

Introduction to grammatical gender

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Lexical Matters

Basic definitions

- ▶ Social gender:

Sex is a biological characterization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of sex.

(Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2013, p. 2)

- ▶ Grammatical gender:

Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words.

(Hockett, 1958, p. 231)

- ▶ Many languages have no grammatical gender.
- ▶ The number of grammatical genders varies, from 2 to more than 10.
- ▶ Usually, genders are imperfectly associated to semantic properties of nouns.
- ▶ In particular, **most but not all** grammatical gender systems (about 75% according to Corbett 2013b) have a **feminine** and a **masculine**:
 - ▶ There is exactly one gender which is preferred when referring to women (but not men)
 - ▶ There is exactly one gender which is preferred when referring to men (but not women)

Grammatical gender and inflection classes I

- ▶ Gender is a classification system manifest in agreement.

(1) French:

- un** livre_M 'a book'
- une** livre_F 'a pound'

- ▶ Gender need not be reflected in the morphology of nouns.

- ▶ French is a good example of this, where there is no reliable indication of gender in the form of nouns.

	MAS	FEM
C final	9 178	7 253
V final	8 015	4 966

(phonology)

	MAS	FEM
<e> final	4 225	8 877
other final	12 968	3 342

(orthography)

Grammatical gender and inflection classes II

- ▶ Even where the form of nouns is indicative of gender, this is usually not fully reliable (Aronoff, 1994).
 - (2) Spanish:
 - a. *est-a nuev-a casa* 'this new house'
 - b. *est-e nuev-o edificio* 'this new building'
 - c. *est-a nuev-a mujer* 'this new woman'
 - d. *est-e nuev-o día* 'this new day'

Grammatical gender and inflection classes III

- ▶ Note the confusion in traditional grammars of languages without case declension between genders and **inflection classes**, i.e., a classification of nouns on the basis of how they inflect.

- ▶ Italian:

SG	spaghetto	mano	atleta	macchina	cane	arte
PL	spaghetti	mani	atleti	macchine	cani	arti
gender	MAS	FEM	MAS	FEM	MAS	FEM
translation	spaghetti	hand	athlete	car	dog	art

- ▶ 2 genders (as witnessed in agreement), at least 6 inflection classes.
- ▶ Some classes have nouns of both genders.
- ▶ Some number exponents are partially indicative of gender (PL -e → FEM).

Grammatical gender and inflection classes IV

- ▶ Still, it is often the case that the shape of nouns is indicative of their gender.
- ▶ A remarkably well-studied case: Ingush (Nichols, 2011, chap. 7).

Table 7-1. Frequency of initial j-, d-, and b- in nonhuman nouns of J, D, and B gender.
Harmonic (bold) = same initial consonant as gender marker. % = percent of total in column.

Gender	<i>J</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>j-</i>	46 (4.3%)	29 (3%)	4 (0.1%)
<i>d-</i>	39 (3.7%)	151 (16%)	17 (4%)
<i>b-</i>	115 (11%)	47 (5%)	77 (17%)
other	1064	954	444
TOTAL	1110	1105	521

Typical semantic correlates of grammatical gender

- ▶ Systems based on social gender
- ▶ Systems based on animacy
 - (3) Suédois:
 - a. *en stor björn* 'a big bear'
 - b. *ett stor-t horn* 'a big horn'
- ▶ Combined systems (masculine/feminin/neuter)
 - (4) Bagwalal:
 - a. w-eš:a-w waša
M.SG-plump-M.SG boy
'a plump boy'
 - b. j-eš:a-j jaš
F.SG-plump-F.SG girl
'a plump girl'
 - c. b-eš:a-b šama
N.SG-plump-N.SG donkey
'a plump donkey'

More than three genders: Mian (Fedden, 2011)

	Assignment criteria	Gender
Animate	Human	Masc. (e.g. <i>naka</i> 'man')
	Animal (Sex readily discernible or relevant)	Sex Fem. (e.g. <i>unáng</i> 'woman')
	Animal (Sex not readily discernible or irrelevant)	Conventionalized gender Masc. (e.g. <i>tolim</i> 'eagle') Fem. (e.g. <i>koból</i> 'cassowary')
Inanimate	Count nouns (e.g. <i>mén</i> 'string bag', <i>imen</i> 'taro')	Neuter 1
	Liquids, body fluids/wastes, substances (e.g. <i>aai</i> 'water', <i>ilem</i> 'blood', <i>as</i> 'wood')	
	Places (e.g. <i>am</i> 'house', <i>mon</i> 'old garden', <i>dafáb</i> 'summit')	Neuter 2
	Masses (e.g. <i>afobèng</i> 'goods, property', <i>moní</i> (TP) 'money')	
	Body decoration (e.g. <i>eit</i> 'decoration', <i>baasi</i> 'pig's tusk')	
	Weather phenomena (e.g. <i>sók</i> 'rain', <i>ayung</i> 'mist')	
	Illnesses (e.g. <i>kweim</i> 'fever')	
	Intangibles/abstracts (e.g. <i>āns</i> 'song', <i>kukub</i> 'way, custom')	
	Temporal nouns (e.g. <i>kutimibo</i> 'in the middle of the night')	
	Verbal nouns (e.g. <i>fumin</i> 'activity of cooking (IPFV VN)')	
Some tools and weapons (e.g. <i>káawa</i> 'steel axe', <i>mōk</i> 'stone adze', <i>skemdâng</i> 'knife')		

How many genders? Czech I

		MAS.ANIM			MAS.INAN		FEM		NEU
		HOST	MUŽ	TÁTA	MOST	KŘÍŽ	ŽENA	KOST	MĚSTO
		'host'	'man'	'dad'	'bridge'	'cross'	'woman'	'bone'	'city'
SG	NOM	host	muž	táta	most	kříž	žena	kost	město
	GEN	hosta	muže	táty	mostu	kříže	ženy	kosti	města
	DAT	hostovi	mužovi	tátovi	mostu	kříži	ženě	kosti	městu
	ACC	hosta	muže	tátu	most	kříž	ženu	kost	město
	VOC	hoste	muži	táto	moste	kříži	ženo	kosti	město
	LOC	hostovi	mužovi	tátovi	mostě	kříži	ženě	kosti	městě
	INS	hostem	mužem	tátou	mostem	křížem	ženou	kostí	městem
PL	NOM	hosté	mužové	tátové	mosty	kříže	ženy	kosti	města
	GEN	hostů	mužů	tátů	mostů	křížů	žen	kostí	měst
	DAT	hostům	mužům	tátům	mostům	křížům	ženám	kostem	městům
	ACC	hosty	muže	táty	mosty	kříže	ženy	kosti	města
	VOC	hosté	mužové	tátové	mosty	kříže	ženy	kosti	města
	LOC	hostech	mužích	tátech	mostech	křížích	ženách	kostech	městech
	INS	hosty, hostama	muži, mužema	táty, tátama	mosty, mostama	kříži, křížema	ženami, ženama	kostmi, kostma	městy, městama

How many genders? Czech II

- ▶ Is animacy coded in noun inflection, or are there 4 genders?
- ▶ Agreement is informative

(5) a. Vidí-m velk-ého muž-e
see.PRS-1SG big-MA.SG man(MA)-ACC.SG
'I see a big man.'

b. Vidí-m velk-ý kříž
see.PRS-1SG big-MI.SG cross(MI)[ACC.SG]
'I see a big cross.'

- ▶ There are 4 genders in Czech
 - ▶ The traditional term 'masculine inanimate' is (synchronically) misleading: it would make more sense to talk of two neuters, as in Mian.
- ▶ Gender is fully predictable from inflection class; however no single form of the noun is unambiguously predictive of gender.

How many genders? Romanian

(6) a. bărbat bun
man(M)[SG] good[M.SG]
'a good man'

b. film bun
film(N)[SG] good[M.SG]
'a good man'

c. femei-e bun-ă
woman(F)-SG good[F.SG]
'a good man'

(7) a. bărbăṭ-i bun-i
man(M)-PL good-M.PL
'good men'

b. film-e bun-e
film(N)-PL good-F.PL
'good films'

c. femei bun-e
woman(F)[PL] good-F.PL
'good women'

- ▶ 3 genders: the overall behaviour of neuter nouns is different from that of masculines or feminines.
- ▶ Neuter is a **non-autonomous gender** (Corbett, 1991, pp. 150–154): no context is unambiguously indicative of neuter gender.

Grammatical gender vs. classifiers

Genders are classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words. To qualify as a gender system, the classification must be exhaustive and must not involve extensive intersection: that is, every noun must belong to one of the classes, and very few can belong to more than one.

Under this definition, some languages have no gender at all. Chinese substantives [...] fall into classes in terms of what measure [i.e., classifier] is used when the substantive is counted, but there are so many measures (hundreds), and so many nouns used with two or more measures with different resulting meaning, that the classification is not usually thought of as a gender system.

(Hockett, 1958, pp. 231–232)

Classifiers I

Examples from lao (Enfield, 2007, chap. 7)

- (8) a. kuu3 sùù4 paa3 sòòng3 too3
1SG.B buy fish two CLF.ANIM
'I bought two fish.'
- b. ? kuu3 sùù4 paa3 sòòng3
1SG.B buy fish two
'I bought two fish.'
- c. kuu3 sùù4 sòòng3 too3
1SG.B buy two CLF.ANIM
'I bought two (possibly fish, but not baskets).'
- (9) a. mùng2 sùù4 (paa3) cak2 too3
2SG.B buy fish how.many CLF.ANIM
'How many (fish) did you buy?'
- b. * mùng2 sùù4 (paa3) cak2
2SG.B buy fish how.many

Classifiers II

About 100 distinct numeral classifiers.

Table 14. Some common numeral classifiers

Classifier	Meaning as noun	Semantics and example referents
<i>kòòn4</i>	'lump'	lumps of mass which naturally occur (e.g., pieces of ice, rocks)
<i>sên5</i>	'line'	ribbon/strip/cord-shaped things (e.g., roads, cables)
<i>khon2</i>	'person'	people, excluding monks (e.g., teachers, children, men)
<i>too3</i>	'body'	non-human entities with 'bodies' (e.g., dogs, snakes, shirts)
<i>ton4</i>	'plant'	living plants (e.g., bushes, shrubs, trees)
<i>tòòn1</i>	'piece/hunk'	lumps of soft mass which are cut (e.g., pieces of meat)
<i>nuaj1</i>	'unit'	round things, assembled things (e.g., apples, chairs, mountains)
<i>phùùn3</i>	'soft sheet'	cloths and similar objects (e.g., tablecloths, skirts, tarpaulins)
<i>phèèn1</i>	'stiff sheet'	stiff/hard flat things (e.g., sheets of dried noodle, LP records)
<i>khan2</i>	'handle'	things with handles, operated by hand (e.g., vehicles, umbrellas)
<i>mêt1</i>	'grain'	very small grains (e.g., seeds, specks)
<i>lam2</i>	—	very large cylindrical things (e.g., tree-trunks, boats, airplanes)
<i>lang3</i>	'back'	houses, certain fish traps
<i>hua3</i>	'head'	books, non-fruit bulbous vegetables
<i>qan3</i>	—	small things which can be held in hand

Grammatical gender vs. classifiers

	Gender	Classifiers
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All nouns classified• Small number of classes (2 to around 20)• Noun-to-gender relation is one-to-one	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some nouns not classified, almost always• Fair number, at least a score, with 100+ being common• Noun-to-classifier relation is one-to-many
Realization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always a closed grammatical system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always a free form
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never entirely within the noun word• Little variation between speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never any reference to a classifier outside the NP• Classifier use often indicates style/ mode differences
Semantics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affix has a fairly fixed meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classifier is a lexeme, with greater possibilities, context of use is important

Table 1: Dixon's (1986) criteria opposing gender and classifiers.

See Fedden and Corbett (2017) for extensive discussion of whether a sharp divide between gender systems and classifier systems can be drawn.

Grammatical gender typology

- ▶ We will rely on Corbett (1991, 2013a).
- ▶ Four main dimensions:
 1. The inventory of genders
 2. Gender salience
 3. Gender assignment
 4. The internal organization of the gender system

Number and inventory of genders

- ▶ Most languages with grammatical gender have two or three genders, correlated with animacy and/or social gender.

# of genders	# of languages	%	Examples
None	145	56%	Turkish, Estonian, Chinese
2	50	19%	French, Spanish, Chinantec, Cree
3	26	10%	Russian, Romanian, Tamil, Ket
4	12	5%	Czech, Mian, Tsez, Dyirbal
plus	24	9%	Chichewa, Fula, Arapesh, Yimas

Distribution of number of genders in a sample of 257 languages Corbett (2013b)

Chichewa I

- (10) a. mu-nthu a-ku-thamanga
SG-person(I) I-PRS-run
'The person runs.'
- b. a-nthu a-ku-thamanga
PL-person(I) I-PRS-run
'The persons run.'
- (11) a. mu-dzi u-ku-kula
SG-village(II) II.SG-PRS-grow
'The village grows.'
- b. mi-dzi i-ku-kula
PL-village(II) II.PL-PRS-grow
'The villages grow.'
- (12) a. t-samba li-ku-bvunda
SG-leave(III) III.SG-PRS-rot
'The leave rots.'
- b. ma-samba a-ku-bvunda
PL-leave(III) III.PL-PRS-rot
'The leaves rot.'
- (13) a. ulendo u-dza-tha
[PL]trip(IV) IV.PL-PRS-end
'The trip will end.'
- b. ma-ulendo a-dza-tha
PL-trip(IV) IV.PL-PRS-end
'The trips will end.'
- (14) a. njoka i-ku-gona
snake(V) V.SG-PRS-lie
'The snake lies.'
- b. njoka zi-ku-gona
snake(V) V.PL-PRS-lie
'The snakes lie.'
- (15) a. chi-patso chi-ku-bvunda
SG-fruit(VI) VI.SG-PRS-rot
'The fruit rots.'
- b. zi-patso zi-ku-bvunda
PL-fruit(VI) VI.SG-PRS-rot
'The fruits rot.'
- (16) a. ka-mwana ka-li bwino
SG-baby(VII) VII.SG-PRS.COP well
'The baby is well.'
- b. ti-ana ti-li bwino
PL-baby(VII) VII.SG-PRS.COP well
'The babies are well.'

(Adapted from Corbett and Mtenje 1987)

Chichewa II

Gender	Noun		Verb	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
I	<i>mu</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
II	<i>mu</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>i</i>
III	<i>t</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>a</i>
IV	—	<i>ma</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>a</i>
V	—	—	<i>i</i>	<i>zi</i>
VI	<i>chi</i>	<i>zi</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>zi</i>
VII	<i>ka</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>ti</i>

Note:

- ▶ Number of nouns are partial predictors of gender (as in Italian).
- ▶ Neutralization of number occurs on both nouns and verbs.
- ▶ Alliterative agreement with some but not all genders.

Arapesh

genre	SINGULIER		PLURIEL		traduction
I	<i>wab^y</i>	<i>bagara-bi</i>	<i>wabys</i>	<i>bagara-bysi</i>	nuit blanche
II	<i>wabø</i>	<i>bagara-børi</i>	<i>waryb</i>	<i>bagara-røbi</i>	village blanc
III	<i>nubarig</i>	<i>bagara-gi</i>	<i>nubarigas</i>	<i>bagara-gasi</i>	jardin blanc
IV	<i>unuk^u</i>	<i>bagaro-kwi</i>	<i>unib</i>	<i>bagara-ui</i>	étoile blanche
V	<i>daudam</i>	<i>bagara-mi</i>	<i>daudeipⁱ</i>	<i>bagare-ipi</i>	araignée blanche
VI	<i>femaun</i>	<i>bagara-ni</i>	<i>femaub</i>	<i>bagara-bi</i>	dugong blanc
VII	<i>niganin</i>	<i>bagara-ni</i>	<i>nigamin</i>	<i>bagara-mi</i>	fil blanc
VIII	<i>kaiñ</i>	<i>bagare-ñi</i>	<i>kaif</i>	<i>bagare-fi</i>	arc blanc
IX	<i>fup^u</i>	<i>bagara-pi</i>	<i>fus</i>	<i>bagara-si</i>	feuille blanche
X	<i>jur</i>	<i>bagara-ri</i>	<i>jugu^h</i>	<i>bagara-guhi</i>	serpent blanc
XI	<i>nybat</i>	<i>bagara-ti</i>	<i>nybag^u</i>	<i>bagara-gwi</i>	chien blanc
XII	<i>natage^{uh}</i>	<i>bagaro-whi</i>	<i>natagegwiruh</i>	<i>bagara-ruhi</i>	lézard blanc
XIII	<i>ha^h</i>	<i>bagara-hi</i>	<i>he^h</i>	<i>bagara-hi</i>	doigt blanc

(Dobrin, 2012)

Burmeso

- ▶ In burmeso (Donohue, 2001), verbs agree with their absolutive argument.

- (17) a. da nawak g-ih-i-maru
1SG woman.SG II.SG-see-TODAY'S_PAST
'I saw a woman.'
- b. da mibo j-ih-i-maru
1SG banana.SG V.SG-see-TODAY'S_PAST
'I saw a banana.'
- c. jamo nawak n-akwa-ru
dog.SG woman.SG II.SG-bite-TODAY'S_PAST
'The dog bit a woman.'

- ▶ 6 genders combining 3 markers per class:

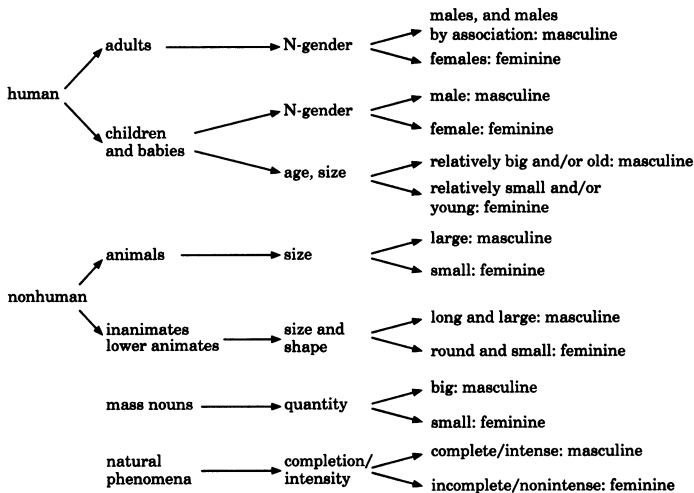
	class I		class II	
gender	SG	PL	SG	PL
I	j-ih-i	s-ih-i	b-akwa	t-akwa
II	g-ih-i	s-ih-i	n-akwa	t-akwa
III	g-ih-i	j-ih-i	n-akwa	b-akwa
IV	j-ih-i	j-ih-i	b-akwa	b-akwa
V	j-ih-i	g-ih-i	b-akwa	n-akwa
VI	g-ih-i	g-ih-i	n-akwa	n-akwa
	« voir »		« mordre »	

Salience of gender

- ▶ A sadly understudied topic:
 1. Which part of the lexicon gives rise to gender oppositions?
 - ▶ Noms and pronouns vs. just pronouns
 - ▶ First names, last names
 2. How manifest is gender in the form of nouns?
 - ▶ French vs. Spanish
 3. How manifest is gender from the environment?
 - ▶ Constructions giving rise to agreement (and their frequency)
 - ▶ Prevalence of syncretism in agreement targets
 - ▶ Obligatory vs. optional agreement

Gender assignment I

- ▶ (Supposedly) purely semantic assignment:



Gender assignment in Manambu (Aikhenvald, 2012)

Gender assignment II

- ▶ (Supposedly) purely morphological assignment: Russian or Czech.
- ▶ (Supposedly) purely phonological assignment: Spanish.
- ▶ Mixed semantic and phonological system:

Semantic assignment	
1.	nouns denoting males → gender I
2.	females, fresh water, fire, stinging → gender II
3.	edible → gender III
4.	remaining inanimates → gender IV
Formal assignment (remaining animates)	
1.	nouns in <i>bi-</i> , <i>gugu-</i> , <i>ma-</i> , <i>yi-</i> , <i>-gan</i> → gender II
2.	remainder → gender I

Gender assignment in Dyirbal (Plaster and Polinsky, 2010)
(Accuracy 0.96)

Gender assignment III

- ▶ Mixed semantic and morphological system: Swahili Corbett (1991, p. 47)

Semantic assignment

1. *augmentatives belong to gender 5/6, e.g. j-oka 'giant snake';*
2. *diminutives belong to gender 7/8, e.g. ki-toto 'baby', ki-j-oka 'tiny snake';*
3. *remaining animates belong to gender 1/2, e.g. mw-alimu 'teacher', m-jusi 'lizard', jogoo 'rooster', ki-pofu 'blind person', ki-faru 'rhinoceros', tembo 'elephant', nyoka snake'.*

Morphological assignment

1. *morphological class 3/4 (m-/mi-) → gender 3/4*
2. *morphological class 5/6 (0 ji-/ma-) → gender 5/6*
3. *morphological class 7/8 (ki-/vi-) → gender 7/8*
4. *morphological class 9/10 (N-/N-) → gender 9/10*
5. *morphological class 11/10 (w-/N-) → gender 11/10*
6. *infinitives (morphological class 15, ku-) → gender 15*

The internal organization of gender systems

- ▶ Cf. Corbett (2013a)
- ▶ Canonical typology: the diversity of systems is characterized by comparison to a **canon**, an idealized system constituting a perfect instance of the category under investigation.
- ▶ Canonical morphosyntactic features (Corbett, 2012):
 1. Canonical feature values have dedicated exponents.
 2. Canonical feature values are expressed irrespective of the values of other features.
 3. Canonical feature values are expressed on with all parts of speech for which they are relevant.
 4. Canonical feature values are expressed for all lexemes in a part of speech.

Criterion 1: dedicated exponents

- ▶ Canonical situation: for each gender, there is at least one context in which it is distinguished from all others.
- ▶ Deviations: Romanian (neuter), Burmeso (all genders).

Criterion 2: feature independence

- ▶ Canonical situation: feature values are expressed irrespective of the values of other features (i.e., no neutralization)
- ▶ Deviations: Chichewa, Burmeso
- ▶ A remarkable deviation: Archi

Gender marking in Archi (*aχas* 'lie down')

NUMBER	GENDER	IMPERFECTIVE	PERFECTIVE
SG	I	w-a<r>χa-r	a<w>χu ⁸
	II	d-a<r>χa-r	a<r>χu
	III	b-a<r>χa-r	aχu
	IV	a<r>χa-r	aχu
PL	I	b-a<r>χa-r	aχu
	II		
	III	a<r>χa-r	aχu
	IV		

Criterion 3: part of speech independence I

- ▶ Canonical situation: same gender distinctions in all relevant parts of speech
- ▶ A remarkable deviation: Burmeso
 - ▶ We saw above a 6-gender partition based on agreement with verbs.
 - ▶ There is also agreement with predicative adjectives:

- (18) a. Da de koya bek-abo
1SG 1SG.POSS grandfather.SG good-M.SG
'My grandfather is well.'
- b. Da d-asia bek-an
1SG 1SG.POSS-grandmother.SG good-F.SG
'My grandmother is well.'
- c. Da de-koysorad bek-odo
1SG 1SG.POSS-grandson.PL good-anim.PL
'My grandmother is well.'

- ▶ 6 genders:

	ANIM			INANIM		
	MAS	FEM	NEU	MAS	FEM	NEU
SG	-ab	-an	-ora	-ab	-an	-ora
PL	-od(o)	-od(o)	-or(o)	-or	-or	-od

Criterion 3: part of speech independence II

- ▶ The two gender system are largely independent. Donohue documents 16 of the $6 \times 6 = 36$ conceivable combinations:

	M	F	N	M INAN	F INAN	N ANIM
I	44 plus all male kin terms	5 (4 birds)		1 ('neck')		2 ('sea', 'wound')
II		7 plus all female kin terms	4		1 ('small goanna')	2 ('sago rinser (lower)', 'string. shapes')
III	3		28, mainly inanimate	10, inanimate	1 ('goanna')	
IV	9, inanimate					
V				2 ('banana', 'sago tree')		
VI			1 ('arrow')	1 ('coconut')		

Critère 4: uniformity

- ▶ In the canonical situation, feature values are expressed for all lexemes in a part of speech.
- ▶ This is rarely the case: cf. French
- ▶ A spectacular example: Archi (Chumakina and Corbett, 2015)

	total	agreeing	% agreeing
adjectives	446	313	70.2
verbs	1248	399	32.0
adverbs	397	28	7.1
enclitic particles	4	1	(25.0)








Envoi: grammatical and social gender

- ▶ In the last decade, fascinating research on
 - ▶ Undocumented aspects of gender systems (see e.g. An and Abeillé 2022; Bonami and Boyé 2019).
 - ▶ The social consequences of the presence of grammatical gender distinctions (see e.g. Gygax et al. 2012; Richy and Burnett 2021).
 - ▶ The efficacy and consequences of proposed changes in grammatical gender conventions (see e.g. Burnett and Bonami 2019, Pozniak and Burnett 2021).
- ▶ These research efforts are partially fueled by, but distinct from, societal interest in social change, notably on the social position of women or of gender and sexual minorities.
- ▶ As fascinating as these issues are, progress will be helped by a better awareness of the considerable diversity in the organization of grammatical gender systems.
- ▶ For instance:
 - ▶ Different gender assignment systems are expected to have different consequences for the social meaning associated with gender.
 - ▶ The social import of grammatical gender is expected to vary with the salience of gender in the language.
 - ▶ ...

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