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INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF SERBIAN EPIC POEM ON THE INCREASE OF SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENTS

Abstract: Serbian epic poems show all levels of complex interpersonal relationships, and understanding of these relationships can enrich students' ability to evaluate the relationship between people, understanding of human behavior – social intelligence. The aim of the survey is to investigate the influence of contemporary interpretations of Serbian epic poems on student achievement on tests of social intelligence. Sample of experimental research includes 414 primary school students of different ages, different genders. Of these 284 students are from elementary school *Vuk Karadžić*, Vlasenica, who had classes of Serbian language and literature in the traditional and the modern way and 130 pupils from elementary school *King Alexander I* in Gornji Milanovac who had classes of Serbian language and literature only in the traditional way. The study applied the experimental method. For the study we used the Test of recognition of human behavior from Lidija Vučić's Test of social intelligence. The results confirm the hypothesis that the modern interpretation of Serbian epic poems is more efficient compared to traditional one in achieving better outcomes for students of both sexes on the social intelligence test.

Keywords: social intelligence, psychosocial development, modern teaching, traditional teaching, epic poems, morals.

Introduction

Epic poem is a poetic story in the poem – a poetry story about historical events and prominent figures, important phenomena that really represent the past of the people. Folk speech energy was born and transformed into different forms: traditions, fantastic events, blessings, curses. In the epic poem there are no taboos, this type of poem is sung in front of all family members.

By default, traditional teaching refers to the frontal form of work and the monolithic method. A modern approach to the interpretation of Serbian epic poems, by using of information technology, through individualized, thematically integrated classes, through setting up the pupils in problem situation, students are introduced to this distant world with the aim that students understand the motives and induce the methods of heroes who were celebrated in epic poetry.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We help students to understand the present and predict the future, giving them the ability to understand the past. Poetry has a positive impact on psychological development of students (Kranjc et al, 2003, Lešnik & Marjanovič Umek, 2005; Laketa, 2011). The question is whether modern methodical interpretation of the epic poem can have a positive impact on increasing social intelligence of students.

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1.1. The epic poem and psychosocial development of the child

For the development of social intelligence, it is necessary to place students in situations that require understanding of relationships among people, the plunge into the deepest urge of human activity. We will use the word epic poem to teach students how to behave and understand the behavior of others. "It is a kind of connective tissue among people, because it either builds or destroys a community. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that very often the person we are talking with does not even know what he said just one minute ago, and that he can not even follow what he says" (Brdar, 2018: 161).

Our psychologist Lidija Vučić implies that Social intelligence is the ability of assessing the relationship between people, understanding people's procedures and their mental state during these procedures, as well as the evaluation of responses to the actions of others and taking initiative in social relationships (Vučić, 1991: 125). In our folk epic poems, all levels of complex interpersonal relationships are presented, so the interpretation of these relationships can significantly enrich students' social experience. The research results confirm that poetry has a positive impact on psychological development of students (Marjanović Umek et al., 2002; Kranjc et al, 2003; Lešnik & Marjanović Umek, 2005; Turjačanin, 2006; Laketa, 2011).

Danka Lajić-Mihajlović's findings (2013), confirm the fact that the performing of national epic poem with a movement while minstrel drags bow across the strings is kind of mnemonics. This syncretism in the performance of epic poems, which is bringing it closer to the primary ritual genres, is interpreted as a result of ancient human experience and cohesion properties of this experience, is interpreted as the power to form and control the collective spirit and to form a collective pattern of behavior bringing the audience into ecstasy (Lajić-Mihajlović, 2013).

Human beings "need to be intellectually superior to less social because of their social environment is more complex, less predictable and more intellectually challenging" (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011: 471). One must be able to predict the likelihood of the behavior of others to anticipate the consequences of their behavior and to calculate whether in a given relation one wins or loses. For the purpose of argument, let's assume that the social world is really much more complex and unpredictable than unsocial. Does social intelligence therefore require complex knowledge? Although the findings are so far considered in order to enrich the social and non-social information, there are truly social discoveries designed exclusively for social information (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011).

Indirect observation of others is evaluating the complex behaviors of a hero in epic folk songs. Respect for elders, respect for parents, helping orphans are their patterns of behavior that we learn from epic poem Marko Kraljević and bey Kostadin. From this poem we learn another important feature which people today have forgotten – that to inappropriate behavior of people in our environment, even if we were the closest – blood brothers, you should not close our eyes, but react. Our accumulated social learning can be used in order to come up with ideas on how to behave, to assess whether it is appropriate to conduct a situation and anticipate possible consequences (previously thought). We create standards of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behavior by reacting to modeling and influence of people (self-regulation).

Some of these standards relate to the ethical moral and socially acceptable behavior, while others refer to personal aspirations in achieving goals and evaluating performance. Self-reflexiveness is the possibility of observing our own thoughts and behavior, returning to them and making conclusions about the future. The conclusions that we can come to (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014) are the beliefs of self-efficacy (estimation of own abilities). From the self-reflexivity of our epic heroes, we can learn this skill. Knez Lazar through a monologue with himself in the poem "The collapse of the Serbian Empire" showed what was in his mind and soul; he questions his possible actions and their consequences. The conclusions that we can come to (Vizek Vidović et al., 2014: 78–83) are the beliefs of self-efficacy (estimation of own abilities).

1.2. The reasons why children should read epic poems

At what age to start reading folk epic poems? How can students experience reading the epic songs in which unusual elements, dragons, and fairies appear? "Students spontaneously notice parts which made them surprised or confused. Although this amazement is significantly, lower in junior primary school classes, than later on. Acceptance of unusual as a normal is characteristic for the psychology of this age" (Mrkalj, 2008: 207). Because of this, epic folk songs have a very large educational influence in growing up influencing the formation of students' personality.

Starting school child is fluent, interested in speech. During this period, children love stories about strong and powerful men. They already have best friend by then. They keep what is theirs. "At the age of 5–7 years the child is already able to empathize with others and to enjoy the experience of others. Children can empathize with personalities from fairy tales and stories" (Radomirović, 2005: 107). We believe that at this early stage of child psychological development it is justified to read selected epic folk songs that contain elements of fairy-tale: "Snake groom", "Building of Skadar".

Piaget, in his theory of moral development, distinguishes two types of morality: heteronomous and autonomous (Piaget 1960). At the stage of heteronomous morality, that corresponds the pre-operational cognitive stage, students see all black & white. People are either good or bad; this view of morality corresponds to characters from fairy tales. At the stage of autonomous moral child can be enjoying in someone else's role and see the dilemma from the standpoint of other people. At this stage, the students' personality and their actions are no longer black & white. Entry into this phase can be encouraged by reading and analysis of folk epic songs that, unlike the fairy tales, present characters as more complex.

Singer of the epic poetry enters the psychology of motivation of certain actions of the main characters through poetic images. Heroes beside virtues have flaws; the students can see this best in the example of the figure of Marko Karljevic that is fair, strong, brave, but also sensitive. Marko is a troublemaker and he likes to drink. In the poem "Banovic Strahinja" we meet the Old Jug-Bogdan and nine Jugovic, who are in the majority of Kosovo's cycle of poems described as great heroes, in two roles: as excellent hosts, but also as traitors, cowards who are not willing to help their son in law Banovic Strahinja to rescue their sister. "The semantics of love could be determined as a set of culturally passed down standardizations for feeling, thinking, acting, and speaking, structuring the love life" (Kos et al., 2016: 11).

1.3. A moral and Christian discourse of epic poems

People differ in relation to moral issues today and in the past. There are people who very strictly follow the unwritten moral rules, but there are people who are willing to openly or secretly violate these rules. And in the distant past, people violated rules, so we have the Emperor Dusan who wants to marry his sister in song "Dušan wants to take his own sister": "*Oh, my sister, an orphan Roksandra! / Come take me for your master / Let's not waist our treasure*"¹.

Unlike him, his sister does not want to commit the sin, which is harshly criticized in our church: "*So, said to him, poor Roksandra; / Oh, you heard me, my brother Stephen! / The sky would rather burst, / and on the sky the sun would die / before I would take you for my master*". Dušan's sister sets requirements for emperor to bring clergy trusting in their righteousness: "*So you bring three hundred monks / and bring twelve holy bishops and four Serbian Patriarchate, / and bring a deacon Jovan / and his three hundred crazy children; / And it will be*

¹ These verses of songs taken from Stef. Karadzic, Vuk (1987). *Serbian folk songs: the book of the second in which the songs of a heroine are the oldest*. Beograd: Nolit.

as they decide". Through this poem, we meet corruptible priests, but also honorable and fair ones:

*"The monks took the bribe,
So did the twelve Bishops
And four Serbian Patriarchate,
But did not deacon Jovan
And his children, three hundred crazy".*

Throughout this song, we meet the cry of helpless through addressing others by curse. We read the curse in the following words, which Roksanda says to monks, bishops, and patriarchs who approve of her marriage to Emperor Dusan calling her emperor's Empress:

*"The Devils took your soul!
May fire burn you alive!
May water swallow you blurry!"*

The song teaches us that there are people who are immune to the power of the imperial treasure and who know that it is better to lose your head than the soul. Epic singer introduces us to these people through the characters of deacon John and his children three hundred crazy who are not afraid to tell the truth.

*"Thus they were saying:
Good morning, poor Roksandra!
With God and Mother of God's will
If you take your loving brother,
you will not remain a trace,
But the snakes and fractured bedrock!"*

"Responding to what happens to us and what affects us means transforming it into something which can be termed, regulated, remembered and so on. In such a way we encounter a *logos* which is not self-contained, but born from *pathos*. But we have to distinguish between primary and secondary kinds of responding similarly to Freud's distinction between a primary and a secondary process of sense making" (Waldenfels, 2016: 18). Serbian epic poems like on the film screen show all levels of complex interpersonal relationships so that an understanding of these relationships can significantly enrich the students' ability to assess responses to the actions of others and take initiative in social relationships.

All components that are part of the human person epic poet takes from real life, installs them on his own ideas into his heroes, epic characters. In this way, the heroes are not only bearers of the event, drivers of significant developments, but also living in children's fiction are returning to real life, where the student opts for them or not. Therefore, it is important to keep the focus on the epic characters, because finding out about them and their actions a student permanently enriches his life experience. Stages in the analysis of a literary character go through exploring and highlighting the natural character trait, noticing dominant spiritual properties, the interpretation of behavior in specific life circumstances, detection and evaluation of the writer's message. Creativity is a skill that can be improved and developed for all students. Model of intelligence that includes divergent production requires that the new and original ways to respond to the problem. The interpretation of the proceedings of Banovic Strahinja launches divergent thinking.

2. PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

It is necessary to train the students to distinguish between good and bad, that nowadays they gain digital wisdom. They need to be empowered to adopt courses with understanding and knowledge that these are used in the appropriate opportunity. The integration of technology in the teaching process is conditioned by the development of new technologies. By combining

pedagogical and technological knowledge, teachers are catching up with the changes. Modern teaching integrates electronic teaching, individualized teaching, and thematically integrated, team teaching and learning, in which we use mind maps. Our goal is to examine the effects of this teaching.

2.1. Method

Research Question

We have defined the problem of our study through question: Could the social intelligence of students be increased by introduction of modern methodical approach in methodical interpretation of folk epic poems? For the subject of research, we chose to investigate the effects of modern teaching on the test of social intelligence of elementary school students. We choose experimental factor as the independent variable (by using modern teaching in the interpretation of the folk epic) to test the transfer of modern teaching (comparing modern and traditional) on the performance of students on the test of social intelligence. According to such a formulated case studies we have collected basic general information about students (age, success, sex); data on the level of performance results from the initial and final measurements on the test of social intelligence; we have checked whether there is a correlation between the results and ways of teaching, depending on the age and sex of pupils.

The aim of the research is to examine the effects of the experimental program: modern classes (electronic, integrated, classes in which we use mind maps, research tasks, individualized teaching) compared to traditional teaching (classes in which is represented a frontal forms of work and monologue method) – in the interpretation of the epic songs on student scores on the test of social intelligence. Tasks of research: Determine the level of student performance results on social intelligence test at the beginning and end of the experimental research.

The general hypothesis is: Modern teaching (electronic, integrated, classes in which we use mind maps, individualized teaching, problem teaching) is more efficient than traditional classes (classes in which he represented a frontal forms of work and monologue method) in achieving the success of students tested social intelligence.

The techniques we used in research surveys, testing and scaling. For the study we used the integrated instrument that consists of a questionnaire of basic information about students and attitudes Likert-type scales, scales of creativity, motivation and scale test of knowledge in the field of folk literature. The questionnaire we collected data on: the age of students, gender, the overall success of the semester, proficiency assessment of computer use in teaching, knowledge of computer programs, assessment of how teachers use computers in the classroom, mind maps, etc. The questions in the questionnaire are closed and consist of a questionable sentence in which it is necessary to choose one of the answers.

We used the *Test of recognition of human behavior* from **Test of social intelligence** professor Lidija Vučić. This is the binomial test of choice (yes/no) and consists of 40 statements about the behavior of people in certain situations.

Experimental method

In our research, we applied the experimental method. Part of the experimental tests was conducted in the Republic of Srpska, in elementary school *Vuk Karadžić*, Vlasenica; where the experimental group teachers use more sophisticated ways to interpret national epic poems (integrated learning, electronic learning, the use of mind maps, and use of research tasks) but also the traditional way in the control group. A part of the tests was conducted in the Republic of Serbia; in the elementary school *King Alexander I*, Gornji Milanovac, where teachers only performed in the traditional way. At the beginning of the experiment, both groups had initial examination to test social intelligence test. After the introduction

of the experimental factors testing was repeated on a test social intelligence in both groups of students (experimental and control). The experiment was carried out in March, April, May and June 2015. Classes of reading and interpretation of epic poetry in a modern way for two hours per week were introduced in the experimental group. Classes were organized with the use of e-learning, using mind maps, teamwork, integrated teaching (integration of history and Serbian language). The aim was to compare the effect of different types of classes (traditional and modern). The difference in the effects of two different ways of teaching was compared to the difference in the initial and final state. Group K is a control, and group E is an experimental group in which experimental factor was introduced: a modern approach to methodical interpretation of the folk epic poem.

The statistical procedure that we used for calculating the effects of the experimental work is: analysis of covariance. Analysis of Covariance² is a statistical method which is used for:

- Harmonization of statistical groups and
- Longitudinal tracking of effects experimental factors.

In the analysis of covariance we have two observations for each subject. One of them is defined as an initial measure X, other measure is defined as Y – it is of importance since it is obtained on a final test after the operation of the experimental factors. For researchers it is important if there is significant difference between the Y in different treatment of dependent variables.

The main objective of the analysis of covariance is to get a reduced rating of experimental error, taking into account the regression of Y dimensions of the X rate.

Analysis of covariance passes through nine stages.

The first phase is the correction of the relationship – for X, Y and XY for mutual products:

$$SS_{XT} = \sum X^2 - C_x; C_y = \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N}; C_{xy} = \frac{\sum X \sum Y}{N}$$

The second phase – calculation of SS_T :

$$SS_{XT} = \sum X^2 - C_x; SS_{YT} = \sum Y^2 - C_y; SS_{XYT} = \sum XY - C_{xy}$$

The third stage – finding SSB (between the group environments):

$$SS_{Xb} = \frac{\sum X^2}{N} - C_x; SS_{Yb} = \frac{\sum Y^2}{N} - C_y; SS_{XYb} = \frac{\sum X^2 \sum Y^2}{N} - C_{xy}$$

The fourth stage – finding SSw (in groups):

$$SS_{Xw} = SS_{XT} - SS_{Xb}; SS_{Yw} = SS_{YT} - SS_{Yb}; SS_{XYw} = SS_{XYT} - SS_{XYb}$$

The fifth stage – analysis of variance X and Y scores taken together:

$$F_x = \frac{MS_{Xb}}{MS_{Xw}}; F_y = \frac{MS_{Yb}}{MS_{Yw}}$$

$$SS_{XYT} = SS_{YT} - \frac{(\sum SS_{XYT})^2}{SS_{XT}}; SS_{YXw} = SS_{Yw} - \frac{(\sum SS_{XYw})^2}{SS_{Xw}}; SS_{YXb} = SS_{XYT} - SS_{YXw}$$

Sixth stage – finding the average adaptation SS for yx:

Analysis of covariance is calculated by the formula:

$$F_{YX} = \frac{MS_{YXb}}{MS_{YXw}}$$

² The program of calculation of the covariance analysis was done by Professor scientist Alexa Brkovic using Garrett's (1959) formula.

Seventh stage – calculate of correlation and regression.

$$r_T = \frac{SS_{YXT}}{\sqrt{SS_{XT} - SS_{YT}}}; r_b = \frac{SS_{XYb}}{\sqrt{SS_{Xb} - SS_{Yb}}}; r_w = \frac{SS_{XYw}}{\sqrt{SS_{Xw} - SS_{Yw}}};$$

$$b_T = \frac{SS_{YXT}}{SS_{XT}}; b_b = \frac{SS_{XYb}}{SS_{Xb}}; b_w = \frac{SS_{XYw}}{SS_{Xw}};$$

$$M_{YX} = M_Y - b_w \cdot (M_X - M_{XT})$$

The formulas for calculating the correlation coefficients (r) and regression (b) are: In the eighth stage of obtaining the MYP bw is used.

The ninth stage is to find the significance of the difference between the adjusted Y using t test. In order to find that it is necessary to:

$$t = \frac{D}{SE_D}$$

$$D = M_{Y1} - M_{Y2}$$

$$SE_D = SE_{MYX} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}$$

$$SE_{MYX} = \frac{SD_{YX}}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$SD_{YX} = \sqrt{MS_{YXw}}$$

Participants

Examining the effects of modern teaching (electronic, integrated, classes in which we use mind maps, research tasks, individualized teaching) in the interpretation of the epic poems, in comparison to traditional teaching (classes in which is represented a frontal forms of work and monologue method), the performance on a scale of creativity, the structure of the sample was determined (table 1) of experimental (E) and control group (K1 and K2) by sex and age (from 4th to 9th grade). K1 is the control group from *Vuk Karadžić* Elementary school in Vlasenica, and K2 is the control group from Elementary school *King Alexander I* from Gornji Mlanovac, Serbia.

Table 1. Structure of the sample by gender and age of the experimental and control groups

CLASS							
EK SEX	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL
EM	8	10	16	17	13	12	76
EF	13	9	12	10	12	7	63
K ₁ M	10	14	16	14	15	14	83
K ₁ F	13	9	12	10	10	8	62
K ₂ M	13	8	12	14	14	9	70
K ₂ F	8	13	6	11	11	11	60
TOTAL	65	63	74	76	75	61	414

The statistical procedure that we used for calculating the effects of the experimental work is analysis of covariance. Analysis of covariance is a statistical procedure that is used in statistical harmonization of groups and longitudinal monitoring of the effects of experimental factors.

2.2. Results and discussion

Results of the test of social intelligence for EK of different sexes (Comparison E and K groups from school in Vlasenica)

Examining the analysis of variance on the test of social intelligence, we have found that between the experimental and control group on initial examination there were no statistically significant difference ($F_x = 0.491$, $p = 0.689$), while in the final one, after the effects of the experimental factors, there is a statistically significant difference ($F_y = 5.791$, $p = 0.001$). The positive effect of experimental factors was confirmed by analysis of covariance $F_{yx} = 6.619$, $p = 0.000$, and the average value of the results on the initial (Mx) and final (My) testing are given in Table 2, where it is clear that the experimental group both male (EM) and female half (EU) has higher scores on the final test (My).

The research by Uglješa and Miroljub Ivanović (Ivanovic & Ivanovic, 2015) came to a result that sex is a statistically significant predictor of the quality of friendship, and that “female respondents assess their friendly relationship higher than the male respondents” (Ivanovic Ivanovic, 2015: 133). In our research, there is a difference between the male and female in the results of the test of social intelligence in favor of males (Table 3), but this difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.248$, $p = 0.386$).

Table 2. Average values of the initial and final tests

Group	N	Mx	SDx	My	SDy	Myp
EM	76	6.105	5.710	7.737	5.587	7.416
EF	63	5.302	5.354	7.111	5.460	7.216
KM	83	5.458	5.923	4.542	5.861	4.565
KF	62	5.016	4.891	5.081	5.119	5.337
		5.500	5.514	6.085	5.682	

Note on the meaning of labels:

E – experimental group

K – control group

Mx – initial testing

My – final examination

Myp – adapted My

M – male

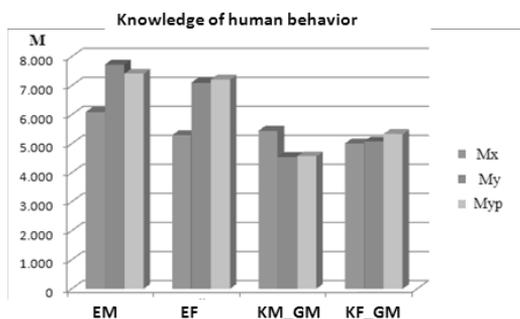
Ž – female

Findings of t-test confirm that there is a statistically significant difference between the results of custom environments of experimental and control groups (Table 3). The result of t-test of experimental and control groups of males is: $t = 3.807$, $p = 0.000$, a t-test of experimental and control groups of females is: $t = 2.227$, $p = 0.034$, so we conclude that the effect of experimental factors influenced positively on increasing of social intelligence of experimental group of both sexes.

Table 3. Results of t-test

Group	dMy'	SEd	t	p
EM i EF	0.200	0.804	0.248	0.386
EM i KM	2.851	0.749	3.807	0.000
EM i KF	2.079	0.807	2.575	0.015
EF i KM	2.652	0.788	3.364	0.002
EF i KF	1.879	0.844	2.227	0.034
KM i KF	0.773	0.792	0.976	0.247

The chart illustrates the changes in the average values of initial and final testing and custom backgrounds of final test at E and K groups of different sexes in the test of human behavior knowledge (Graph 1).



Graph 1. The results on the test of social intelligence

Results of on the test of social intelligence for E/K of different sexes (Comparison of E group in Vlasenica and K group of school Gornji Milanovac)

Examining statistical significance by analysis of variance and covariance of the results in the experimental group (E) and the control group (K) in Vlasenica and control group in school in Gornji Milanovac on social intelligence test were determined at the beginning of the following values ($F_x = 1.933$, $p = 0.125$), and at the end of the experiment ($F_y = 5.006$, $p = 0.002$). Analysis of covariance is $F_{yx} = 5.925$, $p = 0.001$.

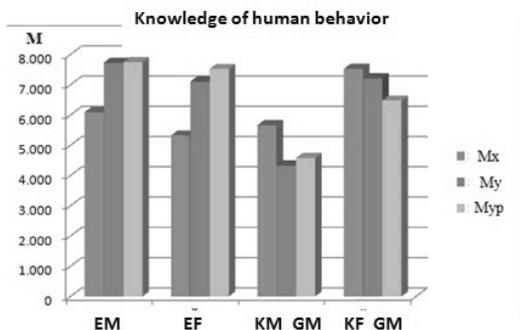
Average values of the results on the initial (Mx) and final (My) testing are given in Table 4, where it is clear that the experimental group both males (EM) and females (EF) have higher scores on the final test (My).

Table 4. Average values of the initial and final tests

Grupa	N	Mx	SDx	My	SDy	Myp
EM	76	6.105	5.710	7.737	5.587	7.748
EF	63	5.328	5.316	7.109	5.416	7.526
KM	70	5.671	5.296	4.343	4.966	4.580
KF	60	7.533	5.559	7.217	6.967	6.482
		6.126	5.507	6.593	5.864	

Findings of t-test confirmed that there is a statistically significant difference between the results of custom environments of experimental and control groups in favor of experimental group for members of the male sex: $t = 3.823$, $p = 0.000$. Members of the experimental group which are females showed better results than the control group males and this difference was statistically significant: $t = 3.406$, $p = 0.001$, so we conclude that the effect of experimental factors contributed positively to the increase in social intelligence of the experimental group of both sexes.

Graph 2 illustrates the change in average values of initial and of final test and custom backgrounds of final test experimental and control groups of different sexes in the test of social intelligence.



Graph 2. *The results on the test of social intelligence*

Our results confirm the hypothesis that the modern interpretation of folk epic poems is more efficient compared to the traditional interpretation in achieving better results of students of both sexes on the social intelligence test.

Conclusion

Epic folk songs through its symbolism, fiction, the epic heroes, through descriptions of duels, wealth, style and language enrich vocabulary of students, encourage the development of speech, and through speech they develop thinking, because these are two inseparable processes which affect the formation and development of concepts.

Serbian epic poems are a treasury of terms related to the language, history, culture, customs, Christianity, ethics, family, family relationships, social relationships, mythology and as such need to be on the central place in education of future generations of young people using available and near sources. With a modern interpretation of folk epic poems we get together two worlds, two ways of thinking, two ways of life between which are centuries in the minds of students. Learning about relationships that are sung in folk epic poetry and learning epic poems by heart, remains in our genetics as recorded track that is transferred for generations.

Experimental research has confirmed the hypothesis that the contemporary interpretation of the epic song is more successful in increasing the results of the student's social intelligence test. It is recommended that this method be used in teaching.

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