ON THE SO-CALLED ROMANIAN "NEUTER"

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Abstract: We discuss several possible analyses of Romanian "neuter" nouns (a productive class of nouns which trigger masculine agreement in the singular and feminine agreement in the plural): the three-gender analysis (Romanian has three genders and systematic syncretism), the ambigeneric analysis (Romanian neuters are masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural), the underspecification analysis (Romanian neuters are not specified for gender) and the nominal class analysis (nouns do not have genders, but rather nominal classes which are selected by Number heads on which the gender feature is generated). The arguments used to decide between these analyses are (i) gender in the pronominal system, (ii) gender agreement in coordination and (iii) general economy considerations. We retain the underspecification analysis and the nominal class analysis and propose solutions to the problems these analyses face.

Keywords: gender, neuter, agreement, coordination, pronouns

1. The problem: the Romanian "neuter"

Romanian has three nominal agreement classes, but only a binary gender opposition between masculine and feminine on targets of agreement (adjectives, participles, determiners and other nominal functional items) and pronouns. The three nominal agreement classes are masculine, feminine and the so-called "neuter", which triggers masculine agreement in the singular and feminine agreement in the plural:

(1) a. acest om, aceşti oameni — *om*: masculine
this.MSG man these.MPL men

b. această femeie, aceste femei — *femeie*: feminine
this.FSG woman these.FPL women

c. acest caiet, aceste caiete — *caiet*: neuter
this.MSG notebook these.FPL notebooks

Pronouns having antecedents containing neuter nouns also display masculine forms in the singular and feminine forms in the plural:

(2) a. Unde e caietul ? **L** -am pus pe birou
where is notebook-the CL3rd.MSG.ACC-have.1SG put on desk

b. Unde sunt caietele ? **Le-** am pus pe birou
where are notebooks-the CL3rd.FPL.ACC-have.1SG put on desk

Neuter nouns constitute a productive type, equally large as the other nominal classes. It mostly comprises inanimates (with very few exceptions like *personaj* 'character, personage', *animal* 'animal').

2. Possible analyses and their problems

(i) The three gender analysis (Graur 1937, *GLR* 1963, *GALR* 2005): Romanian has three values for the category Gender – masculine, feminine, neuter. Under standard

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assumptions about agreement, the value of a feature F which enters agreement is the same on the controller as on the target. This implies that targets of agreement also have three genders. In other words, adjectives, participles, pronouns, determiners may be 'neuter'. In this case, the absence of special neuter forms is due to generalized homonymies (masc. sg. = neuter sg. and fem. pl. = neuter pl.). Using the formalism of Distributed Morphology, we may say that there are only four vocabulary insertion rules for ϕ-morphemes (at least on targets of agreement and pronouns, see below), which refer to the bundles [$_\phi$ fem. sg.], [$_\phi$ sg.], [$_\phi$ masc. pl.], [$_\phi$ pl.].

The presence of a distinct "neuter" value of Gender on nouns is motivated by the existence of a morpheme largely restricted to neuters: the plural morpheme *-uri*. It is true that this morpheme also appears on some feminines (*leafă / lefuri* "salary", *treabă / treburi* "work, business", *lipsă / lipsuri* "lack, shortcoming", *vreme / vremuri* "time, weather, age (pl. times, age)", *marfă / mărfuri* "merchandise")[1], but they are very few and could be characterized as an irregular type.

Note however that not all neuter nouns take this morpheme, but an equally productive plural morpheme for neuter nouns is *-e*, which is also a common feminine plural ending. Moreover, a large part of feminines take *-i* in the plural (like masculines). These facts show that plural morphemes do not directly encode gender, so we have to resort to declension classes. We may conclude that there is one declensional type (singular -/*-u*, pl. *-uri*) typical for neuter nouns.

This analysis faces several problems. First, it postulates the existence of a value of the gender feature on targets of agreement – neuter – which is never distinctively expressed. Generalized homonymies are problematic, because homonymy is typically restricted to some words or morphological classes.

More important problems come from the pronominal system. Languages tend to express more gender oppositions in the pronominal system than in the nominal system (cf. Corbett 1991) – e.g., English only has gender in the personal pronoun, Scandinavian only has the masculine vs. feminine opposition in the personal pronoun. But Romanian, as we have seen, pronouns do not have a three-gender paradigm – no special 'neuter' forms are used to resume neuter nouns.

Moreover, pronominal forms which would be characterized as (potentially) "neuter" (i.e., those used in resuming neuter nouns) do not have the regular interpretations associated with neuter pronouns in languages which have a gender system with a distinct neuter gender (Giurgea 2008b). Gender on pronouns can be interpreted either as *grammatical* gender (i.e., the gender of the (noun of the) antecedent or of the nominal concept under which the referent of the pronoun falls) or as *natural* gender (giving information about the referent). In languages with a distinct neuter gender, this gender, when interpreted as a natural gender, is used for referents which do not fall under a nominal concept. These may be not yet categorized perceptual objects (see (3)) and propositional objects (introduced by CPs or other clausal projections) (see (4)):

(3) a. Was ist **das**? (Germ.)
what is that.NEUT
b. Nescio **id** quid est (Latin)
not-know.1SG that.NEUT what is

(4) a. Ich glaube **es** nicht (Germ.)
I believe it not

[1] With mass nouns such as *brânză / brânzeturi* "cheese / sorts of cheese"*, verdeață / verdețuri* "greens", it is possible that the plural represents a different noun, derived from the mass noun (see the *-et-* morpheme in *brânzeturi*).

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b. Nonne mauis **illud** credere (..) (Latin) (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum,* III.12)
isn't-it prefer.2SG that believe.INF
'Don't you prefer to believe that…'

But in Romanian the masculine singular forms of the definite pronouns (personal and demonstrative) never appear with this use – although these forms do appear if the antecedent is a neuter *noun*, cf. (2) above.

For referents which do not fall under a nominal concept (which we may call the "anominal use"), Romanian uses as definite pronouns the null subject *pro* and feminine forms of the singular demonstratives, which are arguably genderless (see Cornilescu 2000, Giurgea 2008b, 2009) since they trigger masculine singular agreement instead of feminine, and they are not clitic-doubled when fronted, unlike all other definite DPs (see section 4). With some verbs taking propositional objects, it may also use feminine accusative clitics. Compare (5b) to (5d):

(5) a. Asta/*pro*/ *El/*Ăsta e imposibil (with a "neuter" meaning)
this.F/ he/this.M is impossible
'This is impossible'
b. N-am spus-o (with a "neuter" meaning)
not-have.1SG told-CL3rd.F.SG.ACC
'I didn't say it'
c. *Nu l-am spus (with a "neuter" meaning)
not CL3rd.M.SG.ACC-have.1SG told
d. Nu-(*l/*o) vreau (with a "neuter" meaning)
not CL3rd.M.SG.ACC/CL3rd.F.SG.ACC want.1SG
'I don't want it'

To sum up, we expect for a language which has three genders to make use of the third gender in the pronominal system – giving it at least some special forms and using it as a natural gender in the way we have seen (for referents which do not fall under a nominal concept). But in Romanian the pronominal system does not look as if the language had three genders: neuter nouns are resumed by *masculine* pronouns in the singular, but these pronouns do not allow the natural gender interpretation typical for the neuter. Other forms are used for referents which do not fall under a nominal concept, which are arguably genderless.

(ii) The underspecification analysis: The problem of the generalized homonymies can be solved by analyzing neuter nouns as unmarked for gender, as proposed by Farkas (1990). We can then use vocabulary insertion rules as proposed in (i) – rules referring to the ϕ-morphemes [$_{\phi}$ +f +sg], [$_{\phi}$ +sg], [$_{\phi}$ -f +pl] (or [$_{\phi}$ +m +pl]) and [$_{\phi}$ +pl]. In other words, masculine singular and feminine plural on targets of agreement represent morphological defaults (spelling out only number). If the so-called "neuters" lack gender, they will trigger the use of these morphological defaults on targets of agreement.

There is independent evidence that the masculine singular form of adjectives and participles is a default form: as shown in (6), this is the form used with clausal subjects, which lack gender.

(6) a. [A-ți iubi duşmanii] e imposibil
to you.DAT love.INF enemies-the is impossible

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b. [Să-ți iubeşti duşmanii] e imposibil
SUBJ-you.DAT love.2SG enemies-the is impossible
'To love one's enemies is impossible'

This analysis also solves the problem of the lack of special neuter pronominal forms. One problem however remains. As we have seen in (5) above, pronouns with neuter nominal antecedents – which we will call "grammatical neuter pronouns" – are formally different from pronouns whose referent does not fall under a nominal concept – which we have called "anominal". But anominal pronouns can be characterized as genderless forms – as expected if gender always comes from a noun (for additional evidence that in Romanian, as well as in the other languages with a binary masculine-feminine gender system, anominal pronouns are genderless, see Giurgea 2008b, 2009; see also Picallo 2002 for Spanish). If neuter nouns are unmarked for gender, it follows that grammatical neuter pronouns are also unmarked for gender. If absence of gender were all that characterized anominal pronouns, we would expect to find the same forms used as grammatical neuter pronouns and as anominal pronouns. A possible solution, which we will develop in section 4, is to find an additional distinctive property of anominal pronouns, besides lack of gender.

(iii) The ambigeneric analysis: Romanian has two genders, and neuter nouns are 'ambigeneric' (or 'heterogeneric') – they are masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural. Alongside the three gender analysis, this analysis has been entertained for a long time (Jacotă 1905, Bazell 1937, 1952, 1953, Bujor 1955, Pătruț 1956, Hořejši 1957, 1964, Nandris 1961, Manoliu-Manea 1971, Kihm 2008, see Mallinson 1984 and Windisch 1973).

One problem of this analysis concerns the way in which nouns are represented in the lexicon. While gender might be assumed to be fixed in the lexicon for a given noun, number is arguably not. If gender is always fixed, we would have to use two lexical entries for all neuter nouns – one +sg. +masc., the other +pl. +fem. But this analysis is unlikely for several reasons. First, it is uneconomical, duplicating lexical entries. A stronger argument against including fixed number on lexical entries is the behaviour of number in ellipsis: while number in noun ellipsis can be different from the number of the antecedent, gender cannot (even with regular masculine/feminine pairs, as in (7)). This contrast led to the proposal that while gender is lexical (has a fixed value in the lexicon), number is not (see Corblin 1995 and Depiante and Masullo 2001, which discuss French and Spanish, respectively):

(7) *prieten*(masc.) / *prietenă* (fem.) 'friend' (Rom.)
a. Au venit doi **prieteni** ai Monicăi şi **unul** al Rodicăi
have come two friends(M) ART Monica.GEN and one.M ART Rodica.GEN
b. *Au venit doi **prieteni** ai Monicăi şi **una** a Rodicăi (with [$_N$e]=*prietenă*)
have come two friends(M) ART Monica.GEN and one.F ART Rodica.GEN

Note that there is no problem with changing the number in ellipsis with neuter nouns. In this case, gender will be different, as expected:

(8) *vas*(sg.masc.)/*vase*(pl.fem.) 'vessel': neuter
Am adus un vas, iar Monica va mai aduce două
have.1SG brought a.M vessel and Monica will more bring two.FEM
'I brought a vessel, and Monica will bring two more'

We can conclude that neuter nouns do not come in pairs of lexical entries, unlike masculine/feminine gender pairs built on the same root (the type *prieten/ prietenă*).

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We can implement the ambigeneric analysis using one lexical entry if we allow the array of choice of variable features to be somehow represented in the lexical entry. Number on nouns belongs to the type of *variable non-dependent features associated to a lexical category*, i.e., features whose presence is indicated in a lexical entry but which may take any value, their value not being controlled by another item in the linguistic context by agreement or assignment (as in case assignment). There are several possible implementation of this type of features. A widespread implementation uses functional heads. Thus, on a par with Tense, a Num(ber) head which selects N has been proposed (Ritter (1991), Valois (1991), Bernstein (1993), Rouveret (1994), a.o.), number marking on nouns appearing either by head movement of N to Num or by agreement between N and Num[2]. This hypothesis does not allow a direct formalization of the ambigeneric analysis. A possible implementation, in which gender is generated on Num, is developed under (iv) below.

But we can also implement variable non-dependent features differently: suppose that such features are represented on lexical categories with optional values, and a choice is made when the item is selected from the lexicon into the numeration. Applying this idea to Number, we may say that nouns are specified as [Number = sg/pl] (the sign '/' indicates that a choice must be made when the lexeme is introduced into the numeration). If we also allow a correlation between the choices of the values of different features, we may represent neuter nouns as bearing the specification [Number = sg, Gender = masc / Number = pl, Gender = fem].

Even if we can solve the theoretical problems, the ambigeneric analysis is still confronted with a severe empirical problem. Singular neuter nouns do not always behave like singular masculines. With respect to agreement in coordination of inanimates, they obey different rules. As noticed by Diaconescu (1963), a.o., a conjunction of two singular neuter nouns triggers feminine agreement (9), while a conjunction of two singular masculines triggers masculine agreement (10); although many speakers also accept the feminine, at least with some lexical choices (11), the masculine agreement is the most widespread choice (see section 3), so masculine singular nouns and neuter singular nouns must be distinguished:

(9) a. Scaunul şi tabloul sunt pictate / *pictați
chair(NEUT)-the and painting(NEUT)-the are painted.FPL /painted.MPL
b. Podul şi gardul sunt însorite / *însoriți
bridge(NEUT)-the and fence(NEUT)-the are sunlit.FPL /sunlit.MPL

(10) Mărul şi părul sunt înverziți
apple-tree(M)-the and pear-tree(M)-the are green.M.PL.

(11) Ochiul şi obrazul sunt neatinşi / neatinse (Graur 1937)
eye(M)-the and face(M)-the are untouched.F.PL./ untouched.M.PL.

If 'ambigeneric' meant that these nouns have one gender in the singular and another gender in the plural, nothing would distinguish between a singular masculine and a singular neuter, so that we would expect to find masculine agreement in (9), like in (10)-(11)[3]. The coordination

[2] In a variant of this analysis, the number feature is generated on a functional head which is not dedicated to number – Det or n (see Dobrovie-Sorin 2009).

[3] Interestingly, as noticed by Aquaviva (2008), Italian, which has a few masculines with feminine forms in the plural (e.g. *il uovo – le ouva* 'the(M) egg – the(F) eggs'), behaves differently from Romanian, in that a conjunction of two 'ambigenerics' triggers masculine agreement. The author takes this as evidence that Italian 'ambigenerics' have different lexical entries for the singular and for the plural, which correlates with the fact that they are not a productive type and often coexist with regular plurals (e.g. *i bracci / le braccia* 'the(M) arms / the (F) arms').

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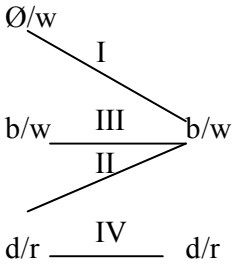
facts suggest that the ambigeneric property should be understood differently, like an instruction to value gender as masculine in the context /+singular/ and as feminine in the context /+plural/. The problem with this formulation is theoretical: in all the formal theories of agreement developed in the generative tradition, in minimalism as well as in HPSG, it is assumed that the feature has the same value on the target and on the controller – no matter whether agreement is described as feature valuation, checking or unification (see Chomsky 1995, 2000, Frampton and Gutman 2000, Pesetsky and Torrego 2007, Pollard and Sag 1994). These frameworks do not allow a feature of the controller of the type "assign/value as masculine in the context +singular, and feminine in the context +plural".

(iv) The nominal class analysis: A solution to this problem has been proposed by Giurgea (2008b). This analysis is an attempt to formalize Corbett's (1991) distinction between *controller gender* or *nominal class* and *target gender* (or, simply, *gender*). Corbett proposed this distinction not only for Romanian, but for various other systems in which the value of gender on targets of agreement depends on the value of the number feature. Some of these systems are very complex and cannot be represented merely by treating one class as unmarked for gender – see Lak's system in (12), which is but one of a whole list of such systems which can be found in Corbett (1991):

(12) singular plural



Giurgea (2008b), using the idea that the number feature is generated on a functional head Num, proposed that in languages where gender depends on number, the gender feature is also generated on Num[4] and the relation between gender and agreement class is mediated by selection. It is generally assumed that functional categories such as Num *select* lexical categories. Suppose that Num comes in several flavors, [+singular +masculine], [+singular +feminine], [+plural +masculine], [+plural +feminine]. Each of these heads is specified for a given nominal class – which we may call Class I ('controller-masculine'), Class II ('controller-feminine') and Class III ('controller-neuter'):

(13) - Num [sg masc] selects class I and class III nouns
- Num [sg fem] selects class II nouns
- Num [pl masc] selects class I nouns
- Num [pl fem] selects class II and class III nouns

The bundling of gender and number on the same head is supported by morphological evidence: in all the systems of this type described by Corbett, including Romanian, gender and number are represented by a single morpheme (are 'fused') – e.g. Rom. 'good' m.sg. *bun-Ø*, f.sg. *bun-ă,* m.pl. *bun-i*, f.sg. *bun-e*.

[4] As proposed by Ritter (1993) for Romance languages in general.

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Note however that in order to deal with agreement in coordination, this analysis must introduce additional assumptions. In order to explain the difference between a coordination of neuter singulars and a coordination of masculine singulars, we need to assume that the Number head introducing gender may be inserted *above* the conjunction and that the nominal class feature may percolate on the conjunction phrase[5]. Note moreover that in (9) we have a DP-coordination – even if in the case of the definite article this conclusion might be questioned, because of the affixal status of the article, we see the same contrast with other determiners, which are realized as independent words:

(14) a. Un scaun şi un dulap erau stricate
a chair(NEUT) and a wardrobe(NEUT) were broken.FPL
b. Un cireş şi un cais erau înfloriți
a cherry-tree and an apricot-tree were blooming.MPL

So we have to assume that in the case of coordination, Num can be inserted above the DP level, and still retains the same selectional properties, seeing the nominal classes of the lexical heads of the DPs:

(15) $Num_{+pl+fem}$ [$_{\&P/DP}$ [$_{DP\ classIII}$ un [$_{NP}$ $scaun_{classIII}$]] [şi [$_{DPclassIII}$ un [$_{NP}$ $tablou_{classIII}$]]]]

Although it is normally assumed that Num occurs below D, as an intermediate functional head between D and N, the idea that number can be inserted above a DP conjunction is in accordance with the following facts and assumptions: (i) a coordination of singulars triggers plural agreement; (ii) number is interpreted on the controller of this plural agreement (i.e., on the conjunction); (iii) a feature is generated where it is interpreted. Since none of the two conjuncts has plural number, it follows that the interpretable plural number is inserted above the two conjuncts, as a property of the whole conjunction phrase. A similar conclusion has been attained by Sauerland (2003), who proposed that such ϕ-features are inserted as ϕ-heads above the DP level[6].

If number always comes bundled with gender in Romanian and similar languages, it can be assumed that even when it is inserted above the D-level, it will come with this gender feature and the selectional property associated with it. What remains problematic is that this selectional property should still be sensitive to the nominal classes of the conjuncts – in other words, that a feature such as nominal class, which is a lexical property, may be able to percolate up to the DP level.

Note that in cases of coordination of DPs, number also appears on each conjunct, because both members contain items agreeing in gender (see, in the following example, the feminine singular, which is not a default form):

(16) un scaun nou şi o masă veche au fost aduse în grădină
a chair(NEUT) new.MSG and a table(F) old.FSG have been brought.FPL in garden

[5] We use this term for the phrase formed by the two conjuncts, but not as a categorial label: as explained in section 3, we assume that the categorial feature of the conjuncts can percolate. Therefore the conjunction phrase in (15) may have the label DP.

[6] According to Chomsky's (1995) Inclusiveness Condition, features are all present in the numeration and cannot be inserted during the derivation, so that we cannot have features directly inserted at the level of the conjunction phrase. Therefore the plural feature characterizing the conjunction must be introduced by an element present in the numeration (a lexical head by definition), which can be either the conjunction or a head above the conjunction.

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Can we also find cases where number appears above an NP conjuction but below D? A possible case is the construction where a plural N is followed by a conjunction of singular adjectives or other modifiers and these modifiers are interpreted as attaching to a singular N:

(17) a. preşedinţii român şi francez
presidents-the.MPL Romanian.MSG and French.MSG
'the Romanian and French presidents'
b. Aceşti miniştri de externe francez şi englez se înțeleg
these ministers(MPL) of foreign-affairs French.MSG and English.MSG get along
foarte bine (nu ca cei din timpul lui Mitterand)
very well (not like the ones under Mitterand

We may say that in this case N raises from both conjuncts (in accordance to the Coordinate Structure Constraint) to the Num inserted above the conjunction:

(18) [D [N+Num_{pl} [t_N Mod_1 & t_N Mod_2]]]

3. Agreement in coordination

Since agreement in coordination proved to be crucial for the analysis of the gender system of Romanian, we will discuss it in more detail. DP-external agreement with DP *and*-conjunctions[7] obeys the following general rules:

(19) (i) Even if both conjuncts are singular, agreement is in the plural.
(ii) If conjuncts differ in gender, agreement is in the masculine if at least one of the conjuncts is animate.
(iii) If conjuncts differ in gender and are inanimate, agreement is in the feminine (with some exceptions to be discussed below).

Gender agreement with animates can be described as *semantic agreement*, as the masculine is the unmarked gender for animates – masculine as a natural gender is interpreted as [+animate], with the +male interpretation arising by implicature. Note that number agreement is also semantic, as shown by the plural agreement with conjunctions of singular DPs. The feminine agreement with conjunctions of inanimates can be described as semantic agreement only if we adopt the three-gender analysis (analysis (i) in section 2 above): we would say then that the feminine plural form represents in fact a plural neuter, and that the neuter as a natural gender has the interpretation /-animate/, as expected (see Graur 1937, Iordan 1954). We have seen however that the three-gender analysis is to be rejected, one of the reasons being precisely the fact that the alleged neuter forms in the pronominal system do not have the normal interpretations associated with the neuter as a natural gender. If Romanian does not have a neuter gender, we can explain this agreement pattern as reflecting a default form. The hypothesis that the feminine plural is a morphological default is part of one of the analyses we have discussed – the underspecification analysis (see (ii)) – and can be added as an additional assumption to the other analyses ((iii) and (iv)).

[7] For space reasons, we restrict our analysis to *and*- coordination.

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3.1 Semantic agreement

In general, the term semantic agreement can be applied to the following situations:
(i) The controller is not specified for a given feature:

(20) Tu eşti deşteaptă
you(2SG) are smart.**F**SG

(ii) The controller and the target have different values for one and the same feature:
(21) a. Fotomodelul a fost prezentă în emisiune cu noul ei şofer
model-the(**M**) has been present.**F**SG in show-the with new-the her driver
"The model appeared in the show with her new driver" (www.libertatea.ro)
b. The/This committee are debating

(iii) The feature of the target is not the feature of the highest head of the controller, but of an element embedded inside the controller, such as the complement of a collective or partitive/fractional noun[8]:

(22) Restul copiilor au venit
remaining-the(**SG**) children-the.GEN have(**PL**) come
'The other children have come'

Since no plural feature is visible on the controller, plural agreement with singular conjuncts can be subsumed to (i) (if we consider the whole conjunction phrase) or (ii) (if we consider the conjuncts).

A general analysis for cases (i)-(ii) can be offered by extending the analysis already proposed for number agreement with conjunctions of singulars[9] (see 2, under analysis (iv)). As proposed by Sauerland (2003), Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2008), the interpretable features reflected in semantic agreement can be represented as introduced on a head above the DP (called Phi^0 by Sauerland and $Index^0$ by Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea). This head resembles *pro*: it is always covert and is licensed via agreement – we suppose that when the semantic agreement features are not present on a target of agreement, this head is lacking:

(23) Tu eşti aici (no FEM feature in this example!)
you(2SG) are here

This hypothesis allows us to consider that the features involved in semantic agreement are not different in nature from those involved in formal agreement, but are only distinguished from them by the position where they are generated. This is a welcome result when we consider targets of agreement, as we do not have to suppose that targets of agreement sometimes bear one type of unvalued feature and sometimes another one (e.g. Index and Concord, as in Wechsler and Zlatić 2000, 2003), or sometimes have uninterpretable and sometimes interpretable features.

[8] Quantity nouns as well as quality nouns of the "kind"-type (*this kind/type of*) may be analyzed as specifiers, in which case it may be assumed that the formal features of the lexical head percolate to the whole DP. Therefore we did not include them under semantic agreement.
[9] It is not sure if this analysis can be extended to type (iii). In any event, this is not important for our purposes.

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As Farkas and Zec (1995) have noticed, a conjunction of two singular animates triggers *semantic* agreement even when the gender of the conjuncts is the same:

(24) a. Ordonanța era obosit / obosită
orderly-the(F) was tired.MSG / tired.FSG
b. Ordonanța şi mama lui erau obosiți / * obosite
orderly-the(F) and mother-the(F) his were tired.MSG / tired.FSG
c. [*the ministers of education and of tourism are now women in Romania*]:
Ministrul învățământului a fost surprinsă / surprins la cumpărături în
minister-the education-the.GEN has been seen.FSG/ seen.MSG at shopping in
piața Obor[10]
market-the Obor
d. Ministrul învățământului şi ministrul turismului au fost
minister-the education-the.GEN and minister-the tourism-the.GEN have been
surprinse / #surprinşi la cumpărături în piața Obor
seen.FPL/ seen.MPL at shopping in market-the Obor

We can conclude that agreement with conjoined singular animates is always semantic. This is probably due to the fact that number agreement is also semantic in this case (recall that agreement is always in the plural): if a head bearing interpretable number is inserted, we can assume that the same head can bear interpretable gender.

3.2 Agreement with inanimates

We have seen that the general rule for agreement with inanimates different in gender is to use the feminine. There are however cases where speakers hesitate.

According to academic grammar, the rules are the following (see *GLR* 1963, perpetuated in *GALR* 2005):

Table I:

Controller	Target	Comment
no conjunct is masculine[11]	f.pl.	
one conjunct is m.sg., the other ≠ m.	f.pl.	
m.sg. + m.sg.	m.pl.	
m.pl. + n.sg.	m.pl.	
m.pl. + f.sg.	f.pl.	gender agreement with the closest conjunct
m.pl. + n. pl./f. pl.	f.pl.	gender agreement with the closest conjunct
any + m.pl.	m.pl.	gender agreement with the closest conjunct

This intricate system is actually unknown to most speakers. Based on several tests, we arrived at the conclusion that for some cases there is a great deal of variation among speakers and often speakers hesitate. Our results are resumed in Table II below (we used the notation "X > Y" for variation in which X predominates (65-90%), "X > = Y" for variation where X only slightly predominates (60-65%), "X = Y" for variation where no variant is significantly

[10] These are examples where the adjective does not apply to the entity *qua* function. When it does, agreement with the function noun is possible:
(i) Ministrul învățământului şi ministrul turismului au fost invitați la reuniune
minister-the education-the.GEN and minister-the tourism-the.GEN have been invited.MPL to meeting-the

[11] n.sg.+n.sg. is included here

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predominating (50%-60%)). We did not include cases with more than 90%. Table III shows the actual results obtained for inanimate conjuncts with different gender in two tests (on 20 educated adult subjects and 40 high-school students) and Table IV shows the results of a test on agreement with conjunctions of two masculine inanimates conducted on 25 educated adult subjects.

Table II:

Controller	Target
(a) no conjunct is masculine[12]	f.pl.
(b) one conjunct is m.sg., the other ≠m.	f.pl.; if the m.sg. is the second conjunct (i.e. the closest) or if the other conjunct is neuter, m.pl. for a minority of speakers
(c) m.sg./pl. + m.sg.	m.pl. > f.pl.
(d) m.sg.+ m.pl.	m.pl. (very few speakers f.pl.)
(e) m.pl. + n.sg.	f.pl. = m.pl.
(f) m.pl. + f.sg.	f.pl. > m.pl.
(g) m.pl. + n. pl./f. pl.	f.pl. > m.pl.
(h) f.sg./n.sg. + m.pl.	f.pl. >= m.pl.
(i) f. pl./n.pl. + m.pl.	f.pl. > m.pl.
(j) m.pl. + m.pl.	m.pl.

Table III[13]:

(a)	f.sg. + m.sg. m.sg. + f.sg. f.pl. + m.sg.	f. 87%, m. 13% f. 92%, m. 8% ♦ f. 96%, m. 4%
(b)	n. sg. + m.sg. m.sg. + n.sg. n.pl. + m.sg.	f. 78%, m. 20%, – 2% f. 88%, m. 12% f. 86%, m. 12%, – 2%
(c)	m.pl. + n.sg.	f. 53%, m. 45%, – 2%
(d)	m.pl. + f.sg.	f. 80%, m. 20%
(e)	m.pl. + n.pl.	f. 92%, m. 8%
(f)	m.pl. + f.pl.	♦ f. 85%, m. 15%
(g)	f.sg. + m.pl.	f. 63%, m. 37% (♦: identical)
(h)	n. sg. + m.pl.	m. 62%, f. 38% ♦ f. 67%, m. 33%
(i)	f.pl. + m.pl.[14]	f. 80%, m. 20%
(j)	n.pl. + m.pl.	f. 65%, m. 35%

[12] n. sg.+n. sg. is included here

[13] For f. pl.+m. sg. and m. pl. +f. pl., the lexical choices in the initial questionnaire (developed for Croitor 2008) may have influenced the result (*păpuşile şi robotul* "the puppies and the robot" might be interpreted as animate, *dolarii şi lirele* "the dollars and the pounds" may favor the masculine agreement because of the hyperonym *bani* "money" and because of the more frequent use of dollars in Romania). Therefore we made a second test with other lexical choices (with 12 educated adults and 34 high-school students). The results of the second test are marked with ♦ in the table. We also retested the combination n. sg. + m. pl., where the masculine plural *banii* "the money" might have influenced the result in the first questionnaire due to the importance of this concept.

[14] The difference between (i) and (j) may be due to the example chosen in (i) – *Vazele şi trandafirii de la petrecere au fost /adus/ de Ion* "the vases and roses at the party were brought by Ion" –, where the second noun is separated from the predicate by a modifier which refers to both conjuncts, which may block the attraction.

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Table IV:

(a) m.sg. + m.sg. (ex. 25a)	m. 72%, f. 28%
(a´) m.sg. + m.sg.(ex. 25b)	m. 88%, f. 12%
(b) m.pl. + m.sg.	m. 72%, f. 28%
(c) m.sg. + m.pl.	m. 92%, f. 8%

As we said, the general preference for the feminine can be explained if the feminine form is the morphological default in the plural (if we do not adopt the three-gender analysis). In other words, there are vocabulary insertion rules for [$_{\phi}$ +m. +pl.] and for [$_{\phi}$ +pl]. The use of a default follows from the fact that semantic agreement cannot be used for inanimates, as natural gender is restricted to animates.

Since we have concluded that with inanimates we cannot find semantic agreement, the agreement which we find can either be formal agreement or represent a default. Formal agreement obtains when the gender feature of one (or both) of the conjuncts percolates to the level of the conjunction phrase. We assume that in a conjunction phrase [X [& Y]], some features may percolate on the mother node. Since feminine is the default form, we can see the conditions which make formal agreement possible by examining the cases where agreement is in the masculine.

As expected, the case where masculine agreement is most frequently found is when the two conjuncts are masculine. We conclude that gender percolation is available when the gender feature has the same value on both conjuncts. Note however that even in this case, there is a possibility to have feminine agreement, when both conjuncts or the second one are singular (see Table IV and ex. (25) below). This indicates that gender may not percolate even when it has the same value on both conjuncts[15].

(25) a. Morcovul şi ardeiul sunt gustoşi / gustoase
carrot(M)-the and pepper(M)-the are tasty.MPL / tasty.FPL
b. Papucul şi pantoful sunt rupți / rupte[16]
slipper(M)-the and shoe(M)-the are ragged.MPL / ragged.FPL
c. Stâlpii şi peretele sunt proaspăt vopsiți / vopsite
pillars(M)-the and wall(M)-the are freshly painted.MPL / painted.FPL
d. Ardeiul şi castraveții sunt stricați / ? stricate
pepper(M)-the and cucumbers(M)-the are altered.MPL/ altered.FPL

Other conditions which facilitate masculine agreement are the plurality of the masculine conjunct (see Table (II) e, f, g, h) and the proximity of the masculine term ("agreement with the closest conjunct", here the second, since we have tested the order Subject-Predicate) (see Table (III) (j) vs. (e) and (g) vs. (d) and Table IV (c) vs. (b)). A possible explanation for the percolation of the feature of the plural conjunct is that the head introducing interpretable number (Num or Index or Phi) has the option of establishing a gender agreement relation with a conjunct with which it shares the number, and since this head is plural, it will choose a

[15] Where masculine is linked to a property of the referent, as with names of trees, which often form regular gender pairs with names of fruits (in which the tree is masculine and the fruit is feminine), agreement is always in the masculine:
(i) Cireşul şi părul sunt înfloriți / ?? înflorite
cherry-tree(M)-the and pear-tree(M)-the are blooming.MPL / blooming.FPL
A possible explanation is that gender is interpretable for names of trees.

[16] In this example, the fact that these nouns are commonly used in the plural favors masculine agreement

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plural conjunct for agreement. Note that when both conjuncts have the same gender and are plural, percolation is obligatory (see Table II, (j)). When both conjuncts are plural, it appears that any feature may percolate, which explains the differences between (g) and (i) (f.sg.+m.pl.: masc. 37%, vs. f.pl.+m.pl.: masc. 20%), (c) and (e) (m.pl.+n.sg.: masc. 45%, vs. m.pl. + n.pl.: masc. 8%), (d) and (f) (m.pl.+f.sg: masc. 20%, vs. m.pl.+f.pl., masc. 15%) in Table III.

Regarding the proximity factor, noting the fact that its influence is considerably weaker than stated by the academic grammar (see the figures in Table (III) (j) vs. (e) and (g) vs. (d), with a 17% difference, (h) vs. (c) with a 14% difference, and (i) vs. (f) with only 5% difference), we consider the possibility that it is a processing effect rather than a grammatical rule[17].

We present the influence of the various rules and factors in Table V, given in the order of their strength: rule I refers to gender percolation when both conjuncts have the same gender; rule II is the use of a default form (applying when gender does not percolate), rule III refers to the influence of the plurality of a conjunct, and IV to the influence of proximity.

Table V:

		I	II	III	IV	Test result
(a)	f.sg. + m.sg.	-	F	-	M	f. 87%, m. 13%
	m.sg. + f.sg.	-	F	-	F	f. 92%, m. 8%
	f.pl. + m.sg.	-	F	F	M	♦ f. 96%, m. 4%
(b)	n.sg. + m.sg.	-	F	-	M	f. 78%, m. 20%, – 2%
	m.sg. + n.sg.	-	F	-	-	f. 88%, m. 12%
	n.pl. + m.sg.	-	F	F	M	f. 86%, m. 12%, – 2%
(c)	m.pl.+ n.sg.	-	F	M	-	f. 53%, m. 45 %, – 2%
(d)	m.pl. + f.sg.	-	F	M	F	f. 80%, m. 20 %
(e)	m.pl. + n.pl.	-	F	M/F	F	f. 92%, m. 8 %
(f)	m.pl. + f. pl.	-	F	M/F	F	♦ f. 85 %, m. 15%
(g)	f.sg. + m.pl.	-	F	M	M	f. 63%, m. 37 %
(h)	n.sg. + m.pl.	-	F	M	M	♦ f. 67%, m.33% m. 62 %, f.38 %
(i)	f.pl. + m.pl.	-	F	M/F	M	f. 80%, m.20 %
(j)	n.pl. + m.pl.	-	F	F/M	M	f. 65%, m.35 %
(k)	m.sg. + m.sg.	M	F	-	M	(a) m. 72%, (b) m. 88%
(l)	m.pl. + m.sg.	M	F	M	M	m. 72%, f. 28 %
(m)	m.sg. + m.pl.	M	F	M	M	m. 92%, f. 8%

To sum up, agreement with conjoined DPs is semantic whenever possible: number agreement is always semantic, gender agreement is semantic with animates. This is probably due to the fact that morphological defaults are last resorts; if syntax has a means to ensure valuation, it will be used before resorting to morphological defaults. An Index head (containing interpretable features inserted on top of a conjunction phrase) is such a means. Since the gender feature for inanimates is not interpretable, Index cannot be used for gender agreement. Therefore, with inanimates a default form is used if the gender (or nominal class) feature of the conjuncts cannot percolate. The gender system of Romanian cannot be

[17] We do not know yet whether/how agreement with the closest conjunct can be formalized in terms of percolation. For a formal analysis, implemented in HPSG, see Villavicencio, Sadler and Arnold (2005).

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described without resorting to morphological defaults. On the theoretical side, this implies that the failure to valuate an unvalued feature does not always make the derivation crash. If the vocabulary insertion rules have an unspecified form, the derivation is successful (see 3rdsg agreement with impersonal verbs and with clausal subjects).

To conclude, agreement in coordination excludes analysis (iii), but is compatible with the other analyses: in the underspecification analysis, since neuters are unmarked for gender, a coordination of neuters will lead to a default form, which we assume to be the feminine in the plural. In the nominal class analysis, with a coordination of neuters we would have either percolation of the nominal class feature (possible because both conjuncts have the same nominal class) or use of a default form. Since a plural feminine Num/Index selects the class III, in the first case we would have feminine agreement. The default form is also assumed to be the feminine in the plural, as shown by the agreement found when the nominal classes of the conjuncts differ.

4. On the difference between anominal pronouns and grammatical neuter pronouns

We have seen that the facts concerning agreement in coordination leave open both analyses (ii) and (iv). Each of these analyses has a problem of its own. Analysis (iv) needs to assume that the functional head introducing number and gender can see the nominal class feature even when it is inserted above a conjunction of DPs. Analysis (ii) is confronted with the problem of 'anominal' pronouns, which do not have the same form as 'grammatical neuter pronouns' (pronouns with a neuter nominal antecedent, including deictics which fall under a neuter nominal concept). Recall that 'anominal' pronouns, i.e. pronouns used for referents which do not fall under a nominal concept, are typically genderless in languages with a masculine/feminine gender system. For Romanian, this is shown by several facts, which are described in detail in Giurgea (2008b, 2009): masculine singular agreement with anominal demonstrative with feminine forms (26); use of the featureless form *bine* of the adjective *bun* 'good' (27); impossibility of clitic doubling, even in fronting, when it is obligatory with other definite DPs (28).

(26) Asta e imposibil
this.FSG. is impossible.MSG

(27) a. Asta/*pro* e bine/* bun
this is *bine* / *bun*
'That's good'

b. [Să-ți iubeşti duşmanii] e bine /*bun
SUBJ-you.DAT love.2SG enemies-the is *bine/ bun*
'To love one's enemies is good'

c. *Întoarcerea noastră / *Iubirea de duşmani e bine
returning-the our love-the of enemies is *bine*

(28) a. Asta aşteptam!
this waited.1SG
'That's what I was waiting for'

b. Ocazia asta *(o) aşteptam!
opportunity-the this CL3rd.FSG.ACC waited.1SG
'That's the opportunity I've been waiting for'

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But under the underspecification analyses, grammatical neuter pronouns would also be genderless. They are however formally distinct from anominal pronouns – they have masculine forms in the singular, while only *pro*, the feminine demonstrative forms and the feminine accusative clitic *o* appear with an anominal use. Compare (2) and (5), repeated below:

(2) a. Unde e caietul ? **L-** am pus pe birou
where is notebook-the CL3rd.MSG.ACC-have.1SG put on desk
b. Unde sunt caietele ? **Le-** am pus pe birou
where are notebooks-the CL3rd.FPL.ACC-have.1SG put on desk

(5) a. Asta/*pro*/ *El/*Ăsta e imposibil (with a "neuter" meaning)
this.F/ he/this.M is impossible
'This is impossible'
b. N-am spus-o (with a "neuter" meaning)
not-have.1SG told-CL3rd.F.SG.ACC
'I didn't say it'
c. *Nu l- am spus (with a "neuter" meaning)
not CL3rd.M.SG.ACC-have.1SG told
d. Nu-(*l /*o) vreau (with a "neuter" meaning)
not CL3rd.M.SG.ACC/3rd.F.SG.ACC want.1SG
'I don't want it'

So, if we adopt the underspecification analysis, we cannot reduce the difference between grammatical neuter pronouns and anominal pronouns to a difference in gender. Then how can we explain the formal difference between them?

One possibility is to analyze pronouns with a nominal antecedent as containing an empty or incorporated N, as proposed by various authors (Postal 1969, Elbourne 2001, 2005, Panagiotidis 2002, a.o.)[18]. Since anominal pronouns are by definition devoid of a nominal content, they would lack this empty N.

(29) a. [D [(Num) N]] (with N empty or incorporated) : *grammatical neuter*
b. [D] *anominal*

Both Ds in these representations lack gender, but the two are distinguished by the fact that the former is transitive (and possibly incorporates a grammatical N by head-movement) while the latter is not.

But grammatical neuter pronouns appear not only as strong DPs, but also as clitics, including cases of doubling. In Romanian, definite and specific fronted DPs are obligatorily clitic-doubled, except for anominal pronouns (28); postverbal objects marked by *pe* are also normally clitic-doubled, and inanimates may be *pe*-marked in post-verbal position in cases of

[18] For the existence of N in 3rd personal pronouns, there is rich semantic evidence: the source and interpretation of grammatical gender of pronouns (Panagiotidis 2002); the existence of pronouns for which the only relation with the antecedent is nominal anaphora/N-ellipsis – "descriptive pronouns"/E-pronouns, "laziness pronouns" (Elbourne 2001, 2005, Rouveret 2008, Guilliot 2006). Elbourne analyses *donkey*- pronouns as descriptive pronouns and derives all these readings from a structure [definite article + NP-ellipsis]; Guilliot (2006) and Rouveret (2008) use this analysis to derive reconstruction effects with resumptive pronouns. For evidence that an N may be present even in bound variable pronouns, see Sauerland (2000), Elbourne (2005).

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N ellipsis (30b). Clitics display the same difference between grammatical neuter pronouns and anominal pronouns: anominal pronouns are never realized as masculine singular clitics or doubled by masculine singular clitics. As we have seen, the only object definite DPs which are not doubled when fronted are anominal pronouns, as in (28) and (30c) – they can be doubled by a feminine clitic only with the verbs which allow a feminine clitic with a propositional object interpretation (30d). Anominal pronouns[19] are also the only DPs which in present-day Romanian have object-relativization without clitic-doubling (31).

(30) a. Caietul ăsta *(**l-**) am pierdut
notebook(NEUT)-the this (CL3rd.MSG) have.1SG lost
'This notebook, I lost'
b. Nu e bun caietul ăla, **îl** iau pe ăsta
not is good notebook(NEUT)-the this CL3rd.MSG take.1SG OBJ this.MSG
'That notebook is not good, I'll take this one'
c. Asta (??o/*îl) aşteptam/ (*o/*îl) speram/ întrebam
this (CL3rd.FSG/MSG) waited.1SG / CL3rd.FSG/MSG hoped.1SG/asked.1SG
d. Asta (o) ştiam
this (CL3rd.FSG) knew.1SG

(31) a. un lucru pe care *(**l-**) am cumpărat /* ce am cumpărat
a thing(NEUT) OBJ which (CL3rd.MSG) have.1SG bought that have.1SG bought
b. ceva **ce** (*l-) am cumpărat / *pe care l- am cumpărat
something what (CL3rd.MSG)- have.1SG bought OBJ which CL3rd.MSG-have.1SG bought
c. ceea **ce** (*o /*îl) ştiam
that what CL3rd.FSG/CL3rd.MSG knew.1SG
'what I knew'

The extensive clitic-doubling found in Romanian suggests that Romanian clitics are at least in some cases agreement markers of sorts or, at least, D heads of a big-DP (note moreover that clitic doubling with *pe-* marked postverbal objects tends to become obligatory in present-day Romanian for definite and specific objects). Then, to say that grammatical neuter clitics are distinguished from anominal pronouns by the presence of an N becomes impossible (for the agreement analysis) or more difficult (for the big-DP analysis).

A possible solution is to consider that while grammatical neuter pronouns (i.e., the masculine singular forms) are specified for number (are *singular*), while anominal pronouns lack not only gender but also number, as proposed by Picallo (2002) for Spanish 'neuter pronouns' (the *-o* paradigm, which indeed do not have plural forms). Then we would say that masculine singular clitics spell-out the feature complex [(+spec…) +sg]. Since anominal pronouns are not marked as singular, clitics cannot double them – except for the accusative *o* with a propositional object meaning, which might rely on a special interpretation of a feminine empty or incorporated N (see Giurgea 2009)[20].

[19] Besides definite anominal pronouns which have presented in section 2, Romanian has indefinite and quantificational 'neuter' pronouns which can have an anominal use, and allow the featureless adjective *bine*: *ce* 'what', *nimic* 'nothing', *ceva* 'something', *orice* 'anything', *tot/totul* 'everything', *cât* 'how much', *oricât* 'however much'

[20] The fact that the clitic *o* with a propositional object meaning is restricted to some verbs supports the idea that it reflects an idiomatic interpretation of a feminine N. Additional evidence is the use of the feminine form of *bun*,

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This account predicts that if we find plural pronouns with an anominal interpretation, they *will* be clitic doubled by a feminine plural clitic. Romanian has, indeed, an empty N interpreted without nominal anaphora (without a nominal antecedent), as /-animate/, which appears more often after plural determiners[21] (or other nominal functional items: pre-determiner universals, quantitatives), and the determiners have *feminine* forms in this case: *multe* many.FPL 'many things'; *atâtea* so-many.FPL 'so/as many things; *câte* how-many.FPL 'how many things'; *astea, alea* these/those.FPL 'these/those things'; *cele (ce*) the.FPL (that) 'those'; *toate* all.FPL 'all things, everything'. These DPs, if they fulfill the conditions for doubling, can be doubled by feminine plural clitics, as expected, and allow *care*-relativization (see (32)d):

(32) a. Toate ***(le)** ştie
all.FPL (CL3rd.FPL) knows
"S/he knows all things/everything" (besides: „he knows them all")

b. Astea ***(le)** uitase
these.FPL (CL3rd.FPL) had-forgotten.3SG
"S/he had forgotten these things"

c. Cele ce urmează ***(le-)** am aflat de la profesorul Ionescu
the.FPL that follow (CL3rd.FPL)-have.1SG learned from professor-the Ionescu
"What follows, I've learned from professor Ionescu"

d. Nu am timp să expun toate cele **pe care le-**
not have.1SG time SUBJ expose.1SG all.FPL the.FPL OBJ which CL3rd.FPL
- am descoperit
have.1SG discovered

Why should Number be absent on natural neuter pronouns? We may speculate that the number feature depends on the presence of N. Depending on the theory of number that we adopt, we may say either that Num always selects N or that number is a variable non-dependent feature associated only with N – i.e., only Ns may be marked [+sg/pl], all other items showing Number have unvalued Number. Therefore, anominal pronouns lack Number altogether.

5. Conclusions

Romanian does not have three values for the category Gender. The facts concerning agreement in coordination can be explained by assuming that the feminine plural form is a morphological default (not specified for gender). They are compatible with the following analyses of 'neuter nouns': (i) as unmarked for gender (the underspecification analysis); (ii) as constituting a third nominal class which is selected by a head containing bundled number and

bună 'good' in the idiomatic expression *Asta-i bună*! ('lit. That's good!') 'Are you serious? / Unbelievable!', and the idiomatic uses of some feminine singular determiners without an overt N: *una e să.., alta e să*... one.FSG is to…, another.FSG is to… 'it's one thing to.., and another thing to…', *una, alta* one.FSG, another.FSG 'various things' (see Giurgea 2008a).

[21] There may be an empty N interpreted without nominal anaphora, as /-animate/, in some singular DPs: e.g. *tot(ul)* 'everything'; in this case clitic doubling is impossible. We may say either that there is in fact no N at all or that there is N but no Number. The same analysis can be applied to indefinite and quantificational (natural) neuter pronouns such as *ceva* 'something', *nimic* 'nothing': since they have no plural counterparts, we may say that they lack number, which explains the fact that they cannot take relatives with clitic doubling.

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gender. The second hypothesis – the nominal class analysis – also requires the assumptions that a head containing bundled number and gender can be inserted above a DP-conjunction and the nominal class feature can percolate at the DP-level.

On the other hand, the underspecification analysis requires further assumptions in order to explain the fact the forms used for neuter nominal antecedents ('grammatical neuter pronouns') are different from the forms used anominally, including in the case of clitics. We have suggested that the anominal pronouns which are not plural and don't allow clitics lack not only gender but also number, due to the absence of an N component.

The choice between the underspecification and the nominal class analysis depends on the plausibility of the additional assumptions that each of the two analyses requires. It appears that the underspecification analysis is preferable on economy reasons, because it uses a smaller number of features (it has only gender, with two values, and no nominal class feature). However, the nominal class analysis may be more convenient for languages which have more complex systems, as some of those discussed in Corbett (1991).

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