



UNIVERSITETI I EVROPËS JUGLINDORE
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ НА ЈУГОИСТОЧНА ЕВРОПА
SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES – SECOND CYCLE

Thesis:

“The effectiveness of play-based learning English with young learners”

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Tetovo, April 2022

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby certify that this thesis has been composed by me and is based on my own work, unless stated otherwise. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this including graphs and data sets, have been specifically acknowledged.

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Acknowledgments

At first, all thanks belong to our majestic God for giving me good health and opportunities to work, earn money, study and come to this phase.

Secondly, my beloved family deserves very special thanks since they always are the ones who support me every time and everywhere, and do the same thing now, too.

Thirdly, extraordinary thanks go to my mentor, Professor Veronika Kareva for her backup, contribution, advice, feedback, heed and stimulation until the completion of my master thesis.

And lastly, all the participants in this research study merit sincere thanks because their furtherance and help contributed a lot in the realization of all this.

Abstract

This master thesis aims to investigate the efficacy of play-based learning on the system of education, more concretely on the primary level. Likewise, in other words, it attempts to reveal the attitudes, points of view, thoughts and beliefs of students, their teachers and their parents as well toward learning through play.

Play-based learning means learning while playing. This approach can be considered as very necessary in fulfilling activities at school and at home. It gives students the opportunity to express themselves, explore language and feelings, learn English concepts, develop a range of skills, and so forth.

This research study took place in the primary school “Ilir Lushtaku” in Prekaz, Skenderaj. The participants that have been selected for this study were fifty students from sixth to ninth grade who actually learn English language through play. Additionally, twenty parents whose children attend their primary studies at the target school were part of this research study, too and three English language teachers, one from this primary school and two others from two different primary schools in the municipality of Skenderaj.

Three instruments were used in discovering the goal of the study: questionnaire, interview and experiment. Parents had to fill in a questionnaire related to the play-based learning approach, whereas English language teachers were interviewed and students took part in the experiment sessions.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in order to measure the three instruments and the whole realization of the study lasted four weeks.

The results of the study are expected to be beneficial for current and future English students and teachers and also for parents who got more informed about the importance of play-based learning.

Keywords: *effectiveness, play-based learning, students, teachers, parents . . .*

Abstrakti

Kjo temë masteri ka për qëllim të hetoj efektshmërinë e mësimit bazuar në lojë në sistemin e edukimit, më konkretisht në nivelin fillor. Gjithashtu, me fjalë të tjera, ajo përpiket të zbuloj qëndrimet, pikëpamjet, mendimet dhe besimet e nxënësve, mësimeve dhe prindërve të tyre gjithashtu drejt mësimit përmes lojës.

Mësimi bazuar në lojë nënkupton të mësuarit gjatë lojës. Kjo qasje mund të konsiderohet si shumë e nevojshme në përmbushjen e aktiviteteve në shkollë dhe në shtëpi. Ajo u jep nxënësve mundësinë që të shprehin veten e tyre, të zbulojnë gjuhën dhe ndjenjat, të mësojnë koncepte në gjuhë angleze, të zhvillojnë një varg të aftësive, dhe kështu me radhë.

Ky hulumtim zuri vend në shkollën fillore “Irir Lushtaku” në Prekaz, Skenderaj. Pjesëmarrësit që janë zgjedhur për këtë hulumtim ishin pesëdhjetë nxënësit nga klasa e gjashtë deri në të nëntën të cilët në të vërtetë mësojnë gjuhën angleze përmes lojës. Përveç kësaj, njëzet prindër fëmijët e të cilëve ndjekin studimet fillestare në shkollën shënjestër ishin pjesë e këtij hulumtimi, gjithashtu dhe tre mësimeve të gjuhës angleze, një nga kjo shkollë fillore dhe dy të tjerë nga dy shkolla të ndryshme të komunës së Skenderajt.

Tri instrumente u përdoren në zbulimin e synimit të hulumtimit: pyetësi, intervista dhe eksperimenti. Prindërit kishin për të plotësuar një pyetësor në lidhje me qasjen e mësimit bazuar në lojë, ndërsa mësimeve të gjuhës angleze ishin intervistuar dhe nxënësit moren pjesë në seancat e eksperimentit.

Metodat cilësore dhe sasore janë përdorur për të matur tri instrumentet dhe i tërë realizimi i hulumtimit zgjati katër javë.

Rezultatet e hulumtimit ishin pritur të jenë përfituese për nxënësit dhe mësimeve të tanishëm dhe të ardhshëm të gjuhës angleze dhe gjithashtu për prindërit të cilët u informuan më shumë rreth rëndësisë së mësimit bazuar në lojë.

Fjalët kyqe: *efektshmëri, mësimi bazuar në lojë, nxënësit, mësimeve, prindërit . . .*

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

Play-based learning is a pedagogical approach that engages and encourages every member of the class. It promotes the areas of development, exploration and learning of children/students. According to Walker (2007), ‘‘ the approach of play-based learning provides two most naturalistic and significant process by which children/students can build their knowing and comprehension, practice learning abilities, steepen themselves naturally in a broad range of literacy and numeracy and engage in productive, intrinsically stimulating learning environments ‘‘ (p. 21).

The foremost aim of the play-based learning is ‘‘ to promote a sense of wonder, exploration, investigation and interest in a rich range of materials, resources and opportunities in which the child can engage (Walker, 2007, p. 30). It is an undeniable fact that all parents and teachers’ desire is to invest in children’s learning and the collaboration between them is the key to better outcomes, therefore it is impressive to let their children/students play every single day of their life.

In accordance with the opinion of Wallerstedt and Pramling (2012), the approach of play-based learning is different from the concept of play. Many conducted studies about play-based learning have defined two types of play, such as: free play and guided play. Free play is totally directed by the children themselves meanwhile guided play is the play that has some level of teacher guide or participation (Fisher, Hirsh-Pasek, Newcombe and Golinkoff, 2013).

Consequently, play as an essential strategy for learning and teaching creates meaningful, joyful, engaging, attractive and interactive situations. It is claimed that a play-based learning environment encourages talking, reading, thinking and writing. Through this, it facilitates the development of skills, communication, dispositions, knowledge and the capability to provide and receive different kinds of information.

Briefly, play has an essential role in early childhood classrooms and in the lives of all children/students (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, Singer, 2009).

1.2.The significance of the thesis

Early education is very important for parents and their children. The main purpose of early education is to lead children/students/young learners to productive growth and development. Therefore, early education has to be applied because it helps them to evolve capacity and improve abilities.

Play-based learning is an educational approach implemented by teachers at school and parents at home. This kind of approach offers benefits for children's learning, such as: involvement, motivation, problem solving, analyzing, evaluating, applying knowledge and creativity, and so forth.

Taking into consideration the major benefits of play-based learning was the main indicator why this topic is chosen. Having read diverse books and online materials, likewise having attended many training sessions (locally and abroad), including online ones and it has been noticed that play-based learning is an inseparable part of education, at the same, it is one of the most important.

The findings of this research study were expecting to be entirely profitable for young learners, their parents and their English language teachers, in particular they seemed to be utterly beneficial for students, parents and teachers of "Iir Lushtaku" primary school in the municipality of Skenderaj.

1.3.The structure of the thesis

This master thesis consists of five chapters which are:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Literature review**

3. Methodology

4. Findings and discussion

5. Conclusion.

The introduction part focuses on the play-based learning approach. This chapter provides definitions and tries to elaborate the main elements of it. Further on, it also covers the significance of the thesis, the structure of it, research aim and objectives. A brief summary of chapter number one is incorporated by the end of it.

The second chapter includes previous research on this field. Additionally, it defines the meaning of play-based learning, continuing by the role, importance, effectiveness and benefits of play-based learning English with young learners. Likewise, a short summary of the target chapter is part of it, too.

The third chapter elaborates all the used methodology throughout the entire realization and completion of this dissertation. It deals with design of the study, research questions, hypotheses, population, sample, data collections and instruments. It gives detailed information about each subheading, as well.

Chapter number four involves and discusses the findings taken from parents' questionnaire, English language teachers' interview and also the experiment realized with English language students. Moreover, this chapter analysis hypotheses one by one and provides the verification of each.

All at the end, chapter five, conclusion part comprises a brief summary of the whole master thesis. In addition, limitations and recommendations for future research studies are impressive parts of it. Bibliography and appendices are included by the end of the thesis, too.

1.4.Research aim

-The purpose of this master thesis is to discover the effectiveness and significance of play-based learning on the education system; furthermore, it attempts to highlight the major attitudes of students, English language teachers and parents toward learning English through play, and

lastly it tends to figure out the outcomes of young learners who capture English language through play.

1.5.Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this research study are:

- To figure out the prominence and efficiency of play-based learning on the system of education;
- To reveal beliefs, points of view and attitudes of students, English language teachers and parents about play-based learning;
- To discover if play-based learning is beneficial and effective for young learners;
- To find out if play-based learning brings strong enthusiasm, inspiring moments and positive outcomes to young learners;

Summary

The introduction chapter defines the importance and effectiveness of play-based learning approach in the process of education. It also covers the meaning of this approach, and its usage in teaching and learning English language with young learners. Except this, the target part determines the whole structure of the thesis, the aim of the research and the objectives, too.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. Introduction of literature review

The sequential chapter covers former research studies and various opinions or views of various authors in relation to the educational approach of play-based learning. More precisely, the second chapter deals with the definition of play-based learning, two impressive types of it, the function, significance as well as the efficiency of the target approach. Next, it elaborates the benefits of play-based learning to young English language learners of ‘‘Ilir Lushtaku’’ primary school.

Play-based learning as a pedagogical approach has become a very supportive treatment in teaching and learning English language to all students, especially to young ones. Play as an essential strategy for learning is more effective in primary school programs because it helps children or students to evolve their general skills, featuring language, social, science, English and Maths skills. Moreover, it increases learners’ imagination, initiative, attention, enthusiasm, confidence, persistence, curiosity, creativity, engagement, motivation, empathy and emotional aspect. Besides this, play-based learning is pleasurable.

Supporting the above-mentioned ideas, Helen Hedges in 2000 claimed that while playing, children or learners, experience new abilities, for instance, sharing toys with others, agreeing on how to work together, figuring out how to make a building with smaller blocks when the larger ones are not available, and so forth. In a word, children are ‘hands-on’ learners who pick up knowledge through playful interaction with objects and people (Hedges, 2000).

The educational approach of play-based learning can be used from preschool programs till the elementary ones. Play-based learning approach, also considered as playful learning, includes hands-on experiences and a variety of learning materials. In this type of approach, something impressive is that, learning is typically led by children meanwhile teachers usually are followers. So, based on some linguists’ viewpoints, tutors take an active or passive place to this approach and they; set up the environment for the children/students and also help to make easier some of

the classroom activities (Acer, Gozen, Firat, Kefeli, & Aslan, 2016; Cutter-Mackenzie & Edwards, 2013).

English language teachers around the whole wide world support positive attitudes toward play-based learning since this approach makes English language lessons more comprehensive, enjoyable, attractive and incentive for students. Meanwhile, play-based learning also facilitates learning at home and helps parents interact with their children. The engagement of parents in children's activities supports children's development through play. Thus, based on the personal opinions of Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek, educators and parents who recruit students/children to play, support them to be "happy, healthy, thinking, caring, and social children who will become collaborative, creative, competent, and responsible citizens tomorrow" (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016, p. 4).

The approach of play-based learning is comprehended in the curricula, as well. Danniels and Pyle, two prominent linguists, explained that play-based learning or shortly PBL is a recommended curricular approach (Danniels & Pyle, 2015). On the other hand, Moon and Reifel in 2008 used the term "integrated lessons" when they discussed situations where learning and play are combined (Moon & Reifel, 2008). Meantime, some well-known linguists recognize play as the laying base for later learning (Hunter & Walsh, 2014; Pui-Wah & Stimpson, 2004).

Despite all, play-based learning is the key core in the field of education. Educators, practitioners/adults, parents, and most importantly, children themselves prefer play-based learning integration in the system of teaching and learning. The set up of success at school, home and beyond is one of the many reasons why they fancy the integration of play-based learning approach.

2.2. What is play-based learning?

Many linguists around the entire globe shared their ideas regarding the definition of play-based learning approach. For instance, Angela Pyle, said that the pedagogical approach of play-based learning highlights the usage of play in promoting many areas of children's progress in learning (Pyle, 2018). Based on Pyle's thoughts, there are two types of play-based learning:

1. Free play
2. Guided play

Sharing Pyle's opinions concerning these two types of play, free play is usually directed by children and motivated from the inside, whereas second type, guided play is usually supported by adults. Free play is profitable for the development of social competence and self-regulation. For example, make believe, is a form of free play, and it allows children to solve problems in the face of conflicts, to prevent their immediate behaviors, to express their inner emotions, to follow social rules, and to backup the emotional well-being of others. On the other hand, guided play is more influential in the acquisition of academic skills. Structuring the surroundings, including the objectives of learning, and modifying games, both parents and instructors increase the opportunities of young children to learn (Pyle, 2018).

Hereto, taking into consideration other linguists' thoughts related to free and guided play, free play is mainly guided by the student, sometimes with little teacher help, interaction or direction. Children often play independently or engage with their peers. Free play can take place inside or outside school or home. When children are outside they may play on a climbing structure or slide, dig in a sandbox, explore nature, or ride bicycles. Teachers typically have designated areas for different types of play in the classrooms as well. Such areas cover a block center, dramatic play, art room, library, puzzle and table-toy area, and also an area for activities, depending on the age of the children (Weisberg et al., 2013).

Meantime, guided play can be directed by the teacher or the student, it all depends on the circumstance. According to Hirsh-Pasek et al, guided play involves hands-on, play-based interactions with an underlying purpose of reaching an academic goal. The teacher bases this type of instruction on classroom observations and a knowledge of each child's ZPD (zone of proximal development) for a particular learning objective. In a guided play, the educator chooses materials in a careful way and engages children or students in play-based activities, by also guiding them to comprehend the goals of curricular through interactions, conversations, and open-ended questions (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). Moreover, Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009) indicated that all tutors have to withstand this tension: "children need both free play and guided, playful learning to best prepare for the entrance into formal schooling" (p. 15).

In a general manner, play-based learning means to learn while at play and for sure, this approach is widely incorporated in education curricula. Since 2000s, the approach of play – based learning has been involved in education curricula across several different countries, such as: Canada, Sweden, China, United Arab Emirates and New Zealand (Synodi, 2010). The same approach (play-based learning) is involved in education curricula of Kosovo, as well and it is pretty much used with young learners of dissimilar school subjects because play-based learning allows students to explore, experiment, and expand on knowledge (Edwards, 2017).

In Emily N. Daubert, Geetha B. Ramani and Kenneth H. Rubin's theory, play-based learning is integral to healthy and social evolution in children. It is scientifically recognized that children who play more are more self-regulated, co-operative, attentive, gentle, and socially competent. Such children or learners show more suitable social behaviors, coping abilities, and experience greater peer acceptance (Daubert, Ramani & Rubin, 2018). Except the above cited conceptions, "Children learn to communicate their feelings, thoughts, and needs through movement and play," according to Stephens and Crowe (2008, p. 4).

2.3. The role and importance of play-based learning English with young learners

The approach of play-based learning is a teaching approach that comprises playful and child-directed elements along with some help and guidance of adults. (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013). For instance, embedding literacy materials within play settings in classrooms is related to children's increased engagement with these materials and the practice of literacy skills (Christie & Enz, 1992; Justice & Pullen, 2003; Stone & Christie, 1996) and teacher involvement in this play can enhance this engagement further (Clark & Kragler, 2005; Tsao, 2008). Besides this, the educator has a responsibility and this responsibility is "to support, not to disturb" (Pramling Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006) students who factually learn while play. Furthermore, educators' duty is to find appropriate ways in order to motivate children/students, as well. Two recognized linguists, Ostrosky and Meadan (2010) think that educators are those who can incite children's play using incentive, modeling, and active role playing with classmates.

Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009) analyzed the significance of both play and play-based learning approach.

“The weight of the evidence, from random assignment to correlational or interventional studies, suggests that both free play and playful learning create optimal environments for achievement. In addition, children in developmentally appropriate classrooms often show less anxiety and stronger social skills”. (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009, p. 4)

A famous author, Villarroel in 2015 noted that the approach of play-based learning is a very noteworthy part of children’s life. The educators should promote learning through play as much as they can. For instance, various games with flashcards, competitions, races, and so forth, are some of the most wonderful ways in which children learn. As well as encouraging active learning, they develop social skills which are also very important at this learning stage. Children need to learn to socialize with each other, applying some important values such as respect and sharing (Villarroel, 2015). Another one, Bergen in 2001 observed “Children begin to engage in pretend play, develop receptive and expressive language, and use mental representation at approximately the same time in their development” (Bergen, 2001, p. 2).

Play-based learning approach also has a very impressive role in the evolution of first and second (L1 and L2) language skills. For example, it is emphasized by Weininger and Daniel that where a blank in children’s interlanguage exists, the usage of physical objects or movement can settle this. This not only allows for meaning to be expressed but for collaborative construction and scaffolding of language to occur (Weininger & Daniel, 1992).

Another far-famed linguist, Welsch (2008) has studied the way how children or students learn from pictures, books, songs, and finger play. Welsch’s findings pointed out that dramatizing stories from children’s literature is a powerful form of play with cognitive, linguistic, and social benefits. Thus, story specific or symbolic props help children extend story lines and encourage role playing. Children can role play the characters of a story, and use story webs, KWL charts (what the child Knows, Wants to know, and has Learned about a given topic), flannel board pieces, puppets, dolls, and other props. These tools help build their vocabularies, comprehension, imagination, and oral communication skills.

As Widdowson (2001) notes, “the play-ground culture is almost exclusively oral”. Such aspect requires children or students to seek ways in order to express themselves verbally. A good example of this kind of activity is a narrative, which, Seach (2007) argues, provides two key elements in children’s language development; context and meaningful communication. Based on him, play partners make easier for children to share the experience while playing with each other.

In other words, Frost, Wortham, and Reifel (2001) tell how children use abilities when they talk about playing. According to them, language supports children in structuring and understanding the meaning of their experiences and emotions, recognizing and making sense of their sensory faculties; play, language use, language development and children’s wider cognitive and social development are tightly connected.

Gee agrees that good games comprehend many learning principles (Gee, 2007) and also have many features that “are particularly relevant to language learning” (Gee, 2007, p. xiii). For example, games can impact vocabulary acquisition (deHaan, Reed & Kuwada, 2010); (Ranalli, 2008), helps the development of listening skills (deHaan, 2005) and helps in improving students’ reading skills (Lu et al., 2007).

2.4. The effectiveness of play-based learning English with young learners

Play-based learning is considered to be more effective than other approaches. According to Smith and Pellegrini (2008), children show positive affection concerning play since they smile, laugh, and enjoy it. In a 2010 survey, conducted by Payne, 45% of parents referred that they do not have enough time to play with their children (Payne, 2013), but fortunately, throughout the school year, children/students practice and improve literacy, English language, Maths, vocabulary, science and social studies skills. Therefore, play-based learning as an educational approach is used by many education professionals in their classrooms (Walther, 2019).

Tutors of kindergarten or preschool childhood often favor play-based learning (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2009). It is the duty of every school subject tutors to help their learners elevate abilities

regarding the subject they teach. Here comes the opinion of Rushton who in 2011 said that childhood educators' task is to help children in analyzing, synthesizing, and clarifying information, and not to indicate facts or figures which do not have meanings (Rushton, 2011).

Likewise, many theorists have thought that playing with objects allows children to think about them in different ways, therefore allowing them to solve problems with them (Dore, Hopkins, Lerner, Lillard, Palmquist, & Smith, 2013). McMahon (1992, p. 1) recognizes the value of play, claiming that "the player is freed to be inventive and creative". Further, Hall (2017) explains that "typically, communicative and interaction-based approaches to English language teaching (ELT) have suggested that teacher talk should be minimized, providing the opportunities for learners to talk, practise and produce language" (p.23).

Jessica Arrow throughout her survey in 2019 declared that play-based learning helps elementary students to get engaged in their education and it brings cognitive, physical, social as well as emotional benefits. In addition, based on her personal thoughts, it supports skills like collaboration, communication, and creativity (Arrow, 2019). By the end of her survey, she indicated that play-based learning into the classroom brings positive outcomes by creating balance between students, investigate thoroughly students' learning, and determines classroom as a place where teachers and learners learn and grow together (Arrow, 2019).

Besides, Burton and Edwards (2009), two prominent linguists, have determined many play rewards for learners of English language: "Play is extremely beneficial in overcoming communication challenges between English speakers and speakers of other languages" (p. 4). Based on Burton and Edwards' mind, while sharing toys, role playing, and building together, children strengthen friendships into the classroom environment. Hence, they continued saying that, through play, children develop vocabulary that allows them to negotiate with one another. Likewise, such learners become more unbound, use their self-regulation, and also expand their overconfidence (Burton & Edwards, 2009).

2.5. The benefits of play-based learning English with young learners

The list of benefits of play-based learning is extensive. In accordance with Berk's views, some of play-based learning benefits are:

- The growth of a dissimilar gangs of capabilities in the young child;
- Children are more progressed in their overall mental evolution;
- An enhanced ability to understand the feelings of others;
- Strengthened mental abilities;
- Improved memory;
- Promotes language and storytelling skills;
- Makes possible children's expanding vocabulary;
- Provides opportunities for children to solve impossible situations;
- Enhances their problem solving skills;
- Builds students' reliance in the decision-making skills, etc (Berk, 1994).

Hereinafter, play-based learning allows students to create, adapt, explore, experiment, learn, communicate, socialize and problem solve in a familiar environment with peers and individually (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, Bowdon highlighted that "play lets children engage in extended interactions that build oral language, imagination, critical thinking, and social skills. Playful learning is more effective for producing student learning than direct instruction" (Bowdon, 2015, p. 33). So, the benefits of play-based learning are profitable which lead children/students into adulthood and future. Most importantly, all parents and educators need to know that while playing children are learning to become harmonious schoolboys/schoolgirls.

To conclude, play is blissful because it allows children to control their learning, and frees them from fear of failure, all of which benefit not only children's cognitive, physical, and language, but also their social affective development. In this case, children are those who establish their behaviors through pleasure and enjoyment by using language in order to carry forward meanings and feelings (Cordier et al., 2009).

Summary

The second chapter of this dissertation stresses the previous research studies concerning play-based learning as well as many meaningful opinions of prominent linguists around the world regarding play-based learning approach. Further on, this chapter highlights the definition of play-based learning, types of it, its role, prominence, effectiveness, as well as the benefits of it in the system of education.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. Research design and methodology

The next parts ensure impressive data about four research questions of the research study, four main hypotheses, all the participants who took part in this research study and the three used instruments. The ethical permission for this particular research study will also be itemized. For better collection of the results, two methods are chosen to use:

1. Qualitative method - this method helped for describing, interpreting and contextualizing the outcomes;
2. Quantitative method - this method helped for measuring, ranking, categorizing and identifying such outcomes.

The aforecited methods are considered as the most convenient ones and they are used in order to collect information about the aim of this research study and to capture the most accurate findings.

3.2. Research questions and hypotheses

The primary **research questions** of this research study are as below:

1. What is the role of play-based learning?
2. How important is play-based learning on the system of education?
3. What are the attitudes of students (young learners), English language teachers and parents toward play-based learning?
4. What are the benefits of play-based learning?

All the above-mentioned research questions contributed pretty much in attaining the goal of this dissertation.

The key **hypotheses** throughout this research study are:

1. English language teachers, young learners and their parents have positive attitudes toward play-based learning.
2. Play-based learning increases motivation and interest of young learners.
3. Young learners comprehend English language better through play.
4. Play-based learning includes all types of learners.

All the aforecited hypotheses helped quite much in reaching the main intention of this master thesis.

3.3. Population and sample

The research study was conducted in the public school, concretely in the primary school ‘‘ Ilir Lushtaku ‘‘ located in the village of Prekaz, not so far from the municipality of Skenderaj, Republic of Kosovo. The entire focus of this research study stands on the effectiveness of play-based learning English as a second language. The target school has a considerable number of students and teachers, approximately 100 students from two shifts and around 20 educators (most of them work as part time teachers in order to complete their working fund). All the tutors possess fabulous knowledge about their profession/subject.

The participants in this research study were English language students (sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders). In total, they were fifty (50) students, 35 males and 15 females. The age of students is 11 – 15. One way or another, they belong to the same level of English language proficiency (elementary).

Likewise, three English language teachers (one female and two males) took part in this research study, as well. One English language teacher was from the aforementioned school and two others from two different primary schools ‘‘Abedin Rexha’’ – Turiqec and ‘‘Elena Gjika’’ – Makermal. The female is married. Her age is 28, and she holds a master degree on English language teaching. Her working experience revolves around 5 years in teaching profession. One of the

men is married whereas the other not yet. Their age is around 33. None of them possess a master degree and the teaching experience of them is around 10 years.

Besides this, twenty (20) parents, 12 females and 8 males, whose children attend their classes in the marked school, were part of the research study, too. All of the partakers belong to the same ethnicity and definitely all of them gave a very big contribution in the realization of this research study.

The ‘‘Ilir Lushtaku’’ primary school starts working at 08:00 in the morning, works with two shifts, and ends working after 17:00 p.m. The duration of each studying hour is 45 minutes and students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade have English language classes twice a week. It is worth mentioning, the indoor and outdoor scenes of this school are marvelous and absolutely attractive.

In the internal part, there are many drawings, pictures, posters, graphics and quotes made by learners meanwhile the external part has a well-decorated yard, many planted trees and colorful flowers, some benches where students can rest before/after school or during the breaks, a football and volleyball field, etc. Taking into consideration the number of students who attend classes at this school, it owns only Biology cabinet, a globe, a projector, some Mathematical tools, some laptops and some musical instruments.

3.4. Data collections and study instruments

The three instruments used in this research study were:

- 1. Questionnaire**
- 2. Interview**
- 3. Experiment**

The cited instruments were realized online, except the experiment. The goal of such instruments was to measure the effectiveness of play-based learning approach in teaching and learning English language.

Twenty (20) parents completed a questionnaire (Appendix 1). The questionnaire for them contained 10 questions each, multiple - choice questions and it was written in two languages, English and Albanian, in order for participants to better capture the questions (Appendix 2). The questionnaire took up to 10 minutes to fill out and the participants were allowed to ask questions if they encountered any difficulties while fulfilling the questionnaire. Each question had two or more options and the partakers had to circle just one alternative. Such questions tended to be quite clear and easily understandable for parents of students.

Three English language teachers were interviewed. The interview (Appendix 3) for English language teachers included 10 open - ended questions. The responses of the respondents were taken through notes, which were immediately reviewed after the interview. This instrument was realized online via ZOOM application.

Fifty (50) students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade took part in the experiment. Different experiments were realized for each grade. Students into a class were divided into two groups, the first group and the second one. The same topic was explained to each group but the same one was taught in two dissimilar ways. Through the experiment learners tended to increase English vocabulary skills.

The first groups learned the topics through the school book meanwhile the second ones learned the topics through the approach of play-based learning. The topics were taken from the class book and based on the school planning. Some of the topics that were covered are: types of music and musical instruments; countable and uncountable nouns; adjectives and nouns of measurement; teenage fashion in Britain, and so forth.

In order to check which group comprehended the topics better, in the end of the lessons, students of each grade were evaluated through tests, classroom activities and crossword puzzle.

The aforementioned instruments (questionnaire, interview and experiment) contributed in verifying the four hypotheses of this research study. The complete realization of it lasted four weeks (by the end of December, 2021 and the second week of January, 2022). The personal data of each participant remained confidential and every response was quite helpful in getting the goal of the research study. It is worth mentioning that prior ethical permission was required from the principal (male) of ‘‘Ilir Lushtaku’’ primary school, three English language teachers, 50 English

language students, and also the parents (20) of some of the students of the target school. Once they accepted the permission and requirement, the realization of the research study started. The findings were carefully collected, analyzed and discussed in order to find out this master thesis's aim.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter number four introduces and discusses the outcomes from the questionnaire done with parents, the interview realized with three English language teachers and the experiment conducted with English language students. All these participants in this research study, one way or another, were part of “Ilir Lushtaku” public and primary school in the municipality of Skenderaj, who felt really enthusiastic in the participation. As it is mentioned previously, the research study had four hypotheses and the verification of them is treated by the end of this chapter.

The analysis of the three used instruments is presented below:

4.1. The findings and discussion from parents’ questionnaire

The questionnaire for parents contained 10 multiple – choice questions. The same questionnaire was written in two languages, English and Albanian, and it was distributed to 20 parents, who helped pretty much in taking the purpose of the research study. The parents were from the municipality of Skenderaj, concretely from the village of Prekaz. Each question had two or more options. The target instrument was completely related to play-based learning at home and at school, including the effectiveness of this approach. In a detailed manner, parents’ questionnaire tended to know if parents practice play-based learning with their children; how often they implement it with their beloved ones; if play-based learning is a helpful approach in encouraging and increasing children’s creativity, imagination and interest to learn English language and to be successful at school; and almost in the end, it inclined to discover children’s reactions in the direction of play – based learning approach. Besides this, the main intention of parents’ questionnaire was to prove the first hypothesis of this research study, such as: *‘English language teachers, young learners and their parents have positive attitudes toward play-based learning’*.

The responses from the questionnaire done with parents are presented and analyzed below:

1. Do you practice play-based learning with your children at home?

According to the question number one of parents' questionnaire, all or 20 parents said that they practice play – based learning approach with their children at home. This also can be verified by the percentage.

- a) Yes – 100%
- b) No – 0%
- c) I don't know – 0%

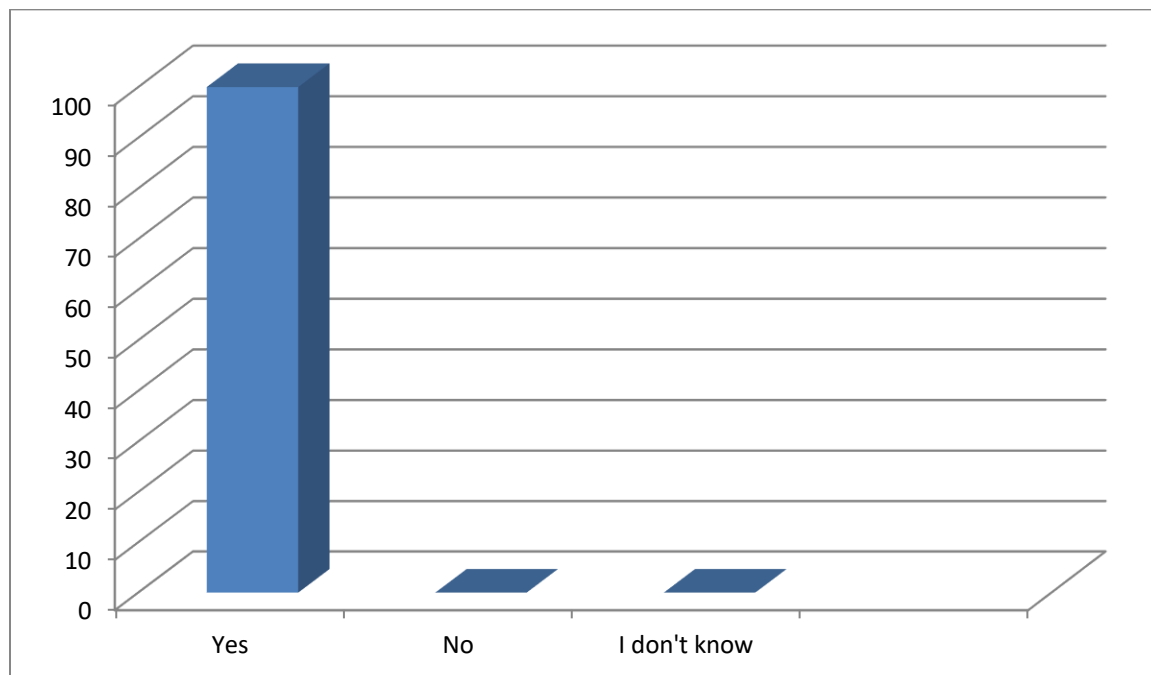


Chart 1: The parents' responses in accordance with question number one.

2. How frequently do you apply play-based learning approach with your children?

According to the second question of parents' questionnaire, they usually, sometimes and often practice play – based learning approach with their children.

- a) Always – 0%
- b) Usually – 10%
- c) Sometimes – 40 %

- d) Often – 50%
- e) Rarely – 0%
- f) Never – 0%

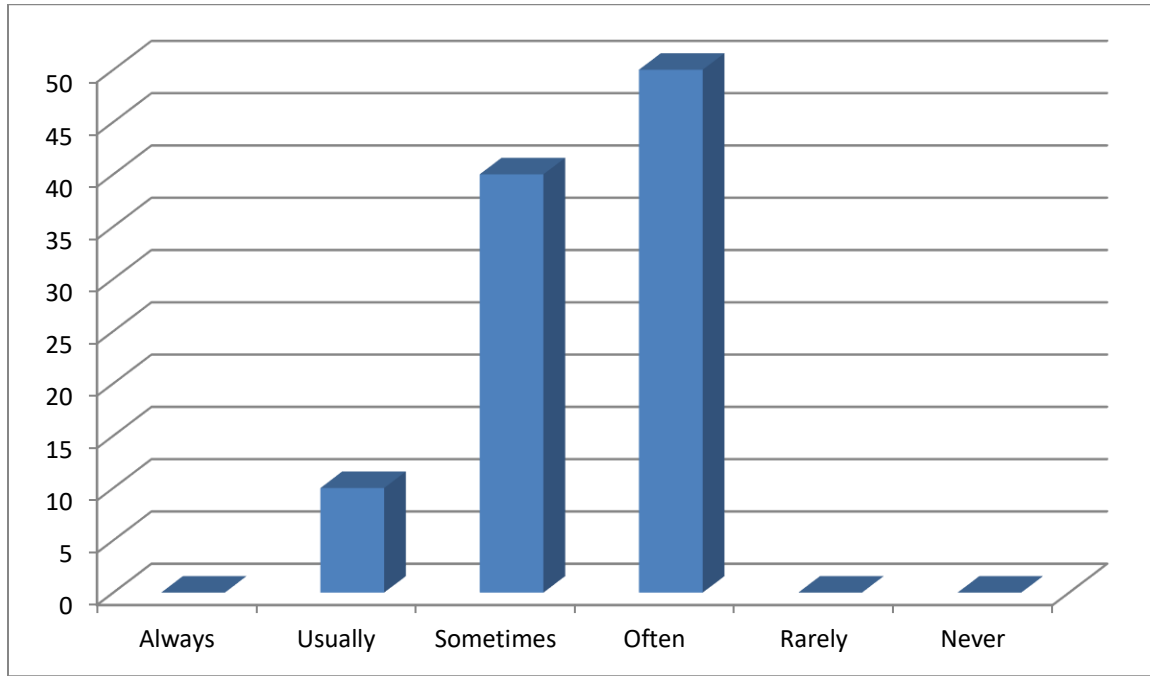


Chart 2: The parents' responses in accordance with question number two.

3. Do you think play helps your children learn?

Play really helps children learn. 20 parents indicated that by choosing the most suitable alternatives. As it can be seen in the below chart, 60% of parents declared that play helps their children quite a lot in learning while 40% of other parents declared that play helps children quite a bit to learn. Whereas, none of the participants in the parents' questionnaire chose the last alternative.

- a) Yes, it helps them quite a lot – 60%
- b) It helps them quite a bit – 40%
- c) No, it doesn't help them at all – 0%

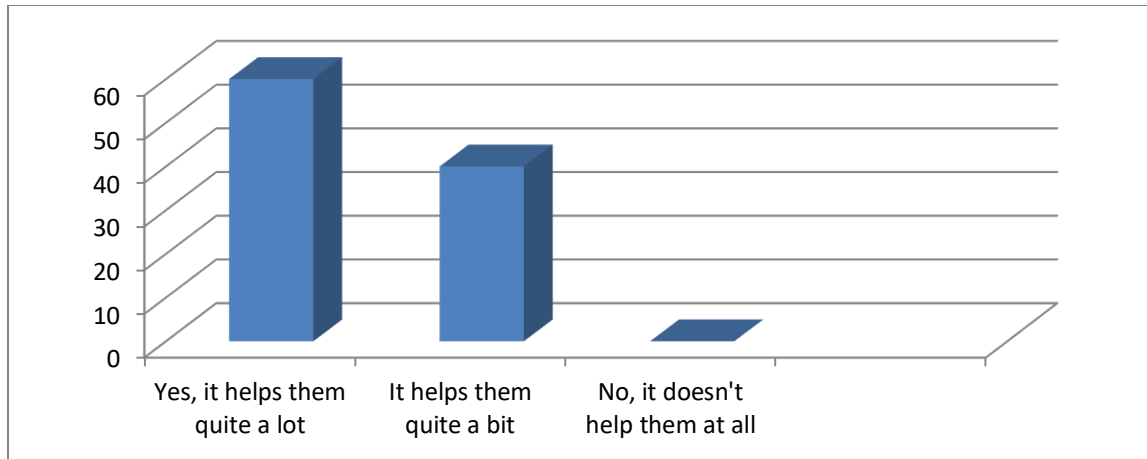


Chart 3: The parents' responses in accordance with question number three.

4. How do your children react toward learning through games?

In accordance with parents' opinions, children show completely positive reactions toward learning through games since all of them circled the first option and none of them circled the other two options.

- a) Positively – 100%
- b) Negatively – 0%
- c) Stay neutral – 0%

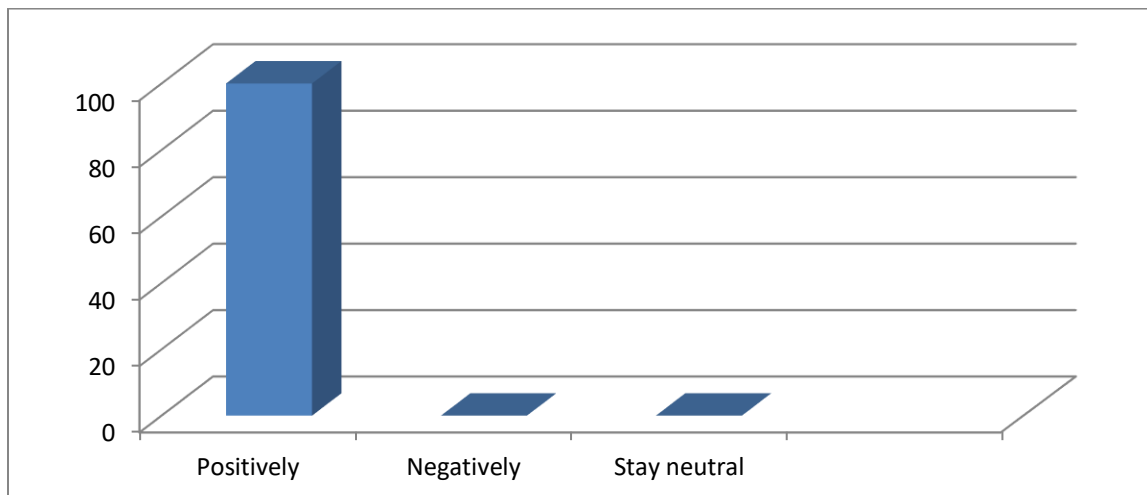


Chart 4: The parents' responses in accordance with question number four.

5. How many hours per week do your children engage in play-based learning?

The chart presented below shows that children engage in play – based learning. Parents' responses can be proved by the percentage, too. So, 20% of parents thought that their children engage in play – based learning more than seven hours during a week meanwhile 80% of them thought differently, their children engage in play – based learning less than seven hours within a week.

- a) More than seven – 20%
- b) Less than seven – 80%

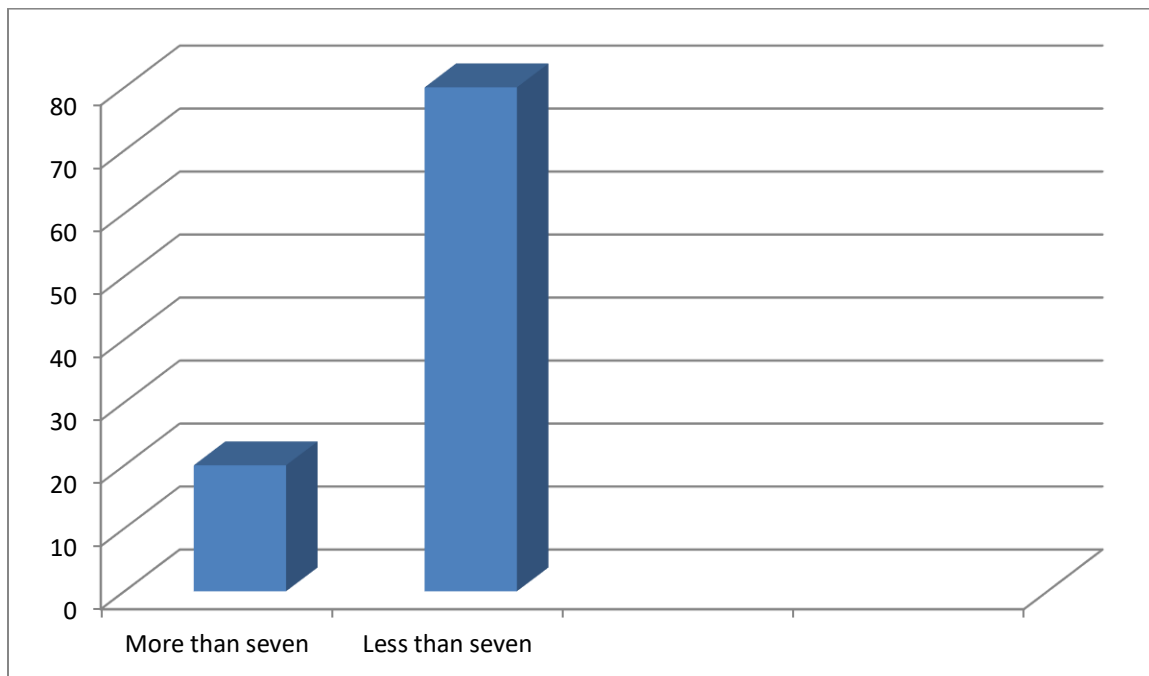


Chart 5: The parents' responses in accordance with question number five.

6. Does play-based learning approach encourage your children's creativity and imagination?

In connection with the sixth question, all parents who participated in this questionnaire emphasized that the approach of play – based learning absolutely cheers up the creativity and imagination of children.

- a) Yes, it does – 100%
- b) No, it doesn't – 0%

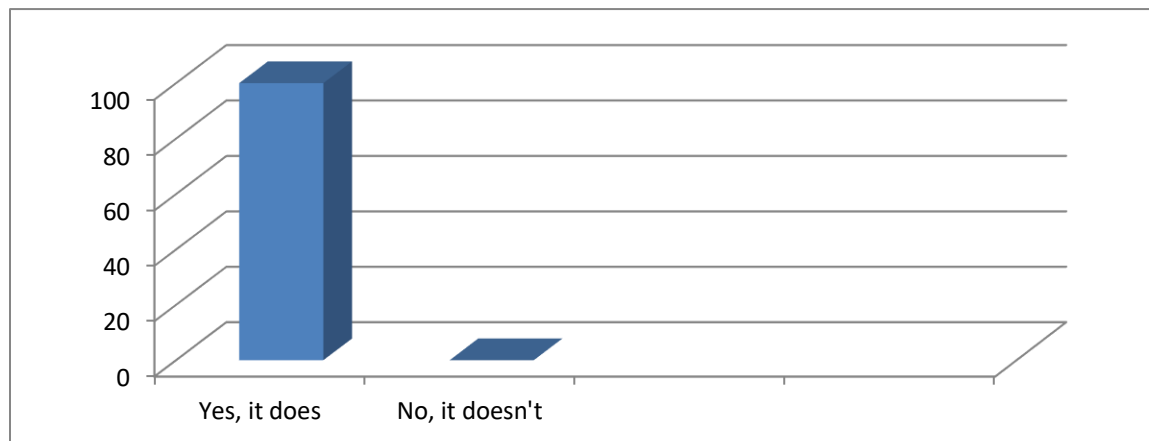


Chart 6: The parents' responses in accordance with question number six.

7. Does play-based learning help your children succeed at school?

With regard to question number seven, the results show that all parents agreed that play – based learning approach helps their children to attain successful achievements at school.

- a) Yes, definitely – 100%
- b) No, definitely not – 0%

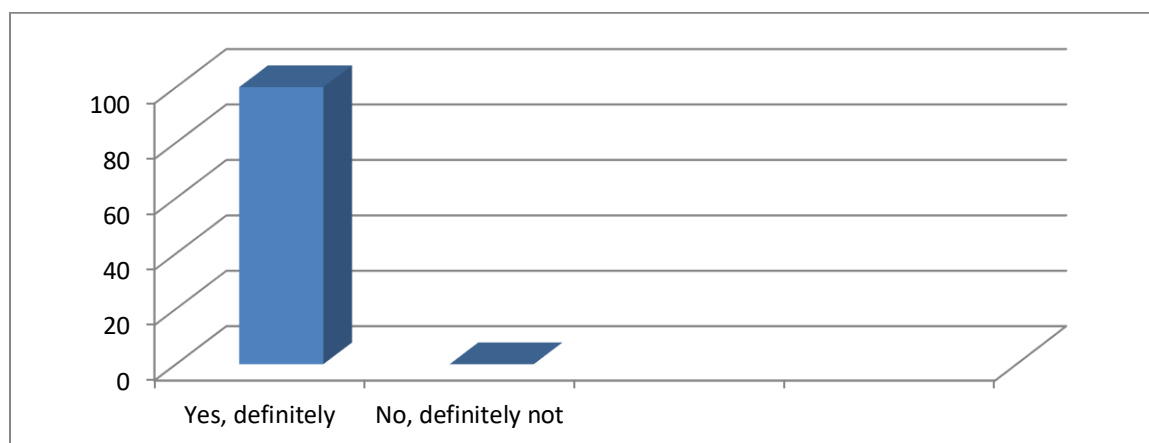


Chart 7: The parents' responses in accordance with question number seven.

8. Do your children enjoy learning English through games?

With regard to this question, every parent pronounced that his or her children like learning English language through games. 85% of parents chose the first option, very much, 10% of them chose the second option, about average, 5% chose the third option, not very much, and the last option, not at all, was not chosen by anyone.

- a) Very much – 85%
- b) About average – 10%
- c) Not very much – 5%
- d) Not at all – 0%

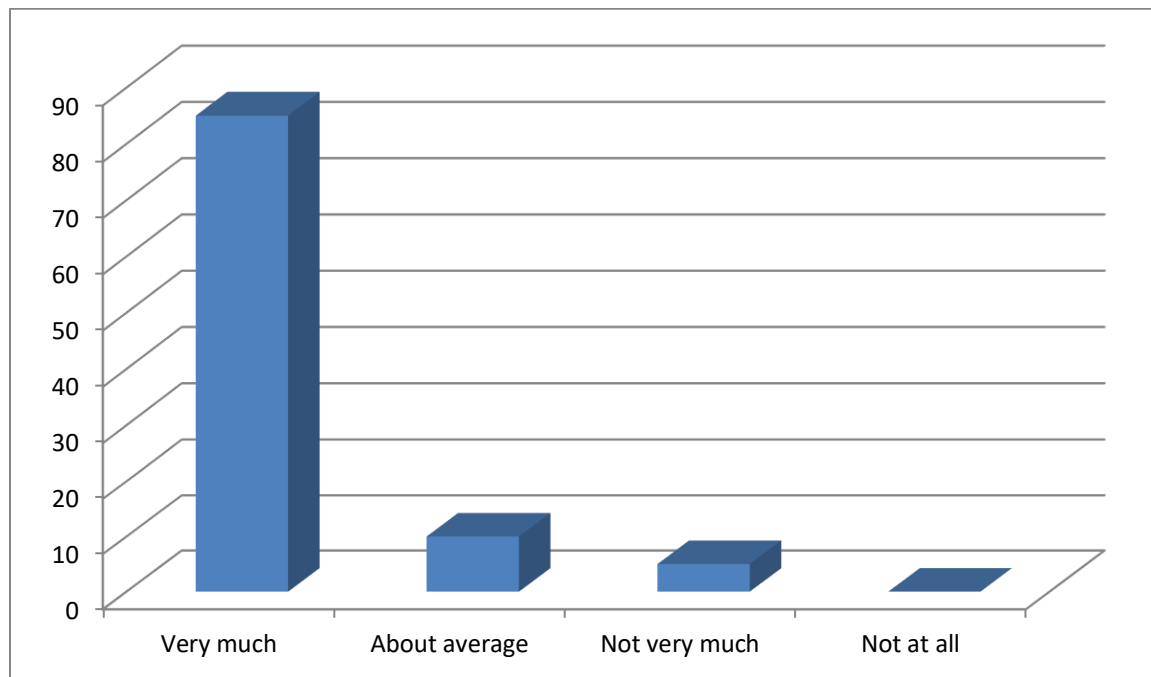


Chart 8: The parents' responses in accordance with question number eight.

9. Does play-based learning approach increase your children's interest and motivation to learn English language?

According to the opinion of parents, the approach of play – based learning elevates the interest and encouragement of children to learn English language. The percentage clearly shows it: 10%

of them selected the alternative, extremely, 20% selected the alternative, quite, and the plurality of parents selected the third alternative, very, while the last two options, not very and not at all, were not selected by anyone.

- a) Extremely – 10%
- b) Quite – 20%
- c) Very – 70%
- d) Not very – 0%
- e) Not at all – 0%

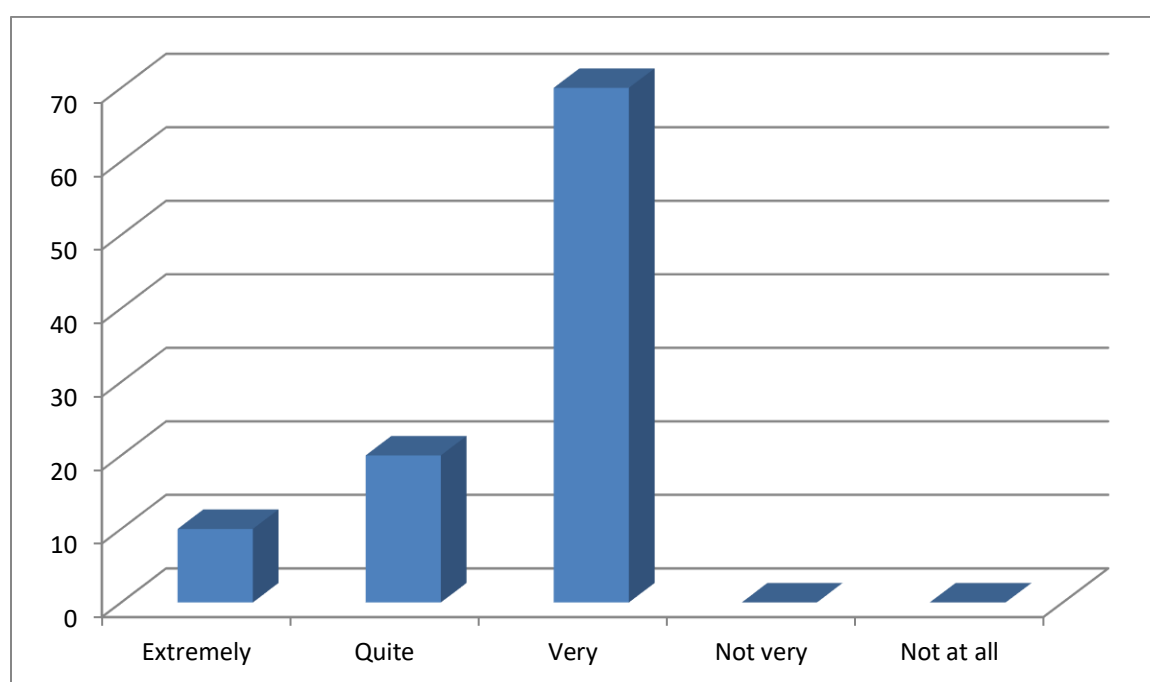


Chart 9: The parents' responses in accordance with question number nine.

10. Do you agree that play-based learning make easier your children's English language comprehension?

In the very last question of the questionnaire, 5% of parents strongly agreed and 95% others just agreed that play – based learning approach facilitates English language apprehension of children. Whereas none of them stayed neutral, strongly disagreed or just disagreed with the submitted question.

- a) Strongly agree – 5%
- b) Agree – 95%
- c) Neutral – 0%
- d) Strongly disagree – 0%
- e) Disagree – 0%

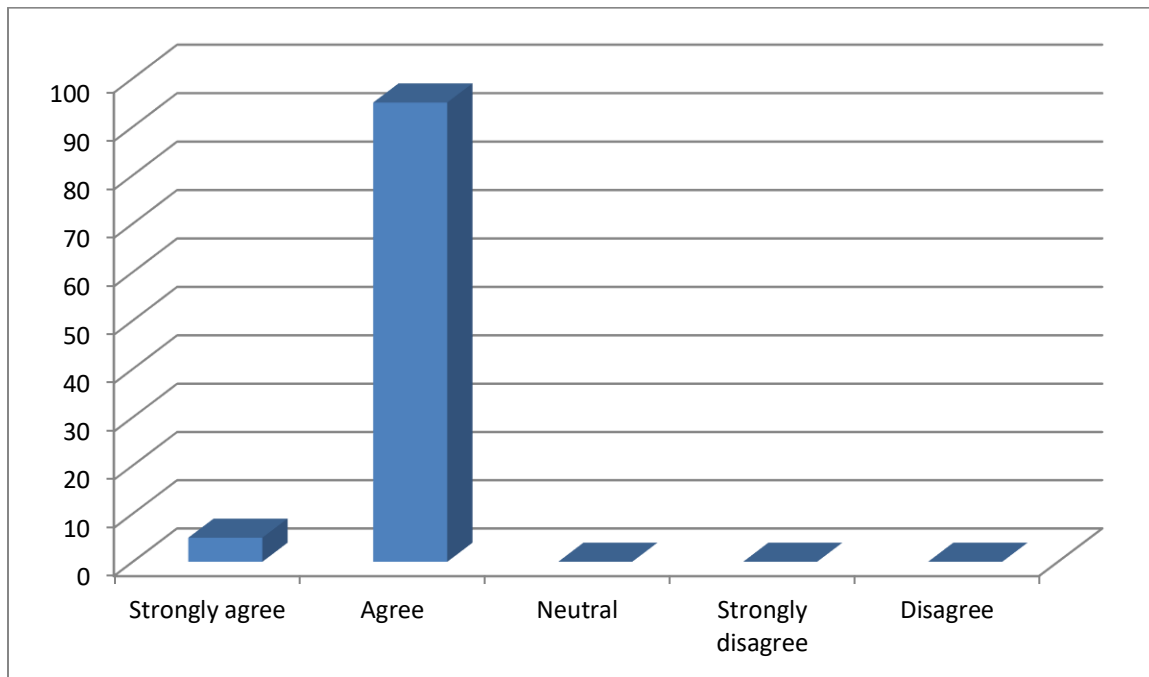


Chart 10: The parents' responses in accordance with question number ten.

As it is above-mentioned, the intention of parents' questionnaire was to figure out their attitudes concerning play – based learning approach. More precisely, this questionnaire intended to uncover if parents practice play – based learning with their beloved ones, how frequently they apply it and how often children get engaged in play – based learning. Through the questionnaire, the researcher also tended to reveal if play – based learning helps parents' children to learn and become successful, if it stimulates the creativity, interest and imagination of them, and if it makes easier the comprehension of foreign language (English). Something that mattered a lot to the researcher was to detect the reaction of children in relation to play – based learning approach and if children enjoy learning English language through the target approach.

So, based on the taken outcomes, all the participants in this questionnaire, in our case, parents, practice the approach of play – based learning with their children at home. Taking into consideration the personal opinion of them, they often utilize the objective approach, almost every day within a week, since they consider it as very helpful, stimulating and concessional. According to them, such approach helps children to learn, encourages the creativity and imagination of them, supports their success at school, builds children's interest and motivation to learn English language, at the same time, it facilitates children's English language comprehension. Based on parents' viewpoints, their children always react positively in relation to play – based learning and they fancy it a lot.

Summing up all the findings gained from the parents' questionnaire, the approach of play – based learning is contributory for English language lessons and it brings significant outcomes to English language learners, therefore it should be more often implemented by parents at home and teachers at school. This approach prepares learners for the future and for the real world of communication (freely and volubly). It also incites them to discover new cultures and principles while collaborating with each - other, and produces a sense of achievement, too. So and so, play – based learning approach is practically a necessity in English language classes because it is considered as a beneficial, helpful and effective approach.

4.2. The findings and discussion from English teachers' interview

The interview was done with three English language teachers and it consisted of 10 open – ended questions. The participants in the interview gave a meaningful contribution in the realization of this research study. The questions were totally related to the approach of play – based learning. Elaborately, the interview tended to figure out the working experience of the target English language teachers and their points of view/perspectives concerning play – based learning. Thus, the interview intended to understand both, positive and negative sides of the focused approach, types of games mostly used by three English language educators, the frequency of using the objective approach, the effectiveness of it in teaching, explaining English topics and in helping and supporting learners' skills, their stimulation and participation in English classroom activities. Students' reactions about play – based learning and the outcomes

gained from this approach were grasped through the interview, as well. The key intention of English language teachers' interview was to verify the second hypothesis of this research study, which is: *“Play – based learning increases motivation and interest of young learners”*.

The responses from the interview done with three English language teachers are presented and analyzed below:

1. How long have you been teaching English language?

As it is pointed out above, in the interview took part three teachers of English language. The purpose of the question number one of this interview was to pick out the working experience of the participants (teachers). So, English language teacher (female) has around five years of teaching experience. She firstly started working at the target school and still continues working there. Meantime, two other participants (men) have around ten years of teaching experience.

2. What are the positive and negative aspects of play-based learning approach?

According to the personal opinion of the English language lecturers, play – based learning brings only positive results to English language teachers and students. So, it makes teachers' job easier, encourages children's learning, extends their thinking skills, raises learners' success at school and everywhere else. One of the participants declared that it also provides opportunities for children to learn while playing, helps in engaging schoolboys/schoolgirls in their education, brings emotional benefits, helps children to concentrate, makes them to use more imagination, creating, enjoying and learning, and so forth. Taking into consideration their thoughts about play – based learning, there are no negative aspects of this approach.

3. What kind of games do you usually use to teach English language to your learners?

Some of the beneficial games for learners mentioned by the English language instructors are: Look outside and write; Guess who?; Secret Santa; Pictionary; Spelling bee; Hot potato game; Hangman; Quizalize; Move and freeze; Cup game; Board games; Memory game; Word order game; etc.

4. How often do you use play-based learning approach in the teaching process?

Regarding this question, English language teachers indicated that students from sixth grade till the ninth one have English language classes twice a week, so, they use play – based learning approach nearly every class but, it all depends on the current topic and activities. By the way, they agreed that everything sounds better and more understandable with the presence of play – based learning approach.

5. Do you think that play-based learning approach help you treat English topics better in comparison with other teaching methods? If yes, explain how?

Play – based learning approach can be contemplated as a modern method of teaching. It makes everything better and surely, all students benefit from it. Based on the three teachers' working experience, the focused approach definitely helps them to teach and explain English language topics since it makes the process of teaching easier and better. One out of three participants said that the integration of games makes students to comprehend better the topics, develops their language skills, keeps the attention on learning, helps learners to be independent, raises learners' motivation to learn and acquire English language vocabulary, and so on and so forth.

6. According to your opinion, what English skills your students gain and improve from play-based learning approach?

Based on the personal opinion of the objective teachers, play – based learning approach helps her students to gain proficiency in English as a second language, to elevate language skills and communication, to meliorate pronunciation skills, build their imagination, encourage curiosity and motivation, improve problem-solving and thinking skills, enhance learning outcomes, and so on.

7. How does play-based learning approach in English language classes impact in enhancing students' learning?

The English language teachers who joined in this interview pointed out that the approach of play – based learning is profitable. It brings vast opportunities to all students to succeed and have fun simultaneously. The entire motivation it brings to them impacts positively in extending learning of students.

8. How do your students react toward play-based learning approach? Does it seem to be boring or interesting for them?

In accordance with English language educators' ideas, fortunately, the majority of students, not to say all, show completely positive reactions or attitudes concerning this approach and it seems to be absolutely interesting for them. So and so, it is worth mentioning, all target teachers unanimously said that their students look forward to English language lessons and truly enjoy the integration of play – based learning approach because it creates an attractive and friendly environment, it helps students to learn better, to communicate easier, to collaborate with each – other and to express themselves freely.

9. Does play-based learning approach ascend your students' motivation and engagement in English activities?

According to the three participants in the interview, English language teachers, play – based learning approach makes possible and even easier students' participation in classroom activities by stimulating and engaging them.

10. Based on your opinion as an English language teacher, what are your students' outcomes from play-based learning?

The English language lecturers declared that the approach of play – based learning makes easier the achievements of students. It brings outstanding outcomes to all students who participate into it. In this way, it enhances English language lessons, makes learning more interactive, allows flexibility in the classroom as well as it proves effectiveness. Two participants emphasized that some students sometimes really feel bored to learn from the teacher or course book, and in such cases, play – based learning approach is a perfect choice.

As it is aforementioned, the scope of English language teachers' interview was to see the attitudes of the teachers in connection with play – based learning approach. In particular, this interview intended to grasp the positive and negative aspects of play – based learning approach, the frequency of its usage in the process of teaching, the help, support and benefits it offers to educators and students. Hereto, another goal of the interview was to find the most useful games by the participating teacher, students' reactions in the direction of play-based learning approach and the outcomes they gained from it.

So, based on the received outcomes, the three participants in the interview (English language teachers) expressed their stands related to the approach of play – based learning. Taking into consideration their 5 to 10 years experience in teaching, they agreed that play – based learning approach only brings significant and positive outcomes to all kinds of students by growing their learning, encouragement and engagement. In addition to this, play – based learning approach also helps teachers to teach and facilitates their job. The participating educators use this approach quite often since their students truly enjoy educational games and react in a very positive way in the direction of them.

To sum up all the findings gained from the English language teachers' interview, the approach of play – based learning has a positive influence to educators and learners. This approach is enticing and entertaining, too. It can create comfortable and warm environment for teaching and learning. Also, it purposely engages students one – on – one, makes them feel free to communicate, to be more creative, autonomous and collaborative.

4.3. The findings and discussion from students' experiment

The experiment was done with students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. It means, one experiment for each class. Eleven students were from the sixth grade, ten from the seventh one, nineteen learners were from the eighth class whereas ten from the ninth grade. In total, they were fifty students. Learners into the classes were divided into two groups, the first and the second ones. Both groups, based on the grade they belong to, learned the same topics but through various approaches. The topics, surely, were taken from the class book (Today 2, Live Beat 2, Live Beat 3 and Live Beat 4) and according to the school planning. The first groups usually learned the topics randomly meanwhile the second ones through the integration of games, specifically through the application of play – based learning approach. The experiment, certainly, tended to elevate students' English vocabulary skills and through it, the conductor of the experiment inclined to see the effectiveness of play – based learning approach. The experiment for each class lasted 40 minutes (as long as a teaching hour lasts), 15 minutes for first groups and 15 others for second groups. 10 minutes left were exploited for the fulfillment of the test which leaned to evaluate and measure learners' English language capturing. Moreover, this experiment was done in order to verify the hypotheses number three and four: *“Young learners comprehend English language better through play”* and *“Play – based learning includes all types of learners”*.

So, the first experiment was performed with eleven students of sixth grade (five girls and six boys). The first group had six learners (a mixture of boys and girls) and they learned the topic predominantly through their course book meantime the second group covered five students (a mixture of boys and girls, too) and they learned the same topic with the first group but, mainly through play – based learning approach. The explained topic was: Types of music and musical instruments.

Grade:	6 th
Number of students:	Totally 11
Date:	21 st of December, 2021
Day:	Tuesday
Time:	09:30 – 10:10

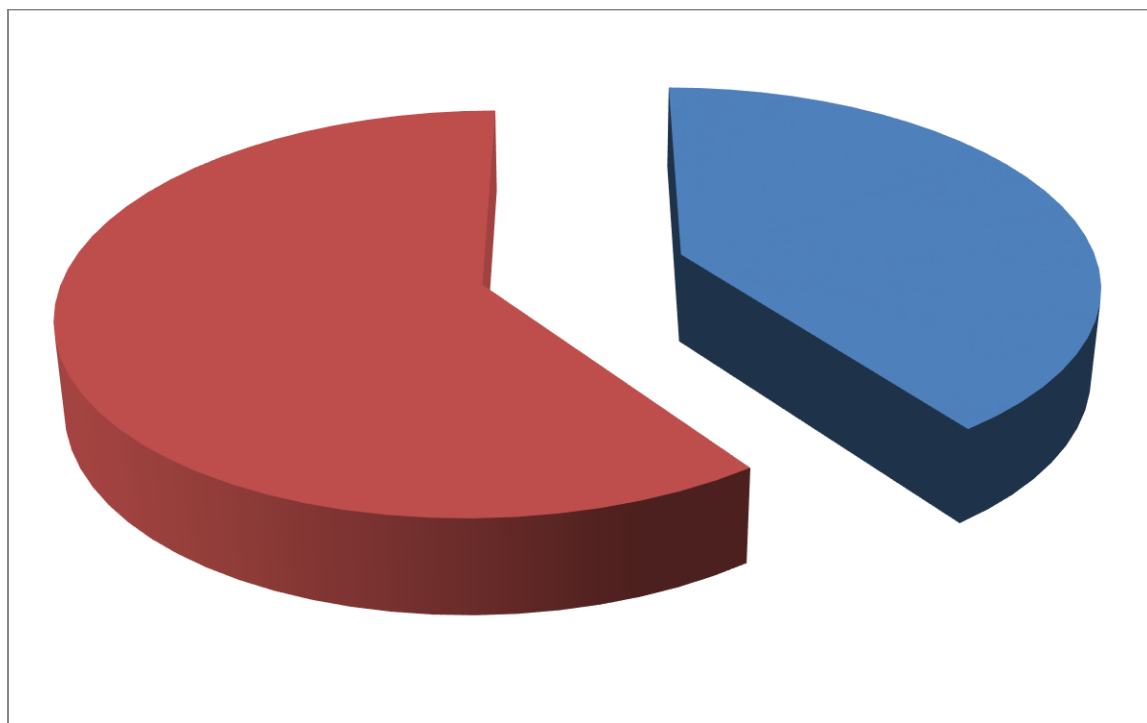
Table 1

Taking into consideration the limited time, the leader of the class greeted the students of first group and immediately started the lesson. The leader was able to realize only three activities for the available time. After the presentation of the topic, learners were encouraged to mention as many types of music and musical instruments as they know. Some of them were (drums, guitar, piano, violin . . . classical, folk, jazz, rock, etc.). In a more detailed manner, the conductor continued the clarification of such types. In that case, sixth graders had the opportunity to listen, repeat and write new English words. Further, the controller of the classroom stimulated the learners to conduct a task in their books. For better recognition of musical instruments, they had to match the musical instruments with the pictures. Once they were ready, they shared the responses with classmates. Lastly, students of sixth class had to work in pairs, to ask and answer about music, for instance: (Do you play a musical instrument? What type of music do you like? Who's your favorite band/singer?).

The conductor of the experiment started the lesson with the second group by implementing hot potato game. The players were gathered in a circle. They passed a real potato to each other. When someone dropped the potato, he/she had to mention a type of music and a musical instrument, if he/she knew the answer, continued the game, otherwise, the student was eliminated. The second group did this game many times. Learners seemed to enjoy it a lot. In that case, they built English vocabulary by learning music types and musical instruments (bass, keyboard, saxophone, trumpet . . . blues, hip hop, pop, rap, and so on). Puzzle pieces was another game realized with such students. Every student had to pick up a card (word) and to match it with another card (picture). The words and pictures were totally related to the current topic. This game tested students' reflexes and thinking skills of them. At last, learners played Pictionary game. A student was obliged to draw something (in this case, a musical instrument) and the rest to guess the word the drawer was drawing. All five students repeated the game at least two times and enjoyed scoring points when they answered correctly.

In the last 10 minutes, learners of sixth grade were evaluated through a test. The questions into the test were about types of music and types of musical instruments. Thus, the intention of the test was to measure students' capturing about the discussed topic. This test (Appendix 4) had 5 questions.

So, based on the results taken from the test, students of the second group (60% of them) gave more correct answers in comparison with students of the first group (40%). The results of the first group are presented in blue meanwhile the results of the second group are represented in red.



The results from the experiment done with sixth graders

The second experiment was accomplished with students of seventh grade. They were ten students in total (nine boys and a girl). The first group covered five students (all boys) while the second one included five students, too (a girl and four boys). The first group learned the topic only through students' book while the second group learned the same topic as well, but through the approach of play – based learning. The expounded topic was: Countable and uncountable nouns.

Grade:	7 th
Number of students:	10 in total
Date:	22 nd of December, 2021

Day:	Wednesday
Time:	10:30 – 11:10

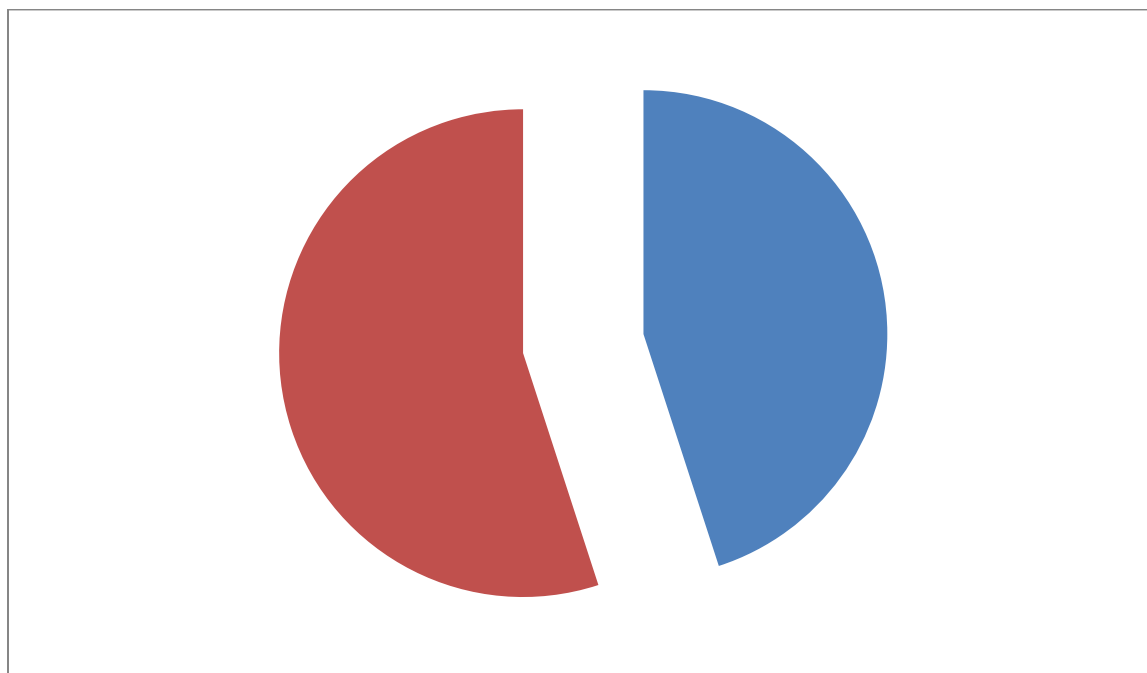
Table 2

After the presentation of the topic, seventh graders (first group) were cheered up to name some nouns/words in singular and plural in order to make easier the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns (C and U). The detailed explanation concerning the actual topic included (the way of defining C and U nouns; much/many, a lot, a few/a little; examples in affirmative, negative and interrogative forms). For better comprehension of countable and uncountable nouns, learners of seventh grade (with the help of the instructor) provided various examples about countable and uncountable nouns, for instance: many coconuts, much bread; a lot of eggs/a lot of milk, a few bananas, a little coffee; He has many plans/I got much sleep last night; There aren't many people here/I don't have much time; How many children do you have?/ How much money have you got? , and so on.

The second group started learning countable and uncountable nouns by trying hot potato game. The conductor of the experiment turned on the music. Seventh graders passed around an object (a tiny ball). When the music stopped, the person who was holding the object had to make a sentence with a singular or plural noun. The aim of this game was to see how students of seventh grade distinct singular and plural nouns. The second game conducted with the second group of seventh class was memory circle game. This game was a great way to elevate countable and uncountable nouns. Learners formed a circle, they took turns by firstly adding countable nouns. For example, first student: apple, second student: apple, banana, third student: apple, banana, house, and so on. The game finished when someone could not remember what was next. The losers sat down and were out of the game whereas the winner was the last person standing. Meanwhile, such students did this game twice. This time they took turns by saying uncountable nouns. First student said: air, second one: air, milk, third student: air, milk, bread . . . and so it went until they could not remember the said words.

In the last 10 minutes, seventh graders were assessed through a test which contained questions completely related to countable and uncountable nouns (C and U). So, the goal of the target test was to fit on students' understanding about the treated topic. The test (Appendix 5) covered 5 questions.

Thus, based on the outcomes gathered from the test, one way or another, students of both groups understood countable and uncountable nouns. Students of the second group (55% of them) did better in the test in comparison with students of the first group (45%). First group's outcomes are represented in blue while second group's outcomes are represented in red.



The results from the experiment done with seventh graders

The third experiment was committed with students of eighth grade. The class consisted of nineteen students (four girls and fifteen boys). The first group comprised nine students (a mixture of boys and girls) whilst the second group restrained ten students (a mixture of boys and girls, too). As usually the first group of eighth class learned the topic through their class book whereas the same topic was taught to the second group as well, but through play – based learning approach. The clarified topic was: Adjectives and nouns of measurement.

Grade:	8 th
Number of students:	19 from both groups
Date:	12 th of January, 2022
Day:	Wednesday

Time:	11:15 – 11:55
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Table 3

The first group of eighth grade started the English lesson by pointing out some nouns and adjectives in English language. The instructor continued telling everything important about adjectives and nouns, including the relation and usage of them. Various examples of adjectives and nouns of measurement paid students' special attention, such as: age, big, cost, deep, depth, expensive, and so forth. In the remaining minutes, learners and experiment's conductor, altogether, matched nouns to the adjectives (a task taken from the students' book):

Age (**N**) – old (**Adj.**)

Depth (**N**) – deep (**Adj.**)

Height (**N**) – high (**Adj.**)

Width (**N**) – wide (**Adj.**)

Speed (**N**) – far (**Adj.**), and so on.

The second group of eighth grade started the English language lesson with mystery word game. The scope of such game is to develop thinking skills by finding out the proper word related to the description. For instance:

My mystery word is a NOUN.

It has eight letters.

The first letter is a D and the last letter is an E.

What is my mystery word?

DISTANCE.

My mystery word is an ADJECTIVE.

It has four letters.

The first letter is a D.

It is the opposite of the word shallow.

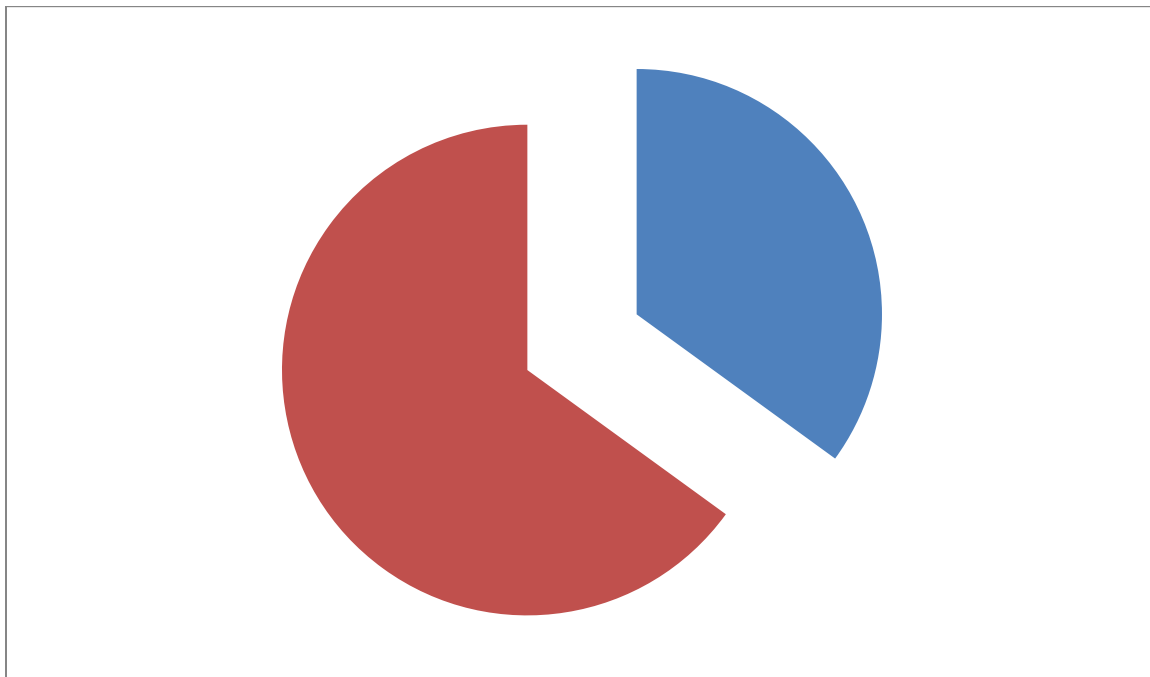
What is my mystery word?

DEEP.

Such descriptions like the abovementioned ones were used for almost every adjective and noun of measurement. The following game was crazy sentences game. It was an entertaining game that helped learners of eighth grade to practice making sentences with adjectives and nouns of measurement. Each student had to write two sentences. The condition was to integrate at least a noun or an adjective within the sentences. The limited time was three minutes. The student with the longest sentence possible and no grammar mistakes or spelling mistakes in it immediately scored a point.

In the last 10 minutes, learners of eighth grade were evaluated through a test, more specifically through some classroom activities related to the topic, nouns and adjectives of measurement (Appendix 6). Such activities tended to figure out if students of both groups understood the focused topic.

Based on the findings covered through the test/classroom activities, second group's students (65%) showed better performance than first group's students (35%). First group's findings are announced in blue and second group's findings are announced in red.



The results from the experiment done with eighth graders

Lastly, the fourth experiment was concluded with students of ninth class. Ten students attended this class. Five out of ten were girls and the rest were boys. This time we had boys versus girls. It means, the first group had five boys and the second one had five girls. Boys learned the topic through students' book whereas girls learned the topic through classroom games. The enlightened topic was: Teenage fashion in Britain.

Grade:	9 th
Number of students:	Totally 10
Date:	13 th of January, 2022
Day:	Thursday
Time:	12:00 – 12:40

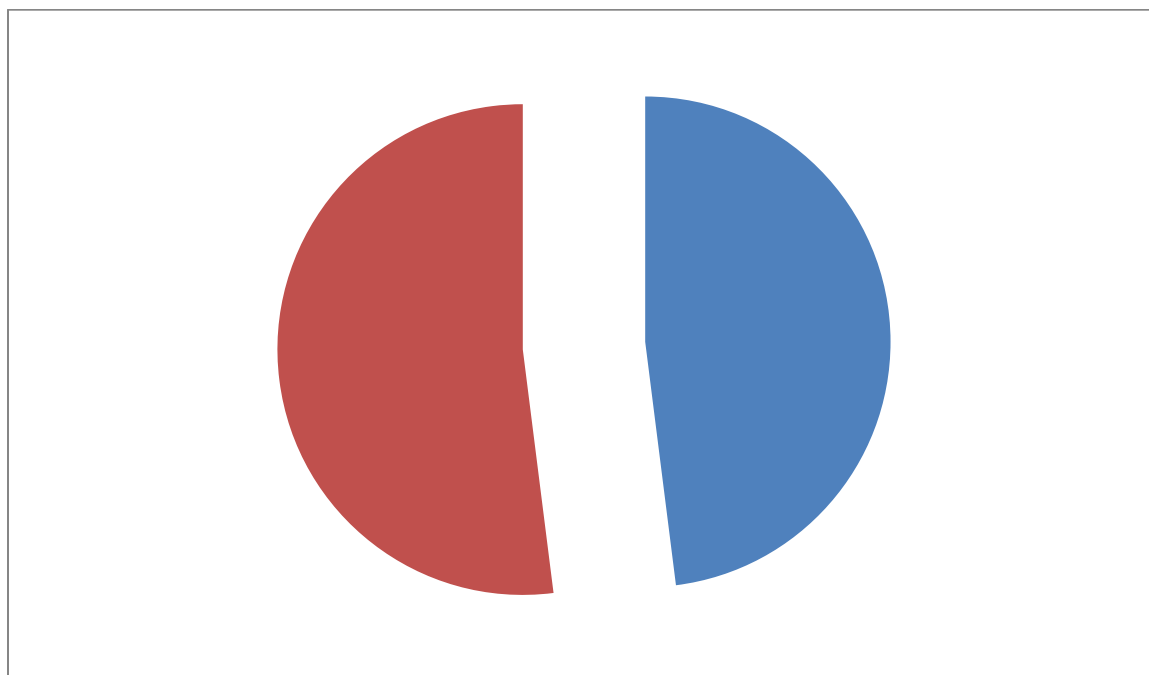
Table 4

The experiment doer presented the topic to the first group of ninth grade and motivated them to talk a little bit about fashion in and out. Next, in order to upgrade students' reading skills, they were encouraged to read the text in the book about teenage fashion in Britain. The objective text covered British teenagers' opinions regarding fashion in their country. In this case, they got familiar with some English words and phrases. After reading and summarizing it, in the remained minutes, ninth graders discussed the differences and similarities about sort of clothes and styles that are fashionable in Britain and Kosovo.

The experiment doer began the lesson (with second group of ninth grade) with memory circle game. The main intention of this game was the improvement of clothes. So, students gathered in a circle took turns and mentioned clothes. If the first student said boots, the second one had to name the first student's word and also to say an extra word, and so the turn went on. The game ended at the time when learners were not able to call up all the said words. Another game played with second group of ninth class was hot potato game. Under the sounds of music, ninth graders passed around a dice. At the moment when music stopped, the person who was holding the dice had to describe the clothes and styles of the person standing next to her. This game made possible the betterment of clothes, the enhancement of words connection and the pickup of students' vocabulary.

In the remained 10 minutes, all students of ninth grade were assessed through a crossword puzzle. This crossword puzzle was fully related to clothes in general (see Appendix 7). The key intention of it was the distinction of clothes by students.

Hence, the outcomes assembled from that crossword puzzle made us figure out that girls – second group, for a nuance, were better in the completion of it than boys – first group. The percentage presented below can prove it, too. In blue are represented first group's outcomes whereas in red are represented second group's outcomes.



The results from the experiment done with ninth graders

As it is cited in the beginning of the experiment's analysis, the main and only purpose of the experiment was to fathom the effectiveness of play – based learning approach. As pointed out earlier, the experiment was conducted with students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. Thereby, based on the collected and well analyzed outcomes, play – based learning approach is really beneficial and effective for students of the experimented classes.

Summing up the experiment, the approach of play – based learning makes English language lessons more interactive, attractive as well as interesting. This approach also makes possible the

development of students' vocabulary, the growth of students' motivation and interest to study. Likewise, it helps learners to reflect, discuss and argue. Besides this, it makes English language teachers treat English language units better, simply and clearly.

4.4. The analysis of the first hypothesis

The first hypothesis of this research study was: “ *English language teachers, young learners and their parents have positive attitudes toward play – based learning* ” and this hypothesis was proved through the questionnaire done with students' parents since these three parties (teachers, learners and parents) show positive stands in the direction of play – based learning approach.

4.5. The analysis of the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis of this research study was: “ *Play – based learning increases motivation and interest of young learners* ” and this hypothesis was verified through the interview done with three teachers of English language who agreed that the approach of play – based learning elevates their learners stimulation to learn English language.

4.6. The analysis of the third hypothesis

The third hypothesis of this research study was: “ *Young learners comprehend English language better through play* ” and this hypothesis was certified through the experiment realized with students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. The results from the tests, classroom activities and crossword puzzle made us understood that the focused classes figure out English language better through play than through traditional teaching methods.

4.7. The analysis of the fourth hypothesis

The fourth and the last hypothesis of this research study was: ‘ ‘ *Play – based learning includes all types of learners* ‘ ‘and it was established through the experiment realized with students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. The experiment made us aware that, regardless the gender, ethnicity and economic conditions, play has the potential to involve each and every student.

In conclusion, chapter number four is the most substantial of all since the foremost outcomes of this research study are discussed and analyzed through it. The gained outcomes highlighted the great effectiveness of play – based learning approach. It is quite helpful, beneficial, attractive and graceful for educators and learners. The acquired outcomes also helped in verifying the four hypotheses of this research study which are explained through this chapter, too.

CHAPTER 5

5.1. Conclusion

Like it was cited previously, the foremost focus of this dissertation was on the effectiveness of play – based learning approach. The case study was conducted at ‘ ‘ Ilir Lushtaku ‘ ‘ primary school. The participating school was from the municipality of Skenderaj, in a village called Prekaz. The main participants in this research study were from this school and this village. Twenty parents, fifty students and an English language teacher were the basic key in the realization of this master thesis.

The master thesis was divided into five important chapters. The chapters also had their subchapters. Such chapters are:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Literature review**
- 3. Methodology**
- 4. Findings and discussion**
- 5. Conclusion**

The first chapter, Introduction, discussed the issue of play – based learning approach. It also treated the importance of this dissertation, the structure of it, the primary research aims and the major objectives. By the end of chapter number one, a brief summary is included.

The second chapter, Literature review, discussed almost everything about the approach of play – based learning. Many thoughts of various famous linguists concerning this approach are involved throughout chapter number two. The detailed definition of play – based learning took place into this chapter, too. Two types of play – based learning are comprised, as well. Something important explicated through the chapter was the function, significance, effectiveness and benefits of play – based learning English language with learners of primary level. By the end of chapter number two, a short summary about it is comprehended.

The third chapter, Methodology, elaborated all the impressive data about this research study. Two used methods, four research questions and four hypotheses are mentioned during chapter number three. The essential partakers in this research study are comprised, too. Three used instruments and data collections' manner were pretty substantial and well processed into this chapter.

The fourth chapter, Findings and discussion, was the most significant chapter of all because it labored the findings from parents' questionnaire, the findings from English language teachers' interview and the findings from students' experiment. Such findings were also accompanied by a meaningful discussion. It is worth mentioning, the findings taken from the instruments were strictly helpful in overtaking this research study's aim. As it was referred above, this research study was set up upon four hypotheses and the analysis as well as their verification is covered by the end of chapter number four.

The fifth and last chapter, Conclusion, elaborately explains the whole realization of this research study. Moreover, drawbacks encountered during the materialization of the dissertation are incorporated in this chapter, too. Based on the data and outcomes, recommendations for further research studies take a noteworthy place into chapter number five. The reference list and seven appendices are included by the end of the chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the goal of this research study was attained through three instruments:

- 1. Questionnaire**
- 2. Interview**
- 3. Experiment**

The intention of the first instrument, questionnaire, was to see the attitudes of the participants (parents) with regard to play – based learning approach and the effectiveness of it with their children. In the questionnaire took part twenty parents. All of them showed positive stands in connection with play – based learning. They were so pro of this approach and supported quite much its usage at home as well as at school.

The aim of the second instrument, interview, was to find out the efficiency of play – based learning approach in teaching. In the interview took part three English language teachers. They

indicated a positive attitude towards play – based learning approach. According to them, this approach has a substantial influence in the teaching process.

The scope of the third instrument, experiment, was to witness the efficacy of play – based learning approach and its contribution in teaching and learning. In the experiment took part 50 students from four different grades. So, the participating students were from sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth classes. The outcomes got from the experiment showed that such students pick up English language better through play and games in comparison with the randomly way of teaching/explaining.

The whole research study was based on four research questions:

- 1. What is the role of play – based learning?**
- 2. How important is play – based learning on the system of education?**
- 3. What are the attitudes of students (young learners), English language teachers and parents toward play – based learning approach?**
- 4. What are the benefits of play – based learning?**

All these research questions were answered through the three used instruments. So, the first and the second research questions were answered based on the findings got from the English language teachers' interview who directly claimed that play – based learning approach has an impressive role in students' learning.

The third research question was responded from the parents' questionnaire. This instrument made us become aware that learners, English language teachers and parents have positive stands in the direction of play – based learning approach.

The fourth research question was responded via the experiment conducted with students of sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. The experiment made us understand that the approach of play – based learning brings fun in the classroom, makes lessons more alluring and entertaining and stimulates students' learning and progressing.

As cited before, this research study was relied upon four hypotheses, such as:

- 1. English language teachers, young learners and their parents have positive attitudes toward play – based learning.**
- 2. Play – based learning increases motivation and interest of young learners.**
- 3. Young learners comprehend English language better through play.**
- 4. Play – based learning includes all types of learners.**

The first hypothesis ‘ *English language teachers, young learners and their parents have positive attitudes toward play – based learning* ’ was proved through parents’ questionnaire. Taking into consideration parents’ thoughts, play – based learning approach is very supportive in children/students’ learning and progressing.

The second hypothesis ‘ *Play – based learning increases motivation and interest of young learners* ’ was proved through English language teachers’ interview. Based on English teachers’ thoughts, play – based learning approach encourages students to learn and keeps them engaged, dedicated and interested.

The third hypothesis ‘ *Young learners comprehend English language better through play* ’ was verified through students’ experiment. In accordance with students’ outcomes from the experiment, play – based learning approach makes learners’ comprehension easier and better.

The fourth hypothesis ‘ *Play – based learning includes all types of learners* ’ was verified through students’ experiment, as well. According to the conducted experiment, when the educator shows willingness to integrate games in teaching, then students’ inclusion is present.

To sum up all this, the approach of play – based learning is absolutely profitable for both processes of teaching and learning. It leans to be an effective, beneficial and successful approach for teachers and students. The good collaboration between parents, students and teachers is utterly necessary. Therefore, play as a great source of satisfaction and positive results strengthens this triangle.

Play allows schoolboys/schoolgirls to use the knowledge of them in order to attain rewards which have the potential to incite students for working harder and learning more. So, when play is integrated, then learners’ participation is inevitable. On the other hand, English language lessons are also more attractive and memorable through play.

5.2. Limitations of the study

All research studies have limitations. This research study had limitations, too. While striving to obtain the main purpose of this dissertation, some of the limitations encountered are presented below:

- **The lack of prior research studies on topics like this one**—while searching the Net in order to get needful and extra materials related to the topic, I found out that there were not enough surveys concerning this issue. Hence, it is important to be said that research studies of this kind are quite necessary for students, their parents and all teachers, including English language teachers, as well;
- **The integration of only one primary school from Skenderaj municipality** – this can be considered as a limitation because if more primary schools of this city would be part of this research study, then believably the results would be more convinced and more accurate;
- **The limited number of the participants** – in this research study totally took part seventy – one participants, reliably if the participating number would be higher, then this fact would lead us toward more believable results;
- **The lack of trainings** – this may be the worst limitation of all because trainings, face to face or even online ones, in this research area are more than required because the process of teaching would be easier and better through the materials teachers get from them, through the experiences they share and through the practice they do;
- **Difficulties in arranging online meetings with parents and English language teacher** – the questionnaire and interview were realized online, via Zoom application and social networking sites/email. It was a little bit difficult to assign meetings with them and to share the questionnaires since some of the parents did not possess emails or social networking sites. It took me time but, luckily I got what I was seeking;

- **Difficulties in appointing meetings with students** – the experiment was conducted at school, with physical presence (while I was visiting my family for winter holidays). It was almost the end of the first semester and also the end of the year, so, I just arrived to manage only two experiments with sixth and seventh graders, and two other experiments were realized in the first week of the second semester. Fortunately, I overtook the aim of the experiment;
- **The lack of space to realize and practice various games**—the school was not so big and the classes were small. It was winter and the weather was cold. This prevented the realization of the games outside. Therefore, the small place into the class was like a limitation which hindered students to create circles or throw objects;

5.3. Recommendation

Based on the results taken from this research study, issued recommendations are announced below:

- ✚ **Further research studies of this kind** – this research study is entirely helpful for English language teachers and students, therefore surveys like this one will make positive changes in the system of education. Ergo, it is recommended to bachelor, master or doctorate students and English language tutors to investigate on such topics;
- ✚ **The broader comparisons between primary schools** – this research study was conducted in a primary school in the municipality of Skenderaj, but to have more convinced and accurate findings about the approach of play – based learning, it is recommended to compare more primary schools in this municipality or in other municipalities within Kosovo;
- ✚ **The organization of trainings** – trainings are needful for every working field. Trainings are needful for English language educators, too. Ergo, it is recommended to the Ministry

of Education in Kosovo to organize trainings in relation to new teaching approaches and to make possible teachers' attendance;

✚ **The integration of new teaching methods** –it is recommended to all teachers of English language or other subjects to join the newest methods of teaching in order to have more attractive, enjoyable and understandable classes;

✚ **The implement of play – based learning approach** – a sincere recommendation to all English language tutors in the country or around to try implementing the approach of play – based learning as much as possible because this approach makes everything better into the class;

✚ **The creation of effective and enjoyable atmosphere in the class** – an honest recommendation to all kind of teachers to put into operation all the possibilities and to use the best teaching methods in order to create warm atmosphere in the classroom environment;

✚ **Teachers need support** – it is recommended to the principals of the schools, to the Municipal Directorate of Education and to the Ministry of Education to support teachers because they do the hardest job and always sacrifice themselves to shine students' road;

✚ **Students need motivation** – it is recommended to all teachers, regardless the subject they teach, to appreciate students' work, no matter if they do something good or bad, they deserve support, stimulation, and praise;

✚ **Syllabi** – it is recommended to all tutors to merge adequate approaches, methods and techniques when they set the objectives and plan the lessons;

✚ **This primary school needs investigation** – a recommendation to the Municipal Directorate of Education and to the Ministry of Education to do more for this school because it is in need of even elementary things;

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Appendix 1

South East European University

Parents' Questionnaire

The intention of this questionnaire is to see your attitudes concerning the approach of play – based learning and its effectiveness while using it at home. The information from the questionnaire will be used as part of Master Thesis in the English Language Teaching Department, South East European University. Your data will remain confidential and it takes up to 10 minutes for the fulfillment of the questionnaire.

Gender: **M** **F** (Please circle)

1. Do you practice play-based learning with your children at home?
 - d) Yes
 - e) No
 - f) I don't know
2. How frequently do you apply play-based learning approach with your children?
 - g) Always
 - h) Usually
 - i) Sometimes
 - j) Often
 - k) Rarely
 - l) Never
3. Do you think play helps your children learn?
 - d) Yes, it helps them quite a lot.
 - e) It helps them quite a bit.
 - f) No, it doesn't help them at all.
4. How do your children react toward learning through games?
 - d) Positively
 - e) Negatively
 - f) Stay neutral
5. How many hours per week do your children engage in play-based learning?

- c) More than seven
 - d) Less than seven
- 6.** Does play-based learning approach encourage your children's creativity and imagination?
- c) Yes, it does.
 - d) No, it doesn't.
- 7.** Does play-based learning help your children succeed at school?
- c) Yes, definitely.
 - d) No, definitely not.
- 8.** Do your children enjoy learning English through games?
- e) Very much
 - f) About average
 - g) Not very much
 - h) Not at all
- 9.** Does play-based learning approach increase your children's interest and motivation to learn English language?
- f) Extremely
 - g) Quite
 - h) Very
 - i) Not very
 - j) Not at all
- 10.** Do you agree that play-based learning make easier your children's English language comprehension?
- f) Strongly agree
 - g) Agree
 - h) Neutral
 - i) Strongly disagree
 - j) Disagree

Shtojca 2

Universiteti i Europës Juglindore

Pyetësoni i prindërve

Qëllimi i këtij pyetësoni është të shohim qëndrimet e juaja në lidhje me qasjen e bazuar në lojë dhe efektshmërinë e saj gjatë përdorimit në shtëpi. Informacionet prej pyetësoni do të përdoren si pjesë e temës së masterit në departamentin e mësimdhënies së gjuhës angleze, universiteti i Europës Juglindore. Të dhënat e juaja do të mbesin të fshehta dhe u merr deri në 10 minuta për plotësimin e pyetësonit.

Gjinia: M F (Ju lutem rrumbullaksoni)

1. A e praktikoni mësimin bazuar në lojë me fëmijët tuaj në shtëpi?
 - a) Po
 - b) Jo
 - c) Nuk e di
2. Sa shpesh e aplikoni qasjen e mësimit bazuar në lojë me fëmijët e juaj?
 - a) Gjithmonë
 - b) Zakonisht
 - c) Nganjëherë
 - d) Shpesh
 - e) Rrallëherë
 - f) Kurrë
3. A mendoni që loja ndihmon fëmijët tuaj të mësojnë?
 - a) Po, ndihmon ata bukur shumë
 - b) Ndihmon ata fare pak
 - c) Jo, nuk ndihmon ata fare
4. Si reagojnë fëmijët e juaj drejt mësimit përmes lojërave?
 - a) Pozitivisht
 - b) Negativisht
 - c) Qëndrojnë asnjëherë
5. Sa orë gjatë një jave fëmijët tuaj angazhohen në mësimin bazuar në lojë?

- a) Më shumë sesa shtatë
 - b) Më pak sesa shtatë
- 6.** A e nxit qasja e mësimi bazuar në lojë kreativitetin dhe imagjinatën e nxënësve?
- a) Po, e bën këtë
 - b) Jo, nuk e bën këtë
- 7.** A ndihmon mësimi bazuar në lojë fëmijët tuaj të kenë sukses në shkollë?
- a) Po, sigurisht
 - b) Jo, sigurisht që jo
- 8.** A e shijojnë fëmijët tuaj mësimin e gjuhës angleze përmes lojërave?
- a) Shumë
 - b) Rreth mesatares
 - c) Jo shumë
 - d) Jo fare
- 9.** A e ngrit qasja e mësimi bazuar në lojë interesimin dhe motivimin e fëmijëve tuaj të mësojnë gjuhën angleze?
- a) Jashtëzakonisht
 - b) Plotësisht
 - c) Shumë
 - d) Jo shumë
 - e) Fare
- 10.** A pajtoheni që mësimi bazuar në lojë e bën më të lehtë të kuptuarit e gjuhës angleze të fëmijëve tuaj?
- a) Plotësisht pajtohem
 - b) Pajtohem
 - c) Asnjëherë
 - d) Plotësisht nuk pajtohem
 - e) Nuk pajtohem

Appendix 3

South East European University

English Language Teachers' interview

The intention of the interview is to see the attitudes of English language teachers about the use of play – based learning approach. The information from the interview will be used as part of Master Thesis in the English Language Teaching Department, South East European University. Your data will stay confidential.

1. How long have you been teaching English language?
2. What are the positive and negative aspects of play-based learning approach?
3. What kind of games do you usually use to teach English language to your learners?
4. How often do you use play-based learning approach in the teaching process?
5. Do you think that play-based learning approach help you treat English topics better in comparison with other teaching methods? If yes, explain how?
6. According to your opinion, what English skills your students gain and improve from play-based learning approach?
7. How does play-based learning approach in English language classes impact in enhancing students' learning?
8. How do your students react toward play-based learning approach? Does it seem to be boring or interesting for them?
9. Does play-based learning approach ascend your students' motivation and engagement in English activities?
10. Based on your opinion as an English language teacher, what are your students' outcomes from play-based learning?

Appendix 4

1. Write the missing letters in the boxes to complete the musical instruments vocabulary.

- a) G _ _ t _ r
- b) V _ _ l _ n
- c) P _ _ n _
- d) Dr _ m
- e) K _ yb _ _ rd

2. Solve the riddles.

- a) Think of a musical instrument that starts with s. _____
- b) Think of a musical instrument that starts with f. _____

3. Unscramble each word to find the name of the instrument.

- a) Puntret _____
- b) Onrh _____

4. What is this? Circle the correct option.

- a) Drum
- b) Piano
- c) Flute



5. Which is your favorite type of music and musical instrument?

_____.

Appendix 5

1. Complete the sentences with A, AN or SOME:

- a) Would you like _____ coffee?
- b) Would you like _____ piece of chocolate?
- c) Would you like _____ envelope for your letter?

2. Write. What did you buy last week?

3. If a noun is Countable write 'C' for Uncountable write 'U'.

- a) Coconuts _____
- b) Bread _____
- c) Grapes _____
- d) Tea _____
- e) Juice _____
- f) Strawberries _____
- g) Cheese _____

4. Circle the correct 'Quantifier'

- a) A carton/bowl of rice
- b) A piece/plate of chocolate
- c) A piece/can of lemonade
- d) A bunch/can of flowers

5. Use 'Many' or 'Much' to complete the sentences.

- a) How _____ money do I need?
- b) I'm sorry. I don't have _____ time today.
- c) How _____ brothers and sisters do you have?
- d) Do you know how _____ time is left?
- e) Pea has _____ friends.

Appendix 6

Mystery Word Game

A Game About Nouns, Adjectives and Verbs for Primary Students

My mystery word is a **NOUN**.
It has three letters.
The first letter is a B.
It rhymes with the word red.
What is my mystery word?
BED

My mystery word is an **ADJECTIVE**.
It has four letters.
The first letter is a "u".
It is the opposite of the word *pretty*.
What is my mystery word?
UGLY

My mystery word is a **VERB**.
It has four letters.
The first letter is a J.
It is a synonym for *hop*.
What is my mystery word?
JUMP

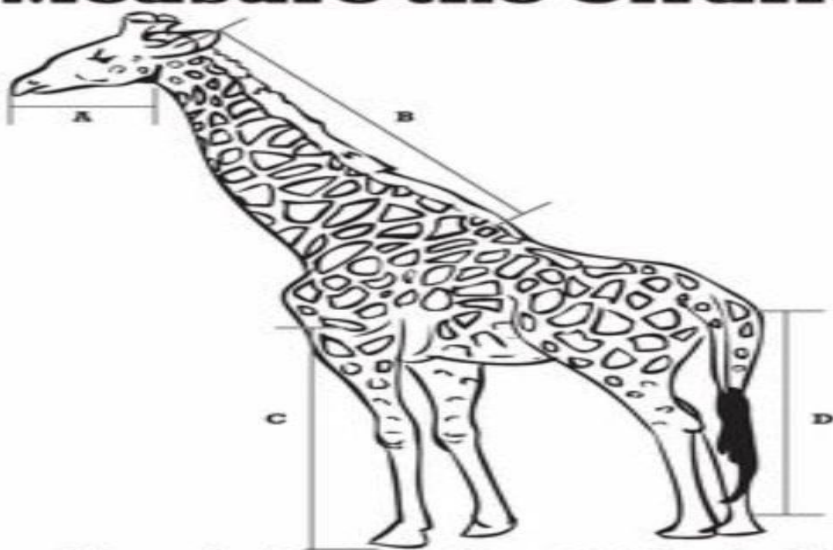
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It is the opposite of the word *pretty*.
What is my mystery word?
UGLY

My mystery word is a **NOUN**.
It has three letters.
The first letter is a B.
It rhymes with the word red.
What is my mystery word?
BED

A fun way to learn nouns, adjectives, and verbs!

Measure the Giraffe!



Use a ruler to measure the parts of the giraffe!

A. How long is the giraffe's head?

C. How long are her front legs?


B. How long is her neck?


D. How long is her tail?


Appendix 7


CLOTHES


Fill in the crossword and find the hidden words.



1



2



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4



5



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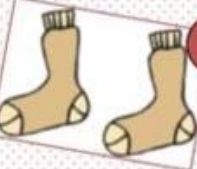

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