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## AGENTIAL NOUNS IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENE TEXTILE TERMINOLOGY

Agential nouns in English and Slovene technical language, more precisely in the language of textile engineering, will be studied. Ninety-two agential nouns were selected and their translation equivalents studied. The paper will focus on their translation patterns, with special stress on Slovene derivatives. Slovene derivatives, as counterparts of English agential nouns, take numerous suffixes: the frequency of suffixes will be presented, together with their semantics. The question to be answered is whether Slovene agential suffixes play any role in distinguishing between the animate and inanimate agentials in technical language.

### 1. Introduction

Agential nouns in English and Slovene technical language, more precisely in the language of textile engineering, will be studied. The agential nouns that will be presented contrastively were taken from Hohenadel and Relton (1984). A limited number of German and English textile terms were investigated and translated into the Slovene language by Društvo inženirjev in tehnikov tekstilcev and published in *Tekstilni tehniški slovar* in 1983. This dictionary is a German-Slovene dictionary with equivalents in English, yet with no alphabetic list of English words added. This lexicographical principle makes the dictionary practically unusable for the English-Slovene translation. A translator can arrive at a Slovene equivalent only indirectly, i.e. via an English-German textile dictionary: s/he has to get a German word first which s/he then looks up in *Tekstilni tehniški slovar*.

### 1. Definition of agential nouns

Quirk et al. (1985:1550) define agential nouns as nouns deriving from verbs with the agential suffixes *-er*, *-or* as in *singer* ['one who sings (especially) pro-

fessionally«], *writer, driver, employer*. Agential nouns may also be nonpersonal: *silencer, computer, thriller*. The suffixes *-er, -or* are also used informally with phrasal verbs (*washer-up, chucker-out*) and with object-verb compounds and some comparable compounds (*window-cleaner, high-flier*). With neo-classical bases, the suffix is often spelled *-or* (*accelerator, incubator; supervisor, survivor; actor*); so too in cases where there is no free base (*author, doctor, etc.*).

The suffix *-er* may also be added to nouns to form personal and inanimate nouns (*glover, teenager, Londoner*) with different meanings: 'maker of X', 'something having X', 'inhabitant of X'.

In English the suffix *-er* is very productive. New words are easily coined by adding it to verbs to represent »one who performs the action of the verb«, either a person or a machine.

What are the potentials of the Slovene language in this respect? Let us have a look at the examples taken from the above-mentioned sources.

Below is a list of 92 agential nouns which were taken from Hohenadel and Relton (1984). Their Slovene translation equivalents were taken from *Tekstilni tehniški slovar* (1983). Not all the L2 terms, however, could be found there. This is a weakness of the dictionary, the omission leading to incomprehensiveness of the studied field. In the cases of non-occurrence of the term in *Tekstilni tehniški slovar*, equivalents had to be found in the existing Slovene technical literature, such as handbooks, journals, articles and textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

<i>ager</i>	<i>parilnik, parilni aparat</i>
<i>atomizer</i>	<i>razpršilnik</i>
<i>autoheeler</i>	<i>avtomat za izdelovanje pete (nogavice)</i>
<i>bartacker</i>	<i>šivalnik za zaporni šiv, šivalni stroj za zaporni šiv</i>
<i>baster</i>	<i>spenjalnik, spenjalni stroj</i>
<i>beamer</i>	<i>snovalni valj</i>
<i>beater</i>	<i>otepalo</i>
<i>binder</i>	<i>vezivo</i>
<i>boarder</i>	<i>fiksirni kalup</i>
<i>braider</i>	<i>stroj za izdelavo pletenic</i>
<i>builder</i>	<i>tvorec (kompleksov), ojačevalec (pralnega sredstva)</i>
<i>carder</i>	<i>mikalnik</i>
<i>cleaner</i>	<i>čistilni stroj; čistilno sredstvo</i>
<i>converter</i>	<i>konverter</i>
<i>decatizer</i>	<i>dekatirni stroj</i>
<i>designer</i>	<i>oblikovalec</i>
<i>detector</i>	<i>detektor</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Only those Slovene translation equivalents are presented that are relevant for the field of textile technology. Counterparts from general language are omitted.

<i>doffer</i>	<i>snemalni valj</i>
<i>doubler</i>	<i>dublirni stroj</i>
<i>dryer</i>	<i>sušilnik, sušilni stroj</i>
<i>duster</i>	<i>krpa za prah</i>
<i>dyer</i>	<i>barvalec</i>
<i>evaporator</i>	<i>izparilnik</i>
<i>eoener</i>	<i>izravnalnik, izravnalna naprava</i>
<i>expander</i>	<i>razpenjalnik, stroj za razpenjanje (tkanine)</i>
<i>extruder</i>	<i>ekstrudirni stroj</i>
<i>fastener</i>	<i>(patentna) zadruga</i>
<i>feeder</i>	<i>dovajalnik (mikalnika); dovajalo (niti)</i>
<i>feeler</i>	<i>tipalo</i>
<i>felter</i>	<i>polstilnik, polstilni stroj</i>
<i>füller</i>	<i>polnilo, polnilno sredstvo</i>
<i>fitter</i>	<i>vlagalna žica; pomerjevalec, oseba, ki izvrši probo, krojač</i>
<i>foamer</i>	<i>penilo, penilno sredstvo</i>
<i>folder</i>	<i>polagalnik, polagalni stroj</i>
<i>footer</i>	<i>stroj za izdelavo stopala (nogavice)</i>
<i>fuller</i>	<i>valjalnik, valjalna naprava</i>
<i>gripper</i>	<i>podajalec (pri šivalnem stroju)</i>
<i>guider</i>	<i>vodilni valj; razpenjalo, razpenjalna naprava</i>
<i>heater</i>	<i>grelec, grelnik</i>
<i>heeler</i>	<i>stroj za izdelavo pete (nogavice)</i>
<i>inhibitor</i>	<i>inhibitor, ?zaviral<sup>2</sup></i>
<i>ironer</i>	<i>likalni stroj; likalec, likalka</i>
<i>knitter</i>	<i>pletilec, pletilka; pletilnik, pletilni stroj</i>
<i>looper</i>	<i>lovilnik, lovilec</i>
<i>lubricator</i>	<i>mazivo</i>
<i>maker-up</i>	<i>konfekcionar</i>
<i>napper</i>	<i>kosmatilnik, kosmatilni stroj</i>
<i>opener</i>	<i>rahljalnik</i>
<i>presser</i>	<i>(šivalna) nožica, tačka</i>
<i>processor</i>	<i>plemenitilni stroj</i>
<i>quilter</i>	<i>prešivalnik, prešivalni stroj</i>
<i>raiser</i>	<i>rahljalnik</i>
<i>reducer</i>	<i>reduktor</i>
<i>retarder</i>	<i>inhibitor, ?zaviral<sup>2</sup> (See note 2)</i>
<i>sampler</i>	<i>predloga, vzorec, model</i>

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<sup>2</sup> *Tekstilni tehniški slovar* proposes also *zaviral* for *inhibitor*, but it is questionable whether this is an appropriate term. The Slovene word *inhibitor* is an accepted term in chemical reactions denoting any substance that stops or slows a reaction. *Zaviral* presents a semantic shift to the field of mechanical engineering, denoting a device having the function of stopping or slowing down a mechanical motion.

<i>saturator</i>	<i>sredstvo za zasičenje</i>
<i>scourer</i>	<i>pralni stroj; sredstvo za odstranjevanje madežev</i>
<i>seamer</i>	<i>šivalnik, šivalni stroj; šivalec, šivalka</i>
<i>separator</i>	<i>separator</i>
<i>shearer</i>	<i>strižnik, strižni stroj; strižec</i>
<i>slasher</i>	<i>škrobilnik, škrobilni stroj</i>
<i>slider</i>	<i>drsnik, potiskač (zadrge)</i>
<i>soaper</i>	<i>stroj za miljenje, pralni stroj</i>
<i>softener</i>	<i>mehčalo</i>
<i>spinner</i>	<i>predilnik, predilni stroj; predilec, predilka</i>
<i>spooler</i>	<i>navijalnik, navijalni stroj</i>
<i>sprayer</i>	<i>škropilnik, škropilna naprava</i>
<i>spreader</i>	<i>polagalnik, polagalni stroj</i>
<i>sprinkler</i>	<i>vlažilnik, škropilnik</i>
<i>steamer</i>	<i>parilnik</i>
<i>stiffener</i>	<i>trdilo</i>
<i>stirrer</i>	<i>mešalnik, mešalec</i>
<i>stitcher</i>	<i>točka vezanja</i>
<i>stopper</i>	<i>ustavljalo</i>
<i>straightener</i>	<i>izravnalo (niti)</i>
<i>stretcher</i>	<i>razpenjalo</i>
<i>stripper</i>	<i>trgalo</i>
<i>tailor</i>	<i>krojač</i>
<i>tearer</i>	<i>trgalnik</i>
<i>thickener</i>	<i>gostilo</i>
<i>threadler</i>	<i>vdevalo; vdevalec</i>
<i>traveller</i>	<i>tekač</i>
<i>tucker</i>	<i>naprava za označevanje gub</i>
<i>twister</i>	<i>sukalnik; sukalec</i>
<i>upholsterer</i>	<i>tapetnik</i>
<i>vaporizer</i>	<i>parilnik</i>
<i>warper</i>	<i>snovalnik, snovalni stroj; ?snovalec</i>
<i>weaver</i>	<i>tkalec, tkalka</i>
<i>whitener</i>	<i>belilo</i>
<i>windbreaker</i>	<i>vetrni jopič</i>
<i>windcheater</i>	<i>vetrni jopič</i>
<i>winder</i>	<i>navijalnik, navijalni stroj</i>

### 3. Discussion

The English agentive nouns are translated into Slovene:

- by a derived word: *atomizer* — *razpršilnik*, *beater* — *otepalo*, *binder* — *vezivo*
- by an adjective + noun: *boarder* — *fiksirni stroj*, *cleaner* — *čistilni stroj*,  
*warper* — *snovalni stroj*

- c) by a prepositional phrase: *autoheeler* – *avtomat za izdelovanje pete nogavice*, *braider* – *stroj za izdelavo pletenic*
- d) by a noun + genitive: *builder* – *ojačevalec pralnega sredstva*, *stitcher* – *točka vezanja*
- e) by a borrowed word: *converter* – *konverter*, *inhibitor* – *inhibitor*, *detector* – *detektor*, *separator* – *separator*.
- f) by one-base rendering: *presser* – *tačka*, (*šivalna*) *nožica*, *sampler* – *predloga*.

Some other remarks concerning translation patterns can be made on consulting the above list:

- a) most of the terms allow two or three translation equivalents:

With the publishing of *Tekstilni leksikon* in 1989, an attempt was made towards the standardisation of textile terms. Terms such as *šivalnik*, *pletilnik*, *kosmatilnik* replaced the longer *šivalni stroj*, *pletilni stroj*, *kosmatilni stroj*, which were used formerly in the literature and textbooks. Experts in the field, however, still argue about their appropriacy.

- b) English agential nouns are polysemous:

In Slovene their polysemy is not preserved but is resolved by a different term. In spinning *feeder* is *dovajalnik* (*mikalnika*), while in knitting the derivative takes the suffix *-o* to form *dovajalo* (*niti*). The same: *guider* – *vodilni valj* (a general textile term) and *razpenjalo* (in weaving), *fitter* – *vlagalna žica* (in weaving) and *pomerjevalec* (in making-up). In *ironer*, *seamer*, *spinner*, *threadler* the difference between animate and inanimate agential noun in Slovene is expressed by a different translation pattern or a different suffix: *likalec* – *likalni stroj*, *šivalec* – *šivalni*, *šivalni stroj*, *predilec* – *predilnik*, *predilni stroj*, *vdevalec* – *vdevalo*.

- c) The gender of English agential nouns is context dependent while in Slovene it is expressed by a suffix: *knitter* – *pletilec*, *pletilka*, *spinner* – *predilec*, *predilka*, *seamer* – *šivalec*, *šivalka*. The term *šivalka* has to be distinguished from *šivilja* (*seamstress*): *šivalka* denotes a profession, a person employed in a sewing plant, while *šivilja* is a person sewing at home. The term *snovalec* (from *warper*: a person who prepares the warp in weaving) is possible, yet not used in Slovene engineering practice. *Tkalec* is being used instead, as a general term semantically incorporating several weaving operations including the operation of warping.

- d) *Fitter* in making-up is a person who adjusts garments on dummies to assure a proper fit. In this sense it can be adequately translated by *pomerjevalec*. Relton and Hohenadel also propose the equivalent *Schneider* – *krojač*. The broadening of the meaning is appropriate if we bear in mind that a *tailor* is a *fitter* at the same time, but it is less appropriate for the clothing industry where the working process is divided into highly specialized tasks and *fitters* are part of it.

- e) In a few cases the agentive suffix *-er* is added to a noun: *footer*, *heeler*, *autoheeler*. These terms are translated into Slovene by a prepositional phrase:

*stroj za izdelavo stopala (nogavice), stroj za izdelavo pete (nogavice), avtomat za izdelavo pete nogavice.*

#### 4. Slovene derivatives as counterparts for English agential nouns

As we have seen above, English agential nouns can also be translated into Slovene by a derivative. Toporišič (1984:124) defines nouns that are derived from action verbs as (*človeški ali živalski vršilec dejanja* (*govornik, sodnik, ravnatelj*)), which corresponds to animate agentive nouns. Inanimate agentive nouns are defined as *predmet ali stvar, ki opravlja dejanje ali je zanj namenjeno* (*vlačilec, kompresor, dešifrant*) and *snov, s katero se kaj dela* (*mehčalo, gnojilo, lepilo*).

Unlike English, Slovene derived agential nouns may take numerous suffixes. Toporišič (1984:124–130) lists 50 suffixes for animate agential nouns (of which 33 are for the masculine gender, 15 for the feminine gender and 2 for the neuter gender), 29 for objects that perform the action (of which 18 are for the masculine gender, 9 for the feminine gender and 2 for the neutral gender) and 3 for the material with which something is performed or achieved. These figures indicate that there are more suffixes for animate agential nouns than for inanimate ones, which implies that some of the suffixes are specific and used only for animate nouns. Besides from the context (for example *brisalec*: a person or a device), animacy can thus also be judged from the suffix. For example: the suffixes *-avh, -avs, -avt, -uh, -un* etc. form only animate agential nouns: *dremavh, bahavs, jezikavt, oderuh, govorun*. But these are stylistic varieties and of no interest in our study as they do not occur in technical language.

To establish the frequency of the Slovene agential suffixes in the translation of English technical terms, I processed the above word-list statistically. Table 1 groups the Slovene equivalents according to the suffixes they take. Suffixes for the feminine gender were omitted since they represent only a version of a masculine noun.

Table 1. Slovene agential suffixes in technical terminology

Suffix	No. of instances	Percentage
<i>-ač</i>	2	2.9%
<i>-ar</i>	1	1.5%
<i>-ec</i>	7	10.1%
<i>-er</i>	1	1.5%
<i>-nik</i>	27	39.1%
<i>-o</i>	15	21.1%
<i>-or</i>	3	4.3%
<i>-nik</i> or <i>-o</i>	1	1.5%
<i>-nik</i> or <i>-ec</i>	8	11.5%
<i>-nik</i> or <i>-ač</i>	1	1.5%
<i>-o</i> or <i>-or</i>	2	2.9%
<i>-o</i> or <i>-ec</i>	1	1.5%

It can be seen from Table 1 that the two most productive suffixes are *-nik*, and *-o*, together accounting for virtually 50% of all the examples. Materials with which something is performed or achieved take the suffix *-o* as a rule (*filler – polnilo*, *softener – mehčalo*, *stiffener – trdilo*). The suffix *-o*, however, is also used to denote technical appliances or parts of machines, but not machines as a whole (*beater – otepalo*, *feeler – tipalo*, *guider – razpenjalo*). Machines more often take the suffix *-nik* (*folder – polagalnik*, *warper – snovalnik*, *spooler – navijalnik*). A typical example to illustrate this claim is *feeder – dovajalnik* (*mikalnika*), which is a machine, and *dovajalo* (*nit*) which is a part of a machine. Borrowings take the suffix *-or* (*detector – detektor*, *inhibitor – inhibitor*, *reducer – reduktor*) or *-er* (*converter – konverter*). *Slider* has the older equivalent *drsnik*, which is being replaced by *potiskač* in contemporary technical literature.

The suffixes *-(n)ik* and *-ec* need to be explained in more detail. In general Slovene the suffixes *-ik* (and *-nik*, *-enik*, *-evnik*, depending on the base) and *-ec* (*-(a/i)lec*, *-vec*, *-(i)vec*) are used both for animate and inanimate agential nouns. Below are some examples from Bajec et al. 1994.

Animate		Inanimate	
<i>-ik</i>	<i>-ec</i>	<i>-ik</i>	<i>-ec</i>
<i>-nik</i>	<i>-(a/i)lec</i>	<i>-(a/i)lnik</i>	<i>-(a/i)lec</i>
<i>-enik</i>	<i>-vec</i>	<i>-(v)nik</i>	<i>-(i)vec</i>
<i>govornik</i>	<i>borec</i>	<i>kuhalnik</i>	<i>plovec</i>
<i>sodnik</i>	<i>govorec</i>	<i>hladilnik</i>	<i>grelec</i>
<i>naročnik</i>	<i>lovec</i>	<i>menjalnik</i>	<i>nosilec</i>
<i>sprevodnik</i>	<i>bralec</i>	<i>brivnik</i>	<i>vlačilec</i>
<i>bojevnik</i>	<i>gasilec</i>	<i>hranilnik</i>	<i>drobilec</i>

If we consult the list of textile terms again, we can see that in technical Slovene, the suffixes *-nik* and *-ec* can also denote both animate and inanimate agential nouns. The question which remains to be answered here is whether there is any preference for using one of them for the animate and the other for the inanimate nouns. There are 8 examples in the corpus which can take both suffixes (*Warper – snovalnik*, *snovalec* was omitted due to the reason explained in Section 3c):

<i>heater</i>	<i>grelec, grelnik</i>
<i>knitter</i>	<i>pletilnik, pletilec</i>
<i>looper</i>	<i>lovilnik, lovilec</i>
<i>seamer</i>	<i>šivalnik, šivalec</i>
<i>shearer</i>	<i>strižnik, strižec</i>
<i>spinner</i>	<i>predilnik, predilec</i>
<i>stirrer</i>	<i>mešalnik, mešalec</i>
<i>twister</i>	<i>sukalnik, sukalec</i>

In 3 of the above examples no semantic difference is made between the use of the suffixes *-ec* or *-nik*: *grelec* – *grelnik*, *lovilec* – *lovilnik*, *mešalec* – *mešalnik* are all inanimate. (*Looper* is a term specific to textile technology: it denotes the part of a sewing machine which catches the loop formed by the raising of the needle). In the 5 remaining examples, however, *-nik* is used to denote the inanimate agential nouns and *-ec* to denote the animate ones. *Sukalnik*, *pletilnik*, *predilnik*, *strižnik* and *šivalnik* are machines used in the technology of spinning, knitting, finishing and making-up, while *sukalec*, *pletilec*, *predilec*, *strižec*, and *šivalec* are operators serving these machines.

The representative pattern of 8 derived words, however, of which only 5 support the claim that *-nik* is a suffix denoting inanimacy in Slovene technical language is too small to be relied upon. Other examples in the corpus had to be studied to obtain more reliable results. The animacy or inanimacy of the respective suffixes is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The suffixes *-nik* and *-ec* according to their animacy or inanimacy.

<i>-nik</i>	Anim.	Inanim.	<i>-ec</i>	Anim.	Inanim.
<i>ager</i> – <i>parilnik</i>		+	<i>builder</i> – <i>tvorec</i> , <i>ojačevalec</i>		+
<i>atomizer</i> – <i>razpršilnik</i>		+	<i>designer</i> – <i>oblikovalec</i>	+	
<i>bartacker</i> – <i>šivalnik za zap.š.</i>		+	<i>dyer</i> – <i>barvalec</i>	+	
<i>baster</i> – <i>spenjalnik</i>		+	<i>fitter</i> – <i>pomerjevalec</i>	+	
<i>carder</i> – <i>mikalnik</i>		+	<i>gripper</i> – <i>podajalec</i>		+
<i>dryer</i> – <i>sušilnik</i>		+	<i>ironer</i> – <i>likalec</i>	+	
<i>evaporator</i> – <i>izparilnik</i>		+	<i>threadler</i> – <i>vdevalec</i>	+	
<i>evener</i> – <i>izravnalnik</i>		+	<i>weaver</i> – <i>tkalec</i>	+	
<i>expander</i> – <i>razpenjalnik</i>		+			
<i>feeder</i> – <i>dovajalnik</i>		+			
<i>felter</i> – <i>polstilnik</i>		+			
<i>folder</i> – <i>polagalnik</i>		+			
<i>fuller</i> – <i>valjalnik</i>		+			
<i>napper</i> – <i>kosmatilnik</i>		+			
<i>opener</i> – <i>rahljalnik</i>		+			
<i>quilter</i> – <i>prešivalnik</i>		+			
<i>raiser</i> – <i>rahljalnik</i>		+			
<i>slasher</i> – <i>škrobnik</i>		+			
<i>slider</i> – <i>drsnik</i>		+			
<i>spooler</i> – <i>navijalnik</i>		+			
<i>sprayer</i> – <i>škropilnik</i>		+			
<i>spreader</i> – <i>polagalnik</i>		+			
<i>sprinkler</i> – <i>vlažilnik</i>		+			
<i>steamer</i> – <i>parilnik</i>		+			
<i>tearer</i> – <i>trgalnik</i>		+			
<i>upholsterer</i> – <i>tapetnik</i>	+				
<i>vaporizer</i> – <i>parilnik</i>		+			
<i>warper</i> – <i>snovalnik</i>		+			
<i>winder</i> – <i>navijalnik</i>		+			



Table 2 clearly shows that the suffix *-nik* is a predominant suffix for inanimate nouns and *-ec* for the animate ones. The only exceptions are *upholsterer* – *tapetnik*, *builder* – *tvorec*, *ojačevalec* and *gripper* – *podajalec* which could be said to prove the rule.

To sum up, the researched corpus features the following findings:

- 28 words take the suffix *-nik* to denote inanimate nouns
- 6 words take the suffix *-ec* to denote animate nouns
- 3 words take either the suffix *-nik* or *-ec* to denote inanimate nouns
- 5 words take either the suffix *-nik* or *-ec*, with *-nik* denoting inanimate and *-ec* animate nouns
- 2 words take the suffix *-ec* to denote inanimate nouns
- 1 word takes the suffix *-nik* to denote an animate noun.

## 5. Conclusion

Agential nouns in the field of textile technology were studied and their translation equivalents presented. There are several possible translation patterns, of which derivatives are an important one. The most productive Slovene suffix for technical terms is *-nik*, but other suffixes are used as well. The suffix *-nik* is predominantly used for inanimate agentials and *-ec* for the animate ones. The present textile terminology prefers the derivative word to other translation patterns, which is evident from *Tekstilni leksikon* where derivatives are lematized as a rule. This proves that an attempt towards the standardization of terms has been made. Slovene experts from the field are aware that terms should be short, meaningful and relevant. Equivalents, according to Hartman (1983:158), should »make sense, conform to the original, and represent genuine usage in the target language«. As such they will be applicable in everyday engineering practice and scientific work.

## Literature

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## Imenice za vršitelja radnje u engleskoj i slovenskoj tekstilnoj terminologiji

### Sažetak

Autorica opisuje imenice za vršitelja radnje u engleskom i slovenskom tehničkom jeziku, preciznije, takve imenice u jeziku tekstilnoga inženjerstva. Proučavaju se 92 takva englesko-slovenska para i to kako se oni prevode, s posebnim naglaskom na slovenske izvedenice. Za razliku od engleskih značenjskih ekvivalenata, slovenske izvedenice imaju mnogo sufiksa. Proučava se i odnos živo-neživo u vezi s takvim imenicama.

Ključne riječi: engleski jezik, slovenski jezik, tekstilna terminologija  
Key words: English language, Slovenian language, textile terminology