REVIEW OF: ERIC MATHIEU, MYRIAM DALI, AND GITA ZAREIKAR (EDS). *GENDER AND NOUN CLASSIFICATION*. OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2019

Avea E. Nsoh
ephraimnsoh@yahoo.com
University of Education, Winneba.

Some general comments on the entire book

The theoretical focus of the series in which this volume is published focuses "…on the interfaces between the subcomponents of the human grammatical system and the closely related area of the interface between the different sub-disciplines of linguistics" (Mathieu et. al., 2019: p: x) In this particular volume, the editors have collected a set of studies from linguists from diverse linguistic backgrounds and different places of the world to explore and discuss gender and nominal classification from a very wide typological range of languages. While their focus was on gender and its classificatory properties, some of the works dealt with alternative grammatical features like number, person, animacy, case, and determiners for this function.

It is a characteristic of humans to categorize their environment. This categorization sometimes finds expression in human languages. The way people classify things varies widely; this notwithstanding, the characteristic is universal. The volume under review focused on one aspect of this categorisation: gender and noun classification. The claim is that gender is a classificatory device for nouns in the world's languages. The authors however, argue that gender hitherto was treated independently of other φ-features viz., number and person. They illustrate that gender can only be better understood when it is studied in the context of these other features. It was also shown that in the absence of gender, other elements such as determiners and other functional elements within the nominal structure could perform the same function as classifiers too.

Gender is usually said to be realized in the context of agreement, so the authors also give some attention to that. There can be no gender to classify nouns when it is not realized on target constituents within the same syntactic domain (cf: Guldeman and Fiedler 2019; Fiedler and Winkhert 2019; Corbett 2010, 2006, 1991; Hockett 1958:231).

The conclusions are generally similar with respect to the role, position, and interpretation of gender in spite of the number of authors, their diverse linguistic background of the wide range of typologically diverse languages. There is no doubt that the volume provides data and findings from a typological perspective to enhance theoretical linguistic research on noun classification especially in generative syntax. The volume, as a whole, serves to provide a reference point in studies of noun classification from the perspective of the Principle and Parameters framework as well as Minimalism and Distributed Morphology.

One important conclusion reached from the articles in this volume is that gender, more often than not, depends on something else; number, person, determination, etc. By discussing gender in the articulated theories of morphology, syntax, semantics or pragmatics of nouns, we obtain interesting results that contribute to a better understanding of the partition of the nominal structure. Gender used to be studied independently from other φ-features or features of the nominal domain and this led to spurious generalizations and problematic proposals. We are now better equipped theoretically and more inclined to study gender from a multifaceted approach.

Part by part/chapter by chapter review

The book is organized into three parts: Part I, II and III. Each of these parts comprises a minimum of two chapters. The chapters discuss gender and nominal classification through three major theoretical research questions:

1. What is the central role of gender in partitioning nouns into separate classes, and how is this best characterized in syntactic theory?
2. What is the syntactic location of gender information in nominal structure and how does this impact morphological realizations?
3. How are gender and related systems of classificatory features semantically interpreted?

The strength of the volume lies in its theoretical approach to gender within the noun structure and the large number of languages covered by authors. Authors explored data from twenty-three different languages. These enriched the discussion and analysis of phenomena in the volume. The approach diverges from a typical Chomskyan tradition where emphasis used to be placed more on single languages with the intention of explaining Universal Grammar (UG). From hence, I shall review each of the three parts referring to chapters as the case may be.

Part I is made of two chapters. It is titled 'Gender and partition'. They respond to the question (1) of the three theoretical questions above. These chapters provide critical issues, which will be recalled in the following chapters. The two chapters together make one critical claim that the major function of gender is to classify or to categorize. This contrasts with the generally accepted view in the literature that gender is only a grammatical feature usually without focus on its categorizing features. Their approach to gender as a classifier confirms the view that nouns are components or substructures of DPs with the ability to distribute their features to the rest of the structure (cf: Lieber 1992, 1980 on feature distribution by heads). The evidence from gender helps to make the distinction between the views held by traditional lexicalists who describe nouns in DP structures as independent atomic units without feature distributive properties.

I now briefly review the two chapters of Part I (i.e., chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 2, written by Rose-Marie Dechaine of the University of British Columbia, discusses the topic 'Partitioning the nominal domain: the convergence of morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics'. Data is derived from a wide range of languages with greater emphasis on Shona, a Bantu language and Plains Cree, an Algonquian language. She focuses on interfaces across these linguistic areas and the challenges they pose to formal syntactic typology of micro- and macro-parametric variation. Her main proposal is that gender determines noun classes in the nominal domain. Additionally, F-categories also introduce successive noun classes. Consequently, CLASS (or gender for that matter) could be a feature of either some functional head or it could head its own projection. Ultimately, she predicted six typological possibilities for CLASS to occur on the nominal spine and proposed a nominal architecture for gender, which will be tested in the six chapters under Part II.

Relying mostly on Italian and English data and the constructionist approach, Paolo Acquaviva of the University College of Dublin, Ireland suggested in chapter 3 that gender behaves similarly to number, as it can be distributed across various functional heads on the nominal spine. He furthermore claimed that even though gender may appear lower down the DP structure, it does not indicate 'lexical' information contrasting with 'grammatical' information higher up DP.

In sum, the seminal nature of the two chapters made them a point of reference for other authors in the book. The result is that these authors constantly referred back to them throughout their analyses.

Part II is titled the 'Locus of gender' and comprises six chapters. All authors attempted to respond to the question: What is the syntactic location of gender information in nominal structure and how does this impact morphological realizations? Again, the authors drew data from a wide range of languages which included Amharic, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, French, Greek and

Italian. The Chapters in Part II make two important claims: 1) that φ-features are intertwined and thus gender features cannot be studied in isolation, and 2) gender features are distributed along the nominal spine. Nonetheless, different authors postulate different positions or locations of the gender feature in DP or the nominal spine. This is not surprising as gender has historically been suggested to be located in n, Gen, Num, or D, or combination of all these depending on the language or even author.

Abdelkader Fassi Fehri of Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco explained in chapter four that gender is not restricted to sex or class and thus, more productive than previously conceived. It could categorise or even recategorize, linking his work to that of Dechaine's claim about nominal partition in Chapter two while providing a nominal structure for nouns in Arabic as proposed by Acquaviva in Chapter three. His analysis of Arabic plurals, especially singulative plurals, directly links the chapter to some work in Part III by Maria Kouneli in chapter eleven. His work addresses two different theoretical or research questions on the role and location of gender referred to earlier in this review (#1 and 2).

Christopher Hammerly, University of Massachusetts, USA, in his chapter on 'Limiting gender' disagrees with the traditional distinction between interpretable and uninterpretable on which gender relies, arriving at the novel generalization that all features are interpretable in the sense that they are visible to LF.

'The double life of gender and its consequences: a case study of standard Italian' is the chapter discussed by Ivona Kacerova, McMaster University. She claimed that gender features may vary in different contexts. For example, she showed that the construction *il chirurgo* "the surgeon" manifests masculine form but could denote female. From this analysis, she insisted that unvalued φ-features within DP are always introduced by D. However, when they are valued, they appear in other positions.

In chapter seven, Danniel da Silva Carvalho, Universidade Federal da Bahia, makes some claims about gender mismatches by studying non-canonical agreement in Brazilian Portuguese. Using the theory of relativized probing by Preminger (2014), he proposed that the mismatches were attributable to the under-specification of the structure of the DP in which the feature is contained. His chapter was titled 'On gender and Agreement in Brazilian Portuguese'.

Writing on 'A novel kind of gender syncretism', Ruth Kramer of the University of Georgetown, Washington DC, employed data from Afro-Asiatic languages to address the question about syncretism and the relation between gender and number. The analysis is cast in Distributed Morphological theory. Her approach predicts default gender in Amharic in addition to contrasting morphological syncretism from syntactic effect.

The final chapter in Part II is by Phoevos Panagiotidis of the University of Cyprus, Nicosia. He wrote on the '(Grammatical) gender troubles and the gender of pronouns'. Data on 'empty nouns' and linguistic transgendering came from Greek and Brazilian Portuguese. The purpose of the study was to locate semantic (natural) and grammatical gender. Based on these data, he concluded that grammatical gender might be located on the nominalizer n whilst semantic gender is encoded on a higher head.

All in all, Part II discussed two critical issues namely, 1) semantic or grammatical gender agreement reflecting both regular or irregular agreement choices; 2) the mapping of gender on the nominal spine which relates to the concept of the partition of the nominal domain which was discussed in the second and third chapters.

Part III contains four chapters. They are mostly concerned about the interaction of number with noun classes and gender. In addition, depending on where the nominal spine number is inserted, there could be different semantic interpretations.

Clarissa Forbes of the University of Toronto, Canada wrote Chapter 10, 'Number, names, and animacy: Nominal classes and plural interactions in Gitksan'. This is the first chapter in Part III. Three types of nominal classifications in the language are discussed leading to some conclusions on mass-count, determinacy and animacy distinctions. For instance, plural pronouns and plural agreement are only possible with animate referents.

In chapter 11, Maria Kouneli of the New York University discussed the topic 'Plural marking on mass nouns: Evidence from Greek'. Analyzing the meaning of the morphology of mass nouns, she objects to existing claims that plural marking in Greek is a 'great amount of mass' (p234). She proposed instead that the plural morpheme that comes with mass nouns could be generated on *n*, whereas the morphemes on count nouns are located in NumP.

The last but one chapter of Part III was written by Conor McDonough Quinn of the University of Southern Maine in the USA. It is titled 'Productivity vs. Predictability: Evidence for syntax and semantics of animate gender in four Northeastern-area Algonquain languages'. Gender in these languages have been held to be arbitrary in the literature, but Quinn illustrates that animacy and the masculine/feminine contrast, for that matter, is predictable. He further claimed that even though gender is usually described as semantically based, he disagrees with this longstanding claim. According to him, animacy in the language varies according to its location in the nominal structure.

Finally, Solveiga Armoskaite of the University of Rochester in New York, using data from Lithuanian noun roots, revealed that these nouns must obligatorily inflect gender, number and case. Nominal number, according to Solveiga, usually supports a lexeme-preserving derivation especially with the derivation of nominals with the morpheme *-yb-*. This morpheme, which has animate features, derives nouns, which resolves or preserves the distinction between two distinct types of verbal bases. To achieve this resolution function, it has to phraseologize or idiomatize the singular versus plural paradigm of derived nouns. The chapter also discusses the interaction between gender and animacy syntax.

It is important to observe that chapters 12 and 13 bring into focus family resemblances and idiomatic morphology which were mostly absent in previous chapters.

Gender is discussed along with or in the context of other grammatical features (e.g. number, person, case) as a critical feature in syntactic theory with particular reference to the DP. The authors offer various representations of gender along the nominal spine providing justifications from diverse languages but arriving at similar conclusions on the role, position and interpretations of gender cross-linguistically. Even though gender is the focus, there is the conscious effort to show that gender cannot be treated successfully without other φ-features like number and person (se Güldemann and Fiedler 2019). The ultimate claim is that gender relies on other features for its realization and adequate treatment in the syntax. This is why they claimed that "Gender used to be studied independently of other φ-features or features of the nominal domain and this led to spurious generalizations and problematic proposals" (p2). However, even though this claim might be justifiable within generative syntax, it falls flat in descriptive linguistics as several authors have jointly discussed these features in the literature (see Guldeman and Fiedler 2019; Fiedler and Winkhert 2019). Indeed, it is almost impossible for instance in noun classification in many Mabia (Gur) languages of West Africa to discuss gender without number (see Gudrun 2012; Nsoh 2011, 2010, 2002, 1997; Nicole 1999; Dakubu 1996).

Authors illustrate their claim with data from a wide range of languages. Even though the volume covers work within the generative syntax, it diverges largely from its traditional claims that linguistic phenomena could be understood using data from just one language. The result is that their claims are more sustainable cross-linguistically.

In most of the chapters, the authors have sought to challenge existing long standing 'misconceptions' about linguistic phenomena particularly of gender (noun classification) and number across varying languages. For instance, Abdelkader Fassi Fehri argued that gender is not restricted to sex or class and thus, more productive than previously conceived. McDonough Quinn argued that while gender in Algonquian languages has been held to be arbitrary in the literature, data from these languages illustrate that animacy and the masculine/feminine contrast are predictable. In other cases, the approach has been to give different conceptualization and formalization of gender particularly in the nominal structure or spine.

According to Eric Mathieu in his introductory chapter "By discussing gender in the articulated theories of morphology, syntax, semantics or pragmatics of nouns, we obtain interesting results

that contribute to a better understanding of partition and nominal structure. Gender used to be studied independently from other φ-features or features of the nominal domain and this led to spurious generalizations and problematic proposals. We are now better equipped theoretically and more inclined to study gender from a multifaceted approach" (p2).

For those who may be attracted by its morphological and syntactic theoretical orientation; and for those interested in harvesting data from a wide range of languages to those interested in linguistic theory pedagogy, you could not have found a better book on gender and its categorization function.

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