

‘It is not fair. Boys are boys cool and girls are girls cool’:

**Children’s Use of Space in the Early Years - Child and
Adult Perspectives**

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My mother for providing endless love...

My father for sharing his wisdom, guidance and support...

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ABSTRACT

This small-scale, qualitative case study was conducted to explore children's gendered play in the early years setting and their gendered ways of using spaces and materials from both children's and adults' perspectives. It also focuses on how early years practitioners use the curriculum to create, maintain or disrupt gendered forms of play in the classroom. The study was conducted in a nursery classroom within an inner-city primary school in the UK. Six children aged from 3 to 4 years old took part in the research process. The Mosaic approach was adopted in order to enable young children to express themselves through having tour in the nursery, taking photographs and creating maps. The children were also observed during their free play time. Semi-structured interviews with children and four early years practitioners were employed to meet research aims. A feminist poststructuralist approach framed the design and the analysis of the data. As a result of a detailed analysis, the results showed the difference between the way in which children and early years practitioners perceived play and its roles in the early years. While educators focused on children's educational outcomes while planning play in the classroom, children perceive and use play in more complicated ways, for example strengthening their friendships, constructing their gendered identities and policing each other's gendered behaviours. Additionally, the influence of the curriculum on the preparation of the play environment was revealed. Adopting the understanding of the social construction of gender enabled the investigation of children's gendered play beyond gender dualism and to explore their experiences in greater depth. This approach also made it possible to explore certain materials and spaces which were used by children during their play to construct gendered identities.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Play is accepted as an essential, innate feature of childhood (Breathnach, Danby & O’Gorman, 2017; Moyles, 2015). It was indicated as a right of children in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. The growing attention to the concept of children’s rights encourages research which values children’s competences and abilities and accepts them as active social players (Martin, 2011). New ways of looking at play have contested some of the established psychological beliefs that dominated the field of play through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Insights from feminist, critical, post-structural and queer theories challenge the foregrounded issues of power, agency and the ways of children’s construction of knowledge within the play context (Wood, 2015). Furthermore, new methodologies and research approaches enable the participation of children in the research process and the understanding of their voices, intentions, play activities and themes by respecting their lives. Furthermore, play, as a way of children expressing themselves, is an area for children to construct their gendered identities. In the early years settings, children can use play to explore various forms of femininity and masculinity.

This dissertation is a report of a small-scale research study conducted in the nursery classroom in London. The study focused on young children’s gendered experiences in the schooling process. The current study aimed to look at children’s play with regard to gender by listening to their voices. It also aimed to take early years practitioners’ perspectives of children’s gendered play in the classroom setting and examined the role of the curriculum in the organization of the classroom environment and children’s play. The research defines the terms ‘play’, ‘gender’ and ‘space’ which form a basis for the study within the early years

context and then it looks at how these terms are reflected in the experiences of young children.

In the literature, there are studies investigating young children's gender-typed toy and activity preferences. Although they present the different preferences of boys and girls, they are limited in their explanation of the full picture as they do not look behind the children's gendered choices and investigate the reasons for their choices. Recent attention has focused on the qualitative studies to investigate children's gendered play in the early years context. More specifically, these studies focused on the outdoor or playground environment in relation to children's gendered use of spaces. However, research is also needed that aims to look at girls' and boys' gendered use of spaces and materials in the classroom setting where they spend most of their time in a day. Moreover, previous studies have often focused on either the perspective of early years practitioners/teachers or children. These studies often fail to reflect children's experiences in the classroom both from their own and from the adults' perspectives. However, this present research aimed to examine children's experiences through adopting the Mosaic approach, and by questioning the educators' perceptions and beliefs regarding play and gender. Furthermore, studies which have focussed on the early years educators' perspectives about gender, play and organizing activities do not investigate the roles of the curriculum in creating, maintaining or disrupting gendered forms of play. The current study aimed to investigate how staff perceive and use the curriculum which is believed to influence the organisation of play and the learning environment. That has not been explored in depth in the previous literature.

1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of five chapters.

Chapter one, *Introduction*, presents the study with a brief summary and highlights the focus and aims of the research.

Chapter two, *Literature Review*, defines key terms, considers theories of gender in the early years, gives a detailed analysis of previous national and international studies and focuses on the children's gendered play in the classroom.

Chapter three, *Methodology*, presents the research aims and questions. It explains and justifies the selection of data collection methods. A detailed explanation of the research approach and design and methods of analysing the data are presented. The context, participants and ethical considerations are also explained.

Chapter four, *Findings*, presents the results from the Mosaic approach, observations, fieldnotes and interviews. The data was coded and six main themes were created from both children's and adults' perspectives. The findings are discussed with regard to previous literature and research as presented in the literature review.

Chapter five, *Conclusion*, presents a summary of the significant findings of the study in relation to the research questions. This chapter also addresses the implications and limitations of the study. It concludes with recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

‘As we watch children’s play in western cultures, we are involved in watching the recreation of patriarchy’ MacNaughton (2000, p.119).

The quotation above reveals the significance of play and gender, highlighting the power relations that exist even in young children’s life. Also, it states that children’s play is a reflection of western societies’ patriarchal views, beliefs and attitudes. For children, play is an arena to test out the meanings of being female and male embedded within the culture. In a play situation they can create and recreate these meanings. It is therefore important to consider the applicability of this phenomenon to the early years.

This literature review will examine children’s gendered play in early years settings looking closely at how children use space and materials in gendered ways. The review will firstly define key terms such as ‘space’, ‘play’ and ‘gender’ in the context of the early years. It then considers theories of gender in the early years (biological determinism, socialisation, new understandings and queer theories). Next, international and national studies are reviewed to explore gendered play in early years settings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how, through the curriculum, teachers might create, maintain or disrupt gendered forms of play.

2.2. EXAMINING ‘SPACE’, ‘PLAY’ AND ‘GENDER’ IN THE EARLY YEARS

In this part, the main concepts - ‘space’, ‘play’ and ‘gender’ are defined separately in the early years context. These concepts are significant in the discussion of early years and play and they are the key ideas from the literature brought together before examining children’s construction of gendered identities.

2.2.1. SPACE

There is a growing interest in ‘spaces of childhood’ over the last two decades from a variety of disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and architecture (Adams & Savahi, 2017; Green & Turner, 2017). The literature offers multiple ways of conceiving the terms of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in which children interact. Some writers tend to use these two terms exclusively, while others suggest a relation between them. Green and Turner’s work (2017) used place as a conceptual lens to understand human experiences and they made a distinction between the concepts of space and place. While space is associated with abstract physicality, place is defined as something lived, interpreted, constructed or the results of experiences.

For this literature review, both terms are used in relation to children exploring the physical spatiality and their experiences in that physicality. It was suggested that space/place-based notions are useful to explore how children make sense of and attach meaning of to their experiences (Adams & Savahi, 2017). As spaces are accepted as dynamic, socially constructed and related with personal meanings, they give children the opportunities to experiment, test, succeed and fail. Therefore, examining children’s lives and the world in which they live offers new perspectives on how spaces influence and shape children’s experiences (Hackett, Procter & Seymour, 2015).

The literature presents a wide range of spaces used by children, including schools, nurseries, playgrounds, green areas, public spaces, museums and streets. The object of this literature review is not focusing on space, however, it is used as a conceptual lens through which to look at children's experiences in the spaces. The indoor spaces of nurseries which allow children to play and conduct semi-structured classroom activities are chosen for the literature review in order to focus on children's gendered play in the early years.

2.2.2. PLAY

The significance of play in children's lives is widely accepted, and it can be seen as an essential, innate feature of childhood (Breathnach, Danby & O'Gorman, 2017; Moyles, 2015). It is considered as beneficial for the development of children, improving essential life skills, using social knowledge and the creation of peer culture (Olafsdottir, Danby, Einarsdottir & Theobald, 2017). However, defining play is not easy, and there is no universal definition of play. The play concept has been differently employed and defined by different writers. Reed and Brown (2000) state that play is 'something to be "felt", not necessarily "done" (p.104). Millar suggests that 'perhaps play is best used as an adverb; not as a name of a class of activities, nor as distinguished by the accompanying mood, but to describe how and under what conditions an action is performed' (as cited in Kilvington & Wood, 2016, p.6). Furthermore, Moyles (2015, p.31) highlights some descriptive characteristics of play which are commonly used in the literature to define it. In the play situation the reality is often ignored; instead, imagination and free-flow thinking take precedence, and everything becomes possible. Play requires using both body and mind; it is a creative process; it is flexible and often does not require predetermined goals; it is mostly positive and enjoyable, it changes and develops in time; it offers children control, freedom and choice and it is a context which allows children to express themselves.

Most of the expressions used to define play are predominately determined by adults, and they reflect adults' understanding of play. One of the limitations of defining play is that researchers may be 'in danger of overlooking' primarily because children have their own understanding of play. (Howard, 2010, p.146). Wood (2013) presents some research findings which identify children's definitions of play. According to young children's understanding, play focuses on their choices rather than adults'; it is their own activities rather than adults' predetermined goals; it is their freedom rather than adult' directions and expectations. Another study conducted in order to understand children's play from their perspectives revealed that children expressed that they felt well while they were in a play situation and they associated positive feelings and having fun with play (Huser, 2009). Additionally, children were using play to create a special peer culture and emphasize their friendship. Due to the limited numbers of studies in the literature, there is a need for further research which will accept children as active agents in meaning-making and will take into account children's perspectives.

2.2.3. GENDER

In the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of 'sex' had begun to be analysed as a variable, and human behaviours were analysed according to visible sex differences. However, it was found to be problematic because not everyone can be easily categorized as male and female. A solution for the problematic terminology appeared when the concept of 'gender' began to be widely used in the 1970s (Francis, 2006). Additionally, the terms 'femininity' and 'masculinity' were introduced instead of using 'female' and 'male', the latter of which are mostly associated with biological sex. Paechter (2007) defined the terms of 'gender' and 'sex' by making a distinction between them. 'Biological sex was seen as something relatively fixed, a truth of the body, while gender was more contingent; sex was seen as dichotomous, while gender, as defined by Stoller is 'the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a

person' (p.10). In recent years, some researchers have begun to use the terms 'femininity' and 'masculinity' in the plural form, masculinities and femininities, reflecting Connell's influential work and the increasing recognition of the effects of multiple factors of identity on the socially constructed self, even though it has been criticised by some scholars (Francis, 2006). Plural forms are used to reflect the different ways in which femininity and masculinity are constructed and performed by different individuals.

The three main concepts, 'space', 'play' and 'gender' defined above, form a basis to understand how children construct gendered identities. The following section focuses on this by examining how children use play in the classroom space to construct gendered identities. Following, the term of gender is then discussed and problematized by examining different theories and their implications for the early years.

2.2.3.1. CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERED IDENTITIES

Paechter (2007) addresses three key sites: family, peer group and school, in which learning and construction of femininities and masculinities take place in children's lives in contemporary societies. While in the very early ages of children's lives the family is central for children's understanding of the roles of women and men, with schooling, children's ideas about femininities and masculinities begin to change according to the social processes that take place in school settings. It is important to note that 'schools are sites of normalisation', they are places in which the 'normal' child is constructed, and children's bodies are often controlled in gendered ways such as telling them where to sit, when to sit or what to wear (Paechter, 2007, p.61). In the discussion that follows schooling processes in the early years context and the role of play as a part of schooling are explored to shed light on children's construction of gendered identities.

When children start in the early years settings, they learn how to position themselves as a girl or a boy by looking at established children's acts and behaviours; participating in their play; using peers and adults as guidance to get explicit and implicit cues. Paechter (2007) notes that children learn the meanings of being masculine and feminine through legitimate peripheral participation in communities of the femininity and masculinity of adults and older children. The concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation' was introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) to emphasize learning in social contexts. According to them, 'legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice' (p.29). Martin's (2011) study undertaken in nursery and reception classes in London used ethnographic methods to look at the children's use of the play space when they came into the nursery and then when they moved into the reception class. The study revealed how newcomers became 'legitimate peripheral members' and then 'full members of communities of the practice of girls and boys' in three stages. Firstly, children need to categorise themselves and others as a boy or a girl as a prerequisite to take part in activities, and then they need to participate in shared feminine or masculine activities. It was found that after new children spent some time observing older children, they gradually joined in the play of other children of the same sex. As a third step, children need to embody the activities and show the others that they know and can use the appropriate gendered objects. The newcomers in the study showed their knowledge by joining the same-sex groups for play and copying the gendered behaviours of older children.

Using objects of knowledge is closely linked to the gendered use of spaces and materials in the classroom because children state specific areas and materials for girls and boys and they police each other's access to them. Paechter (2007) and Martin (2011) discuss Foucault's concept of 'panoptic surveillance' to show how this mechanism permeates social relations

by using a disciplinary form of power. Members of the community exert a disciplinary gaze on one another and in this way the conformity of gender norms are encouraged. The panoptic surveillance concept is important in early childhood communities because it has an effect on how newcomers learn to interact with practices as legitimate peripheral participants.

Play is another way for children to construct their gendered identities in the early years classroom settings. With play, children create their own understanding of normal gendered ways of being, behaving and thinking. It can be argued that children's preferences of play activities and playmates are part of their exploration of various styles of masculinity and femininity. Connolly (2003) states play and play areas as dangerous spaces because they tend to reflect positions of power, relations of domination and subordination. In other words, play, especially without adult intervention, can reproduce the power relations dependent upon dominant gender discourses. On the other hand, children can challenge gender stereotypes via play by testing, pushing or breaking the gender boundaries. Therefore, looking at children's play can be good source from which to examine how children construct their gendered identities.

2.3. THEORIES OF GENDER IN THE EARLY YEARS

There are a variety of theories that try to explain children's gender concepts by adopting different understandings. They are formed by research from different disciplines such as education, sociology and psychology. It is important to note that all of them are speculative in some ways to explain how children acquire gender identities and roles.

2.3.1. BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

In the nineteenth century, it was common to hear that girls could not cope with the same education as boys because of the differences in their mental capacities. At that time, the

human brain was found to be larger than those of fellow primates and the link between intellectual ability and brain size was constructed. Then it was claimed that women were intellectually inferior to men because of having a smaller brain (Browne, 2004). In the late twentieth century, there was increasing scepticism regarding the validity of those claims and their implications such as explaining the difference between boys and girls based on brain structure, however, recently, it has begun to be argued that biological dissimilarities can explain the observable differences between behaviours of girls and boys.

‘Biological determinism theory’ accepts gender as a ‘natural, stable, binary category’ (Breneselovic & Krnjaja, 2016, p.54). Biological factors such as genetics, hormones and brain structure are used to explain the differences between girls’ and boys’ physical appearances and social roles. According to that understanding, boys are naturally more competitive and aggressive; girls are naturally more compliant and quiet (MacNaughton, 2000). Within this essentialist discourse on gender, educators who adopt biological explanations to explain differences between boys and girls accept stereotypical play as a natural expression and do not intervene in the play until it is seen as unnatural in manner (Browne, 2004). Neuroscience studies however, have shown that the development of the brain is influenced by social interactions and environmental factors and these findings contest the ideas of biological determinism theory which accept brain differences between sexes as natural and inevitable (Francis, 2006).

2.3.2. SOCIALIZATION THEORIES

In contrast to the biological view of gender construction, socialisation theories try to explain gender differences as a result of social factors, and they emphasise the importance of environment. While many ‘first-wave’ feminists (in the late 19th and early 20th centuries) argued that the role of socio-economic practices and expectations embedded in social

institutions restricted women's behaviours, 'second-wave' feminists (began in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s) mostly used the 'sex-role perspectives' to understand gender relations (Francis, 2006). According to social learning theory, children learn gender identity via social institutions such as family, school and media. MacNaughton (2006) states that since the 1970s research which has embodied sex-role socialisation theory has claimed that children's play, play styles and the use of materials are gender stereotyped in early years settings. Additionally, it has found that young children can create and maintain stereotypical gender views on their own and their friends' behaviours. Most of these studies have used gender as two opposing categories which are feminine and masculine.

'Social learning theory' or 'sex-role socialisation theory' assumes that children learn gendered behaviours via direct and indirect teaching. Teachers and parents as agents of socialisation encourage children's sex-appropriate behaviours and what they see as 'inappropriate' behaviours are discouraged. It can be interpreted as a simple cause-effect relation between adults' expectations and children's behaviour (MacNaughton, 2000). Sex role socialisation theorists suggest that children behave and think in sexist ways because this is what they learn from traditional and stereotyped sex roles. Even though socialisation theories continue to effect early years pedagogies and curriculum, they have been strongly contested in recent years by new understandings because socialisation theories have a simplistic understanding of gender and they are ineffective in creating gender-fair classroom environments (MacNaughton, 2006).

2.3.3. NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

Many researchers who do not agree with a simplistic understanding of gender such as biological and socialisation explanations challenge current notions of gender. Blaise (2005a) draws attention to two groups of scholars who suggest alternative ways to understand gender

issues and try to break down the barriers of gender equity.

Firstly, feminist poststructuralists offer a way of understanding that gender is a complex and dynamic group of actions, ideas and feelings, and the development of gender identity is an ongoing process, established within social situations. Therefore, gender is used to explain the meaning of being a girl or a boy in a specific time, culture and place. Feminist poststructuralist theory challenges sex-role socialisation theories. First of all, feminist poststructuralist theory states that children construct, reshape and develop their identities via messages they receive from parents, media and school settings rather than absorbing them. Children learn what is acceptable and not acceptable from situations around them, and they can make their own meanings and choices. Therefore, this understanding accepts children as active constructors (Martin, 2011). Secondly, feminist poststructuralist theory sees gender as relational and interdependent rather than separate categories. 'Genders are relational because being a girl is related to and defined by girls' relationships with boys; and vice versa. Genders are interdependent because ways of being masculine and feminine form a continuum,...with some ways to be masculine overlapping some ways to be feminine' (MacNaughton, 2006, p.130). Additionally, while children are constructing their identities, they use meanings which are available for them, and some of these meanings are more powerful, available and pleasurable than others. Therefore, traditional ways to be feminine or masculine can be more powerful than challenging them because they may be preferred.

Feminist poststructuralism suggests that new understandings may be gained in the early years by using poststructuralist theories such as 'subjectivity', 'discourse', 'language', 'agency' and 'power'. Discussing these concepts is important to gain alternative ways of knowing children's experiences in the early years. Poststructuralism claims that knowledge and meaning are constituted through 'language'. Therefore, meaning cannot be fixed, and language is open to challenge and reinterpretation. In the classroom, children create and

recreate the meanings of gender through their actions and talking. Therefore, they take an active part in constructing what it means to be a boy or a girl in a specific time and place through their talk with each other (Blaise, 2005b). The concept of 'agency' is explained as the ability of an individual to make choices and control events. Whereas in traditional childhood discourses, children are often positioned as passive and powerless, and their agency is not recognised, this perspective makes it possible to see children's resistance to the particular practices in the classroom. Another concept from the work of Foucault is 'power'. Paechter (2007) states that 'power is understood fundamentally relational; it operates through interactions, which are mobile and constantly changing' (p.17). It is claimed that power and knowledge are interrelated, and they affect each other. Therefore, the gendered nature of knowledge has an influence on the level of power.

More recently, queer theory which has emerged from gay, lesbian and bisexual studies provides an alternative viewpoint by using concepts of feminist poststructuralist theories to formulate a new understanding of gender. Queer theorists have been critically exploring heterosexuality as a form of sexism and its position in the social construction of gender. They believe that in every culture there are dominant forms of gender which are believed appropriate for men and women (Blaise, 2005a). 'Hegemonic masculinity', developed by Connell, is the cultural expression of the dominant form of masculinity and it subordinates other forms of femininity and masculinity. According to Connell, 'there is no femininity that is hegemonic in the sense that the dominant form of masculinity is hegemonic among men' (Connell, 1987, p.183). Rather, there is 'emphasised femininity' which is defined around the compliance and subordination (Blaise, 2005a). However, emphasised femininity is always constructed with hegemonic masculinity, and both of them maintain practices which institutionalise men's/boys' dominance over women/girls (Blaise, 2005b).

2.4. GENDERED PLAY IN EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

In this section, both national and international studies are reviewed to explore gendered play in the early years context. Studies are separated into two categories according to the approach taken and the adopted methodology to understand children's gendered play.

2.4.1. CHILDREN'S GENDER-TYPE TOY AND ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

There is a large volume of published studies classifying children's toy and activity preferences based on gender. Infants' preferences of toys has been assessed by using eye tracking or preferential looking methods, and those studies have been relied heavily on quantitative analysis (Serbin et al., 2001; Alexander, Wilcox & Woods, 2009; Jadvá, Hines & Golombok, 2010; Lauer, Ilksoy & Lourence, 2018). Alexander et al.'s (2009) study with infants, 3 to 8 months, found that while girls looked at a doll more times, boys did not show significant preferences for any of objects. Jadvá et al.'s (2010) study with 12, 18 and 24 months children stated that at 12 months, boys and girls preferred to look at dolls. However, while older girls looked at a doll more times than a truck, older boys showed a large number of visual preferences for a truck. These findings are consistent with those of Serbin et al. (2001) who examined children's preferences for photos of dolls and vehicles at 12, 18 and 24 months. Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesised that the gender-stereotyped toy preferences appear in later months of children's lives. However, there are some drawbacks in this approach. They use highly gender-stereotyped and a limited variety of toys which are only trucks and dolls to test infant girls' and boys' toy preferences. Another weakness is that the studies tend to explain different choices between girls and boys by heavily depending on cognitive processes and there is very limited explanation on the role of socialisation processes. Also, they do not reveal much about and cannot give the full picture of children's preferences.

	Masculine toys	Feminine toys	Neutral toys
Cherney et al. (2003)	construction materials	dolls	puzzles
Cherney & Dempsey (2010)	vehicles	tea sets	crayons
Weisgram, Fulcher & Dinella (2014)	balls	stuffed toys	books
	guns	domestic toys	chess sets
	trucks	small furniture	barns
Li & Wong (2016)	cars	small fictional characters	cash register toys
	sports equipment	kitchen items	
		dress-up clothes	
		make-up sets	
	Masculine activities	Feminine activities	Neutral activities
Goble, Martin, Hanish & Fabes (2012)	blocks	art	clay
	bikes	music	board games
Granger, Hanish, Kornienko & Bradley (2017)	vehicles	reading	sensory
	computer	writing	large motor
	balls activities	dressing up	math
		kitchen	science
		puzzle activities	

Table 1: Toys and Activities Categorising in the Literature

A considerable amount of literature has been published on examining preschool aged-children's gender-typed or gender-neutral toy and activity preferences. The table shows how studies categorise toys and activities as a masculine, feminine and neutral to examine children's interaction with them. The grouping of toys and activities in separate studies share common qualities. Toys and activities identified as feminine are more likely associated with nurturance, attractiveness, creativeness and domestic qualities while toys and activities

considered as masculine are linked with aggressive, competitive, exciting and constructive features by adults. Goble et al.'s (2012) study offers some important insights into children's gender-typed activity preferences by examining them in different social contexts. Conducted in the US, 264 preschool children were observed during free play time and semi-structured class activities. An interesting finding that emerged was that both boys and girls engaged more with neutral activities while playing in mixed gender groups rather than playing alone. A possible explanation for this might be the power of social context which encourages children to engage in a variety of activities.

Those studies have some limitations such as only focussing on 'what' children engage in with regard to particular activities and toys, rather than looking for the reasons for their choices. Therefore, they only provide a general overview of children's gendered play in the EY classrooms, as a result they fail to acknowledge the reality behind the perception of children's gendered experiences in the classroom.

2.4.2. CHILDREN'S PREFERENCES FOR SPACES

More recently, attention has focused on the qualitative nature of studies to examine boys' and girls' gendered play in the EY context. Much of the current literature suggests that boys and girls prefer to play in different areas in the classroom. Some of the play areas are marked as masculine and feminine, and children are conscious of whether their presence is acceptable in particular places according to their gender (Martin, 2011). While girls choose to play in domestic, decorative, gentle, dramatic play areas, boys prefer to play in the areas which allow lots of movement and action such as construction or the block area (MacNaughton, 2000). Although there are studies that reveal children's space preferences, there is a need to shift towards research which looks closely at why and how children make their choices regarding gendered play preferences in order to problematise gender and understand power relations.

The table below mentions some of the studies which examine children's play by adopting different gender theories. Also, it gives detailed information about the context and data collection methods adopted in these studies.

	Context	Data collection	Theory
MacNaughton (2000)	Australia - Kindergarten - Early childhood teachers and Children	Meetings Interviews Videotaping children's play	Feminist poststructuralist theory
Huser (2009)	Germany - Kindergarten - Children	Video records Mosaic approach Observation	It is unstated
Martin (2011)	England - Nursery and Reception classes - Children	Ethnographic methods Observation Fieldnotes	Gender as socially constructed Feminist ideas Feminist poststructuralist theory
Breneselovic & Krnjaja (2016)	Serbia - Kindergarten - Children	Mosaic approach	Biological determination, socially determined gender and sociocultural determination of gender

Table 2: Studies Examined Children's Play

Huser's (2009) study investigated kindergarten children's perception of their social pretend play by using participatory methods. Even though gender lenses were not adopted to analyse the data, significant findings were found both about children's play themes and their preferences of play space in the classroom. While playing, boys were observed choosing play

themes of being strong and girls were observed playing female characters who go shopping, dancing or caring for babies. Another important finding is that the spaces which were often preferred by many children were those that lacked adult intervention and were used by few children. According to Huser, children had a desire to protect their play space and play episodes from the interruption of adults and peers. Breneselovic and Krnjaja (2016) carried out a study to understand kindergarten children's narratives about space, activities and relationships by using a variety of gender lenses. Children's narratives stated that boys preferred larger spaces which allow physical and loud activities whereas spaces that offered cultural patterns and clichés of female roles to girls such as raising a child, being pretty and cooking were preferred by girls. This supports Huser's (2009) finding which described girls' and boys' play themes. More interestingly, their data revealed that kindergarten culture often reinforced gender stereotypical behaviours rather than problematising them, however, it also found that children had a desire to question and reconstruct these stereotypes. Breneselovic and Krnjaja's study suggests that children as active constructors and able to make their own meanings in kindergarten culture. The results of these studies indicate that children's gendered experiences in the classroom might be limited because of the absence of a chosen theory to look gender. Consequently, they could not enable the exploration of gendered play in depth.

MacNaughton's (2000) seminal work with early childhood teachers over eighteen months reveals the sexist gender dynamics and power relations between children in the early years classrooms. In addition to boys' choosing larger spaces for play, it was found that in domestic play, boys were given 'a non-disruptive role' by suggesting that they should be a 'dad' or a 'pet'. Girls used their roles to take some control over boys such as sending 'dad' to work and bossing the boys who have a role as a 'pet'. It is important to state that experiencing power through the domestic play has a negative effect for girls. It means that they use a small and

enclosed space in the classroom, and it limits the range of roles which girls can exhibit. These results related to children experiencing power and constructing gendered play are consistent with the work of Paechter (2007) who closely examined the gendered use of spaces and activities in schooling. She suggests that those gendered experiences help children to feel powerful and secure their identities. In the early years settings, boys' superhero and fighting play take up a large area and they use these games as significant markers of powerful masculinities. These controlling and taking up space behaviours in effect, exclude others and are a reflection of male dominance in public areas. Martin (2011) draws on the work of MacNaughton, following feminist ideas, and in particular uses feminist poststructuralist theory for discourse analysis. Martin's findings from nursery and reception classes support previous research into boys' and girls' preferences for space. More importantly, she questions children's use of play space and activities from the perspectives of gendered power and knowledge relations. She suggests that children learn how to dominate particular spaces of the classroom to proclaim themselves as boys and girls and show their knowledge. The roleplay area was found to be the only space where girls could take power and control and stay away from boys' disruptive behaviours. For boys, making guns and battle play were identified as a primary practice of masculinity. Interestingly, she found out that some girls positioned themselves as a 'sensible good girl' and threatened boys that she would tell the teacher, in order to experience power over the classroom while boys controlled most of the spaces and materials. Additionally, studies have also investigated what kind of strategies children adopt to protect their play spaces in the EY settings. Both MacNaughton's (2000) and Martin's (2011) studies suggested that boys used many strategies such as showing aggression and making noise as a storyline of play, expanding their play and forcing girls to play in smaller spaces and to identify play spaces for themselves. Furthermore, where girls' used areas which were usually dominated by boys such as the block area, they were restricted

by boy's reactions such as knocking over girls' buildings and barricading the entrance of places. The use of feminist poststructuralist approach strengthens the studies' way of problematising gender in the EY context because it offers an effective way of giving a voice to all children; exploring multiple ways of knowing children's gender and seeing whose gendered voices are marginalised or empowered in the classroom.

It is possible to conclude that in the classroom, there is the observable distinction between boys' and girls' use of spaces and materials which can be supported by variety of studies in the field. However, it is critical to question whether girls' and boys' choice of particular areas and not choosing others to play in could be thought as a free choice. Also, the underlying mechanisms of children's preferences should be carefully considered.

2.5. THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND THE CURRICULUM

In the classroom, children explore and construct power relations and gendered identities through play. Early years educators can influence children's play dynamics in many ways such as through planning the programme, choosing materials and providing feedback. They might also reinforce, construct or disrupt gendered play activities in the classroom.

Browne's (2004) study with 75 educators who had experience in the EY field in London found that most of the educators seemed to believe that gender differences between boys and girls were not innate but they resulted from the socialisation process. Also, it was stated that these educators tended to adopt a non-stereotypical role in the classroom and provide non-sexist books and materials. Adopting the feminist poststructuralist approach, Chapman (2016) conducted a study in two EY settings in Australia to explore children's play with regard to gender beliefs and teachers' practices in the settings. In both settings, it was found that educators focused on children's interests while planning play, however, while in one setting teachers offered more stereotypical play, in other setting they did not mention the

effects of gender on play. Both Browne's (2004) and Chapman's (2016) studies suggest that teachers' views and beliefs about gender have an influence on how they plan play and the interaction of children with play. Another study used naturalistic observational methods to understand preschool teachers' facilitation of masculine, feminine and neutral activities during children's free play time (Granger et al., 2017). More teachers' facilitation to masculine activities rather than feminine activities was observed because teachers believed that feminine activities had little positive educational effects. Interestingly, Goble et al. (2012) who looked at children's gender-typed activity preferences in different preschool social contexts suggested that teachers appeared to encourage boys to engage with feminine activities. However, they categorised activities like writing and reading books as feminine activities unlike in Granger et al.'s study in which these activities were coded as neutral. These studies highlight teachers' concern about children's educational outcomes and their facilitation in the types of activities can be interpreted differently in different studies. As a common point, teachers tended to support children's activities associated with skill development which would be necessary to fulfil the curriculum goals.

On the other hand, teachers can work to create an environment which promotes gender equity by disrupting gender stereotypes. Giraldo and Colyar's (2012) study with four teachers from a US preschool setting stated that teachers allowed boys to explore both masculine and feminine activities such as playing with cars and taking care of dolls. Additionally, these teachers applied non-stereotypical practices in the classroom, and they provided more inclusive materials. Blaise's (2005b) study which employing feminist poststructuralism and queer theory showed how teachers could disrupt traditional stereotypes by promoting multiple alternative discourses for children in the classroom. These studies show the significant roles of early years educators' in disrupting gendered forms of play.

The literature discussed above mentions teachers' beliefs on gender and play, their impact on children's play and activities in the classroom and the way of organizing the environment and materials. However, one of areas that has not been covered in detail is teachers' use of the curriculum. Further research is necessary because young children learn from everything that occurs in their near environment. The curriculum, which is mostly determined by adults, is part of this learning (Siraj-Blatchford, 2014). Additionally, the curriculum has an influence on how teachers prepare the classroom environment and activities. Therefore, teachers' use of the curriculum may have a role to create, maintain or disrupt gendered play in the classroom.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The main terminology such as 'space', 'gender' and 'play' can be interpreted and defined differently by writers based on context and mainstream understandings. Especially for gender there are many different theories that question how children construct their gendered identities. Those adopting theories to look at gender in children's play have a huge influence on conducting and interpreting the results of studies. New perspectives such as those from feminist poststructuralist and queer theories provide an opportunity to look at children's play in a more qualitative manner and in more detail. Also, research examining children's gendered play or their activity and space preferences for play has shifted from looking at children's preferences in relation to the questions of 'what' and 'where' to find out 'why' and 'how' children make their choices. They also reveal the power relations that exist in children's lives. Much of the current literature particularly pays attention to children's agency and their perspectives in qualitative studies. They have used participatory methods to reveal children's experiences in their natural environment like the nursery classroom. Some studies have tried to understand early years educators' perspectives on gender, play and organizing activities in the classroom. It is obvious that teachers have an influence on classroom

environment, organization or children's choices. However, studies have not covered the role of the curriculum for planning or organising the play or classroom activities.

The present research will seek to look at how children use materials and space in gendered ways in the nursery classroom from their perspectives by using participatory methods. Additionally, it will focus on how teachers create, disrupt or maintain gendered forms of play through using the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in the context of learning in the early years.



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the methodological design of the study by presenting the rationale. The chapter begins by explaining why the particular research paradigm and design were chosen for the study. It then discusses the research aims and questions being examined. The research context and participants are then introduced. Data collection methods which were used with children and practitioners are discussed in detail. The chapter also presents ethical considerations, followed by discussion of the data analysis.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is 'a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a worldview, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world' (Sarantakos, 2013, p.30). This study employs a qualitative design and adopts philosophical assumptions embedded within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research aims to gain a deep and holistic overview of the context and often the researcher is involved in everyday life of individuals or groups under study (Gray, 2014). This study adopts an interpretative paradigm therefore reality is understood as being socially constructed and the research aims to understand 'what meanings people give to reality' (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.15). Also, it is believed that reality is shaped by contexts, space, time and individuals. For this study, the context of space is specified as a nursery classroom; individuals are young children; and time is the children's free play time.

The social construction of gender is placed at the centre of the research. A feminist poststructuralist approach is taken to understand gender concept and make meaning from the

data. It offers ‘a way of moving beyond opposites of gender dualism’ (Martin, 2011, p.xv). Also, it accepts children as capable of making their own choices and own meanings (MacNaughton, 1998, 2000). Adopting this approach helps to understand children’s preferences of places based on their own understanding of gender, and it enables an explanation gender concepts as a result of complex relationships between children’s communities in the nursery classroom.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is related to the methodology, approach and methods for data collection, and it makes a connection between research questions and research findings (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). This study was designed as a small-scale case study which was conducted in one nursery classroom. The case study allows ‘investigating a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context’ (Yin, 2009, p.18). It is also helpful to uncover the complexity of social relationships. This case study aimed to gain in-depth understanding about children’s and teachers’ perspectives towards the gendered use of spaces in the EY classroom.

The increasing recognition of children’s rights and social status in the society has promoted to include young children’s voices in the studies (Bucknall, 2014). Using participatory research methods enables young children to express their views and experiences. In this study, the Mosaic approach, which is one of the participatory methods that were centrally used to explore children’s voices on their play and daily experiences in the nursery. Therefore, the children’s role in this research was accepted as active rather than passive.

3.3.1. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to look at children's play in relation to gender by listening to their voices and also taking early years practitioners' perspectives into account, in order to highlight the need for gender equity practices in the EY.

The main aims were as follows:

- to understand young children's gendered use of spaces during play in the early years classroom
- to understand how children dominate or avoid particular spaces and activities
- to learn from teachers about the effects of the EYFS on preparing an environment in the classroom

3.3.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions were as follows:

1. What are children's understandings of play and gender in the early years classroom?
2. How do young children use spaces and activities in the classroom as markers of femininity and masculinity during their play?
3. What are early childhood educators' perceptions of the curriculum which shapes the implementation of classroom organisation in the early years classroom?

3.4. RESEARCH SAMPLE

3.4.1. SAMPLING

Non-probability purposive sampling was used for this research. According to Sarantakos (2013), non-probability sampling procedures ‘do not employ the rules of probability, do not ensure representativeness, and mostly used in exploratory research and qualitative analysis’ (p.177). For this study, one primary school was purposefully selected because of its convenience to access. The nursery classroom was chosen because of the availability of more free play time. Child participants’ ethnicities, gender and abilities such as language and social skills were considered to get a representative sample. The aim was to find participant children who have different skills to communicate with their peers and have different roles such as active or passive in the classroom during play time. Additionally, children’s attendance rates were considered to prevent possible drop-out from the study. Before the selection procedure, the suggestions of the head teacher were taken and some time spent with children to build close relationships.

3.4.2. THE RESEARCH SETTING AND CONTEXT

The research was conducted in a nursery classroom of a community primary school, located in a socially disadvantaged area in North London. The school’s roll comprised 624 pupils aged 3 to 11. Pupils came from the culturally diverse community, and over 70 percent of pupils’ first language was not English. In the 2018 Ofsted report, the school was classified as ‘good’ which means that it is effective in delivering outcomes for children’s needs.

The nursery hosted 70 children in five groups, 25 full-time and 45 part-time places for children aged three and four. They came from multi-ethnic groups, predominately Somalian, Turkish and Polish. The nursery had one qualified teacher and four early years practitioners (for the detailed information about research setting see Appendix 20).

3.4.3. PARTICIPANTS

Six children, three girls and three boys, aged 3 to 4 years were chosen as case children, taking into account their ethnicities, gender and abilities, with the help of observations and discussions with the head teacher of the nursery. The children had been informed about the study and methodology. In order to learn about children's play, classroom observations were conducted during children's play time. Children were invited to take a tour, take photographs, make a map and they participated in semi-structured interview sessions.

In addition, one teacher and three early years practitioners were selected as participants. They also took part in semi-structured interviews. More detailed information about participants can be found at the table below.

Name of Child	Age	Gender	Background	Home Language
Said	3.10*	Boy	Asian	Bengali
Emma	4.6	Girl	British	English
Khaind	4.8	Boy	Somali	Somali
Gemma	4.1	Girl	French/African	English
Aisha	3.10	Girl	Somali	Somali
Umut	4.8	Boy	Turkish	Turkish

Table 3: Information about Child Participants

** 3.10 means that the child is 3 years 10 months old.*

All names are pseudonyms.

Name of Early Years Practitioners	Gender	Job Title	Years of Experience
Teacher 1 (T1)	female	Teacher EYFS coordinator	10
Practitioner 1 (P1)	female	Nursery practitioner	2
Practitioner 2 (P2)	female	Early years practitioner	36
Practitioner 3 (P3)	female	Early years practitioner	16

Table 4: Information about Adult Participants

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

Robson and McCartan (2016) suggest that selection of data collection methods is based on what kind of information is sought from whom and under what conditions. Surveys, interviews and questionnaires can be excellent methods to record information, but are not sufficient to explore the hidden meanings and the experiences of childhood (Fraser, Flewitt & Hammersley, 2014). In order to explore children's views and experiences in the nursery classroom, this study combined the Mosaic approach with interviewing and observation. Each data collection method is explained in detail, and the rationale behind using them are given.

3.5.1. MOSAIC APPROACH

The Mosaic approach puts together traditional and innovative listening techniques to obtain the young children's views and experiences (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). The name of this approach represents the bringing together of different perspectives and pieces to create an image of children's worlds (Clark, Kjørholt & Moss, 2010). It combines traditional methods

of interviewing and observation with participatory tools such as children's use of cameras, taking tours, deciding how to record and map making. The diagram below illustrates the different pieces of the mosaic which are used in this study.

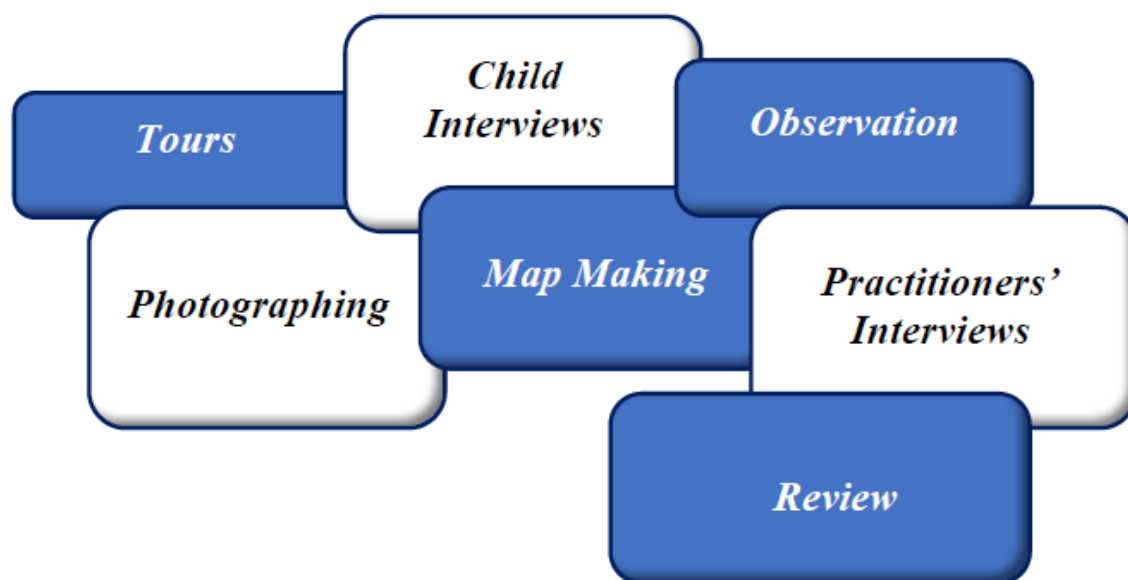


Figure 1: Different Pieces of Mosaic Approach in This Study

Some of the theoretical perspectives adopted by the Mosaic approach had an influence on the data collection methods and procedures chosen for this study. Firstly, children were accepted as active and social actors in the research process. Secondly, the notion of the competent child and the pedagogy of listening were adopted (Clark, Kjørholt & Moss, 2010). The last one was related to making of young children's voices heard. Giving active roles to children during the research process empowered those who are in less powerful positions than adults (Clark, 2010). In each step of the Mosaic approach children worked in pairs. It was believed that children might feel more comfortable taking part in the research in pairs rather singly. Additionally, working in pairs may enable them to share meanings in groups and help to counter unequal power relations between children's participation and the adult researcher (see Appendix 19 for the researcher positioning).

3.5.1.1. TOURS

Tours are one of the tools in Mosaic approach; they enable children to guide adults around an environment and indicate significant features from the children's perspective (Clark & Moss, 2011). Clark (2010) suggests that this method recognises the children's local knowledge about their environment in many ways such as physical, verbal and visual. In this study, children were invited to take a tour which was led by children in the classroom. They were asked to share their experiences about their play while having a tour. During the process, they decided where to go and what to share. The use of child-led tours was not simply about pointing out the areas and having a simple conversation, rather the tours encouraged children to have rich conversation about their experiences in the nursery such as their play patterns, themes and friendships while walking through the spaces. Audio recordings were taken.

3.5.1.2. PHOTOGRAPHING

Asking children to take photographs of the classroom helped to reflect and evaluate the context of children's everyday lives in the classroom. Clark (2010) recommend photographs as tools for interpretation and reflection, and suggests that 'photographs are meaning-making not fact-finding' (p.30). That is why they offer children 'a way to explore their ways of seeing which is valued by the children themselves' (p.31). Children recorded and photographed the spaces and activities they like to play in or not in the classroom setting after having a tour. Children worked with the same partners, and the researcher accompanied them in order to support them to use a camera. Children were not limited in the number of photographs they could take, and they decided when they wanted to end the session. Also, photographs served as a good starting point in conversation with groups of children about their preferences and experiences in play time both during the photography session and later. The audio recording was made.

3.5.1.3. MAP MAKING

Map making is a significant part of the Mosaic approach and is a way of recording information provided by children during the tours (Clark & Moss, 2011). The purpose was that it enabled children to identify places or activities that are important to them and clarified their priorities by making visible the information gathered on the tours. In this study, pairs worked together on a map following their tour and the photography sessions. All photos taken by the children were printed out and presented to the children. Children selected from them those that they wanted to show on their maps. The maps were large circular pieces of paper with a hole in the middle and they enabled children to think about the space (Clark & Moss, 2005). They then added drawings on their map for different reasons. Some children wanted to add places or toys which they had forgotten to photograph; some of them made drawings to highlight their favourite places or toys and some children drew themselves on their map.

3.5.2. INTERVIEW

Interviews allow ‘the possibility of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives’ (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.286). For this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both children and practitioners to elicit their perspectives in relation to gender and play in the classroom.

3.5.2.1. INTERVIEWING WITH CHILDREN

In a semi-structured interview, the interview guide is not predetermined and fixed. It consists of five or six simple open-ended questions which help to guide the interview rather than dictate the content and structure (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). In this research, seven open-ended questions were prepared, and children were given an opportunity to revisit their answers by going back and forth between the questions, depending on their answers and interests.

Interviewing children can bring some potential challenges, especially if they are young. There are power differences between children and adults in an interview situation because adults are in control of the timing, location and questions. The power differential cannot be removed, but it can be decreased by enabling children to feel at ease and by giving children some control over the process (Clark, 2010). In this study, from the first day of joining the classroom, the researcher made an effort to build trusting relationships with the children. For this reason, all interviews with the children were conducted in the last week of the data collection procedure, by which time it was believed that the children felt more comfortable with the researcher. The interviews were carried out in an environment more familiar to the children such as in the reading corner or math area. For the interviews, the time when most of the children were in the playground was preferred to prevent possible distractions. The photographs taken by the children were used in some parts of the interview process if children became silent and needed visual support.

3.5.2.2. INTERVIEWING WITH THE PRACTITIONERS

Flewitt (2014) interprets the interview as ‘generating insights into participant’s lives which would otherwise remain hidden’ (p.138). Without seeking the views of the practitioners in this study, the researcher’s understanding might be incomplete. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the practitioners to gain in-depth knowledge into their understanding of play, gender and curriculum implementation. Interviews were conducted on the school site at a time negotiated with the interviewees. Interviewing practitioners was important to gain their perspectives because it gave them a chance to reflect on their actions. Additionally, it opened ways of thinking and seeing which were more complicated from what might be assumed (Flewitt, 2014). Adults’ perspectives, in addition to those of the children, create a complete picture of children’s experiences in the classroom.

3.5.3. OBSERVATION

Observation is an appropriate method for getting at ‘real life’ in the real world (Robson & McCartan, 2016). It can be used for exploratory purposes to find out what is going on in a situation, and it can also be used for a supplementary method to support the data obtained by other methods. Observation might appear in a variety of forms depending on the structure and positioning of observer. For this study, the observations were conducted in the natural setting of children and unstructured observation criteria were followed. Participant observation was carried out in order to understand children’s lives and experiences in the nursery. It involves ‘engagement and deep hanging out with children’ to make sense about their world (Montgomery, 2014).

In the first week of data collection the researcher introduced herself to the practitioners and the children. The observations were made so that she could get to know the setting, children, practitioners and daily routine. Six participant children were selected at the end of the first week of observations. The following three weeks, observations were focused on six selected children. In total, 18 observation sessions were conducted. For each child, three focused observation sessions were made. The observations occurred during free-play time in which children can choose what to do and where to do it and during semi-structured classroom activities (playing at set-up tables such as puzzles, playdough). The small or large group activities with adults were not included because they did not reflect children’s free choices. Also, observations in the playground were excluded because the study specifically focused on children’s experiences in the classroom. During the observation sessions, children’s activities were observed, as well as ways of interacting with each other and using spaces and materials during play time. Detailed fieldnotes were taken during children’s play time and the conversations between them.

3.5.4. PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection occurred over a period of four weeks, from 30 April to 24 May 2018. The first week was spent in becoming acquainted with and build a trusting relationship with children and staff. The second week was spent observing the case children. During the third and fourth weeks, the researcher worked with the children and also the observation sessions were conducted. During the final week, the interviews were conducted both with children and practitioners.

3.5.5. PILOT STUDY

Carrying out a pilot study helps to gather information and refine techniques before the larger study. It is significant to check the research process, planning and approaches (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). In this study, the first week was spent on the pilot observation. It was helpful for participant selection and deciding on the best time and place to work with the children. Additionally, pilot interviews were conducted with Masters' student colleagues in order to establish the length of the total interview and to check the interview questions.

3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues should be central to any part of early childhood research, and they should continuously permeate all aspects of the research process (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). Ethical considerations are vital to protect participants from potential negative consequences, harm, stress and anxiety (Robson, 2011). In order to minimise these risks, ethical considerations were discussed, and a detailed ethics form was completed. Ethical approval was gained from the Ethics Committee of University College London, Institute of Education.

3.6.1. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

Before beginning the research, a DBS check was obtained. It is mandatory to carry out research in a school environment or to come into contact with children and young people. The purpose of the DBS check is to ensure the suitability of people who are working with children and to guarantee child protection.

3.6.2. CONSENT AND ASSENT

Informed and voluntary consent is essential for research ethics to show that participants understand what is involved; they make a free decision without pressure; they are aware of both the potential benefits and inconveniences of the study (Alderson, 2014). Participants' rights are also the essential framework for ethical research, requiring that participants are well-informed, their views are listened to, and they are respected by a researcher. Gaining informed consent from participants is part of building a trusting relationship between researcher and participants (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). Therefore, information leaflets and consent forms were prepared before the research was embarked upon. These were given to the headteacher, practitioners, parents and children.

Firstly, access to the setting was obtained by getting permission from the head teacher. Detailed information about the study and what it would involve was given on a leaflet, and the written consent was taken for the nursery to participate. After one week spent in the nursery to get to know the setting and children, the information leaflets and consent forms were sent to the parents of the children who were thought to be potential participants. All the parents gave permission for their children to take part in the study. The same procedure applied to the practitioners asking for their consent to participate. Seeking children's consent can be complicated because of the unresolved questions such as whether children are old enough or competent enough to give consent (Alderson, 2014). In this research, the children

whose parental permission was gained were informed about the study and the presence of the researcher in the nursery. The children's consent was sought by asking them to mark the thumbs signs to show their decisions. Their consent was taken as an ongoing process at each phase of data collection by using the thumbs signs.

3.6.3. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality ensures that participants' responses and identifiable data cannot be discussed with anyone else other than the research team. Robson and McCartan (2016) outline the necessity of extending confidentiality beyond not using the real names of participants to not giving personal details through which the participant's identity may be revealed. For this study, the real name of the school is not given in the report. Pseudonyms were used for the children, while for the practitioners, abbreviations such as T1 and P1 were used. All the personal information was changed to protect participants' identities. The data was stored in the researcher's personal password-protected laptop.

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis enables data presented in a verbal, textual and multi-focus format to be analysed and it proposes to transform and interpret qualitative data in a rigorous manner (Sarantakos, 2013, p.365). In this study, for the analysis of the qualitative data, thematic coding analysis was adopted. Robson (2011) notes that it is a generic approach used for the analysis of qualitative data and it can be used to report 'experiences, meanings and the reality of participants' or to examine 'the ways in which events, realities, meanings and experiences are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society' (p.474).

Coding was a significant part of analysing data process. It is a way of categorizing data to establish a framework of thematic ideas (Flick, 2007). In this study, firstly all data gathered

from different techniques was transcribed. The researcher then read through the data to become familiar with and to search for general patterns. Memos were written to record the development of analytic thinking. All data were coded and labelled by highlighting with the same colour. Codes with the same colour were grouped together to create themes. The following tables show the final themes and codes from analysing the children's and early years practitioners' data.

Themes	Codes	Methods
1. Using play	a) Repetitive play b) Role of play	Observation Interview-children Interview-teacher Mosaic approach
2. Using spaces and materials	a) Boys' spreading play b) Playing on the edge c) Transporting toys from space to space d) Looking for a safe place	Observation Interview-teacher
3. Markers of femininity and masculinities	a) Having a role b) Using toys/materials in a gendered way	Observation Interview-children Mosaic approach Interview-teacher

Table 5: Children's Data - Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes	Methods
1. Perception of children's play in the classroom	a) Early years practitioners' roles b) Role of play	Observation Interview-teacher
2. Perception of children's gender	a) Categorising children's play b) Understanding children's gender	Interview-teacher
3. Curriculum	a) Roles of curriculum b) Use of the curriculum	Interview-teacher

Table 6: Early Years Practitioners' Data - Themes and Codes

3.8. VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Robson (2011), validity is 'the degree to which what is observed or measured is the same as what was purported' (p.534). One of the issues faced by the case study is whether the findings can be generalised beyond the study (Gray, 2014). It is also unlikely to ensure generalisation and a definite state of validity, especially in qualitative data. For this reason, for this study multiple perspectives were accepted, and objectivity and generalisation were not sought.

Triangulation can help to counteract the threats to validity and one way to achieve that is by using more than one method of data collection (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In order to ensure triangulation, the data collected from classroom observations, six case children

observations, the Mosaic approach with children and interviews with both children and early years practitioners. The variety of methods and people worked with ensure the validity of the research findings.

Reliability is associated with the use of standardized research instruments in order to look at whether the tool or instruments used produce consistent results. However, thinking about reliability in this way is problematic for most qualitative studies (Robson & McCartan, 2016). One way of achieving reliability is to keep a full record of the activities while conducting the research. For this study, a detailed research journal and fieldnotes were kept. Being familiar with the research setting and participants before data collection can enable the trustworthiness of the study. For this reason, some time was spent in the nursery with the children and practitioners in order to build closer relationships before beginning the data collection.

3.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the research paradigm and design adopted in the study. As described, this is a small-scale case study which used qualitative methods. The methodology used to collect data which aims to answer research questions has been presented. Justification for choosing the data collection methods and data analysis has been given. This chapter has also discussed ethical considerations regarding researching with young children. It has concluded with the issues relating to validity and trustworthiness. The following chapter will discuss the research findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the main findings from the data collected in the nursery described in the previous chapter. The findings are divided into two main sections. Firstly, the children's perspectives are considered and then adults' perspectives are given. The literature and previous study findings are also presented to discuss the current study results.

4.2. CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

MacNaughton (2000) states that 'the most potent source of information about young children's gender knowings are the children themselves' (p.108). Children's insights, reflections and understandings are a crucial part of this study. This part begins by presenting the findings from children's tours, photographs, maps and interviews in order to represent their voices. Then it addresses the themes and codes created by data. The detailed information about six case-children are introduced to get to know them (see Appendix 21).

4.2.1. FINDINGS FROM THE MOSAIC APPROACH

Working with six case children by adopting the Mosaic approach produced significant results about children's perceptions of spaces and their preferences during play time. The photographs which were taken by children revealed the meaningful difference between boys' and girls' preferences of spaces in the classroom. The following graphics show the numbers and the places of photographs taken by girls and boys separately. After tours with the children, they were asked to take photos of the places where they like to play. Both girls and boys took twenty photos in total. There is a significant difference between boys' and girls' space preferences which was noted by looking at the numbers of photographs taken from

home and block/construction areas. While girls chose to take nine photographs of the home corner, boys selected ten photographs of the construction area. These photographs included a number of toys which are located in these areas. For the other areas, the numbers of photographs taken by girls and boys were almost the same. This indicates that these areas were equally used by both boys and girls.

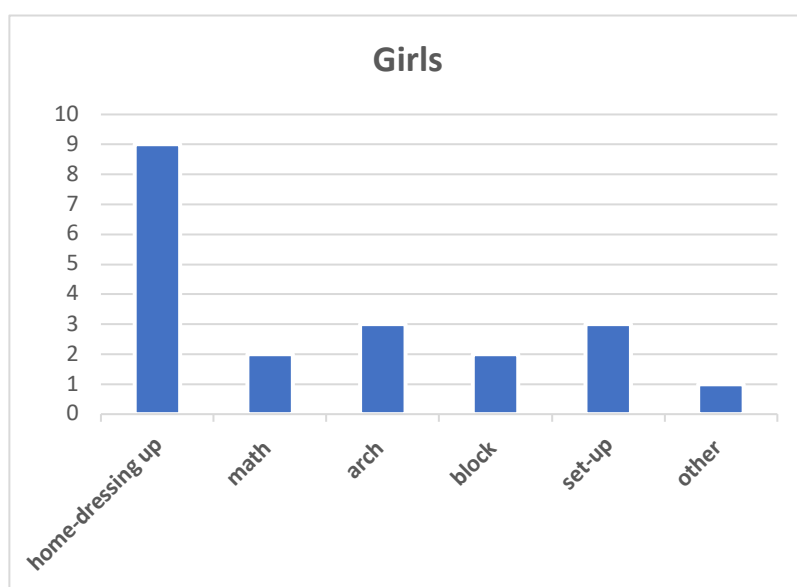


Figure 2: The Numbers and Places of the Photographs Taken by Girls

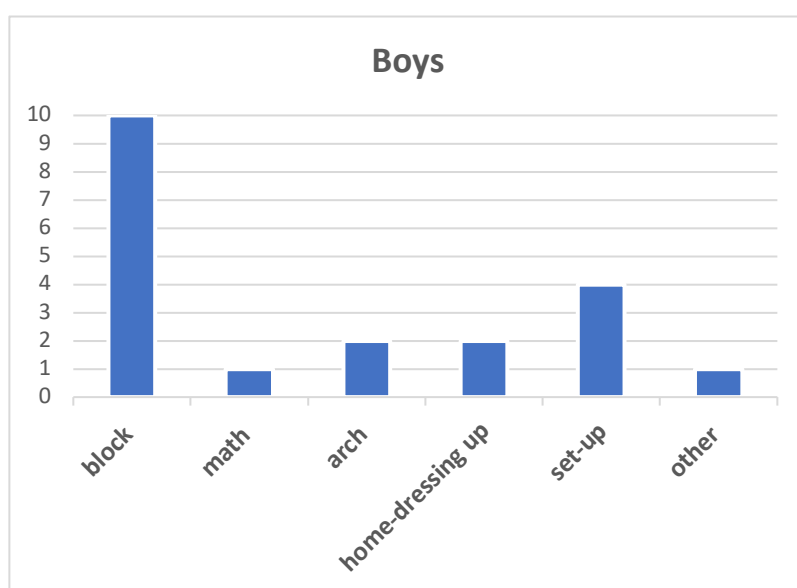


Figure 3: The Numbers and Places of the Photographs Taken by Boys

These findings imply that in the classroom some spaces were marked in a gendered way. Girls identified the home-dressing up area as an important space, boys determined the block area to identify their play in the classroom. The fieldnotes taken during children's play episodes also support these preferences. Furthermore, the conversations with children during all steps of the Mosaic approach gave an opportunity to look behind the numbers and reveal children's perceptions of spaces in the nursery.

The following table presents children's comments during the tours and map-making about certain spaces. While dancing and doing movements linked with the arch and math areas, activities such as counting were associated with the math area. The nature of spaces and the ways of using them might direct the children's perceptions. Both the arch and math area were used for circle time activities by the early years practitioners. Children also participated in dancing, singing and reading activities in these areas. Also, the availability of free space in the middle of these areas could give the idea of physical movements to children. For the math room, there were environmental cues such as a carpet with numbers and pictures of numbers on the wall. This may be the reason of why children tended to associate counting activity with this room.

The areas which were prepared by adults and offered a structured environment were called set-up areas. Some of these areas consisted of playdough, puzzles, painting and sensory materials. Children had a chance to interact within these areas every day and mostly they were accompanied by an adult. Children did not mention 'play' while they were talking about set-up areas. They preferred to call them as 'activities' they engaged with.

Play spaces	Children's comments	Associated with
Arch area	Aisha: 'this room makes some stuff when you want to play and reach up (balloon)' Khaind: 'that's the jungle side'	playing physical movement
Math area	Aisha: 'you can count numbers, so when you like cu cu I like do numbers and perfectly... I like to play. The the toy I like to play and when you like to working' 'I like to play here, I like to play with toys here' 'I though about I did something of the books' Khaind: 'dancing' Umut: 'I like here, I like songs' Said: 'in aaa the balloon'	playing with toys working: numbers, reading singing; dancing
Set-up	Umut: 'I like playdough'; 'I like here because everybody play there' Gemma: 'I like all these games, playdough'; 'I like painting'	Activities

Table 7: Children's Responses to the Places They Like to Play-1

The table below reveals two main spaces which were often used by children. Children's comments about home and block areas showed that they clearly perceived that these spaces were for playing without adult interactions. One of the children's explanations of why he liked to play in the block area was quite interesting. He commented that '*because look you can do whatever you want here*'. He associated play in this area with the freedom of choice.

Unlike the arch, math and set-up areas, children's perceptions of these two spaces focus on play and certain toys they interacted with. They tended to point out many toys such as cake,

microwave, dinosaur and Lego and spoke about them. Specifically, the home area was seen as a place for cooking by both girls and boys. Also dressing up and some costumes were mentioned by children.

Play spaces	Children's comments	Associated with
Home – dressing up	Aisha: 'cooking place' 'we are playing there play with a dressing up um.. Elsa costume' Khaind: 'I know that name cupcake'; 'yeah cake hey cake'; 'umm dressing up' Umut: 'look, look I am cooking' 'I like to play in the home corner' Gemma: 'I need to cook, I need clean this, I just need need to clean' Emma: 'hmm I play this (microwave) and this (cabinets)' Said: 'dressing up'	Playing Cooking
Block corner	Aisha: 'toy area' 'because I like to play everywhere' Said: 'dinosaur dinosaur' (showing a dinosaur toy) Umut: 'because here is so beautiful, because look you can do whatever you want here' Khaind: 'make some motorbikes I mean motorbikes' Gemma: 'I play, play with this' (pointing castle toy)	Lego Playing Toys

Table 8: Children's Responses to the Places They Like to Play-2

Children also talked about the places they did not like to play in. During the tours and photograph sessions, not all children identified places they did not prefer to play in. The following table shows some children's explanations of why they did not choose certain places

in which to play. One child expressed her dislike by highlighting the noise level in the area. It may imply that need of children for quiet and private places in the classroom. Another child complained about lack of toys in the library. The comments of two children to the question of *'do you like to play here?'* were given in the table because they expressed their dislike by refusing without giving a reason. While Khaïnd said *'no'* for playing in the home corner, Emma exclaimed *'no way!'* for block corner. Their answers were very clear, and they did not need further explanation. Furthermore, Khaïnd was observed to spend most of his time in the block corner and only used the home corner to pick costumes.

Math area	Aisha: 'because everyone playing noises and melting some ... when someone bad and all of the noises when you like to play'
Library	Umut: 'I don't like here, because there are not any toys here'
Block corner	Emma: 'no way!' 'I don't like it' (Do you like to play here?)
Home corner	Khaïnd: 'no' (Do you like to play here?)

Table 9: Children's Responses to the Places They Do Not Like to Play

Children's comments during the tours, photographing and map making sessions indicate that they either prefer to play in certain spaces or stay away from those that are not a preference. Some spaces such as the construction area and home corner appeared to be used in a gendered way. The observations and fieldnotes also support this view. The next example shows how the construction area is determined for boys by themselves and the girl's access to the area is denied.

Khaind, 3 boys and 1 girl are in the construction area. Boys are playing with Lego and girl is playing with the castle in the other side of the play area.

Girl attempts to play with Lego. She finds a small piece of toy next to the boys' play. That time Khaind looks at the girl and says;

Khaind: *corner is for a boy*

Khaind takes the toy and gives it to the other boy. She waits for a moment, looks at the boys, does not say anything and finally she leaves.

In the next part children's play and gender are further examined through the themes and codes created from the data.

4.2.2. THEMES AND CODES

THEME 1: USING PLAY

Themes and codes were created by looking at children's play themes, play groups and their ways of interacting with each other.

a. Repetitive play

In the research site, there were a certain number of play themes which shared specific characteristics. They were observed almost every day in different play groups of children. For this reason, they were coded as repetitive play. One child expressed the reason why they were doing the same things everyday;

A boy: *'Children like to do the same one (while playing)'*

In the study, children's repetitive play comprised chasing play, gun-sword play, baby-mummy play, birthday theme and hide and seek play. Two of these are presented here with

the examples from children's play sessions. They help to understand children's gendered play behaviours in the play situation and how they construct their gendered identities through play.

- *Chasing play*

Chasing play was frequently observed between girls and boys in the classroom and each observed session shared some common patterns. Generally, chasing play was initiated by boys using some strategies such as disturbing girls' play or pretending to bite girls with a toy. Girls' reactions revealed differences. In some cases, girls just watched, did not respond and tried to ignore boys' disruptive behaviours. Sometimes, they showed their discomfort by saying 'no no' or looking for an adult to ask for help. If girls showed their responses by running away or screaming, the chasing play started. As a common pattern, boys used high and scary voices and started running after a group of girls. While girls were running away, both boys and girls were screaming and laughing. All the children in the play seemed to be having fun. In the next episode, these patterns can be seen.

3 girls and 1 boy are in the arch area. Boy takes an animal toy. He starts to chase the girls. Girls are screaming. Boy is making a scary sound like 'hoaa hoaaa'. The boy is pretending to bite girls with an animal toy. He chases them around the classroom.

Most of the times, children's chasing play were interrupted by adults because of the loud noises or running. The nursery adopted a 'no running inside' policy so staff asked children to play such games in the playground. The following fieldnote shows how children reacted to the adult's intervention.

3 girls and 1 boy are playing in the home corner. Boy has a stick on his hand. Girls are trying to run away from him. He is chasing them. They are all laughing. An adult hears children's voices and comes. She intervenes in the play. The play ends. After the adult leaves, children start to play the same play again. That time, boy is chasing

the girls into the other places away from adult supervision.

Interestingly, in some play sessions girls initiated the chasing play by provoking the boys. The following excerpt shows how chasing play was started by a girl by singing a provocative rhyme.

2 boys and 1 girl are in the home corner. Boys are looking the costumes. Umut chooses a firefighter costume. After for a while, the girl comes and starts singing a song like 'na na na na' to the boys and she laughs. Then boys chase her into the reading corner.

- ***Guns-swords play***

Guns-swords play was observed as a common play theme among boys. They pretended to be holding a gun or sword made of Lego or small construction toys. While they were pretending to shoot other children, they made sound like '*poaw poaw*'. Sometimes, boys tended to change the storyline of play. Some aggressive behaviours such as crashing the toys, hitting or attacking each other's toys or using a very loud voice were found in the play situations. Below, shows how boys turned the play to crashing the toys.

Khaind is playing with boys in the arch area. They are making structures by using Mobilo and Lego.

Researcher: *What did you do?* (showing the structure)

Khaind: *It is a motorcycle look* (showing). *If I took it off* (one part from the structure) *it is a racing car, if I put that here it is a motorbike.*

At the same time, the other boys are trying to do the same structure as Khaind. After a while, there is the following interaction between Khaind and Boy A;

Khaind: *mine is bigger than yours*

Boy A: *mine*

Their voices get louder.

Khaind: *attack*

Boy A: *attack*

Khaind pushes the toys on the shelf. The other boy does the same. Their structures break down. They fix them, and they then attack each other's structure.



Figure 4: The Mobilo, Children Use to Make Structures, Swords or Gun

On a rare occasion in the classroom, some girls were observed to join fighting play. The next episode shows how one girl first observed and then became a part of her friend's play.

Girl A is playing with the castle toy on the top of the shelves in the block corner.

Next to her one boy is playing with animal toys. Both of them are standing. The boy

is holding an animal toy and he then starts hitting the other animal toys on the shelf.

The girl watches him for a while and she takes an elephant toy.

Girl A: *elephant turn*

She does the same as boy does. They both hit the animal toys by using another toy.

When the play became louder, the teachers realized the nature of the play and intervened. They warned children to stop the play or they suggested children to play with something else. The next episode shows intervention of teacher to the children's swords play and the child's attitude adopted after the warning.

In the reading corner, the boys are playing sword play. When they recognize me, they come and say;

Khaind: *look we did swords again*

The play continues for a while. Then, the teacher realizes that.

Teacher: *Boys we are not playing swords game here. Go and play something else.*

Children go somewhere else and play with Lego on the carpet. Five minutes later, the same teacher comes closer to the area where boys play.

Khaind shows his toy and says;

Khaind: *It is a car*

Teacher: *Yes, it is better. No guns, no swords game here.*

The boys were observed to have developed some strategies to cover themselves and their play. They usually chose playing in spaces away from adult supervision; they tended to change their play structure when they saw an adult around them; they spoke more quietly or

played without making a ‘shooting noise’. The following excerpt from fieldnotes shows how children tended to change or hide their play themes in the presence of adults.

Umut and two boys are playing at the block corner. They are pretending to shoot each other. Making sound like *‘peow, peow’*.

They see me and say:

Umut: *mine is dinosaur*

Boy: *mine cannot do ‘peow’*

I leave and continue to observe them from far away. They continue to shoot each other with the *‘peow’* sound.

A teacher realizes;

Teacher: *do something else please a car or a house*

Umut: *I am making a house*

When the teacher leaves, children continue their shooting play without making a *‘poaw, poaw’* sound.

The strategies used by the children show that they are aware of what is acceptable to play or not in the classroom. However, they continue to display their preferred play when adults are not around. Khaind’s answer to the question about rules of their play in the interview support this claim. He said that *‘I don’t make any swords. Miss said we don’t play with swords’*. Jones’ (2001) study which was focused on nursery children’s gun play found similar findings to the present study. Gun play was stated as a gender specific activity and the rule of ‘no guns’ was found to be ineffective even though the staff emphasized that it was not a suitable choice of play theme.

b. Role of play

The ways of using play were found to be different between children's groups and they were categorized under two groups for this study; expressing friendship and having fun.

- *Emphasized friendship*

Especially in some girls' groups, during the play situation acting as a group and caring about the group's aims were found to be significant for their relationships. For example, during the map-making session, Gemma spoke about her personal experiences related to inviting her friends to her house. She identified her group of friends as a 'special band' and highlighted the importance of being a group.

'... all my friends are coming to my house, all my friends when my special bands
yeah it was cute'

When children were asked the interview question of '*can you tell me the names of your friends you play with?*' they gave different answers. While Aisha identified a group of girls as her friends, Gemma said '*I am playing with my old friends, it is lots of friends*'. Khaïnd stated that '*I do play with everyone*'. Their answers reveal that they have different understanding of the meaning of friendship. Emma and Aisha were observed in a situation with six other girls holding each other's hands and walked together around the classroom. In another episode, Aisha and two other girls were holding each other's hands and jumping together. In girls' play groups, more physical contact such as holding hands and adopting the same roles were found. They sometimes use play to support their group identities by joining in the same activity. The following episode shows how a certain activity is started and it then becomes activity for a group.

8 girls and 3 boys are in the home corner. 2 boys and 3 girls are sitting at the table.

1 boy takes a wooden spoon and starts to hit to the metal cup. He is making music.

One girl is making a cake at the table. Other girl is singing a happy birthday song to a baby doll.

Boys continue to make music. Then two girls take the same metal cup and wooden spoon and join them.

Gemma finds different cups -plastic, wooden and metal and start to hit. More girls join this activity and they start to play as a group. They look at each other and listen to the each other's' music. They keep eye contact, smile and laugh.

Another interesting finding that emphasized friendship was revealed while observing Umut's play and his relationship with his friends. Umut started nursery in January. That means he joined to the nursery later than rest of the children. Also, he was not fluent in English and it was observed that he played only with other Turkish children. He expressed his play with his Turkish friends by saying '*they play with me because I am friend of theirs*'. However, in the interview and the tour he expressed his feelings about other children by saying '*they don't allow me to play, they have their own friends*'. That shows that Umut still was not a full member of the boys' community and sometimes he may have been rejected by a group of children.

- *Having fun*

The sub-code of having fun was found from children's data. Children's groups tended to show the same repetitive actions like singing the same rhyme many times, copying each other's actions and behaviours; jumping; lying down; joking with each other. It was observed that most of these actions were accompanied by laughing and smiling. This was considered to be one of the roles of play for children while constructing their play groups.

Huser's (2009) study with kindergarten children supports these two sub-codes found in the current study. Both studies have similar examples of how children perceive play. Children expressed their play as fun. However, in Huser's study friendship was thought as a part of peer culture and it is connected with play.

THEME 2: USING SPACES AND MATERIALS

This theme was found by examining children's using of space and materials during play. The theme and codes were created from the findings of observations, fieldnotes and interviews.

a. Boys' spreading play

Two spaces in the classroom were coded for boys' spreading play. In the construction area, boys were often playing with blocks and Lego on the floor. Their toys were spread out over all of the available spaces. As a second space, the arch and reading areas were observed as a preferred places for boys. These areas offered larger spaces for children in the nursery. In those spaces, boys were observed performing extensive movements such as tumbling and rolling the vehicles on the ground. On some occasions boys were observed taking over the spaces after which girls would leave and play somewhere else. The following excerpt from fieldnotes shows how boys take over all the space resulting in the girls leaving the area.

Gemma is in the arch area. Khaind and two boys are doing physical movements and demonstrating to each other. (tumbling...)

Boy A: *Is this cool?*

Khainda: *I know better one*

Boy A: (doing one more movement) *Is this cool?*

Khaind does the same. Tumble down over.

At the same time, Gemma is playing with a castle toy next to them. She watches the boys' movements. Then, she leaves.

The boys continue talking and doing movements.

Now, they use the bigger space for their movements. Almost whole arch area. They are telling each other;

Boy A: *look at this one*

Khaind: *how is this one?*

As mentioned in the literature review, prior studies have noted boys' preferences for larger spaces (Breneselovi & Krnjaja, 2016; Paechter, 2007; Martin, 2011) and that this is a marker of masculinity. However, during the interviews none of the early years practitioners mentioned gender while talking about children's spreading play and use of large spaces. They agreed with children using all available spaces in the classroom during play and T1 interpreted this as an opportunity for learning. She said that:

'Yeah they may start off with one particular area like I mentioned before like their home corner but they do bring into the wider area of the learning environment inside or outside.'

The differences found between observations and interviews with staff can be explained if children's play is looked at through a different lens. If children's play is examined through gender, it can be seen how boys' play was spreading and taking over the large spaces.

b. Playing on the edge

This code was evident within observations and fieldnotes for both boys and girls. Playing with toys on the toy-shelves and playing near to the borders of play areas were coded as ‘playing on the edge’. Sometimes, girls were observed as standing up and interacting with toys which were located on the top of the shelves in the construction area. Other times they preferred to play with Lego just next to the shelves. Girls were observed a few times using most of the space in the construction area. These were times when most of the boys went to the playground. The next two fieldnotes exemplify how girls were pushed to ‘play on the edge’ and how they use space when it was available for their sole use.

‘Three girls are playing with Mobilo at the right side of the construction area. They are using almost half of the available space. Some children are playing outside, afternoon children are working with teachers. The classroom is not busy.’

‘Seven children are playing in the construction area. Girls are playing with the toys on the shelves. They are standing up. Boys are playing with blocks on the ground. Their play and toys occupy most of the space.’

There are some studies which are consistent with this finding. However they generally focus on children’s use of space in the outdoor play area. Karsten’s (2003) study conducted in the playground found that girls played together near the borders or hidden corners of the playground with few play objects because of boys’ spreading over the entire space. This shows that gendered use of space is a feature of children’s gendered play more generally regardless of the location, indoor or outdoor.

c. Transporting toys from space to space

Two early years practitioners and the teacher declared that children tended to take toys from one area and carry them to other areas. P2 defined children as '*transporters*' who used the all available spaces by carrying toys around the classroom and P3 interpreted the reason of transporting toys as the nature of children's play themes.

P2	'If you notice when they are playing with the toys, they don't take the toys ...here they put them all over. Yes, because they are transporters so they would not for example the sand. They take the sand from that area, they take it to the other area. They would bring it here to have the opportunity to bring to ... That's how they use play all over the available spaces.'
P3	'But then you get some children that might like transport toys over into the library... You know they got access to play anywhere they want to play. I think it just depends on what they are playing.'

The findings of observations supported teachers' statements. However, different reasons for why children transport the toys were found. Firstly, some boys, (especially Khaïnd), transported construction toys and Lego from the construction area to the arch area where they could find more space. Secondly, both Emma and Khaïnd were observed to collect toys from all over the classroom in a bag or a box. They collected toys to construct their play themes which were going shopping and preparing a parcel, respectively. Interestingly, while some boys were transporting Mobilo from the construction area to the home corner, some girls took the dolls from home corner to the other areas of the classroom. Possible explanations for this could be that children may have a desire to make more familiar the places where they play by carrying the toys with which they are familiar or they may choose to play in larger spaces such as the arch area with a few children.

d. Looking for a safe place

Some children were observed hiding their toys before they left the particular areas or when they were called by teachers. Khaind was observed many times putting the structures made by Mobilo under the cupboard in the construction area. He might not have wanted his structure to be broken down by other children. Said was another child who hid toys that he liked to play with. The following dialogue between Said and the researcher illuminates this phenomenon.

During tidy up time. Said put the castle toy behind the toy shelves so that it is not easily visible to the naked eye. The teacher asks him where he puts the castle toy. He shows.

Researcher: *hey Said, why did you put that over there?*

Said: *girls*

Researcher: *what about girls?*

Said: *girls are playing with it*

Said might be aware that the castle toy is mostly chosen by girls and that he does not have as many chances to play with it. Therefore, he prefers to hide the toy for the next time to guarantee that he can play with it.

Some children's preferences for playing in the corridor and entrance area were coded as 'looking for a safe place'. Children were observed going to the corridor near to the exit door after teachers' warnings and here they continued their play such as chasing or sword/gun which were not approved by adults inside the nursery. The corridor seemed to be perceived as a safe place for children to stay away from teachers' intervention and maintain their play themes. Wood (2013) suggests that children create meanings for themselves from play and

they may want to keep them hidden from ‘the regulating gaze of adults’ because they are challenging or breaking the rules of adults. This is consistent with the finding of this study and explain why children choose the hidden spaces such as the corridor.

Another way of using the corridor was demonstrated by a group of girls. They were found many times to be showing their personal belongings from their school bags; they had a conversation about their past experiences and sometimes they made up a story as a group. These experiences of groups of girls were interpreted as constructing a strong group identity. Children choose somewhere special and secret to share their private belongings and experiences.

P3’s answer to the interview question of ‘*what do you observe about children’s play styles and using spaces during play time?*’ supports the observational fieldnotes regarding children’s preferences for quiet places in some play situations.

‘They just playing in a little group and they wanna play on their own. They go somewhere quiet and play...’

Colwell et al. (2016) state that children have a world which they want to keep separate from others. Children may create secret hiding places regarding of their social interactions and peer relationships and use these places to share secrets, reflect themselves and feel safe. In this current study, groups of girls especially, were found to be willing to use secret places such as corridors to share their personal experiences and belongings sometimes in a whisper.

THEME 3: MARKERS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

This theme was created by analysing the data from observations, fieldnotes, interviews and Mosaic approach. The codes and sub-codes aim to examine the signs of masculinities and femininities which were presented by children in the play situations.

a. Having a role

The observations of children's play and interviews conducted with them reveal that some of children adopted different roles during play. They used these roles to position themselves as powerful and to represent their femininity and masculinity. Some of them are explained in this section.

- *Quasi-teacher role*

Some children were found to have adopted 'a quasi-teacher role' in the nursery. The literature used that term for primary school girls who often aid the teachers with tasks in order to construct themselves as 'good, sensible girls' (Skelton & Francis, 2003). Their study demonstrated that girls' take up this role to delineate their femininity. In this study, some girls were observed tidying up the classroom and helping the staff. For example, they helped to the staff to collect books from the floor every morning. Another example was that during lunch time, a group of girls helped the staff to set a table by spreading the cover; putting out spoons and organizing the chairs. Additionally, some children were observed trying to keep her friends under control by adopting the teacher's words and behaviours. The next excerpt shows the roles adopted by Aisha:

Five girls and two boys are sitting on the mattress at the arch area. They are sitting next to each other. Aisha is sitting in front of them. The sitting arrangement is similar to the circle time which is directed by adults.

Aisha tries to make sure that everyone sits down and listens to her. She is repeating;

Aisha: *let's sit, everyone*

let's say ..., everyone

Some children are making a noise and talking amongst themselves. Aisha is trying to keep them quiet by saying;

Aisha: *Too noisy, everyone*

After for a while she says;

Aisha: *I said...* (interrupts by other children talking)

Some studies state that girls adopt a 'quasi-teacher' role to ensure the use some places and materials in the classroom and to draw teachers' attention (Skelton & Francis, 2003; Martin, 2011). Additionally, the current study found that some boys also adopted sensible roles and reminded their friends of the rules by repeating the teacher's words.

Five boys are playing in the arch area. Each of them has a similar 'racing' car made from small construction toys. They start to run through the empty space. Teacher warns them by saying '*stop running*'. After for a while, they get a second warning from another teacher. That time the teacher says that she will send the children out if they continue to run inside. Khaind stops running, he turns to his friends and says;

Khaind: *don't running or miss will send you outside.*

The teacher hears that and calls the names of the children who keep running inside to ask them to leave. These children go to the playground. The teacher forgets one of the boys. Khaind reminds her.

- *Being a 'mum' or 'baby'*

Interesting roles were found in children's play such as being a 'mum', 'baby' or 'daddy'. This kinds of play were called as 'baby-mom play' and it was one of the repetitive play themes between children. Girls were observed having a role either as a baby or as a mother. Some typical behaviours were specified for children who adopted these roles. Children with a mother role were mostly seen carrying a bag and collecting some stuff around the classroom. They said they were 'going a shopping'. Another distinctive characteristic of the role of 'mum' was showing caring behaviours like using soft voice and fulfilling the babies' needs by offering food or toys. On the other hand, the role of 'mum' required them to put some limits on or make rules for the children who were 'baby' in the play. The following statements were from Gemma and Emma's play and they show how they tried to control the other girls in the play.

<i>'it's bed time go home now'</i>
<i>'just for a little bit'</i>
<i>'no no just pick one, stop make a mess'</i>

Common behaviours between the children who adopted a baby role were also found. They were always demanding something such as food or a toy and they then threw them. Sometimes they pretended that they were crying. Gemma explained the requests of a child who had a baby role in the interview;

'um baby wants something um baby wants toys and baby wants lollipop (laughing)
... um toy um and the baby say wait mommies wait'

It was very rare to find a child who had a father role in the play. On one occasion, ‘daddy’ role was found in children play and the following episode shows the role given to him.

Four girls and two boys are playing separately in the arch area. One of the girls seems like she is a baby. She is lying down on the floor. Gemma is taking a mummy role. She is reading a book to the baby.

Girl A (to Gemma): *no she is not sick, just going to bed because it is late. You are going to your bed, go!*

Gemma refuses that.

According to that girl, she is the only mum in the play and others are babies. But Gemma is also saying she is mummy too. Both Girl A and Gemma offer some toys to a baby. Baby throws them and starts to cry. Gemma takes it and gives her back.

Researcher: *Who is baby and mummy?*

Gemma: *one baby and we are mummies both of us*

Researcher: *Who is daddy?*

Gemma: *Alan is daddy.*

Researcher: *Where is he?*

Gemma: *He is at shop.*

This episode shows that the role of ‘mum’ is something desirable by girls. Mostly, the role of ‘baby’ was given to the children who were physically smaller or newcomers. Also, the ‘father’ role was almost missing in the play storyline. Even if their play included a father role, he was sent away from the play. It can thus be suggested that girls are using the role of

‘mum’ to exercise power over the others by keeping them under control or sending them away from the play. These results support the findings of MacNaughton’s (2000) and Martin’s (2011) studies, which state girls’ are experiencing power through the domestic play.

b. Using toys/materials in a gendered way

These code and sub-codes were created by looking at how children use the toys or materials during play in order to construct their gendered identities.

- *Assigning gender and making distinction*

Some children were found to assign gender to the toys and gave them some feminine and masculine qualities. For example, while Aisha was making ‘snowman’ with playdough, she added some hair. She then said *‘I am cutting mine’s hair. She wants to cut all her hair’*. She identified the snowman as a girl by adding hair. In another example, Emma explained how she can assign gender to the puppet by saying *‘she has hair band, look’*. These can state that children assign gender to the toys by using reference points from their knowledge of communities of masculinity and femininity.

On the other hand, children can distinguish between toys for girls or boys. The following episode shows the boys’ struggled when they tried to assign gender to the toy plane.

Three boys are playing in the construction area with a wooden garage toy.

Khaind: *I am a fireman*

Boy A: *you need to make a plane because this is the plane station*

Khaind: *I did fire truck. The station means fire station*

They find a plane with a female character on it.

Boy A: *this is boy*

Khaind: *no, this is a girl*

I ask how he could know that;

M: *I did not know*

Children may have strict opinions or beliefs about the materials and activities for girls and boys separately. In this study, children's preferences for costumes were found to be highly gendered. While girls mostly chose the costumes of princesses; Cinderella and Mini Mouse, boys preferred to pirate, police, fireman and postman costumes. Interestingly, dragon costume was found to be popular with both by girls and boys. The next example shows Aisha's strict opinion of the costume for girls and her rejection of the possibility that they could be for boys.

Aisha: *Miss look, I dress that* (showing her costume)

Researcher: *what costume are you wearing?*

Aisha: *mini mouse*

Researcher: *who do like mini mouse costume?*

Aisha: *I do*

Researcher: *Who else?*

Aisha: *girls like mini mouse*

Researcher: *what about boys?*

Aisha: *boys don't like*

- *Using toys differently*

It was found that girls and boys used the same toys for different purposes. Two most distinctive toys which were identified in the study are discussed here to reveal how boys and girls prefer to use materials in a gendered way. The castle toy was quite popular among all the children. It was openable and available to put some stuff inside it. Children's use of this toy was observed. While boys were playing with the castle toy, they put toys such as cars, wooden blocks and Lego inside it. They perceived the castle toy as a storage unit in which to keep their toys. Sometimes, boys pretended they were repairers and fixed the walls of this toy. Girls were observed putting some small animal toys and furniture toys inside the castle and called it 'Peppa Pig castle or house'. They used the castle toy to make a story for their dramatic play. Lego was another toy which was used differently by boys and girls. In girls' mummy-baby play, Lego pieces were used as food for the child who had a baby role. Boys used Lego to make some complicated structures such as guns and swords. These findings suggest that the same toys or materials can be interpreted differently by girls and boys in their play and that may lead to different play themes.



Figure 5: The Castle Toy Which Were Used Differently by Boys and Girls

- *Signs of femininity*

The colour pink; fashionable, shiny clothes; the shape of heart; accessories related to hair; henna and lipsticks were found to be significant for the girls' community of practices. In the nursery, girls often had conversation about each other's outfits.

Aisha: *girls are wearing dresses* (showing hers)

Also, they were aware of feminine fashion such as having henna and putting on make-up. They expressed their interest in them many times during their play. The following sentences were recorded separately in the girls' play. They were using lipstick to display the practices of femininity.

Girl A:	<i>'hey Emma I got lipstick a pink lipstick'</i>
Girl B	<i>'My mum only let me have make up when I am big'</i>

In Blaise's (2005b) and Martin's (2011) studies the colour pink was found as a desirable colour for girls and it was used in play as a marker of femininity by both boys and girls. This study supports that pink is used by girls to express themselves as a part of the girls' community. Two excerpts from girls' play exemplify how they highlight the colour pink in their play.

Emma and one other girl are in the dressing-up area and they are trying to pick princess costumes for themselves. Emma points to one costume and says to her friend;

Emma: *Pink, this is the pink one*

3 girls are playing 'baby-mummy play' in the home corner. One of them has a baby role. Emma is the mother. Baby wants something from the mother.

Girl A: *pink pink* (pointing the blocks on the floor). *More pink ones.*

On the other hand, the pink was found to be undesirable for some boys in this study. The literature states that many boys tried to avoid pink because it is perceived to feminise and weaken the boys (Martin, 2011). The following example shows Khaind's rejection of the toy because it has pink sticker on it.

Khaind and two boys come to the home corner and take a box. They go to the arch area.

Khaind: *my presents, put the toys in the box*

They are collecting some toys around the classroom and putting them in the box.

Khaind throws one toy. I asked;

Researcher: *why did you not want that toy?*

Khaind: *there is Peppa Pig on it.*

Researcher: *Peppa Pig?*

Khaind: *Yeah, it cannot go in that box. It can go Peppa Pig castle*

He points to the castle on the carpet. The toy which is thrown has a pink Peppa Pig character sticker on it.

Some children try to explore gender in their play through border work. Said was one of these children in the study and he tried to push the gender boundaries by joining the girls' play and resisting the rejections he faced. The next episode reveals how he insists on playing with a pink Power Ranger character. Also, it shows how his choice was policed and objected by Aisha.

Power Ranger characters are popular among all the children, however there are few in the classroom. Many children want to play with them.

Said finds a pink Power Ranger character and starts to play with it. Aisha realizes that and says;

Aisha: It is for girls

Said: No, boys can play. Look these girls too

He shows one boy who is playing with a green Power Ranger.

Said not only challenges gender norms by choosing to play with the pink Power Ranger character, but he also does so by countering Aisha's objection. In this example, he assigns the green Power Ranger character as a feminine toy and preferred by girls. Thus he points to another boy's use of this toy which is assigned as a toy for girls. His attempt is significant because he positions himself in ways to challenge the stereotypical behaviour of others. Additionally, his effort enables him to explore and try different behaviour.

- *Signs of masculinity*

Martin (2011) found in her study setting that boys took an active part in three main hegemonic practices of masculinity: superhero play, football and construction (Lego and car play). This study has been unable to demonstrate the football play because it did not look at children's play in the playground. The gun/swords play which was discussed under the theme of repetitive play was found as an essential marker of masculinity in the nursery. In addition, boys' construction play was coded as a marker of masculinity. The following excerpts from fieldnotes identify boys' embodying fixing activities and how they position themselves as strong by carrying large or heavy stuff.

Two boys are playing with the castle toy. They are putting small wooden blocks in the castle toy. One boy takes a toy hammer and hits the wall of the castle. The other boy finds a toy helicopter. He uses that in the same way. I ask them what they are doing;

Boys: *we are building a house.*

One boy carries a long wooden beam. First, he tries to put it inside the play house from the window. He cannot achieve that. He then decides to put it in from the door and he says:

Boy: *I am fire engineer.*

He pretends that he is measuring the walls by using the beam. Then all the girls who were playing there left.

Browne (2004) states that young boys position themselves as strong, brave and dominant to explore hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, the boys in this study used some of the play to demonstrate themselves in more powerful positions. In the following examples boys compared their ages, heights and the size of their toys to exercise power over their friends by using physical attributes.

Khaind and two boys are playing with construction toys in the arch area.

Khaind: *I am 4 and I am going to be 5*

Boy A: *Let's see who is the tallest*

They stand up and measure their height

Khaind: *I am taller than you*

Boy A: *let me find 5 years old*

They walk around a bit then come back to the same place. They continue to talk about their ages and start to make a motorcycles using Mobilo. They are showing them to each other.

Khaind: *look this wheel is under*

Khaind: *mine is bigger than yours*

Boy A: *mine*

Khaind: *mine*

Boys' exercising power and effort to achieve a dominant position among their peers can be interpreted as exercising masculinity in the nursery classroom. In this way, they could claim themselves to be a member of boys' communities of practice. Martin's (2011) study found that dominant boys who demonstrated hegemonic masculinities in the classroom did not allow the younger and weaker boys to join in their play. Similarly, this study found that one younger boy's access to the play was blocked by older boys in the classroom. The younger boy came to the nursery for a couple of times in order to prepare for the transition period. He can speak the same language as Umut who was his friend. Umut tried many ways to involve him in play groups. Firstly, he introduced the new boy to his friends by saying '*look, he is our new friend*'. The next episode shows the rejection of new boy by older boys in the group and also Umut's reaction.

Umut and the new boy are holding each other's hands. The new boy tries to join the play of other Turkish boys. One of them does not allow him and says;

Boy A: *don't*

Umut realizes that and says;

Umut: *he is my friend*

Boy A still does not allow him to join in. Umut then holds the boys' hand and says;

Umut: *come*

They sit down on the mattress next to other boys and watch their play.

In this example, the younger boy can be defined as a 'newcomer'. Umut also did not have a powerful position in the group because he started the nursery later than the other children. That is why the younger boy and Umut were not allowed to join in the play by dominant boys in the nursery.

4.3. ADULTS' PERSPECTIVES

This part considers the children's play and gender from the point of view of early years practitioners. Their contributions give an opportunity to look at how they perceive children's play and gender in the early years. Also, it reveals the role of the curriculum and its effects on the children's experiences in the early years. Themes and codes were created from the observations and interviews with early years teachers.

4.3.1. THEMES AND CODES

THEME 1: PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN'S PLAY IN THE CLASSROOM

This theme focuses on the early years practitioners' understanding of their roles and the role of play in the nursery. The codes heavily depend on the interviews with staff and observations.

a. Early years practitioners' roles

The interviews with early years practitioners found that staff perceived their roles in the classroom as organizing the environment; implementing the curriculum; supporting and scaffolding the children's learning. P2 explained the roles of staff in the nursery as setting-up an environment to encourage children to engage with the learning activities. She pointed out that *'when we set-up so for example if we set-up a garage yeah we might have um done the garage to encourage the boys to write...'*. Then she continued by saying *'we do think of ways to improve the children's learning to scaffolding their learning to give them the tools that they need. And yes we do set-up things according to the curriculum'*. While P3 was explaining the roles of staff, she also highlighted the importance of implementing the curriculum by adding; *'how we adopt the activities to meet the curriculum for them (children) you know...'*. Besides all these, T1 added that the communication with parents as a role of staff in order to support children's learning.

However, observations conducted in the nursery revealed more roles that staff adopted in the classroom than those that they explained during the interviews. Many times, adults were observed to warn children when play was seen to be in an unnatural manner. Their roles were identified as stopping play or changing its structure. For example, they often warned children when play became too loud and aggressive by telling them *'to play nicely little bit'*; *'a bit aggressive, be nicer'*. Staff often gave a warning to stop the swords/guns or fighting play. They mostly said to the children *'we don't do playing fighting, stop play'*; *'stop running'*; *'do something else please'*. Another adult role was found as controlling children and reminding them of the rules. They made sure children were aware of the classroom routines by reminding them the time or their duties such as *'tidy up time'*. Other times it was found that they repeated the rules of the classroom to control children's play, for example, *'you cannot hide behind the curtain'*; *'you are not allowed to sit here'*. The observational findings of this study support Logue and Harvey's (2010) study with the preschool teachers to understand their practices and attitudes regarding of play. They found that teachers more frequently stopped children's rough-and-tumble play than other types of dramatic play. Specifically, play fighting was found to be the least tolerated play among teachers and this is consistent with the current study in which teachers were found to stop this type of play.

b. Role of play

From the adults' perspective, three key roles of play were found in the nursery classroom. Mainly, play was considered to be *'a learning opportunity for children'*. Three out of four early years practitioners mentioned play as a learning opportunity and explained how it can be used to prepare learning environment. T1 talked about the seven areas of learning regarding of play;

‘... the seven areas of learning is play that the children engage in to develop the um the making relationships, the self-confidence, self-awareness um developing the self-help skills and developing a physical development um developing communication and language and their understanding um...’

P3’s first expression about play was interesting. She said; *‘ohh it is like um just chaos. Everything is out um they like to make a mess’*. She then highlighted that children benefit from play and learn something in play situation. She expressed that *‘obviously, they get out the Mobilo all out and they build something. They are learning about connecting and you know understanding’*. Another key understanding about the roles of play were found to be ‘meeting curriculum aims’. This one was closely related to accepting play as learning opportunity. T1 expressed play as children’s choices and something planned. She mentioned that they carried out observations on children’s play and they planned it based on particular children’s interests and needs. Then she continued *‘I think as a teacher, as a practitioner we, you know, we have to ensure the curriculum meets the individual need of the children ... you know, we carry out the work we do with the children to ensure that all children’s needs um interests are met’*. She perceived play as something should be planned to meet the curriculum aims. P2 was the only one who stated play as children’s work and she expressed another role of play by saying *‘it is just having fun’*. The educators’ comments reveal that their perception of play is completely different from children’s and they mostly focus on the educational outcomes and benefits of play.

THEME 2: PERCEPTION OF CHILDREN'S GENDER

This theme was created to examine gendered play in the nursery from the adult perspective and the beliefs of staff in children's construction of gendered identities.

a. Categorising children's play

Early years practitioners were found to differentiate between girls' and boys' play and their use of space. P3 explained her perception about children's gendered play by stating; *'I think that it is always that way um the boys wanna do bricks and play with cars and girls wanna do the dressing up ...the boys tend to often do their own thing, go outside, play football, fighting um yeah and girls tend to just do playdough yeah'*. P1 agreed with this but she added how some spaces were being used by both girls and boys; *'it mixes between painting and playdough and sensory play'*. T1 and P2 spoke about the possibility of border work in the classroom by stating *'...the girls we know the princess dresses um oh some boys they do, some boys at times in dresses.'*; *'sometimes I see the boys yeah just see in the girls' things and whatever.'*, respectively.

The early years practitioners' answers to explain children's play revealed their understanding of an individual child. T1 and P3 often mentioned an individual child's needs and interests and they highlighted each child's uniqueness. Also the effects of this understanding on planning play was found. They said that while preparing an environment, they focused on the needs and interests of individual children. This is similar to what Chapman (2016) found in her study setting in which teachers planned play according to children's interests. In addition, staff in this study mentioned the children's needs to plan play.

b. Understanding children's gender

P1 and P2 answered the interview question 'how do you perceive gender in your setting?' by highlighting that all children are equal in the classroom. P2 stated; '*I don't really look at them um differently in a sense. They are children. And you know, why confuse them. Just let them grow together and play together*'. She added that there was no gender difference in the classroom and children were encouraged to play together with all of the toys. This view contradicts the observations of the children's gendered play behaviour in the classroom because they showed definite masculine and feminine ways of playing and play contexts. P1, in agreement with P2, stated that in the classroom there was no specific gender play. She then faced a dilemma and continued with the statement: '*um but we do realize that children turn into gender play...*' Other staff mentioned that the gendered play did not exist in the classroom however it contrasts with both observations and the fact that boys and girls chose separate spaces in which to play.

When the gendered play was specifically questioned, practitioners reflected different beliefs of how children construct their gendered identities. P3 and P1's reactions imply that they adopted the theory of biological determinism to understand children's construction of gender. They came to a similar conclusion by stating the followings:

P3	'I think that it is always that way um the boys wanna do bricks and play with cars and girls wanna do the dressing up'.
P1	'We don't have a specific gender play. Um but we do realize that children turn to gender play ... I think it is already equal I think it's just boys being boys and girls being girls'.

It appeared that they accepted gender and children's gendered play as natural, stable and biologically determined. In contrast to P1 and P3, P2 seemed that she adopted the socialization theories to explain children's gendered play. She explained gender differences as a result of social factors and she believed that children could create gendered identities through absorbing the social messages available around them. Additionally, P2 identified herself as an agent of socialization and children as sponges who soak up the information around them.

P2	'the environment where they come from and they see the different dynamics in the home and they can bring that inside um the centre'.
P2	'we are teaching the children and when we are passing our knowledge on to the children, we are mindful of how and what we pass on because they are like sponges and yes so careful because they are like sponges'.

MacNaughton (2000) also found that teachers in her research believed children construct gender identity through observing and absorbing the social clues they gave them as did some of staff in the current study. She stated that these beliefs restricted the capacity of teachers to construct a meaningful role in children's gender identity formation because of having a simplistic image of relationships between the individual and the social context.

The staff's ways of providing materials and preparing the environment was found to reinforce gender stereotypes. They tended to make a differentiation between boys' and girls' interests to support their learning. The following statements from staff show how they tried to encourage children to involve them in learning activities regarding of their needs and interests.

T1	‘When we are planning, we plan for particular children to have um like for example we do paper, we found the boys might like more paper that has a design on it. We encourage them to draw and encourage them to write...’
P3	‘So if the child needs to count from one to ten that's all the children not just boys or girls. So its ... how we do that, we might have to adopt it. We could put the girls, we could do um Barbie, with the boys we do cars’
P2	: ‘if we set-up a garage yeah we might have um done the garage to encourage the boys to write. Because you know the um some things you have to um be um innovative and be kinda creative to get them involved in writing’

These practices include the danger of creating gender stereotypes by differentiating the activities for boys and girls. The observation sessions also supported that finding. For example, during the circle time the teacher asked one of the boy who spoke with his friends to change his place by saying ‘*go between these two girls*’. She wanted to keep the boy under control by asking him to sit next to the girls. Another practice often observed in the classroom was greeting children during the circle time by stating ‘*hello all the girls; hello all the boys*’. These educators’ practices contradict the teachers’ implications found in the studies of Blaise (2005b) and Giraldo and Colyar (2012). While in these studies teachers’ practices worked to disrupt gender stereotypes, in this study they mostly worked to reinforce stereotypical gendered behaviours in the classroom. It is important to note that staff in the current research did not appear to recognise the ways in which children use and police the materials and nursery space in gendered ways.

THEME 3: CURRICULUM

This theme and codes were created from interviews with staff to present educators' understanding of the curriculum and its effects on the preparation of the environment in the nursery setting.

a. Roles of curriculum

Curriculum was perceived as a guideline by all the early years practitioners in the nursery. P3 explained the role of curriculum by saying *'the curriculum is the curriculum but it is like a guideline what we need, what we need to meet'*. Another role of the curriculum was explained by T1. She suggested that *'I think as a teacher, as a practitioner, we, you know we have to ensure that the curriculum meets the individual needs of the children ... to ensure that all the children's needs um um and interests are met'*. It can be stated from the answers of staff that the curriculum is perceived as something that should be meet. Moreover, the curriculum was seen as a guideline to set up an environment in the classroom for children's learning. Staff stated that the curriculum was not so strict and it can be adaptable according to the individual child's needs. P2 explained that by saying *'yes we do set-up things according to the curriculum but we are not um we are not statics in what we do'*.

When the question of *'do you think the curriculum favours gendered activities'* was asked, half of the staff argued that the curriculum did not have an influence on that. They believed that the teachers might have a role in implementing gendered activities. Both P3's and P1's answers exemplify that:

P3	'The curriculum doesn't say boys and girls. It's just say all children. So I think myself, personally I think same thing I said before. It is how you implement it, yeah'
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P1	‘I think the curriculum doesn't favour gendered activities but there can be teachers that turn the curriculum into gendered activities’
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According to MacNaughton (2000), teachers’ practices in western mainstream early childhood education mostly required the use of developmental information about the individual child to plan the learning and also fulfil the curriculum requirements. To achieve that they need to do observation and focus on each child. In her research site, it was found that these observational practices hid the differences in children’s play preferences and the construction of gendered power relations in the classroom. In this current study, the educators’ answers show that they neither question the curriculum nor interpret it with regard to gender. They did not seem to view the curriculum critically in the way that it promotes certain kinds of gendered knowledge.

b. Use of the curriculum

When the effectiveness of the curriculum to create gender equity was questioned, staff indicated some strategies, such as making an environment more available for all children by setting it up differently. P1 suggested presenting toys which were attractive for both boys and girls in the corners and setting-up play areas differently. She added that *‘it's all about how you use resources and how engaging and welcoming you make it for children’*. P3 made another suggestion about how to create gender equity in the classroom. She started by saying *‘it is all about what you display, how it equals’* and she continued to talk about the importance of displaying both male and female figures in the classroom to make sure of creating equal atmosphere. These statements from educators contradict their ways of organizing the learning environments such as the ways they resource them by putting dolls for girls and cars for boys.

While staff were explaining how to use the curriculum to create gender equity, they focused on how to support children’s development and learning. T1 and P2 tended to associate the

curriculum with more teaching aspects and their answers to the Q.5 and Q.6 reflected their concern, especially for boys' underachievement. P2 suggested to set-up a garage with numbers to make it more attractive for boys and support their learning.

P2: '...to get them involved in writing and stuff so like that we set-up a garage and whatever we know boys are interested in to get them to write. But that doesn't say that the girls cannot play a big part in that garage ... I said set up a garage and put numbers on the bikes and whatever and to um to encourage them to learn the numbers and um to um have them when they come to the garage they have to write...'

T1 spoke more about the resources that they had and how to use them to meet individual child's needs. She stated that they bought lots of magazines to support children's reading. While she was talking about other activities, she mentioned particularly the needs of boys, as P2. She mentioned the importance of having playdough in the classroom and continued with;

T1: 'the statistics show that you know the boys are at risk...that's why the playdough tables are always out for them to strengthen their muscles to support them with the fine motor skills...'

These findings are relevant to the perception of the educators' role of play. They seemed to use both play and the curriculum to create an environment to support children's learning. However, they adopted some practices which recreate gender stereotypes in the classroom while they were trying to make the areas and activities appealing. The literature also presents that teacher facilitate the masculine or feminine activities by regarding of children's educational outcomes. (Granger et al., 2017; Goble et al., 2012). Interestingly, in this study staff mentioned the needs of boys specifically and they perceived boys to be at risk.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to share the important findings of the study and connect them with the research questions presented in the first chapter. Afterwards, the chapter presents the study's limitations and suggestions for possible future research.

5.2. What are children's understandings of play and gender in the early years classroom?

Children in this study used play as a way to construct and strength their friendships. While case children spoke about their play, they mostly emphasized their relations with their peers. When the gender of children's play groups were looked into, both observations and children's own expressions showed that they mostly preferred to play within the same-sex groups. The other understanding of play appeared as having fun. The children did not verbally express that but their behaviours and acts such as laughing and singing together, copying each other's movements in the play clearly pointed to that. As stated in the previous chapter, children tended to show the repetitive play themes and roles. Some types of play were repeated every day and they involved gender specific activities. Children also practice some of the roles such as being mum, baby, dad or having a powerful position in the play situation. These play themes and roles found supporting children's exploration of feminine and masculine identities. Additionally, they sometimes preferred to play somewhere where there was a lack of adult supervision and keep their play storyline private. It was observed that they sometimes played certain types of play such as gun-sword or running in the spaces which were away from adults' observations such as in the corridor and they developed some strategies to cover their play.

5.3. How do young children use spaces and activities in the classroom as markers of femininity and masculinity during their play?

Children were found to present more stereotypical play and behaviours in the home corner and construction area. In the research classroom, boys took power and dominated space through making large movements, construction and gun-sword play while girls used power through baby-mummy play and adopting 'quasi-teacher role'. Additionally, boys' preferences for larger spaces and taking over spaces by excluding girls' access to certain areas was interpreted as a sign of masculinity. Children tended to differentiate between certain toys which were deemed to be for girls or boys. The castle toy and Lego were used differently by girls and boys in different play themes and in this way they explored being a girl or a boy. Also the colour pink was found to be highly desirable for girls and was used as a marker of femininity. Boys on the other hand, mostly rejected to use the pink toys. Power struggles also could be seen between children. In girls play, physically smaller girls were given a role of 'baby' and in boys play 'newcomers' were rejected from joining in the play. In this research setting, it was found to be difficult to cross gender boundaries in the play situation because children's behaviours were policed by their peers. When some children had attempted to cross gender boundaries, their peers objected.

5.4. What are early childhood educators' perceptions of the curriculum which shape the implementation of classroom organisation in the early years classroom?

Observations and interviews with staff revealed that educators' perceptions of the curriculum was linked to their understandings of their roles and the roles of play. They perceived their roles in the classroom as organizing the environment; implementing the curriculum; supporting children's learning in addition to reminding children of the rules and routines of the classroom; stopping play and warning children. Play was found to have the function of

preparing the learning environment for children and meet curriculum aims. It was considered as a learning opportunity. In relation to all these, the curriculum was mainly perceived as a guideline to set up a learning environment. However, while organizing an environment, their beliefs and implications such as providing children dolls and trucks were found to reinforce the stereotypical gendered behaviours of children. Staff believed that not curriculum itself but the teachers might have a role to play in implementing gendered activities. That implies that they did not look at the curriculum by using gender lenses, therefore they did not question and interpret it as promoting certain kinds of gendered knowledge or creating gender equity in the classroom.

5.5. Limitation of the study

Although this study answered the research questions, it has its limitations. Firstly, the study was small scale with only six case children and four practitioners. Therefore, the sample is not representative of the larger population. Secondly, the data was collected by only one researcher. It was challenging for one researcher to observe the case children and their play with other children in the classroom. The large number of children made it difficult to focus on one child at a time. The noise level and busy atmosphere of the classroom also caused several interruptions during the observation sessions. Additionally, the large physical space of the classroom made it difficult to follow children when they moved fast from one space to another. Another limitation might be related to the gender of the staff and researcher. All the staff and the researcher were female. It might bias the behaviours of both parties. During the research process- tours, photographing and map-making, children worked in pairs. Some children were observed to tend to copy their pairs' acts or behaviours. Working in this way might influence the children's behaviours in the research. Lastly, when the children were asked to take photographs of the places where they did not like to play, half of the children

did it. The other half of the children did not identify places they did not like to play in. It might be one of the limitations of methodology which was used in the study.

5.6. Recommendations for future research

The limitations point to the necessity for further research in the field of early childhood in order to highlight the need for gender equity practices in early years context. Further research could include more participants, children and early years practitioners/teachers, in order to present a more generalizable and representative view. Including another adult's perspective such as children's parents would be extremely useful to enrich the research findings. Learning more about children by asking their parents and gathering information about their home environment and parents' beliefs about the children's construction of gendered identities could give a different perspective from which to examine children's gendered experiences in the school setting. Another suggestion that could be useful is the use of a focus group interview with children as a tool for data collection in addition to individual interviews. It could help children to feel more comfortable during the interview process and counter the power relations between children's participation and the adult researcher. Additionally, interviewing with male teachers and getting their perspectives about children's gendered play in the classroom would be interesting for future studies because they might view and interpret some play differently such as gun-sword or baby-mummy play. Lastly, conducting this research in both indoor and outdoor spaces would give rich insights into children's use of spaces and materials in a gendered way and enable comparisons between two separate spaces.

5.7. CONCLUSION

This study shows that young children take an active part in constructing the gendered identities in the nursery setting. The data from observations and working with children reveal that children use gender discourses to construct themselves as girls and boys in the classroom. Play was found to be a way for children to position themselves, to explore various styles of masculinity and femininity and sometimes to challenge the gender stereotypes via pushing or testing the boundaries. Using the feminist poststructuralism approach and accepting children as capable of making meanings and choices have opened up ways for observing, listening and interpreting children's experiences. They enable us to look at children's interactions and conversations in the play situation and reveal how they learn and explore the meaning of being a girl or a boy via play. In addition, it was possible to see power relations between children, their play choices and styles and which types of play and activities in certain spaces are dominant or avoided. The types of repetitive play they present, the roles they adopt and uses of materials and space in the nursery are the examples of their exploration of masculinities and femininities. While most children in the study showed definite masculine and feminine ways of playing and use of space, few of them were observed to challenge gender norms by joining in mixed groups' play and using the toys which more preferable from opposite sex.

For this research setting, there is a need to adopt practices and to create an environment that disrupts gender stereotypes and promotes gender equity. Browne (2004) suggests that young children are not always able to make 'free' choices about how they position themselves in the classroom. Therefore, educators should offer more than the alternative ways of being feminine and masculine. Adults should look closely at their personal beliefs and introduce new strategies and ways of working with children. They also have an important role to ensure that all children have equal access the materials and space in the classroom.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM

Institute of Education



Ethics Application Form: Student Research

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

For further support and guidance please see accompanying guidelines and the Ethics Review Procedures for Student Research <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe> or contact your supervisor or IOE.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk.

Before completing this form you will need to discuss your proposal fully with your supervisor(s).

Please attach all supporting documents and letters.

For all Psychology students, this form should be completed with reference to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Section 1 Project details

a.	Project title	Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives	
b.	Student name	Gizem Silistire	
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor	Christine Callender	
d.	Department	MA Early Years Education	
e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD/MPhil ☐	EdD ☐
		MRes ☐	DEdPsy ☐
		MTeach ☐	MA/MSc ☒
		ITE ☐	
		Diploma (state which) ☐	
		Other (state which) ☐	
f.	Course/module title	Dissertation in Early Years Education	
g.	If applicable, state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.		
h.	Intended research start date	April-2018	
i.	Intended research end date	August-2018	
j.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in <i>If research to be conducted abroad please ensure travel insurance is obtained through UCL</i> http://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/insurance/travel	England	
k.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?		
	Yes ☐	External Committee Name:	
	No ☒ ⇒ go to Section 2	Date of Approval:	

If yes:

- Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.
- Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 Project summary

Research methods (tick all that apply)

Please attach questionnaires, visual methods and schedules for interviews (even in draft form).

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☒ Interviews | ☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study |
| ☐ Focus groups | ☐ Use of personal records |
| ☐ Questionnaires | ☐ Systematic review ⇒ if only method used go to Section 5. |
| ☐ Action research | ☐ Secondary data analysis ⇒ if secondary analysis used go to Section 6. |
| ☒ Observation | ☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups |
| ☐ Literature review | ☒ Other, give details: Mosaic approach: having a tour, map making, interview |

Please provide an overview of your research. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, your method of data collection (e.g., observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.) and kind of questions that will be asked, reporting and dissemination (typically 300-500 words).

The purpose of the research:

The study aims to look children's play regarding of gender by listening to the voices of children in order to highlight the needs for gender equity practices in the early years education.

The main aims of the research:

- to understand young children's gendered use of spaces during play in the early years classroom
- to understand how children dominate or avoid particular spaces and activities
- to learn from teachers about the effects of the EYFS on preparing an environment in the classroom

The research questions:

1. What are children's understandings of play and gender in the early years classroom?
2. How do young children use spaces and activities in the classroom as markers of femininity and masculinity during their play?
3. What are early childhood educators' perceptions towards the curriculum which shapes the implementation of classroom organisation in the early years classroom?

Design of the study:

The research will take place within the interpretative paradigm. Interpretivist paradigm believes that reality is socially constructed and research aims to understand 'what meanings people give to reality' (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 15). Also, reality is shaped by contexts, time, spaces and individuals. Therefore, it cannot be generalised (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). One aim of the interpretative research is to understand people's experiences therefore this research will take place in children's natural setting. It will be a small scale intrinsic case study which is conducted in one classroom and one school. The case study aims to gain in-depth information about children's and teachers' perspectives towards the gendered use of spaces in early years classroom.

Participants and sampling:

Three boys, three girls and four practitioners will be participants of the study. Non-probability purposive sampling will be used to select participants. For the selection procedure, children's ethnicities, social classes and abilities (such as language, social skills) will be considered to get a representative sample. In addition, children's regular attendance at the school will be an important criterion. The suggestions of teachers will be taken. Few days will spend with children before selecting participants and collecting data to build a close relationship and know them better.

Data collection methods:

- **observation**

Firstly, narrative observation will be undertaken to get familiar with the setting and context. Notes from the observations can be discussed with the teachers who are also participants of the study to ensure about accuracy of the observations, routines and contexts of the setting. Secondly, the researcher will observe six children during their play time by looking their activities, ways of interacting with each other, their ways of using spaces during play and their choices of activities. Notes will be taken during observation process. Fields notes will be written immediately after each observation session. The detailed sketch which shows the corners and play areas in the classroom will be designed to see children's choices of spaces, movements and interactions within the group. One observation session will focus on one specific child during the play time. Each day two observation sessions will be taken in the morning and afternoon class. As a total 18 observation sessions will be taken. Observations will help to understand nursery children's using of spaces and activities as markers of femininity and masculinity.

- **Mosaic approach**

A mosaic approach which is developed by Clark and Moss is a creative way of listening to the young children, and it brings different perspectives to create an image of children's world by working with them (Clark, 2017). The child-led tours which give children an opportunity to discover their preferred places during play time will be organised. It will be in the classroom, and each time it will be conducted with one child. Children will record by taking photos of places and activities which they prefer and not prefer during play time. Children then will choose photos from their own to make a map as a group. During the map making session, the audio record will be taken. I will learn children's reasons to choose particular spaces, their play groups, their beliefs or understandings about playing with opposite gender in those particular spaces.

- **interview**

To learn teachers' perception about girls' and boys' play and use of spaces and activities, the semi-structured interview will be conducted. The teachers' practices originated from curriculum itself while constructing play or learning environments in the classroom will be investigated, and their approaches to the gender equity will be questioned.

Children also will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview via Mosaic approach. The interview will build on the photographs which will have taken by children. Children will be asked to explain their choices about photos taken, their play choices and their play peers. The conversation will be recorded.

Section 3 Participants

Please answer the following questions giving full details where necessary. Text boxes will expand for your responses.

a.	Will your research involve human participants?	Yes ☒	No ☐ ⇒ go to Section 4
b.	Who are the participants (i.e. what sorts of people will be involved)? Tick all that apply.		
	☒ Early years/pre-school ☐ Ages 5-11 ☐ Ages 12-16 ☐ Young people aged 17-18	☐ Unknown – specify below ☒ Adults <i>please specify below</i> <i>Early Years Practitioners</i> ☐ Other – specify below	
	NB: Ensure that you check the guidelines (Section 1) carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES).		

c.	If participants are under the responsibility of others (such as parents, teachers or medical staff) how do you intend to obtain permission to approach the participants to take part in the study? (Please attach approach letters or details of permission procedures – see Section 9 Attachments.) Permission for conducting the study with children will be sought from parents of the children via information sheets and consent forms which have details about implications of children's involvement in the study. If parents want to know more about the study, the researcher will be available at drop off and pick up times to answer questions of parents. There will be more than one permission will be requested from children. Firstly, permission will be sought from children to make observation. The second permission will be asked in order to apply Mosaic approach, specifically before asking children to take photos, interview and map making. During permission process, the study will be explained briefly to children.
d.	How will participants be recruited (identified and approached)? I have obtained access to the setting by getting permission from the head teacher. The detailed information about the study and the information leaflet was given to the head teacher. The written consent will be taken. In the setting, there is one nursery classroom and five early years practitioners. They who want to participate in the study will be invited to a short conversation about the study and information sheet will be given. After that, they will be asked to complete the consent form. All children in the classroom will be given information about the study. Children will be selected by using purposive sampling after having permission from their parents. Six children whose parental permission gained for the case study will be selected purposefully regarding representation of the classroom. The ethnicity, social class and gender of children will be considered. The children will be informed about the study briefly and according to their understanding levels. If a child agrees to participate in the study, s/he can mark the thumbs-up sign; if a child does not agree to participate in the study, s/he can mark the thumbs-down sign. That will take as consent of a child. During the study, children's consent will be sought regularly at each phase of data collection. Children will be asked verbally if they wish to take part, I will pay attention to body language and ask the children to show me one of three visual props: 👍 to indicate that they wish to take part; 👎 to indicate that they do not wish to take part and 🤔 to indicate if they are unsure. In the case of the latter children will be told that they can, if they wish join the activity later. These prompts will be used especially beginning of the child-led tour, map making and interview.
e.	Describe the process you will use to inform participants about what you are doing. After presenting information sheet to the teachers and parents, they will have time to understand and reflect the study. If staff have questions, the researcher will answer them in short conversation or meeting. If parents have questions, the researcher will answer them at drop off and pick up times. Then, school staff and parents will be asked to complete the consent form which includes details: they have understood the information given about the study, school staff and children can withdraw from the study in any time, the information gathered from the study will be used in a report, all the names will be anonymously presented, school staff have agreed to participate in the study and that parents give permission for children to be included in the study. I will introduce myself as a researcher and explain my reason to be in the classroom to all children with

	the help of teacher, which is learning about children's play in nursery. Then, it will be explained that activities will be conducted with a group of children, not all of them. Due to the size of the nursery it is not possible to work with all children. There are about 70 children as total (about 50 in morning class; 45 in afternoon; some of them stay whole day). For children in this setting, it is not unusual to work in small groups and to work with student-teachers who come for student teaching placement. For this reason, children who are not participating in the activities are unlikely to be sad. Also, it will be explained that the children who participate the activities will share what they have done with the activity with others about in their class. Six children whose parents have consented will be chosen purposively for the study and they will be asked to their own informed choice by marking thumbs signs. I will prepare thumbs-up, down and sideways signs and explain them how they can use to show their consents. We can have some practices or play with thumbs signs before asking their consent. Each stage of research, I will have brief conversation with children, remind them the meanings of thumbs signs and ask them about their choices. Thumbs up sign is for yes, 'I want to work with you today'; thumbs down sign is for no, 'I do not want to work with you today'; thumbs sideways sign is for not sure, 'I am not sure to work with you today'. Children's consent will be sought in each step of the study. Children who agree with participating in the study will be observed and invited to participate in the walking tour in the classroom. The tour will be conducted in pairs. Because the children will be working with an unfamiliar adult, they will be less likely to feel uncomfortable while working in pairs. They will be asked to take photos the areas which they prefer or not prefer for play time. As a researcher, I will accompany the children on the tour in order to help them using camera and to remind them their task if they need it. Every stage of the study, children's consent will be sought especially before starting the child-led tour, map making and interview. Children will be asked whether they want to participate by explaining both saying 'yes' or 'no' is fine. In addition to that, children's body language will be considered.
f.	How will you obtain the consent of participants? Will this be written? How will it be made clear to participants that they may withdraw consent to participate at any time? <i>See the guidelines for information on opt-in and opt-out procedures. Please note that the method of consent should be appropriate to the research and fully explained.</i> Written consent will be requested from each adult participant and children's parents. In the consent form participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time will be clearly stated. The consent form which asking to mark thumbs-up or down signs will be taken from the children. Also, before each engagement in an activity such as before taking a walking tour, map making and interview children's consent will be obtained by asking them to use the thumbs signs. The researcher will clearly explain about research to children and clearly state that if children do not want to be observed or be a participant of the study, they will not observe and record anymore.
g.	Studies involving questionnaires: Will participants be given the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer? Yes ☐ No ☐
	If NO please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.

h.	Studies involving observation: Confirm whether participants will be asked for their informed consent to be observed. Yes ☒ No ☐
	If NO read the guidelines (Ethical Issues section) and explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
i.	Might participants experience anxiety, discomfort or embarrassment as a result of your study? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If yes what steps will you take to explain and minimise this? It is possible that children may need more time to familiarise with the researcher and devices such as the audio recorder and the camera. I will spend some time with the children to build close relationship and know them better before data collection. Additionally, children will give an opportunity to take some photos/look them and record their voices/listen their voices in order to familiarise with the devices and feel more comfortable before the main data collection takes place. If the researcher feels children's discomfort and anxiety during the study, the session with the children will be terminated. For the adult participants, they will be told at the beginning of the interview that they have a right to decline to answer any of the questions. Also, the teachers will be again informed about the anonymity of data. If not, explain how you can be sure that no discomfort or embarrassment will arise?
j.	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants (deception) in any way? Yes ☐ No ☒
	If YES please provide further details below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
k.	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)? Yes ☒ No ☐
	If NO please explain why below and ensure that you cover any ethical issues arising from this in section 8.
l.	Will participants be given information about the findings of your study? (This could be a brief summary of your findings in general; it is not the same as an individual debriefing.) Yes ☒ No ☐
	If no, why not?

Section 4 Security-sensitive material

Only complete if applicable

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call; involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

a.	Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
c.	Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

Section 5 Systematic review of research

Only complete if applicable

a.	Will you be collecting any new data from participants?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐
b.	Will you be analysing any secondary data?	Yes ☐ *	No ☐

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

*If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 10 Attachments**.*

Section 6 Secondary data analysis Complete for all secondary analysis

a.	Name of dataset/s	
b.	Owner of dataset/s	
c.	Are the data in the public domain?	Yes ☐ No ☐ <i>If no, do you have the owner's permission/license?</i> Yes ☐ No* ☐
d.	Are the data anonymised?	Yes ☐ No ☐ <i>Do you plan to anonymise the data?</i> Yes ☐ No* ☐ <i>Do you plan to use individual level data?</i> Yes* ☐ No ☐ <i>Will you be linking data to individuals?</i> Yes* ☐ No ☐

e.	Are the data sensitive (<u>DPA 1998 definition</u>)?	Yes* ☐	No ☐
f.	Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
g.	If no , was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?	Yes ☐	No* ☐
h.	If no , was data collected prior to ethics approval process?	Yes ☐	No* ☐

*** Give further details in *Section 8 Ethical Issues***

If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to Section 9 Attachments.

Section 7 Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

a.	Confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). (<i>See the Guidelines and the Institute's Data Protection & Records Management Policy for more detail.</i>)	Yes ☒
b.	Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area?	Yes ☐ * No ☒
* If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what these arrangements are below.		
Who will have access to the data and personal information, including advisory/consultation groups and during transcription?		
c.	The researcher will have access to the data. Some details will be shared with the supervisor. Some details may be shared with participants during transcription.	
During the research		
Where will the data be stored?		
d.	The data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer.	
Will mobile devices such as USB storage and laptops be used? Yes ☒ * No ☐ * If yes, state what mobile devices: Laptop, USB storage, audio-recorder		
e.	* If yes , will they be encrypted?: Yes	

After the research

f.	Where will the data be stored? On the researcher's personal computer and USB storage in encrypted files.	
g.	How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format? The data will be stored until the Masters degree is taken. The data will be stored in a word document format.	
h.	Will data be archived for use by other researchers? * If yes, please provide details.	Yes ☐ * No ☒

Section 8 Ethical issues

Are there particular features of the proposed work which may raise ethical concerns or add to the complexity of ethical decision making? If so, please outline how you will deal with these.

It is important that you demonstrate your awareness of potential risks or harm that may arise as a result of your research. You should then demonstrate that you have considered ways to minimise the likelihood and impact of each potential harm that you have identified. Please be as specific as possible in describing the ethical issues you will have to address. Please consider / address ALL issues that may apply.

Ethical concerns may include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Methods – Sampling – Recruitment – Gatekeepers – Informed consent – Potentially vulnerable participants – Safeguarding/child protection – Sensitive topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – International research – Risks to participants and/or researchers – Confidentiality/Anonymity – Disclosures/limits to confidentiality – Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection) – Reporting – Dissemination and use of findings |
|---|--|

Methods:

For the data collection, observation, having a tour, asking children to take photos, making a map and interviews with children and teachers will be used. Permission from all participants will be gained via information sheets and consent forms. Permission of children will be considered throughout the study.

Sampling:

The opt-in method will be used for sampling. First, parents and teachers will be given information sheet and their consent will be received. As a researcher, I will explain the study and introduce myself as a researcher role to the whole class. I will seek children's consent by using thumbs-up and down signs. If the child wants to participate in the study, s/he can mark the thumbs-up sign; if the child does not agree to participate in the study, s/he can mark thumbs-down sign. That will take as consent from the child. If children's permission is not received, the observation, having tour and interview will not be conducted.

Recruitment and informed consent:

All children in the classroom will be given information about the study. They will be informed that some of children will work with researcher and these children can share their experiences with other children. The six children whose parental permission gained for the case study will be selected purposefully regarding representation of the class from different gender and ethnic groups. The aim of the study and what will happen in the classroom during the study will be explained according to children's understanding levels. If the child wants to participate in the study, s/he can mark the thumbs-up sign; if the child does not agree to participate in the study, s/he can mark the thumbs-down sign. That will take as consent from the child. Besides that, before starting each stage of the study, children will be asked to show their choices by using thumbs signs (up, down and sideways).

Gatekeepers

Before gaining access to the school, I will go to meet with a headteacher. I will briefly explain my intent to conduct the study. I will explain about process and give more detailed information about research. When I get Ethics permission from IOE, I will get the permission from headteacher, teachers and parents via information sheet and consent form. After that, I will search children's permission if their parents accept their participations. Before data collection, some sessions will be conducted to get familiar with the children.

Confidentiality/Anonymity:

Personal information of children will be anonymised. The names of school, teachers and children will be changed. In the report, personal information will be changed. Pseudonyms will give to the all participants' and school's names. All data will be destroyed when the Master's degree is received. After conducting the study, a summary of the research may be shared with the school and teachers.

Data storage and security both during and after the research:

The data will be stored in the researcher personal password-protected laptop. The only person who has access to the laptop will be researcher herself.

Reporting:

The findings of the study and data will be reported in the dissertation to gain Master's Degree in Early Years Education programme. While reporting the data and findings, they will give anonymously and personal information will not give.

Section 9 Further information

Outline any other information you feel relevant to this submission, using a separate sheet or attachments if necessary.

Section 10 Attachments Please attach the following items to this form, or explain if not attached

a.	Information sheets and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research, including approach letters	Yes ☒	No ☐
b.	Consent form	Yes ☒	No ☐
	<i>If applicable:</i>		
c.	The proposal for the project	Yes ☐	No ☐
d.	Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee	Yes ☐	No ☐
e.	Full risk assessment	Yes ☐	No ☐

Section 11 Declaration

	Yes	No
I have read, understood and will abide by the following set of guidelines.	☒	☐
BPS ☐	BERA ☒	BSA ☐ Other (please state) ☐

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.



I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.



I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the course of this project.

Name	Gizem Silistire
Date	12.04.2018

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor.

Notes and references

Check, J. & Schutt, R.K. (2012). *Research methods in education*. London: Sage publications Ltd.

Clark A. (2017). *Listening to young children: A guide to understanding and using the Mosaic approach* (3rd ed.). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.) London: Routledge.

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*

or

British Educational Research Association (2011) *Ethical Guidelines*

or

British Sociological Association (2002) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through UCL.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

The www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk website is very useful for assisting you to think through the ethical issues arising from your project.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers* (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) *What are Qualitative Research Ethics?* Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, you may refer the application to the Research Ethics and Governance Administrator (via IOE.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk) so that it can be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A Research Ethics Committee Chair, ethics representatives in your department and the research ethics coordinator can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the Research Ethics Committee.

Reviewer 1

Supervisor name	Christine Callender
Supervisor comments	The necessary amendments have been made to the ethics application.
Supervisor signature	Christine Callender

Reviewer 2

Advisory committee/course team member name	Phil Jones
Advisory committee/course team member comments	I am happy to approve
Advisory committee/course team member signature	

Decision

Date decision was made	05.05.2018
Decision	Approved ☒
	Referred back to applicant and supervisor ☐
	Referred to REC for review ☐
Recording	Recorded in the student information system ☐

Once completed and approved, please send this form and associated documents to the relevant programme administrator to record on the student information system and to securely store.

Further guidance on ethical issues can be found on the IOE website at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/research-ethics-committee/ioe> and www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2. 'INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR HEAD TEACHER'

Information Leaflet for Head Teacher

Title of the study: Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

I am conducting research at the school as part of my Masters Degree in Early Years Education at the Institute of Education, University College London. I would like to invite your school to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. I would be grateful if you could read and give your consent for the study.

What is the research about?

The study aims to look children's play regarding of gender and to highlight the needs for gender equity practices in early years education. Children's play choices, a way of using play spaces, and their interactions with each other during play time will be observed in the classroom setting. Additionally, in this study both adult perspectives and children's voices will be given a place by inviting adults an interview and by asking children to take some photos of their favourite areas in the classroom and talking about them.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point.

What will happen during the research?

After gaining consent from the head teacher, early years practitioners, parents and children, I will observe the children's play, interactions, preferences of spaces and choices of activities in the classroom setting. During observation, I will take fieldnotes, and I may take audio-record.

Children: I will be asking the children to take photos of their favourite places for play time in the classroom. Then, talking to them about their preferences. The children will use photos taken by themselves to make a map showing the places where they play. Our conversations will be audio-recorded. The audio-recordings will not be shared with anyone apart from myself, and they will be destroyed when the study is over. The child's consent will be asked during all process.

Teachers: Teachers who agree to take part in the study will be asked to conduct an interview. It should take no more than 30 minutes. The conversations will be audio-recorded.

Will my taking part of this study be kept confidential?

All information, audio recordings, photos taken by children (photos of the classroom environment, not the other children) will be stored securely, and they will be erased/destroyed at the end of the study. The names of children, teachers and school will be changed in the report. Some photos taken by children will be presented in the report.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that children would enjoy taking part of the study. Educational research helps to think about how we can provide better learning environments for young children. This study will help to have a better understanding in the field of play and gender in early years from children perspective. Moreover, it can highlight the needs for gender equity practices in the early years education and care.

What will happen to the findings of the study?

The findings of this study will be part of my Master's degree in Early Years Education. They will be assessed by my supervisor and course tutor. The summary of the findings will be shared with teachers and children.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to ask me.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

If you would like to your school to take part in the study, you need to fill the consent form.

Gizem

Contact details:

Gizem Silistire

gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

APPENDIX 3. 'CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PARTICIPATION'

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Head Teacher's Consent For the School's Participation

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

Masters in Early Years Education, University College London, Institute of Education

Email: gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

Please read each of the following statements carefully and initial each box to show you consent to it.

I confirm that ;

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research.

☐

I understand that the participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw the school's support for the study at any time without giving a reason and without prejudice.

☐

I understand that I can contact the researcher at any time and ask queries related to the study.

☐

I understand that all participants will be asked to give their own written consent. Children's consent will be asked in addition to their parents' consent.

☐

I give permission for the information gathered to be used in reporting the research findings anonymously. The school's name will not appear in any of the reports.

☐

I give permission for the researcher to visit the setting, to observe, tape record and interview as set out in the information sheet.

☐

I agree to the study being undertaken at this setting.

☐

I give permission for the researcher to take photos of classroom setting, not children's faces.

☐

Name of Head Teacher

Signature

Date

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 4. 'INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS'

Information Leaflet for Early Years Practitioners

Title of the study: Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

I am conducting research at the school as part of my Masters Degree in Early Years Education at the Institute of Education, University College London. I would like to invite you to take part in a research project. Before you decided it is important for you to understand why the research being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. I would be grateful if you could read and give your consent for the study.

What is the research about?

The study aims to look children's play regarding of gender and to highlight the needs for gender equity practices in early years education. Children's play choices, a way of using play spaces, and their interactions with each other during play time will be observed in the classroom setting. Additionally, in this study both adult perspectives and children's voices will be given a place by inviting adults an interview and by asking children to take some photos of their favourite areas in the classroom and talking about them.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up to that point.

What will happen during the research?

After gaining consent from the head teacher, early years practitioners, parents and children, I will observe the children's play, interactions, preferences of spaces and choices of activities in the classroom settings. During observation, I will take fieldnotes, and I may take audio-record.

Children: I will be asking the children to take photos of their favourite places for play time in the classroom. Then, talking to them about their preferences. The children will use photos taken by themselves to make a map showing the places where they play. Our conversations will be audio-recorded. The audio-recordings will not be shared with anyone apart from myself, and they will be destroyed when the study is over. The child's consent will be asked during all process.

Teachers: Teachers who agree to take part in the study will be asked to conduct an interview. It should take no more than 30 minutes. The conversations will be audio-recorded.

Will my taking part of this study be kept confidential?

All information, audio recordings, photos taken by children (photos of classroom environment, not the other children) will be stored securely, and they will be erased/destroyed at the end of the study. The names of the children, teachers and school will be changed in the report. Some photos taken by children will be presented in the report.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that children would enjoy taking part of the study. Educational research helps to think about how we can provide better learning environments for young children. This study will help to have a better understanding in the field of play and gender in early years from children perspective. Moreover, it can highlight the needs for gender equity practices in the early years education and care.

What will happen to the findings of the study?

The findings of this study will be part of my Master's degree in Early Years Education. They will be assessed by my supervisor and course tutor. The summary of the findings will be shared with teachers and children.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to ask me.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

If you would like to take part in the study, you need to fill the consent form.

Gizem

Contact details:

Gizem Silistire

gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

APPENDIX 5. 'CONSENT FORM FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS'

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Consent Form for Early Years Practitioners

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

Masters in Early Years Education, University College London, Institute of Education

Email: gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

Please read each of the following statements carefully and initial each box to show you consent to it.

I confirm that ;

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without prejudice.

☐

I understand that I can contact the researcher at any time and ask queries related to the study.

☐

I give permission for the information gathered to be used in reporting the research findings anonymously.

☐

I agree to be tape recorded during the interview.

☐

I agree to take part in the study.

☐

Name

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 6. 'INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PARENTS'

Information Leaflet for Parents

Title of the study: Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

I am conducting research at the school as part of my Masters Degree in Early Years Education at the Institute of Education, University College London. I would like to invite your child to take part in a research project. Before you decided it is important for you to understand why the research being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. I would be grateful if you could read and give your consent for your child to take part in the study.

What is the research about?

The study aims to look children's play regarding of gender and to highlight the needs for gender equity practices in early years education. Children's play choices, a way of using play spaces, and their interactions with each other during play time will be observed in the classroom setting. Additionally, in this study both adult perspectives and children's voices will be given a place by inviting adults an interview and by asking children to take some photos of their favourite areas in the classroom and talking about them.

Does my child have to take part?

Your child will be invited to take part in the study. You can decide whether your child to take part or not. If you decide your child to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You can withdraw your child's participation at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data your child has provided up to that point.

What will happen during the research?

After gaining consent from the head teacher, early years practitioners, parents and children, I will observe the children's play, interactions, preferences of spaces and choices of activities in the classroom settings. During observation, I will take fieldnotes, and I may take audio-record.

Children: I will be asking the children to take photos of their favourite places for play time in the classroom. Then, talking to them about their preferences. The children will use photos taken by themselves to make a map showing the places where they play. Our conversations will be audio-recorded. The audio-recordings will not be shared with anyone apart from myself, and they will be destroyed when the study is over. The child's consent will be asked during all process.

Teachers: Teachers who agree to take part in the study will be asked to conduct an interview. It should take no more than 30 minutes. The conversations will be audio-recorded.

Will my child's taking part of this study be kept confidential?

All information, audio recordings, photos taken by children (photos of the classroom environment, not the other children) will be stored securely, and they will be erased/destroyed at the end of the study. The names of the children, teachers and school will be changed in the report. Some photos taken by children will be presented in the report.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that children would enjoy taking part of the study. Educational research helps to think about how we can provide better learning environments for young children. This study will help to have a better understanding in the field of play and gender in early years from children perspective. Moreover, it can highlight the needs for gender equity practices in the early years education and care.

What will happen to the findings of the study?

The findings of this study will be part of my Master's degree in Early Years Education. They will be assessed by my supervisor and course tutor. The summary of the findings will be shared with teachers and children.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to ask me.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

If you would like to your child to take part in the study, you need to fill the consent form and return the completed form to the nursery as soon as possible.

Gizem

Contact details:

Gizem Silistire

gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

APPENDIX 7. 'PARENT CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION'

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Parent Consent for Child's Participation Form

Name of researcher: Gizem Silistire

Masters in Early Years Education, University College London, Institute of Education

Email: gizem.silistire.17@ucl.ac.uk

Please read each of the following statements carefully and initial each box to show you consent to it.

I confirm that ;

I have read and understood the information leaflet about the research.

☐

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and my child is free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without prejudice.

☐

I understand that I can contact the researcher at any time and request for my child's data to be removed from the project database.

☐

I give permission for the information gathered to be used in reporting the research findings without real names.

☐

I give permission for my child to be observed, talked to and voice recorded in the pre-school setting he or she attends

☐

I agree to my child taking part in the study.

☐

Name of child

Name of parent

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

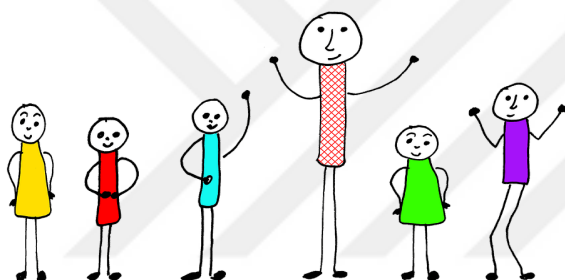
APPENDIX 8. 'INFORMATION FORM FOR CHILDREN'

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Information Form for Children

Before observing children's play, I will inform children and ask their permission for observation and their participation in the study. I will read this information leaflet for children.

I am Gizem. I am not really a teacher. I am a student in one of the universities in London. I have the assignment to do. Therefore, I need to watch your play in the classroom. I want to learn more about what is happening in the classroom and what kinds of games children play here.



Over the few weeks, I want to learn more about your play in the nursery.

- Sometimes we can just talk about your play;
- Sometimes I need to take some notes in my notebook to remember later
- Sometimes I may record your voice not to forget.

I will not let anyone else listen to the recorded voices and read my notes.



If you want to participate now, then change your mind, that is totally okay. You can tell me that anytime. I will sometimes ask you if you want to talk with me or not.

Thank you for listening to me.

APPENDIX 9. 'CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN'

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Consent Form for Children

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____

Gender: male/female

Consent from parents: Yes/No (if no, do not proceed)

Date: _____

First, I will read the information leaflet for children. After having a conversation and answer their questions, I will ask children to mark one of these signs.

I am asking you whether you want to talk with me about your play in the nursery or not. I want you to say yes or no by marking one of these thumbs. If you would like to say 'yes', please mark the thumbs-up sign, or if you want to say 'no', please mark the thumbs-down sign. *(at the same time, showing the signs)* Do you understand?



APPENDIX 10. 'INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRACTITIONERS'

Interview Schedule for Practitioners

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Personal Information

Job title:

Experience working in Early Years Settings:

Interviewee should be:

- *thanked for agreeing to be interviewed*
- *told that they are free to terminate the interview at any time*
- *told that they are free to decline to answer a question*
- *told that they can withdraw the information collected in this interview at any time*
- *told that the interview will be transcribed*

1. How do you define children's play in the classroom?
2. Do you think that the girls and boys prefer to play in separate spaces in the classroom? If so, why do you think it happens?
3. What do you observe about children's play styles and using spaces during play time?
4. How do you perceive gender in your setting?
5. Do you think whether the curriculum favours gendered activities in the classroom?
6. What do you think about the effectiveness of curriculum implementations to create gender equity in the classroom?
7. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX 11. 'INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN'

Interview Schedule for Children

Children's Use of Space in the Early Years: Child and Adult Perspectives

Personal Information

Name:

Age:

Parent Consent: Yes / No

Interviewee should be:

- *thanked for agreeing to be interviewed*
- *told that they are free to terminate the interview at any time o*
- *told that they are free to decline to answer a question*
- *told that they can withdraw the information collected in this interview at any time*
- *told that the interview will be transcribed*

1. Can you take me around the classroom and show me the places you would like to play in your play time?
2. Can you please tell me the things you would like to do there during play time?
3. Do you play there with your friends? Can you tell me the names of your friends you play together in that place?
4. What kind of things are you doing together here?
5. Do you have any friends who do not play in that place? Do you know where they would like to play?
6. Do you have any rules to play in that area?
7. What happens if children in the classroom want to play there? What should they do?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX 12. 'TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH T1'

1. How do you define children's play in the classroom?

As play is the they are engaging in activities or their choices. Um so in relation to the seven aims of the curriculum. So in relation to seven aims of the curriculum, the play that we set-up so it is planned. Play, play of the children um um engaging in and planned play um as a team we collaboratively meet um once a week and we focus on the children who we carry out observation for our focus children for that particular week. Um and we plan for these particular children's interests and their needs for the following week. So it is planned play so so for example um particular children we know that they might have interested in princesses and superheroes so we um plan they learn around that. So some children we have interest in construction and um small worlds magnetives so we plan they play around that. However the seven areas of learning is the play that the children engaging to develop the um the making relationships, the self-confidence, self-awareness um developing the self-help skills and developing a physical development um developing communication and language and their understanding, their speaking um developing their imagination, being creative um all those areas are found at play but it is well encourage them to be independent um lifelong learners, taking risks um and as practitioners and teachers is where they need to support them to scaffolding to give them the the vocabulary they need in order to investigate and explore and to understand where is concepts.

2. Do you think that the girls and boys prefer to play in separate spaces in the classroom? If so, why do you think it happens?

yes, um some days some children um they might go to particular areas but there is a definite defined that the girls particularly like the home corner um the boys particularly like going into the construction and the small world um the girls um both the boys and girls they make

um imaginative role playing games based on their experiences from the home and based on the experiences that they have seen on the television um based on experiences from books that they had and they extend their play further out so they make dress up and extend their play out um you know even in role playing they might not just be in the home corner then out to the wider environment both indoors and outdoors. um some of the boys play more rough games um like you know superhero rough games and um fighting games um so we have to just reinforce that you know we don't play like that you know it's all. The girls we know the princess dresses um oh some boys they do, some boys at times on dresses. Two, three boys I have seen this home um dressing but usually the girls wants to dress up as princesses and the boys who want to dress up as superheroes or um policeman or firefighters. Um in terms of the maths um um and writing they more encouraged in more have to be more encouraged or directed to play um they do enjoy building with bricks, they do enjoy the um the pegs with patterns but specific areas in the curriculum um um are more directed, more led.

3. What do you observe about children's play styles and using spaces during play time?

okay, yeah, I think yeah elaborate they even though yeah they made start of with one particular area like I mentioned before like their home corner but they do bring into the wider area of the learning environment inside or outside. And we we you know encourage them to do that so.

4. How do you perceive gender in your setting?

so in terms of um planning for gender so yeah again you know the reputation of the books that we have. When we planning, we plan for particular children to have um like for example we do paper, if the topic paper, we found the boys might like more paper that got a design on it. Is that we encourage them to draw and encourage them to write um obviously being imaginative we ensure that we got um um range of dressing up clothes to promote them to

promote boys and the girls. Um in terms of large scale outside for boys, the boys like the bikes aa aa scooters a lot and lot of running, running games. We ensure that the spaces is there for them. And um in terms of um for interested well so for example if we are singing a song, rhyme trying to focus on rhyme and songs they like that Thomas, Tanken Jane aa Mr Tumble that has the concept of repetition and rhyme to support their language and experiences. Um and just thinking what else the books we choose um the topics, um speaking to the parents um labels for each Monday encourage the parents to write down what their interests are, what they have done so we can support them and you know planning as well. And the other resources like cars, the big trucks, the trains um having the belts um builders' belts um the bricks just the resources and activities, the tools that we set-up is well just support their interests in their gender.

5. Do you think whether the curriculum favours gendered activities in the classroom?

I think that's the um the curriculum um as a practitioner you have to be quite skilful and creative in your planning and you and you refer to the curriculum. Because you have to also know I mean we in the nursery we have got a lot of boys you know male gender and so in terms of how we deliver the curriculum, um it has to fit into our planning with the parents, knowing your, the individual children's interests. Yeah I think as a teacher as a practitioner we, you know we have to ensure that the curriculum meets to individual needs of the children so that it rationed (?) of planning and it ration to (?) you know we carry out the work we do with the children to ensure that all the children's needs um um interests we met. So for example um even though our topic this term um is food just from you know when the couple of children they say fire fighters, we are firefighters, you know I am gonna be firefighters, I am gonna dress up. That's what we led to the interests, needs from the toys that we got the firefighters to come and um that real life experience you know when I grow up I would be the firefighters so you know firefighters need to read, firefighters need to write you know just

perceiving that they interest to to support them.

6. What do you think about the effectiveness of curriculum implementations to create gender equity in the classroom?

I think it again it goes back to the previous question and um you know really knowing your children and and ensuring as a teacher as a practitioner that you try um and meet those children's individual needs um those gender needs. Sometimes, being very creative because sometimes financially you know the school budget the you know it is not there to support you know buying large scale resources. Um we did have aa aa when we um last year we bought lots of magazines for the children to support them with their um um readings. And we had lots of um Thomas and superheroes but this year we could not afford to do that, budget you know the budget did not allow to do that. Um so in other ways we tried to support them with their learning um but I think as practitioners as teachers you have to always very minded the gender um we have days, we have large paper on the floor, you know know that the boys they like you know large scales of writing and mark making so we try to have that out oo that was very much of the beginning of the year as well um knowing that you know the playdough we have always have playdough at table because the statistics showing that you know the boys they risk, their risks um much we can't so that just manipulation of their risks that that's why the playdough tables always out for them to strength their muscles to support them with the fine motor skills as well um to support them with mark making and their writings and their drawings um yeah it is always keeping in mind what they particularly need.

7. Is there anything else you would like to say?

um just this particular year we are um you know boy heavy we have a lot of boys in the in the class this year. And um they have formed particular groups um you know you notice you identify the Turkish boys they all stay together. Sometimes it is quite difficult if new friend

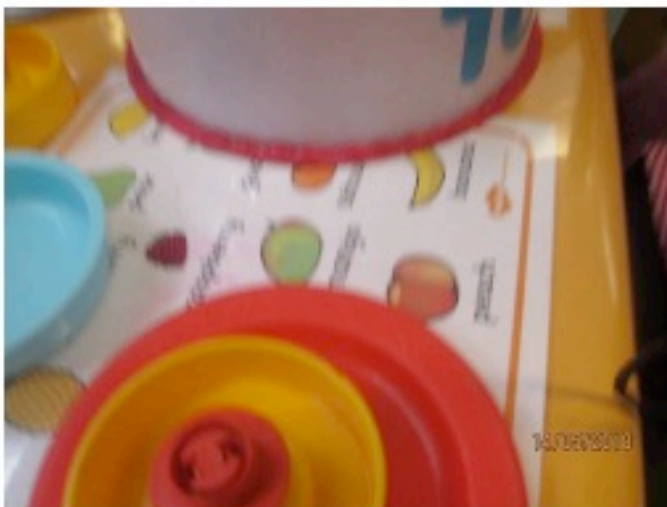
tries to join them um they do recently they have been played more with the other children. But at the beginning, it was um secure thing when they feel comfortable, happy and you know um be aa another member of the peers, spoke their home countries so they develop that relationships is not that they did not want to play with any of the other children I thought that because they found um the similarity with the other peer group, speaking in their home language and they have developed that confident however now because a lot of them um begin to speak English now, they beginning to engage more with the other children. Um and I feel for us you know we don't ever stop the children from speaking in their home language. I think it's really really important for them to feel secure for them to feel comfortable because once that they um secure in their home language you know syntax from that language transfers everything engage, they develop that that language. Um with the girls we have found that they look bit more um welcoming even though they got their friendship groups um if you know we say you know can this welcome and play, they welcome and they do, they do welcome them um more within the girls there is no um particular gender group apart from these couple of Polish children, Polish girls t. Um they started in January and they tend to play together but children started in September they do tend to play with a lot of the other girls not particular gender or not particular in their same um home languages as well. Yeah I think that's it.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 13. 'INTERVIEWING WITH T1 - THE EXAMPLE FROM ANALYSED NOTES'

Play	Teacher role	Girls/boys play	Gender	Image of child	Curriculum
T1 Play as activities choices Planned based on children's needs and interests Play to meet curriculum aims Play as learning opportunity (math, writing) Play based on children's personal experiences Play groups: Turkish boys together, not open to other children: sharing home language, feeling secure, comfortable, happy Polish girls: play together Seeing girls as more welcoming, friendship group	To support To scaffold To set up play To warn children 'we don't play like that' To communicate with parents Using curriculum to make a plan To meet individual child's needs and interests	Girls: home corner, princess dresses Boys: construction and small world; rough games, fighting games, superhero Both: imaginative role playing both using dressing-up area but choosing different costumes boys: superheroes, policeman, firefighter girls: princesses Extending play to wider spaces (from home corner to wider area)	Distinction to perceive gender (Ex. Using paper with design to encourage boys to draw and write) Range of materials; Dressing up Boys: bikes, scooters Songs, rhyme: popular culture Seeing boys and girls' needs and interests differently Boys: running games, space Using materials to support learning according to their interests based on gender (ex. Cars, trucks, bricks, belts...) Materials, toys, equipment to create gender equity	Individual needs Interests	As a guidance Adaptive How to deliver should fit/meet individual child's needs and interests Something to meet To meet gender needs Seeing boys under the risks Focusing boys' needs
role of play roles of curriculum perception of children's play in the classroom early years practitioners' roles	... understanding children's gender ... categorising children's play				

APPENDIX 14. 'PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY AISHA FOR THE PLACES SHE LIKES TO PLAY'



APPENDIX 15. 'PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY AISHA FOR THE PLACES SHE DOES NOT LIKE TO PLAY'



APPENDIX 16. 'AISHA AND SAID - MAP MAKING SESSION'

APPENDIX 17. 'AISHA AND SAID, PHOTOGRAPHING, CHILD-LED TOUR AND MAKING MAP- THE EXAMPLE FROM ANALYSED NOTES'

Having tour- Aisha and Said	Taking photos	Map making
1. Arch area A: "this room makes some stuff when you want to play and reach up (balloon)" Said copying Aisha Arch area: playing 2. Math area A: "you can count numbers, so when you like cu i like do numbers and perfectly ... i like to play. The the toy i like to play and when you like to working" A: hide and seek play S: "in aaa the balloon" Math room= playing: with toys, hide and seek working: numbers 3. Outside A. mentioned that 4. arch area 5. home corner A. calls that as a cooking place A: dress up, cooking, playing, dishes, salad, making books, Elsa costume S: dressing up Home corner= playing 6) library A "when you go in the library, you perfectly you can read books" 7) construction area A calls that as toy area Const area= legos, playing S: "dinosaur, dinosaur" showing the animal toy A: "I love the dinosaur" copying R	A: "i like to play umm i like to play with toys and toy cattle" <u>Spaces like to play - Aisha</u> 1. toys at the table, cake, plates - in home corner A: "toys" 2. Curtains in math room A: "i will just take curtain 3. Table in math room A: "i like to play here, i like to play with toys here" 4. Grass carpet - in arch area A: "i wanna like there um that grass" "because i like it" "i will just take it when i go down" -She crouches down to take that photo- Calls it as 'grass' not carpet 5. Carpet - in block area A: "because i like to play everywhere" 6. Bed-toy - in home corner 7. Dresses, costumes - in home corner <u>Spaces not like to play - Aisha</u> 8. Chairs-in the math area A: "because everyone playing noises and melting some ... when someone bad and all of the noises when you like to play" A: "um i don't like, i don't like here, chairs not chairs. i just take it" 9. Carpet- in math area	A: "i just saw the grass here" "yeah i took grass here and here a balloon" "this is from chair, math room" "i took picture of here, this is toy area" "that's a math room, this is from chair, math room" "yeah that's the math room and that's the math room too. And this is the math room curtains" S: "wao, this train that" "waoow" "That one mine" "i found this one, the car..train but the train chaaaa" "and the dinosaur rarairr" They are very aware of what they are doing. They remember their pictures and where they took them. Before choosing the photos for map making; Choosing criteria: like to play in this place A: "because i like this one (picture) and my play is here .. and some children play in here" (for construction area) G: this is from? A: construction area A: "oo yee this is from math room" G: do you like to play there? A: "i am not sure" Talking about personal experiences: A: "i was very small" (A) "tooth fairy" (A, S) Going hairdresser and having haircut (A, S)

Friends; A: Cara, Sophie, Anna; Inna, Emma S: Edward and George	<u>Spaces like to play - Said</u> 1. Playdough at the table- set up tables wants to copy A.-same picture-grass - copying wants to copy A. at math area 2. Plastic train toy – block corner S: "yeah the train one" Looking for big train R: "the big train" – making plan 3. Small ball – near to block corner S: "a ball" 4. Dinosaur toy – block corner S: "big dinosaur" 5. Toys on the floor – block corner Putting 3 toys side by side and take photo. From large perspective – planned 6. Train – block corner - planned 7. Two trains (big one) – block corner Put them side by side turn light on – planned <u>Spaces not like to play</u> .	S 1. Pic Construction area, toys on the floor "that play in a um in there" Playing; playing with friends space S 2. Pic Toy train "train goes um" Object S 3. Pic Toy train "playing" "that one goes in a" Pointing const. area Object=playing S 4. Pic Dinosaur toy "this dinosaur, rararara" Object With friend S 5 Pic Small ball Object Drawings Balloon S: "I wanna do balloon" A: "That is a man balloon" "I can reach it with my hand" "I am gonna do that far" (reaching) "that is my balloon"	A 1 Pic Bed-toy – in home corner "we are playing there I play with a dressing up um I playing with isa and Eli" and "this is a bed" playing, dressing up, with friends space A 2. Pic Carpet in the math room "I need to play, I am going to play in math room" Space A 3. Pic Chairs-in the math area "that is math room" Remind her what she said: dislike "I thought I thought about I did sth of the books" Space A 4. Pic Grass carpet in the arch area "yeah yeah that's arch area" Space A 5. pic toys at the table, cake, plates - in home corner Drawings Explanation for her drawing; "This one is just what I am doing this but I didn't take photo" "it's me but I didn't draw hair" "that is the hair all over it. I colour the hair" "this is Somali hair um it's dark black" Putting herself and reflecting her identity
expression of like expression of dislike how to use spaces neutral	naming a places personal experiences		

APPENDIX 18. 'THE SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONAL FIELDNOTES – THE EXAMPLE FROM ANALYSED NOTES'

Theme: Markers of femininity/masculinity

Code: *Having a role*

- **quasi teacher roles**

helping teacher to collect books (p.12) (A) -girl
 we need to be gentle. Everyone hides (p.13) (A)- reminding the rule to friends
 organizing environment (p.14) (A)
 'we need to share' remind the rules to friends (p.15) (K)
 'don't running or miss will send you outside' reminding the teacher warning to others (K) (p.42)
 'no more sword' (p.48) (boy)
 'I am choosing someone else. I am choosing whooo' ; 'what acting like a baby' (A.) (p.48)
 Saying what to say other girl (Al) (p.51)
 'look miss he is sitting out' (G) say that to teacher (p.54)
 'who is gonna counting wizard' copying teacher's words and acts at math area (girl) (p.58)
 Showing toy foods and saying their names, trying to teach to newcomer (p.58) (SL and a girl)
 Giving instruction to other children and trying to control them (p.65) (A)
 "lets sit everyone" "too noisy everyone"
 Girls helping staff to prepare lunch table (p.75) (E and girls, one boy)

being a 'mum' or 'baby'

- **caring role**

having a mother role – my baby... (p.13) (A)
 soft using, gentle voice (p.14) (A)
 caring with baby, responding her needs-chancing, washing (p.14) (A)

- **mother role:** (p.23) (E): having a bag, collecting toys around class, holding a doll (p.25) (E); (p.31) (J); (p.38) (E); (p.42) (E); (p.52): (p.63) (G and girls)
 mummy role: warning the baby, feeding, trying to put limits, rules, adopting disciplinary behaviours
 'no no just pick one' 'stop make a mess' 'baby come quick'
 Chancing diaper (p.31) home corner, (girl);
 Mummy reading a book, offering toy, setting rules, carrying a bag (p.34, 35) (G) (p.68) (G)
 Caring bag, collecting toy (E) (p. 41); (E and a girl) (p.56)

Assigning mother role (A.) (p.49)

Going to shop (p. 53) (girl)

'just for a little bit', put limits (p.59) (E)

Offering food (p.59); preparing and offering food (p.64) (girls and G)

"it's bed time go home now" (E) (p.62)-putting limits

"no baby no" "no no no I said no" (girl) (p.64); "stop" (G) (p.64) putting limits

Kissing, hugging, showing affection, touching the babies' heads (p.68; 69) (E)

Sending the baby to the bed (p.53) as a punishment

- **baby role:** naughty baby: throwing toys and food, running away, making mess (p.25) (p.64)
crying (p.31); (p.42); (p. 53); (p.59) (girl): (p.63) (girls)
refusing mummy's requests, throwing (p.34, 35, 60)
objection 'but mum' (p.49) (girl)
acting as a baby and making sound (girl) (p.51) (p.60)
'can I go out with my sister, mum' asking permission (p.59)
- **daddy role** (p.34) he is sending away 'he is at shop'

Code: Using toys/materials as a gendered way

- **Assigning gender and making distinction**

she-snowman (p.9)

Cutting hair (p.9)

making a skirt from playdough (p.9) skirt for Anna

physical app. – belly (p.9) (E)

the doll- she has cough (p.14) (A)

'real baby. Comes from belly' – show her knowledge (A) (p.15)

'I have a girl and a boy' to dolls 'he is sleeping...' 'my boy likes...' (p.39) (girl)

Assigning puppet as female "she has hair bang" (girl) (p.63)

- **Using toy differently**

Castle toy

Boys-put cars inside it (p.18)

Lego inside it (p.24) (boy) by singing spiderman song and saying they are gun

Putting a plane toy (p.24) (S)

Putting cars (p.27) (K and boys) block corner; cars and helicopters (p.68)

Putting small home toys inside (p.36) (SL and girl)

Small furniture toys (p.41) (2 girls)

Putting small wooden toys (boys) (p.56)

Trying to build/repeating the castle by using toy hammer (p.56) (boys)

Putting small animal toys (p.61) (girls): (p.68) (S)

Putting cars and motorcycles inside it (K and boys) (p.62)

Putting their structure toy made by mobile (K and boys) (p.63)

Lego: in mummy, baby play using them as food (p.25)

Lego: as gun (boys) (p.31); as swords (p.72)

- ***sign of femininity***

Rejection the toys/Color as a pollution

‘come on pinky’ ‘they are pink power rangers’ (p.19) (A)

‘She can do pink’ – ability of character

toy with pink peppa pig character on it, throwing away (p.17) (K)

for pink power range character ‘it is for girls’ complaining Riyadh access the toy (p.20) (A)

having conversation about pink, shiny, heart picture on the clothes, showing each other (P.21) (G)

Teacher preference of pink pencil questioned by E (p.22)

‘hey I got lipstick a pink lipstick’ and having a conv. About that (p.36) (girl)

Showing her hair pin and say ‘princess Anna, Elsa) (p.38) (girl)

Showing henna on the hand and having conv on that (p.43) (girls)

‘girls are wearing dresses’ (A) (p.50)

‘I have lipstick on my jacket. My friend will take it’ she mentioned she had lipstick in the bag she carrying-pretend play (girl) (p.56)

Showing their costumes each other ‘pink, this is pink one’ (E) (p.58)

Using pink paper as a tissue while setting up dinner table at home corner (p.58) (E and girl)

‘she likes pink’ for a friend

‘pink pink’ ‘more pink one’ demanding toys from a friend (p.59) (girl)

‘pink pink I want pink’ (p.60)

Assigning puppet as female “she has hair bang” (girl) (p.63)

Putting make up “you look like a princess” (girl) (p.73); (other girl) (p.74)

Asking about my nails and said “my dad say no” (girl) (p.75)

Sign of masculinity

‘we are building a house’ by using toy hammer (p.56) (boys) at block corner

‘I am a fire engineer’ entering into the play house with a long wooden beam and pretending to measure the walls (p.60) (boy) girls left

APPENDIX 19. 'POSITIONING AS A RESEARCHER '

Even though childhood and adulthood are constructed socially and culturally, children are 'other' to adults and adults are 'other' to children. Bucknall (2014) states the 'otherness' as 'lying in the inevitable power differentials between adult researchers and their young participants' (p. 81). For this reason, being an adult researcher in a children's world may present some problems, one of which is being physically larger than children. During the research, some of the children questioned my presence in the small spaces like a play house, and they asked me to leave by specifying my physical qualities: *'you are too big'*; *'you are too tall, go away'*. Also, some of the girls questioned my adult feminine appearance by sharing their related knowledge. On one occasion when I was wearing nail polish, one girl came up to me, pointed to my fingers and said *'I don't know how to do that. My dad says no'*. In another example, one girl asked me why I was wearing make-up and commented *'my mum only lets me have make-up when I am big'*.

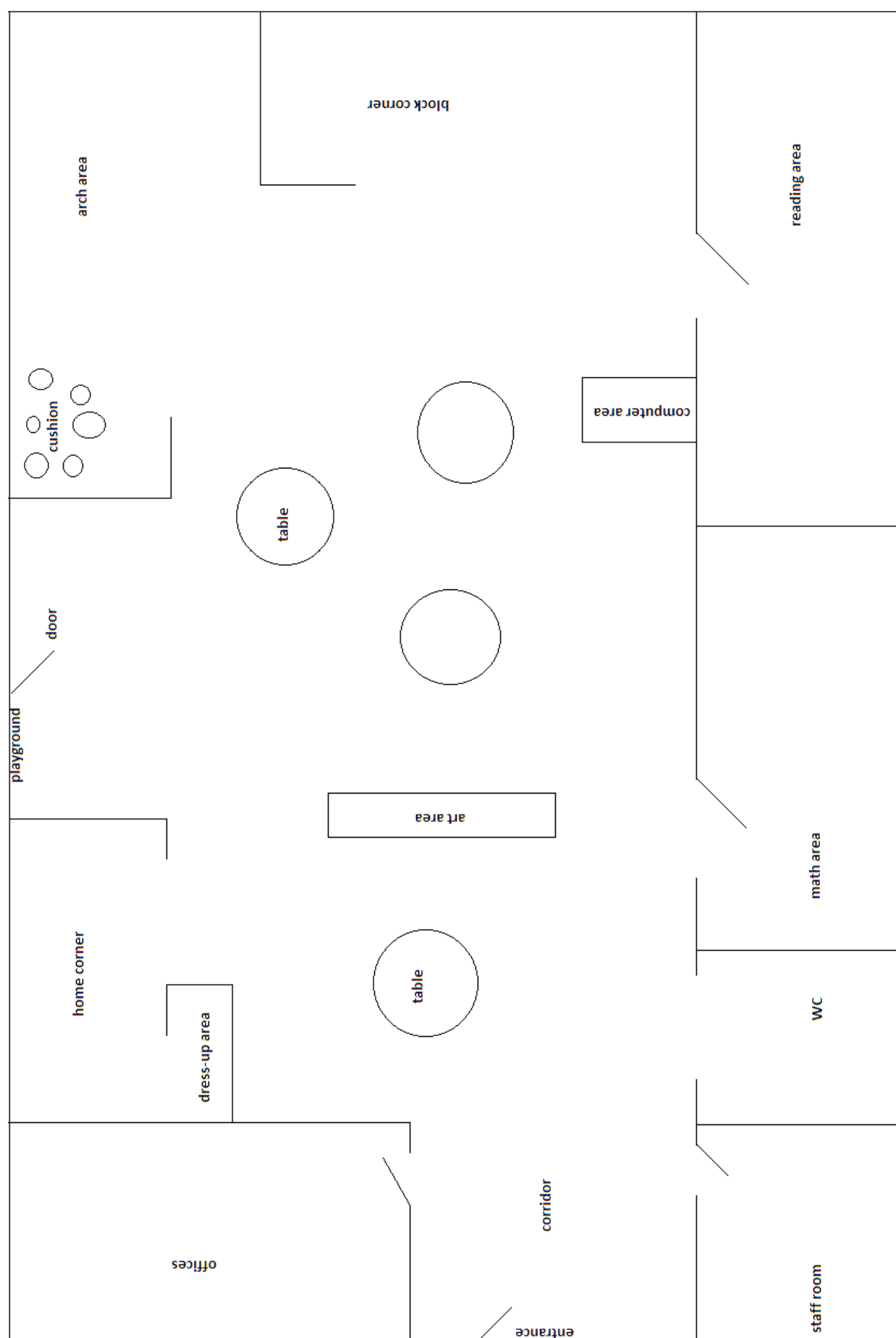
Children might experience my presence in the nursery as comforting, controlling, intrusive or confusing in different situations. For a long time, children saw me while I was sitting quietly and taking notes. When the children were used to my presence, they would sometimes address comments to me about their play and pointed to my notebook. That shows that they accepted my presence in the nursery and they were aware of what I was doing. Sometimes, I found the role of researcher challenging. Children frequently wanted to play or talk with me. I told them, I was not available while taking notes in the classroom, however in the playground, I was totally free to join them. Additionally, sometimes I tried to help with the classroom tasks, but I avoided taking on a disciplinary role. If children asked me to intervene in any conflicts or asked permission for something, I referred them to one of the practitioners. During the study, I tried to adopt a 'less adult role' which enabled me to spend considerable time with the children, establishing positive relationships and letting children correct the

researcher's actions (Bucknall, 2014). The children did not stop their 'private' play such as playing with swords and guns play in my presence. These types of play were not normally allowed in the nursery and the children did not play these games in the presence of other adults in the classroom. I believe that by adopting a less adult role privileged my position as a researcher.



APPENDIX 20. 'THE RESEARCH SETTING AND CONTEXT '

In the nursery, the overall space was large but the groups did not have separate rooms. During the morning and afternoon circle time activities, the children were generally, separated into two groups, and they used separate places to do activities and dance. If teachers decided to work in their own small groups, they used small rooms, construction and reading areas. Children's play appeared in most of the space except the entrance and hall. They were also encouraged to choose their own play-based activities both for indoors and outdoors. The main classroom area was dominated by tables with chairs around them which were used for daily activities, working with adults and art activities. Some of the areas were surrounded by soft cushions. One of the entrances to the nursery leads past the playground. The nursery had its own outdoor play area therefore the children did not meet with older children in the school. The following sketch shows the corners and play areas in the classroom.



APPENDIX 21. 'THE INFORMATION ABOUT SIX CASE CHILDREN'

Umut

Umut began attending the current nursery in January. In England, children usually start to the nursery in September. According to observations and interviews, Umut always prefers playing with children who speak Turkish. He does not interact with other children in the classroom. Also, he expresses the other Turkish boys as his friends. When Umut talks with other Turkish boys, he usually highlights his friendship such as telling '*my friends*'; '*we are all huge*'; '*my friend, help me*'. He states during the 'having a tour session' that sometimes children do not allow him to join their play. The possible reason might be that he is not fluent in English. His home language is Turkish, and his parents talk to him in Turkish language at home. However, he is really willing to respond to the teachers' comments and questions by expressing himself using simple phrases and short sentences such as '*me, me*'; '*yes I did*'. In the beginning, he approached with suspicion to my presence as an adult around him. He expressed his dislike by avoiding talking with me and staying away from me. After he figured out I also speak Turkish, he came to me and started communicating with me voluntarily.

Emma

Emma's first language is English, and she can communicate with adults and her friends easily. Even though one of the early years practitioners defines her as a '*tomboy*' in the interview, through observations, she is identified at usually playing with same-sex peers and showing gendered play patterns such as having a role as a mum or princess. Most of the days, she is observed adopting a role of mum and going shopping with the girls who have baby roles. This play turns to repetitive play theme for herself. She sometimes questions the researcher presence as an adult while playing in the playground's play-house by saying '*you are too big/tall*'.

Aisha

Aisha joins the breakfast club in the mornings that is why she arrives at the nursery a bit earlier than most of the other children. While other children spend time with their parents, she prefers to walk around and observe other children. During working with Aisha, she appears that she is willing to participate in the study. Also, she likes spending time with adults. Sometimes, as a researcher, I felt that she hesitates before answering and tries to give an answer which adults may expect. Through observations, the researcher gained the impression that Aisha sometimes adopts a 'quasi-teacher role'. She reminds the rules to other children by imitating teachers' intonation and behaviours. Aisha holds some rigid stereotypical ideas such as what girls should play with or what they should wear.

Said

Said is physically smaller and thinner than other children. He is observed that he has a quiet and calm personality and he mostly uses lower voice while speaking with adults and his peers. Said comes to the nursery with his father and his father stayed for a while to help him to write his name on the book. Through observations, the researcher realises that Said observes other children's activities and play for a long time without attempts at joining. Said does not seem to have strict rules or stereotypes about using the toys which mostly labelled for girls or boys by other children in the classroom. Some cases are identified that he tries to cross gender boundaries such as joining the girls' play; playing with pink power range character even girls in the play state '*it is for girls*', and he shows resistant by saying '*no, boys can play*'.

Khaind

Khaind spends his most time of days while playing at the construction area with the same male friends. His play theme is almost the same each day. He constructs complicated structures by Mobilo (building/construction toys, including geometric pieces, wheels and axles) and calls them a motorbike, racing car and so on. From beginning to end of observation sessions, his structures are changed by adding new parts or new qualities such as the ability to fly or swim. These complicated structures show his great fine motor skills. Additionally, Khaind is observed in many play situations that he is trying to lead other children by telling them what to do or asking them to copy his movements. It seems that other children are willing to follow his comments. It can be suggested that he is a popular child among boy groups.

Gemma

Gemma comes to the nursery earlier than other children to join the breakfast club. She does not have her parents' company in the mornings. That is why she spends her time interacting with set-up tables such puzzle, playdough and painting until the circle time. During the day, she interacts many times with these activities. Sometimes, she does not interact with her peers. Instead of that she sits down at the set-up table with an adult or sits near to children who are playing, but she reads books or plays with toy-computer. The interaction between Gemma and the researcher began with Gemma's intention. She is willing to speak with the researcher and includes the researcher in her play.

APPENDIX 22. ‘THE PICTURES FROM CLASSROOM SPACES’

Panoramic photograph from the middle of the classroom



Arch area

Construction area



Construction area

Computer area



Arch area

Set-up area (tables, chairs)

Other Spaces in the Classroom



Math area



Art corner



Construction area



Reading room



Dressing-up area



Home corner