

The Importance of the School Magazine as an Extra-Curricular Activity in Facilitating Students' Cross-Curricular Skills and Competences

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≈ The paper discusses the school magazine as an important extracurricular activity. We first define the characteristics of school magazines, pointing to aims, content focus, types of texts and the organisation of editorial boards. The fact that school magazines present an important platform for young people to formulate their opinions, challenge societal norms and values, pursue their artistic aspirations, and acquire knowledge, skills and competences, as well as form group identity, is emphasised. The objective of the research was to identify how the theoretical underpinnings of the school magazine as a clash of genres are reflected in the selected corpus of 103 issues of the school magazine *Izvir*, which has been in circulation since 1967. Particular interest is focused on the content, the types of texts, the presence of the zeitgeist and the edition notice. The research is in the form of a case study, applying thematic network analysis. The results show that the researched corpus covers diverse content, relating mainly to curricular and extracurricular activities, embraced in informative and interpretative journalistic texts, entertaining features and a literary section. The extent of politically oriented content engaging with issues that mark the period 1979–1985 is exceptional. The edition notice shows a significant improvement from the first issues, which lacked much of the required data, to the present perfected issues. Lastly, the magazines mirror the zeitgeist, transitioning from socialist and communist ideology to democracy. All in all, school magazines are an important educational pillar, adding to the formation of young people's minds, but also encouraging teachers to question their roles, didactic methods and approaches. They also play a role in the formation of the school's recognition in the local community.

Keywords: edition notice, extra-curricular activity, skills and competences, school magazine, content, types of texts, zeitgeist

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Pomen šolskega glasila kot obšolske dejavnosti pri razvoju prečnih veščin in zmožnosti

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Članek obravnava šolsko glasilo kot pomembno obšolsko dejavnost. Najprej opredelimo značilnosti šolskega glasila. Pogledamo cilje, ki jim šolska glasila sledijo, vsebino, besedilne vrste, ki se jih ustvarjalci glasil poslužujejo, in delovanje uredništev šolskih glasil. Poudarimo, da so šolska glasila pomembna platforma, ki mladim omogoča, da izrazijo svoje mnenje, so kritični do družbenih norm in vrednot, zasledujejo svoje umetniške ambicije, pridobivajo številno znanje, veščine in zmožnosti ter prek njih tudi izražajo pripadnost šoli. Z raziskavo smo želeli ugotoviti, kako se značilnosti šolskega glasila kot hibridnega medija sporočanja odražajo v izbranem korpusu 103 številčk šolskega glasila *Izvir*, ki izhaja od leta 1967. Posebno pozornost smo namenili vsebinam, besedilnim vrstam, prisotnosti duha časa in kolofonu. V raziskavi je bila uporabljena študija primera, pri čemer smo se poslužili analize tematskih mrež. Izsledki so pokazali, da preučevani korpus pokriva raznolike vsebine, ki se nanašajo predvsem na šolske in obšolske dejavnosti, zajete v informativna in interpretativna publicistična besedila, zabavne vsebine in v literarno ustvarjanje. Presenetljiv je obseg političnoangažiranega pisanja, ki je v preučevanem korpusu svoj vrhunec dosegel med letoma 1979 in 1985. Analiza kolofona kaže, da je glasilo napredovalo od prvih številčk, ki niso vsebovale vseh potrebnih podatkov, do današnjih dovršenih izdaj. Navsezadnje glasila odražajo duh časa, ki sega od socialistične in komunistične ideologije do demokracije. Šolska glasila so torej pomembna vzgojna in izobraževalna dejavnost, ki prispeva k oblikovanju mladih, omogoča preizpraševanje učiteljeve vloge in uporabe sodobnih didaktičnih pristopov ter prispeva k prepoznavnosti šole v lokalni skupnosti.

Ključne besede: kolofon, obšolska dejavnost, veščine in zmožnosti, šolsko glasilo, vsebina, besedilne vrste, duh časa

Introduction

The production of a school magazine is an important extracurricular activity and is perceived as indispensable in many schools (Mohor, 2008). It differs from other types of periodicals in its aims, characteristics, focus, organisation and distribution range (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). As a clash of genres, the school magazine encompasses texts displaying linguistic and functional similarities within a standard set of guidelines that include tone, style, imagery, symbolism and emotion, and take into account text, audience, subject and context (Ljung, 2000). These texts seek to fulfil the social action of interpreting and responding effectively; they also serve as sites for social actions, cultural critique and change, as well as answering questions of how and why texts are produced as cultural artefacts (Bawarshi, 2000; Caudill, 2007; Hoffman, 2002; Miller, 1984, p. 151). The school magazine as a clash of genres is fragile in the sense that it needs to respond to a dynamic, evolving, interdisciplinary world through reflection and assessment of current events (Shavkatovna, 2021).

Characterised by a complex and interconnected activity system involving numerous stakeholders, the school magazine is often conditioned by the enthusiasm and knowledge of individual teachers and students (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019) who are dedicated to reporting about diverse topics, from curricular and extracurricular activities to topics beyond the school setting (Bowen, 2015), within diverse informative and interpretative journalistic texts (Mohor & Saksida, 2003, p. 41). However, it can also bring in more relaxing topics, as well as providing a platform for students' first literary and artistic attempts (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). It is therefore safe to claim that the school magazine represents a platform that allows young people to formulate their opinions and critically reflect upon current problems, thus educating them in the vein of democracy and free speech, as well as helping them to develop creativity (Prostináková Hossová, 2016, pp. 326–335; Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). With the literary dimension, it pursues cultural and aesthetic goals, while shaping young minds into critical readers and media consumers (Mohor & Saksida, 2003). Through the creation of a school magazine, students acquire knowledge of specific journalistic genres and develop cross-curricular complementary skills (Ferguson & Page, 2021), such as communicative, analytical, cooperative and ICT skills. By acquiring functional and organisational skills, students also learn journalism principles (Caudill, 2007) and thus prepare for “effective self-realisation in today’s dynamic, information and mediatised society” (Kačínová, 2018, p. 39).

Students try their hand as novice journalists, writers, editors, designers, photographers, reporters, artists, poets, etc., and hone their skills, ideas and talents (Caudill, 2007; Mohor & Saksida, 2003; Mohor, 2008). They also get an opportunity to reflect on the politics of selection, representation and reception (Melbye & Tassoni, 2006), thus acquiring real-world experience and an insight into the publishing industry, which is driven by deadlines. The social nature of the genre ensures that each member depends on all of the others for success; therefore, the whole process must be entrusted to the hands of a capable, motivated and driven editor-in-chief, i.e., a student who takes responsibility for the entire process, from concept and choice of topics, to design, photography, organisation, production and editing (Caudill, 2007). The editor-in-chief should also make sure that a wide range of topics is covered, and that as many students as possible are included and given instruction on how to undertake thorough research, conduct interviews, write captions, take pictures, insert the data into a template, and take care of marketing, advertising, distribution, etc. (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). In addition, the editor-in-chief should be aware of copyright and trademark infringement, libel, privacy rights, etc., and should ensure that the magazine offers a fair and balanced view of the school and is more than just a set of records and PR tools (Caudill, 2007).

The organisation of work in school magazines is influenced by several factors. The first is continuous generational exchange and unsteady membership numbers (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019), typically decreasing towards the end of the process due to voluntary participation and workload (Caudill, 2007). The second factor is active teacher/student collaboration; teachers must be present and supervise the process, helping with the proofreading while being careful not to interfere too much (Rigler, 2022; Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). Although students are typically the main decision-makers regarding the topics to be written about and published, teachers nonetheless often contribute with their own writings (Caudill, 2007; Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019).

The creation and production process of the school magazine also presents an opportunity for educators to try out more flexible didactic methods and approaches, such as learning-by-doing, project-based, research-based, inquiry-based and problem-based learning, and thus develop a plethora of cross-curricular interdisciplinary skills much needed for students' future life (Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). It is also a way for the school to present itself to the general public and to develop closer links with the community in which it is embedded. As such, it is an ideal base for reflection, analysis and sharing of good practices (Kobolt & Žižak, 2013). As a piece of material culture,

the school magazine can also be used as data to interpret past and present human activity (Hoffman, 2002).

If journalists are to be considered mirrors of society then journalism should genuinely reflect the community in which it is produced and not protect the image of this community (Bowen, 2015). Following this principle, it is no surprise that the school magazine reflects the zeitgeist²: it either reports on various historical, political or ideological movements, issues and views (Coyer et al., 2007) or is very much under their influence (e.g., the writings produced during the Yugoslav³ era) (Mohor, 2008, p. 65). Overall, a school magazine being written for and by students of a specific school preserves images, stories and facts from each year for one specific group of people, linked by age and geographic community (Caudill, 2007). It also contributes to the sense of belonging (Lueck, 2017, p. 383), as it tends to empower by presenting positive images (Caudill, 2007).

The fact that school magazines have a rich tradition within the Slovenian educational setting is also worth emphasising. Dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, with magazines such as *Vaje* (1823), *Pesme za pokušno* (1832–1835), *Zvezek pesmi* (1833), *Vesna Daničice* (1848, 1851, 1852), *Lepa Vida* (1922), *Sprotuletna vijolica* (1846), *Vedež* (1848–1850), *Vrtec* (1871–1994) and *Angelček* (1887–1935), the early school magazines fulfilled the same goals as those of today: they created a platform for young people to sharpen, try out and demonstrate their artistic and editorial skills. This is how authors such as Simon Jenko (1835–1869), Fran Levstik (1831–1887), Matija Valjavec (1831–1897) and Srečko Kosovel (1904–1926) started their careers (Mohor, 2005; Prijatelj, 1995, pp. 236–241). At this point, it should be noted that, at the same time, young Slovenian female writers, such as Josipina Urbančič Turnograjska (1833–1854), Luiza Pesjak (1828–1898) and Lea Fatur (1865–1943), were also beginning to master their voice through poems, fairy tales, short stories, etc. (Blažič, 2018). To the best of our knowledge, however, they did not engage in the creation of school magazines of the early period in the way that their male counterparts did.

Having established the theoretical underpinnings, the study aims to research how the concept of the school magazine is manifested in a selected corpus of school magazines. To this end, four research questions were formulated:

(1) What kind of content prevails in the researched corpus?

2 Zeitgeist, a German word meaning “the spirit of the time”, was first used by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807. Zeitgeist encompasses the cultural, intellectual, ethical, philosophical and political climate that defines and reflects the spirit of an era and presents a platform for its thoughtful analysis and evaluation (Klikauer, 2016, p. 25).

3 The Yugoslav era refers to the times of the existence of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

- (2) What types of texts are used to embrace the content?
- (3) How is the zeitgeist evident?
- (4) What information does the edition notice reveal?

Method

The following is qualitative research that employs thematic network analysis as a method that seeks to “unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 390–394).

Sample

The sample comprises 103 issues of the school magazine *Izvir* published at the Veno Pilon Secondary School in Ajdovščina. The study covers the period between 1967/68 (when the first issue was published) and 2021/2022. However, it is important to note that the school magazine continues to be published to this very day. Geared towards students, teachers and the local community, its mission is to encourage creativity among the young and disseminate information. It is published periodically, the language of communication being mainly Slovenian. The whole corpus is available at several locations: at the Archive of the Veno Pilon Secondary School in Ajdovščina and at the National and University Library of the Republic of Slovenia (NUK), while issues from 1967/68 to 2011/12 are also part of the Digital Library of Slovenia (dLib). Additionally, it is registered in COBISS (the Slovenian Library Information System that links libraries into a national library information system). The author of the present research decided to make use of the issues from the school’s archive for several reasons: first, the digitalised collection finishes with the 2011/2012 school year; second, it is incomplete (a few issues of the first editions have only recently been discovered); and thirdly, due to paper and ink deterioration, some of the issues are difficult to read even in the paper format, which makes them almost indecipherable in digital form.

Instrument

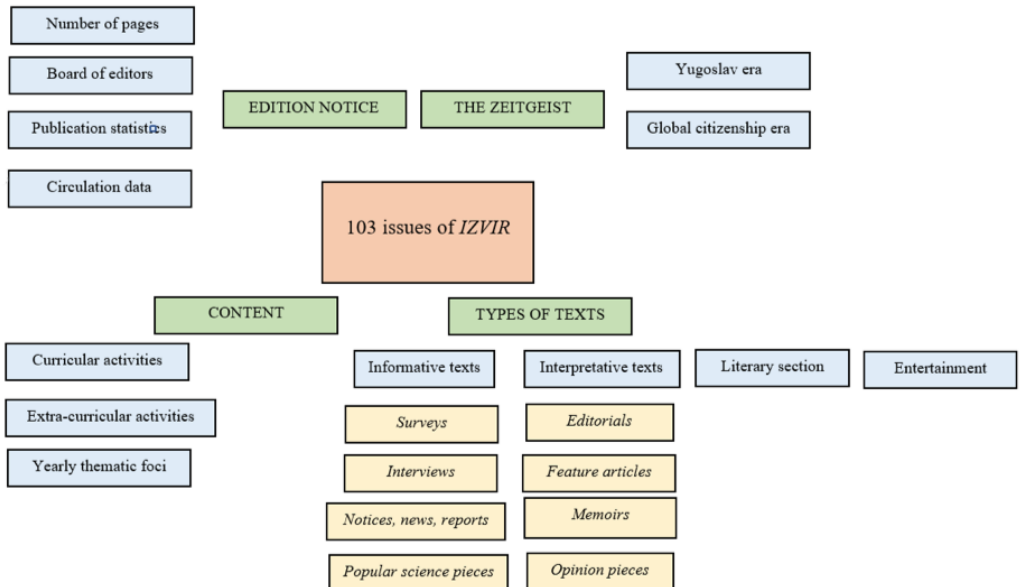
We decided to apply a thematic network, a web-like map (Figure 1) that helped us understand the analysed corpus on both the explicit and implicit levels (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388).

Research design

Based on the theoretical underpinnings and our research questions, a set of predefined categories was devised, which later emerged as global (over-arching) themes. However, during the breaking-up process, the first basic (fundamental) themes and later organising (more abstract) themes unfolded. The organisation of the themes was executed by taking into account the intrinsic similarities they shared. After the thematic network was established, we formed a summary of each theme, made deductions and linked them with the relevant theory. Lastly, we looked at the thematic network, the research questions and the theoretical framework comprehensively and inferred conclusions from the patterns that emerged in the exploration of the texts, as well as exposing underlying questions.

Figure 1

Thematic network of the most salient themes found in the corpus



Results

The following section presents the results of the qualitative analysis, which yielded 4 global themes, 13 organising themes and 8 basic themes.

Content

The global theme 'content' splits into three organising themes: curricular activities, extracurricular activities and yearly thematic foci. The recurring basic themes among the first two organising themes are: excursions and field trips, culture, culture days and other culture-related events, project days, school clubs, competitions, achievements and awards, people important for the school, the issue of the (in)activity of young people, love for one's country, etc. These basic themes align with the yearly thematic focus. Some of the more popular ones relate to:

- artists of local, national and international importance (e.g., a special issue of 1970/71 and the issue of 1994/95 published in memory of Venko Pilon, the second issue of 1992/93 dedicated to the writer Danilo Lokar, the 2003/2004 issue dedicated to Srečko Kosovel, etc.);
- important political personas (e.g., the 1979/1980 issues dedicated to Josip Broz-Tito and Edvard Kardelj, respectively);
- commemoration of political events important for the founding of the nation (e.g., the third issue of 1983/84 dedicated to the 40th anniversary of the first Slovenian government);
- the engagement of the young in political bodies (e.g., the third issue of 1976/77 dedicated to the Communist Union);
- the promotion of political campaigns (e.g., the 1979/80 issue dedicated to NNNP⁴);
- the school's jubilee years (e.g., the 2001 and 2022 issues commemorating 50 and 70 years of the school, respectively).

A humour-themed issue of the school magazine entitled *Bukvice za shirane* (Booklets for the undernourished, 1982/83) is unique for being full of humorous nonsense literary contributions. In 2011/2012, a corpus of sheet music was documented as an issue of the school magazine created under the thematic focus 'seasons of the year'. From 2013, more abstract themes are addressed, such

4 NNNP – an acronym signifying a nationwide political mobilisation campaign in which the Yugoslav authorities informed people about worst-case scenarios, telling them what to do in the event of a natural disaster, a war or a nuclear, biological or chemical attack, with the aim of ensuring defence (Rojc, 2016).

as values (2013), identity and belonging (2014), love (2015), friendship and solidarity (2016), respect (2017), peace (2019), etc.

To sum up, like most school magazines, *Izvir* offers a rich insight into the life of the school, its students, its personnel and the values to which its creators adhered (Caudill, 2007; Mohor & Saksida, 2003; Prostináková Hossová & Švecová, 2019). Particularly noteworthy, however, is the extent of politically oriented content and thematic foci that characterised the issues in the period 1979–1985.

Types of texts

The representation of the global theme of ‘types of texts’ is based on Mohor and Saksida (2003). It splits into four organising themes and nine basic themes. The categorisation of writings into different types of texts was not always clear-cut, as some of the texts shared characteristics of the adjacent categories. In such cases, the criterion was to determine the dominant category and proceed in that manner.

Informative journalistic texts

As one of the organising themes, informative journalistic texts aim to inform and report objectively. They comprise five basic themes: notices, news and reports, popular science pieces, surveys, and interviews.

Notices, news and reports

As analytical descriptions of events (Shavkatovna, 2021), notices, news and reports represent the most popular type of journalistic texts in the researched corpus. Students make use of them to report on the *when*, *where*, *what*, *why* and *who* of the current topic of interest. Some issues should be highlighted for their informative, factual and distinctly political touch (1976/77, 1; 1976/77, 4; 1977/78, 5; 1983/84, 4). In them, we read reports of the activities undertaken by politically oriented youth organisations and clubs (e.g., the Marxist School Club, and the UN School Club). These texts were written in line with the guidelines of the booklet *ABC7: Informing in Schools*, which encouraged building community spirit (Mihelin, 1979, p. 3) in a way that was typical of socialist and communist times.

Popular science pieces

Popular science pieces aim to inform an audience of non-experts of the latest developments in the field of science. Designed to report scientific

information in an interesting way, they have an important role in shaping people's views of academic research (Fu & Hyland, 2014), as they seek to convince readers of the importance of the content and scientific progress (Hyland, 2010). Ten issues contain articles that were classified as popular science pieces. The authors of these articles deal with topics such as relativity theory, memory and learning techniques, snake venom, domestication of birds and some other wildlife, rocket propulsion, juvenile delinquency, the sea as a source of food, the issue of vaccination, etc. These topics are dealt with in an objective, factual, technical and comprehensive way, indicating the complexity with the necessary jargon vocabulary. Sometimes these writings are equipped with charts and images to illustrate the findings, but only one, in a 2021 issue, is equipped with references. In some cases, the pieces are serialised into several parts.

It is worth noting that popular science pieces have a tradition dating back to the very beginnings of the formation of the school magazine as a genre in Slovenia. A group of educated and engaged students known as *vajevci* (1854–1855)⁵ aimed to present novel ideas and concepts to disseminate research and provide readers with new findings. Some of these students later became acknowledged experts in their fields of expertise, e.g., Fran Erjavec on fauna and Ivan Tušek on flora (Pogačnik, 1968, p. 15; Prijatelj, 1995, pp. 236–241). Stemming from this, it might be concluded that the authors of the articles identified in the present study as popular science pieces might have aspired to enter the world of science or academia.

Surveys

Surveys aim to gather information from a group of people by using a set of pre-prepared questions usually in the form of a questionnaire. The surveyor collects data on behaviours, knowledge, attitudes and opinions that they need for further activities (Dale, 2006). The surveys published in *Izvir* follow much in this vein. They were prepared, conducted and reported by students 14 times between 1967 and 2001, after which they no longer appeared. Written in a youthful, entertaining manner, with the use of exclamation marks, rhetorical questions, subjective criticisms, biased interpretations, and ironic and funny comments, they give an insight into the school climate and events of interest to the students. Even if strict factuality is not the main concern of these articles

5 The school magazine *Vaje* (1854–1855) represented an alternative to the rigidity of the school system of the time. The founding members of *Vaje* – Vaclav Bril, Simon Jenko, Valentin Mandelc, Ivan Tušek, Fran Erjavec, Valentin Zarnik and Martin Povše – were individuals with extremely broad interests, who were knowledgeable about general socio-political problems, which is why no other student association has achieved the same level of importance in the development of Slovenian literature (Mohor & Saksida, 2003; Pogačnik, 1968, p. 10; Prijatelj, 1995, pp. 236–241).

and little contextual information is provided, not to mention the questionable research methodology and small sample size, these texts were nonetheless meaningful to the students, as they themselves were the participants of the surveys. Surveys were conducted on the following topics: the popularity of the school magazine, culture, happiness, smoking habits, the grading system, leisure activities, sexuality, the teaching profession, the level of acquaintance among the students, local artists, and life in the dormitory.

Interviews

An interview as a type of text appears throughout the researched corpus. It is the result of a purposeful questioning of a person with the aim of obtaining certain information (Shavkatovna, 2021), but it excludes discussion and the interviewer's opinion (Natsvlshvili, 2013). Interviews in the researched corpus follow the characteristics of the journalistic interview: they reflect reality, they are presented in the form of questions and answers, and they are topical, relevant and interesting. The interviewees are present and former students, teachers of the school, political figures or music groups. The interviews aim to highlight the individual's areas of strength (e.g., a student footballer), present a particular profile of the teaching profession, recall school experience, gather information about well-known local artists, etc. Until 2013, interviews were conducted by students, and after that also by teachers-editors.

Interpretative journalistic texts

Interpretative journalistic texts represent the second organising theme and are further split into four basic themes: editorials, feature articles, opinion pieces and memoirs. As the word interpretative suggests, these articles go beyond mere factual reporting and allow for the author's subjectivity.

Editorials

Editorials are a distinctive form of journalism, occupying a special place in the magazine and representing the voice of the institution rather than that of an individual. They have a characteristic style and form of expression, and they aim to influence (Firmstone, 2019). This is true of the editorials of the researched corpus, as well. However, it should be stressed that not all editions have editorials. Moreover, editorials are often not signed with the editor's name. Nonetheless, it can be deduced that by 2001, editorials had been written by the student-editor-in-chief or a student board of editors. A distinctive feature of students' editorials is their constant call for more articles, which they approached in different ways: by kindly encouraging students to participate, by

moralising about the importance of being active, by pleading for articles, by appealing to the conscience of other students, or by thanking them for their response. Editorials also reveal how work proceeded among the members of the editorial office, which comprised a very energetic, devoted and passionate group of students, among whom crises were nonetheless not unknown. All in all, student editorials reveal the very challenging task that students were faced with and the ways they solved it and succeeded in creating an issue. From 2013, editorials were written by a teacher editor-in-chief, who typically presents the content intertwined in the yearly thematic foci.

Feature articles

Feature articles are narrative texts that portray people and milieus with a personal and subjective touch (Steenen, 2009). Articles in this category aim to illustrate, maybe even inspire, but do not provide critique as opinion pieces do. Feature articles of the analysed corpus deal with the presentation of local businesses, sports and music, personalities, school-related topics, important milestones in the history of the school, and the presentation of research and development projects, while a few of them present oriented education.⁶ However, the most frequently represented articles in this category are texts on political organisations and ideas, the majority of which were published between 1969 and 1985. Some examples of articles of this nature are: *On the work and mission of the Yugoslav people's army* (1976/77, 2, 2-22), *Partisan sanitation in the Primorska region* (1978/79, 3), *Self-protection of the people in war and in the case of disasters* (1979/80), *The first slovenian government in Ajdovščina* (1984/85, 3), etc.

Opinion pieces

Another category is opinion pieces. Driven by facts and based on research, they are written as more complex, erudite, artistically valuable, stylistically complex essays, often without a very rigid structure (Rončáková & Môcová, 2020). As a type of journalistic commentary, they are persuasive, personal and subjective; they aim to convince readers of the importance of a topic and recruit them to the perspective of the writer, who establishes a stance early on in the piece and provides sufficient arguments with which s/he seeks to overcome alternative viewpoints (Fu & Hyland, 2014; Hanoli, 2020). This category of articles is made up of young people's critical – sometimes even daring – reflections

6 Oriented education was an ideologically founded project effective in the period 1980–1996 in Slovenian secondary and tertiary education. It pursued the idea of egalitarianism and human resource management for the needs of the future labour market. It failed on account of not being in line with market trends and left a huge deficit in the number of educated people (Kramberger, 1999).

on topical issues or events (such as the issue of the inactivity and passivity of youth), historical events, the current school and the social system. A passage from an article entitled *Highlights from the youth conference (Izvir, 1977/78, p. 2)* is presented here as an example. In it an anonymous student critically addressed the teacher's expectations:

Well, I remember Professor S.'s remark that we are only interested in money. I don't know why, but it seems to me that people with monthly salaries often find it very difficult to understand that students sometimes need to scrap and save. Society pays for our education, but not fully. There are still expenses like bus fares, lunches, prom trips, proms, membership fees, contributions for broken chairs, compulsory film screenings, theatre, English, French, maths, physics, science notebooks and magazines, books, pencils, field trips, etc.

It is noticeable that young people engaged in this genre with at least one article in all of the years preceding 2003, after which opinion pieces are no longer present.

Memoirs

Another representative subgenre of literary nonfiction is memoirs. As Kirby and Kirby (2010) point out, memoirs provide accounts of real events or experiences in artful narratives. They are characterised by a distinguishable first-person voice, with the author posing rhetorical questions and/or injecting uncertainties and ruminations into their factual texts. In this way, they create detailed word pictures for their readers and send them on memory journeys of their own. Memoirs aim not only to remember or describe, but also to inspire and educate. This is true of the memoirs present in the corpus, as well. They are written by teachers and former students, who recall their high school days or prominent personalities (e.g., Veno Pilon, Evgeny Bavčar, Boris Pahor). Typical of anniversary editions, these writings are stylistically well written, nostalgic and emotionally charged.

Entertainment

The next organising theme is entertainment, which includes diverse basic themes, from crosswords, horoscopes, jokes and witticisms, to cartoons, caricatures, comic strips and other visual images that allow for greater freedom, spontaneity and authenticity (Maidment, 2017). In our case, entertaining features relate to the school environment. Crosswords are present in 10 issues, comic strips in 19 and horoscopes appear 7 times. Whereas crosswords,

horoscopes and comic strips appear throughout the circulation, humour is present in the periods 1967–1970 and 1984–2008, and completely absent from 1971 to 1983 and from 2008 to the present. From 1984 to 1994, there was quite a lot of humour at the teachers' expense, with students making use of jokes, witticisms and mocking rejoinders. The students' aim may have been to test their boundaries (Meeus & Mahieu, 2009), or humour may have been a coping strategy to deal with their feelings (Chateau-Smith, 2016).

Literary section

Another in the organising themes is the literary section, which further splits into three basic themes: prose, poetry and drama. In our case, all 103 issues of the corpus feature fiction in all three forms. Ten issues were entirely fiction-based and mostly published on the occasion of the Slovenian Culture Day, e.g., the first issue of the 1983/84 edition and the 1985/86 edition, the second issue of 1984/85, etc., while one was dedicated to the annual gathering of aspiring young authors.

Edition notice

The global theme 'edition notice' splits into four organising themes: circulation data, publication statistics, board of editors and number of pages. The research shows that the corpus has all of these characteristics only after 2013, while the magazines from 1967–1977 are mostly equipped only with the names of students and the mentor.

The publication statistics show that from 1967/68 to 1986/87, the magazines were on average published four times a year, although some school years proved to be even more fruitful (five issues were published in 1977/78 and six in 1979/80). From 1987/88, there is only one issue per year. Although some issues lack page numbers, it can be concluded that the first issues amounted to approximately 20 pages per issue and persisted at this number until the year 2000, when the anthological issue boasted 284 pages. After 2013, the magazines amount to 70–90 pages on average per issue. Circulation data first appeared in 1987/88, when 150 copies of the issue were printed. The number of copies increased over time and peaked in 2013 with 900 copies, after which an average of 700 copies per issue are published. The first issues were made with the use of cyclostyle,⁷ often by the students themselves. Later, the creators made use

7 Cyclostyle is a manual stencil duplicator that was commonly used in the early to mid-twentieth century. By creating a matrix, multiple copies could be extracted through a process of pressing ink through the matrix onto paper.

of photocopiers, and it seems that the magazine was outsourced to a printing house to complete the publication process for the first time in the 1990/91 school year. In some cases, especially at the beginning of the magazine's circulation, the identity of the mentor remains unclear, and not all of the articles are equipped with the author's name. The only piece of information that is always given is the board of editors with the editor-in-chief. Until the early 2000s, the school magazines were created collaboratively by at least 7 and up to 17 students under the leadership of a student editor-in-chief and tutored by a teacher-mentor. In 2013, the school magazines were transferred to the teachers' leadership and they became the editors-in-chief.

The zeitgeist

The global theme 'the zeitgeist' splits into two organising themes: the Yugoslav era and the global citizenship era. Both of these themes later split into several minor basic ones.

Having thoroughly researched the entire corpus, it is evident that the ideology of the Yugoslav socio-political system heavily influenced students' writings from 1967 to 1991, peaking between 1979 and 1985. There are many articles related to the socio-political ideology, for example:

Everyone should be aware that we live in a socialist Yugoslavia. The working class came to power in our country, but at the same time as it was fighting for power, it was fighting for something more important – for self-management,⁸ for the right of all members of society to decide directly for themselves on all social matters. Self-management is the basis of our socio-political system and social order in our country; it is the aim and the result of the workers' movement. (Izvir, 1976/77, p. 6).

Students were encouraged to write about historical events important for the formation of Yugoslavia. A lot was written about the collaboration with the representatives of the Yugoslav National Army, about young people's participation in workers' brigades,⁹ about the idea of the worker's self-management contribution,

8 Self-management is a distinctive feature of the Yugoslav system that refers to a comprehensive socioeconomic system characterised by collective ownership of production resources and by socioeconomic relations that ensure that decisions are taken by the workforce and the wider local community first, and then by the top governing bodies that gradually lose their authoritarian power (Vodušek Starič, 1983, p. 9).

9 The Youth Work Brigades (Slo. *mladinske delovne brigade*) were organised groups that operated in post-war Yugoslavia. They worked according to a military scheme and were organised on a (conditionally) voluntary basis with the aim of improving the economy and strengthening the political unity of the Yugoslav youth, and of nations and nationalities, while pursuing cultural and educational objectives.

and about referenda¹⁰. A passage from an article entitled *Misli iz naših nalog* (*Izvir*, 1976/77, 15) is presented here as an example. In it an anonymous student writes:

We are preparing for a referendum for the construction of a new school centre, for the renovation of schools in the municipality of Ajdovščina. We will help with our contributions, with our work. We will build together. ...

Numerous articles are connected with the concept of communism and the Union of Communists, for example:

It is true that communists have always given up something, but above all they have given up their laurels and resting on their laurels. They have always been committed to fraternity and unity, to the workers' problems and finding their solutions, and, more recently, to the pursuit of a policy of non-alignment (*Izvir*, 1976/77, 2).

Young people write about their entry into political organisations, such as the Union of Communists or the Union of Socialist Youth of Slovenia, and their participation in Marxist and United Nations Organisation clubs; they report conclusions formed at local, regional and national youth political conferences. Through interviews conducted with factory workers and presentations of local factories, value is given to the importance of the workforce.

Certain editions were enriched with political slogans such as "Tito's way is our way!" (*Izvir* TITO, 1980, p. 3) or "To be a communist is to be on the front line of the struggle for progress, for a happier future" (*Izvir* TITO, 1980, p. 4). A characteristic feature of this type of writing is a strong emotional note, e.g., "Our holiday, in our month, with our dearest leader – Tito. Can we ask for more?" (*Izvir*, 1967/68, p. 1). Leading figures (Tito, Kardelj) and political bodies (the Yugoslav People's Army) were idealised and portrayed in a highly biased way, e.g., "Yugoslavia has never had such a hero in its history, nor can it have one in the future" (*Izvir* TITO, 1980, p. 4).

We would like to present a poem dedicated to Tito, which we classified as a case of engaged socio-political writing within the genre of political eulogy (Dolgan, 1989). It was published on the occasion of Tito's death (*Izvir* TITO, 1980, p. 1). In light of the other articles in this issue, the poem written by an anonymous student helped endorse the cult of Tito's personality by promoting feelings of admiration, love, yearning and devotion, mixed with sentiments of sadness.

May our deeds speak of our love for you!

10 The worker's self-management contribution (Slo. *samoprисpevek*) was a levy of a few percent of the salary, which had to be voted on in a referendum. It was used to co-finance the construction of community-oriented projects (Piškurić, 2017, 99).

*Today, Comrade Tito, I am sending you a poem,
a poem my brothers are already sharing far and wide,
it is full of strength and faith, Comrade Tito –
of the love and yearning that countless young hearts hold for you!*

*Today I yearn, oh so much, I yearn
to shake your heroic hand,
to admire Thy face, sculpted amidst the storms,
Thy caring eyes, their dawn-like glow*

*and whisper words both long and tender
that our spring shall never falter, not even in the face of adversity,
but rather rise even more blooming and gentle!*

*Hear me, Comrade, you soaring falcon,
hear how the earth conceives its warm love
and how new life from her soul sprouts -
gentle as blossoms, pure as the dawn!*

*Today, Comrade Tito, I'm sending you a poem,
a poem my brothers are already sharing far and wide,
a poem full of faith and zeal!
May our deeds speak of our love for you!*

In the anthological issue of the corpus, a former student recalls her teenage artistic endeavours (*Izvir*, 2000, p. 8), saying: “One day, when the teacher was discussing the selection of my poems for publication, she hastily put one of them in her bag. At the time, of course, I didn’t know why. But thinking about it today, I should be grateful to her, because the poem was politically controversial for the time.” The following thoughts of a long-time mentor (Slamič, 2000, p. 56) are in much the same vein: “Some of the poems were overtly critical; we could not publish them because the life of the student and the mentor would have become complicated.” One wonders how many unspoken similar cases there must have been where a mentor decided to withdraw an article to avoid negative consequences.

After 1985, the issues became distinctly more creative and experimental in expression and visual layout. The question arises as to the extent to which this turn is linked with the death of Josip Broz-Tito, the beginnings of the collapse

of the Yugoslav political system and the consequent loosening of censorship, or whether it may simply be the case of more daring generations that did not care about social and political directives. Upon thorough investigation, one thing is nonetheless clear: criticism of the social and political system – albeit not extensive criticism – first emerged only after 1991.¹¹ It can therefore be assumed that until that time, only articles written in line with political directives could be published.

On the other hand, issues published after the year 2000 promote the idea of European and global citizenship, as evident from articles on Comenius and Erasmus student exchanges. After 2017, there is a greater presence of articles on cross-generational cooperation, active citizenship and sustainable development, i.e., themes that are relevant in today's era. Part of the 2021 issue is dedicated to articles written by parents, who assess the school, compare it with their own experience, and express their gratitude.

Discussion and conclusion

As an important extracurricular activity, the traditionally oriented school magazine aims to inform, analyse, comment, educate, advertise, entertain, etc., and as such is an artefact of the world at large (Mihelin, 1979; Mohor, 2005, p. 28; Mohor & Saksida, 2003, p. 65). Production of a school magazine includes students, who take a central role in its creation, and teachers, who refrain from the traditional roles of ultimate know-how and instead take on the roles of facilitators and mentors who can try out alternative didactic methods and approaches to achieve the final product. The school magazine is also a way for the school to place itself within its community.

The article presents a case study that aimed to analyse all 103 issues of the school magazine *Izvir* in the period 1967–2022. A comprehensive analysis of the content, the types of texts, the zeitgeist and the edition notice was conducted and placed within a theoretical framework. The findings show that the researched corpus covers a wide range of topics primarily concerning the school's curricular and extracurricular activities and related to the yearly thematic foci. One phenomenon that needs to be pointed out is the number of politically oriented themes present in the magazines published under the Yugoslav regime. The school magazine is, therefore, an excellent illustration of how the zeitgeist permeated and reflected young people's writings. To be more specific, it demonstrates the influence and intrusion of the socio-political system into the educational setting with the clear promotion of the political and

11 The year of Slovenian independence.

economic ideology of the time, which encouraged active engagement of the young in political affiliations. The writings have elements of nationalism and patriotism that reinforce the cult of personality. To follow in this vein, it might even be deduced that the magazine provided a platform for political education, as values and principles of the political system of the time are so clearly emphasised. Another finding that should be highlighted is the presence of censorship, as mentioned in retrospect in the anthological issue of 2000 in reference to the Yugoslav era.

The research also demonstrates the richness of various types of texts, which form four broad categories (informative journalistic texts, interpretative journalistic texts, entertainment, and a literary section) that are further divided into subcategories. It is therefore safe to hypothesise that the corpus satisfied the various tastes of its readers. In terms of the edition notice, the corpus is not always thoroughly and accurately equipped with the required data, although it does improve as time progresses and was perfected when teachers became editors-in-chief. However, the very engagement of teachers as the ultimate leaders in the creation of the school magazine poses several questions: Are young people today lacking incentives to be bold and daring in their actions, and thereby unable to create their own publication as in the golden years of the magazine's beginnings? Do the students avoid the task because of their general passivity, or are they disinterested because school magazines may no longer be their preferred avenue to express their creativity on the grounds of alternative and more appealing and creative outlets (e.g., memes)? Or are the roots of this phenomenon to be attributed to teachers, the school climate and the leadership of the school?

Looking at the findings, numerous other questions emerge, which we believe would be worth investigating in future studies, for example: Do humour and critique correlate with the zeitgeist that censors, restricts, permits or perhaps even encourages their usage, or could it be a specific feature of the school that discourages ridicule? Might it even be argued that young people today have no opinion of their own? To find comprehensive answers, but also to give the above findings more value, we would suggest extending the research and comparing this corpus with a similar one elsewhere in Slovenia or on the ex-Yugoslav territory.

We nonetheless believe that the results obtained are relevant for schools that engage in the publication of their school magazines on several levels. Firstly, the researched corpus – with its continuity, the number of participating students and teachers, and the circulation data – is an example of good practice. Secondly, as an important extracurricular activity, the school magazine serves

as a useful didactic tool in facilitating students' skills and competences. Thirdly, school magazines provide a platform for educators to reflect upon their roles and the efficiency of their didactic methods. Lastly, they also add to the formation of the school's recognition in the local community, while helping to define and strengthen the identity and sense of belonging among its members. To sum up, based on the obtained insights into the benefits of school magazines as a pedagogical and community-building tool, educators elsewhere can introduce reasonable changes to their publication process and thus enhance the quality of their work.

Author's note

The whole collection of school magazines *Izvir* was taken under thorough investigation with the articles listed below chosen to provide in-text evidence and justifications. To protect the writers' anonymity, all student articles are listed as anonymously written.

Izvir. (1967–2022). [A collection of school magazines]. *Izvir* – Glasilo Srednje šole Venca Pilon Ajdovščina. Arhiv Srednje šole Venca Pilon Ajdovščina.

- Misli iz naših nalog [Thoughts from our assignments]. (1976/77). *Izvir*, 1, 15.
- Utrinki iz mladinske konference [Highlights from the youth conference]. (1977/78). *Izvir*, 1, 2.
- Ob dnevu mladosti [On Youth Day]. (1967/68). *Izvir*, 3, 1.
- *Izvir*¹² – obstaja reka z rednim pretokom [*Izvir* – A river with a constant flow]. (2000). *Izvir*, 1, 8.
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- TITO. (1980). *Izvir* TITO, 6, 1–4.
- Naša sedanost je rezultat revolucionarnosti KP in osebnosti, ki jo vodi. [Our present is the result of the revolutionary character of the communist party and the personality who leads it]. (1976/77). *Izvir*, 3, 2.

Ethical statement

The research did not involve human and animal subjects. The reviews on which it was based aggregated studies that had already received ethical approval. Consequently, no additional ethical approval was necessary.

.....
12 The name of the school magazine *Izvir* means a spring, the origin of a river.

Disclosure statement

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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