

**T.C.**  
**Marmara University**  
**The Graduate School of Educational Sciences**  
**The Department of Elementary Education**  
**The Department of Early Childhood Education**

**THE EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM ON VERY YOUNG LEARNERS'  
VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS**

**Burcu GÜNGÖR**  
**(Doctoral thesis)**

**Supervisor**  
**Prof. Dr. Alev ÖNDER**

**İstanbul, 2020**

**All use rights belong to the  
Marmara University Graduate of Educational Sciences  
© 2020**

## APPROVAL

This PhD thesis entitled "THE EFFECTS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM ON VERY YOUNG LEARNERS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS" prepared and submitted by Burcu GÜNGÖR has been examined and accepted by the Examining Committee Members in 13/01/2020.

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Elementary Education Department, Marmara University.

Name/Surname

Signature

SUPERVISOR Prof. Dr. Alev Toker

COMMITTEE MEMBER Prof. Dr. Cemalettin Ural

COMMITTEE MEMBER Doç. Dr. Hüseyin AKBAĞ

COMMITTEE MEMBER Prof. Dr. İsmet ŞEKER

COMMITTEE MEMBER Doç. Dr. Mustafa Özar

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

2004-2008 Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching from Marmara University,  
İstanbul, Turkey

2009-2013 Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Middle Technical East  
University, Ankara, Turkey

2015-2020 PhD degree in Early Childhood Education from Marmara University,  
İstanbul, Turkey

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**E-mail** : burcugungor02@gmail.com



To Zelal..

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep sense of thanks and gratitude to Prof. Dr. Alev Önder, my advisor and mentor, for his support and guidance during the entire thesis. His encouragement and support made me feel confident to fulfill my desire and helped me become more enduring to overcome some challenges.

My grateful thanks are also extended to Prof. Dr. Ozana URAL who has paved the way for me with her useful critiques with enthusiastic encouragement and enlightened my way of thinking at all times. I would like to express that she will be one of my role model teachers throughout my academic life.

I am very grateful to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Müge AKBAĞ for her advice and valuable contributions during thesis monitoring process. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa OTRAR for assisting me in statistical analysis. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Zarife Seçer who contributed their ideas and criticisms during my thesis defense.

I would also like to express heartfelt thanks to my dear friends Hande ARSLAN ÇİFTÇİ, Ayşenur DURAN and Emine KUTLU for their full support and continuous encouragement.

I lovingly thank my husband Cuma, who was with me at every stage of my thesis, shedding light on my way with her critics, easing the progress of the study with his continual assistance and mobilizing all the facilities for me to undergo an efficient and a productive process. I have been very fortunate to have been with him for nearly 18 years because thanks to him, I have been making progress in life through my journey of self-actualization with great pleasure.

I would like to express my thanks to my beloved mother and father, IŞIK ÖZÇELİK and Hamza ÖZÇELİK who have been providing devoted support by taking care of my kids during this rigorous period. I would like to give special thanks to my sweethearts, Hafsa Zilan GÜNGÖR and Zelal GÜNGÖR.

Burcu GÜNGÖR

İstanbul, January 2020

## ABSTRACT

The better quality English education programs integrating both Early Childhood Education and English Language Education disciplines and involving age-appropriate methodologies, materials and assessment are developed, the more likely young children are to obtain successful and long-lasting learning outcomes in target language. From this point of view, an English education program is developed in this thesis for very young learners considering their distinctive characteristics and diverse language learning needs. In order to examine the effectiveness of this program, two assessment instruments whose formats and procedures are in alignment with the aims of pre-primary foreign language education are designed, piloted and administered to very young learners as a part of empirical study. One of them is an English Picture Vocabulary Test (EPVT) for measuring children's receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and the other one is Performance-based Assessment (PA) for assessing their communicative skills. These tools are pre-piloted with 20 children of the target age group and final piloted with 251 children from different private pre-primary schools. The internal consistency (Kuder-Richardson Formula 20) are found to be .89, .91, .98 respectively for both EPVT (Receptive), EPVT (Productive) and PA. The selection of upper and lower groups for the validation test items as a technique is used to analyze the discrimination power of PA and point-biserial correlation is used for the item difficulty and discrimination indices of EPVT. The findings indicate that EPVT and PA having ideal difficulty in terms of discrimination potential can serve as a valid and reliable assessment tool for assessing receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge and basic communicative skills of very young EFL learners respectively.

In the second part of the study, the newly designed 'Early Childhood English Language Education Program' is piloted on a convenience sample of the target age group from a private pre-primary school to ensure the suitability of content, instructional materials, methods, approaches, principles and assessment tools with VYLs. After some corrections and improvements, the actual intervention is carried out at one of the public pre-primary schools in Beşiktaş/İstanbul. The study group consists of a total of 36 children, aged between 5 and 6 years who are randomly selected from 68 children in

this pre-primary school. In this experimental research, the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest measurements are used. There are 18 children in both experimental group (M = 5 years and 11 months) and control group (M = 5 years and 10 months). The English learning hours that last for 40-45 minutes take place three times a week over 16 weeks. There are six common basic themes including 48 target vocabulary and certain structures with which children are familiar in their mainstream education. Whereas these themes are taught using traditional methods including repetition of decontextualized sentences, memorization of target vocabulary and teacher-led activities with flashcards and songs, same themes are taught to experimental group with communicative and interactive approaches including age-appropriate activities (e.g., thinking skill activities, art and craft activities, stories, drama activities, games, songs, parental involvement) in the scope of the program. EPVT and PA are used to measure VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge and communicative skills respectively. The findings of this study reveal that treatment group shows rapid gains in English word comprehension, production and communication skills. The children's listening and speaking skills in this group are developed in the target language as a result of their exposure to contextualized language learning in meaningful and enjoyable ways through play-based activities and interactive materials. The 'age' and 'gender' are not considered a significant factor in their L2 learning. The results of delayed posttest also demonstrate that effective TEVYL which has not only short term effects but also long-term; in other words, it provides long-lasting benefits in the L2 learning process. Results show clear evidence that quality L2 education program plays a crucial role in engaging children in active participation, sustaining their interest and developing their linguistic and communicative skills.

In addition, children's attitudes, perceptions and interpretations in both groups are elicited to find out about their L2 learning experiences in detail at the end of the intervention through semi-structured interviews. These interviews are analyzed with inductive content analysis which was one of the qualitative research techniques. In this study, 'mixed methods' approach in which qualitative and quantitative research are strategically combined at the data analysis level in order to illuminate each other is used. Considering the results of interview with very young learners on the issues such as the practices they are discouraged, the activities they like and dislike and the



motivational factors that make the L2 learning easier, it can be concluded that their opinions and views about all aspects of the L2 education can provide invaluable feedback for teachers, researchers and policymakers.

**Keywords:** Very Young EFL Learners, Early ELT Program, Performance-based Assessment, Picture Vocabulary Test, Pre-primary Children's Perceptions of English Learning



## ÖZ

Erken Çocukluk ve İngilizce Eğitimi disiplinlerini birlikte ele alan, içerisinde okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının yaşına ve gelişimsel özelliklerine uygun yöntem, materyal ve değerlendirme metotları içeren kaliteli İngilizce eğitimi programları, bu çocukların hedef dildeki öğrenmelerini daha etkili ve kalıcı kılar. Buradan yola çıkarak, bu çalışmada okul öncesi dönem çocukların gelişimsel özellikleri ve farklı öğrenme ihtiyaçları göz önünde bulundurularak onlara yönelik bir İngilizce öğretimi programı geliştirilmiştir. Bu geliştirilen programın etkililiğini incelemek için, bu yaş grubunun ikinci dil öğretiminde ulaşabilecekleri hedefler ile uyumlu iki değerlendirme aracı tasarlanmış, pilot uygulaması yapılmış ve gerçek kullanıma hazır hale getirilmiştir. Bunlardan biri çocukların alıcı ve ifade edici kelime bilgisini ölçmek için hazırlanmış İngilizce Resimli Kelime Testi, diğeri ise temel iletişim becerilerini ölçmek için geliştirilmiş Performansa dayalı değerlendirme aracıdır. Bu araçlar önce 20 okul öncesi dönem çocuğu ile görüşülerek, uygulanabilirliği üzerine ön değerlendirme yapılmış, daha sonra 16 farklı özel anaokulundaki 251 çocuk ile pilot uygulaması yapılmıştır. Resimli kelime testinin alıcı dil ve ifade edici dil bölümleri ve performansa dayalı ölçme araçları için güvenilirlik katsayıları sırasıyla .89, .91 ve .98 olarak bulunmuştur. Resimli kelime testinde, maddelerin ayırt edicilik ve zorluk dereceleri Nokta çift serili Korelasyon Katsayısı bulunarak hesaplanmıştır. Diğer ölçme aracının madde güçlük indeksi ise alt ve üst grupların farkı belirlenerek yapılan madde analizi ile hesaplanmıştır. Sonuçlar İngilizce Resimli Kelime Testinin ve Performansa dayalı değerlendirme aracının ideal zorluğa sahip, geçerli ve güvenilir birer değerlendirme aracı olduklarını göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde, ‘Erken Çocukluk İngilizce Eğitimi Programı’nın içeriğini, programda kullanılan öğretim materyallerinin, yöntemlerinin ve değerlendirme araçlarının uygunluğunu değerlendirebilmek amacıyla, bu programın bir kısmı özel bir anaokulundaki öğrenci grubuna 3 hafta boyunca uygulanarak pilot uygulaması yapılmıştır. Gerekli düzeltmeler yapıldıktan sonra bu deneysel çalışma İstanbul’un Beşiktaş ilçesindeki bir anaokulunda uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu bu anaokulundaki 68 çocuktan rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 5 ve 6

yaş grubu toplam 36 çocuk oluşturmaktadır. Bu deneysel çalışmada, rastgele seçilmiş ön test-son test grup tasarımı kullanılarak ön test, son test ve izleme ölçümleri arasındaki farkın anlamlılığına bakılmıştır. Deney ve kontrol grubunda 18'er çocuk bulunmaktadır. 16 hafta boyunca, 40-45 dakika süren İngilizce öğrenme saatinde, her haftanın başında ortasında ve sonunda olmak üzere toplam 3 kez çocuklar ile bir araya gelinmiştir. Program çocukların günlük yaşantılarından bildikleri 48 kelime ve bazı dil yapılarını içeren 6 temel konuyu içermektedir. Bu konular, kontrol grubuna bağlamdan uzaklaşmış bir yapı ile ve daha çok flaş kartların ve şarkıların kullanıldığı öğretmen merkezli etkinlikler ile öğretilirken, deneysel gruba aynı konular çocuğun yaşına uygun etkinlikleri (sanat, drama, düşünme becerileri etkinlikleri, hikâye anlatımı, oyunlar, şarkılar ve aile katılımı) içeren iletişimsel ve etkileşimli yaklaşımlar kullanılarak öğretilmiştir. Resimli Kelime Testi ve Performansa dayalı Değerlendirme aracı ile çocukların sırasıyla alıcı ve ifade edici kelime bilgileri ve iletişim becerileri değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, deney grubundaki çocukların hedef kelimeleri anlama, ifade etme ve onlar ile iletişim kurabilme becerilerinin diğer gruba göre daha iyi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Yine bu gruptaki çocukların dinleme ve konuşma becerilerinin, maruz kaldıkları anlamlı ve eğlenceli oyun temelli etkinlikler ve etkileşimli materyaller aracılığı ile daha çok geliştiği gözlemlenmektedir. Yaş ve cinsiyet faktörlerinin öğrenme sürecinde bir etkisi olmadığı bulunmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra, izleme testinin sonuçları hazırlanan programının kesintiye uğramadan uygulandığı takdirde küçük çocukların İngilizce öğrenme süreçlerine uzun süreli katkı sağladığını göstermiştir. Son olarak bu çalışma, kaliteli bir İngilizce eğitimi programının, çocukların aktif katılımını sağlayarak, ilgilerini sürekli canlı tutarak onların dilsel ve iletişimsel becerilerini geliştirmelerinde önemli bir rol oynadığına dair net kanıtlar ortaya koymaktadır.

Ayrıca, her iki grupta bulunan çocuklardan, uygulanan programın sonunda yapılan görüşmeler ile öğrenme deneyimlerine ilişkin düşünceleri alınmıştır. Bu yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, nitel araştırma tekniklerinden biri olan tümevarımsal içerik analizi tekniği ile yorumlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, nitel ve nicel araştırmaların birbirlerini aydınlatmak amacıyla veri analizi düzeyinde stratejik olarak birleştirildiği “karma yöntemler” yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Küçük çocuklar ile hoşlandıkları / hoşlanmadıkları etkinlikler, yabancı dili öğrenme süreçlerini kolaylaştıran ve zorlaştıran konular üzerine

yapılan bu görüşmenin sonuçları göz önüne alındığında, çocukların öğretme-öğrenme sürecinin tüm yönleriyle ilgili görüşlerinin öğretmenler, araştırmacılar ve politika yapıcılar için son derece önemli geri bildirim sağlayabileceği sonucuna varılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul Öncesi İngilizce Eğitimi Programı, Resimli Kelime Testi, Performansa Dayalı Değerlendirme, Okul Öncesi Çocuklarının İngilizce Öğrenmeye İlişkin Algıları



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                           |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>APPROVAL .....</b>                                                     | <b>i</b>     |
| <b>CURRICULUM VITAE.....</b>                                              | <b>ii</b>    |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....</b>                                               | <b>iv</b>    |
| <b>ABSTRACT.....</b>                                                      | <b>v</b>     |
| <b>ÖZ.....</b>                                                            | <b>viii</b>  |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>                                            | <b>xi</b>    |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>                                               | <b>xv</b>    |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>                                              | <b>xviii</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....</b>                                      | <b>1</b>     |
| 1.0. Presentation .....                                                   | 1            |
| 1.1. Background to the Study .....                                        | 1            |
| 1.2. The Aims and Significance of the Study.....                          | 13           |
| 1.3. Research Questions .....                                             | 16           |
| 1.4. Limitations .....                                                    | 17           |
| 1.5. Definition of the Terms .....                                        | 18           |
| 1.6. Abbreviations .....                                                  | 20           |
| <b>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....</b>                              | <b>21</b>    |
| 2.0. Presentation .....                                                   | 21           |
| 2.1. Very Young Learners.....                                             | 21           |
| 2.1.1. Developmental Characteristics of Very Young Learners.....          | 25           |
| 2.1.2. Learning Needs of Very Young Learners .....                        | 31           |
| 2.2. Foreign Language and Second Language Education at Earlier Ages ..... | 35           |
| 2.2.1. Benefits of English for Very Young Learners .....                  | 40           |
| 2.2.2. Purposes of Introducing English to Very Young Learners .....       | 42           |
| 2.2.3. Principles of Introducing English to Very Young Learners.....      | 47           |
| 2.3. Background to Child Foreign Language Learning and Pedagogy .....     | 53           |
| 2.3.1. Theories of Child Development .....                                | 53           |
| 2.3.2. Foreign Language Learning Processes in Early Childhood.....        | 57           |

|                                                                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 2.4. Pre-primary Level Foreign Language Education: The International Picture..... | 63         |
| 2.4.1. Pre-primary Level Foreign Language Programs and Outcomes.....              | 68         |
| 2.5. English as a Foreign Language at Pre-primary Level in Turkey .....           | 70         |
| 2.5.1. Current English Language Policy in Public Pre-primary Schools .....        | 76         |
| 2.5.2. Current English Language Policy in Private Pre-primary Schools.....        | 77         |
| 2.6. Properties of an L2 Education Program for Very Young Learners .....          | 80         |
| 2.7. Instructional Methods and Materials for Very Young Learners .....            | 88         |
| 2.7.1. Coursebooks .....                                                          | 90         |
| 2.7.2. Songs .....                                                                | 91         |
| 2.7.3. Stories .....                                                              | 94         |
| 2.7.4. Drama activities.....                                                      | 97         |
| 2.7.5. Play-based activities.....                                                 | 99         |
| 2.7.6. Art and Craft activities .....                                             | 101        |
| 2.7.7. Thinking skills activities .....                                           | 102        |
| 2.7.8. Parental involvement.....                                                  | 104        |
| 2.7.9. Instructional Materials.....                                               | 108        |
| 2.8. Development of Very Young Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge.....                | 109        |
| 2.9. Development of Very Young Learners' Communicative Skills .....               | 114        |
| 2.10. Assessment of Very Young EFL Learners.....                                  | 116        |
| 2.10.1. General Considerations Regarding Young Children's Assessment.....         | 119        |
| 2.10.2. Assessment Types of Very Young Learners' English .....                    | 124        |
| 2.11. Pre-primary Children's Perceptions and Interpretations of EVYL.....         | 127        |
| <b>CHAPTER III: METHOD OF RESEARCH.....</b>                                       | <b>130</b> |
| 3.0. Presentation .....                                                           | 130        |
| 3.1. Participants.....                                                            | 130        |
| 3.2. Data Collection Tools .....                                                  | 135        |
| 3.2.1. The Design of the English Picture Vocabulary Test and Pilot Studies.....   | 137        |
| 3.2.2. Design of Performance-based Assessment Tool and Pilot Studies.....         | 153        |
| 3.2.3. Interview Questions.....                                                   | 164        |
| 3.3. Development of the Early Childhood English Language Education Program ....   | 165        |
| 3.3.1. Identification of Objectives .....                                         | 166        |
| 3.3.2. Selection of Themes and Target Vocabulary .....                            | 172        |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                           |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 3.3.3. Theoretical Basis for ECELEP .....                                                                                                                                                                 | 175        |
| 3.3.4. Properties of ECELEP.....                                                                                                                                                                          | 179        |
| 3.3.5. Pilot Treatment of ECELEP .....                                                                                                                                                                    | 184        |
| 3.3.6. The components of ECELEP .....                                                                                                                                                                     | 186        |
| 3.3.6.1. Stories .....                                                                                                                                                                                    | 188        |
| 3.3.6.2. Thinking Skills Activities .....                                                                                                                                                                 | 194        |
| 3.3.6.3. Drama activities .....                                                                                                                                                                           | 197        |
| 3.3.6.4. Play-based Activities .....                                                                                                                                                                      | 200        |
| 3.3.6.5. Songs .....                                                                                                                                                                                      | 205        |
| 3.3.6.6. Arts and Crafts Activity .....                                                                                                                                                                   | 209        |
| 3.3.6.7. Parental Involvement .....                                                                                                                                                                       | 213        |
| 3.4. Data Collection Procedure .....                                                                                                                                                                      | 218        |
| 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure .....                                                                                                                                                                        | 222        |
| 3.6. Ethics .....                                                                                                                                                                                         | 224        |
| <b>CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....</b>                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>226</b> |
| 4.0. Presentation .....                                                                                                                                                                                   | 226        |
| 4.1. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school<br>children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning in English? .....                                                  | 226        |
| 4.2. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school<br>children's communicative skills in English?.....                                                                           | 233        |
| 4.3. Are there any significant differences by gender and age (months) in terms of<br>the effect of ECELEP on pre-primary school children's English vocabulary<br>learning and communicative skills? ..... | 237        |
| 4.4. Does the implementation of ECELEP result in long-term effect on pre-<br>primary school children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning and<br>communicative skills in English?.....          | 238        |
| 4.5. What do VYLs think about the aims of learning and knowing English in their<br>lives? .....                                                                                                           | 248        |
| 4.6. What are the VYLs' attitudes towards their previous English learning<br>experience?.....                                                                                                             | 251        |
| 4.7. What do VYLs think about activities they enjoyed most while learning<br>English?.....                                                                                                                | 254        |

|                                                                                                                     |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 4.8. What do VYLs think about activities or things they disliked while learning English? .....                      | 260        |
| 4.9. What do VYLs think about the supportive things that help them learn English? .....                             | 262        |
| <b>CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....</b>                                                                                   | <b>271</b> |
| 5.0. Presentation .....                                                                                             | 271        |
| 5.1. Conclusions .....                                                                                              | 271        |
| 5.2. Recommendations .....                                                                                          | 274        |
| 5.3. Further Research .....                                                                                         | 278        |
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>                                                                                              | <b>281</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES.....</b>                                                                                              | <b>317</b> |
| APPENDIX 1: Interview Questions in Turkish.....                                                                     | 317        |
| APPENDIX 2: Interview Questions in English.....                                                                     | 317        |
| APPENDIX 2: Sample Items in English Picture Vocabulary Test (Receptive).....                                        | 318        |
| APPENDIX 3: Sample Items in English Picture Vocabulary Test (Expressive) .....                                      | 319        |
| APPENDIX 4: Record Form of English Picture Vocabulary Test.....                                                     | 320        |
| APPENDIX 5: EPVT Implementation Guide .....                                                                         | 321        |
| APPENDIX 5: Receptive Vocabulary Test .....                                                                         | 321        |
| APPENDIX 5: Expressive Vocabulary Test .....                                                                        | 322        |
| APPENDIX 6: A Sample Performance-based Assessment Task .....                                                        | 324        |
| APPENDIX 7: ECELEP Sample Pages.....                                                                                | 325        |
| APPENDIX 8: A sample Lesson Plan.....                                                                               | 327        |
| APPENDIX 9: Samples for Thinking Skills Activity .....                                                              | 333        |
| APPENDIX 10: A Sample Parental Involvement Paper .....                                                              | 335        |
| APPENDIX 11: Approval from Department for Research, Development and Projects in Ministry of National Education..... | 336        |
| APPENDIX 12: Target Language Background Questionnaire .....                                                         | 337        |
| APPENDIX 13: Informed Consent Form for Parents .....                                                                | 338        |
| APPENDIX 14: Ethics Committee Approval.....                                                                         | 339        |



## LIST OF TABLES

|             |                                                                                                                      |     |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1.1.  | Comparison of English Language Education in Private and Public Pre-primary Schools in Turkey<br>.....                | 5   |
| Table 2.1.  | Ellis’s Comprehensive Schema about the Terms to Describe Children in the ELT Profession<br>.....                     | 22  |
| Table 2.2.  | Contrasting Foreign and Second Language Contexts .....                                                               | 37  |
| Table 2.3.  | The reflections of Child Development Theories into Foreign Language Learning at Pre-primary Level .....              | 57  |
| Table 2.4.  | L2 Language Learning Theories/Approaches Influencing Early L2 Learning .....                                         | 60  |
| Table 2.5.  | Complexity Scale Used in order to be able to Design Age-Appropriate Language Tasks.....                              | 61  |
| Table 2.6.  | Characteristics of Traditional and Communicative Approaches.....                                                     | 84  |
| Table 2.7.  | Criteria to be able to Decide Suitable Tasks and Activities .....                                                    | 107 |
| Table 2.8.  | An Example of Hierarchies with the Most General Concept at the Top and the Most Specific at the Bottom .....         | 110 |
| Table 3.1.  | Demographics for Treatment and Control Group.....                                                                    | 132 |
| Table 3.2.  | Pre-test Scores of Treatment and Control Group.....                                                                  | 133 |
| Table 3.3.  | The Level of Exposure of the VYLs to English.....                                                                    | 134 |
| Table 3.4.  | Features of the Tests Applied in the Research.....                                                                   | 136 |
| Table 3.5.  | Test Development Sequence .....                                                                                      | 146 |
| Table 3.6.  | Pilot Reliability Indices: Test Versions (KR20).....                                                                 | 150 |
| Table 3.7.  | Distribution of the Items in Expressive and Receptive EPVT among the Different Ranges of Difficulty Indices.....     | 150 |
| Table 3.8.  | Distribution of the Items in Expressive and Receptive EPVT among The Different Ranges of Discrimination Indices..... | 151 |
| Table 3.9.  | EPVT Difficulty and Discrimination Indices for Each Item in the Pilot Data.....                                      | 152 |
| Table 3.10. | Description of Assessment Task 1 (Sample) .....                                                                      | 157 |
| Table 3.11. | Description of Assessment Task 2 (Sample) .....                                                                      | 157 |
| Table 3.12. | Item Discrimination Analysis of Performance-Based Assessment Tool for VYLs’ Communicative Skills.....                | 161 |
| Table 3.13. | ‘Can Do Descriptors’ for Beginner Level.....                                                                         | 171 |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                |     |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 3.14. | Guidelines on How to Create Suitable Stories and Implement Storytelling Process in Three Stages.....                                                           | 193 |
| Table 3.15. | The General Format for Drama Activities Used in Early L2 Class.....                                                                                            | 199 |
| Table 3.16. | The Reflection of Epstein’s Typology of Parental Involvement into ECELEP.....                                                                                  | 214 |
| Table 3.17. | Overview of the Research Design.....                                                                                                                           | 221 |
| Table 3.18. | Results from a Normality Test of the Data.....                                                                                                                 | 223 |
| Table 3.19  | Categorization for the Interview Transcriptions.....                                                                                                           | 224 |
| Table 4.1.  | Descriptive Statistics Related to Pretest and Posttest Results of Treatment and Control Groups for EPVT.....                                                   | 226 |
| Table 4.2.  | Mann-Whitney U Test for EPVT Pre-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Groups.....                                                                              | 229 |
| Table 4.3.  | Mann-Whitney U Test for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Groups.....                                                                             | 230 |
| Table 4.4.  | Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Pre-and Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Both Groups .....                  | 232 |
| Table 4.5.  | Descriptive Statistics Related to Pretest and Posttest Results of Treatment and Control Groups for PA.....                                                     | 233 |
| Table 4.6.  | Mann-Whitney U Test for PA Post-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Group.....                                                                                | 234 |
| Table 4.7.  | Percentages of VYLs’ Responses to the Tasks in PA.....                                                                                                         | 235 |
| Table 4.8.  | Results of Mann-Whitney U Test between Females and Males for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment Groups.....                                                    | 237 |
| Table 4.9.  | Results of Mann-Whitney U Test in terms of Age for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment Groups.....                                                              | 238 |
| Table 4.10. | Descriptive Statistics Related to Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Treatment and Control Groups for EPVT.....                                        | 239 |
| Table 4.11. | Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Control Group.....   | 242 |
| Table 4.12. | Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Treatment Group..... | 243 |
| Table 4.13. | Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of PA in Both Groups.....                                     | 245 |
| Table 4.14. | Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs’ Objectives of Learning a Foreign Language....                           | 249 |

|             |                                                                                                                                                          |     |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 4.15. | Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs' Attitudes towards Their Previous English Learning Experience..... | 251 |
| Table 4.16. | Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs' Most Liked Activities.....                                        | 254 |
| Table 4.17. | Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children's Responses about Things They Dislike in L2 Learning Experience.....                                     | 260 |
| Table 4.18. | Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about Supportive Things that Help Them Learn English.....                     | 263 |



## LIST OF FIGURES

|             |                                                                                                                                    |     |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 1.1. | “SIMPLE” Approach Including the Principles of ECELEP .....                                                                         | 15  |
| Figure 2.1. | The Comparison of two L2 Learning Contexts .....                                                                                   | 38  |
| Figure 2.2. | Terms for Different Language Learners Based on CEFR .....                                                                          | 81  |
| Figure 2.3. | Harmer’s framework representing different levels .....                                                                             | 82  |
| Figure 3.1. | Receptive And Expressive Vocabulary Test Framework .....                                                                           | 143 |
| Figure 3.2. | Relationship between the Four Components of Overall Language Proficiency .....                                                     | 155 |
| Figure 3.3. | A Mind Map of Activities Sketched out for Each Theme .....                                                                         | 186 |
| Figure 3.4. | Exemplar Thinking Skills Activities for Supporting VYLs’ Cognitive and Linguistic Development .....                                | 193 |
| Figure 3.5. | Dimensions of Arts and Crafts Activities in TEVYL .....                                                                            | 208 |
| Figure 3.6. | Experimental Procedure .....                                                                                                       | 220 |
| Figure 4.1. | Changes in the Receptive EPVT Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group .....  | 243 |
| Figure 4.2. | Changes in the Expressive EPVT Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group ..... | 243 |
| Figure 4.3. | Changes in the PA Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group .....              | 244 |

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

*The best "method" of introducing a knowledge is to make it clear that the subject is worth learning, and to allow the -- child's -- natural curiosity and interest in truth and understanding to mature and develop.*

*—From interview with Noam Chomsky (Putnam, 1994)*

### 1.0. Presentation

The composition of this particular chapter involves outlining the history of the contemporary demands that lie behind the investigation into the challenges and problems of English language learning in the early childhood period and in which way the results of this inquiry could address and supply solutions in overcoming the identified issues. To add, the common obstacles and challenges of working with very young learners in Turkey within pre-primary level English education's background are included. The relevance along with the questions of the study are declared in the proceeding section of this introduction.

### 1.1. Background to the Study

The recent past reveals clearly that the area of foreign language education is garnering extensive interest rapidly at the pre-primary level. One of the most important indicators of this attention is the emergence of the current concept describing the specific group of children in question as “very young learners”, commonly referring to those younger than 6. Before this, the use of term ‘young learner’ in studies had gained popularity covering a very broad age group studying English, ranging from as low as 3 reaching between the ages of 13 and 14 (Pinter, 2006) regardless of the discrepancy of children's cognitive, psychological, emotional, and linguistic development within this wide age range (Boo et al., 2015). However, it is noticed that young children who are quite different from adults in terms of their developmental characteristics, skills, biological predisposition and motivation (Zandian, 2012; Pinter, 2012 and Inostroza Araos, 2015)

have typical learning needs and characteristics. Relatively recently these young children who are a range of learners in the early childhood period have been called ‘very young learners (VYLs)’ in the literature (Ellis, 2014). Among the key characteristics of VYLs, having all the proper conditions suited to aid in learning an additional language; an intuition with the required skills and characteristics fully matured (Halliwell, 1992), having short attention spans, learning holistically and being illiterate can be listed. Taking all these properties residing in VYLs at pre-primary level into account is particularly relevant to be able to settle on an array of learning objectives, design age-appropriate foreign language programs, determine or create effective tools to assess, prepare suitable instructional activities and materials, and lastly implement and interpret research and publications.

The other indicatives of the growing interest to TEVYL all around the world are the rise in the number of children who are learning English globally at younger ages (Johnstone 2009; Garton et al. 2011), the reforms made about the lowering of the start age of English instruction (Murphy and Evangelou, 2016) and the boom in the volume of documents and studies about early L2 education in recent years. Among the vital reasons for the emergence and growth of English education at early ages as a global phenomenon, to learn English efficiently which is prerequisite for opportunities that fall under schooling and pursuing careers within a communities of global marketplace rich both culturally and linguistically as a result of consequent movement of peoples around the world (Rich, 2014, Enever et al. 2009) can be listed. The other reason is the widespread belief “the younger the children are, the easier they can learn a new language” and this early start puts them in position to succeed in high general proficiency (Nunan, 2003). Pinter’s (2006) research advocates and lists many advantages associated with the early introduction of L2 at an early age, such as pronunciation close to that of native speakers and abilities fundamental in basic English communication, creating curiosity of learning and increasing interest in different cultures, boosting motivation and amusement, and the strengthening cognitive processes and metalinguistic perception of children’s development. In sum, the introduction of an L2, particularly in a foreign language context, is regarded as an enriching experience that provides appreciable advantages when it comes to academic and personal growth of a child the long run. For example, the early L2 learning process fosters comprehension,

communication, expression in target language, facilitates productive interaction with other children and adults, as well as enhances understanding and awareness towards other languages and cultures (Edelenbos et al., 2006; Beacco et al., 2010; European Commission, 2011).

The potential benefits mentioned above reveal that starting English early is gives for VYLs a lead in terms of having a strong foundation for the target language. As is well known the factor ‘age’ is not the only issue, or it is not the key variable for a successful early L2 education. The quality and quantity of programs, teacher qualifications, suitable conditions with age-appropriate methodologies and approaches, and continuity are the subjects which are highly important as well as age (Nikolov, 2000; Singleton, 2014). In this regard, an important shift can be observable from hotly debated issue about the age of acquisition to the factors playing crucial roles in learning another language’s course. These functions can be listed as learning environment effective instructional materials and activities and suitable assessment methods and tools in the field of early L2 language (Mitchell, Myles and Marsden, 2013). To put it differently, the discussions about when to start learning a language yield to how to teach a new language to the learners effectively. In achieving this, one of the most important point is the pre-primary English education programs including meaningful language learning tasks, activities, materials and valid and reliable assessments instruments for very young EFL learners.

It is noticeable that there is a little account in the near past of ‘TEVYL’ surfacing as its own distinct discipline inside the acquisition of L2. In this short time, noteworthy conclusions can drawn from the progress and trends in this field for education programming, accessment and its fairness due to a number of volumes provided and research contributions made, as the very young learner field takes a truly international perspective. To illustrate, the countries from Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America have started to implement a variety of L2 education models and programs in pre-primary settings in which children have various L2 experiences in quantity and in quality (Rixon, 2013). These models include the formal introduction of English, often taking place just once a week in the school; a more flexible approach, relating the L2 to the curriculum’s additional elements (Content and Language Integrated Learning); a

model of language awareness, that isn't concentrated on approaching an individual new language, but makes a multitude of other cultures and languages accessible. Similarly, according to Nikolov (2016), within education programs centred around content and language, there should be differing curricula applied throughout its scope. Initially raising awareness, then FL programs around midway, and finally engagement in CLIL towards the end.

While 'TEVYL' has turned into a huge sensation worldwide, touching the lives of a majority of the educators, children and parents worldwide and steadily growing in academic circles and in practice, there is still much to be achieved at the international and national level. One of the most important challenges that require great endeavors about L2 education at pre-primary level in Turkey and around the world is the fact that both ECE and ELT departments work collaboratively. The desire and necessity of active involvement into early years L2 education is due to the fact that ECE departments generally do not have L2 specialists and ELT departments rarely have early years specialists. The other challenges at macro level are the curriculum-related issues such as inequality of access due to economic differences and variety, uniformity of approach, insufficient prior teacher training, insufficient time allocated to listening and speaking skills in curricula, the lack of learner-centered education, low quality early English education programs and absence of assessment tools. In addition to this, teacher-related issues at micro level are teachers' low proficiency level in English in TEVYL, problems related to the design and decision of materials and the integration of memorable and enjoyable language practice and activities into the English hours at this level.

In Turkey, despite a non-existent national language policy since 2016, the Turkish Ministry of Education encouraged the foreign language education at pre-primary level. Based on this, it can be said that introducing L2 to children of six years and under has become popular in Turkey even if it is not mandatory. The comparisons of private and public pre-primary schools which introduce English at this level are explained in detail from various aspects in Table 1.1.



**Tablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.1. Comparison of English Language Education in Private and Public Pre-primary Schools in Turkey**

|                                      | <b>Private pre-primary School in Turkey</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Public pre-primary school in Turkey</b>                             |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government initiative                | General guidelines set by the central government but with some allowance for specific choice, expansions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Strong central government initiative                                   |
| Form of introduction                 | <p>*Low intensity English instruction: English as a school subject</p> <p>*Moderate intensity English instruction English as a school subject</p> <p>*High intensity English instruction: English as the medium of instruction</p>                                                                                                                                  | English as an after-school activity or club activity                   |
| Publication date of official program | ‘Early Childhood English Language Education Program for Private Pre-schools’ in 2016; nationwide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No official program aimed at TEVYL.                                    |
| Target grade levels                  | <p>1<sup>st</sup> level (VYs between 36 and 48 months old)</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> level (VYs between 48 and 60 months old)</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> level (VYs between 60 and 72 months old)</p>                                                                                                                                                                        | No official program aimed at TEVYL.                                    |
| Number of lesson hours               | <p>*Low intensity English instruction (awareness programs) (30-45 minutes in a week)</p> <p>*Moderate intensity English instruction (3-6 hours in a week) (scheduled L2 programs)</p> <p>*High intensity English instructions (‘immersion’, ‘bilingual education’ and ‘content based instruction’) (extensive and continuous use of English)</p>                    | 1 or 2 hours in a week as an after-school activity or club activity    |
| Curriculum                           | Suggested guidelines regarding when and what to teach are recommended by the central government                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No official program aimed at TEVYL.                                    |
| Textbooks and materials              | No specifically approved textbooks; teachers can use any course books, storybooks and materials that they feel are appropriate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Teachers mostly use flashcards, songs and videos (web-based recourses) |
| English teachers                     | <p>*In low intensity English instruction: primarily regular homeroom teachers or English teachers</p> <p>*In moderate intensity English instruction: mostly non-native English teachers and rarely native English teachers</p> <p>*In high intensity English instructions: mostly native or native-like English teachers and rarely non-native English teachers</p> | Various types of teachers are allowed to teach                         |
| In service Professional development  | <p>Training programs which are mainly offered by private institutions vary in their intensity and duration</p> <p>No government-based training agencies</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | No training programs offered by government or private institutions     |

|                      |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Native speakers      | Not many so far but increasing in number                                                              | No native speakers                                                                                   |
| Approach mostly used | Course book-based approach, Content-based approach, Content and language integrated learning approach | Traditional approach including memory-based learning, rote-learning, repetitions of vocabulary items |
| Assessment           | Generally no assessment<br>Rarely teacher-made or textbook tests at the end of term or year           | Assessment is very scarce                                                                            |

As it is seen in Table 1.1, the implementation of English instruction at pre-primary level occurs mostly in private institutions in various degrees and scarcely within the context of state school as afterschool activity or club activity. As it is the case in all the other language levels, English is treated as a distinct ‘school subject’ in Turkey instead of using it as a tool for developing cognitive processing skills and for learning knowledge and meaning making. The formal teaching of English with didactic strategies and teacher-led activities in the classroom setting takes place in the programs just once every week, 3 to 6 hours per week within the context of scheduled L2 programs (See Table 1.1). Apart from these, a couple of learning programs with the integration of language and content / immersion and partial immersion that require increased time and intensity have an English medium of instruction (see Table 1.1). Keeping in mind a variety of learning experiences within a range of qualities and quantities in Turkey among children who are in state-run and private-run pre-primary schools are apparent, it should be noted that some concerns related to ensuring equal access to L2 education at pre-primary level still exist.

Besides, by 2016, language teachers applying one of these programs in pre-primary education institutions in Turkey have been groping in the dark for a way to TEVYL. The reason for this is the lack of common shared modest achievement goals, the lack of methodological support and instructional materials, the lack of appropriate pedagogies, the lack of educational facilities, the lack of age-appropriate activities, the lack of suitable assessments declared in a national curriculum. This can be advantageous in terms of providing flexibility to teachers when devising course outlines tailored specifically to the interest and needs of the children, but it has also so many disadvantages that teachers have no guidelines as to what they should teach and how they should set about it. Related to this issue, Daloğlu (2007) emphasized the

importance of a clearly defined curriculum to be among the primary prerequisites of an excellent and effective language program in terms of its learning and teaching objectives, age-appropriate methodology, approach and assessment. With the publication of ‘Early Childhood English Language Education for Private Pre-primary Schools’ in 2016 (MoNE, 2016), English education standards from different aspects mentioned above have been set to some degree. However, it can be observable that realizing pre-primary English education is not at the desired level because of the poor quality curriculum in which age-appropriate linguistic and communicative L2 learning objectives are not defined, instructional strategies and methodologies integrating the departments of ECE and ELT are explained insufficiently, sample activities and tasks are not included and proper assessment tools and ways are not defined in a detailed way. For this reason, it can be said that the starting point of this study is to be able to shed light on the process of the fast spread of TEVYL at earlier ages and the discriminatory practices and difficulties that result from the lack of age-appropriate methods, activities and materials at this level.

Although EFL programs in Turkey generally provide children a limited amount of exposure to the foreign language in pre-primary school setting, more successful learning outcomes can be obtained in association with an age-appropriate English education program at this level. In achieving the successful education aiming at the development of VYLs’ listening and speaking skills, providing an environment with greatest amount of exposure for children to receive the language audially and produce it in a playful and exploratory manner is suggested by Philp, Oliver and Mackey (2008).

Needless to say, ultimate attainment is not completely possible unless early L2 learning is integrated into early childhood pedagogy because ‘TEVYL’ stands at the intersection of both these academic disciplines. Contrary to this, in Turkey, English learning which is seen as a discrete subject that generally doesn’t take a holistic approach at private pre-primary schools and as a free-time, after-school activity, which aims at introducing vocabulary mostly in a decontextualized manner at state pre-primary schools (see Table 1.1). To illustrate, the emphasis is on understanding and introducing of basic nouns in target language with songs, some visuals and a textbook which are playing the central role in early L2 education in Turkey rather than fostering the listening and speaking skills, aiding pronunciation, and introducing of vocabulary and structures receptively

and expressively in the short and long run for a strong foundation. This situation is also similar for most countries that English is taught at this level as stand-alone lessons with formal explicit language instruction (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015; Murphy and Evangelou, 2016). Ellis (2017) criticizes the neglect of integrating pedagogies suited to match children's age in the process of establishing distinct skills of language into L2 learning because VYLs aren't sufficiently competent in approaching and perceiving language as an area investigation and scrutiny that demands some rote learning skills. One of the possible solutions might be the successful integration of the principles and practices of ECE into English education through the inclusion of age-appropriate play-based activities, child-friendly stories, role-plays, songs, games, thinking skills activities and art & craft activities undividedly in a balanced way.

Keeping the challenges, deficiencies in TEVYL at pre-primary level in Turkey, it can be suggested that the areas that need developing are: 1) developing high quality English curriculums or education programs which uphold holistic methods when approaching the process of child growth and view English as a 'communication tool to be used in activities' (European Commission 2011), 2) providing quality teacher education programs and professional training for skilled teachers, 3) establishing excellent high quality settings tailored for young children. to be high quality and 4) researching the steps of assessment and learning concerning English for young children. Regarding to the last item, it can be said that very little published research exists on this subject to be able to support teachers, teacher educators and policymakers in Turkey. Considering all these points that need to be examined and improved, it is apparent that offering high quality L2 learning opportunities for VYLs is only the starting point in this study. In addition to this, developing standards-based for VYLs' receptive and productive vocabulary and performance-based assessment tools for communicative skills is among the other issues in this study.

As is well known some issues such as quality curricula, well-planned teacher education, age-appropriate assessment process, and effective transitions over differing education levels in the world puts forward a few difficulties (Nikolov 2009a, 2009b, and Rixon, 2013) and in Turkey. In brief, it can be said although there has been proliferation of research on early English language education globally (Murphy and Evangelou,

2016) and also in Turkey, the key areas such as the characteristics of early start programs, materials, methods, the quality of instruction, classroom L2 practices and early foreign language assessment is not prioritized nationally or internationally in the studies. For that particular reason, the aim of this study is to commit and provide what is missing the relevant studies in terms of the development of an effective and practical early English program for young children and the assessment of very young EFL learners.

The tendency to an ever-increasing demand for TEVYL and the need more effective L2 programs including age-appropriate contents, elements, activities and materials at pre-primary level as mentioned earlier are the main reasons why the development of 'ECELEP' and the design of suitable assessment tools 'English Picture Vocabulary Test' and 'Performance-based Assessment Tool' for VYLs' communicative skills are specifically chosen to be placed at the center of study. Literature globally has turned its attention this skill recently as well. Specifically, this study concentrates on investigating the contexts of EYVL with a view to improving approaches, methodologies and strategies with quality instructional materials so that children and their teachers have good language experiences inside the classroom.

In the Turkish educational system, as 'TEVYL' is trending and being put to practice in state and private schools for pre-primary children, new challenges and obstacles appear at this level. One of the biggest problems in Turkey is due to the lack of understanding of the principles and practices of the early childhood period and the characteristics of young children while introducing a foreign language. For example, a language teacher at pre-primary level should incorporate the use of flashcards which are an incredibly useful and flexible resource for presenting vocabulary into the learning process with mime and dramatization so as to arouse excitement and take the children's attention. It is, therefore, crucial during early years education to seek alternative approaches, methods and recourses that not only present the target vocabularies but also engage learners in active participation, develop critical and creative thinking, and sustain their interest and motivation. Related to involving young children in meaningful learning activities within the context of effective classroom practices instead of traditional

teaching -one of the least effective ways for learning for this age group- is among the issues that need to be improved in Turkey.

On the other hand, many teachers at this age level accentuated the acquisition of basic vocabulary in an L2 their first concern. It remains questionable to what extent vocabulary is learned in context and in a meaningful way. In most private and public kindergartens, teachers have a tendency to present the number of individual words in isolation, not in context irrespective of communicative forms of instruction. This point refers to a lack of information and a misunderstanding of the objectives and basic principles of early L2 learning by the policymakers, as well as among teachers. On the other hand, EFL pedagogy in pre-primary setting seems undeveloped in Turkey when examining the frequency of contact with L2 activities that are regularly teacher-centered based on forms with language drilling, singing and game play. Studies of the subject should do more indepth research by focusing on the development of differing language knowledge and skill along with verbal target language that is relevant and purposeful.

As for the resources and activities used in pre-primary education in order to introduce a foreign language, the findings of the studies reveal that puppets, songs, rhymes and chants, stories and game-like activities are among the mostly used ones worldwide. This situation is not similar in Turkey based on findings of the study conducted by Kimsesiz, Dolgunsöz and Konca (2017) to examine the common methods used in introducing English in pre-schools. It points out that teachers primarily rely on course books (95%) (see Table 1.1), however course book-based instruction is not suitable for VYLs who constructs their new knowledge by interacting physically with people and their environment. It is then followed by TPR (55%), games (54%), flashcards (31%), songs (29%), animation videos (21%), and drama (13%). Although it seems that all the methods are used, the rates of teachers' integration of some child-friendly and communicative methods into L2 learning process are too low. Flashcards, TPR, memorization and transition which are traditional methods can support children's vocabulary knowledge to a certain extent; however, they can't yield significant improvement in the English language learning process and increase very young learners' attitude towards foreign language learning. However, from a constructivist view of learning, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that such young children's abilities are cultivated

through having engagement with their teachers or capable peers in language-oriented and learner-centered games and activities that lead to desirable results in communication in English. All in all, contrary to traditional educational approaches, more constructivists, learner-centered and communicative style in early L2 contexts are needed to be addressed and improved by interrogating the methodologies, approaches, activities and materials that can be used successfully to introduce languages to children and the proper way to use them at pre-primary level. The quality and uniformity of the activities and the methods involved, frequency of contact with L2, and time given to exercise new language are factors that directly affect children's ability in utilizing English (Benigno and de Jong, 2016).

Another challenge and concern for the foreign language teachers, teacher educators, researchers and decision makers is the assessment of English language development and learning outcomes with age-appropriate tools. Studies have revealed that most teachers are less concerned in assessing than focusing on the teaching of knowledge and skills. The main complexity of this issue is due to the a lot of variations in early English learning process such as different types of curriculums and methods, the time allocated to teach English, the qualifications of teachers that affect the assessment of young learners' achievement in FL contexts (Nikolov, 2016). The other issues and challenges result from the fact that not only the very young learners' individual developmental differences but also the lack of age-appropriate assessment materials and tasks in Turkey.

However, the assessment of very young FL learners is vital not only in order to monitor children's development and achievement in some periods but also check the effectiveness of early foreign language education and instructional process from various aspects. Although the assessment of young learners referring to primary school children (7-14 years old) is at the center of learning and practice on daily basis. (Johnstone, 2009; McKay, 2006; Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011; Rixon, 2013; Rixon, 2016 ), the issue of the assessing VYLs need to be examined independently by defining its frameworks including the main principles of assessing very young learners and the possible linguistic and communicative skills at certain stages of their L2 development. In examining this issue, it should be kept in mind that 'assessment in English as foreign

language contexts’ and ‘assessment in English as a second language/ content-based instruction’ is different from each other. The former refers to assessments conducted in FL countries like in Turkey where the tests or alternative assessment tools are generally required to measure two basic skills of listening and speaking at pre-primary level. In addition to this, these tests or tools are expected to include well-designed restricted response items (e.g., multiple choice questions, short answer questions, matching) not only to measure their linguistics knowledge at word and phrase levels but also their basic communicative skills (Papp, 2019). Despite the fact that assessment is fundamental to the success of early English learning, how teachers assess progress and attainment in English at pre-primary level is still something of a ‘blind spot’ in Turkey. This might be due to lack of clear policy decisions and effective studies on the assessment in English and the scarcity of assessment tools at this level. The other reason can be ethical considerations that should be at the forefront of all assessment activity involving young children (Rixon, 2013). For this reason, it can be said that there is a growing need to develop assessments to address and measure VYLs’ language knowledge, skills and abilities in target language considering the characteristics of young children and ethical consideration. The deficit in reliable, valid and effective assessment tools measuring both VYLs’ linguistic and communicative at pre-primary level is the reason why the researcher has decided to deal with the issue of ‘assessing very young learners of English’ which has been underrated in the field of foreign language assessment.

When the national and international studies of the perceptions of key stakeholder groups (teachers, parents and children) are examined, it is noticeable that more research is conducted to examine teachers’ and parents’ view about early foreign language learning (Navarro-villarroel, 2011; Nikolov, 1999; Bezcioglu Göktoğa, 2013; Sığirtmaç and Özbek, 2009; Biricik, 2010). Investigating and reporting on young children’s attitudes, views and perceptions about their English language experience is something arguably missing from the national and international literature (Ioannou-Georgiou, 2015; Pinter, 2019). In other words, the number of studies aiming at how children are motivated during the foreign language learning process in Turkish pre-primary schools is considerably scarce. This apparent lack of interest might be due to their social status in which they are considered ‘vulnerable’ research participants (Coyne, 2010; Pinter,



2019). This present study also focuses on eliciting young children's attitudes, perceptions and interpretations of their L2 learning experiences in pre-primary school and thus hopes to allow for the voices of children who are the most important part of the stakeholder to be heard.

## **1.2. The Aims and Significance of the Study**

English as a foreign language education at pre-primary level is a relatively recent practice in the world and in Turkey when considering the steep decline to the age of 6 in L2 learning in last ten years. However, very little published research exists nationwide to support the development of effective age-appropriate foreign language education programs and the implementation of these programs. Moreover, no legal action has been taken to address the content and methods involved in early L2 education, even though there have been laws created for and applied in pre-primary environments since 2016. Private schools began to give English as a foreign language at different levels in 2017 - high intensity, medium intensity and low intensity – started to use the newly published national curriculum as a framework. However, the program is not adequate to give deep insights into how to teach and assess children at this level even if it gives an idea and guides to teachers about the L2 process and the children's characteristics; for this reason, learning outcomes is not at the desired level. As well as good quality English education programs, tools of assessment that can meet L2 aims are in immediate demand. Arguably, the total interest and work invested in Turkey at the pre-primary L2 education has been inadequate. In this regard, this study can contribute to fill this void by developing a sample program and two assessment tools in the field of L2 education with very young children.

This study focusing on the international and national perspectives on TEVYL with reference to the theory and the practice is supposed to make a contribution to literature concerning L2 education for very young children. The newly-designed program integrates two disciplinary –ECE and ELT- by focusing on the frames of theory, research, policy and pedagogies in childhood and foreign language education. In other words, the guidelines about VYLs' characteristics and learning needs are brought to bear upon foreign language education in school settings and home through the use of a

variety of age-appropriate activities, tasks and materials. Accordingly, this study might be useful for academics, teachers, prospective teachers, post-graduate students in the fields of ECE and ELT by providing critical insights into the why, what and how of early childhood foreign language education.

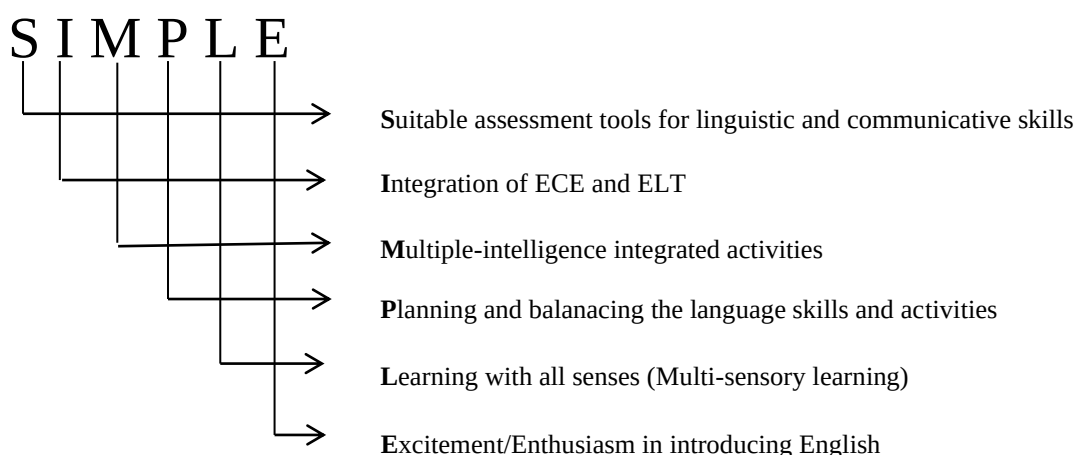
The central aim of the study is to create an early English education program including challenging and imaginative activities and developmentally appropriate tasks by taking into consideration VYLs' developmental and learning characteristics. The contents of the program designed by giving importance to child language development and child development in general can help English teachers of VYLs create an optimal learning atmosphere in the classroom. Inspired by this program, teachers can provide quality language tuition by creating naturally meaningful experiences that encourage young children to view themselves positively and become enthusiastic about learning the new language. The program also can be useful for early English language teachers in pre-primary schools by encouraging them to become conscious of the fact that learning a foreign language early in life with the proper help and age-appropriate level materials can make a significant contribution to the overall development of young children.

Besides, the study might highlight the importance of the necessity of a high-quality English language education program for VYLs who have individual EFL abilities, requirements and concerns because approaches and resources meant for adult learning cannot be applied to VYLs for efficient results. Apart from this, the program suggests a wide range of practical and entertaining activities and tasks which are categorized into seven topics as songs, stories, thinking skills activities, drama, art and craft activities, games and parental involvement for teachers' use in the classroom and parents' use at home. With most of the activities related with different topics listed above, there are some suggestions for variations or extensions. To this respect, the foreign language teachers working in public and private pre-primary schools can get benefit from the program by coming up with their own ideas on how to change, extend or adapt an activity to the specific needs of their group of learners.

ECELEP is created by taking into consideration the principles of early childhood pedagogy and age-appropriate L2 methodologies as well as the theories and practices in this field. While researching and designing 'ECELEP' for VYLs, a set of principles is

formalized with a handy acronym to help readers appreciate the key points in a systematic and clear way. The name of this approach is “*SIMPLE*” which is shown in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1. “SIMPLE” Approach Including the Principles of ECELEP**



The other aim of this study is to elucidate the process of TEVYL by suggesting variety of imaginative and educational methods and providing active learning instead of traditional instructional techniques and materials and rote-learning with flashcards through the eyes of teachers. Besides, teacher educators and curriculum developers can get inspired by the findings of this empirical study in the process of constructing different types of curricula which includes realistic age-appropriate achievement targets and innovative approaches and practical activities with effective assessment of very young learners instead of traditional FL programs. This program might function as a model in EVYL contexts for defining age-appropriate aims, introducing themes and deciding the principles of suitable classroom methodology as well as assessment in target language.

The study not only focuses on developing a comprehensive English education program for VYLs but also concentrates on developing useful assessment instruments for children’s linguistic and communicative skills in accompanied with the achievement targets of ECELEP. Within this scope, two newly developed assessment tools – EPVT and PA- including familiar target vocabulary and phrases which are appropriate to basic

level might be useful and relevant to measure pre-primary level children's basic vocabulary knowledge and communication skills in English. The most important contribution to assessment practices is PA devoted various tasks to assessing basic commutative skills by using visuals, realias and other contextualized information. Apart from these, the findings of the study provide insight into how parents can assist their child's learning in L2 without knowing that language. With the help of parent letters including the practical suggestions and ideas, motivational and informative notes about early L2 learning process and recourses that allow children to practice at home what they have learnt so far, the parents can give their young children a sense of success and confidence and thus, children can continue their L2 journey more pleasantly.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The study was conducted in two stages. First, ECELEP was implemented in a state pre-primary school and its effectiveness on VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary and communicative skills development was assessed with EPVT and PA. In this sense, the main research questions of the study are:

1. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning in English?
2. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school children's communicative skills in English?
3. Are there any significant differences by gender and age (months) in terms of the effect of ECELEP on pre-primary school children's English vocabulary and communicative skills learning?
4. Does the implementation of ECELEP result in long-term effect on pre-primary school children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning and communicative skills in English?

The aim of the second research phase was to find out the views and thoughts of VYLs about ECELEP. For this purpose, after the implementation of the ECELEP, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with VYLs to examine their perspectives

on their foreign language learning experiences. In this sense, following research questions were examined in this stage of study:

5. What do VYLs think about the aims of learning and knowing English in their lives?
6. What are the VYLs' attitudes towards their previous English learning experience?
7. What do VYLs think about activities they enjoyed most while learning English?
8. What do VYLs think about activities they disliked while learning English?
9. What do VYLs think helps them most while learning English?

#### **1.4. Limitations**

The present study has several limitations. The first limitation of the study is related to the limited number of participants, so the findings of the data are limited with the responses of 36 children. Another one is related to the English learning hours lasting for 40-45 minutes and amounting to approximately 27 hours over three months and 81 hours in one year. Children were exposed to English in these sessions three times, namely at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the one-week program. It can be said that English hours are too few based on Cambridge English guidance on learnign hours that indicate 180 hours are required to move within the A level that refers to beginning level. However, the number of English hours are decided in this study considering the 'young learner English language policy and implementations' in Turkey where children receive 2 hours of instruction in English per week from Grade 2 to Grade 4. If all the benefits are obtained from ECELEP with these limited English hours, it is assumed that young children can make significantly greater gains in oral comprehension and production in English with more hours devoted to English. It is well-known that there is a positive correlation between the English proficiency level and the hours per week children spent learning English (Sylvén and Sundqvist, 2014).

Moreover, there are some constraints on the generalizability of results, both qualitative and quantitative data did not reveal much about a population of language learners. Although it sheds empirical light about some practical aspects of TEVYL, the potential

of classroom research to generalise data is limited. On the other hand, this study shows that ECELEP provides a strong foundation for VYLs' further L2 learning; however, young children's disconnection with English education in Grade 1 because of the lack of the National English Education program at this level or the starting age to introduce English at grade 2 in Turkey is the other limitation. Finally, the researcher is aware that not asking for the views of parents who are one of the stakeholders of ECELEP at the end of the intervention is one of the limitations of the study, which is hoped to be overcome in further research.

### **1.5. Definition of the Terms**

*English as a Foreign Language (EFL):* It refers to contexts where children learn English as a subject in the school in limited hours. Foreign language learners' exposure to the target language is primarily restricted to the classroom (Mckay, 2006). According to Block (2003), instructed English as a foreign language in the classroom is the opposite of naturalistic language learning in the community.

*English as a Second Language (ESL):* It refers to contexts where learners are fully immersed in the L2 outside of the classroom. Second language learners learn the majority of L2 language as their second language in the community (Mckay, 2006).

*English as a Foreign Language in Early Childhood Education:* This refers to introduction and implementation of foreign language education to children of six years and under in early childhood period. 'Early Language Learning' and 'English as a Foreign Language in Early Childhood Education' is used interchangeably in this study.

*Pre-primary education:* 'Pre-primary education' is used to refer more specifically to educational programs intended for children from age 3 to the start of primary education.

*Very Young Learners:* It refers to pre-primary level EFL language learners who are below the age of formal entry into compulsory education, usually under 6 years (Reilly and Ward, 2003; Ellis, 2014; Murphy, 2014; Rixon, 2013; Nikolov, 2016; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2016).

*English for Very Young Learners:* It refers children's learning of English in pre-primary school education, for whom English is not their first language.

*English Language Education Program:* It refers to an 'English language exposure program', which aims at 'preparing and helping children to learn a new language' (European Commission, 2011)

*Early Childhood Education:* It is a well-known term referring to educational programs offered to children below the age of formal entry into compulsory education.

*Early Childhood English Language Education:* The introduction of English language learning in early childhood period. 'Early Childhood English Language Education' and 'English Language Education at Pre-primary Level' is used interchangeably in this study.

*Early English Language Assessment:* It refers to any method used for measuring the learning and performance of young children to observe and obtain information about young children's vocabulary knowledge, linguistic and communicative skills (Espinoza and Lopez, 2007).

*Picture Vocabulary Test:* It refers to the assessment of VYL's vocabulary knowledge in terms of both its comprehension and expression with the help of pictures in the early stages of foreign language learning.

*Performance-based Assessment:* Assessment that needs preparation and execution in accordance with formal It is a kind of formal assessment which is planned and carried out following strict measures (McKay, 2006). This assessment type intends to make thorough explanations of learner's needs available through holistic tasks in which children can demonstrate 'what they can do' and 'how they can communicate' instead of giving responses to discrete test items (Rixon, 2016). This type of assessment used in this study depends on the observation of L2 language skills and knowledge in a simulation of a real-life activity through tasks (Mckay; 2006; Weigle, 2002).

## 1.6. Abbreviations

|               |                                                       |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ECELEP</b> | Early Childhood English Language Education Program    |
| <b>TEVYL</b>  | Teaching English to Very Young Learners               |
| <b>EVYL</b>   | English for Very Young Learners                       |
| <b>EPVT</b>   | English Picture Vocabulary Test                       |
| <b>CEFR</b>   | Common European Framework of References for Languages |
| <b>PA</b>     | Performance-based Assessment                          |
| <b>VYL</b>    | Very Young Learner                                    |
| <b>ECE</b>    | Early Childhood Education                             |
| <b>ELT</b>    | English Language Teaching                             |
| <b>EFL</b>    | English as a Foreign Language                         |
| <b>ESL</b>    | English as a Second Language                          |
| <b>CLT</b>    | Communicative Language Teaching                       |
| <b>FL</b>     | Foreign Language                                      |
| <b>L2</b>     | English                                               |
| <b>L1</b>     | Mother Tongue                                         |



## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.0. Presentation**

In this chapter, the definition and explanation of the key term “very young learners” and their characteristics and learnings are provided in detail. The section also provides overviews of TEVYL in regions where it is growing in popularity and offers a review theories related to child development and language learning separately. Various L2 learning processes and programs in different contexts around the world are illustrated. Moreover, the importance of learning age-appropriate vocabulary and communication skills at this level is addressed. In addition to this, the section outlines the most effective methodologies and materials to introduce English to VYLs. Lastly, the considerably recent term “researching with young learners” considering the ethical and organisational concerns and challenges in research with children is discussed.

### **2.1. Very Young Learners**

It is well-known that in early L2 learning process the age factor is not the vital issue for L2 education to be successful (Nikolov, 2016; Pinter 2011). Nevertheless, the definition of “very young learner” in general and the illustration of children in this age range is important. In doing this, it should be kept in mind to determine the “childhood” age range is difficult because of the variety in biological, political and legal and educational definitions of ‘children’ in different societies. Despite these distinctions, in the field of English language education, the literature concerning the age factor focuses on describing second or foreign language learners in different categories by taking the child development and language acquisition fields jointly into account (Singleton and Pfenninger, 2019; Singleton and Ryan, 2004; Mourão and Lourenço, 2015). Within the educational definition, describing the learners who are in different age ranges and have different needs, competences and developmental features is crucial in designing and deciding a suitable EFL program. In doing this, the literature approached this issue with 3 associated but separate perspectives which are elaborated below: chronological age, developmental stage, or traditional school grade level. Ellis (2014) provides a

comprehensive schema about the terms commonly used in the educational systems to which children belong in Table 2.1 although these descriptors and the age ranges they cover can show a tremendous variation according to the educational system of a country.

**Tablo** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı. **2. Ellis's Comprehensive Schema about the Terms to Describe Children in the ELT Profession**

| <b>Education</b>                                                                            | <b>Age Range</b> | <b>Terms commonly used in the ELT profession</b>                                | <b>Proposed terms aligned to those commonly used in educational systems</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-primary school<br>(also referred to as pre-primary, early years, nursery, kindergarten) | 2-5 years        | Kids; very young learners; early starters; young learners                       | Early years / pre-primary                                                   |
| Primary school                                                                              | 6–10/11 years    | Kids; young learners; primary; juniors; tweens                                  | Primary school years                                                        |
| Secondary school pupil                                                                      | 11-14 years      | Kids; young learners; secondary; tweens; teens; early teens; teenagers; juniors | Lower secondary                                                             |
| Secondary school pupil                                                                      | 15-17 years      | Young learners; young adults; seniors; teens; late teens; teenagers             | Upper secondary                                                             |
| University/vocational student                                                               | 18-25 years      | Adults; young adults                                                            | University/further education                                                |

Despite some arguments and concerns about the starting age to learn a second language in L2 context (Grosjean, 2008, Bialystok and Martin, 2004; Murphy, 2014; Rixon, 2013), there seems to be a general consensus in the relevant literature about the general age range of the different types of learners shown in Table 2.1. These learners are mostly categorized into three broad terms which are “young learners” are the children, especially those up to the ages of 9-10, “adolescence learners” who are secondary school students who are between 10-15 and “adult learners” referring to the ones more than 15 -16 years (Harmer, 2015). Related to this, although there have been many classifications in the literature, a broad definition is provided by Pinter (2006, 2011) offering a comprehensive analysis of research findings into the ‘age factor’ in language learning.

The foreign and second language learners are divided as “younger” and “older” by virtue of their different cognitive, social, emotional, linguistic and contextual factors in two basic periods of development which are adulthood and childhood.

The above brief overview of the classification of second language learner shows that age is considerably important in the process of second and foreign language education in terms of discrepancy between their social and cognitive differences, characteristics and learning needs. It should be kept in mind that although each learner is unique considering the individual learner differences and motivation, all the members of each group show similar properties (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, the age range these three terms above cover may vary slightly according to the educational system of the countries.

Until relatively recently (referring to almost 35 years) TEVYL has become common as a result of the emergence and spread of the publications and research in this area (e.g., Brumfit et al., 1991; Enever and Moon, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Daloiso, 2007; Nikolov, 2009; Davies and Taronia, 2012; Enever, 2011; Haznedar and Uysal, 2010; Kennedy and Jarvis, 1991; Moon, 2000; Murphy, 2014; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000; Nikolov et al., 2007; Pinter, 2006; 2011; Rixon, 1999). Several of these publications use the term ‘young learners’, commonly referring to children from around the age of 5 to 12 years old. Others use ‘children’ as a referent, alluding to ‘pre-primary school’ through to early adolescents (Pinter, 2011), or children from 6 to 12 years (Moon, 2000). Furthermore, some of them refer to “early foreign language learning” that refers to primary school children (Daloiso, 2007; Enever, 2011; Nikolov, 2009). Based on this, it can be said that there hasn’t been much attention on the dissemination of research into L2 learning in formal learning contexts with children under the age of 6 years until very recently (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015).

However, a considerable proportion of the second and foreign language education literature has started to deal with very young children more recently (Murphy, 2014; Rixon, 2013). This is due to the L2 learning age being significantly lowered to below the age of 6 in the past decade and countries all over the world start to introduce English language programs earlier in their education systems (Pinter, 2011). Moreover, many researches revealed the well-documented rise in the number of children who are learning English globally at younger ages (Johnstone, 2009; Garton et al., 2011). Related to this, Nikolov (2016) and Rich (2014) asserted that millions of young children learn a foreign language, most often English, in public and private pre-primary schools

around the world these days. Similarly, Ellis (2014) indicated that a growing number of children are introduced to English in pre-primary school programs.

In early foreign or second language research context, there are a number of labels used to refer to children learning English such as young learners' 'early language learners', 'early English language learners' and English young learners (Ellis 2014; Garton et al. 2013; Rich 2014; Rixon 2013). By definition in its broad sense, the term 'young learner' is increasingly used for children who are learning English between 3-14 years old (Pinter, 2006). This one is similar to Nunan (2011)'s definition about young learners who are between 3-15 years old. The age range signalled in both definition refers to pre-primary and primary school children who are being introduced to English. Concerning this, another definition made by Linse (2005) is that younger learners refer to children who are at pre-primary school and in the first couple of years of schooling. In addition to this, Ellis (2014) and Reilly and Ward (2003) used this term to refer to pre-primary children (usually under 6 years old) who have not yet started to compulsory primary education. Mihaljević Djigunović (2012) also defined the term "young language learners" as children that fall between the age of seven to twelve and "very young language learners" is the range between ages three and six at pre-primary school. More similarly, Slatterly and Willis (2001) defined the 7–12 years old children as young learners whereas they defined the children under 7 as very young learners. The other similar classification made by Ersöz (2007) is that pre-primary children who are mostly between 3 - 6 years old are called as 'very young learners' and '7 - 9 years old' as young learners and '10-12 years olds' as older/late young learners.

As it is seen, the different periods in child second and foreign language education which has been mentioned so far are often identified according to developmental stage and chronological age. As for the divisions of schooling, Krause et al. (2003) and Muñoz (2007) offered a classification including all levels of education; early childhood (between 3–7 years of age, when children are in pre-primary school and the beginning grades); middle childhood (7–11years, in elementary or middle school; adolescence (12–14 years, in junior high school); and adult (15 years and older, in high school).

Until relatively recently, "the young learner" has been used as a superordinate term covering all children ranging from 3 to 16 in previous studies of language learning and

teaching. However, it is noticed that using one term (young learner) to cover such a diverse age range (3-15) is unhelpful because of the distinctiveness of young learners and very young learners in strength of L1, state of cognitive development, knowledge of pragmatics and social relationships, and world knowledge, respectively (Nicholas and Lightbown, 2008). Therefore, a distinction was proposed between pre- and post-7 year olds and the ones between 3 and 7 were called as “very younger learners” and the others were called “young learners.” Whereas the former one refers to pre-primary school children, the secondary and above are called young learners referring to primary school children. This classification was necessary because of the huge differences in ‘physical, psychological, social, emotional, conceptual and cognitive development, characteristics and learning styles’, leading to very different approaches to introduce L2 effectively.

Considering the delineation of different types of learners have discussed so far, it can be said that the age is a major factor in the decision about how and what to teach in L2 learning process (Harmer, 2015). Another important point is that it is significant to recognize that the growth of the number and diversity of English language learners all over the world impel the educators and researchers to build age-appropriate programs that meet their educational needs. In doing this, an important starting point is to establish what is meant by the targeted groups of language learners of English as a foreign language. The term “very young learner” in this study refers to children between the ages of 5 and 6 years in kindergarten, who are just setting out on their educational journey. Puchta and Elliot’s (2017) definition of VYLs “the children between the ages of 4 and 7 in kindergarten, who haven’t begun elementary school” is taken as the base in the study. In other words, children who have no formal learning experiences and literacy skills at pre-primary school level are included into the study. In the scope of this study, while designing an early foreign language program, very young children’s language acquisition and general developmental characteristics should be examined in detail in order to facilitate the establishment of age- and language-appropriate learning goals and the identification general education policies for them.

### **2.1.1. Developmental Characteristics of Very Young Learners**

This part analyses the VYLs’ developmental characteristics which have an impact on the approaches to TEVYL and early L2 assessment in this area. The growing consensus

is that young children's learning process is not similar to those of younger and older ones (Elkind, 1988; Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek, 2006). Similarly, Ellis (2014) indicated that each age range has distinctive requirements and characteristics that should be recognized in curricular and instructional approaches. More specifically, Pinter (2011; 2012) and Zandian (2012), Inostroza Araos (2015) indicated that pre-primary school children referring to the ones between 3-6 years old need to be considered a particular group of learners because of their more distinctive learning needs, experiences and motivations than adults and teenagers. Based on this variation, the understanding of what and how VYLs are expected to know at pre-primary level is considerably important for all key stakeholders to be able to develop a set of pleasurable and meaningful educational purposes and design developmentally and linguistically suitable program for VYLs (Nikolov, 2016).

Foreign language learning in pre-primary schools should not be seen as an isolated process. Instead the L2 learning process is closely intertwined with the cognitive, emotional, linguistic, physical, social characteristics and development of VYLs at this level. VYLs' specific characteristics which are bound up with foreign language learning need to be examined in multiple domains which enable the educators to conduct a developmentally appropriate practice.

First of all, the growth of children physically is typified quick and constant progress and fine-motor skills. While young children's gross motor skills such as climbing, balancing, running and jumping are developing in their ability to move around, their fine-motor skills such as handling writing tools, using scissors are also increasing. The necessity of physical activities for VYLs is highlighted by a variety of theorists and researchers from the fields of child development. For instance, Cameron (2001) explained the language learning process for VYLs by describing the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky in relation to child language learning. She explained that very young children should be actively involved in the activities and build their own foreign language. In addition to this, one of the pioneers of "progressivism", John Dewey (1926) described the physical activities as running, jumping, and being actively involved with materials and put emphasis upon the activity as distinct from passivity. In

conclusion, Brewster et al. (2002) summarized these age-group children's physical characteristics:

They are very active, tiring easily and recovering quickly and they need physical movement in the classroom due to their high levels of energy.

As Morrison (2004) explained, those age group children get tired more easily from being passive than from being active in many school activities. In other words, they enjoy playing, running, acting, doing and making in their learning process (Slattery and Willis, 2001). Considering the importance of physical well-being and motor development in learning, it can be said that physical development needs to be taken into account in foreign language education and assessment tasks by providing opportunities for physical exercise and activities in the program.

In addition to physical characteristics, emotional and cognitive dimensions are also significant in early foreign language learning process. Contrary to adult learners who have abstract thinking and higher cognitive skills (Dworetzky, 1993), VYLs are at the concrete stages of cognitive development which requires to include games, activity- arts and crafts activities, oriented approach, action songs, storytelling, puppetry and role plays into the program (Cameron, 2001). In other words, ideas that are not concrete with out the support of references and supplies that are authentic need to be considered (Piaget, 1962; Allen and Kelly, 2015). This explanation is also important for deciding the suitable topic in the L2 learning process. Regarding this, Kersten (2012) explained that L2 learning should be based on concrete themes from nature and the environment that children can visualize and experience easily. One of the benefits of this is to help VYLs feel comfortable and self-confident when involved in learning the target language and prevent them from feeling bored or tired in this process (Rocha, 2007). As well as deciding pleasurable subjects, the process of deciding age-appropriate activities which are contextualized and motivating increase their attention and interest. This process is considerably important in the early years where children's inner motivation mostly depends on the effectiveness and attractiveness of methods and instructional methods (Pokrivčáková et al., 2008). Furthermore, the difficulty level of the tasks and activities should be arranged according to those age groups by considering their limited life

experience and unique interests and preferences in comparison to adults (Nikolov, 2016).

The other characteristic is indicated by Nunan (2011) that VYLs they learn through the here-and-now principle referring that they need to be supported with immediate surroundings and experiences. With respect to this principle, it is suggested in the literature that educators should begin with an accessible L2 environment where VYLs have the opportunity to interact with a great variety of meaningful input through purposeful and meaningful tasks and activities as well as instructional materials in L2 easily (Allen and Kelly, 2015; Pinter, 2014; Butler, 2005). The reason of this is clarified by Fleta et.al. (2015) that young children learn holistically and develop as individuals at their own rates by being actively involved in the learning process.

One of the well-known VYLs' characteristics is their having short attention spans (Cameron 2001; Slattery and Willis 2001; Ellis 2014; Brewster et al. 2002;) and their learning indirectly and holistically rather than directly. Children at this stage cannot concentrate on one activity or task for long periods of time. Therefore, they need variety in activities and tasks with brief and efficient transitions in L2 learning process (Garton and Copland, 2019). On the other hand, children at this age become emotionally attached to the teacher. This attachment sometimes may become a decisive factor in VYLs' attitude towards the target language they are learning. This recognizes the importance of positive reinforcement with the help of gestures provided by the teachers. Musarrat (2011) explained the necessity of reinforcement by saying VYLs respond well to praising and rewards from teacher. Lastly; as it is well known, the input period precedes the output period. To put it differently, VYLs are unable to produce any language until they gather a lot of input through long periods of exposure. Based on this, forcing production of the target language might be very overwhelming and traumatic, thus not recommended. After all, young children's are labeled 'learning optimists' due to their great self-confidence (Pinter, 2011; Victori and Tragant, 2003).

According to the findings of Biricik and Özkan's study (2012), one major way that VYLs differ from adult learners in an EFL context is their motivations and interests. They assert that although adults have a pre-existing set of motivations in the FL learning process because of their immediate or pragmatic need of the L2, VYLs need



more external motivation. Therefore, English teachers of young children in such contexts must work to positively affect children's motivations to learn, and to continue learning the L2 (Biricik and Özkan, 2012). On the other hand, Jalongo (2007) who claims inclination and enthusiasm have a serious impact, examined the interest into two categories as individual and situational interest. She emphasizes that the situational interest including variety of different activities' and materials' difficulty levels and surprising and pleasurable contents playing a particularly important role in TEVYL. In sum, younger children are capable of learning a new language because they are intellectually and emotionally qualified (Doyle and Hurrell, 1997). They are especially less worried and timid compared to older age groups and also excited, inquiring and welcoming when it comes unfamiliar experiences. (Read, 2003). It is clear from these explanations that language learning does not only involve mental processes aimed at practical memorization and utilizing techniques in the recollection, maintenance and rebuilding of information. Furthermore, the ability to learn language is rooted in children's emotional growth (Pinter, 2011).

As for VYLs' linguistic features, even if they have acquired ample amounts of vocabulary and have awareness of L2, they are still illiterate. To be aware of VYLs' linguistic level in L1 and L2 requires to keep a number of points in mind while presenting English such as using aural and visual (gestures, flashcards, pictures, etc.) to make the meaning clear, using L1 appropriately and reasonably as a motivating and learning tool, using standard themes. The other major linguistic characteristic of VYLs is their ability to learn through repetition and to imitate the sounds of the target language (Mourão, 2014; Slattery and Willis 2001; Cook, 2010). Related to this, the ways of learning such as repetition, recognizing and recalling can be a resource for engaging with the target language, comprehending what the target vocabulary or phrase means and using them properly (Turgut and Irgin, 2009; Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio, 2009). Similarly, Brewster et al. (2002) pointed out that listening activities such as listening to stories, songs and rhymes and teachers' instructions as a source of input are very valuable in developing their expressive language and awareness of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language.

These main characteristics that differ VYLs in their approach to L2 learning are collected into three headings: growth, literacy and vulnerability by McKay (2006). Apart from the first two concepts described above, the vulnerability is described as the children's need for positive experiences they have in the FL learning process that help them to feel self-confident about themselves and comfortable about their learning process. Regarding this, McKay (2006) asserted that young children having a high vulnerability to approval, praise and criticism should be taken into consideration in L2 education process at pre-primary school level.

On the other hand, Pinter (2006) identifies the characteristics of young learners including the pre-primary school and primary school English language learners as follows: (a) reading or writing skills even in their first language are limited or non-existent (b) their levels of awareness about the process of learning are very low (c) meaningful inputs help VYLs learn with holistic approach (d) they are more concerned about themselves than others (e) fantasy, imagination and movement are key points in their learning process. In addition to Pinter's explanations, Linse (2005) called the attention to the needs of children's basic physical and psychological needs. She emphasizes that the importance of meeting these needs and providing suitable care is so important to adjust educational experiences by considering the developmental stages of the individual child.

The above overview of the main characteristics of VYLs provides a basis for effective English learning and assessment. Finally, designing a high-quality education program for pre-primary school language learners who have already advantages because of exposure to a new language in early childhood (Bialystok, 2001, 2009; Bialystok and Martin, 2004) is merely based on the compatibility of the learning objectives and instruction with pedagogical principals regarding the age group (Agullo, 2006; Cameron, 2001, Doyle and Hurrell, 1997; Edelenbos et al., 2006). In addition to development needs, learner needs should also be taken into consideration for effective language learning and fair and valid language assessment.

### **2.1.2. Learning Needs of Very Young Learners**

To be aware of the actual needs and issues of pre-primary school L2 learning in an EFL context where the overall time and input available to VYLs is rather limited with some lessons is extremely important (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010). In deciding these needs, the knowledge of L2 education, besides general pedagogical knowledge and ECE knowledge need to be taken into consideration (Cameron, 2003; Mertin and Gillernová, 2010). In addition, the knowledge of developmental universals, L2 developmental stages and rates as well as language levels are vital (Haznedar and Gavruseva, 2008). In addition to figuring out what factors are influential in specifying the VYLs' learning needs, it is also important to address how these areas affect language learning issues.

First of all, Tabors (1997) described four L2 developmental stages in learning English as a target language. The first one is the period children use both their mother tongue and the target language and the second one refers to a silent period in which children focus on listening instead of speaking. Furthermore, the third stage refers to a period in which children use the L2 through formulaic and telegraphic speech and the final stage refers to the productive use of the L2. Before delving into the nature of each stage, it is important to note that there are individual differences among L2 children as a result of the variation in language contexts (e.g., immersion or L2-majority context or context where the amount of input is rather limited outside the classroom), in environment and social context facilitating the development of an L2 (Myles, 2013), sufficient exposure and interaction facilities (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Cummins, 2000). Given the fact that English learners at pre-primary school level have been engaging in a new language for the first time while their minds and bodies are still developing and some aspects of their first language are still developing (Moon, 2000), the focus of early English language learning in EFL context is devoted to the first three stages. To understand what VYLs can achieve in which L2 developmental stages help policy makers, curriculum developers and educators to decide on the learning and assessment's goals, process and outcomes.

On the other hand, meaningful communicative situations, repeated interactions and familiar themes and topics during L2 learning process are among the VYLs' major learning needs (King and Mackey, 2007). These can be provided with focusing on

presenting vocabulary and some basic forms through different types of activities such as telling stories, singing songs and telling rhymes, acting out roles and playing games to VYLs. As a result of their developmental sequences, it is highly likely that classroom L2 learners do not learn new linguistic forms and phrases instantaneously (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015). To illustrate, despite constant effort, receptive and especially expressive language repertoire may not be developed immediately in the class without a lot of repetition, revision and recycling. Therefore, VYLs need play-based activities that are varied and build on one another to avoid boredom and scaffold development (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010; Nikolov, 2002).

The other basic learning need of VYLs is to make sense of what they hear and also interact and experiment with them in the target language. In achieving this at this level, the use of body language, visual cues, realia for promoting comprehension, making the meaning clear in receptive language learning process and the suitable opportunities to apply what they are ready to use in expressive language learning process are highly significant (Swain, 2000). The translation of word meaning is not necessary for VYLs to be able to comprehend and use the target language. The key principle of this is providing comprehensible inputs (Krashen, 1985) referring to two key claims: (1) simplifying input by lowering the speech rate and modifying input and (2) providing comprehension with suitable materials and tasks (Ellis, 2008). To illustrate, reducing the speech rate and speaking clearly and comprehensibly helping the low-proficiency learners to recall the target language they have heard. On the other hand, modifying and simplifying input by using gestures and visual materials to decode and encode a message or meaning that is communicatively important to them (Shintani, 2016). As a result, the ability to choose an age-appropriate approach and activities and present them with age-appropriate classroom language is essential to working in the early years.

The other learning need of VYLs is a multisensory environment where children learn language and content by using all their senses, owing to the fact that very young learners are reliant on aural and visual support to get clues for meaning (Bruce and Spratt, 2011). The use of multi-sensory elements provides learners with meaningful contexts that facilitate L2 comprehension. Related to this, Mordaunt and Olson (2010) indicated that VYLs require many hours of exposure to speech of the target language

and understand what is being said. Within this scope, flashcards, typical classroom objects, realias and musical instruments as well as movement while playing games and reading stories need to be involved into the L2 learning process.

As is well known, comprehension mostly precedes the production in language learning process (Wode, 2010). To put it differently, young children understand much more than they what they are able to produce (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015). Therefore, using a thematic approach in which VYLs have an opportunity to experience target language knowledge entertainingly in several different ways is influential to improve a child's receptive (understanding words and language as well as listening skills) and productive language skills (using words and language to express thoughts). In doing this, the children need a range of task and activity types fostering receptive to productive language skills respectively and meaningful transitions between the activities taking children's attention. However, doing the same activities many times over creates the possibility of boring children, various types tasks should be used and their extent familiarized in order to in order make the reuse of information stimulating (Nikolov, 2016).

Very young learners of EFL have little contact with the foreign language and its use is limited to the specific pre-primary context. Generally their classroom interactions are insufficient in meeting their linguistic needs, thus limiting them. Therefore, favoring entertaining and common situations in the new language that children can relate with their daily lives promotes confidence. Furthermore, for each activity, such as storytelling, singing a song, telling a rhyme, playing a game, learning objectives and outcomes should be clearly determined to meet the communication needs of very young learners. Children's ability to use English is affected by the consistency and quality of the instructional approach (McKay, 2006). Among high-quality approaches in early language learning, the use of target language through play-based activities (Philp, Oliver and Mackey, 2008) and making an clear and direct connection explicit linguistic and cognitive, emotional, social and physical abilities with instructional materials (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2016) can be listed. Besides, activities most suited to VYLs are those which involve songs, chants, rhymes, stories, total physical response, arts and crafts activities (drawing, coloring, cutting and sticking) games and acting ou plays

(Reilly and Ward, 1997). The most important point in designing these tasks and activities is that they should challenge but be within their capabilities, because being extremely difficult or easy can prevent VYLs from developing themselves and displaying their actual and exact abilities (McKay, 2006).

Tasks have to be designed in accordance with children's short attention span. Furthermore, in order for them to be meaningful to do and repeat, they have to be intrinsically motivating. Extrinsic motives such as feedback on accomplishments are significant too, so having activities with clear outcomes are crucial. Feedback has to be given to VYLs on their performance, strengths and what needs further practice to improve their execution. In doing this, one should keep in mind that teachers' feedback shouldn't be very complicated considering VYLs' limited L2 language but it should be encouraging. Lack of success may demotivate young learners in the long run (Nikolov, 2001).

Pre-primary children in low exposure contexts like in EFL learning environments need to use the L1 as a framework for later L2 use especially in the first stage of Tabor (1997). In this stage, children use and mix the language in a playful way (Wode, 2010) because child L2 learners are able to transfer their L1 to the L2 in the domain of academic linguistic, literacy and cognitive skills, which means they do not have to learn everything twice (Geva and Wang, 2001). Related to this, Ampiah (2008), Esch (2010) and Milligan et al. (2016) emphasized the necessity of the use of children's L1 in the English language classroom especially in contexts where children do not have an access to the English outside the classroom. Along with L1 use in foreign language learning process by VYLs, teachers should also use the learners' mother tongue at a minimum level to support children's literacy development and their L2 motivation in English language (Makalela, 2015). Regarding this, Kraemer, (2006), Krashen (2003), Bourgon (2014) and Pfenninger (2014) indicate that L1 is a natural language facilitator and learning strategy, therefore it should be used purposefully. Finally, it can be summarized that teachers need to be encouraged to make use of codeswitching in order to benefit from the wealth of linguistic and cultural knowledge and VYLs need to feel confident and competent during the L2 learning process with the help of reinforcement and feedback given in their mother tongue.

Listening which is the foundation for developing other skills (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010) plays a crucial role in language learning in early second language (Fleta, 2015). As the second language learning process is similar to L1 acquisition, it is suggested that improving VYLs' listening skills with meaningful, multisensory and multimodal practices is extremely important. VYLs need to expose the correct pronunciation of the words and phrases, expand their attention span by localizing and discriminating sounds and understand the general meaning of what is heard in the target language with listening activities. These activities including chanting and singing need to be planned in advance as pre-listening, while listening and post-listening stages (Bruce and Spratt, 2011)

As a natural part of learning an L2 at an early age, VYLs start speaking in the target language with basic words not with full and target-like utterances. Their early productions can show some unanalyzed chunks and many missing elements like the absence of the past tense marker –ed or helping verbs “am, is, are” (Haznedar and Garnuseva, 2008; Paradis et al., 2011). One of the main reasons is that young children have difficulty in analyzing grammar. In addition to this, VYLs need to learn limited number of vocabulary items, phrases and sentences related with specific themes which children are familiar with in advance from their mainstream curriculum (Haznedar, 2008). They also need more on imitation skills, repetition and implicit learning (Pinter, 2011) and their motivation can be mediated by a wide range of factors and specific learning situations (e.g. learning activities and way of instructions) (Dörnyei, 1998; Pinter, 2017).

The knowledge of VYLs' characteristics and learning needs mentioned above will create a basis for the process of deciding and planning English learning aims and objectives, curricular areas, contents, pedagogical methodology, engaging and effective activities at pre-primary level.

## **2.2. Foreign Language and Second Language Education at Earlier Ages**

In L2 language education context, the most significant indicators of decreasing of the starting age of L2 learning, a growing number of children who are being introduced to English in pre-primary school programs in the world (Knagg and Ellis, 2012).

Accordingly, TEVYL at pre-primary level has become a global phenomenon (Rich, 2014). The important starting point to consider while dealing with this important issue is to decide “what VYL refers to” and “what their characteristics and learning needs are” as discussed in previous sections. In doing this, keeping the theoretical bases of foreign language learning with children and child development approaches in mind is extremely important. Another important point for any discussion of TEVYL is to recognize the very different linguistic environments within which children are engaged in learning English as an additional language (Rich, 2014). In fact, language education for VYLs occurs in a wide variety of contexts that refer to different L2 program types and language learning settings. In terms of program types, it seems a shift varying from immersion programs where the target language is the primary language of instruction to awareness programs where children are exposed to a second language for 30 or 45 minutes once a week, which will be discussed in the next section. On the other hand, the term “language learning contexts” points out ESL and EFL settings which are highly influential in adjusting the classroom conditions, providing comprehensible input and output, designing meaningful contexts, based on children’s real life experiences and identifying learning objectives in early L2 education.

In the context of language education, ‘foreign’ and ‘second’ language learning terms are sometimes used interchangeably, however, there is a clear distinction between them (Freed, 1995; Huebner, 1995; Cameron, 2003). ESL contexts can be broadly defined as “the countries where children are exposed to the L2 outside the classroom” and EFL as “the countries where the language class is the only chance children have to hear the target language” (Sakamoto, 2015). More specifically, whereas ESL learners reside in an environment where the acquired language is spoken, EFL learners are exposed to a non-native language outside of the environment where it is commonly spoken (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). For instance, in some parts of the world, such as Great Britain, the United States of America, Canada and Australia, where English is the official language of the community, it is taught to immigrant pre-primary school children as a second language, relevant to their everyday life and as a language of instruction in their future pre-primary school education (McKay, 2006). English is also taught as a second language to non-English speaking children in kindergartens in countries like India or Hong Kong, where it is the official language and the language of higher education.



Contrary to ESL setting, the target language is neither an official language nor the mother tongue of a significant part of the population and it is learned largely within the classroom in EFL settings. For example, the ones who are Chinese, Spanish or Vietnamese learners in Germany or the United States and as well as English learners in Turkey, Spain or Malaysia set an example for EFL learners (McKay, 2006). As a result of this comparison, it can be said that it is considered easier to learn a language in ESL setting as opposed to an EFL setting because of the widespread exposure of L2 learners to real-life situations and the language of the authentic culture itself (Sakamoto, 2015; Lennon, 1995; Tonkyn, 1996).

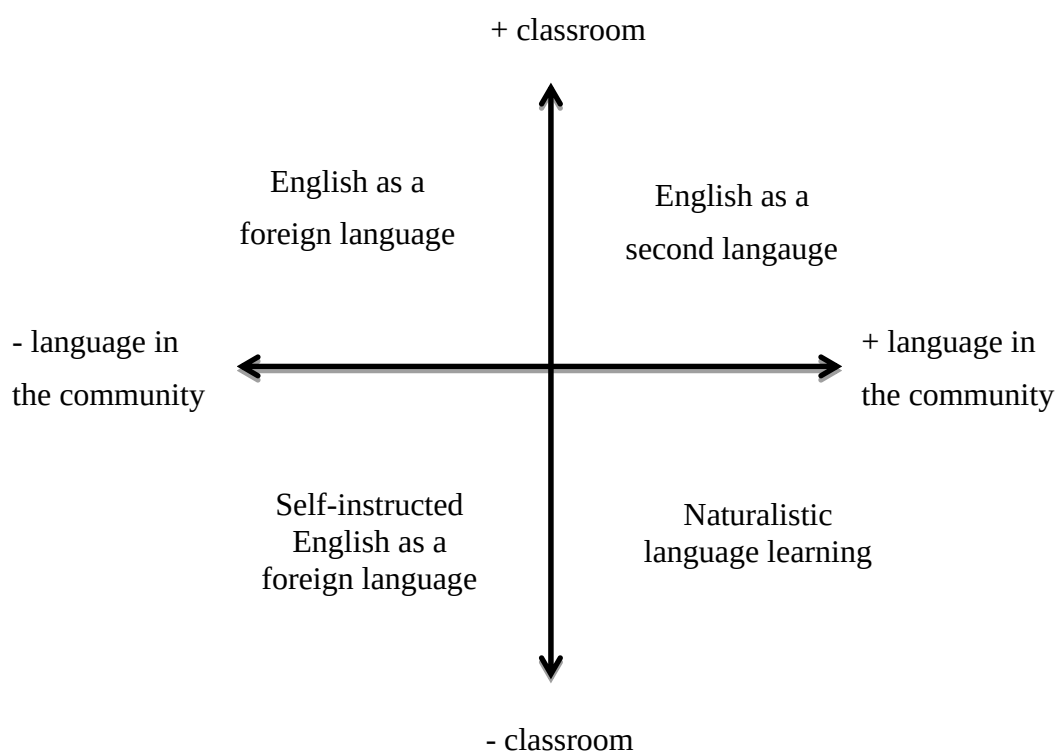
As mentioned above, the contexts in which English is taught to children differ greatly (Cameron, 2003). The knowledge of this plays a crucial role in understanding the key characteristics and principles of children's language learning process in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To illustrate, identifying realistic and appropriate learning outcomes and building a positive attitude towards cultural variety depend on understanding of limitations and advantages of some learning settings. To illustrate, it is indicated that in many Asian countries where English is seen as a school subject (Priyanto, 2009 and Richards, 2010) early English medium instruction to learn science and mathematics in English is detrimental to academic achievement and attainment of a high level of literacy (Ricento, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2013). This can be achieved in countries where L2 learners have a high intensity of L2 contact and a high quality of language input because the language they are learning is usually the main language of communication in their classroom, school and community. As a conclusion, the use and functionality of L2 taught among VYLs is affected by the differences between ESL and EFL contexts that are proposed by Pinter (2011) in Table 2.2.

**Tablo** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.**3. Contrasting Foreign and Second Language Contexts**

| Foreign language                                                                      | Second language                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English input is in low level: 2-5 hours a week in scheduled English learning program | English input is in high level: English as an instructional tool              |
| Only limited with lesson hours in the school                                          | Not limited with school, a lot of opportunities to expose L2 in the community |
| English is introduced as a subject                                                    | English is a tool to learn other subjects                                     |

Table 2.2 shows the differences between foreign and second language contexts, although it is recognized that the differences are not always clear-cut. Based on this, it can be concluded that second language situations, in which children have a great deal of exposure to English and opportunities to use it as authentic communication, are very different from foreign language situations, in which the children may only encounter English limited times in a week in classroom contexts (Nunan, 2011). Ellis (1994) refer to this differences by making a general distinction between “natural” settings (ESL) and “educational” settings (EFL). The former refers to second language learning situations- in workplace, at home, in schools, in markets, etc. where the learners can make contact with other speakers of L2 naturally. The educational settings arise in the course of learning the formal English as a second language instruction in school. One of the disadvantages of EFL settings is the children’s amount of L2 exposure outside of class time which is quite restricted because the language is not widely used in the social context (Sayer and Ban, 2014). Another limitation related with educational settings is about how many hours of input children receive in pre-primary schools and what happens in the English hours. The comparisons of two L2 learning contexts including distinctive properties adopted from Block (2003) are shown clearly in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1. The Comparison of two L2 Learning Contexts**



Considering the diagram of L2 learning contexts in Figure 2.1, it can be said that instructed English as a foreign language (+classroom/-community) is the opposite of naturalistic language learning (-classroom/+community). This variation of setting in L2 learning causes the discrepancy in globally accepted guidelines to serve as a reference for standard setting (Nikolov and Szabó, 2012; Benigno and Jong, 2016). Although there is some consensus on who VYLs are and how their proficiency develops at different cognitive stages, there seems to be a lack of consistency in practices around the world because of different educational contexts where children learn a second language in a formal classroom setting (EFL) or ‘pick it up’ in a natural or informal context (ESL). Moreover, this variation creates a useful reminder of two notions - “acquisition” and “learning”- which are distinguished by the language scholars and Krashen (1982) in his second language acquisition theory. According to him, ‘acquisition’ refers to the process of learning first and second languages naturally, without formal instruction, whereas ‘learning’ is reserved for the formal study of second or foreign languages in classroom settings. The related literature about this indicates that most of the younger children in the world still learn English predominantly through traditional face-to-face classroom instruction (Sayer and Ban, 2019). Contrary to Krashen, most contemporary second language acquisition researchers (MacWhinney’s, 2008; Christian 2006; Nikolov and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2011; Murphy, 2014; Enever 2012) reject the strong version of the learning versus acquisition distinction and they suggest new language policies promoting the children’s learning and acquisition in the classroom and beyond the classroom by expanding the amount of instruction.

The scope of this study involves learning a foreign language in pre-primary schools rather than L2 acquisition in naturalistic settings. The characteristics of FL in Turkish pre-primary schools even in private or public ones are that VYLs have very little experience of the target language outside the classroom and encounters it several hours in a school week. As Matsuda (2012) indicates, it is not possible to find a common way of presenting English that is suitable in all different language settings; for this reason, English education in EFL settings should set out to achieve learning outcomes that are different from this pertaining to ESL instruction. In designing L2 programs, syllabi and materials for VYL in EFL context, it is highly important to make decisions about learning objectives (linguistic, sociocultural, cognitive and affective aspects) and

instructional objectives for pre-primary school language learning by considering the needs of children, besides purpose and principles of early foreign language learning which are examined in the next sections.

### **2.2.1. Benefits of English for Very Young Learners**

The discussion about the advantages of learning a foreign language at earlier ages is a reminder of the ‘critical period hypothesis’ emphasizing that young beginners are more predisposed (or less predisposed) to the acquisition of an additional language than are older beginners. Whereas some researchers emphasize that early L2 introduction provides outstanding benefits to both individuals in terms of effective L2 acquisition and governments as a prestige symbol and economic drive (Šulová, 2007; Brunzel 2002; Nikolov 1999b; Kennedy et al. 2000), some researchers argue against the validity of “the earlier the better” hypothesis by setting forth two reasons. One of them is the fact that learning is not exclusively determined by age but also by many other factors (the quality and quantity of early provision, teachers, programs, and continuity) and the other one is that younger learners have imprecise mastery of their L1 and poorer cognitive skills in comparison to older learners. Moreover, other studies put forth the detrimental effects of early L2 education on first language acquisition and the development of thinking (Kotátková, 2002, in Ježková, 2011). Apart from these, there are studies pointing out that early language learning involves implicit learning and leads to higher proficiency in the long run (Singleton, 1989).

On the other hand, Singleton (2003) asserts that those who begin learning L2 learning in childhood generally achieve higher levels of proficiency in the long run than those who begin in later life. In understanding of the challenges and opportunities of introducing English as an L2 at an early age, it can be concluded that the age factor should not be underestimated; however it is not the mere issue and key variable. To make a case for the Critical Period Hypothesis in the L2 context, it does not suffice to demonstrate that age of onset of L2 learning and ultimate L2 attainment are related. Alternatively, it can be said that the positive effects and advantages of an early start becomes evident by the influence of other variables such as a qualified teacher (Hanušová and Najvar, 2006) and adequate times in learning L2s (Najvar and Hanušová, 2010), age-appropriate methods and approaches (Nikolov, 2000; Singleton, 2014).

As for the requirements for getting high benefits from early L2 starting, Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) suggest three conditions that must be met by early FL programs. First of all, children have to be interested in learning the target language. Secondly, the program needs to be specially designed for VYLs according to their capacities and needs. Last but not least, educators must not only be proficient in the target language but should also have certain pedagogical knowledge. More similarly, the European Commission (2003), in the Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006 emphasized that offering another language at an early age is not inherently advantageous. The process can only be effective if teachers are trained to work with very young children, classes are small enough, the learning material is adequate and sufficient time is allotted in the curriculum. Based on the explanations above, providing that some conditions are satisfied to some extent, the introduction of an L2 both in EFL and ESL contexts can be regarded as an enriching experience that brings some benefits in terms of a child's personal and academic development (European Commission, 2011). Among these benefits, the prominent ones are to support VYLs in comprehending and producing the target language, communicating in a few words basically and problem-solving in this language interacting successfully, as well as increasing their positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures by raising awareness of diversity (Cameron, 2001). These are often pointed out as the main reasons underlying the introduction of languages in the early years (Beacco et al., 2010; Edelenbos et al., 2006; European Commission, 2011a). Furthermore, Šulová (2007) highlights the necessity to introduce L2 to VYL provided that VYLs' developmental stage which refers to a period of play and spontaneity of children, extraordinary rote memory and the desire to interact with peers needs to be taken into account to be able to get highest benefits at this period.

As it is seen under appropriate conditions, an early start can bring many advantages. To illustrate, it can help shape children's overall progress while they are in a highly dynamic and receptive developmental stage in their lives. On the other hand, the fact that young children's brain learns languages leads to develop an enhanced capacity to learn languages throughout life. (European Commission, 2011). The other benefit is the acquisition of basic linguistic and communicative skills in target language at pre-primary level because these young children have interest and energy to learn and

explore new things and they are active and interested in exploration, and they are not embarrassed to make mistakes while they are learning (Griva et al., 2010). However, it should be kept in mind that if a very early start cannot be made, it does not mean that all the advantages mentioned above are missed because each age may have its own advantages and disadvantages for language-learning.

As well as linguistic and cognitive benefits of early L2 learning such as supporting children's cognitive development and evolving language awareness, promoting creativity and flexible thinking and enhancing communication skills in both the first and foreign language (Caccavale, 2007; Read, 2003), it has also some other benefits. To illustrate, L2 learning in pre-primary schools is beneficial because it helps children to learn about other cultures (Brunzel, 2002), develops positive attitudes about languages and motivation and promotes language awareness (Nikolov 1999b; Kennedy et al. 2000). Similarly, an early start is seen to be important for the generation of positive attitudes towards the language and culture (Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006; Tinsley and Comfort, 2012). Johnstone (2002) summarized the benefit of an earlier start by saying "early L2 learning provides a solid attitudinal and motivational platform for young children." In the light of these explanations, an early start can bring many advantages under appropriate conditions and with the quality instructional practices and programs that are suitable to the social, psychological, emotional and cognitive needs of children.

### **2.2.2. Purposes of Introducing English to Very Young Learners**

Under the impact of globalization, the last few decades have seen an increasing tendency to introduce English in pre-primary school curricula around the world (Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006; Nikolov, 2016; Nikolov and Curtain 2000; Gnutzman and Frank, 2005; Enever and Moon, 2009). Despite its being widespread, the major concern is the lack of commonly accepted guidelines to serve as a reference for standard L2 learning (Benigno and Jong, 2014). One of the reasons is that there is a wide range of early childhood English language education programs such as awareness raising, language focus program, content-based curricula or immersion/bilingual programs. That's why it is difficult to assert global L2 learning objectives which fit to all VYLs who have different needs. To illustrate, general objectives of pre-primary

schools learning English as a foreign language has some distinctive properties (European Commission, 2011) than bilingual pre-primary schools in which all the activities are carried out in two languages, L2 is used as the main means of communication in the curriculum (immersion) and native speakers who can convey the language and its culture more authentically are often preferred to non-natives (Kersten, 2015).

The aims of awareness programs is to raise children's interest in the target language and to help children have an enjoyable language learning process without the aim of achieving set language learning goals by the end of the course. In scheduled foreign language classes which are the most common type of foreign language program in pre-primary schools in EFL contexts, the objectives of English hours are to develop VYLs' positive attitude towards other languages and cultural varieties; providing their first contact with an L2; and the learning of basic L2 linguistic and communicative skills in a playful way. The acquisition of basic vocabulary in an L2 is seen as a priority in early language learning at this age. Regarding this, Najvar (2010) indicated that the language learning experience encountered by the participants at pre-primary age are mainly vocabulary-oriented. Lastly in immersion or bilingual early learning programs, content-based curricula or content and language integrated learning, the most prominent aims are to provide children their mainstream education with the target language (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). In other words, the content learning and L2 learning are interrelated in these programs where the children nearly always continue with their regular foreign language program alongside their CLIL content lessons (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Consequently, as in pre-primary education, children are receiving language learning experiences of varying types, in quantity and in quality (Rixon, 2013) and many of these experiences are not in accordance with the suggested guidelines (European Commission, 2011). In this framework, it can be said that the goals of early foreign language learning are closely linked to the types of the curriculum, in other words, how curricula define the aims set for language and content knowledge, and cognitive and other abilities and skills.

Despite some discrepancies, there are some common learning early L2 objectives. First and foremost, achievement targets in L2 need to be modest in early language programs.

It is well known that VYLs are not expected to achieve native level (Curtain, 2009; Haenni Hoti, Heintzmann and Müller, 2009; Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy, 2009) in the first few years of their learning of a new language. Besides, the aims tend to build on developmental stages in early language programs by considering the learners' age and language development. The other common purpose of the early L2 programs is to develop comprehension and two basic skills -listening and speaking- in the target language, gain proficiency not only in receptive language skills but also expressive language skills by interacting both with the teacher and with each other. In achieving this, in the first stages of L2 learning process, the emphasis is mostly on overtly introducing listening and speaking skills in conjunction with receptive and productive language skills by involving VYLs into the listening process actively in multisensory and multimodal ways.

Notwithstanding that there are not global determined objectives for TEVYL, some general guidelines including affective, cognitive and linguistic objectives can be presented based on the L2 learning literature and the general objectives of the English language education curriculums at the pre-primary school level in different parts of the world. One of them is suggested by the European Commission (2011a) that "early language learning should not foster languages as a specific subject but rather as a communication tool to be used in other activities." In doing this, it should be integrated into contexts in which language is meaningful and useful to support the learning of English as a foreign language through their interactional practices. The other main objective is closely linked to the affective aims that are meant to contribute to young children's positive attitudes towards languages and language learning (Prabhu, 2009). When examined, it is seen that most curricula include not only L2 achievement targets, but comprise further aims. To illustrate, the aims of early language learning in Cyprus are reported to be mainly the development of positive attitudes towards other languages and the development of intercultural awareness, as well as providing opportunities for cognitive benefits and enabling the long-term improvement of language competence levels (Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010). Similarly, the objectives of TEVYL in Hong Kong are developing the understanding of languages and culture, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing children with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages (Hong Kong Education Bureau,



2013). In Poland, as in many other European countries, a key objective of learning a foreign language at early years is to instill in children an awareness of, and positive attitudes towards, the cultural other (Sowa, 2014). Besides, the objectives underlying the English education in the Early Years in Malta is creating language awareness through listening to stories and rhymes and developing competences in the target language. The national documents of the Czech Republic also support the affective domain aim by stating that VYLs should know that people also communicate with other languages and that they can be learned and the pre-primary school should enable to create at least “elementary preconditions for learning a foreign language” (Černá, 2015). All these examples demonstrated that there is a consensus about integrating the affective objectives into the early foreign language education and confirmed the priority of affective aims in L2 education (Moon 2005; Cameron 2001; Najvar 2010).

Apart from the affective aims, the comprehension of the spoken language, providing comprehensible input by using suitable methodology and approaches and the higher possibility of later acquisition of native-like accent can also be listed among the aims of early L2 education. However, it is emphasized that in scheduled early foreign language programs where children exposed to the language for 1-2 hours a week, it cannot be expected that VYLs become bilingual or even make huge linguistic progress (Moon, 2005). Although they learn the themes quickly when they are presented in a playful way, the learning outcomes are not even observable at the spot. One of the possible reasons is that children’s receptive language skills mostly precede the expressive language skills. This means that small children are learning even when they are not actually saying anything (Reilly and Ward, 1997). This period is described as a silent period in which the linguistic development has gone underground.

At the national level, the purposes of early language learning are presented in national English Education Program designed for private pre-primary schools (MONE, 2016) in Turkey as: (1) developing a positive attitude towards language learning, (2) recognizing the similarities and differences between the target language and the native language, (3) using English to communicate with their peers, (4) enhancing their listening and speaking skills and their vocabulary knowledge in the target language. Alongside this, one of the common objectives and principles of L2 education in pre-primary level is to

develop social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional skills while they are learning a foreign language (MONE, 2016). Considering that VYLs are absolute beginners (with no previous exposure to English at all) as well as false beginners (who may have been exposed to some English by hearing it from their parents, in kindergarten, in private lessons, on television, in computer games or while staying abroad) in Turkey, the purposes stated above need to be more detailed and illustrative for what VYLs can realistically be expected to do and how they achieve them by the end of the year.

In fact, one of the most important cognitive and linguistic aims of early years L2 learning is to be able to acquire the correct pronunciation and intonation of target words and structures to a reasonable degree (European Commission, 2011; Černá, 2015). In addition to this, the fact that children become conscious of L2 and its meaning, feel encouraged to speak at the word and phrase level, acquire a foundation for further language studies and take an interest in the process are among the other objectives of early L2 education. In short, early L2 learning aims in pre-primary school period are somehow subordinate to a healthy overall development of a child in general, and L2 learning should conjointly go with the contributions to the VYLs' general development in all domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) (Hrdá, 2017).

In a discussion of the effective and relevant L2 education at pre-primary level, it requires to be clear about a realistic set of goals and a challenging environment around these meaningful and achievable goals with optimal difficulty levels. In achieving this, it should be kept in mind that the objectives that emerge according to the actual needs and issues of early L2 learning have to be in line with all areas of child development – physical, cognitive, emotional, personal and social by considering that children learn holistically (Mertin and Gillernová, 2010). Moreover, VYL learning objectives should include carrying out the basic communicative functions in a particular language together with providing information on the linguistic components (grammar and vocabulary). Before moving on discussing the principles of TEVYL, the common aims of enormous variety of early foreign language programs around the world mentioned so far can be summarized as (Pinter, 2011; Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek, 2006; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000; Rixon, 2000):

- Developing basic linguistic and communication abilities
- Fostering motivation and positive attitudes with enjoyable learning experiences
- Encouraging early familiarization with a new language and culture
- Enhancing listening and speaking skills as well as cognitive and linguistic skills

### **2.2.3. Principles of Introducing English to Very Young Learners**

After providing a detailed picture about who VYLs are, how they develop, and what they need during the L2 language learning process, it is important to touch upon some of the principles of TEVYL by integrating child development and language learning disciplines. In the literature it is observable that there are not many research studies that systematically investigate the principles of learning mechanisms and the language attainment of pre-primary school children (Kersten, 2015). On the other hand, at the national level, although there is a newly published Early Childhood English Language Education Program (2016) only for private pre-primary schools in Turkey, it is crucial to state that it is not a document establishing national guidelines or principles of early foreign language in terms of learning objectives, instructional and assessment materials and instructional practices. Because of the absence of agreed standards, even within national education system in Turkey, existing learning, teaching and assessment resources are extremely diverse. This brief overview shows that there is a dearth of research studies into the age-appropriate functional principles for VYLs worldwide and countrywide despite a growing interest in this age group (Murphy, 2014; Rixon, 2013).

In designing a comprehensive English program, it is important to identify the principles about what learners are expected to know at different levels of schooling and how they are learning a foreign language. The principles including the linguistic, affective and cognitive needs which characterize young children include a set of functional descriptors or learning objectives for VYLs. To be able to identify these principles, a vast amount of TEVYL literature related with the psychological, educational, sociocultural, methodological and ethical as well as pedagogical aspects of early language learning and the realities of the majority of L2 education contexts are examined critically. In the first phase of identifying these principles, CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) is used as a point of departure, despite the fact that it is not specifically designed for very young learners (Papp and Salamoura, 2009; Papp and Walczak,

2016). In addition to this, very few publications and research including children under 6 years old (Reilly and Ward, 1997; Falomir, 2015; Puchta and Elliot, 2017; Bertolini, 2016; Biricik and Özkan, 2011; Mourão and Lourenço, 2015; Copland and Garton, 2013; Nikolov, 2016; Singleton, 2014; Murphy, 2014; Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006, 2011) contribute to find out the basic principles of L2 education at pre-primary level. As a result of close scrutiny of research findings and publications in the area of early foreign language learning and the wide range of language learning contexts, major principles of English language learning at pre-primary level which are the basis of the study are listed as follows:

1. **Active involvement:** Piaget's philosophy (1929) 'learning requires the active, constructive involvement of the learner' has a tremendous impact on early L2 education. Without the active involvement and engagement of young children, it is difficult to achieve some cognitive activities such as comprehension, paying attention, learning and reflection of what they have learnt. Based on this, designing an age-appropriate program including game-based, play-based and hands-on activities and providing interesting and challenging learning environments that encourage the active involvement of VYLs are vital. As Vosniadou (2003) indicated, policy-makers, curriculum-developers and language teachers need to avoid situations and contexts where the children are passive listeners for long periods of time.
2. **Familiar L2 contents, target vocabularies and methods:** As acknowledged by Piaget (1932), the young children learn new experience or knowledge by linking them with previously held knowledge. Based on this, deciding the themes, target vocabularies and methods that VYLs are familiar with in their regular syllabus (Arnold, 2016) are extremely important. One of the possible reasons of selecting developmentally and culturally appropriate and familiar themes, tasks and materials might be to make the L2 learning process comprehensible and meaningful for VYLs and maximize the potential for language acquisition (Slattery and Willis, 2001).
3. **High motivation and positive attitudes:** Motivation is as a basic underlying principle for VYL who may have little intrinsic motivation to learn a new

language, especially in EFL contexts (Nikolov, 1999b). Regarding this, Pokrivčáková et al. (2008) points out that young children do not have an fully intrinsic motivation referring to inner drive that encourage VYLs to pursue their L2 activities for internal rewards. She (2008) added that they are mostly dependent on the extrinsic factors such as attractiveness of instructional methods and materials to be motivated at this level. Considering all these issues, it can be said that it is essential in pre-primary level English education to choose age-appropriate and child-friendly approaches and activities in creating motivated learners. Regarding this issue, Nikolov (1999) and Wood and Attfield (2005) suggest intrinsically motivating content, activities, tasks and materials that ensure meaningful context for enjoyable L2 learning and playful activities that build and sustain motivation and positive attitudes towards learning.

4. **Frequent short practice sessions:** The other basic principle of early L2 learning is “deliberate practices” with different materials and tasks related to the theme. These practices becomes meaningful and useful for children provided that they can be made with various methods in a contextualized way. Moreover, it is also beneficial for children to revise the themes in richer educational context in company with their parents at home. In sum, L2 learning is a complex cognitive activity that requires considerable time and periods of practice, for these reasons, a lot of revision and recycling is necessary, activities need to be varied and build on one another to avoid boredom and scaffold development (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010; Nikolov, 2002 ).
5. **Introducing communicative skills as well as linguistic skills:** There has been a shift from traditional and didactic educational approaches to a more constructivist, learner-centered style that encourages communication and interaction in L2 hours recently. The latter issue is also attainable in early L2 education by providing children with opportunities to scaffold language learning through interactions and encouraging them to work on age-appropriate activities and tasks in groups or independently. Whereas linguistic skills (vocabulary or grammar learning) can be acquired with more formal instructional methods such as memorization and repetition of target words, communicative skills require

more challenging age-appropriate activities including playing games, singing songs, acting out role-plays, telling rhymes, doing thinking skill activities and telling stories (Nikolov, 2016). The most critical point here is the fact that these meaningful learning activities become structured and planned in advance and they include smooth transitions between them.

6. **Multisensory learning:** The VYLs various learning styles, which mean that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates are one of the most important aspects of children's overall educational development. Implementing this issue at pre-primary level English education involves creating multisensory environments where children learn language by using all their senses. The use of multi-sensory elements provides children with meaningful contexts that facilitate L2 comprehension. This means that children do not just watch and listen to the teacher presenting the new language, and then repeat what they have learned. They engage with the language through touch and movement at the same time as they are using their sight and hearing. Receiving and processing information in these ages activate the visual, auditory and kinesthetic neurological systems. During the processes of thinking and remembering, the brain's multisensory activation heightens young children's ability to pay attention, concentrate and store linguistic information in their long-term memory.
7. **Social participation:** Scaffolding is one of the most important aspects and principles of early L2 education. The reason for this is the fact that scaffolding supports children during their growth to improve their cognition-in-language and to function independently. In fact, VYLs need the support of a teacher or other adult a lot not only to reformulate the target language but also to participate the tasks and activities in the most effective way. Based on this, language games and activities that require all children to involve and practice L2 knowledge and skills all together need to be included into the early L2 programs.
8. **Optimal and comprehensible input:** At the early stage of L2 learning, listening and speaking have been highlighted rather than reading and writing because of literacy problems of VYLs in L1 (Pavičić and Bagarić, 2004). At this level a

great deal of language learning takes place through oral and visual activities – stories, songs, role-plays, games with simple rules, rhymes, images and realia – and through gestures and movements (Puchta and Elliot, 2017). The key point here is to provide them extensive and continuous exposure to language contextualized in meaningful and enjoyable ways (Cameron 2001; Pinter 2011). In doing this, the critical issue is that listening and speaking tasks and activities should be short, varied, motivating and interesting (Butler, 2005) because they cannot focus on one task for long periods of time as a result of their short attention spans (Cameron 2001; Brewster et al. 2002; Slattery and Willis 2001). The findings of the researches conducted by Ghosn (2017) and Garton and Copland (2019) show that they do not respond well to formal, teacher-fronted and course book-based instruction in foreign language learning process. In this sense, the selection or preparation of age-appropriate and culturally appropriate methods and materials is so vital in early L2 learning process (Butler, 2009).

**9. Internalising and understanding target language rather than memorization:** For these age group, experimenting with language, repeating, guessing meaning, memorising and internalising key language items are among the L2 learning strategy (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2001). From these, children's making sense of what they hear by relying on their background knowledge of the world and of context is significant according to the Krashen's comprehensible input theory (1985). In achieving this, translation of word meaning is not necessary for children to be able to comprehend and use the target language. Allowing them to grasp the meaning through intrinsically motivating and cognitively challenging activities mentioned above (Nikolov, 1999, 2002) and using body language and other visual support scaffolding comprehension and their FL development are two key factors necessary for VYLs at the early stage of language learning (Nikolov, 2016).

**10. Parental involvement:** The principle of building learning experiences on the out-of-school experiences of the children has crucial importance. In doing this, parental involvement, community involvement (if possible) and the use of media and technology can be regarded as effective strategies to assist VYLs in their

efforts to learn an L2 (Castillo and Camelo, 2013). Turkish educational policies also define and establish the importance of parental involvement in children's development (MONE, 2013). The issue of parent involvement as a part of the curriculum takes place as a result of effective communication that guides parents about what they have to know and how they can help their children at home (Castillo, 2012 and Camelo, 2013). In doing this, the parents can be involved in their children's learning in a simple and informative way by sending a regular letter giving information about the activities in the classroom and general stages and benefits of early foreign language learning and giving suggestions about what they can do together at home.

**11. Using limited words:** Although young children –especially bilingual children– can learn and practice grammar at a certain extent through meaningful and real interactions (King and Mackey, 2007), this is not possible for VYLs in awareness or regularly scheduled programs. They generally focus on learning vocabulary and some basic forms through stories, songs and rhymes, based on the view that children have difficulty in analyzing grammar (Haznedar, 2015). However, VYLs' grasp of the foreign language is limited at the beginning of their language learning process. Based on this, selecting and using limited age-appropriate target vocabulary and repeating them frequently and enjoyably in various activities in order to provide extensive and continuous L2 exposure for VYLs are so important (Arnold, 2016).

**12. The ideal use of L1:** Whereas some researches advocate to maximize the use of L2 and prevent the use of L1 by emphasizing the importance of an L2 input-rich environment (Bouangeune, 2009; Kim and Elder, 2008; Seligson, 1997; Burden, 2001; Ellis, 2005), the others point out that using L1 might be of a great advantage for learners especially at the beginner levels when it is used reasonably and usefully. In this regard, Nation (2003) offers a balanced approach which maximizes the use of L2 but at the same time does recognize the role of L1 in the classroom. Besides, the reason, function and frequency of using L1 at lower levels are a bit more different than higher levels. Harmer (2007) explained the reason of using the young children's own language at a



certain level in the class as giving directions and enhancing the rapport with them. Not understanding anything at all in the classroom can be threatening, so the children's own language can be an important safety net. In the literature, some strategies including the use of both English and the first language to facilitate the learning of the new language are suggested (Puchta and Elliot, 2017). They suggested "a sandwich technique" which means saying something in English while using mime and gesture to help VYL understand, then say the same phrase or sentence in their own language, and then immediately repeats the same sentence in English (2017). In addition to this, using puppets that can only speak English or keeping one more colleague acting as a mediator in the class can be listed among some efficient techniques (Puchta and Elliot, 2017). The advantages of using a learner's L1 in the early foreign language class temporarily are also supported by other research. This makes the language learning more personal and creative performance (Kingtoner, 2011) and maintains the learners' identity (Norton, 2000). This also gives children a feeling of security and shows that they can understand the teacher well.

Considering the general characteristics of the VYLs that does not appear to vary noticeably from nation to nation, it can be offered that the common psychological and methodological principles presented above are likely to be generally applicable to early L2 learning especially in EFL contexts at the national and international level.

## **2.3. Background to Child Foreign Language Learning and Pedagogy**

In this section, four influential theories of child development - Piaget, Vygotsky, Information Processing, and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and their relationships with early foreign language education will be discussed. Besides, some important aspects of L1 and L2 development in childhood will be outlined by discussing evidence from both naturalistic second language and formal foreign language contexts.

### **2.3.1. Theories of Child Development**

In an endeavor to create an age-appropriate and effective English curriculum, syllabus or programs for children at pre-primary school level, to be aware of these age groups'

developmental characteristics through theories of child development is highly important. At the basis of this study, there are four theories which are Piaget's child development theory, Vygotsky's social learning development, Gardner's multiple intelligences and Information Processing theory. Curriculum planners, program designers, researchers, linguists, educators and language teachers can benefit from the links between these child development theories and foreign language education in introducing, in planning and in implementing and interpreting researches.

According to Piaget's developmental stages, children between 2-7 years old are in pre-operation stage and they have some specific characteristics. One of them is that these children are 'ego-centric', in other words, they are unable to imagine any other perspectives but their own. Furthermore, they enjoy and participate effectively in repetitive games where the same issue is acted out repeatedly. They cannot understand complicated instructions and they cannot work with tasks that require coordinating perspectives, evaluating options or reasoning in a formal manner. They enjoy spontaneous language play (Nicholas and Lightbown, 2008) and simple, repetitive tasks, games and stories. These activities can stimulate children's creative imagination and willingness to take on playful roles (Pinter, 2011). In addition to this, Piaget mentioned animism for the preoperational child that the world of nature or inanimate objects such as toys and teddy bears are alive, conscious and have a purpose. In other words, by animism he means the attributing of life and consciousness to certain inanimate objects (Klingensmith, 1953). Based on this, it can be concluded that puppets can be used as meaningful and enjoyable instructional tools that help VYLs develop cognitive skills by forcing them to use their imaginations and communicative skills in early L2 learning process (Kroflin, 2012a; Quesinberry and Willis, 1975).

As opposed to Piaget, Vygotsky's theory of development emphasizes continuity in development rather than discontinuity or 'stages'. It focuses more broadly on the crucial role of social environment, and particularly on the role of expert helpers and the quality of their assistance to novice learners. Related to this, Vygotsky (1962) proposed the concept of the zone of proximal development that refers to the distance between the child's level of current ability to solve a particular problem and the potential ability, which can be achieved with the careful assistance or guidance of someone else, usually

a more knowledgeable expert. Zone of proximal development has had immense influence on educational practices. In this sense, the interaction between VYLs and their teacher or peers is the basic principle of early language learning. According to Vygotsky (1962), young children learn a language by actively constructing knowledge of linguistic structures that they hear from others. For this reason, in this interactive process, preparing a setting in which VYLs have many opportunities to hear and speak the target language and to learn to communicate by using the language in purposeful is considerably important (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2011; Cloud, Genesee and Hamayan, 2000). This theory asserts that learning develops in a social context which can be sometimes a language classroom with experiential and multisensory activities including hands-on-experiences, games, role-plays, stories, music and movement. In sum, paying attention to individual differences and considering alternative ways and levels of assisting learners are some of the implications and reflections of the Vygotskian approach in early foreign language learning process.

Unlike the Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories, the 'information processing approach' which is a more recent development in the study of cognition is not associated with a single name or a researcher (Pinter, 2011). The basic idea of information processing theory is that the human mind is like a computer or information processor in which the input is received and processed and the output is delivered. Based on this, early foreign language knowledge and skills gathered from the senses (input), is stored and processed by the brain, and finally brings about a behavioral response (output). According to Baddeley (1992) putting forward the 'levels of processing model' asserted different ways of storing the information. First, the information entering the mind is interpreted meaningfully and linked to other information and retained more permanently in the long-term memory store. In the last stage, when a particular link is strengthened, it becomes automatized. In achieving this process successfully, VYLs who are learning a foreign language at pre-primary level should focus their attention on the core features of the task (Schneider, 2006). Considering the importance of sustained attention and young children's short attention span, it is important to plan various multisensory activities that involve routine patterns of active participation. After attracting children's attention to the target language, the necessary stage is to use memory strategies to store L2 knowledge and skills effectively. Regarding this, Berk (2000) listed short short-term

strategies as rehearsal, organization and elaboration and long-term memory strategies as recognition, recall and reconstruction. Among these, recognition and recall of target vocabulary or phrase which are fairly influential ways of practicing or measuring what VYLs have learnt are mostly used at this level (Berk, 2000).

The theory behind the understanding and interpretation of individual differences remains closely linked to Gardner's (1985, 2011) Multiple Intelligences. According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1992), cognitive factors including age, intelligence learning strategies and style and affective factors including anxiety, extraversion/introversion, inhibition, attitude and motivation are among the lists of factors of individual differences that affect early L2 learning process. In this sense, using effective instructional methods by taking into account those specific and relevant learner characteristics in this process is considerably important (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2006; Mihaljević Djigunović, 2009). On the other hand, the diversity of VYLs in terms of their cognitive abilities and capacities result from the multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 2011). This means that linguistically, culturally, and cognitively diverse children cannot learn in the same way and with the same materials. Based on this, early childhood foreign language programs need to consist of role-playing, dancing, TPR, hands-on learning, manipulative for Bodily/Kinesthetic learners; drills, dialogues, storytelling for Verbal/Linguistic learners; using flashcards, power point presentations from computer, pictures for Visual/Spatial learners; classifying and categorizing, sequencing for logical/mathematical learners; and singing or listening to a song for Musical/Rhythmical learners (Haley, 2004).

All in all, a relevant and comprehensive L2 program for VYLs is one that promotes L2 learning experiences that are meaningful for VYLs. Blanco (2006) also defined a relevant L2 program as the one "placing the child in the center, fitting education to the child's needs, taking into account what the child is, knows and feels, and promoting the development of skills and potential". To achieve to design such a linguistically and culturally successful L2 program which is holistically in conjunction with all areas of child development – physical, cognitive, emotional, personal and social (Mertin and Gillernová, 2010), the implications and reflections of child development theories (mentioned above) into foreign language learning at pre-primary need to be taken into

account carefully and profoundly. Within the scope of this study, the reflections and implications of child theories related to L2 learning in early childhood period are summarized in Table 2.3 in a detail.

**Table** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.**4. The Reflections of Child Development Theories into Foreign Language Learning at Pre-Primary Level**

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory         | <p>Taking key features of pre-operational stage into account when planning tasks, activities and instructional materials for VYLs</p> <p>Planning simple, one-dimensional activities and using here-and-now principle</p> <p>Encouraging art and craft activities for VYLs</p> <p>Providing opportunities for active involvement and creative exploration</p> <p>Planning the sequence of tasks carefully</p> <p>Making the task instructions and explanations clear for VYLs to provide active involvement</p>                                                                                               |
| Vygotsky's Sociocultural Developmental Theory | <p>Teacher's role as guiding children's thinking, comprehension and production</p> <p>Providing opportunities for collaborative learning and peer scaffolding</p> <p>Deciding achievable goals with optimal difficulty levels by taking into account VYLs' ZPD</p> <p>Paying attention to the process of early L2 learning at pre-primary level rather than just the product/outcomes</p> <p>Providing effective, supportive and comprehensible L2 use through instructional aids</p>                                                                                                                         |
| Information processing Theory                 | <p>Attracting children's attention with the enjoyable and age-appropriate methods, activities and materials</p> <p>Incorporating various learning and practicing strategies that improve VYLs' attention, motivation and understanding</p> <p>Providing effective L2 learning by using short-term memory strategies: rehearsal, organization, elaboration and long-term memory strategies: recognition, recall and reconstruction</p> <p>Encouraging children to use the information in practical activities</p> <p>Presenting the information in themes or using logical sequence to concepts and skills</p> |
| Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory       | <p>Providing awareness about VYL's diverse characteristics and learning needs</p> <p>Creating an environment where children can develop listening and speaking skills by communicating in target language</p> <p>Presenting the target L2 knowledge in various activities which engage different types of intelligences.</p> <p>Attempting to get children's attention through different types of activities which are developed around different types of intelligences.</p> <p>Offering a balanced approach where different "windows" on the same concept</p>                                               |

### 2.3.2. Foreign Language Learning Processes in Early Childhood

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which investigates the effects of age on children's L1 and L2 learning process. It puts forward some specific times in which L1 or L2 development takes place at maximum level. More specifically, CPH in L1 puts forward that the deprivation of children's mother language before birth and during the puberty leads to negative consequences and poor outcomes. On the other hand, CPH in L2

proposes that there is a defined period of time for the L2 acquisition. This period includes the process from birth to puberty in which children have a chance to acquire the target language at native-like levels. Although there are many studies indicating that there are many factors such as learning environment, materials and quality programs provide CPH to lose its effects, ECELEP is designed for VYLs who are in the early childhood period to be able benefit from the advantages of early start based on CHP.

Another second/foreign language theory that lies behind the ECELEP is Total Physical Response which is based on the principle that children learn better, when they are included in a physical and rational interaction (Asher, 1972). Due to the fact that VYLs' physical and cognitive development are supported by relating meaning to movement and they learn through direct experience via the five senses, incorporating TPR and miming can be considered to be effective ways in early stage of foreign language learning in EFL context. To illustrate, key words such as 'apple', 'eyes' and 'coat' are introduced through picture cards one at a time to the whole class and then each word within a sentence are contextualized and the actions such as 'eat your apple', 'touch your eyes' and 'put on your coat' are mimed with the children. TPR involving multisensory processing has some benefits such as appealing to auditory, visual and kinesthetic learners, allowing active children to expend some energy and enjoying the fun of uninhibited movement and mimicry (Asher, 2009). Besides, this method also help children follow instructions in a game or craft activity, in miming a song, rhyme, or action, or in acting out a role-play in early foreign language classroom. Considering the diversity of activities and the use of movement and gestures to make the meaning clear for VYLs in ECELEP, it can be said that TPR is the core component of this program.

The other theory that have an influence on early childhood second/foreign language learning is Audiolingual method that is based on Skinner's Behaviorism theory and is an oral language teaching approach (Chunsuvimol and Charoenpanit, 2017). Repeated drills of listening and speaking in the target language are amongst significant features of this method (Butzkamm and Caldwell, 2009). The necessity of this method for early L2 learning result from its principles to provide VYLs with sufficient knowledge of vocabulary and perfect acquisition of the target accent as well. Furthermore, Audiolingual method provides these young children with an opportunity to memorize,

mimic, and practice English through intense repetitions (Harmer, 2001; Bagheri, Hadian and Vaez-Dalili, 2019). Based on this, the processes of combining both linguistic and interactional adjustments, including rehearsal, repetitions, comprehension, communications, checks and gestures constitutes the basis of ECELEP.

As it is well known, there is a shift from traditional educational approaches to a more constructivist, learner-centered approach that encourages co-learning and collaboration in early L2 learning. In this sense, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focusing on the functional aspects of language is a very suitable example for the constructivist method. It is based on the idea that successful knowledge of English as a foreign language is achieved through interaction, communication and relevant and meaningful content as well. Similarly, Candlin (2016) summarizes the fundamental basis of the CLT under three titles, namely ‘tasks, communication and meaning’. ‘Tasks’ include communicative activities such as role-play, games, storytelling and thinking-skills activities which provide a number of opportunities for VYLs to practice the target language (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2013; Richards and Schmidt, 2014). The rationale here is that young children learn the foreign language as a product of such interesting and engaging activities (Bourke, 2006). The second aspect of CLT is ‘communication’ which means actual interactions that promote foreign language learning in the classroom. Finally, the ‘meaning’ component is also a vital aspect of CLT and it refers to an attractive learning environment, interactive activities/tasks and age-appropriate materials that attract VYLs’ attention and stimulate their motivation (Richards, 2006). In the light of the principles of CLT, in ECELEP English is regarded as a communication tool to be used in various interactive activities. Besides, the L2 learning process including the age-appropriate activities in ECELEP focuses on the development of the whole child and the emulation of ECE practices. All in all, the purpose of ECELEP is to provide VYLs to learn English in meaningful and enjoyable contexts with communicative tasks and activities rather than introducing them rules explicitly or working only on language drills and repeating the new language without presenting it in a context. Table 2.4. summarizes some popular second/foreign language learning theories and approaches that vitally influences ECELEP.

**Tablo 5. L2 Language Learning Theories/Approaches Influencing Early L2 Learning**

| Theory                                                          | Year         | Methods and Approaches                                                                  | Implications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Behaviorism (Skinner)                                           | (1940-1970)  | * Audio-lingual Method<br>*Total Physical Response                                      | Stimulus and response connections build L2 classroom routines<br>Target vocabulary is shaped by breaking it into parts and drilling each of them, adding new phrases and sentences gradually<br>A language rich environment and a skilled L2 teacher are significant in shaping them                                                                                                                                                        |
| Universal Grammar/ nativist approach (e.g. Chomsky)             | 1980-1990    | *Communicative Approach                                                                 | Very young L2 learners are naturally adept at learning a foreign language<br>Opportunities for VYL to expose L2 interactively and communicatively.<br>L2 is not taught as a separate and sometimes 'isolated' subject.<br>Activities, tasks and materials are balanced                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Input and interaction s (e.g. Larsen-Freeman and Long; Krashen) | 1980-1990    | *The Natural Approach                                                                   | Both comprehensible input and interaction are necessary for early L2 learning<br>Discovery and interpretation of meanings through pictures, gestures and useful activities<br>Observation imitation and feedback are essential<br>Learning activities and opportunities for comprehensible input, interaction and output                                                                                                                    |
| Cognitive approaches (Anderson 1985)                            | 1990 onwards | *The Silent Way<br>*Suggestopedia                                                       | Young children's mind are a computer<br>Incoming early L2 knowledge is stored in short- term and long-term memory store by interpreting meaningfully and linking deeply with other information<br>Early L2 learning involves storing and retrieving information through form-focused activities like drilling of language items<br>Using chorus drilling and repetition of target words, phrases and sentences for automatic learning gains |
| Socio-cultural perspectives (e.g. Lantolf, Vygotsky)            | 1985 onwards | *Task-Based Language Teaching<br>*Whole Language Approach<br>*Content-Based Instruction | Pre-primary level L2 learning occurs through interaction with peers and teacher in the learning context<br>Dynamic relationship between VYLs and environment<br>Incorporating interactive and developmentally and culturally appropriate activities and routines<br>L2 language practices in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways                                                                                                 |

Table 2.4 provides a general account of the main second language theories with their respective authors, models, and finally, methods and approaches. Amongst these, communicative approach mentioned above has left an indelible mark on early L2



programs resulting in the use of communicative activities in classrooms all over the world (Harmer, 2015). In the scope of this approach, L2 input needs to be presented to young children through a myriad of resources and activities that requires interaction and communication and this communicative interaction provides the basis for comprehension and production in early L2 learning.

In addition to the communicative approach, task-based language learning approach is also important for VYLs to carry out meaningful interactions that ensure more successful early L2 learning (Ellis, 2003; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). In this approach, the tasks can be used as the basic units to describe language performance demands or goals, which can be the basis for curriculum design, L2 education and assessment (Van Avermaet and Gysen, 2006). Pinter (2011) asserted the benefits of introducing English through task-based approach by saying that “it helps young children to develop L2 language more effectively than do traditional methods.” For these reasons, this approach is introduced in this study as one of the mainstay of ECELEP. In other words, task-based approach which is suitable and practicable at basic language levels constitutes the theoretical background of ECELEP. In this scope, the tasks in ECELEP are designed based on a number of conditions at the level of task design and task implementation. These conditions and parameters suggested by Van den Branden (2006) related to task complexity are listed below in Table 2.5 under three titles.

**Tablo 2.5. Belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı. 6. Complexity Scale Used in order to be able to Design Age-Appropriate Language Tasks**

| Parameters                                                              | SIMPLE                                            |                                      |                                                      | COMPLEX |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <hr/>                                                                   |                                                   |                                      |                                                      |         |
| <div>→</div>                                                            |                                                   |                                      |                                                      |         |
| <hr/>                                                                   |                                                   |                                      |                                                      |         |
| (a) World                                                               |                                                   |                                      |                                                      |         |
| <hr/>                                                                   |                                                   |                                      |                                                      |         |
| 1. Level of abstraction: concrete or abstract to the topic              | Concrete descriptions (here-and-now)              | In other time/space (there-and-then) | Abstract perspective                                 |         |
| 2. Degree of visual support: to what extent is visual support provided? | Much visual support                               | Limited visual support               | No visual support                                    |         |
| 3. Linguistic context: to what extent is linguistic context available?  | High level of redundancy; low information density | Limited level of redundancy          | High density of information; low level of redundancy |         |

|                                                                                |                                                      |                                                    |                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| (b) Task (communicative and cognitive processing demands)                      |                                                      |                                                    |                                                      |
| 4. Level of processing: what should children do with information in the text?  | Descriptive (understanding information as presented) | Reconstructing (reorganizing information)          | Evaluative (comparing different information sources) |
| 5. Modality: how should children provide their answers or produce the outcome? | Non-verbal reaction (purely receptive)               | Limited verbal reaction (talking at copying level) | Verbal reaction (talking at descriptive level)       |
| (c)Text                                                                        |                                                      |                                                    |                                                      |
| 6. Vocabulary: is the vocabulary used highly frequent or not?                  | Highly frequent words                                | Less frequent words                                | Infrequent words                                     |
| 7. Syntax: are the sentences simple or complex?                                | Short, simple sentences                              | Reasonably long sentences                          | Long embedded sentences                              |
| 8. Task length: is the task short or long?                                     | Short                                                | Reasonably long                                    | Long                                                 |

Table 2.5 illustrates the features and complexity level of tasks in three categories which is set on a three-point scale ranging from simple to complex. According to the “world” category, the topic of the tasks at this level should be concrete (i.e. ‘cats’ instead of the structure of the brain) because VYLs are not confronted with abstract topics. Based on this, it can be said that topics (i.e. body parts, animals, fruit), activities representing here and now context and even instructions and questions (i.e. what color is this cat? how many eyes have you got?) should be designed according to the here-and-now principle in the early stages of L2 learning. Moreover, VYLs should be supported with various visual materials to aid them to conceptualize the world and perform the task (Pinter, 2007b). The last item in the first category is about ‘linguistic context’ which suggests more comprehensible and simplified input for young children. To illustrate, a storybook or game created for early L2 education should include reasonably low information density to convey the message clearly. Related to this, Kersten and Rohlde (2013) emphasized young children do not necessarily need to understand what is being said to them, as long as they understand what is meant through a context.

On the other hand, the second category (see Table 2.5) explained that VYLs processed the information in the same structure as it is presented and produced their answer and

solution nonverbally (with gestures, mimics) or with limited verbal reaction. The third category is closely related with the identification of target vocabulary, phrase and sentences and determination of activities according to their age and ability level. According to this, target vocabulary in the program should be included in lists of high frequency with which VYLs are familiar and the length of sentences used to give instructions in games and to tell a story in storybooks should be simple and short. In a nutshell, the age-appropriate tasks and activities are developed, sequenced according to the features mentioned above and incorporated into the ECELEP to promote VYLs' communicative skills and develop their receptive and productive skills.

#### **2.4. Pre-primary Level Foreign Language Education: The International Picture**

The introduction of English at pre-primary level has currently been one of the major education policy developments around the world in recent years (Copland and Garton, 2014; Nguyen, 2011; Rixon, 2013). One of the most notable indicators is that many countries in Europe and Asia start to officially implement L2 education to children who are under 6. One of the most notable examples at a European level for early L2 learning is four countries which are Cyprus where the starting age to learn L2 is 5, Belgium where the starting age to learn L2 is 3 as well as Poland and Malta where the starting age to learn L2 is 5. In these countries, English is introduced as a compulsory part of their pre-primary program from the age of five (Eurydice report, 2017). As well as these countries introducing a foreign language into their pre-primary curriculum, ten out of 17 Autonomous Communities in Spain also provide an L2 program when children are 3 years old, the remaining Autonomous Communities from the age of 6 (Murphy and Evangelou, 2016).

Moreover, in Cyprus the introduction of an L2 was lowered to include pre-primary education in 2010 (Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010) and this development was closely related to the EU guidelines that promote language learning and ELL in particular (Council of Europe, 1997; European Commission, 2011). When the early English program used in Cyprus is examined, it can be seen that the main objectives are the development of positive attitudes towards languages and towards

other people and cultures. In this program English is not a distinct ‘school subject’, it is introduced as part of the children’s school lives through the use of daily routines, greetings and other activities. It is also introduced into the school program through the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (Mourao and Lourenço, 2015). As for England, the most commonly taught L2 is French, followed by Spanish and German and they were started to be taught in most of the primary schools in 2010. Although many primary schools have presented a language to children below the age of 7, that is, in the first two years of compulsory education, a very few numbers of pre-primary school teach a foreign language by following a simplified version of programs offered to older children.

In many Portuguese pre-primary institutions, English as a second language has been offered as extracurricular activities. Croatia has also shown significant interest recently in English education at the pre-school level by suggesting very considerable coverage at an official level (Rixon, 2019). As for the Czech Republic, although English is not yet a compulsory part of the state Early Years curriculum, it is very frequently taught at pre-primary level (Rixon, 2019). In Greece, although pre-primary education is not part of the state-supported system, there are also reports of English being offered at pre-school levels in private institutions. In Italy a report by Langé et al, (2014) showed that English is taught in 84% of the early childhood education. Similarly, in Mexico and Germany, children in the first years of primary school can learn English and in South Korea and France, children may be enrolled in private kindergartens which promise an English language environment. In sum, English is reportedly taught as a FL in around 50% of the pre-primary institutions in the Czech Republic (Černá, 2015), Portugal (Mourão and Ferreirinha, 2016), Romania (Dolean, 2015), Slovakia (Portiková, 2015) and Slovenia (Brumen, 2010), and in many cases starting at age three.

The results worldwide so far show that there is a significant interest in English which is already the most widely taught foreign language in almost all education systems at the pre-school level. Despite such a growing interest, it can be said that there are insufficient laws, programs or official documents stipulating content or methodology for early L2 education. Besides, the topic of L2 education at pre-primary level has been the subject of little-to-no academic research or legislative support in many European and

Asian countries (Langé et al, 2014). This can be explained by the non-compulsory nature of pre-primary education within the system of education. Another reason might be the fact that L2 education at pre-primary is considered an after-school or free-time activity resulting in a poorly regulated activity, with little related and accessible official information (Portiková, 2015).

The number of the children officially implementing second or foreign language education to children of 6 years and under is almost equivalent to just over a third of the European community (Mourao and Lourenço, 2015). This growing interest in TEVYL at a European level is a relatively new phenomenon signaling to the last decade. The starting point of this significant interest in English education at the pre-school level in European countries based on a study called “Foreign Languages in Primary and Pre-School Education: Contexts and Outcomes”, intended for policy makers and administrators (Blondin et al. 2008). Besides, the philosophy and the driving force behind the intense attention and effort to explore other languages in pre-primary education in Europe are related to European language policies encouraging the development of a plurilingual and intercultural competence from a very young age (Beacco and Byram, 2007). In other words, it is also believed that the major benefits of coming into contact with different languages and cultures early is that children become aware of other people living in different countries and their languages, that is expanding their horizons (Edelenbos et al., 2006). Besides, at a European level, the introduction of an L2, particularly in a foreign language context, is regarded as an enriching experience that brings considerable benefits in terms of a child’s personal and academic development. In sum, the philosophy behind the early L2 programs at pre-primary level is the desire to help children acquire the target language efficiently as early as possible with the correct methods and materials to develop proficient and permanent English language skills (Banfi, 2015). In brief, these are often pointed out as the main reasons of the European Union language education policy underlying the introduction of languages in the early years (Beacco et al., 2010; Edelenbos et al., 2006; European Commission, 2011a).

The issue of starting to learn at an early age in Europe is similar on other continents as well (Eurydice, 2005). To illustrate, many Asian countries officially start second or foreign language education at the age of 7 years and under (Baldauf et al. 2011; Enever

and Moon, 2009; Enever, 2011; Eurydice, 2012; Mourão and Lourenço, 2015; Selvi, 2014). In other words, many governments in Asia have lowered the starting age of English learning to primary years, even pre-primary periods. The main emphasis in early L2 education is on developing academic skills with the support of a textbook and fostering early literacy skills in most East Asian countries. For instance, in India and Hong Kong, English is also taught as a second language to non-English speaking children in kindergartens. The more cosmopolitan cities of China introduced English into pre-primary education at the beginning of the twenty-first century and gradually this has escalated to parents sending their pre-primary children to after-school and private English lessons (Jin et al. 2016). Similar accounts have been given in relation to Taiwan, where enthusiastic parents are also sending their pre-primary children to English classes as an after-school activity (Tseng, 2008) or English only pre-primary institutions, despite government restrictions on their creation (Butler, 2009). Furthermore, in South Korea, there are a growing number of fee-paying pre-primary establishments claiming to be ‘English kindergartens’ (Song, 2012, p. 40). All of these policies are based on the “assumption on the part of the governments and ministries of education that when it comes to learning a foreign language, younger is better” (Nunan, 2003).

As highlighted previously, there is a downward shift in the age at which English is introduced as a foreign or second language in Europe and Asia (Nunan 2003, 2013a). However, this shift is not accompanied by adequate or appropriate resourcing, high quality curriculum models and suitable materials that increase the chances of effective learning outcomes. On the other hand, there are not well-planned standards regulating L2 education in a pre-school setting in many countries all around the world. Nevertheless, the lack of regulations and age-appropriate policies does not deter early English initiatives in many European and Asian countries from bringing about a variety of learning experiences and varied quality (Mourão and Lourenço 2015).

As for Middle Eastern countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestinian Territories, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia), it is seen that the issue of introducing English at earlier ages is not too common. The usefulness of English in terms of apparent economic need for English, employability, professional mobility, social usefulness and fulfillment is so accepted in

those countries that parents pressure institutions to provide English education at all level of education. However, very few successful private kindergartens offer 2–4 year olds immersion or at least bilingual English programs throughout the region at pre-primary school level (Kirkpatrick and Barnawi, 2017). Besides, English - the official language of the community- is presented to immigrant pre-primary school children as a second language, relevant to their everyday life and as a language of instruction in their future primary-school education in Great Britain, the United States of America, Canada and Australia (Savic, 2016).

Taking all the examples above into consideration, it can be said that in many countries English as a foreign language education has begun recently at pre-primary level in varying types, in quality and in quantity (Rixon, 2013). In parallel with the increase in L2 education at this educational level, some questions naturally arise: Will the experience of learning two or more languages during early childhood provide the child with cognitive benefits? Which methodologies and approaches can be used and are being used successfully to teach children languages? What are the benefits and potential pitfalls of these approaches? What are the ideal assessment tools for measuring young children's L2 learning? A proper interpretation of existing literature shows that very little concrete evidence and studies are available about L2 learning in the early years to answer these questions and clarify the discussions. In other words, despite the widely spread practice of offering second or foreign languages at an increasingly early age as it is mentioned above, few publications and studies focus on the processes and outcomes of English programs and curriculums integrating assessment and pedagogy, learner-driven language activities, enjoyable instructional materials, age-appropriate methods and techniques combining early childhood and English language education. Researches shows that, in many cases, the introduction of L2 education in pre-primary schools has preceded appropriate curriculum, instructional methods and materials development (Enever and Moon, 2009; Garton et al, 2011). To illustrate, children's exposure to the English language is often form-focused and limited to teacher-led activities, such as the repetition of language items, the singing of songs and the playing of games. The opportunities for developing the variety of language knowledge and skills needed for meaningful oral communication in the target language are rare at this level (Garton and

Caplond, 2019). The current L2 education to children less than six years of age in Europe, Asia and South America are in accordance with the views expressed above.

For these reasons, it can be said that there is an urgent need for many countries of the world to develop high-quality education programs, practices, pedagogy and assessment methods that are appropriate to the developmental needs of children in early childhood period (Černá, 2015; Ellis, 2015; Portiková, 2015). Moreover, it is also important to ensure its coherence and consistency of pre-primary level English language education practice at a macro level (Černá, 2015; Ellis, 2015; Portiková, 2015). In sum, it is clear that early L2 education in early childhood needs to formulate effective language policies and reconsider appropriate programs of implementation at the international level (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015; Murphy and Evangelou, 2016).

#### **2.4.1. Pre-primary Level Foreign Language Programs and Outcomes**

Some of the new interest areas of research around the world are what the early L2 programs are and how these different types of programs contribute to early L2 learning (Nikolov 2009a, 2009b; Rixon, 2013). As is well documented, a variety of L2 education programs are found at the pre-primary level and these programs are classified in different ways in the literature (Edelenbos et al., 2006). First of all, Edelenbos, Kubanek and Johnstone (2007) and Johnstone (2009) offered three types of curricula which are popular: (1) awareness raising programs; (2) traditional FL programs offering one to a few classes per week, and (3) content and language integrated learning (CLIL) curricula. They indicate that the first type does not aim to develop proficiency in an L2; the other two usually define L2 achievement targets. On the other hand, McKay (2006) classified the early foreign language program types as awareness programs or introductory programs, scheduled foreign language classes, partial immersion and total immersion programs (bilingual programs). The "awareness programs or introductory programs" refer to language programs in which VYLs often have a very small number of contact hours per week, perhaps only 20-30 minutes per week. These programs' primary aim is to raise children's interest in the language and to show that language learning can be enjoyable, but without the aim of achieving set language learning goals by the end of the course. On the other hand, regular scheduled L2 classes which are the most common type of foreign language program in pre-primary schools have 3-6



contact hours per week (McKay, 2006). Lastly, McKay (2006) defines partial immersion and total immersion programs which are sometimes called bilingual programs as the ones in which children study their curriculum subjects through the target language. Apart from McKay (2006) and Johnstone (2009), Ellis (2014) also proposed a classification for the implementation of TEVYL in the world. This classification includes course book-based programs, more flexible programs where aspects of content from other curriculum areas are also taught through a foreign language, awareness raising programs which usually do not aim to develop language proficiency but make children familiar with a variety of languages instead and bilingual and immersion programs (Ellis, 2014; Johnstone, 2009). Taking all the classification into account, Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy (2009) indicates that different types of curricula are seen along a continuum between programs focusing on language and content. In this continuum, awareness raising is at one end, scheduled FL programs somewhere in the middle, and CLIL and immersion at the other end.

The variation in types of early L2 education models result from the content of the program, the time allocated for instruction and the types of approach and methodologies used in curriculum and the qualifications of the teachers. Johnstone (2009) emphasized that in the process of designing a curricula, there are some points that should be taken into considerations such as to what extent and in what conditions and most importantly how early language learning need to be presented. On the other hand, what young children in EFL contexts can do after learning their new language, what realistic age-appropriate achievement targets can be included and what strategies are effective are the issues that the stakeholders need to give their consideration. Moreover, the constructs and expected outcomes and activities have to be in line with how VYLs' characteristics and foreign learning abilities in the process of designing English education program (Nikolov, 2016). Based on this, whatever the program is used at pre-primary level to teach English, the growth of linguistic and communicative skills and knowledge is closely related and correlated with input quality and input intensity (Kersten et al., 2010a; Kersten, 2015). For this reason, instead of the structurally determined, linear programs are ill-suited for VYLs (Littlejohn, 2016a; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; White, 1988), 'communicative language teaching' including age-appropriate approaches such as activity-based, topic-based, content-based and story-based programs, which

moved English from grammar and vocabulary teaching towards a communications-based standard is more useful for young children (Read, 2016). Here, the focus is on meaningful communication in the classroom rather than forms. In sum, it can be said that the last ten decades pioneered a shifting away from grammatically structured programs towards a more functional, communicative, child-friendly programs including the development of both linguistic and communicative items in English language education at pre-primary level (Littlejohn, 2016a)

Regardless of the type of program, there are some common points of all L2 education programs such as developing language awareness and linguistic and communicative skills provided that appropriate policy, pedagogical and language practices are included in a suitable curriculum (Edelenbos et al., 2006; Widlok, Petravic, Org and Romcea, 2011). In addition to this, any language program, first and foremost, should meet the child's social, cognitive and linguistic needs and contribute to their development as a whole (Widlok et al., 2011; Enever et al., 2009). For this reason, the selection of appropriate pedagogic and linguistic L2 learning, designing playful activities and tasks, providing instructional materials through an age-appropriate L2 education program have great importance in the success of early English language education.

## **2.5. English as a Foreign Language at Pre-primary Level in Turkey**

As stated in an earlier section, the educational policies of many countries have started to be influenced by the global tendency to learn foreign languages at a younger age. Within this context, the governments take some considerable steps such as the lowering age for exposure to English language education. One of these steps is to introduce English at pre-primary level as the lessons in the school curriculum or extracurricular English courses and club activities after school hours. Besides, English is instructed in a very intensive way through immersion, partial immersion and bilingual method in several private kindergartens around the world. In sum, increasing number of children involved in English language education in different intense at pre-primary level is one the emerging evidences that English is being introduced at an ever earlier age on a worldwide scale.

This global spread of early English language learning around the world have also had a significant impact on early English language education policies and practices in Turkey. Within this scope, one of the most significant policy developments in recent years is lowering the age to introduce English as a foreign language in the primary school system. One of the most important curriculum innovations about this issue was conducted by the Ministry of National Education in 2013 that English is to be taught from grade 4 (age 9) to the current grade 2 (6.5 years of age) (Kırkgöz, 2017; Ekuş and Babayigit, 2014; Bayyurt, 2014; MoNE, 2013). This policy is based on the “assumption of the younger is better”. Bekleyen (2016) explained the reason why this change was made as making use of the advantages of starting language learning at an early age.

A second policy has been the growing inclusion of English mostly in private pre-primary schools. In many countries, most of the VYLs learn English in the private sector than in state-run institutions (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill and Pincas, 2003). In case for Turkey, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, an increasing number of children began to learn English in private pre-primary schools, which in turn contributed to reducing the average starting age of L2 education. It can be said that the private sector is prominent in providing English lessons at every level, even in pre-primary schools. Although introducing English has a long history at different levels such as in primary, secondary, high schools and universities, TEVYL is relatively new in Turkey. The first thing to be noted when discussing pre-primary school L2 education and its early start in Turkey is that “pre-primary school children” refer to the children in the age group of 3, age group 4 and age group 5 who have not reached the age of compulsory primary education (MONE, 2018). The other important thing is that English that holds the status of a foreign language mostly in Turkey is compulsory at all levels of education, however, L2 education at pre-primary level is not compulsory. Despite this, the number of private pre-primary school establishments (usually for children between 3-6 years of age) that offer L2 education (e.g., mostly English) has increased dramatically. One of the possible reasons of this might be the prosperous families who strongly support their child’s education and see the value of early L2 learning. They consider their child’s academic performance a top priority and early English learning as an important part of this. They also believe that children should start English early and sufficient time should be given to learning and can thus be expected to achieve higher

proficiency. These perceptions result in parents in higher socioeconomic status supporting their children by sending their children to private kindergartens in which English plays a prominent role. Thus, the children instructed with various English L2 programs in these pre-primary schools have started learning English before entry into formal schooling.

In addition to private pre-primary schools in Turkey, there are few state kindergartens in which children can participate in English language learning with limited hours as after school club activities requiring substantial funds for families. In this scope, an English club activity mostly include the use of songs, flashcards or pictures as visuals, English videos and few language games in a decontextualized way. This “English language gap” between private and public pre-primary schools in terms of English education leads to some inequalities in Turkey. Regarding this issue, UNESCO (2015) explained the effect of socioeconomic status on early L2 education by saying that “there is considerable difference between urban and rural areas, rich and poor families and communities, and thriving and deprived regions within countries despite an increase in the number of children attending early FL learning at pre-primary level around the world.” In conclusion, it can be said that foreign language education at pre-primary level which is closely related with a child’s socioeconomic status also leads to inequality of access to L2 education in Turkey.

The other inequality is the type, level and intensity of the introduction of L2 language in the private pre-primary schools. The introduction of L2 occurs in a wide variety of contexts in Turkey such as within some contact English hours or through bilingual education provided by a native speaker cooperating with a fully qualified pre-primary teacher. As for the time spent for learning an L2, private pre-primary schools are generally more flexible in their incorporation of L2 learning, either 30 minutes per week or 3-6 hours per week. In other words, early childhood foreign language education shows alteration substantially in terms of weekly English lesson hours, types of methods and materials, quality of teachers and programs, the quantity of L1 use in English classes. One of the most important reasons has been the absence of an Early Childhood English Language Education Curriculum until quite recently that sets out the general educational objectives and more specific goals, age-appropriate instruction and

assessment methods. The other reason might be the shortage of competent English teachers who are qualified enough to work with children at pre-primary schools and achieve the smooth implementation of the English program.

A third policy is the Early Childhood English Language Education Curriculum (MoNE, 2016) which contains a set of guidelines for early English language education. By 2016, as other English curriculums for different grades, there hasn't been a national English language curriculum stating its objectives, contents, instructional methods/materials and evaluation procedures for pre-primary school children in Turkey. This leads to confusion and the lack of consensus and clarity among language teachers working at this level about standard criteria for implementation and evaluation of English language education. However, Ministries of Education and private language education providers have a responsibility to equip related stakeholders working with pre-primary school children with appropriate skills (Parker and Valente, 2019). Afterwards, Early Childhood English Language Education Curriculum has been published in recent years with the intention of supporting the already growing initiatives in private sector (MONE, 2016). With the help of this curriculum, the ones related to early L2 education at pre-primary level gain insights into these age group children's learning needs, characteristics and some aspects of the L2 education process, materials, ways of working and assessment at a certain level. In this new program some themes, values, learning aims and objectives, suggested target vocabulary, suggested structures, method and techniques, materials and projects are offered at three different levels which include children between 36 and 48 months old, children between 48 and 60 months old and children between 60 and 72 months old (MONE, 2016).

When it comes to the pedagogic aims of the L2 education at pre-primary level stated in this curriculum, it seems important to identify that pre-primary children in Turkey can be labeled as false beginners or absolute beginners considering Harmer's (2007, 2015) and CEFR (2001, 2018) model of language level. Based on these models (see Figure 2.2 and 2.3), it can be concluded that the situation varies slightly among VYLs in public and private pre-primary schools in Turkey. The reason for this is the fact that children in private ones are exposed to L2 in different amounts of time in a week and thus, they have a familiarity with some linguistic concepts or aspects of language to a certain

extent. For this reason, they can be called false beginners. However, the children in most public pre-primary schools who have not previously been exposed to the target language through formal instruction except some after school club activities in addition to their daily program can be described as zero or absolute beginners.

Keeping the realities mentioned above about children's level of foreign language in mind, one of the main aims of L2 education in Turkey is to form key attitudes towards other languages and to lay the foundations for later language learning at a very early age. However, the national curriculum for private pre-primary schools is not sufficient about what to teach, how to teach and how to measure VYLs' L2 learning. When it is examined in detail, it is seen that 'how to meet the learning needs of VYLs who may have different levels, learning styles and motivations' and 'what are the age-appropriate pedagogies and activities for fostering listening and speaking skill' and 'what are the culturally responsive instruction and assessment' are not placed. Although a number of 'communicative purposes' seems to be privileged in the program, socially and cognitively meaningful practices and suggestions for the communicative activities in L2 are not specified clearly based on children's developmental stages in this program. Another potential problem relates to the curriculum materials which may not always be appropriate for developing VYLs' linguistic and communicative skills in L2. Thus, when the general picture of this curriculum is examined, it is seen that poor curriculum focuses on the useful instructional strategies, materials and assessment tools that language teachers can implement in their classrooms insufficiently.

It is notable in this curriculum that the disciplines including foreign language education that refers to 'language exposure programs' (European Commission, 2011) and early childhood education that covers 'early childhood educational development' (UNESCO-UIS, 2012) are not taken up together holistically. Certain learning outcomes in terms of target knowledge, skills and abilities and age-appropriate language-learning activities are not specified in detail. This curriculum for private pre-primary schools (MONE, 2016) provides also insufficient opportunities for the development of learning tools/materials, communicative skills, age-appropriate activities, children's speaking and listening skills, assessment targets, tools and standards. Needless to say, with such poor curricula, it is almost impossible to set the standards for L2 learning and

assessment and to ensure a high level of attainment in pre-primary L2 education. All in all, the available curriculum is required to be reconsidered in order to make sure it provides equality in the L2 language presented to VYLs both in state and private pre-primary schools of the whole country. Besides, it is also required to monitor in terms of facilitating learning and providing change in teacher's practice.

When the L2 language-related literature at pre-primary level in Turkey is observed, it can be said that there is a proliferation of the researches, articles and books which are positively inclined toward L2 language learning and assessment at earlier ages. Some of these studies, for example, examine language policies in introducing English to VYLs and perceptions of stakeholders attending the early L2 process (Bezicioğlu-Göktolga, 2013; Güngör, 2018; İlter and Er, 2007; Damar, 2009; Biricik and Özkan, 2012; Aytar and Öğretir, 2008; Güngör and Ramazan, 2017; Topçuoğlu, 2006; Sığirtmaç and Özbek 2009; Sert, 2004). Some others focus on the developing field of appropriate pedagogy and methodology and investigates how they contribute positively to the very young learner classroom (Özçelik, 2013; Tavi and İşisağ, 2009; Şeker, Girgin and Akamca, 2012; Küçük, 2006; Kömürcü and Yıldız, 2011; Kocaman and Kocaman, 2012; Karakoç, 2007; Kandır, Özbey and İnal; 2009; Kalaycıoğlu, 2011; Baran and Halıcı; 200; Karakuş, 2016). However, the thing that needs to be noted is that no reliable and valid data on the national situation at pre-primary level foreign language education in Turkey have been provided yet (e.g., number and types of pre-primary school institutions providing foreign language education, methodologies used, number of native/non-native teachers, number of learners, measurements of learning outcomes). In addition to this, there is still little research on early childhood English language learning and assessment at the national level (Değirmenci Uysal and Yavuz, 2015) despite an increase in the number of studies related to early L2 learning. More specifically, there is insufficient discussion about how to introduce English to VYLs for whom it is a foreign language in Turkey. Although the widespread belief “the earlier the language is learnt, the better proficiency will be reached” is adopted in the country, there has been very little critique of the suitable approaches and methods during this period. Moreover, there seems to be little empirical research about how younger children learn English more efficiently or successfully and what the suitable approaches and instructional materials can be designed specifically for TEVYL in the national literature. The

answers to these questions in light of academic research related to learning English as a foreign language at the pre-primary school level will serve as a set of suggestions for language teachers.

### **2.5.1. Current English Language Policy in Public Pre-primary Schools**

In many EFL contexts like in Turkey, English hasn't yet been established as part of the state pre-primary curriculum. As noted in earlier section, the introduction of L2 is available to children attending mostly into the private pre-primary schools or quite a little into the state pre-primary schools. To be able to make sense of the implementation of the English language education in extremely limited state pre-primary school, current pre-primary education in Turkey need to be examined carefully.

Pre-primary education in Turkey which is provided in both state-run and private institutions is not compulsory. The school enrollment rates demonstrate that about 85.22 per cent of the children aged 5 years old, about 57.91 per cent of the children aged 4-5 years old and about 45.40 per cent of the children aged 3-5 years old can attend early childhood education in Turkey (MONE Educational Statistics, 2018). The enrollment rates of children aged 3 to 5 years in OECD report (2019) show that Turkey is considerably behind of OECD average (less than 50%). Although Turkey reports among the lowest rates in terms of the children's enrollment in pre-primary education in 2017 when compared with other countries and OECD average, it has seen spectacular increases within itself in the last decade (OECD, 2019).

On the other hand, 2019 research report about the general state of Early Childhood Education in Turkey conducted by Polat (2019) addresses some significant problems and difficulties available in ECEC that should be primarily addressed and solved. These problems include ensuring equal opportunities for pre-primary school children to create a smooth transition between pre-primary and primary education, providing equal quality education in all ECEC institutions, increasing the quality and quantity of pre-primary school teachers. For this reason, it is not surprising that the development of the knowledge and skills of teachers who will work with children, the enhancement of learning environments in ECEC, children's equal access to early childhood education are increasingly reported and underscored as a priority by policymakers and researchers.



Considering the national policies which are moving from the ‘outside’ referring to critical and basic issues and topics that concern the general practices and embrace all children in ECEC to the ‘inside’ referring to more specific policies across the country, introducing English to children at the pre-primary level is a complex and subordinate phenomenon for now.

Nonetheless, the state-run pre-primary schools might become more actively involved into the early English language education in the near future as a result of a growing demand for English at this level and an expansion of positive learning outcomes from private pre-primary schools and the results of the longitudinal field studies. As noted earlier, the age of starting foreign language education is lowered with the reforms (in 1997, 2012) conducted by the Ministry of National Education and private pre-primary schools are also offering English hours in the meantime (Kirkgöz, 2017; Gursoy, Korkmaz and Damar, 2017). All these improvements in Turkey and opportunities created by private institutions force and encourage the state pre-primary schools to respond this global advance and need quickly. In this regard, a relatively small percentage of the state pre-primary schools provide English instruction as a free-time, after-school activity or club activity. These extra activities are funded and financed by families. As part of these activities, children often have a very small number of contact hours per week, perhaps only 20 or 30 minutes per week. In such a limited time, introducing some basic vocabulary with songs and visuals which are readily available in a decontextualized manner comes to the fore. Some little progress and push in this area might lead to a positive outcome for state institutions to become involved in lowering the age to pre-primary level and improving the quality of L2 education at this level in Turkey.

### **2.5.2. Current English Language Policy in Private Pre-primary Schools**

The issues discussed above point to the general policies, principles and challenges of pre-primary level English education in Turkey from a broad perspective. In addition, the English programs used in private pre-primary schools can be classified into three broad categories by taking all the explanations, program types, research findings in the field of early childhood English language education into consideration. Although all the L2 programs' educational policy are based on the National Pre-primary School English

Education Program which was introduced in 2016 in Turkey, the programs differ in intensity and exposure to the target language. To illustrate, each program has some fundamental similarities such as striving to promote VYLs' language learning and fostering VYLs' attitudes towards the target language. However, the number of lesson hours, the methods and techniques and teacher qualifications are different from each other. Based on this, private pre-primary school L2 programs in Turkey can be grouped as High-Intensity Foreign Language Programs, Moderate-Intensity Foreign Language Programs, and Low-Intensity Foreign Language Programs.

High-Intensity Foreign Language Programs are immersion and bilingual programs that are conducted through the school day entirely in the target language with L2 professionals who use their native language consistently. Moreover, the languages are used to introduce subject matter content rather than just the languages themselves in these programs. In other words, English as a foreign language is used in pre-primary schools as a tool to help children learn content such as science, arts and crafts, mathematics. As a result of this, it can be said that immersion and bilingual programs provide more in-depth exposure to the language and culture. However, these types of programs have been developed and used more in ESL settings such as Canada and United States (Genesee, 1987; Lambert and Tucker, 1972) where children are encouraged to learn other official languages in the pre-primary school setting with the help of the integration of content and second language instruction. Contrary to the ESL setting where the children are active learners of the English language inside and outside of the pre-primary school, in EFL settings, most pre-primary schools introduce subjects in their daily program in the native language within contact lesson hours.

When speaking of the immersion and bilingual education in early childhood education in EFL contexts, some concerns arise regarding the qualified teachers who need to be competent both in early childhood education and foreign language education. In Turkey, many English teachers working at pre-primary level have little or no training during their university education about how to introduce English to VYLs. On the other hand, many native speakers working at this level have some difficulty in introducing English with the effective instructional strategies because of the lack of the degree related with education or a teaching certification or any experience in that area (Güngör, 2017). The

other concern is about the lack of the environment and social context that facilitates shapes or accelerates the development of an L2 in Turkey. Keeping all these concerns in mind, teachers who have a good knowledge of the children as well as a high level of proficiency in the target language and knowledge of the curriculum (Pinter, 2006) can meet VYLs' requirements. Nonetheless, in EFL settings it is difficult to find highly proficient teachers with a good pedagogical qualification for early childhood English language instruction. For these reasons, High-Intensity Foreign Language Programs that refer to immersion or bilingual programs in Turkey are not common.

Moderate-Intensity and Low-Intensity Foreign Language Programs have some similarities in providing equal objectives and themes, foundation for primary school L2 education and equal rights in terms of L2 education at pre-primary level. However, they differ in providing the quality of educational process and in ensuring conditions that the national curriculum suggested. The reasons for this might be diversity in the number of the lesson hours and teacher qualifications and the variety and quality of methods and techniques used to present English. Whereas moderate-Intensity foreign language programs have 3 to 10 English hours in a week, Low-Intensity foreign language programs have an English class only 30 minutes once or twice a week. In addition to this, whereas low-intensity foreign language programs puts emphasis on understanding of basic nouns and fostering listening skills with song-based activities and flashcards, moderate-intensity foreign language programs focus on both listening and speaking skills by providing memorable and enjoyable language practices with visuals in order to provide learning and retention of basic vocabulary and to aid their pronunciation. Both programs aim at providing 5-6 year old children a foreign language foundation by developing their listening and speaking skills. Reading, writing and grammatical structures are not a focus in these programs based on the finding of Bourke's (2006) study indicating that young learners don't have a concept of ideas such as parts of speech, grammar, discourse or phonology.

Although it is suggested in the National English Education Program, additional learning materials and appropriate activities are not used actively in the classrooms. Drama, role-plays and dramatic plays, games, storytelling that are the basic components of communicative language teaching are not included to meet the needs of children who

have different learning styles and rates (Kimsesiz, Dolgunsöz and Konca, 2017). At these programs, language teachers in pre-primary schools use mostly printed handouts, course books, flashcards, audio-visual materials such as songs and videos and texts are used in the L2 learning process. Related to this, Genç-İlter (2013) carried out a study as part of which they aimed to find out what the methods and techniques of foreign language teachers working with young learners are in EFL classes. The study has revealed that many experienced and inexperienced language teachers used traditional methods such as memorization, flashcards, and translation in their classes instead of using communicative methods. Similarly, listening to English songs and using flashcards and memorization were found to be the most common techniques that teachers use to present English in the studies conducted by Sığırtaç and Özbek (2009). Based on these explanations, it can be said that EFL learning practices often rely on decontextualized practice of single vocabulary, discrete-item vocabulary exercises rather than on communicative or sociocultural approaches to language learning. In parallel with this, VYLs cannot be much more creative and active in the English class.

The aforementioned problems in early English language education in private institutions signaled a particular need of newer age-appropriate methods and approaches based on communicative and constructivist principles specified in an age-appropriate program. With the help of more effective and practical L2 programs that offer adequate English instruction, age-appropriate language environment and helpful examples of lesson plans and class materials, VYLs' can have high quality experiences and this can lead to the ultimate attainment of target language in early childhood classrooms.

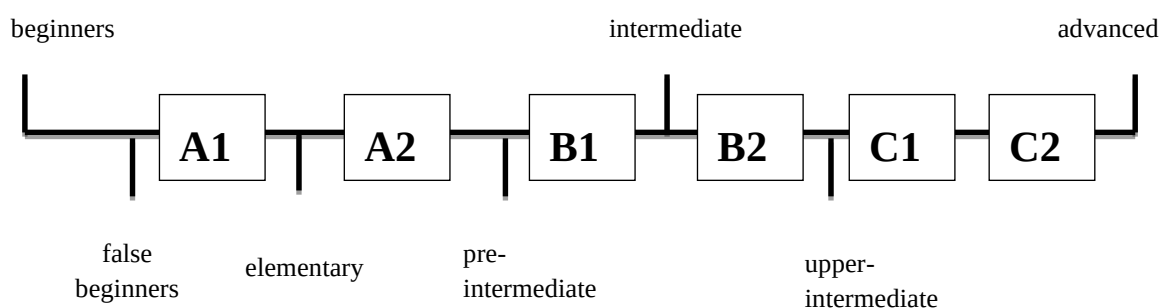
## **2.6. Properties of an L2 Education Program for Very Young Learners**

There is a clear parallel between high quality L2 education that leads to useful learning experiences and an effective L2 learning that has an influence on further educations (Murphy, 2014). When this paradigm is applied to very young learners who have typically high motivation towards learning, it can be said that effective and enjoyable education leads to meaningful learning experiences which guarantee the continuation of children's L2 learning in the future. It is apparent that this is possible with well-designed L2 programs which are developmentally appropriate in terms of learning

content, as well as child-centered approach, age-appropriate methods and activities and comprehensible materials for very young learners. In this regard, one of the most important properties of L2 programs is the meaningfulness and appropriateness in terms of children's language levels. In describing foreign language learners' level in target language, the study conducted by Harmer (2007) defining the foreign language learners in three levels as beginner, intermediate and advanced as well as Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001, 2018) can be used as a framework.

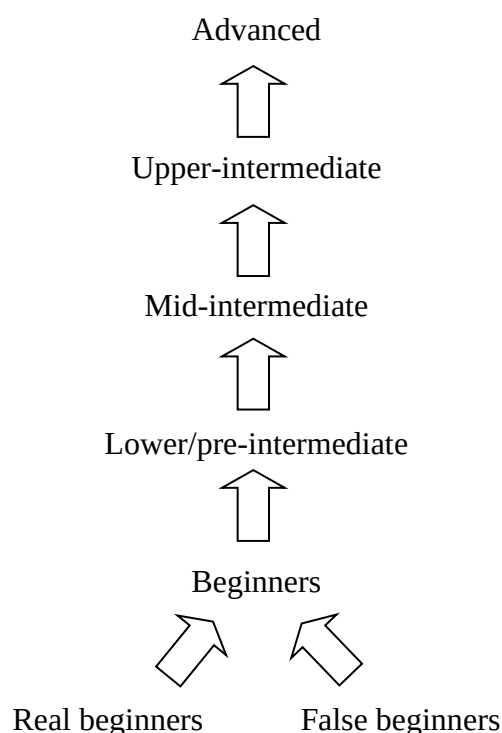
This issue is important to be able to determine what different level foreign language learners can perform and comprehend at different levels. For this reason, this framework is considerably important in describing L2 leaning policies and principles, deciding learning, teaching and assessing criteria, developing L2 programs, selecting and designing learning materials. The illustrative descriptors of language competences could be functioned as road map for educators to identify competences for all language learners regardless of their levels. In very recent years, CEFR includes general illustrative descriptors for all level of L2 learners is redesigned specifically for deciding common illustrative descriptors for young learners who are between 7 and 10 years (Council of Europe, 2018). However, in this framework pre-primary school children who are mostly 6 years old are not included. One of the possible reasons might be that children's L2 learning at pre-primary setting is a relatively new phenomenon. However, CEFR's six specific levels made up of A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 can provide a general descriptive framework for TEVYL. These possible progression levels of second or foreign language learners which are suggested by CEFR (2018) are detailed below in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2. Terms for Different Language Learners based on CEFR**



According to CEFR levels in Figure 2.2 above, A1 and A2 are considered basic users, B1 and B2 are independent or intermediate, and C1 and C2 are proficient or advanced level. On the other hand, Harmer's framework described learners in three levels, beginner, intermediate and advanced, and these categories are further qualified with real beginners and false beginners. He also defines the children between beginner and intermediate as elementary. Moreover, the intermediate level is also sub-divided into lower intermediate and upper intermediate and even mid-intermediate. The detailed versions of different levels proposed by Harmer (2007, 2015) are shown in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3. Harmer's Framework Representing Different Levels**



When compared, Harmer's framework with CEFR's, it is seen that when A1 level in CEFR's criteria refers to basic users who are exposed to a little English and thus, they can communicate in basic English with help from the listener, Harmer's 'elementary level' is divided into two parts including real and false beginners. Real beginners refer to complete beginners and false to beginners with low target language proficiency. Considering Harmer's (2007, 2015) and CEFR's (2001, 2018) model of language level, it can be said that pre-primary school children in Turkey can be labeled as false beginners or absolute beginners who differ greatly in terms of their physical,

psychological, social, emotional, conceptual, cognitive and literacy development. Based on this explanation, the first key recommendation for syllabus designers, policymakers and curriculum developers is the development of genuinely, age-relevant English language programs and syllabuses for pre-primary children in line with their linguistic and communicative competence in target language and levels of language proficiency (Copland and Garton 2014; Ellis 2014, Enever and Moon 2009).

Usefulness should be another property of an the program wherethe progression and continuity in language learning with the inclusion of age-appropriate, methodologies, activities and resources can be provided. Continuity is often mentioned as one of the key success factors of English language learning programs (Edelenbos, Johnstone, and Kubanek, 2006; Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006). On the other hand, intrinsically motivating and cognitively challenging activities including telling rhymes, singing songs, playing games, listening to and telling picture stories, acting out roles, participating to thinking skills, and arts and crafts activities sould be included for the program to be useful for VYLs (Nikolov, 1999, 2002). Curtain and Dahlberg (2010) and Nikolov (2002) suggested that these need to vary and build on one another to avoid boredom and scaffold development. They should also be revised and recycled frequently. Understandably, body language and other visual aids also make their L2 learning meaningful and useful by scaffolding comprehension and their FL development.

The next property of an L2 program is involving ‘comprehensible input’, a term, which is put forward firstly by Krashen (1985). The reason why the input provided to VYLs should be comprehensible is due to the process of making L2 knowledge meaningful and clear for VYLs who actually need to make sense of the L2 knowledge provided to them. In addition to their needs about receptive L2 knowledge, they also have a tendency to use it appropriately in contexts provided them (Swain, 2000) and to experiement with it by interacting with peers or teachers. In the literature, several ways are suggested related to this issue. One of them is choosing L2 thematic areas, topics and activities that are identical to those in the national and school education programs (Portikova, 2015). The other one is to provide the necessary repetition for quick word retrieval and listening input in various learner-centered activities within a meaningful

context. Moreover, VYLs can make sense of the meanings of L2 knowledge with the help of teacher's gestures and mimicry. Contrary to child-centered methods mentioned above, some traditional strategies such as translating and using children's first language used at minimum level can sometimes function as an instructional aid.

The fourth feature of English language programs is well-identified objectives and practices. This issue is closely related with the foreign language curriculum model which is adopted. If the curriculum is seen from a learner-centered perspective, various elements are included in the curriculum for the communicative language knowledge and skills. One of the basic principles underlying all communicative approaches is that children must not only learn to make grammatically correct statements about the experiential world, but must also use their English for communicative purposes (Howatt, 1984, 1997). Communicative language teaching based on constructivist and experiential theories of learning sees language ability as being developed through activities which actually simulate target performance. Within this scope, English hours at pre-primary level should focus on not only language drills or controlled practice, but also age-appropriate activities that lead to communicative language use inside and outside of the class (Nunan, 2013a). In a useful survey of communicative language teaching, Quinn (1984) proposes the characteristics of traditional and communicative approaches. Based on this comparison, the reflections of the traditional and the communicative approaches into English education at pre-primary level are set out in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6. Characteristics of Traditional and Communicative Approaches**

| Traditional approaches                                                                                        | Communicative approaches                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Focus is on specific vocabulary learning in a decontextualized way.                                        | 1. Focus is on communication skills as well as linguistic skills in a contextualized way                                                 |
| 2. The language items are selected based on linguistics criteria alone.                                       | 2. The language items are selected based on the basis of what language items VYLs need                                                   |
| 3. The language items are ordered based on vocabulary in a decontextualized way.                              | 3. The language items are ordered based on vocabulary, phrase and sentence in a contextualized way                                       |
| 4. The degree of coverage is determined by policy-makers by looking the 'whole picture' of language structure | 4. The degree of coverage is determined based on VYLs' needs and interest in EFL context                                                 |
| 5. Target language is seen as comprehension and production of basic words                                     | 5. Target language is seen as comprehension and production of basic words, phrases and sentences and their use in communicative settings |



|                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. The type of language used at this level tends to be formal.                                  | 6. Genuine everyday as well as child friendly language is emphasized.                  |
| 7. The criterion of success is to have VYLs recognize and recall the target vocabulary formally | 7. The criterion of success is to have children communicate effectively                |
| 8. VYLs' listening skills are emphasized mostly at that level                                   | 8. VYLs' spoken interactions are regarded as at least as important as listening skills |
| 9. Tends to be teacher-centered.                                                                | 9. Tends to be child-centered.                                                         |
| 10. Incorrect utterances are seen as deviations and corrected directly by the teachers          | 10. Incomplete and incorrect utterances are seen something to be learned               |

---

The description of the principles of both approaches show that the philosophy of child-centeredness and meaningful learning included in the communicative approach is more useful for the early childhood L2 learning process. In addition to this, the VYLs need to be at the heart of any L2 education program as McDonough (1984) indicated. The possible reason of this is asserted by Nunan (2001) who indicates L2 education for young children should occur not primarily through memorization, but through meaningful tasks involving real communication. These cannot be random activities which are decided aimlessly by teachers. Instead, they are defined in the literature as the activities that result in language use where learners treat the language as a tool for achieving a communicative outcome rather than as an object to be learnt separately (Ellis and Shintani, 2014). As well as relevant activities, using age-appropriate and child-friendly approach to assessment including suitable instruments and methods in early L2 program are also important.

On the other hand, Nunan's model in which the traditional and communicative curriculum are compared from different aspects shed light on how to prepare an effective L2 education program. Related to this, Nunan (1993) emphasized that whereas traditional approaches adopt to assess mastery of linguistic content, communicative ones prefer to assess the achievement of communicative goals. In addition to this, the traditional approaches to syllabus design do not take the learners' needs into consideration, whereas communicative approach elevates learner needs to a position of prime importance. The second significant difference between them is the priority given to tasks over linguistic content. In the traditional model, the activities and tasks are designed in relation to linguistic content and are usually intended to introduce linguistic structures. On the other hand, in communicative syllabus models, topics and tasks are

selected first and appropriate linguistic elements for studying a topic or completing a task are selected and integrated accordingly.

Based on the national literature, it can be said that there is little recognition of the importance of communicative and interactive approaches to introduce English to VYLs. In this regard, very few English language initiatives have taken aim at making English education effective in pre-primary educational contexts in Turkey. Although the national curriculum (MONE, 2016) states that the philosophy of early L2 education is based on the communicative approach instead of grammar-centered one, this is the case in practice (Uysal and Yavuz, 2015). To illustrate, the educators and teachers are expected to focus on listening and speaking skills generally and to use the target language maximum at this level as a communication tool but prefer to teach basic nouns didactically. However, Cenoz (2003) suggests that TEVYL requires different methodology that focuses on communicative skills rather than formal structures of language. Considering all these explanations and the children's developmental stages, various successful communicative activities involving a lot of movement, as well as chanting, storytelling, role-play and music should be integrated into VYLs' L2 learning to keep children actively engaged in the lesson (Klein, 1993; Ghosn, 2017).

One of the main properties of English language programs is to motivate VYLs as well as provide language attainment. When young children's behaviours are observed, it is seen that they are less likely to be motivated for integrative reasons (Li, Han and Gao, 2019). In other words, they do not have inner motivation and they are fully dependent on the attractiveness of forms and methods (Pokrivčáková et al., 2008). However, their motivation can be mediated through a wide range of factors and specific learning situations (Dörnyei, 1998; Pinter, 2017). These factors can be listed as stakeholders involved in or related to their learning of English, learning environments, instructional methods and activities and other related factors such as instructional materials or topics (Pinter, 2017). To illustrate, the findings of studies reveal that authentic hands-on experiences (Strunz and Thomas, 2010), playing language games (Dunn, 2013) are important motivational factors for VYLs. In sum, within this context, in order to provide a motivational basis to children, the quality of language programs including

encouraging age-appropriate resources and activities for pre-primary L2 learning is of utmost importance.

The other feature of pre-primary level L2 programs is to primarily support listening and speaking skills, which are the foundation for developing other skills, for pre-primary school children who mostly don't know how to read and write (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2010). It is well-known that the L2 learning process is similar to L1 acquisition. Within this scope, listening which is a receptive skill is considerably important at this level. Regarding this issue, Cameron (2003) suggested that young children who are pre-literate should be exposed to spoken language and listening input more in an instructional setting. In achieving this, some activities such as storytelling, songs, demonstration, TPR and some games need to be provided as L2 input. The quality of language input, which is just as important as sufficient L2 input, is another issue that should be taken into consideration (Moon, 2000). High quality L2 programs refer to the ones including meaningful listening and speaking activities in a balanced way that increase receptive and expressive knowledge and communication in target language (Ellison, 2019; Puchta, 2019).

The strategies suggested in L2 programs for VYLs should be concrete and multisensory. Regarding this issue, Brumen (2010) put forward that concrete experiences and active participation in activities are some of the most important principles of this program because they increase children's intrinsic motivation and positive learning experiences accordingly. As for the general features of tasks and activities, they should be short, varied, motivating and interesting (Butler, 2005). More specifically, they need variety in listening and speaking tasks. This is because they are not capable of focusing on one task for long periods of time as a result of their short attention spans (Cameron 2001; Brewster et al. 2002; Slattery and Willis 2001). On the other hand, age-accessible content rather than language in the abstract is considerably important to involve the children in the learning process (Bourke, 2006). Regarding this issue, Kail (2010) indicated that salient or familiar themes are helpful in focusing children's attention. Contrary to this, unfamiliar or too abstract content makes it more difficult for children to maintain attention. Keeping all these in mind, it can be said that English can be learned revolving around a common theme familiar and challenging for children with

age-appropriate target vocabulary, phrase and sentences which are the most prominent elements of pre-primary level L2 education programs.

Lastly, the compatibility between learning objectives and assessment methods with the *'what kind of assessment'* and *'how to implement this assessment'* is the other feature of good quality L2 programs. It means that methods of assessment should mirror classroom practices; in other words, the types of activities, materials and tasks planned for assessment should be fully combined with the learning objectives and instructional materials used in the classroom (Nikolov, 2016). The features of the good quality program's elements mentioned so far are summarized by Read (2003) that they should be 'natural and contextualized, interesting and enjoyable, relevant, part of a coherent whole, multisensory, active and experiential, memorable, designed to provide for personal, divergent responses and multiple intelligences, offered in a relaxed and warm learning atmosphere'. Keeping all the properties mentioned above in mind, English language education cannot be dissociated from the early childhood education because of young children's different levels of ability and developmental linguistic demands. A high quality English education program at pre-primary level should be designed properly and effectively with the integration of the critical issues, principles and procedures of both disciplines – early childhood and English language education. In this regard, all the elements and properties of a program need to be embedded into both disciplines.

## **2.7. Instructional Methods and Materials for Very Young Learners**

The practice of introducing English to pre-primary level raises concerns not only about pedagogy but also instructional materials and methods used in the classroom. The literature related with the methods and materials used in this area reveals that children's needs in four main developmental areas should be kept in mind in the process of deciding the suitable methods and designing the suitable materials (Ghosn, 2019). Besides, it is needed to be aware of the important differences between introducing English to older learners and the younger children. Moreover, TEVYL must also take into account the fact that the youngest learners have not yet developed literacy in their first language. On the other hand, as it is implied in the Gardner's Theory of Multiple

Intelligences (1993) putting forward different sets of developed intelligences; each child has different talents and skills. For this reason, the activities and materials integrated into the program should develop and stimulate these areas of intelligence. For instance, offering materials for learning vocabulary and phrases encourages 'linguistic intelligence' or using the body when doing action stories, singing songs and playing action games and developing fine motor skills through various types of activities such as arts and crafts activities are closely related to 'kinesthetic intelligence'.

The key points of successful ELT materials for young children are listed in the literature as follows. Besides, they should help teachers present the themes and target language in a contextualized manner and clarify meaning. Furthermore, developmentally appropriate methods and materials should reinforce the quality interaction and communication (Mourão, 2019). In this regard, the developmentally appropriate methods and materials mostly mentioned include the use of songs, role-plays, stories, games and game-like activities, movement, hands-on interactive pursuits and thinking skill activities as well as parental involvement as an essential part of early childhood education (Brumen, 2010; Elvin et al., 2007; Fleta, 2006; Ordóñez, 2016; Robinson et al., 2015; Wu, 2003). All these forms of introducing an L2 to children are noted to be well liked by the children because they involve multisensory processing and they appeal to auditory, visual and kinesthetic learners (Kirkgöz, 2019). In this way, children are not also simply learning what to say but also how to and where to say it correctly.

Apart from child-centered intrinsically motivating methods and materials, there are also an array of didactic strategies and materials used in the introducing of English for academic purposes as well. These include mechanical memorization of a set of words, phrases, poems or songs, TPR and demonstration with flashcards. On the other hand, there are some studies asserting that using pictures, objects and actions make the meaning understandable for children and they aid memorization, due to the meaning being 'stored both linguistically and visually' (Nation, 2013). Also, memorization, which is a teacher-centered activity, is particularly beneficial, as it always allows improvement of word knowledge. This interesting contradiction can be understood with the answer of the following question: 'are these methods used for enjoyment and communication or as structural memorization?' In other words, the

important point here is their aims of use in the classroom is what determines their usefulness. If they are used for enjoyment and communication, they will make these classroom activities child-friendly. However, when they are used as structural memorization, they become demotivating. For these reasons, using both only pictures/flashcards and memorization didactically is not sufficient and effective to provide child-centered and play-based activities that create opportunities to interact with other children and the teacher, and to practice communicative skills in fun ways. Bourke (2006) and Lourenço and Mourão (2018) argue that any syllabus for young children needs to be planned in an ‘experientially appropriate’ manner and should include the following aspects:

- Topics of interest to children
- Stories
- Games
- Doing and making activities
- Songs, chants and rhymes
- Role-plays (pair work or group work tasks)
- Web-based materials
- Children’s literature

The above and some other methods such as thinking-based activities (Puchta and Elliot, 2017) and parental involvement which are among the most common methods and materials used in TEVYL are examined in detail below.

### **2.7.1. Coursebooks**

The findings of the study reveal that coursebooks as instructional materials play a central role in English hours at pre-primary worldwide (Ghosn, 2019) and nationwide (Kimsesiz, Dolgunsöz and Konca, 2017; Caner, Subaşı and Kara, 2010). Regarding this issue, Portiková (2015) conducted a study with Slovenian teachers working at this level and they stated that the choice of methodology used in their everyday practice came from the coursebook. This issue is similar in different nations. Teachers often prefer to follow the coursebook as a safe way to ensure that lessons satisfy the prescribed syllabus without preparing any suitable materials. Despite teachers’ tendency to rely on traditional coursebooks at this level, one of the challenges is to be able to select coursebooks and resources which are suitable for pre-primary L2 learning. On the other hand, using coursebooks that are CEFR-based, regardless of cultural relevance or age-

appropriateness is one of the concerns discussed in this field (Parker and Valente, 2019).

Puchta (2019) criticizes the structural-situational method included in the VYLs' coursebooks that force children to listen to and repeat dialogues, and learn the spoken language by heart. Arnold and Rixon (2008) divided the coursebooks for VYLs into two categories. Whereas one of them promotes 'structural/grammatical' preparation for academic purposes, the other type which is more activity-based focuses less on 'linguistic content'. Despite this diversity among some coursebooks in terms of their aims and pedagogic materials, many coursebooks ignore to offer alternative approaches with a more holistic approach (Garton and Copland, 2019). Ghosn (2019) also criticizes that a coursebook-based approach is not necessarily developmentally appropriate at pre-primary level due to their deficit in providing rich comprehensible samples of language and optimizing and maximizing language learning with several activities. Instead of coursebooks, she (2019) suggested rhymes, songs, stories and role-plays and picture books for FL pre-primary school learners.

### **2.7.2. Songs**

Songs, which are one of the most prevalent classroom activities in early childhood period, are also used commonly as one of the developmentally appropriate choices in the early TEVYL classes to provide enjoyable repetition of both vocabulary and structures. The importance of songs chants and rhymes in TEVYL result from the fact that they have a positive effect on memory, pronunciation of language and physical movement (Brewster et al. 2002). With the parallel of VYLs' characteristics related to the tendency to learn through repetition and to imitate the sounds of the target language (Slattery and Willis 2001), the use of songs as instructional materials to help them retrieve words and expression is considerably important. Furthermore, listening to stories, songs and rhymes is specifically recommended for children to become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of language (Brewster et al. 2002). On the other hand, songs which are listening materials can be used as a source of input to develop a speaking activity (Mourão, 2014). Empirical studies conducted by Davis and Fan (2016) in China and by Davis (2013) in Japan to examine the widespread practice of using songs in TEVYL found out that songs and choral repetition facilitate children

to learn significant item, phrases and formulaic structures. Furthermore, Yüksel (2016) asserted that using songs at this level promote vocabulary learning, motivate children to learn English, and raise the children's cultural awareness.

Another benefit of the use of songs is to reinforce L2 language learning with the help of their rhythmic and repetitive nature about specific themes. Cameron (2001), Johnstone (2002) and Demirel (2004) asserted that the use of song is the most effective way to introduce listening input, support pronunciation and dictation at this level. Similarly, Djigunovich and Vilke (2000) indicated that songs provide a safe, non-threatening context within which young children can play with language and they can participate in the L2 learning process physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The other benefit is that they provide opportunities for repetition, practice and real language use in a fun and enjoyable way (Sharpe, 2001). Schoepp (2001) splits the reasons of including songs in EFL pre-primary school into three groups as 'affective reasons' contributing to a supportive, non-threatening setting, 'cognitive setting' contributing to the automatic use of meaningful language structures and 'linguistic reasons' contributing to correct pronunciation and fluency.

The use of songs is one of the instructional methods available in many early EFL curricula and in many EFL coursebooks. It is also among the most frequently used activities, methods and techniques, songs and rhymes (88%) in Turkey because it is easy to prepare (Kimsesiz Dolgunsöz and Konca, 2017). These songs need to include curricula-related or theme-related vocabularies and phrases and thus, they need to be created specifically to achieve some pedagogical and linguistic purposes in L2 instead of traditional songs (e.g., Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, London Bridge) (Bourke, 2006). However, the situation is not similar at international and national level. Regarding this issue, Li and Ni (2011) and Sakamoto (2015) who examine the role of technology in early L2 education indicate that teachers mainly use technology to find a song or video related with the topic. However, there are two concerns here, one of which is about the excessive use of songs taken from Internet keep children quiet and passive (Lovely and Moberly, 2012) by preventing them to create new things. The other concern is about the developmentally and linguistically appropriateness of the songs with core curricular objectives, themes, vocabulary and structure. Reilly and Ward



(2003) offered a way to provide compatibility between the content of songs and attainment targets by saying that songs can be easily adapted to suit other target vocabulary and topics.

Some qualifications should also be provided to achieve the successful integration of songs into the process of TEVYL. One of these qualifications asserted by Iten and Petko (2016) is that songs which are one of the suitable instructional materials should include both having fun and usefulness. In other words, the songs need to be enjoyable, meaningful and contextualized. More similarly, the songs should be selected carefully for this age group as a way to provide plenty of opportunities for meaningful, contextualized activities and experiential learning (Ghosn 2017; Hughes 2010). The other qualification is that the songs need to be age-appropriate and relevant, which help children practice the determined target vocabulary and structures in a contextualized way. Considering all these issues, it can be said that in deciding and designing a suitable song, some criteria such as containing simple and easily understood lyrics, linking with a theme or vocabulary, containing repetitive lines and allowing children to easily do actions need to be taken into consideration (Ersöz, 2007; Kirsch, 2008).

On the other hand, one finding of the study conducted by Coyle and Gracia (2014) reveal that using only songs as instructional material in pre-primary class without song-based activities help VYLs develop their receptive knowledge of vocabulary, but not productive knowledge. More similarly, Milington (2011) emphasized that despite its advantages, simply singing songs do not guide young children in how to communicate in another language. In sum, listening to the songs in a decontextualized manner without conducting some song-related activities at the end is not an effective method especially for children's productive vocabulary knowledge and communicative skills although they engage children's attention, develop their pronunciation skills and facilitate their retention of vocabulary at a degree. In other words, the real achievement in pre-primary L2 education is not the mechanical memorization of a set of words, phrases through only one method such as songs, but VYLs' exposure to the target vocabulary and structures in various interactive activities repeatedly and enjoyably within a meaningful context is the real success.

### 2.7.3. Stories

Storytelling which is one of the indispensable techniques of ECE for children's language and literacy growth has also been used as a practical instrument of L2 methodology for young and very young children (Cheater and Farren, 2005; Uchiyama, 2011). Jones and Coffey (2006) suggested the integration of this method into early L2 programs owing to the fact that storytelling as a basic method for VYLs cuts across all of the two key skills (listening, speaking). Regardless of how it is used, many studies indicate a greater benefit of using storytelling to young children, particularly if the story is selected carefully, read with suitable methods and supported with appropriate activity (Ellis and Brewster, 2014; Yanase, 2018). One of these benefits is the development of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in L2 (Ghosn 2003a; Hughes, 2009; Rachmawaty and Hermagustiana, 2010) as well as the development of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in L2 (Beaken, 2009; Madros, 2010; Mattheoudakis, Dvorakova and Láng, 2008). Another benefit can be listed as VYLs' awareness of rhythm and intonation features of L2 knowledge (Mattheoudakis, Dvorakova and Láng, 2008).

In the literature, there is a wealth of research that investigates the effects of reading books to children on vocabulary learning and acquisition in their native language (Suggate, Lenhard, Neudecker and Schneider, 2013; Kotaman, 2013) and a second language in the classroom setting (Cheater and Farren, 2005; Leacox and Jackson, 2014; Pollard-Durodola et al., 2018; Jones and Coffey, 2006). Almost all of them in the latter category indicated that typical early L2 education focuses on introducing vocabulary and some basic forms through stories, based on the view that children have difficulty in analyzing grammar. Based on this, the integration of stories into the program is highly influential in terms of TEVYL considering the characteristics of young children who love listening to stories (Brewster et al. 2002; Slattery and Willis 2001) and have a tendency to retelling the stories (Ibrahim, 2015). Thus, VYLs have an opportunity to become aware of the rhythm, intonation and pronunciation of target language and to improve their listening and speaking skills through illustrated storybooks.

More specifically, studies with pre-primary school children have claimed similarly positive outcomes and supported the use of storybooks in TEVYL (Ghosn, 2001; 2010;

Tarakçıoğlu and Tunçarslan, 2014). Among these results, the most common one is that storytelling which is followed with various activities to practice new vocabulary or develop thinking skills has a positive effect on children's engagement as well as the learning of target vocabulary and structures receptively and productively. Similarly, Senechal et al. (1995) examined two groups of children who listen to the story passively and who take part in the story session actively by pointing or labeling the pictures through some activities. They found that the children in former group produced a lower number of words contrary to the ones in latter group as a result of the deficiency in verbal and non-verbal responding during the storytelling process. The finding of Mourão's (2014) study also revealed that children spontaneously used the English they had heard in the storytelling activity in their play. Mourão (2006) suggested language teachers read stories repeatedly to young children because this repeated reading of storybooks provide children some opportunities to match the L2 knowledge and meaning. Bland (2019) also indicated that storytelling is advantageous for retaining new words at this level as a result of her study conducted with Vietnamese pre-primary school learners. Despite its positive outcomes in English language education at pre-primary level, storytelling is not central to the curriculum in many countries (Bland, 2019; Ellis and Brewster, 2014). Apart from the benefits of reading stories to VYLs, the studies in this field have two dimensions. One of them is related with how to decide or design stories and the other one is associated with how to read the stories effectively for VYLs.

In the process of selecting a story book or creating a new story book, some important points are suggested based on VYLs' characteristics, developmental needs and low language levels in L2. One of these points are offered by Ghosn (2019) who indicates that storybooks used as an instructional material in the classroom should be in Big Book versions referring to large illustrated books designed to be seen easily by a group of children as the teacher reads.. The other point is that storybooks should include lovely vivid illustrations which are familiar to children in their countries to facilitate visualization of language (Mourão, 2019) and to stimulate imagination and develop visual literacy (Dunn, 2003). Yet another important point in deciding or designing a storybook is that it should be linguistically and culturally relevant for VYLs' curriculum. In other words, stories need to have educational value for the youngest

language learners in terms of intercultural understanding and curricular objectives (Bland, 2015a).

Additionally, the L2 stories for this age group should not include the complexity of written literature with regard to language, characterization, setting and theme (Bland, 2019). Stories which are selected or designed should be at optimal difficulty level for VYLs. In relation to the difficulty of the stories, Read (2000) put forward some criteria such as the familiarity of the vocabulary, the length and complexity of the sentences in the text, the presence or absence of illustrations, the spaces between the lines, the size of the letters, the suitability of the text for the age group, as well as the appropriateness of the vocabulary and pictures for the proficiency level of the children. It seems that these items need to be kept in mind to be able to create or select a useful and relevant stories or texts for VYLs. As well as the characteristics of storybooks, the characteristics of the storyteller which needs to be well-trained with very good language skills in pre-primary setting should also be taken into consideration in TEVYL (Isbell, 2002).

Among the features of story-based instructions and materials, some important techniques are suggested for teacher-storytellers who are with pre-primary school children. One of them is related with the repetition of the stories in foreign language periodically during the English hours by the teacher-storyteller (Bland, 2019). The other one is the use of scaffolding such as pictures, puppets and realia which are very helpful in oral storytelling in TEVYL settings to make the meaning clear and understandable. Bland (2015b) also suggested storytellers to use some gestures and facial expressions and to involve expressive prosodic features (pitch, tempo, volume, rhythm – including dramatic pauses) to attract children's attention. Similarly, Reilly and Ward (2000) clarified that the use of visual aids, dramatic tone of voice, mimicry, gesture, and mime to bring the story alive in storytelling process because of the fact that VYLs are pre-literate children. The last point is indicated by Arnold (2016) as using of exaggerated intonation to hold the child's attention, emphasizing key words, repeating the target words and phrases frequently, and keeping sentences short and grammatically simple to make the listening more comprehensible. Moreover, one of the findings of Haven's (2000) study reveals that the limited use of the mother tongue can be used to facilitate comprehension of a story and to attract their attention. All these strategies mentioned so

far help shed light on the selection or creation of suitable stories for VYLs and the reading of them effectively in target language at this level.

#### **2.7.4. Drama activities**

Drama activities are recommended in the literature to develop young children's receptive and productive language skills by providing flexible participation (O'Kane, 2008). They are so child-friendly participatory activities that the children enjoyed and contributed fully. Drama that encourages children to communicate in target language and interact with others effectively and enjoyably is one way of multisensory learning in which children involve with their bodies, minds, emotions. With the help of drama activities which make the classroom activities learner-centered and more enjoyable, VYLs' speaking and listening skills and their opportunities to use the target language through interaction develop significantly (Köylüoğlu, 2010; Farmer, 2011).

In the literature, there are some studies investigating the effects of using drama in early EFL classroom. One of them is Rew and Moon's (2013) study indicating that drama activities in target language was effective for children to learn and individualize some specific expressions learnt in the story or class. On the other hand, the findings of Ntelioglou's (2011) study shows that drama and role-play activities make the meanings clear in L2 language and young children know the meaning of words and sentences that they express by heart during the drama. However, it should be noted in this respect that the type of memorization in these drama activities is not similar to the teacher-centered ones that have been criticized nowadays due to the fact that it occurs without guessing and understanding the meaning. In contrast, young children internalize the target vocabulary, phrase and sentences and at the same time achieve deep learning and critical thinking through memorization which is still an important way of L2 learning for younger children. Bland (2015b) highlights using drama activities for oracy development in young children's classroom. She emphasized that children are involved in holistic learning through imitation and playful experimentation by acting out role-plays or participating drama activities.

More specifically, the results of the studies newly conducted in different parts of the world related to applying drama in young learners' class proved that using drama is a

highly effective way to provide multisensory clues to meaning and support a motivating classroom environment. One of these studies includes an ELT drama project conducted with young learners in France (Serrurier-Zucker and Gobbé-Mévellec, 2014) and the other one consists of a scripted drama project in Germany (Bland, 2014). In addition to these, Reynolds and Chang (2018) conducted a study about scripting picturebooks into interactive plays with pre-primary school children in Taiwan. All this research indicates that children's drama offer an opportunity to perform L2 language, develop their linguistic and communicative skills (Fleming, 2013). In the same vein, the insights that can be derived from the findings of the study regarding the use of drama with young children include two points. One of them is that drama and role-play activities contribute to promoting receptive and expressive language skills, improving vocabulary and pronunciation (Guilfoylea and Mistryb, 2013; Bland, 2015a; Farmer, 2011), and the other one is mostly related to affective learning outcomes including increasing children's confidence and motivation by encouraging collaborative learning (Miccoli, 2003; Ilyas, 2016).

In the process of deciding drama activities, some criteria should be taken into consideration (Zalta, 2006). One of them is to pay close attention to children's developmental and language proficiency level and prefer the useful drama activities (Liu, 2002) for VYLs. In addition to this, to be aware of and enact the drama techniques (warm-up, pantomime, role-play, simulation, improvisation, drama games, puppetry, poetry, hot seating, theatre, dance drama, picturing, sensory perception) in the literature (Slade, 1995; Chauhan, 2004) and to make appropriate choices among these forms based on content and language areas are crucial. Among these, role-play is extremely valuable for introducing L2 to young children because it encourages them to develop and practice new language receptively and productively in a relatively nonthreatening setting. The other benefit of choosing meaningful activities such as drama games or activities is that they promote learner involvement and vocabulary production in the VYL classroom (Hestetraet, 2015) because they create a need for using target structures and vocabulary in context. In sum, age-appropriate drama activities which include interesting, meaningful and motivating contents, methods and materials for VYLs are extremely important in early L2 education (Jalongo, 2007; Artelt, 2005) as motivation and interest have a profound influence on learning in the TEVYL classroom. One of the

most important reasons is that meaningful content through age-appropriate attractive method and materials is learned faster and remembered better than the others less meaningful (Mayer, 1996).

#### **2.7.5. Play-based activities**

Play-based activities provide a perfect, fun and structured setting for L2 learning in early childhood period for practicing the target language receptively and expressively. Regarding this issue, Gardner (2006) asserted that games which are ideal vehicles for involving interpersonal, visual/spatial and bodily/kinaesthetic intelligences create a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Lewis and Bedson (1999) also indicated that games and play-based activities provide a means through which children practice and experiment with language, as well as a real reason to interact with their peers and the environment. Maria Montessori emphasizes the importance of games and playing by saying that ‘play is the work of the child’ (Elkind, 2007). Based on this, when the games are adapted and used as instructional materials at this level, children learn the target language without being aware of the fact that they are learning language (Moon, 2000). Many of the children are so enthusiastic about the games and play-based activities that they want to ‘play’ them again and again (Kersten, 2015) because the motivation exists in playing them (Dunn, 2013). However, it is important to remember that these low-risk activities should be meaningful to the children at this level by allowing for humor and excitement (Kernan, 2007).

Apart from their motivational value as an enjoyable form of activity, play-based activities provide a context in which L2 is embedded. McKay and Guse (2007) explained the philosophy underpinning the play-based activities by saying that they encourage meaningful language use and real communication appropriate to pre-primary age learners and their learning contexts. Thus, VYLs can have opportunities to practice English and develop listening and speaking skills through meaningful repetition and interaction. Phillips (1999) explained this issue as follows: L2 learning does not have key motivational factors especially for children aged 3-6; however, games or play based activities make L2 learning process useful and make the reasons plausible for them. Language games can be used to introduce new themes, to practice recently learnt language items or to provide useful revision. One of the most important benefits of

playing games at pre-primary level English language learning process is to provide VYLs with listening input within a meaningful context and facilitates the children's mastery of the listening skill accordingly (Fleta, 2015). Considering all its benefits such as developing children's speaking and listening skills, practicing vocabulary knowledge, and promoting development of attention and concentration, it can be said that play-based activities as one of the effective instructional materials have an important place in the VYLs' classroom.

Play, in particular, has been central to early childhood education since the beginning of the twentieth century and has been described by Moyles (2010) as a "powerful scaffold" for children's learning. Modern L2 learning theories as well as early childhood learning and pedagogical approaches have viewed the games as significant educational tools and classified mostly as action games, memory games and role-playing games for children. Contrary to this general classification, Maley and Duff (2005) categorized the language games for young children significantly and elaborately as movement games, card games, board games, drawing games, guessing games, role-play games, singing and chanting games, team games and word games. No matter what kind of it is, the studies demonstrated that the key to successful play-based activities is that the ultimate goal and the visible set of rules guiding the children's actions should be clear and well-defined depending on their language level (Maley and Duff, 2005). The only point the need to be taken into consideration is to create or involve theme-based games to introduce or practice specific language structures and vocabulary defined in the program and to meet certain objectives specified in the program.

The other criterion is related with physical conditions of the classroom such as safety, sufficient space and cleanliness for a lively movement game. For this reason, the class size and the games' levels of difficulty should be taken into consideration in deciding or designing a suitable game. On the other hand, Reilly and Ward (2000) suggested that before starting a game, the instructions should be given first in English and then in the mother tongue to make 'what children are expected to do in the game' clearer at this stage. Lively play-based activities are considerably important for VYLs who need to move around a lot as a natural result of their characteristics. Although lively activities



have a special play in early L2 education, there should be a balance of lively and calming play-based activities in the program (2000).

#### **2.7.6. Art and Craft activities**

As it is well known, integrating arts and crafts activities with other subjects in any level can be fun, engaging and effective means of teaching (Ghandbari et al., 2015). More specifically, these activities are an important part of the early childhood education (Shulsky and Kirkwood, 2015). The reason why these activities should be integrated into the L2 learning process at pre-primary level is because they provide a natural and intrinsically motivating medium for children to work and engage their bodies and minds, and build L2 knowledge by allowing them to be exposed to English receptively and expressively (Connery et al., 2010). Keeping this explanation in mind, it can be said that the use of arts and crafts are significant to stimulate L2 learning at pre-primary level. Some activity suggestions for this issue are as follows: making puppets, books, masks or costumes; drawing or painting; creating clay models or constructions of anything; making props from recycled materials; painting a large picture; creating a collage or weaving. These are fun and effective activities for both building both children's fine motor skills and their receptive and expressive language skills in L2. In fact, all various types of arts and crafts activities that can be involved in the scope of ECE curriculum can be adapted and integrated to pre-primary level ELT program. As it is seen, the use of arts and crafts for L2 learning in the early childhood period is based on a constructivist, learner-centered approach to TEVYL. Thus, VYLs develop holistically (in terms of intellectual, fine motor, social and artistic skills) without L2 learning being the only focus.

Reilly and Ward (2000) mentioned two different advantages of including arts and crafts activities into the L2 learning process. One of them is supporting VYLs' receptive knowledge and the other one is fostering expressive L2 knowledge. These activities are a very valuable way of giving the children 'comprehensible language input' as they have to listen to instructions in order to complete an activity; this is really useful for VYLs receptive knowledge from this aspect. On the other hand, children present their products to the class or answer the questions in English about their painting or products, for example, *'Who's this? What is he doing? What color is this? How many animals are*

*there?’* at the end of the activity; this is really useful for VYLs expressive knowledge from this aspect. On the other hand, language teachers can do a revision activity about the target vocabulary, phrase and sentences by using the arts and crafts products that children create at the end of the theme to recall the previous knowledge. This revision process allows teachers to become consciously aware of children’s L2 language development about related themes.

In choosing suitable arts and crafts activities for VYLs, the fine motor skills level of children should be taken into consideration. In addition to this, it is vital to demonstrate each step by using simple understandable language and some gestures. With the help of these classroom talks, demonstrations and step-by-step approach, VYLs can practice the target language and experience the communication which is important part of their learning experience receptively. Considering the class size, the number of the children and aims of the L2 learning, teacher should decide on the type of the arts and crafts activity (independent or group work) or (by using a wide variety of materials or less materials). Thus, well-planned arts and crafts activities which are integrated into children’s English learning process are vital to provide language-rich environments, culturally and age –appropriate activities, communicatively oriented but linguistically organized activities and thematically organized products. Furthermore, Puchta and Elliot (2017) mentioned a creative way of using arts and crafts activities. This way refers to having children take their artwork home and talk about them using some English word with their parents. Thus, these arts and crafts activities function as a valuable connection with children’s parents and as a creative way to promote the use of English even at home.

#### **2.7.7. Thinking skills activities**

Among the fundamental principles of early childhood education in Turkey, developing children’s critical and creative thinking skills which are regarded as a basic skill due to their importance in the scope of constructivist-based curriculum has played an enormous role (MONE, 2018). In achieving to improve children’s thinking skills in early childhood, preparing suitable learning activities, designing social interactions and physical environment of the classroom are considerably important (Doğan Altun and Ekinci Vural, 2017). Within this scope, one of the advantages of using thinking skills

activities at this age group is to help children go beyond the learning of factual knowledge (Olson, 2004). Furthermore, these activities provide some opportunities to VYLs to assess and practice what they have learnt in target language with enjoyable activities with which they are familiar with in their current school curriculum. To illustrate, demonstrating a picture or flashcard related with a target word (i.e., lion) and asking ‘Is this a lion?’ does not require a lot of thought; however, children can revise the vocabulary with sets of flashcards ready, organized into topics by categorizing them into different topics or recognizing an image from its parts.

To use thinking skills activities promote hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills and important spatial and visual strategies (such as noticing, pattern recognition and identification of details). Furthermore, in counting shapes and objects that overlap in a picture, basic numerical skills, the ability to identify objects and to focus attention improve gradually. Also, to practice identifying patterns in a series of pictures develop their cognitive skills, problem solving and scientific thinking. In addition to these, reordering a series of pictures according to a story or some instructions cultivate children’s sequential thinking.

Taking all these benefits into consideration, L2 education programs at pre-primary level can integrate some thinking-based activities aiming at both developing thinking skills and language skills simultaneously. The main basic thinking skill to be developed for this age group have to do with understanding patterns, sequencing, decision-making and imaginative thinking (Puchta and Elliot, 2017). These skills can also be developed in enjoyable ways in the activities such as sorting a mixture of items according to target vocabulary, categorizing the vocabulary sets, recognizing and counting, identifying the patterns in a series of pictures, reordering, putting a number of pictures from a story in the correct order (Littlejohn, 2016b; Westbrook, 2014). Regarding this issue, Parker and Valente (2019) suggested that stories can also be adapted for challenging learning contexts that enable children to retell the stories or to reorder the stories orally with the help of pictures, and thus, children’s higher order thinking skills develop.

### **2.7.8. Parental involvement**

Parental involvement, which is the indispensable part of ECE, plays a crucial role in providing the permanence of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes by enhancing the continuity between school and home (MONE, 2019). Within this context, parents need to be supportive of VYLs in their efforts to learn a foreign language. One of the main concerns about this issue is that most of the parents can be unable to support their children's development in L2 because they "do not know English." The other concern is that the ones who know English cannot be familiar with how to support their children's L2 learning process. Last but not the least is the parent's being uninformed and unaware of their responsibility in supporting their children's endeavor at home. The studies conducted about parental engagement to assist the children's learning in L2 worldwide revealed the effort to address these concerns. To illustrate, in the study conducted by Castillo and Camelo Gámez (2013), parents were educated about what it means to learn an L2, and they were trained to tackle children's assignments. A website was also developed to support this endeavor by informing about why early FL is essential and how they can support this process in the study.

A wealth of studies related to the parental involvement into their children's L2 language learning has shown that it is indispensable part of their L2 education to sustain the learning and motivation at home (Dickinson and Tabors, 2001; Roberts, Jurgens and Burchinal, 2005; August and Shanahan, 2006; Li, 1999). When the engagement types and strategies the parents use to support their children's L2 language development were examined in the international context, it was mostly seen that there were two major categories, after-school programs and parent-initiated activities. Some of the valid explanations for this could be the factors such as the parents' socio-economic status and proficiency in the target language (Forey, Besser and Sampson, 2015). Similarly, the finding of Lee's (2008) study revealed that the after-school English enrichment programs in various types and hours of instruction in Taiwan were viewed as one important way of parental involvement to support children's foreign language development. This was mostly preferred because of the parents who had less knowledge of the target language and also wanted to support their children's L2 learning.

On the other hand, parent-initiated activities involved providing multi-media materials (DVD, songs, audio books) available at home, providing English recourses and written materials (English books, picture books, flashcards), taking their children to bookstores and libraries for materials, reading English books with them and playing games in English, encouraging learning of vocabulary based on their English proficiency level. As for China, Butler (2013) proposed two different parental behaviors in children's English language learning process as direct behaviors (such as providing direct assistance for their children to learn English) and their indirect behaviors (such as the home literacy environment and indirect modeling they provided). In the same vein, Sun (2013) asserted that parents play three major roles in children's English education, which are financial support (sending their children to go study abroad, children's enrollment in English programs, purchasing English learning materials), a guide (spending time with children by reading books/playing games, proving a English learning environment at home for their children, using English to communicate with them, supervising children's everyday learning) and a English learning partner (parent-child learning competition, spending time with their children on English media input). In addition to these, other types of parental involvement mentioned in the literature are parent school interaction programs (Kuma, 2011; Collier and Auerbach, 2011; Deborah, Gilliam and Lisa, 2013; Wessels, 2014; Georgis, Donna Mae Ford and Ali, 2014; Xiaoyi, 2017). These programs refer to the parents' presence in schooling regardless of the fact that it might take place in a formal school space or in an informal space and it demands reciprocal action from the school and the parents (Carreon, Drake and Barton, 2005).

With a view to examine the parental factors and early English education, Butler (2013) classified the parents' behaviors into two parts: the parental indirect behaviors (i.e., the home literacy and language environment and indirect modeling) and parental direct behaviors (i.e., direct assistance with their child's studying and learning of English). It is indicated that both of them were found to be the most influential variables on children's target language performance in Europe (Enever, 2011) and in China (Butler, 2013). More specifically, whereas direct behaviors include parent's involvement in children's English learning at home and in school activities and sending the child private English lessons, indirect behaviors consist of father's and mother's English

level, languages spoken at home or a rich language environment at home. Furthermore, research by Mourão and Robinson (2016) has shown that when all stakeholders ranging from parents to teachers collaborate in the L2 process and take responsibility for the children's English experience, early L2 learning becomes meaningful and effective. For this reason, they (2016) suggested that a language teacher at pre-primary level is responsible for both organizing English learning in the classroom and guaranteeing parental involvement by helping them understand what was happening to support at home simultaneously. As for Turkey, effective and helpful information about the importance of early L2 learning and practical advice about methods and materials the parents can use at home to facilitate children's L2 learning are suggested in 'Integrated Family Support Education Guide with Pre-primary School Education Program (MONE, 2013). In this program letters, booklets, photographs, bulletin boards, correspondences, meetings and school visits are among the ways to get the parents involved in their children's learning process.

The critical role of parents in L2 learning process is emphasized in several studies (Mady, 2010; Gardner et al. 1999). For instance, Gardner et al. (1999) and Mady (2010) put forward the close relationship between parents' involvement and children's attitudes towards and motivation of learning L2. The parent's function about providing motivation and encouragement mentioned above come into prominence in the issue of TEVYL because VYLs have a lack motivation and interest in learning English as a result of the fact that they may not fully understand the value of learning the language (Copland et al., 2014; Garton, 2014). In brief, the involvement of parents who are key stakeholders in a young child's education is recognized as being highly relevant and this naturally holds true with FL learning.

It has been quite obvious so far that using different age-appropriate instructional methods and activities derived and adapted from ECE in TEVYL is very important to introduce English by supporting holistic learning (development of 'the whole child'). These developmentally and age appropriate practices include the use of songs and music, drama activities, stories and picturebooks, games and play-based activities, movement and arts and crafts activities and thinking skills activities (Brumen, 2010; Elvin et al., 2007; Fleta, 2006; Ghosn, 2017; Ordóñez 2016; Robinson et al. 2015). All

these activities, supporting VYLs' listening and speaking skills at varying degrees, complete the battery of instructional resources, because they are how children naturally learn. To illustrate, the importance of song-based activities result from providing memorable and enjoyable language practice, especially in fostering listening skills, understanding of basic nouns, aiding pronunciation, and learning and retention of vocabulary and structures to VYLs. On the other hand, the games, stories, drama and role play are extremely important because of enhancing VYL's speaking skills (Coyle and Gracia 2014; Graham, 2006; Lechel, 2010). At this point, Puchta (2019) highlights the importance of the interconnectedness of instructional objectives and instructional methods and calls for both to be integrated into other activities.

More specifically, the tasks and activities need to be designed or selected by taking into their suitability and young children's learning potential. In achieving this, Cameron's criteria are significantly helpful and useful in designing and deciding appropriate tasks and activities for VYLs. It also gives some key ways and clues about how VYLs need to be supported in achieving the goals of the tasks in L2. These criteria (Cameron, 2001) that provide a basis for tasks and activities in ECELEP are shown in Table 2.7.

**Tablo** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı. **7. Criteria to be able to Decide Suitable Tasks and Activities**

|                        |                                                                                            |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cognitive demands      | The degree of contextualization of language, difficulty of concepts                        |
| Language demands       | Understanding or production, communication with vocabulary needed, the amount of L1 and L2 |
| Interactional demands  | The interaction type required for VYLs                                                     |
| Metalinguistic demands | Using appropriate instructions, giving suitable feedback                                   |
| Involvement demands    | The difficulty degree of the task, the length of the tasks                                 |
| Physical demands       | Duration of the tasks, the actions and fine/gross motor skills needed.                     |

Considering the fact that children need an integrated and well-balanced set of experiences to help them improve their communicative and linguistic abilities in L2 and they also learn best through interaction and experience involving all of their senses, English should be introduced to VYLs in diversified and entangled ways via various relevant methods and materials. For these reasons, all the methods and materials discussed above for VYLs can be used alone in introducing English; however, integrating all of them into the early L2 education program as a complement of each other create a target language world within the classroom that ensures VYLs to hear and

use the language. On the other hand, in EFL contexts, English is not used in the community (Feng, 2012) and for this reason, VYLs in such contexts often have few opportunities to receive sufficient input and produce meaningful output in English (Butler, 2015a). VYLs who are the children at pre-primary level are exposed to English for the first time. Keeping all these challenges and difficulties for VYLs in different parts of the world in mind, it can be said that incorporating both cognitive and interactive activities and materials mentioned above in a balanced way into the early L2 learning process is extremely important in terms of the fact that children are exposed to and engaged in English learning meaningfully (Palfreyman, 2006).

### **2.7.9. Instructional Materials**

As for some instructional materials for VYLs, the most common ones are flashcards, puppets, toys, CD- and DVD-players and a collection of realia to facilitate L2 learning at this level (Kirkgöz, 2015). There is also such a vast array of teacher-made materials from worksheets to board games that can be used in this area (Ghosn, 2015). Realia which are defined as objects and materials from everyday life and used as instructional aids in the literature play a crucial role in providing a good starting point for a variety of language work and communication activities (Harmer, 2015). For instance, a soft ball can be used to make learning more enjoyable while asking a question or giving an answer. On the other hand, English-speaking puppets, animated by the teacher, have an effect on influencing children to use more English during speaking activities and make children more relaxed and motivated.

Despite realia's well-known advantages, it can be said that depending on how they are used and for what purposes they are used, their contributions and benefits vary. To illustrate, when they are used as an aid for comprehension, communication and vocabulary learning in L2 or as a tool to enhance constructivist learning where children become the center of learning and play a more active role, they become meaningful and useful. Otherwise, when instructional materials are used didactically for academic purposes as a part of formal, teacher-fronted instruction, it becomes useless because children at this age do not respond well to teacher-led English sessions through didactic materials (Ghosn, 2017). More specifically, in a teacher-dominated context, with flashcards, the young child is expected to associate the L2 word form with its meaning,



usually in the form of a first language translation (Nakata, 2011). On the other hand, in child-centered EFL pre-primary school, the flashcards are used as supplementary materials in interactive activities such as reading aloud and copying words from flashcards, matching and grouping flashcards, vocabulary games with flashcards (Mourão, 2015).

Another discussion about types of instructional materials shows that some of the equipment and resources are part of the mainstream classroom equipment, while other resources are lesson-specific, crafted and prepared by teachers. Related to this issue, studies have shown that teachers often lack the time and expertise to develop and select appropriate materials, for this reason, they prefer readily available resources (Ghatage, 2009; Ho, 2003). In order to design and select a suitable instructional material, the necessary properties which are listed as being comprehensible to VYLs and appropriate developmentally and culturally for them to maximize the potential for language learning should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the chosen or decided activities should be related to the themes by establishing a meaningful context to promote effective language learning (Slattery and Willis 2001; McDonough and Shaw, 2003). They also allow promoting comprehension and negotiating of the meaning by making sense of different stories and making connections with English and with words they already knew. As a final note, more effective methods and materials rather than conventional ones need to be selected and adapted to early L2 learning process in terms of both obtaining receptive and productive knowledge and skills effectively and providing the retention of learning (Wouters et al., 2013).

## **2.8. Development of Very Young Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge**

Among the objectives and reasons for L2 education at pre-primary level worldwide and nationwide, three of them have dominated: the development of a positive attitude towards other languages and cultural varieties; providing the child's first contact with an L2; and the learning of L2 vocabulary in a playful manner. In many research, the acquisition of basic vocabulary of an L2 in context and in a meaningful way is prioritized in EFL at pre-primary level because of their low foreign language level and developmental characteristics (Portiková, 2015). Cameron (2001) also asserted that

building up a useful vocabulary is central to the learning of a foreign language at this level. In brief, vocabulary learning can serve as a stepping stone to learning listening and speaking skills. Harmon, Wood and Keser, (2009) as well as Linse (2005) state that VYLs' vocabulary development are an important aspect of their language development. One of the possible reasons is the fact that the lack of vocabulary knowledge which is often viewed as a critical tool for L2 learners impedes effective communication.

The children's vocabulary development in L2 needs to be related to conceptual development; for this reason, the children's L1 background is needed to be paid attention to (Cameron, 2001). Within this scope, the words related with some themes begin with the early use of nouns for naming objects in the L1 and L2 language learning process. It is well known by language teachers and educators that for VYLs it takes more time to learn the meaning of words when compared with the spoken form of the words (Locke, 1993). Despite their different learning periods, Hestetraet (2019) discusses the need for young children to develop a large vocabulary through focusing on the use of word receptively and expressively. On the other hand, Nation (1999) listed different types of word knowledge as receptive, productive, phonological, grammatical, collocational, orthographic, pragmatic, connotational, metalinguistic knowledge. This classification can play a significant role in selection of appropriate vocabulary for introducing and assessing receptively and productively. One critical factor to consider when choosing what vocabulary to teach children is selecting age-appropriate vocabulary that relates to the children's cognitive development (Thorbbury, 2002). Related to this, research into types of categories used in early childhood period has shown that the middle of a general to specific hierarchy is particularly significant for children, and hence for their foreign language learning (Lakoff, 1987; Cameron, 2001). Two examples for this are shown in Table 2.8.

**Tablo 2.8. An Example of Hierarchies with the Most General Concept at the Top and the Most Specific at the Bottom**

|                      |               |         |
|----------------------|---------------|---------|
| <b>Superordinate</b> | Furniture     | Animal  |
| <b>Basic Level</b>   | Chair         | Dog     |
| <b>Subordinate</b>   | Rocking chair | Spaniel |

In the early L2 learning field, Cameron (1994, 2001) offered three different level for vocabulary which are basic, superordinate and subordinate levels as seen Table in 2.8. He indicated that the concepts from the former one are more likely to have been mastered than others. Based on this, to start from the basic level items which include concrete words from children's environment (cat, table, book, shoe, water, etc.) while introducing L2 vocabulary for beginners is more practical and suitable than general vocabulary (i.e., vegetables and animals) and more specific words (i.e., ragdoll cat, danvers). A second crucial factor concerns choosing age-appropriate vocabulary in the sense that the children find it meaningful (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). After selecting age appropriate and culturally appropriate vocabulary, the other step is introducing these target vocabulary in context meaningfully through various interactive tasks and activities. Vocabulary development is not just learning more words but is also expanding and deepening word knowledge by meeting the words in new contexts again and again. This recycling of words in a meaningful way aids children to use the target language both receptively and productively. Cameron (2001) stated two possible difficulties in VYLs' vocabulary learning process that vocabulary are not sufficiently connected to children's real lives and they are not practiced adequately in various activities and tasks meaningfully with different methods and materials.

In other words, the number of individual words learned in isolation; in a decontextualized manner, do not reflect the actual mastery of an L2 (Portiková, 2015). There is no need to mention that typical pre-primary L2 education focuses on the learning of vocabulary and some basic forms through some interactive activities such as stories, songs, rhymes, and role-plays. However, the quantity and the quality of input have a crucial influence in the vocabulary learning outcomes. The most important issues that affect the quality of vocabulary learning is the strategies of language use and contextualization that help children build up vocabulary knowledge in a meaningful way in different contexts. As mentioned in Kokla (2013) young children try to comprehend meaning by using their "limited previous knowledge" and also tend to understand the whole meaning in a context more easily than they understand individual words. In addition to this, some strategies such as gestures, body language, facial expressions of the speakers and the tone of their voice can help children understand the target vocabulary, even if they do not know their meaning (Kokla, 2013).

In order for children to know a word, it is vital to know its form, meaning and use, both productively and receptively (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 2008). To illustrate, the noun “carrot” may serve as an illustration. To know the form of this word means to know its pronunciation, its spelling and its grammar. To know its meaning is to know that it denotes ‘a long pointed orange root vegetable’ (Oxford Learners Dictionary). As the children grow older, they will also learn other types the carrot has, such as ‘a round carrot’ and ‘a purple carrot’, and the synonyms and associations that it has, along with specific examples of carrots, such as danvers and dantes, and that it is an example of the higher level concept vegetable. To know the use of the word carrot involves knowing the collocations it forms, such as ‘to eat carrot, to peel the carrot, salad of carrots, carrot grater, cooked carrots, and carrot juice.’ Based on this example and explanation, it can be said that children learn L2 vocabulary incrementally. However, Schmitt (2008) suggests that at the beginning stages of learning a word, explicit teaching is to be recommended whereas later in the process learning from context, implicitly, can improve word knowledge. More similarly, Martinez and Murphy (2011) and Smith and Murphy (2015) suggested explicit vocabulary learning in classrooms through a variety of tasks and activities that provide meaningful exposures and use.

Vocabulary research in early L2 learning area indicates that there is a strong relationship between L2 interaction and L2 vocabulary learning. Regarding this, Rixon (2015) indicates that ‘mere exposure’ is not enough; interaction is also ‘required for optimum take-up and development’. In addition to this, Mourão (2014) offers a way of attending to interaction through child-initiated play. Children acquire the target vocabulary and structure with the repetition of these play-based activities, songs, stories, role-plays and other interactive activities that successfully manage to interact with them. On the other hand, Nation (2013) puts forward the main benefits of explicit, direct vocabulary instruction by saying that it provides opportunities for conscious focus and controlled repetition, as well development of the word knowledge necessary for productive use. Nation (1990, 2013) listed basic techniques as using pictures, word cards, flashcards, gestures, objects, pictures from books and preforming actions that make it easier for children to understand the meaning and aid memorization due to the meaning being ‘stored both linguistically and visually’.

The explanations which have been highlighted so far about how the vocabulary can be taught to VYLs revealed the dynamic and continuous nature of vocabulary learning. It is apparent that target vocabulary needs to be met and recycled at intervals, in different activities. The more the target word is encountered, the more likely it is learned (Beck and McKeown, 1991; Laufer, 2005). Nation and Wang (1997) suggest that a minimum of ten encounters are necessary for likely acquisition. Regarding this, Nation (1990, 2013) suggests that a new word needs to be met at least five or six times in any context before it has any chance of being learnt because recycling makes recall more probable. Hatch and Brown (1995) describe five essential steps in vocabulary learning based on research into learners' strategies as follows: (1) having sources for encountering new words, (2) getting a clear image, whether visual or auditory or both, of the new words forms, (3) learning the meaning of the words, (4) making a strong memory connection between the forms and meanings of the words, (5) using the words. These steps revealed explicitly the importance of the inclusion of various types of tasks and activities, methods and materials, and multisensory learning into vocabulary learning process. All in all, L2 learning at earlier ages should offer some opportunities for VYLs to build up a solid core of words useful for further learning.

As for the definitions of the vocabulary, there are many definitions in the literature, however, the common definition is that vocabulary is the words that people need to communicate and interact with other. It is mostly divided into two categories which are expressive and receptive vocabulary. Receptive and productive vocabulary are also classified in the literature as as passive and active vocabulary (Harmer, 2001; Kokla, 2013). Similarly, Nation (2013) emphasizes that receptive vocabulary refers to perceiving the form of a word while listening whereas productive vocabulary refers to expressing a meaning through speaking. The common character of these definitions on receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recognize and recall the words as a result of listening and speaking inputs (Nation 1990). (Laufer, 1998; Laufer and Paribakht, 1998; Henriksen, 1999; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000; Schmitt, 2000). This literature has various definitions of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Nation (2013) emphasizes that “receptive vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of a word while listening and retrieving its meaning” whereas “productive vocabulary use involves expressing a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving and

producing the appropriate spoken or written word form.” Laufer et al. (2004) also describe receptive knowledge as retrieval of the word form and productive knowledge as retrieval of the word meaning. The common character of these definitions on receptive vocabulary knowledge is the ability to recognize the form and retrieve the meaning in listening and reading (Nation 1990). However, it is well known that words are learnt receptively first and only after a learning process, they can become productive (Zhou, 2010). Concerning this issue, Thornbury (2002) states that children’s receptive knowledge is larger than their productive knowledge and that the former usually precedes the latter.

As for productive vocabulary knowledge, the main feature of it is the ability of production and use of the target language. Nation (1990) defined it as the ability to retrieve and produce the appropriate spoken or written form of a word in the target language. Taken into consideration the children’s illiteracy at pre-primary level, their receptive or productive vocabulary knowledge can be improved or assessed via their listening and speaking skills instead of reading and writing skills. In other words, very young EFL learners need both quantitative and qualitative knowledge of basic vocabulary to comprehend listening and express meaning in the interaction (Griffin and Harley, 1996; Waring, 1997). For this reason, the number of tasks and activities supporting children’s receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge need to be distributed in a balanced way in early L2 program designed for VYLs.

## **2.9. Development of Very Young Learners’ Communicative Skills**

The development of practical development of communicative skills is one of the objectives of many English language education programs from pre-primary to university levels around the world. A set of communication skills are also introduced to young children based on their L2 level proficiency and developmental characteristics. In many countries in Asia and Europe, introducing communicative skills even at earlier ages gains prominence depending on the shift in English language teaching pedagogy from traditional rote memorisation or grammar-focused approaches to more communicative or task-based approaches (Jeong, 2004; Machida and Walsh, 2014). The focus of many studies and publications is on finding out what approaches may help

improve young children's oral communicative skills. Related to this, it is suggested by Mourão and Lourenço (2015) that the instructional methods and materials should include a communicative purpose that encourages VYLs to interact with peers or teacher by using the target language. Moreover, Harmer (2015) indicated that the receptive skills of young children can be improved through listening and reading, in other words, through listening to the teacher who are the source of L2 knowledge, listening to storybooks and listening to age-appropriate songs. On the other hand, he asserted that the key factor in developing young children's productive and communicative skills is to pre-teach some target knowledge related to a specific theme, to make them contact with the oral forms of expression and communication in various contexts and to make them involved into meaningful activities that increase communication in the classroom (Harmer, 2015). This way increase VYLs' enjoyment for and awareness of English as well as their acquisition.

The more young children see and and listen to comprehensible input, the more English they acquire, notice and learn (Harmer, 2015). In other words, when the maximum learning opportunities are provided to VYLs at pre-primary level, they can make sense to integrate different skills such as listening, speaking and communicative. The suitable contexts including age-appropriate game-based activities for L2 learning in childhood is considerably important in introducing and practicing basic communication skills. These contexts need to be planned in a manner that VYLs can acquire target vocabulary, phrase and sentences and apply them in the activities and language games to facilitate contact and communication. In order to make VYLs active participant in the communication process, English is viewed as a tool to be able to play the games, to complete the activities and achieve the target goals. On the other hand, the success in developing VYLs' communication process in L2, the teachers need to feel confident in the language they use in communication with children.

As for Turkey, in English Language Teaching Program for Private Pre-primary schools, some criteria are explained under the heading "Development of Language and Communicative Skills". These are mostly about abilities of VYLs in L1 and L2 language. To illustrate, they can speak in complete sentences of four or more words in their native language, sing familiar songs, name colors, people and objects, use

appropriate verb tenses and pronouns in their L1. It is also indicated that the communicative objectives of this curriculum have been prepared as listening and speaking skills for young children. However, when it is examined in detail, it is seen that the requirements and ways of how to introduce communicative skills to VYLs remain unspecified for pre-primary level English teachers. The issues of how the teachers develop VYLs' communication skills and what the appropriate policy, pedagogical and language practices to support VYLs' communication and interaction in L2 are not clear and explanatory for the educators. For this reason, there is a disconnect between what is learnt in the English classroom and the purposes of introducing English stated in the curriculum at earlier ages in Turkey (Gürsoy, Korkmaz and Damar, 2013). In sum, it requires a relevant change in perspective regarding VYLs' communication skills in L2.

## **2.10. Assessment of Very Young EFL Learners**

By definition in its broad sense, assessment is defined as “a systematic process to measure or evaluate the characteristics or performance of individuals, programs, or other entities, for purposes of drawing inferences” by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education (2014). More specifically, assessment in early English language is a process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information about teaching and learning in order to make informed decisions that enhance children's achievement and progress in English (Rea-Dickens and Germanie, 1993; Genesee and Upshur, 1996; O'Mally and Valdez-Pierce, 1996). As for the assessment of VYLs' English as a foreign language, this field has become a common issue in early language learning research and daily practice in very recent years (Butler, 2009; Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy, 2009; Johnstone, 2009; McKay, 2006; Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011; Rixon, 2013). The reason why this area has been increasingly popular most recently is because TEVYL has also been one of the greatest developments of L2 education worldwide in the last 30 years.

It is well stated in the literature that no assessment has been required to evaluate the children's attainments and progress in learning a foreign language in many countries at



the end of primary school until approximately 1990 (Rixon, 2015). After all, in the early twenty first century, the assessment of the English language learning of primary school aged children started to be raised by researchers as an area of particular concern with the different purposes such as monitoring learning, allowing formative development and providing information to facilitate transition between one level of schooling and another. When the countries' assessment procedures of children's L2 learning at primary level are examined, three different scenarios have emerged. One of them is that the ones who introduce English intensely through Content and Language Integrated Learning (using L2 as a vehicle to deliver content knowledge and target domain-specific skills) or Content-based Instruction (integrating age/level of schooling with language and academic content in core subject areas such as maths, science, social studies and language arts) which are increasingly popular methodologies in Europe tend to use a range and variety of alternative assessment tools such as the collection of children's work in a portfolio (Cyprus) (Rixon, 2013), self-assessment, peer-assessment and observation and written description of learner performance (Germany) (Kubaneck-German, 2000), (France) (Rixon, 2013). In addition to this, with the advent of standards-based assessment, some South American and European countries have developed their own national EFL examinations for young learners in Germany (Rupp et al., 2008); in Norway (Hasselgreen 2005); in Slovenia (Pizorn, 2009); in Hungary (Nikolov and Szabo, 2012); in Switzerland (Haenni Hoti et al., 2009); in Poland (Szpotowicz and Campfield, 2016); in Uruguay (Fleurquin, 2003). On the other hand, the ones introducing L2 as a school subject in EFL contexts in limited hours tend to use formal assessment procedures such as tests produced by the class teacher, tests given in the textbook used in class or standardized tests and examinations. The last scenario is that some countries – Pakistan, Greece and Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia - do not require any types of formal or informal assessment although their target attainment levels for the end of primary schooling are set in their curriculum.

Despite the growing importance of YLs' assessment, it is noticeable that the assessment is a relatively new issue even for children who are learning English at the pre-primary level. It is seen in the literature of early childhood English language assessment that there are relatively few empirical investigations. In other words, very little has been

published on how assessment for learning works at the pre-primary level foreign language contexts. It is apparent that the use of assessment at pre-primary level for VYLs' English level is not given the place it deserves in the literature (Nikolov, 2015). There is unwillingness among teachers and curriculum planners to administer tests or describe progress in a systematic fashion at this level. Despite this indifference to early L2 assesment, it can be said that it has a critical role to play in gathering the information about VYLs' basic vocabulary knowledge and communicative skills whether the assessment is informal, formal, classroom-based, or large-scale.

As the need for learning English among VYLs increases, so does the need for suitable assessments applied in alignment with learning to informing relevant stakeholders (e.g., educators, learners and parents) about the VYLs' L2 development and evaluating how the L2 learning process takes place (McKay, 2006; Nikolov, 2016). However, it is apparent that there is scarcity of studies into VYLs' assessment of English; in other words, more research is needed on the different types of appropriate assessment tools and procedures measuring VYLs' proficiency, receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, communicative competence and linguistic skills at the national and international level.

Among the benefits of VYLs' assessment, evaluating children's progress and achievement in target language, providing feedback and insights to the assessor about the suitability of the curriculum and instructional materials and checking the effectiveness of the methods, and strength and weaknesses of the learners can be listed (Drummond, 2003; Shaaban, 2005). In addition to this, the knowledge about useful approaches to assess VYLs' L2 knowledge effectively may help stakeholders (parents, teachers, policy makers) make valid inferences about L2 learning at the curriculum and methodological level. Assessment tools and procedures, in addition to being essential for evaluating children's progress and achievement, also help in evaluating the suitability and effectiveness of the program, the methodology, and the instructional materials (Shaaban, 2005). Considering all these benefits, it can be said that the field of L2 assessment at the pre-primary level involve knowledge of social and cognitive development of VYLs, knowledge of foreign language literacy development, and

understanding of assessment principles and practices (McKay, 2005, 2006; Inbar, 2005 and Shohamy, May and Or, 2017).

The success of any assessment depends on the effective selection or development and the use of appropriate tools and procedures as well as on the proper interpretation of children's performance by taking their characteristics and levels into consideration. Some of the factors and features to consider in assessments for VYLs are explained in a detailed way below.

### **2.10.1. General Considerations Regarding Young Children's Assessment**

As selecting or developing suitable assessment tools is extremely important in the process of early childhood foreign language learning, some criteria should be taken into consideration. First and foremost, ethical considerations should be at the forefront of all assessment activity involving VYLs who are considered 'vulnerable' research participants because of their social status. They are also vulnerable to ineffective and culturally unsupportive instruction and assessment. Related to this, some criteria to evaluate the ethics of assessments for young children in the literature are listed as follows: (1) paying attention to the children's interests and needs, (2) giving equal opportunities to learning and access to assessment, (3) taking into account the matters of diversity and individual difference, (4) allowing children's voices to be heard (Elwood 2013, Pinter 2011, 2014).

The other criterion is the fact that tests for VYLs need to have desirable test qualities, validity, positive impact, reliability. Based on a review of the literature on validity, some criteria such as checking the appropriateness of the purpose, the practicality of test to improve learning, the universality of the test to make reliable assessment decisions, the utility of the test for children to show the required knowledge, understanding knowledge and skills are suggested (Cambridge English, 2013; Frederiksen and Collins, 1989; Kane, 2013). Another issue is assessment's fitness for purpose which includes how well it motivates learners to learn English and/or how well it gives information about the VYLs' L2 learning process. In achieving this, realistic achievement targets related to reception, production and integrated skills are required to be set to measure the two skills of listening and speaking. For instance, well-designed restricted response

items (multiple choice questions, short answer questions, matching) can measure knowledge at word and phrase levels. However, in order to measure their higher order skills at communicating in a basic level, understanding the questions and answering them word by word or in a few words, various task types (closed/selected and open/constructed response items) such as role-play activities, games, drama games, musical games can be used (Papp, 2019). Moreover, the foreign language learning for VYLs based on vocabulary learning which is indicated by Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) as "learning a foreign/second language starts with the learning words." In other words, in the process of L2 education at earlier ages, the most basic indicator of very young learners' progress in the foreign language is the word acquisition of that language. Thus, from various points of view, vocabulary can be seen as a priority area in L2 education at this level, requiring tests to monitor the VYLs' progress in vocabulary learning and to assess how adequate their vocabulary knowledge is to meet their communication needs.

The other important issue is that the characteristics of VYLs need to be considered in the process of developing and implementing of assessment. When the related literature is examined, it is observed that knowledge of their characteristics and cognitive stage of development is significant for the effective assessment. To illustrate, VYLs' cognitive development is an important consideration in designing appropriate assessments. In this regard, younger children's cognitive abilities typically are not mature enough to formulate structured representations or abstract concepts (Craik and Bialystok, 2006). In other words, younger children are comprehend more easily the concrete words than the abstract concepts in their L2 development and assessment (Kim Wolf and Goto Butler, 2017). Considering the VYLs' growing cognitive abilities mentioned above, some issues including the content of tasks, the length of assessments and assessment stimuli, the appropriateness of the topics and the clarity of task instructions deserve consideration (Bailey, 2008; Bailey et al., 2014).

As well as VYLs' cognitive issues, affective factors of VYLs have also an influence on development and use of assessments. Research findings related with this issue revealed that there is a strong, positive relationship between young children's performance on assessments and their motivation in general (Brumen and Cagran, 2011). Hence, it is particularly crucial that VYLs have positive experiences with assessments and engage

in L2 learning and assessment with high motivation. Among the factors that affect VYLs' motivation, assessment environment including clear instructions, rewards and purposes with positive feedback can be acclaimed (Molloy, 2015). Moreover, testing time, challenges in comprehension of directions, and physical settings are the other factors that have an influence on children's anxiety in the assessment process (Aydin, 2012).

Another typical characteristic of VYLs is the limited ability to focus and sustain their attention for extended periods of time, especially on more structured tasks. The attention span of them is short, as little as 10 to 15 minutes; they are easily diverted and distracted by other pupils. For this reason, assessment should take place in a quiet, calm setting that helps children to concentrate and not be distracted by noise or movement. Regarding this, Mollow (2014) suggested that assessment tasks should be short; in other words, assessment activities need to last for 20 minutes maximum. Tests also should be motivating and practical with its appearance, pictures, styles and applications. To be able to finish the test, it should give children a sense of progress even if they make a mistake. In the process of assessing VYLs' progress and achievement in EFL setting, the educators and researchers should carry out the assessment in a manner that does not cause anxiety in the children. To reduce the anxiety, the items used in assessment tasks should deal with familiar themes they have been exposed to. The assessment tasks which seem to be similar to the instructional activities implemented in the classroom differ from these activities in terms of the fact that they have certain aims, measurable results, assessment criteria, and they are set at specific times during the learning process (Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou, 2003). More importantly, assessment tasks give the teachers or assessors information on the performance and ability of every child in the class.

The other important point is the immediate feedback that should be given by the teachers or assessors on the child's effort during the assessment for maintaining attention and confidence. Besides, assessment tasks that involve physical activity to accompany the language-related response – moving, pointing, circling or coloring in a picture – are helpful to encourage children to complete the task. To put it differently, tasks at this level should involve movement and play. In sum, teachers and assessors

therefore need deep knowledge of children's cognitive, social and emotional and physical growth development. McKay (2006) also mentioned about young children's special characteristics and listed them under the head of growth, literacy and vulnerability that set them apart from older learners. Understanding of these differences is central to effective assessment. The issue of 'growth' has been discussed so far. As for literacy, a vital dimension of difference for VYLs compared with older learners is that VYLs are in the pre-literacy period during the foreign language learning process. For this reason, it is much better to convey the messages with the help of photos, pictures or flashcards in the early years instead of writing. Knowledge of this characteristic of VYLs ensures that VYLs' assessment requires special consideration at the time of deciding on the appropriate assessment tasks such as picture-matching and multiple-choice tasks. Related to this, McKay (2006) put forward that the use of colorful materials in VYL's L2 assessment stimulate interest and elicit a possibly different performance from black and white pictures. As a result, the understanding of pre-primary school children's critical literacy skills establishes the foundation of selecting the appropriate assessment task.

As for the vulnerability, although many older learners are vulnerable to criticism or failure, young learners have a particular vulnerability that requires careful attention. For valid and fair results, the teachers and assessors support children with positive reinforcement after their response even in their incorrect responses during the formal and informal assessment process (McKay, 2006; Nikolov, 2016). This is because VYLs cannot maintain the assessment unless a degree of success and a sense of progression can be experienced by these children. Considering these issues, teachers and assessors should provide partial flexibility to children by giving time to think, repeating the questions twice and giving positive feedback after all responses for effective assessment procedures. The unique characteristics of VYLs that have been discussed so far have important implications for developing and implementing age-appropriate assessments.

What is more, the content and type of the assessment construct is dependent upon the specific purposes for which the assessment will be used and the target population who will take it (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, 2010). Regarding this issue, McKay (2006) indicated that VYLs' English language abilities and development are shaped not only

by their personal attributes but also by the contexts in which their English language learning takes place. To illustrate, in EFL contexts, like in Turkey, VYLs' target language use domains are largely bound to school contexts where major interactions take place with peers and teachers in English classrooms. These children's opportunities to engage in English are likely limited to textbook and instructional activities. This limited and unique exposure to the target language influences the way in which VYLs develop their proficiency as well as the quality and continuity of their L2 knowledge. For this reason, it can be said that whether the children are in EFL or ESL contexts and whether they are exposed to a high-intensity or low-intensity ELT program have been the major impetus that influences the ways of VYLs' assessing procedures, contents and methods (Cameron, 2001; Molloy, 2015).

As is well documented in the literature, valid educational assessment requires significant overlap between the assessment and the curriculum objectives to get reliable and defensible results. More similarly, in early L2 language assessments, the tools and methods should include evaluation of children's proficiencies and their progress with respect to curricular goals and performance standards. In this regard, curricular-based assessment gives a much clearer picture of children's progress and effectiveness of the curriculum. According to Papp (2019), the type of assessment that is most effective and beneficial for young children depends on their age, context of instruction, amount and type of exposure to English, purpose of assessment and use of results. For example, whether the purpose of the assessment is the achievement in specific parts of the target language, communicative competence or proficiency of VYLs has an effect on deciding the type of the assessment (Bailey and Huang 2011, Bailey et al. 2014, Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy 2009, Murphy 2014).

Effective assessment of very young learners is integrally tied to the principles of learning adopted within the curriculum in which the children are learning. If the underlying pedagogic principles of assessment and learning are not aligned, this would indicate a serious problem with the assessment procedures being used. To illustrate, in a curriculum where adult-directed education is provided, the learners' outcomes can be measured by tests because structural approaches, constant repetition and a focus on outcomes rather than processes are valued in such an educational approach (Pinnegar

and Erickson, 2010). On the other hand, in the child centered curriculum, communicative, humanistic and learner-centered approaches are presented and this type of education is characterized by the autonomy of children, responsibility, integration of activities and the acceptance of the role of adults as supporters of learning (Ryan, 2007). In such a curriculum, using merely standardized tests to measure academic achievement and vocabulary knowledge in target language is unsatisfactory because standardized tests may not measure the objectives or content of that program. Therefore, alternative forms of assessment should be used to supplement standardized test information.

### **2.10.2. Assessment Types of Very Young Learners' English**

The reasons for assessing VYLs mentioned above bring about using different types of assessment. Regarding this issue, Nikolov (2016) emphasized that it is unlikely to create a standard assessment tool that is appropriate for all L2 education programs that include different learning aims. McKay (2006) suggested many different types of and purposes for assessment. The broadest classification of them is 'informal assessment' referring to alternative assessment carried out in the classroom during the learning process and 'formal assessment' referring to standards-based assessment that is well-planned and and well designed by following some procedures (McKay, 2006).

Moreover, standards which are the descriptions of curriculum outcomes have also an influence on the types of assessment. To illustrate, whereas content standards describe what children should know and be able to do, performance standards describe how much or at what level children need to perform to demonstrate achievement of the content standard. Achievement on standards can be measured through 'external assessment' (large-scale tests) which is prepared by those outside the classroom for policy decisions or 'classroom assessment' that is prepared and conducted by teachers in the classroom to make sound pedagogical decisions (McKay, 2006). Whether external or classroom assessment, the assessment results can be used for giving diagnostic feedback on strengths and weaknesses at the task/skill level, providing information on children's L2 knowledge development, monitoring progress, planning future action and evaluating the effectiveness of learning in programs by individual learners, teachers, classes, schools, regions or nations.



Among the assessments used yearly at the end of the course, the most widely used and reported are standardized tests (Rixon, 1999) that include proficiency examinations worldwide. Large-scale international proficiency examinations which are presented for young children have appeared only in the last 35 years (Rixon, 2016). Whereas there are a number of international assessment tools such as Pearson's Test of English Young Learners, TOEFL Primary, the Oxford Young Learners Placement Test or British Council's Aptis for Teens, some international tests also exist specifically for children under the age of 6 such as Trinity Stars and Anglia's First Step. However, this type of general evaluation can be implemented in public and private schools around the world. Nevertheless, in the countries where L2 education is introduced at pre-primary level, all children do not have equal access to start learning English. Whereas some of them are in bilingual L2 education system, some of them are instructed in traditional FL programs in limited English hours in schools. Due to the fact that the intensity and quality of early L2 learning in these two programs are different from each other, the assessment about how the young children progress in their L2 and what and how much they can achieve can show an alteration. Regarding this issue, Nikolov (2015) asserted that the type, content and difficulty of assessment vary based on the type of L2 education program, the L2 learning objectives and the way of instruction implemented at this level.

Once the literature related with early foreign language assessment was examined, two different ideas shifting from formal assessment to informal assessment was observed. There are different ideas about the advantages of them in the literature. The common issue in all these varying approaches is that the physical characteristics, the aims, contents and the frameworks of assessment instruments need to be aligned with VYLs' developmental characteristics and L2 language levels. More specifically, formal assessment includes both standards-based and performance-based assessments which have similarities and differences. The starting point of standards-based assessment is to measure whether L2 learners can reach the achievement aims determined in the program or curriculum. The standardized tests that measure whether VYLs attain required standards and reach the achievement aims about curricular subjects in educational systems are one of the samples of standards-based assessment (Shohamy, 2001; Pinter, 2006; Gardner and Rea-Dickin, (2001). On the other hand, performance-based

assessment directly focuses on measuring the use of speaking and listening skills through the measuring VYLs' performances in interactive activities such as role-plays and games. Thus, test results in standards-based assessment indirectly provide an insight into children's attainment levels; however, in performance-based assessment, these levels can be directly observable in pre-determined tasks (Nikolov, 2016). For this reason, performance-based assessments involve holistic tasks in which children are expected to comprehend the question and answer them in a few words instead of giving direct responses to test items (Butler and Lee, 2010). For instance, in a role-play activity or game-based activity requires children to demonstrate their speaking and communicative skills, teachers and assessors can make assessment judgments about VYLs' receptive and productive L2 knowledge directly.

The common distinction between standards-based and performance-based assessment is the degree of the data obtained from them. To illustrate, standards-based assessments mostly give information about what young children know about predetermined subjects whereas performance-based assessments inform about how much or at what level young children can perform with their L2 knowledge. Within this scope, standards-based assessments mostly concentrate on a specific question such as "do you know it?", on the other hand, performance-based assessments mostly focus on the question "how well can you use what you know?" It is not true to say that one of them takes precedence of the other one. The most important point for the researchers is to decide the suitable assessment tool considering the L2 learning objectives by balancing between. Regarding this, Cameron (2001), Linse (2005), Szokol 2015, and Szokol (2016) suggested a variety of assessment techniques for assessing L2 language development in depth. The success of the assessment mostly depends on the carefully selected assessment types and well-decided assessment tools and procedures as well as on the suitable interpretation of cVYLs' performance by taking their characteristics and levels into consideration. In addition to this, in VYLs' language assessment process, there are some other points that should be taken into consideration such as program variability, expected language proficiency correspondingly, and the characteristics of assessment tasks that affect VYLs' performance (MacKay, 2010).

### **2.11. Pre-primary Children's Perceptions and Interpretations of EVYL**

Bringing the children's voices into the research has become increasingly popular in very recent years for several reasons. One of them is the need for more voices from VYLs' classrooms be heard and shared systematically through publications or events aside from teachers and parents. The other reason is that children whose views are different from adults are 'observer' and 'experts' of their own lives (Pinter and Zandian, 2014). In addition to these, policies encourage children's universal right to a 'voice', as they learn gradually to express their perceptions of their early L2 experiences, thereby providing invaluable feedback for their teachers, researchers and others (Johnstone, 2019). For these reasons, it is worthwhile for adults to explore some ways in which young children's experiences and perceptions can be uncovered. In some studies, some of these ways are described as drawings and photographs which are considerably useful tools to assess children's perceptions in a non-threatening and enjoyable context (MacDonald, 2009). On the other hand, Pinter and Zandian (2014) suggest interviewing with children who make spontaneous comments, ask unexpected questions, and explain the issues by giving examples as another way. In this way, Pinter (2014) emphasized the importance of taking children's voices, desires and views seriously in the research by stating that all types of experiences during childhood can be understood 'from children's own perspectives'.

The recent studies are focusing more and more children's attitudes and perceptions in order to identify patterns which promote L2 learning (Pinter et al., 2016; Smith and Kuchah, 2016; Kuchah and Shamim, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017). Such studies employing different qualitative data collection procedures encourage the voices of VYLs to be able to reveal the challenges they faced and to suggest alternative practices instead. There are some studies (Ioannou-Georgiou, 2015) in the literature that allows for the voices of teachers and young children to be heard. The results of this study also indicate that children can become more aware of languages, appreciate and enjoy language learning, and approach the experience with a positive attitude. Pinter et al. (2016) emphasized the benefits of eliciting children's voices and opinions as follows:

Eliciting children's views about their FL learning experiences and classroom issues leads to more engagement with learning, more meaningful choices and children taking on more responsibility for their own learning.

In sum, to elicit VYLs' view about their L2 learning process in the researches is rewarding and valuable, however, it is also challenging because of their developmental characteristics. For this reason, it is suggested by Macdonald (2009) to use a number age-relevant ways such as asking-answering, photographs and drawing that facilitate to research with children. This refers to the importance of the research process as well as the data obtained at the end of the research. During this process, in some researches children can be the object of research and in others they can function as an actor (Mason and Danby, 2011). Whether they are object or actor, classroom practitioners, academic managers, private education providers and ministries of education need to listen to their voices through these studies and make them the starting point for decision making around curricula, materials and methods. From the other perspective, Mourão (2018b) indicated that when English is integrated into the children's learning environment using appropriate pedagogies and methodologies at pre-primary level in a low-exposure foreign language context, children's voices can be heard loudly and clearly.

In terms of research methods, questionnaires are used as a major instrument to look into VYLs' L2 motivation and perception quantitatively (Wu, 2003) and interviews providing more contextual, qualitative data are also used to complement the quantitative results and to provide in-depth insights into VYLs' voices and choices (Brumen, 2010). Research methods with children need careful consideration for feasibility, appropriateness, ethics and validity. For instance, VYLs may be encouraged to use drawings to express their feelings and represent their language learning experiences if they are not able to articulate them through words (İnözü, 2018). Besser and Chik (2014) have also used a photo-elicitation method, through which young learners took pictures of English learning opportunities and then described them in narratives, to understand young language learners' identity construction in the learning process. In addition to this, Elicited Metaphor Analysis, in which 'commonplace metaphorical expressions' were analyzed to identify VYLs' 'conceptual representations of deeper thoughts' with regard to learning English can be effectively implemented to gather data on very young learners' perceptions (Jin et al., 2014). In sum, using checklists,

quantitative questionnaires or more qualitative field studies and ethnographies as well as innovative methods including narrative and metaphor analysis are significantly valuable for this age group because they aid to uncover children's opinions and attitudes and this yields fascinating insights.



## **CHAPTER III: METHOD OF RESEARCH**

### **3.0. Presentation**

In this chapter, participants and data collection tools are introduced. The pilot studies carried out in designing the instruments are explained in detail. The stages and components of Early Childhood English Language Education Program (ECELEP) are identified and clarified elaborately. Then, data collection and data analysis procedures are presented.

### **3.1. Participants**

With a view to evaluate and understand the effects of a newly designed English language education Program for very young learners, a group of 5 and 6-year-old children from state pre-primary school where English hasn't been taught so far was selected. This pre-primary school is situated in the city center of İstanbul where social and economic backgrounds of the children are almost homogeneous. In Turkey, English is presented as the compulsory part of the national curriculum at all levels of education as a foreign language except pre-primary schools. Most of the state pre-primary schools didn't introduce English as a school subject, however, few of them offered English as an after school club activity. Children in this state pre-primary school constituted the means of collecting data in this study concerning that they were absolute beginners with no previous exposure to English at all.

Total of 68 children studying in this pre-primary school, a group of 36 Turkish children, aged 5 to 6 years old were selected randomly to participate in the English program for the study. All were native speakers of Turkish, communicating in their first language in kindergarten and in their everyday life. Even though the study is limited to a small number of pre-primary school children, it is statistically enough to have a general idea about the children who have the same characteristics and English level considering the whole population of very young learners enrolled in a state kindergarten. Private kindergartens in Turkey are generally more flexible in their incorporation of L2 learning in their curriculums, either within a special language class, where children are exposed

to a foreign language for 30 or 45 minutes several times a week, or through bilingual education provided by a native speaker cooperating with a fully qualified pre-primary teacher. Furthermore, bilingual pre-primary schools typically offer their daily routines in two different languages, a major language, which many of the children usually speak as their first language (L1) and another language (L2) in private institutions. Considering the fact that the quality and quantity of exposure to L2 is varying at a certain degree due to the amount of time spent in L2 introduction and teacher's qualifications in private pre-primary schools as mentioned above, it was unlikely to equate both experimental and control groups in terms of their target language competence and proficiency to be able to compare the effectiveness of the newly designed program. Regarding this, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) suggested that the researchers who conduct experimental studies should try their best to control any and all subject characteristics that might affect the outcome of the study. In doing this, the two groups should be as equivalent as possible on all variables other than the one or ones being studied. Thus, children studying in state pre-primary school where almost all of them had never studied any foreign languages before were particularly selected, excluding those who had attended private pre-primary schools where the individuals differ in how, when, and how well they have acquired the target language.

In order to meet the ethical requirements of research studies, all parents of the participants were asked for informed consent. In doing this, parents were sent an information letter including a broad description of the study and its aims and were asked to consent to their child taking part in the study. After obtaining the permission of the parents of the children to be involved, children were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. In this respect, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) stated that every child who is participating in an experiment has an equal chance of being assigned to any of the experimental or control conditions being compared at the beginning of the treatment. After ensuring that both groups are equivalent with random assignment, the researcher gave information about the ECELEP to children and received their approval thus, all the children joined on a voluntary basis.

The demographics of the participating pre-primary school children are illustrated in Table 3.1.

**Tablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.9. Demographics for Treatment and Control Group**

|                 |   | Gender |      | Age   |              |              |       |
|-----------------|---|--------|------|-------|--------------|--------------|-------|
|                 |   | Female | Male | Total | 60-66 months | 67-72 months | Total |
| Treatment group | N | 10     | 8    | 18    | 12           | 6            | 18    |
|                 | % | 55,6   | 44,4 | 50    | 66,7         | 33,3         | 50    |
| Control group   | N | 11     | 7    | 18    | 11           | 7            | 18    |
|                 | % | 61,1   | 38,9 | 50    | 61,1         | 38,9         | 50    |
| Total           | N | 21     | 15   | 30    | 23           | 13           | 36    |
|                 | % | 58,3   | 41,7 | 100   | 63,9         | 36,1         | 100   |

Table 3.1 shows gender distribution of candidates at each level in the study sample. There were a total of 36 kindergarten children, both the control group and experimental group consisted of 18 children. Whereas the gender distributions of the children in control group are 11 female (61,1%) and 7 male (38,9%) and the others in experimental group are 10 (55,6%) female and 8 male (44,4%). In the treatment and control group, male and female candidates are nearly equally distributed. On the other hand, in the treatment group of study, 66,7% are between 60-66 months old and 33,3% are between 67-72 months old. In the control group, the distribution of the age groups showed that 61,1% are between 60-66 months old and 38,9% are between 67-72 months old (see Table 3.1). All of the children participating in the study are typically developing and have healthy hearing and vision. They are not children with special educational needs. In short, it can be said that the groups appeared equivalent on gender, age, grade, school type, normal development and pre-test scores.

To equate the groups statistically on the basis of a pretest is highly important in the randomized pretest-posttest control group designs (Fraenkel, Wallen, Hyun, 2004, 2011). The importance and necessity of the pretest result from the need for assessing the amount of change over time after administering the treatment. Based on this, pre-test including English Picture Vocabulary Test (EPVT) and a Performance-based Assessment (PA) tool was carried out individually in order to assure that all of these target vocabulary were new to all the subjects. The pre-test took place a week before the intervention started. This was essential for the reliability of the results, as any L2 target



words previously known by the participants would have affected the results negatively due to ease of retention. In order to test whether the control and treatment group are uniform, the results regarding children's pre-test mean scores in EPVT, which is used to measure children's receptive and expressive vocabulary development and in PA which is used to measure communicative skills, are presented in Table 3.2.

**ssTablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.2. Pre-test Scores of the Treatment and Control Group**

|                         | Groups          | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD  | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U       | p    |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------|-----|-----------|------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Receptive EPVT          | Treatment group | 18 | ,16       | ,38 | 18        | 324,00           | -,357 | 153,000 | ,721 |
|                         | Control group   | 18 | ,22       | ,42 | 19        | 342,00           |       |         |      |
| Expressive EPVT         | Treatment group | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,000          | ,00   | 162,000 | 1,00 |
|                         | Control group   | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,000          |       |         |      |
| PA communicative skills | Treatment group | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,000          | ,00   | 162,000 | 1,00 |
|                         | Control group   | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,000          |       |         |      |

The data in Table 3.2 show that there is no statistical difference between EPVT pre-test mean scores regarding receptive vocabulary knowledge between treatment and control group ( $U=153.000$ ,  $p > .05$ ). According to EPVT pre-test scores regarding expressive vocabulary knowledge and Performance-based assessment regarding communicative skills, there is no statistical difference between the treatment and control group, either ( $U=162.000$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Based on the mean rank and sum of ranks, these values confirm that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test scores of treatment group children receiving early L2 education with the newly-designed ECELEP and those receiving traditional early foreign language education, thus showing that the groups are statistically equal in terms of their receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge and basic communicative skills.

The pre-test results showed that although a very few spoken words were depicted correctly by some children among four pictures in Receptive Vocabulary part of EPVT, none of the children could name the words in English presented in illustrations. Based on the results of both tests and the observations of children's behavior during the tests,

it can be said that 7 children's (both from control and experimental) identification of the correct picture in the Receptive part, which is a multiple choice test, do not indicate the children's comprehension and knowledge of these words; instead, it signaled the children's chance of success which means the correct answer was given among choices by luck (Atılğan, Kan and Doğan, 2009). The fact that none of the same target words were named or expressed by the children in Expressive part confirmed and concluded that participants both in the control and experimental group were equal in terms of pretest scores.

In addition to this, a target language background questionnaire (see Appendix 12) was also distributed with the consent forms to the parents at the beginning of the study in order to decide the equality of the control and experimental groups in terms of target language exposure. Regarding the approaches to measures of previous target language exposure, the most common and efficient method is to decide when, how and how much children were exposed to English on the basis of the parent report (David and Wei, 2008; Pearson et al., 1997). The questionnaire sent to parents consisted of two parts including background (or demographic) questions about the children and experience questions about the child's previous target language experience and exposure so far. Thus, this study combines pre-test results with questionnaire data in order to draw reliable conclusions about VYLs' English level. The questionnaire results are shown in Table 3.3.

**Tablo** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı. **3. The Level of Exposure of the VYLs to English**

| Items                                  | Experimental Group |    |               | Control group |    |           |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|----|---------------|---------------|----|-----------|
|                                        | yes                | No | how often     | yes           | no | how often |
| 1. playing English games               | 0                  | 18 | never         | 0             | 18 | never     |
| 2. watching English spoken TV          | 0                  | 18 | never         | 0             | 18 | never     |
| 3. listening to English songs          | 0                  | 18 | never         | 0             | 18 | never     |
| 4. watching English videos             | 3                  | 15 | rarely        | 4             | 14 | rarely    |
| 5. reading English books               | 0                  | 18 | never         | 0             | 18 | never     |
| 6. hearing from siblings               | 4                  | 14 | rarely        | 3             | 13 | rarely    |
| 7. going to English-speaking countries | 1                  | 17 | once (3 days) | 0             | 16 | never     |

|                                                |   |    |       |   |    |       |
|------------------------------------------------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|
| 8. contact with people who speak English       | 0 | 18 | never | 0 | 18 | never |
| 9. private English lessons                     | 0 | 18 | never | 0 | 18 | never |
| 10. learning English before pre-primary school | 0 | 18 | never | 0 | 18 | never |
| 11. attending English courses/program          | 0 | 18 | never | 0 | 18 | never |

As Table 3.3 shows, the children neither have any previous experience nor have targeted exposure to the English language except a few of them who was exposed to English by hearing it from their family members like their sister or brother who were studying in different levels. In addition to this, contact with the foreign language outside school, through television, digital media or native speakers are very sporadic. The table 3.3 shows that almost none of the children have gone to English-speaking countries or made contact with people speaking English except one for a limited time. Nonetheless, they haven't participated in any private English lessons or English programs so far. Finally, none has received any English instruction in different contexts. The only minimal amount of exposure to the foreign language has occurred through their siblings who are in different levels. In brief, children in pre-primary schools in both the experimental and control group haven't been exposed English by hearing it from their parents, in kindergarten, beginners in private lessons, on television, on computer games or while staying abroad. Based on this, it can be said that they are absolute beginners with almost no previous English at all. The results of the questionnaire not only permits a more complete description of the children's English background, but also indicates substantial similarities between two groups by supporting the representativeness of the sample. In order to get results that can be generalized, the sample should be representative with regards to gender, age and English knowledge and ability levels of the children groups.

### 3.2. Data Collection Tools

In early foreign language learning, both standard-based and performance-based assessment has a critical role in gathering valid and fair information about the educational process, children's language learning progress and effectiveness of

curriculum (Nikolov, 2016). One of the criteria for the assessment tools and the methods used and designed in studies is that they should be complying with relevant ethical guidelines on research with children (Morrow, 2012; Weir, 1990). In addition to this, domain-specific effectiveness (i.e., effectiveness on language learning) as well as age-related effectiveness (i.e., effectiveness among young learners) of the assessment tools was taken into consideration in the process of designing a suitable one. (Butler, 2019). To illustrate, whether the types and objectives of assessment tools serve the purpose of assessing development and proficiency of VYLs' foreign language in the scope of curriculum and whether the elements, pictures and materials used in the assessment tools are suitable and effective enough for very young children should be paid attention to. This section clarifies the designing process of the formal testing and performance-based assessment tools respectively considering the ethical and effectiveness issues mentioned above. Whereas general features of the tests used in the study are presented in Table 3.4, a number of key differences between standard-based assessment and performance-based assessment with reference to the timing, application procedures, purpose, performance and benefits of the assessment process are also explained in detail in the other sections.

**Tablo** Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.**4. Features of the Tests Applied in the Research**

|                                   | Intended use               | Number of items      | KR20 | Test-retest | Mean (%) | Std. deviation |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| Receptive EPVT                    | Word recognition           | 48 items             | ,89  | ,93         | 31,68    | 9,14           |
| Expressive EPVT                   | Word retrieval/expression  | 48 items             | ,91  | ,94         | 28,09    | 10,45          |
| Performance-based assessment tool | Basic communicative skills | 4 tasks;<br>32 items | ,98  | ,96         | 24,53    | 22,91          |

In order to evaluate and make informed decisions about the effectiveness and the success of ECELEP, measuring the learning outcomes and pre-primary school children's foreign language development on pre-determined subjects in the program is so important. In this sense, Slentz, Early and McKenna (2008) and Kopriva (2008) asserted that language learners are assessed, both informally and formally, to evaluate their progress in relation to the specified content standards. This program assessment

focuses on assessing children's learning and experience to determine whether children have acquired the skills, knowledge and competencies associated with the program of the study. In this program assessment, children are placed in a program sequence and the same themes and items are used to monitor progress toward learning objectives and explicitly stated purposes.

In the light of this background, different methods of assessment such as standards-based and performance-based assessments which are tied to the ECELEP are used to assess VYLs' English language knowledge and skills which are parallel with pre-defined learning objectives appropriately and effectively. Regarding this, Guddemi and Case (2004) assert that using both standards-based and performance-based assessments which reflect an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time are significant in early years as long as they are developmentally appropriate in design and purpose. Based on this, a standards-based assessment instrument (EPVT) referring to an achievement test that measures efficiently children's receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge in English and a performance-based assessment instrument that provides more informative and reliable information about the performance objectives in the program are designed and devised in this study. To put it differently, although the standards-based assessment focuses on assessing children's language knowledge including target vocabulary, performance-based assessment pays more attention to assess learners' communicative ability. Apart from these, semi-structured interview questions aiming at discovering VYLs' thoughts and feelings about ECELEP in detail were conducted. All these different types of assessment tools which have specific purpose, properties and criterion to be measured are examined in a detailed way below.

### **3.2.1. The Design of the English Picture Vocabulary Test and Pilot Studies**

Formal assessment instruments generally refer to standardized tests or achievement tests and allow researchers or educators to compare an individual child's performance on the test to the performance of other children who have similar characteristics (Gullo, 2005; McKay, 2006). The characteristics of these formal tests are that they should be administered according to prescribed time limits, instructional and scoring procedures, and an administration guideline and the scores are usually compared to the scores of a

comparison group (Shaaban, 2001). The reason why EPVT was created by the researcher is to design a testing material which has the same learning objectives and proficiency scale with the ECELEP to measure VYs' language progress in the receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge which is pre-determined in the program.

Due to the lack of an English vocabulary test including target vocabulary and structure determined in the newly designed curriculum for the young children, the researcher designed her own test called the "English Picture Vocabulary Test" in order to measure the children's understanding and use of target vocabulary. In summary, EPVT was designed to assess very young children's receptive and expressive vocabulary for content areas specified in ECELEP. The tests which were taken as the springboard in designing EPVT were some standardized tests such as Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) (Dunn and Dunn, 2007), Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT) (Brownell, 2012) and Receptive One-Word Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT) (Martin and Brownell, 2012) which were used to measure children's verbal ability. Contrary to these standardized tests which aim to provide a comprehensive assessment of learners' general vocabulary knowledge by including more items, EPVT focuses on theme-specific foreign language vocabulary relating to subjects domain decided in the English program for VYs. As a result, it can be said that the use of the existing tests mentioned above can cause both mismatch assessment and curriculum and prevention of the "content validity" that focuses on how well test items represent the curricular objectives in a test (La Marca, 2001; Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Regarding this, the development of a new assessment tool for this study came about from a desire to ensure that children's test scores reflect their performance with respect to specific curricular expectations. To put it differently, designing an English Language Education Program for pre-primary school children created new educational gains and expanded expectations for children's foreign language learning by creating a parallel need to develop a new foreign language vocabulary assessment tool. As a result of this need, EPVT was designed in accordance with the literature review on various aspects of assessment in early year's foreign language learning.

EPVT was developed, piloted and validated in seven stages. In conclusion, in order to test the validity and reliability of EPVT, the following techniques were ordered: literature review, content validity, expert opinion, target age group validity and item analysis.

**STAGE 1:** The researcher started to construct a language test by deciding the appropriate test format to assess VYLs. In that process, the suitable test formats used for VYLs' assessment were investigated in a detailed way by taking into account their characteristics and EFL context. It is a fact that in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context, children start to learn a new language with basic vocabulary that has been considered the major resource for language use. Related to this, Puskas (2017) stated that building up a useful vocabulary is central for foreign language learning at earlier ages. As a result of this and scrutiny of the newly-designed ECELEP, it was decided that children's receptive and expressive vocabulary were assessed in the test to measure VYLs' progress and identify their learning outcomes in different themes stated in the Early Childhood English Education Program (ECELEP). However, when assessing learners' vocabulary knowledge, it should be considered what it actually means to know a word. Related to this, there is a classification in the literature that examines the word knowledge by subdividing into eight elements (Nation, 1990). Among the other categories, for assessing young children's foreign language ability, vocabulary knowledge can broadly be divided into two categories: receptive knowledge and productive knowledge (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2010; Waring, 1997; Webb, 2008). Moreover, the reasons why the other word knowledge is not included in the test can be listed as developmental realities (illiteracy), lack of opportunities to hear and use the language outside the classroom (insufficient input/output), amount of time dedicated to the English language in general, amount of time dedicated to vocabulary learning in particular in EFL context. To put it differently, developmental realities of VYLs (approximately ages 3–6 years) pose unique and challenging considerations for oral language assessment.

Keeping in mind the VYLs' language ability and achievement targets stated in the program, EPVT was designed to quantify the learning outcomes and to measure the extent they can recall and retell the target vocabulary and structures. Whereas the

receptive vocabulary part in the test measures the recognition and comprehension of vocabulary and this is the focus of many EFL children productive vocabulary knowledge measures the actual use of the vocabulary learned (Schmitt, 2010; Nation, 1990).

**STAGE 2:** After deciding the test format to be a receptive and expressive one-word picture vocabulary test, the researcher tried to decide on the test items by resolving the types and numbers of the words included in the test. In this stage, the researcher decided on which specific words should be selected and how many words should be taught and assessed in the test by taking into several different factors such as learning conditions locally, time available, foreign language program type and characteristics of learners which are the part of the construct validity (McKay, 2005; Taylor and Saville, 2002) Based on this, during the item construction in EPVT, two criteria suggested by Nikolov (2016) were guided. One of them was that vocabulary contained in the assessment tools were close to what children were likely to have heard in the course of their instruction. The other one was the authentic language and realistic communication to be able to assess the extent of the children's ability to comprehend the spoken exchanges or simple vocabulary they might meet in everyday situations. In doing this, the researcher decided the constructs are to be assessed by in-depth analysis of the research (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2002; Cameron, 2001, Nikolov, 2016) related to vocabulary instruction and assessment in foreign language, English National Curriculum for Very young Learners in Turkey which has been accepted in 2016, "can do statements" in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), (Council of Europe, 2018) compatible with VYLs' performances, various course books and "word list picture books".

McKeown and Kucan's (2002, 2008) model in which they conceptualize categories of words the learners encountered in different levels is the basis of age-appropriate vocabulary selection in this study. According to this classification, there are three vocabulary levels as "Tier one, Tier two and Tier three" in terms of the words' commonality (more to less frequently occurring) and applicability (broader to narrower). Although Tier 2 and 3 represents specialized knowledge representative of an enriched verbal environment for a particular developmental level, Tier One words



include basic English vocabulary items addressing body parts, basic colors and numbers, common household objects, common fruits and vegetables, common domesticated animals and prevalent wild animals, and food items found in most homes. As a result of extensive review on the themes and target vocabulary suggested by the ‘National Pre-primary English Language Education Program for Private Pre-schools’ in Turkey and learning outcomes stated in course books and picture books, it can be said that there are similarities between words such as those of everyday speech usually learned in the early grades and residing in children's environments and experiences; what they hear, see, are told, read, and like. The other important point for deciding on age-appropriate vocabulary for VYLs is that the words should be nouns that can be learned in a concrete, straightforward manner and assessed with pictures easily. Furthermore, nouns among the content words which children are familiar with from their first language are included in the test because VYLs are still building up their first language vocabulary, and this development is intimately tied up with conceptual development. Related to this, Read (2000) asserted that VYLs' first language background, which generally includes nouns, need to be taken into account in introducing and assessing a foreign language. Based on this, a total of 48 words that children were familiar with in their mother tongue were included in the test by examining the national program for private pre-schools and course books for VYLs. Keeping these explanations and facts in mind, the steps followed in designing EPVT for this study are explained as follows:

- As the first step, to ensure the test content conformability and relevancy to the content of ECELEP, the themes (animals, feelings, clothes, fruit & vegetables, body parts, colors) and the target vocabulary (eight for each unit) are decided after a close scrutiny of ECELEP (see Figure 3.1.)
- The EPVT words, the pictured contexts they represent, are categorized as subjects such as "animals, colors, clothes, etc." This classification helps the assessor analyze the children's learning outcomes of different subjects.
- Then, 48 target words are decided to be measured separately in receptive vocabulary test and expressive vocabulary test parts. Pictures for each item were presented in the test. For this age group, illustrations were also considered good promoters for motivation to complete the task. It can be said that the test measures two English language skills, namely listening and speaking and it doesn't require reading and writing.

- As for the format of the each test, it was decided that pictures that represented the target words were used in expressive and receptive vocabulary test. Related this, Shin and Crandall (2014) emphasized that the most appropriate testing method to assess proficiency in vocabulary is within the context of assessing oral language skills for young children, where they reflect their ability to comprehend and express English vocabulary with the help of the pictures in meaningful way. In this respect, Hughes (2003) claim that vocabulary can be assessed through some activities at pre-primary school level such as matching pictures with words, labeling pictures, retelling the words by looking at the pictures.

-The EPVT Receptive Language Test consists of 48 words, providing 4 images for each question. It has been developed to measure children's listening and understanding of single-word vocabulary on pre-determined subjects.

- The EPVT (Receptive) Including 48 image plates looks like a desk calendar. Each image plate contains 4 colorful pictures drawn by a professional artist, one of which best represents the meaning of the corresponding target word. For each target word, 3 distorters of the same category are identified and test cards are created as one target and three distorters for each card. For example, if the target word is an animal, the other three distorters are also chosen from the animal category.

- The child hears the word that is simultaneously presented with four pictures one of which correctly depicts the spoken word. The child is required to identify the correct picture that matches the words. At the beginning of the test, the examiner can motivate the young children by saying "let's play together with these cards." Then instructions should be read aloud to the children "You will see some pictures on the card. I will say a word and I want you to point to the picture that matches the word I have said."

- Young children are expected to respond by touching or pointing to pictures so EPVT does not require the child to read and write.

- Examiner gives the instruction by saying "Show me the cat", "Point to the cat" or "Where is the cat?" (the one which is used most in the lesson can be preferred). Lastly, the examiner records the answer on the performance record paper as 1 if it is correct and 0 if it is wrong.

- The EPVT (Expressive) was developed to measure children's expressive language knowledge and word retrieval abilities.

- The EPVT (Expressive) consists of the same 48 words, providing one target image on each page.

- Examiner presents the picture from the test easel and asks "What is that?" Examinee must respond with one word that provides an acceptable label for the picture. Examiner records the answer on the performance record paper as 1 if it is correct and 0 if it is wrong.

In short, EPVT is an easy-to-use test of VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge as in line with vocabulary gains of ECELEP.

**STAGE 3:** After the target words were decided in line with literature review on VYLs' foreign language literacy skills and the English education presented at pre-primary school level in Turkey and drawn by a professional artist, test creation was followed with initial piloting with pre-primary school children and four experts in ECE and ELT. First of all, the initial version of tests was assessed by children of the target age group in a number of meetings with small groups of children. The aims of these pre-pilot meetings with young children are to revise the items and tasks by getting their opinions. Szpotowiez and Campfield (2016) defined these meetings as "cognitive laboratories which were fundamental to the process of test construction". They expressed their advantages by saying that "they provided information on children's understanding, perception of the language and the visual materials or types of tests". Similarly, Nikolov and Szabó (2012) indicated that these meetings provide insight to the researcher or test developers on the test difficulty, familiarity and attractiveness. In brief, the researchers aims in the pre-pilot meetings with children and experts were to explore how children (1) understood instructions: to ensure they had been formulated in an age- appropriate and comprehensible way (2) responded to test items: in order to estimate their level of difficulty (3) had an idea about the pictures: in order to check if the style and aesthetics appealed to young learners' tastes and background (4) commented on the difficulty and user-friendliness of the whole test and individual items. 20 very young learners who attended pre-primary school in three distinct İstanbul regions (Kadıköy, Beşiktaş and Ümraniye) were included in the meetings. Private pre-primary schools where English education was provided were included so the socio-economic characteristics were very close. School and parental consent for the interviews were previously obtained. After the researcher encouraged the children to attempt the EPVT (Receptive) and EPVT (Expressive) separately, interviews were carried out by the researcher and took place with groups of four to six children in quiet classrooms. During the interviews, some

questions like "Was the task easy or difficult?, Was the task interesting or boring?, Did you like the pictures and its layout and design of the page?, Were the instructions clear?, Would you change anything in the task?" were asked to the children.

EPVT (Receptive and Expressive) was also checked by four experts, consisting of 2 specialists in the field of ECE, 2 specialists in ELT in terms of their formats, order, level of difficulty, appropriateness of illustrations, convenience between the curricular objectives and test design to improve the test quality. Specifically, the following criteria adapted from the framework suggested by Nikolov (2016) for assessing young learners of foreign languages were included in pre-pilot meetings with experts: (1) age-appropriateness of tests; (2) developmentally and culturally appropriateness; (3) children's performance on the test could be measured; (4) measurability of the tests in terms of receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge; (5) attractiveness of tests; (6) picture quality of the test. Some of the feedback given and the improvements made as a result of these initial pilot meetings are explained as follows:

- The instructions were in English, but it was noticed that although many children do not have difficulty in understanding the instructions in English, a few children were completely distracted by making them focus on what they did not understand. In order to provide clarity, the instruction was given in their mother tongue, too.
- Both the order of the themes and the items in the themes are ordered randomly to avoid item interdependence. At first, the researcher distributed the themes randomly without considering their convenience or difficulties for the children separately for each test and its performance record. Then, the items were placed randomly inside the themes for each test.
- As a result of the feedback on pictures, it was seen that the word "strawberry" in English was different from the others in terms of the word length in spelling and retelling. For this reason, strawberry was changed with the word "cherry".
- As a result of the experts' comments on the ambiguity of picture-words relationship, the vocabulary about feelings was drawn again by the artist by paying more attention to using the illustrations that were same in size, color and shape. It was decided to use emojis (tired, happy, sad, angry, hungry, thirsty, surprised, scared emojis) to provide the commonality in illustrations.
- The observations about the children's answers to the cognate words which were easy words to remember because they looked and remembered the same thing as

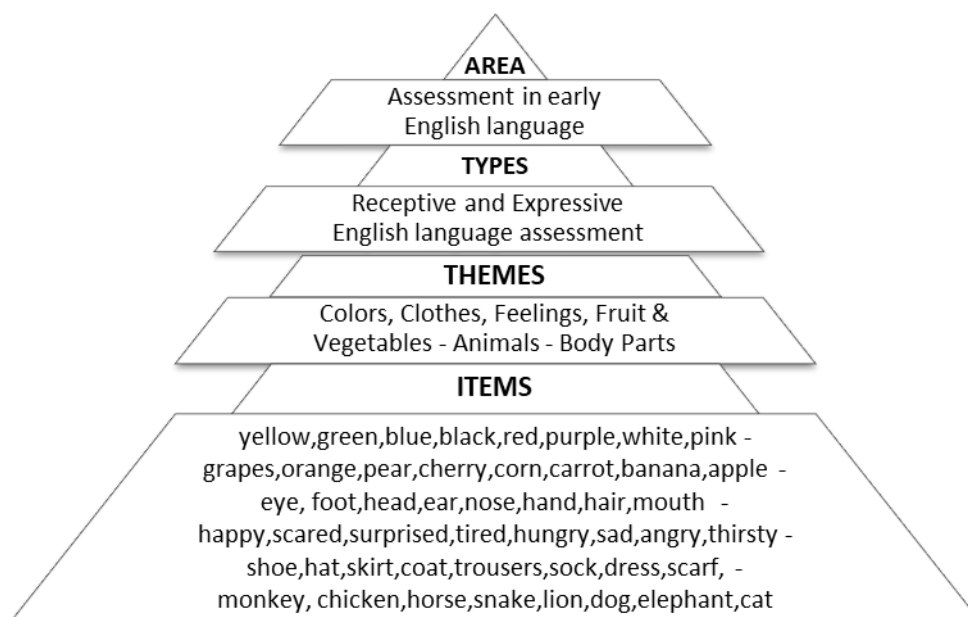
a word they had already known in their mother tongue. For example, "tomato" and "potato" in the fruit & vegetable themes were reworded with "pear" and "grape".

- The comments on the colors and aesthetics of the some illustrations caused some changes in the test. For example, the cartoon-like images like the cat, horse, lion and elephant were changed with their realistic versions of them in order for the children to remember them more easily from their daily environments. Moreover, some extra distracting things on pictures like the water droplets on the orange or the dots on the dress were removed. In addition some supporting shapes were added to make the illustrations clearer for the children like water bottle to the "thirsty emoji" or bigger red hoopoe and longer tail to the rooster not to be confused with chicken.

- Lastly children's practical advice about pictures like short skirt advice instead of a long one, smaller nose instead of the big one, long trousers instead of short one (causing ambiguity with shorts), one cherry instead of two cherries, various color for each item in "clothes" instead of using the same color for all provide test to be age-appropriate and high reliability free from complexity.

In accordance with the corrections and improvements as a result of the initial piloting, the related pictures in the test were drawn by the artist several times. The Receptive and Expressive vocabulary test framework including the aim, themes and items is shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1. Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Test Framework**



**STAGE 4:** In this stage, the other test materials like EPVT Implementation Guide (see Appendix 5) and Record Forms (see Appendix 4) apart from Receptive and Expressive Testbooks were also designed to make the test easy to administer and score. In consideration of being used later by the researchers or teachers to measure VYLs' vocabulary knowledge in foreign language, Implementation Guide that includes points to be considered in application and scoring was designed. In addition, the researcher constructed a performance record paper for each part of EPVT for identifying the children's personal information and recording their answers and scores. The sequence of events followed leading to the final version of the test is demonstrated in Table 3.5.

**Tablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.5. Test Development Sequence**

| Stages of test development and administration |                                                                                                            | Additional tasks                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1                                             | Test conceptualization (Specification of Test Purpose)                                                     |                                             |
| 2                                             | English National Curriculum in Turkey and course books for VYLs analysis (target vocabulary and structure) | Consultation with external experts          |
| 3                                             | Selection of types of test and test items                                                                  | Consultation with external experts          |
| 4                                             | Test plan and specification                                                                                |                                             |
| 5                                             | Drawings of illustrations                                                                                  |                                             |
| 6                                             | Evaluation of test items (drawings)                                                                        | Consultation with 20 children and 4 experts |
| 7                                             | Correction and modification of test items                                                                  |                                             |
| 8                                             | Preparing recording and scoring keys                                                                       |                                             |
| 9                                             | Final pilot-test administration                                                                            | Sample audio recordings                     |
| 10                                            | Recording pilot-test data                                                                                  |                                             |
| 11                                            | Analysis (KR20 and Point biserial correlation)                                                             | Consultation with external experts          |
| 12                                            | Proofreading of the test                                                                                   |                                             |

**STAGE 5:** EPVT for very young learners was improved after the initial piloting and prepared for final piloting. This time, for final piloting, the EPVT was administered to 251 children aged 5 and 6 years from 16 different pre-primary schools in three different region of İstanbul. The aim of the final piloting was to ensure the reliability and validity of the test. In addition to this, the researcher aimed at estimating the degree of relationship between the examinee's item scores with their total RAW scores on the test by using point-biserial correlation. A point biserial correlation coefficient (rpb) is a descriptive item statistic from the classical test theory to measure the discrimination

index of an item. In other words, point biserial correlation coefficient (rpb) that measures the degree to which an item is able to separate between better examinees from the weaker examinees (Pornal, Sotaridona, Wibowo and Hendrawan, 2013). Considering the responses given to the items in the test like "right/wrong" in the receptive part or "could say /couldn't say" in the expressive part which are dichotomously coded as 0 and 1, it can be said that the stability of rpb estimates of 48 items by using receptive and expressive test data should be investigated to report the item discrimination indices. The steps followed in collecting data for final piloting process is as follows:

-At the beginning, the list of private pre-primary schools from different socioeconomic backgrounds (low, middle, high) in three different regions in İstanbul wererequested from the Turkish Statistics Institution. The reason why sample selection was conducted by taking into consideration of the socioeconomic characteristics of the local district is because it was aimed to collect data from children of varying abilities in English. It is a fact that in Turkey the quality and extent of English instruction in pre-primary schools are mostly related with this. Doğancay- Aktuna (2010) illustrated that it is generally the wealthier, upper middle class children who enjoy access to good quality English instruction. She also emphasized the relationship between the socioeconomic factors and the quality and extent of instruction in her study "The Spread of English in Turkey and its Current Sociolinguistic Profile" by explaining that although English is widely taught throughout Turkey, the discrepancies in the amount and quality of instruction prevent the penetration of English into different strata of society in an equivalent manner (2010). This leads to the formation of a continuum of proficiency determined by the type of school one attends, which is, in turn, usually determined by the socioeconomic status of one's family. Based on this, to obtain a representative target group for the final piloting, the same number of children from high, moderate and low English levels wereincluded evenly according to the data coming from the Turkish Statistics Institution. In doing so, the distribution of the annual fee of private pre-primary schools ordered from high to low in each distinct was taken into the consideration by taking the Doğancay- Aktuna's (2010) study as the springboard.

- After deciding on the pre-primary schools, with reference to ethical considerations, school and parental consent (see Appendix A) for the test applications were previously obtained.

- EPVT was carried out in quiet classrooms to each child by the researcher herself in order to eliminate the experimenter's bias and discrepancy in application. In addition, affective characteristics were also critical to test

performance. Although children's attitudes towards a foreign language are generally positive (Mihaljević Djigunović and Lopriore, 2011; Mihaljević Djigunović and Vilke, 2000), motivation to participate in language tasks is related to classroom atmosphere and the sense of security achieved by the rapport established with the teacher and other learners. In parallel with this mentioned above, at first glance the children's class teacher in pilot study appears to be more logical to diminish the stress and to justify their participation, however; the teachers' unfamiliarity of the test administration and characterization and their different English background and teaching experience can affect the inter-rater reliability, one of the aspects of test validity. As a solution, the researcher spent enough time with the whole class by attending their daily school activities and with each child individually before the test by having a conversation to establish rapport and children's sense of security.

- The characteristics of the test takers are generally not influencing the test design so much. To illustrate, VYLs' short attention span emerged as one of challenges to develop in final piloting process. Related to this problem, Nikolov (2016) points out that children's developmental characteristics together with their low level of foreign language knowledge are key obstacles to developing reliable tools for valid measurement of children's achievement. In the same vein, McKay (2006) asserted that the young children have special characteristics that require a special approach to their assessment. It is a well-known that in testing children's abilities and knowledge, attention is the most prominent cognitive factor. However, in this period whereas they have developed voluntary attention which allows them to focus on classroom tasks, involuntary attention can be easily triggered by internal or external stimuli such as hunger, light, color, noise, and tiredness, and may quickly distract children from a set task. Regarding this, Wesson (2011) asserted that the maximum time for VYLs' focused attention during instruction is up to 15–20 min duration, providing the task is engaging and commands their interest. Keeping these facts in mind, EPVT was administered individually in a quiet classroom in each pre-primary school and takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

- It is important that this assessment is administered in a standard way. The child were greeted and accompanied to the testing room by the researcher from their classroom. Then, the researcher introduced the task verbally in their first language to each child at the beginning. Every subject began with Receptive EPVT in which the child was expected to point to the correct Picture among four pictures. The important thing is for them to show the correct picture not repeating the word. In the expressive part, the child expressed the name of the picture loudly. After completion of the test, the child was escorted out of the testing room and given a 5- to 10-min rest period while a report of test results were recorded on the form. The report included subject and test information



(date of test, date of birth and age), an item-by-item tabulation (item number, latency, response choice, and score), and the number of correct and incorrect responses. After completion of performance-based assessment with the same children next day, each was given a sticker and then dismissed.

- In administering the test to the children, the researcher tried to be in consistent with the relevant ethical guidelines on research with young language learners' assessment. In this sense, the researcher was very sensitive in reinforcement and motivational processes. For instance, the researcher supported the children by saying "Great!", "Okey", "Good!", "Perfect!", "Go on!" after their answers. In addition, young children shouldn't be reprehended for the wrong answers. If the children ask the researcher whether their answer is correct or wrong, the testexaminer should say "It is a good answer." With respect to this, Nikolov (2016) asserts that positive feedback or incentives activate the acquired skills to actual performance.

- In view of the researcher's previous experience in pre-pilot meetings with young children, the assessor carried out a multitude of tasks during the testing situation such as establishing rapport, administering the items according to instructions, keeping the materials ready, responding appropriately to the child, precisely recording the child's responses, keeping the child engaged, and scoring the child's responses. In the final piloting process, to make the test application more practical and time saving, another researcher was included who only recorded the children's answer on the forms by taking a back seat in the classroom. According to the paper about the characteristics of conducting assessments of young English language learners published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2009, assessments in early childhood period should involve two or more people.

As for item analysis, it refers to the specific methods used to evaluate items on a test both qualitatively and quantitatively (Krishnan, 2013). The aforementioned corrections and improvements as a result of pre-pilot meetings with children and four experts were the example for the qualitative review for item development. As for the quantitative analysis (statistical analysis), the reliability and validity analysis, item discrimination indices and point biserial correlation coefficients were examined for each tests including 48 multiple-binary choice items. Item analysis was done by using Microsoft Excel 2010. The parameters obtained included a difficulty index, discrimination index, point biserial correlation, and reliability and validity indexes. The reliability of the EPVT (Receptive) and EPVT (Expressive) was measured with the help of the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20) and the reliability coefficients were found to be 0.89

and 0.91 respectively. KR-20 values of 0.8 or higher are considered good reliability (Şencan, 2005; Kuder and Richardson, 1937; Salkind, 2010). Besides, EPVT were administered to the same group of pre-primary school children by selecting 30 children twice after three weeks later. Once completed, the pairs of scores for each child were lined up in two columns, and correlation coefficient were calculated between the two sets of scores by using the test-retest method. The test-retest reliability measures which were 0.93 for EPVT (Receptive) and 0.94 for EPVT (Expressive) show that the scales can be said to have acceptable internal consistency. They are shown in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6. Pilot Reliability Indices: Test Versions (KR20)**

|                 | Number<br>the of items | KR20 | Test-retest |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|-------------|
| Receptive EPVT  | 48                     | ,89  | ,93         |
| Expressive EPVT | 48                     | ,91  | ,94         |

In addition to this, point-biserial correlation was conducted to measure how much predictive power an item had and how the item contributed to predictions by estimating the correlation between each test item and the total test score. Point-biserial correlations employed for item analysis were used to determine difficulty levels of the items by measuring the proportion of children who answer the question correctly (McCowan and McCowan, 1999). Related to this, Schwarz (2011) states that high p-values mean the item is easy and low p-values mean the item is difficult. Based on this, the item discrimination index (p-values) ranging from 0,223 - 0,626 for EPVT (Expressive) and from 0,24 - 0,65 for EPVT (Receptive) are considered "acceptable". In the literature it is indicated that items with point biserial correlation above 0.20 are accepted (Sotaridona, Wibowo, Hendrawan and Pornel, 2013). The results of point biserial correlation analysis are shown in Table 3.7 and Table 3.8.

**Table 3.7. Distribution of the Items in Expressive and Receptive EPVT among the Different Ranges of Difficulty Indices**

| Difficulty<br>index | Degree of<br>difficulty | Number of<br>questions in<br>Expressive | Number of<br>questions in<br>Receptive |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 0-0.2               | Very difficult          | 0                                       | 0                                      |
| 0.21-0.4            | Moderately<br>difficult | 1                                       | 0                                      |

|          |                         |    |    |
|----------|-------------------------|----|----|
| 0.41-0.6 | Intermediate difficulty | 25 | 10 |
| 0.61-0.8 | Moderately easy         | 22 | 38 |
| 0.81-1.0 | Very easy               | 0  | 0  |
| Total    |                         | 48 | 48 |

Table 3.7 shows the distribution of the questions among the ranges of difficulty index values for the 48 items included in both receptive and expressive EPVT. Items were classified as very difficult ( $\rho \leq 0.20$ ), moderately difficult ( $\rho > 0.20$  and  $\leq 0.40$ ), intermediately difficulty ( $\rho > 0.40$  and  $\leq 0.60$ ), moderately easy ( $\rho > 0.60$  and  $\leq 0.80$ ), or very easy ( $\rho > 0.80$ ). The highest number of questions (25) fall in the intermediate difficulty index ranges 0.41–0.6 while 22 items fall in the moderately easy index ranges 0.61–0.8 and 1 question is in the moderately difficult category in the Expressive EPVT. On the other hand, the highest number of questions (38) fall in the moderately easy index ranges 0.61–0.8 while 10 items fall in the range 0.41-0.6. The items falling in the very difficult index ranges (0-0.2) and very easy index ranges (0.81-1.0) are not acceptable. However, the degree of difficulty of the items in Receptive and Expressive EPVT was found to be between 0.2 and 0.8 which is acceptable (see Table 3.7). Therefore, the scales can be said to have ideal difficulty in terms of discrimination potential. In addition to this, discrimination indices of the items in Expressive and Receptive EPVT are given in Table 3.8.

**Tablo 3.8. The Distribution of the Items in Expressive and Receptive EPVT among the Different Ranges of Discrimination Indices**

| Discrimination index | Percentage of questions (Receptive) | Percentage of Questions (Expressive) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| $\leq 0.09$          | 0                                   | 0                                    |
| 0.1-0.19             | 0                                   | 0                                    |
| 0.2-0.29             | 6.25%                               | 6.25%                                |
| 0.3-0.39             | 31.25%                              | 31.25%                               |
| $> 0.39$             | 62.5%                               | 62.5%                                |
| Total (%)            | 100                                 | 100                                  |

Table 3.8 shows the distribution of the questions among the ranges of difficulty index values for the 40 items included in both receptive and expressive EPVT. Test discrimination values were classified as poor items ( $\rho \leq 0.19$ ), fairly good items ( $\rho > 0.20$  and  $\leq 0.29$ ), good items ( $\rho > 0.30$  and  $\leq 0.39$ ) and very good items ( $\rho > 0.40$ )

(Carroll and Sapon, 1958; Guilford and Fruchter, 1973; Brown, 1996). In general, it was seen in the discrimination index that 62,5 % of total questions in both tests were classified as with good or excellent discrimination index.

**Tablo 9. EPVT Difficulty and Discrimination Indices for Each Item in the Pilot Data**

| Item | Exp. Mean | Rec. Mean | Rec. Std | Exp. Std | Exp. Rpbi | Rec. Rpbi | item diffuculty (expressive) | item diffuculty (receptive) |
|------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1    | 36,32     | 34,48     | 0,44     | 0,49     | 0,429     | 0,609     | 0,62                         | 0,73                        |
| 2    | 37,08     | 35,45     | 0,42     | 0,49     | 0,474     | 0,543     | 0,58                         | 0,78                        |
| 3    | 35,94     | 34,70     | 0,42     | 0,50     | 0,312     | 0,506     | 0,52                         | 0,76                        |
| 4    | 35,93     | 29,27     | 0,44     | 0,49     | 0,239     | 0,326     | 0,39                         | 0,73                        |
| 5    | 36,64     | 35,33     | 0,43     | 0,47     | 0,517     | 0,588     | 0,67                         | 0,76                        |
| 6    | 36,31     | 34,86     | 0,43     | 0,50     | 0,312     | 0,574     | 0,47                         | 0,75                        |
| 7    | 37,00     | 34,86     | 0,43     | 0,49     | 0,478     | 0,532     | 0,59                         | 0,76                        |
| 8    | 36,21     | 34,57     | 0,42     | 0,50     | 0,315     | 0,512     | 0,49                         | 0,78                        |
| 9    | 36,03     | 35,15     | 0,50     | 0,43     | 0,526     | 0,318     | 0,75                         | 0,49                        |
| 10   | 35,14     | 34,00     | 0,47     | 0,41     | 0,455     | 0,323     | 0,74                         | 0,68                        |
| 11   | 31,21     | 35,68     | 0,50     | 0,45     | 0,469     | 0,353     | 0,73                         | 0,55                        |
| 12   | 30,73     | 35,19     | 0,48     | 0,41     | 0,490     | 0,340     | 0,75                         | 0,63                        |
| 13   | 30,55     | 35,12     | 0,47     | 0,41     | 0,447     | 0,448     | 0,76                         | 0,66                        |
| 14   | 31,89     | 35,54     | 0,49     | 0,47     | 0,513     | 0,382     | 0,68                         | 0,62                        |
| 15   | 31,76     | 34,71     | 0,43     | 0,46     | 0,522     | 0,368     | 0,70                         | 0,75                        |
| 16   | 31,81     | 34,41     | 0,43     | 0,46     | 0,537     | 0,432     | 0,70                         | 0,75                        |
| 17   | 32,31     | 36,95     | 0,48     | 0,45     | 0,627     | 0,633     | 0,71                         | 0,63                        |
| 18   | 33,39     | 37,48     | 0,48     | 0,49     | 0,605     | 0,670     | 0,59                         | 0,63                        |
| 19   | 32,73     | 36,12     | 0,49     | 0,49     | 0,552     | 0,478     | 0,61                         | 0,62                        |
| 20   | 30,11     | 36,75     | 0,48     | 0,41     | 0,392     | 0,584     | 0,75                         | 0,65                        |
| 21   | 33,71     | 36,33     | 0,46     | 0,50     | 0,505     | 0,583     | 0,47                         | 0,69                        |
| 22   | 32,50     | 36,53     | 0,47     | 0,50     | 0,457     | 0,577     | 0,55                         | 0,67                        |
| 23   | 31,65     | 36,72     | 0,50     | 0,45     | 0,511     | 0,453     | 0,71                         | 0,53                        |
| 24   | 33,01     | 36,96     | 0,48     | 0,50     | 0,514     | 0,589     | 0,55                         | 0,63                        |
| 25   | 32,08     | 36,16     | 0,46     | 0,50     | 0,386     | 0,549     | 0,54                         | 0,69                        |
| 26   | 30,42     | 36,17     | 0,49     | 0,48     | 0,300     | 0,306     | 0,65                         | 0,41                        |
| 27   | 30,96     | 36,46     | 0,50     | 0,46     | 0,409     | 0,388     | 0,70                         | 0,48                        |
| 28   | 30,76     | 36,66     | 0,50     | 0,50     | 0,234     | 0,484     | 0,47                         | 0,57                        |
| 29   | 31,10     | 35,72     | 0,46     | 0,50     | 0,260     | 0,487     | 0,46                         | 0,70                        |
| 30   | 30,97     | 35,76     | 0,48     | 0,50     | 0,223     | 0,427     | 0,50                         | 0,63                        |
| 31   | 31,88     | 37,31     | 0,48     | 0,49     | 0,450     | 0,655     | 0,61                         | 0,64                        |
| 32   | 31,02     | 35,85     | 0,49     | 0,50     | 0,255     | 0,413     | 0,46                         | 0,60                        |
| 33   | 31,96     | 35,18     | 0,45     | 0,49     | 0,459     | 0,463     | 0,61                         | 0,72                        |
| 34   | 31,72     | 36,06     | 0,47     | 0,47     | 0,496     | 0,525     | 0,68                         | 0,68                        |
| 35   | 31,93     | 35,30     | 0,50     | 0,50     | 0,335     | 0,303     | 0,46                         | 0,54                        |

|    |       |       |      |      |       |       |      |      |
|----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|
| 36 | 32,59 | 35,89 | 0,50 | 0,50 | 0,397 | 0,387 | 0,47 | 0,57 |
| 37 | 32,57 | 35,59 | 0,50 | 0,50 | 0,376 | 0,351 | 0,44 | 0,57 |
| 38 | 31,71 | 35,18 | 0,48 | 0,50 | 0,306 | 0,345 | 0,45 | 0,63 |
| 39 | 32,55 | 34,88 | 0,49 | 0,49 | 0,363 | 0,273 | 0,43 | 0,59 |
| 40 | 25,85 | 35,48 | 0,48 | 0,47 | 0,234 | 0,406 | 0,67 | 0,63 |
| 41 | 29,25 | 35,40 | 0,44 | 0,48 | 0,439 | 0,475 | 0,63 | 0,73 |
| 42 | 32,14 | 34,51 | 0,44 | 0,50 | 0,355 | 0,359 | 0,46 | 0,73 |
| 43 | 29,38 | 35,25 | 0,44 | 0,49 | 0,437 | 0,506 | 0,62 | 0,74 |
| 44 | 32,96 | 33,08 | 0,44 | 0,49 | 0,556 | 0,261 | 0,59 | 0,73 |
| 45 | 33,31 | 36,02 | 0,47 | 0,49 | 0,581 | 0,490 | 0,58 | 0,66 |
| 46 | 33,35 | 35,26 | 0,44 | 0,50 | 0,558 | 0,332 | 0,56 | 0,74 |
| 47 | 32,99 | 33,66 | 0,42 | 0,50 | 0,409 | 0,240 | 0,44 | 0,76 |
| 48 | 33,38 | 35,32 | 0,44 | 0,50 | 0,548 | 0,482 | 0,55 | 0,76 |

Table 3.9 shows the examples of item difficulty and point-biserial correlation values for receptive and expressive test items separately. EPVT (Receptive) and EPVT (Expressive) developed for measuring very young learners' receptive and expressive vocabulary in English consist of 48 items in each test and they are answered with true/false and said/couldn't say (1/0 scored) respectively. The correlation coefficient being calculated here is between a naturally occurring dichotomous nominal scale (the correct or incorrect answer on each item usually coded as 1 or 0) with an interval scale test. Findings support that the English Picture Vocabulary Test is a valid and reliable assessment tool in assessing pre-primary schoolchildren's expressive and receptive foreign language knowledge. As a result of all these processes, the EPVT (See Appendix 2 and 3) was finalized and prepared for actual administration.

### 3.2.2. Design of Performance-based Assessment Tool and Pilot Studies

Considering the ECELEP's objectives related to children's basic communication skills in L2 and the interactive activities providing rich and meaningful communication opportunities for children, the need for a new assessment tool to measure these skills apart from EPVT is reasonably apparent. Regarding to the use of multiple measures, National Association for the Education of Young Children (2015) stated that the assessment of early foreign language learning should be based on multiple methods and measures to be able get in-depth description of children's L2 development. In addition to this, the studies demonstrated that the global trends in English language assessments were moving from formal testing to "performance-based language assessment" (Morrow, 2012; Weir, 1990; Shaaban, 2001) because of the fact that the former one

cannot capture the learner's L2 knowledge and abilities in depth and detail (Nikolov, 2016). Based on this, it can be said that assessing how VYLs' receptive and expressive foreign language vocabulary related with curricular subjects only with formal testing might be insufficient to see the big picture in children's L2 learning process. Therefore, assessing children's progress in target language not only with standards-based assessment but also with performance-based assessment provides detailed specification of VYLs' L2 knowledge and abilities.

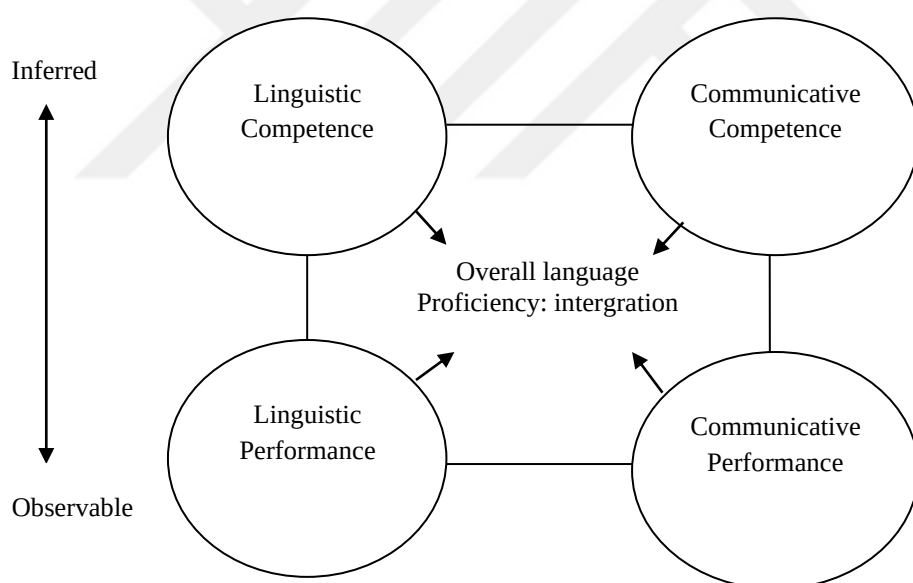
As highlighted previously, ECELEP has focused on developing VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge with their oral communication abilities as well as their positive attitudes toward a foreign language. To illustrate, some interactive activities such as suitable games, songs, role-plays, stories and hands-on activities that require VYLs communicate basically in a few words fosters the useful language ability in two basic skills -listening, speaking- for VYLs. Since ECELEP aims at developing both communicative and linguistic skills through some activities, using merely the traditional formal test is not sufficient to measure the effectiveness of the program. EPVT is a formal assessment tool to examine what level VYLs achieved basic vocabulary in English receptively and expressively. In brief, for the language areas assessed, EPVT prioritized vocabulary, irrespective of gauging communicative skills while performance-based assessment included some authentic and attractive tasks to assess communicative skills.

Although the driving force of formal assessment with EPVT is the attempt to measure the VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary learning in specified curricular subjects by indirectly extrapolating from the test scores, the focal points in performance-based assessment are to reveal what VYLs in EFL context can perform in interactive tasks that gives VYLs a chance to show their communicative performance (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Wigglesworth and Frost, 2017; Nikolov, 2016). Related to this, Rixon (2016) asserted that the strategies used in performance-based assessment that requires holistic tasks is different from standards-based assessment focusing on discrete items. These tasks in this study were designed to measure VYLs' communication language skills through performances in an action game, a musical game or a role-play activity. Thus,

this performance-based assessment tool including 4 different tasks were designed in five stages.

**STAGE 1:** In designing the performance-based assessment tool, the emphasis was on the measurement of VYLs' communicative performance which is one the four components of language proficiency (See Figure 3.2). The reason why the communicative performance were selected as the target of the assessment instead of communicative competence is because only performance of VYLs can be directly measured (Chomsky, 1965; Canale and Swain, 1980). Regarding this issue, Chomsky (1965, 1981) stated that whereas the 'competence' signals to the learner's L2 knowledge, the 'performance' signals to the use of this knowledge in specific situations. The relationship between them is seen in detail in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2. Relationship between the Four Components of Overall Language Proficiency**



To be able to assess VYLs' performance and ability about constructing basic sentences and using language by providing active participation and attention to the process of language production, a range of different language use tasks were created by the researcher. During this process, the proficiency level of the VYLs in L, their interests and the demands of the curriculum were taken into consideration. These tasks which were specific to a certain theme and target vocabulary expect VYLs to use L2 purposefully. Tasks involves games adapted from VYL's mother tongue, role-plays and

tasks using pictures which are suited for classroom assessment by observing and taking notes about children's performance as the rhythm of the task proceeds.

As far as the properties of assessment tasks and procedures were examined in the choice of task types, some significant points that need to be taken into considerations were ordered as: (1) selecting the age-appropriate task and procedures that suit the characteristics of the young children (2) including the assessment tasks which were similar to classroom activities (3) deciding the topics of the tasks in line with the subjects indicated in the ECELEP (4) including interactive tasks that reflect children's real language use (5) preferring realistic tasks. The assessment tasks were prepared by taking into account the criterion set by McKay (2006); Nikolov (2016) who indicated that the tasks should be in optimal difficulty, thus VYLs can show their true knowledge and abilities. Keeping these in mind, five different assessment tasks whose objectives were stated below were prepared to assess VYLs' listening, comprehension and speaking skills.

- The first task is a role-play activity in which children are asked to pick the apples (apple toys) which are hanging from the ceiling of the classroom into her/his basket by counting loudly.
- In the second assessment task, children visit the zoo including mini toy animals (snake, monkey, chicken, fish, cat, dog, lion, horse) which are in different quantities and they are asked to answer the "how many" questions.
- In the third one, children dance with music which help them process information and make connections, and then they are asked to express the color on which he/she stands on when the music stops.
- The next one is a kind of role-play game, in which children act out the feeling that the 'emotion chart signals when they turn it. They are asked to talk about the feelings in a sentence.
- The last one is a traditional adapted game to assess fruit theme in a fun way. Children are asked to play the "Wolf Game! (Kurt Baba) in English and they are expected to use target vocabulary related to fruit with a few words or in a sentence.

The researcher was guided by two considerations while preparing these assessment tasks. One of them was that language used in the test was compatible with the VYLs' classroom experience and the other one was that the tasks were suitable for their



cognitive and linguistic development and attractive enough to create a desire to provide their involvement into the assessment process. (Szpotowicz and Campfield, 2016). Some examples from PA tool are shown in Table 3.10, and 3.11.

**Tablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.100. Description of Assessment Task 1 (sample)**

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Planned assessment task:     | <b>HOW MANY ANIMALS AT THE ZOO!</b> (A simple game for practicing to count animals by answering "how many" question)                                                                                                                                            |
| Characteristics of learners: | Pre-primary school children aged 5-6, beginning EFL learners                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Learning context:            | Children are asked to the number of mini toy animals which are in a "zoo" center. Each type of the animals which are in different quantities in the center should be placed together as a group and separately. The classroom should be quiet and pre-prepared. |
| Recording:                   | Records the answer to the performance record paper as 1 point for one word-answers related to numbers, 2 points for two or more word-answers and 0 for non-response.                                                                                            |

**Tablo Hata! Belgede belirtilen stilde metne rastlanmadı.111. Description of Assessment Task 2 (sample)**

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Planned assessment task:     | <b>EMOTIONS CIRCLE CHART</b> (An exciting and fun way of practicing talking about the feelings.)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Characteristics of learners: | Pre-primary school children aged 5-6, beginning EFL learners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Learning context:            | Children are asked to turn the emotions circle chart fast and wait until it stops. The feeling on the pie which the arrow points to is asked to the child "How are you today?" The child is expected to answer by looking at the feeling that the arrow points to. If the arrow points to the same feeling when the arrow stops turning, examiner can push forward to the other feelings. |
| Recording:                   | Records the answer to the performance record paper as 1 point for one word-answers related to numbers, 2 points for two or more word-answers and 0 for non-response.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

**STAGE 2:** After four tasks covering all the targeted communication goals identified in ECELEP were designed, the analysis of them for 'usefulness' were carried out with three experts. In doing this, the following criteria suggested by Nikolov (2016) were used for inclusion: (1) the compatibility between themes and related vocabulary in the tasks and constructs listed in the ECELEP; (2) age-appropriateness; (3) developmentally-appropriateness; (4) measurability of VYLs' performance on the task; (5) appropriateness for assessing communicative language skills specified in ECELEP;

(6) inclusion of fair and well-designed materials and procedures; (7) attractiveness of tasks for VYLs. The experts' judgments were used as the criterion on which the content-related evidence of validity. Some of the feedback given and the improvements made each time are explained as follows:

- One of the challenges in drawing up whether the VYLs can carry out the tasks concerns their low level of L2 knowledge at the beginning. They are not expected to comprehend many subsequent instructions given for one task. Based on this, in the second task was related to counting and number concepts by answering "how many" questions, mini toy animals in different quantities were placed together as a group and separately in a way that didn't touch each other rather than randomly in the zoo center.
- In terms of content representativeness of newly-developed language assessment tool, it was revealed that the items were compatible with the constructs being measured in ECELEP.
- The tasks and tests designed for VYLs were examined and it was decided that some materials like a few plastic apple toys, mini toy animals, A4 colored paper which was covered in PVC, emotions circle chart, a wolf mask and the flashcards presenting the target vocabulary were used to provide the child's active involvement to the assessment process. Thus, these stimulus materials helped children complete all the tasks by directing the children's attention and interest to specific tasks and motivating them to do by themselves.
- The target language used in assessment task was drawn from familiar activities and language structure to satisfy the criterion of fairness. To put it differently, the tasks in the assessment were congruent with the activities, themes, L2 language knowledge. For this reason, familiar and enjoyable activities and games were selected from each theme, and some activities inhibiting children's attention and interests were removed.
- It is suggested that an example which was set for VYLs at the beginning of each task by the examiner can be useful to clarify the instructions. To illustrate, for the first task, the examiner jumps towards apples with two feet and pretends to pick apples. At this time, she raises one of her hands first and shouts "ONE", then raises the other hand and shouts "TWO". Then, he/she faces the child and says "Now, it's your turn! Let's pick apples and count". In brief, all tasks included an example.

**STAGE 3:** Initial versions of tasks were pre-piloted by a group of children at pre-primary level in a several meetings. The tasks' difficulty, familiarity and attractiveness were assessed for 20 pre-rpimary school children who participated in the pilot treatment

of EPVT. These pre-pilot meetings with children about alternative assessment took place in a quiet classroom on a different day. Some of the feedback given and the improvements made are explained as follows:

- It was noticed that children become more frequently confused especially at the beginning of each tasks because they have difficulty in understanding the instructions. To make the process clear by formulating the instructions in an age-appropriate and comprehensible way, the instructions were given in the mother tongue and moreover, the researcher introduced the tasks to the children and engaged in scaffolding as required.
- Considering the young children's short attention span and the difficulty level of the tasks, it was decided to present the tasks in a clear and attractive format to meet the interests of very young learners. Attractive concrete physical objects such as some materials like basket, mini animal toys and colorful illustrations like "emotions circle chart" were used to motivate children to talk more readily and help children to relax and feel less nervous.
- The questions and commands requiring both comprehension and one word answers ('Count the apples!') and the questions requiring language production responses ('Wolf! What are you eating?' 'What color is it?' 'How are you today?' 'How many dogs are there?') were ordered appropriately.
- The other important point was the setting which was one of the task characteristics articulated by Bachman and Palmer (1996). In a quiet classroom setting, five different tasks should be placed and organized in different places to be able to focus on each tasks carefully without distracting their attention with extra materials.

After the researcher prepared the age-appropriate and interesting resources and materials that the tasks required, the instructions and scoring methods were constructed. On the other hand, the setting was also familiar to the VYLs. Specifically, five different tasks which focus on counting the numbers, answering the "how many" question, saying the name of the colors, talking about the feelings and fruit were created. Tasks focused on communication and interaction with VYLs, not grammatical items. Besides, for these tasks, a performance record was prepared on which the one-word answers were recorded as 1, two or more word-answers were recorded as 2 and non-response were recorded as 0.

**STAGE 4:** In final piloting process, the same 251 children who were selected for the pilot treatment of EPVT were included. They were 5 and 6 years-old children from 16 different private pre-primary schools including high, medium and low intensity English language instruction and program to be able to get reliable and valid results. Despite the fact that all the children participating in the assessment were at the beginner's stage, while low-intensity EFL programs at pre-primary school level has one or two hours English class in a week, medium-intensity EFL programs consist 3-6 hours in a week. Besides, high-intensity ones refer to bilingual or partial immersion and total immersion programs in Turkey. The execution of the test to a larger sample in the piloting process could not be possible due to the time considerations. The aim of the final piloting was to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of the tasks in the alternative assessment tool. At the beginning, the classroom setting were organized and arranged with the suitable materials before the children were let in the classroom. Related arrangements and components of each task were made separately from each other in the class for young children to be able stay focused on each task until they have finished. The fact that these procedures were in line with teaching tasks and the researcher explained the assessment tasks to children in their first language and introduced the purpose of the task separately facilitated the assessment process. Children were not left to work alone on an assessment task in the classroom. After the tasks lasting for 15–20 min for each child were introduced to the children one by one, the researcher engaged in scaffolding as required. In fact, many of the children were so curious about these 'L2 games' that they wanted to 'play' them repeatedly. During the implementation of the tasks, VYLs were given feedback about their performance in the test. It should be kept in mind that whether the children give the correct or wrong answer to the questions, the feedback should be always positive. Regarding this, Nikolov (2011) indicated the correct time of providing feedback or reinforcement to each VYL as right after their performance. Thus, they feel relaxed and motivating for further assessment or learning. Based on this, all the children were given positive feedback after young children completed each task. During the pilot testing of performance-based assessment tool, children's performance and feedback demonstrated the importance and relevance of the set of communication goals identified in ECELEP. Besides, one of the indicators of the effectiveness of the

task types for VYLs at pre-primary level in the performance-based assessment part was their active and efficient involvement and fulfillment of the assessment process.

**STAGE 5:** The selection of upper and lower groups for the validation test items as a technique proposed by Kelley (1939) was used to analyze the discrimination power of the whole scale and the items in the test. The performance data gathered from three different level groups of participants was analyzed from two perspectives:

- firstly, for the discriminating power of the whole test
- secondly, for the item discrimination power

In doing these analyses, total scores of participants were calculated. Then, these scores were rank-ordered from the largest to the smallest. According to this ranking, 27% of participants who received the highest scores and the 27% who received the lowest scores were determined (Kelley, 1939; Brown, 1971; Dimitrov, 2012; Şencan, 2005). The mean differences between two equal-sized extreme groups in the distribution were tested using the independent sample t test model. Thus, it was decided whether the scale and items are discriminatory.

**Table 3.12. Item Discrimination Analysis of Performance-Based Assessment Tool for VYLs' Communicative Skills**

| Item    | Groups | N  | $\bar{X}$ | ss   | $Sh_{\bar{x}}$ | t Test |     |      |
|---------|--------|----|-----------|------|----------------|--------|-----|------|
|         |        |    |           |      |                | t      | Sd  | p    |
| Item 1  | Upper  | 67 | 1.46      | .502 | .061           | 20.647 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .06       | .239 | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 2  | Upper  | 67 | 1.46      | .532 | .065           | 19.704 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .06       | .239 | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 3  | Upper  | 67 | 1.49      | .533 | .065           | 20.709 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .04       | .208 | .025           |        |     |      |
| Item 4  | Upper  | 67 | 1.54      | .502 | .061           | 21.745 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .06       | .239 | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 5  | Upper  | 67 | 1.54      | .532 | .065           | 19.085 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .10       | .308 | .038           |        |     |      |
| Item 6  | Upper  | 67 | 1.57      | .499 | .061           | 19.863 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .12       | .327 | .040           |        |     |      |
| Item 7  | Upper  | 67 | 1.51      | .533 | .065           | 19.163 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288 | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 8  | Upper  | 67 | 1.49      | .533 | .065           | 19.503 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .07       | .265 | .032           |        |     |      |
| Item 9  | Upper  | 67 | 1.54      | .559 | .068           | 18.838 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288 | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 10 | Upper  | 67 | 1.54      | .502 | .061           | 22.463 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .04       | .208 | .025           |        |     |      |
| Item 11 | Upper  | 67 | 1.57      | .529 | .065           | 20.094 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288 | .035           |        |     |      |

| Item    | Groups | N  | $\bar{X}$ | ss    | $Sh_{\bar{x}}$ | t Test |     |      |
|---------|--------|----|-----------|-------|----------------|--------|-----|------|
|         |        |    |           |       |                | t      | Sd  | p    |
| Item 12 | Upper  | 67 | 1.54      | .532  | .065           | 19.603 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288  | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 13 | Upper  | 67 | 1.49      | .561  | .068           | 18.719 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .07       | .265  | .032           |        |     |      |
| Item 14 | Upper  | 67 | 1.52      | .560  | .068           | 19.660 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .06       | .239  | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 15 | Upper  | 67 | 1.55      | .501  | .061           | 20.723 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288  | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 16 | Upper  | 67 | 1.45      | .585  | .071           | 18.500 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .04       | .208  | .025           |        |     |      |
| Item 17 | Upper  | 67 | 1.60      | .524  | .064           | 19.587 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .12       | .327  | .040           |        |     |      |
| Item 18 | Upper  | 67 | 1.49      | .637  | .078           | 16.064 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .10       | .308  | .038           |        |     |      |
| Item 19 | Upper  | 67 | 1.39      | .778  | .095           | 12.819 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Lower  | 67 | .09       | .288  | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 20 | Upper  | 67 | 1.43      | .763  | .093           | 14.055 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .06       | .239  | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 21 | Üst    | 67 | 1.52      | .560  | .068           | 19.660 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .06       | .239  | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 22 | Üst    | 67 | 1.54      | .586  | .072           | 17.716 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .10       | .308  | .038           |        |     |      |
| Item 23 | Üst    | 67 | 1.55      | .634  | .078           | 18.477 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .04       | .208  | .025           |        |     |      |
| Item 24 | Üst    | 67 | 1.49      | .683  | .083           | 17.013 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .03       | .171  | .021           |        |     |      |
| Item 25 | Üst    | 67 | 1.31      | .608  | .074           | 15.705 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .06       | .239  | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 26 | Üst    | 67 | 1.49      | .726  | .089           | 15.027 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .07       | .265  | .032           |        |     |      |
| Item 27 | Üst    | 67 | 1.30      | .759  | .093           | 13.037 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .04       | .208  | .025           |        |     |      |
| Item 28 | Üst    | 67 | 1.34      | .617  | .075           | 15.887 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .06       | .239  | .029           |        |     |      |
| Item 29 | Üst    | 67 | 1.25      | .682  | .083           | 13.194 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .07       | .265  | .032           |        |     |      |
| Item 30 | Üst    | 67 | 1.34      | .750  | .092           | 12.778 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .09       | .288  | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 31 | Üst    | 67 | 1.18      | .548  | .067           | 14.401 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .09       | .288  | .035           |        |     |      |
| Item 32 | Üst    | 67 | 1.22      | .670  | .082           | 13.752 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | .04       | .208  | .025           |        |     |      |
| Toplam  | Üst    | 67 | 46.72     | 7.367 | .900           | 47.233 | 132 | .000 |
|         | Alt    | 67 | 2.34      | 2.206 | .269           |        |     |      |

\*Significant at 0.001

As shown in Table 3.12, the independent sample t-test was used to investigate whether there was a significant difference between the arithmetic means of the upper 27% ( $n_{upper} = 67$ ) and the lower 27% ( $n_{lower} = 67$ ) groups. The results reveal that there are reasonable and statistically significant differences in performance between for all items in two groups. For this reason, it is concluded that the discriminating indices of each

item and the scale is high ( $p < .001$ ). In addition to this, the mean scores of the upper group are significantly higher than lower group. Based on this measure, it can be said that the VYLs in the upper group who are from kindergartens including bilingual or immersion programs performed well in the test. In contrast, the mean scores in the lower group decreased significantly and became nearly 0.00. This indicates that the ones who were exposed to English in an awareness program at a pre-primary school level cannot perform successfully.

Upper and lower groups of consisting of %27 from the extremes of the criterion score distribution are optimal for the study of test items, provided the differences in criterion scores among the members of each group is utilized. Descriptions of item discrimination indices showed that the tasks in the assessment tool ensured discrimination among VYLs' different levels of ability. In sum, a performance-based assessment tool was designed, piloted and administered to VYLs and it was concluded that tasks and materials which were designed carefully revealed that they were balanced in terms of linguistic and cognitive demands in accordance with the children's stage of development. Furthermore, the careful analysis of items using the selection of upper and lower groups for the validation test items as a result of piloting process demonstrated that performance-based assessment tool could be regarded as a performance-measuring instrument including various tasks to evaluate young children's communicative skills.

Finally, considering the complexity of developing and piloting a picture vocabulary test and tasks for performance-based assessment considering the VYLs' specific characteristics (cognitive, affective and social), it can be said that careful planning and implementation by pre-piloting and piloting of the items and tasks in both assessment tools are considerably important to be successful. In the designing process, some stages need to be emphasized. One of them is cognitive laboratories (cognitive interviews) in which a group of VYLs' views and perceptions about PV an EPVT (Receptive and Expressive) the were elicited in the face-to-face interviews. It can be said that it is a valuable process to obtain the target age group and experts' opinions in detail at pre-pilot stage to ensure the usefulness of both standards-based and performance-based assessment tools. The other one is planning and designing attractive and age-appropriate instruments considering VYLs' L2 learning contexts at primary level in Turkey, their immature cognitive skills as well as low level of foreign language knowledge. The third

one is the analysis of items carefully using point-biserial correlation in EPVT and item discrimination analysis for performance-based assessment tool.

### **3.2.3. Interview Questions**

L2 education programs at pre-primary level consist of both L2 achievement targets including how VYLs progress in the target language and affective aims such as increasing VYLs' attitudes, motivation, anxiety, self-confidence and willingness to communicate. To illustrate, in Cyprus, Poland, Hong Kong, Malta and Czech Republic affective aims (i.e. fostering positive attitudes toward target language) in L2 teaching to VYLs were among the main objectives in their curriculum (Sowa, 2014; Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2013; MoYES, 2018; Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010). Related to this, Prabhu (2009) put forward that early L2 education has important contributions towards young children's positive attitudes towards other languages, language learning process and awareness to other cultures. Based on this explanation, besides the aforementioned achievement targets, the ECEPT also identified some affective aims like the development of VYLs' positive attitudes towards foreign language learning. In achieving this aim, it is highly important to identify their perception about the aims of L2 learning practices and the most liked/disliked activities, strategies and materials or supportive factors during the learning process and to determine their attitudes towards learning a foreign language.

Whereas achievement targets defined in the newly-designed English education program were assessed by the researcher with formal and informal assessment tools mentioned above, very young learners' thoughts and feelings about the process and elements of learning English were evaluated with interviews. Barnes (2010a, 2010b) emphasized the importance of individual debriefing interview sessions in which young children can answer the open-ended questions by using their own words in detail. The most important point in these sessions is to make the questions clear and understandable for VYLs by asking several times from different ways. Furthermore, data obtained through interviews is thought to be useful in this study in the sense that it allows VYLs to express most liked and disliked classroom activities and tasks and their perceptions of their English learning experience. The main reason why their ideas were elicited was to gain insights about what facilitates their L2 learning process and what encourages and



motivates in this process. This might be useful to assess the content and elements of ECELEP to help them introduce English more effectively in the early years. For these reasons, the semi-structured interview was designed in parallel with the literature review on studies (Elliott and Hufton, 2003; Nikolov, 1999; Nagy, 2009) investigating young language learners' perspectives on their L2 learning experiences and their attitudes toward this language.

In order to gather valid data, interview questions were prepared then the content, clarity and language appropriateness of the questions were evaluated by two members of the ECE and two members of the ELT departments in a university. In the light of their comments, some questions were reworded, reordered and then some were simplified by taking into VYLs' level of ability and comprehension. The final version of the interview form was pilot tested with five pre-primary school children who did not participate in the main study. The analysis of the pilot data showed that order and clarity of the questions were appropriate and no changes were required. Because of the fact that interviews with children need to be short depending on their age and proficiency level (Nikolov, 2016), five questions were prepared with the aim of getting more detailed information about children's L2 learning experiences. This semi-structured interview (see Appendix ? ) was conducted with the participants (N= 36) in experimental and control groups by the researcher one-by-one at the end of the treatment to observe some discrepancies between these groups.

### **3.3. Development of the Early Childhood English Language Education Program**

With the rise in the number of children who are learning English at pre-primary school level and the number of private pre-primary schools introducing English in a wide range of contexts in Turkey, the need for alternative approaches rather than traditional ones and for age-appropriate methodology, materials and assessment tools has emerged. To put it more specifically, as English as a foreign language is increasingly being introduced into pre-primary school education and it has become common in more private pre-primary school curricula, a number of questions have naturally arisen: What curriculum is best for very young learners by taking their cognitive and socio-emotional

developments and their characteristics? What realistic age-appropriate achievement targets and language and communicative objectives should be included in the curriculum? What methodologies and approaches are suitable to teach L2 to VYLs? Which assessment tools and ways are effective on measuring children's linguistic and communicative language skills? In early English language teaching, the issue is not only necessarily the age of introduction, but also the identification of the most VYL-appropriate learning objectives, the selection of contents, vocabulary, activities and materials which are fully combined with the objectives and the determination of assessment targets, standards and tools which are valid and reliable (Hasselgreen 2013; Lourenco and Mourão, 2018; Widlok et al., 2011; Rich 2014; Enever et al., 2009; Rixon 2013; Nikolov, 2016; Hayes 2014). These are attainable by designing an integrated model of L2 education in the pre-primary setting that takes into account the principles and procedures of ECE and ELT simultaneously. Based on this, more functional and age-appropriate English language teaching program for children at pre-primary school level with the intention of making language education more learner-centered and effective was planned and designed in an 'experientially appropriate' manner. The process of development of ECELEP was explained under five headings below.

### **3.3.1. Identification of Objectives**

In an attempt to set down the learning objectives while devising a foreign language program, the starting point is to notice the language learning model which is found in pre-primary education considering the general educational system. Regarding this, Nikolov (2016) asserted that foreign language policy documents need to include realistic age-appropriate achievement targets which are in accordance to how VYLs improve holistically with high motivation and enthusiasm over years. Based on these explanations, it can be said that in Turkey where children can receive L2 learning experience at pre-primary level within limited hours and quite limited exposure to English language outside the classroom, the achievement targets and learning objects should be more achievable and modest. The L2 introduction at this level often takes place in classrooms combined with some aspects of National Early Childhood curriculum. Based on this, many of the activities children are involved in when they are informally learning English such as watching movies, cartoons and playing video games

are not appropriate in most classroom settings. They may be highly motivating, but they are also time-consuming. At home, learning two or three new words randomly or incidentally while playing games or watching television for three hours may be acceptable, but not at school. L2 learning at school should be designed to meet certain objectives which can be measured in terms of outcomes.

The other significant point that affects the purposes for introducing a new language at pre-primary school level is the role of learning L2 in a community, and an appreciation of its educational and cultural value. In Turkey, the introduction of an L2 is regarded as an enriching experience that brings a variety of benefits in terms of children's intellectual and linguistic development. Lowering the age of learning L2 a few times in the last twenty years and the educational innovations to enhance the quality foreign language education are the indicators of efforts shown in this area. However, the reasons why English education is not at the desired level in Turkey are asserted as the lack of age-appropriate high-quality programs, lack of appropriate teacher training and lack of qualified teachers (Kırkgöz, 2010; Haznedaar and Uysal, 2010; Şad, 2015; Değirmenci Uysal and Yavuz, 2015). To illustrate, in developing the foreign language education curriculum for VYLs, one should decide carefully about the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aims they need to gain considering their developmental characteristics (Edelenbos, et al., 2006). To put it differently, the success of the L2 program or curriculum prepared for children at pre-primary school level depends on the compatibility of the specified objectives and instructions with the pedagogical principles (Agullo, 2006; Cameron, 2001; Ytreberg, 1997).

The other important point for a successful early L2 program is the balance between child-centered and teacher-led activities (Mourão, 2014). To illustrate, teacher-centered instruction instead of a learner-centered one, overloaded programs instead of flexible ones and inadequately-planned initiatives instead of detailed-planned ones lead to worse results such as VYLs' negative attitudes toward language learning process and low level of motivation and learning (Edelenbos et al., 2006). Based on this, ECELEP consists of age-appropriate and cultural relevant objectives related to the comprehension and production of L2 and communication basically in target language as well. All these objectives can build the foundation for later L2 improvements. Besides, increasing

children's positive attitudes which are defined as "openness and curiosity towards an unfamiliar language" (Byram, 1997), facilitating VYLs to interact successfully with teacher and peers, and enhancing understanding and motivation towards target language and culture are among the other objectives of ECELEP. These objectives mentioned above are mostly in alignment with the reasons and goals underlying the introduction of languages in the early years around the world (European Commission, 2011a; Beacco et al., 2010).

The other critical issue in determining the goals and objectives of foreign language learning at pre-primary level is the amount of time allocated to EYL in early education. Regarding this, the report published by Eurydice (2017) revealed that the hours for learning and teaching a foreign language is quite modest when compared to the total instruction time for the entire pre-primary curriculum around the world. Similarly, Johnstone (2019) offered three different time allocations which are 'Modest Time', 'Significant Time' and 'Substantial Time'. He explained that these three different time allocations are not about 'time' alone. In each case, 'time allocated' is only one of several factors. Johnstone (2019) advocates that if the objective is to generalize EYL across an entire country, then the most feasible option is the 'modest time' approach. According to this approach, there are 1-3 hours per week of EYL and therefore time for exposure to English is limited. As for Turkey where English is taught as a foreign language in limited lesson hours per week in many state run and private pre-primary schools, it can be said that EYL at pre-primary school receives a time allocation that is quite 'modest'. In many classes there are few children who have acquired some fluency in English outside the school. From this point of view, having clear and achievable aims for the 'Modest Time' approach, which certainly should include some progression in English language but also the general development of the child (e.g., social, intercultural, cognitive) are so vital (Johnstone, 2019).

Considering the explanations given so far about the issues and conditions having an influence on the process of defining the objectives of language programs and the currently available frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Global Scale of English Learning Objectives and lastly the early years second/foreign language programs used in other countries, the general

objectives of ECELEP that are generated bearing in mind VYLs' linguistic, affective, cognitive and communicative needs can be listed as:

- raising VYLs' awareness of English
- developing VYLs' listening and speaking skills in English
- developing VYLs' receptive and productive vocabulary
- creating facilities through a wide range of methods and materials
- fostering VYLs' English language as a communication tool to interact with others
- encouraging VYLs to communicate in English with a few words by using basic structures.
- promoting positive attitudes towards English
- providing opportunities for both their cognitive and linguistic development
- increasing VYLs' interest and motivation towards the English language
- setting up meaningful contextualized learning activities
- developing receptive skills through listening activities
- developing expressive skills through speaking activities
- developing motor and communication skills through multi-sensory and interactive activities
- laying the foundation for other L2 learnings

Based on these goals stated above, it seems clear that L2 objectives in ECELEP converge with the National Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Turkey to cater to the needs of L2 learners. The fact that objectives in ECELEP are holistically in conjunction with all areas of child development – physical, cognitive, emotional, personal and social as it was suggested by Mertin and Gillernová (2010) is one of the indicators of this situation. To illustrate, the activities -chants, stories, songs, role-play-games, arts & crafts and thinking skills- which are compatible with interests of 5 and 6-year old children are designed for ECELEP to facilitate the learning by providing repeated exposure to the target vocabulary and structures in different formats. Furthermore, in ECELEP the main objectives are developing VYLs ' listening and speaking skills slowly and accurately, encouraging using all of their senses to receive and reproduce the language, stimulating children to think and process necessary information through a number of activities and developing the memory via music, movement, stories and games. In addition to these, developing and encouraging an open and inclusive attitude to other languages are among the affective objectives of ECELEP. All these general and specific goals stated above revealed that the newly designed

program (ECELEP) encompasses comprehensible and functional objectives that integrate two disciplines, namely ECE and ELT. They also highlight the importance of the compatibility of actual needs and issues of early L2 learning in EFL setting with the general goals of national Early Childhood Education program.

Taking as a springboard early English language teaching curriculums at national and international level, it can be said that the other important step after defining general goals is to determine learning objectives, in other words, language descriptors (can do statements) that give a detailed description of learners. In the course of developing learning objectives for English language education at pre-primary school level, existing useful reference document such as the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) and Global Scale of English Learning Objectives (2015b) which set out a framework to guide L2 education at primary and lower-secondary levels are examined in a detailed way. However, the initial document was so comprehensive that illustrative descriptors enclosing broad age groups couldn't identify the learning objectives which are relevant to young children. They are for general English language learning objectives. This might not be relevant for children (particularly the youngest learners) who are distinctive from the other levels. For this reason, a new document in which the objectives are specific to a given age group and context taking into their development of competences and characteristics has newly been published in 2018 (Council of Europe, 2018). However, the learning objectives which are organized into two broad age groups, 7-10 and 11-15, are mostly relevant to "primary" and "post-primary" level learners excluding pre-primary level learners. This is confirmed with another explanation referring that the scope of this document is primary school children and accordingly 7 or 6 years old children are described as the lower threshold of this group in it. More specifically, the absence of learning objectives concerning very young learners referring to pre-primary level learners is emphasized in this document as:

The descriptors for pre-primary ages up to 6 years were not included due to scarcity of useable validated sources, but such work could be undertaken in the future (as cited in CEFR, 2018:10).

This revealed that CEFR has some limitations for ECELEP because of its generic character (Fulcher, 2004). The main characteristics of VYLs who have distinctive

features from adults show the need for age-appropriate learning objectives that are specific for them. In addition to this, Global Scale of English Learning Objectives for Young Learners was developed by Pearson English to meet the different types of learner by building upon the Council of Europe in creating the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001). However, the age range in this document is also between 6-14-year-old children. Thus, the learning objectives in CEFR and GSE Learning Objectives were used as a starting point, however, they were redesigned and recreated with the intention of describing or deciding about what VYLs can perform. As a result, building on the CEFR principles and GSE Learning Objectives, the learning objectives in ECELEP were determined by drawing on a number of ELT sources. Hakuta, Goto Butler and Witt (2000) highlighted the importance of determining functional descriptors (learning objectives) for VYLs by saying “they are not only a powerful instructional tool but also indispensable assessment tool for them as well”. The most VYL-appropriate learning objectives that were selected for ECELEP from CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) and Learning Objectives (Pearson, 2015a) and Early Childhood English Education Program for private pre-primary schools (MONE, 2016) are shown in Table 3.13.

**Table 3.13. ‘Can Do Descriptors’ for Beginner Level**

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listening comprehension  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ can understand very short simple utterances related to pre-determined themes in the program and daily classroom language when spoken slowly and clearly</li> <li>➤ can understand and use a basic range of words, simple phrases and standard expressions related to familiar themes in the program</li> <li>➤ can listen to and interact with the short stories in L2</li> <li>➤ can use the frequently used target words, expressions and short phrases determined in the program receptively and expressively</li> <li>➤ can participate in activities and tasks by following the classroom instructions given both in L1 and L2</li> <li>➤ can comprehend the meaning of familiar or new English words from visuals, gestures, mimicry or TPR activities</li> </ul> |
| Speaking and interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ can communicate using a basic range of memorized words and short phrases as well as gestures and actions</li> <li>➤ can interact in a simple way in play-based activities to be able to be involved</li> <li>➤ can answer simple questions on familiar topics using a word, few words or short sentences</li> <li>➤ can use basic classroom language</li> <li>➤ can repeat the frequently used words and expressions</li> <li>➤ can comprehend and sing 5-6 songs</li> <li>➤ can show a receptive and an expressive understanding of target vocabulary</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

As table 3.13 shows, the learning objectives are arranged in two skill areas –listening and speaking & interaction and the related ‘can do descriptors’ are listed above. In other words, these children who are very low L2 level are expected to be able to do more in the fields mentioned above because of their literacy skills. Due to their developmental characteristics about illiteracy, the learning objectives for reading and writing in the target language are not included. All in all, in developing the assessment tools (EPVT and performance-based assessment) and designing the activities and tasks for each unit in ECELEP, these learning objectives were used as a framework.

With these key objectives and learning objectives in mind, the themes and topics in the instructional materials that were matched with the ones listed in the National Early Childhood Curriculum (MONE, 2013) were determined after a close scrutiny of the relevant literature and related textbooks, course books and the language education curricula at pre-primary level in different countries.

### **3.3.2. Selection of Themes and Target Vocabulary**

In the context of selection themes, target vocabulary and structures for ECELEP, the following steps were employed:

- With a view to determine what VYLs should know about the target language, themes and topics listed in Early Childhood English Language Program for Private Institutions (MONE, 2016) and typically used in instructional materials, coursebooks and textbooks were taken into consideration. A number of themes - animals, plants, feelings, family, body parts, health and food, weather, clothes, seasons, vehicles, etc.- were derived from the related instructional materials and curriculum and several themes that were central to the development of all children were determined.
- Piaget’s (1926 / 1930) well-known stage theory of cognitive development certainly made a tremendous impact on deciding the age-appropriate themes and vocabulary. According to him, the suitable format for the young children who are in pre-operational stage is a thematic development based upon the familiar subject. One of the significant benefits is that VYLs who are introduced English through some specific themes in a contextualized way have some opportunities to foster their linguistic and communicative skills instead of introducing target vocabulary as isolated items (Lourenço and Mourão, 2018). The other advantages were indicated by Angi (1999), Reily and War, (1997) that thematic units ensure VYLs to recycle the target language by focusing on content and



communication at the same time. Based on this, ECELEP is designed as six themes.

- It is well-known that each child is influenced strongly by their cultural background, first language, educational background, and type and amount of preparation or prior experience. Based on this, it can be said that very young children's attention and achievement in L2 is determined by these factors. To illustrate, children's familiarity with the themes and subjects in previous has influences on their ability to take part in a L2 task successfully. McKay (2006) entitled this familiarity as "topical (or background) knowledge" referring to familiar and concrete subjects. Young children's topical knowledge relies on their developing knowledge of the world. The growth of learners' topical knowledge can be seen at four conceptual levels (Billows 1961). The first and innermost level represents what learners can see, hear, and touch directly. For example, the topics -"colors, classroom objects, toys, body parts, etc"- can be given as an example to this category. The second level represents what the learners know from their own experience, their daily life, what they have seen and heard directly but cannot see or hear at the moment. Examples of themes and topics within this level include self, family and friends, home, fruit & vegetables, clothes, animals, etc. The third level represents what the learners have not experienced directly, but what they can recall with an attempt to imagine, with the help of pictures, dramatization, charts, and plans. Examples of themes and topics within this sphere include literature, events of general interest, and topics related to other subject areas. The fourth level represents what is brought into learners' minds through the spoken, written, or printed word alone. Among these four levels, the first two levels are suitable to the present study due to the fact that familiar or too-concrete content makes it more comprehensible and meaningful for VYL to maintain attention and acquire in the target language. On the other hand, the first two levels are quite apposite to the present study considering the children's cognitive development and their psycho-social needs as well. Regarding this, Kail (2010) indicates that young children are more likely to maintain their focused attention when the more salient lesson content familiar to the children is used in L2 lessons. In the same vein, Ellis (1985) emphasized that input can be made comprehensible by the use of structures and vocabulary the learners already know. For these reasons, the themes and target language are selected for ECELEP as a close scrutiny of both the programs of National Early Childhood and English Language Education only for Private Institutions.
- In addition, CEFR suggests appropriate communication themes for young children including personal identification, daily routines, leisure activities, fruit & vegetables, animals and the weather (2001, p. 52). In addition to this, following the coursebooks designed for very young language learners is also a

safe way to be ensured about the common age-appropriate themes in this area. The analysis of well-known coursebooks from Oxford, Cambridge, Pearson, Helbling Languages, Macmillan and Richmond publishers – My Little Island (Dyson, 2012), Cookie and Friends (Harper, Reilly and Covill, 2011), Hooray! (Gerngross and Puchta, 2012), Cubby House (Palacio and Villareal, 2018) Playtime (Selby, 2011), Learning with Ollie (Salvador, 2016) also revealed that there are common topics and themes including toys, food, clothes, body parts, animals, etc. in coursebooks, especially in their first levels. This is one of the indicators of the convenience and relevancy of very basic certain themes which are aimed at teaching kindergarten children. Taking all these issues into consideration, six themes that were relevant to children at pre-primary school level were selected.

After deciding these themes by following the procedures above, the next stage was to specify the target vocabulary and structure. In doing this, following criteria were used for inclusion:

- In English language education, content has been divided into language systems (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and discourse) and skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading). In this study, considering the VYLs' characteristics and learning context, ECELEP focuses on receptive and productive vocabulary from the first group and at the same time listening and speaking skills from the second group.
- Abstract concepts and vocabulary simply cannot be conveyed through obvious gestures, pictures and commands. Regarding this, Fisher (2005) pointed out that VYLs who are pre-literate learners have difficulty in expressing themselves other than their L1. Besides, their ability to use a dictionary and use gestures to be able to understand the meanings of target vocabulary is also immature. Similarly, Harmer (2015) indicated that very concrete vocabularies which are not the most general and most specific level are more useful for VYLs who are 5-6 years old children. For this reason, the selection of vocabulary and theme that are more abstract and remote from their immediate experience are not included. Instead, the concrete words or structures that can be clarified with gestures, visual aids or pictures are included.
- Target vocabulary from each theme was presented in context rather than as isolated words or lists to make the L2 learning meaningful. To illustrate, a target word 'nose' is used in songs, stories, drama activities, art and craft activities and thinking skills activities in ECELEP and thus, VYLs improve their listening and speaking skills by using the target language repeatedly in a fun and contextualized way.

- One of the main critical issues in the VYL vocabulary learning is selecting high-frequency words as a starting point (Nation, 2013; National 2006). Equally important, choosing age-appropriate vocabulary that the children find meaningful is so important.
- The other critical factor is to selecting age-appropriate vocabulary considering the children's cognitive development. In this process, Cameron (1994, 2001)'s classification (see Table 2.8) is taken as the basis. He suggests that basic level concepts such as cat, hat, apple, etc. which are not the most general and specific concept should be introduced for beginners who have limited or no target knowledge.
- Finally, in order for children to know a word, it is vital to know its form, meaning and use, both productively and receptively (Nation 2013; Schmitt 2008). Children learn L2 vocabulary incrementally. This means that words are learned little by little over time. On the basis of the idea of incremental process of knowing a word, variety of activities and games were designed to practice the form of target vocabulary, to guess the meaning of words with picture identifications and visual aids and to know the use of the words as phares or in a sentence such as "put on your jacket, pink trousers, I have two eyes, etc."

After the process of deciding the themes and target vocabulary for VYLs, they are categorized carefully. In achieving this, the most important point is recycling the new language structures in different contexts over and over again.

### **3.3.3. Theoretical Basis for ECELEP**

The idea that L2 learning is achieved through the active and meaningful use of language provided the basis for the development of ECELEP's language pedagogy. Equally important, the philosophy of developing thinking skills and providing optimal input and meaningful tasks that help communicative language teaching and thinking skills development also constitute the basis. As a matter of fact, VYLs can learn the target language with a relevant and meaningful content through which they can practice L2 efficiently (Akcan, 2010). Thus, ECELEP was arranged in such a way that it allows children to develop foreign language skills, knowledge and attitudes by providing the active and meaningful use of language.

The theoretical concepts underlying this program are primarily grounded in developmental theories (Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, Vygotsky's Theory

of Sociocultural Learning, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, etc.). Furthermore, framework of ECELEP is a synthesis of important theoretical perspectives concerning child development referring to the understanding of who VYLs are and foreign language learning referring to the understanding of how to teach VYLs.

One of the key principles of ECELEP is 'comprehensible input' described by Krashen (1985) as the state of the learners' understanding of the meaning, but which is nevertheless slightly above their own production level. To put it differently, any new language shouldn't be too difficult or the children will not be able to draw on what he or she knows in order to make sense of it. In this sense, VYLs are supported by teachers using gestures, visuals and repetition in ECELEP. However, translating the words from the target language to VYLs' mother tongue is not an effective and efficient way of learning L2 to be able to comprehend and use the target language. Secondly, VYLs need to make sense of what they see and hear in the target language, for this reason, themes and vocabulary selection and stories need to be in line with familiar subjects. In addition, some instructional materials, namely flashcards, pictures, puppets, realia and toys can be used to make the meaning comprehensible. Some significant points in ECELEP such as using exaggerated intonation to attract the VYLs' attention during the activities, repeating the key words frequently, emphasizing target words with some instructional materials or body language, incorporating familiar themes, keeping sentences short and grammatically simple in stories and songs are taken into consideration.

On the other hand, Audio-lingualism (Williams and Burden, 1997) (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) which is one of the behaviorist theories of learning suggested that much L2 learning is the result of the constant repetition phases and rewarding correct production, thus, children become conditioned into learning the language automatically. Although this method has been criticized because of being more teacher-centered and abstaining from real or realistic language, it is noted by Harmer (2007) that drilling including choral and individual repetition of target words, phrases or sentences is still a useful technique for beginners who are low-level children (Harmer, 2007). In the same vein, Nation (2013) asserted that conscious focus and controlled repetition of target vocabulary in the class helps the development of the word knowledge necessary for

productive use. While doing the activities related to Audio-lingualism method, the necessary repetition for target words retrieval and memorization is provided by taking the characteristic of VYL who imitate and repeat the sounds of the target language (Slattery and Willis 2001).

The theoretical background of this program is also based on Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method (Asher 2009) that involves the giving of commands to which children react. Asher (2009) believed that children's first language learning process mostly depends on the commands directed at them, so second or foreign language learners can benefit from this, too. Based on this, it can be said VYLs learn best when comprehend the target language and this is accessible by relating meaning to movement, which has a positive effect on children's physical and cognitive development. TPR involves children listening and actively carrying out movements related to what they hear. Hence, TPR and miming which are considered to be effective ways to reinforce meaning during the L2 input processes are incorporated into ECELEP.

As well as the other traditional methodologies such as Audiolingual Method and Total Physical Response Method, the theory that lies behind the ECELEP is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in which VYLs focus on both linguistic and communicative skills. In this sense, the purpose is to prepare the VYLs for interactive and communicative activities in which they learn and practice the target vocabulary and structures by establishing the necessary links between forms and meanings. The essential belief in CLT is that for young children plentiful and meaningful exposure to L2 through role-play, simulation, storytelling, drama or games is so important that they can be active participants in this process. In order for VYLs to be truly active in L2 learning process, they should have a desire to communicate through these activities which are needed to have a purpose for communicating through meaningful and authentic tasks (Xia, 2014; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Considering the level of participants (absolute beginners at pre-primary level) and learning environment (EFL context) in the study, a variety of activities that trigger a desire for children to communicate in a basic level were included to improve their ability to communicate by promoting necessary vocabulary knowledge. ECELEP's different strands of what to teach (words, phrases, utterances as well as sentences about age-appropriate level

themes) and how to teach (TPR, songs, stories, games, art and craft activities, thinking skill activities, role-plays) Harmer's trilogy of teaching sequence: Engage-Study-Activate as well as CLT (with meaning-focused communicative tasks) makes the learning process and sequence effective and influential.

It is evident from the explanations above that theoretical and methodological basis of the newly designed program is 'eclecticism' which refers to deriving the best elements and doctrines from different ideas, methods and approaches (Rivers, 1981). In other words, certain aspects of theories and methods related with early foreign language education constructed the theoretical framework of ECELEP. Believing that children need exposure, motivation and opportunities for use, and acknowledging that different children have different learning styles and sequences, ECELEP mixes more communicative or age-appropriate elements from all these theories and methodologies, and uses a judicious blend of the ideas and elements of them. Finally, all the themes and English hours in the program were presented in a sequence offered by Harmer (2007) as Engage-Study-Activate.

In Harmer's trilogy of teaching sequence, 'E' stands for "Engage" which points out arousal and affect which is one of the vital ingredients for successful leaning. Harmer (2007) asserted that if the children's minds and hearts can be brought into service and focused on the themes and tasks which are intended to be taught, learning and teaching becomes much better. In other words, if the children should be engaged emotionally, they become more curious, passionate and involved. For this reason, certain activities such as stimulating flashcards and pictures, games (depending on the age of the learners and type of game) , music, role-plays, arts and crafts activities and thinking skills and some materials such as puppets, accessories and realia were planned and incorporated into the program to attract their attention and provide involvement and activation. On the other hand, 'S' stands for "Study" that focuses on the construction of language. In this sense, study activities include practicing the target language in different contexts. Finally, 'A' standing for "Activate" describes exercises and activities which are designed for children to be able to use the target language as freely and communicatively.

All in all, the English hours in ECELEP were affected by various language teaching methodologies (mentioned above), each adopting a different view of learning process to be able to get the maximum benefit from the learning experience.

### **3.3.4. Properties of ECELEP**

ECELEP which is based on communicative and constructivist principles, have a variety of activities and tasks which ensure the VYLs to be active in their L2 learning process. Based on this, constructivist principles in this program intended to provide learning as a construction of English knowledge with the help of games, drama, songs, stories, music, role play, flashcards, arts and crafts and TPR (Marlow and Page, 1998). With these methods that are appropriate to their levels, the target vocabulary and structure is repeated many times in a receptive and productive way in the classroom. To illustrate, vocabulary and phrases for a specific topic are practiced by VYLs in games, stories, songs and dramas by hearing them in different contexts from the teacher or technology or using them to communicate. To maximize repetition of language by presenting the target words and structures in different ways facilitate vocabulary acquisition and words recognition. In relation to this, Brown (2000) states that in the communicative classroom, children eventually use the language productively and receptively in unprepared contexts.

One of the distinctive features of this program is involving drama and role-play games which are part of the repertoire of meaningful practice activities and materials; in this way, very young learners can engage in "real" communication. In relation to this, Doff (1990, 232) asserted "role play is a way of bringing situations from real life into the classroom". By simulating reality, they allow very young learners to feel that they are really using the language for a communicative purpose. This, in turn, contributes to children's confidence in their ability to use English. It can be said that role-plays which allow teachers to support learning in environments are also fun and motivating for children. For instance, jungle role-plays where the children get into the different animal roles work well for less-controlled practice of telling animal names and animal related words and phrases.

It should be kept in mind that ECELEP is a scheduled foreign language program which is pointed out by McKay (2006) as the most common type of foreign language program in pre-primary and primary schools. In these programs where the teacher is often the only proficient speaker and opportunities for L2 use, achieving optimal levels of L2 use is particularly important. In achieving this, the background knowledge of VYLs in their mother tongue is so important that it stimulates and fosters L2 language development. It is well known that there is positive correlation between L1 and L2 development. Concerning this, Krashen (2003) puts forward that the successful English language education does not damage and weaken VYLs' first language development. All these suggest that children can benefit from EVYL in pre-primary schools only if the security of the environment and first language continuing development are ensured. For these reasons, ECELEP can give an opinion to teachers and very young learners who are in a wide variety of EFL contexts. It is suitable for:

- VYLs in state run pre-primary schools
- VYLs in private pre-primary schools which have scheduled foreign language program
- VYLs in language awareness programs or introductory programs

As for the frequency and intensity of exposure to English, Pinter (2006) has suggested short but frequent English hours for VYLs. To illustrate, she has indicated that 30 minutes English hours every two days are much better than one or two hours English courses in a week at this level because of their short attention spans and their enthusiasm to repetitions. While VYLs are learning a new language, how much VYLs expose to the target language and how often they interact in that language through activities and tasks in the school are significant points. On the other hand, due to their limited span of attention which is one of the common characteristics of these age groups almost all around the world (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell Hill and Pincas, 2003; Cameron 2001; Pinter, 2006), English learning hours should be short, however, they should be steady. Based on, it can be said that VYLs' exposure to English during thirty to forty minutes each day can be optimal. Based on this, the duration of the English classes are determined 40-45 minutes for them.

The selection of subjects was based on the National Early Childhood Curriculum for pre-primary schools (MONE, 2013) and the National Framework English curriculum



(MONE, 2016) for only private pre-primary schools. In addition to this, some of the methods to teach English to VYLs- songs, storytelling, thinking skills activities, role-play, drama, arts and crafts activities, games and parental involvement- are in line with both early childhood and English language teaching methods and techniques. Therefore, integrating not only topics but also teaching methods and techniques from the ECE curriculum into VYLs' English education at the pre-primary level facilitate the L2 attainment as a result of the practices or subjects that VYLs are familiar with. One of them is that young children can acquire the target words and phrases easily with the help of intrinsically motivating contents with which young children are familiar in advance. Related to this, Rolstad and MacSwan (2014) emphasized the positive and supportive influence of the prior knowledge of target words, phrases and sentences in first language on L2 learning process. On the other hand, the familiar and entertaining age-appropriate methods offers opportunities to acquire L2 skills with ease without losing their attention and becoming bored. When considered from this point of view, it can be said that this study might bridge the gap between ECE and ELT.

As well as the teachers' L1 and L2 use at pre-primary level, the VYLs' L1 and L2 language use is also taken into the consideration. In EFL setting, VYLs who are beginner-level children with little or no knowledge of English are not expected to use English in all the activities and tasks. Such an expectation can harm VYLs who are emotionally engaged and self-confident in L2 learning. As mentioned previously, they have a natural tendency to participate in child-friendly and play-based activities that require to work individually, in pairs and in groups in the classroom. This tendency and enthusiasm can be damaged if they are forced to use English all the time. When their answers are examined carefully, it is seen that some part of their output is Turkish and some other part is English, which is called as 'codeswitching' in L2 acquisition literature. In order to achieve VYLs' emotionally, physically and intellectually involvement into the L2 process, age-appropriate activities and language teachers are required to provide a safe environment in which VYLs can try to improve their listening, speaking and communication skills. To illustrate, teachers' praise, feedback and reinforcement orally and with gestures are so valuable that VYLs feel motivated to maintain and complete their activities with enjoyment and enthusiasm and they do not worry about their mistakes. All in all, there should be a balance between the use of L1

and L2 at pre-primary level without ignoring one of them to encourage VYLs and make the L2 process comprehensible when it is needed.

The EFL methodologies used in ECELEP are both practical and enjoyable. With the use of suitable methods and techniques, VYLs' natural inquisitiveness can be successfully integrated into English education at this level and thus, they can be encouraged to involve in the L2 learning process recurrently in the classroom. The diversity and congruity in methods and activities results in children's involvement in the foreign language learning process inspiring by using all five senses effectively. Apart from creating a pleasurable and exciting learning environment, these communicative activities are also extremely important in terms of providing active participation of children, freedom to use L1 and implementation of authentic performances leading to considerable improvement in their receptive and expressive skills. Ultimately, this issue which makes foreign language process more effective allows VYLs to enjoy the English class and be motivated to actually use English.

In the absolute beginner's class, revision activity provides young children an opportunity to recall the previous knowledge (i.e., revision of what kind of animals, what type of clothes) with a variety of familiar activities. This revision process allows children to remember the target subjects learnt so far, as well as increase VYLs' self-competence and self-confidence. This revision is a kind of repetition which provides them to come across this language by re-using and re-formulating what they have learnt. It is well-known that the more repeated encounters young children have with it, the better chance they have of remembering and being able to use it. For these reasons, some tasks and activities are repeated in revision sections which are at the beginning of each class (10 minutes) and at the end of each week (20 minutes).

In the scope of this program, the use of rhythmic chants and colorful transition cards which were introduced in the warm-up week were suggested to be able to provide the transitions between the activities effectively and consistently. These rhymes are kind of a transition marker which is an instantly recognizable sign that signals a change in the lesson. These songs, also called "classroom management rhymes" were created by the researcher to remind the oncoming activity in the lesson and provide effective and enjoyable transitions between activities and tasks. They mark a change of activity and

the transition from one part of the lesson to another. “Settling song”, “storytime song”, “circle time song” “listen and dance song” as well as the colorful cards as indicators show the young children what type of activity is coming next and help the teacher run the program smoothly. Thus, in the application of this program, children prepare themselves mentally for the next activity with the transition songs and visual clues which gives VYLs a sense of predictability.

The main activities within this approach consist of introducing the target words and phrases through flashcards or realia, listening and acting out the stories together with an adult, singing a related mini-musical, playing action and memory games, designing and presenting their products through arts and crafts activities in the target language and practicing what they have learnt through videos and games with their family at home. In this way the necessary repetition for quick word retrieval and memorization is provided by supporting listening and speaking skills. In this program, words, phrases and sentences are organized into stories, songs, dramas, games and thinking skills activities and arts and crafts activities to create meaningful contexts, based on children’s real life experiences. The other reason for this is that very young children at this level need extensive support in the form of simplified input, slow clearly articulated speech, repetition, and help with meaning.

As for the assessment of early language instruction, two effective assessment tools including EPVT and PA were performed at the end of treatment to measure the effectiveness of program.

In sum, it is a pre-primary school level English education program which provides lessons and resources for very young learners to teach English on a very basic level as a foreign language. Each two weeks are called a “theme”. Thus, it can be said that ECELEP is divided into six main themes that focus on general topics: Colors, Clothes, Animals, Body Parts, Feelings and Fruit. Each of six main themes consists of 8 new target words and 2-3 phrases which are repeated several times in the stories, role-plays, arts and crafts activities, thinking skill activities, songs and games, with some routines and thus, children become familiar with them. The activities mentioned above which are sorted differently for establishing routines that help them make their learning easier and contribute to better classroom management and discipline. All these activities are

provided in a safe environment (warm-up session, revising of the last lesson briefly, maximum use of L2 and minimum use of L1 to support VYLs' English language learning) with attractive materials (real materials, English-talking toys, flashcards, games, masks, realia, puppets). Hence, listening and speaking skills are developed slowly and accurately in the target language by integrating all their senses with the help of functional and innovative activities. Details of these activities are discussed in the next section.

### **3.3.5. Pilot Treatment of ECELEP**

After principles, methods and techniques which are appropriate for VYLs are decided, theoretically justified and practically elaborated in the planning stage, the program needs to be piloted to be able to check its efficiency and practicality before the actual intervention. Regarding the measuring of the effectiveness of a program, Butler (2019) asserted that the researchers who are interested in young L2 learners paid regard to 'domain-specific effectiveness' (i.e., effectiveness on language learning) as well as 'age-related effectiveness' (i.e., effectiveness among young learners) of program or instruction. In achieving the first type, effectiveness was evaluated by two experts in ELT and two experts in ECE in terms of the suitability of content, instructional materials, methods, approaches, principles and assessment tools & procedures with VYLs. On the other hand, 'age-related effectiveness' was measured with VYLs who have specific characteristics and language learning development. The newly designed program for VYLs was piloted on a convenient sample of the target age group (5-6 years old children). The pilot sample was drawn from private pre-primary school which has almost five hours a week of L2 instruction, namely children attend one English class every day per week. Care was taken to ensure that the private language pre-primary schools including Content and Language Integrated Learning and immersion or bilingual programs were not included.

After the pre-primary school was specified for pilot treatment, the authorities in the pre-primary school were informed with a letter about the aims and stages of study. After they agree to take part in this treatment, parents of the participants were also sent an information letter to be able to get their consent about their child's participation to the study. Then, 4 themes from ECELEP that hadn't been taught so far in selected

kindergarten were identified and taught during four weeks. This pilot intervention was carried by not the researcher but the regular class teacher who taught 45-minutes English lessons every day due to formal requirements of kindergarten and concerns about teacher changes for a short period of time. Regarding this, it was asserted that for the pilot study it was quite important to have the class teacher with whom children were familiar as a helper or implementer to introduce the test or program because of the possible discipline problems arising and easy supervision (Szpotowicz and Campfield, 2016). Based on this, within a 45-minute lesson, the class teacher introduced the themes and target languages by paying attention to the order of activities and procedures. Training was intended to ensure that teacher made sense of the procedures, activities and teaching materials embedded in ECELEP and achieved the level of applying this program to her children successfully. In this sense, how the learning was physically embodied through gestures, voice and movement, how to start and finish the lessons, what kind of feedback was needed to be given and what the key points of presenting stories and songs were, how and how often L1 was needed to be integrated to the teaching process, what types of instructions were needed to be used by leading the tasks, how to grasp the children's attention, what the teacher's role was in the application of this program were explained to the class teacher by the researcher in detail. During the application of ECELEP in VYLs classroom, the lessons weren't video recorded due to the prohibition of the school management but reflections/diaries were recorded by the teacher after each English hour. The researcher got the teacher's systematic reflection on the implementation of the program in detail and the children's reflection of the whole learning process at the end of pilot treatment. As a result of this, the researcher gained valuable insights into VYLs' experiences, transitions between activities, flow of the lessons, duration of the tasks, efficiency of methods / instructional strategies and suitability of teaching materials and newly produced songs and storybooks. The problems encountered and the improvements made are explained as follows:

- The order of the activities in the program were reorganized considering the essential balance between both oral and visual activities and active and silent ones. In some units, the thinking skills activity which is a pencil and paper activity comes after the storytelling activity which is also a silent activity.

- Some of the activities were replaced with more meaningful tasks which engage young children emotionally and contribute to their cognitive development.
- The length of some songs which were newly-created in ECELEP were shortened by cutting their music considering children's limited concentration span.
- Short engaging activities were planned instead of longer ones, especially long arts and crafts activities considering children's short attention span.
- In the newly created storybooks, some of the expressions were replaced with clearer ones, i.e. "the child is jumping in the mud" instead of "the child is playing in the mud" to provide the consistency with the picture drawn by an artist. Besides, some pictures were drawn again to make expressions clearer and facilitate the vocabulary learning.
- As a result of the feedback given, the duration of the activities were reorganized.
- Each English hour was split into 2 sections of about 10-15 minutes each. In addition, the games and activities which the children enjoyed from previous lessons were repeated at the end of each week as a general review.

The program was finalized and prepared for actual administration by improving after the pilot treatment.

### **3.3.6. The components of ECELEP**

The starting point in designing ECELEP is to understand the diversity of VYLs in terms of their interest, needs, linguistic background and individual differences which are suggested by Lourenço and Andrade (2015). Based on this, ECELEP include a variety of activities in order to promote the development of VYLs in a foreign language. With respect to this, Nikolov (1999, 2002) gave the account that:

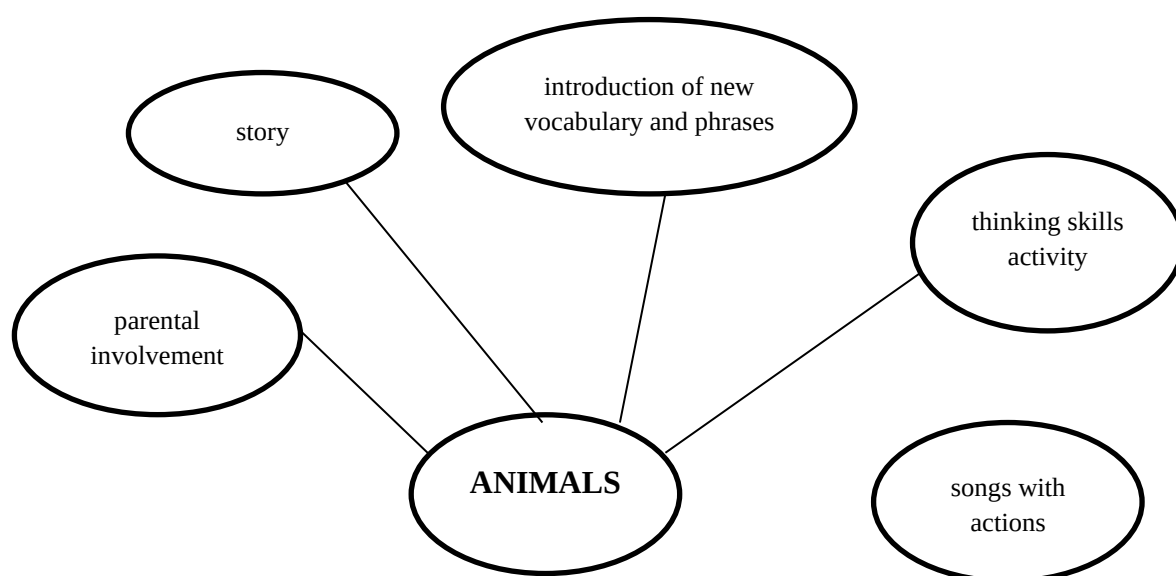
very young learners find pleasure in intrinsically motivating and cognitively challenging activities including singing songs, listening to and telling picture stories, playing games, acting out roles, dealing with art and craft and thinking skills activities which recycle familiar language and offer opportunities to learn new meanings.

The other potential explanation for including a variety of active and quite activities in the program could be due to providing equality and development for each child who has different learning styles and strategies. In this sense, Lourenço and Andrade (2015) indicated that using the same learning styles, strategies, activities and tasks in a curriculum for all children does not promote equality and development.

Research shows that foreign language education programs that include familiar themes from VYLs' mainstream early childhood education result in more successful learning outcomes because VYLs make some connections and their prior knowledge also makes the L2 learning easier (Nikolov, 2009a; Bacsá and Csíkos, 2016). Based on this, ECELEP offers age-appropriate themes and some activities and games with which VYLs are familiar. For example, the objectives about counting and identifying numbers in English provides bilateral benefits to VYLs. One of them is to help them develop in math skills and numeracy and the other one is develop in L2 linguistic skills. Besides, each unit has a song related with the content and target vocabulary. These songs integrating music and movement provide opportunities for VYLs to practice English.

Moreover, a number of arts and crafts activities also consist of benefits to VYLs such as developing fine motor skills by designing new products related to themes and developing linguistic skills by introducing or presenting this product to their peers at the end. Based on this, the arts and crafts activities are found at the end of each theme in ECEPT to practice and reproduce the target vocabulary and structure. As for thinking skill activities in ECELEP aim to cognitively engage the children in the task as well as develop and improve the skills they will need before and after kindergarten. All in all, VYLs have opportunities to acquire and practice the target language through a wide range of activity types which are well-planned and well-designed by the researcher in ECELEP based on VYLs' general developmental characteristics and their specific learning styles. A model of activities that are found in a theme called 'animals' is shown in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3. A Mind Map of Activities Sketched out for Each Theme**



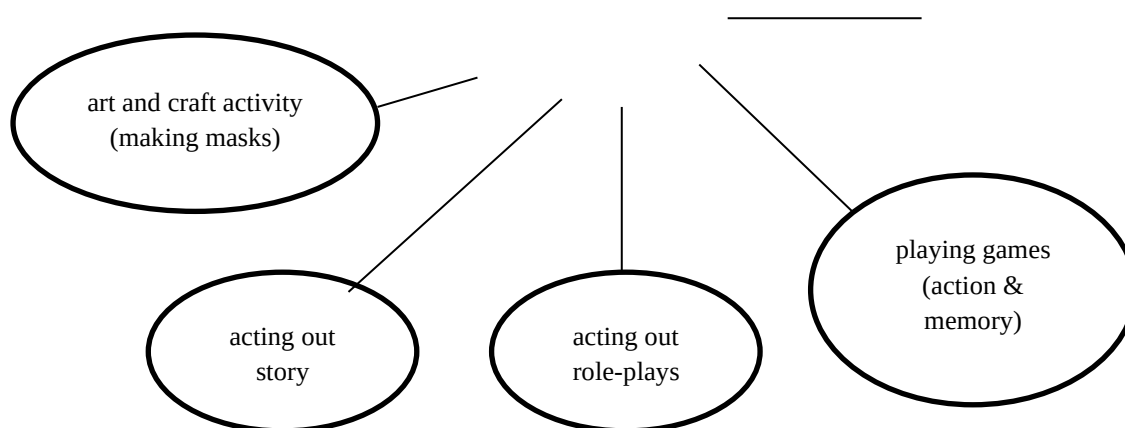


Figure 3.3 illustrates a model of activities that are found in lesson plans. It is of utmost importance that the components of ECELEP –songs, stories, thinking skills activities, role-play, drama, art and craft activities, games, parental involvement- are based not just on language but on all early learning activities where the focus is on development of the whole child, in parallel with the subjects and learning outcomes in their main classes. In the process of determining and deciding these age-appropriate activities for the purpose of English education program used in the early childhood period, the fact that children's having outer motivation referring to attractive and enjoyable learning environment and materials rather than inner motivation (Pokrivčáková et al., 2008) is kept in mind. For these reasons, each theme is presented to VYL through these enjoyable and achievable activities which are found in the same amount but in different order for each theme. To illustrate, a certain amount of routine in an early foreign language class is useful, thus children can practice vocabulary or language structures in a meaningful way based on the previous knowledge about the style and procedure of the activities. On the other hand, the arrangement and contents of the activities are quite different from each other in the themes and thus, the lesson plans are not static meaning that they are not sketched out as linear progressions. As it is seen in Figure 3.3, there is a spiral model that recycles L2 through different activities with an awareness of appealing to children's sense of fun and increasing their cognitive development. The following section describes each activity in detail.

### 3.3.6.1. Stories

According to the recent educational development in the early FL learning, creating a learning environment that is developmentally appropriate in terms of age-appropriate content, the child-centered approach and child-friendly instructional tools are highly



relevant. As is well-known one of these tools for VYLs is storytelling which is a highly recommended way to expose them to a language-rich environment both in L2 learning process (De Temple and Snow, 2003). Storytelling which is based on the communicative and interactive approaches is included in ECELEP to recycle the target vocabulary, phrases and sentences efficiently. The inclusion of storytelling into a program requires two important phases which include the decision of age-appropriate illustrated story books at the beginning stage and the decision of effective techniques in the implementation process of storytelling. These two phases are emphasized so that using storytelling becomes successful in early language learning process when stories are chosen according to the cognitive level of learners and integrated into program effectively (Tunçarslan, 2013).

For the first phase, the researcher preferred to create six different storybooks related with each theme by taking the language level of children, their likely level of motivation, their interests and need into account according to three criteria suggested in the literature (Ellis and Brewster, 2002; Mourão, 2009; Pinto, 2012). These criteria indicate three levels including theme-related level for instruction, difficulty level and age-appropriateness level. Theme-related level of a storybook refers to a suitable topic including high-quality photographing images that are appropriate to their development and age characteristics of the children and including target vocabulary and language structures that children can recycle them in the stories. The other criterion is the difficulty level of storybooks which refers to appropriate language level. To illustrate, the story should include a clear storyline that children can understand and a fun, motivating and memorable content that encourages children participation. The last criterion is age-appropriateness that refers to include helpful high-quality illustrations and plenty of repetitions. Related to this, Mourão (2003) emphasized the importance of repeated chunks of language that help young children learn the phrases or structures easily. Regarding this, the findings of McElwee's study (2015) showed that VYLs' L2 stories should contain much repetition of target words, phrases and sentences related to specific themes to be able to practice them in a contextualized way. This study also demonstrated that there should be more nuclear sentences, single words and phrases in the stories instead of complex sentences as a result of the typical of normal speech of children at these ages (McElwee, 2015). The elements of children's repertoire of

strategies for telling a story were also summarized as the use of single words; the use of syntagms, namely short phrases or words accompanied by an article or adjective, for example, 'My baby!', 'Feel thirsty!'; the use of expressions such as 'Nothing!', 'Look!', or 'Oh no!'. Taking the stories' topic, picture and vocabulary appropriateness and difficulty level to VYLs who are at the beginning of their foreign language learning process in an EFL class into consideration, it can be said that it is most unlikely to find a direct relation to the pre-determined themes in ECELEP in every aspect. For this reason, suitable storybooks -critical elements of a high-quality program- were created by the researcher and a professional artist in accordance with the literature review on various aspects of the creation of storybooks for children.

In the process of creating storybooks, some criteria suggested in the literature (Ellis and Brewster, 2002; Mourão, 2009) were taken into account. One of them is deciding the theme or the topic which gives children an opportunity to learn about a specific subject or practice the target vocabulary, phrase or sentences. On the other hand, the language level used in the storybook should be in optimal difficulty for VYLs who have distinctive features. One of the most important point here is the inclusion of target vocabulary, phrase and sentences which are pre-taught and introduced prior to storytelling time. With respect to this, Mourão (2009) set a criterion that young children should be familiar with about 75% of the language used in the story. The other point that needs to be paid attention is that it should have high quality illustrations, which help VYLs understand the story in L2. Lastly, it should have motivating content and a clear storyline that can be followed and grasped by the children easily. Keeping all these points in mind, six theme-related illustrated storybooks including linguistic and thematic contents, high-quality illustrations and supportive context for language learning were created by the researcher and a professional artist.

Owing to the fact that children are not likely to be able to read in early childhood period, high standard illustrations that are appealing to the children and aiding their general comprehension are quite important. Regarding this, Greenhot, Beyer and Curtis (2014) indicated that illustrations enhance young pre-primary school children's story recall in an interactive story reading context. Considering the necessity of conformability between pictures and words which are telling the story together, a simple

picture and word dynamics in which pictures confirm words and tell similar information was adapted. The illustrations were drawn by a professional artist working in cooperation with the researcher. In the stories the illustrations function as the extensions of the words; for this reason, they should be so clear that children do not need interpretation while reading. Keeping all these guidelines in mind, classroom sized big books with colorful and vivid illustrations whose language and themes were created carefully and intentionally to recycle target language and structures repeatedly were developed by the researcher.

The second phase of storytelling mentioned above is implementing certain strategies while reading the storybooks aloud to very young learners. This issue is quite important as well as creating and selecting the right storybook. Regarding this, Gillanders and Castro (2011) indicated that reading aloud to VYLs needs to be done in a way that allows the children to participate into the process interactively. In achieving this, they suggest some strategies in the literature. One of them is the use of flashcards, illustrations, mimicry, gestures and acting out the words to be able get maximum benefit (Gersten and Geva, 2003). In addition to this, VYLs' use of their L1 during the storytelling time in order to be actively and enjoyably involved in the process is important in terms of children's motivation and the level of children's comprehension as well. Based on these advantages, when VYLs used their L1 or used incorrect English, their contribution were validated and recast into English in ECELEP. Besides, children's L1 use was accepted and suggested to aid story comprehension and English vocabulary learning when they had difficulty in understanding some parts of the study (Lugo-Neris, Wood Jackson and Goldstein, 2010). The same storybooks are read several times during the week based on its benefits stated by Gillanders and Castro (2011) "it allows children to consolidate their learning and deepen their understanding of the words." As suggested by Arnold (2016), while reading the storybooks to children, heightened intonation to hold the VYLs' attention need to be used, short and grammatically simple sentences need to be preferred, key words need to be emphasized, target words and phrases need to be repeated frequently to make the listening more comprehensible. Furthermore, at the end of the story VYLs should be encouraged to retell the story within the scope of thinking skills activities and acting out the story within the scope of drama activities (Yang, 2015) as is the cases in ECELEP. Thus,

VYLs can develop their target vocabulary and listening comprehension. Apart from these general benefits, it has also some advantages such as fostering the pronunciation of words, the correct construction of sentences, and the appropriate use of common expressions in English.

With these issues in mind, it seems worthwhile to mention three major storybook reading styles suggested by Reese and Cox (1999). They all have an effect on VYLs' productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills. The first reading style is described as the describer style in which teacher as a reader is expected to interrupt storybook reading and points at some pictures and parts from the story to repeat and practice them. Besides, the second reading skill is described as comprehender style in which teacher as a reader in the classroom is expected to concentrate more on the meaning and content of the story. For this reason, he/she uses some instructional aids to help VYLs understand the story as well as pictures in the book to encourage VYLs to make predictions while reading the story. The third reading style is the performance-oriented style in which teacher as a reader in the classroom is expected to do all the explanations related to the stories at the beginning and read the story with no interruptions. The findings of this study that investigates children at different levels about which style fits best to them asserted that VYLs with a low level L2 learning experience need describer reading style to greater development in their cognitive and linguistic skills. Similarly, the study conducted by Silverman and Crandell (2010) suggested a new method which refers to read the stories loudly to young children in the classroom by acting out the words. They found out that this way contribute more vocabulary learning in L2 when compared with the method includes read-aloud without acting out the words. Keeping these study findings in mind, the newly created stories were read aloud to young children several times by using some techniques such as describing the pictures, using some visuals like flashcards to make the meaning clear, using intonation and varying the pitch and pace of reading, highlighting some key words or pictures. Thus, when the child is emotionally and intellectually engaged with the story, they become enthusiastic and self-confident in the L2 learning process. The researcher creates six age-appropriate storybooks and implements the storytelling activity depending on the guidelines suggested by Mourão (2003), Pinter (2017) and Cameron (2001) which are shown in Table 3.14.

**Table 3.14. Guidelines on How to Create Suitable Stories and Implement Storytelling Process in Three Stages**

| <b>In creating the stories</b>                               |                                                                        |                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| appropriate theme and content that can link into the program | language difficulty (an easy-to-follow sequence)                       | interactive opportunities (humor and lots of action)            |
| instructional objectives                                     | an appropriate length for the age group / level.                       | clear illustrations that support the understanding of the text. |
| a clear, predictable or familiar storyline                   | repetitive words and phrases                                           | fun, motivating and informative content                         |
| <b>In planning pre-reading activities</b>                    |                                                                        |                                                                 |
| singing a song ('storytelling time' song)                    | pre-teaching unknown vocabulary                                        | asking questions                                                |
| revision of target vocabulary related with story             | showing the cover and the title and talk about them                    | showing pictures related with topic                             |
| <b>In planning while-reading activities</b>                  |                                                                        |                                                                 |
| preparing the environment (silence, easily seen book)        | preparing the VYLs for listening (seating on the floor in semi-circle) | varying the volume or tone of the voice                         |
| using gestures, expressions and sound effects                | pointing to the illustrations total physical response (TPR)            | asking questions and encouraging VYLs to answer                 |
| <b>In planning post-reading activities</b>                   |                                                                        |                                                                 |
| choosing another title                                       | thinking skills activities (ordering pictures /sequencing events)      | playing games (memory & action games)                           |
| some arts and crafts activities                              | retelling the story with puppets                                       | reading or acting out the story                                 |

Table 3.14 suggests three different activities –pre-reading, while-reading, post reading activities- for a storytelling time based on the literature (Wright, 1995; Ellis and Brewster, 2002, Mourão, 2003). In planning a story-based English hour, it is significantly important to incorporate into the process carefully to attract and sustain VYLs attention. Although there are many options for pre-reading activities, limited activities can be listed for VYLs because of their age and L2 language level such as predicting what is going to happen through the title or a picture in their mother language, pre-teaching vocabulary, asking questions and playing games. Whereas while-reading activities include repeating and miming vocabulary, yes/no questions and predicting what is going to happen next, post-reading activities consist of choosing another title, ordering pictures/sequencing events, playing games, making mini-books,

retelling the story with puppets, reading or acting out the story. Based on this, storytelling process begins with revision of the vocabulary found in the story or talking about its title and ends with a thinking skills activity including ordering the pictures according to the story or acting out the story in the classroom in this study.

### **3.3.6.2. Thinking Skills Activities**

The widespread belief and idea based on the fact that all children learn a foreign language diversely encourages the educators and researchers to seek for the different approaches and methods. In other words, alternative language instructions that enhance learners' aptitude and cognitive ability profiles are necessary in order to maximize VYLs' potential for success. The most important point in the integration of alternatives into EVYL is that age-appropriate and familiar-like activities attracting their attention should be included. An example of this is thinking skills activities which are play-based, practical and challenging. The implementation of thinking skill abilities in teaching and learning of English at pre-primary school level provokes more positive learning experiences (Pinkham, Kaefer, and Neuman, 2012) and the development of the receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge skills. Similarly, Puchta and Williams (2012) and Puchta (2012) indicated that combining the teaching of thinking skills with introduction of foreign language has significant relevance for early L2 class as VYLs can achieve a higher level of cognitive and linguistic development through these meaningful and at the same time intellectually challenging activities. Based on this, thinking skills activities such as making comparisons, sequencing, ordering, memorizing, classifying, sorting and focusing attention (Puchta and Williams, 2011) are included in the program because children are familiar with the terminology and strategy from their learning process. Some samples of these thinking skills activities which are adapted from their mainstream education and literature (Langrehr, 2003; Thompson and Evans, 2005; Puchta and Williams, 2012; Puchta, 2012) to VYLs' L2 language learning process in ECELEP are shown in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4. Exemplar Thinking Skills Activities for Supporting VYLs' Cognitive and Linguistic Development**



As can be seen in Figure 3.4, one of the age-appropriate thinking skills activities was completing patterns which is meaningful and familiar to VYLs. In this task, the pictures of target words are sorted in a logical sequence and the young children are asked to complete the gap by drawing a picture of the missing word. At first a few minutes are given to the children to complete each row in the photocopy. When they complete the patterns, they read all the rows and solutions out together rhythmically. The activity can be extended by asking VYLs to read out by heart without looking at the worksheet and thus, children can revise and practice the target words, phrases and sentence structures via thinking skill activities.

To illustrate, two similar pictures that are related to the themes and target vocabulary are shown to VYLs. The pictures include several differences such as the placement or the colors of objects in the picture. VYLs are asked to find the differences between two pictures at the beginning and they are asked to recall them in target language at the end of the activity. Thus, VYLs can have some opportunities through these analytic visual perception tasks such as enhancing both their intellectual development and their

productive foreign language skills about the particular subject. More specifically, recognizing the differences between two pictures is related with cognitive side of development and expressing these differences in the target language in simple terms to practice of target vocabulary and phrases is closely related to linguistic development (Alexiou, 2005).

The other example for thinking skills activities is story sequencing tasks (See Figure 3.4) that develop VYLs' reasoning ability. In this task, six jumbled pictures related to the stories they have read in the storytelling time are shown and the children are asked to sequence the pictures in order to retell the story. The clues on the picture help VYLs to make the connection between the parts of the story. This activity has also two different benefits for VYLs. One of them is that this analytic task that requires VYLs to see the 'whole picture' from the parts to retell the story develops their conceptual and perceptual skills as well as linguistic development in L2 (Goswami, 1998).

Moreover, using odd-one-out tasks in which children were asked to select one picture that didn't belong with four others is really helpful for children in terms of their inductive learning ability and foreign language skills (Cameron, 2001). With this type of activity, VYLs make simple categorization by organizing thematic concepts of words in their mind first and then repeat them chorally and individually in the class with the basic words. Thus, practicing the target vocabulary in class can be done in an enjoyable and motivating way. This process is also important for learners to record vocabulary effectively, as well as to recycle vocabulary as much as possible (Alexiou, 2006a)

As it can be seen, certain thinking skills activities which are integral parts of many early childhood education curriculum can facilitate and develop young children's critical and creative thinking skills in tandem with providing them appropriate language support (Littlejohn 2016b; Westbrook 2014). Egan (1997) provides a good summary of the benefits of using thinking skill activities in young children's classroom:

This approach combines the teaching of thinking skills with foreign language teaching and helps with both the children's cognitive and linguistic development and at the same time gives the teacher plenty of opportunity to take the learners seriously.

Taking all the advantages into account, incorporating thinking skills activities (the pencil and paper activity) into early foreign language learning process helps both the child's



linguistic and cognitive development and at the same time provides children to achieve a deeper level of understanding (Puchta and Williams, 2011).

### **3.3.6.3. Drama activities**

The modern methods and approaches used L2 learning process at pre-primary level focus on more learner-centered and constructivist activities supporting the children's involvement rather than teacher centered ones. In this regard, drama activities are one of the most effective methods that develop young children's two basic skills -speaking and listening- in an active, communicative and contextualized way (Mattevi, 2005, Albalawi, 2014; Rew and Moon, 2013; Maley and Duff, 2005). Role-play which is another form of drama is highly influential in the EFL classrooms. In the related literature, various definitions exist (Via, 1987; Hubbard, Maley and Duff, 1984; Holden, 1981). Despite variations, all agree that drama as a teaching technique is "a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present" (Jones, Thornton and Wheeler, 1986). The basic building blocks of drama which are used as a powerful learning medium in the educational contexts can be listed under three headings (Wooland, 2010; Clipson-Boyles, 2012). One of them is the "role or character" referring to children's acting as if they were someone else, the other is the "narrative" indicating to follow a sequence of events or images in such a way that their order creates a meaning. Lastly, "using language verbally or non-verbally" during the drama activities can be the last criterion that forms a framework for the raw materials of drama. In this sense, drama techniques and practices which are implemented in the English hours at early years make the L2 learning process at earlier ages memorable and enjoyable and promote VYLs motivation and engagement to the process (Maley and Duff, 1978, 2005; Wessels, 1987). When taking into account that ECELEP's objectives focus on developing both VYLs' linguistic and communicative skills in English language learning by providing meaningful contextualized learning activities, which thereby increase VYLs' interest and attitudes towards English language, the relevance and importance of drama and role-play activities are well understood.

It is evident that drama is the broad term including a wide variety of techniques which are quite helpful for educators to involve young children who are coming to the classroom with a different background and lifestyle. More specifically, drama includes

various types of instructional activities such as drama games, role-playing, mime, dramatized storytelling, stimulation and improvisation in the literature (Davies, 1990). These techniques can be incorporated into the foreign language program at pre-primary school level properly considering their specific characteristics (Brandes and Phillips, 1990). An example for this is drama games which are described as short activities including different objectives such as introducing a new topic, encouraging children to interact and making them feel more confident. In the same vein, miming a short play without speech can also be used in early EFL class by creating a guessing game in which some children mime and the others try to guess in the target language.

Besides, role-playing, which is one form of drama, has some advantages such as making young children feel relaxed and fun in having an experience in L2 and feel self-confident in making mistakes by taking them away from rehearsing language patterns in English hours. While acting out role-plays, children can maintain interaction for a longer period since they feel a real need to communicate with the peers or teacher during the activity. From this aspect, incorporating role-plays into the program is engaging and memorable for VYLs who are taking different roles from stories or scripts. One of the important points in its application to much younger age children is that the participation in the role-play activities can be eased for that level with the use of some materials such as puppet, masks, costumes and toys (Brezigar, 2010). With regard to this, Richard Amoto (1996) emphasizes the importance of puppets and toys to encourage VYLs to act out plays or roles. Furthermore, dramatizing the stories by taking some roles after reading the stories several times can provide recycling of known target language in an enjoyable and productive way. Finally, improvisation is a spontaneous action without any script or rehearsal with minimal instruction or framework from the teacher. It can be a bit daunting for young children who need adequate warm-up activities and preparation before the drama activities. Given the scope of drama activities in the newly designed program, it can be said that the first four techniques, namely drama games, role-playing, miming and dramatized storytelling are more feasible in VYL's class. All these different types of drama activities are planned carefully and elaborately for ECELEP according to a step-by-step format suggested by Maley and Duff (2005) in Table 3.15.

**Table 3.15. The General Format for Drama Activities Used in Early L2 Class**

|             |           |                                                                                                                                |
|-------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aims        |           | the decision of the broad reasons for doing the activity.                                                                      |
| Focus       |           | the determination of the narrower, linguistic objectives                                                                       |
| Level       |           | the arrangement of the activities according to young children's level by drawing on whatever language they may be able to use. |
| Time        | refers to | the setting of the timing roughly                                                                                              |
| Preparation |           | the supplying of required equipment or material for the activities                                                             |
| Procedure   |           | the specification of the steps need to be pursued to implement the activity                                                    |
| Follow-up   |           | the suggestions to extend the activity                                                                                         |

As well as deciding the age-appropriate drama techniques, deciding and following a suitable format for activities are also vital. The standard format for activities offered by Maley and Duff (2005) (see table 3.15) is taken as the basis in planning and designing the drama activities in ECELEP. In this sense, the general aims of the all drama and role-play activities are providing multi-sensory learning experiences to VYLs by integrating listening and speaking skills in a natural way. Furthermore, drama activities integrating physical and intellectual aspects of learning in a balanced way are significantly useful in L2 learning process (Maley and Duff (2005). Furthermore, all types of drama activities in ECELEP aim at developing children's listening and speaking skills. More specifically, each drama activity related with different themes includes more specific and content-related aims such as recognizing numbers in relation to fruit, performing simple tasks through single words, phrases and short sentences related with feelings, practicing key words related with animals in a guessing game. The level of the activities selected from literature or designed by the researcher is arranged considering VYL learners' characteristics and English level in an EFL context. In achieving this, much more clear instructions, outstanding visual environment and functional visual clues and realia are used during the drama activities.

In addition to this, a limited use of L1 at the beginning of the drama activities is allowed until they comprehend the aims and stages of the activity and they become familiar with the target vocabularies, phrases or sentences to interact easily. Thus, young children become more motivated progressively to be involved in these activities. Regarding this, Maley and Duff (2005) emphasized the importance of judicious and selective use of L1 in foreign-language classes for drama work. On the other hand, although it is difficult to set accurate timings, the approximate timings indicating how much time should be

devoted to each stage is decided in the program. As for the preparation process, Maley and Duff (2005) emphasized the significant effect of the quality preparation process on both dramatic and linguistic product. Based on this, some visuals supporting what the researcher expresses such as pictures, flashcards, ppt, toys and content-related materials (masks, basket, toys apples, etc.) are prepared. Besides, even if drama activities are conducted with large classes, it is prepared with some procedures in mind that the target known words, phrases and sentences are recycled during the activities instead of the fact that new items are taught. The other procedure is about the teacher's role during the process of drama. It should be kept in mind that language teachers working at pre-primary level do not need to be a drama expert in order to incorporate some drama activities into the introduction of a foreign language process (Maley and Duff, 2005). Teachers applying the activities in ECELEP should give helpful and supportive feedback by being good humored and at the same time, they should be flexible by creating an encouraging atmosphere and using L1 when it is necessary. Lastly, some of the drama activities offer some extensions or alternative ways of doing the activity.

#### **3.3.6.4. Play-based Activities**

As a result of an increased interest in young children's L2 learning (Rixon, 2013), education and training providers in the world have devised different age-appropriate methods and techniques which are appropriate to children's age and characteristics. As it is well-known that "play" which is described as "children's work by Montessori (1972) has huge benefit and significance in an EFL class at pre-primary school level. In fact, many of the children are so enthusiastic about these 'language games' that they wanted to 'play' them repeatedly (Kersten, 2015). At this point, it is highly important to define "game" as a starting point due to the fact that there are many definitions available in the field of ELT. Among them, two definitions are accepted as the framework for this study. The first one belongs to Gibbs (1978, cited in Rixon, 1996) who defined a game as an activity in which children cooperate or compete to achieve the objectives following the imposed rules. The last one described "game" as an entertaining and engaging activity in which the young children are involved and practice what they have learnt mostly through the interaction with others (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 2006). Both definitions signal some common properties of games. One of them is that

games are defined as an activity through which children learn both language and content. Secondly, they include some elements of rules that prevent confusion in the class. Thirdly, games include some learning L2 goals specified in the educational program and reinforce the learning points by giving opportunities to practice them. The last but not the least property is that a game should be an entertaining, engaging and challenging activity where play and interaction takes place amongst the children.

Modern learning theories as well as major L2 learning and pedagogical approaches have supported the potential of play as a significant educational tool. As mentioned above, games are a form of play with goals and rules, and psychologists, early theorists and linguists have long paid close attention to the role of play in children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. Some of them who are Rousseau (1712–78), Pestalozzi (1746–1827) and Froebel (1782–1852) emphasizes the physical features of play such as the importance of physical development as well as gross and motor skills. In addition to this, some other early theories presented by Dewey (1859–1952), Montessori (1870–1952), Steiner (1861–1925), Piaget (1896–1980) and Vygotsky (1896–1934) (cited in Johnston and Nomad-Williams, 2009) concentrated mostly on the emotional and social functions of play such as interaction and collaboration. In addition to this, Piaget (1962) focused on the cognitive effects of play in which young children learn new things through assimilation and accommodation processes. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1962) emphasized the importance of play which is the key activity of early childhood enhances young children's development holistically. To illustrate, when children are at play, they make sense of the external world by engaging in dialogue with themselves or with others. In other words, through play, children engage in social interaction. More specifically, playing a game in L2 provides a zone of proximal development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (1962) and thus, young children improve their L2 knowledge with the help of social interactions with their peers or the teacher's support during the language games. More recently, theories associated with play view it as a holistic activity, for learner development within a social context. Keeping these definitions of play in mind, it can be concluded that play is a central feature of L2 learning in the early years, for these reasons play activities should be inevitably incorporated into early foreign language programs.

With respect to the advantages of using language games in the class, Gardner (2006) asserted that they are ideal vehicles for involving interpersonal, visual/spatial and bodily/kinaesthetic intelligences. Besides, Puchta and Elliot (2017) indicated that multisensory learning takes place while VYLs are playing language games in target language due to the fact that most of the games involve looking, listening and moving all at the same time. VYLs' sensory involvement into L2 learning process leads to emotional development and effective learning. As a result of this emotional and sensory involvement makes the language learning process memorable. On the other hand, Curtain and Dahlberg (2016) pointed out that language games provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for young children and thus, they can practice the target language in a fun way. Similarly, games provide a means through which children practice and experiment with language, as well as a real reason to interact with their peers and the environment (Lewis and Bedson, 1999). The other advantage of games is that young children learn the language and content through games by being involved in the L2 learning process (Moon, 2000) because of the motivation and fun existing in playing the games (Dunn, 2013). Similarly, Constantinescu (2012) summarized some benefits and properties of games as: (a) games build up young children's English repertoire in a non-threatening context (b) games enhance positive attitudes towards the language learning process (c) the procedures and objectives of games need to be identified (d) games can be adapted to different contexts and levels (e) the games in optimal difficulty level facilitate children's learning process

The critical issue here is to manage the balance between children's degrees of enjoyment and learning, because highly enjoyable games do not necessarily warrant learning (Butler et al. 2014). Therefore, the games are selected in ECELEP carefully according to certain characteristics such as "challenge, fantasy and curiosity" which are proposed by Malone (1981) to be able to create intrinsically motivating instructional environment. The games' being a 'challenge' means to include meaningful and achievable goals with optimal difficulty levels. The other characteristics -fantasy environment- refers to the fact that games should be fun and interesting. Finally, games including curiosity as a last feature constitute amazement about the target knowledge and by this way, VYLs have an opportunity to experience target language rather than merely study it. Regarding this, McKay (2006) put forward that the games providing

some opportunities to VYLs to foster their listening skills and speaking skills by engaging in interactions with their peers and teacher as well as using the target language need to be involved into early L2 English education programs. Similarly, Linse (2005) and Gozcu and Caganaga (2016) concluded that games and plays are a significant aspect of a child's development and language is a part of that play.

In the process of designing and developing “L2 language games”, the aforementioned properties and characteristics of games are taken into account. Based on this, goal-oriented games which are aligned with the objectives and contents L2 knowledge described in ECELEP and the principles of child development and pedagogy are selected and developed. Furthermore, these games include drill exercises that are quite important for young children and provide repeated use of language items during a limited period of time in an enjoyable and influential way instead of mechanical drills. Thus, children can sustain their attention and effort during the L2 learning process that is a challenging process for young children to practice L2 knowledge receptively and expressively (Pirrie, 2017). In designing and determining language-oriented and learner-centered games which can be regarded as central in the newly designed early foreign language program, some points suggested by Constantinescu (2012) are taken into account as follows: (a) games should have an aim such as motivating, practicing or revising (b) games should pay attention to the use of target vocabulary and phrase (c) games should have suitable content (d) games should keep young children's attention (e) games should be age-appropriate (f) games should be suitable to the physical conditions to the classroom (h) games should be in optimal difficulty level.

In the ESL and EFL literature, there are different classifications of games based on the aspect being analyzed. One of these categories is put forward by Hadfield (1998) as competitive and cooperative. Wright and his colleagues (2006) provide another classification of games depending on the young children's mental processes which take place while playing the game (e.g., the games in which children describing, ordering, remembering, identifying, etc.) Besides, the other categorization paying attention to the characteristics of games was proposed by Lewis and Bedson (1999) as movement, role-play, singing and chanting, card, team, board, guessing, drawing and dice games. Among these different types of games used in early EFL contexts, memory games and

movement (action) games which are child-friendly activities are specifically incorporated into the program to be able to practice target vocabulary, phrase and sentences receptively and expressively.

Flashcards are an incredibly useful and flexible resource for presenting, practicing and recycling vocabulary through memory games. In this sense, there are some useful tips for attracting VYLs' attention such as showing flashcards very fast and expecting to identify the key words or covering the flashcards and revealing them slowly to make them recognized. In addition to these, the other type of memory game is to show all the flashcards on the board and get children to repeat the words and then, ask for children to close their eyes and then some the flashcards are removed by the teacher. Besides, flashcards are ordered side by side and repeated together orderly. Then, the flashcards are removed by the teacher one by one and the children are expected to express it without saying. As it is seen, all these memory games include drilling, memory and identification activities and TPR activities. On the other hand, some action games like the "fly swatter game" "yes & no chair" are played with flashcards to practice receptive vocabulary in a fun way. In sum, flashcards are a great way to present, practice and recycle vocabulary. All in all, all types of games and learner-centered activities with flashcards provide young children with listening input within a meaningful context and with repetitive language that facilitates the children's mastery of the listening and speaking skills.

Adapted games from one culture to another are another example of language games. For instance, "Kurt baba" is an old and traditional Turkish game which is played by almost all of the children in early childhood period. One child becomes a wolf and sits in the middle of the class. The rest of the children make a big circle and turns around the "wolf" by singing a special song. After some brief communication between the wolf and others, children start to run away as a result of the wolf's answer. This widely used game is adapted to use in teaching English to VYLs by changing the music and the content. The advantage of using these types of games is that because young children know how to play this game in advance, they can practice the vocabulary, phrases and sentences in English easily and influentially. In sum, adapting some effective and enjoyable classroom games for young language learners at pre-primary school level by



adding some L2 targets is a practical and time-saving technique whose rules and procedures are known by most of the children instinctively.

To put in a nutshell, using different types of games as a teaching tool to transmit target language in an enjoyable way is amongst the most effective techniques used at earlier ages in the early FL programs (Puchta and Elliot, 2017) and in ECELEP. In addition, all these different games include different properties based on the explanations above. To illustrate, certain games are played both in teams and as a whole class. Although some of them consist a bit of competition, the others have cooperation for learning. Similarly, certain games in ECELEP are memory games and the others are action games which require movement. Lastly, VYLs are familiar with some of the games which are adapted from their mother tongue and classical games but some games are quite new for them. However, all of them have learning objectives related with ECELEP's general aims, are fun making the learning effective and visual cues and special materials making the language meaningful and thus children make sense of target language intuitively.

#### **3.3.6.5. Songs**

In the field of early L2 learning, there has been a growing body of researches about the activities that develop young children's two basic skills, namely listening and speaking. Regarding this, some of the findings of studies show that the use of games, puppets, stories, drama and role play enhance young children's speaking skills by providing them opportunity to use of more English and making them more relaxed and motivated (Linse, 2005; Haven 2000; Bland, 2015a). In alignment with these, young children's researchers (e.g. Coyle and Gracia 2014; Graham 2006; Lechel 2010) have found that teaching song-based activities provides memorable and enjoyable language practice, especially in fostering listening and speaking skills, understanding of basic nouns, aiding pronunciation, and learning and retention of vocabulary and structures over a shorter time period. In TEVYL, it is recommended to use enjoyable and content-related songs that entertain children and have an impact on more senses. Similarly, Pinter (2006) indicated that the rhythm and sounds of a new language are interesting and challenging for VYLs who enjoy practicing them by repeating the songs. Thus, young children's systematic exposure to target vocabulary and phrase through songs and chants provide opportunities for VYLs to become aware of the pronunciation of

language (Brewster et al. 2002) and to develop a speaking activity by taking the roles of characters in the songs (Mourão, 2014).

The common finding of the studies related to songs in L2 learning is that the songs play a significant role in providing a supportive and positive emotional learning development in different stages of childhood period (Medina, 1993; Spicher and Sweeney, 2007; Ting, 2002). The benefits of using songs as teaching materials in L2 process at early years can be examined into three headings, in terms of increasing motivation to learn, and promoting listening skills and supporting phonological awareness (Hare and Smallwoo, 2002; Sariçoban, 2000; Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy, 2002; Paquette and Reig, 2008; Bird, 2007 and Gromko, 2005). First and foremost, listening to songs and trying to sing in target language is a fun and engaging L2 learning experience that encourages to learn some words, phrases and structures and provides positive attitudes (Hare and Smallwoo, 2002; Sariçoban, 2000). Furthermore, the use of songs in English hours improve VYLs' cognitive skills such as their attention and long term memory as a result of the fact that children listens to the songs enjoyably and repeatedly (Paquette and Reig, 2008). Based on these benefits, the songs which can be used as authentic and enjoyable instructional tools in the classroom (Spricher and Sweeney, 2007) are incorporated into ECELEP to encourage VYLs to practice the target vocabulary, phrase and sentences inside and outside of the classroom.

The other advantage of the integration of songs into the L2 learning process is that songs contribute to fluency and meaningful language structures by providing a secure setting (Jensen, 2000). Secondly, it is well known that there is a close correlation between songs and language learning (Mithen, 2006; Patel, 2008). To illustrate, some activities such as singing a song, rhyming and chanting with suitable movements in the early years can help VYLs familiarize with how the target words are pronounced. In L2 literature there are many studies that mention about the benefits of songs especially in the earliest stages of foreign language learning. One of the benefits is that listening to the songs in target language repeatedly provides enjoyable learning of listening and speaking skills, thus VYLs have an opportunity to practice L2 language in a non-threatening context (Bird, 2007). The other benefit is stated by Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy (2002) as auditory and phonological awareness. On the other hand, VYLs

who are learning a new language in a kindergarten with music instruction during 4 months demonstrated more improvement of their listening skills when compared to young children in the control group. Lastly, selecting age-appropriate music and songs including the target vocabulary and structure is very important for building relevant vocabulary related to L2 learning objectives at this level (Ludke, 2010).

Taking into account all these benefits, the integration of songs in target language into English education program at pre-primary level is highly significant (Morphey, 1992; Anton, 1990). The importance of these songs in early childhood L2 learning process might be result from the developmental characteristics of VYLs who needs more listening input at those ages. In other words, VYLs mostly acquire a new language with the help of age-appropriate listening inputs which are clarified and supported with gestures, TPR, miming and visuals. For this reason, deciding on age-appropriate English songs for VYLs as an effective teaching and pedagogical tool capturing VYLs' attention and increasing their motivation is a useful starting point. The selection of suitable English songs in ECELEP is carried out by taking the guidelines listed below into consideration. The certain properties of songs supporting verbal and vocabulary learning are can be listed as having a simple and predictable song structure, including comprehensible and age-appropriate vocabulary related with target themes and being not too long or too short songs (Kellaris, 2003; Wallace, 1994; Smith Salcedo, 2002). As is well known the songs that include too much new vocabulary and grammar at once or the songs which are too long lead to confusion and frustration for VYLs, for this reason, it is highly important to decide a suitable song based on their developmental characteristics.

In addition to these principles, Ersöz (2007) suggested three vital criteria for suitable song selection. One of them is that songs should contain simple and understandable lyrics. The other suggestion is that the song should be connected to the topic or vocabulary that the learners studied in class. Lastly, songs need to include a format that young children can carry out easy actions with emphasis on meaning. With these features and benefits in mind, the songs in EELTP is selected from the collection of classic nursery rhymes or songs for pre-primary school children and recreated by a proficient speaker of English by associating similar melodies with specific target

vocabulary in a music studio. The fact that of all the songs are re-sung by a proficient speaker of English who have an accurate pronunciation and clear accent and listened to repeatedly in class is quite important for children to reinforce their target vocabulary and improve their pronunciation and intonation patterns of the target language by carrying out musical activities. The reason why all the songs are re-created with a familiar melody by replacing the target vocabulary and phrase with the old ones is that it is important to establish a fairly set and repetitive routine with very young children so that they improve their receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge on circular subjects. Regarding this, Puchta and Elliot (2017) asserted that altering the words is a great way to create versions to suit the VYLs' age, language level and content of the units in the program. Contrary to the idea that all the words and lyrics of the songs have to be learnt, the songs are designed as activities for VYL to move with and participate in. While they are trying to sing and move to the music explicitly, they hear the correct pronunciation and accuracy of the target words, identify speech sounds and remember sound patterns easily (Ludke, 2010).

In the scope of ECELEP, six different theme-related songs are repeated several times as vocabulary-building. The presentation of the songs during the newly designed programs occurs in two different formats. The songs are presented to children for enjoyment and for fostering their receptive vocabulary for the first time. In this pre-listening stage, VYLs are expected to listen attentively. Despite this, the content of songs is demonstrated to the children with the help of all possible means of non-verbal communication (gesture, facial features, etc.) to make the meaning clear. It is also possible to efficiently use the Total Physical Response methods to help VYLs comprehend the target vocabulary easily and keep them in their long term memory. While listening to the music several times, children are asked to join in with actions or words. In other words, young children revise the theme-related target words they have learnt so far while singing and acting out or dancing. In addition to this, young children are encouraged to sing the songs or tell the specific words in different ways, such as by shouting, whispering, like a monster, etc. with the aim of attracting their attention and entertaining them. In the post-listening stage, any musical instrument (i.e., drum, bandir, guitar, etc.) can be used by the teacher to practice singing the songs that children are familiar with. At the time of singing, the teacher pauses in some parts by stopping

singing but goes on playing musical instruments; however, children are expected to complete some parts (including especially the key words). These are called as post-listening stage's fun activities and tasks to improve the VYL's understanding of the pre-determined vocabulary and language phrase used in the English program. All in all, these child-friendly song-based activities are based on structured but communicatively-oriented approach and developmentally appropriate practices.

In sum, including age-appropriate and content-related songs in English is considered highly relevant in pre-primary English learning process as a result of differentiating characteristics of VYLs who are learning indirectly and holistically rather than directly (Pinter, 2017). The songs which are both pedagogical and instructional tools play a significant role in grabbing VYLs' attention to the L2 input, making the L2 learning process easier and providing positive emotional and learning enhancements. Furthermore, songs make an important contribution to VYLs' listening skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structures and repetition that might otherwise be tedious (Cameron 2001). They also help them memorize and internalize the target words, phrases and structures determined in ECELEP through enjoyable repetitions.

#### **3.3.6.6. Arts and Crafts Activity**

One of the least common L2 teaching methods used for young children are “arts and crafts activities” when compared to music, games and movement activities (Witek, 2011; Hrdá, 2017; Zapata, 2017; Er, 2014). In other words, incorporating arts and crafts activities into the early foreign language learning context in a educationally and linguistically productive way to make sense of the foreign language target vocabulary and structures is quite a new method (Zapata, 2017, Bastianomi, 2010). In this sense, Puchta (2017) and Garton and Copland (2019) and Mourão and Lourenço (2015) who are experts in introducing foreign or second languages at earlier ages have emphasized the use of classroom-based and theme-specific arts and crafts tools as foreign language teaching aids more recently. The use of classroom arts and crafts activities with very young learners of English stands at the intersection of several academic disciplines like many areas of EFL and ECE (see Figure 3.5).

**Figure 3.5. Dimensions of Arts and Crafts Activities in TEVYL**

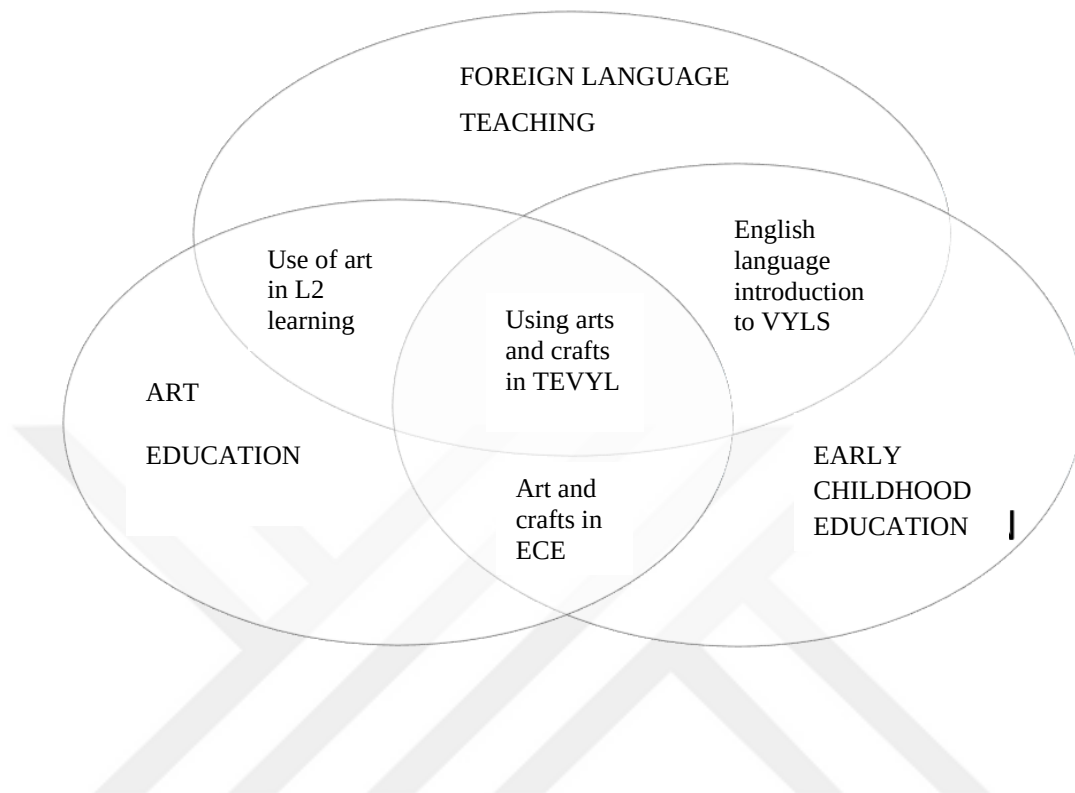


Figure 3.5 provides a schematic representation of the overlapping interests of three main domains. Foreign language studies focus on foreign language education. Besides, art education also intersects with ECE and ELT separately. Although the findings of studies related to Arts and Crafts in ECE and ELT respectively have been communicated and applied effectively, the field of using arts and crafts activities in TEVYL is one of the new research areas of introducing English to VYLS.

Arts and crafts activities which are considered an essential subject of general early childhood education is described as a wide variety of activities involving making things with children's own hands, in other words all the handicrafts based upon making decorative and useful things manually (Zapata, 2017; Hurwitz, 2007). Based on this definition, the term 'craft' includes loosely a range from simple coloring projects to more time-consuming cutting and pasting projects; however, in this study arts and crafts activities are anything that requires children to pick up scissors, construction paper, crayons or markers, or other crafting materials to create concrete or visual representations of knowledge which is related to foreign language themes and learning

objectives. One of the advantages of this is maximizing language learning for VYLs who are recycling and repeating the language during the designing of arts and crafts activities. To illustrate, children become very familiar with a variety of arts and crafts verbs, namely cut, stick (or paste), draw, paint, fold, turn over, hold, press, tape, put, etc. The other benefit is related with enhancement of expressive skills about specific content and language structure through VYLs' presentations about the craft projects with some English words. In short, among the planned education activities, VYLs benefit linguistically from the incorporation of arts and crafts activities into curriculum.

On similar grounds, Vecchi (2010) pointed out that arts and crafts activities which are one of the most indispensable ways of promoting higher mental functions in early childhood classroom engage the children with L2 in meaningful ways for longer period. Integrating arts and crafts in the early English classroom without losing sight of a learning objective is relatively significant to cater to a range of learner styles. According to multisensory reception, children receive the target language much better and easily when most of the children's senses are integrated into receiving and processing information. In this sense, arts and crafts activities are considerably important from different aspects. One of them is that they provide VYLs to learn English through senses (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) and another one is make VYLs' English learning process easier by supporting their cognitive abilities such as concentrating and linguistic abilities such as talking about their products in English. Providing multi-sensory learning in early years foreign language education, arts and crafts can be adopted to L2 learning process at pre-primary level according to certain principles and strategies which are identified by Bastianoni (2010):

- deciding on useful arts and crafts activity which are compatible with L2 learning objectives
- clarifying the aims and stages of arts and crafts activities with clear instructions
- setting sufficient time considering the difficulty level of activities, children's ages and fine motor skills development
- developing and preparing materials which are used during the activities
- help children during the activities if they need

- motivating children to focus on the activity

In selecting age-appropriate arts and crafts activities, the above-mentioned strategies are taken as basis for this study. Considering the group size, which is fundamental when deciding which craft to do, and the fine motor skills ranging among children, simple crafts related to introducing of English to pre-primary school aged children were decided carefully for the newly designed program.

More specifically, the objectives and reasons of including arts and crafts include the development of positive attitudes and motivation towards other languages through arts and crafts activities; providing the child's first contact with an L2 through a method familiar to children; and the learning of L2 vocabulary in a playful and productive way. In achieving this, at first theme-related arts and crafts activities requiring a short amount of time was decided by taking into consideration the children's age, language and fine motor skills level. Regarding this, Cameron (2001) emphasized the importance of the planning of short engaging activities because of children's limited attention span. After deciding on an activity varying from simple to complicated ones, learning objectives which are compatible with the methods are defined clearly to be achieved. Regarding the difficulty of tasks, it should be kept in mind that a craft does not need to be complex in order to be useful to the L2 learning process (Bastianoni, 2010). Some of the activities in the program require more materials and time, however some others which can be done with a minimum of fuss. In the application of these activities, the instructions are given clearly in English with lots of repetition, hand gestures and signaling. Thus, VYLs have an opportunity to recycle and repeat the related language by following the instructions and experience communication in action. As well as learning 'art vocabulary' - scissors, glue, pen, pencil, crayons, paper, cut, draw, paint, stick, etc., VYLs learn or practice the target vocabulary and structure through presenting their artwork in the classroom. Using the finished arts and crafts as a tool to introduce them to target language is a valuable learning opportunity. To illustrate, a child gives information about his/her newly designed animal mask or mini-book by talking about its color, size, items, and body parts. In such guided activities, some questions about color, number and size are asked by teachers to make children feel comfortable taking risks, to develop understanding and to support and check learning. Besides, supportive feedback to help VYLs improve their literacy skills and strategies are provided while



valuing their productions and ideas. Thus, with the help of this brief presentation including the descriptions of artwork that they designed carefully, VYLs develop their expressive use of target language and support their speaking skills.

#### **3.3.6.7. Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement which is an integral part of almost all early childhood education programs also play a critical role in ensuring and fostering young children's L2 learning motivation and achievement (Jeynes, 2005; Thorkildsen and Stein, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). This is explained by National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000) that environmental factors such as efficient and sufficient parent support and positive home environment have also a great deal influence on young children's any kind of learning rather than genetic factors. Similarly, in the process of acquiring English in early childhood period, parental engagement including several informal and enjoyable ways that help parents practice the target vocabulary communicatively and interactively at home is immensely important. Marzano (2003) highlighted the importance of the parental involvement by regarding parent's engagement as a way of practicing what they have learnt in a safe and enjoyable environment at home.

The findings of the research at the national and international level show that parental involvement in children's early foreign language learning is so important that parents find ways mostly to help their VYLs acquire a foreign language. Therefore, language teachers working at pre-primary level should be more informed and industrious in providing an effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications by using various ways in the early stages of L2 learning process. According to Gao (2006), this relationship can be provided by parent's indirect involvement into the children's development at home. As highlighted previously, the stages (the first two stages) of Epstein's (2009) framework constitutes the theoretical background for parent letter which is one of the elements of ECELEP and are shown in 3.16.

**Table 3.16. The reflection of Epstein's Typology of Parental Involvement into ECELEP**

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parenting                        | Providing L2 language rich environment through home materials, checking the thinking skills and arts & crafts activities sent from school to practice          |
| Communications                   | Parent letters including useful websites, game suggestions and information about how to support young children                                                 |
| Volunteering                     | School programs and organizations to give information about VYLs' L2 learning process and outcomes                                                             |
| Learning at Home                 | Opportunities provided to families about how to assist their children at home.                                                                                 |
| Decision making                  | Meetings where the parents, school or community members come together about providing solutions to VYLs' L2 learning challenges and providing some suggestions |
| Collaborating with the community | The integration of beneficial resources, trainings and services from the community                                                                             |

When the items in the Table 3.16 are adopted into English learning at pre-primary level, it can be said that in the first stage parents can facilitate VYLs' L2 learning at home through child-parent conversations, encouragement and interactive games and activities in target language (Carter, Chard and Pool, 2009; Maduekwe and Adeosun, 2010). For instance, within the scope of ECELEP the parents can provide a literacy rich environment through home materials or toys, play interactive online games suggested in the letter, engage with L2 print materials sent to home with letters and giving attention to their children's L2 experience at home. In the second stage, school-to-home and home-to-school communication signal to parent letters which are sent home after completing the theme. Considering the activities and parent letters, it can be said that parental involvement in this study includes the first two stages of this typology. The other stages including the parents' involvement into early L2 learning process consciously in the school and community. However, it is unlikely to happen in EFL contexts like in Turkey at present where even English as a foreign language is not introduced officially at pre-primary level.

In addition to this, to the best knowledge of the researcher there are certain studies about why and how parents support their young children's English education and what the parents' perception about English education is (Kalaycı and Oz, 2018; Poyraz, 2017; Erdener, 2013), by contrast, there are few studies related to what and how parents choose specific types of involvement in early childhood English language learning in Turkey. One of them is the study conducted by Şad and Gürbüzürk (2013) who studied parents' ways of involvement in their children's L2 education. The findings of this study

reveal that parents in Turkey prefer to ‘parenting’ and ‘communications’ from Epstein’s typology. For instance, they prefer to pay attention to communicate with children about their learning process and assisting their homework, providing an effective home environment, supporting their L2 development rather than ‘volunteering’, ‘decision-making’ at school and in the community. However, the challenge of parent’s involved in their children’s English learning in non-English speaking countries like in Turkey is that parents are unable to support their children’s EFL learning process because they don’t know English. For this reason, finding creative and practical ways which are different from the suggestions listed for English speaking countries above are necessary to provide VYLs’ self-confidence and encouragement. In achieving this, informing parents in what it means to learn a foreign language in EFL context, and in guiding them how they can assist and support their children’s English learning at home can be a good idea.

Within this framework, a parent letter was developed to support this endeavor in ECELEP. The philosophy that guided to create these parent letters was that parents can teach their children to do a somersault even if they do not know how to do a somersault. They can help their children by following step-by-step approach to teach this physical activity such as finding a safe and open place, stretching their body at the beginning or tucking their legs and placing their hands on either side of their feet and rolling forward when they are ready. During this process, if parents put the pressure on, or show frustration and indifference while teaching somersault to their children, it could further delay the process. This analogy can be applied for VYLs’ English learning process. Without having a high proficiency of English, the parents can involve in their children L2 learning process by creating a positive, fun and open atmospheres that will support what goes on in the classroom and instil the desire to learn this language.

The contact was established with parents after each theme through parent letters including information and resources about what they have to know, what they can and have to do as parents and how they help VYL learn a foreign language. This contact is considerably important in providing resources to practice English at home and in giving information about the goals of early L2 learning. Correspondingly, the VYLs’ confidence and positive attitudes toward English allowed them to have a strong basis for

their L2 learning process. The reason why many parents cannot provide this support especially in EFL contexts is their belief in a high English level to support their children's English learning process. However, Castillo and Gamez (2013) emphasizes what actually the parents need is to understand what early L2 learning is, what objectives it has and which ways can be used to support. At home, the parents do not need to outperform the L2 teachers while practicing English by trying to teach the themes. Instead, their role is playing some games that their children enjoy most in English and repeating the target vocabularies through games and movement at home. The explanations so far have indicated that parents who are the integral complement of their children's learning process can also help VYLs by showing an attention to their learning and creating a warmer atmosphere of cooperation and interaction.

One of the most important functions of the parental involvement part in ECELEP is to shed light on how the parents can enhance the quality of interactions with their children and support their children's English language learning process. In order to do this, the parent letters were prepared and sent to them at the end of each theme as a communication tool to develop their capacity and understanding for mentoring their children's EFL learning process and provide some practical suggestions for home. In a nutshell, the purpose of creating parent letters as parental engagement in this study is to support a positive relationship between educators and parents, give information about what was done this week and what will be done next week, giving information about the importance and processes of children's early foreign language learning and offering some practical suggestions about what they can do at home with their children to support their children. In addition, a little colorful picture dictionary including all the target vocabulary and phrases of each theme with notes will be sent to parents who would like to help their children at home by revising them or playing with them.

Providing strong home-school connections through parent letters are very important for parents to gain insight about young children's foreign language learning process and experience. Regarding this, the findings of many studies emphasized the importance of parent's support, interest and involvement as the most integral part of their children's L2 learning process. This letter for each unit along with activities, stories, songs and suggestions serve to inform them about the topic and materials their children will be

covering or have covered in class, and also includes the website addresses for the chants, songs and games in each unit and some information about how children learn a foreign language. To illustrate, the information about L2 learning suggests some practical and enjoyable ways for parents to take part in their children's learning experience through games and play-based activities. On the other hand, this letter gives information to VYLs parents about what they should not do in this process. Translating the words into their mother tongue or asking directly as if they were testing their children's knowledge do not work at that level. In addition to this, chants and songs can be listened together and revised by using the website addresses. Moreover, parents can play 'at school' with their children by taking the role of the pupil because they take great pleasure in teaching their parents a foreign language. They can also look at the worksheets and arts and crafts objects with the children. In doing all these activities at home, parents should not expect their children to speak at the beginning because they need to learn to understand first and then respond using simple language. However, they should praise children for their progress in learning by ignoring the errors which are a sign of progress in learning. The parent letters encourage the parents to be as creative and helpful at home as possible with children.

The other benefit of parent letters including various home activities and games such as darts, memory games and matching games is that parents can help VYLs practice the target vocabulary and structures related with each theme without removing the fun of learning. In relation to this, Griva and Chouvarda (2012) suggested that the L2 be taught and practiced in a playful way at home. Especially in an EFL context like in Turkey, parents tend to be overambitious, which often leads to both parents and children becoming frustrated. To avoid these, parents should set realistic goals like increasing their children's interest in English and establishing this language as part of the family routine, thus their children have a chance to be exposed to this new language on a regular basis. The findings of the study conducted by Munoz and Lindgren (2011) about out-of-class experiences of young children found out that two factors had a significant impact on children's L2 language development. One of them was watching films, videos, television programs and listening to music in target language. The second was the degree of parents' L2 knowledge and their attention to L2 and their children's L2 learning process. This study confirmed the necessity of sections in parent letter such as

suggestions and practical information about how to engage in target language at home and useful links for English videos, songs and online games.

As highlighted previously, the components of ECELEP (drama activities, songs, thinking skill activities, art & craft activities, stories, games, parental involvement) described above in detail are mostly aligned with developmentally appropriate practices that develop the whole child in the literature (Wu, 2003; Ordóñez, 2016; Brumen, 2010; Elvin et al., 2007; Fleta, 2006; Robinson et al., 2015). All these forms of introducing English to young children were based on a close scrutiny of early L2 literature and related coursebooks and textbooks. During these activities, a range of instructional aids such as puppets, toys, realia, flashcards, computer, story-books, worksheets about thinking skills and classroom-based arts and crafts tools were used to facilitate learning. Apart from all these, parent letters including guiding principles of how to support the TEVYL process and how to improve their affective and communicative skills in target language were also sent home as a parental involvement activity. All in all, using the aforementioned activities and learning process regularly in ECELEP creates a pleasurable and exciting learning environment for children by giving them a feeling of security.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

The intervention comprised four main stages which are a pre-intervention testing stage, an intervention stage, a post-intervention testing stage and a delayed post-intervention testing stage (see Figure 3.6). The steps of the study in this four-stage cycle aiming at the evaluation of ECELEP are explained as follows:

- At first, after distinguishing three children who are not showing normal development, 18 children, aged 5-6, were randomly assigned to an experimental and control group respectively from 68 pre-primary school children in a public pre-primary school. After meeting the ethical requirements of the experimental study by asking for informed consent from parents and informing the school principal and classroom teachers about the ECELEP, children's exposure to and previous experience in target language was assessed by a background questionnaire. It showed that young children who participated to the study had almost no previous experience with English at home, in the community and in

the school. All of the children in both groups attended the treatment are considered to be absolute beginners (zero beginners).

- This study was a true-experimental design with a pre-and post-test applications. In the first stage, the pre-test was administered one week prior to the intervention. It lasted for two weeks as there are two test formats including receptive and expressive EPVT and informal performance assessment aiming to measure VYLs' communicative skills. One of the possible reason is stated by Papp and Walczak (2016) in their study that if there are various test formats that will be conducted consecutively, the results of the tests can be negatively affected due to some factors such as inattention, fatigue and boredom. For this reason, the test order threat was controlled by implementing the tests in two different weeks. The pre-test results revealed that very young learners' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge and communicative skills related with pre-determined subjects are very similar to each other. To illustrate, the pre-existing subject knowledge of children in both groups confirmed the results of questionnaire filled out by the parents with regard to their children's English level that VYLs were indeed absolute beginners who had almost no exposure to English. The slight alteration between receptive and expressive parts in the pretest might be due to "the effect of the chance". To put it another way, the answers were in multiple choice formats in the receptive part in which children were asked to pick up one of the four pictures; therefore, they might decide the correct answer indeliberately without thinking.
- In the second stage, the intervention program starts with a warm-up week including some greeting and introducing activities to stimulate a good atmosphere by learning each other's name and increasing cooperation in further activities. This week was really important to give them some time to get used to English by providing comprehensible input and enjoyable activities. This week was also greatly significant to familiarize the pre-primary school children with the researcher, the methods and tasks of the program before proceeding with the actual experiment. Then the real intervention was carried out over 16 weeks (February 2019 to May 2019). The English sessions took place in their classrooms which are a naturalistic pre-primary school setting for children but the assessment occurs in a separate activity room. Considering their physical settings which are quite similar in terms of their arrangements, placement of materials, light, temperature and size, it can be concluded that both groups have optimal learning conditions. Experimental group involved 18 children (mean of age=5 years 11 months) and control group also comprised 18 children (mean of age=5 years 10 months). The English sessions took place three times a week, lasting for 40-45 minutes and amounting to approximately 27 hours over three months (see Table 3.17). English hours for the control group and experimental group were consecutive in the morning after the breakfast. Regarding this,

Nikolov (2016) asserted that assessing and introducing very young children immediately before lunch or breakfast or at the end of the day were also to be avoided due to the hunger, fatigue and inattention. The researcher avoided any simple things that introduce distraction or disturbance in the research design. Although both groups were taught the same six themes, the target vocabulary and structures were presented to the children in the control group by using the traditional approach and methods (i.e., flashcards and songs). The program used in the control group is based on a behaviorist view of language learning, consisting of didactic teacher-directed instructions, repetition of decontextualized sentences, and memorization of target vocabulary. However, ECELEP used in the treatment group was designed by taking into consideration multiple developmental and English language education theories and constructs. Similar themes were taught to experimental group with communicative approaches and methods (i.e., thinking skill activities, art & craft activities, storytelling, drama, games, music and movement, parental involvement) in the scope of this program. The delays in the curriculum due to national holidays coinciding with English sessions were compensated for in later periods.

- After the treatment period, the assessment tools (EPVT and performance-based assessment) were administered to both groups as post-test to determine the change in children's receptive & expressive and communicative skills in target language and foreign language development. With EPVT, the young children were post-tested on their skills and knowledge to recognize and express the target words in English. In addition to this, VYLs were post-tested with a performance-based assessment tool for their communicative skills. It is important that these assessments are administered in a standard way. At first, the researcher explained the assessment test and tasks to the children, introduced the purpose of them, and what they were going to do during the activity. At the end, after the administration of both assessment tools, each young child's benchmark results were recorded in a form and analyzed by comparison.



**Table 3.17. Overview of the Research Design**

|         | Experimental                                   | Control    | English sessions             |
|---------|------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| Week 1  | Pre-test (receptive) & Pre-test (productive)   |            |                              |
| Week 2  | Performance-based assesment                    |            |                              |
| Week 3  | colors                                         | colors     | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 4  | colors                                         | colors     | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 5  | animals                                        | animals    | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 6  | animals                                        | animals    | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 7  | body parts                                     | body parts | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 8  | body parts                                     | body parts | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 9  | feelings                                       | feelings   | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 10 | feelings                                       | feelings   | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 11 | fruit                                          | fruit      | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 12 | fruit                                          | fruit      | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 13 | clothes                                        | clothes    | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 14 | clothes                                        | clothes    | 3 English sessions (2 hours) |
| Week 15 | Post-test (receptive) & Post-test (productive) |            |                              |
| Week 16 | Performance-based assesment                    |            |                              |
| Week 20 | Delayed post-test                              |            |                              |
| Week 21 | Delayed post-test                              |            |                              |
| Week 22 | Semi-structured interview with children        |            |                              |

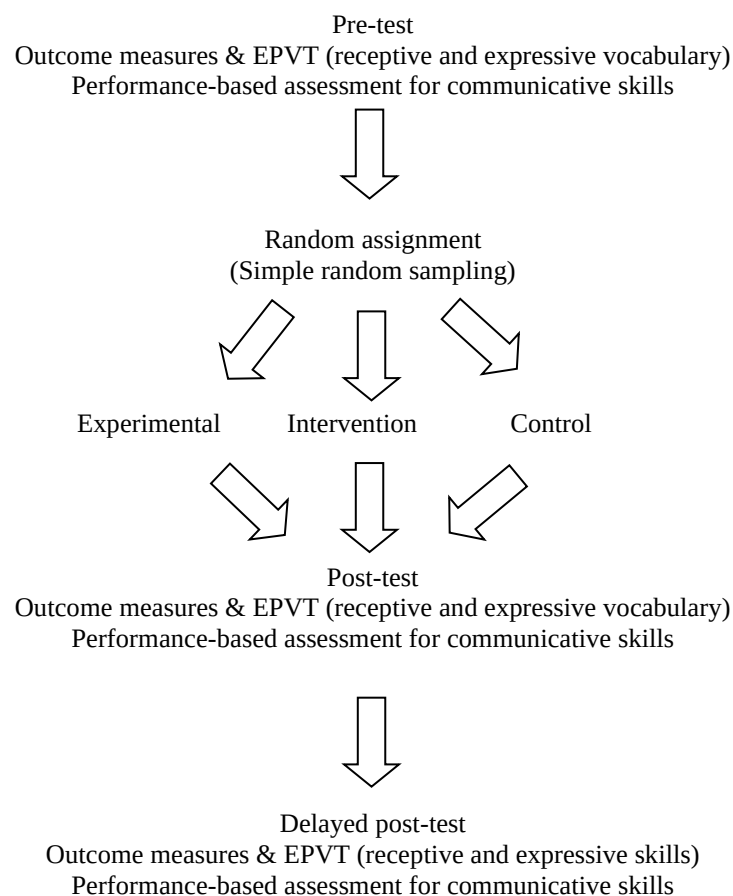
- Finally, all the children in both the experimental and the control group were interviewed at the end of the intervention and post-testing stages. Semi-structured interviews aimed to obtain detailed information concerning the young children's feelings and thoughts about the newly designed English program in detail. With reference to the physical conditions in which the interviews were conducted, all of them were conducted in a silent classroom which was not used by other children. The researcher met with the children on a specific time which was not before and after the meal. During the one-to-one interviews, there was no noise and materials in the classroom where the researcher and children were alone, for this reason, no interruptions occurred. The researcher asked five questions in the same order in Turkish and VYLs were expected to state their opinion about their L2 learning experience. Some techniques such as providing friendly atmosphere, guidance and direction with extra questions were used to make the children feel relaxed and comfortable to help them share their ideas about ECELEP in detail. For the VYLs who do not answer the questions for the first time, they were asked twice in different formats to ensure that children comprehend the related questions correctly. The interviews lasted for 10-15 minutes and they were audio-taped due to the fact there were no missing points in their answers. Then, the data obtained from the each VYL during the interviews was transcribed and coded by the researcher. After collecting the data from children in their mother tongue, they were translated into English for reporting purposes. In the coding process, the researcher focuses on the information obtained from a qualitative research specialist and the related

literature, which is suggested by Creswell (2007), Merriam (2009) and Patton (2002). This type of analysis which is used to analyze the data and the emerging themes are categorized and coded considering the answers of the VYLs in the interview is called as content analysis. Then, the percentages and the frequencies of the emerging themes were calculated.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

An experimental research design was conducted in this study. One of the most important reasons for deciding the experimental research design was to investigate and identify the effects of the newly designed early English program (ECELEP) on VYLs' vocabulary learning and communicative skills and thus determine the success of this program. This study which was formed as the randomized pretest- posttest control group design consist of four key stages which are shown in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6. Experimental Procedure**



Developed by the researcher, EPVT was used to determine VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge. The test consists of 96 items, 48 of them are for the receptive part and 48 of them are for expressive part. Regarding the receptive part in EPVT, children's responses were rated on a two-point scale comprising (0) false (1) correct. On the other hand, children's responses were rated on a two-point scale comprising (0) said (1) not said in EPVT Expressive part. For the performance-based assessment tasks where children were assessed in terms of their communicative skills, VYLs' answers were rated on a three-point scale comprising (0) no answer (1) one-word answer and (2) two or more word answers. The quantitative results were statistically analyzed by using SPSS 22.0 (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The data from a very small sample ( $n=18$ ) are measured on nominal (categorical) and ordinal (ranked) scale in this study do not meet the stringent assumptions of the parametric techniques. For this reason, in an attempt to examine the differences between two independent groups on a continuous measure, Mann–Whitney U tests are used when the parametric techniques can't be used because of the low sample size. In addition to this, normality test of the data is shown in 3.18 .

**Table 3.18. Results from a Normality Test of the Data**

|                      |                 | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |    |      | Shapiro-Wilk |    |      |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|----|------|--------------|----|------|
|                      |                 | Statistic                       | df | Sig. | Statistic    | df | Sig. |
| Receptive            | Treatment group | ,232                            | 18 | ,011 | ,852         | 18 | ,009 |
| EPVT                 | Control group   | ,236                            | 18 | ,009 | ,896         | 18 | ,049 |
| Expressive           | Treatment group | ,240                            | 18 | ,007 | ,895         | 18 | ,047 |
| EPVT                 | Control group   | ,243                            | 18 | ,006 | ,828         | 18 | ,004 |
| PA                   | Treatment group | ,220                            | 18 | ,021 | ,875         | 18 | ,021 |
| Communicative skills | Control group   | ,187                            | 18 | ,096 | ,886         | 18 | ,032 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As it seen in Table 3.18, the results in all variables in Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk tests were significant. That is, it was found that all variables do not show normal distribution. Regarding this issue, Pallant (2013) indicated that the significant value ( $p < .05$ ) obtained from Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk statistics mean that the assumption of normality required for parametric analysis was violated. For this

reason, it can be said that the Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test that is appropriate when it assesses the difference between groups on a dependent variable, without the stringent assumptions that other parametric tests require (Leech, Barrett and Morgan, 2012). For both tasks, all these statistical procedures were pitched at an alpha value of 0.05 to measure statistically significant changes between pre-, post- and delayed post-tests.

As for the analysis of the interviews which were recorded by taking written notes during an interview with 36 children, they were transcribed verbatim in preparation for analysis. The next stage was to print and code these transcriptions corresponding to the research questions, which is proposed by Dörnyei (2007) and Mackey and Gass (2005). Based on this, five questions were prepared by the researcher and categorized according to the research questions. Afterwards, the responses were coded with the help of keywords and entered in each category. The categories are given in Table 3.19.

**Table 3.19. Categorization for the Interview Transcriptions**

| No. | Categories related to research questions                                         | Relevant interview questions |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1   | Participants' views about L2 learning practices                                  | Q1                           |
| 2   | Participants' attitudes towards English learning                                 | Q2                           |
| 3   | Participants' thoughts about the most like activities and tasks                  | Q3                           |
| 4   | Participants' thoughts about disliked activities or tasks                        | Q4                           |
| 5   | Participants' thoughts about supportive things that help them learn English most | Q5                           |

### 3.6. Ethics

There have long been issues with conducting research on young learners, particularly very young ones, because of ethical and organizational concerns (Garton and Copland, 2019; Sargeant and Harcourt, 2012). Nonetheless, there has been a good deal of movement in this area more recently (Rixon, 2013). Therefore, ethical considerations should be at the forefront of all empirical studies and assessment activities involving very young learners. Related to this, Elwood (2013) and Pinter (2011, 2014) suggested some criteria to evaluate the ethics of assessments or programs for VYLs. They can be listed as (a) the suitability to children's interests and characteristics, (b) taking into the consideration the matters of diversity and individual difference, (c) allowing children's voices to be heard. In designing and developing ECELEP and the assessment tools in

the scope of this study, all these criteria were met to be able to create a linguistically and culturally relevant curriculum with a pleasant and exciting learning environment.

In addition to this, it is worth highlighting that research methods and assessment tools that will implement young children need careful consideration for feasibility, appropriateness, ethics and validity (Pinter, 2019). In order to guarantee all these items, ethical permission from the Research Center for Applied Ethics of Marmara University (See Appendix 13) was obtained and approval was granted from Department for Research, Development and Projects in Ministry of National Education (see Appendix 11) to conduct this study.

The other ethical consideration was providing sufficient information about the objectives and details of the study, getting consent to take part in the study from VYLs' parents and informing about their rights to withdraw their children at any time. In addition to this, children were active contributors and participants of the newly designed program and assessment activities in this research, and therefore their own consent was also important. For this reason, the treatment and assessment process were explained briefly and the children's consent was also taken to develop voluntary attention.

Pinter (2019) emphasizes the importance of trustworthy relationship between the researchers and the children during the implementation of a program or the assessment process to be able to obtain the reliable and relevant data. As for confidentiality, all children participating to the treatment are referred to by pseudonyms in collecting and analyzing the data to respect their right to anonymity.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

### 4.0. Presentation

In this chapter, results obtained from the analysis of the expressive and receptive part of English Picture Vocabulary Test (EPVT), Performance-based assessment and interviews are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions.

#### 4.1. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning in English?

In order to find out the effect of ECELEP on VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge on a pre-determined subjects, treatment and control group children's post-test scores regarding EPVT receptive and expressive vocabulary are analyzed with the Mann–Whitney U test. On the other hand, Wilcoxon signed-rank test is used to compare between pre-test and post-tet scores within the experimental and control groups (sample<30). In other words, Wilcoxon test is used to compare intra-group data and Mann-Whitney U test for intergroup results. However, firstly the descriptive statistics about the pretest and posttest scores are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics Related to Pretest and Posttest Results of Treatment and Control Groups for EPVT**

|        | Control group      |                     |                    |                     | Treatment group    |                     |                    |                         |
|--------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
|        | Pre-test<br>(Rec.) | Post-test<br>(Rec.) | Pre-test<br>(Exp.) | Post-test<br>(Exp.) | Pre-test<br>(Rec.) | Post-test<br>(Rec.) | Pre-test<br>(Exp.) | Post-<br>test<br>(Exp.) |
| N      | 18                 | 18                  | 18                 | 18                  | 18                 | 18                  | 18                 | 18                      |
| Mean   | ,22                | 39,11               | 0                  | 36,38               | ,16                | 44,16               | 0                  | 42,11                   |
| Median | ,00                | 39,5                | 0                  | 37,00               | ,00                | 44,50               | 0                  | 42,00                   |
| SD     | ,42                | 1,40                | 0                  | 1,81                | ,38                | 1,46                | 0                  | 1,18                    |
| Max    | 1                  | 41                  | 0                  | 38                  | 1                  | 46                  | 0                  | 39                      |
| Min    | 0                  | 36                  | 0                  | 32                  | 0                  | 40                  | 0                  | 44                      |

Table 4.1 demonstrates some basic descriptive statistics like mean, median, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values and summarizes the means of EPVT pretest and post-test scores of two groups. To illustrate, the means of the pretest scores of Receptive EPVT and Expressive EPVT is .16 and 0 respectively for the treatment group and the means of the pretest scores of Receptive EPVT and Expressive EPVT is .22 and 0 respectively for the control group. It is apparent that VYLs' vocabulary knowledge scores related to pre-determined themes in both groups are very close to each other before the intervention. Their similar knowledge of the target vocabulary is necessary and relevant to be able to observe the changes afterwards of their vocabulary knowledge which signals to the effectiveness of ECELEP on their L2 vocabulary learning. This result reveals the English level of VYLs at pre-primary level in Turkey where there is no national policy in relation to the introduction of a foreign language at state pre-primary schools in the Turkish educational setting. Children can start to study English from 2nd grade in elementary school in accordance with the national policy in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2017). In this sense, the exposure of VYLs' to English at pre-primary level in the state system is possible through media or siblings living in the same house and studying English at different levels. However, the results showed that this minimal amount of exposure to the foreign language outside the school in EFL context does not retrieve VYLs from being absolute beginners with no previous exposure to English. Related to this, Reilly and Ward (2003) indicated that most of VYLs in EFL contexts are absolute beginner and few of them may have had some exposure to English.

On the other hand, the means of the post-test scores Receptive EPVT and Expressive EPVT is 44,16 and 42,11 respectively for the treatment group and the means of the post-test scores Receptive EPVT and Expressive EPVT is 39,11 and 36,38 respectively for the control group. Comparing the mean differences between the treatment and control group in terms of Receptive and Expressive EPVT (see Table 4.1), it can be said that more intensive and better quality early foreign language programs are more effective in developing and promoting VYLs' listening skills which mean the receptive use of language and speaking skills which mean the active use of language to express meaning. In addition to this, this indicates that ECELEP including communicative activities that are specified with socially and cognitively meaningful motives and goals

based on children's developmental stages lead to VYLs' learning in English easily and influentially.

Furthermore, the mean scores of the post-test Receptive EPVT (M: 44,16, M: 39,11) and Expressive EPVT (M: 42,11, M: 36,38) of the treatment and control groups reveal that VYLs in both group outperform in the receptive part than the expressive part. In other words, the young children recognize the target words among four pictures more easily rather than recalling them in English. This finding is explained in different studies that in young children's early stages of L1 and L2 learning process, the first stage is word recognition in which children learn the skills to recognize words and the second stage is the production in which they activate the words (Gibson et al., 2014; Gibson et al., 2012; Mondria and Wiersma, 2004;). More specifically, general observations on the children's L2 acquisition and learning, which indicate children's comprehension of the L2 precedes production (Wode, 2010) verify this finding of the study.

This result is also parallel with the results of the study conducted by Mondria and Wiersma (2004) who pointed out that in all cases (in L1 or L2) the receptive vocabulary knowledge precedes the productive vocabulary knowledge. One of the possible reason is stated in this study that the latter one is more difficult than the former one. The other reason why productive learning is significantly and substantially more difficult than receptive learning is that VYLs can recognize some basic vocabulary and phrase when they expose to them verbally and visually in their environment, however, they are expected to recall and express these orally in productive vocabulary learning process. This process becomes more difficult in L2 learning process in which children are expected to express English words orally. On the other hand, this finding is one of the explanations of the fact that VYLs have more difficulty in productive vocabulary tests aiming at assessing children's ability to express a concept by means of an L2 word than receptive vocabulary tests aimed at measuring children's knowledge of the meaning of an L2 word (Schneider et al., 2002; Mondria and Wiersma, 2004).

This finding revealed that traditional, teacher-centered educational approaches and techniques that present the target vocabulary didactically in a decontextualized manner



can teach the target vocabulary at a degree. To illustrate, in the control group target vocabulary is presented through flashcards including the related pictures on it. After they are expressed by the teacher first, they are repeated chorally and individually many times to memorize it. However, the process and method of learning target vocabulary is different in the treatment group instructed with ECELEP which is more constructive, communicative and learner-centered. For instance, in this program VYLs encounters the target language through a variety of enjoyable, age-appropriate methods and approaches (songs, stories, thinking skill activities, art & craft activities, games, role-plays) and contextualized in such a way as to create the need for using it. In other words, children are engaged with target language in different contexts both intellectually and physically, where all five senses find their due role in the learning process, and thus learning becomes much more effective and long lasting. In other words, arts and crafts activities, thinking skills activities, role-play, songs, storytelling, games and parental involvement favor children naturally in early foreign language learning process. It is particularly refreshing to find how children's natural inquisitiveness and curiosity can be successfully incorporated into foreign language education with a holistic ECELEP.

As mentioned, the collected data in this study do not follow a normal distribution, which is essential for parametric assumption. For this reason, Mann Whitney U Test, which is one of the non-parametric tests is conducted for all research questions instead of independent sample t-test. The comparison of pretest, post-test mean findings are shown as descriptive statistics in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Mann-Whitney U Test for EPVT Pre-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Groups**

|                 | Groups          | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD  | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U       | p    |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-----------|-----|-----------|------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Receptive EPVT  | Treatment group | 18 | ,16       | ,38 | 18        | 324,00           | -,357 | 153,000 | ,721 |
|                 | Control group   | 18 | ,22       | ,42 | 19        | 342,00           |       |         |      |
| Expressive EPVT | Treatment group | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,00           | ,00   | 162,000 | 1,00 |
|                 | Control group   | 18 | ,00       | ,00 | 18,50     | 333,00           |       |         |      |

When the treatment and control groups are compared by Mann-Whitney U Test, the receptive test results show that the p-value, .721 ( $U = 153.000$ ,  $p > .05$ , is greater than

.05 and the expressive test results are also similar ( $U = 162.000$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This meant that there is not a statistically significant difference in the receptive and expressive vocabulary scores between the treatment and the control group in the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Pre-test. The rank average of the pretest scores of the treatment group children was 18 and 18,50 for Receptive and Expressive EPVT respectively while the children in the control group have a pretest score rank average of 19 and 18,50 for Receptive and Expressive EPVT respectively. The close rank averages of the groups' pretest scores indicate that before the experimental and control groups had somewhat equal pretest L2 levels.

Pre-test results also confirmed that children who attended this pre-primary school have no English exposure because children in both groups cannot recognize or express any target vocabulary in the picture vocabulary expression test. Nevertheless, in the vocabulary recognition test which includes multiple choice items, children from treatment group give 4 correct answers and 3 children from control group point to the items among four pictures correctly. The receptive-expressive gap in which VYLs' receptive pre-test scores are likely to be little higher than expressive scores appears because of the stylistic differences between receptive and expressive EPVT. Whereas in Receptive EPVT testers utter an English word, and the child point to the corresponding item from four pictures, in Expressive EPVT children express the target vocabulary in English according to the Picture provided to them. Based on this, if a child does not actually know the target vocabulary, it is not possible to elicit a specific response in an expressive test, however he/she can choose the correct answers randomly and accidentally with "the effect of chance" success in receptive test. Pre-test results also confirm the questionnaire results which are implemented to children's parents to examine the children's previous experience and exposure to English. In sum, VYLs both in treatment and control group are almost equal at the beginning of the study which is very important to obtain practical result at the end of study. In addition to this, Mann-Whitney U Test for EPVT post-test scores of treatment and control groups are shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Mann-Whitney U Test for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Groups**

|                 | Groups          | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U      | p    |
|-----------------|-----------------|----|-----------|------|-----------|------------------|-------|--------|------|
| Receptive EPVT  | Treatment group | 18 | 44,16     | 1,46 | 27,19     | 489,50           | -5,00 | 176,50 | ,000 |
|                 | Control group   | 18 | 39,11     | 1,40 | 9,81      | 176,50           |       |        |      |
| Expressive EPVT | Treatment group | 18 | 42,11     | 1,18 | 27,50     | 495,00           | -5,17 | 171,00 | ,000 |
|                 | Control group   | 18 | 36,38     | 1,81 | 9,50      | 171,00           |       |        |      |

As can be seen in Table 4.3, there is a statistically significant difference found between post-test mean scores of treatment and control group children regarding EPVT receptive vocabulary ( $U = 176.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Similarly, the experimental group produced a higher sum of ranks ( $\sum$  Receptive = 489) than the control group ( $\sum$  Receptive= 176). A statistically significant difference was also found in terms of expressive vocabulary knowledge between post-test mean scores of treatment and control group children ( $U = 171.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In addition to this, the experimental group produced a higher sum of ranks ( $\sum$  Expressive = 495) than the control group ( $\sum$  Expressive= 171).

In relation to the post-test scores between the children who are learning English with ECELEP in the treatment group and those learning English with traditional instructional methods and techniques, mean rank and the sum of ranks show a significant difference in favor of the treatment group children. They reveal that communicative and constructivist approaches and activities integrating both ECE and ELT techniques conceivably are more effective in L2 education at earlier years than traditional ones. Besides, strategies of language use and contextualization help children comprehend and recognize the target vocabulary related with contents in the program and use them at an age appropriate level. The findings of Er's study (2014) in which it is suggested that the appropriate strategies such as drama activities and games and instructional materials such as stationary, toys and puppets as well need to be incorporated into L2 learning at pre-primary level are parallel with the results of this study.

In order to investigate whether there is a significant difference between Receptive and Expressive EPVT pre- and post-test results of the treatment and control group, Wilcoxon signed rank test for paired samples was conducted. Due to the fact that the number of samples is less than 30 ( $n < 30$ ) in the study, the Mann-Whitney U test was

used to examine the differences between the two groups. Furthermore, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to compare intra-group differences and its results are shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Pre-And Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Both Groups**

|                 |                | Receptive EPVT  |           |              |       |     | Expressive EPVT |           |              |       |      |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|-----|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
|                 |                | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p   | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p    |
| Treatment group | Negative ranks | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
|                 | Positive Ranks | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,75 | ,00 | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,75 | ,000 |
|                 | Ties           | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
| Control group   | Negative ranks | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
|                 | Positive Ranks | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,74 | ,00 | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,76 | ,000 |
|                 | Ties           | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |

As shown in Table 4.4, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test indicated a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test Expressive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,75$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) and Receptive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,75$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) scores of the treatment group. The sum of the positive difference ranks ( $\sum R+ = 171$ ) is higher than the sum of the negative difference ranks ( $\sum R- = 0$ ). The results demonstrated that all the participants' scores related to expressive and receptive vocabulary learning increased in treatment group. As for the control group, the results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test related to pre-test and post-test Expressive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,75$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) and Receptive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,75$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) are similar to the treatment group. The results also demonstrated that all the participants' scores related to expressive and receptive vocabulary learning increased in control group, too. On the basis of the results obtained, it could be argued that the use of the communicative and interactive methods in early L2 learning significantly increased the L2 attainment levels of the treatment group children.

The findings highlighted that the instructions used both in control and treatment have an effect on children's productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge when compared to the groups in terms of the analysis and comparison of pre-and post-test results of

Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT. According to these results, it is apparent that both traditional instructional techniques and approaches which are used in the control group and communicative/constructivist methods used in the scope of newly-designed ECELEP result in achievement and change in children's understanding and learning of vocabulary receptively and expressively. A possible reason for this is participants' being a zero beginner who has no English knowledge and had positive attitudes and curiosity to learn a foreign language at the beginning of the treatment. However, descriptive statistics (post-test mean scores of Receptive EPVT=44,16 and 39,11 for treatment and control group respectively; post-test mean scores of Expressive EPVT=42,11 and 36,38 for treatment and control group respectively) and Mann-Whitney U test results ( $U = 176.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $U = 171.00$ ,  $p < .05$  for receptive and expressive respectively) mentioned above revealed that children in the treatment group performed significantly better both in recognition and production parts of EPVT. It is seen that children instructed with high quality programs including age-appropriate innovative methodology and assessment and realistic age-appropriate achievement targets outperform linguistically and communicatively in English.

#### **4.2. Does the implementation of ECELEP have an impact on pre-primary school children's communicative skills in English?**

In an attempt to assess VYLs' basic communicative skills, a Performance-based assessment tool including various tasks associated with pre-determined communication goals is used and the data is obtained. Descriptive statistics of children's communicative skills score in both treatment and control group are provided in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5. Descriptive Statistics Related to Pretest and Posttest Results of Treatment and Control Groups for PA**

|        | Treatment group |           | Control group |           |
|--------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
|        | Pre-test        | Post-test | Pre-test      | Post-test |
| N      | 18              | 18        | 18            | 18        |
| Mean   | 0               | 44,94     | 0             | 25,22     |
| Median | 0               | 43,50     | 0             | 25,00     |
| SD     | 0               | 3,33      | 0             | 3,85      |
| Max    | 0               | 50        | 0             | 31        |
| Min    | 0               | 41        | 0             | 20        |

As the Table 4.5 shows, the means of the pretest scores of PA is 0 for the treatment and control group. On the other hand, the means of the post-test scores of PA is 44,94 and 25,22 for the treatment group and control group respectively. Pretest scores of PA for both groups are similar because they cannot understand the meaning of frequently used basic questions in English and they cannot give response to these questions by giving one-word answers or by answering in a few words in English. Thus, VYLs in both groups have no basic communicative skills prior to the implementation. For this reason, it can be said that any variation after the intervention on their communicative competence can give information about the influence of the instruction on their communication skills in target language.

Tasks in the performance-based assessment tool are designed to measure the extent of VYLs' ability to comprehend the questions clearly and answer them appropriately in accordance with speaking communication goals defined in ECELEP. Although the target language contained in each task is similar to what VYLs are likely to have heard in their English hours and the questions practiced in the L2 learning process are suitable to their level, no one in both groups gave a response to the tasks in the pre-tests. It is most likely because of the children's actual English level before the early foreign language learning process in the scope of this study. In other words, VYL's being false beginners -not the difficulty and irrelevancy of the tasks- resulted in this unresponsiveness at the beginning of the implementation.

As for the comparison of post-test scores of treatment and control group in PA, the results of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the treatment ( $M = 44,94$ ) and control ( $M = 25,22$ ) groups' mean differences on L2 communication skill scores. Another finding demonstrates that the treatment group shows better communication skill scores at the end of the intervention. In addition, Mann-Whitney U Test for PA post-test scores of the treatment and control groups are shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6. Mann-Whitney U Test for PA Post-Test Scores of Treatment and Control Groups**

|                              | Groups          | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U      | p    |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------|------|-----------|------------------|-------|--------|------|
| Performance-based assessment | Treatment group | 18 | 44,94     | 3,33 | 27,50     | 495,00           | -5,15 | 171,00 | ,000 |
|                              | Control group   | 18 | 25,22     | 3,85 | 9,50      | 171,00           |       |        |      |

Pretests and posttests are applied to measure the achievements in their listening comprehension and speaking communication skills (Nikolov and Józsa, 2006). The reason why the pretest scores are not presented is due to the fact that no one in both groups can give a correct answer to the tasks. Nonetheless, when the treatment and control group are compared, the nonparametric post-test results indicate a significant difference between the treatment group and the control group, ( $U = 171.500$ ,  $z = -5,15$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (Table 4.6). According to Pallant (2015), “the direction of the difference” refers to the difference between the mean ranks and it also refers to the higher achievers which performs better. Based on this, children in treatment group produce a higher sum of ranks ( $\sum PA = 495$ ) than the control group ( $\sum PA = 171$ ), indicating that they are more skillful in communication skills than children in control group. This means that pre-primary school children learning English with collaborative and communicative approaches that take into account their linguistic and communicative needs together and support the development of the attitudes show higher achievement in communication skills when compared with the ones learning English in a program that impart instrumental skills and traditional basic competencies. The numbers and percentages of children’s answers are shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. Percentages of VYLs’ Responses to the Tasks in PA**

|                        | No answer |       | One-word answers |       | Answering in a few words |       |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|
|                        | n         | %     | n                | %     | n                        | %     |
| Treatment group (n=18) | 58        | 10,06 | 228              | 39,58 | 290                      | 50,34 |
| Control group (n=18)   | 190       | 32,98 | 322              | 55,90 | 64                       | 11,11 |

Table 4.7 displays the numbers and percentages of children’s answers which are categorized as “no answer”, “one-word answers” “answering in a few words” in the comprehension and expression task and “no answers” are coded as ‘0’, “one-word answers” are coded as ‘1’, “two-or-more word answers” as ‘2’ either. As shown in

Table 4.7, the frequency of two-or-more words answers in performance-based assessment tool is higher in treatment group than control group. This result (  $n=290$ ,  $f=50,34\%$ ,  $n=64$ ,  $f=11,11$ ) confirmed that children participating actively in the listening and communication process while engaging with story, songs, interactive games, thinking skill and arts and crafts activities in the treatment group perform significantly better in basic speaking communication skills than children in the control group. This might be explained with the finding of the study (Fleta, 2015) in which it is revealed that at an early age, oral communicative interaction provides the basis for comprehension and production in L2 learning, thus L2 input should be presented to children through a myriad of resources and awareness-raising activities.

Table 4.7 demonstrates the VYLs' achievement in comprehension of target sentences and questions in L2 learning and in expression of the answers to these questions in a few words irrespective of the sentences' grammatically correctness. When the children's responses are examined more specifically, the sentences include some omission errors, in particular, regarding the "auxiliary verb" (as in 'I eating carrot') and "verb inflections" (progressive inflection, -ing as in 'I am eat'), mainly due to a lack of these structures in L1 Turkish. This result seems to be parallel with the findings of the study carried out by Geçkin (2006) and Geçkin and Haznedar (2008) who studied on early and late acquired elements in early child grammars. They indicated that some errors, known as 'intralingual errors', are produced by child L2 learners regardless of their L1 background as a natural learning process. On the other hand, children's responses to these items include some 'word order errors' (as in 'I carrot eating'). Similarly, this may also be explained with the findings of the study conducted by Haznedar (1997) who presented evidence for the transfer of word order patterns from Turkish into English during the early stages of the acquisition process.

In sum, these results indicate that tasks and activities should not be designed randomly. Instead, they should be designed considering their appropriateness to the linguistic and communicative L2 learning objectives simultaneously and to VYLs' developmental characteristics (Ellis and Shintani, 2014). As a result of this, VYLs cannot view 'English' as an 'object' to be studied instead they use the target language for achieving a communicative outcome, problem-solving or participating an enjoyable activity as it



is the case in ECELEP. To illustrate, the communicative tasks and activities including personally meaningful and achievable goals with optimal difficulty level in the program make the L2 education more learner-centered and encourage the VYLs to use L2 in a communicative way. In other words, the tasks should provide interactive and communicative opportunities that support VYLs to impart information in a game, retell a story, play a game or sustain a dialogue. Based on this, VYLs' productive use of L2 knowledge is considerably important to achieve the communicative goals and develop their speaking skills. The results show that ECELEP including these communicative-oriented activities with suitable materials support VYLs' meaningful and age-relevant interaction and communication in the classroom and develop their collaborative learning and communication.

#### **4.3. Are there any significant differences by gender and age (months) in terms of the effect of ECELEP on pre-primary school children's English vocabulary learning and communicative skills?**

The third question in this study addresses the effect of the VYLs' gender and age on their receptive and productive EFL vocabulary development. In English as a foreign language learning literature, age and gender which are a group of antecedent factors are significant and relevant variables (Nikolov and Curtain, 2000; Józsa and Nikolov, 2005; Mattheoudakis and Alexiou, 2009). For this reason, they are included into this study. In order to examine whether VYLs' performances are related to individual differences (age, gender) in EPVT or PA, Mann Whitney U tests are conducted and the results are shown in Table 4.8 and 4.9.

**Table 4.8. Results of Mann-Whitney U Test between Females and Males for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment Groups**

|                 | Groups | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U     | p    |
|-----------------|--------|----|-----------|------|-----------|------------------|-------|-------|------|
| Receptive EPVT  | Female | 10 | 42,10     | 1,37 | 10,70     | 107,00           | -1,11 | 28,00 | ,262 |
|                 | Male   | 8  | 42,12     | ,99  | 8,00      | 64,00            |       |       |      |
| Expressive EPVT | Female | 10 | 44,60     | ,84  | 9,90      | 99,00            | -,37  | 36,00 | ,700 |
|                 | Male   | 8  | 43,62     | 1,92 | 9,00      | 72,00            |       |       |      |
| PA              | Female | 10 | 45,30     | 3,16 | 10,15     | 101,50           | -,58  | 33,50 | ,554 |
|                 | Male   | 8  | 44,50     | 3,70 | 8,69      | 69,50            |       |       |      |

Table 4.8 shows that the effects of gender are not statistically significant – there seem to be no difference in the performance of male and female candidates in receptive EPVT ( $U=28$ ,  $p=.26 > .05$ ), in expressive EPVT ( $U=36$ ,  $p=.70 > .05$ ) and in PA ( $U=33,50$ ;  $p=.55 > .05$ ).

**Table 4.9. Results of Mann-Whitney U Test in terms of Age for EPVT Post-Test Scores of Treatment Groups**

|                 | Groups       | n  | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Mean Rank | Sum of the ranks | z     | U     | p    |
|-----------------|--------------|----|-----------|------|-----------|------------------|-------|-------|------|
| Receptive EPVT  | 60-66 months | 12 | 44,33     | 1,61 | 10,46     | 125,50           | -1,12 | 24,50 | ,262 |
|                 | 67-72 months | 6  | 43,83     | 1,16 | 7,58      | 45,50            |       |       |      |
| Expressive EPVT | 60-66 months | 12 | 44,41     | 1,08 | 10,63     | 127,50           | -1,33 | 22,50 | ,184 |
|                 | 67-72 months | 6  | 41,50     | 1,22 | 7,25      | 43,50            |       |       |      |
| PA              | 60-66 months | 12 | 44,91     | 3,57 | 9,46      | 113,50           | -,04  | 35,50 | ,962 |
|                 | 67-72 months | 6  | 45,00     | 3,09 | 9,58      | 57,50            |       |       |      |

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between 60-66 months children and 67-72 months children in terms of receptive EPVT ( $U=24,50$ ;  $p=.26 > .05$ ), in expressive EPVT ( $U=22,50$ ;  $p=.18 > .05$ ) and in PA ( $U=35,50$ ;  $p=.96 > .05$ ).

#### **4.4. Does the implementation of ECELEP result in long-term effect on pre-primary school children's receptive and expressive vocabulary learning and communicative skills in English?**

In order to examine the effects of post-delayed test aiming at investigating VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge and communicative language ability after three weeks later, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is used to evaluate the differences between post-test and delayed post-test EPVT and PA scores of the experimental group and control group separately. This technique is frequently used in in-group studies with few subjects conducted in social sciences (Büyüköztürk, 2010). For this reason, it is used to measure the statistical significance of differences between the posttest and delayed posttest scores achieved by VYLs in both group. Besides,

descriptive statistics demonstrating the efficacy of ECELEP used in treatment after a period of time is shown in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10. Descriptive Statistics Related to Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Treatment and Control Groups for EPVT**

|                 |                         | N  | Mean  | Median | SD   | Max. | Min. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----|-------|--------|------|------|------|
| Treatment group | Post-test (Rec)         | 18 | 44,16 | 44,50  | 1,46 | 46   | 40   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (Rec) | 18 | 43,55 | 43,50  | 1,97 | 46   | 40   |
|                 | Post-test (Exp)         | 18 | 42,11 | 42,00  | 1,18 | 39   | 44   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (Exp) | 18 | 41,27 | 42,00  | 2,21 | 45   | 37   |
|                 | Post-test (PA)          | 18 | 44,94 | 43,50  | 3,33 | 50   | 41   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (PA)  | 18 | 44,11 | 44,00  | 2,63 | 50   | 40   |
| Control group   | Post-test (Rec)         | 18 | 39,11 | 39,50  | 1,40 | 41   | 33   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (Rec) | 18 | 30,66 | 32,00  | 3,04 | 35   | 25   |
|                 | Post-test (Exp)         | 18 | 36,38 | 37,00  | 1,81 | 38   | 27   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (Exp) | 18 | 28,55 | 29,00  | 2,28 | 31   | 23   |
|                 | Post-test (PA)          | 18 | 25,22 | 25,00  | 3,85 | 31   | 20   |
|                 | Delayed post-test (PA)  | 18 | 20,77 | 20,50  | 2,43 | 27   | 18   |

As can be seen in Table 4.10, the EPVT receptive and expressive delayed post-test mean scores of treatment group (M=43,55; M=41,27 respectively) are quite higher than the scores of the control group (M=30,66; M=28,55 respectively), which demonstrates higher receptive and expressive achievements of children in treatment group. Table 4.10 also indicates the mean differences between the EPVT receptive and expressive post-test and delayed post-test mean scores. When the mean differences in children's vocabulary recognition and production test in L2 is examined carefully, it is seen that the difference is approximately 9 points between EPVT receptive post-test and delayed post-test scores and almost 8 points between EPVT expressive post-test and delayed post-test scores in the control group. Unlike the control group, the mean differences between EPVT receptive post-test and delayed post-test scores did not change a lot, which indicates age-appropriate and practical instructional practices in the early foreign language learning process make L2 learning more efficient and effective. Children's decreasing delayed post-test scores might be explained with a three-week break in the English language education process. On the other hand, the mean scores in the

treatment group decreases slightly over three weeks, which mean children can remember most of the target word's meaning and express them after a period of time.

Another important comment is that children in both groups have considerably larger recall scores with receptive testing than with expressive testing (see Table 4.1, 4.4 and 4.10). This finding is closely associated with the findings of the studies carried out by Griffin and Harley (1996) and by Schneider et al. (2002) who explained the cause of learners' superior performance with receptive testing with two notions "associative learning and response learning". In their view, L2 words which are previously learnt by associating with illustrations and pictures or by providing a link between the words come to children's mind readily in receptive testing as a result of associative learning. On the other hand, the expression of L2 words without the recall clue is relatively more difficult by virtue of response learning (Griffin and Harley, 1996 and Schneider et al., 2002). A different way of explaining the difference between expressive and receptive recall is presented by de Groot (2011) in terms of inherent difference between production (or 'encoding') and comprehension or recognition ('decoding') that it involves. Based on this, the differences between children's production and comprehension in L2 learning and the assessment process are explained specifically by Griffin and Harley (1996) and Schneider et al. (2002) as followings:

Generally, comprehension tasks are much easier than production tasks because production requires having full of knowledge of the form of the words to be produced whereas comprehension only requires distinguishable but not necessarily complete knowledge.

Most probably for the same reasons, children perform much better in the receptive part of English vocabulary picture test when compared with the expressive part of the test in terms of both post-test and delayed post-test scores of treatment and control group.

As for the comparison of children's communicative skills in both group, it is seen that the PA delayed-post test scores (M=44,11) are slightly lower than PA post test scores (M=44,94) in treatment group, which indicates the effects of newly-designed English language education program at pre-primary level on young children's L2 development is more permanent. On the other hand, in the children control group there is high mean

differences between the PA delayed post-test scores ( $M=20,77$ ) and PA post-test scores ( $M=25,22$ ).

Based on these results, it can be said children learning English with ‘formal instruction’ with traditional methods and materials such as TPR, songs and flashcards mostly used in L2 learning process at pre-primary level (Kimsesiz, Dolgunsöz and Konca, 2017) show slight achievement in terms of receptive and expressive vocabulary development and communicative skills. Conversely, inclusion of play-based language learning activities -songs, games, arts & crafts activities, role-play, storytelling and thinking skills activities- which are adapted to the age of language learners and to the pre-primary context makes the language learning meaningful and useful.

All in all, high quality early childhood English language education programs which are not fostering L2 as a specific subject but viewing L2 as a communication tool to be used in other activities (European Commission, 2012b) and adopting a holistic approach by supporting children’s early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development (UNESCO-UIS, 2012) make the learning long lasting for pre-primary children. In this sense, the treatment group instructed with ECELEP including a variety of activities and tasks by taking into consideration the educational attributes of pre-primary education and English language education achieve higher scores in the development of vocabulary learning and communicative skills than those in the control group even if these scores decline slightly in the delayed post-test.

More specifically, ECELEP’s efficacy after three weeks later is assessed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test to compare differences between immediate post-test scores and delayed post-test scores of treatment group and control group as well. In achieving this, the data obtained from treatment group through post-test and delayed post-test is analyzed by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test which is used to test the significance of the difference between the scores of the two related measurement sets (Büyüköztürk, 2000; Johnson and Christensen, 2014). The same procedures are carried out for control group. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for analysis and comparison of post-test and delayed post-test results of expressive epvt and receptive EPVT in control group are shown in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Control Group**

|               |                | Receptive EPVT  |           |              |       |     | Expressive EPVT |           |              |       |      |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|-----|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
|               |                | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p   | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p    |
| Control group | Negative ranks | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>a</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
|               | Positive Ranks | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,73 | ,00 | 18 <sup>b</sup> | 9,50      | 171          | -3,73 | ,000 |
|               | Ties           | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |     | 0 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
|               |                |                 |           |              |       |     |                 |           |              |       |      |

As shown in Table 4.12, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test indicates a statistically significant difference between post-test and delayed post-test Expressive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,73$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) and Receptive EPVT ( $T=171$ ;  $Z=-3,73$ ,  $p,00 < .05$ ) scores of the control group. The results of the intra-group analysis demonstrate that there is a significant change between post-test and delayed post-test scores both in Receptive and Expressive part of EPVT. Based on this, the effects of traditional program conducted to control group to introduce basic vocabulary receptively and expressively are not long-lasting based on the decrease in their scores in delayed post-test. According to the results of the Wilcoxon test conducted to determine whether the difference between VYLs' immediate posttest and delayed posttest is meaningful, VYLs cannot recognize and recall the target vocabulary three weeks later after the intervention easily. On the other hand, the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for analysis and comparison of post-test and delayed post-test results of expressive EPVT and receptive EPVT in treatment group are shown in Table 4.12.

In the L2 literature, the studies related to the factors that have an influence on the efficacy and quality of young children's learning in the target language show that well-designed syllabuses and programs (Parker and Valente, 2019), digital affordances (Butler, 2019; Majoral, 2019), instructional materials (Ghosn, 2019), young children's motivation for learning English (Li, Han and Gao, 2019) play a crucial role in TEVYL. Among these, designing an age-appropriate holistic program, incorporating effective instructional materials and taking children's attention during the L2 learning process which are the elements of ECELEP are closely tied up with the results of this study. The VYLs in control group have not sufficient motivation and positive attitudes towards

early L2 learning in accordance with the qualitative analysis including their perceptions about their L2 experience (see Table 4.15 and 4.17) because of the lack of attractive game-based approaches, activities and materials. For this reason, ineffective introduction of L2 to VYLs leads to superficial and impermanent learning which is not remembered after three-week break as is the case in this study.

**Table 4.12. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of Expressive EPVT and Receptive EPVT in Treatment Group**

|                 |                | Receptive EPVT |           |              |       |      | Expressive EPVT |           |              |       |      |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
|                 |                | N              | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p    | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p    |
| Treatment group | Negative ranks | 9 <sup>a</sup> | 4,80      | 81,00        | -1,83 | ,067 | 9 <sup>a</sup>  | 9,11      | 82,00        | -1,87 | ,060 |
|                 | Positive ranks | 5 <sup>b</sup> | 9,00      | 24,00        |       |      | 5 <sup>b</sup>  | 4,60      | 23,00        |       |      |
|                 | Ranks          | 4 <sup>c</sup> |           |              |       |      | 4 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
|                 | Ties           |                |           |              |       |      |                 |           |              |       |      |

As shown in Table 4.12, no difference is found between the treatment's group posttest and delayed posttest results of EPVT Receptive ( $Z=-1,83$ ,  $p,067 > .05$ ) and Expressive ( $Z=-1,87$ ,  $p,060 > .05$ ). Although there is a significant decrease of VYLs communicative skills in control group, there is a non-significant decrease between VYLs' post- and delayed post-test scores in treatment group. The results suggest that ECELEP have some positive effect on children's expressive and receptive vocabulary learning, and the positive effect seems to be sustainable over time, as no difference is found between treatment group's immediate and delayed posttest scores. In relation to the delayed posttest and posttests scores between the children who are learning English with ECELEP in the treatment group and those learning English with traditional instructional methods and techniques, mean rank and the sum of ranks showed almost no significant difference. They revealed that children instructed effective recognize and recall the target words more easily and communicate in a few words despite a length of time. In this sense, it can be said the English program has had more long-lasting impact on children's vocabulary development and communication skills. In other words, the effect of ECELEP which is a model demonstration of effective L2 introduction is permanent on VYLs' retention of receptive and expressive vocabulary predetermined in the program in a time period of three weeks.

As mentioned above, children in treatment group exhibit higher achievement in English vocabulary learning and communicative skills when compared with children in the control group in the follow-up test applied to investigate the effects of ECELEP in the long run. In other words, ECELEP's continuing impact resulting in long-term receptive and expressive vocabulary achievement cannot be underestimated. This result is closely related to the finding of Balaban Dağal and Şahenk Erkan's (2016) study in which they develop a questionnaire to measure pre-primary level children's interest towards learning a foreign language. They emphasized the strong relationship between their high motivation and interest and effectiveness and permanence of their L2 learning. There are a number of studies indicating the effects of VYLs' attention on their learning (Köksal ve Atalay, 2015; Zhau, 2014; Swanson, 2008). The common findings of them is young children learn more and their learning becomes long-lasting when they are interested and motivated. Considering all these studies, it can be said that the result of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test of treatment group is one of the indicator of VYLs' having high motivation and attitudes towards learning English as a result of play-based activities which are designed their developmental level, learning interests and needs.

Nevertheless, the reason of why the decreased achievement is found between post-test and delayed post-tests of two tests with Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test at different degrees in both group is due to the absence of exposure to English language learning during three weeks. This result is closely associated with the study findings indicating the importance of continuity and appreciation of children's foreign language learning attainment and process for high-quality outputs (Rixon, 2013; Blondin et al., 2008). Regarding this, Nikolov (2000) and Singleton (2014) pointed out that the persistence of promoting quality and quantity of early foreign/second language learning programs is important in terms of long lasting achievements in linguistic and communicative skills. Finally, it should be acknowledged that the implementation of successful early childhood English language education programs calls for continuity without periodic and continuous interruptions in VYLs' foreign language learning process.

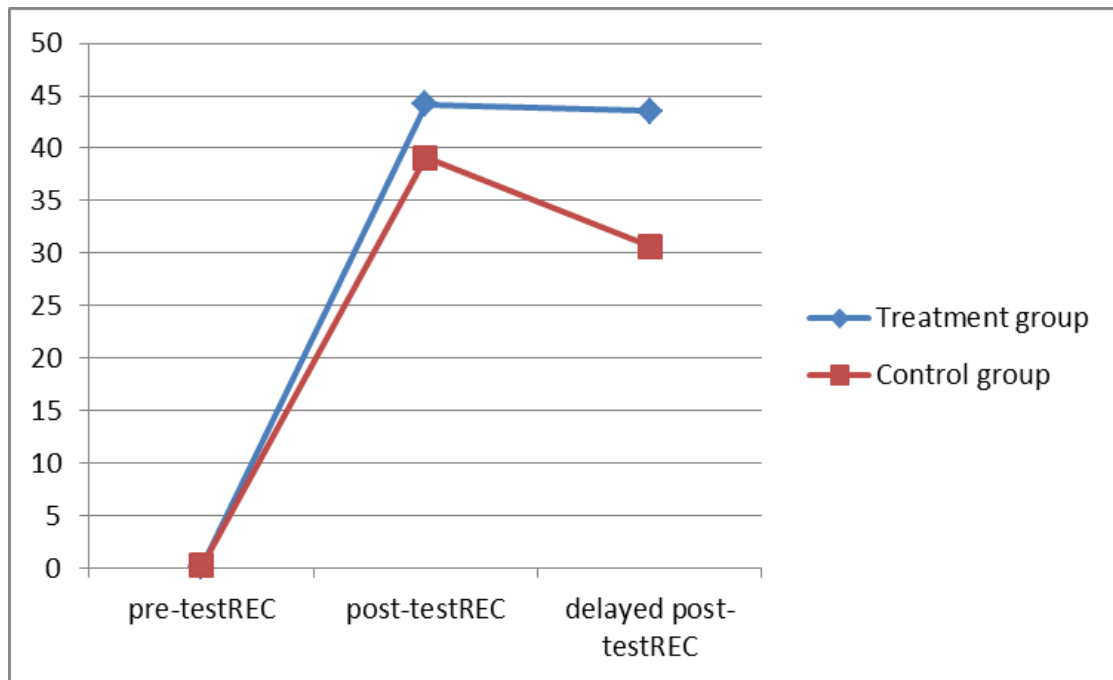


**Table 4.13. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Analysis and Comparison of Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Results of PA in Both Groups**

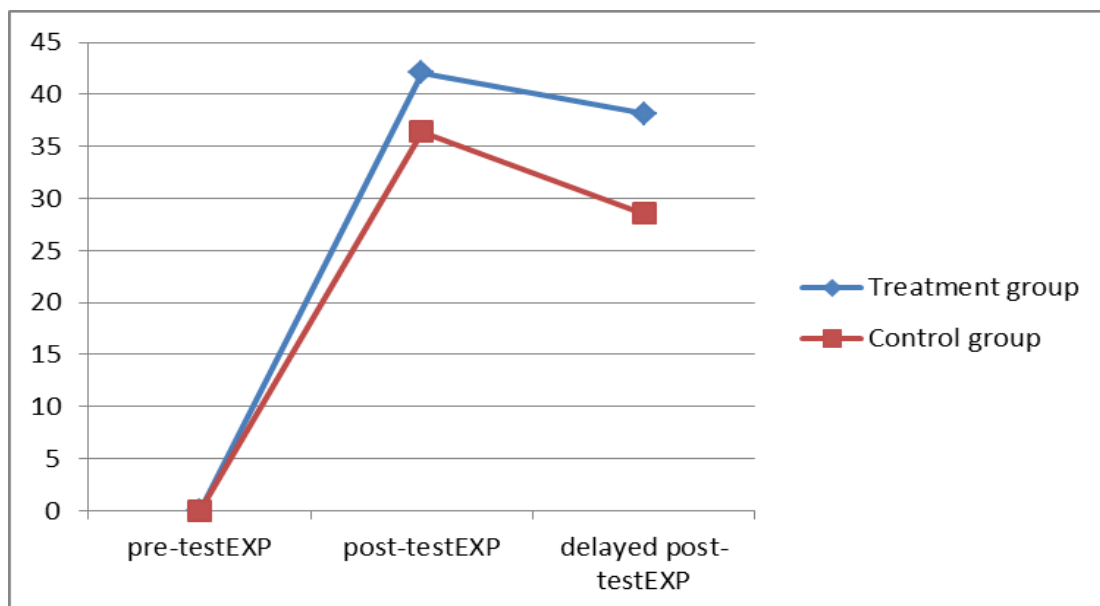
| Performance-based assessment for communication skills |                | N               | Mean rank | Sum of ranks | Z     | p    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
| Treatment group                                       | Negative ranks | 8 <sup>a</sup>  | 10,13     | 81,00        | -1,81 | ,069 |
|                                                       | Positive ranks | 6 <sup>b</sup>  | 4,00      | 24,00        |       |      |
|                                                       | Ties           | 4 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |
| Control group                                         | Positive ranks | 0 <sup>a</sup>  | 8,50      | 136          | -3,54 | ,000 |
|                                                       | Negative ranks | 16 <sup>b</sup> |           |              |       |      |
|                                                       | Ties           | 2 <sup>c</sup>  |           |              |       |      |

As for the development of communicative skills in PA, Table 4.13 demonstrated that there is no significant difference between the PA post-test and delayed post-test scores of treatment group ( $Z=-1,81$ ,  $p,069 > .05$ ). This also reveals that while three children's scores are equal in both tests, 8 children's posttest scores are higher in posttest than delayed post-test. Besides six children get higher scores in delayed posttest than posttest in PA. In control group, results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicate a significant difference between the PA post-test and delayed post-test scores group ( $Z=-3,54$ ,  $p,000 < .05$ ). This also shows that while two children's scores are equal in both tests, the rest of the children's scores decrease in the delayed post-test. According to this result, it can be said that whereas children instructed with both ECELEP and traditional early L2 program tend to lose their L2 vocabulary knowledge and communicative skills after a three-week period, this decrease and lose is not significant. In other words, children in the treatment group is much better to use communicative skills in L2 after three weeks delay than those in the control group. According to these results, the retention test mean scores which are obtained three weeks after the posttest administered at the end of the implementation of the ECELEP are higher than the posttest mean scores in EPVT (Receptive and Expressive) and PA. This situation can be interpreted that the effect of the ECELEP regarding communicative skills continues in the treatment group. This is closely related to the disruption of continuous improvement in L2 learning process. Closely related with this finding, Jin and Cortazzi (2015) indicated that that sustaining the long-term learning at early years is important for more proficient levels in English.

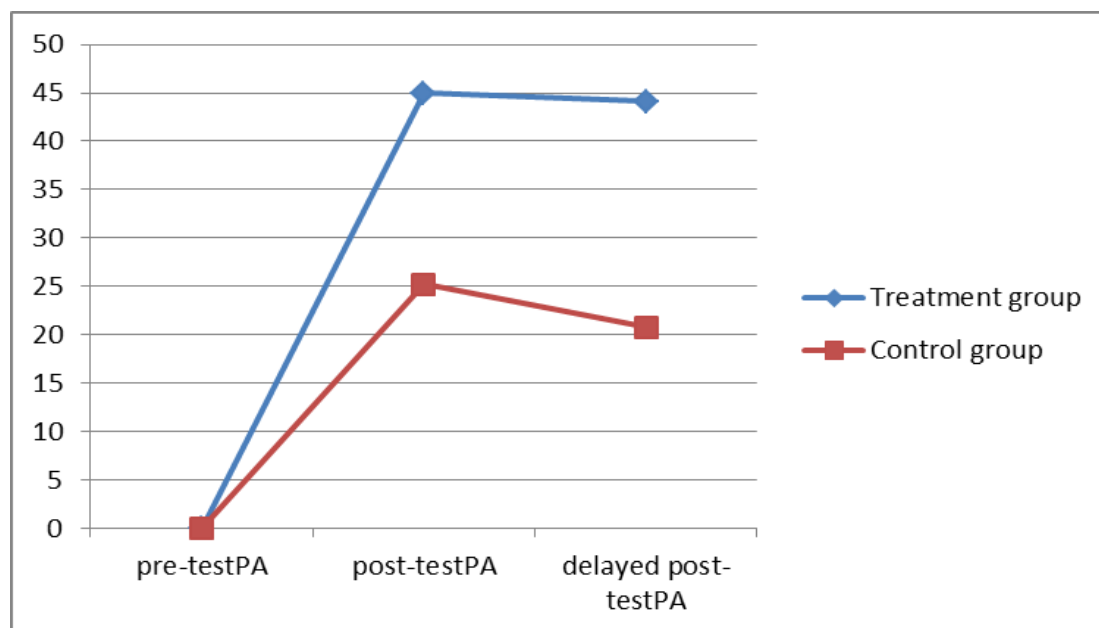
**Figure 4.1. Changes in the Receptive EPVT Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group**



**Figure 4.2. Changes in the Expressive EPVT Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group**



**Figure 4.3. Changes in the PA Pre-Test, Post-Test and Delayed Post-Test Scores of the Treatment Group and the Control Group**



In sum, this study describes how well-designed early L2 programs at pre-primary level embarking on child-centered and constructivist approach and including a variety of age-appropriate language activities develop and enhance very young learners' receptive and expressive vocabulary learning and communication skills in target language. A five-month experimental research study is applied to measure whether or not ECELEP has an effect on VYLs' L2 development and communication skills. The findings reveal that well-developed early foreign language program paying attention to VYLs' cognitive and linguistic demands and needs in accordance with the children's stage of development improve children's linguistic and communicative knowledge, and vocabulary development in target language. This is one of the findings of Ellison's study (2019) that activities, tasks and materials must be designed carefully so as to ensure that they support children's cognitive and linguistic demands by taking into consideration the pedagogical principles. Likewise, Puchta and Elliot (2017) indicated that the inclusion of age-appropriate methodology that views the young learners as a whole person and engages them with the multi-sensory learning process in early second/foreign language education programs makes the learning effective and efficient.

One of the important suggestions made about early L2 education programs by Mourão and Lourenço (2015) is about the characteristics of programs. They suggested that early years L2 learning programs should be designed with a holistic approach that refers to enhance young children's four main development areas - cognitive, physical, social and emotional- during L2 learning process. They also emphasized that these programs should foster the language use for meaningful communication and the development of logical and reasoning skills with a variety of well-planned activities (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015). These characteristics seems to be included in ECELEP consisting thinking skills activities for their cognitive development, action games for their gross motor skills, arts & crafts activities for their fine motor skills, played-based activities for their social interactions with their peers, storytelling and songs for their language development, role-plays for meaningful communications and self-expressions, and lastly a stimulating and language-rich environment with multi-sensory materials to attract their attention.

Furthermore, the findings highlight that the desired English learning outcomes become long lasting in parallel with the efficiency of early L2 programs. According to this study, English education and learning outcomes of ECELEP following both a communicatively oriented and structured approach with a variety of newly-created content-related songs, stories, role-plays, games, thinking skills, arts and crafts activities are not similar to those applying traditional instructional practices and approaches that give educators or teachers a more active role in L2 language learning process regardless of collaboration and communication. Not only short term effects of ECELEP but long-term effects also demonstrate that truly effective English language education to very young learners, which means to put the the communicative and the constructive approaches into practice in the activities provides long-lasting benefits in terms of children's receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and communication skills.

#### **4.5. What do VYLs think about the aims of learning and knowing English in their lives?**

The children both in treatment and control group are interviewed on completion of the implementation of ECELPT with regard to their attitudes towards learning an L2, their

perceptions about the most liked and disliked activities and tasks, supportive factors in L2 learning based on their language learning experience. The researcher recorded the children's answers, which are later coded and prepared for analysis. For open-ended questions, the researcher analyzes the children's replies and categorizes them according to common ideas and expressed opinions. Finally, the data are analyzed at the level of descriptive statistics, which indicates the frequencies ( f, f%) of variables are calculated (tables between 4.14 and 4.19)

In order to find out very young learners' perception about the objectives of learning a foreign language, the first question 'Why do you think that we learn a foreign language?' is asked to children in both the treatment and control group after the implementation process. Descriptive analysis about the first question is presented in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14. Number (f) and Percentage ( f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs' Objectives of Learning a Foreign Language**

|                                         | 1. Why do you think that we learn a foreign language? | Treatment<br>f | f(%)  | Total<br>percentage<br>(%) | Control<br>f | f(%)  | Total<br>Percentage<br>(%) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------------------|
| Language<br>function-related<br>answers | to talk with people                                   | 3              | 16,67 | 17,67                      | 8            | 44,44 | 72,22                      |
|                                         | to comprehend people                                  | 0              | 0     |                            | 5            | 27,78 |                            |
| Classroom-related<br>answers            | to play English games                                 | 7              | 38,89 | 82,33                      | 0            | 0     | 27,78                      |
|                                         | because it is easy                                    | 4              | 22,22 |                            | 2            | 11,11 |                            |
|                                         | because I like it                                     | 4              | 22,22 |                            | 3            | 16,67 |                            |

Table 4.14 shows that the children's responses can be grouped into two broad headings: 'language function-related answers' and 'classroom-related answers'. The responses under 'language function-related answers' are related with the function of languages that address what people do with them. It is well-known that functions represent the active use of language for a specific purpose such as expressing ideas, communicating with others, show understanding of what other people said (Walqui, 2012; Hill and Miller, 2013). Some of the children's responses related with the function of the language are as follows: *'to talk with people who are speaking English'*, *'if I don't know English, I cannot understand everyone'*, *'to talk with foreigners'*, *'my mother said if I don't know English, I can't make contact with these people'*. Table 4.14 demonstrates

that while out of 18 children 3 children (17,67%) mention about the functions of language directly in treatment group, 13 children (72,22%) report the general functions of language use and among these answers 8 answers are related with function about language production and 5 answers are associated with function about language comprehension. The reason of higher numbers related with 'language function-related answers' in the control group might be the absence of functional use of L2 in control group. To illustrate, children in the control group encounter the target language by repeating them through flashcards or listening to songs in typical teacher-directed activities. In contrast to children in treatment group who carried out the functional use of L2 through communicative activities, young children's functional use of L2 is very low in their early L2 program. For these reasons, the bulk of the children might probably give a general response like 'learning English is something to communicate with English-speaking people' to the question investigating VYLs' view on English learning as a foreign language.

As for the children's responses under 'classroom-related answers', they are closely related with their L2 learning experience during the implementation. Some of the children's responses related with the function of the language are as follows: *'because learning English is fun, 'because learning English is quite enjoyable', 'for English games', 'I enjoy myself', 'learning English is easy' 'because it is easy', because we just play', 'I understand everything and it is easy', 'in order to play game' 'because I like to learn English.'* As seen in Table 4.14, the number and the percentages of classroom-related answers in treatment group (f=15, f(%)=82,33) are significantly higher than the answers of control group (f=5, f(%)=27,78) in the same category. One of the possible reasons might be that age-appropriate and enjoyable activities that support children to be actively involved in the learning process and use the target language while carrying out a task or achieving a goal. To illustrate, in order to become an active participant of games and activities carried out in target language, children need to use L2 in the classroom. Furthermore, children in treatment group have multiple opportunities to see and use target vocabulary in various contexts during the treatment. As a result of this, it is not surprising that children build a relationship between the objectives of learning L2 and the functional use of L2 in classroom activities, tasks and materials they find interesting and motivating. This finding seems to be parallel with the findings of the

study carried out by Nikolov (1999) indicating that youngest children referring to 5-6 years old are more motivated by classroom practice provided that intrinsically motivating activities, tasks and materials are presented. In this study, most of the younger children (61%) reported classroom-related reasons to the question related with the issue of why children think they learn EFL.

In sum, it can be concluded that meaningful, interactive and interesting contexts provide settings in which VYLs can actively participate in plenty of activities, tasks and materials by using L2 like the case in treatment group. These children view learning L2 as a tool to carry out the communicative functions related with particular activities in the classroom. However, children in control group prefer to report general reasons of language use because they cannot experience the functional use of L2 in the classroom except expressive and receptive function of language knowledge.

#### **4.6. What are the VYLs' attitudes towards their previous English learning experience?**

In order to find out very young learners' attitudes towards their previous learning L2 experience in the scope of this study, the question 'did you like learning English with this program?' is asked to children in both the treatment and control group after the implementation process. Children's responses and their percentages are given in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15. Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs' Attitudes towards their Previous English Learning Experience**

| 2. Did you like learning English with this program? | Treatment |       | Control |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
|                                                     | f         | f(%)  | f       | f(%)  |
| YES                                                 | 17        | 94,44 | 11      | 61,11 |
| NO                                                  | 1         | 5,56  | 9       | 38,89 |

The main reason of asking children in both the treatment and control group about their attitudes towards learning English right after the implementation of different types of L2 programs are to check their feelings about the previous language learning experience. It is notable that only one child children in treatment group felt negative

attitudes toward their English learning experience. In other words, whereas out of 18 children, 17 of them are enjoyed by learning English in treatment group ( $f=17$ ,  $f(\%)=94,44$ ), only 11 children feel positive attitudes toward English learning in control group ( $f=11$ ,  $f(\%)=61,11$ ).

One of the possible reasons for this difference might be the kinds of activities and instructional methods which are different from each other used in English sessions. To illustrate, while communicative and constructivist methods and carefully-designed activities and materials are used to ensure VYLs' communicative and linguistic demands in accordance with their stage of development in treatment group, didactic methods (demonstration, TPR) and materials (flashcards) are used in the introduction of English with the aim of increasing VYLs' linguistic skills regardless of their communicative skills. Thus, most children in treatment group said they liked learning English and they are happy and engaged with play-based activities (Table 4.16), however several children in control group expressed negative attitudes due to the 'reciting and memorizing English vocabulary didactically' (Table 4.17).

The results show that VYLs instructed with ECELEP seem to be more motivated and to have more positive attitudes towards learning English when compared with children instructed with a traditional early L2 program. The findings are consistent with the results of some other studies (Jin et al., 2016; Wu; 2003; Elvin, 2007 and Brumen, 2010). Jin et al.'s study (2016) carried out to gain insights into pre-primary children's 'conceptual thoughts' and attitudes towards English in China revealed that young children's attitudes towards English and learning in general were dependent upon different types of activities they engaged in during English sessions. On the other hand, the results' of Wu's study (2003) carried out with pre-primary children in Hong Kong showed that open-ended and encouraging activities and language-rich environment is closely related with children's attitudes. On similar grounds, Brumen's (2010) study carried out with Slovenian pre-primary children and Elvin et al.'s study (2007) conducted with Norwegian pre-primary children to describe the factors that affect their attitudes towards English in a study pointed out that children's motivation and attitudes are closely associated with concrete experiences and their active participation in activities in L2 language learning process. Similarly, Nikolov (1999) indicated that



young children are more motivated with the L2 practices that encourage their intrinsic motivation to involve in L2 activities and tasks.

All these studies mentioned above indicated that the introduction methods, activities and materials are significant predictors of children's attitudes. Based on them, it can be said that by designing an age-appropriate L2 program that is developmentally appropriate in terms of content and practices, as well as child-centered in approach for pre-primary children, their motivation and attitudes become positive. In this sense, the higher percentage of positive answers in treatment group can be explained with ECELEP including the use of songs, stories, games and play-based activities, movement and art and craft activities, role play and thinking skills activities with parental involvement which are the elements of developmentally appropriate practices developing the whole child by providing children's active involvement (Fleta, 2006; Ordóñez, 2016, and Robinson et al., 2015). With respect to this issue, Excerpt 1, 2 and 3 clarifies and shows evidence:

#### Excerpt 1

Researcher: Did you like learning English with this program?

Child: Yes, definitely.

Researcher: Were you happy with it?

Child: Yes, the game "Wolf! Wolf! What are you eating?" (adapted from Turkish games) made me happy so much.

(From an interview with a child in treatment group)

#### Excerpt 2

Researcher: Did you like learning English with this program?

Child: Yes, pink monkey (puppet) is really enjoyable. It played with us, run with us and made some jokes. Why was this monkey speaking English all the time?

(From an interview with a child in treatment group)

#### Excerpt 3

Researcher: Did you like learning English with this program?

Child: Of course. Did you remember that we jumped on the flashcards like hopscotch? It was great.

(From an interview with a child in treatment group)

In all these interactions, children's answers demonstrate that they have positive attitudes and high motivation towards the L2 learning context. In addition to this, they are also the indicator of VYLs' inner motivation for participating the activities and tasks in L2 learning process. Children's responses giving the short description of the games also confirm that introducing English to very young learners with play-based activities make the L2 process enjoyable and efficient. Consequently, a supportive and encouraging 'early childhood English language education program' that ensure children have successful and enjoyable experience can increase children's enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language.

#### 4.7. What do VYLs think about activities they enjoyed most while learning English?

With a view to examining the activities that VYLs enjoyed most in their language learning process, the question 'Which activities did you like most?' is asked to children in both the treatment and control group. When children's responses are analyzed carefully, it is seen that children in the treatment group tend to give more than one answer to the question while most of the children's responses consist only one answer in the control group. For this reason, the total amount of answers is higher than the total amount of children. Children's responses and their percentages are given in Table 4.16.

**Table 4.16. Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about VYLs' Most Liked Activities**

|                     | 2. Which activities did you like/enjoy most? | Control group<br>f | Control group<br>f(%) | Total<br>percentage<br>(%) | Treatment group<br>f | Treatment group<br>f(%) | Total<br>percentage<br>(%) |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| common<br>answers   | songs                                        | 7                  | 38,89                 |                            | 4                    | 11,78                   |                            |
|                     | flashcards                                   | 8                  | 44,4                  | 100                        | 2                    | 5,89                    | 17,65                      |
|                     | no answer                                    | 3                  | 16,77                 |                            | 0                    | 0                       |                            |
| uncommon<br>answers | acting out (role-plays)                      | 0                  | 0                     |                            | 6                    | 17,64                   |                            |
|                     | thinking skills                              | 0                  | 0                     |                            | 4                    | 11,78                   |                            |
|                     | art & craft                                  | 0                  | 0                     | 0                          | 4                    | 11,78                   | 82,35                      |
|                     | activities                                   | 0                  | 0                     |                            | 9                    | 35,29                   |                            |
|                     | games                                        | 0                  | 0                     |                            | 5                    | 14,70                   |                            |
|                     | storytelling                                 | 0                  | 0                     |                            |                      |                         |                            |

Table 4.16 showed that out of 34 answers given to this question, 28 of them (82,35%) reported role-plays, thinking skill activities, arts & crafts activities, games and stories as the most liked activities. Furthermore, among these 28 answers, 9 of them (26,4%) are specifically related with games. It is seen that there is a general tendency and enthusiasm towards play-based learning activities that encourage VYLs to participate in L2 learning. The majority of answers associated with games in treatment group signal the need and necessity for playful activities in early foreign language education program. When almost of all the children's answers about positive attitude in the treatment group ( $f=17$ ) and most of the children's answers (stories, thinking skills activities, play-based activities, acting out and songs) about the most liked activity are examined together, it can be said that VYLs like to learn English because they are actively involved in the activities mentioned above. The 'fun and enjoyment' factor VYLs are feeling and 'the engagement' factor that provides them to participate in activities and completed them with satisfaction motivates them to maintain their learning process successfully. This means that the children joining the ECELEP are aware of the interactive and efficient activities which have different features for them such as 'fun, enjoyment and engagement'. To put it differently, it can be said that the positive impact of establishing an effective early L2 language program at pre-primary level became evident in the interviews with children.

As for the control group, while 3 children don't give any responses to the questions, almost half of the rest prefers songs and the other half expressed 'flashcards' as the most liked activity. This can be possibly explained based on their responses on the second interview question that children felt negative attitudes towards English. On the other hand, the reason of VYLs' negative attitudes towards L2 learning might be due to the absence of fun activities and interactive opportunities as mentioned above. To illustrate, early L2 program aiming at introducing 'foreign' language to very young learners (under 6 years old) by underestimating the fun and interactive activities and child-friendly methods result in these children's discouragement. In this sense, it can be concluded by saying that introducing a new language with enjoyable and effective instructional tools considering the characteristics of young children plays an increasingly important role in early childhood and pre-primary settings. In relation to the most liked activities in L2 learning, three of the children said the following:

## Excerpt 1

Teacher: Which activities did you like most?

Child: the one we played basketball while we were learning fruit.

Teacher: Why did you like most?

Child: It was really enjoyable. On that game, I scored three baskets and expressed many words in English.

Teacher: Wow! Great job! [laughs] . . . What else?

Child: The one we played with fly swatters. The flies were making a buzzing sound and then landing on a picture. Then we swiped on the pictures with fly swatters. It was so funny.

## Excerpt 2

Teacher: Which activities did you like most?

Child: Did you remember that we designed our clothes and we cut them with scissors and then hung them on the clothesline with the clothespins? And that I enjoyed with it

Teacher: Is there any activities you liked most?

Child: Finding the pattern in English.

Teacher: Really?

Child: It is very easy. It looks like the one we are doing in the class.

## Excerpt 3

Teacher: Which activities did you like most?

Child: Yeah, one day I acted out a wolf role. It was so funny.

Teacher: Can you tell me about it to remind me?

Child: Well, I wore a wolf mask and sit in the middle of the class. We said 'Walking in the jungle. Walking in the jungle? Wolf, wolf! How are you today?' I said 'I am hungry, I chased my friends'

Teacher: Can you catch them? [laughs] . . .

Child: All of them.

Teacher: What else? Is there any activities you liked most?

Child: The storybook that includes some animal tail illustrations.

Teacher: Why do you like it?

Child: You asked us to know 'which animal does this tail belong to?' I answered all of them correctly.

Teacher: Congratulations. [applause] . . .

These views concur with the literature on children's language learning indication that young children in early childhood period enjoy learning English with play-like activities, role-plays and storytelling which are intrinsically motivating activities. As indicated in the literature, the children who shows normal development can learn a new language with varying degrees of proficiency in early childhood period easily if this

language is provided with effective and interactive instructional methods and materials (Grosjean, 2008; Haznedar, 2015). In deciding these methods and opportunities that can be provided to VYLs in the early stages of English as a foreign language learning, all the stakeholders – teachers, researchers and decision makers can benefit from the perceptions of VYLs about fun and effective methods and activities. This seems to be parallel with some findings of the study carried out by Sykes and Reinhardt (2013) and Iten and Petko (2016) who commonly indicated the close relationship between children's enjoyment and their learning. The results of this question in the interview validate the findings of the study conducted by Jones and Coffey (2006) and Brumen (2011) who indicates that young children can have an effective and enjoyable L2 language learning process provided that this process is full of play-based activities and early childhood methods and techniques which are parallel with their developmental period.

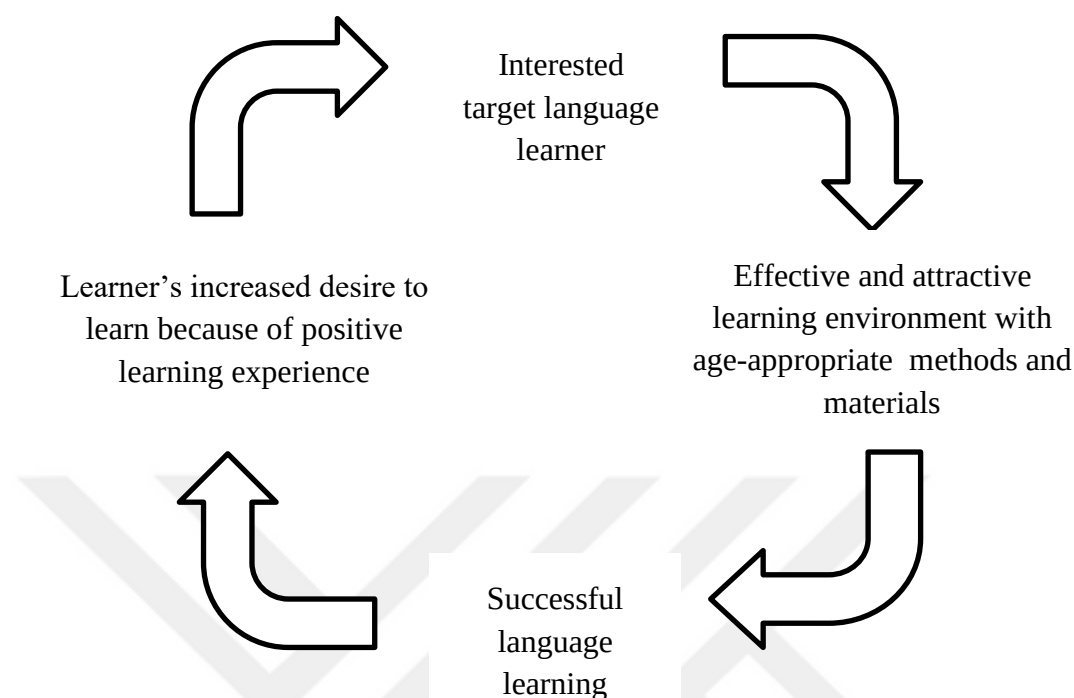
It is clear from Table 4.16 that if the alternative options in terms of instructional materials, developmentally appropriate language activities and games are not provided as is the case in control group, the bulk of the children prefer songs and flashcards indispensably as the most liked activities ( $f=15$ ,  $f(\%)= 83,29$ ). However, when a wide range of L2 learning options are provided to pre-primary school children by the L2 program/curriculum, they are positively inclined toward communicative and interactive methods, as is the case in treatment group in which a reasonable number of children demonstrate that they like games ( $f=9$ ,  $f(\%)= 35,29$ ), role-plays ( $f=6$ ,  $f(\%)= 17,64$ ), arts & crafts activities ( $f=4$ ,  $f(\%)= 11,78$ ), thinking skill activities ( $f=4$ ,  $f(\%)= 11,78$ ), and storytelling ( $f=5$ ,  $f(\%)= 14,70$ ). In the case of many alternative learning options, high number of children's tendency to the activities indicated above can be explained with the idea claimed by Lewis and Bedson, (1999) "interactive and communicative methods and activities provide a means through which children practice and experiment with language, as well as a real reason to interact with their peers and the environment"

The perceptions of VYLs about the enjoyable activities are congruent with the findings of some studies indicating that young children practice L2 language in the games or in other activities without realizing they are using this language per se during playing, for this reason, the learning of the target language takes place unconsciously in the process

(Moon, 2000; Dunn, 2013). Similarly, the findings of Kersten's study (2015) indicating that many of the children were so enthusiastic about 'language games' that they wanted to 'play' them repeatedly clarified the relatively high percentages of children preferring 'games' as the most liked activity. Related to this, the researcher who conducted two different programs in both the treatment and control group has also shared the view that VYLs show a pretty much enthusiasm to participate the drama and play-based activities and an enormous effort to speak orally in English based on her classroom observations.

In fact, Table 4.15 and 4.16 together summarized the effective language learning cycle. The first step of this cycle in L2 language education and learning process is the well-designed L2 program consisting of various kinds of activities and materials based on their developmental linguistics demands. The second step is the presentation of the elements of program to the very young learners in a language rich environment enthusiastically by paying sufficient attention to their developmental needs and characteristics. In the next step, the natural consequences of the first two stages occur and VYLs have enthusiasm to be actively involved in the L2 learning process. As long as VYLs participate actively into L2 learning with a growing wish to express themselves meaningfully in the L2, they develop their comprehension and build an awareness of the target language. Finally, in the last step VYLs' achievements in listening comprehension, speaking communication skills and vocabulary development in early language process increase their motivation and positive attitudes. These explanations are compatible with the 'positive language leaning cycle' claimed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) to explain the outcomes of intrinsic motivation that learners have during L2 learning process. According to them, attractive learning environment including effective methods, materials and teacher result in successful language learning which is the main reason and source for learners' desires and motivation because of positive learning environment (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) (see Figure 4.4)

**Figure 4.4. A Positive Language Learning Cycle**



In order to carry out this positive language learning cycle, language practices should be enriched in early stages of L2 learning on the basis of studies providing interesting and innovative contributions to the early childhood foreign language education field. Most of children's responses about the most liked activity in treatment group such as games, storytelling, acting out, art & craft activity concur with the strategies used in early childhood education. This means that any type of learning and education cannot be dissociated from the development of learning in early childhood education. In this sense, very young learner-specific ELT pedagogy which was not explicitly researched until the late 1990s (Rich 2014) existed at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Edelenbos et al., 2006) and integrated both ELT and ECE instructional strategies and adapted them into their developmental social, cognitive and linguistic demands. In the scope of this new area – early childhood English language education- it is highly important that VYLs' voices, desires, feelings and perceptions are taken into seriously and brought into research to be able to design or select more meaningful activities, tasks and alternative practices as it is the case in this study including the perspectives and voices of the children about their experience. Regarding this, Pinter (2014) and Pinter et

al. (2016) points out that issues related with L2 education in early childhood can be understood ‘from children’s own perspectives’.

#### 4.8. What do VYLs think about activities or things they disliked while learning English?

In order to find out very young learners’ answers about the things they disliked, the question ‘Is there anything you disliked in your L2 learning experience?’ is asked to children in both treatment and control group after the implementation process. Children’s responses and their percentages are given in Table 4.17.

**Table 4.17. Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children’s Responses about Things They Dislike in L2 Learning Experience**

| 4. Was there anything you disliked while learning English? | Treatment group |      | Control group |       | Reasons                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|---------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                            | f               | f(%) | f             | f(%)  |                                                                              |
| YES                                                        | 0               | 0    | 8             | 44,44 | Repeating words many times (4), spent long time (2), difficulty of tasks (2) |
| NO                                                         | 18              | 100  | 10            | 55,56 | -                                                                            |

It is evident from Table 4.17, none of the children stated anything they dislike about their L2 learning experience in the treatment group. This result concurs with the results obtained from second question of interview related with children’s positive attitudes. Out of 18 children, all the children except one of them report their positive attitudes toward learning L2 (f=17, f(%)=94,44). The results show that the VYLs’ attitudes and motivation are mostly positive towards English as a results of enjoyment and pleasure which are derived from the enjoyable and age-appropriate games and activities presented in the framework of ECELEP. As Kersten (2015) indicated, many of the children were so enthusiastic about these ‘language games’ that they wanted to ‘play’ them repeatedly.

To illustrate, children’s word knowledge is consolidated in the treatment group by using them repeatedly but in different context. More specifically, one of the target words ‘lion’ is practiced while acting out in drama games, reading storybooks, engaging with play-based activities, finding the patterns in thinking skills activities and designing a



lion mask in art and craft activity. These repeated exposures support VYLs' vocabulary learning and communicative skills, as it may take at least 8–9 encounters to learn a word. In sum, the elements of ECELEP including age-appropriate instructional materials and methods provide pedagogical benefits to VYLs with holistic development and cognitive benefits through challenging activities and linguistic benefits through sufficient exposure to target vocabulary and structures receptively and productively.

Unlike this extensive input in game-like activities, children in control group rely mostly on flashcards including a picture related with the target vocabulary and they listen to the songs. Although they have an opportunity for repeated exposure and practice (at least 8–9 encounters) of target vocabulary and structures, the lack of diversity, intensity and enjoyment children need because of their developmental process result disliked situations in L2 learning process. In this sense, the results revealed that out of 18 children 10 of them liked everything in control group while 8 of them (44,44%) stated disliked issues in the L2 learning process as 'repeating English words frequently', 'spending too much time to learn L2' and living hard times because of difficulty of language'. Supporting these results, some children's answers in the interview as follows: *'I am feeling bored while repeating words', 'learning English is really hard', 'Ms. Burcu is speaking English and I don't understand', 'learning English takes too many times', 'Sometimes activities are too difficult', 'English hours are too long, 'I don't know English'*

Children's in these responses verify the findings of study (Murphy, 2019) that word learning takes time, and multiple exposures are needed to really enable learners to solidify the meaning receptively and productively. However, if these exposures are not played-based, which triggers VYLs' curiosity and excitement, learning a language might be hard at times, the 'English hours' can be long because of the boring L2 process in which they cannot enjoy (Murphy, 2019). The case is the same in this study, some children state that some activities are too long and English learning is boring as the reason for their dislike. 8 of the children (44,44%) indicate that they dislike the foreign language and mention some inconvenient factors that bother and discourage them in the classroom atmosphere. In addition to this, the results also show that repeating and memorizing the words chorally and individually without using those in communicative

and interactive activities functionally can result in the loss of motivation to learn and dissatisfaction, as it the case in the control group.

In the second question, 9 (38,39%) children out of 18 stated their negative attitudes towards learning L2. In the third question 15 of them stated listening to songs and learning and practicing with flashcards as the most liked activities due to the absence of alternative learning options. 3 of them give no response to this question. Finally, in this question they explained the reasons of why they dislike as boring instructional techniques including memorization and vocabulary learning with flashcards and songs, long L2 hours and difficulty of tasks. Children's answers are significantly related with each other because if children cannot be actively involved in meaningful tasks and activities by using L2 as an instrument, they can be bored with teacher-directed activities in which they do not have enthusiasm for learning and using the target language. One of the possible outcomes of this process is that children view learning English as a difficult subject and they become demotivated and indicated their negative attitudes. Enever (2011), Jin et al. (2014), and Littlejohn (2016a) summarized this issue by saying that "in an early L2 program, pedagogical and instructional weaknesses which stem from lack of the interactive and communicative activities and age-appropriate procedures and materials can cause pre-primary children's motivation to learn English to decline."

#### **4.9. What do VYLs think about the supportive things that help them learn English?**

The last question in the interview 'What made your learning English easier?' is asked to pre-primary children in both groups, with the aim of investigating their perceptions about the supportive things that help them to learn English. Children in the treatment group and control group tend to give more than one answer to the question, for this reason the total number of answers are different from each other. Children's responses and their percentages are given in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.18. Number (f) and Percentage (f %) of the Children Responding to the Question about Supportive Things That Help Them Learn English**

| 5. What made your learning English easier? | Control group |       | Total percentage of common answers | Treatment group |       | Total percentage of common answers |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------------------|
|                                            | f             | f(%)  |                                    | f               | f(%)  |                                    |
| Teacher's use of L1                        | 10            | 34,48 | 100                                | 11              | 34,38 | 78,13                              |
| Flashcards                                 | 11            | 37,94 |                                    | 5               | 15,62 |                                    |
| Gestures                                   | 8             | 27,58 |                                    | 9               | 28,13 |                                    |
| Realia                                     | 0             |       |                                    | 4               | 12,5  |                                    |
| Puppets                                    | 0             |       |                                    | 3               | 9,37  |                                    |

The Table 4.18 shows both general analysis and comparison of common answers of both groups and more specific analysis of each item in terms of both groups separately. In more general terms, Table 4.18 shows that high percentages of common answers about the supportive things during L2 learning process in both groups are related with teacher's use of L1 and gestures. More specifically, 18 (62,06%) children out of 29 in control group and 20 (62,51%) out of 32 in treatment group indicate that gestures, reinforcement and L1 used in a balanced way in the classroom make the early language learning easier. This is mostly related with the general characteristics of very young children and their specific pedagogical learning principles. From a pedagogical point of view, it is highly important for children to make sense of what they learn and draw on what they know in compliance with their characteristics and developmental trends. In this sense-making process, VYLs need the teacher's using gesture, visuals, repetition and reinforcement that makes the input understandable and comprehensible (Krashen, 1987; Copland and Ni, 2019). In addition to this, in accordance with their characteristics, VYLs' L2 learning process becomes efficient by participating to the activities actively and internalize what they learn with the help of instructional aids and materials. At this point, gestures and miming are considered to be effective ways for VYLs because they reinforce meaning by relating meaning to movement and facial expressions.

More specifically, 8 children (27,58%) in the control group and 9 children (28,13%) from the treatment group view the teacher's using gestures as supportive item for their understanding. Some of the children's answers related with this are as follows:

## Excerpt 1

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: I understand the stories. They are really enjoyable. They are easy at the same time.

Teacher: Why were the stories easy for you?

Child: Did you remember you put a tail on your back while reading the story. Then you act out all the animal roles.

Teacher: Pointing, acting out, moving make your learning easier.

Child: Yes.

## Excerpt 2

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: Learning English is easy. I can learn it easily.

Teacher: How?

Child: From the flashcards.

Teacher: Okey. What else?

Child: From your demonstration. While playing games, you show them. While reading story, you act them out.

These children's answers show that children need gestures which are linked to some meanings to help them retrieve words and expressions. They point out that gestures help them to remember easily. This might be somewhat due to the fact that accompanying the words with the gestures makes the activity engaging and fun (Pirchio et al., 2015). Related to this, Ellison (2019) indicated that teachers encourage children to use a range of means to express their knowledge and understanding; these might be verbal and non-verbal, namely the use of mime, gestures and drawings. McElwee (2015) also emphasized the importance of gestures which are helpful in storytelling by saying that 'gestures and mimicry allow the meaning of phrases to be learned through active work at pre-primary level L2 learning'. Similarly, Haven (2000) put forth that using visuals, non-linguistic support and limited use of the mother tongue facilitated comprehension of a story during storytelling. The finding of McElwee's (2015) and Haven's (2000) study seem to be parallel with children's responses and the researcher's observation during the implementation that pre-literate children need the support of gestures and mimicry significantly in storytelling time to make the meaning of phrases and sentences clearer. The reason of this need can be explained with the finding of the studies (Huang, Kim and Christianson, 2019; Novack and Goldin-Meadow, 2015; Porter, 2012)

emphasizing the effectiveness of gestures presented with words and sentences in facilitating the comprehension of target language, in developing not only children's L2 oral production but also L2 comprehension.

Considering the very young learners in EFL context where they carry out their first meeting with learning a new language, it is relatively significant to introduce the target vocabulary and phrase with gestures and mimicry to strengthen the links between the words and meaning and to facilitate the recall of the words. More specifically, Congdon et al. (2015) indicated that presenting the gesture along with spoken words is more effective than presenting the gesture after the spoken words. In this sense, gestures and facial expressions are used intensely while presenting target words, reading and storytelling, indicating transitions between activities and giving instructions to both the treatment group and control group. The effectiveness of gestures supporting the meanings is clearly observed by the researcher in their L2 learning and assessment process. For example, utterances that children used in the classroom mostly such as 'Ms. Burcu! I am thirsty. Drink water?' is accompanied with the gesture of drinking water. In addition to this, based on the researcher's observation during the assessment process it can be said that several children use their gestures and facial expressions while answering the questions especially in 'emotions' part.

The other high percentage of responses given to the question is teacher's use L1 in the classroom. Specifically, 10 children (34,48%) from control group and 11 children (34,38) from treatment group view the teacher's L1 use as the facilitator in L2 learning process. Some of the children's answers related with this are as follows:

Excerpt 1

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: Sometimes I didn't understand what I was going to do in games. It was difficult and boring.

Teacher: Why didn't you understand the rules?

Child: Because you spoke English. But when you told them in Turkish, I could play the games.

Excerpt 2

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: Designing our animal masks (arts & crafts activity) was easy for me.

Teacher: Why was it easy for you?

Child: I understood how I was going to design.

Teacher: What did you do for understanding?

Child: Nothing. You told them in Turkish.

#### Excerpt 3

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: I won in the 'Yes/No chair' game. It was easy.

Teacher: How was that game?

Child: I contested with Ahmet, I both know your question correctly and run fast.

Teacher: Great! Was the game itself or the question easy?

Child: I understand the game, that's why it was easy.

Teacher: Okey. Thank you.

The table 4.18 and children's responses show that children in both groups feel secure and motivated when the instructions of activities are explained in children's mother tongue. It is evident that the most of the children view the use of L1 as facilitator in the case of comprehension of how the games are played, how the role-plays are acted and what the rules and explanations of games are. García and Li Wei's study (2014) include similar findings that emphasized the importance of L1 use in terms of children's engagement with classroom-based activities easily. From other perspective, Cummins (2017), and Conteh and Brock (2011) stated the benefit of using L1 as children's taking advantage of the common underlying proficiency –that is, the underlying linguistic and cognitive system that is shared across all languages.

Related to this issue, there are two views which are relatively discrepant from each other. One of them indicated that there is no benefit for using the L1 in L2 learning process. Regarding this, it is emphasized in a study conducted by Chalmers (2017) that the use of L1 in the learning environment leads to lower L2 performance. However, the result obtained from VYLs' responses related to this issue is contradicted with the findings of this study (Chalmers, 2017). As it is seen from the children's responses, teacher's use of L1 during moments of conflict or when trying to organize a game or an activity become helpful for children. It is clear in some children's responses that they want to participate in the L2 activities but not achieve it because they don't understand. This also results in frustration at first because VYLs are less acquainted with English. However, the use of teacher's L1 allows young children to comprehend what is going on during specific activities and encourages to actively participate in them. It becomes advantageous for children by the time they understands the formats of activities,

classroom language and key words. As Krashen (1982) has suggested, L2 teachers need to be able to use a new L2 language clearly and recurrently for VYLs to make the foreign language comprehensible and understandable. Besides, some studies suggest some practical and useful practices such as translation (Hall and Cook, 2012) and codeswitching (Milligan et al., 2016) during the early stages of L2 learning especially in EFL contexts at minimum level. The common point of all these studies is that the use of young children's mother tongue or a familiar language as resources in pre-primary foreign language learning process at reasonable level can facilitate L2 learning.

With regard to teacher's L1 use, there are several studies listed the usefulness of L1 to teach the L2 as contributing to positive classroom 'affect' which refers to emotional side of learning (Mitchell et al., 2013), reducing anxiety (Littlewood and Yu, 2011), enhancing the affective environment for learning (Auerbach, 1993), and engaging and motivating young children. Based on these studies and children's need that they indicate in their answers and researcher observations in the classroom, it can be said that the use of L2 should be maximized inside the classroom with the support of gestures, mimicry and pictures to clarify the meanings in many contexts. However, in difficult circumstances where the messages and meanings couldn't be conveyed to children through these tools, L1 can be used to ensure that children keep on task and activities and comprehend the meanings successfully. In this perspective, how, why and when aspects of using L1 in early L2 learning process in EFL context can be further examined.

As for children's responses related to visual materials (flashcard, puppet and realia), while 11 children (37,94%) out of 29 from control group view only flashcards as the facilitator in L2 learning process, 5 children (15,62%) out of 32 stated the flashcards as supportive items. The rest of the children (7 children out of 12) who are indicating visual materials as helper reported that puppets and realia help themselves learn target vocabulary and enhance speaking in L2. The difference between children's responses related to visuals as facilitator in terms of number and percentage result from the absence of puppets and realia as instructional materials in control group. Some of the children's answers supporting this are as follows:

## Excerpt 1

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: One day, you came to the class with a suitcase. There were a lot of clothes in it. I wore all of them. It was funny.

Teacher: Yeah, were they helpful for you to learn words related to clothes?

Child: Yes, I learnt all of them. For example, trouser, shoes, etc. [listed some of them by pointing]

Teacher: Well done [laughs] . . . What else?

Child: Cheeky monkey, the pink one. It was amusing.

## Excerpt 2

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: Cheeky Monkey, certainly. He was playing with us, asking some questions to us, even one day he kissed me.

Teacher: I see, were they helpful for you to learn English?

Child: Yes, it was always speaking English? Why?

Teacher: because it's mother tongue was English like yours is Turkish. What else?

Child: I learnt very well from pictures.

Teacher: Do you mean flashcards?

Child: Yes.

## Excerpt 3

Teacher: What made your English learning easier?

Child: Finger puppets made it easier. My finger puppet was apple, red apple. It was enjoyable.

Teacher: Can you learn the fruit vocabulary easily?

Child: Yes, I learnt all the words.

The result and VYLs' responses show that if children are provided a variety of pedagogical tools in L2 learning process, they can prefer the interactive and communicative ones such as puppets and realia. Related to English-speaking puppets, animated by the teacher, the findings of Kırkgöz's study (2019) indicating that they make children more relaxed and motivated and encourage them to use more English during speaking activities are closely associated with the children's responses. Similarly, Brezigar (2010) asserted that the use of puppets, physical movements and realia can make a dialogue come alive for VYLs, giving them a communicative purpose as is the case in treatment group. For instance, a puppet 'cheeky monkey' is created as a personality to support children's listening and speaking by helping them to communicate much more spontaneously. 'Cheeky monkey' which is included in songs,



games, dialogues and stories by the teacher supports them to grasp the meaning of phrases and sentences and answer the questions. This is evident in children's specific responses described above that they find the puppets entertaining and motivating.

In sum, a variety of methods (i.e. games, songs, stories, role-plays, arts and crafts activities and thinking skill activities, parental involvement) and instructional aids (i.e. visuals, teacher's L1 use, gestures ) are used in accordance with the early linguistic and communicative L2 objectives in ECELEP. The results of EPVT and PA indicate that children in the target group scored higher than the ones instructed with traditional English instructional methods on measures of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and communication skills. Despite the decline in the scores of EPVT and PA in both groups at varying degrees in the follow-up test, VYLs' receptive and productive knowledge and communication skills show moderate decline as the time progresses. This shows that using age-appropriate methods and materials with clear linguistic and communicative goals related to early language learning is likely to result in effective learning. Furthermore, language-oriented and learner-centered activities that help children engage in interactions at pre-primary level L2 learning can yield desirable results.

Another important finding resulting from this study is the fact that interview findings provide some underlying explanations for the reasons of VYLs' higher attainment and learning carried out with ECELEP. Besides, all these findings of interview highlight the importance of children's point of view in order to gain a better understanding of their L2 learning experiences in early childhood, as they have great potential to provide valuable insights into what activities and methods are effective, what motivates and helps them to learn English. In this sense, they mostly indicated visuals, teacher's L1 use and gestures as language supportive items and facilitating factors. With the interview results, when alternative methods are provided in the classroom, their tendency to participate in interactive and collaborative speaking and listening activities in accordance with their developmental needs and demands becomes evident. Young children's general preference towards 'playing' in general becomes specific in children's responses related to the most liked activities. As far as the negative attitudes towards L2 learning process are concerned, it is worth noting that teacher-led activities

including repetition periodically and continuously can make them bored and make the learning process difficult. Conversely, enjoyable play-based activities provided with the teacher support and instructional aids satisfy children's need and make them happy. As a final note, well-designed early foreign language program integrating ECE and ELT instructional techniques and pedagogy and at the same time providing a high-quality L2 experience is one of the most vital parameters (high-quality programs, teacher, learning environment) of effective and efficient L2 education to children at pre-primary level.



## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

### **5.0. Presentation**

In this chapter, some conclusions focusing on how children's natural inquisitiveness can be successfully incorporated into L2 learning and which methodologies and instructional recourses are practical and enjoyable, how children are involved in L2 learning process intellectually, physically and linguistically and what the practical guidelines and curricular frameworks are in the field of language education with VYLs are discussed and analyzed. Then the chapter concludes with implications for early childhood foreign language learning and assessment. Lastly, suggestions for further research about English language education at pre-primary level are presented.

### **5.1. Conclusions**

In sum, this study describes how effective early L2 programs at pre-primary level embarking on the child-centered and constructivist approach and including age-appropriate language activities develop and enhance VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary learning and communication skills in the target language. A five-month experimental research study was applied to measure whether or not ECELEP had an effect on VYLs' L2 development and communication skills. The findings revealed that high-quality and well-designed programs including meaningful and age-appropriate tasks and activities which were balanced in terms of cognitive and linguistic demands in accordance with the children's stage of development improved children's linguistic and communicative skills in target language. This is one of the findings of Ellison's study (2019) that activities, tasks and materials must be designed carefully so as to ensure that they support children's cognitive and linguistic demands by taking into consideration the pedagogical principles. Likewise, Puchta and Elliot (2017) indicated that the inclusion of methodology engaging the learner as a whole person through the multi-sensory learning process in early foreign language education programs makes the learning effective and efficient.

One of the important suggestions about ELT programs to VYLs by Mourão and Lourenço (2015) is about the characteristics of programs. First of all, they suggested that early years L2 education programs should be designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development (2015). Secondly, they emphasized that these programs should foster the language use for meaningful communication and interaction as well as the development of cognitive and linguistic skills in target language (Mourão and Lourenço, 2015). These characteristics seems to be included in ECELEP including thinking skills activities for their cognitive development, action games for their gross motor skills, arts & crafts activities for their fine motor skills, played-based activities for their social interactions with their peers, storytelling and songs for their language development, role-plays for meaningful communications and self-expressions, and lastly stimulating and language-rich environment with multi-sensory materials to attract their attention.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted that the desired English learning outcomes become long lasting in parallel with the efficiency of early L2 programs. According to this study, English education and learning outcomes of ECELEP following a communicatively oriented but structured approach with a variety of newly-created content-related songs, stories, role-plays, games, thinking skills and arts and crafts activities are not similar to those applying traditional instructional practices and approaches that give educators or teachers a more active role in L2 language learning process regardless of collaboration and communication. Not only short term effects of ECELEP but long-term effects also demonstrated that truly effective TEVYL, which means to put the communicative and constructive approaches into practice in the activities introduced for use in the classroom provides long-lasting benefits.

There is no doubt that many teachers are already effectively introducing some basic vocabulary in English to VYLs at pre-primary level. Nonetheless, the most important point is how L2 education at this level carried out effectively and efficiently in pre-primary school contexts considering the communicative needs of VYLs. Based on the findings of this study, it can be said that the efficient L2 education at pre-primary level mostly depending on designing/selecting and sequencing the age-appropriate tasks and activities, incorporating interactive and attractive instructional materials, including

communicative approaches and methods and assessing them with suitable methods and materials. There is no need to mention that L2 learning at any level achieve its objectives in a learning environment where the learners expose to meaningful and real interactions (King and Mackey, 2007). In this scope, contrary to some traditional and mostly-used methods including coursebook-based and teacher-centered instructions, the game-based practices and activities offered in ECELEP aiming at introducing some basic vocabulary and communication skills holistically are likely to be generally applicable to VYLs in all EFL contexts.

Garton et al. (2011) studying on early years English language education programs and curriculum emphasized specifically three aspects of curriculum: syllabus, materials and assessment and identified them as key challenges of the successful implementation of pre-primary English. ECELEP involving all these three facets by offering some age-appropriate and culturally appropriate ELT materials and activities that provide comprehensible input for VYLs and ensure them to repeat and practice this input in a contextualized way. Furthermore, they also provide contributions to their L2 communication skills by providing opportunities for them to reveal the output through a variety of activities. Besides, the themes and the target vocabulary becomes meaningful, interesting and relevant via these materials. In addition to these newly-designed ELT materials such as a variety of realia, flashcards, story-based materials, songs, picture cards, puppets and worksheets for thinking skills activities, ECELEP offers effective activities involving a lot of enjoyment and movement such as games, thinking skill activities, role play, songs, arts and crafts activities, that provide active involvement into L2 learning process. As well as a practical and enjoyable practices which are better suited to the organization of L2 learning at pre-primary level, ECELEP offers a number of recommendations for the effective assessment of VYLs' English as a foreign language. One of these recommendations is the English Picture Vocabulary test and the other one is Performance-based assessment for their communication skills which are age-appropriate and theme-related assessment tools developed by taking into consideration VYLs' age, context of instruction, amount and type of exposure to English and purpose of assessment. These assessment tools can be incorporated into the ELT national program for VYLs or used by early English language teachers in the assessment of VYLs' L2 achievement at the end of their pre-primary education. Thus,

teachers can have in-depth knowledge about various assessment tools that measure the VYLs' receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge as well as their progress in their speaking and listening skills at certain intervals.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

This study can be beneficial for teachers and teaching assistants working with three-to seven year-olds who are learning English at pre-primary level in EFL contexts. The educational needs of these learners are different from those of older children, and the aim of this study is to encourage language teachers to reflect on these needs, provide quality English education and create meaningful L2 experiences that VYLs can become enthusiastic about learning a new language. It can be inspiring for the ELT practitioners in private sectors or some state kindergartens who are looking for designing meaningful and imaginative ideas and activities and developing a language rich environment in the pre-primary classroom. Moreover, considering the results of the development in VYLs' communication and comprehension skills, it can be concluded that children instructed with ECELEP are more willing to communicate in English with a few words in L2 learning process irrespective of the grammatical mistakes the children made while answering the questions like 'I am eat apple', 'five cat', etc. To illustrate, children are able to use routine phrases and target vocabulary in context, sing songs, read parts of newly-created stories, play group games in the classroom, do role-plays and answer to questions in thinking skills activities. As a possible suggestion, teachers and teacher trainers can make use of the set of activities in ECELEP presents for enhancing very young L2 learners' listening and speaking skills more effectively and the practical suggestions to improve their communication skills with meaningful, multisensory and multimodal practices. Thus, they can provide VYLs' involvement and participation into the English learning process comfortably and naturally in their scheduled 'English' times and this also increases L2 language production and communication and comprehension skills automatically.

The development of Early Childhood English Language Education Program with the assessment tools can be a guiding light for private pre-primary schools which continue introducing English as a foreign language in different amount and level nowadays. It

can be also inspiring in the future for the Turkish Ministry of Education and policymakers that can be further in need of strengthening the position of English by lowering the starting age to the pre-primary school years and introducing English as an L2 in state pre-primary schools. As is well-known that an L2 is not officially part of the pre-primary curriculum and only a few private pre-primary establishments include this in their programs in Turkey. In addition to this, a number of state pre-primary schools introduce English as an L2 within the framework of after-school study clubs. Besides, the enthusiasm for pre-primary L2 education programs is supported by a variety of publications and research papers at a nationwide level. Based on these, it can be said that an early start is expected to improve the quality of L2 education and have advantages in the long run in Turkey by looking at regulations of Ministry of Education that has an enthusiasm for lowering the starting age periodically. For this reason, this study can be inspiring in the forthcoming years for Ministry's EFL program for pre-primary education in deciding the guidelines, educational goals, age-appropriate instructional methods and approaches and the instructional aids and creating relevant conditions for enhancing the early L2 knowledge and competencies of the population of the Turkish children. More and more stakeholders realize that offering L2 education at pre-primary level is only the starting point. In addition to this, issues related to high quality curricula, monitoring progress and learning outcomes over the years, well-designed programs, carefully selected instructional materials are the key points that should be taken into consideration holistically. This might be possible with the help of numerous publications and research papers containing a wealth of information about English language education and assessment at pre-primary level. In this scope, this study is not only aiming at providing a detailed picture of all aspects of TEVYL but also touching upon some of the main issues related to creating and implementing of early childhood English language education program and some assessment tools for VYLs' receptive and expressive L2 vocabulary and communication skills.

In relation to pre-primary level L2 learning in a low-exposure foreign language context, this study provides evidence that when English is integrated into the children's learning environment, using appropriate pedagogies, resources, methodologies and activities is considerably significant. As Rincón and Clavijo Olarte (2016) stated that the more intellectually and emotionally children are engaged in L2 learning process, the better

learning is achieved. In achieving this, this study can provide alternatives for the English teachers working in pre-primary schools for designing more challenging learning contexts where mechanical and decontextualized language activities are converted into interactive and contextualized practices that encourages VYLs to use English to communicate orally. In other words, instead of introducing English to children explicitly or didactically, teachers provide children to encounter the target language through play and contextualized in such a way as to create the need for using it. The activities, tasks and materials that are designed and sequenced carefully so as to ensure that they are balanced in terms of linguistic, social, emotional and cognitive demands and in accordance with the children's stage of development can be inspiring and helpful for private pre-primary education providers for successful early L2 education. In sum, this study can serve as a guideline for the stakeholders –teachers, teacher trainers, policy makers, academic managers, private education providers and ministries of education- in creating a curriculum for this age group, in deciding instructional materials, in planning lessons with age-appropriate activities and in assessing with suitable tools.

The results of various studies show that music education, environmental learning, drama and art education are taking place in pre-primary schools. What is more, according to local preference, different areas of learning can be incorporated into the early childhood education process by taking children's developmental levels into consideration. As for this study, it also develops a point of view implying that applying age-appropriate and activity-rich foreign language education at pre-primary level where the children can encounter the language in a naturalistic, meaningful and inspiring environment seems especially beneficial for building their L2 language foundation. However, the results also imply that the success in this process considerably depends on the quality of input, strategies of language use and contextualization because they are highly important in guaranteeing that the children understand the target vocabulary, phrase and sentences about the different topics encountered in the L2 at this level. In view of these positive results, it is hoped that the benefits of pre-primary level L2 learning will be exploited more effectively in educational institutions in the future.



Considering the results of interview with the young children, it can be concluded that their perceptions of their foreign language learning experiences can provide invaluable feedback for teachers, researchers and policymakers. In this study that foregrounds young children's voices – one of the children's universal rights - children's attitudes, perceptions and interpretations were elicited to find out about their L2 learning experiences at the end of the implementation of ECELEP via interviews. The findings of the study give some practical suggestions for language teachers about what VYLs like and dislike. In this scope, the repetition of the target words in the same way, the lack of fun and enthusiasm in introducing L2, the ambiguity and uncertainty about when and how they will participate in the activities and games are among the practices they are discouraged. Contrary to this, the use of specific strategies such as a small degree of using L1, translation and code-switching, play-based activities, gestures and mimicry are motivational factors that make the L2 learning easier. In short, their voices can be heard loudly and clearly in the research as is the case in this study. For this reason, teachers in public and private pre-primary schools, academic managers and ministries of education need to listen to VYLs' voices and make them the starting point for decision making around English language education policies and procedures at pre-primary level.

In what concerns the children's views, the study showed that ECELEP can positively influence children's attitude towards learning a new language. The study has shown that children can become more aware of languages, appreciate and enjoy language learning, and approach the experience with a positive attitude. The success of ECELEP reported through the analysis of the attitudes and perceptions of the children and through quantitative analysis leads to the conclusion that ECELEP can be implemented at the pre-primary education level and beneficial results can be obtained in this context where children's involvement in introducing an L2 should be in limited school time. Teachers who are introducing L2 at pre-primary level may wish to ask themselves: "What do young children enjoy or find motivating to learn at this level?" "How can I make the L2 process more effective and enjoyable?" "How can I assess the children's L2 learning and success in the short or long term?" At this point, the suggestions about the activity types, practices and assessment tools can be helpful in catering for the growing numbers of pre-primary children. Furthermore, one of the implications for the teacher and

syllabus designer is that VYLs are encouraged and participated actively in L2 learning process provided that the activities, tasks and materials become interesting and meaningful for them and the teacher supports them when it is needed. In short, learning L2 with fun and the teacher as facilitator and supportive are some of the essential properties of VYLs' English learning process.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that L2 learning at pre-primary level is the 'first meeting' with a foreign language for children who start to learn this language in EFL context. In this sense, language teachers, policy makers, teacher educators and researchers who place emphasis on children's first impressions in their first meetings should support VYLs in order to have meaningful, useful and playful L2 learning experiences in a language rich environment in pre-primary classroom. If they can develop healthy and positive attachment with the target language in a high-quality L2 program designed with age-appropriate and effective methodological and pedagogical principles, they can reach the desired learning outcomes quite easily and the positive effects of this 'impressive meeting' sustain for a long time. It is significant we get it right from the beginning.

### **5.3. Further Research**

'Introducing English as a Foreign Language to Very Young Learners' is a significant research area around the world. The situation is similar in Turkey. The rapid expansion in the number of VYLs, private pre-primary schools, studies and documents present a reasonable research agenda going forward for academicians, researchers, policymakers and educators. Considering the major education reforms such as lowering the starting age to L2 and encouragements to provide English at pre-primary level that have taken place in Turkey, it is possible to say that English language education at this level will become an vital area of policy with the ongoing attention of researchers, policy makers and teachers for the foreseeable future. However, a number of quite complex challenges are presupposed to occur. At that point, it is believed that the findings of the studies in relation to introducing English to VYLs provide some practical solutions to challenges and some effective suggestions. Based on this belief, more research is needed to support the implementation of L2 practices.

The ECELEP -effective and comprehensive ELT program offering tremendous opportunities for presenting English to VYLs- is suggested within the scope of this study; however, it is not realistic to suppose that a successful program fulfilling most of the requirements does not necessarily guarantee learning. Therefore, it can be said that ECELEP is only one part of the picture, a number of influential themes and issues related to introducing English to VYLs are needed to be further studied. Some of these are how to provide a successful early L2 teacher education, how to provide parental involvement, how to develop thinking skills with language activities, what new methods and recourses instead of traditional ones, how to provide the motivation of very young learners, how to provide classroom management how often to include the learners' first language, how to apply the holistic classroom approach, how and how much to involve coursebooks and materials, how to develop VYLs' two basic skills - speaking and listening skills-, which age-appropriate vocabulary is, how to incorporate technology, how to design a syllabus, how to assess linguistic and communicative skills at pre-primary level.

With respect to the assessment VYLs of FL, there are a number of key areas where more research is needed to be examined in detail worldwide and nationwide. One of them is the investigation of alternative assessment tools that can be used for VYLs considering the criteria and procedures of early childhood assessment. In addition to this, early language teachers' and VYLs' perspectives, beliefs and lived experiences can be integrated into studies to reveal testing models, their effectiveness and challenges during the assessment of foreign language learning. Furthermore, the issue of access to L2 learning opportunities both in public and private pre-primary school as well as the relationship between equity and attainment of L2 are among the topics that can be investigated in further studies. In addition to this, the integration of different types of assessments -formal and informal, standards-based or performance-based or standardized or alternative assessment- in VYLs' assessment and their influences on very young EFL learners' linguistic and communicative skills can be discussed in depth to expand horizon for the teachers and researchers.

Finally, the findings of qualitative data obtained from children's interview provides significant contributions to the pedagogical researches. Although the findings of this

study also focus on pedagogical context and give some ideas about pedagogical implications of TEVYL, they are regarded as suggestive rather than definitive due to the limited number of participants to the study. This issue deserves further investigation with a high sample size, particularly in different educational contexts where English is introduced as a foreign language to children at pre-primary level, to further our understanding of VYLs' views about factors developing and hindering their L2 learning, motivation and attitudes. It is therefore important for future research and practice to identify opportunities where children are encouraged and enabled to become active and questioning participants in and contributors to their own learning processes. This is closely related with the fact that more voices from VYLs' classrooms should be heard and shared systematically through publications or events. One of the possible benefits of this is foregrounding VYLs' reflections and opinions in age-relevant ways while optimizing L2 learning and developing early L2 programs. For this reason, more research and publication that will shed light on VYLs' beliefs and perceptions of introducing an L2 from different aspects is needed in this field. In achieving this, some innovative methods using narrative and metaphor analysis, alongside interviews, can be helpful in VYLs' dynamic thinking about their English learning experiences.

## REFERENCES

- Agullo, G.L. (2006). Overcoming age-related differences. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 365–373
- Albalawi, B. R. (2014). Effectiveness of teaching English subject using drama on the development of students' creative thinking. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 6(4), 54-63
- Alexiou, T. (2005) *Cognitive development, aptitude and language learning in Greek young learners*. Thesis (PhD). Swansea University, United Kingdom
- American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and National Council on Measurement in Education, (2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: AERA, APA, NCME
- Ampiah, J. G. (2008). An investigation of provision of quality basic education in Ghana: A case study of selected schools in the central region. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 11(3), 19–37.
- Anvari, S. H., Trainor, L. J., Woodside, J., and Levy, B. A. (2002). Relation among musical skills, phonological processing and early reading ability in preschool children. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 83, 111-130.
- Arnold, W. (2016). *Listening for young learners*. Available at [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/listening-younglearners](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/listening-younglearners)
- Arnold, W., and Rixon, S. (2008). Materials for young learners. In B. Tomlinson, (Eds.) *English language learning materials*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Arnold, W., Bradshaw, C., and Gregson, K. (2015). Language learning through projects. In S. Garton and Copland, F. (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner* (pp.288-302). London and New York: Routledge
- Artelt, C. (2005). Cross-cultural approaches to measuring motivation. *Educational Assessment*, 10(3), 231–255.
- Asher, J. (1972). Children's first language as a model for second language learning. *Modern Language Journal*, 56(3), 133-139.
- Asher, J. J. (2009). *Learning another language through actions* (7th ed.). Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oak Productions
- Asude Balaban, D., and Şahenk Erkan, S. S. (2016). Developing an interest in foreign language scale for pre-school children. *Turkish Studies*, 11(9), 135-252
- Auerbach, E. R. (1993). Reexamining English only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(1), 9–32.
- Aytar, A. G., and Öğretir, A. D. (2008). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarındaki yabancı dil eğitimine ilişkin anne-baba ve öğretmen görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 16(1), 13-30.

- Bachman, L., and Palmer, A. (2010). *Language assessment in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. F. (2004). *Statistical analyses for language assessment*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., and Palmer, A. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bacsa, E., and Csíkos, C. (2016). The role of individual differences in the development of listening comprehension in the early stages of language learning. In M. Nikolov (Eds.) *Assessing Young Learners of English: Global and Local Perspectives* (pp. 263–287). Switzerland: Springer.
- Baddeley, A. (1992). Working memory. *Science*, 255(5044), 556-559.
- Bagheri, M., Hadian, B., and Vaez-Dalili, M. (2019). Effects of the Vaughan Method in comparison with the audiolingual method and the communicative language teaching on Iranian advanced EFL learners' speaking skill. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(2), 81-98.
- Bailey, A. L. (2008). Test review: Cambridge young learners English tests. *Language Testing*, 22(2), 242–252.
- Bailey, A. L. Heritage, M., and Butler, F. A. (2014). Developmental considerations and curricular contexts in the assessment of young language learners. In Kunnan, A. J. (Eds.). *The companion to language assessment*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bailey, A. L., and Huang, B. H. (2011). Do current English language development/proficiency standards reflect the English needed for success in school? *Language Testing*, 28, 343–365.
- Baldauf, R. B., Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N., and Bryant, P. (2011). Success or failure of primary second/foreign language programs in Asia: What do the data tell us? *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 309–323.
- Banfi, C. (2015). English language teaching expansion in South America: Challenges and opportunities. In L. Kamhi-Stein, G. Maggioli and L. Oliveira (Eds.), *English language teaching in South America: Policy, preparation, and practices*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baran, G., and Halıcı, P. (2006). Çocuklarda yabancı dil eğitimi. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 24, 44-52.
- Bastianoni, R. (2010). The linguistic benefits of using crafts in TEYL. *The International TEYL Journal*. Available at: <http://www.teyl.org/article16.html>
- Bayyurt, Y. (2014). 4+4+4 Eğitim Sisteminde Erken Yaşta Yabancı Dil Eğitimi: Türkiye’de Yabancı Dil Eğitiminde Eğilim Ne Olmalı? *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı 1. Yabancı Dil Eğitimi Çalıştayı Bildirileri*, 117-127. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları
- Beacco, J.-C., and Byram, M. (2007). *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

- Beacco, J.-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Cuenat, M. E., Goullier, F. and Panthier, J. (2010). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Beaken, M. (2009). Teaching discourse intonation with narrative. *ELT Journal Oxford University Press*, 63(4), 342-352.
- Beck, I. L., and McKeown, M. G. (1991). Conditions of vocabulary acquisition. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal and P. D. Pearson (Eds.) *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 789– 814). New York: Longman,
- Beck, I., McKeown, M., and Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: Guilford Press
- Bekleyen, N. (2016). *Foreign language teaching to children*. Ankara: Anı Publishing.
- Benigno, V., and de Jong, J. (2016). A CEFR-based inventory of YL descriptors: Principles and challenges. In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 43–64). New York: Springer
- Berk, L. (2000). *Child development*. Needham Heights, MA: Pearson Education Company.
- Besser, S., and Chik, A. (2014). Narratives of second language identity amongst young English learners in Hong Kong. *ELT Journal*, 68, 299–309.
- Bezcioglu Göktoğa, İ. (2013). *Self-reports of preschool foreign language teachers on early childhood foreign language teaching and related challenges*. Thesis (MA). Middle Technical East University, Ankara.
- Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in Development: Language, literacy and cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bialystok, E. (2009). Bilingualism: The good, the bad and the indifferent. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12(1): 3–11.
- Bialystok, E. and Martin, M. (2004). Attention and inhibition in bilingual children: Evidence from the dimensional change card sorting task. *Developmental Science*, 7(3): 325–39.
- Biricik, E. (2010). *Motivating very young learners of English in a classroom setting*. Thesis (MA). Çukurova University, Adana.
- Biricik, E., and Özkan, Y. (2012). The role of teacher attitude in preschool language education. *Çukurova University Faculty of Education Journal*, 41(1), 70-86.
- Blanco, R. (2006). Equity and social inclusion: One of the challenges of education and schools today. *Revista Electrónica Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, 4(3), 1–15.
- Bland, J. (2014). Interactive theatre with student teachers and young learners: Enhancing EFL learning across institutional divisions in Germany. In S. Rich (Eds.), *International perspectives on teaching English to young learners* (pp. 156–174). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Bland, J. (2015a). Oral story telling in the primary English classroom. In J. Bland (Eds.), *Teaching English to young learners critical issues in language teaching with 3–12 year olds* (pp. 183–198). London, Bloomsbury.
- Bland, J. (2015b). Drama with young learners. In J. Bland (Eds.) *Teaching English to young learners critical issues in language teaching with 3–12 year olds* (pp. 219–238). London: Bloomsbury.
- Bland, J. (2019). Learning through literature. In S. Garton and F. Copland, *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. New York, NY : Routledge, 269-288.
- Block, D. (2003). *The social turn in second language acquisition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Blondin, C. et al. (2008). *Foreign Languages in Primary and Pre-school Education. Context and outcomes: A review of recent research within the European Union*. London: CILT
- Bouangeune, S. (2009). Using L1 in teaching vocabulary to low English proficiency level students: A case study at the University of Laos. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 2(3), 186 -193.
- Bourgon, R. (2014). The predictive effects of L1 and L2 early literacy indicators on reading in French immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 70(3), 355–380.
- Bourke, J. M. (2006). Designing a topic-based syllabus for young learners. *ELT Journal*, 60(3), 279-286.
- Brandes, D. and Phillips, H. (1990). *Gamesters' handbook*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes.
- Brewster, J., Ellis, G., and Girard, D. (2002). *The primary English teacher's guide*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Brezigar, B. (2010). How does the introduction of an English speaking puppet influence the use of English in group speaking activities? Papers presented in *Teaching English to young learners, third international TEYL research seminar 2005–2006*.
- Broughton, G., Brumfit, C., Flavell, R., Hill, P. and Pincas, A. (2003). *Teaching English as a foreign language*. London: Routledge.
- Brown, F. G. (1971). *Measurement and Evaluation*. Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock.
- Brown, H. D. (2015). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman.
- Brownell, R. (2000). *Expressive and receptive one-word picture vocabulary tests*. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy
- Bruce, T., and Spratt, J. (2011) *Essentials of literacy from 0–7: A whole child approach to communication, language and literacy*, (2nd ed.). London: Sage.



- Brumen, M. (2010). The perception of and motivation for foreign language learning in preschool. *Early Child Development and Care*, 181(6), 717–732.
- Brumen, M., and Cagran, B. (2011). Teachers' perspectives and practices in assessment young foreign language learners in three Eastern European countries. *Education 3-13*, 39(5), 541-559.
- Brunzel, P. (2002). *The topic of culture and interculturality: Study on the development of cultural connotations in the teaching of French at the lower secondary level*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Burden, P. (2001). When do native English speakers and Japanese college students disagree about the use of Japanese in the English conversation classroom? *The Language Teacher*, 25(4).
- Butler, G. Y. (2019). Gaming and young learners. In S. Garton and F. Copland, *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. New York, NY : Routledge, 305-320.
- Butler, G. Y. (2016). Self-Assessment of and for Young Learners' Foreign Language Learning. In M. Nikolov (Eds.). *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 43–64). New York: Springer.
- Butler, Y. G. (2005). Comparative perspectives towards communicative activities among elementary school teachers in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. *Language Teaching Research*, 9, 423–446.
- Butler, Y. G. (2009). Teaching English to young learners: The influence of global and local factors. In J. Enever, J. Moon and U. Raman (Eds.), *Young learner English language policy and Implementation: International practices* (pp. 23-29). Reading: Garnet Education.
- Butler, Y. G. (2015a). English language education among young learners in East Asia: A review of current research (2004–2014). *Language Teaching*, 48, 303–342.
- Butzkamm, W., Caldwell, J.A.W. (2009). *The bilingual reform: A paradigm shift in foreign language teaching*. Narr, Tu"bingen.
- Büyüköztürk, Ş. (2010). *Sosyal bilimler için veri analizi el kitabı [Handbook of data analysis for social sciences]* Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Caccavale, T. (2007). The correlation between early second language learning and native language skill development. *Learning Languages*, 13 (1): 31–32.
- Cambridge English Language Assessment, (2013). *Principles of Good Practice: Quality management and validation in language assessment*
- Camelo, L. (2013). *Parental involvement to support EFL, literacy, learners' and family communication*. (Unpublished monograph). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cameron, L. (2003). Challenges for ELT from the expansion in teaching children. *ELT Journal*, 57(2): 105–112

- Candlin, C. (2016). Sociolinguistics and communicative language teaching. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16(1), 37-44.
- Caner M., Subaşı, G., and Kara, S., (2010). Teacher's beliefs on foreign language teaching practices in early phases of primary education: A case study. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(1), 62-76
- Castillo, R. (2012). Editorial introduction: A reflection on the role of foreign language learning in today's education. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 5(2), iv-vii.
- Castillo, R., and Camelo, C. L. (2013). Assisting your child's learning in L2 is like teaching them to ride a bike: a study on parental involvement. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal*, 7, 54-73.
- Castro, D. C., and Gillanders, C. (2011). Storybook reading for young dual language learners. *YC Young Children*, 66(1), 91-95.
- Černá, M. (2015). Pre-primary English language learning and teacher education in the Czech Republic. In S. Mourão and M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early years second language education: International perspectives on theories and practice* (pp. 165–176). Abingdon: Routledge
- Chalmers, H. (2017). What does research tell us about using the L1 as a pedagogic tool? *EAL Journal*.
- Chauhan, V. (2004). Drama techniques for teaching English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10(10).
- Cheater, C., and Farren, A. (2005). *The literacy link*. London: CILT, The National Centre for Languages.
- Christian, D. (2006). Introduction. In F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. M. Saunders and Christian, D. (Eds.), *Educating English Language Learners: A synthesis of research evidence* (pp.1–13). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chunsuvimol, B., and Charoenpanit, P. (2017). Effectiveness of the Audiolingual Method: A Further Synthesis of Research Through 2015.
- Clipson-Boyles, S. (2012). *Teaching primary English through drama*. Abington: Routledge.
- Cloud, N., Genesee, F., and Hamayan, E. (2000). *Dual language instruction: A handbook for enriched education*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle
- Commission of the European Communities, (2003). Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006.
- Connery, C., John-Steiner, V., and Marjanovich-Shane, A. (2010). *Vygotsky and Creativity: A cultural-historical approach to play, meaning making, and the arts*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Cook, G. (2010). *Language play, language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Copland, F., and Garton, S. (2014). Key themes and future directions in teaching English to young learners: Introduction to the Special Issue. *ELT Journal*, 68(3), 223–230.
- Cortazzi, M., and Jin, L. (2019). Early English language learning in East Asia. . In S. Garton, and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge
- Council of Europe, (1997). *Language learning for European citizenship*. Germany: Council of Europe
- Council of Europe, (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe, (2018). *Collated representative samples of descriptors of language competences developed for young learners aged 7–10 years*. Council of Europe: Language Policy
- Coyle, Y., and Gracia, R. G. (2014). Using songs to enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition in preschool children. *ELT Journal*, 68(3), 276–285.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Cummins, J. (1981a). *Bilingualism and minority language children*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1981.
- Cummins, J. (1992). Language proficiency, bilingualism, and academic achievement. In P.A. Richard-Amato and M.A. Snow (Eds.) *The multicultural classroom: Readings for content-area teachers* (pp. 16-26). New York: Longman
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Curtain, H. (2009). Assessment of early learning of foreign languages in the USA. In M. Nikolov (Eds.) *The age factor and early language learning*, (pp. 59–82). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter
- Curtain, H. A., and Dahlberg, C. A. (2010). *Languages and children – Making the match: New languages for young learners* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.
- Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, (2010). *A national curricula for pre-primary, primary and secondary education – Vol. I*. Nicosia: Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
- Daloğlu, A. (2007). Assessing English language learners' needs and lacks. *Education and Science*, 32(146), 64-79.
- Daloiso, M. (2007). *Early foreign language teaching*, Perugia: Guerra Edizioni.
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011). Content and language integrated learning: From practice to principles? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 182–204.
- Damar, M. (2009). Okul öncesi eğitimde dil etkinlikleri, *Milli Eğitim*, 182, 96- 105.

- David, A., and Wei, L. (2008). Individual differences in the lexical development of French–English bilingual children. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 11, 598–618.
- Davies, M. G., and Tarona, A. (2012). *New trends in early foreign language learning*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Davis, G. M., and Fan, W. (2016). English vocabulary acquisition through songs in Chinese kindergarten students. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 39(1), 59–71.
- Değirmenci Uysal and Yavuz, (2015). *Teaching English to very young learners*. Paper presented at the 7th World Conference on Educational Sciences, Athens, Greece.
- Demircan, Ö. (2006). *Öğrenici açısından yabancı dil öğretimi ile yabancı dilde öğretim ilişkisi*. (Lecture notes). Istanbul, Turkey. Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Language and Communication Club.
- Demirel, Ö. (2004). *Yabancı dil öğretimi: Dil pasaportu dil biyografisi dil dosyası*. Ankara: Pegem Academy Yayıncılık.
- Dewey, J. (1926). *Democracy and Education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Djigunovic, J. M., and Krajnovic, M. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Early learning and teaching of English new dynamics of primary English*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Djigunovich, J. M., and M. Vilke. (2000) Eight years after; wishful thinking or the facts of life. In J. Moon and M. Nikolov (Eds.) *Research into teaching English to young learners*. Pecs: University of Pecs Press.
- Doff, A. (1990). *Teach English: A training course for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doğan Altun, Z., and Ekinci Vural, D. (2017). Okul öncesi dönem düşünme becerileri: Öğretmen görüşleri. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Buca Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 44, 214-224.
- Doğançay-Aktuna, S., and Kızıltepe, Z. (2005). English in Turkey. *World Englishes*, 24(2), 253–265.
- Dolean, D. D. (2015). How early can we efficiently start teaching a foreign language? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 23(5), 706–719.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1998). *Demotivation in foreign language learning*. Paper presented at the TESOL '98 Congress, Seattle, WA.
- Doyle, P., and Hurrell, A. (1997). *Foreign language education in primary schools (age 5/6 to 10/11)*. Strasburg: Council of Europe Press.
- Dunn, L. M., and Dunn, D. M. (2007). *The Peabody picture vocabulary test*, Fourth Edition. Bloomington, MN: NCS Pearson, Inc.
- Dunn, O. (2013). *Introducing English to young children: Spoken language*. Glasgow: Harper Collins
- Dyson, L. (2012). *My little island*. Pearson publishing

- Edelenbos, P., Johnstone, R., and Kubanek, A. (2006). *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners: Languages for the children of Europe*. Final Report of the EAC 89/04, Lot 1 study. Brussels: European Commission.
- Egan, K. (1997). *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Eküş, B., and Babayiğit, Ö. (2014). İlkokul 2. sınıftan itibaren yabancı dil eğitimi verilmesine ilişkin sınıf ve ingilizce öğretmenlerinin görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Researcher: Social Science Studies*, 40–49.
- Elkind, D. (1988). *The hurries child: Growing up too fast too soon*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Elkind, D. (2007). *The power of play: Learning what comes naturally*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Elliott, J., and Hufton, N. (2003) *Achievement motivation in real contexts*. BJEP Monograph Series II, 155–172.
- Ellis, G. (2014). “‘Young learners’: clarifying our terms’. *ELT Journal* 68(1), 75–8.
- Ellis, G., and Brewster, J. (2014). *Tell it again! The storytelling handbook for primary English language teachers* (3rd ed). British Council.
- Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(3), 8.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *Principles of instructed second language acquisition*. *CAL December*. Available at: [http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest\\_pdfs/Instructed2ndLangFinalWeb.pdf](http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest_pdfs/Instructed2ndLangFinalWeb.pdf)
- Ellis, R. (2017). Language teaching materials as work plans. In Tomlinson, B. (ed.) *SLA research and materials development for language learning*. New York: Routledge, 203–218.
- Ellis, R., and Shintani, N. (2013). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. New York: Routledge.
- Elvin, P., Maagerø, E., and Simonsen, B. (2007). How do the dinosaurs speak in England? English in kindergarten. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 15(1), 71–86.
- Elwood, J. (2013). Educational assessment policy and practice: A matter of ethics. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 20(2), 205–220
- Enever, J. (2011). *ELLiE: Early language learning in Europe*, London: The British Council.
- Enever, J., and Moon, J. (2009). ‘New global contexts for teaching primary ELT: Change and challenge’. In J. Enever, J. Moon and U. Ramon (Eds.) *Young*

- Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International Perspectives* (pp. 5–18). Reading: Garnet Education,
- Enever, J., Moon, J. (2009). New global contexts for teaching Primary ELT: Change and challenge. In J. Enever, J. Moon and U. Raman (Eds.), *Young Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International Perspectives*, Garnet Education: UK.
- Enever, J., Moon, J. and Raman, U. (2009). *Young learner English language policy and implementation: International perspectives*. Reading: Garnet Education.
- Epstein, J. (2009). *School, Family and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. (2nd Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Er, S. (2017). Which is the most appropriate strategy for very young language learners? *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education* 4(4), 829-837
- Ersöz, A. (2007). *Teaching English to young learners*. Ankara: EDM Publishing
- Esch, E. (2010). Epistemic injustice and the power to define: Interviewing Cameroonian primary school teachers about language education. In C. N. Candlin and J. Crichton (Eds.) *Discourses of Deficit* (pp. 235–255). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Espinoza, L. M., and Lopez, M. L. (2007). *Assessment considerations for young English language learners across different levels of accountability*. Paper prepared for The National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force and First 5 LA.
- European Commission, (2011). *Language learning at pre-primary school level: Making it efficient and sustainable: A policy handbook*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/ellpwp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/ellpwp_en.pdf)
- European Commission, (2011a). *Language learning at pre-primary school level: Making it efficient and sustainable. A policy handbook*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/documents/early-language-learning-handbook\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/language-policy/documents/early-language-learning-handbook_en.pdf)
- Eurydice, (2012). *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission.
- Eurydice, (2005). *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe*. Brussels: Eurydice
- Farmer, D. (2011). *Learning through drama in the primary years*. Norwich: Drama Resource.
- Feng, A. (2012). Spread of English across greater China. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33, 363–377.
- Fleming, M. (2013). Drama. In M. Byram and A. Hu (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of language teaching and learning* (pp. 209-211) London: Routledge.
- Fleta, T. (2006). Stepping stones for teaching English L2 in the early years. In R. Mitchell-Schuitevoerder and S. Mourão (Eds.), *Teachers and young learners: Research in our classrooms* (pp. 43–51). Kent: International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

- Fleta, T. (2015). Active listening for second language learning in the early years. In S. Mourão and M. Lourenço. *Early years second language education international perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 137-148). New York: Routledge,
- Fleurquin, F. (2003). Development of a standardized test for young EFL learners. *Spain Fellow Working Papers in Second or Foreign Language Assessment*, 1, 1–23.
- Forey, G., Besser, S., and Sampson, N. (2015). Parental Involvement in foreign language learning: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 16(3), 383-413
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., and Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fredericksen, J., and Collins, A. (1989). A systems approach to educational testing. *Educational Researcher*, 18(9), 27–32.
- Fulcher, G., and Davidson, F. (2007). *Language testing and assessment: An advanced resource book*. New York: Routledge
- Gao, X. (2006). Strategies used by Chinese parents to support English language learning. *RELC Journal*, 37(3), 287-295.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (10th anniversary edition). New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons in theory and practice*. New York: Basic Books
- Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C., and MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). A student's contributions to second language learning. Part II: Affective variables. *Language Teaching*, 26, 1–11.
- Gardner, R. C., and MacIntyre, P. D. (1992). A student's contributions to second language learning. Part I: Cognitive variables. *Language Teaching*, 25, 211–220.
- Gardner, R. C., Masgoret, A. M., and Tremblay, P. F. (1999). Home background characteristics and second language learning. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 18, 419–437.
- Garton, S. (2014). Unresolved issues and new challenges in teaching English to young learners: The case of South Korea. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15, 201–219.
- Garton, S., and Copland, F. (Ed.). (2019). *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge

- Garton, S., Copland, F. and Burns, A. (2011). Investigating global practices in teaching English to young learners. *ELT Research Papers*, British Council.
- Garton, S., Copland, F., and Burns, A. (2013). Investigating global practices in teaching English to young learners. In S. Sheehan (Eds.), *British Council ELT research papers volume, 1*, 35–56.
- Geçkin, V. (2006). *The acquisition of morphosyntax in child L2 English*. Thesis (MA) Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.
- Geçkin, V., and Haznedar, B. (2008). The morphology/syntax interface in child L2 acquisition: Evidence from verbal morphology. In B. Haznedar and E. Gavrusseva (Eds.) *Current Trends in Child Second Language Acquisition: A Generative Perspective* (pp. 237–67). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Genç-İlter, B. (2013). Methods and techniques of foreign language teachers working with young learners in EFL classes. *Mediterranean Journal of Humanities*, 3(1), 137-144
- Geneese, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages: Studies of immersion and bilingual education*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House
- Geneese, F. (1992). Second/foreign language immersion and at-risk English-speaking children. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25, 199-213.
- Geneese, F., and Upshur, J. A. (1996). *Classroom evaluation in second language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gerngros, G., and Puchta, H. (2012). *Hooray*. Helbling Publishing
- Gersten, R., and Geva, A. (2003). Teaching reading to early language learners. *Educational Leadership*, 60(7), 44-49
- Geva, E., and Wang, M. (2001). The development of basic reading skills in children: A cross-language perspective. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 182–204.
- Ghatage, M. M. (2009). Introduction of English from Grade 1 in Maharashtra, India. In J. Enever, J. Moon and U. Raman (Eds.), *Young Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International perspectives* (pp. 45–51). Reading: Garnet Education
- Ghosn, I. K. (2013a). *Storybridge to second language and literacy: The theory, research and practice of teaching English with children's literature*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Ghosn, I. K. (2017). No place for a coursebooks in the very young learner classroom. In B. Tomlinson (Eds.) *SLA Research and materials development for language acquisition*. New York: Routledge, 50–66.
- Ghosn, I. K., (2019). Materials for early language learning. In S. Garton and F. Copland, *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner*. New York, NY: Routledge, 374-389.
- Gibson, T., Oller, D. K., Jarmulowicz, L., and Ethington, C. A. (2012). The receptive-expressive gap in the vocabulary of young second-language learners:



- Robustness and possible mechanisms. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 15, 102–116
- Gnutzmann, C., and Frank I. (eds.). (2005). *The Globalisation of English and the English Language Classroom*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Goswami, U. (1998). *Cognition in children, developmental psychology, a modular course*. Sussex: Psychology Press.
- Graham, C. (2006). *Creating chants and songs: Resource books for teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Greenhoot A. F., Beyer A. M., and Curtis, J. (2014). More than pretty pictures? how illustrations affect parent-child story reading and children's story recall. *Front. Psychol*, 5, 738.
- Griffin, G. F., and Harley, T.A., 1996. List learning of second language vocabulary. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 17, 433-460.
- Griva, E., Semoglou, K., and Geladari, A. (2010). Early foreign language learning: Implementation of a project in a game-based context. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, ELSEVIER*, 2, 3700-3705.
- Gromko, E. J. (2005). The effect of music instruction on phonemic awareness in beginning readers. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 53(3), 120-132.
- Grosjean, F. (2008). *Studying bilinguals*. Chicago, IL: Oxford University Press
- Guddemi, M., and Case, B. J. (2004). *Assessment report: Assessing young children*. Pearson Education.
- Guilfoyle, N., and Mistry, M. (2013). How effective is role play in supporting speaking and listening for pupils with English as an additional language in the Foundation Stage? *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 41(1), 63-70.
- Gullo, D. F. (2005). *Understanding assessment and evaluation in early childhood education* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Güngör, B. (2018). The effect of the integration of talking toys on preschoolers' vocabulary learning in English. *Journal of Early Childhood Studies*, 2(2), 180-193.
- Güngör, B., and Ramazan, O. (2017). The prospective early childhood and English language teachers' views on teaching English in early years. *The Journal of Academic Social Science*, 5(48), 479-492
- Gürsoy, E., Korkmaz, S.Ç., and Damar, A. E. (2013). Foreign language teaching within 4+4+4 education system in Turkey: Language teachers' voice. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 53/A, 59-74.
- Haenni Hoti, A., Heinzmann, S., and Müller, M. (2009). "I can you help?" Assessing speaking skills and interaction strategies of young learners. In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *The age factor and early language learning* (pp. 119–140). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Haenni Hoti, A., Heinzmann, S., and Müller, M. (2009). "I can you help?" Assessing speaking skills and interaction strategies of young learners. In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *The age factor and early language learning* (pp.119–140). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyteri,
- Haley, H. M. (2004). Learner-centered instruction and the theory of multiple intelligences with second language learners. *Teachers College Record*, 106(1), 163-180.
- Hall, G., and Cook, G (2012). Own-language use in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 45(3), 271–308
- Halliwell, S. (1992). *Teaching English in the primary classroom*. Harlow: Longman
- Hanušová, S., and Najvar, P. (2006) *Foreign language acquisition at an early age*. Brno: Masaryk University, Faculty of Education
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*, 4th ed. Harlow: Longman
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching*, 5th ed. Harlow: Longman.
- Harper, K. Reilly, K., and Covill, V. (2011). *Cookie and friends*. Oxford Publishing
- Hasselgren, A. (2005). Assessing the language of young learners. *Language Testing*, 22 (3), 337–354.
- Hasselgreen, A. (2013). Adapting the CEFR for the classroom assessment of young learners' writing. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 69(4), 415–435
- Hatch, E., and Brown, C. (1995). *Vocabulary, semantics, and language education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Haven, K. F. (2000). *Super simple storytelling: A can-do guide for every classroom, every day*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Haznedar, B. (1997). L2 acquisition by a Turkish-speaking child: Evidence for L1 influence. In E. Hughes, M. Hughes and A. Greenhill (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 21st Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development* (pp. 245–56). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Haznedar, B. (2010). Türkiye’de İngilizce eğitimi: Reformlar, yönelimler ve öğretmenlerimiz. *International Conference on New Trends in Education and their Implications*, Antalya, 747-755.
- Haznedar, B. (2015). Cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning a second language in the early years. In S. Mourão and M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early Years Second Language Education* (pp. 15-28). Newyork: Routledge
- Haznedar, B. and Uysal, H. H. (2010). *Handbook for teaching foreign languages to young learners in primary school*, Ankara: Anı Publications.
- Haznedar, B., and Gavruseva E. (2008). *Current trends in child second language acquisition: A generative perspective*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

- Hestetræet, T. I. (2019). Vocabulary teaching for young learners. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner* (pp. 220-233). New York, NY : Routledge
- Hestetræet, T. I. (2015). Vocabulary instruction in 7th-grade English classes. In A. Amdal, H. Fjørtoft and Guldal, T. M. (Eds.), *Faglig kunnskap i skole og lærerutdanning II*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Ho, W. K. (2003). English language teaching in Asia today: An overview. In W. K. Ho and R. Y. L. Wong (Eds.), *English language teaching in East Asia today: Changing policies and practices*. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1–32.
- Hong Kong Education Bureau, (2013). *NET scheme in pre-primary schools objectives*. Available at: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/resource-support/net/pnetobjectives>.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., and Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67, 3–42
- Howatt, A. P. R. (1984). Teaching languages to young learners: Patterns of history. In C. Brumfit, J. Moon and R. Tongue (Eds.), *Teaching English to children: From practice to principle* (pp. 289–301). Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Howatt, A. P. R. (1997). *A history of English language teaching*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hrdá, M. (2017). *Teaching English to very young learners*. Thesis (MA). University of Pardubice: the Czech Republic
- Hubbard, P., Jones, H., Thornton, B., and Wheeler, R. (1984). *A training course for TEFL*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, K. (2009). How social stories support early literacy learning of toddlers. In D. Meier (Eds.), *Here's the story: Using narrative to promote young children's language and literacy learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hughes, R. (2010). Materials to develop the speaking skill. In N. Harwood (Eds.), *English language teaching materials: Theory and practice* (pp. 207-224). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, T., and Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learner-centered approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ibrahim, N. (2015). Perceptions of identity in trilingual 5-year-old twins in diverse pre-primary educational contexts. In S. Mourão, and M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early Years Second Language Education* (pp. 46-61). London and New York: Routledge
- İlter, B., and Er, S. (2007). Erken yaşta yabancı dil öğretimi üzerine veli ve öğretmen görüşleri. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 15(1), 21-30.
- Ilyas, H. P. (2016). Drama in the EFL classroom: Critical review of the literature. *Journal of ELT Research*, 1(2), 200-205.
- Inbar-Lourie, O., and Shohamy, E. (2009). Assessing young language learners: What is the construct? In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *The age factor and early language learning* (pp. 83–96). Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Inostroza Araos, M. J. (2015). *Examining challenges and complexities in the Chilean young learners classroom: A case of teaching English as a foreign language*. Thesis (PhD), University of Sheffield.
- İnözü, J. (2018). Drawings are talking: Exploring language learners' beliefs through visual narratives. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9, 177-200
- Ioannou-Georgiou, S. (2015). Early language learning in Cyprus. In S. Mourão, and M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early Years Second Language Education* (pp. 95-109). London and New York: Routledge
- Ioannou-Georgiou, S., and Pavlou, P. (2003). *Assessing young learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Isbell, R. (2002). Telling and retelling stories. Learning language and literacy. *Young children*, 26-30.
- Iten, N., and Petko, D. (2016). Learning with serious games: Is fun playing the game a predictor of learning success? *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 47(1), 151-163
- Jalongo, M. (2007). Beyond benchmarks and scores: Reasserting the role of motivation and interest in children's academic achievement: An ACEI position paper. *Childhood Education, International Focus Issue*, 395-407
- Jeong, Y. K. (2004). A chapter of English teaching in Korea. *English Today*, 20(2), 40-4
- Jeynes, W. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40, 237-269.
- Jin, L., Zhou, J., Hu, X., Yang, X., Sun, K., and Zhao, M. (2016). *Researching the attitudes and perceived experiences of kindergarten learners of English and their parents in China*. London: British Council.
- Johnson, J., and Newport, E.L. (1989). Critical period effects in second language learning: The influence of maturational state on the acquisition of English as a second language. *Cognitive Psychology*, 21, 60-99.
- Johnson, B., and Christensen, L. (2014). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. London: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Johnstone, J. (2009). An early start: What are the key conditions for generalized success? In J. Enever and J. Moon (Eds.), *Young learner English language policy and implementation: International perspectives*. Reading: Garnet Education and IATEFL.
- Johnstone, R. (2019). Languages policy and English for young learners in early education. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner* (pp. 13-26). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jones, J., and Coffey, S. (2006). *Modern foreign languages 5-11: A guide for teachers*. UK: Fulton
- Kail, R. (2010). *Children and their development* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

- Kalaycı, G., and Öz, H. (2018). Parental Involvement in English language education: Understanding parents' perceptions. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 5(4), 832-847.
- Kalaycıoğlu, E. H. (2011). *Picture vocabulary games in English vocabulary learning in early childhood education*. Thesis (MA), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Kandır, A., Özbey, S., and İnal, G. (2009). A study on the difficulties face by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(6), 373-387.
- Kane, M. T. (2013). Validating the interpretations and uses of test scores. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 50(1), 1-73.
- Kara, K., and Eveyik-Aydın, E. (2019). Effects of TPRS on very young learners' vocabulary acquisition. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 10(1), 135-146.
- Karakoç, C. (2007). *Okul öncesi eğitimde anasınıfları İngilizce dersi için bir öğretim Programı önerisi*. Thesis (MA), İnönü Üniversitesi, Malatya.
- Karakuş, H. (2016). Okul Öncesi Dönemde Yabancı Dil Eğitimi Verilmesine İlişkin Anne- Baba ve Öğretmen Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi. *Uluslararası Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 1(2), 7-19
- Kellaris, J. J. (2003). Dissecting earworms: Further evidence on the 'song-stuck-in-your-head' phenomenon. In C. Page and S. Posavac (Eds.), *Proceedings of the society for consumer psychology winter 2003 conference* (pp. 220-222). New Orleans, LA: American Psychological Society.
- Kellaris, J.J. (2001). Identifying properties of tunes that get 'stuck in your head': Toward a theory of cognitive itch. In S.E. Heckler and S. Shapiro (Eds.), *Proceedings of the society for consumer psychology winter 2001 conference* (pp. 66-67). Scottsdale, AZ: American Psychological Society.
- Kelley, T. I. (1939). The selection of upper and lower groups for the validation of test items, *Journal of Educational psychology*, 30,(1), 17-24.
- Kennedy, C. and Jarvis, J. (1991). (Eds) *Ideas and issues in Primary ELT*. London: Nelson.
- Kennedy, T. J., Nelson, J. K., Odell, M. R. L., and Austin, L. K. (2000). The FLE Sattitudinal inventory. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(3). 278-89.
- Kernan, M. (2007). *Play as a context for early learning and development*. Dublin: NCCA.
- Kersten, K., Fischer, U., Burmeister, P., Lommel, A., Schelletter, C., Steinlen, A.K., and Thomas, S. (2010a). *Immersion guide for schools*. Kiel: FMKS.
- Kersten, S. (2015). Language development in young learners: The role of formulaic language. In Bland, J. (Eds.) *Teaching English to young learners: Critical issues in language teaching with 3-12 year olds*. London: Bloomsbury.

- Kim, S. H. O., and Elder, C. (2008). Target language use in foreign language classrooms: Practices and perceptions of two native speaker teachers in New Zealand. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 21(2), 167-185.
- Kimsesiz, F., Dolgunsöz, E., and Konca, Y. M. (2017). The effect of project based learning in teaching EFL vocabulary to young learners of English: The case of pre-school children. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 5(4), 426-439
- King, K., and Mackey, A. (2007). *The bilingual edge: Why, when and how to teach your child a second language*. New York: Harper Collins.
- King, K., and Mackey, A. (2007). *The bilingual edge: Why, when and how to teach your child a second language*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Kinginger, C. (2011). Repertoires: Decentering and the expression of identity. In G. Zarate, D. Levy and C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Handbook of multilingualism and multiculturalism* (pp. 37–44). Paris: Archives Contemporaines Editions.
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2009). Globalization and English language policy in Turkey. *Educational Policy*, 23(5), 1-22.
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2017). English education policy in Turkey. In R. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *English language education policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 235-256). Language Policy 13: Springer International Publishing
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2019). Fostering young learners' listening and speaking skills. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner* (pp. 171-188). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kırkgöz, Y., and Ağçam, R. (2012). Investigating the written assessment practices of Turkish teachers of English at primary education. *The Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 8(2), 119-136.
- Kirkpatrick, R., and Barnawi, O. Z. (2017). Introduction: English language education policy in MENA. In R. Kirkpatrick (Eds.) *English language education in the Middle East and North Africa*. Geneva: Springer, 1–8
- Kirsch, C. (2008). *Teaching foreign languages in the primary school: Principles and practice*. London: Continuum.
- Klingensmith, S. W. (1953). Child animism: What the child means by alive. *Child Development*, 24, 51-61.
- Kocaman, O., and Kocaman, N. (2012). Age factor in foreign language education at preschool level. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55, 169-177.
- Kokla, A. (2013). Dora the explorer: ATV character or a preschooler's foreign language teacher. Thesis (MA). Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece
- Kopriva, R. (2008). *Improving testing for English language learners*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Köksal, O., and Atalay, A. (2015). *Öğretim ilke ve yöntemleri*. Konya: Eğitim Yayınevi.

- Kömürcü, B., and Yildiz, Y. (2011). An assessment of the auditory speech perceptual skills of young Turkish learners of English: Perceptual assimilation model. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*, 15, 3511-3515
- Köylüoğlu, N. (2010). *Using drama in teaching English for young learners*. Thesis (MA). Selçuk University, Konya.
- Krashen, S. & McField, G. (2005) What works for English learners? Reviewing the latest evidence. *Language Learner*, 29(3), 7 – 11.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
- Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Krause, K. D., Bochner, S., and Duchesne, S. (2003). *Educational psychology for learning and teaching*. Southbank, Victoria: Thompson.
- Krishnan, V. (2013). *The early child development instrument (EDI): An item analysis using calssical test theory (CTT) on Alberta's data*. Edmonton: Early Child Development Mapping Project
- Kroflin, L. (2012a). The role of the puppet in language teaching. In L. Kroflin (Eds.) *The Power of the Puppe* (pp. 46–62). Zagreb, Croatia: Union Internationale de la Marionette
- Kubaneck-German, A. (2000). Early language programmes in Germany. In M. Nikolov and H. Curtain (Eds.), *An early start: Young learners and modern languages in Europe and beyond* (pp. 59–70). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing
- Kuchah, K., and Shamim, F. (Eds.). (2018). *International perspectives on teaching English in difficult circumstances: Contexts, challenges and possibilities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Kuchah, K., and Smith, R. C. (2011). Pedagogy of autonomy for difficult circumstances: from practice to principles. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 119–140.
- Küçük, M. (2006). *Okul öncesi yabancı dil eğitimi konusunda eğitimcilerin ve ailelerin Görüşleri*. Thesis (MA), Çukurova Üniversitesi, Adana
- Kuder, G. F., and Richardson, M. W. (1937). The theory of the estimation of test reliability. *Psychometrika*, 2, 151-160
- Lambert, W. E., and Tucker, G. R. (1972). *Bilingual education of children. The St. Lambert experiment*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Langé, G., Marrocchi, D., Lopriore, L., Benvenuto, G., Cinganotto, L., and Vacca, M. (2014). *Esperienze di insegnamento in lingua straniera nella Scuola dell'Infanzia*. Report presented at Early Childhood Education and Care and Early Language Learning, Reggio Children – Loris Malaguzzi Centre Foundation, Reggio Emilia, Italy

- Larsen-Freeman, D., and Anderson, M. (2013). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd eds.). China: Oxford.
- Laufer, B. (2005). Instructed second language vocabulary learning: The fault in the “Default Hypothesis”. In Hausen, A., and Pierrard, M. (Eds.) *Investigations in instructed second language acquisition*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 311–332.
- Laufer, B., (1998). The development of passive and active vocabulary in a second language: same or different? *Applied Linguistics*, 19(2), pp.255-271.
- Laufer, B., and Paribakht, T. S. (1998). The relationship between passive and active vocabularies: Effects of language learning context. *Language Learning*, 48(3), 365-391.
- Laufer, B., Elder, C., Hill, K., and Congdon, P. (2004). Size and strength: Do we need both to measure vocabulary knowledge? *Language Testing*, 21(2), 202-206.
- Leacox, L., and Jackson, C. W. (2014). Spanish vocabulary-bridging technology-enhanced instruction for young English language learners’ word learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 14(2), 175–197
- Lechel, F. (2010). What is the effect of using children’s songs on young learners’ understanding of basic nouns? *Third International TEYL Research Seminar 2005–2006 Papers*, 58–67.
- Lee, H. K. (2004). A comparative study of ESL writers’ performance in a paper-based and a computer- delivered writing test. *Assessing Writing*, 9(1), 4–26
- Lewis, G. and Bedson, G. (1999). *Games for children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Li, G., and Ni, X. (2011). Primary EFL teachers’ technology use in China. *RELC Journal*, 42(1), 69–85.
- Li, Y., Han, Y., and Gao, X. (2019). Young learners’ motivation for learning English. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Linse, C. T. (2005). *Practical English language teaching: Young learners*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Littlejohn, A. (2016a). How young learners learn language. *IATEFL Young Learners & Teenagers SIG Newsletter: C&TS Digital Special Pearl Anniversary Edition*, 31–32.
- Littlejohn, A. (2016b). Task types and cognitive engagement. *TEYLT Worldwide: The Newsletter of the IATEFL Young Learners and Teenagers Special Interest Group*, 50–53.
- Liu, J. (2002). Process drama in second- and foreign-language classrooms. In G. Bräuer, (Eds.), *Body and language* (pp. 52-70). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing,
- Locke, J. L. (1993). *The child’s path to spoken language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- López Gopar, M. (2016). *Decolonizing primary English language teaching*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.



- Lourenço M., and Andrade, I. (2015). Languages and diversity in pre-primary education: Towards a broader and integrated approach. In S. Mourão, and M. Lourenço (Eds.), *Early Years Second Language Education*. London: Routledge.
- Lourenco, M., and Mourão, S. (2018). Learning English (and other languages) in Portugal. *Language Issues*, 28(2), 53–55.
- Lovely, G., and Moberly, D. (2012). 12 best practices for moving young learners forward with technology. *T.H.E. Journal*, 39(8): 43–5.
- Ludke, K. M. (2010). *Song and singing in foreign language learning*. Thesis (PhD). University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- Lugo-Neris, M., Wood Jackson, C., and Goldstein, H. (2010). Facilitating vocabulary acquisition of young English language learners. *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 41(3), 314-327
- Machida, T., and Walsh, D. J. (2014). Implementing EFL policy reform in elementary schools in Japan: A case study. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 1-17
- MacDonald, A. (2009). Drawing Stories: the power of children's drawings to communicate the lived experience of starting school. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 34(3), 40-49.
- MacWhinney, B. (2008). A unified model. In P. Robinson, and N. C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of cognitive linguistics and second language acquisition* (pp. 341–371). New York: Routledge,
- Madros, J. (2010). *Traditional oral storytelling in the classroom*. Thesis (MA). University of Alaska, Fairbanks.
- Mady, C. J. (2010). Motivation to study core French: Comparing recent immigrants and Canadian-born secondary school students. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 33, 564–587.
- Makalela, L. (2015). Moving out of linguistic boxes: The effects of translanguageing strategies for multilingual classrooms. *Language and Education*, 29(3), 200–217.
- Maley, A., and Duff, A. (2005). *Drama Techniques. A resource book of communication activities for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Martinez, R., and Murphy, V. A. (2011). The effect of frequency and idiomaticity on second language reading comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45, 267–290.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mason, J., and Danby, S. (2011). Children as experts in their lives: Child inclusive research. *Child Indicators Research*, 4, 185-189
- Matsuda, A. (2012). *Principles and practices of teaching as an international language*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

- Mattevi, Y. (2005). *Using drama in the classroom: the educational values of theatre in second language acquisition*. Thesis (PhD), Stony Brook University, New York
- Mattheoudakis M., Dvorakova, K., and Láng, K. (2008). Story-based language teaching: an experimental study on the implementation of a module in three European countries. In M. Nikolov J. Djigunovic, M. Mattheoudakis, G. Lundberg and T. Flanagan (Eds.), *Teaching modern languages to young learners: Teachers, curricula and materials* (pp.59-76). Council of Europe
- Mayer, R. E. (1996). Learners as information processors: Legacies and limitations of educational psychology's second metaphor. *Educational Psychologist*, 31, 151–161.
- McCowan, R. J., and McCowan, S. C. (1999). *Item analysis for criterion-referenced tests*. Buffalo, NY: CDHS, SUNY.
- McDonough J. (1984). *ESP in perspective: A practical guide*. London and Glasgow: Collins Educational
- McElwee, J. (2015). Introducing French to pre-primary children in the North East of England: the Narrative Format approach. In M. Nikolov (Eds.) *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 263–287). Switzerland: Springer
- McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McKay, P., and Guse, J. (2007) *Five-minute activities for young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mertin, V., and Gillernová, I. (2010). *Psychology for pre-primary school teachers*. Praha: Portál.
- Miccoli, L. (2003). English through drama for oral skills development. *ELT Journal*, 57(2), 122-129.
- Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2001). Do young learners know how to learn a foreign language? In Y. Vrhovac (Eds.) *Children and foreign languages III*, 57–71. Zagreb: Faculty of Philosophy.
- Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2016). Individual differences and young learners' performance on L2 speaking tests. In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives*. New York: Springer.
- Mihaljević Djigunović, J., and Lopriore, L. (2011). The learner: Do individual differences matter? In J. Enever (Eds.), *ELLiE. Early language learning in Europe* (pp. 43–60). London: British Council,
- Mihaljević Djigunović, J., and Vilke, M. (2000). Eight years after: Wishful thinking vs. the facts of life. In J. Moon and M. Nikolov (Eds.) *Research into teaching English to young learners* (pp.67–86). Pécs, Hungary: University Press Pécs.
- Milligan, L. O., Clegg, J., and Tikly, L. (2016). Exploring the potential of language supportive learning in English medium instruction: A Rwandan case study. *Comparative Education*, 2(3), 328–342.

- Millington, N. T. (2011). Using songs effectively to teach English to young learners. *Language Education in Asia*, 2(1), 134-141.
- Mitchell, R., Myles, F., and Marsden, E. (2013). *Second language learning theories* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Molloy, A. (2015). Seven essential considerations for assessing young learners. *Modern English Teacher*, 24(1), 20-23.
- Mondria, J. A., and Wiersma, B. (2004). Receptive, productive, and receptive + productive L2 vocabulary learning: What difference does it make? In P. Bogaards and B. Laufer (Eds.), *Vocabulary in a Second Language: Selection, Acquisition and Testing* (pp. 79-100). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishers
- MoNE, (2013). *National early childhood education curriculum*. Available at: <https://tegm.meb.gov.tr/dosya/okuloncesi/ooproram.pdf>
- MoNE, (2013). *Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı İle Bütünleştirilmiş Aile Destek Eğitim Rehberi (OBADER)*. Ankara: MoNE, UNICEF.
- MoNE, (2016). *Early childhood English language teaching for private pre-schools*. Available at [https://ookgm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2016\\_06/23023701\\_ozel\\_okul\\_oncesi\\_ingilizce\\_ogretim\\_programi.pdf](https://ookgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_06/23023701_ozel_okul_oncesi_ingilizce_ogretim_programi.pdf)
- MoNE, (2016). *National English language curriculum for primary schools*. Available at <http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/Dosyalar/201812411191321-%C4%B0NG%C4%B0L%C4%B0ZCE%20%C3%96%C4%9ERET%C4%B0M%20PROGRAMI%20Klas%C3%B6r%C3%BC.pdf>
- MoNE, (2018). *National Education Statistics Formal Education, 2018-2019*. Available at [http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2019\\_09/30102730\\_meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2018\\_2019.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_09/30102730_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2018_2019.pdf)
- Moon, J. (2000). *Children learning English*, Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann.
- Moon, J. (2005). *Children learning English*. Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan
- Mordaunt, O. G., and Olson, D. W. (2010). Listen, listen, listen and listen: Building a comprehension corpus and making it comprehensible. *Educational Studies*, 36(3), 249–258.
- Morgan, A. G., Leech, L. N., Gloeckner, W. G., and Barrett, C. K. (2012). *IBM SPS for introductory statistics: Use and interpretation*. NEW York: Routledge
- Morrison, G. (2004). *Early childhood education today* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall
- Morrow, K. (2012). Communicative language testing. In C. Coombe and B. O’Sullivan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment* (pp. 140–146). Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Mourão, S. (2003). *JET: Realbooks! In the primary classroom*. Southam: Mary Glasgow Scholastic.

- Mourão, S. (2009). *Using stories in the primary classroom. Using literature in EFL classrooms*. BritLit: London
- Mourão, S. (2014). Taking play seriously in the pre-primary English classroom. *ELT Journal*, 68, 254–264
- Mourao, S. (2015). English at pre-primary: the challenges of getting it right. In J. Bland, (Eds.) *Teaching English to young learners. Critical issues in language teaching with 3-12 year olds*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mourão, S. (2018a). *English teaching in the early years: Research in Peru*. Lima: British Council.
- Mourão, S. (2018b). Playing in English: The emerging voices of pre-primary children in a foreign language context. In Copland, F., and Garton, S. (Eds.) *Voices from the TESOL classroom: Participant inquiries in young learner classes* (pp. 67-76). Alexandria, VIC: TESOL
- Mourão, S., and Ferreira, S. (2016). *Early language learning in pre-primary education in Portugal*. Unpublished report.
- Mourão, S., and Lourenço, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Early years second language education*. London: Routledge.
- Mourão, S., and Robinson, P. (2016). Facilitating the learning of English through collaborative practice. In V. Murphy and M. Evangelou (Eds.), *Early childhood education in English for speakers of other languages* (pp. 253–264). London: British Council
- Munoz, C., and Lindgren, E. (2011). Out-of-school factors- the home. In J. Enever (Eds.) *Early language learning in Europe* (pp.43-59). London: British Council
- Murphey, T. (1992). The Song-Stuck-In-My-Head phenomenon: A melodic din in the LAD? *System*, 18(1): 53-64.
- Murphy, B., and Hastings, A. (2006). The utter hopelessness of explicit grammar teaching. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 2(2), 9-11.
- Murphy, V. (2014). *Second language learning in the early school years: Trends and contexts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Murphy, V., and Evangelou, M. (2016). Introduction. In Murphy, V. A., and Evangelou, M. (Eds.) *Early Childhood Education in English for Speakers of Other Languages* (pp. 4–18). London: British Council,
- Murphy, V., and Evangelou, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Early childhood education in English for speakers of other languages*. London: British Council.
- Musarrat, M. (2011). *Challenges of teaching EFL to very young learners*. Paper presented at the 5th International BELTA Conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Myles, F. (2013). Theoretical approaches. In J. Herschensohn and M. Young-Scholten (Eds), *The Cambridge handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 46–70). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Nagy, K. (2009). What Primary School Pupils Think About Learning English as a Foreign Language. In M. Nikolov (Eds.), *Early learning of modern foreign languages: Processes and outcomes*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Najvar, P. (2010). *Teaching foreign languages at an early age in the Czech Republic at the end of the 20th century*. Brno: Paido
- Najvar, P., and Hanušová, S. (2010). Time in learning foreign languages. *Studia Paedagogica*, 15(1), 65–83.
- Nakata, T. (2011). Computer-assisted second language vocabulary learning in a paired-associate paradigm: A critical investigation of flashcard software. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24, 17–38.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Nation, P. (1990). *Teaching and learning vocabulary*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Nation, P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, 5(2).
- Nation, P., and Wang, R. (1997). Vocabulary size, text coverage, and word lists. In N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition, and pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 6–19.
- Navarro-Villarroel, C. (2011). *Young students' attitudes toward languages*. Thesis (PhD), Iowa State University, New York
- Neuman, S. B., and Dwyer, J. (2009). Missing in Action: Vocabulary Instruction in Pre-k. *The Reading Teacher*, 62, 384–392
- Ng, M. L., and Rao, N. (2013). Teaching English in Hong Kong kindergartens: A survey of practices. *The International Journal of Literacies*, 19(3), 25–47.
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2011). Primary English language education policy in Vietnam: Insights from implementation. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 225–249.
- Nicholas, H. and Lightbown, P. M. (2008). Defining child second language acquisition, defining roles for L2 instruction. In J. Philip, R. Oliver and A. Mackey (Eds.), *Second language acquisition and the younger learner: Child's play?* (pp. 27–51). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Nikolov, M. (1999). “Why do you learn English?” “Because the teacher is short”: A study of Hungarian children’s foreign language learning motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 3(1), 33–65.
- Nikolov, M. (2000). Issues in research into early second language acquisition. In J. Moon & M. Nikolov (Eds.), *Research into teaching English to young learners: International perspectives* (pp. 21–48). Pécs: University Press Pécs.
- Nikolov, M. (2002). *Issues in English language education*. Bern: Peter Lang AG.

- Nikolov, M. (2009). *Early modern foreign languages: Processes and outcomes*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Nikolov, M. (2016). *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing
- Nikolov, M. (Ed.). (2009a). *Early learning of modern foreign languages. Processes and outcomes*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Nikolov, M. (Ed.). (2009b). *The age factor and early language learning*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nikolov, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Nikolov, M., and Curtain, H. (2000). *An early Start: Young learners and modern foreign languages in Europe and beyond*. Brussels: European Centre for Modern Languages.
- Nikolov, M., and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, J. (2011). All shades of every color: An overview of early teaching and learning of foreign languages. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 95–119.
- Nikolov, M., and Mihaljevic' Djigunovic', J. (2006). Recent research on age, second language acquisition and early foreign language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26, 234–260.
- Nikolov, M., and Szabó, G. (2012). Developing diagnostic tests for young learners of EFL in grades 1 to 6. In E. D. Galaczi, and C. J. Weir (Eds.), *Voices in Language Assessment: Exploring the impact of language frameworks on learning, teaching and assessment – Policies, procedures and challenges* (pp. 347–363). Cambridge: UCLES/Cambridge University Press.
- Nikolov, M., and Szabó, G. (in press). A study on Hungarian 6th and 8th graders' proficiency in English and German at dual-language schools. In D. Holló and K. Károly (Eds.), *Inspirations in foreign language teaching: Studies in applied linguistics, language pedagogy and language teaching in honour of Peter Medgyes*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Nikolov, M., Djigunovic, J. M., Lundberg, G., Flanagan, T., and Mattheoudakis, M. (2007) *Teaching modern languages to young learners: Teachers, curricula and materials*. Brussels: European Centre for Modern Languages
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning*. New York: Pearson Education
- Ntelioglou, Y. B. (2011). But why do I have to take this class?' The mandatory drama-ESL class and multiliteracies pedagogy. *Research in Drama Education*, 16(4), 595-615
- Nunan D. (2011). *Teaching English to young learners*. Anaheim, CA: Anaheim University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1993). Task-based Syllabus design: Selecting, grading and sequencing tasks. In G. Crookes and S. M. Gass (Eds.) *Tasks in a pedagogical context: Integrating theory and practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 55-68.

- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37 (4), 589–613.
- Nunan, D. (2013a). *Learner-centered English language education: The selected works of David Nunan*. World Library of Educationalists. New York: Routledge.
- O’Kane, C. (2008). The development of participatory techniques: Facilitating children’s views about decisions which affect them. In P. Christensen and A. James (Eds.), *Research with Children: Perspectives and practices* (pp. 125–155). London: Routledge,
- OECD, (2019). *Education at a glance 2019: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing, Paris
- Olson, K. (2004). Critical thinking: A brief overview of practice and theory. *Early Childhood Matters*, 5(2) 102-122.
- Ordóñez, C. L. (2016). Just singing, role playing and reading: A case study in education for bilingualism. In V. Murphy and M. Evangelou (Eds.) *Early childhood education in English for speakers of other languages* (pp. 241–253). London: British Council,
- Öz, H. (2014). Turkish teachers’ practices of assessment for learning in the English as a foreign language classroom. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(4), 775-785.
- Özçelik, B. (2013). *The effect of the integration of talking toys on preschoolers’ vocabulary learning in English*. Thesis (MA), Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Palfreyman, D. (2006). Social context and resources for language learning. *System*, 34, 352–370.
- Papp, S. (2019). Assessment of young English language learners. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge
- Papp, S., and Salamoura, A. (2009). An exploratory study into linking young learners’ examinations to the CEFR. *Research Notes*, 37, 15–22. Cambridge: Cambridge ESOL.
- Papp, S., and Walczak, A. (2016). The development and validation of a computer-based test of English for children: The computer-based Cambridge English: Young Learners tests. In M. Nikolov (Eds.). *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives* (pp. 139–190). New York: Springer.
- Paquette, K. R., and Reig, S. A. (2008). Using music to support the literacy development of young english language learners. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36, 227-232.
- Paradis, J., Genesee, F., and Crago, M.B. (2011). *Dual language development and disorders: A handbook on bilingualism and second language learning* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Parker, V., and Valente, D. (2019). Syllabus development in early English language teaching. In , S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Designing qualitative studies [excerpt: Purposeful sampling]*. In *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pavičić, V., and Bagarić, V. (2004). *Introducing early foreign language learning to state schools: Between principles and reality*. Paper presented at the international conference on teaching foreign languages to younger learners, in Nitra, Slovakia.
- Pearson, B., Fernandez, S., Lewedeg, V., and Oller, K. (1997). The relation of input factors to lexical learning by bilingual infants. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 18, 41–58.
- Pearson, (2015a). *The Global Scale of English*. Retrieved May 25, 2015, from <http://www.english.com/gse>
- Pfenninger, S. E. (2014). The literacy factor in the optimal age debate: A 5-year longitudinal study. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 19(3), 217–234.
- Phillips, S. (1999). *Drama with children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Philp, J., Oliver, R., and Mackey, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Second language acquisition and the young learner: Child's play?* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Piaget, J. (1929). *The child's conception of the world*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Piaget, J. (1978). *Success and understanding*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Piirainen-Marsh, A., & Tainio, L. (2009). Other-repetition as resource for participation in the activity of playing a video game. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 153-169.
- Pinkham, A. M., Kaefer, T., and Newman, S. B. (Eds.). (2012). *Knowledge development in early childhood: Sources of learning and classroom implications*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press
- Pinnegar, S., and L. Erickson. (2010). *Teacher-centered curriculum*. In *Encyclopedia of curriculum studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching young language learners*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Pinter, A. (2007b). What children say: Benefits of task repetition. In K. Van den Branden, K. Van Gorp, and M. Verhelst (Eds.) *Task-based language education from a classroom-based perspective* (pp.126–149). Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing,
- Pinter, A. (2011). *Children learning second languages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pinter, A. (2012). Is research relevant for teachers of English working with young learners? In *English for Young Learners – Forum 2012*. Upsala: Upsala Universitet, 11–27.



- Pinter, A. (2014). Child participant roles in applied linguistics. *Research Applied Linguistics*, 35 (2), 168–183.
- Pinter, A. (2015). Researching young learners. In B. Paltridge and A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research methods in applied linguistics* (pp.113-128). London: Bloomsbury
- Pinter, A. (2017). *Teaching young language learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pinter, A. (2019). Research issues with young learners. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge
- Pinter, A., and Zandian, S. (2014). ‘I don’t ever want to leave this room’: Benefits of researching ‘with’ children. *ELT Journal*, 68(1), 64–74.
- Pinter, A., Kuchah, H., and Smith, R. (2013). Researching with children. *ELT Journal*, 67(4), 1 October 2013, 484–487.
- Pinter, A., Mathew, R., and Smith, R. (2016). *Children and teachers as co-researchers in Indian primary English classrooms*. London: British Council ELT Research Papers 16.03.
- Pinto, C. F., and Soares, H. (2012). Using children’s literature in ELT a story- based approach. *Sensos*, 2(2), 23-39.
- Pižorn, K. (2009). Designing proficiency levels for English for primary and secondary school students and the impact of the CEFR. In N. Figueras and J. Noijons (Eds.), *Linking to the CEFR levels: Research perspectives* (pp. 87–102). Arnhem, The Netherlands: Cito/EALTA,
- Pokrivčáková, S., Farkašová, E., Filo, J., Hanušová, S., Klimentová, A., Lojová, G., Najvar, P., Tandlichová, E., Tóthová, M., Zat’ková, T., Zelenická, E., Žemberová, I. (2008). *Innovations and Trends in primary school foreign language education*. Nitra: PF UKF.
- Polat, Ö. (2019). *Türkiye’de Okul Öncesi Eğitimin Genel Durumu: 2019 Araştırma Raporu*. İstanbul: Testfen yayın grubu.
- Pollard-Durodola, S., Gonzalez, E. J., Saenz, L., Resndez, N., Kwok, O., Zhu, L., and Davis, H. (2018). The Effects of Content-Enriched Shared Book Reading Versus Vocabulary-Only Discussions on the Vocabulary Outcomes of Preschool Dual Language Learners. *Early Education and Development*, 7, 1-22
- Portiková, Z. (2015). Pre-primary second language education in Slovakia and the role of teacher training programmes. In Mourão, S., and Lourenço, S. (Eds.) *Early Years Second Language Education: International perspectives on theories and practice*. Abingdon: Routledge, 177–188.
- Poyraz, E. (2017). The effects of parental involvement in English language learning of secondary school students. *International Association of Research in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics ELT Research Journal*, 6(3), 250-275
- Prabhu, N. S. (2009). Teaching English to young learners: The promise and the threat. In J. Enever, J. Moon and U. Raman (Eds.), *Young learner English language*

- policy and implementation: International perspectives*, (pp.43–44). Reading, UK: Garnet Education Publishing.
- Puchta, H. (2019). Teaching grammar to young learners. In S. Garton and F. Copland, *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner* (pp.203-220). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Puchta, H. and Elliot, K. (2017). *Activities for very young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Puchta, H., and Williams, M. (2011). *Teaching young learners to think*. Innsbruck and Cambridge: Helbling Languages and Cambridge University Press
- Putnam, L. R. (1994). An interview with Noam Chomsky. *The Reading Teacher*, 48(4), 328-333.
- Quesinberry, N. and Willis, M., (1975). Puppets as a learning tool. *Language Arts*, 52(6), 883-885.
- Rachmawaty, N., and Hermagustiana, I. (2010). Does retelling technique improve speaking fluency? *TEFLIN Journal*, 21(1),
- Read, C. (2003). Is young better? *English Teaching Professional*, 28, 5-7.
- Read, C. (2016). An ABC of changes in primary English language teaching and learning over the last 30 years. *IATEFL Young Learners & Teenagers SIG Newsletter: C&TS Digital Special Pearl Anniversary Edition*, 33–37.
- Reese, E., and Cox, A. (1999). Quality of adult book reading affects children's emergent literacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 20-28
- Reilly, V. and Ward, S. M. (2003). *Very young learners*. (Eighth edition). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reilly, V., and Ward, S. M. (1997). *Very young learners (resource books for teachers)*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Rew, S., and Moon, Y. (2013). The effects of using English drama on the learning of target expressions for primary school students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 10(4), 215-239.
- Reynolds, B. L., and Chang, S. (2018). Empowering Taiwanese preservice EFL teachers through a picture book community service project. In F. Copland and S. Garton (Eds.), *Voices from the Classroom: Teaching English to young learners*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.
- Rich, S. (Ed.) (2014). *International perspectives on teaching English to young learners*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richard-Amato, P. (1988). *Making it happen: Interaction in the second language classroom*. New York: Longman
- Richards, J. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Richards, J. C., and Schmidt, R. W. (2014). *Language and communication*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rincón, J., and Clavijo-Olarte, A. (2016). Fostering EFL learners' literacies through local inquiry in a multimodal experience. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 18(2), 67–82.
- Rixon, S. (1999). *Young learners of English: Some research perspectives*. London: Longman, British Council.
- Rixon, S. (2013). *British Council survey of policy and practice in primary English language teaching worldwide*. London: British Council.
- Rixon, S. (2016). Do developments in assessment represent the “coming of age” of young learners English language teaching initiatives? The international picture. In Nikolov, M. (Eds.), *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives* (pp.19–41). New York: Springer.
- Rixon, S. (2019). Teaching English to young learners in Europe. In S. Garton and F. Copland, *The routledge handbook of teaching English to young Learner* (pp.493-508). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Robert, C., Borella, E., Fagot, D., Lecerf, T., and De Ribaupierre, A. (2005). Working memory and inhibitory control across the life span: Intrusion errors in the Reading Span Test. *Memory & Cognition*, 37 (3), 336–345.
- Robinson, P., Mourão, S., and Kang, N. J. (2015). *English learning areas in preschool classrooms: An investigation of their effectiveness in supporting EFL development*. London: British Council
- Rupp, D. E., Gibbons, A. M., Baldwin, A. M., Snyder, L. A., Spain, S. M., Woo, S. E., Brummel, B. J., Sims, C. S., and Kim, M. (2006). An initial validation of assessment centers as accurate assessments for effective training interventions. *Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 9, 171-200.
- Şad, S. N. (2015). Do Prospective Classroom Teachers Perceive Themselves as Effective and Willing to Teach Young Learners English? *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 5, 1257-1269.
- Şad, S. N. and Gürbüztürk, O. (2013). Primary school students' parents' level of involvement into their children's education. *KUYEP/Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 13(2), 993-1011.
- Salkind, J. N. (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications
- Sargeant, J., and Harcourt, D. (2012). *Doing ethical research with children*. Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Sarıçoban, A. (2000). Metacognitive strategies and learner autonomy in EFL reading. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 2(2), 45.
- Sayer, P., and Ban, R. (2014). Young EFL students' engagements with English outside the classroom. *ELT Journal*, 68(3), 321–329.

- Sayer, P., and Ban, R. (2019). Research on learning English outside the classroom. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge
- Schmitt, N., (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 329–363.
- Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schwarz, J. (2011). Research methodology: Tools. Applied data analysis (with SPSS). Lecture 02: *Measurement scales and item analysis*. Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts
- Schneider, W. (2006) Memory development in childhood. In U. Goswami (Eds.) *Blackwell handbook of childhood cognitive development* (pp.236–256). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Schoepp, K. (2001). Reasons for using songs in the ESL/EFL classroom. *The internet TESL journal*, 7(2).
- Selby, C. (2011). *Playtime*. Oxford Publishing
- Seligson, P. (1997). *Helping students to speak*. Spain: Richmond Publishing
- Selvi, A. F. (2014). Myths and misconceptions about the non-native English-speakers in TESOL (NNEST) movement. *TESOL Journal* 5(3): 573-611.
- Şencan, H. (2005). *Sosyal ve davranışsal ölçümlerde güvenirlik ve geçerlilik*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Senechal, M., Thomas, E., and Monker, J-A. (1995). Individual differences in 4-year-old children's acquisition of vocabulary during storybook reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87(2), 218-229.
- Serrurier-Zucker, C., and Gobbé-Mévellec, E. (2014). The page is the stage: From picturebooks to drama with young learners. *Children's Literature in English Language Education*, 2(2), 13–30.
- Shaaban, K. (2005). Assessment of young learners. *English Teaching Forum*, 39(4), 16-24
- Sharpe, K. (2001). *Modern foreign languages in the primary school: The what, why and how of early MFL teaching*. London: Kogan Page
- Shin, J. K., and Crandall, J. A. (2014). *Teaching young learners English: From theory to practice*. Boston: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning.
- Shintani, N. (2016). *Input-based tasks in foreign language instruction for young learners*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Shohamy, E. (2001). *The power of tests: a critical perspective on the uses of language tests*. London: Longman.

- Shohamy, E., Or, L., and May, S. (Eds.) (2017). *Language testing and assessment*. Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Springer
- Shulsky, D., and Kirkwood, D. (2015). Beyond Tempera Paint: Authentically Exploring Visual Art in Early Childhood. *Childhood Education*, 91(5), 363-369.
- Sığirtmaç, A., and Özbek, S. (2009). Teaching English in early childhood. *İnönü University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, 10(1), 107-122.
- Silverman, R., and Crandell, J. D. (2010). Vocabulary practices in pre kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45, 318-340
- Singleton, D. (1989). *Language acquisition: The age factor*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Singleton, D. (2003). Critical period or general age factors. In M. P. Garcia Mayo and M. L. Garcia Lecumberri (Eds.), *Age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 3–22.
- Singleton, D. (2014). Apt to change: The problematic of language awareness and language aptitude in age-related research. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 4(3), 557-571.
- Singleton, D., and Pfenninger, S. E. (2019). The age debate. In S. Garton and F. Copland (Eds.) *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learner*. London and New York: Routledge
- Singleton, D., and Ryan, L. (2004). *Language acquisition: The age factor*, 2nd ed. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Slade, P. (1995). *Child play: Its importance for human development*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Slattery, M., and Willis, J. (2001). *English for primary teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sotaridona, L. S., Wibowo, A., Hendrawan, I., Pornel, J. (2013). An Application of Nominal Response Model to Identify Erroneously-Scored Test Items. Invited paper at the 12 th National Convention on Statistics, 1-2 October 2013.
- Sowa, E. (2014). Addressing intercultural awareness-raising in the young learner EFL classroom in Poland: Some teacher perspectives. In S. Rich (Eds.), *International perspectives on teaching English to young learners*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spicher, L., and F. Sweeney. (2007). Folk music in the L2 Classroom: Development of Native-Like Pronunciation through Prosodic Engagement Strategies. *Connections*, 1, 35-48.
- Suggate, P. S., Lenhard, W., Neudecker, E., and Schneider, W. (2013). Incidental vocabulary acquisition from stories: Second and fourth graders learn more from listening than reading. *First Language*, 33(6), 551-571
- Šulová, L. (2007). Early years foreign language education? Possible risks or benefits? *E-psychologie*, 1(1), 49–57.

- Sundqvist, P., and Sylvén, L., K. (2014). Language-related computer use: Focus on young L2 English learners in Sweden. *ReCALL*, 26(1), 3–20.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, (pp. 97–114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swanson, P. B. (2008). Efficacy and Interest Profile of Foreign Language Teachers During a Time of Critical Shortage. *NECTFL Review*, 62, 55-74.
- Szpotowicz, M., and Campfield, D. E. (2016). Developing and piloting proficiency tests for Polish young learners. In M. Nikolov (Eds.) *Assessing young learners of English: Global and local perspectives*. New York: Springer.
- Tabors, P. (1997). *One child, two languages: A guide for preschool educators of children learning English as a second language*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes
- Tarakcioğlu, Ö. A., and Tunçarslan, K. H. (2014). The effect of short stories on teaching vocabulary to very young learners (aged 3-4-Year): A suggested common syllabus, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 10(2), 68-85.
- Tavil, Z. M., and İşisağ, K. U. (2009). Teaching vocabulary to very young learners through games and songs. *EKEV Academy Journal*, 13(38), 299- 308.
- Taylor, L., and Saville, N. (2002). Developing English language tests for young learners. *Research Notes*, 7, 2–5.
- Thompson, G., and Evans, H. (2005). *Thinking it through: Linking language skills, thinking skills and drama*. London: David Fulton Publishers
- Thorbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Tinsley, T., and Comfort, T. (2012). *Lessons from abroad: International review of primary languages.CFBT educational trust*. Available at: <http://cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2012/r-lessons-from-abroad-2012>.
- Tseng, C-L. (2008). Understanding the desirability of English language education in Taiwan. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(1), 83–86.
- Turgut, Y., and Irgin, P. (2009) Young learners' language learning via computer games. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1, 760-764
- Uchiyama, T. (2011). Reading versus telling of stories in the development of English vocabulary and comprehension in young second language learners. *Reading Improvement*, 48, 168–178.
- UNESCO, (2015). EFA global monitoring report. *Education for all 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*. EFA Global Monitoring Report, Paris: UNESCO
- UNESCO-UIS, (2012). *International standard classification of Education ISCED 2011*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
- Van Avermaet, P., and Gysen, S. (2006). From needs to tasks: Language learning needs in a task-based approach. In K. Van den Branden (Eds.), *Task-based language teaching in practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Van den Branden, K. (2006). *Task-based language teaching: From theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vecchi, V. (2010). *Art and creativity in Reggio Emilia: Exploring the role and potential of ateliers in early childhood education*. London: Routledge
- Vosniadou, S. (2003). *How children learn*. International academy of education. The international bureau of education.
- Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press
- Waring, R., (1997). A comparison of the receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of some second language learners. *Immaculata (Notre Dame Seishin Univerisy, Okayama)*, 1, 53-68.
- Webb, S. (2008). Receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of L2 learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30(1),79–95.
- Weigle, S. (2002). *Assessing writing* . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wesson, K. (2011). Attention span revisited. Retrieved from <http://sciencemaster77.blogspot.com/2011/01/attention-spans-revisited.htm>
- Westbrook, C. (2014). *Teaching critical thinking using Bloom's taxonomy*. Available at: [www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/04/18/teaching-critical-thinking-using-blooms-taxonomy/](http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/04/18/teaching-critical-thinking-using-blooms-taxonomy/)
- White, R. V. (1988). *The ELT curriculum, design, innovation and management*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Widlok, B., Petravic, A., Org, H., and Romcea, R. (2011). *Nuremberg recommendations on early foreign language learning*. London: Goethe Institut.
- Wode, H. (2010). Foreign language education in Europe: Why include preschools? In K. Kersten, A. Rohde, C. Schelletter and A.K. Steinlen (Eds.), *Bilingual preschools. Vol. II: Best practices* (pp.7–34). Trier: WVT.
- Wood, E., and Attfield, J. (2005). *Play, learning and the early childhood curriculum* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Paul Chapman
- Wooland, B. (2010). *Teaching primary drama*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Wouters, P. (et al.) (2013). A meta-analysis of the cognitive and motivational effects of serious games. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(2), 249–265.
- Wu, X. (2003). Intrinsic motivation and young language learners: The impact of the classroom environment. *System*, 31(4), 501–517.
- Yanase, C. (2018). Getting children to be active agents of their own learning. In Copland, F., and Garton, S. (Eds.) *Voices from the classroom: Teaching English to young learners*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.
- Yüksel, D. (2016). *Using songs in teaching English to very young learners*. Thesis (MA). Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus.
- Zalta, G. (2006). Using drama with children. *English Teaching Forum*, 2, 24-46

- Zandian, S. (2012). Participatory activities, research and language classroom practice. In *English for Young Learners – Forum 2012*. Upsala: Upsala Universitet, 133–142.
- Zapata, G. G. (2017). *Teaching English through arts and crafts to third grade public school children at Institución Educativa Suroriental De Pereira*. Colombia: Facultad de Bellas Artes y Humanidad
- Zhou, S. (2010). Comparing receptive and productive academic vocabulary knowledge of Chinese EFL learners. *Asian Social Science*, 6(10), 14–19.
- Zhao, Y. (2014). On how to arouse the students' learning interest in foreign language teaching. *International Conference on Education, Management and Computing Technology (ICEMCT 2014)*, USA: Published by Atlantis Press.





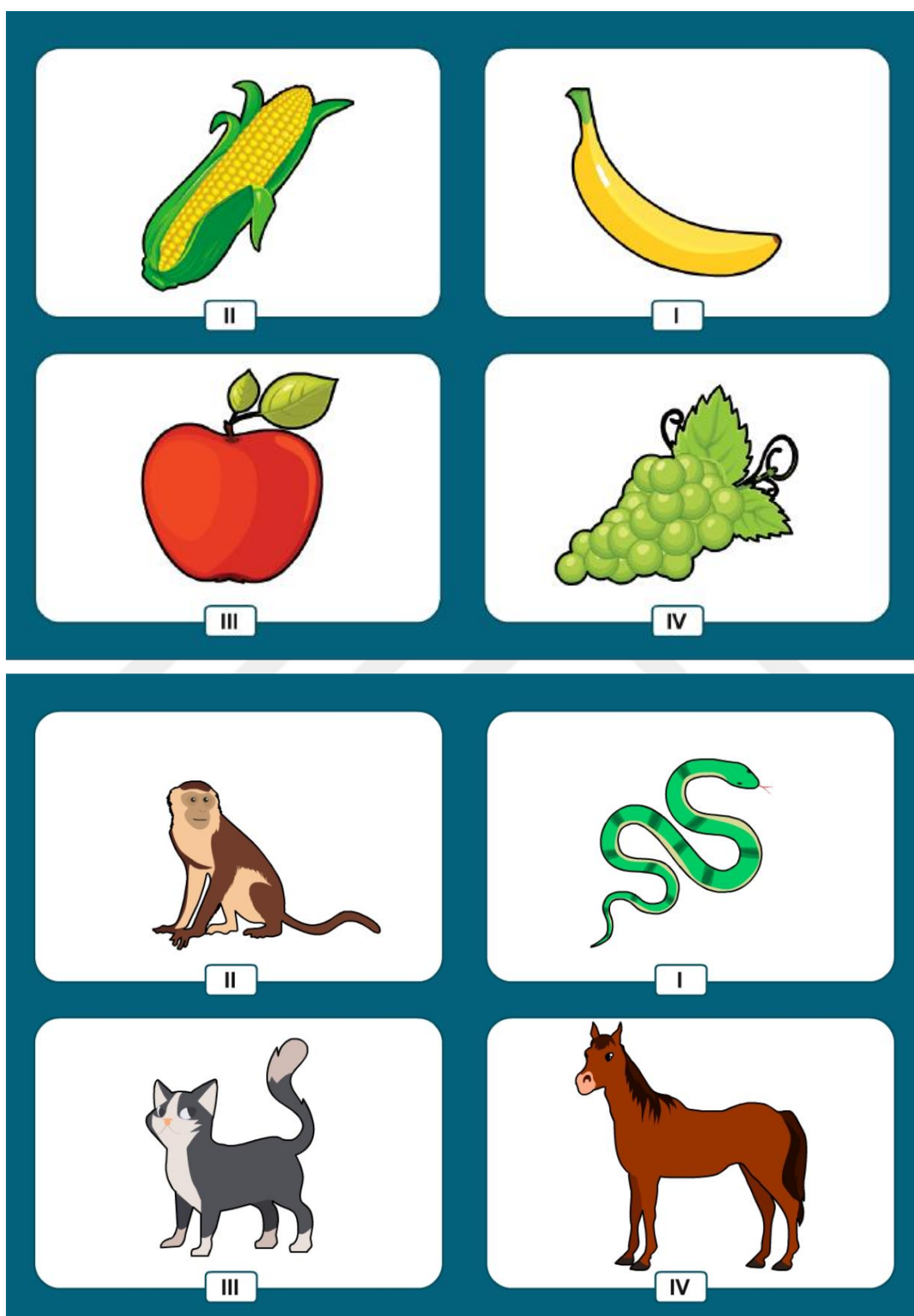
## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Interview Questions in Turkish**

1. Sence başka bir dili öğrenmek ne demek? Neden başka bir dili öğreniriz?
2. İngilizceyi seviyor musun? İngilizce öğrenmek seni mutlu ediyor mu?
3. İngilizce öğrenirken en çok neler yapmak seni mutlu etti? En sevdiğin etkinlikler hangileriydi?
4. İngilizce öğrenirken yapmak istemediğin/hoşlanmadığın şeyler oldu mu?
5. İngilizce öğrenmeni kolaylaştıran şeyler nelerdi?

### **APPENDIX 2: Interview Questions in English**

1. Why do think that we learn a foreign language?
2. Did you like learning English with this program?
3. Which activities did you enjoy most while learning English?
4. Was there anything you disliked while learning English?
5. What made your learning English easier?

**APPENDIX 2: Sample Items in English Picture Vocabulary Test (Receptive)**

**APPENDIX 3: Sample Items in English Picture Vocabulary Test  
(Expressive)**



## APPENDIX 4: Record Form of English Picture Vocabulary Test

|               |                                                              |             |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>FORM B</b> | <b>English Picture Vocabulary Test<br/>(Expressive Part)</b> | <b>EPVT</b> |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|

Performance Record

**Section 1. Identifying Information**

Examinee Code \_\_\_\_\_ Female ☐ Male ☐ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Year      Month      Day

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Testing: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2. Record of Scores**

|                      |                        |                                               |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                      | Raw Score<br>out of 48 | Comparison of Receptive &<br>Expressive Score |
| EPVT<br>(Expressive) | _____                  | _____                                         |

**Section 3. Answer**

| THEMES   | NW | Answer    | Said | Not said |
|----------|----|-----------|------|----------|
| FEELINGS | 1  | Hungry    |      |          |
|          | 2  | Sad       |      |          |
|          | 3  | Thirsty   |      |          |
|          | 4  | Tired     |      |          |
|          | 5  | Happy     |      |          |
|          | 6  | Scared    |      |          |
|          | 7  | Angry     |      |          |
|          | 8  | Surprised |      |          |
| COLORS   | 9  | Red       |      |          |
|          | 10 | Blue      |      |          |
|          | 11 | Green     |      |          |
|          | 12 | Yellow    |      |          |
|          | 13 | Pink      |      |          |
|          | 14 | Purple    |      |          |
|          | 15 | White     |      |          |
|          | 16 | Black     |      |          |
| ANIMALS  | 17 | Monkey    |      |          |
|          | 18 | Elephant  |      |          |
|          | 19 | Horse     |      |          |
|          | 20 | Cat       |      |          |
|          | 21 | Lion      |      |          |
|          | 22 | Snake     |      |          |
|          | 23 | Dog       |      |          |
|          | 24 | Chicken   |      |          |

| THEMES                | NW | Answer   | Said | Not said |
|-----------------------|----|----------|------|----------|
| FRUIT &<br>VEGETABLES | 25 | Carrot   |      |          |
|                       | 26 | Orange   |      |          |
|                       | 27 | Apple    |      |          |
|                       | 28 | Cherry   |      |          |
|                       | 29 | Grapes   |      |          |
|                       | 30 | Corn     |      |          |
|                       | 31 | Banana   |      |          |
|                       | 32 | Pear     |      |          |
| CLOTHES               | 33 | Sock     |      |          |
|                       | 34 | Hat      |      |          |
|                       | 35 | Coat     |      |          |
|                       | 36 | Trousers |      |          |
|                       | 37 | Scarf    |      |          |
|                       | 38 | Skirt    |      |          |
|                       | 39 | Dress    |      |          |
|                       | 40 | Shoe     |      |          |
| BODY PARTS            | 41 | Mouth    |      |          |
|                       | 42 | Foot     |      |          |
|                       | 43 | Eye      |      |          |
|                       | 44 | Hand     |      |          |
|                       | 45 | Nose     |      |          |
|                       | 46 | Ear      |      |          |
|                       | 47 | Hair     |      |          |
|                       | 48 | Head     |      |          |

## **APPENDIX 5: EPVT Implementation Guide**

"Learning a foreign/second language starts with the learning words" (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001). In the process of foreign language learning and teaching at earlier ages, the most basic indicator of very young learners' progress in the foreign language is the word acquisition in that language. For this reason, picture vocabulary tests have a vital role in assessing children's foreign language development. In this regard, the English Picture Vocabulary Test (EPVT) is designed to measure pre-literate children's receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge in preschool level. EPVT which is an original, valid and reliable vocabulary test contains 48 target words and 96 questions totally. They are selected from "Colors", "Clothes", "Feelings", "Fruit & Vegetables", "Animals" and "Body Parts" themes which are in Preschool English Education Program (PEEP). The selection and gradation of words for the test is conducted with the help of extensive-theory based and pedagogical procedures. The Vocabulary Test aiming to measure vocabulary knowledge related with predetermined subjects in target language consists of two subtests: the receptive language test and the expressive language test. The test is administered individually and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. This test can be administered by someone who knows the characteristics of preschoolers and the pronunciation of each words and the application of test. Raw score is calculated by adding all correct answers.

### **APPENDIX 5: Receptive Vocabulary Test**

The EPVT Receptive Language subtest has been developed to measure children's listening and understanding of single-word vocabulary on predetermined subjects. It is developed for individuals who 5 and 6 years old preschoolers. There are 48 full-colored picture cards in the test. For each target word, 3 distorters of the same category are identified and test cards are created as one target and three distorters for each card. For example, if the target word is an animal, the other three distorters are also chosen from the animal category. The location of target words in the test was determined randomly and the pictures were drawn by a professional painter.

The Receptive Vocabulary Test measures the very young learners' ability to recognize words. The child hears the word that is simultaneously presented with three pictures one of which correctly depicts the spoken word. The child is required to identify the correct picture that matches the words. At the beginning of the test, the examiner can motivate the young children by saying "let's have a play together with these cards." Then instructions should be read aloud to the children "You will see some pictures on the card. I will say a word and I want you to point to the picture that matches the word I have said." A few examples are given at the beginning to ensure that the examinee understands the demands of the task. Examiner gives the instruction by saying "Show me the cat", "Point to the cat" or "where is the cat?" (the one which is used most in the lesson can be preferred) Lastly, the examiner records the answer to the performance record paper as 1 if it is correct and 0 if it is wrong.

### **APPENDIX 5: Expressive Vocabulary Test**

The EPVT Expressive Language subtest has been developed to measure children's expressive language knowledge and word retrieval abilities. It is used for progress monitoring in preschool's English expressive vocabulary. There are 48 full-colored picture cards in the test. Examiner presents a picture from the test easel and asks "What is that?" Examinee must respond with one word that provides an acceptable label for the picture. A few examples are given at the beginning to ensure that the examinee understands the demands of the task. Lastly, the examiner records the answer to the performance record paper as 1 if it is correct and 0 if it is wrong.

### **POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN APPLICATION**

- EPVT requires no reading and writing and enables flexible measures of very young learners' English word knowledge.
- EPVT should be applied individually in a silent room.
- Examiner should know the characteristics of pre-primary school children and the correct pronunciation of the words in the test.
- Examiner should support the children by saying "Great!", "Okey", "Good!", "Perfect!", "Go on!"

- Young children shouldn't be reprehended for the wrong answers. If the children ask you whether their answer is correct or wrong, examiner can say "It is a good answer."
- The words in the test should be read from the paper instead of being recited.
- The answers shouldn't be pointed, spelled and explained for the children to give them a clue.
- The questions can be asked more than once by the examiner.
- Appropriate time (1 minute) should be given to the examinees. If they don't say or point the answer in a minute, motivate them "let's show me one of them" or "what is that?"
- If the children are distracted and show different places on the page, the examiner attracts their attention by saying "Now we are looking the pictures carefully by showing the pictures simultaneously."
- If the examinee changes his/her answers perpetually, his/her first answer is the valid one.

### **APPLICATION OF TEST**

After the target words have been thought in the specified themes, the examiner can start testing. The test is continued until all the questions are answered. The answers given by the children are recorded on the record form by examiner.

### **METHOD OF SCORING**

In the receptive part, for all the correct answers that the examinee gives by selecting the correct picture, 1 point is given and all the wrong answers are given 0. In the expressive part, all the correct answers that the examinee gives by expressing the words in English, 1 point is given and all the wrong answers are given 0.

## APPENDIX 6: A Sample Performance-based Assessment Task

### INFORMAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Examinee Code:  
Date of Testing:  
Date of Birth:

#### TASK 5 : WOLF! WOLF! WHAT ARE YOU EATING? (A traditional adapted-game to assess fruit & vegetables in a fun way)

##### What to do

- ❖ It is adapted from a game (Kurt Baba Oyunu) they have played in their mother tongue; that's why, children are familiar with what they have to do.
- ❖ A wolf mask and the flashcards related with target "fruit " and a "hungry face" are prepared before the child doesn't enter the classroom.
- ❖ At the beginning, motivate the child to play the game (Kurt Baba) by showing the materials.
- ❖ The child becomes wolf by wearing the mask and sits in front of the class. Examiner turns around the wolf by saying its rhymes "Walking in the jungle, walking in the jungle. I saw a wolf. Wolf wolf what are you eating?"
- ❖ The child is expected to express eight different fruit by looking at the flashcards shown by teachers.
- ❖ When the flashcards including fruit finish, "Hungry face" flashcard is shown lastly.
- ❖ The child says "I am hungry" or "hungry" and the examiner starts to run way. The game ends with fun by catching the examiner. (Help the child say "hungry" by asking "are you hungry" or remind him/her to catch.
- ❖ Repeat 8 times until asking all the fruits to the child.
- ❖ If there is no answer, ask twice and go on playing the game. Record the correct answers.

##### Performance Record

**\*\* Records the answer to the performance record paper as 1 point for one word-answers related to colors, 2 points for two or more word-answers.**

| One-word answers |                 | Two-words answers             |                  |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| ** orange        | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat orange | ..... (2 points) |
| ** cherry        | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat cherry | ..... (2 points) |
| ** corn          | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat corn   | ..... (2 points) |
| ** apple         | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat apple  | ..... (2 points) |
| ** carrot        | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat carrot | ..... (2 points) |
| ** grapes        | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat grapes | ..... (2 points) |
| ** banana        | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat banana | ..... (2 points) |
| ** pear          | ..... (1 point) | ** I (am) eating/I eat pear   | ..... (2 points) |



## APPENDIX 7: ECELEP Sample Pages

| EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM (12-weeks distribution) |        |      |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Theme no                                                                   | Theme  | Week | Hour | Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Function and skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2                                                                          | Colors | 3    | 3    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizing and naming color vocabulary words, phrases and sentence structures</li> <li>Talking about the colors of the things in basic level</li> <li>Asking something's color by using "what color is it?" and answering the question using "it is.."</li> <li>Counting from one to ten</li> <li>Listening to and joining in with a song related to colors</li> <li>Showing and telling the colors correctly</li> <li>Playing an action or a memory game to practice the target vocabulary</li> <li>Listen to and respond to an action story/ story</li> <li>Practicing the target vocabulary through thinking skills activity</li> </ul>            | <p>By the end of the unit children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have a basic repertoire of words and phrases related to colors</li> <li>listen and name the colors of the objects</li> <li>identify the colors by using pointing, gestures, etc.</li> <li>sing a song about colors</li> <li>count from one to ten</li> <li>point to something of an appropriate color when asked</li> <li>name story objects, characters and events using visual and interactive supports</li> <li>show their understanding using gestures and mimes, as well as through participation in the games and activities</li> <li>show a receptive and an expressive understanding of target vocabulary</li> </ul>                                     |
|                                                                            |        |      |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revising and practicing the target vocabulary related with colors through revision of the song as well as more games and activities.</li> <li>Counting from one to ten</li> <li>Asking the colors of something simply by using "what color" and giving a short answer to "what color" question</li> <li>Using the feeling vocabulary to play a mini drama game</li> <li>Practicing the related words and structures in an art craft activity</li> <li>Playing an action/a memory game to practice the target vocabulary</li> <li>Integration of parents into children's foreign language learning process in order to reach the common goal</li> </ul> | <p>By the end of the unit children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ask the colors of something simply by using "what color"</li> <li>give a short answer to "what color" question</li> <li>show their understanding using gestures and mimes, as well as through participation in the games and activities</li> <li>recognize the characters and show interest in the events of the story</li> <li>recognize and use different colors appropriately in acting out or games.</li> <li>show a receptive and an expressive understanding of target vocabulary</li> <li>understand related questions and answers appropriately</li> <li>practice the target vocabulary and structure at home with the help of parent letters</li> </ul> |

| Theme  | Week | Hour | Target Voc.                                                        | Structures<br>(Productive Language)                                                                                                                            | Methods& Tech                                                                                                                                         | Materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colors | 3    | 3    | red<br>blue<br>green<br>yellow<br>orange<br>pink<br>black<br>white | What color (is it)?<br>It is ...black / yellow /<br>brown.<br>How many reds are there<br>in this picture?<br>There are four ....<br>Give me ...<br>Show me ... | Music and Movement<br>Storytelling<br>Thinking Skills Activities<br>Acting out/ Role play<br>Arts and crafts<br>Playing games<br>Parental Involvement | a set of flashcards,<br>eight boxes in different<br>color, a fast and lively<br>music, small papers in<br>different color, a story<br>bag, a set of story<br>cards, music, Cd player<br>or computer, a simple<br>drawing of clowns with<br>clothes, sheets of thick<br>paper (A4) and crayons,<br>residual materials |
|        |      |      | red<br>blue<br>green<br>yellow<br>orange<br>pink<br>black<br>white | What color (is it)?<br>It is ...black / yellow /<br>brown.<br>How many reds are there<br>in this picture?<br>There are four ....<br>Give me ...<br>Show me ..  | Music and Movement<br>Storytelling<br>Thinking Skills Activities<br>Acting out/ Role play<br>Arts and crafts<br>Playing games<br>Parental Involvement | music, CD player or<br>computer, 8 different<br>hula hoops, circle cards<br>in different color with<br>stick, worksheet for<br>each child, crayons<br>a musical instrument<br>(bandir, drum, guitar                                                                                                                  |

## **APPENDIX 8: A sample Lesson Plan**

### **LESSON PLAN- 1**

### **LESSON PLAN (WEEK 5)**

### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

**Objective of the lesson: BODY PARTS**

**Skill focus:** Listening and speaking skills

**Target Students:** 5-6 years old

**WEEK 1:** 3 lessons of 40 minutes

**Target vocabulary:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Target phrase:.** What is that? It is a foot/head, etc. They are feet/hands, etc.

What color are the eyes? Blue/ red eyes..

How many feet/fingers are there in the body? two feet, ten fingers, etc.

Order the pictures..

Shake / Touch.. / Clap...

Give me / show me...

**Activities:**

- Music & Movement
- Mini-Stories & Action stories
- Thinking Skills Activities
- Role-play & Drama
- Art& Craft activities
- Games
- Parental Involvement

### **STAGES AND TIMINGS (1<sup>st</sup> Day – 40 minutes totally)**

**Remember the last class (Revision (10 minutes)**

### **STAGE 1: Introduction & Action Game (Shake)**

**Target Language:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Length of Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** a set of flashcards about body parts

**Objectives:** to listen attentively and understanding instructions and target vocabulary  
to sing and/or do the actions to simple songs in English  
to practice the target vocabulary through an action game

**Activity:** The class sits in a semi-circle. Introduce the body parts vocabulary through flashcards. Say rhythmically “It is a foot” by showing one of your foot and say “They are feet” by showing both of them. Then ask “Where is your foot?” and children show their feet. Say “Stomp your feet” Introduce all the body parts by demonstrating and moving. Teacher says the lines below rhythmically for each body parts.

It is a head. It is a hand. It is a foot.

**Extension idea:** After ensuring everyone know the target vocabulary; they stand up around the circle. Practice the target vocabulary through some physical activities. First say “Breath in, breath in, breath in. Breath out!”. Say “Shake your arm! Shake, shake, shake!” and everybody shake their arms. Say “Shake your foot! Shake, shake, shake!” and everybody shake their foot. They shake their tummy and bottom to make it funny. Thus children meet with the new target words in a natural funny way through some physical actions.

## **STAGE 2: Song about Body Parts (The Hokey Pokey Shake)**

**Target Language:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Length of Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** music, CD player or computer

**Objectives:** to listen attentively and understanding instructions and target vocabulary  
to practice target vocabulary through songs  
to sing and/or do the actions to simple songs in English

**Activity:** Sing the song by doing the actions in the classroom. Repeat the songs several times with the children. They can join in with the actions or words. As soon as children learn the words and relevant actions, sing it faster and faster to make it challenging. In post-listening stage, repeat the same part by changing the body parts only to practice the

target vocabulary, “You put one hand in, you put one hand out, you put two feet in, you put your hair in, you put your ear in” Thus children practice the numbers in relation to body parts.

**Extension idea:** If you have space enough in your class, you can make a big circle with children. Sing the song by doing its actions. After doing this dance several times, you can perform dance show to your parents at the end of the term.

**Assessment:** The English hours in every day are assessed with “Daily English Note”



. Children are asked “Do you like English hours today?” (by showing a big happy face, sad face or neutral face) at the end of each lesson and their reactions, gestures and reflections in L2 or L1 are used in order to get an idea about the daily English hours with the help of children’s feedback.

### **STAGES AND TIMINGS (2<sup>nd</sup> Day – 40 minutes totally)**

#### **Remember the last class (Revision) (5 minutes)**

#### **STAGE 1: Story (A child is a child)**

**Target Language:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Length of Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Story book

**Objectives:**

- to listen attentively and understanding the main points in a spoken story.
- to practice asking and answering questions
- to listen and respond to simple stories
- to review of the target vocabulary

**Activity:** In pre-reading stage, all the students and teacher are seated in a semi-circle in the class with the help of “storytelling song”. Start to sing the song which children are familiar with to attract their attention to the story time. Then practice target vocabulary and structures in a plot and pre-teach the unknown words before stating to read the story. Then read the story from the big colorful designed book by showing them in turn.

Use her body language and gestures to make the meaning clear. Read the story book about animals. While reading the story, pause to read to be able engage a child in conversations by asking closed questions such as, “What color is this?” “Which body part is it?” Use some techniques to elicit children's active involvement to the story such as using her/his voice and varying the pitch and pace of reading, reading with expression, asking short simple questions, using some visuals like realia or flashcards to make the meaning clear, highlighting some things from the book like child's facial expressions. Thus, the child practices the target words and phrases by engaging with the story, becoming motivated, gaining interest as well as confidence. In the post reading stage, help children revise the target vocabulary and sentences with role plays.

**Extension idea:** Color the children body parts with suitable colors mentioned in the story and children practice the questions and answers in groups as dialogues.

## **STAGE 2: Drama & Role-play (about story)**

**Target Language:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Materials:** worksheet including the pictures about the story (above)

**Length of Time:** 15 minutes

**Objectives:** to listen attentively and understanding instructions and target vocabulary  
 to practice key words in a guessing game  
 to revise and consolidate target vocabulary  
 to develop and perform simple role-plays

**Activity:** Show small papers in different colors and ask children “What color is it?” After they remember the name of the colors, read the story quickly one more time. Then, you behave children as if they were a baby. Take some of them in her arms like a baby. Children pretend they are a baby. Some of them crawl on the floor, some of them cry, some of them try to walk like a baby. They act out the story in English. Stick white paper or sticker to one of the children’s hand (like in the story) and ask “Oh no! What happened to your hands?” by showing and fondling her/his hands. The child tries to answer like in the story “Nothing! I am a child. I played with yogurt.” This continues

until all children become a baby and answer to the teacher. Thus, they practice body parts in relation colors through role-play.

**Extension idea:** Children are asked to attach some colorful papers on your some body parts in order and they practice the question part by asking “Oh no! What happened to your hands?” and you answer as if you were a baby.

**Assessment:** The English hours in every day are assessed with “Daily English Note”



. Children are asked “Do you like English hours today?” (by showing a big happy face, sad face or neutral face) at the end of each lesson and their reactions, gestures and reflections in L2 or L1 are used in order to get an idea about the daily English hours with the help of children’s feedback.

### **STAGES AND TIMINGS (3<sup>rd</sup> Day – 40 minutes totally)**

#### **Remember the last class (Revision) (5 minutes)**

#### **STAGE 1: Thinking Skills Activity (Sequencing)**

**Target Language:** eye, foot, head, ear, nose, hand, hair, mouth

**Materials:** worksheet including the pictures about the story (above)

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Objectives:** to practice the target vocabulary through thinking skills activity  
to practice key words, phrases and sentences by putting the series of pictures into correct order

**Activity:** Put the four pictures for the story on the board in random order. Give the children time to look at the pictures. Encourage them to say what they see by asking “What can you see in this picture?”, “That’s right! It is blue” “What else?”, “Are they friend?” When the children comment on the pictures using their own language, scaffold their language by repeating what they have said in English and commenting on it. When children run out of things to say, ask “What is the order?” Ask children to put the pictures in a sequence. Thus, children practice target vocabulary, phrase and sentences through sequencing the story.

**Extension idea:** As well as doing this activity together as a whole class, you can do it in pairs and groups with small papers related to the story.

**General review of the week (storytelling, songs, games) 20 minutes**

**Assessment:** The English hours in every day are assessed with “Daily English Note”



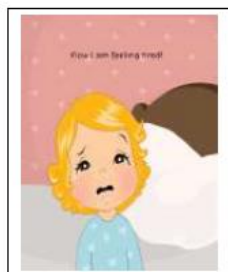
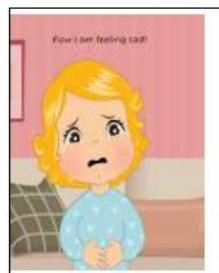
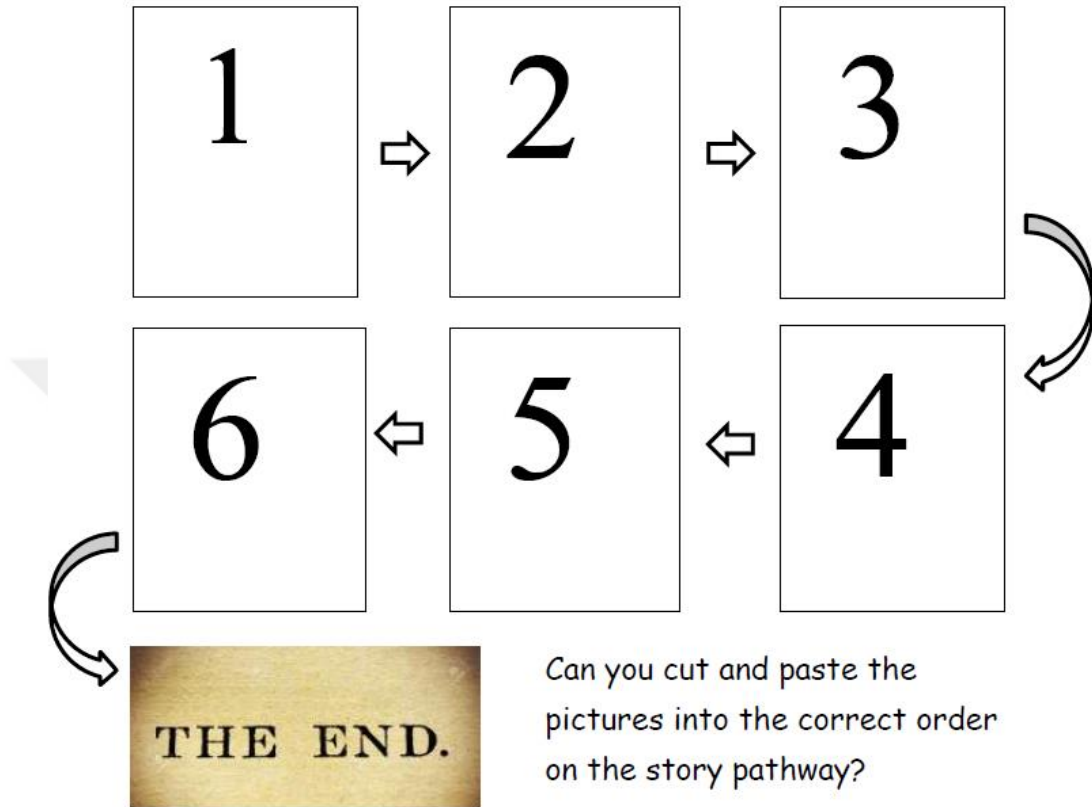
. Children are asked “Do you like English hours today?” (by showing a big happy face, sad face or neutral face) at the end of each lesson and their reactions, gestures and reflections in L2 or L1 are used in order to get an idea about the daily English hours with the help of children’s feedback.



## APPENDIX 9: Samples for Thinking Skills Activity

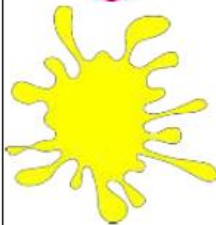
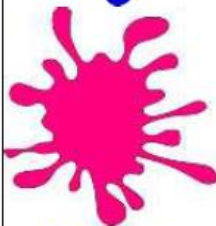
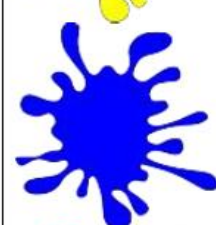
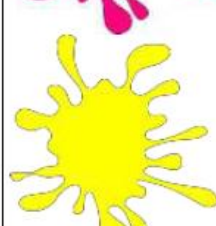
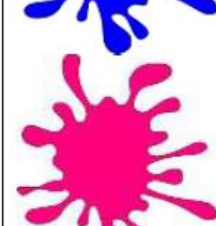
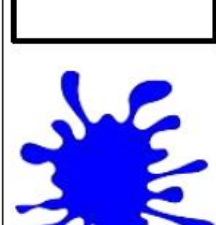
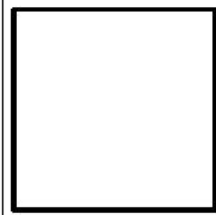
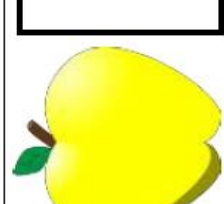
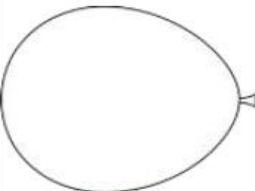
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of the Book: **HAPPINESS!**



Name: .....

**What Comes Next? (Color Patterns)**  
Complete the pattern by drawing and coloring the picture in the box.

|                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                      |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |    |     |     |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## APPENDIX 10: A Sample Parental Involvement Paper

15.02.2019

### ÖNERİLER

#### Faydalı linkler

<https://www.eslgamesplus.com/colors-vocabulary-esl-interactive-board-game/>

<https://www.eslgamesplus.com/colors/>

<https://www.mes-games.com/colors.php>

<https://www.mes-games.com/>

<https://learnenglishidb.britishcouncil.org/word-games/colours>

<https://www.eslgamesworld.com/members/games/vocabulary/memoryaudio/colours/index.html>

#### Evde oyun önerileri

1. Sırayla eşyaların renklerini sorup puan toplamaya çalışma (what color is the jacket? It is blue)
2. Doğadan farklı renkteki yaprak, ot, çalı, ağaç kabuğu ve meyve toplayıp evde kâğıda yapıştirarak birlikte sanat etkinliği yapabilirsiniz.
3. Farklı renkleri kullanarak parmak baskısı yapıp İngilizce sohbet edebilirsiniz.
4. Ailecek İngilizce şarkı yarışması yaparak keyifli bir şekilde öğrendiği kelimeleri ve şarkıları tekrar edebilirsiniz.

## COLORS

Değerli Velimiz,

Çocuklarımızın erken yaşta ikinci bir dili öğrenmesi ile iki dil konuşulan bir ortamda büyüyerek iki dil edinmesi bambaşka şeylerdir. Dil edinme çoğu zaman eğitime gerek kalmadan, hızlı ve zahmetsizce olur fakat yabancı dil öğrenimi iradidir, çevreden (anne-baba, öğretmen, kardeş, yabancı bakıcı, komşu, akraba) destek ister ve aktif gayret gerektirir. Öğrenme sürecinde öncelikli amaç, çocuklara bu dili ana dil yetkinliğinde öğretmek değil, farklı dillerin ve kültürlerin farkına varılmasını sağlamak, hedef dilde temel konular ile ilgili bir altyapı oluşturmak ve o dili sevmelerini sağlamaktır.

Çocuklarımızın İngilizceyi ebeveynin istediği düzeyde konuşmıyor olması çok normaldir. Ne kadar girdi olursa, dili kullanmaları o ölçüde kolaylaşır, bu sebeple okulda verilen İngilizce eğitimi, diğer yaşam alanlarında desteklenmelidir. Tek bir kelime İngilizce bilmeden dahi, iyi bir motivasyon/takip sağlayarak evde bu sorumluluk yerine getirilebilir.

Burcu Güngör

### RENKLER KONUSUNDA NELER YAPTIK?

Hedef kelime ve dil yapılarını, "Fısılda & Bağı" oyunu ve sınıfta "Renk avı" oyunu ile minik öğrencilerimize tanıttıktan sonra hep birlikte *flaş kartlar* yardımı ile ve gösterip yapırma yöntemi ile doğru telaffuz üzerine çalıştık.

Sınıfta "Colors dance" şarkısını söyleyerek, şarkıya uygun olan hareketleri yaparak, dans ederek renkleri ve kıyafetleri öğrendik. "Happiness!" adlı İngilizce *hikâye kitabını* okuyup, basit *canlandırmalar* yaparak hedef kelime ve dil yapılarını cümle içinde tekrar ettik.

*Düşünme becerileri etkinliği* olarak renkli boyama kaleminden oluşan 5 farklı örüntüyü çizerek tanımladık ve sonra örüntüleri sırayla İngilizce olarak tekrar ederek hedef kelimeleri etkinlik içerisinde kullandık. Daha sonra müzik eşliğinde "Traffic lights" hareketli oyunu ile "Hunt the colors" adlı hafıza oyunu oynayarak hedef kelimelere yönelik alıcı dil ve ifade edici dil becerilerimizi geliştirdik.

"My clown" adlı sanat etkinliği ile kendi palyaçolarımızı çizip renklendirdik. Daha sonra arkadaşlarımızı ortaya çıkan ürünleri İngilizce olarak tanıtarak renkleri, sayıları ve belirli dil yapılarını iyice öğrenmiş olduk.

## APPENDIX 11: Approval from Department for Research, Development and Projects in Ministry of National Education



T.C.  
**İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ**  
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 59090411-20-E.22036545  
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzin Talebi

19/11/2018

### VALİLİK MAKAMINA

- İlgi: a) Marmara Üniversitesinin 31.10.2018 tarih ve 1800298949 sayılı yazısı.  
b) MEB. Yen. ve Eğ. Tk. Gn. Md. 22.08.2017 tarih ve 12607291/ 2017/25 No'lu Gen.  
c) Millî Eğitim Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 08.11.2018 tarihli tutanağı.

Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü doktora programı öğrencisi Burcu GÜNGÖR'ün "**5-6 Yaş Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocuklarına Yönelik Hazırlanan İngilizce Eğitimi Programının Etkisinin İncelenmesi**" konulu tezi kapsamında, ilimiz Beşiktaş Nimetullah Mahruki İlkokulunda öğrenim gören okul öncesi öğrencilerine; İngilizce resimli kelime testi ve İngilizce alternatif değerlendirme formunu uygulama istemi hakkındaki ilgi (a) yazı ve ekleri Müdürlüğümüzce incelenmiştir.

Araştırmacının söz konusu talebi; bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, uygulama sırasında bir örneği müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarımıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun müdürlüğümüzden izin alınmadan kamuoyuyla paylaşılması koşuluyla, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ilgi (b) Bakanlık emri esasları dâhilinde uygulanması, sonuçtan Müdürlüğümüze rapor halinde (CD formatında) bilgi verilmesi kaydıyla Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Levent YAZICI  
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

- Ek:  
1- Genelge.  
2- Komisyon Tutanağı.

OLUR  
19/11/2018

Ahmet Hamdi USTA  
Vali a.  
Vali Yardımcısı





### APPENDIX 13: Informed Consent Form for Parents

Değerli Anne-Babalar,

Marmara Üniversitesi Atatürk Eğitim Fakültesi Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği Bölüm'ünde doktora öğrencisi olarak danışman hocam Prof. Dr. Alev Önder ile birlikte "Erken Yaşta Yabancı Dil Eğitimi" üzerine çalışmaktayız. Bu araştırma kapsamında okul öncesi dönem çocukları için hazırlayacağımız İngilizce Eğitimi Programı'nın yeterliliğini ve etkisini ölçebilmek için İngilizce Resimli Kelime Testi ve Alternatif Değerlendirme Formu geliştirilmiştir. Türkiye'deki Okul Öncesi İngilizce Eğitim Programı esas alarak hazırlanan bu test, okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının İngilizce alıcı ve ifade edici kelime bilgilerini ölçmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Toplamda 2 bölümden oluşan bu test, yaklaşık 20 dakikada yanıtlanabilmektedir. Bu ölçme araçlarının geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik çalışmasını yapabilmek için, İngilizce eğitimi veren bir anaokuluna devam eden 5-6 yaş grubu çocuklara ihtiyaç duymaktayız.

Çocuklarınızın bu çalışmaya katılmasına izin verdiğiniz takdirde, testin birinci bölümünde çocuklarınızdan her bir kartta yer alan resmi adlandırmasını isteyeceğiz, ikinci bölümde ise söylenen kelimeyi kartın üzerindeki dört resim arasından seçip göstermesini isteyeceğiz. Bununla birlikte, "alternatif değerlendirme" ile çocuklarınızın belirli konularda yabancı dil bilgi ve becerilerini önceden hazırlanmış oyun, drama, dans ve müzikler aracılığı ile doğal öğrenme ortamları olan sınıflarında gözlemlenerek değerlendirilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Çocukların verdiği cevapları kayıt formunda yazılı olarak toplayacağız.

Çocuğunuzdan alacağımız cevaplar tamamen gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilecek bilgiler sadece bilimsel amaçla kullanılacak, çocuğunuzun ismi ve kimlik bilgileri, hiçbir şekilde kimseyle paylaşılmayacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Burcu Güngör ile (e-posta: burcugungor02@gmail.com) ve Prof. Dr. Alev Önder (e-posta: aonder@marmara.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

***Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve çocuğumun bu çalışmada yer almasını onaylıyorum***  
(Lütfen alttaki iki seçenekten birini işaretleyiniz.)

***Evet onaylıyorum***\_\_\_\_\_

***Hayır, onaylamıyorum***\_\_\_\_\_

Annenin adı-soyadı: \_\_\_\_\_

Çocuğun adı soyadı ve doğum tarihi: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 14: Ethics Committee Approval



T.C

MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ARAŞTIRMA ETİK KURULU

Sayı:2019-12Tarih: 08.09.2019

PROJENİN ADI: "The Effects of An English Language Program for 5-6 Years Old Preschoolers (5-6 Yaş Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocuklarına Yönelik Hazırlanan İngilizce Eğitimi Programının Etkisinin İncelenmesi)"

PROJE YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ: Burcu Güngör

PROJEDEKİ ARAŞTIRICILAR:

ONAY TARİHİ VE ONAY SAYISI: 2019-01/03

Sayın: Burcu Güngör

2019-3/5 Protokol Nolu

"The Effects of An English Language Program for 5-6 Years Old Preschoolers (5-6 Yaş Okul Öncesi Dönem Çocuklarına Yönelik Hazırlanan İngilizce Eğitimi Programının Etkisinin İncelenmesi)" isimli projeniz Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Etik Kurulu tarafından incelenmiş ve etik yönden uygunluğuna karar verilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. İsmail Taşpınar

Kurul Başkanı

Prof.Dr. Bihterin Dinçkol

ÜYE

Prof.Dr. Kemal Yıldız

ÜYE

Prof.Dr. Nurhan Zeynep Tosun

ÜYE

Prof.Dr.Kemalettin KÖROĞLU

ÜYE

Prof.Dr. İnci Deniz Ilgın

ÜYE

Prof.Dr.A.Mete ÇİNGİRTÜRK

ÜYE

Prof.Dr. Fatma Ayanoglu

ÜYE

Prof.Dr. Halil Ekşi

ÜYE