



## THE ENGLISH-SLOVENE LANGUAGE CONTACT: BORROWING OF PERSONAL NAMES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*Bo Kevin Kampl igrat? Vse bolj se zdi, da ne.* [Is Kevin Kampl to play? It seems unlikely.]<sup>1</sup>

Such and similar were this year's headlines in Slovene sports newspapers. The Slovene footballer, though born in Germany and of mixed Slovene-German parentage, may currently be the most famous Slovene bearing the name of *Kevin*. This name, unused in Slovenia prior to 1970, exemplifies the trend of fashionable name borrowing from a prestigious foreign culture. The national statistical data show that this male English name first appeared in Slovenia around 1970, gained popularity in 1990, and peaked in 1996. Regionally, about 50 percent of all newborns named *Kevin* lived in Štajerska and Prekmurje, followed by Primorska (about 25 percent) (see Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, hereafter SURS; cf. Lenarčič 2012: 405). Why have so many Slovene parents in the 1990s decided to name their child *Kevin*? The unwitting culprit for its popularity is most probably the American actor Kevin Costner, whose acting career peaked between 1987 and 1992.

However, the naming of a newborn gives the baby identity. While Slovene parents can choose from a number of original Slovene first names whose etymologies are undoubtedly Slovene (e.g. *Mojca, Ajda*), there is an even greater pool of first names to choose from that have been borrowed in the past from various sources and are no longer felt to be foreign at all although their origins may be Germanic, Romance, Latin(ate), or Slavic (e.g. *Albert, Renato, Aleš, Igor*). But during the past few decades, the lists of popular names that are given to newborns in Slovenia have become increasingly foreign-sounding. Between 1981 and 1990, several English-derived names, *Robert/Robi, Alen/Alan, Elvis, Patrik, Diana, Lana, Samanta* and *Sabrina*, made it onto the list of 200 most popular names of the decade.<sup>2</sup> The next decade (1991–2000), saw a new influx of (potentially) English names: *Kevin, Vanesa/Vanessa, Tara, Alex/Alexander, Kim, Patrick, Melani/Melanie, Neli, Sarah*,

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1 ekipa24.si/clanek/nogomet/evropskipokali/54eadfea90a96/po-kvalifikacijah-usodna-se-poskodba; accessed July 2015.

2 The etymological origins of these names are not always English, but the English-speaking culture may have played a decisive role in their dissemination. For the criteria on inclusion among names from English source, see section 3.1.

and *Nick*, with *Diana*, *Samanta*, *Alan*, and *Sabrina* still persevering among the top 200. The statistical list for 2001–2013 shows new additions, such as *Zara*, *Liam*, *Ian* and *Emma* featuring among the top 200. Given that naming a newborn child is one of the most intimate events in a family's life – why do parents feel the need to introduce a foreign(-language) element into this act?

## 2. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BORROWING OF PERSONAL NAMES IN SLOVENIA

The phenomenon of borrowing personal names is, naturally, not limited to Slovenia. It has been observed elsewhere in Europe (cf. Lenarčič 2012: 886). In Denmark, for example, certain English name equivalents are currently found to be more attractive than the traditional Danish forms, so *William* tops the list of names of newborn male children for 2014 ([www.dst.dk/en](http://www.dst.dk/en)). The form *William* peaked between 2006 and 2010, but remains immensely popular, unlike the Danish variant *Vilhelm*, which has also been on the rise, but is far less popular than the English form ([www.dst.dk/en](http://www.dst.dk/en)). Similarly, the English form *Henry* has experienced a sharp rise in popularity since 2011 over the traditional Danish form *Henrik*, which has been on a steady decline since 1985, but nevertheless remains the fifth most common name of the total Danish male population ([www.dst.dk/en](http://www.dst.dk/en)).<sup>3</sup> The British themselves have had to come to terms with an influx of foreign personal names, such as *Gemma*, *Irene*, or *Claire*.<sup>4</sup>

Another fact that needs to be mentioned here is that the phenomenon of borrowing personal names has had a long tradition in the Slovene culture. Many names of foreign origin have been present in this area for such a long time that they are no longer felt to be foreign at all. Among these we find numerous Biblical names and names of saints that have been fully adapted into Slovene (e.g. *Simon*, *Peter*, *Janez*, *Luka*, *Andrej*; *Barbara*, *Katarina*, *Tomaž*), and that can be found in variant forms in most other European languages in countries with Christian tradition. Also borrowed centuries ago and completely adapted are some German names which testify to a strong influence of the German culture on practically the entire Slovene territory (e.g. *Albert*, *Rudolf*, *Valter*, *Ernest*, *Vilma*, *Oto*, *Karel*, *Herman*, *Ferdinand*, *Ida*, *Adela*, *Erna*, *Amalija*, *Irma*). Most of these names are no longer popular as names given to newborns, and are mainly found among the elderly Slovene population, with the exception of *Oto*, which is currently on the rise (see SURS). While names of German(ic) origin can be found

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3 The pair *Henry-Henrik* was also mentioned by Prof. Henrik Gottlieb in his paper within The Pragmatics of Borrowing seminar at the ESSE Košice Conference in September 2014.

4 The official UK statistics show that between 2003 and 2013, the name *Mohammed* moved from the 21<sup>st</sup> place to the 23<sup>rd</sup> place on the list of the most popular names, while the variant *Muhammad* rose from the 61<sup>st</sup> place to the 15<sup>th</sup> ([www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)). Thus, the sum of all newborn *Mohammeds* and *Muhammads* in the UK in 2013 amounts to 6386, placing the name just behind the most popular boy name *Oliver* with 6949 newborn boys and before *Jack* with 6212 baby boys ([www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)). However, *Mohammed* is used in the UK for the naming of the newborn exclusively by Muslims and as such cannot be described as an import into the English language.

throughout Slovenia, certain name borrowings of Italian (e.g. *Ariana, Renato, Bruno*) and Hungarian (e.g. *Aranka, Zoltan, Lajoš*) origins remain restricted to the bordering areas of Primorska and Prekmurje respectively (see SURS). Along with German names, some names that originate in Greek or Latin have been present for a long time and have become completely nativised (e.g. *Aleksander, Roman, Emilija, Ambrož, Dijana, Ksenija, Mohor, Irena*). Later additions include names from Slavic languages (e.g. *Igor, Vanja, Mitja, Uroš, Stanislav, Ivan, Nataša*), which are also no longer felt to be foreign at all and are by now deeply rooted. Some of these newer additions to the pool of personal names are variants of the older forms; thus, *Nataša* co-exists along with *Natalija*, and *Ivan* with *Janez*.

During the recent decades, however, increasing numbers of new names of foreign origin have entered lists of birth in Slovenia. Although some of these have become quite familiar (e.g. *Karin, Karmen, Ines, Ingrid, Ula, Arne*), others remain exotic and decidedly foreign, particularly if their spellings include non-Slovene characters (e.g. *Alex, Max* as opposed to *Aleks(ander), Maks(imiljan)*), a hiatus (e.g. *Mia, Tia, Dorian, Laura, Diana* instead of the more homely *Mija, Tija, Dorijan, Lavra, Dijana*), or double lettering (e.g. *Vanessa, Ulla, Ella, Emma*). The current trend in naming newborns in Slovenia therefore seems to be: the more foreign(-sounding and looking), the better. Another apparent trend is the brevity of names, as increasing numbers of three- or four-letter names dominate the lists. Furthermore, there is a trend towards usage of imaginative names that are created by parents themselves and have no etymological background (see also Lenarčič 2012: 891), but are simply fashionable in a particular period and will probably go out of use after some time (e.g. *Nal, Amar, Nia, Din, Lian, Naj, Ajna, Nejla, Nej*, to list just a few from the 2001–2013 top 200-name list).

### 3. PRAGMATIC BORROWING AND PERSONAL NAMES

Borrowing, particularly borrowing from English into other languages, has attracted a great deal of attention within linguistics from the 1950s onwards, starting with the pioneers of contact linguistics Haugen (1950) and Weinreich (1953). English as the world's *lingua franca* and the popularity of Anglo-American culture practically throughout the world have resulted in English exerting a major influence on other languages, particularly in lexical fields such as science and technology, business, sports, fashion, foods, modern culture, etc. (see also Andersen 2014: 17). Naturally, research on anglicisms has mostly dealt with lexis and terminology, but has, in recent decades, begun to move beyond the word level and has started to include pragmatic and stylistic elements (see, for example, Prince 1988, Onysko 2009, Treffers-Daller 2010). It is now widely acknowledged that borrowings can convey a broad range of stylistic and pragmatic effects (cf. also Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011: 1550). So far, most of the pragmatic research on anglicisms has focused on the borrowing of interjections or some other discourse features of a source language (SL) into a recipient language (RL) (see Andersen 2014: 17 ff and his overview), but Andersen argues for a broader definition of pragmatic borrowing that also includes associated speaker attitudes, taking into

account ‘sociolinguistic aspects’ and considering ‘relevant demographic predictors and factors such as register and style’ (cf. Andersen 2014: 18, 24).

The reorientation towards the pragmatic aspects of borrowing has resulted in more research on contextual factors that motivate the use of borrowed lexemes, ‘such as the attitudes, symbolic values and prestige associated with the SL culture’ (Andersen 2014: 21). Pragmatically borrowed items carry important signals about the borrower’s attitudes. The influence of English on present-day Slovene (and most other European languages) is a case of remote or intermediary language contact. Thus, ‘language contact generally lacks immediate speaker contact’ (Onysko 2007: 44), but English is nevertheless continuously present through popular culture on Slovene territory. By borrowing English personal names (along with other borrowings from English), Slovene speakers also participate in global trends, but such borrowing is done idiosyncratically and in a locally specific manner (see also Buchstaller 2008: 26).

The stylistic and pragmatic views on the study of anglicisms probably started with Galinsky (1967), who researched the stylistic and functional motivation for the use of anglicisms in German.<sup>5</sup> A recent study made by Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011) explores the pragmatic motivations for lexical borrowing in more detail, and has yielded some findings which can, to some degree, also be applied to the borrowing of English personal names. Many studies on linguistic borrowing (see, for example, an overview of these in Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011: 1551) make a distinction between necessary loans and luxury loans; this distinction is mainly based on whether the RL already contains a word that can be considered a semantic equivalent of the borrowed term or not. Naturally, this distinction has mainly been applied to usual lexical borrowings and not to personal names. But borrowing of names is also related to linguistic innovation, and the main motive for it is to be found in the prestige/fashion of the SL culture.

When a personal name is borrowed, this is clearly an example of luxury borrowing, particularly if we bear in mind the huge numbers of various male and female names at disposal that already exist in the language. It is, however, difficult to explain the motivation for the choice of a borrowed form over a native one in strictly linguistic terms. By choosing a foreign name, the parents try to introduce some local colour of the SL culture into their own. Once a borrowed form becomes popular and frequent, its markedness begins to disappear; that is why we find loanword-exoticism doublets such as *Patrik* and *Patrick*, the former so ‘naturalised’ that it was borrowed anew as *Patrick* in the 1990s (similar examples include *Zofija/Sofija* and *Sofia, Ela* and *Ella, Sara* and *Sarah*). The reasons for such borrowing may be sociolinguistically diverse, but in the case of English names used in Slovenia the influence of pop culture and media is probably of primary importance.<sup>6</sup> Thus, parents’ bilingualism is no longer a prerequisite for borrowing.

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5 Galinsky’s research has focused on the rather specific US-German context, so not all of his findings can be applied equally well to the English-Slovene language situation, and, in particular, to the borrowing of English personal names.

6 The same phenomenon is observable in Britain and the USA: new names that appear in lists of popular baby names include popular film and TV-inspired first names.

### 3.1 English personal names in Slovenia

It is difficult to establish the time of the first language contact between English and Slovene with any certainty, but the indirect contact between these two languages was certainly carried out via the intermediary German language and this took place centuries ago. The German language has, for a very long time, played the role of the intermediary language in the process of borrowing from English into Slovene. While this is immediately observable in the pronunciation and the spelling of some anglicisms that have found their way into the Slovene vocabulary via German (e.g. English: sprint [sprint] > German: Sprint [ʃprint] > Slovene: šprint [šprint]), the German influence is also noticeable in some personal names borrowed into Slovene long ago that can be traced back to their British origin.<sup>7</sup> Below, a selection of English first names that have been borrowed into Slovene is presented.

**Oswald** One of such early borrowings from English is the name *Ožbalt* and its variant *Ožbolt*, which entered from the German form *Oswald*, and this can be traced back to the English name *Oswald* and its Old-English (OE) form *Osweald*.<sup>8</sup> Several churches, particularly in Koroška and Štajerska, were consecrated to this saint as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, so the name must have been familiar to at least part of the Slovene population since.<sup>9</sup> The name has produced several shortened forms such as *Ožbe/Ožbej/Ožbi*, and variants *Ožbald/Ožbold/Oswald/Ozvald*. The forms *Ožbald/Ožbold/Ožbalt* are extremely rare, the form *Ožbolt* is rare, but has resurfaced since 1991 as a name for newborns, and remains limited to Koroška and Gorenjska. Interestingly, the traditional Carinthian form *Ožbej* has gained ground since 1981, and has been on the rise in 2001–2013 (ranking as high as 71<sup>st</sup> of all male newborn names in that period); while it is still mostly used in Koroška and Gorenjska, it has also spread to most other regions in Slovenia. *Ožbej* can serve as a classic example of a name that has been so completely adapted and nativised that its origin is felt to be native Slovene, particularly on account of the typical Carinthian ending *-ej*.

**Edward** Another early borrowing is *Edvard*, originating in the English name *Edward* (OE: *Ēadweard*). It has spread successfully throughout Europe and already ap-

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7 At a meeting of the Linguistic Circle, held on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2000, at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, Prof. Janez Orešnik suggested that one of the first English borrowings in Slovene can be traced back to the Slovene dramatist Anton Tomaž Linhart and his play *Miss Jenny Love* (1780). Although the tragedy was written by Linhart in German, it can be assumed that this might be one of the first recorded appearances of an English phrase on Slovene territory. It seems, however, that certain personal names of potential English origin had been known in the area even before. With the earliest borrowings like Oswald, the Germanic name borrowings may have had parallel developments on the continent and the British Isles.

8 The etymologies of the names are cited after Hanks et al. (2006), Lenarčič (2012), and Keber (2008). The statistical data on the rankings and regional distributions of individual names are provided by SURS.

9 Thus, the first church of St. Ožbalt in Jezersko dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century (I owe this observation to Dr. Ferdinand Šerbelj, pers. comm. August 2015), and Sv. Ožbalt ob Dravi is mentioned for the first time as a place name in a document of St. Paul's Abbey in Lavanttal in Carinthia in 1372 (cf. [http://www.kam.si/romarske\\_cerkve/ozbalt\\_ob\\_dravi.html](http://www.kam.si/romarske_cerkve/ozbalt_ob_dravi.html); accessed August 2015).

pears in the almanacs by Vodnik (1795–1797) (Lenarčič 2012: 201), no doubt having made its entrance into Slovene via German. The name was recorded before 1930 and has been present ever since, its popularity peaked between 1931 and 1960; the name has been on steady decline since 1960, its ranking is highest in Štajerska and Primorska, and it is currently ranking in the 98<sup>th</sup> place of all male names in Slovenia. The name has produced shortened variants *Edo/Edi*. The currency of *Edo* is rare according to the national statistics, but *Edi* is somewhat more popular. *Edi* has made it into the list of top 200 names in 1951–1960 (127<sup>th</sup> place), 1961–1970 (134<sup>th</sup> place), 1971–1980 (197<sup>th</sup> place), and again in 1991–2000 (189<sup>th</sup> place), probably due to increasing popularity of short names, ranking highest in Primorska.

**Edith** Of female names, *Edita* can be traced back to the English form *Edith* (from OE: *Eadgyth/Eadgyð*). It was recorded before 1930 and has had a rare but constant presence since. It prevails in Štajerska, Koroška and Prekmurje.<sup>10</sup>

**Edwin** The name of *Edvin* can be traced back to the English name *Edwin* (OE: *Eadwine*). The name has been present since 1941, and ranked 183<sup>rd</sup> in 1991–2000. Its currency was highest in Primorska. Lenarčič (2012: 202) argues that this name is also popular among the Muslim population living in Slovenia, on account of its similarity to traditional Muslim names beginning in *Ed-* and/or ending in *-in*.<sup>11</sup>

The personal names mentioned above are not really felt to be English at all by the speakers of Slovene. Some names that are to be dealt with below have been more recent additions to the pool of personal names used in Slovenia, but have also gone completely native on account of their frequency/popularity and their form, which has allowed for unproblematic spelling and pronunciation (e.g. *Robert*, *Alan*). Some others remain decidedly foreign-sounding in the ears of many Slovene native speakers.

**Patrick** Another saint name that originates from the British Isles, but seems to have gained popularity only recently, is *Patrik*, derived from the English form *Patrick* and going back to Latin *Patricius*. It had probably been known as the name of the Irish saint and as such appeared in various Slovene almanacs and in calendars, but had not been

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10 Lenarčič (2012: 200) cites shortened variants such as *Eda/Ditka/Dita*, though the latter two are probably more frequently used as shortenings of the name *Judita*. The currency of *Eda* seems somewhat limited, it is only in Primorska that it has joined the top 200 names (181<sup>st</sup> place); the form was recorded by the national statistics before 1930, but has remained rare since, has even disappeared for a decade and then resurfaced in 2001–2013, probably due to the popularity of short three-letter names (similar to *Oto* and *Edi* mentioned before).

11 Lenarčič (2012: 885) argues that names given to their children by Slovene citizens of Bosnian or Albanian origin remain foreign-sounding as they are used to ‘express and retain their religious and national identity’. It appears, however, that names such as *Tarik* and *Lejla* are now used beyond the Muslim community (see also Table 1 in the Appendix). Lenarčič (2012: 887) also points out that many parents of Bosnian origin show a preference for names which are neither real Muslim names nor typical Slovene names (e.g. *Elvis*, *Almira*), while parents of Serbian or Croatian or mixed origin opt for names which are French, English, or in some other way foreign-sounding. A similar trend has been observed in France with parents of Arab origin, who often choose a Greek name like *Yannis/Yanis*, the form of which may be reminiscent of Arab names, to avoid the traditional Christian variant *Jean* (see Lenarčič 2012: 342).

used as a personal name until 1971 when it started to appear in the national statistics. It entered the list of top 200 personal names in 1981–1990 decade (155<sup>th</sup> place), and the next decades saw an even steeper rise in its popularity. It was the 50<sup>th</sup> most popular name in the 1990s, and rose to the 33<sup>rd</sup> place in 2001–2013. The name ranks highest in Primorska and Prekmurje. Also statistically recorded since 1971 is the foreign form *Patrick*, this was likewise on the rise in 1991–2000 (110<sup>th</sup> place) and 2001–2013 (150<sup>th</sup> place). This form ranks highest in Prekmurje.<sup>12</sup>

**Kevin** Not to be left out from the present study are some names of Celtic origin that have been introduced into Slovene in their anglicized forms. These are mostly recent additions to the pool of personal names used in Slovenia (see Table 1 in the Appendix). Thus, *Kevin* can be traced back to Irish *Caoimhín*. The name has been recorded by SURS from 1971 onwards, and experienced a sharp rise between 1991 and 2013. While unknown before 1970, it made it to the 69<sup>th</sup> rank in 1991–2000, and ranked 80<sup>th</sup> in 2001–2013.<sup>13</sup>

**Alan** On the other hand, we may find some very popular names whose origins are somewhat uncertain or mixed, but their popularity can undoubtedly be attributed to the influence of the English-speaking culture. A fairly popular male name in Slovenia is *Alan*, whose origin is either Breton or other Celtic. The name was first recorded between 1961 and 1970, and then made it to the top 200 male names; it ranked 134<sup>th</sup> in 1971–1980, 137<sup>th</sup> in 1981–1990, 136<sup>th</sup> in 1991–2000, and 162<sup>nd</sup> between 2001 and 2013, its popularity prevailing in Primorska. Its popularity was even surpassed by the variant *Alen*, which ranked 77<sup>th</sup> between 1971 and 1980, 35<sup>th</sup> between 1981 and 1990, 25<sup>th</sup> between 1991 and 2000, and 39<sup>th</sup> in 2001–2013. The name is popular throughout Slovenia, but prevails in the Littoral (32<sup>nd</sup> place). However, the form *Alen* is particularly popular among the Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian-Muslim population living in Slovenia (see also Lenarčič and his explanation of the use of the name in ex-Yugoslavia in Lenarčič 2012: 30–31).

**Robert** The name *Robert* has been present in Slovene prior to 1930 and can be traced back to the German, French and English name *Robert* or its Latinised variant *Robertus*. It originates in Old High German *Hrodebert* and had existed in OE as *Hrēodbēorht*, *Hrodberht*, *Hrēodbēorð*, *Hrædbærð*, *Hrædberð* before the Normans brought the Old French form *Robert*. Similarly, the name must have been known among Slovenes in an older form *Rupert* (from Germanic *Hrodberht*). It was an immensely popular name for male newborns in Slovenia for two decades, between 1961 and 1980, when it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among all male names. It has experienced some decline in popularity since, but has always ranked among the top 200 names. It has been frequent all over Slovenia, and is presently in the 19<sup>th</sup> place of all male names. It has produced a shortened form *Robi*, which has been quite popular since 1971 and can be found throughout Slovenia. The

12 Lenarčič (2012: 633) attributes the surge in popularity of *Patrik/Patrick* to the success of the American actor Patrick Swayze in the 1980s and the 1990s.

13 Lenarčič (2012) includes a number of other names of Celtic origin in his monograph (e.g. *Kilian*, *Moira*, *Ken*), but these are rare or not used at all by Slovenes according to the statistical data provided by SURS.

variant *Robin* is rarely used, but has been constantly present since 1961 when it was first recorded. The form *Robin* can also be found used as a female name, but this is even rarer.

**Kim** The origin of the name *Kim* is even more opaque. In English, it can be both a male and female name, and traced back to the OE form *Cyneburh*. Another, less possible, influence is the novel *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, in which the hero *Kim* (shortened from the name *Kimball*) is a boy. In Slovenia, the name is used exclusively as a female name, it was first recorded in 1981–1990, then took a sharp rise between 1991 and 2000 when it made it to the 108<sup>th</sup> place among the top 200 girl's names, and rose even further up to 87<sup>th</sup> rank in 2001–2013. It seems to be somewhat more popular in the Littoral than elsewhere in Slovenia.<sup>14</sup>

**Elvis** The next group of English names that have been borrowed into Slovene owe their inclusion to the influence of a prominent personality from the English-speaking culture. One of such outstanding examples is the name *Elvis* (the etymology of this name is not transparent, the origin may be the Irish form *Ailbhe*). It was first recorded as a name in Slovenia between 1961 and 1970, experienced a sharp rise in popularity between 1971 and 1990 (ranking 99<sup>th</sup> in 1971–1980 and 62<sup>nd</sup> in 1981–1990). There was some decline between 1991 and 2000 (but still 107<sup>th</sup> rank), after 2000 it left the list of the top 200 boy names. Its appearance can undoubtedly be linked to the popularity of Elvis Presley (peaking between 1953 and 1970), but afterwards the name has obviously caught on among the Muslim population of Slovenia irrespective of Presley's fame. Its rankings are highest in the Littoral and Zasavje (both regions have a dense Muslim population) and its use peaked well after Presley's death in 1977. Lenarčič (2012: 213) attributes its popularity among the Muslims to its similarity to some traditional Muslim names beginning in *E(l)-* and ending in *-is*, such as *Enis* (compare *Edvin* above).

**Diana** The name *Diana* and its variant *Dijana* have been known among Slovenes since the 1930s, the origin, of course, goes back to Roman mythology. Both forms were first recorded between 1931 and 1940. *Diana* was rare before 1961 when it first made it to the top 200 names (179<sup>th</sup> in 1961–1970, 161<sup>st</sup> in 1971–1980). Then came a sudden rise in popularity between 1981 and 1990 (114<sup>th</sup> rank) and between 1991 and 2000 (106<sup>th</sup> rank), coinciding with the strong media presence of Princess Diana throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. Some decline has been apparent since (181<sup>st</sup> rank for 2001–2013), probably attributable to Princess Diana's death in 1997. This name form can be found throughout Slovenia, but particularly in the South and South-East of Slovenia. The more homely variant *Dijana* reappeared in the statistics in 1951–1960, and made it to the top 200 names in the following periods (134<sup>th</sup> in 1971–1980, then 74<sup>th</sup> in 1981–1990, 129<sup>th</sup> in 1991–2000). Again, a drop in use is recorded for 2001–2013. The nativised form prevails in Gorenjska and Zasavje and in Central Slovenia. This trend of borrowing British royal names is probably comparable to the popularity of *Edvard* (see above) in the 1930s and the following decades, and may continue with

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14 Lenarčič (2012: 407) attributes its popularity to the singer Kim Wilde and the actress Kim Basinger, but that hardly explains the recent rise in the name's popularity.



*Zara*.<sup>15</sup> As a girl's name, *Zara* was first recorded in Slovenia in 2001–2013 and immediately got high rankings (68<sup>th</sup>), becoming popular throughout the area.

**Samantha** Some other names that have been statistically recorded as popular names recently are *Samanta/Samantha*, *Sarah*, *Lana*, *Ian*, *Liam*, and *Lucas*. The form *Samanta* was first statistically recorded between 1961 and 1970. It made it to the top 200 names in 1981–1990 (171<sup>st</sup>) and 1991–2000 (113<sup>th</sup>), but has experienced some drop in popularity since 2001. The highest rankings are in the Littoral and Prekmurje. The original form *Samantha* appeared later (1981–1990) and has since been used constantly, but rarely.<sup>16</sup>

**Sarah** While the Old Testament name *Sara* has become the most popular name for girls in 2013 (see Table 1), its foreign (English-induced) form *Sarah* also made it to the top 200 names in 1991–2000 (175<sup>th</sup> ranking), having been first recorded only a decade before. It remained popular in 2001–2013, particularly in Prekmurje, Štajerska and Goriška.

**Lana** Another name that ranks very high in the national statistics is *Lana*, whose etymological origin, however, is also uncertain (Gaelic, Hebrew or German). Lenarčič (2012: 431), however, makes it a name of Anglo-American origin (and parallels its rise in popularity to the growing fame of the actress Lana Turner); it is also possible that in Slovenia it is seen as a female counterpart to the male name *Lan* (currently ranking 29<sup>th</sup> in the latest list of boy names). However, in the Slovene statistics, *Lana* was first recorded 1961–1970, decades before the first appearance of *Lan* in 1991. *Lana* has been on the rise ever since; it is popular throughout Slovenia and is presently ranking 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Liam** Of male English names, *Liam* is currently one of the more popular ones. Its origin is undoubtedly Irish English, a shortened form of *William* (going back to Old German *Wilhelm*), which, however, has never been present in this form in Slovene. Known were the forms *Vil(i)jem/Vil(i)jam* (probably from the German name *Wilhelm*), and the shortened form *Vili*. Although not recorded before 2001, these days *Liam* ranks 79<sup>th</sup> (its rankings are highest in Štajerska, Prekmurje and the Littoral).

**Ian** The name goes back to Scottish Gaelic *Ian/Iain*, and was borrowed into Slovene even earlier than *Liam*. It was first recorded by the national statistics between 1981 and 1990, and has enjoyed a rising popularity since, currently ranking 94<sup>th</sup> in the Slovene list of popular boy names for 2001–2013. It appears throughout Slovenia, with the exception of Zasavje. The rankings are highest in Primorska and Central Slovenia.

**Lucas** The name *Lucas* in this particular orthographic form can also be considered English (unlike the form *Lukas*, which is most probably modelled on German), but its etymological pathway of borrowing makes English origin somewhat uncertain (Latin form of the Greek name *Loukas*). Both forms compete with the form *Luka* that is well established in the area (similar to other popular Bible names, statistically present before 1930, practically always listed among the top 200 male names, with a sharp rise

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15 *Zara* is not originally English, it was first used in English in the translation of Voltaire's play *Zaïre*; alternatively, its popularity in Slovenia may be attributable to the name of the Spanish fashion store *Zara*.

16 Lenarčič (2012: 694) attributes its popularity in the USA to the TV series *Bewitched* (1964), but this can hardly be the reason for its spread in Slovenia.

1971–1980 to the 51<sup>st</sup> place, then 12<sup>th</sup> place in 1981–1990, and 1<sup>st</sup> place since 1991 onwards). Both *Lukas* and *Lucas* were first recorded statistically between 1991 and 2000. While *Lukas* rose to 84<sup>th</sup> place between 2001 and 2013 (its highest ranking reached in Prekmurje), the English variant *Lucas* is somewhat rarer (but still ranking 195<sup>th</sup> in 2001–2013, and, again, with the highest ranking reached in Prekmurje). Interestingly, an earlier variant, *Lukež*, known from Slovene literature, is not statistically recorded at all.

### 3.2 Adaptation of English personal names in Slovene

In some aspects, borrowed personal names from English conform to the rules that apply to the borrowing of anglicisms in general. However, it turns out that in some other aspects they resist adaptation to retain their foreignness as prestige borrowings.

Most borrowed English personal names undergo complete adaptation and are, as a result, totally integrated into the language system of Slovene. This is to be expected: once given, a name is, after all, used on a daily basis and is not an occasional exoticism used to pep up an informal conversation with some ‘local colouring’. Thus, their foreignness becomes blurred and they are, consequently, pronounced, written and declined as any other Slovene name. This is the case with all old borrowings (e.g. *Robert*, *Edvin*, *Edita*) and some recent ones, especially if their forms allow for non-problematic pronunciations and spellings (e.g. *Kevin*, *Lana*, *Sabrina*, *Zara*). Thus, borrowed female names that end in *-a* (*Sabrina*, *Lana*) enter the first nominal declension pattern for feminine nouns. However, borrowed female names not ending in *-a* enter the third nominal declension pattern with zero case endings. Such female names have been in use for a long time (e.g. *Ines*, *Karmen*, *Karin*, *Iris*, *Lili*, *Doris*), so all English-derived additions such as *Kim* or *Melani* also conform to this pattern. Morphologically, male names in Slovene as a rule enter the first masculine nominal declension pattern (e.g. *Janez*, *Jakob*), some also the second masculine nominal declension pattern (e.g. *Miha*, *Luka*). As for the borrowings, in all male names borrowed from English the first declension pattern is applied (e.g. *Patrik* – *Patrik-a* (genitive)). Shortened name forms ending in the vowel *-i* add *-j-* before the final case ending in non-nominative cases (e.g. *Robi-j-a*, *Edi-j-a* in the genitive).

Phonologically, the adaptation of English names may remain incomplete in some of the more recent borrowings, on the grounds of remaining fashionable and prestigious in their foreign sound, but there is a tendency towards complete phonological adaptation, in which individual English phonemes are sought to be replaced by their nearest equivalents from the Slovene phonemic system. The written form is, however, crucial to the pronunciation of the borrowed name by Slovene speakers as in Slovene every grapheme, as a rule, has its own pronunciation and represents one phoneme. Consequently, the formation of the phonological form of the borrowed name is mainly modelled on its spelling. Nevertheless, it is to be expected that *Melani* and *Melanie* are actually pronounced in exactly the same way by Slovene users, and that the pronunciation of *Samantha* is no different from that of *Samanta*, due to the fact that the English dental fricative /θ/ is totally absent from the Slovene phonological system and therefore regularly replaced by its nearest equivalent phoneme /t/ in the transphonemisation pro-

cess. The most notable phonological changes appear in the vowels. Thus, the English close-mid to open-mid front /e/ is usually replaced by close /e/ in Slovene, the front-to-central and close to close-mid /ɪ/ is replaced by the front close /i/, and the schwa /ə/ is replaced by /a/: *Melanie* [ˈmɛlənɪ] > [ˈmɛlani], *Kevin* [ˈkɛvɪn] > [ˈkɛvin], *Ella* [ˈɛlə] > [ˈɛla]. However, since increasing numbers of Slovene speakers are familiar with the original pronunciations of these names due to their bilingualism (or some command of the English language), variant pronunciation forms with open /ɛ/ can also be heard, thus [ˈmɛlani], [ˈkɛvɪn], and [ˈɛla]. The forms with close vowels seem to be mainly used by the older generation and/or users not too familiar with English. The pronunciations of *Liam* and *Ian* are also changed: [lɪəm] > [ˈlijam]; [ɪən] > [ˈijan]; the English diphthong /ɪə/ is replaced by the group /ija/. The same goes for *Diana* – in this case, the phonological form of the borrowing is based solely on the spelling: the English pronunciation [daɪˈænə] is replaced by [diˈjana] in Slovene.

The spellings of some of the fashionable prestige borrowings of the last decade are the most resistant to complete adaptation. If the parents opt for a foreign name for their offspring, then at least the spelling is sought to be preserved to set the baby apart from the rest of the children, therefore *Max* instead of *Maks*, *Lucas* instead of *Luka(s)*, *Alex* instead of *Aleks*, *Ella* instead of *Ela*, and *Nick* instead of *Nik*.

### 3.3 Potential of borrowed English personal names

It was already established earlier that the borrowing of English personal names into Slovene is not a recent phenomenon. However, the question remains as to whether these latest imports, which may still sound unusual in the ears of many Slovenes, are to be integrated into the Slovene language as successfully as *Robert* was in the past. Do they possess the potential to oust traditional or established names or are they to remain marginal borrowings, fashionable and prestigious for a particular period of time and then disappearing into disuse? Table 1 in the Appendix lists the 100 most popular baby names of 2013 (along with the total number of newborns that received a particular name) and clearly shows that the names chosen for newborns in Slovenia are now a mix of original Slovene names (e.g. *Svit*, *Bor*, *Gaber*, *Živa*, *Ajda*, *Zarja*), completely nativised names of various foreign origins, and fashionable name borrowings that stand out as recent additions. Among the completely nativised names we find those of Biblical origin and names of saints. These have mostly been in use for decades, if not centuries, particularly New Testament names with some (now popular) shortened variants (e.g. *Luka*, *Marko*, *Simon*, *Janez* and its variant *Jan*, *Matej* and its variants *Matic*, *Matevž*, *Matija*, *Tevž*), and the names of popular saints in many variants (e.g. *Jakob*, *Jaka*; *Neža*; *Ema*; *Ana* and its variants *Anja*, *Anika*, *Aneja*; *Nikolaja* and its more popular shorter version *Nika*). Many Old Testament names, on the other hand, although familiar to the Slovene population, have, traditionally, not been used as first names, so that names like *Sara*, *Rebeka*, *Izak*, and *Adam* are mainly found in the young generation. It is quite probable that some popular shortened forms from these long established names have been produced under the English influence and can therefore have English source ascribed to them (e.g. *Nik* either as shortened from *Nikolaj/Niko* or from English *Nick*;

*Mark* from traditional *Marko* or from English *Mark*; *Tim* from traditional *Timotej* or from English *Tim*; *Leo* from traditional *Leonard/Leon* or from English *Leo*). *Val*, *Neli*, and *Evelin* in the list could potentially (also) have English source (see also Lenarčič 2012: 797, 598, 231, who advocates their English origin).

When considering the degree of nativisation of these names, three factors are of crucial importance: the longevity of the name, its frequency/popularity, and its form. Thus, if a name has been used for a long enough period of time, has been popular and thus frequently used, and if its written and spoken form allow for rapid adaptation, the remarkability of the name may all but disappear. Thus, many of these names from foreign sources and adopted long ago (e.g. *Erik*, *Aleksander*, *Uroš*, *Karin*, *Lili*, *Maša*, *Doris*, *Lara*, *Nina*) are nowadays not felt to be foreign at all. Quite often we may find variants of what is essentially the same name at different degrees of nativisation, e.g. the nativised forms *Sofija/Zofija* along with the forms *Sofia/Zoja* with a still foreign touch to them. The list brings a number of names taken from foreign sources that are mainly recent imports and are currently popular as prestigious fashionable borrowings, e.g. *Jon* from Scandinavian languages, *Rene*, *Žan*, *Žana*, *Žak*, *Marcel* from French, *Aleksej*, *Jaša*, *Zoja*, *Larisa* from Russian. The source language of some others may be more difficult to pin down (*Val* could be English, but could also be original Slovene, *Oskar*, *Alex/Aleks* and *Max/Maks* could be modelled either on English or German; forms like *Tian*, *Tijan*, *Lian*, *Tai*, *Taj* are probably products of parents' imagination). The names that can be ascribed English source are written in bold in Table 1, though their respective origins may not be English but most often Celtic (e.g. *Liam*, *Alen*, *Ian*, *Kevin*, *Tara*) or some other (e.g. *Zara*, which is of Arabic origin).

A quantitative analysis of the frequency/popularity of the names from Table 1 shows that 7742 (out of 10804) newborn boys and 7239 (out of 10307) newborn girls in Slovenia have been given one of the top 200 names. Of these, 5625 boys (72.66 %) were given original Slovene or completely nativised names, and 2117 (27.34 %) were given names whose foreignness is still palpable. Of the 7239 baby girls born in Slovenia in 2013 with one of the top 200 names, 5542 girls (76.56 %) were given original Slovene or completely nativised names, and 1697 girls (23.44 %) were given names that may still sound foreign.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We can therefore conclude that the share of personal names recently borrowed from foreign sources is on the rise among the Slovene population; however, the influence of the English language as a source is not prevalent here as its share amounts to approximately six per cent of the most popular names used in the last decade. Regionally, the preference for foreign (-sounding and looking) name forms is more marked in certain bordering areas of Slovenia, particularly in Prekmurje and in the Littoral. What sets borrowed names apart from ordinary anglicisms is their 'resistance' to certain aspects of adaptation: the original spelling is often preserved, and sometimes the phonetic adaptation is only partial. The borrowed item probably also does not convey the same

attitudinal meanings/connotations in the RL and the SL – in English speaking cultures these names are unremarkable, while the recently borrowed names ‘stand out’ in the Slovene area.

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[www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/navne/Baro](http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/navne/Baro)

[www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/navne/navne-i-hele-befolkningen](http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/navne/navne-i-hele-befolkningen)

## Appendix

rank	boys	number	girls	number
1	Luka	317	Sara	264
2	<b>Nik</b>	267	Eva	259
3	Jakob	244	Lara	232
4	Filip	241	Ema	230
5	Žan	212	Ana	219
6	<b>Mark</b>	197	Nika	208
7	David	184	Julija	194
8	Jaka	180	<b>Lana</b>	190
9	Jan	175	Zala	190
10	Žiga	169	Zoja	172
11	Anže	162	Mia	165
12	<b>Maks</b>	154	Ajda	164
13	Nejc	150	Ela	152
14	Vid	150	Neža	152
15	Lovro	145	Hana	147
16	Aljaž	144	Klara	126
17	<b>Tim</b>	138	Brina	119
18	Matic	137	Maša	113
19	Gal	116	Kaja	112
20	Maj	111	Lina	111
21	<b>Patrik</b>	111	Vita	103
22	Gašper	108	Maja	101
23	Anej	106	Nina	101
24	Rok	103	Manca	91
25	<b>Aleks</b>	101	Tinkara	91
26	Tilen	101	Neja	90
27	Miha	100	Taja	87
28	Lan	99	Žana	81
29	Tian	89	Živa	80
30	Matija	84	Anja	79
31	<b>Liam</b>	83	Lucija	75
32	Matevž	83	Gaja	74
33	Martin	80	Laura	70

34	<b>Oskar</b>	80	Zarja	70
35	Blaž	79	Mija	69
36	Leon	78	Naja	69
37	<b>Val</b>	78	Tjaša	68
38	Jure	73	Ula	68
39	Erik	72	Alina	66
40	Benjamin	66	Pia	66
41	Enej	66	Tia	66
42	Andraž	63	Katarina	64
43	Rene	63	Špela	64
44	Matej	62	Iza	62
45	Svit	62	Iva	61
46	Bor	58	Mila	61
47	Timotej	58	Teja	58
48	Lukas	56	Lia	57
49	Marko	56	Tina	57
50	Urban	55	Sofija	55
51	Teo	54	Alja	53
52	Tine	54	Larisa	53
53	Jaša	52	<b>Neli</b>	52
54	Tai	52	Lea	47
55	Domen	51	Lili	47
56	Nace	49	<b>Kim</b>	44
57	Aleksander	48	Nuša	44
58	Taj	48	<b>Zara</b>	43
59	Izak	46	Izabela	42
60	Bine	44	Maruša	40
61	<b>Alex</b>	43	Pika	40
62	Lenart	43	<b>Tara</b>	40
63	Tristan	43	Lejla	35
64	Marcel	42	Karin	34
65	<b>Ožbej</b>	42	Valentina	34
66	Urh	42	Sofia	33
67	Aleksej	41	Tisa	31
68	Dominik	41	Nikolina	30

69	Erazem	40	Veronika	30
70	Jurij	40	Katja	29
71	Andrej	39	Kiara	29
72	Tadej	39	Kristina	29
73	Adam	36	Nastja	29
74	Žak	36	Iris	27
75	<b>Alen</b>	35	Karolina	27
76	<b>Leo</b>	34	Asja	26
77	Gabriel	33	Elena	26
78	<b>Ian</b>	32	<b>Evelin</b>	26
79	Klemen	32	Ivana	26
80	<b>Kevin</b>	30	Daša	25
81	Jernej	29	<b>Ella</b>	25
82	Brin	28	Patricija	25
83	Jon	28	Leja	24
84	Kristjan	28	Aneja	23
85	Lev	28	Anika	23
86	Tevž	28	Liza	23
87	Vito	28	Nia	23
88	Samo	27	Stella	23
89	Gaber	26	Urška	23
90	Uroš	26	Inja	22
91	Adrian	25	Luna	22
92	Ažbe	25	Tajda	22
93	Simon	25	Jerca	21
94	Tarik	25	Lija	21
95	Tijan	25	Rebeka	21
96	Jošt	24	Tea	21
97	<b>Max</b>	24	Tiana	21
98	Tibor	23	Tija	21
99	Lian	22	Viktorija	21
100	Amadej	21	Lorena	20

Table 1. Popular names for newborns in Slovenia 2013 (Source: SURS)



Abstract  
THE ENGLISH-SLOVENE LANGUAGE CONTACT:  
BORROWING OF PERSONAL NAMES

The article aims to shed some light on the growing tendency of Slovene native speakers towards borrowing English personal names when naming new-born children. Some historical overview of the borrowing of English personal names into Slovene is given, starting with lists compiled from 1931 onwards, established from the data supplied by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURs). The phenomenon of borrowing personal names is discussed from the point of view of pragmatic borrowing as advocated by G. Andersen (2014), taking into account the traditional distinction between necessary loans on the one hand and luxury loans on the other. The article illustrates how in the case of personal names, 'exoticisms' (e.g. *Alex, Liam, Kevin, Kim, Ian, Vanessa, Adrian, Ella, Emma, Patrick, Nick, Alan, Lucas*, listed among the most popular 200 first names in the 2001–2013 period) compete with name forms that have been adapted and nativised long ago (e.g. *Patrik*), or are currently being introduced for the first time into Slovene. In these recent borrowings, the foreign forms undergo some adaptation, but at the same time, unlike other anglicisms, show the tendency to resist complete adaptation, particularly in terms of spelling and pronunciation. Such pragmatically borrowed items carry significant sociolinguistic signals about the borrowers' attitudes, and these are briefly commented on.

**Keywords:** pragmatic borrowing, personal names, English, Slovene

Povzetek  
ANGLEŠKO-SLOVENSKI JEZIKOVNI STIK: IZPOSOJANJE OSEBNIH IMEN

Prispevek obravnava vse bolj izraženo tendenco slovenskih govorcev, da si pri poimenovanju svojih otrok sposojajo angleška lastna imena. Statistični podatki, dostopni na portalu Statističnega urada Republike Slovenije (SURs) s seznami najpogostejših imen od leta 1931 dalje nam omogočajo zgodovinski pregled takega sposojanja iz angleščine v slovenščino. Pojav sposojanja tujejezičnih lastnih imen obravnavamo z vidika pragmatičnega sposojanja po G. Andersenu (2014) in ob upoštevanju že uveljavljene razlikovanja med potrebnimi in prestižnimi sposojenkami. Prispevek ponazarja, kako pri lastnih imenih »eksotična« imena (npr. *Alex, Liam, Kevin, Kim, Ian, Vanessa, Adrian, Ella, Emma, Patrick, Nick, Alan, Lucas*, ki so na seznamu 200 najbolj priljubljenih imen za novorojence v obdobju 2001–2013) tekmujejo z oblikami, ki so bile sposojene in prilagojene slovenščini že pred desetletji (npr. *Patrik*) ali pa jih tokrat prvič uvajamo v slovenščino. Pri teh nedavnih sposojenkah tuje oblike sicer delno prilagodimo slovenskemu jezikovnemu sistemu, vendar jih, za razliko od drugih anglizmov, ne prilagodimo vedno v zapisu in izgovarjavi. V članku na kratko komentiramo tudi sociolingvistične vidike takšnih pragmatičnih sposojenk in odnos sposojevalcev.

**Ključne besede:** pragmatično sposojanje, lastna imena, angleščina, slovenščina