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## LANGUAGE, SOCIETY AND CULTURE: SLOVENE IN CONTACT WITH ENGLISH

The author addresses Slovene-English language contact, both in the immigrant context and in Slovenia. The direct contact of Slovene and English in the case of Slovene Americans and Canadians is examined from two perspectives: social and cultural on the one hand and linguistic on the other. In the first part, I present the general linguistic situation in Cleveland (and to a minor extent in Washington, D.C. and Toronto), with emphasis on language maintenance and shift, the relationship between mother tongue preservation and ethnic awareness, and the impact of extralinguistic factors on selected aspects of the linguistic behavior of the participants in the study. I then compare the use of second person pronouns as terms of address and the use of speech acts such as compliments to determine the role of different cultural backgrounds in the speakers' linguistic choices. The linguistic part of the analysis focuses on borrowing and code switching, as well as on the influence of English on seemingly monolingual Slovene discourse, where the Slovene inflectional system in particular is being increasingly generalized, simplified and reduced, and Slovene word order is beginning to resemble that of English. Finally, the rapidly growing impact of English on Slovene in Slovenia on various linguistic levels from vocabulary to syntax and intercultural communication is discussed.

Avtorica obravnava slovensko-angleški jezikovni stik v izseljenstvu in v Sloveniji. Neposredni stik med slovenščino in angleščino pri ameriških in kanadskih Slovencih prikaže z dveh vidikov: družbenega oz. kulturnega in jezikoslovnega. V prvem delu predstavi splošno jezikovno stanje v Clevelandu (in delno v Washingtonu, D. C. in Torontu), pri čemer jo posebej zanimajo vprašanja jezikovnega ohranjanja in opuščanja, odnosa med stopnjo ohranitve materinščine in zavestjo o etnični pripadnosti ter vpliva izbranih zunajjezikovnih dejavnikov na jezikovno vedenje sodelujočih v raziskavi. Sledi primerjava rabe osebnih zaimkov za 2. osebo pri ogovaranju sogovornika in govornih dejanj, kakršni so npr. komplimenti, da bi ugotovila, v kolikšni meri so jezikovne izbire govorcev odvisne od različnih kulturnih okolij, iz katerih le-ti prihajajo. Jezikoslovni del analize se osredotoča na sposojanje in kodno preklapljanje, pa tudi na vpliv angleščine v na videz enojezičnem diskurzu izseljencev. Ta se kaže predvsem na oblikoslovni ravnini, kjer se poenostavljajo, posplošujejo in celo opuščajo slovenski sklanjatveni vzorci, prisoten pa je tudi v skladnji, kjer se slovenski besedni red ponekod približuje angleškemu. Zadnji del je posvečen vedno močnejšemu vplivu angleščine na slovenščino v Sloveniji. Govora je o angleškem vplivu na leksikalni, sintaktični in medkulturni ravni.

**Key words:** Slovene-English language contact, language maintenance, language attitudes, borrowing, code switching, intercultural communication

**Ključne besede:** slovensko-angleški jezikovni stik, jezikovna ohranitev, jezikovni odnosi, sposojanje, kodno preklapljanje, medkulturna komunikacija



## 1 Introduction

This article is an attempt at providing a reasonably brief, but nonetheless comprehensive survey of my research to date. As such, it will necessarily leave out a number of issues that I have explored and focus only on those that I consider the most important ones. These are connected primarily with Slovene-English language contact, both in the immigrant context and in Slovenia itself. I have always looked on language as a dynamic system, susceptible to change and variation, depending on the social and cultural context within which it is used. Language contact situations are particularly relevant in this respect. In fact, I believe that Slovene studies cannot be complete without including research on, say, the use of Slovene in an immigrant context. This as well as studies of other contact situations are an integral part of Slovene language studies and may well contribute to clearer insights into the linguistic mechanisms and constraints governing language use. It is thus the purpose of this article to present various aspects and possible outcomes of Slovene-English language contact, both in terms of function and structure, with special emphasis on the interconnectedness of the linguistic, social and cultural factors defining it.

## 2 Direct Contact between Slovene and English in an Immigrant Environment

An environment which is ideally suited for observing direct contact between Slovene and English is an immigrant context, in my case North America. There Slovene experiences a special kind of development, as if it were an island surrounded by the ocean of the dominant English, which makes Slovene particularly vulnerable to the English impact and, consequently, to potential language contact-induced change.

### 2.1 Social and Cultural Dimensions

In the three studies carried out in two U.S. cities (Cleveland, OH, Washington, D.C.) and in Toronto, Canada, I describe the general linguistic situation of the speech communities in terms of language maintenance and shift, the relationship between mother tongue preservation and ethnic awareness, and the impact of extralinguistic factors on the linguistic behavior of the participants in the study. In the second part, I touch upon the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns used as terms of address by Slovenes in Slovenia and in diaspora in order to illustrate the kind of difficulties that may stem from the different cultural backgrounds of the speakers. The same is often true in the case of certain speech acts.

#### 2.1.1 Mother Tongue Maintenance and Language Attitudes

Owing to space limitations, I will focus on only a couple of selected variables relating to mother tongue maintenance and language attitudes. Also, only the study conducted in Cleveland, the city with the largest population of Slovene Americans in



the U.S.A., will be described in more detail, the other two studies will be referred to only briefly.

The findings are based on the analysis of the empirical data gathered over a four-year time period from small and medium-sized social networks of immigrants (Milroy, 1987) through tape-recorded interviews, follow-up self-report questionnaires and participant observation. For the purpose of this article, however, I rely only on the analysis of questionnaire responses by 185 participants about their language use and attitudes, and their socialization patterns.

A brief outline of the Cleveland Slovene American community is provided as background information for the research. Cleveland Slovenes immigrated to the United States in two major waves. The first consists of those who came at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the second those who came after WWII. The early immigrants came to America mostly for economic reasons; as uneducated and unskilled workers they found jobs in steel mills, mechanical and manufacturing industries, the construction industries and similar sectors. Their exact number is practically impossible to determine. The census data for 1910, however, lists 14,332 Slovenes in Cleveland, making it the third largest Slovene city in the world at that point. Their number changed over time; The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History (1987: 989) estimates that there were approximately 50,000 Slovenes in Cleveland in the 1980s, whereas the 1990 census record lists 120,000 Slovenes for the entire country and 49,598 people of Slovene ancestry for the state of Ohio.

The early immigrants never really integrated into mainstream American society, but lived instead in ethnically segregated neighborhoods, where they could rely on ethnic organizations and communicate in their native dialects. These neighborhoods were so Slovene in character that the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic groups says that »In Cleveland, for example, St. Clair Avenue from 30<sup>th</sup> to East 79<sup>th</sup> Streets became by the 1920s so completely Slovene in character that English was the foreign language« (1980: 973). The influence of English was limited to borrowing, with English lexemes being morphologically and partly phonologically adapted to Slovene. Their children, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, however, were quite different. They went to school, learned English, in most cases moved out of the inner city, became homeowners and progressed both socially and economically. While bilingual themselves, they nevertheless resented the stigma of being of foreign origin, and more often than not neglected to teach their own children any Slovene. The 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war generation is thus mostly college educated and economically successful, but no longer or only exceptionally speaks Slovene.

The group of post-war immigrants is largely made up of the refugees that fled the Communist regime and came to the U.S. from former Yugoslavia after the 1948 Displaced Persons Act. Compared to the early immigrants, they came with better education and in some cases even with a working knowledge of English. Residential concentration was no longer essential to their survival, as it had been for the pre-war immigrants, and the majority settled in the suburbs. Linguistically, it is interesting that they have a good command of both the dialects and Standard Slovene, which is why they only rarely resort to borrowing. Instead, they engage in code switching, i.e.

the alternate use of two discrete linguistic systems. Their children are similar to the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war generation immigrants<sup>1</sup> in that they speak little or no Slovene as well as in terms of social and economic mobility.

The statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses reveals a highly significant degree of intergenerational variation within each of the two major immigration groups both in their bilingual competence and in their language attitudes. Two variables will be presented for illustration purposes: the participants' competence in Slovene and their preferred conversational language.

The respondents were asked to evaluate their Slovene speaking, reading and writing skills rating them as poor, fair, good or excellent. The majority of 1<sup>st</sup> pre-war immigrants rate their speaking skills in Slovene as good and excellent. Only two out of thirty-seven rate themselves as fair and none as poor. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-war generation we observe the same frequencies for good and excellent, an increase in the category of fair and the first occurrence of poor ratings. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war generation, the number of those who rate themselves as fair and poor continues to rise at the expense of those who assess their speaking as good, while nobody rates themselves as excellent.

The 1<sup>st</sup> post-war generation immigrants rate themselves predominantly as excellent and only a few as good. The 2<sup>nd</sup> post-war generation has a high percentage of answers in the category of fair, which is similar to the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war generation data. Some are in the good, and very few in the poor and excellent categories.

Not surprisingly, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants (both pre-war and post-war), who grew up in a Slovene-speaking environment, show the highest competence in Slovene. It is also understandable that a higher number of more recent immigrants rate themselves as excellent than the pre-war generation, for whom Slovene as was spoken in the »old country«<sup>2</sup> has become remote in terms of time and distance.

What is interesting is the difference between the two 2<sup>nd</sup> generations. While the pre-war generation differs from their parents only slightly in that there are a few more cases of only fair speaking skills among them, the post-war generation shows a drastically sharp decline in their speaking skills evaluation, exhibiting the same pattern as the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war generation.

For reading and writing we observe similar patterns, the only difference being that the rating starts at a considerably lower level, which is attributed to the higher difficulty level of the two skills. The higher the difficulty level, the more rapid the decline in competence.

The responses relating to preferred conversational language point to the fact that Slovene has largely lost its communicative value. Most respondents selected English (54 %), followed by those who preferred Slovene (25 %) and finally those who couldn't decide between the two (21 %). The relatively high numbers for Slovene are

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of economy, the term immigrant(s) is used to refer to all the participants in the study. In fact, only those who emigrated from Europe and settled in the U.S.A. (1st generation) qualify as immigrants, while their children are already American-born and U.S. citizens, i.e. not immigrants.

<sup>2</sup> The »old country« is the usual term used by the Slovene-born immigrants to refer to their Slovenian homeland.

somewhat misleading, as the respondents' other answers show that Slovene is limited to partial use on certain informal occasions among family members, and friends.

Two generations for which Slovene is the preferred language stand out from the rest: the 1<sup>st</sup> pre-war and the 1<sup>st</sup> post-war generations. The 1<sup>st</sup> pre-war generation especially undoubtedly prefers Slovene, as only a negligible number opt for English or both options. For the 1<sup>st</sup> post-war generation immigrants, the ratio between those who prefer Slovene and those who prefer both languages is somewhat more balanced. None prefer English, however, which is understandable in view of their Slovene upbringing. The pre-war immigrants, most of whom are rather elderly by now, are particularly fond of Slovene. As I was able to observe during my fieldwork, with some the competence in English is decreasing and traces of their dialectal Slovene are becoming stronger and stronger. Their emotional attachment to the language and, by association, to the »old country« seems to be increasing with age. Post-war immigrants, on the other hand, generally do not have such problems. They use English daily at work and in their communication with non-Slovenes, which explains the large number of those who chose both languages.

For all other generations, the preferred conversational language is English. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> pre-war and the 2<sup>nd</sup> post-war generations this was the only language selected, whereas in the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-war generation some prefer both languages. It is not surprising that it is this particular generation that shows such preferences, as it is the one that is the most bilingual in the sense that it is in between their parents, who are still very much Slovene, and their children, who are more or less Americanized.

These and other results were then used as a basis for singling out those factors that encourage Slovene language maintenance and those that encourage the Slovene language shift to English.

The former include the participants' relatively high degree of competence in Slovene and their positive attitudes toward it, the latter the participants' relatively low competence in Slovene and negative attitudes. The degree of Slovene competence depends on the place, age, and manner in which the language was learned and on the frequency of opportunities to actually use it.

Competence in Slovene is higher with Slovene-born respondents, especially those who immigrated after WWII. Those who were born in the U.S., on the other hand, with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-war generation, grew up in the homes where a partial or a complete language shift from Slovene to English had already taken place. The frequency of opportunities to speak Slovene are the highest for those who are married to partners of Slovene descent, those who live in the same household with their grandparents and those who are involved in ethnic activities. For the younger generations especially such opportunities are minimal, as they no longer live in segregated communities. They associate with friends and other contacts regardless of their ethnicity and have little time to participate in ethnic activities. Social and geographical mobility as well as the increasing number of intermarriages are therefore among the major factors that contribute to the rapid displacement of Slovene by English.

The linguistic situation in the community is therefore one of a very transitional and unstable bilingualism. With the exception of the older pre-war immigrants, the

majority of whom have very strong ties with their old homeland, and the most recent post-war immigrants, for whom the time of emigration from Slovenia is still relatively fresh in their minds, all the others are more bicultural than bilingual.

The majority perceive themselves as part of the mainstream society, and while they take great pride in having »roots« and belonging to an ethnically distinct group, their being Slovene comes only second to their being American. While they verbally proclaim the importance of preserving Slovene, their enthusiasm remains largely at a symbolic level and those who actually try to learn the language are the exceptions, not the rule. Other factors, from Slovene music to culture and cuisine, and even non-ethnic values such as work ethic, rank higher than language among the factors that they cite as contributing to their feeling Slovene.

The most striking finding, however, has to do with the greatly accelerated pace at which the language is lost if we compare the pre-war and the post-war immigrants. The 2<sup>nd</sup> post-war generation has its counterpart in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and not in the 2<sup>nd</sup> pre-war generation. The language shift from English to Slovene, which in families of pre-war immigrants took place over the course of three generations, has occurred in just two generations in the case of post-war immigrants. In other words, we observe the shortening of the cycles, the progression from the initial Slovene monolingualism to partial Slovene-English bilingualism and finally to monolingualism again, only this time English. A likely explanation for such development may be found in the indirect, but omnipresent pressures exerted by English language and culture on the younger generations who associate them with social, cultural, political, and economic prestige, and are therefore driven to integrate as fully as possible. Coupled with this, their perception of Slovene as being of limited practical value for wider communication also contributes to the attrition of the weaker language.

Contrary to the rather bleak prospects for the maintenance of the Slovene language, the participants' ethnic awareness is very high, which is manifested in the impressive network of ethnic organizations, numerous cultural activities and regular or at least frequent contact with Slovenia. In this respect, the newly gained independence of Slovenia in 1991 contributed significantly to a heightened interest in their ethnic heritage. The Slovene American community is thus likely to survive even though its members may in the future no longer identify themselves as being bilingual but rather as bicultural.

The Toronto study showed similar traits as the Cleveland one, the only difference being that the community there is smaller and considerably less varied, as the vast majority of the immigrants came to Canada after WWII. Consequently, they speak relatively fluent Standard Slovene, local dialects, English and also engage in code switching. Their children and younger generations show strong signs of mother tongue attrition. The general impression about those who do speak Slovene, though, is that they are remarkably proficient in it. The same is true of the greater Washington area (D.C. together with Maryland and Virginia suburbs), where there are even fewer Slovenes, but those who speak Slovene, speak it almost flawlessly. Typical of that community is that most people moved to the capital city after WWII either from Slovenia or from other U.S. federal states. They were attracted by occupational and professional oppor-





tunities that were quite different from those of early immigrants to Cleveland. Being well-educated (many holding M.A. and Ph.D.s), the majority of Washington Slovenes work in managerial positions, in academia, as federal employees and the like. For them, living together was never a matter of survival, but rather a matter of personal choice, a way to enrich their social and cultural lives and to express their identity.

### 2.1.2 *Ti* vs. *Vi*

Social background and ethnicity are not the only extralinguistic factors that affect language use. Culture, for instance, plays a vital role, too. It is often said that language and culture are inseparable, and indeed there can be little doubt that language to a great extent mirrors the social values, attitudes, beliefs and norms of a specific society. Speakers belonging to different social and cultural backgrounds often perceive reality differently; they judge it by their own specific standards, have their own traditions and conventions, allusions, references and ways of behavior and, as a result, do not always agree in their views. The discrepancy between different cultures may be complete or the cultures may only partially overlap, but in either case the danger of potential misunderstanding or even communication breakdowns remains. The danger might be in fact even greater in the case of only partial cultural overlap, where the speakers are not aware of the differences and thus feel free to rely on their own taken-for-granted intuitive knowledge, using it in communication with speakers coming from different backgrounds. This may occasionally apply to the communication between Slovenes coming from Slovenia and those living in North America. It is thus not uncommon for a Slovene American to, say, give compliments in Slovene as generously as any American would do and be then dumbfounded that the Slovene recipients do not accept them graciously. Compliments in Slovene are far rarer than in American English, given only for outstanding achievements. On top of that, many Slovene recipients tend to withdraw into modesty and pretend not to deserve any credit. This strategy is likely to put the Slovene American speakers offering compliments into an unpleasant, even embarrassing position. They cannot figure out why the person was not pleased with the compliment and can only interpret their behavior as a sign of false modesty (fishing for compliments) or low self-esteem. In either case the likelihood that they will compliment them again is small and so is the likelihood of their trying to maintain normal relations. Similar misunderstandings may be encountered with other speech acts as well.

Another example illustrating the impact of different cultural norms is the use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns as terms of address. Almost every Slovene visitor to the U.S.A. has probably had the experience of being addressed as *ti* by complete strangers upon first meeting them. While Slovene has a binary system of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, whereby a single interlocutor can be addressed either as *ti* or *vi* and where the choice implies different degrees of personal and social (in)equality among speakers or, according to Brown and Gilman (1960), power and solidarity, English uses the single form *you* in all cases.

In Slovenia, the distinction between *ti* and *vi* in addressing the other is largely observed (with the exception of some younger speakers). The situation in the U.S.A. and Canada, on the other hand, is much less stable. A study comparing the use of *ti* vs. *vi* among Slovenes in Slovenia on the one hand, and those living in Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Fontana in the U.S. and in Toronto, Canada on the other, showed that second person pronouns in the U.S. and Canada often seemed to be used almost at random and with a very strong bias in favor of *ti*. The distinction between *ti* and *vi* is partly observed only by some Slovene-born speakers, while the American- and Canadian-born use the two with no consistency, or openly state that the distinction no longer matters to them and that they prefer *ti* in all circumstances. There are several possible explanations for such attitudes: the exclusive use of *ti* that the early immigrants brought with them from the »old country«<sup>3</sup>, the uncertainty as to which pronoun to choose when they did not grow up with them in the case of all other speakers, and finally the influence of the English language with *you* as the only pronoun used. The responses provided by the participants in the study confirm this last view at least to some extent. Especially younger speakers believe that the more formal *vi* is redundant and that the less formal, casual *ti* better serves their needs in addressing others on an equal footing. Compared to the relatively conservative and stable *ti* vs. *vi* distinction in Slovenia, Slovenes in the U.S.A. and Canada use predominantly *ti*, which is in line with the very dynamic relations of a fairly egalitarian and socially mobile society. The tendency to address people by first names only can be understood in this light as well.

The relatively relaxed approach to the use of pronouns on the part of Slovene Americans and Canadians on the one hand and the deeply-rooted adherence to the more conservative and consistent use of pronouns by speakers in Slovenia on the other makes for potentially slippery ground in communication between individuals from different environments. Speakers from Slovenia might be easily offended when addressed as *ti*, when no familiarity is called for, and Slovenes from diaspora might be puzzled as to the cause of their resentment and the resulting misunderstanding. The risk of this happening is lower with younger speakers in Slovenia, who are increasingly beginning to use *ti* in the contexts where we would normally expect *vi*. Whether or not such use is just a temporary phenomenon that will disappear as younger speakers age remains to be seen. It is equally possible that we are dealing with language change under way. The ever more frequent use of the so-called *partial vi/ na pol vikanje* (Toporišič 2000: 390) as well as the combination of titles such as *gospod* and *gospa* with first rather than last names by the majority of all speakers, regardless of age, indicates the possibility of such a change.

## 2.2 Linguistic Dimensions

Language contact is equally fascinating from the purely linguistic perspective, as it offers a wealth of data that hold potential answers to the questions about the possible

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<sup>3</sup> *Ti* as the only pronoun used by lower classes such as peasants.



constraints on the combinations of two languages, the types of bilingual discourse, the degree of interlingual influences on various linguistic levels and the like.

My research reveals two types of bilingual discourse: borrowing and code switching. The former is encountered primarily with the 1<sup>st</sup> pre-war generation immigrants, the latter is typical of all others.

Borrowing involves attaching Slovene inflections to English bases, which results in the most commonly borrowed parts of speech: nouns (*štor*, *ajsbaksa*, *braderlo* from *store*, *ice-box*, *brother-in-law*), verbs (*hajrati*, *pejntati*, *spilati* from *to hire*, *to paint*, *to spill*) and adjectives (*zbrokan*, *divorsana*, *pofiksano* from *broken*, *divorced*, *fixed*). The process involves both phonological and morphological adaptation, with a considerable degree of vacillation in the pronunciation (owing to the poor productive ability of 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants). It is precisely for this reason that phonological adaptation alone is not a sufficient condition for a word to be classified as a borrowing. Morphological adaptation is required as well, which means that the new combination has to acquire all of the morphological characteristics of a Slovene word in accordance with the rules of Slovene grammar. In addition, not just any nonce borrowing is sufficient either, rather a borrowing needs to be recognized and used as such by all or at least the majority of the speech community.

Code switching, on the other hand, is defined as the alternate use of two discrete languages or their respective varieties within the same conversation.

e.g. *He had to take a day off*; je blo ta prvič, ko je šel vzet državljanstvo papir. /He had to take a day off; that happened for the first time when he went to get his citizenship documents/.

A detailed discussion of code switching would exceed the scope of this article. Suffice to say that the predominant type of code switching in the case of Slovene Americans is the intersentential type, that it is very difficult, if not impossible to determine its directionality at a sentence level, that the most commonly switched items include single lexemes, discourse markers and numerals and, most importantly, that with the exception of the free-morpheme constraint (Sankoff and Poplack 1981), most other linguistic constraints from the literature do not hold for the data in my study. It is suggested that instead of trying to explain code switching within the strictly syntactic framework, a broader approach that focuses on the semantic, pragmatic and communicative aspects of code switching should be adopted in order to account for those occurrences of code switching that contradict the mentioned constraints. The only constraint therefore that basically prohibits the use of code switching and that is proposed for the Slovene-English code switching is the potential breakdown in communication.

An almost regular occurrence outside of borrowing and code switching, i.e. in monolingual passages, are also the interlingual influences of Slovene and English. The impact of English is understandably stronger than the Slovene one and is felt on all levels from phonology to morphology, syntax and semantics. The two most affected areas are the Slovene inflectional system which is being increasingly generalized, simplified and reduced, and word order which is beginning to resemble that of English.

e.g. *Pa smo šli z moja vnuk in poli mi smo vzeli ena slika od cela žlahta.* /Standard Slovene: *Smo šli z mojim vnukom in se slikali z vsemi sorodniki/vso žlahto/.*

### 3 Indirect Contact between Slovene and English in Slovenia

Living in an era of intense globalization and advanced technology, in which English for all intents and purposes has gained the status of international lingua franca, it comes as no surprise that Slovenia is not immune from its influence either. Compared to the immigrant context, where the contact between Slovene and English for bilingual speakers occurs directly and on a daily basis, the contact in Slovenia is less direct, but nevertheless very powerful, especially for some segments of the population (e.g. business community, scientists, Internet users and the like). The following section will address this type of English influence on various levels from lexicon to syntax and intercultural communication.

#### 3.1 The Influence of English on Slovene Vocabulary

Slovenes borrow English words for more diverse reasons than Slovene Americans, who do it primarily to fill lexical gaps. In Slovenia, too, some loanwords have been adopted to name new objects and concepts, thus filling lexical gaps, but quite a few enter the Slovene lexicon even though Slovene already has an equivalent native word for that item. The former include examples such as *disketa*, *bojkot*, *parkirati*, and recent examples of *globalizacija* and *wellness*, the latter words such as *manager*, *design*, *marketing* (with *direktor*, *oblikovanje*, *trženje*, as their Slovene equivalents). In cases of these latter, fashionable borrowings, which could be termed cultural or prestigious borrowings and that label their users as up-to-date, chic, knowledgeable, cosmopolitan or, alternatively, simply pretentious, their use may develop in several directions. The foreign and the native word may coexist side by side as near-equivalents, e.g. *glamur* and *blišč*, *tatu* and *tetovaža*, *reality show* and *resničnostni šov*, *talk show* and *pogovorna oddaja*; one of the words may be partially displaced in some of its meanings through the process of specialization and semantic restriction, e.g. *miss* retaining just one of its English meanings in Slovene, referring to the winner of specific beauty pageants and not matching the exact meaning of similar words in Slovene (*lepotna kraljica*, *zmagovalka lepotnega tekmovanja* and the like); and occasionally, a loanword may undergo semantic expansion and, in Slovene, acquire a meaning that does not exist in the original, e.g. the word *toast* in the sense of a toasted cheese-and-ham sandwich or *vikend* meaning a cottage or a vacation home.

In the initial stages, borrowings are extremely susceptible to variation manifested both in unstable pronunciation and orthography, e.g. *college/kolidž*, *software/softver*, *leasing/lizing*, *rock'n'roll/rokenrol*, *jazz/džež*, *koktajl/koktejl/cocktail*, *jogging/džoging*, *imidž/image*, *jeans/džins*. In printed media they are often used in inverted commas or italics or even accompanied by a gloss or a footnote explaining their meaning.

e.g.

- *Ameriška vlada si je pustila odprta vrata tudi za takšen razvoj dogodkov: sporazum o embeddingu, ki ga je vsak embedded novinar moral podpisati z ameriško vlado določa, da sme ameriška vlada proces embeddinga prekiniti kadarkoli in zaradi kateregakoli razloga – at any time and for any reason.*  
*Opomba: Angleški izraz to embed v dobesednem prevodu pomeni nekaj trdno, neločljivo vstaviti, vložiti, zakopati v obkrožajočo stvarino. Fossil, denimo, je embedded v obdajajočo kamnino. Raba tega izraza za opisovanje položaja, statusa novinarjev je pomensko nova, gre za pentagonski novorek, zaradi česar ga tudi angleško pisoci tisk neredko – včasih posmehljivo – uporablja v navednicah. Mi ga ne bomo prevajali, kadar pa že, potem z nevtralnimi izrazom »vključitve v ento«.* (Delo, Sobotna priloga, 29.3. 2003:13).
- Veliko podjetij najema za iskanje zahtevnejših profilov kadrov 'headhunterje' – lovce na glave, ki za njih iščejo ustrezne kandidate. (Mojedelo.com, revija za zaposlovanje in razvoj kariere, August 2005:11).
- *Mafini* so modno pecivo. Priljubljene mini kolače lahko jemo ob različnih priložnostih ... (Ona, year 7, no. 31, 9.8. 2005:53)

Borrowings naturally progress through several such stages until some gradually disappear and some eventually become so completely integrated into the Slovene lexicon that they are no longer perceived as foreign, e.g. *sendvič*, *pulover*, *piknik*, *intervju*, *tabu*, *jahta*, *bojler*, *trenirati*, with *klikniti* as a recent example. This is also the stage of their complete morphological assimilation, as they begin to comply completely with the rules of Slovene word-formation, declination and conjugation.

The influence of English on Slovene vocabulary is evident in all areas of life and in different genres, but particularly so in the media and in the spoken discourse of the young. A survey carried out among my own students at the University of Maribor shows English loanwords (nouns, verbs, adjectives and whole clauses) covering practically all areas of life that are closest to teenagers and young people: music, the movie industry, computer terminology, mobile phones, sports, and entertainment, and also swear-words. At first sight, they look similar to the loanwords used by Slovene Americans, but a closer examination reveals an extra element with them, that of slanginess. Their use of English is therefore indicative of their unwillingness to conform to the norms of adult society, of their in-group solidarity and also of their feeling of being »in«, with a very strong American element being present as well. Obviously these terms are very unstable and most of them, by definition, will probably be fairly short-lived. It is possible, however, that some of them may survive and in time become part of the established vocabulary.

e.g.

- *mesidž/mesič/message*, *luzer*, *frendica* from *message*, *looser*, *friend*;
- *skenslati*, *mailati*, *densat* from *cancel* (i.e. to hang up on somebody/to break up with somebody), *mail*, *dance*;
- *kul*, *ful*, *the/d best* from *cool*, *full*, *the best*;
- *Skuliraj se!* *Hauzit going?* *Gremo v lajf*. from *Cool down* (i.e. Take it easy). *How is it going?* *Let's go into life* (i.e. Let's party).

Very similar, if not identical examples can be found in some magazines specifically targeted at teens (e.g. *Smrklja*). Again, a considerable degree of instability, illustrated by different spelling variants for the same items even within the same sentence, is observed.

e.g. *What about pajama party? Za dober pajama party potrebuješ sestavine: pet najboljših prijateljic v pižamah ... veliko pop-corna ... Prijateljice te vabijo na pidžama party z goro video-kaset.*

Somewhat suprisingly, more »serious« printed media for wider audiences are often interspersed with English, too. Apparently, newspapers and magazines resorting to such techniques take the English proficiency of their readers for granted. Unfortunately, they also marginalize all those who are not young, mobile and educated, therefore not proficient in English, not to mention the very detrimental effect that such a policy has on the status and development of Slovene in Slovenia.

e.g.

- *Obstajata dva načina, kako izgovoriti tisto, kar misliš; on the record in off the record, za objavljanje in ne za objavljanje.* (Delo, Sobotna priloga, 20. 11. 2004: 23).
- *Danes mladi skupaj z našo družbo vstopajo v svet potrošništva, kjer si 'in', če zbiraš sličice Pokemon, nalepke ali celo akcijske figurice in tako imeovane baby born punčke, ki starše tudi ogromno stanejo.* (Večer, 19.9. 2005:13).

### 3.2 The Influence of English on Slovene Syntax

While lexical aspects of Slovene-English language contact are the most salient, the English influence does not stop there, but also affects syntax, namely the word order of Slovene. This happens in more subtle ways and to a much smaller extent than in the case of vocabulary. It is often attributed to careless language use and tendencies on the part of some speakers and particularly writers to be sensationalistic (e.g. as a means of attracting attention in commercials), but is nevertheless indicative of potential language change. I list a couple of very telling examples from the Slovene press, the most typical of which are the premodifier/s + nominal head sequence and the redundant use of possessive pronouns. Both are clearly in contradiction with the spirit of Slovene.

e.g.

- *Afrodita Body Firm Lotion kolekcija ...*
- *Shield čistilo zaščiti vaša stekla ... vaše steklene površine.*
- *Zahvaljujem se vam za vaš odgovor.* (a typical error in my students' e-mail messages to me).

### 3.3 Intercultural Aspects

Finally, we can observe the intercultural impact of English on Slovene. Advertising strategies provide the clearest examples of English being used as an »in« language, associated with prestige and values worth striving for. This is reflected in the choice of visual and linguistic elements of advertisements, all of which is meant to make the



consumer feel part of a broader global family, sharing uniform cultural beliefs. Background music or lyrics during commercials are thus, as a rule, English or American as are scenes from everyday life that often contain culturally-loaded elements from a typically Anglo-American environment; slogans are often completely or at least partly English (a *Hyundai ad* showing a car driving across a typical American landscape and the English slogan *Drive your way*; the commercial for Smart (a small car) entirely in English with pictures accompanied by the following lines: *australopithecus, homo erectus, homo sapiens, Smart, Open your mind*; the teleshopping slogan *Call now* translated into Slovene word-by-word as *Pokličite zdaj* (instead of *Pokličite takoj*) as are many brand names of products as well as store and company names. Given the interconnectedness of language and culture, there can be no doubt that such strategies are slowly, but surely changing the Slovene cultural landscape molding it into a distinctly less Slovene and more and a more globalized entity.

It is obvious that English has managed to penetrate almost every aspect of our lives. We see it on the billboards, electric displays, radio, TV, on the Internet, in commercials, in so called creative, unconventional spelling such as *Batagel & Co., Rože & Vrt* etc. It is there to attract our attention and it has become so commonplace that we no longer question its presence.

Given the current trends, it is unlikely that the kind of influence that English exerts on Slovene in Slovenia will diminish. Just the opposite, which inevitably raises the question of balance and of possible consequences for Slovene. As for English loanwords, there are basically two kinds of attitudes toward them among native speakers of Slovene. Some regard it as a natural process of creating new vocabulary and enriching the language, others are concerned that too many loanwords may endanger the very existence of the language. The latter often try to counter the influx of English loanwords by inventing new indigenous lexical material whenever possible. This has worked very well in some cases, e.g. *tiskalnik* instead of *printer*, *računalnik* instead of *komputer*, *splet* instead of *world wide web*, *najstnik* instead of *teenager*, and somewhat less successfully in others, e.g. *vroča hrenovka* instead of *hot dog*. Among recent attempts in this direction we find the neologism *dlančnik* for *palm calculator* and the word *medmrežje* as an alternative for the *Internet* (the word *Internet*, however, is very persistent and is unlikely to be displaced completely by its Slovene equivalent owing to its wide-spread use across language boundaries).

As for the other aspects discussed, syntactic, and intercultural, the situation is far less clear, as the areas affected are particularly sensitive in that they have direct or indirect implications for our personal, social and cultural identities. Only time will tell which of the changes will survive and to what extent English will make a permanent impact on Slovene.

#### 4 Conclusion

The field of language contact research is simply too vast and too complex to be presented thoroughly in the confines of such an article. For that reason, I was able only to touch upon a limited number of issues, those too significant to be left out and those which I personally find intriguing, challenging and fascinating. While much remains to be learned and written about language contact, I hope that my research until now provides a valuable contribution to an understanding of the way languages function. And particularly so in contact, as this is not revealing only about languages per se, but also about the social dynamics and cultural values mirrored in them.

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#### POVZETEK

Avtorica obravnava vprašanje slovensko-angleškega jezikovnega stika v izseljenstvu in v Sloveniji. Neposredni stik med slovenščino in angleščino pri ameriških in kanadskih Slovenceh prikaže z dveh vidikov: družbenega oz. kulturnega in jezikoslovnega. V prvem delu predstavi splošno jezikovno stanje v Clevelandu (in delno v Washingtonu, D.C. in Torontu), pri čemer jo posebej zanimajo vprašanja jezikovnega ohranjanja in opuščanja, odnosa med stopnjo ohranitve materinščine in zavestjo o etnični pripadnosti ter vpliva zunajjezikovnih dejavnikov na jezikovno vedenje sodelujočih v raziskavi. Izpostavi razlike v jezikovni rabi in odnosu do obeh jezikov pri pripadnikih različnih generacij izseljencev in ugotavlja pospešeno opuščanje materinščine pri povojnih izseljencih v primerjavi s predvojnimi. Medtem ko se je premik od slovenščine k angleščini v družinah predvojnih izseljencev zgodil v toku treh generacij, se je pri povojnih skrajšal na dve generaciji. Z drugimi besedami, gre za premik od prvotne slovenske enojezičnosti preko delne slovensko-angleške dvojezičnosti do ponovne enojezičnosti, le da tokrat angleške. Vzroke je treba najbrž iskati v navidezno prikrite, a povsod in vedno prisotnem pritisku angleščine in ameriške kulture, ki ju predvsem mlajše generacije povezujejo z družbenim, kulturnim, političnim in gospodarskim prestižem. Tako ni presenetljivo, da se želijo v čim večji meri integrirati v okolje, v katerem živijo in da slovenščini ne pripisujejo velike uporabne vrednosti za širše sporazumevanje. Vse to prispeva k pešanju šibkejšega jezika, tako da je stanje dvojezičnosti v obravnavanih skupnostih zelo nestabilno in prehodnega značaja. Nasprotno pa je zavest o etnični pripadnosti slovenstvu pri vseh sodelujočih v raziskavi izredno visoka, tako da lahko z veliko verjetnostjo predvidevamo, da bodo te skupnosti, kljub temu, da se utegnejo njihovi člani v prihodnje prej kot za dvojezične morda opredeljevati za dvokulturne, vendarle preživele. Sledi primerjava rabe osebnih zaimkov za 2. osebo pri ogovarjanju

sogovornika in govornih dejanj, kakršni so npr. komplimenti, da bi ugotovili, v kolikšni meri so jezikovne izbire govorcev odvisne od različnih kulturnih okolij, iz katerih le-ti prihajajo.

Jezikoslovni del analize se osredotoča na vprašanja možnih omejitev kombinacij obeh jezikov, vrst dvojezičnega diskurza in stopnje medjezikovnih vplivov na različnih jezikovnih ravninah. Avtorica podrobno raziše oba glavna diskurzna tipa, sposojanje in kodno preklapljanje, in s primeri angleškega vpliva na pretežno enojezične slovenske dele diskurza ponazori, kako se slovenski sklanjatveni vzorci pogosto posplošujejo, poenostavljajo ali celo opuščajo ter kako slovenski besedni vrstni red v nekaterih pogledih postopoma postaja podoben angleškemu.

Zadnji del prispevka je posvečen vedno močnejšemu vplivu angleščine na slovenščino v Sloveniji. Ta je najbolj opazen v medijih in oglaševanju ter v govoru mladih. Najbolj očitno se kaže na leksikalni ravnini, kjer slovenščina ne privzema le besed, ki so potrebne za zapolnitev leksikalnih vrzeli, ampak tudi take, kjer ima za določene predmete ali pojme popolnoma ustrezne lastne izraze. Angleške sposojenke gredo običajno skozi več razvojnih stopenj: na začetku so največkrat zelo nestabilne, kar se kaže v neustaljeni pisavi in izgovorjavi, sčasoma pa lahko postanejo bolj stabilne, tako da govorci v njih ne zaznajo več elementov tujosti. Nekatere se še naprej rabijo kot približne sopomenke hkrati s slovenskimi ustreznici, druge doživijo različne semantične modifikacije, spet druge s časom izginejo iz jezika. V primerjavi z leksikalnimi so skladenjske spremembe precej manj pogoste in bolj subtilne, tako da jih včasih komajda opazimo. Kljub temu si najbrž zaslužijo še večjo pozornost, saj vplivajo na zelo občutljivo področje besednega vrstnega reda in ustaljenih slovenskih skladenjskih struktur. So torej nekakšne tihe znanilke potencialnih jezikovnih sprememb slovenskega jezika v prihodnosti. Prav tako ne smemo zanemariti pragmatičnih in medkulturnih vplivov angleščine, predvsem na področju oglaševanja.

Glede na to, da je jezik sistem, ki je zaradi odvisnosti od zunajjezikovnih kontekstov, v katerih se uporablja, zelo podvržen spremembam, so jezikovno-stične situacije še posebej zanimive za raziskave. Lahko rečemo, da je raziskovanje slovensko-angleškega jezikovnega stika s tem, ko ponuja vpoglede v mehanizme potencialnih jezikovnih sprememb, ki izvirajo iz tovrstnih stikov, integralni del slovenističnih raziskovanj. Ne prinaša namreč le novih spoznanj o sami strukturi jezika, ampak tudi o družbeni dinamiki in kulturnih vrednotah, ki se zrcalijo v jezikovni rabi.