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**Liubov Bashmanivska<sup>1</sup>**ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7152-3691><sup>1</sup> Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University (Zhytomyr, Ukraine)

## **THE EPISTOLARY HERITAGE OF LESIA UKRAINKA AS A MEANS OF FORMING LITERARY COMPETENCE**

### **Annotation**

The article makes an attempt to research the epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka as a means of forming pupils' literary competence. It proves the topicality and expediency of using letters at the classes of Ukrainian literature. It highlights the importance of using epistolary materials in order to increase pupils' interests in literature, better their standard of knowledge and ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of other people.

**Keywords:** epistolary heritage, letters, literary competence, teacher of Ukrainian literature, writer's biography.

### **Introduction**

The epistolary heritage of well-known writers is a significant means of forming pupils' literary competence. This is one of the primary sources of learning author's life and works and social and political thought. Studying the epistolary heritage of a famous Ukrainian writer - Lesia Ukrainka - is by far the most important process of forming literary competence. With the help of her letters we can get acquainted with her friends and some historical features. Moreover, we can understand more about the national and cultural life of Ukrainians back then, find portraits and artistic passions of Slavic and European authors.

The problem of forming literary competence was studied by a lot of scholars, such as L. Bazyl, O. Kutsevol, A. Lisovskyi, L. Luzan, A. Sytchenko, O. Semenoh, A. Fasolia, L. Fursova, V. Shuliar and others. Such scholars as N. Voloshyna, Ye. Pasichnyk, N. Petrychenko, K. Prykhodchenko, O. Slonovska, V. Tsymbaliuk and others highlighted the importance of learning the epistolary heritage of writers.

### **Aim, subject and research methods**

Based on the letters of Lesia Ukrainka the article is supposed to prove the significance of usage those letters at the classes of Ukrainian literature as a means of forming pupil's literary competence.

The research uses methods of analysis of scientific and methodical studies on learning the epistolary heritage and formation of literary competence, generalization of personal experience and interpretation of the results.

### **Research results**

The epistolary heritage takes an important place in the works of Lesia Ukrainka. Thus, it can be used during the lessons of Ukrainian literature in schools with the purpose of forming literary competence. Lesia Ukrainka desired to cover a range of issues in her letters: events, literary issues, emotional condition. According to I. Pohrebniak, "the tone of letters is by far the best material which helps to create a certain and vivid picture of an author, to feel the nature of their individuality, to see the inner world, their world perception and mental spirits" [2].

A teacher of Ukrainian literature can use the letters of Lesia Ukrainka for pupils to learn the biography. These letters are a true testimony of her life and works. In addition, they are defined by their informational value and creativity. Each letter illustrates the ideas, moods and feelings which the writer felt at some point. By the way, each of them helps to understand the worldview values, artistic and aesthetic preferences of Lesia; to recreate the time she lived in; and to find out about the conception and creation of the works of art.

When forming literary competence, the teacher introduces the biography of Lesia Ukrainka to pupils with the help of the letters. This is an interesting and new form of work at lesson. The letters are the truest material about the author, her preferences, social and political; literary and aesthetic points of view. At the lessons of Literature, the teacher makes up a special emotional mood while pupils learn how to deepen into an artistic laboratory of the writer, see the peculiarities of her mental spirits and get the information about various cultural leaders who were Lesia's pen pals. Such biography learning based on letters will foster the formation of pupils' literary competence.

The traditional usage of chronological tables, memorizing entire biographies given in a classbook decreases the interest in literature. When such old-fashioned methods are used, the time when the writer lived and created is eliminated.

The usage of modern methods, in particular, lessons carried on with the help of original letters, is the key to analyzing her lifetime, art. Additionally, it helps to seize how the works of art were being written and, accordingly, it will form literary competence. In fact, learning biographies at the lessons of Literature at schools launches the consideration of each monographic topic. Therefore, as it was written by a well-known scientist and methodologist - B. Stepanyshyn, it must become a stimulus to be interested in learning the works of an author. The scholar suggests to use: "less date, names, insignificant secondary information, and more interesting episodes with a subtextual address to the feelings of pupils" [3, p. 182].

In order to form literary competence, it would be interesting to examine the peculiarities of Lesia Ukrainka's family correspondence which has a special warmth.

It is needed to tell pupils that the letters sent to relatives (in particular, the Drahomanov family) were written by Lesia Ukrainka when she was young. Throughout all her childhood she was ill, then she had been struggling with the disease for the whole life. It was, as she wrote in one of the letters, "a 30-year-old war". Her life was a constant travel to the places of treatment. This correspondence was almost the only consolation in her life. But she never gave up, she hoped for recovery, for healing with the help of spring, the sun and the sea.

Lesia Ukrainka once wrote in the letter to her mother: "If the real spring came sooner for the sun to be more" (1908)." [5 p. 231]. Or the letter to the Kosach family (1909): "...So nice spring we have got here! The gardens flourished, even the violets were blue everywhere in the shade, - so I have 'uplifted'. When the heat affects me I become doubly healthier" [5, p. 278].

Then we tell children that despite the disease the writer did everything she could. When she was only 18 she joined the activity of Kyiv "Pleiada" and started working on the edition for public. There were translation works of world literature masterpieces. In connection with this she wrote to her brother Mykhailo: "There is nothing more than say that I'm going to work SO hard! Everything that will depend on me, I'll do my best to execute! What else I can do if not that! Because, nevertheless, literature is my job!" [4 p. 37-38].

After that we should mention that Lesia Ukrainka was a woman of spirit, she fought against disease and worked hard all her life! She wrote that literature is not just her profession - it's her calling!

Many interesting facts about political and literary life of Ukraine and other countries can be found in the letters to her relatives. While traveling to Bulgaria, Italy, Egypt, Germany and other countries the poetess was describing very thoroughly everything she saw there. For

the sick Lesia Ukrainka these journeys and correspondence were salvation and a huge part of her life.

As the woman once wrote, there were days when she sent about eight letters in which she shared her successes and failures, literary ideas, commented on her works and made an evaluation of critics of that time, took an interest on art. Moreover, she interchanged views on theatrical and operatic performances, music, pictorial art, etc.

While using the epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka in order to form literary competence when teaching biography, it is necessary to explain pupils the content and mood of her thoughts, speculations about her complicated fortune, search for an individual path in life, the role of her friends. With such a purpose the teacher has to select the appropriate letters, read some extracts out or write them down on board, show them from the screen. It is extremely significant for pupils to seize the essence of these letters. The teacher can achieve this by using the conversation to find out personal opinions on a certain matter, forming the questions on some problems, giving tasks for self-investigation of epistolary materials, and leading a kind of a dialogue 'a letter - a pupil'.

In addition to this, we should tell pupils that in these letters to relatives Lesia Ukrainka explains her points of view on educational and scientific matters. In the letter to M. P. Drahomanov (1891) Lesia Ukrainka writes that "our people are beginning to think more about their own education, rather than being satisfied with the state science itself" [4 p. 112].

It is important to highlight that this correspondence between the Kosach and Drahomanov families had a significant impact on Lesia Ukrainka's worldview and art.

In the middle classes these epistolary materials serve, to a greater extent, as an illustration for teacher's explanation. Schoolchildren learn the concept of letter building, get acquainted with the history of correspondence, understand the significance of the letters as the source of information about the poetess, her art. What is more, they acquire the skills of independent work with letters. For example, they learn how to draw up a bibliography, select quotes, copy out some notes, compare letters with works of art. The epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka is considered to be a means of familiarizing with the inward world of the poetess.

In the senior classes schoolchildren can see the connection between the correspondence and art of Lesia Ukrainka. By the way, they are able to deepen their knowledge about the theory of correspondence itself.

It is appropriate to use the epistolary works of Lesia Ukrainka at the lessons related to biography learning. Moreover, it is significant to add the memories of contemporaries and notes from diary.

Hence, it is important to apply various methods and forms of work with the letters. One of the most interesting forms of work with the epistolary heritage at the lessons of Ukrainian literature is the selection of a quote from a letter of the poetess as an epigraph to the lesson or a composition. Aside from that, children also can find an aphoristic phrase, because Lesia Ukrainka's letters are full of color. There are many popular expressions of folklore and literary origin, proverbs and sayings. Her letters contain the characteristics of various events, reviews of literary works, sceneries.

A great object for searching activities of pupils at the lesson of Ukrainian literature can become the following issue: "The biography of Lesia Ukrainka with the help of letters". The teacher has to advise the pupils which illustrative epistolary materials can be selected to learn writer's biography, recommend the necessary literature, point to the appropriate letters that are to be used during preparation. Therefore, it means that the teacher has to manage the whole process of preparing.

Having got enough knowledge on this topic, children are able to understand the content, seize Lesia's considerations about her fortune, and realize the importance of friends in her life.

The epistolary heritage can be used at different stages of the lesson of biography learning. By the way, it can also be used when analyzing the work of art or at final lessons. With the help of these materials a certain emotional background is created. This background affects pupils' interest in the figure of the poetess. Besides, the teacher can use the epistolary heritage during some extracurricular activities. For instance, The Day of Lesia Ukrainka's Letter can be held, where children would discuss the content of some letters of the writer. Moreover, there can be created the groups of young researchers: biographers, historians, literary critics. Thus, the epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka may become the important means of increasing pupils' interest in literature, the means of forming literary competence.

Some methodists, in particular N. Petrychenko, recommend using the epistolary materials at the lessons of extracurricular reading, hobby clubs, optional classes, where schoolchildren are able to work on the writer's letters in the context of a particular problem ("The Question of Psychology of Creativity in the Epistolary Heritage of Lesia Ukrainka", "The Beauty of the Homeland Nature in the Letters of Lesia Ukrainka", etc.). The scientist suggests to use the samples of epistolary prose during some extracurricular activities (quizzes, competitions, literary and artistic evenings, The Day of a Letter, etc.) [1, p. 13].

### **Conclusions**

To sum up, the epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka is a significant source of learning writer's biography at school. It is the means of forming literary competence. The point is that it allows to reveal the peculiar features of her inward world, views on life matters, creative work, attitude towards literary processes and social life at that time. Reading Lesia's letters helps pupils to feel and understand her worries. The epistolary materials make schoolchildren think about their own life and deepen into their own inward worlds. With the help of the epistolary heritage pupils become more interested in Literature. Moreover, it increases their standard of knowledge, betters their ability to perceive the thoughts and feelings of other people. Evidently, the usage of the epistolary heritage of Lesia Ukrainka helps to form the literary competence of schoolchildren.

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