

ORAL LITERATURE IN CROATIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL READERS IN SENIOR GRADES

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Summary – This paper presents the research on the status of Croatian oral literature in the readers of our primary school senior grades, on two basic levels – the level of ‘pure’ folk texts, and the level of written works of literature which establish specific interference processes with spoken literature. While dealing with folk literature texts we have established their quantity, genre and dialect classification. In written works of literature with obvious interference processes, apart from quantity, we have tried to establish the fields in which they overlap and, more importantly, what their function is. The guideline was a general classification which differentiates among six most frequent interference functions. Among all the conclusions drawn from the research, the most prominent one was the insight into the insufficient dispersion of the above mentioned functions in our readers. This insufficiency is particularly noticeable in the relatively small amount of texts which, because of the interference of oral and written poetic forms achieve ludism and the so-called new fairy-tale quality, the two receptive functions which are at the same time the most attractive ones as well.

Key words: oral and written literature, interference processes, readers, interference functions

INTRODUCTION – ORAL AND WRITTEN LITERATURE RELATIONSHIP

Oral literature of any nation is a very complex and multifaceted phenomenon which is not easy to delve into and describe without ambiguity. Its functions are multiple, its manifestations diverse and over the decades it has earned the status of the object worthy of scientific research. As such, it has encountered various kinds of reception, interpretation, and, especially, various methods of evaluation.

The main particularity of oral literature when compared to its written counterpart is in the manner of its centuries long functioning preserved by word of mouth, which has simultaneously marked its mode of existence, while the written

form of oral literature has been limited to the final, much shorter stage of its development and existence. The spell of oral literature lies in the result of its unwritten, dynamic nature – the varieties of its folk forms which only confirm “the wealth of their interchangeability which cannot be captured, with the basic structure stability” (Bošković-Stulli, 1975, p 264).

The forms of oral literature pose a perpetually important question in the field of literary theory, sociology and ethnology – the relationship of the individual and collective. In the gap between these two notions they become a model permeated by tradition and history of the community and individual creativity. Although an individual is at the same time a collective representative and a conveyor of collective consciousness dating from pre-historic times, he is also an important agent in the specific individual act, which, abstractly speaking, is realized as a creative act. It is precisely this creative core of every speech act that provides the multitude of varieties of oral themes and forms, which again is the result of their spoken, dynamic, more fluid nature. Therefore, it is not surprising that by writing down oral literature and through a more encompassing and faster development of written literature, the destiny of the former becomes more and more interesting and vaguer, and its forms more diverse and hybrid. The interference process of oral and written literature becomes inevitable for the both, so we are talking about two sides of the same coin.¹ The transformation process does not encompass only oral, but also written literature, even to a greater extent.

From the point of view of correlation poetics (Pavletić, 2007), with which the contemporary literary science is becoming more and more concerned, the relationship between these two literary categories is becoming clearer. They interfere frequently as a text and a subtext, each assuming one of these roles depending on the influences. An especially interesting process of interference is the one moving from oral towards written literature, which is nowadays predominant, more complex, more diverse, and more attractive to the readers. That process has rarely been noticed, even less systematically studied and interpreted, probably due to its seemingly hidden quality and fine integration into the discourse of the dominant literary domain. Due to this unique relationship, but also to the lack of research carried out on them, these diverse and subtle interference processes are becoming the main object of our scientific interest.

Oral and written literature, as well as the vast fields of various language structures, is potentially open to one another. Written literature has a pronounced tendency towards finding its incentives in oral literature, incorporating it in an original way into its written discourse. The impulses of oral provenance function in its written counterpart in different ways, their implicit receptive impact has a different level of intensity, just as there are different functions which we can read

¹ Several researchers have talked about this, among them Maja Bošković-Stulli in *Oral Literature as the Art of Words (Usmena književnost kao umjetnost riječi)*, Stjepan Hranjec in his manuscript of the text *Functions of interference (Funkcije interferencije)* and Josip Kekez in many of his texts.

in this multifaceted discourse. Interference processes between these two poetic forms can have diverse features and be manifested in different ways. The most important task is to explain the causes and consequences of their overlapping and common features – motives, themes, ideas, language, style, evaluation, structure and aesthetics – in order to reconstruct and explain interference spheres completely. Potential dislikes, rejections and negative reactions to the poetic features of oral literature should not be neglected, ‘‘since they have also frequently been fruitful and the analysis of these states can provide explanations for some phenomena’’ (Kekez, 1988, p 8).

In his text *The Functions of Interference*² (*Funkcije interferencije*) Stjepan Hranjec isolates and analyses the functions which motivated interpolation of an oral text (in its written form) into a children’s literature text, determining the most frequent functions such as: archaic function, regionalisation, patriotic function, new fairy-tale quality (in which oral fairy-tale structure prevails), moral function and ludistic function. This classification has been the guideline of this research, the basic aim of which is the analysis of the status of oral literature (the presence of both poetic forms; the presence of the texts in which interference processes are manifested; the basic nature of these texts, e.g. interference functions; the receptive justification) in Croatian readers used in the primary school senior grades.

ORAL LITERATURE IN THE READERS USED IN OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL SENIOR GRADES -ANALYSIS

The research encompassed four series of Croatian readers used in the senior grades of primary schools (5th – 8th grade), by three different publishers:

- *Hrvatska čitanka (Croatian Reader)* (for the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades of primary school); the authors are Ante Bežen and Olga Jambrec, Naklada Ljevak, Zagreb, 2001, 2003, 2003 and 2000
- *Dveri riječi (The Castles of Words) 5, 6, 7, 8*; the authors are Nada Babić, Danka Golem, Dona Jelčić and Ivan Đurić (only for the 8th grade), Profil, Zagreb, 2006, 2004, 2004 and 2005
- *Krila riječi (The Wings of Words) 5, 6, 7, 8*; a group of authors, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2006, 2007, 2007 and 2007
- *Žubor riječi 5 (The Murmur of Words 5), Sjetva riječi 6 (The Harvest of words 6), Žetva riječi 7 (The Harvest of words 7), Darovi riječi 8 (The Gifts of Words 8)*; authors Zvonimir Diklić and Joža Skok, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2007.

Altogether, there are sixteen Croatian readers for primary school senior grades, all of which have been created to suit the new curriculum of Croatian National Educational Standard (CNES), and have been approved as teaching ma-

² The text was written in the beginning of 2008, and is still a manuscript.

terials in our schools. Each single reader has been analysed during the research, but each series has been analysed as a whole. All the remarks have been noted down and conclusions have been drawn for each reader, the series of readers, and in general as well. Since it would be too detailed for this purpose to analyse each of these sixteen readers, we have decided to provide a detailed analysis of one reader from each series³ and to present our conclusions for each series, but the general ones as well, which we drew at the end of the research. In each instance the object of research was double – on the one hand, it regarded the text which belongs to ‘pure’ oral literature, and, on the other hand, it regarded the texts which belong to written literature, but in which we can notice a certain overlap between the two poetic forms, oral and written, on any level, in any form. We have established the number of texts of oral (folk) literature and to what extent they are represented when considering the total amount of the texts in a reader; what their genre is, and which dialect they were written in. In the texts of written literature in which we had detected interference processes we also tried to establish their representation in the total amount of texts, but, most importantly, we tried to identify what the intertextual overlapping areas consist of, and what their function is. For both types of texts, since they are found in primary school readers, the basic point of view encompassed the receptive criterion, e.g. the evaluation of their appropriateness for the achievement of educational, functional, communicative and all other aims concerning a young recipient.

Bežen – Jambrec: Hrvatska čitanka za V. razred
(Croatian Reader for the 5th grade)

The texts of oral literature include: *Ero s onoga svijeta* (*Ero from the other world*, a funny folk narrative); *Ive vara dva duždeva sina* (*Ive cheats two duke's sons*, a folk epic poem); *Ostala narodna baština* (*The remaining folk heritage*, proverbs and sayings, riddles, and two anecdotes: *Dobro je kadšto i pametnu ženu poslušati*; *Dok je ljudi, bit će i magaraca*); *Marina kruna* (*The crown of Marin*, an epic folk poem) and *Paun i sokol* (*The peacock and a hawk*, a fable). When their genres are analysed, it can be seen that there is an appropriate genre variety – a folk narrative, a fable, a lyric and epic poem, rhetoric and other forms of oral literature – a proverb, a saying and a riddle. What is obvious is the fact that there is no folk play, although, since it is a younger senior 5th grade, that is not a serious disadvantage. However, when dialects are analysed in the above mentioned texts, a serious disproportion can be seen – opposite to three Štokavian texts, there is one Čakavian and no Kajkavian texts (apart from five Kajkavian proverbs, in the total of twelve).

The texts which exhibit interference processes are: A. Šenoa: *Dolazak Hrvata* (*The Arrival of the Croats*); P. Preradović: *Rodu o jeziku* (*On language*); J. Truhelka: *Baka i bašča* (*Granny and the Garden*); D. Domjanić: *Zdrava Marija*

³ Out of all four analysed series, here is a short interpretation of the 5th grade reader.

(*Hail Mary*); M. Krleža: *Stric-vujc*; P. Ljubić: *Podne (Noon)*; Z. Balog: *Brač*; I. Cukon: *Krasna zemljo, Istro mila (Oh Beautiful Country, Dear Istria)*; I. B. Mažuranić: *Šuma Striborova (Stribor's Forest)*; V. Nazor: *Pepeljuga (Cinderella)*. In the analyses of these texts, there is a variety of interference processes – various types and ways of intertextual overlapping, different levels on which the overlapping occurs, with different functions as well. In Šenoa's *The Arrival of the Croats* the interference can be found on the expression level – some of regular epithets of oral literature provenance are used (*sweet home, green vegetation, lively heart...*); motives and the manner of their syntactic form have also partly been taken from folk poems (*druga slijedi drug; tmina minu, danak sinu; cvate nada, zdravo da si; živo srce glasno kliče...*)⁴. Opposite to this, in the work of Domjanić and Krleža interference is manifested in the description of a particular ethnic mentality, by writing regional ethnic data⁵, by using motives from regional way of life (*voz, seno, zvon...*; *zornica, babe, veter, zajec, klobasi i kisela repa...*) and by using the Kajkavian dialect. An interesting example is Balog's poem *Brač* in which collision is seen only on the linguistic level (Čakavisms), while the motives, themes and style imply a typical modern, ludistic children's poetry. In each examined text we tried to establish the function of the noticeable interferences between oral incentives and written models, although it is not always easy to determine simply, especially because there are texts in which these functions are multi-faceted. Sometimes these functions can even hardly be differentiated. If we take Hranjec's classification of six different functions of interference as the guideline, it will lead us to a conclusion that in the reader which is being examined all the functions are evident, except the meaning function. As far as representation is concerned, it can be noticed that the following two functions occur most frequently: regionalisation, found in four examined texts, and patriotic function, found in three texts. The remaining functions – ludistic, archaic and fairy-tale quality were each present in only one text.

Hrvatska čitanka Series (5th-8th grade) (Croatian Reader) – conclusions:

1) All four readers contain, apart from other texts, texts which belong to oral literature, but also the texts of written literature (children's or 'adult') in which interference processes with oral literature tradition can be detected.

2) All readers contain more texts in which interference is detected than 'pure' folk texts, but there is an evident decrease in the number of the former as the readers move to higher senior grades (there are five teaching topics dealing with Croatian oral literature in the 5th and 6th grades, while in the 7th and 8th there are only two).

⁴ In this place and later in the text some Croatian phrases have not been translated into English since their English equivalents are not relevant for the reader; (translator's note)

⁵ The concept was used by Stjepan Hranjec in *Functions of Interference*, writing about Truhelka's *Zlatnim dancim*

3) The number of texts with interference is more or less equal from the 5th to 8th grade.

4) The readers contain texts in all three Croatian dialects, but disproportionately. If we analyse the achievements of folk literature represented in these readers, dialects are distributed as follows: 5th grade: Štokavian texts -3, Čakavian -1, Kajkavian - 0⁶; 6th grade: Štokavian texts - 4, Čakavian - 1, Kajkavian - 0; 7th grade: Čakavian texts - 1 and Kajkavian -1, Štokavian - 0; 8th grade: Štokavian texts - 2, Čakavian - 0, Kajkavian - 0.

Altogether in the four readers: Štokavian texts - 9, Čakavian - 3, Kajkavian - 1.

In the texts which exhibit the influence of folk literature all three dialects are represented. However, Štokavian dialect is predominant, while two others are not so prominent (e.g. in the 7th grade reader there is no text in Kajkavian dialect).

5) Interference processes are very diverse, but if only their functions are examined, it is obvious that there is a domination of texts with regional function, while patriotic and archaic functions are not so prominent. The remaining functions - ludistic, fairy-tale quality, meaning function - are not present in these readers.

Babić – Golem – Jelčić: *Dveri riječi 5 (The Word Castles 5)*

This reader encompasses the following oral literature texts: *Rukovet pameti i naramak smijeha* (proverbs, riddles, anecdotes); *Mladi glazbari* (chant); *Od zlata jabuka* (extracts from ten different folk lyric poems - a reapers' poem, a love poem, a Slavonian humorous-ribald folk poem, a ritual/ceremonial poem, a Christmas poem, a poem sung in Herzegovina (*ganga*), a historical poem, a poem about rain-making customs, a carol). The criterion indicated in the choice of these texts is the variety of literary forms (an oral lyric poem, a proverb, a riddle, an anecdote, a chant), but their regional and dialect classification is not equally represented - Štokavian dialect prevails; there are four Čakavian and only two Kajkavian texts.

The texts which exhibit interference processes are: V. Kos: *Ljubav (Love)*; S. Pilić: *Zežancije, smijancije, ludancije (Teasing, Laughing, Clowning)*; M. S. Mađer: *Djedovo slovo (Grandpa's words)*; I. I. Ramljak: *Srijedom u Imotskom (On Wednesdays in Imotski)*; M. D. Dravski: *Starinske šege (Old mockings)*; P. Ljubić: *Naši škoji (Our Islands)*; A. G. Matoš: *Na ladanju (In the Country)*; V. Nazor: *Orač Dragonja (The Plowman Dragonja)*; I. B. Mažuranić: *Ribar Palunko i njegova žena (Fisherman Palunko and his Wife)*. These texts encompass diverse themes, language, genres, as well as various ways of poetic relationships with oral

⁶ Apart from 5 proverbs

literature. An example is a poem *Starinske šege* in which Dolenc Dravski creates a regional and ethnic mentality function permeating the written discourse with oral elements on all levels – by using the Kajkavian dialect from the Podravina region, by giving picturesque descriptions of particularities of common people's lives (everyday life, mentality, work...) and by creating the specific atmosphere of the region. It is interesting to note that a humorous tone fits into this scheme perfectly as a relevant frame of reference within a particular world view, everyday situations, as the guideline of life optimism by which he efficiently creates a ludistic function in the end of the text (*Bili bi bogme stigel/ da se kesno nisi digel*). This is also the result of the overlap of two poetics which is extremely important for young student readers and which is actually so rarely found in our readers. Nazor creates his text *Orač Dragonja* on the foundations of folk legend using his personal interpretation. The relationship with oral models is indicated in the subtitle *Kako su nastale Dragonja, Mirna i Fojba u Istri* (*How Dragonja, Mirna and Fojba in Istria were created*), by which he creates a new fairy-like quality of the text. In this reader, the texts which exhibit interference also exhibit a greater regional function. All other functions are also present, but to a lesser degree. Dialects are more or less equally represented.

The *Dveri riječi* (The Word Castles) Series – conclusions:

1) Among other texts, all four readers contain the texts which belong to oral literature, as well as written literature, and in which we can detect the processes of interference with oral literature tradition.

2) All the readers contain more texts in which interference can be detected than 'pure' folk texts. However, unlike the previously analysed series of readers in which we have detected a gradual decrease in the number of folk texts as we progress from the 5th to the 8th grade, here we have a different tendency. The largest number of 'pure' folk texts is found in the 8th grade reader, a somewhat smaller number in the 5th, but in the 6th and 7th grades the number is smallest – only two teaching units per grade.

3) The number of texts exhibiting interference is mostly equally distributed among the readers from the 5th to 8th grade, although it is slightly smaller in the 5th grade (but the scope of this reader is also smaller than the scope of the readers in higher grades).

4) The readers contain texts in all three Croatian dialects, but they are also not equally distributed. If we analyse the texts of folk literature, dialects are distributed as follows: the 5th grade – out of 10 extracts of folk lyric poems there are 5 Štokavian, 3 Čakavian, 2 Kajkavian poems. The chant is Čakavian, while the proportion cannot be exactly determined in very short literary forms because most of them are presented in the standard Croatian language. In the 6th grade, both oral forms – lyric poem and fairy-tale are Štokavian; in the 7th grade – 2 Čakavian po-

ems; in the 8th grade – out of 9 extracts of lyric poems 4 are Štokavian, 3 Čakavian, 2 Kajkavian; the ballad is Štokavian, as well as the epic poem, while the miracle is Čakavian. Štokavian dialect also prevails here, while Kajkavian dialect is least represented. Also, the oral forms genre is unequally represented – poetry is frequent (lyric, epic, epic-lyric), as well as the so-called short forms. The prose forms are represented only through a fairy-tale (1) and anecdote (3), while folk play is not represented at all.⁷ Within the texts which exhibit the influence of folk literature all three dialects are almost equally represented.

5) Interference processes are diverse, but if we analyse only their functions, we can also detect the domination of the texts with regional interference function. All other functions are represented to a lesser degree. Along these lines, the greatest dispersion of functions was achieved in the 8th grade reader, in which all other functions of interference of written discourse with oral literature models are represented.

Group of authors: *Krila riječi 5 (The Wings of Words 5)*

This reader encompasses the following texts of oral literature: *Svijetu se ne može ugoditi* (humorous folk short story); *Gašpar i Melko* (children's folk role-play); *Svim na zemlji* (folk Christmas carol). These texts belong to various genres. Even more, they present all three literary forms. Two of them are Štokavian and one is Kajkavian.

There are also texts which exhibit interference processes: M. S. Mađer: *Djedovo slovo*; D. Britvić: *Maslina je neobrana*; M. D. Dravski: *Starinske šege*; D. Domjanić: *Božić*; I. B. Mažuranić: *Prestadoše čari u šumi Striborovoj*; F. H. Kiš: *U Buzeštini*; V. Parun: *Bajka*; D. Miloš: *Nepoznata priča (Čarobni štapić)*; Z. Balog: *Brač*; T. P. Marović: *Mrkli mrak Nepomak*.

By using a gentle regional Kajkavian dialect and by relying upon folk phrases and expressions (*vse pute; vse kute; smeh i popevka; v sela i grade...*), Domjanić creates an idyllic winter portrait of the region, which is even more than that. As well as a landscape portrait, it is also a presentation of the people's mentality in this region, their tradition and lifestyle – basically, it is the entire life philosophy of the inhabitants of the Hrvatsko Zagorje region, as well as the philosophy of Croatian people in general (*i spunil z veseljem / vse kute, / da smeh i popevka zvoni, / da brigah i tugah ni...*). On the other hand, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, turning towards the oral literature discourse, creates an archaic text through various procedures on different levels – characters from folk legends and mythology, structure and dynamic sentence rhythm (*Malo šute Domaći, malo tepu snijeg s opančića i ne znaju baki savjeta*), using specific verb forms (all past tenses verb

⁷ Except the introductory, octosyllabic verse extract from the miracle The Passion of St Margarita which, due to its verse form and the fact that it is literally a song sung by Margarita, a shepherdess, belongs to poetic genre, rather than a play.

forms), using standard numbers in oral communication (...*u njem bilo sedam zlatnih dvorova i osmo selo*) and somewhat gnomic sentences (...*volim ostati u svojoj nesreći a znati da imam sina, negoli da mi dadeš sve blago i sve dobro ovoga svijeta a da moram zaboraviti sina*).

The *Krila riječi* (5th – 8th grade) (*The Wings of Words*)

Readers Series – conclusions:

1) Not all of these readers encompass both text types – both ‘real’ folk texts and the texts exhibiting interference with folk literature. While the latter are found in all the readers from the 5th to 8th grade, the former are not found in the 8th grade reader at all.

2) The number of folk texts does not decrease (nor increase) gradually from the 5th to 8th grade – the 5th grade curriculum plans to interpret three such teaching units, while the 6th grade plans six of them (some of them encompassing more than one text), while the 7th grade plans only 2 (the teaching unit on legends also includes a small mosaic of legends).

3) The number of interfering texts decreases gradually from the 5th to the 8th grade – it is highest in the 5th and 6th grades (11 texts), smaller in the 7th grade (7 texts) and the smallest in the 8th grade (6 texts).

4) As far as dialects are concerned, there is a balanced number of texts in all three dialects in these four readers.

5) The interference functions in the analysed texts are very different, but the regional function is the dominant one. All other functions are not so frequent, even the patriotic function which was quite frequent in some previously analysed reader series. The ludistic and moral function are extremely rare.

Diklić – Skok: *Žubor riječi 5* (*The Murmur of Words*)

The following texts of oral literature are included in this reader: *Tiček i tičica* (a folk epic poem); *Lepo naše Međimurje* (a folk lyric poem); *Ero s onoga svijeta* (a folk short story); *Pripovist o zelenom vrapcu* (a folk short story); *Kratak rep* (a folk anecdote); *Mala vila* (a folk fairy-tale). Apart from a great number of folk texts, when compared to some other readers, it is obvious that there is a significant variety of forms and dialects – the texts belong to various literary genres and equally represent all three dialects (two texts in each of the three Croatian dialects).

The texts which exhibit interference processes are: L. Paljetak: *Djetinjstvo*; F. Mažuranić: *Majka*; Z. Kampanjet: *Kad je mat zaspala*; I. B. Mažuranić: *Sunce djever i Neva Nevičica*; G. Krklec: *Proljeće u Zagorju*; L. Paljetak: *Plava ruža*; F. Galović: *Lastavice*; M. D. Dravski: *Moja Podravina*; M. S. Mađer: *Suton na rijeci Savi*; V. Zemunić: *Ivanjska noć*; I. G. Kovačić: *Rodni kraj*; P. Ljubić: *Podne*; Z.

Balog: *Brač*; S. Škrinjarić: *Čičak i Kaktus-car*; N. Zidar-Bogadi: *Sretni cvrčak*; S. Feminčić: *Magarac*; P. Kanižaj: *Stara nova priča o Crvenkapici*; Z. Balog: *Mrav u autobusu*; J. Truhelka: *Baka i bašča*; D. Gervais: *Nonić*; Lj. Car-Matutinović: *Polnoćnica*; D. Domjanić: *Božić*. What is obvious is an extremely large number of texts exhibiting interference. The distribution of interference functions is also very interesting – although texts with the regional and ethnic mentality function of interference also prevail here (11 texts), there is also a significant number with the new fairy-tale quality function (7 texts). Other functions found here are ludistic function (2 texts), moral function (1 text) and archaic function (1 text). It is interesting to mention that, no matter how large a number of texts with interferences is, none of them exhibits patriotic function as the dominant function. That is also a departure from the tendency that we have had so far. As far as dialects are concerned, there are no significant differences. We are going to give an illustrative example of Luka Paljetak, who, in *Plava ruža* (*The Blue Rose*) resorts to fairy-tale conventions – using standard fairy-tale characters with their own functions⁸ (a beautiful princess, a wise man, a young man – servant in love); with the concise plot; by presenting flat characters; using a motive of a riddle/task which needs to be solved or an obstacle which has to be overcome in order to achieve a certain goal (to find the blue rose) and by using an element of wonder (the white rose turns into the blue one). What makes this text different from the fairy tales we are accustomed to is definitely the portrayal of the young man. Instead of the conventional generosity/courage/wisdom/determination that similar fairy-tale characters with the similar function normally show, the character of the young man in this *new fairy-tale text* shows completely opposite characteristics – sorrow, self-pity, instability (*in the first inn he got drunk because of sorrow he felt for his beloved...*), and, in the end, mendacity (he picked a white rose and presented it as a blue rose). What follows is not only an unexpected denouement with respect to this portrayal of characters (the rose actually did turn into the blue rose), but also a satirical remark in the end, untypical of a classic fairy tale (but quite frequent in an anecdote): (Malicious people say that she turned blue with pain when she heard such a lie.) This kind of denouement (which, on the other hand, corresponds very well to the happy-ends of a classic fairy tale) is encouraged by the young man's great love which forced him to resort to lies (the idea is: love justifies everything, but does wonders as well) but not to acts of courage or slyness as is the case in a classic fairy tale. A completely original and innovative approach to fairy tales can be found in Kanižaj's text *Stara nova priča o Crvenkapici* (*The old new story about Little Red Riding Hood*). The basic story (the one about Little Red Riding Hood) has two frameworks – the first narrative framework consists of the remark on the departure from fairy-tale conventions (*Most fairy tales begin with the words 'Once upon a time', but our story does not start like that. Maybe be-*

⁸ In the sense that Vladimir Propp uses the term function – as functions of fairy-tale characters, that is the conventions which are constant in fairy tales and linked to the characters; they are the basic conventions of fairy tales.

cause it might happen today, and yesterday, and tomorrow). The second narrative framework consists of the reference to the grandfather who, one evening, is telling children the story of Little Red Riding Hood (*So, one day, or, better to say, one evening, a grandfather was telling children the old story about Little Red Riding Hood!*). In this sentence about the grandfather we can notice two things which point to a departure from a fairy-tale discourse which we are used to – the first one is about hesitation, or fake insecurity in narration (*better to say, on evening*) typical of some other contemporary (mostly post-modern) discourses, but not typical of the fairy-tale discourse. The second one is the fact that it is the grandfather who is telling the story (a more usual situation is the one in which a grandmother is the narrator); the story which is announced as an ‘old’ one, while what he is actually narrating is anything but an old Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale. It is obvious from the very beginning which is full of satirical tones connected with situations and problems of modern lifestyle. (*In a remote village with only three TV sets, there lived Little Red Riding Hood with her mother. Her father had gone to the city to find a job, but he found another lady instead and never came back to Little Red Riding Hood and her good mother...*) The story goes on in the same style, with another feature untypical of fairy tales – auto reference in narration (*Although there are fewer and fewer wolves in our forests and in our stories, in this story, as in the real one, a wolf will appear.*) Apart from the discourse referring to itself, this sentence is also proleptic (*a wolf will appear*), which is not really typical of fairy tales. Playing with more levels of narration and the possibility of an *open ending* (*The story does not end here, the hunter’s discussion is still going on! Continue the story yourself!*) – these are the features of modern novels or short stories, not characteristic of fairy tales. There is also an intertwining of reality / fiction levels, that is, life reality / literary reality, such as the remark on the ‘reality’ of the wolf (*And the real one, too!*); the special outcome of the story (*The story does not end here, the hunter’s discussion is still going on!*); the introduction of the wolf into the story as in a drama (*Here he is!*). Furthermore, the real shock, or the ‘*effect of wonder*’ for the reader who had grown up with classic fairy tales, comes while reading the following situations – from the one in which the wolf tells granny that he came to eat her up, and granny’s reply to be her guest (*Go ahead, son! You have come at the right moment. I cannot live on this small pension anyway.*), to the remark on what Little Red Riding Hood was taking to her granny (*Singing modern pop tunes cheerfully, she was carrying some cake, some cheese and three bags of Podravka soup to her granny*) or granny’s replies (for example, to the question why her eyes are so big, she replies: *So that I can see my little pension more easily, my darling*). Most of these sentences allude to the difficulties and unsuitability of the contemporary man’s environment, both natural and social, which implies modern themes. Therefore we can say that *The old new story about Little Red Riding Hood* is a multiply subversive text – with respect not only to an appropriate social context of ‘normal’ human life but also to the relationship to a traditional fairy tale and its conventions.

The reader series *Žubor riječi*, *Sjetva riječi*, *Darovi riječi* – conclusions:

1) All four readers contain both types of texts – folk (oral) and those which exhibit interference processes of oral and written framework.

2) All the readers contain more texts in which interference occurs than the ‘pure’ folk texts. The greatest number of folk texts can be found in the 8th grade reader (7 texts), the 5th and 6th grade readers contain an equal number of folk texts (6), while the smallest number is found in the 7th grade reader (4 texts).

3) The number of interfering texts decreases significantly in the 7th and 8th grades when compared to the 5th and 6th grades, in which there are 23 such texts, and in the 7th and 8th grade readers there are 14 texts in each.

4) On the dialect level in the first type of texts (folk texts), all three dialects are equally represented only in the 5th grade reader. The 6th to 8th grade readers neglect the Kajkavian dialect in comparison with Čakavian, and, especially, with Štokavian. In the analysis of dialects in the other type of texts no significant departures were found.

5) Within the texts which we have analysed and which have the relationship with oral literature, these relationships are established in various manners and with different functions – the most frequent one in all readers being the regional function, followed by archaic function, ludistic and patriotic functions. The function of creating a so-called new fairy-tale quality and especially the meaning function of interference are least represented in these readers. Within this line of thought an exception is the 6th grade reader, which contains a multitude of texts in which new fairy-tale quality can be detected, aided by the influence of oral literature models.

**CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE STATUS OF ORAL LITERATURE
IN CROATIAN READERS**

Based on the research carried out on the status of oral literature in our primary school readers in senior grades, we have obtained the following results:

1) Folk (oral) literature is represented in most of Croatian readers, but still not in all of them. Out of 16 readers we have analysed, one does not contain a single example of oral literature. There are a few which contain two examples of oral literature, while the largest number of readers contains only a few.

2) The number of oral literature texts is not equally distributed, which indicates that not enough attention was paid to this kind of texts. While in two of the analysed series of readers this number decreases as we progress to senior grades (the greatest number is found in the 5th grade reader in one series, and in the other it is greatest in the 6th grade reader), in the remaining two series of readers the number is greatest in the 8th grade, then the 5th and the 6th grades. If we take a glo-

bal look at all four series of readers with respect to the representation of the 'real' folk texts, it seems that the 7th grade contains the fewest of them.

3) In all the readers there is a certain number of texts in which we can detect particular interference processes of the written discourse with oral literature models. This number is more or less equal in all readers, that is, it is in proportion with the entire 'range' of a reader.

4) The readers contain the texts in all three Croatian dialects. In the written literature forms we have analysed, they are more or less equally distributed (with a few exceptions, mostly to the detriment of the Kajkavian dialect). On the other hand, in oral literature examples it is evident that the criterion of equal representation of the three dialects was not relevant for their inclusion into the readers. Most of the readers neglect Kajkavian folk literature, but provide most space for Štokavian literature.

5) While including folk literature into the readers, the criterion of their diversity of form was taken into consideration only to a certain extent, and only in some readers. It can be said that poetry is the leader in this respect (lyric, epic, lyric-epic), followed by rhetoric forms and short oral literature forms. Prose texts are mostly less frequently represented, and the least represented is folk play, which is practically not found in the readers.

6) Although the number of interfering texts is satisfying, it is evident that the readers include mostly the texts with the same functions of interference processes. Therefore, there is the greatest number of texts in which through oral incentives the regional, native picture is created (regional and ethnic mentality interference function). There is a somewhat lower number of those which, through relationships with oral models make the discourse archaic, or give a spur to the patriotic mood. There is a small number of texts with other functions of interference (the creation of new fairy-tale quality, ludistic function or meaning of some thoughts and themes), with exceptions found in a small number of readers.

By comparison, the analysis of cause-reaction relationships and the analysis of the results obtained in the research, we have taken the following attitudes:

- Oral (folk) literature should, without any doubt, be included into all Croatian readers in the senior grades of primary schools, with no exceptions that we have come across in the course of this study. It is vital if we want to cherish the relationship with our cultural heritage, tradition and the 'roots' of our language and nation, but also with the 'roots' of each one of us.

- While including oral literature texts into the readers, more attention should be paid to the quantity of such texts. It would be desirable to include an equal number of such texts (or the same 'proportion' with respect to a reader as a whole, if the readers of the same series have a different 'range') as we progress to senior grades. It might even be considered to increase their number, which would correspond well to the

increased students' abilities, but also to a greater previous knowledge gained in the junior grades.

- More attention should be paid to a relatively equal representation of all three Croatian dialects. It is important if we wish to cherish equally folk expressions from all Croatian regions, and through that get students acquainted with the works of folk literature of those regions, with cultural heritage in general, with everyday lives of people in those regions, with various ethnic mentalities... It is also important in order to encourage 'the richness of diversity' which is ever so frequently mentioned in various segments of life, but which, on the other hand, is so rarely put into practice.
- When selecting texts for school readers, more thought should be given to the receptive criterion, especially when selecting those specific texts which are connected with oral literature roots in various ways. First of all, it is our opinion that readers should also include the texts with somewhat more contemporary themes and in which through interference with oral models ludism or new fairy-tale quality is created. Such texts, ludistic, playful, with new fairy-tale quality are mostly very interesting to the students of this age and are well received, which again is an important motivation factor for further reading and reaching for works of literature. We do not want to suggest that the texts with regional, archaic or patriotic function of interference processes should be avoided. We suggest that a greater diversity should be achieved, and the receptive criterion be more taken into consideration.

Everything that we have said so far points to the fact that compiling a school reader is not an easy task at all and that it requires careful and thorough thinking about many questions, using various criteria, consulting experts in various fields, and, which is especially important, knowing cognitive, emotional, language, communicative and other capabilities of the young recipients. It is extremely important if we want to accomplish the basic aims of teaching literature, which are: 'cognition and interpretation, that is, reception of works of literature; developing sensitivity to literature; developing readers' needs; developing students' reading habits; making students capable of independent reading and independent understanding of literary works'⁹. It is also vital for accomplishing all basic didactic aims as well (educational, functional, communicative) which are interwoven into the teaching process and interpretation of texts, such as: developing positive ethical values and taste; developing linguistic creativity; developing awareness of the uniqueness of one's homeland and its natural, historical and cultural features; developing love for the native region and people, for language and historical achievements; creating a feeling of belonging to spiritual experiences we have inherited from our an-

⁹ These aims have been prescribed by the National curriculum for primary school, within the Croatian National Educational Standards from 2006.

cestors; developing respect and understanding for all Croatian regions, Croatian dialects, regional communities and their material and spiritual heritage (cherishing the ‘richness of diversity’).

The aim of this research was not a qualitative analysis – it does not aim to say that one reader is better than another, a series of readers better than another series of readers, or that one publisher is better than another publisher. The quality of a reader depends on the whole range of parameters, mainly those which account for its methodological form. However, with respect to the quality of selected texts there is also an entire range of criteria which should be taken into consideration (the proportion of national and foreign literature; an appropriate genre and genre diversity; theme...)

This paper presents an analysis of only one aspect of the texts found in our primary school readers – the analysis of the status of oral (folk) literature. All other aspects are potential subjects for some future research.

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