



EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL 'MY MONSTER' GAME ON TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF TURKEY

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Abstract:

The game is a need and development tool for the child. Games and children are two terms always mentioned together and they have always been associated in education and learning. The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which the words of the Body Parts unit intended to be given to primary school students in the second grade by using the teaching method of playing game, by means of the designed "My Monster", and to measure the attitudes of the children to the game. The findings of the study have proved that 'My Monster' game has increased the achievement level of the students and the children have exhibited a positive attitude towards the game. The attitudes of teachers and students towards gaming are positive and do not change with regard to gender. At this point, it may be concluded that a game embracing all the children irrelevant of the gender variable is effective.

Keywords: game, attitude, primary school

1. Introduction

In Turkey, in the academic year 2012-2013, 4 + 4 + 4 education reform, foreign language education was started from the 2nd grade. Second, third and fourth grades are taught as two hours of English as a foreign language at primary school level. In these lessons, the use of play is often preferred by teachers in terms of attracting attention of students and making active participation in the lesson. The main target in the English lesson curriculum in primary school 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades is development of listening and speaking skills. In the acquisition of speaking and listening skills, the games will make a significant contribution to the process.

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The game is a need and development tool for the child; it contributes to physical, mental and social development. The game is a fun activity for the child's life in self-prosecution, preparing for adult life (Tonkovic, 1978). Learning in an environment where children can express themselves more comfortably and amused is also important.

Teachers can create a variety of contexts where the use of games requires children to communicate, exchange information, and express their own ideas (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby, 1984). Huang (1996), "Self-esteem, motivation, and self-confidence increase in children when they learn through games." Lee (1995), using games in class motivates children and increases their learning desires. According to Ersöz (2000), According to Ersöz (2000), games are highly motivating because they are compelling at the same time they are entertaining. They encourage their students to cooperate.

Games add interesting things that students do not find interesting. Maintaining an interest may mean sustaining an effort to learn (Thiagarajan, 1999; Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005). Learning a language requires long-term effort. They provide a context for meaningful communication. A meaningful communication takes place when students try to understand how to play the game and communicate about the game before, during, and after the game (Wright, Betteridge, & Buckby, 2005). This meaningful communication forms the basis of the inputs the students understand from what they read and listen to increase the intelligibility such as asking to repeat and giving example (Swain, 1993) and of the understandable outputs (Long, 1991) such as speaking and writing which others can understand (Krashen, 1985).

The emotions that arouse when playing games add variety to the sometimes dry, serious language teaching process (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, Ersoz, 2000; Lee, 1995). The diversity and intensity of the games can reduce the rate of anxiety (Richard-Amato, 1988), and encourages inactive students to play, especially when the game is played in small groups (Uberman, 1998). The games can include all basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the same game usually involves several skills (Lee, 1995). The games are student-centered because the children are active while playing, and the games can be arranged with teachers as facilitators for the students to take leading roles.

Many games can be played in small groups, thus providing an environment for students to develop their ability to work together, such as being polite and asking for help (Jacobs & KlineLiu, 1996). Team size of many games can encourage collaboration and develop team spirit (Ersoz, 2000). Although many games contain contests, this is not the case (Orlick, 2006). In most games, everyone plays by all the talk and other actions, and everybody has a chance to be a part of the game. No one is excluded.

Since many games can be played outside the classroom, they provide a means for students to use the language outside the classroom time (Ellis, 2005). Games can be associated with various intelligences (Gardner, 1999). For example, games played with others involve interpersonal intelligence; games involving drawing communicate with

visual / spatial intelligence. Games usually have a hand-held item, such as cards / cards, rotators, or pieces that are linked to the body / kinaesthetic effect.

Considering all these positive effects on children, it is unthinkable that a teaching style involving games is not effective. In this direction, the use of games as part of the curriculum will contribute positively to learning and attitudes. For this reason, the following aim has been presented for the game which has been developed in the study and the answers to the research questions have been sought.

The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which the words of the Body Parts unit intended to be given to primary school students in the second grade by using the teaching method of playing game, by means of the designed "My Monster", and to measure the attitudes of the children to the game. Answering the following research questions was sought in this direction. What are the attitudes of the students towards the game? Do the attitudes of the students towards the game vary with regard to gender? What are the thoughts of the students about the game? What are the thoughts of teachers about the students and the game?

2. Methodology of Research

This study has been carried out in accordance with the mixed method. The mixed method is described as combining the qualitative and quantitative methods, approaches and concepts within a research or consecutive researches (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori ve Teddlie, 1998; Johnson ve Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Creswell and PlanoClark (2007) focus on collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study within the mixed method. Besides, as the basic assumption lying behind the mixed method, Creswell (2008) points out using the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods enables better understanding of research problem and questions. Fırat, Kabakçı and Ersoy (2014) indicate that the mixed method clarifies discovering, analysing, developing and interpreting the same subject from different aspects.

This study has been carried out on a total of 37 second year students, 20 female and 17 male, attending Mehmet Yağcıoğlu Primary School at Afyonkarahisar city centre. 67% of the fathers are workers and the remaining part is composed of civil servants, tradesmen and retired ones and 86% of the mothers are housewife. The rest of the mothers are civil servants and workers.

Through the game developed with second level primary school students, revising the subjects has been possible and the instructions have realised. The game has been designed with the purpose of reinforcement of the units of 'numbers' and 'colours' and forming sentences by using the vocabulary in the 'body parts' unit. The game 'Monster' is an evocatory game having two stages. Children gather their attention and goes through the next level after completing the first one.

In order to identify the effect of 'monster' game on learning, a pre-test and post-test which contain every word included in the game have been applied. The pre-test have been given to students to identify pre-learnt elements that is the parts of body,

matching the numbers ranging from 0 to 10, and finding the missing letter. The same version of the pre-test has been used in post-test. After the game application, the students have been given a 4-point likert scale (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') comprised of 12 items and developed by Mustafa Akkuzu in 2015. The Cronbach-Alfa reliability coefficient of the scale is .80. The scale includes usability, feedback, effectiveness and motivation subjects related to the game. The students have also been asked two open-ended questions to learn about their thoughts related to the game. These are:

- 1) I feel while watching my friends during the game. Because
- 2) I like the game because The teachers have been asked about their feelings towards the game and the attitudes of the students after the game.

2.1. Description of the Game

Developed for primary school students, this game is mainly designed for the "body parts" theme and also reminds the 'numbers' and 'colors' units. The aim of the game is to draw the monster (creature) with the commands that come out of the papers that are placed in the bowl with two different colored papers. The important point here that should be cautious is that the paper in which the color is selected can continue its command; if the pink paper is drawn, the drawing of the monster drawn according to the commands on the pink paper is continued, if the white paper is drawn, the drawing of the pink paper cannot be continued and the commands on the white paper are drawn separately. To help students at this point, two titles can be given based on the color of the paper. In this way, it can be avoided to confuse which drawing to keep on and attention can be gathered more easily.

The game begins by one of the students among the volunteer ones' choosing the paper in the bowl and reading the numbers given there loudly then stepping on the three numbers correctly; after making this step, s/he can pass the second one; that is, s/he carry out the second command by drawing the written body parts on the same paper (draw two green eyes). At this stage, it is expected that the student pays attention to the color of both the paper color and the body part of the drawing. The knowledge of colors is passed on in this section and correct directions can be made if it is needed. Instead of the student completing the task, a new student comes to the stage and performs actions on the new paper in the same way, thus the "monster" is completed.

When the game is played, the student is expected to perform the steps with priority, and if there is a stage failed, his/her friends are encouraged to help; if necessary and if the student accepts, they can give their turn to another friend. The important thing is to be able to make gameplay correctly as a class. The process shown below is shown.



Figure 1: Stepping on the numbers drawn like hopscotch on the floor

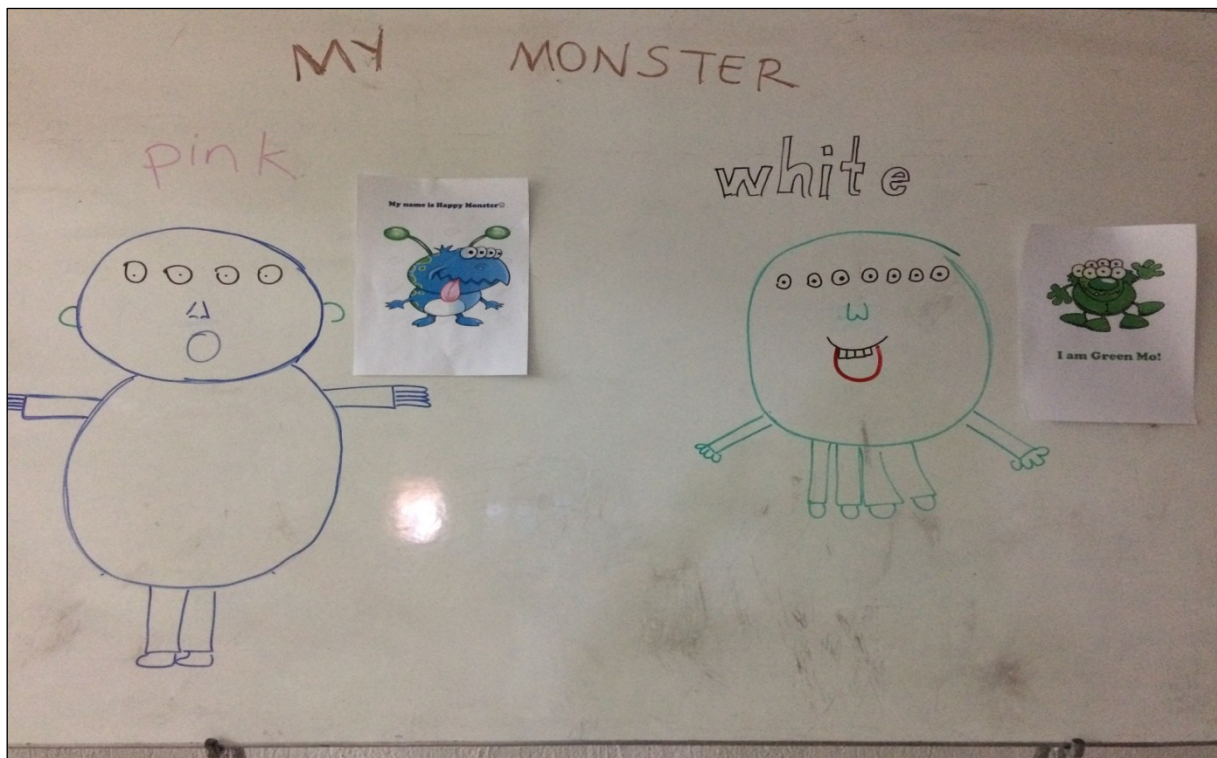


Figure 2: Comparisons of completed drawings and actual images

A. Game commands written on paper

First group (pink) papers		Second group (white) papers	
One five nine Draw A BlueMouth	Two four eight Draw FourBlackEyes	Zero five ten Draw seven blackeyes	four seven nine Draw four white teeth
Three six ten Draw TwoGreenEars	one seven nine Draw two blue feet	One three six Draw one green nose	Four five eight Draw two green arms
four seven ten Draw A BlueHead	Zero six eight Draw TwoBlueArms	seven nine ten Draw one black mouth	Two three ten Draw one red tongue
one seven nine Draw TwoBlueLegs	zerofiveeight Draw One BlueNose	Two seven ten Draw four green legs	One three six Draw four green feet
Two six ten Draw Four Blue Fingers	Four six eight Draw A Blue Body	Three four eight Draw four green fingers	Six eight nine Draw one green head

B. Necessary Materials

Picture of two predefined "monster". The papers on which commands of these monsters that define a body part and the numbers are written. Bowl. Numbered floors just like hopscotch. Paper (board). Colored pencils (board markers)

3. Results of Research

3.1 Students' Attitudes Towards Game

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Findings on attitude scores towards the game 'My Monster'

Variables	η	Range	Min	Max	Mod	Median	X	SD	Var.	Skew.	Kurt.
Attitude	37	16.00	32.00	48.00	44.00	43.00	41.70	3.95	15.604	-.735	-.235

Examination of Table 1 reveals that 2nd graders' mean attitude scores towards game ranges between 32 (minimum) and 48 (maximum), whereas mean of total attitude scores is 41,7. By interpreting this finding, it can be said that students have positive attitude towards the game.

3.2 Effect of Gender on Student Attitudes

Table 2: Gender Variable T-test Results of 'My Monster' Game Attitude Scale Scores

Sub-Dimension	Gender	n	X	SS	t	p
Achievement	Female	20	43.00	3.14	2.291	.28
	Male	17	40.17	4.33		

As can be seen in Table 2, there are 37 students, 20 of which are females and 17 are males. In order to find out the difference between the genders in attitude scores towards game, mean attitude scores and standard deviations are calculated and t-test is utilized to test the significance of the difference. T-test results for gender variable effect on attitude scores are shown in Table 2. The table shows that the mean attitude scores of female students who participated in the game is $X=43$, whereas the mean score for male students is $X=40,17$. Although there is a slight difference between the mean scores of

male and female students, it is insignificant at the $p>0,05$ level. It can be summed up that the gender variable has no significant effect on attitudes towards game.

3.3 Pre-test Post-test Results

The pre-test applied before the game and the post-test applied after the game reveals the effect of the game on vocabulary achievement of the students.

Table 3: Paired t-test results to test for the significance of the difference between mean achievement scores of the 'My Monster' Game pre-test and post-test results

Groups	N	\bar{x}	Sd	SE	t Test		
					t	Df	p
Pre-test	37	58.52	22.43	3.63	-9.588	37	.000
Post-test	37	76.31	18.83	3.05			

As can be seen in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results ($p<0.05$). While the pre-test mean achievement score of the students was 58.52, the post-test mean achievement score is increased to 76.31. It can be interpreted that the achievement of the students is positively affected by the game.

3.4 Student opinions on the game

At the end of the game, students are required to express their opinions about the game filling the gaps; "While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself.....", "I liked the game. Because"

Table 4: Themes Derived From Answers To The Open-Ended Questions

Sentence 1: While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself.....			
		f	%
Good	S1, S2, S3, S10, S16, S21, S24, S27 S6, S17, S19, S31	12	29.26
Very happy	S4, S11, S32, S38, S23, S26, S36	7	17.06
Very good	S10, S22, S25, S29, S33	5	12.18
Had great fun	S5, S12, S13, S19, S15, S28, Ö37	7	17.06
Respectful	S4	1	2.43
Sorry	S8	1	2.43
Learned	S12	1	2.43
Pleased	S14	1	2.43
Very curious	S34	1	2.43
Excited	S35	1	2.43
Forced	S30	1	2.43
Included	S18	1	2.43
Realising what I fail to achieve	S20	1	2.43
Excluded	S7	1	2.43
Total		41	100

For expressing their feeling during the game, 12 of the students responded with the statement 'good'. (S1: While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself good). 7 students stated they are 'very happy'. (S38: While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself very happy/S26: While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself happy). While 5 students used the statement 'very good' (S22: While watching

my friends during the game, I felt myself good/S29: While watching my friends during the game, I felt myself very good), 7 students stated they had great fun. Other statements for expressing various feelings with single frequencies can be seen in the table 4. Though with single frequencies, the terms 'sorry' and 'excluded' are the statements that can be considered negative. Considering the statements, one can conclude that the game created positive feelings.

Table 5: Themes Derived From Answers To The Open-Ended Questions

Sentence 2: I liked the game. Because			f	%
It was a very nice game	S1, S2, S6, S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S32, S33, S34, S35, S36, S38		14	18.66
The sentences were easy	S1, S20, S29, S35		4	5.32
Exciting	S1, S3, S32		3	3.59
Very funny	S3, S7, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S18, S20, S23, S26, S28, S29, S31, S33, S38		16	21.33
We played it together	S2, S7, S25, S26, S27		5	6.65
Instructive	S12, S14, S16, S17, S18, S22, S23, S29, S31		9	12
I liked it	S23, S25, S26, S34		4	5.32
It was eventful	S32, S38		2	2.66
It was remindful	S14		1	1.33
The rules were very good	S10		1	1.33
I felt myself good	S10		1	1.33
It made me read the words correctly	S17		1	1.33
It was a new game	S17		1	1.33
I Felt good	S33		1	1.33
It was enjoyable	S35		1	1.33
It was like a puzzle	S30		1	1.33
The name of the game was nice	S28		1	1.33
Thoughts on parts of the game				
The monster was entertaining	S4		1	1.33
The monster was funny	S5, S35		2	2.66
The monster was cute	S11		1	1.33
The monster was scary	S11, S12		2	2.66
I liked it because it was like a puzzle	S24		1	1.33
I like the hopscotch part	S5		1	1.33
Drawing was entertaining	S11		1	1.33
Total			75	

Examining the Table 5, reasons for liking the game can be concluded from the students' statements that the game was entertaining, exciting, eventful, collaborative, instructive and remindful. Among these statements, S7 stated "It was very entertaining, we had fun and it was nice playing with friends", S14 stated "I recalled all the information, had great fun. It was informative and full of knowledge" and S35 stated "The game was very nice I had fun and liked it very much. I could read the writings very fast and it was even very enjoyable. It was a funny picture when finished". Among the parts of the game, hopscotch and the pictures created seem to had drawn greater attention and found funny.

Table 6: Frequencies and Percentages of the Answers Given to the Attitude Scale

Attitude Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. I had fun while playing the game.	32	84.2	5	13.2	×	×	×	×
2. It was an interesting game.	21	55.3	9	23.7	3	7.9	4	10.5
3. The game helped me learning new words.	30	78.9	5	13.2	1	2.6	1	2.6
4. I did not have any difficulty playing the game.	29	76.3	4	10.5	1	2.6	3	7.9
5. I would like to play this game in learning new words.	28	73.7	9	23.7	×	×	×	×
6. The rules of the game were not complicated.	27	71.1	6	15.8	3	7.9	1	2.6
7. I could see my errors immediately while playing the game	23	60.5	9	23.7	2	5.3	3	7.9
8. Number of words in the game should be less.	10	26.3	7	18.4	8	21.1	12	31.6
9. Number of words in the game should be more.	23	60.5	6	15.8	3	7.9	5	13.2
10. I think the game is helpful.	33	86.8	3	7.9	1	2.6	×	×
11. I would like this game to be used in the classroom regularly.	26	68.4	3	7.9	2	5.3	6	15.8
12. The game enhanced my wish to learn.	27	71.1	8	21.1	×	×	2	5.3

As can be seen in Table 6, answers to the positive scale items cluster on the 'strongly agree' selection. It can be concluded that the game was found effective, addresses to the majority and a positive attitude was exhibited to the game.

3.5 The thoughts of the teacher about the game and the attitudes of students

They found the game interesting. They like the section of reading numbers and stepping on the numbers like playing hopscotch. The students who were introverted watched with interest, although they did not want to be involved in the game. The drawings are very laughable and the part where they have the most fun is the part where they compare the basic drawings with their drawings. Since it is a game focused on subject repetition, they were not forced to perform the steps of the game. The section on numbers and colors was done very quickly. Reading only the number of 'one' was compelling for a few students. It was difficult to remember but in a short time it was full recollection and consolidation. I have observed that children have a bit of difficulty in drawing and that there is a lack of confidence in this issue. I have the idea that they may be involved in not being able to actively focus on the picture lessons in the school since they have not done regular work on painting or drawing in school and everyday life. The fact that they were involved in the fun and participated in one of the three subjects previously learned provided an important repetition opportunity. It helped children to read some words and remind their meanings. At the end of the game they voiced that they wanted to play this game again. The positive feedback that a student received as a result of a series of accurate and accurate readings significantly increased her motivation and encouraged her friends to remember that the numbers presented in writing were correct. It was a beautiful and effective experience in terms of recollection.

The kids have repeatedly said when they can play the game again. This allowed me to evaluate the game as the one that contained them. I see it as a game that can be adapted to other topics in my class and I would like to use it again with my students in vocabulary exercises. That some of the students read the number and step on the wrong

number made their friends feel excited and they tried to stand up and show the correct number, causing the occasional noise in class. But when the remembrance of the student who had the right to play was expected to do the instruction, they went their places and more silent atmosphere was provided.

There was no problem with the players who finished the game fast, contrarily the idea to reach the result in a quick way created a positive attitude towards the fast finishers, so that the game became more fun and paced as other students were queued up and the completion of the drawing speeded up. But waiting for the students who think that they cannot or will not be able to draw in the step on the numbers, caused impatience on the other students. As a precautionary measure, the students who had been using long time during the game were asked whether they wanted to give their right to play to another friend or not help this negative atmosphere dissolve.

They kept their interest during and after the game, but I got the most positive reactions when the game was finalized, ie when comparing their drawings with the actual drawings. They had a lot of fun and criticized themselves. The students tried to be part of the game. Sometimes there was noise, but this game got tempo and increased excitement. But a few warnings were enough to get the order back on track without any chaos.

I think it has affected the exam results of my students. Because the game helped them to remember the words they knew more clearly. Success test results also support this. I think the game is a separate effect on children and should be part of teaching children.

The views of the teacher are of supplementary type for the achievement test and the responses for the survey. The results of the observations also show that "My Monster" helps the students to get involved in the learning process and contributes to the recall of the students who are involved in the process. It is stated that the game takes place in the classroom environment without creating a negative atmosphere, in cooperation, waiting for the order and being aware of being part of the game. In this respect, it can be considered that the game is an educational aspect.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Games and children are two terms always mentioned together and they have always been associated in education and learning. Plato, Aristoteles, and Seneca always drew attention to the fact that games should be used in children education. Likewise, Hall, Erasmus and Locke mentioned that child education should be developed along with gaming for the education itself to be fun.

Headfield (1984) defines a game as an activity having rules, a goal and a fun element. Danesi (1987) describes language teaching games as problem solving activities based on interaction of students. In parallel with these definitions, Rixon (1991) concludes that children learn better through gaming. The results and observations of this study support the fact that gaming is an effective way of learning. Moreover, the game 'my monster' developed within this study has been proved as an effective way for

the second level primary school students who met with a foreign language for the first time in their life.

Didactical games have many advantages in language teaching. Students find a place for themselves within the process through an imaginary world developed by themselves. The language development is realized by the activities within the game and a dynamic environment is created for learning. Games prepare the necessary ground for children to trust themselves. Games make it possible for children to gather their attention and interest for a subject (Kara, 2010).

The findings of the study have proved that 'My Monster' game have increased the achievement level of the students and the children have exhibited a positive attitude towards the game. Other studies in the literature have similar results with those of this study. As Vernon (2006) has mentioned, children focuses on the game while playing and the language acquisition is subconsciously realized during playing. In parallel with this result, the reason of the increase in the student achievement level within this study is this fact. Huyen and Nga (2003) have identified within their study that all the students in a class including introverts actively engage in the game and they permanently learn new vocabulary faster.

Atake (2003) has determined that along with the contribution to motivation and recollection, games make possible for children to develop new learning strategies, use all their skills, naturally focus with lower levels of stress, use English in a real communication environment, and understand and use English. In another study about use of games in a different discipline, Kaya and Elgün (2015) have concluded that science teaching supported with gaming is more effective that traditional science teaching.

In accordance with the results of all these studies, it may be concluded that gaming is an effective way of teaching particularly on primary school students. When the effect of gender variable on the achievement level is considered, the results have proved that there is not a significant correlation between the gender and results. At this point, it may be concluded that a game embracing all the children irrelevant of the gender variable is effective.

The 'My Monster' game developed within this study is effective in that it has gathered all the attention of the children, contributed to the level of achievement, encouraged students to join to the learning process. To sum up, in accordance with the results presented in the findings part, the game has yielded positive results as an effective way for interacting with the children.

The gradual 'My Monster' game has been developed to effectively revise the learnt subjects and contains several units. It may be reformed and adjusted to new subjects and units. The game could be applied in two groups to create a competitiveness. For this reason, during the game developed in the interview part, the slowdown and waiting periods while drawing may be prevented.

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