

Inclusive Gender in Spanish Subverting the Binary Taxonomy by Expressive Means

Andrés Saab

Conicet, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Abstract This paper discusses inclusive gender in Spanish from a morphosemantic perspective. It is proposed that the inclusive exponent -e in pronouns and human nouns introduces a new mixed expressive morpheme. The truth-conditional value of -e is modeled as a partial identity function with a [human] presupposition, whereas its expressive value contributes a profile of the speaker regarding their belief system with respect to the dominant binary taxonomy. Crucially, the new item impacts on the entire gender system by giving up a version of the human-cloning rule according to which under some conditions human nouns in Spanish are either female or male.

Keywords Inclusive gender. (anti-)presupposition. Binary taxonomy. Expressive semantics. Spanish.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Semantics and Pragmatics of the Current Gender System. – 3 Giving up Human Cloning. – 4 Final Remarks.



Peer review

Submitted 2026-02-22
Accepted 2026-07-16
Published 2026-10-12



Open access

© 2026 Saab | 4.0

1 Introduction

Gender in Spanish can be characterized through three very general properties (see Estomba 2016). First, there are good reasons to conceive the gender inflectional paradigm in Spanish as a dual system,¹ in which gender is encoded only in two ways, namely (i) either a noun/pronoun is feminine, or (ii) masculine. Second, we say that the system is *exhaustive* in the sense that every relevant noun/pronoun must encode the feminine or the masculine regardless of the semantic class of the nominal category. Finally, the system is *semi-predictable*, i.e., for a subset of the categories in the nominal class, its gender can be determined on the basis of its semantic class. Thus, for almost all human nouns/pronouns, if the noun is marked as ‘female’, then it is [feminine] (Harris 1991).

The current gender system for human nouns (toy sample):

(1) human nouns:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. niño ‘child.M.SG’ | b. niña ‘child.F.SG’ |
| c. niños ‘child.M.PL’ | d. niñas ‘child.F.PL’ |

(2) definite articles:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. el ‘ART.M.SG’ | b. la ‘ART.F.SG’ |
| c. los ‘ART.M.PL’ | d. las ‘ART.F.PL’ |

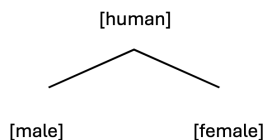
(3) personal pronouns:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| a. él ‘he’ | b. ella ‘she’ |
| c. ellos ‘they.M.PL’ | d. ellas ‘they.F.PL’ |

Thus, for the case of human nouns, in which there is a syntactic-semantic correlation between gender and sex, a certain binary taxonomy can be inferred, according to which each human noun (of any nominal class) is classified as male or female:

¹ This way of looking at the current system denies the existence of the so-called *neuter* as a third gender (e.g., *lo lindo* ‘the nice’, *ello* ‘it’; see Bosque and Moreno 1990 for an in-depth study and Saab 2017 for an argument against the existence of the neuter as a third gender). This contrasts with languages in which there is true neuter gender like, say, Greek (see Adamson and Anagnostopoulou 2025 for a recent analysis on gender resolution in three-gendered languages).

(4) *The binary taxonomy:*



[I.e., human nouns are either male or female]

Now, there is another dimension of the gender system related to the fact that the distribution of the feminine and the masculine is not uniform, since the masculine is used in more contexts than the feminine. This is what I will call the *asymmetric rule*:

- (17) **The asymmetric rule (simplified):** use the masculine form in plurals referring to mixed-groups or in singular generics.

Relevant examples are provided in (6) and (7), respectively:

Plurals (for mixed groups):

- (6) a. *Los niños llegaron tarde.*
 ART.M.PL child.M.PL arrived late
 'The children arrived late.'
 b. *Ellos llegaron tarde.*
 they.M.PL arrived late
 'They arrived late.'

Singular generics:

- (7) *Usualmente, el niño habla solo.*
 usually ART.M.SG child.M.SG speaks alone.M.SG
 'Usually, the child speaks alone/to himself.'

In the public domain, this asymmetric distribution is considered gender-biased by some, and then, a concrete instance of biased grammar (i.e., in the sense of placing the speaker into a particular cultural setting). For those who ascribe to this idea, a way of avoiding at the same time both the binary bias and the asymmetric rule is by giving up the dual character of the current system. One of the strategies used in Argentina and other Spanish-speaking countries is adding a third gender exponent, the so-called *inclusive* one, as shown below:

the two genders can be explained by the functioning of the nominal system. More recent reactions regarding the usefulness of the strategy can also be found in Saab (2018; 2020) and Mendívil Giró (2020). There are also more technical considerations, addressing the status of the inclusive morpheme *-e* from a grammatical perspective (see, for instance, Fábregas 2022; Muñoz Pérez 2023). Although the present paper is aligned with many of the conclusions reached in the literature just mentioned, its main question is what exactly the inclusive linguistic behavior consists of from a morphosemantic and pragmatic perspective. To answer this question, I will assume a multidimensional approach to meaning² according to which the semantic value of linguistic expressions can have at least two dimensions of meaning: (i) the truth-conditional or at-issue dimension, and (ii) the non-at-issue or, what I will just call here, the *expressive dimension*. Among the types of expressive items we are interested in, mixed or hybrid expressives are particularly relevant. According to McCready (2010), mixed expressives are terms that contribute both truth-conditional and expressive meanings. Canonical examples of mixed terms are slurs. Consider in this respect the slur word *sudaca* which is the pejorative counterpart of *sudamericano* ‘South-American’. Descriptively, both terms denote the set of South American people; yet *sudaca* also introduces an expressive meaning, which in the normal case reveals the xenophobic profile of the speaker. Using the notational device in McCready (2010) for mixed items, the at-issue and expressive dimensions are separated with the diamond symbol shown in (13b).

- (20) a. $[\text{sudamericano}] = \lambda x. \text{South-American}(x)$
 b. $[\text{sudaca}] = \lambda x. \text{South-American}(x) \blacklozenge \text{xenophobic bias}$

In this study, I will argue that *-e* is the PF realization of a mixed morpheme denoting a partial identity function at the at-issue dimension and a certain gender bias at the expressive dimension. For a human common noun like *niñe* in (8c), the semantic value of the gender morpheme encoded on little *n* is represented as follows:

- (21) $[[_n -e, \text{human}]] = \lambda f: \text{Human}(x). f \blacklozenge \text{gender bias}$

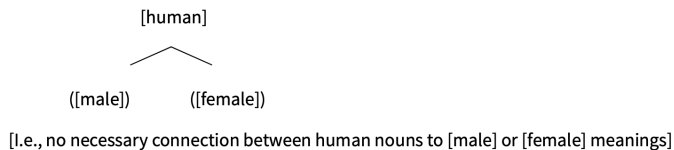
Simplifying, a speaker who makes a felicitous use of the inclusive exponent adheres (at least, to a certain extent) to the belief that the taxonomy in (4) must be disputed. This is the expressive value condensed at the right of the diamond. In section 3, I will offer a more explicit analysis of the notion of *bias* involved in (14). For the moment,

² Kaplan 1999; Potts 2005; McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2015; 2019; Saab, Carranza 2021.

let me offer some preliminary clarifications on the notion of *expressive manipulation* I am concerned with. According to Corver (2016), emotion/expressivity in language sometimes results from certain specific manipulations of the rules of grammar. Here, I will partially accept this view, but I will argue that the truth-conditional dimension can also be altered by this sort of grammatical manipulation; specifically, by a minimal change in the presuppositional content of human nouns/pronouns. Put differently, the truth-conditional information at the left of the diamond is also the result of some sort of grammatical manipulation. The crucial difference between slurs and inclusive gender is that since grammatical or functional morphemes are in competition for insertion into the same abstract node in the syntax, the adding of a new exponent indicates a reconfiguration of the formal makeup of its competitors, in this case, the masculine and feminine morphemes, in such a way that the entire system is morphosemantically modified. On the contrary, the adding of a new slur word does not modify the truth-conditional dimension of its neutral counterpart, since lexical roots do not interact in terms of competition for insertion. In the version of Distributed Morphology I favor in this study, roots are modeled as mere numerical indexes with no other syntactic information, at least in the normal case (Embick 2000; Saab 2008; Harley 2014, among many others). So, the introduction of a slur as *sudaca* boils down to the introduction of a numerical index different from the index for *sudamericano*. Both roots denote the same concept at LF and are only differentiated at the expressive dimension.

A way to understand the reconfiguration of the gender system that the inclusive strategy implies is comparing (4) with the non-binary taxonomy resulting from the new system, in which there is no necessary connection between the feature [human] and the semantic features [male] or [female]:

(15) *The new taxonomy (a plausible description):*



Now, there is no way to evaluate this idea without a good understanding of the current system. In what follows, I offer a morphosemantic analysis both of the current gender system and of the inclusive strategy. In section 2, I introduce some background discussion on the semantics and pragmatics of gender in Spanish, particularly

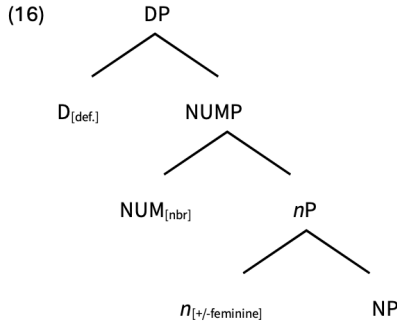
addressing the question whether the Spanish grammar has a [male] feature encoded in the relevant syntactic node (i.e., little *n*). If not, then the dual character of gender can be derived by familiar anti-presuppositional reasoning (Sauerland 2002; 2008a; 2008b; Percus 2006). Yet, as we will see, it seems that the system does encode a [male] property in some specific environments, a fact that makes a proper analysis of gender particularly complicated. Additional evidence for a [human] feature is also discussed in the same section. In section 3, I focus on the main idea that the inclusive language is a case of grammatical manipulation. This manipulation is morphosemantic in the sense that it directly affects both the morphological resolution of gender and its semantics. In the concluding section, I summarize the results and discuss slur reclamation. A brief comparison between inclusive gender and the slur reclamation strategy is particularly enlightening both from a purely linguistic perspective and from a sociolinguistic one.

2 Semantics and Pragmatics of the Current Gender System

The grammatical system of gender in Spanish has been extensively studied from many different perspectives. Ambadiang (1993; 1999) is probably one of the most exhaustive overviews on the topic in Spanish, but the reader can also consult the new edition of the *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* (NGRAE 2025) for an in-depth description of the nominal system and a complete list of references. In this paper, I will not offer any in-depth overview of the many proposals that can be found in the previous literature. What I have to say is indeed compatible with different technical implementations. Instead, I will restrict my attention to the empirical question of to what extent the gender system is morphologically and semantically marked only for [feminine] and [female], respectively. Modifying previous proposals in Percus (2006; 2011), I argue that the system also encodes a [male] feature in some restricted contexts and discuss the consequences of this fact for the proper morphosemantic characterization of gender in Spanish. But before advancing, I would like to make explicit some assumptions regarding the syntax of DPs. I assume the architecture of Distributed Morphology, in particular, the idea that syntactic nodes for abstract or grammatical morphemes only encode syntactic features, which receive PF and LF interpretations after they are spelled out.³ As for the structure of DPs, I assume Saab's (2004; 2008) analysis for Spanish, according to which at least three functional

3 Halle, Marantz 1993; Embick 2000; Embick, Noyer 2001; Saab 2008; Harley 2014.

projections dominate the nominal layer containing the lexical root:
n, NUM and D.



Each of these functional categories encodes syntactic features, which in most cases are interpreted according to PF and LF rules. For instance, when defined, the D head is realized as /l-/ at PF and as the *iota* operator at LF. For the purposes of this study, the *n* head is the most relevant one. On the one hand, it categorizes the lexical root as being nominal and, on the other hand, it encodes syntactic gender features. As shown in the tree, I adopt a binary approach to gender with only one attribute: the feminine. At PF, the *n* node is realized according to the rules that connect syntactic gender to morphological nominal class (see, among others, Roca 1989; Harris 1991; Ambadiang 1993).

These are, of course, minimal assumptions. The syntactic distribution of gender in the nominal spine is far from being resolved. There are relevant remaining issues regarding, for instance: (i) the distribution of gender in the nominal spine,⁴ and (ii) the proper semantic interpretation of gender. Here, I will specifically focus on this second issue, specifically, on how LF interprets the two relevant [+feminine] and [-feminine] features encoded on *n* when *n* denotes human entities.

2.1 Gender (anti-)presuppositions: is there a [male] feature in the system?

Here is a first important observation regarding human nouns in Spanish:

⁴ Yatsushiro, Sauerland 2006; Fábregas, Pérez Jiménez 2008; Pesetsky 2013; Kramer 2014; 2016; Steriopolo, Wiltschko 2010.

- (17) **Mating:** Human nouns are “mated”, both a masculine and a feminine form exist for each human noun. (Harris 1991, 37)

This is true regardless of gender realization, i.e., the observation covers any noun class, even suppletive pairs:

- (18) *Sex related pairs (including human ‘honoris causa’)*

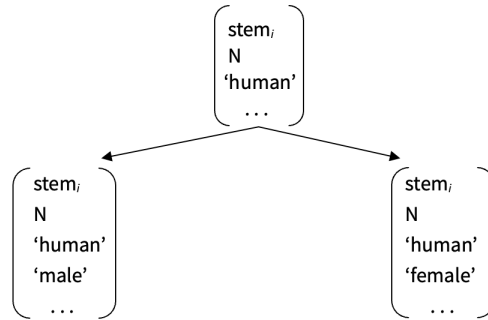
a. <i>Masculine (Class1)</i>	<i>Feminine (Class 2)</i>
hermano ‘brother’	hermana ‘sister’
hijo ‘son’	hija ‘daughter’
niño ‘boy’	niña ‘girl’
esposo ‘husband’	esposa ‘wife’
tío ‘uncle’	tía ‘aunt’
muchacho ‘boy’	muchacha ‘girl’
gato ‘cat’	gata ‘cat’
perro ‘dog’	perra ‘bitch’
burro ‘donkey’	burra ‘donkey’
b. <i>Class 3</i>	<i>Class 2</i>
jefe ‘boss’	jefa ‘boss’
monje ‘monk’	monja ‘nun’
nene ‘baby’	nena ‘baby’
c. <i>Invariable nouns</i>	
(el ‘the.M.sg’/la ‘the.F.sg’)	testigo ‘witness’
	mártir ‘martyr’
	estudiante ‘student’
	dentista ‘dentist’
	patriota ‘patriot’
d. <i>Other suffixes</i>	
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
duque ‘duke’	duquesa ‘duchess’
zar ‘czar’	zarina ‘czarina’
poeta ‘poet’	poetisa ‘poet’
gallo ‘cock’	gallina ‘hen’
e. <i>Suppletive Pairs</i>	
<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>
caballo ‘horse’	yegua ‘mare’
macho ‘male’	hembra ‘female’
yerno ‘son-in-law’	nuera ‘daughter-in-law’
toro ‘bull’	vaca ‘cow’
hombre ‘man’	mujer ‘woman’
padre ‘father’	madre ‘mother’
papá ‘dad’	mamá ‘mum’

For Harris, only two rules are needed to explain mating and gender resolution. On the one hand, there is a rule of gender resolution that redundantly assigns the feature [feminine] to any female human noun (see (19a)). On the other hand, human nouns are divided into [female] and [male] through a lexical rule dubbed *Human Cloning* (see (19b)):

(19) a. Human gender:

[female] → feminine / [____, 'human']

b. Human cloning:



(Harris 1991, 51)

In Harris' own words:⁵

The effect of Human Cloning is this: for every lexical entry L of a noun stem that contains the semantic specification 'human' without specification of sex, Human Cloning replaces L with a pair of entries L_m and L_f , each identical to L except for the addition of the semantic specifications, 'male' and 'female', respectively. (Harris 1991, 51)

⁵ According to Harris, there are only four exceptions (see (i)), but perhaps only *persona* deserves some serious consideration (*gente* 'people' and *pueblo* 'folks' are interesting but not clear exceptions). For Harris, *persona*, *víctima* and *criatura* "whose meaning has no component referring to sex, have lexical entries that contain a specification for (feminine) gender" (p. 52).

(i)	MASCULINE	FEMININE
	marido 'husband'	*marida 'wife'
	*criaturó	criatura 'baby'
	*personó	persona 'person'
	*víctimó	víctima 'victim'

The two core ingredients in Harris' analysis can be summarized as follows: (i) the gender system is marked for feminine (privatively under his analysis), (ii) reference to sex in human nouns constitutes an equipollent opposition, i.e., the system is semantically unmarked and symmetric. This second ingredient leads to an obvious problem when it comes to explaining the asymmetric distribution. Let me generalize (5) including many of the environments in which markedness effects are observed:

- (20) **Asymmetric distribution:** In the following environments, use the masculine form whenever there is reference to mixed groups or to block any sex distinction,
- a. plural DPs
 - b. singular generic DPs
 - c. DPs headed by generalized quantifiers
 - d. DPs headed by numerals
 - e. non-specific DPs modified by subjunctive relative clauses

Here is a list of relevant examples:

Plurals (for mixed groups):

- (21) a. *Los niños llegaron tarde.*
ART.M.PL child.M.PL arrived late
'The children arrived late.'
- b. *Ellos llegaron tarde.*
they.M.PL arrived late
'They arrived late.'

Singular generics:

- (22) *Usualmente, el niño habla solo.*
usually ART.M.SG child.M.SG speaks alone.M.SG
'Usually, the child speaks alone/to himself.'

Non-inflected quantifiers:

- (23) a. *Cada alumno debe presentar una monografía.*
each student.M.SG must present a monograph
'Each student must present a monograph.'
- b. *Todo alumno debe presentar una monografía.*
every student.M.SG must present a monograph
'Every student must present a monograph.'

Inflected quantifiers:

- (24) a. Algún alumno llegó tarde.
 some.M.SG student.M.SG arrived late
 ‘Some student arrived late.’
- b. Algunos alumnos llegaron tarde.
 some.M.PL student.M.PL arrived late
 ‘Some students arrived late.’
 (the same with *ningún estudiante* ‘no student’, *varios estudiantes* ‘several students’...)

Numerals:

- (25) Tres alumnos llegaron tarde.
 three student.M.PL arrived late
 ‘Three students arrived late.’

Non-specific DPs:

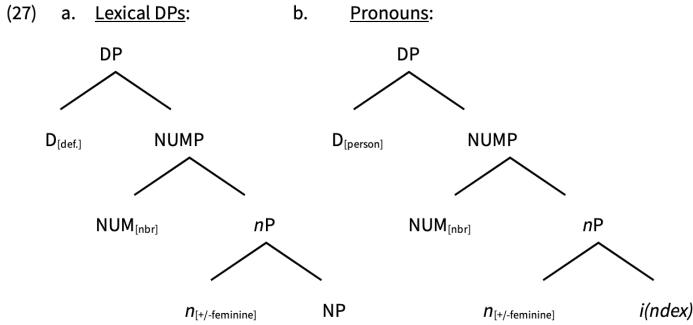
- (26) El profesor que contratemos puede ser hombre o mujer.
 the.M.SG professor.M.SG that hire.SUBJ.1PL can be man or woman
 ‘The teacher we hire can be a man or a woman.’

An alternative to Harris’ Human Cloning would consist in assuming that the gender system is also semantically marked for *female*, as proposed in Sauerland (2008b) or Percus (2006; 2011). Following these authors, let us model this [female] property as a semantic presupposition. In the case of pronouns, the easiest way is to assume that pronouns contribute indexes for assignment functions and that ornamental inflectional features contribute partial identity functions for number, gender, and person.⁶ I will assume the same for lexical DPs, with obvious adaptations (i.e., with some polymorphic action).⁷ The following trees illustrate the basic syntactic analyses for lexical DPs and pronouns, respectively. As already illustrated with the tree in (16), repeated in (27a) below, lexical

⁶ Heim, Kratzer 1998; Heim 2008; Sauerland 2008b; Kratzer 2009.

⁷ At least for *e* denoting DPs, polymorphism in the semantic type of the argument is avoided if gender is interpreted above the D head, as in Sauerland (2008b). I think that there are good reasons for not assuming this view, though (the behavior of gender under ellipsis being the most important one). In addition, I do not see good reasons to distribute gender in more than one position in the DP spine either, as in Yatsushiro and Sauerland (2006) or Pesetsky (2013). The reasons adduced in Yatsushiro and Sauerland for doing this are convincingly challenged in Adamson (2021). At any rate, polymorphism cannot be avoided whenever the DP denotations are not of the required semantic type.

DPs are extended projections of lexical nouns, whereas pronouns are analyzed as projecting a mere index at the lexical level and inflectional categories in their extended projections (see (27b)).



The different semantic realizations of the *n* head, i.e., the gender bearer, are provided below for both lexical DPs and pronouns:

Semantic realizations of the *n* head:⁸

(28) **Lexical DPs:**

- a. $[+feminine] = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$
b. $[-feminine] = \lambda f. f$

Pronouns:

The index for *e* types:

- (29) $[<e, n>]^g = \text{individual}$
(e.g., $[<e, I>]^g = g([<e, I>])$)
- (30) a. $[+feminine] = \lambda x: \text{Female}(x). x$
b. $[-feminine] = \lambda x. x$

⁸ For lexical DPs, it is not always clear whether the semantic contribution of gender is presuppositional or assertoric. Sudo and Spathas (2016; 2020) offer some interesting arguments to the effect of showing that noun classes in Greek are divided among those that encode both male and female meanings at the presuppositional and assertoric level, those in which only [female] contributes to the two levels, and those in which there is no gender meaning encoded at any level. The two main pieces of evidence come from nominal ellipsis and focus constructions. Nominal ellipsis has been used in previous literature also as an argument for introducing divisions among noun classes, although there is no consensus both regarding the grammatical status of many of the crucial cases and the theoretical implications we should derive from the relevant patterns (Zocca 2003; Bobaljik, Zocca 2010; Depiante, Masullo 2001; 2004; Saab 2004; 2008; 2010; Merchant 2014; Ranero 2021). Sudo and Spathas, aware of the intricacies of the NP-ellipsis data, add focus constructions as another diagnostic to test the impact of gender at the presuppositional or the assertoric dimensions. Yet, Mussini (2026) shows that noun classes in Spanish give the same result under the relevant focus diagnostics, namely, that gender is not asserted but presupposed.

Evidence for semantically marking the feminine comes from usual (anti-)presupposition considerations.⁹ Let us assume the following version of *Maximize presupposition!*:

- (31) **Maximize presupposition!**: Among a set of alternatives, use the felicitous sentence with the strongest presupposition. (Chemla 2008, 142)

Now, we say that two identical NPs or indexes that only differ in presuppositional force are alternatives. Therefore, given the context provided in (32), MP! dictates the use of the feminine form either for a lexical DP, as in (32a), or for a pronoun, as in (32b):

[context: A group of female students decides to meet to do a final project to present the next class]

- (32) a. {#Los/las estudiantes} se encuentran en la casa de Anita.
{the.M.PL/F.PL students} se meet.3PL in the house of Anita
'The students are meeting at Anita's house this Friday.'
b. {#Ellos/ellas} se encuentran en la casa de Anita.
{they.M.PL / they.F.PL} se meet.3PL in the house of Anita
'They meet at Anita's house.'

When the context does not satisfy the presupposition, the masculine, which anti-presupposes the feminine, must be used.

Plurals (for mixed groups):

- (33) a. Los niños llegaron tarde.
ART.M.PL child.M.PL arrived late
'The children arrived late.'
b. Ellos llegaron tarde.
they.M.PL arrived late
'They arrived late.'

Singular generics:

- (34) Usualmente, el niño habla solo.
usually ART.M.SG child.M.SG speaks alone.M.SG
'Usually, the child speaks alone/to himself.'

⁹ Heim 1991; Sauerland 2002; 2003; 2008a; 2008b; Percus 2006; 2011; Chemla 2008.

On this view, there is no [male] feature in the system. A [female] presupposition on [+feminine] human nouns would be enough. Among other things, this predicts *dominance* effects (Sauerland 2008b).¹⁰ For instance, whenever a coordinate structure combines masculine and feminine DPs, predicative agreement shows up in the masculine form:

- (35) Juan y Ana están cansados.
 Juan and Ana are tired.M.PL
 'Juan and Ana are tired.'

If one believes that the current system is semantically marked only for a [female] presupposition, then the inclusive language (see (8)-(10)) semantically impacts on one particular direction. Concretely, the strategy enlarges our taxonomy including a semantic [male] presupposition which is absent in the current system. This can be stated as follows:

- (36) **Inclusive language #1:** it converts an anti-presupposition into a semantic presupposition.

Here is one possible implementation. Assume as above that the current gender system is binary but unidimensional:

Table 1 the current system (under one analysis)

System: binary /unidimensional	Feminine in <i>-a</i> and variants	Masculine in <i>-o</i> and variants
Feminine	+	-

That the system is unidimensional means that only the feminine dimension is encoded in the language.

- (37) **Lexical DPs:**
 a. $[[+feminine]] = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$
 b. $[[-feminine]] = \lambda f. f$

- (38) **Pronouns:**
 a. $[[+feminine]] = \lambda x: \text{Female}(x). x$
 b. $[[-feminine]] = \lambda x. x$

10 Sauerland (2008b) gives three other tests to detect semantic markedness, which would also follow from *Maximize presupposition!*: (i) quantification, (ii) epistemic status, and (iii) emergence of the unmarked. I will not discuss the (non-)applicability of each of these tests in Spanish.

Under (36), the inclusive strategy consists of the conversion of a certain type of pragmatic reasoning (provided by MP!) into a purely semantic property. We can implement the idea by adding a new gender dimension to be encoded on n , as shown in the following table:

Table 2 The “inclusive” gender system in Spanish

System: binary /bidimensional	Feminine in -a and variants	Masculine in -o and variants	Inclusive form in -e	Predicted (not attested?)
Feminine	+	-	-	+
Masculine	-	+	-	+

Focusing only on the first three slots in table 2, the relevant denotations for the n node would be as follows:¹¹

(39) **Lexical DPs:**

- a. $[+F, -M] = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$
- b. $[-F, +M] = \lambda f: \text{Male}(x). f$
- c. $[-F, -M] = \lambda f. f$

Pronouns:

- (40) a. $[+F, -M] = \lambda x: \text{Female}(x). x$
- b. $[-F, +M] = \lambda x: \text{Male}(x). x$
- c. $[-F, -M] = \lambda x. x$

The consequence of this type of strategy is clear enough. Assuming that there is no [male] feature in the current system, we can conceive the inclusive system as enlarging the gender taxonomy, by adding a [masculine] grammatical property associated to a semantic [male] presupposition. Enlarging the taxonomy in this way impacts on the distribution of the masculine/male forms, which are now semantically restricted to contexts which satisfy the male presupposition. For any binary system the calculus is very simple: power of base 2, that is:

(41)

$$2^n$$

[where n stands for any dimension we would like to include]

Thus, the two systems under dispute are differentiated by the gender dimensions they offer, namely:

11 Again, in the case of lexical DPs what could be under dispute is part of an asserted meaning, not a presupposition. In either case, it is still a representational dispute.

- (42) a. Current system: $n = 1$ [dimensions = {feminine}]
 b. “Inclusive” system: $n = 2$ [dimensions = {feminine, masculine}]
 and so on...

Evidently, enlarging social taxonomies raises many issues regarding the problem of reintroducing stereotypes, the true borders of the taxonomy (e.g., all what the + in the LGBT...+ implies), and, of course, its linguistic efficacy (see section 4.2). But before advancing into these types of considerations, further empirical discussion is needed, since the picture of the gender system offered so far is too simplistic. In effect, as already noted by Percus (2006), there are cases in which the masculine form triggers a stronger meaning than the one predicted by a mere anti-presupposition. In the example (42B) below, the masculine form, more than anti-presupposing the female meaning (i.e., that the speaker does not believe that the referent is female), strongly suggests that the individual is not female:

- (43) A: No sé si el nuevo profesor que van
 not know.1SG if the new professor.M.SG that go.3PL
 a contratar es hombre o mujer.
 to hire.INF is man or woman
 ‘I don’t know whether the new professor that they will hire is a man or a woman.’
 B: #Yo tampoco. Todavía no hablé con él.
 I neither still not talk.PST.1SG with he
 ‘Me neither. I haven’t talked to him yet.’

This type of facts casts doubts on any attempt to derive the strong masculine meaning by adding more conditions on (anti-) presuppositions (say, ways of introducing further epistemic conditions like in Chemla 2008 and others). In simple cases, like *él vino* ‘he came’, in which there is more than a mere feminine anti-presupposition, one can indeed derive the stronger male meaning from inferences coming from competence and authority assumptions.¹² Simplifying, we can assume that in cases like this the speaker is opinionated with respect to the feminine presupposition, in such a way that whenever she asserts that *él vino* we derive that she believes that p is not the case. Now, this analysis does not extend to uncertainty contexts like

¹² The competence assumption states that the speaker is opinionated with respect to some presupposed proposition p such that she believes that p is true, or she believes that it is not ($[B_s[p] \vee B_s[\neg p]]$). Chemla (2008) supplements competence with an additional authority assumption (i.e., that the speaker believes that she is an authority on p) to account for presuppositional failures which are not particularly relevant for the present purposes.

(43), in which Speaker B is clearly not opinionated, without further assumptions.¹³

In addition, note the sharp contrast between singular and plural pronouns, which do behave as predicted under an (anti-) presuppositional analysis.

- (44) A: No sé si los nuevos profesores que van
not know.1SG if the new professor.M.PL that go.3PL
a contratar son hombres o mujeres.
to hire.INF are men or women
'I don't know whether the new professors that they will hire are men or women.'
- B: Yo tampoco. Todavía no hablé con ellos.
I neither still not talk.PST.1SG with they.M.PL
'Me neither. I haven't talked to them yet.'

This shows that there is not a distinction between lexical DPs vs. pronouns (as suggested by Percus): plural pronouns, like lexical DPs, can be unrestricted.

But there is more. Not all singular pronouns trigger the strong male meaning. Pronominal clitics do not give rise to the strong meaning that the individual is not female.

- (45) A: No sé si el nuevo profesor que van
not know.1SG if the new professor.M.SG that go.3PL
a contratar es hombre o mujer.
to hire.INF is man or woman
'I don't know whether the new professor that they will hire is a man or a woman.'
- B: Yo tampoco. Todavía no lo vi.
I neither still not CL.ACC.M.3SG saw.1SG
'Me neither. I haven't seen him yet.'

13 As Percus shows, this is not the case with "true" anti-presuppositions. For the well-known *to know/to think* pair, dropping competence and authority assumptions is enough to force a weak inference in *to think* that the speaker does not believe that Mary is pregnant. Compare with *his*, which in the same uncertain environment, still triggers the stronger meaning that the referent is not female:

- (i) a. A. I don't know whether Mary is pregnant or not.
B. I don't either. Jane thinks she is.
b. A. I can't tell from here whether that professor is a man or a woman.
B. I can't either. ?Mary was decorating his office. Let's ask her. [Percus 2006]

Following ideas in Cardinaletti and Starke (1999), we can make sense of the contrast between (43) and (45) by assuming that clitics are semantically impoverished when compared to strong pronouns like *él*. Concretely, clitics do not encode [human] and, consequently, any sex feature, male or female, but only gender. So, the masculine in example (45B) is a purely formal gender feature. Under this assumption, there is no expectation that the impoverished clitic triggers any male meaning.

In sum, the formal makeup of pronouns matters when it comes to deriving their presuppositional behavior. And it matters in two ways: (i) their number encoding is relevant, (ii) their clitic or strong nature is relevant.

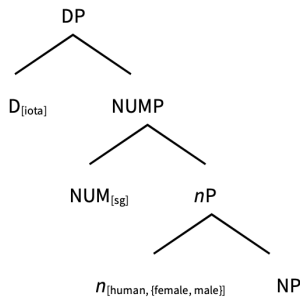
A plausible solution inspired by Percus (2006) would be to assume that Spanish uses both [male] and [female] presuppositions. A syntactic-semantic gender feature is added under specific conditions. For instance, we can adopt some form of Restricted Human Cloning according to which a semantic gender feature is added on *n* in the syntax in some specific environments.

- (46) **Restricted Human Cloning (RHC):**¹⁴ If $[n_{\text{[hum]}}(+\text{Root})]$ projects an atomic and individual-denoting DP, then,

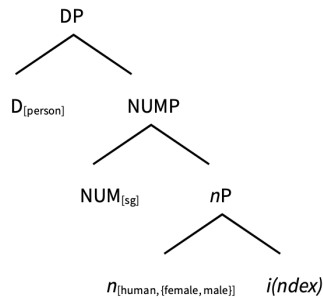
$$[n_{\text{[hum]}}(+\text{Root})] \rightarrow [n_{\text{[hum, \{[male], [female]\}}]}(+\text{Root})]$$

From an abstract point of view, each of the syntactic representations in (47) would trigger RHC:

- (47) a. Lexical DPs:



- b. Pronouns:



¹⁴ I would like to insist on the tentative nature of this formulation. For instance, it is not clear at all that this captures the behavior of gender with singular generics or with some definite descriptions without further commitments with respect to the semantics of generics or definite descriptions. Alternatively, we can think of [sex] features as being determined by purely formal properties of DPs and not by semantic ones.

I think that this describes well most uses (but there are remaining issues, in particular, with definite descriptions, see footnote 15), provided, of course, that something along the lines of Human Gender applies (see (19a)):

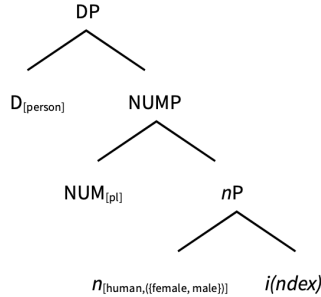
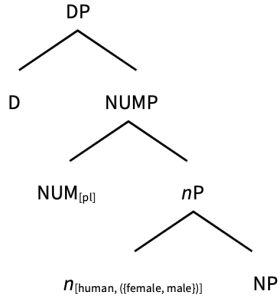
(48) **Human gender:**

[female] → [+fem] / [____, 'human']
[-fem] / elsewhere

For instance, whenever D is a non-human clitic, a generalized quantifier or a plural DP, sex-assignment is left open giving rise to the unmarked case.¹⁵ Consider the case of plural DPs/pronouns:

- (49) a. *Los niños llegaron tarde.*
ART.M.PL child.M.PL arrived late
'The children arrived late.'
b. *Ellos llegaron tarde.*
they.M.PL arrived late
'They arrived late.'

- (50) a. Lexical DPs: *los niños/as* b. Pronouns: *ellos/as*



¹⁵ Or it is human 'honoris causa'. Suppose that you see a nice cat and, pointing it out, you say:

- (i) *Mirá ese gato!*
look that cat.M.SG
'Look at that cat!'

In such a situation, the noun *gato*, although marked as masculine, does not trigger the [male] meaning, which is the case when you replace *gato* by *niño* 'child'.

So, in the plural, adding a sex feature is entirely optional, leaving open the possibility that n does not encode any sex feature, but only a human one. This, together with Human Gender in (48), basically gives us Percus' analysis.

Semantic realizations of the n head:

(51) **Lexical DPs:**

- a. $[\text{female}] = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$
- b. $[\text{male}] = \lambda f: \text{Male}(x). f$
- c. $[\text{human}] = \lambda f: \text{Human}(x). f$

Pronouns:

The index for e types:

- (52) $[\langle e, n \rangle]^g = \text{individual}$
(e.g., $[\langle e, I \rangle]^g = g([\langle e, I \rangle])$)
- (53) a. $[\text{female}] = \lambda x: \text{Female}(x). x$
b. $[\text{male}] = \lambda x: \text{Male}(x). x$
c. $[\text{human}] = \lambda x: \text{Human}(x). x$

In sum, it seems that the Spanish gender system uses a [male] feature. Its distribution is extremely complex and not easy to state, but there are a set of indubitable cases in which the feature is both syntactically and semantically active. Pure anti-presuppositional inferences are still playing a role in the system, but only in those cases in which RHC does not apply and the n head can be left with no sex feature. This is the case for non-atomic DPs/pronouns or non-human ones.

2.2 Additional Evidence for a [male] Feature: Proper Names

Recent findings by Mussini (2024; 2025) indirectly confirm the existence of a [male] feature in the Spanish gender system. The evidence has to do with the behavior of proper names in predicative uses. As Mussini shows, predicative uses of proper names do not pass markedness tests, showing that proper names must be marked either for female or male. Consider the case of *Alejandro.m* / *Alejandra.f* (but the test applies to *all* proper names). The following examples are adapted from Mussini's work:

No mixed readings:

- (54)

Los	Alejandro(s)	llegaron	tarde.
ART.M.PL	Alejandro.M.PL	arrived	late
‘The Alejandros (all men) arrived late.’			

No female interpretation in generic environments:

- (55) Cuando un Alejandro te engaña, nunca lo olvidás.
when an Alejandro you cheats never it forget.2sg
'When an Alejandro (only men) cheats you, you never forget it.'

For the case in which there is no plural marking, one could argue that there is an underlyingly metalinguistic structure along the following lines:

- (56) los *x*+/alexándro/

Given that all (or most) people called /alexándro/ are male, it seems that we do not need the postulation of a [male] feature here. Yet, things are not so easy when we consider the string with the plural marking. In any case, let us assume that a metalinguistic derivation is also possible here.

- (57) los *x*+/alexándro/+s

There are other cases to consider, though. In many Spanish varieties, one can shorten *Alejandro* and *Alejandra* to produce two homonyms:

- (58) a. Alejandro → Ale
b. Alejandra → Ale

However, the shortening does not change the basic patterns; in (58) and (59) the plural masculine proper name still triggers the strong [male] reading:

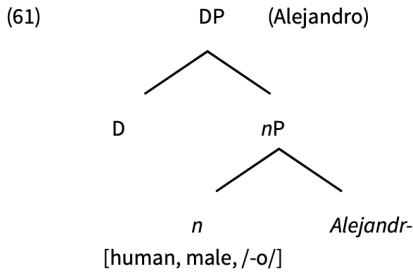
No mixed readings:

- (59) Los Ale(s) llegaron tarde.
the.M.PL Ale(s) arrived late
'The Ales (all men) arrived late.'

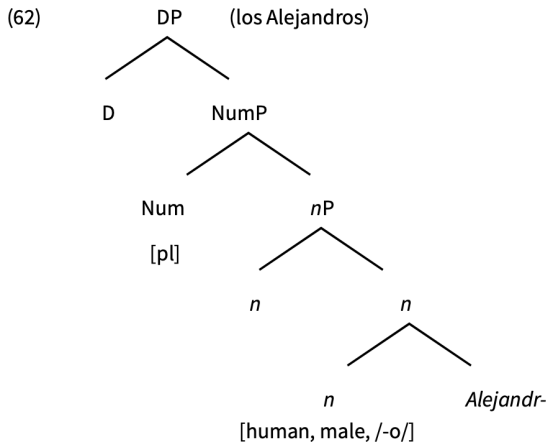
No female interpretation in generic environments:

- (60) Cuando un Ale te engaña, nunca lo olvidás.
when an Ale you cheats never it forget.2sg
'When an Ale (only men) cheats you, you never forget it.'

Assuming that proper names are born as atomic and individual denoting entities, RHC applies, giving rise to male or female proper names. Following Saab and Lo Guercio's (2020) idea that proper names do not project number (the category that turns entities into properties), the basic structure of a referential proper name can be represented as follows:



In predicative uses, however, there is also the presence of an empty *n* which ultimately allows for the proper name to occur in predicative environments (see Saab and Lo Guercio 2020):

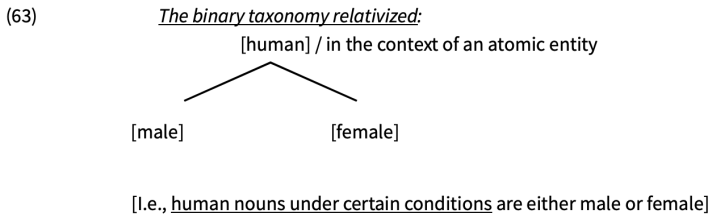


Now, given that Restricted Human Cloning is calculated at the first categorizing head, a [male] feature is inserted here regardless of additional nominal and functional projections. This blocks any attempt to leave lower *n* unmarked for sex and explains why there

are no mixed readings in the relevant examples in (54), (55), (59), and (60).¹⁶

3 Giving up Human Cloning

Evidently, the system just sketched still gives rise to some form of a binary taxonomy (or, at least, one can infer it). Consider a revised version of (4) after RHC:



Taking for granted that something along these lines is behind the binary taxonomy, we can now focus on the inclusive strategy. As advanced in the introduction, the inclusive exponent can be modeled as the PF realization of a mixed expressive morpheme. Let us consider again McCready's (2010) analysis for slurs (simplified and adapted in important respects):

- (64) a. [sudamericano] = λx . South-American(x)
 b. [sudaca] = λx . South-American(x) $\blacklozenge$ xenophobic bias

Likewise, the introduction of the *-e* item into the system sketched in (53) will impact not only on truth-conditions but also on expressive meanings. Indeed, it is well-known that the use of *-e* also gives us a contextual profile of the speaker. This is consistent with Corver's (2016) original thesis that grammatical manipulation must impact on expressivity. According to him, one of the ways in which expressive meanings can be produced in language is through manipulation of rules of grammar. The meanings obtained by this sort of manipulation are related to subjective valence, intensification and so on. Yet, I think that there is more than that. A felicitous use of the inclusive strategy

16 Following Sudo and Spathas's (2020) analysis for some noun classes in Greek, Mussini (2025; 2026) proposes that in predicative uses the best way of modeling the [male/female] features in proper names is by encoding them at the assertoric level at the *n* node.

also imparts information with respect to certain cultural/ideological settings which the speaker ascribes to. My claim is that this type of expressive meaning can then be better modeled as a propositional object in a way similar to Kaplan (1999).¹⁷ Using the notational device in McCready (2010) for mixed items, I propose that the *-e* exponent is the PF realization of a mixed abstract morpheme presupposing the property of being human at the at-issue dimension and a certain gender bias at the expressive dimension. On this view, the semantic value of the relevant morpheme in (51c) must be reformulated along the lines in (65) (see also (14)):

(65) $[[[-_n, \text{human}]]] = \lambda f: \text{Human}(x). f \blacklozenge \text{gender bias}$

This gives the following reformulated inclusive gender system for nouns and pronouns in (51)-(53):

Semantic realizations of the *n* head:

(66) **Lexical DPs:**

- a. $[[\text{female}]] = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$
- b. $[[\text{male}]] = \lambda f: \text{Male}(x). f$
- c. $[[\text{human}]] = \lambda f: \text{Human}(x). f \blacklozenge \text{gender bias}$

Pronouns:

The index for *e* types:

- (67) $[[<e, n>]]^g = \text{individual}$
 (e.g., $[[<e, I>]]^g = g([[<e, I>]])$)
- (68) a. $[[\text{female}]] = \lambda x: \text{Female}(x). x$
 b. $[[\text{male}]] = \lambda x: \text{Male}(x). x$
 c. $[[\text{human}]] = \lambda x: \text{Human}(x). f \blacklozenge \text{gender bias}$

Now, the notion of *bias* mentioned at the right of each diamond in (66c) and (68c) requires a more explicit definition. As already said, on a Kaplanian view, expressive meanings can be formalized in a parallel meaning dimension using the same formal tools we use to model possible world semantics. More specifically, while truth-conditional meanings require manipulation of well-defined possible world parameters, expressive meanings manipulate (Kaplanian) context parameters. In Kaplan's own words:

Now *here is the new idea*: we can get an equally useful measure of the expressive information that is in a sentence — or, in the

¹⁷ For related use-conditional approaches, see Potts 2005; McCready 2010; Predelli 2013; Gutzmann 2015; 2019.

case of exclamatories like “ouch” and “oops”, in an expressive standing alone — *by looking at all the contexts at which it, the sentence containing the expressive or the expressive standing alone, is expressively correct.* [...] I claim that “ouch” is an expressive that is used to express the fact that the agent is in pain. What is the semantic information in the word “ouch” on this analysis? The semantic information in the word “ouch” is —more accurately, is represented by— the set of those contexts at which the word “ouch” is expressively correct (since it contains no descriptive information), namely, *the set of those contexts at which the agent is in pain.* That set of contexts represents the semantic information contained in the word “ouch”. (Kaplan 1999, 15-16; emphases added)

Following Predelli (2013), I assume that expressive and other related use-conditional meanings are encoded as a conventional *bias* on words or derived structures (but there are many alternatives). For a slur like *sudaca*, I adopt the bias in (69) (Saab 2021):¹⁸

- (69) *Bias for ‘sudaca’*: $c \in CU(sudaca)$ only if a stereotype about South Americans is in force in c .

[c = context, CU = the set of contexts of use]

Paraphrasing Kaplan’s previous words, the statement in (69) amounts to saying that “the expressive information in the word *sudaca* is represented by the set of those contexts at which the word *sudaca* is expressively correct, namely, those contexts in which a stereotype about South Americans is in force in c ”.

With this in mind, we can provide a first sketch of the expressive meaning in (65), along the following lines:

- (70) *Bias for ‘[_n -e, human]’*: $c \in CU([_{n} -e, human])$ only if, in c , c_a believes that the binary taxonomy in (63) must be disputed.

Consider again the inclusive paradigm in (8)-(10), repeated below, and some of the relevant examples in (74) and (75):

One of the proposed “inclusive” gender systems:

- (71) human nouns:

a. niño ‘child.M.SG’	b. niña ‘child.F.SG’	c. <u>niñe</u> ‘child.INCLUSIVE.SG’
d. niños ‘child.M.PL’	e. niñas ‘child.F.PL’	f. <u>niñes</u> ‘child.INCLUSIVE.PL’

¹⁸ For an elaborated proposal on stereotypes and slurs, see Orlando, Saab 2020, and section 4.2 for some additional comments.

(72) definite articles:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. el 'ART.M.SG' | b. la 'ART.F.SG' | c. <u>le</u> 'ART.INCLUSIVE.SG' |
| d. los 'ART.M.PL' | e. las 'ART.F.PL' | d. <u>les</u> 'ART.INCLUSIVE.PL' |

(73) personal pronouns:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. él 'he' | b. ella 'she' | c. <u>elle</u> 'PRN.INCLUSIVE.SG' |
| d. ellos 'they.M.PL' | e. ellas 'they.M.PL' | f. <u>elles</u> 'they.INCLUSIVE.PL' |

Plurals (for mixed groups):

- (74) a. *Les* *niñes* llegaron tarde.
 ART.INCL.PL child.INCL.PL arrived late
 'The children arrived late.'
- b. *Elles* llegaron tarde.
 they.INCL.PL arrived late
 'They arrived late.'

Singular generics:

- (75) Usualmente, *le* *niñe* habla sole.
 usually ART.INCL.SG child.INCL.SG speaks alone.INCL.SG
 'Usually, the child speaks alone/to himself.'

If the analyses in (66) and (68) are on the right track, the inclusive strategy would consist of something along the following lines (compare with (36) above):

- (76) **Inclusive language #2:** it creates new anti-presuppositions by giving up some forced presuppositions.

This can be straightforwardly implemented by abandoning any form of Human Cloning, repeated in (77) below:

- (77) **Restricted Human Cloning:** If $[n_{[hum]}(+Root)]$ projects an atomic and individual-denoting DP, then,
 $[n_{[hum]}(+Root)] \rightarrow [n_{[hum, \{[male], [female]\}]}(+Root)]$

Giving up Restricted Human Cloning amounts to the new taxonomy in (15), repeated as (78):

- (78) *The new taxonomy (a plausible description):*
- ```

 [human]
 / \
 ((male)) ((female))
 [i.e., no necessary connection between human nouns to [male] or [female]]

```

But this is not enough yet. As it stands, the system produces more unmarked uses of the masculine forms, since now,

- (79) Él       llegó       tarde.  
       he     arrived   late  
       ‘He arrived late.’

should be able to give the weak inference that it is not the case that the speaker believes that the individual being referred to by this use of the pronoun is female, a clearly incorrect prediction. Therefore, to get true “inclusive” effects, syncretism in the set of realizational rules must be avoided, as well. We can still have a binary gender system with [+ feminine] being partially predictable, i.e., we still have Human Gender:

- (80) Human Gender:  
       ‘female’ → [+fem] / [\_\_\_\_, ‘human’]  
               [-fem] / elsewhere

But now, syncretism is blocked by adding a new vocabulary item:

#### Simplified and incomplete lexical insertion rules:<sup>19</sup>

- (81) [+ fem, Class 2] ↔ /-a/  
       [- fem, Class 1] ↔ /-o/ / \_\_\_\_ [male, human]  
       [- fem] ↔ /-e/ / [human]

<sup>19</sup> As illustrated in (18), according to Harris (1991), there are three noun classes related to syntactic gender. Class 1 for the masculine is realized through the exponent /-o/ and Class 2 for the feminine, through the exponent /-a/ in pairs like *tío* ‘uncle’ and *tía* ‘aunt’. This is the more productive mating. Yet, pairings like *jefe* and *jefa* in (18b) are also attested. In this case, /-e/ is the masculine exponent for Class 3, not the inclusive one. For cases like these, the inclusive meaning can only be detected by nominal concord like in *le jefe* ‘the<sub>INC,SG</sub> boss<sub>INC,SG</sub>’ vs. *el jefe* ‘the<sub>M,SG</sub> boss<sub>M,SG</sub>’. The same happens with the case of the invariable nouns illustrated in (18c), although *le testigue* ‘the<sub>INC,SG</sub> witness<sub>INC,SG</sub>’ can also be found when the invariable ending is /-o/.

The new system gives rise to the emergence of the unmarked form through the new morpheme vocabulary item *-e*. The new unmarked form behaves as expected regarding dominance. Compare (35) with (82):

- (82) Juan y Ana están cansades.  
 Juan and Ana are tired.INCL.PL  
 'Juan and Ana are tired.'

Interestingly, this system also predicts the weak and strong inferences already commented in the introduction, depending, for instance, on epistemic assumptions. Consider the following example:

- (83) Elle/le chique está jugando.  
 PRON.INCL.3SG/ART.INCL.SG child.INCL.SG is playing  
 'They/the child is playing.'

For the pronominal case, *elle está jugando*, the inclusive morpheme triggers weak and strong inferences as expected. In polite or uncertainty environments, the relevant inferences deriving from the alternatives constructed out from (68) can be put in prose as follows:

(84) **Weak inference (the polite/uncertainty inference):**

- a. It is not the case that the speaker believes that the individual being referred to by this use of the pronoun is female.
- b. It is not the case that the speaker believes that the individual being referred to by this use of the pronoun is male.

A strong, non-binary inference can also be obtained whenever the speaker is strongly opinionated, in a way such that in uttering the relevant sentence the speaker believes that the referent of the pronoun is not male and is not female:

(85) **Strong inference (the non-binary inference):**

- a. The speaker believes that the individual being referred to by this use of the pronoun is not female.
- b. The speaker believes that the individual being referred to by this use of the pronoun is not male.

In summary, by abandoning (Restricted) Human Cloning, the new system leaves the male or female presuppositions as entirely optional. This is possible by introducing a new exponent at PF, which realizes an abstract morpheme in which a [human] feature is not associated with any male or female feature.

## 4 Final Remarks

### 4.1 Summary

Although it is true that the current gender system allows us to licitly infer a certain binary taxonomy (recall (4)), there is no direct connection between the taxonomies that can be inferred from particular languages and our knowledge systems. For instance, the biological taxonomies that one can infer from the entire gender system in Spanish contradicts our biological knowledge. To see this, consider the basic fact that most animals are not subject to Human Cloning, even when they have biological sex (e.g., *jirafa* ‘giraffe’). Put differently, the taxonomies that can be inferred from grammatical systems do not seem to have an obvious impact on our knowledge systems. Yet, they can have an impact on our cultural profiles by, for instance, reinforcing unwanted stereotypes. Inclusive gender is an attempt to put those stereotypical taxonomies under dispute. I claim that, from a linguistic perspective, the strategy implies the abandonment of any form of Human Cloning, and consequently, the elimination of the duality that follows from such a rule for human nouns. In order to eliminate Human Cloning from the system, one must also manipulate the set of abstract morphemes and realizational rules that allow to make the abandonment of Human Cloning explicit enough. This is what the introduction of the exponent *-e*, which realizes [human] *ns*, exactly does. Now, such an introduction also impacts on the expressive dimension of language by adding a gender bias in that dimension (see (65)), forcing us to analyze the inclusive morpheme as a mixed term.

There are many remaining issues, mostly related to the proper analysis of the gender system. Even with some caveats, I have assumed a presuppositional analysis of grammatical gender. I think that this is correct for pronouns, but much more controversial for some noun classes. As shown in section 2.2, there are good reasons to believe that gender in proper nouns is assertoric in Spanish, as suggested in Mussini (2025), and according to Sudo and Spathas (2016, 2020) for certain noun classes in Greek (see footnote 9). If this is correct, and some noun classes have assertoric gender, then a more complex analysis would have to make the proper distinctions. At any rate, in terms of semantic calculations, an assertoric analysis would also use alternatives to generate relevant scalar implicatures. I will leave this open for further research.

But there is more. I have assumed a neo-Gricean approach to anti-presuppositions with no discussion of other grammatical alternatives (see Chierchia et al. 2013 for an excellent overview). For instance, Elliott and Sauerland (2019) suggest that some form

of inclusive gender in English (in particular, the use of *they/them/themselves* instead of *he/him/himself* in inclusive contexts) could be derived through proper manipulations of an Exhaustive operator. I think that an implementation in terms of Exh is plausible and perhaps advisable, but it is to a certain extent orthogonal to the aims of the present study.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, a more in-depth revision could be required given some recent experimental results that show that Gricean reasonings can be blocked by stereotypical roles in gender resolution (Pozniak, Burnett 2021; Stetie, Zunino 2022; Anaya-Ramírez et al. 2022).

## 4.2 Enlarging Contexts of Use: A Brief Remark About Slur Reclamation

I would like to conclude these considerations on the morphosemantics of inclusive gender by comparing this strategy with another strategy of linguistic intervention, namely, slur reappropriation, i.e., the use of slur words by members of the target of derogation (for a recent proposal and references, see Carranza, Lo Guercio 2024). Here is a clear example of slur reappropriation in Rioplatense Spanish, in which the phrase *Puto Peronista* ('F... Peronist', very hard to translate with all its local coloring) is reappropriated together with other sexual slurs:

Los Putos Peronistas nacimos como agrupación a fines de 2007 en el kilómetro 35 de ruta 3, en las afueras de González Catán, partido de La Matanza y desde allí nos ampliamos al resto del

---

**20** In addition, it is worth mentioning that the ways in which I have characterized semantic markedness in gender was simplistic in many respects. For instance, as noted by Ramiro Caso (pers. comm.), another way to look at the asymmetric distribution between masculine and feminine would be to impose different quantificational force for the [female] and the [male] presuppositions. As before, the [female] presupposition would exhaust the domain of individuals, as shown in (ia), whereas the [male] presupposition would only require that the intersection between the set of male individuals and whatever the set *f* stands for not be empty, as shown in (ib). Similar considerations would generalize to pronouns with the corresponding adaptations.

- (i) Lexical DPs:  
 a.  $\llbracket \text{female} \rrbracket = \lambda f: \text{Female}(x). f$   
 b.  $\llbracket \text{male} \rrbracket = \lambda f. \text{Male}(x) \cap f(x) \neq \emptyset. f$

This also derives markedness effects for gender once number is properly calculated. Thus, for a mixed plural reading (e.g., *los chicos*), the presupposition is met to the extent that at least one individual in the domain is male. For the singular, we will have a unique individual in the domain, so the presupposition is met only if such an individual is male. Of course, things are more complex in the case of definite descriptions depending on grammatical and semantic-pragmatic constraints. For instance, in uncertainty environments like (43), (ib) does not give good results without further assumptions on the semantics of DPs.

conurbano, a la Capital, a Neuquén, a Mendoza, y a otros rincones de nuestra patria.

*Somos tortas, trans, travestis y putos y también somos hermanas, hijos, padres y madres. Somos trabajadores, desocupadas, estudiantes. Somos los que construyen la riqueza de la Nación. Somos hijxs del deseo y deseamos una nación de hermandad: justa, libre y soberana.*

Los Putos Peronistas somos hijos políticos de estos años, en los que la política como sueño y promesa para cambiar este sistema social injusto vuelve a ocupar el centro de la escena -a pesar de la mala leche y los manoseos de los medios de comunicación masivos contra un gobierno al que sentimos nuestro- y en los que lxs trabajadores podemos comer más tranquilos y empezar a pensar en la educación, la salud, la vivienda y por qué no en la diversidad sexual de nuestros iguales argentinx. Son tiempos de recuperar las banderas de Perón y Evita por una patria políticamente soberana, independiente económicamente y socialmente justa. Porque el peronismo es el hecho maldito del país burgués, también seremos nosotrxs la chispa que permita a nuestra comunidad expulsar hasta sus últimos vestigios discriminatorios.<sup>21</sup>

The *Putos Peronistas* (*F... Peronist*) were born as a group at the end of 2007 at kilometer 35 of route 3, on the outskirts of González Catán, La Matanza district and from there we expanded to the rest of the suburbs, to the Capital, to Neuquén, to Mendoza, and to other corners of our country.

We are *tortas* (d...), *trans*, *travestis* and *putos* (f...) and we are also *sisters*, *children*, *fathers* and *mothers*. We are *workers*, *unemployed*, *students*. We are the ones who build the wealth of the Nation. We are children of desire, and we desire a nation of brotherhood: fair, free and sovereign.

We *Putos Peronistas* are the political children of these years, in which politics as a dream and promise to change this unjust social system occupies the center of the scene once again - despite the bad temper and the manipulations of the mass media against a government that we feel is ours - and in which we workers can eat more peacefully and begin to think about education, health, housing and why not about the sexual diversity of our Argentinian peers. These are times to recover the flags of Perón and Evita for a politically sovereign, economically independent and socially just homeland.

Because Peronism is the cursed fact of the bourgeois country, we will also be the spark that allows our community to expel even its last discriminatory vestiges.

---

<sup>21</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20100703021728/http://www.putos-peronistas.com.ar/about>.

I would like to suggest that reappropriation looks for an impact on use-conditions in Kaplan and others' sense. Compared to the inclusive strategy, it is also a form of linguistic manipulation, but a different one. Essentially, it consists of the explicit intention of enlarging contexts of felicitous use for conventionally implicated meanings. In this sense, it is the perfect opposite to inclusive language, which, among other things, marks the masculine with the aim of reducing its contexts of use.

As already assumed in (69), a slur like *sudaca* 'South-American.PEJ' can be analyzed as denoting the following bias:

- (86) *Bias for 'sudaca':*  $c \in CU(sudaca)$  only if a stereotype about South Americans is in force in  $c$ .  
[ $c$  = context,  $CU$  = the set of contexts of use]

Now, stereotypes introduce belief systems, perhaps, sets of propositions. Adapting Kratzer's idea about modal basis,<sup>22</sup> we can think of stereotypes as cultural basis (briefly, misleading and typifying theories about things, among which there are social groups; see Orlando, Saab 2020):

- (87) [Stereotype] $g, w = \lambda p. \exists P_{\langle e, t \rangle} [P \in C \ \& \ p = [\lambda w. P(Kind)(w)]]$   
[ $C$  = contextual salience]

Consider now our previous reappropriation example. Compared to the inclusive strategy, reappropriation is simpler in many respects. First, as I already said, it consists of a linguistic intervention with the aim of altering/impacting on use-conditions. Crucially, reappropriation is a proposal for enlarging contexts of use in a way such as introducing more contexts of use, which essentially dispute stereotypes. Consequently, if successful, it has an obvious anti-bias or re-bias effect. Put differently, it disputes felicity conditions by merely manipulating the expressive meaning of slur words. Second, unlike the inclusive strategy, it does not change social taxonomies by imposing new ones; quite the opposite, it puts under question its existence and social utility. In a sense, it makes visible the irrational character of social taxonomies, by unveiling a crucial representational failure (see Losada 2021).

---

**22** A collection of Kratzer's relevant works on modality can be found in Kratzer (2012).

## Acknowledgments

Previous versions of this material were presented at the *Bochum Language Colloquium* (Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2024), Ohio State University (online, 2024), Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS, Berlin, 2024), and the workshop *Expressive meaning and hate speech* at the *Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Filosófico* (Buenos Aires, 2024). I am grateful to the audience of these talks and to two anonymous reviewers for comments and criticism. In particular, I would like to thank Ramiro Caso, Nicolás Lo Guercio, Carla Mussini, Eleonora Orlando and Matías Verdecchia for many hours of fruitful discussion. Finally, I would also thank Carla Mussini for proofreading this paper. Usual disclaimers apply.

## Bibliography

- Adamson, L.J. (unpublished). “The Locus of Gender Interpretation: A Reply to Yatsushiro and Sauerland (2006)”. Ms., Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS) (2021).
- Adamson, L.J.; Anagnostopoulou, E. (2025). “Gender Features and Coordination Resolution in Greek and Other Three-Gendered Languages. Implications for the Cross-Linguistic Representation of Gender”. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 57(3), 443-92. [https://doi.org/10.1162/ling\\_a\\_00543](https://doi.org/10.1162/ling_a_00543).
- Ambadiang, T. (1993). *La morfología flexiva*. Madrid: Taurus.
- Ambadiang, T. (1999). “La flexión nominal. Género y número”. Bosque, I.; Demonte V. (dirs), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua español* (vol. 3). Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 4843-916.
- Anaya-Ramírez, A.; Grinstead, J.; Nieves Rivera, M.; Melamed, D.; Reig-Alamillo, A. (2022). “The Interpretation of Spanish Masculine Plural NPs: Are they Perceived as Uniformly Masculine or as a Mixture of Masculine and Feminine?”. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 43(6), 1257-74. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716422000352>.
- Bobaljik, J.; Zocca, C. (2010). “GenderMarkedness: The Anatomy of a Counter-example”. *Morphology*, 21, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11525-010-9156-3>.
- Bosque, I. (2012). “Sexismo lingüístico y visibilidad de la mujer”. *Boletín de Información Lingüística de la Real Academia Española*, 1. [www.rae.es/sites/default/files/Bosque\\_sexismo\\_linguistico.pdf](http://www.rae.es/sites/default/files/Bosque_sexismo_linguistico.pdf).
- Bosque, I.; Moreno, J.C. (1990). “Las construcciones con *lo* y la denotación del neutro”. *Lingüística*, 2, 5-50.
- Chemla, E. (2008). “An Epistemic Step for Anti-Presuppositions”. *Journal of Semantics*, 25(2), 141-73. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffm017>.
- Chierchia, G.; Fox, D.; Spector, B. (2013). “Scalar Implicature as a Grammatical Phenomenon”. Maienborn, C.; von Stechow, P.; Portner, P. (eds), *Semantics. An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning* (Vol. 3). Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2297-332. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110253382.2297>.
- Corver, N. (2016). “Emotion in the Build of Dutch”. *TNTL: Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 132(4), 232-75.

- Depiante, M.; Masullo, P. (unpublished). “Género y numero en la elipsis nominal: consecuencias para la hipótesis lexicalista”. *I Encuentro de Gramática Generativa*, Universidad Nacional del Comahue (General Roca, 2001).
- Depiante, M.; Masullo, P. (unpublished). “Gender is in the Lexicon, Number is in the Syntax: Evidence from Nominal Ellipsis in Spanish”. *GLOW 27*, Aristotle University (Greece, 2004).
- Elliott, P.D.; Sauerland, U. (2019). “Ineffability and Unexhaustification”. Espinal M.T.; Castroviejo, E.; Leonetti, M.; McNally, L.; Real-Puigdollers, C. (eds), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung*, 23(1). Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès), 399-411.
- Embick, D. (2000). “Features, Syntax, and Categories in the Latin Perfect”. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 31(2), 185-230. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002438900554343>.
- Embick, D.; Noyer, R. (2001). “Movement Operations after Syntax”. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 32(4), 555-95. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002438901753373005>.
- Estomba, D. (2016). *El género sintáctico y la proyección funcional del nombre* [Tesis de maestría]. General Roca, Argentina: Universidad Nacional del Comahue.
- Fábregas, A. (2022). “El género inclusivo. Una mirada gramatical”. *Cuadernos de Investigaciones Filológicas*, 51, 25-46.
- Fábregas, A.; Pérez, I. (2008). “Gender Agreement on Adverbs in Spanish”. *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics*, 7(2), 25-45. <https://doi.org/10.5334/jpl.126>.
- Gutzmann, D. (2015). *Use-Conditional Meaning. Studies in Multidimensional Semantics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gutzmann, D. (2019). *The Grammar of Epressivity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halle, M.; Marantz, A. (1993). “Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection”. Hale K.; Keyser, S. (eds), *The View from Building 20: Essays in Linguistics in Honor of Sylvain Bromberger*. Cambridge, (MA): MIT Press, 111-76.
- Harley, H. (2014). “On the identity of roots”. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 40(3/4), 225-76. <https://doi.org/10.1515/tl-2014-0010>.
- Harris, J. (1991). “The Exponence of Gender in Spanish”. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 22(1), 65-88. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4178707>.
- Heim, I. (1991). “Artikel und Definitheit”. von Stechow, A.; Wunderlich, D. (eds), *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 487-535.
- Heim, I. (2008). “Features on Bound Pronouns”. Adger, D.; Béjar, S.; Harbour, D. (eds), *Phi theory. Phi-Features across Interfaces and Modules*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 35-56.
- Heim, I.; Kratzer, A. (1998). *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Malden, (MA): Blackwell Publishing.
- Kaplan, D. (1999). “The Meaning of *Ouch* and *Oops*: Explorations in the Theory of Meaning as Use”. Ms. University of California.
- Kramer, R. (2014). “Gender in Amharic: A Morphosyntactic Approach to Natural and Grammatical Gender”. *Language Sciences*, 43, 102-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2013.10.004>.
- Kramer, R. (2016). “The Location of Gender Features in the Syntax”. *Language and Linguist Compass*, 10, 661-77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12226>.
- Kratzer, A. (2009). “Making a Pronoun: Fake Indexicals as Windows into the Properties of Pronouns”. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 40(2), 187-237. <https://doi.org/10.1162/ling.2009.40.2.187>.
- Kratzer, A. (2012). *Modals and Conditionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lo Guercio, N.; Carranza, F. (2024). “A Metapragmatic Stereotype-Based Account of

- Reclamation". *Analytic Philosophy*, 66, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phib.12345>.
- Losada, A. (2021). "Sudaca. Slurs and Typifying". Orlando E.; Saab, A. (eds), *Slurs and Expressivity. Semantics and Beyond*. Lanham: Lexington, 187-207.
- McCready, E. (2010). "Varieties of Conventional Implicatures". *Semantics and Pragmatics*, 3, 1-57.
- Mendivil Giró, J.L. (2020). "El masculino inclusivo en español". *Revista Española De Lingüística*, 50(1), 35-64. <https://revista.sel.edu.es/index.php/revista/article/view/2014>.
- Muñoz Pérez, C. (2023). "A Cautionary Comment on the Morphological Status of Inclusive –e in Spanish". *Borealis: An International Journal of Hispanic Linguistics*, 12(1), 75-90.
- Mussini, C. (unpublished). "Observaciones sobre el problema del género en los nombres propios". *ELBA V* (Escuela de Lingüística de Buenos Aires) (Buenos Aires, 2024).
- Mussini, C. (2025). "On Gender Resolution in Spanish Proper Names". *Issues on Contemporary Semantics and Ontology*, VII, SADAF, (Buenos Aires, 2025).
- Mussini, C. (unpublished). "Gender Features and Alternatives in Spanish Nouns". Ms. IIF-Sadaf-CONICET (Buenos Aires, 2026).
- NGRAE (2025). *Nueva gramática de la lengua española (edición revisada)*. Madrid: Espasa-calpe.
- Orlando, E.; Saab, A. (2020). "Slurs, Stereotypes and Insults". *Acta Analytica*, 35, 599-621. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12136-020-00424-2>.
- Percus, O. (2006). "Antipresuppositions". Ueyama A. (ed.), *Theoretical and Empirical Studies of Reference and Anaphora: Toward the Establishment of Generative Grammar as an empirical Science*. Report of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B), Project No. 15320052, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 52-73.
- Percus, O. (2011). "Gender Features and Interpretation: A Case Study". *Morphology*, 21, 167-96. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11525-010-9157-2>.
- Pesetsky, D. (2013). *Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262019729.001.0001>
- Potts, C. (2005). *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pozniak, C.; Burnett, H. (2021). "Failures of Gricean Reasoning and the Role of Stereotypes in the Production of Gender Marking in French". *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 6(1), 50, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1310>.
- Predelli, S. (2013). *Meaning without Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ranero Echeverria, R. (2021). *Identity Conditions on Ellipsis* [Ph.D. Dissertation]. College Park: University of Maryland.
- Roca, I. (1989). "The Organisation of Grammatical Gender". *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 87(1), 1-32.
- Saab, A. (2004). *El dominio de la elipsis nominal en español. Identidad estricta e inserción tardía* [Tesis de maestría]. Neuquén: Universidad Nacional del Comahue.
- Saab, A. (2008). *Hacia una teoría de la identidad parcial en la elipsis* [Ph.D. Dissertation]. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires.
- Saab, A. (2010). "(Im)possible Deletions in the Spanish DP". *Iberia*, 2(2), 45-83.
- Saab, A. (2017). "Cosas invisibles. Dos pruebas de su inexistencia". Gallego, Á.; Rodríguez, Y.; Fernández-Sánchez, J. (éds), *Relaciones sintácticas. Homenaje a José M. Brucart y M. Lluïsa Hernanz*. Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions UAB, 619-32.
- Saab, A. (2018). "Nostalgia del estructuralismo. Sobre una exclusión del lenguaje inclusivo". *Escritores del Mundo*, October 2018. <https://escritoresdelmundo>.

- art.blog/2018/10/16/nostalgia-del-estructuralismo-sobre-una-exclusion-del-lenguaje-inclusivo-por-andres-saab/.
- Saab, A. (2020). “Dos conjeturas sobre la cuestión del llamado *lenguaje inclusivo*”. *Escritores del Mundo*, June 2020. <https://escritoresdelmundo.art.blog/2020/06/27/dos-conjeturas-sobre-la-cuestion-del-llamado-lenguaje-inclusivo-por-andres-saab/>.
- Saab, A. (2021). “On the locus of expressivity. Deriving parallel meaning dimensions from architectural considerations”. Orlando, E.; Saab, A. (eds), *Slurs and Expressivity. Semantics and Beyond*. Lanham: Lexington. 17-44.
- Saab, A.; Lo Guercio, N. (2020). “No Name. The Alloemy View”. *Studia Linguistica*, 74(1), 60-97. <https://doi.org/10.1111/stul.12116>.
- Sauerland, U. (2002). “The Present Tense is Vacuous”. *Snippets* 6 (online publication).
- Sauerland, U. (2003). “A New Semantics for Number”. Young, R.; Zhou, Y. (eds), *The Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 13. Ithaca (NY): CLC Publications, 258-75.
- Sauerland, U. (2008a). “Implicated Presuppositions”. Steube, A. (ed.), *Language, Context, and Cognition. The Discourse Potential of Underspecified Structures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 581-600.
- Sauerland, U. (2008b). “On the Semantic Markedness of Phi-Features”. Adger, D.; Béjar, S.; Harbour, D. (eds), *Phi Theory. Phi-Features across Interfaces and Modules*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 57-82.
- Steriopolo, O.; Wiltschko, M. (2010). “Distributed GENDER Hypothesis”. Zybatow, G.; Dudchuck, P.; Minor, S.; Pshetskaya, E. (ed.), *Formal Studies in Slavic Linguistics*. New York: Peter Lang, 155-72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/stul.12190>.
- Stetie, N.; Zunino, G. (2022). “Non-Binary Language in Spanish? Comprehension of Non-Binary Morphological Forms: A Psycholinguistic Study”. *Glossa: a journal of general Linguistics*, 7(1), 1-38. <https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.6144>.
- Sudo, Y.; Spathas, G. (2016). “Nominal Ellipsis and the Interpretation of Gender in Greek”. Bade, N.; Berezovskaya, P.; Schöller, A. (eds), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung*, 20, 712-29.
- Sudo, Y.; Spathas, G. (2020). “Gender and Interpretation in Greek: Comments on Merchant (2014)”. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*, 5(1), 129, 1-42. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1173>.
- Yatsushiro, K.; Sauerland, U. (2006). “[feminine] in a High Position”. *Snippets*, 13, 11-12.
- Zocca, C. (2003). *O que não está lá. Um estudo sobre morfologia flexional em elipses* [Tese de Mestrado]. Campinas: Universidad Estatal de Campinas.

