

IAT210 Board Game Analysis

Instructor: Ivan Aguilar

Student name: John Liu

Student number: 301116278

1. Bibliographic Reference

The game was originated in Hubei Province in China and was spreading among the people. It is played on a normal deck of cards with additional 2 differentiated jokers, which makes it 54 cards (Dou dizhu, 2020). I've searched for the publisher, published location and year of the game but I couldn't find them. However, here is a reference for the digital version of the game I played on my phone, which is widely popular in China:

(2008). *Huan Le Dou Di Zhu (fighting the landlord)*. Tencent Holdings Ltd.

2. Meaning of Name

2.1 Origin of name:

The name "Dou Dizhu" when translated in English means "fighting the landlord". It is a reference to the class conflict during Cultural Revolution in China from 1966 to 1976. Political propaganda rallied Chinese peasants to group up together and fight against the landlords (Cultural Revolution, 2020), which was "Dizhu".

2.2 Name's narrative content:

The name of the game basically summarizes the scenario of the game, where two players (peasants) team up together, and fight against the "landlord". When I played the role of the "Peasant" in the game, I felt like I was in "lower class". On the other hand, when I played the role of the "Landlord", I felt superior to my enemies and more confident.

2.3 Name's references to other games or cultural experiences?

The game is similar to some other popular card game like "Winner" and "Big Two" in Asia. These game has very simulator structure and they are all shedding-type card games. Player starts with a hand of cards, and the object is to dispose all the cards before other players (List of shedding-type game, 2020).

3. Magic Circle

3.1 Define the term magic circle:

Magic circle is where the game takes place. It is a special space in time and space that is apart from the reality. It is created by the game. When players enter the magic circle, they are immersed in the game world and in a mental state that they will obey the rule of the game.

3.2 Aspects contributed to the creation of a magic circle

The card play area. Usually the game is played on top of a table. When the game is not played, the table is just a table with no additional meaning into it. But when a the game is being played, the table becomes a battlefields for the players. Therefore, the size of the table matters. If the game is being played on a table with large surface area, the players sits far apart from others and are more relax. But when the game is played on a smaller table, the players sit closer, thus a more tension in the atmosphere is created.

3.3 Aspects impeded the creation of a magic circle

Since I played the digital version of this game on my phone, the digital version even has background music. It is also possible to play some music when play the physical version. As the game goes, the pacing of the music changes. I remember when it was close to the end of the game, the pacing of the music started to accelerate. And I became more concentrated and immersed in the game.

4.Game Objects

4.1 Define game objects.

Game objects are things in the game that players can interact with. It could be something the player can see or control in some way. A game object can have a physical form like a card or dice, or just being abstract. Game object are essential to a game, game object needs to exist in order for player to “play”.

4.2 List the objects in the game.

A normal deck of cards, plus 2 differentiated jokers. (Dou dizhu, 2020)

Draw pile, discard pile, player hand, and play area.

4.3 Describe the one most important game object.

The most important object in this game is the deck of cards. Everything about this game is designed around it. The symbols and numbers formed the fundamental rules of the game. The cards are ranked according to the numbers and letters. Players can mix and match different cards into different categories according the rule (Dou dizhu, 2020). For example, in my playthrough, the previous player played a single 8, then I needed to play a single card(same category) with a bigger value (higher rank). Even I had a few smaller valued card on my hand , I couldn't play them. So I played a single 10(also a single card, and $10 > 8$). If one thinks deeper, there's also probability involved in the game, that can elevate the strategy of the game into another level that requires even more critical thinking and planning.

5.Object Attributes

5.1 In your own words, define attributes.

Attributes are the property or characteristic of the game object. It defines the game object and it also differentiates one game object from another. Attribute can be static, means it stays the same during the game, or dynamic, means it changes through out the game. Players receive information from the attribute of the object, and make decision based on the information that they received.

5.2 What are the attributes of the important game object

Static attributes:

- The image, numbers, symbols and color of the cards.
- Everything that is printed on the card stays static.
- Shape of the cards.

Dynamic attributes:

- The position of the card, in player's hand, or being played
- The visibility of the information, hidden or revealed

5.3 Describe in detail one of those attributes that changes state

The position of the cards: when the cards are in player's hand, or when the cards are already played by the player. When the cards are in the player's hand, the information about

the cards are hidden from other players, because only the backside of the cards (which all look the same) can be seen by others. When a player is holding a lot of cards, there is great variety the cards could be. But when more cards are being played, more information are being reveal to other players, and the other players can exclude many possibility what those cards (in one's hand) could be.

5.4 The circumstances/causes of the state change.

The state changes when a player have valid cards that can be played, and the player is also willing to play these cards. Normally, if the cards in player's hand are considered "bad", means low rank, the player wants to dispose them as fast as possible. But if the cards are considered "good", means high rank, the player might want to save them and to play later. How fast the player dispose the cards also depends what kinda of combination of cards the player can make.

6. Operative Actions

6.1 Define operative actions.

Operatives actions are simply the things players can do, or actions players can take in a game. The actions player are allowed to do is bounded by the operational rule. It drives the game and keeps the game going.

6.2 List the operative actions in the game

- Shuffle the cards
- Draw the cards or Deal the cards to each player
- Bid the "landlord" position
- Pick up the 3 leftover "wild cards"
- Look at the front side of one's own cards
- Play the cards. When cards are played, the front side are revealed to other players. The hand being played must be in the same category of and ranked higher than the last hand being played by last player. Or the hand is categorized as "bomb"(four of kind), that beats other categories of cards. (Dou dizhu, 2020)
- Pass one's own turn(willingly, or have to pass if don't have cards that can be played)

7. Resultant Actions

7.1 Define resultant actions

Resultant actions are meaningful actions the players take which can benefit the player in the long run. Theses actions have purpose, and can help the players to achieve their goal. To achieve the goal, the player need to perform resultant actions by performing operative actions in a planned order, that things need to go according to plan.

7.2 Ways in which resultant actions helped to ensure that the moves were integrated

While I was playing the card, there were many ways that how I could play my hand. But I kept my goal in mind that I need to dispose all of my cards sooner than other players. To do that, I had to create a situation which could be the best for me. In one of the game I had a bomb which was form by four 2s (2 is has the highest rank other than joker), but I also had a lots of small pairs that I needed to get rid of. So I split it in to two pairs of 2s (2 highest rank pairs). This helped me to play some of my small pairs. I could play those four 2s all together

or single by single, but neither of these suited my situation better.

8.Skills

8.1 Define skills

Skill is what is required for player to win the game. Skills can be divided into three types:

- Physical Skill: It is related to one's physical coordination, agility, and endurance.

- Mental Skill: Being able to memorize information , make rightful decision, critical thinking and plan future moves.

- Social Skill: Control one's self-emotion and hide it, being able read and understand opponent and teammate

8.2 Skills are required

Mental skills are required here. When the game is played in person, social skills is also required.

8.3 Opportunities the game offer to improve their skills

Memorization is important in this game. When I was playing the game, I kept track of what and how many high ranks cards(jokers, 2s, Ace) were already played. And I could plan my next move according to it. In one of the game I played, I knew that three 2s were already played, that's mean only a single 2 was left. So I played a pair of Ace, and granted my another free turn. I wouldn't have the advantage if I didn't memorize the cards.

9.Operational and Behavioral Rules

9.1 Example of an operational rule

When a hand of "chain" is being played, it must contains as leave five **consecutive** individual cards. (e.g. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, hands like 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 is not allowed, because a 7 is missing here)

9.2 Example of violation of a behavioral rule

Because I played the digital version of the game, it was very unlikely one could cheat. But here is an example of how one to could cheat when play the physical version: A player tries to confuse opponents by plays a hand that contains disordered cards like "6,10,9,5,8,4" and announces "5 to 10" to disguise this as a chain of 5 to 10, and hopes no one find the 7 is missing.

10.Types of Fun

10.1 A type of fun:

- Challenge: Players enjoying the competition the game creates, even the competition is not perfectly balanced. When I played as the "landlord" I was in a "one versus two" situation , but it also provided me a greater challenge. Because I was competing against two players. I needed to be more decisive and confident.

10.2 A different type of fun:

- Fellowship: When playing as the "peasants", cooperation also becomes available. In a few games where I played as the peasants, my hands were not great, but I set up the cards for my teammates, and helped my teammate to achieve our common goal. Also, I felt grateful when I got supported by others.

References

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