

**DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF AN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOARD GAME FOR  
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**by**

**ANISHA SASIDHARAN**

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## **PEMBANGUNAN DAN PENILAIAN PERMAINAN BAHASA BAGI PARA PELAJAR SEKOLAH RENDAH**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kanak-kanak belajar dengan lebih baik apabila mereka terlibat secara langsung dengan dunia di sekeliling mereka. Permainan bahasa ini menekankan kemahiran lisan Bahasa Inggeris murid-murid sekolah rendah seperti yang tertera dalam Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR). Memandangkan murid-murid suka akan permainan, *CHALLENGE* dicipta untuk mengalakkan murid-murid untuk berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Inggeris, belajar dalam keadaan yang menyeronokkan dan keluar daripada tradisi bilik darjah yang lebih mengutamakan guru-guru. *CHALLENGE* menggunakan *Multiple Intelligences* dan *Social Learning* sebagai teori-teori utama. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan bercampur iaitu kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Para peserta kajian ini adalah 56 orang pelajar-pelajar Malaysia yang berumur sebelas dan dua belas tahun, 11 orang guru-guru dan 12 orang awam. Latar kajian ini pula adalah ketika *CHALLENGE* dimainkan; sesi percubaan, bengkel, pameran dan pertandingan. Borang soal selidik diberikan kepada para pelajar, guru-guru dan orang awam manakala sesi temu bual pendek dijalankan dengan para pelajar sahaja untuk mengkaji perspektif mereka terhadap *CHALLENGE*. Beberapa sesi temu bual yang ringkas juga dijalankan dengan empat orang pensyarah, seorang pegawai pembantu kajian dan seorang pereka grafik yang terlibat dalam pembangunan permainan bahasa ini. Penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan dokumentasi pembangunan permainan bahasa ini bersama-sama dengan cabaran-cabaran yang diharungi serta model yang menerangkan setiap langkah dalam pembangunan permainan ini. Penemuannya turut menunjukkan respon positif terhadap permainan bahasa ini dari sudut pandangan para pelajar, guru-guru dan orang awam. Implikasi kajian ini akan memanfaatkan para pelajar dan

guru-guru. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kaedah pengajaran yang menggunakan permainan dapat mengalakkan dan memotivasikan para pelajar. Langkah-langkah dalam pembangunan permainan ini juga dapat membantu para guru menggunakan model ini sebagai panduan untuk merekacipta permainan mereka sendiri.

# **DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOARD GAME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

## **ABSTRACT**

Children learn best through games which directly involve them and the world around them. The language board game, CHALLENGE emphasises on the speaking of the English language for young learners as stipulated in the present Primary Schools Curriculum Standards (*KSSR*). Bearing in mind students' love for games, CHALLENGE is invented to fulfil the purposes of allowing students to practise speaking, learn in an enjoyable manner and break the traditional teacher-centered classroom style. CHALLENGE uses the Multiple Intelligences and Social learning Theories as its main educational theories. This study employs the triangulation mixed methods research design. The participants of this study consist of 56 Malaysian students from the ages of eleven and twelve, 11 teachers and also 12 members of the public. The settings of the study are the sessions where CHALLENGE was played; tryouts, workshops, exhibitions and competitions. Survey questionnaires are given out to the students, teachers and members of public whereas short semi-structured interviews are carried out with the students to study their perspectives on CHALLENGE. Short interviews are also carried out with four lecturers, a research assistant and a graphic designer who are directly involved in developing the board game. The findings show the development of the game together with its challenges and provide a step-by-step model in language game development. Positive responses on CHALLENGE are reported by the students, teachers and members of the public. This study has several pedagogical implications which will benefit both teachers and students. Through this study, it is observed that game-based materials are student centred and able to encourage and motivate students to learn. The model of material



development described in this study will also allow teachers to have a useful template to design their own game-based material.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Scholars have realised the importance of play amongst children that helps in their development; physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally and in language learning. More studies were carried out regarding the importance of games in the early childhood which undoubtedly contribute to the cognitive development of later years, in a child. These, led to the extension of play in the elementary school for young learners (Elkind, 2007; Ginsburg, 2007; Rizi, Yarmohamadiyan & Gholami, 2011; Runcan, Petracovschi & Borca, 2012).

Play is looked upon as a vital way in which a child acquires living skills. Children learn about the world surrounding them through play. Pre-primary school years are seen as an important period of time whereby their physical, mental and social development reaches its peak. Thus, the usage of games in education allows children to be imaginative, creative and discover learning. This allows them to be independent and creative human beings in the future (Mahdaviniaa & Samavati, 2010; Rizi, Yarmohamadiyan & Gholami, 2011). Play helps a child to advance, learn and grow healthily (Ramazan, Ozdemir & Beceren, 2012).

In today's world, education is so much in line with child psychology and development in which games play a crucial role in supporting a child's learning and development. Earlier philosophers such as Froebel, Montessori, Dewey and Piaget strongly advocated the concept of play in children's early education (Morrison, 1988). Kapp (2012) claimed gamification as a tool for children to learn the integral skills such as psychomotor, physical and cognitive skills. The concept of game soon

developed from play. Games then became popular among the students of today. Games work as a stimulation and are able to arouse and captivate a student's attention.

According to Karakus, Inal and Cagiltay (2008), numerous attempts have been taken to make students' learning meaningful and impactful with a lasting record of their learning by increasing their motivation and focusing their attention. In this regard, popular interactive computer games have become common in the educational environment to bait students to learn. According to Demirbilek, YÖlmaz and Tamer (2010) the statistics of using games in teaching a foreign language has increased in the past two decades. This clearly shows the adaptation and the importance of 'games' into our learning context.

Roussou (2004) and Elkind (2007) stated that educational games provide a platform for students to be involved in learning while they enjoy themselves and that the purpose is to make students value learning critically while trying out difficult tasks in a more enjoyable manner. This notion was also pointed out by Kapp (2012) in which he claimed that games not only provide meaning in learning but also a safe environment for students to think, explore and try things. Similarly, Mahdaviniaa and Samavati (2010) stated that educational games should meet the goal of enabling individuals to practise in real life, what has been taught in school. Such games involve engaging one's mind, body and heart as well as interacting and working together with others in a group.

Games have been used widely in the education field, from the elementary level (Kirikkaya, Iseri & Vurkaya, 2010; Mahdaviniaa & Samavati, 2010) up to tertiary level (Azriel, Erthal & Starr, 2005; Demirbilek ,Yolmaz, & Tamer, 2010; Lean,

Moizer, Towler & Abbey, 2006; Pasin & Giroux, 2011; Huang & Soman, 2013). In the acquisition of English as a second language, games are highly regarded as a tool which enables the language to be learnt at an enjoyable and less stressful pace (Reese & Wells, 2007). As for the younger learners, games not only prepare them in a mental state of learning basic language knowledge but also serve as a platform for them to exercise their motor skills. These younger learners are usually eager, vigorous and zestful in exploring new discoveries through games, which also motivate learning (Elkind, 2007; Griva, Semoglou & Geladari, 2010). Thus, undoubtedly, the importance of games in the learning of English as a second language should be explored in research and exploited in practice.

This research is an investigation carried out regarding a particular board game called CHALLENGE. This board game is a product developed by a team of lecturers for school teachers and students to enhance the teaching and learning in school. CHALLENGE is underpinned by the theory of Multiple Intelligences which advocates the provocation in a child's various intelligences through games in the learning of English. This research, carried out in the Malaysian context, takes into consideration the scenario of teaching and learning of English in schools in Malaysia. The following section covers the study which includes a discussion on simulation and games in education as well as the English teaching in Malaysia.

This study arises from the need to adapt a creative educational game which could be used in the Malaysian primary school context. This educational board game is devised based on the fields of simulations and games as well as gamification in education and considerations the teaching and learning of English in Malaysia.

### **1.1.1 Simulations, Games and Gamifications**

According to Yorke (1981), simulation-based learning approaches aim to imitate a system, entity, phenomenon, or process. They attempt to represent or predict aspects of the behaviour of the problem or issue being studied. Simulation can allow experiments to be conducted within a fictitious situation to show the real behaviours and outcomes of possible conditions (as cited in Lean, Moizer, Towler & Abbey, 2006, p.228).

Huang and Soman (2013) defined gamification as a kind of intervention which allows engagement, motivation and longer time span spent on task at hand. A properly planned gamification in education can increase students' willingness to learn. Besides that, it is also a popular tactic to encourage specific behaviour in learning.

In other words, simulations, games and gamification allow hands-on method which offers students many benefits in the learning context. According to Magney (1990) educational games offer several essential benefits and these benefits can be categorised under "cognitive, motivational and attitudinal aspects" (as cited in Mummalaneni & Sivakumar, 2008, p. 260). The table below explains these aspects in greater detail:

Table 1.1

*Benefits of Educational Games*

| Aspects      | Benefits  |
|--------------|---|
| Cognitive    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge acquisition</li> <li>• greater knowledge comprehension</li> </ul>  |
| Motivational | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase subject interest</li> <li>• increase learning motivation</li> </ul> |
| Attitudinal  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive attitude towards teacher, content and own ability</li> </ul>        |

Adapted from Magney (1990) as cited in Mummalaneni & Sivakumar (2008)

Fowler and Pusch (2010) further suggested that simulations as well as intercultural simulations are devised to offer chances to train certain sets of skills or to be expert in dealing with conditions that could occur in the future. Intercultural simulations however, can be defined as instructional activities which engage and challenge players with certain experiences restricting it to certain cultures such as “national, ethnic, occupational, gender, racial or any other cultures” (p.94). Every culture would offer different beliefs, norms, behaviour prototypes and preferences.

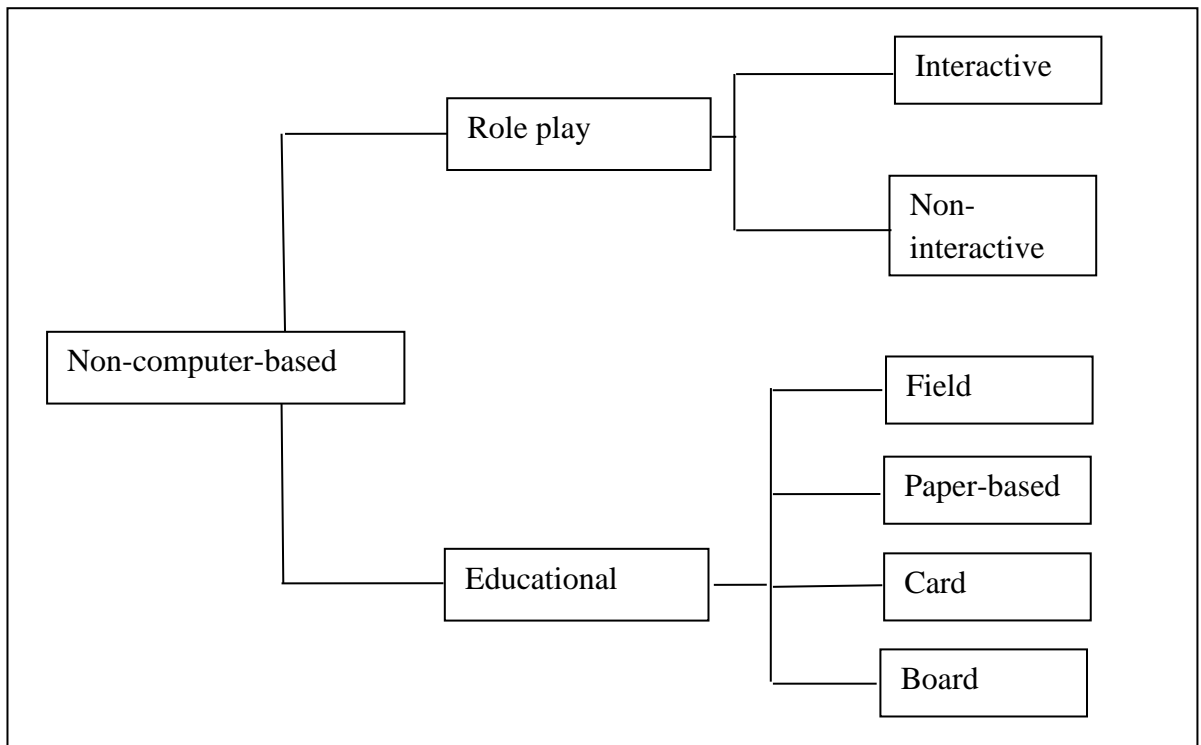
Fowler and Pusch (2010) explained that in intercultural simulation games, impediments to achieving goals are usually present. These impediments usually come in the form of time, language and information constrains. Additionally intercultural simulations possess elements of winning by accumulating most points or collecting most “goods” during the game. In the intercultural simulation game context, the concept of how the game is played is much more important and meaningful compared to whether the player wins or loses the game. Fowler and Pusch (2010) also added that a few intercultural simulations and games used today

are not published. Thus there is lack of availability even though they are interesting and useful.

As we focus on simulation games, we can refer to the typology given by Lean, Moizer, Towler and Abbey (2006) who classified simulation games into two sub-categories, namely computer-based and non-computer based. The computer-based simulation is further divided into three groups; gaming simulations, training simulations and modelling simulations.

The non-computer based simulation has two sub-groups which are role play and educational games. Role play consists of interactive and non-interactive simulations whereas educational games consist of field oriented games, paper-based games, card games as well as board games.

According to Mummalaneni and Sivakumar (2008), what distinguishes a computer-based game and non-computer based, board game is the interactions among participants. Figure 1.1 below shows a clearer picture of the non-computer-based simulation.



*Figure 1.1* Typology of non-computer-based simulation games

Adapted from Lean, Moizer, Towler and Abbey (2006)

Figure 1.1 above shows that role play and educational games come under the non-computer-based games. The focus of this study is on a particular board game called CHALLENGE which falls under the non-computer based group. This board game comes under the educational games.

This study focuses on the simulation through the CHALLENGE board game which is a non-computer-based, educational game. Other than tracing its development, this study looks at the way the board game is perceived by three groups of people, namely the students (players), teachers and public.



### **1.1.2 English in the Malaysian Context**

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society with a unique diversity in cultures and languages. Malays form the largest ethnic group followed by the Chinese, indigenous people, Indians and other races. Bahasa Malaysia is the national language and it is widely used as the official language. Other than Bahasa Malaysia, there is a variety of other languages, for instance, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai and the rich Chinese language which is made up of a few dialects such as Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan and Foochow. Even with such a rich repertoire, the importance of English is not denied. English is second in importance after the Malay language in the professional as well as the academic setting (Gaudart, 1999; Mohan, Gopala, Shashi, Irma & Norashikin, 2010; Mohd. Sofi Ali, 2003).

For many, English is a very important foreign language in Malaysia and it is extensively practiced in all aspects, from performing business transactions up to advertisements in the mass media. Vinodini (2003) also stressed that English is important when it comes to communication between various ethnic groups and in certain cases, among the same ethnic group. Thus, English creates a closer relationship between the multi-ethnic citizens of Malaysia. English is also increasingly needed to ensure that Malaysia could compete globally. Needless to say, English is an important and compulsory subject in mainstream education, a point discussed in the following sections.

### **1.1.2.1 English in the Primary School**

English is regarded as a second language in all Malaysian primary schools. The mastery of this language is important in order to gain information and knowledge. Thus, the English language curriculum is devised to enable students to be proficient in the language so that they could employ it in their daily lives, to pursue their studies and in future career fields (MOE, 2011).

The *KBSR* syllabus is used in the primary schools. Textbooks are the main curriculum support materials used as a guide in teaching and learning. The content of these textbooks are designed in accordance with the *KBSR* curriculum document and the National Philosophy of Education which stresses on the development of a student as a whole, covering the physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual aspects.

The focus of the *KBSR* English language syllabus for primary schools is to ensure that students are able to communicate orally and in writing, both in and out of school by preparing them with the basic skills and knowledge.

Recently, in 2011, a new syllabus for primary education in Malaysian was introduced. It is known as the Primary Schools Curriculum Standard or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah*, known as *KSSR*. This new syllabus is designed to be more holistic and relevant in facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It consists of the elements of creativity and innovation, Information Technology and communication as well as entrepreneurship. This curriculum focuses on pre-school education, lower primary education (Year One – Year Three) and upper primary education (Year Four- Year Six).

Recently in 2011, the government came up with a more comprehensive new syllabus for the primary schools called Primary Schools Curriculum Standards or

*Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR)*. The aim of the English Language Curriculum for primary schools is to furnish these young learners with basic language skills allowing them to communicate effectively in various contexts which suit the students' level of development (Ministry of Education, 2011).

The *KSSR* has just been implemented for the Year One as well as Year Two throughout the nation. It will be systematically introduced throughout all primary schools from Year One till Year Six.

### **1.1.2.2 English in the Secondary School**

In secondary schools, the *KBSM* syllabus is applied. The English language syllabus focuses on the competency of the language in various contexts, acquiring knowledge in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and employing inquiry skills in solving problems and issues. Accuracy of grammar is also stressed in order for students to use English intelligibly. Networking too, is given priority so that students could carry out joint activities with other schools and develop their interpersonal skills and be prepared to step into the 'real world' when they leave school.

A small literature component is also added in the curriculum. A carefully selected range of poetry, short stories and novels were embedded to the English language syllabus to arouse students' interest in the English language. The main reason for the implementation of the literature component in the secondary schools is 'to engage students in wider reading of good works for enjoyment and for self development. They will also develop an understanding of other societies, cultures, values and traditions that will contribute to their emotional and spiritual growth' (MOE, 2000, p.1).

The textbooks designed by the Ministry of Education are the essential curriculum support materials utilised as a guide in teaching and learning. The content of these textbooks are designed in accordance with the National Philosophy of Education and the Educational Act of 1996 which focus on optimising and balancing students' potentials in the aspects of physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. The aim of the *KBSM* syllabus is to improve students' proficiency in English so that they would be able to use it in their daily context, to acquire knowledge and in their future work place (MOE, 2000).

Thus, it is very essential for students to master the basic foundation spelt out in the *KSSR* syllabus, which is to communicate effectively in various contexts in order to expand their level of mastery in the secondary school and become competent in the English language. Effective communication includes spoken English. Hence, to build the foundation of the English language through speaking in the primary school students is the utmost important task for the teachers.

### **1.1.3 English Teaching Approaches**

There are several methods in the English language teaching. This section illustrates the methods or approaches commonly used by the English teachers in Malaysia to carry out their teaching. English teachers use these methods or approaches according to their suitability in their classroom. Based on an informal interview with three English teachers; two primary school teachers and one secondary school teacher as well as the researcher's personal reflection, the following is an overview of the methods commonly practised by English teachers in Malaysia.

According to all the teachers interviewed, drilling is the common approach used which works the best among the students. The drilling approach is a key feature under the Audio-Lingual Approach. This approach emphasises the repetition of structural patterns via oral practice (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The primary school teachers interviewed use the drilling and repetition method to master words, phrases and sentences in substitution tables. For the younger learners (seven and eight year olds) one of these two teachers makes them repeat songs and rhymes found in the English text book in order for them to remember the words and phrases. At the secondary school level, drilling and repetition is mostly used in learning grammar and sentence structures.

Games are the main modes of teaching for the primary school teachers. This is mainly because games being highly motivating are able to stimulate the younger learners to learn. These teachers make sure that they provide adequate instructions before the games are carried out and even during the game so as to aid the students. They also give examples of how the games are played so that the students could observe and imitate later on. The act of observing and imitating by students is the key in Total Physical Response (TPR) Approach. Students are said to learn by observing actions performed by their teacher (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The teachers ensure that their students communicate in the target language and move around during these games, for example, word games, crossword puzzles, hangman, cracking the secret code and using flash cards to match vocabulary within peers. Other than using games to deliver the content, these teachers also use games as induction and closure. These methods not only reduce the stress level in a student and facilitate learning, they also have the speciality to evoke 'movements' through

games. Thus games are categorised under the kinaesthetic intelligence; this is the base understanding, underlying the TPR Approach.

According to Larsen-Freeman (2000) TPR holds on to the belief that learners go through a less stressful condition of learning as they follow the instructions from the instructor. TPR promotes conversation among learners in English. This is the teacher's goal; students should communicate in English in an enjoyable environment without being pressured.

TPR also emphasizes on 'hands-on' experience in order to directly involve and indirectly teach students. All the items used during the play, allow students to respond towards the language used. It is also believed that the 'effect of touching' leaves a more lasting effect on a child's learning. As such, the teachers (interviewed) make sure that the children have physical contact with the items such as flash cards.

In the secondary school English learning context, the English teacher often uses materials such as the newspapers in teaching various topics. Sometimes, the students are asked to extract certain grammar categories such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and prepositions. At other times, they are asked to detect unfamiliar words and build sentence structures from these words. The English teacher also trains the students' reading skills by asking them to read the article aloud. At times, the teacher also presents a certain newspaper article and asks the students to predict the ending of the story or article. This clearly shows the usage of authentic materials in the teaching of English which is one of the traits of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach.

Dramatisation and poem writing used in Literature lessons enable students to express themselves and communicate with their peers in the target language. This is

also a feature in Communicative Language Teaching whereby students are made to use the target language freely to communicate and express their thoughts, ideas or feelings. Other than dramatization and poem writing, the teacher interviewed also added that she even asks her students to create their own comic strips. The students will then use these comic strips and explain it to the class. This activity together with the earlier mentioned predicting the ending of an article, clearly shows us how students could express themselves.

The Direct Method is also commonly used by these teachers. Using this approach, translation is not allowed and the goal of this approach is to enable students to use the target language to communicate. Therefore, students need to learn how to ask and answer questions in the target language. This method also stresses on self-correction to facilitate learning as the teacher provides an option for the students if the question that they ask is grammatically wrong.

Reading is carried out in the target language and the teacher responds to any kind of questions from the students in the target language. The teacher would give further details in the target language through examples or illustrations. Here, the teacher will not use the native language.

Content-based Approach is also practised as the teacher uses a certain subject matter in order to learn the target language. For example, when the teacher taught the theme of 'Entertainment' for one of the weeks, she focused on the show business, films, and anecdotes of famous actors and teenage novels which were movie hits. This was able to grasp students' interest as it is relevant and it builds on their prior knowledge based on entertainment. This also enables them to learn new vocabulary using contextual cues. Larsen-Freeman (2000) noted, using the Content-based

Approach, language is learnt effectively to convey informational content, loved by the students.

All the three teachers interviewed shared their experience of asking their students to carry out group work to complete a particular task. This is a Task-based Approach, another approach indicated by Larsen-Freeman (2000) in which is often practised as a method of teaching the English language done to ensure students converse with each other in the target language, both direct and indirectly. The Task-based Approach supports authentic speaking and listening in the target language. This activity allows the students to discuss, produce and even reject ideas in the English language. Even though the students' main goal is to finish the task assigned to them, what they do not realise is that this activity trains their comprehension, listening and speaking skills. This task allows them to undergo meaningful interaction amongst their peers.

The teachers interviewed also, often connect what is taught to the real life situation so that it is easier for the learners to picture it and feel it, which in turn will make their learning, much more meaningful and valuable. This, according to Larsen-Freeman (2000), is the Participatory Approach. This approach allows learners to relate themselves to the reality of the world and comprehend the social and cultural elements surrounding them in order to shape them into people who are sensible to make the right decisions and actions. This approach is experience-centered and their personal involvement motivates them to learn.

An example of this approach being practised will be when the secondary school teacher teaches about the benefits of a tree which is in the syllabus but asks the students to connect it to their daily lives. They are asked to personally weigh the



importance of trees and think about the troubles that they have faced before due to the absence of trees. This allows the students to reflect upon their own beliefs and practices which is related to the nature around them.

Another example was when a particular teacher, during her lesson on ‘Movie Review’, asked her students for their favourite movie and to discuss how much this movie has impacted their real lives or how much it has changed their lives. After the sharing session, the teacher told the students to write an informal letter to their best friend to convince the friend to watch this movie. This letter includes a movie review by the students. The Participatory Approach made the teacher produce a lesson which is more relevant to the students by talking about their own favourite movie and how much it has affected them. At the end of the lesson, the students had to produce a movie review which will convince their best friend to watch it.

These are the teaching approaches commonly used by the English language teachers (ELT) in Malaysia during their English lessons. These teaching approaches are listed and explained in order to give background information on how English is usually taught and how the newly invented educational board game is a break free from these traditional methods yet offers the same or even more experiential learning to the learners.

## **1.2 The Educational Board Game: CHALLENGE**

As mentioned earlier, a group of researchers devised an educational board game called CHALLENGE. CHALLENGE was initially developed to supplement the modules created for primary school students under the Yayasan Sabah Project. The task of designing this new board game was taken up by a team of researchers based on the initial ideas of a group of young children. The task of drafting out a board

game was given to this group of young children with the belief that they will be able to come up with something which they would desire to play and which will suit their best interest in games.

The CHALLENGE board game was designed, emphasizing on young children's interest in games and thus it takes into account the ability of strategic thinking and competitiveness in children during games.

### **1.2.1 How to Play CHALLENGE?**

CHALLENGE requires students (players) to move on a gigantic board as tokens. This board can be spread on the classroom floor or any other open space. Students would move on the board with the indication of numbers from the giant dice which they would roll, during their turn. On the surface of this giant board game, there are circles containing numbers from 1 up to 40. These circles are in four different colours; red, blue, yellow and green. The aim of the game is to reach the 'FINISH' point and in order to do so, students have to face various challenges such as responding to questions correctly, capturing opponents as well as salvaging teammates who are captured by their opponents.

CHALLENGE also comes with a stack of question cards prepared by the group of lecturers on English, Science, Mathematics and General Knowledge based on the *KSSR* syllabus but students are highly encouraged to formulate their own questions for the game. This game is ideally played for thirty minutes. Students are divided into four groups, under the four colours; blue, red, yellow and green. A pupil will be sent from each team to the board to represent the team and to move on the board like a token. This representative will roll the dice and move accordingly, from one circle to another. As soon as the pupil lands on a colour, he/she is safe if it is her/his own

colour otherwise, the team member of that colour will post a question to the pupil on the board. If the pupil manages to answer correctly, the team would score points. On the other hand, if the member fails to answer the question, he/she will be captured by the opponent. Each captive carries certain points for the respective team which captures them. The question is then opened to the rest of the red team members and if they manage to answer it correctly, the team will be awarded some points as well.

As the game progresses, students on the board can also choose to answer a question from the opponent and redeem any of their teammates which have been captured as they land on the opponent's colour. As mentioned earlier, redeeming a teammate will carry some points.

Each pupil will get a chance to move on the board game as the rules of CHALLENGE allow other teammates to be on the board. The first team to reach the 'FINISH' point is the winner. If none of the teams manage to reach this 'FINISH' point within the time limit, the winning team is awarded based on the accumulated points. These points are awarded to them from the questions that have been answered correctly as well as the number of captives.

Some graphic illustrations of CHALLENGE can be found in Appendices L and M. These photographs were inserted to aid in visualising and understanding the game better.

### **1.2.2 Facilitators of CHALLENGE**

There are three essential roles in CHALLENGE. The main one is the game master who facilitates the flow of the whole game and ensures that the rules are followed. The game master will also ensure there are a balanced number of questions from each category English, Science, Mathematics and General Knowledge. An

assistant could also be appointed to help the game master if the teacher thinks that it is necessary.

A time keeper is also necessary during CHALLENGE. This time keeper will keep track of the time for the overall game which should ideally be thirty minutes and be watchful over the time spent to decide and ask the question as well as answer the question. A particular duration of time should be spared to decide on which question to ask and then start asking as well as providing a period of time for the pupil to think and start answering the question. The time keeper would signal the game master once the time is up.

The score keeper will be assigned to keep track of the score for each team. A score card is used in order to carry out this task. Scores should be awarded after consulting the game master.

### **1.2.3 Why Play CHALLENGE?**

CHALLENGE is an ideal game which assists students in active learning as students are challenged with both language-based and content-based questions which are categorised into four subjects; English, Science, General Knowledge and Mathematics. The environment of healthy competition enables the students to learn, practise and master knowledge and skills pertaining speaking and listening.

This game cultivates students' sense of belonging in their own groups, as a team player. Here, they would cooperate and collaborate to strategise in order to design questions to challenge their opponents, help each other to answer questions and discuss to make decisions. This trains students to give, receive and respond to instructions cautiously which engages them in active learning. Creative thinking is

also emphasised when students design their own questions to challenge their opponents.

The CHALLENGE board game can be used by teachers as a part of an enrichment activity or to assess the students' level of understanding in a certain subject. CHALLENGE is also feasible as it could be played within the classroom context or outside the classroom context such as in a competition. The teacher is free to alter the rules of the CHALLENGE board game pertaining to the time given to ask and answer the questions and even varying ways of winning the game. This could be done in order to best suit the interest or ability of the students. These are the outstanding features of CHALLENGE which make it flexible and entertaining.

The elements of suspense and anticipation, creative and active thinking, competition, movement, excitement and fun make CHALLENGE appealing to students learning English as well as other subjects. The characteristics of this board, its rules and its unique method of play itself are the elements that distinguish this game from other games in the market.

Before the presentation of details on how the CHALLENGE board game is supported by the Multiple Intelligences theory discussed in Chapter 2, the next section explains the theory and concept of Multiple Intelligences.

### **1. 3 Multiple Intelligences Concept**

The Multiple intelligences is a theory which explains the differences between individuals. This theory explains that there are nine various ways to express intelligences: linguistic/verbal, logical-mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist intelligence and existentialist. All these intelligences possess its own characteristics

which are indeed unique and each intelligence portrays a variation in thoughts, problem solving and learning.

Linguistic intelligence is seen through expressed words. These words could also be used to appreciate complex meanings, state what's in one's mind and understand others. The act of reading and writing poetry, essays, reports, riddles, jokes, expressing wordplays and the act of storytelling depicts this intelligence. Examples of products that can be used to bring out the linguistic intelligence are newspapers, scripts, manuals, word games, debates and lyrics.

Logical-mathematical intelligence enables an individual to calculate, quantify, hypothesize and understand recurring patterns involving numbers, words and geometric designs. Individuals with logical-mathematical intelligence would have problem-solving tactics, strategize to meet new challenges and carry out complex mathematical operations. These individuals are able to use and appreciate abstract relations, think logically and manipulate numbers. Products that focus on logical-mathematical intelligence are graph, flowchart, timeline, computer programme and logic puzzles.

Someone with spatial intelligences is keen towards shapes, images, patterns, designs, colours, textures, pictures, visual symbols as well as active imagination, pretending and visualisation. These individuals usually have the ability to think in a three- dimensional way (as pilots, architects and painters would). They are able to recreate, transform or modify images to decipher graphic information. These individuals are usually very observant towards spatial information and visualisation of world and arts. Spatial intelligence could be discovered through these products;

graphs or charts, paintings, film or television programmes, map, sculpture or even inventions.

Bodily- kinesthetic intelligence refers to the capacity of enabling body manipulation. This would mean the capability of an individual to solve a problem or produce something using his or her whole body or just certain parts of the body. This individual would be able to move physically and involve creativity together with it, such as dance, play, drama, mime, role play, physical games, and exercise.

An individual who is sensitive towards pitch, melody, rhythm and tone is likely to have musical intelligence. This individual possesses the ability of recognising, remembering and even manipulating music. This individual would also be receptive towards the sound from the environment, human, machines, musical and percussion instruments. Composing songs, producing jingles and sound effects, performing and reciting as well as being a part of the musical or opera depicts the ability of the musical intelligence.

Interpersonal intelligence depicts the talent of an individual to understand and interact efficiently with others, focusing on human relationships, collaboration, teamwork, cooperation, distinctions among people, common goals, consensus, empathy and meaningful encounters with others. Individuals in this category usually have the ability to reflect and analyse the social environment around them. Interpersonal intelligences could be seen through tutoring or teaching, role play, community services and leadership roles.

Intrapersonal intelligence on the other hand explains the awareness of the internal aspects of the self which includes awareness of an individual's own feelings, intuitions, thought process, inner quests, spiritual pursuits, beliefs as well as values.

This includes detecting what one can do, what one wants to do, how one reacts to things and which are the things that one avoids. This knowledge can be used by individuals to plan and direct one's life. Products that provoke the intrapersonal intelligence are genealogy, sermons, journal or diary, and artwork.

Last but not least, the naturalist intelligence represents the ability to understand the natural patterns, flora, fauna, species and subspecies categorisation, classification of objects, external and internal sensory experiences of the natural world and all sorts of encounters with plants, animals, water and weather from the microscopic view to the natural phenomena detected by the naked eye. Plants, flowers, nature walks and experiments are the examples of the strategies or products that emphasise on naturalist intelligence.

The existential intelligence refers to human inclination to ask questions on their basic existence such as who am I, where did I come from and why do I have to die. After much analysis and argument, Gardner (2000) pronounced the ninth intelligence which is the existential intelligence. This intelligence is the ability to realise and feel our being as a part of the cosmos.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Inevitably, speaking is an essential skill in the English language which needs to be mastered by the Malaysian primary school students in order to be able to communicate effectively in various contexts as the stipulated aim of the Primary Schools Curriculum Standards (*KSSR*). However, most students find it difficult to communicate in English as it is not their native language. Rosniah Mustaffa, Idris Aman, Teo, and Noorizah Mohd Noor (2011) also pointed out in their study that the teaching and learning of English in Malaysia is still teacher-centered in which



teachers mainly “question, inform, instruct, accept, model and correct” (p.638). Students are therefore given less chances to speak and practice the English language. In a study conducted by Gurnam Kaur Sidhu and Chan (2010) to explore the Malaysian English teachers’ instructional practices in teaching of literature, it was discovered that the speaking and listening skills were the least emphasized skills in the ESL classrooms.

It is discovered that even at the tertiary level, students feel fearful, uncomfortable, shy and insecure to speak in the English language in the classroom setting and even worse, in public (Wan Zumusni Wan Mustapha, Noriah Ismail, Deepak Singh Ratan Singh & Suhaidi Elias, 2010). If this is the scenario that happens in the tertiary level, it is clear to us that something is lacking in the foundation laid by the schools in Malaysia which has then produced students who are not able to be confident and brave to speak in English.

According to Zhang and Kortner (1995), the negligence of teachers in the aspect of speaking in the classroom will annihilate the foundation and be an impediment towards the development of the other skills, for every learner.

In the study conducted by Fauziah Hassan and Nita Fauzee Selamat (2002), there were several factors which contributed to the low English language proficiency amongst lower secondary school students. These are as shown in Table 1.2 below.