UNDERSTANDING PLAY FROM CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

HATİCE SAPMAZ

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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UNDERSTANDING PLAY FROM CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Hatice Sapmaz

Boğaziçi University

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Hatice Sapmaz, certify that

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Date 14.07.2020

ABSTRACT

Understanding Play From Children's Perspectives: A Phenomenological Study

This study examined children's understanding of their play experiences. The participants were eight children aged five to six, all from a laboratory preschool of a university in Istanbul. Designed as a phenomenological study, the goal was to understand how children defined play. To enable children's participation and decrease the gap between the children and researcher, this study employed several creative tools inspired by the Mosaic Approach, namely, conversations stimulated by a) the researcher's observations of children, b) informal chit-chats with children, c) children's drawings, and d) child-led school tours. The study contributes to the gap in children's play studies that is dominated by adults' understandings and meanings. An iterative data analysis showed that children's conceptualizations of play can be examined across four dimensions: motivations for play, feelings in play, imagination while playing, and resources for play. The findings show that play is a pleasant experience that is nevertheless subject to unpleasant emotions, and that children are aware of their motivations for play. While adults are used as a resource for play, children rarely mentioned them as playmates. Whether they call it play or non-play, children need space, materials, security, and friends to exert their agencies and powers, and to fulfill their motivations for play individually and collectively. Use of the given methodology and tools of the study can help adults not only understand children's play but also inform them about their roles and place in child's play.

ÖZET

Çocukların Gözünden Oyunu Anlamak: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma

Bu çalışma, çocukların oyun deneyimlerine dair anlayışlarını incelemiştir. Katılımcıları, İstanbul'da bulunan bir üniversitedeki erken çocukluk birimindeki beş-altı yaşlarındaki sekiz çocuk oluşturmaktadır. Fenomenolojik desende kurgulanan bu çalışma, çocukların oyunu nasıl tanımladıklarını anlamayı hedeflemiştir. Bu tez çalışması, çocukların araştırmaya katılımını güçlendirmek ve yetişkin araştırmacı ile çocuklar arasındaki mesafeyi azaltmak için Mozaik Yaklaşım olarak bilinen yaklaşımdan uyarlanan çeşitli yaratıcı veri toplama yöntemlerini kullanmıştır. Bunlar görüşme niteliğinde olup a) araştırmacının çocuk oyununa ait gözlemleri, b) formel olmayan sohbetler, c) çocukların çizimleri ve d) çocukların yönettiği okul turları üzerinden sohbet etme şeklinde ilerlemiştir. Bu çalışma, yetişkinlerin oyuna dair anlayış ve anlamlarının ağırlıkta olduğu çocuk oyunu çalışmalarındaki alan yazındaki açıklığa katkıda bulunmaktadır. Tekrarlayan bir veri analizi sonucunda, çocukların oyun kavramları dört boyutta ele alınmıştır. Bunlar: oyuna dair güdülenme, oyunda duygular, oyun oynarken hayal gücü ve oyun için kaynaklar. Bulgular, oyunun hoşa giden bir deneyim olmakla birlikte olumsuz duyguların da deneyimlendiği bir ortam olduğunu ve çocukların oyunlarına dair güdülenmelerinin farkında olduklarını göstermektedir. Çocuklar yetişkinleri oyunda kaynak olarak kullanırken, nadir zamanlarda yetişkinlerle oynadıklarından bahsetmişlerdir. Oyun olarak adlandırsın ya da adlandırmasın, çocukların bireysel ya da kolektif olarak failliklerini uygulamak, gücü deneyimlemek ve oyuna dair güdülenmelerini gerçekleştirmek için alana, güven duygusuna, materyallere ve arkadaşlara ihtiyacı bulunmaktadır. Çalışmaya rehberlik eden yöntem bilgisi ve araçların kullanımı, yetişkinlere

çocukların oyununu anlamalarında yardımcı olmakla birlikte yetişkinlerin oyundaki rolleri ve yerine dair bilgi de sağlayabilmektedir.

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Finally, I offer my thanks to myself, for enduring the ups and downs of the process, and for trying hard to complete this work while keeping the curiosity flared. Wink wink!

Hatice Sapmaz

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 A personal journey

In a study of children's understanding of play, one would wonder why to start with explaining my experiences of play as a researcher. However, my personal and theoretical way of viewing play gives the background and the context of how I perceived and made meaning of my experience with the children throughout the study. Therefore, I will dedicate this section to share my personal journey to understand children's perspectives of play with the reader.

In the beginning of my journey to understand play, I tried to put my definition of play in words. The primary memories of play came from my childhood, where I played with the children in the neighborhood or with my sisters so much so that we would come home only to satisfy our hunger with a lunch or snacks only to soon return to the meetup with the friends. What stood out from those memories were being physically active, for example, lots of climbing to walls, trees, roofs of the houses, and mountains. Some scenes with lots of daydreaming and pretending came to my mind as well, such as elaborating on a dream of going on a vacation in a shopping cart, or constantly serving food and drinks to my sisters.

Returning to my adulthood, both as an adult and as a teacher in early years, I dug into my professional way of defining play: it was chaotic. One image involved a period when children played by themselves while adults were nearby but not playing with them. Another was adults' participation to play with my perceived concern on the side of teachers and as a teacher to make learning activities playful so that children could learn without getting bored. In the meantime, the phrase "play is

children's work" was echoing in my mind, confusing me as to how children saw play and where I was supposed to be as an adult.

With this confusion in my mind, I started asking questions about the nature of play. Was it that when children played alone and with friends where I could be there to help when they asked for it? What was my role in their play as an early-years educator or as an adult? To set the setting and let children play? Or to take the control in my own hands and transform my adult learning agenda into a playful tone, so that children could absorb in my teachings with fun? As happens with mental contradictions, this contradictory conceptualization of play was my chance to learn about play. Therefore, I delved into reading the literature on play.

Gradually, my conceptualization of play behavior became more organized and less elusive. Now that I could recognize such elements of play as fun, tension, metacommunication, order, etc. (Bateson, 1956; Huizinga, 1980), I left out the word "free" from the common word "free play", particularly encouraged by Meynell Walter, a long-time playworker, who once said in a personal conversation that play is already free and if it is not free, then it is not play. Hence, my conceptualization of play evolved into one where an individual decides what, where, with whom to play, and even whether to play at all (Gray, 2009; 2013).

Next in my venture, a cascade of studies and articles documented certain functions of play as in physical, cognitive, language, social-emotional development and learning of children (Whitebread et al., 2012). While the benefits of play were fascinating, benefit-focused dominant literature bothered me. In other words, as if play were only tolerable if it served an educational purpose (Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005). Sutton-Smith (2001) puts what I call a *benefits-focused approach* as "political rhetoric of play" which portrays an image where children's play is monitored and

guided by the pre-determined agendas of the market and as such, adults (Kane, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2001). According to Gray (2013), such surveillance and organization of children's play happen to a degree that it seems adults' and authorities' concern for preparing children for the future is shadowing children's agency, their right to play and have fun here and now.

Furthermore, I perceived an asymmetric distribution between studies that were done directly with children, and those that resorted to adults' accounts or researchers' mere observations. A considerable amount of research is carried out with adults to recall their memories of play as children and their opinions of today's children's play (Skår & Krogh, 2009); with parents that show how much, where, with whom, etc. their children play (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014; Singer, Singer, D'Agostino, & Delong, 2009), and with teachers on their opinions of play (Aras, 2016).

While this adult-lens of play is dominating the literature, researchers are working increasingly more with children to understand what children's play experiences are like both in educational settings and play-work literature (Corsaro, 2003; Einarsdóttir, 2014; Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2019; Ivrendi et al., 2019). Yet, compared to the dominant adult discourse, the space they cover is small; even among children, the younger ages are subject to less volume of study (Brooker, 2014). This asymmetry was a further motivation for me to research young children's perspectives of play.

Now that I was interested in researching with children, I turned my gaze towards children's participation in research. Discussing children's participation in a lecture, I was fascinated when I heard about the studies that were guided by children themselves. No matter how much I had thought of myself as an advocate of

democracy, I noticed that I had difficulty picturing myself doing a study where I shared control with children (such as asking them for a school tour or entrusting them with use of cameras) let alone catering all control to them. My discussions with my colleagues and professors luckily led me to see my problem crystal clear: that I was inexperienced. Therefore, I went through the literature to see samples of studies with a concern to get used to the idea of researching with children (Clark, 2003; Clark & Moss, 2005; Corsaro, 2003).

Besides, I started talking to children that I had come to know for long, such as a girl I had previously played with for two years as a babysitter. This proved to be challenging particularly with younger ages as of three to five, and relatively smoother with older children as in primary to middle school. The difficulty involved language and the way I formulated and directed questions to children. For instance, I asked a question that did not make sense to the child or the child just expressed boredom by my question that was irrelevant to the immediate game, such as “Agh, can we just play?”. Yet, when I played with children and asked a question or two regarding our game, as “Oh, that boy X. Why are the girls hiding from him?”, it generated more talking on the side of children. This experience helped me conclude that I should spend time with children and observe them at play whereby I could devise questions that were more meaningful to the children.

After all, possibly owing to my propensity to stand against the domination of welfare on behalf of market-related concerns, I came to identify more with the work of Brian Sutton-Smith (2001) and Pat Kane (2005). That is, the early years education is increasingly more institutionalized, as such, early years become more susceptible to the agendas of adults and the market (Gray, 2009, 2011; Kane, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2001). Although I appreciate the significance and value of studies and

theories that adults had put forwards, I believe in the significance of hearing children's agendas for play, for play is a meaningful part of childhood. With my overall engagement with the current research and practices in the field of play, I could not help but develop a strong motivation in hearing young children and understand what play means to them: How did they see play? What did play mean to them? How did they conceptualize play? What did they like or not like about play? When did play end and non-play begin for them? Therefore, I can frankly say that embarkment of this study was not only a result of identifying a gap in the literature or a concern to cover it with yet another study but also my strong curiosity (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Finlay, 2014) to experience researching with children as well as hearing and understanding play from their point of view.

Thus, I went to the field with a concept of play as free in nature where children decide what-how-with whom-when, etc. to play and even whether to play at all. With a perception of children as valuable contributors to understand play, I took a bag of tools with me, such as observation, researcher's journal, and conversations stimulated by my observations, children's drawings, and child-led school tours. Hereby, I could direct children questions that made more sense to them, such as "I saw you with X and Y at the swings. Can you tell me about that? How were you feeling doing …? Would you like to change something in that game? Can you show me where you like to play in the garden?", instead of directly asking "What is play?".

1.2 Purpose of the study

Literature on play is dominated by adults' assumptions and meanings. Neither recalling of a childhood memory nor formulating assumptions about the play of today's children can be as close to children's own perspectives of play in the here

and now. Considering children as the experts of their play, this study aimed to understand how a group of five-to-six years-old children conceptualized play. The overall goal was to get closer to children's understanding and conceptualizations of play.

1.3 Research questions

The goal of this study was to understand the meaning of play of the participant children. While the central question was "What does play mean to children?", the following questions guided the study:

i. How do children feel about their play?
ii. Do children attribute certain elements to play?
iii. How do children distinguish play from non-play?
iv. Is play a social or solitary activity for children?
v. Do children think they obtain something from play?
vi. What do children need or wish to have for their play?

While I set off with these questions in mind, I knew that they could transform or expand along the qualitative study for I was to grasp a better understanding of the setting and the phenomenon over time (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) .

1.4 Significance of the study

As I discussed above, the study of children's perspectives of play is yet to increase in number (Einarsdóttir, 2014). In addition to an asymmetry between the voice of children and adults, a disparate image emerges even among children when it comes to the ages that researchers prefer to study (Brooker, 2001). The review by McNamee and Seymour (2012) delineate this in their review of 320 papers published in three of

pioneer early childhood journals. Their analysis showed that the age group that was largely studied was between 10 and 17 years old while the voices of younger children were relatively avoided (McNamee & Seymour, 2012). That is, we hear less of the voice of children below age 10, particularly those below age six (McNamee & Seymour, 2012).

Regarding the context in Turkey, we hear the adults' voice more than we hear children on their conceptualizations of play. In a review of post-graduate theses and dissertations about play in early years studies programs in Turkey, it was demonstrated that the majority of studies were done in the form of reviews of literature or data, and experiments with adults and children whereas observations and interviews covered relatively smaller spaces respectively (Kaytez & Durualp, 2014). While both children and adults were observed in these studies, only adults were interviewed either to understand their views of play or their perspectives of children's play (Kaytez & Durualp, 2014).

Aiming to get closer to the perspectives of children aged five-to-six regarding their experiences and conceptualizations of play, I decided to adopt a phenomenological approach to qualitative study. Since researching with young children about their lived experiences can prove challenging to the researcher for several reasons, such as developmental barriers, not remembering much about experiences or reflections (van Manen, 2017), being reluctant to converse with the researcher or preferring to keep certain- things private to themselves (Irwin & Johnson, 2005), I determined to counter the barriers by carrying out the study a) in places where children had more power and were more comfortable, b) by using child-friendly tools to generate conversations, and c) by first observing children, then

directing more meaningful questions and facilitating a better recalling of experiences and reflections on the part of children (Clark & Moss, 2005; van Manen, 2017).

Therefore, this study informs researchers about doing a phenomenological study with five-to six-years-old children. As such, it contributes to the literature with a group of Turkish children's understandings of play, informing anyone working and/or caring for children.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

While it is most ubiquitous in humans, play is a phenomenon that is observed across several species such as turtles pushing around balls, frogs pushing around their mates as in rough-and-tumble play, octopuses catching targets by shooting balls, and fish pushing around objects (Burghardt, 2014). As such, it has been a topic of interest for a long while, and particularly from the 20th century on, it has been at the forefront of various disciplines such as ethology, anthropology, psychology, and education (Ellis, 1973; Whitebread et al., 2012).

In the following sections, I will touch upon play from the discipline of education and development in early years to understand what developmental functions play serves in young children, how play is defined, and what types of play are formulated or outlined by researchers. Next, I will proceed by examining the status of play in early childhood education settings today. Moving on to the context of Turkey, I will next mention Turkish Ministry of Education and play in Turkish preschools. I will terminate the chapter with a discussion of how children conceptualized play in the existing literature.

2.1 Functions of play

Play behavior, its quality and amount, is correlated with changes in children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Regarding social and emotional development, for instance, children are observed to interact with each other and learn how to get on well with others, to negotiate, to share, to make compromises and to fix problems in play (Corsaro, 2003; Göncü, 1999, 2018). Moreover, children who

play more show more empathy skills (Çankaya & Ergin, 2015); less aggression and withdrawnness (Durualp & Aral, 2010), and lower anxiety levels (Christian, Russ, & Short, 2011). Also, be it traumatic or everyday life experiences, children are noted to make sense of their experiences when they are playing (Piaget, 1951; Vygotsky, 1966).

Play is next related to certain improvement in mental capacities as children engage in evaluation of the situations, development of alternative solutions to problems and decision-making processes in play (Barker et al., 2014; Gray, 2009). Play requires thinking in symbols in its various forms and is a way of creating symbolic connections (Piaget, 1951; Vygotsky, 1966), capacity for which is positively correlated with children's language comprehension (Laakso, Poikkeus, Eklund, & Lyytinen, 1999; Pellegrini & Galda, 1990; Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013).

Regarding a physically active play, on the other hand, children use gross motor skills which is correlated with improvement in children's muscular and physical strength and skills (Crews, Lochbaum, & Daniel, 2004; Gapin, Labban, & Etnier, 2011; Gray, 2011; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998; Smith et al., 2013; Verret et al., 2012). Through play, children use their physical resources and take risks exploring some unusual experiences (Elkind, 2008; Stephenson, 2003), restriction of which influences children's activity levels and confidence adversely (Little, 2006), such as in poor quality in risk evaluation (Wyver & Little, 2008).

2.2 Categories of play

When it comes to categories or stages of play in the literature, the proposed models, in general, assert a change in the quality of play across the age and developing

capacities of children, and they report specific play samples for stages. For Jean Piaget, for instance, the quality and complexity of children's play evolve with their developing mental capabilities. Accordingly, from birth to age two children engage in motor and sensory play. Grabbing and sucking on something, shaking, or hitting an object give pleasure to the child, and are a way of showing what the child can do. Between ages two and seven, the child shows symbolic play where s/he primarily transfers roles to an object such as showering a baby doll. Further, this play turns into taking on and acting out roles such as playing barbershop. Parallel to the child's developing mental capabilities, the games become defined with a set of rules from age seven to further and children pay more attention to the details of reality (Piaget, 1951).

Drawing on Piaget's theory of mental development, Sara Smilansky outlined four stages of play. Apart from the three levels proposed by Piaget, Smilansky came up with *constructive play* that happens after functional or practical play and before symbolic play. At this step, children construct crafts of varying quality and quantity.

Mildred Parten, on the other hand, lists six categories of play that are supposed to be transforming with children's developing social skills. At its most basic form, it is when young children experiment with their surroundings and try to understand how they work (unoccupied play) as in watching something or playing with one's hands or feet. Children are further seen to play on their own (solitary play) with other children nearby while they do not communicate visibly. At its next levels, children start showing interest in other children's play. In the beginning, this interest can be seen in the form of watching without engaging (onlooker play), and later by playing close to other children with similar toys (parallel play). With time, this can take on a more social quality when children focus more on each other (associative play). At its

furthest stage, children tackle challenges to cooperate with their group against another group (cooperative play), which signifies use of a set of complex social skills.

2.3 Characteristics of play behavior

Defining play has proved problematic in that the tradition was either to name each play behavior separately or bring together all play behaviors and describe them as a unified concept (Burghardt, 2014; Huizinga, 1980) and today there is not a unified or single definition of play for it is a complex phenomenon (Wood, 2014). Nevertheless, certain characteristics in common have been attributed to play behavior of humans which I will examine in the following paragraphs.

According to Huizinga (1980), for instance, every form of play is a voluntary activity that has freedom in its nature. Freedom is considered the "hallmark of play" (Gordon, 2009, p.5) and the individual decides what and how to play (Gray, 2009; International Play Association [IPA], 2013). It is unique in that it is carried out at free time which is different from immediate real life (Huizinga, 1980).

While playing, play itself is the reward. Unlike the activities where the individuals hope to get something in the end, the goals of play are fulfilled and enjoyed throughout the whole process of playing; it does not only focus on the result. Someone who breaks the rules to achieve the goals with a shortcut is not playing anymore; that activity is not considered play anymore (Gray, 2009; Huizinga, 1980).

A unique sense of time and space frames play. It happens in a space that is shaped physically and guided by a set of rules, which evolves into various worlds throughout play (Huizinga, 1980). It transcends the limits of contexts and allows

freedom and possibilities where one is free to create contexts and use previous experiences for play (Miller, 1968).

Though for a limited time, play is a serious work carried out with a consciousness of "only pretending" (Huizinga, 1980, p. 8). Bateson explains this as a metacommunicative element. That is, children co-construct meaning and are aware of signs that signal when one is playing and when one is no longer playing (Bateson, 1956).

Play is a conscious activity with a purpose, with rules and order *(*Gordon, 2009; Gray, 2009). The moment rules are broken, the game ends (Huizinga, 1980). The rules guiding play have flexibility for children's imagination and creativity. These rules are agreed upon and understood well by the players. A play where rules are imposed on others is not a play (Gray, 2009).

The element of tension, further, stems from the fact that play has its own goals. The ambiguity of the results and the process of achieving the goals create tension which keeps the players going (Gray, 2009). The effort to eliminate the tension is what keeps pushing play forward (Huizinga, 1980; IPA, 2013). Play is spontaneous, flexible and has elements of risk and delight in it, which keeps children alert and vigilant during the play (Spolin, 1963).

2.4 Play in early childhood education (ECE) settings

Children's free time activities have long been scrutinized, to ensure that the time they spend is more worthwhile. Ellis (1973) dates this back to Jean Jack Rousseau's well-known book, Emile. From Emile on, he argues, adults came to place more significance on early years and engage in and dominate children's free time increasingly; setting children goals to achieve. This concern over early years of life

and the suggested value of early investment have led to the immense spread of early childhood education and care settings (Ellis, 1973; Gray, 2009).

In a parallel line to Ellis' (1973) perspective, educational and academic expectations of schools from increasingly earlier ages threaten children's play opportunities even though they originate with good wills (Gray, 2009). Aiming to prepare children for a competitive employment world, parents and educators are concerned with academic knowledge, standardized tests, and organized sports, that may look well on future resume of the child; which influences the time for play and leisure adversely (Cevher-Kalburan, 2014; Loebach & Gilliland, 2016; Miller & Almon, 2009; Singer et al., 2009; Skar & Krogh, 2009; Whitebread et al., 2012).

The expectations mentioned above are also reflected into the early childhood education settings (Gray, 2009; 2013). In the studies with preschool teachers, teachers report the challenge they encounter while trying to give play space and time they would like to, mainly due to the perceived pressures from curricular goals in ECE settings (Lynch, 2015; Ploof, 2014; Russo, 2008). In such an attempt, teaching academic content in a "playful" manner is another tendency observed in early education settings which may further override the means that are allocated to play that is started and maintained by children (IPA, 2013). As Vygotsky (1966) maintains, such a tendency is likely to render the play devoid of its wholeness by leaving out play's role in its satisfaction of children's needs, and to neglect their motivation to play.

2.5 Turkish Ministry of Education and play in preschools

In Turkey, education from preschool to high school is regulated by the Ministry of Education (MoE). As a central entity, its main headquarters is in the capital city of

Ankara. MoE delivers its regulations to its branches in each city and province. A sub-organization which is called General Directorate of Primary Education (GDoPE) is responsible for ECE. GDoPE primarily provides regulations, developmental objectives, and experience plan templates for ECE.

The preschool education program issued by the MoE is described as a child-centered program that has the flexibility to adapt to changing needs of children and contexts. Since 2013, one of its significant tenets is being play-based. That is, the program considers play as a method or activity while program objectives and goals are developed. According to the program, children not only learn through play, they also develop the skills of critical thinking through play (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2013). In the booklets published by the MoE, play is described as children's work; something that children naturally do; an activity that children initiate and terminate themselves; a source of fun and enjoyment for children; and a vital need of childhood (MEB, 2016).

Moreover, play is divided into three categories in these booklets: structured play, semi-structured play and non-structured or free play. Structured play time refers to games with pre-determined rules and materials. While traditional games are included in this category, teachers can also structure certain games to reach their pre-determined objectives with children. Semi-structured play, on the other hand, refers to games which can be started either by children or the teacher. They are aimed to contribute to children's development, learning and creativity. They can evolve with children's contributions (Temel Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü [TEGM], 2013).

Unstructured play, or free play time, stands on the other end of the spectrum. It refers to play time which is started and ended by children themselves. Children play in the learning centers of the classroom alone, in pairs or small groups. Learning

centers are parts of a classroom which are supposed to be equipped and designed to meet children's play needs. Namely, dramatic play corner, silent corner, manipulatives corner, blocks corner, science and mathematics corner, art corner, etc. These corners can be expanded with new learning centers in line with children's needs and preferences. Children here decide in which corner, with whom, and what to play before they start playing. Unlike the previous two models of play, MoE notes that unstructured or free play time is crucial for children and therefore should be provided both after arrival and before departure of children during the day (MEB, 2016; Mesleki Eğitim ve Öğretim Sistemini Güçlendirme Projesi [MEGEP], 2014; TEGM, 2013).

2.6 A framework for the study

Children's rights to participate and to play and leisure as well as the new sociology of childhood and recent image of child in childhood studies have guided the starting point and the data collection tools of this study, which I will explain in the following section.

2.6.1 Children's rights to participate, and to play

With the declaration of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, children's lives and rights came to the forefront at several dimensions. Articles 12 and 13 accentuate that children have a right to actively participate in matters that concern their lives and that this participation should not be confined to tokenism. To this end, children's participation is evaluated from a variety of levels from a simple consultation to children to the point where children initiate and actualize a change (Hart, 1992). For children's partcipation to happen, adults

should be listening to children, supporting their participation through giving children space and time to take responsibility and action in matters that affect their lives (Lansdown, 2005).

Article 31 of the convention, on the other hand, highlight that children have a right to leisure and play as the importance of play is recognized for children's physical, mental, social and emotional well-being, for which children need to be provided time and space with (IPA, 2013; Whitebread et al., 2012). Combining the articles about children's right to participate and the right to play and lesiure, there are increasing attempts to uncover children's experiences and wishes for play and leisure, as it is seen vehement to consult to children about their play in a research design to empower their active participation in a matter that is as significant to children's lives as play (Einarsdottir, 2014; Clark & Moss, 2005). Nevertheless, the power relations among adult researchers and children raise issues about children's genuine participation and privacy and require authentic concern to address these ethical issues in research with children (Brooker, 2001; Einarsdottir, 2007).

2.6.2 New sociology of childhood, children as social actors and the Mosaic Approach

The 20th century not only set the stage for children's rights. With the new sociology of childhood, children are recognized as competent social actors who can influence their lives and construct their meanings (James & Prout, 1997; Corsaro, 2015). Valuing this social actorship or agency, children are deemed as a part of the social structure and have the competency to impact on their social world as beings in today before they are adults of tomorrow (James & Prout, 1997). Accordingly, children's socialization is seen differently from the one that passively absorbs in what adults

cater to them to one where children actively make sense of their experiences and contribute to their societies in unique ways (Corsaro, 2015; Jenks, 1996).

Meanwhile, this relatively recent image of children and childhood has reflected into the children's participation in research (Einarsdottir, 2014). Researchers came to be concerned not only with children's right to actively participate in their life issues but also with empowering their participation by respecting children's agencies and competencies (Powell & Smith, 2009); recognizing them as crucial reporters of their lives and striving to listen to them (Dockett & Perry, 2007), to which the Mosaic Approach or the pedagogy of listening is an example (Clark & Moss, 2005).

The Mosaic Approach framework informed this study in several manners, primarily with is emphasis on children's strengths and its recognition of children as "competent, active, meaning makers and explorers" (Clark & Moss, 2005, p.29). The approach furhter draws on the following key concepts: perception of child as competent (Mayall, 2001) and viewing children as "beings" in the moment rather than adults of tomorrow (James & Prout, 1997); making the "voice" of the least empowered heard (Hart, 1992); and finally, the "pedagogy of listening and of relationships" coming from the philosophy of Reggio Emilia (Rinaldi, 2001).

Drawing on these paradigms and perspectives, the Mosaic Approach attempts to "listen to" how children see their lives, which involves reflecting on how children construct and explore meanings, and express their comprehensions. Compatible with phenomenological research, it intends to direct children's attention to their "lived experiences", for which it aims to provide children with a variety of tools to communicate their experiences, feelings, opinions to look at their experiences from diverse angles (Clark & Moss, 2005).

Therefore, in the study, I recognize children as competent social actors in their own unique ways and their right a right to have a say and influence on matters that concern their lives. Yet as an adult, I mostly rely on language to understand them. According to Clark and Moss (2005), when offered "the right tools and time" other than a mere adult language, children deliver their interpretation of their lives and experiences and are experts in their lives (Clark & Moss, 2005, p.74). To mitigate this barrier of language, while I recognize my limitations as an outsider adult, I decided to spend time observing, interacting, and playing with children, and made use of child friendly tools and prompts to stimulate conversations.

In the next section, studies that were done by conversing with children below age seven will be discussed.

2.7 Children's opinions of play

Apart from the aforementioned theories, definitions and categories of play, research is carried out to understand play from the perspectives of educators (Aras, 2016; Ihmeideh & Al-Qaryouti, 2016; Lynch, 2015; Wu, Faas, & Geiger, 2018), parents and adults in general (Skår & Krogh, 2009; Singer et al., 2009; Tuğrul et al., 2014a). Sustaining the concern by Vygostky (1966), understanding play solely from adults' perspective can mislead educators and policymakers from grasping the conceptualizations and motivations of children for play.

Nevertheless, studies that are rather concerned with preschool children's perspectives of play have increased in the last decades (Einarsdottir, 2014). Just as adults' definitions of play have proved elusive, children's views of play prove elusive too (Huser, 2017). What is taken as play by child(ren) in one setting may not be deemed play by child(ren) in other contexts (Theobald & Danby, 2014). In several

studies, children disagreed about what was play and what was non-play (Howard, 2002; Keating et al., 2000; King, 1979; Rogers & Evans, 2006; Wing, 1995). In addition to the differences among contexts, how children make sense of their play differs even in the same context (İvrendi et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2018). Karrby (1989), for instance, primarily observed a group of kindergartners in their free time and structured time, and later asked them about it. Children had changing opinions of play. While for some children preparing for an activity was play, for some other children it was just preparation, but not play. A similar finding is reported by Ólafsdóttir and Einarsdóttir (2017) where preschoolers differentiated between the actual play and the preparation stage. Therefore, it is important to ask the children to understand their meanings and perceptions of play (Howard & McInnes, 2012).

Although play is a hard-to-agree on phenomenon that shows changes for even the same child on different days let alone among the same group of children (S. Axelson, personal communication, April 13, 2019), children show commonalities in the ways they define play, which I will mention below.

2.7.1 Specific games

The way children talk about play happens in several manners. While some children refer to certain games, still other show their play with their bodies (Husser, 2017). Children sometimes describe play by referring to such specific games that involve movement such as ball games, hide and seek, tag game; games that involve imagination and pretending such as dramatic play; games for construction such as puzzles, Legos, manipulatives; and strategy games such as chess (İvrendi et al., 2019; Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Ogelman et al. 2019; Øksnes, 2008; Tuğrul et al., 2014b).

2.7.2 Feelings

Another way that children talk about their play is by expressing the emotions that are aroused in play or the children feel while talking about play. Very often, children express having fun (Beattie, 2015; Breathnach, Danby & O'Gorman, 2017; Colliver & Fleer 2016; Duncan, 2015; Goldfarb, 2019; Howard, Jenvey & Hill, 2006; İvrendi et al., 2019; Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Øksnes, 2008; Pilten & Pilten, 2013; Wong, Wang & Cheng, 2011), and feeling excitement while they talk about their play experiences (Ogelman et al., 2019; Sandseter, 2009; Veitch, Salmon & Ball, 2007; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006; Yılmaz & Pala, 2019).

Yet, this claim of play as a fun activity is challenged. While children in Glenn et al. (2012)'s study described an activity as play if only it were interesting and fun, on other occasions an activity that is fun may not necessarily be considered play but playful (Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2019). Children's perception of fun in play can also depend on how challenging it is. That is, play is fun if it is not too difficult, nor too easy (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Veitch et al., 2007; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006). On the other side of the coin, children report play moments that cause them distress which they maintain anyway (Theobald et al., 2015).

2.7.3 Imagination

Imagination is another component or characteristics of play that sometimes children refer to in their play, for which their opinions differ. In Glenn and her colleagues' study (2012), while the children did not confine play to those activities with an element of imagination in them, children in Karrby's (1989) study accentuated the component of imagination in play. That is, play for some children is something which has an imaginary content (Ogelman et al., 2019; Yılmaz & Pala, 2019). In the

study by Rogers & Evans (2006), on the other hand, pretending was asserted as an evidence of play. Yet, sometimes this scope of imagination can be larger in determining the nature of an activity, to the extent that children consider the activities where they are pretending roles and having the flexibility to do or be what they want as play, whereas they categorize the rest of the activities as non-play (Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2019; Prompona, Papoudi, & Papadapoulou, 2019).

2.7.4 Movement

Several studies showed that play activities for children involve movement such as running and sports (Theobald et al., 2015), climbing, balancing, and swinging (Sandseter, 2010; Wong et al., 2011), speed (Beattie, 2015) and anything that does not involve sitting down (Wing, 1995). Likewise, children consider those activities as play where they actively do something (İvrendi et al., 2019; Ogelman et al., 2019; Tuğrul et al., 2014b; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006; Wong et al., 2011), for instance, leaving out TV watching as not-play (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008). Developing physical skills in play can also be important to children (Prompona et al., 2019).

2.7.5 Outdoors

Studies demonstrate that children like to spend time outdoors (Einarsdóttir, 2005). In a study by Glenn et al. (2012), for instance, children preferred playing outside more, using such words as “mountain”, “mud puddle”, “mud hole”, “hill behind the house” and “big backyard" (p.193). While Clark (2007) claims that children’s preference is largely due to their pleasure from being physically active, Sandseter (2009) points out to the enjoyment children express while taking risks and pushing their limits. Beyond a meaning of outdoors as a place to move and take risks to one’s enjoyment,

children also use outdoors for places to relax, to socialize and to get to know the details of nature (Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015).

2.7.6 Playmates

Children in several studies stated that they could play nearly with anyone from peers, adults, siblings to pets, though stating a main preference for their friends (Duncan, 2015; Glenn et al., 2012; Howe, 2016; İvrendi et al., 2019; Löfdahl, 2005; Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Ogelman et al., 2019; Theobald et al., 2015). Children in the study by McInnes et al. (2013), in contrast, defined play activities as situations and/or photos which involved only a group of children.

Children can also coin play with friendship. In several studies, play was fun as long as there were friends (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2007; Duncan, 2015; Goldfarb, 2019; Øksnes, 2008; Prompona et al., 2019; Theobald et al., 2015; Veitch et al., 2007; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006). Children in the study by Avgitidou (1997) stated that play was a means where they could make friends. Rogers & Evans (2006), on the other hand, reported that what made play enjoyable was the fact that it was a chance to come together with friends. Building on these, still other studies demonstrated that children evaluated their play activities as a chance to continue their friendships (Corsaro, 2003; Dunphy & Farrell, 2011). A factor that starts and maintains these friendships was specified to be having similar interests (Parsons & Howe, 2013).

2.7.7 Perceived control over the activity

In studies where children talked about their play, they used several expressions while describing it. The words children used usually engaged having a control over the

activity, having the say over the course, and making the decisions themselves (Keating et al., 2000; Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2019; Robson, 1993; Rogers & Evans, 2006; Theobald et al., 2015; Wing, 1995). Similarly, in a study with kindergartners, children defined their play as activities that were self-initiated and that they joined voluntarily (King, 1979); where they were active and had control over the flow (Breathnach et al., 2017; Duncan, 2015; Goldfarb, 2019; Ólafsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2019; Pilten & Pilten, 2013; Prompona et al., 2019; Theobald, et al, 2015; Wong et al., 2011). Supporting these findings, when children felt they were obligated to do an activity, that activity was no longer perceived as play (Breathnach et al., 2017; Øksnes, 2008; Koçyiğit & Baydilek, 2015; Tuğrul et al., 2014b).

2.7.8 Adults in play

For some children, adults do not play because of such reasons as being mature, having busy schedules, thinking of play as trivial or boring (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Tuğrul, et al., 2014b) or adults not knowing how to play or failing at play (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Pilten & Pilten, 2013). Emphasizing the social nature of play, children in Duncan's (2015) study suggested adults play both with other adults with children; yet, what they played was perceived to be different from that of children. That is, adults' play reflected adults' cultures, whereas children's play reflected their own cultures (Duncan, 2015).

Nevertheless, children can resort to adults for help to facilitate children's entrance in a game; to provide materials for play; to help resolve conflicts; to make sure rules are not broken or maintained in a play (Einarsdottir, 2014). On the other hand, adults' presence in play can make the activity be perceived as not-play when they are interrupting or assuming control over children's play; whereas the same

activity can be perceived as play when children are the ones having control over the course of the activity (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2007; Colliver & Fleer 2016; Einarsdottir, 2014; Howard et al., 2006; Øksnes, 2008; Pilten & Pilten, 2013). Also, children underline their discontent about adults' interruptions of their play, usually to finish a work or go back to learning; and report protesting when teachers assign their roles in a play (Rogers & Evans, 2006).

2.7.9 Play versus work

A common dichotomy that comes up from children's accounts is the distinction between play and work. Although this dichotomy is usually attributed to the way researchers question children, such as showing them photos and asking what is play and what is work (Huser, 2017; Theobald et al., 2015), this distinction among the two is associated with the element of perceived control in play.

The activity is perceived as play when children make the decisions by themselves; when adults or teachers are not around nor set goals for children's performance in the activity; and when it is up to them to leave the activity (Breathnach et al., 2017; Øksnes, 2008; Theobald et al., 2015; Wing, 1995). Work is something one must do, whereas play is something one can do, upon his/her will (Wing, 1995).

While play involves freedom, work is attributed an obligation (Wing, 1995). From a parallel perspective, the activities that are started and maintained by adults are not considered play since they do not involve children as the decision maker or owners of the control over the action (King, 1979; McInnes et al., 2013). Similarly, children report that being the ones who start, sustain, and adjust an activity are the

criteria for play (Howe, 2016). The more control children have over the activity, the more likely they are to call an activity as play (Rogers & Evans, 2006; Wing, 1995).

Children categorize such activities as cleanup time, writing, reading, drawing, chores, etc. as work (Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Theobald et al., 2015). Preschoolers in Keating et al. (2000)'s study, for instance, indicated that the writing activities they engaged in were work. Howard (2002) too reveals similar findings where preschoolers pointed out the photos where children were sitting at a table as work whereas the photos that showed children sitting on the floor were described as play.

Nevertheless, depending on the context, the very same activities such as writing and drawing can be perceived as play, for instance, creating a sign that defines their border in a game (Breathnach et al., 2017). What marks this context is the perceived control over the activity and decision-making. That is, drawing is perceived as play when started and directed by the child whereas it is perceived as work when the teacher is the one requesting it and when the child feels s/he has to be very careful not making any mistake during drawing (Wing, 1995).

Theobald et al. (2015) question this dichotomy though, for it may be partially due to the researchers' wording of their questions, such as "is it play or work?". Unlike the findings by Wong et al. (2011), Wing (1995) revealed that children can also enjoy work. According to Miller & Kuhaneck (2008), what matters to children is the cooperation and agreement among playmates in perceiving the play as fun.

2.7.10 Teachers in play

Regarding the particular presence of teachers in play, while children note teacher's role as helping children, they may still have fun playing with their teacher (Pramling-Samuelsson & Johansson, 2009; Pálmadóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2015). Husser (2017),

yet, reports that while children value their teacher's such facilitative roles as setting up the setting or offering them help when they need it, children note discomfort when the teacher interferes in the game or assumes control over it. On the other hand, in the studies by Howard (2002) and Howard et al. (2006), researchers presented children several photos of a group of children in a classroom where they appeared to be engaged in some activities. It was revealed that children in these studies were more likely to classify those photos without a teacher as play.

In a parallel line, in the studies where a work versus play dichotomy was brought up, children were more likely to categorize activities with a teacher nearby as work (McInnes et al., 2013; Wing, 1995). Pyle and Alaca (2016) concluded that children's likelihood to make a distinction between play and non-play or play and work could be the result of children's usual experiences. That is, children who did not experience playing with their teachers are not likely to categorize the activities with teachers as play (Keating et al., 2000; Wing, 1995).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study is designed as a qualitative research for several reasons. In this paradigm, the researcher recognizes the extensive presumptions that lead her to qualitative research in the first place. Also, the researcher asks open-ended questions and these questions can be reshaped as the researcher gets to know the participants better. It not only provides her with profound knowledge on certain topics of interests but also with a comprehension of the context where the experiences happen. Extending the study across time, the researcher grasps the phenomenon better and her questions of interest are better clarified (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Finlay, 2014).

Since my goal was to get a closer look at the children's understandings and conceptualization of a phenomenon, namely play, I adopted a phenomenological approach among the qualitative research designs. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), the goal of phenomenology is a profound comprehension of participants' conceptualizations and experiences of a phenomenon. It helps the researcher apprehend the phenomenon by transmitting the reality through the perception of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Below, I will touch upon the criteria of a phenomenological study and how I tried to respond to them.

Primarily from an ontological point of view, phenomenological approach assumes that reality can be explained by various perspectives. Thus, it relies on collecting and reporting as many different views as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2016;

Finlay, 2014). To this end, I observed children and provided some tools to generate conversation to get closer to their perspective of the phenomenon of play.

From an epistemological perspective, on the other hand, researchers need to provide evidence from the participants to explain the knowledge gained from a study, and to diminish the gap between themselves and the participants. This can be achieved by providing specific evidence from the participants through extensive time spent in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Finlay, 2014). Thus, I visited children at school setting for three months, took observation notes and videotaped children. Videotapes facilitated capturing the exact expressions of children and offered me a chance to go through data multiple times whereby I could get to know children, the classroom, their play, and interactions.

From an axiological perspective, further, the nature of phenomenological research is replete with values and biased (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For this reason, researchers are expected to explain the values that influence the course of their study and how their interpretations unfold along with those of the participants (Finlay, 2014). Keeping a researcher's journal and taking reflective notes allowed me to get a better grasp of my evolving a) attitude towards the phenomenon and the participant children, b) data collection tools, c) focus of interest and observations, and d) overall understanding of the phenomenon (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Although qualitative research approaches, in common, focus on revealing the multiple perspectives of the individual or individuals, phenomenological design, in particular, focuses on understanding the common meaning of a phenomenon by several individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers attempt to gather data from individuals that have the experience with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994), in this case, with a group of children who are also classmates.

3.2 Purposive sampling and the setting

3.2.1 Purposive sampling

With purposive sampling, it is advised to work with a sample that promises an abundance of information on the phenomenon of interest (Rapley, 2014). I decided to work with the participant school on purpose since I had previously known about its emphasis on and ample opportunities for free play time. Their daily routine (Appendix A) provides play time in line with the recommendations of the MoE (Appendix B), both in the beginning and towards the end of the day.

The participating classroom as well was chosen intentionally upon a suggestion for the following reasons:

i. Classroom teacher received training in drama and Non-Violent Communication, and she often brings related activities to classroom. Children are accustomed to expressing their opinions and to having influence in their classroom life, since the classroom adopts democratic procedures that allow children ample opportunities to join in decision-making regarding their classroom and activities.

ii. Classroom teacher provides lots of time for children to play both indoors and outdoors, sometimes extending the play time.

iii. All children except one have been together for three years with the same teacher. Therefore, they are familiar with each other, the teacher, and the overall setting; and have ample opportunities to play.

Knowing these about the given teacher and classroom, I concluded that I could learn a lot about play from them by observing, listening to, and talking with them.

3.2.2 About the school and the classroom

This study takes place in a laboratory preschool on the campus of a university in Istanbul, Turkey. It serves the children of university personnel, and costs 15% of the monthly income of a personnel per child. As the income of the personnel depends on one's title, degree and total experience, the price that is paid can change from parent to parent.

Moreover, the preschool unit is overseen and aided by a group of faculty members who teach at faculties of educational sciences and primary education of the university regarding education-related issues. It is structured within a High Scope approach. As such, a theme that is assigned to each week is examined and explored with a focus on certain "key developmental indicators", for instance, science and technology has such key indicators as observation, classification, experimentation, prediction, etc. (Highscope, 2007).

Also, a daily routine, although flexible, guides the educational day of the classroom (Appendix B). During free play time, children can play on an individual, small group, and large group levels both indoors and/or outdoors. Indoor play time happens at corners, which are parts of a classroom each of which addresses a different interest area, such as manipulatives, home and kitchen, a hanger for costumes, puppets, arts table, silent area, books, and nature corner with materials from nature (Figures C1-C4, Appendix C). Children decide where and with whom to play and can switch between the corners. Depending on the number of children in a corner at a time, teachers can recommend children some other corners or rotate them among the corners to avoid crowding.

Outdoor play happens in the garden which has a variety of toys and spaces (see Appendix D for a list of toys in the garden, and Figures E1-E7 in Appendix E

for views of the garden). The classroom is located at the ground level and has the independent use of the whole floor, which feels “spacious; freedom to move around” for the classroom teacher. The room where they have lunch and snacks is opening to the garden. As such, it is easier for the classroom to make frequent use of the garden. From 11 am to 12 pm, it is usually time for outdoor play. Here children can come together and play with children from other age groups. Sometimes children get to play outdoors from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, depending on the weather and their wish as a group. Likely due to being in Spring, children went outside every day I was there and often stayed for more than an hour at a time, except rare occasions when children wanted to go inside due to the cold weather.

After the play time is over, the children come together to discuss and review their free play time experiences. With a lunch in between, children move on to rest time. Having snack time after that, children together with the teacher usually carry out a large or small group activity, with a focus on the week’s theme and the chosen key developmental indicators. This is either skipped to make time for play or followed by free play time until parents pick up children. Overall, the time for play can increase or decrease slightly depending on their schedule, wish as a group, the weather, or any school-wide occasion.

3.2.3 Schedule of the study

I visited this classroom twice a week, once during the morning play time including lunch time (from 10 am to 12:30), and once during the afternoon play time (from 3:30 pm to 5 pm). As the classroom already hosted trainee teachers during the week, I decided to attend the study half day per day, to avoid crowding and overwhelming children. Nevertheless, I benefited from observing two different play periods, as well

as being invited to lunches, snack times or special events such as preparation for end-of-the-year show. In total, the study lasted for 13 weeks, 26 days which made approximately 100 hours.

3.3 Participants

3.3.1 Children

Participants are eight children, with three boys Umay, Capi, Yemeksu and five girls Yaprak, Deniz, Mia, Gül and Ponpon. Children came up with their pseudonyms. All children except Mia has been with the classroom teacher Sakman for three years. Mia has been with this group for a year. The classroom has one teacher, with one trainee teacher attending the classroom on certain days. Hereby, I will call the classroom teacher Sakman, her pseudonym. Based on my observations, accounts of children and of teacher Sakman, I will try to depict each child as much as I can:

Yemeksu is five years and one month old. Both of his parents are academicians at the university. He has an older brother. He usually wanders around the classroom with a "genius opinion" in his mind, within his words. He reminds me of an enthusiastic scientist: every now and then he asks questions about the phenomena he observes, as "Hatice, this paper role can flatten when I squeeze it but this one does not. Why is that?", "Unbelievable, I found a mysterious pencil. Look, this piece of wood can color the tree trunk. Both (piece of wood and the tree trunk) are wood. How is that possible?" and he then walks away thoughtfully with a smile on his face. He smiles and radiates joy when he is designing "a surprise box" or "a trap for the enemies". Mia calls him "(Salvador) Dali" referring to his intelligence.

Capi is five years and six months old. While his mother works as university personnel, his father works outside the university. He has an older brother. I have observed Capi usually spending time with Sakman. According to Sakman, Capi has difficulty regulating his emotions and behavior, which results in his hitting a friend, the teacher or an object: “Capi was not like this before. He was calmer. When his mom was hospitalized last year, he stayed away from us and it took a harsh toll on him”. Sakman stays close to him to detect a problem ahead and involve smoothly. When at discomfort, I see Sakman soothing him by hugging, gentle talking, listening and sometimes getting outside the classroom for a change. Sakman believes that Capi has improved a lot over the year with children’s help: “I have overcome all the process with Capi thanks to children’s support. Particularly girls supported me a lot during this time”. I frequently see him playing with pretend guns, cars, football, running and chasing, and sometimes pretend play. He tells me he likes to play ball and football.

Umay is five years and seven months old. While his mother works as university personnel, his father works outside the university. He is a single child. Umay seems concerned with rules and I see him worried about Capi’s, his cousin’s, actions. If Capi lets a faucet run, Umay first warns him verbally. If that does not get Capi to turn the faucet off, Umay gives up and goes to turn it off himself. Meanwhile he whines to Capi “My teacher will get angry if she sees it Capi, ugh!”, to which Capi responds with a playful laughter. Sakman tells me “Being in the same classroom with Capi took a toll on Umay. Since (their) moms know each other, the children clash very often. A constant comparison and competition. Poor kids”. Both my observations and Sakman tell me that Umay likes to observe his surroundings:

people, emotions, something to be fixed, something to be designed, etc. All along my visits, he recommended me better ways to position my camera.

Mia is five years and six months old. Both of her parents are academicians at the university. She is a single child. Mia is eloquent while expressing herself and is good at storytelling. Sakman puts her overall impression of Mia's outstanding visibility as "Whomever comes to our classroom for observation or teaching always spends more time with Mia. She is good at verbal expression". I see her usually crafting a scenario for a pretend play where there are unicorns, wars, bad people, innocent people to be saved, and doing gymnastics or cooking. She likes "intelligence games" in her own words. With Yemeksu, she usually creates a craft such as a book or building a room, saying "Yemeksu is a very intelligent child. I try to surpass him". She spends time in monkey bars, running, and swinging children in the big swing. Ponpon once said "I can run fast when I am chasing someone. But I can never run faster than Mia.". Gül, on another occasion, commented on Mia's climbing skills with a smile: "I admire you Mia, you are good at it".

Deniz is five years and seven months old. While her mother works as university personnel, her father works outside the university. She has a brother and was expecting a baby sibling at the time. Both my observations and Sakman tell me that Deniz is soft yet this softness does not stop her from speaking her mind. In Sakman's words:

> None of the children can manipulate Deniz. She does not let them. I used to worry about her being a silent kid, that they would manipulate her for that. Yet she beautifully states when she does not want something. She is helpful but also cares for herself.

Also, she comes up with creative solutions to problems among friends. For instance, if more than one child solicits a role or toy, she comes up with an

alternative role or toy and children go along with it. Once Mia, after receiving help and comfort from Deniz, said: “Why would I feel bad when I have such supportive friends? Come, let me hug you”. Deniz has been sad sometimes and sought comfort from her teacher and friends since her mother was hospitalized.

Yaprak is five years and three months old. Only her father is working, as university personnel. She has a younger brother at home. Yaprak once told Sakman that her grandfather did not like the fact that all the friends she had talked about dearly at home were boys. That is what attracted my attention too in the first place. While all boys and girls play with opposite gender, I barely see Yaprak playing with other girls, particularly in the beginning of my study. I see her engaging often with Capi, Umay and sometimes Yemeksu. Sakman explains this through relationship dynamics:

> Yaprak resists getting “no” as an answer, as if she is not loved when someone says “no”. She is rather interested in rough and tumble games. Since other girls play relatively calmer games, they do not satisfy or attract Yaprak. But they were playing together before Mia came. I noticed that because Mia is very dominant too. So, they clash often.

Yaprak looks happier when running outside, which Sakman agrees with: “She is very happy in the garden, you barely see her aggressive there. She does not like indoors”. Nevertheless, I also often see her at the arts corner, creating something for herself, me, Sakman or someone else. Sakman agrees with my observation: “While other girls usually play at the home (dramatic) corner, Yaprak’s artistic side is stronger. She is more creative and thus prefers to be in the arts corner”.

Ponpon is five years and seven months old. Both of her parents are university personnel. She is a single child. According to Sakman, Ponpon discovered her propensity to theatre through playing. She seems a friendly child, offering help and sympathy to her friends in need, such as accompanying Yaprak to wash her bleeding

finger (a small friction happened in the garden), or reminding her friends to listen to Capi when it is his turn to sing a song, and occasionally providing him with clues when Capi forgets the lyrics. Sakman suggests that Ponpon has changed since Mia arrived: “Another teacher has the same observation, that Ponpon used to be more polite and tender before Mia came. Yet she is still a softer kid and she can handle peer pressure really well”.

Gül is five years and seven months old. While her father works as university personnel, her mother works outside the university. According to Sakman, “Gül has more access to everything because his father is at a more advantaged financial position” compared to other regular personnel of the university. She was expecting a baby sister throughout the semester and kept sharing her news of the baby with us. What I noticed very often about Gül is that she seems to be timid at times. For instance, when teacher warns her to be careful with climbing due to a recent injury she has had, she stops for a second, looks at her teacher and at me, hesitant to move forward to continue climbing. After teacher reassures that “If you can handle the consequences, go ahead and climb”, she waits for a few seconds more and continues to climb. Also, she seems fond of Mia, “I admire you Mia, you are good at it”; “If Mia allows me I want to play with her”; “I also like what Mia likes”; “I want unicorns to be real like Mia”; “Mia Mia, I want you to be my coach”. Sakman shares her concerns for Gül’s “imitation of Mia” and says “I encourage Gül to be herself. I remind her that her craft does not have to be like Mia’s, that she can create her own craft that is special to her”. Nevertheless, I saw Gül insisting on speaking up, no matter how low and soft in volume, as when she repeatedly told Yaprak “You cannot tell me to shut up. You cannot yell at me. I have a right to talk”.

3.3.2 Classroom teacher

The classroom teacher, Sakman, has been teaching for ten years, and for seven years in the given preschool. She expresses herself as a devotee to the peace and democracy; also resorting to democratic procedures in her classroom. Instead of classroom rules, they have developed and agreed on classroom decisions which are subject to change upon demand and agreement from each member of the classroom, which Sakman explains further:

> In my classroom, equivalence is important. I try to ensure this with them. But sometimes circumstances are an obstacle and then I must take a decision myself. Then they object 'Sakman, you did not talk to us', because they are accustomed to our decision-making as a classroom.

Also, she reports avoiding imposing any rule or restriction on children for which she does not have a solid reason. For instance, Capi was pretending to smoke with a pen in his mouth. She looked bothered by the view and silently mimicked to Capi to drop the pen. Meanwhile, Ponpon saw the pen and said "Sakman, Capi is smoking". Sakman stayed silent for a bit and said "Capi is pretending to smoke. He is not smoking. He is not harming himself or anyone". When Yaprak pointed to Capi too, Sakman reasoned out loud "He is only pretending. He is not really smoking. He is not harming himself or anyone. So, we cannot say anything to him".

She emphasizes importance of social and emotional well-being of children during our conversations:

> This is my philosophy of education, Hatice. I believe children are capable of learning anything. Yet, teachers focus so much on academic knowledge. Schools as well. Such are the expectations. They are missing social and emotional development, and love-based bonding.

Sakman received training in Non-Violent Communication of which she has brought a few rituals to the classroom. For example, following a physically active time, she invites children, or sometimes children demand it, to the circle of emotions

where everyone first listens to her/his inner voice and then when feels ready, talks about his/her emotions. She also has a Non-Violent Communication game which they play from time to time either upon the teacher's or a child's request. Here, the teacher and a child talk about how they feel, what they need, and listen to their companion when s/he talks about his/her feelings and needs.

Referring to her respect for children's play, she states that when she sees children absorbed in their play and in a state of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008), she lets children continue their play instead of interrupting them for an activity. Here is an excerpt from my observations:

> Sakman: Deniz, come here. Oh, am I interrupting your play?
> Deniz: Just a little left.
> Sakman: Okay.
> [And Deniz resumes her play.]

She states that children get very tense if they go without playing for long. For instance, once after snack time she told me: "They will start playing now. They could not play properly today. That is why they are very tense now". Sakman also suggests that children learn while they play:

> If a teacher does nothing but only creates a setting where children feel safe and loved, everything happens itself. It does not matter if you do not give academic knowledge. Do not push. Everything already happens while they are playing. I witnessed it.

3.4 Initial contacts with the gatekeepers

I primarily contacted school administrator and the classroom teacher and introduced my study. After gaining their verbal consent, I applied to the ethical committee for social sciences at Boğaziçi University and to the Committee of Education of the given school. Having gained both approvals as well, the classroom teacher

announced the thesis study to the parents and invited them to an introduction meeting with me (see Figure 1 for a step by step display of the initial contacts).

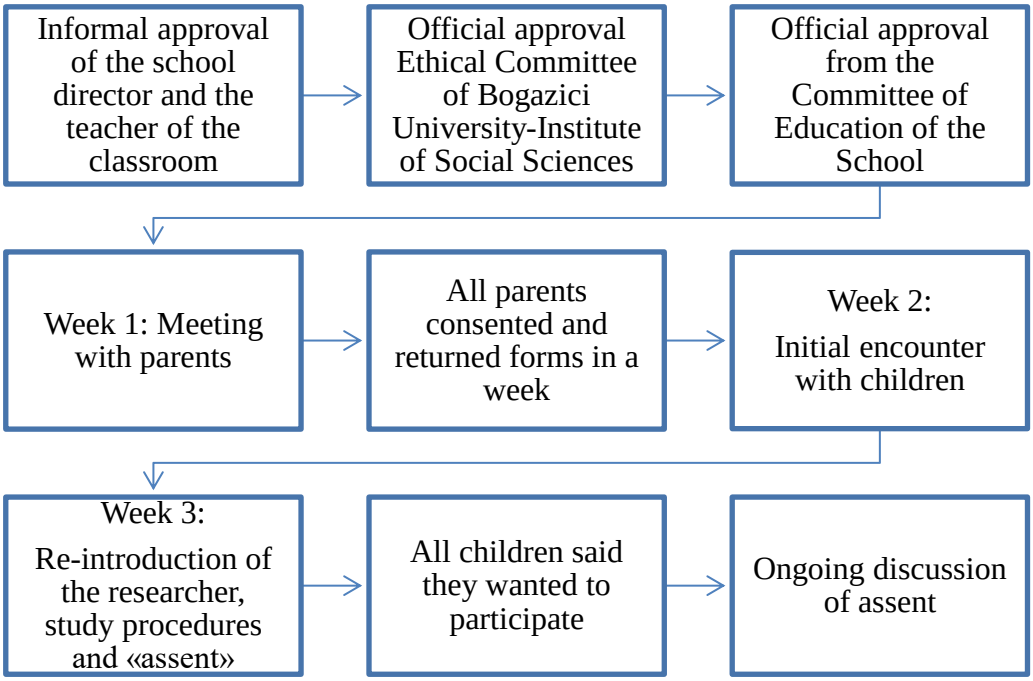


Fig 1. Step by step display of the initial contacts

At the meeting with parents, six out of eight parents (per child) attended. I introduced myself, my interest in play, and my experiences with children. Further, I informed them of the details of the study and introduced them the consent forms for parents and assent forms for children. I asked the forms to be returned to the classroom teacher in a week. The teacher of the classroom informed the parents of Mia and Yemeksu of the details of the study and delivered the consent and assent forms. After one week, all parents turned in their consent forms as well as their children's assent forms.

Following this, I went to the classroom to meet the children. The teacher had previously talked to children about a semester-long study with me. Upon my initial encounter with children, Sakman introduced me as "part of the classroom from now on". Intended as a smooth transition, I did not collect data during this week. Probably

since the preschool is the field study site of the relevant department of the university, children are accustomed to the adults visiting them for observation or teaching. I observed children, we got to know each other. Mostly children invited me to play with them. We ran around, walked on a wood block balancing ourselves, and picked grass. They sometimes asked me questions, told me things about themselves and the school.

Meanwhile, the teacher informed me that Capi was uncomfortable with my presence in the classroom, and that he gets overwhelmed by strangers in the classroom. She recommended me that I directly interact with him about something he likes. I decided to comply with her recommendation and next day I interacted with Capi individually. He showed me his photos of some animals that lived in high latitudes, which made our encounter more relaxed.

The following week, I went to the classroom with my camera, voice recorder and notepad. We sat in a circle and the teacher introduced me once again and explained the procedures of my study: that I would be observing, video and voice recording, taking notes, and talking to them or playing with them if they liked. After I re-mentioned the assent procedure and forms, the teacher re-stated what I meant by "assent" to make sure children understood that they can be off my notebook or camera when they want to, and this would not be a problem for me. All children said they wanted to participate. Hence, I started the data collection procedure.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Since the study engages with very young children, I tried to respond to possible ethical issues in several manners. To begin with, I contacted the school administration and the classroom teacher, and summarized the purpose of the

research, what I was going to be studying, for how long, using which tools, the procedure of data collection. I submitted them a written summary of my study proposal, consent forms for parents (Appendix F for English and Appendix G for Turkish) and assent forms for children (Appendix H for English and Appendix I for Turkish) and sample questions for asking children. I explained the procedure of seeking ongoing assent of children. Upon my thesis advisor's previous contact with the school administration, I provided them with the approval of my study by my thesis advisor. Hence, I asked for the official approval of the school and the unofficial approval of the classroom teacher. The school and the teacher provided approval.

I applied to the Ethics Committee of Boğaziçi University and submitted my research proposal together with consent and assent forms for parents and children and sample questions for children (Appendix J). I received the official approval of the Ethics Committee (Appendix K) and submitted a copy of it to the school before I started the field work. In consent forms, I informed children and their parents of the topic and methodology of the research, stating that they could seek more information about the research if they wished, withdraw from the study whenever they wanted without consequence. I informed the school administration, teacher, parents and children of videotaping and voice-recording in the classroom. In conclusion, all parents consented their children's participation. When it comes to children, their decisions or degrees of participations changed along the study, as when a child refused to talk to me while another child or children asked me to turn off my camera and/or not write down certain dialogues.

I kept all the field notes, videotapes, and additional notes my in private data storage device with a personal password to access. Throughout the research process,

I shared these field notes only and partially with my thesis advisor. Children's and teacher's names and personal information that can give away their identities have been kept confidential through all processes of the research. Pseudo names are used to refer to the participants. I shared the prompt questions for conversations with my thesis advisor, and an experienced researcher at the Department of Primary Education at Boğaziçi University. I made revision upon their recommendations.

Next, I will explain a number of ethical concerns that stemmed from working with young children, and detail the ways I attempted to respond to them in the following sections.

3.5.1 Ongoing assent

After introducing the study to children on the second week of the study, I occasionally informed children of their assent: that they do not have to answer my questions, nor it would be any trouble to me. I reminded them if they want to keep some things to themselves, they have a right to do it. Also, if they are tired or they want to engage in some activity other than talking to me, it is very normal, that we could talk on some other occasion if they wanted to.

With informal chit-chats and video-recording, I stood close to children and responded when a child him/herself directed a question or shared an anecdote. When any of the children asked me to stop videotaping, I stopped. Sometimes, children requested that their certain 'secrets' that the camera was capturing not be shared with others. In such cases, I assured children and did not include these 'secrets' in the transcriptions. Although rarely, on some occasions they asked me to turn it off because that moment was private to them. I turned off the camera and told them it was "definitely okay". I only asked them to tell me when it was again okay to record.

They did inform me after that private moment or secret was over. Below, Mia differentiated between what should be on and off the record:

> [Mia and Yemeksu are at the top of the monkey bars. I am taking notes nearby.]
> Mia [calls to me]: Do not you ever write (about) us! [she is grinning]
> Hatice: Mm, if you are serious about it please let me know. This is your right. It is no problem for me at all.
> Mia [smiles]: No, I am not serious. Just do not write the secret ones.
> Hatice: Then tell me which one is secret so that I will not write it down nor share it with anyone.
> Mia: What I am now going to tell you is the secret and do not write that.
> Hatice: So, you want to share your secret with me. Sure, I am not writing that.
> [She tells me her secret.]

Although I expected children to inform me about their assent or dissent during the study verbally, I also knew that children could signal their reluctance to participate in a non-verbal manner (Markström & Halldén, 2009). Therefore, it is important to watch the body language of the child (Brooker, 2001). During some conversations, I dropped questioning upon realizing the child's discomfort, as when the child was fidgeting or looking away at her/his friends, or just trying to change the topic from what I was asking about. When they were looking away from me and were clearly interested in something else during our conversation, I simply reminded them it was alright if they want to play or do something else. I sometimes directly asked: "Do you want to play or do something else? We can talk later when you want".

Occasionally, I noticed that children were looking at me while they were talking about something among themselves. I either turned my camera off directly or offered them turning it off. Here is an excerpt to illustrate a child-initiated conversation on videotaping:

> [We are at the table for snack time. Mia and Gül look at each other and then at me. They laugh as if they cannot help themselves.]
> Mia: Let the camera not see us [laughs].

Gül: Yes yes, do not film us [looks my way and back to Mia, smiles].
Hatice: Oh, you want me to turn off the camera? That is no problem for me. I will not share any of the records with anyone and I will delete them after my study is over.
Mia: Your teacher will not watch it, right?
Hatice: No, she will not.
Mia: Okay then. We can be on the camera.
Gül: Okay then.

Bringing up these moments of realizations to children proved beneficial as it clarified our intentions, in that, children at certain times asked me to turn off my camera, or a child told me she wanted to go play while another insisted that we continue talking about his drawing.

In addition to monitoring children for signs of distress to drop filming or questioning, the researcher can request feedback from the teachers and parents to find out if children report any discomfort from the researcher and the research process, as well (Flewitt, 2005). Since research may harm children when their guardians are not there to withdraw them from the study, it is important that there is someone else in the research setting that supports the researcher in ensuring children's well-being (Coady, 2014). The teacher of the classroom together with a trainee teacher were there on the days that I visited the school. Every now and then I asked the head teacher to tell me if she noticed any discomfort on the part of child(ren) in case I may have missed it. She indeed sometimes kindly told me when children felt overwhelmed by the number of adults in the classroom or the amount of activity going on. I left the classroom when I could or dropped overwhelming children further by my questions. Either the teacher or a trainee teacher or the helper lady (helps with cleaning and serving food) was nearby to observe and hear me as well during my interactions with children.

3.5.2 Power inequalities

Problems created by power inequalities between children and adults are a challenge to be addressed delicately while working with children. The proceeding of participation from top to bottom, that is from adult to child, can cause children feel less of a sense of belonging in the research process (Franks, 2011). Thus, the researcher tries to make sure she does not treat children "as objects to be researched rather than subjects with all that entails about subjectivities" (Coady, 2014, p.69). When children were in emotional distress, I turned off my camera or stopped noting as I could not stay oblivious to the child's distress. Also, I occasionally played with children upon their invitation or helped them with swinging or grabbing some fruits from the tree upon their requests. In addition, I enjoyed leisure time with them like chitchatting, enjoying a performance by a child or eating together.

To diminish the power gap between me and the children, I behaved differently from the teacher and trainee teacher, in that, I took part in children's activities and games. For instance, I sat on the floor with them during the circle time when the teacher asked us how we were feeling at that moment and I talked about my feelings too. I played with them while the teachers watched us or did some classroom-related work. Also, on occasions where children asked me for permission to go to toilet or use a material or not eat their lunch anymore, I just reminded them that I was not in a position to allow or limit their given actions. Upon this, I saw that children resorted to the head teacher or some other adult present in the setting.

3.5.3 Group conversations

According to Einarsdottir (2014), children in group interviews are "stronger together than when alone with an adult researcher" and have the support of each other

(p.321). I observed that some children hesitated when answering to any question when alone. They were relatively more comfortable and sharing more in the presence of their peers. Group conversations proved valuable also as they provided a medium for children to discuss the questions, elaborate on the details, and remind each other of the recollections of happenings. They also allowed children to direct questions and respond to each other, serving to give them more power in relation to me as the researcher (Brooker, 2001; Einarsdottir, 2007). Occasionally I asked a question to which a child offered her view, to while another child offered his/her view or questions. This interaction sometimes happened in a snowball effect as when one question evolved into a narration of several experiences by more than a child.

3.5.4 Praise

Praising children can lead them to hesitate to say or do something in case the researcher may not find it that "good" (Malet et al., 2010). Every now and then, some children came to me to show a drawing, an art-craft, or a physical activity. Sometimes they just waited for a response and sometimes they openly asked "Did I do it right? Is it beautiful? Did you like it?".

Such moments involved reflection on my part, which inevitably led me to take some time before I answered. I decided to point to the effort the child had made while creating that object or movement, saying "I see you have made effort to practice keeping your balance while walking on that line", "Well, it is colorful. Do you like using lots of colors?", "You really wanted to do it, I suppose. And now you made it.". This way, I could direct the evaluation of the craft or skill back to the child.

3.6 Gathering data

As Briod (1989) puts, all adults once have been children, and therefore they can recall their experiences of childhood. Yet, this childhood is only a recalling of what it once was (Lippitz, 1986). When today's children are making sense of their world through the lens of today's experiences, it is difficult to capture their reality through the adults' memories of childhood, which leads researchers more to engage directly with children (van Manen, 2017).

Regarding researching with children, on the other hand, researchers' conceptualizations and perceptions of child and childhood impact on what they cater to children such as the research design, the tools they employ, and the way they position themselves in research with children (Dockett, Einarsdottir & Perry, 2009; Einarsdottir, 2014). In an attempt to engage with children's competencies and communication skills that may differ in quality compared to that of adults (Miller, 2000), I benefited from the framework developed by Alison Clark, namely the Mosaic Approach which informed the data collection tools and my position as a researcher in relation to children.

The Mosaic Approach advised the study primarily for the reason it recognizes children's agency (Mayall, 1999; James & Prout, 1997); builds upon children's strengths; recognizes children as "competent, active, meaning makers and explorers"; prioritizes listening to children (Clark, 2003, p.29); and seeks variety of viewpoints by employing several child-friendly tools to stimulate communication among the children and researcher (Clark & Moss, 2005). Although "…we can only hope to make an honest attempt to approach children's life-worlds" (Palmadottir & Johansson, 2015, p.294), when the researchers offer "the right tools and time" other than a mere adult language, children deliver their interpretation of their lives and

experiences as they are experts in their lives (Clark, 2003; Clark & Moss, 2005, p.74).

In conclusion, I carried out my study at places where children were more experienced, had spent more time than I did, felt comfortable and more powerful, and had their friends and teachers nearby; namely in the classroom, garden and at the dining table (Keating et al., 2000, van Manen, 2017). In the end, I visited children twice a week for three months, once during morning play time and once during afternoon play time. This half day visit was partly due to my intent to avoid overwhelming children my increasing the number of adults in the classroom, as there was already a trainee teacher visiting the classroom on both days. Meanwhile, instead of directly asking "What does play mean to you?", I used alternative tools provided by the Mosaic Approach to generate conversation in alternative ways as shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Data Collection Tools

Observation	Conversations	Researcher's journal
Took field notes. Videotaped children.	Conversed with children benefiting from 1. My observations, 2. Informal chit-chats, 3. Drawings of children, 4. School tours guided by children.	Wrote down 1. Notes for the data collection tools, 2. Possible questions to direct to children, 3. Impromptu realizations of significant play moments, 4. Ethical concerns and considerations.

3.6.1 Observation

I observed children and videotaped the play periods. The goal of videotaping was to grab the actual conversations of children as well as to aid myself to remember or see the play time in greater detail, in order to device more context-based questions to children to generate conversation about their play. While running the camera, I took notes which describe what children were doing where, when and with whom, and notes to myself regarding the methodology, data collections tools, and analytic memos. Analytic memos included the questions I derived from my quick analysis of the observations of children's play. Directing these questions to children while their memories were still fresh proved helpful as they could recall the moments more easily.

I stopped taking notes when children asked me for help and sometimes when invited me to their games. On most of such occasions the camera continued running, except when I had to take the camera with me because children were running around, and the camera was very likely to fall off. Later, I watched the videos and read the observation notes, upon which I took further analytic and summative notes, and created prompt question for children. Combining the two helped me get a more complete view of the children, their play, and interactions, and direct them relevant questions.

3.6.2 Conversations with children

With an ethical concern to not to "take children away from playing" (M. Walter, personal communication, April 13, 2018), I avoided interrupting their play while collecting data. When I observed them sitting and seemingly not engaged in an

activity, I approached and asked them if they would like to talk to me and respected their answer for a "no". The excerpt below is an example to such encounters:

> Hatice: Yemeksu, can I ask you a few questions?
> Yemeksu: No [He jumps away].
> Hatice: Alright. No problem. Maybe I ask you later again?
> Yemeksu: Yeeeees [Further away].

Sometimes the child(ren) stayed for a short period of time and soon left to continue playing:

> Mia: I will go play now [putting on her shoes, her back is turned to me].
> Hatice: Okay. Thank you.
> Mia: We can continue from time to time Hatice. Byeeeee! [And off she goes to her friends].

Participation happened both in group and individual formats. I initially used a voice recorder to capture the conversations. Yet, over time I shifted the use of camera to whole time, including the observations and conversations. Conversations took the form of a) conversations stimulated by my observations, b) informal chit-chats that happened every now and then, c) conversations stimulated by child's drawing, and d) conversations stimulated by child-led school tours.

During the conversations, I posed children some questions to understand their stories and perspectives better while they could take the conversation their way. Directing children questions that are formulated from an adult perspective can prove limiting in terms of the conversation it generates; yet, general questions with an open end can elicit more on the side of the respondent child (van Manen, 2017). Therefore, I initiated the conversation with general questions, hoping that this would allow the children to lead the conversation, such as "I saw you at the drama corner. You were with Ponpon. Can you tell me about that game you were playing? ". Later, I employed certain prompt question to aid the children detail on the "what-how-why-

what if" of the experience, such as "How did that feel? "or "Would you change anything in that game?".

Nevertheless, I was not the only one asking questions. The participant children often asked me such questions as well, such as "Hatice, what are you doing? What are you writing? Are you writing what I am saying? Hatice, do you have parents? Where do you live? Why were you not here last week? Hatice, you are dressed up. Are you going somewhere? Did it hurt you at the dentist?" that changed the direction of questioning back to me that I allowed wishfully so that they could feel the control over our relationship that in turn helped me built rapport and equality in some forms.

Certain clues signaled the end of the conversation. Sometimes the participant child(ren) started looking away at her/his friends or away from me, just dropped the conversations to go play. On other occasions, the participant children verbalized their wish to end the conversation, telling me that they did not have anything else to say or add. I took it as an indicator when children started repeating themselves, saying "I told you that", for a sign of data saturation.

3.6.2.1 Observation-stimulated group conversations

Upon my observation of kids while playing, I sometimes asked children open-ended questions to stimulate a conversation when a child or children were at rest or at lunchtimes (one with Umay, Gül & Ponpon; another Umay, Mia, Gül, Deniz & Ponpon) on the same day. Their memories of the moments I referred to were still fresh.

At lunchtime, we were eating together at the table. Children participated when they wanted to. The conversation was maintained by at least two children and me, with varying levels of participation. That is, sometimes children answered my

questions and the rest of the time they talked among themselves, commenting on someone, asking a further question, continuing the narration, or building on the previous play scene. The Table 2 below shows the durations of such conversations with the children.

Table 2. Durations of Observation-Stimulated Group Conversations

Children	Length
Mia, Gül, Ponpon, Deniz and Umay	18 minutes
Mia, Ponpon, Deniz and Umay	14 minutes
Total	32 Minutes

3.6.2.2 Informal chit-chats

Informal chit-chats with children took place in the classroom or the garden, in the presence of other children. Informal chit-chats are considered the ones that happened upon children's or teacher's initiation or along the flow of our daily interactions. During such conversations, I asked questions for clarification and reacted to what I heard with restatements, such as "So, you are making a lot of effort". I used my camera and/or notebook to record conversations for later verbatim transcription.

3.6.2.3 Drawing-stimulated conversations

As Rinaldi (2001) puts it, children make use of a variety of symbolic tools to express themselves, as in the prominent "100 Languages of Child" of Luis Malaguzzi, one of the pioneers of Reggio Emilia approach. Drawings by children, from this stance, open up a different source of communication. Drawings not only allow us to see more of children's imagination and perspective as they are children's products, they can also generate richer conversations (Clark, 2003).

In this step, I decided to request children to primarily imagine a child who was playing, only to later talk about this child in several aspects. Since I already asked children many questions about their actual play and the relevant interactional processes among them upon my observations, I aimed to leave the drawings open-ended instead of confining them to a certain play experience of the child. My goal was to get closer to the aspects of play for children that were beyond my observations. Nevertheless, I was open to the possibility of children's switching from the imaginary child to their actual experiences.

In the study, I previously mentioned the drawing procedure to children. Later in the week, the teacher asked each child one by one if s/he wanted to draw and talk with me. Five children said "yes" and participated. I and the child came together and sat down on the floor when other children were playing nearby. Four children drew in the classroom and one child drew in the garden.

In the beginning, I asked the child to confirm if s/he wanted to converse with me about a drawing. After getting a "yes", "okay", "I want to" as an answer or a nod to indicate "yes", I asked the child to imagine for a moment a child who was playing. After a few seconds, I requested the child to draw this child on the floor. After the point where the child thought that the drawing was finished, I posed questions about this imaginary playing child. Sometimes child(ren) continued to draw as s/he told his/her story. I had a certain question in mind, yet, I also questioned unique details provided the child. For instance, once Umay told me that the imaginary child could not play because the imaginary child did not have hands and our following questions built on this input and evolved.

The table 3 below indicates the durations of such conversations with each participant child.

Table 3. Durations of Drawing-Stimulated Conversations

Children	Length
Capi	5 minutes
Yemeksu	10 minutes
Gül	7 minutes
Mia	13 minutes
Umay	16 minutes
Total	51 minutes

3.6.2.4 Child-led school tours

Taking a walk in the very places that children know very well and spend a lot of time can remind children more of their previous experiences, feelings, and wishes (Clark, 2003). It is a way to engage children in reflection on the meanings of their experiences in the school ground (Rinaldi, 2001). In this respect, a school tour proved beneficial in stimulating conversations since children except Mia have been attending the same setting for three years. Therefore, I anticipated that a tour with children, as experts of the school grounds, could give me ideas as to their play spaces, how safe or not safe to play is a particular spot, enjoyable places, scary places, and the experiences that could be elicited by a tour, etc. Also, a tour that was led by children's contributions, despite my pre-determined interest in mind, could be way to reverse the positions in a way, in that, children could actively drag me anywhere they liked and elaborate on the specific spaces (Clark, 2003).

As such, towards the end of the study, I sat down with children in the circle time, together with the teacher. The teacher informed children that I had an announcement to them. I told children that they were the experts on their school

grounds and their play experiences. Therefore, as I wanted to learn more about these, I asked them if they would like to take me on a school tour.

With the four children who accepted to guide me on the tour, individual and small group tours took place. Umay, Gül and Capi were together on the tour, where primarily Gül showed me around with Umay and Capi participating our tour on and off. Secondly, Umay took me on a tour with Gül next to us. Capi showed up briefly during this period as he preferred to play, compared with Umay and Gül. Mia , on the other hand, took me on a tour herself with no other child participating. Along the tour, I asked them some previously determined questions as well as fresh questions upon children's unique contributions.

The Table 4 below shows the durations of the conversations with the children during the school tours they had led.

Table 4. Durations of Child-led School Tours

Children	Length
Mia	15 minutes
Gül, Capi and Umay	12 minutes
Total	27 minutes

3.6.3 Researcher's journal

I kept a journal throughout the study. I took reflective notes regarding the certain patterns I recognize at play time; an improvement or change in the way of collecting data, the focus; transformation of the research questions; questions to direct to children; my role as a researcher in relation to children; my feelings and reactions; or my ethical concerns and considerations. Here is an excerpt from a day on my journal:

> I realized that I cannot be a voice to children in a full sense. Inadvertently, my previous experiences (what I think of as play and not play), interests, curiosities, the fact that some children are more talkative or dominant than the others… will stand in my way. Yet, I am aware of this and I want to take steps to compensate for it, though it will be limited. I think we have established a rapport with kids. They play with me. They talk to me. Although sometimes they are fixated on my camera or my notepad, they usually seem to be absorbed in the flow of their activities. They sometimes tell me stuff from their lives inside and outside the classroom (pregnancy of the mom, pregnancy of the cat, a fear of bees...). I decided to pay more attention primarily to Yaprak, Umay and Capi, because they do not talk much about themselves or their activities to me. I realized I must make more effort to hear them yet.
> Analytic Memos: I went through my notes and took note of the outstanding themes-points, such as "swinging fast". What does it mean to children? Looked like they were more courageous than the trainee teacher who expressed her concern about children's swinging very fast.

3.7 Researcher's role

Along the study, I attempted to assume the "least adult" role that Corsaro (2003) portrays. I approached children without interfering their games. I participated in their games upon their request. Nevertheless, due to my responsibilities such as taking notes, videotaping, and observation, I sometimes had to withhold so that I could proceed with the study.

Throughout the study, I took care to note my realizations of the relationships between me and children in my researcher journal. Sometimes I just took a break and recorded my voice as I narrated my reflections, critiques, and recommendations to myself. Repeatedly going through these notes present that children often engaged me in conversation about the study, asking me what I was writing down or if I was videotaping them. Every time, I took care in explaining why I was there: to understand their play.

A few weeks into the study, children started inviting me to a volleyball competition where their teachers took part. I showed up when I could and sat next to them. Children showed interest in me, in my dental braces and dental appointments,

and regularly briefed me on what had been going on with them. On occasions when I could not go to school or had to switch the day, they asked their teacher and later me why I did not show up as usual. They screamed in chorus when they noticed that my glasses were missing: “Haticeeee, you don’t have your glasses today!” As the classroom teacher noted and I observed, they were keen to my presence, trusted me and laughed with me.

Over time, I observed that children confided me with things from their lives, such as sharing the exciting news of an expected baby sister or the recently born kitties of the school’s cat or a new teacher who came to do Yoga with them. They shared their concerns over starting the primary school next year and as such leaving the preschool and their classroom. They shared the joy they had when they carried out a Spring Fest.

However, I was still an adult to them. Maybe that explain why children often asked me for help, for instance, to grab fruits from a branch they cannot reach, or to swing them. Very often, children called out to me to show me their maneuvers, such as “Hatiiiice! Look how fast I am running! Hatice, look I am also climbing the slide this way.” Also, children seemed to invite me to their play when there was no other child in the sight.

Although I was an adult to them, I was not a teacher nor someone with authority in the school setting. At other times, children occasionally called to me, as Umay did “Teacher, can I do this?”. I told them I was not a teacher and could not tell what to do or what not to do, that they could ask their teacher. I nevertheless offered my opinion to kids when they asked me for permission to do something. Also, children invited me over to their games with a simple “Hatice, come”. They at times addressed their teachers this way too but it was not that often. They were informal

with me that they expected to drag me here and there. Such examples delivered me a sense of rapport between me and the children.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 About the data and the transcription procedures

Having visited the classroom for 13 weeks, 26 days, I carried out 100 hours of observation, and accumulated approximately one hour 53 minutes of conversations with children except the addition of informal chit-chats. While they made up a significant part of the analyzed data, I did not calculate the durations of informal chit-chats as they consisted of short and large periods that were scattered across the records and field notes which made it difficult to extract the exact duration of each moment.

The data analysis has been an iterative process that involved coding, reflecting, reading, and recoding. I started taking notes and coding informally during the study. Following the transcriptions of all the conversations, I primarily worked on the data manually. Later I switched to use of Microsoft Word program for its advantages in visual illustrations and the possibility of creating and using multiple files simultaneously. Finally, I uploaded all the transcriptions on Atlas.ti8, a software program for analysis of qualitative data. The Table 5 shows the media used for data analysis.

Table 5. Media Used for the Analysis of Data

The medium used for analysing the data	The steps of data that were carried out
Manually: on printed transcriptions	Reading and taking initial notes
Microsoft Word program	Forming and transforming codes, sub-themes, and themes
Atlas.ti8: a software for analysing qualitative data	Forming and transforming the codes, sub-themes, and themes

4.1.1 Transcription procedures of records

I stored the data in video and audio format and transcribed the conversations entirely except for leaving out the repetitions that did not change the meaning of what the participant(s) said, such as “Then then then we saw that”. To understand an utterance or context properly, descriptions are provided in square brackets [], for instance, smile, sad face, shrugging off shoulders or a nod to say yes or no. Also, to clarify the context for the reader, children’s statements are filled in in parentheses when the meaning can be blurred, as in “I like playing it here (the art corner)” when the child was obviously directing to the art corner but did not state it openly. After transcribing once, I once more watched and/or listened to the videos (when the camera was looking at somewhere else other than the talking participant) and audios to see if I accidentally left out or added something and any misunderstanding of what was said and done .

4.1.2 Translation

Children spoke Turkish. As such, transcriptions of the children’s accounts were primarily in Turkish. Codes and themes were formed primarily in English and excerpts were written in Turkish. After the termination of the data analysis, I translated the excerpts from children’s accounts into English. While there are no contractions in Turkish, such as don’t, children can sometimes leave out some syllables. This proved inevitable to make grammatical corrections while translating from Turkish to English.

Also, there is no gender while denoting the third person in Turkish as in English, such as he or she. Therefore, I sometimes used he or she when children were talking about an imaginary kid depending on the clues they provided, such as “well,

the girl would feel cold if she does not get sunshine". When there was no clue, I used "he" when the participant child was a boy and "she" when the participant child was a girl. Finally, the words "play" and "game" can be used interchangeably in Turkish, hence is their often appearance in the text.

4.2 Data analysis

Data analysis involved an iterative process where I read the data several times to grasp the wholeness of the data and what it was telling me; formed and re-formed the codes to indicate bodies of meaningful data; collapsed the codes into themes and sub-themes; transformed, refined and elaborated on the themes and codes with provision of relevant excerpts from the data (Finlay, 2014). Meanwhile, I aimed to establish relationships among the themes, and tell a meaningful story of the data while responding to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

While sustaining the data collection procedures, I went through the records, fields notes and transcriptions to get familiar with the data. The data analysis procedure started analyzing with my initial transcriptions and analytic notes on the data which was an informal step of analysis where I started making sense of what the data was telling me from a critical and analytical lens (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Finlay, 2014).

Once I completed the transcriptions after the termination of the study, I went back to the actual records to compare the transcriptions against the actual data to see if I missed out or mistyped anything inadvertently. The next step in the data analysis involved deciding the category of analysis (see Figure 2 below for the steps of the data analysis procedure).

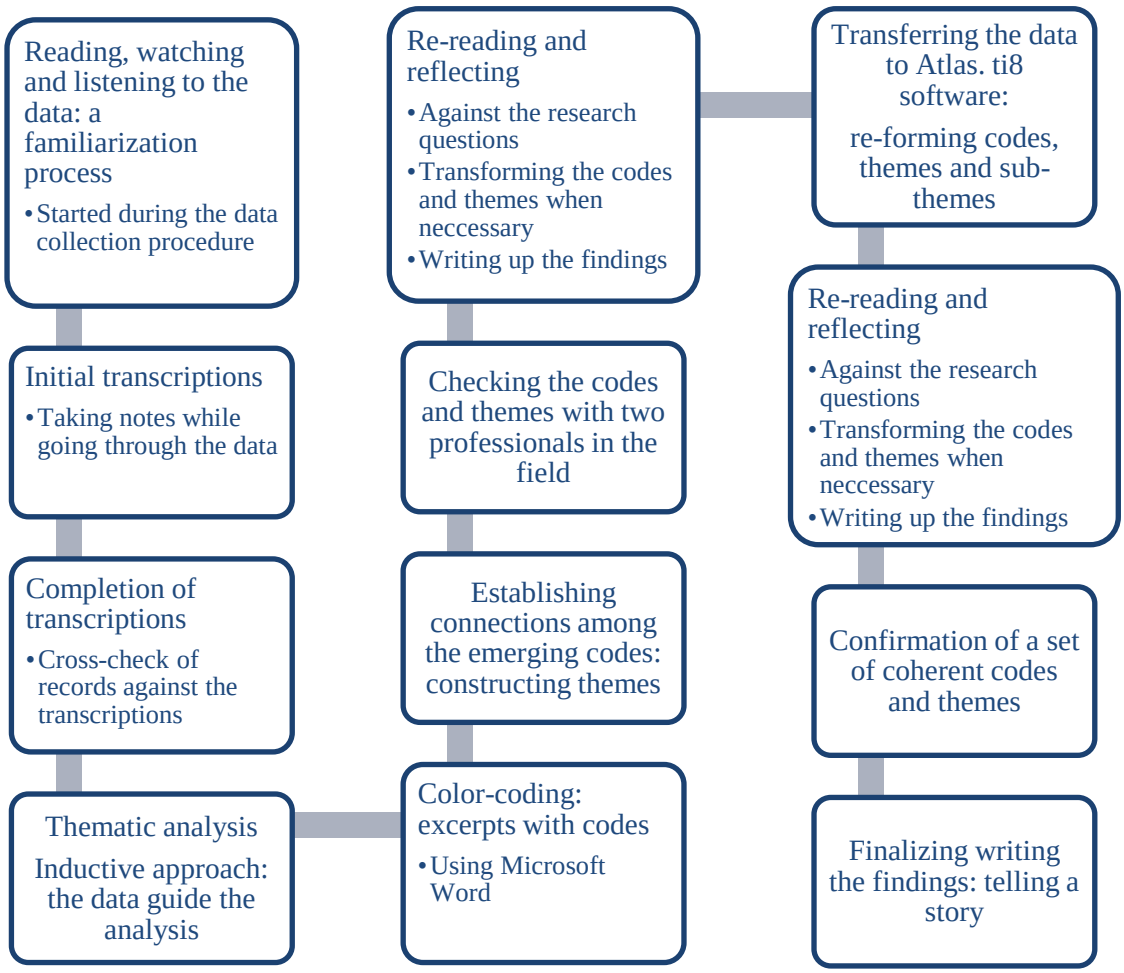


Fig 2. Steps of data analysis

4.2.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p.57) that can be done in a variety of manners. Although a researcher cannot isolate herself totally from her assumptions and previous knowledge, it is still advised to orient oneself toward an approach which will be reflected across the whole procedure of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Hycner, 1985).

Among the categories of thematic analysis, I decided that an inductive approach to coding and analysis of data fits better to the purpose of this study,

namely, understanding the lived play experiences of children (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this approach, the data guide the analysis procedure. In other words, the codes and themes emanate from the data instead of some concepts that the researcher adopts from outside (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Patton, 2002) and the researcher prioritizes the participants' words rather than looking at the transcribed text through a theoretical framework (Eberle, 2014).

4.2.2 Establishing connections

Once I determined the category of analysis, I read and re-read the data to create codes that were descriptive and interpretive tags for the meaningful units of data and were relevant to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014). While the step of creating codes still signaled some themes prematurely, I moved on to the procedure of collapsing codes into larger themes in a more systematic way as soon as I terminated developing codes (Braun & Clark, 2012) where I sought any connection, similarity, or relationship among the codes (Vaismoradi, 2013).

I organized and re-organized the data developing the constructs and the themes, while I maintained reading the data to see if there was a relevant data excerpt for the given code. This was a long and iterative process where I switched among the data, codes, themes and writing up the findings.

4.2.3 Rereading and transforming the themes

Rereading and transforming themes and/or the texts is an indispensable step of a phenomenological study and thematic analysis (van Manen, 2017). As I illustrated above on the table 5, I primarily organized and worked on my data manually as on

the printed transcriptions. At this stage, I read the data several times, highlighted the statements and created initial notes.

As I kept reading the data and transforming the codes, I transferred to the use of Microsoft Word program where I created subsequent files. Initially, I color-coded the excerpts (Appendix L) and formed primary themes which evolved across new Word files that I had created. Once I started sensing connections among the codes and themes, I started creating visual displays on Microsoft Word which facilitated a quick glance at the analysis (Appendix M).

For a final stage of checking with a set of established codes and themes, I transferred my transcriptions to a qualitative data analysis software, namely Atlas.ti8, to re-analyze the data. My goal of using this software was to benefit from its visual illustrations and the ease it provides in creating and retrieving the codes, sub-themes, themes, and quotations. With the help of the software, I could look at the data from a fresh perspective and re-form and transform codes, sub-themes, and themes (Appendix N).

I terminated the data analysis when I was convinced that several reviews, comparing and contrasting of findings against the data provided me with a set of coherent and solid themes that are sufficiently supported by the data (Smith, 2011). Overall, I attempted to ensure that each theme had a precise focus, without going astray; were connected but not repeating another theme and were relevant to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Vaismoradi, 2013). Overall, the themes, sub-themes and codes draw on the data and thus, tell a story of the lived experiences of participant children (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Creswell &Poth, 2016; Finlay, 2014).

4.3 Interpretation

Interpretation happens whenever there is an attempt to understand verbal or written language and involves understanding what someone means with her/his words (Ricoeur, 1996). Since my work involved children's accounts, I inevitable engaged in interpretation of what I heard. In empathic interpretation, further, which I adopted in the interpretation of findings, the researcher aims to stay close to the transcribed text and concentrates on the details of participants' accounts. The goal is to interpret the phenomenon from within, yet, this closeness to actual data does not necessarily mean a mere description of data (Willig, 2014). Hence, the interpretation of the findings carries a tint of my take of the phenomenon.

Although it is impossible on the part of the researcher to stay neutral to the phenomenon, I repeatedly question my preliminary opinions against what the data was telling me to get closer to participants' perspectives (Frosh, 2007; Willig, 2014). Over time, my previous conceptions changed as the actual data orchestrated the process of interpretation.

4.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a critical lens that helps the researcher to interpret and present participants' accounts both during and after the study (May & Perry, 2014). In a phenomenological study, while reading or listening to the data, researchers are expected to approach the data with as much openness as possible, what is known as "bracketing" to address reflexivity (Husserl, 1965). Although the purpose is not a free-presumption attitude on the part of the researcher, the goal of bracketing is to separate one's meanings from the meanings that emerge from the data or participants'

accounts to the most possible degree, in order to be more transparent (Grieshaber, 2001).

One way to ensure bracketing is to present these pre-meanings and -assumptions (Hycner, 1985). I have attempted to demonstrate my previous knowledge, understanding, and experience with the phenomenon and researching with children across the written output, such as under the titles “a personal journey” and “researcher’s journal”. The former included my previous knowledge, theoretical stance, experiences, and assumptions about the phenomenon of play, and researching with children. The latter, on the other hand, involved my questions after a period of observation of children’s play, central points to summarize the conversations, and what worked or did not work regarding the methodology and tools.

Reflexivity is also dealt with through a repetitive process to ensure that the interpretation of data is as close as possible to the participants’ meanings (Eberle, 2014) which I addressed by going through a constant review of data, codes, themes, and connections. While mapping out the findings as well, I kept switching back and forth among the data, codes, themes, and the data again and made changes when necessary (Roulston, 2014).

4.5 Credibility and trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are terms that are widely employed in quantitative research. While the former refers to demonstrating what a research item claims to be demonstrating, the latter is about an item’s capability of yielding similar results across repetitions. In qualitative studies, on the other hand, credibility and trustworthiness correspond to what validity and reliability concepts attempt to ensure in quantitative research (Finlay, 2014).

In the study, I followed a set of steps to ensure the scientific credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Cornish, Gillespie, & Zittoun, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Finlay, 2014; Hycner, 1985; Smith, 2011). In the Table 6 below, I outline certain criteria that I adopted while responding to my concern for credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Table 6. Steps for Ensuring Credibility and Trustworthiness

Credibility	Counseled one professor and two professionals in the field regarding the prompt questions for conversations, generation, and interpretation of codes and themes
	Triangulated the data using conversations that are generated by my observations, children's drawings, child-led school tours and informal chitchats.
	Provided direct quotations from the participants' accounts
	Observed participants for slightly more than three months
	Adopted two criteria while forming themes: 1. Ensuring minimum four quotations from at least three children to construct a theme (Smith, 2011) 2. Also giving weight or value to the emotions arose out of play and children's elaboration on their explanations
	Described the data collection process and the participants based on the observation notes and direct quotations from the participants
Trustworthiness	Recorded videos and audios to prevent data loss
	The study took place in a setting where children had known for three years and felt more comfortable and powerful than the researcher
	Themes and connections address to the purpose and question of the study

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

In this study, I observed children, took field notes, and videotaped them during free play time. Meanwhile, we either conversed casually or engaged in talks that were stimulated by my observations, children's drawings, and child-led school tours. After an iterative process of data analysis of our conversations while trying to respond to my research questions, four themes emerged from the data. Namely, children's motivations for play, the feelings in play, the imagination while playing, and resources for play (see Figure 3).

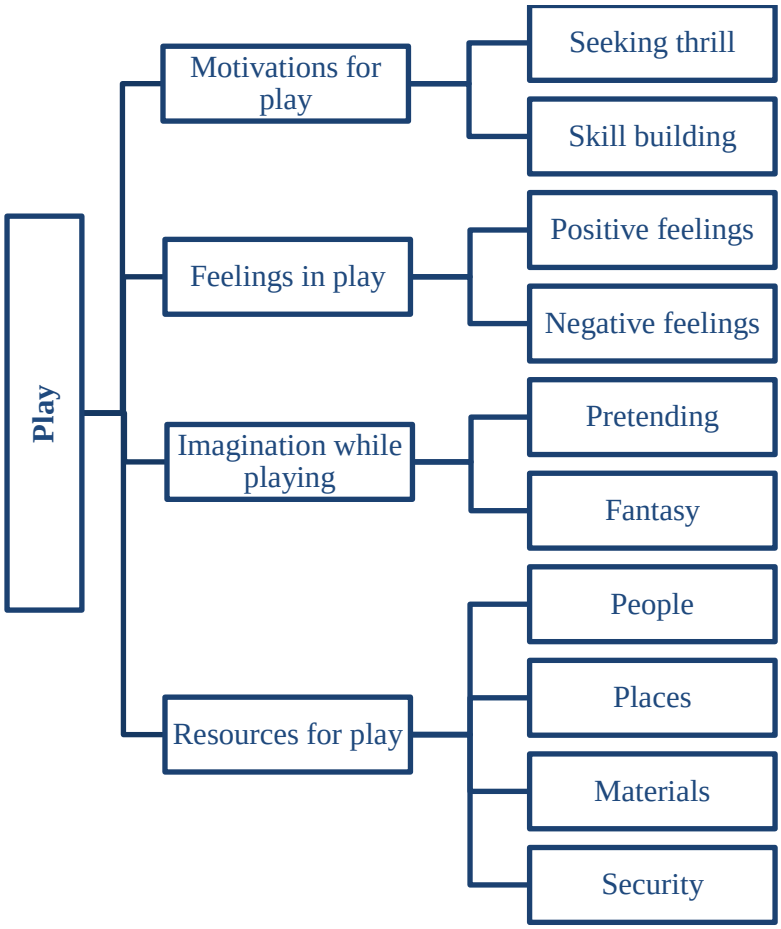


Fig 3. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

5.1 Motivations for play

Children's motivations for play is a theme that emanated from the data. Throughout the study, I frequently observed children at the monkey bars and the big swing, for which our conversations usually revolved around these toys. The data children revealed showed that children had two primary motivations for play. Firstly, play involved a sense of thrill both in physical and imaginary situations. Secondly, children indicated improving their physical skills such as doing sports, getting stronger and more capable of doing physical maneuvers during play.

5.1.1 Seeking thrill

The sub-theme of seeking thrill emanates from conditions that entail physical and imaginary tension, challenge, and risk. In both cases, children report situations where there is a threat or risk that carries excitement and fun with it. While at the monkey bars, swinging as a group in the big swing or playing an imaginary game, children seek thrill in their games by countering risky conditions or creating elements of threat, such as climbing to the top of the monkey bars, taking a bat position at the bars, jumping from increasingly higher bars, climbing the ramp without holding onto the surface, swinging faster to run away from a threat, etc.

In the following excerpt, I asked children about their play at the monkey bars earlier that morning. While Ponpon had expressed her fear while trying to jump off the bars, Deniz responded by a few times telling Ponpon "If you fear just jump off". Seeing the fear on children's faces while they were calculating to jump or not and seeing the subsequent joyous "I did it!" after having jumped off, I wondered what was going on there. Here is the excerpt from our conversation on the same day of the occasion:

Hatice: How are you (all) feeling while climbing?
Ponpon: Before we used to be scared. Later we started getting used to it. Then I saw I could do it. Then I first succeeded in doing it.
Gül: First time [pauses] I succeeded, I was not scared at all. I did not even tremble. If I had trembled, I would have fallen [I hear pride in her voice].

Among two actions with differing amount of tension or challenge in it, children can prefer the one with more challenge rather than the other. Challenge in such situations can be coined with the thrill experienced. Below is an excerpt from our conversations with Ponpon and Gül. The same day, I observed Gül and Umay paying tag where Umay noted his unhappiness over being the tagger. Upon Ponpon's participation, Umay was still the tagger as he could not catch any of the girls. Despite Umay's several requests to the girls to swap roles with him, girls cheerfully rejected and kept running. I wondered what kept them running so joyously although they had seen Umay got very uncomfortable and even started crying. That is why I asked them:

Hatice: Is running or chasing more fun?
Ponpon and Gül: Running! [They look at each other and yell at the same time with a smile on their face.]
Ponpon: To have fun, chasing is more boring. I change space in order not to be tagger [the one who chases and tags the runner]. And for that reason, I run very fast.
Gül: I do not like to chase but I … [pauses] running like this without being tagger is better.

Sometimes children deliberately increase the challenge they face. Once Deniz asked me to hold her hand while she was stepping from tyre to tyre, trying to keep her balance. Smiling and giggling, she told me she was increasing the difficulty of the move:

Deniz: Look, I am making it gradually more difficult.

In imaginary situations as well, children seek thrill by creating an imaginary threat or by building upon one that was earlier created by another child(ren). Below

is a segment where we conversed upon my observation of a play scene. Gül, Ponpon, Deniz, Yemeksu and Capi were at the big swing and Mia was swinging them while children one by one had yelled and warned of a coming threat, such as a villain robot train, upon which Mia started swinging even faster and children yelled even more with laughter. Here is Mia's words describing the threat in their game:

> Hatice: What kind of a game was that?
> Mia: Like this: I am being Key. Then I imagine a duke and think s/he is doing something to me, (like) trying to chase me. So, I do it fast (swinging fast) [to run away from the threatening duke].

While Mia shared her perspective of this game, Gül, Ponpon and Deniz preferred to continue adding new threats to their game while we were conversing at the lunch table. Since they did not directly respond to my question and preferred to play among themselves by sustaining the same game by adding new threats, I preferred to suffice with a quotation by Mia and stating what the other children were up to meanwhile:

> Gül: Friends, the duke has sent a message [Looking at the children with big eyes as if waiting for a response with excitement.]
> Mia: What? [Turns to Gül, eyes wide open.]
> Gül: Shall I tell you? Very funny messages [grins]. The duke, you know, they forced him/her into the bathroom [giggles]. They soaped him/her for the first time [giggles].
> Mia: Ah… [Returns to her food.]
> Gül [returns to Mia]: Mia look, it is not over yet. And then [pauses to eat her food].
> Deniz: Mia, the duke (it turns out) is waiting for you.
> Mia: Mine is worse, shall I tell you? [Sounds as if she is giving a secret. Shoulders turned inwards, body looked smaller and she lowered her voice with a threatening tone.]
> Gül: Yes.
> Mia: "You will never beat me down. We will see next time. As always, I will get your Mia. I will make her lose her consciousness" [Her tone is primarily as if she is reading a message from someone. Then she returns to her own voice and continues]. What? What does this mean? [Sounds concerned].
> Gül [grins and looks at Mia]: Are you silly or what?
> [The conversation dissolves as children continue eating.]

Sometimes, there were moments where the thrill children experienced turned into fear as children got hurt during the game. Once, Mia was again swinging children faster and faster, to which children reacted with shrieks of joy (see Figure 4 below). When the trainee teacher also attempted to swing the kids, Mia interjected, saying “Do not swing. I am swinging”, upon which the trainee teacher stopped. After a while, Mia responded to the children: “If you want, I can send you all the way to the end of the (the peak of) trees!”, continuing to swing faster. In the meantime, Mia lifted herself above the ground by holding on to the swing a few times, upon which Sakman and the trainee teacher once warned her “Mia, that can be dangerous”. Mia continued.

Fig 4. Mia is swinging her friends in the big swing

The episode above ended when Mia fell face down and hurt herself. Once Mia was consoled with the support of the teacher and her friends, they went back to play. Wondering their impression of the overall experience, I brought up the moment to a discussion at the lunch table:

> Deniz: I wanted Mia to be fast, but I got scared at this moment, [pauses], when Mia crushed to the bushy area. I was scared at that moment [frowns,

speaks at a lower volume]. But before when she was swinging, I felt very excited. Like I am on a plane [smiles].
Gül [interjects with a sad expression on her face]: I would not have wanted that to happen (that Mia fell and hurt herself). But it was so fun. So nice [smiles].
Mia: Everybody likes my swinging [grins and sounds prideful].

Seeking a thrill out of physically challenging play often came to be the center of our conversations. Children expressed taking risks, completion of which without being hurt was a source of exhilaration to children and sometimes deemed a success. This involved a calculation as children differentiated between situations that could end up with someone hurt and those that could be undertaken with no hurtful outcome. Children created or countered challenge not only in physically active play, but also in imaginary play where they created a threat or built on one.

5.1.2 Skill building

Skill building is another sub-theme that indicates children's motivations or intentions for play. Children use such expressions as getting stronger and developing skills while they describe their experiences in the garden, particularly at the monkey bars, trampoline, balancing tyres, swinging and other climbing options.

Below Mia tells me about her swinging upon my question. Previously on the morning, I saw Mia swinging her friends in the big swing where the friends were joyously yelling "Faster! Faster!". According to Mia, the game Ponpon created required Mia to get stronger and swing faster. Here is the excerpt:

Hatice: When I saw you at the big swing Mia, sometimes you were swinging fast. Can you tell me about it?
Mia: My strength is a bit over top. That is why I go (and) use an enormous strength, when they (children) want to swing. I mean, Ponpon created a game yesterday, so I got strong there. And then I started to swing that fast.

In another case, I asked children to tell me about their time at the monkey bars on the same day (Figure 5). Children underlined doing sports and developing physical skills at the monkey bars:

> Hatice: I saw you at the monkey bars. Can you tell me about that?
> Mia: Okay, we will tell you.
> Deniz: We do sports there.
> Mia: We exercise there. It also develops my swinging skills. It is both my hands' game and my doing exercise.
> Ponpon: I mean, we do everything sportish.

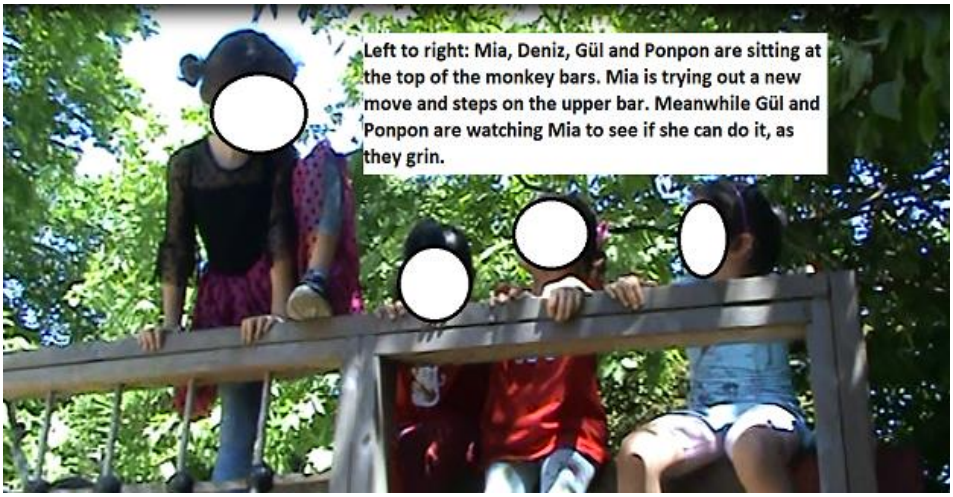


Fig 5. Mia, Deniz, Gül and Ponpon are sitting at the top of the monkey bars

As I mentioned above at the previous sub-theme, children spent a lot of outdoors time at the monkey bars and the big swing. I observed them trying out moves, sometimes teaching each other how to do a new move, such as climbing with the rope to the peak, taking a bat position, jumping from incrementally higher and more difficult positions, etc. depending on the degree of perceived need of help, children either asked each other for help or an adult nearby, as in "Can you stand close to me? I am afraid. I may fall. Just like that, that is enough" or "Can you hold my hand?". The end of a long-calculated jump was usually marked with a "I did it! It was so fun!". Therefore, our conversations usually came back to these moments.

5.2 Feelings in play

Feelings that stem from play or that are coined with play experiences make up another theme that is derived from the data. Children report positive feelings when they talk about their play experiences such as feeling good, happy, like flying or like a hero, whereas they coin the following situations with negative feelings; not being able to play, being ignored, being stuck in the same role, lack of cooperation among peers, unfair treatment, and rejection.

5.2.1 Positive feelings

When I asked children "How did you feel while …?" or "How does this child (the child in their drawings) feel doing …?", their answers usually carried a positive tone. They reflected on their positive feelings by referring to their play experiences as feeling good, happy, like flying or like a hero. In our encounters, Capi rarely shared his feelings or thoughts with me. Hence, our conversation in the following excerpt reflects one of our such rare moments where Capi drew a child who was playing (Figure 6). Here is what he said about his drawing's feeling:

> Capi: Happy [Then he makes a smiling mouth on his drawing].

Fig 6. Capi's drawing of a child who is playing. Writings left to right: outside, flowers, a baby, alone

Sometimes children elaborate on their feelings. The following segment is from one of our conversations upon children's play time where Mia was swinging some children in the big swing:

> Hatice: How did it feel swinging like that?
> Mia: (I felt) like, a hero.
> Ponpon: I am flying. Like this [Stretches her arms at both sides as if they are wings]. Because I liked it so much.

5.2.2 Negative feelings

The sub-theme of negative feelings is related to lack of play and certain interactional processes among peers that cause strong feelings shown in the form of crying, rage, and a perception of not being loved. In addition to being ignored, being stuck in the same role, lack of cooperation among peers, unfair treatment, and rejection are the main situations that cause unpleasant emotions to children.

Primarily, lack of play causes discomfort to children. In our hypothetical conversations about an imaginary child, we talked about the possibility of not playing at all. Here are the excerpts from my conversations with Umay (Figure 7) and Mia:

> Hatice: How does the child feel when s/he cannot play?
> Mia: S/he is being sad and feeling nausea.
> Umay: Bad [frowns].

Fig 7. Umay's drawing shows a sad child

In addition to not being able to play, when one's feelings of distress are not recognized or ignored repeatedly, it can cause some extreme distress to the child. On an occasion, I saw Umay playing tag with Gül. As he could not catch her, he voiced his discontent by requesting to swap roles. As it did not convince Gül, Ponpon participated in the game too. To Umay's frustration, she did not accept the role of tagger either. Umay nevertheless continued to chase the girls. As he could not catch the girls, he got more frustrated. Umay finally stopped playing and left to sit. While Ponpon left the place, Gül primarily went to Umay upon seeing his sadness, and they talked a bit. After Gül left too, I saw Umay crying. I put aside my camera and went over to him. As we conversed, I saw that Umay felt unloved by his friends as they were not willing to swap roles with him despite his distress. Here is a part of our conversation:

> Umay: I want to kill myself. Because nobody loves me.
> Hatice: What makes you think that they do not love you?
> Umay: Because they made unfairness to me. I am very angry. They do not love me.

Related to the finding above, being stuck in the same role can cause a child to dislike a play. Umay's experience was carried to out dialogue about his drawing of an imaginary child. Below is a segment from our conversations with Umay about his drawing:

> Umay: (I do not like) playing tag. Because it is always me who chases [while he frowns].

Lack of cooperation among peers is another situation that can block children's play and cause distress to them. The excerpt below is upon a play moment in the garden where Umay, Mia, Ponpon and Deniz played at the wooden house. Mia complained about Umay's not "fitting in" whereas Umay repeatedly demanded that

Mia let him be captain too. When I questioned further, she stated that "listening to" her would be an example of "fitting in":

> Mia: Umay can try fitting in the games a bit. We were again playing the same game the day before, he did not fit in then either. I will be very happy if he fits in. For instance, he listens to me. Like listening. Since he does not listen to me, he is not fitting in.

On the other hand, Ponpon was not happy with Umay's not responding to her callings. Unlike Mia whose demand was to be obeyed by her friends in the play, Ponpon's emphasis was on being heard and responded to. Below is her response to my question "Would you have liked to change anything in that game?":

> Ponpon: Vallahi [I swear to God] I would not have changed anything. Only I would want Umay to quit the game. Because I am calling out "Umay", Umay does not respond to me.

Unfairness in a play as well such as violating one's turn can cause sadness and discomfort to children. In the following quotation, Gül and I were conversing about the imaginary child she had drawn. When I had questioned further, Gül told me that when the child who is done injustice speaks up to her friends, her friends feel embarrassed and stay silent.

> Hatice: Does anything in the play make her feel bad?
> Gül: (The child is sad) when they treat her bad in the game. For instance, it is her turn. She is sad when someone plays at her turn.
> Hatice: Does she say anything to them?
> Gül: She says "It was my turn. Why am I not playing?"
> Hatice: Do they say anything back to her?
> Gül: No, they are embarrassed [smiles and stretches her back and arms as if it is a difficult moment].

Rejection, on the other hand, happens when a friend or friends refuse to play with a kid and can cause sadness. When Mia's friends left a game that Mia had started to go to backyard to ride bikes, Mia ran after them. After some time, she returned with her shoulders lowered, looking sad. She went to the trampoline and

lied down in it after a few jumps. I turned off my camera and went to her. Halfway into our chitchat, she explained what that rejection meant to her:

> Mia: I am trying to get my fun together [trying to feel better]. I always do this (come here and try to feel better) when the others leave the game.

Regarding the sub-theme of negative feelings, while not being able to play can be as bad as causing a child to feel sick, certain relational processes during play may lead children to feel extreme distress, anger, sadness, and unloved.

5.3 Imagination while playing

Imagination emerged as a theme with two sub-themes: pretending and fantasy which were possible with children's capacity to imagine. Pretending involved separating when one is only pretending to be something or someone to be other than what she/he/it is from when one is in the real time and place. Fantasy, on the other hand, refers to such content as fairies, villains, unicorns, going to the space, etc. that children liked and wished to have or be capable of doing.

5.3.1 Pretending

Pretending refers to when children differentiate a play moment from the reality, as in "it is not in real life", as well as the action of pretending, saying "only joking" that children referred to while talking about some of their play moments. Below, Ponpon and I were talking about a dinosaur that she protected me from:

> Hatice: Who is the dinosaur?
> Ponpon [grins]: Only joking (no dinosaur in reality).

Upon talking about a menu that Mia had created for her fish restaurant in free play time, we talked about this experience. Contrary to my assumption, Mia said

creating a menu was not a game. Yet, pretending to use this menu at home where her mother could prepare all the food on the menu upon Mia's order, as had happened at the restaurant they had frequented with her mom, could be a game:

> Hatice: So, was it (creating that menu book) play for you?
> Mia: No.
> Hatice: Where will you use it (the menu)?
> Mia: At home. I can use it while playing. I will tell my mom so she does all of them (the foods and drinks on the menu) [looks excited].
> Hatice: Like what?
> Mia [laughs]: Orange juice, fruit juice.
> Hatice: Okay. So, it was not play for you. You made it at free play time.
> Mia: It was not play for me because there are lots of recipes. I mean, there is a restaurant we go to. Sometimes we order. I made their food (in the menu). Sushi.
> Hatice: So, you made something from your real life (the restaurant) and thus it was not play?
> Mia [nods affirmatively]: We cook at home too.

Pretending involves pretending to be something or someone other than what something or someone is, which expands with imagination. Although it is not defining the whole play activities, children differentiate some play moments from the reality by such clues as "only joking".

5.3.2 Fantasy

Children also enjoy the element of imagination in play as it frees one momentarily from the limitations of reality and nears him/her to the possibilities of a fantasy world. After observing children's play at the big swing, I asked them "What would you have liked to do differently while swinging?", to which their answers are as the following:

> [Children start joyfully and talk looking at each other.]
> Deniz: We would like to go to the space!
> Mia: We would like the characters to be real!
> Ponpon: Going to the space and for characters to be real!
> Mia: Sentopia to be real!
> Hatice: What characters are there?

Mia: Ladybug, black cat, robot trains, Mia, mermaid.
Gül: Fairy powders!

As can be seen, children integrated certain figures from the media they had watched and/or listened into their games. With this sub-theme of imagination, children not only created new play activities, but also engaged with their emotions as they went beyond the limits of reality to the wider possibilities of fantasy.

5.4 Resources for play

Resources for play consist of another theme that draw on the data. During our conversations, children referred to such resources as people, places, and materials to play with. While their presence in play can enrich the overall experience, a lack of these resources can cause discontent in children. Primarily, people include peers that children report playing with. Children not only play with their friends, they also play alone. Certain features of the playmates, such as having similar interests or being at the same age, can increase the likelihood of playing together. People also refer to adults whose primarily space regarding play can be helping, while playing comes secondary.

Nevertheless, adults' place in child's play may be bigger than what is seen at sight. Places, secondly, indicate the spaces children report playing at, the places they mention while talking about their drawings, and the one they show around during the child-led school tours. These places can hold a variety of meanings to children, such as a place to seek refuge, to recover from a stressful event, to exercise and develop skills, or to enjoy the beauties of nature. Materials, finally, demonstrate the toys and tools children play with. Their number, diversity, and quality, such as being within

child's reach or allowing the children to experience the thrill of climbing higher, are important to children as they can increase the pleasure a child derives from the play.

5.4.1 People

The findings indicate that although the participant children enjoyed playing or being alone, most often they pointed out to playing with other children. When it comes to the adults in play, children rarely talked about adults in our conversations. On such occasions, the participant children referred to the role of their teacher as helper and playmate, or the teacher's inadvertent role in interrupting their play while trying to keep up with the daily routine. Nevertheless, there are numerous aspects of adults' presence that are shown across play moments and our interactions.

5.4.1.1 Peers

Children referred to interacting and playing with other children while they were reflecting on their play experiences in the school, talking about their drawings or the school tours they gave. Capi's response below, for instance, indicates his opinion of the child that he had drawn to my questions "Is there anyone with him?"

> Capi: A baby. They will play. They are both children.

For some children, play is best when there are friends around, indicating a strong stance. Umay's response below about his drawing is an example to this:

> Hatice: What is his favorite place to play?"
> Umay: (The child's favorite play space is) where his friends are.

Age can be a determining factor that brings children together. Although this may still signal the importance of playing with other children for the participant child. The excerpt below is from my conversation with Mia where she was talking

about the child she had drawn. She previously mentioned that she plays “sometimes with friends sometimes alone” and I further questioned where they met up with these friends. Here is her answer upon my question “Does she have any friends in the neighborhood?”:

> Mia: Yes. She plays with them [smiles]. Well, I do not have any friends in the neighborhood.
> Hatice: You do not have any friends but she (the imaginary child) has friends?
> Mia: Yes. I do not have many people like me [refers to her age as I understood].

Having similar interests, for some children, can bring peers together for play. Below is an excerpt from an informal conversation between me and Capi in the garden that developed when I was swinging him:

> Capi: We always play football with Emre [from another classroom].
> Hatice: Okay. Mm, do you play football with anyone from your classroom?
> Capi: No.
> Hatice: Why not?
> Capi: They (my classmates) do not like football.

5.4.1.2 Adults

During our conversation with children while they were reflecting on their play moments, conversing about their drawings, or giving me a school tour, they rarely mentioned adults. Notwithstanding, there are several dimensions of adults’ presence in play which I will explicate below based on my observations and children’s words. Later, I will end the section by sharing my direct conversations with the children regarding adults in play.

Firstly, children at times invited an adult to play. To my surprise, this happened when there was no available child at sight, as with Yemeksu “Hatice, shall we play tag?”, or when the child was distressed as in the case of Mia “Sakman, can we play Non-Violent Communication?”.

On the other hand, I saw Sakman inviting some children to a game as well, usually indoors. Consistent with Sakman's accounts, I observed Sakman engaging children in a play when the child(ren) was seemingly alone or distressed. For instance, seeing that Umay was repeatedly rejected by Yaprak from joining her play, Sakman called out to Umay "Come on Umay, I also need to play. I see that you also need it."

There were cases when I observed Sakman playing make-believe game with Capi and Yaprak to meet her perception of a child's need for company and acceptance. Children created a hamburger shop to which Sakman kept visiting as a customer. In that play, Yaprak was constantly pretending to write letters to Sakman, to which Sakman was responding with her verbal letters saying that "Ah, my Mahmut (referring to Yaprak in that game) has sent me another letter. She really likes me, and I like her so much too. My dear friend Mahmut". I saw Yaprak really absorbed in these exchanges and reacting with smiles to Sakman's verbal letters. Sakman later told me that she was particularly trying to make Yaprak feel that she was loved and not alone. This game session continued even after Sakman left the game, saying, "Friends, I am quitting this game now as I have things to do. Is that okay for you?"

Nevertheless, children occasionally used an adult as a prop in their play. This usually included me, the trainee teacher and sometimes Sakman. For instance, as I was observing kids nearby my camera, my camera and I sometimes became a figure to run away from. Below is a sample where Gül and Mia were playing at the steering wheel for a ship. Mia was the captain and Gül was observing around with her binoculars and reporting Mia about what she saw:

> Gül [turns to Mia]: There is someone.
> Mia [turns back and sees me]: We will move away.

Gül [first looks through the binoculars and then turns to Mia. Gül looks both concerned and excited]: And she is following us!
[Mia looks at me briefly and turns to steering the wheel. After spending some time playing among themselves, Gül goes back to the binoculars and sees me again!].
Gül: That woman is still following us! [laughs].
Mia [as if not happy with this woman's appearance in her game]: I am moving away. We are far away. You cannot see her Gül.
[The game ends after a cat bites Mia.]

Another aspect refers to the moments when children particularly invited an adult over, usually me and the trainee teacher, only to show us their moves and skills; or to challenge their perceptions of our fears and limitations. For instance, one day Mia was again swinging a bunch of children in the big swing, trying to increase the speed to the joyous shrieks of children. Seeing this, the trainee teacher shared her concern about the speed. Here is a part of their interaction:

Trainee teacher: I get really scared when I am swinging in this swing. Are you not afraid?
Gül [giggles]: Nooo, we are having so much fun.
Ponpon: We can actually get even faster, [pauses, then returns to Mia], Mia, swing faster so that they see [refers to the trainee teacher and adults, as I understood].

The final aspect of adult and child involvement in play happened when what I heard from the child struck me between being ambiguous or a reflection of an adult language. In the excerpt below, I was observing children and taking notes in the garden. Yemeksu and Gül were independently walking around and seeking some pieces of colored paper that was left from a previous party in the garden. Umay was sitting next to Sakman building images with small pebbles. Mia, who was swinging at the swing nearby, called to me:

Mia: Hatice, what are you doing?
Hatice: You know, I am taking notes about your play.
Mia: But we are not playing. We are just hanging out as we like [we both pause for some time]. Look now. Sakman and Umay are playing 'finding the

rock', doing models with rocks. The others (Yemeksu and Gül) are hanging out.
Hatice: How am I going to differentiate between when you play and when you do not play?
Mia: When we are sad, we create a game. So, what makes play is its creativity [that play is creative].

The fact that Mia differentiated children who were walking around alone and with no visible product like "doing models with rocks" is pressing me to assume that play for Mia is creating something with a goal, which either has a visible product or is done to alleviate a negative feeling. My observations tell me that for Mia, play has a visible outcome (Mia says her favorite play is "intelligence play, like chess") or involves emotions. For instance, she goes to Sakman and asks her to play Non-Violent communication game which requires her to think about her feelings and needs. During emotion-circle as well, she takes her time to elaborate on her feelings, which is consistent with Sakman's observations. This may be the reason why Mia attaches an emotional relief aspect to play that she "creates".

On the other hand, the fact that Mia stopped me to tell me that what I was assuming to be play was not actually play struck me. Was she denying me of an access to their play? When she concluded "what makes play is its creativity", I wondered if it was this Mia speaking. Was I hearing adults in her life? According to Sakman, Mia's parents cared about intelligence and cognitive skills and expected Mia to surpass other kids, as Mia herself corroborated by saying "Yemeksu is a very intelligent child. I try to surpass him". Or was it Mia's perception of me and my expected answer? When my assumptions are put aside, what Mia meant with her distinction of play and non-play stays elusive to me, leaving me unsure if this is Mia speaking or her parents, or Mia's perception of me as an adult.

Finally, I will share children's reflections about their teacher in play. Despite my observation, I wanted to know what children would say about their playmates. Children did not mention playing with the teacher upon my question "Who does s/he play with?" about their drawings. Except, when I directly asked them "Does s/he do anything with the teacher?" and "Does s/he play with the teacher?", respectively. The responses suggest that the primary response is to ask for help from the teacher whereas playing with her comes secondary. The conversation below about Yemeksu's drawing (Figure 8) illustrates this:

> Hatice: Does this child do anything with his teacher?
> Yemeksu: Yes. (The teacher) helps.
> Hatice: Do they play together?
> Yemeksu: Yes. Shall I show (the game)? [Eyes wide open. As if wants to see if I am interested in the game. Off he goes to bring the game DOMINO.]

Fig 8. Yemeksu is drawing a child who is playing

On the other hand, children's desires can at times clash with that of the teacher in an indirect manner. During the conversation about his drawing with Yemeksu, he stated that the imaginary child wished to stay in the classroom and draw at the art table instead of going to the garden. From my observations and during our conversations, Yemeksu mentioned and showed enjoying the outdoors. Yet, on

that day, he had had to go outdoors with us while he actually wanted to stay in the classroom to continue drawing. As such, his wish was clashing with the classroom routine and the decision of the majority since there was no other adult to attend him in the classroom.

> Hatice: Does he go to the garden?
> Yemeksu: He does not like it.
> Hatice: Why not?
> Yemeksu: He just does not. He wants to draw at the art corner.

My observations are consistent with this assumption above. That is, on occasions when Sakman did not want to leave children in the classroom unattended, she had to ask children to delay finishing their craft or the game they were playing because the majority wanted to go outside or it was time for lunch.

As can be seen, children report playing mostly with their friends. Having likes in common and being at the same ages can facilitate children's coming together to play. Regarding adults, children barely mentioned an adult in their play. Yet, my observations showed involvement of adults and children upon either children's or adults' initiation. While the exact interaction between adults and children in perception or expression of play stays ambiguous, children nevertheless report playing with their teacher, though upon a direct question about the teacher. Yet, the primary role children attach the teacher might be confined to asking for help, whereas playing with her comes second. Also, the teacher's responsibilities to follow the classroom routine or act according to the majority of the classroom can sometimes clash with what children wish for (i.e. when there is no other adult to attend the children in classroom). Nevertheless, these are the opinions of children who I observed usually played with other children, unlike Yaprak and Capi who

played relatively more with Sakman, yet, almost always indoors. Since they did not share their opinions with me, their relevant accounts are not reflected here.

5.4.2 Places

During our conversations with children, they mentioned that they liked to play outdoors. During the school tours they led as well, they took me to primarily and mainly through outdoors and explained what they liked about the particular play spaces. Also, during our conversations about their drawings, children imagined the child playing outdoors happily, engaging with beauties of the nature such as flowers, butterflies, lavenders, nice weather, etc.

Below are the segments from our conversations with children about the places that children mentioned where either they played or the child in their drawings played. Their answers mainly refer to outdoors, school garden and parks:

> Yaprak: I was happy while going out to the garden.
> Yemeksu: (The child wants to go to) the park because the park is beautiful.
> Capi: I like it here (monkey bars). I play ball (here) [points to the ball he is holding while he tries to climb up the monkey bars].
> Umay: He plays outside. On the road.

During our interactions, what certain places in the garden meant to children unfolded. Such places can serve children to recover from an emotionally unpleasant situation, hide, or protect from a pretend or imaginary danger, come together with friends, and create a play. Below is a part of my conversation with Ponpon. We were at the backyard. Capi called out “dinosaur!” upon seeing me and Capi, Mia, Gül, Yaprak and Deniz started chasing me. At that point Ponpon grabbed my hand and directed me to the wooden house, telling me to take refugee there from the dinosaur. Here is our conversation that show what that wooden house meant to her:

Ponpon: We are protecting ourselves here. Sometimes we play here. This is an old house. And we turned it into a toy. Stay here, or the dinosaur will eat you up: gulp! Look, you can continue with your camera from here. But do not show yourself to outside. If you feel scared, call out “Ponpon” [then she goes to her friends].

For Umay as well, what looked like a corridor covered with green bushes was actually a cave for him, which was his second favorite place in the school as it allowed him to swing. Below is a segment from the school tour Umay was leading with Gül (Figure 9):

Hatice: Can you take me to your least favorite place in the school? Or a place that you do not like at all?
Gül: I can.
Umay [starts heading to the corridor that is covered with green bushes]: I will take you.
Umay: My second-best place is this: the cave.
Hatice: Oh, a cave. What are you doing here?
Gül: This is also my second favorite place.
Hatice: What is good about here?
Umay [points to the metal bars]: To swing.
[The conversation dissolved as children stepped into animal poo and had to clean up.]

Fig 9. Umay is taking us to the corridor on the right

Particularly when children were talking about their drawings (Figure 10 below as an example), they mentioned such parts of nature as smelling flowers, sunbathing, chasing butterflies, etc. which indicated the pleasure they derive by being in the nature:

Gül: (The child sees) butterflies. (Butterflies are) dancing. She is trying to catch the butterflies.
Mia: (The child often plays in) the lavender field, park. The most fun thing is to lie down in the lavender garden and sunbathe. She felt very good because she could get (fresh) air and she could be with those lavenders.

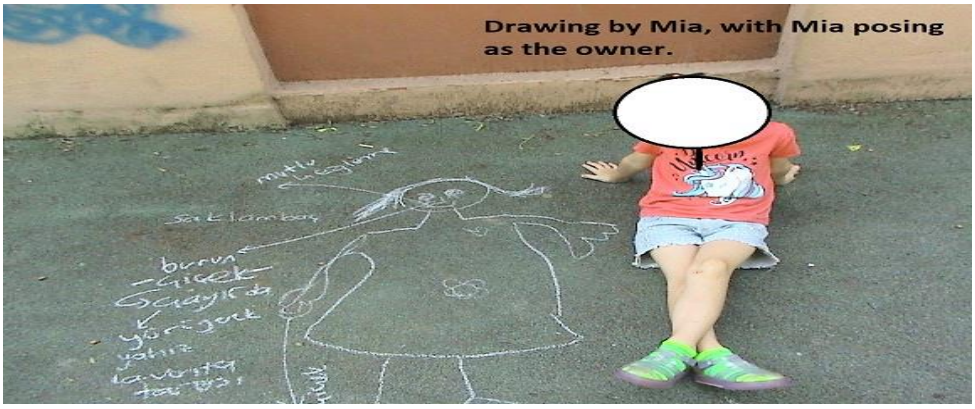


Fig 10. Mia is posing next to her drawing. Writings from top to bottom: happy, fun, hide-and-seek, nose, flower, in the meadow, walking (there) alone, lavender field

Places children talked about and showed me around were mainly outdoors and nature. While outdoors revolved around the school garden and parks, children's accounts of the nature were both inside and outside the schoolyard. Children gave individual or collective meanings to those places or toys, apart from the way I saw them.

5.4.3 Materials

The sub-theme of materials refers to the toys and tools children use while playing. According to children, the variety and number of materials, as well as their quality are important components for their play. For instance, children can enjoy when there are diverse toys both inside and outside the school. Below is our talk with Gül:

Gül: Inside (the school), I like the toys best. Outside what I like the best is monkey bars, swings, and the trampoline. I love doing climbing.
Hatice: Is there anything you do not like here?
Gül: No. I like all the toys in the school.

Enough number of materials that are in good quality can facilitate the game in a group. Below is an excerpt that was upon my observation of Deniz, Yaprak and Umay at the monkey bars where Yaprak was ensuring that everyone was waiting for their turn to get the rope to swing and jump with. I observed that children were having fun to hold on to the rope, swing with it and then jump off, which Umay put as “Yaprak, it is a lot of fun, right?”. Deniz appeared impatient there to get her turn sooner, to which Yaprak scolded her “Enough! Enough! Wait for your turn! Wait! Wait! Wait!”. Later we conversed:

> Hatice: Deniz, would you change anything in that game?
> Deniz: Instead of rope, I would like to put such a nicer (then increases the number), a few better swinging ropes.
> Hatice: Maybe you would not have to wait for a turn?
> Deniz: Yes.

Toys that are complete, at child’s size and suitable to the child’s purpose of play are desirable whereas the opposites can elicit negative feelings. Below is an excerpt where Umay was giving me a school tour (Figure 11). He took me to the monkey bars as his favorite place to play yet there was something that he was not content with. He liked the bar to be placed higher, as it allowed him to climb on it and climb higher. Yet, now that it was placed lower, it did not allow Umay to climb as high as he would have liked to:

> Umay: They lowered it [he is showing me the horizontal bar that goes through the middle of the monkey bars, parallel to the ground. Children can either walk on it or swing from one and to the other by holding on to smaller bars]. It was better when this was higher (that horizontal bar). I do not like it like this.

Fig 11. Umay is showing me his favorite toy, the monkey bars

Toys and tools inside the school appear to be important to children. While children enjoy their diversity, enough number of toys can eliminate the need to wait for one's turn, which is undesirable. The status of toys, on the other hand, such as their height or manner of usage, can block a game and cause unpleasant feelings to children.

5.4.4 Security

The sub-theme of security emerged from the data from several aspects. When taking physical challenges in the garden, such as climbing, swinging, jumping, etc., children still want to feel safe. Regarding the play beyond the school garden, children refer to their concerns over road accidents. Although children mention their friends or other children as their primary playmates, they may still want to be close to adults that are coined with a sense of safety.

Below is an excerpt where Ponpon feared the outcome of falling off the monkey bars and as such, asked me for a certain amount of help that she thought she needed (Figure 12). Once she completed the swing-and-jump move, Ponpon went back to do it again, this time, "Now on my own!". Here is our conversation:

> Ponpon: Can you come over?
> Hatice: You need help?
> Ponpon: Yes [meanwhile she is already holding onto the bars, ready to swing].
> Hatice: Okay [Off I head in that direction].
> Ponpon [grins]: We will do something.
> Hatice: What will I do?
> Ponpon [sounds as if states something obvious to me]: From my leg.
> Hatice: I am not sure if I can carry you. What if I cannot? Can you protect yourself?
> Ponpon [sounds as if she states something obvious to me]: Yees [pauses], if you hold me, I can protect (myself).
> Hatice: Okay then. Go ahead and swing. I will stay close.
> Ponpon [protests]: But I will fall (if you stay close but not hold my leg).

Fig 12. Left to right: Yemeksu, Umay, Ponpon and Gül

The conversation ended as I stood close and lightly touched Ponpon's legs. She primarily let go off her feet and swung for a few seconds. After jumping off, she looked at me and said, "I did it!", only to go back to climb again.

Road accidents are another aspect of the sub-theme. While conversing about children's drawings, they brought up the possibility of road accidents and the feeling of security. Below is an excerpt from my conversation with Capi:

> Capi: The baby is on his own. A car has hit (the baby).
> Hatice: Mm. What happens now?
> [Capi continues his drawing.]
> Capi: They have come to the hospital.

On the other hand, feeling secure around the parents can be what makes a child feel good while playing:

> Hatice: Playing where makes this child happiest?
> Gül: When feeling safe.
> Hatice: Where does she feels safe?
> Gül: Around her mom and dad.

Children want to feel safe when they are playing. This happens in the form of a child's request for certain amount of help to avoid a feared outcome, such as falling. On the other hand, children have concerns about playing outside where there is the possibility of a road accident. Whether they play alone or with other children, having adults around that make children feel safe might ensure a sense of security to children while they maintain playing.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In the following sections, I will address my research questions and answer them through incorporation and interpretation of findings of the study in relation to the previous research. The overall attempt is to answer the central question of this research: “What does play mean to children?”. Each research question is addressed to tell a story of participant children’s conceptualizations and lived experiences of play.

6.1. Children’s active participation: what children decided to reveal and what they preferred to keep to themselves.

One of the basic tenets of this study has been the belief that children are agentic individuals with competency (Mayall, 1999; James & Prout, 1997), whose right to participate in matters that concern their lives can be supported through such tools as visible listening and employment of child-friendly tools (Clark, 2003; Clark & Moss, 2005). As Husser (2017) maintains, just as children have a right to participate, deciding not to participate is the other side of the coin. In my study too, children decided and determined the degree of their participation (Dockett & Perry, 2010). As such, the extent to which they revealed their perspectives changed.

On several occasions, some children refused my invitation to converse about a previous play scene, to give me a school tour or to talk about a drawing. Sometimes I sensed that the child was willing to start and maintain a conversation with me, for example, about the song she wanted to practice. Yet, s/he avoided my attempts to converse about my research, either directly rejecting my invitation with a “no, I will play” or “no, I do not feel like talking”, or just looking away or fidgeting (Husser,

2017; Markström & Halldén, 2009). On other occasions, children simply told me that they preferred to play instead of talking about play. For instance, Yaprak barely shared her reflections on her play with me. Yet, she invited me to her play and showed me what she was doing, or what she was good at doing.

Sometimes play was restarted during our conversations. Children directly started talking among themselves and kept their previous play going instead of talking with me, as when Gül brought back the game of the villain duke to the lunch table on which Deniz and Mia built further. This seemed very understandable to me, for if children had enjoyed playing more than they had enjoyed talking with me, who was I to judge? I could also see occasions where children wanted to continue chit-chatting with me or gave me a very long school tour detailing on every toy s/he saw instead of doing something else. As was argued by previous research, this could be a result of children's evaluation of the choices between desirable, less desirable, and non-desirable activities (Hill, 2006; Husser, 2017).

Another factor that kept certain points unrevealed was when children avoided talking about a certain play moment, where the child slightly blushed, started looking away and grinned a bit. That was the clue for me to drop questioning further as I sensed that the child wanted to keep that to herself (Pálmadóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2015). Alderson (2005) interprets children's such tailoring of their participation as being the owners of their data for they determine what to reveal and what to keep unrevealed.

Sometimes during the group conversations, children did not like what another child was telling about them and asked us to drop the conversation, saying "because I get upset when I hear such complaints". Such were the cases when a delicate point for a child was inadvertently touched upon by the flow of our conversation

(Einarsdóttir, 2007). Husser (2017) as well reports similar situations where children avoided talking about a certain moment where they previously had a problem with each other whereas they were willing to talk about other things. As such, dropping the conversation soon after, some dynamics could not be revealed either.

Not all children are equally capable of expressing themselves. This results in a disparate picture when some children are heard more than the others. Although I attempted to hear all children by observing and initiating conversations particularly with Capi and Yaprak, I can never be sure how much of their reservation was due to their deliberate choice to not participate, and how much was due to the fact that they were not heard among the crowd that were more loud and eloquent. Sakman's reminders to Gül, Mia, Ponpon and Deniz corroborates my assumption. Once Yaprak started playing with four of the girls in the home-drama corner. Yaprak looked so excited upon her participation, she hugged and kissed Gül on the cheek. Gül, while brushing off her cheeks, said "Yaprak, do not do that", to which Yaprak responded "I just wanted to kiss". Observing this, Sakman interjected: "Friends, have you noticed how Yaprak becomes happy when you accept her in (to play with you)?". Therefore, I cannot help but wonder if these dynamics among the girls ever caused Yaprak to withdraw from me as well. On the other side of the coin, I question the extent to which I was carried away by the strong tide of the more visible group of children.

There were also moments where children tailored each other's participation, as when Mia repeatedly and loudly spoke which made Umay stop and listen to her. Such moments involved reflection on my part as I wanted no child to feel bad but also avoided taking on a rescuer role, as if "I know better than children and I am in a position to save them". I waited till the child ended her phrase and then returned to the kid who I thought was dominated "You were saying something. Can you please

repeat that?", following which we either continued talking or the conversation dissolved. As such, the dominated child(ren) could not possibly reveal as much as s/he liked.

6.2 Do children think they obtain something out of their play?

This question attempts to understand the participant children's motivation for play. Children in this study expressed seeking thrill through situations that entailed physical and/or imaginary tension, challenge, danger, or risk. In the physically thrilling situations, children sought thrill when they were on the verge of a risk or threat, as when jumping from the monkey bars despite the fear the child expressed. Aldis (1975) maintains a similar point, where a group of preschool children reported seeking the feeling of thrill particularly during physically active play such as climbing, dangling from a source of support, or swinging. In this study, the physically thrilling play also exclusively happened in the garden, except when the teacher allowed the children to climb up and jump off the shelves inside the classroom. This is consistent with previous research, which showed that children aged four years-old mentioned the physically challenging play taking place in the outdoors, for outdoors allowed a lot of freedom do move around (Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015) and chances to be physically active (Clark, 2007).

In the study, children highlighted their willingness to continue the thrilling activity despite the hesitation and fear they reported or showed. Although children felt both fear and thrill, the thrill was rather accompanied by visibly positive feeling such as laughter, which is consistent with the findings by Sandseter where she conversed with preschoolers (2007, 2009). In the study, the participant children explained overcoming the feared action as "success" and reported the fun they had.

Sandseter (2009) makes a similar point, where participant preschoolers stated experiencing the thrill or exhilaration when they achieved something despite their earlier doubt.

Among two actions, as well, children chose the one which involved more tension and challenge, or more thrill, according to their statements. For instance, running away was more attractive than chasing in the tag game, because running involved more strategy and more action to avoid the threat. Instead of quitting the game to evade the threat for once and all, children preferred to remain in the game and to continuously develop tactics in the face of danger. In addition to enjoying the challenge in a game, participant children increased the degree of challenge, as in the challenge of keeping one's balance while walking on the tyres, to which they reacted with smile and laughter. Likewise, in imaginary situations children created differing degrees of an imaginary threat which they sometimes collectively built on to keep the thrill going incrementally, as when Mia built on the figure of villain duke that another child had created previously. Although it is not often addressed in other studies, this finding can be corroborated by some research where children noted the fun in physically challenging play, and how they transformed the activity to augment the thrill and pleasure experienced, such as increasing the steepness of the cycling path more and more (Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015; Sandseter, 2009).

Children were aware of the possible dangers and risks during a game and hesitated before making a move as they went through some calculations: can I handle this without getting hurt? For instance, Gül considers the risk of trembling for jumping "If I had trembled, I would have fallen", which was consistent with my observations as well, where Umay, for instance, once said "Sakman! This is so fun! I jumped off the shelf but did not hurt myself!" only to climb back to the shelf and

jump several more times. Research confirms this finding in previous engagements with preschoolers (Cook, 1993; Gray, 2013; Sandseter, 2009; Stephenson, 2003). That is, children calculate the risk, danger, outcome joy, required skills, etc. and choose to take the risk when the feared outcome is not greater than the expected thrill out of the game (Sandseter, 2009). I liken this to the example of adult pilots' thrill-seeking behavior by Gibson (2004). As Gibson maintains, the pilots climb so high in the atmosphere that at a point the plane starts shuddering as if it is about to break down. Yet, right when it is at that can-be-dangerous threshold, the plane retreats and the adrenaline is experienced at its peak (Gibson, 2004).

Nevertheless, being safe was important to children even though it did not stop them from seeking thrill in risky or threatening situations where they were very close to danger. Despite the calculations, children still got hurt sometimes, as when Mia fell and hurt herself while swinging her friends fastly. Children kept playing when they were not seriously hurt and could get back to the stage after being consoled or cared for, as it happened with Mia's accident at the swing. That is, children felt momentary fear when their perceived risk of getting hurt turned into reality. Yet, this did not stop children from going to that play which had previously hurt nor from remembering the thrill they had felt, saying, "I felt very good" or "Like I was on a plane". In our conversations over drawings as well, children noted their concern for being secure while playing, such as from road accidents. This indicates children's conscious awareness to be safe and sound to play carefree, or while keeping the thrill going. Norðdahl and Einarsdóttir (2015) confirm this finding. Children in their study pointed out the fun they had from taking risks and doing physically challenging things in play but also expressed their need to be safe meanwhile (Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015).

Children also reported developing physical skills through play such as doing sports, getting stronger, climbing higher, running faster, and balancing on the tyres which were noted to happen exclusively in the garden. During the conversations that were generated by my observations of children's play as well as when children gave me school tours, they emphasized developing their climbing, maneuver skills on the monkey bars, and several opportunities where they thought they got stronger and better skilled physically. In addition to anterior studies of adults' observations or interviews about play (Crews et al., 2004; Gapin et al., 2011; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998; Smith et al., 2013; Verret et al., 2012), previous research with preschoolers as well corroborate these findings, in that, developing physical skills is important to children (Prompona et al., 2019). In addition, similar to the children in this study, children in several studies elaborate on their play activities as the ones that involve running and doing sports (Theobald et al., 2015), climbing, balancing, swinging (Sandseter, 2009; Wong et al., 2011), and speed (Beattie, 2015).

The commonalities between the places that gave them the thrill and the one where children got stronger and built their skills were outstanding. Namely, the monkey bars and the big swing are the primary places where children go beyond the safe zone and take some risks to experience that exhilaration, which are also where children exercised and did everything "sportish". This is consistent with previous research on risky play, where children in preschool age developed their gross motor skills by engaging in challenging, thrilling, and risky activities (Aldis, 1975).

6.3 How do children feel about their play?

While children view play as a pleasant experience, lack of play as well as certain interactional processes among children can cause unpleasant emotions. Similar to the

previous research with children below age eight, children in this study noted that they felt happiness, pleasure (Beattie, 2015; Breathnach et al., 2017; Colliver & Fleer 2016; Duncan, 2015; Goldfarb, 2019; Howard et al., 2006; İvrendi et al., 2019; Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Øksnes, 2008; Pilten & Pilten, 2013; Wong et al., 2011) and excitement while they played (Ogelman et al., 2019; Sandseter, 2009; Veitch et al., 2007; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006; Yılmaz & Pala, 2019).

Yet, the participant children also reported that certain stressful moments accompanied the pleasantness of play, as when children played the same game over and over despite the fear expressed. Previous studies with children below age eight revealed similar findings, where children reported playing despite discomfort they experienced, such as deriving joy from the spin while feeling dizzy (Jansson, 2008; Theobald et al., 2015). This can further be supported by the adult theories of play. For instance, as Sutton-Smith (2017) maintains, play is not all joy and happiness, yet, it also brings up a variety of emotions such as rage, fears, surprise, disgust, sadness, experiences of which are important for children's emotional development and well-being. Also, tension in play comes from the rules and goals it has, which in fact does not counter the joy or excitement derived from it (Gordon, 2009; Gray, 2009, 2013; Huizinga, 1980).

On the other side of the coin of feelings aroused in play, while lack of play is coined with such unappalling feelings as sickness, certain factors and interactions such as overlooking a child's demands and needs, unfair treatment by playmates, being stuck in the same role, lack of cooperation, and waiting for one's turn instead of directly delving into play were unappealing to children. As Lester and Russell (2010) maintain, despite the common matching of play with innocence and fun,

specific moments in play cause children negative feelings (Löfdahl & Hägglund, 2006).

Regarding the negative experiences in these cases, they seemt to revolve around certain interactional processes among children that were transmitted to different situations through relationship dynamics. For instance, children who tended to not speak up to certain child or children could stay silent in the face of an injustice, such as violation of one's rights. Unless someone, including the child herself, spoke up, this could continue. Being stuck in the same role as well can be explained by a child's characteristics, such as being overweight, where Umay remained in the same role because he could not run faster than his peers.

As my observations suggest, such unpleasant situations can not only cause children extreme distress when continued (i.e. Umay: "I want to kill myself. Because nobody loves me."), they can continue till a child or an adult interjects and protests. According to Löfdahl and Hägglund (2006), though, when children are given time and space in the face of such encounters, they can have the chance to work out on these hurtful affections and increase their skills for coping with stress. For instance, the rejection Mia experienced as her friends left the game, she went to the trampoline to jump for some time and then lied down to watch the sky, till she recovered and started feeling better. Korpela et al. (2002) support this finding in their study with eight years old children. That is, children reported that they went to certain spaces to get their composure back or to feel better usually after an emotionally difficult situation (Korpela et al, 2002).

Wohlwend (2004), on the other hand, claims that sometimes the duration and after-effects of such situations can continue a long time among children, which can be confronted effectively only with the involvement of the whole group of children

and the adults in an egalitarian gathering. This reminds me of the moments when a child spoke up to another child with the words children and the teacher spoke in the classroom, as when Gül responded to Yaprak “You cannot tell me to shut up. You cannot yell at me. I have a right to talk”. That is, the usual language and interactional processes experienced in the classroom, what Wohlwend (2004) puts as an involvement of all parties in an egalitarian gathering, can be transferred through children’s own agencies to the settings when children get into negative experiences with each other, instead of either going to an adult for solution or staying silent in the face of one’s discomfort.

6.4 Do children attribute certain elements to play?

Although children did not differentiate between their categories of play as adults had done in literature (see Parten, Piaget, and Smilansky), for some of the participant children, play had the element of imagination, pretending and/or fantasy. That is, these children referred to certain games as “only joking” or “not in reality” to indicate that it was a play moment. Previously reported in the literature, children in preschool ages differentiated between play and non-play by describing play as different from reality and joking (Husser, 2017; Ogelman et al., 2019; Rogers & Evans, 2006; Yılmaz & Pala, 2019). While this element of play was not encompassing the whole definition of play, children know when someone is in or out of play by that person’s being in the reality versus being in the imaginary space, what Bateson put as metacommunication (1956). Here, children were aware of the clues when one is pretending, only joking, or acting outside the reality, which is play.

On the other hand, pretending or imagination had an emotional aspect for it freed children momentarily from the limitations of reality and lets them experience

situations and emotions in a fantasy world or fantasy moment, as when children yelled joyously that they would like to go to space and wished that the characters from the child media they watched were real. As adults' theories of play confirm, it was a limited time and space where children were free to create new contexts and employed their earlier experiences (Huizinga, 1980; Miller, 1968). Studies done with children demonstrate that imagination, pretending, and fantasy created conditions where children exerted their agency and frame situations as they liked (Theobald et al., 2015; Wing, 1995). Similar to what Wood (2012) revealed, imagination was the participant childrens' realm in this stdy where they determined the roles, scenarios and limits, and could indulge in the power they exercise (Wood, 2012).

6.5 How do children distinguish play from non-play?

The complexity of the definition of play has proved a challenge in this study, as it had before to other researchers (Huizinga, 1980; Gray, 2013). As Wood (2012) puts it, "we can never fully understand the complexities of play, even from the perspectives of the players themselves" (p.4). Not only adults' ways of contemplating play differ, let alone children in the same setting having a unified conceptualization of what is play and non-play, even the same child may hold contradictory views of play (S. Axelson, personal communication, April 17, 2020).

Despite the variety and changing nature of what is play and what is not, I could not gather enough data to help me clarify what I was hearing. One obstacle that can account for this can be the language children and I exhanged to express ourselves (Pálmadóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2015). According to previous research experiences with preschoolers, the language of an adult researcher can lead children in a certain direction (Theobald et al., 2015), children may feel obliged to answer in a certain

way (Einarsdóttir, 2007) or the researcher may not clearly understand the message that the child delivers.Similarly in this study, sometimes what children said was indicating me something obvious, as when I perceived creation of Mia's menu was play. Yet, the child was falsifying me, as in "No (creating menu was not play. But I will play with it at home)". Upon our conversation on what the place of that menu was in her play, I stepped onto another "obvious" point for me, which was "since you will use it in real life to refer to your real life, you will probably be re-creating your real-life experience in your play. So, using your menu with your mom is play?". As Mia sufficed with an affirmative nod, my "obvious" point was confirmed. Such was an occasion that led me doubt if I had led the child to answer that way. Not only she might have understood something other than what I had meant, I may as well have understood something other than she meant. Those were moments where I felt like no matter how hard I tried, there were going to be times I would not grasp what the child meant exactly.

Nevertheless, not all children brought up the distinction between play and non-play. On occasions where it was voiced, play seemed to be coined with activities that engaged more than one person, when there was a scenario, a set of rules to the activity, and active creation by the child. For example, Mia defined the scene where Sakman and Umay were building a home and child figures with while sitting on the floor in the garden as play, whereas for Mia Yemeksu and Gül who had been walking around alone were not playing. Previous studies build on this finding in an aspect: child's active doing or creation. That is, children aged three to five in several studies commented on their play as activities where they actively did something (İvrendi et al., 2019; Ogelman et al., 2019; Tuğrul et al., 2014b; Vickerius & Sandberg, 2006; Wong et al., 2011). This can be further supported by adults'

definitions of play as having its goals, order, and rules (Gordon, 2009; Gray, 2013; Huizinga, 1980). Therefore, children may interpret play as an activity with a visible goal.

On the other hand, play appeared to be related with a child's motivation to relieve negative emotions, such as sadness. Again, the child expresses it as her creation, something she exercises her will to build to alleviate her conscious awareness of a negative affection. Although previous research does not directly address this finding, they support the importance of play in a child's regulation of her/his feelings (Lester & Russell, 2010; Sutton-Smith, 2017), lack of which was coined with disruption of emotional and physical well-being in presch(Gray, 2011; Pellis & Pellis, 2006; Sutton-Smith, 2017).

6.6 Is play a social or solitary activity for children?

According to children, play could be either a social or solitary activity. Although children reported playing alone while still having fun, their primary and frequent answers involved playing with other children. In some cases, playing with friends was expressed as the best condition to play. This builds on the previous research which indicated that children favor playing with peers best (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2007; Duncan, 2015; Glenn et al., 2012; Howe, 2016; İvrendi et al., 2019; Löfdahl, 2005; Miller & Kuhaneck, 2008; Ogelman et al., 2019; Theobald et al., 2015). Similar to what Parsons and Howe (2013) reported, having similar interests was a factor that brings children together to play. A further assumption can highlight the social aspect of play as it brought preschool children together with their friends (Rogers & Evans, 2006). Yet, when there is no one to share similar interests with, this can become a reason to isolate and be excluded willfully or unintentionally.

The fact that Capi could play football only with a child from another classroom in a way limited his play chances to outdoor times where he could come together with that friend or more children who like to play football.

When it comes to the presence of adults in play, the participant children rarely referred to adults while talking about play. There are several reasons that can account for why adults were rarely brought up. For instance, our conversations were mostly about children's actual play experiences on the same day. As these experiences did not always involve a teacher or an adult, this might tell why children did not actually refer to the adults but to each other while reflecting on their play. Pyle and Alaca (2016) support this assumption. A second reason is possibly the way I framed questions as when talking about a drawing, since I began conversing by asking primarily open-ended questions as “Who does the child play with? Is there someone around or is the child alone? How did the child go to that park?” etc. As Theobald et al. (2015) maintain, the way researchers frame their questions can lead children to think and answer in the expected manner.

Nevertheless, there are numerous aspects to adults’ presence in play that were either visible at first sight or were felt rather at a subtle vibe. Apart from the initiations of children or adults to play together, there were occasions where children used an adult as a prop in their play, which showed that children were exercising power and agency over the roles adults might take in their play. In addition, the interactions where I heard an adult voice although it was the child speaking was a source of ambiguity as to what I heard about the child’s definition of play, such as Mia’s “What makes play is its creativity”. This might be reflecting their interactions with other adults such as parents, teachers, or me as the researcher (Milne, 2009) or whether the child was trying to leave me out of her play as a gatekeeper. Several

studies confirm children's gatekeeping as the ways to block or enable the researcher from learning their perspectives (Alderson, 2005; Markström & Halldén, 2009). Even when adults are not present at the first sight, their expectations and teaching might still have a place in the way a child frames or expresses play. Gol-Guven (2016) shares my thinking as she maintains that "despite adult non-presence, children felt the obligation to play according to adult rules" (p.126), where she witnessed that kids stopped playing according to their perceived expectations of adults even when adults had not been there. Milne (2009) supports this perception of children of adults, in that, children in her study perceived a difference between themselves and the adults, which together with children's perceptions of adults' expectations, led children to behave different from what they would have liked (Dupree, Bertram, & Pascal, 2001).

Apart from the ambiguity of adults' presence in play, both my observations and children's talks with me underline that children asked adults for help such as providing a material or report a conflict such as when there was hitting or insistent trespassing to one's ongoing play, which is supported by Einarsdottir (2014). Yet, no child mentioned a difference between play and non-play based on whether or not there was an adult control, unlike what several previous studies demonstrated (Ceglowski & Bacigalupa, 2007; Colliver & Fleer 2016; Einarsdottir, 2014; Howard et al., 2006; Øksnes, 2008; Pilten & Pilten, 2013).

From my personal observations as well, I rarely saw the teacher interfered in children's games unless someone was hurt, or children took an issue to the teacher. Yet, regarding the content of play, the teacher stayed around without intervening even at those times I was thinking she would. For instance, when children were climbing very high and taking challenging positions on the monkey bars, Sakman

kept observing children and on rare occasions she reminded children “Can you handle that?”. On occasions where I thought the teacher would intervene at the sight of the game, as when Mia was jumping on Ponpon in recreation of a scary moment where Ponpon was supposed to be a sleeping baby, Sakman’s attention focused on children every now and then. She at a point interjected calmly “Girls, I do not want you to jump on each other. That will hurt you”. Seeing the willingness of Ponpon to continue the game, Mia grinned and said “But Ponpon wants that”. Upon Sakman’s reminder of the border “That will hurt you”, children primarily lowered the intensity of jumping only to increase it sooner. Such moments were interesting because probably due to my previous experience, there were occasions when I thought the teacher would stop children, but she did not. She was there, present, observing some kids while playing with others. Yet, she did not stop children’s game due to content, loudness, lots of movement, or risk. She sufficed with standing close when spotting a danger, either directly intervening or reminding children to go ahead as long as they think they can “handle the consequences”. Allowing children to take risks or express emotions while staying in certain safety border can be important as they allow children to explore unusual experiences and become more confident in evaluating risk, a point confirmed by previous studies (Little, 2006; Wyver & Little, 2008).

Although on rare occasions, I saw and heard children’s discontent about interruptions of their play by the teacher for such reasons as transition to outdoors time or lunch time (Rogers & Evans, 2006). Children neither brought up a distinction between play and work, which might also be due to the way I framed my questions. As Theobald et al. (2015) underline, asking children “is this play? is this work?” can be leading them to think of the matter in this aspect and answer accordingly. Since I did not ask “Is this play or work?”, I avoided having a part in such a leading.

While no child reported playing with their teacher primarily, upon a more direct questioning they stated that children also play with their teacher. Although I had already observed them playing with their teacher and/or inviting their teacher to play sometimes, I still wanted to see what comes to children's minds first when I ask about their playmates. The role of helper is attached firstly to the things a child does with her/his teacher, whereas playing comes secondary. This is compatible with the findings of the other studies with preschoolers (Husser, 2017; Pálmadóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2015; Pramling-Samuelsson & Johansson, 2009) where children primarily attributed such roles as helping and facilitating to their teachers although still reporting enjoying playing with them. While previous research suggests that children tend to perceive the activities with a teacher nearby as work, I did not gather any related findings, which might be explained by my data collections tools. Such mentioned research relied on showing children photos where children were sitting at a table or on the ground with a teacher nearby, which prechoolers mostly defined as non-play or work (Howard, 2002; Howard et al., 2006). In this study, children were asked questions primarily about their actual play experiences, which did not bring a play versus work dichotomy. Since children usually played alone without the teacher's interruption, this may clarify why they did not mention an adult control or obligation in their play. This can be supported by Pyle and Alaca (2016) as they point to the role of children's usual experiences in accounting for their such distinctions.

6.7 What do children need or wish to have for their play?

When I directly asked children: "What would you like to change there? What would you like here?", their answers usually involved outdoors, nature, and materials.

Among the places where children played, outdoors cover an important space usually as they referred to the school yard, a park or just outside. When I asked children to give me school tours, they preferred to show me the outdoors, even upon me asking "Is there something inside the classroom or the building that you like?". Except when Gül led me through indoors too, while still elaborating more on outdoors. Previous research supports this where preschoolers underlined that they liked to be and play outdoors (Einarsdóttir, 2005; Glenn et al., 2012); that preference for outdoors is due to the possibilities it offers for physical activities (Clark, 2007); and a variety of challenging and risky experiences the outdoors provide (Sandseter, 2009; Stephenson, 2003; Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015), which is consistent with the participant children's elaboration on the monkey bars, the big swing, balancing tyres, etc. where they could challenge themselves for engaging in feared but thrilling play.

Regarding the school garden, probably due to our common knowledge and direct experience of the school yard, the participant children elaborated more on the places inside the garden compared to the places beyond the schoolyard. Like what Clark (2007) revealed, garden had several meanings to the preschoolers as a den for Umay to go and swing, places to hide for Ponpon from an imaginary threat such taking refuge in the wooden house from a dinosaur, a solitary place for Mia to retreat to pull her composure together such as the trampoline, or a big swing to come together to create a scary and exhilarating game as when imagining being chased by a villain duke which further propels children to swing faster and faster. It appears that despite the visible content of the garden at first sight, children took initiative and exerted their agency to create new places there, as in turning the old house into a toy where they protected themselves. To support this, children in the study by Norðdahl and Einarsdóttir (2015) stated that the wooden blocks mattered to them because they

were places where they could hide, play, rest, or chill. Hougie (2010) as well, revealed the restorative role of places where children could relax and get their composure back. My observations of indoors support this finding. I saw Yemeksu and Mia hiding behind the costumes usually after an upsetting experience, as when Yemeksu's play was turned upside down by Capi, or when Mia was rejected from participating a game that Sakman, Capi and Deniz were playing. Yet, as research suggests, this may be due to the limited space of indoors as it is smaller and designed more closed-ended compared to outdoors (Clark, 2007; Hougie, 2010; Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015) which can limit children's chances to find a spot to retreat.

Nature was another component that came up from children's accounts. Children imagined and stated that they liked to be and/or play in nature where they could feel and enjoy the sun and fresh air, smell flowers and lavenders, and chase butterflies. This indicates that children liked to be close to the beauties of nature, a finding that is consistent with previous research (Clark, 2007; Hougie, 2010; Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015).

Materials are another sub-theme that emerged from children's accounts. The diversity of materials, as diverse toys and corners that are outdoors and indoors, can add color to children's play as well as responding to children's differing needs and interests. The quality of a materials mattered to the children as well, as it blocked or facilitated their play. That is, a material that was not suitable to children's size or purposes of use were not be as fun as it used to be, as when Umay did not like it when the bar on the monkey bar was lowered, which went against Umay's need to climb higher. While the number of materials was not brought up as a problem often, varying conditions and contexts turned it into a problem as well, such as delaying the fun for Deniz and leading her to get into conflict due to an insufficient number of

toys. These findings are consistent with previous research with kindergartners (Jansson, 2008). Consulting to children's knowledge and opinions of toys and play spaces can enrich their play experiences further (Clark, 2007).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

With this study, I aimed to understand children's perspectives of play. My goal was to explore what understandings and meanings they hold about their play. Secondly, I wanted to learn about the applicability of a phenomenological study for researching by examining the ways children participated in the study. In this chapter, I summarize the contributions and implications of the study to the existing theories of and definitions of play, children's perspectives of play, and ECE practice. I conclude the chapter by outlining the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

7.1 Contributions

The study has described what the participating children identified as play, the benefits they attached to play, the content and conditions of their play experiences, and their wishes for play. This knowledge contributes to existing studies about children's play.

7.1.1 Children tailored their degree of participation in the research.

The degree to which children revealed their perspectives changed. Sometimes children would only talk about the things they wanted while avoiding answering my questions. Sometimes they brought their game to our conversation. Some moments were special to children for some reason as they refused to talk about them. Occasionally, children asked me to drop a conversation as what her/his peer was saying caused discomfort to her/him. Children's differing capabilities of verbal

expression as well as their will to express themselves resulted in a skewed picture where children's participation was not equal to one another.

7.1.2 Children have a motivation to build skill and seek thrill in play while they still want to be safe.

Children in this study were aware of the risks they engaged in while taking on a challenge. They engaged in calculation of risk and their capabilities along with the expected outcome of thrill. When they hesitated that they may not be able to handle the risk, they asked for help either from a peer or from an adult nearby. That is, children were aware of their capabilities and needs. Despite the moment when someone was hurt, children showed flexibility as to go back to play the same game once the hurt friend recovered.

Building skills appeared to go hand in hand with children's engagement in challenging and thrilling play. Both outcomes of play took place in similar places which allowed children to engage in the aforementioned calculations of risk, joy, required skills for completing the task and whether to ask for help. This indicates that children exerted their knowledge and agency to notice their needs, motivations, and capabilities, which possibly resulted in development of certain skills. For such processes to happen, it seems important to provide them with space to allow children to notice these factors and exert their agencies. Connected with children's need to feel safe, educators can ensure that the outdoors are safe and still full of opportunities to engage in challenging and risky action. As for some children voice, having trustworthy adults nearby can let children feel safe which further facilitates play.

Children also had an idea about their reasons or motivations for play (Hougie, 2010) and consciously continued it in their free time despite the fear they had and the

risk they faced. When the self-initiated aspect of play behavior is considered, it can be assumed that the counted outcomes of play can be optimized when children's motivations are considered (Gray, 2013; Vygotsky, 1966). That is, an internally driven play, one that is conducted with the motivations and awareness of children, can facilitate children's acquirements of certain skills and feelings out of play.

7.1.3 For children, play has a sentimental aspect.

Not only when seeking thrill, play was usually a pleasant experience for the children. The lack of play, on the other hand, causes distress. In addition, certain interactional processes among children can continue through play which can caused children differing degrees of unpleasant affections such as being unloved or a desire to stop existing to end the caused pain of being ignored.

I cannot help but wonder the role of adults and children in maintaining or disrupting these cycles where a child or a group of children keep suffering in the face of unfairness, being ignored or stuck in a role, having difficulty cooperating, etc. During my observations, I witnessed certain moments where a child spoke up to the "unfairness" of another child, reminding her to wait for her turn instead of violating another friend's turn. Such was an instance where the cycle was broken, at least momentarily. Also, there were cases, when children called out to the teacher when there was physical harm caused to them or invasion of play space by a peer, which again broke the cycle, at least momentarily. Although very rare, when the teacher noticed the discomfort on a child's face, she came closer and asked: "Are you okay?". To my surprise, the discomforted child together with the one who caused the discomfort cooperated and evaded the teacher's interruption, saying "yes, we are good". This was unlike the moments when children took initiative to ask for help

only when the teacher's intervention appeared to be welcome to the children. This questioning takes me back to Wohlwend (2004), who claims that the disruption of such a cycle can be confronted effectively only with the involvement of the whole group of children and the adults in an egalitarian gathering, where adults and children are there to understand each other and create the optimal conditions for existing together.

7.1.4 Children like to be outdoors, stay close to nature and its beauties.

Children have a preference for outdoors, possibly due to the freedom it allows for moving around, the chances to engage in physical activity (Clark, 2007) or challenging and thrilling play (Sandseter, 2009), and having space to create one's own meanings for places (Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015). Children's expressions about nature, on the other hand, involve enjoying its beauties such as sunbathing, smelling flowers and chasing butterflies, which is confirmed by previous research (Clark, 2007; Norðdahl & Einarsdóttir, 2015). Research also shows that such being close to and having positive sentiments for nature in early years is related with an environment friendly attitude in later years (Bögeholz, 2006).

7.1.5 Play is a primarily social activity with peers as playmates, whereas the place of adults in child's play is rather ambiguous.

For the participant children, play was a mainly social activity although they reported play alone or enjoy being alone as well. Children's reported playmates were largely other children, where having similar interests and being at the similar ages were important factors that brought children together. Regarding the adults in play, both my observations and children's accounts showed that they also interacted and played

with adults. In the seeming absence of other children or the distress the child appeared to experience such as rejection, either the teacher or the children initiated a play together. Apart from such play initiations, there were occasions where children exercised their agency and power in benefiting from an adult as a prop in their play. In addition, there were occasions although the child did not necessarily mention an adult, I heard either the child's perception of an adult or adults' expectations or heard the voice of adults transferred to me through the children. Previous studies explain this as the reflection of children's perceptions of what adults think of and expect from them (Dupree et al., 2001; Milne, 2009).

7.1.6 Play created conditions where children could exert power and exercise their agencies.

With imagination, pretending and fantasy in play, children create situations, scenarios, and roles where they not only experience exhilaration, but also feel powerful and in control. With their play spaces, children use and give meanings to certain spaces either individually or collectively, such as a place to hide, protect, create a game, or relax. Children also held an opinion about their motivations for play, such as the exhilaration or building certain skills. They calculated, joy, required skills for completing the task and whether to ask for help from each other or adults nearby, which demonstrates that children exerted their knowledge and agency to notice their needs, the feelings aroused in them and the capabilities they have. As such, children to use their resources and discover non-ordinary experiences (Elkind, 2008; Stephenson, 2003) while they engage in risk evaluation (Wyver & Little, 2008), build skills and confidence (Little, 2006). It seems important to provide them with space to allow children to notice these factors and exert their agencies.

7.2 A concluding remark

Children in this study were active and competent actors. They imagined and drew their imaginations; later created a story of their drawings together with their stories. They played and reflected on their play. They took me on school tours, reflected on what the places and tools meant to them, and why. They told me when to stop and when to continue. They helped me generously by listening to me and explaining their perspectives.

Notwithstanding, the findings of the study took me back to the questions I had in mind prior to embarking on this study:

> Was it (play) when children played by themselves where I could be there to help when they asked for it? What was my role as an early-years educator or as an adult? To set the setting and let children play? Or to take control in my own hands and transform my adult learning agenda into a playful tone, so that children could absorb in my teachings with fun?

In an effort to make sense of the questions above, the findings remind me of a workshop where a bunch of adults including me were asked to draw about a happy moment from our childhood. What stood out in common was intriguing: we all imagined a place where there were adults nearby, so close that we felt secure, yet, so far that we felt independent and powerful either on our own or with friends, be it older or younger children.

Looking at the data, my memory of the workshop is enhanced. No matter they call it play or not, I see that children need a space, security, materials, and friends for play so that they can exercise their agency and power, to create their own meanings, to fulfill their motivations for play either alone or with the other(s). As such, I cannot help but share the concern of many; that adults' and authorities' concern for organizing children's play to make sure they learn and

develop enough for the future might be shadowing children's agency, their right to play and have fun now (Gray, 2013; Kane, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2001).

7.3 Significance and implications of the study

The study is significant in the context of early childhood education and research in Turkey in numerous aspects. The literature review on the meanings of play shows that not a single study so far was conducted in Turkey to comprehend how children aged five-to-six view play as a concept within a phenomenological design. It is the primary and single long-term phenomenological study with in-depth observation to elicit conversations that aimed to understand how a group of preschool children conceptualized their play. In addition, the study is important as it gives voice to the teacher's observations and practices regarding children and their play. Beyond the views of participants, I depict my dispositions and reflections both prior and during the study to be able to present my own role in the development and analysis of the study.

The study has contributed to the discipline of early childhood education in several manners. From a conceptual point, the study provides a framework for further studies to question and transform the understanding and meaning of play which accentuates children's need for space, security, materials, and friends to exert their agencies on an individual and collective manner. This outline can guide teacher education programs, in-service training of teachers in practice and the development of programs. In addition, it informs the early childhood policy makers in Turkey in incorporation of children's voices and agenda to the policy notes, as children are aware of their needs and the benefits they derive from play.

Regarding the methodological implications of the study, it proposes that researchers take their time in the field and use a variety of tools to be able to increase the chances of hearing young children in greater depth. In addition to a concern to hear children, researchers need to ensure that they are attentive and respectful to children's agency as they tailor their participation by verbal or non-verbal dissent. Also, power relations among children must be watched out for their domination of some children's participation despite their willingness in the research. This proposal can guide new studies in early childhood in Turkey and help to raise children's voices.

While such studies provide a clue about what a group of children like, prefer and wish to do or have, each group of children is unique. As with the practical inferences of the study, the study suggests that teachers observe and listen children to understand their play experiences and preferences in their free time so that not only these topics can be brought up in classroom discussions, but also be reflect onto the design of indoors and outdoors spaces, and time for play. Whether or not children call what they do in their free play time as play, the way they want or wish to regulate the unstructured time they are given needs to be listened to. Such are the practical recommendations that can be taken out of this study and applied by the current and prospective educators and practitioners.

7.4 Limitations of the study

According to van Manen (2017), the written output of any phenomenological study "should be read tentatively with a questioning attitude" (p.795), especially when an adult is trying to understand the lived experiences of children as an outsider. As an outsider and an adult, I can only comprehend children's experiences of play through

my subjectivity, no matter how hard I try not to (Eberle, 2014). For instance, children reported that there were thrilling moments in play and chances to develop physical skills, which I heard as "children's motivation for play". That is, the contruction of this theme is a reflection of my subjective interpretation although I had been striving to get closer to children's understandings. Therefore, although I used some tools in order not to rely on an only adult language, the findings of this study are my interpretation and my subjectivity, therefore, should be read with a questioning stance.

Regarding the question of if children made any distinction between play and non-play, only a child brought up this distinction herself. On such occasions, I felt a language barrier among me and the child. That is, as I avoided questioning insistently with a concern to not overwhelm the child, I could not dig further into the child's seemingly obvious fact "it is (was) not play". As such, I felt that at a point I had to rely on the clues the child had provided me so far with (i.e. when Mia told me she was going to use the menu book at home for her play with her mother). Also, I had a concern to raise children's awareness about their play as it could have taken them way from the actual experience of play (M. Walter, personal communication, April 13, 2018). Further, the way I talked about my observation time as in "I am taking note of your play" might have led children to think that I considered what I saw as play but nothing else, potentially limiting our conversations as well.

Also, the findings of this study are pertinent only to the children who participated in this study. Even among the participant children, their participation levels differed. As I had to rely primarily on children's talking with me and among themselves, those with better language skills had a bigger part in the findings. Thus,

the findings of this study do not aim generalizability to other contexts that have their unique characteristics and experiences.

Still another limitation concerned the data collection tools and schedule. As children either played or took part in an activity during an educational day, my invitations to converse were not always accepted. One way to counter this could be extending the research time beyond the educational days, assuming it would suit the participants as well. Also, use of disposable cameras by each child could alleviate certain limitations of the data collection. For instance, the data would not be confined to what the camera of the researcher grabbed or what the researcher observed. That is, disposable cameras could create a variety of options to generate further conversation about children's experiences and perspectives. Importantly, use of cameras by each child would let them exercise power and space. Although this would be more suitable with the starting point of this study, I could not provide children with cameras since I could not afford them financially. Since I was using a single borrowed camera, I could not afford lending it to the children either.

7.5 Future recommendations

While early years are becoming ever more institutionalized and increasing number of children are attending ECE institutions, how play, which is recognized as a right of child by UNCRC (1989), is experienced by children is important to know. In addition, how children see play as a concept and their lived experiences are researched relatively less than the meanings and experiences of adults. Recognizing this, future research can add to the diverse knowledge about children's experiences of play or free time which can enrich the practices of educators and practitioners.

The study indicates that certain unpleasant interactional processes among children can be maintained in the free play time when not intervened, as with being stuck in a role due to one's being overweight, creating a cycle which is created or continued in play experiences. One suggestion to overcome this is that educators might consider moving towards a discussion of such dynamics in play with children. This suggestion creates new questions for future research around the role of educator(s), children, and a cooperation among the two parties in maintenance and/or disruption of such a cycle.

The role and place of adults in children's play stay ambiguous. The way children experience and express their play experiences and definitions might reflect their involvements with adults' definitions and expectations. One suggestion to the researchers can be a design of study which research not only with children, but also primary adults in their lives such as parents and teachers to understand children's conceptualizations of play at a more profound level.

The study demonstrates that children are aware of their preferences, needs and the benefits they derive from play. A recommendation to this can be a cooperation among children and practitioners in the creation of play time and spaces. The study by Clark and Moss (2005) is an example to how listening to children's voices enriched the educational experience. Such a venture could inform the development of the play-based curriculum for ECE, as the one Ministry of Education maintains. Future research can employ an action research or participatory approach where children share the role of investigators along the adults to understand how play spaces and time could be constructed together.

APPENDIX A

DAILY ROUTINE FOR THE PARTICIPANT CLASSROOM

(AGE GROUP FIVE TO SIX)

08:30 (am)	Arrival
08:30- 08:50	A quiet activity with a caregiver, i.e. father, mother, a grandparent (This is encouraged yet is not the norm. Classrooms can make amendments).
08:50- 09:00	Clean-up
09:00- 09:20	Breakfast
09:20- 09:30	Clean-up
09:30- 10:00	Large group time
10:00- 10:10	Plan time
10:10- 10:45	Work time
10:45- 10:55	Recall time
10:55-11:00	Dressing up
11:00- 11:55	Outside time
11:55- 12:00	Clean-up
12:00- 12:30	Lunch
12:30- 12:40	Clean-up
12:40- 13:00	Child Education Program (Pre-literacy and language activities to prepare children for first grade of primary school)
13:00- 13:30	Story-telling and resting time
13:30- 14:45	Quiet activities
14:45- 15:00	Clean-up
15:00-15:20	Snacks time
15:20- 15:25	Clean-up
15:25- 15:45	Music-movement-dance
15:45- 16:15	Key experiences
16:15- 16:35	Work time
16:35- 16:40	Dressing up
16:40- 17:00	Outside time and departure

APPENDIX B

DAILY ROUTINE FOR A FULL-DAY PRESCHOOL AS PRESCRIBED BY THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.

Starting the day: During this period, the main goal is to help children adjust to the daily schedule and activities by talking about activities and their plans for where to play. Yet, this is not an unchangeable routine. Children can prefer another activity such as taking a walk with a focus on that day's activities. Following this, children start playing.
Free play time: Children play either indoors or outdoors.
Breakfast and clean-up time
Activity time: During this period, one or a few activities regarding Turkish language, music, mathematics, drama, play, science, movement, literacy, art or field trips can be carried out. These can take the form of individual, small or large group. The activities are determined according to what children need, the objectives determined by the teacher and the available time, indoors and/or outdoors.
Lunch and clean-up time
Rest time: The length of this period depends on the age group. Children can choose how to spend this time by taking a nap, reading a book, drawing, listening to a calm music, etc. Depending on the needs, a separate room for taking a nap can be accommodated.
Afternoon breakfast and clean-up time
Activity time: During this period, one or a few activities regarding Turkish language, music, mathematics, drama, play, science, movement, literacy, art or field trips can be carried out. These can take the form of individual, small or large group. The activities are determined according to what children need, the objectives determined by the teacher and the available time, indoors and/or outdoors.
Free play time: Children play either indoors or outdoors.
Review time: Children come together, and they review their day with the teacher. The teacher direct open-ended questions about where and what they played, and they evaluate what activities they did. Teachers are recommended to ask children for what they want to do regarding the next day. This way, children's participation in planning the activities can be ensured.
Departure time: children get prepared and say goodbye.
Overall review: after the educational day ends, an overall evaluation takes place. This is written with combination of previous review time.

APPENDIX C

VIEWS OF THE CLASSROOM

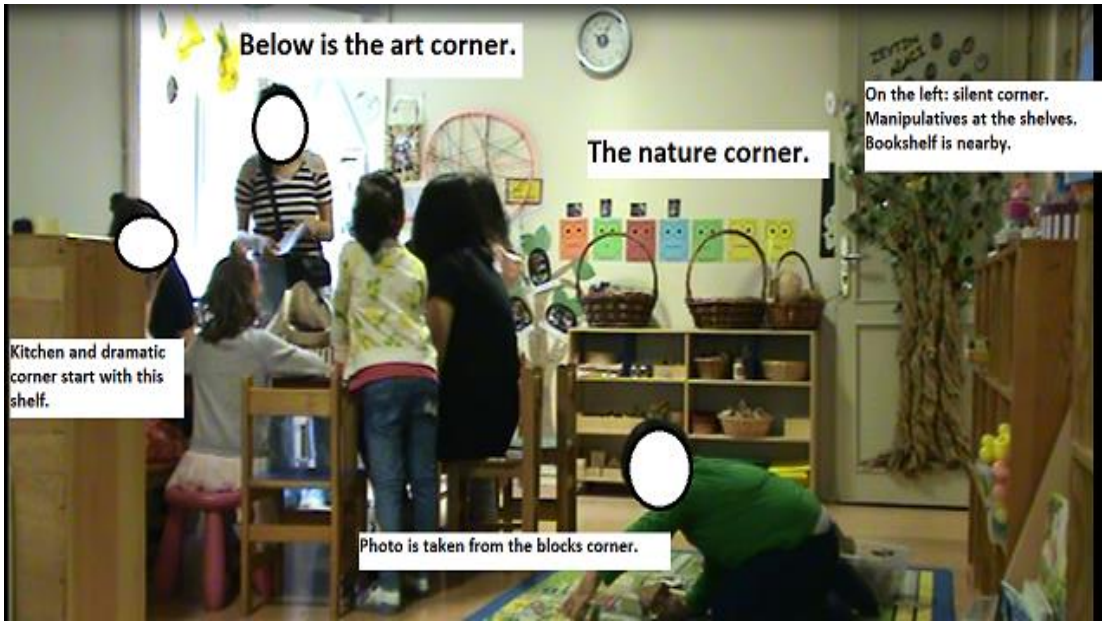


Figure C1. The art corner, nature corner, and silent corner

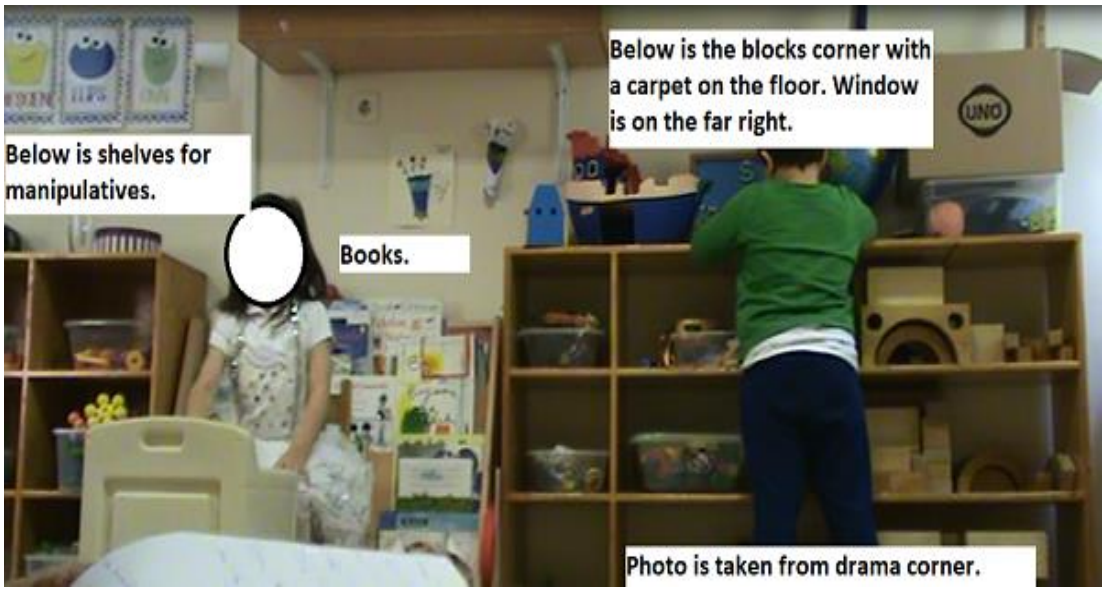


Figure C2. The manipulatives corner, books, and blocks corner

Figure C3. The puppets corner, costumes, and drama corner

Figure C4. The kitchen corner

APPENDIX D

DETAILS OF THE ITEMS IN THE GARDEN

Category	Number	Notes
Swings	2	Each for a single child.
Big Swing	1	Wooden. Takes up to four children.
Tyre-Swing	1	Located next to the single swings. The child sits on the tyre, holds on the rope, and swings him/herself.
Slide	1	A complex toy with an adjacent climbing ramp. Also has a steering wheel for a boat where children play the captain and the boat, or some other games.
Climbing Ramp	1	Has a rope tied to it and some steps to make climbing easy. Children climb either using the rope or only using the step.
Balancing on Tyres	4	For tyres are half buried in the ground of soil. Children step on them trying to maintain their balance.
Wooden House with a Garden	1	Garden is surrounded with a wooden fence and can take multiple children. The surface is soil. Trees cover a single side of the garden. The house is one store above the ground and is accessed with stairs; can take multiple children.
Monkey Bars	1	A reverse U-shaped toy. Two legs of the U have climbing stairs. The horizontal bar allows children to either walk with hand or feet. Has a rope tied to it which children use to climb up and down. Can take multiple children at a time. Ground is soft soil.
Backyard for Cycling	1	Includes an L-shape of the outer part of the school building. Surrounded by bushes. Has tricycles for single and multiple children. Ground is concrete.
A Bush-Covered Corridor	1	Is behind the monkey bars and the wooden house garden. A skeleton of reverse u-shaped metal bars makes up the corridor and is covered with green vine. Children use the closed space and climb the metal bars. Ground is soft soil.
Colorful Rain-Drainage Tubes	3	Children's height-level. Children use them for dropping materials through the tubes or making music hitting the tubes.
Rubber playground	1	Children play hopscotch and other games that are played with drawings on the ground. Also used by children to draw. The ground is soft and made up of colorful rubber.
Trampoline	1	A square-shaped toy covered with a net so that children will not fall off. Takes three to four children at a time.
Space in front of the basement	1	Surrounded with a fence and has a gate. Closed to children when there was a mom cat caring for its kittens.
Drawing Wall	1	A part of the garden's wall is spared for children to draw with chalks.
Benches	3	Two benches are in the form of a circle around each tree; the other one is a bench with table. Takes multiple people at a time. Is almost in the center of the garden.
Trees		Some with edible fruits. Both inside the garden and surrounding it.

APPENDIX E

VIEWS OF THE GARDEN

Figure E1. Entrance to the garden

Figure E2. Rubber playground

Figure E3. Monkey bars, the gate to the wooden house, and the corridor

Figure E4. The trampoline and monkey bars

Figure E5. The slide and the swings

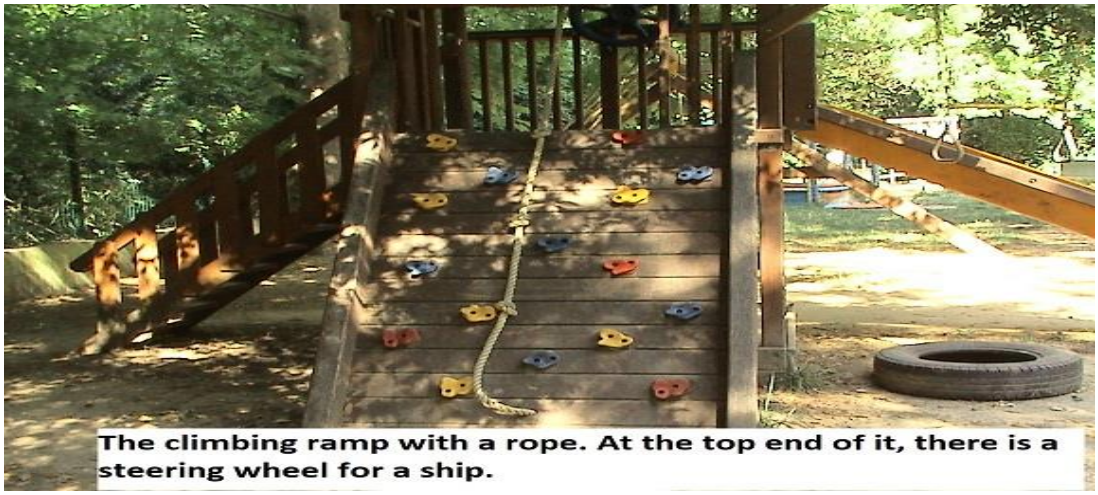


Figure E6. The climbing ramp

Figure E7. The big swing

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Title of the research: Understanding play from children's perspectives: A phenomenological study
The institute that supports the research: Boğaziçi University
Project manager: Assoc. Prof. Mine Göl-Güven
E-mail address: mine.golguven@boun.edu.tr
Office phone: +90 212 359 -- --
The researcher: Hatice Sapmaz
E-mail address: hatice.sapmaz1@gmail.com
hatice.sapmaz@boun.edu.tr
Phone number: +90 506 --- -- --

Project Topic: Play behavior is observed in animals and humans from early ages to adulthood. Why individuals play, does play have any functions, what children do and what they get during play has been at the forefront of many studies. In these studies, the ideas of adults were consulted to in general, or children were tried to be understood by only observing. In this thesis study, using different tools (such as observation, interview, photographing, video recording and children's products), children's own play experiences will be tried to be understood by observing them and asking them for their opinions. This study recognizes that children have the right to participate in issues that concern and affect them, and that children's ideas can turn into action. In this context, this thesis study requires to investigate how children make sense of their own play experiences in order to understand their play. Observations and interviews will be held at ..(participant school).

Consent: My name is Hatice Sapmaz, I am a student of Boğaziçi University- Institute of Social Sciences- Early Childhood Education programme. I invite you to participate in this thesis study. With your consent and assent from your child, I will conduct a study in your child's classroom. The assent of the children will be taken verbally throughout the study, in addition to the written consent and assent forms sent to you. The child who does not want to participate in any step of the research will not be included in the research. The daily activities of the child who is not included in the study will not be affected by this situation. If the child wishes, the researcher will still be able to interact with the child, participate in the game and chat with the child. The child who has not participated in the study will not face any negative reaction.

In this study, I will try to understand the activities of the children in the classroom, what play means to the children and what happens during their play. While the children are playing, I will observe and take notes about their games as a researcher. Meanwhile, a camera will record video of children's play. These records will be taken to allow me to remember the game activities more comfortably. We will be able to

watch these recordings later and have conversations with your child about the play experiences that I saw in the recordings and the play experiences in general. I will also examine the crafts that your child creates in the classroom and the performances in the classroom. Then we will be able to chat about these products and performances.

A total of 3 interviews are targeted with each child. Interviews will take place when children are willing to speak and want to chat with the researcher. The researcher or children will be able to start the conversations. In cases where the child does not want to participate in the interview, the researcher will not insist. The researcher will be able to repeat another time her interview invitation. As the conversations can proceed with the guidance of the child, they will also be shaped by the open-ended questions that the researcher determines; or from the questions based on observation notes, videotapes, photographs, or children's products. (I see you doing…. in this photo, would you like to tell me about it? How do you feel playing? Can you tell me about your favorite game?). Conversations will be held and recorded in the classroom, while other children continue their activities.

Privacy:

Your child's identity information will be kept confidential. As a researcher, I will know your child. But when I publish my study results, I will give all children a pseudonym. I will not share any special information that will cause children to be recognized. Opinions about play that are taken from your child can be used in publications other than this thesis, without giving name, place or identity information.

Possible Risks:

In order to eliminate the feelings of possible discomfort that children may feel from the presence of an adult they do not know in their class, the researcher will not collect data in the first week and will create opportunities for children to get to know her in the first days with the support of the teacher. During the process, the researcher will participate in a child's activities only when the child invites. In the research, children will be observed in natural school and classroom settings without intervention. The study (interview) with the child will be stopped either when the child states her/his discomfort verbally or when the researcher notices that the child avoids the researcher, that they stay away from the researcher or looks not interested. In cases where the child does not want to participate in the interview, the researcher will not insist. The researcher will be able to repeat another time her interview invitation. Daily activities of children who do not want to participate in the study will not be adversely affected in any way. The researcher will be able to chat and play with the child when the child wishes.

Possible Benefits:

It is not possible to tell in advance whether this work will benefit you and your child, and we cannot promise you this. It is likely that the research will provide information to teachers and specialists working with children about children's play, thereby helping children access to play and enjoy their play rights. Our research findings are expected to inform policies and practices in the field of early childhood education.

Regarding the Video and Audio Recordings of Children who Have not Given Assent and Participated in the Study:

The study will take place in children's natural classroom and school settings. The aim of the study is to understand how play behavior occurs in this classroom environment. It is not possible to distinguish children as “children participating in the study” and “children who do not participate in the study” during the study both for this reason and in accordance with the philosophy and practice of the school. The images and sounds of children not participating in the study will be recorded as long as they interact with the children participating in the study and share the same classroom environment and playgrounds. The recorded data of children who do not participate in the study and get their consent will in no way participate in data analysis.

The daily activities and interactions of children not participating in the study will not be adversely affected by this situation.

Withdrawal from the Research:

You and your child may stop participating in the study at any time, provided that it happens before the start of the data analysis. In this case, the information received from your child will be destroyed. Your child will be reminded that no negative reaction will happen to him/her upon her/his withdrawal from the study and that this situation is very natural.

For your Questions:

Before you sign this form, please ask if you have any questions about the study. Then, if you have any questions, you can ask the project manager Mine Göl-Güven (Office Phone: +90 212 359 7313). You can also consult to your local ethics committees about your rights related to the research:

Boğaziçi University Human Research Ethical Sub-Committee (INAREK).
E-mail*:sbinarek@boun.edu.tr*

If your address and phone number change, we ask that you notify us.

I understood what was told to me and what was written above. I have / do not want to get a copy of this form (in this case the researcher will keep this copy).

In case there is a participant below age 18:

Name and surname of the participant's parent, if any: .....
Signature: ....
Date (day / month / year): ..... / ..... / .....
Name and surname of the researcher: Hatice Sapmaz
Signature:
Date (day / month / year):

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

(TURKISH)

Araştırmanın Adı: Çocukların Gözünden Oyunu Anlamak: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma
Araştırmayı Destekleyen Kurum: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi
Proje Yürütücüsü: Dr. Öğrt. Üyesi Mine Göl-Güven
E-mail Adresi: mine.golguven@boun.edu.tr
Telefonu: +90 212 359 -- --
Araştırmacının Adı: Hatice Sapmaz
E-mail Adresi: hatice.sapmaz1@gmail.com
hatice.sapmaz@boun.edu.tr
Telefonu: +90 506 --- -- --
Proje Konusu: Oyun davranışı, hayvanlarda ve insanlarda erken yaşlardan yetişkinliğe gözlemlenmektedir. Oyun neden oynanır, herhangi bir işlevi var mıdır, oyun esnasında çocuklar ne yapar ve neler edinir sorularını cevaplamak için birçok çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmalarda genel olarak yetişkinlerin fikri alınmış ya da çocuklar yalnızca gözlemlenerek "çocuk oyun"u anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu tez çalışmasında ise, farklı araçlar kullanılarak (gözlem, görüşme, fotoğraf çekimi, video kaydı ve çocukların ürünleri gibi) çocukların kendi oyun deneyimleri, kendileri izlenerek ve kendi görüşleri sorularak anlaşılmaya çalışılacaktır. Bu çalışma, çocukların kendilerini ilgilendiren ve etkileyen konulara katılma haklarının olduğunu ve çocukların fikirlerinin eyleme dönüşebileceğini tanımaktadır. Bu bağlamda bu tez çalışması, çocukların oyunlarını anlamak için, çocukların kendi oyun deneyimlerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını araştırmayı gerekli görmektedir. Gözlem ve görüşmeler Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yuva Biriminde, sınıf ortamında, gerçekleştirilecektir.
Onam: Ben Hatice Sapmaz, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği yüksek lisans programı öğrencisiyim. Sizi bu tez çalışmasına katılmaya davet ediyorum. Sizin onayınız ve çocuğunuzdan alınacak onam ile, çocuğunuzun bulunduğu sınıfta bir çalışma gerçekleştireceğim. Çocukların onamı ise sizlere iletilen bir yazılı onam ile birlikte çalışma süresince devamlı olarak sözel olarak alınacaktır. Araştırmanın herhangi bir basamağına katılmak istemeyen çocuk, araştırmaya dahil olmayacaktır. Çalışmaya dahil olmayan çocuğun günlük aktiviteleri bu durumdan etkilenmeyecektir. Çocuğun istemesi durumunda araştırmacı yine de çocukla ilgilenebilecek, oyununa katılabilecek ve çocukla sohbet edebilecektir. Çalışmaya katılmayan çocuk herhangi bir olumsuz tepki ile karşılaşmayacaktır.

Bu çalışmada çocukların sınıf ortamındaki faaliyetleri ile çocuklar için oyun nedir ve oyun esnasında neler oluyor, anlamaya çalışacağım. Çocuklar oyun oynarken araştırmacı olarak ben, oyunlarına dair gözlem yapıp not alacağım. Bu esnada bir kamera oyun aktivitelerinin video kaydını yapacak. Bu kayıtlar oyun aktivitelerini

daha rahat hatırlamamı sağlamak için alınacak. Bu kayıtları daha sonra izleyip, çocuğunuzla kayıtlarda gördüğüm oyun aktivitelerine ve genel olarak oyun deneyimlerine dair sohbetler yapabileceğiz. Çocuğunuzun ayrıca sınıf içerisinde ürettiği ürünler ile sınıf içerisinde sergilediği performansları da oyun bağlamında inceleyeceğim. Sonrasında bu ürünler ve performanslar hakkında sohbet edebileceğiz.

Her bir çocukla toplamda 3 görüşme yapılması hedeflenmekte olup, görüşmeler, çocukların kendilerinin konuşmaya istekli oldukları ve araştırmacı ile sohbet etmek istedikleri zamanlarda olacaktır. Görüşmeyi araştırmacı ya da çocuklar başlatabilecektir. Çocuğun görüşmeye katılmak istemediği durumlarda araştırmacı ısrarcı olmayacaktır. Araştırmacı başka bir zaman görüşme davetini yineleyebilecektir. Sohbetler çocuğun yönlendirmesiyle ilerleyebileceği gibi, araştırmacının genel olarak belirlediği sorular ile gözlem notları, video kaydı, çekilen fotoğraflar ya da çocukların ürünlerinden yola çıkılarak oluşturulan sorularla da şekillenecektir (Seni bu fotoğrafta… yaparken görüyorum, bana bundan bahsetmek ister misin? Oyun oynarken nasıl hissedersin? Bana en sevdiğin oyundan bahseder misin?). Görüşmeler sınıfta, diğer çocuklar aktivitelerine devam ederken, gerçekleştirilecektir ve ses kaydı alınacaktır.

Gizlilik:

Çocuğunuzun kimlik bilgileri gizli tutulacaktır. Ben araştırmacı olarak çocuğunuzu tanıyor olacağım. Fakat çalışma sonuçlarımı yayınlarken bütün çocuklara birer takma isim vereceğim. Çocukların tanınmalarına sebep olacak herhangi özel bir bilgiyi paylaşmayacağım. Çocuğunuzdan alınan oyuna dair görüşler isim, yer ya da kimlik bilgisi verilmeksizin, bu tez çalışmasının dışında çıkacak yayınlarda kullanılabilecektir.

Olası Riskler:

Çocukların tanımadıkları bir yetişkinin sınıflarındaki varlığından duyabilecekleri olası rahatsızlık duygularını gidermek için, araştırmacı ilk hafta veri toplamayacak, öğretmenin desteğiyle ilk günlerde çocukların kendisini tanımasına fırsatlar yaratacaktır. Araştırmacı süreç boyunca, çocuk aktivitelerine ancak çocuk davet ettiğinde katılacaktır. Araştırmada çocuklar doğal okul ve sınıf ortamlarında müdahale edilmeksizin gözlemlenecektir. Çocukların araştırmacıdan uzak durdukları, araştırmacıdan kaçındıklarının ve kendilerini rahatsız hissettiklerinin fark edildiği ya da sözel olarak katılmak istemediklerini belirtmeleri durumunda, çocukla olan çalışma (görüşme) durdurulacaktır. Çocuğun görüşmeye katılmak istemediği durumlarda araştırmacı ısrarcı olmayacaktır. Araştırmacı başka bir zaman görüşme davetini yineleyebilecektir. Çalışmaya katılmak istemeyen çocukların günlük aktiviteleri hiçbir şekilde olumsuz olarak etkilenmeyecektir. Araştırmacı, çocuğun istediği durumlarda, çocukla sohbet edebilecek ve oyun oynayabilecektir.

Olası Yararlar:

Bu çalışmanın size ve çocuğunuza bir yarar getirip getirmeyeceğini şimdiden söylemek mümkün değildir ve size bu konuda söz veremeyiz. Araştırmanın ileride öğretmenlere ve çocuklarla çalışan uzmanlara çocukların oyunu konusunda bilgi vermesi ve bu sayede çocukların oyuna erişimleri ile oyun haklarından faydalanmaları

konularında yarar sağlaması muhtemeldir. Araştırma bulgularımızın erken çocukluk eğitimi alanındaki politikaları ve uygulamaları bilgilendirmesi beklenmektedir.

Onamı Alınmayan ve Çalışmaya Katılmayan Çocukların Görüntü ve Ses Kayıtlarına Dair:

Çalışma, çocukların doğal sınıf ve okul ortamlarında gerçekleşecektir. Çalışmada hedeflenen, oyun davranışının bu sınıf ortamında nasıl yaşandığını anlamaktır. Hem bu sebeple hem de okul felsefe ve uygulaması gereğince çocukları çalışma süresince "çalışmaya katılan çocuklar" ve "çalışmaya katılmayan çocuklar" olarak ayırmak mümkün değildir. Çalışmaya katılmayan çocukların görüntü ve sesleri de, çalışmaya katılan çocuklara etkileşimde bulundukları ve aynı sınıf ortamı ve oyun alanlarını paylaştıkları sürece kayda alınmış olacaktır. Çalışmaya katılmayan ve onamı alınmayan çocukların kayda alınan bu verileri hiçbir şekilde veri analizine katılmayacaktır. Çalışmaya katılmayan çocukların günlük aktivite ve etkileşimleri bu durumdan hiçbir olumsuz şekilde etkilenmeyecektir.

Çalışmadan Çekilme:

Siz ve çocuğunuz, verinin analizi başlamadan önce olmak şartıyla, istediğiniz zaman çalışmaya katılmaktan vazgeçebilirsiniz. Bu durumda çocuğunuzdan almış olduğumuz bilgiler imha edilecektir. Çocuğunuza, çalışmadan çekildiği için herhangi bir olumsuz tepkiyle karşılaşmayacağı ve bu durumun çok doğal olduğu hatırlatılacaktır.

Sorularınız İçin:

Bu formu imzalamadan önce, çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız varsa lütfen sorun. Daha sonra sorunuz olursa, proje yürütücüsü Mine Göl-Güven'e (Ofis Telefonu: +90 212 359 7313) sorabilirsiniz. Araştırmayla ilgili haklarınız konusunda yerel etik kurullarına da danışabilirsiniz:

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Alt Kurulu (INAREK).

Email:*sbinarek@boun.edu.tr*

Adres ve telefon numaranız değişirse, bize haber vermenizi rica ederiz.

Bana anlatılanları ve yukarıda yazılanları anladım. Bu formun bir örneğini aldım / almak istemiyorum (bu durumda araştırmacı bu kopyayı saklar).

18 YAŞ ALTI KATILIMCI VARSA:

Varsa Katılımcının VELİSİNİN Adı-
Soyadı:.....
İmzası:.....
Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....
Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı: Hatice Sapmaz
İmzası:
Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):

APPENDIX H

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

Title of the research: Understanding play from children's perspectives: A phenomenological study
Researcher: Hatice Sapmaz
Phone number: +90 506 --- -- --
Coordinator: Mine Göl-Güven

Hello ……..……..

I am Hatice Sapmaz. I am a student at Bogazici University. I study early childhood. I am interested in children's development, education, wellbeing, rights, and of course, play.

I want to talk to you about my research. A research helps us understand a topic very well. In this research, I will try to understand children's activities and play in their classroom and school. I invite you to this research.

If you want to participate in my research, what will be doing with you and your friends?

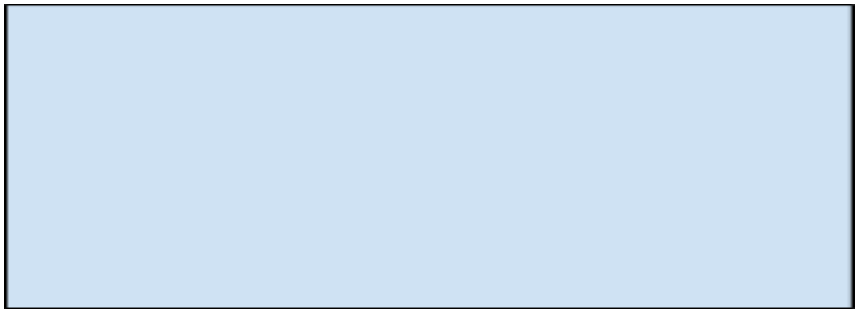
1. I will observe you and your friends in the classroom and take notes about your activities and play.
2. I will videotape your play. These records will help me remember you play. I and you may talk about what we see in these records as well.
3. I will be able to look at what you and your friends have done in the classroom, such as your drawings, dances, songs, artcraft, and stories
4. When you are willing, we can talk about your activities and play. I will be recording our conversations. Because I will have to listen to these to remember your play again.
5. When you are willing too I will sometimes participate in your play.

You do not have to take part in these activities, when you don't want it - when you feel tired, get bored or want to do something else- we can stop the activity. This will not be a problem for me. I can still spend time, play games or chat with you. Later you can join the study again if you want.

I will not tell your name to anyone. If there are things you do not want me to tell others, I will not tell them to anyone. I will keep your information safe.

Do you want to participate in my research?

If you want to participate in my research, please draw anything you want in the following box.



If you want to leave the study after participating in the study - when you feel tired, get bored or want to do something else - we can stop the activity. You can leave whenever you want without. Then you can join the study again if you want.

If you are confused, you can call me.

My phone number is +90 506 --- - -. If you call me, I can answer your questions. If you are confused, I can inform you. Then you can decide whether or not to participate in the study.

Please complete this form and bring it back to school. I need to keep these forms.

Thank you for your time ☺.

APPENDIX I

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

(TURKISH)

Çalışmanın Adı: Çocukların Gözünden Oyunu Anlamak: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma
Araştırmacı: Hatice Sapmaz
Telefon Numarası: +90 506 --- -- --
Koordinatör: Mine Göl-Güven

Merhaba ……..

Ben Hatice Sapmaz. Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde öğrenciyim. Erken çocukluk dönemi alanında çalışıyorum. Çocukların gelişimleri, eğitimleri, iyi olma halleri, çocuk hakları ve tabi ki oyunları ile ilgileniyorum.

Sana yapmakta olduğum bir araştırmadan bahsetmek istiyorum. Araştırma, bir konuyu çok iyi öğrenmene yardımcı olur. Bu çalışmamda, çocukların sınıflarında ve okullarında yaptıkları aktiviteleri ve oyunlarını anlamaya çalışacağım. Seni bu çalışmaya davet ediyorum.

Çalışmama katılmak istersen, seninle ve arkadaşlarınla neler yapacağız?

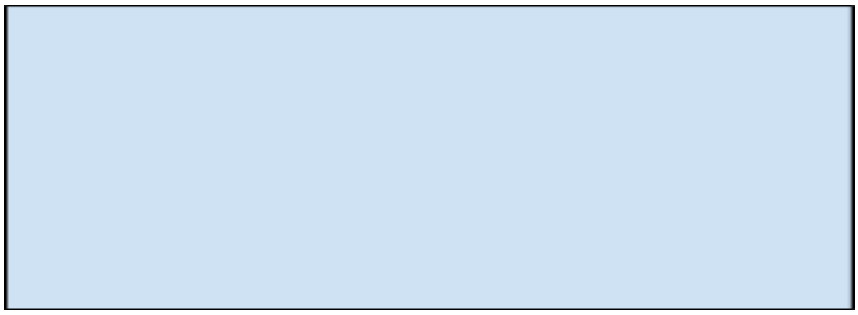
6. Seni ve arkadaşlarını sınıftayken izleyeceğim, aktivitelerinizi ve oyunlarınızı aklımda kalması için not alacağım.
7. Kameramla sizin oyunlarınızın video kaydını yapacağım. Bu videolar, sizin oyunlarınızı hatırlamamı kolaylaştıracak. Belki seninle birlikte bu videolarda gördüklerimize dair konuşacağız.
8. Senin ve arkadaşlarının sınıftaki faaliyetlerinizi inceleyebileceğim. Örneğin, çizimler, danslar, şarkılar, sanat ürünleri, hikayeler, yazılar gibi.
9. Sen istediğinde seninle okuldaki aktivite ve oyunlarına dair sohbet edebiliriz. Konuştuklarımızın ses kaydını yapacağım, çünkü senin oyununu anlamam için sonra yeniden bu ses kaydını dinlemem gerekiyor.
10. Sen de istersen senin oyunlarına bazen katılabileceğim.

Bu faaliyetlere katılmak zorunda değilsin, istemediğin zaman - kendini yorgun hissettiğinde, canın sıkıldığında ya da başka bir şeyle ilgilenmek istediğinde- aktiviteyi durdurabiliriz. Bu benim için bir problem olmayacak. Seninle yine zaman geçirebileceğim, oyun oynayabileceğim ya da sohbet edebileceğim. Sonra istersen yeniden çalışmaya katılabilirsin.

Hiç kimseye senin adını söylemeyeceğim. Benim başkalarına anlatmamı istemediğin şeyler olursa, ben onları hiç kimseye anlatmayacağım. Senin bilgilerini güvende tutacağım.

Benim çalışmama katılmak ister misin?

Benim çalışmama katılmak istiyorsan lütfen bu kutunun içine istediğin bir resmi yap.



Eğer çalışmaya katıldıktan sonra çalışmadan çıkmak istersen - kendini yorgun hissettiğinde, canın sıkıldığında ya da başka bir şeyle ilgilenmek istediğinde- aktiviteyi durdurabiliriz. Çalışmadan ne zaman istersen çıkabilirsin. Sonra istersen yeniden çalışmaya katılabilirsin.

Eğer kafan karıştıysa, beni arayabilirsin.

Telefon numaram +90 506 --- -- --. Beni ararsan, senin sorularını cevaplayabilirim. Kafan karıştıysa sana bilgi verebilirim. Sonra da çalışmaya katılıp katılmayacağına karar verebilirsin.

Lütfen bu formu doldurduktan sonra tekrar okula getir. Bu formları saklamam gerekiyor.

Zaman ayırdığın için teşekkür ederim ☺.

APPENDIX J

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Çocuk oyunu ile ilgili sorular:
(*Questions about children's play*)
Bu … ile ilgili bana söylemek istediğin bir şey var mı?
(*Is there anything you want to say about ….?)*
Neler var burada? Kimler var burada?
(*What is here? Who are here?)*
Neler oluyor? Neler yapıyorlar?
(*What is going on? What are they doing?)*
Nasıl hissediyorlar?
(*How are they feeling?)*
Buradaki kişiler başka şeyler isterler miydi? Başka bir malzeme, başka bir arkadaş, başka bir kişi, başka bir yer…
(*Would people here want anything else? Another tool, friend, person, place…*)

Oyun kavramlarını ve deneyimlerini anlamak:
(*Questions to understand children's concepts and experiences)*
Bana okulda neler oynadığından bahseder misin?
(*Can you tell me what you play at school?*)
Senin en sevdiğin oyunları bana anlatır mısın?
(*Can you tell me your favourite play?*)

- Bu oyunu neden çok seviyorsun? Senin için bu oyunda özel olan şey nedir?
  (*Why do you like this game so much? What is special to you in this?*)
- Neler oluyor bu oyunda?
  (*What is going on in this play?*)
- Bu oyunu oynarken neler hissediyorsun?
  (*How do you feel playing this game?*)
- Kimlerle oynuyorsun peki bu oyunu? Nerede oynuyorsunuz?
  (*Who do you play this with? Where do you play?*)

Oyun arkadaşları:
(*Playmates*)
Kimlerle oyun oynuyorsun?
(*Who do you play with?*)

- Neden bu kişilerle?
  (*Why with these people?*)
- Nereden tanışıyorsunuz?
  (*How do you know each other?*)

Neler oynuyorsunuz?
(*What do you play together?*)
Nerelerde oynuyorsunuz?
(*Where do you play together?*)
Ne zamanlar oynuyorsunuz?
(*When do you play with?*)
Bu oyunlarda en çok ne yapmayı seviyorsunuz?

(*What do you like doing best in these games?*)
Bu kişilerle oynarken en çok neyi seviyorsun?
(*What do you like playing with these people?*)
Bu kişilerle oynarken seni mutsuz eden, üzen ya da kızdıran… bir şeyler olur mu?
(*Does anything sad, angry... happen when you play with these people?*)

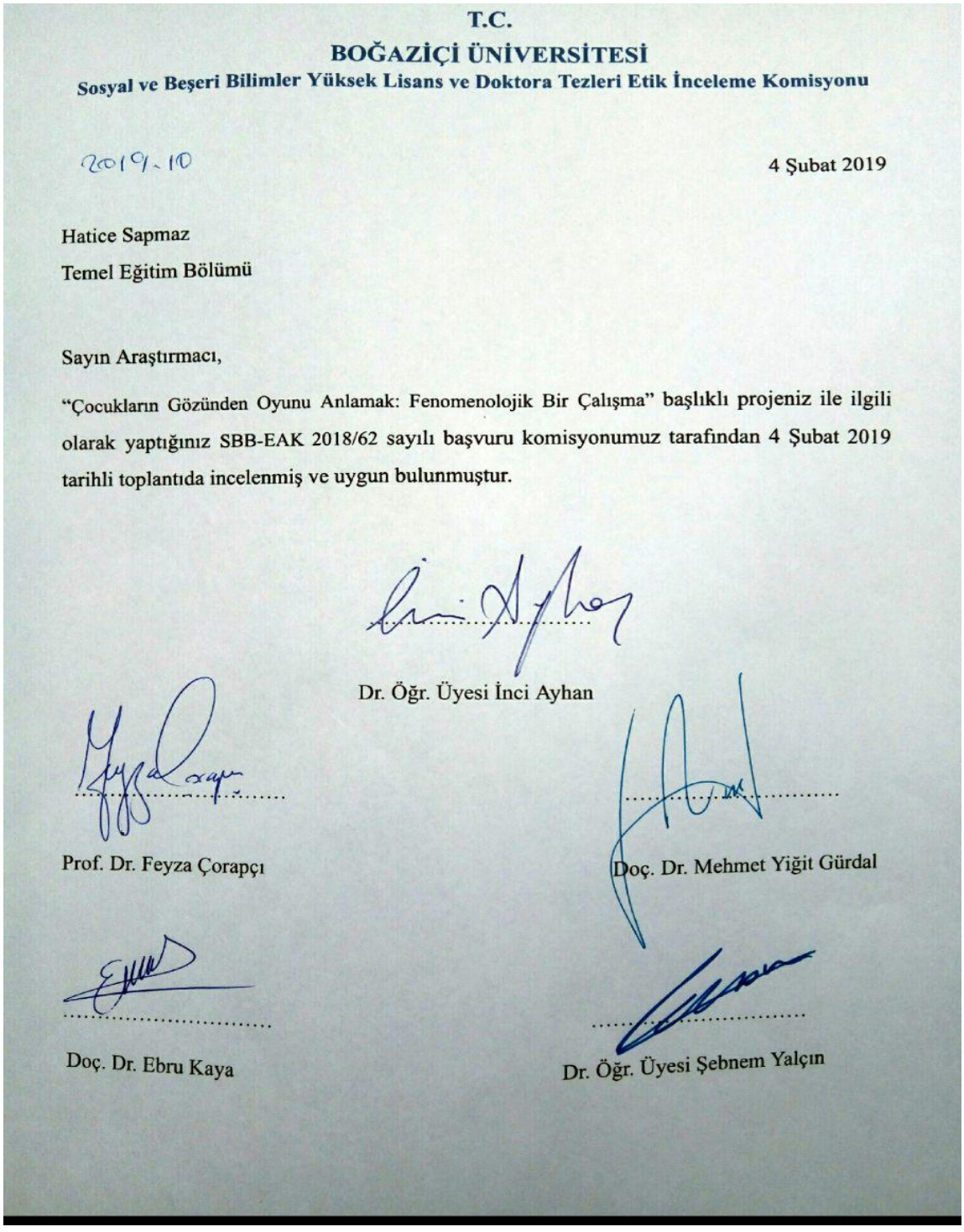
Dilekler:
(*Wishes*)

1. Farklı bir yerde oyun oynamak ister miydin? Nereler? Neden?
   (*Would you like to play somewhere else? Where? Why?*)
2. Farklı insanlarla ya da arkadaşlarla oynamak ister miydin? Neden bu kişiler? Neler oynardınız?
   (*Would you like to play with other people or friends? Why these people? What would you play differently?*)
3. Daha çok oyun oynamak ister miydin? Ya da daha az oyun oynamak ister miydin?
   (*Would you like to play more? Or less?*)
4. Başka hangi malzemelerle oyun oynamak isterdin? Neden?
   (*What other materials would you like to play with? Why?*)

APPENDIX K

APPROVAL OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES,

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY



T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu

2019-10

4 Şubat 2019

Hatice Sapmaz
Temel Eğitim Bölümü

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Çocukların Gözünden Oyunu Anlamak: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2018/62 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 4 Şubat 2019 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İnci Ayhan

Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şebnem Yalçın

APPENDIX L

SAMPLE FOR COLOR-CODING ON A MICROSOFT WORD FILE

- Oynarken güç ve becerim gelisir

Ben: siz salıncakta sallanırken, M bazen hızlanıyordun. Bana bundan biraz bahseder misin?

M: benim gücüm biraz fena yüksek. Bu yüzden gidiyorum, sallamak istedikleri zaman fena bi güç kullanarak… yani, P dün bi oyun yarattı, ondan dolayı güçlendim. Sonra da böyle hızlı sallamaya başladım.

M: trambolinde ne yapıyodum biliyo musun? Dün annem toplantıdayken Barbie izlemiştim. Orada bi kız çocuğu söyle söyle hareketler yapıyordu. Ben aynısını tekrarlamaya heveslıydim oysa ki.

Ben:. Sizi tırmanma merdivenlerinde görüyorum. Oradan biraz bahseder misiniz bana?

M: bahsedelim.

D: spor yapıyoruz

M: orda spor yapıyoruz. Benim hızlı sallamamı da geliştiriyo. Hem ellerimin oyunu hem de benim spor yapmam.

P: yani biz her şeyi sportik yapıyoruz.

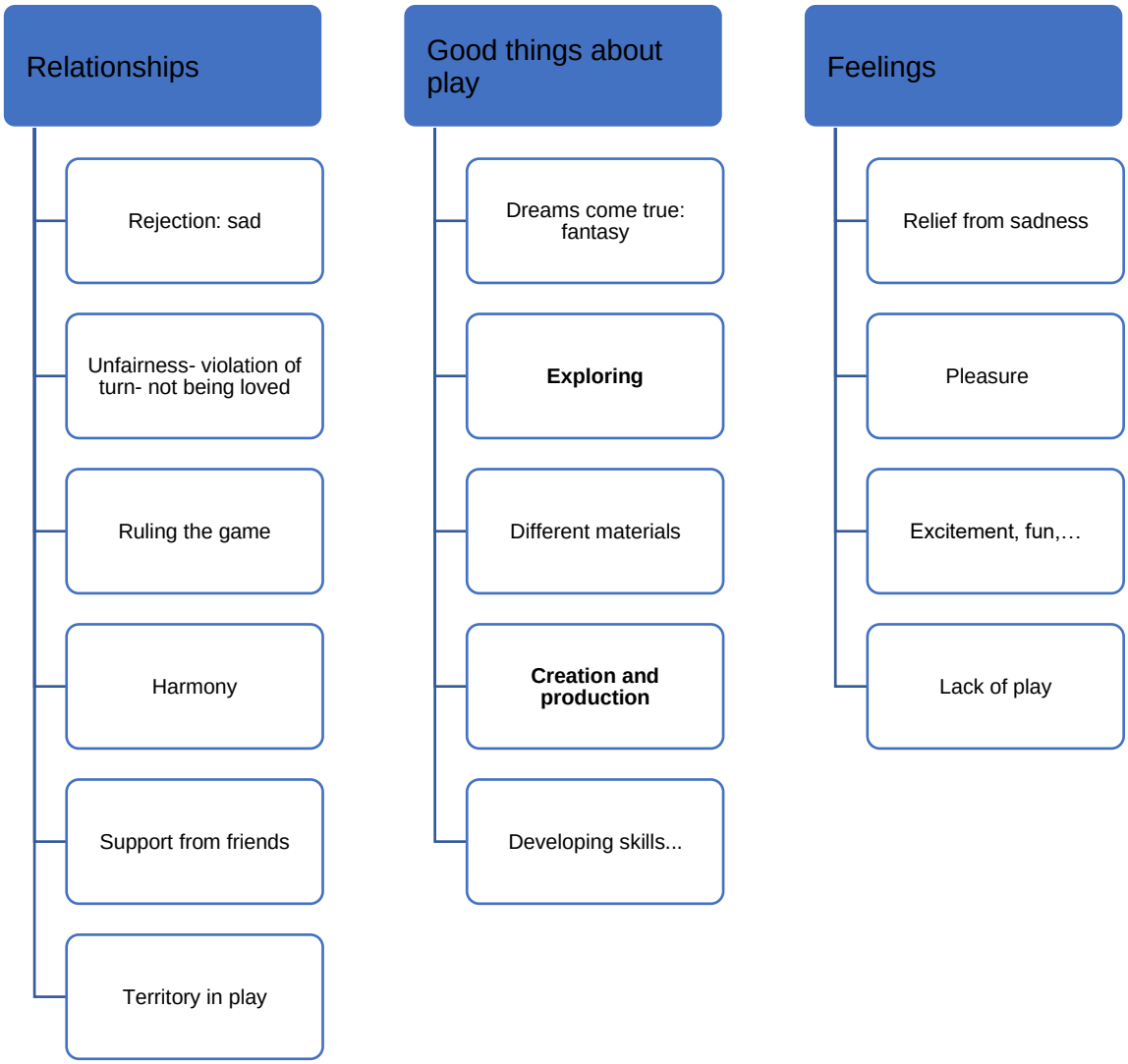
H: peki. En sevdiği ya da onu en çok mutlu eden oyun var mı bu çocuğun?

M: zeki geliştiren, zeka geliştiren, satranç oyunu.

- Güçlüysem daha iyi oynarım ?

APPENDIX M

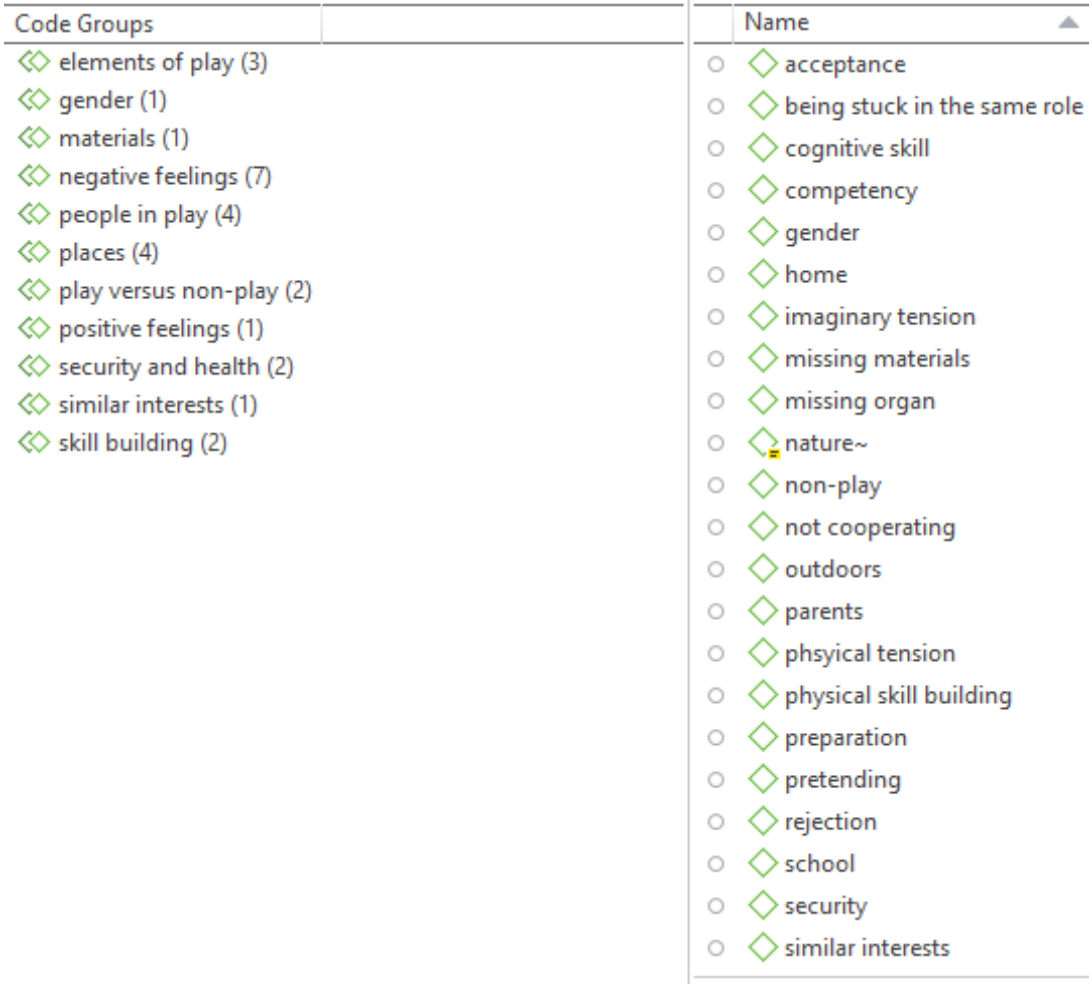
SAMPLE FOR VISUAL DISPLAY OF CODES AND THEMES ON A WORD FILE



APPENDIX N

SAMPLE OF CODE AND THEME DEVELOPMENT ON ATLAS.TI8

SOFTWARE



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