

INVISIBLE ANGLICISMS IN SLOVENE

An Overview

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ABSTRACT • While Slovene uses numerous visible Anglicisms, which are either established and lexicalized on the one hand, or fashionable luxury loans (Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011) on the other, there appear several examples of invisible Anglicisms whose structure is clearly influenced by English. These loan translations are extremely difficult to detect; such items and phrases slither into the language and only careful language users sense that something ‘sounds unusual’ or that there might be a more idiomatic alternative in Slovene. The structures and meanings of some of these calques, but also their frequencies, are checked by means of the Slovene corpus Gigafida 2.0. An attempt at a classification of these loan borrowings has been made, as they enter the Slovene language both as individual lexemes or polylexemic units, while also exerting influence on and reshaping syntactic and word-formational patterns. The article illustrates this with examples.

KEYWORDS • invisible Anglicisms; semantic loans; calques; Slovene.

1. Introduction

The present article aims to provide an overview of the types of hidden Anglicisms that appear in present-day Slovene. These covert Anglicisms, though inconspicuous and therefore difficult to detect on account of their Slovene form, are increasingly frequent in both spoken Slovene and in written Slovene texts.

The article first tries to provide a functional definition of the concept of hidden Anglicism. In section 3, a typology of hidden Anglicisms appearing in Slovene is proposed, subdivided into semantic loans (3.1) and calques on word-, phrasal-, clause- and sentence-levels (3.2, 3.3, and 3.4, respectively). The discussion is then extended to changes in morpho-syntactic patterns (3.5) and word-formational patterns (3.6) that are due to English-language influence. In the final sub-section (3.7), the discussion shifts to extra-linguistic phenomena (gestures, signs, emojis) that have started to appear in Slovene communication and show English-culture influence. The conclusion focuses on the downside of these hidden Anglicisms for the Slovene language in terms of loss of idiomaticity and naturalness of texts as well as increased uniformity and stylistic impoverishment of the language.

The structures and meanings of hidden Anglicisms, but also their frequencies, have been checked by means of Slovene dictionaries¹ and the Gigafida 2.0 corpus² where possible; in all

¹ The various Slovene dictionaries consulted during work on this article are available online at <https://www.fran.si/>. The *Fran* web portal, managed by the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language, gives

other cases, their presence has been verified by various Slovene web texts (blogs, social media, websites, etc.). Illustrative examples of their use have been taken from all the above-mentioned sources.

2. What can count as a hidden Anglicism and how to detect one?

While classic Anglicisms, i.e., individual lexical items borrowed from English into Slovene and adapted into the borrowing language to be integrated into its linguistic system (cf. Weinreich 1953; Filipović 2000; Görlach 2003, etc.), have been appearing in the Slovene language since the late 18th century, Slovene is now increasingly borrowing structures and forms that are clearly English-based. This is not an isolated case – in fact, most European and other world languages seem to have fallen under the spell of English (see, for example, Onysko 2007; Andersen 2014; Witalisz 2015; Fiedler 2017; Gottlieb 2020; Pulcini 2023, and many others), and the omnipresence of Anglo-American culture particularly during the past decades has left its mark beyond the way people shape their linguistic utterances. Gottlieb (2020: 32) in his broadened definition of Anglicism follows Picone (1996: 3-4), who proposes that the notion of Anglicism should not cover only borrowings from English that “constitute a new word, morpheme or locution”, but also “any semantic extension of a pre-existent word, morpheme or locution” in the receiver language that is due to contact with English, as well as “morphosyntactic structural innovation” that is “attributable to language contact with English resulting in its imitation” in the receiver language. It is within the last two domains that we can expect invisible Anglicisms to appear. Invisible Anglicisms are, however, notoriously difficult to detect; such lexical items, morphemes, and phrases slither into the language and only careful and highly sensitive language users feel that something ‘sounds unusual’ or they would not ‘quite put it that way’ or that ‘the generation of their (grand)parents would not say something like that’.

If we accept the premise that a hidden Anglicism in Slovene is any element showing English-language, or, even more broadly, Anglo-American cultural influence (see also Gottlieb 2020: 32), then our research needs to be broadened out to include far more than just individual lexical items. It seems that hidden Anglicisms have already penetrated deep into the tissue of most social interaction, and today we can detect Anglo-American conventions, norms of interaction and patterns of behaviour in discourse conducted by native speakers of Slovene without them being aware of it at all.

3. Invisible Anglicisms – an attempt at classification

3.1. Semantic loans

One of the ways to bridge lexical gaps is to borrow lexical items from English and integrate them more or less successfully into the Slovene language system. However, this can also be done

access to a plethora of language manuals; as of January 20, 2025, its version 12.1 serves as an entry point for browsing 46 dictionaries, four corpora, various databases and two online language consulting services.
² Available online at <https://viri.cjvt.si/gigafida/>. Gigafida 2.0 is a reference corpus of written Slovene, comprised of daily news, magazines, a selection of web texts, and different types of publications (fiction, schoolbooks, and non-fiction). However, it was last updated in 2019, which makes it less representative in 2025, so the use of certain recently added hidden Anglicisms had to be attested by browsing the Internet.

covertly, by transferring the meaning of a lexical item from English and adding it to an already existing word in Slovene. The result is another kind of hidden Anglicism, in literature referred to as semantic loan or semantic calque (cf. Pulcini 2023: 125). Pulcini (2023: 126) comments that “the phenomenon of semantic loans is the least noticeable one among all types of borrowings, since it does not add any new item to the lexical inventory of the recipient language”. In Slovene, too, numerous semantic loans can be found in which a new additional sense is added to the existing meaning of an already established, but often foreign, lexical item under the influence of English.

One of such nouns is *ikona*, traditionally used in the meaning of ‘a Byzantine-style painting venerated in the Eastern Church’. This meaning of the 19th-century borrowing of Greek origin is duly attested by Slovene dictionaries. An additional sense of *ikona* was added in the semantic field of information technology to cater for ‘a pictorial representation of a facility available on a computer system’, which is now widely accepted due to the widespread use of smartphones and computers. A third sense, that of ‘a person regarded as a symbol of nation, cultural movement or fashion trend’, may have been semantically somewhat restricted in comparison to its English model³ and is frequently found particularly in journalese and sloppy translations. It typically collocates with premodifying adjectives or needs postmodification, as in:

ikona slovenskega športa [icon of Slovene sport]
pop/gejevski *ikona* [pop/gay icon]

The addition of the new senses has made the noun *ikona* polysemic, and this polysemy is clearly English-influenced (cf. also Pulcini 2023: 125 citing Gusmani 1986 and interpreting the phenomenon as that of ‘induced polysemy’). All three senses have been included in and explained by Slovene dictionaries and are attested by the corpus.

- (1) Slika resda ni bila tako zelo ostra, še vedno pa je bila zelo dobra. Tudi enakomernost slike se je malce poslabšala, pri podnapisih pod **ikonami** na namizju pa je bilo opaziti malce rožnat preliv. (Monitor, 1989) [The image was not that sharp, but it was still of very good quality. The image uniformity was slightly worse, and the subtitles under the icons on the desktop had a pinkish hue.]
- (2) To se je, denimo, leta 1988 zgodilo Cher. Prava izbira oblačil, čevljev in drugih dodatkov pa lahko igralca preko noči spremeni v **ikono**. (Dnevnik, 2000) [That, for example, happened to Cher in 1988. The right choice of dress, shoes and other accessories can turn an actor into an icon overnight.]

The third sense has already produced an adjectival derivation *ikoničen*, which was recently included in the Slovene dictionary, while evidence from the Gigafida 2.0 corpus suggests its increasing use since 1996 onwards in the sense of ‘important or impressive as a symbol of something’, as testified by the following examples:

ikonična podoba Marilyn Monroe [iconic image of Marilyn Monroe]
ikonični pogled na mesto [iconic view of the city]

However, careful native speakers would still prefer collocations like *znamenita podoba Marilyn Monroe* [famous/renowned image of Marilyn Monroe] or *znameniti/prepoznavni pogled na mesto* [famous/well-known view of the city].

³ See, for example, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/icon>.

Yet another noun that has recently added a new sense to its meaning by calquing from English is *snežinka* [snowflake].⁴ So far, the Slovene dictionaries only record the meaning of ‘one of the soft, white bits of frozen water that fall as snow’. However, another disapproving sense has started to appear, mostly in social media and in journalistic texts, meaning that somebody is ‘too easily offended or upset’. The corpus does not yield any hits for this use, but examples of it can be found on the internet:

- (3) Kako rešiti svojega otroka pred usodo “**snežinke**”? (Aleteia, 2022) [How can you save your child from becoming a ‘snowflake’?]

An example of a verb that has acquired a new sense is *nasloviti*, a political buzzword calqued from English to mean ‘address a problem’. Slovene dictionaries only list the following senses of *nasloviti*: ‘write the name and address on a letter, parcel etc.’, ‘speak to somebody’, ‘give a title to a work of art’, and ‘call somebody by a name or title’.⁵ The new sense ‘to deal with or focus on (an issue)’ is clearly a semantic loan influenced by English use. The language counselling service provided by the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language⁶ explicitly warns against the new use and suggests more acceptable alternatives.⁷ However, the newly added sense seems to have caught on even in the speech of careful speakers.

As seen in the first example above, such lexical items are quite often past borrowings that are assigned a new sense. For a while, the new senses are treated as false friends, but continual use in sloppy translations (e.g., subtitles on TV or dubbed commercials) can promote their use and help them become established. The pair *patetičen* – *pathetic* is currently undergoing this transition.

Like so many borrowings originating in Greek or Latin, the adjective *patetičen* was adapted into Slovene in the 19th century in the meaning that corresponds entirely to that of the German adjective *pathetisch*, so it can be safely concluded that the path of borrowing went via German into Slovene (see also Snoj 2015). The meaning as explained by dictionaries is ‘exceedingly emotional’ and it typically collocates with nouns such as *speech*, *style*, *behaviour*, etc.

patetičen govor [tearful speech]
Spregovoril je s *patetičnim* glasom. [He spoke with an exceedingly emotional voice.]

While English has also borrowed the same adjective from Greek (the base form being the noun *pathos*), the borrowed adjective *pathetic* in English has developed the meaning of ‘sad, weak, helpless’, as in:

The small group of onlookers presented a *pathetic* sight.

⁴ In 2016 ‘snowflake generation’ was shortlisted by the Collins English Dictionary as one of the Words of the Year (<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/collins-dictionary-s-10-word-of-the-year-from-brexitee-and-snowflake-generation-to-jomo-a7395121.html>).

⁵ See <https://fran.si/iskanje?View=1&Query=nasloviti>.

⁶ Available at <https://isjfr.zrc-sazu.si/en/programi-in-projekti/language-portals-for-everything-fran-francek-terminologisce-jezikovna>

⁷ See (<https://fran.si/iskanje?View=1&Query=nasloviti>). During work on this article, the use of *nasloviti* as a semantic loan was criticised also by several other sources (see, for example, <https://www.rtv slo.si/kultura/jezik/globalescina-na-rtv-slovenija-kjer-naj-ne-bi-naslavljalitezav/734956>).

English dictionaries (e.g., Collins COBUILD) stress that the adjective is quite often used disparagingly, as in:

What *pathetic* excuses.
Don't be so *pathetic*.

There is clearly no overlap in meaning in the pair *patetičen* – *pathetic*; in both cases above, the corresponding translation into Slovene should be the adjective *beden* (*Kakšni bedni izgovori. Ne bodi tako beden.*). However, the choice that is made increasingly often by both subtitlers and other translators, is the adjective *patetičen*. Whether this has been caused by the translators' ignorance or mere sloppiness, or perhaps for some other reason (see, for example, Gottlieb 2020: 124, 127, who argues that the expectations of the readers and viewers may also prompt the selection of that which is the closer approximation to the original), sentences like *Kakšen patetičen izgovor* [What a pathetic excuse] and *Ne bodi tako patetičen* [Don't be so pathetic] have appeared so often that the young generation of Slovene speakers has started using it, thus adding a new sense to the old borrowing. In fact, many young speakers seem to be unaware of the first sense altogether. Slovene dictionaries, however, still explain it only in the traditional meaning, while the corpus already includes the second sense as well:

- (4) Ne počutim se kot zvezda. Nekateri bodo rekli, da je ta odgovor **patetičen** oz. ne vem kaj še vse – že na forumu oddaje so me spraševali o tem. (Cosmopolitan, 2004) [I don't feel like a star. Some will say that this answer is pathetic and so on – I was asked about this already in the forum of the show.]
- (5) V Khanovem uradu so potem opozorili na Trumpovo napako, Trump pa je v odgovoru župana obtožil, da je podal "**patetičen** izgovor". (www.rtv slo.si, 2017-06) [Khan's office then pointed out Trump's mistake, while Trump accused the mayor in his answer of giving a 'pathetic excuse'.]

The continual use of the new added sense in sloppy translations (both in subtitles on TV and in dubbed commercials) has promoted the new use and helped it become established. As substandard translations are included in AI-generated texts, and the *Sprachgefühl* of the speakers gradually desensitized, the adjective *patetičen* is probably going to become just another polysemic adjective with two distinct senses.

There are quite a number of classical borrowings that still show complete semantic overlap in relation to their German counterparts, and a false-friend connection in relation to English (e.g., *decenten* and *dezent* both in the meaning of 'subtle, discreet, modest' as opposed to the English *decent* meaning 'polite, respectable, proper, fitting'; *ekstravaganten* and *extravagant* both meaning 'extraordinary, unusual, exaggerated' as opposed to the English *extravagant* meaning 'costly, overpriced'). Presently, there are no signs of these two adjectives adding another, English-influenced, meaning.

Another feature that may appear in some semantic loans is semantic specialization. In Slovene, the 20th-century borrowing *rutina*, originating in French and German, and meaning 'expertise gained by practice' and 'the practice of regularly doing things in a fixed order' has recently added on a new, more specialized sense of 'cosmetic routine', first recorded by Gigafida 2.0 from an Internet source in 2018. The new (sub)sense has not yet been entered in any of the dictionaries, but keeps re-appearing in Internet texts and commercials.

- (6) Odgovor je – ne, **rutine**⁸ ti ni potrebno spreminjati le zato, ker je poletje. (<https://si.missalicecosmetics.com/>, 2025) [The answer is – no, you don't have to change your routine just because it's summer.]
- (7) Helen Mirren razkriva, kako izgleda njena lepotna **rutina**. (Metropolitan, 2025) [Helen Mirren reveals her beauty routine.]

Occasionally, an overt Anglicism and a semantic loan exist side by side, the difference between them being purely stylistic and/or pragmatic. Thus, modern Slovene uses both *korner* and *kot* in football terminology to denote 'a free shot or kick taken from the corner of the pitch'; the former is a traditional overt Anglicism derived from the English noun *corner*, the latter a semantic loan, with the football sense added to the existing senses of the native Slovene noun *kot* ('a point or an area where two or more edges, sides, or surfaces of something join'). Both synonyms are explained by dictionaries without giving any preference to either of the forms, while the corpus data remain highly inconclusive on account of *kot* also being used as a conjunction in Slovene.

3.2. Calquing

When lexical gaps need to be filled, the creation of calques is just another way of providing names for new concepts. In calquing, a translation replacement is provided for an English lexical item, in our case the English element is substituted for by a Slovene item. Weinreich (1953: 50-51) already discussed such 'reproductions' and introduced a distinction between loan translations, loan renditions and loan creations, which has proven influential for a number of scholars dealing with Anglicisms in many European languages (cf. Görlach 2001; Pulcini 2023: 121). In reality, however, it is often difficult to draw an exact division line between individual types of calques on formal grounds only, and whether direct links can be established to English etyma or not is actually of little relevance for the scope of the present article.⁹ What is important is that the semantics of the English model is 'transported' into Slovene, and what counts is that this is done under English influence as this donor language has become so ubiquitous in all spheres of life. In fact, if we adopt English influence as a sufficient parameter in determining hidden Anglicisms, then practically entire terminologies of modern sciences such as computer science and environmental science can be potentially English in origin. Due to typological differences between English and Slovene, however, the majority of calques formed in Slovene change the (morpho-syntactic) pattern, as Slovene remains deeply rooted in its synthetic nature with rich morphology. Calques in which the English pattern is faithfully reproduced word-by-word are usually adjective + noun combinations, but also adverb + adjective combinations, as in:

artificial intelligence > umetna inteligenca (Adj + N)
 black box > črna skrinjica (Adj + N)
 boarding pass > vstopni kupon (Adj + N)
 green transition > zeleni prehod (Adj + N)
 politically correct > politično korekten (Adv + Adj)

⁸ The noun *rutina* can also be regarded an ellipsed form of the phrase *kozmetična rutina* [cosmetic routine]; the phrase itself is clearly a calque from English.

⁹ Slovene, for example, uses both *podnebne spremembe* and *klimatske spremembe* [climate change] as synonyms, but only the latter shows a link to the original English form (see also Haugen and his discussion on 'hybrids' in Haugen 1950: 214).

Among hidden Anglicisms we also find numerous phrases and collocations in which the English pattern is reproduced with certain morphological changes (compare also Pulcini 2023: 121-122 for Italian), often by replacing the premodifying noun with an adjective, but other patterns are possible as well:

side effect (N1 + N2) > stranski učinek (Adj + N2)
 credit card (N1 + N2) > kreditna kartica (Adj + N2)
 zero tolerance (N1 + N2) > ničelna toleranca (Adj + N2)
 helicopter parents (N1 + N2) > helikopterski starši (Adj + N2)
 climate change (N1 + N2) > klimatske/podnebne spremembe (Adj + N2)
 climate neutral (N + Adj) > podnebno nevtralen (Adv + Adj)

In some other cases, the premodifying noun of an English combination or the first element of an English compound or a phrase is rendered into Slovene as a postmodification in the genitive case or a prepositional postmodification structure:

snowflake generation (N1 + N2) > generacija snežink (N2 + N1_{GEN})
 brain drain (N1 + N2) > beg možganov (N2 + N1_{GEN})
 weekend (N1 + N2) > konec tedna (N2 + N1_{GEN})
 case-study (N1 + N2) > študija primera (N2 + N1_{GEN})
 coffee break (N1 + N2) > odmor za kavo (N2 + prep + N1_{ACC})
 headhunter (N1 + N2) > lovec na glave (N2 + prep + N1_{ACC})

Finally, there are numerous other calques in which semantic influence from English can undoubtedly be claimed, but the new coinages in Slovene have been created out of the native material by means of word-formational processes such as suffixation:

skyscraper > nebotičnik (neb-o [sky] + tik- [touch] + -nik [inanimate masc N suffix])
 printer > tiskalnik (tisk-a- [print] + -l-nik [inanimate masc N suffix])
 influencer > vplivnež (vpliv- [influence] + -než [masc agent N suffix])
 vplivnica (vpliv- [influence] + -n-ica [fem agent N suffix])
 whistle-blower > žvižgač (žvižg- [whistle] + -ač [masc agent N suffix])

The English models in such cases either give a general hint for the reproduction in Slovene (e.g., *vplivnež* ‘influencer’), or they simply stimulate the creation of the new coinage (e.g., *nebotičnik* ‘skyscraper’).

3.3. Calqued phrases

However, what is of more interest is that calquing has spread from naming individual concepts to influencing the way certain phrases and collocations are formed in Slovene, particularly in substandard language. In careless speech and writing, entire phrases (and even larger units) have been translated word-for-word and may slowly be gaining ground in Slovene. For the time being, they may still stand out as slightly unusual and foreign-sounding, but with increased usage they stand a good chance of becoming standard.

One of these is the collocation *zlomiti srce*, calqued from *break one's heart*, which is ousting the more traditional and perhaps slightly more elevated *streti srce* [crush one's heart]; the former already yields more hits than the latter combination in the Gigafida 2.0 corpus and is probably further promoted in its use by the agent noun *lomilec src* (for *heartbreaker*).

Another competing pair is *humoristična serija* and *komična serija* [comical series]. TV comedy programmes in the past were usually announced as the former (the corpus yields 2374 hits for it), but the latter has been on steady increase since 1997 when it was first attested by the Gigafida 2.0 corpus (275 hits).

Similarly, the collocation *odpiralni čas* [opening time]¹⁰ has been in use since 1995 as evidenced by Gigafida 2.0; the traditional way to indicate opening hours of shops and offices has been simply *odprto* [open] or *delovni čas* [working time] followed by the hours. Speaking of shops, the sales personnel these days no longer say *na svidenje* [good-bye] to their customers, preferring the phrase *lep dan* [nice day], which has been calqued and shortened from ‘*Have a nice day*’.

Another interesting example is the causal use of *zahvaljujoč*, which has been calqued from the English causal phrase *thanks to*, and abounds in dubbed TV commercials and sports commentaries¹¹ as in the following sentence:

- (8) Real Sociedad je zmagal **zahvaljujoč** avtogolu Jordija Albe v 2. minuti dvoboja. (www.24ur.com, 2015) [Real Sociedad won thanks to an own goal by Jordi Alba in the second minute of the match.]

A better sounding alternative would be: Real Sociedad je zmagal **zaradi** avtogola Jordija Albe v 2. minuti dvoboja. [Real Sociedad won following an own goal by Jordi Alba in the second minute of the match.]

What is problematic here is that in Slovene the verb *zahvaljevati se* [thank] can only be used as a reflexive verb. Accordingly, the participial form derived from it can only be the reflexive *zahvaljujoč se*, and its rather infrequent use is attested by dictionaries: *Poslovili so se, zahvaljujoč se drug drugemu.* (Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika) [They said their goodbyes, thanking each other.] However, after 1997, the Gigafida 2.0 corpus suddenly records a sharp rise in the use of the previously unknown causal phrasal conjunction *zahvaljujoč*. It continues to be overused in TV commercials (particularly for cosmetics, cars, and detergents), as in the one for a shower gel:

- (9) Ta revitalizirajoči gel za tuširanje lahko **zahvaljujoč** nežni, 99 % biorazgradljivi formuli uporabljate za umivanje telesa, obraza in las. (www.nivea.si, 2025) [This revitalizing shower gel can be used, thanks to its gentle, 99%-biodegradable formula, for washing your body, face and hair.]

There has been no need for the introduction of *zahvaljujoč* into Slovene, the causal conjunction *zaradi* [because of, due to] can perform its function perfectly well and sounds more idiomatic: *Zaradi nežne, 99% biorazgradljive formule lahko ta revitalizirajoči gel za tuširanje uporabljate za umivanje telesa, obraza in las.* [Due to its gentle, biodegradable formula, this revitalizing shower gel can be used for washing the body, face, and hair.]

¹⁰ Admittedly, *odpiralni čas* may also have been calqued from the German compound *Eröffnungszeiten*, and it seems that the majority of foreign-owned branches in Slovenia (shops, banks, etc.) prefer to use *odpiralni čas*.

¹¹ Since sports commentaries are a particularly rich source of *zahvaljujoč*, it is also possible that its use has been influenced by Croatian or Serbian, both of which use *zahvaljujući* as a causal conjunction.

3.4. Calques at clause- and sentence levels

English influence can also be detected at clause- and sentence-levels; usually these items are simply word-by-word renditions by the users. A TV commercial for Oreo biscuits uses the phrase *smo vsi na isti strani*, which has clearly been calqued from *we are all on the same page*. Its metaphorical meaning can only be guessed at by the unsuspecting viewers from the situational context shown, and it would clearly be better for the translator to use the idiomatic *vsi se strinjamo* [we all agree] in this particular case. However, after the Slovene viewers have heard the phrase repeated on TV for countless times, it becomes acceptable to them and maybe even actively used.

Another phraseological unit that is gaining ground in Slovene is *ni zastonj kosila* [no free lunch]. While its origin can certainly be traced back to *there is no such thing as a free lunch* (or one of its variants) and is often associated with the US free-market economist Milton Friedman,¹² the saying itself is used in Slovene instead of the more traditional *nič ni zastonj* [nothing comes for free] or *vse se plača* [everything must be paid for] or *vse ima svojo ceno* [everything comes at a price] (cf. also Meterc 2020-). The corpus shows increased use of the saying since 1991 onwards.

- (10) Še enkrat se je pokazalo, da v ekonomiji **zastonj kosila** ni. (Finance, 2008) [It was shown once again that in economy there is no free lunch.]
- (11) Vsi smo že slišali rek, da **zastonj kosila** ni. Večina nas se zaveda, da se to plačuje iz državnega proračuna, ki ga polnimo državljani Slovenije z davki. (24ur.com, 2015) [We have all heard the saying that there's no free lunch. Most of us are aware that all that is paid from the state budget which is filled by Slovene taxpayers.]
- (12) Nobeno **kosilo ni zastonj**. (www.topnews.si, 2024) [No lunch is free.]

Similarly, the phrase *za vašo informacijo* is increasingly used in Slovene and has been calqued from the phrase *for your information*. The more traditional way of putting it would be *če vas že zanima* [if you really want/need to know]. Interestingly, the English abbreviation FYI in writing is rarely, if at all, used. Some examples from the corpus illustrate the use:

- (13) **Za vašo informacijo**: dnevni izpuh ogljikovega dioksida v času visoke kurilne sezone je prek 23.000 kg. (Delo, 2004) [For your information: the daily carbon dioxide emission during the high heating season is over 23,000 kg.]
- (14) **Za vašo informacijo** prilagamo nekaj kopij zapisov o dogajanjih v zvezi z ABB iz kredibilnega vira, to je časopisa The Economist, ki je zadevo dosledno spremljal. (Mladina, 2004) [For your information we enclose some copies concerning the events involving ABB from a credible source, i.e., The Economist, which covered the matter closely.]

A phrase that is commonly heard among the young generation of Slovene speakers is *Kako je bil tvoj dan?*, a word-for-word rendition of *How was your day?*. A somewhat older speaker would rather ask *Kako si se imel(a) danes?* [How were you today?]. The following example taken from the internet illustrates the point:

- (15) Ko boste naslednjič imeli na jeziku ponavljajoč se “**Kako je bil tvoj dan?**”, raje poskusite z naslednjimi vprašanji, ki bodo odprla zanimivo debato. (elle.metropolitan.si, 2018) [And next

¹² See, for example, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_such_thing_as_a_free_lunch.

time when you want to repeat *How was your day*, you should try one of the following questions which can open up an interesting discussion.]

Another trendy calque is *imamo to* or *imaš to* (from *we/you've got this*), used instead of the more common *zmoremo* or *zmoreš* [We/You can do it.]. It could be found as the slogan of the Slovenian Olympic Committee for the 2024 Olympics:

- (16) **Imamo to**. Pariz, prihajamo! [We've got this. Paris, here we come!]
 (17) **Maš¹³ to!** je kompetentni sogovornik mladih odraslih pri njihovem soočanju z vsakodnevnimi življenjskimi izzivi in duševnimi stiskami. (Siol.net, 2024) [You've got this! is a competent conversational partner for young adults as they face everyday life challenges and mental distress.]

Lastly, the phraseological unit *ukrasti šov* (from *to steal the show*) can be repeatedly seen in journalese meaning 'to get a lot of attention or praise because performing better than anyone else in an event'; a more common phrasing would be *ukrasti vso pozornost* [steal all the attention].

- (18) 21-letni Nемеc je **ukradel šov** in na VN Italije povsem zasenčil tekmece za osvojitev naslova prvaka. (www.rtv slo.si, 2008) [At the GP of Italy, the 21-year-old German stole the show and completely outshone his rivals for the championship title.]
 (19) Ko je med volitvami malce pustemu Cameronu zmanjkalo moči, je volivce začel nagovarjati njegov strankarski kolega in župan Londona Boris Johnson; vedno je **ukradel šov** in je po volitvah gladko prišel v parlament. (www.delo.si, 2015) [When during the campaign the rather dull Cameron ran out of steam, his party colleague and the mayor of London Boris Johnson started to win the voters; he always stole the show and after the elections effortlessly made it into the Parliament.]

3.5. (Morpho-)syntactic patterns

English influence can clearly be detected in some morpho-syntactic patterns that have begun to appear in Slovene. Traditionally, complex nominal phrases have adjectival premodification which displays total agreement in gender, case and number depending on the noun headword, e.g., *pravopisna pravila* [orthographic rules]. Alternatively, a noun headword can also be postmodified by a noun in the genitive case, e.g., *pravila pravopisa* [rules of orthography]. However, it has often been observed that most adjectives that have been borrowed directly from English (as well as from some other languages, such as German, French or Italian) remain unsuffixed and show no gender, case or number agreement (see, for example, Lencek 1982; Sicherl 1999: 59), as in: *fer tekma* [fair match] or *pink pullover* [pink pullover]. This has paved the way for today's formation of noun phrases like:

Erasmus študent [Erasmus student]
Erasmus+ mobilnost [Erasmus+ mobility]
Hofer cena [Hofer price]
Subway krompirček [Subway fries]

which are direct echoes of the corresponding English formulations; admittedly, the more natural-sounding phrases in Slovene are longer, e.g., *študent na izmenjavi Erasmus* [student on Erasmus exchange], so language economy may also play a part in the choice of the pattern.

¹³ *Maš* is shortened from *imaš* to emphasize informality of style.

Slovene orthography (Slovenski pravopis 2014), however, allows both pre- and post-modification if a part of the phrase is an individual letter or an acronym, making such noun phrases (potential) compounds (Žele, personal communication, 10/3/2025):

C-vitamin and vitamin C [C vitamin]
CEEPUS mreža and mreža CEEPUS [CEEPUS network]

- (20) Glede možnosti prijave v posamezno **CEEPUS mrežo** se pozanimajte pri lokalnih koordinatorjih. (www.ff.uni-lj.si, 2025) [Consult your local coordinators about the possibility of application in an individual CEEPUS network.]

By using *Hofer cena* instead of the Adj + N phrase *Hoferjeva cena* [Hofer's price], the former is treated as a compound and the morphological complexity of the phrase is consequently greatly reduced.

Another type of English-language influence can be observed in complex premodification patterns. In informal style, complex premodifiers are no longer an oddity and are clearly English influenced, as exemplified by the following sentences found on social media. This kind of pattern started with code-switching, as illustrated by the first two of the following contexts, but the other examples show that the word-material found in these phrases is now completely native Slovene:

- (21) No, to pa je šolski **by the book** primer poročanja o @AstaVrecko, če želite uspeti in dobiti proračunski denar na medijskih razpisih @mk_gov_si (Pozar, X, 2025) [Now, this is a classic by-the-book example of reporting on Asta Vrečko if you want to succeed and get budget funding from the media tenders put out by the Ministry of Culture.]
- (22) Še tri leta nazaj bi lahko @RTV_Slovenija tole prikrla in inkorporirala v del **business-as-usual** agitpropa. (Iršič, X, 2025) [Only three years ago RTV Slovenia could hide this and incorporate it as part of its business-as-usual agitprop.]
- (23) Kdor misli, da vsi vaški in mestni reklamni panoji, preplepljeni s **tovornjake-na-vlake** SMC butlparolami, in neusmiljeno bombardiranje z internetnimi oglasi stanejo skupaj zaokroženih 97.000 evrov, je naiven ali pa se spreneveda. (Iršič, blog, 2017) [Those who believe that all the village and city billboards with trucks-on-trains Miro-Cerar-Party slogans and the ruthless bombardment with internet adds cost exactly 97,000 euros are either naïve or play dumb.]
- (24) A razni slovenski **Vasev-tip** dolgočasneži ves svoj slovar jemljejo iz repertoarja ameriške skrajne levice? (Iršič, X, 2025) [Do Slovenian Vasev-type bores take all their vocabulary from the repertoire of the American extreme left?]
- (25) Od kod fantazma, da so naši skrajno levi jamrači uspešni politiki izven slovenske **Huda Jama** resničnosti? (Iršič, X, 2025) [Where does the phantasm that our extreme-left moaners make successful politicians outside of Slovenian Hudajama reality originate in?]
- (26) Ni sicer povsem jasno, kdo je plačal za pijačo in jedačo, a glede na to, da je bil projekt kriminalno preplačan, je sklepati, da gre za "**hvala za davkoplačevalski denar**" potezo s strani izvajalcev. (www.nova24tv.si, 2025) [It is not clear who paid for the drinks and the food, but since the project was vastly overpaid it can be assumed that it was a thank-you-for-the-taxpayers'-money gesture on the part of the contractors.]
- (27) Iz njega pa se veselo napajajo ministrstva, tudi tisto za "kulturo", ki ga tako avtoritativno vodi tovarišica "**vsak dan v drugi obleki in plašču**" Asta. (Poniž, www.plusportal.si, 2025) [Out of it funding goes to ministries, also to that of 'culture', which is so authoritatively led by comrade 'each-day-wearing-another-dress-and-coat' Asta.]

Yet another English influence can be detected in valency changes in certain verbs. The verb *zmagati* [win] has started to be used as a simple transitive verb. The correct pattern requires the preposition *na* [on], as in *zmagati na tekmi/olimpijadi/prvenstvu* [win on a match/the Olympics/

championship], but what we often see now is the simple transitive pattern with the accusative noun (*zmagati tekmo/prvenstvo*); the reason probably lies in the English pattern *to win a match/a championship*.

- (28) Želimo **zmagati prvenstvo**, pokal in super pokal, želimo dokazati, da smo najboljši. (www.sta.si, 2012) [We want to win the championship, the cup and the super cup, we want to prove that we are the best.]
- (29) Košarka mi pomeni vse, ne glede na to, kje jo igram, bom to počel z enakim veseljem, strastjo in ciljem – da **zmagamo prvenstvo**.¹⁴ (www.24ur.com, 2025) [Basketball is everything to me, regardless of where I play it, I'll do it with the same joy, passion and goal – to win the championship.]

However, *zmagati* [win] in military contexts requires the preposition *v* [in], as in *zmagati v vojni/bitki* [win in a war/a battle]. Here, too, the simple transitive pattern is starting to emerge:

- (30) Kako **zmagati vojno** proti nečemu takšnemu? Nemogoče. Edina rešitev so pogajanja in konsenzi. (www.delo.si, 2013) [How do you win a war against something like that? Impossible. The only solution is negotiations and consensus.]

Similarly, the verb *pristati* [land] can enter a variety of valency patterns in Slovene (see Žele 2011: 319), but the following formulation is clearly calqued from the English pattern *the pilot lands a plane*; the only adequate formulation in Slovene would be *pilot pristane z letalom* [the pilot lands with a plane]:

- (31) Cole Langston verjame, da se vse stvari zgodijo v troje: v snežnem metežu je **pristal letalo**, potem ko je njegov pilot doživel srčni napad, ... (beletrina.digital.si, 2021) [Cole Langston believes that all things come in threes: in a blizzard he landed the plane after the pilot had suffered a heart attack, ...]

Overall, it is possible to argue that the omission of a preposition in favour of simple transitive valency may not be entirely induced by English influence. Such simplifications have been known to occur before, for example in cases like the following: *Tekel je na maratonu*. [He ran on the marathon.] > *Tekel je maraton*. [He ran the marathon.]

The dropping of the preposition results in the transformation of the intransitive verb *teči* [run] into a transitive one; simultaneously, the focus is somewhat shifted from the location of the action (on the marathon) to the content of the action (the marathon itself) (Žele, personal communication, 10/3/2025).

3.6. Word-formational patterns

The fact that certain word-formational elements have started appearing in Slovene that are English-induced is sufficient proof of how deeply the language system has already been affected.

¹⁴ Alternatively, it is possible to use *osvojiti prvenstvo* [conquer the championship] in this context, which requires a simple transitive pattern, and we could argue that *zmagati prvenstvo* results from contamination with the former.

Thus, for example, the noun *Sirijec* [Syrian] has been used massively in the news since 2011, coinciding with the Arab Spring and the subsequent migration of Syrians to Europe. However, the correct Slovene noun for an inhabitant of Syria has always been *Sirec* as attested by *Slovenski pravopis* (2014); besides, the usual word-formational pattern for deriving inhabitants from names of countries in Slovene supports the form *Sirec* and not *Sirijec* (*Nemčija* [Germany] > *Nemec* [German]; *Slovenija* [Slovenia] > *Slovenec* [Slovene/Slovenian]). The influx of the new form *Sirijec* can therefore only be attributed to English-language influence and sloppy translation.

However, the most evident influence from English can be seen in the emergence of blends in Slovene; blending is a recent phenomenon in Slovene as the language system has traditionally preferred other word-formational processes, particularly affixation. Blends are increasingly used in spoken language, in advertising, and in creative writing (e.g., children's literature, blogs and forums; see also Sicherl 2018). Naturally, the pattern itself had to be borrowed from English first and made familiar to the speakers of Slovene; such borrowings from English with clearly recognizable bases have paved the way for later Slovene coinages:

Eng. *bankster* > Slo. *bankster* (*banka/bankir* + *gangster*)
 Eng. *presstitute* > Slo. *prestitut* (m)/*prestitutka* (f) (*press* + *prostitut/prostitutka*)

The pattern itself has caught on and is now used by creative native speakers with Slovene lexical material:

Mafijankovič < *mafija* [mafia] + *Jankovič* [Jankovič, mayor of Ljubljana]
Zverjasec < *zverina* [beast] + *merjasec* [wild boar] (for: Gruffalo)
Brucšura < *bruc* [freshman] + *brošura* [brochure]

Further developments can be observed in affixoidal formations; the prefixoids and suffixoids are often rooted in classical languages, but the pattern itself is English-influenced, and the transition from proper blends is a gradual one:

megastično < *mega-* [mega-] + *fantastično* [fantastic]
blefsikon < *blef-* [bluff] + *-sikon* [lexicon]
besedoholik < *besed-a* [word] + *-holik* [-holic]
čokoholik < *čoko-lada* [chocolate] + *-holik* [-holic]
e-naslov < *e-lektronski* [electronic] + *naslov* [address]
e-uprava < *e-lektronska* [electronic] + *uprava* [administration]
e-avto < *e-lektrični* [electric] + *avto* [car]
*Vičstock*¹⁵ < *Vič* [Vič, an area in Ljubljana] + *-stock* [-stock as in Woodstock]

Another interesting phenomenon is the rise of graphic blends, found particularly in creative copywriting.

HOVtel < *hov* [woof] + *hotel* [hotel]¹⁶
*HOV du ju du*¹⁷ < *how do you do*

¹⁵ The name of a student festival organized by Vič High School.

¹⁶ The name of a hotel for dogs (<https://pikaboo.si/>; accessed February 2025)

¹⁷ The name of a dog groomer business (<http://hovdujudu.si/>; accessed March 2025) and alluding to *how do you do*.

Such graphic formations often show a gradual transition to English-influenced extralinguistic phenomena, which are the topic of the next section.

3.7. *Extralinguistic phenomena*

With increased use of English as an international carrier of popular culture that is spread both via the spoken and written as well as visual channels of communication, and increasingly through the social media, a number of extralinguistic phenomena have emerged in Slovene communication that are also English-influenced. Certain gestures that were unknown and unused in Slovene culture in the past have become widespread and are used with increased frequency in appropriate contexts, particularly by the young generation. In some of these cases, however, accurate historical investigation is necessary to trace certain gestures and signs back to their true origin, which may be non-English (cf. for example, Pulcini 2023: 99).

The first that deserves mentioning is the V-sign, popularized by Sir Winston Churchill during the Second World War as the victory sign. In the 1960s, during the Vietnam war, the V-sign was adopted by the hippie culture as a symbol of peace and has spread worldwide as the peace sign. In Slovenia, it was given a new lease of life as the victory sign in 1988 during the political trial against four Slovene journalists held by the Yugoslav army, which eventually led to Slovenia's independence and the fall of communism in the country.

In the case of the thumbs-up and thumbs-down gestures, the origin can probably be traced back to ancient Rome and its gladiator games. Nowadays, the thumbs-up is associated with positivity, approval, achievement, satisfaction and solidarity, while the thumbs-down gesture is associated with concern, disapproval, dissatisfaction, rejection and failure.¹⁸ The use of the thumbs-up sign in Slovene texts and extralinguistically has certainly become more widespread since the introduction of text-messaging and has been influenced by the Anglo-American culture. The corresponding emoji has helped widen its use although in most contexts and situations Slovene could use the phrase *klobuk dol* [hat off] or *kapo dol* [cap off] meaning 'chapeau', 'taking your hats off to someone' when expressing admiration for someone and their achievements (see also Keber 2015).

There is no evidence of the phrase *palec gor/dol* [thumbs up/down] in the Slovene dictionaries yet, but the use has been attested by the corpus:

- (32) Torej še en **palec dol** za Janusa, ki je v delu z ekipo sledil svojim načelom. (Gigafida, INTERNET www.sta.si (2018-03)) [That is another thumbs-down for Janus, who followed his principles in his work with the team.]
- (33) Brez težav drži korak z najboljšimi premijskimi tekmeci in jih v nekaterih prvinah presega. **Palec gor** za energijsko učinkovitost. (Gigafida, INTERNET siol.net (2017-04)) [It keeps up with the best of its premium rivals and even surpasses them in some elements. Thumbs-up for energy efficiency.]
- (34) Ko se navadiš občutka in visoko postavljenih meja tega krmiljenja in podvozja, je vožnja res doživetje. **Palec gor** in kapo dol. Dober voznik bo v teh dveh avtomobilih brez težav držal korak s kakšnim GTI. (Gigafida, INTERNET www.siol.net (2017-02)) [Once you get used to the feeling and the high-set boundaries of its steering and undercarriage, the drive becomes a true joy. Thumbs-up and cap off. In these two cars a good driver can easily keep up with any GTI.]

¹⁸ See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thumb_signal.

Another gesture popularized by US culture is the high five. Its origin can certainly be traced back to US sports, but whether it was first used by players of baseball, basketball or volleyball, however, is still debatable¹⁹. So, while the jury is still out on who the first was to use the high five, the context in which the gesture can be used varies from greeting, congratulations, to celebration. In Slovene, the gesture is often preceded verbally by the phrase *Daj petko*, which has been literally translated from *Give me five*.

While still unattested by the dictionaries on the Fran web portal, the corpus already gives evidence of its use:

- (35) Veliko gledalcev ob progi tekačem ponuja dlan. **Daj petko**, rečejo. Večinoma so mlajši od 10 let, kakšen je tudi odrasel. (Gigafida, INTERNET www.delo.si (2018-10)) [Many spectators by the track offer their palms to the runners. Give five, they say. They are mostly under ten, but some are adults.]

The gesture itself was unknown in Slovene culture decades ago. When greeting someone or congratulating them, a handshake or a pat on the back or the shoulder were used, respectively. Another gesture that was unknown until recently and has been imported from the US, is a fist bump (a bro fist or a spud), which is similar in meaning to high five.²⁰ Additionally, it can be used as a symbol of giving respect or approval, as well as companionship between two people. Again, the Fran web portal does not include this meaning in any of its dictionaries, and its use is not yet attested by the corpus either, however, some instances can be found on the internet pages and the social media:

- (36) Tokrat je osvojila nov pozdrav – kako **dati “kepico”**, se naučila uporabljati žličko in piti iz kozarca. (FB PRVIČ MAMA 2; 2023) [This time she learnt a new greeting – how to give a fist bump, she learnt how to use a spoon and drink from a glass.]

Another emoji-supported gesture that is widening its influence is keeping one's fingers crossed. To cross one's fingers has been a gesture commonly used in Christian cultures to wish for luck.²¹ However, which of the fingers are crossed may differ from culture to culture. In Slovenia, like in German-speaking countries, wishing for luck is gestured by holding one's thumbs tightly, and the corresponding phrases used are *držati/tiščati pesti za koga* [holding/pressing one's fists for someone] or *držati fige/figo za koga* [holding the fig/figs for someone] meaning 'to wish that someone succeeds in doing something' (see Keber 2015). The English-influenced emoji with the second and third fingers crossed is increasingly used and may eventually oust the traditional gesture with its corresponding phrases.

4. Conclusion

The intensity of the language contact between English and Slovene has increased vastly with the popularity of the digital means of communication following the 1990s. As is the case in many

¹⁹ See, for example, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_five.

²⁰ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fist_bump.

²¹ Compare https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossed_fingers.

other language communities all over the world, the young generation of Slovene speakers is no longer acquiring English as a foreign language, but rather as a second language (see also Gottlieb 2012: 169). The bilingualism of young Slovene native speakers has resulted in massive changes in the way their language is employed on a daily basis and particularly in informal styles (cf. also Košmrlj 2024). With the amount of code-switching steadily on the rise, new patterns are entering also in the form of hidden Anglicisms, changing or replacing some traditional language patterns. As Slovene readers, viewers and listeners encounter increasing numbers of AI-generated or AI-translated texts, they become desensitized to the subtle nuances of what would be ‘correct’ formulations in Slovene.²² Consequently, the fine differences between the two languages are gradually erased, while the language output provided by the desensitized bilinguals becomes less idiomatic, more uniform, and stylistically impoverished without the language users being aware of it. However, the fates of minor languages like Slovene rest in the hands of their native speakers: language policies on a societal level can certainly help, but on a micro level, it is all up to the speakers’ conscious efforts, metalinguistic awareness, and care for their mother tongue.

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²² Sentences like the following found on a web page of one of Slovenia’s TV channels are illustrative of the point:

Na letošnjih volitvah je zmagal Trump, **zmagal je elektorske glasove**, kot tudi **vsesplošno glasovanje**, kongres je republikanski, kot tudi senat. [In this year’s election Trump won, he won the electoral college vote, the popular vote, the Congress is Republican, and so is the Senate.] (Ž.K., 10.1.2025, Nova 24 TV)

While the author (abbreviated as Ž. K.) uses the correct Slovene pattern *zmagati na volitvah* for ‘win the election’, it is incorrect to use the simple transitive pattern with electoral vote and popular vote in Slovene echoing directly the English pattern; instead, a more suitable formulation would be either *zmagati pri elektorskih glasovih* or *dobiti elektorske glasove* [get the electoral vote]. Whether substandard texts of this kind are a result of AI-generated translation or not, no haste or sloppiness on the author’s part should serve as an excuse for getting published in this form.

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