The child's perspective on what the purpose of preschool is

Olivia Tumini

University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD1 3DH

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This qualitative case study focuses on children's perspectives of their preschool provision, specifically examining how their voices are recognised and facilitated within their Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The 2017 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework which underpins early years practice, advocating for provision that is inclusive, child-centred and driven by the child's best interests. However, increasing pressures on standards and results has led to the escalation of formal practices and adult-initiated learning within early years provision, disrespecting and disregarding the child's voice. This study highlights the tensions within the current framework, EYFS (2017) and supporting guidance document, Development Matters (2012). A multimodal methodology was applied to work collaboratively with the children and provide an insight into their views and experiences of preschool. Photo elicitation, semi-structured interviews and observations were the multimodal approaches selected to collect data with a group of children in a preschool. The main findings of this research imply that the areas of provision that are most significant to the children are; play and imagination, friendships and socialisation, and the home environment and role models. This in turn allows for questioning of the extent to which increasing formal practices, dominating current early years provision, respect and value the child's voice.

Introduction

Children's development and learning experiences in their early years have a significant impact on their progress and development in their later schooling, life opportunities and their overall participation in society (Allen, 2011; Field, 2010; Marmot, 2010; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2004). Despite the impact preschool has on children's lives, their voices are inadequately facilitated throughout early years provision (Brooks and Murray, 2018; Robertson and Hill, 2014; Wall et al., 2019). The current framework and guidance documents which govern early childhood education and care (ECEC); the Early Years Foundation stage (2017) and the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) documents, promote provisions that are built around the individual child and their needs. However, the current frameworks and policies are dominated by standards and predetermined goals which results in the formalisation of early years education (Bradbury, 2019; Lewis, 2018). Consequently, current pedagogy fails to successfully incorporate the child's voice with a tokenistic approach to involving children in their learning (Whitty and Whisby, 2007; wood 2019). This study works in collaboration with children to uncover their perspective of their preschool provision, using a multimodal methodology to effectively and appropriately involve the children and capture their voice.

The role of play

The EYFS (DfE, 2017) is the statutory framework that underpins early years practice, followed in conjunction with supporting guidance from the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage document (Early Education, 2012). The EYFS recognises and champions the use of child-initiated, play-based pedagogies to effectively meet the needs of the unique child (DfE, 2017, p. 6).

Article 12 of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) gives all children the right to express their voice. Play is intrinsic to children and provides the opportunity for them to communicate, express their feelings and become active participants in their learning (Macintyre, 2017). Vygotsky (1987, cited in Nilsson, Ferholt and Lecusay, 2018, p. 235) believed that imagination was an essential component of pragmatic thinking and that through imaginative practices, complex cognitive processes occur. In addition, Vygotsky (1987 cited in Nilsson, Ferholt and Lecusay, 2018, p. 235) believed that play facilitates these cognitive processes required to contextualise abstract thoughts and allows children to make sense of their worlds, highlighting the importance of play for their development.

The increased formalisation of Early Years

A vast amount of research explains how the recent prioritisation of 'school readiness' has resulted in an increase of adult-led practices, assessments and the 'schoolification' of early years (Bradbury, 2019; Roberts-Holmes, 2015). Although ECEC is grounded in playful, inclusive provision, current pedagogy places emphasis on phonics, writing and mathematics which insists upon a more formal approach to teaching and learning (Roberts-Holmes, 2019, p. 2). Robertson and Hill (2014, p. 167) explain that the predetermined learning goals, set out in the 2012 Development Matters guidance document, that children are measured against and practitioners are compelled to teach, are in conflict with the adaptive, child focused ethos emphasised

throughout the framework. Moss (2019, p. 53) elaborates that the formalisation develops practice that is linear and rigid, which views the child as powerless and rejects individuality to produce uniform children that are 'readied' with the 'correct' knowledge. This formal approach to early years practice threatens and suppresses children's intrinsic motivation and desires for play and learning, with little consideration for the child's voice (Brooks and Murray, 2018; Lewis, 2018). In addition, the formal, pre-primary pedagogy fails to achieve the playful provision that is reflective of children's needs and individuality, that is championed throughout the EYFS (Brooks & Murray, 2018; Rouvali & Riga, 2019).

Whitty and Whisby (2007, p.304) explain how a tokenistic approach towards listening to and involving children to fulfil policy demands is ineffective and disregards children's rights. Murray (2019, p. 2) discusses how collaborative methods and social practices teach children that they are valued and to value others, having a positive impact on their well-being. Similarly, Church and Bateman (2019, p. 278) argue how a social pedagogy should be adopted to develop provision that is responsive to children's perspectives and that works collaboratively with children. Wall et al. (2019, pp. 272-273) explain how increased use of multi-modal practices that recognise children as social agents in their learning and increases their engagement and participation, can work to achieve a social pedagogy.

The methodological approaches used within this study are detailed in the next section, followed by an analysis of the data collected and the findings produced. An overall summary of the whole study and recommendations for the study, conclude this article.

Methodology

This study examines children's experiences of their early years provision through the perspectives of children, to understand what activities and areas of provision children value and enjoy. This research adopted a case study approach, which allows for a specific topic to be studied in-depth to develop

findings that influence and inform practice (Bell and Waters, 2018, p. 43). Bassey (1981, p. 85) explains that a case study has to be functional and carry 'relatability' in order to be influential in practice. This study represents the feelings of a small group of children at one time in their education and at an early stage of their learning and development, therefore, due the scale of this case study, the findings produced may not be highly relatable or influential within early years practice. However, this research has ecological validity (Mukherji & Albon, 2018, p. 189) as it studies children in a natural environment that they are comfortable in, therefore the data and findings reflect honest and tangible experiences within a preschool setting (Brewer, 2000; Mukherji & Albon, 2018).

Participants

The research was carried out in a preschool setting for two to five-year-olds. The preschool is located in a socioeconomically disadvantaged area in North West England, however, the children come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures. Three of the five children this study worked with come from families that are considered to have a lower socioeconomic position in society, as they are from low-income households with both of their parents unemployed and living in social housing. Two out of the five children the study worked with are deemed to have a higher socioeconomic position, as both of their parents are well educated and are in full-time employment. This research worked collaboratively with a group of five children aged between three and four years-old who were specifically chosen for the study, making the sample of participants a purposive sample (Johnson and Christensen, 2008, p. 239). The participants were selected as they had attended the preschool for one year or more and at the time of research, and because they attended five days a week. Therefore, the children were familiar with the layout and routine within the preschool. In addition, the children were of an age wherein they could articulate their views clearly, which would be beneficial for the research project.

Research methods

This study used a multimodal methodology to recognise and exploit children's unique learning processes to work collaboratively with the children (Hurdley & Dicks, 2011, p. 278). Data was collected using three different data collection methods; photo elicitation, semi-structured interviews and observations, as part of a 'Mosaic approach' to corroborate the children's responses and capture how the children interacted with the space (Clark, 2007; Hackett and Rautio, 2019). Adopting a multimodal methodology when working with young children allowed the researcher to 'tune in' to the child (Clark, 2011, p. 311), acknowledging the range of communication tools children use to express themselves, providing the researcher with a deeper understanding of children's meaning-making practices (Clark, 2011; Hurdley & Dicks, 2011). Canosa and Graham (2020, p. 26) raise questions around children effectively and accurately participating in research, however, Beazley, Bessell, Ennew & Waterson (2009, p. 369) explain that using multimodal approaches allows children to be active contributors in any research surrounding them and their lives.

Photo-elicitation acted as a 'creative method' to support children in articulating their voice (Veale, 2005, p.234). Photo elicitation involves discussion around photographs (Miller, 2016, p. 264), in this research the children took the photographs that were to be discussed with the researcher on the preschool tablet. Allowing the children to take the photographs allowed the children a 'visual voice' (Burke, 2008, p. 26) as well as providing stimuli for conversations between the child and the researcher (Alexander, 2008, p. 469). Orellana (1999, p. 88) comments that the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the photographs can be inaccurate, which emphasises the importance of using a multimodal approach and supports the use of semi structured interviews, both in order to listen to children's descriptions and reasonings for taking a photo, and to fully understand their perspective (Luttrell, 2010, p. 226).

The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore the multiple meanings of a photo with the child (Templeton, 2020), as the conversational style of a semi-structured interview provides opportunity for both specific questions and open discussion instigated by the participant (Lin, 2016, p. 160). The interviews took place directly after the photo taking activity to capture the children's initial thoughts and feelings and to sustain the children's motivation throughout the data collection process.

The direct observations worked as a third method of data collection, to capture the non-verbal ways the children communicated. The observations were carried out during the photo taking and elicitation interviews, to document the children's movement and expressions, to encompass all modes of communication and to support the photos and the data collected during the interviews.

To allow the research to be child-led there was no limit on the number of photos the children could take or the length of time they could discuss them in the semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, there was a varied number of photos taken by each child and the children themselves decided which photos would be discussed, by swiping through their photos on the tablet and choosing one to speak about. A total of 44 photographs were taken and discussed in five separate semi-structured interviews, totalling 40 minutes and 85 seconds of conversation. Additionally, five observations were carried out during the photo taking activity and the semi-structured interviews, one observation per child.

Ethics

Inspired by Edwards (2019) 'Case of Ethics' the researcher used the objects required for the data collection to explain the research project and the data collection process to the children, to ensure that they fully understood the project, before gaining their consent. An information sheet explaining the research project and data collection, was provided to the parents and carers of the participants, alongside a tiered consent form (Clark, 2020, p. 687) to allow the parents and carers to provide their consent for each activity and stage of the data collection. Ensuring that this study adhered to the BERA ethical guidelines (2018). In addition, this study complied with the UNCRC (1989) specifically articles 3, 12 and 13 which support the prioritisation of the child's best interest and respect of the child's views.

Data analysis and findings

The value of 'everything!' from the perspectives of the child

Pseudonyms were applied in this study to protect the anonymity of the participants and ensure confidentiality. 'O' stands for Olivia.

During the semi-structured interviews when asked 'what happens in this area?' Harvey replied 'everything!' and in response to 'what songs do we sing?' Charlotte said, 'we sing everything' and when asked 'what do we have for snack?' Ellie responded 'erm everything'. The photographs taken by the children, transcripts of the semi-structured interviews and observations worked collectively to capture all the 'everything's' that form provision and highlight the most important parts of practice, from the perspective of the child.

The multimodal methods used to collect data provided the researcher with a strong analytic framework to decipher children's understandings and experiences of their preschool provision (Clark, 2007, p.77). Focusing on how the children communicated through speech as well as their precise movements and expressions throughout the data collection activities, to provide a deeper insight into the children's experiences and listen to their voices (Clark and Moss, 2005, p. 84).

Play and imagination

During the photo taking activity, Poppy quickly walked over to the dinosaur themed area and set up the dinosaurs to take a picture of them, saying, 'move the dinosaurs in a line so I can take a picture of all of them'. Once Poppy had prepared the dinosaurs for a picture she said, 'I think I need to put it this way so it's easier' and turned the tablet landscape and took a picture. Figure 1 shows Poppy's picture of the dinosaurs.

Figure 1

Poppy confidently explained this image during the semi-structured interview without hesitation.

O: 'What's in this photo?'
Poppy: 'So dinosaurs cause, cause it's dinosaur land… and that green thing isn't a seatbelt, cause it's grass for the dinosaur world'

In this example, it is clear that Poppy's imaginative play has defined, purposeful meanings to her and evidences play supporting, sense-making practices. Comparably to the ideas of Vygotsky (1987 cited in Nilsson, Ferholt and Lecusay, 2018) and the importance of imagination to support thinking processes, explaining that through imaginative play children translate ideas to experiences, which promotes their cognitive development.

During the semi-structured interview with Alex, he chose to discuss a picture of the home corner.

O: 'What can you do in that area?'

leans forward and looks at the picture closely then sits back and looks at me and turns his palms upwards Figure 2 *and shrugs his shoulders*
Alex: 'Anything you want'

Charlotte chose to discuss a picture of the role play and dressing up area first.
Charlotte: *Pointing across the room to the area* 'That's over there'
O: 'Yeah and what happens in that area?'
Charlotte: *moves closer to the tablet and looks closely at the photo* 'We, we play'

In these extracts both children make reference to the child-initiated nature of the home corner and the role play and dressing up area, evidencing the importance of freedom and play to children. This supports arguments made by Brooks and Murray (2018) that play and child-initiated practices promote children's autonomy and freedom, which increases their interests and engagement in learning - therefore, the idea of being able to do 'anything you want' is intriguing and motivating for the child.

A breakdown of the areas photographed by the children further indicates their enthusiasm for imagination and child-initiated practices.
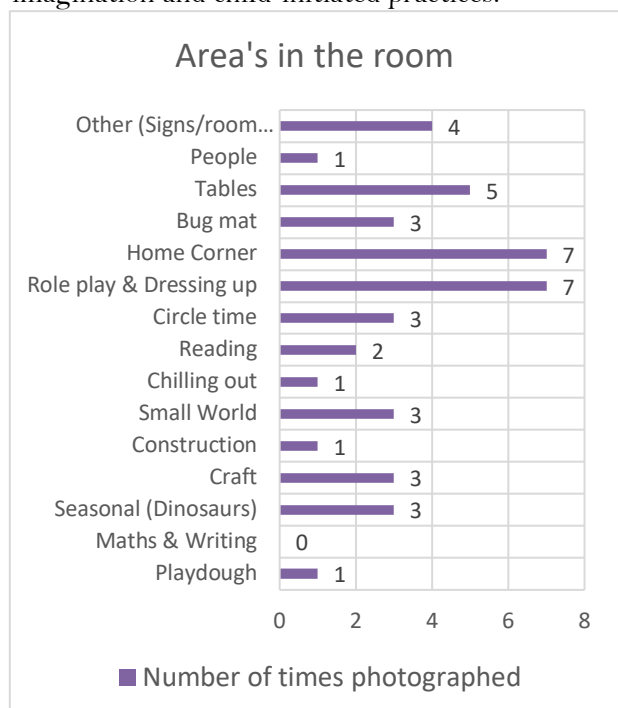

Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the number of times an area was photographed.

The role play and dressing up area and the home corner are the most frequent areas to be photographed, in contrast to the maths and writing area which did not feature in any of the children's photographs. This suggest that the role play and dressing up area and the home corner are the most favoured areas by the children. Observations of children participating in the photo taking activity further demonstrates their attitudes towards the role play and dressing up area and the home corner, as they confidently moved towards these areas first. Some children verbalised their choices 'yeah we like this area don't we' (Charlotte) and 'I'm going to do one of the dresses' (Poppy). Both the role play and dressing up area and the home corner are areas that provide opportunities for imaginative, child-initiated play (Smidt, 2011). In comparison, the maths and writing area is an adult-led zone to which the children are often directed by a practitioner to complete an activity, for example, writing their name or ordering numbers.

However, adult-led areas and practices were photographed and discussed. Ellie chose to discuss a photograph of the bug mat.

Ellie: *pointing to the bug mat in the picture* 'That's the mat that we sit on'
O: 'That is the mat that you sit on and what happens on that mat?'
Ellie: 'We sing the goodbye song and then we have our lunch'

Poppy also replied 'do singing and doing books' when explaining what happens during circle time. During the discussions of adult-led practices, the children commented on the singing and storying activities and made no references to the pre-primary activities that are delivered, such as phonics or number work. Bottrill (2018, p. 40) elaborates that singing and reading are activities attached to childhood and should be employed to stimulate and inspire children's learning. Comparably to Wall et al (2019) using child-led practices allows children to

become active participants in their early years provision and it is clear that this approach to learning is highly valued by the children. However, as Bradbury (2019) explains, the current pre-primary pedagogy and schoolification of early years provision impedes the child-centred, play-based approaches that underpin early years practice and are in conflict with the children's perspectives as reflected in these findings.

Friendships and socialisation

The data indicated that friendships and social practices are hugely important to the children and play a significant role in their early years provision. Figure 3 shows a photograph taken by Harvey of the reading area.

Figure 3

O: 'What happens in this area?'
Harvey: *pointing at the screen to the mats under the bench* 'Erm we sit on them and then we sit on the bench and *pointing at the screen to the books* then we read those books there'

In this example, when describing what happens in the reading area and the activities the children engage in, Harvey referred to himself and the other children collectively as a group rather than as an individual, using the word 'we' not 'I'. Similar language appeared throughout discussions with other children; 'we play blocks' (Ellie) and 'we open

the cupboards and we play dolls and we have bread when we're finished' (Charlotte). The children continuously refer to themselves as a group, which evidences how they value their relationships with each other and view their friendships as an integral aspect of their preschool experience.

Referring back to figure 2, the tables are the second most photographed area. Figure 4 is a photograph Ellie took of the tables.

Figure 4

O: 'What's in this picture?'
Ellie: 'That's the table where we have snack'

In addition, Harvey and Charlotte pointed out that the main purpose of the tables is for mealtimes.
Harvey: 'We sit on them and have, and have lunch'
Charlotte: 'We have snack at that table and the little ones do'. Although the tables are used for various activities throughout the day, such as, playdough, crafts or drawing, the children's explanations of how the tables are related to mealtimes highlights that they view them as predominantly used for social practices.

In addition to mealtimes, the children explained how other social practices such as singing or sharing stories made them 'happy' and gave them a sense of enjoyment.
O: 'What happens at circle time?'
Ellie: 'Read our books and when someone brought their book in the teacher can read it'
O: 'Have you ever brought a book in?'
Ellie: *nods her head* 'yeah'

O: 'How did that make you feel?'
Ellie: *Smiles and says* 'Good to show my friends'.

In addition, Harvey excitedly explained: 'I like, like, I like everyone reading a story after, after, after we sing the song' when discussing circle time. These examples further demonstrate the children's appreciation for social activities. Church and Bateman (2019) advocate for social pedagogic approaches which prioritise positive relationships and peer-interaction in order to develop high-quality provision that works cooperatively with children. It is clear throughout this data that the children's relationships, togetherness and social practices are a valued part of their preschool provision.

During the semi-structured interview, Alex expressed that sometimes he felt sad 'because no-one's playing with me'. Alex related the absence of his peers to negative emotions, which correlates with Murray's (2019) argument that children attach positive emotions to strong peer relationships, explaining that social practices are beneficial in order to teach children feelings of worth and value.

During the photo taking activity, Alex pointed the camera at me and smiled, squinting one of his eyes and said 'click' once he took the photo. During the semi-structured interview, I asked Alex to choose his favourite picture that he had taken, and he chose the photo he had taken of me. When I asked why it was his favourite he replied enthusiastically, 'because it's you'. In addition, Poppy also discussed the practitioners in the setting;

Poppy: 'I like all the teachers in nursery.'
O: 'What's your favourite thing about the teachers?'
Poppy: *thinks for a couple of seconds* 'Erm, telling me I've been good.'

It is clear that the children value having respectable relationships with the practitioners. Although the EYFS (DfE, 2017) encourages effective relationships between the practitioner and the child, as Rouvali and Riga (2019) explain, the intense

focus on formal practices decreases practitioner's time to build warm, effective relationships with children, which in turn impacts the quality of the relationship between practitioners and children.

Home environment and role models

The children linked many of their preschool experiences to their home lives and unexpectedly discussed role models that influenced their behaviours. This was not an expected outcome for this study, and consequently there is limited literature within the review to support this finding.

During the semi-structured interview with Ellie, she chose to discuss a picture of a dollhouse after swiping through all her pictures. Ellie seemed shy at the beginning of the conversation but gained confidence when speaking about her picture of the dollhouse.

Me: 'What's in this picture?'
Ellie: *tilts her head to the side* 'Erm the dollhouse, *sits back in her chair and looks at me* I've got a dollhouse in my bedroom'
Me: 'Do you? And do you like playing with this dollhouse at nursery?'
Ellie: *Nods* 'Yeah I really like it'

Figure 5 shows Ellie's picture of the dollhouse.

Figure 5

Additionally, figure 6 shows a picture of the home corner photographed by Alex.

Figure 6

Alex: 'So a toaster. *pauses for a second and then shouts* Wait! I've got a toaster!'
O: 'Yeah do you have one of those at home?'
Alex: 'Yeah!'

Ellie's growing confidence and Alex's enthusiasm whilst talking about their home lives demonstrate how they value their home environments. In addition, the children's images of areas and conversations about items that resemble their home environments suggest that incorporating home experiences into their play supports their learning and meaning-making practices.

Children's meaning-making practices are relevant throughout data as the children explain performing tasks and imitating behaviours that they have observed in the home environment. Poppy explained how the children soothe the crying dolls by 'making a bottle for her' whereas, Ellie expressed how they 'dress the babies…so they don't get all cold' as she wraps her arms around herself and rubs the sides of her arms with her hands. Furthermore, Alex expresses how 'it can turn into cheese sandwiches, sausage rolls or hamburgers' when describing how he makes food in the home corner. Brooker (2010, p. 42) explains how children make sense of their natural worlds and develop their identities, by practising and participating in activities and tasks observed from others and in the home environment. This supports Vygotsky's (1987 cited in Nilsson, Ferholt and Lecusay, 2018) argument that imaginative play allows children to

engage in sense making practices and connect with realistic experiences.

During the photo-taking activity, Poppy photographed some small world figures, Poppy lined the figures up saying, 'I'm just going to put these the right ways' and took a picture of them. Figure 7 is Poppy's picture of the small world figures.

Figure 7

After swiping through her photos, Poppy decided to tell me about the small world figures.

Poppy: 'So, people work around the world'
Pauses for a couple of seconds and looks closely at the figures
Poppy: 'Yeah and that one's for who goes across the road'
O: 'Yeah, the lollypop lady'
Poppy: 'Yeah and she puts a sign up and you have to stop' *Says 'stop' firmly and holds her hand up in front of her face*

In this example, Poppy explains knowledge she has learnt from role models and experiences outside of preschool and demonstrates how this knowledge is applied and extended within her play at preschool, using the small world figures as a cultural tool to support meaning-making practices (Hedges, 2010). Furthermore, Ellie explained how two of the pictures she had taken of the role play area were influenced by her mum after I asked, 'why did you take this picture?' Ellie replied, 'cause my mummy likes taking pictures' and a second time explained 'cause my mummy likes taking all the pictures what I like'. These extracts suggest Ellie's motivation for taking the photos was from events she had observed

or experienced with her mum, and that she had then enacted these experiences during the photo taking activity. Montgomery (2018, p. 66) discusses how the home environment is the space in which children's earliest learning experiences occur. The EYFS (DfE, 2017) encourage strong partnerships between practitioners and parents and main carers to holistically support children's learning and development. It is evident that the children admire and respect their parents and by creating areas that reflect the home environment within the preschool environment, children's learning experiences are supported and extended.

Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

This study worked with a small group of children within one preschool to elicit their views of their preschool provision, although the study achieved the aim of highlighting the areas of practice that are considered the most valuable from the perspectives of the child. Due to the scale of this case study, the findings produced are as unique as the children who provided them, and cannot be generalised.

It is clear that the children enjoyed the responsibilities and autonomy the study provided them with, subsequently, the project has emphasised the importance of respecting and incorporating children's views. This correlates with the considerable amount of research that champions the benefits of listening to the child's voice and working collaboratively with children (Clark, 2011, Murray, 2019, Wall et al., 2019).

The concentration on policy goals and standards across education results in the formalisation of early years, to accelerate children's learning and prepare them for school (Bradbury, 2019). This schoolification compels structured, adult-led practices to dominate early years provision. However, the data collected from the children within this study, indicated that children view preschool as an environment for play, building relationships, imagination, meaning-making, discovering identity and inclusion. Evidencing that the children enjoy and value the time they spend playing, pretending and socialising.

The data collected in this study in conjunction with the literature reviewed, suggests that there are two layers of early years practice being delivered in this specific preschool; the practice that complies with policy demands and the practice that supports children's intrinsic motivation for play and which meets the needs of the individual child. The frameworks instruct an inclusive, child-centred approach to ECEC, however, this style of provision is contradictory and disconnected from the goals and objectives of the preschool provision expected by the government and educational policies. From the data collected, it is clear that the children are able to enjoy and engage in child-initiated, meaningful activities, as well as express themselves and build strong, positive relationships with their practitioners and peers. Practitioners ensure that policy demands are met by delivering formal, academic learning through playful activities that are appropriate and engaging for children, such as the storying and singing that the children commented on during the semi-structured interviews. This creates a balance between the two layers of practice that successfully support the child's individual needs as well as ensuring school readiness, and ultimately demonstrating the significance of recognising the uniqueness of each child.. In addition to this, it signifies the importance of listening to and working collaboratively with children, to effectively support their learning and development.

Upon reflection, working with a small number of participants from one preschool setting limited the findings of the study. Conducting the study with a larger group of children or across a number of preschool settings may have increased the generalisability of the findings produced. Additionally, carrying out the data collection in the main preschool room in conjunction with the outdoor area, would have provided an insight into the children's views of their entire preschool provision. Furthermore, extending the research project to gather practitioners' perspectives on current early years practice and how the practice they deliver facilitates children's views, would have provided comparative findings for the research.

In conclusion, this study could enlighten early years settings of the benefits of listening to the child's voice by adopting pedagogic approaches that work collaboratively with children to respect their rights and support children's autonomy. This would optimise children's learning and enhance their preschool experiences, as it is clear that children value practice that allows them to exercise their voice and lead their play.

Acknowledgements

References

Allen, G. (2011). *Early intervention: the next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's government by Graham Allen MP*. The Stationery Office.

Alexander, V. D. (2008). Analysing Visual Materials. In N. Gilbert (Ed.) *Researching Social Life*. (3rd ed., pp. 462-481). London: SAGE.

Bassey, M. (1981). Pedagogic research: On the relative merits of search for generalisation and study of single events. *Oxford Review of Education*, 7(1), 73-94. doi:10.1080/0305498810070108

Beazley, H., Bessell, S., Ennew, J., & Waterson, R. (2009). The right to be properly researched: Research with children in a messy, real world. *Children's Geographies*, 7(4), 365-378. doi:10.1080/14733280903234428

Bell, J., & Waters, S. (2018). *Ebk: Doing your research project* (Seventh ed.). GB: McGraw Hill Book Company.

Bottrill, G. (2018). *Can I go & play now?: Rethinking the early years.* London; Los Angeles: Sage.

Bradbury, A. (2019). Datafied at four: The role of data in the 'schoolification' of early childhood education in England. *Learning, Media and Technology, 44*(1), 7-21. doi:10.1080/17439884.2018.1511577

Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Ethnography.* Philadelphia; Buckingham [England]: Open University Press.

British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fourth edition, London. Retrieved from https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethicalguidelines-for-educational-research-2018

Brooker, L. (2010). Learning to Play, or Playing to Learn? Children's Participation in the Cultures of Home and Settings. In L. Brooker, & S. Edwards (Eds.) *Engaging Play.* (pp. 39-53). England: Open University Press.

Brooks, E., & Murray, J. (2018). Ready, steady, learn: School readiness and children's voices in English early childhood settings. *Education 3-13, 46*(2), 143-156. doi:10.1080/03004279.2016.1204335

Burke, C. (2008). 'Play in Focus' Children's Visual Voice in Participatory Research. In P. Thompson (Ed.) *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People.* (pp. 23-36). London; New York: Routledge.

Canosa, A., & Graham, A. (2020). Tracing the contribution of childhood studies: Maintaining momentum while navigating tensions. *Childhood, 27*(1), 25-47. doi:10.1177/0907568219886619

Church, A., & Bateman, A. (2019). Children's right to participate: How can teachers extend child-initiated learning sequences? *International Journal of Early Childhood, 51*(3), 265-281. doi:10.1007/s13158-019-00250-7

Clark, A. (2007). A hundred ways of listening: Gathering children's perspectives of their early childhood environment. *YC Young Children, 62*(3), 76-81.

Clark, A. (2011). Multimodal map making with young children: Exploring ethnographic and participatory methods. *Qualitative Research, 11*(3), 311-330. doi:10.1177/1468794111400532

Clark, A. (2020). Visual Ethics Beyond the Crossroads. In L. Pauwels, & D. Mannay (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods.* (2nd ed., pp. 682-693). London: SAGE Publications.

Clark, A., Moss, P., & National Children's Bureau. (2005). *Spaces to play: More listening to young children using the mosaic approach.* London: National Children's Bureau.

Department for Education. (2017). *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.* Retrieved from: https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/eyfs_statutory_framework_2017.pdf

Education, E. (2012). Development matters in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). *London: Early Education.*

Edwards, V. (2019) *How might we work more Ethically with Children and Young People: The 'Case of Ethics'.* Retrieved from http://www.exchangewales.org/single-post/2019/05/15/How-might-we-work-more-Ethically-with-Children-and-Young-People-The-%E2%80%98Case-of-Ethics%E2%80%99

Field, F. (2010). *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children from becoming poor adults.* HM Government.

Hackett, A., & Rautio, P. (2019). Answering the world: Young children's running and rolling as more-than-human multimodal meaning making. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies*

in Education, 32(8), 1019-1031. doi:10.1080/09518398.2019.1635282

Hedges, H. (2010). Whose Goals and Interests? The Interface of Children's Play and Teachers' Pedagogical Practices. In L. Brooker, & S. Edwards (Eds.) *Engaging Play.* (pp. 25-38). England: Open University Press.

Hurdley, R., & Dicks, B. (2011). In-between practice: Working in the 'thirdspace' of sensory and multimodal methodology. *Qualitative Research,* 11(3), 277-292. doi:10.1177/1468794111399837

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches.* SAGE.

Lewis, Z. (2018). Policy and the image of the child: A critical analysis of drivers and levers in English early years curriculum policy. *Early Years* 1-15. doi:10.1080/09575146.2018.1501552

Lin, Y. H. K. (2016). Collecting Qualitative Data. In I. Palaiologou, D. Needham, & T. Male (Eds.) *Doing Research in Education: Theory and Practice.* (pp. 156-176). London: SAGE.

Luttrell, W. (2010). 'A camera is a big responsibility': A lens for analysing children's visual voices. *Visual Studies,* 25(3), 224-237. doi:10.1080/1472586X.2010.523274

Macintyre, C. (2017; 2016). *Enhancing learning through play: A developmental perspective for early years settings* (Third ed.). London, [England]; New York, New York: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315617107

Marmot, M. (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: The Marmot Review.* Retrieved fromhttps://www.parliament.uk/documents/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report.pdf

Miller, K. (2016). Learning about children's school preparation through photographs: The use of photo elicitation interviews with low-income

families. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 14*(3), 261-279. doi:10.1177/1476718X14555703

Montgomery, A. (2018). The Multicultural Classroom: Celebrating Diversity and Challenging Disparities. In P. Beckley (Ed.) *The Philosophy and Practices of Outstanding Early Years Provision.* (pp. 63-79). London: Routledge.

Moss, P. (2019). *Alternative narratives in early childhood: An introduction for students and practitioners* (1st ed.). Milton: Routledge Ltd. doi:10.4324/9781315265247

Mukherji, P., & Albon, D. (2018). *Research methods in early childhood: An introductory guide* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Murray, J. (2019). Hearing young children's voices. *International Journal of Early Years Education,* 27(1), 1-5. doi:10.1080/09669760.2018.1563352

Nilsson, M., Ferholt, B., & Lecusay, R. (2018). 'The playing-exploring child': Reconceptualizing the relationship between play and learning in early childhood education. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood,* 19(3), 231-245. doi:10.1177/1463949117710800

Orellana, M. F. (1999). Space and place in an urban landscape: Learning from children's views of their social worlds. *Visual Sociology,* 14(1), 73-89. doi:10.1080/14725869908583803

Roberts-Holmes, G. (2015). The 'datafication' of early years pedagogy: 'if the teaching is good, the data should be good and if there's bad teaching, there is bad data'. *Journal of Education Policy: Governing by Numbers,* 30(3), 302-315. doi:10.1080/02680939.2014.924561

Roberts-Holmes, G. (2019). School readiness, governance and early years ability grouping. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood.* doi:10.1177/1463949119863128

Robertson, L. H., & Hill, D. (2014). Policy and ideologies in schooling and early years education in England: Implications for and impacts on leadership, management and equality. *Management in Education, 28*(4), 167-174. doi:10.1177/0892020614550468

Rouvali, A., & Riga, V. (2019). Redefining the importance of children's voices in personal social emotional development curriculum using the mosaic approach. *Education 3-13, 47*(8), 998-1013. doi:10.1080/03004279.2018.1553990

Smidt, S. (2011). Playing to learn: *The role of play in the early years.* London; New York;: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203851999

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2004). *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report. The Institution of Education,* Retrieved from https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10005309/1/sylva2004EPPEfinal.pdf

Templeton, T. N. (2020). 'That street is taking us to home': Young children's photographs of public spaces. *Children's Geographies, 18*(1), 1-15. doi:10.1080/14733285.2018.1550573

UNICEF. (1989). *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

Veale, A. (2005). Creative Methodologies in Participatory Research with Children. In S. Greene, & D. Hogan (Eds.) *Researching Children's Experience: Approaches and Methods.* (pp. 234-251). London: SAGE Publications.

Wall, K., Cassidy, C., Robinson, C., Hall, E., Beaton, M., Kanyal, M., & Mitra, D. (2019). Look who's talking: Factors for considering the facilitation of very young children's voices. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 17*(4), 263-278. doi:10.1177/1476718X19875767

Whitty, G., & Wisby, E. (2007). Whose voice? An exploration of the current policy interest in pupil involvement in school decision-making. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 17*(3), 303-319. doi:10.1080/09620210701543957

Wood, E. (2019). Unbalanced and unbalancing acts in the early years foundation stage: A critical discourse analysis of policy-led evidence on teaching and play from the office for standards in education in England (Ofsted). *Education 3-13, 47*(7), 784-795. doi:10.1080/03004279.2019.1622494