

THE STUDENT AS AN ACTIVE RECIPIENT OF LITERARY ART

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Abstract. *The theory of reception in the study of literature is based on the knowledge that the reader is an indispensable actor in the realization of a literary work, as well as in the process of its spiritual form. A literary work of art can come to life and realize its true function only if the one receiving it understands and experiences it in the right way, if he manages to interpret and adopt the message that the writer sends him through the work. There is therefore a common opinion that the writer and the reader jointly create and revive the wonderful world of literary art. This paper points out the importance of educating early primary school students for the proper reception, understanding and emotional experience of a literary text. The precondition to achieve success in this endeavor, is that students successfully master the skill of reading and familiarize themselves in a comprehensive way with the different types of reading. Modern schooling also sets an important task for the teacher, which is to motivate students to read and experience literary works; and above all to encourage and help students develop their own internal motivation to read.*

Key words: *student, reading, literary work of art, reception, motivation*

1. THE STUDENT AND LITERARY WORKS

In order for a student to be able to emotionally experience and critically evaluate a certain literary and artistic work, one must first fully master reading as a creative activity; the latter is acquired, developed, and perfected through a systematic teaching effort in the early grades of primary school. Bearing this in mind, Goethe believes that there are three kinds of readers: the first group includes those who enjoy without judging, the second group includes those who judge without enjoying, while the third group includes those who judge by enjoying and enjoy judging. In the theory of reception, the reader who belongs to Goethe's third category is always emphasized, that is, the one who re-creates a

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work of art in the process of reading. One of the fundamental goals of teaching literature is to enable students to enjoy the work they read and to make reasonable judgments about its values. This goal is a condition for achieving all the other goals and tasks of this reading-based teaching. However, prior to this,, the student must master the skill of reading, which, in the opinion of specialists is the most difficult skill, "that is learned, developed and acquired over years of long, constant, systematic work, practice and perseverance" (Dimitrijević, 1962, p. 10).

A teaching approach that is organized and conducted in the traditional way places the teacher in the foreground, while the student is in the position of a passive observer and actor in the teaching process, who in essence mechanically receives and adopts a finished product of knowledge. Students generally cannot or are unable to apply knowledge gained in this way and therefore it does not contribute to their psychophysical development; the latter is necessary to constantly nurture and develop in order to build up their personality in a positive way. The shortcomings of traditional teaching approaches warn us that the role of students in the teaching process must change. It is thus necessary for the student to be an active participant in and creator of the teaching process, and not just be a passive observer. This also applies to the teaching of literature based on the manner that literary and artistic works are received. It should contribute to the youngest readers to develop not only their mental abilities, but also the strength of will and emotional side of their personality through learning and experiencing literary works. In order to succeed in this endeavor, it is necessary to displace the teacher from the position of being the most important initiator of all teaching activities in class and the main interpreter of a literary work, and instead provide the student with the opportunity to affirm his research potential through immersion and thorough study of all the important elements of a literary text.

Each literary text provides readers with numerous opportunities for exploration and enjoyment of an emotional experience, because it is rich in varied content, the intertwining and sequence of which causes uncertainty, excitement, tension, pleasure, and various other emotional states. In order for the reception of the literary work to be complete and successful, it is necessary for the student to have an autonomous approach to knowledge. Such a creative approach, which implies both intellectual and emotional engagement of the student in line with his potential, contributes to reaching the highest level in the process of reception of literary works. The provision of this kind of freedom in investigating a literary work also additionally strengthens and motivates the student to give his maximum in the phase of content analysis and interpretation of the text. The individualization of the reading process and the logical and emotional interpretation of a literary work of art are reflected in the fact that each child understands and experiences a literary work in his own way; this can be seen in the way each individual adopts meanings and messages expressed by the writer through his written word. The approach of individualization is also largely manifested in the diversity of emotional and voluntary reactions to the content of the literary work. In other words, each child perceives and experiences a certain literary and artistic work from his own angle and in his own way; he just needs to be given the opportunity to reach that realization. That is the charm of literary art. A child is a completely equal recipient of a literary work to an adult because he possesses all the necessary qualities, namely: his own shaped taste, his own aesthetic experience and his own feeling as a recipient of a literary work.

The wide range of prose literary works that a child encounters in the early grades of primary school provides him with an opportunity to freely express himself mentally and emotionally, to take and express certain views and opinions regarding their structural,

aesthetic and stylistic features, and of course their content. The diversity of themes in different types of prose works sets the conditions for an increase in the student's interest in their thorough study and aesthetic analysis. Fantastic characters and events in fairy tales, allegory in fables, mysticism and extraordinary aspect of legends and traditional stories, as well as the diversity of thematic material of the novel, all further stoke children's curiosity and imagination, and awaken in them a desire for a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the mentioned content. Certainly, proper reception of these literary works will be successful if students are allowed to enter this world on their own, to explore it in accordance with their own abilities and interests, and then to freely express their understanding and their emotional experience. This is very important for students, because in this way they affirm themselves before others, but also to themselves. Therefore, we should constantly strive to work toward the unity of mental and emotional engagement of students, since that unity has a crucial influence on the success of teaching literature and its interpretation.

2. READING AS A FUNCTION IN THE SUCCESSFUL RECEPTION OF A LITERARY WORK OF ART

Reading is a basic precondition in the process of acquiring knowledge, both in the field of language and literature as well as in all other teaching fields. A student who has not fully mastered the skill of reading will find himself in grave difficulty, because he shall be incapable of mastering the curriculum provided by a school program, and ultimately of the functional application of what he has learned in everyday life. Therefore, each student must first successfully master the skill of reading, so that, using this tool, he can effectively follow the curriculum and acquire the necessary knowledge. The principled application of a systematic and gradual approach is most fully reflected in the initial teaching of reading and writing skills.

The most important stage in the process of mastering different reading techniques is the earliest stage of reading, in which the child adopts the first letters, spells the first words and sentences, understands their meaning, and thus enriches his being with new and unknown information and facts. In order for a child to be successfully guided through the process of adopting reading skills, it is necessary for a teacher to carry out a thorough and comprehensive preparation of precise goals and tasks, and to purposefully apply available methods and forms of work, as well as well-designed and prepared teaching aids. The role of the teacher is very important because, "with good reading skills, the student easily gains new knowledge, raises the level of his general and spoken culture, copes well with unexpected situations, and successfully enters the world of literary works; the child is well equipped for the interpretation and aesthetic evaluation of literary and stage drama contents" (Smiljković i Milinković, 2010, p. 84). We must therefore work on the quality of reading skills, because the qualitative nature of how a literary and artistic work is received will largely depend on that. In addition, "of all the methodological work that is involved in the study of a literary work, only reading is constant and irreplaceable" (Nikolić, 1992, p. 163). All this points to the fact that a student's reading must be oriented in such a way as to lead to thorough research and a logical and emotional cognition of the literary work.

In the teaching of literature, among numerous types of reading, exploratory, experiential, expressive, and interpretive reading are most often practiced. Methodologists believe that the optimal individualization of the teaching of literature is obtained through exploratory and

experiential reading. In a situation when students first encounter an artistic text, interpretive reading is most often used, which can be applied to other forms of work "in determining or practicing, or synthetically sublimating new knowledge and information" (Smiljković i Milinković, 2010, p. 85). This type of reading is especially important in the process of mastering the skill of correct reading.

In experiential reading, the engagement of the emotions and fantasy of the reader prevails, and this is realized primarily when reading artistic texts. This form of reading requires a deep mental and emotional engagement of the student because, "in this way he re-creates a work of art and a vision of his own world, in which the subconscious urges and instincts of his inclinations and his hidden desires and individual affinities are realized" (Smiljković i Milinković, 2010, p. 86).

Unlike experiential reading, exploratory reading primarily involves an increased rational orientation and a critical curiosity towards the text. For this type of reading, students are especially motivated by being given research tasks.

Expressive reading, which by its basic definition is reading aloud, aims to enable students to fully experience and understand an artistic text, and to serve as a springboard for acquiring reading skills. When it comes to this type of reading, one should certainly pay attention to all the necessary components of good, expressive speech such as diction, intonation, voice, color, pitch, dynamism, rhythm, intensity of the sentence and everything else that can significantly shape the auditory impression.

A well-read literary text is a prerequisite for the correct interpretation, understanding, and experience of the same. Furthermore, the quality of understanding the messages and themes of the text largely depends on the quality of the reading. That is why in the teaching process various forms of directed reading are the basic precondition for students to acquire knowledge and to be successfully introduced to the world of literary work. The degree of understanding the contents and, accordingly, the building up of appropriate attitudes and opinions about it (and, most of all, emotional experience of the work); largely depend on the way in which a certain text is read.

The interpretation of a text as a basic program content in the early grades of primary school is an extremely complex and delicate program requirement. Therefore, the interpretation and understanding of the basic structural, and especially, artistic factors of a text, should be approached in a rigorously systematic and persistent fashion, in order to enable students to gradually notice, recognize, and then explain and spontaneously understand its basic subject matter.

The analysis of a text begins after a successful interpretive reading aloud and a silent reading to oneself. The literary work of art is read, if necessary, several times, until the teacher is certain that reading has achieved the appropriate experiences and impressions that are necessary for a further acquaintance and study of the text. Reading must be done in such a way as to awaken all the senses and emotions of the students and to encourage them to intensify their mental engagement and critical judgment. Various forms of repeated and directed reading of the work as a whole or in excerpts are obligatorily carried out in the study of lyrical poems and shorter prose (Malićević, 2014, p. 27). What also precedes the content analysis of the text is the interpretation of unknown or lesser-known words and expressions, since without understanding each individual word in the text it is impossible to properly understand and experience its meaning and message. The teacher must be well prepared for this stage of the class.

Students should develop the habit of constantly supporting their views, opinions, and conclusions about the read and studied literary work with facts from the text itself and thus enable them to express themselves independently, research activities and take critical attitudes towards the processed contents. This effect is achieved by adequate application of the text method in the process of researching the work.

Most literary and artistic texts that undergo content analysis require an appropriate understanding of the situation of the text, often multiple times. Conditions without which in many cases the text cannot be fully experienced and properly understood include placing the text in a temporal, spatial, and socio-historical framework, providing children with necessary information about the writer and the creative process behind the work, as well as information about important contents that precede the passage in question. Therefore, the psychological reality from which the thematic material, motives, characters and deeper source for creation originate, should be given in an appropriate form, i.e. in a scope and form that is necessary for a more complete and reliable experience and interpretation (Malićević, 2014, p. 28).

3. THE MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS TO READ AND EXPERIENCE LITERARY WORKS

One of the crucial factors that largely determines the quality of reading and studying a literary work is motivation. Reading and motivation are mutually conditioned factors that must be properly nurtured and guided. Motivation effectively influences the reader because it arouses all thinking operations of the mind, sparks a certain emotional tension and interest, which result in a willingness to delve into the deep layers of the work, and initiates a pleasing interpretation and experience of the said work. Motivation is a necessary precondition because, "it enables a timely, complete and creative preparation of students for the realization of interpretations" (Pavlović, 2008, p. 41). Students who possess a high degree of motivation to read or listen to a literary work, tend to approach its cognitive-emotional interpretation with much greater attention. On the other hand, unmotivated students do not feel the need to thoroughly analyze a certain work; their involvement with a literary work is mainly reduced to a superficial reading and an equally superficial emotional and mental interpretation of the artistic content of the work. A properly guided motivation of students to read literary works leads to the development of certain reading habits that support the mastering of a course curriculum with much content. Motivation, which implies the existence of a strong will and a desire to carry out certain work, is a fundamental prerequisite for building reading habits.

Interest in reading and experiencing literary works can be aroused in different ways in students. The most important thing is that they develop a need to read even when they are not asked or expected to do so. This refers to an inner motivation that represents the existence of the highest level of willingness to carry out voluntary activities. But in order to reach this level in the child, the action of external stimuli is necessary, which over time lead to the appearance of self-motivation. "The most important achievement of motivational procedures in teaching is in the development of a student's self-motivation" (Andrić, 2002, p. 23). The teacher, in this sense, bears a great responsibility. He has to approach his work in multiple ways to succeed in this endeavor with the students.

Only a literary work with its linguistic, stylistic, artistic and other elements can offer the reader artistic experiences that are an inexhaustible source of motivation for reading. The content of the work is already a sufficient motive for the student to dare read it first, and then approach its interpretation. The different content elements of the work are already a sufficient motive for the student to go ahead and read it first, and then approach its interpretation. However, a teacher must be able to persuade the student to approach the work in such a way, that he can feel its artistic charms and wish to re-explore its magical world. Prose literary works are especially conducive to that. Fairy tales and novels for example, entice the reader with a dynamic sequence of events and adventures associated with the main characters. A teacher must know how to use this. One of the ways in which students can be gotten interested in a certain literary text and made to explore its deeper mental and emotional richness, is for the teacher to choose an inspiring excerpt from the text and read it in an expressive manner to the children. The excerpt must be able to attract and arouse the children's curiosity and imagination. This will induce the children to read the work as a whole in order to discover all that was unclear or left unsaid in the passage that was read.

One of the ways to encourage students to read is for a student who has read a certain literary work to present his emotional impressions of it to the whole class. This can also be done by the teacher himself, who can pass on his enthusiasm to the students and thus awaken in them a desire to have that experience themselves.

Works of the same authors can be studied in the course curriculum for the first four grades of primary school, provided that they are adapted to the age and abilities of the students. Literary works that were previously known and which had a strong impact on the students can spark their curiosity and interest to get to know other works by the same authors.

An additional stimulus to reading can be provided by arranging a meeting of students with the writer. Talking to the author about the motives for the creation of his work, about the moments that inspired him to create and the way in which a work was created, can be a strong factor in motivating students to read. When it comes to works of drama, attending theater plays and watching television adaptations of selected literary works can provide a great incentive.

When it comes to the teaching of the mother language and its literature, a correlation is often made with the teaching of music culture, since the melody and rhythm of the musical composition that accompanies a text, can arouse certain emotional states in the reader, which can strengthen his desire for further reading and study.

All these teaching methods are applied in order to encourage students to read and enjoy works of literary art. The ultimate purpose of this, however, is to gradually phase out external stimuli in order to develop students' desire and need to read when this is not expected of them. Reaching this level of self-motivation in a student is a difficult process that requires great effort. Possessing an inner motivation is a prerequisite for success in all areas. When it comes to literature, "acts of motivation move on to other fields, take on new forms and encourage an intense relationship of curiosity with the artistic text" (Nikolić, 1992, p. 182). But not only that; motivation can also be a trigger for literary creation.

4. CONCLUSION

The reader is an essential agent in bringing to life the literary qualities of works and in spiritually shaping them. We can say that the reader participates in the creation of a literary work because he is a consumer of its artistic properties and adopts a critical approach to it. The theory of how a literary work is 'received' or apprehended in the study of literature is based on this idea. It advocates the view that students should be shaped in such a way as to "be able to feel and critically judge a literary work" (Tasić, 2010, p. 76). In order to reach that stage, it is necessary beforehand to build up a special attitude and love for books and reading among students. This is a difficult and demanding task. Pavle Ilić warns, however, that we must not rest on this task alone, since "by achieving these goals, the student develops only into a consumer (enjoyer, consumer) of literary production" (Ilić, 1997, p. 191). What is also very important is to enable the student to actively participate in the process of creating a literary work. This is exactly one of the basic functions of literature, to stimulate the reader and arouse in him the desire and need to independently create. Every individual perceives the world around him in his own way, emotionally envisions it in accord with his own sensibility and projects it. By adding the use of the magic of imagination, he gives the literary work its original artistic stamp.

A child gets acquainted with the beauty of literary art very early in childhood. Lullabies and fairy tales are the favorite literary genres that a young child encounters at that age; and, although not quite fully aware of it, these genres gradually introduce the young child to the wonderful world of literature. Already then, "love for literary work begins to be born in him, which adults should arouse, nurture and develop by constantly drawing the child's attention" (Tasić, 2010, p. 76). This primarily refers to parents who should provide a basis for developing a child's love and interest for literary works, which will later be of great importance when they reach school age, where the child will be required and expected to take a more serious approach in interpreting and aesthetically analyzing works of literary art. Any previous experience obtained will enable the child to more easily and thoroughly study a literary work. At the same time, a love for books and reading will grow in him, and perhaps, a love or wish to create his own literary works.

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UČENIK KAO AKTIVNI RECIPIJENT KNJIŽEVNE UMETNOSTI

Teorija recepcije u nauci o književnosti temelji se na saznanju da je čitalac neizostavni činilac u stvaranju književnog dela, kao i u procesu njegovog duhovnog oblikovanja. Književnoumetničko delo može zaživeti i ostvariti svoju pravu funkciju tek ukoliko ga recipijent na pravilan način shvati i doživi, ukoliko uspe da protumači i usvoji poruku koju mu pisac posredstvom dela upućuje. Stoga je i uvreženo mišljenje da pisac i čitalac zajednički kreiraju i oživljavaju čudesan svet književne umetnosti. U radu se ukazuje na značaj osposobljavanja učenika mlađih razreda osnovne škole za pravilnu recepciju, odnosno, razumevanje i emocionalno doživljavanje književnog teksta. Da bi se u tome uspelo, preduslov je da učenici uspešno savladaju veštinu čitanja i svestrano upoznaju sve vrste čitanja. Takođe, značajan zadatak koji savremena škola postavlja pred nastavnika je da učenike motiviše za čitanje i doživljavanje književnih dela, a pre svega, da kod učenika podstakne razvoj unutrašnje motivacije za čitanje.

Ključne reči: učenik, čitanje, književnoumetničko delo, recepcija, motivacija