

Gender assignment in bilingual grammars: the case of contact-induced gender systems
(Please consider for virtual conference)

Grammatical gender is the sorting of nouns into two (or more) genders, and agreement is its defining property (Corbett, 1991; Hockett, 1958). Typological studies further indicate that the assignment mechanism operates primarily on the basis of semantic information such as animacy, humanness, and/or biological gender as well as morphophonological information internal to nouns (Comrie, 1999; Corbett, 1991; Harris, 1991; Kramer, 2015, 2020). Building on these typological observations, Kramer (2015, 2020) developed a theory of gender assignment in which interpretable [+/-FEM] gender features combine with the nominalizer *n* in the syntax, and these features are further assessed with respect to a set of Phonological Form (PF) and Logical Form (LF) licensing conditions so that they trigger some kind of connotation at LF for interpretation purposes and can receive morphophonological exponents at PF.

Adopting Kramer's (2015, 2020) theory of gender assignment, Cruz (2021) developed a syntactic analysis (as opposed to a lexical approach) to gender assignment in Spanish-English codeswitched speech. The present study aims to extend the analysis developed in Cruz (2021) to contact-induced gender systems. In particular, we investigate the emergence of gender systems in prolonged language contact situations where communities experienced dense bilingualism at some point (or at present time) of their geopolitical environments (e.g., Di Garbo & Miestamo, 2019). In the language contact situations that concern us here, only one of the languages involved, but not the other, exhibits a robust grammatical gender system. The relevant data is reported in Table 1. In this dataset, standard Indonesian is a variety of Malay-Indonesian, which was in turn in significant contact with Sanskrit, the gendered language (Tadmor, 2007). The Indonesian data in Table 1 show that there are some (same-root) nouns that exhibit a morphological gender alternation on the basis of biological gender (e.g., sex) whereby post-stem *-a* marks conceptual femaleness and post-stem *-i* marks conceptual maleness, respectively, in this language.

In the case of Austronesian Chamorro and Tagalog, these languages were in extensive contact with Indo-European Spanish, the gendered language (Stolz, 2012). Lekeitio Basque, a Basque variety spoken in the town of Lekeitio in the Basque Country, is also in contact with Spanish (Hualde et al., 1994). Similar to the Indonesian data, the Chamorro, Tagalog, and Lekeitio Basque data in Table 1 show a morphological gender alternation operating on the basis of biological gender whereby post-stem *-a* marks conceptual femaleness and post-stem *-o/u* marks conceptual maleness, respectively, in these languages. Although some of the noun pairs in Table 1 can be considered borrowings from the gendered language (Sanskrit or Spanish), it is crucial to emphasize that the morphological gender alternations in Table 1 have also extended to nouns (roots) of the recipient languages, which did not exhibit such morphological gender alternation before language contact (Di Garbo & Miestamo, 2019).

Assuming that contact-induced gender systems emerge as the result of dense bilingualism, we suggest that the data in Table 1 support Cruz's (2021) syntactic analysis to gender assignment in the bilingual architecture whereby biological gender (interpretable gender) is the driving force in the assignment mechanism. In his analysis, and in line with Kramer's (2015) theory of gender, interpretable [+/-FEM] gender features encode biological gender, and semantic licensing conditions govern which $\sqrt{root} + n$ combinations are well-formed at the interfaces. It follows that interpretable [+FEM] represents conceptual femaleness and interpretable [-FEM] conceptual maleness, respectively, of the same-root nouns in Table 1. The morphological alternations in Table 1 (e.g., the *-a/-i* alternation in Indonesian) are in turn the morphological reflexes of interpretable [+/-FEM] gender features syntactically located on *n*. Although gender

agreement is limited in such language contact situations (Di Garbo & Miestamo, 2019), we show that interpretable [+/-FEM] gender features are also relevant for morphosyntactic agreement.

Altogether, the present study aims to bridge the gender assignment patterns observed in codeswitched speech (Cruz, 2021) and gender assignment in language-contact situations whereby interpretable gender (semantically relevant) is the driving force in the assignment mechanism.

Table 1. Morphological gender alternations on the basis of biological gender

Language	Female-denoting	Male-denoting	Translation
Indonesian Tadmor (2007)	putri siswi saudari dewi pemudi	putra siswa saudara dewi pemuda	‘daughter-son’ ‘high school student’ ‘sibling or relative’ ‘godness/god’ ‘young woman/man’
Lekeitio Basque Hualde et al. (1994)	enana alumna txúla gixája sorrista	enano alumno txúlo gixájo sorristo	‘dwarf’ ‘student’ ‘arrogant’ ‘poor woman/man’ ‘lousy’
Chamorro Stolz (2012)	iha yenta anobia apostrera bentera	ihu yetno anobiu apostrero benteru	‘daughter/son’ ‘daughter/son-in-law’ ‘lover’ ‘upholsterer’ ‘saleswoman/salesman’
Tagalog Baklanova (2016)	utangera alahera lasengga bulakbulera palikera	utangero alahero lasenggo bulakbulero palikero	‘debtor’ ‘jeweler’ ‘drunkard’ ‘vagabond’ ‘philanderer’

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