COMPARISON OF THE PRESENTATION OF HERITAGE TOPICS IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Abstract

History as a school subject relates to cultural heritage in a specific way because the remnants of tangible and intangible culture are, in fact, historical sources. As historical sources, they can be used to analyse and practice historical skills. This paper compares the position of heritage in the old curriculum and the new curriculum and shows how these differences are presented in history textbooks for primary school.

Keywords: cultural heritage, History curriculum, History textbooks
Introduction

Cifrić (2014: 11) encompasses the width of the definition of heritage as the totality of natural and created cultural material and spiritual goods in a certain area that a community (society) inherits and disposes of. In many legal acts, heritage is often approached from the aspect of identity, in which the survival of the national cultural heritage or nation is preserved in an interrelation with the preservation of cultural heritage. With the original foundations of the Constitution, the Republic of Croatia clearly emphasised the importance of the historical, social and cultural past of the peoples who lived and still live in the area of modern Croatia. Article 52 of the Constitution states that “real estate and things of special cultural, historical, economic and ecological significance, which are determined by law to be of interest to the Republic of Croatia, have its special protection.” This legislative decision on the protection of cultural heritage is implemented by the executive through its ministries. In accordance with the Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Culture and Media maintains a public book of cultural goods. The Register of Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Croatia is available via the Internet, and in mid-September 2021, 6358 (immovable and intangible) goods were entered into it. Interested users can find out basic information, legal status, location and other information about each cultural property. A special role in the long-term maintenance of cultural heritage is played by the Ministry of Science and Education, which participates in heritage research with its programmes but, more importantly, in the upbringing and education of new generations. In the National Framework Curriculum (2011: 22), in the section on socio-cultural and educational values, it is defined that “a person should become a citizen of the world while preserving their national identity, culture, social, moral and spiritual heritage.” From this, one of the educational goals is defined: “to develop students’ awareness of preserving the material and spiritual historical and cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia and national identity.” (Ibid., 2011: 23) The same wording was retained in the National Curriculum Framework, which was on the public discussion in 2017. The framework has not been officially adopted since then.

In the school year 2021/2022, the last part of the new educational reform in the Republic of Croatia is being completed. The ambitious ideas of the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology adopted by the Croatian Parliament in 2014 have over time been mainly reduced to the fields of primary and secondary education, to design the subject and interdisciplinary curricula for primary and
secondary schools. With the publication of the first Croatian curricula in the spring of 2019, the School for Life project came to life. Starting in 2018, the experimental introduction of the curriculum in some schools occurred, and the Ministry of Science and Education has issued public calls for the development of new textbooks and other educational materials. Public invitations define guidelines according to which publishers must adhere to the Law on Textbooks and Other Educational Materials for Primary and Secondary Schools (2018) when designing textbooks and harmonising them with the Ordinance on the textbook standard and members of expert commissions for evaluation of textbooks and other educational materials (2019). The Law on Textbooks and Other Educational Materials for Primary and Secondary School (2018) defines a textbook as “compulsory educational material in all subjects, except for subjects with a predominantly educational component, which serves as a comprehensive source for achieving all educational outcomes determined by the subject curriculum as well as expectations of interdisciplinary topics for a particular class and subject.” Bežen (2008: 289) includes textbooks with the teacher as the primary sources of knowledge.

For the first time, textbooks for primary schools could be changed regarding the content and didactics since the last curricular reform in 2006. This was seen in the scientific and professional community but also in public as an opportunity for significant change. The public, as Stradling (2003: 257) writes, perceives History “as a public good”, and therefore messages are often sent from various speakers about the need to include different contents in the curriculum and/or textbooks. Curriculum analysis of History, scientific and professional articles on didactics and History teaching methods are not common in domestic periodicals. Some of the papers published most often cover only the area of History politics, while other aspects are neglected. The situation is similar in the institutional part of permanent teacher training at the county expert councils of History teachers or the national level. The first national symposium on History teaching, being held since 2015, in early September 2021 in the duration of three days, was devoted mainly to content. This can be seen in the emphasis of the evaluations of about 270 participants who, among other things, pointed out that the “lecturers presented very interesting examples from practice and thus gave us ideas for work” or much content that can be applied in practice, topicality and interdisciplinary approach. (Education Agency, 2021) The curriculum topic was directly mentioned in only a few sentences in the introductory speech of the symposium organiser. Some research of History textbooks and/or curricula
has been noticed only among students’ diploma theses, but most often without publication in periodicals. The problem of lacking works on textbooks is not recent, as this is also confirmed by Poljak (1980: 21).

**Framework**

The former primary school curriculum (2006) explicitly mentions cultural heritage in only five places. The goals and tasks of upbringing and education in primary school state that upbringing and education create people with “a deep sense of preserving national and cultural heritage, and moreover respect for the values of other cultures and peoples.” This is further emphasised in the History subject curriculum as a task by which students develop an interest in history and the preservation of cultural heritage. Only the possibility of shaping elective topics related to the monumental heritage of the homeland is mentioned, and among the 5th-grade contents, it is mentioned that students will value the cultural heritage of the Greeks and Romans.

The History subject curriculum for primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia (2019) more clearly emphasises the importance of heritage in education. Thus, the purpose and description of the subject state: “Learning about their own nation, state, society, cultural and historical heritage, as well as other nations, cultures and societies in the past and present, students acquire essential knowledge and develop skills that enable understanding of their own identity and the identity of others.” In the educational goals of learning and teaching History, it is stated that the student understands the importance of preserving the native, national and world culture and historical and spiritual heritage. Educational outcomes and contents of the subject curriculum are divided into domains where cultural heritage is most present in the domain of philosophical-religious-cultural area. Rendić Miočević (2005: 79) wrote about these five domains in exactly the same way as five areas of human activity. A special feature of the school subject History is that the past is studied by analysing historical sources, which are especially emphasised in the technical concept of Working with historical sources: “Learning about sources, the student learns about the importance as well as the role of cultural and historical heritage and about the institutions that preserve such heritage.” (Ibid., 2005: 79) For primary school, cultural heritage is not being particularly emphasised in any topic, while in the fourth grade of secondary school, the topic of History and culture of memory in the 20th and 21st centuries is mandatory. Prehistoric and ancient
heritage was highlighted in the Croatian historical area (for the 5th grade) and Industrial heritage in my homeland (for the 8th grade) as recommended elective topics. In the section on the environment, the curriculum recommends that History classes be held “in heritage institutions (museums, archives, galleries, libraries, etc.), at various archaeological and other sites as part of fieldwork, school trips and excursions”. (Ministry of Science and Education, 2019a)

The textbook is prepared according to the rules of the competent law in compliance with the Ordinance on the textbook standards and members of expert committees for the evaluation of textbooks and other educational materials (2019) and following the subject curriculum. This includes the realisation of the educational outcomes of the subject History, which are distributed in each grade of primary school over 16 compulsory and 2 elective topics. Educational expectations of cross-curricular topics are also taken into account. All these factors affect the editorial-authorial concept of the textbook. This concept is emphatically shaped and adapted to the market’s requirements, which in this case does not imply students but teachers who choose these textbooks for their students. When choosing, teachers mostly choose a textbook whose contents are already well known, whose teaching has already been tried and does not require a significant adaptation to the new one. In accordance with the Ordinance, the textbook is approved by the expert committee of the Ministry of Science and Education. After that, it is included in the Catalog of approved textbooks for a specific school year. Research by Munjiza, Peko and Dubovicki (2016) showed that curricula, school textbooks and other school materials are a source of student overload. All the reforms of the History curriculum, as well as the design of the first subject curriculum, did not solve the problem of factual overload, but new contents were continuously added. An additional factor in the inclusion of certain materials in textbooks relates to their commerciality, i.e., when choosing image sources in textbooks, it is necessary to take care of copyright. Therefore, the same illustrations may appear in several textbooks or not at all for some phenomena because they are commercially unavailable.

**Methodology**

The research aims to determine the quantitative and qualitative presence of concepts related to Croatian cultural heritage in the last series of textbooks according to the old curriculum and comparative analysis to determine changes in textbooks according to the new subject curriculum.
For the purposes of this comparative analysis, an instrument for textbook content analysis was developed. The analysis determined the occurrence of concepts related to Croatian cultural heritage. Data on occurrence in the main text, in the form of a written or pictorial source, are separated. Since the phenomenon itself does not provide a good quality overview of the use of such terms, the analysis is supplemented by an overview of the didactic equipment of these phenomena - description of the term, questions related to the term, the term prominence (whether the term is further emphasised, e.g. typed in bold).

The unit of analysis in this research is the textbook as the only legally prescribed compulsory teaching tool. History textbooks in the past and current selection are published by Alfa, Alka script, Meridijani, Profil Klett and Školska knjiga. Textbooks whose series can be followed in both selections have been selected for analysis. This excluded Alka script and Meridijani textbooks that did not release a series that can be followed in both selections. The old selection includes the last series of History textbooks developed according to the old curriculum. The new selection refers to the first series of textbooks developed according to the subject curriculum.

The following history textbook editions from 5th to 8th grade of primary school are included in the analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Name of the old series</th>
<th>Name of the new series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfa</td>
<td>History (5 – 8)</td>
<td>History (5 – 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profil Klett</td>
<td>Vremeplov (5 – 8)</td>
<td>Vremeplov (5 – 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Školska knjiga</td>
<td>Tragom prošlosti (5 – 8)</td>
<td>Klio (5 – 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. A total of 24 textbooks were analysed - 8 from each publisher, i.e. 12 from the old and 12 from the new selection.

Materials within the thematic sections are included in the analysis - with the exception of announcement duplicates, summaries at the end of units or topics, historical maps and selected project tasks. Also, phenomena are not included; for example, when explaining a certain historical-cultural period, only authors are listed without citing the work, or if only the locations where an example is located are listed.

The analysis of didactic equipment does not include questions that do not directly relate to the term, written or pictorial source (e.g., tasks that require additional research on a topic). In describing different types of teaching sources
(Anderson, L. W. et al. 2014: 132), Koren argued that “sources only become relevant to teaching when they have a clear purpose related to the task; more precisely, their role as teaching media is determined by their role in the learning process.” Stradling (2003), in the chapter dedicated to the evaluation of the History textbook, asks a number of questions for analysis, among which:

“In what relation to the text are the illustrations, photographs, maps and diagrams? Do they clarify the statements in the text and give examples for them? (...) Or is their main function of “breaking” the text to make a particular page look more interesting?” (Ibid., 2003: 260)

For example, with the portrait of Bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovec (Povijest 7, 2020: 96), the task was set: “Select all the objects in the picture that show the signs of episcopal honour.” (Ibid., 2020: 96) On the next page, next to the portrait of Ljudevit Gaj, the task was set: “To make a short, structured paper (composition) about Ljudevit Gaj and his activity.” (Ibid., 2020: 97) The first task refers to the material presented in the textbook, while in the second example, the portrait is used only as an illustration to ask a question.

The analysis includes all terms related to Croatian cultural heritage, which includes tangible and intangible heritage in the modern Republic of Croatia, as well as works by authors originating from Croatia (for example, the miniature by Julius Klović Christ hands over the keys to St. Peter kept in the Louvre Museum in Paris).

In the analysis of the occurrence of image sources, the methodology used for the fifth-, sixth- and seventh-grade textbooks differs from the methodology used in the eighth-grade textbooks. Image sources for the purposes of this analysis are included in the occurrence in the case of artistic paintings, graphics and/or cultural heritage photographs. Also included are old photographs belonging to the beginnings of photography ending with the end of the new century (1918).
Results

The analysis results are presented in graphs 1 to 12 and Table 2.

**Graph 1.** Occurrence of terms by type in 5th-grade textbooks with an indication of a change in the new edition.

In all editions, regardless of the publisher or year of publication, Croatian cultural heritage most often appears in the form of pictorial sources. There has been an increase in the presence of cultural heritage in new editions, also in favour of pictorial sources.
Almost all terms related to Croatian cultural heritage have at least a minimal description. The new edition of the Alfa saw a 12% drop in the description percentage. The same Alfa edition also records the largest increase in question
equipment by 47%. The new edition significantly reduced the number of prominent terms (-31%), but at the same time, the number of questions was reduced by 15%.

**Graph 4.** Occurrence of terms by type in 6th-grade textbooks with an indication of a change in the new edition.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of occurrences of terms related to Croatian cultural heritage in the new edition of Profil Klett (-32%), while this number is growing among other publishers. Occurrence is still largely dominated by image sources.
Graph 5. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 6th-grade textbooks.

There is a decrease in the number of prominent terms in all new editions. In the Profil Klett new edition, a decrease in the number of questions was recorded, while the largest increase in the number of questions was recorded in the new edition of Alfa.

Graph 6. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 6th-grade textbooks expressed in percentages with an indication of a change in the new edition.
With the increase in the total number of terms, the new edition of Alfa records a 51% increase in the number of questions. The new edition of Profil Klett records a significant decline in the total number of terms with a 19% reduction in the appearance of questions. The new edition of Školska knjiga records an increase in the overall occurrence of terms, with no change in the percentage of occurrence of questions. The new editions of Alfa and Školska knjiga record a significant decline in prominent terms, while that number in both editions of Profil Klett remained low.

**Graph 7.** Occurrence of terms by type in 7th-grade textbooks with an indication of a change in the new edition.

A significant decrease in incidence in the new editions was recorded in Alfa and Školska knjiga, while in the new edition of Profil Klett, an increase of 57% was recorded. Image sources are the dominant source of occurrence.
Graph 8. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 7th-grade textbooks.

Graph 9. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 7th-grade textbooks expressed in percentages with an indication of a change in the new edition.

The textbooks equipped with questions increase in the new editions of Alfa by 53% and in Školska knjiga by 15%. With the new edition of Profil Klett, the incidence dropped by 39%. In the new editions of Profil Klett and Školska knjiga, the number of prominent occurrences increased by 5 and 8%, respectively.
Croatian cultural heritage is not mentioned in any written source. In the new editions, there is no direct appearance in the main text of the textbook. The incidence in the form of an image source in the new editions of Alfa was reduced by 71% and by 50% in the Školska knjiga. In the new edition of Profil Klett, an increase in the incidence of 16% was recorded.
Graph 11. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 8th-grade textbooks.

Graph 12. Occurrence of terms by didactic equipment in 8th-grade textbooks expressed in percentages with an indication of a change in the new edition.

The old edition of Alfa did not contain questions about the appearance of Croatian cultural heritage, and the new edition recorded an increase of 29%. There was also a 15% increase in questions in the new edition of Školska knjiga. In the new edition of Profil Klett, the incidence of questions decreased by 29%.
During the analysis of the results, data on the appearance of Croatian cultural heritage, which appears in old and new editions of all publishers, were extracted. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Heritage mentioned in all editions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Heritage mentioned</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Diocletian’s Palace, Husnjak’s Hill, Pula Arena, Salona, Vucedol Dove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>HNK (Croatian national theatre) building in Zagreb, poem Croatian Homeland, Croatian Parliament in 1848 (painting by D. Weingartner), JAZU (Academy) building, Josip Jelačić (in various graphic forms), A brief basis of Croatian-Slavic spelling by Ljudevit Gaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis results show that the terms related to Croatian cultural heritage are represented in the history textbooks for a primary school in large numbers. This incidence also increased in 7 of the 12 new editions analysed.

During the research, it was noticed that the same photo, depending on the need of the topic or content, can appear twice with different captions. Such examples are visible in the edition Klio 6 (2020), where, for example, the photograph on page 72 was signed as a Fragment of the altar partition from Ržinice. The full text read: “Pray for duke Trpimir”, while on page 112, it was signed as Trpimir’s inscription. In the first example, a photograph of a stone inscription serves as a contribution to the theme of Croatia in the early Middle Ages, while in the second example, it illustrates the theme of Art from Pre-Romanesque to Gothic. Or in the edition Klio 5 (2019), where the same photograph of the Temple of Augustus in Pula was used as a corroboration of the Roman residence in today’s Croatian territory (p. 209) and later as part of the Roman architectural heritage (p. 213). It is similar to the photograph of Višeslav’s baptistry, which was first shown independently only with a signature and later in an expanded form as a
photograph with a longer description and questions for analysis. At the same time, Višeslav’s baptistery serves as proof of the baptism of Croats without discussing the historiographically questionable dating of the archaeological find itself.

In the topics on the development of art and construction, there are enumerations of locations, and locations with the findings of objects in the main text are frequent. Thus, for example, when mentioning Baroque urbanism, Bjelovar, Koprivnica, Virovitica, Osijek and Tvrda in Slavonski Brod, Pula, Šibenik and Hvar are mentioned. The same topic also mentions church architecture in Dubrovnik, Rijeka, Rovinj, Sisak, Belec, Samobor and Zagreb, as well as secular architecture in Gornja Bistra, Miljana and the castles of Hrvatsko Zagorje. (Klio 6, 2020: 186)

Although this was not part of this analysis, differences were observed in the editorial-authorial concept of the display, i.e. the use of photographs. They are in most editions located marginally on the page and are smaller in format. In this way, it is further emphasised that they are a less important part of the textbook and do not necessarily need attention. This is corroborated by the fact that there is a ratio of signature photos to those that also have questions. An example is, let us say, History 7 (Alfa, 2014), where on page 171, there are a total of 8 illustrations with their signatures and one passage of text. Six paintings by famous Croatian painters are shown (Slava Raškaj, Oton Iveković, Menci Clement Crnčić, Vlaho Bukovac, Adolf Waldinger, Celestin Medović). Along with the author’s name, biographical data on the year of birth and death and the name of the displayed image are given. Three paintings in two rows are pretty small, so they cannot be used to analyse the characteristics of a particular artistic style. There are no tasks or questions, and due to the small size, only a fundamental analysis (scene, colours, etc.) can be performed.

A similar example is the misuse of photographs in History 6 (Alfa, 2020) on page 180, showing Radovan’s portal and page 181 Buvina’s Gate. The photograph of Buvina’s gates occupies most of the page (more than a third), and the motif is shown perpendicular to the viewer so that the details of the relief can be seen. Radovan’s portal is photographed sideways, and the photograph occupies less than a sixth of a page, so the motifs are not visible. Along with Radovan’s portal, the task is: Explore and find what scenes are shown on Radovan’s portal. Compare them to the scenes from Buvina’s Gate. Notice what their similarities are and what their differences are. For comparison, in Vremeplov 6 (Profil Klett, 2015), it is photographed perpendicular to the portal, and the photograph is the
size of a quarter of a page. It is a better solution for possible analysis, but it is still poorly visible.

**Conclusion**

Petrungaro (2009: 30) wrote that reading a History textbook of a country is “a way of looking at its history, more precisely its self-presentation through time.” Croatian cultural heritage in the History textbooks for primary school is well represented in various proportions, most often in topics specifically dedicated to reviewing the development of culture and art. It is mainly used in the form of pictorial historical sources, mostly of an illustrative nature, in order to visualise (or more vividly depict) a particular historical event or period. In topics not related to culture, it appears only as an illustration.

In public and even in the professional public, the need for more education about cultural heritage is often emphasised. In such a context, there is rarely any mention of a continuous increase in the facts presented to primary school students and how this affects their workload. Since the Law on Textbooks and Other Educational Materials for Primary and Secondary School (2018) defines that *the content and structure of textbooks must enable students to learn independently and acquire different levels and types*, it is justified to question the purpose of using a large number of illustrations without didactic equipment in the form of questions or tasks. Teaching involves the cooperation of teachers and students so that the teacher can use the textbook material in various ways. However, again due to the amount of material, the question arises as to how many such materials remain used or unused in the teaching process itself. That impression is further enhanced by looking at the rare occurrences in all editions. Additional research is needed to analyse the quality of the tasks and questions asked to students, as well as the functionality of the pictorial sources of the heritage itself.

The difference in the ratio of occurrences with the basic description and the occurrences equipped with didactic equipment for students is large, which indicates a possible problem of inadequate or unnecessary use. The transition to the new curriculum generally increases the number of occurrences in 5th and 6th grades while decreasing in 7th and 8th grades.

A number of new questions open up due to textbook overload by various materials, the retention on the reproduction of factual knowledge to the success of reform ideas that are translated into teaching materials. Additional research is
needed on how to use textbooks and other educational content and the impact of using these materials with modern teaching methods. Such research and papers are chronically lacking in Croatian scientific and professional periodicals and literature.

References


**Analysed textbooks**


USPOREDBA PREZENTACIJE BAŠTINSKIH TEMA U UDŽBENICIMA POVIJESTI ZA OSNOVNU ŠKOLU

Sažetak

Povijest kao školski predmet na specifičan se način odnosi prema kulturnoj baštini jer su ostatci materijalne i nematerijalne kulture zapravo povijesni izvori. Kao povijesni izvori mogu se koristiti za analizu i vježbu povjesničarskih vještina. U radu se uspoređuje položaj baštine u starome nastavnom planu i novome kurikulumu te se prikazuje na koji se način ove razlike prezentiraju u udžbenicima Povijesti za osnovnu školu.

Ključne riječi: kulturna baština, kurikulum Povijesti, udžbenici Povijesti