

9.2. АНОТАЦИИ НА НАУЧНИТЕ ТРУДОВЕ на английски език

ANNOTATIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS
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for participation in the competition for the academic position of *Associate Professor*,
announced in the State Gazette, issue 34 of 07.04.2026

Field of Higher Education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences
Professional Field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy – Play-Based Technologies)

A total of 15 scientific publications have been submitted for participation in the competition, grouped into the following sections: 1 monograph; 1 book based on a defended doctoral dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”; 6 publications in scientific journals indexed and referenced in internationally recognized scientific databases; and 7 publications published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes. All publications were developed and published after the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” and following the appointment to the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor.

The order of the annotations corresponds to the numbering of the publications included in the list of scientific works submitted for participation in the competition.

I. MONOGRAPHS

1. HABILITATION THESIS: Bahchevanova, T. (2026). *A Competence-Oriented Model for Learning through Play in Preschool Education*. Plovdiv University Press, ISBN: 978-619-281-115-0

The monograph is devoted to the processes of transformation in contemporary preschool education – from traditional approaches to competence-oriented learning through play. At the core of the study lies the attempt to overcome the opposition between “free play” and “guided learning” through the concept of the play continuum, which views play as a natural environment for children’s learning, development, and socialization. The proposed model seeks a balance between children’s free initiative and pedagogical support, emphasizing the development of key competences through experience, action, and active participation.

The object of the study is the process of educational interaction in preschool age, while the subject concerns the conceptual, structural, and technological characteristics of a play-based learning model grounded in the idea of the play continuum. The main aim is the theoretical substantiation and development of a pedagogical model for fostering key competences through play interaction, experience, and active participation of the child in the educational process.

The work combines theoretical analysis and empirical research and is structured into five chapters tracing the transition from conceptual foundations to the practical implementation of the model. The competence-based approach and key competences in preschool education are examined, together with contemporary international pedagogical models such as Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, and HighScope. The study also presents findings from empirical research conducted among pedagogical specialists, outlining their attitudes and readiness to implement play-based approaches, alongside the main practical challenges they encounter.

Special attention is devoted to the original pedagogical model, which includes a play continuum, thematic cores, competence components, and a system of pedagogical technologies for managing educational interaction. Practical play scenarios for different preschool age groups are also developed, focusing on learning through exploration, cooperation, and creativity. The monograph presents a contemporary vision of preschool education in which the child is viewed as an active participant in their own educational experience.

2. BOOK BASED ON A DEFENDED DOCTORAL DISSERTATION FOR THE AWARD OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE “DOCTOR”:
Bahchevanova, T. (2026). *Role-Play as a Form of Cooperative Activity among Children Aged 5–7*. Plovdiv University Press, ISBN 978-619-281-116-7

The study is devoted to role-play as a form of cooperative activity among children aged 5–7 and examines its role in the social, cognitive, and communicative development of preschool children. At the center of the research interest is the understanding that role-play is not only a natural child activity, but also a space for interaction, cooperation, communication, and the shared construction of play meaning. The emphasis is placed on the development of collaborative story-building as a foundation for the formation of children’s social and personal competences.

The object of the study is the role-play activity of children aged 5–7, while the subject concerns the process of its development and establishment as a form of cooperative activity. The main aim is the development and approbation of a pedagogical model for enhancing role-play through the stimulation of interaction, shared focus, metacommunication, and intersubjectivity within the play process.

The work combines theoretical analysis and empirical research and is structured into four chapters that trace the transition from the theoretical foundations of play to the practical application and experimental validation of the proposed model. Classical and contemporary theories of play, various classifications and forms of play activity, as well as the specific characteristics of role-play as a space for children’s socialization and development are examined. An original pedagogical model is presented, including structural components, principles, technological aspects, and a thematic system of play situations.

The empirical part of the study explores the effectiveness of the model through a pedagogical experiment conducted in diagnostic, formative, and control stages. The analysis focuses on the development of skills for cooperation, coordination, role interaction, and collaborative construction of play narratives, while also outlining the practical applicability of the model within preschool educational practice.

II. PUBLICATIONS IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS REFERENCED AND INDEXED IN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SCIENTIFIC DATABASES

1. Bahchevanova, T. (2022). *Application of Digital Games in the Educational Process in Kindergarten*. INTED2022 Proceedings, pp. 4127–4131, ISBN: 978-84-09-37758-9

The paper examines the application of digital games in the educational process in kindergarten as a contemporary and innovative approach responding to the needs of children in the 21st century. Theoretical foundations for the use of play-based learning through digital technologies are analyzed, and its main advantages as a complement to traditional pedagogical methods are outlined. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of digital games in developing key skills and competences in children, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, adaptability, and problem-solving. The study also includes an empirical component exploring the attitudes and experiences of preschool teachers in Bulgaria regarding the use of digital games, highlighting their significance for increasing children's motivation and engagement in the learning process.

2. Bahchevanova, T. (2023). *Games for Developing Creativity in Preschool Children*. Pedagogika, Vol. 95, Issue 4s, pp. 123–134. <https://doi.org/10.53656/ped2023-4s.12>

The study explores the influence of games developed on the basis of the Theory of Inventive Problem Solving on the development of creativity in preschool children. The main components of creativity and criteria for evaluating its manifestation in play activities are presented. Characteristics of the theory are analyzed, and sample game activities are proposed. The results indicate that this type of game stimulates creative thinking and contributes to the development of creativity in children aged 5–7.

3. Bahchevanova, T., E. Kamenova (2024). *Didactic Play as a Means of Teaching English in Bulgarian Kindergartens*. INTED 2024, ISBN: 978-84-09-63010-3, pp. 10685–10688. <https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2024.2774>

The article examines the importance and effectiveness of didactic play in foreign language teaching in preschool education. It is emphasized that despite the growing role of digital technologies, play remains a leading activity in the educational process. Didactic play is presented as an effective tool that stimulates children's motivation and active participation while creating conditions for the successful acquisition of language competences. Attention is drawn to the need for applying contemporary methods aligned with children's interests and parents' expectations. The article presents results from a survey conducted among English language teachers in kindergartens, confirming the significance of didactic play in the learning process.

4. Bahchevanova, T. (2025). *Play Activities in Natural Environments for Encouraging Key Skills in Preschool Children*. Annual of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Vol. XXIX D, Shumen, ISSN 1314-6769, pp. 934–941

The study emphasizes the role of preschool education in children's holistic development, focusing on the importance of play activities in natural environments. The influence of outdoor play on the development of sensory perception, motor skills, creativity, and socio-emotional competences in children aged 6–7 is examined. Various pedagogical approaches are applied, including exploratory activities, scientific games, role-play, and environmental projects, in order to assess their impact on key skills. The findings show that activities in natural environments significantly improve problem-solving, cooperation, communication, and initiative skills, underlining the importance of learning through play for achieving children's comprehensive development.

5. Bahchevanova, T. (2026). *Diagnostic Potential of Play Methods in Assessing Children's Cognitive Development*. *Savremenna Humanitaristika*, 1(24), pp. 84–91. ISSN 1313-9924

The paper examines the potential of play methods as a means for diagnosing cognitive development in preschool children. Major cognitive domains are analyzed, including memory, thinking, attention, language skills, and problem-solving, for each of which sample games and evaluation criteria for children's performance are presented. It is emphasized that games create a natural and non-threatening environment for observation, enabling teachers to monitor children's individual characteristics and strategies. The advantages and limitations of play-based diagnostics are outlined, and a model for its application in pedagogical practice is proposed. The presented criteria are applicable not only to specific tasks but also to other games with similar structures and aims, thus providing a flexible framework for observing and interpreting children's achievements.

6. Bahchevanova, T. (2026). *Play as a Pedagogical Resource for the Development of Imagination in Preschool Age*. *Savremenna Humanitaristika*, 1(24), pp. 58–65. ISSN 1313-9924

The present study examines play as a pedagogical resource for developing imagination in preschool children, with a special focus on role-play. Diagnostic and control assessments were conducted with 18 children from a preparatory group over a two-week period. The results show that initially, symbolic substitution, storyline construction, role negotiation, and adherence to play rules appeared at a basic level, often incomplete and inconsistent. Following a series of purposefully organized role-play episodes, significant progress was observed: symbolic transformations became more creative, storylines more coherent and enriched, roles more effectively coordinated, and new plot elements introduced more dynamically. The findings confirm the importance of role-play for stimulating imagination both as an individual and collective process and highlight the teacher's role as a facilitator of collaborative story-building.

III. ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN NON-INDEXED PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS OR EDITED COLLECTIVE VOLUMES

1. Bahchevanova, T. (2023). *Creative Games for Acquiring Competences in Preschool Age*. In: *Annual of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Education, Vol. II*, Plovdiv University Press, pp. 154–169, ISSN 2815-4134

This article examines the application of creative games as a means for acquiring competences in preschool age. Twenty-first-century competences considered essential for every individual are discussed, and some of the leading competences are classified according to developmental domains. A pedagogical experiment was conducted to trace the degree of acquisition and frequency of application of the competences examined in the context of creative play. The participants were 30 preschool children aged 5–7. The results confirm the applicability of creative games as both a means and a space for acquiring and applying competences in preschool children.

2. Bahchevanova, T. (2023). *Digital Technologies and Social Interaction in the Context of Children's Play*. In: *Interdisciplinary Education through Arts, Sports and Digital Technologies – Conference Proceedings*, Plovdiv, Plovdiv University Press "Paisii Hilendarski," October 2023, pp. 163–174, ISBN 978-619-7663-76-1

The article examines social interaction in the context of digital play and, more specifically, the ways in which digital technologies manifest in children's play. Emphasis is placed on their

influence on peer interaction. A study was conducted with children aged 5–7. The results indicate that social interaction is not significantly affected by the type of resources used.

- 3. Bahchevanova, T. (2024). *Play as a Means of Stimulating Language Development in Preschool Children*. In: Annual of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Education, Vol. III, Plovdiv University Press, pp. 198–208, ISSN 2815-4134 (Print), ISSN 2815-4487 (Online), DOI: 10.69085/afp20243198**

The article examines the importance of play for the language development of preschool children. Different types of communicative skills and the dynamics of their acquisition are described. The study focuses on the role of games as a primary and stimulating means for enriching speech skills. A survey among teachers was conducted to explore pedagogical specialists' opinions regarding the use of play as a means of encouraging language development. Although some teachers reported challenges such as limited time, noise management, and difficulties in finding appropriate games, the analysis shows that games can serve as a valuable tool for developing preschool children's language skills.

- 4. Bahchevanova, T. (2024). *Digital Resources in Play-Based Education for Improving the Engagement of Children Aged 5–7 in the Learning Process*. In: Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference 40 Years Faculty of Education – Traditions and Innovation, pp. 365–380, ISBN 978-619-7768-12-1**

The present study examines the integration of digital resources in play-based education and their influence on children's engagement in the learning process. The role of technology as a means of activating learners, stimulating critical thinking, and encouraging social interaction is emphasized. Theoretical foundations of play-based learning and examples of digital tools such as Kahoot and Wordwall are presented. The empirical findings demonstrate increased motivation, interaction, and cognitive engagement among learners, highlighting the need for broader implementation of digital resources in educational practice.

- 5. Bahchevanova, T. (2025). *From Play to Knowledge: Pedagogical Models and International Perspectives*. In: Proceedings of the Faculty Scientific Conference Creativity and Science in Action: Multidisciplinary Research and Education for the Future, Plovdiv, pp. 297–311, ISBN 978-619-7768-45-9**

This scientific work presents an analytical overview of established pedagogical models for learning through play, aiming to systematize their characteristics and outline possibilities for their implementation in Bulgarian educational practice. The study includes a theoretical and comparative analysis of international practices, as well as a synthesis of data concerning adaptation to the national context. A major contribution of the study is the development of an evaluation framework based on five key indicators – autonomy, social interaction, organization, the role of the environment, and freedom of play – measured through a three-level scale. Practical recommendations for improving the educational system are formulated. The findings emphasize the role of play as a strategic pedagogical approach for developing key competences that integrates cognitive, social, and emotional development.

- 14. Bahchevanova, T. (2025). *Play-Based Learning in Preschool Education: Comparative Analysis and Pedagogical Perspectives*. In: Annual of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Education, Vol. IV, Plovdiv University Press, pp. 280–290, ISSN 2815-4134 (Print), ISSN 2815-4487**

The paper examines play-based learning as an effective approach for developing key competences in preschool age. International good practices are presented and compared with the normative and practical context in Bulgaria. The main challenges related to the implementation of this approach are analyzed, including insufficient teacher preparation, limited material resources, and the tendency toward the “schoolification” of preschool education. Directions for future development are proposed, including systematic improvement of teacher qualification, enhancement of the educational environment, and active involvement of parents and institutions. The conclusion emphasizes that play-based learning should be viewed not only as a method, but also as a comprehensive pedagogical philosophy.

15. Bahchevanova, T. (2026). The Integrative Potential of Play Activities in the Transition “Kindergarten – Primary School”, “St. Kliment Ohridski”, University Press

The study examines play activity as a means of ensuring continuity between kindergarten and primary school. Through the observation of play activities, the research explores how play supports cognitive, social, and emotional development. The results show that play activity facilitates children’s adaptation to the school environment, but also requires purposeful pedagogical support.

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