

**Karin Kavčič Hvala**Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Slovenija  
[karin.kavcic@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:karin.kavcic@ff.uni-lj.si) | <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8736-2150>**Tatjana Marvin Derganc**Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Slovenija  
[tatjana.marvin@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:tatjana.marvin@ff.uni-lj.si) | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4507-966X>

## Slovenian Expressive Suffixes: Variation in the Manner of Attachment in Diminutive Suffixes and in Attitude Suffixes with a Positive Connotation

This paper presents a typological classification of Slovenian expressive suffixes based on their formal properties. Our analysis builds on crosslinguistic research on expressive suffixation in Russian, Spanish, German, and Greek (Wiltschko and Steriopo 2007; Steriopo 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Steriopo, Markopoulos, and Spyropoulos 2021). These studies demonstrate that the place and manner of attachment of expressive suffixes can be predicted from their meaning within each language, though crosslinguistic variation exists. For instance, in Russian, expressive suffixes conveying attitude function as morphological heads, whereas in Greek, they act as modifiers. Similarly, size suffixes behave as modifiers in Russian and Spanish but as heads in Greek and German. In this paper, we analyze a subset of Slovenian expressive suffixes, specifically attitude suffixes with a positive emotional connotation and size suffixes with diminutive meaning, focusing on their manner of attachment. Our findings indicate that Slovenian does not exhibit a one-to-one correlation between form and function, as both size and attitude suffixes can behave either as modifiers or heads. This demonstrates that variation in attachment patterns is not only a crosslinguistic phenomenon but also occurs within a single language.

**KEYWORDS:** expressive suffixes, diminutives, attitude suffixes, size suffixes, Slovenian

V prispevku je predstavljena tipološka delitev slovenskih ekspresivnih pripon na podlagi njihovih formalnih lastnosti. Naše izhodišče je medjezikovna raziskava o ruskih, španskih, nemških in grških ekspresivnih tvorjenkah (Wiltschko in Steriopo 2007; Steriopo 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Steriopo, Markopoulos in Spyropoulos 2021). Te raziskave pokažejo, da je formalno obliko ekspresivne pripone, natančneje njeno mesto in način dodajanja, mogoče predvideti iz pomena ekspresivnih pripon v vsakem posamičnem jeziku, vendar z medjezikovnimi razlikami.

Na primer, ekspresivne pripone, ki izražajo čustveno naravnost, se v ruščini obnašajo kot morfološka jedra, medtem ko v grščini delujejo kot modifikatorji. Nasprotno pa se pripone, ki izražajo velikost oz. manjšalnost, obnašajo v ruščini in španščini kot modifikatorji, medtem ko v grščini in nemščini delujejo kot jedra. V tem prispevku preučujemo slovensko podmnožico ekspresivnih pripon, natančneje čustveno izrazne pripone s pozitivno konotacijo in pripone za izražanje manjšalnosti, ter njihov način dodajanja k osnovi. V članku pokažemo, da v slovenščini ne moremo potrditi enoznačne korelacije med obliko in funkcijo, saj lahko tako čustveno izrazne pripone kot pripone za izražanje manjšalnosti delujejo bodisi kot modifikatorji bodisi kot jedra. To pomeni, da je razlike v načinu dodajanja obrazil mogoče najti ne le medjezikovno, temveč tudi znotraj enega samega jezika.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** ekspresivne pripone, manjšalnice, čustveno izrazne pripone, pripone za izražanje velikosti, slovenščina

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Slovenian is a language with a rich expressive suffixation inventory. Expressive suffixes are generally classified into two major semantic groups: size affixes and attitude affixes. Size affixes express the meaning of “small/young” (diminutives) or “big” (augmentatives) and can at the same time convey the meaning of speaker’s positive (“nice/endearing”) or negative attitude (“bad/ugly”), illustrated in (1, 2).

(1) Kako srčkana **kravica**! “What a cute little cow!” (size + attitude/positive)

krav-a	→	krav-ic-a
cow-fem.nom.sg		cow-EXPR.fem.nom.sg
‘cow’		‘cute little cow’

(2) Kakšna obupna **hišura**! “What a big and ugly house!” (size + attitude/negative)

hiš-a	→	hiš-ur-a
house-fem.nom.sg.		house-EXPR.fem.nom.sg
‘house’		‘big and ugly house’

Attitude affixes express a positive or negative attitude on the part of the speaker without reference to size, as shown in (3, 4).

(3) Mami nam vedno kupi čokolado. ‘Mummy always buys chocolate for us.’

mam-a	→	mam-i
<i>mother-fem.nom.sg</i>		<i>mother-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i>
‘mother’		‘mummy’

(4) Novak je en navaden pisun! ‘Novak is one bad writer.’

pis-ec	→	pis-un
<i>writ-er-masc.nom.sg</i>		<i>write-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>
‘writer’		‘bad writer’

In this paper, we analyse Slovenian expressive suffixes that appear in nouns, focusing on size affixes associated with the notion “small/young” and on attitude affixes with a positive connotation (affectionate/endearing).<sup>1</sup> The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we provide a crosslinguistic classification of expressive suffixes found in previous work, where the main objective is establishing the correlation between form and function (Wiltschko and Steriopolo 2007; Steriopolo 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Steriopolo et al. 2021). Our main task is to examine Slovenian within this framework, focusing on the manner of attachment of expressive suffixes in question. In section 3, we introduce Slovenian expressive suffixation under investigation in more detail. We present an analysis in terms of mapping expressive meaning to the structure, showing that in Slovenian, we cannot confirm a one-to-one correlation between form and function. Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2 CROSSLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN EXPRESSIVE SUFFIXES: THE MANNER OF ATTACHMENT

In this part, we present the morphological framework adopted in this work (2.1.) and the crosslinguistic analysis of expressive suffixation that relates to the manner of attachment and is provided in the work by Steriopolo and her collaborators (2.2.–2.4.).

<sup>1</sup> Expressive suffixation in Slovenian most commonly occurs in nouns, but is also frequently observed in verbs, adjectives, adverbial derivatives, interjections, and numerals, (Toporišič 2000, Černe, 2010, Stramljič Breznik 2010, 2015).

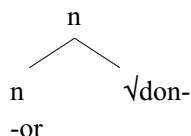
## 2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis here (as well as in the work by Steriopolo and collaborators) is conducted within the framework of Distributed Morphology, proposed by Halle and Marantz (1993), Halle (1997), Marantz (1997) and subsequent work.

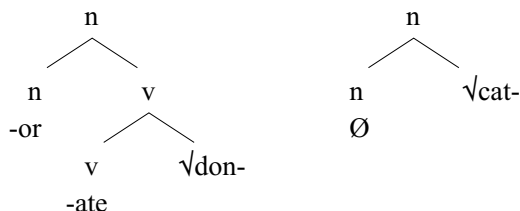
The assumption that is relevant in this paper concerns the treatment of roots and syntactic categories (N, V, A). We adopt Marantz's (1997) proposal, where  $\sqrt{\text{roots}}$  have no category *per se*, but are rather merged with category-defining functional heads such as the 'little' *n*, *v*, *a* to form nouns, verbs, and adjectives, respectively. These functional heads are typically realized by derivational affixes (5a), or by zero derivational affixes (5b).

(5)

a)



b)

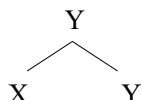


## 2.2 THE MANNER OF ATTACHMENT

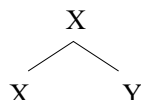
In generative literature, affixes have been argued to be either heads or modifiers.<sup>2</sup> Morphological heads contribute properties such as grammatical features which influence the labels of higher nodes, determining the syntactic category and/or subcategory features such as gender. Morphological modifiers do not project, thus only contributing meaning and not the syntactic category and/or subcategory features. The difference is illustrated in (6), where X is the modifier in (6a) and X is the head in (6b).

(6)

a) MODIFIER



b) HEAD



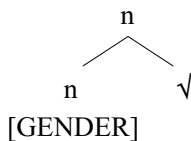
<sup>2</sup> The notion of head appears in several morphological theories (Williams 1981; Selkirk 1982; Scalise 1988; Lieber 1989; Zwicky 1985, Wilschko and Steriopolo 2007 among others).

It is not always possible to predict whether a derivational affix is a head or a modifier. When it comes to expressive suffixes, they have been shown to vary in this property across languages (Lieber 1989; Scalise 1988; Wiltchko and Steriopo 2007; Steriopo 2008, 2009, 2015; Steriopo et al. 2021). We turn to a more detailed description of the cross-linguistic proposal regarding this issue by Steriopo and her collaborators in section 2.4.

### 2.3 GENDER

Slovenian has three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, and derivational affixes can determine the gender of the derived noun. As to the category of gender, we adopt the assumption that gender is a feature on the category defining head *n* (see e.g. Ferrari 2005; Lowenstamm 2008; Acquaviva 2009; Kramer 2015).<sup>3</sup> We assume the following gender features: [masculine], [feminine], and [neuter].<sup>4</sup>

(7)



With respect to expressive suffixes and their head or modifier status that relates to gender feature, we adopt the diagnostic from Steriopo et al. (2021): If an expressive suffix can cause a change in gender feature of the base it attaches to, then this affix is a morphological head.<sup>5,6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Alternative proposals claim that gender is introduced in its own phrase GenP (e.g. Picallo 1991) or that it is distributed across different positions and can also be a property of a root (Steriopo and Wiltchko 2010).

<sup>4</sup> See Kramer (2015) for a more detailed cross-linguistic analysis of gender features.

<sup>5</sup> The same argument is found also in Scalise (1988), which identifies Italian diminutive suffixes as non-heads, given that they inherit the gender of the base they attach to. See also Gouskova and Bobaljik (2022) for an analysis of the Russian affix *-onok*. In their proposal, the affix *-onok* behaves as head when it comprises a lexical morpheme and a functional nominalizing head (in its baby-diminutive function), while it behaves as a modifier when it comprises the lexical morpheme alone (in its evaluative function).

<sup>6</sup> In an earlier proposal, Steriopo (2008, 2009) defined a morphological head as an affix that alters at least one of the following properties of the base: syntactic category, grammatical gender, or inflectional class. However, in Steriopo et al. (2021), the change of inflectional class is no longer considered relevant. In this study, we adopt gender as the sole defining characteristic for two reasons. First, we found no conclusive evidence that category change is relevant for Slovenian. The Slovenian counterparts of Russian examples with category change can be interpreted as nominalizations to which expressive morphology is added (e.g., *umazan* 'dirty' (Adj) → *umazanec* 'dirty person' (N) → *umazanček* 'dirty person-exp.' (N)). Second, Steriopo's (2008, 2009) approach fails to account for cases where size suffixes alter declension. To preserve her analysis, Steriopo attributes these changes to phonological properties of nouns, making the use of declension class as a criterion questionable. Moreover, Gouskova and Bobaljik (2022) demonstrate that declension class does not function as the same type of feature as gender.

## 2.4 MANNER OF ATTACHMENT IN RUSSIAN, SPANISH, GERMAN AND GREEK EXPRESSIVE MORPHOLOGY

Steriopolo (2008, 2009, 2015) and Steriopolo et al. (2021), argue that Russian size suffixes act as syntactic modifiers, as they do not change the syntactic category or grammatical gender, (8), while Russian attitude suffixes act as heads, being capable of determining the syntactic category as well as gender change, (9).<sup>7</sup>

(8)

masc → masc

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| a) | č'elov'ek<br><i>person-masc.nom.sg</i><br>'person' | č'elov'eč-ek<br><i>person-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'person (diminutive)' |
|----|--|---|

fem → fem

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| b) | ovc-a<br><i>sheep-fem.nom.sg</i><br>'sheep' | ov'eč'-k-a<br><i>sheep-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i><br>'sheep (diminutive)' |
|----|---|--|

neu → neu

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| c) | bolot-o<br><i>swamp-neu.nom.sg</i><br>'swamp' | bolot-c-e<br><i>swamp-EXPR.neu.nom.sg</i><br>'swamp (diminutive)' |
|----|---|---|

(9)

neu → fem

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| a) | bolot-o<br><i>swamp-neu.nom.sg</i><br>'swamp' | bolot-in-a<br><i>swamp-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i><br>'swamp (vulgar)' |
|----|---|--|

masc → fem

- |    |  |  |                     |
|----|--|--|---------------------|
| b) | golod<br><i>hunger-masc.nom.sg</i><br>'hunger' | golod-ux-a<br><i>hunger-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i><br>'hunger (vulgar)' | (Steriopolo, 2009). |
|----|--|--|---------------------|

<sup>7</sup> Steriopolo (2008) is also concerned with the place of attachment of expressive suffixes in Russian. She shows that attitude suffixes attach to category-free as well as to categorized roots, while size suffixes merge only with categorized roots of the type *nP*. In this paper, we only consider the manner of attachment in Slovenian expressive suffixation, leaving place of attachment for future research.

Steriopolo (2015) and Steriopolo et al. (2021) also examine a subset of expressive suffixation in German and Spanish, specifically their diminutives. They show that in German, diminutives act as syntactic heads, as they can change the grammatical gender of the base, (10). In Spanish, on the other hand, diminutives act as modifiers, (11).

(10)

masc  $\rightarrow$  neuter

- |    |                             |              |    |                           |                          |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------|----|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) | der/klein-er                | Tisch        | b) | das/klein-es              | Tisch- <b>chen/-lein</b> |
|    | <i>the.masc/little-masc</i> | <i>table</i> |    | <i>the.neu/little-neu</i> | <i>table-dim/dim</i>     |

- c)
- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| $  \begin{array}{c}  n_2^{\text{neu}} \\  \swarrow \quad \searrow \\  n_2^{\text{neu}} \quad n_1^{\text{masc}} \\  \text{-chen/-lein} \quad \Delta \\  \text{Tisch} \\  \text{'table'}  \end{array}  $ | Tisch-chen/-lein 'table (dim)' |
|--|--------------------------------|

(11)

- |    |                             |                 |           |             |           |                 |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| a) | El                          | perr-o          | de        | Juan        | está      | enferm-o.       |
|    | <i>the.masc</i>             | <i>dog-masc</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>Juan</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>ill-masc</i> |
|    | 'Juan's (male) dog is ill.' |                 |           |             |           |                 |

- |    |                                    |                     |           |             |           |                 |
|----|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| b) | El                                 | perr- <b>it</b> -o  | de        | Juan        | está      | enferm-o.       |
|    | <i>the.masc</i>                    | <i>dog-dim-masc</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>Juan</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>ill-masc</i> |
|    | 'Juan's little (male) dog is ill.' |                     |           |             |           |                 |

- |    |                               |                |           |             |           |                |
|----|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| c) | La                            | perr-a         | de        | Juan        | está      | enferm-a.      |
|    | <i>the.fem</i>                | <i>dog-fem</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>Juan</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>ill-fem</i> |
|    | 'Juan's (female) dog is ill.' |                |           |             |           |                |

- |  |                                      |                    |           |             |           |                |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
|  | La                                   | perr- <b>it</b> -a | de        | Juan        | está      | enferm-a.      |
|  | <i>the.fem</i>                       | <i>dog-dim-fem</i> | <i>of</i> | <i>Juan</i> | <i>is</i> | <i>ill-fem</i> |
|  | 'Juan's little (female) dog is ill.' |                    |           |             |           |                |

Fortin (2011, p.c.), from Steriopolo (2015)

Finally, Steriopolo et al. (2021) argue that Greek expressive suffixes are symmetrically opposite to the Russian ones. The Greek attitude suffixes behave as syntactic modifiers, while Greek size suffixes behave as syntactic heads.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Steriopolo et al. (2021) examine two most productive affixes in Greek, -ak, and -ul.

The data from Russian, German, Spanish and Greek shows that even though expressive suffixes in these languages carry the same meaning (function), they differ in their syntactic structure (form), providing evidence that there is no one-to-one correlation between form and function of expressive suffixes across languages. However, given the data analyzed by Steriopo and collaborators, one can still maintain a one-to-one correlation between form and function within a single language, e.g. all size affixes in Russian behave as modifiers and all attitude affixes behave as heads. We now proceed to analyzing Slovenian expressive morphology, where we show that variation can occur even within a single language.

### 3 SLOVENIAN EXPRESSIVE SUFFIXES

Slovenian expressive suffixes can be divided into two major semantic groups, size affixes (diminutive or augmentative) and attitude affixes (with positive or negative connotation). In this paper we limit ourselves to diminutive size affixes (section 3.1.) and attitude affixes expressing a positive meaning (section 3.2.).

#### 3.1 SIZE AFFIXES (DIMINUTIVES)

##### 3.1.1 The list of nominal diminutives

Nominal diminutives in Slovenian are created by attaching one of numerous suffixes to a base that can be either masculine (12a), feminine (12b) or neuter (12c), producing nouns of masculine, feminine or neuter gender, respectively.

(12)

- |    |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|
| a) | fant<br><i>boy-masc.nom.sg.</i><br>'boy'        | → | fant- <b>ek</b><br><i>boy-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'little boy'        |
| b) | hiša<br><i>house.fem.nom.sg.</i><br>'house'     | → | hiš- <b>k-a</b><br><i>house-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i><br>'little house'     |
| c) | zrcalo<br><i>mirror.neu.nom.sg.</i><br>'mirror' | → | zrcal- <b>c-e</b><br><i>mirror.EXPR.neu.nom.sg</i><br>'little mirror' |



Different lists of Slovenian diminutive affixes appear in the works by Bajec (1950), Toporišič (1973), Toporišič (2000), Stramljič Breznik (2010), Vidovič Muha (2018). In this paper we take the list by Vidovič Muha (2018) in Table 1 as the starting point, supplementing it with our modifications of the affixes and by adding expressive affixes that we believe are missing.<sup>9</sup> In Vidovič Muha's list, suffixes are presented in their singular nominative case form: for the masculine form this means a zero ending, while the feminine and neuter forms consist of the suffix and the declension ending (e.g. *-ica* = *ic* + *a*). In our paper, we insert a hyphen between the affix and the declension ending in examples (e.g. *kravi-ic-a*) while for in-text reference to individual affixes, we put the ending in brackets (e.g. *-ic(a)*). Similarly to Vidovič Muha (2018), we use brackets for the fleeting vowel *-e-* (e.g. *-(e)k*, *gumbek* 'small button-sg.nom', *gumbka* 'small button-sg.gen').

Gender	Suffixes (adding the meaning of 'small' + optionally 'affectionate') <sup>10</sup>					
masculine	<i>-(e)k</i> gumb-ek button-EXPR	<i>-č(e)k</i> hotel-ček hotel-EXPR	<i>-(e)c</i> vrag-ec devil-EXPR	<i>-ič</i> gozd-ič forest-EXPR	<i>-ic</i> mož-ic man-EXPR	<i>-et</i> kamion-et camion-EXPR
feminine	<i>-ica</i> žab-ica frog-EXPR	<i>-ka</i> rač-ka duck-EXPR	<i>-ca</i> noč-ca night-EXPR	<i>-ice</i> hlač-ice trousers-EXPR	<i>-ce</i> dver-ce door-EXPR	<i>-ke</i> hlač-ke trousers-EXPR
neuter	<i>-ce</i> kril-ce skirt-EXPR	<i>-ece</i> lič-ece cheek-EXPR	<i>-ko</i> klob-ko ball.of.thread-EXPR	<i>-iče</i> perj-iče feathers-EXPR	<i>-eca</i> ust-eca mouth-EXPR	
	<i>-ca</i> dur-ca door-EXPR	<i>-ka</i> pljuč-ka lungs-EXPR				

TABLE 1: List of diminutive suffixes, adapted from (Vidovič Muha 2018)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> We chose Vidovič Muha (2018) as our starting point for the following reasons. First, it offers the most comprehensive list of expressive suffixes, together with the discussion on the meaning and productivity of individual affixes, supplemented with the list of all examples taken from *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (Dictionary of Standard Slovenian). Second, it points to cases in which gender change occurs in expressive suffixation.

<sup>10</sup> It is sometimes very difficult to tease the two meanings (size vs. attitude) apart, as size affixes almost always contain attitude meaning. See also Sicherl and Žele (2011) for a discussion on the blurred boundaries between denotation and connotation in diminutives.

<sup>11</sup> The list of affixes in Table 1 could be optimized and reduced by recognizing that some affixes represent *pluralia tantum* forms. For example, *-ice* (feminine plural) is simply the plural form of *-ica* when attached to a feminine *pluralia tantum* noun. The same pattern applies to *-ce* (plural of *-ca*), *-ke* (plural of *-ka*), and for neuters, *-eca* (plural of *-ece*), *-ca* (plural of *-ce*), and *-ka* (plural of *-ko*). Further simplifications are possible across gender categories. For instance, we could generalize a single affix, *-e-*, which manifests as *-(e)c* in masculines (via schwa insertion), *-ca* in feminines, and *-ce* in neuters, once the case ending has been added.

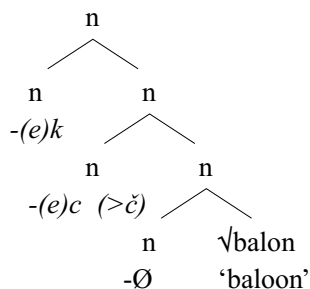
Our main modification of this list is a different treatment of  $-\check{c}(e)k$ , one of the most productive suffixes. This suffix is traditionally considered to be a phonetically conditioned allomorph that occurs in complementary distribution with the diminutive suffix  $-(e)k$ :  $-\check{c}(e)k$  attaches to words that end in sonorants (m, l, n, r, j, v), while  $-(e)k$  is added to all other endings (Vidovič Muha 2018).

(13)

- a) gumb – gumbek, \*gumbček  
 button button.EXPR
- b) balon – balonček, \*balonek  
 balloon balloon.EXPR

In this paper we propose that instead of being an allomorph of  $-(e)k$ , the suffix  $-\check{c}(e)k$  is a combination of two separate expressive suffixes,  $-(e)c$  and  $-(e)k$ , with the schwa in the suffix  $-(e)c$  being dropped after the addition of  $-(e)k$ , and  $/c/$  turning into  $/\check{c}/$  [tʃ] due to palatalization. For words such as *balonček*, we propose the structure in (14).<sup>12</sup>

(14)



We present two main arguments for our claim. First, if we assume the allomorph analysis, in which the suffix  $-\check{c}(e)k$  only attaches to sonorants, then we cannot explain how this suffix can be attached to examples which do not end in sonorants, (15):

<sup>12</sup> In this study, we analyze the suffix  $-\check{c}(e)k$  as a combination of the suffixes  $-(e)c$  and  $-(e)k$  even in cases where the intermediate form with  $-(e)c$  does not exist as an independent word (e.g., *balon* 'balloon' → *balon-ec* non-existent → *balon-č-ek* 'little balloon'). Such cases, where an intermediate stage is unattested, are common in Slovenian derivation. For instance, when forming the verbal noun *padanje* 'falling', the nominalizer *-je* attaches to the *-n* participle *padan* ('fallen', from the verb *padati* 'fall'), which does not exist as a standalone form. A similar phenomenon occurs with the affix *-ov*, as in *bank-ov-ec* ('banknote'). For further discussion, see Simonović and Mišmaš (2020).

(15)

hleb-ček	hrib-ček	trebuš-ček,	hlod-ček
<i>loaf-EXPR</i>	<i>hill-EXPR</i>	<i>belly-EXPR</i>	<i>log-EXPR</i>
‘small loaf’	‘small hill’	‘small belly’	‘small log’

koš-ček,	sod-ček	hip-ček
<i>piece-EXPR</i>	<i>barrel-EXPR</i>	<i>moment-EXPR</i>
‘small piece’	‘small barrel’	‘quick moment’

If we analyse the affix *-č(e)k* as the combination of  $[-(e)c + -(e)k]$ , then these and other similar problematic cases can be explained, (16).

(16)

hleb	→	hleb-ec	→	hleb-č-ek
<i>loaf</i>		<i>loaf-EXPR</i>		<i>loaf-EXPR-EXPR</i>

Second, our proposal aligns with Vidovič Muha (2018) regarding numerous words that contain the non-diminutive suffix *-(e)c* but form their diminutives by adding *-(e)k*, such as *begun-ec* ‘refugee’ > *begun-č-ek* ‘refugee-EXPR’. Although *-(e)c* is not a diminutive suffix in these cases, the same process of schwa-dropping and palatalization occurs when *-(e)k* is added.

### 3.1.2 The manner of attachment of diminutive suffixes

Slovenian diminutive affixes produce nouns belonging to one of the three genders, at the same time also selecting for a particular gender of the noun they attach to: e.g. *-(e)k* will select for masculine stems, *-ic(a)* for feminine and *-c(e)* for neuter stems, producing diminutives such as (17a), but not diminutives as in (17b). Clearly, this points to a modifier-like behaviour, as the gender of the noun remains unchanged after adding the diminutive suffix.<sup>13</sup>

(17)

a) vrč	→	vrč-ek
<i>jug.masc</i>		<i>jug-EXPR.masc</i>
‘jug’		‘small jug’

<sup>13</sup> In some cases, these affixes change the declension without changing gender, as seen in (i): (i) *stvar* ‘thing, fem.(declension II)’ → *stvar-c-a* ‘small thing, fem.(declension I)’. We adopt the view in Gouskova and Bobaljik (2022), where declension class is not the same type of feature as gender and thus not treated as a feature that percolates in the structure of the word. The same view is adopted in Steriopo et al. (2021), though interestingly not in Steriopo (2008, 2009).

hiša	→	hiš-ic-a
<i>house.fem</i>		<i>house-EXPR.fem</i>
‘house’		‘small house’

okno	→	oken-c-e
<i>window.neu</i>		<i>window-EXPR.neu</i>
‘window’		‘small window’

b) vrč ‘jug’ → \*vrč-ic-a hiša ‘house’ → \*hiš-ek okno ‘window’ → \*okn-ic-a<sup>14</sup>

There are a few examples, however, where diminutive attachment results in gender change, leading us to conclude that Slovenian diminutive affixes can also behave as heads. The affixes that show such behaviour are *-(e)k* and *-(e)c*. *-(E)k* can attach also to feminine or neuter nouns, producing masculine diminutives, as seen in (18). *-(E)c* can attach to neuter nouns, producing masculine diminutives, (19).

(18)

a) fem → masc

miš	→	miš- <b>ek</b>
<i>mouse-fem.nom.sg</i>		<i>mouse-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>

raca	→	rač- <b>ek</b>
<i>duck-fem.nom.sg</i>		<i>duck-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>

b) neu → masc

sonce	→	sonč- <b>ek</b>
<i>sun-neu.nom.sg</i>		<i>sun-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>

srce	→	srč- <b>ek</b>
<i>heart-neu.nom.sg</i>		<i>heart-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>

(19)

neu → masc

mleko	→	mlek- <b>ec</b>
<i>milk-neu.nom.sg</i>		<i>milk-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>

<sup>14</sup> The word *oknica* exists in the meaning of “window sash”, which is not a diminutive. In fact, many of expressive suffixes have homophonous non-expressive counterparts. For example, *-ic(a)* is widely used to form feminatives (učitelj “teacher” – učitelj-ic-a “female teacher”), *-(e)c* is used in the agentive noun formation (pis-ec “writer”), etc.

kolo → koles-**ec**<sup>15</sup>  
*bike-neu.nom.sg* → *bike-EXPR.masc.nom.sg*

uho → uh-**ec**<sup>16</sup>  
*ear-neu.nom.sg* → *ear-EXPR.masc.nom.sg*

### 3.2 ATTITUDE SUFFIXES WITH THE MEANING “NICE/ENDEARING”

We now turn to attitude affixes that are associated with a positive emotional connotation, for which Vidovič Muha (2018) proposes the following list, Table 2.

Gender	Suffixes (adding the meaning ‘affectionate’)					
masculine	-o	-i	-ej	-ko	-ka	
	dečk-o <i>boy-EXPR</i>	strič-i <i>uncle-EXPR</i>	ded-ej <i>grandad-EXPR</i>	sin-ko <i>son-EXPR</i>	oč-ka <i>father-EXPR</i>	
	-či	-čki				
	papa-či <i>father-EXPR</i>	možgan-čki <i>brain-EXPR</i>				
feminine	-i	-an				
	muc-i <sup>17</sup> <i>cat-EXPR</i>	mam-an <i>mother-EXPR</i>				
neuter						

TABLE 2: List of expressive suffixes (positive connotation), adapted from (Vidovič Muha 2018)

The affixes in Table (2) act as modifiers, as none of them change gender.

(20)

- a) stric → strič-**i**  
*uncle-masc.nom.sg* → *uncle-EXPR.masc.nom.sg*  
‘uncle’ → ‘uncle (affectionate)’
- b) mama → mam-**an**<sup>18</sup>  
*mother-fem.nom.sg* → *mother-EXPR.fem.nom.sg*  
‘mother’ → ‘mother (affectionate)’

<sup>15</sup> In some neuter nouns (e.g. *kolo* ‘wheel’, *uho* ‘ear’, *oko* ‘eye’, *drevo* ‘tree’, *telo* ‘body’) the stem is modified by the addition of the extension -s-.

<sup>16</sup> This word appears often in children’s literature as a right attributive modifier: *medvedek Uhec* ‘bear cub Uhec’, *zajček Uhec* ‘bunny Uhec’.

<sup>17</sup> See Snoj (2015) for a discussion on the attitude affixes -i.

<sup>18</sup> This example involves a change in declension class, but not the change in gender (from feminine I to feminine III). The word *maman* ‘mother (affectionate)’ is an indeclinable feminine noun.

We now proceed to expanding Vidovič Muha's (2018) list by incorporating additional affixes that were not originally included:  $-(e)k_{AT}$ ,  $-ič_{AT}$ ,  $-(e)c_{AT}$ ,  $-ic(a)_{AT}$ ,  $-k(a)_{AT}$ ,  $-c(e)_{AT}$ . To distinguish the latter from their diminutive homophones (cf. 3.1.), we use the subscript for attitude suffixes.

We begin with  $-(e)k_{AT}$  and the examples derived from masculine nouns in (21), which are all classified as diminutives in Vidovič Muha (2018).<sup>19</sup> Contrary to Vidovič Muha, we would like to suggest that these nouns are not diminutives, but rather nouns formed with the attitude affix  $-(e)k_{AT}$ . For example, the word *atek* is not a father who is small in terms of size, but an endearing form of the word *ata* "father".

(21)

- |    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| a) | <i>ata</i><br><i>dad-masc.nom.sg</i><br>'dad'         | → | <i>at-ek</i><br><i>dad-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'dad (affectionate)'          |
| b) | <i>ded</i><br><i>grandad-masc.nom.sg</i><br>'grandad' | → | <i>ded-ek</i><br><i>grandad-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'grandad (affectionate)' |
| c) | <i>stric</i><br><i>uncle-masc.nom.sg</i><br>'uncle'   | → | <i>strič-ek</i><br><i>uncle-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'uncle (affectionate)'   |

The attachment of  $-ek_{AT}$  to feminine nouns is seen with the nouns in (22). Again, the affix does not express the meaning of size but rather conveys the speaker's affectionate attitude toward the referent.

(22)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>punc-a</i><br><i>girl-fem.nom.sg</i><br>'girl'      | → | <i>punč-ek</i><br><i>girl-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'girl (affectionate)'      |
| <i>sirot-a</i><br><i>orphan-fem.nom.sg</i><br>'orphan' | → | <i>sirot-ek</i><br><i>orphan-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i><br>'orphan (affectionate)' |

<sup>19</sup> Toporišič (2000) does not list these specific examples, however, we can assume that in his system, they would be listed under the category affectionate-diminutive.

The attachment of  $-(e)k_{AT}$  to neuter nouns is exemplified in (23). As above, the affix here expresses the speaker's affectionate attitude. For example, *mesek* is not a small amount of meat, but an endearing form of the word *meso* 'meat'. Such form is typically used in parent-child conversation when a parent uses the affectionate word with the goal of persuading the child to eat the meat.

(23)

mes-o	→	mes- <b>ek</b>
<i>meat-neu.nom.sg</i>		<i>meat-EXPR.masc.nom.sg</i>
'meat'		'meat (affectionate)'
sonc-e 'sun'	→	sonč- <b>ek</b> 'sun (affectionate)'
jajc-e 'egg'	→	jajč- <b>ek</b> 'egg (affectionate)'
src-e 'heart'	→	srč- <b>ek</b> 'heart (affectionate)'
želez-o 'iron'	→	želez- <b>ek</b> 'iron (affectionate)'
lic-e 'cheek'	→	lič- <b>ek</b> 'cheek (affectionate)'
uh-o 'ear'	→	uh- <b>ek</b> , ušes- <b>ek</b> 'ear (affectionate)'
ok-o 'eye'	→	oč- <b>ek</b> , očes- <b>ek</b> 'eye (affectionate)'
pišč-e 'chick'	→	pišč- <b>ek</b> 'chick (affectionate)'
jabolk-o 'apple'	→	jabolč- <b>ek</b> 'apple (affectionate)'

Note that some of the words in (23) can be ambiguous between the size and attitude meaning, depending on the context in which they are used. For example, *sonček* could be used to refer to a small sun (e.g. in a drawing when comparing a small sun (*sonček*) to a big sun (*sonce*)) but is not a size affix in (24), where it is used to express an affectionate attitude of the speaker.

(24) Zunaj je krasen sonček!

'The sun (affectionate) outside is lovely!'

Next we provide examples where  $-(e)k_{AT}$  attaches to neuter diminutives in  $-c(e)$  formed from neuter nouns, (25).<sup>20</sup> We believe that in such cases, the suffix  $-(e)k$  does not function as a diminutive but rather reinforces the attitude meaning already inherent in the diminutive. For example, *cedilček* is not the diminutive of *cedilce* in the sense of indicating a smaller size; rather, it serves as a more endearing form of the word.

<sup>20</sup> The consonant /c/ turns into /č/ [tʃ] due to palatalization.

(25)

cedil-o	→	cedil- <b>ce</b>	→	cedil-č- <b>ek</b>
strainer-neu.n.sg		strainer-EXPR.neu.n.sg		strainer-EXPR.EXPR.neu.n.sg
‘strainer’		‘strainer (affectionate)’		‘strainer (affectionate)’

drev-o ‘tree’	→	dreves- <b>ce</b>	→	dreves-č- <b>ek</b>
kolen-o ‘knee’	→	kolen- <b>ce</b>	→	kolen-č- <b>ek</b>
kol-o ‘bike’	→	koles- <b>ce</b>	→	koles-č- <b>ek</b>
kladiv-o ‘hammer’	→	kladiv- <b>ce</b>	→	kladiv-č- <b>ek</b>
masl-o ‘butter’	→	masel- <b>ce</b>	→	masel-č- <b>ek</b>
mil-o ‘soap’	→	mil- <b>ce</b>	→	mil-č- <b>ek</b>
ogledal-o ‘mirror’	→	ogledal- <b>ce</b>	→	ogledal-č- <b>ek</b>
okn-o ‘window’	→	oken- <b>ce</b>	→	oken-č- <b>ek</b>
polen-o ‘log’	→	polen- <b>ce</b>	→	polen-č- <b>ek</b>
tel-o ‘body’	→	teles- <b>ce</b>	→	teles-č- <b>ek</b>
zelj-e ‘cabbage’	→	zelj- <b>ce</b>	→	zelj-č- <b>ek</b>

We now turn to the affix *-ič<sub>AT</sub>*, which in examples (26) functions not as a size but as an attitude affix. The nouns in *-ič* that refer to young animals, (26a, b) are derived from bases that are inherently diminutive, meaning the affectionate nuance is simply layered onto the diminutive meaning already present in the root. The word *deklič* in (26c) is not a smaller or younger variant of *dekle* but rather a more endearing form of it. As can be seen from (26), *-ič<sub>AT</sub>* behaves as head, changing the gender of the base noun.

(26)

a) žreb-e	→	žreb- <b>ič</b>
foal- <b>neu.nom.sg</b>		foal-EXPR. <b>masc.nom.sg</b>
‘foal’		‘foal (affectionate)’
b) tel-e	→	tel- <b>ič</b>
calf- <b>neu.nom.sg</b>		calf-EXPR. <b>masc.nom.sg</b>
‘calf’		‘calf (affectionate)’
c) dekl-e <sup>21</sup>	→	dekl- <b>ič</b>
girl- <b>neu.nom.sg</b>		girl-EXPR. <b>masc.nom.sg</b>
‘girl’		‘girl (affectionate)’

<sup>21</sup> Note that the word *dekle* can also be of feminine gender (used with feminine agreement).



Finally, we examine the affixes  $-ic(a)_{AT}$  -  $k(a)_{AT}$  -  $c(e)_{AT}$ , which convey endearment and function as modifiers without altering the gender of the base to which they attach, as shown in (27). Notably, these affixes are absent from Vidovič Muha's (2018) classification, where only their homophonous counterparts are categorized as size affixes. In contrast, Toporišič (2000) classifies them separately as affectionate-diminutive affixes, distinguishing them from their purely diminutive variants.

(27)

a) Suffix  $-ic(a)_{AT}$

mam-a	→	mam- <b>ic</b> -a
<i>mother-fem.nom.sg</i>		<i>mother-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i>
'mother'		'mother (affectionate)'

kav-a 'coffee'	→	kav- <b>ic</b> -a 'coffee (affectionate)'
rev-a 'poor woman'	→	rev- <b>ic</b> -a 'poor woman (affectionate)'
sirot-a 'orphan'	→	sirot- <b>ic</b> -a 'orphan (affectionate)' <sup>22</sup>

b) Suffix  $-k(a)_{AT}$

mam-a	→	mam- <b>k</b> -a
<i>mother-fem.nom.sg</i>		<i>mother-EXPR.fem.nom.sg</i>
'mother'		'mother (affectionate)'
tet-a 'aunt'	→	tet- <b>k</b> -a 'aunt (affectionate)'

c) Suffix  $-c(e)_{AT}$

vin-o	→	vin- <b>c</b> -e
<i>wine-neu.nom.sg</i>		<i>wine-EXPR.neu.nom.sg</i>
'wine'		'wine (affectionate)'
piv-o 'beer'	→	piv- <b>c</b> -e 'beer (affectionate)'

<sup>22</sup> The noun *jokica* 'crybaby' is a case where the affix  $-ic(a)$  changes the gender of the base noun *jok* 'crying-masc.' This affix is not part of our current research, as we do not consider attitude affixes with a negative connotation.

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Slovenian diminutives and attitude suffixes expressing a positive connotation in relation to their manner of attachment can be classified as in Table 3.

Type	Meaning	Modifier attachment	Head attachment
Size	Small/Young+ Affectionate	<b>Masc:</b> $-(e)k$ , $-(e)c$ , $-ič$ , $-ic$ , $-et$ <b>Fem:</b> $-ic(a)$ , $-k(a)$ , $-c(a)$ , $-ic(e)$ , $-c(e)$ , $-k(e)$ <b>Neu:</b> $-c(e)$ , $-ec(e)$ , $-k(o)$ , $-ič(e)$ , $-ec(a)$ , $-c(a)$ , $-k(a)$	<b>Masc:</b> $-(e)k$ , $-(e)c$ <b>Fem:</b> - <b>Neu:</b> -
Attitude	Affectionate	<b>Masc:</b> $-(o)$ , $-k(o)$ , $-i$ , $-ej$ , $-k(a)$ , $-či$ , $-čk(i)$ <b>Fem:</b> $-i$ , $-an$ , $-ic(a)_{AT}$ , $-k(a)_{AT}$ <b>Neu:</b> $-c(e)_{AT}$	<b>Masc:</b> $-(e)k_{AT}$ , $-ič_{AT}$ <b>Fem:</b> - <b>Neu:</b> -

TABLE 3: Manner of attachment in Slovenian diminutives and attitude suffixes with positive connotation

This classification is based on an analysis of Slovenian data, with a particular focus on the gender-changing potential of expressive affixes. While most size affixes in Slovenian are formed through modifier attachment, some cases involve head attachment, such as  $-(e)k$  and  $-(e)c$ . Similarly, although attitude affixes primarily function as modifiers, there are numerous instances where two of them,  $-(e)k_{AT}$  and  $-ič_{AT}$ , attach as heads. Slovenian data demonstrates that variation in the correlation between form and meaning is not limited to crosslinguistic differences but also occurs within a single language. This insight makes a significant contribution to the broader study of expressive morphology.

The author states that the article is based on research data from existing and publicly available sources and literature, which are cited in the list of bibliography below.

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## SUMMARY

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This paper presents a typological division of Slovenian expressive suffixes based on their formal properties. The analysis is conducted within the framework of Distributed Morphology, proposed by Halle and Marantz (1993), Halle (1997), Marantz (1997) and subsequent work. Our starting point is the crosslinguistic research on Russian, Spanish, German and Greek expressive suffixation (Wiltschko and Steriopolo 2007; Steriopolo 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Steriopolo, Markopoulos and Spyropoulos 2021). The authors show that the form of expressive suffixation, specifically its place and manner of attachment, can be predicted from the meaning of expressive suffixes in each individual language, but with cross-linguistic differences. For example, expressive suffixes with the meaning of attitude act as morphological heads in Russian, while in Greek they act as modifiers. Expressive suffixes with the meaning of size act as modifiers in Russian and Spanish, while they behave as heads in Greek and German. In this paper, we examine a Slovenian subset of expressive suffixes,

more precisely attitude suffixes with a positive emotional connotation and size suffixes with diminutive meaning and study their manner of attachment. We show that in Slovenian, we cannot confirm a one-to-one correlation between form and function, as both size and attitude suffixes behave either as modifiers or heads. This means that variation in the manner of attachment can be found not only cross-linguistically but also within a single language.

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**SLOVENSKE EKSPRESIVNE PRIPONE: VARIACIJA V NAČINU DODAJANJA  
OBRAZILA NA PRIMERU POZITIVNO KONOTIRANE MANJŠALNOSTI IN POZITIVNE  
KONOTACIJE BREZ MANJŠALNOSTI**

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V prispevku je predstavljena tipološka delitev slovenskih ekspresivnih pripon na podlagi njihovih formalnih lastnosti. Analiza je predstavljena v okviru pristopa t. i. razpršene morfologije (Distributed Morphology), ki sta jo prva predlagala Halle in Marantz (1993), Halle (1997), Marantz (1997) ter so jo kasneje prevzeli številni drugi avtorji. Naše izhodišče je medjezikovna raziskava o ruskih, španskih, nemških in grških ekspresivnih tvorjenkah (Wiltschko in Steriopolu 2007; Steriopolu 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016; Steriopolu, Markopoulos in Spyropoulos 2021). Avtorji te raziskave pokažejo, da je formalno obliko ekspresivne pripone, natančneje njeno mesto in način vezave, mogoče predvideti iz pomena ekspresivnih pripon v vsakem posamičnem jeziku, vendar z medjezikovnimi razlikami. Na primer, ekspresivne pripone, ki izražajo čustveno naravnost, delujejo kot morfološka jedra v ruščini, medtem ko v grščini delujejo kot modifikatorji. Nasprotno pa pripone, ki izražajo velikost oz. manjšalnost, delujejo kot modifikatorji v ruščini in španščini, medtem ko se v grščini in nemščini obnašajo kot jedra. V tem prispevku preučujemo slovensko podmnožico ekspresivnih pripon, natančneje čustveno izrazne pripone s pozitivno konotacijo in pripone za izražanje velikosti, ter preučujemo njihov način vezave. V članku pokažemo, da v slovenščini ne moremo potrditi enoznačne korelacije med obliko in funkcijo, saj lahko tako čustveno izrazne pripone kot pripone za izražanje velikosti delujejo bodisi kot modifikatorji ali kot jedra. To pomeni, da je razlike v načinu vezave mogoče najti ne le medjezikovno, temveč tudi znotraj enega samega jezika.