

The Usage and Standardization of Feminatives in Slovenian Language – An Analysis of User Dilemmas

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses dilemmas that have been sent to the Language Consulting Service of the ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language by users and are related to feminatives in Slovenian, also shedding light on these dilemmas from the perspective of wider societal developments. Most dilemmas are connected to feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar, but dilemmas often also arise when multiple feminatives are included in dictionaries or viable in terms of word formation. Though the Language Consulting Service is integrated into the search system of the Fran dictionary portal, the feminatives considered, which were not yet included in dictionaries when the corresponding questions were submitted, are at the time of writing still not included, which leads us to the question of a systematic treatment and dictionary presentation especially for feminatives that are uncommon in usage, which are most frequently the subjects of dilemmas in the Language Consulting Service.

Key words: *feminatives, Slovene, language consulting, Fran portal, dictionary*

Introduction

The role of women in Western society has changed significantly in the last decades; while, on the one hand, it is known that the most ingrained stereotypes are deeply entrenched precisely in language^{1–3}, on the other hand, research has shown that there are no major problems related to equal possibilities for noun forms for women and men in Slovenian in terms of word formation and in comparison with other Slavic languages^{4,5}, and there is a noticeable wish of users to realize these forms in language. As regards the establishment and standardization of feminatives in Slovenian, the introductory part of the present article points out two periods when the issue of the usage of feminatives, especially in relation to non-sexist use of language, was highly relevant not only among experts, but in the general public as well. Through the temporal context of wider societal developments, it will be easier to understand the (non-)inclusion of feminatives in individual dictionaries.

The first calls for the use of forms for both genders and non-sexist use of language appeared in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, when many significant political and, consequently, societal changes took place in Europe and other parts of the world. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published

the Guide to Non-Sexist Language in 1987, which was followed by recommendations of the Council of Europe on such use of language⁶. Women's social status grew, and they started to increasingly take over positions previously mostly held by men, so in 1995, at the initiative of the Slovenian Government Office for Women's Policy, there was a discussion on non-sexist use of language, which, *inter alia*, led to the first standard classification of occupations (SCO), which already included both masculine and feminine forms and was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia no. 28/1997. At the time, the first edition of the *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language; SSKJ) had already been published, and there were numerous studies on feminatives; the 33rd seminar on the Slovenian language, literature and culture organized by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, in 1997 focused on women in the Slovenian language, literature and culture and included some linguistic studies relevant from the perspective of feminatives, as they are discussed in this article; these are briefly presented in the following. Bešter⁷ writes about the use of feminine forms in administrative texts, discerning that the recommended guidelines are only partly implemented in practice. For instance, in forms, designations for female persons only appear in 10% of cases, and non-implementation of guidelines is some-

times purely practical in nature, e.g. because some associations “do not have the money to print new/amended documents/forms”⁷, and in most cases female individuals are not really bothered by the use of masculine forms, though they use feminine forms in some places – either because they like them or because this is demanded by their superiors⁷. Stabej⁸ presents the background of his involvement in the drafting of education legislation, which used a version with forms for both genders, and feels that the SCO is “perhaps the most important and most meaningful action but has been overshadowed by the greater attention given to gender forms in laws”⁸. Vidovič Muha⁹ wrote a paper on the naming typology of activities and characteristics of women for the proceedings of the seminar, and Breda Pogorelec¹⁰ had a lecture on Slovenian syntax and designations for female persons (the paper is published as an annex to the proceedings). Jež¹¹ subsequently presented the theoretical placement of feminatives in the Slovenian system of word formation.

The second period of widespread interest in feminatives and non-sexist use of language followed in approximately 20 years, but in the meantime, linguistic studies relating to feminatives had not been completely abandoned, and the importance of social responsibility became a major element of lexicographic work. As part of her doctoral dissertation and subsequently, feminatives were explored in depth by Markežič, especially in terms of word formation^{12,13} and with a review and inventory of the principles of their inclusion in the *Slovar novejšega besedja* (Dictionary of New Slovenian Words; SNB), the second (SSKJ2) and third (eSSKJ) editions of SSKJ and the *Sprotni slovar slovenskega jezika* (Growing Dictionary of the Slovenian Language), including by comparing this with usage in corpora and other texts^{14–16}. A study of feminatives in the context of terminological dictionaries for Slovenian has also been produced¹⁷, as well as other works. An important milestone regarding non-sexist use of language is 23 October 2018, when a round-table discussion entitled *Jezik in spol* (Language and Gender) was organized in Ljubljana by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana and the Commission for the Slovenian Language in Public at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The round-table and broader public discussion on this topic were prompted by a decision of the Senate of the Faculty of Arts on the alternate use of masculine and feminine grammatical forms as neutral forms referring to all genders in the rules and regulations of the Faculty of Arts¹⁸. The discussion has sparked a wider reflection on new solutions regarding inclusive use of language in Slovenian¹⁹, which will certainly continue to be the subject of many discussions and studies in the years to come.

Slovenian Language Dictionaries and the Language Consulting Service

In analyzing user dilemmas regarding feminatives, this article refers in particular to normative dictionaries (and one non-normative dictionary) of the Slovenian lan-

guage that are published on the freely accessible Fran portal. Since 14 October 2014, the Fran portal has been in operation at www.fran.si^a and includes all the fundamental reference works for the Slovenian language^{20,21}. The latest version (this article was written in autumn 2021), i.e. version 8.0 published on 3 December 2020, includes 38 dictionaries, an atlas and the Language and Terminological Consulting Services, amounting to 689,941 dictionary entries in total. In addition to the Language Consulting Service of the ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language as the main source, the present article frequently references the following dictionaries:

Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika (Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language, SSKJ)^b: it was published in five volumes between 1970 and 1991; it is a medium-sized monolingual general explanatory informative and normative dictionary, the importance of which is evidenced by many subsequent lexical reference works relying on SSKJ for their materials. It has been frequently criticized for its presentation of socially sensitive lexis^{1–3,22}, which is not unusual when a dictionary created in the past is viewed from a more modern perspective²³. It must be kept in mind that SSKJ is a product of its time and, as such, cannot be completely neutral^{1,23,24}; in this sense, it is essentially no different from other Slavic-language dictionaries produced at the same time^{9,25}. As regards feminatives in SSKJ, it is worth noting that SSKJ explained some feminatives, especially those less commonly used, with the referential explanation ‘feminine form of.’ Due to older sources used as materials, it also included archaic or obsolete meanings, such as *gozdarica* ‘forester’s wife.’

Slovenski pravopis 2001 (Slovenian Normative Guide; SP 2001): this is an orthographic dictionary accompanying the first part of the normative guide – the Rules, which were published in 1990. In terms of materials, it largely relies on SSKJ; it is the most extensive and currently still valid normative guide for the Slovenian language. As regards feminatives, it is worth noting that it systematically includes feminine forms as subentries alongside masculine ones; however, these feminine forms were frequently constructed artificially and did not reflect actual usage – regardless, some have become established, while others have not. The SP 2001 also included so-called feminine forms of surnames, which are formed by adding a feminine noun suffix to the surname or by replacing the masculine noun suffix with the feminine. This practice has been criticized by various linguists, because these denominations are not part of the standard language, either then or now²⁶.

The second, augmented and partly modernized edition of the Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language (SSKJ2)^c: retains the conceptual elements of the 1st edi-

^a Fran, slovarji Inštituta za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša ZRC SAZU, 2014–, različica 8.0, www.fran.si.

^b SLOVAR slovenskega knjižnega jezika, Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2000, <http://bos.zrc-sazu.si/sskj.html>.

^c Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, 2, 2014, www.fran.si.

tion, but its materials also cover the language after 1991 and most of the lexis from SNB has been added. An important new feature in the context of the present article is the inclusion of numerous more recent feminine forms as a reflection of the changed gender dynamics in society, and the second edition uses full explanations of meaning for feminatives instead of the first-edition referential explanation ‘feminine form of’^{1,27}.

eSSKJ: the third edition of the Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language: like the first two editions, this is a fundamental monolingual general explanatory informative and normative dictionary, but it is made from scratch in terms of concept and materials. The dictionary devotes special attention to socially sensitive lexis^{28–30}. As a growing dictionary, it has been in the making since 2016^d.

ePravopis: Slovenski pravopis (Slovenian Normative Guide) is a normative dictionary describing normative dilemmas in particular and is being made in parallel with the overhaul of the orthographic rules (the so-called Pravopis 8.0 – Rules of the New Slovenian Normative Guide for Public Discussion). Feminatives are included in the dictionary consistently, as can be seen with an overview of the orthographic categories, which include both gender forms in their names where appropriate (cf. the following issues: *Nagrajenci in nagrajenke* (Prizewinners), *Pripadniki in pripadnice jezikovnih in verskih, rasnih skupin* (Members of linguistic, religious and racial groups), *Pripadniki in pripadnice redov* (Members of orders), *Pripadniki in pripadnice nazorskih, političnih in vojaških skupin* (Members of ideological, political and military groups), *Pripadniki in pripadnice umetnostnih, kulturnih in subkulturnih skupin* (Members of artistic, cultural and subcultural groups) and *Uslužbenci in uslužbenke, uporabniki in uporabnice storitev* (Employees, users of services)). As a growing dictionary, it has been in the making since 2014^e.

Sprotni slovar slovenskega jezika (Growing Dictionary of the Slovenian Language)^f is basically a non-normative dictionary with no guiding role, but it provides a description of the use of words, phrases and meanings, particularly more recent ones, that are not yet included in the dictionaries of the Slovenian language with a normative role or do not currently (yet) meet the criteria to enter these dictionaries. This context often includes feminatives; “if they are perceivable enough in usage and diverse enough in terms of sources, they are included in the dictionary”³¹. As a growing dictionary, it has been in the making since 2014 and although it is not a normative dictionary, it is very important as one of the dictionaries on the Fran portal, because users, especially when they want quick information, pay less attention to which dictionary they get it from, and take the Fran portal as a reference.

When the present article refers to inclusion in dictionaries, this means the dictionaries of the Slovenian language listed above; the starting point of the analysis is the Language Consulting Service^g as the main source of user dilemmas related to feminatives. The service was established in 2012, though language consulting had been introduced at the ZRC SAZU Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language as early as 2001 with the publication of SP 2001, where the covers of the dictionary included a web address for user comments and questions; even before that, employees of the institute had performed ad hoc language consulting over the phone and by mail³². Since the Fran portal was established in 2014, the consulting service’s posts have also been searchable via this portal. The consulting service, which operates as a standalone website, solves language problems of users of Slovenian and also categorizes questions to enable searching by question category. By August 2021, over 3000 questions had been answered by the Language Consulting Service in total.

Research Purpose and Methodology

The research purpose is to find and examine (1) the main reasons why user dilemmas regarding feminatives arise, and another interest is (2) what share of feminatives was included in dictionaries at the time the question was addressed to the consulting service in comparison with the current state (autumn 2021). We will also analyze whether each feminative is included in a normative or non-normative dictionary.

As regards (1), we assume that a dilemma most frequently arises because, due to an increased awareness of gender-sensitive use of language, users wish to use feminatives that were not used in the past and are consequently not included in dictionaries or are not as familiar, or there are multiple variants used between which users must decide, so they want to know which is the most suitable. As regards (2) the inclusion of the feminatives under consideration in the dictionaries, we assume that most were not included when the corresponding questions were asked, though we suppose the inclusion of these words in dictionaries is greater today, especially due to the option of regularly including new words in the growing dictionaries on the Fran portal. We expect to find most of the newly included feminatives in the non-normative Growing Dictionary, which has the most open concept when it comes to the inclusion of new lexemes. While both the orthographic and the general explanatory dictionary envisage the inclusion of a wide range of feminatives, including those that are less common in use, the increments of both dictionaries are created more systematically in terms of the inclusion of lexis (the words of each increment are included in the dictionaries if they deal with a specific orthographic problem, if they belong to selected conceptual groups, if they deal with a specific grammatical prob-

^d eSSKJ: Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika, 2016–, www.fran.si.

^e ePravopis: Slovar slovenskega pravopisa, 2014–, www.fran.si.

^f Krвина, Domen, Sprotni slovar slovenskega jezika 2014–, www.fran.si.

^g Jezikovna svetovalnica, <https://svetovalnica.zrc-sazu.si>.

lem, etc.). Individual words from the word family are usually not included separately.

Analysis of User Dilemmas Related to Feminatives

In the first part of the analysis, we have analyzed dilemmas related to individual feminatives, which we sought out in the Language Consulting Service. We searched using tags attributed to individual questions, namely *ženska poimenovanja* (feminine designations), *ženska poimenovanja poklicev* (feminine designations of occupations), *uveljavljanje ženskih poimenovanj* (establishment of feminine designations), *vključitev besede v slovar* (inclusion of word in dictionary); some questions had several tags, the second tag often being *besedotvorne dvojnice* (word-formational variants). We thus acquired 32 units (number of questions) that include the user's question and the answer by one or several authors working at the Language Consulting Service. The authors or co-authors of the analyzed answers regarding feminatives were the staff of the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language (in alphabetical order): Aleksandra Bizjak Končar, Manca Černivec, Helena Dobrovoljc, Nataša Gliha Komac, Domen Krvinina, Tina Lengar Verovnik, Mija Michelizza, Tanja Mirtič, Marko Snoj, Urška Vranjek Ošlak and Peter Weiss. A question can relate to one or more feminatives, and sometimes the question is broader, encompassing other questions besides dilemmas relating to feminatives; on the other hand, there are feminatives that are the subject of user dilemmas in multiple questions, so we used individual feminatives (number of feminatives), a total of 35, as the unit of analysis. In two cases, a dilemma was repeated in relation to the same feminine; one question highlighted dilemmas regarding three feminatives, and in three questions, the users highlighted two dilemmas regarding individual feminatives.

Although the number of analyzed feminatives is relatively small, we can still observe a slight increase in the number of questions relating to feminatives in recent years, but with considerable fluctuations (Table 1); on the one hand, this can be interpreted with the rising visibility of the Fran portal and the Language Consulting Service in general; on the other, it is known that the theme of feminatives and gender-inclusive use of language has received particular public attention, especially in 2018. The highest yearly number of questions related to feminatives was registered one year before (2017), with 7 questions on this topic, which suggests interest in this topic was increasing, a sign of the wide public discussion to come.

We have split dilemmas regarding feminatives into three major groups: the first (1) mostly includes feminatives that were not included in dictionaries and certain unfamiliar feminatives, further divided into additional subgroups; at the end of the section, we have checked whether they are included in dictionaries today. The sec-

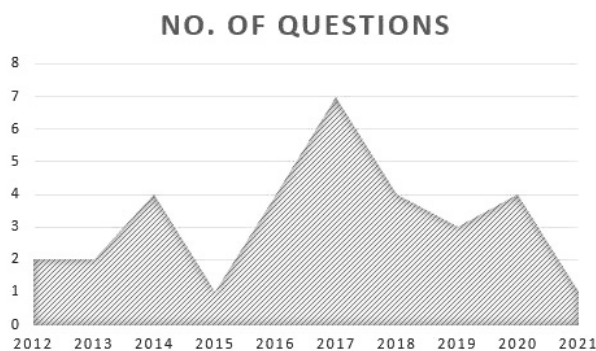


Fig. 1. Number of questions related to feminatives in the Language Consulting Service, by year.

ond (2) group includes cases where multiple feminatives are included in the dictionaries or viable; in the third (3) group we have highlighted a dilemma regarding the search for a suitable designation, non-standard designations and the search for the suitable written form of a designation related to the classification of occupations and scientific titles.

Just as we predicted, users of the Language Consulting Service most frequently have trouble with feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar (54.3%); among these, the most prominent are (a) unusual feminatives, often related to traditionally male occupations or roles (40%), followed by a group with a (b) feminine form included in dictionaries but with another meaning (11.4%) and the case of *vodja* 'leader, manager', where the (c) masculine and feminine forms coincide (2.9%). This is followed by normative dilemmas regarding the most or more suitable variant (31.4%), while the rest of the questions (14.3%) present dilemmas regarding the search for feminatives, non-standard designations, the standard classification of occupations etc.

Unfamiliar feminatives or not included in dictionaries

Although the publishing of dictionaries (or at least their increments) for Slovenian has accelerated significantly in recent years compared to the previous decades, when print dictionaries were the norm, there is often still a certain gap between the expectations and needs of users on the one hand and the actual state of dictionaries on the other, including as regards feminatives. Feminatives that are not included in dictionaries are a frequent source of dilemmas, as there is often a belief that words that are not in dictionaries may not be appropriate or standard.

The first subgroup of feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar are unusual feminatives (often relating to traditionally male occupations, roles). As can be seen in the following, users sometimes refer to the Fran dictionary portal itself, which undoubtedly demonstrates the importance and usefulness of assembling the dictionaries on the portal but also suggests there is a need to familiarize users with the different concepts and spe-

cifics of individual dictionaries. The form that they try to create using the usual word-formation procedures or that they have read somewhere sounds unusual to them. This usually occurs when the feminative that is viable in terms of word formation already has a homograph or another meaning.

In the case of the *piska* ('writer' fem.) feminative, the user wrote: "In today's Večer newspaper, I was bothered by the *piska* expression referring to a female writer. The Fran website does not even include this word. Is it correct? Or rather, how do you call a female writer?" In the answer to the question above, which was published as early as June 2016, Helena Dobrovoljc emphasized that a language can accept "feminatives even if they are highly unusual as long as they are used for a long enough time," which has also been confirmed for other languages³³.

A similar case is the *mislica* ('thinker' fem.) feminative, which was featured in no fewer than two questions in the Language Consulting Service – first in October 2013, when it seemed there was no suitable word-formational derivation in Slovenian, and in addition, the materials suggested there was no suitable feminative to be detected in usage due to its unusualness, so the masculine form was the most suitable, such as in this poem by Maksa Samsa: "Sem bila *mislec*, modri filozof, // vse dni bogata, kakor oni grof, // ki nosil 'špico' je za zlati 'knof'" ('I was [fem.] a thinker [masc.], a wise philosopher, // rich every day, like that count // who wore a spike for the golden button'). It appears, however, that users were not satisfied with the proposed solution, and in October 2018, the Language Consulting Service received another question about this feminative, and there was no longer any doubt. This is because in the meantime, the second period of the general media interest in the topic of feminine designations had started, and apparently it had been demonstrated over time that despite being a homograph of the meaning 'clever thought,' the feminine form *mislica* is a perfectly valid option. Since 2018, the *mislica* feminative has been included in the Growing Dictionary, while the normative dictionaries of the Slovenian language have not recorded it so far. For the feminine form of *modrec* ('wise man, sage'), the possible *módrica* (there exists the homograph *modrica* 'bruise') and *modrinja* have not been detected in usage, though both are suitable feminatives from the word-formation perspective. A similar case in terms of word formation is the feminine form of the *duh* ('ghost' masc.) lexeme, where *duhica* and *duhinja* are possible, but both are rarely used.

A homography-related dilemma also arose with the *lovka* ('huntress') feminative, though *lovka* as a 'woman engaging in hunting' had already been included in SSKJ and subsequently in SP 2001 and SSKJ2. By checking the mentioned dictionaries, the user ascertained that this form is deemed suitable, but was bothered by the fact that *lovka* also means 'tentacle,' suggesting two other feminatives instead (*lovkinja* and *lovica*), which, while viable in terms of word formation, are not established in usage. In Marko Snoj's answer, one can read that "there are a few

other similar examples in our language, such as *drsalka* ['(ice-)skater' fem./'(ice) skate'], *navijalka* ['roller (worker)' fem./'(hair) curler'], *varovalka* ['guardian' fem./'fuse'], *ko-palke* in plural ['swimmers' fem./'swimsuit'], and, if one disregards the capitalization, *Danka* ['Dane' fem.]/*danka* ['rectum'], which are not bothersome either."

The feminative for *kupec* ('buyer' masc.) – *kupka* – is also fairly unusual and relatively poorly established in usage. Perhaps the simplest and especially the most convenient course of action in this case would be to use the *nakupovalka* ('shopper' fem.) feminative, but it is better to use words with the same base when forming feminatives.

The expression *plemenitnica* is not included in recent explanatory dictionaries for Slovenian, but it can be found in SP 2001 as the feminative for *plemenitnik*, which means 'noble(man),' as well as in Pleteršnik's Slovenian-German dictionary of 1894, where it signifies a noble woman. As is noted in the answer to the linguistic question in the Language Consulting Service, *plemenitnica* appears in a corpus in the meaning 'noble vine'; in terms of word formation, it is also a suitable feminative in opposition to *plemenitež* ('noble man'), though the phrase *plemenita ženska* ('noble woman') can also be used and is probably a better choice in terms of clarity, at least until the single-word expression becomes established in usage. A similar case is *agova žena* ('aga's wife'), i.e. the wife of a Turkish man of authority called an aga, though there exists "the less revealing single-word *ágovica*, according to the Serbian-/Croatian-Slovenian dictionary by Janko Juraničič, the form probably being a one-off occurrence. It is the equivalent of the Serbian etc. form *áginica*, which is known mostly for the ballad Hasanaginica but is rare even in languages descended from the former Serbo-Croatian," as noted by Peter Weiss on the Language Consulting website.

In the dilemma regarding the feminative for *praktik* ('practitioner' masc.), it turned out the most suitable feminative is *praktičarka* (by analogy to *didaktik* – *didaktičarka* 'didact', *sintaktik* – *sintaktičarka* 'syntactician' etc.), though *praktikinja* is also possible – while it does not appear in usage, it can be found in the derived feminative *kiropraktikinja*, which is another example of how unpredictable living language can be.

A(nother) sign of the importance of integrating the Language Consulting Service in the search mechanism of the Fran dictionary portal can be seen in the question for the feminine forms for *kadrovik/kadrovnik* ('human resources officer' masc.), which are not included in any of the normative dictionaries on the Fran portal, and the only hit is from Language Consulting. Interestingly, this occupation is not listed in the most recent Standard Classification of Occupations of 2008, which has been in force since 2010 (SCO-08), and an overview of job posting and search websites shows that *kadrovik* (masc.) and *kadrovica* (fem.) are used more widely, though *kadrovnik* (masc.) and *kadrovnica* (fem.) are just as suitable in terms of word formation; in any case, it is recommended to consistently

use the same word-formation pair throughout an individual text.

Dilemmas also arise regarding feminatives such as *keramičarka* ('ceramist' fem.), *živilska tehničarka* ('food technician' fem.) or *tekstilna mehaničarka* ('textile mechanic' fem.) which is somewhat surprisingly, because these are word-formationally quite predictable feminatives, and also because the feminine forms of nouns are included in dictionaries but these occupations, like in the previous cases, used to be dominated by men, so the feminine forms may have been unfamiliar to users or sound unusual to them.

The second subgroup of feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar are feminine forms included in dictionaries but with another meaning. The possibility of feminatives having homographs (e.g. *lovka*, *mislica* etc.) has already been mentioned; there are also cases when feminine forms are included in dictionaries but not in the desired meaning. These are most often archaic meanings of the type 'n's wife' recorded in SSKJ. Nouns with such meanings have been discussed in more detail by Štumberger³⁴. An example is the feminative *mesarica* ('butcher' fem.), which, in addition to 'butcher's wife,' means 'butcher's axe,' so the user wanted to know how to refer to a woman working in a butcher's shop. In addition to *mesarica*, SP 2001 introduced the feminative *mesarka*, which has apparently become established in usage; moreover, *mesarka* is also listed in SCO-08 as the feminine form.

With *tajnica* ('secretary' fem.) and *občinska tajnica* ('municipal secretary' fem.), it turned out once again that in relation to the masculine form, i.e. *tajnik* or *občinski tajnik*, respectively, users find the feminatives unsuitable or less prestigious due to the conception of *tajnica* as only a 'woman carrying out administrative, organizational, technical tasks,' as noted by SSKJ2 (and SSKJ)³⁰. In SSKJ2 (and SSKJ), the masculine form *tajnik* has the 2nd meaning 'high-ranking official of an organization, body,' while *tajnica* has lacked this meaning in normative dictionaries so far; SSKJ2 only added the meaning 'answering machine.' In job classifications, *tajnik* and *tajnica* are often renamed to *poslovni sekretar* and *poslovna sekretarka* ('business secretary'), perhaps in part to overcome this implied difference. The case of *tajnik* and *tajnica* is an example of distinct semantic asymmetry³⁵, though this is not such a major issue in Slovenian as it is in some other Slavic languages, e.g. Polish⁴ or Russian⁵. The issue is that the masculine and feminine forms are morphologically symmetrical but do not carry the same connotative meaning. On the Language Consulting website, Helena Dobrovoljc also pointed out that "in official texts (rules, laws, statutes etc.) titles are most often used generically and without names, so they are often kept in the masculine gender but the fact that they apply to both genders is noted with the sentence: The expressions in the masculine grammatical form used in the statutes are used as neutral and apply equally to both genders". However, the form in the statutes does not oblige you to use the masculine form in positions where the title is followed by a name and sur-

name or even only a surname. This manner has also been abolished in the orthographic rules." At the end of the previous century, similar findings regarding the designations *tajnica* and *tajnik* were reported by Pogorelec¹⁰, who already believed that the feminine form was becoming established, but it seems that the connotative meaning had anchored itself deeply in the perception of users and is still present many years later.

In SSKJ (and SSKJ2), *pogrebница* is a 'woman attending a funeral,' and also has the meanings 'funeral dirge' and, archaically, 'funeral repast.' A user of the Language Consulting Service was looking for a suitable expression to designate a woman that (professionally) carries out tasks related to burying the dead, i.e. the female equivalent of *pogrebnik* ('undertaker' masc.), because such a feminative is not included in normative dictionaries for Slovenian. In another meaning (archaic), *pogrebnik* is 'funeral attendee' (masc.) or *pogrebec*, for which SP 2001 lists the equivalent feminative *pogrebka*. SCO-08 lists *pogrebница* as the equivalent feminine form, while the normative dictionaries on the Fran portal do not currently include the word in this meaning.

To conclude the examination of the first group, we have also checked how many feminatives that were not included in dictionaries when the corresponding questions were addressed to the Language Consulting Service can today be found in the normative and non-normative dictionaries on the Fran portal listed at the beginning of the present article. The analysis has shown that at the time of the Language Consulting question, 13 feminatives had yet to be included in dictionaries, and the present state (autumn of 2021) is very similar as only 2 out of the 13 (15%) are included in dictionaries. The two feminatives are *mislica*, which is included in the non-normative Growing Dictionary, and *vodja*, which is included in SSKJ2 and ePravopis. The feminine *vodja* is also found in the *Sinonimni slovar slovenskega jezika* (Synonym Dictionary of the Slovenian Language; SSSJ), in the explanation for *razredničarka* ('class teacher' fem.): 'a female teacher who teaches in class and is also the manager of a class.' SSSJ also includes *mesarka* and *mesarica* as 'a woman employed at a butcher's shop,' while the other feminatives cannot be found on the examined dictionaries on the Fran portal. While the feminine forms are used only rarely in most of these cases – most do not even reach a frequency of 50 occurrences in the Gigafida 2.0 text corpus –, *mislica*, which is included in the Growing Dictionary, is equally rare in usage. *Tajnica* in the meaning 'high-ranking female official of an organization, body' is definitely more frequent as the phrase *tajnica občine* ('secretary of municipality' fem.) alone has 131 hits in Gigafida 2.0, but even *tajnica* has not been included in any dictionary so far. The introductory hypothesis where we predicted a higher inclusion of feminatives that had not been included in dictionaries (especially in the non-normative Growing Dictionary) when the corresponding questions had been asked has definitely proven false.

The third subgroup of feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar are when *the masculine and feminine forms coincide*. The lexeme *vodja* ('leader, manager') is a somewhat specific case; it first only referred to male persons (this is the case in SSKJ and SP 2001), then SSKJ2 was the first to note its homonym, where the *vodja* lexeme is feminine. Subsequently, the feminine *vodja* has also been included in ePravopis. The question was received by the Language Consulting Service in April 2014, a few months before the release of SSKJ2, so asking about the most suitable form was understandable as the feminative was not noted in the normative dictionaries for Slovenian at the time. *Vodja* in its feminine form had in fact appeared in the print version of the *Gledališki terminološki slovar* (Dictionary of Theatre Terminology) in 2007 (the phrase *glasbena vodja* 'music leader, musical director' fem. is included) and later (2009) in the monograph *Novejša slovenska leksika (v povezavi s spletnimi jezikovnimi viri)* (Recent Slovenian Lexis (in Relation to Online Language Resources))³⁶. The latter also lists *vodkinja*, but this form had too few attested occurrences in usage to be included in SNB, for which the list in the monograph served as a general entry list. A second feminine form viable in terms of word formation is *vodjinja*, but despite a desire to encourage such a distinction from *vodja* based on a trend for equality³⁷, neither of these viable feminatives has become established in usage. The current state for both in the Gigafida 2.0 text corpus reveals 4 occurrences for *vodkinja* and only 2 for *vodjinja*.

Multiple feminatives included in dictionaries (or viable)

The second most frequent type of dilemma in the Language Consulting Service relates to cases where multiple feminatives are included in dictionaries but the information about them may differ across different dictionaries, making the users unsure about which feminative is the most suitable. The previous chapter already mentions the noun *vodja*, which was first used (and thus included in dictionaries) only in its masculine form, then the homonymous feminine form became established. In her answer, Helena Dobrovoljc notes that *vodja* (its feminine form, that is) is used more frequently than the more recent derivations *vodkinja* and *vodinja*, while compounds with the *voditi* ('to lead, to manage') component more frequently result in the usage of feminatives containing *-vodkinja* (with *zborovodkinja* 'choir director' fem., *računovodkinja* 'accountant' fem. etc. noted among the dilemmas) or *-vodinja* (*računovodinja* 'accountant' fem. etc.). An important point, also highlighted in the Language Consulting answer, is that while there may be a certain logic in language, it does not always follow predefined expectations. This can be observed when examining the formation and usage of feminatives as well.

Dilemmas often arise due to variants, which are usually all included in dictionaries, and users wonder which one is preferred. Most frequently, the suffixes *-ka*, *-ica* and *-inja*, or two among these, are possible. Sometimes the variants are almost equal in usage, e.g. *organizatorka* and

organizatorica ('organizer' fem.) or *prosilateljica* and *prosilka* ('applicant' fem.); in the pair *nogometasica* – *nogometasinja* ('soccer player' fem.), the first one has become more established, while, in the pair *citrarka* – *citrarica* ('zitherist' fem.), the variant with the *-ka* suffix is more established. For both *geografka* and *geografinja* ('geographer' fem.), SP 2001 refers to *zemljepisica*, but the latter is poorly attested in usage. Out of all three, *geografinja* has become the most established and is also the feminine counterpart of *geograf* in SCO-08.

It is sometimes apparent that the need for the establishment of a particular feminative arises when the media report on a woman in a post previously held only by men. The example of *generalka*, *generalica* and *generalinja* ('general' fem.) demonstrates how, similarly to *dekanka*, *dekanica* and *dekanja* ('dean' fem.), all three options have become relatively established (*generalka* and *generalica* are listed in SSKJ, and *generalinja* is listed in the *Vojaški slovar* (Military Dictionary) by Tomo Korošec et al.). Until Alenka Ermenc became the first *generalmajorka* ('major general' fem.) (i.e. in November 2018), which is the official designation for *generalka*, *generalica* or *generalinja*, the second of these forms had been dominant. But experts started to favor *generalka*³⁸ (cf. also the answer of the Terminological Consulting Service), which was also followed by the media when reporting about the first woman assuming this high rank in the army, and the Language Consulting Service appended an editorial postscript to its answer, explaining the recommendation for *generalka*.

Sometimes two feminatives whose meanings overlap can be derived from different bases, e.g. *jahalka* (fem.) < *jahalec* (masc.) and *jahačica* (fem.) < *jahač* (masc.) (all meaning 'equestrian, rider'), but are equivalent in usage, like their masculine counterparts. A similar example is the pair *katehetinja* (fem.) < *katehet* (masc.) and *katehistinja* (fem.) < *katehist* (masc.) (all meaning 'catechist').

Other

The materials examined suggest that users sometimes do not know where exactly to seek out suitable gender pairs. This kind of onomasiological question only appears in the Language Consulting Service in the example of searching for designations for some female animals (question: How do you name the females/males of certain animals?), which are word-formationally identical to the names for female persons. That the problem is real, even if does not arise in the case of feminatives for persons in the Language Consulting Service, can also be seen in the example of the eSSKJ dictionary, where a word-formation section was introduced to fill precisely the naming gaps for feminatives (and likewise for diminutives and possessive adjectives). If the feminatives are included in dictionaries, there are usually no major problems, and the tendency of recent explanatory dictionaries for the Slovenian language is to include more such feminatives than before, but it is a fact that all possible feminatives have not (yet) been included in dictionaries and probably never will be, so it is sometimes necessary to look for them in text cor-

pora or other available sources of materials, which is not always easy.

It rarely happens in the Language Consulting Service that users ask for advice regarding non-standard designations, but a question on how to colloquially call a woman who studies bats highlighted just such a dilemma. The user explained a misunderstanding that could occur with the feminine derivationally parallel to the colloquial designation for a man who studies bats (i.e. *netopirec*), namely *netopirka*, which already refers to a female bat. In the analyzed examples, it has already been demonstrated that polysemy is generally not problematic with feminatives, but in this case the author of the question was worried that this word could cause misunderstandings in communication. As usual, there are multiple options in terms of word formation, such as *netopirjevka*, which, like *netopirka*, already has another meaning ('batfish'), but this does not preclude its use. In such a case, it is best to opt for the expression that is the most unambiguous.

The following dilemma is related to searching for the suitable written form of a designation related to the classification of occupations or official scientific titles. This is a topic that digresses from dictionary standardization as dictionaries do not necessarily list all designations of occupations and official scientific titles. In the following, two examples are highlighted, namely *pomočnik/pomočnica kuharja/kuharice* ('assistant [masc./fem.] to the cook [masc./fem.]') and *vršilka dolžnosti direktorja/direktorice* ('acting director' fem.). In the first example, the author of the question is a writer of occupational standards and would like to know how to properly refer to the occupation *pomočnik kuharja* ('assistant to the cook') if the designation needs to cover all possible combinations, namely: a male assistant to a male cook, a female assistant to a male cook, a male assistant to a female cook and a female assistant to a female cook. As noted in the Language Consulting answer, the proper form is *pomočnik/pomočnica kuharja/kuharice*. In the second example, the dilemma is related to the expression *vršilka dolžnosti direktorja/direktorice* ('acting director', literally: doer (fem.) of the duties of the director (masc./fem.)). As there is no director in the given example, one cannot know whether a woman or man will take the post, so both forms have to be used in accordance with the principles of the equal use of masculine and feminine forms, namely *vršilka dolžnosti direktorja/direktorice*.

The problem related to the example of *magistra/magistrice farmacije* ('Master of Pharmacy' fem.) is somewhat specific but also similar to the examples related to the classification of occupations as SP 2001 and SSKJ2 (or SSKJ) contain no information about the official title of a pharmacist with a master's degree, and the official List of academic titles and their abbreviations (in the PisRS database^b) includes it as *magistra farmacije*. An additional complication is that the expression *magistra* also exists as

^b The Legal Information System of the Republic of Slovenia (PIS), www.pisrs.si.

a colloquial expression for a female Master of Pharmacy employed at a pharmacy.

In Place of a Conclusion – On the Understanding of the World

As demonstrated by the article, two types of user dilemmas regarding feminatives stand out, namely dilemmas relating to feminatives that are not included in dictionaries or are unfamiliar and dilemmas where multiple feminatives are included in dictionaries or viable. It is noticeable that users know dictionaries and other linguistic reference works rather well as the analyzed questions relate to more difficult cases, but it is also surprising that the perception of linguistic dilemmas, including those related to feminatives, is still often limited to what is "right or wrong," as has been demonstrated in a study by Lengar Verovnik³⁹ regarding the questions addressed to the Language Consulting Service, where this accounted for 32% of questions. The ratio for questions regarding dilemmas related to feminatives, which were analyzed using examples, is almost identical: there were 31.25% of questions with a language element related to correctness, while answers more often employ the expressions suitable and recommended (also 31.25%). By providing the ability to search in multiple dictionaries and other lexical resources simultaneously, the Fran dictionary portal greatly facilitates users' efforts, but it is noticeable, especially on social media, that some users do not distinguish between different dictionaries (any longer) and are thus not aware of the potentially differing concepts and roles of individual dictionaries. It would definitely be reasonable to have a systematic and holistic dictionary presentation of feminatives, perhaps by designing a separate dictionary of Slovenian feminatives, as suggested by Stramljič Breznik⁴⁰, and to establish a mechanism as part of the Fran portal for feminatives that are not yet included in the dictionaries on the portal and are pointed out by users of the Language Consulting Service to be included in the Growing Dictionary or eSSKJ (together with its word family) if it turns out they are largely established in usage. With variants of feminatives where the normative guidelines in different (older) dictionaries are different, it is also advisable to examine recent usage and prioritize their re-inclusion in newer normative dictionaries.

In addition to many questions of different kinds, the Language Consulting Service sometimes receives questions that are somewhat provocative, as is apparent in an example of a question regarding the designation for a female *vol* ('a castrated male ox'). Therefore, the answer by Peter Weiss³⁷ was not entirely serious either: "While pairs are common in nature and are mostly reflected in language, this is often not the case, such as with queen bees, drones and worker bees, with geldings and with oxen. In such cases, to understand the alleged linguistic deficits, it is advisable to understand the world." In fact, it seems that the general public often reproaches researchers, including lexicographers, for not understanding the real

problems of users, i.e. for not understanding the world. The concrete user dilemmas that we receive through the Language Consulting Service definitely uncover a different view on language, highlighting problems from a different angle, and future lexicography should make better use of this.

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UPORABA I STANDARDIZACIJA FEMINATIVA U SLOVENSКОM JEZIKU – ANALIZA KORISNIČKIH DVOJBA

SAŽETAK

U radu se analiziraju dvojbe koje su upućene službi jezičnih savjeta ZRC SAZU-a pri Institutu za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša, a tiču se feminativa u slovenskom s jezičnoga i širega društvenog gledišta. Najčešće je riječ o dvojba-
ma koje se odnose na feminative nezabilježene u rječnicima, koji su rijetki ili u slučajevima kad postoje sinonimni nazivi ili im je tvorba upitna.