Daniela Andonovska-Trajkovska[1]
Faculty of Education, Bitola, "St. Kliment Ohridski"
University of Bitola, FYROM

Original
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The Impact of the Students' Age on the Literary Text Analysis Approach: Teaching Methods and Approaches in Primary Education

Extended summary

Literary prose text analysis is a part of the Language and Literature Curriculum in the primary education. Teachers are expected to implement different types of teaching methods, such as: demonstration, whole-class work, reading and working on a text, discussion, conversation, students' oral presentations and creative writing. Students can also do the literary prose text analysis as group work, pair work, individually, and during the whole-class work. The aim of the research was to determine whether teachers in FYROM use different teaching methods and approaches with different age groups of their students in the lessons of the literary prose text analysis and whether they prefer some methods over others.

We collected the data for this descriptive research by using a questionnaire designed specifically for this purpose and consisting of open, cloze and combined questions. The questions dealt with didactical and methodological issues, as well as the articulation of the lessons of the literary prose text analysis in primary education, including the information about the time allotted for each class activity. The teachers were asked to present the methodological approaches that they use in their classes on a regular basis. The random sample consisted of 75 primary school teachers (N=75) from different towns in FYROM. The data were tested by using the ANOVA – single factor test. Qualitative analysis was applied in order to describe the features of the methodological approaches used by the teachers.

The results indicate that teachers use different teaching approaches in the process of the literary prose text analysis in class, which is graphically presented and discussed in the paper. The results did not show any significant differences in the teaching methods used in different primary school grades, which is quite surprising. Text method and conversation are the most

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1   daniela.andonovska@uklo.edu.mk

methods most frequently used by the teachers teaching various grades, but students' oral presentations are used as well. Demonstration and creative writing are the least used methods.

Despite the fact that teachers use the same teaching methods, the research results show that they use many variations of the methods in teaching different age groups of students. For instance, teachers use the text method in teaching early primary students for the purpose of developing their reading skills, which means that they use the method mostly for reading and the basic understanding of the text in the contexts in which the students read the text aloud many times during the lesson. On the other hand, teachers use the text method with older students mostly to enable them to develop a deeper understanding of the text and make critical inferences about the specific elements of the plot and the everyday contexts. In upper grades, students are frequently expected to read the text at home, whereas reading aloud in the class is rarely practiced. Conversation as a method is used differently in the lower and upper primary grades. Lower-grade students are engaged in conversation with much easier questions (plot analysis and basic characterisation, locating the text in terms of place and time) than upper-grade students (specific events in the plot, character analysis from different perspectives, localisation of the text by making extra-textual connections).

The conclusion is that the choice of the methods and approaches depends on the students' age (except for pair work). Group work is increasingly being used, starting from the 3rd to 5th grades, then its use decreases unexpectedly in the 6th grade, and reaches its peak in grade 7. The fact that group work is rarely used (8th grade) or not commonly used (9th grade) in the upper grades is quite surprising, bearing in mind the increased preparedness of the students to actively participate in the process of collaboration and cooperation in terms of their increased skills for managing information and increased responsibility for accomplishing the learning objectives. Pair work is the least used activity in the classroom in all grades. Similarly, the biggest difference in using social activities in the classroom is observed in the grades 6-9, and in the lower grades (3-5). In grades 3-5, whole-class work is the most frequent method, followed by group work and individual work, while pair-work is rarely practiced. In the 6th grade, teachers use whole-class activities most of the time, followed by individual and group work. Pair work is rarely used. In the 7th grade, the whole-class work and group work are the most exploited social types of work, while individual and pair work are used least. The differences between the grades are quite evident in the grades 6-9, where considerable discrepancies were identified.

The results of the research will help scholars to get a deeper insight into the lessons of the prose text analysis in primary schools in FYROM in terms of teaching methods and approaches that are employed for the purpose of creating the age-appropriate classroom atmosphere. It will also contribute to the process of teachers' reflections about the methods and approaches that they use to improve the quality of teaching while bearing in mind the contemporary trend of interactive classrooms in which the students are responsible for their own learning.

Key words: teaching methods, literary text analysis, teaching approaches, primary education.

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