

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S PLAY CULTURE IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD
CLASSROOM: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ragibe Yeşil, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
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Date19.07.19.....

ABSTRACT

Exploring Children's Play Culture in an Early Childhood Classroom:

An Ethnographic Study

This study aims to explore children's play culture in an early childhood classroom. Additionally, there are two more objectives of this study. The first objective is; the characteristics of the socio-dramatic play that takes place in the classroom. The second one is exploring the active construction process of socio-dramatic play with special attention to how children name the play, how they terminate play, how they evolve into other things or other types of play. The qualitative study is conducted as an ethnographic study in an Early Childhood Education Center. In order to conduct this ethnographic study, ten children aged between four and five, who form one classroom, participated in this research. Observations, field notes, informal interviews and children's drawings were used. A general overview of the play in the classroom, play scenarios constructed by the children of the Little Daisies classroom, play culture in the classroom and general characteristics of socio-dramatic play in the classroom are described in detail.

ÖZET

Erken Çocukluk Sınıfında Oyun Kültürünü Keşif: Bir Etnografik Çalışma

Bu çalışma, erken çocukluk sınıflarında çocukların oyun kültürünü keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ek olarak, bu çalışmanın iki amacı daha vardır. İlk amaç, sınıfta yer alan sosyo-dramatik oyunun özelliklerini anlamaktır. İkincisi, sosyo-dramatik oyunun aktif yapım sürecini, çocukların oyuna nasıl isim verdiklerini, oyunu nasıl sonlandırdıklarını, oyunlarının başka türlü oyunlara nasıl evrildiğini özellikle dikkat ederek incelemektir. Bu araştırma, nitel yöntemle etnografik çalışması olarak Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okul Öncesi Eğitim Birimi'nde 4-5 yaş arası on çocuk ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmada, gözlem, alan notları, görüşmeler ve çocukların çizdiği resimler kullanılmıştır. Sınıftaki oyuna genel bir bakış, Küçük Papatyalar sınıfının çocukları tarafından oluşturulan oyun senaryoları, sınıfta oyun kültürü ve sınıftaki sosyo-dramatik oyunun genel özellikleri ayrıntılı olarak açıklanmıştır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

“Heyy, my teacher! It is very nice to be a child to play. If I were an adult, I could not have enjoyed it this much !” (Tuna, 5 years old)

Play is an important occupation during childhood and it has been the focus of research for decades. While some researchers such as Piaget (1962) and Bruner (1974), focused on play “as a means for learning” (Piaget, 1962 & Bruner 1974) others explained play as an expression of inner conflict (Freud, 1920).

In contemporary research Drake (2001) and Broadhead (2006) confirm that play is a necessity for children’s learning. Wood (1996) stated that communication, fantasy and thinking creatively are represented through children’s play. Through play children are able to create relationships with friends; learn to help each other and understand the feelings of people around them. They can relax and overcome their inner thoughts and worries, fears via play. In their play scenarios children can act a role, jump, hide, hold, take responsibilities, and have an adventure and so on.

Discovery and exploration through play can help children learn about themselves and others (Sutton-Smith, 2002). Socio-dramatic play, on the other hand is a kind of play through which children learn how to share, take roles and act. Through socio-dramatic play children learn how to set the rules in a social context (Smith & Pellegrini, 2008). Previously research on play was mainly concerned with the types of play, outcomes and functions of play for children and paid rarely attention to the content of play, what it meant for children and how it is constructed by children.

Over last decades, there has been a change in childhood studies. Since the 1980s the

new sociology of childhood perceives the child as an active agent, who is capable of influencing, acting on, yet shaping the surrounding social world. According to James and Prout (1997) children are regarded as competent social actors. By seeing children as social actors and in the center of their own play, it is so crucial to explore their social environment and play culture.

Aside from being competent actors, children create their own peer culture by being in adult world (Corsaro, 1992). However, it does not mean that they just get some information and copy from the adult world. Simply by interacting, sharing and joining into the adult world, children constitute their own unique peer culture. As they live in the adult culture and have a relationship with them, children get some information and recreate this information via their own thinking (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Corsaro names this construction as “interpretive reproduction”. He uses the term “interpretive” in order to emphasize the negotiation feature in the creation of peer culture and the term “reproduction”, as children have an influence in changing the culture. He points out that by being in this shared production process, the children’s childhood is influenced by the cultures which they belong to.

Corsaro (2015) assumes that children’s peer culture is the joint product of adult and child cultures. In other words, it is the result of these two cultures’ interaction. He points out that these two cultures are complicatedly interwoven.. That is to say interpretive perspective is explained by a reproductive process rather than a linear one (Corsaro, 1992). According to Corsaro (1997, p.95) children’s peer culture constitutes different kinds of “stable set[s] of routines, values, artifacts, and concerns that they produce and share in interaction with peers”. Children get some information from adult’s world and they recreate and reproduce this information by different rituals and actions to form their peer culture (Elgas, 2003; Madrid and Kantor, 2009).

For this reproduction, children's language and social development has a vital importance (Corsaro, 1992). Corsaro states that cognitive and language development promote children's interaction and relations with others. That is to say these developmental notions give rise to organize children's information to reproducing in their social worlds.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The study aims to understand how children create their own play culture in an early childhood classroom and how their peer culture is reflected in their socio-dramatic play. One purpose of the study is to describe the socio-dramatic play scenarios created by children in the classroom. Secondly, the study aims to understand the characteristics of the socio-dramatic play that takes place in the classroom in order to discover the routine of children's play. Lastly the study aims to explore the active construction process of socio-dramatic play with special attention to how children name the play, how they initiate or terminate play, how they evolve into other things or other types of play and so on. To explore children's play culture, lengthy observations and interviews were conducted. An additional concern of the study is to understand the role of wider context and the role of adults in children's socio-dramatic play.

The study employs ethnographic study research method to understand the peer culture guiding socio-dramatic play in the classroom. Observations, field notes, children's drawings and informal interviews were the major sources of data to get a rich description of children's play and play culture in the classroom. It took almost

one year to collect the data for the study. Data for this study was carefully collected over a twelve month period.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study's significance lies in its deepened interest in children's active construction of their unique play culture in their own classroom. There is an increasing interest on play studies in early childhood education, however, there is little research about children's play culture and how they construct their own play culture in their peer group. Play in early childhood is generally investigated through the lenses of adults and children are mostly perceived as the objects of research. However, in line with UNCRC and as current literature in new sociology of childhood suggests and children are competent social actors of their own lives (James & Prout, 1997) and therefore children should have a right to say about their most important occupation, play. Play is the most important domain, in which children get to decide what to play, when to play, how to play and with whom to play. Therefore, play in each and every classroom is unique and is a construction of the members of the peer culture in that specific classroom. The present study endeavors to explore sociodramatic play that takes place in an early childhood classroom, with specific attention to the characteristics of play that takes place in the specific classroom, the construction process, the peer culture within the classroom and children's agency in their play culture. Children's voice and agency were ventured to be captured along the process in order to reflect their own play culture in their own classroom. Moreover, most of the studies focusing on children's construction of their own social world have focused on peer culture and there are very few studies which specifically addresses

children's play culture in an early childhood classroom, so this activity is an additional significance of the present study. The study is also significant for its methodology. The study is an ethnographic study and attempts to uncover play culture within the specific classroom. The data for the study is gathered through the lengthy observations throughout one year in the age 5 classroom and through semi-structured interviews with children regarding their sociodramatic plays. My dual position in the setting, both as a researcher and as the teacher of the classroom, was an additional point of strength as I have had the opportunity to involve the group in prolonged observation. Periodically, during the data collection through participant observation I had the opportunity to be immersed in the day-to-day lives of the children in the classroom and be a witness of the active construction of play by children.

1.4 Research questions

Specifically, the study focused on the following research questions:

- 1- What kind of sociodramatic play scenarios are constructed in this classroom?
- 2- How can the peer culture in this classroom be described?
- 3- How do the children in the classroom construct their play?
- 4- What are the general characteristics of sociodramatic play in this classroom?
- 5- What is the role of adults' world and wider context in children's sociodramatic play?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical and theoretical roots of play

Play has always been recognized as a vital, inseparable component of children and childhood throughout history. Archeological evidences of toys and toy like tools demonstrate that play has always been acknowledged and valued by adults in various societies.

Since the ancient times play has been a major point of interest for philosophers, educators and scientists. Evidences found in the ancient vases demonstrates that children were depicted as playing with wagons, rattles, toys on wheels. Plato and Aristotle were the two philosophers who took special interest in childhood and stressed the vitality of play in children's life and learning. Even though the concept of childhood and the functions of play in society has changed enormously throughout centuries the necessity of play remained constant. According to Plato, there is a connection between play and thinking. Between the ages three and six children need to play games with other children and with toys in order to help them form their own character, learn their future roles as adults and practice the necessary skills they will require when they become adults. In other words, play should be considered as means to prepare children for future life roles. For instance, Plato asserts that if a man is to become a builder, he must play with construction toys when he is a child. When children reach the age of seven, they must be required to dedicate their toys to Hermes or Artemis with special ceremony in order to set aside childish gadgets and thus certified that their childhood years have come to an end.

The games and play that Plato addressed is quite different than play in the contemporary world apparently. Play or toys they were talking about only an option for some children in society. Aristotle likewise stressed the role of play in preparing children for adult activities (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

In the 1600s, play and its functions in children's lives was brought to attention once again by Jon Amos Komensky (Comenius) whose ideas set the stage for contemporary early childhood education and were quite revolutionary in his time. For Comenius play had a significant role in childhood and it was the parents' responsibility to provide toys for their children, to encourage play and provide a safe place for play to take place. It was through play that children amused themselves, exercised their bodies and minds. Constructing houses, erecting walls of clay, wood or stone were the ways to display their skills and were delighting experiences for children. Adults should let children play with the things that delight them and children need to be with children of the same age for interaction. It is important to note that Comenius was the first person who created the first picture book for children, called *Orbis Pictus* in 1658 (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

In the late 1600s, John Locke also emphasized play in helping acquire certain skills needed in society and stated that children should be free to play, grow and experiment. As it had been the case with Plato and Aristoteles, play is conceptualized as a means to an end for Locke.

It was only during the late 1700s that play, similar to today's understanding has emerged and Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel, who offered a new conception of childhood, was the major figure behind this emphasis. According to Froebel (1887, p.54-55), the plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later life and children

unfold their uniqueness in play. Play is the instinctive activity of the child and reveals the child's mind. It is the mother's' duty to cultivate and foster play and the fathers' responsibility to protect and guard it. Froebel defines play as "the highest form of human development at this period; for it is self-active representation of the inner – representation of the inner from inner necessity and impulse". Moreover, for him play "is the most beautiful expression of child-life at this time" (Froebel, 1887, p.55). According to Froebel play develops the child's mind and connects the child to the wider world and in play child ascertains what he can do, discover his possibilities of will and thought and reveals his original power. Even though Froebel valued play as an expression of child's nature, still he acknowledged play as a means to an end. He wrote that "A child that plays thoroughly, with self-active determination, perseverance until physical fatigue forbids, will surely be a thorough, determined man, capable of self-sacrifice for the promotion of the welfare of himself and others" (Froebel, 1887, p.54). It is also important to note that even though Froebel was a keen defender of play, he did not allow total self-direction, free play, unruly play as for him unstructured play represented a potential danger. It was quite likely that a child left on his or her own devices may not learn much and designed special materials and activities for children to play with (Braun & Edwards, 1972).

Like Froebel, Maria Montessori offered a totally new conceptualization of childhood and children by asserting that children are not educated by others but learn through their absorbent minds. For Montessori "the child should not be regarded as a feeble and helpless creature but as someone who deserves respect. Children cannot help but learn simply by living. However, differing from Froebel she referred to play as the work of children in a way to stress that play should be taken seriously by adults (Montessori, 2007).

According to Hyde (2011), children choose work over play in Montessorian philosophy. According to him, Montessori sees work as “any activity which involves the child’s whole personality and has as its unconscious aim the construction of personality” (Montessori, 1998). A child works in order to develop and become him or herself. Montessori believes that children find amusement and pleasure in ‘work’. She states that by work, a child is expressing his or her whole being. It is a way of achieving the full potential by doing it, loving it and repeating it until “perfecting himself” (Standing, 1962). To those who claim her approach was play based, Montessori clearly stated that it was work not play (as cited in Hyde, 2011). Likewise, some researchers indicate that Montessori found play “developmentally irrelevant” (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, as cited in Lillard, 2013).

In her research Lillard (2013) investigated how Montessori education is related to playful learning. She argued that her approach looked like playful learning in plenty of ways. The way that children choose activities freely, how they engage in play with peers, how the activities lead to inner motivation and the factor that they are enjoyable are some examples. However, there are also some differences. The basic difference in Montessori classrooms is activities are called “work” whereas playful learning tends to be referred to as “play”.

According to Montessori’s approach, children benefit from play and educational settings more where adults do not intervene and provide them the right environment and mental stimulation. The teacher is the observer while children are playing. With the provided wooden materials children recognize their own mistakes and learn by doing again. Montessori believed children achieve higher levels of learning and understanding if the child is motivated by his/her initiative during play (Lillard, 2018).

When it comes to toys and play materials, Black (2014), states that in original Montessori classrooms, children had no toys. Instead of giving children some plastic toys for pretend play, they were provided with real-life objects. Children were also engaged in real-life activities like “sweeping the rooms, dusting and washing the furniture”.

In late 1900s play gained a different kind of significance in children’s lives. Piaget is one of the most well-known educators who gave great importance and thought to play. He supported the idea that children should experiment and discover for themselves and he suggested that this occurs only when they are active in plays. Piaget (1962) stated that children only comprehend what they experiment and construct by themselves. Ahmad et al. (2016) stated that for Piaget “play is literally cognitive development”. Abott and Moylett (1999) assumed that with the help of play, children learn in various aspects and achieve the skills necessary for their development. Children are free, autonomous and social during play. Play can take place with various types of equipment or with no materials at all and it can happen in any setting. It is a natural part of them (Piaget, 1962).

Piaget categorized play into three groups; practice play, symbolic play, games with rules. This categorization is related to children’s level of development. Practice play takes place in the early stages of childhood. It starts in the first month after birth. It is basically sensorimotor and based on repetitions. Practice play is an ongoing development that leads to symbolic play. During symbolic play “imitations and mental representations start” and it is more complex than the practice play. It involves “representation, verbal communication, and interiorized actions.” The third categorization is described by Piaget as; “... games with sensory-motor combinations (races, marbles, ball games, etc.), or intellectual combinations (cards, chess, etc.), in

which there is competition between individuals (otherwise rules would be useless) and which are regulated either by a code handed down from earlier generations, or by temporary agreement” (Piaget, 1962). He defined most of the types as assimilative. Children make their existing experiences meaningful using play (Davis & Bergen, 2014).

Piaget made assumptions about play’s effects on “logical thought and moral reasoning”. He saw a connection between moral development and games with rules but not with practice play or pretense. In one of his research studies he interviewed children and consequently found out that “playing games with rules fosters children’s movement to higher moral levels, due to the cognitive disequilibrium associated with issues such as equity and fairness” (Davis & Bergen, 2014).

Piaget saw games with rules as a tool for achieving greater stages of moral reasoning. In games, children come across with concepts like; “fairness, distributive justice, or other moral dilemmas.” Therefore, games with rules support moral development significantly. To make sure all players are in the game although there might be some conflicts among them is the social part of the games. Therefore Piaget emphasized the significance of the social relations and necessary cooperation in order to achieve moral decisions (as cited in Davis & Bergen, 2014).

Lev Vygotsky, a contemporary of Piaget, is another educator who has investigated and written extensively on the concept of play in 1900s. He believed play has an important role in cognitive development and essential for children’s biggest achievements (as cited in Aronstam & Braund, 2015). He saw play as the root of development (as cited in Flear, 2018). Unlike Piaget, he stated that through

play children do not only practice previously gained skills but they also acquire new information (Aronstam & Braund, 2015).

Zone of proximal development is a concept developed by Vygotsky.

According to Vygotsky, there is a difference between what a child as a learner is able to do with help and what she or he is able to do without help, this difference is called “zone of proximal development”. According to Vygotsky, play builds a zone of proximal development of the child. He stated that play includes all the developmental tendencies; it is an extensive source of development. A child’s skills that are not yet acquired can be triggered in a play supported by an experienced peer or adult. When a teacher or an adult is responding to a child’s pretend play, while at the same time letting him or her take the initiative during play, they are helping him or her acquire important social and cognitive skills (Gowen, as cited in Patrick, 1996).

Vygotsky also related play with moral development as Piaget did. However, he stressed social context as an important component. He suggested engaging in pretend play with peer supported “sociomoral behaviors, such as self-regulation and ability to follow appropriate social scripts”. He claimed as they pretend in social plays, “their ability to control their actions, negotiate and implement roles and rules, and practice rules of behavior all increase their self-regulation skills, which are a component of moral behavior” (as cited in Davis & Bergen, 2014). Vygotsky especially aimed his attention at sociodramatic play. In this kind of play, Vygotsky stated that, they create their own social stories, create imaginary social scene, they become the characters they imagine and this supports moral emotions and exercising these emotions.

2.2 Play in early childhood and definitions of play

Defining play is not an easy task as there is huge amount of literature about play and many of them employ different perspectives. Youngquist & Pataray-Ching (2004) argue that there are two views regarding the definition of play. One view defines play as an entertaining activity where children enjoy and have fun. For example playing with play dough and acting as if they are involved in cooking. The other view defines play as an educational activity where children get educated. For example, researching about animals for a class activity is defined as educational activity.

Ailwood (2003), on the other hand, focuses on behaviors and argues that there are three major expressions of play. First one is “romantic / nostalgic discourse”. The second one is called “play characteristics discourse”. The third expression is “developmental discourse”. According to Ailwood (2003) the romantic / nostalgic expression of play discounts the pessimistic attitude and only takes the optimistic attitude into consideration. Following this optimistic view, the romantic / nostalgic expression is separated into other categories such as 1) physical play, 2) constructive play and 3) fantasy play. Moreover, there are other categories such as social play and plays with rules (Ailwood, 2003). The second expression, play characteristics, is characterized by Monighan-Nourot et al (1987) cited in Ailwood (2003) as “(1) active engagement, (2) intrinsic motivation, (3) attention to means rather than ends, (4) nonliteral behaviour, and (5) freedom from external rules” (p. 289). The third and the last expression, that Ailwood summarized is “developmental discourse of play”, which is related to developmental issues for children. Ailwood summarized that the developmental part of play idea emerged from Piaget and Vygotsky and created “developmentally appropriate practice”. Ailwood stated that for that discourse play is crucial for children’s “mental growth”.

Piaget (1962), states that children develop themselves through play. He advocates that there is a relation between children's play and their cognitive development.

Children in their play process naturally show curiosity, interest and assimilate the play. Piaget is one of the main theorists of cognitive theory of play.

Vygotsky (1978) describes play in a social context. Children can act, interact and take some roles in their play. Children by being in the social environment, observe and use their experiences about social relations in their play, they can act, react and relate these relations through play.

2.2.1 Play in children's development

In particular, it is possible to see that play has lots of benefits for children's development. There are lots of researches about the benefits of play. They mention about play's benefits for social, cognitive, language, emotional developments of children. Bergen (2002) states that pretend play supports children's cognitive, academic and social development.

2.2.1.1 Social development

According to Zins (2004) play develops children's social skills. Children through play interact with each other, they share their ideas and they talk about an issue etc. Moreover, play helps children to experience different kinds of scenarios. They can take some roles and get an idea about different people (Tsao, 2002). By doing this, they have a chance to understand other people around them. Children through

social-play, practice what to expect from friends, how to perceive their emotions. Also they practice how to regulate their emotions through play (McArdle, 2001).

2.2.1.2 Cognitive development and language development

Play has a vital role for developing children's thinking skills (Vanderberg, 1980). Children through playing can learn how to solve the problems and think in different ways. This in turn affects children's cognitive skills. Vygotsky (1978) states that play has a vital role for children by extending from concrete to abstract thinking. Sutton-Smith (1976) says that playing affects children's creativity by experiencing new situations through play. Through play, children learn how to deal with new situations, and how to solve the problems around them. Play supports children to think in different ways (Hurwitz, 2002)

Fein (1975) found that symbolic play supports children's language development. Piaget (1962), states that when children hear more words and sentences, they have a chance to use them in various ways through play.

2.2.2 Types of play

There are lots of different play types described by different perspectives. For example, Lester and Russel (2008) classified play into six categories: "physical play, games with rules, pretend and socio dramatic play, social play, language play, and construction play". Parten (1932) classified play by the developmental and social stages of children. According to Parten (1932) there are six types of play; "associative play, solitary play, onlooker play, unoccupied play, parallel play, and social play".

Smilansky (1968) developed Piaget's play phases. According to Smilansky, there are four types of play. These are "constructive play, functional play, pretend-dramatic play and games with rules". These types of play are defined by Smilansky (1968) as following:

Constructive play: It is a type of play that children can put the things together. They can make some models out of the blocks or sand.

Functional play: By means of this type of play, children use their arms, legs, muscles and senses to learn the physical features of the things.

Pretend-dramatic play: Children act out some roles. They pretend to be somebody like a mother, a driver or a princess. If one child adopts this role him/herself, it is called dramatic play. If there is more than one child playing role-taking together, it is called socio dramatic play.

Games with rules: In this type of play, children need to control themselves, their words and moves for the rules.

Hughes and Melville (2002) discuss that there are sixteen (16) types of play; "symbolic play, rough and tumble play, socio-dramatic play, social play, creative play." There is also "communication play, dramatic play, loco motor play, deep play, exploratory play". In addition, they add "fantasy play, imaginative play, mastery play, object play, role play and recapitulative play". These types of plays are interrelated with each other.

Symbolic Play: In symbolic play children use some objects differently than their original use. For example, a stick may symbolize a doll, a stone may symbolize a birthday cake or a piece of paper may symbolize a blanket for the doll.

Rough and Tumble Play: This rough and tumble play is like wrestling and is about playful touching, it is like real fighting but in this play, children do not hurt each other. They fairly play this rough and tumble play.

Social Play: This social play consists of couple of children playing together with some set rules and imaginary elements.

Creative Play: Children use their imagination to create something in their play, they mix, put some materials together with their curiosity.

Communication play: It is a kind of play that children use their body, gestures, facial expressions and mimics.

Dramatic Play: It is a play type, where children take roles, use some clothes and costumes.

Loco-motor Play: Children run, chase and jump. They use their large motor skills in this kind of play.

Deep Play: It is a kind of play that children experience adventure, and gain life skills.

Exploratory Play: In this type of play children try to explore their world through physical activities such as throwing, rolling and banging.

Fantasy play: Children make believe that they can do something which normally cannot happen, such as driving a fire truck.

Imaginative play: In this kind of play children imagine some roles such as being a super hero, or they can behave like they have an imaginary friend in their play.

Mastery play: In this kind of play, children check their environment and try to do some actions such as making the stairs with foil or digging the holes.

Object Play: Children use some objects such as puzzles, cars or dolls in their play.

Object play help children to develop new skills and abilities.

Role Play: Children take on some roles such as a doctor, sister or mother. They behave like their roles would demand.

Recapulative Play: This type of play enables children experience the world around them with some stories, routines and some rituals.

Parallel Play: Children play at the same area but by themselves at around two years of age.

Language Play: Children make some funny noises and form sentences.

2.3 Socio-dramatic play

Children use some toys to symbolize objects that are used in real life, such as a banana to symbolize a telephone, or a stick to symbolize a doll. When children use these objects, they sometimes assume roles like being a mummy, daddy or someone else. They behave or talk according to their roles. This kind of play is called dramatic play. If someone joins the child and they engage in the same play context, this becomes socio-dramatic play.

Children around age three can start playing socio-dramatic play. Smith and Pellegrini (2008) found that children about age three can initiate socio-dramatic play in which they negotiate their roles, rules, and criterions to continue.

Smilansky (1968) states that, there are five components of a socio-dramatic play, which are: 1) role playing, 2) make-believe, 3) verbal interaction, 4) social communication, 5) to be able to carry the play from the beginning to the end.

Vygotsky (1978) states that through play, children experience being in a shared play scenario. Through play, they learn how to mediate, cooperate and communicate about their roles their roles. Hughes (1999) states that in socio-dramatic play, through the play context children take some roles that complete their friends' roles. If there is a family for example, some children are mummies, daddies, and some of them are babies. Also he points out that they practice relationships through language.

According to Dinham and Chalk (2018), children through socio dramatic play, 1) establish some roles, 2) build their stories and 3) pursue a dialogue. Also they stated that children operate how to connect in between different roles.

There are many research studies about socio-dramatic play. Some focused on the benefits of socio-dramatic play and children's language and oral development (Combs, 2010; Krizek, 2011). Nicolopoulou et. al (2015) state that children's socio-dramatic play supports the development of language skills. Weisberg et al. (2013) point out that play improves children's language usage by hearing and practicing. Smilansky (1968) states that, through play, children build different scenarios and characters, and display progress in terms of social and language abilities.

Deunk et. al. (2008), focused on two nine-months-old children's initial behaviors in socio-dramatic play. They found that, initially one of the children tended to show some reaction towards the play in the pretend level. Later she began to put new meanings to objects. Gradually she and her friend began to add some roles to this symbolic meaning.

Socio-dramatic play consists of some complex rules and symbols. Through time, children gradually start being in a socio-dramatic play context. In recent years, researchers focused on socio-dramatic play and teacher's roles (Meacham et al.

2014), the use of drama as a tool for education (Brown, 2017). In their study, Meacham et al. (2014) focused on teachers' questioning in children's socio-dramatic play. According to the results, teachers tend to ask more close ended questions than open-ended ones.

Children found to be more likely to response open ended questions through their play. Brown (2017), states that drama has a vital role in children's educational and developmental processes. He pointed out the necessity of learning through drama. He stated that children have a tendency to learn by observing, pretending and acting, that's why curriculum needs to focus on drama in early childhood education.

In the last decades, the researchers about socio-dramatic play, they Banerjee et al. (2017) state that children from early ages are able to learn literacy through play. In their research, Banerjee et al. (2017), focus on the necessity of socio-dramatic play for children's literacy learning. They suggest that it is very vital to learn literacy through play. Apart from this, Karabon (2016) focuses on children's role for knowledge transformation through the socio-dramatic play. Karabon (2016), states that children have an active role for mediating their culture, which is children's production of new knowledge out of their prior knowledge, through their socio-dramatic play.

Additionally, Simmons (2014) focuses on children's popular culture. In this research, Simmons (2014) states that children shape and reconstruct their knowledge in their own culture within their common popular culture. It points out children's active role in their social world. As a result, the conclusion of these studies point out the children's active role in their social world.

2.4 Theoretical framework of the study

This section represents the history and deconstruction of childhood, new sociology of childhood and new image of child in childhood studies. Also this section elaborates on Corsaro's interpretive reproduction theory, as is the main theoretical framework of the study.

2.4.1 History and deconstruction of childhood

In the second half of twentieth century, the work of Aries (1962) initiated the prevailing movement of exploring the history of childhood by different disciplines. In his work he explored the representations of childhood in Medieval Art and stated that there is no difference between child and adult image in the portrayals prior to the sixteenth century. He posits that before seventeenth century in the pictures, children and adults were wearing the similar kind of clothes. Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries childhood was not perceived as a distinct and different stage in life. Only during the Enlightenment era and as an aftermath of its educational philosophy, people felt the need to separate the young from older children due to their age level and intellectual capacity. After this awareness, the differentiation between childhood and adulthood has emerged and this differentiation could be seen by seventeenth century in the pictures of children from Upper and Middle class. In these pictures they were wearing school uniforms, which were different from adults' clothes.

There had been much opposition to Aries assertions regarding the nonexistence of childhood as a separate entity and Corsaro was one of them. In this well-known work, the sociology of childhood, Corsaro stated that children had

always found a way to reflect and live their own childhood culture even as early as in the fourteenth century (Corsaro, 1997).

Aries also states that by the seventeenth century, through arts and literacy childhood could be depicted like adulthood. However, even though Gittens and Corsaro (2012) and many others (Pollock, 1983; Hanawalt, 1993) criticized Aries' work, because he based his analyses only on artwork and paintings, his work is referred to as one of the most influential documents for the deconstruction of childhood (Corsaro, 1997). Since then studying childhood has become a major line of research and created the path for the new sociology of childhood.

2.4.2 New sociology of childhood

Aries' work, 'Centuries of Childhood' (1962) raised the awareness that the definition of childhood varied in time and context and it encouraged researchers to perceive childhood as a construction of society bound by time and space. After three decades James and Prout (1997) stated that there is not just one definition of childhood and childhood can be different in one society compared to another, because of the age, gender, class and ethnicity.

As a matter of fact, over twenty years, the new sociology of childhood has been focusing on the social construction of children and quite recently on their rights (Tisdall & Punch, 2012). They stated that the "new" sociology of childhood focused on the necessity to respect children and seeing children not from an adult's perspective. James and Prout (1997) and Corsaro (2005) are among the first supporters of this "new" sociology of childhood. They define children as social actors that they can shape and construct their own world. These researchers state that

children can affect the community that they are a part of (James & Prout, 1997, p.8). They define childhood as a socially constructed phenomenon.

The new conceptualization of a child, as a social actor, brought along the concept of children's agency. James and Prout (1997) explained that by agency, it is meant that children are seen as social actors in their own lives, able to make decisions about their lives. Likewise, research began to focus on children's ability to change their social world as they have begun to be seen independent social actors. Moreover, it has been argued that until recently children were seen as human becomings instead of beings, due to the emphasis on their preparation to join the adult world (Qvortrup et.al, 1994).

2.4.3 New image of child in childhood studies

The new image of child and childhood brought new methodologies while working with children in research. James (2003; p.30) posits that along with the construction of childhood, two main motivations have arisen; (1) to interpret children's rights and (2) to make children to be heard. He shows that with these motivations, childhood studies were evolved to see children's perspectives and their views about their lives.

Pufall and Unsworth (2004) emphasize that children's agency has a crucial role for children to be heard, listened to and taken into consideration from other people. They stated that when children show their views about the issues, they can shape and construct the environment around themselves. Similarly James (2003), states that when we listen to children's voices, they help us to perceive their abilities and capabilities. This understanding helps us to shape our expectations toward themselves.

Tisdall and Punch (2012) states that in this “new” sociology of childhood paradigm, childhood studies have been developed with the theories related to children as social actors and childhood as a socially constructed phenomenon. Therefore ethnography as a methodology has begun to be widely used in order to maintain children’s rights and to hear children’s voices in research as well. According to James and Prout (1997) ethnography is a valuable method to understand children’s voices as it enables the children’s right to interpret their ideas and perceptions and contribution to the construction of sociological data. Likewise, Broström (2008) points out that children’s active participation in research, especially ethnographies and phenomenology give rise to increase children’s voices, as seeing them as experts of their own lives. Beside observation and field notes, interviews with open-ended questions are found to be more valuable methods for understanding children’s perspectives (Pellegrini, 1996).

2.4.3.1 Contemporary research with children about play

In line with the new sociology of childhood and the new image of the child as someone who can form and express his/her own perspectives there exists a considerable amount of research conducted on children’s play following qualitative research tradition.

One of the oldest and most famous qualitative studies about children’s play was from William Corsaro, which later on evolved into his well-known interpretive reproduction theory. Corsaro (1992) worked on children’s socialization and the peer culture by observing their everyday dramatic playing. It was an ethnographic research with deep field notes and participant observations throughout twice a week

of the one year of school. He stated that children contribute to create their peer culture with their own views. That is to say, children do not imitate the adults' roles in their play; they also create their own views about parents and adults. Corsaro defined this process as "interpretive reproduction", which will be addressed in the following subsection in detail. Glenn et al. (2013) explored meanings of play from 7-9 year olds children's perspective. Thirty eight students from Western Canada participated in focus group. They concluded that children as participants saw anything as an opportunity to engage in play and they would play almost anywhere and anytime. On the other hand researchers perceived that parents had different views regarding play.

Similarly, in their study Berinstein and Magalhaesh (2009) examined children's perspectives about the nature of the play. They used phenomenological photo voice study that children took photos about play. There were 16 children who were about 11-13 years old in the study. The study suggests that play is seen by Tanzanian children as a free time social interest and a fun activity that makes the body stronger. According to the findings, play has affected by tradition, poverty and culture.

Keating et al., (2000) focused on the role of play in reception classes and interviewed children, teachers and parents in ten primary schools in the North-West of England. They found that there are dilemmas about the role of play for children's learning. Children saw work is superior to play. Children said that playing is possible if they finish paper works.

Rogers and Evans (2006) focused on the perspectives of children about role play. It was a longitudinal ethnographic research about what children in South-West

England like and dislike about role playing and how they can answer adults' attained role play environments. According to the findings, children use role play for making friendships. Another encouragement that children want to be in role play is pretending action. Researchers stated that children are active participants of their learning environments rather than passive beings. Wing (1995) focused on children's work and play differentiation by using interviews and observations of kindergarten, first and second grade children's classrooms. The research stated that children can easily distinguish work and play with the feature of being voluntary or not; the degree of teacher involvement, enjoyment; cognitive or physical activities; the obligation to finish or not. This study also mentioned about the teachers' role to shape children's perspective of work and play.

Pyle and Alaca (2018) explored children's views about their play and their relatedness about play and learning. The results show that children's thoughts about play related to learning, change with the teacher's presence in the play. When there is a teacher in the play children think that play is about learning.

In terms of play preferences, Pilten and Pilten (2013) explored game concept and play preferences of school aged children. 40 children aged between 7 to 11 years participated. According to these findings, children perceive play as fun and voluntary activity. Children generally found that play is their occupation. Toy and game preferences changed according to gender. Finally Glenn et al. (2013) explored meanings of play among 7-9 year olds children. Thirty eight students from Western Canada participated in a focus group. They identified that children as participants saw approximately anything as an opportunity of play and they would play almost anywhere and anytime. On the other hand they perceived that parents had different views regarding play.

2.4.4 Interpretive reproduction and peer culture

The present study accepts the recent paradigm of new sociology of childhood and bears on the premise that (1) children are competent and active beings whose actions and thinking are worth studying for its own sake and (2) children are beings with agency who can express their own perspectives regarding issues that concern them and change the world around them. The second theoretical framework that the study stands on is Corsaro's interpretive reproduction theory, which fed by and has grown out of the new sociology of childhood paradigm. As mentioned earlier in the first chapter, and once again in the previous subsection, Corsaro (1992) argues that children are capable of creating their own peer culture while living in the adult's world. Children constitute their own unique peer culture based on their interaction with adults and each other, through sharing the social world with them and joining into adult's world. However, contrary to previous thinking, children do not only imitate adults and represent the adult world in their own interaction but also recreate the information with their own thinking (Corsaro & Eder, 1990) and create their own unique and dynamic peer culture. Therefore, in their study Aydin and Corsaro (2003) found that gender segregation is arranged and shaped in children's peer culture.

A considerable amount of research studies, which were conducted in the different social environments such as the classroom and some ethnic groups' locations, investigated social phenomena (children's play by Löhfdal, 2006; cultural differences in conflicts by Kim, 2014; language, gender and schooling by Henning, 2018) from Corsaro's interpretive reproduction framework.

Lash (2008), using Corsaro's interpretive reproduction theory explored children's peer culture during the transitional months before formal education and

found that children have some routines and rituals, such as clean-up strategies and saving some toys over time. Recent research used Corsaro's interpretive reproduction theory in order to understand how infants connect to the routines of people around them (Ruth, 2016), young people making sense of their ethnic perspectives, in for example the "stone fight" (Poveda & Marcos, 2005) and how children reproduce the adult's world's actions with their pretend marriage play into their own peer culture (Breathnach et al., 2018).

2.4.4.1 Play culture as the main medium of children's active construction

Driven out of Corsaro's interpretive reproduction theory and children's active construction of peer culture, the scope of research has been also focusing on children's play culture, which can be considered as a subculture in the peer culture phenomenon. However, while there is a wide range of research exploring peer culture, studies specifically addressing play culture are very rare.

James, Jerks and Prout (1998) focus on children's play as a cultural evaluation of children's social actions for engaging more directly with the intentions and motives of children as social actors. According to Goldman (1998) (as cited in Kalliala, 2005), there are a minimum of two different insights about the play culture. The first one is the children's own analysis of cultural identity and the social activities around them. The second insight is their knowledge regarding the play and the ways of playing. Kalliala (2005) also argues that children's play culture cannot be divided from the culture of the society. He states that children are also accepted as a part of this society. They experience the environment and the environmental issues, learn common codes and share meanings alike.

Danbolt and Enerstvedt (1995), (as cited in Kalliala, 2005) argue that children's culture can be identified in two forms. These are "Culture for Children" and "Culture of Children". They summarized that culture for children is shaped by the traditional and modern media such as books, cartoons, movies, computer games. Furthermore, they identified that culture of children is developed by themselves. This development is done through their own jokes, abilities, adjustments of opinions that has been taken from the media and also building their own toys.

According to Kalliala (2005, p.27) play culture of children has five (5) elements.

These are "1) shared experiences, 2) commonly shared knowledge, 3) shared values, 4) same language, and 5) shared ways of thinking".

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodological pattern and design process will be presented in this chapter. At the beginning, the design of the study will be stated. Secondly, role of the researcher, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures will be explained.

3.1 The design of the study

In this study I aimed to understand and analyze children's play behavior in depth in order to reach to a better understanding of their play culture. Qualitative approach is a strong path to follow to reach this goal because as Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) state that qualitative studies do not aim to generalize the data, instead they provide experiences (as cited in Yanik, 2011).

School environment provides space for children to spend a long period of time with their peers. In a way, they come together in a little community. This study aims to capture children's experiences and play behavior within their classroom community.

In this example of an ethnographic study, I expressed common behaviors of a group that shares, creates their culture in a certain period (Creswell, 2012); I presented participants' sentences and my explanation of comprehensive design (Creswell, 2013).

This study aims to explore children's play culture in their own environment. It also investigates how children behave, and how they interact with each other in their socio-dramatic play. That's why it was crucial for me to be a part of their

environment naturally because if the researcher is in the social group, it is easier to understand the social group's values, behaviors and attitudes in their own culture. To create more meaning of children's culture, ethnographic study is applied (Yanik & Yasar, 2018). I, as their homeroom teacher, spent 5 days a week from 08:30 to 17:00 with them at school. This fact made me become more familiar to antecedents and consequences of their behavior, to discover patterns of their plays and to understand their relationship with each other.

3.2 My role as the researcher in this ethnographic research

I have been a preschool teacher for seven years. During this time I had a great chance to observe different kinds of play behavior of children from different age groups. This study is implemented in my work place. There, in my workplace I had the opportunity to work with the same children for four years. Therefore children and I know each other for a long time. Thus, it was easy to for me to communicate with children.

As the researcher I conducted observations on children's self-initiated play during the year. Moreover, I did semi-structured interviews with children and I collected children's pictures in order to understand their play culture.

There were ten children in the classroom. For the research all the children's names are changed in order to preserve anonymity of the informants. Moreover, the name of the classroom is changed due to the ethical issues.

Furthermore, the collected data was only used for this research. I am highly aware of the confidentiality of the information.

3.3 Case selection

I was working in this school as a teacher for five years and I am a graduate student of Early Childhood Education Masters Program in Primary Education Department at Boğaziçi University. My undergraduate degree is from Preschool Education Department. I have a chance to observe different kinds of children's play along with my education by being student-teacher and now by being a head teacher. Throughout all these years, both as a student and as a teacher I have had the opportunity to observe that play has a significant place for children's lives. When they have a free time, they start to play immediately. They run, chase, act role, design and so on via play.

I have chosen my own classroom as the research setting because I have had the opportunity to closely observe children's play culture. My presence in classroom as the teacher both helped me become a participant observer and enabled naturalistic observation as well. Children's behaviors were not influenced by my presence in the classroom and they were comfortable while answering my questions. One of the possible threats might have been my already formed knowledge and judgments regarding children's behaviors, however, I have tried to overcome this threat by keeping detailed field notes and continuously writing memos to myself about my observations.

As a result of my experiences and observations as a student teacher, head teacher and the literature and research I have been exposed to as an undergraduate and graduate education I have developed a keen interest for children's play culture in early childhood classrooms. Through this research I have searched for the answers of these questions:

- 1- What kind of socio-dramatic play scenarios are constructed in this classroom?
- 2- What are the general characteristics of socio-dramatic play in this classroom?
- 3- How do the children in the classroom construct their play?
- 4- How can the peer culture in this classroom be described?
- 5- What is the role of adults' world and wider context in children's sociodramatic play?

3.4 Research setting

Boğaziçi University Preschool Education Center was established in 1974. The center serves children from one to 6 years. The main aim of this center is to contribute to children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Moreover, this center supports children to be independent members in the society and offers a rich environment, which provides them to build positive relationships with their peers and adults. This center also helps children to develop their problem solving skills, decision making abilities and prepares children to primary education.

One of the most crucial resources of this center is the cooperation between academic studies and practice.

Additionally, this center offers a rich cultural environment with the children, families and employees from different cultures. This valuable cultural atmosphere, where different perspectives, socio-economic conditions and different traditions meet and live together, is an ongoing natural part of our school life.

This center acknowledges that children and their rights are so crucial. They see children as an active participant of the society and they protect children's rights as a main principal. The aim of this center is to listen to children and observe, learn from them, guide them and being together with them.

The mission of this center is to discover children’s potentials. For this center, play has a vital role. They let children to play uninterruptedly to concentrate on their work.

The research was implemented in Boğaziçi University Preschool Education Center (see Appendix A). As illustrated in Figure 1, it was applied in the classroom that has different play corners.

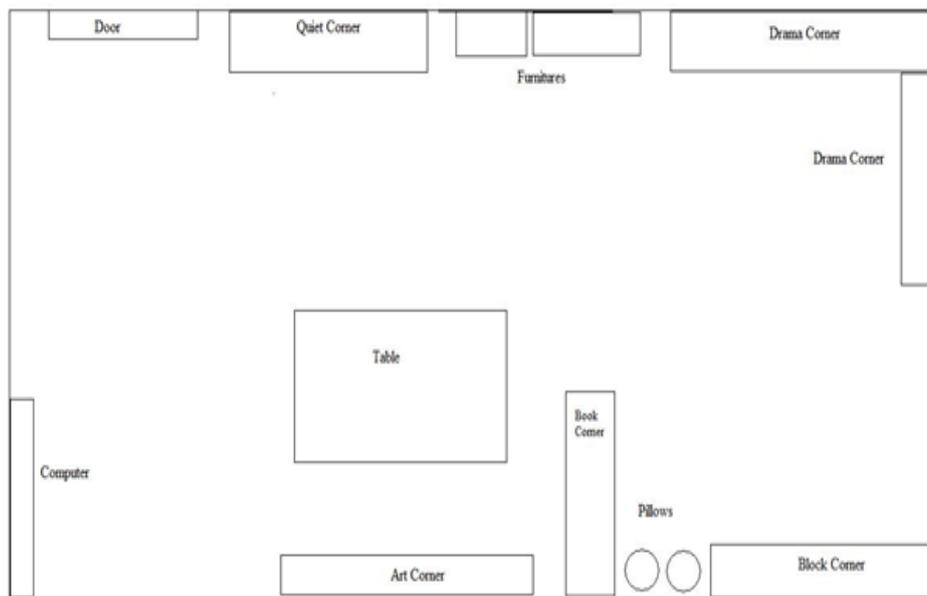


Fig. 1 Classroom map

The classroom consists of 4 and 5 years old children. In this center, children have an unstructured and self-selected play time that they can initiate their play freely at least 1 hour each day from 10:00-11:00 as shown in Table 1. Moreover, in the afternoons children can have the opportunity for self-initiated play before leaving the school. Children and teachers attended to classes only on weekdays from Mondays to Fridays, five days a week. Every day, children get to decide what they are going to play and play for at least one hour uninterrupted play time. In total, there are forty seven weeks of school time.

Table 1. Sample Schedule of the Classroom

8.30-9.00	Welcome to school
9.00-9.30	Breakfast
9.30-10.00	Large Group Activities
10.00-10.10	Plan
10.10-10.45	Do
10.45-10.55	Review
10.55-11.00	Getting Ready for Garden
11.00-11.55	Garden
11.55-12.00	Clean up
12.00-12.30	Lunch Time
12.30-12.40	Clean up
12.40-13.00	ÇEP (Book for School Readiness) Time
13.00-13.30	Story Time
13.30-14.45	Quiet Time
14.45-15.00	Tidy Up
15.00-15.20	Snack Time
15.20-15.25	Clean up
15.25-15.45	Music-Action-Dance
15.45-16.15	Small Group Activities
16.15-16.35	Do
16.35-16.40	Getting Ready for Garden
16.40-17.00	Garden and Home Time

3.5 Participants

As illustrated in Table 2, the participants of the study were the four and five year old children in my classroom. There are 10 children: 5 girls and 5 boys. There are 11 months between the youngest and the oldest child. Most of the children had been in the school for four (4) years. Two of them (Can and Yaman) joined the Little Daisies Classroom two years before the others. They had been together in the same classroom since they were two years old. They knew each other well.

Furthermore, they are very accustomed to the school environment and the school culture. They were very familiar with the classroom environment, garden and the daily schedule. As they have been in the same school for at least four years they have a strong sense of belongingness to the school and to their classroom. Being in the same classroom with the same children contributes greatly to their belongingness to classroom community as well. They are also very familiar to and have good relationships with the other teachers and school personnel and the school manager. Everybody knows each other by name and the school has a positive, friendly and supportive environment.

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Participants

ID	GENDER	AGE
Filiz	Female	5 years 2 months
İrem	Female	5 years 1 month
Emre	Male	5 years
Beren	Female	5 years
Asya	Female	4 years 11 months
Tuna	Male	4 years 8 months
Can	Male	4 years 6 months
Masal	Female	4 years 6 months
Osman	Male	4 years 5 months
Yaman	Male	5 years 3 months

As I have been working with the same children since they were 2 years old, I have had the great opportunity to get to know each and every child in my classroom really well. I have been a close witness to their development, to their masteries, to their challenges, to their learning and to their unfolding journey in their own and unique paths. Seeing the children meeting the milestones in child development was an astonishing and enriching experience for me as an early childhood education teacher. Even though I did not concentrate on individual children in this research still I would like to share my reflections as a professional about each child in my classroom to provide the reader with a rich knowledge of the participants of my research.

Filiz: Filiz does not experience any difficulty in following the classroom rules. She makes friends easily and gets along well with all of her classmates. She enjoys socio-dramatic play and loves leading her friends and offering some ideas throughout the play. Filiz likes taking the leader roles in most of the plays. For example, in Being a Baby Play she likes taking the father or mother role and leads the other friends.

In Being a Naughty Child Play, she experiences the action which a baby does not listen to the mother or the caregiver. At that play Filiz and Can as the owners of the play, have some strict roles for the play.

Osman: Osman is a creative child and he is the one who created Cave Play. He likes adventure and excitement. Moreover, he likes to assume the “baby” role in Being a Baby Play. When he is with Filiz, who is one of his best friend, he likes taking the baby role in “Being a Baby Play”. When I asked him, he said “I want to be a baby, because I am remembering my babyhood. I was so sweet when I was a baby. Osman likes rules. One day, in our conversation with his father he said that he likes putting

some rules at home, too. He likes to own a play and making his friends to listen to him.

Emre: Emre can easily make friends and very open to communication. He likes playing in the groups. He likes taking some roles such as dogs to save the house in Being a Baby Play, a team member in Gunslinger Play.

Tuna: Tuna loves making jokes and making his friends laugh. He is full of new and interesting ideas, which enriches play in the classroom. He likes playing in socio-dramatic plays, he likes taking roles such as dogs, babies in the play.

İrem: İrem is a creative child. She created Scooby Doo Play. She generally likes playing by herself with her dolls. She also likes playing with play dough.

Beren: She likes attending the socio-dramatic plays. She also loves role playing. She likes acting like the mother or the sister with some imaginary items such as high heels pretend shoes, some jewellery or the nail polish.

Can: He is one of the founders of “Being a Naughty Child” play. He likes small group and some individual plays. He has a close friend Filiz which is the other founder of the Being a Naughty Child Play.

Masal: She loves socio-dramatic play and role taking. She likes acting like a mother or a sister in the play. She loves drawing a picture and making models with play-dough. In the plays, she likes watching the children first and then she attempts to join them.

Yaman: Yaman likes playing in some adventurous plays. He likes being in the focus of the play. He likes taking some roles such a monster for Scooby Doo play, a police or a thief in Gunslinger Play. He likes using his loud voice.

Asya: Asya likes attending the socio-dramatic plays. She has some close friends such as Beren. They like playing together especially in “Being a Baby Play”. She likes being a team member of the plays. She also likes acting like a sister, and sometimes a mother in the play.

3.6 Data collection procedures

Data collection in an ethnographic research involves certain steps as described by Creswell (1998). Ethnographic research is conducted on the members of a culture-sharing group or individuals through participant observations, interviews, artifacts and documents. The data is recorded through field notes, interview and observation protocols. As ethnographic research aims to make sense and describe the culture within a specific culture-sharing group through gaining access through gatekeeper and gaining confidence of informants are issues of great importance. This study is performed through participant observations of children’s play, semi-structured interviews about their perceptions, field notes and document analyses. My position as the teacher of the classroom for 3 years and our warm, trusting and affectionate relationship through all these years were the advantages in terms access and rapport issues. As an early childhood education teacher during these three years I have always acted as a participant in their play and asked them questions about their reasons and motives behind their choices and behaviors. So the present study and data collection tools did not create any role conflicts, did not influence or alter children's behaviors and more importantly did not make a change in the nature of the physical, social and cultural environment. Aside from participant observations and field notes, semi-structured interviews were applied for gathering children’s

perceptions about their descriptions of their play. The interview questions aim to understand:

- Descriptions regarding their specific play scenarios
- The reasons behind choosing this type of play
- Steps of their play: Pre play phase, playing phase and ending phase

3.6.1 Data collection during phases of play in the classroom

In this section data collection during phases of play in the classroom will be explained in detail.

3.6.1.1 Pre play phase:

In this phase children decide what to play, who to play with and where to play. For planning their play children sit in a circle and express their plans about their play. This method is called High Scope model that includes plan-do-review part.

As mentioned earlier children have at least 1 hour play time every morning. Play time starts right after planning time finishes with the review session. In other words, children express about their plans such as like “I will play with dolls, I will play with blocks.” Sometimes in their plans they address whom they going to play with by saying “I will play with Filiz, we will decide together what we will do” or “I will join in Can’s play”. The older the children get the more they elaborate on their plans and provide specific details about their play plans. My role as the researcher during this phase was to listen to the children’s ideas and decision and to take notes. As they were used to my note taking behavior in class as a teacher and during the

planning time, my note taking as a researcher did not have an influence on their behaviors and did not make a change in the classroom atmosphere.

3.6.1.2 Play phase

This is the phase where children actually start and continue playing. During this phase they are setting the rules of play, decide the procedures. Sometimes they may even rearrange the rules while continuing their play. During this phase, I, as the researcher, either made observations and took notes or participates in their play when they asked me to join in or gave me the opportunity. I also videotaped children's play for later analyses. Even though I will elaborate on this in the following chapters, my participation in their sociodramatic play has always been constrained by children's decisions and management. All the times I tried to follow the rules of the play and acted as a member of the classroom not as the teacher with authority during the play. Keeping a reflective journal as a researcher helped me a lot for this phase.

3.6.1.3 Ending

This is the phase that children finish playing. There are three reasons for the play to come to an end. First one is completing the mission of the play. For example in "Being a Naughty Child Play" scenario a child misbehaves and at the end the caregiver becomes angry and runs behind him and the mission is accomplished so the play ends. The second reason for ending the play is because children get bored and want to stop playing. Finally children end playing because of the time limit. The children may be obligated to finish playing because of the time schedule of the school. All these factors will be elaborated in the following sections. The data

gathering method started with the Planning process. I, as a researcher asked children about their plan, “what will you do in playing time?” and took notes. After the planning session, I recorded the play in order to analyze their play in depth and make further sense of the data.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

In this research I conducted participant observation, informal interviews and kept field notes as stated earlier. The handwritten field notes have been ethnographically taken on the spot while the children are playing, and during conducting the interviews. Audio and video records, photos and children’s drawings were used for data analysis in data collection. As Creswell, (1998, p. 58) defines, “ethnography involves prolonged observations of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people”. Studying the meanings of behaviors, language and interactions among the members of the group is necessary.

3.7.1 Data transformation

Creswell (1998) and Wolcott (1994) present three steps of data transforming in ethnographic research as description, analysis and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. According to Wolcott (1990, p.28) “description is the foundation upon which qualitative research is built. Therefore without incorporating footnotes and intrusive analysis the researcher needs to describe the events and the setting. In line with this, I have transcribed the audio and video recordings and organized my field notes prior to data analysis. At the same time I have listened to the audio

recording and watched the video recordings repeatedly in order to understand the events in the setting. For getting a full picture of the play scenarios, I have explored children's drawings (Spindler, 2006 cited in Breatnach, 2018).

Then I have organized the descriptions under the main play scenarios that Little Daisies Classroom constructed and re-read the descriptions. As the second step as Wolcott (1994) I have searched for the patterned regularities in the data, which I have defined as the themes emerged out the data (roles, rules, time span, flexibility, ownership and room for adult) and tried to draw connections between the children's play behaviors and larger theoretical frameworks (new sociology of childhood and interpretive reproduction).

Finally, in the final chapter I have presented the interpretation of the culture-sharing group (Little Daisies Classroom children), in other words tried to make sense of the knowledge within the context of theories. Additionally I have added a final statement regarding my personal experiences and learning throughout this research process.

During this analysis some opinions, thoughts and expressions are raised. As Wolcott (1987, p.41) states, "culture is an amorphous term, not something "lying about" so the researcher have to make attributions by looking at the patterns of daily living. Looking for behaviors, language and artefacts are critical components to get an understanding of the culture of a group (Spradley, 1980).

3.7.2 Coding and forming categories

According to Strauss & Corbin (1996, p. 101), open coding is "the analytical process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data". Open coding is a way of conceptualizing, i.e. abstracting

the data as the data is broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events and the researcher gives a name to each and make sure that each name is representative of the incident, event and idea. Then the researcher engages in comparative analysis to search for other events, ideas and incidents which would place in the same code. I have read the descriptions over and over again in order to reach to an understanding. Then I began name the events, behaviors, conversations among children, which would lead into codes. Then I began to search for the codes in different types of play scenarios and in the construction processes of the play scenarios. Following the early coding process, I have engaged in comparative analysis in order to discern the range of potential meanings and began to write memos, which are defined as records of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions and directions for further data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1996). Eventually when I saw that the early codes that I have formed can be applied to a majority of the play scenarios and the processes involved in the construction play in the classroom and made sure that I had ensured all the other possible meanings I began to form my categories and subcategories (how children construct their play, who gets to play, how the play terminate for play culture; and roles, rules, time span, flexibility, adult's role and ownership of the play for the characteristics of play scenarios) that will describe each play and the play culture in general.

3.7.3 Operational definitions

Play Scenario: The specific socio-dramatic play constructed by children with a storyline, roles, acting and rules. **Construction:** Construction is an action that putting something together and constitute a new thing. As Corsaro (1998) stated that with

shared production process, children put their ideas, values together and they build up their play culture.

Casting: Role division in play scenarios such as children assuming the roles in the scenario according to the storyline. Deciding who will be acting as a mother, sister, dog, baby etc.

Episode: Different variations of the play scenario similar to the episodes of a TV series. In each episode, children have different topics. It is a kind of new chapter for the play.

Ownership: In every play there is a rightful owner who has played the major role in the construction of the play, can be referred to as the founder of the play.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Before the beginning of the data collection, the researcher applied to the Boğaziçi University Human Research Ethical Commission (INAREK). As is shown in Appendix B, the Ethical Commission approval was taken. After the approval of INAREK, consent forms were given to families of the participant children (see Appendix C) in order to see that whether they give consent to their children's participation in the study or not. Finally I took the participant children's verbal consent for my research. I explained the research to the children. We sat around the carpet and I said "children, I see you are playing some different plays, some group plays, some individual plays. These are so special. I want to observe and write them. I greatly value your creativity and am amused by the fun you get. I want others to hear about your play". I asked their permission about my research. Their attitude was

positive. Throughout my research, they were eager to explain details, answer questions about their play and cooperate in any possible way.

To be able to construct trustworthiness of the research, during the process of the study, I asked some questions to myself about the data and I took some notes and memories about the data.

I also made member checking with the student teachers that came to my classroom and observe children's play culture to provide trustworthiness. Moreover, I shared my data analysis procedures with some researcher friends from the field. My advisor enabled continual feedback from the beginning of the process to the end. Subjectivity is the certain feature of the qualitative research. I, as a teacher and researcher, was aware of that I have a subjective role on the research with my interpretations and perspectives.

Reflexivity, as Glesne (2011, p.150) describes that, on the research, researchers should continually consider about their own roles. I started to think about my role on the study, and I took my reflection notes and I wrote my feelings about the process.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

The interpretation and the findings of the study will be presented in this chapter according to the following subtitles: A general overview of play in the Little Daisies Classroom, socio dramatic play scenarios of the classroom, play culture in the classroom and general characteristics of socio dramatic play in the classroom.

4.1 A general overview of play in the Little Daisies Classroom

In this section, the general overview of play in the Little Daisies Classroom will be explained deeply with the types of play, the groups of children in their play and the time that play proceeds.

4.1.1 What types of play take place in the classroom?

Children in the classroom generally prefer to engage in socio-dramatic play. As discussed earlier in detail, the early childhood education center endorses a play-based curriculum and children can have uninterrupted 1-hour play time in the morning. As the curriculum of the center is influenced by the High Scope Approach, during planning time children get to choose what to play, where to play and with whom to play during circle time and carry out their plans during at least one-hour work time. Group play that consists of two or more children is also highly valued as it has been

accepted as a major path to both individual development and classroom community building. According to the curriculum of the school teachers encourage children to play together by asking questions during planning time, such as “where do you want to play, what do you want to play, and with whom do you want to play”. Because of this shared understanding in the school, children naturally prefer to play in groups. However, as the preferences of the children and self-initiated play are the main drives guiding play, individual play is equally appreciated and valued. Therefore, one of the mediators for the socio-dramatic play is the center’s, more importantly the teacher’s emphasis and encouragement for this type of play. Another mediator for group play is the small size of the classroom as the classroom consists of ten (10) children at the age of five (5).

There is an uninterrupted play time period in the Little Daisies Classroom as mentioned in the previous chapters. During uninterrupted play time, I, as the teacher of the classroom, made observations and engaged in children’s play as long as the children allow me to do so. In brief, children sometimes invited me to participate in their play and sometimes they do not allow me to be a part of play as they tell me that there is no room for me in the play.

For example, when I asked Osman for the Cave Play if I could play with them in the cave Osman replied “No, you are too big to fit in the cave, you cannot play with us.”

Another example is when I asked Asya “may I be the baby?” in the Being a Baby Play. She said “No, you are a teacher, you cannot be a baby.”

On the contrary, in Scooby Doo Play, they allow me to be the monster. When I asked their permission to take a role in Scooby Doo, they only allow me to be the monster.

Tuna said “you can only be the monster.”

In the Little Daisies Classroom through socio-dramatic play children construct their own unique culture, rituals and routines. Other than the socio-dramatic play, there is individual play that children prefer to be engaged in, such as playing with cars, play dough, blocks etc. However, individual play is not within the scope of this study so the data for this type of play was not collected.

4.1.2 Who plays with whom in the classroom?

The children who get along well and have close friendship generally prefer to play together. In other words, whoever gets along well together form groups for playing during that specific play. For example in Little Daisies Classroom in most of the cases, Filiz, Osman, Emre and Tuna formed a group, whereas Beren, Asya and Masal formed another group. Additionally Filiz and Can; Osman and Filiz have their own play as shown in Table 3. Although the children mostly prefer to play with their best companions this does not mean that the members of the groups are fixed. Daily or sometimes weekly their preferences and choices can change and the nature of the plays in the classroom makes it possible for daily adjustments to occur. For example İrem could join any of the plays if she wanted to. Also Yaman could join any play if the members allow him to join. The negotiation and shared decision making is the most important and the only valid asset for engaging in play. When children do not want to allow their friend or friends in the current play of their preference, I as the teacher generally respect their decision and guide the child so that the child will not feel rejected. However, if the non-allowance for play turns into isolation for one or two specific child I address this issue during another time period, and apply

strategies for group management and guidance. This has not been a major issue and need in this specific classroom on the other hand.

Table 3. Children’s Groups with Their Friends

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Individual Players
Filiz	Beren	Filiz	Osman	İrem
Osman	Asya	Can	Filiz	Yaman
Emre	Masal			
Tuna				

4.1.3 How long does play take place in the class?

In Little Daisies Classroom, children have one hour of uninterrupted play time. This play time is in the mornings, from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. However, if they want children can initiate and engage in these play scenarios anytime they find the opportunity other than the one- hour uninterrupted play time. While Being a Naughty Child and Cave Play can only take place in the indoor classroom environment, Scooby Doo Play, Being a Baby Play and Gunslinger Play can take place in the outdoor environment.

4.2 The Socio-dramatic Play Scenarios of the Classroom

There are five main socio-dramatic play scenarios that the children of the Little Daisies Classroom constructed and like to play during play times. All these play scenarios have different characteristics and features. These scenarios are named as follows.

- Being a Naughty Child (Yaramaz Çocukçuluk)
- Scooby Doo Play (Scooby Dooculuk)
- Cave Play (Mağaracılık)
- Being a Baby Play (Bebekçilik)
- Gunslinger Play (Silahçılık)

These play scenarios were constructed during the very early days of the 2015-2016 academic year. Although some of the play scenarios re based on cartoons, or stemmed out of their previous experiences of the children, all of the play scenarios are uniquely invented by the members of the Little Daisies Classroom. The invention process will be deeply explained in the following phases of this research.

4.2.1 Being a Naughty Child Play (Yaramaz Çocukçuluk)

Being a Naughty Child Play, were originally set up by two children Filiz and Can. Both children are generally good at being in conformity with the classroom rules and never display any challenging behavior in the classroom regarding the rules and order.

In this play scenario, one of them pretends to be the baby and the other one pretends to be the caregiver, in particular nanny or mummy. As shown in Figure 2, in Being a Naughty Child Play, there is a child who is napping and the mother is who is cooking. The child is getting ready to run away from the mother as a “naughty” activity. The scenario addresses the possible challenging issues between a baby and the mother in the home environment. Filiz generally acts the role of the caregiver and Can is generally the baby in the play. In their play there is a good relationship between Filiz and Can, and they listen to each other very well.



Fig. 2 Being a Naughty Child Play

4.2.2 Scooby Doo Play

Scooby Doo is a cartoon which is widely popular among children. The children in Little Daisies Classroom also watch this cartoon. As shown in Figure 3, in this cartoon, there are Shaggy, Vilma, Daphne, Fred, Scooby Doo and some monsters. In the original scenario of the cartoon, the above mentioned characters act as a team except the monsters. The human characters in the play come together and make some plans for catching the monster as a team. The team fights against the monsters. In every episode, there is a new topic and adventure. This is how children get inspired. In every play episode children experience a new adventure. Most of these adventures are about the monsters that are coming from different places to fight with the team. For example, in one play they imagine that a monster is coming from the cave. In another play, it is coming from behind the curtain. Sometimes, the types of the monsters may differ.

For example, one day the children were talking about the types of the monsters. Osman said “always a different monster comes”. I asked that what kind of

monsters are coming and Osman replied “food monster came one day”. While he was talking about it, an idea came in his mind and he said “today, robot monster will come! Yaman will be the robot monster and he will come and eat us!”

The aim is as a team to destroy the monsters with creating new strategies such as hiding in the different places, running and bringing some materials to fight against the monster. During this play, children practice being a team, co-working, and decision making in a group and helping each other.



Fig. 3 The monster and the team in Scooby Doo Play

As a different place, children as a team create a place to hide from the monster; they call it as a “mystery cabin”. When they come into the cabin, the monster cannot come next to them. It is a kind of secure place. Osman said “in the mystery cabin, there is something going round and round like “tirtirtir” and the monster cannot catch us there!” Filiz said “I like being in the mystery cabin with my friends!” When I asked the reason behind it she said “because in the mystery cabin, the monster cannot catch us! This is so funny!”

4.2.3 Cave Play

In the Cave Play, children pretend to be as adventurers. They try to come into the dark and narrow cave to find the gold bucket. There is a leader of the play which is the founder of the Cave Play and he leads them in their search for the gold bucket.

This scenario is invented by Osman and the play proceeds according to Osman's ideas and suggestions. The play takes place in the house area in the indoor environment. Yaman explains the play as follows "Osman puts two chairs around the furniture, and he hides the treasure" (see Fig. 4)

They put two big treasures under the two-seat furniture with full of toys and cover the front with a green cushion so that they cannot be seen. In the meantime, instead of closing the long seat with the cushion, they create a tunnel passage by combining two single seat seats, reaching the treasure. In fact, these combined seats were a cave.

Me: Who gets the treasure? Osman replied "Me" and Filiz said "yes, Osman because he sets up the play. Me: Is the person who set up the play taking the treasure? Yaman replied "Yes"

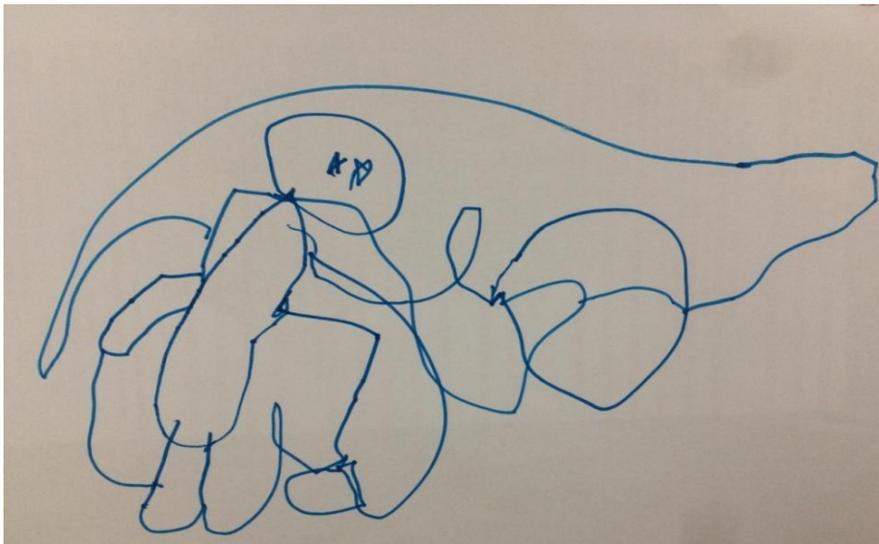


Fig. 4 Cave Play: Osman is in the cave, trying to get gold bucket

4.2.4 Being a Baby Play

In Being a Baby Play, children pretend to be a family. According to the scenario of the play that constructed by children spontaneously, there is a dad, a mom (see Fig. 5), one or two babies depending on the number of children who want to play and a family pet, mostly cats and dogs and occasionally parrots. Children can choose their roles in the play and the casting in this play is very open to negotiation. This play scenario is very open-ended and spontaneous in nature as every day a different episode may arise depending on the group's preferences. The episodes include family daily life activities such as going on a holiday, getting on an airplane, going swimming and shopping etc.



Fig. 5 Being a Baby Play: Two mothers are going around

4.2.5 Gunslinger Play

The main action of the Gunslinger Play is pretending to shoot each other (see Fig. 6) with their imaginary guns both in the classroom and garden. In this play, children were pretending to hide from each other in order to save their own lives. There are two teams which are formed spontaneously. Usually, boys are playing in this game.

Yaman, Osman, Tuna and Emre are the main members of the Gunslinger Play. In Gunslinger Play, children who are in the same team make some plans and strategies to stay alive. On the other hand, if a child is seen and shot from the opposed team members, the child who pretends to be shot lies on the ground and waits until a friend from the same team comes and cures the wounded with an injection.



Fig. 6 Gunslinger Play: Yaman is using his gun

4.3 Play culture of the classroom

In the following section I will try to describe children's construction of play in order to explain the play culture of the classroom. The categories arise are as follows

- 1) how they construct their own play,
- 2) how they decide who is going to play,
- 3) how they dismiss players,
- 4) how they terminate their play, and
- 5) how play evolve into other types of play.

4.3.1 How children construct their own play?

The construction process of play for each scenario is unique and worth special attention. Therefore I will describe how each play scenario is constructed by the children. Each play scenario was constructed at different times during the years and they emerge out of a child's idea. When the other children like the idea the play scenario begins to evolve and becomes a living feature of the play culture of the classroom. There have been many other scenarios that were initiated by children but unless they become widely accepted by children, they fade away and are forgotten.

Each play scenario has a specific name and children refer to the play scenario with this specific name. As soon as the play scenario is invented the first thing children do is to name the scenario. The play scenarios in the classroom are invented and constructed spontaneously by the children themselves and they are authentic to the Little Daisies Classroom. This also includes naming the play. The name of the play is, therefore, found and given by the children in the classroom. Without any hesitation, as a teacher who has worked in the same center for five (5) years I can say that I did not come across to these exact plays in any other classroom.

4.3.1.1 Being a Naughty Child Play scenario

The play scenario called Being a Naughty Child, which literally means naughty-child play was first constructed while Filiz and Can was playing together and taking acting out the roles mummy and the baby. I have recorded the construction of this play as follow in my field notes:

Filiz and Can are playing in the drama corner, which has an armchair and a kitchen for children. Filiz is acting as the mother and Can is the baby. When the play starts,

Can (the baby) sits on the armchair, and Filiz (mother) is cooking next to him. They are in constant dialog with each other and discuss how the scenario will proceed.

Can says to Filiz “Let’s say I was lying in my bed and you said good night to me.

You were cooking in the kitchen and I get out and ran away from my bed”. Filiz says “ok” with a smile on her face.

They listen to each other like they have a contract between themselves. Through the play when Filiz pretended to recognize Can is out of his bed, she yells at Can “I said go to your bed!” She seems to be very tired and very busy in the kitchen. Can stops acting and says “wait Filiz, you did not recognize me yet”. Filiz says ok and she continues to cook as if she is not aware of Can’s actions. This was how the play “Being a Naughty Child” has been invented and carried on for one year.

4.3.1.2 Scooby Doo Play

A similar pattern has occurred with the play, Scooby Doo Play. One day, during snack time they were sitting around the table and İrem was talking about the cartoon Scooby Doo. She said “I love Shaggy a lot!” which is one of the characters in this cartoon. After this conversation, they looked at each other and they commonly agreed to play Scooby Doo. They started planning and imagining who will be who, which adventures they can make. They became very excited, and they immediately wanted to play. Later on when I asked them about how they come up with this play: İrem replied “I watched Scooby Doo a lot. It came into my mind”.

When I said: “Have you thought of playing this Scooby Doo play with your friends, haven’t you?” She said: “Yes.” And this is how the Scooby Doo play was invented.

4.3.1.3 Cave Play

The play called “Cave Play” started with Osman’s idea. This is how I wrote the process in my field notes:

In the drama corner next to the wall there are three small chairs for children. That day Osman and Filiz were playing in front of the chairs by crawling. Osman wanted to put the chairs in front of each other and made a tunnel with them (see Fig. 7). He said “Minecraft play has some caves, let me build the cave” and he started initiating the play. Minecraft is a kind of computer game, which is about an adventure. When the others saw Osman building the cave, they came and surrounded him to watch and observe his preparation for the play. They called this play “Cave Play.”



Fig. 7 Cave Play and the treasure in the bucket

Cave Play is created by Osman. Osman builds the cave and he allows the others to enter the cave. Inside the cave, they searched for gold buckets “altın kesesi” in other words, treasure. One day, Osman saw the chairs next to the drama corner. He said “I want to make a tunnel” and suddenly he decided to build a cave out of these chairs. First he and his friends put two toy boxes into the cave. His friends Filiz and Asya helped Osman to put the treasures inside the cave. This is how they create their own play “Cave Play”.

4.3.1.4 Being a Baby Play

Among the play scenarios Being a Baby Play is the oldest. Most of the play scenarios were more spontaneous in nature, however, “Being a Baby Play” was developed over the years and has a longer history. It started around 2 years ago as a make-believe play in the house area. During the years it had its own name and different versions were added. When I asked them about how they found this play; for example, Beren explained that she was playing with a baby doll in previous years. Similarly Filiz also explained parallel memories. She said “I used to take my doll and I was feeding her. I was also putting her into bed as a mummy.”

Diversely, what they constructed were the subcategories of Being a Baby Play. These are Being a Parrot Baby, Mud Baby, Marrying Baby, and the last one is Ge ge No No Baby Play.

These themes were developed by children spontaneously. They created their own ideas and scenarios for these subcategorized plays.

For example, Filiz and Asya went to the drama corner to play Being a Baby Play. In this mean time, Filiz had a bucket of “link a link flower shaped toys”. The “link-a – link flower shaped toys” are one of the most favorite toys for the children in Little Daisies Classroom. These toys have a different soft texture and they can be used in different ways by combining them.

Suddenly Filiz started throwing some of the link a link toys to the floor and she said “these are the sweets.” Asya commented on this by saying that “These sweets are not for us, these are for the Parrots!” Filiz agreed on this and she replied “we are feeding the Parrots!” Following this discussion Masal joined Filiz and Asya and she said “I will be the baby parrot!” Upon agreeing on this, Masal pretended to

be in an egg of a Baby Parrot. With a crack, she was getting out of her egg. Later, Osman and Asya joined her as the other parrots. They pretended to be a parrot by making bird noises, using their arms as wings. They enjoyed eating some sweets from the floor! This is how Parrot Baby Play evolved from Being a Baby Play. In other words, this is how children spontaneously alternate a previously practiced play scenario.

Another play that they initiate is described earlier in “Being a Baby Play”. In this play, children pretend to be a baby. Based on this, they call this play “Being a Baby Play”. Also it has some different variations such as “Ge ge no no Baby Play”. There were some baby roles and they were making the sound like “ge ge no no” and talking like that. Apparently they started calling the play like “ge ge no no Baby Play”.

During planning time in the High Scope planning the play process, it was possible to see that they were using the name “I want to play ge ge no no Being a Baby Play.”

Also there is another variation of Being a Baby Play which is called “Mud Baby Play.” Children pretend to play in the mud. They pretend to be like the babies and when they see mud, they act as if there is real mud and they jump around in the mud.

4.3.1.5 Gunslinger Play

The last play that will be analyzed in this research is called “Gunslinger Play”. They chose the name “Gunslinger Play” because this play is played with imaginary guns they created out of the building blocks (see Fig. 8). Moreover, the reason of this imaginative play will be explained in the following chapter of adult’s role in the play. This play was constructed by the children in the classroom environment. Children had an idea about gun plays before. When I asked some of the children about gun

plays, one of them replied “I was playing gun play with my grandmother at home.”(Yaman). Furthermore, through the observation and listening to children’s dialogues, it is possible to say that most of the boys have gun toys at home. Gunslinger Play was started by one of the children’s conversation. Yaman was telling others “I am a policeman, let’s fight against each other! I am hiding. I am shooting, chuff chuff”. He was so excited to play Gunslinger Play. Suddenly boys divided into two groups and they pretended to fight against each other. This is how Gunslinger Play was created by the children in the classroom. More importantly Yaman generally preferred to play individually in the classroom before the Gunslinger Play was “on air”. However with this specific play scenario he has become a wanted and active member of the play culture in the classroom.



Fig. 8 Gunslinger play materials

4.3.2 How they decide who is going to play

In this session, I will explain how children choose and agree on the participants for each play. In the High Scope Plan process, both the teacher and the children sit on the carpet form a circle and children take turns to tell their plans for play time. As

mentioned before in the Methodology Section in this research, the High Scope Program has three phases before starting a play. These are Plan Section, Do Section and Review Section, respectively.

When the teacher asks them about their plan, children choose where to play and with whom to play. At this phase, they announce their plans like “I want to play ‘Being a Baby Play’.” At that process, the teacher asks others “who will join him/her?” Close friends prefer to join each other to have fun together. Children who are close friends prefer playing together in the classroom. For example, in Being a Naughty Child Play, two close friends, Filiz and Can prefer playing together. When I asked them individually about playing with each other they told me that they like to play together. “I like playing with Can. He is so funny.”(Filiz). Moreover, Filiz has another close friend, too. She enjoys playing with Osman and she likes to be an assistant of Osman in the Cave Play. In planning process, Filiz tells “I will be Osman’s assistant in the Cave Play.”

Through the end of the school Osman was getting more popular among some of the friends. Asya said “Osman is so nice; I like to play with him”. For Cave Play, she purposefully wanted to play his Cave Play.

If one of the children plays the play passionately, he/she is always referred to by that specific play. For example, Yaman plays Gunslinger Play passionately. Therefore the others want to play this Gunslinger Play with him. They even talk to each other that they should play gunslinger with Yaman.

Me: Why do you refer to Yaman’s name all the time for the Gunslinger Play? Emre: “Because I like to play with Yaman in the Gunslinger Play. He is so excited and he plays well”. In brief, children decide who is going to be in the play. This decision

depends on some criteria like being a close friend, playing the play well and being passionate about the play but also to the available roles in the play.

In the Naughty Baby Play scenario there is room for just two children, the caregiver and baby. Therefore they do not let the others come and join their play. For example one day, Yaman approached Can and Filiz and asked if he could play as well. They said “it is our play, we found it, and this is a play for two”. When I asked them for the reason, Filiz told me that she wanted to play only with Can. She said that “this is our play and we found this play. That’s why only we can play the Being a Naughty Child play”. Based on my observations I can say that Yaman is an active child and generally does not prefer to follow the directions of his friends during play. Even though the scenario is about a baby acting out, still there are certain rules that each player should follow. These rules are predetermined and negotiated among Filiz and Can. Another interesting point about deciding on who is going to play occurred in the Naughty Child Play is that only Filiz and Can play this scenario and the other children have never attempted to join in or choose to play this scenario.

One day when Yaman insisted on playing with Filiz and Can, I encouraged them to do so and they allowed Yaman to join their play but they did not let him to behave like he wanted to. They tried to control his actions and reactions. Yaman wanted to be a naughty baby and he did not want to follow Filiz’s direction who was pretending to be the mummy. Filiz and Can did not like that. Yaman began acting out and began to throw the toys and pillows around. Filiz raised her voice and said: “Yaman you are out. The play is finished for you” and she left the play area. When I asked about what happened, Can said “we don’t want Yaman to ruin our play” and Filiz said “Because Yaman ruined our play area, he did not sleep, and he did not

listen to me. That's why I left because I was getting angry. I needed to calm down, I left the area and the play was finished.”

4.3.3 How they dismiss players

In this section, I will explain how children dismiss players from the play. Based on my observations and interviews I saw that there are two main reasons for children to leave their friends out the play. These are (1) ruining the play and (2) not obeying the play rules. The latter reason has also two categories. These are fulfilling the rules of the roles and scenario.

4.3.3.1 Ruining the play

In children's play, there is an environment that they construct and they do not let the others to ruin this environment. For each play they want to keep this environment safe to pursue their play. They do not want to keep their friends who ruin their environment. That's why they dismiss those who ruin this environment. In other words, if one or more children do something that is against this environment, he or she will be dismissed from the play.

For example, for Gunslinger Play, they use the building blocks as guns and/or arrows. After they take their guns and/or arrows, they keep these with them. Ruining the arrows is forbidden and if they do that, they need to exit the play. When I asked the reason behind it, Osman said that “ruining the arrows is not ok because arrows are special. We need to keep them safe.” Filiz replied “We spent too much time to make these arrows”. For the Being a Baby Play, ruining the toys like cups, baby

pillows and mother's tools are also forbidden. Whoever ruins these will be dismissed from the play. For the Cave Play, it is forbidden to ruin the cave. Ruining the cave means misplacing the chairs that forms the cave. Whoever changes the position of the chairs is taken out of the play.

4.3.3.2 Not obeying the play rules

The second reason that somebody is dismissed from a play is not obeying the rules of the play. As mentioned before in rules part, there are some rules for each play.

Children who join the play need to obey the rules. If they do not, play members especially the play founder dismisses these players. For example, in the Cave Play, taking the treasure from the cave that belongs to the play founder is such an act. If someone gets the treasure, he or she dismissed from the play. In the Gunslinger Play, it is forbidden to spit. While children make "chuff" noise, they need to be careful not to spit. Whoever spits by mistake or intentionally, he or she will be dismissed.

Moreover, if someone blocks his or her friend's action and move, he will be dismissed. For example, one day Emre was trying to shoot and Yaman blocked his action. Emre got very angry and it was decided to dismiss Yaman from the play.

Furthermore, in Being a Baby Play, children should listen to each other. If somebody ignores, he or she will be dismissed. For example, Yman and Osman were playing together by pretending some different roles in the Being a Baby Play. Osman was pretending to be a baby and Yaman was pretending to be a dog. While Osman was telling about the actions that he wanted to do, Yaman did not listen to him. Osman got angry and said "Yaman, you need to listen, if not, how we can play together? In their play, listening to each other is a crucial thing to pursue the scenario.

4.3.4 How they terminate play

Children terminate play or stop playing for three main reasons. These are: 1) reaching to the goal in the play / satisfaction, 2) getting bored or seeing something more interesting, and 3) time limit.

4.3.4.1 Satisfaction; if the predetermined goal in the play has been reached

A play terminates after children reach satisfaction, which means that if a shared task is completed, children terminate the play. For example, in the Cave Play, the play finishes when the children find the treasure. In the Scooby Doo Play, the play terminates after they catch the monster.

4.3.4.2 Getting bored and seeing something more interesting

The second reason that a play can be terminated is getting bored and seeing something more interesting. In the Little Daisies Classroom, children may get bored easily due to their age group. Similarly, their interest may change rapidly. Due to these factors, children may choose to terminate their play.

For example, in the Being a Baby Play, children get bored after a couple of scenarios. One day, Asya was pretending to be a big sister and she was pretending to go to school from one corner to another in the classroom. İrem was playing with her baby from home. Asya came next to İrem and she was interested in this toy. She was asking some questions to İrem. At that moment, Asya stopped playing as part of the Being a Baby Play like a big sister; instead, she started playing with İrem. That is to say, she saw something more interesting and stopped playing.

4.3.4.3 Time limit

The third and the last reason that a play can be terminated is the time limit. As mentioned before, in this school where the research has been conducted, the play time is limited with one hour. Children want to play more and more in some types of play such as Gunslinger Play. In these plays they enjoy hiding, shooting, escaping, chasing, crawling, and jumping. Due to the nature of this play, there is no end to this play. Children do not want to finish this play but the play is terminated because of the daily schedule.

4.3.4.4 Children who set up the play can terminate it

When one child or children are not happy about how the play proceeds they reserve the right to terminate the play. If there is an owner of the play he or she can terminate the play. For example, for the Cave Play, Osman has a right to terminate the play as the owner of the play. One day, Osman, for example said “the cave play is finished! Ok, it is closed”. Moreover, for the Being a Naughty Child Play, Filiz and Can are able to stop playing their play. The others generally accept the termination and do not insist. This is also a product of shared understanding about play in the classroom.

4.3.5 How play evolves into other things or other plays in the classroom

Over time some plays evolve into other plays. For example, the Gunslinger Play evolved over time. This is because of my attitude towards guns, war plays and violence in the classroom. According to Heart and Tannock (2013) practitioners

believe plays that involve violence cause aggressive attitude for children. They stated that these violent plays are also detrimental for their development. In the Little Daisies Classroom, this view is also adapted by the teacher. I did not want children to play with guns. Although the guns are made from building blocks, I still do not allow children to play with guns. However, children like playing this play. Therefore they do their best to convince me. In order to convince me, children say “this is not a real gun, this is an arrow. There is no smoke coming out of it, and nobody really dies.” After my approval, the children evolved this play into Arrow Play. This is how Gunslinger Play evolved into Arrow Play.

Another example is how Being a Baby Play evolved into some subcategories “Ge ge no no Baby Play” and “Mud Baby Play”. Children play the Being a Baby Play with some baby and mummy roles. While they were talking about their roles, they said “babies cannot speak” After this talking, one of the children, Osman started uttering some nonsense words like “ge ge, no no” baby speak, and children accepted it. After that Being a Baby Play has evolved into another subcategory “Ge ge no no-Baby Play”.

In another Being a Baby Play time, children pretended to be the babies playing around and not listening to their mothers. At that time one of the children pointed the floor and she said “mud” After that word, children whoever around this area jumped into the pretend mud. Children like the mud idea because they imagine that they get dirty and it is very funny. That day, when they say mud, they started laughing and jumping around the carpet. Osman, Filiz and Asya use the word “mud” couple of times. After the couple of days, that they named this play “the Mud Baby Play” and they call it as “çamur bebekçilik”

4.4 General characteristics of socio dramatic play in the classroom

In the Little Daisies classroom, even though each play scenario is unique and addresses different issues they also have common characteristics, which are the same for all scenarios. These are specific name of the play, roles, rules, time span, room for flexibility, room for adult players and the ownership of the play.

4.4.1 Roles

Each play scenario has specific roles and each child assumes these roles before beginning to play. There goes a negotiation among children who gets to play which part and when the roles are assigned the play starts. Each child is expected to act according to the predetermined and negotiated roles. Roles serve the play and they proceed in the expected manner.

4.4.1.1 Being a Naughty Child Play

The Being a Naughty Child play scenario has room for two children; a naughty baby and the mother. Once they decide to play they begin to negotiate who gets to play each part. However, as this play scenario is invented by two children, Filiz and Can, this play scenario is not open to newcomers and there is some sort of ownership in this play scenario which is not seen in other. When children want to switch roles they express their opinions, they listen to each other and show respect.

For role changes, when they decide that they want to change the role, they listen to each other. They have a nice relationship towards each other. For example, when Can got bored being in the role of the baby, he looked at Filiz and said “let’s

change roles, now you are the naughty child, ok Filiz?” Filiz listened to him and accepted. She smiled and finished staying near the kitchen area and came next to the child’s bed.

4.4.1.2 Scooby Doo Play

In Scooby Doo play, certain children assume the role of certain cartoon characters. There is room for 5 characters in this scenario, which are two males, two females and one animal, a dog character. The girls who attended the play want to act the female characters. It is also same for the males. There is a gender division in casting. For Scooby the dog role, boys generally prefer to be the Scooby especially the humorous ones like Tuna and Emre. Yaman acts as the famous monster character in the play. Sometimes Can and Masal choose to become monsters too. Not only do they choose their roles in the play based on their gender, but they choose them according to their own personal characteristics. These are: being a leader, being attractive, hardworking, funny etc.

In Scooby Doo Play, Osman is leading the play by enacting Fred. On the other hand, Filiz is Vilma and Beren is Daphne. In the cartoon, Vilma is the clever one and the leader just like Filiz. Daphne is fashionable just like Beren likes to be. On the other hand Yaman likes being the monster. When I asked him about the reason for this fact, he said “I like running away, hiding from the others.” Apart from this he also enjoys making different noises like screaming and roaring. Yaman, is an active boy. In Scooby Doo Play, he takes the monster role and chooses to be the opponent. In Scooby Doo Play, the play scenario is around the monster and the team. Thus, he as the monster is at the center of the play. In the play, children call Yaman’s name by shouting in order Yaman to catch them. Therefore, Yaman gets more

excited and he becomes more into the play. When I talked to Masal about this play, she said “It is so excited when Yaman is the monster because he runs after us and shouts!” Moreover Beren with a smiley face “Yaman makes funny noises as a monster! I like it”

Interviews with children and my observations about the Scooby Doo play lead me to think about Yaman’s active role as a monster in the play. He does not like obeying the rules, in other words he likes to be free. He wants to do whatever he wants. And for the Scooby Doo Play, he likes taking the monster role. By doing this, he is able to do these free actions and he becomes very happy.

Sometimes when the other children like Tuna and Osman become the monster they shared their feelings as follows:

Tuna: I do not want to be the monster.

Me: Why not Tuna? Tuna: Because I felt like I was a real monster. I do not like it because when I was a monster, everybody hates me! I want to be the good guy!

Osman: I do not want to be the monster because I hate being a monster.

Me: Why not Osman?

Osman: Because I want to be the good one.

Osman is one of the students in the classroom who wants to obey the rules, tries to be the good one and the leader during the play. Moreover, sometimes being a monster is related to the rules. This means that when the monster catches a member from the team, he or she also becomes the monster. Moreover, Beren told us “sometimes in the play I want to be Daphne, and sometimes I became a monster when a monster caught me!”

4.4.1.3 Cave Play

In Cave play, there are three children who are part of the play. One of them is the leader and also the founder of the play, Osman. The other is his best friend, Filiz the assistant of Osman during the play. Asya is another member of the play. For some sections of the activity, Yaman and Masal were joining the play if they could fulfill the requirements that were mentioned in rules part.

Osman is the leader, founder and first adventurer of the Cave Play. He was getting ready to enter the cave by putting his pretend helmet and light on. When he enters the cave, he lets the others know about what is going on in the cave. In other words he checks the cave before the team comes. Filiz is the assistant of Osman and she is helping him to get ready for the cave and follows him into the cave. They are good friends and based on this situation they choose to invite other friends to join in on the play.

4.4.1.4 Being a Baby Play

In the Being a Baby Play scenario, there is a mum, a dad, a baby, a sister and a pet. According to the chosen theme, the roles can be switched. For example, in one scenario, Filiz, who is a girl, plays the dad; Osman is the baby; Tuna is sometimes the cat, sometimes the dog, alongside with Emre. In another Being a Baby Play, Beren is the mum, and Asya is the sister and Masal is the baby and they change the roles throughout the play. The mum says “I am going to the work” Big daughter is going to school and the baby is sleeping or doing some naughty things. In the Being a Baby Play, the mother is responsible for leading the children in the play of the scenario. She is busy with her children, her work and house chores. She feeds,

washes, helps them go to sleep and gets them ready for school etc. This is very demanding and busy role.

Big sister is the one who has some responsibilities such as doing homework, looking after her baby sister or brother. Moreover, she is also the one who has a right to have the mobile phone; she is allowed to go to school by herself. The baby is the one who is waiting to receive all the attention, being fed and enjoying playing in the mud, or being pampered with some cotton candy and lots of sweets. Dogs have some responsibilities to protect the babies around the house. They are barking, looking and checking around the house and saving the babies from the enemies such as the imaginary thief. Cats are enjoying things like tumbling, sleeping, catching the ball, showing their claws sometimes. Children enact these different roles.

4.4.1.5 Gunslinger Play

In the Gunslinger play, there are two rival groups who engage each other. The groups consist of boys; Osman, Yaman, Emre and Tuna. Osman and Yaman have the central role of the play. Generally they create opposing groups and pretend to shoot at each other. Emre was in Osman's group and Tuna was in Yaman's. However, it is possible to observe that Yaman likes to be by himself, sometimes. Once, children were getting ready for the play and Yaman said "let me be the thief alone! You can all be the police" to his friends. When I asked him "what is your reason of being alone in this play as a thief?"

He replied "I am so powerful! I can deal with them by myself". He wants to show his power and abilities to his friends. Therefore, he prefers being alone as an opposing power in the Gunslinger Play.

4.4.2 Rules

Each play scenario has certain rules. These rules were established by the children. In some cases the play-inventor (founder) sets the rules and in some cases these rules are a product of group negotiation.

The rules can be strict or flexible based on the play scenario. The common characteristics of the rules are to ensure that children act according to their assumed roles. For instance if the child is acting the role of the baby in the play, he or she needs to act in line with a baby in real life. The major common rule in all play scenarios is that, one cannot spoil the play. In other words nobody can interfere with the physical set up of the environment or display behaviors that would restrict the behavior of any child who is playing. Following are the specific rules for each of the play scenarios.

4.4.2.1 Being a Naughty Child Play

The Being a Naughty Child has two rules that are set by the children. One of them is acting the roles appropriately and the other one is providing a tidy place to play.

In this play, children take some roles like mummy, nanny and baby. They need to follow their roles. While the caregiver has some responsibilities for the baby, such as preparing food, setting up the sleeping time etc., the baby does not have any responsibilities.

“There is a rule about sleeping. You should sleep in this play if you are a baby. You should not ruin the environment that we set up.” (Filiz)

Also they said “we decided the rules together. If they do not obey the rules, we need to stop playing.”

4.4.2.2 Scooby Doo Play

In the Scooby Doo play, there are some rules to ensure that the play progresses nicely. The rules are to make sure that the children act according to their chosen roles. For example if you are Scooby, you should behave like a dog, a little bit of secondary role and you are expected to help the team. If you are a monster, you should fight against the team. On the other hand the roles may change according to the location. In the classroom, children are not allowed to run, hide under the table. Outside they can act freely. For the Scooby Doo Play, it can be said that the rules are flexible; but the right to start and finish the play belongs to the play founder, İrem.

4.4.2.3 Cave Play

In cave play, there are some rules. These rules are created by the leader. One of the rules is the right to build the cave that belongs to the leader. The other rule is: if someone wants to join the play, they need to get trained by watching and observing the players. For each cave play, children were waiting for Osman to build the cave. When I asked them about it they appeared to accept this situation.

Me: Can you build the cave? Masal: Actually yes, but they do not let me to build the cave. That's why I need to wait Osman to complete building the cave.

Emre: Osman is the cave play leader. He can build the cave!

Filiz: Let's wait for Osman to start the play.

It was possible to see that children accept their friend's ownership for the play. They were listening Osman and watching his actions to get ready for the play. This morning Filiz carried the yoghurt buckets in front of the chairs and she told Asya that

they needed to wait for Osman because he would carry the yoghurt buckets into the cave and he would build the cave! Because he was the founder of this play! They knew that the play founder was Osman and they were listening to him. Sometimes before Osman would go into the cave, Tuna would try to enter it but the children would show a sharp reaction.

Another rule that is worth mentioning is about joining the play: The leader Osman and the assistant Filiz thought that their cave was very dangerous to enter that they wanted their friends to be educated about it.

Osman “if they want to join the play, they need to be trained”

Me: what kind of training do they require?

Osman: they need to sit down and watch us for five minutes about what is going on.

4.4.2.4 Being a Baby Play

In Being a Baby Play, there are some rules. These rules allow the play to continue. These rules are: acting according to their roles and listening to friends through the play.

First of all they need to listen to their friends throughout the play, while they are talking. They are talking about their roles and the actions they do in the play such as “I am the mum and I am going to the work”. It makes the others aware of it and shapes the play in accordance with it. Or, for example the baby may say “I will eat some cotton candy” and he start pretending to eat some cotton candy.

Another rule that they need to accept is that they act according to their roles. If there is a baby, their expectation from him or her is some baby actions such as

crawling and talking like a baby, some utterances like “ge ge no no” When I ask them about the rules for Being a Baby Play, they told me about some actions that they would not permit in the play. These actions are: ruining the play and ruining the toys.

4.4.2.5 Gunslinger Play

In Gunslinger Play, children have some rules to follow during the play. These rules are about saving the fidelity of the play process. One of the rules is: ruining the play is absolutely forbidden. While the children are playing, they do not allow anyone to destroy their play. They kept on playing with their roles and rules. If some of them blocked their friend to hide or shoot, they were getting angry and telling about the rules. “Do not destroy the play! Let me do my action!” (Osman)

The second rule of Gunslinger Play is that “spitting is forbidden”. One of the play members Yaman was getting excited while he was making gun sounds and he spat. His friends showed a big reaction to this and they said “spitting is forbidden!” Filiz said “I do not like spitting! If he spits, he cannot play with us.”

When I asked them about the reason behind why spitting is forbidden, they told me that spitting is disgusting. One day when Yaman was pretending to be a gunslinger, he used a piece of Lego and shooting around. He was making “chufffff” noise with excitement. Osman tried to stop his spitting whilst making his own gun sound.

In general these five plays have some specific rules. These rules are for continuing the play. They do not allow children to who ruin the play to participate and ensures that they act according to their role. Moreover, these rules are enforced by the play

founders for the Being a Naughty Baby, the Scooby Doo Play and the Cave Play. On the other hand the Gunslinger Play and the Being a Baby Play have more flexible rules and they do not have a play founder.

4.4.3 Time span

The time period of the play has various effects on the structure of the play. There may be some difference between playing the same play for ten minutes and spreading to one hour. Moreover, time span can be changed due to children's actions and the scenario of the play.

4.4.3.1 Being a Naughty Child Play

Being a Naughty Child Play lasts one year. They started playing this scenario when they were four years old and it finished when they were five. The play finished when one of the play members left school permanently.

When they were playing the Being a Naughty Child Play, they have one hour play time each day due to our High Scope Program. Filiz and Can who were the actors of this play, generally used half an hour for each play time.

4.4.3.2 Scooby Doo Play

Children played Scooby Doo play throughout a year and a half. When they were four years old they started this play. Until their early childhood schooling was complete and they were ready to go to primary school, they played the Scooby Doo Play.

Especially during their time span in the garden, they enjoyed playing it. In the classroom, they played this scenario as well, but in the garden they played it even more. Because garden is a place that they can act freely, run, chase and hide. Moreover, children use some garden toys such as a ferris wheel to hide from the monster. Till the end of their schooling; they wanted to play this play. Throughout our conversations with children, they said that if they had more play time, they could play the Scooby Doo Play time and time again.

4.4.3.3 Cave Play

The Cave Play lasted eight months. They started to play in the classroom with some class furniture and some construction toys. They played the Cave Play in the classroom from November to July. Some days if the play founder was in the classroom, they would enact this scenario. When they decided to play the Cave play, it was observed that they would spend half an hour or sometimes one hour on this task. The length of the play depended on mood of the children.

4.4.3.4 Being a Baby Play

Children play the Being a Baby Play from their toddlerhood onwards. This play continued through their early childhood school life in the Little Daisies Classroom.

4.4.3.5 Gunslinger Play

Gunslinger play lasted one year. It had been started with some of the boys talking about their toy guns and pretend shooting in the classroom. The idea had been raised

around the classroom environment by boys. When they were five years old, the play Gunslinger was experienced as a team in the classroom.

4.4.4 Room for flexibility

Some of the plays have room for flexibility which means there is a chance to change some of the features of the play such as the play scenario, roles, numbers of players and the rules. In the Little Daisies Classroom, in those five socio-dramatic plays, some of them are flexible and the others are more structured. Flexibility and non-flexibility issue for each socio-dramatic play will be mentioned below.

4.4.4.1 Flexible plays

The Being a Baby Play, has many different variations. These variations are also constructed by the children like “Ge ge no no Baby Play”, “Parrot Baby Play” and “Mud Baby Play”.

In each variation there are some babies, some caregivers and pets. In terms of the flexibility of roles, it can be seen that children should act like their chosen roles. For each play, if a child chose to be a baby, he or she needs to act like a baby, doing some funny things. If a child chose to be a caregiver, he or she needs to represent the adult behaviors such as doing household chores and helping the babies with their needs.

On the other hand, they are allowed to switch roles. For example Beren and Asya were playing together. Beren was the mummy and Asya was the baby. They played a little bit, did some actions and Asya told Beren that she wanted to be the

mummy now. She said “I want to be mummy, I am bored to be the baby” and Beren listened to her and they changed the roles. Moreover, in the Being a Baby Play, the number of players can change. In some scenarios, there are one or two babies, in other scenarios there are more than two babies. In terms of numbers of players this play is flexible.

In the Gunslinger play, there are two main roles which are the police and the thieves. These groups fight against each other. In the play process, children did not need to change the scenario and the roles. They just chose their roles and started to shoot. In terms of the scenario, it can be seen that the Gunslinger play is not flexible. On the other hand, the number of players can vary from day to day because Yaman is one of the most popular children in the Gunslinger play. He likes to use his pretend gun and he likes to fight against his friends. Sometimes he is by himself and he does not say anything about the number of players for the other group. Moreover other children do not mention about having an equal number in each group.

In the Scooby Doo Play, the scenario is based on being a team and fighting against the monster. There are different episodes and parts of Scooby Doo Play. Speaking of the episodes, it can be said that the Scooby Doo Play is flexible because the episodes can vary and change. Children negotiate deciding the episodes. Children act according to the characters in the cartoon.

4.4.4.2 Non flexible plays

In the Little Daisies Classroom there are two plays that are considered as non-flexible. These are the Being a Naughty Child Play and the Cave Play. These plays

are non-flexible plays because the scenario and players are fixed. The leaders of the plays set the actions for other play members.

In the Being a Naughty Child Play, there are just two roles: one is caregiver and the other is baby. Two children take turns to be the baby and the caregiver. They know what to do with their roles and they do not let the others to join their play. When some of the friends want to join in their play they say “this play is for two people, just Filiz and Can.” In the play Can and Filiz let each other change their roles in between. If one of the children is bored of being a baby or nanny, they say that they are bored and they change the roles. Changing the roles in between themselves is the flexible part of the play. On the other hand the scenario, number of players and the actions of the roles cannot be changed.

In the Cave Play, the scenario and the roles are fixed. The role is being a cave adventurer. Among these adventurers there is a hierarchy. The play founder is the first adventurer and the helper is the second. The others are following these two for coming into the cave. Everytime they play, the scenario is based around the leader and the helper. The other participants are listening to the leader. The aim is to get the gold bucket and the scenario is stable. That’s why it can be seen that the play is not flexible in terms of scenario and roles.

4.4.5 Ownership of the play scenario/copyright

In the Little Daisies classroom, some of the play scenarios have a specific owner. In those plays, the rules are shaping over the owners of the play. The owner is the child that finds the play idea in the classroom. The owner has some rights. He or she is able to set the play in the class. Sometimes the owner is able to tell the other children

whether the others may be in the play, or not. In this section, the ownership of the play scenario will be explained.

4.4.5.1 Being a Naughty Child Play

For this play scenario, Can and Filiz share the ownership status. They are very good friends and they construct the Being a Naughty Child Play. They decided to play together, named the play and lastly they set some rules for their specific play. They have some rights on the play. As the owners of the Being a Naughty Child Play; Filiz and Can do not allow their friends to join this play as they openly tell the others that this play belongs only to them.

4.4.5.2 Scooby Doo Play

İrem found this play scenario and the others helped it to develop along the way. Therefore there is no significant owner of this play scenario. As it is a team play with many members, they share the roles. İrem does not tell the others whether the others may be in the play, or not.

4.4.5.3 Cave Play

Osman is the founder of this play scenario. He as an owner builds the cave and gets the treasure from inside the cave. While doing this, the others only watch and assist him. As the owner of the Cave Play, he has some prerequisites. If his friends want to join the play they need to listen to him. He underlies that, in order to be inside the cave, the others need to get training by watching and listening Osman for five

minutes. He, as the founder of the play, has an ownership status in the classroom. Children listen to him if they want to join in the cave play. Osman behaves like a leader and shows the others how to play and how to be very careful in the cave.

4.4.5.4 Being a Baby Play

Being a Baby Play is one of the most flexible plays in the Little Daisies Classroom. In the classroom, children are able to choose to be in the play or not. In other words, there is no significant owner and founder of this play.

4.4.5.5 Gunslinger Play

In this play, there is no ownership. Children play in teams. In total they are two teams fighting against each other. In none of the groups, there is a leader. Although Yaman is one of the passionate and well-known players for this play, he is not the owner of the Gunslinger Play.

4.4.6 Room for adult players

In children's play, they either give me a secondary role or the role of an opponent. In the Being a Baby Play they wanted me to be a grandma. One day I was observing their play and I wanted to join the Being a Baby Play. Asya said "you can be a grandma." and the others approved. Masal gave me a knit and she said "you make our babies some clothes." When I asked them what else I can do in the play, they replied "you read our babies stories." (Masal and Asya). In the play processes, they had an active role and they wanted me to watch them quietly. They also told me that

if I was a grandma, I needed to move slowly. This grandma role is a kind of secondary role for me. They do not want me to be an active member in their play. In the Gunslinger Play, children made me a nurse. When someone got hurt somewhere as a joke, I was the helper of them. However, in their play process, they would rarely come next to me. In the Being a Naughty Child Play, children did not let me to join their play. They told me that “this play is just for us.” In the Scooby Doo Play, when I ask them to join in the play, they told me that “you can be a monster”. When I was a monster, they were very harsh towards me, they put me into jail, took my keys to from my pocket. Moreover they told me that “no more food, no more drinks in the jail.” They like to assume the power in the play. I felt a little bit bad about being a monster. When I asked them the reason behind my role to them, they said “you are the monster, this is just a play!” Furthermore, in the Cave Play there is a narrow cave that children built. When I asked them how I can join their play, they told me that I cannot join because the cave was so small for me. In general, for their play as the teacher they gave me a weak status, or an opposed power.

Chapter brief

In this chapter, firstly general overviews of socio-dramatic plays of the classroom were described. As mentioned throughout this research, Being a Naughty Child, Scooby Doo Play, Cave Play, Being a Baby Play and Gunslinger Play; which are played by the members of the Little Daisies Classroom, are deeply analyzed. Second, socio-dramatic play scenarios were explained. Third, play culture of the classroom was identified. After discussing the play culture of the classroom, general characteristics of the socio-dramatic play were researched.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I will discuss the findings of study within the context of current literature. The present study aimed to explore how children create their own play culture in an early childhood classroom and how their peer culture is reflected in their socio-dramatic play. While describing their play culture the data guided me into the following themes and categories: How the play scenarios constructed by the children in the Little Daisies classroom, how they decide who would play, how they would dismiss players from the play, how the play is terminated and how socio-dramatic play scenarios evolved into other types of play. Moreover, during the data analysis phase data showed me that there are certain commonalities among play scenarios to which I will refer as the general characteristics of play scenarios in the classroom. The themes that arose during data analysis were: The predetermined and negotiated roles in each and every play scenario, rules bounding each play scenario, the time span of each play scenario, room for flexibility in each scenario, ownership or copyright issue and room for adult players.

As the teacher of the classroom I have been amazed by the originality of ideas incorporated in play, the agency displayed by each and every child during the play and the negotiation that occurs among the children throughout the process during all these years I have spent with children in my classroom. My admiration, interest and curiosity were my major motives while conducting this research and tried my best to first understand and then explain the play culture in my classroom. I have organized this section under following subtitles and will discuss my findings in

relation to the previous and current literature: (1) Children's construction of their play culture (2) Children's shared meaning making in socio-dramatic play in the classroom (3) Teacher's role and facilitation for uninterrupted play in empowering children's play culture (4) Little Daisies Classroom as a community and (5) Children's socio dramatic play as a combination and reflection of a wider culture.

5.1 Children's construction of their play culture

Kalliala (2005) defines the elements of play culture as shared experiences, commonly shared knowledge, shared values, same language and shared ways of thinking. The main premise of my study was that children of the Little Daisies Classroom have constructed their own unique play culture and their play culture is worth studying for its own sake. At the end of the study I had the opportunity to see that the children in the classroom have constructed their own play culture in their own unique way that it cannot be seen in any other classroom. The play scenarios are driven out of individual children's interest, likes and strengths. Moreover, they are also joint products of the children in this classroom bounded by that specific time and context. While studying with different children would reveal different findings, studying with same children at a different point of time reveals different results as well. The new sociology of childhood posits children's construction of their culture and as a result, their experiences as children are meaningful and valuable.

In the Little Daisies Classroom, children constructed their own culture by negotiating their values, thoughts and interests. They got the information from adult's world and change and constitute their own culture (Corsaro, 1992), and it is

called interpretive reproduction. Children in their play experience new scenarios with their knowledge from adult's world and their social environment.

Children in this classroom, used their knowledge, interpret, construct and then reproduce their own play culture within these five different plays. Some of the plays are from the real life, with role playing and experiencing different families with different roles. Some of the plays are from an imaginary world, a computer game or a cartoon.

Along with the interpretive reproduction theory, it can be said that children in their plays, share the meanings together and reproduce similar plays. For example, when they put the chairs together to build a cave, they all know that it is a cave. When they construct guns from the toys, they all know that it is a gun.

Children's interpretative reproduction of the family shows us that there are different kinds of animal families just like human families. Children imagine that there are animal families like the "parrot family". They experience the birth of baby parrot which makes them understand that parrots also form families.

5.2 Children's shared meaning making in socio-dramatic play in the classroom

Corsaro (2015), states that children in their play culture, reproduce new "experiences" by a collective interpretation. Every child who is involved in a play, brings in their own interpretation of their experiences. All interpretations come together to form a collective reproduction of that small group. They create a shared meaning with their collective group, and with their peers. Thanks to this play culture, they have an opportunity to practice alternative roles other than their own. Experiences are constructed by all the active agents of that specific group.

Children construct their own play culture with players, scenario, rules and roles. Those are meaningful for their own peer culture. As a shared meaning making, children come together and give the name of the play. When they say “let’s play Scooby Doo” they all understand what they are talking about. They know how they are going to play, what is expected of them and what they will get at the end. If the scenario is more open-ended and flexible they constantly engage in negotiation as the group and decide about how the play will proceed along the way. Children can practice alternative roles in almost all of the play scenarios. For example, in Being a Naughty Child Play, they experience different roles like being the mother and being the child who is not following the rules set by the mother. As a sign of shared meaning making, children in this play, recognize the circumstances of being naughty and the reactions of the mother and act accordingly.

Besides, children have a shared understanding about the rules of each play and conditions of play in general. They act according to their shared understanding regarding how the play scenario will proceed, how many players can play in each scenario, what ruins the play and when the play will end. For example, the Naughty Child Play is a scenario for two but on the other hand in the Cave Play there is room for as many children as there are.

Some scenarios are subject to ownership, which means that the play constructed by an individual child and therefore the child has the right to direct the scenario. Due to the shared meaning making, the other children do not try to challenge and act against these principles. Osman is the sole creator of the Cave Play. Therefore, he assumes the leader role in each episode and the others follow his instructions.

5.3 Teacher's role and facilitation for uninterrupted play in empowering children's play culture

Garvey (1990), states that children's play can be restrained by adults in some cases. In this play culture, even when I tried to constrain the children from playing with pretend guns in the classroom, they found ways to play with pretend guns. They also tried to persuade me by negotiating. They would say that the guns were not real and that they were just using them to play with each other. They would also tell me that the guns are water guns or fake guns. As Breathnach (2018) states that children with improvisation and re-creation their activities, they tried to exercise their own practices. Moreover, in their play, they would give me a secondary role or a weak role, or sometimes opposed power. They, as peers would want to have power in their play environment.

At that situation, adults should give some challenges to children to change their play. Maybe instead of ending the play directly, teachers should give an opportunity to children so that they can think about their play. Teachers should also give extra time to make children develop another idea about their play. Children in their peer culture can create and reconstruct some ideas for their play. It is very crucial for children to be thought as active agents in their own society.

5.4 Little Daisies classroom as a community

Little Daisies Classroom is a community with its eleven members, including myself. The children in the classroom know each for almost 3 years and the relationships among them grow and evolve as they grow up. The center provides a context for the classroom and from its educational philosophy to in class practices of teachers, from

teachers' expectations to child behavior. All are components are combined to create a meaningful totality. This is the center's emphasis on children's agency and decision making. In addition, the central importance placed on group play in early child development and learning creates an enriching classroom atmosphere for socio-dramatic play.

Research suggests that classrooms with a built in sense of community empower students to become active agents and engaged beings (Watkins, 2005). Moreover, Watkins (2005) states that, in such classrooms, children display increased sense of classroom belongingness. This, in turn, brings along greater relatedness, participation and motivation. In the Little Daisies Classroom, children get to decide on possibly the most valuable part of the day themselves, display agency and while doing this they always incorporate their friends in their plans. This sense of belongingness, participation and motivation does not grow over one night but it is process which is a product of their experiences in the school's context which grew on them as they grow old. Finally, the classrooms with build in a sense of community regards differences as greater diversity of people and the contribution of each member is embraced (Watkins, 2005).

In the Little Daisies Classroom there is a play scenario for each child in the classroom and even though each play has certain rules and boundaries each child finds a way to participate and make a contribution. For those who want to experience action, adventure and imagination there is the Cave Play, the Scooby Doo Play and even the Gunslinger play. For some who want to stick with the real life experiences there is the Being a Baby play and the Naughty Baby Play. More importantly children can create smaller communities through these play scenarios and can be exposed to different experiences that the scenarios offer.

5.5 Children's socio-dramatic play as a combination and reflection of a wider culture

Status and power relations are seen in children's play culture. Children create and use those types of status that are related to hierarchy. As Corsaro (2011) states that in children's play there are three types of roles according to their status. These are superordinate roles, subordinate roles and equal roles. Corsaro focuses (2011) on that, in superordinate roles children have power and control over the others. In subordinate roles, children either obey or do not obey the rules. In equated ones, they cooperate with the others. In this research, children represent those kinds of roles in their plays.

For example for Cave Play, the play founder Osman has a superordinate role. He has some rights and priorities on the play like building the cave and getting the treasure. Other friends from cave play have subordinate roles by obeying the rules. For Scooby Doo and Gunslinger Play, children have equated roles as a team. In these two plays, they equally share the roles and duties.

According to Kalliala (2005) children's play culture cannot be divided from the culture of the society. Children are influenced by the ideas and the values from the society and they construct this knowledge in their play. They experience the events happening around them and learn common codes and share meanings alike.

In Being a Baby Play, children adapt the role of being a mother like doing housework, taking care of the baby, setting the rules for the children. In most of the time, the mother is very busy and this is mostly because of the heavy workload of their mothers. Children represent a reflection of gender stereotyped roles for imitating real life in their play.

Danbolt and Enerstvedt (1995) state that media has a vital role that contribute to children's culture. In our daily lives, media takes a huge place with social media, smart phones, TV shows, cartoons, videos, advertisements, music and computer games. Children are affected and influenced by all this technology. Children gather some information and knowledge from the media and reflect it to their own daily life which builds up their culture. In this research, the media effect can be seen on two of the plays: Cave Play and Scooby Doo Play. The Cave Play has been influenced by the computer game "Minecraft". Minecraft is an adventure game where the characters build some constructions. Osman who is the founder of this play is influenced by this computer game while creating the Cave Play. He said "Minecraft play has some caves, let me build the cave". The Scooby Doo Play is also influenced by the cartoon "Scooby Doo". As mentioned in Interpretation Chapter, Scooby Doo is a kind of play where groups of people fight against the monster as a team and the cartoon is full of adventures.

5.6 Conclusion

In this research, children's play culture construction processes, socio-dramatic play scenarios that are created by children and the characteristics of socio-dramatic plays in the classroom were identified. In the construction of the play culture process, the ways that children name their plays were explained. Children chose their friends in the play with three reasons; by being a close friend, playing the play well and being passionate about the play. Children, in their play culture sometimes needed to dismiss players from the play if their friends ruined the play and did not obey the play rules.

For the termination of the play there were identified three factors: reaching the goal of the play, getting bored from the play and time limit. There are six characteristics of the socio-dramatic play in this specific classroom. These are roles, rules, time span, room for flexibility, ownership of the play and room for adult players. An ethnographic study has been developed based on the new sociology of childhood, in which the child's experience as an active agent is worth investigating.

5.6.1 Implications

I might suggest that this research contributes to the area through its conceptual implications. Theoretical background of the study enables a framework for further studies to see children as active individuals and competent social actors in the society. This study suggests that children should be given more value and attention in the research. Moreover, this study proposes that teachers should emphasize the uninterrupted play for children. They can just observe children and find out how they can construct and design their own play culture on their own.

5.6.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Further research needs to be conducted to contribute to literature about children's play culture. Moreover, more research should be conducted to see children as active agents and to make contribution to new sociology of childhood. Other researchers can initiate new research with different age levels to see the difference between children's construction process in their play culture. Moreover, further research can be done on children's play culture in state schools with the contribution of more children. This study only demonstrates the situation in one single classroom.

APPENDIX A

THE SCHOOL

BOĞAZIÇI ÜNİVERSİTESİ OKULÖNCESİ EĞİTİMİ BİRİMİ

GİRİŞ

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak “Biz kimiz, nasıl bir kültürümüz var, kimlerle çalışıyoruz, YUVA çatısı altında buluşan kişiler olarak çocuk, aile, öğretmen, akademik kadro arasındaki ilişkiler neler ve bu paydaşlar nasıl etkileşimde bulunuyorlar, amaçlarımız neler, bu amaçlarımıza ulaşmak için neler yapıyoruz, yaptıklarımızdan nasıl emin oluyoruz?” gibi soruları irdeleyerek birim işleyişini daha da önemlisi çocuklarımızın deneyimlediği okul çevresini; fiziksel, sosyal, bilişsel, duygusal ve kültürel unsurlarıyla bir arada ele alarak dile getirmeyi amaçlıyoruz.

TARİHÇEMİZ

44 YILLIK KÖKLÜ BİR GEÇMİŞ...

1974 yılında Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Rektörlük bünyesinde açılan “Gözlem ve Uygulama Merkezi” 1999 yılında “Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği Programı Uygulama Birimi” adını alarak Eğitim Fakültesi İlköğretim Bölümü ile iş birliği içerisinde Eğitim Fakültesi Dekanlığı’na bağlanmıştır. Ardından 2015 yılında “Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi” adı ile Sağlık Kültür ve Spor Daire Başkanlığı çatısı altına alınmıştır. Son olarak 2018 yılında Genel Sekreterlik Sosyal Tesis İşletme Müdürlüğü’ne bağlanarak Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Bölümü rehberliği ile çalışmalarına devam eden köklü bir kurumuz. Birimimiz 44 yıldır çocuklarımıza bir YUVA olmaya devam etmektedir.

Biz kimiz?

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak üniversite bünyesinde çalışan akademik ve idari personelin 1-6 yaş arasındaki çocuklarının sağlıklı koşullar altında, bilişsel, sosyal, duygusal ve fiziksel gelişimlerine yardımcı olmak; benlik kavramlarının gelişimini sağlamak, bağımsız olma yolunda olgunlaşmalarını desteklemek, akran ve yetişkinlerle olumlu ilişkiler geliştirmelerine olanak sağlayacak bir ortam sunmak, problem çözme, inisiyatif alma ve karar verme alanlarında destekleyici ve zenginleştirici deneyimler sağlamak, ilköğretime hazır olmalarını desteklemek gibi temel amaçlarla Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Güney Kampüsünde yer alan Ana Bina, Küçük Gym ve Park 2 Binası olmak 3 ayrı çatı altında çalışmalarımıza devam etmekteyiz. 2018-2019 eğitim öğretim yılında birimimiz bünyesinde 10 sınıfta 86 çocuk bulunmaktadır.

Çocuklarımızın gelişim ve öğrenme süreçlerini desteklemek bu doğrultuda aileler ve çocuklarla iş birliği çerçevesinde en doğru kararları almak ve planlama yapmak adına da Boğaziçi Üniversitesini farklı bölümlerinde yer alan ve kendi alanlarında uzmanlaşmış akademisyenlerle Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi çatısı altında buluşuyoruz.

Kimlerle çalışıyoruz?

Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak Boğaziçi Üniversitesi mensuplarının çocukları, aileleri öğrencileri ve akademisyenleri buluşturan bir noktadayız.

Farklı alanlarda uzmanlaşmış kişilerle birlikte çalışmak ve süreç içinde sıklıkla temas etmek bizim için zengin bir kaynak oluşturmakta ve farklı alanlarla fikir alışverişi süreklilik kazanmaktadır.

Özellikle de bilimsel çalışmalar ile uygulamanın birbirini beslemesi ve birlikte ilerlemesi YUVA olarak birimizin en güçlü kaynaklarından biridir. Bilginin sınırsız olduğu, çok sesliliğin bir zenginlik oluşturduğu, doğru bilgiye ulaşma ve seçmenin önem kazandığı, eğitim alanındaki güncel gelişmeleri ve bilimsel verileri takip etmenin elzem olduğu günümüz dünyasında, akademik altyapımızın rehberliği bizler için vazgeçilmezdir.

Bununla birlikte farklı kültürlerden gelen çocuklarımız, ailelerimiz ve çalışanlarımızla birlikte zengin bir kültürel çevreyi yaşamakta ve yaşatmaktayız. Farklı bakış açılarının, sosyo- ekonomik koşulların ve farklı geleneklerin buluşup bir arada yaşadığı ve yaşatıldığı bu zengin kültürel atmosfer okul yaşantımızın süregelenmiş doğal bir parçasıdır.

Aileler, akademisyenler ve çocuklardan öğrendiklerimizi geleceğin Erken Çocukluk Eğitimcisi adayları ile paylaşıyor ve onların profesyonel gelişimlerine destek oluyoruz. Birimiz Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Bölümü öğretmen adaylarına ev sahipliği yaparak haftanın belirli günlerinde uygulama ve gözlem yapmalarına olanak sağlamaktadır. Bu ortaklık sayesinde deneyimlerimizi öğretmen adayları ile paylaşırken genç meslektaşlarımızın yeniliğe ve bilimsel gelişmelere açık dinamikleri ile temas edebiliyoruz.

ÖNCELİĞİMİZ ÇOCUK

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimine dahil olan tüm kişiler çocuktan yola çıkarak birlikte çalışırlar. Bu çatı altında alınan tüm kararlarda, uygulamamızda, yapılan değişikliklerde çocuk, çocuğun hakları, çocuğun yetkinliği, ihtiyaçlarının gözetilmesi ve korunması esas önceliğimiz ve temel prensibimizdir.

Bu doğrultuda gelişim hedeflerimiz ve eğitim sistemimiz şekillenmekte, güncel ve bilimsel araştırmalar ışığında, akademik ve uygulayıcı kadromuzla birlikte “çocuktan yola çıkarak”, onu dinleyerek, gözlemleyerek, yanında olarak, ondan öğrenerek, rehberlik ederek “çocuk için” birlikte çalışmaktayız.

VİZYONUMUZ

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak bünyesinde bulunduğumuz Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nin sosyal, kültürel, bilimsel, sanatsal ve akademik değerlerini okulöncesi eğitiminde uygulama ile bütünleştiren bir kurum olmayı amaçlıyoruz. Bununla birlikte Üniversitenin Temel Eğitim Bölümü Okulöncesi Öğretmenliği programı ile kurulan organik bağımız ışığında; farklı alan ve fikirlerden beslenebilen, bilimsel çalışmaları uygulama ile harmanlayabilen, değişen zamanla birlikte eskimeyen aksine kendini yenileyebilen okulöncesi alanında çok yönlü ve öncü bir kurum olmayı hedefliyoruz.

MİSYONUMUZ

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak çocuklarımızın sahip olduğu potansiyeli ortaya çıkarmaları ve kullanmalarını sağlamak için bilimsel veriler ışığında ihtiyaç duydukları bireysel, sosyal ve kültürel desteği sağlıyoruz. Çünkü biliyoruz ki çocukların, çocuk olmanın gereği ve ayrıcalığı olarak, içlerinde taşıdıkları potansiyeli keşfedip gerçekleştirmeleri için bilim insanlarının, eğitimcilerin ve ailelerin, kısacası biz yetişkinlerin payı büyüktür.

Daha da önemlisi özgüvenli, katılımcı, kendi kararlarını alabilen, sorgulayıcı ve araştırmacı, doğaya ve çevreye karşı duyarlı, kendisine ve diğer bireylere ilişkin duygusal okuryazarlığı kuvvetli, insan hak ve özgürlüklerine saygılı ve bu hakları gözetken, insanlarla etkili ilişki kurabilme becerilerine sahip, problem ve bireysel çatışmaların çözümünde etkin, sorumluluklarının farkında olan ve inisiyatif alan, içinde yaşadığı topluma katkıda bulunan, yaratıcı, meraklı ve her şeyden önce mutlu çocuklar için birlikte çalışıyoruz.

Çocuklarımızı YUVA'dan mezun edip uğurladıktan sonra ise bu sürecin çocuklarımıza rehber olmaya devam ettiğini görmek, içinde büyüdükleri bu kültürü dışarıya taşıyan, güçlü, bağımsız, kendi kararlarını verebilen, yetkin ve etkin çocuklar olarak hayatlarına devam etmelerini görmek bizi cesaretlendiriyor.

EĞİTİM FELSEFEMİZ

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Eğitimi Birimi olarak çocuğa dair bakış açımız eğitim felsefemizin yapılanmasının temel taşlarından biridir. Çünkü uygulamalarımızdan, yaklaşımımıza, bina içindeki düzenlemelerimizden, günlük kültürümüze kadar eğitime dair alınan tüm kararlar çocuğa bakış açısı etrafında şekillenmektedir.

Çocuğun edilgen ve yetişkine bağımlı olarak görüldüğü bir ortamda; özgürlüğü kısıtlanır ve engellenir. Bağımlı ve zayıf bir çocuk imajının aksine çocuk bizim için güçlü, karar verebilen, araştırmacı, sorgulayıcı, yaratıcı, dönüştürücü ve doğuştan meraklıdır. Bu bakış çerçevesinde çocuk öğrenmek için özgürdür ve yetişkinden bağımsızdır. Burada çocukları doğal bir biçimde bağımsız kılma anlayışı ortaya çıkar. Bu ise çocuğun “bunu kendim yapabilirim” düşüncesini güçlendirir. Dolayısıyla bağımsızlık çocuğu kendi içsel potansiyeline yönlendirmektedir. Aynı zamanda çocuklar içine doğdukları ve yaşadıkları toplumun bir parçası olma, bu toplumu şekillendirme ve değiştirme gücüne sahip bireyler olarak kendi kültürlerini oluştururlar. Bu doğrultuda sosyal etkileşim, bir gruba ait olma ve uyum, akran ilişkileri büyük önem taşımaktadır. Nitekim programımızın temelinde çocuk aktif öğrenen, öğrenmeye giden yolları kendi inisiyatifiyle seçen ve inşa eden, öğrenme sürecinde sorumluluk alan ve özgür olan, akranları ve yetişkinlerle olumlu iletişim ve iş birliği kuran birey olarak yer alır.

Çocuklar, merak güdüsüyle, yaşadıkları çevre ve insanlarla bağ kurma ihtiyacı ve isteği ile doğar. Bu durum çocukta doğal olarak oluşan bir soru sorma, araştırma, test etme ve dolayısıyla bilginin peşinde koşma döngüsünü oluşturur. Bu döngünün yakıtı hayal gücü ve merak, aracı da oyundur. Bu döngünün kendini gerçekleştirebilmesi için duygusal bağ, olumlu sosyal ilişkiler ve zengin, güvenli ve destekleyici bir

fiziksel ortam gereklidir. Bunun için, okulumuzda, çocukların bireysel, gelişimsel ve kültürel özelliklerini temel alan bir eğitim yaklaşımını benimsemekteyiz.

Çocuklar için nasıl bir ortam hazırlıyoruz?

Bu amaçlarımıza ulaşabilmek için öncelikle çocukların kendilerini güvende hissedebilecekleri, korunaklı, sağlıklı ve donanımı zengin destekleyici bir öğrenme ortamı sağlanmalıdır. Bunun için öğretmenin birincil sorumluluğu okulumuzdaki çocukların fiziksel, duygusal ve sosyal ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilecekleri bir sınıf iklimi yaratmaktır.

Bu ortam içinde çocukların ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda hazırlanan, kendilerini güvende hissettikleri ve onlara tutarlı ve birbiriyle bağlantılı, anlam bütünlüğü olan olaylar zinciri sunmak üzere tasarlanmış bir günlük akışımız vardır. Günlük akıştaki zaman dilimleri ise takip ettiğimiz katı saat dilimleri olarak değil çocukların dinamikleri doğrultusunda esneyebilen tutarlı olaylar zinciri olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bununla birlikte önceden planlanmış olan akış içinde saate karşı bir mücadelemiz yoktur ya da küçük bir zaman dilimine birçok şeyi sığdırma girişiminde bulunmayız. Kısacası zamana karşı yarış yoktur ve çocuğu akış içinde koşturmazız. Bunun aksine çocuğa uğraşları üzerinde yani oyununa yoğunlaşabileceği, kendini oyun içinde kaybetmesine fırsat tanıyan kesintisiz bir zaman sunuyoruz. Çünkü öğrenme çocuğun dışında, çocuk katılımından bağımsız bir süreç değildir aksine çocuğun bizzat fiziksel ve sosyal çevresiyle etkileşime girmesi, kendi bilgisini kendisinin oluşturmasıyla gerçekleşen bir süreçtir. Bu nedenlerle öğrenme sürecinde, çocuğa sunulan deneyimlerin anlamlı ve keyifli olması, çocuğun mutlu olması, ilgi duyması, merak etmesi, soru sorması, cevap araması ve bulduğu cevapları yorumlaması büyük önem taşımaktadır. Çocuk ona sunulan bu kesintisiz oyun diliminde kendi ilgi, merak ve içsel motivasyonu ile başladığı ve sürdürdüğü eylemlerle dener, düşünür, fikirler üretir, yaratır, test eder, çevresindeki insanlarla, nesnelere, fikirlerle uygulamalı olarak teması geçer, çatışmalar yaşar ve bunlara çözüm üretir. Kısacası çocuklar kendi öğrenmelerini yapılandırır. Yetişkinin müdahale etmediği kesintisiz oyun zamanı ve tematik köşelere ayrılmış sınıfın fiziksel çevresi içinde çocuk güven, aidiyet, hâkimiyet ve yetkinlik duygularını geliştirir. Çocuk onun ihtiyaçlarına cevap verecek şekilde hazırlanmış sınıf ortamında da yetişkinden bağımsızdır. İhtiyaç duyduğu bir malzemeyi nerede bulacağını bilir, fikirlerini ya da oyununu geliştirmek için sınıfın fiziksel kaynaklarını tanır ve yönetebilir.

Bu ortamda çocuk en az öğretmen kadar ve zaman zaman öğretmenden daha aktif bir şekilde, katılımcı ve araştırmacı bir rol üstlenmektedir.

Böyle bir sınıf iklimi içinde çocuk sosyal etkileşimler ve paylaşımlarda bulunarak akranlarıyla birlikte ve akranlarından öğrenir. Çocuklar birlikte çalışarak kendi fikirlerini geliştirirler, birlikte dünya hakkındaki bilgilerini ve algılarını inşa ederler. Bu karşılıklı etkileşim sürecinde çocukların aynı fikirde olmaları gerekmez. Çocuk zıt fikirler ve çatışmalar yaşayarak yeni şeyler öğrenir. Çünkü çocuklar eşit statüde birbirlerinin fikirlerine meydan okuyabilirler.

Öğrenme süreci içinde öğretmenin rolü

Öğrenmeyi çocuğun önderliğinde ve aktif katılımıyla gerçekleşen bir süreçler dizisi olarak kabul eden öğretmen; bilgiyi hazırlayıp, çocuklara aktaran bilgili ve etkin yetişkin olmak yerine çocuklarla birlikte öğrenen, araştıran, mesleki etik ve çocuk

haklarına gönülden bağlı, eğlenen ve öğrenmeyi mümkün kılan, deneyimli, aile, çocuk ve yönetimle iş birliği kuran yetişkin rolünü üstlenmektedir.

Gelişim ve öğrenme, çocuğu tanıma ve değerlendirme süreçlerini takip eden öğretmen çocukların ihtiyaçlarını görebilir ve bunlar doğrultusunda çocuklara uygulamalar ve deneyimler sunar.

Aile katılımı

Eğitimciler olarak bizler kendimizi ailelerle ortak amaçlar doğrultusunda birlikte çalışan bir ekip olarak görmekteyiz ve erken çocukluk eğitiminin aile katılımı olmadan etkili bir erken çocukluk eğitimi hizmeti olmayacağını farkındayız. Çocukların aileleriyle bir bütün olduğunun bilincinde ve özellikle erken çocukluk eğitiminde bu birlikteliğin çocuğun gelişim ve eğitimi için bir zorunluluk olduğu düşüncesindeyiz. Bu nedenle eğitim felsefemize göre veli tanımlamasından ziyade aile tanımlamasını tercih etmekte ve süreç boyunca tüm çocuklarımızı olduğu kadar tüm ailelerimizi de içeren bir yaklaşımı benimsemekteyiz. Aile katılımı anlayışımız, aileden öğretmene veya öğretmenden aileye tek taraflı bilgi aktarımı yerine, düzenli olarak karşılıklı bir etkileşim içinde bulunarak, ailelerimizin imkânları doğrultusunda tercih edebilecekleri farklı aile katılım yöntemlerini içermektedir. Çünkü bizler bu sürecin sadece çocuk için değil hem ebeveynler hem de öğretmen, uzman ve çalışanları için verimli, eğlenceli ve sağlıklı bir süreç olması amacını gütmekteyiz.

Değerlendirme

Uyguladığımız programda hem çocuğun hem de öğretmenin aktif katılımı, inisiyatif olarak yönlendirmelerde bulunması büyük önem taşır. Bu programda öğretmenin sorumluluğu; çocuğun gelişim düzeyini, çocuğu tanıma ve değerlendirme yöntemleri aracılığıyla belirleyerek hem çocuğa ihtiyacı olanı sunmak, hem de çocuğun gelişim düzeyinin biraz üzerinde olan becerileri kazanabilmesi için çocuğu uyaranlarla desteklemek ve motive etmektir.

Çocuğu izleme ve değerlendirme amacımıza yönelik olarak Eğitim Alt komisyonu üyelerimiz tarafından oluşturulan, çocuğu sosyal-duygusal gelişim, yaratıcı/estetik bakış açısı ve öğrenme, bilişsel/ entelektüel/dil ve okuma yazma gelişimi, okuma yazmaya hazırlık ve fiziksel gelişim alanları çerçevesinde takip ettiğimiz “Boğaziçi Gelişim Hedeflerini” uygulamaktayız.

APPENDIX B

ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT

BOĞAZIÇI ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu (İNAREK) Toplantı Tutanağı
2015/01

16.02.2015

Ragibe Yeşil
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Birimi Güney Kampüs 34342 Bebek/ İstanbul
ragibe.yesil@boun.edu.tr

Sayın Araştırmacı,

“Çocukların Gözünden Oyun” başlıklı projeniz ile yaptığımız Boğaziçi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Kurulu (İNAREK) 2015/25 kayıt numaralı başvuru 16.02.2015 tarihli ve 2015/01 sayılı kurul toplantısında incelenerek etik onay verilmesi uygun bulunmuştur.

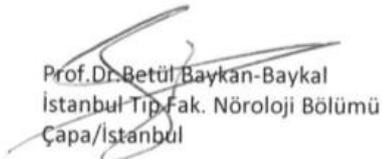
Saygılarımızla,



Prof. Dr. Hande Çağlayan (Başkan)
Moleküler Biyoloji ve Genetik Bölümü,
Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi,
İstanbul



Prof. Dr. Yeşim Atamer
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
Hukuk Fakültesi
İstanbul



Prof. Dr. Betül Baykan-Baykal
İstanbul Tıp Fak. Nöroloji Bölümü
Çapa/İstanbul



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Özgür Kocatürk
Biyo-Medikal Mühendisliği Enstitüsü
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi,
İstanbul



Doç. Dr. Özlem Hesapçı
İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi,
İşletme Bölümü, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi,
İstanbul



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ekin Eremsoy
Psikoloji Bölümü, Doğu Üniversitesi,
İstanbul

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

Arařtırmayı destekleyen kurum: Boęaziçi Üniversitesi

Arařtırmanın adı: Çocukların Gözünden Oyun

Arařtırmacının adı: Ragibe Yeřil

Adresi: Boęaziçi Üniversitesi Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Birimi Güney Kampüs 34840

Bebek / İstanbul

E-mail adresi: ragibe.yesil@boun.edu.tr

Telefonu: 0506 623 4423

Sayın veli,

Boęaziçi Üniversitesi İlköğretim Bölümü'nde yüksek lisans öğrencisiyim. "Çocukların Gözünden Oyun" adı altında bir tez çalışması yapmaktayım. Bu çalışmanın amacı oyunun merkezinde olan çocuğun oyunu kendi bakış açısından nasıl tanımladığını anlamaktır. Kararınızdan önce arařtırma hakkında sizi bilgilendirmek istiyorum. Bu bilgileri okuduktan sonra arařtırmaya katılmak isterseniz lütfen bu formu imzalayıp kapalı bir zarf içinde bana ulařtırınız.

Bu arařtırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde sınıfımızda çocuğunuzun oyun saatleri içinde arkadaşlarıyla oynadıkları oyunları gözlemleyeceğim ve bu aşamada video kaydı yapacağım.

Bu arařtırma bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmaktadır ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizlilięi esas tutulmaktadır. Video kayıtlarında çocukların ismi yerine bir numara kullanılacaktır. Çekilen videolar arařtırma süresince saklanacak, arařtırma sona erdiğinde silineceklerdir

Bu arařtırmaya katılmak tamamen isteęe baęlıdır. Katılım için herhangi bir ücret verilmeyecek ve talep edilmeyecektir. Katıldığınız takdirde çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir sebep göstermeden onayınızı çekmek hakkına da sahipsiniz. Arařtırma projesi hakkında ek bilgi almak istediğiniz takdirde lütfen Boęaziçi Üniversitesi İlköğretim Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi Assist. Prof. Zeynep Erdiller ile temasa geçiniz (Adres: Boęaziçi Üniversitesi, Eta-b Binası, 34342 Bebek, İstanbul).

Eęer çocuğunuzun bu arařtırma projesine katılmasını kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen bu formu imzalayıp kapalı bir zarf içerisinde bize geri yollayınız.

Ben, yukarıdaki metni okudum ve çocuğumun katılması istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını tamamen anladım. Çalışma hakkında soru sorma imkânı buldum. Bu çalışmayı istediğim zaman ve herhangi bir neden belirtmek zorunda kalmadan bırakabileceğimi ve bıraktığım takdirde herhangi bir ters tutum ile karşılaşmayacağımı anladım.

Bu koşullarda çocuğumun söz konusu araştırmaya hiçbir baskı ve zorlama olmaksızın katılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Formun bir örneğini aldım / almak istemiyorum.

Katılımcının (Çocuğun)

Adı-Soyadı:.....

Velisinin

İmzası:.....

Adresi (Tlf):.....

.....

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../...../.....

Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı: Ragibe Yeşil

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl): 7/4/15

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