

## Effectiveness of Using Games in Teaching Grammar to Young Learners

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**ABSTRACT:** The primary aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners from the view points of Turkish EFL teachers working in primary schools. English language teachers' (n=15) opinions were collected through a questionnaire and the results of this study demonstrated that Turkish EFL teachers have a range of conceptions about using games in grammar teaching similar to those reported in the current literature. The study suggests that while Turkish EFL teachers accept the effectiveness of using games in grammar teaching, they do not use games as frequently as expected in their classrooms.

**Keywords:** grammar, children, young learners, games

### INTRODUCTION

Although some teachers of English see language games as time consumers or classroom techniques for fun, games have a special role in any foreign language teaching programme because they facilitate foreign language learning especially for young learners. 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. Games have become crucially important for English language learners and teachers not only because they provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also as they encourage students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. Similarly, because the definition of the term “young learners” encapsulates those children between the ages of about 5 years old to 12 years old (Rixon, 1999), it can be suggested that games are a natural part of young learners' lives.

The relationship between games in the teaching of foreign languages has been explored in various studies in Turkey (İzğören, 1999; Ministry of National Education's English Language Curriculum for Primary Education Grades 4,5,6,7 and 8, 2006; Topkaya and Küçük, 2010). As Topkaya and Küçük (2010) articulate, primary school curriculum for young learners' English lessons should incorporate more games for children. Similarly, Sungurtekin, Sezer, Bağçeli-Kahraman and Sadioğlu (2009: p. 756) explain that “by playing games, a child makes acquaintance with his environment, learns life and gains new instructions.” Ministry of National Education's English Language Curriculum for Primary Education Grades 4,5,6,7 and 8 (2006) further claims that games should be a fundamental part of primary school education because they are motivating, contextualizing, and natural activities that make learning meaningful.

It should be born in mind that language learning is a challenging task requiring constant effort especially for young learners. Games encourage learners to direct their energy towards language learning by providing them with meaningful contexts (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 1984). Therefore, it is important that teachers should not see games as time fillers or tools designed for fun only, but integrate them into their foreign language teaching programmes. It is possible to come up with many descriptions proposed by various researchers about the nature of games. Rixon (1991, p.3), for example, describes games as “form of play governed by rules.” Likewise, Hadfield (1990; Quoted in Deesri, 2002, p.1) describes games as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun.” According to Haycraft (1978, p. 94), “Games are an agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English.” However, games are described by Gibbs (1978; Quoted in Rixon, 1991, p. 3), as “games are activities carried out by cooperating or competing decision makers, seeking to achieve, within a set of rules, their objectives.”

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What is common in all these descriptions 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. As expressed by Lee (1979, p.3) games have a very clear beginning and ending and they are governed by rules. Competition, which is associated with games, plays a crucial role as for the nature of games requires. Learners are excited by competition because the question of who will win or lose remains unanswered until the game is over. Similarly, games' making learning easier in an enjoyable way suggests that games are full of fun which leads to successful learning. In many games, learners are required to cooperate to achieve the goal and most learners enjoy cooperation and social interaction. It is believed that when cooperation and interaction are combined with fun, successful learning becomes more possible. To conclude, no matter how differently games are described, one cannot underestimate their pedagogical value both in teaching and learning a foreign language.

Games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classroom. One of these advantages is that learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in a game. McCallum (1980, p. ix) emphasizes this point by suggesting that "games automatically stimulate student interest, a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques." Avedon (1971; Quoted in Deesri, 2002, p. 2) further argues that "games spur motivation and students get very absorbed in the competitive aspects of the games; moreover, they try harder at games than in other courses". In other words, games stimulate students' interest in classroom activities and as a result, students become motivated and willing to learn.

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).

Games are student-focused activities requiring active involvement of learners. In Crookall's (1990) opinion, learners and teachers change their roles and relations through games and learners are encouraged to take active role in their learning process. As a result, games provide learners with a chance to direct their own learning. From an instructional view point, creating a meaningful context for language use is another advantage that games present. By using games, teachers can create contexts which enable unconscious learning because learners' attention is on the message, not on the language. Therefore, when they completely focus on a game as an activity, students acquire language in the same way that they acquire their mother tongue, that is, without being aware of it (Cross, 2000, p. 153).

Games bring real-life situations to the confinement of the classroom which provides learners with an opportunity to use the language. Celce-Murcia (1979: p. 54) argues that "in games, language use takes precedence over language practice, and in this sense games help bring the classroom to the real world, no matter how contrived they may be." To state this differently, by putting learners in real life situations, games make a connection with the real usage of language. In addition to these, McCallum (1980) explains that there are many advantages of games such as the fact that they

1. focus students' attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items.
2. can function as reinforcement, review and enrichment.
3. involve equal participation from both slow and fast learners.
4. can be adjusted to suit the individual age and language levels of the students.
5. contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition, providing an outlet for the creative use of natural language in a non-stressful situation.
6. can be used in any language teaching situations and with all skill areas (reading, writing, speaking or listening).

7. provide immediate feedback for the teacher.
8. ensure maximum student participation for a minimum of teacher preparation. (p.ix)

To sum up, games have a great pedagogical value providing language teachers with many advantages when they are used in foreign language classes. The review of the studies related to language games indicates that games are crucially important in foreign language teaching and learning in a variety of areas. The major areas mentioned in the literature are using games in teaching grammar to young learners (Nedomová, 2007; Bekiri, 2003; Hong, 2002); factors to consider while choosing games; deciding which game to use (Nedomová, 2007; Rixon, 1991; McCallum, 1980); deciding the time to use games (Lee, 1979; Rinvoluceri, 1990); the role of teacher in using games to teach grammar to young learners; teacher's preparation (McCallum, 1980); the role of the teacher as a facilitator (Celce-Murcia, 1979); class organization (McCallum, 1980); learner participation (McCallum, 1980; Lee, 1979); and the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners (Amato, 1988; Gunn & McCallum, 2005; Deesri, 2000; Celce-Murcia & Hilles, 1988).

The fact that games are the most suitable instructional activities for young learners is obvious because they are a natural part of their existence. Nedomová (2007, p.17) argues that "young learners are not able to pay their attention for more than 10-20 minutes and after that they start to be bored and tired." Especially when grammar teaching is too dependent on rules and memorization, they start to lose their interest and motivation. Teachers know that young learners like being physically active as they learn by doing. Moreover, they are imaginative and creative and they learn without being aware of it. Besides, young learners use their previous experience, knowledge, several skills, and abilities which help the teacher present the new information by enabling children to practice the new knowledge on top of their previous knowledge (Nedomová, 2007, p. 28). Therefore, the best way to direct this capacity in grammar teaching is using games. Bekiri (2003, p.1) states that when a lesson includes a game, the game gives a chance to the teacher to help learners acquire new forms and lexis in an effective way. It should not be a complicated game, but a simple one because it is usually more effective as young learners find it difficult to understand a long list of rules. Similarly, games should also include praise and encouragement because young learners always love to be the centre of attention. In addition to all these, it should be born in mind that games should be as short as possible because as mentioned before, young learners are able to pay their attention to the games just for a limited time. Hong (2002) gives some suggestions to teachers about using games for teaching young learners by claiming that:

- a. When giving instructions to beginners, a few words in the mother tongue would be the quickest way to make everything clear. More English exposure is needed at a later stage.
- b. Games are best set up by demonstration rather than by lengthy explanation.
- c. It is very important not to play a game for too long. Students will begin to lose interest. It is best to stop a game at its peak. (p. 1)

Teaching young learners is a very demanding issue that needs consideration. Research in Turkey has shown that only 35% of pre-service teachers of English believe that their teacher education curriculum prepare them as effective teachers of English that can teach young learners successfully (Özkan & Arıkan, 2010). This problematic issue is important because the teacher should come up with the most suitable activities and tasks to teach young learners. As such, games are one of the best ways to direct young learners' energy not only to grammar learning, but also to many skills and areas of the language. However, it should be taken into consideration that as they are young learners, teaching them through games requires special effort from the teacher. Hence, two factors, namely, deciding which game to use and deciding the time to use games need to be explained.

### **Which Game to Use**

Teachers should be careful about choosing games if they want to make them advantageous. First of all, the teacher should decide on the purpose of a game. A game may seem appropriate and useful.

However, when its value is considered from the view point of foreign language teaching, it may have little or no purpose. Nedomová (2007, p.19) underlines the fact that we “should consider whether the game-like activity is for children only to make the lesson more attractive and protect them from being bored or whether we tend to revise and practise some particular part of grammar, vocabulary, etc.” when they choose a game.

Considering the level of the game is equally important while choosing games. Teachers must decide whether the level of the game fits students’ language level because a game may become difficult when it is beyond the learners’ level or it may become boring when learners find it too easy to carry on. When a game’s value in grammar teaching is considered, teachers tend to use them for practice or to reinforce a specific grammatical aspect of language only if a game is suitable for learners’ level so that the grammatical knowledge can be used easily as they are playing the game.

The fact that games enable social interaction and participation is also important. Learners, especially the young ones, learn better when they interact with their peers. Some games may include both cooperation and competition together. While students cooperate within a team, they, at the same time, compete against another team (Rixon, 1991, p. 5). Hence, what teachers should consider while choosing a game is the fact that children learn best with games which require physical action, interaction, competition and participation.

In addition to all these, there are many other factors such as the size and the physical properties of the classroom, the equipment, materials and the time available for a game (McCallum, 1980, p. xii). In conclusion, teachers should take all these factors into account while choosing a game because a game which seems to be most appropriate may turn into a complete failure in the end.

### **When to Use the Games**

Games are mostly used when there is some time left at the end of the lesson to keep students quiet. However, Lee (1979, p. 3) proposes that “games should not be regarded as a marginal activity, filling in odd moments when the teacher and class have nothing better to do.” With this in mind, games should be put into the center of classroom teaching and they should not be treated as a merely warm-up activity. Rinvoluceri (1990) clarifies that a game can be used in any of these three stages while using them as a part of grammar instruction:

- a) before presenting a given structure, especially to find out diagnostically how much knowledge is already known by the learners;
- b) after a grammar presentation to see how much the group have grasped;
- c) as a revision of a grammar area (p. 3).

Teachers should be well aware of their roles while using games in their classes. Since it is rather difficult to find a game that meets all the needs of the learners, careful preparation of the teacher is necessary. McCallum (1980, pp. x-xi) suggests that the teacher should organize the game before the instruction. The teacher may need some extra equipment or materials to play the game and most of the time these equipment and materials are not available in the classroom. Before explaining the rules to the class, the teacher should first understand how the game is played. Especially when working with children, the teacher should always be prepared to adapt the game to the givens of the class. After choosing the game, the teacher should explain its rules to the learners in a direct and non-complicated way. Especially for young learners, it may be necessary to use the mother tongue because if these learners cannot understand how to play the game, there is no educational purpose in playing it. Therefore, demonstrations may be beneficial because they can help young learners understand the rules clearly and easily. Moreover, the teacher is not recommended to interrupt a game to correct the mistakes of young learners. According to Celce-Murcia (1979, p. 54), “interruptions should be as infrequent as possible so as not to detract from the student’s interest in the game. An alternative to immediate correction is to make note of errors and discuss them when the game is over”. In other words, as sudden interruptions may distract learners’ attention, it is better to wait until the game is over to discuss and correct the mistakes of the learners. In addition, appropriate class organization

increases the success of a game. Many games require the class to be divided into groups or pairs. This gives the teacher a chance to monitor the activity of the learners while they are playing the game. McCallum (1980, p. xii) asserts that learners should be in the same team during the year because it both saves the teacher's time and helps learners develop team spirit that promotes exchange of ideas among themselves. Pair work is also beneficial as it develops learners' communication skills. In short, dividing class into pairs and groups enables learners to improve their language and communication skills while promoting competition among the teams or pairs. As such, the teacher may find more time to focus on students' language development.

Games increase learners' proficiency in practicing grammar communicatively. With the help of grammar games, students can develop their ability in using language as they are given a chance to use language in the situations which have a purpose (Deesri, 2000, p. 3). Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988, p. 132) claim that when English language learners participate in games, the language they use is task-oriented and their aim is more than producing the correct speech. Therefore, games provide learners with a chance to practice grammar communicatively provided that games attract learners' attention to some specific forms before the communicative practice. When this is achieved, the relation between form and discourse is enhanced with the help of games because the form(s) aimed for attention exist naturally in the larger discursive context provided by games. In short, games provide learners with an opportunity to drill and practice grammatical rules and forms by presenting them in a communicative way. In sum, with the introduction of communicative competence, games, which were treated as time fillers or for relaxation activities, began to appear as an indispensable part of any English foreign language teaching programme.

Having reviewed the importance and features of games from various angles, the primary aim of this study was to the opinions of Turkish EFL teachers on the use of games in their English language classrooms. For this aim, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

- (1) What are Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs about the pedagogical value of using games in foreign language classrooms?
- (2) What are the teachers' attitudes towards using games in grammar teaching?
- (3) What do teachers think about the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners?
- (4) To what extent do the teachers of EFL make use of games while teaching grammar?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study was designed as a descriptive study with an aim to explore the beliefs and habits of Turkish EFL teachers' towards using games in young learners' English classes.

### **Participants**

Fifteen EFL teachers voluntarily participated in the study and in the selection of the participants, purposive sampling was used to get the most adequate data from the available individuals within the researchers' reach. The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 54. Only two of the participants were at the beginning of their teaching career. More than half of the fifteen participants' ages ranged from 30 to 40. The rest of the participants were older than 45 years old. All of the participants worked in 6 different primary State schools. Among the participants, the females were in majority (27% males and 73% females). The demographic information on the sex and age of the participants is given in table 1.

### **The Research Instrument**

A questionnaire was prepared by the researchers and was applied in different schools in Edirne and Ankara. The questionnaire was composed of fifteen questions. In the first part of the

questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of taking part in the questionnaire. In the second part, they were asked to fill in the demographic information about their age, sex, and the school type at which they were teaching. In the third part, they were asked to fill in the option which best showed their opinion about games and their effectiveness in teaching grammar to young learners. The questionnaire included a five-point Likert type scale with five options, namely, 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'undecided', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. The items in the questionnaire were prepared under the light of the relevant literature and since all of the participants were EFL teachers, the questionnaire was administrated in English. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated to be .072, suggesting moderate reliability which can be resulted from the low number of the questions asked in the questionnaire and the low number of the participants. However, as the relevant research suggests, any number above .67 can be accepted as acceptable in terms of the instrument's reliability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 506).

**Table 1**  
Demographic Information about the Questionnaire Participants (*n*=15)

Age	Male	Female
Below 29	50%	50%
30- 40	12.50%	87.50%
45- 55	40%	60%

### Data Analyses

After the administration of the questionnaire, the results obtained from the participants were analyzed with the help of a reknown spreadsheet application. The data were tabulated and the frequencies and percentages for each question were presented in tables.

## RESULTS

The results obtained from the analysis of data for each item are discussed elaborately in this part of the article.

**Table 2**  
Teachers' Beliefs about the Pedagogical Value of Using Games in Language Teaching (*n*=15)

#	Statement	Agree	Disagree
1	I believe that games are both fun and full of pedagogical value.	86.67%	13.33%
5	I believe that games should be given a special role in a foreign language teaching programme.	93.33%	6.67%
9	I believe that games present many opportunities to learners to show their skills not only in grammar but also in many language areas.	100%	0%
13	I think that teachers must use games for fun only for breaking down boredom.	53.33%	46.67%

The results of the first question show that a great majority of EFL teachers, 86.67%, believe in the pedagogical value of games in second language teaching. Question five asked participants whether games should be given a special role in the foreign language teaching programme or not. The results of question five reveal that nearly all of the participants, 93.33%, agree with the idea that games should be given a special role in the foreign language teaching programme. The results of question nine indicate that all of the participants are of the same opinion that games provide learners with a chance to show their skills not only in grammar, but also in many areas of language. Lastly, thirteenth question was directed to learn whether participants think games as tools designed only for fun or alternatives that can be used to make instruction more effective. Results show that while nearly half of the participants think games as tools for fun, others think them as one of the best alternatives to make the instruction beneficial for learners. Consequently, *Table 2* reveals that although some of the EFL teachers do not think that games have any pedagogical value, the ones thinking them pedagogically valuable are in the majority.

**Table 3**

*Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Games in Grammar Teaching as a Form of Instruction (n=15)*

#	Statement	Agree	Disagree
2	I believe that I cannot measure students' knowledge of grammar when I use games in my classroom.	36.67%	63.33%
6	I believe that using games to teach grammar may distract students' attention during the instruction.	43.33%	56.67%
8	I believe that using games in my grammar class can be time-consuming	40%	60%
10	I feel uncomfortable when I don't give the exact rules for every grammar subject.	80%	20%
12	I find it difficult to find a game for every aspect of grammar.	86.67%	13.33%

The results show that most EFL teachers (63.33%) do not agree with the idea that games prevent teachers from measuring students' knowledge of grammar when they are used as a form of instruction. Similarly, 56.67% of the teachers do not believe that games distract students' attention when they are used for teaching grammar. Sixty percent of the teachers disagree with the idea that using games in grammar classes is time-consuming. Question twelve indicates that most of the EFL teachers, 86.67%, have difficulty in finding a game for every field of grammar. In conclusion, the results of *Table 3* reveal that while most of the EFL teachers still believe in the validity of teaching direct rules, their attitudes towards the use of games as a form of instruction are generally positive.

The results of question three indicate that a great majority of EFL teachers, 93.3%, believe that games lower students' anxiety towards grammar learning. Therefore, games help students overcome their anxiety, feel relaxed and be enthusiastic to learn. Question four reveals that most of the EFL teachers (76.67%) believe that games are effective in grammar teaching. Question seven shows that the important part of the teachers, 93.3%, are agree with the idea that grammar games encourage, entertain and promote fluency. Question eleven reveals that a great majority of teachers, 86.7%, think that games are motivating and entertaining way of teaching grammar, especially for weak students. Similarly, Bekiri (2003, p.3) emphasizes this point by saying that the cooperation between the group members help weaker learners overcome their stress and motivate them to participate in the game because they know that the better ones are there to help them when they need. Lastly, the results of question fourteen indicate that a great majority of EFL teachers, 90%, believe that while playing a game, learners do not focus on the structures only, but they learn them unconsciously. As a result, *Table 4* reveals that a great majority of EFL teachers are aware of the fact that games are effective in many ways in grammar teaching.

**Table 4**

Teachers' Thoughts about the Effectiveness of Using Games in Teaching Grammar to Young Learners (n=15)

#	Statement	Agree	Disagree
3	I believe that using games can lower students' anxiety towards grammar learning.	93.33%	6.67%
4	I believe that games are not very effective in grammar teaching.	23.33%	76.67%
7	I believe that grammar games encourage, entertain, teach and promote fluency.	93.33%	6.67%
11	I believe that games are highly motivating and entertaining way of teaching grammar, especially for weak students.	86.67%	13.33%
14	I believe that while playing a game, learners are not concerned about focussing on the structures, but learn them unconsciously.	90%	10%

**Table 5**

The Frequency of Using Games for Teaching\Learning Grammar (n=15)

#	Statement	Agree	Disagree
15	I use games in my grammar class as much as possible.	63.33%	36.67%

Question fifteen was directed to the participants to reveal how frequent they use games in their EFL classes to teach grammar. The results indicate that many of the participants, 63.33%, try to use games as much as possible in their classes. However, one can conclude from the results that games are not used so frequently as expected in EFL classes because the results *Table 5* reports are low in percentage when compared with the results of other questions. One of the reasons for this, as Deesri (2002) suggests, is that as there is a very limited time and a strict schedule to study all the content and material; so, it is not so easy to incorporate games into the class (p. 4). Another reason suggested by the current literature is that most of the time, teachers find it difficult to find a game for every field of grammar. As a result, the use of games in grammar teaching/learning is often neglected.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners from the view points of Turkish EFL teachers who work in primary schools. Games are important in primary school classrooms because as Vernon (2006, p.1) claims, as young learners play a game, they "focus on the activity and end up absorbing the language subconsciously." Similarly, Gunn and McCallum (2005) express that games are another way to help students learn, review, and internalize various grammar structures. As the findings of this study show, according to the teachers, games are an important and necessary part of English language teaching and learning in the context of primary schools' English lessons simply because they provide EFL teachers with many instructional advantages. Games are one of the best ways to direct young learners' energy into language learning because young learners like to be physically active; moreover, they are imaginative and creative and they learn subconsciously. Therefore, teaching young learners requires a special effort and challenge

by the teacher and games are one of the best ways to achieve this. However, for a game to achieve its purpose, it is necessary that teachers should consider some factors such as deciding on which game to use and the time to use the game in their classrooms. Besides, teachers have some other important roles such as making the necessary preparations about the game, organizing the class, and running the activity as smoothly as possible. Hence, for a game to become pedagogically successful, it is important that teachers should be aware of their roles and all the other factors affecting the success of a game. As such, Celce-Murcia (1979, p.54) asserts that games should not only be used to prevent class from being monotonous or to attract students' attention or to fill the time at the end of the class.

It is obvious that the participants articulate that games are effective in teaching and practising grammar. Grammar learning becomes enjoyable and permanent as a result of games' providing learners with a meaningful context for practising grammar communicatively. However, some of the results of this study point at the problematic practices despite this recognition. It is found that 80% of the EFL teachers feel uncomfortable when they do not teach grammar by explicitly giving the grammar rules. This shows that although English language teachers recognize the value of games for the teaching of English grammar, they still follow a rule-based approach to teaching grammar rather than helping students to get used to using the grammar forms especially in the natural process of games. This finding supports that put forward by Wei-Pei's (2008) earlier work in which it was found that although teachers claim that they recognize the value of games in English language classroom and claim to be using games in their classrooms, observations show that classrooms were in fact heavily teacher fronted. This clashes with the literature because instead of being taught the rules explicitly, students feel more positive about being taught through alternative grammar teaching methods (Gunn and McCallum, 2005, p. 38). Likewise, Deesri (2002, p.3) reports that students feel uncomfortable and stressful in the classroom because they have to master unfamiliar and unknown grammatical structures and this affects their learning which can be dealt with the use of games.

Although this study is a small scale study employing the views of 15 participants, it can be considered as an important step in identifying the practitioners' views on an important topic, that is, young learners' learning of English grammar with games. Current projection of the Ministry of National Education supports the view that games make up an indispensable part of all primary school foreign language education (Ministry of National Education's English Language Curriculum for Primary Education Grades 4,5,6,7 and 8, 2006). Hence, research and pre-service and in-service training programmes should pick up all aspects of teaching English with games as an important topic.

In conclusion, a close examination of these results point that Turkish EFL teachers recognize the pedagogical value of using games in their classrooms and agree that while teaching the grammar rules explicitly is still important, using games as a form of instruction is also beneficial. Similarly, the participants express that using games is effective in grammar teaching especially for young learners. Finally, results of this study further show that although a great majority of the participants favours the effectiveness of using games in grammar teaching, they do not use games as frequently as expected. Most of the participants express that this is because of the crowded classroom environments and the heavy load of the curriculum. With accurate planning and information passed onto the teachers, this problem should be dealt with to secure the benefits of games in the foreign language classroom. Lastly, in coursebooks and materials, the use of games can be emphasized and by presenting alternative games, foreign language teaching can be enriched so that primary school students enjoy learning English in a robust manner.

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# Çocuklara Dilbilgisi Öğretiminde Oyun Kullanmanın Etkinliği

**ÖZ.** Bu çalışmanın başlıca amacı, çocuklara dilbilgisi öğretiminde oyun kullanmanın etkinliğini ve ilköğretim seviyesindeki Türk yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin sınıflarında oyunların kullanımına ilişkin görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Dilbilgisi öğretiminde oyun kullanmanın etkinliğine dair popüler görüşler, bu çalışmanın yazarı tarafından hazırlanmış bir anket kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Çalışma sonuçları, dilbilgisi öğretiminde oyunların etkinliği konusunda Türkiye'deki yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin ilgili kaynaklarda belirtilenlerle benzer görüşlere sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, öğretmenlerin dilbilgisi öğretiminde oyunların etkinliğine inandıkları halde, sınıflarında oyunları beklenildiği kadar sık kullanmadıklarını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** gramer, dilbilgisi, çocuk, oyun.

## ÖZET

**Amaç ve önem:** İletişim yetisinin ortaya çıkışı ile birlikte, zaman geçirici, rahatlatıcı, eğlendirici aktiviteler olarak görülen oyunlar, İngilizce eğitim programının vazgeçilmez bir parçası olarak görülmeye başlandı. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma, ilgili literatür kapsamında oyunların kullanımının yabancı dil öğretimi nasıl etkilediğini ele almak ve Türkiye'deki yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin oyunların kullanımına ilişkin görüşlerini öğrenmek için hazırlanmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Bu çalışmaya 2 farklı şehir ve 4 okuldan toplam 15 yabancı dil öğretmeni gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Katılımcı sayısının oldukça düşük olmasına rağmen ortaya çıkan tablo, yabancı dil öğretiminde oyun kullanımına ilişkin görüşler hakkında gerçekçi ipuçları sergilemektedir. Araştırmacılar tarafından ilgili literatürden yararlanılarak beş basamaklı (1=Hiç Katılmıyorum, 2=Katılmıyorum, 3=Kararsızım, 4=Katılıyorum, 5=Tamamen Katılıyorum) bir anket hazırlanarak 2008-2009 eğitim-öğretim yılında yabancı dil öğretmenlerine uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar daha sonra analiz edilerek tablollaştırılmış ve değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmada temel amaç yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin oyunların kullanımıyla ilgili görüşlerine ilişkin genel bir görünüm elde etmek olduğundan, sonuçlar "Katılıyorum" ve "Katılmıyorum" şeklinde iki temel kategoriye dönüştürülerek değerlendirmeye alınmıştır.

**Sonuçlar:** Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlar, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin %86.67 gibi büyük bir çoğunluğunun sınıflarında oyun kullanmanın eğitsel değeri olduğuna inandığı, direk kural öğretiminin dilbilgisi eğitiminde hala önemi olduğu halde, eğitsel değeri olan oyunların da oldukça avantajlı olduğunu düşündüklerini ortaya koymuştur. Benzer bir şekilde, katılımcılar oyunların özellikle çocuklara dilbilgisi öğretiminde oldukça etkin olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Ancak, bu çalışmada, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin büyük bir çoğunluğunun oyunların eğitsel etkinliğinin farkında oldukları halde sınıflarında oyunları beklediği sıklıkta kullanmadıkları saptanmıştır.

**Tartışma ve öneriler:** Çalışmada, genel olarak, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin, çocuklara dil öğretiminde oyun kullanmanın eğitsel açıdan birçok avantaja sahip olduğuna inandıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Araştırmanın diğer bir önemli sonucu ise, yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin sınıflarında oyunları gerektiği sıklıkta kullanmadıklarıdır. Neden olarak ise katılımcılar sınıfların kalabalıklığını ve ders programının yoğunluğunu göstermişlerdir. Sorunun çözümüne yönelik olarak yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin de görüşlerini içeren daha detaylı bir çalışma yapılabilir. Genel olarak ise, özellikle devlet okullarındaki sınıf mevcutları düşürülerek öğrenene bilişsel, duyuşsal ve psiko-motor becerilerini daha iyi geliştirebileceği ve sergileyebileceği ortamlar yaratılabilir. Buna ek olarak, yoğun ders programları daha uzun döneme yayılarak teorik bilgi öğretimine ilişkin yığılmanın önüne geçilerek pratiğe daha çok zaman verilebilir. Son olarak ise, hazırlanan ders kitaplarında oyunlara daha fazla yer verilerek ve alternatif oyunlar tanıtılarak uygulayıcılara kılavuzluk sağlanabilir.