



The Marriage Status of Women in the Belarusian Literary Language and Northeastern Dialects

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Abstract. The article compares the semantics of the lexical group “the names of women by marital status” in the Belarusian literary language and in the northeastern dialect, the distribution area of which is the Vitebsk region and part of the Mogilev region. Of the 24 names extracted from the general language and regional dictionaries, the overwhelming majority (two-thirds, i.e. 66.66%) are literary words. This is natural, since the literary language as the core of the national language has a more extensive vocabulary. The names of women were divided according to marital status, i.e. in relation to marriage, into four subgroups: premarital, marital, postmarital, and extramarital. The words for women in marriage have the same number in the literary language and in the dialect. Literary names of women of illegitimate status have a significant numerical advantage – 4 to 1 dialect word. Although there are fewer dialect names, they differ, firstly, in greater expressiveness and figurativeness, and, secondly, in a variety of word formation means – suffixes. The analysis also showed that the evaluative connotations of units in this lexico-semantic group (LSG) are influenced by sociocultural gender stereotypes. Words denoting women in premarital and marital status have a positive connotation, the names of women in extramarital status have a negative connotation, and the names of divorced women have a negative connotation as well.

Keywords: Belarusian literary language, northeastern dialect, names of women, marital status, categorical seme, marker, distinguisher

Introduction

The Belarusian dialect language is represented by “the main group of dialects” and the dialects of Western Polissya. The first one is divided into northeastern, southwestern, and intermediate central dialects (Koryakov 2002: 114). The relationship between the Belarusian literary language and its dialects, primarily in terms of social and areal stratification, has become the object of study by many scientists (cf. Vakar 1956, Dingley 1989, Wexler 1992, Mechkovskaya 1994, Koryakov 2002, Lukashanets 2009, etc.). J. Getka writes about the special role of the northeastern dialect in the codification of the Belarusian literary language: “Along with the normalization of the literary language and the subsequent orthographic reform (1933), the most popular dialect in this historical and cultural period (the Belarusian dialect) is the language of the texts of this period” (Getka 2018: 186). The range of this dialect is located in the northeastern part of Belarus on the territory of the Vitebsk region and the central and eastern parts of the Mogilev region (cf. *Dyjaliiektalahičny atlas bielaruskaj movy* 1963). The linguists have explored individual features of the northeastern dialect. At present, the main phonetic features of the literary and dialect pronunciation are described, and the phonetic marking of various functional and territorial varieties of the Belarusian language – literary and dialect – has been established (Rusak & Getsevich 2018: 87–88). N. V. Sivitskaya (2017) establishes the factors that influence the choice of a northeastern dialect or literary national language by a speaker in a certain sociocultural situation. The scientists conduct a comparative description of individual groups of dialect and literary vocabulary. The work of L. I. Zlobin and Ya. N. Marozava is close for our study, as they analyse the dialect–literary oppositions in the vocabulary system that arise as a result of the use of different word formation means (Zlobin & Marozava 2010). Vitebsk scientists have carried out a large lexicographic work on compiling a two-volume regional dialect dictionary: *Rehijanaĺny sloŭnik Viciebščyny* [Regional Dictionary of the Vitebsk Area] (2012–2014). This dialect dictionary, edited by L. I. Zlobin and A. S. Dzyadova, became the source of dialect vocabulary in this article. The purpose of our study is to compare the northeastern dialect lexical units that name women depending on marital status with similar names in the literary Belarusian language. As a result, we will try to establish the similarities and differences between the northeastern dialect and literary units, to identify factors that affect the semantics of literary and dialect words.

Z. Farkas writes that in the sociological literature the term “social status” is used to denote socioeconomic status, social status by role, and social status by prestige (Farkas 2022: 425). He suggests relying on the understanding of social status by role, which was formulated by T. Parsons: “The social status defined in connection with the role is a position in the social system to which specified

rights and duties, specified expectations or norms, and the roles made up by them apply” (Parsons 1951: 25). In this article, we also use the term “status” as understood by Parsons.

Marriage, family rites and rituals in Belarusian culture have traditionally been studied from ethnographic, cultural, and historical points of view (cf. Nikol’skiy 1956, Varfolomeeva 1988, Kazakova 2007, etc.). Marriage and wedding vocabulary were considered by P. Michajlaŭ (2005, 2009), S. Faciejeva (2005), and K. L. Khazanava (2012). The names of women in terms of their marital status have not been studied either in the Belarusian literary language or in its dialects; therefore, our article is a contribution to the linguistic study of the named vocabulary group.

1. Material and research methods

The material for the study is the names of women in the Belarusian literary language and in the northeastern (Vitebsk) dialect, related to their position in relation to marriage. Lexicographic sources of material for the study are the dictionaries of the literary Belarusian language: *Tlumachal’ny sloŭnik belaruskaj movy* [Explanatory Dictionary of the Belarusian Language] in 5 volumes (1977–1984) (hereinafter referred to as TSBM),¹ *Frazealagichny sloŭnik belaruskaj movy* [Phraseological Dictionary of the Belarusian Language] I. Ya. Lepeshaŭ in 2 volumes (1993) (hereinafter FSBM), *Russko-bielorusskij slovaŭ* [Russian–Belarusian Dictionary] in 2 volumes 1991 (hereinafter RBD), and the regional dialect dictionary *Rehijanal’ny sloŭnik Viciebščyny* [Regional Dictionary of the Vitebsk Region] in 2 volumes (2012 and 2014) (hereinafter RSV). We selected 24 names of women related to their marital status.

The work uses the method of component analysis of dictionary meanings of lexical units. Using it, we have identified the main semantic features of the names of women of a particular marital status in the literary language and in Vitebsk dialects. The method of component analysis was first applied to a vocabulary that included kinship terms among different tribes (cf. Goodenough 1956, Lounsbury 1956).

Developing the ideas of W. H. Goodenough and F. G. Lounsbury, E. Nida analysed semantic fields in the language of shamans (Nida 1962: 45–71). I. V. Arnol’d proposes to use a component analysis of non-closed lexical groups based on dictionary definitions (Arnol’d 1991: 51). In our study, we rely on the classification of semes by D. Bolinger, who distinguishes categorical semes, markers, and distinguishers (Bolinger 1981: 200–234). Categorical semes contain

1 A number indicating the volume number is added to the abbreviation; if necessary, the issue number is indicated through a hyphen, and the abbreviation looks, for example, like this: TSBM1-4. This also applies to other abbreviations denoting dictionaries.

an indication of generalized properties, markers indicate features common to a certain class of lexical units, and distinguishers individualize the denotation. The largest components of meaning are categorical semes – the seme of objectivity for nouns, the seme of indicativeness for adjectives, etc. R. S. Ginzburg claims there are hidden and potential semes in the meaning of a word (Ginzburg 1978). Potential semes are not included in the mandatory set of semes, they are among the properties known to native speakers or attributed to this denotation. By hidden components, Ginzburg understands the semes, which are manifested in the possibilities of the word compatibility. Implications materialize in comparisons, metaphors, idioms, certain types of syntactic constructions. Implicit, additional meanings, superimposed on explicit meanings, are capable of conveying large amounts of information.

The meanings of a polysemantic word do not remain unchanged. The appearance of a new meaning in one word inevitably entails changes in other words associated with it, since everything is interconnected in the lexico-semantic system (Nikolaenko 2019: 203). As a result, the relationship between the meanings of a word changes: primary meanings are replaced by figurative ones, the meanings of individual words, which are currently perceived as figurative, may turn out to be primary from a historical point of view.

In addition, the definitional analysis makes it possible to compare the meanings of the main verbal representatives – the names of women by marital status in the Belarusian literary language and in the Vitebsk dialect, to identify their core and peripheral features and to determine their similarities and differences. Peripheral features appear in metaphorical, metonymic usage, in idioms, and in context (Rakhimzhanov, Akosheva et al. 2022: 139–140).

2. Results and discussion

The lexico-semantic group (LSG) is united by a categorical seme denoting the gender of a person – ‘female’. Marriage status markers act as differentiators for subgroups within LSG: names of women in the premarital period; names of women in marriage; names of women in the postmarital period and names of women of extramarital status (Temirgazina, Luczyk et al. 2022: 279).

Within each of the subgroups, markers and, to a greater extent, distinguishers are more essential for establishing the semantic features of names (see, for example, Bakhtikireeva, Sinyachkin et al. 2016: 1387–1388). The premarital period is the time when a girl generally prepares for marriage as such, i.e. is married or is already on the verge of marriage – betrothed or engaged, i.e. has a fiancé. Thus, the seme ‘attainment of marriageable age’, which unites a subgroup, acts as a marker of names. Distinguishers that mark words within the subgroup

include the semes ‘engaged’, ‘having a groom’, or ‘not having a groom’. The marriage period is the period when a woman is ‘married’, ‘has a husband’ and, accordingly, the names of women have these markers. Within the subgroup are found, as we show below, various distinguishers. The postmarital stage includes the status of a divorced woman and the status of a widow. The names combine the markers ‘after marriage’ and ‘no husband’ and differentiate some distinguishers. We found it necessary to isolate the “out-of-wedlock” status of women who have crossed the marriageable age but have never been married.

A component analysis of the meanings of words naming women in the premarital period is shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. *The component analysis of the names of women in the premarital period*

	Literary language	Vitebsk dialect
1	VYDÁNNICA ‘a marriageable girl’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period 3. Distinguisher: of marriageable age	NIVÉSTUL’KA ‘a marriageable girl’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period 3. Distinguisher: of marriageable age affectionate attitude
2		MALADÉLYA ‘a marriageable girl’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period 3. Distinguisher: of marriageable age
3	NYAVESTA ‘a bride’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: before marriage of marriageable age 3. Distinguisher: betrothed having a fiancé before the wedding	KINYAGÍNYA ‘a bride’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: before marriage of marriageable age 3. Distinguisher: betrothed having a fiancé

	Literary language	Vitebsk dialect
4	NARACHONAYA 'betrothed' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period of marriageable age 3. Distinguisher: engaged / betrothed having a fiancé	MALADÓVACHKA 'a bride' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period of marriageable age 3. Distinguisher: having a fiancé before the wedding
5	MALADÁYA 'a bride during wedding' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: premarital period of marriageable age 3. Distinguisher: having a fiancé during the wedding	

The marker 'age of marriage' is relevant for our analysis; it characterizes a woman's readiness for marriage and is especially significant for the names of women in premarital status. The 'marriageable age' marker is determined not only by a woman's physiological readiness for marriage but also by sociocultural traditions and stereotypes (Rakhimzhanov, Akosheva et al. 2020: 263–264). In traditional Belarusian culture, the age of marriage for a woman was set at sixteen to eighteen years. "In general, Belarusians started thinking about creating a family already at the age of 16–17. Girls of marriageable age began to whiten and blush, changed their hairstyle – they made a wreath of hair with an open top, wore jewelry – from beads to feathers and flowers on their heads".²

The names of women of premarital status should be divided into subgroups, which are distinguished by the marker 'marriageable', i.e. 'not betrothed' and 'betrothed', 'having a groom'. Girls who have reached the age of marriage, are 'marriageable' are called in the Belarusian literary language *vydannicej*; in the Vitebsk dialect, there are more names for this category of girls: *nivéstul'ka* 'a bride', *maladelya* 'a bride'.

The literary name *vydánica* means "a girl who has reached a marriageable age", and it is associated with the phraseological unit *dzyaŭchyna na vydánni*, as the dictionary indicates (RSV1: 530). In the meaning of the dialect word *nivéstul'ka* 'a bride' (RSV1: 63), there is a potential connotative seme of an emotional-evaluative nature – affectionately approvingly, which is formally expressed in the suffix *-ulk* and is denoted by the diminutive mark. A semantic

2 www.belarus.kp.ru.

feature – an indication of age –, the girl's youth is leading in the word *maladelya* (from the adjective *malad-aya* + *-el-ya*): “MALADÉLYA fem. Young unmarried girl. *A maladelya genaya nichoga sama rabic' ne ýmee* ('And this young woman can't do anything on her own). Ivansk Chash” (RSV2: 16).

The second subgroup has the distinguishers ‘betrothed’ and ‘having a fiancé’: in the literary language, *nyavesta* ‘a bride’, *narachonaya* ‘betrothed’, *maladaya* ‘a young woman’; in the Vitebsk dialect, *kinyaginya*, *maladóvachka*. *Narachonaya*, *maladaya* are substantiated participles and adjectives; the first name is associated with the rite of matchmaking, betrothal, and the second with the age of the girl, her youth. The rite of matchmaking, naming is one of the obligatory rituals for Belarusians before marriage. The noun *kinyaginya* in the Vitebsk dialect has two meanings: “1. A marriageable girl. *Dachka tvaya ýzhe kinyaginya – kali bylo* ('Your daughter is already a marriageable girl – when was that'). Kazlovichy Gar. 2. Bride, betrothed. *I ya glidzela, yak kinyaginyu vykupyali* ('And I looked as if I was redeeming the bride'). Kanashy Gar” (RSV1: 250). The word in the first meaning is included in the first subgroup and denotes a girl of a marriageable age. The second meaning includes distinguishers ‘betrothed/engaged’ and ‘having a specific fiancé’.

The peculiarity of the semantics of this dialect word is created by potential associative semes (according to R. Ginzburg) arising from the traditional metaphorical comparison of the position of the bride with the high position of the princess, the wife of the ruler-prince. Belarusian words *kinyaginya*, *knyaz'* of Proto-Slavic origin: **kǫnędzь* (*k”nędz’*) is an ancient common Slavic borrowing and goes back to the ancient Germanic root **kun-ing*. The Germanic words *König*, *king* is of the same origin, the Scandinavian *konung* (a king) is a term for the elder of a clan (Trubachev 1987: 200). Initially, the king was a tribal leader who headed the organs of military democracy. The most ancient position of the king as the elder of the clan was deposited in the East Slavic wedding vocabulary, where the newlyweds (the nominal founders of the clan) are poetically called ‘prince’ *knyaz* and ‘princess’ *knyaginya* (Froyanov 1980: 17). As S. Lyubimova writes, “Semantically motivated nomina of sociocultural stereotypes are formed according to logical, allusive, and figurative strategies” (Lyubimova 2022: 116). The word *maladovachka*, like the word *maladelya*, is word-formatively connected with the adjective *maladaya*, indicating the young age of the girl. It is important to note that in the Vitebsk dialect we observe a variety of word formation models and means – suffixes (*-el*, *-ovachk*) with an endearing meaning for the formation of the names of women in the premarital status. They convey the approving positive attitude of society towards girls in the premarital status.

For some names, a specific chronological moment of being in the status is important: ‘right before the wedding’ – this seme is contained in the literary word *nyavesta* (TSBM3: 423) and the dialect *maladovachka* (RSV2: 16), ‘during the

wedding' – in the literary word *maladaya* 'a bride after engagement and during wedding' (TSBM3: 91).

A subgroup of names of women who are married will be considered further in Table 2.

Table 2. *The component analysis of the names of married women*

	Belarusian literary language	Vitebsk dialect
1	ZHÓNKA 'a wife' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: having a husband affectionate attitude	
2	BÁBA 'a wife' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: having a husband colloquial disparaging connotation	
3	ZAMÚZHNYAYA 'married' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: having a husband	ZAMÚZHNICA 'a wife' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: having a husband
4	MALADZÍCA 'a young wife' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: short time young	
5	MALADÚHA 'a young wife' Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married 3. Distinguisher: short time young	

There are five literary names in this LSG subgroup. The literary name of the *zhónka* has an endearingly approving connotation, expressed by the suffix *-k*, the word *bába* – with the mark colloquial and is stylistically reduced: “Coll. A married woman. *Shnuruyuc’ baby i dzyaŭchaty I kantralyuyuc’ moh uznyaty* (‘Women and girls lace up and control the raised moss’). Kolas” (TSBM1: 318). In the substantivized adjective *zamužhnyaya*, the seme of ‘being married’ *zamuzham* is brought into focus of meaning; the word is formed from the same adverb (*zamuzh-n-yaya*): “Who is married. *Zamuzhnyaya dachka* (‘A married daughter’)” (TSBM2: 350). It is interesting to note that the dialect noun *zamuzhnica* also emphasizes the position of a married woman, but a noun with the suffix *-nic* is formed from the adverb, and not from an adjective (*zamuzh-nic-a*): “A married woman. *I malodshaya maya ŷzho zamuzhnicaj stala* (‘And my youngest is already a married woman’). Zaazer’e Paul” (RSV1: 202). Two literary words, *maladzíca* (TSBM3: 90) and *maladuha* (TSBM3: 90–91), convey a woman’s short stay in marital status, indicating her youth. They are formed with the help of various suffixes *-ic*, *-uh*: *maladzíca* < *malad(-aya) + -íc(-a) i maladuha* < *malad(-aya) + -uh(-a)*. Such detailing and emphasis on youth, the young age of a married woman suggests that in Belarusian culture a lot of attention was paid to a woman in the initial period of marriage. Perhaps this is due to the difficulties of adapting a girl to a new status and new responsibilities. The hard lot of a young married woman is mentioned in many Belarusian proverbs and sayings: “*Yak ya byla ŷ bacen’ka, to ya byla chubacen’ka; dastalasya da svyakruhi, to ab’eli chubok muhi*” [When I was with my father, I was with a forelock; when got to the mother-in-law, then the flies ate a forelock] (Prykazki i prymaŷki 1976: 246).

Table 3 below presents a component analysis of the names of women in the postmarital period.

Table 3. *The component analysis of the names of women in the postmarital period*

	Belarusian literary language	Vitebsk dialect
1	RAZVYADZYONKA ‘a divorced woman’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: after marriage 3. Distinguisher: divorced	RAZZHANIHA ‘a divorced woman’ 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: after marriage 3. Distinguisher: divorced stopped being married

Belarusian literary language	Vitebsk dialect
2	PAKIDÁŃKA 'a divorced woman' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: after marriage 3. Distinguisher: divorced abandoned
3 UDAVA' 'a widow' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: after marriage 3. Distinguisher: husband passed away	
4 UDAVÍCA 'a widow' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: after marriage 3. Distinguisher: husband passed away	
5 SALAMYÁNAYA ŹDAVA' 'a grass widow' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: married having a husband 3. Distinguisher: long absence of a husband	

In the dictionary of the Belarusian literary language, one name for a divorced woman, *razvyadzyonka*, is recorded, formed from the verb *razvadzicca* with the suffix *-yonk-*: *razvyadz-yonk-(a)*. More expressive figurative expressions function in the Vitebsk dialect: *razzhaniha* and *pakidanka*. *Razzhaniha* is formed from the verb *razzhanicca* (*raz-zhan-ih-a*), the meaning of which includes the seme 'cease to be what is named in the generating stem' *zhanicca*, i.e. stop being married. In the word *pakidanka*, formed from the verb *pakida-c'* + *nk-(a)*, the distinguisher 'abandoned' is actualized: "A wife abandoned by her husband. *Yana pakidánka, adna dzyacej gaduec*" ('She was left alone, raising children alone'). Shodziki Shum" (RSV1: 99). The word has a potential negative implication 'a woman is a thing that can be thrown'.

In general, this subgroup of female names is characterized by negative axiological connotations arising from gender stereotypes that still exist in society (Temirgazina, Albekova et al. 2021: 462–463). The Belarusian journalists write about this: “For a woman, this is a change in status from a married lady to a “divorced woman”, and although society today treats divorced women loyally, there is still negative connotation connected to this status” (Ronina 2021).³ The degree of negativity gradually increases – from less in the literary word *razvyadzyonka* to high in the dialect words *razzhaniha* and *pakidanka*.

A woman whose husband has died is called in the literary language *ŷdava*, *ŷdavica*. The word *ŷdava* is of Indo-European origin: “Ukr. udova, udovitsya, st.-glory. widova χήρα (Zogr., Assem., Savv., etc.), Bulg. widow, Serbohorv. Udova, udov ‘widowed’, Slovenian. vdava, Czech. vdova, slvts. vdova, Polish. wdowa, v.-luzh. wudowa, n.-luzh. hudowa. || Praslav. *vydova primordially related to another Prussian. widdewū (from *vidavā), OE Ind. vidhāvā ‘widow’, vidhūs ‘widowed’, Avest. viḍava w. ‘widow’, Greek ἡθεος ‘single, unmarried’, lat. vidua ‘widow’, viduus ‘widow’, Goth. widuwō ‘widow’, D.H.N. wituwa; see Uhlenbeck, Aind. wb. 286 et seq.; Trautman, BSW 357; Bartolome, Air. wb. 1443” (Fasmer).

The semantics of the word *ŷdava* is axiologically neutral. The word “*ŷdavica* (*ŷdav-ic-a*)” derived from it has a slightly reduced meaning and is used mainly in colloquial speech: “*ŷDAVÍCA*, -y, f. *Coll.* The same as *ŷ d a v a*. *Hoc’ yoj bylo ŷzho dalyoka za sorak i ŷdavica dobra-taki razdalasya ŷ stane, yana yashche maladzilasya i paglyadala na muzhchyn.* (‘Although she was already well into her forties and the widow was in a good state, she was still getting younger and looked at men’). Mashara” (TSBM5–1: 614). The dictionary also contains the phraseological unit *salamyánaya ŷdavá*, which is used to refer to a woman who is married and has a husband, but he has been absent for a long time. This idiom has the mark *zhart* ‘humorous’ in the dictionary: “woman temporarily separated from her husband (transl. from German *Strohwitwe*)” (TSBM5–1: 614). It is indicated that this is a calque from the German expression *Strohwitwe* ‘a grass widow’.

We would like to emphasize that in the Vitebsk dialect there are no special names for this category of women. This suggests that the speakers of the dialect in this regard completely manage with literary words. The researchers also write about this: most of those who speak Belarusian are native speakers of dialectal speech; most of them, to some extent, also own the literary norm⁴ (Koryakov 2002: 51).

Table 4 below shows a component analysis of the names of women of extramarital status in the literary language and dialect.

3 *Zviazda* – newspaper. 02.09.2021. <https://zviazda.by/>.

4 The excerpts from the scholarly literature were translated by the author.

Table 4. *The component analysis of the names of women in the extramarital period*

	Belarusian literary language	Vitebsk dialect
1	ADZINÓCHKA 'a single woman' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: was not married 3. Distinguisher: a significant excess of marriageable age	BABYLÍHA 'a single woman' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: was not married 3. Distinguisher: a significant excess of marriageable age compassionate disdain
2	VEKAVUHA 'a single woman' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: was not married 3. Distinguisher: a significant excess of marriageable age	
3	STARAYA DZEVA (DZEŬKA) 'a spinster' 1. Categorical seme: female 2. Marker: was not married 3. Distinguisher: a significant excess of marriageable age	

In literary names, the emphasis in semantics is on the loneliness of *adzinochka*: “Who is alone, without a family, is not a couple. *Use nastajnicy i nastajniki-adzinochki harchavalisya ŭ stalovaj. Duboŭka*” (TSBM1: 137) or the woman’s age, which is significantly older than marriage. So, for example, *vekavuha* is formed from the word *vekavoj*, i.e. ‘centennial’ (TSBM1: 475); in the idiom *staraya dzeva* (*dzeŭka*), the adjective *staraya* ‘old’ indicates a significant age of a woman.

The dialect name *babyl-ih(-a)*, formed from the word *babyl’*, has a colloquial character, expressed by the suffix *-ih* with colloquial semantics. *Bobyl’* (Russian), *babyl’* (Belarusian) is a “landless peasant, day laborer” (Fasmer). M. Fasmer also notes that the etymology of the word is unclear. In the dictionary of V. I. Dal’, the meaning of the word *bobyl’* expands: “lonely, homeless; the bobył’ lives with people as a backbone or a laborer, a watchman, a shepherd” (Dal’ 1989: 101). Thus, the word *babyliha* is accompanied by a stable connotation of pity, neglect:

“A poor lonely woman. *U babylya nichoga nyama i ŷ babylihi tozha*. Plisa Glyb” (RSV1: 59).

A subgroup of literary and dialectal names of women of extramarital status is characterized by the same axiological character – emotionally negative, differing only in the degree of intensity of individual lexemes. One of the likely reasons for such a negative assessment is, in our opinion, the rootedness in the minds of the native speakers of the Belarusian language and culture of gender stereotypes, one of which reads “a woman should get married”.

Conclusions

Thus, the quantitative ratio of the names of women in accordance with their marital status in the literary Belarusian language and the northeastern Vitebsk dialect can be presented in the following table.

Table 5. *The number of names of women according to the marital status in the literary version and the northeastern dialect of the Belarusian language*

	Variety of language	Premarital period	Marriage period	Postmarriage period	Extramarital period	Total
1	Belarusian literary language	4	5	4	3	16 / 66.66%
2	Northeastern dialect	4	1	2	1	8 / 33.33%
	Total	8	6	6	4	24 / 100%

The table shows that the literary language has a numerical superiority in this group of words in the ratio of 16 to 8. This is natural, since the literary language, as the core of the national language, has a more extensive vocabulary. Parity is observed only in a subgroup of words denoting the premarital status of a woman – 4:4. In the remaining subgroups, there is a predominance, sometimes significant, of literary names. Nevertheless, it should be noted that dialect names are more expressive, which are expressed in potential semes based on associations and figurative comparisons from the general fund of knowledge of native speakers of the Belarusian language. O. I. Blinova believes that figurative nominations constitute the core zone of folk speech culture, reflected in regional dictionaries (Blinova 2002: 234). Dialect words are also characterized by a more diverse arsenal of word-building means – suffixes *-el*, *-ul’k*, *-ovachk*, *-ih*, *-ank*, *-uh*, *-ic*, in which various emotional and evaluative connotations of speakers are realized. Zlobin and Marozava write about this phenomenon in the dialect system of word

formation: “[...] Dasledavanne dydalektna-litaraturnyh varyyantnyh radoŭ dae magchymasc’ kanstatavac’ bol’shuyu raznastajnasc’ slovaŭtvaral’nyh farmantaŭ u sisteme dydalektnyh naminacyj u paraŭnanni z litaraturnymi adpavednikami, shto dazvalyae gavaryc’ pra pradyktyŭnasc’ unutyrdydalektnyh slovaŭtvaral’nyh varyyantaŭ” (Zlobin, Marozava 2010: 20). [... The study of dialect-literary variant series allows us to state a greater variety of word formants in the system of dialect nominations in comparison with their literary counterparts, which allows us to speak about the productivity of intra-dialect word-forming variants]. In literary and dialect derivative words, the frequency (five words) of the word-formation connection with the word *malad(-aya)* is noted. This indicates the relevance of young age for the nomination of marital status, especially premarital – three words (*maladelya*, *maladovachka*, *maladaya*) and marriageable – two words (*maladzica*, *maladuha*). Some of the words under consideration (three words) are semantically related to marriage rituals and ceremonies: *vydannica*, *narachonaya*, *razvyadzyonka*; part of the names (five words) conveys the figurative-metaphorical perception of a particular marital status by native speakers – *kinyaginya*, *babyliha*, *adzinochka*, *vekavuha*, *pakidanka*.

The axiological and emotionally expressive characteristics of lexical groups depend on the socio-cultural stereotypes that exist in society, regardless of the language stratum. Thus, the literary and dialectal names of the extramarital status of women are distinguished by a negative evaluative connotation due to the influence of the gender stereotype that a woman’s destiny is to marry and create a family. The names of divorced women have a similar axiological connotation, since divorce is not approved in society. Names of women who are married are characterized by axiological neutrality or positivity, since they correspond to the sociocultural stereotypes. The literary and dialect names of women with premarital status have the most positive axiological potential, while the dialect names of *nivestul’ka*, *maladelya*, *maladovachka*, *kinyaginya* are characterized by emotionally expressive caressing and approving connotations.

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