



UDC 811.163.6'27

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## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL SPEECH AMONG DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS IN SLOVENIA<sup>1</sup>

This paper presents the results of a survey of 238 speakers of Slovenian. The survey gathered responses to samples of four different sociolects; the analysis of the results contains a close study of the distribution of these responses according to respondents' sex, age and social group. The analysis highlights specific links between certain groups and sociolects, the methods used by respondents when evaluating the language and speakers of individual sociolects, and the ways in which those methods are characteristic of membership of a specific social group.

V članku so predstavljeni rezultati ankete med 238 govorce slovenščine. V anketi so bili zbrani odzivi na vzorce štirih različnih sociolektov, v analizi pa smo proučili distribucijo teh odzivov po spolih, starostih in družbenih skupinah anketirancev. Izkazale so se specifične povezave posameznih skupin s posameznimi sociolekti, pa tudi specifični načini vrednotenja jezika in govorcev posameznih sociolektov, kot so značilni za anketirance različnih družbenih pripadnosti.

**Key words:** sociolinguistics of Slovenian, sociolects, slang, vulgarity in language Survey

**Ključne besede:** sociolingvistika slovenščine, sociolekti, sleng, vulgarno v jeziku

### 1 Survey

A research survey was carried out of the responses of various groups of Slovenian speakers to four samples of social speech (sociolects) taken from contemporary Slovenian literary texts. The sociolects used were: slang, elite (extemporaneous/relaxed speech of educated speakers), rural (dialect) and urban (low colloquial language). A total of 238 people were surveyed, divided as follows for the purposes of analysis:

- 1) into two age groups, those under and those over 25 (in choosing this division, which corresponds roughly to the end of one's schooling, we wished to separate the members of the »moratorium group« from those that are already an established part of the social economy);
- 2) by sex;
- 3) into three educational groups: lower (primary or secondary vocational education), medium (secondary or further education), and higher (college education).

The division into educational groups is an approximation of social division and is not, as such, ideal; for a more precise definition one would need to establish (primarily) social status on an individual basis (Max Weber), or even more precisely *habitus* (Pierre Bourdieu). Despite these reservations, it was decided, for the purposes of analysis, that a single factor in an otherwise three-dimensional social stratification

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<sup>1</sup> This research was carried out as part of a doctoral study under the supervision of Professor Ada Vido-  
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(material, cultural and social capital, see Bourdieu, 1986: 241–261) would be used. Institutional education is not only the factor which is the most easily addressed from an objective point of view but also the most important when considering attitudes to language. It is in the education process that a speaker of a language is introduced to more complex forms of discourse (and to »cultural language« in general), and his own practical linguistic sense develops from an understanding of his own attitude to these discourses (see Bourdieu, 2002).

The table below shows a precise distribution of respondents according to the parameters outlined above.

| Level of education | Male         |         | Female       |         | Total |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|-------|
|                    | 25 and under | Over 25 | 25 and under | Over 25 |       |
| Lower              | 27           | 12      | 11           | 7       | 57    |
| Medium             | 3            | 17      | 41           | 25      | 86    |
| Higher             | 9            | 10      | 66           | 10      | 95    |
| Total              | 39           | 39      | 118          | 42      | 238   |

Since the groups were distributed unevenly in numerical terms, the results had to be weighted in the course of statistical processing. The following approach was decided upon. In comparing, for instance, the responses of age groups within an individual age group, (1) we first calculated the average of the responses of all three social groups for both sexes; (2) we then calculated the average of the responses between the sexes. We were thus able to eliminate the possibility, for example, of the larger number of women under 25 with higher education from distorting the results of the analysis for the under-25 age group.

The questions that the respondents were required to answer can be divided into two groups: questions relating to the attractiveness of a sample sociolect, from which we calculated indices; and questions relating to stereotypes surrounding speakers of a sample sociolect, where we considered the percentages of respondents within a given group who had opted to give an individual descriptive response. There were four questions within the first group:

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1. Are you able to identify with or feel close to a person who uses this language?
  - a. Yes, I feel at home with such a person
  - b. No, but I am able to understand them
  - c. No, their way of thinking is strange to me
2. Is such a person attractive to you?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Somewhere in the middle
  - c. No
3. Would you normally be interested in a novel of this type?
  - a. Yes

- b. Perhaps
  - c. No
4. What do you think of the use of such a method of expression in public, e.g. in television discussion programmes, public appearances, conversat conversations with strangers?
- a. It is inappropriate and unpleasant to hear
  - b. This unnatural manner of speaking is not appropriate in such situations.
  - c. I would not notice, and it would seem entirely normal to me
  - d. I would find it interesting
  - e. I would find it attractive and relaxed

We evaluated the responses as follows:

- 1) We counted the positive, neutral and negative responses in each group for each question, and expressed them as percentages.
- 2) We then subtracted the percentage of negative responses from the percentage of positive responses, thus obtaining an **index** of the sociolect in question for each group according to the given parameter. For example, an index of -21 for the second question means that in the group in question, 21 % more respondents responded that the sociolect was not attractive to them than those who gave a positive response. For the fourth question, where five answers were possible, the last two answers were calculated in the same way as with the other questions, with the moderately positive and the moderately negative answers being multiplied by 0.5 so that their contribution to the index had suitably lesser weight. The highest hypothetical index was +/-100 (100 % positive or negative response), while an index that approaches zero signifies a largely neutral response to a sociolect among respondents in the group in question (meaning either that their assessment was mostly »somewhere in the middle« or that roughly the same numbers gave positive and negative responses).
- 3) We processed the responses as indices of (1) identification (2) attractiveness (3) interest and (4) suitability for public use. We refer to the average of these indices as the index of attractiveness. Special attention has been paid to the index of identification and the average index of attractiveness; differences between the other indexes have been noted only when they pointed up a specific or unexpected ratio.

The second group of questions attempted to establish the image respondents had of people who used such language. A range of possible positive and negative responses corresponded to the characteristics that might induce a respondent to regard a speaker of such language as attractive or unattractive. A person could be:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| a) boring        | a) funny, witty                         |
| b) sugary        | b) cultivated                           |
| c) vulgar        | c) coarse, direct, relaxed              |
| d) affected      | d) sincere, open                        |
| e) stupid        | e) intelligent, thoughtful              |
| f) narrow-minded | f) well-versed in the ways of the world |
| g) conceited     | g) understanding towards other people   |

We simply added up the responses to these questions and expressed them as percentages of all respondents (with the appropriate weighting of the results). At least a fifth of all respondents were required to have chosen a particular response it to be regarded as a conclusive response.

## 2 Comparison of age groups

Respondents in the younger age group assessed **slang** more favourably according to all parameters (e.g. an index of identification of +21 vs. +6 among the older age group);<sup>2</sup> this was entirely in line with expectations. It is interesting to note, however, that despite this high index, the under-25 group gave a fairly low assessment of its suitability for public use (-35), even though the sample did not contain particularly vulgar elements; clearly, secondary socialisation is already playing its role in constructing an approach towards cultural language among these respondents.

By contrast, the older speakers surveyed felt somewhat greater identification with the **rural** sociolect: an index of identification of -5 among the younger and +5 among the older respondents, with the overall index being -7 and +4 for the respective age groups. This difference is even more interesting in relation to suitability for public use. While the older age group regarded it as relatively suitable (+7), for example, more suitable than the elite sociolect (-13), the index for the younger age group was extremely low (-22) – even lower than for the elite sociolect (-17). This seems to point to a re-evaluation of dialect by the younger generation, but is unlikely to be a special symptom of our times; the deterioration of dialects has, after all, been a point of discussion since the very beginning of dialectology. More likely this simply demonstrates the feeling that rural speech is inappropriate for younger speakers as they begin their professional careers on the one side and certain nostalgia for dialects among older speakers on the other. This can also be seen in the fact that the older respondents designated this language as the speech of *compassionate* people significantly more often than the younger ones (28 % vs. 12 %), but at the same time as *limited* (37 % vs. 28 %).

When we consider the stereotypical notion of the »rebellious« approach to language taken by younger people, the fact that by far and away the greatest difference between the age groups was in their attitude towards the **low urban sociolect** was entirely in line with expectations. These differences were more pronounced than all others in the survey. The index of identification was 21 among the younger age group and -0 among the older age group; the index of attractiveness was -7 among the younger age group and -45 among the older age group; and the index of interest was +4 among

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<sup>2</sup> It is understandable that the index is not even higher if one considers the fact that slangs, like all major types of sociolects, are differentiated. The identification with particular slang depends on other characteristics of the respondent, e.g., level of education, affiliation with a particular social network. This survey is intended to measure the response to general features of individual groups of sociolects by a very diverse group of participants, rather than the response of a concrete social network to the characteristics of a particular sociolect, which is typical of other sociolinguistic studies. For general features of individual groups of sociolects cf. Skubic, 2004.

the younger age group (the only positive outcome for all sociolects) and –28 among the older age group. Sixty-one percent of older respondents regarded such speech as *vulgar* (37 % of younger respondents); and 38 % of younger respondents preferred to regard such speech as *sincere, open* (25 % of older respondents did so).

### 3 Comparison of the sexes

There were no particular differentiations in responses according to sex when it came to specific slang and elite features of language; the more interesting differences came with both marginal (rural and urban) sociolects.

As regards the **rural** sociolect (dialect), the index of identification was lower among women than among men (–5 vs. +8); at the same time, the index of attractiveness was slightly higher among women (+28 vs. +21). It appears that this figure, though the difference is minimal, agrees with findings on the gender differentiation of expression from sociolinguistic research in the United States and Great Britain (e.g. 1978, Trudgill, 1975, where interpretation proceeded in two directions. The original interpretation of Labov and Trudgill was that the status of women in Western society was under greater threat since they had less power in society, their need for a defence mechanism as a substitute signalisation of status making it more incumbent on them to use a more cultivated form of language. According to the other interpretation, advocated by James and Lesley Milroy (see Wodak, 1997: 136), this shows that social networks control loyalty to local values considerably more rigidly among men, from which it is therefore expected with greater certainty that they will preserve a marginal sociolect; women, on the other hand, have greater linguistic freedom, which is why they are also able to deploy cultivated variants (which for men are »too effeminate«). The otherwise unpronounced trend shown by the survey is interesting, given that our approach measured a relatively *abstract* attitude towards ways of speaking in general and did not focus on concrete ways of speaking within a given speech network.

As expected, men expressed a greater degree of identification with regard to the **low urban sociolect** than women (+17 vs. +9) and greater tolerance when it came to assessing attractiveness (–21 vs. –29). Opinions on (un)suitability for public use were roughly equal (–51 for men and –54 for women). It is interesting to note that women nevertheless demonstrated greater *interest* in the text featuring this mode of expression (–8 among women and –19 among men). Where there were roughly equal levels of (un)attractiveness and (dis)interest among men (–21 and –19, respectively), women expressed a greater interest in the language whose speakers were otherwise regarded as less attractive (therefore, attractiveness –29 and interest –9). To draw a perhaps inappropriate but nevertheless interesting parallel: in analysing the attitude of social groups to the low sociolect, we see that this attitude to language was expressed by those with a medium level of education (index of attractiveness was –45, with the index of interest somewhat higher at –33), where sociological research and interpretation posits an uneasy relationship with language, rather than by those with a higher level of education (attractiveness and interest roughly equal at –12 and –9, respectively), where the relationship with language is more relaxed. The differences are

certainly not great and do not indicate a »principle«; however, they do perhaps show a trend in the approach to the evaluation of what the dominant social culture excludes, but what still remains exciting.

The reliance on conventional evaluations is demonstrated when one examines the descriptive markers for all the sociolects. Women were more inclined to regard uncultivated elements as *vulgar*. Twenty-seven percent of women and 17 % of men regarded the speaker of slang as vulgar; 54 % of women and 42 % of men regarded the speaker of the urban sociolect as vulgar.

#### 4 Comparison of educational groups

Expectations regarding the attitude of social groups to language derive from what we know about their own sociolects (see Skubic, 2004). In this comparison we will therefore examine the following: (1) view of the world, which is reflected in the specific assessments given by an educational group of respondents; (2) the evaluation of sociolects seen as likely to be closer to the group in question. Naturally, it is not possible to judge, on the basis of the modest amount of information available on the respondents, whether a respondent speaks or identifies with a specific dialect; we can, however, place a respondent with a proportionately high probability in a *habitus* in which a certain sociolect is most at home. Likewise, when deploying this analytical classification, one is unable to establish all the necessary links; for example, we have not included in the survey samples of the hypercorrective cultivated sociolect, which would one expect to be closer to the medium-level educational group. This sociolect is (especially in written form) so close to the language of culture that readers expect to encounter in printed texts that respondents probably would not recognise it as a language that designates the social status of the speaker. For this reason, we have not included a study of the evaluation of their sociolect in the sub-section on respondents with a medium-level education. A review of the evaluation of the slang sociolect is included in the section on respondents with a higher level of education with reservations; slang *in general* is not more closely linked with any single social group (unlike the *specific* slang of vocational school students for example, which can be linked to the lower education group), since it denotes speakers who have decided to withdraw from established linguistic hierarchies and to resocialise within their own group under their own conditions. We discuss this sociolect there because it expresses a linguistic ease and exclusive (self-)evaluative approach that is close to the semiotic approach of the elite sociolect. In fact, the expression *elite sociolect* itself might be problematic because it actually involves a modification of the cultivated sociolect towards slang, a marginal phenomenon that could also be treated as a socially higher variety of slang.

##### 4.1 Respondents with a lower level of education

If we take language attitude as tolerance of social heterogeneity in language use, we can take respondents with a lower level of education as being (1) relatively conscious of the importance and identification value of differences – they demonstrated



comparatively the most pronounced indices of identification with the expected sociolects; (2) despite this fact they were relatively tolerant – the total indices of attractiveness for all sociolects were, in comparison with the other two groups, **moderately (not excessively) low** (slang –14, elite –6, rural –3, urban –7).

As expected, speakers with a lower level of education expressed the highest index of identification with the **urban sociolect** (+31, which was the highest index of identification of all sociolects and all social groups in the study). This affiliation is in apparent contradiction with the low index of suitability for public use (–37) and even with the relatively low index of attractiveness (–12), although this was still the most positive evaluation of all three groups surveyed. In part, this is the phenomenon that William Labov called *linguistic uncertainty* ((1978): 124 and following), and partly a discrepancy between the norms of the (declared) prestige and the (actual) covert prestige, which could not be included in a study of this type. The most notable fact here is that **in no other educational group were the differences between the older and younger age groups so pronounced**. The index of identification was +61 among younger speakers and +3 among older speakers; this difference appeared in all other indices (the index of attractiveness was +25 among younger speakers and –49 among older speakers), and even in the negative evaluation of suitability for public use (–21 among younger speakers and –53 among older speakers). The generation gap is clearly particularly deep in the social class whose marginal dysphemistic values are under greatest pressure from the dominant culture.

The urban sociolect is followed by **slang**, with an index of identification of +15. The most striking fact is that this group found the slang to be the least *attractive* of all the sociolects (–26, which was twice as low as the index for the low urban sociolect). What makes this relatively benign slang even more unattractive than the vulgarities of the urban sociolect? In light of the general observations on the living habits and tastes of social groups (see e.g. (1984)), it probably points to a certain characteristic of the lower social groups in general: these groups are supposed to be extremely pragmatic and are not meant to have an ear for »affected« speech, which is precisely how the playful and ironic stance taken by slang towards the dominant culture can be understood. If dysphemism plays a role in living and working practices of a more physical nature, the playfulness of slang is contrary to »common sense«, which is traditionally linked with the term »folk«, as it has also been treated in Slovenian sociolinguistic history. This also says something about the relationship of slang to the hierarchy in general social semiotics: the idea of resocialisation, the decision to adopt alternative values, which is the background of the origins of slang, is an act of individualisation, a withdrawal from a linguistic environment that seems repressive in its conventionality; it is experienced as subversive and, because of the relatively weak social power of its adherents, frequently comical.<sup>3</sup> It is no surprise that, with the exception of several ar-

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<sup>3</sup> This certainly does not mean that such a newly created group does not act in a repressive manner against its members with respect to linguistic conduct – possibly even more so on account of its persecution complex and self-exclusion.

ticles by Velemir Gjurin (Gjurin, 1974, Gjurin, 1982), slangs have not been accorded particularly serious or careful attention in Slovenian linguistics. There is a clearly noticeable generational split here as well: the index of identification was +27 among younger speakers (index of attractiveness –3), and +3 among older speakers (index of attractiveness –49).

The **elite sociolect** scored relatively highly among members of this group, somewhat contrary to expectation (+12); curiously, this group gave it the highest index of attractiveness of all the groups surveyed. Surprisingly, most of the credit for the high score accorded to this sociolect goes to young people (+24, as opposed to +0 among the older age group), and particularly to young women (+36, vs. +11 among young men). It appears that the pejorative terms *zasvinjanost*, *svinjarija*, *bedak* and *rovte*, which led more educated groups to regard this angry speaker as unattractive, are closer to the mode of expression of young women in the lower-education group, which is also otherwise more inclined to uncensored expression of (also negative) feelings; however, the extreme vulgarisms from the urban sociolect appear over-stigmatised to the young women of this group. They are even willing to overlook certain obvious intellectual words (*razpadajoče beljakovine*).

#### 4.1.1 Assessments of the rural sociolect

As expected, **respondents with a lower level of education** identified most with the rural sociolect; however, a generation gap is found here as well. The total index of identification was fairly low (+3), which can be attributed on the one hand to the expressly regional character of the rural sociolect in the sample text, which considerably reduced the likelihood of identification; on the other hand, the index of identification was much higher among *older* respondents with a lower level of education (+14 vs. –8 among the younger respondents). This language still expresses a marginal view of the world, but in a way that is compatible with the dominant norms. The rural sociolect is therefore the only language with which these respondents felt properly affiliated; their index of identification for all other sociolects was close to zero (i.e. the number of respondents who identified with it was roughly the same as those who did not). None of the groups surveyed placed the rural sociolect first or second.

The evaluation of the rural sociolect was the most different from the evaluations of other sociolects. The rural sociolect was the only language in which the index of attractiveness exceeded the index of identification among all groups. All groups of respondents assessed the speakers of this sociolect as *funny*, *witty* (average 42 %), and of all sociolects, rural speakers obtained the highest average mark denoting them as *compassionate* (around 20 % of all respondents). It is also interesting to note that the group **with medium and lower levels of education** placed this sociolect before the elite sociolect in terms of suitability for public use (–17 or –4 vs. –34 or –16); among those with a higher level of education, the elite sociolect remained slightly ahead. We may surmise that these results simply agree with the traditional myth of the »folk language« as the best Slovene of all. Of all groups of respondents, those with a **higher level of education** were far and away the most common in stating that speakers of



this sociolect were *sincere, open* (61 %), which points to the particularly pronounced idealisation of rural life among this group (only 18 % of the more down-to-earth respondents with a lower level of education agreed with this assessment).

It should also be mentioned that this idealistic assessment hides within itself a high degree of patronising. Respondents with a **higher level of education** also often regarded speakers of this sociolect as *limited* (37 %), with the other two groups not far behind. Respondents with a **lower level of education** commonly characterised speakers of this sociolect as *stupid* (22 %); this was particularly the opinion of young men (33 %).

#### 4.1.2 Assessments of the urban sociolect

As mentioned above, the urban sociolect was most conspicuously claimed as their own by respondents with a **lower level of education**; the index of identification was most pronounced among this group. As expected, this sociolect provoked the most extreme responses among all groups.

Respondents with a **medium level of education** were distinct in characterising this sociolect as *vulgar* (61 %, which is around 20 % more than the other two groups of respondents). They agreed with respondents with a higher level of education that speakers of this sociolect were *limited* (44, or 48 %), although this opinion was not held so widely by respondents with a lower level of education (only 23 %).<sup>4</sup> At the same time, respondents with a **higher level of education** did characterise speakers of this sociolect as *sincere, open* to an above-average extent (42 %, vs. approx. 25 % for the other two groups); this difference is similar to that seen in assessments of the rural sociolect. This appears to suggest that there is a certain degree of idealisation of the »untainted« nature of lower social groups generally among members of this group.

Respondents with a **lower level of education** did not contribute descriptive assessments in any great number; one can however note three relatively low (in percentage terms) assessments that are specific to this group. Sixteen percent of these respondents believed that a speaker of this sociolect was *well-versed in the ways of the world* (22 % of young men, only 5 % in the other two groups), 13 % that (s)he showed *understanding towards other people* (19 % of young men, with no respondent in the other groups giving this assessment) and 17 % that (s)he was *funny, witty* (37 % of young men vs. only 11 % and 5 %, respectively, for respondents with higher and medium levels of education).

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that around one third of respondents regarded speakers of practically all sociolects as limited. The deviations from this rule are also of interest: only respondents with a higher level of education agreed with this assessment considerably less with respect to the elite sociolect, while only respondents with a lower level of education disagreed with it with regard to the urban sociolect.

#### 4.2 Respondents with a higher level of education

Of all the groups surveyed, these respondents produced the **highest** indices of attractiveness for all sociolects (E -5, M +3, S +8) with the exception of the urban sociolect, which was evaluated lower by this group than by the groups with lower education (-16). This points to a relatively **high degree of linguistic tolerance** among these respondents even when they do not identify with a certain language.

**Slang** was markedly the sociolect with which this group most identified (+20, rising to +29 among young people). Of all the groups surveyed, it produced by far the highest index of attractiveness for this sociolect (although still a negative value of -8). Of all respondents, they were most frequent in characterising a speaker of this sociolect as *sincere, open* (45) and *coarse, direct* (50), even though such speakers were also commonly characterised by this group (as they were by those with a lower level of education) as relatively *limited* (40). With no other sociolect did the index of identification exceed +10 for this group of respondents. Second place was occupied by the elite sociolect (+6), which was the only sociolect that received a positive index of suitability for public use among this group (+5).

##### 4.2.1 Assessments of the elite sociolect

As mentioned earlier, of all the groups surveyed, the group with a **lower level of education** produced the highest index of identification for the elite sociolect (+12), although it put it only in third place overall. No group put it in first place. It did claim second place among those with a higher level of education, but with a low index of identification (+6).

The descriptive designations of this language differed quite widely according to the group. To a large extent, those with a **medium level of education** regarded speakers of this sociolect as particularly unattractive (-31); this group also distinguishes itself by its characterisation of the speakers of the elite sociolect as *limited* (32 %, respondents with a low level of education 25 %; only respondents with a higher level of education do not agree with this assessment) and *boring* (30 %; 24 % respondents with a higher level of education). Respondents with a medium level of education also regarded this sociolect as unsuitable for public use (-34). Respondents with a **lower level of education** characterised speakers of this sociolect as *conceited* (25 %, which was above average) and the sociolect itself as less suitable for public use (-16). As already mentioned, respondents with a higher level of education regarded this sociolect as entirely suitable. Speakers of this sociolect were given positive assessments chiefly by respondents with a **higher level of education**: *well-versed in the ways of the world* (32 – half the number of respondents from the other two groups agreed with this, but speakers of this sociolect nevertheless had the highest score for this parameter of all the sociolects) and *sincere, open* (42 – close to 32 for the respondents with a lower level of education; only respondents with a medium level of education do not agree).

#### 4.2.2 Assessments of slang

Respondents with a **higher level of education** identified most with slang (+20), followed by those with a **lower level of education** (+15); in both groups the lead was taken by young people (+29 and +27 respectively). It is interesting to note that those with a medium level of education identified least with this sociolect: the index was a mere +9.

None of the groups produced a positive index of attractiveness for speakers of this sociolect. The highest score (only -8) came from those with a **higher level of education**, who assigned positive attributes to speakers of this sociolect to an above-average degree: *sincere, open* - 45 % (only 29 % among the other two groups); *coarse, direct* - 50 %. They were regarded across the board as being *limited* (approx. 38 %); respondents with a **medium level of education** characterised them as *vulgar* to an above-average degree (34 %, i.e. twice as often as respondents from other groups). Those with a **lower level of education** characterised the speaker as moderately *funny, witty* (22 % - the same figure as for those with a higher level of education, which placed it in second place among all the sociolects).

#### 4.3 Respondents with a medium level of education

The total indices of evaluation of all sociolects were **exceptionally low** among respondents with a medium level of education (slang -23, elite -29, urban -38, even rural -9). They were far and away the most common users of the marker *vulgar* for all sociolects (see above). Their very low evaluation of the elite sociolect according to all parameters was surprising; they even assessed it as being more unattractive and uninteresting than the slang (as noted above, they regarded the speaker of this sociolect as *limited* and *boring* with above-average frequency). Moreover, this group was distinguished by its unexpectedly low assessment of the rural sociolect, i.e., despite a modest (the lowest of all at only +12) level of attractiveness, its suitability for public use was assessed at -17 (-46 among young people!), although this assessment was not based on a particularly outstanding descriptive markers.

These respondents gave no index of identification higher than +10 for **any of the sociolects** included in the survey. In first place was slang (+7, among young people +9), although this affiliation was by far the lowest for this sociolect according to all parameters of all the groups surveyed; the index of identification was not positive for any of the other sociolects.

The attitude to language displayed by this group effectively illustrates the features of this social group put forward by Pierre Bourdieu in his book on the social critique of taste (1984) and which I also anticipated, based on his analysis, in my article on sociolects (Skubic, 2004). Although affiliation with the language of culture is stereotypically and frequently attributed primarily to educated people, a number of socio-linguistic studies (in my opinion, the present one as well) have shown that this is not always the case in everyday life. The higher-status group is characterised by a fairly relaxed attitude to language, rejection of conventional exclusivity and even an inclina-

tion towards eccentricity (since it »does not need« symbolic linguistic endorsement). On the other hand, the linguistic uncertainty forces the lower-status groups – which desire to distance themselves from groups they regard as lower or less cultured – into hypercorrection, rigidity and intolerance of difference.

## 5 Appendix: Samples of sociolects used in the survey

### Slang

Mislim, mimoidoči je bil dobesedno tepec na celi črti. Takšne tipe sovražim že od malih nog, res. Gledal sem za njim in kar na bruhanje mi je šlo. Nisem vedel, kaj storiti, pa sem se počasi podal za njim. Brez vsakih nakan, da smo si na jasnem. Imela sva pač isto pot. Capljaj sem tam ob tisti reki in se oziral za staro hišo, katere stopnice vodijo v reko. Stari mlin. Nekje sem slišal, pa ne bi potem, kje, da so v neki davni avstrijski in ogrski deželi zmleli tam na tone in tone žita, ki so ga nato zmletega prevažali po reki na nekakšnih prekletih flosih. Da so se ti modeli, ki so prevažali moko, imeli nadvse kul in to in da so bili pravi, khm, khm, porivači in da so imeli v vsakem mestu, kjer so seveda lahko privežali svoj flos, po eno ljubico. Da so nosili domov muziko, kot so tedaj pravili spolni boleznin in to. Za vola ubit.

Dušan Čater, *Patosi*

### Elite sociolect

»Situacija je kar normalna...«  
»Toliko normalna, da človeku ni treba stopati čez ljudi, prtljago, da še ne smrdi po hodnikih po česnu in čebuli, ovčetini in kozletini mogoče, da ni do konca zasvinjano in da se ne kadi in ne pije. Lahko si samo želimo, da ne bo hitrih racij in pregledov policije in carine, da si še ni nabral več kot tristo minut zamude, ne glede na to, v katero smer pelje. To zate pomeni, da so cariniki in policisti za silo normalni, četudi, tako kot potniki, malo smrdijo po česnu, čebuli in žganju, po težkem tobaku, po kislem in postanem, po razpadajočih beljakovinah... to je zate še normalno, ne? Ta tvoja večna težnja, da bi se približal dnu, da bi se dotaknil čim večje svinjarije... Ko je doseženo to, takrat si srečen – in vrh tvoje sreče je, če najdeš bedaka, da posluša tvoje predavanje o zgodovini železnice... kakor da se danes peljem prvič, kakor da grem prvič tja proti tistim rovtam...«  
Malo se je presedel, kdo se pa ne bi. Ne more ji uiti, ker je kriv. Kriv je za ta vlak in verjetno še za vse ostalo.

Dušan Merc, *Sarkofag*

### Rural sociolect

Ivanka, gremo na Luno! reče.  
Kdaj? rečem mama.  
Drugi mesec. Piše na giornali! Sputnik je že  
pront!  
Ma ja?!  
Ja. Piše, da so ga prav centriral na Luno!  
Kako?  
Ne znam. Čentriran je, da pride na Luno!  
Bojo pokazali na televižjoni!  
A ja?  
Ja. Vi nimaste televižjona?  
Ne.  
Bem, ma uni bojo šli prav taku na Luno,  
znaste?  
O, znam, znam, reče mama in mu natoči  
kozarček.  
Odprl bo usta. Z mamu ga bova gledali.  
Potem bo zaprl usta in se bo smejal in bo šel  
in bo na vratih še kaj rekel. Reče. Zdaj.  
Bem, Ivanka, če nimaste televižjona, lahko  
prideste h meni na dum. Sem stavu anteno na  
streho. Je treba antena, da prime bulše. Luna  
je djelč! [...]  
Sem kupla televižjon, ma Giacomino ga ne  
mara, reče Josipina.  
Zakaj?  
Pravi, da sem malo štipida, in če bomo imeli  
televižjon, da bom še bolj štipida.  
Giacomio ne zastopi, reče tata. Mi bomo  
kupli televižjon, ki se kliče Telefunken. Boš  
pršla sem, da boš gledala naš televižjon.

Branko Sosič, *Balerina, balerina*

### Urban sociolect

Rekla je: »Ti pa najbrž nisi doživel veliko  
lepega v življenju.«  
To je rekla sočutno. Najbrž je mislila, da sem  
potreben tolažbe. Pa saj ne rečem. Potreba je  
bila res velika.  
»Ja, pizda,« sem rekel, »res nisem. Ljudje  
govorijo o ljubezni, o sreči, o ne vem čem,  
meni pa vse to nič ne pomeni.«  
»Oh ne, tega ti pa ne verjamem,« je rekla  
Mojca. »Kaj pa tvoja družina?«  
»Kakšna družina? Tisti zajebani folk?«  
Zasmejala se je: »Ah, daj no. A nisi bil  
poročen? A nimaš otrok?«  
Verjetno je Dorček povedal, kolikor je vedel.  
»Saj to ti govorim,« sem rekel. »Folk je  
zajeban.«  
»Kaj pa počne?«  
»Kurc, nič ne počne. Le tistega ni, kar bi jaz  
rad.«  
»Kaj bi pa ti rad?«  
Kurc, kaj bi rad. To me je vprašala že mami  
na balkonu. Kaj bi rad. Če bi že moral kaj  
reči, bi rekel, da nimam nobene prihodnosti.  
Da ne vidim stvari, ki bi bile vredne truda,  
jebiga.  
Prevalil sem se na bok. Mojca je vzela roko  
k sebi, jaz pa sem ji dal svojo na stegno. Kar  
tja blizu, jebiga. Rekel sem:  
»Veš kaj. Nekaj bi pa res rad.«  
Tone Hočevar, *Porkasvet*

V angleščino prevedel  
Joel Smith.

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#### POVZETEK

Opravljena je bila anketna raziskava odnosa do štirih vzorčnih sociolektov pri 238 govoricah iz različnih izobrazbenih skupin, različnih starosti in spolov. S statistično analizo smo prišli do razlik v njihovem vrednotenju do jezika glede na omenjene tri parametre. V raziskavi so se mlajši govorniki izkazali za znatno strpnješe do sociolektov, ki se oddaljujejo od norm dominantne kulture. Posebno izrazito je bilo identificiranje z vulgarnim govorom pri mlajših anketirancev iz niže izobražene skupine, izredno izrazito pa je bil razkorak med mlajšimi in starejšimi govorniki v teh izobrazbenih skupinah glede vrednotenja slenga. Podoben odnos so izkazali tudi moški nasproti ženskam. Najzanimivejše rezultate je dela primerjava anketirancev po družbenih skupinah. Skupina srednje izobraženih (srednja do višja šola) je izkazala znatno večjo nestrpnost do oblik, ki so ocenjene kot vulgarne (urbano obrobje), narečne (ruralno obrobje) in slengovske (ekscesne vrednote), kot obe drugi skupini. Niže izobražena skupina (osnovna ali poklicna šola) je izrazila znatno identifikacijo z obrobnimi oblikami, visoko izobražena skupina (univerza) pa sicer manjšo identifikacijo, vendar pa veliko mero strpnosti.