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A Study into Traditional Child Games Played In Konya Region In Terms Of Development Fields of Children

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Abstract

Being a phenomenon as old and universal as human history, game is one of the basic needs of children. Depending on these needs, where is a child, there is a game. Children could combine all their knowledge and skills required for life through games, explain themselves in a very easy way and exhibit their skills. Game, which is the most effective learning process for children, is a real means of education and provides us with carrying the knowledge attained throughout preschool period and school years from one generation to another and support the development of children in physical, cognitive, linguistic and social – emotional aspects. In this perspective, the current study was carried out to evaluate traditional child games which are a part of Turkish culture and about to disappear in terms of development fields of children. The study is a descriptive survey and the data of the research was obtained through personal interviews. The data was collected through “Interview Form for Traditional Child Games”. The population of the study was made up of young people and adults at the ages of 18-88 chosen randomly and living in the town of Ilgin, the city of Konya in the years 2013 and 2014. The data of the research was analysed in descriptive analysis technique which is used as a descriptive research method. At the end of the study, it was found that games contribute to the motor, linguistic, cognitive and social emotional development fields of children and to their self-care to a great extent.

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1. Introduction

Game, which is as old as human history, has reached today, although it underwent some changes during the history. Being influential on every stage of child development from the first years of life, games are very important. Although game is generally defined as all of the physical and mental activities aiming at having fun or enjoying, it

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means to fulfil free time, and have a good time lifelong for adults (Arslan, 2000; Sevinc, 2004; Ozyeser- Cinel, 2006; Colak, 2009).

With an aim or not, performed with or without rules, but in each case something in which a child takes part voluntarily, game, a part of real life, is the basis of physical, cognitive, socio – emotional development and language development and is an active learning process by which a child best expresses himself (Arslan, 2000; Gunturkun, 2009; Toksoy, 2010; Girmen, 2012). In this sense, game is a natural and educational environment, and through game, a child may have the opportunity to learn such senses as touching, seeing, smelling, listening and tasting. By this way, a more permanent and natural learning occurs. (Yazici-Ersoy, 2010; Firat, 2013).

The most effective way of children education, game is a real education tool, and the knowledge and skills, gained in the years before and during school, are passed down through it. A child learns behaviours, knowledge and skills necessary for life in a game autonomously (Aksoy, 2014; Goksen, 2014). Game, which meets almost all necessities and is an effective source to ease the unity with outer world, enables the child to know his environment, explore it, to improve his abilities through new experiences, to express himself his emotions and thoughts, to communicate with his environment, and to adapt himself to social roles. In this sense, child relaxes through game and continues his personal development through his position among the people. Therefore, game helps child know himself and be aware of his own characteristics that separate him from other people (Arslan, 2000; Sevinc, 2004; Ozyeser-Cinel, 2006; Bagceli, 2008; Colak, 2009; Goksen, 2014).

In addition to its effect on personal development, game is an important element contributing to social and cultural development of a child. One of the most important contributions of game to socio – cultural development of a child is its development of language. In a role in the game, speech, tongue twisters, song and other elements effect the language development positively. Game is also effective in enriching vocabulary, expressing emotions and thoughts properly, speaking in front of public in a relaxed way, tone of voice, adjusting the stress of words, as well as listening and understanding others (Basal, 2007; Gunturkun, 2009; Firat, 2013). Children learn to communicate with each other, share, cooperate, help each other and solve problems together. That children solve the problems in a game together shows that game contributes to development of reasoning, curiosity, creative thinking, perception and understanding skills as well as cognitive skills of a child (Gumustas, 2010; Firat, 2013; Goksen, 2014).that the child creates scenes like the real world enables the child to present lots of different events and problems and to decide during the game. This requires the child to use his cognitive skills to find answers to questions and supports cognitive development (Aslan, 2000; Gunturkun, 2009).

Children gain the social rules and ethics more easily by games. They also learn such social rules as respecting others, protecting both his and others' rights, making a decision on any topic and applying it and cooperating. Besides, the activities during the games supports the small muscles such as finger and hand, and also big ones such as arm and leg. Especially through the games which require physical power (running, jumping, climbing etc.), breath, circulation, digestion and excretory systems of the children work regularly and the games help development (Bakirci, 2007: 203; Esen, 2008: 359; Gumustas, 2010: 17; Goksen, 2014: 233). Having the necessary behaviours and skills for the life, game supports the cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional development positively. From that point, the research is aimed at evaluating how the traditional games, which were a part of Turkish culture, effect child development.

2. Method

This is a qualitative research in which data is collected through interviews in the region where the traditional games are played. Descriptive analysis was used in the research. While descriptive analysis doesn't require deep analysis in data input, content analysis requires a deeper analysis of data gained and to reach concept and themes explaining these data (Yildirim and Simsek, 2008).

2.1. Study group

The study group of this research is composed of randomly selected 45 young and adult people between the ages of 18-88 living in Ilgin, Konya. The topic of research is traditional games gathered from the town of Ilgin and its villages in Konya.

2.2. Analysis of Data

Data of the study is obtained with personal interviews with young and adults. In interviews, “what kind of games do you know from your environment in your childhood?” is asked and they are asked to express the games they observed. The games interviewers told are saved in “Interview form of traditional child games”, developed by researchers, and some comments are made with descriptive analysis which is one of the quantitative methods used in data analysis. All of the games are about social, emotional, language, cognitive, motor development and self-care skills of children. In addition to its requirement for social, emotional, language, cognitive and motor development, the games are classified according to which skills it develops, and relations with other development areas are set. The data obtained are analysed in themes according to development areas of children.

3. Findings and discussion

In traditional games, a lot of information, skills, behaviours and attitudes take place. 60 games, which are subject to the study, are analysed by relating them to the development areas in preschool educational program. The data obtained is presented in tables and discussed.

The distribution of content features in traditional games according to development areas of children is presented in Table 1.

Table1. The distribution of content features in traditional games according to development areas of children

| Development areas | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Motor development | 16 | 26.6 |
| Social and emotional development | 16 | 26.6 |
| Language development | 14 | 23.3 |
| Cognitive development | 11 | 18.3 |
| Self-care skills | 3 | 5.0 |
| Total | 60 | 100.0 |

It is seen that in table 1, the content features in games are 26.6 % for motor, social and emotional development areas, 23.3 % for language development, 18.3% cognitive development, 5.0% for self-care.

Firat (2013) pointed to the importance of games for the development of spiritual, social, emotional, physical, language development and suggested that in games like Bezirgan Basi, especially traditional games are helpful tools for mental, language, physical, personal, social and emotional developments. This result fits into the finding that features of child games contribute to development areas of children.

Content features of games which support motor development are presented in Table 2 according to other development areas.

Table 2. The relations of content features of games supporting motor development with other development areas

| Games Supporting Motor Development | Development Areas | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Social and Emotional Development | Language Development | Cognitive Development | Self-care Skills |
| Karpuz Kabugu | * | * | | |
| Caldirim | * | | * | |
| Kukali Saklambac | * | | | |
| Gommeli Celik Comak | * | | * | |
| Fos | * | | * | |
| Yakar Top | * | | | |
| Yerden Yuksek | * | | | |
| Voleybol | * | | * | |
| Misketim Misket | * | | * | |
| Mendil Kapmaca | * | | * | |
| Futbol | * | | * | |
| İp Sekme | | * | * | |
| Birdir Bir | * | * | * | |
| Ficca | * | | * | |
| Cuval Oyunu | * | | | |
| Onbir Elli | * | | * | |

When Table 2. analysed, it is estimated that nearly all of them (15) support emotional development, a majority of them (11) support cognitive development, a few of them (3) support language development.

When you analyse the content features of the games in table, it can be said that they support such skills and competence about motor development as walking, jumping, rolling, holding objects, carrying, rolling something, pulling and rope jumping and that the games are related to some explanations in preschool education program about motor development; *“He/she does movements.”*, *“He/she does activities in balance.”* *“He/she does movements requiring control.”*

Together with its support to motor development, it can be said that games support these aspects; joining groups, obeying rules, building a sentence, adjusting his voice, keeping speaking, explaining what he listened, counting, paying attention, remembering, and also the knowledge, skills and competence about language and cognitive development. And these aspects are related to these; *“He/she performs his/her responsibilities.”* *“He/she obeys the rules in different environments.”*, *“He understands the meaning of what he watched and listened.”*, *“He uses his voice properly.”*, *“He/she pays attention to object / situation / event.”*, *“He/she counts objects.”*

The distribution of content features of games supporting social and emotional development according to the other development areas is given in Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of content features of games supporting social and emotional development according to the other development areas

| Games Supporting Social and Emotional Development | Development Areas | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | Motor Development | Language Development | Cognitive Development | Self-care Skills |
| Kumbet | * | | * | * |
| Yitirmeli | * | | | |
| Ara Kestirmece | | | * | |
| Gommeli Celik Comak | * | | * | |
| Evcilik | * | * | * | * |
| Saklambac | * | | * | |
| Uzun Esek | * | | * | |
| Toplu Saklambac | * | * | * | |
| Guvec Guvec | * | | * | |
| Hop | * | | | |
| Balik Agi | * | | * | |
| Guzellik mi Cirkinlik mi? | | * | * | |
| Kose Kapmaca | * | | * | |
| El Ustunde Kimin Eli Var? | | * | * | |
| Sapan | * | | * | |
| Tasta Toprakta | * | | * | |

When Table 3. is analysed, it is seen that among the features of games affecting social and emotional development, almost all (13) support motor and cognitive development, a few (4) support language development and just (2) support self-care.

When the content features of these games are analysed, it is seen that they support such skills and competence about social and emotional development as expressing emotions, self-confidence, obeying the rules, joining group games, sharing, waiting his turn, performing responsibilities. And these features are related to *“He/she expresses his/her features.”*, *“He/she performs his/her responsibilities.”*, *“He/she obeys the rules in different environments.”*, *“He/she has self-confidence.”* in preschool education program.

Together with their support to social and emotional development, it can be said that games support walking, running, jumping, adjusting voice, showing somehow what he listened, paying attention, cleaning his hands and face, and also knowledge, skills and competence about motor, language and cognitive development. And these are related to; *“He/she does movements.”*, *“He/she expresses somehow what he listened or watched.”*, *“He/she pays attention to object / situation / event.”*, *“He/she obeys the rules of being clean.”* in preschool education program.

The distribution of content features of games supporting language development according to the other development areas is given in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of content features of games supporting language development according to the other development areas

| Games Supporting Language Development | Development Areas | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | Motor Development | Social and Emotional Development | Cognitive Development | Self-care Skills |
| Pat Pat | | * | * | |
| Simit | * | * | * | |
| Himbil | | * | * | |
| İsim Sehir | | * | * | |
| Son sesle sozcuk | | | * | |
| Ac Kapiyi Bezirgan Basi | * | * | * | |
| Catlak Patlak | | * | * | |
| Dodi Dodi Gezdik | | * | | * |
| Kutu Kutu Pense | * | * | * | |
| Eski Minder | * | * | * | |
| Tuzluk | * | * | * | |
| Dusuren Esek | * | * | * | |
| Damdan Atlasana | | * | | |
| Ellem Bellem | * | | * | |

When Table 4. is analysed, it is seen that among the features of games supporting language development, almost all of them (12) support social and emotional, cognitive development, more than half (7) support motor development, just (1) supports self-care.

When the content features of the games in the table is analysed, it can be said that games support adjusting voice, joining in chat, asking questions, expressing emotion, thoughts and dreams, using different vocabulary, reading and writing skills and also skills and competence about language development. And these aspects are related to; *“He/she adjusts his/her voice.”*, *“He/she expresses somehow what he listened and watched.”*, *“He/she shows awareness of phonetics.”*, *“He/she shows awareness of writing.”* preschool education program.

Together with its support to language development, it can be said that games support these aspects; obeying the rules, joining in group activities, paying attention, remembering, grouping, holding a pen, running, eating and drinking. And these aspects are related to; *“He/she obeys the rules in various environments.”*, *“He/she remembers what he perceived.”*, *“He/she does movements requiring small muscles.”*, *“He/she eats enough and in a balanced way.”*

Table 5 The distribution of content features of games supporting cognitive development according to the other development areas is given

| Games Supporting Cognitive Development | Development Areas | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Motor Development | Social and Emotional Development | Language Development | Self-care Skills |
| Renkli İstöp | | * | * | |
| Yedi Kiremit | * | * | | |
| Hotak | * | * | | |
| Ciz | * | | * | |
| Sebit | * | * | * | |
| Korebe | | * | * | |
| Bes Tas | * | | | |
| Lades | | | * | |
| Seke Seke Ben Geldim | * | * | * | |
| Carsiya gittim | | * | * | |
| Nesi Var? | | * | * | |

When Table 5. is analyzed nearly all of the features of games (8) improving cognitive development have qualities supporting social and emotional and language development and more than half of them (6) support motor development.

When the content features of the games in the table are analyzed, it is seen that traditional games improve skills and competences of cognitive development such as paying attention, remembering, predicting, observing, matching, problem solving and these features are related to the cognitive development goals of pre school curriculum such as *“He/she pays attention to objects/situations/events.”*, *“He/she make guesses about objects/situations/events.”* *“He/she remember the things he/she perceives.”*, *“He/she observes objects and things.”*, *“He/she matches objects and things with their features.”*, *“He/she produce solution to the problems.”*

These games not only improve cognitive development but also knowledge, skills and competences of social and

perceptual, language and motor development such as obeying rules, forming sentences and collecting objects and these features are related to social and emotional, language and motor development goals of preschool curriculum such as “*He/she obeys the rules in different circumstances*”, “*He/she does the exercise requiring small muscle movements.*” and etc.

The distribution of content features of games supporting self-care skills according to the other development areas is given in Table 6.

Table 6. The distribution of content features of games supporting self-care skills according to the other development areas

| Games Supporting Self-care Skills | Development Areas | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | Social and Emotional Development | Language Development | Cognitive Development | Motor Development |
| Gydim Gitti | * | * | * | * |
| Kapi Kapi Gezdik | * | * | * | * |
| Yangin Var | * | | * | * |

When Table 6 is analyzed all of the features (3) improving self care skills have features supporting cognitive, social and emotional development and a great number of them (2) have features supporting motor and language development.

When the content features of the games are analyzed, it is seen that they support the features of self-care skills such as eating foods, being attentive about etiquette, getting dressed, protecting from dangers and accidents and these features are related to the self care skills goals covered in preschool curriculum such as “*He/she has adequate and balanced nutrition*”, “*He/she gets dressed.*”, “*He/she protects himself/herself from dangers and accidents.*” and etc.

These games support self care skills and improve the knowledge, skills, competences of social and emotional, language and motor development such as taking responsibilities, telling the parts of the objects, communication, moving and these features are related the goals of social and emotional, cognitive, language and motor development covered in preschool curriculum such as “*He/she distinguishes meronym.*”, “*He/she uses the language for communication.*”, “*He/she does the movements of swapping.*”

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

When the content features of the traditional games covered in this study and bearing in mind they are mainly in the framework of field classification, it is seen that traditional games have the features improving the kid’s motor, social and emotional, cognitive and language development. It is found that games categorized according to development areas include the goals not only belonging to the areas covered in preschool curriculum but also the goals of other development areas.

In the light of the findings of the study, followings are suggested

- The total development of kids can be supported by including traditional games which are supportive for their motor, language, cognitive, social and emotional development and self-care skills into the activities implemented as the daily plan in pre-school curriculum.
- It is important to implement traditional kids games which are especially today about to be forgotten in terms of kids' gaining national identity and getting to know their culture and values into teaching activities.
- Parents, educators and municipalities can design areas enabling kids to play freely.
- Suitable games can be selected after compiling traditional games belonging to other regions and these games can be used by doing norm determination study.
- Teachers can be informed about the use of kid’s games as an educational tool and their importance by organizing seminars, conferences and workshops about traditional games.

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