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## *Language Games in Serbian Language Textbooks for the First Grade of Primary School<sup>2</sup>*

### Extended summary

The subject of the research is the representation of language games in Serbian language textbooks for the first grade of primary school. The corpus consists of current editions of textbook sets for the school subject Serbian Language. The analysis was carried out horizontally, in the first grade of primary school. The goal is to examine how much language games are represented in the current Serbian language textbooks for the first grade of primary school, what types of language games are represented the most, whether language games are adequate for the age of the students, and whether they are organized through different forms of teaching.

The development of motivation for learning belongs to the basic goals of education and upbringing, because it contributes to its effectiveness. Learning through play motivates students better and language games are especially motivating for students who have developed language skills and talent for languages. Using of language games allow students to develop preliminary reading and writing skills through fun activities.

Language games are not represented to a greater extent in the Serbian language textbooks for the first grade of primary school and the textbooks of different publishers differ in their variety. The analysis shows that the language games in the textbooks are aligned with the age of the students, but that they are primarily organized as an individual form of work, less often as pair-work.

Most of the analyzed textbooks contain phonological games for the discrimination of the initial voice, while games for the discrimination of the final and central voices are not equally

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represented in all textbooks, as well as syllable games. The games that ask students to delete or replace phonemes to make a new word are very rare. The lower prevalence of the phonological games and the predominance of tasks in which students are asked to write down a word represented by a picture or to rewrite a sentence may be insufficiently stimulating for students who are making better progress in initial literacy and already know how to write.

In the first grade, students develop an awareness of the sentence and its structure through the recognition of the main syntactic concepts, which is why syntactic games are present in all the textbooks of our corpus.

Rhyme games are the least represented of all types of language games in all the textbooks of our corpus, so they should be included to a greater extent in primers, reading books, and teaching sheets for the Serbian language for the first grade of primary school. It is advisable to use games for recognizing and building rhyme more often in the first grade, because children's rhyming ability develops intensively in that period, and it is a significant predictor of phonological pre-skills necessary for successful mastery of reading.

The unequal representation of dramatic games in the analyzed textbooks is noticeable. Dramatic games are popular among children, so a greater representation of dramatic games would contribute to the popularity of the subject and greater interest even for those children who have lower success in initial reading and writing.

The study points out the need for modernization of Serbian Language textbook sets for the first-graders by means of electronic supplements with language games in the form of interactive and multimedia content.

Language games encourage interest in the subject, enable the connection of Serbian language content with games familiar to children from the preschool period. In the analyzed textbook sets for the Serbian language, there are no e-textbooks with interactive language games, in the form of a compact disc with a workbook. Innovative didactic-methodical solutions would contribute to the application of what has been learned from the subject Serbian language through a medium close to children.

**Keywords:** Serbian Language teaching methodology, initial reading and writing, language games

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