A traditional children's play: "Seeker, do not give me to the wolf"[1]

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Abstract

The research aimed to record the game called "seeker, do not give me to the wolf ", one of the traditional children's games belonging to the Gaziantep region. The research was designed as descriptive research. Individuals who have information about the game and live in Gaziantep voluntarily participated in the study. Snowball sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the research group. As the data collection tool, semi-structured interview form was used and the data obtained were evaluated by content analysis. The collected data were analyzed by content analysis. According to the data obtained; the participants of the game are a group of seven-eight people, which can be a mixture of boys and girls, a person guarding the lambs (shepherd), a wolf and lambs. Its basic mentality is based on the competition between the wolf and the shepherd who tries to protect the lambs under his care. Although there is no specific playground, open areas that can provide movement space for the players are preferred. No tools or equipment are needed in the process of playing the game. In a game, which does not have a time limit, the game may continue for a long time until the players are bored or tired.

Keywords: Game; traditional game; descriptive field study.

1.   Introduction

Every society has its own value judgments, traditions, and habits. These features are the accumulation and reflection of the generations that lived in that geography. In this sense, they best represent the structure of that society. As a matter of fact, one of the elements that best summarizes this cultural structure is games. Every society has its own traditional games. These games contain many cultural codes, especially the ethnic and socio-cultural structure of the society, its reflections on the period of its existence and its effects on society. In this sense, it can be said that traditional games have the characteristics of cultural heritage.

Games affect, guide, bring us closer, develop and entertain us at every stage of life (Özdemir, 2006). In particular, values about society are frequently encountered in games. In this sense, they reflect the life philosophy of the society they belong to. (Sümbüllü & Altınışık, 2016). Gander and Gardiner (1993) also emphasized that children's social awareness and behaviors develop with games. In this direction, it is clear that the game is not just a means of entertainment, it is used as a tool to transfer cultural factors and values to generations (Erdal, 2019). In summary, it can be said that play is an important phenomenon that plays a major role in shaping culture and civilization (Hazar, Tekkurşun- Demir & Dalkıran, 2017).

Huizinga (2018) states that game is an old concept from cultures. In this sense, although the shape, features, and equipment of the games differ from period to period and culture to culture, the game has always existed wherever the child is (Arslan, Güllü, & Yücel, 2010). It can be said that besides the cultural value of the game, it also has an important place in the development of children. Dönmez (1992) defines play as activities that form the basis of physical, mental, social, linguistic, emotional, and social development, with or without a specific purpose and rule, but in which the child always participates willingly. Ünal (2009) emphasized that playing a game is the best educational program for the development of children. From this point of view, it can be said that play has an important place in children's preparation for real life by improving their abilities in exploration, imagination and decision making (Sulistyaningtyas & Fauziah, 2019) in every period (Açak, 2006).

Play is an integral part of children's world. With this aspect, traditional street games are an important part of children's social lives (Hazar, Tekkurşun- Demir & Dalkıran, 2017). Today, although the structure and implementation of the game have undergone changes because of technological developments (Can & Tekkurşun-Demir, 2020), traditional children's games maintain their importance in terms of both the development of children and their acquisition of certain values. Especially Gaziantep city and its surroundings are home to many traditional children's games. As a matter of fact, Gökşen (2014) stated that many traditional games are still kept alive in this region. When the literature is examined, it is seen that many traditional games belonging to the Gaziantep region are the subject of academic studies, evaluated from different perspectives and recorded (Akbaş & Özuslu-Ünal, 2016; Gökşen, 2014; Tuzcuoğlu, Fakazlı, Yılmaz & Hazar, 2020).

Within the traditional structure, the games have their own rules, rewards, and punishments (Ayan, Altıncak, & Tuzcuoğulları, 2015). Especially in traditional games, children pay attention to the rules and warn each other about it (Kovačević & Opić, 2013). This attitude of children is very important in terms of protecting the games correctly and transferring them to future generations. However, it is thought that compiling, publishing, and making permanent these diversified plays in line with academic studies is very important for the future of these cultural heritage plays. In this sense, the aim of the study is to make a compilation by recording all the features of the game of giving me the wolf to the seeker of Gaziantep region in line with the statements of the participants.

2. Purpose

The research aimed to record the game called "seeker, do not give me to the wolf ", one of the traditional children's games belonging to the Gaziantep region.

3. Method

In this section, the design of the research, the research group, the collection of data and the analysis of the data are included.

3.1. Research Design

This study was designed as a field study in the qualitative research model. Research conducted in the environments where participants work or live is expressed as field research (Wolcott, 2008).

3.2. Research Group

The research group was determined by the snowball sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. This method can be used when it is believed that situations or individuals that

can be rich sources of information can be transferred about the research problem (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this method, first of all, a few people who may provide a rich source of information are determined and data is collected through interviews. Afterwards, people with similar characteristics are reached with the guidance of the participants from whom the data was collected, and data is collected from them as well. It is a process in which one respondent directs another and this process is continued within the possibilities until data saturation is reached (Berg & Lune, 2019).

The research group consists of eight people residing in Gaziantep, who have knowledge about the traditional game within the scope of the research purpose. Information about the research group is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the participants

No	Age	Gender	Job	Interview Date	The Source of the Information Learned	Residence Address
K1	86	Woman	Unionist	22.03.2011	Ancestors	Gaziantep
K2	85	Woman	Housewife	03.05.2013	Friend	Gaziantep
K3	32	Man	Retired	04.04.2010	Friend	Gaziantep
K4	70	Woman	Housewife	15.11.2015	Grandma	Gaziantep
K5	80	Man	Retired	29.04.2011	Grandfather	Gaziantep
K6	80	Woman	Housewife	03.03.2011	Friend	Gaziantep
K7	76	Woman	Housewife	15.11.2015	Mom	Gaziantep
K8	62	Woman	Retired	15.12.2014	Grandfather	Gaziantep

When the table for participant information is examined, it is striking that there are long processes between the dates of the interviews. It can be said that the reason for this situation is that it is difficult to access the participants of the group consisting of elderly people residing in Gaziantep. It is seen that the participants learned the game from their relatives and relatives.

3.3. Data Collection

During the data collection phase, the personal information form and semi-structured interview form created by the researchers were used. While applying the semi-structured interview, the predetermined questions in the interview plan can be asked exactly to the volunteers participating in the research, while additional questions can be asked if needed (Karasar, 2015). While creating the interview form, expert opinions were consulted. Within the scope of the form, seven questions were included to obtain general information about the game. Additional questions to these questions were used when it is needed.

4. Results

In this field, the participants' experiences regarding the game "seeker, do not give me to the wolf"; basic information about the game and how the game is played are presented under the main headings.

Basic Information about the Game

Place: The game does not have a certain area (K1), but open spaces or gardens that can provide movement space for the players (K6) are preferred (K8).

Roles: A seeker (shepherd), a wolf and lambs (K3;K6;K8)

Material: Although there is no need for any tools and equipment in the game, within the possibilities, a wolf mask (K8) or any piece of cloth can be used in the form of making two holes for the eyes and making ears (P3; P8).

Number of Players: The game is played in groups of 7-8 people (K3;K6;K8), which can be played mixed with boys and girls (K2;K4). This number can be increased (K2) but not less 7-8 (K6).

Duration: The game does not have a definite duration (K1; K3). The game can continue for hours until the players get bored or tired (K1) (K5;K7).

Game Outcomes: Sociability, group/team spirit awareness, condition, speed, velocity, friendship, responsibility (K6;K8).

How to play?

The game starts with the representation of wolves, seekers and lambs (K6).

Identifying the Players

More than one method can be used to identify players. In the selection of the seeker (shepherd), a method based on the players trying to find a stone, also called empty or full, is used. In this method, whoever holds the stone last becomes a seeker (K5;K7) or the choice of a seeker (shepherd) takes place in the form of making a seeker the oldest among the players (K3; K4; K8). The choice of wolf is made among other players except the seeker. In order to make this choice, the players draw a line at a distance they have determined. They start running towards the line they have determined and the wolf is the last to complete this run. Players who complete the race in front of the wolf continue the game with the role of lamb (K3; K4; K8). In another method used as an alternative to this method, the players gather together and start counting according to a rule they have determined. When the counting process is over, two people are selected; one of them is a wolf and the other is a seeker. Others continue the game with the role of lamb (K1).

Game Play

After the players are determined, the game can be started. The beginning of the game starts with a line-up in which the player designated as the "seeker" in the front and the "lamb" behind the players hold each other's skirts in a row (K1;K2;K7). The seeker (shepherd) is responsible for the lambs and his duty is to protect the lambs from the wolf (K6). In other words, the seeker tries not to lose his lambs to the wolf (P1). When the wolf makes a move to catch the lambs, all the players run to the left and right at the same time, shouting "seeker, do not give me to the wolf " (K3;K4;K6;K8). The wolf player also tries to catch the lambs running around (K3;K4;K8). There are variations in which the eye of the wolf is covered with a cloth/handkerchief in order to complicate the catching process (K5;K7). While the game progresses invariably until this stage, the next stage appears in different forms:

1- The player who is a wolf tries to catch the lambs running around and gets stronger by arranging each lamb he catches behind him (K3; R4; R8).

2- When the wolf catches one of the lambs, the player is removed from the game (K5; R6; R7). In the continuation of this game form, if the lambs are caught in a row or who break their order, the lamb is given an option instead of being removed from the game. The caught lamb becomes the new seeker and the game starts again (K2).

3- When the wolf catches one of the lambs, it is returned to the player selection phase, and the players in the roles of the wolf and the seeker are changed (K1).

Regardless of which game form is continued, the seeker should be careful and alert so that the wolf does not take his lambs from his hands during the game (K5;K7). On the other hand, the wolf tries to counter-attack with quick movements. The game, which continues in this order, continues until the wolf or the lamb outcompete each other (K4;K8). If all players are caught, the wolf wins the game (K6). The lambs all shout, "You gave us to the wolf, and we will punish you" (K3; K4; K8). In this game where there is no prize (K3), the punishment given to the seeker is to take the wolf on his back and walk around a little (K8), while the other players hide his shoes (K3;K4).

5. Conclusion

The game is a game that provides some gains to children, basically teaches them to act together, and makes them like running and being a team. The main idea of the game is based on the rivalry between the wolf and the player in the role of the seeker who tries to protect the lambs under his protection. This competitive environment requires the players to act in cooperation in line with the characteristics of the roles they play. Players, on the one hand, try to fulfill the responsibilities of

their roles. On the other hand, they struggle as a team (lambs and midwives) and individually (wolves). Thus, they perform an activity in which they gain personal and social gains.

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