GENDER ON DEFINITE PRONOUNS

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Abstract: This paper explores some issues related to the interpretation of gender on definite pronouns. Gender in definite pronouns (i.e. personal and demonstrative pronouns) may either reflect the gender of the noun of the antecedent (grammatical gender) or a property of the referent (natural gender). We can note, across languages, that natural gender may override grammatical gender for persons but not for inanimates. I explain this by assuming that neuter natural gender means lack of descriptive content, the inanimate interpretation arising from an implicature, and that a general principle requires pronouns to bear a descriptive specification whenever possible (this specification can be represented either by nominal anaphora or by the descriptive content of natural gender). It follows that neuter natural gender is only used for entities which do not fall under a nominal concept (propositional objects, denoted by clauses, and uncategorized perceptual objects). In languages with the two-fold opposition masculine/feminine, special pronouns lacking grammatical gender (the so-called 'neuter pronouns') are used for entities which do not fall under a nominal concept. Romanian patterns with these languages, which supports the idea that Romanian does not have a three-gender system, but a two-gender one. Having established that in Romanian the category of Gender does not have more than two values, I discuss several possible analyses of the so-called 'neuter' nouns in this language, concluding that genders must be distinguished from nominal agreement classes, as proposed by Corbett (1991). Romanian can be described as having two genders and three nominal classes. A minimalist formalization of this distinction is put forth, which is based on Ritter's (1993) proposal that Gender is generated on Num in Romance languages.

Keywords: definite pronouns, gender, semantics, neuter pronouns, Romanian neuter

1. Introduction. The semantics of definite pronouns and the source of the gender feature

Gender in definite pronouns (3rd person pronouns, including null pronouns and demonstratives)[1] may either reflect the gender of the noun of the antecedent (which I will call (noun)-anaphoric gender) or a property of the referent (non-anaphoric gender):

(1) a. Da war auch sein Weib_i. Es_i war älter als er. (Germ.)
there was also his wife(NEUT) 3rd.NSG. was older than him
b. Da war auch sein Weib_i. Sie_i war älter als er.
there was also his wife(NEUT) 3rd.FSG. was older than him

If in the formulation above the term 'antecedent' is understood in its primary meaning, it does not cover all the interpretations of pronouns, but only the cases in which the pronoun is interpreted in relation to a linguistic expression, in the same sentence or in the same text. But there are several reasons to extend the notion of antecedent to the other uses of pronouns. Arguably, co-reference and deixis are two instances of the same phenomenon: reference to salient entities. An entity may be salient by mention (in which case we speak about co-reference), by its presence in the utterance context (deixis) or by its presence in the common concerns of the speaker and hearer (the evocative use). The evidence for this unitary treatment comes from the fact that all the expressions languages use for deixis and evocative use are also used for reference to previously mentioned entities. There are no demonstratives specialized for contextually salient non mentioned entities. Languages generally have special expressions for co-reference inside a domain (grammatical anaphora) and allow cataphora

[1] I will not discuss here 1st and 2nd pronouns, which do not have any gender contrast in most Indo-European languages. For the issue of gender agreement with a 1st/2nd person subjects, see Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2008).

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under certain structural conditions inside the same sentence (the backward anaphora constraint), but discourse anaphora does not seem to be essentially different from deixis and the evocative use. Then, if we use the term 'antecedent' for discourse anaphora, we should apply it to deixis and the evocative use too and change its meaning accordingly: we will define 'referential antecedent' as 'contextually salient referent which gives the pronoun its referential value'.

A second reason to extend the use of the term 'antecedent' to deixis and the evocative use is the fact that the same parallelism between anaphora and deixis is found in cases of identity-of-sense anaphora. The missing content in nominal and verbal ellipses may sometimes be taken not from the same sentence or from the previous discourse, but from the extralinguistic context. For this case, Hankamer and Sag (1976) used the term 'pragmatic antecedent'. A more precise term would be 'extralinguistic antecedent'. This can be shown in the following examples of nominal anaphora, in which the grammatical gender on the determiner comes from the missing noun:

(2) [before a hat on a shop display]
a. Am şi eu **una** aşa. (Rom.) (*pălărie* 'hat' – feminine)
have.1SG also I one.F. like-this
b. Moi aussi j'en ai **un** comme ça. (Fr.) (*chapeau* 'hat' – masculine)
me too I PRO-N-CLITIC have one.M. like this
'I too have one like this'

Extralinguistic antecedents may also be found with VP ellipsis (Merchant 2004):

(3) a. [John attempts to kiss Mary while driving] John, you mustn't.
b. [A piece of chocolate cake is offered.] I really shouldn't.
c. [As an invitation to dance.] Shall we?

The availability of extralinguistic antecedents for nominal anaphora explains the fact that deictic pronouns show combined effects of referential and nominal anaphora, as witnessed by the use of gender in the examples below:

(4) [before a bill fallen on the ground]
a. Ia-**o**, ce mai aştepţi (Rom.) (*hârtie* 'bill (folding money)' – feminine)
take-3rd.F.SG. what still wait.2.sg.
'Take it, what are you waiting for?'
b. Prends-**le**, tu hésites encore ? (Fr.) (*billet* 'ticket' – masculine)
take-3rd.M.SG. you hesitate still

The proposed definition for the term 'antecedent' only refers to discourse anaphora, deixis and the evocative use. In a sentential domain, what is traditionally called 'antecedent' is not always a co-referring expression: in the bound variable reading of pronouns, the antecedent is the expression which introduces the lambda operator which binds the pronoun[2]. The bound

[2] This expression may be a quantifier, but also a referential expression, as witnessed by the 'sloppy readings' which may be found in ellipses:
(i) John doesn't talk to his sister, and neither does Paul.
strict reading: Paul doesn't talk to John's sister
sloppy reading: Paul doesn't talk to his own sister
the antecedent of the ellipsis in the sloppy reading : John λx. x doesn't talk to x's sister

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variable reading and co-reference inside a sentence usually behave alike with respect to syntactic phenomena – a pronoun c-commanded by its antecedent and even a reflexive may sometimes have a co-reference reading. Therefore a common representation was proposed for intrasentential co-reference and the bound variable reading, namely indexation (the principles of the binding theory are formulated in terms of this representation; syntactic binding, as co-indexation under c-command, must be distinguished from semantic binding – the operator-variable structure; see Büring 2005). Using this theoretical tool, we may define an intrasentential antecedent as the coindexed expression involved in the interpretation of the pronoun. This leads to a disjunctive definition of 'antecedent'. We may extend the formulation given for discourse anaphora and deixis to intrasentential co-reference, but obviously not to the bound variable reading. Since the bound variable reading is standardly represented by coindexation, I propose the term 'indexical antecedent' for the co-indexed DP which introduces the operator which binds the pronoun. For contextually salient referents I will use the term 'referential antecedent'.

There are pronouns which do not involve either reference to salient entities or variable binding. Elbourne (2001, 2005) argued that all these cases involve nominal anaphora: pronouns do have an antecedent, but they only share with this antecedent the descriptive content and not reference. They are interpreted as definite descriptions (hence the appellative 'descriptive pronouns' or 'D-pronouns') and they get the descriptive content from the antecedent, which, like in other nominal anaphora cases, is normally linguistic but may also be extralinguistic (see (2) above). Typical examples are given below: pronouns of laziness with a bound variable in their descriptive content (see (5)) or inside idioms (see (6)), generics with non-generic antecedents (see (7); (7)c with an extralinguistic antecedent):

(5) The man who gave **his paycheque** to his wife was wiser than the man who gave **it** to his mistress (Karttunen 1969)

(6) Pierre a pris la mouche. Il **la** prend souvent pour un rien. (Fr.) (Corblin 2006:8)
P. has caught the fly(fem) he CL.3.F catches often for a nothing
'Pierre flew off the handle. He often does this (lit. flies it off) for nothing'

(7) a. A: How's baby? B: Oh, she's crying now. A: Yes, **they** do tend to cry.
(Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 7.2.3.[25])
b. A. Am cules o ciupercă. B : Vezi că (***pro***) nu sunt întotdeauna comestibile (Rom.)
have.1SG picked a mushroom beware that not are.3PL always edible
'I picked a mushroom. – Beware, they are not always edible' (Giurgea 2008:4.62b)
c. [context: it's dark, stray dogs are approaching] (Giurgea 2008: 4.62c)
Pay attention, **they** sometimes are dangerous at night.

Elbourne argues that *donkey* pronouns are D-pronouns. DPs with overt nouns can indeed be used as '*donkey* anaphorae', which gives support to the proposal of explaining *donkey*-pronouns by nominal anaphora:

(8) When a cat and a dog meet, usually **the cat** flees from **the dog**.

The same mechanism is perhaps involved in examples of the type in (9), where the personal pronoun is interpreted referentially – 'the cows' in a certain region where we know that cows must be present – whereas the antecedent is used non-referentially, only contributing the noun 'cow':

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(9) I didn't see any cow. The peasants must have put **them** in stables.

Elbourne (2005) shows that no other strategies than nominal anaphora are needed for the interpretation of descriptive pronouns, and, moreover, that those strategies make wrong predictions. This offers an elegant account for the descriptive use of pronouns: as D elements, pronouns have an empty NP which may result from ellipsis[3].

Nominal anaphora is present not only in pronouns of laziness. In languages with grammatical gender, it is manifested in the fact that pronouns have the grammatical gender of their antecedent even if the gender is unmotivated (lexical):

(10) a. Am pus **paltonul**$_i$ pe scaun. Peste **el**$_i$ am pus umbrela. (Rom.)
have.1SG put coat(M.)-the on chair over 3rd.M.SG. have.1SG put umbrella-the
b. Am pus **cămaşa**$_i$ pe scaun. Peste **ea**$_i$ am pus umbrela.
have.1SG put shirt(F.)-the on chair over 3rd.F.SG. have.1SG put umbrella-the

(10)′ a. J'ai laissé mon **manteau**$_i$ là-bas. **Il**$_i$ doit être nettoyé (Fr.)
I have left my coat(M.) over there 3rd.M.SG. must be cleaned
b. J'ai laissé ma **chemise**$_i$ là-bas. **Elle**$_i$ doit être nettoyée.
I have left my shirt(F.) over there 3rd.F.SG. must be cleaned

The same holds for unmotivated number (lexical plural in *pluralia tantum*):

(11) Where did I put the **scissors**? Have you seen **them**?

Even in the deictic use, pronouns have the gender of the nominal concept to which the referent can be subsumed, as we have seen in the examples (4) above.

Elbourne (2005) proposes a unitary semantic representation for all the readings of definite pronouns (with referential antecedents, bound variable, descriptive), which is also applicable to definite DPs in general:

(12) [[THE] [Index]] [Restriction (Descriptive content)]]
$[[THE]] = \lambda f_{<e,t>}.\lambda g \in D_{<e,t>} \& \exists !x\ (f(x)=1 \& g(x)=1).\imath x\ (f(x)=1 \& g(x)=1)$ (Elbourne 2005 : 3.156)
$[[Index]]^a = \lambda x\ .\ x=a(i)$ (Elbourne 2005 : 3.6)

The operator is *iota*, the denotatum of the definite article (which is given a 'fregean interpretation', in which the unique satisfaction of the description is a presupposition, as proposed by Strawson (1950)).

The Index encodes reference to contextually salient entities[4] and the bound variable reading. Elbourne provides evidence that the bound variable reading is not incompatible with the presence of a descriptive content (restriction):

[3] If we analyze nominal ellipsis, at least in some cases, as base generated, it is not necessary to say that 3rd person pronouns involve an empty NP. The $+N_{anaph}$ feature which is responsible for the anaphoric interpretation of empty Ns and pro-Ns may be directly generated on D in the case of pronouns, if we allow feature bundling (for which there is copious independent evidence). See Giurgea (2008) for this line of analysis.

[4] In this case, I assume that the choice of an Index encodes *accessibility* (see Ariel 1990, 2001), which explains the difference between personal pronouns and demonstratives, and also between weak and strong pronouns, at least partially (including the difference between *pro* and overt subject pronouns): weaker forms are used for more accessible referents, such as established discourse topics (weak>strong>demonstrative). If the bound

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(13) Mary talked to no senator before the/that senator was elected. (Elbourne 2005 : 3.77)

Evidence for the presence of a descriptive content in bound variable pronouns was provided by Sauerland (2000), which argues that the contrastive accent on the bound variable pronoun *his* in (14) cannot be explained if the pronoun is semantically represented by nothing more than a mere index, so the pronoun must be translated as 'the teacher's':

(14) On Monday, every boy called his mother. (Sauerland 2000: 1)
On TUESday, every TEAcher called his/HIS mother.

It is possible that in some cases bound variable pronouns involve an Agree relation with their antecedent (as argued by Kratzer 1998, 2006), in which case their ϕ-features are not interpreted, but valued via Agree. Kratzer's examples involve the person feature[5], but if this is true for person it may also hold for gender. However the bound variable reading for 3rd person pronouns is less constrained than for the first two persons, which shows that this reading cannot be reduced to Agree (Kratzer 2006 suggests that in cases which are not covered by Agree the bound variable reading may result from the descriptive reading, like in *donkey* anaphorae).

Putting aside the possible instances of Agree, we may conclude that the gender feature of pronouns may reflect: (i) the gender of the nominal antecedent, (ii) the gender of the nominal concept under which the referent falls or (iii) a property of the referent. For (i)-(ii) we speak of *grammatical gender,* for (iii) of *natural gender*. Of course, the distinction is only relevant for languages which have grammatical gender.

2. An asymmetry regarding natural gender: neuter vs. animate

The difference between grammatical and natural gender can be seen in cases where the two conflict, like in (1) above. The feminine is associated to the non-anaphoric descriptive content '+human + female', the masculine with '+human', often read as '+male' by implicature. As shown in (1) and in (15) below, if the referential antecedent is introduced by a

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variable reading is analyzed in terms of co-indexing, accessibility may also apply here (more local co-indexing correlates to a higher degree of accessibility):

(i) a. Mihai$_i$ l-a întâlnit pe Gheorghe$_j$ azi dimineață. Acesta$_j$ i-a spus că... (Rom.)
M. 3rd.ACC-has met OBJ G. today morning this-one 3rd.DAT has told that
'Mihai met Gheorghe this morning. He (the latter) told him that…'

b. Mihai$_i$ l-a întâlnit pe Gheorghe$_j$ azi dimineață. El$_{i/j}$ i-a spus că...
M. 3rd.ACC-has met OBJ G. today morning this-one 3rd.DAT has told that
'Mihai met Gheorghe this morning. He told him that…'

c. Mihai$_i$ l-a întâlnit pe Gheorghe$_j$ azi dimineață. *pro*$_{i/?j}$ i-a spus că...
M. 3rd.ACC-has met OBJ G. today morning 3rd.DAT-has told that
'Mihai met Gheorghe this morning. He told him that…'

[5] The examples she uses are:

(i) Wir sind die einzigen, die unsere Kinder versorgen. (Germ.) Bound variable reading possible
we are the only-ones which our children take-care.1/3PL

(ii) Ihr seid die einzigen, die eure Kinder versorgen. *Bound variable reading
you.PL are the only-ones which your children take-care.1/3PL

A similar contrast can be illustrated for Romanian:

(i) Sunt singurul care am grijă de copilul meu. Bound variable reading possible
am only-one-the which have.1SG care of children-the my

(ii) Sunt singurul care are grijă de copilul meu. *Bound variable reading
am only-one-the which has care of children-the my

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noun with a gender different from the one reflecting the sex and animacy of the referent, the pronoun may have either the grammatical gender or the natural gender:

(15) Întâi a intrat ordonanța$_i$. După ea$_i$/el$_i$ au intrat ceilalți.
first has entered orderly-the after him/her have.3PL entered the-others

For the neuter gender, we do not have the same optionality. If we assume that neuter as a natural gender is interpreted as '-animate', we expect to find inanimates introduced by non-neuter nominals to be resumed either by pronouns reflecting the gender of the nominal antecedent or by neuter pronouns. But what we find instead is that grammatical gender is obligatorily used:

(16) Wir gingen in die Kirche$_i$ ein. **Sie$_i$**/***es$_i$** war sehr alt. (Germ.)
we went into the church 3rd.fem/3rd.neut was very old

Why is the neuter not used as a natural gender when the antecedent falls under a nominal concept? A possible answer would be that the neuter is not associated with an 'inanimate' or 'non-human' feature, but lacks any descriptive feature, so it wouldn't be able to be used as a natural gender.

The neuter is used non-anaphorically (i.e., without being the gender of the NP of the antecedent or of the nominal concept under which the referent falls) if and only if the antecedent doesn't provide any nominal part. This happens in two situations: when the referent is a perceptual object not yet categorized (see (17)) and when the referent is a propositional object or state of affairs normally referred to by clauses (see (18)):

(17) Was ist **das**? (Germ.)
what is that.neut

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

These facts may be explained by considering that the negative specification of the personhood or animacy in neuter actually means lack of descriptive content. The neuter, as the unmarked gender, may indeed be used for maximal generality, as in the following examples:

(19) Ex nihilo nihil. (Latin)
from nothing nothing

(20) mens, quae (..) supponit **ea omnia** non existere de quorum existentia vel
mind which supposes those.npl. all.npl. not exist.Inf. of whose existence even
minimum potest dubitare (lat.) (Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, Synopsis, 12)
very-little can doubt.Inf
'The mind, which supposes that everything it can doubt does not exist'

Then the impossibility to use non-anaphoric neuter when the antecedent falls under a nominal concept may result from a principle aiming at maximizing informativity, which can be formulated as follows:

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(21) Informativity condition: use the maximum of information made available by the gender system of the pronouns – or, alternatively: use descriptive content on pronouns whenever possible

If we adopt a simple analysis of pronouns, with gender generated directly under D, we may say that gender is interpreted as either +/- Human +/- Feminine or as +noun-anaphoric (this would be the same feature as $+N_{anaph}$). Then the combination /-person/ /-noun-anaphoric/ is restricted for entities not subsumed under a nominal concept, according to the informativity condition.

If we adopt a complex analysis of pronouns, with gender generated on an empty noun which is the complement of the pronoun (as in Panagiotidis 2002), the informativity condition would exclude a neuter empty N with no $+N_{anaph}$ feature whenever the antecedent is subsumed under a nominal concept.

An alternative view on nominal anaphora in pronouns holds that it is due to deletion of an NP at the PF-interface (Elbourne 2001, 2005, Sauerland 2000, Rouveret 2008). Under this theory, the informativity condition could still be used in the variant 'use descriptive content on pronouns whenever possible' under the assumption that in non-anaphoric uses the descriptive content is represented by a grammatical N (or n, see Saab 2004) and that the n of neuter pronouns, lacking gender or being negatively specified for gender, lacks descriptive content[6].

3. Neuter pronouns in languages with a masculine/feminine gender system

We have seen that there are cases in which pronouns without any descriptive content must be used, due to the fact that their referent does not fall under a nominal concept and does not satisfy the features positively specified by natural gender (+human +/- female). Languages with a neuter gender consistently use this gender, interpreted non-anaphorically, in these cases. But what solution is adopted by languages with a feminine-masculine gender system?

Examining several languages of these type (Romance and Baltic), we may see that they resort to pronominal forms which are sometimes special and sometimes identical with forms of the paradigm of one of the genders. Traditionally, the special forms, and sometimes also the regular forms in this special use, are called 'neuter pronouns'. I will argue that all these

[6] The deletion analysis of nominal anaphora in pronouns encounters the following important problems:
(i) Languages use the same forms with and without nominal anaphora, although the deletion hypothesis assumes different structures for the two interpretations (with a deleted NP and with a grammatical N, respectively): see (1) for animate pronouns, (17)-(18) for the non-anaphoric use of the neuter in languages with neuter gender, and also the co-existence of a noun-anaphoric and a non noun-anaphoric use for the Engl. *it*. We cannot assume that natural gender is due to deletion of a noun with a very general interpretation: deletion of a generic noun *thing* in non-noun-anaphoric neuter pronouns does not comply with general conditions on deletion (the antecedent must be contextually salient); moreover, in some languages the gender of the general term *thing* is not neuter. For instance, Latin *res* is feminine, so it cannot explain the use of the neuter pronoun in (i)b:

(i) a. Quid est **illud**?
what is that.neut
b. Quid est **ea res**?
what is that.F thing(F)

(ii) If ellipsis were the result of deletion, we would expect to find an overt NP constituent after pronouns. But this is not the case. It can be shown that pronouns are not a special spell-out of an adnominal determiner (for various arguments against the view that 3rd person pronouns are a special spell-out of the definite article, see Giurgea 2008, Elbourne 2005, Panagiotidis 2002).

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forms are genderless. If natural gender is always +human in these languages and the referent does not fall under a nominal concept (being either a propositional object or an uncategorized perceptual object), it follows that no gender can be used on pronouns in these cases. This prediction is confirmed by independent evidence, as will be shown below. Some of this evidence has been put forth by Picallo (2002, 2005) for Spanish, Cornilescu (2000) and Giurgea (2008) for Romanian.

First, let's see the forms.

(a) forms which are not restricted to the neuter use :

For propositional objects, western Romance use direct object (see 22) and PP clitics (see 23). The direct objects clitics have the form of the masculine singular. PP clitics do not have a gender opposition in these languages. Only Catalan has a special direct object neuter clitic (see 32b below).

(22) a. Je **le** sais. (Fr.)
I CL.3rd.M know
b. **Lo** so. (It.)
CL.3rd.M know.1SG
c. **Lo** sé. (Sp.)

(23) a. Nous **y** pensons. (Fr.)
we to-it think
b. **Ci** pensiamo. (It.)
to-it think.1PL
c. **Hi** pensem. (Cat.)

All null subject Romance languages can use *pro* as a neuter pronoun. Overt subject are excluded, which shows that they are never genderless:

(24) Ce-i asta? *pro* e un cal / *El e un cal.
what is that is a horse 3rd.M is a horse

(25) Decidieron [PRO producir aquellos documentales]$_i$ aunque ***pro***$_i$ no les proporcionara
decided.3PL produce.INF those documentaries although not them provide.3SG
nunca ningún beneficio. (Picallo 2002: note 13, (i)c)
never no benefit
'They decided to produce those documentaries although it wouldn't ever provide them with any benefit'

Italian also uses the masculine singular form of demonstratives as neuter pronouns:

(26) Cosa è questo?
what is this.M.SG.

For the direct object, Romanian sometimes uses accusative feminine clitics, but they are much more restricted than masculine accusative clitics in western Romance and neuter pronouns in German or English. In most of the cases, no overt object appears (see (28)). A null object *pro* can be assumed for these cases. This shows that the feminine form is no longer genderless in Romanian, except when selected by specific predicates, in what might be considered to be idiomatic expressions:

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(27) a. Nici nu-mi vine s-**o** spun.
not-even not-me.CL.DAT comes SUBJ- CL.3rd.FEM. ACC say.1SG
b. E, acum am făcut-**o**
well now have.1SG done-CL.3rd.F.SG.ACC
'Well, now I/we did it'

(28) a. Nu (??o) cred / ştiu. (with *o* with a propositional object reading)
not CL.3rd.F believe.1SG./know.1SG
b. Je ne **le** crois pas. (Fr.)
c. I don't believe it. (Engl.)
d. Ich glaube **es** nicht. (Germ.)

Neuter demonstratives in Romanian have forms identical to the feminine singular. These forms are syntactically distinct from the feminine: they do not trigger feminine agreement, but (what looks like) masculine agreement on the predicate (see 29b), and they never use the direct object marker *pe* which is normally used with demonstratives in case of noun ellipsis even for inanimates, see (30):

(29) a. Ce e **aia**?
what is that.F.SG.
'What's that?'
b. **Asta** e imposibil
this.F.SG. is impossible.M.SG.

(30) a. Ştiu **asta.**
know.1SG this.F.SG
'I know that/it'
b. O ştiu pe-asta
CL3rd.F.SG.ACC know.1SG OBJ this.F.SG
'I know this one/this woman' (with female human referent or nominal anaphora)

(30)′ a. Ia(-l **pe) ăsta**! (e.g. *pantof* 'shoe' – masculine)
take(3rd.M.ACC OBJ) this.M.
'Take this one!'
b. Ia(-o **pe) asta**! (e.g. *pălărie* 'hat' – feminine)
take(3rd.F.ACC OBJ) this.F.
'Take this one!'
c. Ia **asta**! (with no nominal antecedent)
take this

(b) special forms (cf. Meyer Lübke, *Rom. Gr.* III, § 87, 98-99, II § 98):
Spanish and Portuguese use a special ending:

(31)

Sp.:	masc.sg.	fem. sg.	neuter pronoun:
3rd person	él	ella	ell**o**
demonstratives:	este	esta	est**o**
	ese	esa	es**o**
	aquél	aquella	aquell**o**

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Port.: demonstratives:	este	esta	ist**o**	(close to the speaker)
	esse	essa	iss**o**	(close to the hearer)
	aquele	aquela	aquil**o**	(remote)

This ending also appears with the definite article followed by a modifier (e.g. *lo bueno* 'what is good, the good thing', *lo que crees* 'what you believe'), suggesting the presence of an empty N unmarked for gender.

In some Romance languages a special root or stem is used: French *ce/ça* (demonstrative and weak pronoun), *ceci, cela* vs. *celui-ci/celle-ci, celui-là/celle-là* (demonstratives), It. *ciò*, Cat. *això* (demonstratives), *ho* (clitic), Prov. *ço* :

(32) a. **C**'est impossible. (Fr.)
it is impossible
b. **Ho** crec. (Cat.)
it believe.1SG
'I believe it'

Baltic languages also use special forms, for the nominative and accusative singular – Lithuanian *taĩ* 'this', contrasting with masculine N. *tàs,* A. *tą*, feminine N. *tà*, A. *tą*, and forms with the special ending unaccented *-a* (e.g. *vìsa* 'everything' vs. masc. *visàs,* fem. *visà*).

Now let's see the independent evidence that all these forms – those under (a) as well as those under (b) – are unmarked for gender.

As shown in (29b) above, Romanian neuter demonstratives, although formally identical to the feminine, trigger masculine singular agreement. The most straightforward explanation, already proposed by Cornilescu (2000), is that the form of the adjective represents a morphological default used when the controller is unmarked for gender. It is, indeed, the form used with sentential subjects (see 33) and may also be used adverbially (see 34); Romanian does not have an adverbial suffix like western Romance *-ment(e)*, except for the *-e* which builds adverbs from adjectives in *-esc*):

(33) a. [A-ți iubi duşmanii] e imposibil.
to you.DAT love enemies-the is impossible
'To love one's enemies is impossible'
b. [Să-ți iubeşti duşmanii] e imposibil.
SUBJ-you.DAT love.2SG enemies-the is impossible

(34) a. Asta e frumos.
this is beautiful
b. Cântă frumos.
sings beautiful
'(S)he sings beautifully'

For most adjectives, this form is identical to the root.

There is one adjective which has a special form for sentential subjects, different from the masculine singular (*bun/bine* 'good')[7]. It is this special form that is used with neuter demonstrative subjects. The same form is used adverbially:

[7] The form *bine* may also be used with nouns, but with a different meaning – 'respectable; handsome': *E un om bine* 'He's a respectable person', *bărbat bine* 'handsome man'.

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(35) a. om bun
man good.M.SG.
b. A-ți iubi duşmanii e **bine / *bun.**
to you.DAT love enemies-the is good / good.M.SG.
c. E **bine** să-ți iubeşti duşmanii.
is good SUBJ-you.DAT love.2SG enemies
'It is beautiful/good to love your enemies'
d. Asta e **bine** / ***bun.**
this is good/ good.M.SG.
e. Cântă **bine** / ***bun.**
sings good / good.M.SG.
'He sings well.'

We may conclude that except for *bun*, which has a genderless form *bine*[8], the masculine singular form is also a default form, used when the gender feature is absent.

Picallo (2002) argues that Spanish neuter pronouns are [-Gender] based on the behavior of the pronoun *cuál* 'which'. She notes that *cuál* 'which' is compatible only with masculine or feminine nominals, but not with neuter pronouns or clauses (in this case, only the neuter interrogative *qué* 'what' is allowed). She proposes that the reason of this incompatibility is that *cuál* is always marked for gender (as can be seen from the fact that it cannot resume clauses)[9]:

---

[8] The form *bine* is not simply the genderless form of *bun*, but has a further restriction: it only applies to propositional objects / states of affairs. This is shown by neuter indefinite pronouns, which take *bine* when referring to propositional objects/states of affairs and *bun* when referring to physical objects, although there is evidence that they too are genderless – they have a certain reluctance to be resumed by accusative clitics , as shown in (iii):

(i) Nimic nu e bine/bun.
nothing not is *bine/bun*
'Nothing is good'

(ii) Ce e bine/bun?
what is *bine/bun*

(iii) N-am luat nimic fără să-(??l/*o) plătesc.
not-have.1SG taken nothing without SUBJ 3rd.M.ACC/3rd.F.ACC pay.1SG
'I didn't take anything without paying it'

[9] Picallo (2002) proposes that neuter pronouns, as well as sentences, do not lack ϕ-features but are rather 'negatively marked for gender, number and person': [-Gender –Number –Person]. This is a theory-internal assumption, needed in order to explain the fact that neuter pronouns and sentences can function as subjects and objects under the assumption that these positions are associated with ϕ-feature checking. Since I do not know any empirical evidence for the idea that subjects and objects must have full ϕ-features specifications, I do not adopt this view and prefer to consider neuter pronouns as simply genderless.

Picallo (2002, 2005) also argues that neuter pronouns are [-Number], based on the fact that these pronouns, like sentences, do not allow plural agreement when coordinated:

(i) a. [Que el presidente sea reelegido] y [que sea procesado] es/*son igualmente probable/*probables
that the president is reelected and that is impeached is/are equally probable.SG/probable.PL
en este momento (Picallo 2002: 31b)
in this moment

b. Me gusta/*gustan esto y aquello, pero no lo / *los probaré. (ibid.: 34b)
me.D likes/like.3PL this.NEUT and that.NEUT but not 3rdSG/3rdPL taste.FUT.1SG

However, as Picallo herself acknowledges in a footnote, plural agreement is sometimes possible with coordinated neuter pronouns, although not with coordinated sentences:

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(36) a. Cuál escoges, la pluma o la cartela de piel? (Picallo 2002: 21)
which choose.2SG the pen(F.) or the bag(F.) of leather
b. Cuál lamentas más, el hecho de PRO haberte callado o el hecho de que se
which regret.2SG more the fact of have.INF remained-silent or the fact of that REFL
pro haya enfadado?
has annoyed
'Which (fact) do you regret more, the fact of having remained silent or the fact that (s)he has been annoyed?'

(37) a. * Cuál quieres, esto o aquello? (Picallo 2002: 22)
which want.2SG this.NEUT. or that.NEUT
b. * Cuál prefieres, salir a dar una vuelta o quedarte en casa?
which prefer.2SG go-out.INF for a walk or remain.INF-REFL at home

Baltic languages (Lithuanian and Latvian) have special adjectival forms used with a neuter pronoun subject, with a clausal subject or where there is no nominative subject at all. What all these cases have in common is obviously lack of gender.

(38) a. Tai sunku (Lith.)
this.NEUT difficult.NEUT
'This is difficult'
b. Skambinti pianinu yra sunku.
play.INF piano.INST is difficult.NEUT
'Playing the piano is difficult'
c. Man sunku.
me.DAT difficult.NEUT
'I'm having a hard time'
d. Lauke šilta.
outside warm.NEUT
'It's warm outside'

Based on these facts, I propose that the masculine singular forms which we find in some cases (accusative clitics, Italian also the demonstrative *questo, quello*) also represent morphological defaults, used when the gender specification is absent.

Romanian neuter demonstratives have an interesting property which is probably correlated to the fact that they do not have a special inflection: in answers to questions about the category of a perceptual object, the demonstrative referring to the uncategorized object inherits the gender from the predicate nominal instead of keeping the 'feminine' form characteristic of neuter pronouns – while languages with special neuter forms keep the neuter gender of the subject:

(ii) a. Esto y aquello se complementan. (ibid. note 21)
this.NEUT and that.NEUT REFL complement.3PL
b. Que digas esto y que actues de esta forma es/*son contradictorio/*-s
that say.2SG this and that act.2SG of this way is/are contradictory.SG/.PL

In Romanian too neuter pronouns may trigger plural agreement when coordinated:
(iii) Nu ştiu ce sunt asta şi aia de-acolo.
not know.1SG what are this and that of there

Therefore I do not agree with Picallo's (2005) claim that lack of a positive gender specification entails lack of number. Besides examples such as (ii)a and (iii), some languages do have plural neuter pronouns: Romanian has plural feminine demonstratives with neuter interpretation, see (40) below.

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(39) a. – Ce-i aia? – Ăla / ?? aia e un urs. (Rom.)
what is that.NEUT(=F) that.M/that.NEUT(=F) is a bear(M)
b. What's that? **It**'s a bear.
c. Was ist das? **Das/es** ist ein Bär. (Germ.)
d. Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça? **C**'est un ours. (Fr.)
e. O que é que é isso/aquilo? *pro*/Isso/Aquilo é um cão (Eur. Port.)
what is that is that.neut that.NEUT is a dog
f. Qué es eso? *pro*/**Eso** es un lápiz (Sp.)
what is this.NEUT this.NEUT is a pencil
g. Què és allò? *pro*/**Allò** es un gos
what is that.NEUT that.NEUT is a boy

The explanation I would suggest is that Romanian does not have a special entry for neuter demonstratives, but uses an entry with an unvalued gender feature, which gets valued whenever possible – by agreement with the predicate, if the predicate has valued gender. Otherwise, this feature may remain unvalued because it is interpretable at the interfaces: at LF, it is interpreted as lack of descriptive content; at PF Romanian has elsewhere forms: Dem[sg][masc] → *ăsta,* Dem[sg] → *asta*.

Romanian may also use plural demonstratives with a non-anaphorical neutral meaning. In this case the forms as well as the agreement are feminine:

(40) a. Nu cred toate astea.
not believe.1SG all.F these.F
'I don't believe all these things/ I don't believe anything of this'
b. Ce-s alea?
what-are those.F
'What are those things?'
c. Toate astea mi se par incredibile.
all.F these.F me.DAT REFL seem.3PL incredible.F.PL
'I find all these things/all that incredible'

If neuter pronouns in general lack gender in two-gender systems, we may say that in Romanian the feminine plural forms represent a morphological default (as the masculine form for the singular). The neuter interpretation appears, indeed, with the feminine plural of other adnominal determiners, when followed by an empty N, as in (41), (for more on gender in Romanian, see section 4):

(41) Ştie multe / unele
knows many.F.PL / some.F.PL
'He knows many/some things'

With respect to the constraint on the non-anaphoric neuter discussed in section 2, it is interesting to notice that the French neuter pronoun *ce/ça(cela)* represents an exception, as it is sometimes used with antecedents introduced by a nominal:

(42) a. Je n'ai pas pris ton stylo$_i$: tu as probablement rangé **cela$_i$**
I NEG-have not taken your pencil you have probably put-in-order this.NEUT
sans y penser. (Corblin 1995, 2, note 28 ex. 1′)
without to-it think

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b. L'argent$_i$ ne fait pas le bonheur, mais **cela$_i$** aide à faire les courses
the money NEG makes not the happiness but this.NEUT helps to do the shopping
(Corblin 1995, 2, 38-39)

If we want to consider the informativity condition (21) universal, we may say that French *ce/ça* has a positive specification /inanimate/ rather than being devoid of descriptive content.

4. Neuter pronouns and the Romanian 'neuter' gender

The generalizations and theory developed in this article have an important consequence on a long-standing debate in Romanian grammar, the issue concerning the so-called 'neuter' gender in this language (whether Romanian has a neuter gender in addition to the masculine and the feminine genders).

We have seen that languages which have a neuter gender consistently use this gender for reference to entities which do not fall under a nominal concept – perceptual objects not yet categorized and entities introduced by non-nominal antecedents (propositions, states of affairs introduced by clauses). Romanian, as shown in section 3, does not have special neuter forms for these uses. It uses *pro*, demonstratives unmarked for gender which are formally identical to the feminine singular, plural feminine demonstratives and exceptionally accusative singular feminine clitics. Except for the feminine plural, the situation in Romanian is similar to that found in the other Romance languages and characteristic for languages with a masculine/feminine gender system.

Romanian has a large class of nouns (which we will call 'class III' following Corbett 1991), comprising only inanimates, which trigger masculine agreement in the singular and feminine agreement in the plural:

(43) un scaun / două scaune
a.M. chair / two.F. chairs

Pronouns anaphoric to these nouns also have masculine forms in the singular and feminine forms in the plural.

In the grammatical tradition of Romanian there have been two major competing analyses of class III. Some researchers considered that Romanian has two genders, and class III nouns are 'ambigeneric' (or 'heterogeneric'), in the sense that they are masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural Bujor 1955, Nandris 1961). Other researchers considered that class III nouns represent a distinct gender, the neuter (GLR 1963, GALR 2005, Graur 1937)[10].

If class III nouns were neuter, under current theories of agreement in the minimalist framework as well as HPSG, elements agreeing with neuter nouns would have a +neuter gender feature, and the appearance of a masculine agreement in the singular and a feminine agreement in the plural would be an instance of homophony, pertaining to morphology.

The data coming from 'neuter pronouns' disconfirm this view: not only are there no special neuter forms in the pronominal system, but the homophony rules too are not observed: demonstrative and clitics with a neuter interpretation have *feminine* forms in the singular, and they are arguably *genderless* (see section 3 above). If neuter gender was formally identical to

[10] Historically, class III continues the Latin neuter. The dispute around the Romanian neuter only concerns the synchronic analysis.

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the masculine in the singular, we would expect to find singular masculine forms with a neuter meaning. But masculine pronouns never have this meaning:

(44) a. Asta/*el/*ăsta e imposibil. (with a neuter meaning)
this.F/ he/this.M is impossible
b. N-am spus-o /*Nu l-am spus. (with a neuter meaning)
not-have.1SG told-3rd.F.SG.ACC/not 3rd.M.SG.ACC-have.1sg told

To say that Romanian nouns (and presumably items agreeing with them) have three genders but pronouns have only two contradicts a typological generalization: languages tend to have at least as many genders in the pronominal system as in the nominal one (see Corbett 1991) (there are languages with more gender contrasts in pronouns than in nouns, e.g English and mainland Scandinavian, but not the opposite).

So we need an analysis in which Gender on pronouns and items showing nominal agreement should only have two values – masculine and feminine. Then how should we analyze class III nouns?

There are several reasons for which the ambigeneric analysis (according to which class III nouns are masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural) cannot be adopted. As shown by Diaconescu (1963), singular neuters behave differently from singular masculines in coordination. Although two coordinated singular masculine nouns trigger masculine agreement (see (46)), two coordinated singular class III nouns trigger feminine agreement (see (45)a-b). Likwise, a class III singular coordinated to a masculine singular triggers feminine agreement (see (45)c):

(45) a. Scaunul şi tabloul sunt pictate.
chair(III)-the.M and painting(III)-the.M are painted.F.PL
b. Podul şi gardul sunt însorite.
bridge(III)-the.M and fence(III)-the.M are sunlit.F.PL.
c. Muntele şi dealul sunt înverzite
mountain(M)-the.M and hill(III)-the.M are green.F.PL.

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

In the ambigeneric hypothesis, class III nouns are masculine in the singular, so the coordination rule should treat them as masculines. Then no difference between (45) and (46) is expected.

The ambigeneric analysis also encounters a general theoretical problem: it suggests that we have two lexical entries for all class III nouns: +sg. +masc., +pl. +fem. But, while gender might be assumed to be lexical, number is arguably not. First, the vast majority of nouns can take either the singular or the plural, while regular pairs masculine / feminine (built on the same root and showing a regular semantic correlate of the gender opposition) are but a minority. A stronger argument against including valued 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). This contrast led to the proposal that while gender is lexical, number is not (see Corblin 1995, Depiante and Masullo 2001):

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(47) *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.G

(48) a. Pierre a plusieurs **chevaux**, mais **le noir** qui est là n'est pas à lui. (French)
P. has several horses but the.M.SG black.M.SG. which is there is not of him
'Paul has several horses, but the black one over there is not his'
b. *chien* 'dog' / *chienne* 'bitch'
* Pierre a plusieurs **chiens,** mais **la noire** qui est là n'est pas à lui. (with [$_N$e]=*chienne*)
P. has several dogs but the.F.SG. black.F.SG. which is there not is of him
(Corblin 1995, 4, 5-6)

(49) a. Juan visitó a **sus tíos** y Pedro prometió visitar a**l** de él. (Sp.)
J. visited OBJ his uncles and P. promised visit.INF OBJ-the.M.SG. of him
"Juan visited his uncles and Pedro promised to visit his (uncle)'
b. *Juan visitó a **su tío** y Pedro prometió visitar a **la** de él. (où [$_N$e]= *tía*)
J. visited OBJ his uncle and P. promised visit.INF OBJ the.F.SG. of him
(Kornfeld and Saab 2004: 7)

Note that there is no problem with changing the number in ellipsis with class III nouns (in spite of the gender agreement difference):

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

So we must conclude that although Romanian does not have more than two genders on pronouns and agreeing items (adjectives, participles), class III nouns are not ambigeneric. An analysis is needed which should reconcile both these results.

We can think of considering that class III nouns are unmarked for gender (as proposed by Farkas 1990) and that the masculine is the default gender form for the singular and the feminine for the plural. This hypothesis accounts for the feminine agreement with coordinated neuter singulars as well as for other agreement patterns. The general rules of agreement with conjunctions of nouns of different genders are, according to *Gramatica Academiei Române* (1963) and GALR (2005), the following: for names of beings, the masculine takes precedence; if a name of being is coordinated with a name of thing, the rules for names of beings take precedence; for names of things, the feminine takes precedence, except when one of the conjuncts is a masculine plural, in which case the agreement is masculine if the other conjunct is a class III singular or if the masculine is the closest to the target of agreement, otherwise it is feminine[11]. Speakers' judgments are most divergent in case one of the conjuncts is a

[11] These rules suggest that the gender reflected in predicate agreement with conjunctions is not purely formal, but keeps an interpretive residue : the unmarked gender for persons is the masculine, therefore if at least one conjunct is a masculine animate, agreement in the masculine; otherwise, the unmarked gender is the feminine. This might be explained if we adopt Sauerland's (2008) analysis of agreement with conjunctions as involving a ϕP projection above the conjunction (called IndexP in Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea in prep.) and we assume that the gender feature of the ϕ (or Index) head is interpretable.

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masculine plural. A recent test performed on 20 subjects by Blanca Croitor gave the following results for coordination of two inanimates (Croitor 2008) – I only show the cases where neither of the answers reached 90%, except in case of a masculine plural, where it is useful to see the whole paradigm. The examples contained predicative adjectives with a preverbal subject, so the closest conjunct is always the last. I boldfaced the cases where variation is so big (13/7 or more) that it seems that there is no established rule:

(51)

(a)	m. pl. + f. sg.	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(b)	**m. pl.+ III sg.**	**m. 50 %, f. 45 %, no answer %**
(c)	**f.sg. + m.pl.**	**f. 60 %, m. 40 %**
(d)	**III sg. + m.pl.**	**m. 65 %, f. 35 %**
(e)	m.pl. + f. pl.	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(f)	m.pl. + III pl.	f. 90 %, m. 10 %
(g)	f.pl. + m.pl.	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(h)	**III pl. + m.pl.**	**m. 60 %, f. 40 %**
(i)	f.sg. + m.sg.	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(j)	III sg. + m.sg.	f. 85 %, m. 15 %

Some of these results are expected in the hypothesis that the feminine is a morphological default form for plural. We might say then that when the conjuncts have different genders, no gender value is assigned and therefore the default form appears, which is identical to the feminine. A different strategy is to use agreement with the closest conjunct, which would account for (51i-j). This could also explain why in case one of the conjuncts is a masculine plural the masculine agreement is more often found when the masculine is the closest conjunct (51d compared to 51b and 51c compared to 51a). What remains to be explained is why the masculine plural behaves differently from the masculine singular – allowing, for instance, masculine agreement even when it is the farthest conjunct (see 51a-b). We might think that since the masculine is the default form for the singular but not for the plural, the masculine gender is treated as the unmarked gender in the singular and the marked gender in the plural, and there is an optional rule imposing agreement with the most marked gender. Notice that 'unmarked' here cannot be equated to 'morphological default', because masculine singulars are not genderless. They cannot be considered to be genderless because they trigger masculine agreement in coordination, unlike class III nouns (see 46 above, compared to 45). Is it true that at least for some speakers some masculines behave as unmarked for gender in the singular, when they denote inanimates, allowing feminine agreement in examples such as (52), noticed by Graur (1937)

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

However such examples are rather exceptional. The regular agreement for two coordinated inanimate masculine singulars is masculine.

The results also show some differences between feminines and class III nouns, the feminine agreement being found more often when one of the conjuncts is feminine: see (51c) vs. (51d), (51a) vs. (51b), (51g) vs. (51h). The difference is more significant when the feminine or the III class nouns, respectively, are singular and the masculine is plural. This is expected if feminine is a marked gender in the singular: the difference between feminine and class III nouns would result from the application of the marked gender rule, which can only apply when the feminine is singular.

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I conclude that gender agreement in coordination of inanimates in Romanian results from the interplay of the following rules:

(53) (I) Use a default form when the conjuncts differ in gender (including the case in which one of the conjuncts is unmarked for gender) = assign no gender (default forms = the masculine in the singular, the feminine in the plural)
(II) Assign the gender of the conjunct bearing the most marked gender (marked genders= the feminine in the singular, the masculine in the plural)
(III) Assign the gender of the closest conjunct (including no gender for unmarked conjuncts, resulting in the use of a default form)

The relative weight of these rules can be seen by comparing the results they give for the various orders in (51) with the empirical results in (51), as represented in (54). We see that rule (I) always overrides one of the others and can only be overridden by the cumulate effect of the other two (54b, d and h, the only examples where masculine appears to be predominant). Even in these cases, the masculine reaches at most 65 % (54d), otherwise being practically equal with the feminine (differences smaller than 60% are not very relevant in such a small sample). What is unexpected is the difference between (54g) and the other cases where the last two rules balance the first (b, d and h). The difference is correlated to the presence of a feminine plural in (g), while the other examples contained a class III noun. It may be that for some speakers both the masculine and the feminine count as marked in the plural, so that rule II gives no preference.

(54)

		Rule I	Rule II	Rule III	Empirical data
(a)	m. pl. + f. sg.	F	–	F	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(b)	m. pl.+ III sg.	F	M	M	m. 50 %, f. 45 %, no answer %
(c)	f.sg. + m.pl.	F	–	M	f. 60 %, m. 40 %
(d)	III sg. + m.pl.	F	M	M	m. 65 %, f. 35 %
(e)	m.pl. + f. pl.	F	M	F	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(f)	m.pl. + III pl.	F	M	F	f. 90 %, m. 10 %
(g)	f.pl. + m.pl.	F	M	M	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(h)	III pl. + m.pl.	F	M	M	m. 60 %, f. 40 %
(i)	f.sg. + m.sg.	F	F	M	f. 75 %, m. 25 %
(j)	III sg. + m.sg.	F	–	M	f. 85 %, m. 15 %

However, the idea that class III nouns are unmarked for gender encounters some problems. First, why should rule (I) also apply in case of the conjuncts is unmarked for gender? We would rather expect the target to take the value of the conjunct bearing gender, but this is not the case when the other conjunct is masculine, especially if it is singular – as shown in (45c) above, the agreement is feminine in this case. See also (55) below:

(55) Peretele şi gardul au fost vopsite /??vopsiți.
wall(M)-the and fence(III)-the have been painted.F.PL /painted.M.PL

Another problem for the hypothesis that class III nouns are unmarked for gender is the fact that the adjective *bun*, which with neuter pronouns referring to propositional objects/states of affairs takes the form *bine* (see section 3 above and note 8), prefers the form *bun* with a neuter singular noun:

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(56) a. Atacul a fost bun/*bine.
attack(III)-the has been *bun/bine*
b. Intratul în opoziție ar fi bun/?bine.
entering(III)-the in opposition would be *bun/bine*

In section 3 we have seen that a genuine genderless form referring to a propositional object/state of affairs such as *asta* excludes *bun* altogether (see (35d, repeated below). Why should then class III nouns behave differently, if they really were genderless?

(57) Asta e **bine** / ***bun.**
this is *bine/ bun*

A more important problem for this analysis is the fact that it predicts that neuter pronouns and pronouns with a class III nominal antecedent should have the same forms, which is not the case, as we have seen in this article. If class III nouns were unmarked for gender, the masculine forms of determiners in a DP with a singular class III noun would presumably reflect a default form used when no gender feature is present. Then we expect the same forms to be used with a class III nominal antecedent and with no nominal antecedent at all. But, as we have seen, Romanian draws a formal distinction here, using the masculine forms in the singular for class III nominal antecedents and the special forms which we argued to be genderless in case of lack of a nominal antecedent – see (44), repeated below, compared to (58):

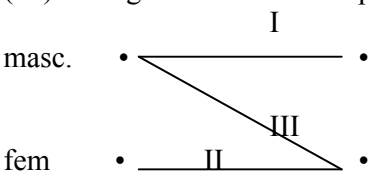
(44) a. Asta/*el/*ăsta e imposibil. (with a neuter meaning)
this.F/ he/this.M is impossible
b. N-am spus-o /*Nu l-am spus. (with a neuter meaning)
not-have.1SG told-3rd.F.SG.ACC/not 3rd.M.SG.ACC-have.1sg told

(58) a. Ăsta era mai bun. (speaking of a pencil, *creion* – class III)
this-one.M was more good
'This one was better'
b. L-am cumpărat ieri. (speaking of a pencil, *creion* – class III)
3rd.M.SG.ACC-have bought yesterday
'I bought it yesterday'

There is another possible analysis of the Romanian class III, which has the advantage of being applicable to a large number of languages, but is difficult to formalize in current generative syntactic theories (minimalism as well as HPSG). This analysis starts from the observation that in various languages of the world the number of gender values on agreement targets and pronouns is smaller than the number of nominal classes, because more than one nominal class may trigger the same agreement in one of the numbers. More nominal classes than genders in a language appear when there is at least one class A whose agreement forms fall together with those of some other class B in one of the numbers and with those of a different class C in the other number (as happens in Romanian). For such systems, Corbett (1991) proposed to distinguish *controller genders* (or agreement classes) from *target genders*. He represents the Romanian system as in (59), with three controller gender / agreement classes (called I, II, III) and two target genders (or simply genders):

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(59) singular plural

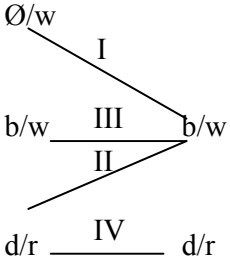


In this system, the main problem Farkas's (1990) analysis encounters does not appear: pronouns referring to class III nouns are expected to differ from genderless pronouns, because a class III noun triggers masculine agreement in the singular, exactly like a masculine, so if a pronoun resuming a class III noun is a determiner which takes a class III empty noun, it will receive masculine gender, while in the absence of a nominal antecedent the pronoun will not have any value for the category Gender.

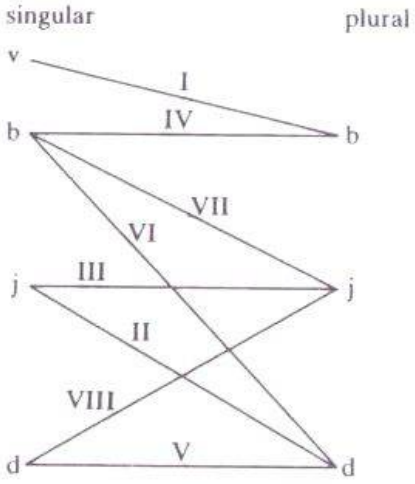
Another advantage of Corbett's analysis is that it can describe much more complex systems in which gender interacts with number, which are encountered n various languages of the world and about which Farkas's analysis has nothing to say. I give here some examples from Corbett (1991):

(60) Lak (North-east Caucasian):

singular plural

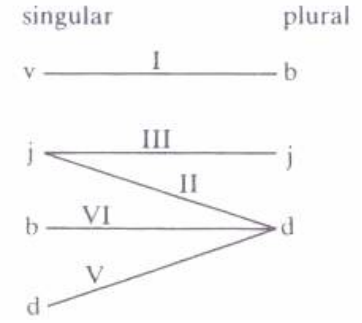


(61) Tsova-Tush (North-central Caucasian):
a. (with minor classes – "inquorate genders") (Corbett 1991 fig. 6.16):



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b. (without minor classes) (Corbett 1991 fig. 6.17):



There are also systems which distinguish more (target) genders in one number (normally the singular) than in the other:

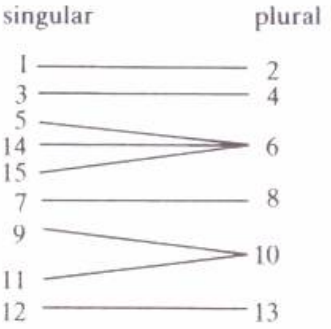
(62) German:

singular	plural
masculine	
feminine	
neuter	

Swedish and Danish:

singular	plural
common	
neuter	

(63) Chibemba (Bantu) (Corbett 1991 fig. 6.9):



(64) Tamil (Dravidian) (Corbett 1991 fig. 6.8):

singular	plural
masculine	
feminine	animate
neuter	neuter

Where all genders collapse in the plural (like in German and mainland Scandinavian), we may say that the feature structure of agreement targets is responsible for the phenomenon: we may say that uϕ, in these languages, is structured so that a positive specification for Number

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(assuming that singular is /–plural/) is complementary to a positive specification for Gender (Note that in all these languages gender and number are bundled together). But this account does not extend to the more complex systems illustrated in (63) and (64).

The distinction between controller and target genders gives an adequate account for all these systems, but is problematic for current generative theories of agreement. In all of these theories, minimalist as well as HPSG, there is perfect match between the feature of the target and the feature of the controller: the feature of the target is either valued via copying, verified ('deleted') under identity of value or unified with the feature of the controller (see Chomsky 1995, 2000, Frampton and Gutman 2000, Frampton and Gutman 2006, Pesetsky and Torrego 2007, Pollard and Sag 1988).

I would like to propose a possible formalization of Corbett's distinction, in which the relation between (target) gender and nominal class (or controller gender) is established by the mechanism of selection. Suppose that Gender is introduced on the Number head (as proposed by Ritter (1993), for Romance languages) and that this head selects certain noun classes. The systems illustrated above are characterized by the fact that there are differences between the classes selected by the head containing a given gender feature *g* depending on the number feature it contains. For instance, a head containing the features 'd/r' and singular, in Lak, selects the noun classes II and IV, while a head containing the features 'd/r' and plural selects the noun class IV. For Romanian, we will say that Number /-pl +masc/ selects class I and class III nouns, Number /-pl -masc/ selects class II nouns, Number /+pl +masc/ selects class I nouns, Number /+pl -masc/ selects class II and class III nouns. For the coordination facts discussed above, especially those involving a singular class III noun with another singular class III noun or a masculine, we must assume that Number is introduced above the conjunction. Thus, the gender resolution rules which apply in conjunctions will be seen as selectional rules of the Number heads.

For systems with fewer gender in the plural than in the singular, we will say that plural heads have different gender specifications (for instance /+animate/, in Tamil, instead of masculine or feminine) or none (as in German and mainland Scandinavian).

There is morphological evidence for the bundling of gender and number features I propose: in all the systems of this type that I've read about, gender and number are represented by a single morpheme (are 'fused').

The idea that gender is not found on nouns, but on functional items selecting the noun is confirmed by an interesting aspect of the mainland Scandinavian gender system. In this language family, gender syncretism in the plural is found not only on agreeing items (adjectives, participles), but also in pronouns. However, the plural inflections of neuter and common nouns are different. If gender was a property of nouns, it is difficult to understand why, if the distinction between neuter and common appears on plural nouns, it fails to appear on plural pronouns. If 'common' and 'neuter' on nouns are not genders, but classes, we expect them to be absent on pronouns: classes typically characterize lexical categories (open classes) and not functional items[12].

[12] A similar situation is found in Romanian, although to a lesser extent: class III nouns have a special plural ending *-uri*, which does not appear on feminines except for a handful of nouns (*leafă* 'salary', *treabă* 'work', *lipsă* 'lack, shortcoming'). But this ending does not appear on all class III nouns: many of them have the regular feminine ending *-e*. Neither of these endings can be said to be prevailing.

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5. Conclusions

(i) Gender in definite pronouns may be either 'grammatical' (or 'anaphoric'), coming from the noun of the pronoun's antecedent or from the nominal concept under which the referent of a deictic pronoun falls, or 'natural' (or 'non-anaphoric'), reflecting a property of the referent.
(ii) Non-anaphoric gender may be used for animates even when they have a nominal antecedent (which is seen in cases where grammatical and natural gender diverge), while the non-anaphoric inanimate is usually restricted to entities which do not fall under a nominal concept: either propositional objects/states-of-affairs, or perceptual objects not yet categorized. This difference may be explained by assuming that the non-anaphoric inanimate corresponds to the lack of a descriptive specification and that a principle of maximizing information requires that pronouns should have a descriptive specification whenever possible)
(iii) Languages with a masculine vs. feminine gender system use special pronouns lacking a gender feature for entities which do not fall under a nominal concept.
(iv) Romanian behaves in this respect like languages with two genders (masculine vs. feminine). The analysis of 'class III' nouns as a separate 'neuter' gender makes wrong predictions regarding the pronouns used for entities which do not fall under a nominal concept.
(v) Romanian class III nouns are not to be analyzed, though, as masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural (agreement in coordination refutes this analysis). They are not to be analyzed as unmarked for gender either (as in Farkas 1990), because then we expect pronouns with class III nominal antecedents and genderless pronouns to have the same forms, which is not the case.
(vi) Corbett's (1991) distinction between controller genders (or nominal agreement classes) and target genders offers the most promising solution to the problems of the Romanian gender system (including the issues raised in this article) and also accounts for other more complex systems encountered in various languages of the world.
(vii) Corbett's (1991) distinction between controller genders (or classes) and target genders may be formalized by considering that nominal classes are selected by heads containing gender and number features bundled together. So Gender is arguably generated on Num in Romanian (as proposed by Ritter 1993 for Romance languages). Class III nouns are selected by a masculine singular Num and by a feminine plural Num.

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