

**On Default Realization and Gender in Lithuanian**  
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**1. Introduction:** This study examines the representation of gender by investigating the inflection on predicative adjectives (PAs) in Lithuanian. We demonstrate that the representation of unmarked gender, the masculine, is distinct from the neuter, which we analyze as the absence of gender features. While Kramer’s (2015) theory takes unmarked gender to be represented with no feature, this study shows that there can be a split between an unmarked feature value and feature absence.

**2. Background:** PAs in Lithuanian have been reported to reflect three gender categories: neuter (N) (1), feminine (F) (2), and masculine (M) (3) (Ambrasas et al. 1997:134). However, the neuter is unusual in that it is not an inherent gender of any lexical noun (unlike 3-gendered languages e.g., Russian); the only ‘inherently’ neuter arguments are certain pronouns and quantifiers (1). Masculine has been argued to be the default gender, based on evidence from loanwords (Bruno 2012).

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| (1) Viskas yra sald-u.<br>everything.N is sweet.N<br>‘Everything is sweet.’ | (2) Vyšnė yra sald-i.<br>cherry.F is sweet.F<br>‘The cherry is sweet.’ | (3) Medus yra sald-us.<br>honey.M is sweet.M<br>‘Honey is sweet.’ |
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**3. Proposal:** We show that masculine morphology does not appear on PAs in all environments identified with gender defaults (e.g. from Kramer 2015). When the subject bears an unmarked gender feature the realization on PAs is masculine. However, when the subject has no accessible gender feature, the realization on PAs is neuter. We model this distinction in terms of feature geometry (based on Harley and Ritter 2002): both masculine and feminine bear the feature [CLASS], which originates on *n* (Kramer 2015), whereas neuter lacks this feature. While the realization of ‘default’ forms on PAs follows from the Elsewhere Condition (e.g. Schütze 2002), the choice of unmarked versus neuter forms is only sensitive to the featural representation of the subject accessible to the PA in the syntax.

**4. Default Gender.** Masculine behaves as a ‘default’ gender according to various tests from Corbett 1991, Kramer 2015. PAs take masculine when the subject is: **(I)** a coordinated expression resolving gender mismatch between two inanimates (4) or animates (5) (note the absence of a closest conjunct pattern); **(II)** a mixed-gender group (6), (note that when the noun is feminine, it can only refer to a group of females, (7); **(III)** a person of unknown gender (8). In all of these cases, PAs are realized as masculine, as they agree with a nominal subject with a gender feature on *n*.

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| (4) [Kėdė ir stalas]/[stalas ir kėdė] yra purvin-i/*-os/*-a<br>[chair.F and table.M]/[table.F and chair.M] are dirty-M/F/N<br>‘The chair and the table are dirty.’ |  |
| (5) [Moteris ir vyras]/[vyras ir moteris] yra ram-ūs/*-ios/*-ù<br>[woman.F and man.M]/[man.M and woman.F] are quiet-M/F/N<br>‘The woman and the man are quiet.’    |  |
| (6) Atletai yra aukšt-i/*-os/*-a<br>Athletes.M are tall.M/F/N<br>‘Athletes (males and females/only males) are tall.’   | (7) Atletės yra aukšt-os/*-i/*-a<br>Athletes.F are tall.M/F/N<br>‘(Female) athletes are tall.’ |
| (8) Ligonis yra judr-us/*-i/*-u<br>Patient.M is restless.M/F/N<br>‘A patient is restless.’   |  |

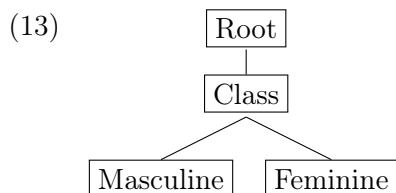
**4. Lack of Gender.** In environments where a gender feature is not transmitted from a subject to a PA, the adjective surfaces as neuter rather than masculine. PAs take neuter when: **(I)** the subject has quirky dative case and cannot be agreed with (9) (cf. Bobaljik 2008); **(II)** the subject

lacks gender, as with to-infinitives (10); **III**) the PA is a ‘weather’ type predicate, which either involves no projected subject or the projection of a weather clitic that causes non-agreement (cf. Wood 2017) (11); **IV**) the subject of a copular sentence has an eventive reading (feminine PA is infelicitous with eventive reading)(cf. Wechsler 2012, Danon 2012, 2014) (12). Following Danon (2012), we analyze eventive subjects as lacking agreement.

- (9) Man buvo šalt-a/\*-as/\*-à (10) Pavargti už tėvyne - graž-ù/\*-us/\*-i  
 Me.DAT was cold.N/M/F suffer.INF for homeland - beautiful.N/M/F  
 ‘I felt cold.’ ‘To suffer for one’s homeland is beautiful.’(Ambrasas)
- (11) (Lauke) tams-u/\*-us/\*-i (12) Trumpos suknelės - negraž-ù/\*-ūs/#-ios  
 outside dark.N/M/F Short dresses.F not.nice.N/M/F  
 ‘It is dark (outside).’ Intend. ‘Short dresses are not nice (to wear).’

**4. Analysis:** We argue that the distinction between neuter and masculine stems from a difference in feature representation on the Agr node. We modify the geometry of Harley & Ritter 2002, presented in (13), and propose that in Lithuanian, masculine is the unmarked gender, associated with the CLASS node (14b), whereas neuter lacks gender features altogether and realizes an empty Agr node (14c), with feminine being marked (14a), as shown by Vocabulary Items for the PA inflection. In (4) and (5), coordination resolution for gender percolates the feature [CLASS] to &P, as it is present on both conjuncts. Following agreement with &P, the Agr node on the PA is realized as in (14). In contrast, the features of subjects in cases like e.g., (9-10) do not percolate out, and the adjective surfaces with the non-agreement form, the neuter.

This approach captures the distinction between an underspecified gender, masculine, and the absence of gender features, neuter. In contrast, Kramer (2015) predicts that Lithuanian should have an inventory of only two *n* heads for arbitrary gender: *n*[+fem] and plain, featureless *n* (masculine), because its nouns are never inherently neuter. As plain *n* lacks gender features, this predicts that the form for the default gender in the language should be the same as the non-agreement form, contrary to fact.



- (14) Vocabulary Insertion at Agr of *purvi*- ‘dirty’
- a. [+fem][+class][+pl] ↔ -os/{purvin...}
- b. [+class][+pl] ↔ -i/{purvin...}
- c. ∅ ↔ -a/{purvin...}

**4. Predictions:** Our analysis predicts that when a DP is coordinated with a neuter argument, the PA should be neuter, as both elements share ROOT but not CLASS. This prediction is borne out (15). Attributive adjectives always agree in gender with *n*; thus we also correctly predict that attributives cannot be neuter: *trump-os/\*-a sunkelės* - short-F/\*-N dresses.F.

- (15) Stalas ir viskas aplinkui yra  
 table.M and everything.N around be  
 purvin-a/\*-os/\*-i.  
 dirty-N/-F/-M  
 ‘The table and everything around is dirty.’

**5. Implications:** The study offers a novel way of distinguishing between a ‘semantic’ default (a gender value on *n*) and an agreement default (no such value) (cf. Wechsler 2013).

**Ref.:** • Ambrasas et al. 1997 Lithuanian Grammar • Bruno 2012. The assignment of grammatical and inherent gender to English loan words in Lithuanian discourse • Danon 2012. Nothing to agree on: Non-agreeing subjects of copular clauses in Hebrew; 2014 Syntactic (dis)agreement is not semantic agreement • Harley & Ritter 2002. Person and number in pronouns: A feature-geometric approach • Kramer 2015. The morphosyntax of gender • Wechsler 2012. The structure of Swedish pancakes.