

FEMINIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL TITLES IN FRENCH, SPANISH AND
PORTUGUESE NEWSPAPERS

by

HANNAH JANE MALICKI

(Under the Direction of Diana L. Ranson)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the strategies used to feminize professional titles in French, Spanish, and Portuguese newspapers. It addresses the growing use of distinctive feminine forms (DFFs) in Romance languages, that retain grammatical gender, and assesses how DFFs are employed in contemporary written discourse. The study analyzes corpora from SketchEngine for each language (*French Trends*, *Spanish Trends*, *Portuguese Trends*) to identify patterns in the formation and frequency of DFFs. A central focus of the dissertation is testing the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis (DFFH), which predicts that writers will prefer morphologically distinct feminine forms over masculine or neutral ones when such forms are available. These findings are then compared to recommendations from official language guides and prior academic studies. The analysis reveals a consistent preference for DFFs across all three languages, which supports the DFFH. Additionally, language-external factors such as negative semantic associations with certain suffixes, appeared to have greater influence on instances in which DFFs were not chosen, than internal factors such as nominal morphology. The results contribute to our understanding of linguistic feminization and have implications for language planning, educational materials, and gender equity in professional representation.

INDEX WORDS: nominal morphology, France, Spain, Portugal, written discourse,
newspaper corpora, corpus linguistics, variation, grammatical gender

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, who pushed me to apply to PhD programs in the first place, and who provided an endless amount of emotional support, advice and general handholding during the pursuit of this endeavor. The defense took place on her birthday, which she called “the best birthday present ever”. I truly could not have done it without her.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Purpose of the study

Students of Romance languages, especially those coming from languages lacking grammatical gender, often ask about the form to use for a female professional when no historical gender distinction exists for her profession. For example, a French student who has learned the pattern *vendeur ~ vendeuse* for a salesclerk, may be puzzled by the different forms textbooks give for a female professor. Some textbooks tell them that the masculine *professeur* is always used even for women (Kelton et al. 2019:329), whereas others suggest a feminine form *la professeure* (Valdman et al. 2020:111-112). A form that is never recommended, however, is *la professeuse*, the form expected from the model of *vendeur ~ vendeuse*.

Students who possess knowledge of two or more other Romance languages are sometimes surprised to find that a profession that has a single widely accepted feminine form in one Romance language has a variety of forms in another language. For example, even though the title for a female professor is variable in French, as seen above in the options *le professeur* and *la professeure*, to which one can add *la professeur* and *la femme professeur*, the only form used in Spanish and Portuguese is *profesora/professora*. For a female judge, there is variation in Spanish. The forms, *la juez* or *la jueza*, remain the subject of debate in Spain, while in Argentina *la jueza* is widely employed (Fraser 2015:78). The corresponding French term, *le/la juge* allows variation only on the article, no doubt because the masculine noun ends in the typical feminine ending *-e*. According to Fujimura (2005:43-44) the use of *la juge* in French newspapers

increased by over 50% after 1998 when a government circular was published promoting the use of distinctively feminine forms when the referent is female.

The purpose of this dissertation is to create a portrait of the current feminization strategies for professional titles within Hexagonal French, Peninsular Spanish and European Portuguese. The first step in this process is to define the available strategies for feminizing professional titles in each of the three languages of study. The second step is to compile the existing information on feminine titles from two sources: prescriptive language guides published by the governments of the respective countries and previous studies on feminization of titles in each language. The third and final step is to collect and analyze the feminine forms found in three online newspaper corpora available via SketchEngine (Kilgariff et al. 2004), referred to as *French Trends*, *Spanish Trends* and *Portuguese Trends*. This data collection will provide a current picture of the use of feminine titles in newspapers in France, Spain and Portugal, which will then be compared to the forms recommended in the language guides and those mentioned in previous studies. These data will also be used to test the hypothesis for this study presented in the next section.

1.1 Hypothesis and research questions

Given the trend in France, Spain and Portugal toward gender-inclusive language, I propose the distinctive feminine forms hypothesis (henceforth DFFH) which states that writers will use a distinctively feminine form (henceforth DFF), one different from the masculine form, for female referents whenever there is a morphological means to do so in their language. For example, French writers will prefer the form *autrice* or *auteure* over *auteur* to refer to female authors. The feminization of professional titles is an aspect of gender-inclusive language that recognizes the participation of women in the workforce. “Gender-inclusive language”,

sometimes also called “Gender-neutral language” is a broad term, covering the ensemble of strategies that are meant to reduce gender stereotypes in spoken and written communication by using language that includes all genders of people. Some stereotypes that are given as examples in the United Nations’ Guidelines on Gender Neutral Language include phrases such as “Research scientists often neglect their *wives and children*” (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al 1999:11 emphasis is author’s own), in which the use of the word *wives* implies that research scientists are heterosexual men, since same-sex marriage was not legal in the United States at the time these guidelines were written. The guide suggests rewriting the phrase as “Research scientists often neglect their *families*” (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al 1999:11 emphasis is author’s own). Other suggestions for reducing stereotypical language include replacing words such as *mankind* with *humankind* or *humanity* (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al 1999:7), replacing the pronoun *his* with either *his or her* or *their* (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al 1999:10); and avoiding gendered terms such as *chairman* which can be replaced with the non-gendered option *chairperson* (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al 1999:6) or *chair*. This dissertation focuses only on the last option, the use of professional terms. In languages with grammatical gender, like French, Spanish and Portuguese, where gender is obligatorily marked on all nouns, a gender inclusive term is one that recognizes the gender of the referent. If a chairperson is a woman, then referring to her as *la présidente* /pʁezidãt/ indicates her gender and validates the fact that this job can be and is held by a woman in a way that using the masculine noun, *le président* /pʁezidã/ would not. The DFFH proposes then that writers will show this recognition by using DFFs in their choice of titles for female referents.

Although the movement toward gender-inclusive writing has now widened to include the use of non-binary pronouns such as French *iel* ‘[singular] they’ and noun forms such as Spanish

profesorx or *profesor@* ‘professor [of any gender]’ or *alumnes* ‘students [of any gender]’, these linguistic phenomena will not be treated in the present study, as their analysis would encompass a wide range of social, linguistic and political factors that are outside the scope of this study’s purpose, which is to examine a single linguistic phenomenon, the use of feminine professional titles, across three Romance languages. This approach has the advantage of allowing comparison of real phenomena with recommendations from government-issued language guides in France, Spain and Portugal, which for the time being do not incorporate non-binary gender expression into their recommendations. This study will also not address recommendations related to reducing the overall number of gender references in a text, such as replacing a personal noun form with an impersonal noun, i.e.: replacing Portuguese *o gerente* ‘the [male] manager’ with *a gerência* ‘management’ as recommended in Portugal’s inclusive-language manual (Abranches et al. 2009:23). Instead, this study focuses only on instances in which a feminine noun form is used to refer to a feminine referent, as recommended by all of the government language guidelines reviewed for this study (Abranches et al. 2009, Becquer et al. 1999, Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999, Lledó 2006, Toledo et al 2014).

In the French government’s feminization guide (Becquer et al. 1999) then-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin specifically asked members of the administration, to whom the guide was originally addressed, to “set an example” by “us[ing] feminine names for professional titles, ranks and functions whenever the feminine [is] in common use”. He further stated that he hoped “that arguments over ‘le’ or ‘la’ *ministre* [minister], when a woman occupies the role, will soon belong to the past” (Becquer et al. 1999:5-6). Similarly, a 1995 edition of the Spanish Instituto de la Mujer’s guide starts with a call to readers, asking them to rethink “concepts such as correctness, beauty or economy, linked to forms of language use that ignore humanity’s

gendered condition and the existence of women as free and autonomous subjects with their own voice” (Alario et al. 1995:5). Given the efforts by government-sponsored institutes and commissions to promote the use of distinctively feminine noun forms (DFFs), I believe that the results will show a tendency toward use of more DFFs in all languages.

Related to this hypothesis, the study will answer the following four questions:

1. What are the available feminization strategies for professional titles in each language?
2. What are the feminization strategies for professional titles used in the newspaper corpora for the three languages?
3. How do the feminization strategies in the corpus compare to those recommended by prescriptive language guides and to the results of previous studies on feminine titles?
4. When writers do not use an available feminine form for a particular noun, is this form not used because the shape of the feminine form is undesirable in some way, an internal factor, or because a feminine form has acquired negative connotations or because it seems inappropriate for a particular profession, external factors?

Because of its comparative nature, this study will also answer a fifth question:

5. What are the differences in feminization strategies among the varieties of French, Spanish and Portuguese written in France, Spain and Portugal?

In response to question 3, I predict that the language-internal factors, namely the specific shape of possible feminine forms, will play a more important role in writers’ choice of form for female professionals than external ones, namely the semantic connotations of a form or the degree of women’s participation in a profession. However, I also expect the external factors, like the actual or perceived participation of women in a particular job sector to have some effect.

1.2 Organization of the dissertation

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 establishes the basic definitions of gender and related concepts used in the analysis. It also provides a response to research question 1 above by presenting the available options for feminizing professional titles in the three Romance languages. Chapter 3 provides the necessary background on prescriptive guidelines for the feminization of professional titles and on the previous studies on feminization in French, Spanish

and Portuguese. Chapters 4-7 present and discuss the original data collected in the present study. Chapter 4 explains the methodology used to collect and analyze the data, including a complete list of words chosen for analysis. Chapter 5 presents the results for the study in tables showing the numbers and percentages of the forms used to address female professionals for each of the titles selected for analysis in the three languages. A cross-linguistic analysis of morphological differences in gender expression for feminine professional titles concludes the chapter. In Chapter 6, the results of the study are compared both with the prescriptive guidelines laid out in government-sponsored feminization guides and with the results of past studies. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the results in order to evaluate their support for DFFH. Special attention is devoted to the discussion of the non-feminine forms used to refer to women. Since these go against the DFFH, it is important to determine the reasons behind a writers' choice not to use a distinctively feminine form. The conclusion in Chapter 8 summarizes the results of the study and evaluates the degree to which they support or refute the hypothesis. It also offers suggestions for future research on the feminization of professional titles.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER IN FRENCH, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

2.0 Overview and definition of terms

Gender, in linguistic terms, is a way of classifying nouns based on “the behavior of associated words” (Hockett 1958:231, cited by Corbett 1991:1). Corbett (1991:8) distinguishes between gender classification systems based on “meaning (semantics)” and those based on “form”, though, citing Aksenov (1984:17-18), he acknowledges that “there is always a semantic core to the assignment system”. Gender classification systems with semantic gender agreement may assign words to genders according to a meaning-based set of distinctions, such as masculine/feminine/neuter, animate/inanimate, human/nonhuman. Though social and/or biological gender is one of the semantic categories that can form the basis of a gender system, it is not directly related to linguistic gender. In French, a language that has a binary gender system divided into “masculine” and “feminine” nouns, most animate beings are assigned to a gender class based on their biological or social gender. For instance, the word *femme* ‘woman’ is feminine as is the word *sœur* ‘sister’ because they refer to female human beings, though the two words share no formal (i.e. morphological) similarities. However, gender in French is also assigned to certain semantic groups whose meaning is not directly related to biological or social gender. Days of the week are always masculine (*le lundi, le mardi*), along with the names of languages (*le français, le portugais*), while names of sciences are feminine (*la chimie, la biologie*). However, because semantics and morphology often overlap, as seen in the final -e in

the names of sciences in French, it can be difficult to ascertain whether the gender assignment for a given word is based only on semantic or morphological criteria, or both.

A system whose gender is based purely on form, often called “grammatical gender”, is one in which the gender of a word can be determined by its written or spoken form. Corbett (1991:8) specifies that this form can be either phonological, if it relates to the sounds of the word, or morphological, if it relates to the word’s derivation and inflection. For example, in French, 99.8% of nouns ending in written *-tion*, pronounced /sjɔ̃/, are feminine (Corbett 1991:58), so any new nouns ending in *-tion* would be assigned feminine gender. In fact, Corbett (1991:58) cites Tucker, Lambert & Rigault’s (1977) claim that the gender of almost all French nouns can be predicted using phonological rules, making its gender system highly formal/grammatical. The difficulty in proving, however, whether a given French, Spanish or Portuguese noun’s gender has been determined by morphological or semantic factors, can be explained through the historical development of Latin gender in each of the Romance languages.

2.1 Gender in French, Spanish and Portuguese

French, Spanish and Portuguese all evolved from spoken Latin, in which nominal elements were either feminine, masculine, or neuter. Over time, the neuter gender was lost and its nouns were either reassigned to masculine and feminine gender or lost. Thus, binary gender systems with feminine and masculine genders developed in French, Spanish and Portuguese, in which words referring to sexed, animate beings were usually assigned a gender based on their biological/social gender, and other nouns were assigned a gender based on formal and/or other semantic properties. For example, in all three languages the words for ‘sister’, ‘mother’ and ‘daughter’ are feminine, while the words for ‘brother’, ‘father’ and ‘son’ are masculine. For many nouns designating professions, a distinctive feminine form is used to refer to female

referents, as in Spanish *la profesora* ‘the [female] professor’ and French *l’actrice* ‘the actress’. However, as we shall see, this is not true for all professional titles, some of which use the same masculine noun form for male and female referents, either with or without feminine determiners and adjectives. If feminine determiners and adjectives are used with a masculine noun form to denote a feminine referent, this is called a common gender (CG) noun form, as in French *la médecin* ‘the [female] doctor’. A masculine noun form used with masculine determiners and adjectives to refer to a female referent is called an epicene noun form. Because distinguishing epicene noun forms referring to women from formally identical masculine nouns would require reading the full context of every masculine noun in the corpus to determine the gender of the referent, it was not feasible to include epicene nouns in this study. For some nouns in this corpus, there were over 100,000 masculine noun forms. Therefore, epicene nouns have not been distinguished from masculine nouns in the data, and they are not analyzed as a feminization strategy. Epicene nouns did occur in the corpora, however, as shown in example (1). All examples are from the corpora for this study, unless otherwise specified.

(1) *Depuis la création de la série médicale Grey's Anatomy en 2005, Ellen Pompeo incarne Meredith Grey, un brillant chirurgien.*

‘Since the creation of the medical series *Grey's Anatomy* in 2005, Ellen Pompeo plays Meredith Grey, a brilliant surgeon.’

In this example above, the masculine form of the noun *chirurgien* modified by the masculine indefinite article *un* and adjective *brillant* is used to refer to Meredith Grey, a female character.

Traditionally, some professional nouns in all three languages were considered epicene, such as the French word for a writer, *un écrivain*, though no linguistic factors would have prevented the development of a common gender, or even a morphologically feminine form like

écrivaine. Indeed, both common gender and morphologically feminine forms of this word are now in use in France, as the results of the current study will show. Section 2.2 presents a brief summary of the current feminization options common to French, Spanish and Portuguese, followed by a summary of the language-specific endings used for feminine titles in each language.

2.2 General feminization options common to all three languages

In all three languages, there are five basic options for referring to a female referent, three of which are analyzed in this study. The first three use a noun identical to the masculine noun, the fourth uses different nouns for masculine and feminine referents, and the fifth option uses nominal endings to create a distinct noun inflected for feminine gender. The hypothesis of this study predicts that distinctively feminine forms (DFFs) used in the fifth option will be preferred by the writers of the texts in the corpora.

The first option, presented in the previous section and illustrated in example (1), is the use of an epicene form, a masculine noun along with masculine modifiers, to refer to any referent, regardless of its social or biological gender. As was also mentioned, epicene forms are excluded from this study given the difficulties of distinguishing between masculine and epicene forms in the sample. The second option is common gender (CG), sometimes called variable gender, in which the noun appears invariably in masculine form, but modifiers, such as determiners and adjectives, agree with the gender of the referent. Example (2) shows an example of common gender from Portuguese:

(2) female referee: *A I Liga vai contar pela primeira vez com uma árbitro assistente, depois de ter sido confirmada a subida de Andreia Sousa à primeira categoria...*

‘The First League will have a female assistant referee for the first time, after the promotion of Andreia Sousa to the first category has been confirmed...’

The third option, which is called lexical addition (LA), consists of adding a separate lexical item meaning ‘woman’ before a masculine noun, as in Example (3) from French:

(3) female doctor: *Nous sommes recueillis par Cres, une femme médecin du village de Lethe.*

‘We are taken in by Cres, a female doctor from the village of Lethe.’

A fourth option, which was not extracted from the corpora for this study, is lexical substitution in which different nouns are used for male and female referents. One such example appears in French in (4) where the noun for a male midwife is *maïeuticien* and *sage-femme* for a female midwife.

(4) a. male midwife: ...*Olivier Legrain parle peu, écoute et interroge à la manière d'un maïeuticien.*

‘...Olivier Legrain speaks little, listens and interrogates in the manner of a [male] midwife.’

b. a female midwife: *Une sage-femme, Céline Eucat, a animé un atelier sur l'auto palpation.*

‘A midwife, Céline Eucat, led a workshop on self-examination.’

Lexical substitution is not included in the present study because the focus here is to determine the various feminine forms of an individual masculine noun used to designate to female referents. In order to study lexical substitution, it would have been necessary to identify the different masculine and feminine nouns in advance in order to search for them in the corpus.

Given that this was not compatible with the design of the study and that such examples are rare, lexical substitution is not included.

The fifth option, morphological inflection, is the presence of different nominal endings for masculine and feminine genders. As noted above, these distinctively feminine forms that result from morphological inflection are of special interest in this study. Example (5) offers an example of morphological inflection from Spanish in which *médico* refers to a male doctor and *médica* to a female doctor. In this noun, and many other like it, the *-o* ending indicates masculine gender and the *-a* ending indicates female gender.

(5) a. male doctor: “*El Programa de Ana Rosa*” conecta con Rafael Bengoa, médico y exdirector del Sistema de Salud de la OMS para aclarar dudas sobre vacunación...”

‘ “The Ana Rosa Program” connects with Rafael Bengoa, a [male] doctor and former director of the WHO Health System, to clarify questions about vaccination...’

b. female doctor “*Cristina Ibarrola Guillén (Pamplona, 1969)*, médica con un currículum extenso en la labor asistencial y de gestión, casada y con dos hijos ...”

‘*Cristina Ibarrola Guillén (Pamplona, 1969)*, a [female] doctor with an extensive resumé in healthcare and management, married with two children’

Within the category of morphological inflection, one can distinguish among different kinds of inflection. In addition to the *-o/-a* alternation just seen, a final *-a* in Spanish can also alternate with a final *-e* on the masculine, as in *presidente ~ presidenta*, or it can alternate with zero in Spanish nouns ending in a consonant, as in *profesor ~ profesora*. Another option is the use of a suffix, such as *-isa*, as in Spanish *sacerdote ~ sacerdotisa*. The different inflectional possibilities for all three languages are discussed in the following sections.

2.3 Feminization options in French

As seen in the previous section, there are two strategies available in all three languages that do not alter the form of the masculine noun. These are common gender (CG), the use of the masculine noun for feminine referents along with feminine modifiers, and lexical addition (LA), the addition of the lexical item *femme* ‘woman’ before the noun. In French only, there are four options that add a written *-e* to the masculine noun, and it is necessary to distinguish between the two that change only the written form of the noun and the two that also change its pronunciation. The option where a feminine noun with a written *-e* is pronounced the same as the masculine noun is abbreviated “Ø/e same”. This is the case of *auteure*, which is pronounced /otœʁ/, just like masculine *auteur*. There are also nouns with the same pronunciation as the masculine noun in which the consonant is doubled before the final *-e*, as in feminine *cheffe* alongside masculine *chef*, both /ʃɛf/. These are designated as “Ø/e + same”, where the + represents the doubled consonant. There are also two options with a written final *-e* where the feminine noun has a distinct pronunciation from the masculine noun. The first of these, designated “Ø/e distinct”, has a final pronounced consonant in the feminine not present in the masculine, as in *agente* /aʒãt/, distinct from masculine *agent* /aʒã/. The other not only adds a written *-e*, and sometimes a double consonant in writing, and a final pronounced consonant, but also involves a change of the vowel before the pronounced consonant. This is designated as “Ø/e+ distinct” where the + indicates the vowel change. One set of words in this category has a masculine noun ending in a nasal vowel, such as *chirurgien* /ʃiʁyʁʒjɛ̃/. The feminine form *chirurgienne* /ʃiʁyʁʒjɛn/ has a final consonant /n/ not present in the masculine and the oral vowel /ɛ/ instead of its nasal counterpart. Another set of words ends in *-er* /e/ in the masculine and *-ère* /ɛʁ/ in the feminine, as in *pompier* /pɔ̃pjɛ/ ~ /pɔ̃pjɛʁ/. Nouns ending in *-eur* /œʁ/ in the masculine and *-euse* /øz/ in the feminine are also

included in this category, such as *conteur* /kõtœʁ/ ~ *conteuse* /kõtøz/. This is the one type of noun in the Ø/e+ distinct category where a final consonant is replaced in the feminine rather than added. The final option is the replacement of the masculine suffix by a feminine suffix, as in *acteur* ~ *actrice* or the addition of a feminine suffix, as in *poète* ~ *poétesse*. These seven feminization options are summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Feminization options for French nouns

name (abbreviation)	examples
common gender (CG)	<i>le juge</i> ~ <i>la juge</i> ‘the judge ~ the [female] judge’
lexical addition (LA)	<i>médecin</i> ~ <i>femme médecin</i> ‘doctor ~ woman doctor’
written -e addition, same pronunciation (-Ø/e same)	<i>auteur</i> ~ <i>auteure</i> ‘author ~ [female] author’
written -e addition plus doubled written consonant (Ø/e + same)	<i>chef</i> / <i>cheffe</i> ‘chef ~ [female] chef’ or ‘head ~ [female] head’ <i>colonel</i> ~ <i>colonelle</i> ‘coronel ~ [female] coronel’
written -e addition, additional final consonant in speech (Ø/e distinct)	<i>agent</i> ~ <i>agente</i> ‘agent ~ [female] agent’
written -e addition, additional final consonant plus vowel change (Ø/e+ distinct)	<i>chirurgien</i> ~ <i>chirurgienne</i> ‘surgeon ~ [female] surgeon’ <i>pompier</i> ~ <i>pomprière</i> ‘firefighter ~ [female] firefighter’ <i>conteur</i> ~ <i>conteuse</i> ‘storyteller ~ [female] storyteller’
suffix alternation or addition (suffix)	<i>acteur</i> ~ <i>actrice</i> ‘actor ~ actress’ <i>poète</i> ~ <i>poétesse</i> ‘poet ~ [female] poet’

The feminization options are organized in the table from least to most distinctive, even though this study will make distinctions only between common gender and lexical addition, non-distinctively feminine forms, and DFFs. For all the options, feminine determiners and adjectives are used and so these do not help to determine degrees of distinctiveness among the options. Distinctiveness depends instead on the form of the noun. Common gender is the least distinctive option with respect to the noun because the noun used for the feminine is identical to the

masculine noun. Lexical addition also uses the masculine noun, but it is considered more distinctive than common gender because the lexical item *femme* appears before the masculine noun form.

The next five options are all considered to be distinctive feminine forms (DFFs) because their feminine noun form is distinct from the masculine noun. The least distinctive of these is $\emptyset/e$ same because the difference between the feminine and the masculine noun exists only in writing, as in *auteure*. This is also the case for $\emptyset/e+$ same, as in *cheffe*, so it is considered to have the same degree of distinctiveness as a form without the doubled written consonant. In fact, in the results presented in Chapter 5, these two options will be combined into a single option designated as $\emptyset/e(+)$ same. The next most distinctive feminine forms are those that differ from the masculine through the addition of a final pronounced consonant, as in *agente*. Even more distinctive are the feminine forms that not only add a consonant but also change the vowel, such as *chirurgienne*. Finally, the most distinctive feminine forms are the suffixed forms, such as *actrice*, since the difference between the masculine and feminine forms differs by even more letters and sounds than in the other options.

The only options that exist for every noun are common gender and lexical addition, since they do not depend on the form of the masculine noun. The distinctive feminine options, however, are limited by the morphology of the masculine noun. For masculine nouns ending in a written *-e*, the only option for a distinctive feminine form is a suffixed form, such as *poétesse*. The addition of this suffix is possible in theory for any masculine noun ending in *-e*, but not all forms are present in the corpus. For example, **jugesse*, **capitainesse* and **édillesse* are not attested in the sample. The *-trice* suffix is possible only for nouns ending in *-teur*, so that *auteur* ~ *autrice* is possible but not *entraîneur* ~ **entraîntrice*. The suffix *-drice* is only used for the

feminine of ‘ambassador’: *ambassadeur* ~ *ambassadrice*. The feminine of a masculine noun ending in the vowel *-é* or a pronounced consonant, such as /l/, /f/, or /ʁ/, but not in the suffix *-eur*, is only to add an *-e* in writing and perhaps a double consonant. There is no option for a distinctive pronunciation, except for the nouns ending in *-teur* as mentioned above. The feminization of masculine nouns ending in a written consonant *-t* form their feminine with a written *-e* and the addition of a pronounced final /t/. The nouns ending in a nasal vowel, *-er* /e/, or *-et* /e/, fall into the Ø/e+ distinct category. The only nouns in French that have more than one DFF attested in the corpus are those ending in *-eur*, such as *auteur* ~ *autrice* and *entraîneur* ~ *entraîneuse*. This means then that writers have only a three-way choice between common gender, lexical addition, or a distinctively feminine form for all nouns, except for nouns in *-eur*.

2.4 Feminization options in Spanish and Portuguese:

The feminization options in Spanish and Portuguese are similar enough to discuss them together. As seen in Table 2.2 below, there is only one set of endings present in Portuguese that is not also present in Spanish. In both languages, unlike French, the written letters at the end of nouns also represent spoken sounds, so there is no need to differentiate between forms that are distinct only in writing and those that produce audible changes. The patterns of masculine/feminine gender expression in both languages are summarized in the chart below.

Table 2.2: Feminization options for Spanish and Portuguese nouns

Name (abbreviation)	Examples in Spanish	Examples in Portuguese
common gender (CG)	<i>el estudiante</i> ~ <i>la estudiante</i> ‘the student ~ the [female] student’	<i>o estudante</i> ~ <i>a estudante</i> ‘the student ~ the [female] student’
lexical addition (LA)	<i>piloto</i> ~ <i>mujer piloto</i> ‘pilot ~ woman pilot’	<i>piloto</i> ~ <i>mulher piloto</i> ‘pilot ~ woman pilot’
masculine ends in <i>-o</i> , feminine in <i>-a</i> (o/a)	<i>árbitro</i> ~ <i>árbitra</i> ‘referee ~ [female] referee’	<i>árbitro</i> ~ <i>árbitra</i> ‘referee ~ [female] referee’
masculine ends in <i>-e</i> , feminine in <i>-a</i> (e/a)	<i>presidente</i> ~ <i>presidenta</i> ‘president ~ [female] president’	<i>presidente</i> ~ <i>presidenta</i> ‘president ~ [female] president’
Feminine adds an <i>-a</i> to the masculine (Ø/a)	<i>senador</i> ~ <i>senadora</i> ‘senator ~ [female] senator’	<i>senador</i> ~ <i>senadora</i> ‘senator ~ [female] senator’

masculine ends in -ão, feminine in -ã, -a, -oa, - ona (Portuguese only) (ão/ ã-a-oa-ona)	--	<i>cirurgião ~ cirurgiã</i> 'surgeon ~ [female] surgeon' <i>ladrão ~ ladra ~ ladrona</i> 'thief ~ [female] thief' <i>patrão ~ patroa</i> 'owner ~ [female] owner'
Suffix alternation (suffix)	<i>poeta ~ poetisa</i> 'poet ~ [female] poet', <i>actor ~ atriz</i> 'actor ~ actress'	<i>poeta ~ poetisa</i> 'poet ~ [female] poet', <i>ator ~ atriz</i> 'actor ~ actress'

As was also true for French, common gender and lexical addition are options for any noun. For masculine nouns ending in *-a* in Spanish and Portuguese, the only option besides CG and LA is a suffixed form, such as *poetisa*. However, a suffix can be added only to a limited set of nouns. For example, a suffix cannot be added to *cuentista* to create a DFF **cuentistisa*. The categories of feminine forms ending in *-a* depend on the ending of the masculine noun. This means that in Spanish and Portuguese there is never more than one DFF available for a noun, with the exception of nouns where both an *-a* ending and a suffix are possible. The nouns attested in the corpora are Spanish *diácona ~ diaconisa* and *emperadora ~ emperatriz*, and Portuguese *embaixadora ~ embaixatriz*, *imperadora ~ imperatriz* and *ladra ~ ladrona*.

These options were used to categorize the data on feminine forms presented in Chapter 5, and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. The same categories have also been the subject of legislation, with different governmental agencies advocating for the use of certain forms, specifically those which render women's participation more visible in the workforce. They have also been the focus of earlier studies on linguistic feminization, which have been undertaken with many different aims. Both subjects will be treated in Chapter 3, which begins with a brief history of legislation around feminization followed by a review of previous studies on linguistic feminization in French, Spanish and Portuguese.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF LEGISLATION AND PREVIOUS STUDIES ON FEMINIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL TITLES IN FRENCH, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is composed of a historical overview of government efforts to promote and legislate on the issue of feminization in different countries, followed by a review of the existing scientific literature on the linguistics of feminization in all three languages. The historical section is divided into separate sections for French, Spanish and Portuguese. The literature review is organized not by language but by linguistic field into three subsections: studies combining morphology with sociolinguistics, studies combining morphology and the effects of legislation or linguistic planning, and corpus studies focused on morphology.

3.1 A Short History of Legislation around Feminization in French, Spanish and Portuguese

3.1.1 The history of feminization legislation in France

Linguistic feminization has been a source of controversy in France for longer perhaps than in any other Romance-speaking area, partially due to Cardinal Richelieu's cultural policies that eventually led to the establishment in 1635 of the Académie Française (AF). During this period of cultural and linguistic standardization, the famed writer and translator Marie de Gournay was reprimanded by the grammarian Guez de Balzac for daring to use the feminine form *tyranne* '[female] tyrant' in a translation of Virgil. Although de Balzac acknowledged the existence of feminizations such as *autrix* 'female author' in late Latin, he considered them to be symbols of "an Empire in decline" (Evain 2019:20). The kind of value judgements inherent in

such an observation have not themselves declined over time; instead, they seem to shape the discourse around linguistic feminization in France, where efforts of the Académie Française to constrain feminization have been well-documented (Viennot 2014, Viennot et al. 2016, Evain 2019).

Despite France's historical engagement with the topic of feminization, in the twentieth century, Canada and some francophone European countries were first to implement government-backed language policies. Canada, influenced by the United States' adoption, in 1975, of gender-neutral terminology in all government references to professional titles, adopted feminization guidelines for French and English before its European peers (Arbour et al. 2014:32). In Quebec, the "official francization" of the province began in earnest after Bill 22 and Bill 101 established French as an official language of Quebec, and then as the official language in 1974. This made the establishment of norms for French language usage a provincial priority. Within this political context, *L'Office de la langue française* 'The Office of the French Language' (OLF) gained power at the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s, as a result of the social, and later legal, necessity to establish French-language norms for words that had formerly been employed in English (Ivárez 1996:77-78). Though the governmental norms set for English followed the American pattern of removing feminine suffixes and/or all references to gender in professional titles, the Office declared the need to equally balance "the structure of French and the concerns for social equality that characterize North America" (Arbour et al. 2014:33). They thus opted to preserve the gendered nature of French professional titles, while at the same time working towards the establishment of new norms in their usage that would promote the use of feminine variants and, "in all cases, the agreement of the determiner with the feminine" (Arbour et al. 2014:33).

In Quebec, in 1976, the need to adopt new feminine professional titles was galvanized by a series of actions starting with the refusal by Mme. Louise Cuerrier, then vice president of the National Assembly, to accept the feminine form *vice-présidente* until all the professional titles in the National Assembly were feminized. The *Réseau d'action et d'information pour les femmes* ‘The Network of Action and Information for Women’ and *Le Conseil du statut de la femme* ‘The Council on the Status of Women’ also put pressure on the OFL to devise a set of norms, which resulted in the publication of an advisory, in July 1979, recommending feminized professional titles, while still emphasizing that use of these titles was optional (Ivñez 1996:78).

Over the next few decades, the OLF published several such guides (Biron 1991) (Vachon-L’Heureux et Guénette 2006, Guilloton et al. 2014), while stressing that they were intended only as guidance, and that feminization was optional. In these early Canadian guides, as in those of their French peers, their authors encountered some difficulty in establishing norms for nouns ending in *-eur/-teur*. Additionally, the authors seemed unsure as to whether Quebecois language users should use the norms in effect in France or adopt their own norms. As the years went on, these guides became progressively more complex, offering not only guidance as to the words to employ, but also models of “epicene writing”, using, for example, collective nouns and active sentence structures, and the development of online tools, such as *la Banque de dépannage linguistique* ‘Linguistic Help Desk’, literally ‘The Bank of Linguistic Troubleshooting’ and *Le grand dictionnaire terminologique* ‘The Big Terminological Dictionary’, which provide clear instructions and sample texts for feminizing common subject matter (Arbour et al. 2014:34-35).

In France, it was Yvette Roudy's appointment as Minister of Women's Rights that gave new energy to the debate around feminization with her creation, in February of 1984, of *La Commission de féminisation des noms de métiers, titres et fonctions* ‘The Commission on

Feminization of Professions, Titles and Functions’ (Houdebine-Gravaud 1998:12). This led to the publication of a circular, in 1986, recommending the following practices for feminization: the systematic use of feminine determiners, such as *la ministre*, the feminization of masculine nouns ending in *-eur* or *-teur* by *-euse* and *-teuse*, unless the base of the noun is a verb, in which case *-trice* should be employed, as in *enquêtrice* (verb *enquêter*) or in some cases the use of a single noun form with feminine determiners (*une professeur*), the common gender form. The circular also noted that *autrice*, while not a neologism, was “no longer accepted”, and that the suffix *-esse* was no longer in use in “modern French” (Viennot et al. 2016:68) (All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated).

Despite the relatively narrow scope of these recommendations compared to modern feminization measures, their publication set off an extended conflict with the Académie Française, which set out to block usage of the recommended terms, by publishing a first declaration in August 1984 in which it called the use of feminine terms “discriminatory” and recommended the use of the masculine, or “non-marked gender”, for all professional terms in which “usage” had not already determined a feminine form (Viennot et al. 2016:107).

It was not until the publication of a new circular by then prime minister Lionel Jospin, in 1998, that the use of feminization strategies became more widespread, and led to the publication in 1999 of *Femme, j’écris ton nom!* ‘Woman, I write your name!’ (Becquer et al. 1999), a new, more ambitious set of feminization guidelines, by *La Commission générale de terminologie et de néologie* ‘The General Commission on Terminology and Neology’. These guidelines form the basis of the current recommendations for feminization in France and have been more widely employed than their predecessors.

3.1.2 The history of feminization legislation in Spain

In Spain, the death of Francisco Franco in 1975 signaled the end of the conservative dictatorship, and the establishment of a new Constitution, article 14 of which guaranteed “equality between men and women” (Guerrero-Salazar 2020:204). Although this gave rise to a wealth of studies on linguistic sexism, it was not until the 1980s, when international institutions, such as the United Nations, began to impose norms for gendered language, that public debate on the issue accelerated and became even stronger with the growth of social media (Guerrero-Salazar 2020:204).

Since 1983, the *Instituto de la Mujer* ‘The Institute of Women’ (IdlM) has been principally responsible for creating peninsular Spanish norms in response to the European guidelines (Guerrero-Salazar 2020:205). The *I Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres* ‘The First Plan for the Equality of Opportunities for Women’, approved in 1987, included a section recognizing the need to eliminate gender discrimination from all written materials used by the state. In 1990, the IdlM collaborated with the Ministry of Education to put in place the *Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo de octubre de 1990* ‘Law of General Planning of the Education System of October 1990’, which defined gender equality as a priority for the educational system and led to the prioritization of combatting linguistic sexism within the same system (Guerrero-Salazar 2020:206). In 1990, the IdlM coedited the *Manual de estilo del lenguaje administrativo* ‘Style manual of administrative language’ for distribution in the administrative sector, which included a section on feminization. The Ministry of Education and Science, in 1995, established the legal necessity for educational institutions to issue diplomas and academic titles using professional terms that corresponded to the gender of the recipient.

Guerrero-Salazar (2020:206-207) highlighted the importance of one law, the *Ley Orgánica 3/2007* ‘Organic Law 3/2007’, in advancing legislation on the issue. Because it stipulated “la implantación de un lenguaje no sexista en el ámbito administrativo y su fomento en la totalidad de las relaciones sociales, culturales y artísticas” “the implantation of non-sexist language in the administrative sector and its promotion in the totality of social, cultural and artistic relations”, its influence was felt in a wide range of laws that followed.

However, the interpretation of these laws was left up to individual judges, and the extent of their implementation varied from commune to commune. Many debates have arisen in the media around these issues, and the Real Academia Española (RAE) took a stand against the use of feminization (Guerrero-Salazar 2020:218). However, this has not stopped its progression, as evidenced by the list of 120 style guides compiled by the *Instituto de la Mujer* and distributed for free through its website (Instituto de la Mujer 2019:26).

3.1.3. The history of feminization legislation in Portugal

Like Spain after 1975, Portugal in the 1970s was experiencing the fall of a conservative dictatorship, that of former finance minister António de Oliveira Salazar, who died in 1970, but whose administration ruled for a further four years until the *Revolução dos Cravos* ‘The Carnation Revolution’ overthrew the Estado Novo and established a new Portuguese Republic, whose constitution was ratified on April 25, 1976. Article 9 of this constitution establishes the promotion of equality between men and women as a fundamental task of the state (Conselho Económico e Social 2021:6).

In 1977 the *Comissão da Condição Feminina* ‘Commission on the Feminine Condition’ (CCF), which had its roots in commissions formed during the pre-revolution, post-Salazar government of Marcelo Caetano, was officially founded, and in 2007 it became the current

Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género ‘Commission on Citizenship and Gender Equality’ (CIG).

Despite this early commitment to equality and the expansion of feminism in other areas, Portugal has lagged behind not only France and Spain, but also Brazil, in establishing norms for gender-inclusive writing, and specifically for the feminization of professional titles. Following initiatives led by both the UN and the Council of Europe, in 2003, Portugal issued its first guide to gender-inclusive language, the *Manual de Formação de Formadores/as em Igualdade entre Mulheres e Homens* ‘Training Manual for Trainers in Equality between Women and Men’ (Comissão P.A.I.N.T. & ENO Emprego 2003). Edited by the *Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego* ‘Commission for Equality in Work and Employment’, it was intended for “instructors, legal professionals, social partners, entrepreneurs, human relations managers and technicians, consultants, [and] agents of the public administration” (Comissão P.A.I.N.T. & ENO Emprego 2003:14). It was followed by the CIG's 2009 guide that in turn became the basis for the 2021 *Manual de Linguagem Inclusiva* ‘Manual of Inclusive Language’ published by the *Conselho Económico e Social* (CES 2021) ‘Economic and Social Council’. The lack of guides published between 2009 and 2021, and the fact that the 2021 guide acknowledges its heavy reliance on the earlier version, stands in stark contrast to the 120 style guides compiled in Spain alone in 2019, and the relatively recent “inclusive writing” guides published in France that incorporate and build upon Becquer et al. (1999), such as Haddad (2016), though it is unclear whether this points to a relative lack of interest in the subject, or simply less debate around it.

Whatever the case, none of the guides written in Portugal specifically addresses the forms to use for professional nouns that do not have a traditional female equivalent. Instead, they provide a short list of non-controversial dual gender forms to illustrate the concept of

morphological inflection, which they refer to as "double forms". For example, "a/o cidadã/cidadão" and "o/a condutor/a" (Abranches 2009:20).

Despite the lack of public debate on the subject, since the turn of the century, the Council of Ministers has passed several “resolutions” that specifically refer to the use of gender-inclusive language, starting with the May 18, 2006 resolution to “neutralize or minimize gender specificity through the use of inclusive or neutral forms” in the writing of “normative acts”. On June 22, 2007, the Portuguese Council of Ministers approved the “III National Plan for Equality -- Citizenship and Gender” article 1.2 of which affirms the state’s objective to “include the dimension of gender equality in the written and visual language, namely in the printings, publications, documents and sites of the Ministries and respective services” (CES 2021:19-20).

In 2008, the use of distinctive feminine and masculine noun forms was explicitly recommended in the October 22 resolutions, article 6 of which establishes that “in each government department must be elaborated communication materials that use inclusive terminology in the dimension of gender, as well as images that do not promote gender stereotypes”, whereas article 7 addresses language more specifically, stating that the government must elaborate non-discriminatory language practices, such as:

- a. The specific reference to both sexes, which implies the use of masculine forms to designate men and the use of feminine forms for women;
- b. The neutralization or abstraction of sexual reference, making use of a single neutral form to designate both sexes. (CES 2021:19)

Between 2018 and 2019, several other laws and resolutions were passed which may demonstrate a growing preference for neutralization, rather than feminization, of the language.

These include:

Law n. 4/ February 9, 2018, article 4: “the evaluation of the impact of gender must also analyze the use of non-discriminatory language in the composition of norms through the

neutralization or minimalization of gender specifications, the use of inclusive or neutral forms, namely through the use of real generics or the use of invariable pronouns” (CES 2021:17).

Decree-law n.169-B/December 3, 2019, article 17: “in the elaboration of normative acts gender specificity should, whenever possible, be neutralized or minimized through the use of inclusive or neutral forms, namely through recourse to real generics or the use of invariable pronouns, as long as this does not impair the clarity of the text “(CES 2021:17). An example of using an invariable pronoun to replace a gendered noun is given in Abranches (2009:24): “em vez de ‘os requerentes devem...’ utiliz[e] ‘quem requerer deve’”. ‘Instead of ‘[male] applicants must...’ use ‘those applying must’.

Legislation around feminization has also been passed in Brazil, which Svobodová (2020:302) calls “for now, the only country of Portuguese expression to deal with this issue in a more systematic manner” while lamenting the lack of any such government measures within Mozambique. In 2011, when Brazil's first female president, Dilma Rousseff, was elected, she publicly declared her preference for the feminine form *presidenta* rather than the common gender form *presidente*, and enacted legislation that mirrored Spain's law establishing the legal obligation to distribute academic diplomas and titles with “the gender flexion corresponding to the sex of the person receiving the diploma” (Da Silva 2013:22). This may be one reason why much of the previous work on feminization in Portuguese has centered on Brazil.

3.1.4 Government Guidelines for Feminization of Professional Titles

At the 1987 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Convention, Canada and the Nordic countries first raised the issue of “sexist language” among member states, leading to the adoption of Resolution 25C/14, which “invites the Director-General ‘to adopt a policy related to the drafting of the Organization’s working

documents aimed at avoiding, to the extent possible, the use of language which refers explicitly or implicitly to only one sex except where positive measures are being considered” (Desprez-Bouanchaud 1999:4). The Resolution was reaffirmed at the 1989, 1991 and 1995 conferences, and has formed the basis for a number of resolutions and legislative acts, whose effects were far-reaching.

Aside from legislation, one of the main outcomes of these resolutions was the publication of guidebooks to what was then called “Non-Sexist Language”, and which has since become known as “Gender Neutral Language” or “Gender Inclusive Language”. UNESCO members drafted a first edition in 1987, but it was the 1999 edition which became most widely distributed and which is currently available for download from the UNESCO digital library. Printed in both French and English, it laid the groundwork for further language-specific guidelines that would come to be published by governments, universities and non-profit groups from around the world.

The current study focuses on one specific aspect of gender-inclusive writing, the feminization of professional titles in which there existed in the standard language a single masculine form for both male and female referents, whether accompanied by a masculine determiner *un écrivain*, the epicene form, or a feminine one *une professeur*, the common gender form. While the government-issued guides have been, at times, both rejected and contradicted by conservative language academies such as the *Académie Française*, the *Real Academia Española* and the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, the government-backed guides will be examined in this dissertation because they mandate or at least recommend use of feminine titles in all public workplaces.

In France and its overseas territories, the standard reference for feminization of titles is *Femme, j'écris ton nom!* (Becquer et al 1999), while in Spain the publication of over 120 guides from various regional governments, universities and groups renders the choice of a standard reference less obvious (García 2019:26). However, the federal government-backed guide of the *Instituto de la Mujer* guide is often cited as a standard-bearer and is therefore the work selected for comparison with the results of the current study in Chapter 6. The situation in Portugal is starkly different. While it lacks a guide as comprehensive as those of France or Spain, in 2021 the national *Conselho Económico e Social* 'Social and Economic Council' published and distributed an Inclusive Language Guide that was "fundamentally" based on an earlier guide edited by Graça Abranches for the *Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género* (Abranches 2009 in CES 2021:5). However, this guide focuses mainly on strategies to avoid use of gender-specific professional titles, citing only 24 examples of feminized professional titles. A reference guide published by the government of the Brazilian state Rio Grande do Sul (Toledo et al. 2014) is also available online and contains more examples of feminine titles and a larger focus on feminizing professional nouns. For this reason, the Brazilian guide which is more complete and has been cited in works on Portuguese feminization (Serrão & Rocha 2020:40), has been used as the basis of the comparison between prescriptive recommendations and the results of this study in Chapter 6 (see section 6.1.3), with references to the Abranches guide when appropriate.

Of the feminization strategies listed in section 2.2, the guides most often recommend the use of DFFs formed through morphological inflection, followed by common gender; epicene and lexical addition forms are much less frequent (Larsson 2009, Fraser 2015). As the most frequently used strategy, the use of morphological inflection is encouraged in each guide with

specific recommendations for the formation of new (or resurfacing) vocabulary, except in the case of Portugal, whose guide includes only a small set of 24 nouns that serve as examples. Complete descriptions of the rules, by language and suffix, as well as a comparison with the results of this study, can be found in Chapter 6.

3.2 Previous studies

Studies on feminization of professional titles in the Romance languages have often combined and/or contrasted sociological or psychological phenomena with linguistic phenomena. They seek to use linguistic evidence to strengthen a sociological or psychological claim, to seek the explanation for a linguistic phenomenon through sociological or psychological factors, or to compare the relative influence of linguistic and sociological/psychological factors on a linguistic phenomenon. These studies are presented first in section 3.2.1, as their claims are more complex. Then section 3.2.2 presents those studies whose sociological factors focus specifically include the effects of legislation on language use. Finally, studies which focus only on morphology, and whose scope is usually more limited, are presented in section 3.2.3.

3.2.1 Studies combining morphology with sociolinguistic and psychological factors

Epperson & Ranson (2010) compared morphological and sociological factors to determine whether the amount of feminine participation in a profession influenced the feminine titles reported by native Spanish-speakers living in the United States. By analyzing native-speaker linguistic surveys that asked their preferred feminine forms for masculine job titles and data on feminine participation in US job sectors, they found that native speakers preferred a feminization strategy when referring to a professional woman, whether through common gender or a distinctively feminine form (DFF). High female participation in a job sector correlated to high use of a DFF, and this relationship was strongest when feminine noun morphology followed

regular patterns, such as final *-o* to *-a* alternation. However, regular morphology did not correlate to high use of a DFF when female participation in the sector was low, as shown by the high percentage of the common gender form *la piloto* ‘the [female] pilot’, a field in which feminine participation was low. They also found that a second meaning of a feminine title, such as *la fisica* ‘the [female] physicist’, which also means ‘physics’, did not pose an obstacle to their use which correlated with feminine participation in the field. They therefore concluded that sociological factors “stimulated” the linguistic change in progress regarding feminine professional titles, and ought to be taken into consideration in future linguistic studies (Epperson & Ranson 2010:409-410).

Santana (2018) also used linguistic questionnaires to examine the use of two novel feminine forms in Brazilian Portuguese, *presidenta* and *chefa*, within the socioeconomically disadvantaged Northeast region of Brazil. Her study showed lower levels of usage of the feminine forms *presidenta* and *chefa* than common gender *presidente* and *chefe*, despite the use of both forms by then-president Dilma Rousseff. Moreover, she showed a small correlation between completion of higher education and preference for the traditional common gender forms, and a high level of variation in responses from speakers with less formal education. She thus concluded that educational level was a “determining factor” in the choice of morphological form for these speakers (Santana 2018:502).

Fraser (2015) compared feminization strategies for female agentives in French and Spanish to determine the “relevance” of those strategies in promoting women's equality, as defined by psycholinguistic theory (Fraser 2015:13). Her work also had a morphological element, as she classified each noun in her study according to the predictability of its gender based on morphological factors, following criteria from Lyster (2006) for French, and Bergen

(1978) and Teschner (1983) for Spanish. For example, French words ending in *-ent*, *-an*, *-ant* were considered “strongly masculine” because a final nasal predicts a masculine noun in 99% of cases (Fraser 2015:50). Using a large news media corpus, she examined the use of DFFs in professional titles in both languages to determine their frequency, whether job sector influenced that frequency, and whether specific morphological elements showed resistance to feminization. She also looked at agreement patterns for determiners.

Using a regression tree analysis, Fraser (2015) also determined which factors-- morphological or social-- had the greatest impact on her findings. Using guidelines for linguistic feminization issued by UNESCO as a reference for prescriptive norms in France and Spain, she found that morphological factors had a lesser impact on the use of recommended feminization strategies than did social factors, especially sector of activity, with government, public sector and military roles favoring the use of masculine epicene forms. Her qualitative assessment led her to conclude that feminization strategies are most consistently applied in military titles by the news media when a female is performing a role that is considered atypical for her sex, such as that of a stunt pilot or military hero thereby contradicting a gender stereotype. When the role is less strongly atypical, such as that of a spokesperson, feminization strategies are applied more randomly, even within the same newspaper (Fraser 2015:138),

Regarding common gender nouns, Fraser (2015) examined the theory that the gender of French nouns is more closely linked to word form than determiner use, whereas the opposite is true for Spanish. She asserted that Spanish-speakers have less need to use distinctive feminine nouns because determiner use is taken to have a stronger link to the referent's biological sex than is the case for French. For example, *la soldado* is acceptable in Spanish, despite the high correlation of *-o* suffixes with masculine nouns; in French, however, the tendency would be to

feminize the suffix to agree with the determiner, i.e.: *la soldate*, or to use an entirely masculine noun phrase to refer to a female referent, i.e.: *le soldat Jane Malicki*. Conversely, she asserts that Spanish agentive nouns “never appear to take a masculine determiner when referring to women” (Fraser 2015:140).

Like Fraser (2015), Larsson (2009) also used corpus data and combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate morphological and sociolinguistic factors in the choice of feminization strategy and forms used in feminine titles. However, her results led her to different conclusions from those of Fraser (2015). She first performed a frequency and distribution analysis of the *Real Academia Español*’s CREA corpus, which contains over 170 million words of written and spoken Spanish from around the world, of which 90% is written Spanish across various genres, and 10% is spoken. She then sent surveys to 70 native speakers of peninsular Spanish to ask about their linguistic behavior and contrasted her results with the prescriptive strategies outlined in several reference works. In contrast to Fraser (2015), Larsson (2009) found that the morphosyntax of the word was more important for the choice of word form, while sociolinguistic factors played a small, secondary role. She found that most Spanish words were feminized through a “double form”, i.e. distinct masculine and feminine noun pairs, such as *el profesor ~ la profesora*, while the words that speakers continued to use in the common gender form were those that end in in *-a*, *-al*, *-ante*, *-e*, *-ente*, and *-iste*. The use of epicene forms was very rare in her study, as were cases of lexical addition, such as *mujer médico* (Larsson 2009:46).

These two doctoral dissertations mentioned above, Fraser (2015) and Larsson (2009), both asserted that use of epicene forms and lexical addition were decreasing in both French and Spanish, but they make opposing claims as to whether current usage favors their replacement by

common gender or distinctively feminine forms in Spanish, and whether or not this process is primarily influenced by societal factors or by noun morphology.

3.2.2 Studies Combining Morphology and the Effects of Legislation and Linguistic Planning

Other studies attempted to gauge the efficacy of linguistic planning efforts by comparing usage with goals set by linguistic planning committees or through legislation. In Spain, the government agency *Instituto de la Mujer* financed research by Bengoechea et al. (2009) to determine the effect and possible pitfalls of their feminization guidelines. To do so, Bengoechea et al. (2009) examined a corpus of three types of text, i.e. media, juridic texts and poetry, written by female authors, using both qualitative and quantitative methodology. They concluded that linguistic feminization efforts had been more successful than might have been supposed, given the pushback from normative sources such as the RAE, which led to a media polemic around the issue. Surveys of university students showed a mostly positive attitude towards feminization, while the corpus analysis revealed the following changes: a large increase in feminine professional terms; acceptance of formerly epicene nouns as common gender (*la soldado*); use of @ as a gender-neutral replacement for final -o or -a , as in “*Amig@s*” (Bengoechea et al. 2009:33); the use of a slash mark to present both a masculine and a feminine word endings as options, such as “*los/as profesores/as*” (Bengoechea et al. 2009:36); pragmatic changes in forms of address (“appellative formulas”, Bengoechea et al. 2009:117), and in general, a questioning of the idea that the masculine gender is capable of representing both sexes.

Amaral & Santos (2021) carried out a study designed to investigate whether Brazilian inclusive language guidelines had impacted actual use by politicians. Using transcripts of Parliament discussions from Rio Grande do Sul, the Southern state in which the Inclusive Language style guide of reference for Brazil was published, they examined oral texts from two

separate years, 2011 and 2017, to compare usage before and after the publication of the style guide in 2014. They found a rise in the use of inclusive language strategies and a decrease in use of masculine epicene forms, which did not vary significantly when correlated to individual Parliament members.

Fujimura (2005) carried out a longitudinal corpus study of French newspapers between 1988 and 2001 in order to trace the “semantic, lexical and sociolinguistic factors conditioning the language's evolution” (Fujimura 2005:37). She found that political factors had influenced the sudden uptake of the common gender forms of *ministre*, *député*, *juge* and *secrétaire (d'État)* after Lionel Jospin's 1998 circular, while *professeur* was slow to feminize both in the form of the noun itself, and in its use with feminine determiners. She also found that the traditional distinction between a title designating a function (always masculine, according to the norms), and that designating an individual (potentially variable), already varied before 1998, and the number of feminine titles designating a function continued to rise after that date. A “function” here means an office rather than the person occupying that office, such as *président* ‘[male] president’ in the following example from Fujimura's (2005:42) corpus, which demonstrates the traditional use of an epicene form for the role:

- (1) *Mercredi dernier se tenait, au dojo, l'assemblée générale extraordinaire du club, où les membres présents ont voté à l'unanimité pour la candidature au poste de président d'une femme dynamique et pleine d'idées, #Elisabeth# Derechniewski. (Le Télégramme, 2000)*

‘Last Wednesday, the club's special general meeting was held at the dojo, where the members present unanimously voted for the candidacy to the job of president of a dynamic woman full of ideas, #Elisabeth# Derechniewski’

In the example above, the word *president* does not agree with the female referent who has been nominated to fill the role, because in this context the word is understood to describe the role itself, rather than the person who occupies it. However, her data showed increasing use of common gender and DFFs to refer to functions when occupied by females, as shown through use of the DFF *directrice générale* ‘chief executive’ in the following example:

(2) Quand, au début de l’année, Alain-Dominique Perrin, le président de Cartier (ADP pour les intimes) lui offre le poste de directrice générale de Cartier France, #Isabelle#Guichot n’hésite que quelques heures. (Le Point, 1996)

‘When, at the beginning of the year, Alain-Dominique Perrin, the [male] president of Cartier (ADP to his friends) offers her the post of [female] chief executive of Cartier France, #Isabelle#Guichot only hesitates for a few hours. (Le Point, 1996)’

Planelles Ivañez (1996) outlined the history of planification efforts for feminized titles in Québec and France and studied the influence of such linguistic planning on “actual usage” through a comparative corpus study of French-language news media in these two countries. She also aimed to determine which feminine form speakers would choose for words that have different options, such as *chercheur*, *chercheure*, or *chercheuse*. She found that linguistic planning efforts were much more successful in Québec than in France in influencing usage, and that government planning was “decisive” in the choice between different feminine variants. In her corpus study, she looked at 24 terms chosen either for their competing morphological variants (*amateur*, *auteur*), or for their association with a formerly male-dominated field (*magistrat*, *pompier*), or for both reasons (*chercheur*, *docteur*). Her results showed that the use of masculine terms to refer to women was “much sharper and more abundant in France...than in Québec” (Planelles Ivañez 1996:105) with most of the recommended feminine forms going

unattested in the French corpus, and more variation in the Canadian feminine forms, partly due to a higher rate of feminization overall.

One drawback of this study is that the corpus was relatively small, with 96 tokens of feminine forms in the French corpus, and 125 in the Québécois corpus. Additionally, while the French corpus included tokens from three newspapers representing different poles of the political spectrum (*Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *L'Express*) and over a period of four years, the Québécois corpus was made up of articles from just one source (*La Presse*) over a period of one year. This opens up the possibility that the more conclusive results from Québec could be a product of that paper's editorial stance. However, it is likely that the researcher was forced to widen the scope of the French corpus because of its lack of tokens, as evidenced by the several terms that have just one token or none at all.

Almost 20 years later, Arbour et al. (2014) carried out a similar study while working for the Office Québécois de la langue française. Like Planelles Ivañez (1996), they compared real usage to prescriptive norms in European and Canadian dialects of French, again using newspaper corpora and a pre-defined word list. Their European corpus included French from across Europe in the same way that the Canadian corpus was not limited to Québec. They also searched for a larger word list than Planelles Ivañez (1996) did, containing 48 masculine words that required searches for 241 feminine forms. Because of the limits in their corpus search engine, they were not able to include epicene forms in their analysis, just as they are excluded from the present study. They also compared the forms recommended by the Office Québécois de la langue française to forms listed in both Canadian and European French dictionaries and found that there was a “good match” overall between the dictionaries and the Office recommendations, with the

Canadian dictionary *Usito* including 95% of the recommended forms and the oldest European French dictionary, *Trésor de la langue Française* (TLF), including 59%.

Their results showed that feminine forms recommended by the Office were more likely to be used than other forms, since 89% of the forms used were those recommended by the Office (Arbour et al. 2014:42). However, they did not include the prescribed European forms in their analysis, so it is not possible to say whether the European dictionaries have been influenced by Canadian forms, or whether their own guidelines are simply similar to those found in Canada. Additionally, the authors made a claim that the use of epicene forms is “more widespread” in Europe than in Canada (Arbour et al. 2014:42), but they did not test use of epicene forms in their study. They found that in Canada, forms ending in *-eure* were used in 95% of cases, while in Europe they were used in only 23% of cases (Arbour et al. 2014:44-45). For 33 cases, a non-recommended feminine form ending in *-eure* was in variation with a recommended form ending in either *-trice* or *-euse*. The study’s author’s hypothesized that in these cases, within Canada, the tendency to use *-eure* rather than the recommended form would be stronger for words ending in *-euse* than in *-trice*, “due to the unpopularity of [*-euse*] within Canada” (Arbour et al. 2014:45). This hypothesis was validated, as their results showed that in 57% of cases in which the two types were in variation, Canadians used a non-recommended *-eure* form over a recommended *-euse* form, but in Europe this was only true in 7% of cases. Regarding variation between non-recommended *-eure* and *-trice*, both geographic areas showed similar results—non-recommended *-eure* was used instead of recommended *-trice* in just 1% of cases in Canada, and less than 1% in Europe (Arbour et al. 2014:45). It would seem, then, that Canadians prefer to use *-eure* instead of *-euse* even when it is not a recommended form, while Europeans do not show this tendency.

In both geographic areas, lexical addition was found to be “extremely marginal”, making up less than 1% of the total tokens, and the most frequent lexical addition form in both areas was *femme soldat* ‘female soldier’ though it was not the most frequent feminine form for a female soldier in either corpus (Arbour et al. 2014:47).

Thus, while the *-eure* forms are popular in both Canada and Europe, it is clear that there is more variation in European dialects of French. However, it remains unclear whether this is due to inter- or intra-dialectal variation, since no analysis was made of the different dialects present in the European corpus. The researchers cite Maurais’ (1999) assertion that *-euse* terms have a pejorative connotation in Québécois French (Arbour et al. 2014:46), and that words with the *-trice* suffix are generally used by speakers on both continents when they are in competition with *-eure* forms.

Dister (2004) used a list of problematic feminine forms to analyze a corpus of four months of Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* in 2001 and found extreme variation in usage not only between authors, but from the same author even within the same article. Unlike Arbour et al. (2014), she found low use of *-eure* variants, such as *docteure*, across all professions.

Simon & Vanhal (2021) also studied Belgian French through newspaper corpora, this time correlating it to the author of the text’s stated opinion about linguistic feminization, to determine whether explicit attitudes and usage were in line. They found that female referents, which in this corpus made up the majority of referents, were almost universally signaled through feminine noun morphology, with no use of common gender, and one token of lexical addition, *les journalistes femmes*. They also found one instance of a nonbinary author referred to using a combination of masculine and feminine suffixes, as in *auteurice*. However, for plural nouns referring to mixed groups, the masculine epicene was the predominant strategy employed, while

the use of either full or abbreviated ‘double forms’, such as *les travailleurs et travailleuses* ‘the [male] workers and [female] workers’ or *les auteur·e·s* ‘the author·esse·s’, was the least frequently used. When correlated to the newspapers’ stated stance towards feminization, they found that use of double forms and common gender were by far the most common strategies employed by all sources, no matter the official stance on feminization taken by the source. For example, the center-right political party, *Mouvement Réformateur* (MR), published an article on their website stating that they are opposed to inclusive writing because it “complicates reading and is a superficial gimmick” (Simon & Vanhal 2021:91), yet they used few epicene constructions and did employ double forms. However, the use of abbreviated double forms was restricted to sources that were openly favorable to “the use of inclusive writing for activism,” (Simon & Vanhal 2022:100).

Houdebine-Gravaud’s (1998) book, *La Féminisation des noms de métiers: en français et dans d’autres langues*, was heavily enmeshed in the politics around the Roudy commission’s circular supporting linguistic feminization within the French administration. The book combines a contemporary historical account of the linguistic feminization debate in France with several studies on French feminization undertaken by graduate students in the linguistic theory and description research group at the Université Paris V – René Descartes, directed by Dr. Houdebine-Gravaud, and a section on feminization in several non-Romance languages, such as Korean, Arabic and Hungarian, which will not be discussed here.

All of the studies on French feminization carried out by the research team sought to use linguistic data to reinforce, expand upon, or aid the implementation of the Roudy commission’s circular. Boivin’s (1998) study of the language used in French job offers and brochures built on work undertaken by the Commission of European Communities to analyze whether feminization

efforts were being made in job announcements and, if so, what kinds of strategies were used. She found that only 15% of job announcements employed some form of feminization, usually by adding (*H/F*) or (*M/F*), meaning *homme/femme* or *masculine/féminin*, respectively, to indicate openness to applicants of either gender. Only three nouns in the ads contained explicitly feminine morphology, *délégué(e)*, *attaché(e)* and *diplômé(e)*. Even though she explained that nominalized adjectives such as these are the easiest to feminize morphologically, only 11% (3 tokens) of nominalized adjectives in the corpus were feminized morphologically, while 30% (8 tokens) of them were feminized using *H/F*, and the rest not at all. A second analysis compared sector of activity with feminization rates to determine whether a job listing's relative prestige affected its chances of being feminized. She found that job listings were feminized most in fields related to communication/marketing, selling and healthcare, including caretaking and aesthetics, but not at all in management, and rarely in supervisory roles.

In Chapter 1 of the same book, Philippe (1998) performed a diachronic study of two children's encyclopedias, one published in 1971, entitled *Que ferai-je plus tard?* 'What Will I Do Later On?', and the other published in 1995/96, entitled *Un métier en poche* 'A Profession in the Bag'. Because one assumes these contexts to be rather normative, the purpose of the study was to observe the evolution of professional terms in a "conservative" environment (Philippe 1998:57). She analyzed not only the written text, but the imagery associated with terms such as man and woman. Part of her hypothesis was that there would be a tendency toward strategies that "neutralize" texts by eliminating gendered noun forms, such as nominalization and use of infinitives—for example, replacing the gendered nouns *directeur~directrice* '[male]director~[female] director' with the impersonal noun '*la direction*' 'management' or the verb *diriger* 'to direct' (Philippe 1998:69). Because encyclopedia entries did not include any

definite articles in the entry names, professions with bare masculine nouns were marked as epicene, rather than common gender, which may have contributed to the overall dominance of epicene forms in her results. However, over the 25-year period that the two works represent, she found a 34% reduction in use of the masculine forms for encyclopedia entries and a 31.5% reduction in masculine personal markers, which they define as “any linguistic indication, found in the definition of the profession, related to the referent who is the individual that is supposed to exercise the defined profession... These markers are quite varied morphologically, syntactically, lexically: pronouns, definite and indefinite determiners, past participle agreement, etc.” (Philippe 1998:62). The number of linguistically feminized entries tripled in the same period, but still comprised only 13% overall in 1995/96, versus 4% in 1971. In both years, a final *-e* was the most popular form of feminization, whereas suffixation using *-trice* had only 1 token in both years, and in 1995/96 there were no feminine tokens with an *-euse* ending. Her examination of the domains in which linguistic feminization was likely to occur, based only on the 1995/96 corpus, found that these corresponded exactly to the domains in which women were, at the time, most active, namely: nursery school assistants, nursery nurses, midwives, aesthetician-manicurists, secretaries and management secretaries (non-executive), domestic workers, social workers, cashiers, switchboard operators and receptionists. Thus, she concluded that the written norm appeared to be based on the societal norm.

In the next section of the same book, Brunetière (1998) analyzed a brochure published by the French National Office for Information on Teaching and Professions (ONISEP) and the State Secretary for Women's Rights called *700 métiers pour les filles • C'est technique, c'est pour elle*, ‘700 professions for girls • It’s technical, it’s for her’ which was meant to help orient women towards technical professions. Noting that the Secretary for Women’s Rights did not feminize

her own title by adding an *-e* to *chargé* when she signed the brochure “*Secrétaire d’état chargé des droits des femmes*”, Brunetière (1998) investigated the use of feminine titles in a brochure expressly meant to draw women towards technical fields, formerly seen as a masculine domain. Once repeated titles were removed from the calculations, she found that 35% of the titles were feminized, 38% masculine epicene and 27% common gender. There were 55 different lexical items, and repeated tokens were high, especially for *technicienne*, which was repeated 19 times. She found that most *-eur* words were not feminized in *-euse* but rather left in the masculine, the two exceptions being *acheteuse* and *souffleuse de verre*, while *-teur* words were feminized using the *-trice* suffix a majority of the time, as in *conductrice*, *collaboratrice*, *restauratrice*, and *opératrice*, while only *programmeur* remained masculine. The researcher’s qualitative analysis of sector of activity correlated to morphology revealed that while *conseillère* was feminized, *menuisier*, *bobinier*, and *tôlier-carrossier* were not, which she theorizes is because the latter three are manual labor positions. Even though *souffleuse de verre* is both manual and feminized, it represents an artisanal activity, which is more likely to be associated with women. The nouns *agent*, *chef*, *contrôleur-aérien*, *chercheur*, *professeur*, *ingénieur*, and *programmeur*, amongst others, were not feminized, which she attributes to the high degree of responsibility denoted by those posts. She therefore posited that titles which were feminized were associated with jobs that were neither manual, nor high-prestige/high-responsibility positions. Finally, after taking into account the pronouns and adjectives used in the job descriptions, as well as the forms of the professional titles themselves, she concluded that the professional world appears to be “essentially masculine”, even in a pamphlet produced to promote women’s insertion into the workplace.

The next chapter consists of a sociolinguistic inquiry on feminization in contemporary French by Mohaupt (1998), with a focus on oral use in the workplace. However, the researchers concluded that the results from their surveys were too variable to draw any conclusions from them, although they noted that morphology did seem to play a role in the choice of whether to feminize. They noted, however, that this might have been related to a desire to give the perceived “correct answer”, as many informants asked whether their responses were correct. They did note, however, that the *-trice* suffix seemed to be used more than the *-teuse* suffix even when there was a verbal base to the word. They attributed this to the relatively higher frequency of *-trice* in the language, leading speakers to perceive it as more correct. They also noted that younger informants tended to use the *-eure* suffix in place of the *-euse* suffix, and to rely more on common gender forms instead of epicene forms than older informants did.

3.2.3 Corpus studies focused on morphology

Dronovsk’s (2019) undergraduate thesis studied three feminine variants in European Portuguese, *presidenta*, *governanta* and *chefa*, in a large newspaper corpus hosted on SketchEngine (Kilgarriff et al. 2004). She found a clear preference for common gender variants in forms for all three nouns but noted a small but important number of distinctively feminine plurals, such as *os chefes* ~ *as chefas* (30% of the total number of plural tokens of *chefe*). However, her data on *governanta* did not take into account the secondary meaning ‘governess’, most likely present in her data, which complicates the interpretation of that word’s results. Since *governanta* can mean both ‘governess’ and ‘woman who governs’, the tokens that mean ‘governess’ are not a distinctive feminine form for an existing masculine form since there is no word with the same root for a man who exercises this profession. Because this is a role that was traditionally filled by women (thus the lack of a masculine equivalent), including these tokens

with the results that indicate a new DFF for a female who governs risks skewing the results in favor of an artificially high number of DFFs meaning ‘one who governs’. For example, in the following example, the form *governanta* most likely refers to a governess, given that the context of the sentence mentions two other academic roles, although this cannot be determined conclusively without access to the full document.

(3) *Este é um trabalho, encenado/produzido e dirigido por Eduarda Borba e conta com os desempenhos de Carla Soares, Eduarda Borba e Luís nos papéis de aluna, governanta e professor.*

‘This is a work, staged/produced and directed by Eduarda Borba and features performances by Carla Soares, Eduarda Borba and Luís in the roles of student, governess and teacher.’

Since Dronovsk (2019) does not distinguish between the two, it is difficult to draw conclusions from her data about the use of the new feminine form *governanta* for a female who governs.

Gouveia (2007), in her discussion of the differences between normative varieties of Brazilian and European Portuguese, stated that *chefa*, *génia*, *estudanta* and *presidenta* are often feminized in informal, regional variants of European Portuguese. By contrast, she found that European Portuguese lacked the variants *ladroa*, *ladrona*, *aldeoa*, *diabra* and *polonesa*, and that unlike Brazilian Portuguese, *a juiza* was less recommended by normative sources in Europe than the lexical addition form, *a Senhora Juiz*, and the common gender form, *a juiz*.

Trainer (2021) studied the use of four Portuguese feminine professional titles, *a juiza*, *a deputada*, *a diretora-geral* and *a presidente* in a corpus of European Parliament legal acts passed in the year 2020 and found no use of any of them except *a presidente*, despite the high frequency of their masculine forms in the corpus. He concluded that this was due to the continued use of masculine forms to refer to a role or profession, rather than to a specific individual who exercises that profession.

Svobodová (2020) focused on the language used in advertisements, including job advertisements, and institutional publicity in a corpus study of 10 Portuguese-language periodicals published in Mozambique. Her goal was to determine whether efforts were being made to reference women explicitly, and, if so, the strategies used and their frequency. Out of 312 possible gender references, only 12 marked both genders, while 84 avoided mentioning gender, usually through use of epicene forms. When both genders were explicitly mentioned, there was a tendency to use a slash or parentheses (*Procuramos um consultor/a*), although some tokens of words with separate roots were found (*mulheres, homens*) (Svobodová 2020: 305), or, rarely, common gender nouns with *m/f* added at the end to specify both sexes: *recrutamos responsável de desenvolvimento de negócio (m/f)*. Masculine forms were almost always used for the plural, only two of which included explicit feminine markings: *os candidatos(as)* and *os trabalhadore(a)s*. As Svobodová (2020) notes, the feminine could have been included in *trabalhadore(a)s* because the ad referred to sex workers, a traditionally feminine occupation. Like other researchers, she noted much variation in the strategies used within the announcements. In most cases of explicit marking of feminine gender, only one component of a noun phrase was marked, but not always the same one. For example, in *procuramos Moçambicano(a)... assiduo, dedicado* the feminine is indicated for the noun, in *uma tecnico de estomatologia* it is on the indefinite article, and in *um consultor dinamico(a), proactivo(a)* it is an option on the adjectives (Svobodová 2020:306). Although she characterized this variation as random, she did find that the masculine epicene was used most often in words whose feminine form is considered “problematic” (Svobodová 2020:309), such as *miembro* for which there is typically corresponding female noun, or to refer to a different job category than the masculine noun form, such as *secretária*, or for jobs that were traditionally masculine, such as *um mecânico*

de automóveis. Svobodová (2020) also noted that some advertisements explicitly encouraged women's candidacies, yet left the job title in the masculine form. For example, *Procura-se Diretor...encoraja-se candidatura de mulheres... o aplicante deve....* 'A [male] director is sought...candidacies from women are encouraged...the [male] applicant should...'. She concluded that gender references in Mozambican Portuguese are typified by the use of the masculine generic, with avoidance strategies such as nominalization also employed, and to a lesser extent, feminization of professional titles, which is then employed in a random and varied fashion.

Finally, González Fernandez (2017) used Big Data methodology to analyze the Twitter accounts of five major Spanish newspapers for six signs of linguistic sexism, including whether feminine professional terms or the generic masculine were used. She found that the masculine generic for plurals was still popular in this medium, and that feminine plurals were rare, and never used to refer to groups of both genders.

While many of these studies had different goals and therefore used different methodologies, findings were similar overall. The use of epicene masculine forms appears to have decreased since the 1990s, while use of common gender and distinctively feminine forms have increased. Both sector of activity and word morphology were shown to impact the likelihood that a feminine form would be used, especially if that form was a distinctively feminine form. For this reason, both factors were taken into account when choosing the words to include in the current study, a process described in further detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

In order to test the hypothesis that writers prefer distinctively feminine forms to refer to female professionals, the nouns writers used to refer to women from almost 60 professions were collected from newspaper corpora. This chapter presents the methods that were used to carry out the data collection and analysis, as well as the justification for them. Section 4.1 presents the characteristics of the three chosen corpora and section 4.2 describes the methods used to choose words for the cumulative word list which is presented in Table 4.1. Finally, Section 4.3 describes the data collection process and the method of analysis.

4.1 The *French Trends*, *Spanish Trends* and *Portuguese Trends* corpora

This study uses data from the domains of France, Spain and Portugal from three monitor corpora of the same corpus family – *French Trends*, *Spanish Trends* and *Portuguese Trends* (Kilgariff et al. 2004). All three are newspaper corpora that regularly update from the Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds (newsfeeds) of newspapers and some other sources. The corpus metadata does not detail which other sources were included. However, because the *Portuguese Trends* corpus has an optional search by genre function that the other two corpora do not, it is possible to see that some blogs, reference works, fiction and discussion forums have been included, making it likely that some of these text types are present in the French and Spanish corpora as well. *French Trends* and *Spanish Trends* contain feeds from 2022 to present day, with more data available from 2023 to the present. *Portuguese Trends* contains feeds from 2023 to

present day. The size for each corpus is measured in number of tokens, which in this context refers to “the smallest part of a corpus”, including both words and punctuation. For example, the corpus metadata specifies that the word *Hello* represents one token, while the word *Hello!* represents two. Additionally, the contracted form *weren’t* counts as two tokens—one of *were* and one of *n’t*. The French and Spanish corpora are of similar size at 679,914 and 821,725 tokens, respectively, whereas the Portuguese corpus is less than half the size of the other two at 308,749 tokens. The corpora used in this study are subcorpora of larger corpora. The complete *Spanish Trends* corpus contains over a billion tokens (1,299,950,876), while the complete *French Trends* and *Portuguese Trends* have 714,763,346 and 631,096,881 tokens, respectively.

4.2 Selection of nouns referring to female professionals

In selecting words for this study, I sought to include words for which earlier studies (see Section 6.2) had shown variation among the forms of nouns referring to female referents and to achieve an equal representation of the morphological classes of nouns, as defined by the ending of the masculine noun, and of different sectors of professional activity¹. The first step then was to compile a list of words in French, Spanish and Portuguese that earlier studies had shown to have different forms for the same noun, such as French *autrice* and *auteure*, or to have different forms within a morphological class of nouns, such as French *professeure* and *vendeuse* for the class of masculine nouns in *-eur*.

Because several previous studies, such as Epperson & Ranson (2010), Fraser (2015) and Bengoechea et al. (2009), suggested that the sector of activity may have an effect on the

¹ Although feminization can take place on “clipped” forms such as *le/la prof* ‘the male/female professor’, these forms were not studied because they tend to occur in informal, spoken registers (Hamilton 2024:13) and therefore were not expected to occur at levels high enough to study within the written, formal register represented in the newspaper corpora.

feminization of titles, words were chosen from the following professions, especially when studies had found more than one feminine form for the same noun:

- 1.) Government titles: ambassador, attaché, chancellor, chef, city councilor, consul, deputy, emperor, governor, mayor, minister, prefect, president, senator, secretary (of), city councilor
- 2.) Military titles: captain, colonel, corporal, soldier
- 3.) Religious titles: bishop, deacon, pope, priest, prophet
- 4.) Artistic titles: actor, author, director, illustrator, poet, storyteller, writer
- 5.) Legal titles: district attorney, investigator, judge, lawyer, magistrate
- 6.) Medical/Science titles: (medical) doctor, engineer, surgeon, architect
- 7.) Academic titles: (non-medical) doctor, master, professor, researcher, student
- 8.) Business titles: agent, boss, director, entrepreneur, impresario, manager
- 9.) Manual labor titles: culinary chef, firefighter
- 10.) Service jobs: salesclerk, secretary, trainer
- 11.) Other: champion, pilot, referee, thief

Whereas the terms for medical doctors (Fr. *médecin*, Sp. *médico*, Pt. *médico*) refer only to physicians, the terms for academic or non-medical doctors (Fr. *docteur*, Sp. *doctor*, Pt. *doctor*) are often used in these languages for medical doctors as well. The same is true for many other nouns that can refer to more than one specific profession, such as those for director, master, secretary, trainer, and *chef* in French, which can mean either ‘boss’ or ‘culinary chef’. In such cases, all feminine tokens were collected for the noun in question without making further semantic distinctions, a task rendered impossible by the large numbers of tokens collected.

For the morphological classes of nouns identified in previous studies as having variation in feminine forms, five words per class were initially selected per language, based on the variability of the form. Then, in order to allow for cross-linguistic comparisons, the words selected in each language were compared, and when possible, the cognates or semantic equivalents of a word that was initially selected in only one language was also added to the word list in the other two languages, if such a word existed. For example, the word *ator* was initially selected only for Portuguese, in order to include a feminine form ending in *-triz* in that language.

Later, the French and Spanish equivalents, *acteur* and *actriz*, were added to compare the female nouns for ‘actor’ in all three languages.²

The application of the selection process outlined above resulted in the following list of words presented in alphabetical order according to the French noun:

Table 4.1 The complete list of all words searched in the *Trends* corpus for each language

French	Spanish	Portuguese	English meaning
acteur	actor	ator	actor
agent	agente	agente	agente
ambassadeur	embajador	embaixador	ambassador
arbitre	árbitro	arbitro	refere
architecte	arquitecto	arquiteto	architect
attaché	agregado	adido	attaché
auteur	autor	autor	author
avocat	abogado	advogado	lawyer
capitaine	capitán	capitão	captain
caporal	caporal	caporal	corporal
champion	campeón	campeão	champion
chancelier	canciller	chanceler	chancellor
chef	chef	chef	culinary chef
chef	jefe	chefe	chief/boss
chercheur	*see <i>investigador</i>	pesquisador	investigator
chirurgien	cirujano	cirurgião	surgeon
colonel	coronel	coronel	colonel
conseiller	concejal	conselheiro	councilor
consul	cónsul	cônsul	consul
conteur	cuentista	contador	storyteller
député	diputado	deputado	deputy
diacre	diácono	diácono	deacon
directeur	director	diretor	director
docteur	doctor	doutor	(non-medical) doctor
écrivain	escribano	escrivão	writer
édile	edil	edil	town councilor
empereur	emperador	imperador	emperro
enquêteur	investigador	investigador	investigator
entraîneur	entrenador	treinador	trainer

² There were no equivalents in French and Spanish for one word, Portuguese *autarca*. This refers to a government position similar to a mayor. French *maire* had already been paired with Spanish *alcalde* and Portuguese *alcalde/alcaide* and there is no cognate for Portuguese *autarca* in French. The word *autarca* does exist in Spanish, but with a different meaning, ‘autocrat’. It was important, though, to include Portuguese *autarca* for ‘mayor’ because it is far more frequent in Portugal than *alcalde/alcaide*.

entrepreneur	emprendedor	empreendedor	entrepreneur
étudiant	estudiante	estudante	student
évêque	obispo	bispo	bishop
gérant	gerente	gerente	manager
gouverneur	governador	governador	governor
illustrateur	ilustrador	ilustrador	illustrator
impresario	empresario	empresário	impresario
ingénieur	ingeniero	engenheiro	engineer
juge	juez	juiz	judge
magistrat	magistrado	magistrado	magistrate
maire	alcalde	alcalde	mayor
* no equivalent	*no equivalent	autarca	mayor
maître	maestro	mestre	master
médecin	médico	médico	(medical) doctor
ministre	ministro	ministro	minister
pape	papa	papa	pope
patron	patrón	patrão	boss
pilote	piloto	piloto	pilot
poète	poeta	poeta	poet
pompier	bombero	bombeiro	firefighter
préfet	prefecto	prefeito	prefect
président	presidente	presidente	presidente
prêtre	sacerdote	sacerdote	priest
procureur	fiscal	procurador	prosecutor
professeur	profesor	professor	Professor
prophète	profeta	profeta	prophet
secrétaire	secretario	secretário	secretary
sénateur	senador	senador	senator
soldat	soldado	soldado	soldier
vendeur	dependiente	vendedor	salesclerk
voleur	ladrón	ladrão	thief

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

All three corpora were analyzed using the SketchEngine corpus manager and text analysis software, which provides a uniform set of data collection and analysis options across different corpora. Because all three corpora in this study contain texts from different regions of the world, it was necessary to limit the data to texts originating in France, Spain and Portugal by setting the variable “top-level domain” in the feature “text types” to .fr, .es, or .pt, respectively.

This means that some texts using an .eu (European) or .com (non-localized) domain may have been inadvertently excluded from the study despite originating within the target countries. Not all corpora in SketchEngine possess “text type” feature tags. Of the three languages in this study, only *Portuguese Trends* included a “genre” tag, which was set to “news”. This may have reduced the size of the Portuguese corpus somewhat, since only 79.7% of the Portuguese corpus was marked as within the “news” genre. Another 13% was labeled “blogs”, 5.9% “unspecified”, and 1.3% “discussion”.

Within each corpus, the “concordance” tool was used to search for tokens of each type. Due to the limitations and inherent difficulties of working with automatically tagged corpora, which include incorrect and/or inconsistent part-of-speech (POS), lemma and gender tagging, various methods were employed to find and sort the maximum number of masculine and feminine variants of a type. For most words, an initial search was carried out using the “lemma” query type, with part of speech set to “noun” and the masculine form of the noun entered as the lemma. For example, in the *Spanish Trends* corpus, all lemmas of the word *abogado* that are nouns were searched, which yielded results with the noun forms *abogado*, *abogados*, *abogada*, *abogadas* *abogadillo*, as well as versions of the same words with different capitalizations. The results were then separated into masculine and feminine noun forms, using the “frequency” function to separate the responses by word form in the Key Word in Context (KWIC) position, that is, the position of the lemma that was searched. All masculine forms of the noun were selected and downloaded as an Excel file, and the number of tokens was recorded. Then, all feminine forms of the noun were selected and grouped together in a results page. For example, all results for Spanish *abogada* were grouped together with all results of *abogadas*, and the capitalized versions of these nouns. These results were then downloaded to an Excel file and the

number of tokens was recorded. Finally, the masculine results were re-selected, and the “frequency” option applied to word forms that were first word to the left of the KWIC. This produced a list of every word that appeared immediately to the left of the masculine noun in question, sorted by frequency. This list of word forms was searched manually for any forms that could indicate feminine gender attributed to the masculine noun form. These included feminine determiners and adjectives, such as *una*, *la*, *esta*, and *nueva* preceding the word *abogado*. Those that were preceded by a feminine modifier were separated from the masculine noun forms. These were then examined to make sure that they were legitimate examples of common gender, after which they were downloaded and recorded as such. Any such cases that were judged to be typographical errors were excluded from the dataset, such as grammatically feminine forms that referred to referents with a typically masculine name, such as Philippe, or grammatically masculine forms referring to referents with typically female names, such as Maria.

The search for the Spanish lemma “juez” can serve to illustrate this process. An initial lemma search for “juez” as a noun within the corpus of text originating from .es top-level domains resulted in 6704 tokens of feminine *jueza* and *juezas* and 71,132 tokens of masculine *juez* and *jueces*. Words immediately preceding *juez* or *jueces* that were flagged as possibly indicative of feminine gender included *alguna*, *ambas*, the name *Ana*, *democrática*, *disparatadas*, *ella*, *esa*, *esta*, *europeas*, *la*, *las*, *magistrada*, *ministra*, *muchas*, *mujer*, *nombrada*, *nueva*, *otra*, *primera*, *propia*, *prospectiva*, *señora*, *sola*, *Sra.*, *tercera*, *una* and *veterana*. Of these, the tokens preceded by *Ana*, *democrática*, *disparatadas*, *prospectiva* were eliminated, as they first used “juez” as part of a proper noun, and the last three did not modify *juez*, but rather a preceding word or phrase. The two tokens of *mujer juez* were excluded, since these were both part of the construction *la primera mujer juez*, which I interpreted as *la primera mujer [que es]*

juez. The writer would probably not have used the word *mujer* had he or she not been stressing the idea of the first woman judge. This left 3,137 tokens of common gender *juez* of which the majority were of the form *la juez*. Returning to the concordance page, all tokens of morphologically feminine *jueza* and *juezas* were selected and the number of tokens was recorded, giving 10,338 tokens of this variant. The number of all feminine variants, in this case, common gender, *juez*, and those ending in *-a*, *jueza/juezas*, were added together to calculate the total number of feminine tokens as 13,475. This was then used to determine the percentage of each variant. Common gender *juez* with 3137 tokens represented 23.3% of the total and *jueza* with 10,338 tokens represented 76.7%. These percentages were then recorded in tables that were grouped according to suffix pattern and language in order to compare the feminine forms according to morphological type within each language. The numbers of tokens and their percentages for each noun are presented in the Chapter 5, which answers research question 2, “What are the feminization strategies for professional titles used in the newspaper corpora for the three languages?”. The total number of distinctively feminine forms in the corpus for each language is also counted and presented at the end of Chapter 5, which will provide the empirical basis for the discussion of the distinctive feminine forms hypothesis presented in Chapter 7. Chapter 6 compares the results of this study to government guidelines for feminine titles for each language and to the results of previous studies in order to provide an answer to research question 3, “How do the feminization strategies in the corpus compare to those recommended by prescriptive language guides and to the results of previous studies on feminine titles?” In Chapter 7, exceptions to, and variations on, the general observations are discussed, in order to answer research question 4, “When writers do not use an available feminine form for a particular noun, is this form not used because the shape of the feminine form is undesirable in some way, an

internal factor, or because a feminine form has acquired negative connotations or because it seems inappropriate for a particular profession, external factors?” Finally, these results are used to discuss whether the distinctive feminine forms hypothesis, which states that writers will use a distinctive feminine form for a female referent whenever the morphological means to do so exists in their language, is validated by the results of the present study.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.0 Presentation of the results: overall organization

This chapter presents the feminine forms of the nouns found in French, Spanish and Portuguese newspapers in the *Trends* corpus following the methods described in Chapter 4. These results provide data to test the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis (DFFH) formulated at the beginning of this study that writers of languages with grammatical gender on nouns, like French, Spanish and Portuguese, will use, or even create, distinctively feminine forms (DFF) whenever there is a morphological means to do so. The failure to use a DFF can then be attributed to a lack of morphological means or some undesirable association with it, or to an external impediment, such as a negative connotation with the word or the actual or perceived lack of female participation in a profession which is viewed then as primarily the domain of men. The results presented in this chapter will show the extent to which journalists writing in French, Spanish, and Portuguese newspapers included in these corpora do in fact use distinctively feminine forms, in support of the hypothesis. The possible explanations for their failure to do so for any given noun, whether for morphological or social reasons, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

The presentation of the results is organized as follows. The chapter begins by presenting a series of three tables, one each for French, Spanish and Portuguese, showing the feminine forms for all the nouns in the dataset in alphabetical order. Following the overall results for each language, a cross-linguistic comparison of these results determines the relative degree of feminization in the three languages. The overall results, for each language and their comparison

are followed in Chapter 6 by a comparison of these results first with the prescriptive guidelines for each language, described in Chapter 2 and then with the results of the previous studies described in Chapter 3.

In support of the hypothesis that writers will use a DFF whenever morphologically possible, we find that the majority of nouns have a single prevalent feminine form, defined for the purposes of this study as a form that accounts for 90% or more of the tokens for a single noun, such as French *avocate* (100%), Spanish *abogada* (99.9%), and Portuguese *advogada* (99.9%). However, the results also show variation among the feminine forms of a small number of nouns, defined as two or more forms for a single noun that account for between 10% and 90% of the feminine tokens, such as the French feminine nouns *poétesse* (89%) and *poète* (11%), Spanish *poeta* (80%) and *poetisa* (18%) (and *mujer poeta* at 2%), and Portuguese *poeta* (31%) and *poetisa* (69%). Consideration of the results according to morphological group, as defined by the ending of the masculine noun, reveals that variation also exists within some of these groups, such as the feminine endings in French for masculine nouns in *-eur*, which can take the form of *-eure* (*gouverneure* 98.3%), *-euse* (*chercheuse* 98.0%), or *-trice* or *-drice* (*actrice* 100%, *ambassadrice* 99.8%), and the feminine endings in Spanish for masculine nouns in *-ente*, which are either *-enta* (*presidenta* 99.4%) or *-ente* (*agente* 99.2%). There are no such examples in Portuguese. We will turn out attention now to the results for all nouns in the sample for each language.

5.1 French feminine forms in the *Trends* newspaper corpus

Table 5.1 presents the 58 nouns whose masculine and feminine forms were extracted from the *French Trends* corpus. These are arranged in alphabetical order according to the masculine form of the noun shown in the leftmost column under which is the number of masculine tokens in the corpus. The columns to the right show the feminine forms found in the corpus. At the

bottom of each cell with a feminine form is its raw number of tokens above which is the percentage that this represents of all feminine forms for this noun.

The feminine forms are arranged into columns according to the feminization strategy used, as originally presented in Section 2.3. These include in the two columns to the left strategies that do not alter the form of the masculine noun, namely common gender (CG), the use of the masculine noun for feminine referents along with feminine modifiers, such as *une médecin*, and lexical addition (LA), the addition of the lexical item *femme* ‘woman’ before the noun, such as *une femme médecin*. The use of these forms by the writers in the corpora, when a DFF is morphologically possible, refutes the hypothesis that writers will use a distinctively feminine noun. There are also four strategies in French that do alter the form of the noun by creating a distinctively feminine form whose use supports the hypothesis. The first three strategies all add a final *-e* to the written form of the masculine noun. The first one, indicated by the heading “Ø/e (+) same”, does not change the pronunciation of the masculine noun, as in *attaché/attachée*. The consonant preceding the additional written *-e* may also be doubled, as in *chef/cheffe*, hence the (+) in the notation for this group. The second strategy, labeled “Ø/e distinct” has a distinct pronunciation from the masculine form through the presence of a final consonant in the feminine, as in *agent ~ agente* /aʒã/~ /aʒât/. A third strategy, “Ø/e+ distinct”, changes the pronunciation not only by adding a final consonant, but also by changing the vowel preceding the final consonant, as in *champion* /ʃãpjõ/ ~ *championne* /ʃãpjøn/ and *chancelier* /ʃãsəlje/ ~ *chancelière* /ʃãsəljeɸ/. For masculine nouns in *-eur* where the final consonant is already pronounced, this option also changes the final consonant of the masculine form, as in *chercheur* /ʃɛʃœɸ/ ~ *chercheuse* /ʃɛʃøz/. The fourth strategy is the substitution of a feminine suffix for the

masculine ending, such as *-teur/-trice*, as in *acteur ~ actrice*, which takes the form of *-drice* only in *ambassadeur ~ ambassadrice*, or the addition of the suffix *-esse*, as in *prêtre ~ prêtresse*.

The feminine strategies are arranged from left to right from the noun that is the least distinctively feminine to the noun that is the most distinctively feminine. Common gender, which does not indicate feminine gender on the noun but only through nominal modifiers, is the least distinctively feminine option. The noun is also unchanged in lexical addition, but the addition of the lexical item *femme* merits its classification as more distinctively feminine than common gender. The *-e* ending is considered to be a less distinct marker than the longer suffixes *-trice* and *-esse*, and so the suffixed forms are considered to be the most distinctively feminine. There is also a hierarchy among the feminine forms ending in *-e*. Those that are identical to the masculine in speech are at the lower end of this hierarchy, those that only add a final consonant in speech are in the middle, and those that add or replace a final consonant and replace the vowel are the most distinctively feminine of the feminine forms ending in *-e*. This arrangement of feminization options allows one to scan the table to see whether the noun farthest to the right is the prevalent form for each noun. In fact, if the nouns with only CG and LA options are excluded, then the prevalent option for 41 (70.7%) of the 58 nouns in Table 5.1 is the most distinctively feminine form.

A prevalent feminine form, one that accounts for more than 90% of the tokens, is indicated in the table in boldface. One can conclude then that there is little variation among feminine forms for these nouns. In contrast, there is variation among feminine forms when two feminine forms each account for more than 10% of the tokens but fewer than 90%. The most frequent of these variants is indicated through darker shading of its cell and the less frequent of the two is indicated through lighter shading.

Table 5.1: French feminine forms in the corpus by alphabetical order of the masculine noun

masculine noun # tokens	CG	LA	Ø/e (+) same	Ø/e distinct	Ø/e+ distinct	Suffix (-euse, -esse- or -rice)
acteur 93,005						actrice 100% 17906
agent 39,730	agent 5.7% 52	femme agent 0.3% 3		agente 94.0% 852		
ambassadeur 11,244			ambassadeure 0.2% 6			ambassadrice 99.8% 2466
arbitre 7669	arbitre 34.6% 18	femme arbitre 65.4% 34				
architecte 10161	architecte 94.62% 123	femme architecte 5.38% 7				
attaché 3,606			attachée 100% 270			
auteur 44,196	auteur 0.21% 13	femme auteur 0.03% 2	auteure 32.84% 2033			autrice 66.92% 4142
avocat 41,834				avocate 100% 10826		
capitaine 14,470	capitaine 99.9% 954	femme capitaine 0.1% 1				
caporal 204			caporale 100% 15			
champion 42,596					championne 100% 7842	
chancelier 4,569					chancelière 100% 290	
chef 113,292	chef 4.2% 459	femme chef 0.5% 54	cheffe 95.3% 10488			
chercheur 34,194	chercheur 0.1% 4		chercheure 1.9% 100		chercheuse 98.0% 5195	
chirurgien 2,033		femme chirurgien 0.6% 1			chirurgienne 99.4% 165	

colonel 3,967	colonel 6.1% 6		colonelle 93.9% 93			
consul 447	consul 1.8% 1		consule 98.2% 53			
conseiller 26509					conseillère 100% 7915	
conteur 662					conteuse 100% 253	
député 76,149	député 1.3% 216		députée 98.7% 16057			
diacre 213		femme diacre 100% 25				
directeur 45,991	directeur 0.02% 4					directrice 99.98% 19897
docteur 8,474	docteur 3.95% 55		docteure 93.0% 1295			doctrice 0.1% 1 doctoresse 2.95% 41
écrivain 10,133	écrivain 1.2% 27	femme écrivain 0.2% 4			écrivaine 98.6% 2228	
édile 6528	édile 100% 88					
empereur 2,602						impératrice 98.3% 406 emperesse 1.7% 7
enquêteur 14,669					enquêteuse 2.0% 10	enquêteuse 98.0% 497
entraîneur 17,588		femme entraîneur 0.9% 3	entraîneuse 37.4% 134		entraîneuse 61.7% 221	
entrepreneur 14,999	entrepreneur 0.1% 1	femme entrepreneur 1.8% 28	entrepreneur e 34.1% 535		entrepreneuse 64.0% 1002	

étudiant 35735	étudiant 0.04% 2			étudiante 99.96% 5092		
évêque 3882	évêque 75% 3	femme évêque 25% 1				
gérant 6,936	gérant 0.2% 5			gérante 99.8% 2841		
gouverneur 13,933	gouverneur 1.4% 14		gouverneure 98.3% 958		gouverneuse 0.3% 3	
illustrateur 772						illustratrice 100% 415
imprésario 34						imprésaria 100% 1
ingénieur 15,340	ingénieur 1.2% 14	femme ingénieur 0.4% 5	ingénieure 98.4% 1147			
juge 27,716	juge 99.9% 2662	femme juge 0.1% 2				
magistrat 9,952				magistrate 100% 1582		
maire 13,7010	maire 98.8% 11,852	femme maire 0.4% 46				mairesse 0.8% 100
maître 23,522	maître 106 2.5%	femme maître 3 0.1%				maîtresse 97.4% 4091
médecin 34,778	médecin 86.9% 654	femme médecin 13.1% 99				
ministre 226,488	ministre 99.9% 42760	femme ministre 0.1% 61				
pape 14,568		femme pape 0.5% 1				papesse 99.5% 195
patron 43865					patronne 100% 4148	
pilote 19,988	pilote 82.3% 158	femme pilote 17.7% 34				
poète 3,044	poète 10.6% 43					poétesse 89.4% 364

pompier 20,517	pompier 9.2% 6	femme pompier 18.5% 12			pompière 72.3% 47	
préfet 23309	préfet 0.69% 17	femmes préfets 0.04% 1			préfète 99.26% 2430	
président 259,570	président 0.21% 80			présidente 99.79% 37688		
prêtre 4182	prêtre 0.49% 1	femme prêtre 5.42% 11				prêtresse 94.09% 191
procureur 23,207	procureur 3.68% 198		procureure 96.3% 5172		procureuse 0.02% 1	
professeur 29,579	professeur 2.7% 147	femme professeur 0.11% 6	professeure 97.1% 5253		professeuse 0.09% 5	
prophète 1,323						prophétesse 100% 17
secrétaire 45,215	secrétaire 99.9% 7301	femme secrétaire 0.1% 10				
sénateur 21,665						sénatrice 100% 3391
soldat 27,427	soldat 1.3% 3	femme soldat 8.9% 21		soldate 89.8% 212		
vendeur 11836	vendeur 0.07% 1				vendeuse 99.93% 1462	
voleur 4815					voleuse 100% 302	

The strongest support for the distinctively feminine form hypothesis (DFFH) comes from the 40 nouns in the sample, 69% of the total, that have a prevalent DFF. Of these 40 nouns, where one form accounts for over 90% of all feminine tokens, 12 have a distinctive feminine suffix (*actrice, ambassadrice, directrice, impératrice, imprésaria, enquêtrice, illustratrice, maîtresse, papesse, pretresse, prophétesse, sénatrice*), 17 have a final written *-e* along with a change in pronunciation (*agente, avocate, championne, chancelière, chercheuse, chirurgienne,*

conseillère, conteuse, écrivaine, étudiante, gérante, magistrate, patronne, préfète, présidente, vendeuse, voleuse), and 11 are formed by adding a final *-e* in writing only (*attachée, caporale, cheffe, colonelle, consule, députée, docteure, gouverneure, ingénieure, procureure, professeure*). A word is in order about *imprésaria*. It is counted among the suffixed feminine forms, but as a borrowing it creates its feminine form in *-a*, as in Italian, rather than by adding one of the suffixes regularly found in French. Thus, 29 nouns have a prevalent DFF in both speech and writing whereas another 11 nouns have a prevalent DFF only in writing.

Although these 40 nouns provide support for the DFFH, there remain 18 nouns in the sample, 31% of the total, for which a DFF is not the prevalent option. Of these, 6 have a DFF as their most frequent option, but it is not classified as prevalent since it does not account for 90% or more of the tokens. For three of these the DFF with a distinct pronunciation is more frequent than the form with a pronunciation identical to that of the masculine noun: *autrice* (66.9%) ~ *auteure* (32.8%), *entraîneuse* (61.7%) ~ *entraîneure* (37.4%), and *entrepreneuse* (64.0%) ~ *entrepreneure* (34.1%). Two other nouns show variation between a DFF in *-e* with a distinctive pronunciation and lexical addition and common gender forms: *soldate* (89.8%) ~ *femme soldat* (8.9%) ~ *soldat* (1.3%) and *pompière* (72.3%) ~ *femme pompier* (18.5%) ~ *pompier* (9.2%). The last noun with a more frequent DFF variant is the suffixed feminine form, *poétesse* (89.4%), that varies with a common gender form, *poète* (10.6%).

For the remaining 12 nouns, a CG or LA form is either the prevalent form or the most frequent variant. Among those with a prevalent form, CG is used for 7 nouns (*architecte, capitaine, édile, juge, maire, ministre, and secrétaire*) and lexical addition is used for only one noun (*femme diacre*). It is interesting that these nouns all end in *-e* for which there is no means of forming a DFF other than a feminine suffix, such as *-esse*, as in *prêtresse*. Another 4 nouns show

variation between a common gender form and lexical addition. In 3 of these, common gender is more common: *médecin* (86.9%) ~ *femme médecin* (13.1%), *pilote* (82.3%) ~ *femme pilote* (17.7%), and *évêque* (75%) ~ *femme évêque* (25%), and in only one is lexical addition more common than the common gender form: *femme arbitre* (65.4%) ~ *arbitre* (34.6%).

In addition to the variation just seen in the feminine forms for individual nouns, there is also variation within the morphological group of masculine nouns ending in *-eur*. Not only do three individual nouns whose masculine ends in *-eur* show variation, as seen above, *autrice* ~ *auteure*, *entraîneuse* ~ *entraîneure*, and *entrepreneuse* ~ *entrepreneur*, but there is also variation among the prevalent forms for nouns within this morphological group. The prevalent form ends in *-euse* for 2 nouns (*chercheuse* 98%, *conteuse* 100%), and for 6 other nouns in the suffix *-trice* or *-drice* (*ambassadrice* 99.8%, *directrice* 99.9%, *impératrice* 98.3%, *enquêtrice* 98.0%, *illustratrice* 100%, *sénatrice* 100%). However, there are also 4 nouns ending in *-eure* (*docteure* 93%, *gouverneure* 98.3%, *procureure* 96.3%, *professeure* 97.1%) whose pronunciation is identical to that of their masculine counterparts.

In summary, 40 of the 58 nouns in the French *Trends* corpus have prevalent DFFs. These nouns support the hypothesis that writers will use a DFF whenever they have the morphological means to do so. Another 6 nouns that have a DFF as the most frequent variant offer mitigated support. Finally, 12 nouns do not support the hypothesis because they have a prevalent common gender or lexical addition form (8) or because they show variation between CG and LA forms (4). Chapter 7 will discuss the possible explanations for the feminization forms of these 18 nouns that do not offer strong support for the feminization hypothesis.

5.2 Spanish feminine forms in the *Trends* newspaper corpus

Table 5.2 presents in alphabetical order the 58 Spanish nouns analyzed along with the numbers and percentages of feminine forms found for each noun in the Spanish newspaper corpus. The possible feminine forms for each noun, as was the case for French above, include common gender (CG) and lexical addition (LA), which in Spanish is the addition of the lexical item *mujer* ‘woman’ before the noun. In these two options the noun is identical to the masculine noun and so they are not considered to be distinctively feminine forms. The options for creating a distinctively feminine form include an *-a* ending or another feminine suffix, such as *-triz*, *-esa*, or *-isa*. The three columns for the *-a* ending indicate whether the masculine form ends in *-o*, *-e* or a consonant. As in Table 5.1 above, boldface indicates a prevalent feminine form that accounts for more than 90% of the tokens found, whereas shading indicates variation between feminine forms that account for 10% to 90% of the tokens for that noun. Darker shading is used for the more frequent variant and lighter shading for the less frequent.

The feminine options are arranged from left to right from the noun that is the least distinctively feminine to the noun that is the most distinctively feminine. As was the case for French, common gender, in which the noun is identical to the masculine noun, indicates feminine gender least clearly. Lexical addition comes next since the noun is also unchanged in this option, even though female gender is clearly indicated through the addition of the lexical item *mujer*. The *-a* ending is considered to be a less overt marker than a longer more distinctive suffix, like *-triz*, *-esa*, or *-isa*. Unlike the French feminine nouns ending in *-e*, there is no ordering among the Spanish feminine nouns ending in *-a*.

Table 5.2: Spanish feminine forms in the corpus by alphabetical order of the masculine noun

Masculine Noun (# tokens)	CG	LA	o/a	e/a	Ø/a	suffix
abogado 29,305	abogado 0.1% 8		abogada 99.9% 5853			
actor 51,036						actriz 100% 31,696
agente 1,113,587	agente 99.2% 1686	mujer agente 0.2% 4		agente 0.6% 10		
agregado 393			agregada 100% 20			
alcalde 85,420	alcalde 0.1% 31 85,420					alcaldesa 99.9% 24,141
árbitro 13,597	árbitro 10.1% 45	mujer árbitro 0.7% 3	árbitra 89.2% 399			
arquitecto 9220	arquitecto 0.8% 8		arquitecta 99.2% 1031			
autor 69,365	autor 0.04% 6				autora 99.96% 14,773	
bombero 18,425	bombero 3.2% 5	mujer bombero 3.2% 5	bombero 93.7% 148			
campeón 51,067	campeón 0.1% 15				campeona 99.9% 12,024	
canciller 1622	canciller 81.4% 96				cancillera 18.6% 22	
capitán 25,492	capitán 2.2% 46				capitana 97.8% 2064	
caporal 156					caporala 100% 1	
chef 7586	chef 99.3% 455	mujer chef 0.7% 3				
cirujano 4536			cirujana 100% 336			
concejal 43,367	concejal 17.4% 2859				concejala 82.6% 13,612	

cónsul 1400	cónsul 97.7%% 128					consulesa 2.29% 2
coronel 22,532	coronel 70.8% 136	mujer coronel 1.1% 2			coronela 28.1% 54	
cuentista 161	cuentista 100% 20					
dependiente 9178	dependiente 4.2% 26			dependienta 95.8% 598		
diácono 492		mujer diácono 36.2% 17	diácona 4.2% 2			diaconisa 59.6% 28
diputado 54,771	diputado 0.05% 8		diputada 99.95% 14,769			
director 111,907					directora 100% 32,729	
doctor 29,506	doctor 0.09% 10	mujer doctor 0.01% 1			doctora 99.9% 11,237	
edil 26,259	edil 98.6% 7466				edila 1.4% 104	
embajador 9710	embajador 0.03% 1				embajadora 99.97% 2940	
emperador 2525					emperadora 4.4% 14	emperatriz 95.6% 307
emprendedor 12,786					emprendedora 100% 1962	
empresario 32892	empresario 0.2% 6		empresaria 99.8% 2611			
entrenador 83,397	entrenador 0.3% 6				entrenadora 99.7% 2135	
escribano 206			escribana 100% 4			
estudiante 37,590	estudiante 97.6% 1347	mujer estudiante 0.9% 12		estudiante 1.5% 21		
fiscal 33,426	fiscal 97.9% 4808				fiscala 2.1% 105	

gerente 11,992	gerente 99.5% 1827			gerenta 0.5% 9		
gobernador 5979	gobernador 0.8% 3				gobernadora 99.2% 367	
ilustrador 1310					ilustradora 100% 719	
ingeniero 14,476	ingeniero 0.4% 6		ingeniera 99.6% 1579			
investigador 54,517	investigador 0.22% 16	mujer investigador 0.01% 1			investigadora 99.77% 7421	
jefe 43,659	jefe 2.47% 143	mujer jefe 0.03% 2		jefa 97.5% 5638		
juez 71,132	juez 23.3% 3137				jueza 76.7% 10,338	
ladrón 7253					ladrona 100% 232	
maestro 22,289	maestro 0.2% 5		maestra 99.8% 3193			
magistrado 24,764	magistrado 0.1% 11		magistrada 99.9% 8017			
médico 33,413	médico 13.3% 185	mujer médico 0.4% 5	médica 86.3% 1202			
ministro 85,130	ministro 0.03%		ministra 99.97% 39,998			
obispo 13,710	obispo 2.1% 2		obispa 97.9% 92			
papa 27,707	papa 8.7% 2	mujer papa 4.3% 1				papisa 87.0% 20
patrón 18,001	patrón 0.05				patrona 99.95% 4063	
piloto 23,626	piloto 51.4% 54	mujer piloto 34.3% 36	pilota 14.3% 15			
poeta 10,213	poeta 80.3% 888	mujer poeta 1.5% 17				poetisa 18.2% 201

prefecto 777	prefecto 4.2% 2		prefecta 95.8% 46			
presidente 225,888	presidente 0.6% 314			presidenta 99.4% 49,334		
profesor 51,004	profesor 0.01% 1				profesora 99.99% 14,689	
profeta 1806	profeta 36.4% 12					profetisa 63.6% 21
sacerdote 8718		mujer sacerdote 2.6% 4				sacerdotisa 97.4% 151
secretario 33,393	secretario 0.05% 7		secretaria 99.95% 12724			
senador 8946	senador 0.2% 4				senadora 99.8% 2149	
soldado 15,779	soldado 92.5% 247	mujer soldado 7.5% 20				

The Spanish nouns marked for feminine gender on the noun, either through a final *-a* or a feminine suffix, are the most frequent options for referring to female referents in the corpus, as was also the case for French. The prevalent form, accounting for 90% or more of the feminine tokens, ends in *-a* for 34 nouns and in a suffix for another 4 nouns (*actriz*, *alcaldesa*, *emperatriz*, and *sacerdotisa*). Thus, 38 (65.5%) out of 58 nouns have a prevalent DFF, a finding that supports the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis.

This leaves 20 nouns that do not have a prevalent DFF. For 7 of these, a DFF is the most frequent form, although it does not rise to the threshold of 90% established for prevalence. These include 4 nouns for which a feminine form in *-a*, the most frequent variant, alternates with a common gender form (*árbitra* (89.2%) ~ *árbitro* (10.1%), *consejala* (82.6%) ~ *concejal* (17.4%), *jueza* (76.7%) ~ *juez* (23.2%), *médica* (86.3%) ~ *médico* (13.3%) and 3 for which the most

frequent variant has a suffixed form alternating with a CG of LA form (*diaconisa* (59.6%) ~ *mujer diácono* (36.2%), and *papisa* (87.0%) ~ *papa* (8.7%) ~ *mujer papa* (4.3%), *profetisa* (63.6%) ~ *profeta* (36.4%).

For the remaining 13 nouns a common gender form is either the prevalent form or the most frequent variant. It is the prevalent form for 9 nouns (*agente, chef, cónsul, cuentista, edil, estudiante, fiscal, gerente, soldado*) and the most frequent variant for 4 nouns (*canciller* (81.4%) ~ *cancillera* (18.6%), *coronel* (70.8%) ~ *coronela* (28.1%), *piloto* (51.4%) ~ *mujer piloto* (34.3%) ~ *pilota* (14.3%), *poeta* (80.3%) ~ *poetisa* (18.2%).

The only case of variation in the same morphological group is the feminines of masculine nouns ending in *-ente* and *-ante*. The prevalent feminine form for 2 of these ends in *-a* (*dependienta, presidenta*), but for 3 nouns the common gender form is prevalent (*agente, estudiante, gerente*).

In summary, the 38 nouns in the Spanish *Trends* corpus that have a prevalent DFF support the feminization hypothesis. Another 9 nouns have a DFF as the most frequent variant, but the common gender and lexical addition variants for these nouns do not support the DFFH. These variants along with the 7 nouns with a prevalent common gender form and the 4 nouns with a common gender form as the most frequent variant will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.3 Portuguese feminine forms in *Trends* newspaper corpus

Table 5.3 presents in alphabetical order the masculine forms of 59 nouns along with their corresponding feminine forms and their percentages and number of tokens. As was the case for French and Spanish above, the feminization strategies common gender (CG) and lexical addition (LA), which in Portuguese is the addition of the lexical item *mulher* ‘woman’ or *senhora* ‘madam’ before the noun, do not create a distinctively feminine form of the noun. The options

for creating a DFF include an *-a* ending or another feminine suffix, such as *-triz*, *-esa*, or *-isa*.

Three of the distinctively feminine endings are organized according to whether the masculine noun ends in *-o*, *-e*, a consonant, options also available in Spanish. In Portuguese, there is also a column for masculine nouns ending in *-ão*, which can form their feminine in *-ã* in *campeã*, *capitã*, *cirurgiã* and *escrivã*, *-a* in *ladra*, *-ona* in *ladrona*, and *-oa* in *patroa*. As in the previous tables in this chapter, boldface indicates a prevalent feminine form that accounts for more than 90% of the tokens found, while shading is used to indicate feminine forms that account for 10% to 90% of the tokens with darker shading indicating the more frequent variant.

Table 5.3: Portuguese feminine forms in the corpus by alphabetical order of the masculine noun

masculine noun (# tokens)	CG	LA	o/a	e/a	Ø/a	ão/ã~a~oa~ona	suffix
adido 62			adida 100% 2				
advogado 8163	advogado 0.1% 1		advogada 99.9% 857				
agente 15,980	agente 100% 377						
alcalde/ alcaide 137	alcaide 14.3% 1						alcaldesa 85.7% 6
árbitro 2635	árbitro 1.7% 3		árbitra 98.3% 176				
arquiteto 3626			arquiteta 100% 470				
ator 11,661	ator 0.01% 1						atriz 99.99% 7164
autarca 8457	autarca 100% 896						
autor 10,349	autor 0.05% 1				autora 99.95% 2035		
bispo 2072		mulher bispo 66.7% 2	bispa 33.3% 1				

bombeiro 9719			bombeira 100% 106				
campeão 6656	campeão 0.6% 17					campeã 99.4% 2662	
capitão 2932	capitão 14.0% 13					capitã 86.0% 80	
chanceler 1228	chanceler 100% 100						
chef 2646	chef 99.5% 209	mulher chef 0.5% 1					
chefe 10,268	chefe 99.5% 430			chefa 0.5% 2			
cirurgião 449						cirurgiã 100% 38	
conselheiro 3093	conselheiro 0.3%		conselheira 99.7% 318				
cônsul 374	cônsul 96.3% 26						consulesa 3.7% 1
contador 756					contadora 100% 91		
coronel 640	coronel 100% 12						
deputado 25,528	deputado 0.17% 7	senhora deputado 0.03% 1	deputada 99.8% 4055				
diácono 60							diaconisa 100% 12
diretor 24,239	diretor 0.1% 10				diretora 99.9% 7324		
doutor 2583	doutor 1.7% 2				doutora 98.3% 113		
edil 510	edil 100% 26						
embaixador 2200					embaixa- dora 99.7% 632		embaixatriz 0.3% 2

empreendedor 2917					empreendedora 100% 770		
empresário 10,964	empresário 0.2% 2		empresária 99.8% 955				
engenheiro 3853	engenheiro 0.3% 1		engenhaira 99.7% 341				
escrivão 20						escrivã 100% 2	
estudante 16,036	estudante 99.6% 468	mulher estudante 0.4% 2					
gerente 425	gerente 100% 54						
governador 3676					governadora 100% 189		
ilustrador 469					ilustradora 100% 207		
imperador 515					imperadora 1.3% 1		imperatriz 98.7% 77
investigador 17,266	investigador 0.1% 2				investigadora 99.9% 1967		
juiz 6075	juiz 1.7% 20	senhora juiz 0.2% 2			juíza 98.1% 1176		
ladrão 580						ladra 96.9% 31 ladrona 3.1% 1	
magistrado 26,430	magistrado 0.1% 7		magistrada 99.9% 5026				
médico 12,934	médico 0.1% 1		médica 99.9% 762				
mestre 1703	mestre 66.7% 24			mestra 33.3% 12			
ministro 22,649	ministro 0.04% 3		ministra 99.96% 8350				

papa 5572							papisa 100% 3
patrão 1012						patroa 100% 68	
pesquisado r 248					pesquisa- dora 100% 41		
piloto 6938	piloto 75.7% 28	mulher piloto 18.9% 7	pilota 5.4% 2				
poeta 2428	poeta 30.7% 65						poetisa 69.3% 147
prefeito 213			prefeita 100% 18				
presidente 145,420	presidente 99.4% 11,125	mulher/ senhora presidente 0.52% 57	presidenta 0.08% 9				
procurador 2145	procurador 0.37% 2				procura- dora 99.63% 542		
professor 16,985	professor 0.07% 2				professora 99.93% 3004		
profeta 216	profeta 12.5%% 1						profetisa 87.5% 7
sacerdote 538							sacerdotisa 100% 22
secretário 13,119	secretário 0.2% 9		secretária 99.8% 4532				
senador 784					senadora 100% 103		
soldado 2437	soldado 45.45% 5	mulher soldado 9.1% 1	soldada 45.45% 5				
treinador 15,397	treinador 0.67% 2				treinadora 99.33% 298		
vendedor 1792					vendedora 100% 121		

The results for all 59 nouns show that the forms marked for feminine gender on the noun, either through a final *-a* or another feminine suffix, are the most frequent options in the corpus, as was also true for French and Spanish. The feminine form in *-a* is prevalent for 30 nouns, another 5 have a prevalent feminine form in *-ã*, *-a*, *-oa*, or *-ona* for masculine nouns in *-ão*, and another 5 have a prevalent feminine suffix, *-triz* or *-isa*. This means that, in support of the DFFH, 40 (67.8%) of the nouns in the sample have a prevalent DFF.

Of the 19 nouns that do not have a prevalent DFF, 4 have a DFF as their most frequent variant: *profetisa* (87.5%) ~ *profeta* (12.5%), *alcaldesa* (85.7%) ~ *alcaide* (14.2%), *poetisa* (69.3%) ~ *poeta* (30.7%), and *capitã* (86.0%) ~ *capitão* (14%). The other 15 have a common gender form as the prevalent form or as the most frequent variant. Common gender is prevalent in 11 nouns (*agente*, *autarca*, *chanceler*, *chef*, *chefe*, *cônsul*, *coronel*, *edil*, *estudante*, *gerente*, *presidente*). For *soldado*, the feminine form in *-a*, *soldada*, and the common gender form both represent 45.45% of the tokens, with *mulher soldado* being used in the other 9.1% of tokens. In another 2 nouns, the common gender form is the most frequent variant, including *mestre* (66.7%) ~ *mestra* (33.3%), *piloto* (75.7%) ~ *mulher piloto* (18.9%) ~ *pilota* (5.4%). For one form, lexical addition was the most frequent, but this represented only 3 total tokens: *mulher bispo* (66.7%/2 tokens) ~ *bispa* (33.7%/1 token).

Unlike the feminine nouns for masculine nouns in *-eur* in French and those for masculine *-ente* and *-ante* in Spanish, there is no variation within morphological groups in Portuguese. Instead, as seen above, the common gender *-ente* is the prevalent feminine form in Portuguese for masculine nouns in *-ente* and *-ante*, such as *agente* (100%), *presidente* (99.4%), and *estudante* (99.6%).

In summary, 40 nouns in the Portuguese *Trends* corpus have a prevalent DFF. Another 4 nouns have a DFF as the most frequent variant, but the DFF alternates with common gender and lexical addition variants. There are also 11 nouns with a prevalent common gender form, one with an equal number of tokens of DFF and CG forms, and 3 with common gender as the most frequent variant. The possible reasons that writers choose common gender and lexical addition forms that do not support the feminization hypothesis will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.4 Summary of the overall results for French, Spanish and Portuguese

This chapter concludes with a cross-linguistic comparison of the feminization strategies in the three languages, as seen in Table 5.4 below. It presents in one table the numbers and percentages of prevalent nouns and most common variants for distinctively feminine forms and for common gender and lexical variation, as reported above in the results for each language. One is immediately struck by the similarities across languages. The prevalent DFFs account for between 65% and 69% of the target nouns in each language, a percentage that rises to 76% to 81% when the DFFs that are the most frequent variant are added to the total. Therefore, for roughly three-fourths of the nouns in each language, a DFF is the most common way of referring to female referents. This provides support for the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis that writers use distinctively feminine forms whenever they have the morphological means to do so. However, the percentages of prevalent and frequent common gender and lexical addition forms show that this is not true for all nouns. They account for between 19% and 24% of nouns in each language. One small difference observed is that Portuguese shows a higher percentage of prevalent common gender forms at 19% vs. 12% in French and Spanish. Some examples of prevalent CG nouns in Portuguese that have prevalent or frequent DFFs in French and Spanish

are Portuguese *chefe* vs. French *cheffe* and Spanish *jefa*, Portuguese *mestre* vs. French *maîtresse* and Spanish *maestra*, and Portuguese *presidente* vs. French *présidente* and Spanish *presidenta*. There is also common gender Portuguese *autarca* with no cognates in the other languages.

Table 5.4: Comparison of prevalent nouns and most frequent variants in French, Spanish and Portuguese

	French		Spanish		Portuguese	
total # of nouns	58		58		59	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
prevalent DFF	40	69.0	38	65.5	40	67.8
	29 (without -e same)	50.0				
most frequent variant DFF	6	10.3	7	12.1	4	6.8
Subtotal prevalent and frequent DFF	46	79.3	45	77.6	44	75.9
prevalent CG, LA	7	12.1	9	15.6	11	19.0
most frequent variant CG, LA	5	8.6	4	6.9	3	5.2
Subtotal prevalent and frequent CG, LA	12	20.7	13	22.4	14	23.7

The following chapter begins with a comparison of the results of this study with the prescriptive guidelines for each language followed by a similar comparison with the results of previous studies. This will provide the necessary background for the discussion of the nouns identified in this chapter that do not support the DFFH, namely the use of common gender and lexical addition forms to refer to female referents, that will be the topic of Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the government guidelines for feminization of professional titles for all three languages in Section 6.1 and then compares them to the results of the current study in order to measure uptake of the guides' recommendations by the writers whose work appears in the *Trends* corpus. The comparison is done on a language-by-language basis, beginning with Becquer et al. (1999) for French, then continuing with Lledó (2006) for Spanish and Toledo et al. (2014) for Portuguese. Then the results for all languages are compared and analyzed. In Section 6.2, the results of past studies are presented and compared with the results of the current study, again on a language-by-language basis. These results are then analyzed to gain insights into whether language users currently make the same choices regarding linguistic feminization as they did in the past, and what appears to be motivating those choices.

6.1 Comparison of the results with prescriptive guidelines

6.1.1 French results compared to prescriptive guidelines

The government guidelines for the feminization of French nouns (Becquer et al. 1999) are summarized below and compared to the results of the present study. The organization follows the numbering system for the rules presented by Becquer et al. (1999:22-27).

Rule 1: Always use feminine determiners with a feminine referent.

It was not possible to determine the degree to which this rule was upheld in the nouns analyzed in the present study due to the selection criteria described in Chapter 4. Common gender forms were identified as referring to a feminine referent through the presence of a feminine modifier used with a masculine noun, such as *la médecin*. It was impossible, therefore, to identify the tokens of masculine nouns with masculine modifiers referred to women. Identifying such epicene forms would have required manually searching each token of a masculine noun in the corpora to determine whether its referent was female and this was not feasible. There are certainly examples in the corpus, though, as noted in passing, such as the following example, also noted in Section 2.2:

(1) *Depuis la création de la série médicale Grey's Anatomy en 2005, Ellen Pompeo incarne Meredith Grey, un brillant chirurgien.*

‘Since the creation of the medical series *Grey’s Anatomy* in 2005, Ellen Pompeo has played Meredith Grey, a brilliant surgeon.’

In the example above, although the referent is female, the masculine form of the noun *chirurgien* has been used, as well as the masculine indefinite article *un* and masculine form of the adjective *brillant*.

Rule 2.a: *-e ~ -e* (Common Gender)

This rule states a masculine noun ending in *-e* will have an identical feminine form, therefore a common gender form. The nouns whose masculine ends in *-e* in the corpus are shown in Table 6.1. The corpus results are shown in the columns to the left, whereas the two rightmost columns show the forms recommended by Becquer et al. (1999) and whether the recommended

form is the prevalent form in the corpus, indicated by Y for yes or N for no. In this table P represents partial conformity to the recommended form. In such cases, both recommended forms were present in the corpus but the second recommendation was the most frequent. Dashes in the two right columns indicate that the guidelines made no recommendation for a noun. For three nouns, Becquer et al. (1999:22) recommended two possible forms, recognizing that certain words have a long-standing feminine variant in *-esse* “admitted alongside” the prescribed common gender forms, such as *poétesse*, *mairesse*, *maîtresse*. The guidelines prescribe *diaconesse* as the feminine of *diacre*, yet there is no recommended feminine form of *pape*. It is worth noting that the only way to create a distinctive feminine form (DFF) for masculine nouns ending in *-e* is by adding the feminine suffix *-esse*.

Table 6.1 Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in a written *-e*

Masculine	Feminine (# of tokens)	CG	LA	suffix <i>-esse</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P
édile	88	100			--	--
juge	2664	99.9	0.1		juge	Y
capitaine	955	99.9	0.1		capitaine	Y
ministre	42821	99.9	0.1		ministre	Y
secrétaire	6335	99.8	0.2		secrétaire	Y
maire	11998	98.8	0.4	0.8	maire, mairesse	Y/P
architecte	130	94.6	5.4		architecte	Y
pilote	192	82.3	17.7		pilote	Y
évêque	4	75.0	25.0		évêque	Y
prophète	17			100	--	--
pape	196		0.5	99.5	--	--
maître	4200	2.5	0.1	97.4	maîtresse, maître	Y/P
prêtre	202	0.5	5.4	94.1	--	--
poète	407	10.6		89.4	poète, poétesse	P
arbitre	52	34.6	65.4		arbitre	N
diacre	28		89.3	10.7	diaconesse	N

Rule 2a was nearly always upheld, except for the 5 nouns with only partial agreement or no agreement. The corpus has a DFF in contrast to the recommended form for two nouns. For *maître*, the DFF *maîtresse* was the second recommended form, yet it is the most prevalent form

in the corpus, with the CG form *maître* accounting for only 2.5% of the feminine tokens. A similar situation occurs with *poète*, where the CG form is the first recommendation, yet the most frequent variant in the corpus is *poétesse* at 89.4% of the tokens. We can also mention two forms for which no recommendation was given that have a prevalent DFF in the corpus: *prophétesse* and *papesse*. The opposite occurs, however, for *maire* and *diacre*. For *maire*, the second recommendation was the DFF *mairesse*, but it accounted for less than 1% of the feminine tokens for *maire*. For *diacre*, the recommended form was DFF *diaconesse*, but *femme diacre* was prevalent in the corpus. Finally, for *arbitre*, neither the recommended form nor the prevalent form in the corpus was distinctively feminine. The recommendation was for CG *arbitre* and the most frequent variant in the corpus was *femme arbitre*.

Rule 2.b. “-é or -i ~ -ée or -ie”

This rule states simply that the feminine of a masculine noun ending in -é or -i will add a written -e to its feminine form, which incidentally will not change its pronunciation. This is true for the two masculine nouns in the sample ending in -é, as shown in Table 6.2. None of the feminine tokens of *attachée* and only 1.3% of the tokens of *députée* were not written with a final -e.

Table 6.2 Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in written -é

Masculine	Feminine (# of tokens)	CG	LA	e(+) same	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N
attaché	270			100	attachée	Y
député	16273	1.3		98.7	députée	Y

Rule 3.1: - Ø (consonant) except *-eur/-teur* ~ Ø + *-e*

This rule states that a masculine noun ending in a consonant, except for nouns in *-eur/-teur*, will add a written *-e* in the feminine. These results are presented in three tables, labeled Table 6.3a, 6.3b, and 6.3c, depending on the final consonant of the masculine noun. Table 6.3a shows that the nouns ending in *-l* all followed the recommendation, but that the one noun ending in *-f* did not. Whereas the guidelines recommended the CG form *chef*, the DFF *cheffe* was prevalent in the corpus.

Table 6.3a Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in written *-l* or *-f*

Masculine	Feminine (# of tokens)	CG	LA	<i>e</i> (+) same	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N
caporal	15			100	caporale	Y
consul	54	1.85		98.15	consule	Y
colonel	99	6.1		93.9	colonelle	Y
chef	11029	4.4	0.5	95.1	chef	N

The nouns ending in *-t* are shown in Table 6.3b. The prevalent form in the corpus is the recommended DFF ending in a written *-e* and a pronounced consonant /t/ with one qualification. For *soldate* the percentage of tokens was 89.8% with LA *femme soldat* accounting for 8.9% of the tokens.

Table 6.3b Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in *-t*

Masculine	Feminine (# of tokens)	CG	LA	Ø/e distinct	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N
avocat	10826			100	avocate	Y
magistrat	1582			100	magistrate	Y
étudiant	5094	0.04		99.96	étudiante	Y
gérant	2846	0.2		99.8	gérante	Y
président	37786	0.3		99.7	présidente	Y
préfet	2448	0.7	0.04	99.26	préfète	Y
agent	907	5.7	0.3	94.0	agente	Y
soldat	236	1.3	8.9	89.8	soldate	Y

The third table related to Rule 3.1, Table 6.3c, shows the results and recommendations for masculine nouns ending in *-r* and *-n*. There is only one discrepancy. The optionally permitted distinctively feminine form *médecine* was not used in the corpus. Except for *pomprière*, the most frequent variant at 72.3% of tokens for a female firefighter, all other words showed prevalence of the prescribed form at 95% or more.

Table 6.3c: Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in a consonant other than *-t* or *-eur*

masculine	feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	Ø/e+ distinct	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N
conseiller	7915			100	conseillère	Y
champion	7842			100	--	--
patron	4148			100		
chancelier	290			100	chancelière	Y
écrivain	2259	1.2%	0.2	98.6	écrivaine	Y
chirurgien	168		1.8	98.2	chirurgienne	Y
pompier	65	9.2	18.5	72.3	pomprière	Y
médecin	753	86.85	13.15		médecin(e)	Y/P

Rules 3.2.a and b and 3.3.a and b. for masculine nouns ending in *-eur*:

The rules regarding the masculine nouns in *-eur* are stated in four parts. The recommended forms depend on whether there is a semantic link between a verb and the root of the noun.

Rule 3.2.a

-eur (except *-teur*) ~ *-euse*, if there is a direct semantic connection between a verb and the noun's root, or if the root is a noun borrowed from English

Rule 3.2.b

-eur (except *-teur*) ~ Ø or *-e* (free choice), when there is no verb that has a direct semantic link to the meaning of the noun, which usually comes directly from Latin.

Rule 3.3.b

-teur ~ -teuse when there is a verb that has *-t* in its stem which has a direct semantic link to the root of the noun, and no correlating noun ending in *-tion*, *-ture* or *-torat*.

3.3.a

-teur ~ -trice in all other cases, except for *autrice*, *aut(h)oresse*, *doctrice*, *pastoresse*, which should be rendered as *auteur(e)*, *docteur(e)* or *doctoresse*. *pasteur(e)*

Table 6.4 Uptake of French recommended forms from Becquer et al (1999): masculine nouns ending in *-eur*

Masculine noun	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-eure</i>	<i>-euse</i>	<i>-rice</i>	<i>-esse</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N
ingénieur	1166	7.6	0.43	98.37		--		ingénieur(e)	Y
gouverneur	975	1.4		98.3	0.3			gouverneur(e)	Y
professeur	5411	2.7	0.1	97.1	0.1	--		professeur(e)	Y
procureur	5371	3.7		96.3	0.02	--		procureur(e)	Y
docteur	1392	4.0		93.0	0.1		2.9	docteur(e), doctoresse	Y
conteur	253				100			conteuse	Y
voleur	302				100			--	--
vendeur	1463	0.1			99.9			vendeuse, venderesse	Y
chercheur	5298	0.1		1.9	98.0	--		chercheuse	Y
entrepreneur	1566	0.1	1.8	34.1	64.0	--		entrepreneur(e)	N
entraîneur	368		1.1	36.4	62.5	--		entraîneuse	Y
acteur	17906					100		actrice	Y
sénateur	3391					100		sénatrice	Y
illustrateur	415					100		illustratrice	Y
directeur	19901	0.02	0.02			99.96		directrice	Y
ambassadeur	2472			0.2		99.8		ambassadrice	Y
empereur	413					98.3	1.7	impératrice	Y
enquêteur	507				2.0	98.0		enquêteuse	N
auteur	6190	0.21	0.03	32.84		66.92		auteur(e)	N

Rule 3.2a was followed for all nouns. The recommended form *entraîneuse*, which has a pre-existing pejorative meaning related to prostitution, does show some variation, though, with *entraîneure*.

Rule 3.2b The rule was upheld in all cases except for *entrepreneur(e)*. Writers used the form with a distinctive pronunciation *entrepreneuse* twice as often as the silently inflected *entrepreneure*.

Rule 3.3b The recommended form *conteuse* was the only feminine form for *conteur* present in the corpus. By contrast, the recommended form *enquêteuse* accounted for only 2% of tokens. Instead writers largely preferred *enquêteurice* (98.03%).

Rule 3.3a: The rule was followed except that writers preferred *autrice* to the recommended *auteure*. Writers did, however, prefer the silently inflected form *docteure*, and produced 41 tokens of *doctoresse*, as well as one token of *doctrice*.

Thus, for the masculine nouns in *-eur*, there were three discrepancies between the recommended forms and the corpus results. In all three of these, the results show a preference for a more distinctively feminine form than the recommendation: *entrepreneuse* over *entrepreneure*, *enquêteurice* over *enquêteuse*, and *autrice* over *auteure*.

To summarize, of the 58 nouns in the dataset, the guidelines prescribed a recommended form for 52 of these. One noun not included in the tables above, but included in the figures just given, is *imprésario* for which the prevalent form *imprésaria* was recommended. The nouns for which no recommendation was given are *prophète*, *pape*, *prêtre*, *champion*, *patron*, and *voleur*. The prescribed forms were prevalent in 34 words, 65.4% of the total. If we add the 4 words for which the most frequent variant was recommended (*pilote*, *évêque*, *médecin*, *entraîneuse*) and for which the most frequent variant was the second recommendation (*poétesse*), then the percentage of recommended forms in the corpus rises to 75.0%.

The 11 nouns for which a difference was observed between the recommended form and the most frequent form in the corpus are shown below in Table 6.5. In this table R represents the

recommended form when only one form was recommended. When two recommended forms were given, R1 represents the first recommendation and R2 the second. The corpus results are represented as either P for the prevalent form in the corpus, accounting for over 90% of the tokens, or V1 for the most frequent variant that accounts for under 90% of the tokens and V2 for the less frequent variant. The abbreviation for the forms in the corpus is in boldface to distinguish them visually from the recommended forms.

Table 6.5: French: Summary of the differences between the recommended forms and the results

Masculine	CG	LA	-e same	-e distinct	suffix -esse, -trice
Nouns in -e					
<i>maire</i>	R1, P				R2
<i>maître</i>	R2				R1, P
<i>poète</i>	R1, V2				R2, V1
<i>arbitre</i>	R, V2	V1			
<i>diacre</i>		P			R
Noun in -f					
<i>chef</i>	R		P		
Noun in -n					
<i>médecin</i>	R1, P			R2	
Nouns in -eur					
<i>entrepreneur</i>	R1		R2, V2	V1	
<i>enquêteur</i>				R	P
<i>auteur</i>	R1		R2, V2		V1
Noun in -o					
<i>imprésario</i>	R			P (<i>imprésaria</i>)	

Of the 11 nouns shown in Table 6.5, a more distinctively feminine form than the only recommendation or the first recommendation was the most frequent form in the corpus in 6 nouns. These include *poétesse*, *cheffe*, *entrepreneuse*, *enquêteurice*, *autrice* and *imprésaria*. For *arbitre*, neither the recommended form, *arbitre*, nor the most frequent form in the corpus, *femme arbitre*, was a distinctively feminine form, yet the lexical addition form in the corpus indicates female gender more overtly than the recommended common gender form. For *maître*, the guidelines offer a second recommendation of the common gender form, yet *maîtresse* is the prevalent form in the corpus. By contrast, three recommended forms, *mairesse*, *diaconesse*, and

médecine, were more distinctively feminine than the prevalent forms in the corpus, *maire*, *femme diacre*, and *médecin*.

6.1.2 Spanish

The guidelines for feminization of Spanish nouns (Lledó (2006)) are summarized below and compared to the results of the present study. These are presented according to the ending of the masculine noun, beginning first with the masculine nouns ending in *-o*, shown in Table 6.6. As for French, the tables in this section show the results for the present study in the columns to the left with the rightmost columns showing the recommended form and whether the forms in the corpus correspond completely with the recommendation, only partially, or not at all.

Table 6.6 Uptake of Recommended forms from Lledó (2006): masculine nouns ending in *-o*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-a</i>	<i>-isa</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P
agregado	20			100		agregada	Y
cirujano	336			100		cirujana	Y
escribano	4			100		escribana	Y
ministro	40010	0.03		99.97		ministra	Y
diputado	14777	0.05		99.95		diputada	Y
secretario	12731	0.05		99.95		secretaria	Y
abogado	5861	0.1		99.9		abogada	Y
magistrado	8028	0.1		99.9		magistrada	Y
empresario	2617	0.2		99.8		empresaria	Y
maestro	3198	0.2		99.8		maestra	Y
ingeniero	1585	0.4		99.6		ingeniera	Y
arquitecto	1039	0.8		99.2		arquitecta	Y
obispo	94	2.1		97.9		obispa	Y
prefecto	48	4.2		95.8		prefecta	Y
bombero	158	3.2	3.2	93.7		bombrera	Y
árbitro	447	10.1	0.7	89.2		árbitra	Y/P
médico	1392	13.3	0.4	86.3		médica	Y/P
piloto	105	51.4	34.3	14.3		piloto/pilota	Y/P
soldado	267	92.5	7.5			soldado	Y
diácono	47		36.2	7.2	59.2	diacona/diaconisa	P

We see that 15 of the 20 masculine nouns in the corpus have a prevalent feminine form in *-a* and so agree with the recommendation. For two other nouns, *árbitra* and *médica*, the prescribed forms in *-a* were the most frequent, but their non-prescribed common gender variants accounted for 10% and 13% of the tokens, respectively. One noun, *soldado* had a prescribed form ending in *-o*, which was also prevalent in the dataset. The only clear case of divergence from the recommended form are for a female dean. The first recommendation, *diácona*, was only used in the corpus in 7.2% of cases. The second recommendation, *diaconisa*, was the most prevalent, at 59.2% of tokens, and a non-prescribed lexical addition form, *mujeres diáconos*, was used in 36.2% of cases, always in the plural form. The guide provides information regarding the *-isa* suffix in its notes for *poetisa* that offer some insight into the reasons for naming *diaconisa* a second recommended form rather than the first. The *-isa* suffix “has not been productive for a long time” and “the certain derogatory tone that it implies makes it inadvisable” (Lledó 2006:26). However, Lledó (2006:26) also says that some women prefer to use the suffixal variant *poetisa*, and that “They will do well, then, to do so

The masculine form *piloto* was unique in that the guidebook prescribed two possible variants, *piloto* and *pilota*, with the common gender variant first. In line with the recommendation, writers did choose the common gender form most frequently at 51.4% of tokens, but the second most frequent variant was a non-prescribed lexical addition form, *mujer piloto* or *mujeres piloto(s)*. It is interesting that in the lexical addition forms, *mujer* was always inflected for number, but *piloto* was singular in 16 (72.7%) out of 22 tokens, as seen in Example (2).

(2) *La escudería francesa impulsa a las mujeres piloto, mecánicas o ingenieras a puestos de trabajo en la F1.*

‘The French team is promoting female drivers, mechanics, and engineers for jobs in Formula 1.’

Because the distinctively feminine and plural forms for a female mechanic and engineer have been employed, while only the noun for a female driver has been left in the singular, it appears that some writers have re-analyzed *piloto* as an invariable adjective describing the word *mujer* or that they have created a compound noun *mujeres piloto*, like *coches cama* ‘sleeping cars’, in which only *mujer* is inflected for number.

Table 6.7 presents the results and recommended forms for masculine nouns ending in *-e*. For the 3 nouns in this table that have more than one recommended form, the first recommendation is always the DFF in *-a*. These are the nouns for which the corpus results diverge from the recommendations.

Table 6.7 Uptake of Recommended forms from Lledó (2006): masculine nouns ending in *-e*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-a</i>	<i>-esa/-isa</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P
presidente	49648	0.6		99.4		presidenta	Y
jefe	5783	2.47	0.03	97.5		jefa	Y
dependiente	624	4.2		95.8		dependienta	Y
gerente	1836	99.5		0.5		gerenta/ gerente	N/P
agente	1700	99.2	0.2	0.6		agente	Y
estudiante	1380	97.6	0.9	1.5		estudiante/ estudianta	N/P
alcalde	24172	0.1			99.9	alcaldesa	Y
sacerdote	155		2.6		97.4	sacerdota/ sacerdotisa/ sacerdote	P

In the corpus the first recommended forms *gerenta* and *estudianta* were rarely used, whereas *gerente* and *estudiante* were highly prevalent. Writers preferred the common gender form in these two nouns which the guidelines listed as a second option. The first prescribed form for a priestess, *sacerdota*, is never attested in the corpus, yet the second recommendation, *sacerdotisa*,

is the prevalent form. It is interesting, furthermore, to note that the guides made different recommendations for words ending in *-ente* and *-ante*. Common gender *agente* was recommended, yet DFF forms in *-a* were recommended for *presidenta* and *dependienta*. This can be explained by the guide's author relying on current usage in proposing a recommended form:

There are some words ending in *-a* that are unchangeable (*cliente*, *dependiente*), possibly due to their frequency of use. This solution coexists with terms that currently accept two forms: *gerenta/gerente*, *escribienta/escribiente*. The glossary, therefore, reflects these uncertainties at the time of its presentation. Consequently, for some words, a single form ending in *-enta* (*cliente*) is proposed; for others, a single form ending in *-ante* (*rematante*); and, finally, for other terms, both options are presented (*lugarteniente/lugarteniente*, *asistentente/asistente*).” Lledó (2006:22, translation my own)

It seems, then, that the guides' attempts to promote the use of less commonly used variants ending in *-enta/-anta* have not been followed, while the pre-existing forms *presidenta* and *dependienta* have been maintained.

Next we turn our attention to the masculine nouns ending in a consonant, other than *-or*, shown in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Uptake of Recommended forms from Lledó (2006): masculine nouns ending in a consonant, other than *-or*.

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-a</i>	<i>-esa</i>	Recommended form?	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (partial)
ladrón	232			100		--	
caporal	1			100		--	
patrón	4065	0.05		99.95		patrona	Y
campeón	12,039	0.1		99.9		(sub)campeona	Y
capitán	2110	2.2		97.8		capitana	Y
concejal	16,471	17.4		82.6		concejala/ concejal	Y
juez	13,475	23.3		76.7		jueza	Y/P
canciller	118	81.4		18.6		cancillera	N/P
coronel	192	70.8	1.1	28.1		coronela/ coronel	Y/P
chef	458	99.3	0.7			chef	Y
edil	7570	98.6		1.4		edila/edil	N/P
fiscal	4913	97.9	0.7	2.1		fiscala/ fiscal	N/P
cónsul	1400	97.7			2.3	cónsul	Y

For masculine nouns ending in *-n*, the predominant feminine form was always the recommended, distinctive feminine form ending in *-a*. All four nouns ending in *-l*, *concejal*, *coronel*, *edil* and *fiscal*, were assigned two recommended forms, the first a distinctive feminine form ending in *-a*, and the second common gender. In only one noun, *concejal*, was the distinctively feminine form *concejala* prevalent (82.6%), in variation with common gender (17.4%). The noun *cónsul* was only recommended in the common gender form, and writers used this form in 97.7% of the 131 feminine tokens. Coronel also showed variation between the common gender and distinctive feminine form *coronela*, but common gender was more prevalent (70.8% of 192 tokens) than *coronela* (28.1%). The common gender forms of *edil* and *fiscal* were highly prevalent, at over 97% each.

The recommended, distinctively feminine form *jueza* was the most frequent variant yet the non-recommended common gender form *la juez* appeared in 23.3% of the 12,475 tokens for this noun referring to women. For the word *chef*, the recommended form was common gender, and writers chose this form over 99% of the time, in variation with three tokens of lexical addition, two of the form *mujeres chef* and one token of *mujeres chefs*. The plural *mujeres chef* recalls *mujeres piloto* above. However, in the case of *chef*, the lack of pluralization could be caused by its being a borrowing from French ending in *-f*, for which there is no established plural form in Spanish. Another borrowing from French is *canciller*, which may explain writers' low uptake of the recommended form *cancillera*, which they used in only 18.6% of its 118 tokens. Instead, writers used the non-recommended common gender form *la canciller* in the other 81.4% of its tokens.

Table 6.9 presents the comparison of the results and the recommendations for the masculine nouns ending in *-or*. The prescribed distinctive feminine forms were used in every

word of this type, which in all but two cases, *emperatriz* and *actriz*, were forms ending in *-a*. The two prescribed exceptions are both words whose feminine forms in *-triz* are long-standing, and *emperatriz* can be considered a learned word, inherited directly from Latin.

Table 6.9 Uptake of Recommended forms from LLedó (2006): masculine nouns ending in *-or*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-a</i>	<i>-triz</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (partial)
director	32,729			100		directora	Y
emprendedor	1962			100		--	--
ilustrador	719			100		ilustradora	Y
profesor	14,691	0.01		99.99		profesora	Y
embajador	2941	0.03		99.97		embajadora	Y
autor	14,779	0.04		99.96		autora	Y
doctor	11,248	0.09	0.01	99.9		doctora	Y
senador	2153	0.2		99.81		senadora	Y
investigador	7438	0.22	0.01	99.77		investigadora	Y
entrenador	2141	0.3		99.7		entrenadora	Y
gobernador	370	0.8		99.2		gobernadora	Y
emperador	321			4.4	95.6	emperatriz	Y
actor	31,704	.03			99.97	actriz	Y

Only four nouns in the sample ended in *-a*, as shown in Table 6.10. Since *-a* is the most common feminine ending, the only means of creating a DFF for these nouns is through the suffix *-isa*. This suffix never appears on the common gender form *cuentista*, the recommended form that is also prevalent in the corpus. The suffix is an option for the other three nouns ending in *-a*. For *poeta* the common gender form, which the guide explicitly stated was preferred, was most frequent at 80.3%, in variation with 18.2% of the second recommendation, *poetisa*. The other two nouns diverge slightly from the recommendations. The prescribed form *papisa* is the most common variant at 87% of the 23 tokens, but common gender (8.7%) and lexical addition (4.3%) are also present.

Table 6.10 Uptake of Recommended forms from Lledó (2006): masculine nouns ending in *-a*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	<i>-isa</i>	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (partial)
cuentista	20	100			cuentista	Y
poeta	1106	80.3	1.5	18.2	poeta/poetisa	Y
papa	23	8.7	4.3	87.0	papisa	Y/P
profeta	33	36.4		63.6	profeta/profetisa	Y/P

For *profeta*, in contrast to *poeta*, suffixal *profetisa* was most frequent at 63.6%, in variation with common gender *la profeta* at 36.4%. It may be that language users associate the common gender *-a* ending with a more modern usage, while they associate the *-isa* suffix with historical words. This might cause them to see the suffix as “derogatory” when referring to contemporary female poets, but appropriate for describing historical roles and figures, like a prophetess. In support of this notion, we see in examples (3)-(5) below, that the uses of *profetisa* in the corpus referred to a literal prophetess, usually a historical or literary figure, while the majority of uses of *profeta* were metaphorical, often referring to contemporary persons.

(3) (profetisa) ...*hasta que no viera el Mesías en el templo de Jerusalén, y por Ana, la profetisa, hija de Fanuel, que según las cuentas del párroco vivió 105 años.*

‘...until he saw the Messiah in the temple of Jerusalem, and by Anna, the prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, who according to the parish priest's accounts lived 105 years.’

(4) (profeta) *Sonia Martínez es la profeta de muchos influencers...*

‘Sonia Martinez is the prophet of many influencers...’

(5) (profeta) *¿Y qué nos dice la Profeta del amor?*

‘And what does the Prophet of Love tell us?’

In summary, the guidelines recommended a form for 54 of the 58 words in the corpus. The nouns for which there were no recommendation are *caporal*, *emprededor*, and *ladrón*. The first prescribed form was also the prevalent form in 39 of these 54 words or 72.2%. If we add the 6 words for which the first recommendation is the most frequent variant, but accounts for fewer than 90% of the tokens, i.e. *árbitra*, *médica*, *piloto*, *concejala*, *jueza*, *papisa*, then this percentage rises to 83.3%. Finally, if we add the 8 nouns for which the prevalent or most frequent variant is the second recommendation, rather than the first, which includes *diaconisa*, *gerente*, *estudiante*, *sacerdotisa*, *coronel*, *edil*, *fiscal*, *profetisa*, then the percentage of agreement with the guidelines is almost complete at 53 out of 54 or 98.1%. This leaves only *canciller*, for which the recommended feminine form *cancillera* was not frequent (18.64%)

Table 6.11 presents the 14 nouns that were classified as having only partial agreement with the guidelines because a single prevalent form was not also the only recommended form. This table allows us to see whether the forms in the corpus were more or less distinctively feminine than the recommended forms. As in Table 6.5 above for French, R is the recommended form. When more than one form was recommended by the guidelines, these are indicated by R1 for the first recommendation, R2 for the second, and R3 for the third. The forms in the corpus are represented by P for a prevalent form and by V for a form that accounts for between 90% and 10% of the tokens. V1 indicates the more frequent variant and V2 the less frequent one, if the less frequent variant reaches the 10% threshold.

In only 3 words are the forms in the corpus more distinctively feminine than the recommended forms. This includes *sacerdote* for which the prevalent suffixed form, *sacerdotisa*, is the second recommendation after *sacerdota*, *diácono* for which the recommendation is

diácona and the most frequent variant is *diaconisa* and *profeta* for which *profetisa* is the most frequent variant but only the second recommendation after *profeta*.

Table 6.11: Spanish: Summary of the differences between the recommended forms and the results

Masculine	CG	LA	-a	suffix -esa, -isa, -triz
nouns in -o				
<i>árbitro</i>	V2		R, V1	
<i>médico</i>	V2		R, V1	
<i>piloto</i>	R1, V1	V2	R2	
<i>diácono</i>		V2	R1	R2, V1
nouns in -e				
<i>gerente</i>	R2, P		R1	
<i>estudiante</i>	R2, P		R1	
<i>sacerdote</i>	R3		R1	R2, P
nouns in a consonant other than -or				
<i>jueza</i>	V2		R, V1	
<i>canciller</i>	V1		R, V2	
<i>coronel</i>	R2, V1		R1, V2	
<i>edil</i>	R2, P		R1	
<i>fiscal</i>	R2, P		R1	
<i>cónsul</i>	R, V1			V2
nouns in -a				
<i>papa</i>				R, V
<i>profeta</i>	R1, V2			R2, V1

The nouns for which the recommended form is more distinctively feminine are much more numerous. The difference is very slight for *papa*. The suffixed *papisa* is the only recommended form, but it represents only 87% of the tokens in the corpus, just below the threshold for prevalence. For 3 nouns, the most common variant is the recommended DFF, i.e. *árbitra*, *medica* and *jueza* but the less frequent variant is not a DFF, but common gender *árbitro*, *médico* and *juez*. For 4 other nouns, the recommended form for *cancillera* or the first recommendation for the other 3 is a DFF in -a, namely *cancillera*, *coronela*, *edila* and *fiscal*. However, the DFF is a less frequent variant in the corpus than *canciller* and *coronel*. The prevalent forms for *edil* and *fiscal* are common gender; *edila* and *fiscal* are barely attested in the corpus. The clearest examples where the guidelines recommendations for DFFs are not followed, are the first recommendations of *gerenta* and *estudianta*, in contrast to the prevalent common

gender forms, *gerente* and *estudiante*, in the corpus. Finally, neither the guidelines nor the corpus prefer a DFF for *piloto*. The recommendation and the most frequent variant in the corpus are both common gender *piloto*. The second recommendation is *pilota* in contrast with the second variant *mujer piloto*, created through lexical addition.

Of the prescribed nouns that were not prevalent or the most common variant, one has a masculine form in *-o* (*diácono*), three have a masculine form that ends in *-e* (*gerente*, *estudiante*, *sacerdote*), four have a masculine form that ends in *-l* (*coronel*, *edil*, *fiscal*, *consul*), one has a masculine form ending in *-er* (*canciller*), and one has a masculine form that ends in *-a* (*profeta*). The guide's suggestions were generally followed for words ending in *-o*, *-or*, *-n* and *-z*. The guides usually suggested more than one feminine form for words ending in *-ente/-ante* and *-l*, one of which was a DFF, like *gerenta*, and the other common gender, like *gerente*. For both sets of words, the common gender form was usually chosen over the DFF when both were recommended, while a DFF was chosen if it was the only recommended form, as in *presidenta*. This evidence suggests that morphology may play a primary role in writers' choice of whether to produce a DFF, since non-distinctive forms were most frequent only in words ending in *-er*, *ente/-ante* and *-l*, although the suggestion is only weakly supported, given that the recommendations usually included non-distinctive forms as well. We do not know whether to explain the correspondence between the guidelines and the forms observed in the corpus as evidence that the writers followed the guidelines or as evidence that the guidelines based their prescriptions on observations of current language use.

6.1.3 Portuguese

The prescriptive guidelines for feminization of Portuguese nouns are taken from Toledo et al. (2014) published in Brazil. It is important to note then that the differences between the results and the recommendations may reflect different norms for feminization in Brazil and Portugal. There were no guidelines for Portugal that listed more than 24 words and even the guidelines for Brazil list fewer words than the guides for French and Spanish, so that many of the Portuguese words in the corpus for this study have no corresponding recommended form. The recommended forms that were proposed appear in the tables below organized according to the form of the masculine noun. As for French and Spanish, the tables show the results for the present study in the columns to the left with the rightmost columns showing the recommended form and whether it is the same as the prevalent form in the corpus.

As was the case for Spanish, we begin by considering the masculine nouns ending in *-o*, except those in *-ão*. Six recommendations were given for the 18 words of this type, and they were all the same as the prevalent forms in the corpus. These are all distinctively feminine forms, five ending in *-a*, and one ending in the suffix *-isa*, *diaconisa*.

Table 6.12 Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in *-o* except for *-ão*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	-a	-isa	Recommended form	Prevalent = rec? Y/N/P (Partial)
arquiteto	470			100		--	--
prefeito	18			100		--	--
bombeiro	106			100		--	--
adido	2			100		--	--
ministro	8353	0.04		99.96		ministra	Y
advogado	858	0.12		99.88		--	--
médico	763	0.13		99.87		médica	Y
magistrado	5033	0.14		99.86		--	--
secretário	4541	0.2		99.8		secretária	Y

deputado	4063	0.17	0.03	99.8		deputada	Y
empresário	957	0.2		99.8		empresária	Y
engenheiro	342	0.2		99.8		--	--
conselheiro	319	0.3		99.7		--	--
árbitro	179	1.7		98.32		--	--
soldado	11	45.45	9.1	45.45		--	--
bispo	9	66.7	22.2	11.1		--	--
piloto	31	75.7	18.9	5.4		--	--
diácono	12				100	diaconisa	Y

Next we compare the results and the recommendations for masculine nouns ending in *-e*, shown in Table 6.13. Of the 6 recommended forms given for these 8 nouns, two were prevalent in the corpus (*agente*, *sacerdotisa*) and one was the most frequent variant: *alcaidessa*. Three recommendations for a distinctive feminine form ending in *-a*, *presidenta*, *chefa*, and *mestra*, were not frequent in the corpus. Instead common gender forms *presidenta* and *chefe* were prevalent, while common gender *mestre* was the most frequent variant. *Mestra* was the only feminine noun for a masculine noun ending in *-e* with good representation in the corpus with 33.3% of the tokens. It is worth noting that common gender *presidente*, *estudante* and *chefe* were recommended as 3 of the 24 words in a separate government guide, published in 2009 in Portugal by the Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género (Abranches 2009:20).

Table 6.13 Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in *-e*

Masculine noun	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	-a	-isa or -esa	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (Partial)
agente	377	100				<i>agente</i>	Y
gerente	54	100				--	--
presidente	7441	99.8		0.2		<i>presidenta</i>	N
estudante	470	99.6	0.4			--	--
chefe	432	99.5		0.5		<i>chefa</i>	N
mestre	36	66.7		33.3		<i>mestra</i>	N/P
sacerdote	22				100	<i>sacerdotisa</i>	Y
alcalde/ alcaide	7	14.3			85.7	<i>alcaidessa</i>	Y/P

Table 6.14 presents the results and recommendations for the nouns ending in *-or*. One noun had a recommended common gender form, *a chef*, that was also prevalent in the corpus. Two forms ending in *-l* had recommended distinctive feminine forms, *coronela* and *consulesa*, that were not prevalent. Instead, writers used common gender *cônsul* and *coronel* almost invariably. One recommended distinctive feminine form, *juíza*, was prevalent among writers. In general, writers chose common gender forms for words ending in *-er*, *-l* and *-f*, and distinctively feminine *juíza* for the one word ending in *-z*. Recommendations did not appear to influence this pattern, as they were followed only in the one instance in which they recommended common gender for *chef*, and for *juíza*.

Table 6.14: Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in a consonant, except *-or*

Masculine noun	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	-a	-esa	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (Partial)
chanceler	100	100				--	--
edil	26	100				--	--
coronel	12	100				<i>coronela</i>	N
chef	2646	99.5	0.5	0.9		<i>chef</i>	Y
cônsul	27	96.3			3.7	<i>consulesa</i>	N
juiz	1198	1.7	0.2	98.1		<i>juíza</i>	Y

The masculine nouns ending in *-or* appear in Table 6.15. The DFF in *-a*, such as *autora*, is recommended and prevalent in the corpus for 7 out of the 8 nouns for which a recommendation is given. It is also prevalent for another 7 nouns for which there is no recommendation. For one noun, *atriz*, the suffixed form is recommended and prevalent. Thus, the existing recommendations for this group of words were always followed, except that the optional suffixed form *diretriz* never appeared in the corpus and *embaixatriz* appeared only twice.

Table 6.15: Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in *-or*

Masculine	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	-a	-triz	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P
senador	103			100		--	--
empreendedor	770			100		--	--
ilustrador	207			100		--	--
governador	189			100		governadora	Y
vendedor	121			100		--	--
contador	91			100		--	--
pesquisador	41			100		--	--
diretor	7334	0.1		99.9		diretora/diretriz	Y/P
professor	3006	0.07		99.93		professora	Y
autor	2036	0.05		99.95		autora	Y
investigador	1969	0.1		99.9		--	--
embaixador	634			99.7	0.3	embaixadora/ embaixatriz	Y/P
procurador	544	0.4		99.6		procuradora	Y
treinador	300	0.7		99.3		--	--
doutor	115	1.7		98.3		doutora	Y
imperador	78			1.3	98.7	--	--
ator	7165	0.01			99.99	atriz	Y

For the 4 nouns of the 6 nouns in *-ão* that have a recommendation, shown in Table 6.16, writers always followed the prescribed forms. For 3 words, distinctively feminine forms ending in *-ã* were recommended, and were prevalent. For one word, a distinctively feminine form in *-oa* was prescribed, and was always used.

Table 6.16: Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in *-ão*

Masculine noun	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	-ã	-a	-ao	-ona	Recommend ed form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (Partial)
cirurgião	38			100				<i>cirurgiã</i>	Y
escrivão	2			100				<i>escrivã</i>	Y
campeão	2679	0.6		99.4				--	--
ladrão	32				96.9		3.1	--	--
patrão	68					100		<i>patroa</i>	Y
capitão	97	14.0		86.0				<i>capitã</i>	Y/P

Only 2 of the 4 words with a masculine noun ending in *-a* had recommended forms, but both were prevalent. Even though recommended form *papisa* was used in the only 3 tokens for this noun, this small number makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. The recommended form *poetisa* was the most frequent variant accounting for 69.3% of the tokens, but common gender *a poeta* was well represented with 30.7% of the 212 tokens.

Table 6.17: Uptake of recommended forms from Toledo et al. (2014): nouns ending in *-a*

Masculine noun	Feminine # of tokens	CG	LA	suffix	Recommended form	Prevalent = recommended? Y/N/P (Partial)
autarca	896	100			--	--
profeta	15	53.3		46.7	--	--
poeta	212	30.7		69.3	<i>poetisa</i>	Y/P
papa	3			100	<i>papisa</i>	Y

In summary, of the 59 words in the Portuguese sample, 30 had at least one recommended form. For 20 of these nouns (66.7%), the only recommended form was also the prevalent form in the corpus. If we add the 3 words for which the recommended form is the most frequent variant (*alcaidesa*, *capitã* and *poetisa*) and the 2 words for which the prevalent form was the first recommendation, then this percentage rises to 83.3%.

The 9 nouns that diverge from the recommendations are show in Table 6.18 below. As in Tables 6.5 above for French and 6.11 for Spanish, R is the recommended form. When more than one form was recommended by the guidelines, these are indicated by R1 for the first recommendation, R2 for the second, and R3 for the third. The forms in the corpus are represented by P for a prevalent form and by V for a form that accounts for between 90% and 10% of the tokens. V1 indicates the more frequent variant and V2 the less frequent one, if the less frequent variant reaches the 10% threshold.

Table 6.18: Portuguese: Summary of the differences between the recommended forms and the results

Masculine	CG	LA	-a/-ã	suffix -esa, -isa, -triz
nouns in -e				
<i>presidente</i>	P		R	
<i>chefe</i>	P		R	
<i>mestre</i>	V1		R, V2	
nouns in a consonant other than -or				
<i>coronel</i>	P		R	
<i>cônsul</i>	P			R
nouns in -or				
<i>diretor</i>			R1, P	R2
<i>embaixador</i>			R1, P	R2
nouns in -ão				
<i>capitão</i>	V2		R, V1	
nouns in -a				
<i>poeta</i>	V2			R, V1

For all these words, the recommended form is a distinctively feminine form, yet this is true for only two of the prevalent forms in the corpus (*diretora* and *embaixadora*) and 2 of the most frequent variants (*capitã* and *poetisa*). The guidelines also recommended *diretriz* and *embaixatriz* which were not found in the corpus and the second variant for *capitão* and *poeta* which were not recommended. In the other 5 words, a common gender form was prevalent (*presidente*, *chefe*, *coronel*, *cônsul*) of the most frequent variant (*mestre*) in contrast with the prescribed DFFs *presidenta*, *chefa*, *coronela*, *cônsulesa*, and *mestra*. Of the common gender forms in the corpus that diverge from the guidelines, three end in -e (*chefe*, *mestre*, *presidente*) and two end in -l (*cônsul*, *coronel*). Cases in which a recommended DFF was not most frequent are thus limited to words whose masculine forms ending in -e or -l.

Of the 21 words in which one of the prescribed forms was prevalent, 19 were DFFs ending in either -a or the suffix -isa/-esa. For 2 of these 19 words, *directora* and *embaixadora* there was a second recommended suffixed DFF. *Diretriz* never appeared in the corpus and *embaixatriz* appeared only twice. The other two of the 21 words where the prescribed form was prevalent were *agente* and *chef* for which a common gender form was recommended. Thus, a

DFF was recommended and prevalent in 19 out of 30 nouns (63.3%) of the nouns for which there was a recommendation. A DFF was most frequent, but not prevalent, in another 3 nouns, *alcaidesa*, *capitã* and *poetisa*, as mentioned above, being the total of prevalent and frequent DFFs in the corpus that were also recommended to 22 or 73.3% of the nouns for which the guidelines offered a recommendation.

Finally, the total number of cases in which a DFF was the most frequent form used is 75.9%, which supports the DFFH because in the majority of nouns writers used a distinctive recommended feminine form.

It is worth noting that the guide that originated in Portugal (Abranches 2009:20) recommended non-distinctive feminine forms *chefe*, *estudante*, and *presidente*. Since these were forms for which writers did not use DFFs, the positive data on recommended DFFs does not change. However, this helps to clarify the fact that writers may not have used DFFs for these forms because the Portuguese government did not promote them. Overall, it appears that the Brazilian guide's recommendations for established morphological patterns were consistent with the corpus results, but not its recommendations to use *-a* endings for some masculine forms ending in *-ente*, which would have created more DFFs overall.

6.1.4 Summary for the comparison of recommended and observed forms in all three languages

The majority of recommended forms were prevalent in all languages. When all the recommended forms are taken into account, Spanish had the highest uptake of prescribed words that were either prevalent in the corpus or the most frequent variant at 98.1%, with *canciller* instead of recommended *cancillera* being the only exception. The high uptake may be due in part to more than one recommended form for 11 Spanish nouns. Yet, this number was also 11 in

French, although 6 of these were forms ending in *-eur/-eure*, but only 2 in Portuguese.

Portuguese had the second highest uptake of prescribed forms at 83.3%, but more than one third of words in the Portuguese study (37.3%) were not given explicitly prescribed forms and some of the discrepancies may be due to comparing guidelines from Brazil with a corpus from Portugal.

French had the lowest uptake of prescribed forms at 75%, but many of the discrepancies in French are in favor of forms in the corpus that are more distinctively feminine than the recommendations of the guidelines.

Some words had prescribed forms that were not prevalent in two languages. The is true of the words for deacon in French and Spanish, for chef in French and Portuguese, and for consul and colonel in Spanish and Portuguese. The suffixed form, *diaconesse*, was recommended for French, but *femme diacre* was prevalent (89.3%). In Spanish the suffixed form, *diaconisa*, which was also the second recommendation, was the most frequent (59.6%). The first recommendation, *diácona*, was attested only twice in the corpus, with *mujer diácono* accounting for 36.2% of the 47 tokens. The prescribed form for a female chief/boss was not prevalent in French and Portuguese. The writers in the corpus preferred the feminine form *cheffe* (95.3%) rather than the recommended common gender form *chef*. In Portuguese the reverse was true where the recommendation was for *chefa* and writers preferred *chefe* (99.5%). For consul and colonel, distinctively feminine forms were recommended in both Spanish and Portuguese, yet in both languages common gender forms of the words were most frequent—in Spanish common gender *una cónsul* (97.7%) was prevalent, while common gender *coronel* (70.8%) more was used often than *coronela* (28.1%). In Portuguese, writers used almost exclusively *cônsul* (96.3%) and *coronel* (100%).

For French, out of 7 nonprescribed variants, 6 were more distinctively feminine than the prescribed form, with *femme diacre* as the only exception. For Spanish, the more distinctively feminine suffix *-isa* was preferred to the prescribed *-a* inflection for two words, but the common gender form was preferred in four nouns, all of which ended in *-l* or *-er*. For Portuguese, all of the nonprescribed words used common gender forms that were preferred to the prescribed DFFs. Therefore, the differences in uptake percentages among the three languages reflect differences in writers' choices in each language. French writers use more overtly feminine forms than recommended, Spanish writers follow the rules nearly exactly except for words ending in *-l* and the rarer *-er* suffix, while Portuguese writers use fewer morphologically feminine nouns than recommended, although this may reflect a difference between greater acceptance of feminine forms in Brazil and lower acceptance in Portugal.

Overall, with uptake of over 75% of the recommended forms in all three languages, the efforts of government agencies to increase visibility of women in the workplace through language prescriptions appear to be effective, even though it is impossible to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the prescriptions and the journalists' choices of feminine nouns. The use of prescribed forms is especially high in Spain, whose government has published its own guidelines for the feminization of professional titles, in which the recommended feminine form for most professional titles can be individually referenced. Specific government guidelines also exist for France, yet here the uptake is lower because French writers use more DFFs than recommended by the guidelines.

6.2 Comparison of the results of the present study with those of previous studies

6.2.1 Comparison of the results in French with those of previous studies

Fujimura's (2005:43) longitudinal study of feminization of professional titles in French newspapers from 1988-2001 showed a mass shift away from the use of epicene forms after the 1998 publication of then-prime minister Lionel Jospin's circular promoting the use of feminine professional titles (see Section 3.2). While the current study does not examine epicene forms, the high proportion of distinctively feminine forms found in the French *Trends* corpus suggests that the trend toward feminine forms that Fujimura (2005) described 20 years ago is ongoing.

The comparison with previous studies in this section is organized according to the feminization options for nouns, rather than according to masculine noun morphology, as was the case for the comparison with prescriptive guides in Section 6.1.

Written *-e* (with possible consonant doubling before *-e*), same pronunciation as the masculine (Ø/e (+) same)

Boivin (1998:46) claimed that nominalized adjectives such as *attaché* and *député* were “very easy to feminize”. In her study of the job listings section of the French newspaper *L'Express*, only words of this type were written using DFFs, and only in the words *délégué(e)* *commercial(e)*, *diplomé(e) en pharmacie*, *attaché(e) commercial(e)*. Fujimura (2005:39) noted that the use of *députée* “rose brutally in all newspapers” after the publication in 1998 of Jospin's aforementioned circular, while other words, such as *professeur*, were slower to feminize, remaining mainly epicene throughout her study (which ended in 2001), and with no tokens of DFFs for *professeur*. In Dister's (2004) corpus study of Belgian newspapers, female deputies were referred to as *députée* 50 out of 51 times, and common gender was used in the remaining

token. The one token of silently inflected *colonelle* referred to the wife of a colonel, rather than a female colonel. Arbour et al. (2014) carried out a large-scale corpus study of European and Canadian newspapers and found that in Europe, silent *-e* inflection was always used in the form *procureure-adjointe* and was prevalent at over 90% of tokens for *caporale*, and *auteure-compositrice-interprète*. In the current study, the distinctive feminine form in *-e* was prevalent in all words ending in an *-é* or a pronounced consonant, excluding nouns whose masculine ends in *-eur*.

Written *-e*, distinct pronunciation from the masculine (Ø/e distinct)

Fujimura (2005:43) found that *présidente* was used 98% of the time to refer to female presidents in her corpus, and was therefore “the most feminized” of all the nouns in her study, which ended in 2001. She also found that the distinctively feminine form *avocate* was present at a rate of over 90%. Plannelles Ivañez (1996:104) found that the form *présidente* accounted for 39 of 43 tokens (90.7%) in her hexagonal French newspaper corpus, while *soldat* was feminized only through lexical addition, as *femme soldat*, and *magistrat* was always epicene, *le magistrat*, even when it referred to a woman.

Arbour et al.’s (2014) corpus study of European and Canadian newspapers from 1980-2013 found that the distinctively feminine form *soldate* was used 79.5% of the time in Europe, with lexical addition *femme soldat* accounting for 20.1%, and lexical addition with a feminine form of *soldat*, *femme soldate*, which she counted as a separate category, accounting for the remaining 0.4%. Brunetière (1998:82) found that *agent* was not feminized in her corpus of an official brochure promoting feminine participation in the workforce, titled “100 Professions for Girls”.

In the present study, the distinctively feminine form was prevalent at rates of over 90% for all words except for *soldat*, for which it was prevalent at 89.8% (212 of 236 tokens), in variation with 21 tokens (8.9%) of lexical addition and 3 tokens (1.3%) of common gender. *Magistrate* was invariable in the 1582 references to a female magistrate, and *avocate* was the invariable form for a female lawyer in all 10,826 tokens. It would seem, then, that the difference between frequently morphologically feminized words of this type (*présidente*, *avocate*) and less-frequently feminized words (*soldat*, *magistrat*) has diminished over time, so that now there is very little variation in the feminization pattern of words of the Ø/e distinct type.

Suffix or written *-e* with same pronunciation as the masculine for masculine words ending in *-eur/-teur*

The results of the present study mirror those of Cartignies (1997:165) in Houdebine-Gravaud's (1999) survey of speakers in the Provins region of France, the same department as Paris, who found that the *-trice* suffix was "more productive than" the *-euse* suffix, and that speakers chose the *-trice* suffix frequently, even for nouns whose base was a verb, which prescriptively would take the *-euse* suffix. She calls the *-trice* suffix the "statistical norm" for *-teur* verbs and makes the bold claim that "the feminization of these words will be done, in the long term, using *-trice*," to the exception of all other variants (Cartignies 1997:169).

Brunetière (1998:82) also asserted that "derivation in *-trice* [is] imagined more noble, valorizing, to the detriment of the derivation in *-euse*, judged more "vulgar". One example is the avoidance of *tourneuse*. Brunetière (1998:81) says *is* is not used to name a female lathe-operator because of its similarity to *entraîneuse*, which has a sexual connotation of a type of prostitute who works in a bar and entices men into buying more drinks. In fact, in her textual study, words ending

in *-eur* were rarely feminized in *-euse*, while *-trice* feminizations were frequent. This finding echoes the conclusions of researchers studying Canadian French (Planelles Ivañez 1996:80, Arbour et al. 2014:46-47). However, Arbour et al.'s (2014) corpus study of European and Canadian newspapers does not support the idea that the same tendency to avoid *-euse* suffixes is present in European francophone countries. In their study, Canadians preferred non-prescribed suffixes ending in *-eure* to a prescribed form ending in *-euse* for 57% of nouns, while in Europe this was true for only 7% of word types. However, in both geographic areas, *-eure* tended to replace recommended forms in *-trice* much less frequently—only 1% of the time in Canada, and less than 1% in Europe (Arbour et al. 2014:45). Dister (2004:318) found that in her Belgian corpus, epicene *chercheur* was used only 5 out of the 17 times that female researchers were referred to, while feminine *chercheuse* was used the other 12 times.

Written *-e*, distinct pronunciation from the masculine plus a vowel change (Ø/e distinct)

Studies of this word type mainly focused on words whose morphology creates no particular difficulty for feminization and yet are slower to feminize than other words of the same type. This was frequently attributed to the sector of work involved, specifically stereotypically masculine or high-prestige jobs, since morphological factors would seem to have no impact. One well-known anecdote, shown in example (6) below, was repeated within several works on feminization to illustrate that the word for a surgeon, *chirurgien*, was considered epicene in French, and that this caused speakers to ignore the presence of women in the field.

(6) *Blessé dans un accident de voiture où il vient de perdre son père, un enfant doit subir une intervention chirurgicale d'importance. Aux urgences, le chirurgien déclare qu'il ne peut l'opérer, puisque c'est son fils.* (Schapira 1995:387, Dawes 2003:198, Houdebine-Gravaud 1999:29)

(6) 'Wounded in a car accident where he just lost his father, a child must undergo major surgery. In the emergency room, the surgeon declares that he [she] cannot operate, because it's his [her] son.'

The answer, of course, is that the surgeon in question is a woman, the child's mother. This fact is obscured in the French version by use of the masculine pronoun *il*, which agrees in gender with epicene *chirurgien*, regardless of the gender of the referent. While anecdotal, the story makes clear that in France epicene *chirurgien* was at one time the accepted norm for referring to both male and female surgeons. As Schapira (1995:385) stated, the words *officier*, *huissier* and *chirurgien* "exist only in the masculine, but one could easily derive the feminine from pre-existing models." However, Mohaupt (1999:155) found that *chirurgienne* was among the distinctively feminine forms that was most frequently employed by speakers in her sociolinguistic survey of speakers in France, although it was "rarely employed by women" and instead "preferred by men".

Prévost (1998:189) noted that "Contrairement à ce qu'on observe chez les Français, les auteures, les chirurgiennes et les écrivaines ne rebutent pas les Québécois." "In contrast with what one observes in the French, [the new words for female] *authors*, *surgeons*, and *writers* do

not repel the Quebecois.” Brunetière (1998:78) attributes this to “a particularly active resistance to feminization when the profession is sociologically positioned high-end”. She points out that *épicière* ‘female grocer’ is readily accepted, while for some speakers *huissière* ‘female bailiff’ “does not exist, is unpronounceable.” In her examination of professions in a book titled “100 Professions for Girls”, she found that the feminine form *technicienne* was frequent, while other feminine nouns were less frequent. One such word was the feminine noun *ingénieuse* for masculine *ingénieur*, because *ingénieuse* is also an adjective meaning ‘ingenious’ (Brunetière 1998:81). Brunetière (1998:82) also found that *conseillère* was feminized, while *sapeur-pompier*, *monteur-électricien* and *menuisier*, among others, were not.

Fraser (2015:146) found that the feminized noun form for a female chancellor, *chancelière*, was usual in France, La Réunion and Canada, but one university chose to use the epicene form, *chancelier*, which Fraser (2015:147) attributes to the university’s conservative editorial policy. She notes that in her corpus, other words of the same type, such as *policrière*, *conseillère* and *cuisinière*, were always morphologically feminine. Planelles Ivañez (1996:89,95) found that distinctively feminine forms *écrivaine*, and *pompière* were not present in her hexagonal French corpus. For the latter, *femme pompier* was always used, while for the former, the masculine noun form *écrivain* was always used, in both epicene and common gender forms. Dister (2004:322) found that lexical addition, *femme écrivain*, was used 4 out of 13 times, while inflected *écrivaine* was used the other 9 times. Dister’s finding along with the fact that *pompière* accounts for 72.3% of tokens in the present study and *écrivaine* for 98.6% suggests that a change has taken place toward the usage of DFFs.

In the present study, *médecin* is the only noun in this category for which a DFF is never attested in the corpus. Instead, 654 tokens of common gender *la médecin* and 99 of *femme*

médecin are found. The DFF *médecine* for a female doctor may be infrequent because *médecine* also refers to the field of medicine. It appears that *médecin* rarely appeared in the common gender in the past but was always epicene. Planelles Ivañez (1996:92) reported that *médecin* was never inflected nor did it ever occur in phrases with determiners that would make it possible to know whether the epicene or common gender forms were intended. Fujimura (2005:43) concurred that *médecin* “is feminized very little”. Dister (2004:322) also agreed that the DFF *médecine* is not attested, but she did find variation among epicene, common gender and lexical addition forms to describe women using the word *médecin*.

In this study, with the exception of the word *médecin*, all of the words were predominantly feminized through distinctively feminine forms. Feminine forms *écrivaine* and *chirurgienne* were employed more than 98% of the time. For *chirurgienne* this amounts to 165 tokens of *chirurgienne* and one token of *femme chirurgien*, while there were 2228 tokens of *écrivaine* versus 27 tokens of common gender *écrivain* and one token of lexical addition *femme écrivain*. In the corpus for the present study two forms were invariably feminine: *championne* with 7842 tokens and *chancelière* with 290 tokens.

It would seem, then, that sector of activity has a weaker influence on choice of feminine form than in the past, given that all of the nouns whose DFF did not have a preexisting meaning, excluding *médecine*, appeared in a distinctively feminine form, even though these forms had been considered incorrect or had been nonexistent in the past. A weak effect of job sector may help to explain the variation observed in use of the word for a female firefighter, *pomprière*, though it was still the predominant form. In particular, the fact that lexical addition (*femme pompier*) was the largest variant (12 tokens/18.46%) points to a perception that female firefighters are exceptional.

Feminine forms ending in *-esse* (suffix)

Fraser (2015:159) found that common gender *maire* was invariable in hexagonal France and Reunion Island, while in Canada, by contrast, *mairesse* was invariable. Planelles Ivañez (1996) found that in France, common gender *maire* and the lexical form *Madame le maire* were in variation, while in Canada, common gender varied with suffixal *mairesse*. Fujimura (2005:43-44) found that *maire* was feminized “very little” and that the feminization of *secrétaire* through common gender depended on the prestige level of the job it referred to. She stated that “high level secretaries, such as the Secretaries of State...were always expressed with the masculine, even if their referent was a woman,” while reference to lower-level female secretaries was feminine. She highlighted the fact that this semantic distinction applied only to women: “men [were] constantly referred to as masculine regardless of their social status” (Fujimura 2005:44). She also noted that epicene *juge* and *ministre* were rapidly replaced by common gender forms after 1998, and she attributes this to a mix of lexical factors and sector of activity. Noting that jobs related to academic research and writing tended to feminize more slowly than other words, she attributed this to “a certain linguistic conservatism that tends to slow feminization of words such as *professeur, écrivain, auteur, chercheur, directeur de recherche, secrétaire perpétuel de l’Académie*” due to the influence of the Académie Française, while jobs related to “politics, administration, justice and business” are feminized quickly because professionals in those sectors “who are primarily interested in events in the extra-linguistic world rather than in linguistic events, readily accept this movement and encourage it” (Fujimura 2005:47).

In the current study, sector of activity appears to be relevant only for religious titles and the words for author and poet. With the exception of *diacre* ‘deacon’, however, words pertaining

to these sectors tend to be expressed through the distinctive feminine suffixes *-esse* and *-trice*, which could signal a change in the attitude of the Académie Française towards linguistic feminization, a change in writers' attitudes towards the Académie Française, or that Fujimura's explanation was incorrect, and that linguistic factors were responsible for the difference that she noticed between the slower feminization of words in the academic and research sectors, compared to the political, administrative, justice and business sectors (Fujimura 2005:47).

Finally, Dawes (2003:205) asserts, without quantitative evidence, that "for French purists, the words *ministre* and *capitaine* are not [common gender] words, but single-gender words that are masculine by simple chance." She cites the example of captain Prieur, a female captain who had to return to France after becoming pregnant, generating the following citation from Jacques Chirac, "*le capitaine Prieur est actuellement enceinte et l'accord prévoyait que dans ces circonstances, elle pouvait être rapatriées à Paris*," "captain Prieur is currently pregnant and the agreement provided that in these circumstances, she could be repatriated to Paris" (Dawes 2003:204, translation my own).

Contrary to the assertions of "purists" such as those described by Dawes (2003:205), all words in the dataset had attested feminine forms, whether these were common gender or a DFF, and the only word in which lexical addition was the most frequent form was *femme diacre*, which is discussed further in Chapter 7. Words of the same morphological type as *ministre* and *capitaine* appeared either in prevalent common gender or suffixed forms. Those for which suffixed forms were prevalent include *maîtresse*, *papesse*, *poétesse*, *prêtresse*, and *prophétesse*. Further, common gender *ministre* was one of the most highly attested feminine forms in the dataset, at 42,760 tokens. Thus, although the number of epicene forms cannot be judged from the results of this study, the results indicate that feminine forms are in use for all word types,

regardless of job sector or morphology, which could indicate a shift away from ideologies of linguistic “purity”.

6.1.2 Comparison of the results in Spanish with those of previous studies

The comparison the results of this study for Spanish with those of previous studies is organized according to the endings of the masculine nouns.

Spanish masculine nouns ending in *-o*

The largest number of Spanish nouns in the sample are those that end in *-o*. First, we compare our results with those of Epperson & Ranson’s (2010:402) survey of Spanish-speakers living in the United States. They found that common gender was the most prevalent feminine form of *piloto*, and *arbitro*, in variation with distinctively feminine forms and, in the case of *árbitro*, the epicene form. Masculine *médico* was most often replaced by *doctora* in the feminine. Some respondents also reported using common gender, the DFF *médica*, epicene forms, and a suffixal form. For all other nouns ending in *-o*, distinctively feminine forms ending in *-a* were prevalent, in variation with common gender. Their percentages of feminine forms in Epperson & Ranson (2010:402) are presented alongside those of the present study in Table 6.16 for some words ending in *-o*.

Table 6.19 Comparison of Epperson & Ranson (2010:402) (ER) with the present study (PS): Percentages of feminine forms for masculine words ending in *-o*

Masculine	o/a		Common Gender		# responses	# tokens
	ER	PS	ER	PS	ER	PS
médico	13.2	86.3	30.2	13.3	410	1392
piloto	14.2	14.3	79.2	51.4	424	105
arbitro	17.5	89.2	63.8	10.1	326	447
arquitecto	64.7	99.2	31.9	0.8	326	1040
ingeniero	64.9	99.6	31.6	0.4	424	1585
abogado	74	99.9	21.5	0.14	424	5861

In the two studies, the percentage of the distinctively feminine form *pilota* has remained nearly the same—14.3% in this study, versus 14.2% in Epperson & Ranson (2010). The percentage of common gender in the current study is much lower, because lexical addition, *mujer piloto*, accounts for 34.3% of tokens. This could be related to the different methods of the studies. Epperson & Ranson (2010) used a written linguistic survey, in which each speaker reported the form they would use to refer to a female exercising the masculine profession provided. Speakers filling out a linguistic questionnaire may be more inclined to produce the form that they believe to be the most correct and might be disinclined to respond with a lexical addition variant, such as *mujer piloto*, that they might in fact use in another context. Lexical addition was not a predominant form for any noun in Epperson & Ranson (2010:403), and the two cases in which suppletion was present at over 10% of tokens were cases in which speakers used lexical substitution by choosing an entirely different noun form to represent a female professional—*médico~doctora* and *sastre ~ modista*, not cases in which the word *mujer* preceded a masculine noun form, such as *mujer médico* (Epperson & Ranson 2010:405-407). Journalists, who produce feminine forms in the context of a longer piece of newspapers writing, may use different forms, depending on pragmatic needs, such as creating emphasis, editorial guidelines, or just the desire to vary their wording. If lexical addition and common gender are counted together as one category, given that they both use the masculine noun form *piloto*, the resulting category would account for 85.7% percent of female pilots in the current study, and 80.1% in Epperson & Ranson (2010). Therefore, it appears that feminization strategies for the noun *piloto* are similar across the two studies.

For all other words of this morphological class, the use of distinctively feminine forms is higher in the present study than in Epperson & Ranson (2010). The DFFs *arquitecta*, *ingeniera*

and *abogada*, already the most common forms, rose from 65-74% to over 99% in the present study. The DFFs *arbitra* and *médica* have grown from a minority variant (14-18%) to highly frequent forms (86-89%), due largely to a drop in the use of common gender, which decreased by 54% for *abritro* and 17% for *médico*. Furthermore, considering *doctor* and *médico* to be separate lexical items in the present study meant no examples of lexical substitution of *doctora* for a *médico* or *médica* could be identified.

Larsson's (2009) study of peninsular Spanish included a written and oral corpus, as well as a written questionnaire. She found that masculine nouns ending in *-o* were usually feminized using a distinctive feminine form ending in *-a* (Larsson 2009:59), but noted that in the medical, tourism and military fields, common gender was more frequent for all morphological word types. In her corpus study, she found 1909 tokens of *médica* and only two tokens of *mujer médico* (Larsson 2009:62), while in her linguistic survey, all age groups and sexes preferred common gender *la médico* (Larsson 2009:70). She further specified that there were fewer tokens of common gender *médico* in the corpus, compared to *médica*, but did not give exact figures (Larson 2009:92). It would seem, then, that the two survey types showed different results. Speakers reported *la médico* on surveys, perhaps because they believed it to be more correct, but in speech and writing they tended to use *médica* more often. The present study can neither confirm that in the written, formal register represented by newspaper articles, there is a clear preference for *médica*, in variation with common gender *la médico*.

Bengoechea (2009:29) asserted that morphological feminization was more prevalent in sports titles in Spanish, such as *árbitra*, than in other sectors, such as the army, where common gender was more prevalent. Larsson's (2009:61) survey of the peninsular Spanish CREA corpus found 6 tokens of *árbitra*, 5 tokens of common gender, and 1 token of *mujer árbitro*. However, 6

respondents to her sociolinguistic survey preferred using a masculine noun form, whether common gender or epicene, for a female referee, while only 2 preferred the distinctively feminine noun *árbitra*. In the present study, *árbitra* was preferred (89.26%) over common gender (10.07%), suggesting perhaps that usage in formal, written contexts such as newspapers, has progressed from strong variation with common gender to a clear preference for the DFF *árbitra*.

Spanish masculine nouns ending in *-e*:

Past researchers have noted the coexistence of common gender and *-a* inflected variants in words of this type (Bengoechea et al. 2009:29, Larsson 2009:105). The feminine forms of *presidente* and *dependiente* were shown to be more likely to end in *-a* (Larsson 2009:63, Fraser (2015:151), while *estudiante* and *gerente* were more likely to appear in the common gender (Fraser (2015:151-152). In the present study, the results mirrored those of previous researchers in that the nouns for a female president and salesclerk nearly always appeared in the *-a* inflected form, as *presidenta* and *dependienta*, while *estudiante*, *gerente* and *agente* were nearly always in the common gender. Fraser (2015:152) found that *presidenta* was invariable in Spain, while 67.2% of Epperson & Ranson 's (2010) respondents residing in the United States preferred *presidenta*. Larsson (2009:63) found that *presidenta* and *dependienta* “present[ed] a high frequency in [her] corpus” of European Spanish, while two other *-ente/-ante* nouns, *asistente social* and *gerente*, had only a few tokens of *-a* inflection, while all others were invariably common gender. Epperson & Ranson's (2010) results show that participants wrote the DFFs *jefa* and *presidenta* as the feminine forms of *jefe* and *presidente* in 73.8% and 67.2% of responses, respectively, and common gender *estudiante* as the form for a female student in 94.2% of cases. The current study shows that writers

used *jefa* to denote a female judge in 97.5% of cases, *presidenta* for a female president in 99.4% of cases, and common gender *estudiante* for a female student in 97.6% of cases. These results suggest that words that were once in variation may now be settling into accepted word-specific patterns, with certain words, such as *presidenta* and *dependienta* being seen as exceptions to a rule in which *-ente/-ante* nouns are common gender. However, because Epperson & Ranson (2010) surveyed language users living in the United States, it is possible that dialectical differences played a role as well.

Spanish masculine nouns ending in a consonant other than *-or*

Looking first at the feminine forms whose masculine noun ends in *-l*, Fraser(2015:149) noted based on the results of a small corpus query that such words are generally not feminized in Spanish. In her study, there was variation between *la concejal* (59%) and *concejala* (41%). Epperson & Ranson (2010) found the common gender variant to be predominant at even higher levels (89.4%) in slight variation with *concejala* (4.7%), epicene *concejal* (2.1%), a suffixal form, (2.9%) and lexical addition (0.3%). Bengoechea (2009:30) noted the coexistence of *concejala* and common gender *concejal* in mainland Spain but did not provide quantitative results. In the present study, inflected *concejala* was more frequent (82.64%) than common gender *concejal* (17.36%). There appears, then, to have been an evolution in mainland Spain of *concejala* from an option less popular than common gender to the preferred feminine form.

Bengoechea (2009:30) also noted the existence of both *edil* and *edila*, as well as *fiscal* and *fiscala*, in mainland Spain. However, Larsson's (2009:84) survey data found no tokens of *fiscala*, leading her to conclude simply that it "is not used in Spain." The five tokens that she found of *edila* were both "metalanguage", meaning that they were instances in which use of the feminine form *edila* was being discussed as a linguistic topic, rather than being used to refer to a female

town counselor. The majority of references to a female *edil*, 47 tokens, were common gender. Her findings were confirmed by the present study, in which the common gender forms, *edil* and *fiscal*, were nearly invariable. One distinctively feminine form of a masculine ending in *-l*, *caporala*, was so infrequent in the present study as to make drawing conclusions about its usage impossible.

The single word ending in *-z* in this study, *juez*, most often appeared as the DFF *jueza* (76.72%) and less often as common gender *la juez* (23.28%). Fraser (2015:146) also found variation between *jueza* and *juez* in Spain but concluded that common gender *juez* was used more often than *jueza* in mainland Spain, whereas *jueza* was used more often in Argentina. Fraser (2015:157) cited Teschner's (1983) findings that "84% of words ending in *-ez*" are feminine to explain the prevalence of *la juez* observing that "an additional word form for the feminine version does seem unnecessary." She also attributed the presence of *jueza* to references to female judges living outside of Spain, where "local usage" may have prompted Spanish journalists to use *jueza* as well. Epperson & Ranson (2010) found a similar dominance of common gender *la juez* amongst respondents in the United States, with 74.8% preferring the common gender form, and only 23.6% writing *la jueza*. Therefore, the results of the current study show a strong increase in use of the DFF *jueza*, which was over three times more frequent than common gender *la juez*, even though it is not prevalent.

Spanish masculine nouns ending in *-or*

Epperson & Ranson (2010) found variation in two nouns ending in *-or*, *cantor* and *mayor*. While speakers most frequently chose *cantora* (42.1%) as the feminine of *cantor*, a large number of respondents also chose suffixal *cantante* (38.5%) and common gender (12.9%). For the feminine of *mayor*, 87.8% of speakers chose the common gender form, and no other variant was chosen in 10% or more of surveys. Epperson & Ranson (2010:408) explain that *la mayor*

may seem acceptable to speakers based on the “the model of the adjective *mayor* which has the same form for the masculine and the feminine.” The word for a mayor that is used in the current study, *alcalde*, does not have a cognate adjective, and common gender represented only 0.13% of feminine tokens of *alcalde*. The present study did not include cantor or mayor making a direct comparison impossible. However, all of the masculine nouns ending in *-or* were very nearly invariable in the *-ora* form (99% or more), except for long-standing/historical feminine nouns *emperatriz* and *actriz*, which were very nearly invariable in the *-triz* forms.

Spanish masculine nouns ending in *-a*, including *poeta*, *papa*, *profeta*, *cuentista*

Epperson & Ranson (2010) found that common gender was the most popular form for *poeta*, at 82.2% of responses, in variation with suffixal *poetisa* at 14.7%, epicene 1.8% and lexical suppletion 0.9%. Fraser (2015:159) found that *poeta* was invariable in her newspaper corpus within mainland Spain, while the one token referencing a female poet in Argentina was *poetisa*. In the present study, common gender is still the most popular form for *poeta* at 80.3% of the 1106 tokens, but suffixal *poetisa* is higher than in either previous study at 18.2%.

In summary, the results of the current study show greater use of DFFs for all categories of professional nouns that were examined in past studies. Use of DFFs for masculine nouns ending in *-o* increased from frequent, to prevalent, for all nouns except for *piloto*, for which common gender is most frequent, and *árbitro*, for which use of *árbitra* is nearly prevalent, at 89.3% of feminine tokens. For nouns ending in *-e*, the current study showed an increase in use of DFFs *presidenta* and *jefa* to prevalent forms, compared to reports in previous studies that they were frequent, but in variation with common gender. While none of the words ending in *-or* in this study were tested in other studies, the current study shows that all words ending in *-or* use

DFF forms ending in *-ora* at rates between 99-100%. Finally, use of DFFs *concejala* and *jueza* were previously shown to be less frequent variants, in comparison to common gender, but the current study showed that they have become the most frequent variants for their word type.

6.2.3 Comparison of the results in Portuguese with those of previous studies

Unlike Spanish or French for which there are large-scale studies of feminization of titles, no such studies exist for Portuguese. Of the smaller studies, only two had a quantitative component. One of these, Trainer (2021), studied only four words in the very specific register of European Parliament proceedings. The other, Dronovsk (2019), used a large newspaper corpus of European Portuguese, but studied only three feminine forms, *presidenta*, *chefa* and *governanta*. The other studies include Gouveia (1997, 2007), who studied the *Português Fundamental* guides that were based on findings from the University of Libson's *Português Fundamental* oral corpus, and Melo (1989), who surveyed dictionaries in order to summarize the normative guidelines for European Portuguese. Another scholar, Almeida (2010), made assertions about feminization in Portugal, without stating whether her conclusions were rooted in observed usage, normative guides, or neither. One corpus study examined classified sections of newspapers in Mozambique (Svobodová 2010), whereas another examined Portuguese newspapers over several decades, and compared them to the *Português Fundamental* corpus findings (Gouveia 1997). Both studies gathered quantitative data but used it to make qualitative statements about patterns of usage without publishing exact figures. For example, Svobodová (2010:309-310) noted that the epicene masculine form was the most frequently used strategy for representing gender in her study, but did not give any numerical data to support this claim.

Another study examined usage of the words *presidenta* and *chefa* in Northeastern Brazil (Santana 2018).

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-o*, except *-ão*

Gouveia (1997:343-344) used the University of Lisbon's corpus-based reference work *Português Fundamental* (Casteleiro 1984), in comparison to archival newspaper documents, to make assertions about feminine titles in European Portuguese. She reported that some *-o* nouns are feminized in *-a*, including *advogada*, *arquiteta*, *deputada*, *engenheira*, *médica*, *ministra*, *secretária* that are included in the present study. However, she stated that some feminine forms in *-a* are still in variation with an older, epicene form, such as *engenheira* ~ *engenheiro*, while the word *ministra* is in variation with a common gender form. In the present study, *deputada* was nearly invariable as the feminine of *deputado*, while *ministra* was nearly invariable as the feminine form of *ministro*, which again shows evolution from the variation that Gouveia (1997) noticed between common gender and inflected *-a* forms. Only 3 (0.04%) of the 8,353 feminine tokens of *ministro* in the *Portuguese Trends* corpus were common gender, and all the rest were inflected *-a* forms. She declared *árbitro* to be an “absolutely uniform animate noun”, meaning that it always appears as epicene *o árbitro*, but she predicted a common gender form, *a árbitro*, might arise, in the future (Gouveia 1997:344). In the present study, DFF *árbitra* was nearly invariable, at 98.3% of the 179 feminine forms, indicating perhaps a linguistic evolution over the 28 years since Gouveia (1997) predicted the appearance of a common gender form. Portuguese writers have now gone beyond a common gender form to the inflected *-a* form that Gouveia (1997) apparently hadn't even imagined. Regarding *soldado*, Gouveia (1997:344) stated that the Portuguese language “does not permit the use of a feminine form, because it already exists with

another meaning” and noted that newspapers were using the common gender form, *a soldado*, to refer to female soldiers. Although she did not specify this meaning, the *Dicionário Priberam* (2008) notes that *soldada* could refer to either the feminine past participle of the verb *soldar* (to solder/weld) or to the noun referring to a soldier or a sailor’s salary. In the current study, *soldado*, for which only 11 feminine tokens were found, was evenly split between common gender and morphologically feminine *soldada* (5 tokens each), with one token of lexical addition. This offers some evidence against Gouveia’s (1997) assertion that the form *soldada* for a female soldier is impossible, due to its preexisting meaning. It appears that this may cause writers to vary their use of common gender and inflected forms, but it does not block the inflected form altogether.

Svobodová (2020:309) asserted that epicene *o secretário* is “typical[ly] but not exclusively” used in Mozambique. She advised that, even though the morphologically feminine form *secretária* exists, “there are reasons to avoid it,” specifically that it can “indicate two positions of different prestige” while the masculine form is “a variant that is more clear, and in the end, more neutral.” This linguistic position assumes, of course, that there are no male secretaries, in the sense of an assistant, which would render the masculine form free for use in higher-prestige positions. Svobodová (2020:309) gives the example of the masculine being used for referents of either gender to indicate “secretary” in examples such as “category of third secretary of the diplomatic career” but advises against using the DFF *secretária* because it could indicate both “an assistant” and “a civil servant with an elevated post” and therefore ought to be avoided. In the current study, DFF *secretária* was nearly invariable, at 99.8% of the 4541 references to a female secretary, while common gender *secretario* accounted for just 9 feminine tokens (0.02%). Of the 4532 tokens of DFF *secretária*, 3310 (73%) are part of the construction

secretária de/do ‘secretary of/of the’, of which 2313 (70% of the DFFs) are of the form *secretária de Estado* ‘secretary of State’ and 928 (28%) are of the form *secretária regional* ‘regional secretary’. Only 2% of tokens for the DFF *secretária* refer to any other position, and the 4541 tokens in the corpus provide strong evidence that the semantic difference noted by Svobodová (2020:309) in Mozambican Portuguese is not currently present in European Portuguese.

Dronovsk (2019) cites *diaconisa* as the normative feminine form of masculine *diácono* in European Portuguese, which was confirmed by the results of this study, though in a small dataset of just 12 feminine tokens, all of which were of the form *diáconisa*. For a female bishop, Almeida (2010:24) from the University of Madeira asserts without evidence that there is “obviously” no feminine form in Portuguese. Da Silva (2013:28) recalls that the prescribed feminine form of *bispo* is *episcopisa*, but states that “it is not a very simple word and requires knowledge of a learned norm.” In the corpus for the present study, there were only 3 total tokens of this form, two of lexical addition, *mulher bispo*, and one of inflected *bispa*, which weakly contradicts Almeida’s statement that there is no feminine form of *bispo* in European Portuguese. No tokens of the word *episcopisa* were found. However, this offers some support to Da Silva’s (2013:27-28) statement that *bispa* was “used in the evangelical sphere” and had become “the usual form even though [it] isn’t correct” in Brazilian Portuguese.

Since Gouveia (1997) wrote about variation in *-o/-a* nouns in European Portuguese, the linguistic system appears to have evolved towards a more stable paradigm in which *-a* inflection is the most frequent feminine form for masculine professional nouns ending in *-o*. Variation with common gender is no longer present at a high levels for forms that refer to prestigious positions, such as *ministro* and *engenheiro*. *Diaconisa* was, and remains, an exception to this rule. Despite

declarations to the contrary, *bispo* has two feminine forms in the corpus for the present study (*mulheres bispa* and *bispa*) in the 3 tokens referring to feminine bishops in the corpus.

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-e*

The word *presidente* was the only word that appeared in all of the studies, as seen below. Gouveia (1997:344) commented that the word *presidenta* would “be [best] to avoid”; should it arrive by “analogy”, it would probably take on “a pejorative meaning”. In Gouveia (2007:275) she notes, without giving evidence, that *presidenta* is used in the “popular and regional language forms of Portugal”, which Svobodová (2020:301) also asserted is true in Mozambique. Dronovsk’s (2019) corpus study of European Portuguese newspapers found that common gender *presidente* was used for a female president in 95% of cases and *presidenta* in only 5%. Santana (2018:502) found that *presidenta* and *chefa* are in variation with common gender forms in Northeastern Brazil, but that the common gender is prevalent in both nouns. She reported, furthermore, that a lower educational level was associated with the use of inflected *presidenta* and *chefa* (Santana 2018:502). In the present study, all of the words ending in *-ente/-ante* were nearly invariably rendered in common gender, including *presidente*, confirming the results of previous studies. Because this study examined Portuguese newspapers, a semi-formal register in which the journalists are likely to have a relatively high educational level, it cannot offer evidence to substantiate Gouveia’s (2007) assertion that *presidenta* is used in popular, regional forms of European Portuguese nor Santana’s (2018) findings that less educated Brazilians in the Northeastern region are more likely to use the inflected forms. It can attest to the fact, however, that only 9 tokens of *presidenta* were found in the writing of educated Portuguese in the present study compared to 11, 125 tokens of common gender *presidente*.

Dronovsk (2019) found an overall preference for common gender *chefe* in European Portuguese, but significant variation with *-a* inflected *chefa* (30%), especially in the plural, *chefas*, yet Gouveia (1997:344) said that if such a variant arose by analogy, it would be “pejorative”. *Chefe* was also nearly invariably common gender, confirming the results of most previous researchers, while contradicting Dronovsk’s (2019) findings that *chefas* was a significant plural variant in European Portuguese. The two tokens of *chefa* in this study were both singular, and both refer to a citation of spoken language within the same article. If written citations of speech were removed from the corpus, there would be no tokens of inflected *chefa* or *chefas* in the corpus compared to 430 common gender tokens of *chefe*.

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in a consonant, other than *-or*:

In the present study, common gender was widely used for nouns ending in *-l*, *-er*, or *-f*, while the word *juiz* was most often feminized through *-a* inflection. Gouveia (1997:344) noted the existence of the feminine variant *consulesa*, but did not say whether this form was prevalent, or in variation with other forms. The present study found that *consulesa* was not a frequent variant of common gender *cônsul* accounting for only 3.7% of feminine tokens.

Almeida (2010:23) asserted, without providing evidence, that there is no feminine form of *coronel*, which she calls “incompatible with the article *a*”. This statement is refuted by the 12 tokens of common gender *a coronel* in the present study. However, her statement that *coronel* would be difficult to feminize morphologically is supported by the absence of inflected *coronela* in the sample. Almeida (2010:23) suggests that *coronel* cannot be feminized because it is a borrowing from French, and therefore has a masculine suffix that, “[being] unusual in Portuguese, lends itself with difficulty to feminization in **coronela*.”

Gouveia (1999:344) found that regarding feminine forms of *juiz* there was “enormous hesitation” between use of common gender, lexical addition, and *-a* inflection in Portugal, and that use of *juiza* was more widespread in Brazil. In Gouveia (2007:271) she stated that *juiza* was “only gradually becoming established in Portugal”, where lexical addition and common gender forms had been preferred. She also noted the higher use and acceptance of the variant in Brazil. Svobodová (2020:301) noted that *juiza* had become the dominant feminine variant in Portugal, but noted that in her corpus some tokens of common gender *a juiz* were found, attributing this to “the conservative character of Mozambican Portuguese” (Svobodová 2020:312). In the present study, which included 1200 feminine tokens referring to a judge, inflected *juiza* was nearly always used, with common gender accounting for only 2% of tokens. These findings support the assertions and findings of previous studies, that *juiza* is now the predominant form for a female judge in Portugal.

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-or*

The feminine variant *atriz* is cited by Gouveia (1997:343-344) as the only word using a *-triz* ending in the *Português Fundamental* oral corpus. However, later in the same paper she notes that *embaixatriz* is undergoing a change in meaning, from “the wife of” an ambassador” to a female ambassador, presumably based on her corpus of archival newspapers. Even so, *embaixatriz* appears only twice in the *Trends* corpus with *embaixadora* accounting for the other 632 tokens. Furthermore, the two tokens of suffixal *embaixatriz* were both used metaphorically, to denote an “ambassador” for another entity, specifically the company Ikea as an ambassador for Sweden, and trees as ambassadors for nature within the urban landscape and did not refer to people at all.

Gouveia (1997:343) stated that, with the exception of *atriz*, masculine forms ending in a consonant are feminized through *-a* inflection. Of the words in this study, she specifically mentioned *diretor*, *doutor*, *professor* and *treinador*. Almeida (2010:24) mentioned that the word *lenhador* ‘lumberjack’ had no feminine form because women do not have access to that field. A quick search of the *Portuguese Trends* corpus found two tokens of feminine *lenhadora* referring to women and 21 masculine tokens of *lenhador/lenhadores*. Even though it turned out that the two tokens of *lenhadora* referred to the wife of a lumberjack, a fictional character mentioned in a film review, rather than a female lumberjack, they do confirm that there is no morphological impediment to creating such a form. Other words ending in *-or* were largely absent from studies and commentary on feminization in Portuguese, perhaps because they so consistently form their feminine in *-a*.

With the exception of *imperador* and *imperatriz* in the present study, words ending in *-or* were always feminized using distinctively feminine forms ending in *-a*. It appears, then, that the well-established feminine form *atriz* as well as some historical forms that do not indicate current professional titles (*imperatriz*), may be the only exceptions to the noun paradigm *-or/-ora*, which perhaps explains why researchers did not include these words in their studies.

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-ão*

Gouveia (2007:276), who lives and works in Portugal, says that “regarding words ending in *-ão*, Brazilian Portuguese is more regular in the expression of the feminine, following the rule ‘of suppression of the final atonic vowel segment of *ão*: *-ã*’”. She cites the Brazilian forms *espiã* ‘[female] spy’ and *capitã*, which she says are usually rendered as *espia* and *capitôa* in Portugal. In an earlier study, Gouveia (1997:344) noted the emergence of feminine *escrivã* in Portuguese

newspapers, in variation with the epicene form. Almeida (2010), in contrast, asserted that *capitão* was an epicene form in Portugal, but without providing references or evidence to back up the claim. Eighteen years earlier, Melo (1989:215) noted the appearance of *capitã* in Brazil, as an alternative to *capitão*, but only in a “sporting sense” as in “a captain of a team”, while *espiã*, *cirurgiã* and *escrivã* are listed as established feminine forms.

In the present study, except for *patrão* ~ *patroa*, all five words ending in *-ão* were feminized in *-ã*, or *-a* for *ladra* only, with a common gender variant in over 10% of tokens only in the word *capitão* (13.27%). There were no tokens *capitona* or *capitosa* in the *Portuguese Trends* corpus. It appears, then, that through analogy to Brazilian noun forms, the gender paradigm for *-ão* professional nouns in Portugal may be becoming more regular, with the exception of long-standing feminine forms such as *patrona* and *ladra*.

Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-a*:

The only mention of words whose masculine forms end in *-a* in earlier studies is Almeida’s (2010:2024) assertion that there was no word for a female pope, except when referring to “*papisa Joana*”. Pope Joan, a legendary woman who was rumored to have “reigned as popess” from 855-857 (Wikipedia 2025), was also mentioned in a study of French feminization (Larivière 2001:26). The present study shows that *papisa* appears to have spread outside of that specific context, appearing in three tokens that do not refer to Pope Joan.

6.2.4 Summary of Portuguese comparisons with past studies

The findings of this study confirm the findings of past studies for nouns ending in *-ente/-ante* and the word *chefe*, which are nearly always common gender. For nouns ending in *-o*, they confirm the general trend of distinctive feminine forms in *-a* while also demonstrating a loss of variation within the noun, as variation with common gender and lexical addition has decreased, except for the words *soldado*, *bispo*, and *piloto*, which was not addressed in earlier studies. As *soldado* and *bispo* had previously been labeled as having epicene or common gender forms only, the appearance of inflected *-a* forms for both words represents an increase in the use *-a* feminines for masculine nouns in *-o*. *Diaconisa* remains exceptional, and invariable. *Papisa* appears to have spread to contexts besides the legendary Pope Joan and is the only masculine noun ending in *-a* that was mentioned in other studies. The *-ora* suffix appears to have spread to at least one lexical context in which a *-triz* suffix had been prevalent (*embaixatriz/embaixadora*) and there were no *-or* nouns without a feminine form in this corpus, which could signal an overall increase in the use of *-ora*, with exceptions for the longstanding suffixed forms *atriz* and *imperatriz*. The status of the feminine form *juiza* has changed from a little-used variant to the predominant variant in European Portuguese, which continues the growth of the $\emptyset/a$ paradigm. Finally, the *-ão ~ -ã/oa/ona* paradigm appears to be stabilizing, with the increase in feminine forms ending in *-ã* or */a/*, with the exception of the long-standing feminine *patroa*.

Overall, these changes appear to point to a general decrease in variation within the noun paradigms due to the spread of feminine suffixes within the nominal paradigm to which they already belong, especially due to a drop in the predominance of epicene forms. Although this study did not examine epicene forms, the existence of feminine forms for nouns once deemed only masculine suggest that feminine forms are becoming more frequent in Portugal.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter compared the results of the current study to government-issued recommendations and the results of past studies. It found that in the majority of cases, government guidelines were followed, and adherence was highest in Spanish, for which only a single noun, *canciller* was not most frequent in one of the recommended forms. However, the Spanish guidelines also allowed for the most flexibility, assigning more than one recommended form for several nouns. French writers tended to write forms that were more distinct than the government-recommended forms, such as *cheffe* instead of prescribed *chef* and suffixal *entrepreneuse*, which is distinct in both speech and writing, instead of prescribed *entrepreneure*, which is distinct only in writing. Portuguese writers did not use recommended forms ending in *-enta*, *-la*, *-fa*, or *-era*, but these represented a minority of forms. For nouns with other suffixes, Portuguese-speakers applied the prescriptive rules more consistently than in Spanish, reaching prevalence thresholds for some words that Spanish writers used most frequently, but not prevalently.

In relation to past studies, growth in the use of DFFs was observed across all three languages. In French, a shift away from use of the epicene masculine could not be proven but was suggested by the presence of common gender and/or distinctive feminine forms for every noun in the study. In Spanish, the percentage of use of some distinctive forms such as *jueza* rose from least frequent, to most frequent, and others, such as *presidenta* and *jefa* rose to the level of prevalence. One morphological group, masculines ending in *-or* is now feminized by newspaper writers in Spain using feminine forms in *-ora* at rates of between 99-100%. Finally, in Portuguese, the results for nouns ending in *-ente* remained common gender, as was shown in previous studies, while variation in other noun paradigms decreased, often due to an increase in

use of distinctive feminine forms, as was true for nouns such as *médica*. Overall, a trend was shown of increasing use of distinctive feminine forms in paradigms in which it was already frequent, and a decrease or lack of growth in paradigms for which it was not, such as *-efe ~ efa*. Exceptions to the above observations will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS IN RELATION TO THE DISTINCTIVE FEMININE FORMS HYPOTHESIS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the current study in relation to the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis introduced in Section 1.1 which states, “writers will use a distinctively feminine form (henceforth DFF), one different from the masculine form, for female referents whenever there is a morphological means to do so in their language.” In this study 118 words, or 67.4% of the sample size, had prevalent DFFs, defined as 90% or more of the tokens for its word type, so the hypothesis is strongly supported by the results. Another 19 words (10.9%) had DFFs that were the most frequent feminine form for their word type, though not at a frequency above the 90% level established for prevalence. These results partly support the DFFH, since writers chose a DFF most frequently, yet still in variation with a non-distinctive form. This brings the total percentage of forms for which a DFF was the most frequently used variant to 78.3%.

This chapter also discusses those forms which do not have prevalent DFFs and therefore either do not, or only partially, support the DFFH. Nouns for which a DFF was possible, but not used, provide evidence against the DFFH. If a possible DFF was not used, then we wish to determine, in order to answer research question 4, whether this was due to an internal reason, such as the form of the potential DFF, or an external reason, such as actual or perceived lack of women in the profession, or a combination of internal and external reasons. In the discussion that follows,

the availability and the choice of DFFs will be presented according to the form of the feminine nouns, though sometimes also in relation to the masculine noun forms.

7.1 The possibility of a suffixed feminine form for masculine nouns ending in *-e* in French and in *-a* in Spanish and Portuguese

This section addresses the question of whether the morphological means exist to create a DFF for French masculine nouns ending in *-e* and Spanish and Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-a*. For such nouns, feminization cannot be achieved through the most frequent means of adding *-e* in French or *-a* in Spanish and Portuguese with its accompanying sounds, since these nouns already end with that vowel. Instead, a suffix is the only option for creating a DFF.

The majority of nouns in all three languages with no prevalent DFF have these endings. In French, 12 of the 18 masculine nouns for which a DFF is not prevalent, end in *-e*. These include 7 nouns for which the common gender is prevalent: *architecte*, *capitaine*, *édile*, *juge*, *maire*, *ministre*, and *secrétaire*. For 2 other nouns common gender is the most frequent option and lexical addition is the second option: *pilote* (82.3%) ~ *femme pilote* (17.7%) and *évêque* (75%) ~ *femme évêque* (25%). For *femme diacre* lexical addition is prevalent and for *poétesse* the suffixed form accounts for (89.4%) of the tokens. In Spanish, only 4 nouns have masculine forms ending in *-a*. For 2 of these, the suffixed DFF form accounts for the majority of tokens, but does not reach the 90% threshold for prevalence: *papisa* (87.0%) ~ *papa* (8.7%) ~ *mujer papa* (4.3%) and *profetisa* (63.6%) ~ *profeta* (36.4%). For *cuentista* the common gender form is prevalent and for *poeta* it is the most frequent variant: *poeta* (80.3%) ~ *poetisa* (18.2%). In Portuguese, three masculine noun forms ending in *-a* have distinctive, suffixed feminine forms ending in *-isa/-esa* that were most

frequent without reaching the 90% threshold. These were *alcaldesa* (85.7%) ~ *alcaide* (14.2%), *profetisa* (87.5%) ~ *profeta* (12.5%), and *poetisa* (69.3%) ~ *poeta* (30.7%).

One can argue that the morphological means to create a DFF was present for all of the words in the study whose masculine ends in *-e* in French and *-a* in Spanish and Portuguese. For example, French speakers who know the pattern *poète* ~ *poétesse* are aware that the suffix *-esse* can be added to a masculine noun to create a distinctively feminine noun. Therefore, they could reasonably be expected to know how to create *jugesse* from *juge*, whether or not they believe the form *jugesse* to exist currently or to have existed in the past. Because speakers can use the suffix *-esse* to create a new feminine form, we can say that the morphological means exists to create DFFs for masculine words ending in *-e* even if there is no attested present or historical form in *-esse*. However, speakers may be reluctant to create such forms if they do not believe the form to exist, or if they believe that it will alter the meaning of the word in an undesirable way, for example, by adding a pejorative connotation. Speakers may also fail to use a suffixed form if addition of the *-esse* suffix would require a stem change, as is the case with *diacre* ‘deacon’ ~ *diaconesse* ‘female deacon’. It is, furthermore, unlikely that language users have encountered other masculine nouns referring to people ending in *-cre*. A search of the *French Trends* corpus reveals that *diacre* and its variants *sous-diacre* ‘under deacon’ and *archidiacre* ‘archdeacon’ are the only professional nouns with that ending and that just two other nouns in *-cre* represent people: *cancre* ‘dunce’ and *bébéancree* ‘anchor baby’. This means that speakers would have no model on which to create the existing form *diaconesse*. In this case, the morphological means to create a DFF might be said not to exist for that form, unless one allows for the option **diacresse*. However, without knowing which forms speakers have been exposed to, it is only possible to conjecture about whether speakers have the means to create such forms, even when they are historically attested, as is also

the case for French *capitaine*, a suffixed feminine form that is first attested in the Frantext historical corpus in 1585, and last attested in 1869. Although the form is not new, speakers might not reasonably be expected to have been exposed to it. Instead, they would be more likely to create *capitaine* from the masculine *capitaine* by following the model of other words ending in *-esse*, such as *maîtresse*. The following section discusses in which cases suffixes were and were not used in each language, and then, through a second corpus query search, compares the nouns that did not have suffixed DFFs to a frequency list of suffixed words in the corpus for each language to determine whether speakers might reasonably be expected to make a suffixal form for each word.

7.1.1 Suffixes *-esse/-isa/-esa/-issa/-essa*

Across all three languages of this study, speakers appeared to limit use of suffixed variants to words with specific semantic properties. They used them most frequently in certain nouns, such as French *poétesse* and Portuguese *poetisa* ‘female poet’ or French *prêtresse* and Spanish *sacerdotisa* ‘female priest’. This finding contradicts the French and Spanish guidelines’ characterization of the words ending in these suffixes as “pejorative” or “demeaning” (Becquer et al. 1999:22, Lledó 2006:26). They appear, rather, to be the predominant forms used for referring to females in religious roles, and for poets. The question then arises as to why these suffixes are employed frequently for some words, and rarely or not at all for other words of the same morphological type. Using a suffixed feminine form for French nouns ending in written *-e* and in Spanish and Portuguese nouns ending *-a*, would create DFFs for these nouns, yet writers do not use such a form for the nouns listed earlier in this section. For example, French writers in the corpus for this study never used the historically attested form *jugesse* (Evain 2019:20) and Spanish-speakers used common gender *poeta* more frequently (80.3%) than suffixed *poetisa*

(18.2%), despite the opposite trend in the French and Portuguese words for a female poet. What follows, then, is a discussion of the semantic properties that characterize words in which suffixes are, and are not, used in French, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as an analysis of the factors that might lead writers to use suffixed forms for some nouns but not others.

In all three languages, suffixed variants were prevalent to name female popes, prophets and priests, while in Spanish and Portuguese words for female deacons were also prevalent in this form. In French the suffixed form for a female deacon did not occur in the sample outside of three tokens of the name of a hospital, perhaps because of its opaque morphology involving a stem change from the masculine form, *diacre* to feminine *diaconesse* ‘female deacon’. Since it is an infrequent and even learned term, writers may not have been familiar with the suffixed variant and so they used lexical addition, *femme diacre*, instead. Forms for female religious figures, then, are well-accepted in all three languages, as shown by suffixed forms *papesse/papisa* ‘[female] pope’, *prophétesse/profetisa* ‘[female] prophet’, *prêtresse/sacerdotisa* ‘[female] priest’. The suffixed variant for a female poet is prevalent in French and Portuguese, but not in Spanish. In French *papesse* accounts for 89.2% of tokens and in Portuguese *poetisa* accounts for 69.3%, but in Spanish, *poetisa* accounts for only 18.2% of the 1106 tokens, a far smaller number than common gender form, *la poeta* (80.3%). Due to the presence of a suffixed form for a female poet in all three languages, it seems that writers may associate poets, especially female poets, with religious mysticism, or use the term to create a special effect. Fraser (2015:160) proposes for Spanish that “the word *poetisa* may be used for a specific, ‘antique’ effect: to present the profession of poet as quaint and out of touch with the modern world.” However, Fraser’s (2015:78) own data showed that *poetisa* was not used in mainland Spain, in direct contradiction to the findings of this study, yet she notes that Smith Avendaño de Barón (2012:95) suggested

that “*la poeta* is a very recent coinage” and asserted that its first occurrence was in the 1737 edition of the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (DRAE) (Smith Avendaño de Barón 2012:94). Therefore, the use of *la poeta* instead of *la poetisa* may represent the decreasing use of an established suffixed variant, in favor of common gender. As already discussed in Section 6.2.2, the Spanish prescriptive guidelines have suggested such a shift, which may explain the difference between Spanish and Portuguese on this point. However, because the French guidelines also discourage use of *poétesse*, it seems likely that some historical or literary association with the *-esse/-isa* suffix may explain the popularity of suffixed words for a female poet. The *Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé* (TLFi) (Dendien 2020), an online French reference dictionary that contains historical and etymological information on words based on historical corpus evidence, remarks that “the feminine in *-esse* is stylistically marked as literary or poetic, especially when the derivative is employed as an adjective.” However, it also notes that *poétesse* “is tending to become pejorative,” which the results of the current study contradict. Finally, the TLFi states that the *-esse* suffix comes from “ecclesiastical Latin *-issa*, which had borrowed it from Greek mainly to form honorific titles: *abbatissa* (*abbesse*), *diaconissa*, *sacerdotissa*; it was extended to names without an etymological feminine form such as: *comte*, *duc*, *prince* : *comtesse*, *duchesse*, *princesse*.” One explanation for the absence of the *-esse/esa/isa* suffix in words for which it is etymologically available, then, is that the suffix was retained in all three of the languages of this study when the suffixed version existed in Latin, such as in the religious and aristocratic titles listed above. Words that do not currently use the *-esse* suffix may not have had a form ending in *-esse* or *-issa* in Latin, and thus may not have one today. However, some nouns that did not have a suffixed form in Latin, such as *maîtresse*, developed suffixed forms later. The TLFi gives the first attestation of *maîtresse* as 1180, with

the meaning of “[female] governor”, and these forms still exist today (Dendien 2020). In French, *maîtresse* was the most frequent feminine form (97.4%) of masculine *maître*, so clearly the fact of a word descended directly from Latin is not the determining factor in writers’ choice between a DFF ending in *-esse/-isa/-esa* and a common gender or lexical form. The question, then, becomes twofold: why do writers sometimes not prefer suffixed forms that descend directly from Latin, and why do they prefer, for other words, suffixed forms that do not descend directly from Latin? One possible explanation is that, as noted by the French and Spanish language guides, some words ending in *-esse* may be perceived as marked, or non-neutral, by contemporary language users, which could lead to some sort of effect being associated with these words, whether the effect is “pejorative” (Becquer et al. 1999:7) “literary” (Dendien 2020) or “antique” (Fraser 2015:160), though the specific effect created may vary by language.

Strengthening the idea that use of the *-esse/-isa/-esa* suffix creates a literary effect, were the metaphorical uses of suffixed forms for female popes found in the *Trends* corpora, which suggest a hyperbolic reading of the word, except for occasional references to the legendary Pope Joan (see Section 6.2.3). Generally, the word was used to refer to a woman who is powerful within the world of fashion, music and art, such as the editor of American *Vogue*, Anna Wintour, as seen in the following examples from each of the languages:

(7) French: *Parmi les quelque 350 invités, la papesse de la mode Anna Wintour...*

‘Among the approximately 350 guests, the pope of fashion, Anna Wintour...’

(8) Spanish: *La papisa de la moda Anna Wintour llegó a su fiesta del brazo del actor británico...*

‘The pope of fashion Anna Wintour arrived at the party on the arm of the British actor...’

(9) Portuguese: ...*a gala de maio de 2025 terá como anfitriões o rapper ASAP Rocky, o ator Colman Domingo e, como de costume, a papisa da moda e diretora da revista Vogue Anna Wintour.*

‘...the May 2025 gala will have as hosts the rapper ASAP Rocky, the actor Colman Domingo and, as usual, the pope of fashion and director of Vogue magazine, Anna Wintour.’

However, some literal uses of suffixed variants to refer to non-existent female popes did occur, as in the Spanish example below:

(10)...*las mujeres no pueden ser papisas, ni obispas, ni sacerdotisas, ni siquiera diaconisas,*...

‘...women cannot be popes, or bishops, or priests, or even deacons,...’

The results of this study show that common gender *poeta* is the prevalent form in Spain, in variation with suffixed *poetisa*, while in France and Portugal the suffixed variants *poétesse* and *poetisa* are predominant forms, in variation with common gender. Despite the apparent similarity between the French and Portuguese results, I believe that these sets of results illustrate different trends. In France, a trend of reviving antiquated, pre-existing variants that were at one time thought to be pejorative could explain the relative popularity of *poétesse*. In Portugal, by contrast, the 20th century movement by female Portuguese poets such as Natália Correia to stop using suffixed *poetisa* because they consider it to be pejorative appears to have been only partly

successful, with some female poets continuing to refer to themselves or being referred to, as *poetisas* (Martins 2007).

Additionally, in France, data from this study show that suffixed *maîtresse* appears to have expanded beyond the meaning of a schoolteacher and is now predominant for titles such as *maîtresse de conference* ‘associate professor’, while in Spain, a very small number of tokens (2) were found of the suffixed feminine form for a female consul, *consulesa*, although the common gender form was by far the more frequently used with 128 tokens. This extremely limited data set could suggest that suffixed forms of government titles other than *alcalde* may also be in use, either by analogy to *alcalde* or through readoption of a pre-existing form.

To test Fraser’s (2015:160) suggestion of an “antique” effect, a search was performed using the wildcard function in the *Spanish Trends* and *Portuguese Trends* corpora. The following words shown in Table 7.1, listed in order of frequency in the corpus, were found to have an *-isa/-esa* ending:

Table 7.1 Spanish and Portuguese professional titles with *-isa/-esa* suffixes in the *Trends* corpora

English word	Spanish word	# tokens	English word	Portuguese word	# tokens
(ex)mayorress	(ex)alcaldesa	34792	princess(es)/ anti-princess(es)	princesa/ princesas/ antiprincesa(s)	5019
(ex)princess/ Madrid-princess	(ex)princesa/ Madrid-princess	16093	duchess	duquesa	470
(ex)marquise	(ex)marquesa	1870	poetess(es)	poetisa/poetisas	201
(ex)vice mayorress	(ex)vicealcaldesa vice-alcaldesa	1673	countess	condessa	180
(ex)duchess	duquesa	1346	marquise	marquesa	105
countess	condesa	952	peasant	camponesa	37
(ex)abbess	(ex)abadesa	519	(ex)abbess/ mother-abbess	(ex)abadessa/ madre-abadessa	45
baroness	baronesa	480	archduchess	grã-duquesa	33
poetess	poetisa	244	priestess(es)	sacerdotisa/ sacerdotisas	31
peasant	payesa	167	professed nun	professa	27
priestess	sacerdotisa	100	female pope	papisa	14

fortune teller	pitonisa	65	vice-countess	viscondessa	13
female devil	diablesa	48	female deacons	diaconisas	11
professed nun	profesa	29	baroness	baronesa	11
female vampire	vampiresa	25	prophetesses	profetisa	5
archduchess	archiduquesa	20	princess (alternate spelling)	principessa	4
female sheikh	jequesa	18			
prophetess	profetisa	17			
female pope	papisa	17			
viscountess	vizcondesa	14			
female deacon	diaconisa	3			

*shaded areas indicate words with a shared meaning that occur in both tables

As shown in Table 7.1, all of the Portuguese words that end in *-essa/-isa* also occur in the Spanish dataset, but the opposite is not true. The Portuguese dataset contains only the words whose meaning relates to the original Latin use of the *-issa* suffix, which was borrowed from Greek to use for religious and royal/noble titles (abbess, priestess, professed nun, female deacon, marquise, duchess, viscountess, princess), and the word for a female poet (Dendien 2020). The Spanish dataset contains the Spanish cognates of all of those words, and also a set of words related to devils/magical beings (female devil, fortune-teller, female vampire, prophetess). Leaving aside *alcaldesa* and the word for a female sheik, both of which have roots borrowed from Arabic, the fact that the majority of words do have a meaning that either comes from an original Latin set of honorifics, or that refer to a magical being or a poet. This provides support for Fraser's (2015:160) assertion that speakers use the *-isa/-esa* suffix to create an "antique". In this case, the effect is not only antiquated, but also mystical. Although the Portuguese table does not contain any of the words referring to magical beings, *poetisa* is the third most frequent word in the list, which suggests that it has a strong association with this suffix, that is otherwise only

applied to words for titles that are religious, noble and originated in Latin. For this reason, Fraser's (2015) hypothesis can reasonably be extended to apply to Portuguese as well.

In order to test this theory's validity for French, the same search of nouns with the suffix *-esse* was carried out in the *French Trends* corpus. The results are listed in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 French professional titles with the *-esse* suffix in the *Trends* corpus

English word	French word	#tokens
(ex)princess(es)/half-princess	princesse/ princesses/ mi-princesse	4789
(ex)mistress(es)/female masters	(ex)maîtresse/ maîtresses	4465
hostess(es)	hôtesse/ hôtesse	1380
(ex)duchess(es)	(ex)duchesse/duchesses	458
poetess(es)	poétesse/poétesses	455
countess(es)	comtesse/comtesses	350
(ex)female pope(s)	(ex)papesse(s)	233
priestess(es)	prêtresse/ prêtresses	210
female mayor	maire	155
abbess(es)	abbesse /abbesses	121
chick/broad(s)	gonzesse/gonzesses	32
viscountess	vicomtesse	26
female sinner(s)	pécheresse/pécheresses	30
prophetess(es)	prophétesse/prophétesses	28
archduchess	grande-duchesse/archiduchesse	28
female devil(s)	diabliesse/ diabliesses	22
female druid(s)	druidesse/druïdesse	21
goddess(es)/demigoddess(es)	demi-déesse/mi-déesse/ demi-déesses	20
female painter	peintresse	12
female deacons	diaconesses	13
female knight	chevaleresse	11
female hunter(s)	chasseresse/chasseresses	7
female fortune teller(s)	devineresse/devineresses	7
female traitor/social traitor(s)	traîtresse/traîtresses/ sociale-traîtresse	4
female ogre	ogresse	4
female vampire	vampiresse	4
female minister	ministresse	3
female pirate	piratesse	3
female doctors	doctoresses	3

poor/sad female	pauvresse/pauvresses	3
female clown	clownesse	2
female foreman/men	contremaîtresse/ contre-maîtresses	2
female mayors	maïresses	2
female senior citizen	sénioresse	2
female dog-master	chien-maîtresse	1
female chief/head	chefesse	1
female patrons	patronesses	1
strange woman	drôlesse	1
female philosopher	philosophesse	1
female sales clerks	venderesses	1
female canon (religious)	chanoinesse	1
female ex-doctor	ex-doctoresse	1

*shaded areas indicate words with a shared meaning that occur in Table 7.1

As shown in Table 7.2, the French dataset contains two high-frequency, and many low-frequency words (arbitrarily defined as fewer than 100 tokens) whose meanings are not represented in the Spanish and Portuguese datasets. The high-frequency words are the words for a female master/teacher/mistress and hostess, both of which *TLFi* cites as having first occurred during the 12th century (Dendien 2020). These words, having both been borrowed into the language during the same timeframe, may provide evidence of the beginning of a time period during which the *-esse* suffix was productive. Then at a later point, perhaps because prescriptive grammarians did not recommend the words with this section (see Section 3.1.1), they were lost from the language, or became archaic, with the exception of these two words *hôtesse* and *maîtresse*. Both words refer to roles associated with typically feminine work. Hosting someone relates to the hearth and home, as well as service work, while both the meanings ‘mistress’ and ‘schoolteacher’ are words that represent roles that were traditionally open to women.

It is perhaps the less-frequent words that show more evidence of a semantic effect caused by the *-esse* suffix in French. While a few of these represent religious, mystical and/or historical roles (female druids, canons, and sinners, goddesses, ogresses, female pirates, fortune-tellers, vampires and knights), supporting the idea of an ‘antique effect’ (Fraser 2015:160), others represent a variety of meanings, some of which are neutral (female foreman, female chief/head, female philosopher, female doctor, female hunter, female salesperson, female senior, female minister, female clown, patroness) and a few pejorative (strange woman, broad, traitor, poor/sad woman). This weakly suggests that writers may be in the beginning stages of using this suffix creatively, since there is a higher number of non-pejorative meanings than those that are pejorative. However, the low number of tokens for these neutral forms, none of which occurred more than three times, as well as the relatively higher frequency of the pejorative term *gonzesse* ‘chick/broad’ (32 tokens) suggests that the *-esse* suffix may be in the beginning stages of losing the pejorative association described by Becquer et al. (1999:7) and the *TLFi* (Dardien 2020) .

In summary, in all three languages, suffixed variants were predominant for females in religious roles, and to some extent, poets. The suffixed forms of the religious words are most likely learned words, while other suffixed variants may be formed via analogy, or they have pre-existing forms that are readopted perhaps in order to create an “antique” or mystical, literary effect. For the French variant *maîtresse* this would not appear to be the case, so it also possible that a general trend towards use of more distinctively feminine forms is responsible for the change.

Becquer (1999:22) remarks that “certain nouns have long been feminized using the suffix *-esse*: *hôtesse, mairesse, maîtresse, poétesse*... this suffix is today felt to be outdated, even demeaning, one would prefer not to have recourse to it.” This appears no longer to be the case

for the form *poétesse*, which was prevalent (89.43%/364 tokens out of 407 feminine tokens), in variation with common gender (10.57%/43 tokens). Now that distinctively feminine forms are now the most frequent way of expressing feminine gender in professional nouns, the “demeaning” quality attached to the *-esse* suffix may be diminishing, especially for jobs related to creative writing (see below the discussion for *autrice* in Section 7.4). The variation in this word form points potentially to the fact that this evolution is not complete, as also evidenced by the small percentage of suffixed *maire* (0.83% of 100 tokens) compared to common gender *la maire* (98.78% of 11852 tokens). As creative writers may naturally be expected to use more creative language, and therefore to re-appropriate historical word forms, than politicians, the word *poétesse* may be evolving towards an invariable *-esse* ending, although the variation present in the choice of form today shows that this is not yet the case.

Finally, *diaconisa*, *papisa* and *profetisa* all had prevalent suffixed forms that varied with feminine forms ending in *-a*. This may be because writers are uncertain whether to use the historical forms in *-isa* for these religious roles, which usually refer to theoretical or fictional/legendary persons, or whether to follow the tendency for their morphological category, which is to use common gender. The fact that government language guides generally accept both forms, but promote the DFFs overall may explain the general preference for the suffixed variants.

Alcaldesa and *sacerdotisa* were both invariable as the feminine forms of *alcalde* and *sacerdote*. These are both learned words, which appear never to have developed a common gender form, perhaps because *alcalde* is a borrowing from Arabic, and *sacerdote* from Latin, so writers may have hesitated to depart from the suffixed feminine forms that were used at the time of the borrowing. The sample size for *alcalde* in this corpus was very small at 6 tokens, though,

so it may not be representative of more widespread usage. In Portuguese, *poetisa* is the standard form for a female poet, while some language users have called for the use of common gender *poeta*, because they say that the *-isa* suffix is pejorative (Martins 2007).

Across all three languages, common gender was an option for most nouns but was prevalent only in nouns of certain morphological types. In French, the only DFF possible for masculine nouns ending in *-e* is a suffixed feminine in *-esse*. If the variant in *-esse* was not productive in French, then writers who wished to feminize could only choose to employ a common gender or lexical addition variant. Because lexical addition involves adding the word *femme* before the masculine form of a noun, it may be seen as an incomplete form of feminization, and in fact, an intensification of the idea that the noun itself is masculine, and that its feminine determiners agree with the word *femme*. By contrast, the common gender form leaves no doubt that the noun form is interpreted as feminine, despite looking and sounding the same as the masculine form.

7.2 Distinctively feminine forms ending in *-a* for masculine words ending in a consonant in Spanish and Portuguese

As noted in section 6.2.2, the comparison between past studies and the current study shows that feminine forms *concejala* and *jueza* increased in usage to have become the most frequent noun in Spanish for a female city counselor and judge. This could follow the model of nouns ending in *-n*, such as *capitán*, and *campeón*, whose feminine forms are nearly invariably *capitana* and *campeona*.

Edil, *chef* and *canciller* were all most frequent in the common gender form, which aligns with prescriptive guidelines that permitted either the common gender, or the inflected *-a* form. All three are borrowings, whose suffixes are infrequent in Spanish (*edil* is a learned form from

Latin *aedilis*, *chef* is from French, and *canciller* is most likely also a borrowing from French, according to the DRAE) (Real Academia Española 2014). The feminine form *edila* is unusual since there are only three other forms ending in *-dila* in the DRAE. These are *badila* ‘fire shovel’, *cordila* ‘baby tuna’ and *zascandila* ‘bum’. Given that the one other agentive noun ending in *-dila*, *zascandila*, has a negative connotation, it may be that writers hesitate to form words ending in *-dila*, because of their form or possibly pejorative connotation. The argument that a smaller number of word types with the same feminine morphology leads to fewer tokens of a DFF is less convincing for *chef*, however, whose morphology is infrequent (the DRAE lists 14 words ending in *-efa*, but not *chefa*). Because language users could easily model *chefa* after the prevalent form *jefa* ‘female boss’, also from French *chef*, it seems less likely that the *-efa* morphology itself inhibits language users from choosing that variant. In the case of Spanish *chef*, the borrowing from French may be so recent that writers may hesitate to apply the morphological rules of Spanish to it.

For the one word whose masculine form ended in *-z*, although Spanish and Portuguese show similar tendencies, the inflected variant *juíza* is nearly invariable in the Portuguese corpus at 98.2% of tokens, while *jueza* represents only 76.7% of the tokens in Spanish with common gender accounting for 23.3%. This study’s results for *juíza* in Portuguese represent a departure from Gouveia’s (1999:344) findings that there was “enormous hesitation” for *juiz* between use of common gender, lexical addition, and *-a* inflection in Portugal, and that the use of *juíza* was more widespread in Brazil. From a less-used variant, to the nearly invariable variant in Portugal or most frequent variant in Spain, the inflected *-a* form in Spain and Portugal seems to have grown over the past few decades and may soon be the only variant used in mainland Portugal. This could provide evidence against the idea that it is redundant for words whose masculine

forms use morphology that is traditionally feminine to develop a separate feminine form, or it could simply show that writers may not highly associate *-ez* endings with feminine gender, due to their perhaps infrequent use, especially compared to the *-a* ending. The Spanish form *jueza* may follow a similar path, as it is already the most frequent form for a female judge, and it is probably simply a newer form than its Portuguese equivalent, which would account for the slower route to prevalence.

The one word ending in *-r*, but not *-or*, in this study, *canciller*, varied between common gender (81.4%) and *-a* inflection (18.64%). Portuguese *chanceler* is a borrowing from French *chancelier* (Lacerdo 2025) which is likely also true of Spanish *canciller* (Real Academia Española 2014). As discussed above, this could help to explain why, unlike the results for *-or* nouns, common gender was dominant in both languages, and invariable in Portuguese. In Spanish, there was variation with *-a* inflected *cancillera* (18.6%), but common gender *canciller* was still highly preferred, at 81.4%. Bengoechea (2009:30-48) calls the variation with common gender in this form “a clear example of the RAE’s policy towards the feminization of professional terms and political positions” interfering with the evolution of a form for which there are already accepted DFFs of the same morphological type, such as *bachillera* (Bengoechea 2009:48). She noted that after female German chancellor Angela Merkel’s election, the media in Spain began to use the DFF *cancillera* “without problems” but that the word “has not yet become part of the standardized language” because the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) expressly prohibited its use. Noting the current coexistence of both forms in Spain, Bengoechea (2009:49) explains that there has been mediatized debate over use of the term, with at least one member of the RAE arguing for its acceptance, in the daily newspaper *ABC*. It seems, then, that the variation observed in Spanish may be a product of varying linguistic policies, with the more conservative RAE proscribing forms that

the government's own Institute of Women prescribes, such as *cancillera* (Bengoechea 2009:48). In the Portuguese corpus, there were no tokens of *chancelera*, or its suffixed variant *chancelerina*, even when restraints on textual genre and region were removed. When the Portuguese Web 2023 Corpus was searched, in the over 16 billion total tokens from across the Portuguese-speaking web, only 6 tokens of *chancelera* were found, but 5 of them were from an article in an online reference website about which forms of feminine *chanceler* should be accepted in Portugal, while just 1 other token of *chancelera* was found on a personal blog from Portugal. However, 69 tokens of the suffixed feminine variant, *chancelerina* were found, although 11 of these were from the same article about acceptable feminine forms of *chanceler* on the aforementioned online reference website (<https://ciberduvidas.iscte-iul.pt/>), 3 were from Galician newspapers, which could indicate a dialectal difference, and 13 were from the French-run international alternative media company *Voltaire Network* that is known for “advocating conspiracy theories” (Wikipedia 2025b). The remaining 42 tokens were from various websites and blogs originating from .org and .com addresses. A survey of a few of these websites found that most were personal websites containing individual political critiques and commentary. However, a Google web search for *chancelerina* returned tokens of *chancelerina Merkel* from Portuguese newspapers that were not found in the *Trends corpus* including hits from *publico.pt*, *observador.pt* and Portuguese public broadcasting network *Rádio e Televisão Portugal* (RTP), though three of these used *chancelerina* only to report the spoken words of the same Portuguese politician, who used the form several times during a speech in which he praised the politician. Though the amount of evidence is small, it points to the fact that a DFF *chancelerina* is in use in Portugal and appears to be more widely used in speech and informal writing than in journalistic prose.

Portuguese *chefe*, borrowed from French *chef* just like Spanish *chef* and *jefa*, almost always appeared in its common gender form, *chefe*. A search of the *Portuguese Web 2023* corpus for tokens of *chefa* from the .pt domain, but without a source genre filter, returned 40 tokens of *chefa*, 8 of which were from the same Portuguese reference website’s articles referencing the feminine form *chefe* within articles about the feminization of professional titles. The 32 remaining tokens appeared to be from personal websites or blogs, several of which put the word inside quotation marks, or appeared to be discussing the subject of feminine professional titles, which example (11) illustrates:

(11) *E entre o povo ouve se estudante, comercianta, parenta, chefa.*

‘And among the [members of the lower class] you hear [female] student, [female] merchant, [female] relative, [female] boss.’

The content of example 11 may also illustrate the message implied by its medium, a personal blog. This small amount of evidence supports Gouveia’s (2007:275) claim that “*chefa*, *génia*, *estudenta*, [and] *presidenta*” are all present in “Portugal’s popular, regional speech”. The fact that 18 years later they still appear limited to that context suggests that writers perceive these DFFs as less prestigious variants. The question then, is why they do not do so for other DFFs ending in *-a*. In the present study, there were no words in which the *e/a* feminine form was most frequent—indeed, there were only two tokens (0.46%) of *chefa*, but these were written quotations of informal speech. There were also 12 tokens (33%) of feminine *mestra*.

For words ending in a consonant, DFFs ending in *-ora* were nearly invariable for all words ending in *-or*, except for *ator* and *imperador*, which as discussed in Section 6.2.2, used historical suffixes in *-triz*. The DFF *juíza* was also nearly invariable at 98.2%. The evidence suggests that a combination of morphological and social factors may be affecting these words.

Writers may associate *e/a* inflection with lower-class speech, while *or ~ ora* is perceived as neutral or prestigious. It may be worth noting that the unlike Spanish, in which feminine forms such as *bachillera* could have been formed on the example of words such as *pionera* ‘[female] pioneer’ and *bombero* ‘[female] firefighter’, these forms have cognates ending in *-eira* in Portuguese (*pioneira, bombeira*), so writers would be less likely to use them as models when making feminine forms for words ending in *-er*.

7.3 Distinctively feminine forms ending in *-a* ending for masculine words ending in *-e* in Spanish and Portuguese, especially those ending in *-ente/-ante*

Among nouns with masculine forms ending in *-ente*, *presidenta* and *dependienta* are exceptions to the tendency that the common gender form is generally used to refer to women. This occurs despite the recommendation in the government-issued language guides to use *-enta/-anta*. Because linguists have noted the exceptional behavior of *presidenta* and *dependienta* since at least 2009 (Bengoechea et. al 2009), it is possible that writers eventually accepted these forms as individual exceptions to the rule, while use of other, less commonly used distinctive variants, such as *gerenta, estudianta*, diminished. *Presidenta* and *dependienta* may have fossilized in the distinctive forms because they represent opposite poles of the social hierarchy. Bengoechea (2009:45) noted that the distinctively feminine forms *sirvienta, assistenta, ayudanta* and *dependienta* had already been in use in Spain for a long time. These words, which translate to servant, assistant, aide and salesclerk, respectively, all represent low-level roles that have traditionally been open to women, which may be why they have long been feminized in *-a*. Female presidents, in contrast, are a newer phenomenon, and also represent the very top of the social and professional hierarchy. For this reason, writers may feel pressure to use the distinctive

feminine form recommended by the government for female presidents, especially in the formal, written context of newspaper articles. Furthermore, one would not want to risk offending a female president by not referring to her with a feminized title, especially if she herself prefers this title.

Portuguese *mestre* was usually rendered in the common gender form (66.7%) while inflected *mestra* was used in 33.3% of the 36 tokens. Because *mestre* presents no morphological difficulty for feminization in *-a*, writers' tendency to use the common gender form may be due to the word's meaning. According to *Dicionário Priberam* (Dicionário Priberam 2008) masculine *mestre* can mean "a person who teaches", but also "an individual who practices a trade on his own, who works without technical guidance from others or who has apprentices," "a person who directs an office", "artist (painter or sculptor) of great merit" "A person who is very proficient in a profession, an art, or an activity," "founder of a literary school" "superior of military order" "third level of the Masonic order" as well as the "person who holds this degree" and the "commander of a ship". There are also two other definitions not related to people. *Mestra*, on the other hand, is listed as meaning "Woman who teaches, generally children," or "Wife of the *mestro* (the office)". Because writers may believe that the word *mestra* is meant to be used to refer to a teacher, they may be hesitant to use it to describe a female "master" in the sense of the master of a trade, office or art. But in fact, all of the tokens of *mestra* in the *Portuguese Trends* corpus displayed meanings related to the dictionary's definition of *mestre*; there were no references to women who teach using forms of this word. The example below, which references female chess masters, is typical of the use in *Portuguese Trends*.

(11) "A grande mestra francesa Nino Maizuradze foi a melhor classificada entre as mulheres, seguida da WMI polaca Alexandra Acha..."

(12) ‘The great French master Nino Maizuradze was the top-ranked among the women, followed by the Polish WCM Alexandra Acha...’

Because writers may be aware of the association between *mestra* and a more limited semantic range cited in dictionaries (teacher or “wife of” only), they may hesitate to choose *mestra* as the feminine form for all of the other meanings accorded to masculine *mestre*, as demonstrated by the fact that tokens of common gender *a mestre* were twice as frequent in the *Portuguese Trends* corpus.

7.4 Distinctively feminine forms for masculine words ending in *-eur* in French

Four French nouns have recommended silent feminine forms in *-eure*, and speakers used those forms most frequently. For nouns ending in *-teur*, writers used an ending in *-trice* more frequently than the prescribed ending in *-teuse* for the word *enquêteur*, which may be due to the fact that *-trice* endings are more frequent for words of this type (Cartignies 1997:169).

In French, words ending in *-eur* can be feminized using a feminine suffix, *-eure*, distinct from the masculine in writing only, a feminine suffix distinct in both speech and writing, *-euse*, and, if the masculine suffix is *-teur*, there is also the option of a suffixed distinct feminine form in *-trice*. The general trend for words of this type in French is to use feminine forms that are distinct in both speech and writing, except in the case of *docteure*, *gouverneure*, *ingénieure*, *procureure* and *professeure*. These exceptional words all have in common that they refer to high-ranking professions in government/law, medicine and academia that were traditionally reserved for men, or at least perceived as such, and whose distinctive feminine forms either have other meanings or an illicit connotation, that writers may not wish to impart to high-ranking, non-

artistic roles. Generally, the *-euse* suffix is interpreted as demeaning by some researchers, and writers may avoid it for that reason for higher-level positions.

In other words, it appears that writers prefer the *-trice* suffix for words ending in *-teur* and the *-euse* for words ending in *-eur*. This may be because the *-trice* suffix is more frequent in *-teur* words, which leads speakers to believe that it is the more prestigious variant for all *-teur* nouns. This may be why writers now most frequently (66.9% of cases) feminize masculine *auteur* as *autrice* despite the fact that the government language guide recommends *auteure*, which writers used in only 32.8% of cases. Since the guide's recommendations were published in 1999, it is possible that it reflected the speech environment of 26 years ago, and since this time writers may have developed the association between *-teur* and *-trice*, yet still in variation with the formerly prevalent silent inflected form.

Finally, although writers produced the DFF *entraîneuse* most frequently (61.7%), its variation with a less-distinctive, written-only inflection *entraîneure* (37.4%) may be accounted for by the fact that *entraîneuse* has a pre-existing meaning associated with prostitution, which some writers may wish to avoid (Brunetière 1998:81, See Section 6.2.1)

7.5 Distinctively feminine forms for seven other professions

Across all three languages, words for a female soldier were slow to feminize. Although in French the DFF *soldate* now appears to be nearly prevalent (89.8%), past studies documented that this was not always the case, although *soldate* is morphologically regular and there are no homonyms associated with the feminine form. In Spanish and Portuguese, a pre-existing homonym *soldada* meaning either 'a soldier's wages' or 'welded/soldered' exists in both languages, yet this DFF accounted for nearly half (45.5%) of tokens in Portuguese but was

nonexistent in Spanish. The lack of DFFs for female soldiers in Spain, and the variation in Portuguese, may be partly attributable to the presence of homonyms for the feminine form *soldada*. Furthermore, writers in both Spain and Portugal no doubt perceive female soldiers to be rare, yet this does not explain the difference in the use of *soldada* in the two countries. It may be that Spanish speakers tolerate a modifier-noun gender mismatch, such as *la soldado*, more readily than Portuguese speakers. This idea is based on an observation that Fraser (2015) made about the difference between French *le soldat* (epicene) and Spanish *la soldado*. She stated that “research evidence from Spanish suggests that grammatical gender is linked more to the pattern of determiner use than to the word form for many speakers” (Fraser 2015:143-44). She goes on to explain that this could account for why Spanish-speakers might more easily accept a common gender form with a final letter that typically indicates a gender that is opposite the gender indicated on the determiner. The *-o* in *soldado* is usually associated with a masculine form, while *la* indicates feminine gender. French speakers, according to Fraser (2015:144) would be more concerned with matching typically feminine noun morphology with feminine determiners. This may be the case in Portuguese as well, as Gouveia (1997) already showed that DFF *médica* was already invariable in the Fundamental Portuguese corpus (Casteleiro 1984), and was nearly invariable (99.9%) in the current study, while Spanish *médica*, while frequent (86.4%) still varied with common gender (13.3%) and lexical addition forms (0.4%). It is possible, and seems likely, that social factors may have contributed to the different feminization rates between the two Spanish forms, *soldado* and *médico*. Since women’s participation in the medical field may have grown faster than their participation in the army, and language users are also likely to see doctors and notice this difference more often than they see soldiers, it is possible that this accounts for the frequency of DFF *médica* (86.4%) and the total lack of DFF *soldada*. It is less

plausible, however, that the difference in feminine participation in the army is so high between neighboring countries Portugal and Spain that this would account for the absence of tokens of *soldada* in Spain, and the somewhat high frequency (45.5%) of the same in Portuguese, though these represent only 5 tokens out of the 11 references to female soldiers in the Portuguese corpus-- especially given the fact that journalists often write about female soldiers in other parts of the world.

The same pattern is present in the words for a female referee in both languages. In Spanish DFF *árbitra* is nearly prevalent (89.3%) but still in variation with common gender *arbitro* (10.7%), while in Portuguese *árbitra* is nearly invariable (98.3%). Although a referee is most likely seen as a typically masculine profession in both countries, this alone does not explain why the DFF is nearly invariable in Portuguese, but not in Spanish. It seems likely, then, that morphological factors such as a high/low tolerance for gender mismatches between noun ending and determiner, and the existence of homonyms, may be more important in Spanish and Portuguese words of the *o/a* paradigm than are social factors, though they too may play a role. One counterexample is Portuguese *bispo* ‘bishop’ ~ *bispa* ‘[female] bishop’. While the distinctive Spanish reflex, *obispa* was nearly invariable (97.9%), the Portuguese tokens were split between lexical addition *mulheres bispos* (66.7%) and *bispa* (33.3%). However, since there were only 3 tokens overall for Portuguese female forms of *bispo*, this amounts to 2 tokens of *mulheres bispos* and 1 token of *bispa*. The French word for a female bishop ‘*une évêque*’ is similarly rare, at 4 tokens. These are split between common gender *une évêque* (3 tokens, 75%) and lexical addition *femme évêque* (1 token, 25%). Though writers never used a suffixal form *évêquesse*, an informal Google search revealed that this suffixed form is currently in use, though

it may be rare. This confirms that the morphological means to make a DFF for this word were present, but a DFF was not chosen.

We turn now to the word for medical doctor in French. Though the morphology of the gender distinction *médecin* ~ *médecine* is the most frequent type for French agentive nouns, there were no tokens of DFF *médecine* in reference to a female doctor. I propose that this is a case in which the interference from a homonym prevents its use as a feminine title, since DFF *médecine* ‘female doctor’ and *médecine* ‘[field of] medicine’ are identical. While pre-existing homonyms do not always block use of a new form (after all, the term for a male lawyer *avocat* is spelled and pronounced the same as the word for an *avocado*), it seems logical that interference is more likely to happen when the two words have closely related meanings and are likely to appear often within the same texts or discourses. Hearing or reading a sentence such as “*Une médecine pratique la médecine.*” “A (female) doctor practices medicine” may cause language users to laugh, which could discourage writers from choosing that variant. Furthermore, the fact that both *médecin* and *chirurgien* used to be prescribed as epicene forms, testifies to the fact that they were both at one time at least perceived as predominantly male professions, which could play a secondary role in preventing uptake of the DFF.

In Portuguese there was little variation between words in most noun paradigms, but this was less true for words whose masculine forms ended in *-ão*. Until recently, writers in Portugal may have hesitated between the distinctively feminine forms *capitã*, *capitoa* and *capitano* for masculine *capitão* ‘captain’. With no one distinctive feminine form dominant, this may have caused writers to choose common gender variant *a capitão*, in order to avoid the perception of having used an incorrect feminine suffix. As *-ã* became the most accepted feminine form for masculine words ending in *-ão*, writers may have begun to prefer the distinctively feminine form

capitã, in variation with common gender. Unlike other words ending in *-ão*, the feminine of *capitão* may have been in variation originally because it is an official title, usually associated with the army and navy, where women may have been less present, and where it is possible that a conservative government may have prevented the early adoption of feminine titles. In contrast, for a position such as *cirurgião* (*surgeon*) women may also have been less present in the field, but since surgeons and their teams are generally not supervised by the government, distinctively feminine variants may have been more likely to develop early on. Distinctively feminine *cirurgiã* was invariable in the *Portuguese Trends* corpus, though there were only 38 references to a female surgeon.

Finally, the words for a female pilot were variable in all three languages—in French, no tokens of a DFF were found, while in Spanish the DFF *pilota* was used in only 14.3% of tokens, and in Portuguese 5.4%. French *pilote* appears to be a case in which no distinctively female form is available, except for a possible suffixed form *pilotesse*, which was not found in the *French Trends* corpus, or discussed in any literature that was reviewed. It appears that writers, in this case, prefer to mark the feminine form through addition of the word *femme* than to use common gender, although the opposite was true for most other words of this type. For example, the prevalent form for a female mayor was common gender *une maire*, despite the existence of a competing suffixed variant *mairesse*. This, coupled with the fact that lexical addition was also used in the word for a female pilot in the Spanish and Portuguese data, suggests that actual or perceived lower levels of feminine participation in piloting aircraft or driving vehicles may be the reason that lexical addition is so often the preferred term for female pilots.

Spanish *piloto* remains highly variable, with common gender (51.4%) and lexical addition (34.3%) forms being the most frequent, and distinctively feminine *pilota* (14.3%) least

used. As noted for French *médecine*, writers' hesitation to use a form, *pilota*, that looks and sounds the same as the third person singular form of the verb *pilotar* (to pilot) may be greater because the two forms have a close semantic connection. Additionally, *pilota* is a near homonym of *pelota* 'ball'. Unlike *piloto*, which looks and sounds like the first-person singular of the same verb, use of feminine *pilota* could lead to sentences such as "Una pilota pilota," ("a pilot pilots") which some writers may prefer to avoid. It is also possible that low feminine participation in the profession contributes to the lack of a distinctively feminine form, as shown by the high rate of lexical addition.

Finally, French *pompière* 'female firefighter' was frequent, but still in variation with lexical addition *femme pompier* (18.5%) and common gender *pompier* (9.2%). There is no morphological impediment to the formation of feminine *pompière*, since *-ier ~ -ière* is a frequent masculine/feminine noun paradigm). It seems likely, then, that social factors seem cause the variation observed in the nouns for a female firefighter. As discussed in greater detail in the next section, this is supported by the greater number of lexical addition tokens than common gender. Like female soldiers, female firefighters may have been, at one time, if not currently, perceived to be rare. Both words have been shown to be resistant to morphological feminization efforts since at least the mid-90s (Planelles Ivañez 1996) and are now moving closer to a predominant distinctively feminine form.

Across all three languages, lexical addition was generally infrequent but occurred in similar words. French was the only language in which a lexical addition form was prevalent, and there were forms of this type: *femme arbitre* (female referee) (34 out of 52 tokens) and *femme diacre* (female deacon) (all 25 tokens). The lexical addition form for a female deacon was also relatively high in Spanish (36.2% or 17 out of 47 tokens), while the lexical addition form for a

female bishop was also relatively frequent in Portuguese (22.2% 2 out of 9 tokens). The French data also shows 25% of tokens of *femme évêque*, but this is only out of 4 tokens, it represents one instance of lexical addition. The word for a female pilot had lexical addition variants at high levels in French (17.7% 34 out of 192 tokens), Spanish (34.3%/ 36 out of 105 tokens) and Portuguese (18.9%/7 out of 37 tokens), while levels for a female soldier were not high, but were present at noticeable levels for all three languages—8.9% of 236 tokens for French, 7.5% of 270 tokens for Spanish, and 9.09% (1 token) out of 11 tokens for Portuguese. These forms all appear to have a few things in common: low overall token counts, traditionally masculine fields of activity, and interference from homonyms with their distinctive feminine forms (*médecine*, *pilota*, *soldada*). These are words for which feminine forms are rarely sought, and when they are, writers usually either have no distinctive feminine option available (*évêque*) other than a suffixed form (*évêquesse*), or may be reluctant to use the DFF, due to interference by a homonym, or simply because they have never heard a feminine form of the word. In these cases, rather than simply use common gender, some writers may choose to mark or intensify the rarity of the feminine form through use of lexical addition. Given the infrequency of references to women in these fields, it may increase comprehension on the part of the reader, even if that was not the writer's primary intention.

7.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, although writers chose to use DFFs for most nouns, in French they did not always do so when the only available feminization strategy was use of the suffix *-esse*, though these forms were morphologically available for all of the words in question. This can be explained by a mix of social and semantic factors. Writers were more likely to apply the *-esse*

suffix to professions related to religion, arts and humanities, possibly due to a perceived historical or literary effect in these suffixed forms, and/or the perception that women's participation is greater in these fields. Spanish writers did not use a DFF for some nouns ending in *-nte*, *-l*, and *-er*, and in Portuguese they never used them for nouns ending in *-nte*, *-l*, *-fe*, or *-er*. Nouns ending in *-nte* were feminized using DFFs when they were low-status and traditionally open to women (*dependienta* 'saleswoman') or conversely, very high status, and usually closed to women (*presidenta*). Portuguese words ending in *-nte*, however, were never feminized through DFFs, suggesting that writers do not perceive the suffix *-nte* as highly masculine, and therefore in need of a distinctive feminine form. Spanish words ending in *-l -f* and *-er* appeared to be more likely to use common gender when the masculine form was a borrowing, and when the DFFs overall morphological shape was rare (*edila*), and the same was true for Portuguese words ending in *-l*, *-fe* or *-er*.

There were other DFFs for feminine titles that were not prevalent. These are French *soldate*, *pompière*, *médecine*, *autrice* and *entrepreneuse*, Spanish *poetisa*, *profetisa*, *pilota*, *soldada*, *médica* and *árbitra*, and Portuguese *poetisa*, *profetisa*, *pilota*, *soldada*, *bispa*, *capitã*, *chefa* and *mestra* were not prominent. For French *soldate* and *pompière* there is no morphological impediment to using a DFF, so actual or perceived lack of female participation is taken to be the deciding factor in writers' choices not to use DFFs. For *médecine*, it is possible that social factors play a role, but this is most likely secondary to the presence of the homonym *médecine* '[field of] medicine'. Variation in use of *autrice* is most likely due to the fact that an association between *-teur* suffixes and the *-trice* suffix has been growing over the past few decades, leading to the rise in popularity of this form, while still in competition with *auteure*, and

use of *entrepreneuse* in variation with *entrepreneure* can also probably be accounted for by the growing association of *-eur* with *-euse*.

For both Spanish and Portuguese DFFs *poetisa* and *profetisa*, variation in use of the DFF can be attributed to a growing perception of the *-isa* suffix as pejorative, in part due to statements to this effect by female poets. DFFs *pilota* and *soldada* were probably variable due both to the presence of homonyms whose meaning is closely linked to the meaning of the noun, and to perceived or actual low feminine participation in the field. Spanish *médica* may not yet be prevalent for a mix of morphological and extralinguistic reasons. Being a doctor may be perceived as a masculine profession, but as that changes, Spanish language users may be more comfortable with the mismatch between a feminine determiner and masculine noun form than are users of Portuguese, leading to slower uptake of the DFF *médica* in Spanish, and the same can be said for Spanish *árbitra*. Finally, Portuguese *capitã* and *mestra* appear to be variable due to a mix of social and morphological factors. Women captains and “masters” of a field may have been historically rare or perceived as such. Additionally, the variety of endings available to feminize masculine nouns ending in *-ão* and the general trend not to feminize nouns ending in *-e*, may have also played a role.

Most of the cases in which a DFF was not used can be grouped according to their morphology endings. There appears to be some resistance to use of the *-esse* suffix for nouns ending in *-e* in French and to creating feminine nouns ending in *-nta* in Spanish and Portuguese. The morphology of these nouns cannot be said to cause any difficulty in forming distinctive feminine forms, as models for each type exist in the language, such as *maîtresse* and *infanta*. Therefore, language-external factors, such as the negative semantic association attached to some suffixes, or interference from a homonym, appear to be responsible for all of the noun forms

tested in this study in which a DFF was not prevalent. This relatively small set of nouns for which a DFF is not the most frequently used form do not support the DFFH. Speakers had the morphological means to write a distinctive form but chose not to do so.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the purpose, methodology and results of the present study, outlines its pedagogical implications and suggests areas for further research. It begins by restating the study's hypothesis and research questions, after which it summarizes the evidence for and against the hypothesis, and answers each of the research questions, based on the results presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Applications of the study to courses in French, Spanish and Portuguese for the professions and other language courses, as well as for Data-driven Learning are briefly discussed. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research through consideration of frequency and first attestation of nouns in this study, the application of morphological theory to the results of this study, the expansion of the corpora of this study to oral registers and other varieties of French, Spanish and Portuguese, and to consideration of processing time and acceptability judgments of existing and made-up forms for female professionals.

8.1 Summary

The purpose of this study has been to create a portrait of the current feminization strategies for professional titles in French, Spanish and Portuguese newspapers. Specifically, it has tested the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis (DFFH), which states that writers of

languages with grammatical gender on nouns, like French, Spanish and Portuguese, will use, or even create, distinctively feminine forms (DFFs) whenever there is a morphological means to do so. This hypothesis assumes that writers wish to recognize the presence of women in the workforce by using distinctive feminine forms, a practice consistent with the guidelines for gender-inclusive language in French (Becquer et al. 1999), Spanish (Lledó 2006) and Portuguese (Toledo et al. 2014). A distinctively feminine form is defined as one that differs from the masculine noun form, either in writing only, as in French *cheffe*, or in both speech and writing, as in French *agente*. In order to test this hypothesis, data were collected from three online corpora of RSS (Really Simple Syndication) newsfeeds, *French Trends*, *Spanish Trends* and *Portuguese Trends*, using the *Sketch Engine* corpus manager and text analysis tool (Kilgariff et al. 2004). The corpora were searched for a list of 58 nouns in French and Spanish, and 59 in Portuguese. As explained above in Section 4.2, these words were selected based on the results of past studies that showed each noun to be variable in its feminine form in at least one of the languages of the study.

The findings of this study provide support for the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis. For 118 nouns (67.4%) out of the 175 nouns analyzed, writers chose a distinctively feminine noun form, different from the masculine noun form, in over 90% of the feminine tokens extracted from the corpus for that noun. A feminine noun form that reached or surpassed this arbitrary 90% threshold is called a *prevalent* form in this study. A DFF was used in the majority of tokens in another 19 nouns (10.9%), but its percentage was less than 90%. In 37 (21.1%) of the other 38 nouns, a noun that is not distinctively feminine was used in a majority of tokens, and for the remaining noun, Portuguese *soldado*, the DFF *soldada* and the masculine noun, *soldado*, used with feminine referents, had the same number of tokens. The forms that are not distinctively

feminine include common gender nouns, a masculine noun used with feminine modifiers, such as Spanish *la estudiante*, and nouns formed through lexical addition, the addition of another noun form, such as French *femme* ‘woman’, in front of the masculine noun form to indicate feminine gender, such as French *femme arbitre*. Common gender was prevalent in French for most masculine nouns that end in a written *-e*, while in Spanish and Portuguese it was prevalent for most nouns whose masculine forms end in *-e*, especially *-nte*, and also for nouns ending in *-a*, *-l* and *-er*. Lexical addition accounted for the majority of tokens for only two nouns in French, *femme arbitre* ‘female referee’ and *femmes diacres* ‘female deacons’. Lexical addition was not prevalent for any noun in Spanish or Portuguese.

In addition to testing the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis, this study also answered five related questions. Each question is presented below followed by the answer provided by the present study.

1. What are the available feminization strategies for professional titles in each language?

There are four basic feminization strategies in each language. Common to all three languages are common gender and lexical addition, described in the preceding section. The two other strategies create distinctively feminine forms through morphological means specific to each language. In French these two strategies take the form of the addition of a written *-e* to the masculine noun or the addition of a longer suffix, *-trice* or *-esse*, as in *acteur* ~ *actrice* and *poète* ~ *poétesse*. The addition of a written *-e* may be accompanied by doubling of a preceding consonant in writing, as in *colonelle*, and by the addition of a final consonant in speech, as in *agente*, which may optionally be accompanied by a vocalic change, as in *pomprière*, as shown above in Table 2.1. In Spanish and Portuguese, feminization is usually achieved through a final *-a* that replaces a final *-o* or *-e*, as in Spanish *bombero* and Portuguese *bombeiro*, and Spanish and Portuguese

presidenta, or is added to a noun ending in a consonant, as in Spanish and Portuguese *autora*, as shown in Table 2.2 above. This final *-a* is sometimes nasalized and written as *-ã* in Portuguese, as in *campeã*, or as *-oa* in *patroa*. The suffixes, *-triz* and *-isa/esa*, sometimes also spelled *-issa/essa* in Portuguese, can also be used to create DFFs.

2. What are the feminization strategies for professional titles used in the newspaper corpora for the three languages?

Having first established the possible feminization strategies, it was then possible following data collection to see which nouns used each strategy and in what proportions in the corpus. Common gender and lexical addition, the two strategies which do not result in DFFs, were the most frequently used strategies for 20.7% of nouns in French, 22.4% in Spanish, and 24.6% of nouns in Portuguese. In French, common gender was the most frequent feminization strategy in 10 nouns, 17.2% of the French dataset, whereas lexical addition was the most frequent strategy only in two nouns, *femme arbitre* and *femmes diacres*, 3.4% of the French dataset. In Spanish, common gender was the most frequent feminization strategy for 13 nouns (22.4%), whereas lexical addition was not the most frequent strategy for any noun. In Portuguese, 13.5 nouns (22.8%), with the aforementioned *soldado* ~ *soldada* counting as half a noun, most often form their feminine through common gender whereas only one noun, *mulher bispo*, does so through lexical addition.

The most frequent feminization strategies in all three languages are those that result in DFFs. Of these options in French, adding a final *-e* in writing and a final consonant in speech along with a vowel change (abbreviated as Ø/e+ distinct), as in *champion* ~ *championne*, was the most common option for 14 nouns. The addition of a feminine suffix, such as *pape* ~ *papesse*

was also the most common option for 14 nouns. The next most common feminization strategy for French, used in 11 nouns, was feminine form distinct from the masculine in writing only, through the addition of a final *-e*, with optional doubling of the preceding written consonant, that does not change the word's pronunciation, as in *chef* /ʃɛf/ ~ *cheffe* /ʃɛf/. Finally, the most frequent feminization strategy in 7 nouns was the creation of a DFF through the addition of a written *-e* along with a change in pronunciation, such as *magistrat* /ma.ʒis.tʁa/ ~ *magistrate* /ma.ʒis.tʁat/. In Spanish, the strategy that was prevalent or most frequent with the largest number of nouns (38) was *-a* addition or substitution, such as *abogado* ~ *abogada*, whereas the majority of forms for 7 nouns created a DFF through a feminine suffix, *-triz*, *-esa* or *-isa*, as in *actor* ~ *actriz*. In Portuguese, the feminine form in *-a* was prevalent or the most frequent variant for 30.5 nouns, while for 5 nouns, whose masculine nouns end in *-ão*, a feminine form with a nasal *-ã* was prevalent or most frequent, and for 1 form, *patrão* ~ *patroa*, final *-oa* was prevalent. Finally, the prevalent or most frequent variant for 8 nouns is a suffixed form in *-triz* or *-isa/-esa*, as in *profeta* ~ *profetisa*.

3. How do the feminization strategies in the corpus compare to those recommended by prescriptive language guides and to the results of previous studies on feminine titles?

Spanish had the highest uptake of prescribed forms at 98.1%, the only exception being *canciller* instead of recommended *cancillera*, if one considers the forms that were not only prevalent but most frequent and all the recommended forms, not just the first recommendation. In Portuguese the uptake of prescribed forms was 83.3%, but it is important to keep in mind that more than one third of words in the Portuguese study (37.3%) were not given explicitly prescribed forms and that some of the discrepancies may be due to comparing guidelines from

Brazil with a corpus from Portugal. French had the lowest uptake of prescribed forms at 75%, but many of the discrepancies in French are in favor of forms in the corpus that are more distinctively feminine than the recommendations of the guidelines. In French, for example, speakers created DFFs in some cases even when the guidelines prescribed a nondistinctive form, such as *cheffe* rather than the prescribed *chef*, and *poétesse* rather than recommended *poète*. However, sometimes a less distinctive feminine form was used, such as *entrepreneure* instead of *entrepreneuse*. In two nouns, speakers preferred lexical addition over a prescribed common gender form or distinctive form, as in *femme arbitre* instead of common gender *arbitre* and *femme diacre* instead of *diaconesse*. If one considers only the first recommendation, then we can observe that Spanish speakers did not produce DFFs for 3 out of 5 masculine nouns ending in *-ente/-ante*, though the distinct suffix *-enta* was the first recommendation. They did, however, prefer the prescribed form in *presidenta* and *dependienta*. Speakers did not prefer the first recommendation a DFF for some nouns ending in *-l*, preferring *edil* (98.6%) to *edila* (1.4%) and *fiscal* (97.9%) to *fiscala* (2.1%), and *-r*, preferring *canciller* (81.4%) to *cancillera* (18.6%). In Portuguese, speakers never produced DFFs for words ending in *-ente/-ante*, but there is disagreement between the Portuguese and Brazilian guides on the recommended form, with the Brazilian guides favoring DFFs in *-enta* and *-anta*. The Portuguese guide does not prescribe DFFs for these nouns, and newspaper writers did not produce them. The Brazilian guide recommended the forms *chefa*, *consulesa*, *coronela* and *mestra*, but writers used the common gender forms more often. Only *mestra* at 33% even accounted for more than 10% of the feminine tokens for its noun. With the exception of the words *atriz* ‘actress’ and *imperatriz* ‘empress’, writers never produced DFFs ending in *-triz* to refer to female professionals, even

though *diretriz* '[female] director' and *embaixatriz* '[female] ambassador' were recommended as secondary, optional alternatives to the prevalent forms *diretora* and *embaixadora*.

In sum, the feminine forms in the Spanish and Portuguese corpora usually aligned with the guides' first recommendation, except for most words ending in *-nte*, *-e*, *l* and, in Spanish, *-er*. Writers in French newspapers usually followed the guidelines except when they produced more DFFs than prescribed. For example, they used the suffixed noun *autrice* '[female] author' in place of the recommended form in final *-e*, *auteure*. This shows opposite tendencies in the three languages, with French writers producing more DFFs than the guides recommended, Spanish producing slightly fewer DFFs, but adhering more to the guide's standards in doing so, and Portuguese showing adherence to the very limited set of suggestions from Portugal, but less adherence to the Brazilian guide's recommendations, which were more distinctively feminine than those recommended by the guide written in Portugal.

4. When writers do not use an available feminine form for a particular noun, is this form not used because the shape of the feminine form is undesirable in some way, an internal factor, or because of an external factor, such as a pejorative connotation with the word or the lack of representation of women in a particular profession?

Variations within and exceptions to the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis can be explained by a combination of internal morphological and external semantic or sociological factors. However, external factors appear to be primary, because, in most cases a pejorative association with a feminine suffix was the most likely cause of the failure to use a DFF, while interference from a homonym also occurred in a smaller number of cases.

In Spanish and Portuguese *piloto*, French and Spanish *médecin/médico*, and Spanish *soldado*, it appears that interference from a homonym with a different meaning, an internal primary conditioning factor, interacts with sector of activity, an external factor. Spanish and Portuguese *pilota* also means ‘he/she pilots’ and is similar to *pelota* ‘ball’. French *médecine* is identical to the word for the field of medicine and Spanish *soldada* also means ‘salary’ and ‘welded’, the past participle of *soldar*. Sector of activity alone would not account for the lack of DFFs, since other high-prestige medical professions, such as the words for surgeon in all three languages, have frequent distinctively feminine forms, as do stereotypically masculine, manual-labor jobs such as Spanish *bombero/bombero* and Portuguese *bombeiro/bombeira* ‘firefighter’.

In other words, it appears that feminine words are not preferred because of their semantic connotations and their sector of activity. The distinction between the kinds of French nouns that are frequently feminized using the *-esse* suffix appears at first glance to be based on job sector. Feminine forms within the arts and humanities are frequent, such as *poétesse* ‘[female] poet’ and *maîtresse* ‘[female] teacher/professor/master’, whereas *maire* ‘[female] mayor’ within the political sphere is infrequent. However, there could also be another external factor at work, namely the possible connotation of inferiority attached to *-esse*, labeled by Becquer et al. (1999:22) as “outdated, even devalorizing.” Writers attached it selectively to a few nouns, such as *poétesse* and *maîtresse*, in which the pejorative connotation has apparently been lost, and to a religious title, like *prêtresse*, in which it may never have had this connotation. It is then a semantic reason, the connotation of inferiority, attached to the *-esse* suffix itself that likely conditions the selective use of *-esse* to create DFFs. It is important to note that there is no apparent internal obstacle to adding *-esse* to any noun. One can easily create *jugesse* from *juge*, for example, even though *jugesse* is unattested in the *French Trends* corpus.

There may be a pejorative connotation attached to the *-isa* suffix in Spanish and Portuguese, like the inferior connotation of *-esse* in French, that may explain the preference for common gender *poeta* over *poetisa*. As Balcells (2008:361) recounts in his overview of the “polemic” around the use of *poeta* or *poetisa* to refer to female poets in Spain, the latter have resisted the label *poetisa* since the second half of the 19th century, with criticism growing stronger in the first half of the 20th, when Ernestina de Champourcin wrote that hearing it next to her name made her “feel a strong desire to disappear, if not to attack the author of the unfortunate phrase”. Martins (2007), in an article published on the Portuguese reference website *Ciberdúvidas da língua portuguesa*, notes a similar resistance in Portugal, where a common gender form of *poeta* “is not registered in any grammar or dictionary” but is reclaimed by some female poets, such as the 20th century poet Natália Correia, in place of the prescribed form *poetisa*.

Spanish *fiscal* and Portuguese *mestre* are the only two cases in this corpus in which sociological factors would appear to be primary with no apparent interaction with internal or semantic factors. Spanish *concejala* ‘[female] town counselor’ has the same suffix as *fiscal* ‘[female] prosecutor’, yet *concejala* is used at much higher rates than *fiscal*. It appears that some aspect of *fiscal*’s meaning interferes with feminization, as is also likely the case for Portuguese *mestre*.

Further, an interesting observation can be made about the differences in feminization of certain words in Spanish and Portuguese. While both *médica* and *soldada* have the same pre-existing meanings in Portuguese that I have theorized interfere with their use as titles for female doctors and soldiers in Spanish, use of the DFF for both was much higher in Portuguese. Because it seems unlikely that the number of female doctors and soldiers is much higher in Portugal than

in Spain, Fraser's (2015 143-144) observation that mismatches between gender marking on determiners and noun endings are more easily tolerated in Spanish than in French may perhaps also be true of Spanish and Portuguese. If it is indeed true that Spanish speakers accept an article-noun mismatch like *la medico* more readily than Portuguese speakers would accept *a médico*, then this could explain the difference between the greater frequency of the forms *soldada* and *médica* in Portuguese and their lower frequency in Spanish.

5. What are the differences in feminization strategies between the varieties of French, Spanish and Portuguese written in France, Spain and Portugal?

In France, writers showed an uneven use of the suffix *-esse*, which was predominant in some words, such as *maîtresse* 'teacher/professor/mistress' and *poétesse* '[female] poet' and infrequent in others such as *maïresse* 'female mayor'. I attribute this exception to a hesitation to apply this suffix to fields outside of the humanities or to historical religious titles, due to a preexisting pejorative connotation. However, the fact that the *-esse* suffix is now used predominantly to refer to female poets and teachers suggests that this pejorative effect may be weakening. Conversely, the suffixal form *alcaldesa* for a female mayor is preferred in Spanish, but the overall number of words for which the *-esa/-isa* suffix was used is smaller than in French, and restricted to historical titles, such as *vizcondesa* 'vizcountess', not attested in the corpus, religious titles such as *sacerdotisa* 'priestess' the word for a female poet *poetisa* and a handful of words referring to mythical beings, such as *vampiresa* 'female vampire', not attested in the corpus. Because *alcaldesa* is by far the most frequent Spanish form ending in *-esa* in the *Spanish Trends* corpus, it appears to be an anomaly, perhaps a remnant of a historical time period in which the *-esa* suffix was less restricted. In Spanish and Portuguese, *poetisa* was present, but not

predominant, which I attribute to societal factors, specifically a pejorative connotation that some female poets in both languages have decried.

It appears, then that there may be opposite trends occurring in the use of the *-esse/-isa/-esa* suffix in French, and in Spanish and Portuguese. In French, use appears to be growing, in response to a partial loss of the pejorative status that was noted in Becquer et al. (1999:7). However, it still does not appear to be frequent outside of words in which it has historically been used, namely in the arts and humanities and religious spheres. In Spain and Portugal, however, use appears restricted to learned words, including religious roles, antiquated social titles (such as *baronesa* ‘baroness’) and the word *alcaldesa*, which is by far the most frequent word ending in *-esa* in the corpus.

Overall, suffixed DFFs were used more in French than in Spanish or Portuguese, due not only to the differences in use of the *-esse/-isa/-esa* suffixes mentioned above, but also to the productivity of the French suffix *-trice*. The French corpus contained eight words that used *-trice* or *-drice*, which was always the most frequent variant for its type. These include *actrice*, *ambassadrice*, *autrice*, *directrice*, *impératrice*, *enquêteurice*, *illustratrice*, and *senatrice*. Nouns in Spanish and Portuguese with the suffix *-triz*, the cognate of French *-trice* are less common than in French. In the Spanish corpus there were only two words with a feminine form in *-triz*, *actriz* ‘actress’ and *imperatriz* ‘empress’, which were both prevalent. The Portuguese corpus contained three words, *atriz*, *imperatriz* and *embaixatriz*, but only the first two were prevalent. Portuguese *embaixatriz* was only used in 2 tokens out of 634 feminine tokens of *embaixador*, neither of which referred to a female ambassador, but rather to an ambassador for the Ikea brand and to trees as an ambassador for nature. Human female ambassadors were always referred to using the DFF *embaixadora*. The greater use of the suffix *-trice* in French than *-triz* in Spanish and

Portuguese is likely due to the frequency and regularity in Spanish and Portuguese of the *-dor ~ -dora* suffixes, the ending for most of the cognates or the French nouns in *-trice*. Suffixation is both more frequent, and more productive in French than in Spanish or Portuguese; languages in which DFFs were nearly always formed through *-a* addition or substitution.

Lexical addition was also used more in French than in either Spanish or Portuguese, and Portuguese used substantially less lexical addition than did Spanish. The French dataset contained 476 tokens of lexical addition, spread over 26 words, and was the most frequent form for two words, *femme arbitre* and *femme diacre*. The Spanish data contained 134 tokens of lexical addition spread over 16 words, none of which were the most frequent variant for their word. The Portuguese data contained only 73 tokens of lexical addition, spread over 7 words, but the majority of the tokens (57/73 which is 78%) were of the type *mulher presidente*, and these did not make up even 1% of the feminine tokens of *presidente*, which were nearly always (in 99.4% of cases) common gender. Although lexical addition was the most frequent variant for one word, *bispo*, the feminine form of this word only occurred three times in the corpus, meaning that there were just two tokens of *mulher bispo*. Therefore, despite the fact that Portuguese has one word with lexical addition as its most frequent strategy, because the tokens of that word are so few, a hierarchy can still be established in which lexical addition is used most frequently, and for the greatest number of words, in French, while in Spanish it is used less frequently, and in Portuguese least of all, with use nearly restricted to one word, *mulher presidente*, which, at 11,191 tokens overall, was also the highest-frequency feminine form in the Portuguese dataset.

Finally, there was less variation of strategies used for individual words within their morphological type in Portuguese than in Spanish. For example, Portuguese masculine nouns ending in *-l*, *-f* or *-er* always had prevalent common gender feminine forms, while in Spanish the

cognates for these same words showed higher variation between common gender and DFFs ending in *-a* or *-esa* and the DFF *concejala* was most frequent in Spanish, but not in Portuguese. Additionally, some forms were prevalent in Portuguese, but only most frequent in Spanish, such as *árbitra* ‘referee’, *médica* ‘doctor’, *jueza* ‘judge’, *una canceller* ‘chancellor’, *una coronel* ‘coronel’, *una cónsul* ‘consul’. The feminization strategies used in Portuguese, then, were overall more uniformly applied to morphological groups than in Spanish, and there was slightly less use of DFFs in Portuguese (75.9%) than in Spanish (81%) or French (79.3%).

The differences between the feminization strategies used in each language may be summarized in the following manner: French writers use a wider variety of feminization strategies due to the higher number and productivity of suffixed forms in that language, and to the higher use of lexical addition than in Spanish or Portuguese. However, the percentage of use of nondistinctive feminine forms is nearly the same in French (20.7%) and Spanish (19%), but slightly higher in Portuguese (23.7%), which is mainly due to increased use of common gender in Portuguese, especially in nouns whose masculine ends in *-ente*. Lexical addition is most frequent in French, less so in Spanish and least of all in Portuguese. While Spanish and Portuguese writers nearly always form the feminine through *-a* addition or substitution, Portuguese writers do so in a more uniform fashion, creating less variation within word types and within individual words than in Spanish, which results in higher use of common gender in Portuguese.

8.2 Pedagogical implications of the study

The results of this study will help guide developers of language courses and especially courses focused on teaching French, Spanish or Portuguese for the professions in choosing terms

for female professionals. The comparison of corpus data with recommendations by government agencies and the results of past studies in Chapter 6 show course developers where writers publishing in a formal register diverge from prescriptive guidelines, information that can be used to develop learning materials that reflect authentic, current written usage that is appropriate for professional, written correspondence.

Additionally, the present study can serve as a model for classes using the Data-Driven Learning (DDL) approach (Johns 1994) in which students investigate concordance data for given words and compare their findings to the entries for the same words in dictionaries and other reference works. Materials could be developed from the present study's data, such as comparisons between articles in which common gender or distinctive feminine forms of the same word type were used, with students making observations about factors that could have led each author to choose each form and using the form as a model. In the latter case, students could perform a search for feminine forms in an oral corpus of one the languages in this study and compare those forms with the results of the present study, after first hypothesizing which terms would be used more frequently in the oral corpora. They could then draw conclusions from the results that would allow them to gain insight into the differences between oral and written registers in their language of study. Awareness of these differences would then allow language learners to work on using appropriate forms in spoken and written registers.

8.3 Directions for future research

One direction for future study on the same corpora is to examine the effects of frequency and the amount of time a feminine noun has existed in the lexicon of each language on the presence of distinctively feminine forms for words of similar morphological types. One could

hypothesize that frequency will correlate positively with DFFs so that more frequent nouns are more likely to have distinctively feminine forms. One can also assume that the later attestation of a noun will correlate positively with DFFs. The Spanish words *edil* and *concejal* can offer an example. Both mean ‘town counselor’ and both end in *-l*, yet the DFF *concejala* was used in 82.6% of the tokens of *concejal* referring to women, while the DFF *edila* was used in only 1.4%. It appears, though, that frequency alone cannot account for this difference. Even though feminine *concejal* was over twice as frequent as feminine *edil* (16,471 tokens to 7,570), *edil* was still among the most frequently feminized words in the corpus. Adding the factor of word age would nuance this factor and possibly help to explain why some frequent words are not feminized using DFFs. In the case of *edil* and *concejal*, the former comes directly from Latin *aedilis* (RAE 2004), while the latter was “formed from Latin roots” (Anders 2023) and may therefore be a newer word, for which writers may more readily accept a distinctive feminine form. Date of first attestation could also be determined by consulting etymological dictionaries and online corpora of older texts. Future research could then determine whether the origin of a DFF or its date of first attestation has any correlation with its current use. In the same way that one can determine the date of first attestation of a feminine noun from corpora of older texts, one can also use them to trace the history of feminine forms over time. This would make it possible to determine the popularity of a form over time and to determine whether the forms in use today are modern creations, forms in continuous use since their first attestation, or whether they are forms that declined in use and have been revived.

Another way of analyzing the feminine title in this study’s dataset would be to view them through the lens of morphological theory. For example, by using the canonical approach to agreement (Corbett 2006) one can determine whether the most canonical feminine forms were

those chosen by language users. The canonical approach, developed as a theoretical tool to aid typologists in measuring and categorizing real instances of language use, consists in a set of three principles that are used to create a hierarchy of canonicity among agreement types, with canonical forms defined as “the best and clearest examples” of a phenomenon (Corbett 2006:8-9). These principles state that canonical agreement is redundant, rather than informative, syntactically simple, and that “the closer the expression of agreement is to canonical (i.e. affixal) inflectional morphology, the more canonical it is as agreement” (Corbett 2006:26-27). Based on these three principles, Corbett (2006:26-27) sets out a hierarchy of canonicity in 19 criteria that relate to controllers, targets, domains, features and conditions, not all of which are relevant to the forms examined in this study. Criteria 5 through 8 hierarchize agreement on target forms and are therefore ideal as analytical tools for the dataset in the present study. In the following set of criteria representing the hierarchy from Corbett (2006:12-16), C followed by a number is the number of a criterion and the symbol > means “is more canonical than”:

C-5: bound > free, C-5': inflectional marking (affix) > clitic > free word

C-6: obligatory > optional

C-7: regular > suppletive

C-8: alliterative > opaque. Alliterative, in this case, means that “the agreement marker on the target is identical to a formant of the controller” and “the same agreement marker is used for different agreement targets” (Corbett 2006:16).

This hierarchy can be applied to the Spanish dataset of the present study to create the following hierarchy for canonicity: o/a inflection > e/a inflection > Ø/a inflection > suffixation > lexical addition > common gender. o/a inflection is judged to be most canonical because it is inflectional morphology that is bound to the noun, is regular rather than suppletive, and is

alliterative in the sense that it is also distinguishes masculine and feminine gender in other kinds of targets, such as adjectives (*bello, bella*) and pronouns (*lo~la, ello~ella*). While e/a inflection has the same properties as o/a inflection, it is less frequent overall within the gender paradigm of Spanish (Santos et al. 2022:1149), making it less canonical than o/a agreement, but more canonical than Ø/a inflection, which does not occur in pronouns. Because suffixed forms are suppletive, they are less canonical than the inflected forms. Lexical addition is not affixal, and therefore is less canonical than all affixed terms, and common gender does not express agreement on the target (in this case the noun), making it the least canonical of all. It would be interesting then to see whether the prevalent feminine forms in each language are the most canonical. This would help to explain the DFFs chosen and also lend support to the applicability of a morphological theory.

Turning now from a theoretical approach to an applied one, it would be interesting to gain further information about the factors that account for the variation among feminine forms by asking language users which forms they use, and why. Acceptability judgment surveys could be created that present language users with the feminine forms found in this study, to find out whether they are aware of all the different forms, which ones they themselves use, and which they find acceptable or unacceptable, even if they don't necessarily use them. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods used in such a survey would complement the present study by providing clues as to whether language users perceive a form they don't use as simply unfamiliar or unknown, because they have not needed to address or refer to a female professional in that field, or as unacceptable in which case speakers make a conscious decision not to use it. Additionally, speakers could be asked to provide masculine forms for professional titles that historically did not have one, such as French *sage-femme* 'midwife' or Spanish *ama de casa* and

Portuguese *dona de casa*, both of which translate to ‘homemaker’. The inclusion of new masculine noun forms could reveal important aspects of language users’ decision-making process when forming new nouns, including whether the same strategies are used to create new feminine and masculine noun forms and whether there is a difference in the relative influence of internal and external factors pertaining to new masculine and feminine nouns.

A complement to an acceptability judgment task of attested feminine forms would be a task that measures processing time of these same forms and another that evaluates acceptability of made-up feminine forms. One could ask participants to read a written text containing a variety of feminine variants for different nouns while wearing an eye-tracking device in order to measure the length of processing time required for each lexical item. The time spent on each feminine variant could be compared across different participants to determine whether similar patterns were observed, and, if so, whether some feminine variants require more processing time on the part of language users. This longer processing time could indicate unfamiliarity with certain forms or hesitation in accepting them. A follow-up to this study could ask participants their attitudes toward the feminine forms they took longer to process. Another study could ask participants to evaluate the acceptability of made-up feminine variants and to comment on their reactions to these forms as a way of testing hypotheses regarding the choice of existing forms. For example, speakers’ reactions to invented words ending in *-esse* or *-euse* would indicate whether there is a positive or negative emotional bias attached to these suffixes in French, as discussed above in Section 8.1 in response to research question 4.

Because newspaper articles represent a formal, written register that may reflect different patterns of use than more informal and/or oral language, research using oral corpora could complement the results of the current study by exploring whether language users’ choice of

feminization strategies differs according to register. This could help to reveal the underlying factors conditioning choice of feminization strategy, since phonological factors conditioning use would be more evident in an oral corpus than in written one. Differences between the two datasets that are not attributable to phonological factors could then more easily be identified as resulting from extralinguistic factors, such as social pressure to adhere to norms in writing. Additionally, comparative studies with other francophone, hispanophone and lusophone countries could help to resolve the same question, as one would expect a language-internal factor to produce consistent results regardless of where the language is spoken, once regional differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are accounted for. For example, *-nta* variants, such as *presidenta*, are frequent in Brazilian Portuguese yet nearly nonexistent in the present study in European Portuguese where just one form, *presidenta* had only 9 tokens out of 11,191. There is a small difference in the pronunciation of the final syllable of the masculine noun, written *-te*, which is /ti/ in Lisbon and /tʃi/ in São Paulo (Ashby et al. 2012), but this is unlikely to affect the adoption of the feminine noun *presidenta* whose final suffix is pronounced similarly in both countries. It appears then that other reasons are behind the different frequency of use of *presidenta* in Portugal and Brazil, such as different attitudes of speakers and writers toward the feminization of this form.

Further comparative studies of Spanish and Portuguese could determine why some words that are resistant to feminization in Spanish, such as *médico* and *soldado*, yet are frequently feminized in Portuguese. For example, a study focused on nouns of the o/a paradigm could collect tokens of agentive nouns that are not professional titles, such as *amigo ~ amiga* ‘[male] friend ~ [female] friend’ to determine whether there is greater overall uniformity in the use of *-o* with masculine nouns and *-a* with feminine nouns in Portuguese than in Spanish, as the results of

the current study suggest. Similarly, an in-depth study of the list of words that this study showed to be resistant to feminization in both languages, such as *canciller*, *chef*, *cónsul/cónsul*, *edil*, could be carried out to verify whether the words' forms, or their origin as borrowings or learned words, or another factor is responsible for this resistance. This could be done by compiling a list of other borrowings and learned words from both languages, to see whether they behave in the same way as those in the study. If not, external factors would appear to be responsible for their resistance to feminization.

In French, corpus-based research could be done to determine with greater clarity the factors that govern language users' choices between the *-trice* and *-euse* variants and the motivation for them. For example, why did writers in the current study strongly prefer the non-prescribed form for a female investigator, *enquêteurice*, over prescribed *enquêteuse*. When the verbal base of the feminine noun is clear, writers usually applied the rule of using *-teuse* for the feminine form, such as *conteuse* 'storyteller' from the verb '*conter*' 'to tell'. Even though *enquêter* 'to investigate' is the clear root of *enquêteur*, writers preferred *enquêteurice* in 98% of the feminine tokens for this noun. If language users were shown to use feminine forms ending in *-trice* most frequently for the majority of nouns ending in *-teur*, regardless of whether or not the stem is a verb, this would strongly support Cartignies's (1997:169) prediction that in the future speakers will use the *-trice* feminine suffix with all *-teur* masculine nouns and *-euse* as the feminine of masculine nouns ending in *-eur*, which the results of the current study support. Additionally, the *-esse* suffix could be further researched in order to determine which words had a historical *-esse* suffix, so as to then apply this knowledge to a current corpus to determine whether this suffix is productive. This could be determined by comparing a list of words ending in *-esse* found in a corpus of current French to a list of those found in a historical corpus, and

through consulting reference works on historical word use, such as *Trésor de la Langue Française* (TdlF). Words that exist in current usage but appear to have no historical form could provide evidence of productivity. Additionally, research could be carried out to determine in greater detail the factors currently constrain use of the *-esse* suffix. This is of particular interest, because if this suffix were to become fully productive, there would be no words in French without a possible DFF.

In Spanish, additional research could be undertaken to determine the factors that influence use of the *-enta/-anta* suffix. Past researchers have theorized that it is conditioned by social factors (Bengoechea et al. 2009:45), but the number of words ending in *-ente/-ante* was too small in the corpus for the present study to draw firm conclusions. A focused study of nouns with these endings that includes a greater variety of forms spanning work sectors of varying levels of prestige could confirm whether feminine forms are more frequent in lower-status professions such as *dependienta* ‘saleswoman’ and *sirvienta* ‘[female] servant’, or whether there is a language-internal factor that influences the choice of feminine variant. Studies on words ending in final consonants *-l*, *-er* and *-z* could help to clarify whether internal or external factors disfavor feminization of *edil*, *fiscal*, *canciller*, yet favor the increasing use of *jueza*. It is now predominantly a DFF, but it may be that other words ending in *-z*, such as *aprendiza* ‘[female] apprentice/learner’, are slower to feminize.

Finally, in Portuguese, there is a lack of current studies on feminization outside of Brazil. Further studies on all aspects of feminization, especially those with a quantitative component, would contribute to the construction of an empirical knowledge base on the current state of grammatical gender in general, and feminine titles in particular, in Portuguese. One issue raised,

but not answered, by the current study is the question of whether the suffixes *-oa*, *-ona* and *-ina* are currently productive in European Portuguese, and the factors that condition their use.

8.4 Conclusion

This study set out to create a portrait of current feminization patterns used in newspaper writing within France, Spain and Portugal, especially as they relate to the recommendations issued by government-sponsored commissions and the results of past studies. As an analytical tool, the Distinctive Feminine Forms Hypothesis (DFFH) was formulated, along with five additional research questions in order to ascertain the overall patterns of use of feminine titles across the three languages. The major finding of this study is that the use of distinctive feminine forms is now the most common way of expressing feminine gender in professional titles across all three languages, and that the cases in which writers do not use distinctive forms are usually tied to either a interference from a homonym, such as French *médecine* ‘medicine’, or a pejorative connotation associated with the suffix itself, such as Spanish and Portuguese *-isa* and French *-esse*. However, writers in Spain and Portugal appeared resistant to feminizing nouns of some morphological groups, though there appears to be no morphological impediment to doing so. These included nouns ending in *-ente*, *-l*, *-f* and *-er*. Although it was impossible to know with certainty writers’ motivations for this resistance, the lack of morphological impediments points to possible language-external factors, such an association of the *-enta* suffix with low-status professions that have typically been open to women, or to the lack of women’s participation in a field. To test this finding, further studies of these morphemes in additional words and in the oral register and other varieties of French, Spanish and Portuguese have been recommended to gain further insight into language users’ perception and use of distinctive feminine forms.

Overall, the results of this study show that most newspaper writers in France, Spain and Portugal now aim to use a distinctively feminine form to represent female professionals, and usually do so whenever there is no risk of pejoration. This puts their writing in line with government recommendations, although writers in France tend to use forms that are distinctive even when a less-distinctive form is recommended, for example, they prefer *cheffe* to the recommended noun *chef*. The results also showed an increase in use of DFFs compared to the results of past studies in all three languages, which indicates a growing trend towards using distinctive forms, that could result in loss of variation in patterns that currently show variation between use of common gender and distinctive forms, resulting in fully distinctive noun paradigms such as French *-e ~ -esse* and Spanish/Portuguese *-nte/-nta*.

The empirical information gathered and analyzed in this study updates the existing research on feminization of professional titles and in so doing represents a useful resource for instructors teaching courses that include professional, written communication. It also updates the existing research on feminization of professional titles, especially by showing an increase in use of suffixed forms such as *autrice* in French and an increase in overall use of distinctive feminine forms, usually through *-a* addition or substitution, in Spanish and Portuguese. Finally, the current study makes a contribution to the literature on Portuguese by providing a contemporary description of feminization in Portugal, for which the last corpus study (Gouveia 2007) based its data on corpus findings compiled in 1984.

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Appendix A: Feminine nouns in the corpora in French, Spanish and Portuguese in alphabetical order by English meaning

English meaning	French	Spanish	Portuguese
actor	actrice	actriz	atriz
agent	agente	agente	agente
ambassador	ambassadrice	embajadora	embaixadora
architect	architecte	arquitecta	arquiteta
attaché	attachée	agregada	adida
author	autrice 66.9% auteure 32.8%	autora	autora
bishop	évêque 75% femme évêque 25%	obispa	mulher bispo 66.7% bispa 33.3%
captain	capitaine	capitana	capitã 86.0% capitão 14.0%
champion	championne	campeona	campeã
chancellor	chancelière	canciller 81.4% cancillera 18.6%	canceler
chef (culinary)	chef	chef	chef
chief/boss	chefe	jefa	chefe
city council member	édile	edil	edil
coach/trainer	entraîneuse 61.7% entraîneur 37.4%	entrenadora	treinadora
consul	consule	cónsul 50%	cônsul
coronel	colonelle	coronel 70.8% coronela 28.1%	coronel
corporal	caporale	caporala	--
councilor	conseillère	concejala 82.6% concejal 17.4%	concealheira
deacon	femme diacre	diaconisa 59.6% mujer diácono 36.2%	diaconisa
deputy	députée	diputada	deputada
director	directrice	directora	directora
doctor	docteure	doctora	doutora
emperor	impératrice	emperatriz	imperatriz
engineer	ingénieure	ingeniera	engenheira
entrepreneur	entrepreneuse 64.0% entrepreneuse 34.1%	emprededora	empreendedora
entrepreneur/impresario	imprésaria	empresaria	empresária
firefighter	pomprière 72.3% femme pompier 18.5%	bombrera	bombeira
governor	gouverneure	gobernadora	governadora
illustrator	illustratrice	ilustradora	ilustradora
investigator	enquêteur	investigadora	investigadora
judge	juge	jueza 76.7% juez 23.3%	juiza
lawyer	avocate	abogada	advogada
magistrate	magistrate	magistrada	magistrada
manager	gérante	gerente	gerente
master/teacher	maîtresse	maestra	mestre 66.7% mestra 33.3%

mayor	maire	alcaldesa	alcaldesa 85.7%
			alcaide 14.3%
mayor	--	--	autarca
medical doctor	médecin 86.9%	médica 86.3%	médica
	femme médecin 13.1%	medico 13.3%	
minister	ministre	ministra	ministra
pilot	pilote 82.3%	piloto 51.4%	piloto 75.7%
		mujer piloto 34.3%	mulher piloto 18.9%
	femme pilote 17.7%	pilota 14.3%	pilota 5.4%
poet	poétesse 89.4%	poeta 80.3%	poetisa 69.3%
	poète 10.6%	poetisa 18.2%	poeta 30.7%
pope	papesse	papisa 87.0%	papisa
		papa 8.7%	
		mujer papa 4.3%	
prefect	préfète	prefecta	prefeita
president	présidente	presidenta	presidente
priest	prêtresse	sacerdotisa	sacerdotisa
professor	professeure	profesora	professora
prophet	prophétesse	profetisa 63.6%	profetisa 87.5%
		profeta 36.4%	profeta 12.5%
prosecutor	procureure	fiscal	procuradora
referee	femme arbitre 65.4%	árbitra 89.2%	árbitra
	arbitre 34.6%	árbitro 10.1%	
researcher	chercheuse	buscadora	pesquisadora
robber	voleuse	ladrona	ladra
salesclerk	vendeuse	dependienta	vendedora
secretary	secrétaire	secretaria	secretária
senator	sénatrice	senadora	senadora
soldier	soldate 89.8%	soldado	soldada 45.45%
			soldado 45.45%
	femme soldat 8.9%		mulher soldado 9.1%
storyteller	conteuse	cuentista	contadora
student	étudiante	estudiante	estudante
surgeon	chirurgienne	cirujana	cirurgiã
writer/notary/secretary	écrivaine	escribana	escrivã

Legend:

common gender

lexical addition

-e same (French only)

-e distinct/-a

suffix