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# WRITING IN ACADEMIC SLOVENE: STATE AND ORIGINS OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

By using a survey and semi-structured interviewing our study showed that the majority of Slovene PhD students are satisfied with their Slovene academic writing skills, but admitted they could improve, for example, with regard to their use of typical academic vocabulary in its usual context; writing concisely and accurately; and producing characteristic sentences and phrases in accordance with specific sections of text. As for the origins of the skills in question, in students' opinion the most important way of learning how to write academic Slovene is by reading academic text during the entire course of study, as well as by writing term papers and similar assignments. Here – in PhD students' and supervisors' opinion – the role of teachers is very important, i.e. all teachers, not just linguists, should contribute to the excellence of students' knowledge of academic Slovene.

KEYWORDS: academic writing, PhD students, supervisors, survey, interview

Z anketiranjem in intervjuji smo ugotovili, da je večina slovenskih doktorskih študentov zadovoljna s svojim znanjem ter veščinami, povezanimi s pisanjem strokovno-znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini, čeprav so hkrati priznali, da bi tovrstno znanje in veščine lahko še izboljšali. In sicer pri: tipičnem znanstvenem besedišču in njegovi okolici; jedrnatem in natančnem ubesedovanju; tipičnih stavčnih frazah v posameznih delih besedil ipd. Pri izvoru znanja in veščin, potrebnih za strokovno-znanstveno pisanje, se je pokazalo, da je po mnenju študentov najpomembnejši način, na katerega jih pridobijo, branje te zvrsti v času celotnega študija, prav tako pa tudi pisanje sólo, npr. pisanje seminarskih in podobnih nalog. Pri tem – in tu so bili enotnega mnenja tako študenti kot mentorji – je zelo pomembna vloga učiteljev, in to vseh učiteljev, ne le jezikoslovcev: vsi bi morali prispevati k odličnemu znanju adakemske slovenščine pri študentih.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: strokovno-znanstveno pisanje, doktorski študenti, mentorji, anketa, intervju

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Aspirations for the establishment of Slovene as a language of Academia are well described (e.g. *Slovenski jezik v znanosti 1* 1986; *Slovenski jezik*

*v znanosti 2* 1989; Orel 2007; Žigon, Almasy and Lovšin 2017). Starting with legal lexical items recorded in the Freising Manuscripts in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Škrubej 2007) and reaching its peak with the foundation of the University of Ljubljana in 1919 (Pirih Svetina 2019), academic Slovene grew into a fully functional means of communication, enabling its speakers to scientifically deliberate on all matters of spiritual and material culture (Pogorelec 1988/2011: 392). Since then, as Vidovič Muha (2007a: 10) pointed out, it has “born witness to the (global) equality and excellence of scientific thoughts expressed in Slovene”.

Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the Bologna reform of 1999, and at a time of English language dominance in the global science domain (Ammon 2011), an important issue arose, i.e. the Slovene language being an obstacle to further internationalisation of Slovenia’s higher education system (Kalin Golob et al. 2014). Apart from linguists debating the matter (e.g. Vidovič Muha 2007b; Kalin Golob, Stabej 2007; Humar and Žagar Karer 2010; Kalin Golob 2012; Stabej 2013), the issue was also addressed in two Action Plans signed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 2015 (*Akcijski načrt za jezikovno izobraževanje*; *Akcijski načrt za jezikovno opremljenost*). Both documents emphasized that communicative competence in academic Slovene needed special attention, and that all participants of the Slovene higher education system, especially students should acquire the high level of Slovene used in professional settings.

It is self-evident that linguists should pay considerable attention to the proficient use of academic language by their students, as well as their own use of course, and that of their colleagues. Yet, not much is known about the attitudes towards academic Slovene held by teachers and students from other fields of science. Generally speaking, the number of present-day studies that are taking a closer look at students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards different aspects of education is comprehensive (cf. Dweck 2002; Lavelle and Bushrow 2008; Sanders-Reio et al. 2014, etc.). In fact, one of the earliest attempts to assess students’ beliefs was made already at the end of the 1980s by Benson et al. (1993). Benson and his colleagues were interested in students’ experience of learning to write in the academic community, in relation to their previous uses of writing. One of the scholars’ findings was that students participating in the study “had a strong sense of writing essays at university as another ‘world of literacy’ into which with some

difficulty and less than optimum support they had had to initiate themselves" (Benson et al. 1993: 52–53).

As for the teachers: the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices has been researched for decades as well (Fang 1996; Five and Gill 2015: 2). Results of such studies show that "tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions [of individual teachers] about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (Kagan 2010: 65) play an important role in every educator's work (Ernest 2006; Biesta, Priestley and Robinson 2015; etc.). Also, extensive literature on language teacher cognition (for example Borg 2003; Barnard and Burns 2012) provides us with detailed "insights into [language] teachers' mental lives and into the complex ways in which these relate to teachers' classroom practices" (Borg 2009: 163). In Borg's summary of studies on teacher cognition in academic writing, two notions (Borg 2006: First language writing instructions) stand out: (a) positive reinforcement and positive feedback of teachers greatly contribute to students' self-perception on the subject; and (b) teachers' beliefs about writing (i.e. about accuracy, vocabulary, style, etc.) have a considerable impact on the way writing is perceived by learners. Additionally, the idea of teachers non-linguists being in part language teachers was very closely monitored with regard to immersion teaching. As Cammarata and Tedick (2012: 251, 253–255) summarise, such studies consistently show that content instructors tend to focus on subject matter, clearly at the expense of language teaching.

Since I agree that "most academic contexts are dominated by written work, so knowledge use requires an ability to write" (Eraut 1982: 10), I focused my research here on academic writing competence in Slovene. I conducted a study of academic writing in Slovene with the aim of establishing perceptions and attitudes of two specific groups: (a) PhD students, and (b) PhD supervisors. My motive for the study was therefore to gain a clearer perspective on how the Slovene higher education system could be fine-tuned for this particular, yet academically ubiquitous task.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

To collect data, I used two research methods: a survey and semi-structured interviewing (Bryman 2012: 197–230, 465–499; Flick 2009: 147–172). This mixed method approach (triangulation) allowed me to gain different

perspectives on the subject of the study – in other words, to “produce knowledge on different levels” (Flick 2009: 445) and consequently increase understanding of the problem (Creswell 2009: 203–205).

I deliberately kept the online survey short and focused on getting a quick, yet broad (the number of participants wise) insight into the subject at hand. With the interviews, on the other hand, my main goal was to establish the reasons for the state of affairs as it presented itself in the survey, and to further explore solutions and good practices of learning and teaching academic writing in Slovene.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What is the PhD students’ state of knowledge and skills needed for academic writing in Slovene?
2. When and how do PhD students gain the knowledge and skills needed for academic writing in Slovene?

## 2.1 SURVEY: DESIGN AND SAMPLE

The on-line questionnaire consisted of 13 questions/items.<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire was active from 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017. I sent an invitation to participate in the survey by e-mail to all Slovene speaking PhD students of four universities in Slovenia. During the seven-week period, 464 students responded to the questionnaire: 397 fully and 67 partially, which is a 25% response.<sup>2</sup> It took on average 5 min 35 sec for participants to conclude the survey.

As Figure 1 shows, 39% of respondents in the survey came from social sciences, followed by 24% of students from natural sciences

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<sup>1</sup> Among all topics, due to extent restrictions of the paper three will not be presented here (possibilities for further improvements of the knowledge; terminology issues; students’ willingness to share their knowledge with younger colleagues). The questionnaire is available in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> The number of PhD students with Slovene as L1 enrolled in the year 2016/17 is an estimate, since the information about the number of students at the University of Nova Gorica, which is the smallest university of all four, was not forthcoming. A professor from this university couldn’t give the exact number of students enrolled, but explained that 60% of their postgraduate students came from abroad and therefore write their academic texts in English, as do the majority of their Slovene students. For other universities, the number of PhD students was as follows (the number of foreign students was subtracted): University of Ljubljana 1,279; University of Primorska 249; University of Maribor 374. This gives a total of 1,902 PhD students.

and mathematics, and 21% from humanities. A smaller 9% share of respondents came from technological sciences and the smallest 6% share came from (bio)medical sciences.<sup>3</sup>

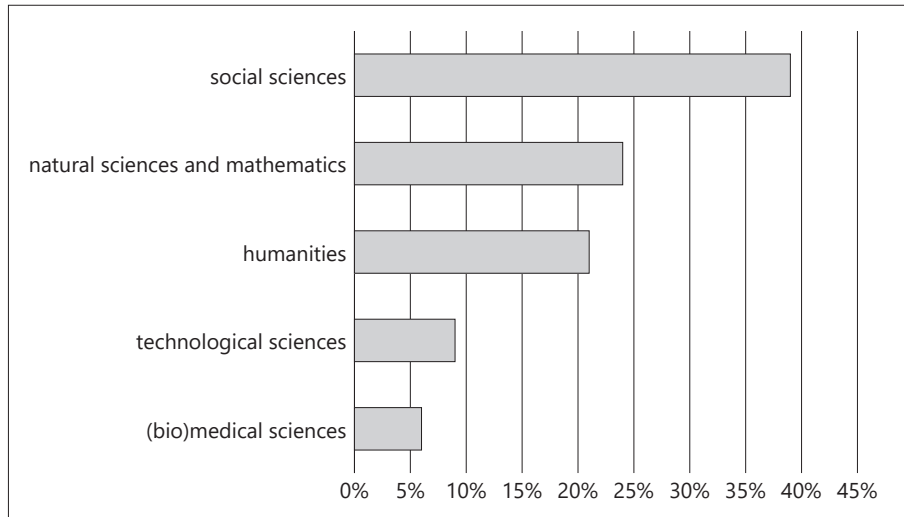


FIGURE 1: Survey sample: percentage of PhD students according to their field of study (N = 440)<sup>4</sup>

Respondents who chose the field of humanities were further asked if their field of study was linguistics and 22% of them responded positively, which is a 5% share in the whole sample.

## 2.2 INTERVIEWS: DESIGN AND SAMPLE

I conducted 15 interviews: 5 with supervisors and 10 with students. A number seem low, nevertheless according to Creswell (2014: 239), who reports that phenomenology studies typically include from 3 to 10 interviewed individuals, I felt confident in drawing some initial conclusions based on such a sample.

All interviewees were from the University of Ljubljana. As Table 1 shows, they came from five fields of study. To avoid expertise bias none of the interviewees was a linguist, a PhD student of linguistics or a former

<sup>3</sup> Cf. CERIF classification, <https://www.arrs.gov.si/en/gradivo/sifranti/inc/CERIF.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Since all 464 participants did not answer all of the questions/items in the survey, figures will be presented with the number of responding participants (N).

student of linguistics. All the interviewed students participated in the Young Researchers Programme funded by the Republic of Slovenia,<sup>5</sup> and were at the time of the research in the final year of their PhD study, which meant they had experience in writing a PhD thesis, as well as in publishing their first scientific articles. All interviews were conducted by the same person (the author of this paper).

Field of study	No. of PhD students	No. of PhD supervisors
social sciences	2	1
natural sciences and mathematics	1	1
humanities	2	1
technological sciences	3	1
(bio)medical sciences	2	1
Total	10	5

TABLE 1: Interviews sample: number of interviewees according to their field of study

The initially prepared interview questionnaire for students consisted of 12 open-ended questions/items and 6 open-ended questions/items for supervisors, but the method of semi-structured interviewing allowed for flexibility.<sup>6</sup> All 15 interviews were conducted face-to-face in the period between 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The average length of the interviews was 39 min 49 sec (students) and 28 min 32 sec (supervisors).

### 3 RESULTS

The results of the survey and interviews will be presented together, for they are complementary.

<sup>5</sup> For the aims and objectives of this programme, see <https://www.arrs.gov.si/en/mr/>.

<sup>6</sup> Both questionnaires are available in Appendix 2. Again among all topics included in interviews, four will not be presented in this paper (co-existence of Slovene and English language; terminology; language revision; and in the case of student interviews possible advice to younger colleagues).



### 3.1 STATE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: STUDENTS' SELF-EVALUATION

3.1.1 After two questions regarding the sample (the field of study and the year of enrolment), students were first asked to evaluate their own academic writing proficiency. They were presented with four statements all beginning with: *In general, the writing of academic texts in Slovene ...*

The endings of the statements are presented in Figure 2. Only one ending could be chosen.

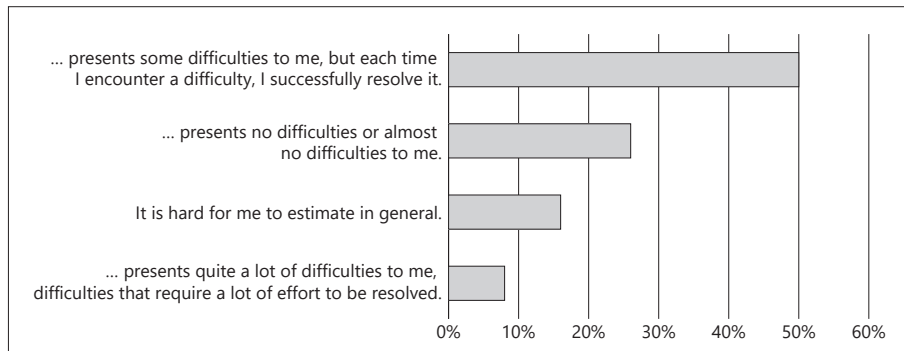


FIGURE 2: PhD students' evaluation of their knowledge and skills: *In general, the writing of academic texts in Slovene ...* (N = 457)

If we disregard those who could not evaluate their own knowledge in general (16% of respondents), we can see that half of the students in the sample evaluated their knowledge as good or solid. They acknowledged some problems, but managed to find solutions to them. A further quarter of the students (26%) evaluated their knowledge as very good or even excellent. They encounter no, or almost no difficulties when writing academic Slovene and seem very satisfied with the level of their proficiency. Only 8% of students admitted they had quite a lot of difficulties writing academic texts in Slovene and acknowledged they struggled to resolve them. Among the latter, there is a slight deviation from the sample structure in three categories; namely 36% of those who chose the 'I have a lot of difficulties' option came from the field of natural sciences and mathematics (while their sample share was 24%), and 39% of them came from the field of social sciences (while their sample share was 28%). On the other hand, in the field of humanities this ratio was reversed: it showed 14% of respondents with difficulties vs 21% sample share. Therefore, it was more likely for PhD students from the first two fields of science to struggle with academic writing in Slovene, and less likely for students of humanities.

3.1.2 The next survey question was the most comprehensive one. Respondents were asked to complete the following statement by selecting one or more of the below listed topics: *With regard to academic writing in Slovene, it would be useful for me if I improved my knowledge and skills relating to: (1) summarising (2) titling of chapters and subchapters [...]*

13 more topics followed (all are listed in Figure 3),<sup>7</sup> but students could also choose an answer (16) [...] *I do not feel the need to improve my knowledge and skills*, or they could append their own thoughts on the subject by responding to the last item on the list, an open-ended item (17) *Other topics*.

The top part of Figure 3 shows topics chosen by most students (30%–40% of them) and at the bottom there are topics that the respondents (10% or less of them) felt most confident about. Among the latter, with an 8% share, there are also students who are completely satisfied with their academic writing proficiency in Slovene and do not feel the need for any improvement.

Upon closer inspection, the following observations can be established. Among 15 topics listed in this survey item, none was recognized as challenging by more than 50% of respondents. Yet, there are issues causing problems for the 30% of the students participating, or even more. To be exact, between 30% and 42% of students admitted a gap in their knowledge on the following topics: using appropriate academic vocabulary together with collocations; writing in concise style; producing phrases characteristic of specific academic text sections; using specific grammar categories; forming efficient and persuasive statements; and establishing firm coherence.

If we set an arbitrary boundary-line further down the chart values at, for instance, the elements chosen by 20% of respondents, we could name six academic writing characteristics which still cause difficulty. The topics chosen by 20% and up to 29% of PhD students in the survey were: neutral style, orthography rules, footnotes, intertextuality and summarising, but also explaining and arguing. Below the value of 20% and down to 10% there is a gap in the results and the only three topics chosen by 10% of students or less are the following: titling of (sub)chapters;

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<sup>7</sup>In Figure 3 (as well as in Figures 4, 5 and 6 below), the numbers in brackets indicate the succession of topics as they appeared in the survey questionnaire.

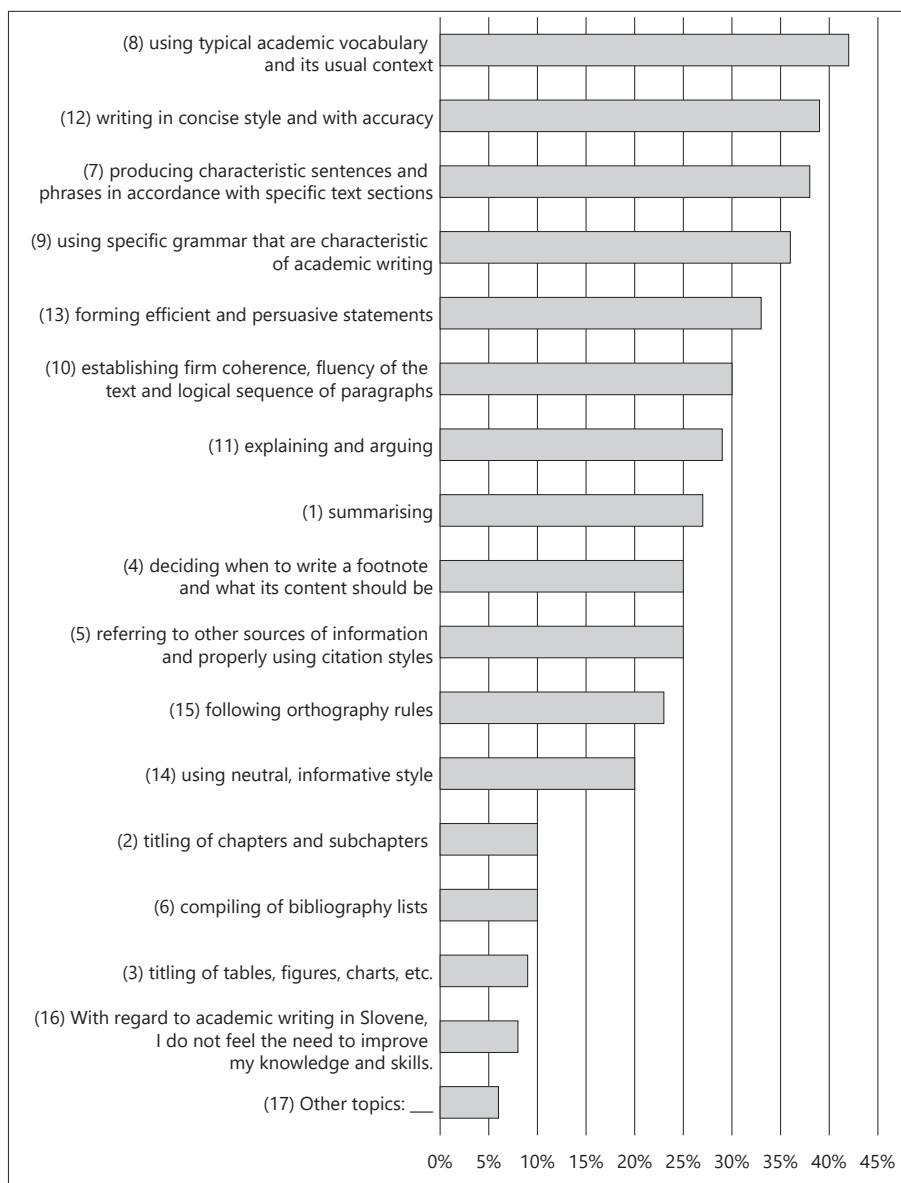


FIGURE 3: PhD students' opinion on the knowledge and skills they find it would be useful to improve: *With regard to academic writing in Slovene, it would be useful for me, if I improved my knowledge and skills relating to ...* (N = 423)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Three of the listed topics had an additional explanation or examples quoted (here underlined): (8) *using typical academic lexicon and its usual context* *which word is often*

titling of tables, figures and charts; and compiling of bibliography lists. Those topics almost entirely address the formatting side of academic writing and are characteristic of the lowest and easiest to comprehend level of academic writing proficiency.

Following the survey, the content of this survey item was also included in interviews. Student and supervisor interviewees were presented with Figure 3, with a brief explanation of what it showed and how the data was obtained, and then paused for about half a minute in order to allow each interviewee to process it. Afterwards the following question was asked: *In your opinion, what are the reasons for the knowledge deficiencies PhD students acknowledged?*

Half of the students responded in the 'practice makes perfect' sense. They estimated that their peers – and themselves – have language difficulties, if (or where) during their entire university enrolment, the practice of writing in academic Slovene is almost non-existent. Other answers varied: one student mentioned the lack of language consciousness, one a prevailing focus on content, and one the fact that a great deal of writing-specific knowledge acquired in high schools (grammar, orthography) had been lost by the time a student graduated at university. Two others 'blamed' the predominant use of English or at least extensive academic contact with it.

The answers from supervisors, on the other hand, were twofold. Three of them were critical: (a) the knowledge of standard Slovene language obtained in high schools is poor and inadequate for the requirements of good academic writing; (b) where students have to produce a lot of texts, they use copy-paste technique, this practice is known to them already before they enrol – hence, the language learning process is truncated over the years; and (c) students do not read enough (regardless of the text type). The remaining two supervisors also stressed the importance of high school Slovene courses, but added that academic language up-grading, particularly in terminology and style, was in the hands of university teachers. One of the two emphasized: "I repeatedly remind students that academic writing is neither easy nor expeditious."

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*accompanied by another specific word, which prepositions follow, etc.); (7) producing characteristic sentences and phrases in accordance with specific text sections (introduction, sample description, definitions of concepts, discussion, conclusions, etc.); (9) using specific grammar categories that are characteristic of academic writing (passive, plural of the sentence subject, etc.).* By giving some examples, the possibility of lack of comprehension was reduced. These examples were deleted from Figure 3 in order to keep the figure smaller.

### 3.2 ORIGINS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS; SUPERVISORY GUIDANCE

3.2.1 The aim of the next survey question was to find out where, in PhD students' opinion, their academic writing knowledge and skills originate from. Participants were, again, presented with the beginning of a statement and instructed to choose a conclusion to it. The beginning of the statement read: *With regard to academic writing in Slovene, I have so far acquired knowledge and skills ...*

The possible conclusions, as well as the distribution of respondents' replies, are shown in Figure 4.

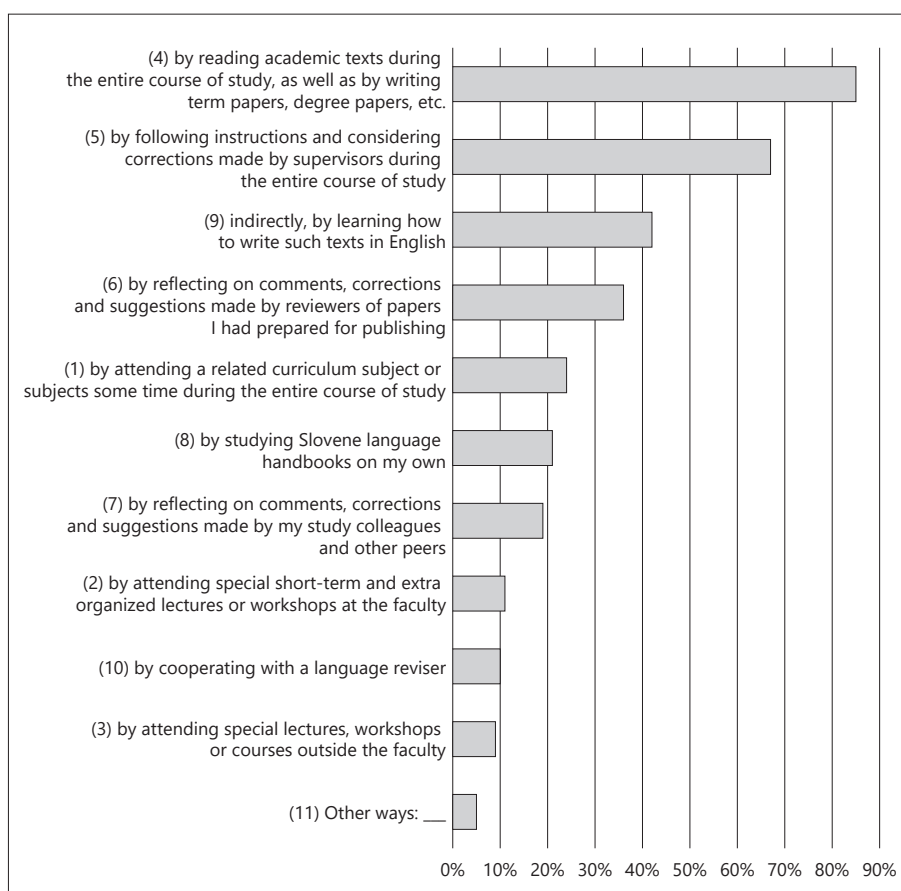


FIGURE 4: Origins of PhD students' knowledge and skills: *With regard to academic writing in Slovene, I have so far acquired knowledge and skills ...* (N = 438)

As we can see, 85% of students confirmed that the most obvious way of learning academic writing (in Slovene) is by reading and writing the genre itself, during the entire course of study. The second most influential factor chosen by 67% of respondents is continuous teacher supervision. A considerable 42% share of students also acknowledged the fact that they learned how to write academic Slovene by learning academic English, hence English being a mediating language in this process. A further 36% response shows the importance of language-related comments and corrections made by paper reviewers. Other listed topics were chosen less often.

3.2.2 The next survey question associated with the origins of students' knowledge and skills focused on the role of supervisors. The question was explicitly related to the role of *all* the supervisors students had encountered during *all* the years of their enrolment at university, including PhD supervisors. Three possible answers were offered and as Figure 5 shows, one prevailed (see the full question in the Figure 5 title).

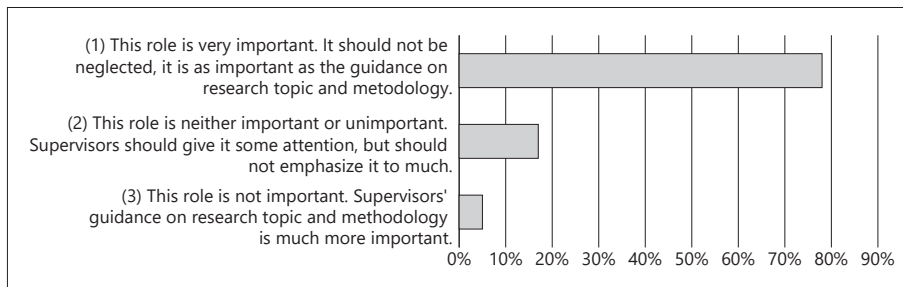


FIGURE 5: PhD students' opinion on the role of supervisors: *In your opinion, what is the role of supervisors with regard to guiding students towards excellent academic writing in Slovene?* (N = 398)

Almost 80% of PhD students in the survey who answered this question evaluated the language-related role of supervisors as very important, i.e. as important as the supervisors' guidance and assistance with the research topic and methodology. Only 5% of them chose the last, 'unimportant' statement. Yet, a closer look revealed a significant deviation from the sample structure in the category of technological sciences, namely 25% of those who chose the 'unimportant' option came from the field of technological studies, while their sample share was only 9%. It was thus more likely for a PhD student of technology to see the language supervision role as unimportant, than it was for

other students. In the case of the second statement (no. (2) in Figure 5), such deviation occurred with students of natural sciences, but not to such an extent. While in the sample they were represented by a 24% share, they 'achieved' a 37% share among respondents who chose the 'neither important or unimportant' statement.

Of course, supervisors' opinions on this matter were also of our interest, so all five interviewed teachers were presented with the same question and answers. The survey question was printed and interviewees were given approximately half a minute to consider options on paper. Then they were asked to comment on the statement they most inclined towards. Three of them chose the first statement; one interviewee chose the second statement, and one placed his position between (1) and (2). In their comments, one interviewee stressed that the supervisors' role regarding language was in teaching students to take responsibility for the language part of their academic work in the same way they stand by its content; two interviewees pointed out that even though this role was time consuming, it was simply a part of supervisors' 'job description'. Additional elaborations on the subject by two supervisors from the fields of natural and technological sciences suggested that the language part of academic texts, especially scientific ones, was not as important as know-how breakthroughs, i.e. the content having a clear priority. Three teachers also mentioned hindrances regarding their own Slovene language competence, in the sense of lacking linguistic expertise.

After comments were made, Figure 5 was shown to supervisors. As expected, none was surprised to see the survey results, though the 80% share of students agreeing with the first statement was revealing to supervisors, since they had never thought about their language guidance being so clearly expected of them (after all, none of our interviewees was a linguist). At the end, one teacher summarized: "That is clearly what we are here for, too."

#### 4 DISCUSSION

The decision to use two research methods was to the study's advantage. A combination of a quantitative and qualitative approach facilitated more complete answers to both research questions designed at the beginning of the study. Nevertheless, the number of interviewees was

not ideal. Though with some topics almost unanimous replies were given, but other topics were commented upon more disparately, each revealing different perspectives on the issue. For the same reason, no conclusions could be drawn with regard to the interviewees' fields of study.

As for the first research question, the high value with which survey respondents graded their language knowledge about writing in Slovene is not unexpected, given that the respondents were PhD students. Even so, they later showed self-criticism by choosing several areas where they could still improve. When presented with Figure 3, which showed students' opinion on the knowledge and skills they find it would be useful to improve, one student interviewee insightfully remarked: "Well, everything can be improved." Nevertheless, the numerical data in Figure 3 is mainly continuously distributed (with a gap between 10% and 20%) and shows roughly three sets of academic writing proficiency areas students and supervisors believe could be improved. Again, we should emphasize that the results present students' perception and attitudes based on their own experience with academic writing in Slovene, and that the central point of this part of our study were challenges in the writing process.

The focus of the next research question was the origins of PhD students' knowledge and skills needed for academic writing in Slovene. This issue was approached with a presumption that a high proficiency in standard Slovene is already achieved in high school, so only learning possibilities specific for academic environment were listed (Figure 4). From the results, we can conclude that two inter-connected factors play a crucial role: (1) the extent of essays, term papers, reports, etc. students are obliged to write, and (2) the feedback on all such texts (in this case, of course, language-related feedback) offered by teachers, reviewers, and peers. This is in consistence with the point Lonka et al. (2014: 266) and Borg (2006) made: constructive feedback strategies foster the development of literate expertise and reflective thinking in all students, not just post-graduates.

Further down the survey, more than 300 respondents (78%) from different fields of study said they regarded supervisors' language guidance as important as the guidance on research topic and methodology. This is a very high share. Along with concurring interviewees' opinions, this demonstrates how our respondents believe



that learning from suggested improvements is the most effective way of becoming academic writing proficient in Slovene. Though the process of teaching students how to “write with clarity”, “use proper structure”, “articulate in an academic style”, etc. is extensive and time consuming, interviewed supervisors, all non-linguists, a bit reluctantly (cf. Cammarata and Tedick 2012) agreed the role of language guidance was a *sine qua non* of their profession.

One finding, though, needs to be further researched: more than 40% of survey respondents said they had learned how to write academic Slovene by learning how to write academic English. By itself, this is not something to be concerned about: after all, in academic world English and other languages inevitably meet as languages in contact. So, in general and in isolation, this survey statement reads positively; but, again, it certainly lays foundations for additional (contrastive) studies.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Academic writing characteristics have important educational implications, and once mastered, firmly interconnect with the clear and concise sharing of academic ideas and findings. The focus of this study was academic writing competence in Slovene. On the whole, the analysis of different angles of the subject led to the same conclusion: the most important way of achieving a high degree in academic writing proficiency is by writing the genre itself and learning from constructive feedback offered by teachers. It is therefore evident that all teachers, not just linguists, shoulder the burden of developing this competence expected of university graduates, regardless of their field of study.

The central point of our interest here were students’ beliefs and self-perceptions. We did not in any way measure difficulties in the writing process, or in fact measure how accurate students’ perceptions were. Nevertheless, according to the data obtained, a synergy of a few factors would encourage a positive outcome in terms of students’ and teachers’ appreciation of academic writing: (a) a solid knowledge of standard Slovene language acquired during pre-university schooling; (b) a special subject discussing academic writing topics included in the undergraduate study curriculum at faculties of all fields of study; (c) extensive reading and writing of academic texts during the entire enrolment; and (d) informative and positive feedback on the language

used in essays, term papers, reports, etc. from all university teachers. If this process were fine-tuned, Slovene higher education graduates would feel more confident and sovereign when using Slovene in their professional environment, and would do so without considering a recourse to English.

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## SUMMARY

### WRITING IN ACADEMIC SLOVENE: STATE AND ORIGINS OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In the article, a study on academic Slovene is presented. By using two research methods, i.e. a survey and semi-structured interviewing, two topics were considered: (a) the kind of knowledge and skills needed for academic writing in Slovene among PhD students in different fields of study; and (b) the origins of such knowledge. The survey was responded to by 464 Slovene PhD students and interviews were conducted with 15 interviewees (10 PhD students and 5 supervisors, all from the University of Ljubljana). The results show that the majority of PhD students regard their academic writing skills in Slovene as very good or excellent, but at the same time believe they could improve, for example with regard to academic vocabulary and collocations. As for the origins of the skills in question, one answer stood out: the most important way of learning how to write academic Slovene is by reading and writing the genre itself. Here, a crucial role is played by supervisors' feedback.

### STROKOVNO-ZNANSTVENO PISANJE V SLOVENŠČINI: STANJE TER IZVOR ZNANJA IN VEŠČIN PRI ŠTUDENTIH

Prispevek obravnava dve vprašanji, povezani s pisanjem strokovno-znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini: (a) katera znanja in veščine so potrebni za tako pisanje ter (b) kje in kako so usvojeni. Odgovore smo pridobili z anketo, izvedeno med slovenskimi doktorskimi študenti različnih znanstvenih področij (odzvalo se je 464 anketirancev), in 15 polstrukturiranimi intervjuji (10 z doktorskimi študenti in 5 z mentorji; vsi z Univerze v Ljubljani). Rezultati so pokazali, da večina doktorskih študentov svoje znanstveno pisanje v slovenščini ocenjuje kot zelo dobro ali odlično, hkrati pa menijo, da bi svoje znanje lahko še izboljšali, npr. pri splošnem akademskem besedišču in kolokacijskih zvezah. Najpomembnejši način pridobitve omenjenih znanj in veščin je branje ter pisanje te zvrsti besedil, in to v čim večji količini, pri čemer imajo ključno vlogo povratne informacije mentorjev.

## APPENDIX 1

On-line questionnaire (with the omission of three topics that are not presented in the paper)<sup>9</sup>

1. Sem doktorski študent/-ka na področju: (a) naravoslovja, (b) tehnike, (c) medicine, (č) biotehnike, (d) družboslovja, (e) humanistike (+ podvprašanje: Ali je vaš študij jezikoslovni? – (e1) da, (e2) ne), (f) interdisciplinarnih raziskav.

2. Vpisan/-a sem v: (a) prvi letnik, (b) drugi letnik, (c) tretji letnik, (č) sem absolvent/-ka, (d) nisem vpisan/-a v noben letnik, le še dokončati oz. zagovarjati moram disertacijo.

3. Ocenite: Na splošno s pisanjem znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini ... (a) nimam nobenih oz. skoraj nobenih težav, (b) imam sicer težave, a jih sproti uspešno rešujem, (c) imam kar veliko težav, za rešitev katerih je potreben večji napor, (č) težko ocenim na splošno.

4. Znanje in veščine, ki so potrebne pri pisanju znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini, sem do sedaj pridobil/-a ... /možnih je več izbir/ (a) pri posebej temu namenjenem predmetu ali predmetih v času celotnega študija, (b) pri posameznih, posebej organiziranih krajših predavanjih ali delavnicah na fakulteti, (c) na predavanjih, delavnicah ali tečajih izven fakultete, (č) s siceršnjim branjem znanstvenih besedil v času študija ter s pisanjem seminarskih nalog, diplome ipd., (d) prek mentorjevih navodil in popravkov, (e) prek komentarjev, popravkov in predlogov recenzentov prispevkov, ki sem jih poslal/-a v objavo, (f) prek komentarjev, popravkov in predlogov študijskih kolegov in drugih vrstnikov, (g) s samostojnim učenjem po jezikovnih priročnikih za slovenščino, (h) posredno prek spoznavanja, kako se taka besedila pišejo v angleščini, (i) pri sodelovanju z lektorjem, (j) drugo /dodajte/: \_\_.

5. Pri pisanju znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini bi bilo koristno, da bi še izboljšal/-a svoje jezikovno znanje in veščine pri ... /možnih je več izbir/ (a) povzemanju, (b) naslavljanju poglavij in podpoglavij, (c) naslavljanju tabel, slik, grafov ipd., (č) odločitvah, kdaj napisati opombo in kaj vanjo sodi, (d) sklicevanju na druge vire in načinih vključevanja informacij od drugod, (e) seznamu virov in literature na koncu naloge, (f) tipičnih stavčnih frazah v posameznih delih besedil (npr. v uvodu, opisu vzorca, definiranju pojmov, razpravljanju, zaključku), (g) tipičnem znanstvenem besedišču in njegovi okolici (npr. s katero besedo se neka beseda pogosto pojavlja skupaj, kateri predlog ji sledi), (h) slovničnih oblikah, pogostih v znanstvenih besedilih (npr. raba trpnika, množinski osebek), (i) trdnejši povezanosti in tekočnosti besedila ter smiselnem zaporedju odstavkov, (j) razlaganju in utemeljevanju, (k) jedrnatem in natančnem ubesedovanju, (l) učinkovitem in prepričljivem ubesedovanju, (m) nevtralnem, informativnem stilu, (n) pravopisni pravilnosti, (o) ne vidim potrebe po tem, da bi svoje jezikovno znanje in veščine, potrebne za pisanje znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini, kakorkoli izboljševal/-a, (p) drugo /dodajte/: \_\_.

[...]

<sup>9</sup>The on-line survey questionnaire and interview questionnaire are both in Slovene, since the items of both are fully presented or summarised in English throughout the paper.

9. Kakšno vlogo imajo po vašem mnenju pri usmerjanju h kakovostnemu pisanju znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini mentorji (tj. vsi mentorji: tisti, ki usmerjajo delo pri posameznih izdelkih v času celotnega študija, kot tudi mentor pri disertaciji)? (a) Zelo veliko vlogo. Ne bi je smeli zanemarjati, je enako pomembna kot vsebinsko in metodološko vodenje.; (b) Ta vloga ni niti pomembna niti nepomembna. Prav je, da ji mentorji posvečajo nekaj pozornosti, ni pa je treba posebej poudarjati.; (c) Ta vloga ni pomembna. Veliko bolj pomembno je, da mentorji kandidata vodijo vsebinsko in metodološko.

## APPENDIX 2

Interview questionnaires (with the omission of four topics that are not presented in the paper)

### A. Students

1. Svoj študij na prvi stopnji ste zaključili z diplomskim delom, nato pa ste napisali še znanstveni magisterij. Kakšne so za vas razlike med enim in drugim delo (ne mislim toliko na jezikovne)?
2. Kakšni so vaši spomini na celoten proces nastajanja magistrskega dela, pa tudi na zagovor in podelitev listine?
3. Sicer ste v zadnjih 4 letih pridobili že tudi izkušnje z znanstvenim objavljanjem. Ste (so)avtor/avtorica /xxx/ del. V čem je pisanje takih prispevkov drugačno od pisanja zaključnih študijskih del, kakršen je bil magisterij?
4. Kako ste ob pisanju prvega prispevka za objavo v slovenščini vedeli, kakšno jezikovno podobo mora imeti, z drugimi besedami: kje ste se naučili, kako ga ubesediti?
5. Če zdaj pomislite na obdobje zadnjih 6 mesecev. Katera strokovna in znanstvena besedila ste v tem času (še) (na)pisali?
6. V kateri fazi nastajanja je vaša disertacija? Kakšen je (bil) za vas proces nastajanja disertacije? Kateri del tega procesa je (bil) najlažji in kateri najtežji? Kaj trenutno (v zadnjem tednu) najbolj "zaseda" vaše misli v zvezi z disertacijo?
7. Katera so po vašem mnenju osnovna jezikovna znanja, ki so potrebna za kakršnokoli javnosti namenjeno pisanje, ne samo znanstveno? Kdaj v okviru celotnega šolanja se ta znanja usvojijo (ali bi se morala usvojiti) in kako? Kakšna je bila vaša izkušnja v zvezi s tem: gledano nazaj – kaj bi pohvalili, kaj je bilo pomanjkljivo?
8. Februarja in marca letos smo med doktorskimi študenti štirih slovenskih univerz izvedli anketo o znanstvenem pisanju v slovenščini. Anketo je izpolnilo več kot 450 študentov. Okvirno lahko povzamem, da so anketirani na splošno precej zadovoljni s svojim pisanjem znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini, obenem pa so ocenili, da bi bilo koristno, če bi svoje jezikovno znanje še izboljšali, in to, kot lahko vidite, pri marsičem. /Intervjuvanec/-ka dobi rezultate 5. anketnega vprašanja v obliki slike./

Kateri mislite, da so razlogi za to, da so ta znanja pri večini anketiranih – če obrnem – pomanjkljiva?

[...]

#### B. Supervisors

1. Kakšno vlogo imamo mentorji pri usmerjanju h kakovostnemu pisanju znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini? To je: pri mentoriranju vseh študijskih izdelkov, ne le zaključnih del.

Lahko izbirate med naslednjimi odgovori /odgovore intervjuvanec/-ka dobi napisane na listu, vas pa vabim, da jih še dodatno utemeljite ali komentirate:

(a) Zelo veliko vlogo. Ne bi je smeli zanemarjati, je enako pomembna kot vsebinsko in metodološko vodenje.

(b) Ta vloga ni niti pomembna niti nepomembna. Prav je, da ji mentorji posvečajo nekaj pozornosti, ni pa je treba posebej poudarjati.

(c) Ta vloga ni pomembna. Veliko bolj pomembno je, da mentorji kandidata vodijo vsebinsko in metodološko.

2. Vprašanje, na katerega ste odgovorili, smo v anketi, ki smo jo izvedli februarja in marca lani, zastavili tudi doktorskim študentom štirih slovenskih univerz. Tema ankete je bila znanstveno pisanje v slovenščini, izpolnilo pa jo je več kot 450 študentov. Odgovori, ki smo jih dobili na omenjeno vprašanje, so se razporedili takole /intervjuvanec/-ka dobi rezultate 9. anketnega vprašanja v obliki slike: [...]

Ali vas ti rezultati kakorkoli presenečajo?

3. Če zdaj pomislite samo na doktorske disertacije in prve znanstvene članke, ki jih študenti pišejo v času doktorskega študija ali v krajšem obdobju po zagovoru. Koliko je po vaši oceni in izkušnjah še potrebnega popravljanja in usmerjanja, povezanega z jezikovno podobo teh del? S tem mislim tako na popravljanje pravopisnih in slovničnih pomanjkljivosti ter tehničnih napak v seznamih virov na eni strani kot tudi – na drugi strani – na popravljanje ubeseditiv, ki niso ustrezne žanru (npr. subjektivni stil, gostobesednost, nenatančno naslavljanje ipd.).

Se pravi: jezikovna podoba prvih znanstvenih del študentov – koliko popravljate ali komentirate, da je treba popraviti? /Lahko se pogovarjava tako o pisanju v slovenščini kot v angleščini./

4. Naj se navežem še na eno točko ankete. Pokazalo se je, da so anketirani študenti na splošno precej zadovoljni s svojim pisanjem znanstvenih besedil v slovenščini, obenem pa so ocenili, da bi bilo koristno, če bi svoje jezikovno znanje še izboljšali, in to, kot lahko vidite, pri marsičem. /Intervjuvanec/-ka dobi rezultate 5. anketnega vprašanja v obliki slike./

Kaj je razlog, da so ta znanja pomanjkljiva?

Katere so poleg mentorskega spremljanja še možne rešitve, da bi se ta znanja izboljšala? Poznate morda še druge dobre prakse iz tujine, na vaši fakulteti?

[...]