HUSBAND STATUS-RELATED NAMES FOR WOMEN ‘IN POWER’: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF SELECTED SUFFIXED FORMATIONS IN POLISH

Abstract: Since the times of emancipation Polish speakers have faced the problem of forming names for working women. Although in most cases the -ka suffix has taken on this role, it is not suitable for deriving names for all kinds of professions across all the social strata. In the Polish hierarchical society, the derivation of names for women holding high positions in public life (especially in the Polish establishment) has always followed its own ‘elite’ rules. Male names (with a few exceptions declining according to the masculine paradigm) have been ‘frozen’ in their masculine form and used in reference to women regardless of grammatical case, receiving the name of paradigmatic ‘zero’. This, however, goes against the modern feminist ideals where equality between men and women is expressed not by giving the same name but a name by which the referent’s sex is marked overtly. Language evolves in such a way as to cater for the needs of the changing society by providing separate nomenclature for men and women. Since the -ka suffix strongly connotes with the working class, other solutions have been proposed. This paper will explore the use of the long-standing, husband status-related (‘maritonymic’) names, ending in -owa and -ina/-yna in this function. It is a corpus-based study of all contexts of usage of 13 husband status-related formations in Polish which are potential candidates for becoming names of women holding high positions. This strategy curiously diverges with the Slavic tradition of suffixation preserved in Polish rural dialects, which has spread imperceptibly over the language in the shape of colloquial names for women in question, encouraged also for colloquial use by Polish linguistic authorities (the Polish Language Council), leaving speakers trapped between two opposing tendencies each of them having its own reasons for demanding priority.

Key words: corpus analysis, female professional names, the suffix -owa, the suffix -ina/-yna, maritonymic names
Introduction

This paper provides a corpus-based analysis of all contexts of usage, the number of which amounts to 1219, of 13 husband status-related formations in Polish which are potential candidates for becoming names of women holding high positions in the Polish establishment, i.e. prezydent-owa ‘president of the state-fem.’/‘mayor of a city-fem.’, senator-owa ‘senator-fem.’, posł-owa ‘MP-fem.’, marszałk-owa ‘speaker of the Sejm/the Senate-fem.’, premier-owa ‘prime minister-fem.’, minister-owa ‘minister-fem.’, sędz-ina ‘judge-fem.’, wojewódz-ina ‘voivode-fem.’, staroś-ina ‘starosta-fem.’, wójt-owa ‘vogt-fem.’, burmistrz-owa ‘mayor of a small town-fem.’,1 ambassador-owa ‘ambassador-fem.’, sołtys-owa ‘village leader-fem.’. Our aim is to assess their chances in this field, although, we fully realise that they encounter fierce rivalry in the shape of masculine nouns (paradigmatic derivation) – (pani) prezydent, (pani) premier, (pani) minister, (pani) marszałek etc., and other suffixed formations used (or aspiring to be used) in the same sense – prezydentka, premierka, marszałkini, burmistrzyni, sołtyska etc. Still, we expect, in our research, to come across at least some examples of such formations. This hypothesis is based on the premise that some of them (sędzina, starościna, sołtysowa, wójtowa) already function in colloquial Polish. Furthermore, an extensive vocabulary system in the field of female names is also typical of Polish dialects (Miodek 1999: 88, Urbańczyk 1972: 39-40). Thus, it is possible that some husband status-related names are used in reference to local elite women by the Polish rural society.

The proposed analysis is based on the data from the National Corpus of Polish (Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego NKJP) (Przepiórkowski et al. 2012) available online at http://nkjp.pl/ obtained with the aid of the PELCRA search engine. The names submitted for the analysis come from two reverse dictionaries – Indeks a tergo do Słownika języka polskiego pod redakcją Witolda Doroszewskiego and Indeks a tergo do Uniwersalnego słownika języka polskiego (ed. Bańko 2003). In addition, seven dictionaries were used to provide background knowledge about the formations with a view to forming a basis for comparison between the theoretical lexicon of the native speaker, as represented in the dictionaries, and the linguistic reality, as represented in the Corpus. They are the Dictionary of the Polish Language (Słownik Języka Polskiego) (1807-1814) by S. B. Linde (Lsjp), The Dictionary of the Polish Language (Słownik Języka Polskiego) (1900-1927) by J. Karłowicz (Ksjp), The Dictionary of the Polish Language (Słownik Języka Polskiego) (1958-1969) by W. Doroszewski (Dosjp), The Dictionary of the Polish Language (Słownik Języka Polskiego) (1978-1981) by M. Szymczak (Szsjp), The Universal Dictionary of the Polish Language in Poland the mayor of a town with the population below 1000,000 is called burmistrz (although prezydent has been a traditional title used there even before 1990).

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1 In Poland the mayor of a town with the population below 1000,000 is called burmistrz (although prezydent has been a traditional title used there even before 1990).
The position of women and derivation

It has not always been obvious that women can hold high positions in the society. In the Middle Ages a woman was dependent first on her father, and then on her husband or brother (Bogucka 2005: 76, Bystroń 1994: 120). And her role as a wife was strictly defined – she was ‘the first servant’ responsible for the children, the house and the farm (Bystroń 1994: 121; Cf. Chwalba 2009: 610). Peasant women busied themselves with tending cows and poultry, producing food, cooking, weaving etc. Town women helped their husbands in the craft workshops or merchant’s offices (Bogucka 2005: 65-68). And it was only after the economic changes of the 19th century (industrialisation, urbanisation and working migrations) that women began ‘going to work’ (working outside the family and the household). First, they became a cheap working force for factories, smelter plants and mines (Bogucka 2005: 247). Another hallmark was the First World War when men went fighting on the front, leaving vacancies not only in factories, but also in bureaux, offices, banks, shops etc. that had to be filled (Bogucka 2005: 279). Women also began to fight for their rights to vote – in England the suffragette movement expanded (Bogucka 2005: 263-270, Chwalba 2009: 612-613), and to study (also at universities) (Chwalba 2009: 614-615, Bogucka 2005: 263). Since that time, step by step, women have been moving up the social ladder winning access to more prestigious jobs (Chwalba 2009: 615) to become, finally, part of the ruling elite. Admittedly, men still significantly outnumber women in this respect (Bogucka 2005: 316-318).

The changing reality required changes in the linguistic system. Thus, names for working women had to be coined (a woman was no longer somebody’s daughter, wife or sister only). What is special about it here is the dichotomisation of the language that separates names for lower and middle class working women from those ‘in power’ (being part of the ruling elite), employing different linguistic devices in the derivation of both, and sometimes still hesitating how to do it (Klemensiewicz 1957: 101-119, Jadacka 2000: 1767-1768, Miodek 1999: 86-89, Łaziński 2006: 248, Kubiszyn-Mędrala 2007: 32).\(^2\) Thus, in Polish a

\(^2\)This hesitation can be illustrated by the attempt made by Joanna Mucha, the Minister of Sport and Tourism, who coined the art house derivative ministra ‘a female minister’, in the political chat-show Tomasz Lis na żywo (Lis 2012). This has become the subject of debate among both linguists
A woman can be called fryzjer-ka ‘hairdresser-fem.’, kuchar-ka ‘cook-fem.’, krawc-owa ‘dressmaker-fem.’, kosmetycz-ka ‘beautician-fem.’, laborant-ka ‘laboratory assistant-fem.’, sekretar-ka ‘secretary-fem.’, nauczyciel-ka ‘teacher-fem.’, śpiewacz-ka ‘singer-fem.’ etc. But, if she becomes a party secretary or a minister nobody dares to call her sekretarka or ministerka, but (pani) sekretarz, (pani) minister. *Prezydentka would not be the right name for a potential woman president in Poland as well (perhaps except for feminists). That would not be respectful enough. While for a woman vogt, a village leader or a headmistress speakers vacillate between wójcina, wójtka, wójtowa and (pani) wójt, sołtyska, sołtysowa and (pani) sołtys, dyrektorka and (pani) dyrektor. 

Polish is a highly affixing language, which does not exclude the existence of other word-formation devices such as compounding, back-formation and paradigmatic derivation (Szymanek 2015: 21-22). And it is the first (affixation) and the last (paradigmatic derivation) device that will be taken into account in the area in question. This great variety of choice, however, especially as regards feminine suffixes (-ka, -ica, -ina/-yna, -owa, -ini) does not make things easier. Some affixes have already assumed a specific semantic ‘tinge’, or have another meaning, or some other drawback – the -ka suffix is for the working class (as mentioned above), often not ‘respectful’ enough, “marked by a shade of humorousness” (Reczek 1993), -ica specialises in ‘bad girls’ – grzesznica ‘sinner-fem.’, anielica ‘naughty girl, lit. ‘bad angel’’, złośnica ‘vixen’, szefica_{hum} ‘an over-requiring boss-fem.’), and the -ina and -owa suffixes are reserved for wives. 

The paradigmatic derivation is not a perfect solution either. The paradigmatic zero in minister, premier or wójt is grammatically masculine and sounds awkward with feminine verb forms such as powiedziała ‘say-3.SG.PST.FEM’, podpisała ‘sign-3.SG.PST.FEM’, stwierdziła ‘state-3.SG.PST.FEM’ etc. (Thus, it is often supported by the honorific pronoun pani.)

(1)  
\[
\text{Pan minister NOM.SG.MASC powiedział 3.SG.PST.MASC, że nie trzeba płacić podatku.}
\]

‘The minister (man, honorific) said that the tax was not to be paid.’

\[
\text{Pani minister NOM.SG.MASC powiedziała 3.SG.PST.FEM, że nie trzeba płacić podatku.}
\]

‘The minister (woman, honorific) said that the tax was not to be paid.’

As regards other formations, marszalkini is a fresh invention speakers are not accustomed to (0 occurrences), and ministra goes beyond the framework of Polish word-formation devices used in the formation of female names (Bloch-
Trojnar 2015). Perhaps these attempts are the best evidence of the difficulty language users have in dealing with the problem.\(^5\)

**Husband status-related names in Polish**

The most commonly used husband status-related or ‘maritonymic’\(^6\) female names are those with the suffix -\(\text{owa}\), typical of Polish as well as other Slavic languages such as Czech, Slovak and Slovenian. The suffix is frequently attached to male surnames to denote a wife – K\(\text{owalczykowa}\) ‘Kowalczyk’s wife’ (Polish), N\(\text{ováková}\) ‘Novák’s wife’ (Czech, Slovak), K\(\text{ozakova}\) ‘Kozak’s wife’ (Slovenian), though the languages differ as regards stylistic details and legal regulations concerning such surnames (Nowakowska 2016). In addition to this, the suffix -\(\text{owa}\) in Polish derives common female names from male ones denoting a professional or a highly-placed man. Thus, there exist derivatives such as aptekarz ‘chemist’ – aptekarzowa ‘chemist’s wife’, doktor ‘doctor’ – doktorowa ‘doctor’s wife’, dyrektor ‘headmaster’ – dyrektorowa ‘headmaster’s wife’, general ‘general’ – generałowa ‘general’s wife’, inżynier ‘engineer’ – inżynierowa ‘engineer’s wife’, mecenas ‘lawyer’ – mecenasowa ‘lawyer’s wife’, naczelnik ‘governor’ – naczelnikowa ‘governor’s wife’, wójt ‘vogt’ – wójtowa ‘vogt’s wife’, kucharz – kucharzowa ‘cook’s wife’, ochmistrz ‘chief steward’ – ochmistrzowa ‘chief steward’s wife’, marynarz ‘male sailor’ – marynarzowa ‘sailor’s wife’ etc., which emphasise the wife’s social status.

Another suffix employed in the ‘maritonymic’ field is -\(\text{inal-yna}\) deriving, similarly to -\(\text{owa}\), names (and surnames) of wives from the names of positions held by their husbands. Derivatives of this kind are wojewoda ‘voivode’ – wojewódzina ‘voivode’s wife’, sędzia ‘judge’ – sędzina ‘judge’s wife’, starosta ‘starosta, leader’ – starościna ‘starosta’s wife’, gazda ‘a farmer in the Polish Carpathians’ – gaździna ‘gazda’s wife’, leśniczy ‘forester’ – leśniczyna ‘forester’s wife’, Zaręba – Zarębina ‘Zaręba’s wife’, Kościuszko –


\(^6\) The term ‘maritonymic’ is our own coinage based on the Polish term ‘marytonimiczny’ used in ‘nazwy marytonimiczne’ by Halina Wiśniewska in Świat płci żeńskiej baroku zakłęty w słowach (Wiśniewska 2003:15), meaning husband status-related names (next to ‘patronymiczne’ meaning ‘patronymic’ or father status-related).
Kościuszczyna ‘Kościuszko’s wife’ etc. However, according to Skudrzykowa, this suffix is being replaced by its rival -owa (so doublets are possible Piętka – Piętczyna/Piętkowa). The -owa suffix does not trigger any phonetic changes in the root cf. Waża – Ważyna/Wagowa, which is formally and semantically transparent (Skudrzykowa 1996: 19).

Other ‘maritonymic’ suffixes, used in dialects, are -ka (Little Poland), as in kowalka ‘smith’s wife’ (Grzegorczykowa 1984: 52), ciesielka or cyermanka ‘carpenter’s wife’, krawczka ‘tailor’s wife’, lokajka ‘valet’s wife’, organistka ‘organist’s wife’, szewczka ‘shoemaker’s wife’, zbójniczka ‘ruffian’s wife’ (Cyran 1977: 24), sołtyska ‘village leader’s wife’ (Dosjp), and -ula (Silesia), as in krawcula ‘tailor’s wife’, szewcula ‘shoemaker’s wife’ (Cyran 1977: 93), bacula ‘baca’s wife’ (Grochola-Szczepanek 2012: 176) (baca is a senior shepherd in the Polish Carpathians). A curiosity is the suffix -ichal-ycha in Rzepicha (a name derived from rzepa ‘turnip’), who was the wife of the semi-legendary Piast the Wheelwright, founder of the Piast dynasty, mentioned by Gallus Anonymus in his Polish Chronicle. Then, there is bracicha ‘brother’s wife’, czarcicha ‘devil’s wife’, kowalicha ‘smith’s wife’, krawczycha ‘tailor’s wife’, parobczycha ‘farm worker’s wife’, poganicha ‘pagan’s wife, i.e. a Jew’s wife’, szewczycha ‘shoemaker’s wife’ (Cyran 1977: 104), Kozaczycha ‘Cossack’s wife’ (Dosjp) and starostycha ‘starosta’s wife’ (Ksjp). The -icha-/ycha suffix is typical of the region of the Eastern Borderlands. It is now perceived as obsolete by native speakers of Polish (Grzenia 2002).

Research results

Of the 13 husband status-related formations selected for analysis 10 were found in the NKJP (prezydentowa, marszałkowa, ministrowa, sędzina, wojewodzina, starościna, wójtowa, burmistrzowa, ambasadorowa, sołtysowa), and 3 exist neither in the ‘maritonymic’ or ‘professional’ sense (senatorowa, posłowa and premierowa). The names appeared in colloquial contexts in excerpts from newspapers and magazines (Gazeta Wyborcza, Polityka, Gazeta Pomorska, Trybuna Śląska, Dziennik Zachodni etc.), books, and, to a lesser extent, poems and drama, embracing the period between 1988 until the present day (2018).

The number of occurrences in the NKJP of each of the formations in the sense of ‘a woman “in power” in the Polish (and foreign) establishment is as follows (in descending order): sędzina – 153 occurrences, sołtysowa – 13 occurrences, wójtowa – 10, starościna – 9 occurrences (5 in Poland and 4 abroad), burmistrzowa – 4, wojewodzina – 3, prezydentowa (head of state) – 2, prezydentowa (mayor of a city) – 2, marszałkowa – 1, ministrowa – 1, ambasadorowa – 0.
Here, we present the research results for each individual -owa and -ina\textsuperscript{7} formation.

\textit{Prezydentowa}

\textit{Prezydentowa} is ‘president’s wife’ (Lsjp, Ksjp and Dosjp). The more recent dictionaries such as Szsjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN consider the word as non-existent.

The NKJP research results contradict this. There were 403 occurrences of \textit{prezydentowa} in the sense of ‘the wife of the head of a republic’ (96.75%, 391 occurrences), and ‘the wife of the mayor of a big city’ (2%, 8 occurrences), which is in agreement with the definition of the word in the older dictionaries (Lsjp, Ksjp and Dosjp). Examples of women ‘in power’ are few and far between – only 0.5% for ‘a female president of a republic’ (2 occurrences), one of them being the name for a potential Polish female president suggested by the feminist M. Gretkowska in the book \textit{Europejka}. Then, there is 0.5% (2 occurrences) for ‘a female mayor of a big city’ and 0.25% (1 occurrence) used figuratively in the sense of ‘a bossy woman’.

\textit{Marszałkowa}

According to Sjp PWN \textit{marszałek} is ‘the speaker of the Sejm and the Senate’. Its ‘maritonymic’ counterpart is \textit{marszałkowa} ‘marshal’s wife’ (Lsjp, Ksjp, Dosjp).

As regards women ‘in power’ there is 1 occurrence of \textit{marszałkowa} ‘a female speaker of the Senate in Poland’ in the NKJP. This is 1% of the total of the occurrences (133) – the rest of them denote wives of different types of marshals (132).

\textit{Ministrowa}

\textit{Ministrowa} is ‘minister’s wife’ (Ksjp, Dosjp, Szsjp, Dusjp (coll.) and Sjp PWN (coll.)). In the NKJP there is 1 occurrence (out of 47) referring to a female minister (2%). Then, there is 1 reference made to a minister’s spokeswoman (2%). The rest of the occurrences (96%) denote wives.

\textsuperscript{7} In the research results we do not mention the phonological alternant \textit{-yna} of the \textit{-ina/-yna} suffix since the three formations we analyse (sędzina, starościna, wojewódzina) end in \textit{-ina}.
**Sędzina**

In Lsjp *sędzina* is ‘a judge’s wife, or a person who arbitrates in a dispute’. In Dosjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN the order of definitions has changed – *sędzina* is, in the first place, ‘a woman judge’ (Dosjp, rare), or ‘a female form of *sędzia*’ (Dusjp, Sjp PWN, (coll.)). In the second place, it is defined as ‘a judge’s wife’ (Dosjp (obs.), Dusjp, Sjp PWN (obs., arch.)). The corpus-based research mirrors this change of emphasis noting 153 occurrences of *sędzina* in the sense of ‘a female judge’ (72%) and only 18 of ‘a judge’s wife’ (9%). There are also 41 occurrences of *sędzina* ‘a female referee’ (19%) – a meaning not included in any of the dictionaries (contrary to *sędzia* ‘a referee’ in Dusjp and Sjp PWN).

**Wojewodzina**

*Wojewodzina* is ‘a voivode’s wife’ (Lsjp, Dosjp (arch.), Dusjp, Sjp PWN (arch.)) – the wife of a man who, etymologically speaking, was ‘a warrior-leader’ (Besjp). In the Corpus there are 79 occurrences (96%) of the word meaning ‘a voivode’s wife’, and 3 occurrences (4%) of *wojewodzina* as ‘a female voivode’, including one example of feminist language.

**Starościna**

*Starosta* is a Proto-Slavic word meaning ‘the oldest person or a person highest in rank, chief, leader’ (Bsejp). The female form of *starosta* is *starościna* ‘starosta’s wife’ (Lsjp, Ksjp, Dosjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN) or ‘a kind of female leader’ (to sum up the different definitions given in Ksjp, Dosjp, Szsjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN).

In many aspects the results of the NKJP research reflects the dictionary findings. First of all, *starościna* is a multi-aspectual word. Its large spectrum of referents includes wives, pseudo-wives such as mistresses of the ceremony at harvest festivals etc., independent leaders such as a female year/group prefect, or the leader of a group of female prisoners.

There are 5 examples of women ‘in power’ i.e. female officials in charge of *powiat* in the Polish local self-government. Another group of 4 occurrences refer to female leaders in the self-governments abroad.

The NKJP findings are in agreement, to a great extent, with the information given in Dosjp and Sjp PWN, where the ‘maritonymic’ sense of the word gives ground to *starościna* as ‘a female leader, organiser, manager, representative etc.’, being respectively 41% for wives, and 52% for different types of female leaders. Here, women ‘in power’ take 7% (4% in Poland i.e. 5 occurrences, and 3% abroad, 4 occurrences).
Wójtowa

Wójt is ‘the head of gmina’ (commune). The female counterpart of wójt is wójtowa ‘vogt’s wife’ (Lsjp, Ksjp).\footnote{Ksjp gives also an alternative form – wójcina. This, however, has no results in the NKJP.} The NKJP, however, recognises three types of wójtowa: ‘female head of gmina’ (67%, 10 occurrences), ‘female head of a (female) organisation’ (6%, 1 occurrence), and ‘a vogt’s wife’ (27%, 4 occurrences). Thus, the use contradicts the dictionary search results – wójtowa in the historical sense of ‘vogt’s wife’ is retreating in favour of ‘a female vogt’.

Burmistrzowa

Lsjp, Ksjp, Dosjp, Szsjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN all agree that burmistrzowa is ‘the wife of the mayor of a town’. To a great extent, the NKJP research confirms the dictionary findings since 95% of all of the occurrences (76) refer to wives, and 5% (4 occurrences) to female mayors of towns.

Ambasadorowa

According to Lsjp, Ksjp, Dosjp, Szsjp, Dusjp and Sjp PWN ambasadorowa (spelled ambassadorowa in Lsjp) is ‘ambassador’s wife’, and all the occurrences of the word in the NKJP (45) bear this meaning. No female ambassador is referred to as ambasadorowa.

Sołtysowa

Sołtys is a village administrator. Sołtysowa is the ‘maritonymic’ form of sołtys (Lsjp, Ksjp and Dosjp). Sołtysowa as ‘a female sołtys’ is also non-existent in the dictionaries. The NKJP research, however, contradicts this. Sołtysowa as ‘a female sołtys’ constitutes 23% of the total occurrences of the word (13 out of 56).

Senatorowa, posłowa and premierowa

There were no occurrences in the NKJP of senatorowa ‘senator’s wife’ (Ksjp), and posłowa – ‘MP’s wife’ (Lsjp, Ksjp, Dosjp (rare)), ‘a female messenger’ (Ksjp) or ‘a female messenger of the court’ (Dosjp). Premierowa ‘prime minister’s wife’ is non-existent both in the dictionaries and the Corpus.
Conclusions

The chart shows the percentage of formations ending in -owa/-ina used as names of women ‘in power’ contrasted with other meanings of the words – ‘maritonymic’ ones or those connected with different kinds of small-scale power.

Only sędzina, wójtowa and sołtysowa have a significant share in the field of husband status-related names used as names for women ‘in power’. The semantic shift (by which we understand that the occurrences of a given word in the sense ‘woman ‘in power’’ outnumber those meaning ‘wives’) has already happened in the case of sędzina (72% of ‘a female judge’), which is confirmed by the dictionaries, and, wójtowa (67%). As regards sołtysowa, the result of 23% for ‘a female sołtys’ indicates that ‘sołtys’s wife’ is still the primary meaning of the word.

The results obtained by starościna, burmistrzowa, wojewódzina, ministrowa, marszałkowa, prezydentowa and ambasadorowa meaning ‘woman ‘in power’’ are not higher than 7%. Thus, in this sense, the formations are used marginally, their primary meaning being ‘wives’.

Formations ending in –owa

The association of -owa with the position of wife is so strong that -owa formations are not able, in most cases, to stabilise in the language in the sense of a ‘woman ‘in power’’. All the more that prezydentowa and ambasadorowa are
deeply-rooted in the language in the ‘maritonymic’ sense today (respectively 98.75% and 100% of the total). And even though some husband status-related, -owa formations we searched for are not frequent enough to appear in the NKJP (senatorowa, posłowa, premierowa), which could potentially make space for their use as female titles, they do not occur in this sense. Formations ending in -owa as names for women ‘in power’ exist only in the linguistic periphery since their number oscillates between 0 and 4 percent. Exceptions are -owa names connected with rural societies (Matysiak 2015: 128) – soltysowa (23%) and wójtowa (67%), where the ‘maritonymic’ character of the suffix is not an obstacle in using them in the meaning in question.9

Formations ending in –ina

Despite their ancient origin, -ina formations are associated by language users with wives. However, contrary to -owa names they are likely to be employed in the derivation of names for women ‘in power’. The -ina suffix is unproductive as ‘wife’ today – a president’s wife is called prezydentowa, not *prezydencina, and an ambassador’s wife is ambasadorowa, not *ambasadorzyna. The suffix is of historical value. The referents of most of the still-existing -ina ‘maritonymic’ formations are non-existent. They have vanished together with the historical functions of podskarbi ‘treasurer’, podstoli ‘a court official responsible for the king’s pantry’, podczaszy ‘cupbearer’, koniuszy ‘the Master of the Horse’ etc., and if they appear at all it is only in historical contexts. And those which have survived until today are few and far between (sędzina, wojewodzina, starościna). Moreover, wives who could potentially be called these names have been re-named – the starosta’s wife who is a teacher will be called nauczycielka ‘a teacher-fem.’ rather than starościna. Women are perceived in the first place as professionals. This gives some hope that wojewodzina and starościna will follow the example of sędzina, which has already anchored in the language as ‘a female judge’.

The question is whether Polish language users want to give up the honorific tradition of pani names to the rules of the affixing language. The Polish society is fond of showing respect, emphasising hierarchy, historically, taking shape of the omnipresent title-using (tytulumania) (Kuchowicz 1975: 324-327), the remnants of which are visible in the form of pan/pani in front of occupational names or titles in the masculine form, fulfilling a double role – being a marker of femininity and an honorific pronoun. Are ordinary Poles ready to get rid of the tradition and be on the same terms with the ruling class? The above-presented analysis shows that the psychological barrier has not been broken yet.

9 Jadacka quotes doktorowa ‘a female doctor’ as an example of -owa formations existing typically in dialects (Jadacka 2000: 1768).
References

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