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**THE ATTITUDES OF VERY YOUNG LEARNERS TOWARDS THE USE OF
GAMES IN LANGUAGE CLASSES**

THESIS BY

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MASTER OF ARTS

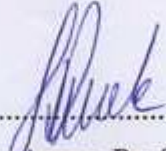
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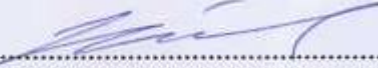
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ÖZET

DİL SINIFLARINDA OKUL ÖNCESİ ÇOCUKLARIN OYUN YOLU İLE ÖĞRENMEYE TUTUMLARI

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Bu çalışmanın amacı okul öncesi çocuklara İngilizce öğretmede oyunların etkilerini araştırmak ve bu çocukların kelime öğrenmede oyunlara gösterdikleri tutumların analizini yapmaktır. Dil öğrenmek farklı aşamalar, konular ve yöntemler gerektiren bir algılama sürecidir. Bugün dünyadaki çocukların çoğuna çok erken yaşlardan itibaren yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretilmektedir. Türkiye yabancı dil olarak en çok İngilizce'nin öğretildiği ülkelerden biridir. Bu çocuklara İngilizce öğretmenin en iyi yollarını bulmak için birçok çalışma ve araştırmalar bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma beş yaşında yirmi çocuğun bulunduğu bir anasınıfında yürütülmüştür. Bu konudaki çalışmalarda analiz yapmanın dışında, bu incelemede temel yöntem, gözlemlemeyi ve her ders sonunda mülakatları kapsayan çoğunlukla görsel ve hareketselliğe dayanır. Gözlenen grup altı hafta boyunca haftada üç defa çalışılan yirmi kişilik çocuklardan oluşmuştur. İngilizce dersleri kırk dakika sürmüştür. Derslerin sonunda çocuklar ders boyunca oynadıkları oyunlarla öğrendikleri kelimeler için mülakata alınmışlardır. Oyunların türü kelime öğrenmede oyunların etkililiğini ortaya koyan beş yaş çocuklarından oluşan kelime sınıflarında gözlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oyun, Okul Öncesi Çocuklar, Tutum, Sözcük

ABSTRACT

THE ATTITUDES OF VERY YOUNG LEARNERS TOWARDS THE USE OF GAMES IN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of games on teaching English vocabulary to very young learners and to analyze the attitudes of these learners towards games in vocabulary teaching. Learning a language is a cognitive process which requires different steps, tasks and methods. Today, most of the children worldwide are taught English as their foreign language from very early ages. Turkey is one of the countries in which English is the most taught foreign language. There have been several researches and studies to understand the best ways of teaching English to very young learners. This study is carried out in a kindergarten environment with twenty, five year old children. Besides analysing the studies on this subject, the basic method of this study is mostly visual and verbal which includes observation and interviews at the end of each lesson. The observation group is consisted of twenty children who were observed three times a week for six weeks. Their English lessons lasted forty minutes. At the end of the classes, they were interviewed about the vocabulary they learnt and the games they played during the lessons. A variety of games was observed in the vocabulary classes for five year old children who proved the effectiveness of the games for vocabulary teaching.

Key words: Game, Very Young English Learners, Attitude, Vocabulary

ABBREVIATIONS

L2 : Second Language

ESL : English as a Second Language

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a language starts from birth. People learn their mother languages first from their parents and environment and then from the school. It is almost impossible for someone to forget their mother language since they learn it by living. The key point of learning a language is to learn the words. Without learning vocabulary well, grammar rules do not work alone. "A number of effective teaching techniques are used to stimulate beginners' interest. Using games in classroom can support English learning in many perspective" (Chirandon, 2010, p. 2). Vocabulary teaching is a hard task to do for the very young learner groups. "What is common in all these description is the fact that games involve many factors such as employing rules, fostering cooperation while making learning fun. One can simply say that games are enjoyable. However, in addition to being enjoyable, games refer to rules to be followed pointing at a serious instructional planning and delivery process" (Arıkan & Yolageldili, 2012, p. 220). There are a lot of beneficial methods. It is observed and understood from other studies that when the learner group is aged five, use of games is almost the only way to teach English vocabulary. The main reason is that almost all these very young learners do not know how to read or write. The life is a kind of game for this age group. Games are what they like most. When a teacher uses something which her/his learners love; she/he teaches the best. It means that games are the best and funniest ways for these very young vocabulary learners to make them memorize and remember English vocabulary. This study has two aims. The first one is to show how affective verbal and audio-visual techniques are on teaching vocabulary. "The presentation of new vocabulary can be classified for example according to verbal and visual techniques. Among visual techniques we can find pictures- flashcards, photographs and magazine pictures, wall charts, posters, blackboard

drawings, word pictures, several realia that teachers can hold up or point to“ (Pribilova, 2006, p. 19). The types of different games are stated to see the differences among them. The other aim of this study is to analyze the attitudes of very young vocabulary learners towards games.

1.1. Background of the Study

The importance of vocabulary teaching and its methods have recently been understood better because teaching to pre school English learners is almost a new concept in Turkey. It is a developing area which needs researches and analyzes to find out the best ways to teach English to very young learners. “Vocabulary teaching and learning is a constant challenge for teachers as well as students because historically there has been minimal focus on vocabulary instruction in the ESL classroom. Due to this, an increased emphasis on vocabulary development is crucial for the English language learner in the process of language learning” (Mukoroli, 2011, p. 1).

Pre school English teaching is a processing new area, day by day new understandings and methods have been found. The importance of vocabulary teaching has been well comprehended by the teachers of such courses in Turkey. As Alhaisoni (2012, p.116) states below, language learning is a living process from old times. Although language learning dates back to millions of years ago, as the world develops, day by day new methods have appeared.

“Language learning strategies have been used for thousands of years, although researchers have formally discovered and named them only recently. For example, there are well-known examples of mnemonic or memory devices used in ancient times by storytellers to help them remember their lines” (Alhaisoni, 2012, p. 116). Mnemonic or memory devices helped storytellers to memorize their story lines in the old days, today, the same or other certain devices can also help very young vocabulary learners and remember the words and sentence patterns. Teachers are the guides to define and find these devices and to teach how to

use them. Very young vocabulary learners need a perfect guide to learn what these devices are to pave the way for a good memorization of English vocabulary. Teachers and parents are the mentors to understand and analyze the attitudes of the children towards language learning devices and methods. They should keep in mind that the most effective device is seen to be games for very young English vocabulary learners although there are different techniques in vocabulary teaching.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Some techniques, methods and learning devices can help foreign language learners very much. They can increase their learning capacity and speed. With the help of such tools, both mother language and a foreign language need a process to be fully learnt. They can not be learnt in a very short period. This understanding has become very widespread lately and this is why parents are more willing to send their children to language courses nowadays. Learning a foreign language becomes easier if one starts at very early ages. This does not mean that one needs to be very young to learn a foreign language but it is better to start as soon as possible. The reason behind this fact is probably that the children are like empty cups to be filled. They are ready and willing to begin learning new things. It is a known fact that beginning to learn English at very early ages is not enough. It must be considered while teaching to very young English learners that it is very helpful to know where to start, especially for the teachers. They need to understand the attitudes of the children towards vocabulary content and teaching methods.

Determining the starting point is mainly the teachers' responsibility. When teaching a foreign language, one must know that there are some defined branches such as vocabulary and grammar. They are also divided into different subjects in themselves. The starter point of English learning may differ from one learner group to another. As studies and observations have proved, vocabulary should be the first step to teach a foreign language to very young

English learners to get the best results. Both the choice of content and methods are very important for teaching very young English learners. Some certain contents and techniques should be determined before beginning to teach. Previous techniques, like grammar translation methods, have disadvantages for pre school English learners group because they mostly do not know how to read and write. They are interested in learning via communication and games more than learning how to read and write in English. Their attitudes towards teaching methods should be taken into account. Before learning how to read and write in their mother languages, it is hard for them to learn how to write and spell English words. Grammar rules such as tenses and verbs are hard for them to memorize. Teaching vocabulary is now seen to be the first step for this age group. It is clearly seen in the observation made for this study that very young learners voluntarily taken part in vocabulary teaching, especially through games.

The findings to prove games being the best vocabulary teaching method to very young English learners are gathered from the observation made for this study. The results are derived from the attitudes of the children towards different teaching methods in the use of vocabulary teaching. These findings are also helpful to compare the game types to find out which one(s) is/are the most effective and advantageous. The kids observed for this research are aged five. Through the observations, it was monitored that the learning style changes from one child to another. Their attitudes change towards different teaching methods. Even though there is such a clear difference, there is a common fact about these kids who do not exactly know how to read and write. They easily lose their attention during the classes, especially if the activities are not enjoyable enough. They can easily learn but they can also forget. When a learner, whether he/she is five or more, does not know how to read or write, he/she mostly depends on the visual, verbal, auditory and kinaesthetic learning methods although writing and reading can be classified under visual, verbal and/or auditory methods. Even if they know

how to read and write, it is generally not interesting and funny at all to write and read while learning something in a new language, especially when the written and spoken types of the language are different. At this age, as observed from the attitudes and responses and understood from the previous studies, kids are mostly visual, verbal, kinaesthetic and auditory learners. They need to see, hear and pronounce the words and put it into action to learn words. Teachers have to communicate with the children and they also need to make them participate in the activities.

1.3. Aim of the Study

Since not only to teach the nineteen words but also to provide the students to memorise and remember them was targeted, the objectives of the study became more important to be defined.

- I. To define and analyse the target foreign language learners; five-year old pre school children and their attitudes towards teaching vocabulary methods.
- II. To evaluate how effective the games are in vocabulary teaching to very young learners and to investigate their attitudes towards games.

1.4. Research Questions

According to this study conducted with the twenty students, the following research questions need to be answered to constitute the basis of the study:

- I. What are the attitudes of students towards games in the use of vocabulary?
- II. What is the role of games in learning vocabulary to motivate the students?

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Why teaching English vocabulary to pre school learners

To understand the reason why teaching English vocabulary to very young learners is important, choosing true content and methods for vocabulary teaching should be studied in details. What a teacher of very young vocabulary learners should do is also crucial while teaching vocabulary to pre school learners.

2.1.1. Importance of vocabulary

The importance of English teaching in general should be stated before emphasizing the importance of vocabulary teaching. It is known the fact that English has become the most widespread language around the world, in spite of the fact that there are also other foreign language courses for pre school kids such as German and French. However, these are very few in number while the English courses for kindergarten children enormously outnumber. “With the introduction of communicative language teaching, English language teaching and learning has become much more demanding for teachers and learners just like any other innovation poses challenges for its users” (Yolageldili & Arıkan, 2011, p. 1). The main reason is that English is the most common spoken and written language around the world. Most of the countries use English as the common language. Learning English is a must because it is taught in schools since 4th grade as compulsory and it is even asked in high school and/or university entrance exams. In business life, English acquaintance is not an asset anymore to find a job even in Turkey.

“During the last couple of decades the world has been concerned with cultural, social, political and technological changes. In order to keep up with these changes, people have had

to meet the needs created by all these changes. Language learning is one of the most important needs and it has become an essential component in people's lives. Because of numerous reasons such as studying at an English medium university or living in a foreign country, people all over the world are trying to learn a second, even a third language” (Kafipour, Shokrpour & Yazdi, 2011, p. 305).

It is clear that English is the most common language throughout the world and this is important for all countries. Especially it is urgent that our country do this immediately as young people are really suffering from lack of English. Parents want their children to learn English from very early ages because they want their children to be one step forward than others. As education system is an industry itself, it depends on the well known supply and demand chain. Teaching English has been a profession for years, and when today's world conditions are taken into account, it has also become an important branch for pre school kids. Years ago, it was decided to put English language classes in the primary school for 4th grade, children in Turkey, which meant that children would learn English till the end of high school. When the law was implemented, the variations in schools in our country were not taken into consideration. Because the education system differs from one school to another, there are still some troubles.

English vocabulary teaching is one of the most important parts of English teaching and it is better to start vocabulary learning at very early ages since the earlier one begins to learn earlier, the easier it becomes to understand and memorize the words. To explain the reason why and with which methods the pre-school kids should be taught English vocabulary first as foreign language learners, it will be beneficial to explain what vocabulary is. According to the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (1989: 1629), “the vocabulary of a language is the total number of words in it” and “someone's vocabulary is the total number of words in a

language that he or she knows” Michael Wallace calls “content words” as opposed to “structure words”, which include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs derived from adjectives. According to the author, structure words are almost deprived of meaning when considered in isolation and, therefore, should be considered as part of the grammar of a language” [Wallace 1998: 18] (Campillo, pp. 35 - 49).

Vocabulary is the heart of a language, whether it is English or any other language. A vocabulary consists of words in general. It can be defined as the dictionary of a language which includes words, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. The other part of a language is constructed by rules. Although they are inseparable parts of a language, without a well endowed vocabulary, grammar rules may not work properly. This is not the actual reason of teaching pre school students the vocabulary. The main reason is that they are too young to be interested in rules. They even have not met with the school rules yet. To make English learning funnier and easier, vocabulary teaching must be preferred first for very young learners.

Before questioning the reasons why to teach vocabulary to pre school learners as the first step, it should be first explained why to teach English to them at such an early age. It is a general fact that learning a language takes time and it is a process rather than a one day activity. The process mentioned here depends on the purpose of language learning. When it is a foreign language, it may seem hard for the learners first because of the fact that till the day they come across with a new language, the learners have already constructed a language concept in their lives and minds; with their mother languages. When the purpose is just to learn a foreign language for simple needs or for a short travel, the process might . might become shorter. To become fully equipped with a language, one needs to take his/her time because of the fact that first reaction against a foreign language is to create links with the

mother language. To make a full connection and then to start thinking in a foreign language, a certain time of period is important.

Through this learning period, learners might like or dislike learning a foreign language. It generally depends on whether they have verbal intelligence or not but this is not the only reason determining likes and dislikes for language learning. Especially for little language learners, teachers have really important roles to make them like the learning process. One of the most important reasons why to start English teaching so early is to make the learners like learning a foreign language. “To account for two aspects of word learning we have so far invoked two apparently contradictory notions: On the one hand, shared mental structure in child learner and adult tutor is said to facilitate learning because under these circumstances their conversational interactions can refer to the same reality. On the other hand, differences in conceptual structure have often been suggested as the explanation of mismatches between which words are most frequently heard and which of these are first learned by the very young child” (Gilette et al., 1998, p. 4). Both content and learning activities are very important because if a learner finds the first lessons very hard and/or boring, it is highly possible that his/her attention will be easily lost and he/she will not want to go on learning a foreign language. Funny and easy to learn lessons are very motivating for little children. The reason why to choose games for very young English vocabulary learners lies there; to carry out funny and attractive classes to make them love language learning. Teachers play very important role because they are the ones who choose and determines the content and methods during the English classes. This is the reason why we mostly remember our first teachers because they make us like or dislike the topic.

While deciding teaching English, it must be kept in mind that language consists of different parts. When teaching a new language, to know where to start helps both teachers and

learners. Languages have two main parts which are the vocabulary and grammar rules. Certainly there are other classifications such as grammar, listening, writing, speaking and reading. To have fully command of a language, one needs to have good vocabulary knowledge. Since there are different parts in a language, there should be different methods. The main variable of these methods is also the age group of the learners. When the age group is consisting of adults, teaching English as a foreign language might become harder because of the fact that these learners mostly have other problems to handle such as jobs, households, relationships and family matter. Their minds are usually full of lots of things. Teachers of this age group should implement other methods than the teachers of pre school learners. The content of this vocabulary teaching may change from one learner group to another. The vocabulary learners at the age of five have rather free minds than adult learners. They can easily learn new words in English. There is another fact that they can also forget the new words. English teachers of these very young vocabulary learners must be careful about their choices of both the vocabulary content and teaching methods. After choosing proper words, in other words true content according to learner group, true methods should be chosen.

2.1.2. Choosing true content and methods for vocabulary teaching

Vocabulary is the most important part of a language. Each context has its own special. Each age group has their own vocabulary in their mother languages. Because of the fact that the learners of a foreign language mostly tend to connect the words in their mother language with the new foreign language words, the mother-language vocabulary of the learner group should be recognized well before teaching a foreign language. The teacher should approach the pre school vocabulary learners with this understanding. Pre school kids do not have a large word capacity in their own language, they do not have the capacity to learn too many words in a foreign language. They need to make links between their mother and foreign

languages. A foreign language learner, as a beginner, no matter how old he/she is, makes a connection with the words in his/her mother language. It makes them to learn and memorize the words in a foreign language easily. This is why the teachers of foreign language courses generally use both languages at first while teaching new stuff. Each age group has their own tendencies and concerns about the words they learn. Their imaginations, likes, dislikes, attentions and daily lives play crucial roles for the words they learn, use and remember. The more a learner uses a new word in his/her life, the more likely they memorize this word. This is same with very young vocabulary learners. The special context they are familiar with and their daily life word usage must be taken into account while trying to teach them new words in English. “It will be the job of the teacher then to create the learning conditions so that the learner can acquire some or all of these different types of knowledge of the target vocabulary to be learnt according to the students’ needs” (Campillo, p. 38). The learning condition here means the teaching environment and content of the lessons. Knowledge and awareness play really important role for vocabulary learning. As Campillo states, it is teacher’s role to find out the “context” and needs of the learners to know where to start foreign language vocabulary teaching. It will also help teachers to find out the most effective teaching methods.

Vocabulary learning is the first step of learning a new language. When a person starts learning a language, she/he starts with learning new words instead of full sentences. People add new words to the vocabulary of themselves. New words should be learnt in the foreign. One must be careful about the content of vocabulary both to learn and teach to get successful results. The learners of a foreign language tend to connect their vocabulary in their mother language with the vocabulary in their foreign language.

“Even in our native language we are continually learning new words and meanings of old words. Some words can be entirely new to us. We come across completely new words that

are made up according to new technologies and according to the needs of real life. Learners of a foreign language experience something similar” (Přibilová, 2006).

In their native and foreign languages, people learn new words according to the new contexts and new technologies they meet. This makes the need of learning vocabulary a never ending process. It is better to start teaching English vocabulary to the learners as earliest as possible. Vocabulary teaching should come before teaching the grammar rules in an English learning process. Grammar rules should be taught as earlier as possible but vocabulary should be the first step in English teaching. Lack of a well structured vocabulary, it would be too hard to understand and memorize the grammar rules. Vocabulary learning will make the grammar rules easier to be understood. After knowing what bird and fly mean, it will be very easy to understand that “can”, as a modal verb, which means capability and ability. A good vocabulary helps the learners to understand grammar rules more easily. This is one of the most important reasons why vocabulary learning should be considered as a crucial and first step of language learning. At this first step of language learning, the choice of content is very important. If one learns the words which he is not familiar with in his mother language, it becomes very hard for them to learn and memorize these new words. This is mostly the result of the need to make connections between mother and foreign languages.

Language is a developing field. It refreshes itself through years. Grammar rules do not change as much as the words. Every day, new words or new versions of appear. It becomes very important to teach English vocabulary to pre-school children to prepare them to learn English with full capacity. The importance of teaching words as a first step to the pre-school kids is being understood more and more day by day. The first, and also the main part of teaching English to pre-school kids should vocabulary owing to the fact that “Noun learning is superior to verb learning in the earliest moments of child language development” (Gilette et

al. 1998). First important part of teaching a foreign language to very young learners is teaching the words. It is same with the mother language since parents first teach their children how to say “Mum” or “Dad” instead of saying “Mum comes” or “Daddy loves me”. The importance of vocabulary teaching to pre school students is recently understood because there were not so many English courses for pre-school children in Turkey. By experience, its importance has become clearer. All these experiences and such an understanding are not enough because of the fact that this is a field which needs further researches to see what to teach in vocabulary first and also to find out the true methods.

The increase in the number of English courses in Turkey brings out some results such as the need of good teachers and the need of good researches for new programs and curriculums. English courses are generally classified according to age groups for children and knowledge level groups for the adults. “Although the view that foreign language teaching should mirror parental ‘teaching’ of the first language may be appropriate with respect to young learners of a foreign language, we hesitate to endorse it in relation to adolescent and adult learners for several reasons” (Canale & Swain, 1980).

The mentor cannot teach the same content with the same methods to every group. Very young children need different vocabulary content and methods while adults need others. This is because of the difference in their attitudes towards foreign language. Reflection of parental approach to language teaching for the little pupils might be very helpful while this would be awkward and ineffective for adolescent and adult learners, as stated by Canale and Swain. Apart from the critics and authorities preparing curriculums and books to guide teachers for their English courses, it is mostly teachers’ role to find out the most efficient content and methods. In content choosing, teachers must know the general characteristics of the target age group to classify the vocabulary parts to be taught. Then, they should learn the

reaction of their students towards teaching tools to know how to teach these vocabulary parts; which means to find true methods.

“For the last twenty years, much research in the field of second language (L2) learning and teaching has shifted from instructional methods to learner characteristics. Along with this new shift in interest, questions about how learners process new information and what kind of strategies they employ to understand, learn, or remember the information have become a primary concern of researchers in second language learning” (Alhaisoni, 2012, p. 115). The characteristics and attitudes of the learners have become very important for deciding true teaching methods. Characteristics means the general mental and knowledge level of the target group in general and also their attitudes. The rule is still same with the vocabulary teaching to pre school pupils. Learning styles may change from one student to other in a teaching environment. This brings out diversity in the teaching methods. Foreign language teachers should be very careful about the general and individual characteristics of their students.

The language teachers should know the mental and linguistic levels of the students. When the age group is five, which means pre school children in Turkey, the learners have already begun learning some words from their mother language although they mostly do not know how to read and write. A teacher of a foreign language must know the mother language of the learners very well to know what to teach. Such a knowledge and awareness bring out the true content and method choices. Without knowing the mother language of the students, it is still possible to teach them a foreign language but it might be some problematic and inefficient especially when the age group is consisted of little children. This does not mean that a teacher should translate the Turkish words into English or the adverse. It is even better to prefer only English in class. To understand the connection they make between their native

language and the new words, a teacher had better know the content of the native language of the students especially when they are pre school pupils.

When content is being chosen, the familiarity of the children with the words should be taken into account because the very young learners can understand a foreign language better when they learn the vocabulary they are familiar with. They can create links between mother and foreign language. Five year old learners are familiar generally with animals, colours, domestic tools and body parts. In Turkey, mother language is Turkish and the children like to create a link between the words in their mother language and in English. Children can easily detect some animals when they are animated with body language. If the teacher teaches the name of this animal together with animation or a game, they can easily associate it with its Turkish equal and memorize it. This example was observed many times in the observation group. As observed, the easiest way to start English vocabulary teaching to this age group is to use the words they are mostly related with animals, body parts and colours. It is an observed and proven fact that vocabulary is the first step of English education to very young learners but when the chosen group is pre-school kids, the teachers should pick the proper words from the whole English vocabulary. In the observation made for this study, such words as colours, animals and body parts were tried to be taught to five year old English vocabulary learners. At the end of the lessons, they were seen to remember almost all the words. This is mostly because of the fact that their teacher knew what to teach from English vocabulary to this group. She seemed to know how to teach it. While deciding the words to be taught and the ways to transfer these words to the children, there are some certain necessities which a teacher needs to learn. A teacher should stay as an enthusiastic student to keep researching and learning new stuff.

2.1.3. What a teacher of very young vocabulary learners should do

To implement the best teaching methods in vocabulary teaching, a teacher must know the attitudes and needs of his target students. When the age group is pre school learners, there is a variety of methods. It is observed that the best choice among all these different vocabulary teaching methods is playing games. Almost all of the pre-school pupils do not know how to read and write. The most important reason is that it is hard to keep their attention. Games are the best solution because they are mostly the funniest parts of the classes for those children. There is a general misunderstanding about games. Some teachers make the mistake of thinking games as the last ten minute activity. Some teachers use games to keep the children busy or some teachers may see games as time-consumer. Games are the quickest and funniest ways for pre-school children to make new vocabulary easy to be memorized. These are general misunderstandings and to abstain from such misunderstandings, teachers should try new techniques and keep on learning new things and do researches to find out the best content and methods.

Vocabulary comes first in foreign language teaching. If a teacher tries to teach them grammar rules, they can easily forget them and they can be bored. They need to know basic and mostly used English words. “In fact, until fairly recently, researchers were divided on the question of whether a foreign language could even be taught directly, as opposed to being acquired through meaningful interactions with other speakers. However, we now are pretty confident that teaching the language directly helps learners learn the language, but learners also need to be in situations where they can use the language for genuine communication” (Goldenberg, 2008).

Use of language in the daily life is very important because communication through the foreign language being learnt accelerates the learning process of new vocabulary and sentence

patterns. The key to make the very young English vocabulary learners memorize the vocabulary is to find out the vocabulary they mostly use in their own mother language such as numbers, colours, animals and some tools and clothes.

Teaching vocabulary is so important. It is the first step to begin English teaching to very young learners. Teachers of these very young vocabulary learners should be aware of that fact. “Vocabulary learning is an important and indispensable part of any language learning process” (Mukoroli, 2011). For very young learners, vocabulary learning is more important and effective than learning the grammar rules first. “The dominant explanation of this phenomenon in the literature invokes differing conceptual requirements for items in these lexical categories: Verbs are cognitively more complex than nouns and so their acquisition must await certain mental developments in the infant” (Gilette et al. 1998).

Grammar rules are complex and detailed constructions while words are easier to be memorized by very young learners. Instead of pushing the kids hard to learn the rules of a foreign language, it is better to start with words. Mental development of a child from infancy is very important. For little kids, verbs might be harder to be learnt than nouns but some simple and mostly used verbs can be taught to children. Some simple sentence patterns and/or some simple, mostly used and necessary imperative sentences such as “open the door” or “sit down” in a class environment.

The importance of the words in a child’s mind is also related with the fact that their worlds are shaped by the words they know. When they begin learning a foreign language, their imagination gets larger and they mostly create links between their previous and new word-constructed worlds. The teachers of these groups should be familiar with these words to find out true content and methods of vocabulary teaching. In the observation group, some children were calling the names of the animals, colours or body parts in English with some

Turkish words. In the third week after when they began to learn the colours, they began to say each others' clothing colours in English. In the fourth week, the names of the colours were repeated and when they are asked some questions in Turkish like "What colour is the sky?" or "What colour is your dress today?" they immediately answered with the correct colour. This also leads another fact that they are stimulated by the new words to learn more. They can easily create links between their daily lives and the words they learn. The linking of these words leads them to be enthusiastic and curious to learn new words in English. It makes vocabulary learning in English easier and attractive for them. They like to learn more and to create connections with these new words. If the word choice of the teacher is not carefully made and if the words are unrelated with their capacity and current word knowledge, it may become harder for them to learn and remember the new English words. If they are taught the grammar rules as the first step, it might become boring for them and they might find it hard to learn.

Teachers of very young English vocabulary learners should be aware of her/his roles. This role is consisted of true approach, true content and method choices. Their main role is to make the children like English lessons. To provide this, they must be aware of their attitudes and characteristics to find out true content and methods in vocabulary teaching. When the age group is pre school learners, teachers should know what these students are capable of and what they like to learn and do. Their attitudes and likings will lead their capacity. Attitudes here define their reactions towards what and how they are learning in English vocabulary. As long as their reactions are positive, their capacity shall increase. Teachers can easily make true content and method choices when they know these attitudes and capacities well. This will help them to make little English learners love this new language. When students love a lesson,

they will be very successful in that lesson easily. So, teachers' role is very important in vocabulary teaching to very young English learners.

2.2. Overview of very young language learners

Learning styles and intelligence types change from one person to another. Learning techniques are not also same in each group. This is same with the very young English vocabulary learners. There is a difference between very young and adult language learners.

Since intelligence types and mental structures are different in each person, language learning also requires a different understanding. Language learning is much related with verbal intelligence. This does not mean that only verbal learners can learn foreign languages. No matter which intelligence type a person has, language learning takes time and effort. Languages can be easily forgotten without rapid and regular studying. The effort mentioned here is up to learners' own characteristics, life styles and learning styles. To define this effort for foreign language learning in general, it can be said that it includes repeating, memorizing and being stick to a studying schedule. This effort becomes easier when one's linguistic development begins as a bilingual person who is exposed to two different language speaking environment from their childhood. "The bilingual literature differentiates between two types of foreign language acquisition. Sequential bilinguals are those that have been exposed to only one language for a few years and then later are exposed to and acquire a second language. Simultaneous bilinguals are those that have been exposed to two languages from birth and acquire both languages at the same time" (Neris, 2007). To provide this bilingualism, the foreign language education should be given children as soon as possible. Pre school education on foreign language brings out the best results. Although a bilingual environment for both English and Turkish languages might not be provided all the time in Turkey, where the spoken and official language is mostly Turkish, it can be provided at least

in English courses from early childhood. It is stated that learning a foreign language needs a good deal of effort. While learners make a real effort, teachers also exert effort to teach their foreign language learners. There is a general understanding about the teachers that they should be patient, good-humoured and understanding; and should approach the students like their mothers or fathers sometimes. A teacher should be a learner who is willing and enthusiastic to find new things to teach and new methods to teach them. These methods should be chosen according to learner group and it is the teacher's role to understand the capacity and characteristics of her/his students. "The concept of developmentally appropriate education raises two issues that concern early childhood teachers. The first is the notion that to teach certain content and skills to young children is dangerous because it amounts to "hurrying" them, which may damage their ability to learn in later years. ...The second issue relates to the notion that a child will manifest his or her current level of literacy development naturally and unambiguously" (Bodrova et al., 1999).

Children should not be hurried into learning something new which they are not ready to learn. This is same with the foreign language learning. The children at the age of five are willing and enthusiastic to learn new words but if they are pushed too hard to the things which they are not mentally ready, the results would be disappointing. The nature, physical, psychological and linguistic development of the age group should be taken into consideration. When this is done, it will be easier to understand their language and worlds.

Different from adults, children have simple but creative and very imaginary worlds. Their word knowledge may be limited but their minds are very free to think very different things and their way of understanding the world is rather different than ours. "The child has his own instincts and tendencies, but we do not know what these mean until we can translate them into their social equivalents" (Ai Chun Yen, 2012). The children have their own

communication ways and a special dictionary constructed especially in family and environment. As emphasized by Chun Yen, they must be well observed to be understood and their language must be well recognized by their listeners; specifically by their teachers to teach them new words of a foreign language. In the observation it was seen that the teacher of the five year old students was highly aware of their own language and what they needed to be stimulated. She knew which words the children were familiar with and then she taught these words with different methods. She might know that proper vocabulary content by experience or maybe she is following a pre-written curriculum or schedule. A teacher needs to be aware of the characteristics of the learner group to filter her experience and pre-written works to find out the proper vocabulary and proper methods.

In the observation group, their teacher was very careful about repeating the words she taught. The attitude of the teacher is very important at this age group because they are open to be influenced by little things. As they begin learning a new language, a comprehended teacher is very important for their learning process since the pre-school students are highly sensitive. “The dominant explanation for the early preponderance of nouns invokes changes in the child’s conceptual structure over developmental time. Some of the caregivers’ words just cannot be represented by the young listener so they pass through his ears without stirring up his brain” (Gilette et al.1998). Very young learners are interested in, and so familiar with some certain context, which is determined and shaped by especially their families, caregivers and nowadays, television programmes. The words to be taught to very young learners should be picked up. Even if a teacher does not pick these words very carefully, the children do it for themselves by remembering some of them while they may easily forget others. There is a good example for this from the observations made for this study; their teacher told them the English word as tax in one of the classes. She only told the name of it both in Turkish and in

English. With the same style, she told them the English name of tree. She again said it both in Turkish and in English, without any flashcards, activities, songs or games. At the end of the class, there was an interview with the children again and it was seen that they easily remembered the word tree while almost none of them remembered the word as tax. This is mostly related with what they are interested in and the rate they can relate it. Some of them even showed a tree outside the window. Interestingly, most of them remembered tax as taxi. It proves they tended to find a relation in terms of its sound if they could not find any other. “Preschool-aged children already have substantial, although not complete, control over first language. Normally developing children of 3, 4, and 5 already understand what language is for and know a good deal about how their first language works. They have developed an extensive vocabulary, they can use all of the basic grammatical structures, and they have begun to learn when, where and with whom it is appropriate to use certain language forms” (Genesee, 1994).

Learning continues for a life time. Studies and experience prove that when it is learning a new language, it becomes harder by age. Stephen Krashen states in his “Second Language Acquisition Theory” that the learners who experience language learning at very early ages generally achieve better foreign language proficiency than the adult learners. (Munoz, 2006) The earlier is the better to learn a foreign language. It is obvious that this awareness is very high in Turkey nowadays because there is increasing number of the pre-school English courses. There are even a few French and German courses although they are less in number. It is obvious that learning a second or third language has become important nowadays. It is another fact that learning needs guiding which means teaching. A well built mind is generally constructed by proper education and guiding. Pure information may not work alone, it shall need true guiding to know how to use it. A true guiding means true

teaching. In other words, students need teachers who know the true techniques to teach. This rule of true techniques is the same with the foreign language learning. It is not always easy for teachers to teach a foreign language to their very young learners and this was also seen in the observation made for this study for six weeks. The observed group is consisted of twenty children at the age of five. Although they were eagerly listening to their teacher when she involved in the teaching such as songs and games, their attention easily lost especially if they were dealing with art and craft works. It was also seen that it was not always easy to keep the little students' attention at a high level. The solution for this problem generally depends on teacher's choice of teaching technique. It mostly depends on recognizing the learner's characteristics and general tendencies. At this age level, stimulating the learner, which means involving the learner in the language, is the first requirement for an excellent teaching. As a language has different branches to learn, such as grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing, there must be different approaches in every age group. Since our target group in this study is vocabulary learners, the methods for vocabulary teaching for very young learners are analyzed. The attitudes of the very young learners towards vocabulary teaching methods are at the centre of this analyze.

2.2.1. The attitudes of very young learners towards foreign language learning

Children have a great deal of language learning capacity. To use that capacity at its full and best, teachers should know about their characteristics to determine what and how to teach in foreign language classes. "Language learning strategies (LLSs) are important because research suggests that training students to use LLSs can help them to become successful language learners. LLSs enable students to gain a large measure of responsibility and to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. LLSs encompass a wide range of behaviour that can help the development of language competence in many ways" (Alhaisoni, 2012).

Characteristics and mental capacity of each age are effective in one's learning styles. These learning styles identify the learner's learning methods. Very young language learners should be analyzed and understood about their attitudes towards teaching methods in vocabulary teaching. "Children move through a number of stages when learning English as a new language. Some go through these stages more quickly than others, and children will sometimes have the characteristics of more than one stage at the same time as they transition between stages. Understanding a child's stage of learning is important for planning appropriate activities" (Paradis et al., 2009).

Since each target learner group is different than other, different methods should be followed to teach very young language learners rather than the methods applied to adult language learners. Different from the age group, each child has different levels of knowledge and learning capacity. To determine the best methods to teach English, teachers should define the most common attitudes and characteristics of the learner group they are teaching.

General attitude of very young learners towards foreign language learning is positive since they are interested in learning new things; especially a new language. The mother language learning is also on development. This makes them learn a foreign language together with their mother language easy. Very young learners easily learn new words and mostly repeat the actions they learn from their role models.

"Young children have an innate capacity to absorb a second language like a sponge. They imitate their role models with spontaneity and enthusiasm in addition to a general lack of self-consciousness. Young children actively learn a second language through games, songs, puppets, stories, projects and other activities" (Andrés, 2001). As Andrés clearly states, very young learners easily copy their role models and they quickly learn new words in a foreign language. Therefore, their teachers should be very aware of what and how she/he is teaching.

Role modelling means repeating the actions of their role models. Since the role models are the teachers in English classes, the children like to see them. Very young learners can learn English vocabulary more effectively when they are involved in activities in the class. They like to be a part a part of a learning environment. This attitude results in positive learning environments especially when they are made by their teachers to involve in learning activities. This participation is mostly provided with games especially the ones including questions asked to the learners. Physical activity is very helpful especially for the kinaesthetic learners while verbal learners need more speaking activities. Visual learners need colourful images and auditory learners need to hear more. Games are the key point of all these activities. This is another reason why pre-school children's attitudes towards games in foreign language learning are mostly positive.

Another important aspect of little children's attitudes towards language learning is that they tend to make relations with their mother languages, as stated before. The very young learners like to connect the words in their mother and foreign language. In the observations through six weeks it was observed that the children at the age of five are mostly interested in the vocabulary which they are familiar with because of this connection reason. Actually, this theory is same with every age group since a learner of a foreign language is always tend to learn the words he/she is familiar. There is a kind of relation and similarity between very young and adult learners in these terms. "Young learners will correctly interpret the world in view and the adult's speech intent just because child and adult are creatures of the same sort conceptually and motivationally and so their conversations conspire to the same ends" (Gilette et al.1998). The conversations and speeches of the children and adults are same in their own context and language; however, as stated by Chun Yen, the children should be

interpreted in their social equivalents. They are same in a sense, but they are also different in familiarity because of the fact that they catch different words from the conversations.

Very young learners have positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards foreign language learning. This will lead the awareness of their attitudes towards each teaching methods. With the choice of proper content and methods, very young vocabulary learners can be taught English to very young learners. They mostly seek fun and participation in the class activities. To keep their attention at a high level, they need funny and didactic lessons at the same time. The vocabulary teaching methods and very young learners' attitudes are analyzed in the following parts of this study; together with the observation results through the end.

2.3. Importance of vocabulary learning in foreign language learning

Learning a language begins from birth. It is one of the most important ways of communication. Well instructed vocabulary knowledge helps the learners to develop their reading and speaking skills in the further years of English language learning. When the learners of English live in a country like Turkey where there are compulsory English language classes as a foreign language, they will certainly get higher grades and scores with the help of a good vocabulary. Learner of a foreign language should keep in mind that language learning is not a stable situation which can be completed in a certain period of time because it has different parts step by step, which develops as a process. Languages have no limits and they are dynamic structures. They renew themselves every day with new words, concepts and usages. They can be enlarged by adding new words from other languages and also with the help of developing technologies. Although languages, especially foreign languages, need such a period of time to be learnt, there is always a starter point. It is very helpful to know where to start, whether in learning of foreign language. As the researches and experience have proved, the first step of teaching English to very young learners is teaching the words; vocabulary.

“Without some knowledge of vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible” (Mukoroli, 2011). To be good at English in the following years, very young learners should be taught vocabulary first. It is a necessity for students from every age to learn English vocabulary. It is very important to start learning English with its vocabulary at first step. “Given the difficulties of vocabulary learning in a second or foreign language (L2), along with the obvious necessity of trying to overcome them, one would expect that vocabulary instruction would be at the top of the agenda for language teachers” (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). Learning vocabulary is a hard task even in one’s mother language. It is probably because of the fact that there is no end in vocabulary learning although grammar rules are limited. When learning and also teaching a foreign language vocabulary, more effort is needed. The vocabulary teaching should be given the most importance and should be the first step in foreign language learning. The difficulty of vocabulary learning is resulted especially from the necessity to memorize the words and this task, whatever a teacher does, is a student’s duty. The teachers should be as helpful as they can be and the students should give the necessary attention and importance to vocabulary learning. Memory is actually open to development; it can be strengthened or enriched. It is not always easy for every student to memorize words. The difference of the intelligence types among people. Some people find it hard to remember lots of words while others can easily memorize new words.

The sentence structure process is developed with the process of vocabulary development through years of foreign language learning. It needs a lot of effort. This effort can be lessened by knowing where and how to start. Starting English learning as a foreign language at very early ages is very helpful but it is better to know the start. “Vocabulary is obviously a very important element within a language as the overwhelming majority of

meaning is carried lexically; and, therefore, something to be taken into consideration both in second and foreign language teaching – although not the only one that conveys meaning. There are certainly other elements such as grammar, stress, rhythm, intonation, tone of voice, pauses, hesitations or silences...” (Campillo, pp. 35 - 49). Campillo explains clearly that vocabulary learning should be given utmost importance in foreign language learning and other parts of a language come after. It must be well emphasized that learning a foreign language is not limited only vocabulary learning. There are other branches in language learning as it is same with our mother languages such as grammar rules, pronunciation, speaking, daily language, listening, reading. Vocabulary is the first and the most important step. Without good vocabulary knowledge, other parts of a language cannot be well understood. Vocabulary has different parts in itself as stated by Campillo. Teachers’ role here is to find out the best vocabulary content to teach the learners by analyzing the qualifications of the target learner groups. To find out the best content, teachers should know the tendencies, characteristics and familiarity of the learners. This might take time and need experience but teachers can also get some help from the studies on the subject like this one. As a tip for teachers, it can be said that it is better to teach to different age and English language level groups to see the differences.

Before analyzing the learner groups, a teacher should have previous background information about the target groups. Reading some studies and/or taking the advices of English language teachers can be helpful. There are tons of studies on English language teaching and learning as a second language in non-English culture and language backgrounds. Studies have shown that when a learner is allowed to study a foreign language alone, they tend to learn and memorize the words they are familiar with (Frasier, 1999). Through the observations, it was seen that children at the age of five are also tend to remember the words

they know formerly. In one class, their teacher gave them flashcards of the colours. Female students in the group were tend to remember such as pink and yellow more quickly while the male ones remembered such as blue and black. This is because of the fact that they are related with these colours. Most of the girls, especially at that age, are wearing pink or yellow dresses or their parents make them wear those colours since their childhood. This is same with the boys about blue or black colours. The teacher taught the kids some animal names with flashcards and games. Female students easily remembered the animals like butterfly and cat while male ones more easily remembered the strong animals like dog or spider which they related with the cartoon character Spiderman. It is clear that this familiarity rule is same with this pre school age group. The results from the context due to the fact that it is highly related with the vocabulary familiarity. “ The importance of context in vocabulary learning is evident from two common-sense observations: What a word means often depends on the context in which it is used, and people pick up much of their vocabulary knowledge from context, apart from explicit instruction” (Nagy, 1995). The context of a five year old child’s world is almost full clear; colourful, daily, interesting and funny staff. The better part about the children is that they are generally open to learn new things unless they have some personality or learning problems. These problems can be observed by the parents and teachers easily and solutions can be found at very early ages.

Such problems should be also taken into consideration in deciding the content to be taught to very young vocabulary learners. Content is very important because choosing too many words or too complicated and/or irrelevant words for the children to learn may result in failure. “The deliberate learning of vocabulary may contribute directly to implicit knowledge if the words learnt are not complicated and if the learning is meaningful. ...A well thought-out

vocabulary component of a course would be largely indistinguishable from the listening – speaking – reading and writing parts of the language program” (Richards & Renandya, 2008).

The importance of content’s relation and its usage in other classes are given. It is hard for pre-school children to use English in their kindergarten. They may use it at home. Therefore, a usable content must be chosen for the very young learners to understand and memorize the words.

Vocabulary must come first in foreign language teaching and it should have the most part especially when the learner group is consisted of pre-school children. Their characteristics and mental capacities should be taken into account and true contents and methods should be defined before planning their English lessons. When it is defining the content, finding true methods and analysing the students’ characteristics and problems, here the teachers take the stage and decide which words to be picked up and put into English vocabulary teaching process. They must be very careful since the children will be ready to learn whatever they are taught. They will try it at their bests, when they are encouraged by their parents and teachers.

2.3.1. Very young learners and English vocabulary

Before analyzing children’s attitudes towards games, their vocabulary knowledge and learning styles should be defined first. As stated in Joseph Mukoroli’s article, a research by Colorado (2007, as cited in Adger, 2002), an average native English speaker at age five or six, knows almost five thousand words while a standard English learner knows only a few words in English. “The reality is that native speakers continue to learn new words while English language learners face the double challenge of building that foundation and closing that

language gap” (Mukoroli, 2011). The results of a research showing the vocabulary amount necessary to learn a foreign language effectively is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of words with the level

LEVEL	NUMBER OF WORDS	TEXT COVERAGE, %
HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS	2,000	87
ACADEMIC VOCABULARY	800	8
TECHNICAL VOCABUALRY	2,000	3
TOTAL TO BE LEARNED	4,800	98
LOW – FREQUENCY WORDS	123,200	2
TOTAL	128,000	100

(Nation and New man, 1997:239)

Learning a foreign language needs a well built vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary needs different techniques for different age and social groups. Since the target group in this study is young learners, the necessary and existing teaching styles for very young vocabulary learners must be analyzed in the following parts.

When the results found at the end of the six- week observation are compared with the ones in Table 1, the number of the words the students learnt through the six-week period are seen. In the first week of the study, the five year old vocabulary students who were observed were taught eight new words which are eight animal names. At the end of the classes, they were asked what they remembered and they mostly remembered the ones taught by games. In the second week, these words were repeated with different activities. They were interviewed

again and it was seen that most of them remembered all of these words. They were taught five colour names in English in the third week, most of them remembered the colours at the end of the week and they also remembered most of the words taught in the first week. In the fourth week, all of these words repeated. In the fifth week, they were introduced with six new words about human body. Each week, the previous words were repeated while in the first, third and fifth weeks new words were introduced. In the last week of the observation, the children repeated all the words they learnt. Almost all of them remembered the words. It is obvious that repeating words is very helpful for vocabulary teaching. The six- week teaching period is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The number of words learnt through six weeks

	<u>Animal names</u>	<u>Colours</u>	<u>Body parts</u>	<u>The number of the Word that students remembered</u>
<u>First Week</u>	8			8
<u>Second Week</u>	8 (Repetition)	5		13
<u>Third Week</u>	8 (Repetition)	5 (Repetition)	6	19
<u>Fourth Week</u>	8 (Repetition)	5 (Repetition)	6 (Repetition)	19
<u>Fifth week</u>	8 (Repetition)	5 (Repetition)	6 (Repetition)	19
<u>Sixth week</u>	8 (Repetition)	5 (Repetition)	6 (Repetition)	19

The work having been conducted for six weeks by a group of twenty students whose age are five will be explained in details. In the first week, the students were introduced to the names of the names in a oral way. While the picture of the animal being shown to the kids,

the teacher pronounced the name. In the first part, the learners only asked to listen the music. Some of them tried to repeat what they heard. Then the teacher wanted them to repeat after each picture and name. At that time, the teacher was standing up with the flashcards in her hand and the children were sitting comfortably while repeating and looking at the cards. Then the games started. It was because to attract the children's attention to highest level. They all attended the games which showed how the animals mentioned move. When saying the name of the animal, the teacher also tried to swim like a fish, which made all the students do the same and enjoy themselves. The same words were repeated in the second week with flashcards and games, while the colours of the animals were taught in the third week. In the fourth week, the eight names and five colours were repeated. As the students were enjoying a lot while learning and also they were learning audio, visual and even with drama. It is seen that they completely memorized all the words. Six more words were added in the fifth week as the body parts of the animals. In the sixth week, the 1 Apart from these groups of words, they also learnt the meaning of some other words like some commands such as "Put your hands up" or "Little finger up" which they learn from the games. It is clear that children's attitudes towards games are highly positive especially because they like to be involved in classroom activities and games can provide it. It is easier for a young learner to remember the words he uses in his own mother language in his daily life. This is another way of participation. As Laufer states in his study, "Many of learners match English words with their equivalents in the first language. They also concentrate on literal meaning of single words, and do not learn the meaning of the words in context" (Kafipour & Naveh, 2011). Learning a vocabulary becomes easier when a little child tries to memorize it in his daily life. Making a good link word to world helps little children memorize the vocabulary of a second language. (Gilette & et al., 1998) Since this link is easily created by games, children really like games in vocabulary teaching.

This linkage can be created easily when the word knowledge of the students is well known because this helps teachers to find out the most effective methods. The most effective methods can be defined as the methods which the children's react in the most positive way. As explained in the previous sections, vocabulary is classified into branches according to context. At the age of five, the context in a child's mind is consisted of colourful images and games. They are like empty cups waiting to be filled. A good teacher is very helpful to fill this cup. While teaching to very young vocabulary learners, a teacher's role is to decide the true words to be picked and to find the true methods according to his/her target group. Despite the fact that learner's role is very important to memorize the vocabulary of a foreign language, a teacher's role is also very crucial especially when the age group is pre school kids.

Learning styles should be defined to find out and understand the attitudes of the children towards teaching methods. After determining the learning strategies to be used, teachers can find proper methods and content to apply within these strategies.

The interaction of the teacher with the little kids group is an important point for their learning process. The more the teacher knows about his/her target group's characteristics and potential, the more he/she makes the students learn the material. Since the material here is the vocabulary, the teacher of these very young learners should know the potential of students' to learn new words. This potential is shaped by the world they live in and interested in. The children are well known to be interested in colourful and enjoyable activities. They are interested in nature; animals and they also begin to learn their own body.

As long as a teacher knows the interests of his/her students, he/she can select the correct vocabulary according to the age group being dealt with. "When children learn numbers or colours in their native language, they are adding concepts as well as vocabulary items. Course books for young learners often emphasize nouns because they are easy to

illustrate and because often young learners don't have literacy skills, so the only words that can easily be featured are nouns. However, language is more than nouns and it is important to include verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions and also different lexical fields (colours, animals, days of the week, food, jobs, etc.) as part of the vocabulary teaching" (Linse, 2005). Linse claims that young learners should also be taught other language parts such as verbs, adjectives etc. These are also parts of the vocabulary of a language, unless they are joined: "Fly" is a verb. A word but when it is used with other words in a sentence such as "Birds fly", it turns into a part of grammar rules. In most of the programmes of the pre-school English courses, teachers also teach some verbs and adjectives together with some simple sentence patterns. In the observation group, for example, some verbs, adjectives, days of the week, seasons, jobs are also included in the following weeks' plans although there was not the chance of observing those in the past six weeks.

No matter how many words, verbs, adjectives or simple sentences are taught, the content of English teaching is very important. Teachers should pick the correct words from the large English vocabulary. Being correct means being as much related with the children's word capacity and familiarity as possible. Any mismatch between the word and method choices of the teacher and the children's capacity and characteristics may result in disappointing or misleading effects.

In the study group which was observed for six weeks, their teacher knew what her young vocabulary learners were interested in and what they were capable of. She was aware of her students' mental capacities and structures. This is very helpful both for a teacher and the students to learn as many things as possible and in the easiest and shortest ways. This awareness is also very helpful in finding true methods for vocabulary teaching to these very young learners. A new content was taught and that new content and the previous contents

were repeated in the following week. Repetition plays a crucial role to prevent little children from forgetting new English words. Repetition might be some boring but it is a very crucial key for successful language learning. Studies, experience and observations prove that many repetitions are necessary to make a word unforgettable for long term in one's memory. Repetitions can be done visually, verbally, aural, or written. The previous subjects should be chosen to be repeated instead of repeating all of the content. As the methods are important for teaching vocabulary, repetition methods are important at the same time. Games and songs or other funny activities and methods are the best ways to repeat the vocabulary to the very young English vocabulary learners.

Repetition is important but the ways and content of repetition is more important. "Unlike earlier accounts of the role of repetition in foreign language (FL) learning, however, most current accounts acknowledge that it should be meaningful and relevant to the learners – a form of negotiation of messages and texts – and not merely (or entirely) a mechanical or rote parroting of structures that does not ultimately enhance students' proficiency in the target language" (Duff, 2000). If repetition becomes boring, it might lose its importance and efficiency. It should not take more place than learning new vocabulary. It is best to make repetitions of previous content in the shortest and best way and then add new information upon it. When the learner group is aged five, it is better to repeat the previous vocabulary by combining it with the new one. Games and songs are mostly chosen ways of repetition for the pre-school English learners as observed during six weeks.

In a study carried out by Susan Gass, M. Jose Alvarez and M. Fernandez-Garcia from Michigan State University and Alison Mackey from Georgetown University, it is seen that repetition of the tasks while learning Spanish as a foreign language is very helpful for the learners to memorize more words. The participants of that study were native English

speakers. So, no matter which mother or foreign language is being learnt, repetition is very crucial in foreign language vocabulary learning (Gass et al., 1999).

The teacher of the observation group was also aware of the fact that language needs repeating to be learnt. She used mostly games to make repetitions. In the first week, some animal names were taught the children via different activities. In the second week, these were repeated. The same circulation went on with colours in the third and fourth weeks and body parts in the fifth and sixth weeks of the observation. At the end of each week, the students were interviewed about the words they learnt and it was seen that almost all of them remembered the words they learnt. In the second, fourth and sixth weeks, their knowledge of the words was higher because of repeating the words.

Being aware of the students' needs and capacity and the methods of teaching English vocabulary to the target age group, a teacher must also know both languages well to pick up the true vocabulary and true methods. She/he first needs to be familiar with the students. Although they are like "empty cups" waiting to be filled with new information, it is not so easy for very young learners to learn and memorize the vocabulary of a new language. It is not easy to teach them as well. Teaching vocabulary is a hard task for instructors since it mostly involves learners' participation. The teacher must know the general characteristics of his/her learners to encourage their students to involve in the teaching process. "Learning strategies play a crucial role in second or foreign language acquisition. Learning strategies also help learners to gather new information and then assimilate those acquired information into their existing knowledge" (Weng Pei-Shi, 2012). As stated by Weng Pei-Shin, defining the best learning methods help students to learn the material. The role of the teacher is to find out his/her students' attitudes towards different teaching styles and to implement the true

teaching style according to them. Since this study mostly focuses on the five year old vocabulary learners, the attitudes of these learners are explained.

There are different learning styles because of different intelligence types. The vocabulary teaching methods can be limited into some groups when the learner group's age is pre school. Most of the pre-school learners are visual, verbal, auditory or kinaesthetic learners. Childrens mostly like games because games combine visual, auditory and kinaesthetic techniques.

2.4. Vocabulary teaching methods to very young learners and their attitudes

As observed in the study, each child has their own learning style. There are different teaching methods depending on some variations such as age, cultural background and characteristics of the learners. To find the true teaching methods, no matter what they are teaching, the teachers should analyze and learn the characteristics and capacity of their students. Especially the children at the age of five are very sensitive and if they are pushed to do the tasks they are not interested in, they can be easily distracted. Characteristics and personality of the student his/her learning style. "In view of the influence personality type has on learners' use of learning strategies, language instructors should take personality type into consideration when they design learning tasks and activities. For example, in social strategy training for introverted students, teachers can put students in groups of four or six based on how extroverted/introverted they are" (Ling-Chen et al., 2012).

Teaching methods are determined mostly by the characteristics of the learners. When the learner group is aged five, they are mostly interested in games. As a result, games become the most effective method for the very young English vocabulary learners.

Students' learning styles are very important in choosing right teaching methods. "Auditory learners depend on hearing and speaking as a main way of learning. Auditory learners must be able to hear what is being said in order to understand and may have difficulty with instructions that are written. They rely on listening input such as conversation to sort through the information that is sent to them" (Pei-Shi, 2012). Most of the pre school children are visual and/or auditory learners since they do not know how to read or write. They can be also kinaesthetic and/or verbal learners but they usually like visual or auditory activities. Adding verbal and kinaesthetic techniques to visual and aural activities are more effective in teaching very young English vocabulary students.

Although intelligence types and learning styles change from one student to another, there might be a generalization about the techniques to be implemented in pre-school English vocabulary lessons. Most of the very young students are, as stated by Dunn & Dunn, aural or visual learners or the mixture of these two. "However, a large number of learners, with the proportion depending chiefly upon cultural expectations and experience, are not primarily aural learners but rather visual learners or else "combination" learners who prefer a mixture of sensory media" [Dunn & Dunn, 1972] (Oxford & Crookall, 1990).

The most helpful and easy solution for the different learning styles of the students is to implement common techniques. To address all intelligence types and learning styles, it is the best way to use the methods including all, or most of these techniques. Games are the common point in which most of these techniques can be used and mixed together easily and in an enjoyable way for pre-school English vocabulary pupils.

Teacher's role is very important to understand the general learning style of the group as well as their individual tendencies to implement the best effective teaching method. As the interviews, observation and the previous studies have proved, it is possible to group five year

old vocabulary learners' learning styles in four; most of them are visual, verbal, auditory and/or kinaesthetic learners. Although individualistic characteristics affect the learners' learning methods, there are typical ways to approach the learners according to their learning styles. Flashcards and body language are the best ways to teach visual learners while auditory learners need to hear the words more. Kinaesthetic learners are highly interested in physical activities. It is best to use visual and auditory material together with kinaesthetic activities. At this age group, games are the best ways to combine them.

The teacher of the observation group used different games like animating some animals, questions and answers and some flashcard activities all of which included children's participation. It must be born in mind that there are different styles for teaching vocabulary and these styles also have their own categories. Games are very effective methods among teaching vocabulary styles because children mostly like game or game-like activities. There are different types of games but children's attitudes are almost same towards games and they love playing games. They might learn more easily through some game types than others. A recent study made in the Prince of Songkhla University shows that there are different types of vocabulary games such as whispering games, who am I?, fishing" and others (Chirandon et al., 2010). This study was carried out in Thailand, where the mother language is Thai. This proves that learning a vocabulary of a foreign language requires games for very young learners everywhere in the world. The games will be listed in the following parts to see the differences of attitudes of children towards them.

Each age group has different attitudes towards vocabulary teaching methods. Pre-school children mostly enjoy games among other methods. One child's attitude may change from other. There is another study carried out by John Everatt and other four academics on the ELS learners from non-English backgrounds. "Students with learning disability may be

more likely to suffer emotional disorders, such as depression, anxiety and lower self-esteem, than their peers” [Huntington and Bender, 1993; Livingstone, 1990; Maughan, 1994] (Everatt et al., 2011). It depends on mostly the teacher’s observation of the students to find out which one has learning problems to prevent them from suffering emotional problems and to teach those English. It is also a teacher’s role to understand the attitudes of each child towards vocabulary learning and teaching methods. A teacher’s role is not only to find out the true vocabulary to teach and true methods to implement according to the learner group but also to carefully observe the students to find out their characteristics and attitudes.

Observation of the students might be harder than saying especially if they are five years old because of the fact that pre-school learners are very active, energetic and some of them may even have attention deficiency disorder problems which prevent the teacher from doing a perfect observation of the group. In the study carried out by Bodrova, Leyong and Paynter, there is an interesting finding related with this subject. They state in their article that they observed many pre-school English teachers who tried to teach the alphabet by “saying or singing the letter names in alphabetical order and by pointing the letters”. The teachers then thought that children correctly learnt the letters. Some children might not catch up the order of the letters correctly because they go on looking the letters before or after the letter which the teacher points. As Bodrova and others state, “The teacher doesn't catch the error because he or she cannot monitor where each child's eyes are focused at every second, whereas an older child, who is capable of following the teacher's pointer precisely, can benefit from the same activity” (Bodrova et al.,1999). As clearly exemplified, it is hard for pre school teachers to observe their students. However, they can make some true generalizations according to most of the group and deal with the exceptional situations individually. The general tendency of five year old English vocabulary learners is to enjoy visual, auditory and kinaesthetic

activities together. This combination is perfectly provided by games. In the group observed for this study, there were also used different types of games which can be stated in the following parts more in details. Before analyzing game methods among themselves, it will be helpful to analyze three common teaching styles for five year old vocabulary learners. These are not the methods themselves but the general techniques. Gaming method generally includes different techniques together. "It is up to the teacher mostly to choose the right activity. This is not easy and teachers should spend really quality time to think about this. It needs to be considered well. Some language activities can stir a class. Thinking about the positive way of the word "stir", it means these activities will wake up the class, warm them up. Before the lesson is planned, there should be considered what kind of activities should be chosen knowing the effect of them. Activities that can stir the class are, for example, oral work, games, competitions" (Přibilová, 2006). It is mostly depends on teacher's choice which method to use. The teacher must learn the general capacity and characteristics of her/his class to find out the best method to apply. In order to do this, a certain period of time together with the students is enough for a teacher as long as she/he wants to learn these. Without a certain mixture of intimacy and mutual trust with very young learners, it may become hard for a teacher to comprehend the general atmosphere of the class and naturally finding true and effective methods turns out to be a hard task as well. The duty of the teacher starts before the classes with a good preparation and it goes on through the lessons. When a teacher achieves these simple but basic tasks, the rest of the teaching period becomes easier. The teacher of the vocabulary learners at the age of five, after a period together with these kids, can easily become aware of the fact that they are generally interested in the activities including mostly visual or auditory activities. This a kind of generalization although it depends on the findings of the studies mentioned here and on the observation made for this research. There might be differences from one group to another. The best choice is to know that the activities including

all four which are visual, verbal, auditory and kinaesthetic methods are the best loved and effective ones.

2.4.1. Visual techniques for teaching English vocabulary

To make a simple classification, there are four approaches. Visual styles address especially to visual learners who learn the best by seeing. “Visual students need the visual stimulation of bulletin boards, videos and movies” (Kafipour et al., Vol. 25, 2011). When the age group is five, instead of bulletin boards, other tools can be chosen. Colourful flashcards, informative films and videos, art & craft works are examples of visual activities.

Colourful flashcards are helpful especially for visual learners. This rule does not change whether a learner is at the age of five or fifty. “With creativity and thought on the part of the learner, flashcards can indeed be employed to provide greater context. For instance, learners can sort flashcards into piles representing different groups of words (e.g., nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, prepositions; words that are already learned vs. words still needing to be learned; past tense forms vs. present tense forms)” (Oxford & Crookall, 1990).

It was seen in the observation that unless they are included within games, they might stay uncompleted for five year old vocabulary learners. To turn a flashcard activity into a game, the teacher may add questions and/or songs, such as it was seen at the second week of the observation. The teacher showed the children some flashcards in different colours and then she sang a song including the names of these colours. When she stopped the song with a certain name of colour, the children were asked to show that colour on the flashcards. All of them gave true answers. This is certainly a good game which combines a visual tool; colourful flashcards with an auditory tool; a song and an interaction; involvement for the children to the learning and questions answers. While playing this game, the children are also

learning to be fast in the competition with others because it is clearly seen that almost each one of them wants to say the true answer. It was also seen in the observation group that visual approach is helpful but it was better when used in a game.

2.4.2. Verbal techniques for teaching English vocabulary

There is not any special verbal techniques since verbal is generally the learning intelligence of a person. It can be defined as the spoken or written words. When one's verbal intelligence is high, she/he can learn a language very easily. Verbal techniques are much related with the words being written or sometimes spoken. Since the target group of this study consists of pre-school children in Turkey and since they mostly do not know how to read or write, written techniques might not be very helpful. Moreover, they may even be hard for little children to learn new words by writing. English alphabet is mostly taught with verbal styles. To address verbal learners, it is better to make them say and repeat the words being taught. This also provides their participation in the lessons and the learning activities. "People are used to the linkage between verbal and visual symbols, such as found in a whole array of public signs and notices. ...These familiar verbal-visual links can help L2 learners. Another kind of visual image useful to L2 learners is a mental image or a drawing of an object related to a new L2 word. Learners can use visual imagery by making their own drawings or sketches of words or phrases... Another aid is to visualize a set of locations (possibly the rooms in one's house or apartment), to associate each location with a specific word or expression, and then to take a mental walk" (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). It is better to address as much intelligence types as possible. This is possible by combining some techniques together like combining a visual activity with a verbal activity as exemplified above. Examples of verbal techniques, apart from the written ones, are the speaking exercises and singing songs. When

the songs have some vocabulary content to be taught, they are not only aural but also verbal activities.

2.4.3. Auditory techniques for teaching English vocabulary

Auditory techniques are also very helpful in English vocabulary teaching to very young learners. In this technique, the voices and the tone of these voices are very important for the learners. “L2 words can be represented in memory by using aural imagery rather than visual imagery. Aural imagery provides a form of semi-context for the learner and a link with what the learner already knows. Aural imagery makes verbal learning more efficient through associating new sounds with existing, sound-related schemata” (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). Auditory tools can be more efficient than visual tools. This is very true especially when the learners are pre school children. Due to the fact that this observed age group is consisted of little children whose brains are hungry for new things, they automatically record what they hear. The tone of the teacher’s voice and especially songs are very important. Through the six weeks of observation on twenty very young vocabulary learners, their teacher was always careful about her choice of tone. At some points, she said “Enough!” in a high volume when the children were no listening to her at all. Although not all of the children remembered the exact meaning of the word enough, they knew that it meant that they made a lot of noise and needed to be quiet. If she had said that in a lower tone of voice, they might have not understood that meaning. In each class, the teacher used songs with her own voice. She knew where to stop or where to get her voice lower or higher. When a song is repeated for a second or third time, all of the children took part in the song and they also knew to get their voices higher or lower.

2.4.4. Kinaesthetic techniques for teaching English vocabulary

Kinaesthetic learners care about body language and especially art and craft works. The second group, art and craft works might be seen as time consuming by some teachers and besides, some English teacher use this method as a time filler. However, for a kinaesthetic learner, art and craft works are very helpful for learning vocabulary since it includes bodily effort and action. Kinaesthetic approach is mostly used by combining other methods like animating an animal and then telling its name; kinaesthetic and auditory methods together. The games which mostly include kinaesthetic techniques were proven to be very helpful for teaching vocabulary to five year old learners in the study.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The participants chosen for the study are explained what age they are and where they live. The data are collected with the games, flashcards and songs which are used in teaching these pre school children. The learners are aimed to memorize and remember the words. Data analysis are done with the instruments; video records and voice records. While data analysis being done, the procedures are followed to see the development of the very young learners. The objectives of the study are to define and analyse the target foreign language learners; five-year old pre school children and their attitudes towards teaching vocabulary methods, and to evaluate how effective the games are in vocabulary teaching to very young learners and to investigate their attitudes towards games.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study are five year old pre school English learners twenty in number and their English teachers from an English course located in Adana.

3.3. Data Collection

First a target group learners were chosen. They were five-year old children. The number of the learners was twenty. Flashcards for the names of the animals and colours were prepared. Games were the main parts of the study as it aimed to show that the best way to teach vocabulary and made them remembered was games. The names of the eight animals, the five colours and the six body parts, totally nineteen words, were taught by games, whereas flashcards were used only with the names and colours.

Observations continued for six weeks. The study started on November 2012 and finished on December 2012. During the observations, the lessons were recorded and interviews were done. It was seen that vocabulary teaching was easy through games to pre school English learners. Their teacher also used some simple sentences such as “What is this?” or “Put your hands up”. The sentence structure development went on together with the vocabulary learning. In these six weeks, three new topics were added to the previous ones: animals, colours and body parts. The words were chosen carefully by the teacher according to the childrens’ ages. The familiarities among the words were taken into consideration. Repetition played a very important part to make the children remember and memorize the words. Interviews were very important at this point because they simply and clearly showed what the children learnt during the classes. They were also asked about which game they liked the most and it helped to find out the most advantageous game. It is clear that five year old pre school children could both easily memorize the songs and learnt the new words and some simple sentence patters. They did not find it hard to memorize the songs but without repetition of the songs, they could easily forget new words.

3.4. Data Analysis

The instruments used in the study were prepared carefully in order to have correct analysis. As it claims that teaching pre school learners with audio visual methods is one of effective techniques, nineteen flashcards were used in the classroom with twenty five year old pre school learners, eight of which were the picture of bird, fish, rabbit, turtle, spider, dog, cat and horse; five of which were the colours such as red, pink, yellow, purple and green and the last six ones were the body parts: eyes, nose, hair, arms, hands and fingers. Sixteen games were used, in which the students took parts actively and enjoyed themselves. Although I was not allowed to record the children while they were playing the games and singing, I tried to

record their voice and their teacher. I did not use a professional camera but my mobile phone in order not to trouble the students and the teacher.

3.5. Procedures

The five-year old children learners were observed in a class environment. This study was conducted for six weeks. Each class lasted for forty minutes. The students were observed three times a week. The students were interviewed at the end of every class to check what they learnt and remembered. This was not done by any written examination and neither was by a formal oral examination. As it was part of the lesson, the teacher was just asking something in general to the students all and they answered her just as they were chatting together.

3.5.1. First week:

The first week of the observation was not actually the first week of the course. So, the children have already learnt something in English. However, in the first week of the observation of the five year-old English vocabulary learners, they were taught “animals”. Certainly, they were not taught all the animals but some of them. These were the mostly seen and known animals which also attracted the attention of the kids such as cat, dog, bird fish, spider and turtle. These were the animal names to be remembered easily by the children. Unless the word choice is done truly, no matter which method is applied, the results would be disappointing. The teacher of this observed group was well aware of the capacity of her learners and she picked the right words. She started the lesson with reminding previous words by songs or games and then began to teach some animals in the first week of the observation. Here are the activities and the games applied through first week:

Songs

The teacher of the observation group got help from songs to repeat the former vocabulary knowledge and also to step up new words. For example, she started the lesson with “Hello” song. So, the children remembered the word “hello”. Besides, there were also some verbs like “skip” and the teacher showed the verb by pretending she was “skipping rope”. There were other songs used during the first week. Some of these songs were like games; for example “Monkey” song; the song begins with “five little monkeys” and the lyrics are repeated with “four little monkeys”, “three little monkeys” and so on through which the children learnt counting down from five to one. During that song, children also learnt some verbs such as fall down, call and jump. Their teacher did not only sing the song together with the children, but she also used a lot of mimics and gestures to show what the words mean like using her hands to show numbers or what “calling” means. Another song was “do you like?” in which there were some animals like fish and spider. She used some gestures again to animate the animals. It was seen that almost all of the children memorized the songs very well. The songs were used like games sometimes because she stopped in some parts of the songs to make the children say the names of the animals. After she told the names of the animals in English, she animated some of those animals with a song and game: she sang the song and animated the animal but she stopped and waited for the answer from the students. That provided the children to participate in the activity and to repeat the animal names.

Flashcard games:

Flashcards are the most commonly used tools to teach English words. Teacher shows the picture, number or the letter on the card and then tells its English name. It is very important to start with the words which the learners are familiar with in their native language. The teacher of the observation group chose some certain animals to teach at first: bird, fish,

turtle, spider, rabbit, monkey, dog and cat. The pictures on the flashcards were very attractive and colourful which caught the attention of the pupils. The teacher used the flashcards then in a game. She used animal flashcards in which there are two same pictures of each animal and turned them back. The children turned them to find the couple cards. This is a kind of memory game. This game is helpful to remind the children the names of the animals.

Another flashcard game at the first week asked the names of the animals. The flashcards were put on the table and the teacher said an animal name there. The students tried to find the animal on the picture. The first one was the winner. The competition also stimulated the children in all the games. In general, flashcard games are very helpful but they are limited in a way; after a while they might become boring for the children because they get familiar with the pictures and need to see other examples to memorize the words totally. A flashcard game includes mostly visual approach and when it is compared with the games including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities, they are not as good and effective as the latter ones.

Turtle race game:

In the first week in which the teacher taught some animal names, she played a game with the help of a person from the course. The teacher and her assistant put the school bags on their back and they walked slowly as if they were turtles. They made a kind of race and the children guessed the name of the winner animal. Although they first said it in Turkish, then their teacher insisted to hear it in English and they said that they were turtles. This game was mainly visual and kinaesthetic. It was seen that the children liked such dynamic games.

“What is this?” game

In this game, the teacher showed some movements by using her hands like “flying” or “swimming” and then asked “What is this?” to the children. The children replied both Turkish and English names of the animals. At the end of the week, when the children were interviewed and asked “Which game did you like the most?”, they were seen that they usually remembered that game in the first week. This is highly because of the fact that this game applies to both visual and auditory learners because this game is done after the song “Do you like?” and then it turned out a visual, auditory and kinaesthetic game which made the children remember the animals and like the game.

3.5.2. Second week

In the second week of the observation, the repetitions of the previous weeks’ lessons were done through songs and games again. After the repetitions, it was seen that all of twenty children remembered the animal names correctly. Some of the games of the last week were repeated and the children again replied in the interview that they liked the games with songs at most. There was a new game with a song in that week:

Itsy-bitsy spider game

In that game, the teacher played a song and she also sang the song. The children were seen to be willing to participate in the song and that willingness made them memorize the song quickly. She used her hand as if it were a spider and made it walk on her arm and legs. After that, she wanted the children to say its English name and children replied correctly.

3.5.3. Third week

In the third week of the observation, besides repeating the words of the previous weeks, colours were taught to the children. Eight colours were chosen because they were the most commonly used colours which made the kids remember them more easily: red, blue, pink, purple, green, yellow, orange and black.

Colours song & game

This is a game mixed with a song and flashcards. The song started with “red, pink, yellow, purple, green or blue”. The teacher stopped the song and the children tried to show on the flashcards the colours at which the song stopped. For example, if the song stopped at the colour blue, children showed the blue flashcard. This was a very funny game for the kids especially because it included a song and colourful flashcards; both auditory and visual tools.

Colours flashcards – memory game

This game is similar to the animal flashcards game. The teacher turned down the flashcards in a position hiding the colours. The students tried to find the two flashcards in the same colour. This game can be played either individually or as a group. The students opened the same coloured cards among all cards in an untidy order and said the name of the colour in English. Such memory games were found to be helpful and interesting for the kids as it was seen from the interviews with the kids at the end of the lesson. The first game colours song and game was remembered most rather than this memory game. This is again probably because of the fact that the previous one included a song which is an auditory technique.

Colourful balloon game

In that game, the teacher gave each child different coloured balloons and she opened the music. Then the students began to dance. When the teacher stopped the music, the students stopped as still as statues. Whoever made the first move; he/she said the English name of the colour and sat. The others continued the game. This game is the most liked and remembered game by the kids because at the interview of that week, they mostly remembered that game and especially the colours they said in this balloon game.

3.5.4. Fourth week

In the fourth week of the observation, the children repeated the previous vocabulary. The colours were repeated again with flashcard and memory games. Additionally, they were asked the names of the colours of their clothes and it was seen that girls mostly remembered the colours of pink, purple and yellow while most of the male students remembered easily the colours black and blue. This is probably because of their familiarity with the colours because most of the female students said that they liked those three colours at most while male ones said these two colours. Through the week, colours were repeated with songs and games. A new activity was done to repeat the colour names in English:

“What colour is this?” game

This is a very simple question-answer game. The teacher held the coloured flashcards on her hands and asked each card's colour after showing them. All of the children replied truly. This proves that repetition plays a very important role in vocabulary learning.

“What is your favourite colour?” song

In that song, colours were repeated in an order. What is your favourite colour? It is pink, orange and blue. It helped the children to repeat the colours and since it was seen that the children easily memorized the song.

3.5.5. Fifth week

In the fifth week of observation, new vocabulary content added to the previous ones: body parts. Since the word content of vocabulary part is very large, a lot of activities were implemented in the fifth and the following week of the observation. After the teacher told the names of the body parts one by one, she showed them with the flashcards and then put it into action with songs and games. Although the body part names are more in number, they were easily remembered because of the fact that it was easy for the kids to repeat it in their daily lives. For example, some of the children told their body parts to their parents at home as the feedbacks from the parents showed.

One little finger game

The teacher first showed that game and then she made it with the children at the same time. This is one of the most advantageous games because it included a song, a rhythm, and a lot of physical activity and participation of the children. That game was played with the index fingers. The teacher sang the song of the game while showing some body parts. The song is like that:

Little finger, little finger, little finger

Tap tap tap (here they hit their left and right index fingers on each other)

Put your finger up

Put your finger down

Put it on your ... (here a body part is said)

Bap bap bap bap bap

When the teacher said put your finger up, then they put their fingers up and when she said down, they put showed the ground again with their fingers. When she put her fingers, for example, on her nose, she waited for the children to say “nose”. That finger game went on by showing other taught parts of the body; head, eyes, ears, mouth, chin, feet and hands. The song made the game enjoyable and it also made the words catchy. Teacher’s stopping during the song to wait the answer from the kids made the kids participate in the activity. That made them memorize the words more easily rather than the games sang only by the teacher. In the interviews, it was seen that the children mostly remembered that funny game.

Robot game

In this game, the kids moved like robots and asked some questions to their friends by showing their body parts. For example, the child who was the robot, showed his/her hand to other children and waited for an answer for its name in English. Then the kids replied back the English name of that body part. This game is mostly a kinaesthetic one and it also included participation of the children. However, that was not the most remembered and enjoyed game as understood from the interviews.

3.5.6. Sixth week

In the sixth, and the last week of the observation, it was monitored that the teacher repeated again the previous weeks' vocabulary. Repetition is very helpful to prevent the students from forgetting the previous words while teaching new ones. In this week, apart from repeating the previous words, especially the body parts which were taught last week were repeated with games and songs. Games were mostly chosen for teaching body parts because it was the most effective way to teach them. Kinaesthetic activities are very helpful for body part teaching.

Puppet game

In this game, the teacher used a puppet and wanted the children to show the body part which the teacher said in English. For example, if the teacher said "hand", the children showed the hands of the puppet. This game was funny for the children because it included a toy which the kids love very much.

"Open shut them" game

In that game, children waited with their fingers opened. When they were told by the teacher "open shut them", they opened and shut their hands. Then, teacher said "give a little clap clap clap", they clapped their hands. When the teacher said "put them on your foot", they showed their feet. When the teacher said "put them on your head", they put their hands on their heads. That game was played with a song. It was observed that the children enjoyed that game very much.

“Put your hands up” game

This game is played with a song. The teacher directed the children with the song. When it was said “put your hands up” in the song, the children raised their hands. When the song said “put your heads up”, the children raised their heads above. The children moved their hands, heads and feet during the song up, down, right and left. This song does not only teach the body parts “hand, head and foot” but also the directions “up, down, right and left” and also some verbs like “put up” to the children. During the game teacher also said “show me” sometimes which taught the children what “show” means.

Fishing game

The fishing game is one of the most enjoyable games. Here, the children walked around the class and a song was played. When the teacher stopped the song, she caught a kid like fishing and want her students have a sit.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

The data were collected from the observations, which were obtained from the diaries. All the findings were discussed due to the aim of this study. Each day, every lesson, the teacher was recorded by a mobile phone camera while she was teaching. The school did not let me record the students as they claimed that it must be so far the secrecy of the school.

4.2. Findings of the Study

The aim of this study was to compare gaming method with other methods for teaching very young learners and appropriate way for the same aim. When teaching methods are examined, it can be seen that vocabulary teaching used to be done only by teachers' boring repetition. Sometimes if the teacher is young and patient, he/she tries to use flashcards or colours. Teachers usually used to want the children to sit in their chairs and not to move. Therefore, they were usually bored and hardly ever memorize the vocabulary.

Teaching English vocabulary through games can be suggested as one of the effective techniques. Very young learners enjoy themselves while learning because they take a part in the lesson actively, which helps them keep most words in their mind.

4.2.1. The attitudes of very young learners towards games in the use of vocabulary teaching

There are different techniques in English vocabulary teaching. It is hard to state one method as the best one but some methods have more advantages than others especially when the learners' age group is taken into account. When the age group is five, there are some

enjoyable and effective activities which include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic techniques. “It is evident that young learners learn through play much easier and they enjoy it more. This is quite a natural way for them to learn. In playing together we can see elements of interaction and during interacting the learners develop language skills. Learning can be absorbed really well. Quite often the learners do not realize they are learning. Fun and games should have an important role in the children’s education. The language learnt by heart can often be a part of the activities. For example, commands for the games can be remembered quite easily” (Přibilová, 2006).

It is a well known fact that children do love games especially when they are pre-school children. Children really cannot become aware of the fact that they are learning something while they are learning it through games. It makes the learning enjoyable and not boring even if it takes a long time. Most of the children remember some simple imperative sentence patterns learnt during the games even if a long time passes.

In this study, flashcards and pictures were used. They were shown to students and then the English words were said to them. It was a good starter. When the students first saw the cards and pictures, they were very quiet as they were very interesting for them. Each student fixed his eyes in the picture and try to find out which animal it was. At the same time, they were listening what the teacher said. Since it is difficult to attract their attention in a short time, they got bored with the flashcards and pictures. “The cards with single pictures which can be held up by the teacher. They can be used for presenting and practising new words and structures, for revision. The teacher can draw a picture on the flashcard, or stick on a picture from the magazine; flashcards can also be used to show words or numbers” (Doff, 1988). When the teacher began to behave as an actress, all the students were standing up around her with exiting eyes. While they were looking at her, she started to sing the song about the

vocabulary. All the student got excited and began clapping their hands. They were automatically following her. They naturally learned the vocabulary while singing.

Each student had different characteristics, it was not suprising that in the beginning some of them did not join the game. While children were easily singing, some others were very shy and only watching their friends. But then, as they saw their friends enjoy themselves and happy, they took their part in the the game. “Another advantage associated with games is that students’ anxiety towards language learning decreases as games are employed. In language classes, learners feel stressful because they think that they have to master the target language that is unknown to them. Besides, learners become too anxious about being criticized and punished by their teachers when they make a mistake. Games are advantageous at this point because they reduce anxiety, increase positive feelings and improve self confidence because learners do not afraid of punishment or criticism while practicing the target language freely [Crookal, 1990, p.112]” (Yolageldili & Arıkan, 2011, p. 220). It was seen in the observation group that art & craft was helpful at some point but when they learn an English word and repeat it with games, they did not forget the names of the animals or objects in this game. During some games, the teacher of the observation group asked them questions one by one or as a group, or as whole class. Plainly asking questions did not bring answers easily but when they were asked in a game, they answered and remembered the vocabulary.

Through the observation the attitudes of the students were positive. It could clearly be seen that they did not feel themselves in a serious environment like a cold classroom, but, as a group with a leader, who was the teacher. There was a lovely and happy expression on all of their faces as they were smiling and even laughing during the teaching period. Although there were almost no negative points during the observation, only few children were said to become

spoiled. The teacher could easily control them, since they were very young. At the end of each lesson, when the teacher asked the students, the word with the picture of it, almost all the students truly answered her.

4.2.2. The Role of Games in Language Learning to Motivate Students

Games are very helpful to diminish the worries and nervous of the students in a learning environment. They are less afraid to participate in the games than participating in other activities.

Games are the best ways to combine the visual, verbal, auditory and kinaesthetic techniques together because of the fact that very young learners mostly enjoy games, no matter what the aim is; teaching English vocabulary or teaching math. “It can be assumed that teaching English through games is one of the effective techniques. It can help students improve both vocabulary knowledge and ability to communicate” (Chirandon et al., 2010, p. 6). As Chirandon and other researchers of this study found out from their own researches, this is also seen in the observation made for this study that games are very effective in vocabulary teaching especially because they stimulate communication and participation.

In the study, it was observed that vocabulary learning through games were effective to teach five year old children. The advantages of teaching through games were observed clearly by the number of words which were memorized by all the students in the group. It did not take a long time to teach the words and there was no difficulty in making the students concentrate on the vocabulary they were taught.

Gaming method is usually an inclusive method which can be created in many different ways with different combination of other methods. This makes the gaming method is the most efficient, enjoyable and helpful method both for teachers and for the students. Although

games can be seen as last ten minute activities or time-consuming activities by some teachers, when their help for quick learning is considered, they must be the main method for the pre school English vocabulary classes and they are not time consumers.

As being an inclusive method, using games includes different activities. Mostly used materials and games are flash cards, singing songs, body language, questions and answers and listening activities like songs or little stories. In the observation group, all of these were used. Because of the fact that each child has their own learning style, it was not always easy to name a game as the best to teach vocabulary. Finding which games were the most effective ones became easier with the interviews at the end of each lesson. “Even though games are able to implement or apply in English classes, a number of dimensions need to be concerned in so doing. There are how to choose appropriate games, how to design the teaching plan and how to implement games in real class. In terms of choosing games, teachers should be concerned about students’ learning styles. Some students may prefer to work alone than in group. In addition, different games serve different purposes, so when designing a teaching plan, teachers should specify in which stage games would be employed” (Chirandon et al., 2010, p. 7). Except for keeping the students quiet and under control, there were nearly no disadvantages of teaching through games. Sometimes, since they were really excited, they were jumping up and down and dancing uncontrollably in the classroom. They could hurt their friends. This broke the motivation of other students. One of the students was very shy because she was just five years old. When she saw that everybody was shouting and cheering, she began to cry. The teacher could easily control the situation and encouraged this student.

Some of the observations and interviews were recorded. In the interviews, the children were asked what they learnt, whether they liked the lesson or not, which game they liked most. In general, the teacher of this five year old group usually got help from auditory tools,

especially songs. She usually preferred turning almost all of the tools into funny games while teaching these very young vocabulary learners. The game were listed and compared in this part at the same time to find out which one(s) was/were appropriate to teach very young vocabulary learners.

The teacher went into the classroom with a big smile on her face saying 'Hello' as usual. The response she took was also the same as usual from children like a choro were singing 'Hello' together. The teacher showed the cards one by one by repeating the names of the animal pictured on. In few seconds the children's response were heard;

The teacher : A fish, a fish, a fish

The students: A fish, a fish, a fish

The teacher : Good, very good. Now only girls!

The girls : Fish, fish, a fish

The teacher : Now, the boys! (She encouraged them to do better with clapping her hands and saying let's say it men!)

And then the game started. The teacher began to move her hand like fish as all the students were doing the same. Both the teacher and the students walked around by saying fish and trying to make their hands swim like a fish. When observed the students in their position, it could easily be seen the enjoy on their faces. Children were smiling, cheering and walking with their moving hands as if they had been swimming.

The first week, only the names of the animals were taught in the same way. The more active the teacher became, the more ambitious the students became. It was really worth to observe the students when the teacher began to bark like a dog and walk as their teachers did.

It was done for the other animals. Flashcards were also used to help them memorise the words. At the end of the first week, it was clearly observed that they were very enthusiastic to learn new things as long as the teacher managed to keep their attention alive.

In the second week, there was only repetition of the things done in the first week. In general, in both weeks the students were able to remember all they learnt. In addition to the names, five colours were taught by flashcards. It was easy for them to see the colours everywhere in the classroom, even on their clothes.

The teacher : Show me the blue

The students: Blueee ! (They were trying to show the colour of their chairs)

The teacher: Show me the red

The students: Reddd! (They were trying to show the red balls)

The following week was spent only for repetition. Since they enjoyed the teacher's participations in the games, teaching the words were not so difficult.

The teacher: Find the yellow flashcard

The students: Yellow card! Yellow card (They were so excited to find the card.

In the fifth week, six more words were added. It was like something usual for them since they were learning the words as they had learnt them in their native language.

The teacher: Look at me ! (She steps as is she would walk and opens her arms and hands like a robot.) These are my legs and these are my hands. Now , together with me! (With a song.)

The students: Put your hands up

Put your hands down

Put your legs up

Put your legs down

The teacher : Okay everybody, now arms (By the way, she can touch each students to make feel her love.) Let's do together like a bird.

The students: Armm ! (Students were cheering and laughing. They were flying like a bird.)

The teacher taught the other like nose, eyes, ears and mouth. While teaching, the teacher used puppet which is called Cookie

The teacher : Show me the Cookie's eyes

The Students: Eyes (They were showing Cookie's eyes. Students are happy because they like Cookie)

The teacher: Show me your hands . (The teacher prepared students to make fingerplays which is called Open shut them.

The students : Open shut them (Students open and close their hands)

5. CONCLUSION

This study aims at analysing vocabulary teaching to very young learners and the role and part of gaming method in this subject. The most advantageous games were chosen by comparing the vocabulary teaching games. The methodology consisted of three sources; first, some reliable studies on the field, secondly, the observation of an English course including twenty children at five year old for six weeks, and thirdly; the interviews made with these children at the end of the classes.

English teaching is better and more effective to start at early ages and vocabulary teaching should be preferred to be taught first since words are easier to be learnt by pre school learners than grammar rules. Vocabulary is the most important part of a language and the learners mostly tend to make a connection between their mother languages and the foreign language they are learning. Teachers should be very careful about choosing the content and methods for vocabulary teaching according to learner group. Since the learner group is five year old kids here, their familiarities, tendencies and characteristics are examined. This learner group is mostly interested in learning via games.

The young learners are generally analysed with the help of some articles and studies and observations made for this study. It is seen that very young learners are mostly interested in learning through games. “There are techniques that are particularly appropriate for curten types of words- for example actions can be explained through pantomime. Another factor that is worth considering is the age of the learners younger ones react quiet well when we show them concrete illustrations, the older ones can manage pretty well abstack explanations or even definitions” (Pribilova, 2006, p. 19).

Games are the most helpful and enjoyable for the pre-school vocabulary learners. The reason why most teachers prefer games is that pre school children like games a lot when they learn something new. It can be seen that games make them connect the words in their mother languages and in English. Games are the funniest and easiest ways to make pre school learners memorise the words in English.

The games and other methods are told generally to make the reader see the differences among the methods. In the observations, it is seen that the children are taught new words every week. Besides, the repetition of the previous weeks' teachings is done again and again which makes pre-school learners' vocabulary learning stronger and easier. It is clear that vocabulary learning provides easier grammar learning.

Vocabulary teaching is the most important and first step for English teaching to pre-school learners. Games are the best ways to teach them English vocabulary as the studies, observations and the interviews proved. Moreover, games are the most effective ways for English vocabulary teaching to pre-school kids when their capacity, interests and characteristics are taken into consideration. There are lots of different games to teach vocabulary. It is observed and understood that the most advantageous games are the ones including visual, verbal, auditory and kinaesthetic techniques together; the games including songs, movements, gestures, questions, answers. When the age, characteristics and the attitudes of the learners are taken into consideration, these styles become more important. The participation of the learners are also very important for the teachers because very young learners can be very sensitive. "Special activities designed to make children want to talk can provide the motivation needed for shy or reluctant speakers. For example, picture or stories with unexpected images or events; e.g., swimming in sand or opportunities to sing and dance

to a catchy tune, can motivate even shy children whatever English they know''(Paradis et al, 2009, p. 15).

Since English teaching has become a very important education field nowadays in our country, this study aims at helping pre-school English teachers, the authorities preparing curriculums and methods for this English vocabulary learners.

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