

SEX AND GENDER IN SERBIAN AND BULGARIAN

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Abstract. It's a comparative study, focused on a grammatical category Gender in the Indo-European languages. All European languages show sexist structures. Today European gender languages have problems with the designations of professions. Gender is present in most European languages, but sex and gender do not always coincide. Today the European languages have to deal with the phenomenon that professions previously reserved for men are now open to women. Further, suffixes are often polysemous. The most used feminizing suffix in the Slavonic languages, -k(a), has other functions, as a diminutive and for producing nomina instrumenti. In Russian, Polish, Bulgarian and Italian feminine/female counterparts of terms denoting prestigious occupations are avoided. Fem agentives are available and are normally employed for traditional female occupations. Fem forms are employed for women in the high-status occupations today in German and Croatian and to a lesser extent in Serbian.

Key words: comparative study, European languages, Gender, sex, Serbian, Bulgarian.

Gender is a grammatical category in the Indo-European languages. It is generally assumed that sex and gender agree in nouns that denote animate beings, but there are many exceptions, as we shall see (cf. also Eckert, McConnell-Ginet 2003: 68). In the Slavonic languages there are three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter. In Serbian (Sr) nouns that end in a consonant (strictly speaking, zero) are masc., e.g. *зид, нут, знак, прозор, уда-рац, лист, пенео* (from *pepel*) *посао* (from *posal*). The following nouns designate animate beings: *човек, отац, син, ован, јарац, бик*. Nouns that end in -a in the nominative singular are normally fem.: *клуна, снага, земља, волја, глава, трава, борба*. The following nouns designate animate beings: *жена мајка, кћерка, овца, коза, крава*. Nouns in -o- or -e are neuter, e.g. *село, коло, писмо, стабло, полје, море, име, пруже, гранје, знанје, свануће*. Some nouns can have one of two different genders, e.g. *бол, -а* (m.) or *бол, -и* (f.), *глад, -а* or *глад, -и*. In Bulgarian (Bg) we have nouns such as *двор, облак, часовник, случај* (m.), *кџа, опашка, стая, кесия* (f.), *зърно, село, грозде, сърце* (n.) Foreign borrowings are also neuter, e.g. *дерби, жури, такси, бижу, интервју*. Some nouns ending in cons are f., e.g. *захар, сол, ноц, пролет, алчност, вечност*, while in some cases the gender can vary, e.g. *вар, жал, кал, пенел*. The gender of a noun is determined by agreement, following the famous statement by Hockett: “*Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words*” (Hockett 1958: 231): ... *авлија је још пуста* (Време смрти), ... *аутомобил, опкољен болни-*

чаркама што су изишле да се поздраве с Миленом. (BC), *Блед, блед, провиди се, очи му нарасле и још више поплавеле* (BC). Some nouns have atypical endings. Here the agreement reveals the gender of the noun, e.g. *деда* or *чича* are masculine, even though they have the typical feminine ending *-а*: *Чича Милоје је лежао непомичан* (Stevanović II: 125), *мој добри деда, дошао је деда*. The following are similar examples: *ујка, стрица, бата, тата*. In Bg we have examples such as *баща* ‘father’ (m.), *вуйчо* ‘uncle’ (m.). Further examples are Sr *дипломата, активиста, анархиста, машиниста, специјалиста*. The noun *аташе* appears to be neuter but is in fact masc., reflecting the sex of the person: *војни аташе, трговински аташе, Вг военен аташе, културен аташе*. On the other hand there are nouns in *-е* or *-о*, that are neuter, even though they denote animate beings, e.g., *дете, чедо, пиле, теле: а дете безбрижно и весело* (Stevanović II: 125). This category includes diminutives, e.g. *момче, девојче, чобанче: Саже [се] једно високо и кршино момче* (Бр. Нушић), similarly in Bg *Вие едно дете ли сте? Братя, сестри нямате ли?* (Св. Минков), *Чие си момиче?* (Ел. Пелин), *Много ми харесва Ниновото момче* (К. Петканов). *Лице* meaning ‘person’ is neuter, even though it always designates people: Sr *правно лице* ‘legal person’, *познато лице* ‘well-known personality’, Bg *духовно лице* ‘clergyman’. Similarly, Sr *особа* ‘person’, is feminine even when it designates a man: *Деца долазе у Опоравилиште у пратњи једне поуздане особе* (Зб. зак. 4: 23).

There are other nouns in Sr that can display either neuter or masculine agreement, e.g. *оклевало* ‘procrastinator’ is classified as a neuter noun, as in *Само је размишљала да је старо оклевало* (www.nbks.org.rs/digNBK/sintezaNS/.../page8.html) but according to RSKNJ it can also be used as a masculine noun (agreement by sex rather than by declensional class). The same is true of, e.g., *мрдало* ‘fidgeter, bungler’ (RSKNJ XIII: 150): *с (м) [neuter (masculine)]*, also *мувало* ‘pest; busybody’. In Bg we have *мухльо* (m.), *мухла* (f.) (derog.) ‘nincompoop, ninny, sucker’, *мижитурка* (m or f), *мижитурко* (m.) (colloq. derog.) ‘squit, milksop, pigeon’, *лигльо* (colloq. derog.) m. ‘twaddler; molly-coddle; yob’. Some emotive expressions designating girls or women in Sr are masc: *тај девојчуљак, Катица [је] руген и весело девојчурак од петнаестак година* (Бр. Топић). There is another class of nouns in Sr that have the typical fem *-а* but are generally masc in the singular. Note the contradiction between sex and gender in *слуга, војвода, владика, старешина: веран слуга / верна слуга, велика кукавица, тежка пијаница: Ништа опасније од паметног слуге* (BC). The following are in this class: *војвода, владика, слуга, судија, старешина: Сам војвода остао је у шанцу* (Вук Караџић), *Ето зашто је гомила најсигурнији судија* (Ј. Скерлић, Уништење естетике: 34), (Stevanović II 130f.). However, surprisingly, such nouns are regularly treated as fem in the plural, where the gender follows the typically fem ending: *У свим другим поротским седницама председавају среске судије* (Ј. Ђ. Авакумовић, *Порота*: 10), *За једним сто-*

лом су младе газде (И. Андрић, *На Дрини ћуприја*: 196) (Stevanović II: 131), but there are counter-examples: *И једног и другог су подстицали моћни наше* (И. Андрић, *Проклета авлија*: 86), *Са стране и позади јахали су заптије ливљанског кајмакама* (И. Андрић, *Травничка хроника*: 21) (Stevanović II, 1979: 132f.). In Bg., *владика* and such nouns are masc. *Шваба* is a pejorative expression to designate Germans (or Austrians). In the sg the noun is masc, in the plural fem, even when Germans and/or Austrians of either sex are meant: *Швабе су гладне* (BC).

Epicene nouns have only one form but may refer to animate beings of either sex: Sr *сисар* ‘mammal’ is masc, but can designate animals of either sex; similarly *птица* is fem, but can designate birds of either sex, cf. *жаба* ‘frog’, *кос* ‘blackbird’, *славуј* ‘nightingale’, *препелица* ‘quail’, *гуштер* ‘lizard’. The noun *пас* is masc but can designate a dog of either sex; there is also a marked fem form *куја* or *кучка*. The noun *лисица* can mean (1) ‘fox’ (unmarked for sex) (2) ‘female fox’ (marked fem form). The noun *лисац* designates a male fox (marked masc form).

Similarly *овца* designates (1) a sheep (unmarked for sex) (2) a female sheep (marked for sex), while *ован* designates a male sheep (ram) (marked for sex). With most wild or only partly domesticated animals, sex is of no great significance and so there is normally just one word to denote the species and the gender is random (Hentschel 2003: 291). Where the animal is of economic importance, there are usually terms for the different sexes and the offspring: Sr *крава* – *бик* – *теле* (Hentschel 2003: 290). Nouns like *особа*, *жртва*, *члан* can also be considered to be epicene, since they have a particular gender but refer to people of either sex (Hentschel 2003: 291).

Substantiva mobilia are those where a change in the desinence reflects the sex, e.g. Lat *filius* m. ‘son’ – *filia* f. ‘daughter’, *magister* m. ‘male teacher’ – *magistra* f. ‘female teacher’, *victor* m. – *victrix* f. ‘victor’, *asinus* m. – *asina* f. ‘donkey’, Ru *супруг* ‘husband’ – *супруга* ‘wife’, Sr *супруг* ‘husband’ – *супруга* ‘wife’, Bg *съпруг* – *съпруга*.

In the classical languages nouns that can be either masc or fem are said to be of *genus commune* (*substantiva communia*, *double-gender nouns*, Sr *двородне именице*): AGr *ὁ βοῦς* *hò boûs* ‘bull’ – *ἡ βοῦς* *hē boûs* ‘cow’, Latin *civis* ‘citizen’, either fem or masc, depending on the sex. A good example in Sr is *варалица*: *Он је прави варалица* vs. *Она је права варалица* (Hentschel 2003: 291). Such double-gender nouns in Sr are, e.g. *присталица*, *пијаница*, *пропалица*, *муштерија*, *трчилажа*. On the other hand, the following examples designate men, whether they display masc or fem agreement: *наш присталица* – *наша присталица*, *велики пропалица* – *велика пропалица*, *велики пијаница* – *велика пијаница*: Роберт Редфорд: *Био сам главна пијаница на универзитету* (Свет, 02.12.2013). There is also a masc form *пијанац* and in this case *пијаница* is considered to be the fem form. If the noun

designates a woman, only fem agreement is possible (agreement by sex): *наша присталица*, *велика пијаница* (Stevanović 1981: 178). Many double-gender nouns are of Turkish origin: Sr *муштерија*, ‘customer’ from Tk *müşteri*. Bg *мющерия* (dial.), on the other hand, is a masc noun. The gender of Sr *муштерија* is a matter of dispute: acc to some dictionaries it is f., following the desinence, and acc to other dictionaries it is m. Vuk (1818) classifies *муштерија* as a fem noun, without any commentary and without any examples. RSKNJ (XIII: 371) classifies it as a double-gender noun (“ж и м”). *Будала* ‘fool’ appears to be a double-gender noun: *велики будала* / *велика будала*. Vuk 1818 says that *будала* is a fem noun. RSKNJ (XIII: 371) classifies it as a double-gender noun (“ж и м”): in BC, Nikola Pašić describes himself as *највећа будала*. In Bg *будала* is a double-gender noun, i.e., it is fem or masc, depending on the sex of the person. Sr *комишија* (from Tk *komşı*, dial. *komşı* ‘neighbour’) is a m noun (but it takes f agreement in the pl – cf. above); the fem forms are *комишијиница*, *комишиница*, *комишијка* and *комишика*. In Bg *комишия* (popular usage) is a masc noun, the fem is *комишийка*.

All European languages show sexist structures. For instance, in Serbian one would assume that *човек* means ‘person’ or ‘human being’, (cf. *човечанство* ‘mankind’ *човечански* ‘human’) as well as its suppletive pl *људи* ‘men’ (cf. *људски* ‘human’) but it is clear that women are not really included, as in *један човек и једна жена*, *људи и жене* (Hentschel 2003: 291), or the utterance *Жене говоре више него људи*. In Russian, the pronoun *никто* is masculine, even when it refers to women, cf. *никто из женицин не пришёл* (m.sg.) ‘none of the women came’ (Doleschal & Schmid 2001: 264). Serbian, on the other hand, allows indefinite pronouns to agree with the sex of the referent, as in: *Нека је дошла и питала за тебе; Да ли је нека од њих звала?* (Hentschel 2003: 294). From a grammatical point of view, m nouns and m pronouns are considered to be unmarked for sex (“generic masculine”): Sr ... *говорили су они који ме воле* (BC), *Дошли су људи и жене* (Hentschel 2003, 293), *Драги студенти и студенткиње!* However, variations are also possible, as in *Драге студенткиње и студенти!* (Hentschel 2003: 293). Mozdierz (Mozdierz 1999: 16) writes: “In the category of gender, the feminine form is the marked member of the opposition in that it is restricted to denote only females, while the unmarked masculine does not have such a constraint”, but feminists consider this practice discriminatory, since women become “invisible”. Attempts to come to grips with this in Serbian are, e.g. *Сви студенти и студенткиње* (у даљем тексту *студенти*) vs. *Они/оне* (у даљем тексту ‘*оне*’) (Hentschel 2003: 305). Examples of feminist (anti-sexist) usage in Sr are: *Активисткиње и активисти Центра за ненасилну акцију Београд; чланови/це, студенти/киње, доктори/ке; морамо да будемо свесне и свесни неких ствари* (Bugarski 2005: 63).

Today European gender languages have problems with the designations of professions.

One would imagine that there should be a fem form of every professional name, but in some languages this is not the case, or the theoretical fem form is not actually used. There are fem forms of low-status occupations or occupations where women have traditionally been represented: thus we have in Sr *секретарка* (*секретарица*), *благајница*, *учитељица*, *наставница*. For professions traditionally open to women, not necessarily low-status occupations, such as *writer* or *teacher*, there will often be a commonly used feminine agentive, e.g. *учитељица*, *професорка* (meaning ‘high-school teacher’), and ‘student’ in various languages, e.g. Sr *студенткиња*. Unlike some other languages (e.g., Russian, Macedonian), Sr *секретарка* can also be used for a high-status position such as “First Secretary of the Party”: *Међу највећим фаворитима за функцију председника владе била је и градоначелница Лила и прва секретарка Социјалистичке партије Мартин Обри* (RTV 15 May 2012 – http://rtv.rs/sr_ci/evropa/oland-preuzeo-duz_nost-predsednika-bez-pompe_319178.html); *Бивша државна секретарка Хилари Клинтон* (<https://sr.wikipedia.org> – Председнички избори у САД 2016). And Serbia now has a *премијерка* (*председница владе*). In Italian, certain fem titles are perceived as “ironical and patronising” (Proudfoot, Cardo 1997: 228); they cite *avvocatessa*, *soldatessa*, *poliziotta*, *vigilessa*. In Bulgarian *мениджерка* and *министърка* are used only pejoratively (Comati 2009: 177). In Sr *професорка* is often understood to mean “professor’s wife” (Hentschel 2003: 299), otherwise it designates a high-school teacher. In the novel *Време смрти* Milena Katić refers to her former high-school teacher Nadežda Petrović as *професорка* and addresses her as *професорко*, even though the latter is now working as a nurse in a military hospital. On the other hand, a university professor, that is, a woman with a high-status profession, is referred to only as *професор*. According to Klajn (Klajn 1966: 47f.), in recent years Sr has seen an increase in fem agentives such as *полицајка*, *преводитељка*, *премијерка*, *пешакиња*, *навијачица*, *гледатељка*, *слушатељка*, *нобеловка*, *герилка*. It. *ambasciatrice* is still commonly used to mean ‘ambassador’s wife’, *presidentessa* ‘president’s wife’ (Proudfoot, Cardo 1997: 227f.). Ru *профессорша* is glossed in I. Ja. Pavlovskij’s 1911 Russian-German dictionary as ‘Frau eines Professors’. Similarly, Ru *докторша*, *инженерша* normally denote the ‘wife of the doctor’ or ‘... engineer’. Mozdierz (Mozdierz 1999: 168) writes that “because of their semantic ambiguity, these feminine forms are avoided in official speech in favor of the masculine forms” (cf. Doleschal, Schmid 2001: 255, 259). Sr *генералица* is glossed in RSKNJ III 238 as ‘general’s wife’. When referring to high-status professions in Sr one would normally say *Она је лекар / професор/ пилот* (but cf. below). In Bg one can say *Той/тя е лекар* ‘He/She is a doctor’, though according to Енциклопедия на българския език (Enciklopedija 2000: 401) it is preferable to say *Тя е лекарка* ‘She is a doctor (using the fem agentive)’. In Sr, agentives of foreign origin regularly form fem forms with the suffixes *-иња/-киња*, e.g. *социологиња*, *психологиња*, *теологиња*, *филозофкиња* (Hentschel 2003:

295). However, Klajn (Klajn 1966: 48) disputes this, stating that there are no fem forms for the names of scholarly professions in *-лог*. In some cases, *-ка* and *-ица* coexist, as in *професорица/професорка*, *докторица/докторка* (Hentschel 2003: 295).

The problem of fem agentive nouns is twofold: 1. whether they can easily be formed, 2. whether they are actually used. Hentschel (Hentschel 2003: 297) quotes: “When we talk about native words denoting professions that have been open to women for a longer time ... then we usually have the formation of special words, of special forms for male and for female persons ... *učiteljica* ‘female teacher’, *radnica* ‘female worker’, *pomoćnica* ‘female helper’ ... However, when we come to talk about a new profession, job, position or title ..., then the doubting begins. Should one say: *drugarica kapetanica* ‘comrade.FEM captain.FEM’, *Jovanka S, inženjer hemije* ‘Jovanka S., chemical engineer.MASC’ or *Jovanka S., inženjerka hemije...*?”. However, as early as 1934 forms like *gospodja profesor* were condemned and the formation and use of fem agentives was advocated (Hentschel 2003: 297).

In some cases it is morphologically difficult to form a fem form. This is the case with e.g. *руководилац* and *деловођа* and so these terms are regularly used to designate women (as well as men). But even today there is still considerable hesitation, e.g. all three of the following variants are possible today: *Мој нови професор из математике је жена*; *Из математике имам женског професора*; *Ово је моја нова професорка из математике* (Hentschel 2003: 298). Stevanović (Stevanović I 1981: 177) cites the following examples: *Рада* (f.) *је наш највреднији* (m.) *и нај-савеснији* (m.) *судија*; *Другарица* (f.) *ће бити ваш разредни* (m.) *старешина*. Some examples from Serbian TV: *Министарка правде*, *Министарка финансија*, *Милица Делевић*, *директорка канцеларије за европске интеграције*, *Јоргованка Табаковић*, *гувернер Народне банке Србије* (key on the screen), but the announcer (a woman) and the reporter (also a woman) referred to her as *гувернерка* (repeatedly); *Тања Мишчевић*, *шеф тима за преговоре са ЕУ*, but on other occasions she was referred to as *шефица тима*; *Немачка канцеларка* *и шефица ЦДУ Ангела Меркел*. Today in Sr forms such as *председница* ‘president, f.’ or *посланица* ‘ambassador, f.’ are normal, but – according to Ranko Bugarski – forms such as *предавачица* ‘lecturer, f.’, *асистенткиња* ‘assistant professor, f.’, *доценткиња* ‘lecturer, f.’ still have a ‘feminist overtone’ (*феминистички призив*) (Bugarski 2005: 61–62). There is no fem form of *војник* There is no acceptable fem form of *мајстор* ‘tradesman’: *?мајсторица*, ***мајсторка* (Hentschel 2003: 299). Usage in Sr is still quite inconsistent, as witness the following excerpts from an article in Wikipedia (Serbian):

Маја Гојковић је српска политичарка, председник Народне скупштине Републике Србије и бивши градоначелник града Новог Сада. Гојковићева је била члан Српске радикалне странке, из које је искључена 2008. Гојковићева је исте године основала нову странку – Народну партију. Крајем 2012. своју странку припаја Српској напредној стран-

ци, где постаје члан председништва. Дана 23. априла 2014. постаје председник Народне скупштине Републике Србије. ... У политику је ушла почетком 90-их, прво у Народну радикалну странку, која се потом сјединила са Српским четничким покретом утопила и тако се формирала Српска радикална странка, у којој је обављала истакнуте партијске дужности – од секретарке странке до потпредседнице... Маја Гојковић је била посланица Српске радикалне странке у Савезној скупштини СР Југославије од 1992. (<https://sr.wikipedia.org/> – Маја Гојковић)

In Sr is still not unusual to use the male agentive when talking about a woman, e.g. *Амерички државни секретар Хилари Клинтон*, *Игоси Окоњо Ивеала*, *директор у Светској банци*. Croatian uses *sutkinja* ‘woman judge’ from *sudac*, but Serbian uses *судија* for both men and women because *судиница* would still be understood to mean ‘judge’s wife’; and in titles before persons’ names the masc form is still used: *Професор др Иванка Иванковић*, not *Професорка др Иванка Иванковић*. On a programme on TV Pink in Belgrade a man referred to the compere, a woman, as *наша домаћица* ‘our hostess’, to which she replied angrily *Ја нисам домаћица, ја сам домаћин емисије!* ‘I am not a hostess, I am the host of the program!’ (Bugarski 2005: 61–62). Klajn (Klajn 1966: 48) notes that women have achieved parity in sport with fem agentives such as *рукометашица*, *одбојкашица*, *џудисткиња*, *каратисткиња*, *ватерполисткиња*, *мачевалка* being now completely normal. But in the professions there is still hesitation: according to Klajn, *доценткиња/доцентница*, *архитектица*, *адвокатица* are still unusual. There are various fem forms of *судија* but none has become established. Quoting S. Nikolić, Klajn notes a tendency to use a fem address with a m professional name, as in *другарица благајник*, or to indicate the sex of the person by other means, as in *доктор Јелица Петровић*, *дечуј лекар*. According to Klajn, there are no fem forms of scholarly titles in -лог (but see above) or for other qualifications such as *агроном*, *академик*, *магистар*, *борац*, *стручњак*, *доктор наука*, *посланик*, *руководилац* or *вршилац дужности*. Marković (Marković 2012: 118) claims that prescriptive grammar often requires the use of a masc agentive for a woman. She conducted an experiment with university students and discovered that they do not always use fem agentives, even though these are available. Quoting Romaine (Romaine 2001: 156), Marković argues that the purpose of using fem agentives is “visibility through feminization”, therefore, it is not always necessary to use fem agentives if it is clear from the text that the agent is a woman (Marković 2012: 120–22). Nikunlassi (Nikunlassi 2000: 781f.) refers to so-called hybrid nouns in Russian which either lack derived female counterparts or where their use is stylistically restricted, e.g., *врач* ‘doctor’, *секретарь* ‘secretary’, *инженер* ‘engineer’, *бухгалтер* ‘book-keeper’, *управдом* ‘janitor’: *недовольная контролер* ‘dissatisfied ticket inspector’, *упрямая бухгалтер* ‘stubborn book-keeper’. One can say *Она – отличный/отличная врач*; *Врач уже пришла*; *Наша профессор сказала ...*;

Професор пришед / пришла (cf. Weiss 1993: 88; RSG 1988: 200; *Russkaja grammatika I* 467f.; Doleschal 2000; Doleschal & Schmid 2001: 263). In Serbian such constructions are not possible: **психолог је рекла да је социолог закаснила* (Bugarski 2005: 62), **инженер је нацртала скицу* (Hentschel 2003: 292).

The hesitation in using fem forms may be due in part to the ambiguity of the suffixes used to form fem agentives. In Serbian the suffix used most of all to form fem agentives, -к(а), is also used to form the names of objects, as in *петролејка* ‘petroleum lamp’, *најлонка* ‘nylon stocking’. The suffix -ица, which may be used to form feminine agentives, is used also to form deminutives: *сестра – сестрица*, *рука – ручица*, *птица – птичица*, *кућа – кућица*, *врвца – врвчица*, and also to designate devices, as in *слушалица* ‘receiver; headphones’ from *слушати* ‘to listen’ or *дизалица* ‘crane’ from *дизати* ‘to raise, lift’ and for designations of female animals: *голуб – голубица* ‘pigeon, m. – pigeon, f.’, *вук – вучица* ‘wolf, m. – wolf, f.’ Nissen (Nissen 1986: 737) writes: “On the one hand, we find a desire among women to get integrated into the masculine world, which would result in a rejection of *feminine* occupational titles, on the other hand, we encounter the desire to stay faithful to the female identity, and the wish to promote feminine occupational titles”. Hentschel (Hentschel 2003: 299f.) notes: “most women use the masculine form to refer to themselves. They accept this form as ‘normal’, whereas the feminine is perceived as strange and unusual, sometimes even as degrading”.

Gender is present in most European languages, but sex and gender do not always coincide, e.g. Ger *das Kind* n. ‘child’, *die Person* f. ‘person’, Ru *лицо* n. ‘person’, Sr *особа* f. ‘person’. In Sr some emotive expressions designating girls or women are masc: *девојчуљак*, *девојчуак*. Epicene nouns have only one gender but may refer to animate beings of either sex, e.g. Sr *жаба* f. ‘frog’, *славуј* m. ‘nightingale’. Interestingly, diminutives are neuter in different languages, e.g. Ger *Mädchen*, Sr *момче*, *девојче*, Bg *маомче*, *момиче*.

Today the European languages have to deal with the phenomenon that professions previously reserved for men are now open to women. While in English generally – and also, of course, in non-gender languages such as Turkish – there is only one noun to designate both men and women, one would expect that, in the other European languages, fem agentives would be formed and employed to designate women in the professions, but this area is fraught with difficulties. In some cases, the derivation of a fem form is morphologically impossible, e.g. Ru *драматург* ‘playwright’, *политик* ‘politician’ (Doleschal, Schmid 2001: 259). A lot of fem agentives originally designated the wife of the agent. To a certain extent, even today, the fem agentive is perceived as being subordinate to the male agent. Fem agentives are mostly derived from masc agentives using suffixes. The exception are the double-gender nouns, where there is no derivation. In Russian masc agentives can sometimes be construed as fem (“hybrid nouns”).

Further, suffixes are often polysemous. The most used feminizing suffix in the Slavonic languages, *-k(a)*, has other functions, as a diminutive and for producing nomina instrumenti. In Russian, Polish, Bulgarian and Italian feminine/female counterparts of terms denoting prestigious occupations are avoided. Fem agentives are available and are normally employed for traditional female occupations. Fem forms are employed for women in the high-status occupations today in German and Croatian (cf. Hill 2014) and to a lesser extent in Serbian.

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