

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY
AND COUNSELLING
(IJEPC)

www.ijepec.com



LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: A
PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE FROM IBNU SINNA

Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf¹, Ainul Azmin Md Zamin², Hasnah Abd Kadir³, Saodah Wok⁴, Wan Mazwati Wan Yusoff⁵, Rozailin Abdul Rahman⁶

¹ Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: nfaridah@iium.edu.my

² Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: ainul_azmin@iium.edu.my

³ Department of Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
Email: hasnah.ak@umk.edu.my

⁴ Department of Communication, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: wsaodah@iium.edu.my

⁵ Department of Fundamental and Interdisciplinary Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: wanmazwati@iium.edu.my

⁶ Department of Business Administration, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: rozailin@iium.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 30.10.2023

Revised date: 26.11.2023

Accepted date: 22.12.2023

Published date: 31.12.2023

To cite this document:

Abdul Manaf, N. F., Md Zamin, A. A., Abd Kadir, H., Wok, S., Yusoff, W. M. W., & Rahman, R. A. (2023). Language Learning Through Play: A Psychological Perspective From Ibnu Sinna. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 8 (52), 701-714.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.852053

Abstract:

Teaching and learning during the time of the pandemic are indeed challenging. It is not easy to sustain the interest of young children especially when teaching is done virtually. This paper explores the use of Ibnu Sina's psychology in teaching young children during this difficult period using both f2f and virtual learning. Past practice that required children to memorize facts and follow rigid instructions no longer worked for 21st-century children. Active learning is done through freedom to move and think and very often, this is done through play. Ibnu Sina emphasised fun learning with the combination of music and play at a young age to create healthy physical, mental and moral growth for the children. This study is interested to measure the effect of fun learning in English language subject through online applications among children. A total of 140 middle and low-income school children from Perak participated in this study. The results stated that the children enjoyed learning English through games. Almost all of them were motivated and happy when rewarded for their correct answers done through a game online. Through this approach, they improved their pronunciation and increased their vocabulary. As a result, their overall performance in learning English also increased. The findings of this study echoed what was introduced by Ibnu Sina centuries ago that the use of

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

play, music and physical activities was instrumental in young children's overall growth.

Keywords:

Educational Psychology, English Language Learning, Play In Teaching, Online Learning, Language App

Introduction

The 21st century witnessed a shift in teaching and learning caused by the pandemic in which learning is disrupted by lockdowns. The Malaysian Education Ministry reports that 21,316 pupils, or 0.22 percent of the overall student population, dropped out of school between March 2020 and July 2021. According to the ministry, the reason this figure is lower than in past years is because education authorities at the state, district, and ministry levels have been working together. The ministry further stated that it has implemented a number of measures, including home-based learning, financial help, counselling services, and primary literacy and numeracy programmes, to address the problem of school dropouts. Not only the teaching pedagogy needed to be adjusted to the pandemic but it also needed to be customised according to the age group. Ibnu Sina, an Islamic philosopher and scholar in the 10th century, asserts that the primary goal of education is to assist children in achieving happiness and perfection in this life as well as the next. According to him, education ought to be founded on a child's innate skills and interests and should support the growth of the child's mind, morals, and spirituality. Teaching and learning need to be conducted online and facilities have to be adjusted and adapted. The students and the teachers use communication technology and communication platforms for their subjects. This study focuses on learning English subject. Due to online teaching, the knowledge delivery process is proven to be very challenging and compare to face-to-face learning since not all students have access to online learning or have the connectivity to do so.

Pre-covid education system focused on rigid classroom activities. Among the activities were memorizing, textbook exercise and homework. For students who had an interest, they would read extra storybooks in English. With new, more flexible teaching and learning procedures, online instruction has emerged as the new standard, according to Puteh (2020) during the pandemic. The Malaysia Education Blueprint of Higher Education 2015–2025, which describes the globalised online learning movement, is further supported by online instruction (Malaysia Ministry of Education). However, when the teaching and learning activities are conducted online, the teachers will be competing with other interesting features in social media, online gaming and other online entertainment. Online teaching must overcome several difficulties, including those related to discipline, social presence, Internet connection, and technological comfort. Many children lose interest in studying and focus on the entertainment online that is accessible using Smartphones, laptops or tablets. Gaming and social media activities are more fun when they have Internet access and gadgets. It shows that the children are attracted to fun and play activities. For online learning to be successful and meaningful, teachers, students, and parents must all work together and adapt. This is where the element of play through fun learning becomes vital in ensuring the success of learning.

This study is interested in measuring the fun learning activities through the Moomin application which is a language learning application used to teach English to young children. The language learning application is embedded in the games with interesting features and a reward system. Without knowing, the children need to understand and follow the instructions, improve their pronunciation, and keep challenging themselves to get the right answers. Fun learning was already being promoted by Ibnu Sina where he emphasised the fun teaching and learning to develop a love of knowledge among the children from an early age. The children are more interested in gaining knowledge when they can explore to find the answers. Their teachers can guide them throughout the process. The fun and learning system can develop the physical, mental and moral of the children.

This paper explores the use of Ibnu Sina psychology in a language learning application used in a case study done in selected schools in Perak.

Background of Perak Case Study

The approach used in this study is Finnish's language learning application called Moomin. The application is used to create self-confidence in learning English. The emphasis is on learning language through play. This is because children aged between 6 and 12 years old love games and they learn faster through such an approach. The approach is to attain quality education when the children learn English at their own pace of learning. However, the competitive spirit still exists because children like to compete and do not want to be left behind.

The contents of the approach are to prepare learners to solve problems in real life, thus promoting a good, relaxed and encouraging atmosphere between children and their respective teachers. Accordingly, Finnish learning success came from the early education model. For decades, the Finnish educational system has undergone extensive testing, yielding exceptional learning outcomes. It integrates the newest and greatest learning philosophies, methods, and practices with ongoing improvement (. In most cases, the approach emphasizes children's ability to ask questions, create ideas, and interpret the observations personally. In this way, the educational approach helps children engage in the activities wholeheartedly.

At the same time, team-building skills through collaboration are encouraged so that the children know how to work with one another. An underlying principle is a student-centred approach in which children learn about a subject by working in groups to solve an open-ended problem. Children normally like to work in small groups to gain knowledge and acquire problem-solving skills (Evania et. Al, 2023). Hence, every child has a good chance of getting the same quality education and normally the length of time is rather short and the study period is about 5 hours per day. That is enough for an observable fact or event to be appreciated and remembered by the children. Through this method, it is hoped that the children can raise the level of their education and get equal educational opportunities regardless of whether they are from a well-to-do family or an ordinary family. The basics and the underlying principles of the English language are learned at their own pace.

The use of the Moomin Language Learning App is to test the creativity and skills of the children while the children are engrossed with their ability and they tend to compete within themselves. However, this can be observed by their teachers at school and their parents at home. During this COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching and learning are encouraged; even though face-to-face teaching and learning are much preferred by the children because they like to mingle

around in the classroom with their friends where interaction and communication are done physically. While there are a lot of flexibilities in online learning, greater engagement can be experienced in face-to-face discussions (Kemp & Grieve, 2014).

The Psychology of Ibnu Sina in Teaching Young Children

Abu Ali Sina or better known as Ibnu Sina was born in Afshona in Uzbekistan in 980 AD. He was a polymath and seen as the father of early modern medicine. However, his concept of education in Islamic history is not studied in the Muslim world. Al Naqib (1993) points out that Ibnu Sina's wide knowledge in Greek philosophy and Islamic knowledge had prompted him to design his philosophical education especially in the area of children's education development. It is important to mention that "no discussion of Ibn Sina's views on education would be complete without mention of his doctrine of the intellect, the faculties of the soul and the hierarchy which determines the different levels of man's intellectual perfection." (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1985) As also pointed out by Embong and Salleh (2017), Ibnu Sina's philosophy of education stressed the liberation of man which would free him from worldly concerns. This spiritual liberation would move one closer to the goals of Islamic education which do not only mean having academic excellence but also having moral uprightness and taqwa. Ibnu Sina devised 4 different stages of children's education which include the following:

The Infant Stage Beginning From Birth Until The Second Year

Ibnu Sina gave attention to activities that would affect the child's development of education like sleep, bathing, suckling and exercise that are suitable for the child's age. For example, bathing was seen as an important trigger for the child's growth (the baby must be bathed more than once a day). Other pointers include rocking the cradle gently to prevent any disturbance on the milk contained in the baby's stomach and breastfeeding should last 2 years; the weaning process needs to be done gradually, not instantly (Al Naqib, 1993).

The Stage of Childhood (3rd To 5th Year)

At this stage, the child would be ready for instructions and Ibnu Sina placed much emphasis on the child's morals. The child needs to be protected from harmful influences that could affect his behaviour and thinking. Al Naqib (1993) cited Ibnu Sina's child psychology in which he believed that the child should be bathed the moment he/she woke up, then let him/her play for an hour before the child was fed. Then the child was allowed to play again but now for a long time, then bathed and fed again (p.7). Game activities are to develop the child's body movement and motor skills.

Ibnu Sina believed that music played a role in shaping a child's behaviour and aestheticism. He would encourage guardians to let children sleep to music so that they could learn moral values from the poetry or songs sung to them (p.8). It was also at this stage that Ibnu Sina would introduce the teaching of the Quran, its Arabic handwriting and its pronunciation.

The First Stage of Teaching (6th Year To 14th Year)

This was considered as primary education and children of this age should slowly move away from games and sport towards more organized study. As pointed out by Al Naqib (1993), the children should be exposed to the principles of Islamic culture like learning the Quran and Arabic poetry, calligraphy and Islamic rules of good conduct.

Ibnu Sina also believed in doing group work for children of this age so that they learn how to socialize and communicate well. It was also important to be guided by a teacher or tutor. Independent learning was not thought of. Only light exercises were recommended to avoid excessive hardship (Nasr, 1985).

The Specialized Stage of Education (Age 14th Onwards)

After completing his/her primary education, the student would be given a freer option which field he/she wanted to do especially to earn a living. This phase comes after the child finishes his primary education and his aptitudes have become clearer whether the inclinations are in the field of education or towards craft and at the same time, he/she must be prepared to earn a living but must do so with the guidance of a teacher (Al Naqib, 1993, p.9).

Since the focus of this paper is on language learning through play, it will examine how Ibnu Sina's initial introduction of music and play in a child's early education work in other educational settings. According to Einarsdottir (2012), play is deemed as an important element in a child's educational structure where the learning process involves play just as the play involves learning. Moyles (2005) believes that the reason is that using play in child education leads to an effective way to shape and develop children's thinking. For Ali and Mahamod (2015), play helps preschool children to learn in a meaningful way and thus, it is encouraged that the preschool becomes the center of child's play where learning and development take place appropriately. In the case of language learning, the research done by Ali and Mahamod (2015) proves that children who engage in play experience learning language way better and easier compared to traditional learning with no play. The tendency of children to respond more effectively towards play-based instruction and environment becomes the reason for speedy learning.

As argued earlier, working as a group works better for children because they could seek the solution from their peers and teachers while learning. Ibnu Sina paved the way for later educationists by introducing children's psychology for their educational, mental and spiritual development.

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design by employing a survey method. A questionnaire is used as a research instrument. A survey questionnaire was transferred into a Google form for data collection from March to July 2021, that is, during the COVID-19 pandemic when the Movement Control Order was implemented in 2021.

The population of the study is the pre-school and primary school children from 31 schools in Perak; namely Larut, Matang and Selama. This study used purposive sampling; therefore, the distribution of the questionnaires was with the help of the schools in the selected areas. A total of 140 school children participated in the study.

The questionnaire was mainly based on 'Yes' or 'No' answers because children found it easier and clearer to answer accordingly. The questions for the children were directed towards obtaining answers about: demographic characteristics, the preferred method of learning English, learning through the Moomin Language Learning App, online performance, comparison between online performance and face-to-face method, performance improvement, and overall performance. Majority of the questions were adapted from Friedman (2020).

The pre-testing was conducted before the actual data collection. The questionnaire was validated by the experts with the aims to improve the research instrument. Therefore, this study employed face validity. Since the set of questions is the dichotomous set of choice, together with the experts' view, thus, the questions were assumed to be reliable.

Overall, the cognitive aspect of learning a language is emphasized in addition to the preference and liking of the language. Hence, the attitudinal aspect of language is gauged. Finally, the impact on learning English can be observed ultimately both by the teachers and the parents while the children themselves answered the questionnaire sincerely to each aspect of the study.

The data analyses were done through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel for the quantitative data where chart, graph, frequency and percentage were attained based on the research objectives of the study.

Findings and Discussions from The Questionnaire

A total of 140 students were involved in answering the survey questions. Demographic information was collected at the initial part of the survey to get an idea of the background of the students.

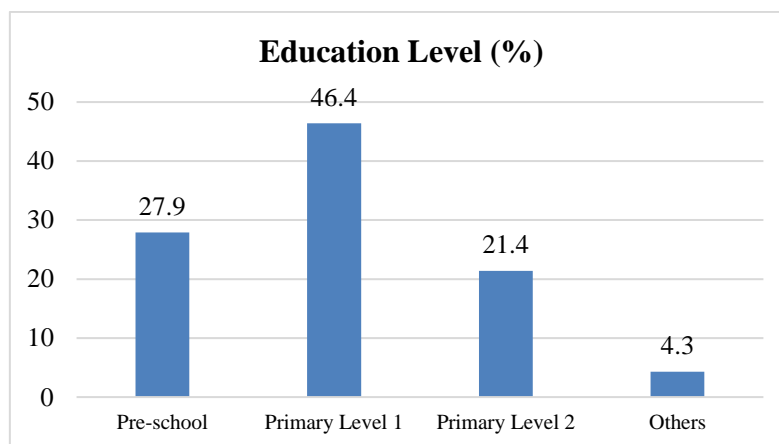


Figure 1: Demographic Characteristics Of The Respondents

The table shows a total of 27.9% were from the pre-school level. Those from primary level 1 made the biggest percentage; 46.4%.

Primary level 1: 7-9

Primary level 2: 10-12

Others: not stated

Category	Fathers' income		Mothers' income	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Medium income	69	49.3	46	32.9
Low income	62	44.3	32	22.9
no income/no info	9	6.4	62	44.3
Total	140	100	140	100.1

Table 1: Parents' Income

No	Item (N=140)	Face to face	Online
1	I can interact more with my English teacher	92.1	7.9
2	I can interact more with my classmates	89.3	10.7
3	I like to learn English	85.0	15.0
4	My performance in English has improved	84.3	15.7
5	I like speaking English	80.0	20.0
6	My mother/father/guardian can help me more in learning English at home	73.6	26.4

Table 2: The Preference of Studying English Language and Performance

No.	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	I love to get many stars when playing Moomin games.	96.4	3.6
2	I am very happy in getting the correct answers when playing the Moomin game.	94.3	5.7
3	I keep on trying until I get to the next level.	93.6	6.4
4	Playing the Moomin game makes me know more words in English.	93.6	6.4
5	I love to play Moomin games.	92.1	7.9
6	Playing the Moomin game helps me in my English pronunciation.	91.4	8.6
7	Playing the Moomin game makes me understand English instruction better.	88.6	11.4
8	Playing the Moomin game makes me braver to speak in English	82.1	17.9
9	Playing the Moomin game makes me write better in English.	78.6	21.4
10	I play the Moomin game almost every day.	52.9	47.1

Table 3: Students Performance

Almost all of them indicate that:

- (a) they love to get many stars when playing Moomin games (96.4%);
- (b) they are very happy in getting the correct answers when playing the Moomin game (94.3%);
- (c) they keep on trying until they get to the next level (93.6%);
- (d) playing Moomin game makes them know more words in English (93.6%);
- (e) they love to play Moomin games (92.1%); and
- (f) playing the Moomin games help them in their English pronunciation (91.4%).

The majority of the respondents (88.6%) indicated that playing the Moomin game makes them understand English instruction better and playing the Moomin game makes them braver to speak in English (82.1%) while 78.6% of the respondents said that playing Moomin game makes them write better in English. Nonetheless, only 52.9% of the respondents said that they play Moomin games almost every day.

Generally, playing the Moomin game can help improve their English pronunciation, understand English instruction better, make them braver to speak in English, and make them able to write better in English. In a way, the Moomin game does help improve their English to a certain extent. This is a good indication where playing games can help in improving English proficiency.

Impact of Moomin application on Students' Motivation in Learning English

- The students liked and enjoyed using the Moomin application
- The features in the Moomin application motivated them to increase levels,
- They felt happy and motivated when collecting stars and getting correct answers.
- Playing Moomin games improved their English in terms of their vocabulary, speaking, understanding, writing and pronunciation.
- Overall, Moomin application was able to increase students' performance and sustain their interest in learning English

Impact of Moomin application on Students' Self-confidence in Using English

- Students attended most online and f2f classes
- They were engaged in-class activities
- Students showed interest in the Moomin application by playing almost every day
- Students kept trying to progress to the next level and get more stars
- They showed improvement in pronunciations, speaking, understanding, and writing in English
- Teachers reported students had increased self-confidence and were more courageous to speak more in English
- The parents reported their children had a positive attitude towards the English language

Family income and Moomin Application

- Regardless of their family income, the students showed their preference to learn English using the face-to-face method
- Regardless of their family income, they liked to play Moomin games
- Regardless of their family income, Moomin application improved their English language
- Students from medium-income families were better motivated to use the Moomin application

The contents of the Moomin Language Learning App are found to be fun and exciting.

Elements of Ibnu Sina in Moomin Language Learning Application

Ibnu Sina's assertion on children to be given ample time to play is consistent with his explanation of the relationship between body and mind-soul. For example, we cannot smile if our mind keeps thinking of a sad situation. Conversely, we cannot frown if our mind keeps thinking of happy moments. Therefore, happiness can be induced if we are physically active with fun games. Ibnu Sina further asserts that play and games are one of the means to relieve fatigue and boredom; and mental fatigue and boredom which will weaken the heart and intelligence. The feeling of joy not only produces energy and vitality but also leads to positivity, empathy and creativity. One's happy facial expression, in turn, affects those around him or her. Smile is indeed contagious; a joyful soul produces smiles and affects others to smile as well. At the moment people smile, all their negativity and worry are gone. Moreover, Ibnu Sina mentions that play is important for the development of physical strength, talents and personality. When children are actively playing with their peers, they communicate to get the game going. This means that play is important means for the development of children's social and communication skills. Ibnu Sina also maintains that joy can be achieved through music.

Concisely, joyful learning which can be achieved through play, games, and music should be an integral part of children's education.

The elements of joyful play, games and music are present in the Moomin language learning application. The mobile apps for language learning (MALL) developed by Moomin to teach English to non-native speaking children incorporated fun learning activities, games and music to motivate children to keep doing until they reach a higher level. The Gamification concept was applied in the development of the mobile apps where the designer used elements of gameplay in language learning settings. Fun features such as music, stars for getting correct answers, race elements to climb to the next level, and so on were incorporated in the Moomin apps. This was done to increase the children's engagement with the Moomin apps by tapping their intrinsic motivation to sustain joyful play and this would ensure continuous English language learning. The children are required to spend at least 15 minutes a day playing the Moomin apps installed on their smartphones or tablets. One week of lessons using the Moomin language learning application is also supported by a weekly face to face or online class facilitated by trained teachers or tutors. Ibnu Sina's elements of fun learning through music, play and games also can be found in each teaching and learning session.

Each teaching and learning session is divided into 3 sections: circle time, theme and goodbye. In circle time, children are made to sit in a circle, most of the time, on the floor. During this time, the facilitator would play a few active physical games which are related to the topic of the lesson. Children will be actively engaged with the games while practising English words and expressions at the same time. At least one of the games would involve the children singing together with the facilitator. Singing is an effective tool for language learning especially to memorize new vocabulary in a fun way. The second part is the theme session where children are shown and play with flashcards of words based on the session's theme. Children also will be asked to draw and present their drawings orally in the class. When the time to say goodbye has come, the children will sing together goodbye songs. The play elements are less structured compared to the mobile apps but doing fun activities together with teacher and friends motivate children to keep coming to class.

In the nutshell, joyful language learning through fun games and activities as proposed by Ibnu Sina could be found in Moomin Language Learning Apps which motivate students intrinsically to keep engaging with the mobile apps and during teaching and learning sessions with their facilitators.

Sustaining Students' Interest in Learning English Using Finnish App Based on Ibnu Sina's Psychology of Learning

The earlier sections of this article have touched upon the Moomin app where the element of play is the central approach to language learning for young learners. Another crucial aspect that was highlighted is the philosophical views from Ibnu Sina's concept in education. The crucial question now is how do we reinforce and maintain this combination to suit the learning environment for the children in our context? On the one hand, children are exposed to the western learning concepts brought by the Moomin app. While on the other hand, there is the principle of learning advocated by Ibnu Sina that was based in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah.

Nikolov and Djigunović (2006) highlighted seven reasons why a child can successfully become bilingual at a young and tender age. At the age of ten and below, the brain can easily absorb any new language as this is part of the natural development of a child. Studies have shown that children have the best chance to be fluent in any language they learn while adults need to struggle a lot more (Ramirez Naja & Kuhl Patricia, 2016). At the age of ten and below, children focus on building their oral and communication skills before picking up their reading and writing skills in elementary school (Dao, 2019). Children at the age of 7 and 8 are normally able to use certain basic grammar to engage in basic English conversation. While it is interesting to observe they read and write using simple English, these two skills also enable them to learn and pick up new knowledge in other subjects too. For this group age, Ibnu Sina did not mention any specific kind of teaching but he suggested creating a happy childhood with regards to physical, mental and moral health. What better way than to learn a new language using activities that are based on play. The Moomin language app does not subscribe to any particular learning approach but rather combines a variety of them based on Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" and learning as a social process, Dewey's concept of "learning by doing" and Ebbinghaus's "the spacing effect".

A child is born with a natural interest in language and communication. The Finland education system taps on this and it is not surprising that their young learners enjoy the language activities as they are parallel with the natural learning process. For example, while children develop their native language, they also have a better ability to mimic the pronunciation of any language compared to adults. Language development can be taught in terms of the three major components of language –form, content and use (Hoff,2014). Form refers to the structural aspects of language, including phonology (sound units and sequences), syntax (word order and relationships) and morphology (the internal organisation of words). Content refers to the semantic system of rules governing the meaning or content of words, phrases and sentences. Use refers to the pragmatic aspects of language as a social tool, with conventions around how language is used in real-life contexts. The language activities from the Moomin app can provide the various activities that can encourage all 3 major components of the language; form, syntax and morphology. The child-centred activities involve digital educational games with fun play activities.

Language immersion is one crucial factor that can lead to language mastery. Hoff (2014) elaborated on how a child can be immersed in the use of language that there are more opportunities to use the language without any fear of making mistakes. The foundations of the Moomin language app is based on playing, physical activities, exploring, interacting with others, artistic experiences and self-expression. A total of 6 modules cover a range of topics from "family" and "home" to "animals" and "zoo". Children also learn to count and recognize colours and numbers in English. A child is encouraged to explore and discover the language through fun and interactive activities. The digital tools can be easily used by the children with minimum guidance from the teachers as they are user friendly. All these are parallel with the children's brain development. To localize the context of the activities, teachers can adapt the approach of pointing out the differences in the objects as found in our own country as compared to those found in the west. Simple items or vocabularies like local fruits or animals that are normally found in Malaysian farms can be introduced in English. A child's appreciation of his surroundings is advocated by Ibnu Sinna education philosophy and at the same time respecting and accepting individual differences.

The Finnish education system regards each child as a unique and valuable individual with the right to learn through play. Children's diversity and different ways of learning are valued as their opinions matter. Children participate in the construction of learning environments where feedback is given to encourage and support their learning process. Finnish education is based on the premise that children have the right to express their thoughts, feelings and deal with conflict. In a nutshell, the system regards children as young active individuals who learn through play and the use of digital resources foster the children's sense of freedom to pace their learning. The respect given by this approach to the child's individuality is also in line with Ibnu Sinn'a idea of giving attention and bringing up a child according to his or her particular make-up (Al- Naqib, 1993).

One of Ibnu Sina's principles of education deals directly with human's ability to adapt and change according to the influence of the environment and educational system. An immersive programme such as the Moomin language learning app by the Finnish education system provides the children with exposure to the kind of learning that is suitable for their young age. Rosnani (1996) discussed Ibnu Sina's aims of education; the cultivation of intellect and the preparation of children for their calling in life. Education is regarded as not merely preparing children to become elites or philosophers but training children for a specialized vocation and skills that can enable them to become contributive members of society. Ibnu Sina believed that education begins at infancy and even before the child is yet to be born (Al-Naqib, 1993).

Ibnu Sina outlined four stages of learning; the stage of infancy, the stage of childhood, the first stage of teaching and the specialized education. At the ages between three and five, children should receive a lot of individual attention but at the age of six and fourteen, a child needs group guidance from a teacher to gain the knowledge and skills. The principle behind the Moomin language app is no different from what Ibnu Sina has advocated; guided play approaches are effective because they encourage children to become active and engaged partners in the learning process. As Myck- Wayne (2010) posits "learning and play are compatible" for young children. From a constructivist point of view, play facilitates a child's development by building and extending knowledge through cooperation with others and on his or her own. This is truly in line with Ibnu Sina's idea of teaching a child alongside other children to form good conduct and habits. This in turn will increase motivation and reduce stress and problem behaviour (Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff (2013).

The gamified learning in the Moomin app provided activities that were not just for fun but also offered feedback such as micro rewards to increase motivation and support engagement to boost the level of confidence in using the language. Although mistakes are expected, the children are not burdened with grammatical accuracy but rather support is on the use of the language. This is one similarity with Ibnu Sina's concept of avoiding toil and hardship at the stage between boyhood and adolescence (Nasr, 1985).

Conclusion

From the perspective of Ibnu Sina's philosophy of childhood education which emphasises the elements of music and play in educating children at their early years, this study examined the impact of fun learning activities through Moomin mobile application which is a language learning application used to teach English on young children's learning engagement and skills in English language. Moomin apps offered many elements of joyful play, games, and music. The mobile apps for language learning (MALL) were developed by Moomin for the purpose

of teaching English to non-native speaking children by incorporating fun learning activities, games, and music to motivate children to keep doing until they reach a higher level.

This study has unveiled a profound understanding of the significance of fun learning activities and play in promoting children's engagement in learning activities. Sustaining children's attention in teaching and learning sessions is very challenging. This study has shown that fun learning activities, games, and music motivated the children to stay focused in learning English language. Furthermore, when children were given the opportunities to engage in playful learning activities, they become more confident in communicating with their teachers and friends using English language. The children also reported that they can understand instructions in English better because they have learned more new English vocabularies; and this has improved their speaking and writing skills. Not only that, but fun learning activities also encouraged the children's positive feelings towards English language. Concisely, language activities from the Moomin app which provide the various activities that can encourage all 3 major components of the language including form, syntax and morphology were effective in enhancing English language skills of the children in this study.

This research project also discovered that majority of the children had to use their parents' mobile phones to play the Moomin Apps. Since most parents were working, they can only play the Moomin Apps in the evening. Moreover, those who owned tablets had to share the tablets with their siblings. Discussion for cooperation by parents to prioritize their children who were involved in the study resolved some of the problems. In addition, parents' supervision on how to play the Moomin Apps and involvement in ensuring that their children would play the apps daily were low. This was because most parents had fulltime jobs and they also had little knowledge in English language. Therefore, teachers from the schools played a significant role in encouraging and helping the children to resolve their issues pertaining to using the Mobile apps.

The concepts found in the Moomin language app is consistent with the principles advocated by the Muslim philosopher, Ibnu Sina. The concept of play, language immersion, the use of digital tools and spaced learning provided the kind of educational ecosystem that is suitable for the children's age. It will be a wise action taken by the policymaker to introduce such applications from early childhood education up to the primary school level. From the practitioners' point of view, application developers tend to find there's a huge market to be penetrated in the education line involving technology. As a way forward, in addition to the hybrid education system that being implemented since the pandemic, the opportunity is open widely for the revolution of application to be expanded and exploited.

This study is interested in measuring the fun learning activities through Moomin application which is a language learning application used to teach English among young children. Despite Malaysia being hit with the Covid19 pandemic, this study managed to fulfil its objective by getting responses through an online platform. Taking Ibnu Sina's education philosophy, in examining how the initial introduction of music and play in a child's early education work in other education settings, Moomin apps offered many elements of joyful play, games and music. The mobile apps for language learning (MALL) that has been developed by Moomin did teach English to non-native speaking children incorporated fun learning activities, games and music to motivate children to keep doing until they reach a higher level. Even though it is very challenging to sustain children attention while learning, language activities from the Moomin

app were able to provide the various activities that can encourage all 3 major components of the language including form, syntax and morphology. In summary, the concepts found in the Moomin language app is consistent with the principles advocated by the Muslim philosopher, Ibnu Sina. The concept of play, language immersion, the use of digital tools and spaced learning provided the kind of educational ecosystem that is suitable for the children's age. It will be a wise action taken by the policymaker to introduce such applications from early childhood education up to the primary school level. From the practitioners' point of view, application developers tend to find there's a huge market to be penetrated in the education line involving technology. As a way forward, in addition to the hybrid education system that being implemented since the pandemic, the opportunity is open widely for the revolution of application to be expanded and exploited.

Acknowledgment

The researchers for this project would like to thank all the reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions that helped the authors improve the quality of this manuscript. We are grateful to Yayasan Hasanah for providing the funding that made this research and publication possible.

References

- Al Naqib, Abd al-Rahman. (1993). "Avicenna". The Quarterly Review of Comparative (Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education), XXIII, pp. 53-69.
- Ali, Aliza & Mahamod, Zamri. (2015) Development of Play-Based Instruction Module for Teaching Preschoolers' Language Skills. Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci., 9(34): 110-118.
- Einarsdottir, J., (2012). Play and literacy: A collaborative action research project in preschool. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 58(2): 18 – 33.
- Embong, Rahimah & Salleh, Sakinah. (2017). Educational Views of Ibnu Sina. Al-Irsyad: Journal of Islamic And Contemporary Issues. 2(1), 13-24. <https://doi.org/10.53840/alirsyad.v2i1.23>.
- Erlkila, M. (2017). Learning English from digital games: Finnish upper secondary school students' perspective on game-enhanced language learning. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/53679>.
- Friedman, Cara. (2020). Students' Major Online Learning Challenges amid the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Hoff, Erika. (2014). Language development (5th ed). Belmont: Cengage Learning.
- Kemp, Nenagh & Grieve, Rachel. (2014). Face-to-face or face-to-screen? Undergraduates' opinions and test performance in classroom vs. online learning. Frontier: Psychology, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01278>
- Malaysia Ministry of Education. Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025: (Preschool to Post- Secondary Education). Putrajaya: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia
- Moyles, Janet., (2005). The Excellence of Play. New York: Open Press University.
- Myck-Wayne, Janice, 2010. In defence of play: Beginning the dialogue about the power of play. Young Exceptional Children, 13 (4). 15-23.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. (1985). The Islamic Philosophers' Views on Education. Muslim Education Quarterly 2:5-14.
- O'Neill, Gillian. (2021). Unpacking the Research and Philosophy Behind the Finnish Education System: The Nordic models of schooling are renowned around the world. How and why did the education system in Finland come to be? In Focus.

<https://universitytimes.ie/2021/06/unpacking-the-research-and-philosophy-behind-the-finnish-education-system/>

Puteh, Marlia. Embracing online teaching during the pandemic. *New Straits Times*, November 25, 2020.

Shamey R., Kirchner E., Amirshahi S.H. (2020) Ibnu Sina (Avicenna) Ca. 980–1037. In: *Pioneers of Color Science*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-30811-1_9.

Weisberg, D.S., Hirsh-Pasek, K. and Golinkoff, R.M., 2013. Guided play: Where curricular goals meet a playful pedagogy. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 7(2), 104-112.

Yafie, Evania, Mohamad Ashari, Zakiah, Jumaat, Nurul Farhana & Nor Fajariyah, Puja. (2023). Supporting Children's Resilience Through Play Based On Technology Usage In The Disruption Era. *The 2nd International Webinar Series Educational Revolution "Building Resilience and Competitive Advantage in Education*.