Tina Lengar Verovnik
ORCID: 0000-0002-8454-6160

Helena Dobrovoljc
ORCID: 0000-0002-3568-8453

Revision of Slovenian Normative Guide: Scientific Basis and Inclusion of the Public

Tina Lengar Verovnik (ORCID: 0000-0002-8454-6160)
Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenija
ZRC SAZU, Inštitut za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša, Slovenija
Helena Dobrovoljc (ORCID: 0000-0002-3568-8453)
ZRC SAZU, Inštitut za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša, Slovenija
Univerza v Novi Gorici, Fakulteta za humanistiko, Slovenija
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3986/sjsls.14.1.07

Revision of Slovenian Normative Guide: Scientific Basis and Inclusion of the Public

Contemporary Slovenian language standardisation includes the revision of the normative guide, a process taking place since 2013 within the Commission on Orthography. This article presents an overview of the scientific basis of this process as well as describes the systematic inclusion of different segments of the public in the phase of assessing the suitability of current orthographic rules and formulating new ones. This is due to an awareness that a normative guide can be accepted by the wider language community only through a convergence of differing opinions and codification based on arguments.

Keywords: language standardisation, codification, Slovenian, normative guide, public discussion

Jezikovna standardizacija sodobne slovenščine, katere del je prenova pravopisnega priročnika, za slovenščino poteka od leta 2013 dalje pod okriljem Pravopisne komisije pri SAZU in ZRC SAZU. V prispevku bodo predstavljena znanstvena izhodišča tega procesa, opisano pa bo tudi sistematično vključevanje različnih javnosti v fazo preverjanja ustreznosti trenutno veljavnih pravopisnih pravil in oblikovanja novih. Zavedamo se namreč, da je lahko pravopisni priročnik sprejet v širši jezikovni skupnosti šele s približevanjem različnih mnenj in s kodifikacijo, ki temelji na utemeljitvah.

Ključne besede: jezikovna standardizacija, kodifikacija, slovenščina, pravopisni priročnik, javna razprava

1 Introduction

The last decade has been one of the most dynamic periods of synchronic Slovenian linguistics. As a result of an at least tenfold increase in the numbers of public texts and non-professional writers and the relaxation of criteria for publishing (Crystal 2012), the norm of standard language is now a linguistic phenomenon that is realised not only in small circles of exemplary writers but by a wide range of people in the context of coincidental communication. In an age that can certainly be called electronic and that influences the diversity of language realisations by providing different media and modes of expression, it is necessary and desirable to reassess normative issues. At the same time, it is necessary to rethink the frameworks of language standardisation, which includes the revision of the normative guide, a process taking place since 2013 for Slovenian. This article presents the scientific basis of this process as well as describes the systematic inclusion of different segments of the public in the phase of assessing the suitability of current orthographic rules and formulating new ones. We are aware that a normative guide can be accepted by the wider language community only through a convergence of differing opinions and codification based on arguments.

2 Language standardisation phases

Linguistics (Haugen 1966; Leith 1983) generally places the beginnings of standardisation, i.e. selecting a suitable dialectal basis for a written language, in periods when a language community establishes an adequate system of writing, i.e. adapts writing to the spoken form of language, which some theoreticians call "alphabetisation" (Frawley 2003: 410). This is followed by a process of formulating the rules of writing (in some languages, these are called orthographic rules) and their codification.[1] With both these standardisation milestones, a language community exhibits social power and the autonomy of a collective of speakers. When a language becomes an external sign of an individual's national identification (Vogl 2012), as was the case

---

[1] In the case of Slovenian both processes started in the 16th century.

with Slovenian at the end of the 19th century, the language community faces a challenge of the intellectual discipline needed to maintain a flexible stability of the language standard. There are roughly two possible ways of dealing with this, they will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

Modern linguistics (Garvin 1993; Jaffe 2000; Milroy 2001) has ascertained that languages with a less extensive standardisation experience have a greater desire for increased linguistic uniformity. The reason for this can be found in the fact that through a non-variant standard, these languages wish to emulate the authoritative power of dominant languages (Jaffe 2000: 506). Even today, traditionally oriented environments justify their authoritative codification with the expectations of language users, claiming that authoritative rules are more popular with the latter than liberal ones (Sebba 2007: 154). Despite a conviction that standardised language is best presented through a black-and-white demonstration of acceptable and incorrect language possibilities, linguists of the Anglosphere, in particular, proclaim this methodology of defining correctness to be a remnant of the linguistic view in which grammatical structures are defined outside the language itself (Milroy 2001: 535–536), e.g. under the influence of dominant linguistic ideologies or policies.

On the other hand, languages with a long-standing tradition of a language standard were in the early 20th century more open to linguistic heterogeneity as the reflection of different societal, cultural, cognitive and biological factors. Therefore, they put a greater emphasis on criteria of language usage. In modern times, a revision of standards in most languages requires a redefinition of the criteria of linguistic correctness. The standardisation process must be carried out in such a way that a language reaches a level of stability that is sufficient for the performance of basic functions but also enables adaptability to alterations required by dynamic cultural changes and by the development of the language community (Garvin 1993: 43). This consideration for both the features of the natural variability of language and the static preservation of linguistic habits, rules and

agreements, termed "flexible stability" by Mathesius (1929), has been the fundamental principle of standardisation for almost a century.

3 Slovenian normative guides – a historical perspective

In general, Slovenian normativistic linguistics mainly discussed standardisation criteria, the modernisation of the norm and the standardisation process when developing and publishing normative guides. In most East and South Slavic languages, the latter are considered a "symbol" of standard language, setting norms for writing, orthoepy and punctuation (Mønnesland 1998: 1103), and their authors try to present linguistic or societal arguments for their proposals, at least in principle.

The period after the publication of the first Slovenian normative guide, which was authored by Fran Levec (1899), is already characterised by a polemical relationship between linguists who wanted to standardise the language based on the tradition of previous centuries and those, especially non-linguists, who wanted to converge the language standard and contemporary usage and objected to historically justified changes in fields where Slovenian was already stable. In subsequent decades, Slovenian linguistics "avoided" discussing fundamental standardisation principles, which had a negative reflection at the level of applied linguistics, i.e. in the concrete evaluation of lexis (e.g. in the 1920 normative guide by Anton Breznik). The intuitive evaluation of lexis was motivated by an idealistic conception of language purity and by a concern for the preservation of the cultural and national identity of the language in the context of multilingual states.

The next normative guide (Anton Breznik and Fran Ramovš, 1935) and its amended version for schools (1937) ushered in an era of academy-driven standardisation,[2] in which pre-war guides indicate the end of black-and-white evaluation and a shift from prescriptiveness to

---

[2] This period also entails the beginning of the formally recognised normative mandate of orthographers; writers of the normative guide working within the Scientific Society (*Znanstveno društvo*) and subsequently within the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SAZU) were granted the privilege of norm-setting authority first by their fellow experts and then also by the political authorities (Dobrovoljc, Bizjak Končar 2013).

descriptiveness as regards linguistic phenomena. This shift from an idealistic to a realistic model of linguistic thought, where linguistic correctness is something sought after rather than declaratively formulated, is less explicit in both post-war normative guides by the academy (1950, 1962), however. From this perspective, the conception of linguistic correctness is rather undefined in the post-war period,[3] a fact pointed out by the critical audience as well. In both normative guides, the standardisation body authoritatively, providing no argumentation, introduced new rules based on its structural conception of the language system and on the etymological-historical principle; in the 1962 guide, it also reformed the already stable way of writing word-formational suffixes for agent nouns (*-vec* instead of *-lec*), aiming to affect orthoepy. The academy was forced to forget the latter reform itself after it had been vehemently refused by both the professional and non-professional public.

On the basis of this "undermined" academy authority, a younger generation of linguists (Jože Toporišič, Jakob Rigler) was able to enter the standardisation activity, bringing new views on linguistic correctness and orthographic issues. Their era based standardisation on the structural understanding of the language system, which the linguist dynamically adjusts by following the actual societal practice. Through the adoption of the Prague conception of the balanced system of codification principles (tradition, usage, system and economy), the concepts of the exclusionary prescriptive logic, which exacerbated the variance between standard language and actual usage, became restricted to the domain of lay, i.e. amateur linguistics, at least in principle. Indeed, the orthographic rules of 1990 (or 2001) reflect a balance of all the essential standardisation principles; however, on the applied level, i.e. in the dictionary, which was only published ten years later, the systemic principle is overvalued. This orientation of the orthographers later became a controversial issue, especially due to the standardisation of entries that are not attested in usage but

---

[3] The standardisation activity was carried out based on materials for the making of a monolingual explanatory dictionary without analysing contemporary language usage or the needs of users.

are realisable in terms of word formation (or the language system) and, similarly, due to the non-credibility of the materials.

In the time of the publication of the current standardisation guide, i.e. the normative guide of 2001 (its technically enhanced e-version was released in 2003), a high level of stability of the written language was achieved in Slovenia. Even though the asynchronous codification itself (i.e. publishing the orthographic dictionary ten years after the orthographic rules) gave rise to quite a few gaps between the orthographic rules and their lexicographic application, the standard Slovenian as presented by the normative guide is mainly in line with the needs of the language community and in agreement with usage by the majority. Nonetheless, the rapid dynamics of societal and technological developments and the evolution of language require a continuous standardisation process.

4 Contemporary practice and perspectives

With the beginning of the new millennium, codification has gained a new dimension and has drawn closer to reality. Research into the dynamics of the system of the Slovenian standard language has been able to rely on empirically verifiable data owing to digitised written materials collected in corpora and other electronic databases. The facts who wrote a particular word, what their social status and linguistic education is have been put aside in research. The linguistic fact and its role in a given text are thus now at the centre of studying linguistic habits.

In designing modern linguistic works that are considered references due to the societal functions of the norm of standard language, it is therefore necessary to take into account shifts from language description, which is mostly based on linguistics and is often overly technical, and focus the attention to the reasons why a language user, who is supposed to be at the forefront of modern linguistic research (Tarp 2008), decides to use a particular linguistic element. A language description, i.e. a normative description, thus cannot focus merely on those aspects of grammar and lexis that are most suited to a particular

linguistic model; it should also include linguistic characteristics and patterns that reflect the diversity of language.

In preparing updates to the normative guide, the materials themselves call for rethinking, i.e. reassessing existing descriptions and looking for new, not-yet-established aspects and, most of all, standpoints that could guide the emerging description of the standard language to a more universal or a more exclusivist direction. Naturally, such a dichotomy is present in many European environments; especially in Slavic languages where standard languages were established as national identity symbols two centuries ago (Lenček 1996: 18), which are facing similar problems (Dolník 2010):

a. On the one hand, there is the maintenance of the traditional belief that the standard language is the (only) instrumental driving force of a given nation, which means it is also the greatest national asset and must be constantly preserved in a regulated conservative form. As noted by Dolník (2010), this idea is often perpetuated through a linguistic elite that, with a view to preserve the traditional hierarchy of language values, maintains a syndrome that the language or its specificities are constantly under threat, keeping this relevant through various interventions.

b. Beyond this emotional elitism, there is a more modern and rational information service that, instead of restrictive intervention, provides honest and research-based communication on linguistic phenomena. Guiding standard language according to criteria described in Daneš (1977)[4] and ensuring the development of tools that empower users to use the language in any situation, help strengthen their language confidence and promote the use of language in any situation are at the forefront of this view.

---

[4] Daneš's hierarchy consists of the primary (1) language stability (convention, collective habit), followed by (2) contemporary usage (considering the types of discourse and the functional needs of the community) and (3) an assessment of compliance with the existing language system.

The process of the so-called destandardisation, typical of developed post-modern societies, should also be taken into consideration nowadays. According to Nekvapil (2008: 259–60), destandardisation means, on the one hand, that standard language ceases to be used in certain conditions or areas where it used to be common, and on the other hand, that it is becoming more and more diverse as it increasingly includes elements that were not characteristic of it before. Linguistics can either criticise deviations from the norm, evaluating them as errors, or gradually adapt the standard language, increase its variability and promote a higher tolerance for change in general. In post-modern societies, the fact that codification is supported by a prestigious institution (such as an academy) is no longer enough to ensure a positive public reception (Nekvapil 2008: 255).

5 Orthography and language management

Compared to other linguistic rules and descriptions, the rules of writing are usually highly standardised and regulated. This makes the symbolic value of deviations (when they are not the result of a lack of knowledge) even greater, and the written form of language – a distinctly visual, physical image of language – can also be a convenient medium for various ideological conflicts and protests (Sebba 2003: 152). Socially significant choices may occur even at the level of the script (e.g. Latin vs Cyrillic or Arabic script) but more often at the level of orthography. While the rules of writing are usually designed to minimise the potential for deviations, users find creative ways to introduce them. Innovations must be similar enough to what is considered the norm in order for users to even recognise them as variants or alternatives (Sebba 2007: 33). The significance of deviations also depends on the type of texts in which they appear. According to the author, not all texts are subject to the same level of strict evaluation, so there is different potential to influence the (re)design of the rules of writing – for example, there is a difference in the level of language regulation and oversight between graffiti and a book publication.

The genres that are subject to the greatest levels of language oversight are also the genres that the process of orthographic standardisation is most interested in. Dobrovoljc and Jakop (2011: 15) define this process for the contemporary Slovenian situation as a cyclical activity carried out in four stages: (1) determining language usage, (2) evaluating the usage according to the described norm, (3) recording the norm or creating a prescription, (4) checking whether the prescription is established in usage. Naturally, while verifying existing norms, linguists come across new linguistic phenomena and problems requiring assessment or solutions. For this part of the standardisation process, a model proposed by the language management (LM) theory, put forward by Jernudd and Neustupný (1987) and developed by many other authors (for an overview, see Sherman 2016), seems highly useful. This is because LM places language problems in a sociolinguistic context, linking them to corresponding phenomena or problems at the level of communication and at the socio-cultural or socio-economic level.

In their original formulation of the theory (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987), the authors start out with the questions on whose behalf (comprehensive) language planning takes place and to what extent individual social groups may be affected by this. They find that different language problems call for different solving procedures, but LM can roughly still be defined as a process comprising the following steps: (1) comparing language in use with the norms to detect deviations; (2) evaluating the deviations (those evaluated negatively are highlighted); (3) identifying the required corrections or adjustments; (4) the process is completed when the correction or adjustment is implemented in practice. Subsequently, step (5) has been added, which concerns feedback or checking whether the implementation is successful, turning the previously linear process into a circular one (Fairbrother and Kimura 2020).

LM can cover everything from individual instances of discourse to systemic corrections; adjustments can be simple, i.e. immediate

(implemented in discourse right away)[5], or organised. Even organised systemic corrections originate in individual but recurring instances of discourse, targeting discourse again at the end of the LM process. However, organised LM is characterised by the participation of diverse individuals grouped into social networks and by a higher explicitness and more precise targeting of the procedures. Language problems are detected and articulated at a metalinguistic level, becoming the subject of discussions where theories and ideologies serve as the motivation and means to legitimise the directions the LM process is taking (Sherman 2016: 194).

In the process of organised LM, individuals or groups highlight certain elements of language usage and/or of the language system as language problems. These are linguistically informed demands that often coincide with the economic, social, political or cultural interests of the speakers. However, some demands do not originate in language usage or in the existing process of communication; instead, the groups expressing such demands refer to the symbolic role or potential effects of the use of the proposed element (which means these demands are founded on extralinguistic interests). If such demands for status succeed, the element is included in the system; however, the extralinguistic interests must first be reflected in usage, creating a language problem that is then evaluated in the LM process. Some demands in the process of organised LM are thus openly ideological, while others are made with little or no awareness of their actual origin or implications (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987).

Developing the original theory further, Nekvapil (2006) notes that in modern times, LM does not take place only at the level of state institutions, where the activities target the society as a whole, but also at the level of various social networks (from schools, businesses to media etc.) and with different scopes. Therefore, in addition to the macro-social level, LM must take into account the micro-social dimension and, in particular, the dynamics of the dialectical

---

[5] Nekvapil (2009: 5) also adds the possibility that the speaker does not solve the problem immediately, but they do detect it, solving it later with the help of a linguistic reference work or expert, for example.

relationship between both levels. As mentioned above, organised LM affects simple LM but is also based on simple LM (though organised LM is not simply a sum of simple LM procedures). Ideally, the LM cycle would thus take place in the micro > macro > micro sequence.

6 The process of revising the Slovenian normative guide

All the Slovenian normative guides so far[6] have consisted of two parts: the first part comprises orthographic rules complemented by the rules of morphology and word formation that are relevant to writing; the second part adds an orthographic dictionary, which varies in size across different guides, the most recent one (2001) also replacing the general dictionary of the standard language to a certain extent. The revised normative guide, too, comes in two parts, but unlike all the previous guides, both parts are being developed in parallel and published regularly on the Fran language portal[7] (each year, new chapters and dictionary entries are added).

The revision of the orthographic rules has been going on since 2013 within the Commission on Orthography at SAZU and ZRC SAZU (the Slovenian academy and its research centre are its co-founders). Under the decision establishing the Commission, its mandate is to prepare a proposal for the modernisation of existing orthographic rules in line with the normative tradition and considering changes in the contemporary Slovenian language, as well as to ensure its assertion in language practice. Representatives of different professional communities, especially of Slovenian studies, are members of the Commission. Through the participation of representatives of research and educational institutions, experts for different fields of language and creators, the Commission is able to take note of the different views on orthographic and related linguistic issues and thus revise the language standard in accordance with the expectations

---

[6] Since 1899 there have been seven normative guides, all of them are now available at <https://www.fran.si/slovnice-in-pravopisi/>.

[7] Available at <fran.si>. The orthographic rules are being created as a collection named *Pravopis 8.0*, and the orthographic dictionary is being made as a growing dictionary called *ePravopis*.

of the public, i.e. users of the written language. The Commission has two configurations. The narrower configuration is editorial, and its mandate is to draft proposals for the articulation of new chapters of orthographic rules. The broader configuration is a body of reviewers assessing and commenting on the proposed solutions. The orthographic dictionary is being created simultaneously at the Orthographic Section of the ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language (some of its members are also members of the Commission on Orthography). By preparing both works synchronously, it is ensured that the dictionary builds on and expands the orthographic rules with materials, and the dictionary versions or the lessons learned in their drafting often provide feedback for the articulation of rules.

The revision of the normative guide as a whole is problem-oriented. Each orthographic topic is dealt with in six phases (Dobrovoljc and Lengar Verovnik 2015): 1. checking the suitability of the orthographic rule and its lexicographic presentation in the last normative guide (2001) and detecting new orthographic problems that have not been recorded yet; 2. adapting the rule to the identified actual state or preparing a new rule (when a gap appears in the normative description); 3. selecting illustrative examples for the rule; 4. preparing an expanded set of examples for each rule to include in the dictionary entry list; 5. preparing lexicographic solutions for the web; 6. justifying the orthographic and lexicographic solutions and ensuring their normative validity.

In the first phase of the process – which is the focus of the continuation of this article – the orthographic group at the Institute of the Slovenian Language systematically makes an overview of professional contributions and any critiques of the currently applicable orthographic rules. Then, it analyses corpora and other available materials. Moreover, in revising the normative guide, the user perspective is particularly important. One of the basic principles when deciding on the scope and articulation of the orthographic rules is what the user needs or seeks. This first phase therefore also includes elements of simple LM (questions in the Language

Counselling service); in addition, by using certain work methods, the perception of orthographic problems is examined at different micro levels (surveys, public discussion accompanying the publication of revised chapters of the normative guide, cooperation with specialist linguists).

6.1 Language Counselling service as a source of normative dilemmas

The Institute of the Slovenian language has performed counselling in relation to topical language dilemmas for decades; writers, authors and editors originally asked questions over the phone and by mail, with answering organised ad hoc among the Institute's employees. However, when the 2001 Slovenian Normative Guide was released, the authors published an email address on the book jacket, intending to collect all user comments and questions in its inbox. Between the publication of the normative guide (November 2001) and May 2003, the inbox received approximately 65 electronic responses both by linguists and laypeople from every generation. The questions or responses were answered by the SAZU Commission on Orthography. An overview of the questions highlighted the lack of an appropriate institution for the organised monitoring of language usage and providing competent advice to language users (Majcenovič 2003: 214).

In addition to foreign examples[8] and an accelerated language dynamic, the idea that a counselling service can be an empirically verifiable source of language dilemmas prompted the authors of both resolutions on the National Programme for Language Policy for 2007–2011 and 2012–2014 to include plans for the establishment of an institutional language counselling service. Nonetheless, in 2012 the promise of state support from the resolution prompted the formation of the web-based Language Counselling service of the ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language, which has operated since 2012 and represents a continuation of the already established counselling activity with the additional immediate publication of the

---

[8] A similar, long-established language counselling service is provided by the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Nekvapil 2008); for some other language counselling services in Europe, see Ludányi (2020).

answers on its website and, since 2014, their searchability on the Fran dictionary portal.

Currently, there are 2998[9] questions and answers published on the website, which means that on average, consultants reply to almost 360 questions per year or 30 questions per month (except during the summer holidays). The counselling service has a moderator and a scientific editorial board that makes changes to and finally approves the answers before they are published. A system for tracking visits to the counselling service, which was introduced in 2019, reports about 1000 users per day, of which most are unregistered users, which means they have not asked any question yet but have reached the website of the service through web browsers and targeted queries. The breakdown of questions is not surprising: orthography, which is also the most subdivided group, as it includes capitalisation, one-/two-word spelling, writing marks, punctuation marks and other symbols, principles for borrowing foreign-language elements etc., accounts for the highest number of questions. This is followed by morphology and syntax as well as word formation and semantics. Questions relating to stylistics, even the stylistics of punctuation and other language instruments, not only on the stylistics of lexis, are also increasing in number. These are problems of functional orthography, which is related to administrative texts, suitable text patterns, the stylistics of formal letters etc.

An online survey carried out between December 2016 and July 2017 has shown that at least three quarters of users are persons that have already finished their education (including the highest levels). In terms of education, the group of persons with a higher education degree stood out, constituting half the sample. The shares of persons with a pre-Bologna research master's degree or PhD were also relatively high, totalling much higher than the sum of both lowest levels of education (primary and secondary school). The age structure and especially the education structure of the respondents show that they are mostly highly educated persons in their most active years. No questions were asked about their careers, though it was possible

---

[9] As of June 2021.

to infer the professional backgrounds of some respondents from answers to certain open-ended questions. The most telling figures were that two thirds of the respondents were able to refer to an answer of experts in their field and that half indicated professional needs as the only or one of several motivations for using the Language Counselling service.

After almost a decade of operation, it is clear that the counselling service not only provides quick and referentially reliable assistance with the dilemmas of all users of Slovenian that have difficulties navigating the current language reference works or do not find the answers to their questions there, but the answers of the counselling service also fill the gaps created because of the dynamic and accelerated development of language or the lack of up-to-date reference works. At the same time, users' questions are a valuable resource for the revision of the normative guide, as they provide numerous current examples of the contemporary written practice and indicate: (1) which orthographic topics are covered inadequately in the current guide; (2) which orthographic problems have newly emerged in the past 20 years; (3) which areas of orthography show clear developmental tendencies; (4) the articulation of which orthographic rules needs to be updated; (5) which themes seem to be covered adequately in the current guide since they do not appear in any questions.

6.2 User surveys

So far, a need to include a survey-based examination of problems emerging during the analysis of corpus materials has arisen in the preparation of two chapters of the normative guide. The first such chapter was Grammatical outline for the normative guide, for which the Commission on Orthography decided to test some assumptions it had formed about the adequacy of the orthographic codification in a situation when an individual must solve a problem without being offered any solutions. Experts, such as language editors and proofreaders, translators and linguists of all specialisations, were particularly invited to take part in this survey, which was conducted between May and July 2019. The Grammatical outline for the

normative guide is designed as an overview of problematic aspects of phonetics, morphology and word formation that cause writing-related issues for users and for which deviations from the 2001 Slovenian Normative Guide have already been identified in the preparation of rules and lexicographic examination. Having established a set of questions, the Commission decided to apply the survey method as it found the corpus method inadequate for open questions due to a lack of materials; moreover, the corpus materials provide too little information on the creators of texts, it is not clear whether the texts have been proofread/copy-edited etc. Questions in the survey questionnaire were not mandatory, so the respondents did not answer all of them, and the sample size varies to some extent, from 821 to 928.

The second survey was made when, in the context of the revision of rules on capitalisation, it was proposed that the Commission on Orthography follows the suggestion of the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (KSZI) to change the orthographic rule on capitalisation in non-initial constituents of geographical names. KSZI argued that all constituents of geographical names – except prepositions and conjunctions – should be capitalised regardless of whether the names in question are settlement names or other names, which is a radical intervention compared to the current rules.[10] Representatives of both commissions presented their views on writing geographical proper nouns in June 2019 at the "meeting of two commissions".[11] Due to opposing views at the discussion and an awareness that such a comprehensively designed reform would

---

[10] According to the KSZI proposal, non-initial constituents of all multi-word names would be capitalised – not only in settlement names, but all names arising from descriptions of natural features. For example, *Bohinjsko jezero* (lake in Bohinj) or *Soška dolina* (valley through which the Soča River flows) would be written as *Bohinjsko Jezero*, *Soška Dolina*, something that speakers of Slovenian have rejected so far.

[11] Contributions from this discussion, which also serve as the substantiations of individual proposals, were presented in a special publication Živim v Bukovem vrhu pod Bukovim vrhom, which is available online: <https://omp.zrc-sazu.si/zalozba/catalog/view/1915/7944/1216-1>.

have a significant impact on public life, signs, documents etc., it has been decided that the Commission on Orthography would employ a survey before the public presentation of the proposal in order to receive opinions or views on the reform from a wide circle of language users, i.e. the general public, with a specific focus on the opinions of the general professional public, i.e. everyone dealing with language professionally (proofreaders and language editors, media workers, writers of texts etc.). The Commission wished to learn which of the proposed changes to the orthographic rules seems the most suitable to the language users taking part in the survey, also offering users the choice not to change the existing rules or to present their own view. In the survey, the potential changes were presented in a concrete text, and respondents selected the solutions they felt were the best, also commenting on them if they wanted to. The survey was conducted in May and June 2020; 1844 persons responded.[12]

6.3 Public discussion accompanying the publication of revised chapters of the normative guide

Four revised chapters have been published so far in the Pravopis 8.0 collection: on writing marks, on capitalisation, on the principles of borrowing words from foreign languages and on abbreviations. Each chapter is accompanied by scientific substantiations of changes and new additions compared to the previous normative guide, and the publication of a chapter is followed by a one-month public discussion. For each rule in a proposed chapter, users can submit an online comment. These comments are examined and evaluated by the orthographic group at the Institute of the Slovenian Language and used to prepare a further enhanced version of the chapter to be discussed once more by the Commission on Orthography.

---

[12] The majority of the respondents voted against any change. However, there were slight differences between certain subgroups of the respondents: e.g. translators were more in favour of the capitalization of all constituents of geographical names, while teachers most strongly opposed all of the potential changes. A detailed analysis is available online: <https://pravopisna-komisija.zrc-sazu.si/Ankete/Anketaopisanjuzemljepisnihimenmaj2020>.

In the public discussions held so far, the published chapters received between 216 and 1080 comments; the number partly depends on the length of a chapter and partly on how neuralgic a given topic or change is (as perceived by the public). Comments are mostly anonymous, though some are signed. An examination of their content shows that the comments are most frequently based on familiarity with the current normative guide and its shortcomings, so they are written by experts on the issue at hand. This is corroborated by the signed comments, which have been authored by proofreaders and language editors, teachers, researchers or specialists in areas related to orthography or interest groups (e.g. translators in EU institutions).[13]

6.4 Cooperation with specialist linguists

Slovenia is characterised by a strong integration of language editors or proofreaders in the text publication process. The language editor or proofreader profession arose after the Second World War due to the specific socio-political situation, when editorial departments in the media employed writers poorly educated in language, who needed the support of linguists specialising in Slovenian (Verovnik 2005). In the 1980s and 1990s, there was an increasing need for the regulation and coordination of proofreading and language editing, also through various forms of the organisation of proofreaders and language editors (especially in media outlets), culminating in the establishment of the Slovene Society of Language Editors and Proofreaders in 1996. Today, language editing and proofreading are not activities that can be taken up by anyone with any education and with no special qualifications. They also do not mean that Slovenians are more illiterate than the average European, entailing the need for correcting badly written texts; they are a developed and targeted

---

[13] All comments will be available on the Commission's homepage as of Autumn 2022: <https://pravopisna-komisija.zrc-sazu.si/>. The analysis of the comments' impact on the Commission's work and decisions was presented on the conference "Škrabčevi dnevi 2021" (cf. Lengar Verovnik 2021; this will be followed by a paper form the same author).

concern for the publication of quality texts, which is a perfectly normal European cultural and professional standard (Pučnik 2018).

The Commission on Orthography has cooperated with the Society of Language Editors and Proofreaders since the start of the revision of the normative guide. Together, members of both organise regular thematic meetings to present their research findings and the planned changes in individual chapters. Since language editors and proofreaders are in touch with user problems on a daily basis, the meetings enable useful exchanges of information and opinions. In addition to meetings with the Society, the Commission on Orthography occasionally collaborates with specialist linguists at the RTV Slovenija public broadcaster, who help direct the research of the orthographic group at the Institute of the Slovenian Language with a range of problems from everyday practice (the adaptation of borrowed words and names is a particularly topical issue). Teachers of Slovenian in primary and secondary schools, grouped in the Association of Slavic Societies of Slovenia, are the third group of specialist linguists that the Commission on Orthography cooperates with. So far, members of the Commission have attended several round-table discussions and a congress organised by the Association, where they have presented the process of revising the normative guide in dialogue with educators and acquired valuable feedback.

7 Conclusion

Past experience shows that linguists often become aware of innovations in linguistic processes only when evaluating the works of previous generations, not being able to hold a dispassionate enough view of own work. However, regarding the current revision of the normative guide for Slovenian presented above, it seems that the electronic age nonetheless provides methods enabling the immediate verification and evaluation of the conducted scientific and research work. Although a comprehensive analysis of the revision will only be possible after the process is over, it can already be noted that the regular collection of information and feedback from different interested communities has a positive influence on the integrity of a linguists as the performer/actor in the processes described above.

REFERENCES

Crystal, David. 2012. *Internet linguistics: a student guide*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.

Daneš, František. 1988. K dvěma základním otázkám kodifikace. *Naše řeč*. 3–13.

Dobrovoljc, Helena, Jakop, Nataša. 2011. *Sodobni pravopisni priročnik med normo in predpisom*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC.

Dobrovoljc, Helena, Bizjak Končar, Aleksandra. 2013. Slovenski pravopisi in vprašanje normativnih pristojnosti. *Slovenski jezik – Slovene linguistic studies* 9. 111–126.

Dolník, Juraj. 2010. *Teória spisovného jazyka (so zreteľom na spisovnú slovenčinu)*. Bratislava: VEDA, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied.

Fairbrother, Lisa, Kimura, Goro Christoph. 2020. What is a language management approach to language problems and why do we need it? Goro Christoph Kimura, Lisa Fairbrother (eds): *A Language Management Approach to Language Problems: Integrating macro and micro dimensions*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1–28.

Frawley, William J. (ed.). 2003. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Garvin, Paul L. 1993. A conceptual framework for the study of language standardization. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 100–101. 37–54.

Haugen, Einar. 1966. *Language conflict and language planning. The case of modern Norwegian*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Jaffe, Alexandra. 2000. Introduction: Non-standard orthography and non-standard speech. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4. 497–513.

Jernudd, Björn Holger and Jiří Václav Neustupný. 1987. Language planning: for whom? Lorne Laforge (ed.): *Actes du Colloque international sur l'aménagement linguistique / Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Language Planning*. Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval. 69–84.

Lengar Verovnik, Tina. 2021. Pomen javne razprave ob predlogu novih pravopisnih pravil (povzetek). Škrabčevi dnevi 12. Zbornik povzetkov. 11. Available at http://skrabcevi-dnevi.zrc-sazu.si/Portals/19/Povzetki/2021-09-29-Skrabcevi-dnevi-12-povzetki.pdf.

Leith, Dick. 1983. *A Social History of English*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Ludányi, Zsófia. 2020. Language consulting: a brief European overview. *Eruditio – Educatio* 15/3. 25–47.

Majcenovič, Helena. 2003. Odzivnost javnosti ob izidu Slovenskega pravopisa (Izhodiščne teze I-V). Marko Jesenšek (ed.): *Perspektive slovenistike ob*

vključevanju v Evropsko zvezo. Ljubljana: Slavistično društvo Slovenije. 213–217.

Mathesius, Vilem. (1929) 1983: Functional linguistics*.* J. Vachek (ed.): *Praguiana, Some Basic and Less known Aspects of Prague Linguistics School*. John Benjamins Publisching company. 137–138.

Milroy, James. 2001. Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5/4: 530–555.

Mønnesland, Svein. 1998. Emerging Literary Standards and Nationalism. The Disintegration of Serbo-Croatian. *Actas do I Simposio Internacional sobre o Bilingüismo*. 1103–1113.

Nekvapil, Jiří. 2008. Language Cultivation in Developed Contexts. Bernard Spolsky, Francis M. Hult (eds): *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*. Blackwell Publishing. 251– 265.

Nekvapil, Jiři. 2006. From language planning to language management. *Sociolinguistica* 20. 92–104.

Pučnik, Kristina M. 2018. Lektorska licenca in drugi poskusi regulacije poklica. *Bela knjiga o prevajanju. Premiki na področju prevajanja, tolmačenja, podnaslavljanja in lektoriranja v Sloveniji*. Available at: https://www.belaknjigaoprevajanju.si/.

Sebba, Mark. 2003. Spelling rebellion. Jannis K. Androutsopoulos, Alexandra Georgakopoulou (eds): *Discourse Constructions of Youth Identities*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 151–173.

Sebba, Mark. 2007: *Spelling and Society. The Culture and Politics of Orthography around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sherman, Tamah. 2016. Language management and Language Management Theory [LMT]. Andrew Linn (ed.): *Investigating English in Europe*. Boston/Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 192–199.

Tarp, Sven. 2008. *Lexicography in the Borderland between Knowledge and Non-Knowledge: general lexicographical theory with particular focus on learner's lexicography*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer.

Verovnik, Tina. 2005. *Jezikovni obronki*. Ljubljana: GV Založba.

Vogl, Ulrike. 2012. Multilingualism in a standard language culture. *Standard Languages and Multilingualism in European History*. 1–40.

SUMMARY

REVISION OF SLOVENIAN NORMATIVE GUIDE: SCIENTIFIC BASIS AND INCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The last decade has been one of the most dynamic periods of synchronic Slovenian linguistics. In an age that can certainly be called electronic and that influences the diversity of language realisations by providing different media and modes of expression, it is necessary and desirable to reassess normative issues. This article presents the scientific basis of this process as well as describes the systematic inclusion of different segments of the public in the phase of assessing the suitability of current orthographic rules and formulating new ones. With the beginning of the new millennium, codification has gained a new dimension and has drawn closer to reality. Research into the dynamics of the system of the Slovenian standard language has been able to rely on empirically verifiable data owing to digitised written materials collected in corpora and other electronic databases. In preparing updates to the normative guide, the materials themselves call for rethinking, i.e. reassessing existing descriptions and looking for new, not-yet-established aspects. The revision of the orthographic rules has been going on since 2013 within the Commission on Orthography at SAZU and ZRC SAZU (the Slovenian academy and its research centre are its co-founders). Representatives of different professional communities, especially of Slovenian studies, are members of the Commission. Through the participation of representatives of research and educational institutions, experts for different fields of language and creators, the Commission is able to take note of the different views on orthographic and related linguistic issues and thus revise the language standard in accordance with the expectations of the public, i.e. users of the written language. Moreover, in revising the normative guide, the user perspective is particularly important. One of the basic principles when deciding on the scope and articulation of the orthographic rules is what the user needs or seeks. The process of revision of the normative guide therefore also includes elements of simple language management (e.g. questions in the Language Counselling service); in addition, by using certain work methods, the perception of orthographic problems is examined at different micro levels (surveys, public discussion accompanying the publication of revised chapters of the normative guide, cooperation with specialist linguists).

PRENOVA SLOVENSKEGA PRAVOPISNEGA PRIROČNIKA: ZNANSTVENA IZHODIŠČA IN VKLJUČEVANJE JAVNOSTI

Zadnje desetletje sodi med bolj dinamična obdobja sinhronega slovenističnega jezikoslovja. V dobi, ki ji z veliko gotovostjo lahko rečemo elektronska in ki s ponujanjem različnih medijev in izraznih možnosti vpliva na raznolikost jezikovnih uresničitev, je potrebno in zaželeno tudi ponovno tematiziranje pravopisnih vprašanj. V prispevku so predstavljena znanstvena izhodišča tega procesa, opisano pa je tudi sistematično vključevanje različnih javnosti v fazo preverjanja ustreznosti trenutno veljavnih pravopisnih pravil in oblikovanja novih. Z vstopom v novo tisočletje je kodifikacija dobila novo razsežnost in se približala realnosti. Raziskave dinamike sistema slovenskega knjižnega jezika so se zaradi digitaliziranega pisnega gradiva, zbranega v korpusnih in drugih elektronskih zbirkah, lahko oprle na empirično preverljive podatke. Pri pripravi pravopisnih posodobitev nas gradivo samo sili k preizpraševanju, torej k ponovni presoji že opisanega in iskanju novih, še neuveljavljenih vidikov. Prenova pravopisnih pravil poteka od leta 2013 pod okriljem Pravopisne komisije pri SAZU in ZRC SAZU (soustanovitelja sta slovenska akademija in njen raziskovalni center). V komisiji sodelujejo predstavniki različnih strokovnih javnosti, zlasti slovenistične. Z udeležbo predstavnikov raziskovalnih in pedagoških ustanov, strokovnjakov za različna jezikovna področja in ustvarjalcev je komisiji omogočeno, da se seznani z različnimi pogledi na pravopisna in s pravopisom povezana jezikovna vprašanja ter posledično prenovi knjižnojezikovni standard v skladu s pričakovanji pišoče javnosti. Pri prenavljanju pravopisnega priročnika je uporabniški vidik nadvse pomemben. Eno od osnovnih vodil pri odločanju o obsegu in ubeseditvi pravopisnih pravil je, kaj potrebuje oziroma išče uporabnik. Zato v prvo fazo vključujemo tudi elemente enostavnega jezikovnega menedžmenta (npr. vprašanja v Jezikovni svetovalnici); prav tako z uporabo nekaterih metod dela preverjamo dojemanje pravopisnih problemov na različnih mikro ravneh (ankete, javna razprava ob objavljanju prenovljenih poglavij pravopisa, sodelovanje z jezikoslovci specialisti).