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PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF CHRISTIAN EXPRESSIONS IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE

1 INTRODUCTION

Religion has been a powerful mechanism in the development of world cultures. It continues to have a strong impact on everyday life all around the world, even in those (mostly Western) countries where many people do not pay particular attention to it, or do not feel special religious commitments; for example, many Christian holidays are declared as national holidays, Sundays are work-free days, etc. The impact of religion on human history is stronger than anything else; it has prompted people to resettle, to go to war, and has inspired some of the most precious human achievements in art, architecture, etc. Every person, whether religious or not, has an attitude towards religion. It is, therefore, not surprising that religion can also be traced in our everyday speech; not only when we are speaking about religion, but in casual conversation or in discourse. This can be heard on television or radio, where expressions having their origins in religion are used, often in a meaning-free manner. In such usages, they function as a special group of pragmatic expressions, such as discourse markers, interjections, topic orientation markers, pragmatic deictics, general extenders, etc. However, even though different groups of pragmatic expressions in spoken discourse have received significant attention from researchers over recent decades (cf. Aijmer 1996; Norrick 2009; Schourup 1999), there have only been a few studies on the topic of religious expressions in spoken discourse from the pragmatic perspective.

When we talk about religious expressions within the Christian tradition, we refer to religious entities such as *God, Mary, Jesus, Devil,* or notions like *heaven* and *hell.* To our knowledge, these expressions have not as yet been analyzed as a distinct group of expressions within speech. However, the pragmatic status of expressions using *God* in phrases like *God knows* and *Goodness knows* was recognized and analyzed by Hill (1992), who observed differences in their usages that went beyond a difference in the level of emotional intensity expressed. According to her findings, each expression is associated

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with a particular attitude reflecting the extent to which the speaker does in fact *know* something. In the same study, Hill focused on another word with pragmatic functions, the curse word *bloody*. Even though she did not establish (stipulate) any connection between these two types of expression, we can speculate that a comparison between religious expressions and curse words in spoken interactions might reveal interesting findings. This goal, however, goes beyond the scope of the present study.

We were unable to find any other study of religious expressions in everyday interactions from the pragmatic perspective within Western cultures, whilst within the Muslim culture interesting research was undertaken by Nazzal (2005). He investigated the motivations and reasons that induce Muslims to invoke the recitation of Qur'anic verses in their ordinary discourses, again finding different pragmatic functions that stimulate such usages. These functions ranged from mitigating one's commitment for carrying out a future action or failing to honour one's commitments, to avoiding the effects and adverse consequences of one's actions towards others. In addition, such recitation appears to function as a confirmation of the participants' religious, cultural and linguistic identities.

The present study was based on the Slovene language. Religious expressions in Slovene spoken discourse have not as yet been the focus of linguistic research from the pragmatic perspective; however, the Slovene dictionary SSKJ does note that in colloquial speech such expressions are used as interjections. The aim of the present study was to investigate more common expressions with origins within the Christian religion, as used in everyday spoken discourse in Slovene. Based on data from the GOS reference speech corpus, these expressions are: *bog* and *bože* "God", *marija* "Mary", *madona* "Madonna", *jezus* "Jesus", *hudič* and *vrag* "Devil". The study attempted to shed light on the pragmatic perspectives of their usages.

2 DATA AND ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The reference speech corpus of the Slovene language, GOS (Verdonik/Zwitter Vitez 2011), was used for the analyses. It is available through a web-concordancer[1] that provides access to sound and detailed contextual information, including information about the recorded situations and speakers. Without access to sound and broader contexts, pragmatic analysis would be impossible. Even with such access, several usages remain rather unclear: pragmatic usage could be detected, but further details could not be specified (the function, the attitude expressed, etc.).

Some important characteristics of the corpus data for our study were:

- most of the recordings included spontaneous speech (read speech was avoided);
- real speech events were recorded between friends, family members, or within different institutional settings;

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[1] Available at www.korpus-gos.net (5. January 2012).

- the private discourse section was demographically balanced (according to age, gender, education and region), with a total of 186 speakers in this section;
- the total number of words within the corpus was 1,032,775.

When investigating the corpus data for the selected expressions, data recorded among the Slovene minority in Italy, Austria and Hungary was eliminated, since we were not sufficiently familiar with these dialects to carry out reliable analyses. Graph 1 shows the number of words for the different discourse types within the GOS corpus, without the data from the Slovene minority.

Private, 266710

Information/ education, 359549

Official, 153471

Entertainment, 219739
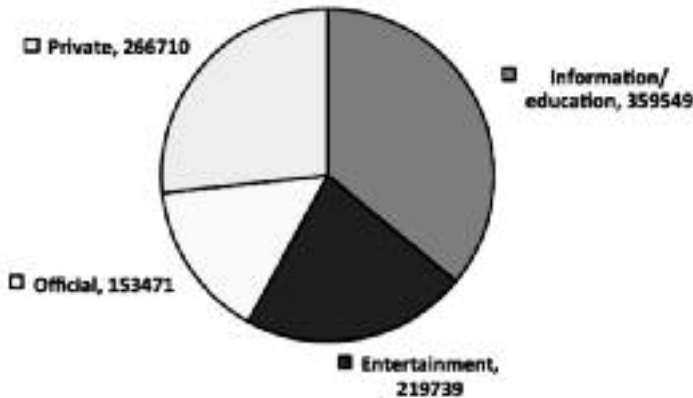
Graph 1: Discourse types within the GOS corpus regarding the number of words.

In order to obtain a broader picture on how often the selected expressions are used in different sections of the corpus, we began our analytical procedure with corpus analysis. Usages with direct meanings were treated separately. These are usages where the religious expressions refer to a religious entity, for example: *Bog nas je ustvaril takšne kakršni smo* "God created us the way we are". Such usages were counted, and a survey was made of examples in which they appeared, but they were not investigated in detail. The focus of our interest was usages that we will call pragmatic, where religious expressions do not refer directly to a religious entity, e.g., *ne vem bog ve kva si je on prevedu s tem* "I don't know, God knows what he translated with this".

In the second part of our analysis, we investigated the expressions in more detail, listening to each usage and learning about its context. In this sense, the method approaches the analytical procedure of conversation analysis (cf. Have 1990), which studied the social organization of "conversation", or "talk-in-interaction", through a detailed study of tape recordings and their transcriptions. However, whereas conversation analysis was oriented particularly towards the social dimensions of discourse, in the present research we considered the textual and cognitive dimension as well, attempting to describe what each particular usage expresses by considering the textual, interpersonal and cognitive/emotional planes of the discourses. Common characteristics were then sought, and an attempt was made to find an appropriate scheme to

describe such characteristics. In order to produce a clear representation of the findings, the results were organised according to the primary functions of the expressions in the discourse. This representation should not, however, be understood as a classification of religious expressions or their usages, as expressions can perform several discourse functions at the same time. A similar situation exists with regard to other pragmatic expressions (cf. Schiffrin's (1987: 315–316) findings on discourse markers). The results are presented in the following section.

3 RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

3.1 Corpus analysis

The most common religious expression within our data was *bog* "God". *Bože* "God", the appearance of which is rare compared to *bog*, has the same origin, but its function is expressive (also defined as such by the Slovene dictionary). Table 1 presents more details on the frequency of usages within the GOS corpus.

Bog, bože	No. of occurences			Per 100,000 words		
	Bog	Bože	Both	Bog	Bože	Both
Information/education	50	0	50	13.9	0.0	13.9
Entertainment	49	0	49	15.3	0.0	15.3
Official discourse	10	0	10	6.5	0.0	6.5
Private conversations	56	4	60	21.0	1.5	22.5
Total	165	4	169			
Pragmatic usage	100	4	104			
Direct meaning	65	0	65			

Table 1: Expressions *bog* and *bože* "God" within the GOS corpus.

Overview of the usages with direct meanings:
- in private conversations, *bog* "God" is used in the speech of persons with deep religious beliefs (priests, some older people);
- in public discourse, it is common in education, especially when referring to the past: history lessons about early eras of human civilization, literature lessons, classes about the middle ages;
- in informative radio programmes, it is used during interviews with etymologists discussing the linguistic development of the word *bog* "God";
- in TV and radio entertainment, it is often used in a humorous context, e.g., *o Boh če mi ne dovoliš da shujšam prosim te pomagaj saj mojim prijatlcam da se zredijo* "Oh God, if you don't let me lose weight please at least help my friends to gain weight", as well as in non-humorous contexts, such as: *ljudje smo takšni kakršen je kakršne nas je ustvaril Bog* "we are the way God created us".

The negative religious opposite, the Devil, appears much less frequently in every-day speech. In Slovene, there are three different expressions for the Devil: *hudič*, *vrag*, and *satan*. The latter, *satan* "Satan", appears only twice in the GOS corpus, once using the direct meaning and once metaphorically (*kot tristo satanof* "as three hundred Sa-tans"). The frequencies of *hudič* and *vrag* in the GOS corpus are presented in Table 2.

Hudič, vrag	No. of occurrences			Per 100,000 words		
	Hudič	*Vrag*	Both	*Hudič*	*Vrag*	Both
Information/education	15	5	20	4.2	1.4	5.6
Entertainment	6	9	15	1.9	2.8	4.7
Official discourse	0	3	3	0.0	2.0	2.0
Private conversations	11	9	20	4.1	3.4	7.5
Total	32	26	58			
Pragmatic usage	20	22	42			
Direct meaning	12	4	16			

Table 2: Expressions *hudič* and *vrag* "Devil" in the GOS corpus.

The usages with direct meanings are:
- in propositional usage, *hudič* was used in a school lesson on literature (e.g., *hudiča ima Pegam dva* "Pegam has two Devils" – a rhyme from an old poem); and
- in a radio talk show about religion (e.g., *znamenito kamenjanje hudiča* "the famous stoning of the Devil");
- with direct meaning, *vrag* was used in a radio talk show (e.g., *te vrag brez dela ne najde ko pride po tebe* "that the Devil doesn't find you unoccupied when he comes for you"); and
- in entertainment TV shows (e.g., in the rhyme from the Slovene hymn, a poem by Prešeren: *da rojak prost bo vsak ne vrag le sosed bo mejak* "Who long to see, That all men free, No more shall foes, but neighbours be").

Jesus is the next religious entity referred to in everyday speech. However, this ex-pression appears much less frequently than God, and also less frequently than Devil.

Jezus	No. of occurrences	Per 100,000 words
Information/education	2	0.6
Entertainment	9	2.8
Official discourse	0	0.0
Private conversations	26	9.8
Total	37	
Pragmatic usage	31	
Direct meaning	6	

Table 3: Expression *jezus* "Jesus" in the GOS corpus.

Usages with direct meanings occur:
- in private conversations in the speech of a priest;
- during a school lesson.

The female side of religious entities is represented by Mary, in reference to whom two expressions are used in Slovene discourse: *marija* "Mary" and *madona* "Madonna". Both expressions are used less frequently than God, but more frequently than Jesus, with *Marija* "Mary" being used more frequently than *madona* "Madonna". This is also the case in direct meaning, because *Marija* is a common Slovene female name whereas *Madona* is not. More details are presented in Table 4.

Marija, Madona	No. of occurrences			Per 100,000 words		
	Marija	Madona	Both	Marija	Madona	Both
Information/education	2	1	3	0.6	0.3	0.8
Entertainment	35	7	42	10.9	2.3	13.1
Official discourse	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Private conversations	21	7	28	7.9	2.6	10.5
Total	58	15	73			
Pragmatic usage	32	14	46			
Direct meaning	26	1	27			

Table 4: Expressions *marija* "Marie" and *madona* "Madonna" in the GOS corpus.

Usages with direct meanings:
- *Marija* is used as a Slovene female name;
- referring to the religious entity, *marija* "Mary" was used in private conversation in the speech of a priest;
- with direct meaning, *Madona* "Madonna" was used as the name of the famous singer Madonna.

3.2 Pragmatic functions

The pragmatic usages of religious expressions are treated as pragmatic markers, and the results are presented in five sections according to the primary functions of the expressions: marking the attitude, marking the content, discourse markers, metaphors, and greeting phrases.

3.2.1 Marking the attitude

All of the religious expressions examined in the present paper can have the primary function of marking or expressing the speaker's attitude. This category includes all of the usages of *bože* "God" and most of the usages of *marija* "Mary", *madona* "Madonna" and *jezus* "Jesus", as well as some usages of *bog* " God", and *hudič* and *vrag* "Devil".

When marking the attitude, the main function of a religious expression is that it expresses a speaker's inner state of feeling/state of emotion at the moment of speaking. This state is connected either to the content of the conversation or to the conversational situation (context). More specifically, usages can be described according to the sound impression and the local context, but not always: often we are unable to specifically explain the emotion or attitude of the speaker. However, based on the context, we can quite reliably distinguish between usages where the emphasis is either in general negative or in general positive. It was also observed that the intensity of the emotion or attitude expression can vary, based mostly on prosodic realization: sometimes it seems very low, like moaning (quieter, calmer pronunciation), while other times it is high, perhaps angry, strongly disappointed (especially swearing), or, on the positive side of the scale, very surprised (louder voice, higher pitch, etc.). Although this distinction is not very clear cut, we nevertheless attempt to provide examples from the data according to these two criteria, not in order to classify usages but merely to point out that there are very different types of usages within this category.

1) Negative attitude

a) Low intensity, for example moaning: expressions *ljubi bog* "dear God", *o bože* "Oh God", *jezus* "Jesus", *ljubi jezus* "sweet Jesus", *vrag* "Devil", *Marija* "Mary"
Examples:

- a speaker explains her negative attitude when she hears about someone's plans because she thinks they will not last: *a veš je reku jez bi pa kitaro sem rekla o lubi bog to bo pa za dva mesca pa konc* "y'know he said I would like a guitar and I said oh dear God this will last for two months and then be over"
- a speaker comments on something she considers bad: *jezos sam da neki zaslovžijo* "Jesus, anything just to earn some money"
- a speaker doubts whether she will be able to have her garden in the future: *Jazos vrt eee čim še mola* "Jesus, will I still have the garden?"

b) Moderate intensity: expressions *vrag* "Devil", *hudiča* "Devil", *madona* "Madonna", *jezus* "Jesus", *o marija* "oh Mary", *ni vrag* (literally "it is not the Devil")
Examples:

- a speaker realizes that something is not the way she expected: *to ze pa ... oh vrag* "this and now ... oh hell"
- a speaker feels that her family members worry too much about what she wears and she is therefore dissatisfied: *ma sej imam duosti dej in obljek madona* "oh I have enough blankets and clothes Madonna"
- a speaker explains how a girl reacted furiously after a kiss, when his beard tickled her: *enkrat me kušnala te pravla jezoš kak pika* "once she kissed me and she said Jesus how it tickled"

c) High intensity, usually swearing: expressions *pod milim bogom* "under sweet God" (literally)/"for Christ's sake" (similar Eng. phrase), *pri bogu* "by God/for Christ's sake", *ti boga* "you God/Jesus Christ", *jebem ti boga* "fuck your God/fuck", *madona* "Madonna", *porka madona* "Porca Madonna", *hudiča* "Devil/hell", *ni vrag* "isn't the Devil/hell"
Examples:

- a speaker explains his problems regarding writing in school: *nisem mogu spis napisat za dva pod milim bogom* "I couldn't write the essay for a positive mark for Christ's sake"
- a speaker explains her poor physical condition: *ja pa jz po štengah ne pridem pr bogu* "well I can't climb the stairs for Christ's sake"
- a speaker considers the event that the previous speaker was telling him about to be bad, undesirable: *in po je pa ta klinac pršu | ja porka madoa* "and then this fuck came | oh Porca Madonna"

2) Positive attitude

a) Low intensity, for example satisfaction, admiration: expressions *madona* "Madonna"*, bože moj* "my God"

- a speaker is surprised at how nice the other girl/woman looks: *o madona s se zrihtala* "uh Madonna you dress nicely"
- an older woman explains how she enjoyed an event: *bože moj tak mi je blo všeč* "my God, I liked it so much"

b) Moderate intensity, swearing: expressions *ni hudič* "not the Devil", *ni vrag* "not the Devil", *o ti boga* "oh God" (we find no equivalent English phrases):

- an interviewee on the radio explains the beginnings of a music festival and his determination and that of his group to pursue their goal: *in smo rekli če bomo vztrajali n() ni ni ni ni vrag da ne bi prišli do tukaj* "and we said that if we persist there's no way in hell we won't get there"
- a speaker is positively surprised/expresses admiration about what the other speaker is saying: *tak akustičen al pa polakustičen no | o ti boga* "such acoustics or half-acoustics | wow that's nice"

c) High intensity, all of the examples in our data show surprise: expressions *marija* "Mary", *jezusmarija* "Jesus Mary", *moj bog* "my God"

- the reaction of a radio listener when he hears that he has won something: *jozusmarija* "Jesus Mary"

In general, it seems that the positive attitude is more rarely expressed than the negative.

3.2.2 Marking the content

In this section, we describe the types of usages of the expression *bog* "God" in the following phrases: *hvala bogu* "thank God", *bog ve kaj/kje...* "God knows what/where...", *bog ne daj* "God, don't make it happen", and *bog pomagaj* "God help me". These phrases are quite frequent. From the pragmatic perspective, they are found to primarily express a speaker's opinion (i.e., rational state) about (part of) the propositional content of a conversation, about what is being talked about. Specifically, these phrases express whether a speaker considers something to be good, unknown, undesirable or beyond his/her power. However, the emotional state cannot be excluded completely: these phrases can express a speaker's attitude (emotional state) as well, just like attitude markers (e.g., they express gratitude, relief, etc. – cf. examples below). Nonetheless, we find this to be a secondary, context-bound function, less explicative than attitude markers.

a) Something is good: phrases *hvala bogu, bogu hvala, boga hvaliti* "thank God"

These phrases express that a speaker considers something to be good (and therefore thanks God for it). Based on the impressions gained when listening to each of the examples, and according to contextual information, it is possible to describe these examples more specifically (see examples below); however, such explanations are always partly dependent on interpretation.

Examples:[2]

- a speaker feels gratitude because something did/did not happen: *ne tist ne hvala bogu* "no this not, thank God"
- a speaker is relieved or satisfied because something did/did not happen: *o hvala bogu* "oh thank God", *zaj sn pa jaz pogruntala hvala bogu* "now I get it right, thank God"
- a speaker considers something to be positive: *sn rekla ja hvala bogu d best ne* "I said, well thank God, the best"
- a speaker considers something to be luck: *hvala bogu je bla sreda* "thank God it was Wednesday"

b) Something is unknown: phrases *bog ve kje/kdaj...* "God knows where/when...", *bog si ga vedi* "God knows"

Phrases that name God as the one who knows inform us that the speaker does not know something, or that it is not within his/her power to know something.

Examples:

- a speaker does not know something, but he is curious: *bog ve kaj je* "God knows what it is"

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[2] Due to space limitations, all of the examples and the descriptions of their contexts within the paper are very short. Readers who wish to hear them can visit www.korpus-gos.net and browse through the examples, in order to see the broader context or obtain details about the recorded situation.

- a speaker expresses doubt about something unknown: *pa zej bog si ga vedi če bodo glede na to kar se dogaja* "and God knows if they will, given what's going on"
- a speaker hints that something may be a secret: *boh vej kaj mata vidva med sabo* "God knows what secret you two know"
- something unknown is considered to be out of the ordinary scope: *mislijo da boh ve kaj jih bom vprašala* "they think only God knows what I will ask them"
- anything at all is possible: *bog ve kaj bom pol delala* "only God knows whether I will work after this"

However, one usage of this phrase lies outside the scope of that which is described above. Used together with the negative particle *ne* "no", it expresses diminution: *tukej ga imamo nje glih bog ve kaj duosti* "we don't have it here a lot, God knows why"

c) Something is not desired: the phrase *bog ne daj* "God forbid"

When God is used in a phrase with *ne daj* (literally "God do not give" or Eng. "God forbid"), it expresses that the speaker considers something as undesirable.
Examples:

- a desire for something not to happen: *e to pa boh ne dej* "well God forbid this happens"
- something is marked as absolutely wrong: *bog ne dej da date toplo gor* "God forbid that you put it on hot"

d) Something is not within the power of the speaker: the phrase *bog pomagaj* "God help"

When used in a phrase with the verb *pomagaj* "help", speakers usually express that something is not within their power, and that they therefore feel powerless or indifferent, as well as compassionate, etc.
Examples:

- a speaker is compassionate: *se je stric utopil buh pomagi* "uncle drowned, it's God's will"
- a speaker is indifferent: *ja to mu pa bog pomagej* "well, God help him for that"
- a speaker feels powerless: *bog pomagi tako je* "God help, that's the way it is"

Only one example is closer to the more literal meaning, where a speaker calls God for help if something undesirable happens:
pa mi tuk dol pade če bom mogu čez poletje se za štrom učit da buh pomagi ne "and it would be so unfortunate for me if I had to study electricity during the summer, God help me"

3.2.3 Discourse marker

Discourse markers are a set of pragmatic expressions that have attracted a lot of attention (cf. Schiffrin 1987; Redeker 1990; Fraser 1999; Schourup 1999; Blakemore 2002, etc.). Different definitions of discourse markers are used, but in the present paper discourse markers are considered to be primarily pragmatic elements conveying no or minimal propositional content (for a more detailed explanation see Verdonik et al. 2007;

2008). In the corpus GOS data, there are a few very specific usages of the expression *marija* "Mary", the expression that we feel best describes discourse markers. These usages are rather similar to the usages of the discourse markers *zdaj* "now" or *no* "well" (cf. Verdonik et al. 2007). However, this type of usage is present in only one private discourse, i.e., a conversation between a grandmother and her granddaughter in the north-west region of Slovenia. In these usages, *marija* "Mary" functions as a meaning-empty word, as some sort of filler, often used to commence the utterance or as a backchannel signal.

Examples:

- a grandmother starts a new turn after a short pause: *marija pa s() eee se spomnm eno starejš žensko u Križah* "well, I remember an older women in Križe"
- a grandmother starts a new utterance: *eee marija ga pa umerkam* "um, and I noticed him"
- a grandmother responds with backchannel to the event that her granddaughter is describing: *jezer je bil tok dol k smo bli tok visok gor a veš | marija a res* "the lake has been down there since we were so high up y'know | Madonna, really"

3.2.4 Metaphorical usages

Amongst the expressions in our study, *vrag* and *hudič* "Devil" were metaphorically very rich, being used in the following metaphors:

Devil:

- *zamisliti vraga* "imagine the Devil", meaning something very unexpected happened: *zamisli vraga Nataša druga* "imagine the Devil, Nataša was second"
- *videti hudiča/vraga* "to see the Devil", meaning a threat: *če ne boš tega naredu boš pa že vidu hudiča* "if you don't do this you'll see the Devil"
- *vrag vzeti* "Devil takes", meaning "to die": *do te bo me pa tag vrag vzeo* "by then I'll be dead anyway"
- *iti k vragu* "go to the Devil", meaning something is broken or is turning bad: *vse gre k vragu* "everything goes to hell"
- *biti od hudiča* "to be from the Devil", meaning to be problematic, or to be very clever, etc.: *kdo je bolj od hudiča* "who is more from the Devil"
- *vsega hudiča/vraga* "all Devils", meaning all kinds of things: *vsega hudiča pišejo* "they write all kind of things"
- *hudič/vrag biti* "to be the Devil", meaning the problem: *hudič je v podrobnostih* "the Devil is in the detail"; *pijača je hudič* "alcohol is the Devil"; *to je hudič če ne veš* "it's Devilish if you don't know"
- *ta vrag* "this Devil", meaning the problematic thing: *poglejte piska ta vrag* "look, it whistles this Devil"
- *ko hudič/ko sto hudičev* "like the Devil/like one hundred Devils", for comparison, something bad: *težko ko hudič* "it will be as hard as the Devil", *ropota ko hudič* "it rumbles like the Devil"

God:
- *bog i batina* "God and punisher", meaning someone who gives commands, and someone who punishes any disobedience: *tak bota Pahor pa Borut prihodnje leto najtrdnejša koli()*

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koalicija / bog i batina "this way Borut and Pahor will form the strongest coalition next year / God and the punisher"
- *svega boga* "all God", meaning all kinds of things: *d meš dva centimetra pudra in svega boga po celmu telsu* "that you have two centimetres of powder and all kinds of things all over your body"
- *biti bog* "to be God", meaning to be an unquestionable authority: *zdaj pa je internet bug* "and now Internet is God"

3.2.5 Greeting phrases

Bog "God" is also used in greeting phrases, especially amongst the older generation in border regions of Slovenia. The following were used in the GOS corpus:

- *bog lonaj* "God repay", meaning thank you: *lep pozdrav tebi pa kolego | bog klone ejda adijo* "best regards to you and your friends | thank you alright bye bye"
- *bog plati* "God will pay you", meaning may God repay your good work/intentions: *bog ploti to ste tak lepo povedali ze* "may God bless you, what you said was so nice"
- *bog daj* "God give", meaning hello: *a pozdravleni [ime] [ime] | bog dej* "oh hello [name] [name] | hello"

4 CONCLUSIONS

The usage of the Christian religious expressions God, Devil, Jesus, Mary and Madonna in everyday spoken discourse was investigated, and it was found that these expressions are used in a content-free manner, as pragmatic expressions, much more often than in their direct meanings, with reference to the religious entity. The most common of these expressions is God, while all of the others (Devil, Mary, Madonna, Jesus) are much less common.

Qualitative analyses were used to investigate the pragmatic usages of these expressions. According to their primary functions, their usages were described in five groups: marking the attitude, marking the content, discourse markers, metaphorical usages, and greeting phrases, as summarized in Table 5.

Type	Expressions	Description
Marking the attitude	*bože* "God", *Marija* "Marie", *madona* "Madonna", *jezus* "Jesus", *bog* "God", *hudič* and *vrag* "Devil"	expresses the speaker's inner state of feeling/state of emotion at the moment of speaking
Marking the content	*hvala bogu* "thank God", *bog ve kaj/kje...* "God knows what/where...", *bog ne daj* "God don't make it happen", and *bog pomagaj* "God help"	expresses the speaker's opinion (i.e., rational state) about (part of) the propositional content of a conversation
Discourse marker	*marija* "Mary"	meaning-empty word, as some sort of filler

Type	Expressions	Description
Discourse marker	*marija* "Mary"	meaning-empty word, as some sort of filler
Metaphorical usages	*vrag*, *hudič* "Devil", bog "God"	metaphors like zamisliti vraga "imagine the Devil", iti k vragu "go to the Devil", biti bog "to be a God"
Greeting phrases	*bog* "God"	bog lonaj "God repay", bog daj "God give", bog plati "God pay"

Table 5: Overview of the results of qualitative analyses.

Usages in greeting phrases and as discourse markers are rather exceptional. Usage as a metaphor refers mostly to the expressions for the Devil (*vrag* and *hudič*), but exceptionally also to the expression *bog* "God". Phrases with *bog*, such as *hvala bogu*, *bog pomagaj*, *bog ne daj*, are described as marking the content, as their primary function is to express a speaker's opinion (something is good, unknown, undesired, or not in the power of speaker) with regard to (part of) the propositional content. When they are not used in direct meaning, the most widespread function of religious expressions in everyday speech is to express a speaker's inner state of feeling or state of emotion (or attitude) at the moment of speaking. A distinction was made between usages where this attitude is in general negative (more common), or in general positive (less common), while it was also observed that the intensity of the emotion/attitude can vary.

Along with the results, some interesting findings are worthy of further discussion.

The same expression can be used to express various attitudes, from very negative (*in po je pa ta klinac pršu | ja porka madoa* "and then this fuck came | oh Porca Madonna") to very positive (*o madona s se zrihtala* "uh Madonna you dressed really nice"). It seems that it is not the expression that carries a particular attitude, but rather the context and the voice (prosody) that provide attitude.

Often, we cannot name the attitude, e.g., *ja pa jz po štengah ne pridem pr bogu* "well I cannot climb the stairs, for Christ's sake"; we cannot say definitively whether the speaker is angry, dissatisfied, is in a bad mood or similar. When we listen to this utterance (and it is very important that we listen!), it almost feels like the speaker is emphasizing what is said with emotional energy transferred through the swear phrase *pri bogu* "by God".

We are used to thinking of God, Jesus and Mary as positive entities, and of the Devil as a negative entity. Similarly, when these expressions function as attitude markers, we found that we can distinguish between those usages where they express a positive attitude and those where they express a negative attitude. However, it would be wrong to expect positive religious entities to express positive attitudes, and negative entities to express negative attitudes: Jesus, God, Mary and Madonna can all express negative attitudes, while Devil can express positive attitude as well.

Based on the results and discussion above, one conclusion should be highlighted for future work, even though there may be many others: the expression of attitude in spoken discourse is a highly interesting but, thus far, sparsely investigated topic of research.

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Abstract

PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF CHRISTIAN EXPRESSIONS
IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Different kinds of pragmatic expressions in spoken discourse, such as discourse markers, interjections, topic orientation markers, pragmatic deictics, general extenders, etc., have attracted the attention of researchers over recent decades. However, expressions that have their origins within religions have not as yet been studied from the pragmatic perspective, even though in everyday conversation they are used in non-religious contexts and content-free manners more often than within a religious context. The present study is based on the GOS Slovenian reference speech corpus, and covers the more common Christian expressions used in the

corpus data, namely: *bog* "God", *bože* "God", *marija* "Mary", *madona* "Madonna", *jezus* "Jesus", *hudič* "Devil", *vrag* "Devil". The study attempts to highlight the contexts in which these expressions are used, as well as the pragmatic functions they perform.

Keywords: religious expressions, speech, discourse, attitude.

Povzetek
PRAGMATIČNE VLOGE KRŠČANSKIH IZRAZOV
V VSAKDANJEM GOVORU

Različni pragmatični izrazi v govorjenem diskurzu, kot so diskurzni označevalci, medmeti, kažipoti, označevalci propozicijske vsebine ipd., so bili v zadnjih desetletjih deležni precejšnje pozornosti raziskovalcev. Toda izrazi, ki imajo svoj izvor v religiji, kot so *bog, hudič, marija, madona* ipd., s pragmatične perspektive niso bili sistematično raziskani, čeprav jih v vsakdanji govorni komunikaciji pogosteje uporabljamo v nereligioznem pomenu, kot vrsto pragmatičnih izrazov, kakor v njihovem izvornem religioznem pomenu. Raziskava temelji na slovenskem referenčnem govornem korpusu GOS in zajame najpogostejše krščanske izraze, ki jih najdemo v njem. To so: *bog, bože, marija, madona, jezus, hudič, vrag*. Osvetliti skušamo, v kakšnih kontekstih so ti izrazi rabljeni in kakšne so njihove pragmatične vloge.

Ključne besede: religiozni izrazi, govor, diskurz, odnos.