

Agreement in Asturian

Paloma Carretero García

University of Essex

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Abstract

We propose an LFG treatment for mixed agreement patterns in Asturian, where a given controller can at the same time control two agreement patterns. Under certain specific conditions, adjectives and pronouns show an ending in ‘-o’ in opposition to masculine and feminine endings in ‘-u’ and ‘-a’. This third ending has been previously considered a neuter gender inherited from Latin. We show this is not a third gender but a separate ending that is superimposed on the gender system and is based on the countability of the nuclear term. We propose an analysis based on the INDEX and CONCORD distinction by formulating agreement constraints that are sensitive to the count/mass distinction directly. We show that the basis for the choice for a given target is not linearisation based and propose a category based solution by which pronominal attributive elements are of category \hat{A} and agree in CONCORD and postnominal attributive and predicative elements are of category A and agree in INDEX.

1 Asturian: some general characteristics

Asturian is a Romance language spoken in Asturias, a region in northwestern Spain. Even though it is not the official language of the region –Spanish is–, its use is protected and regulated by law. This language has been catalogued as *definitely endangered* by UNESCO with an estimated figure of 100,000 native speakers (PROEL)¹. There are three main dialectal areas: western, central and eastern. The standard variety is regulated by the Academy of the Asturian Language² and is based on the central area.

In general terms, Asturian is similar to other Iberian Romance languages. It shows mainly SVO order, with optionally overt subjects and is predominantly head initial:

- (1) a. (Yo) atopé’l xatu na caleya
I find.PST.1SG=the.M.SG calf in.the.F.SG path
‘I found the calf on the path.’
- b. El páxaru roxu
the.M.SG bird.M red.M.SG
‘The red bird’

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¹Note that this –possibly generous– figure includes not only the area that is now Asturias, but also some other areas of Cantabria to the East, and as far as Extremadura to the South or even Portugal - in which it has been labelled as the Astur-Leonese family. Some might consider these varieties distinct enough to merit consideration; however, it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the different varieties and so we will focus only on data from Asturias itself.

²<http://www.academiadelalingua.com>

2 The nominal system of Asturian

2.1 Nouns

Nouns in Asturian show gender and number distinctions. Gender groups nouns into masculine or feminine and number distinguishes between singular and plural nouns.

Gender is not always morphologically marked on the noun³ but shows on the article/determiners:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (2) El debuyu
the.M.SG ripe-nut
'Ripe nut' | (4) Los xingadorios
the.M.PL swing.PL
'The swings' |
| (3) La rescampladura
the.F.SG brightness
'The brightness' | (5) Les fesories
the.F.PL hoe.PL
'The hoes/mattocks' |

2.2 Adjectives

Adjectives also show gender and number distinctions. Gender splits between feminine and masculine. The most frequent ending for feminine adjectives is '-a' and for masculine we find '-u', '-án' or '-ín', even though this list is not exhaustive. Number then differentiates between singular and plural.

Masculine and feminine genders and number in adjectives are always an expression of agreement with the gender and number of the noun they modify.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (6) La saya esgatayada
the.F.SG skirt ragged.F.SG
'The ragged skirt' | (8) El xilecu esgatayaú
the.M.SG vest ragged.M.SG
'The ragged vest' |
| (7) Les sayes esgatayades
the.F.PL skirt.PL ragged.F.PL
'The ragged skirts' | (9) Los xilecos esgatayaos
the.M.PL vest.PL ragged.M.PL
'The ragged vests' |

There is a third ending: *-o*, that appears under specific conditions in contrast with feminine or masculine endings. When the adjective enters in an agreement relation with a mass noun, either postnominally or predicatively, it triggers the appearance of this ending, which we label MASS

³There are some tendencies, as is often the case in Romance languages, by which we can find that certain nominal endings correlate with gender, e.g. most nouns ending in '-a' are feminine or nouns in '-u' are generally masculine.

NEUTER (MN) as coined by Alonso (1962), a term that has pervaded the literature even though it is not very transparent⁴:

- (10) **La** xente vieyo/*vieya
 the.F.SG people old.MN/old.F.SG
 ‘Old people’
- (11) **La** ropa esgatayao/*esgatayada
 the.F.SG clothing ragged.MN/ragged.F.SG
 ‘Ragged clothing’

This ending could be considered at first sight as a vestige of the Latin neuter, and some examples can be found in Spanish and Asturian in the form of pronouns, determiners and articles that appear with adjectives that are nominalised⁵ and is used to designate inanimate, indeterminate or generic entities:

- (12) Lo murnio ye que teamos enfrentaos
 the.NEUT sad.NEUT be.PRS.3SG that be.PRS.SBJV.1PL opposed.PL
 ‘What’s sad is that we’re opposed.’ [Asturian (from ESLEMA)]
- (13) No veo por qué lo bueno de otros tiempos tiene que
 NEG see.PRS.1SG for what the.NEUT good of other.PL time.PL have.PRS.3SG to
 perderse
 lose.INF.REFL
 ‘I don’t see why the good of times past has to get lost.’ [Spanish (from CREA)]
- (14) Esto es lo que no me gusta
 This.NEUT be.PRS.3SG the.NEUT that NEG DAT.1SG like.PRS.3SG
 ‘This is what I don’t like.’ [Spanish]

However, as noted by Neira Martínez (1978) and Hualde (1989) among others, we do not have a three way (masculine, feminine, neuter) gender split for nouns in Asturian, as the term *mass gender* might suggest. We can assume that the external form of this ending is likely derived from the Latin neuter but this does not imply the existence of a class of nouns that show a neuter gender. This is clearly attested by the fact that gender classifies nouns only as masculine or feminine and pronominal elements such as articles, demonstratives or attributive adjectives do not show the MN ending but agree in gender with the noun as we will see in Section 3.

⁴Harmon (2007) labels this third ending MASS GENDER (MG) and not neuter, which is equally opaque. Perhaps more successful is the label *mass agreement* proposed by Fernández Ordóñez (2007a), which addresses more directly the fact that this agreement pattern is not based on lexical gender but rather on semantic features.

⁵DPD - Real Academia Española (2005) notes that *lo* can be considered an article because of its ability to nominalise adjectives and certain relative clauses, but it is also considered a pronoun by many linguists.

2.2.1 Count vs. mass nouns

Some nouns in Asturian always have a mass reference such as *lleche* ‘milk’, *dineru* ‘money’, *xente* ‘people’, *ropa* ‘clothing’, *lleña* ‘wood’, *sidra* ‘cider’, etc. In contrast, many nouns, while referring to the same entity reference, can be count in some contexts and non-count in others. In this case, there is a difference in meaning and interpretation: individual element vs. generic reality. This group includes for instance *fueya* ‘leaf’, *piedra* ‘stone’, *papel* ‘paper’, *café* ‘coffee’, *güesu* ‘bone’, etc. Generally speaking, these nouns do not show different endings for the count/non-count distinction: the neuter has no manifestation on the nuclear term, but is manifested on the adjective or referent⁶. There are three exceptional nouns which have MN forms:

1. *fierru* - ‘a metal object’ vs. *fierro* - ‘iron’
2. *pelu* - ‘one hair’ vs. *pelo* - ‘hair’
3. *filu* - ‘a thread’ vs. *filo* - ‘thread’

The fact that a noun is count or non-count, or more accurately, that it has a count or mass reading, will have repercussions for its agreement patterns (Academia de la Llingua Asturiana, 2001, p. 76) as we will see in the following section. The elements that require MN agreement appear always in the singular; the neuter is never associated with plural number.

3 Agreement

3.1 NP-internal agreement

Agreement inside the NP varies according to position and the countability features of the noun. Attributive adjectives, articles and other determiners that appear preminally can only agree in gender- masculine or feminine- regardless of the type of noun:

- (15) **El** famientu llobu
the.M.SG hungry.M.SG wolf
‘The hungry wolf’ [COUNT]
- (16) **El** duru carbón
the.M.SG hard.M.SG coal
‘The hard coal’ [NON-COUNT]
- (17) **La** bona neña
The.F.SG good.F.SG girl
‘The good girl’ [COUNT]

⁶However, there is a tendency in the spoken language to end some masculine nouns in ‘-u’ if they are count and in ‘-o’ if they are non-count.

- (18) **La** seca lleña
 The.F.SG dry.F.SG wood
 ‘The dry wood’ [NON-COUNT]

For postnominal agreement we have two patterns depending on the countability of the noun:

1. If the noun is count, agreement will show masculine or feminine endings:

- (19) **El** llobu famientu anda pel monte
 the.M.SG wolf hungry.M.SG walk.PRS.3SG for=the.M.SG forest
 ‘The hungry wolf walks in the forest.’ [COUNT]

- (20) **La** neña llista escribe poesíes
 The.F.SG girl clever.F.SG write.PRS.3SG poem.PL
 ‘The clever girl writes poems.’ [COUNT]

2. If the noun is non-count, the adjective will then show the MN ending:

- (21) **El** carbón duro / *duru ambura bien
 The.M.SG coal hard.MN / hard.M.SG burn.PRS.3SG well
 ‘Hard coal burns well.’ [NON-COUNT]

- (22) a. **A** la vera'l riu hai abonda piedra menudo
 PREP the.F.SG edge=the.M.SG river be.PRS.3SG much.F.SG stone small.MN
 ‘At the edge of the river, there is much small stone.’ [NON-COUNT]

- b. **A** la vera'l riu hai piedra menudo abondo
 PREP the.F.SG edge=the.M.SG river be stone small.MN much.MN
 ‘At the edge of the river, there is much small stone.’ [NON-COUNT]

As previously stated, some mass nouns can be used in a context where their reading is count. In such cases, agreement will follow the pattern of count nouns:

- (23) Dio-y con una piedra menuda en güeyu
 hit.PST.3SG=DAT.SG with a.F.SG stone small.F.SG in eye
 ‘He/she hit him/her with a small stone in the eye.’ [count reading-a particular stone]

3.2 External agreement

Adjectives used predicatively also require MN agreement if the noun is non-count⁷:

⁷Count nouns require agreement in gender (MASC or FEM), as seen above for internal agreement. We are not including any more examples as this agreement pattern does not pose any major issues.

- (24) **La** ropa ta tendío
 The.F.SG clothing be.PRS.3SG hang.PASTPART.MN
 ‘The clothing is hung.’ [NON-COUNT]
- (25) **Esa** lleña_i que pañó Xuan paezme mui seco_i
 That.F.SG wood that collect.PST.3SG Xuan seem.PRS.3SG=1.SG.REFL very dry.MN
 ‘That wood that Xuan collected seems very dry to me.’ [NON-COUNT]

Items in the sentence that refer to a non-count noun such as anaphoric pronouns or clitics also select the MN ending:

- (26) Diz que nun-y gusta **la** lleche_i pero nun pue
 say.PRS.3SG that NEG-DAT.SG like.3SG the.F.SG milk but NEG can.PRS.3SG
 pasar sin **ello**_i calentino
 pass.INF without it.MN hot.DIM.MN
 ‘He/she says he/she doesn’t like milk but cannot do without it hot.’ [NON-COUNT]
- (27) **La** ropa muy vieyo pues vendelo
 the.F.SG clothing very old.MN can.PRS.2SG sell.INF=3.ACC.MN
 ‘The very old clothing, you can sell.’ [NON-COUNT]

Thus far we can summarise the agreement patterns of Asturian as follows: count nouns always require agreement in gender while mass nouns select gender agreement for determiners and prenominal attributive adjectives but select the MN ending for postnominal attributive adjectives, predicative adjectives and anaphoric referents.

We can therefore argue - based on the data shown so far- that the distinction between masculine, feminine and this mass neuter is not a three-way gender opposition inherited from Latin but a count/mass distinction that is superimposed on the masculine/feminine gender system.

4 Similar phenomena in Italian varieties

Kučerová & Moro (2011) note the existence of mixed agreement patterns in Central Italian dialects, which they claim have not received much attention in the literature. They note there is no synchronic, theoretically informed analysis - literature is mainly either diachronic or Romance-internal synchronic. There are two opposed diachronic views: this neuter descends from the Latin neuter or it can be evidence of survival of the ABLATIVE case (Hall Jr., 1968). They claim that the use of this special marking is both productive and highly stable, can be extended to words which did not exist in Latin and is also found on nominalised adjectives and infinitives, and occurs in contact-induced borrowings.

- (28) So kumbratə⁸ lə vinə. Lə so kumbratə pərke ɛ bonə
 AUX bought the.MN wine.MN itMN AUX bought because is good.MSG

I bought wine. I bought it because it's good. [Celano, Abruzzi (Kučerová & Moro, 2011, p. 7)]

Franco et al. (2015) provide more data from different varieties. They observe that in Mascioni, the opposition between count and mass is only available on determiners and quantifiers:

(29) a. l- \square / kweft- \square / kwell- \square vin- \circ
 the/ this/ that wine

b. kwell- \square vin- \circ vecc- \circ
 that wine old

'that old wine'

[Mascioni, L'Aquila (Franco et al., 2015, p. 11)]

They claim that these Italian varieties indeed show a three gender opposition, which is not visible in varieties such as Mascioni due to the syncretism between masculine and neuter endings: "three genders can be present in the abstract syntax, though the vocabulary of Mascioni will include a single exponent, namely *-u*, for both masculine and neuter, unless merged with D/Q" (Franco et al., 2015, p.11).

They mention that in other varieties such as Amandola the neuter ending is also distinguished on lexical categories which proves further the existence of "three genders/N classes, namely masculine, feminine and neuter and the neuter corresponds to the Elsewhere N class, so that it will show up in environments where invariable inflections are selected" (Franco et al., 2015, p.12).

Kučerová & Moro (2011) summarise their approach with the following *empirical generalization* that they claim needs to be formulated in semantic terms (p. 7): "If a mass noun may be predicative, it triggers a default vocabulary insertion. If a mass noun must be referential, it triggers a 'marked' vocabulary insertion." They believe theirs to be the only formal attempt to analyse this phenomenon but it relies on very specific and abstract c-structural assumptions.

Franco et al. (2015) agree that this solution could work for some varieties such as Mascioni but criticise the fact that Kučerová & Moro (2011) do not make clear how to deal with the issue in other varieties or languages.

Indeed if we try to extrapolate Kučerová & Moro (2011)'s generalisation to Asturian we find that their account which predicts that a MN will only ever, in the cases of mixed agreement patterns, show MN and the default pattern of MSG, fails to account for the Asturian cases by predicting the wrong patterns, since we have seen that a mass noun –labelled predicative as opposed to referential by their account– can use both forms for data with generic interpretation. Furthermore, in Asturian both MASC and FEM are available in the contexts where MN is not required, which rules out a default vocabulary insertion:

(30) a. **La** **buena** **lleche fresco** **se** **toma** **templado.**
 the.FEM.SG good.FEM.SG milk fresh.MN REFL take.PRS.3SG warm.MN

⁸Kučerová & Moro (2011) do not mention whether the participle forms *kumbratə* display MN or M.SG agreement, or whether they do not agree at all. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

Pruéballo

try2.IMP=3.ACC.MN

‘The good fresh milk is drunk warm. Try it.’

- b. **El** buen vinu blanco se toma frío
the.MSG good wine white.MN REFL take.PRS.3SG cold.MN

‘The good white wine is drunk cold.’ (Fernández Ordóñez, 2007b, p. 59)

Since the analysis proposed by Kučerová & Moro (2011) cannot be satisfactorily applied to Asturian, we propose an analysis in the following section that addresses the mass/count distinction directly.

5 Proposed Analysis

5.1 Linearisation observations

First of all, let us consider the possibility that the basis for the choice of gendered or MN agreement for a given target is linear order. This could easily be assumed based on the data presented so far which seems to suggest this possibility. However, in predicative constructions, the adjective can precede the noun and still show MN, as in (31) and (32). So we discard linear order as a determining factor for the choice of agreement:

- (31) onde l’aire güel a ocle y ye tibio la
where the.M.SG=air smell.PRS.3SG PREP seaweed and be.PRS.3SG warm.MN the.FSG
rosada
dew

‘where the air smells like seaweed and the dew is warm.’

- (32) Con sidre aneyo güélvase mozo la xente vieyo
With cider mature.MN turn.PRS.3SG.REFL young.MN the.FSG people old.MN

‘With mature cider old people turn young.’

5.2 Towards a category-based solution

We propose an analysis that assumes that prenominal and postnominal adjectives belong to different categories: prenominal adjectives are non-projecting \hat{A} and postnominal adjectives are A, together with predicative adjectives. The idea of grouping together postnominal attributive adjectives and predicative adjectives is not far-fetched as they show comparable characteristics that separate them from prenominal attributive adjectives (*cf.* Lamarche (1991), Alexiadou (2014)).

Agreement involves CONCORD and INDEX distinctions by which indices reflect more semantic properties and concord captures values *ad formam* (Kathol, 1999). Our analysis builds on this distinction and is based on the analysis for the French Polite Plural Generalisation provided by Wechsler (2011).

We introduce a COUNTABILITY feature with +/- values and we take it to be an INDEX feature. Pronouns, predicative and postnominal attributive adjectives agree in INDEX and determiners and prenominal attributive adjectives would be dealt with by CONCORD agreement. This account is consistent with the semantic hierarchy proposed by Corbett (2006, p. 207):

- (33) a. Agreement hierarchy:
 attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun⁹
- b. “For any controller that permits alternative agreements, as we move rightwards along the Agreement Hierarchy, the likelihood of agreement with greater semantic justification will increase monotonically (that is, with no intervening decrease)”

Since we are considering the possibility of two categories for adjectives, our rules for a noun phrase include the following:

$$(34) \text{ DP} \longrightarrow \begin{array}{cc} \text{D}^{\circ} & \bar{\text{N}} \\ \uparrow = \downarrow & \uparrow = \downarrow \end{array}$$

$$(35) \bar{\text{N}} \longrightarrow \begin{array}{cc} \text{N}^{\circ} & \text{AP} \\ \uparrow = \downarrow & \downarrow \in (\uparrow \text{ADJ}) \end{array}$$

$$(36) \bar{\text{N}} \longrightarrow \begin{array}{c} \text{N}^{\circ} \\ \uparrow = \downarrow \end{array}$$

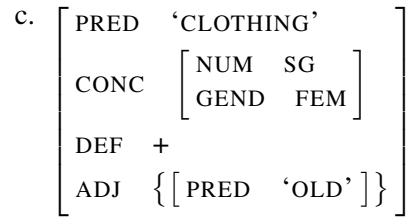
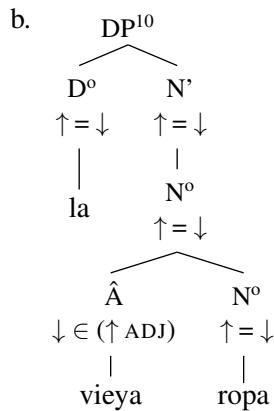
$$(37) \text{N}^{\circ} \longrightarrow \begin{array}{cc} \hat{\text{A}} & \text{N}^{\circ} \\ \downarrow \in (\uparrow \text{ADJ}) & \uparrow = \downarrow \end{array}$$

$$(38) \text{AP} \longrightarrow \begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ \uparrow = \downarrow \end{array}$$

Let us now turn to applying the above rules to Asturian and exploring the constraints that are necessary for our analysis to predict the right combinations and rule out ill-formed ones:

- (39) a. **La vieya ropa**
 the.F.SG old.FSG clothing
 ‘Old clothing’

⁹Fernández Ordóñez (2007b, p.61) adapts this hierarchy to the mass agreement patterns in Ibero-Romance varieties as follows: attributive > predicative > secondary predicate > personal and demonstrative pronoun; which shows the spreading of the MN in Asturian.



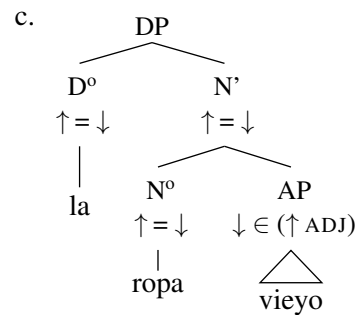
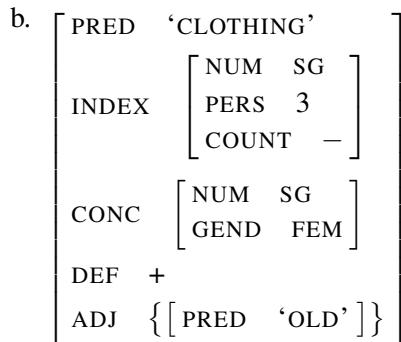
d. *la*: D^o (\uparrow CONC GEND) =_c FEM
 (\uparrow DEF) = +

vieya: \hat{A} (\uparrow PRED) = 'OLD'
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) CONC GEND) =_c FEM
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) CONC NUM) =_c SG

We see in (39) that both the determiner *la* and the pronominal attributive adjective *vieya* agree with the CONCORD values for GENDER of the noun *ropa*. Since INDEX agreement is not involved, the countability feature is not relevant in this case, which predicts the right combinations by ruling out *vieyo* (MN), and the CONCORD constraints for gender also rule out the masculine *vieyu*.

If we compare (39) with (40) below, we find that we now have a postnominal adjective, which is of category A and shows agreement in INDEX which now rules out the appearance of a feminine A, since such adjective can only appear with count nouns. The agreement for the determiner is still resolved by CONCORD agreement:

(40) a. **La** ropa vieyo
 the.F.SG clothing old.MN
 'Old clothing'



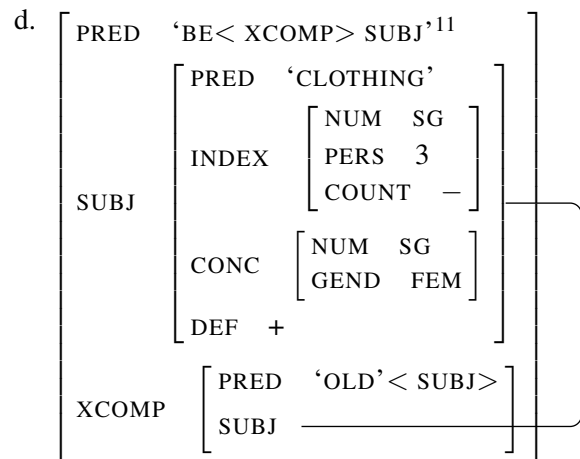
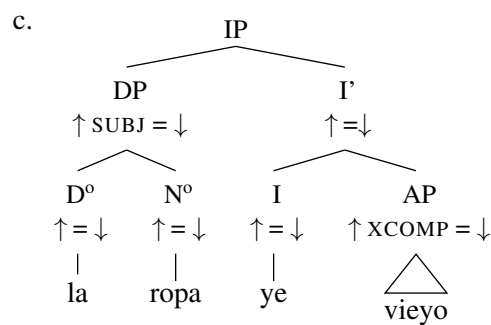
¹⁰We treat the determiner as a cohead, but this could be easily adapted to a treatment as a specifier function.

- d. *la: D^o* (↑ CONC GEND) =_c FEM (↑ DEF) = + **vieya: A* (↑ PRED) = ‘OLD’ (↑ SUBJ INDEX COUNT) =_c +
- vieyo: A* (↑ PRED) = ‘OLD’ ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c –

Let us now turn our sentence into a copular structure with a predicative adjective as below:

- (41) a. **La** **ropa** **ye** **vieyo**
the.F.SG clothing be.PRS.3SG old.MN
‘The clothing is old.’

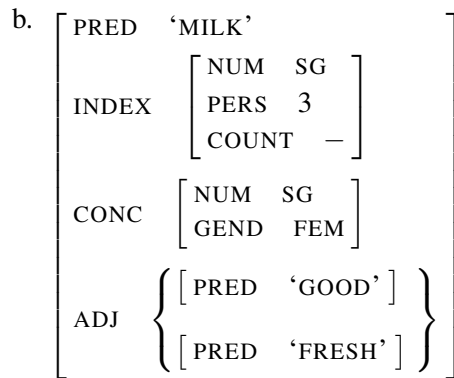
- b. *la: D^o* (↑ CONC GEND) =_c FEM (↑ DEF) = +
- vieyo: A* (↑ PRED) = ‘OLD’ (↑ SUBJ INDEX COUNT) =_c –



In (41), we see the same mechanism but the target is now the INDEX features for COUNTABILITY of the SUBJECT. We can also easily combine prenominal and postnominal attributive adjectives and obtain the expected results:

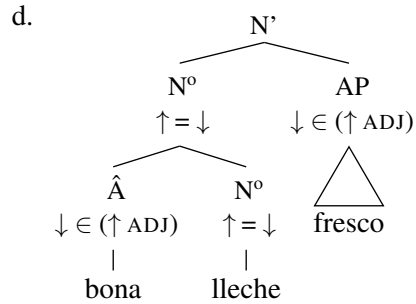
- (42) a. **bona** **lleche fresco**
good.F.SG milk fresh.MN
‘Good fresh milk’

¹¹Here we follow Dalrymple et al. (2004)’s approach to French copular complements.



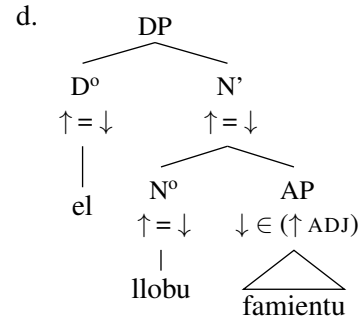
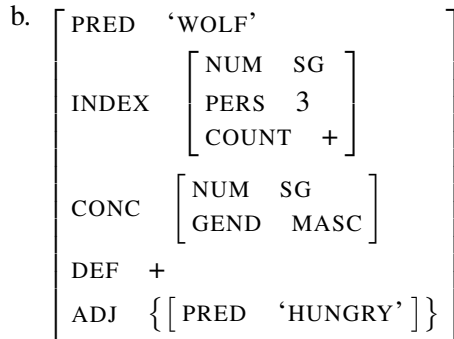
c. *bona*: \hat{A} (\uparrow PRED) = ‘GOOD’
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) CONC GEND) =_c FEM
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) CONC NUM) =_c SG

fresco: A (\uparrow PRED) = ‘FRESH’
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) INDEX COUNT) =_c -



For postnominal attributive adjectives that modify count nouns, note that the COUNTABILITY feature will predict that we cannot have a MN ending but does not ensure that we get only either MASC or FEM endings, which would in turn predict the wrong combinations:

- (43) a. El llobu famientu
 the.M.SG wolf hungry.M.SG
 ‘The hungry wolf’



c. *el*: D^0 (\uparrow CONC GEND) =_c MASC
 (\uparrow DEF) = +

famientu: A (\uparrow PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) INDEX COUNT) =_c +

**famiento*: A (\uparrow PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ \in \uparrow) INDEX COUNT) =_c -

In (43c) we see that our rules correctly accept the MASC adjective *famientu* and rule out the MN *famiento*. However, this has not ruled out yet the FEM *famienta*, which is not a possible option since it is the wrong gender. As it stands, our rule does not provide any arrangements for gender and both *famientu* and *famienta* would potentially have the same lexical entry as below:

- (44) *famientu*: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +
famienta: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +

This is, however, not a problem for our account, as GENDER is also an INDEX feature (Wechsler & Zlatić, 2003). Therefore, for count nouns, we have to specify constraints both for COUNTABILITY and GENDER in INDEX:

- (45) *famientu*: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX GEND) =_c MASC
famienta: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX GEND) =_c FEM

This will result in the following f-structure for (43) by ensuring that only the MASC adjective *famientu* is available:

- (46)
$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{PRED} \quad \text{‘WOLF’} \\ \text{INDEX} \quad \left[\begin{array}{ll} \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEN} & \text{MASC} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{COUNT} & + \end{array} \right] \\ \text{CONC} \quad \left[\begin{array}{ll} \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{MASC} \end{array} \right] \\ \text{DEF} \quad + \\ \text{ADJ} \quad \{ \left[\text{PRED} \quad \text{‘HUNGRY’} \right] \} \end{array} \right]$$
famientu: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX GEND) =_c MASC
 **famienta*: A (↑ PRED) = ‘HUNGRY’
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX COUNT) =_c +
 ((ADJ ∈ ↑) INDEX GEND) =_c FEM

Including GENDER will not affect the unacceptability of *famiento* as it fails to check the COUNTABILITY features imposed by the noun *lobo*. It also reflects our proposal that we are not dealing with a three gender system for Asturian and that we have gender on one side and countability as a separate feature¹².

¹²As mentioned by the editors, one might consider arguing that all noun phrases should have values for NUMBER, GENDER and COUNTABILITY in CONCORD and INDEX as they are all involved in obtaining the right combinations of agreement patterns. It remains to be discussed, however, whether we have a default value for all of them or if there is some sort of feature hierarchy - it seems that a – feature for COUNTABILITY is more prominent than the features for GENDER and it is also unclear how NUMBER interacts with them. This will be briefly discussed in Section 6 where

6 Some remarks about coordination

So far we have identified an interesting pattern of mixed agreement for Asturian and proposed a plausible analysis. It is interesting now to examine how mass nouns can combine in coordinated structures. This section will present some preliminary data. However, due to the limited data available and the diversity in judgement by speakers, we will not provide a full analysis here but will consider some possibilities that will be the subject for further research.

Academia de la Llingua Asturiana (2001) observes the following regarding coordination and agreement:

When the adjective/referent has to agree with more than one noun, it appears in the plural, regardless of the number of the nouns:

- (a) If the nouns have the same gender, the adjective will show that same gender and plural number:

(47) **El** pá ya'l fíu son uvieín**os**
the.M.SG father and=the.M.SG son be.PRS.3PL from.Oviedo.M.PL
'The father and the son are from Oviedo.'

(48) **La** ma ya **la** fía son avilesin**es**
the.F.SG mother and the.F.SG daughter be.PRS.3PL from.Avilés.F.PL
'The mother and the daughter are from Avilés.'

- (b) If the nouns have different gender, the adjective will show masculine gender and plural number:

(49) **El** parllamentu ya **la** conseyería tan esmolecí**os**
the.M.SG parliament and the.F.SG ministry be.PRS.3PL uneasy.M.PL
col tema
with=.M.SG topic
'The parliament and ministry are concerned about the issue.'

(50) **La** neña y **el** rapacín tan galdí**os**
the.F.SG girl and the.M.SG boy be.PRS.3PL exhausted.M.PL
'The girl and the boy are exhausted.'

However, there is no mention about how to resolve the agreement if one (or more) of the nouns is non-count. We find some contradictory information from Academia de la Llingua Asturiana (2001). On the one hand, it is clearly stated that "nouns and other elements that require neuter agreement always appear in the singular, the neuter is never associated with plural number,

we see competition between the NUMBER and COUNTABILITY features triggering different forms. However, due to the limited data and the ambiguity between count and mass readings, we will not be discussing this further in this paper.

which is also reflected on the agreement with the verb” (p.89); but also that “when one same adjective or referent has to agree with a group of two or more nouns, the adjective or referent have to appear in plural, regardless of the number of all or any of the nouns” (p. 342).

Obtaining data proves problematic, especially if we take into account that many mass nouns can have count interpretations. However, there seems to be some tendency that when we have one mass noun and one count noun, the plural does appear in the agreement with the adjective and verb. It seems also that we can discard the possibility that Asturian could show closest conjunct agreement, as various order combinations are possible¹³:

- (51) a. **La** carne y **les** gambes taben **riques**
 the.F.SG meat and the.F.PL prawn.PL be.PST.3PL tasty.F.PL
 ‘The meat and the prawns were tasty.’ [non count + count]
- b. **Les** gambes y **la** carne y taben **riques**
 the.F.PL prawn.PL and the.F.SG meat be.PST.3PL tasty.F.PL
 ‘The prawns and the meat were tasty.’ [count + non-count]
- (52) a. **La** carne y **los** cachopos taben **ricos**
 the.F.SG meat and the.M.PL cachopo.PL be.PST.3PL tasty.M.PL
 ‘The meat and the cachopos (*Asturian dish*) were tasty.’ [non-count + count]
- b. **Los** cachopos y **la** carne taben **ricos**
 the.M.PL cachopo.PL and the.F.SG meat be.PST.3PL tasty.M.PL
 ‘The cachopos (*Asturian dish*) and the meat were tasty.’ [count + non-count]

However, note that we also find instances where agreement is not resolved at all and even though we have the same adjective, it is repeated to agree separately with each noun as below:

- (53) El Reinu de Lleón seguirá na mesma tradición del so antecesor norteñu
 axuntando **nueves** tierres y **xente** **nuevo**
 join.PRESPART new.F.PL land.PL and people new.MN
 ‘The Kingdom of León will continue the same tradition as its northener predecessor, gathering new lands and new people.’

(García Arias, 2016)

It remains to be seen what possibilities may arise when we coordinate two mass nouns. Judgements for these seem to differ drastically:

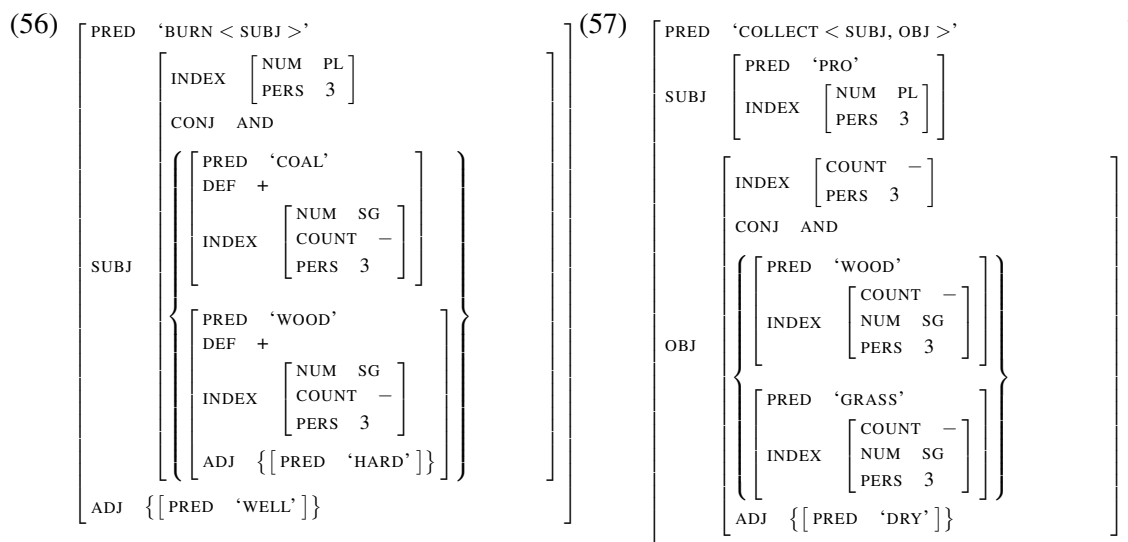
¹³We also found speakers that accepted MN agreement for all sentences in (51) and (52) arguing that the whole NP can be substituted by the pronoun *ello* ‘it’ :

- (i) **La** carne y **les** gambes **taba** **rico** = Ello **taba** **rico**
 the.F.SG meat and the.F.PL prawn.PL be.PST.3SG tasty.MN = it be.PST.3SG tasty.MN
 ‘The meat and the prawns were tasty = it (all) was tasty.’

- (54) a. El carbón y [la madera duro] amburen bien
 the.M.SG coal and the.F.SG wood hard.MN burn.PRS.3PL well
 ‘The coal and the hard wood burn well.’
- b. # [El carbón y la madera duro] ambura bien
 the.M.SG coal and the.F.SG wood hard.MN burn.PRS.3SG well
 ‘The hard coal and wood burn well.’
- (55) Pañaron [lleña y yerba seco] /*secas /*secos
 collect.PST.3.PL wood and grass dry.MN /dry.F.PL /dry.M.PL
 ‘They collected dry wood and grass.’

It is worth noting that in (55), the possibility of having anything other than MN agreement was rejected, possibly due to the fact that the two nouns *yerba* ‘grass’ and *lleña* ‘wood’ are only used with mass interpretation.

We will leave out cases of coordination of a count noun with a mass noun, but we can outline the following tentative f-structures for the less complex cases such as (54a) and (55), where we have coordination of mass nouns showing either plural or MN agreement –and therefore not plural¹⁴:



In (56) we have two singular nouns but plural agreement on the verb. This is unproblematic if we follow Dalrymple & Kaplan (2000)’s view that INDEX features are non-distributive and as such are associated with the set that represents the coordinate structure independent of the individual features of each conjunct. INDEX agreement is typically relevant for NP external agreement. In (55) we have two mass nouns and one MN adjective that modifies both of them. We have argued that postnominal adjectives also agree in INDEX.

¹⁴See Belyaev et al. (2015) for a recent treatment of problematic patterns of agreement in coordination.

Note that two singular nouns triggered plural verb agreement in (56) but the plural is ruled out for (55). It seems that somehow the feature for COUNTABILITY imposes the necessary constraints, thus preventing the appearance of a plural adjective. However, the question arises as to why those constraints do not seem to apply in (56) when we also have two mass nouns but the plural verb is actually preferred over a singular one as in (54b)¹⁵.

In contrast with (55), in (58) two options were accepted: one with MN in (58a) and the possibility of having a plural as in (58b).

- (58) a. La tele da pa mañana agua y aire frío
 the.F.SG TV give.PRS.3SG for tomorrow water and air cold.MN
- b. La tele da pa mañana agua y aire fríos
 the.F.SG TV give.PRS.3SG for tomorrow water and air cold.M.PL
- ‘The TV forecasts cold rain and wind for tomorrow.’

There is probably a different nuance in meaning and we could possibly argue that (58b) refers to specific meteorological phenomena such as *it is going to rain/be windy*, which could have a specific interpretation –a particular event– whereas (58a) might refer to the rain and wind themselves as mass entities, thus triggering the MN agreement. This is, however, very difficult to assess from the little data obtained. Similarly, in (59) below, we might have a subtle distinction between homogenous and heterogeneous reference and that is possibly why again the two possibilities were accepted:

- (59) a. El quesu y la carne taba rico
 the.M.SG cheese and the.F.SG meat be.PST.3SG tasty.MN
- b. El quesu y la carne taben ricos
 the.M.SG cheese and the.F.SG meat be.PST.3PL tasty.M.PL
- ‘The cheese and the meat were tasty.’

The data above raises interesting issues. Firstly, it has to be determined how accurate the semantics of each noun is before we can decide whether we have an instance of *true* mass reference and therefore we can expect MN agreement and also singular forms of the verbs in copular sentences, for instance. If that turns out to be the case, it will be interesting to examine and decide how to best treat coordination for Asturian, maybe following the theory of feature resolution proposed by Dalrymple & Kaplan (2000) and introducing sets of abstract features, possibly for NUMBER, that can then undergo a set union operation. However, this cannot be properly examined until the right data can be found and all the semantic nuances disentangled.

¹⁵Note that the coordinate structure in (54) functions as SUBJ and as OBJ in (55). We cannot do away with the definite article in (54) and it is not clear if the addition of an article in (55) would trigger different patterns - and perhaps different readings.

7 Summary and conclusion

We have presented and examined the agreement patterns of Asturian. Asturian shows previously unanalysed mixed agreement patterns by which a feature of COUNTABILITY is superimposed on a masculine/feminine gender system.

We provided evidence and argued that this split is not a case of a three-gender system. We also provided some counter arguments against an existing Distributed Morphology analysis for comparable data in central varieties of Italian. We then proposed an LFG analysis by formulating constraints that are sensitive to the count/mass distinction directly. We also showed that the different patterns are not triggered by linear order and sketched an analysis that considers pronominal elements belong to the category \hat{A} whereas postnominal attributive adjectives, predicative adjectives, and anaphoric pronouns are of category A. The former agree in CONCORD and the latter in INDEX and answer to specific GENDER and COUNTABILITY constraints. We believe this approach to agreement in Asturian makes the right predictions for the data examined.

We also briefly considered how to extend our analysis to coordinated structures. We presented some basic data and examined the reasons for the choice of agreement, even though the data was not sufficient. We raised some interesting questions about the data presented and briefly proposed this could be analysed through feature resolution, which is proposed as the subject for further research in Asturian agreement.

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