

## Slovene Teachers' Opinions on Teaching Literature in Grammar Schools

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### Abstract

The article presents the results of a survey that included ninety-seven teachers of Slovene language at Slovene grammar schools. Besides answering general demographic questions, the respondents gave their opinion on literary works that are crucial for consideration in literature lessons in grammar school and the different dimensions of grammar school literature lessons. I found that for them the most important aspect of literature lessons is knowledge of main Slovene and foreign literary works and the relations between them, as well as strengthening the understanding of one's own and other cultures. The emotional value of teaching literature is important to them as well. Less important is the social view on literature and the formal linguistic analysis of literary works. Both Slovene and foreign works of various literary types and genres are cited as key texts for discussion in literature lessons.

**Key words:** literary lessons, grammar school, Slovene language, literature didactics

### 0 Introduction

The modern appearance of globalization and multiculturalism alongside new ways of communication “on one hand demands greater ethical and social responsibility, and on the other hand greater ability of self-learning, self-reflection and problem solving” (Vogel 2016). In this setting, a systemic literary-didactic paradigm has developed in modern grammar school<sup>1</sup> literature lessons in Slovenia, which sees the basic goal of teaching literature and the active contact of students with literature “as discovering and evaluating the literary system, in short, texts and contextual factors” (Krakar Vogel 2013: 12). The elements of reception literary didactics are also present, but the student is motivated to “deepen the initial reading experience through thinking, researching content and form, classification, comparison, literary and extra-literary evaluation. In doing so, the reader acquires and uses

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<sup>1</sup> Grammar school in Slovenia (also called gymnasium) is aimed at the general secondary education for students aged between fifteen and nineteen. The grammar school begins after the obligatory nine year primary school education and it lasts for four years, the classes of students are formed based on the year of their birth. The grading system in the Slovenian grammar school goes from one (the lowest, insufficient grade) to five (the highest, excellent grade).

complex literary and non-literary knowledge and his or her experience.” (Krakar Vogel 2013: 19–20).

Systemic literature didactics highlight the education of a cultivated reader, which is the fundamental goal of grammar school literature lessons (cf. Krakar Vogel 2004; Žbogar 2010). A cultivated reader has a positive relationship with reading, is motivated for an in-depth experience of diverse literature, and uses appropriate knowledge in articulating their vision of the content, form, textual, and intertextual components of what they have read (Krakar Vogel 2004: 72). Furthermore, the reader is knowledgeable, consciously upgrades subjective experiences and his or her expectations by understanding, deepening their knowledge, and evaluating it (Žbogar 2010: 425).

Teo Witte et al. (2006: 20) warn that the didactic paradigms of teaching literature are in the domain of the *perceived* curriculum—i.e., theoretical concepts about teaching literature in school. This may not necessarily reflect the *actual* curriculum—that is, what teachers do in the classroom daily. The questionnaire was not used to determine the actions of Slovene language teachers, but to seek their opinions<sup>2</sup> on the importance of individual components of literature lessons.

The opinions obtained were on:

- Emotional and experiential aspects of literature lessons related to the students’ personal growth;
- cultural aspects of literature lessons relating to knowledge of the literature system;
- sociological aspects of literature lessons relating to the depiction of social problems in literary works;
- linguistic aspects of literature lessons relating to the composition of literary works.

In addition, it was determined which literary texts, in the respondents’ opinions, are crucial for consideration in grammar school literature classes. It was examined whether the used texts are poetry, prose, or drama, as well as who wrote the texts—female or male authors. On this foundation, it was analyzed whether, in the opinion of the respondents, the aspects related to the systemic didactics of literature are also necessary in grammar school literature lessons.

## 1 Research Method

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<sup>2</sup> The basic goals of the survey research are descriptive in nature (cf. Sagadin 1993: 12; Žbogar 2011: 33).

The research that was carried out using the survey method, included teachers of Slovene language at educational institutions in the Republic of Slovenia, who are registered in the record of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport as holders of the grammar school program (cf. *Evidenca zavodov in srednjih šol*<sup>3</sup>). These are the pedagogical workers who worked as teachers of Slovene language in grammar schools in the school year 2018–19. According to my estimate, the total number of members of the selected population was 264. This number was determined on publicly published data or our direct inquiries at the institutions involved. All such Slovene language teachers were sent a web link to the questionnaire on the IKA platform (i.e., En klik anketa) via professional email addresses.

The survey was first published online at the end of May, while the process ended in early July in 2019. The used survey questionnaire had thirty-seven questions. The first part asked the respondents to list five literary works that are, according to their opinion, crucial for consideration in literature lessons in grammar school. The second part had twenty-five statements about different dimensions of grammar school literature lessons. Demographic questions were in the third part. 114 respondents completed the survey questionnaire. As all not fully completed questionnaires were excluded from the statistical treatment, ninety-seven surveys were analyzed.

### 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Among the respondents who completed the questionnaire in full, 16.5% were male and 83.5% were female.<sup>4</sup> The lowest age of the respondents was twenty-eight, the highest age was sixty-three, and the average age of the respondents was 48.71 years. The shortest amount of time a respondent had been in the position of a grammar schoolteacher of Slovene was one year, the longest forty years, and on average the respondents had worked for twenty-two years. 33% of respondents worked in grammar school programs, which according to the division of territorial levels of the Republic of Slovenia into statistical regions are in the Osrednjeslovenska region. The higher return in this region corresponds to the denser population in this part of the country in comparison to other regions. The Podravska region is next with 14.7%, Savinjska with 12.8% and Jugovzhodna Slovenija with 9.2% of respondents, while 7.3% of respondents were from Gorenjska and Goriška regions. Slightly less, 4.6% or 3.7% of respondents worked in the Obalna-Kraška or Primorsko-Notranjska region. 2.8% of respondents were employed in the Posavje and Pomurje regions, and the least of them—0.9%, in the Zasavska and Koroška regions.

<sup>3</sup> The record of institutions and secondary schools.

<sup>4</sup> Among all the Slovene teachers in secondary schools in the year 2018 there were 67% of female and 33% of male teachers, so the survey returns are not representative of the gender make up of all Slovene teachers in secondary education (SVIZ).



Slovene, the most frequently mentioned works were *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, Sophocles's *Antigone*, and *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare. Some authors were represented by several different literary works. Among Slovene authors, Ivan Cankar especially appeared most frequently. Both dramatic and prose works written by him were featured in the results (in order from the most common to the least common answers): *Hlapci*, *Kralj na Betajnovi* (*The King of Betajnova*), *Na klancu* (*On the Slope*), *Za narodov blagor* (transl. *For the Good of the Nation*), *Hiša Marije Pomočnice* (*The Ward of our Lady Mercy*), and *Pohujšanje v dolini Šentflorjanski* (*Depravity in St. Florian Valley*).

The authors Drago Jančar (*Veliki briljantni valček* [*The Great Brilliant Waltz*] and *To noč sem jo videl* [*I Saw Her That Night*]), Edvard Kocbek (*Črna orhideja* [*The black orchid*] and *Strah in pogum* [*Fear and courage*]), and Lojze Kovačič (*Prišleki* [*Newcomers*] and *Resničnost* [*Reality*]) all appeared twice each in the results.

France Prešeren was represented by five works (*Sonetni venec*; *Krst pri Savici*; *Poezija* [*Poetry*]); *Soneti nesreče* [*Sonnets of Unhappiness*]; and "Slovo od mladosti" [*Farewell from My Youth*]). Srečko Kosovel is represented by four different literary texts ("Ekstaza smrti" [*Ecstasy of Death*]), "Kons 5" [*Cons 5*]), *Integrali* [*Integrals*], and "Pesem št. X" [*Poem No. X*]). The most frequently mentioned translated works were by Fyodor M. Dostoevsky. Along with *Crime and Punishment*, the respondents mentioned *The Idiot* and *The Adolescent*. In addition to *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Slovene language teachers included Johan W. von Goethe's *Faust* in the questionnaire.<sup>6</sup> The size of the letters of individual titles in the

<sup>6</sup> Among the results we find Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey* or both of them, and Boccaccio's *Federigo's Falcon* or the entire collection of *Decameron*, Sophocles's tragedies *Antigone* and *King Oedipus*, and Shakespeare's tragedies *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Proust's novels *Swann's Way*, *In Search of Lost Time*, and *Combray*. Some literary works appeared only once among the answers: Ivan Cankar's *Za narodov blagor*, *Hiša Marije Pomočnice*, and *Pohujšanje v dolini Šentflorjanski*; *Angel pozabe* (*The Angel of Forgetting*) and other novels by Maja Haderlap; Drago Jančar's *To noč sem jo videl*; Edvard Kocbek's *Strah in pogum*; Ciril Kosmač's *Pomladni dan* (*A Day in Spring*); Lojze Kovačič's *Reality*, a short story by Prežih Voranc entitled "Samorastniki" ("The Self-Sown"), poems by Srečko Kosovel like "Poem no. X"; Oton Župančič's *Duma*; and Janez Menart's "Croquis." Among the translated literary texts the plays, *Ghosts* of Henrik Ibsen; *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett; and *Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; a collection of sonnets by Francesco Petrarca called *Canzoniere*. The novels mentioned by the respondents were: *The Idiot* and *The Adolescent* by Fyodor M. Dostoevsky; *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*; Imro Kertész's *Fateless*; Gabriel Garcia Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; George Orwell's *Animal Farm*; Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way*, *In Search of Lost Time*, and *Combray*; Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, Marie-

following visualization, created with the help of the so-called word cloud method,<sup>7</sup> corresponds to the ratio of the frequency of occurrence of a particular literary text among the results.



Figure 2: Frequency of occurrence of individual literary authors

## 2.2 Linguistic Picture of the Translated Literary Texts

The linguistic picture of the translated texts is wide. Most (eighty-seven) of the translated literary works were originally written in ancient Greek, slightly less works were written in Russian (sixty-five) and English (sixty-three), followed by French (thirty-three), German and Italian (both twelve), Hebrew<sup>8</sup> (nine), Spanish (six), and Norwegian and Hungarian (both one).

## 2.3 Types of Literary Texts

The types of the texts that were mentioned by the respondents are diverse. 18% of the works mentioned is poetry, a little more than 36% is prose, and a little more than 45% is drama (fig. 3). The high number of dramas especially stands out, which makes it clear that teachers, despite its connections with the presentational dimension, understand it as an autonomous literary genre that

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Steni Beyle's *The Red and the Black*; *Ana Karenina* by Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf; and *The Drinking Den* by Émile Zola were mentioned only once.

<sup>7</sup> The visualization was created by entering the results of the questionnaire into the *Pro-Word-Cloud* program. Before that we had edited them by excluding all data and parts of the record that were not the titles of literary works, descriptive answers had been summarized in the appropriate title, we had corrected the incorrectly written ones, and eliminated the answers that did not contain the information asked by the question.

<sup>8</sup> Or Arameic and Ancient Greek, as the text is the Bible or biblical stories.

is equal to others. Among the foreign dramatic authors the most prominent two were Sophocles (*Antigone* was listed sixty-two times, *King Oedipus* ten times) and William Shakespeare (*Hamlet* was mentioned fifty-three times). Looking at the types of texts, there are differences between the Slovene texts and translated texts (fig. 3).

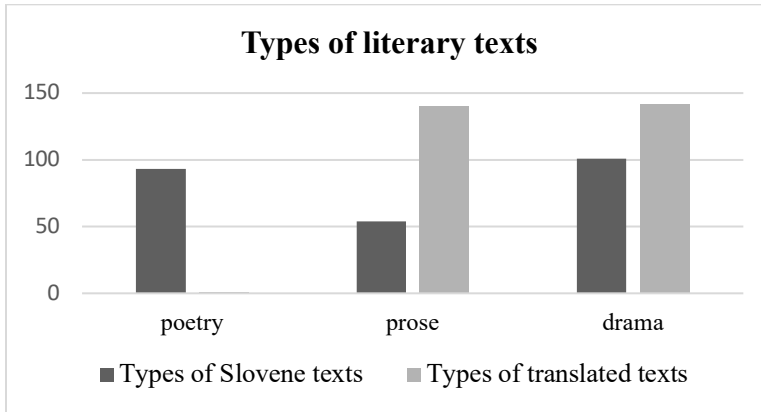


Figure 3: Types of literary texts

Among the Slovene literary titles, about 22% are prose, about 41% of mentioned works are dramas, and 37% are poetry. Among all mentioned literary works there is only one translated poetry text. This is quite a low number (around 0.35%). Around 50% of mentioned works belong to the drama genre, and just over 49% are translated prose. It is apparent that teachers of Slovene place great emphasis on Slovene poetry in their literature lessons, but this is not true for translated poetry. Slovene poetry is among the texts that are crucial for discussion in grammar school literature lessons. The works of France Prešeren, Srečko Kosovel, Tomaž Šalamun, Oton Župančič, Ciril Zlobec, Janez Menart, Kajetan Kovič, and Tone Pavček are mentioned here. The reason for this is not only poetry's important part in national literary history, which was directly connected to the shaping of the national identity, but also the role of poetry in the modern literary system and in the Slovenian cultural space. The results of the questionnaire show that respondents perceive Slovenian poetry as a key element of teaching literature and developing an individual's literary competence.

Speaking of translated literature, the grammar school Slovene language give priority to prose and drama, with much less emphasis on foreign poetry. Surprisingly, dramatic works comprise as much as 45% of all listed titles, and most of the included foreign literary works are dramatic texts. This shows that high school teachers of Slovene perceive Slovene and foreign

drama as an important element of the literature system. Among foreign literary titles, there is a more pronounced emphasis on prose texts—especially novels and ancient epics—and 45% of them can be classified as epics. Respondents give less weight to Slovenian prose as they mention it in 22% of answers.

#### **2.4 The Gender of Literary Artists**

Almost all literary works mentioned by respondents were written by male authors. Out of a total of 534 mentions of literary texts, only two of them were written by female authors. Out of a total of thirty-six different Slovene titles, the respondents mentioned only one written by a female author—i.e., Maja Haderlap. Similarly, grammar schoolteachers of Slovene mentioned only one translated work out of the twenty-seven different texts that was written by a female author—i.e., Virginia Woolf.

### **3 Part Two of the Survey: Components of Literary Competence in Grammar School Literature Lessons**

Like stated above, the components of literary competence recognized by a community vary and depend on social and cultural influences, the influences of a school system and curriculum, as well as individual school institutions or individual teachers. The predominance of a certain literary-didactic model in professional discourse does not mean that this model is directly implemented in school practice, as the teaching of literature can also be marked by other, implicit influences that highlight other aspects of literary competence. That is why it is important to explain, plan, and professionally reflect on the development of various components of literary competence, and thus control and maintain the quality of literature lessons. From this point of view, it is necessary to understand how teachers of Slovene comprehend literature lessons, as it is they who interpret and implement professional literary didactic discourse in school practice.

In the following sections of the article, the basic provisions of the reception and systemic literary-didactic paradigm are explained first. Established by the Slovene didactics of literature they relate to four literary-didactic models that highlight individual components of literary competence. Using the questionnaire, I analyzed how much importance the pedagogical workers who participated in the research give to individual components of literary ability and which literary-didactic model is emphasized by them.

#### **3.1 Reception and Systemic Literary-Didactic Paradigm**

Boža Krakar Vogel (2014: 234–35) writes that the reception literary-didactic paradigm, which focusses on the reader and his emotional-experiential

response, is in literature lessons in grammar schools dialogically complemented by the systemic literary-didactic paradigm within Slovene. According to Krakar Vogel, this is made possible by the interpretation of literary works<sup>9</sup> in the context of the literature lessons that is a fundamental method in the didactics of literature. If the reception paradigm is suitable for the primary school level, the systemic one is most consistently implemented in grammar schools (cf. Krakar Vogel 2013a; Blažič 2013; Krakar Vogel 2014).

The reception didactics of literature considers the reader's expectations and suggests literary works that deal with problems that make sense or are relevant to readers (Saksida 2003), as well as provides for a reading for relaxation that is voluntary rather than reading for learning whose goal is seeking information (Žbogar 2013: 68). Slovene literary didactics, especially in grammar school literature classes, combine the reception literary-didactic paradigm with the systemic one, which relies on systemic approaches in literary science (cf. Dović 2007, 16). According to Milena Mileva Blažič (2013: 52), systems theory generally strives for studying and teaching literature in its broader context, as literature is understood as an integral part of society. In Slovenia, the monograph *Sistemska didaktika književnosti v teoriji in praksi* (Systemic didactics of literature in theory and practice) by Boža Krakar Vogel and Milena Mileva Blažič explains systemic literary didactics, and points out that the basic goal of teaching literature—that is, students' communication with literature, within the systemic literary-didactic paradigm, directs to the reception of literature as a system that is “both autonomous (independent) and heteronomous (interdependent on the network of relations in culture)” (Blažič 2013: 58). This teaching of literature develops a cultured reader, which is the basic goal of teaching literature in grammar school (cf. Blažič 2013; 2015; Krakar Vogel 2004; 2013; Žbogar 2010). The systemic literary-didactic paradigm, as Boža Krakar Vogel (2013: 12) points out, argues that “to understand literature and evaluate its role, it is not enough just to read and discuss individual texts, but also to know the factors or functional roles that form its context.” The author substantiates the importance of literary knowledge as a system of information about literary phenomena in the systemic didactics of literature. She emphasizes that the student relies on it in the interpretation of individual texts and in their comparison and classification in the literary system (Krakar Vogel 2013: 14). Within the system didactics of literature, it makes sense to “functionally research and teach not only one literary text, but literature as a whole or a system, where the relations between individual parts of the system, such as

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<sup>9</sup> Within the framework of the reception literary-didactic paradigm, interpretation of literature within the classes of Slovenian focuses on the reader's imaginative, emotional response, dialogically thinking observation, evaluation based on experience and creativity (Krakar Vogel 2014: 234; Krakar Vogel 2013: 7).

author, institutions, repertoire, market, product, reader” says Milena Mileva Blažić (2013, 52). The systemic literary-didactic paradigm envisages useful systemic literary knowledge—i.e., knowledge of literary and cultural phenomena from a synchronous and diachronic perspective (Krakar Vogel 2014, 235).

### 3.2 Literary-Didactic Models

Boža Krakar Vogel (2014) draws attention to four literary-didactic models described by Theo Witte, Tanja Janssen and Gert Rijlaarsdam. These are the cultural model, the linguistic model, the social model, and the model of personal growth that emphasize the various components of literature teaching.

They originate from the point of view of theoretical observations of researchers, teachers’ theoretical starting point of teaching and teachers’ emphasis on content when teaching, the choice of literary texts in the teaching of literature, the method of teaching, and students’ assignments (Witte et al. 2006: 30). In literary-didactic models, Boža Krakar Vogel identifies elements that are comparable to the definition of two literary-didactic paradigms—the reception and the systemic didactic paradigms. The cultural and the linguistic model correspond to the systematic literary-didactic paradigm, while the social and the model of personal growth relate to the reception literary-didactic paradigm. (Krakar Vogel 2014: 234; 2019: 45).

The cultural literary-didactic model emphasizes literary-historical knowledge and a wide knowledge of the cultural environment and identifying with it. It highlights the literary-cultural heritage represented by key writers and their classical texts (Witte et al. 2006: 19). Teachers who advocate this literary-didactic model believe that the focus of teaching literature should be to acquaint students with classical cultural and literary products and national literary history (Witte et al. 2006: 19).

In the teaching of literature, the linguistic or the aesthetic-linguistic model emphasizes literary-theoretical knowledge and communicative ability. In addition, it cultivates the acquisition of literary conventions as an element of literary competence and highlights the use of language in literary works, especially its aesthetic function, thus focusing on the intratextual dimension. The focus is mainly on the analysis of literary language, formal structures of literary texts, and linguistic figures. Because of the above, the linguistic paradigm is associated with literary-theoretical knowledge, which is the foundation of literary analysis. It is mainly concerned with the study of the texts themselves. The priority is the interpretation and evaluation of literature based on textual analysis and analysis of formal structures and linguistic figures (Witte et al. 2006, 19).

The social model that aims at developing social awareness is based on literary-science theories, which are interdisciplinary connected with sociology and interpret literature from the point of view of social production, so it discusses the areas that go beyond the literary text alone. The system of literature is perceived from the point of view of its relations to social, political, and other systems. The social literary-didactic model is occupied with questions of how literature reflects and comments on the sociocultural context in which it was written, so students discuss social topics. The focus is on social, ideological, political, socio-historical, and other contexts of production and reception of literary texts. This literary didactic model is known for its critical approach (Witte et al. 2006: 19), as it is influenced by the methods of literary science, which are primarily interested in social criticism, the disclosure of prejudices etc. It encourages students to search for hidden ideologies that can be more or less implicitly reflected in literary texts.

The model of personal growth in the teaching of literature within the framework of literary competence primarily emphasizes the emotional and experiential aspects and the individual's ethical and empathic response. It focuses on the individual learner and his or her personal responses and experiences, memories and emotions while reading. The main purposes of reading literature within this literary-didactic model are personal or emotional growth of the individual and the pleasure of reading (Witte et al. 2006: 19).

Each of the twenty-five statements in the second part of the questionnaire describes the opinions on the importance of each component of grammar school literature lessons, which is typical for a particular literary-didactic model. The statements emphasize the individual components of literary competence as well. Individual statements are represented by ordinal variables, which are grouped into a set that refers to a specific literary-didactic model and represents a unit and an interval or spaced variable. We collected responses using a Likert scale of views from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A comparison of the values of different units shows the importance that pedagogical workers give to an individual literary-didactic model and thus the individual components of literary competence. The last question in the second part of the questionnaire is close ended and the respondents are asked which of the statements related to a certain literary-didactic model is in their opinion the most important. Based on the results, it was determined which dimensions of literature lessons or which aspects of literary competence the respondents find most important and which literary-didactic model they support the most. Since the cultural model, which defines the grammar school literature lessons, matches the systemic didactics of literature, I analyzed whether this model is also mentioned the most by pedagogical workers. From the point of view of theoretical findings that literary didactic models are interconnected within the reception or system didactics of literature, it was determined whether there exists a correlation

between the linguistic and cultural model and between the social model and the model of emotional growth.<sup>10</sup> I also analyzed the relation of literary-didactic models to demographic indicators.

### **2.2.3 Estimates of Individual Statements within Literary-Didactic Models**

The statements related to the importance of getting to know the central Slovene and foreign literary works and the relations between them were rated the highest (average grade 4.22). The statement that teaching literature to students strengthens their understanding of their own culture and other cultures was also rated high (average score 4.08). Both highest rated statements belong to the cultural literary-didactic model and refer to literary knowledge that helps the reader to understand the literary system and different cultures. The lowest rated statements belong to the social and linguistic model. The lowest rated statement (2.23) argues that students should look primarily for stereotypical images of certain groups of people in literary works. This statement belongs to the social literary-didactic model. It refers to the critical reading of literary texts and the unveiling of stereotypes that appear in them. The second lowest rated statement (2.28) refers to the structure of literary works and belongs to the linguistic model. It represents a typical formalistic understanding that in the teaching of literature it is necessary to first analyze the structure of the text, which is necessary to perceive its meaning.

On average, the cultural model was rated the highest (3.62), followed by the personal growth model (3.16), the social model (2.76), and the linguistic model (2.61) (fig. 4).

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<sup>10</sup> For future research, it would be informative to use the same questionnaire on the population of primary school teachers and analyze whether there is a greater affinity among them for the social model and the model of personal growth, which match to the reception didactics of literature.

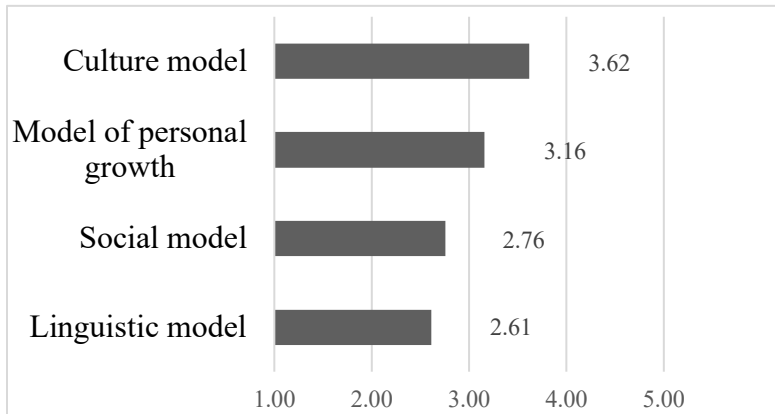


Figure 4: A comparison of literary-didactic models

Slightly lower than the cultural model, grammar school teachers valued the emotional and experiential aspects of contact with literature, which in their opinion are still more important than looking for stereotypes and social injustices in literary works, which is the starting point of the sociological model. On average, respondents gave the least importance to the linguistic model, which refers to the analysis of formal linguistic aspects of literary texts.

Since the results of the p-value at the level of characteristics are 0.05, we find that there are statistically significant differences between different literary didactic models. In the population that was sampled are correlations between the variables, so the results can be generalized from the sample that was included in the study to the whole population. Among all dimensions, the cultural dimension has the highest ranking average (286.36), which confirms that the respondents marked it as the most important. Statistical analysis also showed that the age of the respondents was not statistically connected to their responses; the same applies to the length of time they work as teachers, affiliation to a statistical region and gender, as there are no statistically significant differences.

### 3.2.1 The Cultural Model

The statements from the cultural model highlighted the importance of intertextual connections between literary works, learning about the literary canon, historical and literary-historical circumstances of literary texts, literary-historical periods, the author's life and his or her mental horizon, and understanding his or her own culture and other cultures. On average, the highest ranked statement (with 4.22) within the cultural model and the highest

among all statements of the questionnaire refers to the fact that students get to know the central Slovene and foreign literary texts and the relations between them. From the cultural model, and with the other statements of the questionnaire, the second highest (4.08) claim was that the teaching of literature to students strengthens the understanding of their own culture and other cultures. This is followed by the statement that students understand a literary work better when they connect it with other literary texts and works of art that influenced it. It was rated at an average of 3.71. Slightly lower, with 3.40, was the statement referring to the importance of the historical circumstances of the creation of literary texts. Rated 3.20 was the statement that students in literature lessons in grammar schools learn about the basic features of literary-historical periods. The lowest rating in cultural model was given to the statement that students get to know the author's life and his mental horizon during the school discussion of literary texts. With a score of 3.10, this statement was still ranked above average in comparison with the statements in other literary-didactic models and, for example, has a higher average score than the statements that are rated the highest in the linguistic or social model.

### **3.2.2 The Model of Personal Growth**

In the model of personal growth, the highest rated statement (on average with 3.64) refers to the fact that students connect the literary works they discuss in literature lessons with their own life experiences and memories. The following two statements talk about the development of emotions or students empathizing with literary characters and fictional situations, which were assessed similarly (with 3.40 and 3.37). Slightly lower were the statements—rated 3.25 and 3.14 on average—that relate to written or oral explanation of their own emotional response when reading literature. Even lower were the statements that point out the importance of pleasure in reading literature at school (3.09), the importance of imaginative associations and free creative writing (2.90), and the importance of including literary works in the teaching of literature which discusses everyday problems for teenagers (2.51).

### **3.2.3 The Social Literary-Didactic Model**

In the social model, respondents on average largely agreed (2.8) with the statement that teachers should include the political circumstances of the social order at the time of their creation in the discussion of literary works. The statement about the importance of economic and social circumstances in which an individual literary work was created was assessed similarly (2.7). Respondents gave less importance to the statements that advocated the need

for students to look for hidden ideologies in the texts (2.3) and stereotypical images of certain groups of people (2.23).

### 3.2.4 The Linguistic Model

The linguistic literary-didactic model generally received the lowest grades from grammar schoolteachers of Slovene who participated in the research. The lowest rated statement linked with the model (on average 2.28) was that the condition for understanding a literary work is an analysis of its structure. This statement was also the lowest rated of all the statements. The second lowest (2.48) statement as part of the linguistic literary-didactic paradigm also refers to the understanding and analysis of the formal structure of literary works. These are stylistic means of language—i.e., tropes and figures. The statements about the importance of recognizing the author's choice of vocabulary and stylistic peculiarities of an individual writer were rated slightly higher (2.54 and 2.70). Both focus on the linguistic and stylistic aspect of literary works, which they directly connect with the production of literature or with specific literary approaches of an individual literary author—i.e., on the applied literary theoretical knowledge or on the reader's sensitivity to the author's language choices. The highest rated statement within the linguistic paradigm (2.73) was the statement relating to the differences between types, forms, and genres. It is clear that teachers of Slovene do not attach much importance to the analysis of the structure of the literary text being discussed. They seem to pay more attention to other described aspects of the discussion of literature in school.

### 3.2.5 The Most Important Literary-Didactic Model

The last question of the second part of the questionnaire was a closed question. The respondents had to choose one of the statements that corresponded to the individual literary-didactic model of literature teaching.<sup>11</sup> The question was borrowed from Witt et al. (2006: 22). The participants were asked which literary didactic model they, as teachers of Slovene language,

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<sup>11</sup> This question was borrowed from a study presented by Witte et al. (2006, 22) which was featured in the discussion *Literary competence and the literature curriculum*, which examined the theoretical findings of four literary-didactic models. In it, Dutch language teachers in secondary education highlighted one of the previously mentioned statements. This showed which of the four models they find most important. Based on this question, the research divided secondary school teachers of Dutch into four categories, which corresponded to four literary-didactic models. All further answers of the respondents were, for example, understood as answers of a respondent who supports the cultural model. In the present research, we did not choose such an approach, as we doubt that teachers can be categorized into groups based on one answer. Furthermore, we can't rely on teachers to properly assess their own belief in one question.

explicitly support. In addition, I determined whether the respondents properly evaluated their own belief, or whether they supported the dimensions of the literary-didactic model throughout the questionnaire and in the mentioned question as well. The largest share of respondents (39.2%) described the dimension of personal growth as the most important. This concerns the students' self-knowledge and awareness of their own emotions when in contact with literature. A slightly smaller share of respondents (37.1%) chose the social model, which refers to the fact that students learn about social phenomena through literature and have a critical attitude towards it. 23.7% of respondents identified the cultural model as the most important. The model refers to learning about literary works from world and Slovenian literature and literary-historical development. The linguistic model of teaching literature, which refers to the structure of literary texts, has not been identified as the most important by anyone.

The results of this question differ from the results of the entire questionnaire, in which the cultural model was generally highlighted as the most important, followed by the model of personal growth. The social model proved to be the least important. Although the respondents in the last question chose the answer that belongs to the linguistic, cultural, or social domain, the principle of teaching literature, which they affirmatively marked as the most important, differs from their other answers to questions connected with literary-didactic models. The exception is the model of personal growth ( $p < 0.05$ ), as the respondents who marked it as the most important in the last question, mostly rated the other statements within this model quite high.

#### 4 Conclusion

The number of types and the original language of the texts cited by the respondents as being crucial works for discussion in the grammar school lessons of Slovene is large. Respondents cited almost exclusively the works of male literary authors, which means that they do not include female authors among the most important names in the literary system. One of the possible explanations for this is the predominance of male authors in the curricula for Slovene in grammar schools, which would need to be subjected to additional research. Moreover, the reason for this could be the predominance of male authors among both Slovene and foreign canonized literary works (cf. Novak Popov 2008) that dominate the most answers. These are also highlighted by the cultural literary-didactic model, which grammar schoolteachers of Slovene in Slovenia described as the most important in the teaching of literature. The model includes aspects related to literary knowledge, including knowledge of main Slovene and foreign literary works and the relations between them, as well as strengthening the understanding of one's own and other cultures through studying the system of literature. Teachers also point out the literary-didactic model of personal growth, and thus the

emotional aspects of discussing literature. The results show the influence of systemic didactics of literature with elements of reception. From the point of view of literary didactics, this is the basic direction of grammar school literature lessons. It is also apparent that the respondents strive to educate a cultured reader who demonstrates systemic literary knowledge, as well as emotional and ethical sensitivity. The research has shown that the formal linguistic analysis of literary texts has a minor role according to pedagogical workers. The same is true for the detection of social stereotypes, ideologies, and other meanings of the text that we find through social interpretations.

In the last close-ended question, the respondents indicated which model they thought was the most important. The average score of the cultural model, which is otherwise rated the highest among all the statements of the questionnaire, is lower here than the average rating of the model of personal growth. This can be explained by the fact that for teachers the basic operational aim of teaching literature lessons is the cultural aspect, while discussing literature is meaningful within the emotional dimensions. Therefore, in the last question, the essential and more important element of teaching literature was marked as becoming familiar with one's own emotions and personal growth, as well as the critical analysis of social phenomena.

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## POVZETEK

### MNENJE PROFESORJEV SLOVENŠČINE O POUČEVANJU KNJIŽEVNOSTI NA GIMNAZIJAH

V članku predstavim rezultate anketne raziskave, ki je zajela sedemindeset učiteljev slovenščine na slovenskih gimnazijah in je preverjala njihova mnenja o tem, katera literarna dela so ključna za obravnavo pri slovenščini na gimnaziji in katere dimenzije pouka književnosti so po njihovi oceni najpomembnejše. Rezultati kažejo, da so po mnenju profesorjev slovenščine za obravnavo v razredu ključna kanonizirana slovenska in tuja literarna dela različnih vrst ter zvrsti. Najpomembnejša dimenzija pouka književnosti je po njihovi oceni poznavanje osrednjih književnih besedil in odnosov med njimi, kar posameznemu učencu pomaga pri razumevanju lastne kulture in drugih kultur. Poleg tega je po mnenju učiteljev slovenščine na gimnaziji ključna tudi čustvena dimenzija pouka književnosti, ki se nanaša na učenčevo doživljanje književnosti in njegovo osebno rast. Po drugi strani sta po mnenju respondentov manj pomembna sociološki pogled na literaturo in formalna analiza književnih besedil.