

Croatian Journal of Education  
Vol.19; Sp.Ed.No.2/2017, pages: 35-48  
Original research paper  
Paper submitted: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
Paper accepted: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017  
<https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v19i0.2625>

# The Concept of *Dissimilitude* in Teaching Literature: Comparative Analysis of Syllabi for the First Cycle of Education in Croatia and Serbia

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## Abstract

*This article focuses on the presence of the concept of dissimilitude in the selection of literary texts for children prescribed by the syllabi in Croatia and Serbia. The comparative analysis is based on providing a list of texts for the first cycle of education in the two syllabi through a concept-based (transcending the text) observation of dissimilitude, as well as a content-based (text-inherent) analysis of the presence of dissimilitude in these texts in its broadest sense.*

*In the literary texts prescribed by the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia, the field of dissimilitude thematization can largely be attributed to the nature of the literary work itself, rather than the curricular or concept-based education policy behind the current syllabi. The paper presents results of the analyses of the two syllabi that are conceptually quite different.*

*The aim of this paper is to compare educational strategies for teaching literature in two countries – Croatia and Serbia – by analysing the presence of dissimilitude in a selection of literary texts.*

**Key words:** *compulsory reading lists; elective reading lists; identity; interculturalism.*

## Introduction

The concept of *dissimilitude* in teaching literature is understood as a much broader concept than the current terms for the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism. Multiculturalism is related to a quantitative definition of culture, that is, of one society with many cultures, without indicating their mutual relationship (Vermezović, 2003, p.

151), whereas interculturalism implies that two or more cultures stand in relation (be it positive or negative) to each other. Our understanding of the concept of *dissimilitude* with reference to literature encompasses the meanings of both these terms, and more. The complexity and breadth of the concept of *dissimilitude* in teaching literature stems from the fact that diversity is omnipresent in teaching and in literature, both among those who teach and those who are being taught. The literature only partially models itself on its subject matter, and the subject matter is essentially an unprogrammed and unformalized discourse on the manifold and multifaceted understanding of *dissimilitude* (cf. Marković, 2015, pp. 305-319).

“The idea of interculturality would be feasible if all participants had an equal interest in it” (Koković, 2011, p. 46); however, if interest is expected on the basis of didactic and democratic civic education (Bagić & Vrhovac, 2012; Bakić Mirić, 2012; Mutavdžić, Kampuris, & Savić, 2012), success cannot be expected. Literature can assume a role between two opposing views which claim that “*dissimilitude* cannot be learnt” or that “*dissimilitude* should be learnt” (Kujundžić, 2012, pp. 46-64). With a selection of literary texts, rich in symbolism and traditional, cultural, and social layers of meanings, cross-linked with issues of “the other” and “otherness of the other”, literature takes part in education that “needs to balance the personal, national, and multi-cultural identities” (Avramović, 2003, p. 148). At the same time, one should not forget that this kind of discourse belongs to bearers of the (dominant) culture, who articulate the existence of “the same” and “the other”, and the very *dissimilitude* present in the relations of the two entities. “The balance of identities is achieved through a selection of elements of cultural identity and control of their meanings” (Avramović, 2003, p. 148). Such education through literature is also necessary when it comes to the identity of “the other”, which is associated with what is ours. This generates a free image of a culture that never fully corresponds to the reality which it arises from, but is truthful in a phenomenological sense, and converts negative models and symbols into positive ones, that are sincere and closer to knowledge<sup>1</sup>. Speech which is constitutive of interpreting *dissimilitude* risks losing “the secret of the other”; thus, a faithful and knowledgeable interpretation of a literary text which includes the concept of *dissimilitude* “requires certain forgetfulness, negligence, blindness, in order to protect the Other from any possible appropriation, reduction, or programmed reception” (Kujundžić, 2012, p. 47).

It is possible to observe the multiform concept of *dissimilitude* within literary works through a division into 1) *dissimilitude* transcending literary works, and 2) *dissimilitude* inherent to literary works. *Dissimilitude* transcending literary works is related to dialogical positions: inherited or modern/current literary production; various literary genres and types (genre vs. non-genre literature); etc. *Dissimilitude* inherent to

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<sup>1</sup> The possibility of a symbolic recasting of negative models and identities into positive ones can be proved by a reverse process: “Can we ignore the immoral or inappropriate messages that radiate from many games and toys, as well as children’s fairy tales? Besides immoral ones, toys can send controversial messages” (Zloković, 2013, p. 298).

literary works is to be found within the content and meaning of the text itself, in relations such as: individual and collective *dissimilitude* among heroes/characters and motifs; inter-generational, class, and gender *dissimilitude*, etc.

A problem entailed in the request to accept pluralistic and common elements (cf. Council of Europe, 2008, p. 9) arises from a place where shared values and traditions are taken to mean “the other”, “foreign”, or “alien”, thus leaving space for the prevalence of *dissimilitude* which needs to be overcome in an “intercultural dialogue”.

## Method

The article presents the results of a qualitative comparative analysis of literature syllabi of two countries: the Republic of Croatia (hereinafter: RC) and the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: RS), aimed at identifying the concepts of *dissimilitude* transcending and *dissimilitude* inherent to literary works included in the syllabi (cf. *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu RH (n.d.)*; *Nastavni planovi i programi za osnovnu školu RS (n.d.)*). The subject of the analysis is a list of texts for the first cycle of education in both syllabi and the recommended literary texts themselves.

The first part of the analysis refers to defining the program concepts, specifying the ratio between compulsory and elective texts, as well as their potential impact on the development and fostering of the concept of *dissimilitude* in the reading experience of students: (1) quantitatively, by comparing the number of recommended texts, and (2) qualitatively, by defining explicit and implicit syllabus criteria for their selection and classification.<sup>3</sup> The findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of conceptual differences between the two syllabi, and the tendency to define the texts that are included in the collective reading experience of generations of students, represent the basis for further qualitative analysis and classification of *dissimilitude* inherent to literary texts.

## Conceptual Features of the Syllabi and Formation of the Concept of *Dissimilitude*

Comparing the syllabi of the two countries requires clarification of conceptual specifics in their approach to teaching literature (Bežen, 2008, pp. 249-271). On the one hand, the RC syllabus prescribes only 2 or 3 *compulsory texts* per grade, while all the other texts are *elective*, so that an additional 4 or 5 texts are chosen from the proposed list. It should be noted that in the first two grades, the compulsory reading material is also offered as elective: namely, the author is prescribed, while *a selection of his/her works* is left to the teacher.<sup>4</sup> This reflects a curricular fostering of *dissimilitude* regarding

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<sup>2</sup> The fact that “intercultural dialogue” is the generator of all modern European political and economic trends (cf. Mutavdžić, Todorović, & Kampouris, 2011, p. 73) should not be disregarded.

<sup>3</sup> Bearing in mind the period in which Croatia and Serbia coexisted within Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the syllabus from 1984 (ZPPOVR, 1984-1985) was also taken into consideration.

<sup>4</sup> This can be proved by current textbooks which contain a multitude of extracurricular titles. Future research may provide a comparison of extracurricular texts in the approved textbooks by different teams of authors and define the criteria for their selection.

students' interests, reading experience, and curiosity (Miljković & Jurčec, 2016, pp. 115-116). During the entire first cycle of education, only 5 texts from the proposed reading list will be read by all students in one generation. As emphasised by M. Hameršak, "due to their evident variability and the already mentioned predominantly elective character, extensive lists of suggested reading have not functioned on the generation level as common, symbolic, and institutionally certified capital" (2006, p. 97). On the other hand, the prescribed texts in the RS syllabi are *compulsory reading* for all students, and the process of schooling results in a systematic formation of a common reading experience for young generations (130 texts).<sup>5</sup> In addition to the compulsory texts, *selections from works* following set criteria (e.g. a selection of poetry, a selection of fairy tales, etc.; the proposed reading list contains four elective titles for the first and third grade, and three titles for the second and fourth grade) are offered, as well as a selection of texts students can freely choose from (2 to 5 texts). For the corpus of elective texts, the RC offers suggestions, while in the syllabus of the RS, this insignificant number of titles is entirely left up to the teachers. However, it should be noted that in both cases this choice is in large part entrusted to the authors of textbooks (Cvetanović, 2012, pp. 22-24), who offer some kind of a solution for this elective aspect of the syllabi, rather than teachers, who agree to such solutions for practical reasons.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that Croatian teachers enjoy greater freedom in this respect, since they do not have to follow the selection of texts provided by textbooks; in contrast, most of the texts in the RS are prescribed by the syllabus, so there are only a few texts teachers can choose from. With reference to the presented data, one can also reasonably put forward the question of the role of teaching literature. Thus conceptually designed, a school system may have a tendency to influence the creation of a uniform system of values among young generations (Šušnjić, 2008, pp. 181-188). On the other hand, the systematic presentation of identical contents to generations of students creates a fertile ground for various forms of manipulation through shared experiences, associations, visualisations, etc. One can rightly wonder whether the collective experience of reading creates a space for manipulation or represents the cultural capital of a nation?

Table 1

*The number of literary texts in the first cycle – comparative analysis.*

Prescribed readers	RC syllabus	RS syllabus
Compulsory	5	130
Compulsory selection of literary works <sup>7</sup>	2	14
Selection from the proposed texts	17 <sup>8</sup>	0
Free choice	0	8

<sup>5</sup> Students get acquainted with 6 larger works of prose through select passages.

<sup>6</sup> The teacher will certainly rather choose a text that the students have in their textbooks, than some other text that should be specifically provided for all students in the class.

<sup>7</sup> The compulsory selection includes at least one work by the selected author or from the genre of national literature, but can also include the analysis of a number of texts.

<sup>8</sup> Out of the 124 proposed texts, teachers select a total of 17 texts.

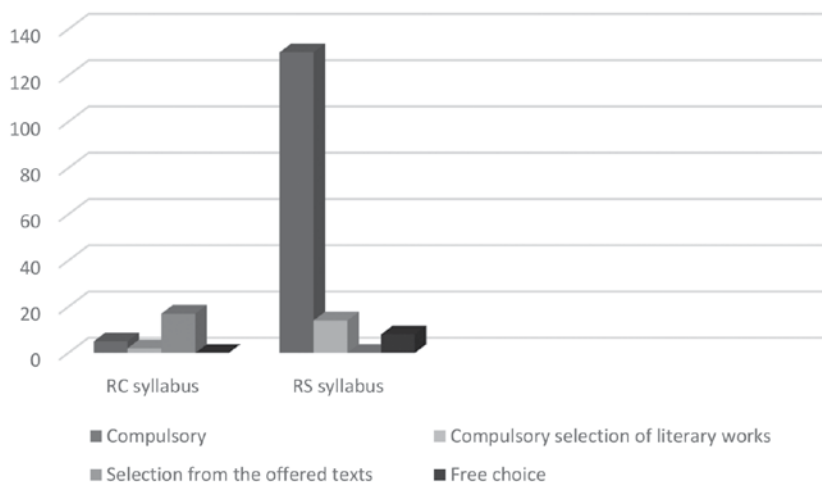


Figure 1. The number of literary texts in the first cycle

The two educational concepts that we have taken as the subject of our research can have different impacts on young people, and their individual or shared reading experiences, which, in turn, bring about individual/different or joint/identical associative, emotional, ideological, ethical, and other concepts and reactions, as well as “identification with the world of literary works” (Opačić, 2015, p. 21).

The RC syllabus prescribes screen adaptations of texts by certain authors who are represented in the syllabus via a *selection from literary works*. Thereby, they certainly affect the teacher’s choice of titles to be included in the literature class, as *conditional compulsory texts*.<sup>9</sup> Screen adaptations are another testimony to the fostering of the concept of *dissimilitude*, whereby students are offered a certain text moulded in two narrative forms, two different arts. Picturebooks can also be added to this group of texts, as well as stories presented in the form of comic books. Thus, systematically developed reading and media experience is an advantage of the RC curriculum (Erjavec & Zgrabljic, 2000, p. 95) over the RS syllabus, which is “very extensive when it comes to the selection of literary works” (Milatović, 2013, p. 407), but does not recommend any film title whatsoever (Vukomanović Rastegorac, 2015, p. 103).

The lists of literary theory terms prescribed for a particular grade influence the selection of texts. In the fourth grade, for instance, genre will be the criterion for the selection of 5 out of 7 texts prescribed by the syllabus, although the program explicitly states that only 2 titles are compulsory (which may serve to illustrate and define the concepts of *the fairy tale* and *the children’s novel*). The collection of poetry by Z. Balog – the only poet included in the recommended reading lists – will be selected to illustrate the concept of *the poem*. Of the remaining 4 texts, teachers will have to choose at least 1 *play* and 1 *short story*.

<sup>9</sup> Intertextual connections will similarly influence the text selection (Mičić, 2009, p. 77).

Although the rules about literary terminology in the two countries are almost the same, the difference in the structure of the recommended texts is very noticeable. Textbooks in Croatia are not structured according to literary form (or genre), while in the RS they are (*poetry*: 60; *epic poetry*: 61; *drama*: 12; *popular science texts*: 2). The recommended reading lists in the RS are structured in such a way that each theoretical term prescribed by the syllabus is covered by an adequate corpus of illustrative texts in the compulsory selection.

Thus, in the RC syllabus, the titles can be divided into: 1. *compulsory reading* – 1.1. compulsory texts, 1.2. compulsory selection from works; and 2. *elective reading* – 2.1. conditional compulsory elective texts, 2.2. conditional compulsory selection of works, 2.3. elective texts, and 2.4. elective selection of works; while the titles in the RS syllabi are divided into: 1. *compulsory texts*, 2. *compulsory selection of works*, and 3. *free choice*.

A comparison of the two syllabi shows shared titles, primarily international classics of children's literature, such as H.C. Andersen and the Brothers Grimm<sup>10</sup>, as well as one local writer, G. Vitez.<sup>11</sup>

## **Dissimilitude Immanent to Literary Works**

The field of *dissimilitude* thematization is rather broad, so we shall restrict our study only to those examples of *dissimilitude* that are the most dominant in the literary works themselves. The table below (Table 2) lists all identified types of *dissimilitude* which could be supported by examples from the analysed syllabi. Due to the scope of the corpus, the table does not include a list of all the texts that confirm a particular type of *dissimilitude*, but only those whose introduction into the teaching process implies inevitable interpretation of the topic covered. Repetitions in the table are not accidental, because several types of *dissimilitude* are thematized in a number of literary works. Representative literary works presented in the table were selected based on the principle of dominant *dissimilitude* which, as such, is unsustainable out of the context of other differences in the same literary piece, or the relationships and effects of such relations in the different layers of meaning included in it. The aim of this part of the paper is to provide an indicative list of literary works based on the thematic principle of the concept of *dissimilitude*. In these works, that concept is mainly manifested as a complex.

According to the concept presented in the program, literary works included in the RC syllabus are shown in the table through the following differentiation: as elective or compulsory. Compulsory texts include both *compulsory* and *conditionally compulsory texts*, while elective texts include the other categories from the classification that is the result of our qualitative conceptual analysis.

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<sup>10</sup> If the elective corpus of the RC syllabus is also taken into consideration in this part of the comparative analysis, then common works also include *Bambi* by F. Salten and *The Little Prince* by A. de Saint-Exupéry.

<sup>11</sup> All the authors mentioned are part of the curriculum from the period in which Croatia and Serbia coexisted within SFRY (1984).

Table 2

Thematization of dissimilitude in literary works prescribed by the RC and RS syllabi (a selection)

Br.	Type of dissimilitude	Typical text examples which thematize <i>dissimilitude</i>		
		RC syllabus	RS syllabus	
1.	Generational differences  (adults, parents/child)	C <sup>12</sup>	<i>A Train in the Snow</i> , Pero Kvržica's Gang, M. Lovrak; <i>Pinocchio</i> , C. Collodi; <i>The Brave Adventures of a Shoemaker's Boy</i> , Stribor's Forest, I. Brlić-Mažuranić	<i>A Dragon Cooing to Its Cub</i> , General Almighty, Lj. Ršumović; <i>A Good-hearted Ant</i> , B. Crnčević; <i>A Little Sparrow</i> , M. Gorki; <i>A Poem for the Mother's Eyes</i> , M. Alečković; <i>An Angry Bear Cub</i> , B. Crnčević; <i>Bambi</i> , F. Salten; <i>Marko the Prince and Bey Kostadin</i> , <i>The Little Fawn</i> , folk poems; <i>Silly Song</i> , F.G. Lorca; <i>The Little Prince</i> , A.S. Exupéry; <i>Mother</i> , J.J. Zmaj; <i>Two Letters</i> , A. Popović; <i>What Is a Father?</i> , D. Lukić; <i>What's the Greatest Thing of All</i> , M. Antić
		E <sup>13</sup>	<i>Bambi</i> , F. Salten <i>Bum Tomica</i> , S. Šesto <i>Did You Know, Too?, If I Were a Grown-up</i> , É. Janikovszky <i>Lottie and Lisa</i> , E. Kästner <i>Pauline P's Diary</i> , S. Polak <i>Peter Pan</i> , J.M. Barrie <i>The Little Prince</i> , A.S. Exupéry	
2.	Class differences  (rich/poor, etc.)	C	<i>A Train in the Snow</i> , M. Lovrak; <i>The Princess and the Pea</i> , <i>The Swineherd</i> , H.C. Andersen	<i>Imagine</i> , D. Radović; <i>Marko the Prince and Bey Kostadin</i> , folk poem; <i>The Emperor and the Vagrant</i> , L. Lazić; <i>The Princess and the Pea</i> , H.C. Andersen (selection); <i>The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish</i> , A.S. Pushkin
		E	<i>Good Night, Children</i> , E. Peroci; <i>Puss in Boots</i> , C. Perrault	
3.	Gender differences	C	<i>Pero Kvržica's Gang</i> , M. Lovrak	<i>The Flirting Reapers</i> , folk poem
		E	–	
4.	Identity differences <sup>14</sup>	C	<i>The Ugly Duckling</i> , H.C. Andersen <i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i> , F.L. Baum	<i>A Dragon Cooing to Its Cub</i> , <i>One Day</i> , Lj. Ršumović <i>The Barefooted and the Sky</i> , B. Crnčević; <i>The Neverending Story</i> , M. Ende; <i>The Selfish Giant</i> , O. Wilde; <i>The Tale of the Swan</i> , D. Maksimović; <i>The Ugly Duckling</i> , H.C. Andersen
		E	<i>Kjel, the Black Swan</i> , Ž. Hercigonja; <i>Donkey Me</i> , Z. Balog; <i>Figaro, the Cat Who Snored</i> , J.B. Baronian	
5.	Different perspectives	C	–	<i>A Dragon Cooing to Its Cub</i> , Lj. Ršumović; <i>A Good-hearted Ant</i> , B. Crnčević; <i>A Three-storey Patient</i> , <i>The Sun Singer</i> , B. Čopić; <i>The World Cannot Be Pleased</i> , folktale; <i>What Is the Colour of Spring?</i> , G. Vitez
		E	<i>The Life of Antuntun</i> , <i>Why Not</i> , G. Vitez	

<sup>12</sup> C: compulsory reading.<sup>13</sup> E: elective reading.<sup>14</sup> The list does not include titles of fables, a genre present in both syllabi, featuring obvious dissimilitude. Typical characteristics of one-dimensional characters could only tentatively be categorised as identity distinctions.

Br.	Type of <i>dissimilitude</i>	Typical text examples which thematize <i>dissimilitude</i>	
		RC syllabus	RS syllabus
6.	Artistic/ non-artistic (non-utilitarian/ utilitarian)	C	–
		E	<i>The Happy Cricket</i> , N. Zidar-Bogadi; <i>Three Bears and a Guitar</i> , Lj. Bauer
7.	Rural/urban	C	<i>A Train in the Snow</i> , M. Lovrak
		E	<i>Heidi</i> , J. Spyri
8.	Peace/war	C	–
		E	<i>Escape in a Basket</i> , M. Gluščević; <i>A Christmas Fairy Tale, New Roof Keepers</i> , N. Iveljić; <i>Ciconia, Ciconia</i> , A. Peterlik Huseinović
9.	Human/animal	C	–
		E	<i>A Letter from Greentown</i> , N. Videk; <i>The Story of Doctor Dolittle</i> , H. Lofting; <i>The White Deer</i> , V. Nazor
10.	Man/nature	C	–
		E	<i>A Boy in Starry Boots</i> , L. Mravunac; <i>A Letter from Greentown</i> , N. Videk; <i>Bambi</i> , F. Salten
11.	Human/alien	C	–
		E	<i>Brass Peter, The Purple Planet</i> , A. Gardaš
12.	Living/non-living	C	<i>Pinocchio</i> , C. Collodi
		E	<i>The Way Things Dream</i> , S. Škrinjarić; <i>Winnie-the-Pooh</i> , A.A. Milne
			<i>The Emperor and the Vagrant</i> , L. Lazić; <i>The Violin</i> , M. Demak
			–
			–
			<i>A Brigand Cat</i> , B. Ćopić; <i>Marko the Prince and the Eagle</i> , folk poem; <i>Solitude</i> , B. V. Radičević; <i>The Lion and the Man</i> , Arab folktale; <i>The Weather-miller Firefly</i> , D. Erić; <i>There's No School for Cats</i> , G. Vitez
			<i>Bambi</i> , F. Salten; <i>Poem about a Flower</i> , B. Miljković; <i>The Wind and the Sun</i> , folktale
			–
			<i>The Pair of Shoes</i> , P. Gripari; <i>Two Sisters with No Brother</i> , folk poem

Classification of works from the corpus of children's literature is markedly specified by the author's awareness of the implicit reader. This awareness will usually give the child hero the central role in the literary work; therefore, one of the fundamental kinds of *dissimilitude* featured on recommended reading lists is based on the *children – adults* opposition. In this dyad, the role of the adult is usually assigned to parental figures. In the selected literary works, the relationship ranges from the motif of unconditional love in compulsory texts from the RC syllabus, through educational *adults – children* relations in both syllabi, to rebellion against parental principles in a number of texts included in the RS syllabus.<sup>15</sup> When elective texts are also taken into consideration, it seems that

<sup>15</sup> This fact provides the basis for a potential subsequent division of texts based on other principles and categories, which in this case include harmony/agreement or disharmony/disagreement between the representatives of distinctions. For example, within the *adult/child* opposition, the image of harmony is featured in poems about the mother, while representatives of disagreement within this category can be found (among others) in gang novels.



the understanding of children's flaws and needs has a lot more prominent place in the RS reading lists, which, by contrast, do not seem to pay as much attention to the role of the child in a social community. This is certainly not the case in the novels of M. Lovrak. Both novels include recognition of the child's deeds and thus the recognition of the values of the child himself. However, this value becomes evident and affirmed only through the child's adult-like maturity. A similar, socially enlightened role of the child is visible in works centred around environmental issues.

Present but slightly less represented in both syllabi are *class, sex/gender*, and other differences based on a set of anticipated images of an entity, including the *poor/rich* binary, with the first item in the binary being positively valued and connected with compassion. At this point, we can raise a question that takes into account the contemporary political and economic-social context, which is dominated by liberal-capitalist ideology. Namely, how is one to understand the promotion of the idea of social equality in the RC syllabus (through its presence in literary works for compulsory reading), an idea certainly opposite to the current ideology of liberal capitalism: as a signal of the prevailing social atmosphere – non-existent in the society that is being projected – or an emancipatory act of the author of the syllabus? Unlike the RC syllabus, the syllabus of the RS does not include texts that would prompt young readers to think deeper about the nature of the aforementioned ideological, existential, and similar problems. In the background, one can recognise sins in the treatment of the other, potential overcoming of class differences in a jocular tone, or sporadic affirmation of folk literature, history, and culture.

Identity-related *dissimilitude* and differences in interpersonal relations are the dominant types of *dissimilitude* in both programs. They are reflected on a higher level of generality: on the level of identity, which eludes the above classifications, or in the appreciation of the possibility to take different standpoints from which to observe the world (cf. Mičić, 2009, p. 77). For example, *The Life of Antuntun* shows the inverted world of Antuntun from the perspective of the hero of the lyrical narrative, thus presenting the two worlds as two perspectives.

It should be noted that an approval of different perspectives is probably most positively exemplified in the literary work of G. Vitez.

As expected, the nature of the relationship child – external world, which is typical of literary works for children, includes differences such as: living/non-living; man/child – nature/animal; art/reproductive, non-artistic work; and oppositions such as: rural/urban, man/alien, which occur only in the RC syllabus. The nature of these differences is, one may say, the most noticeable and accessible in children's reading experience.

Texts that have unbearable differences as their main theme are somewhat more challenging for interpretation. Andersen's fairy tale *Ugly Duckling* is one of these, and it can be found in both syllabi. A particularly symptomatic part of this fairy tale is its ending. With respect for the past interpretations of this fairy tale and its importance for the upbringing of numerous generations, reading in the light of the

concept of dissimilitude/diversity (dissimilation) could help students find new ways of understanding the connections between themes and motives in it. At the very end of the fairy tale the hero does not find happiness in dissimilitude/diversity (the possible coexistence of swans and ducks), but in the place where his identity is confirmed and accepted. His happiness begins at the moment when he realises that he is not, after all, the one duckling that is different from others, but the swan, the same as other swans. In the fairy tale, this will happen only when he is surrounded by members of his own kind (the swans), which partially annuls the concept of dissimilitude/diversity. This very concept would be plausible if the Ugly Duckling found his happiness among the ducks, retaining the identity of a swan. The text that serves as the paradigm for the concept of dissimilitude/diversity, paradoxically shows us that the dissimilitude/diversity is partially annulled in it. Generally speaking, the texts whose main theme is unbearable dissimilitude demand the most sensitive manner of speaking about the others in the in-class interpretation, and good foreknowledge of the ethical consequences in the conceptual layer of the literary work.

## Conclusion

Shedding light on the possible systemic, conceptual, and individual influences of teaching literature on the formation of the concept of *dissimilitude* between two neighbouring communities, identifies it as quite fluid due to the constantly changing footholds of (identity-related) differences and, consequently, of all previously established differences. Teaching contents selected for this study indicate that the things which used to be marked as the same or common are nowadays seen as signifying difference.

The syllabus of the RC, which is conceptually based on the elective character of literary works and a greater presence of extracurricular texts in the textbooks, in this way fosters *dissimilitude* in the reading experience and interests of students. At the same time, on the generational level, texts do not function as a “common and symbolic, institutionally verified capital” (Hameršak, 2006, p. 97). The syllabus prescribes screen adaptations of texts, which is an advantage of the RC syllabus. The explicit conceptual framework of this syllabus, regulated around a wider selection of literary works, is subject to the following new implicit restrictions: 1) screen adaptations of fairy tales prescribed by the syllabus affect the teacher’s choice of titles that will be included in classwork; 2) reading lists in Croatia are not structured according to literary form (or genre); thus, the number of texts, which is supposedly elective according to the syllabus, is actually conditioned by the literary terminology that is to be taught. This syllabus is characterised by the dominance of contemporary prose forms. The more progressive nature of the Croatian syllabus is reflected in the presence of texts whose background reveals contours of living ideological and cultural patterns, and the topical issues of contemporary societies. A more consistent representation of contemporary ideological and social trends is less noticeable in the syllabus of the RS, although a more detailed analysis would show that every literary text paradigmatically represents an established group of worldviews.

In the syllabus of the RS, there is an appropriate corpus of illustrative texts in the compulsory selection of literary works for each prescribed literary term. Classification criteria stem from the literary forms themselves (*poetry, epic poetry, and drama*). The sphere of media culture is neglected; there is not a single title recommended in the syllabus.

In the texts prescribed by both the RC and the RS, the issue of the thematization of *dissimilitude* is widely present, and it can largely be attributed to the eminent nature of literary works that arise in relation to the presence of differences in the world, rather than curriculum- or concept-based educational policies in the existing syllabi. In both syllabi, literary texts send the message that the equality of sovereign perspectives is an ideal to strive for. Many texts inevitably include prototypes and typical manifestations, so an individual is taken as a representative of a larger group identity, which simultaneously affirms the *dissimilitude* and annuls it, by reducing it to an inviolable facet of the group. However, this does not mean that these texts should be removed from reading lists; rather, it points to the fact that it is necessary to consider the sensitivity of the discourse about “the other” when interpreting a literary work. All the differences indicated in the thematic classification (see Table 2) are based on the relationship of man towards “the other”: 1) human/human; 2) human/animal; 3) human/nature; 4) human/fantastic (alien). Such differences can be characterised in the following manner: generational differences (adults, parents/child); class differences (rich/poor); identity differences; human environment (rural/urban); different perspectives; human condition (peace/war); human work (artistic/non-artistic); living/non-living. Looking at the types of differences in the comparative analysis of the two syllabi, it can be seen that some types of differences are not present in both syllabi, or that the field of thematization is not equally directed. Hence, defining the advantages and limitations of the syllabi can be used for future improvement and correction of the representation of the concept of *dissimilitude*.

In the syllabi for the first cycle of education in the RC and the RS, the biggest drawback is noted in the absence of some valuable works from Croatian literature and from Serbian literature that deserve to be found in the syllabi of the neighbouring nations. It could be expected that mutual including of some literature works from neighbouring culture, language and literature into the respective syllabi might broaden the cultural and literature horizons of young generations.

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# Koncept različitosti u nastavi književnosti – komparativna analiza programa za prvi ciklus nastave u Hrvatskoj i Srbiji

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## **Sažetak**

*U radu se razmatra prisutnost koncepta različitosti u izboru književnih tekstova za djecu koje propisuju nastavni programi u Hrvatskoj i Srbiji. Komparativna analiza polazi od popisa tekstova za prvi ciklus školovanja u oba programa i uočavanja koncepta različitosti u samim programskim koncepcijama (transcedentno tekstu), ali i sadržajima, putem analize prisustva najšire shvaćene teme različitosti u tim tekstovima (imanentno tekstu).*

*U tekstovima propisanim u RH i RS s obzirom na polje tematizacije razlika se u najvećoj mjeri može pripisati prirodi djela, a ne programskoj i koncepcijskoj obrazovnoj politici važećih programa. U radu se iznose rezultati analiza programa koji su koncepcijski sasvim različiti. U odnosu na koncept različitosti u djelima oba programa razmatra se niz problema koji prate fenomen razlike.*

*Cilj je rada usporediti obrazovne strategije nastave književnosti dviju zemalja – Hrvatske i Srbije – na primjeru analize prisustva koncepta različitosti u izboru književnog teksta.*

**Ključne riječi:** *identitet; interkulturalnost; izborni tekst; obavezni tekst.*