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Promoting literary language on national television in the Republic of Slovenia – an exemplary model for all language users

Summary

Radio Television Slovenia is a publicly funded institution of great cultural and national significance which, among its various responsibilities, places a particular emphasis on fostering language culture. In this paper, we start with the premise that the mass media exerts a significant (linguistic) influence on the general population, underscoring the importance of presenters' adept usage of literary language. The findings from the qualitative research revealed that, at TV Slovenia, the usage of literary language by presenters in its news, entertainment, sports, and cultural programmes holds paramount significance in their public presentations. Furthermore, promoting language culture emerged as one of the central guiding principles in television work and lies at the core of the public service broadcasting mission. There are also well-defined language prerequisites for presenters appearing on camera, along with an evaluation system assessing their linguistic proficiency. The results from the quantitative research revealed that public speaking on TV Slovenia encompasses various types of mistakes, those of a stylistic nature having the highest occurrence and the mistakes in terminology the lowest. The news programme, which boasts the highest ratings among all programme types, exhibited the most favourable overall linguistic presentation. Based on the findings, it can be argued that national television is indeed a linguistic exemplary model for all language users.

Keywords: TV Slovenia, literary language, exemplary model, interviews, mistakes

1. INTRODUCTION

In contrast to commercial media, public media in the Republic of Slovenia, primarily represented by Radio Television Slovenia, are mandated to maintain a proper culture

of speech and expression which is aligned with the expectations of its audience. The spoken literary Slovenian language emerged during the 19th century, serving several key purposes: a) to address or demonstrate respect for the inhabitants of the entire Slovenian linguistic region; b) to showcase linguistic refinement and sophistication; c) to ensure the highest level of clarity and comprehensibility. The most formal and rigorous form of spoken language is known as literary spoken language. Contemporary communication requires a television language that adjusts to the genre, content and objectives of each programme. However, employing more casual or non-literary language genres becomes a notably intricate matter in the context of media outlets that encompass the entire Slovenian territory (cf. Ahačič, 2022). While it is appropriate to employ diverse language genres, there remains a necessity to establish what is commonly referred to as¹ the “ideal contemporary Slovenian spoken language” in official and public speaking situations.

The initial premise in this paper is that promoting literary language on national television (in the Republic of Slovenia) is an exemplary model for all language users. With this premise in mind, we sought to assess the current state of language usage within this public institution. To do so, we conducted both qualitative and quantitative research (structured interviews and linguistic analysis) concerning the use of literary language on national television in the Republic of Slovenia, the findings of which are presented in the empirical section of this paper.

2. SOCIAL VARIANTS IN SLOVENIAN LINGUISTICS

Within Slovenian linguistics, social language variants are classified into two main categories: literary and spoken² (Toporišič, 2000). Because these variants are applied

¹ The speaking situation hinges upon the context in which communication occurs, shaped by factors such as the location and the audience we are addressing. These circumstances are shaped by the participants, the content, and the purpose, all of which impact the selection of linguistic resources. Among various factors, speech situations vary based on formality and informality where the key criterion is the social relationship between the speaker and the addressee, as well as public and private contexts, determined by the chosen addressee group (Križaj Ortar, 1999; Zemljarič Miklavčič, Stabej, Krek, & Zwitter Vitez, 2009). As per Tivadar (1998), public (and consequently official) speech situations that involve the use of spoken literary language can be categorised into four groups: 1) Speeches within governmental institutions; 2) Speeches in the business sphere; 3) Classroom lectures; 4) Speeches delivered in front of a microphone (including those broadcasted on television).

² Given the swift social changes and the evolving perspectives on communication in its broadest sense, language must adapt rapidly in contemporary times. This adaptation is imperative, regardless of the social context, prompting the need to contemplate the enhancement or, at

in specific contexts, this paper examines them with a focus on the speaker and the particular speaking scenario, specifically, public speaking. In such instances, the correct usage of linguistic variants is crucial, given the nationwide and nation-representative function of the literary language³. Toporišič (2000) suggests that standard language can be categorised into literary and spoken variants, both of which serve as the means of communication throughout the entire territory of Slovenia. He goes on to mention (*ibid.*) that the user of the literary language is a linguistically educated individual, and this form of language is consistently employed in public and official discourse. Vogel (2017) observes that, despite various transformations, literary language remains the genre that allows individuals to effectively engage in society⁴.

When employing literary language, as highlighted by Vogel, Kastelic, and Ozimek (2009), it is imperative to conscientiously adhere to the conventions of the Slovenian standard language. This encompasses regulations regarding word forms, the structure of sentences and phrases, as well as orthoepic rules, amongst other considerations. Through the appropriate linguistic imagery usage, we convey our connection with both the intended recipient and our environment. Language serves as the medium through which we articulate our thoughts and emotions, shaping the perceptions others develop of us⁵.

Šekli (2004) asserts that the theory of literary language was formulated during the late 1920s and 1930s by linguists associated with the Prague School of Linguistics, and it remains fundamentally valid in contemporary times. He goes on to say that within a linguistic or national community, literary language fulfils two crucial social roles. It acts as a nation-building language, allowing speakers of various non-literary language variants to effectively communicate with one another thus fostering a sense of belonging to a supra-regional and supra-provincial (nation-wide) linguistic community. Beyond linguistic or ethnic boundaries, literary language assumes the role

the very least, the updating of Toporišič's current categorisation. For more details, see Petek, T. (2018).

³ Due to the nature of this paper, we will focus only on the literary language.

⁴ Considering these factors, it's important to note that the Slovenian spoken language is seldom acquired as one's native tongue. Instead, it is largely learned through formal education and exposure to public media, such as television. Petek (2019) highlights that orthoepy and other elements of spoken language must be acquired, much like how spelling and grammar require learning.

⁵ In 2014, Petek formulated a didactic model for cultivating public speaking skills, applicable to all individuals engaged in public speaking, including presenters and educators. See also Petek & Lazzarich (2019).

of a national language, enabling its users to both identify with it and, concurrently, differentiate themselves from other similar communities. Tivadar (2010) additionally highlights unification and unity as pivotal attributes of literary language. However, it is worth noting that literary language is often portrayed, both in professional and non-professional contexts, as challenging to acquire and as a complex linguistic code.

3. SPOKEN LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC MEDIA

Spoken texts are texts that are transmitted by the addresser to the addressee by means of an auditory transmission⁶ (Vogel, 2004). Most speech positions in which we accept spoken text involve the direct presence of the listener (*ibid.*), whereas in our scenario, these texts are conveyed indirectly, through the media (television broadcasts)⁷. Zemljak Jontes (2010) asserts that nurturing and preserving linguistic culture represent⁸ two of the utmost priorities within the Slovenian language environment. Kalin Golob (1996) emphasises that fundamental linguistic-cultural tasks lie in fostering linguistic culture through cooperation between linguists and language users. However, Valh Lopert (2005) argues that one of the ways of fostering linguistic culture is through media presence. The media serve as conduits for literary language, with their primary role being to disseminate information to the public, all the while upholding the standards of proper language and speech. RTV Slovenia plays a significant role in the development and promotion of the Slovenian literary language. According to Article 4 of the RTV Slovenia Act, RTV Slovenia functions as a public institution offering public broadcasting services in the domains of television and radio. The legislation also mandates a particular emphasis on fostering linguistic culture.

⁶ Our thoughts can be conveyed to the recipient either through written expression (visual transmission) or through spoken communication (auditory transmission). The basis upon which we categorise texts as either spoken or written is the mode of transmission (Vogel, 2004).

⁷ Texts transmitted indirectly are distinguished by the fact that they typically demand greater communication and evaluative abilities, along with a deeper reservoir of subject matter knowledge. This is because the speaker often directs these texts toward a more abstract or diverse audience and, as a result, may not respond to or be influenced by individual recipients (Vogel, 2004).

⁸ Linguistic culture constitutes an essential element within the theory of literary language (Kalin Golob, 1996). The concept of linguistic culture is closely intertwined with the concept of linguistic norms, and in the context of a literary language, it is also tied to its embodiment (Vidovič Muha, 1991). A linguistic norm represents what is typically considered standard or customary within a specific linguistic genre, particularly in literary language. The establishment of this norm is accomplished through familiarisation and utilisation in fundamental resources such as grammar guides, spelling rules and dictionaries (Toporišič, 1992).

According to Tivadar (2004, 2011), spoken texts can be categorised into five fundamental levels of speech, each demanding varying degrees of mastery in literary expression: 1) reading; 2) semi-reading⁹; 3) speaking with reference points; 4) spontaneous speech without notes but with mental preparation; 5) entirely spontaneous speech¹⁰. All speech levels are exemplified in various broadcasts on TV Slovenia. However, for the purpose of this research, we specifically focus on what is referred to as speaking with reference points and spontaneous speech without notes but with mental preparation¹¹. Tivadar (2004, 2011) highlights that these categories are already integrated into spontaneous speech which is no longer directly tethered to a written template. This form of speech necessitates the speaker (presenter) to possess a proficient command of orthoepic norms. In this category of speech, word usage tends to be less predictable, often incorporating diverse colloquial forms and phonetic characteristics, such as vowel reduction and dialectal intonation, incorrect pronunciation of the preposition “v” (equivalent to “in” in English), the “l” sound within words and the improper pronunciation of narrow and broad sounds amongst other dialectal forms.

Public media in the Republic of Slovenia are also governed by the provisions of the Public Use of the Slovenian Language Act (2004)¹². The act specifies that Slovenian

⁹ Reading and semi-reading are associated with the written linguistic code and necessitate a fundamental understanding of orthoepy. Any ambiguity concerning pronunciation can be either annotated within the text or considered in advance. A speaker should also be cognisant of the advantages and distinctive qualities of the spoken language, rather than merely mechanically transmitting written text to an auditory format (Tivadar, 2004, 2011).

¹⁰ This situation often arises when the speaker (journalist or presenter) requests and promptly receives a statement, and it is also common in various debates. While there is undoubtedly some mental preparation beforehand, in these instances, we cannot refer to it as premeditated or rehearsed speech. In such scenarios, professional speakers tend to deviate less rigorously from the literary norm, whereas non-professionals often exhibit a noticeable presence of dialect and colloquialism (Tivadar, 2004, 2011).

¹¹ In the empirical section of the paper, specifically in the second phase of our research, we unveil the outcomes of a linguistic analysis encompassing 12 programmes broadcast on TV Slovenia. These programmes were produced under the supervision of the four most-watched editorial departments. To ensure the utmost objectivity in our analysis and comparison, we have chosen programmes from all the editorial offices in which the speaker (presenter) employs both spontaneous speech with and without written notes but with prior mental preparation (corresponding to stages 3 and 4 as defined by Tivadar, 2004, 2011). In most instances, this involves engaging in a conversation with a guest during the programme. The presenter formulates the talking points, frequently engages in mental preparation and subsequently crafts the spoken text.

¹² In 2023, the Ministry of Culture proposed an amendment to this law for public consultation, elucidating that the existing law was enacted in 2004, a time when lawmakers could not have foreseen the technologies and services that have now become indispensable for access to

is the official language of the Republic of Slovenia, serving as the language for both spoken and written communication across all facets of public life. Furthermore, as one of the official languages of the European Union, Slovenian is employed to represent the Republic of Slovenia in international diplomatic interactions. Article 4 states that “The Republic of Slovenia ensures the status of Slovene with an active language policy, which includes care for ensuring the legal bases of its use, for continuous scientific monitoring of linguistic life and for the expansion of linguistic capacity and care for the development and culture of the language”, and Article 22 states that Slovenian shall be the language used in media registered in the Republic of Slovenia. The legislation additionally delineates the authorities of inspectorates in cases of violations of its provisions and sets forth penalties (Public Use of the Slovene Language Act, 2004: 2, 6).

4. PUBLIC SPEAKING MISTAKES

Typically, errors made during public speaking are described as departures from the standard. Hence, the concept of “standard” requires more precise definition. Žugelj (2011) differentiates between two types of mistakes: 1) knowledge-level mistakes – these are recurrent and cannot be self-corrected by the individual; additional learning is necessary as they result from a lack of, or insufficiently developed, linguistic ability; 2) usage-level mistakes – these are non-repetitive and non-systematic; the individual can self-correct them when brought to their attention and they do not necessitate specialised intervention. Regarding knowledge-level mistakes, Bešter Turk (2011) states that texts are generated using the spoken language which necessitates that both the communicator and the recipient possess strong linguistic competence and are also well-versed in the spoken language. Linguistic competence comprises multiple components, including those relating to vocabulary, composition and grammar, as well as a good understanding of orthoepy and orthography.

In Slovenian, ‘informal practice’ relates to the term of “incorrect/false/deviant form” which refers to mistakes that indicate a departure from the linguistic system, whereas the term “inappropriate/unacceptable solution” pertains to mistakes that deviate from the established common language usage. It is also worth noting the term “lapse”, which typically result from a momentary lapse of attention on the part

information society services. They also emphasised that innovations during that period had a substantial impact on the utilisation of the Slovenian language.

of the individual. In most cases, the individual identifies and rectifies these lapses independently. “This type of mistake often arises when the individual is familiar with the speech rule but applies it inconsistently – sometimes they are applied appropriately, sometimes not (cf. Žugelj, 2011).”

Following Petek’s classification (2019), for the purposes of this paper, linguistic errors in spoken language are categorised into four main types: orthoepic, grammatical, stylistic and naming mistakes¹³.

4.1 Orthoepic accuracy

In addition to the proper pronunciation of various sounds, orthoepic accuracy also entails correct accentuation. Toporišič (2000) further asserts that Slovenian vowels encompass not only fundamental, segmental features but also what are known as prosodic, supra-segmental attributes, including duration, intensity and tone. Based on the length of duration, vowels are divided into long and short vowels, categorised as strong (stressed) or weak (unstressed) vowels and distinguished as high or low vowels based on their tone. Stressed vowels are pronounced with more intensity than those which are unstressed. The emphasis on pitch and tone in vowels is referred to as ‘accent’, whereas the emphasis on duration is termed as ‘vowel cohesiveness’ (*ibid.*). When enunciating sounds, individuals must adhere to the rules of the Slovene literary language.

There are two accentual word forms in the Slovenian literary language: intensive and tonemic. Given the circumstances at hand, below we discuss the intensive accentual word form. According to Toporišič (2000), strongly accented vowels are articulated with greater force compared to unstressed ones. They also typically exhibit a higher pitch although this is not a distinctive characteristic. The accent serves to connect individual syllables within a word. Particularly in the case of single-syllable words, it distinguishes various word types, such as differentiating a noun from a preposition, an adverb from a preposition, or an article from a conjunction. It should be noted that not all words have an accent but the vast majority do. In the Slovenian literary language, the position of a word accent is not fixed to a specific syllable. Some words have their first syllable accented, others the last syllable, and in some cases, it falls on one of the middle syllables. Even within the same word, the accent may shift to different syllables. There is no straightforward rule dictating the placement of an accent in the Slovenian

¹³ This distribution of language mistakes serves as the foundation for analysing linguistic mistakes within the chosen spoken texts in the empirical section of the paper.

language. In Slovenian, the position of the accent is determined for each word, and it is acquired simultaneously with the word itself (*ibid.*). Regarding accentuation, there are three distinctive features that must be correctly applied in public speaking: 1) Acute accent: position of the accent, duration and the narrowness of “e” and “o”; 2) Inverted circumflex accent: position of the accent, duration and the broadness of “e” and “o”; 3) Grave accent: position of the accent, brevity and the broadness of “e” and “o” (Toporišič, 2000). Slovene is a language which is characterized by a “free accent”, as Toporišič (1992) also notes. The same author also explains that the “free accent” is where the accent does not fall on a specific position in multi-syllabic words, for example as in Czech where it falls on the first syllable, in French where it falls on the last and in Polish and Macedonian where the penultimate syllables are emphasized.

Orthoepic mistakes encompass various aspects, such as the incorrect pronunciation of the preposition “v” (equivalent to “in” in English), the “l” sound within words (known as “vkanje” and “elkanje”), the merging of final and non-final vowels, as well as the improper pronunciation of narrow and broad sounds occurring in the root form of a word and during conjugation, among other examples.

4.2 Grammatical accuracy

Škarić (2005) links grammatical accuracy to the proper usage of all grammatical elements that convey relationships, including conjunctions, prepositions, various pronoun forms, verb forms denoting time and manner, as well as dependent clauses.

Grammatical rules govern the manner in which words are structured and assembled into larger linguistic units. They instruct us in constructing accurate phrases, sentences, texts or sentence combinations (Toporišič, 2000). To attain grammatical precision in public speaking, an individual should possess grammatical competence, signifying proficiency in spoken language encompassing vocabulary, structure, syntax, semantic and phonological rules (cf. Bešter Turk, 2011).

Grammatical mistakes encompass a range of issues, including inaccurate forms of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, improper word order, erroneous use of prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns, as well as incorrect pairings of prepositions with nouns, among other examples.

4.3 Stylistic accuracy

Stylistic accuracy refers to the capacity to identify the context of communication and respond appropriately to it. The speaker must select the suitable manner of conveying

their intention (direct: explicit and implicit; indirect), appropriate words, phrases, sentence structures for the situation, and the appropriate linguistic genre for its context. Additionally, the speaker should possess a strong grasp of vocabulary, including technical terms, common language, loan words, and alternative ways to convey intent, synonyms, various sentence patterns and diverse social styles. Furthermore, they must be familiar with the stylistic nuances of words, distinguishing between stylistically neutral and marked words (cf. Bešter Turk, 2011).

Stylistic (in)accuracy also involves the (non-)use of filler words. Kalin Golob (2001) characterises filler words as linguistic elements employed in speech without genuine necessity, without influencing its communicative, persuasive, informative, argumentative or aesthetic quality (e.g. in Slovenian: *[ə]*, *no*, *a ne*, *pač*, *seveda* and *torej*). She proceeds to point out that there are also personal filler words – ones that an individual habitually repeats in each sentence or even multiple times within a single sentence. Verdonik (2005) contends that employing filler words serves as a means to gain processing time for the speaker's forthcoming statement.

Stylistic mistakes include: ignorance of the context of the message, inappropriate vocabulary, word repetition, use of colloquialisms and filler words.

4.4 Description accuracy

The speaker is anticipated to possess a diverse and extensive vocabulary, enabling them to select precisely the right words. They should demonstrate proficiency in both literary and non-literary terminology, capable of discerning the nuanced connotations of words, including co-, counter-, sub-, and supra-meanings, in order to avoid unnecessary word repetition. Additionally, they should employ synonyms accurately, exhibit knowledge of word formation and utilise phrases as opposed to lengthy descriptions. A strong grasp of derived and borrowed words is also expected. Furthermore, the speaker should be well-versed in the principles of objectivity, encompassing its properties, various types and quantities, and be able to metaphorically characterise these elements. In the most comprehensive context, naming mistakes can be categorised into two distinct groups: 1) words that are non-existent, and 2) words that, although they exist, should have been substituted with alternative terms (Bešter Turk, 2011; Godec Soršak, 2019).

Naming mistakes encompass both non-official words and instances where existing words should be substituted with alternative, neutral terms in a literary expression.

5. STUDY AIMS

The aim of this article is to find out how Slovenian public television, which is a role model for all language users, monitors the appropriate use of the literary language and which language errors occur in the most viewed programmes.

5.1 Research questions in the first part of the study

1. How significant is the use of appropriate literary language for presenters in news, entertainment, sports, and cultural programs during public appearances?
2. What language-related (use of the language) criteria must a presenter in news, entertainment, sports, and cultural programmes meet when appearing on camera?
3. What aspects should presenters in news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes be mindful of during public appearances?
4. How can you guarantee the suitability of language employed by presenters in news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes, and what methods are utilised to assess their linguistic proficiency?

5.2 Research questions in the second part of the study

What types of language mistakes are commonly made by presenters in news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes, and in what proportions?

According to the data available to us, a similar study where a combined quantitative and qualitative approach to research on this topic has yet to be conducted (in Slovenia). On individual topics related to the use of language (also) in public television they wrote, e.g. Škarić and Varošanec-Škarić (1994)¹⁴, Zemljak Jontes (2010)¹⁵, Pangeršič (2012)¹⁶, Tivadar (2008)¹⁷, Tivadar (2018)¹⁸, Varošanec-Škarić, Bašić, and Šegvić (2023)¹⁹.

¹⁴ The paper analysis the speech of Croatian television and is based on the description of the speech of 154 individual TV speakers.

¹⁵ This article presents a brief theoretical insight into Slovene language use, a short survey of language programmes on Slovenia Television that offer linguistic-cultural content, and students' opinion on the role, importance and functions of the national Slovenia Television and their realisation.

¹⁶ This article deals with the question of formal and informal language in the media.

¹⁷ As well as the role as the media (and of the written standard language) in the development of Slovene pronunciation standards, this paper also presents real-world research into the contemporary standard language (for example, the vowel sounds of media speakers).

¹⁸ Public appearance in Slovene language is these days a must and a reality for almost every speaker that operates within Slovenia, which means that us linguists will have to dedicate ourselves to Slovene public speech and not leave it to spontaneous action and personal linguistic feel. In the article, autor justify the need to issue a modern (academic) orthoepy, based on the codification tradition, modern research and the description of speech from modern public texts.

¹⁹ A comparative analysis were authors used to examine the discourse strategy of negative interruptions and overlaps in relation to other parameters of fluency in the television genre

6. METHODOLOGY

We employed a causal non-experimental method for pedagogical research, utilising both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The research was segmented into two components: 1) Qualitative approach: structured interviews were administered to the director²⁰ of TV Slovenia and the editors responsible for news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes at TV Slovenia²¹. 2) Quantitative approach: a linguistic analysis was conducted on three programmes of identical speech type within each of the aforementioned editorial departments. This analysis covered both speech with reference points and spontaneous speech, with the latter involving mental preparation and without the use of notes. We have referred to the broadcast archive available on the Multimedia Centre of RTV Slovenia (MMC) website. We analysed the quantity and types of language mistakes²².

of political interview in the pre-election period, between Croatian and British journalists and politicians.

²⁰ Interviews were conducted in 2020. Upon transcription, they underwent linguistic editing without any alteration to their content. We adhered to the guidelines outlined by Vogrinč (2008). The names and surnames of the Director of TV Slovenia and the editors of the news, entertainment, sports and culture editorial offices included in the survey are available from the author of this paper.

²¹ According to RTV Slovenia, these programmes are in the top four places in terms of viewership. 1) As an example: between January and July 2021, during the hours of 7am to 11pm, an average of 3.0%, equivalent to 58,000 viewers aged 4 and above, which accounts for 14% of all TV viewers, tuned in to watch the entire programme broadcast on TV Slovenia 1. In other words, during this specific time frame and period, a total of 670,400 unique viewers watched TV Slovenia 1 every day. 2) TV Slovenia 2 had an average viewership of 1.9%, which corresponds to 36,000 viewers aged 4, or 9% share of all TV viewers. In other words, during this specific time frame and period, a total of 462,400 unique viewers watched TV Slovenia 2 every day. 3) TV Slovenia 3 had an average viewership of 0.2%, which corresponds to 3,000 viewers aged 4 and above, or 0.2% share of all TV viewers. In other words, during this specific time frame and period, a total of 124,400 unique viewers watched TV Slovenia 3 every day.

²² In this paper, we present the types and percentages of language mistakes, as well as the frequency of mistakes per 100 words. The choice of the latter estimate was made to enable an impartial comparison of the frequency of linguistic errors across programs produced by various editorial departments. The titles of the analysed programmes can also be obtained from the research author.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Interview findings

7.1.1 The significance of employing appropriate literary language by news, entertainment, sports and cultural programme presenters during public appearances

The director of TV Slovenia highlights that TV Slovenia, as a part of RTV Slovenia, is affiliated to the largest cultural institution in the country. Moreover, she emphasises that “language diligence remains one of the foremost guiding principles within television’s efforts, encompassing not only the creators (journalists, scriptwriters, editors and proof-readers) but also the speakers (announcers, presenters and journalists).” The same principle extends to the textual content displayed on screens, encompassing “graphic notes such as telops, tie-ins, 3D-animated inscriptions and translations presented in the form of subtitles.” She continues explaining that “TV Slovenia houses a dedicated Department for Proofreading and Translation which, in conjunction with a similar department at Radio Slovenia, constitutes a coordinating entity responsible for establishing language guidelines that apply to both spoken and written communication across the institution.” She adds, “Within RTV Slovenia, there exists an internal portal that allows anyone to search for a word and verify its pronunciation at any given time²³. On a monthly basis, the proof-readers at TV Slovenia compile a summary of the most common language mistakes observed not only within TV Slovenia but also in wider contexts. They subsequently disseminate this information to individuals who encounter language issues in their daily duties to promote correct language usage.” The news programme editor asserts that “language precision constitutes a pivotal component of TV Slovenia’s mission,” underlining that “news programmes rank among the most widely viewed programmes on TV Slovenia.” She continues by stating, “Within our daily news programmes, the text intended to be read by the presenters, translations from foreign languages, graphics and any supplementary on-screen text undergo a thorough review by a proof-reader prior to publication. Additionally, we strongly encourage our journalists to collaborate with proof-readers regularly during the news text preparation process. We never underestimate language mistakes or oversights pointed out by our viewers or members of the professional audience and make every effort to rectify them. These mistakes can be categorised into two groups: the first group comprises errors stemming from ignorance,

²³ It is called the Speech Assistant and can be accessed at <https://govornipomocnik.rtvslo.si>.

while the second group encompasses mistakes arising from the time constraints under which our broadcasts are created. We produce a total of eight daily news bulletins and each one is created with a keen focus on timeliness and current events. This approach ensures that we incorporate the latest information available.” The editor of entertainment programming briefly highlights that “the utilisation of suitable literary language stands as one of the foremost priorities for both the creators and presenters of TV Slovenia’s entertainment programme. This responsibility is upheld by both the creators and presenters, as well as the proof-readers.” He continues by stating, “It is already stipulated in the statute of the public institution that at TV Slovenia, including within the entertainment programme, we are dedicated to maintaining a standard accent. Content, even when it is relaxed and entertaining, serves as an educational tool for people. This is why I believe that adhering to the standard accent is significant and obligatory for journalists and editors. While adhering to the guidelines of programme production in Europe and around the world, we exercise flexibility to a certain extent. However, this flexibility should not compromise the overall perception of the spoken language in our programmes.” The sports editor remarks: “We regard the correct utilisation of literary language as paramount, as language serves as our primary mode of expression, alongside visual elements.” Likewise, the editor of cultural programming emphasises, “The utilisation of suitable literary language holds immense significance for journalists within the culture editorial team.”

7.1.2 Language-related criteria which must be met by news, entertainment, sports and cultural programme presenters when appearing on camera

The director of TV Slovenia underscores the presence of a comprehensive system within the public institution dedicated to upholding language quality across all domains. This commitment to language culture, as emphasised, “commences not only with the speaker but with the journalist, the scriptwriter and the translator.” She further mentions that “training courses are conducted within the Education Centre at RTV Slovenia, although internally, the Centre for Quality Radio Speech is regarded as the most exemplary in this regard.” The news editor says, “They [the journalists] have to have completed in-house language training. We assess young colleagues who wish to join us, and for those who are older and more experienced, we provide what are known as ‘language and speech refresher courses’.” The editor of entertainment programming states, “Presenters and journalists of the entertainment programme undergo language training which is conducted at the Education Centre of RTV Slovenia. This serves

as a prerequisite for making on-camera appearances in our routine broadcasts.” He also emphasises their commitment to maintaining consistency in their efforts by arranging and coordinating refresher courses and seminars specifically for presenters who appear on camera during prime viewing hours when viewer numbers are at their peak. He proceeds to provide more precise details, explaining, “The training spans a duration of 1–2 years and includes two written tests and two oral tests. While a degree, particularly in social sciences and languages, is preferable, it is not mandatory. Lately, there has been an enhancement in the foundation for understanding the rules of correct language usage. It was significantly more challenging a few years ago when there were insufficient and suitable institutions, programmes, schools and colleges available. Today, numerous opportunities exist for students and pupils to establish a strong foundation in the language of public media performance. This serves as a valuable precursor to subsequent training tailored to the requirements of TV Slovenia’s programmes.” The editor of the sports programme shares a parallel perspective: “A speaker must possess the ability to employ literary language effectively in public discourse. The essential prerequisite for on-camera appearances is speech training, conducted in collaboration with experts in this domain at the Education Centre of RTV Slovenia.” The editor of cultural programming was concise: “All our journalists receive language training.”

7.1.3 Utilising appropriate literary language by news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes presenters during public appearances

The director of TV Slovenia explains, “We use different registers of language in different programmes, e.g. in entertainment and morning programmes we use colloquial language, while in educational, cultural, artistic, religious and documentary programmes etc., in cartoon dubbing, as well as in programmes which are not intended for direct communication with the audience, we use a higher register of colloquial language, or literary language, depending on the genre, the topic, the topicality and the audience.” The news editor is very specific: “We use a standard accent in our programme, but elements of colloquial language are acceptable, for example in a relaxed situation when talking to a guest or when reporting in the field without a written text. We avoid overly emotive language, as the focus is on informing the audience.” The editor of entertainment programming says that “the criteria are the correct use of literary language, comprehensibility and clarity of texts; in programmes aimed at younger viewers, the use of slang is also allowed”, and then goes on to justify his answer by saying: “Standard accent, logical emphasis of the text,

diction, interpretation, gesticulation, facial physiognomy, breathing, use of hands, use of body language, energy, charisma, pace and energy are all taken into consideration. Perhaps it's not so much all about language, but more about the package needed to make a good visual impression. Unfortunately, entertainment shows are often first watched and then listened to. I am aware that the standard accent, especially in the commercial and local media, has fallen dramatically over the last 10–15 years, and I am very sorry for that. That's why it's up to us to maintain its high standards." The editor of sports programming first comments that "the question is very broad", so he can only mention a few of the main points: "the correct use of participles, possessive pronouns, the correct genitive case of negation, the correct pronunciation of personal and place names and the use of respectful words etc. As far as acceptable discourse is concerned, I can answer that the consensus in our editorial office on the necessity of using the literary language is so strong that a departure from it seems to me unthinkable." The editor of cultural programming was again brief: "the correct use of the literary language, as well as the comprehensibility and clarity of the texts."

7.1.4 Ensuring the appropriate use of literary language employed by news, entertainment, sports and cultural programme presenters and the evaluation of its use

The director of TV Slovenia says: "I mentioned earlier that every month we prepare an overview of the most typical language mistakes. The fact is that recent generations are leaving school with weak vocabulary, poor literacy and a rather low register of spoken language." The editor of the news programme focused on evaluation: "We are aware of our responsibility in society so we are not satisfied with the way things are going. In my opinion, or rather in my observation, new generations are far less linguistically attentive and educated. I attribute this to the fact that the reading habits among young people have significantly declined compared to the past. Language education, a profound comprehension of a public speaker's responsibility, and the paramount significance of using the Slovenian language in the public domain should form the fundamental pillars of every Slovenian public speaker's practice. Wading through hundreds of pages of classics can make this task more challenging. Becoming a skilled and linguistically proficient public speaker often takes years of practice before stepping in front of the camera. Their language development begins when they first start reading words as children." The editor of entertainment programming states, "All the texts created for our programmes undergo proofreading. Only in rare instances, typically due to time constraints, do they go ahead without proofreading." If occasional slips occur during

live presentations, we address them in discussions with the presenters or journalists. Within our editorial team, we find ourselves reasonably content with the current state of language usage. It's not brilliant, but it's highly satisfactory. Presenters are human as well. Our viewers also point out the language mistakes we make. It is crucial to respond, offer apologies when needed, and, most importantly, uphold control and consistency in the spoken language. The sports program editor states clearly: "In our editorial office, we take great pride in our longstanding collaboration with the proofreading department which plays a significant role in ensuring the programmes are presented with proper linguistic precision." They consistently review the texts of journalists and presenters, and they also monitor reporters' spontaneous speeches during live broadcasts. They offer guidance to all our staff and keep us informed about language-related issues, discrepancies and challenges during our weekly editorial meetings. It's an ongoing process aimed at continuously enhancing language standards. This partially addresses the latter part of the question: the current situation is acceptable but we are doing our best to enhance it. The entertainment programming editor responded succinctly: "All the texts created for our programmes undergo proofreading, with exceptions being rare and primarily due to time constraints."

The interview responses reveal that at TV Slovenia, the use of appropriate literary language by presenters in news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes is of paramount importance for their public appearances. Language care stands as one of the most critical guiding principles in television work and it lies at the core of the public service television mission. This emphasis on language is consistently emphasised to presenters. There are also well-defined language standards that presenters must adhere to in order to appear on camera. The public institution houses the RTV Slovenia Education Centre, where presenters receive language training, including regular and refresher courses in speech training. The duration of these courses varies based on the specific requirements and needs of each presenter. All of our presenters pay close attention to the usage of literary language. Depending on the nature of the programme, they either adhere to a strict version of literary language, including a standard accent, or a slightly more relaxed version known as 'spoken literary language'. The preservation of literary language always receives significant attention. For instance, the most frequent language mistakes are reviewed and discussed with presenters on a monthly basis with evaluations provided in most instances. Additionally, proof-readers continually review texts from journalists and presenters whenever feasible.

7.2 Findings from the linguistic analysis of the selected broadcasts

Table 1. Analysis of language mistakes in news programmes

Tablica 1. Analiza jezičnih pogrešaka u informativnim emisijama

Number of words No. = 1,287 / Broj riječi N = 1 287	Orthoepic mistakes / Ortoepske pogreške	Grammatical mistakes / Gramatičke pogreške	Stylistic mistakes / Stilske pogreške	Naming mistakes / Pogrješke u nazivlju	Number of mistakes per 100 words – total / Broj pogrešaka na 100 riječi – ukupno
Number of mistakes (per 100 words) / Broj pogrešaka (na 100 riječi)	2 (0.16)	21 (1.63)	52 (4.04)	0	5.8
Percentage / Postotak	2.7	28	69.3	0	

The analysis of language mistakes in the news programmes indicated that the highest proportion were stylistic (69.3%), followed by grammatical mistakes (28%), with a minimal number of orthoepic mistakes (2.7%), and no naming mistakes (0%). The number of mistakes per 100 words was 5.8.

Table 2. Analysis of language mistakes in entertainment programmes

Tablica 2. Analiza jezičnih pogrešaka u emisijama zabavnoga sadržaja

Number of words No. = 850 / Broj riječi N = 850	Orthoepic mistakes / Ortoepske pogreške	Grammatical mistakes / Gramatičke pogreške	Stylistic mistakes / Stilske pogreške	Naming mistakes / Pogrješke u nazivlju	Number of mistakes per 100 words – total / Broj pogrešaka na 100 riječi – ukupno
Number of mistakes (per 100 words) / Broj pogrešaka (na 100 riječi)	22 (2.59)	24 (2.82)	74 (8.71)	6 (0.71)	14.8
Percentage / Postotak	17.5	19	58.7	4.8	

An analysis of the language mistakes in the entertainment programmes revealed that the highest number of mistakes were stylistic (58.7%), followed by grammatical mistakes (19%), orthoepic mistakes (17.5%) followed by naming mistakes (4.8%).

Table 3. Analysis of language mistakes in sports programmes

Tablica 3. Analiza jezičnih pogrešaka u emisijama sportskoga sadržaja

Number of words No. = 942 / Broj riječi N = 942	Orthoepic mistakes / Ortoepske pogreške	Grammatical mistakes / Gramatičke pogreške	Stylistic mistakes / Stilske pogreške	Naming mistakes / Pogrješke u nazivlju	Number of mistakes per 100 words – total / Broj pogrešaka na 100 riječi – ukupno
Number of mistakes (per 100 words) / Broj pogrešaka (na 100 riječi)	12 (1.27)	16 (1.70)	29 (3.08)	2 (0.21)	6.3
Percentage / Postotak	20.3	27.1	49.2	3.4	

An analysis of language errors in sports programmes revealed that the highest percentage of errors was stylistic (49.2%), followed by grammatical errors (27.1%), then orthoepic errors (20.3%), with the lowest number being naming errors (3.4%). The number of mistakes per 100 words was 6.3.

Table 4. Analysis of language mistakes in cultural programmes

Tablica 4. Analiza jezičnih pogrešaka u emisijama kulturnoga sadržaja

Number of words No. = 1,098 / Broj riječi N = 1 098	Orthoepic mistakes / Ortoepske pogreške	Grammatical mistakes / Gramatičke pogreške	Stylistic mistakes / Stilske pogreške	Naming mistakes / Pogrješke u nazivlju	Number of mistakes per 100 words – total / Broj pogrešaka na 100 riječi – ukupno
Number of mistakes (per 100 words) / Broj pogrešaka (na 100 riječi)	8 (0.73)	23 (2.09)	53 (4.83)	1 (0.09)	7.7
Percentage / Postotak	9.4	27	62.4	1.2	

An analysis of language mistakes in cultural programmes revealed that the highest number of mistakes was stylistic (62.4%), followed by grammatical mistakes (27%), then orthoepic mistakes (9.4%), and the lowest number being naming mistakes (1.2%). The number of mistakes per 100 words was 7.7.

Table 5. Overall results of the language mistake analysis²⁴

Tablica 5. Ukupni rezultati analize jezičnih pogrešaka

Type of programme / Vrsta programa	Orthoepic mistakes / Ortoepske pogreške	Grammatical mistakes / Gramatičke pogreške	Stylistic mistakes / Stilske pogreške	Naming mistakes / Pogreške u nazivlju	Number of mistakes per 100 words – total / Broj pogrešaka na 100 riječi – ukupno
News / Informativni	2.7%	28%	69.3%	0%	5.8
Entertainment / Zabavni	17.5%	19%	58.7%	4.8%	14.8
Sports / Sportski	20.3%	27.1%	49.2%	3.4%	6.3
Cultural / Kulturni	9.4%	27%	62.4%	1.2%	7.7

An analysis of language mistakes in programmes across all editorial departments (news, entertainment, sports and culture) revealed that the best overall linguistic image is found in news programmes (5.8 mistakes / 100 words), followed by sports programmes (6.3 mistakes / 100 words), then culture programmes (7.7 mistakes / 100 words), with entertainment coming last with the most linguistic mistakes (14.8 mistakes / 100 words).

The findings from the quantitative analysis align with those from the qualitative analysis. The results of the interviews show that the editorial staff of news programming pay a great deal of attention to linguistic appropriateness: “.../ language care stands as one of the most critical guiding principles in television work”; “language care is at the very heart of the mission of the public broadcaster Televizija Slovenija”, which is also reflected in the results of the linguistic analysis of the individual programmes – the least number of linguistic mistakes was found among all the editorial staff.

²⁴ Specific examples of linguistic mistakes are available upon request.

The second-highest performer in terms of language quality is the sports programme, which is in accordance with the insights gained from the interviews: “We regard the correct utilisation of literary language as paramount, as language serves as our primary mode of expression, alongside visual elements.”; “/.../ As far as acceptable discourse is concerned, I can answer that the consensus in our editorial office on the necessity of using literary language is so strong that a departure from it seems to me unthinkable.” Next in line are cultural programmes, with entertainment programmes ranking last in terms of linguistic performance, a result that aligns with the interview findings: “In accordance with the guidelines for the creation of broadcasts throughout Europe and the world, we can sometimes be a little ‘loose’ /.../.”

The results of our study can be compared with those of Škarić and Varošanec-Škarić (1994), who investigated language on Croatian public television. Among other things, they found that the quality of speech on Croatian public television is monitored by the Department of Speech and Language, which carefully and expertly checks all prepared texts, including translations and this is similar to what we have found with Slovenian public television. The speakers also interact with the phoneticians; they give them language lessons as part of their training and accompany them in their work. In this study, as in ours, various types of errors were found but the linguistic picture of spoken texts is generally good. Keber (2016), who analysed public speeches, also found various types of errors but generally confirmed a favourable linguistic image of individual speakers. Our results are also in line with the findings of Mlinar (2018), who analysed the speaking style of newsreaders on public television in the Republic of Slovenia and found minimal deviations from the book norm.

8. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the Act on the Public Use of the Slovenian Language, the RTV Slovenia Act, and other relevant laws, public media in the Republic of Slovenia, primarily Radio Television Slovenia, are obliged to uphold a suitable culture of speech and expression. In this paper, we started with the premise that the mass media exerts a significant (linguistic) influence on the general population, underscoring the importance of presenters’ adept usage of literary language, as it serves as an example for all language users. In order to assess the current state of language usage within TV Slovenia, we conducted a two-part study including both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Qualitative methodology included structured interviews with the director of TV Slovenia and with the editors of the news, entertainment, sports and cultural programmes of TV Slovenia, while the quantitative method used

linguistic analysis of the three programmes of the same type of speech in each of the above-mentioned editorial departments (spontaneous speech, without notes, but with mental preparation). The broadcast archive available on the Multimedia Centre of RTV Slovenia (MMC) website was used as the material for the linguistic analysis. We analysed the quantity and types of language mistakes.

Through qualitative research, we found that TV Slovenia, as a part of RTV Slovenia, is affiliated with the largest cultural institution in the country and that language diligence remains one of the foremost guiding principles within television's efforts, encompassing not only the creators (journalists, scriptwriters, editors and proof-readers) but also the speakers (announcers, presenters and journalists). They never underestimate language mistakes or oversights pointed out by their viewers or members of the professional audience and make every effort to rectify them. The public institution encompasses a comprehensive system dedicated to upholding language quality across all domains, as the commitment to language culture commences not only with the speaker but with the journalist, the scriptwriter and the translator. Presenters and journalists undergo language training programmes which are conducted at the RTV Slovenia Education Centre. This serves as a prerequisite for making on-camera appearances in their routine broadcasts in order to maintain a high level of consistency in their work and, additionally, refresher courses and workshops for the presenters are organized. All programme texts undergo proofreading. Only in rare instances, typically due to time constraints, are they broadcast without proofreading. The results from the quantitative research revealed that public speaking on TV Slovenia encompasses various types of language mistakes, with the highest occurrence being stylistic mistakes and the lowest being those related to terminology. The news programme, which boasts the highest viewership among all programme types, exhibited the most favourable overall linguistic presentation. Stylistic errors could be reduced/eliminated by the speaker in the following ways: 1) by acquiring theoretical knowledge of stylistic appropriateness; 2) reading various fiction and non-fiction texts on a daily basis; 3) listening to other qualified readers/speakers and studying critical analyses; 4) undertaking daily analysis (collecting experiences), recording and subsequent self-analysis; 5) using various online language manuals; 6) becoming aware of the importance of stylistic appropriateness; 7) choosing a mentor and following his/her advice.

Considering all the research results and conclusions presented, it can be argued that national television is indeed a linguistic exemplary model for all language users.

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Briga za pravilan književni jezik na nacionalnoj televiziji u Republici Sloveniji – primjer za sve korisnike slovenskoga jezika

Sažetak

Radiotelevizija Slovenija javna je ustanova od posebnoga kulturnog i nacionalnog značaja koja posebnu pozornost posvećuje i razvoju jezične kulture. Ovaj rad polazi od pretpostavke velikoga (jezičnoga) utjecaja javnih medija na opću populaciju, stoga je odgovarajuća uporaba književnoga jezika voditelja emisija od presudne važnosti. Rezultati kvalitativnoga dijela istraživanja pokazali su da je na TV Sloveniji pravilna uporaba književnoga jezika voditelja u informativnim, zabavnim, sportskim i kulturnim programima, kada je riječ o javnim nastupima, od iznimne važnosti i da briga za pravilan književni jezik predstavlja jednu od temeljnih smjernica u radu na televiziji te da je u samom središtu misije javne televizije. Uz jasno utvrđene uvjete koje voditelji moraju ispuniti kako bi se pojavili ispred kamera, uspostavljen je i sustav jezične provjere. Rezultati kvantitativnoga dijela istraživanja pokazali su da se u javnom govoru na TV Sloveniji javljaju sve vrste pogrešaka – uglavnom se radi o stilskim pogreškama, pri čemu najmanji broj čine pogreške u nazivlju; primjer najbolje jezične slike općenito utvrđen je u emisijama informativnoga programa koji prati najviše gledatelja svih vrsta programa. Na temelju ovoga istraživanja može se utvrditi da nacionalna televizija zapravo pruža primjer pravilne uporabe jezika svim korisnicima.

Ključne riječi: TV Slovenija, književni jezik, primjer, intervjui, pogreške
