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The Alternative Model Of Classification Of Belles-Lettres In Libraries

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ABSTRACT: Several systems for the classification of fiction have been proposed to date, but experience shows that such classification partially depends on the culture and literary education in specific countries. Slovenian public libraries have traditionally used UDC as the only subject information on belles-lettres. Research has shown that users would prefer richer subject information. Therefore an attempt was made to enhance UDC by adding subject information, that should be helpful to users and librarians. The newly proposed Alternative Model system contains lists of verbal and alpha-numerical denotations for the basic groups of belles-lettres book material (main-genres: lyrics, drama, epics) and all other categorical criteria (language of the original literary work, literature to which the work belongs, genre, sub-genre) and half-categorical (accessibility of the content of literary works, origin within the periods of literary history, the century in which the literary work was written, the rhythm of the language). All these lists are available, but not included in this paper. The idea of the Alternative Model system is to show the possibilities of making the classification of belles-lettres in libraries more helpful, efficient and exact.

1. Introduction

Classification systems are most often used for shelving library materials. This task is approached with different degrees of user friendliness in several library classification schemes. The most frequently cited and used are the Dewey and Universal Decimal, and Library of Congress classifications. Because these systems are used as shelving devices, the decision of assigning any work to a particular class influences the work's retrievability. The classification of fiction can be more challenging than the classification of non-fiction works, because it is often difficult to capture their elusive topics. They rarely speak

of facts, rather they frequently are written to provoke feelings. These feelings can, however, differ widely among different readers. Although in this sense classifying fiction means exerting a certain amount of force on these works, librarians and library users need fiction collections organized in such a manner that the works can be retrieved either from the library catalog or from the library's shelves. Classificatory criteria are such that a retrieval tool makes the retrieval of works of fiction either easier (user friendly) or more difficult.

Classificatory criteria for belles-lettres, i.e., the genre of fiction, can be specific to particular cultures. Sear and Jennings (1991), for example, list genres used by British libraries. While family sagas from their list can be translated to Slovenian "družinske sage," there is an insufficient number of such books to justify the use of either shelf location or subject headings. On the other hand, "road fiction" from the American guidelines on subject access to individual works of fiction (*Guidelines* 2000) has no meaning for the average Slovenian reader and would either be placed in Slovenian libraries with adventure or the depiction of everyday life. These differences can be partially attributed to the classification schedules traditionally used in British, American and Slovenian libraries. Hovi (1989) has shown that librarians performing subject cataloging are influenced by the classification system being used when making their classificatory decisions. On the other hand, literary theory is taught in schools at different levels, usually with a significant portion of national literature and influenced by national literary theory experts, who write the textbooks typically used.

The question thus arises as to which classification criteria a public library should employ for shelving their collection of belles-lettres and whether they should use one of the international classificatory systems or devise a new one. With these questions in mind, we have approached the problem of the classification of belles-lettres with the goal of creating a system that would be intuitively understood by public library users and easily used by librarians. On the basis of the *Universal Decimal Classification* (*UDC*) we have built an alternative classification system, which could be used in Slovenian libraries and libraries with a similar tradition, e.g., the states of the former socialist Yugoslavia or the Austrian Empire, for shelving and subject description.

2. Classification of Belles-lettres

The three prominent classification systems used by the libraries worldwide employ some of the same classificatory criteria for belles-lettres, but in slightly different ways. The *Dewey Decimal Classification*'s basic classificatory criteria are:

– the author's country, language and/or nationality;
– the literary genre; and,
– the time period when the author wrote.

A novel written by a German author who wrote in the period 1900-1950 would therefore receive the classification number 833.91. All novels by German authors from this period would, thus, be shelved together. This group of novels would neighbor first German novels of other time periods and then other literary genres written by German authors.

The *Universal Decimal Classification*, although it originated from the *DDC*, uses a slightly different approach. The basic classificatory criteria are:

– the author's language, country and/or nationality; and,
– literary genre.

The same novel written by a German author who wrote in the period 1900-1950 would therefore get classification number 821.112.2-31. However, time period would play no role in the classification process. All German novels would be shelved in the same group.

The classification of the Library of Congress would approach the same work quite differently. Its basic classificatory criteria are the following:

– the author's language, country and/or nationality;
– the time period, when the author wrote;
– the specific author; and,
– the genre, but only for prolific authors.

For example, the novel *Felix Krull,* written by the German author Thomas Mann who wrote in the period 1990-1950, would get class number PT2625 further subdivided by the number for the individual author. All literary works of this particular German author would be shelved in this group. This group of works, not limited to novels, would neighbor first works of other German writers of belles-lettres, then German authors of different time periods, and finally, all German literature. As in *DDC* and *UDC*, here too

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Literary work	*DDC*	*UDC*	*LCC*
Mann, Thomas (1875-1955) *Confessions of Felix Krull, confidence man : the early years.* 1st Vintage international ed. New York : Vintage Books, 1992.	833.91 83 German literature 833 German fiction 833.91 German fiction of the time period, 1900-1990	821.112.2-311.2 82 Literature 821 Literatures of individual languages 821.112.2 German literature 821–311.2 Representational novels of customs and characters. Depiction of everyday life. Realistic, slice-of-life novels	PT 2625 .A44 B313 1992 PT German literature PT 2625 Individual authors – time period 1860/70-1960 .A44 Mann, Thomas B313 Cutter number for the uniform title of the work
Bronte, Emily (1818-1848) *Wuthering Heights* Oxford : Oxford Univ. Press, 1981.	823.89 82 English literature 823 English fiction 823.8 English fiction of the Victorian time period, 1837-1899	821.111-311.2 82 Literature 821 Literatures of individual languages 821.111 English literature 821–311.2 Representational novels of customs and characters. Depiction of everyday life. Realistic, slice-of-life novels	PR4172 .W7 1981 PR English literature PR3991-5990 19th century, 1770/1800-1890/1900 PR4172 – 4173 Bronte, Emily .W7 Cutter number for the title proper
Bartol, Vladimir (1903-1967) *Alamut,* 1st North American ed. Seattle, Wash. : Scala House Press, 2004.	891.845 890 Slavic literatures 891.84 Slovenian literature 891.845 Slovenian literature from the time period 1900-1991	821.163.6-311.6 82 Literature 821 Literatures of individual languages 821.163.6 Slovenian literature 821–311.6 Historical, political, war novels	PG1918 .B33 A7813 2004 PG Slavic, Baltic and Albanian literature PG1900-1918 Slovenian literature PG1918.A-Z Individual authors 1800-1960 .B33 Cutter number for the author A 7813 Cutter number for the title proper

Table 1. Hierarchical explanation of class numbers and classificatory criteria of UDC, DDC *and* LCC.

the division of German literature would be preceded and followed other national literatures. This and two other examples are illustrated in Table 1.

Researchers have found that these classificatory criteria are not optimal for users. Their main drawback is the absence of topic representation. Alternative systems often include the description of the topic of the novel. Pejtersen and Austin (1983, 1984) included the following information in the subject representation of fiction:

– subject matter;
– action or course of events (psychological development and descriptions, social events, also includes genre);
– frame (time and geographical location); and,

– author's intention (emotional experience, cognition or information, criticism, and agitation).

Beghtol's Experimental Fiction Analysis System (Beghtol, 1994) includes four main elements:

– time and space of the work;
– event, i.e., seeking the criminal in mysteries; and,
– character or characters in the literary work.

Both Pejtersen and Austin's and Beghtol's schema are similar to Walker's, which according to Beghtol (1994) is based on Ranganathan's facets of space and time, genre, and topic. However, most alternative systems were designed to help the user search in an online catalog and were not concerned with shelving.

Our focus is on both: shelving and retrieval in the catalog.

UDC class numbers are traditionally the only subject description of belles-lettres given in the library catalogs in Slovenia. Only recently have some libraries decided to enhance such subject description with additional information. Two approaches are in use today. Slovenian subject headings (*Spletni splošni slovenski geslovnik* 2002-), developed and maintained by the National and University Library at Ljubljana, promote the description of the author's language, country and/or nationality, and literary genre. The second approach includes description of the topic of the literary work, following the American *Guidelines on subject access to individual works of fiction, drama, etc.* (2002) and Beghtol (1994). Both authors took part in the project, where possibilities for such description were investigated and the model developed (Pogorelec et. al 2004). A third approach by Šauperl and her students is under investigation, following Hayes (2001) and Saarti (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). This approach includes using popular literary reviews and annotations of belles-lettres as notes in catalog records. Since the three approaches in the enhancement of subject description of belles-lettres are relatively new the vast majority of catalog records still lack this enhancement. Librarians and users have to rely on browsing library shelves, where books are ordered by language of the publication, author's language, nationality and/or origin, and literary genre. Further, books are then shelved by main heading (usually author's last name) and the first meaningful word of the title. If more editions of the same work are available, they are ordered by publication year.

In his user study, Pogorelec (2004) found that Slovenian public library patrons preferred searching by author, topic, title, genre, national and linguistic group of the author, or collection and publisher (see Figure 1). As we have seen above, *UDC* does not accommodate all the criteria users mentioned. Author and title are provided for by the bibliographic description and are one of the shelving criteria, but they do not play a role in *UDC*. Topic and genre are the most important classificatory criteria, of which just genre is represented in *UDC*. It was assumed that these criteria would be helpful to the librarian and to the reader. A decision was reached that the existing *UDC* criteria, should be enhanced accordingly.
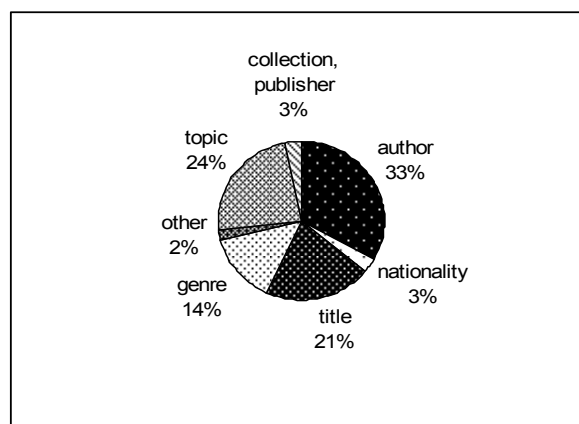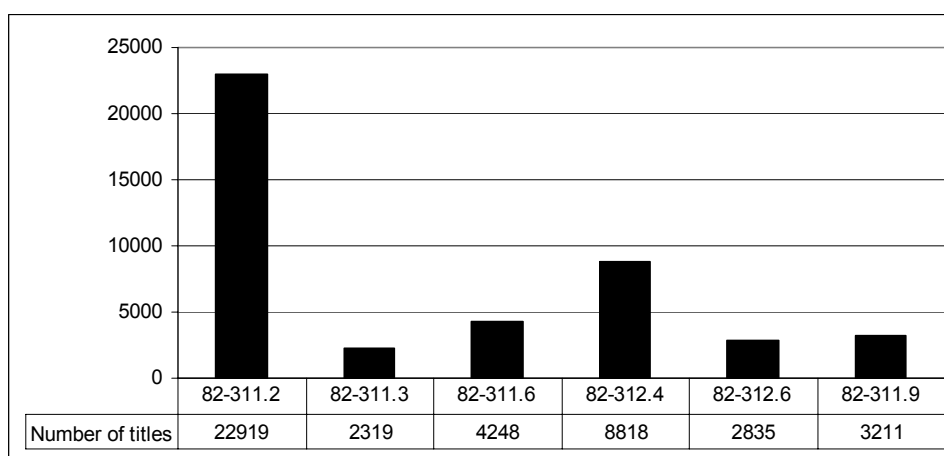

Figure 1. *User searching criteria for fiction (100 users in 4 Slovenian public libraries, surveyed in 2002)*

	82-311.2	82-311.3	82-311.6	82-312.4	82-312.6	82-311.9
Number of titles	22919	2319	4248	8818	2835	3211

Legend.   *82-311.2 Representational novels of customs and characters. Depiction of everyday life. Realistic, slice-of-life novels; 82-311.3 Adventure novels; 82-311.6 Historical, political, war novels; 82-312.4 Crime, detective novels, novels of mystery, suspense; 82-311.9 Scientific novels, science fiction and 82-312.9 Fantasy, fantastic novels.*

Figure 2. *Number of items included in the largest genre groups by* UDC *(Slovenian national union catalog COBISS/OPAC, November 16, 2006).*

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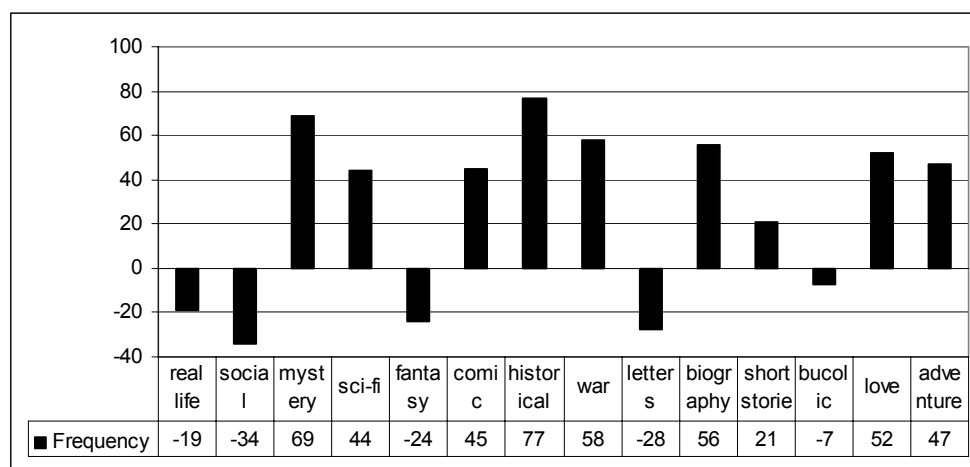|	real life	social	mystery	sci-fi	fantasy	comic	historical	war	letters	biography	short stories	bucolic	love	adventure
■ Frequency	-19	-34	69	44	-24	45	77	58	-28	56	21	-7	52	47

Figure 3. *Rating of the genre of belles-lettres in Slovenian public libraries in levels of positive: more helpful and negative: least helpful*

In addition to the missing classificatory criteria, Pogorelec also found that the classes of the existing scheme were not satisfactory. A simple search in the Slovenian national union catalog reveals that some genre include many more items than others (see figure 2).

More than half of all novels fall within the area of the "depiction of real life" (*UDC* 82-311.2). This distortion makes the classification quite inefficient for both shelving and searching purposes. Not surprisingly, in the same study users rated this genre as the least helpful. "Fantasy" and "letters" followed as not helpful. Rated as most helpful were "historic," "war," and "mystery novels" (See figure 3).

As a consequence of the findings of our own user study and other research results an alternative model (AM) for classification of belles-lettres was developed and is presented below.

3. The Alternative Model (AM) for Classification of Belles-lettres

3.1. The intention and object of classification

The alternative model of classification of belles-lettres (AM) could be used in the classification of belles-lettres in public and other types of libraries which have belles-lettres for adults in their collections. This type of library material is most often clearly divided from other types such as non-fiction material, material for children and non-book material. The AM is partly derived from the *UDC*. It includes the classification of poetry (821-1), drama (821-2) and fiction (821-3). These three basic groups

of belles-lettres are redefined in accordance with Slovenian literary science (Kos 1983, Trdina 1969). Instead of the term poetry, which is based on formal characteristics (verse), the term lyrics, which is focused on the content of the literary work, is used. Likewise instead of the term fiction, which is again based on the formal characteristics (fictional prose), the term epics, which refers to the content of the literary work, is used. The term drama remains the same.

Speaking of literature in broader terms, Trdina (1969) classified it in the following way:

a) with its origin: folk literature, authorial literature;
b) with its formL prose, or verse; and,
c) with its content: belles-lettres, science, or oral literature.

The belles-lettres were subdivided further into lyrics, drama, and epics. This division of belles-lettres into three subgroups is derived from the content of literary works. It is the basis for the AM classification. It was assumed that the Slovenian library users are familiar with this division because it is taught in both primary and secondary school.

3.2. The structure of the AM system

The alternative model (AM) is based on two concepts: categorization and description. Categorization means classification in a more specific sense, especially the formation of groups of belles-lettres books that can be represented by pictograms for shelving. Description is classification in a narrower and broa-

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der sense, including presentation of the content in a narrower and broader sense, and verbal and alpha-numeric denotations in the catalog. In the AM system all the processes of belles-lettres content analysis are covered within the concept of description. This includes all the criteria of classification:

a) categorical (verbal and alpha-numerical description);
b) half-categorical (verbal and alpha-numerical description); and,
c) non-categorical (verbal description).

The first group (a) consists of the criteria which represent the basis for the formation of belles-lettres shelf-groups (see table 1). Because library patrons usually chose a particular language in which they prefer to read, this is the first classificatory criterion. Next the main-groups (lyrics, drama, and epics) follow. This is because they are the basic criteria for further subdivision into literary genres. The third classificatory criterion is the language of the author, the author's country, or nationality. It is usual to refer to a particular literature as "English drama" or "German lyrics." However, the main-groups may be further subdivided by genre, e.g., "English comedy." All four classificatory criteria should be used for shelving and could be noted on each particular item or book either with verbal expressions (meaningful words), alphanumerical notation (class number) or pictograms. Meaningful words and alphanumerical notations are necessary for the catalog. Pictograms likely would be more useful for shelving purposes. A library may choose to have all four classificatory criteria expressed in alphanumerical notation in a catalog and on the book. However, to make the classification more user-friendly, they may decide to write meaningful words on the shelves and book labels. Expressing language in which the book is written, the main-group and nationality can be relatively straightforward and easy to express, e.g., English drama in Slovenian. Next comedy could be expressed with a pictogram, e.g., ☺. We prefer the aforementioned sequence of classificatory criteria for two reasons: it begins with the same order as *UDC* and most Slovenian public library collections are shelved in this order.

This last classification criterion (comedy etc.) might alternatively be considered one of the criteria of the second group of AM, group (b). Libraries can decide whether to use group (b) for shelving or not. This second group (b) consists of the criteria, which

in principle do not form the basis for shelving, however, they can be applied as pictograms, labeled on the spine of the book or the front or back cover if the book is thin (see table 1). Other criteria in this group are complexity of the work, literary or artistic period, time when the work was written and rhythm (e.g., verse, dialogue). A reader may prefer leisurely reading (e.g., *Bridget Jones' Diary* by Helen Fielding) or a more challenging one (e.g., *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky). That may be a matter of taste or occasion and readers could regularly make use of this classificatory criterion. A reader may also choose an abridged work with the aim of learning a foreign language (e.g., Penguin's series for learners of English) or unabridged works perhaps for literary studies. The literary or artistic period, i.e., when a work was written, can be important information. Slovenian secondary school students regularly request works by this criteron, e.g., they would ask for a novel from the Romantic period. Because literary or artistic period characteristics may not be obvious, in many contemporary works the time period when a work was written can substitute for the information on literary or artistic period. The rhythm of the writing in a work is the last classificatory criterion in this group. Works may be originally written in verse and adaptations may be prepared in prose. Readers may have preferences for one or the other for a variety of reasons. Some or none of the second group classificatory criteria can be used for shelving purposes. However, it may not be practical to have too many shelving criteria and notations. Therefore, expressing all the criteria in meaningful words or in the classification notation only in the library catalog would seem to be the best practice.

The third group (c) represents the criteria that cannot be categorized in any way, as they are represented by verbal description only, meaning that they have nothing to do with shelving or pictograms (see table 2). They describe the topics, ideas or motifs of the literary work, time and place of events or individuals or groups presented. They should be expressed as subject headings. Summaries might be an alternative to subject headings.

In the AM system the relationship between the categorical and half-categorical criteria is clearly defined, however, the choice of shelving and the use of pictograms depends on the needs or preferences of individual libraries, their available space, the wishes of library users, and the size and structure of the belles-lettres book materials budget. The same is true for the categorical criterion "original language in

Types of Classification Criteria and modes of their description	Classification Criteria
Categorical criteria – Classification in a narrower sense – *Denotation of the content in a broader sense (external perspective)* – *Verbal and alpha-numerical description* – <u>Shelving</u> (+catalogue)	– Language in which the literary work is written – Main-genre (lyrics, drama, epics) – Original language of the literary work – Genre in the group *epics* (this criterion may also be treated as a half-categorization criterion) – Sub-genre in the group *epics* (this criterion may also be treated as a half-categorization criterion)
Half-categorical criteria – Classification in a narrower sense – *Denotation of the content in a broader sense (external perspective)* – *Verbal and alpha-numerical description* – <u>Pictograms</u> (+catalogue)	– Genre in the groups *lyrics* and *drama* (possibly also in the group *epics*) – Sub-genre or form in the groups *lyrics* and *drama* (possibly also in the group *epics*) – Accessibility of the content of literary works – Origin within the periods of the literary history – Century in which the literary work was written – Rhythm of the language (prose, verse, dialogues in prose, dialogues in verse)
Non-categorical criteria – Classification in a broader sense – *Denotation of the content in a narrower sense (internal perspective)* – *Verbal description* – <u>Catalogue</u> only	– Literary subject, themes motifs – Fictional place – Fictional time

Table 2. *AM classification criteria*

which the literary work was written." The problem of shelving cannot be solved without consideration of specific needs of each individual library. Various literatures can be joined into larger groups; for example: Scandinavian literature.

3.2.1. Verbal description

In accordance with the rules of the content analysis in COMARC (used in the Slovenian national union catalog COBIB), the verbal description for the categorical and half-categorical criteria is carried out in the doubled field 609a with subfields (a-first element, x-subject subdivision, y-geographical subdivision, z-time subdivision, w-form subdivision). For the non-categorical criteria no more than once repeated field 606a (subject description of COMARC format) with the similar subdivisions (a, x, y, z, w) is used in AM. For an eventual additional subject description the field 610a (freely assigned subject headings) can also be used.

3.2.1.1. Verbal description of the categorical and half-categorical criteria

609 a *Original language of the literary work / e.g., The British literature*

z *Century in which the literary work was written / e.g., 20ᵗʰ Century*

w *The rhythm of the language and the language in which the literary work was written / e.g., Prose in the Slovenian language*

609 a *Main-genre / e.g., Epics*

x *Genre / e.g., Novels*

x *Sub- genre / e.g., Biographical novels*

z Origin within the periods of the literary history / *e.g., Postmodernism*

w Accessibility of the content of literary works (readability) / *e.g., medium range of accessibility*

610 a *Sub-genre (additional denotation) / e.g., satirical novels*

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3.2.1.2. Verbal description of non-categorical criteria

606 a   *Theme(subject) or idea / e.g., Love*
   x   *Theme or motif / e.g., Family life*
   x   *Theme or motif / e.g., Education of children*
   y   *Fictional place / e.g., London.*
   z   *Fictional time / e.g., 1960-1969*

The field 606a can be used twice and new themes and motifs can be described in the same way as in the first field (no more than two subfields x can be used). Field 620a can also be used. It is intended for denotations with no such limitations.

Characters and summaries could also be interpreted as non-categorical criteria, but in the case of characters a distinction must be drawn between fictional characters and persons who are, or were, living persons, as both types of characters appear in literary works. In accordance with the rules of the content analysis in COMARC, description of characters would be carried out in field 600a.

600 a   Surname / e.g., Sorel
   b   Given Name / e.g., Michel
       Date of birth and death / e.g., 1940 –
       Fictional character (or a real person appearing in fiction) / e.g., Michel Sorel (or Winston Churchill)
       Summaries may be written in the field 330a for notes.

3.2.2. Alpha-numerical notation

Only categorical and half-categorical criteria can be denoted by alpha-numerical description. The alpha-numerical description of the previous example would appear in field 675a (UDC classification number) of COMARC format:

675 a   821.111-326.038.2"19"=163.6 (P)

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe published in Slovenia in Slovenian language might be described with the AM system in COMARC format as Table 4 illustrates.

Classifying *Robinson Crusoe* with AM is relatively straightforward because the story is most often perceived as an adventure novel. However, as in all other classification systems, a certain perspective requires putting the work in a certain class in AM too. This "forcing" of different works into certain categories may be more or less acceptable, depending on the purpose of the collection and the social environment. The story of Robinson Crusoe might also be perceived from the perspective of technical development of the society on that period or from a perspective of relations between social groups. In both cases the AM would fail to express the necessary dimensions of the literary work. Literary works may also be forced into AM classification, when it is difficult to express the topic, genre, or period of literary history. It is difficult – some might argue it is impossible – to describe the topics in *Finegans Wake* by James Joyce, or describing the story is sufficient

System	Classifier	Description	Example
UDC/AM	82	*main number for literature*	*belles-lettres*
UDC/AM	821.111	*original language of the literary work*	*British literature*
UDC/AM	-3	*main-genre*	*epics*
AM	-32	*genre*	*novel*
AM	-326	*sub-genre*	*biographical*
AM	.038	*origin within the periods of the literary history*	*postmodernism*
AM	.2	*accessibility of the content of literary works (readability)*	medium range accessibility
UDC	"19"	*time of the content of the literary work*	20th Century
AM	"19"	*time the work was written expressed by the century only*	20th Century
UDC/AM	=163.6	*predominant language used in this work*	*Slovenian language*
AM	(P)	*rhythm of the language*	*prose*

Table 3. *Example of an alpha- numerical notation in the AM system*

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COMARC		AM	
Field number	Field description	Classificatory criterion	Content
330	Contents notes	Verbal description, non-categorical: Summary	Robinson Crusoe is the only person surviving a shipwreck. He is stranded on an uninhabited island, where he organizes his life, hopes for a rescue, and prepares for an eventual return home.
600	Personal name as subject heading	Verbal description, non-categorical: Literary characters	600aCrusoe bRobinson wLiterary character 600aFriday wLiterary character
606	Topic as subject heading	Verbal description, non-categorical: Theme	606aShipwrecks xSurvival xLife in wilderness xIsolated island z17th century wFiction
609	Form subject headings	Verbal description, categorical: Original language of the literary work	609aEnglish literature z18th century (1719) wProse in Slovenian language
609	Form subject headings	Verbal description, categorical: main-genre	609aEpics xNovels xAdventure novels xEnlightenment period wLeisurely literature
610	Freely assigned subject headings	Verbal description, categorical: sub-genre	610aprose apicaresque novels asea stories afiction
675	Classification number	Classificatory criteria from Table 2	821.111-327.022.0"17"=163.6(P) 82 main number for literature 821 subdivision for individual literatures 821.111 English literature -32 subdivision for main-genre: novel -327 subdivision for sub-genre: adventure .022 subdivision for literary period: Enlightenment .0 subdivision for accessibility of work: leisurely literature "17" time period when the work was written: 18th century =163.6 predominant language used in the work: Slovenian (P) rhythm of language: prose

Table 4. *A Slovenian edition of Daniel Defoe's* Robinson Crusoe *described using the AM system*

as in *Women as lovers* by Elfriede Jelinek. In such cases we can only assign from subject headings, describing genre and period of literary history. Upon publication of some contemporary literary works, even this may be difficult. Here the limitations of AM are quite similar to limitations found in other library classification systems. However, these limitations cannot deter librarians from organizing their collections. To be able to retrieve particular literary works, they need a system that can accommodate the majority of such works. With AM we are proposing a system that can be used to organize such works.

4. Conclusions

Libraries use different classification systems and different classificatory criteria for arrangement of their literary collections. The *Universal Decimal Classification* is the most prominent system used in Slovenian public libraries. This system arranges all literary works in class 8, subdivided by language and by literary genre employing notation of special subdivisions. That these criteria are not sufficient was also noted by Riesthuis (1997). *UDC* allows for the expression of several classificatory criteria, which are important to the average Slovenian library user, but not all such criteria that are important. It expresses the author's language, country or nationality or literature to which the work belongs and the genre. Several other important classificatory criteria are absent in *UDC*. The gap is bridged by the proposed AM classificatory system.

The AM system contains lists of verbal and alphanumerical denotations for the basic groups of belles-

lettres book materials (main-genres: lyrics, drama, epics) and all other categorical criteria (language of the original literary work, literature to which the work belongs, genre, sub-genre) and half-categorical criteria (accessibility of the content of literary works, origin within the periods of literary history, the century in which the literary work was written, the rhythm of the language). All these lists are available, but not included in this paper. The purpose of the AM system is to show the potentialities and possibilities for making the classification of belles-lettres in libraries more efficient and exact.

The question remains, why would Slovenian public libraries, which already have two recently proposed models for subject description of belles-lettres, need a third approach. How could they decide which of the approaches would be optimal? Before investigating the answer it should be clear that a *UDC* class number is mandatory in Slovenian public libraries and their catalogs. Slovenian subject headings, proposed by the national library, verbally repeat the information already expressed in a *UDC* number. According to the investigations of Riesthuis and Bliedung (1991) it would be possible to convert class numbers into verbal description automatically or at least semi-automatically. If such conversion was possible, then there would be no need to duplicate information in the catalog record manually, as it is done now. Such an approach would certainly be beneficial to those users who reject classification codes as artificial and complicated. But it would still not help those users who like to select their reading by topic. The second approach only considers subject headings and does not involve classification and shelving. It is therefore partial. The alternative model of classification of belles-lettres considers both purposes, shelving and retrieval. It also merges the two components of subject description, classification and verbal description, into one process.

In addition to merging the two processes of subject description, which are often separated in technical services, the AM model holds another advantage. Besides the usual *UDC* class number for the literature and genre, the main entry, and the first word of the title, it marks the individual book with several other classificatory marks, such as sub-genre, origin within the periods of the literary history, accessibility of the work, time of the content of the literary work, time when the work was written, predominant language of the work, and rhythm (see Table 3 for examples). This means, that the large collections of books on library shelves could be organized in smal-

ler groups. Librarians' experience shows that better organized library shelves stimulate readers for browsing. At the same time the AM class number, present on the label of the book, enables users and librarians to actually use all the classificatory criteria from Table 3 not just for searching in the catalog but also for browsing the shelves. This makes AM model unique among the three models developed in Slovenia.

Practical implications of a useful classification system for shelving were demonstrated by Saarti (1997). He compared alphabetical arrangement of fiction by author's name to arrangement by genre in a Finnish library. Slovenian readers currently experience problems with the arrangement by literature and genre, because some classes are too large. They will likely respond favorably to the enhancement of current arrangement with the proposed AM model. It is also user-friendly, because it is based on the literary theories which are familiar to the average Slovenian from his or her primary and secondary education. The importance of grounding of the classification of belles-lettres in literary theory was also suggested by Nielsen (1997).

Subject description is time consuming and many library directors decide to limit it to the minimum. Subject description of fiction can be even more time consuming, because the cataloger may not rely on the scientific structure of text to help identify the information that needs to be reported in subject description. Nielsen (1997) has pointed to a number of problems in subject representation of fiction. He maintains that mechanically recording the literature, genre, subject, characters, space and time is insufficient. The indexer needs extensive knowledge of literature and literature studies to be able to represent not just the simple story, but aesthetic values and aspects such as the narrator's way of telling, points of view, style or mode of telling, function of the setting, and leading motifs. Many of the attributes of belles-lettres have been incorporated in the AM, which means that only experienced librarians with a degree or strong interest in literary studies would be able to use it. This fact adds to the expense needed for the task.

Several researchers investigated whether other systems could be employed for subject description of belles-lettres, to make the process more economical. Hidderly and Rafferty (1997) proposed, and most Internet bookstores adopted, the idea of democratic indexing, indexing by readers' comments and reviews. Experience with such reviews is quite

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disappointing: they are diverse in contents and methodology. A reader cannot rely on finding comparable and reliable information about all works of belles-lettres in one or in different sites. Additionally Hayes (2001), Saarti (2000b, 2001) and Šauperl and her students show that popular reviews and literary criticism is of limited use in catalog subject description. The main problems are 1) differences in judgment of what has to be reported of the literary work and 2) unfavorable reviews. Librarians seem to be intuitively aware that subject description and contents notes should never be biased. Readers can like or dislike different works. However, as Pogorelec (2004) suggests, it would probably be unwise of librarians to discriminate users on their reading preferences. In such case the real question is: Can librarians afford not to engage in extensive subject cataloging of belles-lettres?

Acknowledgement

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