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**CONTRIBUTION OF GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG
LEARNERS**

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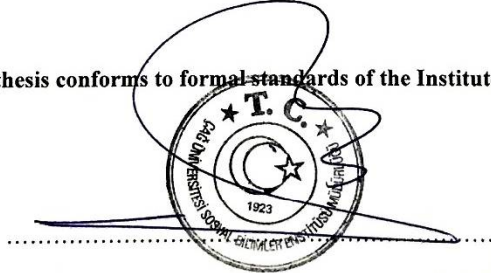
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ÖZET

ÇOCUKLARA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNDE OYUNLARIN KATKILARI

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İngilizcenin önemi günden güne artmaktadır. Gerekliliğinin farkına ne kadar çok varılırsa, etkili bir öğretme ve öğrenme ortamı hazırlamanın önemi de bir o kadar artar. Oyunların derslerde kullanımıyla dil öğrenme rahat bir ortamda keyifli ve etkili olabilir. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları, 10-12 yaş ortalamasında olan, 29 başlangıç seviye İngilizce bilgisine sahip 4. sınıf öğrencileridir. Bu çalışma çocuklara İngilizce kelime öğretiminde oyunların katkılarını bulmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Çalışma, 2015-2016 ikinci akademik eğitim öğretim döneminde, 4 hafta boyunca Van-Muradiye Fatih ilkokulunda yapılmıştır. Araştırmacı günlüğü ve yapılandırılmış görüşme veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, kelime oyunlarının İngilizce öğrenen çocuklara, kelime öğretiminde yararlı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oyunlar, İngilizce Dil Öğretimi, Kelime Öğretimi, Çocuklara Öğretim

ABSTRACT

CONTRIBUTION OF GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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It is an inevitable fact that English gains more importance day by day. The more its necessity is realized, the more importance is given to prepare an effective teaching and learning atmosphere. With the use of games in the lessons, learning a language can be enjoyable and effective in a relaxed environment. The purpose of this study was to find out the contribution of games in teaching vocabulary to young learners of English. The study was carried out for four weeks in the second term of 2015-2016 academic year at Muradiye Fatih Primary school in Van, Turkey. The participants of the present study were 29-beginner level 4th grade students between the ages of 10 and 12. Researcher diary and semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tools. The results of this study showed that games are beneficial in teaching vocabulary to young learners of English.

Key Words: Games, English Language Teaching, Teaching Vocabulary, Teaching Young Learners

ABBREVIATIONS

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

TEYL : Literature on teaching English to young learners



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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the research questions respectively. In the last part, significance of the study and the definitions of the terms are explained.

1.1. Background of the Study

It is an inevitable fact that English gains more importance day by day. The more its necessity is realized, the more attention is paid to prepare an effective teaching and learning atmosphere. Teaching a language can never be an easy task, and introducing it at early ages may be more challenging. In order not to put students into difficult situations to cope with and not to make them develop a negative attitude towards the language being learned, time and effort must be devoted for careful planning and detailed preparation regarding young learners' interest in fun elements. Language teaching techniques like games provide this interest to young learners and promote learning through pleasure. Moreover, they give the opportunities to the students of English in early ages to practice the vocabulary items, the verbal exchanges and also to fulfill certain frequently carried out functions, which they have learned.

Linse (2006) states in her article "Language ability of learners will be improved overall by vocabulary improvement" (p.2). Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in language learning. It is argued that, games play an important part of children's development and learning language (Anyuegbu et al., 2012, Gardner; cited in Al-Nafisah, 2012). Instructional games offer learners variety of benefits, which range from cognitive aspects of language learning to the co-operative group dynamics (Gardner cited in Al-Nafisah, 2012). Azar (2012) stated, "Vocabulary is one element that links the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing all together. In order to communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately" (p.259). Vocabulary is argued to be more important than grammar as the basic of language (Ghadessy, 1998 cited in Sripamong, 2004). The more vocabulary one knows or acquires, the more sentences

they could create; otherwise, language learning will not occur. So it is known that “word” is the most common element in sentences because a language is a collection of words. Sufficient English words can make learners efficiently communicate and fundamentally comprehend English articles and academic essays (Dickinson, 1987 cited in Sripramong, 2004).

It is possible to teach English to the people at all levels but its ways; techniques or approaches differ according to the proficiency level of the students. The teacher follows different ways of teaching English considering the students' ages. The reason is that the age, level, interests, needs, expectations and development of young learners are not the same with those of teenagers and adults. Young learners' most outstanding feature is their interest in fun. Games can help in this subconscious learning process for the child. Uberman (1998) states, “I have noticed how enthusiastic students are about practicing language by means of games. I believe games are not only fun but help students learn without a conscious analysis or understanding of the learning process while they acquire communicative competence as second language users” (p. 20).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The premise of this study is based on the idea that young learners get great enjoyment during games in the courses and those teachers should use fun elements while teaching language to them. Although most teachers are not aware of its educational value and necessity and do not use it very much in their classes, using games is one of the most effective ways in teaching and learning a foreign language, especially in teaching vocabulary (Sripramong, 2004; Al-Nafisah, 2012). Most adults find learning a foreign language quite difficult and full of tiresome, and suffer from this painful process. However, for a child, it does not have to be a conscious learning. It can be just a play, which requires no conscious effort. Games can help in this subconscious learning process for the child. Therefore, we may assume organizing the lessons in the form of games help addressing young learners' interests, abilities and intelligence.

1.3. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to find out the contribution of using games in teaching vocabulary to young learners. The following research question framed the present study to achieve its aim:

Do games contribute to young learners' learning English? If so, in what ways?

1.4. Operational Definitions

Game: Game is a physical or mental activity or contests that have rules and people do it for pleasure (Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary). Jung (2005) states that, “games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency and communicative skills” (p. 4). Similarly, Rihchard-Amato (1988) suggest, games can make students focus more in learning, because they do not feel that they are forced to learn. Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely.

Vocabulary: **Vocabulary** refers to the words used in a language (Azar, 2007). In general terms, Finch (2000) notes, it can be seen as an all words of a given language or an internal knowledge possessed by speakers of that language. It is also possible to state that “Vocabulary is the glue that holds stories, ideas, and content together and vocabulary facilitates comprehension” (p. 102).

Young learner: Cameron (2001) states young learners are those under 14 years old. However, Rixon (1999) states children between the ages of 5 to 12 years old are regarded as young learners.

Foreign Language: A foreign language is a language indigenous to another country. It is also a language not spoken in the native country of the person.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter starts with the nature of games and the reasons for using games in language teaching. Then it explores the types of games and the advantages and the disadvantages of using games in language teaching. The chapter continues with the suggestions for the teachers regarding the use games, the nature of young learners and teaching vocabulary and games. It concludes with the types of games that might be used in young learners' classes for vocabulary practice.

2.2. Nature of Games

In language classes, it is a difficult job to teach a new language to young learners. They are accustomed to using only their mother tongue taught by either their family or teachers until that time. On the other hand, they are not capable enough to think abstract concepts. At this point, teachers of these classes take a serious and difficult responsibility. They should make the lesson easy, enjoyable and productive for both themselves and the students. Therefore, they can use some teaching techniques in their courses. One of these techniques is the use of games. (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 1984) Ministry of National Education's English Language Curriculum for Primary Education Grades 4,5,6,7 and 8 (2006) further claims that games should be a fundamental part of primary school education because they are motivating, contextualizing, and natural activities that make learning meaningful.

The word 'games' is used in teaching process in a broad sense. All games used in language classrooms have a goal, they are governed by rules and they are meant to be fun. Most of them also contain an element of competition (Orlick, 2006 and Hadfield, 1990). Harmer (1991) states that "games are a vital part of a teacher's equipment, not only for language practice they provide, but also for the therapeutic effect they have. They can be used at any stage of a class to provide an amusing and challenging respite

from other classroom activity and are especially useful at the end of along day to send students away feeling cheerful about their English class" (p.101).

In his article, Celce-Murcia (1979) argues that in games, language use “takes precedence over language practice” (p. 54). It is impossible not to agree with him on this point because in this sense, games help bring the classroom closer to the real world, no matter how elaborate they may be. This not to say that language is not practiced in games. On the contrary, each game focuses on one or more aspects of English. Through games, learners practice and internalize vocabulary, grammar and language structures of the target language. Teachers may expect their students to be concerned not only with the object of the game but also with the correctness of their language. Young learners acquire language unconsciously, with their whole attention engaged by the activity, in much the same way as they acquired their mother tongue. Motivation is enhanced; too, by the play and the competition. Cameron (2001) argued that games could provide a nice, beneficial alternative that helps to maintain the motivation of the students in the classroom. According to Neyadi (2007) “Using games and activities to practice vocabulary enhances student’s ability to memorize words; encourages student interaction; and enhances students’ motivation” (p. 106). Jong (1981) indicated that students acquire a great deal of language by concentrating and listening intensively. Based on his research, Jong (1981) concedes:

The use of games moves in two directions. An emphasis on communication perhaps combined with moves towards group feelings of togetherness, belonging, etc., leads inevitably to further use of drama techniques. The other direction is indicated by the move towards individualizing the language learning experience. Group work with classes of managers, planners and, perhaps to a lesser extent, engineers and others are bound to take the form of simulations (p.5).

Games have an essential role in pupils’ interaction between the other people around them since games include communication in it. While playing, students learn language by using it for communication purposes. Games help to create a meaningful environment for language use as they encourage learners to interact each other and to communicate to complete their tasks (Sutheo, 2004). To sum up, games are not only a means of relief for the learner from the demands of language learning, but also have a

valuable role in themselves in promoting meaningful language practice in the classroom.

2.3. Reasons for Using Games in Language Teaching

As it has been mentioned above, using games as a teaching technique is very important in teaching English, especially in young learners' classes. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990) stated children have a short concentration span and the teachers must make the lessons more enjoyable to draw their attention to the lesson. Thus, this enjoyable teaching and learning atmosphere can be provided via games. As Jong (1981) states "Language teaching games seem to have been with us for a long time. They are an essential element in every EFL teacher's bag of tricks" (p. 3), almost all young learners' teacher should use games as a teaching technique.

In recent years, teachers have realized the importance of games and since then its use in English language teaching is increasing rapidly day by day (Yolageldili and Arıkan, 2011; Gülsoy, 2013 and Alpar, 2013). Antonaros and Couri (2003) express in their book that "games in the foreign language classroom encourage and develop socialization, cooperating with others, learning self-discipline, respecting rules, peer teaching and cooperative learning" (p. 6). While researching the reasons why games are used in classrooms, one can come across lots of reasons in related literature. One of the main factors is its giving fun for learners. McCallum (1980) pointed out some other reasons as stated in the following:

Students are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language when they are in the atmosphere of game play. In addition, games automatically stimulate student interest; a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques. Other reasons for including games in the language class are:

1. They focus student attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items.
2. They can function as reinforcement, review, and enrichment.
3. They involve equal participation from both slow and fast learners.
4. They can be adjusted to suit the individual ages and language levels of the students in the class.
5. They contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition, providing an outlet for the creative use of natural language in a non-stressful situation.

6. They can be used in any language teaching situation and with any skill area whether reading, writing, speaking or listening.
7. They provide immediate feedback for the teacher.
8. They ensure maximum student participation for a minimum of teacher preparation (p. ix).

2.4. Types of Games

There are many different types of games that can be used for young learners in language classroom. For example, Jacobs (n.d. cited in Klimova, 2014) makes a distinction between languages games by dividing them into competitive (learner tries to be the first to reach the goal) and cooperative games (learners try to reach the same goal together; they help each other). In addition, he suggests that competitive games can be modified to lessen the competitive element and to add a cooperative element. In addition to this, Hadfield (1998) states that games can be organized based on whether the game is competitive or cooperative. For Hadfield, games promote a sense of cooperation among young learners. Students usually work in a group or in pairs in cooperative games; thus, they have the opportunity to decrease their level of shyness. According to Bilbao (2000), some examples for these types of games include drawing, grouping things and putting things in order.

In addition to this, the competitive games are played in a competition atmosphere so we call them as competitive games. This kind of games may be played between teams, individuals, against other individuals or individual against the rest of the class. The main purpose of these games is to complete the task as soon as possible and get the award. Board games, definition games, password games and so forth can be some examples of competitive games (Plummer, 2007). Klauer (1998) mentions, “The object of this type of game is finishing or reaching the end before the other competitors, making more points, surviving elimination or avoiding penalties” (10th paragraph).

On the other hand, Hadfield's second classification has more categories. These games are as follows (Hadfield, 1998, as cited in Kaya, 2016, p. 10):

1. Information Gap Games - students must cooperate with each other to obtain missing information.
2. Guessing Games - such as 20 questions, or charades. The player must give some clues and the other students try to guess.

3. Search Games - such as fill in the blank or problem solving games.
4. Matching Games - like matching pictures to vocabulary words or connecting two halves of a sentence.
5. Matching-up Games – when competitor has a series of ideas, points of view and needs, and the group has come to an agreement through discussion.
6. Exchange Games- in which the students barter for information or cards
7. Collecting Games- where students collect as many cards or tokens as they can to complete the mission.
8. Combining Games- where the students combine their collective knowledge to form or do something like lining up according to age.
9. Arranging Games - such as a group of student each have a card with a letter on it and they have to arrange the cards and themselves to form a word (p. 8).

In addition to this, when we adapt any game to our classroom, we should take into account our students' level because the difficulty or easiness will cause them to be bored and lose interest or concentration. As Read (2007 cited in Kaya, 2016) proclaims that:

When trying to find a game for your classroom, there are certain things you need to take into account. First, the level of language needed to play. Second, whether your class will benefit from this particular game. Third, the materials needed to play the game and the space needed for it. Then when you select a game, there are some principles to implementing it in the classroom. The students need to know how the game works, there need to be clear instructions that are demonstrated so there is no confusion, the students need to know the language needed for the game, the teacher must be fair and firm in following the rules, and stop the game when students start to get bored with it. The teacher must monitor the game but also give the students their independence so that they are the ones playing the game of their own accord. The teacher is there as a referee or game host but the students are the ones that must do the tasks and participate in the game. (p.10)

In addition to these, McCallum (1980) categorizes games that are used for language learning in a different way. He states that games must be into seven kinds. One of them is vocabulary games, the second one is number games, the third one is structure games, the fourth one is spelling games, the fifth one is conversation games, the sixth one is writing games, and lastly role-play and dramatics. In conclusion, despite the

fact that there are some categories about games according to their different features, to make young learners use the language effectively is the main purpose for all kinds of games. The learners concentrate on not only the task but also the language while playing. As they use language, they can learn to use many vocabulary items. Furthermore, the teachers should stimulate their learning to increase the rate of success.

2.5. Advantages of Using Games in Language Teaching

Games play an important part in children's development and their language learning process (Anyuegbu et al., 2012; Gardner, cited in Al-Nafisah, 2012). Instructional games promote varieties of benefits for language learners. These benefits range from cognitive aspects of language learning to the co-operative group dynamics (Gardner, cited in Al-Nafisah, 2012). Learning language through games is useful, meaningful, worthwhile and effective that causes motivation, relaxation and fun to learners in class. The learners can learn languages fundamentally and easily through games (Anyuegbu et al, 2012; Alemi, 2010; Huyen & Nga, 2003; Kumar & Lightner, 2007; Obee, 2002; Simpson, 2011; Jitmuad, 2005). Moreover, positive feedbacks from instructors or learners can improve learning better by learners' participating within a group or class. These motivate them to the succeeded goal (Alemi, 2010; Kumar and Lightner, 2007). In addition, word games can reflect the learners themselves in their classroom and teachers can assess teaching process by themselves through word games as well (Alemi, 2010).

The most outstanding feature of young learners is their getting enjoyment while playing in the courses. As it is known, this enjoyment is provided with some activities, especially games. Children both get pleasure and learn through playing, without consciousness of the aim. When it is researched, one will meet so many advantages of games. As gathered from various resources, and quoted as the following g:

1. Games enrich the classroom and enhance motivation, providing an opportunity to use the target language in the classroom (Cameron, 2001).
2. It is easy to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation as Brown (1980, cited in Pazarbaşı, 2000) suggests, "Motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a

particular action” (p. 42). Furthermore, Ersöz (2000) states “Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting” (9th paragraph). I agree with the points that Brown and Ersöz mention as one of the advantages of games.

3. Games not only involve the students in the learning process, they also help the students to get a better sense of the language itself. Because games are fun, motivational, and widely enjoyed by students, this allows the students to grasp “the meaning of the language.... more vividly” Wright et al. (2006, p.2).
4. The advantages of games can change the direction of a class. Maintain the motivation of the students. Encourage the students to communicate to each other. Have the ability to improve the learner’s vocabulary (Cameron, 2001).
5. “They can be used in any language teaching situations and with all skill areas (reading, writing, speaking or listening)” (McCallum, 1980, p.9).
6. Games have an educational value, which goes beyond the foreign language lesson. They teach children about the nature of cooperation, since they cannot be played at all without it, and they encourage the development of reasoning processes since they require a great variety of strategies (Carrier, 1990, p.1).
7. They are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinions and feelings (Hansen, 1994, p.118).
8. In the easy, relaxed atmosphere, which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus, 1994, p.218).
9. Games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely (Richard and Amato, 1988).

In addition to these, McCallum (1980, p. ix) explains that there are many advantages of games such as the fact that:

1. Games focus students’ attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items.
2. They can function as reinforcement, review and enrichment.
3. They involve equal participation from both slow and fast learners.
4. Games can be adjusted to suit the individual age and language levels of the students.

5. They contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition, providing an outlet for the creative use of natural language in a non-stressful situation.
6. They can be used in any language teaching situations and with all skill areas (reading, writing, speaking or listening).
7. Games provide immediate feedback for the teacher.
8. Games ensure maximum student participation for a minimum of teacher preparation.

It is possible to add more advantages to those above. For all these reasons, the teachers should integrate games in their regular course syllabus as much as possible.

2.6. Disadvantages of Games

Throughout the process of this study, I have generally come across the advantages of games in language classes in every resource. Despite these people supporting games, some insist on the disadvantages of using games while teaching language, especially vocabulary (Zaino, 2013 and Ford, 2015).

The first and the most important disadvantage, according to them, is the students' using their mother tongue when playing games. As quoted by Pazarbaşı (2000), Khan asserts that “if children get involved and excited in playing games, they will use their first language and gain no benefit in English” (p.38-39).

The second disadvantage, from these people’s point of view, lies behind the view that games are generally used as time filling activities. As teachers have five or ten extra minutes at the end of the lesson, they make students play a game. Therefore, to mention any learning at this time is impossible. However, as Cross (1999) proclaims “Useful though these games are as time fillers, they are also effective teaching-learning instruments” (p. 153). Learning does not have to be conscious every time. Sometimes you learn unconsciously like students’ learning while playing.

Next, they point out game being not serious enough as the other disadvantage. They support that entertainment is dominant in games, as the children do not give any seriousness to learning. However, when children get pleasure, they take the situation serious. Hence, their view is not accurate enough.

Overall, while the advantages of games are in a great number, their disadvantages are so restricted. One can conclude from the discussions in related literature that the benefits of games are much more than their disadvantages. Then, they should be used in language classes.

2.7. Suggestions for the Teachers Regarding the Use Games

In the light of the discussion provided above, we might state that games are useful, enjoyable and essential tools for language classes, especially when teaching English to young learners. Language teachers need to use them as a classroom activity, but while using them, there are some points that they should not ignore.

In the first place, games should be more than something that teachers use to provide relief from the classroom routine, to get their students' attention, or to take up the extra minutes at the end of class. Games can teach, and there is no reason why they cannot be included as an integral part of the lesson. Games can involve all the basic language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and a number of skills are often involved in the same game (Lee, 1995). In the second place, there are many different types of games that help with different skills and can be manipulated to help the students. But for the game to be beneficial to the students, the teacher must consider some criteria such as the students' language proficiency level, age, the materials needed for the game, and the length of the game (Uberman, 1998). If very difficult games to be understood and played are chosen for young learners, the lesson becomes a place of boredom instead of pleasure or vice versa. Therefore, appropriateness between games and the learners is important. Next, the rules should be explained in an easy way to constitute a listening comprehension exercise in itself for young learners. Moreover, the teacher should not correct the students' language errors during a game as interruptions detract the students' interest in the game (Celce-Murcia, 1979). As McCallum (1980) states, "an alternative to immediate correction is to make note of errors and discuss them when the game is over", and he adds that "games can also be recorded on tape and then played back for the class for discussion and correction" (p. 156). In addition, Dilbaz (1998, p.20) offers a list of some ideas to teachers of young learners considering the characteristics of young learners as in the following:

- The students will learn more if they are in charge of what they learn and it is not all just given to them on a silver platter.
- It is important to remember that they need motivation, not discouragement.
- Make sure that they are challenged so that they are not bored but that they are able to complete or do the activity.
- Present the same words or material in multiple different ways so that all the students can really learn it. Do not assume they have learnt the words the first few times going through them.
- Let the students be social and provide activities in which they can be. Young learners need social interaction. Do not expect a silent class sitting behind desks.
- Your approach should be interesting, fun and stress-free to your students.
- Help them to memorize vocabulary but not only in list form.
- Young learners need variety so change activities every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Encourage them to be interested in their surroundings and learn to share and to cooperate.
- Make sure the students are involved as much as possible; don't let them be passive learners.
- Be sure to get their feedback on activities and their own progress. Do not assume your activities are interesting for them.
- Be sure that they understand the instructions. If you need to use L1 so that everything is clear. They will not understand everything in English especially at the beginning.
- Make your lessons so that there is variety, balance and everything is well paced.
- Relate the English lessons to other things they are learning so that they understand English is a way to communicate, not just another subject taught in a book.
- Tests are not the only way to evaluate student's progress. They can be stressful and with young learners, you want to avoid making class stressful.

In conclusion, the job of teaching a second/foreign language is a difficult task because the fundamental aim is not only to teach but also to give pleasure to the students while learning. Thus, the role of games in these classes is debatable but the

teachers should take the important points explained above into consideration; otherwise, effective teaching and learning cannot be provided.

2.8. The Nature of Young Learners

The term ‘young learners’ refers to children from the first year of formal schooling (five or six years old) to eleven or twelve years of age (Philips, 1993). However, it is not so much the children’s age that counts in the classroom as how mature they are. Young learners are enthusiastic to learn new things and have no inhibitions, which older learners sometimes bring to their schooling. They need physical movement and activity as much as stimulation for their thinking so that better learning will be provided. Some characteristics of young learners Pribilova (2006 cited in Köse, 2013) mentions in her study are as in the following:

They love to share their experiences, they love when people pay attention to them and their talking.

- They can think, argue, discuss and they are able to interact with both children and adults. They are able to concentrate for certain time.
- They are able to use language skills not even realizing them (p.5).

In addition, there are five characteristics of young learners that are stated by Brumfit (1991). One of them is that young learners are just starting school so the teachers have the task and opportunity to help mold their attitudes towards school and language learning. Second, the classes have the potential to be very diverse in terms of students because they have not been exposed to the conformity school and formal education encourage. Third, they are often enthusiastic and eager to learn. Lastly, their ideas and concepts can be closely linked to their education and five; they need to be physically active as well as mentally stimulated and the closer these activities can be the better.

Most of the young learners are at the age of playing so it is very difficult to keep their interest in the lesson for an extended period of time. The children of this age are not interested in subjects with that they are unfamiliar, so language should be taught through interesting texts and the techniques to be used should attract their attention and

be suitable to their ages. Teaching through games, rhymes, songs, dialogues or pictures are preferable methods for young learners.

As it is generally known, pupils love to play, and learn best when they are enjoying themselves but they also take themselves seriously and like to think that what they are doing is 'real' work (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 3). They are positive about learning. According to Rixon (1991), the teachers are assumed to be very careful when selecting vocabulary games because the young learners can achieve success based on the selection of the most appropriate game. It is important to praise them if they are to keep their enthusiasm and feel successful from the beginning. If we label children failures, then they believe us. In conclusion, young learners are often happy playing games in their language courses. They are engaged in cooperative works during these games. Cooperative and communicative works are essential for them to be prepared to the life. Hence, using games is an inevitable technique for young learners (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 1984).

2.9. Teaching Vocabulary and Games

Vocabulary acquisition is considered as crucial to language acquisition. There are numerous techniques concerned with vocabulary presentation; however, there is much disagreement as to the effectiveness of different approaches for presenting vocabulary items. At this point, Uberman (1998) states, "...I have noticed how enthusiastic students are about practicing language by means of games. I believe games are not only fun but help students learn without a conscious analysis or understanding of the learning process while they acquire communicative competence as second language users" (p. 20). Young children are quick to learn words, slower to learn structures. This may be because words have tangible, immediate meanings whereas structures are less obviously useful (Phillips, 1993). While they are learning structures by repeating over and over again, they learn new words easily. This learning can become easy when the meaning of the words is illustrated, for example by a picture, an action, or a real object or used in a game. As it is widely known, games are one of the effective vocabulary teaching techniques. The children should meet and use the word(s) in relevant contexts, in order to 'fix' them in their minds. This helps establish their relationship to other words (Mukoroli, 2011).

According to Dale et al. (1971), “An important objective of vocabulary instruction is to develop an interest in words. The student whose curiosity about words is aroused is likely to increase his vocabulary and to become more discriminating” (p. 302). This assertion in the book is, in my opinion, correct. The grade level is important in deciding the kinds of exercises the teacher will use. Some of the exercises require mature thinking; others can be done at a lower grade level. However, by using appropriate words the teacher can fit the techniques of the exercises to any desired grade level. In conclusion, using games is indispensable technique in teaching vocabulary to young learners.

2.10. Methods for Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

We know that vocabulary is one part of the language. There are some views that argue vocabulary is the most important area among the other parts of a language. Harmer (1991) is an example of the people who support this idea and he declares, “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and flesh” (cited in Pazarbaşı, 2000, p.12).

There are some strategies, methods and different kinds of techniques that create an effective atmosphere for vocabulary teaching and learning. Words are stored in memory like a network; and so integrative strategies have a positive effect on retention. If there is a well integration between the techniques and prior knowledge, the capability of memorization increases and recalling it again becomes easy. Related research has shown that every person has different learning styles and strategies and so there is an individual difference between students. For this reason, learners should be informed about the learning strategies, which can be visual, verbal, tactile, textual and kinesthetic so that they can improve their ability to remember words. The teachers should offer learners a number of different strategies to be chosen by them; thus, learners will get the opportunity to become more aware of their individual learning styles and become confident in their language learning process. After a long-term research and information gathering, Holden (1999, pp. 42-47) mentions 15 methods for vocabulary acquisition in his article:

1. Association/elaboration method means finding a relationship between new information and the information already known.
2. Finger method is accepted as the second method. In this method, you associate new words with your fingers; therefore, you will easily remember them. It is generally used in memorizing for things like numbers, lists, days of the week, months of the year, etc. Holden points out that it lasts for only a very short time.
3. In grouping method, you should separate new words into units or groups according to some features. It can be easy to remember, then.
4. Imagery method as the fourth one relates to imagination. While learning new words, imagine a scene or a picture having an association with the word. Then, when you remember the scene you have created, you will remember the word easily.
5. Holden explains keyword method that one creates sound or sight links between the new word that sounds similar in his/her own language.
6. Loci method is about the creation of an association between the new word and the place you know very well. Give the word as a name to the parts of place. Whenever you see them, you will remember the word.
7. You will make up a story using the new words in a context or setting in narrative chain method.
8. The other method is peg method. While learning new words, match them with certain type of words like days of the week, names of the friends etc. When you hear the word, you will remember the word you have match them.
9. According to Holden, the physical response method requires you to move your body or parts of your body in a certain way that illustrates the meaning of a word.
10. The tenth method is pictorial method. It resembles to the fourth method so you imagine a picture in your mind to remember the new word when you think the picture.
11. This method requires that you connect the words by the way they are spelled, matching the last letter of a word with the first letter of the following word so Holden names it as word chain method.

12. In semantic mapping method, you will arrange a group of words into a picture. There is a main idea or new word at the center or the top of the picture and then, you will think of words, which you associate with the central word.
13. You will visualize the new words with the help of pictures in visual method, according to Holden.
14. Spatial grouping method is related to writing words in various ways on paper to help you recall them.
15. Holden's last method is sound representation method. It is about the association of the sound of a new word with a word that you already know which starts with a similar sound.

Consequently, I strongly agree with Holden that teachers can use different techniques and methods while teaching vocabulary. Using only one technique may not be beneficial enough for the learners. Hence, the students get more benefits at the end of the language learning process.

2.11. Some Examples of Vocabulary Games

As stated in the sections above, games are one of the techniques used in vocabulary teaching. This section presents several types of games that can be used to teach and practice vocabulary to young learners.

Bingo

Teachers use the game named Bingo in order to teach and practice vocabulary. Bingo is a game that teachers can practice any area of a language such as its structure, pronunciation, etc. However, the game Bingo, firstly designed for the purpose of vocabulary practice. While playing Bingo, the teacher divides the class into groups. Each group has a Bingo card. There are some words, which the students have learnt so far written on these cards. During the game, the teacher shows some pictures one by one. Each picture describes a word. When the teacher shows the picture, if the group who has this word described by the picture on their Bingo card, they put a small piece of a paper on that word. If they do not have the word, the group members wait until the next picture. Whenever one of the groups finds all the words on their card, the group members say "Bingo" as a sign of finishing the game. After that, the teacher checks the

words. If the group members do well, the game is over and they are the winner of the game as they are the first group to find the words on the Bingo cards.

The game Bingo is very valuable in practicing vocabulary. Since the cards contain lots of words, the students search through their vocabulary memory to find the right vocabulary. As Shears (1974) declares, "The game is just like a repetition of all the vocabulary parts in the course book" (p. 36). As the students are not aware of this and game has fun, the learners like the Bingo game very much.

Hangman

Hangman is a quick and easy game. In this game, paper and pencil are the only material. Firstly, Write the alphabet out in the corner of the board and then select one person to be the executioner. Then another player in the classroom guesses the letter. If that letter is in the word then write the letter in everywhere it would appear, and cut off that letter in the alphabet. If the letter is not in the word then add a body part to the gallows. Head, body, left arm, right arm, left leg and right leg are the parts of body. The player continues guessing letters until find the correct word or all six-body parts are on the gallows. (Retrieved from <http://www.printactivities.com/Paper-Games/Rules-For-Hangman.shtml>).

Hangman is one of the favorite word games among children. Strickland (1951) emphasizes the importance of this game by saying, "when this game is played in language courses by the teacher, the learners get the opportunity to learn not only the letters but also new words" (p. 69).

Make a Story

It is a game in which the students work together to make a complete story. In this game, one student starts by saying one sentence. The other students must listen to what is said and add on to it. Each student adds only one sentence and in this way they listen and create a story together. While this is also a speaking game, it is really important that the students listen to what the others say so that the story flows and makes sense. While each student does say a sentence, most of the time they are listening to what their peers are saying. In this way, they get to listen to their peers speak as well as their teacher and the audio recordings from the book. The more students get to listen to different accents and people speaking, the better they will become. (Retrieved from <http://www.oaktraining.com/traininggames/listeninggame.html>)

Shouting Directions

Shouting direction is a game where the students pair up and go across the classroom so they will have to speak up in order for their partners can hear. They must speak loudly so that their partners can hear them over the distance and the other students speaking. This helps with the students being shy about speaking the language because they will have to speak up and over everyone speaking at the same time the students are not so concerned with pronunciation and correct phrasing but more concerned with being heard. This is also a change from their teachers asking them to speak up because their fellow students will be the ones asking. The students can say anything from directions that their partner has to follow, to prove they heard, to words or sentences. This game can be fashioned so that it is a vocabulary review game, or anything else you wish to do. (Retrieved from <http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/games/speaking-games-false-beginners/>)

Taboo: Taboo is a game that requires the students to describe a specific word without using it or a list of related words. The other students have to guess which word is being described. This not only helps with speaking but also with vocabulary, association and sentence structure. This game requires that the students have a firm and concrete knowledge of the words they are describing. It can be made more difficult for more advanced students or easier for lower level classes (Retrieved from <http://www.tefllogue.com/in-the-classroom/tefl-word-game-courtesy-of-hasbro.html>).

Word Chains: To play this game, learners must know many words because the teacher write a “starter” word on the board and they are asked to add a word to either end. For example, if he writes the word kiss, the students need to write a word beginning with “s” like “stop” to the end of the starter word. It is an easy and an enjoyable game to be used in classrooms. Moreover, it is beneficial when the starter word is written from the text the students have already read. They are also asked to add words from the same text so that they can internalize the vocabulary items related to the text. (Retrieved from <http://www.wordchains.com/>).

Blockbuster: It is a game for word review. It is played by having a grid drawn on the board with enough compartments to fit the full alphabet in the grid. Then the class is divided into two teams, and each team claims a colour. Then one student chooses a letter and the teacher, from a previously prepared list, describes a word that starts with that letter. The students must guess which word the teacher is describing.

The first team to guess the correct word wins the letter and fills in the spot with their colour. Then the team that won chooses the next letter, either horizontal or vertical from the first letter won. One team must go vertically while the other team goes horizontally. The first team to fill in all the spots in a line, either top to bottom or left to right, wins. This game is great for vocabulary review and word association. It provides a fun and competitive way for the students to listen to descriptions and remember words. The list of words the teacher draws can be made in many different ways. It can be compiled from words in the previous chapter, year, book, unit, or from words that the students tell to the teacher. They can also be words that they have come across during class that are not from the book or that are difficult. This is a great game to help the students remember words as they are presented with a fun a creative context to remember them. It also personalizes the words a bit more because they have to guess them correctly so that their team can colour more places and win. (Retrieved from <http://www.eflclub.com/elvin/publications/highmotivat.html>)

Are You Hungry? Try This: Categorization is the fundamental purpose in this type of games. The teacher informs the category like animals, fruits and so forth to the children. They are asked to find the word from the formula that will be written on the board by the teacher. For instance, a + met=? is related to the word “meat.” As in this example, the students add each letter to the word next to it and they rearrange the letters to find the word. Thus, the students have an opportunity to classify the words according to their category.

Look Back: Photocopies of animal cards (an animal picture) are given to each student. The name of an animal is stuck on the back of each child. The children wander around the classroom trying to find out which animal they are by asking the question, “Am I a...?” After finding out which animal they are, they make themselves available to be asked questions by the students who have yet to discover their animal identity.

The Treasure Hunt Game: It is a game in which the students have to hunt or look for a predetermined treasure. This game can be verbally played with written clues, listening clues or with picture clues. It can be as long or short as you want and span over however much space you want. Each clue will lead to another destination until the last clue leads the students to the final treasure. The first child or team to reach the treasure wins. This game can also be adapted for inside the classroom by hiding any small object, like a pencil or eraser, and having one student go outside the classroom while it

is being hidden. They come back in and have the rest of the students direct them to the hidden object either by giving them verbal directions or by saying 'hot' and 'cold' until the student finds the object. Both of these games are a good way to get the students up and moving. It can also help for teaching directions by having the students physically follow them in order to find the prize. This game can also be adapted to practice prepositions (Retrieved from: <http://www.experiential-learning-games.com/successful-examples.html>)

School Photo: The class is divided in half. The year of two photos are written that are about 15 years before the year in which you are actually doing the activity. School Photo A is copied and then given to the one half of the class and School Photo B is copied and then given to the other half. The students are divided into groups A and B. School photo A is given to the As and school photo B to the Bs. The object of the game is to find out what everyone's job is. To do this, they will have to ask each other question. For example 'What does John do now?' When their partner answers, "He's a doctor," they are assumed to write it on the photo. According to the photo, they guess the job.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter of the study gives detailed information about the research and how it was conducted. Firstly, the research design is introduced. Secondly, the participants of the study are described. Then, the data collection tools and the implementation procedures are explained in detail. Finally, the data analysis procedure is presented.

3.2. Research Design

The aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of games in teaching vocabulary to young learners in English lessons. Qualitative research methods were used to find an answer to the research question of the study. As Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) state qualitative research covers a wide range of techniques and philosophies. Qualitative research is an approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods and life histories or biographies. One of main distinctive features of qualitative research is that the approach allows you to identify issues from the perspective of your study participants, and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behavior, events or objects. Among the variety of qualitative approaches, we used a teacher diary (see 3.4.1.) and semi-structured interviews (see 3.4.2.) to collect the data of the study.

3.3. Participants

This study was conducted at a state primary school in Van, Turkey in 2015/2016 academic year. The participants of the study were 4th grade students. When choosing the participants of the study convenience sampling strategy was used. Marshall (1996) stated, "Convenience sample is the least rigorous technique involving the selection of the most accessible subjects. It is the least costly to the researcher, in terms of time,

effort and money..." (p. 523). The participants' age ranges were 10 to 12. There were 29 students in this class. Thirteen of these students were girls and sixteen were boys. Two of the students in the class had learning disabilities. The students were from the same social status. Therefore, they had almost the same background, by means of families, socio-cultural and economic status. The fourth grade students at state schools take four hours of English classes per week. Their language proficiency level is beginner. The book that is used in the fourth grade is *Sunshine* written by Arda and Onay (2015). The level of book is beginner. According to the official curriculum for English lessons, fourth grade students take two written examinations and two performance projects for each term.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

Two different types of qualitative data collection instruments were used to find an answer to the research question of this study. The first data collection instrument was a teacher diary and the second data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews conducted with the students after each lesson. The following sections present detailed information about the data collection instruments of the study.

3.4.1. Teacher Diary

Teacher diary is one way of collecting data that is used in qualitative studies. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), "there are two purposes for keeping a teaching journal. The first is to record ideas and events so as to reflect on them later. This supports the author's memory and can inspire new ideas for use in future lessons. The second purpose is that the process of writing itself helps trigger insights about teaching. Writing in this sense serves as a discovery process" (as cited by Kourelis, 2007, p.45). Following this line of thinking, in the present study, the researcher noted in the teacher diary his observations about the students' level of participation in the activities and his perceptions of the students' reactions towards the games and his reflections on the benefits of using the vocabulary games after each lesson.

3.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are also used in qualitative studies. “Interviews are discussions, usually one-on-one between an interviewer and an individual, meant to gather information on a specific set of topics. Interviews can be conducted in person or over the phone. Interviews differ from surveys by the level of structure placed on the interaction” (Harrell and Bradley, 2009, p.6). Harrell and Bradley (2009) pointed out that:

In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered. The interviewer has some discretion about the order in which questions are asked, but the questions are standardized, and probes may be provided to ensure that the researcher covers the correct material. This kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a subject and to understand thoroughly the answers provided (p.27).

In the present study, we interviewed five students after each lesson to find out their feelings, attitudes, and ideas about the use of game activities and their perceived benefits regarding learning vocabulary through games. The following four open ended questions guided the semi-structured interviews:

1. Did you like the activity you just did?
2. What did you like most about the activity? Why?
3. What did you like least about the activity? Why?
4. What do you think about the benefits of activities?

3.5. Implementation Procedures

As a first step, the administration of the school was informed that the researcher would carry out a study with the fourth grade students in their English lessons. As a next step, the fourth grade students were informed about the content of the study. They were also informed that the study would be conducted in four weeks. Then, the researcher began using games in teaching vocabulary for four weeks. The data

collection procedure used in this study is presented and explained in detail as in the following.

Week 1: In the first lesson of the first week, I tried to elicit background information about my students, because I had to learn both their English language proficiency, and their cultural background. I have learnt that, the students were eager to learn new things, and approximately all of them liked learning a new language and aware of the importance of learning English. Generally, their English language proficiency was low. Then, I explained how I would conduct English lessons and my expectations from them. They were very excited about playing games in English and learning new things.

The theme of the unit in the course book was *Jobs*. The lesson objectives of the week as dictated by the course syllabus were to present and to do practice activities with the vocabulary items *doctor, teacher, plumber, tailor, taxi driver, fireman, policeman, farmer* and *babysitter*. I started the lesson with a warm-up activity. During the warm-up stage of the lesson, I used flashcards and asked the students some questions about jobs, which they were already familiar with. Flashcards are the most important tools that are commonly used to teach new English words. Firstly, I showed the pictures and then they tried to find what they referred to in their native language. The flashcards used at this stage were very colorful and attractive. They caught the students' attention. Then, I showed both the pictures and the letters on the cards and then I told them the pronunciation of those jobs. They repeated after me. At the end, they were able to say the correct job and its pronunciation on seeing the pictures that were shown to them. Games are a great way to have everyone do the same thing together and have fun easily. Reflecting on related literature, I decided to use a game for the practice stage of the vocabulary work named as *Guess The Word* with mimics. I select this game thinking that it would be easy to play for all the students and so everyone would voluntarily join it. As a first step, I divided the class into two groups. There were ten flash cards; it meant that there were ten different jobs to be practiced. These vocabulary items related to *Jobs* included *doctor, teacher, plumber, tailor, taxi driver, fireman, policeman, farmer* and *babysitter*. Each group chose five flash cards randomly, and then, one of the students tried to explain the job in that flash card without using words but his/her mimics in each group, the other students in that group tried to find the job. Each student in the group tried to find the correct job one by one. At the end of this game, the group,

which guessed the jobs correctly the most, became the winner of the game. As a follow-up activity, we discussed with the students what they wanted to be in the future.

Week 2: The theme of the unit in the course book was *Body Parts*. The lesson objectives of the week as dictated by the course syllabus were to present and to do practice activities with the vocabulary items *hair, eye, forehead, nose, tooth, mouth, arm, finger, hand, stomach, leg* and *foot*. I started the lesson with a warm-up activity. During the warm-up stage of the lesson, I hanged a big poster on the wall revealing parts of body. Then I had the students to repeat the vocabulary items that related to the body parts several times. I used flashcards and asked the students some questions about body parts. Then I showed both the pictures and the names of body parts and then I told them to listen to the pronunciation of those body parts. Next, they repeated the pronunciation of those vocabulary items after me. At the end, the students were asked to say the correct vocabulary related to body parts on seeing the pictures that were shown to them.

Reflecting on related literature, I decided to use *Word Find* and *Touch* games at the practice stage of the lesson. I chose this game thinking that each student would voluntarily participate in it. As a first step, I divided the class into six groups. Each group was given a paper of *Word Find* game. Each paper of *Word Find* included twelve vocabulary items related to body parts. These were *hair, eye, forehead, nose, tooth, mouth, arm, finger, hand, stomach, leg* and *foot*. Firstly, the students located a word in the grid, and then they drag from the first letter in the word to the last letter and then released. The letters were outlined. Then, they matched the word in the list. Each group had eight minutes to complete this activity. Then, I checked all the groups' paper to identify the winner of the game. At the end of this game, the group, which indicated the correct body parts the most, became the winner of the game. As a follow-up activity, the students were guided to play *Touch* game. In turns, two students came to the board. While one student touched one of the body parts of his/her friend, the other student tried to say which body parts his/her friend touched.

Week 3: The theme of the unit in the course book was *Farm Animals*. The lesson objective of third week as dictated by the course syllabus was to help students to learn the names of animals such as *goat, sheep, horse, goose, cat, elephant, dog, duck, giraffe, rabbit, chicken, rooster, turkey, pigeon, snake, fish, parrot* and *donkey*. The second objective was to help students to say what those animals *can do*. I started the

lesson with a warm-up activity. During the warm-up stage of the lesson, I asked some questions about what certain animals could do and then we talked about the most dangerous animals and the prettiest ones. I showed the flashcards of the animals, which I had prepared in advance, one by one and the students repeated the names of the animals after me. Then, I closed the name of the animals, and showed only the flashcards; the students tried to say the names of the animals with correct pronunciation. In some cases, I had to do a repetition activity for some of the vocabulary items, which the students found difficult to pronounce. At the end, the students were able to tell the names of the animals and their pronunciation correctly on seeing the pictures that were shown to them. Reflecting on related literature, I decided to use *Scrambled Letters* game at the practice stage of the vocabulary work. I chose this game thinking that it would be easy for all the students to understand what to do and voluntarily participate in it. Before playing the game, I divided the classroom into five groups. I wrote up the words with their letters shuffled on the board. When I said 'go', the groups tried to untangle the words quickly. The first group, to do so with the correct pronunciation, won the game. (Retrieved and adapted from, <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Koprowski-RecyclingVocabulary.html>). When the game was over, we talked about whether the students had any farm animals or not and who wanted to have a farm animal as a follow-up activity.

Week 4: The theme of the unit in the course book was *Fruits*. The lesson objectives of the week as dictated by the course syllabus were to help the students to identify the names of the commonly known fruits, to state the names of the fruits, which grow on a tree, on a vine, or in the ground. The vocabulary items to be presented and practiced were *apple, watermelon, banana, grapes, lemon, orange, pear, peach, strawberry, cherry, apricot, pineapple, kiwi, grapefruit, melon, and blackberry*. I started the lesson with a warm-up activity. During the warm-up stage of the lesson, I used flashcards and asked the students some questions about fruits, which they were already familiar with then the students tried to describe each fruit by its physical attributes, lastly as a warm-up activity we talked about the classification of fruits. I showed the flashcards of the fruits to the students and had them to listen to the pronunciation of those fruits. They repeated after me. At the end, they could identify the names of the correct fruits and their pronunciation on seeing the pictures that they were shown. Considering related literature, I decided to use two games for the practice stage of the

vocabulary work. These were named as *Bingo* (Retrieved and adapted from: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Koprowski-RecyclingVocabulary.html>) and *Guess My Word*. I chose these two games thinking that they would be easy for all the students to understand and to take part in them voluntarily. The first game was *Bingo*. Before the first game, I divided the class into five groups and I wrote up sixteen words on the board. Each group chose any four of the vocabulary items from the board and wrote them down. I then selected one of the vocabulary items randomly from the bag and offered a brief definition of the item and described the physical attributes of the fruit but I did not say the word itself. If a group thought they had the word I described, they ticked it. When a group ticked all of their words, they shouted BINGO! The first group to shout BINGO won the round. The second game was *Guess My Word*. First, I divided the class into four groups. I assigned four fruits to each group and I gave each group three clues to try to guess which vocabulary item I described from the list. If the group guessed the word correctly, they got a point. At the end of the game, the group, which got more points than the other groups, was the winner of the game.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected both from the teacher diary and the student interviews were subjected to descriptive content analysis. Descriptive content analysis is defined by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) as a method that can be used inductively or deductively with either quantitative or qualitative data. As Downe-Wamboldt (1992) states, qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

CHAPTER IV

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the contributions of using games in teaching vocabulary to young learners in English lessons. This chapter presents the findings of the study that were gathered through a teacher diary and semi-structured interviews conducted with the students after each lesson.

4.2. Findings

This section presents the findings of study that were gathered through a teacher diary (see section 3.4.1.) and semi-structured interviews (section 3.4.2.) conducted with the students after each lesson on weekly basis.

4.2.1. Findings from the first week

The first objective of the first week was to help the students to learn the meanings, correct pronunciation and spelling of new nouns about *Jobs* and the second objective was to help them to use those nouns in meaningful sentences. In the first week, the *Flashcard* and *Guess The Words* games with mimics were used to achieve the objectives of the week. On analyzing my observations and reflections recorded in my diary, I found out that most of the students perceive learning English through game activities interesting and motivating. Reflecting on my observations, I realized that for most of the students learning vocabulary through games becomes an enjoyable task, as they were bored of trying to learn English through traditional language learning materials. This finding is also supported with the findings gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with the students. During the semi-structured interviews, some students stated:

Student C: "It was really interesting for me. I loved it very much. I wish all of my lesson would be as our English lesson, because I felt relaxed while playing vocabulary games."

Student B: "I really liked them. I had fun. Such kinds of vocabulary games make me relaxed."

Student F: "I think everybody liked it, because playing games were very exciting."

Hence, it becomes clear that most of the students tried to use the newly introduced vocabulary items during the lesson as their attention was on playing the game rather than trying to learn new vocabulary items. Regarding their level of classroom participation, I observed that they were highly motivated during the completion of the games. Although most of the students were eager to play the game, quite a few of them did not. In an attempt to understand those students' resistance to playing games, I reanalyzed both my observations recorded in my diary and the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews. As a result, I found out three interrelated reasons as to why those students' were not interested in participating the game activity. Firstly, for some of the students the new words were a bit hard to understand and so it was difficult for them to participate in the activity. Secondly, some of those students were shy and some of them thought playing games was a boring activity and so they did not want to play games in English lessons. In general, there were not any serious problems in any part of the lesson, but I realized that as it was the first week, the new vocabulary items practiced was challenging for some of the students. For this reason, I may conclude that we - the teachers- need to be more careful regarding the theme and the language required to play the game before determining the types of games to be used.

4.2.2. Findings from the second week

The first objective of the second week was to help the students to learn and understand *Body Parts* and the second was to help them use related vocabulary items in meaningful situations. I chose the *Word Find* game to achieve these objectives. Drawing on my reflections cited in my diary for the second week, it became clear that

almost all of the students employed a positive attitude towards the use of game. The students' level of participation in the activity was very high. The responses given to the interview questions revealed the reasons behind active student participation in the activities:

Student D: "I want these games to be used in our English classes because I learnt lots of new vocabulary. Playing game was very funny. There was a calming atmosphere in our classroom. Everybody was listening to our English teacher. I wish other teachers would also use games in their lessons."

Student T: "Nobody made noise in the classroom anymore. And.... I am very curious about the new games that we will play next week. In addition to this, last week, we were not afraid of making mistakes."

Student Ş: "These vocabulary games not only bring fun to our class, but they also motivate my friends and me. We easily keep the new vocabularies in our mind."

As seen in the above quotations, while one student stated the value of the positive learning environment created through the use of games in the lessons, the other mentioned that this type of atmosphere helped them to practice the newly learned vocabulary items without being afraid of making mistakes. They also mentioned that the use of the flashcards and the game was very effective to remember and revise the newly presented vocabulary. Moreover, they expressed that the visual materials helped them to remember the meanings of the new words and keep them in mind easily. The following quotations gathered from the student interviews support the finding:

Student A: "According to me, games affect my learning positively. By the help of playing games, I easily learn the new words."

Student C: "Games help us to memorize new words. And I think these types of games can be useful to improve my vocabulary."

Student Z: "In my opinion, it was wonderful! Vocabulary games helped us both understand the meanings of new words and memorize them quickly. Vocabulary games useful and effective."

Based on the findings gathered from the teacher diary, I may state that I achieved the lesson objectives. I can conclude that the effectiveness of using the *Word Find* game was encouraging in terms of increasing student motivation, promoting social skills i.e. practicing team work and cooperation, and most importantly the students' comprehension of the meanings of the newly presented vocabulary items. In addition, I may state that using visual materials during the presentation and the practice stage of a lesson is beneficial in drawing the students' attention to the lesson. I also realized that some students might need time to get used to learning English through student-centered activities. For example, one of the students, who could not come to school in the first week, was very sorry for not being in that lesson as his friends told him that the lesson was very enjoyable and that they had great fun and learnt many new things. The following student quotation seem to confirm this finding:

Student A: "I was so sorry for not being in last lesson. However, I am so happy and so excited to take part in new lesson. It is so funny, and I learnt lot of new words, I like English lesson very much."

4.2.3. Findings from the third week

The theme of the third week was *Farm Animals*. Accordingly, the first objective was to help the students to learn the names of animals such as *goat, sheep, horse, goose, cat, elephant, dog, duck, giraffe, rabbit, chicken, rooster, turkey, pigeon, snake, fish, parrot and donkey*. The second objective was to help the students to say what those animals *can do*. I used *Scrambled Letters* game at the practice stage of the vocabulary work.

On analyzing my observations recorded in my diary regarding the lesson objectives, it became clear that almost all of the students' level of participation in the *Scrambled Letters* game was high and they seemed to enjoy practicing the new words through the game. The findings gathered through the interviews revealed the reasons behind the students' active involvement in the game activity. First of all, they stated that with the help of the visual materials and the game activity, the lesson was not boring, but enjoyable and motivating. Because using different materials apart from the book

made the students focus on the lesson without specific effort. The following quotations taken from the students' interview support the above finding:

Student Z: "These vocabulary games bring fun to our class; I was never bored in the English lesson. I easily memorize many new words."

Student N: "We don't have to memorize new words. It is boring and difficult to memorize unknown words in this way. But, it is really easy for me to memorize them when we play games."

In addition, the use of game helped to establish a positive attitude towards English lessons as indicated in the following quotation taken from the students' interview:

Student A: "I look forward to new English lesson. Both we play game and we learn lots of new words. It is very funny. I prefer enjoyable activities instead of the everyday boring activities."

Moreover, it was observed that the game activity encouraged a feeling of cooperation among the students. That is, some students tried to help the others in order to win the game. The following quotation seem to confirm this finding:

Student C: "We are very happy today, because our group win the game. We struggled too much for wining game all together. We helped to each other."

Furthermore, it could be concluded that when the language to be learned is related to real life and the materials used for presentation and practice purposes are authentic enough, their effect in language use both in and out of classroom is the highest. Regarding these findings, two students stated the following during the interviews:

Student M: "Games encourage us to speak in English in the classroom, because we learnt the words that are related to our life. I can practice the words in the vocabulary games".

Student B: "I played scrambled letters game last night with my father. He liked it very much. I have learnt many new words by the help of these games."

4.2.4. Findings from the fourth week

The objectives of the fourth week were to help the students to learn vocabulary related to *Fruits* and use them in meaningful sentences. In order to accomplish the objectives of the week, the *Bingo* game was used during the lesson. When the diary entries related to the fourth week were analyzed, we realized that integrating the *Bingo* game into the lesson increased student motivation in learning and using English as they realized they could easily remember the words and their meanings and use them in their speech. This finding is also supported with the findings gathered from the students' interviews. For example one student stated:

Student K: "I am very happy! Because I was able to keep in mind all new words. Games helped me to learn new words and phrases in a short time. I do not forget these words. I can easily use new words."

The analysis of the interview data also showed that the students appreciated practicing newly presented vocabulary items through games as they think involvement in games help retention of the meanings of the new words easily as compared to memorizing list of vocabulary items. The following quotation taken from a student interview support the above findings:

Student B: "I could not memorize new words. It is too hard to memorize unknown words and it took hours. However, I easily learnt many new words in a short time by the help of game anymore."

It was also observed that supporting lessons with visual materials and involving the students in teamwork is very important for their learning. These kinds of games and the materials can be used in English lessons to enhance not only the students' knowledge of vocabulary but their social skills as well. Furthermore, we realized that those materials and the game activities help the students' pronunciation. That is, the

students don't experience much difficulty in pronouncing the new words. They feel happy when they pronounce the words correctly. In the present study, only a very few of the students had difficulty in the pronouncing some of the new words. This finding is also supported with the findings gathered from the student interviews:

Student A: "I can practice the words in the games several times, so I could pronounce these words easily."

Student C: "My teacher liked my pronunciation, because I was able to pronounce new words correctly anymore."

Student F: "I was not able to say some words, for example I could not say the GIRAFFE and PIGEON that we learnt in second week. But then I could easily say both these words and the other new words."

On analyzing the findings of the fourth week, it can be concluded that all of the materials used worked a lot regarding the objectives set for the fourth week. Despite some rejections from a few of the students to participate in the game actively, it was observed that the game activity helped the students' to learn and use the new words. There were only some little problems, which were related to the managing of the classroom such as noise during the implementation of games. However, the students mostly participated in the activities.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter first provides a brief summary of the study. Then, it presents the conclusions and the limitations of the study.

5.2. Summary of the study

Literature on teaching English to young learners (TEYL) indicate that it is quite difficult for teachers to attract young learners' attention to the lessons, as young learners' concentration span is too short and they have motivation problem. However, when teachers use language teaching activities like games in young learners' classes, their attention can easily be drawn to the lesson and so they perform the tasks given by the teacher attentively. These kinds of tasks encourage and support the learners to learn the elements of language indirectly. Learning a language by the help of games is useful, meaningful, worthwhile and effective that causes the motivation, relaxation and fun to learners in class (Alemi, 2010; Kumar and Lightner, 2007; Ersöz, 2000). Drawing on the arguments raised in related literature, the purpose of this study was that find out the contributions of using games in teaching English to young learners in our local context. This study was conducted at a primary state school in Van, Turkey in 2015/2016 academic year. The participants of the study were 4th grade beginner level students with an age range of 10-12. Two different types of qualitative data collection instruments were used to achieve the aim of the study. The first data collection instrument was a teacher diary and the second data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews conducted with the students after each lesson for four weeks.

5.3. Conclusions

The findings of the present study revealed that games contribute to young learners' language learning process in four interrelated dimensions. These dimensions

as identified in the present study are: (i) *Use of games promotes an effective language-learning environment for young learners*; (ii) *Use of games increase students' level of participation in the lessons*; (iii) *Use of games provide meaningful vocabulary practice*; (iv) *Use of games helps to develop students' social skills*.

Use of games promotes an effective language-learning environment for young learners:

One of the most important conclusions drawn out of this study is that the use of vocabulary games promotes an effective language-learning environment for young learners. This conclusion is line with the arguments raised by Scott and Ytreberg (1990) about the characteristics of young learners and the implications of these characteristics on how teach English to young learners. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) state that young learners love to play and they learn best when they enjoy themselves. They also point out that young learners take themselves seriously and like to think that what they are doing is 'real' work. In our study, most of the students were willing to join the games in groups and they tried their best in order to be the winners of the games. The students liked playing vocabulary games such as Bingo, Guess the Word Games with Mimics, Hangman and Scrambled Letters. The students in the present study, as stated in related literature, liked the relaxed atmosphere, freedom and being active in the classroom. As with Domke (1991), our findings showed that the students were positive about learning English because they enjoyed practicing vocabulary through games. This conclusion supports the findings of Huyen & Nga (2009) who stated that the students showed pleasant feelings and positive attitudes towards learning vocabulary through games. Moreover, Uberman (1998) observed the interest of her students in learning through games. She believes that games are a way to help students not only enjoy and amuse with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally. In addition, Huyen and Nga (2009) stated, "the use of vocabulary is a way to make the lessons more interesting, enjoyable and effective" (p. 24). Similarly, Celce-Marcia and Macintosh (1979) pointed out "Games are by definition fun and nearly everyone would agree that if learning can be made enjoyable, then students will learn more" (p. 56). According to Kuzu and Ural (2008), when games and education are combined, it can be educative and education environments can be entertaining. The learners, who learn languages with the use of games, gain positive attitudes and can be more motivated while learning.

Use of games increase students' level of participation in the lessons

The findings of this study suggest that the use of vocabulary games increase student motivation in the language learning process. When the student motivation is high, as we observed, the students' level of participation in the lessons increases. Motivation plays a central role in learning (Dweck 1986, as cited in Chiu-Pin Lin, Shelley Shwu-Ching Young, Hui-Chun Hung, 2008). The use of games helps students to involve in the classroom activities actively. These kinds of tasks encourage and support the learners to learn new things. Young learners are enthusiastic to learn new things and have no inhibitions that older learners sometimes bring to their schooling. They need physical movement and activity as much as stimulation for their thinking so the better learning will be provided. Therefore, by the help of games, teachers can increase their students' level of participation in lesson and their motivation towards learning English. As Hansen (1994) stated games are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy students more opportunity to express their opinion and feelings. In addition to this, Azar, (2012) claimed that games usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested. These characteristics of games create the motivation for learners of English to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities. Furthermore, McCallum (1980, p. ix) emphasizes this point by suggesting that “games automatically stimulate student interest, a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques.”

Use of games provide meaningful vocabulary practice

As with Berne and Blachowicz (2008), we might conclude that vocabulary games provide meaningful practice for vocabulary learning. When the vocabulary practice activities are meaningful, students learn and remember both the form and the meaning easily. This conclusion is in line with those of Bahri (2008) who states, “using games in vocabulary lessons would help the students remember the words easily” (p.11). In addition, through the use of vocabulary games children improve their pronunciation of the new words and improve their vocabulary building skills indirectly as they find the opportunity to practice the pronunciation of the target vocabulary items by the help of playing games. As Uberman (1998) stated “games encourage, entertain, teach and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they may be used just because they help students to see the beauty in a foreign language” (p. 87). Moreover, Bahri (2008) argues that “the games lend themselves perfectly to quick bursts of revision, using some of the games; you can revise a massive amount of vocabulary and

grammar in a few minutes” (p.11). Similarly, Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) point out that, “Games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners’ communicative competence” (p. 226). Communication is the reason we learn a language and games help the students be able to communicate. Hence, using games is an inevitable technique for young learners to be able to communicate.

Use of games helps to develop students' social skills:

Antonaros and Couri (2003) claim that “Games in the foreign language classroom encourage and develop socialization, cooperating with others, learning self-discipline, respecting rules, peer teaching, and cooperative learning” (p. 6). In line with the arguments raised in literature, we concluded in our study that the students collaborated quite actively in games that required group work. It also became clear that games encouraged among our students a feeling of cooperation, which is believed to be an important issue in developing group identity (Cowan, 1974). Myers also (2013) highlights the importance of using games in developing students' social skills by stating “Not only are games a fun and nonthreatening way to discuss student concerns, but when used in groups, they also can be used to help students work on social skills and cooperation” (p. 36). Students are engaged in cooperative works during these games. Cooperative and communicative works are essential for the students to be prepared for life. Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) stated that, “Games are used not only for mere fun, but more importantly, for the useful practice and review of language lessons, thus leading toward the goal of improving learners’ communicative competence” (p. 226). Communication is the reason we learn a language and games help the students be able to communicate. Hence, using games is an inevitable technique for young learners to be able to communicate.

5.4. Limitations of the study

This study was carried on only for 4 weeks; for this reason, time is one of the most important limitations of this study. Because the implementation of vocabulary games requires much more longer period of time to reveal the contribution of games in learning vocabulary. The number of the participants was another important limitation of

the study. We observed and collected data only from 29 students. The number of the participants might be increased in future studies.



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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Appendix 1: Puzzle, Worksheets and Flashcards

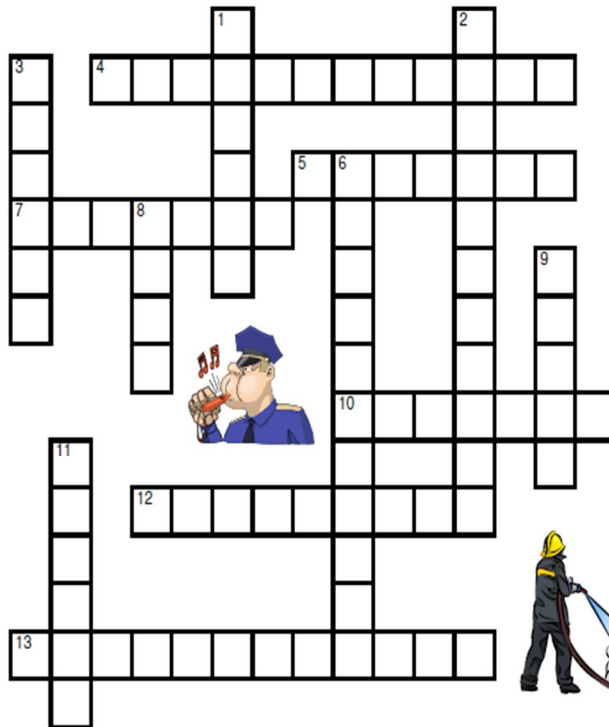
7.1.1. Appendix A: Job Crossword Puzzle

What do you do?

Name: _____

Class: _____

Instructions: Jobs crossword puzzle, read the clues below and fill in the correct answer.



Across













- 4 Who fights crime?
- 5 Who studies at school?
- 7 Who teaches students at school?
- 10 Who takes care of teeth?
- 12 Who drives a bus?
- 13 Who brings our mail?

Down

- 1 Who sings songs?
- 2 Who fights fires?
- 3 Who serves food in a restaurant?
- 6 Who drives a truck?
- 8 Who cooks in a hotel or restaurant?
- 9 Who looks after sick people and helps doctors?
- 11 Who treats patients (sick people) ?















7.1.2. Appendix B: Job Flashcards

 	 DOCTOR
 	 FIREMAN
 	 TAILOR
 	 TEACHER

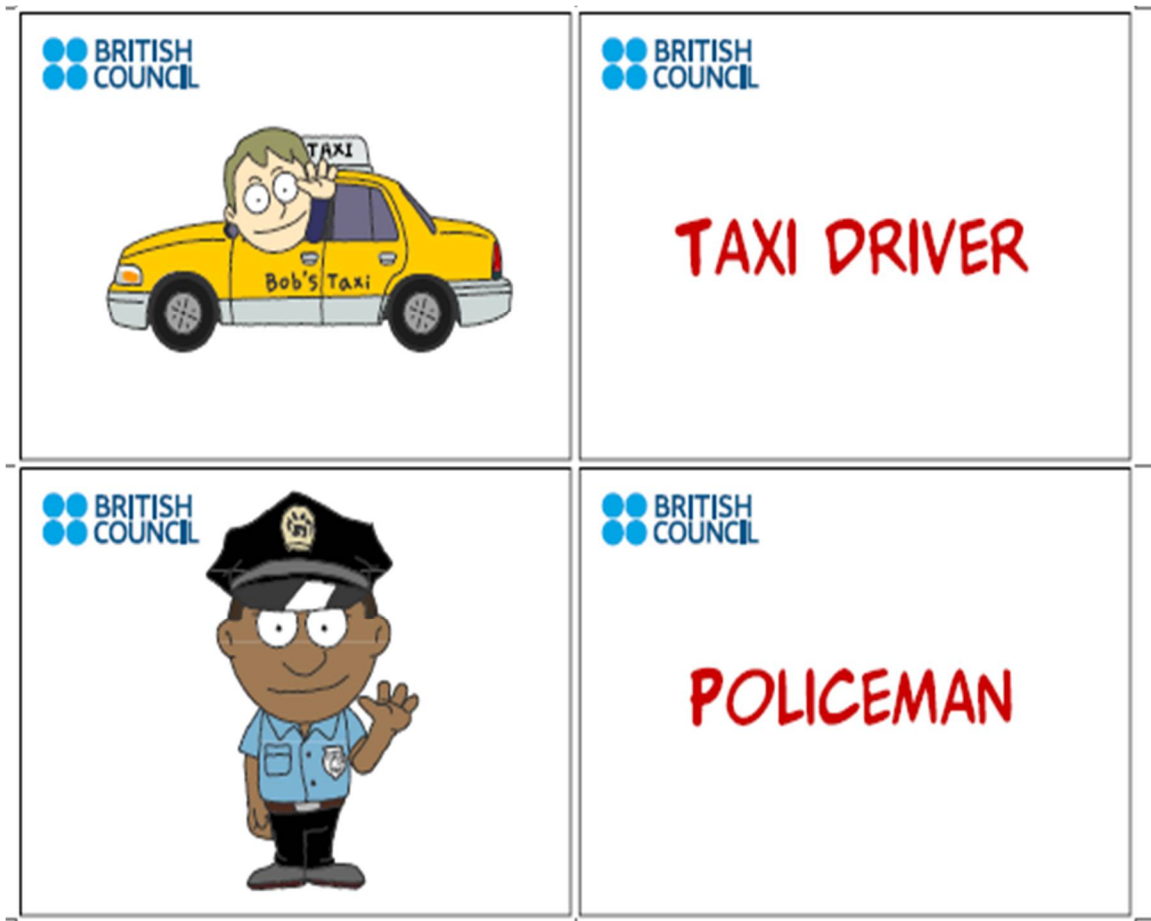
(Britishcouncil learningenglish, 26.04.2015,
<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/vocabulary-games>)

7.1.3. Appendix C: Job Flashcards

 	 PLUMBER
 	 FARMER
 	 DENTIST
 	 BABYSITTER

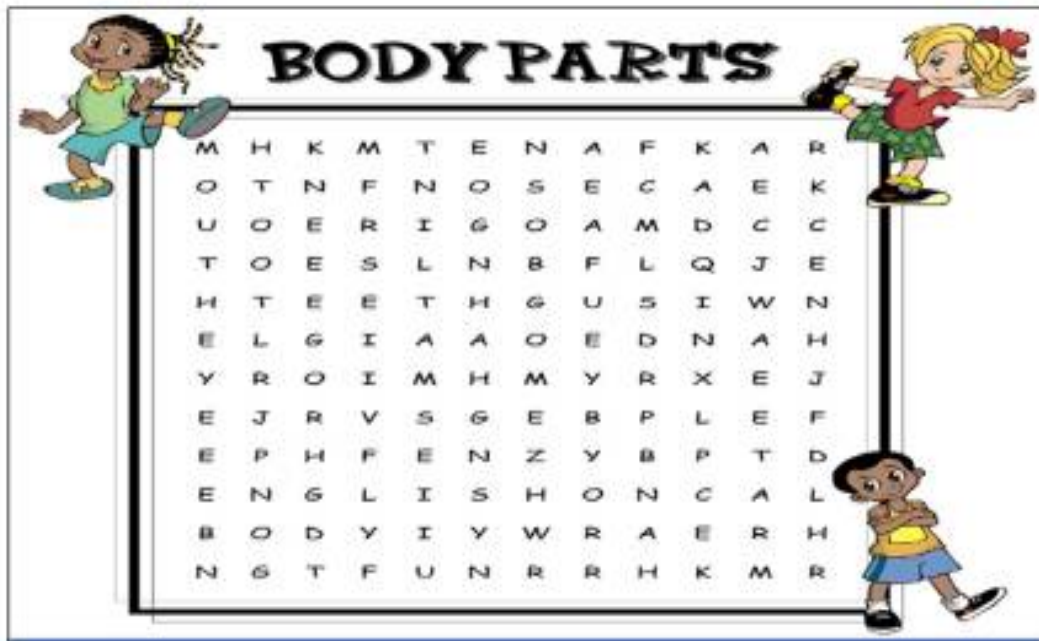
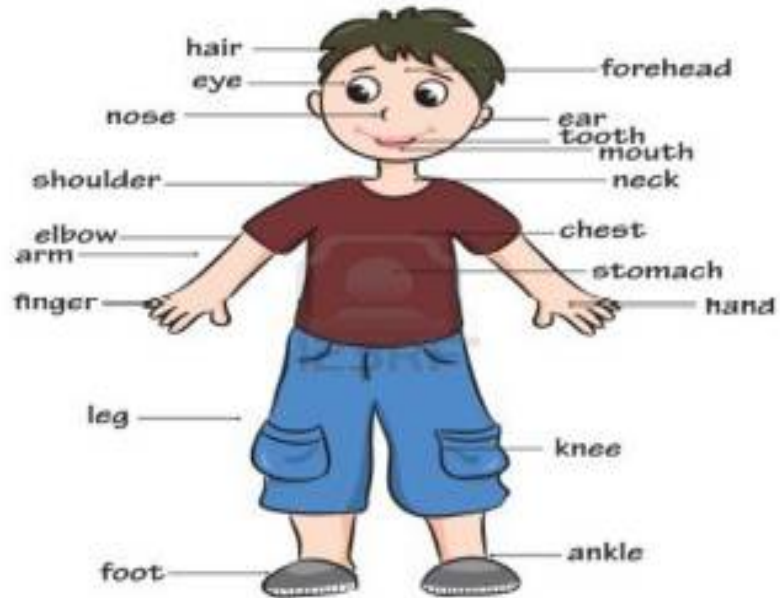
(Britishcouncil learningenglish, 26.04.2015,
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7.1.4. Appendix D: Job Flashcards



(Britishcouncil learningenglish, 26.04.2015,
<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/vocabulary-games>)

7.1.5. Appendix E: Body Parts and Puzzle



Find all the words below:

- | | | | |
|------|----------|--------|------|
| head | nose | arm | leg |
| face | mouth | elbow | knee |
| hair | teeth | hand | foot |
| ear | neck | finger | toe |
| eye | shoulder | back | body |

(123RF, 15.04.2015, www.123rf.com)

7.1.6. Appendix F: Farm Animals

FARM ANIMALS MATCHING WORKSHEET



**LOOK AT THE LIST BELOW AND
WRITE THE NAMES OF THE FARM
ANIMALS UNDER THEIR PICTURES**

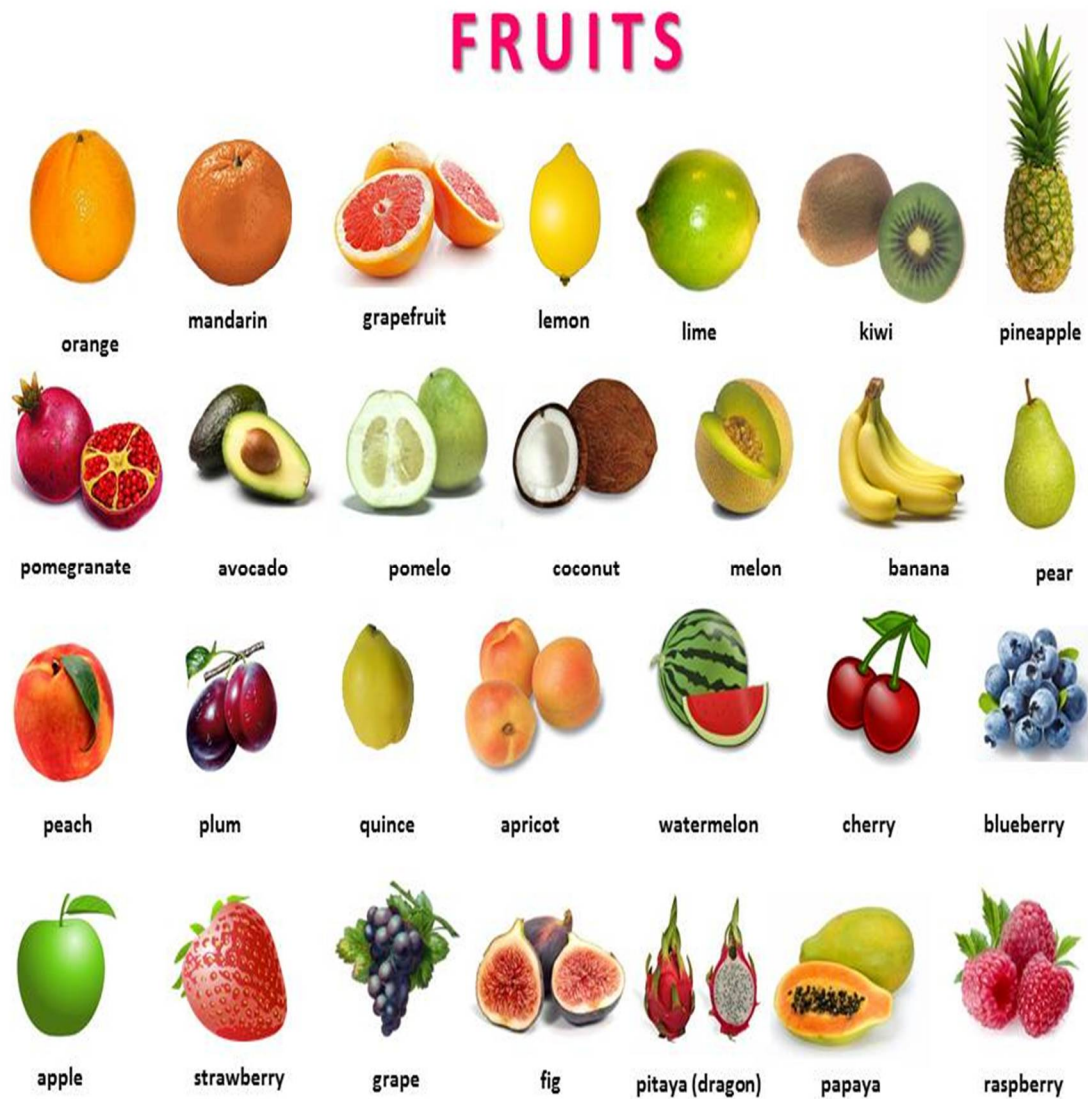
- ROOSTER
- TURKEY
- SHEEP
- DOG
- PIG
- DUCK
- RABBIT
- GOOSE
- COW
- CAT
- DONKEY
- PIGEON
- CHICKEN
- HORSE
- GOAT



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(English Work Sheets, 28.04.2015, www.englishworksheets.com)

7.1.7. Appendix G: Fruits Flashcards



©My two cents...

(Language Bug, 16.05.2015,
<http://languagebug.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/fruits-in-mandarin.jpg>)

[http://languagebug.co.uk/wp-](http://languagebug.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/fruits-in-mandarin.jpg)