

# The Slovenian Language, Literature and Teaching of Slovenian Language Research Project

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Raziskovalni projekt Slovenski jezik, literatura in poučevanje slovenščine predstavlja položaj slovenskega jezika v matičnem slovenskem prostoru in v stiku s sosedskimi jeziki. Gre za diahroni in sinhroni pogled na slovenski jezik v regiji, ki ji jezikovno stičnost določata podonavski in alpsko-jadranski prostor, primerjalno tudi za slovenščino v stiku z globalnim angleškim jezikom.

The Slovenian language, literature and teaching of Slovenian language research project explores the role of Slovenian both in its native Slovenia and in contact with the neighbouring languages. It combines diachronic and synchronic approaches to the study of Slovenian in contact with other languages in the Danube and the Alps-Adriatic regions. In addition, it examines its contact with Global English.

**Ključne besede:** razvoj slovenskega jezika, jezikovna politika in načrtovanje, dialektologija, slovenska slovnica in slovaropisje, slovenska književnost, večkulturnost in medkulturnost, didaktika jezika in književnosti

**Key words:** history of the Slovenian language, language policy and planning, dialectology, Slovenian grammar and lexicology, Slovenian literature, multiculturalism and interculturality, didactics of language and literature

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In the past, Slovenian managed to preserve its essential linguistic elements despite the strong influence of German and Hungarian.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-19th century it developed a professional register and terminology, thus becoming a complete language with a full range of functions. From the viewpoint of social varieties, the project exposes the central issue associated with a uniform literary language, which is the relationship between literary and non-literary language (Orožen 2010: 25–40). In the 20th century this is replaced by a concern for “correct” vs “incorrect” and “beautiful” vs “ugly” in the Slovenian language (Toporišič 1987: 297–314; 1991: 419–435; Pogorelec 2011: 164). With the beginning of the 21st century, however,

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such structuralist views give way to the following issues: the appropriate use of individual linguistic means in given communicative circles (comp. Jesenšek ed. 2007a), the adjustment of Slovenian to interlingual influences (regional and global ones) (comp. Jesenšek 2007, 2013, 2014), and contemporary language planning and preparation of adequate language policy based on EU guidelines regarding the implementation of regional multilingualism and attitudes toward English (comp. Kalin Golob et al. 2014, Ahačič et al. 2017, Nečak Lük 2017).

The research project shows the following: (a) excessive openness causes functional deficiencies in Slovenian. Especially in the area of professional and scientific language, it may lead to a situation similar to the one that existed before Miklošič's efforts to develop Slovenian as a professional language as well; (b) eliminating English from higher education, and publishing major scientific findings exclusively in English may signify the beginning of the end for Slovenian; (c) English cannot and should not become the dominant language in any Slovenian speech community (including the academic one) in Slovenia; (d) Slovenian is sufficiently developed and sophisticated so as to allow well thought-out language planning to prevent its assimilation with other global and regional languages. We can draw a parallel with the past when Slovenian, despite the strong influences of Latin, German and Serbo-Croatian similar to the current one from English, managed to survive; (e) the language of the media has acquired the most important role in setting new standards for the use of Slovenian, especially in as far as pragmatics and intercultural communication are concerned (comp. Jesenšek ed. 2020).

In its past stage, the research project was implemented successfully and all of its objectives were reached. Its findings were presented to the public in Slovenia and abroad, at scientific conferences and symposiums, in the domestic and foreign scientific press, lectures that project members have been giving in various contexts, and in representative monographs. This research project embodies an important contribution to Slovenian science in the field of humanities and the Slovenian language. It has also helped the public in Slovenia and abroad to better understand the ways in which language develops historically, how it operates in conflict and how it is used by various interest groups, as well as mono-, bi-, and multilingualism, relationships between its colloquial and official (literary) forms, language planning, interlingual, multi- and intercultural contacts in literature. The research project also discusses the role that a national language plays in world literature. Project reviewers have established that the set goals are clear and are being expertly achieved in the following contexts:

(A) Language: (a) a socially critical, historically developmental linguistic analysis of the Slovenian language and literature of the early 21st century, which is an important period of time for Slovenian studies and language, (b) the identifying role of a language with regard to social and political conditions and regulations that affected the development of the Slovenian language (Austria-Hungarian, German, Yugoslavian Kingdom, the SFRY, Slovenia as an independent republic, and later Slovenia as a member of the EU); (c) the identifying role that the Slovenian language plays today as a core element of national identity; (d) the traditional interference of global and neighbouring languages.

(B) From the point of view of the theory of literature and didactics, the research shows that (a) the Slovenian-Austrian (German) bi-culturalism could not be part of a more open intercultural dialog in the time of the Austria-Hungarian monarchy; (b) from the point of view of intercultural relationships, different relationships between Slovenian and other languages are demonstrated with multiple examples from domestic and foreign literature; (c) it is important to design didactic models that encourage cultural exchange within the framework of the Slovenian language curriculum (and also to evaluate existing didactic models).<sup>2</sup>

(1) In terms of language policy and planning, it has been demonstrated that the Slovenian language plays a very important role in all levels of education (from primary school to university) (Vogel 2018: 74–93). The most important discovery is that it is imperative that the Slovenian language remain the language of instruction and learning in Slovenian universities – this will happen only if we, Slovenians, are aware of the important role that our mother tongue plays in our lives and that if we are educated in languages other than our own, we will eventually be de-Slovenified, lose our language, culture, the way of thinking, and identity (comp. Jesenšek 2016); under no circumstances, therefore, should we succumb to language globalization and accept the deceitful idea that it is necessary to use English in our tertiary education system (Jesenšek 2018: 114–115). We have shown that Slovenian positive language policy has benefited the Balkan-Danube region in comparison with less successful cases of language policy implementation. Similarly, before Macedonian take its place among the EU's official languages, it will be necessary to shape and adjust Macedonian language policies in accordance with the standards of the European Council. While joining the EU, some countries have equated teaching foreign languages to instruction in foreign languages and have thereby Anglified their education, science and research. It is imperative that such mistakes are not repeated (Jesenšek, Nikolovski 2012; Nikolovski 2015, 2017).

(2) With regard to the history of the Slovenian language (diachrony), we carried out a diachronic study of the role of Slovenian in manuscripts and printed texts in the period between the 15th and 20th centuries. We analyzed and interpreted two manuscripts (a draft of a 15/16th century sermon and a text of oath dating back to the early 19th century) (comp. Ulčnik 2016, 2017). We verified and evaluated the normative standards in the old grammar of the Slovenian Prekmurje language (Jesenšek 2013). We presented a developmental outlook on the word-form *človeki* that is now considered inappropriate. We carried out a diachronic evaluation of a university subject (Old Church Slavic). We carried out historic and linguistic research related to current events with the Slovenian domain, such as celebrations in 2016 and 2018 dedicated to Toporišič and Cankar respectively (Čeh Steger, Pulko, Zemljak Jontes ed. 2018, Jesenšek ed. 2016). We studied the role of the Prekmurje standard language and its transformation into a dialect during the process of unification of the Slovenian literary norm that took place in the 19th century. The process of unification in some parts of Prekmurje and Porabje extended to the end

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<sup>2</sup> ARRS-RPMRA-OCENA-RPROG-LP/2019, Raziskovalni program: P6-0156. 6312-1/2019-26; 7. 7. 2020.

of WWI, when the whole territory was unified under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Jesenšek 2018a). We are pleased to report that all set academic and program goals in the field of language history research were successfully reached.

(3) As for the field of dialectology, the relevant stated goals of the research project have been realized in the following aspects: (a) The meaning and role of dialects in the globalization process with respect to popular culture and the formation of a collective identity; (b) the research of Slovenian dialects, especially the dialects that form among Slovenians living in English-speaking countries (situation in the 21st century) (Šabec, Koletnik 2017). (c) The identifying role that language plays among the Slovenian minorities living in Porabje. (d) The research of dialectal lexics (Koletnik 2010, 2015, 2019; Koletnik, Šabec 2017; Nikolovski 2016). (e) The normative standards of the Slovenian language with an emphasis on the use of dialectisms and the role they play in text creation. Dialectal phraseology (comp. Lipavc Oštir, Vasiljevič, Koletnik 2014; Valh Lopert, Koletnik 2018; Koletnik 2017, 2018; Koletnik, Šabec 2017).

(4) In the field of the Slovenian literary language (synchrony) we (A) completed the planned lexicological study (Stramljič Breznik 2008, 2009; Ulčnik 2010). The relationship between words and collocations is tied to the linguistic-cultural interpretative approach that uses linguistic tools to uncover a culturally determined worldview of a certain language group (of speakers) (comp. Stramljič Breznik 2019; Krajnc Ivič 2009, 2010). The research on this subject is not done only within the realm of lexicology, but relies on a broad variety of data yielded by ethnological, semantic and phraseological studies that draw material from non-specialized (Gigafida) and specialized (TURK) corpora. Such research encourages a discussion on the status of certain language units, such as *kaša*, *kokoš*, *voda*, *odlika* and *odličnost*. An analysis of complex words used by language speakers yields material that can be used to develop cognitive research approaches in linguistics. (B) In the field of text linguistics, an analysis of selected texts and literary studies has shown that the Beaugrande-Dressler definition of text should be expanded for the (field-specific) purposes of text linguistics. Text varieties result from the normalization of different language-based interactions inside a certain area of communication and are constituted through inclusively connected characteristic functions, media-determined, thematic and structural text properties (Kranjc Ivič 2018). Text varieties in primary school textbooks are understood and classified according to the communicative-pragmatic definition of text and the relationships between the participants of a communicative process, which dictates illocutions that are possible and appropriate within the given text. Clustering of texts in Slovenian linguistics is based, above all, on the intention behind the text creator and, to a lesser degree, on establishing the relationship between text types and their respected versions (Kranjc Ivič 2018). (C) We are presenting new discoveries that synchronic language research has brought to the following fields: (a) the development of poststructural approaches when dealing with language in general gender identities (Krajnc Ivič 2019); (b) an analysis of speciesism and anthropocentrism in types of discourse that reach beyond the humanistic framework of the intersectional approach to the analysis of discourse and symbolic patterns of supremacy; (c) dealing with literary and journalistic antisemitism in its political and historic context that offers insight

into relationships among European cultural phenomena and their articulation in Slovenian literature and journalism of the first half of the 20th century; (d) research of discourse constructions of national identity as a special form of social identity, predominantly discourse constructions of group imagery of national symbolism (Kern, Vičar 2019; Vičar, Kern 2017; Vičar 2018, 2017).

(5) Research on Slovenian literature has (A) focused on the historic phenomena of biculturalism, interculturalism and multiculturalism, which can be found in representations of foreignness by bilingual Slovenian authors and their relationship with their native language (Borovnik 2008, 2017); (B) emphasized the marginalized position of the work of Slovenian female authors (Borovnik 2011, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2019; Čeh Steger 2014); (C) covered some Austrian authors who have discussed Slovenian-German bi- and interculturalism within the multicultural Habsburg Monarchy (Čeh Steger 2017a, Borovnik 2019a); (D) studied the phenomena of Slovenian-German bilingualism and interculturalism of the Austria-Hungarian Empire (Čeh 2018a, Borovnik 2020) and Cankar's language, cultural, and national identity, his relationship with the German language, images of domestic and foreign ecological spaces in Cankar's prose, Cankar's short prose in its entirety with the focus on the intercultural aspects of his "Viennese" short stories (Čeh Steger 2017, 2018, 2019); (E) new discoveries in genre classification of modern Slovenian short prose builds on earlier traditional understandings (Čeh Steger 2014) – a connection between former and present discourse practices is suggested, especially elements of minimalism and historic context in the poetics of Slovenian authors' literary work (Štuhec 2019, Bošnjak 2017); (F) the role of animals in children's literature was studied (Haramija 2015). New outlooks have been presented on the so-called easy reads and the monograph *Reading Is Easy (Lahko je brati). Easy Reading for Experts* (with a manual) in two parts (*Introduction, Rules*), which is aimed at people for whom reading does not come easy (children and adult immigrants, challenged people, and those with poorer reading skills) (Haramija et al. 2019).

(6) In the field of didactics, we presented (A) new perspectives on the development of literacy among children (Pulko 2017) and (B) the development of literacy and language acquisition of young disadvantaged learners (Pulko, Zemljak Jontes 2018; Zemljak Jontes, Pulko 2017). There are also important updates for the field of (C) reading literacy of children and adolescents (Haramija 2018, 2019; Haramija, Vilar 2019), (D) the development of family reading (Haramija 2019a), (E) encouragement of innovative flexible forms of learning through advances in language technology (Aberšek et al. 2017, Kordigel Aberšek 2018). (F) We also put forward a model of practical training for students of the Slovenian language and literature (Slovenski jezik in književnost) teaching programmes, i.e. future teachers (single- and double-subject teaching majors) at the Slavic Languages Department of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Maribor. After the adoption of Bologna study programmes, teacher training now takes two years at the postgraduate level, for three trimesters to be precise. We show the advantages of such education, along with examples of some good practices, especially cooperation with schools and teachers in charge of teaching practice. We drew a comparison between the practical training of future teachers with old university study programmes (Pulko 2016).

## Description of the work

Now we are continuing with the research of the role and importance of Slovenian language, literature and teaching in the inter-cultural area of the Danube region, whereby we are adhering to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region – an opportunity to carry out research that brings together and strengthens the Danube region. It is a study of national importance and an analysis of the Slovenian language, teaching and culture that draws attention to the linguistic diversity, literary and cultural heritage, as well as a scientific and pedagogical exchange; in doing so we are using the regional proximity of the Slovenian language to other (non-)Slavic languages in the Danube region as a starting point.

The research continues in the following interconnected areas: language policy and planning, language history, dialectology, literary language, Slovenian literature and Slovenian didactics.

We will continue with research in the fields of language policy and planning in the Republic of Slovenia and analyse existing harmonies or discrepancies between Slovenian and EU language acts (comp. Hojnik 2018). We will rely on the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to the Council of European Member States.<sup>3</sup> Our research will focus on (a) the adoption of EU guidelines for language education; (b) analyzing the existing Resolutions and critical perspectives on the process of the compilation of the Third Resolution; (c) the role and significance of the Slovenian language in Slovenian tertiary education (comp. Žele 2018); (d) the work of the inspectorate and ministry in charge of implementing the Public Use of the Slovenian Language Act; (e) the Slovenian language landscape (comp. Snoj 2018); (f) the question of multilingualism and language teaching; (h) the work done by the Slovenian Language Committee.<sup>4</sup> All of this work will play an important role in the efforts aimed at retaining Slovenian as the language of instruction in Slovenia's tertiary education system and preventing it from being replaced by an English surrogate (Jesenšek et al. 2016c). This research will start a dialogue on the scientific value and validity of Slovenian (comp. Tivadar 2018, Dobrovoljc 2018) and exert influence on positive language policy-making in Slovenia (Jesenšek 2016, Gliha Komac 2018).

In the field of language history, we will build upon the analysis and interpretations that have already been completed by this PG (comp: Jesenšek 2013a, 2015, 2015a, 2018; Ulčnik 2016, 2017; Horvat 2020) and beyond, e.g. within the eZISS<sup>5</sup>, at symposiums (comp. collection of scientific papers *Obdobja* vol. 37, eds. Kržišnik, Hladnik 2016) or published scientific articles. We will also shed light on the texts that are yet to be analyzed and the normative texts we are working with at the moment. For example, we are now preparing a Slovenian translation of the handwritten Grammar by Slomšek for its later publication in annotated form. This, we hope, will complete and standardize the corpus of oldest analyzed Slovenian texts that have arisen in Slovenia's (north)eastern regions (Jesenšek 2018a).

<sup>3</sup> Comp. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016804fc569>

<sup>4</sup> Comp. [https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism\\_sl#jeziki-na-portalu-europa](https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_sl#jeziki-na-portalu-europa)

<sup>5</sup> Elektronske znanstvenokritične izdaje slovenskega slovstva/Digital critical editions of Slovenian literature <http://nl.ijs.si/e-zrc/slomsek/index-sl.html>

In the field of dialectology, we will study (a) original Slavic and non-autochthonous vocabulary in dialectal professional terminology, (b) dialectal phraseology and (c) the question of translation of dialects (comp. Valh Lopert, Koletnik 2018, Smole 2018). Through focused lexicological research of professional dialectal terminology of Slovenia's northeastern dialects, we will create an inventory of the lexical and dialectal material that is disappearing from modern Slovenian (comp. Zemljak Jontes, Valh Lopert 2015). We will consider Slavic and non-Slavic interferences from its neighbouring languages (comp. Štumberger 2018). Slovenia's northeastern dialects have developed while in contact with Slavic, German, Romanian and Hungarian languages and cultures. The general Pannonian language area can be considered the most formative factor in the contact between Slovenian and Croatian – Kajkavian was the substitute literary language in the Prekmurje region up to the end of the 18th century, and it influenced the development of the east Styrian standard language at the end of 18th century (Jesenšek 2015a: 36, 75; Orožen 2010: 459, 469). German is our most important bordering language – in the past it had a dominant role and was used for a wide range of official and cultural purposes. Porabje is the convergence point of three cultures and languages: Slovenian, Hungarian, and German. Ripka (2002) believes that phraseology in dialects is very important for a thorough understanding of a people's language, culture and mentality. However, the body of research dedicated to Slovenian dialects pays little attention to phraseology (Poklač 2004, Smole 2014). We will limit our work to collocation phrasemes with a high degree of idiomaticity. We will also establish the differences and similarities in the phraseology of neighbouring language domains. Another question we want to answer is how to translate dialectal texts (Siladji 1991: 32). We are particularly interested in the strategies that are employed in the translation of dialects and whether or not translators are affected by the cultural tradition or political and historical conditions of the time in which they live and work.

In the field of literary language, we will focus on: (A) the word-formation process from the viewpoint of cognitive linguistics (comp. Stramljič Breznik 2018). The creation of a complex word is not merely a way to expand vocabulary, but also a means of strengthening a notion (or a number of notions) within a word, which reflect new values in culture and knowledge (comp. Stramljič Breznik 2018a). The study of word formation includes a synchro-diachronic approach (comp. Stramljič Breznik 2008, 2009). Factors that affect the process of word creation can be extralingual (new knowledge and objectivity) and intralingual (functionality and frequency of occurrence). Abrosimova (2014: 13) believes that it is important to view word formation as culturally conditioned patterns within a linguistic worldview – the word formation process is the result of various sociocultural factors. The cognitive framework (theoretical and interpretative) word formation categories is well-developed in the English-speaking world (Onysko/Michel 2010: 1–12). It is possible to apply English-written research on theoretical possibilities of cognitive grammar to Slovenian word formation in terms of the morphological and creative flexibility of Slavic languages. Such a transfer, however, cannot be done directly due to the differences that exist between the ways in which the foreign and our language communities operate. (B) Text clustering.

Slovenian text linguistics still does not have a working set of methods to classify (group) texts according to individual spheres of communication, which has been shown to work quite successfully in German text linguistics (Brinker et al., 2000; Gansel, Jürgens 2007). Research into the textual means of general and new media (Mikolič, Romih 2015) and tourism-related texts (Mikolič 2007, 2007a) will have to be upgraded with a clear distinction between the text type and text variety. (C) Research into second and foreign languages. We will (a) further develop the ever-growing Slovenian-Macedonian and Macedonian-Slovenian dictionary (to preserve cultural ties between Slovenians and Macedonians and better integrate Macedonian immigrants into Slovenian society); we will prepare (b) an analysis of the terms *native*, *primary*, *secondary*, and *foreign languages* in Slovenian society; (c) an analysis of modern methods of teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language and how these methods affect the processes of language learning and social integration; (d) an analysis of the interlingual understanding of Slovenian and other Slavic languages; (e) the development of a digital university-level textbook for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language for non-Slovenian speaking students; we will develop (f) easily accessible, free/open online apps for learning Slovenian as a second/foreign language. We will take into account the Strategy of inclusion of immigrant children, pupils, and students into the kindergartens and broader education system of the Republic of Slovenia (2007)<sup>6</sup> and the Guidelines for educating children of immigrants in kindergartens and schools (2012)<sup>7</sup>.

In the field of literature studies, we will focus on: (A) the systematic study of sermons and hagiographic texts of Slovenia's oldest literature with the emphasis on narratological analysis and narrative strategies from the point of view of theology and theory of literature (comp. Matija Ogrin 2013). (B) An analysis of a wide range of texts of the Holy Scripture based on typical situations, wherein The Holy Scripture of the New and Old Testaments is connected with numerous ancient and modern examples of Slovenian literature (Gabel, Wheeler 1986). (C) The analytical and discourse-based study of modern Slovenian short prose (comp. Bošnjak 2008), which can lead to various insights. This segment of literature features a high degree of genre hybridity, individualized autopoetics and a great variety of literary and stylistics tendencies. (D) A study of the latest Slovenian literature in the context of immigration and globalization processes. We will take into account the modern theory of multiculturalism and interculturalism (Welsch 2001, Hofmann 2006, Žitnik Serafin 2008, Kozak 2010, Kovač 2011), which is becoming closely tied to the Slovenian experience of cultural plurality that has existed in history but is assuming a new expressive shape in modernity (comp. Borovnik 2017). (E) An analysis of selected works by Slovenian authors will demonstrate that they write about social inequality, the marginalization of various social groups, mechanisms

<sup>6</sup> Strategija vključevanja otrok, učencev in dijakov migrantov v sistem vzgoje in izobraževanja v Republiki Sloveniji (2007) file:///C:/Users/Marko/AppData/Local/Temp/by2w6krds0og9q40yayhaylcn0s97fk.pdf

<sup>7</sup> Smernice za vključevanje otrok priseljencev v vrtce in šole (2012). [http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2019/programi/media/pdf/smernice/cistopis\\_Smernice\\_vkljucevanje\\_otrok\\_priseljencev.pdf](http://eportal.mss.edus.si/msswww/programi2019/programi/media/pdf/smernice/cistopis_Smernice_vkljucevanje_otrok_priseljencev.pdf)

of using violence and manipulation as well as language- and nation-based discrimination. The study of contemporary Slovenian literature relies on the culturological discussions of A. Debeljak, M. Velikonja, Ch. Taylor, Z. Baumann, W. Welsch et al. and on discoveries made in the fields of theory and history of literature by M. Bahtin, M. Bubr, J. Lacan, J. Derrida, L. F. Lyotard et al. We have also taken into account contributions to modern Slovenian literature studies made by S. Borovnik, J. Čeh Steger, A. Jensterle Doležal, M. Juvan, K. J. Kozak, A. Zupan Sosič, J. Žitnik Serafin et al.

In the field of children's literature, we will focus our efforts on (A) genre theory (research into the genre of short stories in relationship with picture books and how the combination of literary and artistic elements affects the development of children's literacy); (B) the importance of in-depth reading in primary and secondary schools; (C) the study of various forms of books (picture books, illustrated books, books with no illustrations) and various genres that have an important effect on children's literacy (Batič, Haramija 2018).

In the field of language didactics and literature, we will study (A) quality literary work from the standpoint of family literacy and the Eight Key Competences for lifelong learning. Literacy, the first competence of the European framework of reference (OJ EU 2018/C189/8) has become the foundation for all the other competence types. Therefore, we will work (relying on PIACC, 2016 results) on advance literacy among children, children of immigrants and anyone else who needs assistance with this task. (B) The process of learning Slovenian as a second/foreign language among adolescents (with regard to intercultural context): research into literacy and reading (how accessible these skills are economically and intellectually) is an important condition for the successful development of society as a whole. (C) The Stavanger Declaration acts as the heart of didactic research. The appeal is endorsed by hundreds of scientists and education professionals relying on the metaanalysis *Don't throw away your printed books* (Delgado et al. 2018). The study relies on data obtained from 170,000 surveys and demonstrates that the learning competences obtained through digital sources are so low that there is now a sizable threat of widespread academic underachievement. The declaration also calls for further research into e-literacy and ways that could be used to equip so-called digital natives with enough literacy to fully participate in social processes. Scientists are still searching for answers to the key questions posited in the declaration.

Education systems on a global level aim to increase the degree of student engagement, i.e. get learners to participate more actively in the learning process. Teachers are not expected to just transmit knowledge, but rather take on the role of managers in learning situations. Our research will make an important contribution to the relevant fields of science globally.

## **Objectives of the research project**

(A) Language:

Goal 1: To confirm the dualistic nature of the Slovenian literary language and to portray the language makeup of regional language varieties (text comprehension,

comparison with texts that appeared simultaneously, search for differences and similarities with other texts, checking for language changes and tracing changes in the literary norm, temporal and spatial placement) (comp. Jesenšek et al. 2016). Theoretical assumptions and (research) results will be applied in practice during the production of theoretical and practical solutions for registering the Prekmurje language with the Registry of Intangible Cultural Heritage.<sup>8</sup>

Goal 2: To carry out the systematic inventory of dialectal language material and collocation phrasemes (comp. Ulčnik 2015, 2020) with a high degree of idiomatity and to produce a set of strategies for the (more effective) translation of dialects. A linguistic analysis and presentation will add to the knowledge base of Slovenian linguistics.

Goal 3: To update and compare the cognitive approach to interpretation of text-forming phenomena in Slovenian and to determine the culturally conditioned patterns that regulate word formation processes.

Goal 4: To determine the function and structure of text as a unity of relations between sentences or propositions that make up text and have effect on its internal connectedness and coherence. The way that researchers use to understand text types depends on their perception of the text at hand. Therefore, we will prepare a new approach to text classification that will incorporate the latest (non-linguistic inclusive) discoveries, e.g. the field of intertextuality.

Goal 5: To foster closer ties between Slovenian language, literature and didactics with language culture and social variation of language, as well as to determine the influence that inter- and multiculturalism have on children and adolescents whose mother tongue is not Slovenian.

Goal 6: To produce language materials for underprivileged children and adolescents and to develop literacy as a core competence for lifelong learning.

Goal 7: To put forward a theoretical definition of the dialectics of complexity and homogenization of modern societies and to carry out a critical analysis of the discourse occurring in the media.

Goal 8: To develop a new field of research – critical animalistic and media studies.

#### (B) Literature:

Goal 9: To present ceremonial, hagiographic and other texts of old Slovenian literature with an emphasis on narratological analysis. The text forms have had a far-reaching effect on the development of modern Slovenian storytelling.

Goal 10: To prove that various texts of the Holy Scripture employ fundamental literary forms to express universal feelings and findings and to show the elements of narrative structure of such texts that allow such a conclusion to be drawn.

Goal 11: To prove that certain biblical texts simultaneously reflect historic, social, cultural, religious and language characteristics of the past and have ties to numerous works of old and modern Slovenian literature, especially with regard to genre hybridity and autopoetics of modern Slovenian short prose.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.mk.gov.si/si/storitve/razvidi\\_evidence\\_in\\_registri/register\\_nesnovne\\_kulturne\\_dediscine/seznam\\_registriranih\\_enot\\_nesnovne\\_kulturne\\_dediscine/](http://www.mk.gov.si/si/storitve/razvidi_evidence_in_registri/register_nesnovne_kulturne_dediscine/seznam_registriranih_enot_nesnovne_kulturne_dediscine/)

Goal 12: To uncover elements of interculturality in Slovenian literature and explain the notions of interculturality, intercultural dialogue, intercultural contact, intercultural conflict that are manifested in various spheres of human activity. These phenomena are currently studied by a wide range of disciplines (postcolonial studies, women's studies, imagology, intercultural Slavistics, German studies, etc.) (comp. Čeh Steger 2019a).

Goal 13: To boost interest in neighbouring literature in Italy, Austria and Hungary, Slovenian literature in emigration, and the literature produced by those who have immigrated to Slovenia. We would like to bring attention to the new developments of this field and the new content that it has yielded. In the past, due to ideological reasons, research of these matters was substandard at best.

Goal 14: To develop effective methods of dealing with various demographics. We will prepare useful lists of high-quality classical and modern books for children and adolescents and put forward a set of standards that will help determine which fiction books and other printed and digital materials contain a powerful multi- and intercultural component

(C) Language and literature didactics:

Goal 15: To determine field-specific literacy types and meta-cognitions. We will produce didactic solutions for the development of field-specific audio meta-cognitions for social studies and STEM subjects. We will use a case study to verify the successfulness of didactic solutions for the acquisition of field-specific meta-cognitions.

Goal 16: To help improve language competencies of children who, due to certain language-related and cultural factors, are unable to perform as well as their peers, thereby improving their educational record.

## **Methodology**

(A) Language:

In our study of literary language, we mostly rely on the cognitive approach, i.e. bringing updates and a comparison of research data with regard to the currently predominant linguistic research paradigm. We will select research material following a variety of criteria, i.e. according to texts' themes, varieties, materiality, and media-related characteristics. In some cases, we will also use methods of compilation and interpretation. All language research will be grounded in valid methodological principles, i.e. language analysis, text transcription, translation, language description (taking language unit inventory), comparative method (analytical comparison), text interpretation, historic method, synthesis, as well as inductive, deductive, and static methods. We will carry out (multiple types of) quantitative research by means of written questionnaires. We will disseminate the questionnaire in different ways: in person, through the post, e-mail and also via Google Forms.

In the field of dialectology, we will also use the so-called direct methods, i.e. field work, recording of spoken material, informants (direct contact – collecting research materials directly, and indirect contact – collecting material through questionnaires prepared in advance).

To carry out research on KDA, we will use Fairclough's dialectical-relational model (Fairclough 2001, 2010, 2014). This method will be used in connection with van Leeuwen's social-semantic model (van Leeuwen 2008) that stresses the importance of the relationship between the syntactic-semantic and social roles of participants. The analysis of multimodal genres will be based on a socio-semiotic approach (Kress in van Leeuwen 2001) in order to identify the performance of social actors (participants) and their social interrelations in terms of power.

(B) Literature:

Literature research stems from fundamental methods of formal logic – both comparative and Slovenistic – of literary science and cultural studies (analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, description). It takes into account qualitative text breakdowns and interpretations as well as the comparative and analytical treatment of selected texts. It also considers socio-linguistic discoveries related to language switching. Additionally, we will employ interpretative methods and discourse analysis, however mostly when researching modern Slovenian (short) and older Slovenian narrative traditions (in children's literature as well).

(C) Language and literature didactics:

In the field of Slovenian didactics, we will use methods from linguistics and literary science alongside methods from social sciences (from pedagogy for the most part). When making methodological decisions we will predominantly rely on two documents, namely the National Strategy for the Development of Reading Skills (2017) and all nine cornerstones of literacy that are developed within the OBJEM project. We will use a series of qualitative case studies that will deal with non-comparative experiments and the longitudinal observation of functional literacy in STEM and social sciences; the experimental factor will be represented through developed didactic strategies for the development of subject specific e-functional literacies.

## Qualitative results

(A) Objectives of the language research: (a) to analyze the role and status of the Slovenian language in the Danube region in comparison to EU language policy guidelines (comp. Jesenšek 2016a); (b) present historic and developmental dynamics of the Slovenian language with regard to the central and eastern Slovenian language space as well as the unification of Slovenian literary norms (comp. Jesenšek 2008); (c) take a more precise measurement of the dialectal makeup of the Danube region (comp. Koletnik 2015); (d) put forward a cognitive approach to the synchronous research of word formation, lexicology, phraseology and the relationship between the norm and actual usage of the (literary) language (comp. Stramljič Breznik 2017); (e) carry out a critically discursive, multimodal text analysis that takes into account the social, cultural and genre context of the text, so as to show lexicology as a field of interdisciplinary research of written (language statistics and pragmatics) and spoken texts (comp. Krajnc Ivič 2020; Ulčnik 2020; Pulko, Stramljič Breznik 2009; Zemljak Jontes 2018).

(B) The literary-historical research will focus on the phenomena of bi- and inter/multi-culturalism (in light of the cultural memory theory, imagology and the poly-systemic theory) in the Slovenian literature from ceremonial texts to 21st century literature, also taking into account short stories, children's literature, and female writers (comp. Borovnik 2017, Bošnjak 2017, Čeh Steger 2014, Haramija 2019b).

(C) Research in the area of teaching Slovenian language and literature will (a) touch upon the process of mastering Slovenian as a second and a foreign language among adolescents; (b) be directed at the development of literacy as a key competence of lifelong learning and (c) show how to solve the problem of shifting the information sources and instruction materials into the realm of e-learning; (d) show that the generation of the so-called digital nomads learns notably less successfully from screens than from printed sources (comp. Aberšek et al. 2017; Kordigel Aberšek, Aberšek 2018; Pulko 2017; Pulko, Zemljak Jontes 2018).

Staff training to ensure a more lasting effect on the population that comes from the better dissemination of reading skills and results in asinificant improvement of life quality (of those who achieve a higher level of reading competence).

### **Quantitative results**

- Ten scientific conferences in the period of six years that will be dedicated to the fields of language, literary and didactic research in relation to the research subject of the PG (status of Slovenian, diachronic and synchronic research of the Slovenian language, multilingualism and interculturalism, mostly from literary and historical viewpoints).
- Regular publication of scientific articles and monographs.
- Fostering the publication of expert articles.
- The long-lasting nature of the PG results is intended for training the staff who will later use our research findings in real-life situations. Once our research findings become widespread and are used in all suitable contexts, life quality of the general population will significantly improve (with better reading skills, higher overall literacy, better understanding of inter- and multi-culturalism as well as the Slovenian language's history and evolution).

### **Timetable of research activities by years**

Year 1: The study of theoretical foundations, the collection and analysis of existing materials, the analysis of the current state of the field. Publication of (partial) findings. Organization of the "Slovenistični premisleki" ("Slovenian Reflections") scientific symposium. Keeping track of the developments in the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2019–2023.

Year 2: The analysis of the situation at hand (current state of the field) will show in which direction the work should proceed, e.g. language interculturalism at schools (in group monograph); the findings should be presented at a conference. The collection and descriptive-interpretative analysis of different text types; research into genre hybridity and examples of autopoetics in Slovenian prose; defining

of field-specific literacy; defining field-specific metacognitions, development of the ever-growing reverse Slovenian-Macedonian and Macedonian-Slovenian dictionary, translation of Slomšek's hand-written grammar; organization of the "Slovenistični premisleki" scientific symposium; Keeping track of the developments in the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2019-2023.

Year 3: Synthesis of research of approaches; publication (partial) of research findings in the fields of language, literature and Slovenian didactics. Publication of partial findings regarding ways to promote literacy among children, children of immigrants and those among the general population who need such help (the emphasis will be on linguistic analyses); study of selected ceremonial and hagiographic texts of older Slovenian literature, emphasizing narratological analysis; lexical analysis; analysis of intercomprehension of Slovenian and other Slavic languages, which is an important precondition for successful comprehension and learning of Slovenian as a second/foreign language; development of a didactical solution for the development of reading metacognition STEM. Organization of the "Slovenistični premisleki" scientific symposium. Keeping track of the developments in the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2019-2023.

Year 4: Construction of a theoretical and methodological model that will be suitable and useful for research done on Slovenian language materials, valid from the standpoints of linguistics, literature and didactics. A systematic approach to research along the set parameters, e.g. language analysis and interpretation of older texts (text selection, text transcription, analysis, interpretation and, ultimately, synthesis of resulting data); lexical analysis – interleximic relationships, complex words, development of a digital university-level textbook for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language for foreign, non-Slovenian speaking students at level B2, slang used by primary and middle school students (in relationship with research into the development of family literacy and reading skills among children and adolescents (with an emphasis on language analysis); the structural-functional and lexical analysis of preselected texts, search for new materials. The development of a didactical solution for the development of social sciences related reading metacognitions. Organization of the "Slovenistični premisleki" scientific symposium. Analysis of the effects of the Resolution on the National Program for Language Policy 2019-2023 and cooperation in preparing a new Resolution. Publication of findings.

Year 5: The objective is to produce a theoretical and methodological model which will enable us to conduct research of Slovenian materials (language, literature, didactics) as well as allow for a systematic approach to research according to the set parameters; Lexical analysis – meaning changes (selections, analysis, interpretation, synthesis of discoveries); established vocabulary made up of multiple words (selection, analysis, interpretation, synthesis of findings), development of a digital university-level textbook for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language for foreign, non-Slovenian speaking students at level C1/C2; publication (partial) of findings regarding slang used by primary and middle school students (also in relationship with research into the development of family literacy and reading skills among children and adolescents (with an emphasis on linguistic analysis and suitable texts from children's literature)). Verifying (through case

studies) the performance of didactic solutions for acquiring field-specific reading STEM metacognitions. Organization of the “Slovenistični premisleki” scientific symposium. Analysis of the effects that our research findings have on a new Resolution. Publication of findings.

Year 6: Synthesis of findings. Implementation of findings within Slovenia’s tertiary education system. Language improvements in the process of teaching/learning Slovenian and teaching/learning Slovenian as a second and foreign language. Verifying (through case studies) the performance of didactic solutions for acquiring field-specific reading metacognitions in the field of humanities and social sciences. Interculturalism in education. Literary intercultural studies. Organization of the “Slovenistični premisleki” scientific symposium. Presentations of suggestions regarding additions to and updates of the Public Use of the Slovenian Language Act.

Organization of an international scientific symposium Slovenian Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching Slovenian, during which we will present the results of our work and discuss them with other domestic and foreign researchers.

### **Importance for the development of science and the profession**

(1) Language and policy related research will (a) strengthen the position of Slovenian language as an official language of the European Union (comp. Jesenšek 2009), (b) confirm its full functionality and strengthen legislative and legal provisions of Slovenian language as a study language in Slovenian educational institutions (public primary schools and secondary schools, universities), (c) establish groundwork for the development of active Slovenian language policy and planning, (d) offer contemporary theoretical baselines for drafting of the Resolution, (e) enable the preparation of a modern act on the public usage of the Slovenian language. (2) Language, historical and dialectological research will (a) contribute to a new level of knowledge in the field of language history and dialectology, which will in turn (b) lead to new scientific findings in the field and (c) contribute in an important way to Slovenian language cultural heritage. (3) Research will highlight the role and importance of Slovenian language as a second/foreign language in times of intensive migration and integration developments, which will enable the easier integration of non-Slovenian speaking immigrants into Slovenian society. An interdisciplinary approach to language study will enable understanding of the role of (linguistic) relationships in social processes, social structures and social change. (4) In the contemporary research of the Slovenian language, we need to acknowledge that (a) word formation research cannot be conducted only from the point of view of formal processes, based on morpheme structure modelling. Rather, word formation research should consider cultural factors, allowing for an understanding of word formation processes as results of socio-cultural factors. (b) Understanding of text varieties belongs to essential knowledge that allows for taking part in communication processes; especially so in the case of developing a critical communicative ability. Therefore, research of authentic and varied texts, produced or interpreted by native speakers on a daily basis, is needed. (c) Understanding of the social function of discourse, enabled by critical discourse analysis, fosters positive social change. (5) Until the independence of Slovenia, Slovenian literature played a role extending

beyond literature itself, considering aspects of nation building and preservation. Therefore, Slovenian literary science was exclusively or predominantly focused on the national concept of literature until the early 1990s, thereby neglecting other aspects. The national concept has thus excluded bi-lingual and bi-cultural authors as well as works covering multi-lingual, bi-cultural and intercultural issues. (6) The development of youth literature and connected activities focused on the promotion of reading are vital for ensuring development of reading competencies among youth. Awareness-raising regarding the importance of reading and reading literacy, which is in itself a lifelong process, presents an important state measure contributing to citizens' spiritual growth. All of the abovementioned reading campaigns/promotions share a set of common characteristics: (a) They are carried out on a national level with the support of various (competent) ministries. (b) All campaigns seek to encourage family reading and offer education and advice to parents who are not skilled readers themselves. (c) The campaigns are designed in an interdisciplinary way, linking different educational institutions (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools), researchers in fields of reading and literature, librarians, as well as primary care physicians (pediatricians), social services, etc. (7) In the past three decades, interdisciplinary research, linking research fields of education science, psychology, cognitive psychology and mother language has successfully shed light on reading processes and learning with the help of reading, considering reading of linear, paper-based texts. During the last decade and a half, research has dealt with reading/learning from digital sources, mostly proving the inferiority of digital over a paper-based medium. This has led to findings that e-reading strategies differ from paper-based reading strategies (even though they both have common foundations), as well as findings that each scientific field has its own e-reading strategies. The proposed programme will define the field-specific characteristics of e-functional literacy, and propose and test solutions on how to develop them.

Knowledge has become a perishable commodity in modern society, for, on the one hand, it ages faster and faster, and, on the other, it is subject to oblivion. An individual's ability to compete for employment and other social advantages depends, therefore, to a great extent on their capacity for lifelong learning – in a 21st century society and in its ever-expanding cyberspace. The suggested approach to teaching a mother tongue aims to accomplish just that: to discover a way that would equip young people with tools for effective reading/learning in e-environments. Traditional literacy and didactic methods exclusively in the teachers' domain, which used to dominate in the field of Slovenian didactics, are no longer effective. Better reading literacy will have a long-term effect on overall economic growth, for it can allow us to become a society of knowledge. Through the study of mechanisms of "easy reading" (reading accessible to a wide range of people), we can expect good results above all in the sphere of workplace security, because employees will possess sufficient reading skills to, among other things, read and follow the safety instructions and, consequently, avoid accidents at work. Interdisciplinary cooperation in the creation of online apps for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language and university-level textbooks for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language in tertiary education. Potential for marketing of digital products.

Slovenian language and culture significantly participate in the formation of the image of European multiculturalism. This has an enormous influence on the promotion of the state, which can be recognized in a global world only by its language and culture. Slovenian literature is one among the most important pillars of our cultural heritage. In the most important period of Slovenian national development, Slovenian language was the most exposed element. At that time, political and language aspects were always equalized. We would like to promote the idea that, in the crucial moments of Slovenian history, Slovenian was on the barricades too and that Slovenia is a country with an exciting sociocultural past, rich and diverse literature, and a language that has joined the ranks of the EU's official languages, which makes it suitable and irreplaceable for communication in all spheres of Slovenia's public and private sectors.

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## RAZISKOVALNI PROJEKT SLOVENSKI JEZIK, LITERATURA IN POUČEVANJE SLOVENŠČINE

V središču zanimanja raziskovalnega projekta Slovenski jezik, literatura in poučevanje slovenščine je dopolnjevalno vključevanje sinhronih in diahronih pogledov na jezik ter povezovanje/dopolnjevanje jezikoslovnih, literarnovednih in didaktičnih raziskav. Gre za slovenski jezik, literaturo in kulturo v stiku, upoštevajoč: (a) eno-, dvo- in večjezičnost, (b) eno- dvo- in večkulturnost na področju književnosti, (c) pomen nacionalnega jezika in literature v globalnem svetu ter (č) poučevanje slovenskega jezika s poudarkom na medpredmetnem povezovanju. Jezikovne raziskave bodo: (a) analizirale vlogo in položaj slovenskega jezika v Podonavski regiji primerjalno z usmeritvami evropske jezikovne politike, (b) predstavile razvojno-zgodovinsko dinamiko slovenskega jezika, upoštevajoč osrednje- in vzhodnoslovenski jezikovni prostor ter poenotenje slovenske knjižne norme, (c) dialektološko natančneje raziskale slovenski panonski jezikovni prostor, (č) izpostavile kognitivni pristop na področju sinhronega raziskovanja besedotvorja, besedoslovja in frazeologije ter razmerje med normo in rabo (knjižnega) jezika, (d) opravile kritično diskurzivno, multimodalno žanrsko ter sociokulturno analizo besedil, tako da bo besediloslovje prikazano kot interdisciplinarno raziskovalno področje zapisanih (jezikovna stilistika in pragmatika) ter govorjenih besedil.

Literarnozgodovinske raziskave bodo: (a) osredinjene na pojave dvo- in med-/večkulturnosti (upoštevajoč teorijo kulturnega spomina, imagologije in polisistemske teorije) v slovenski književnosti od pridižnih besedil do književnosti 21. stoletja, upoštevajoč tudi posebnosti kratke proze, mladinske književnosti in ženskih pisateljic.

Raziskave na področju poučevanja slovenskega jezika in literature bodo: (a) opozorile na usvajanje slovenskega jezika kot drugega in tujega jezika pri mladostnikih, (b) usmerjene na razvoj pismenosti kot ključne kompetence vseživljenjskega učenja in (c) pokazale, kako v vzgoji in izobraževanju rešiti vprašanje vse intenzivnejšega premikanja virov informacij in učnih gradiv v e-okolja, (č) pokazale, da se generacija t. i. digitalnih domorodcev z zaslonu uči opazno manj uspešno kot iz natisnjenih virov.