



Jelena Lj. Spasić¹ 

University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education, Jagodina, Serbia

Original
research paper

Paper received: Jul 9 2024
Paper accepted: Nov 13 2024
Article Published: Dec 20 2024

Word classes in the spontaneous speech of preschool children²


Extended summary

After the reform of preschool education, in kindergartens in Serbia, the attention is devoted to the children's communicative abilities and symbolic expression, including the writing of letters, while other aspects of speech development are neglected.

The subject of the research is the spontaneous speech of children of preschool age, aged three to seven years. The corpus consists of a total of four-hundred children's statements, one hundred each from children of ages 3.0–3.11, 4.0–4.11, 5.0–5.11 and 6.0–6.11. The statements were collected using the technique of anecdotal notes in kindergartens in Jagodina. The respondents are native speakers of the Serbian language, the Kosovo-Resava dialect. The children's speech was recorded most often during free play or eating, less frequently while drawing or engaging in other activities. After the analysis, the lists of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, numbers, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, exclamations and words that appear in children's speech were extracted. The paper offers a deeper insight into the speech development of the children aged three to seven and indicates the aspects of speech development that should be given more attention.

In children's spontaneous speech, verbs are the most represented, nouns are the second most represented, and pronouns are the third. Within each type of words, the most represented are typical representatives for that type of the word, which are also frequent in the speech of adults addressed to children. Words with a more complex semantic structure, such as verbs of change of state, are not common in the speech of the preschool children.

1 jelenaspasic2410@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2811-5865>

2 This research was funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia (Contract number: 451-03-65/2024-03/ 200140).

Copyright © 2024 by the authors, licensee Teacher Education Faculty University of Belgrade, SERBIA.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original paper is accurately cited.

Speech is acquired through imitation, so teachers should use carefully selected vocabulary in their speech, taking care that the statement is understandable to the children, but that the children have opportunities every day to hear a new word from the teacher. Our research showed that certain word classes are absent in children's spontaneous speech. The use of adjectives, adverbs, exclamations and particles should be encouraged in the preschool children's speech.

When describing, special attention should be paid to what something is like in terms of color, introducing children to the names of different colors and shades of colors. It is necessary to describe the inner qualities of people with children. Since distal pronouns are not represented in children's spontaneous speech, it is preferable to use them when addressing children. Guided fantasy is an excellent stimulus for using descriptive adjectives and adverbs of manner that rarely occur in children's spontaneous speech.

We also work on enriching children's active and passive vocabulary through lexical, semantic, and semantic-creative games. Games with antonyms, homonyms, synonyms, hyponyms, and hyperonyms, as well as games to expand the meaning of words, are types of language-thought games. All of these language games can easily fit into the project approach by having the teacher design a game with words related to the topic of the project.

The conducted research was of a smaller scale and the collection of the children's statements was limited in time and space. Nevertheless, we believe that it provides an insight into the level of language development of today's preschool children whose mother tongue is Serbian and provides guidelines for further research into the spontaneous speech of children with regular speech development. The mentioned limitations of this study could be overcome in the future through a larger-scale research, with respondents from different cities in Serbia.

Keywords: speech development, morphological development, Serbian language, children's statements

References

- Anđelković, D. (2012). *Glagoli i glagolske dopune u razvoju dečijeg govora* (Doktorska disertacija). Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu.
- Anđelković, D. (2012a). Razvoj komunikacije: neverbalna komunikacija, govor i pismenost. U A. Baucal (ur.). *Standardi za razvoj i učenje dece ranih uzrasta u Srbiji* (str. 49–66). Institut za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu.
- Braun, R. (1981). Prve rečenice deteta i šimpanze. U V. Mitić (ur.). *Razvoj govora kod deteta* (str. 39–62). Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Čabarkapa, N. i dr. (2003). Odnos razvijenosti artikulacije i nivoa leksikona kod dece. U M. Sovilj (ur.). *Govor i jezik* (str. 112–117). Institut za eksperimentalnu fonetiku i patologiju govora.
- Drljan, B. (2017). *Leksičke sposobnosti kod dece sa specifičnim jezičkim poremećajem*. (Doktorska disertacija). Fakultet za specijalnu edukaciju i rehabilitaciju, Univerzitet u Beogradu.
- Fajgelj, S. (2005). *Metode istraživanja ponašanja* (2. dopunjeno izdanje.) Centar za primenjenu psihologiju.

-
- Gligorović, M., Buha, N., i Dobrota-Davidović, N. (2018). Razumevanje govora kod dece od šest do devet godina. *Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija*, 17(1), 9–31. <https://doi.org/10.5937/specedreh17-15257>
 - Golubović, S. (1998). *Klinička logopedija II*. Univerzitetska štampa.
 - Kostić, Đ., i Vladislavljević, S. (1995). *Govor i jezik deteta u razvoju*. Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
 - Milankov, V., i Kerkez, J. (2024). Prediktori komunikacionih sposobnosti dece na ranom predškolskom uzrastu. *Inovacije u nastavi*, 37(1), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.5937/inovacije2401091M>
 - Nikolić, B. (2019). Rano usvajanje sintakse s fokusom na usvajanje prvih glagola. *Primenjena lingvistika*, 20, 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.18485/primling.2019.20.3>
 - *Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja i obrazovanja - Godine uzleta* (2018). Službeni glasnik RS - Prosvetni pregled, br. 16.
 - Savić, M., i Anđelković, D. (2004). The acquisition of prepositions in Serbian: factors and mechanisms of development. *Psihologija*, 37(4), 415–450.
 - Spasić J. (2020). Leksički razvoj deteta predškolskog uzrasta. *Uzdanica*, 17(1), 171–178. <https://doi.org/10.18485/uzdanica.2020.17.1.10>
 - Spasić, J., i Đurović S. (2020). Morfološki i tvorbeni aspekt dečijih neologizama. U M. Kovačević (ur.). *Srpski jezik, književnost, umetnos. Ekspresivnost u srpskom jeziku*, knj. 1 (str. 71–86). FILUM.
 - Spasić, J. (2022). *Jezičke igre u govornom razvoju*. Fakultet pedagoških nauka Univerziteta u Kragujevcu.
 - Spasić, J., i Miljković, A. (2023). Vođena fantazija u funkciji podsticanja govora i razvijanja realnog programa. U S. Marinković (ur.). *Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog naučnog skupa „Savremeno predškolsko vaspitanje i obrazovanje - tendencije, izazovi i mogućnosti”* (str. 293–302). Pedagoški fakultet.
 - Strižak, N. (2019). O dimenzijama leksičkog znanja, načinima njegovog sticanja i procene. *Primenjena lingvistika*, 20, 19–30.
 - Vukomanović Rastegorac, V. (2022). *Uvod u metodiku razvoja govora*. Učiteljski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.