



Ana K. Milovanović¹ 

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Education,
Belgrade, Serbia

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Education about the Kosovo Covenant in the function of dramatising poems of the Kosovo cycle - a case study

Extended summary

The paper examines education about the Kosovo Covenant (Kosovski zavet) in the function of dramatising the poems of the Kosovo cycle using the example of a case study of its application in Drama and Movement academic course for pre-service primary school teachers of the Faculty of Education, University of Belgrade, in the academic year 2023/2024. The aim of the research was to determine whether the content of education about the Kosovo Covenant contributed to the ideas of student dramatizations of the poems of the Kosovo cycle and to their alignment with the Kosovo Covenant.

The initial theoretical starting points of the research included the study of epic poems of the Kosovo cycle. The study determined that the Kosovo Covenant represents its ideological and thematic starting point and stronghold, implying that students need the knowledge of the Kosovo Covenant to determine the ideological basis of the dramatisations of the poems of the Kosovo cycle.

Starting from the hypothesis that students do not possess the knowledge about the Kosovo Covenant, we conducted research using the method of content analysis and a survey with the question: “What is the Kosovo Covenant?” As the obtained results confirmed the hypothesis, we

¹ ana.milovanovic@uf.bg.ac.rs

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7145-5608>

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concluded that it is necessary, in order to dramatise the poems of the Kosovo cycle, to provide the students with basic education about the Kosovo Covenant.

The theoretical framework of the basic education about the Kosovo Covenant includes the defence of the interpretations of the Kosovo Covenant in the writings of Serbian theologians, writers, and scientists that deal with its original meanings, characteristics, and problems. The content of education about the Kosovo Content included: definitions of the Kosovo Covenant; the foundation of the Kosovo Covenant in the Serbian medieval state and culture; commitment to Kosovo - Serbian orientation towards the Kingdom of Heaven; the Serbs consciously sacrificed themselves for the Kingdom of Heaven; the uniqueness of the Kosovo Covenant; the universal human significance of the Kosovo Covenant; misinterpretations and distortions of the meaning of the Kosovo Covenant; the commitment to the Covenant is a commitment to life, not death.

The research of the functionality of education about the Kosovo Covenant in teaching the dramatisation of the poems of the Kosovo cycle was conducted at different stages of education. The first stage was a survey conducted among the students who attended the lecture in February 2024, which proved, using content analysis and comparison methods, that the lecture had improved students' knowledge of the meaning of the Kosovo Covenant. The research conducted in June 2024, although primarily focused on the moral aspect of the Covenant, showed that the eminently Christian and original understanding of the Kosovo Covenant was found in one third of the dramatisations. In the last research, using the method of content analysis of the dramatisations of all previously surveyed students, it was determined that in each dramatisation one of the basic understandings of the Kosovo Covenant was dominant (according to Radulović): the original understanding of the Kosovo Covenant was most represented (42.54%), then the aristocratic-chivalric and patriarchal-epic view of the Kosovo commitment (40.42%), and finally the educational-historical understanding of the Kosovo battle (17.04%).

The results of the research yield the conclusion that education about the Kosovo Covenant was functional in the process of dramatising the poems of the Kosovo cycle, namely, it provided the students with the corpus of knowledge necessary for determining the ideological basis of dramatisations in line with the Covenant as ideological and thematic foundation of the epic poems of the Kosovo cycle, and achieved the goal for which it was introduced into the dramatic art lessons.

While fully acknowledging that this research in a form of a case study has significant limitations, we believe that it will raise the awareness of the need for the inclusion of basic education about the Kosovo Covenant in the dramatisation of the Kosovo cycle poems, both in university dramatic art lessons and in subject teaching (literature, religious studies), even in extra-curricular activities in elementary and secondary schools.

By presenting a case study from education about the Kosovo Covenant, an area that has not been defined and formulated as a separate area until this research, the paper draws the attention of the educational public to it and encourages reflection on the possibilities of its application in the Serbian education system.

Keywords: Kosovo Covenant, education about the Kosovo Covenant, drama art teaching, dramatisation of the Serbian traditional poems of the Kosovo cycle, primary school teachers' education

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