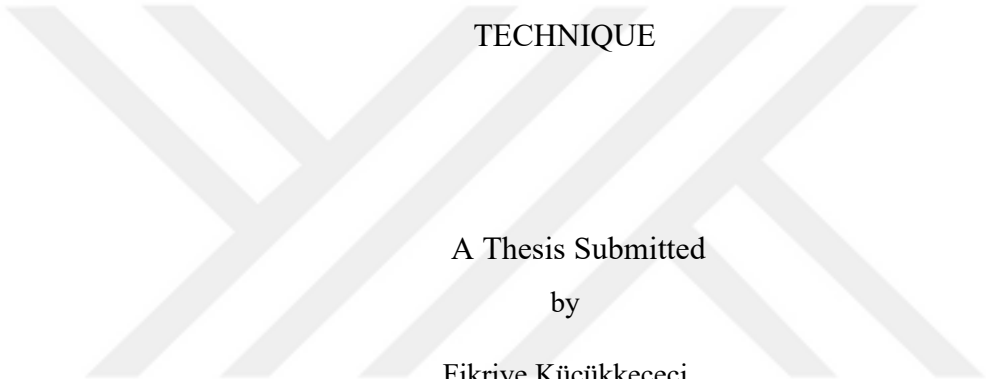


YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

**PRESCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES
ON TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH SONGS AS AN ACTIVE
LEARNING TECHNIQUE**

Fikriye Küçükkeçeci

Istanbul - 2025



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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: PRESCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH SONGS AS AN ACTIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUE

This study aims to investigate the attitudes of preschool English language teachers toward the use of songs as an active learning technique in early language education. Recognizing music as a powerful pedagogical tool, the research explores how songs contribute to young learners' engagement, motivation, and language acquisition within the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL).

The research was conducted using a quantitative design, and teachers' attitudes toward teaching English through songs, their frequency of use, and the challenges they face were analyzed. Data were collected from 116 preschool English teachers through a survey. Following the normality analysis, it was determined that the data did not show a normal distribution; therefore, non-parametric tests (Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U) were used. The findings revealed that teachers generally have a positive attitude toward the use of songs and believe that songs make a significant contribution to children's English learning by enhancing vocabulary development, improving pronunciation, facilitating grammar acquisition, and increasing classroom participation. No significant differences were found in attitudes based on demographic variables such as professional seniority, graduation degree, or participation in in-service training. The study emphasized the role of songs not only in language development but also in cultural transmission. Although in-service training appeared to have a limited impact on teachers' practices, it was observed that teachers are generally open to active learning methods. The results highlight the importance of integrating songs into preschool English education and suggest a need for further support and development efforts in this area.

By highlighting the role of music in supporting active and meaningful learning, this research provides insights into how songs can be effectively integrated into early childhood language instruction. The results are expected to contribute to the development of engaging, age-appropriate teaching strategies and to encourage educators and curriculum developers to embrace music as an essential component of preschool EFL education.

Keywords: Active learning, EFL teaching, preschool education, early childhood, language acquisition, songs, teacher attitudes, music in education



ÖZET

TEZ BAŞLIĞI: OKUL ÖNCESİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN BİR AKTİF ÖĞRENME TEKNİĞİ OLARAK ŞARKILARLA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİ ÜZERİNE TUTUMLARI

Erken çocukluk döneminde aktif öğrenme, çocukların gelişimlerine uygun ortamlar yaratılması ve içlerindeki performansın ortaya çıkarılması konusunda önemlidir. Çocuklar nesnelerle, akranlarıyla, yetişkinlerle ve gelişen fikirlerle etkileşim kurarak öğrenirler (Stephen, Ellis, & Martlew, 2010). Bu açıklamadan yola çıktığımızda aktif öğrenme stratejilerinin çocuklarda etkileşimi, öğrenme deneyimine bizzat katılarak çözüm üreten bireyler olabileceğini ve takımın içinde diğerleriyle uyum içinde iletişimi sürdürebileceğini söyleyebiliriz.

Demirtaş ve Sucuoğlu'na (2009) göre, erken çocukluk döneminde yürütülen aktif öğrenmeyi içeren grup etkinlikleri çocukların bireysel öğrenmelerini ve grup çalışmalarını, daha fazla üretme becerilerini ve karar verme becerilerini olumlu yönde etkiler. Şarkılar, erken çocukluk döneminde kullanılabilecek aktif öğrenme stratejilerinin arasında önemli bir yere sahiptir.

(Mardiyatun, 2007; Asih, 2011; Millington, 2011; Apsari) dahil olmak üzere birçok araştırmacı, 2012; Burhayani, 2013), İngilizce derslerinde şarkı kullanmanın çok faydalı olacağını gözlemlemişlerdir. Ve eğer programda çeşitli şarkılar mevcut olacaksa çocuklar en sevdikleri şarkıları seçebilir ve böylece İngilizce öğrenmeye daha fazla teşvik edilebilirler.

Müzik çocuklar için bir anlama aracıdır. Okul öncesi çocukların okuma-yazma bilmedikleri için en değerli bilgi edinme araçları kulaklarıdır. Ses dinleme ve ses üretme çalışmaları müziğin temelini oluşturmaktadır. Duymak, dinlemek, dikkati seslere yoğunlaştırmak ve uygun tepkiyi verebilmek okulöncesi eğitiminde önemli noktalardır (Gültek, 2002). Şarkıların pozitif öğrenme sürecine de katkıları göz önünde

bulundurulduğunda, çocukların öğrenmeye dair streslerinden uzak ve bariyersiz bir ortamda şarkılara eşlik ederek dil becerilerini rahatlıkla geliştirebileceklerdir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de anaokullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin şarkı temelli öğretime yönelik tutumlarını ölçmeyi ve bu tutumların sınıf içi uygulamalarla olan ilişkisini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Nicel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilen çalışmada, öğretmenlerin şarkılarla dil öğretimine yönelik tutumları, kullanım sıklıkları ve karşılaştıkları zorluklar analiz edilmiştir. Veriler, 116 anaokulu İngilizce öğretmeninden anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Normalite analizleri sonucunda verilerin normal dağılım göstermediği belirlenmiş ve bu nedenle non-parametrik testler (Kruskal-Wallis ve Mann-Whitney U) kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, öğretmenlerin şarkı kullanımına büyük ölçüde olumlu yaklaştıklarını ve şarkıların çocukların İngilizce öğrenme süreçlerine kelime dağarcığı geliştirme, telaffuz iyileştirme, dil bilgisi öğrenimi ve derse katılım sağlama gibi birçok yönden katkı sağladığını ortaya koymuştur. Demografik değişkenler (mesleki kıdem, mezuniyet derecesi, hizmet içi eğitim alma durumu) açısından anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Çalışmada, şarkıların hem dil gelişimi hem de kültürel aktarımda etkili bir araç olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Ayrıca, hizmet içi eğitimlerin şarkı kullanımına etkisinin sınırlı olduğu, ancak genel olarak öğretmenlerin aktif öğrenme yöntemlerine açık oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, okul öncesi İngilizce öğretiminde şarkılarla aktif öğrenmenin önemine dikkat çekmekte ve bu alanda daha fazla destek ve geliştirme çalışmalarına ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir.

Araştırma kapsamında, öğretmenlerin bu yönteme ilişkin görüşleri ve uygulama durumları; cinsiyet, yaş, mesleki deneyim ve eğitim düzeyi gibi demografik değişkenler bağlamında incelenmiştir. Veriler, nicel araştırma desenine uygun olarak yapılandırılmış bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Araştırma sonuçlarının, okul öncesi İngilizce öğretiminde müzik temelli aktif öğrenme yaklaşımlarının daha etkili kullanılabilmesi için öğretmenlere, program geliştiricilere ve eğitim politikası yapıcılarına yol gösterici olması hedeflenmektedir. Aynı zamanda, bu çalışmanın çocukların öğrenme süreçlerine daha neşeli, etkileşimli ve anlamlı katkılar sağlayacak öğretim yöntemlerinin yaygınlaştırılmasına destek olması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aktif öğrenme, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi, okul öncesi eğitim, erken çocukluk, dil edinimi, şarkılar, öğretmen tutumları, eğitimde müzik kullanımı



DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the children whose laughter, songs, and curiosity illuminate the classroom. This research is inspired by you.

And to my beloved daughter Nil, your joy, dreams, and passion for learning continue to inspire me every single day.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ESL – English as a Second Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

L1 – First Language / Native Language

L2 – Second Language / Target Language

ALM – Active Learning Method

MoNE – Ministry of Education

DFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis

ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TPR – Total Physical Response

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language, especially at the preschool and elementary levels, has become increasingly important worldwide. In Turkey, as in many other countries, the age to begin English education has been lowered (Eurydice, 2005). In this context, curricula developed for young learners prioritize communicative approaches to language teaching, with a focus on listening and speaking skills. Among the active learning tools in this process, songs play a significant role in making English learning enjoyable and effective. Edelenbos et al. (2006) emphasized the central role of songs and games in early language teaching across Europe.

Ersöz (2007) also underlined the importance of using songs and games in language teaching for young learners, suggesting that the curriculum should be based on communicative value. Similarly, Sharpe (2001) highlighted that auditory and verbal skills should be the focus when planning primary school modern language curricula, asserting that songs should be an integral part of the curriculum. Bourke (2006), in his studies on teaching languages to young learners, argued that songs are a pedagogically appropriate tool and should be included in the curriculum. Halliwell (1993) emphasized that teaching languages through games and songs is one of the most effective learning methods for children. Rumley (1999) suggested that songs provide children with a safe and non-threatening environment in language learning, allowing for natural repetition and practice.

The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs creates a significant impact on the language learning process. Krashen (1981) noted that providing sufficient and necessary input is one of the most crucial elements in language learning, stating that songs are powerful tools that support language acquisition in this regard. The rhythmic structure of music and songs adds joy to the learning process, making language learning more enjoyable for children and facilitating internalization of the language. At this point, the repetition and rhythm of songs emerge as an important factor in children's language development (Johnstone, 2002).

Research has shown that songs are an effective method in preschool English teaching and are preferred by both teachers and students. Kirsch (2006, 2008) reported that singing is considered one of the most effective language learning strategies by children. Klein (2005) also observed that children respond enthusiastically to songs and welcome this method with

joy. A study conducted by Ilter and Er (2007) revealed that both parents and teachers have a positive view of using songs in early language teaching. Büyükduman (2005), in his study on the primary school English curriculum in Turkey, emphasized that songs and games should be used more frequently in the teaching process.

In conclusion, songs in preschool English teaching are an effective method that facilitates the internalization of language structures through repetition and rhythm, allowing students to participate in the language learning process with enjoyment. Teachers can make a significant contribution to developing students' language skills by using songs in their classrooms. In this context, using songs as a creative and motivating tool in language teaching helps make language learning enjoyable and effective.

Songs provide numerous benefits in the language learning process for children. Their rhythmic and melodic structure helps natural language acquisition. According to Krashen's (1981) input hypothesis, providing meaningful and repetitive input is essential in language learning. The repetitive nature of songs assists children in learning grammar rules and vocabulary, while the entertaining nature of songs increases their participation in the learning process. Johnstone (2002) also emphasized the importance of providing sufficient language input at an early age and supporting these inputs with various activities to positively influence language learning.

Another key feature of songs is that they offer children a safe and non-threatening environment during language learning. Rumley (1999) argued that songs present a playful environment for children, making them more open to language learning. While making the language learning process enjoyable for children, songs naturally reinforce grammar rules and vocabulary. Through repetition in songs, children develop their language skills.

The role of songs in language learning is not limited to linguistic skills. Songs also contribute to children's social and emotional development. Singing in groups increases children's social interactions and encourages collaboration during the language learning process, thus boosting their motivation to learn (Ilter & Er, 2007). Klein (2005) also noted that songs heighten children's enthusiasm for language learning and make the process more enjoyable.

The use of songs in language teaching is quite broad. In preschool English teaching, songs can be used alongside various activities that support the development of language skills. For example, songs can improve children's listening and speaking skills. Songs help children learn the sounds, rhythm, and melodic structure of the language while also expanding their vocabulary (Bourke, 2006). In this regard, songs can be used as a tool to enhance listening and speaking skills.

Moreover, since songs provide repetitive learning, they are an effective method for learning grammar rules and vocabulary. Through songs, children learn grammar rules and vocabulary naturally. The repetitive structure of songs helps internalize language structures and makes the learning process more lasting (Rumley, 1999).

Büyükduman (2005), in his study on the primary school English curriculum in Turkey, emphasized that songs and games should be used more frequently in the teaching process. Songs actively engage children in the language learning process and help develop their language skills. In this regard, songs can be used as active learning tools in language teaching.

Research on the effects of songs in language learning has demonstrated that songs positively contribute to children's language learning process. Studies by Kirsch (2006, 2008) revealed that singing is considered one of the most effective language learning strategies by children. Songs enable children to participate in the language learning process more enthusiastically and help them learn language structures more quickly.

A study by Ilter and Er (2007) showed that parents and teachers have a positive view of using songs in early language teaching. In this study, both parents and teachers reported that songs contribute positively to children's language learning process and enhance their language skills. Moreover, it was highlighted that songs increase children's motivation and make the language learning process more enjoyable.

Another study on the effects of songs in language learning was conducted by Klein (2005). Klein observed that songs increase children's enthusiasm for language learning and accelerate the process of learning language structures. In this context, songs can be used as an effective tool in language learning.

In conclusion, the use of songs in preschool English language teaching proves to be a highly effective and developmentally appropriate method for supporting young learners' language

acquisition. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs not only facilitates the internalization of vocabulary and grammatical structures but also creates a joyful, safe, and engaging learning environment. Through songs, children are naturally exposed to meaningful input, in line with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which supports the development of listening and speaking skills in a playful and low-stress context. Moreover, songs enhance children's motivation, social interaction, and emotional involvement in the learning process. Research consistently shows that both educators and parents perceive songs as a valuable and enjoyable educational tool that boosts language learning efficiency. Therefore, incorporating songs as a regular component of preschool English curricula can significantly enrich the language learning experience, encourage active participation, and lay a strong foundation for lifelong language development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners has become a priority in many education systems around the world, including Turkey. Recognizing the cognitive and linguistic benefits of early language exposure, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has implemented significant reforms, including introducing English in the second grade and promoting communicative and student-centered approaches in language curricula. However, despite these positive policy developments, persistent challenges remain in the effective implementation of English language instruction at the preschool level.

One of the fundamental issues lies in the disconnect between curriculum guidelines and classroom practices. Although MoNE encourages interactive, communicative methods in its official documents, many preschool English teachers continue to employ traditional, grammar-focused, and teacher-centered techniques that do not align with the developmental needs of young children. These approaches often emphasize rote learning, written exercises, and passive reception rather than encouraging active engagement, interaction, and creativity. As a result, young learners are not sufficiently exposed to meaningful language use and are unable to internalize English as a functional tool for communication.

Moreover, active learning, which has been widely recognized as an effective educational approach, remains underutilized in preschool English classrooms in Turkey. Active learning

involves strategies that place the student at the center of the learning process through hands-on activities, collaboration, problem-solving, movement, and exploration. Such methods are particularly well-suited to early childhood education, where learning is most effective when children are physically active, emotionally engaged, and socially interactive. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that active learning strategies are not consistently or effectively applied in many preschool environments. Teachers often cite barriers such as large class sizes, limited classroom materials, insufficient time, and a lack of professional training in active methodologies (Tuna, 2012; Özbay, 2022).

Within the broader category of active learning, songs and music-based activities stand out as highly appropriate and effective tools for language acquisition in early childhood. Songs offer multiple pedagogical benefits: they are inherently repetitive, rhythmic, and engaging, which helps children memorize new vocabulary, understand pronunciation patterns, and practice sentence structures enjoyably and naturally. Furthermore, songs reduce anxiety, increase motivation, and support both linguistic and socio-emotional development. Despite these advantages, songs are often undervalued or improperly integrated into preschool English instruction in Turkey. Many teachers are uncertain about how to use songs pedagogically, while others may lack access to quality musical materials or guidance on how to align songs with curriculum goals.

In the context of Turkey, the teaching of English to young learners faces various instructional challenges that hinder the effectiveness of early language education. These include insufficiently trained preschool English teachers, inconsistent curriculum implementation, a lack of age-appropriate materials, and limited use of innovative, child-centered methodologies. The current educational policies support early language learning and encourage the use of creative and communicative techniques, yet there is a lack of empirical research that investigates how these strategies, especially songs, are perceived and applied by preschool English teachers. Most previous research in Turkey has focused on language education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary levels, leaving a noticeable gap in studies targeting the preschool stage. This is a significant oversight, considering that early childhood is a critical period for language acquisition, as supported by developmental theories (e.g., Chomsky, 1980) and neurological evidence regarding brain plasticity.

Furthermore, existing literature points to a gap in in-service teacher training and support for implementing music-based and student-centered English instruction. While teachers may recognize the potential benefits of using songs, they may not feel confident or competent enough to integrate them effectively into their daily lessons. This lack of training can result in missed opportunities to enhance students' linguistic, cognitive, and emotional growth through music.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to explore the real-world experiences, attitudes, and challenges faced by in-service preschool English teachers regarding the use of songs as active learning tools. It is essential to understand whether teachers view songs as beneficial, how often they incorporate them into their lessons, what types of songs or activities they use, and what obstacles they encounter in doing so. By identifying these factors, this study aims to fill an important gap in the literature and provide practical insights that can guide the improvement of early English language education practices in Turkey.

Ultimately, this research is motivated by the belief that songs, when used effectively, can transform the preschool English classroom into a more dynamic, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Addressing the instructional challenges and limitations that currently hinder this potential is crucial for aligning educational practice with policy intentions, and more importantly, with the developmental needs of young language learners.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate preschool English teachers' attitudes regarding the use of songs as an active learning technique in early language education. Given that young children are inherently active learners who acquire knowledge best through engagement, movement, and sensory experiences, it becomes essential to identify instructional strategies that align with their developmental needs (Hohmann et al., 1995). Songs, with their rhythmic, repetitive, and interactive nature, present a unique opportunity to foster language acquisition in a developmentally appropriate manner.

In the Turkish context, many English language teachers enter the profession without sufficient training in early childhood education. This lack of pedagogical background

specific to preschoolers often results in a mismatch between instructional methods and learners' needs. By examining teachers' awareness and implementation of active learning through songs, this study aims to fill an important gap in the literature. It seeks to provide insights into how teachers perceive the use of songs, and how their background (e.g., graduation, experience) influences their attitudes and practices.

The contribution of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to the fields of curriculum and instruction by aligning early childhood education principles with language pedagogy—an area that remains underexplored in non-native English-speaking settings such as Türkiye. Practically, it addresses a persistent issue in English education: the lack of speaking fluency among learners who have often been exposed only to teacher-centered, grammar-oriented instruction. Active learning strategies, such as using songs, support learners in using language communicatively and meaningfully, enhancing both motivation and retention (Stefanou et al., 2012).

Furthermore, this research aims to raise awareness among preschool English teachers about the developmental characteristics of young learners and how song-based instruction can respond to these needs. It also sheds light on how songs can be used not only for enjoyment but as pedagogical tools that support vocabulary development, pronunciation, and social interaction. Ultimately, the study offers actionable implications for teacher training programs, curriculum developers, and policymakers to design more engaging and developmentally aligned English teaching practices for preschool settings.

This study also aims to examine whether factors such as teachers' professional backgrounds, years of experience, and educational qualifications influence their attitudes toward using songs in the language learning process. By doing so, the research endeavors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual and pedagogical variables that shape teachers' preferences and classroom practices.

Furthermore, this study aims to highlight the pedagogical potential of music-based instruction as a dynamic and developmentally appropriate strategy for teaching English as a

foreign language (EFL) to preschool children. Through the lens of active learning theory, it emphasizes how songs can foster meaningful, interactive, and joyful learning experiences.

Ultimately, this research intends to offer practical insights and recommendations for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers aiming to integrate music more effectively into early language education, promoting not only linguistic competence but also emotional and cognitive growth in young learners.

Specifically, it aims to explore how teachers perceive the pedagogical value of songs, how frequently and in what ways they integrate them into their instruction, and what barriers they encounter in doing so.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to explore the perceptions of in-service preschool English teachers across İstanbul regarding the use of songs as an active learning tool in early English language education. In recent years, the importance of early foreign language instruction has gained considerable attention both globally and nationally. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has introduced several reforms to enhance English language teaching by promoting communicative and student-centered approaches, especially at younger ages. However, there remains a significant gap between policy objectives and classroom practices. While songs are frequently recommended as enjoyable and effective tools for young learners, the extent to which teachers implement them and how they perceive their pedagogical value has not been fully explored.

One of the key contributions of this study is that it provides insight into the actual classroom experiences and attitudes of preschool teachers who are currently working under the MoNE curriculum. It focuses on how teachers perceive the role of songs in facilitating language acquisition and whether they feel equipped to use songs effectively in their teaching. Although the use of music and songs is widely acknowledged in the literature as a beneficial method in early language learning, there is little empirical data specifically reflecting the voices and practices of Turkish preschool educators. This makes the current study particularly valuable, as it aims to fill this critical gap.

Moreover, existing research in the field of foreign language teaching in Turkey has mostly focused on primary, secondary, or tertiary education. Preschool teachers and early childhood education settings have been largely overlooked. Given that the early years are a sensitive and crucial period for language development, supported by theories such as Chomsky's concept of the innate language acquisition device, understanding how songs contribute to language learning at this stage is both timely and relevant. By focusing on the preschool level, this study highlights a developmental window where foundational skills in listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition are formed, making the role of songs all the more important.

Additionally, this research is significant because it may inform educational policy and teacher training programs. Despite reforms, many preschool English teachers in Turkey still rely on grammar-based, exam-oriented methods and may lack the professional development necessary to implement active, communicative methods such as using songs. Reports from organizations such as TEPAV and the British Council have emphasized the importance of teacher competence and motivation in successful language instruction. Therefore, the insights gathered from this study could support the design of more targeted in-service training programs, equipping teachers with both the pedagogical tools and confidence to integrate music effectively into their English teaching practices.

In the Turkish context, where early English instruction is expanding yet still under development, this study holds particular significance. It responds to both national needs and international trends by advocating for the use of creative and developmentally appropriate teaching methods. By documenting and analyzing preschool teachers' perceptions and classroom experiences, this research offers practical recommendations that could enhance both curriculum development and language education quality in Turkey. In doing so, it aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to promote more effective and engaging English language instruction for young learners.

1.3 Research Questions

Main Research Question:

What are the attitudes of preschool English teachers towards the use of songs as an active learning method?

Sub-Questions:

1. Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to their teaching experience?
2. Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to their type of graduation program?
3. Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to their postgraduate education status?
4. Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to whether they have received in-service training?

1.4 Assumptions of the Research

This study is based on several assumptions that are considered necessary for the integrity and interpretation of the research findings:

In this research, it is assumed that the participants of the study group responded to the data collection tools sincerely and honestly, reflecting their true thoughts and experiences regarding the use of songs in language teaching.

It is assumed that all participants possess a general awareness of the concept of active learning and the role songs can play in facilitating it, even if they have not received formal training in this area.

The attitude scale used in this study is assumed to be a valid and reliable tool for measuring preschool English teachers' attitudes, as it was subjected to necessary adaptation and piloting procedures before full-scale data collection.

The study was conducted exclusively with preschool English teachers working in private schools in İstanbul. It is assumed that these teachers operate within institutional environments that may differ in terms of autonomy, access to resources, curriculum flexibility, and professional expectations compared to those in public schools. Therefore, the results of the study are not intended to be generalized to all preschool teachers across different school types.

It is assumed that teachers' levels of teaching experience, undergraduate or graduate educational backgrounds, and exposure to professional development related to active learning may have an influence on their attitudes toward using songs in preschool English instruction.

1.5 Limitations of the Research

This study is limited to the attitudes of preschool English teachers working in a specific regions of Turkey. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to all preschool English teachers across the city or country. Moreover, the data were collected solely from teachers employed in **private preschools**, which may have distinct institutional characteristics compared to public schools, such as curricular flexibility, access to resources, and teacher autonomy.

Future research could benefit from including a more diverse and larger sample, involving both private and public institutions, and exploring the longitudinal impact of using songs on preschool students' language acquisition and overall achievement.

1.6 Definition of Concepts in ELF Research

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): ELF refers to the use of English as the sole option for communication among people with different first languages (Seidlhofer, 2011).

English as an International Language (EIL): EIL refers to the use of English in the international arena. Jenkins (2012) explains that EIL was used in the early stages of research on English in global and international contexts as a neutral term, but its use has decreased compared to ELF due to its ambiguous meaning (p. 486).

In-Service Language Teacher: In-service language teachers are those currently teaching English at various educational levels, from kindergarten to university.

World Englishes (WE): WE is the research area where "researchers identify and codify national varieties of English" (Galloway & Rose, 2014, p. 11). It is also referred to as an umbrella term for the different varieties of English worldwide and the study of these varieties by Bolton (2004) (cited in Jenkins, 2006, p. 159).

Global Englishes (GE): The field of Global Englishes is defined as the research area that combines ELF and WE study. GE is considered an umbrella term for the study of English as a Lingua Franca (Bolton, 2004; Galloway & Rose, 2014, p.11).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): EFL refers to the practices of teaching and learning English as a modern language by non-native English speakers (Jenkins, 2011).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary aim of this study is to examine the significance of foreign language education in the preschool period, particularly for children aged 0–6, and to investigate how various pedagogical, developmental, and environmental factors influence language acquisition during this critical stage. Given that early childhood is a sensitive period for cognitive and linguistic development, understanding how children acquire language and how this process can be supported through effective teaching methods is essential.

In the following literature review, several interconnected subheadings are discussed to provide a comprehensive background for the study. First, pre-school education is introduced as a foundational concept to understand the structural, developmental, and educational context in which early language learning occurs. Next, language development in children aged between 0–6 is examined in detail, including the basic concepts and stages of language development, and the early linguistic milestones such as crying, chirping, murmuring, and spelling phases, along with vocabulary acquisition processes.

To ground these observations in theoretical understanding, the theories of language development are reviewed, offering insight into how language acquisition has been interpreted across psychological and linguistic paradigms. Following this, the distinctions between mother tongue, second language, and foreign language are clarified to contextualize the nature of language exposure in preschool settings.

Further, the literature review explores the importance of foreign language education during the preschool period, presenting arguments from recent studies and perspectives. The section titled general thoughts on foreign language education in the preschool period provides a synthesis of scholarly views, emphasizing both the benefits and challenges of early language instruction. To understand how to implement language instruction effectively, the review includes a detailed analysis of factors to be considered in foreign language teaching, such as developmental readiness, instructional approaches, and teacher attitudes. The subsequent section addresses situations affecting the foreign language teaching process, such as socio-cultural influences, classroom dynamics, and parental involvement.

The role of the physical and instructional environment is discussed under the heading environment and material effect on language acquisition, focusing on how setting and

learning materials contribute to successful language learning. In addition, the potential of music in the classroom is explored, including the Affective Filter Hypothesis and motivational factors, which highlight how emotional and psychological elements impact language acquisition. To complement this, the concept of multiple intelligences in the language classroom is reviewed to consider how differentiated instruction can support diverse learner profiles. Finally, the use of songs in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' classrooms is discussed as a practical strategy to enhance engagement, memorization, and enjoyment in language learning for young children. Through these interconnected topics, the literature review aims to provide a well-rounded theoretical and practical foundation for examining early foreign language education and to inform future pedagogical practices.

2.1 Teacher Attitudes in Education

2.1.1. Definition and Dimensions of Teacher Attitudes

Teacher attitudes refer to the predispositions or tendencies that educators have towards various aspects of their professional roles, such as students, instructional practices, classroom management, and curricular content (Richardson, 1996). These attitudes are shaped by a combination of personal experiences, educational background, beliefs, and values. They are often classified into cognitive (belief-based), affective (emotion-based), and behavioral (action-based) components (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991).

In the context of early childhood education, teacher attitudes take on a particularly influential role, as young learners are highly responsive to the emotional and behavioral cues of adults. Positive teacher attitudes can foster a nurturing learning environment, while negative attitudes may hinder both teacher effectiveness and student engagement (Pajares, 1992). Understanding these dimensions is crucial for identifying how teachers perceive innovative methods such as music-based instruction in language learning.

2.1.2. The Significance of Exploring Teacher Attitudes Teacher Attitudes?

The study of teacher attitudes is essential because these attitudes significantly influence educational decisions, instructional strategies, and the overall quality of the learning environment (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Teachers' openness to new pedagogical approaches,

such as active learning techniques or the integration of music in the classroom, often depends on their underlying beliefs and feelings about these methods.

Moreover, teacher attitudes serve as predictors of how educational reforms and curriculum changes will be received and implemented in practice (Ajzen, 1991). For example, even well-designed instructional materials may fail to be effective if the teacher does not believe in their value or relevance. As such, examining attitudes provides deeper insight into the success and sustainability of educational innovations, particularly in early foreign language instruction.

2.1.3. The Impact of Teacher Attitudes on Teaching Practices and Student Outcomes

A growing body of research indicates that teacher attitudes directly impact classroom practices and, consequently, student learning outcomes (Fang, 1996; OECD, 2009).

Teachers who hold positive attitudes toward certain teaching methods are more likely to implement them consistently and effectively. In contrast, negative attitudes may result in minimal engagement or avoidance, regardless of the method's pedagogical merit.

In early language education, teachers' attitudes toward tools such as songs and music significantly affect their frequency and manner of use. Enthusiastic and confident teachers tend to employ songs not only as a motivational element but also as a meaningful linguistic input that enhances vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and pronunciation skills (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Thus, assessing teacher attitudes is key to understanding and improving educational practices in preschool language classrooms.

2.2 Understanding Learning and Active Learning

A significant portion of human behavior consists of learned actions. Therefore, in order to understand how these behaviors are formed and why we act in certain ways, it is necessary to define learning and examine its fundamental principles. Addressing questions such as how learning occurs, what we learn, how quickly we learn, and which variables influence the learning process can benefit a wide range of individuals. For example, parents who want to support their children's learning, teachers seeking to guide effective classroom practices,

producers and marketers targeting consumer behavior, advertisers, and politicians trying to gain votes can all benefit from this understanding. This demonstrates how critical knowledge about learning truly is (Senemoğlu, 2012).

Learning is a process that leads to relatively permanent changes in cognition, behavior, and emotion through experience, practice, and repetition. In other words, it involves the interaction of environmental stimuli with the nervous system, with information being encoded and processed in relevant brain areas before being stored in long-term memory. Learning a foreign language, solving mathematical problems, or acquiring historical knowledge are examples of cognitive learning. Psychomotor skills also play a crucial role in the learning process. For instance, although a person like Ayşe may be born with musical talent, the emergence and development of that ability depend on the availability of suitable environments and opportunities for practice. Skills such as riding a bicycle, becoming a proficient computer user, or obtaining a driver's license are all outcomes of psychomotor learning (Aydın, Akbağ, Tuzcuoğlu, Yaycı, & Ağır, 2013).

Everyday usage of the term "learning" often fails to fully capture its academic and psychological dimensions. Hillner (1987) outlined several areas that fall within the scope of learning as examined by learning psychologists:

1. Learning concerns both human and animal behaviors and can be applied to behavioral disorders, all organisms, or even artificial models like computer simulations.
2. It involves acquiring a broad range of behaviors, from involuntary muscle twitches to symbolic concepts, prejudices, or neurotic symptoms.
3. Learning is associated with both internal and external physiological responses of the organism.
4. It has a positive impact on memory, allowing information to be retained over time, and it facilitates the acquisition of new behaviors previously absent in the organism.
5. Learning is related to motivation, perception, development, personality, and socio-cultural factors.
6. It involves not only average behaviors but also individual differences among people.

7. Studying learning requires a strong educational background, academic expertise, practical experience, and familiarity with technology.
8. Learning is a process associated with language, cognition, information processing, and decision-making activities (Terry, 2000).

It is now a well-established scientific fact that humans possess a constantly evolving brain with virtually unlimited learning capacity. Understanding how learning occurs remains a contemporary issue, with ongoing debates around its definitions and theoretical frameworks. Psychologists and field experts approach the concept of learning differently depending on their adopted perspectives. Cross (1974) broadly defined learning as a change in behavior resulting from experience. According to Morgan (1991), learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as a result of practice and experience. He emphasized that for learning to take place, a behavioral change must occur, it must be based on repetition or experience, and it must be relatively long-lasting.

Hergenhahn and Olson (2001) define learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior or behavioral potential due to experience. Driscoll (2012) interprets learning as a continuous change in performance or potential performance resulting from experience and interaction with the environment. Senemoğlu (2011) describes learning as a relatively permanent traceable change in behavior or behavioral potential that cannot be attributed to growth or temporary physical effects but results from lived experiences. Similarly, Schunk (2014) defines learning as a permanent change in behavior or capacity to behave, resulting from practice or various forms of experience. Bakırcıoğlu (2015) considers learning as a process of forming conceptual structures, a lasting effect of practice, and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and understanding through experience or repetition (Yazar & Karataş, 2011).

Learning possesses several core characteristics:

- Learning results in behavioral change. The direction of the change—positive or negative—does not alter the fact that learning has taken place. From a marketing perspective, this is important because the effects of learning may take time to become evident.

- Learning is based on experience or practice. It is not merely the acquisition or storage of information but becomes evident when changes occur in observable behavior throughout one's life.
- Behavioral changes resulting from learning are relatively permanent. This means, firstly, that learned behaviors tend to be repeated; secondly, behaviors that are not reinforced or practiced may eventually fade (İslamoğlu & Altunışık, 2013).

In summary, learning implies the existence of a potential behavioral change that demonstrates new knowledge acquisition. It leads to relatively permanent changes in behavior. Temporary changes caused by fatigue, motivation, or heightened arousal do not fall within the scope of learning. Researchers studying learning often encounter challenges in distinguishing between innate behaviors or those resulting from maturation and actual learning.

2.2 Active Learning in Early Childhood Education

2.2.1 Core Principles of Active Learning

Active learning is an instructional approach that emphasizes student engagement, participation, and reflection, placing learners at the center of the educational experience. Rather than passively receiving information, students are encouraged to analyze, discuss, create, and apply knowledge in meaningful contexts (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). The foundational principles of active learning include learner autonomy, collaborative learning, immediate feedback, and the integration of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Prince, 2004).

At its core, active learning fosters deeper cognitive processing and increases students' motivation by involving them in authentic and purposeful tasks. This principle aligns closely with constructivist learning theories, which propose that knowledge is best constructed through active involvement and interaction with the learning environment (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978).

2.2.2 Characteristics of Active Learning

Active learning is characterized by instructional methods that go beyond traditional lectures, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. These methods include group discussions, problem-based learning, case studies, simulations, peer teaching, and project-based assignments (Michael, 2006). In language education, particularly with young learners, active learning may involve songs, games, role-plays, and storytelling, which promote language use in dynamic and engaging ways (Cameron, 2001).

Additionally, active learning environments are typically interactive, student-centered, and flexible. Teachers function as facilitators who guide learners through inquiry-based tasks and support them in making connections between new information and prior knowledge (Freeman et al., 2014). Such learning spaces encourage experimentation, critical thinking, and collaboration—skills that are essential for both academic success and lifelong learning.

2.2.3 Teacher Attitudes Toward Active Learning

Teacher attitudes toward active learning play a critical role in determining the extent to which such methods are implemented in the classroom. Educators who perceive active learning as beneficial for student engagement and academic achievement are more likely to adopt these practices (Donche & Van Petegem, 2009). On the other hand, teachers with reservations—often due to time constraints, lack of resources, or unfamiliarity with the methods—may resist incorporating active strategies into their teaching (Ertmer, 1999).

In early childhood education, teacher support for active learning is particularly influential, as young learners thrive in environments that encourage exploration, movement, and interaction. When teachers recognize the developmental appropriateness and pedagogical value of active learning strategies such as using songs, their attitudes become more favorable, which enhances the overall quality of instruction and learner outcomes (Jones, 2007).

2.2.4 The Role of Teacher Attitudes and Young Learners' Development

In the modern educational landscape, the implementation of active learning has been the focus of numerous empirical studies, particularly in higher education settings across the United States. One of the noteworthy innovations in this area is the SCALE-UP model (Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs), which emphasizes cooperative and inquiry-based learning in large classroom environments. As described in detail by Beichner and colleagues (2000; 2007), this approach restructures the physical and pedagogical layout of classrooms to promote collaborative learning through round tables, small-group work, and a curriculum based on student participation in simulations, problem-solving tasks, and hands-on experimentation.

Beyond these structural components, the **attitudes of teachers** emerge as a central element influencing the success or failure of such pedagogical reforms. Teacher attitudes are especially critical when working with **young learners**, whose cognitive and emotional development is still in progress. A teacher's enthusiasm, openness to innovation, and belief in student potential have been repeatedly shown to shape the learners' own motivation, engagement, and attitudes toward education. Positive teacher attitudes foster environments in which curiosity and inquiry are welcomed, thereby aligning perfectly with the goals of active learning models.

When educators actively facilitate learning through discussion, experimentation, and collaboration, they not only challenge traditional methods but also model for students how to be lifelong learners. Particularly for younger students, who are highly impressionable and responsive to authority figures, a teacher's disposition can either nurture or hinder intellectual growth. An educator's attitude affects how learners view the act of learning itself—either as an opportunity for exploration or as a task of passive reception.

Empirical findings support the argument that active learning environments significantly enhance conceptual understanding (Dori & Belcher, 2005). The notion that active learning only benefits struggling students has been largely debunked. For instance, Hake (1998), in a study involving over 6,500 college students, revealed that even high-achieving students made more substantial gains in understanding Newtonian mechanics through active methods compared to traditional instruction. These findings underscore the universal applicability of

active learning and reinforce the idea that when **teachers believe in the efficacy of engagement-based methods**, they are more likely to implement them successfully across diverse student groups, including younger learners.

Developing **higher-order thinking skills** is one of the most valued outcomes of active learning. Through guided problem-solving, data interpretation, and collaborative analysis, students cultivate intellectual independence. Bloom's taxonomy (1956) provides a framework for categorizing these cognitive processes, from basic recall to synthesis and evaluation. Active learning supports the development of these layers by requiring students to make decisions, construct arguments, and reflect on their reasoning. Teachers who internalize and value these processes are more equipped to scaffold learning experiences, especially for younger students who require age-appropriate yet intellectually stimulating tasks.

The collaborative nature of active learning also strengthens social interaction, which is essential for young learners. Studies have found that students in group-based, active settings show greater academic gains, motivation, and persistence compared to those in traditional lecture formats (Zohar & Dori, 2003; Etkina & Van Heuvelen, 2001). Through structured activities and teacher guidance, learners explore multiple perspectives, evaluate evidence, and articulate their understanding—skills that are particularly beneficial during early educational stages, where foundational habits of thinking and learning are formed.

Yet, despite the robust evidence in support of active learning, teacher attitudes can either accelerate or impede its adoption. Research has shown that many educators, particularly those accustomed to traditional, lecture-based instruction, express reluctance to adopt active methodologies due to factors such as time constraints, large class sizes, lack of training resources, and resistance to change among colleagues (Niemi, 2002). Teachers who perceive active learning as an additional burden rather than a beneficial shift are less likely to engage fully in the process, which may limit its impact—especially on younger students who rely heavily on consistent and supportive instructional practices.

In addition, **teachers' beliefs about students' capabilities** influence their willingness to engage in active learning. When educators assume that young learners are not capable of independent or critical thought, they may unintentionally structure their classrooms in ways

that suppress student agency. Conversely, when teachers hold positive beliefs about their students' potential, they are more likely to design activities that challenge and inspire. Ada's (2009) research in collaborative learning environments confirms that student engagement and cognitive gains are closely linked to the quality of social interactions facilitated by the teacher.

Student satisfaction is another critical indicator of success in active learning contexts. Despite the voluntary nature of class attendance in many SCALE-UP classrooms, universities report attendance rates as high as 90%, with significantly lower dropout rates compared to traditional courses (Kramer, Brewe, & O'Brien, 2008). Such outcomes demonstrate that when both the structural and attitudinal components of active learning align—classroom design, pedagogy, and most importantly, **teacher mindset**—the results are tangible and far-reaching. Young learners, in particular, benefit from consistent, emotionally supportive environments that encourage inquiry and risk-taking.

Instructors' personal perceptions of their roles also affect implementation. Some teachers view themselves as knowledge transmitters, while others embrace a more facilitative role. Freire (1970) criticized the traditional "banking model" of education, wherein students are passive recipients of information. He advocated for a dialogic model, emphasizing co-construction of knowledge through active participation—an approach mirrored in contemporary active learning practices. Teachers who internalize this philosophy are better positioned to foster critical thinking, especially in early learners who are still forming their academic identities.

However, challenges remain. Teachers cite numerous barriers, including lack of time, student readiness, and even parental resistance in primary and secondary education settings (Scheyvens, Amy, & Griffin, 2008). Moreover, students themselves often resist active learning when they are habituated to passive roles in the classroom. This mutual inertia between teachers and students can hinder educational reform. Felder and Brent (1996) note that educators may become discouraged when enthusiastic efforts to innovate are met with passive or confused reactions from learners.

In conclusion, the success of active learning hinges not solely on its structural application but on the **attitudes of teachers**—particularly in environments with **young learners**.

Teacher beliefs, motivation, and willingness to adapt pedagogical strategies are crucial for establishing learning settings that are intellectually rigorous and emotionally supportive. Young students, more than any other group, rely on the attitudes and behaviors of their teachers to guide their academic development. When teachers champion active learning, they lay the groundwork for generations of engaged, critical, and reflective thinkers.

2.3 Pre-school Education

2.3.1 Understanding the Purpose and Principles of Preschool Education

Preschool education generally refers to the period that starts at birth and continues until the beginning of formal education, typically primary school. In practice, early childhood education covers the ages between 0 and 6 and represents a critical phase in which children experience substantial development in mental, social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and motor domains, as well as in self-efficacy. It functions as both a program and a system that aims to establish the foundation for a child's personality, character, skills, and abilities, while taking into account their demographic background, developmental level, and individual differences. Research indicates that many developmental problems or deficiencies encountered later in life often stem from mistakes or inadequacies experienced during the preschool years (Turaşlı, 2007).

Considering both the literature and practical implementations, the concept of early childhood education is a relatively new term in many studies and practices, and following World War II, individual-centered ideologies highlighted the importance of children in society. Various studies have been conducted on this topic from different perspectives, making child education an area of focus in psychology, child development, sociology, pedagogy, medical sciences, educational sciences, and philosophy (Toran, 2012).

From a practical standpoint, preschool education, which corresponds to educational activities from birth to age six, is seen by many researchers as critical and significant for later stages of an individual's life. The reason for this is to lay the foundation for one's character and personality, identify and develop one's talents and differences for personal benefit (Demoulin, 1999). Therefore, the preschool education received by a child, or lack thereof,

significantly influences their future life stages and shapes the course of their life (Oktaý, 1999).

According to Haktanır (2015), preschool education focuses on the personal development that emerges in the 0–72-month period of a person's life, aiming to uncover and enhance a child's potential. This development is directed toward cognitive, mental, social, emotional, physical, personal, motor, and language skills. It is a planned and systematic learning process supervised by authorities and carried out by qualified educational specialists or support specialists, often involving primary caregivers such as mothers. In addition to these definitions, in practical terms, preschool education typically refers to the structured and planned education a child receives in the years before primary school, generally at the ages of 3, 4, and 5. However, research shows that preschool education begins actively from the moment of birth due to the cognitive activity that starts in the child (Oktaý, 1993).

In the literature, early childhood education is often referred to as early childhood education because it shares many common points with this concept, though they differ in fundamental dynamics. Early childhood education, which covers the 0-8 age group, as opposed to preschool education, which covers the 0-6 age group, is a period involving sensitive dynamics in terms of the child, family, and education (Witt, 1997). As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of preschool education, which focuses on developing mental and physical tools that vary from child to child between 0 to 72 months, is to prepare children for social life. Through this education, children can acquire the skills and qualities needed to interact with their social environment in a healthy way, communicate effectively, and realize their potential. Therefore, early childhood education is essential both socially and individually. Today, preschool education, which is controlled, conducted, and regulated by national authorities, is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. According to the Preschool Education Program for 36–72-Month-Old Children published by the Ministry of National Education in 2013, the program emphasizes that preschool education shapes children's attitudes toward primary education and their environment and highlights that the skills, experiences, and talents gained during preschool have a lasting impact.

The Ministry of National Education's directive on early childhood education also emphasizes that children in the 0-6 age group who are effectively and positively evaluated in terms of education and learning tend to realize their potential, establish healthy relationships with peers, and develop socially. Negative experiences or a lack of education during this period can lead to psychological problems later in life. Therefore, preschool education plays an important role in the healthy psychological, social, and physiological development of children and serves as an essential support for academic success and the realization of individual potential.

In addition to its contribution to children's development and social adaptation, preschool education plays a significant role in reducing differences between different socio-economic groups in society, ensuring that all children have equal access to education. Thus, preschool education helps prevent educational inequality in society and is crucial for the social integration and participation of vulnerable groups in educational activities. The literature confirms and supports this, showing that children from economically and socially disadvantaged families benefit more from preschool education (Cornelissen, Dustmann, Raute, & Schönberg, 2018).

Gürkan (2008) highlighted some universal goals of early childhood education, which are as follows:

1. Preschool education fosters positive self-esteem in children.
2. It encourages a sense of sharing in children.
3. It aims to develop relationships based on cooperation and respect for the environment, offering children experiences in areas such as art, literature, nature, and music that form the basis for the development of talents and qualities.

Physically, preschool education supports and focuses on the development of motor skills in children, both in large and small muscle groups. It aims to develop children's social abilities, speech, listening, creative and critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, in addition to enhancing skills in various areas of interest and experience. Finally, within a broader goal, preschool education seeks to adapt children as individuals to society and raise them as individuals who can contribute positively to society (Polat, 2010).

Planned and systematic preschool education ensures that children benefit from education based on their learning needs and attitudes. These foundational educational activities are provided to children throughout the preschool period (Zembar, 2005). Early childhood education, which has been recognized for its importance by many countries over time, was adopted by the Ministry of National Education in 2012, and should be evaluated using the theoretical framework of the early childhood education program published in 2013. Preschool education considers children's differences and designs educational processes accordingly. As highlighted by the goals and benefits of early childhood education, it supports children's development as individuals and contributes to the emergence of skills such as interaction, communication, evaluation, and control (Adagideli & Ader, 2014).

Bayraktar (2009) summarizes the role of preschool education in child development as follows: Positive relationships with peers, caregivers, and other adults during the preschool years increase children's adaptability during early schooling and high school, as well as in other phases of their lives. On the other hand, situations where these positive relationships are not established may result in problematic relationships, psychological issues, and academic failure (Turaşlı, 2011). Another study by Ladd (1990) highlights that healthy peer relationships formed during preschool play a significant role in a child's communication skills, and children who can establish these relationships perform better in their future academic lives (Bayraktar, 2009).

Thus, early childhood education refers to the education and learning processes that occur between birth and six years of age, carried out by mothers, educators, and caregivers and overseen by relevant authorities. From this point of view, preschool education prepares children for later stages of life, helping them realize their talents and abilities, develop skills, and prepare for primary education.

2.4 Language Development in Children Aged 0-6

All living things on Earth interact in some way (Özkan, 2022). The best way for human beings to carry out this interaction is associated with the ability to use language. The ability to use language well is integrated with social skills (Cephe, 2006). Interaction differs from

country to country on the basis of cultural characteristics; It is carried out with a number of communication tools such as touch, speech, gestures and facial expressions. In particular, gestures and facial expressions can have different meanings in different cultures. However, there are also cases where it shows a one-to-one match (Günay Köprülü, 2020).

There are verbal and non-verbal ways of interaction between people. While using gestures and facial expressions, touching, writing, making eye contact are among the types of non-verbal communication; Speech through voice falls into the category of verbal communication. Non-verbal communication plays a supportive and reinforcing role in order to fill some gaps in communication through speech. Especially in the first years of life, communication is established with the baby through touch, eye contact, face and body movements, and communication is considered to have started from birth (Küçük, 2006).

When language development in early childhood is examined, it is found that children in the same age group go through similar stages in the same period, but show some differences. Situations that cause differences in developmental processes; socio-economic status, learning, intelligence and gender. Children need to know the language well in order to convey their feelings and thoughts correctly. In this context, the concept of success is associated with the correct expression of feelings and thoughts. It is only possible for the child to have a command of the mother tongue if he has a rich vocabulary (Temizyürek, 2008). Since the language acquisition process is a long and complex process, the effort to clarify the language acquisition process continues through different views and theories (Çakır, 2013).

2.4.1 Basic Concepts and Stages of Language Development

Some basic concepts and definitions of language development can be listed as follows:

Semantic; It is semantic knowledge. In linguistics, it refers to the meaning attributed to words.

Pragmatic; It refers to the use of language in a way that makes sense and benefits in the socio-cultural context (Yıldırım, 2015).

Receptive Language; It is called the ability of the individual to acquire language. It refers to the tendency to acquire new words and use the words they have acquired. Taking a language message transmitted to us by someone else and trying to make sense of it is defined

as receptive language (Küçük, 2006). Receptive language develops before expressive language (Kana and Geçgel, 2023).

Expressive Language; It is the expression of what has been learned after the receptive language. In other words, it is defined as the act of speaking. Sending a message as a response to a message sent by someone else is expressive language (Küçük, 2006).

Stages of Language Development

Language, in its most basic sense, is defined as the way people communicate through sound. However, animals also communicate through sound. There are some features that distinguish human language from other communication tools. The most basic of these features is that it contains mental processes. To date, the development of civilization and the point it has reached have been largely achieved through language (Kerimoğlu, 2014). Children's language development can be examined under two headings: the pre-speech period and the speaking period (Aksoy and Baran, 2017; San Bayhan and Artan, 2011). Pre-speech period; from the phases of crying, chirping, purring and spelling; The speaking period consists of single words, telegraphic speech and first grammatical phases.

2.4.2 Early Language Milestones and Spelling phases

Crying phase (0-2 months): According to some sources, the language development process is considered to have started from the moment the child is born (Öncül and Öztürk, 2019). Through crying, the vocal cords, which are the first step of the tongue, are used. From the moment babies are born, they convey their needs to the caregiver by crying. The sounds made in the first month of the crying phase are noisy and random (Karacan, 2000a). It is observed that babies, who are initially seen to convey their distress and needs to the caregiver only with simple and uncontrolled cries, increase their awareness of using the vocal cords over time (Baştürk, 2013).

Crying begins at the moment of birth and is then instinctively used as a means of indicating needs. Crying is defined as the vocal act that forms the basis of language development in the first months of life. The main reasons for crying during this period are; There may be physical conditions that need to be relieved, such as hunger, pain, weakness, discomfort (Kara, 2004). According to Kara (2004), the first cries that appear unconsciously should not yet be

considered as a means of communication. However, it is assumed that a communication is established with the feedback given by the environment to the cries. As time passes, crying, which occurs unconsciously at first, begins to be accepted as a communication tool and a language that is expected to be returned by the child. This view coincides exactly with the view adopted by the behaviorist approach, which is one of the theories of language development. Contrary to the behaviorist approach in the literature, there is also the view that all crying from birth has a communication quality. As the months progress, the language develops and the crying decreases as the vocabulary is enriched (Çakır, 2013). In the first trimester after birth, the baby's failure to react to the sounds directed to him from his caregiver or not making any sounds may indicate a problem in the field of language development (Demir and Karakök, 2019).

Chirping phase (2-4 months): Sometime after birth, the baby bonds with the caregiver and adds happy sounds of satisfaction to the crying sound. The chirping phase covers the period from the second to the fourth month. During the chirping phase, it is observed that the baby tries to recognize his own voice and makes the same sounds again. In addition, it is the period when intensive preparations are made for the next phase (Temizyürek, 2008). The period in which smile-like sounds are made, which is defined as the chirping phase in the literature, is an indication that the baby has passed to the second stage in language development. It is assumed that by the time they complete the first month, babies recognize vowel and consonant sounds (Baştürk, 2013). It is suggested that babies reach a level where they can distinguish their mother's voice from other women from the third month (Dağabakan and Dağabakan, 2007).

Mumbling phase (4-6 months): *The mumbling* phase is considered to be the first psycholinguistic period. At this stage, the baby begins to sound syllables by combining the vowel and consonant sounds he knows. The sounds made during this period are considered universal (Baştürk, 2013). The fact that the sounds made are universal means that the syllables and sounds used do not have an equivalent in the mother tongue and that exercises are performed only on the vocal cords. During this period, it is observed that babies' interest in the environment increases (Temizyürek, 2008).

Spelling phase (6-12 months): According to Baştürk (2013), although sounds such as mama, father, and grandfather made consecutively during the spelling phase seem to make sense,

they are considered as a set of sounds formed only by syllables lined up one after the other. In particular, parents think that the words used during this period are consciously pronounced by the child and make sense. At this stage, communication is established in preparation for expressive language (Dağabakan and Dağabakan, 2007). This period, known for the repetition of syllables, is also called the cascade phase (MEB, 2015). The first word use of a child whose developmental process continues in its normal course takes place between 8-12 months (Baştürk, 2013).

Single-word phase

It covers the period of 12-18 months (Bağcı Ayrancı, 2018). Although the sounds produced in this period are considered universal, they have similar characteristics to the words of the mother tongue. It refers to the sounds formed by the repetition of sounds containing a vowel and a consonant. Spellings that are repeated voluntarily towards the end of one year provide an environment for the first words to be removed. The meaning of the first words refers not only to a word, but also to a sentence. For example, the word "Mama" uttered by the child can mean "*I want food*". For children, the meaning of a single word can be much more than it means for adults. In the literature, this situation is called a sentence word (Kara, 2004).

In this period, vocabulary is limited and the number of words used varies between 5-50. Phonemes, which were universal until this stage, turn into morphemes with meaningful combinations after this stage. Children's first words are usually words in their mother tongue. However, children can use these words by changing them (Baştürk, 2013). The sounds made by the period are defined as an effort to be in a social union with the environment and to establish a communication. In addition, the ability to establish a relationship between the word and the object is developing (Kara, 2004).

Telegraphic Speech Phase

It covers a period of 18-24 months. By the time children reach the 18th month, approximately 9 words per week are added to their vocabulary (Kara, 2004). At this stage, children begin to form simple sentences called telegraphic speech, in which two different words such as "Give water, eat food" come together (Öncül and Öztürk, 2019). It is the period when children try to convey meaningful messages with two or more words. The use of hand gestures, gestures and facial expressions is replaced by sentences formed by juxtaposing two or three words.

During this period, children develop a speech style of their own. One of the striking features in this period is the emphasis in speech. The words used are simple, they do not take any additions. In this period, the words used to form sentences stand out with their simplicity and shortness (MEB, 2015).

First Grammatical Phase

It covers the period of 24-60 months. Grammatical development accelerates with the use of words together. Sentences consisting only of nouns, adjectives and verbs at the beginning later become more functional with the addition of conjunctions and prepositions to the sentences. When children reach the age of 5, they can form sentences that comply with grammatical rules almost as much as an adult. However, at this age, the use of deep grammatical structures such as passive construction is not observed. If the number of words used is examined; It is possible to use 300 words at the age of 2 and 13,000 words at the age of 6 (Öncül and Öztürk, 2019). In his book "Thirty Million Words", Suskind (2018) emphasized the importance of the impact of environmental factors on learning and conducted a study on language development in this regard. Children of 42 families with different income levels constituted the sample of the study. The research was concluded by following the vocabulary development of children from nine months to three years of age. The findings of the study were revealed that children from families with high income levels heard 45 million words, while children from families with low income levels heard 13 million words. As a result of the study, suggestions on how to close the gap of approximately 30 million words are included. These suggestions are presented under three main headings about the child's understanding of the situation that the parents focus on, talking to the child frequently and regularly in the first years of life, and conducting the conversations in a reciprocal manner by avoiding one-sided conversations (Özenç, 2020).

In the single-word era, the words with which objects are identified begin to be replaced by words in the vocabulary of adults. In the first grammatical stage, language development is quite rapid. Interacting with peers is one of the factors that accelerate the child's language development. It is of great importance for the parents to have an attitude suitable for the language development periods in terms of the child's language development in accordance with their age. A child who communicates by making meaningless sounds such as talking to a newborn baby, below the level he can understand, may be stuck in a period of development

for a longer period than he should be due to his age (Kara, 2004). In this sense, the effect of attitudes and attitudes towards children on their developmental areas is undeniable. For this reason, it is necessary for the audience that addresses and educates children, such as parents and educators, to be aware of the characteristics of their developmental periods and the capacity and readiness of children in the period they are in and to take action accordingly.

2.4.3 Vocabulary Development in Early Childhood

The development of vocabulary in the child develops through the questions he asks to the peers and adults he is in contact with. The child's wide vocabulary has an impact on social and emotional areas. It becomes easier for the child with a large vocabulary to express his feelings and thoughts, and this allows for a more successful communication in the social field. It is known that some of the sounds are pronounced more quickly and easily than others during the language development process. Sounds that are easy to pronounce are made up of vowels, followed by consonants. In some children, the "ş" and "z" sounds may be delayed due to the difficulty of pronunciation (Kara, 2004). Language development; Parental attitude depends on many factors such as the number of children, the order of the child, the language level of the parent, the social environment, the richness of stimuli, and gender. It is known that girls speak earlier than boys and make sounds more properly (Küçük, 2006).

According to Kara (2004), the approximate age of a child whose language development progresses in its normal course and the number of words acquired are given in the table below.

Table 1.

Age/vocabulary.

Age	Vocabulary
10 months	1 word
1 year old	3 words
18 months	20 words
21 months	110+ words
2 years old	200+ words
3 years old	Around 900 words

6 years old	2500+ words
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2.5 Importance of Foreign Language Learning in Early Childhood

2.5.1 Early Childhood as a Critical Period for Language Learning

Language development during early childhood is a fundamental component of cognitive and social growth. Numerous studies underscore the unique ability of young learners to acquire languages more naturally and efficiently than older individuals, particularly when instruction aligns with their developmental stages and learning styles (Thompson et al., 2000; Johnson & Newport, 1989). This is supported by neurological findings showing heightened plasticity in the language-related regions of the brain between the ages of six and fifteen—a period often described as the "sensitive period" for language acquisition.

Young learners do not acquire language in the same way as adolescents or adults. According to Ullman (2001a), they rely heavily on procedural memory, gradually absorbing grammatical structures and vocabulary through contextualized repetition and use, rather than through explicit rule-based learning. This explains why young learners often use formulaic expressions such as “this-is-a” or “once-upon-a-time” as holistic language chunks (Ghosn, 2011). This approach reflects the connectionist theory of language development, which holds that children build a mental network of linguistic associations based on frequency and meaningful exposure (Ellis, 2003; Ormrod, 2009).

Despite sharing some developmental similarities with native first language (L1) learners, young second language (L2) learners face unique challenges. L1 learners are immersed in their mother tongue from birth, acquiring an extensive vocabulary and an intuitive grasp of grammar before formal schooling begins (Pinker, 1994). In contrast, L2 learners typically encounter the target language in limited settings—often only during short classroom sessions. Such limited exposure is insufficient for developing full language competence unless the instruction is meaningfully enriched (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Effective language development in young learners, therefore, requires instructional approaches that reflect their cognitive, linguistic, and emotional characteristics. For instance, young children benefit most from interactive, play-based learning environments, where stories, songs, and hands-on activities foster natural language use. Research has shown that children do not respond well to formal grammar instruction, and that corrective feedback—

unless delivered subtly through conversational recasting—is generally ineffective (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; White, 1991).

Incorporating storytelling into language learning is especially powerful. Stories provide rich, repetitive language and expose learners to essential grammatical structures, such as the past tense, which is notably underrepresented in many commercial English courses for young learners (Ghosn, 2002). Moreover, storytelling creates opportunities for emotional engagement and social interaction, both of which are known to enhance motivation and retention (Krashen, 1981; LeDoux, 1993). Studies across various countries have demonstrated the effectiveness of story-based instruction in improving all four language skills (Elley, 2000; Djigunovic & Vilke, 2000).

Motivation is another critical factor in early language development. As young children are unlikely to be intrinsically motivated to learn a foreign language, materials must evoke interest and emotional resonance to stimulate engagement (Jalongo, 2007; Artelt, 2005). Instructional texts that include novel and relatable content, promote interaction, and incorporate enjoyable activities—such as crafts, music, or drama—are more likely to hold children’s attention and foster a positive attitude toward learning.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the socio-cultural relevance of language learning materials. Materials that connect with the learners’ lived experiences, interests, and values are more likely to facilitate meaningful learning (Tomlinson, 2003). The inclusion of familiar cultural references and topics can lower the affective filter, enhance comprehension, and allow for the construction of meaningful associations within the learner's cognitive framework (Krashen, 1982).

In sum, fostering language development in young learners is not simply a matter of early exposure to vocabulary and grammar. It requires a holistic understanding of how children learn—cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Instruction must go beyond rote memorization and isolated drills, and instead immerse learners in rich, meaningful experiences that promote authentic communication. Methods such as storytelling, scaffolding through interaction, emotionally engaging content, and developmentally appropriate materials are all essential for maximizing the language learning potential of young children.

2.5.2 Situational Factors Affecting Language Teaching

When planning the foreign language learning process, which is a complex period, the emotions and personality traits of the individual should be taken into consideration. In a study conducted on the subject, it was concluded that the personality traits of the individual affect the foreign language learning process. It has been concluded that the individual's extroverted and responsible personality traits have positive effects on the field of speaking the learned foreign language. In the study, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' attitudes towards foreign language and personality traits. This situation shows students that they can create more efficient ways of working by getting to know themselves. While learning a foreign language, it is beneficial for the teacher who plans the process to know the personality traits of the student as well as the student to know himself. In this way, the roadmap to be drawn in the student's foreign language learning journey and the plans made for the student are individualized and the most suitable study program is created. Thus, the foreign language teaching and learning process is more effective and permanent. The educational environment is very important in foreign language learning, which is usually carried out in the classroom environment. It is thought that being in the process of learning a foreign language in an environment where the individual feels safe and thinks that he will not be judged will positively affect his views on the target language (Ünsal, 2021).

In some faculties of education in Turkey, courses such as "Foreign Language Teaching in Early Childhood" are included as elective courses within the scope of the Preschool Education program. Likewise, within the scope of the Foreign Language Teaching program, "Foreign Language Teaching to Children" courses are given. However, due to the limited course time, it is thought that it is not possible to train fully adequate and well-equipped teachers who provide foreign language education to preschool children for both fields.

This situation may lead to the adoption of incomplete or wrong methods for preschool children in these important years when the foundation of foreign language love is laid (Kuru Atadere, 2012). Kuru Atadere (2012) mentions that the course hours allocated for foreign

language teaching are limited and insufficient. Although this situation does not determine the quality of the education provided, it raises concerns that it will provide effective teaching.

Foreign language education for adults is carried out differently than for children. Considering his own personality traits, the individual can determine which of the individual or interactive learning options will provide more efficient learning for him and determine the working order in line with these factors. The understanding of individual work is a model that is generally preferred by young people and adults with introverted personality traits. In his study, Bozavlı (2012) emphasizes that this model consists of four stages. The first of these stages is the determination of the source book. The second stage is for the individual to determine which parts of the book they will benefit from. The third stage is to implement the relevant activities and the last stage is to evaluate whether the target gains have been achieved. The application of this model is not efficient on the grounds that language acquisition or learning should be included in social processes. Teachers should know the methods and approaches that appeal to different age groups in the foreign language teaching process and choose the most suitable one for the student among all these.

In his research, Uslu (2018) mentions that not providing an environment where young children can actively use the foreign language taught will negate the efforts made in the field of foreign language at an early age. Socio-economic level differences are a situation that affects the field of language development in children. It has been determined that the vocabulary of children with insufficient socio-economic level is less than their peers in better conditions. In the development of vocabulary, it is very important to create an environment that supports the language development of the child (Erdoğan et al., 2005). Just like in mother tongue development, the environment offered to the child is important in foreign language learning depending on the socio-economic level and affects the teaching process.

2.5.3 Environment and Materials Impact on Language Acquisition

Man is a social being and communication is inherent in him. Socialization is a basic need in order to become a member of society. The first step of socialization for human beings is to talk. In order to socialize, it is necessary to be included in a community and interact. Language is the inevitable tool of interaction and communication. While learning and expressing language, people need the existence of an environment (Kara, 2004).

Considering that the formation of language is based on sociality, culture and foreign language are two inseparable concepts. Defined by Ateş and Aytekin (2020) as the beginning of communicative processes, language is an indispensable part of social interaction. The strong link between language and communication makes it necessary for foreign language learners to have knowledge about the culture of the target language. Multicultural education; It is important that it is unifying, complementary and supports sociality. In line with these qualifications, European countries organize their education programs within the scope of multiculturalism and implement these regulations (Ateş and Aytekin, 2020).

In European countries, which have been home to a multicultural and multilingual mixed social structure for a long time, it is normal for the European Commission not to find the teaching of a single foreign language sufficient and to consider teaching at least two foreign languages compulsory (Ateş and Aytekin, 2020). In this context, if we look at our country, the increase in the foreign population in big cities such as Izmir and Ankara, especially in Istanbul, is one of the reasons why more importance should be given to education in the context of culture and language. Many educators and linguists agree that including activities that will ensure the active participation of the child in the process of teaching a foreign language at an early age increases the interests and desires of children. In the study of Kuru Atadere (2012), the importance of the tools used in the education process is stated. It is emphasized that the use of visual and auditory materials should be emphasized. Language, which emerges as a result of a mutual interaction process, is a social phenomenon requires the learner to be actively involved in the process (Bozavlı, 2012).

In his study, Modiri (2010) emphasizes that language is automatically recorded in the brain through music due to the overactivity of the neurophysiological system in the brain from birth to 5 years of age. For this reason, teaching through music in the preschool period is known as a logical and efficient method and educators benefit from this method. One of the reasons why auditory foreign language education is used more in the preschool period is known as the start of visual-based education for children who learn to read and write and the decrease in the recording feature of the neurophysiological system. Since literacy is not known in the preschool period, the inclusion of activities targeting the sense of hearing in the programs is one of the factors that increase the efficiency of the process.

Singing songs learned through hearing by children is found to be very beneficial for the development of expressive language (Modiri, 2010). Music activities play an important role in self-expression skills and self-confidence. Music activities, which are usually planned as group activities for the preschool period, also increase social interaction. When foreign language teaching with music and memorization-based method were compared, it was concluded that musical education was a more effective method. Contrary to ancient knowledge, it is known that there is no single type of intelligence today and that it is possible for individuals to develop different areas of intelligence by making an effort. It is seen that Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has made a great contribution to the formation of this idea. In his research, Modiri (2010) concluded that foreign language teaching with music is a more efficient method than classical teaching methods.

The materials used in the process of foreign language education in early childhood are quite diverse. Picture story books, music players, projectors for watching cartoons are some of these materials. Research is ongoing on how and for how long these materials will contribute the most to teaching. However, it is known that spoken music and cartoons often accompany the teaching process in order to correctly pronounce the sounds and words of the learned language (Vélez Gea, 2013).

In his study, Modiri (2010) states that there are many types of memory, that in some people images are more permanent, in others sounds, and in others what they read and write. With the Multiple Intelligence Theory, Gardner argues that individuals have different types of intelligence and that some of the 8 types of intelligence he has determined are more dominant than others. In his study, Çalışkan (2019) talked about the importance of using appropriate materials in order to direct children's attention to the lesson, and emphasized the importance of choosing the materials used by considering Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory. In addition, in the study, it was mentioned that the materials used should be versatile because each child has a unique type of intelligence. Materials used in foreign language teaching in preschool period; "video, song, flash cards, coloring papers, jigsaw puzzle, accessories, game, drama". In addition, in the school where the materials used in foreign language teaching are examined, the duration of foreign language education is determined as 30 minutes 5 days a week for 4-5 years old and 40 minutes 5 days a week for 6-year-olds (Çalışkan, 2019).

Günay Köprülü (2016) emphasizes that listening and comprehension skills are of greater importance among the 4 basic skills in foreign language education in the preschool period, since literacy education has not started yet. For this reason, foreign language education in the preschool period is structured only on listening and speaking. It is known that the activities planned for any attitude, behavior or skill that is intended to be taught in preschool education should excite and arouse curiosity in children and ensure the active participation of children in the process. Cartoons are known as very successful works in attracting attention with their colorful characters and voiceovers in accentuated tones. Children

Cartoons, which have a great place in the world, can be preferred by adults in the stages of learning a foreign language and reinforcing what has been learned, as they have simple and understandable speech content (Günay Köprülü, 2016). However, considering the importance of active participation of students, cartoons are insufficient. It is an ongoing matter of debate whether monitoring activities in which children are in the position of a passive spectator are appropriate for the preschool period. In a study conducted on the subject, most of the parents and all of the teachers stated that preschool children were influenced by cartoons broadcast without making any distinction between beneficial or harmful (Türkkent, 2012).

In the current century, the execution of educational activities has been greatly facilitated by the development of technology. It is predicted that the active and conscious use of technology in the classroom will accelerate the process of learning a foreign language and make the information more permanent. Collins and Halverson (2009) mention in their study that most teachers are willing to use technological tools while teaching a foreign language. However, in the research, it is mentioned that there are educators who think that using technology as a teaching tool is not the right method on the grounds that it will eliminate the teacher. These educators consider the use of technology for educational purposes wrong and perceive technology as a threat to education (Collins and Halverson, 2009, Akt., Degardin and Mucundayi, 2022).

In foreign language teaching, it is known that teachers must have some competencies in this field in order to actively involve technology in the process. In addition, the pedagogical beliefs of the teachers are also effective in the active use of technology. The use of technology in foreign language teaching is beneficial because it offers a narrowed and customized

content to learners. In addition, it is mentioned in the research that technology provides a wide reach to the student learning language both inside and outside the classroom (Degardin and Mucundayi, 2022).

Researchers suggest that as a result of 21st century skills, teachers should turn to the use of technology in the process of teaching a foreign language, planning and developing lessons. In addition, it is pointed out that the financial difficulty of accessing technological tools and the insufficient knowledge of teachers in the field of technology will negatively affect the process (Degardin and Mucundayi, 2022). In order to prevent these negative situations and to use technology in the foreign language teaching process in a useful and effective way, it is important that education policies support access to technological education tools and that the trainings provided are organized and put into practice in a way that the new generation teachers will have sufficient knowledge and equipment in the technological field.

It is known that the importance of getting support from education in the process of mother tongue acquisition, determining the factors that can contribute positively to the development of the language and preparing a suitable environment for the situation on language development is known. Another material that has a positive effect on the course of language development is story books. Since it increases the interaction between the child and the parent, the importance of organizing reading hours with the family is mentioned by educators (Yıldız Bıçakçı et al., 2018). "Interactive storybook reading approach"; It is an approach in which the child is included in the process while reading the story, the child, who is in the position of a listener during the activity, occasionally expresses his ideas about the story, interprets the pictures, guesses about what may happen in the continuation of the story, and completes the sentences that are consciously left unfinished by the reader. It is inevitable that interactive reading contributes to expressive language development as it encourages the child to speak (Whitehurst et al., 1988, Akt., Yıldız

Bıçakçı et al., 2018). In their study, Şahin and Türkoğlu (2022) emphasize the importance of preschool children being introduced to books at an early age and emphasize that picture story books develop children's ability to produce alternative solutions to the problems they encounter in daily life.

2.6 The Role of Songs in Language Learning

2.6.1 Songs as an Active Learning Tool

In early childhood and language education, songs are widely recognized as powerful tools that support active learning by integrating rhythm, melody, movement, and language. Unlike passive forms of instruction, songs engage multiple sensory modalities, stimulate emotional connections, and enhance memory retention (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Their repetitive structure and rhythmic patterns help learners internalize new vocabulary, grammatical forms, and pronunciation more effectively than traditional drills.

Songs encourage learners to participate actively—singing, miming, dancing, or even acting out lyrics—which fosters meaningful language use and promotes physical and cognitive engagement. These features align closely with the principles of active learning, which advocate student-centered, participatory, and experiential learning approaches (Medina, 2002).

Research has shown that incorporating songs in the classroom increases student motivation, lowers affective filters such as anxiety, and creates a supportive environment for risk-taking in language use (Murphey, 1992). Furthermore, music supports holistic development by combining cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional domains—making it particularly effective in preschool settings where play-based and exploratory learning is prioritized (Standley & Hughes, 1997).

Given these benefits, songs serve not only as linguistic input but also as instructional strategies that reflect active learning paradigms. Teachers who adopt songs in their classrooms often observe higher levels of learner engagement and sustained attention, especially in younger learners (Gordon et al., 2015). When used intentionally, songs become pedagogical tools that transform learning into a dynamic and interactive process.

2.6.2 Affective Filter Hypothesis and Motivation

The Affective Filter Hypothesis, introduced by Stephen Krashen, is one of his five key theories on Second Language Acquisition (SLA). This hypothesis explains how the emotional states of learners impact their ability to acquire a second language. The theory suggests that a learner's emotional state acts as a filter that either facilitates or hinders language learning. In Krashen's view, the lower the affective filter, the more effective the language acquisition process will be. A positive emotional state allows for a lower affective filter, creating an optimal learning environment. Conversely, a high affective filter—caused by negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, or lack of motivation—acts as a barrier to learning, limiting the input learners receive and process (Krashen, 1982).

Yang (2012) expands on this by emphasizing the role of motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety in influencing the affective filter. High motivation and self-esteem, coupled with low anxiety, are essential components of a low affective filter, making the learning experience more productive and enjoyable. When students are confident and motivated, their ability to retain and understand language increases, as they are more open to new information and less concerned with making mistakes. Conversely, high anxiety and low self-esteem can block language acquisition, as learners become overly focused on their fears rather than the learning process itself (Yang, 2012).

Both Schoepp (2001) and Yang (2012) argue that teachers play a critical role in managing the affective filter in the classroom. They emphasize that the classroom environment can either ease or exacerbate students' emotional states, affecting their ability to learn a new language. Teachers must strive to create a positive, supportive, and engaging classroom atmosphere where students feel safe to experiment with language without fear of ridicule or failure. Oxford (as cited in Yang, 2012) provides several strategies for lowering the affective filter. These include creating opportunities for students to experience success, fostering a friendly and cheerful classroom environment, and incorporating diverse learning activities such as music and games. Music, in particular, is highlighted as a tool that can effectively

lower anxiety and promote a relaxed atmosphere conducive to language learning (Boothe & West, n.d.).

Music has been shown to influence emotional states, making it an excellent tool for reducing the affective filter in language learners. Research has demonstrated that music helps lower anxiety and increase motivation, thereby enhancing the language learning experience. Nath, Mohamad, and Yamat (2017) discuss the benefits of using out-of-class activities, such as listening to music, watching movies, and engaging with other media, to support language learning. These activities provide learners with authentic materials that keep them engaged and motivated. Learners often report feeling more relaxed and confident when participating in activities that allow them to apply their language skills in real-world contexts. This combination of increased motivation, self-confidence, and reduced anxiety helps lower the affective filter, allowing learners to be more receptive to language input. Furthermore, the use of songs in the classroom offers students a unique way to practice language skills in a fun, non-threatening manner. Music encourages students to engage with language through rhythm, melody, and repetition, which can lead to improved retention of vocabulary and grammatical structures. The repetition and rhythm of songs create a natural learning environment where students can practice language patterns and pronunciation without feeling pressured. As Boothe and West (n.d.) note, music's ability to reduce anxiety and promote a positive emotional state makes it a powerful tool for lowering the affective filter and enhancing language learning.

2.6.3 Effective Use of Songs in Preschool English Instruction

The use of songs and music in language classrooms has long been recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing language learning. Research shows that songs can improve memory, increase concentration, reduce stress, foster a sense of community, and make language learning more enjoyable (Farmand & Pourgharib, 2013). Songs provide learners with authentic language input that is often more engaging and memorable than traditional language exercises. The repetitive nature of songs, combined with their rhythm and melody, helps learners internalize vocabulary and grammatical structures, making it easier for them to recall and use the language in real-life situations.

Tegge (2017) conducted a survey of teachers' beliefs about using songs in the language classroom and found that the majority of teachers view songs as effective tools for teaching vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. According to her study, 69% of teachers reported using songs to teach vocabulary, 56% used them to teach pronunciation and prosody, and more than half used songs to teach grammar. Teachers cited the ability of songs to engage learners, reduce anxiety, and provide repetitive language exposure as key reasons for using them in their classrooms.

However, despite the positive attitudes toward using songs in language instruction, research shows that there is often a gap between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Alisaari and Heikkola (2017) found that while teachers generally believe that singing, listening to music, and reciting poems are effective techniques for language learning, these techniques are not always implemented in practice. Their study revealed that although teachers recognized the benefits of using songs and music in the classroom, they often relied on more traditional methods, such as reading and writing exercises, rather than incorporating music-based activities.

Klimek (2017) explored the impact of music on vocabulary acquisition and found mixed results. In her study, young learners were divided into two groups: one that used music in their language learning and one that did not. The results showed no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition between the two groups. However, interviews with teachers and administrators suggested that music may still play a beneficial role in language learning, particularly for young learners who respond positively to the rhythm and melody of songs. Teachers reported that music helped students develop better rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation, even if it did not lead to immediate gains in vocabulary retention.

Farmand and Pourgharib (2013) conducted a study on the effects of songs on the pronunciation of 15-17-year-old language learners. The experimental group, which participated in 15-minute song sessions over the course of the study, showed significant improvements in pronunciation compared to the control group. The researchers concluded that songs not only helped improve pronunciation but also created a more relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, which increased students' motivation and engagement with the language.

Racette and Peretz (2007) investigated the effect of music on word recall and found that while music did not enhance long-term word recall, it did help learners remember lines of songs more easily. Their study showed that the fluency found in songs helped learners recall language patterns more effectively during the learning process. However, there was no significant difference between the recall rates of learners in the sung condition compared to those in the spoken condition over time.

The use of music in language classrooms offers a unique and effective way to engage learners and enhance language acquisition. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis demonstrates the importance of reducing anxiety and increasing motivation in language learning, and music is an excellent tool for achieving these goals. Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligences Theory further supports the use of music, as it caters to musical-rhythmic intelligence and provides a way for learners to engage with language in a natural and enjoyable manner.

Although research on the impact of music in language learning yields mixed results, the majority of studies support the idea that music can enhance vocabulary retention, pronunciation, and overall language engagement. Teachers should consider incorporating songs and music into their language classrooms as a way to create a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, while also addressing the diverse needs of their students.

2.7 Review of Related Studies

2.7.1 Research Conducted in Turkey

In the Turkish early childhood education context, music and songs have attracted increasing scholarly interest as tools for active learning. Arıcı et al. (2023) explored how preschool teachers perceive musical activities within educational settings. The study revealed that although teachers were generally aware of the motivational power of music, a lack of structured training and limited access to musical materials hindered their effective implementation.

Karademir and Kartal (2019) further emphasized the practical constraints faced by educators. Their investigation into music-based practices in preschool classrooms

indicated a reliance on rhythmic exercises; however, this approach often remained superficial due to the scarcity of resources and inadequate professional development programs.

Focusing on language education, Şevik (2011) provided insight into how songs are utilized in English language teaching among young learners. While teachers acknowledged the educational benefits of music in language retention and classroom engagement, they reported difficulty in sourcing suitable content and objectively evaluating students' progress through song-based activities.

Another dimension was introduced by Pektaş and Elmacı (2023), who compared different preschool settings in Turkey. Their findings suggested that institutional factors play a decisive role in shaping musical practices. Independent kindergartens, with greater curricular flexibility and resource autonomy, were found to offer more diverse and consistent musical experiences compared to state-funded institutions.

2.7.2 Research Conducted Abroad

Internationally, research has also underscored the significance of songs and musical activities in early childhood education. Ehrlin and Tivenius (2018) conducted a quantitative study in Sweden to determine factors influencing the extent of music in daily preschool activities. The study concluded that teachers' musical competence and institutional support played crucial roles in the integration of music into the curriculum.

Flores (2018) examined kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the relationship between music and early learning. The findings suggested that teachers perceived music as a valuable tool for enhancing children's cognitive and social development, emphasizing its role in facilitating learning processes.

Williams et al. (2015) explored the associations between early shared music activities in the home and later child outcomes in Australia. The longitudinal study found that early musical engagement positively influenced children's literacy and numeracy skills, as well as social-emotional development.

Supporting these findings, Winsler et al. (2011) emphasized the role of structured music and movement curricula in promoting self-regulatory skills among young children in the U.S.

Their study indicated that early engagement in such programs fosters essential executive functions, laying a foundation for later academic performance.



3.METHOD

This section discusses the research instruments, participants, data collection process, and data analysis methods in line with the objectives of the study.

The research was conducted using a quantitative research design to determine the attitudes of preschool English teachers toward teaching English through songs. The study examined various variables such as teachers' attitudes regarding the use of songs in language teaching and frequency of their use of songs. Therefore, the data were collected through a survey, and teachers' views were analyzed.

3.1 Research Design

The research was conducted using a quantitative research design to determine the attitudes of preschool English teachers toward teaching English through songs. The study examined various variables such as teachers' attitudes towards the use of songs in language teaching and frequency of their use of songs. Therefore, the data were collected through a survey, and teachers' views and experiences were analyzed.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were preschool English teachers working in various private and schools in Istanbul. A total of 116 teachers took part in the study. The selection criteria included having at least one year of teaching experience in preschool education and incorporating English songs in their teaching practices. Convenience sampling was used to reach participants who were willing to participate in the study.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

A structured survey was used to collect data on preschool teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding the use of songs in English language teaching. The survey consisted of 30 items (17 for likert scale) divided into two sections:

Demographic Information: This section gathered background information about the participants, such as age, years of teaching experience, and the type of institution they work in.

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Songs in Language Teaching: This section measured teachers' beliefs about the use of using songs for language acquisition.

The survey used a Likert scale (e.g., 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) to assess teachers' responses. The primary instrument used in this study was "The EFL Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Towards the Use of Songs in Learning English", developed by Heba M.N. Al-Efeshat and Abdallah Baniabdelrahman (2020). This scale has been widely utilized to assess perceptions regarding the use of songs in English language instruction.

The scale used in this study consists of a total of 17 items and is structured with a 5-point Likert-type rating system. Participants were asked to rate each item on a scale from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree." The items assess the teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical value of using songs, their impact on student participation, their contribution to language skill development, and their effect on student motivation. The scale exhibits a unidimensional structure, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward teaching through songs.

In the original study, the content validity of the scale was ensured based on the opinions of field experts, and reliability analysis reported a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .84. This value indicates a high level of internal consistency for the scale. In this study, the reliability of the attitude scale was found to be high, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .98.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected in the study were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 statistical software. Frequency and percentage analyses were utilized to determine the descriptive characteristics of the participating teachers, while mean and standard deviation statistics were used to examine the scale items.

In order to assess whether the research variables were normally distributed, kurtosis and skewness values were analyzed.

Table 2.*Normality of Distribution*

	Kurtosis	Skew
Attitude	0,845	-0,962

According to the relevant literature, skewness and kurtosis values ranging between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), or between +2.0 and -2.0 (George & Mallery, 2010), are considered indicative of a normal distribution. Based on these criteria, it was determined that the variables in the study demonstrated normal distribution. Therefore, parametric methods were employed in the data analysis.

To examine the differences in attitude scale levels according to the descriptive characteristics of the teachers, independent samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and post hoc (Tukey) tests were conducted.

4.FINDINGS

The findings regarding the descriptive characteristics of the teachers are presented below.

Table 3.

Distribution of Teachers According to Descriptive Characteristics

Groups	(n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
23-29 Years	52	44.8
30-35 Years	23	19.8
35 and above	41	35.3
Teaching Experience		
Less Than 5 Years	53	45.7
5-10 Years	26	22.4
11-15 Years	22	19.0
16 Years and Above	15	12.9
Preschool Experience		
Less Than 5 Years	71	61.2
5-10 Years	29	25.0
11 Years and Above	16	13.8
Graduation Programme		
English Language Teaching Program (Faculty of Education)	53	45.7
English Language and Literature (Faculty of Arts and Sciences)	33	28.4
Other	30	25.9
Postgraduate Education Status		
Master's Degree	19	16.4
No, I Haven't Done It	97	83.6
Active Learning Training Status		
Yes	93	80.2
No	23	19.8
Use of Song Method		
I Have Used It Before	22	19.0
I Am Currently Using It	94	81.0
Years of Using Song Method		
I Have Been Using It for 1-3 Years	57	49.1
I Have Been Using It for 3-5 Years	17	14.7
I Have Been Using It for More Than 5 Years	42	36.2

The descriptive characteristics of the preschool English language teachers participating in the study are presented below. According to the data, 44.8% of the teachers were aged between 23 and 29, 19.8% were aged between 30 and 35, and 35.3% were 36 years and older. In terms of teaching experience, 45.7% had less than 5 years of experience, 22.4% had 5 to 10 years, 19.0% had 11 to 15 years, and 12.9% had more than 16 years of experience. Regarding their preschool English teaching experience, 61.2% of the teachers had been working in this field for less than 5 years, 25.0% for 5 to 10 years, and 13.8% for more than 11 years.

Concerning graduation program, 45.7% were graduates of English Language Teaching programs in Faculties of Education, 28.4% held degrees in English Language and Literature from Faculties of Arts and Sciences, and 25.9% graduated from other departments. In terms of postgraduate education, only 16.4% had a master's degree, while 83.6% had not pursued graduate-level studies.

With regard to in-service training on active learning, 80.2% of the teachers reported that they had received training, whereas 19.8% had not. Additionally, 81.0% of the participants stated that they currently employ the song-based method in their classes, while 19.0% indicated that they had used it previously but were not currently applying it. In terms of the duration of implementation of this method, 49.1% reported having used it for 1–3 years, 14.7% for 3–5 years, and 36.2% for more than 5 years.

4.1 Findings Related to Sub-Research Questions

4.2 Findings Related to 1st Sub-Research Question

In order to examine the research question “Is there a difference between preschool English teachers’ attitude levels according to their teaching experience?”, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in attitude scores across groups with varying lengths of teaching experience. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results are presented in Table 4.

Tablo 4.*Differences in Attitude Scores According to Teaching Experience*

	Group	N	Mean	Ss	F	p
Attitude	Less Than 5 Years	53	4.202	0.988	1.233	0.301
	5-10 Years	26	4.206	1.139		
	11-15 Years	22	4.091	1.344		
	16 Years and Above	15	4.722	0.375		

One-Way Analysis of Variance

According to the results, although the group with 16 years and above experience showed the highest mean score ($M = 4.722$) and the group with 11–15 years of experience had the lowest ($M = 4.091$), the difference between groups did not reach statistical significance ($F(3, 112) = 1.233, p = .301$).

These findings indicate that teachers' attitudes toward the use of songs as an active learning method do not significantly differ based on their professional seniority. While there appears to be a trend suggesting more experienced teachers may hold slightly more favorable attitudes, the variation is not sufficient to be deemed statistically meaningful. This could imply that the recognition of the pedagogical value of songs in early English instruction is consistent across different levels of teaching experience.

4.3 Findings Related to 2nd Sub-Research Question

To address the research question “Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to their type of graduation program?”, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The aim was to determine whether the attitudes of preschool English teachers toward using songs as an active learning method varied based on the academic department from which they graduated. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.*Differences in Attitude Scores According to Type of Graduation Program*

	Group	N	Mean	Ss	F	p
Attitude	English Language Teaching Program (Faculty of Education)	53	4.335	0.879	0.516	0.598
	English Language and Literature (Faculty of Arts and Sciences)	33	4.255	1.130		
	Other	30	4.090	1.244		

One-Way Analysis of Variance

The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in attitude scores among the different graduation program groups ($F(2, 113) = 0.516, p = .598$). Although the highest average attitude score was observed among graduates of English Language Teaching programs ($M = 4.335$), followed by English Literature graduates ($M = 4.255$) and others ($M = 4.090$), the observed differences were not sufficient to indicate a meaningful variation.

This finding suggests that the type of academic background does not significantly influence teachers' attitudes toward using songs in English language instruction. Regardless of whether teachers were trained through pedagogical programs or language and literature programs, they demonstrated similarly positive orientations toward integrating song-based methods in early childhood English education.

4.4 Findings Related to 3rd Sub-Research Question

To address the research question "Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to their postgraduate education status?", an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean attitude scores of teachers who had completed a postgraduate degree (master's) and those who had not. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.*Differences in Attitude Scores According to Postgraduate Education Status*

	Group	N	Mean	Ss	t	sd	p
Attitude	Master's Degree	19	4.372	1.227	0.554	114	0.581
	No, I Haven't Done It	97	4.225	1.019			

Independent Samples T-Test

The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in attitude scores between teachers with a postgraduate degree and those without ($t(114) = 0.554, p = .581$). Although the average score was slightly higher among those who had completed a master's degree ($M = 4.372$) compared to those who had not ($M = 4.225$), the difference was not statistically meaningful.

These findings suggest that postgraduate education does not significantly impact teachers' attitudes toward using songs as an active learning method in English instruction. The generally high scores across both groups indicate that teachers, regardless of their level of academic attainment beyond undergraduate studies, tend to hold similarly positive perceptions regarding the pedagogical value of integrating songs into language teaching practices.

4.5 Findings Related to 4th Sub-Research Question

To explore the research question “Is there a difference between preschool English teachers' attitude levels according to whether they have received in-service training?”, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the attitude scores of teachers who had participated in active learning-related in-service training with those who had not. The descriptive statistics and test results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7:*Differences in Attitude Scores According to Active Learning Training Status*

	Group	N	Mean	Ss	t	sd	p
Attitude	Yes	93	4.326	1.012	1.592	114	0.114
	No	23	3.939	1.170			

Independent Samples T-Test

The results indicate that although teachers who received active learning training reported higher mean attitude scores ($M = 4.326$) compared to those who did not ($M = 3.939$), this difference was not statistically significant ($t(114) = 1.592$, $p = .114$).

These findings suggest that participation in active learning training does not significantly influence teachers' attitudes toward the use of songs as an active learning technique in preschool English language instruction. Nonetheless, the difference in mean scores may imply a potential positive trend in favor of training, which could become statistically meaningful with a larger sample size or targeted content related specifically to music-based pedagogy.

4.5 Descriptive Analyses

Table 8:*Descriptive Statistics of the Scale of Teaching English Through Songs*

Substance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standart Sapma (Std. Deviation)
I believe that songs contribute positively to children's English learning.	116	1,00	5,00	4,20	1,12859
Songs improve children's English vocabulary.	116	1,00	5,00	4,47	1,11044
Songs contribute to the development of children's English grammar structures.	116	1,00	5,00	4,22	1,15427
Songs help children improve their pronunciation.	116	1,00	5,00	4,34	1,13474

Substance	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standart Sapma (Std. Deviation)
Songs teach children English in a fun way.	116	1,00	5,00	4,38	1,14294
Songs increase children's participation in the lesson.	116	1,00	5,00	4,32	1,11750
Teaching through songs allows children to learn English more permanently.	116	1,00	5,00	4,20	1,20224
Songs help children learn English naturally.	116	1,00	5,00	3,88	1,14272
Songs increase children's motivation to learn a language.	116	1,00	5,00	4,00	1,13575
Songs make it easier for children to remember learned English words.	116	1,00	5,00	4,40	1,13517
Songs develop children's ability to use language.	116	1,00	5,00	4,33	1,14208
The songs introduce children to the target language in a cultural context.	116	1,00	5,00	4,45	1,14315
Songs contribute to the emotional development of children.	116	1,00	5,00	4,36	1,14208
Classroom management becomes easier in teaching through songs.	116	1,00	5,00	4,05	1,18695
Songs help children gain self-confidence.	116	1,00	5,00	4,	1,16908
Teaching through songs contributes to children's love of the English language.	111	1,00	5,00	4,17	1,20591

In the study, descriptive statistics were examined for a scale consisting of 17 items for English teachers' use of English songs in preschool classes.

The mean values were found to be above the 4 level in all items, indicating that the participants had an overall positive attitude towards teaching English through songs. In particular, "Songs improve children's English vocabulary" (Mean = 4.5315) and "Songs introduce children to the target language in a cultural context" (Mean = 4.5045) had the highest averages. The lowest average was seen in the item "Classroom management is easier in teaching through songs" (Mean = 4.1351).

5 DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the attitudes of kindergarten English teachers working in İstanbul about using songs as an active learning technique and their classroom practices. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers see songs as an effective tool in language teaching and think that they support an active learning process. This result is consistent with the views of Hohmann et al. (1995) that active learning is critical in early childhood. Songs, by their very nature, engage multiple senses, offer rhythmic repetition, and create emotionally rich experiences, making them particularly suitable for young learners (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

In the research, the majority of teachers stated that songs contribute positively to children's English learning and emphasized that songs are especially effective in areas such as vocabulary development and pronunciation improvement. These results are consistent with the literature (Stefanou et al., 2012) arguing that songs support both cognitive and emotional development in children's language learning processes. Songs also contribute to the internalization of linguistic structures, promote confidence, and provide opportunities for repetition without boredom (Murphey, 1992).

As a result of normality analysis, it was determined that the data were not normally distributed and therefore non-parametric tests such as Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U were used. There was no significant difference in the analyzes made according to variables such as teaching experience, kindergarten English teaching experience, graduation degree, graduated department and in-service training status. This result shows that positive attitudes towards the use of songs are independent of teachers' experience, education level, or the source of the education they receive. Similar patterns have been observed in other studies where teachers' beliefs about effective teaching tools were shaped more by practical classroom experience than by academic credentials (Borg, 2003).

One of the particularly noteworthy findings is that teachers with 16-20 years of experience have higher average scores. This suggests that the experience contributed to developing a conscious approach to the use of songs. However, this difference was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, Stefanou et al. (2012) stated that teacher experience can support more effective use of active learning techniques.

The fact that 79.3% of the participants stated that they actively use the song method shows that the use of songs in the preschool period has become a common teaching strategy. The finding that songs are a powerful tool in terms of both language development and motivation has been reflected in the studies in literature that songs are an effective learning tool, especially for children in the younger age group (Akal & Serdar, 2020; Szabo, 2018).

It was noted that the mean scales of the teachers who received in-service training, courses or seminars were higher, but this difference was not found to be significant. This finding suggests that the direct impact of in-service training on song use may be limited. A greater focus on active learning methods in the content of training can create more significant changes in teacher attitudes (European Commission, 2020). As noted by the European Commission (2020), **continuous professional development (CPD)** is most effective when it directly addresses classroom realities and includes practical, context-relevant strategies. CPD programs that incorporate musical pedagogy and active learning models could amplify the impact of teacher training in this area.

Demographic findings show that most of the teachers (57.7%) have less than 5 years of professional experience. This situation shows that preschool English teaching is a relatively young field in Turkey and teachers need to constantly update their knowledge of early childhood education (Turhan, 2018).

In particular, the high participation given to the statement "songs teach language in a cultural context" indicates that songs are effective not only in linguistic but also in cultural transmission. As mentioned by Pierini (2019), language education is an important tool that supports intercultural understanding, and in this context, songs can be considered as an indispensable resource.

However, some difficulties encountered in practice should not be overlooked. Although not directly measured in the research, some limiting factors (lack of materials, time limitations, parents' expectations), which are frequently emphasized in the literature, can negatively affect the effectiveness of song use (Sengul, 2018; Turhan & Seufert, 2015). In particular, the lack of material support by school administrations or intense curriculum pressure can prevent teachers from fully using active learning techniques.

As a result, these research findings revealed that songs are an effective active learning tool in preschool English teaching and teachers generally adopt this method. However, for these positive attitudes to translate into even more impactful classroom practices, it is essential to provide **ongoing support, structured CPD opportunities, and institutional commitment** to child-centered, creative pedagogies. Further research with observational data and longitudinal designs could offer deeper insights into how teacher beliefs shape actual classroom behavior and student outcomes.



6 CONCLUSION

In this study, kindergarten English teachers' attitudes to active learning through songs were examined and important results were reached. The findings revealed that teachers saw songs not only as a fun activity but also as an effective language learning tool.

The vast majority of teachers stated that songs increase vocabulary, improve pronunciation, facilitate the learning of language structures and increase participation in lessons in children's English learning. These findings are consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of active participation and natural learning at an early age (Hohmann et al., 1995; Stefanou et al., 2012).

Another important finding of the study is that there is no significant difference between the demographic characteristics of the teachers (teaching experience, graduation status, in-service training) and their attitudes towards the use of songs. This shows that active learning strategies are generally accepted among teachers. However, it is recommended that environmental factors that may affect the practice (school management, material support, parents' attitudes) should be examined in more detail in future studies.

Among the limitations of the study are that it was based only on survey data and qualitative data collection techniques such as observation were not used. For this reason, in future studies, more in-depth analyzes can be made by directly observing teachers' classroom practices.

In practice, increasing teachers' knowledge and skills on active learning methods through in-service training will significantly increase the success of foreign language teaching at an early age. In addition, it is of great importance that school administration provides teachers with material and time support to support active learning.

Finally, this research has made an important contribution to the literature on the prevalence of song use in English teaching in preschool period in and teachers' attitudes on this method. The findings will also shed light on the development of policies for the more effective use of active learning in preschool language education. Future studies might examine the **quality and frequency of implementation**, not just attitudes, to fully understand the pedagogical value of songs.

6.1 Recommendation for Further Research

Future research could benefit from incorporating classroom observations to verify whether the attitudes reported by teachers are reflected in their actual classroom practices. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how songs are implemented as active learning tools in real-life settings. Additionally, further studies might focus on investigating the effects of song-based learning on young learners' language development, particularly in terms of vocabulary retention, motivation, and oral fluency. Such research would offer valuable insights into the pedagogical effectiveness of music-integrated instruction.

Comparative studies examining different geographical regions, types of schools, or age groups could also reveal meaningful contextual variations in the use and perception of songs in preschool English education. Moreover, longitudinal research is recommended to explore how teachers' attitudes and instructional behaviors evolve over time, especially following professional development programs or access to new instructional resources. These lines of inquiry could significantly contribute to the development of more effective, child-centered language teaching practices.

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8.APPENDIX

Appendix A: DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Preschool English Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching English Through Songs as an Active Learning Technique

Değerli Meslektaşım,

Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında İngilizce eğitim programı kapsamında aktif öğrenme metoduna uygun etkinlikler arasında şarkılar yoluyla öğretimin uygulama durumlarını belirlemek amacıyla bir araştırma planlanmıştır. Size sunulan anket, planlanan araştırmanın verilerini toplamak üzere hazırlanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler gizli tutulacak, yalnızca araştırma için kullanılacaktır.

Yanıtlamanız rica edilen anket 2 bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde kişisel bilgilerinize dair 13 adet soru yer almaktadır. İkinci bölümde şarkılarla İngilizce eğitimine ilişkin görüşlerinizi aktarabileceğiniz maddeler yer almaktadır.

Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçların geçerliliği, sizin bu ankette karşılaşılabileceğiniz sorulara vereceğiniz gerçek cevaplara bağlıdır. Bu nedenle, lütfen her soruyu dikkatle okuyup sınıf içindeki öğretiminizi göz önünde bulundurarak size en uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz ve yanıtsız soru bırakmayınız.

İlginiz ve desteğiniz için teşekkür ederim.

Fikriye Küçükkeçeci

Yeditepe Üniversitesi

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Anabilim Dalı

Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı Öğrencisi

BÖLÜM 2 Anketin bu bölümünde şarkılar yoluyla İngilizce eğitimine ilişkin görüşlerinizi göz önünde bulundurarak “kesinlikle katılmıyorum”, “katılmıyorum”, “kararsızım”, “katılıyorum”, “kesinlikle katılıyorum” seçeneklerinden size en uygun olan seçeneği işaretlemeniz beklenmektedir.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Songs are considered a valuable pedagogical tool in learning English.					

Songs are considered a valuable pedagogical tool in learning English.					
Songs are considered a valuable pedagogical tool in learning English.					
Songs help develop language acquisition.					
Songs can be used to illustrate themes or topics.					
Songs help learners become familiar with word stress, intonation and rhythm.					
Songs enable learners to remember chunks of language.					
Songs provide students with opportunity for great exposure to improve vocabulary acquisition.					
Songs help improve students' speaking skills.					
Songs help students to better understanding of the culture of the target language.					
Songs are useful in the teaching of sentence structure.					
Songs help learners improve their listening and pronunciation skills.					
Songs increase students' enjoyment of learning English.					
Songs add interest to the classroom routine.					
Songs improve student's motivation.					
Songs help create a relaxed and non-threatening environment of learning.					

Songs can be used to practice the four skills.					
Songs help create more students' participation.					
Songs lower students' anxiety toward learning English.					



Appendix B: SCALE PERMISSION CORRESPONDENCE


abdallah baniabdelrahman <baniabdelrahman@gmail.com>
 Alıcı: ben

6 Oca 2024 Cmt 10:38 ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮



Your request is approved.
 Yes of course you can use it in you thesis.
 Best regards
 ...


Fikriye Küçükkeçeci <fikriye.kucukkececi@gmail.com>
 Alıcı: abdallah

6 Oca 2024 Cmt 15:25 ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

Thank you very much for your approval and kind response.
 Best Regards,

 abdallah baniabdelrahman <baniabdelrahman@gmail.com>, 6 Oca 2024 Cmt, 10:38 tarihinde şunu yazdı:
 ...

Appendix C: PERMISSION FOR THE USE OF SCALE

Scale Usage Permission


fikriye.kucukkececi@gmail.com
 Alıcı: hebbahmansoor, bcc: ddemirbulak

5 Oca 2024 Cum 02:17 ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

Dear Heba Al-efeshat,

 I am Fikriye Küçükkeçeci, and I am writing this e-mail to you as a Thesis Master's student at Yeditepe University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Curriculum and Curriculum. I request your permission to use the scale titled "The EFL Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Towards The Use of Songs in Learning English" for my thesis titled "Preschool Teachers' Opinion on Teaching Through Songs as an Active Learning Technique".

 I would like to request your evaluation and approval on this request. If permission is granted, I undertake that we will take all necessary security measures.

 Thank you for your attention and time.

 Fikriye Küçükkeçeci
 ...

Appendix D: ETHICS COMMITTEE DECISION

YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ BEŞERİ VE SOSYAL BİLİMLER
ETİK KURUL KOMİSYONU
20.02.2024 TARİHLİ
48/2024 No' lu TOPLANTI KARARLARI

Prof. Dr. Suat ANAR



Etik Kurul Komisyon Başkanı

İletişim Fakültesi, Gazetecilik Bölümü

Prof. Dr. Sultan TAHMAZOĞLU ÜZELTÜRK

Hukuk Fakültesi, Hukuk Bölümü

(İzinli)

Prof. Dr. Cengiz ERİŞEN



İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Prof. Dr. Demet LÜKÜSLÜ

Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyoloji Bölümü

(İzinli)

Prof. Dr. Pelin HÜRMERİÇ



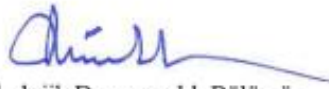
İletişim Fakültesi, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Bölümü

Prof. Dr. Erkut AKKARTAL



İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Lojistik Yönetimi Bölümü

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Münire ERDEN



Eğitim Fakültesi, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Bölümü

Appendix E: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

	T.C. YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ Sosyal Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu Müdürlüğü	
Sayı : E.51461623-050.06-357 Konu : Fikriye Küçükkeçeci'nin Etik Kurul Onayı Hk.		06.03.2024
İLGİLİ MAKAMA		
Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Programı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Fikriye Küçükkeçeci'nin Doç. Dr. Dilara Demirbulak danışmanlığında gerçekleştireceği 'Okul Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Şarkı Yoluyla İngilizce Öğretimi Üzerine Görüşleri' başlıklı araştırmasının Beşeri Bilimler Etik standartlarına uygunluğuna ilişkin Yeditepe Üniversitesi Beşeri ve Sosyal Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etik Kurulu onayı ekte sunulmuştur.		
Gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.		
Prof. Dr. Fatma Yeşim EKİNCİ Rektör Yardımcısı		
Ek: 48 Sayılı Kurul Kararı.pdf		
Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır. Belge Doğrulama Adresi : http://belgedogrulama.yeditepe.edu.tr/bg.aspx?id=EB7ECCFF-2C0A-4671-8DBD-DA2C5ADDBFCB Yeditepe Üniversitesi 26 Ağustos Yerleşimi, İnönü Mahallesi Kayışdağı Caddesi 34755 Bilgi İçin: Eylem BOZOK		

Appendix F: MEB RESEARCH PERMIT



T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü



Sayı : E-59090411-20-105626287
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzni (Fikriye
KÜÇÜKKEÇECİ)

04/07/2024

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi : a) Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 21.01.2020 tarihli ve 2020/2 sayılı genelgesi.
b) Yeditepe Üniversitesinin 24.06.2024 tarihli ve E-73847308-730.08.03-58 sayılı yazısı.
c) Müdürlüğümüz Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 27.06.2024 tarihli tutanağı.

Araştırma Konusu : Okul Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Şarkı Yoluyla İngilizce Öğretimi
Üzerine Görüşleri
Araştırma Türü : Görüşme
Araştırma Yeri : İstanbul
Araştırma Yapılacak Kişiler : Okul Öncesi Öğretmenleri
Araştırmanın Süresi : 2023 - 2024 Eğitim - Öğretim Yılı

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen araştırmanın; 6698 sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanununa aykırı olarak kişisel veri istenmemesi, öğrenci velilerinden açık rıza onayı alınması, bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, bir örneği Müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarınıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması ve araştırma bittikten sonra 2 (iki) hafta içerisinde Müdürlüğümüze gönderilmesi, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim ve öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde, ilgi (a) genelge esasları dâhilinde uygulanması kaydıyla Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Murat Mücahit YENTÜR
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
Mustafa KAYA
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek:
1- İlgi (b) Yazı ve Ekleri (7 Sayfa)
2- İlgi (c) Tutanak (1 Sayfa)

Bu belge güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.
Adres : Binbirdirek Mah. İmran Öktem Cad.No: 1 Sultanahmet Fatih İstanbul Belge Doğrulama : <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/meb-ehys>
Telefon : 0212 384 36 30 Bilgi İçin : Seda BALCI
E-posta : stratejigelistirme34@meb.gov.tr Uzman : Büro Hizmetleri
Kep Adresi : mebi@ns01.kep.tr İnternet Adresi : <http://istanbul.meb.gov.tr/>