The Form and Interpretation of Nouns and Adjectives in Asturian and Spanish: A Distributed Morphology Approach

By

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ABSTRACT

Across Romance languages the final vowels of nouns and adjectives, -*o*, -*a* and -*e*, are analyzed as special morphemes known as word markers. They are obligatorily added to roots and interact with morphosyntactic and semantic phenomena like grammatical and social gender. They are not thought to (necessarily) indicate gender, as they mark both masculine and feminine nouns and adjectives. Asturian, a western Iberian minority language, merits investigation because it appears to have developed a larger inventory of word markers than more widely studied varieties of Spanish. Nouns and adjectives mainly end in -*u*, -*a* or -*e*, but also -*o*. In addition to its larger inventory of forms, word markers interact not only with grammatical and social gender but also with countability and generic versus specific reference. Some -*o* nouns indicate mass, *fierro 'iron material'*, *pelo 'hair'*, and *filo 'thread'*, while their -*u* forms are countable, *fierru 'an iron object'*, *pelu 'a hair'* and *filu 'a thread'*. Adjectives ending in -*o* agree in mass with nouns, *la lleche cuayao 'the curdled milk'*, or generic references to individuals, *la bicicleta ye duro 'bicycling is difficult'*. Elsewhere, gender agreement surfaces.

Through this dissertation I aim to describe the evolution of the Asturian word marker system as well as how speakers currently use it. I also propose an analysis of my findings within a distributed morphology framework which examines word components—the root, a gender-bearing node, and the word marker—to theoretically account for the derivation of mass -*o* nouns and adjective -*o* agreement in Asturian. These data were elicited through two surveys disseminated through online crowdsourcing methods, and that focused separately on nouns and adjectives. Data from traditional Asturian sources formed the basis of the -o/-*u* forms that were presented to the participants. In conclusion, my work corroborates previous analyses of mass/generic versus count/specific morphological marking on Asturian nouns adjectives. The

main contribution of my work is that it accounts for additional examples of mass *-o* nouns and

adjective *-o* agreement beyond what is included in the literature, and it also documents

descriptions of how speakers interpret these forms.

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Contents

LIST OF STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	PASS	passive
2	second person	PL	plural
3	third person	PORT	Portuguese
ABL	ablative	PROG	progressive
ABS	absolutive	PRS	present
ACC	accusative	PST	past
AF	Agent-Focus	REF	reflexive
AN	animate	SBJ	subject
AST	Asturian	SBJV	subjunctive
BEN	benefactive	SG	singular
CA	Central Asturian	SPAN	Spanish
CanA	Cantabro-Asturian	THV	theme vowel
CL	classifier	Q	question particle/marker
CT	count	WA	Western Asturian
COA	Centro-Oriental Asturian		
COL	collective		
COM	completive aspect		
COND	conditonal		
DAT	dative		
DEM	demonstrative		
DOM	direct object marker		
DIM	diminutive		
EA	Eastern Asturian		
EO	Eo-Navian		
ERG	ergative		
F	feminine		
FOC	focus		
FUT	future		
GA	Gallego-Asturian		
GAL	Galician		
GEN	genitive		
GER	gerund		
IMP	imperative		
IMPS	impersonal		
INAN	inanimate		
INTJ	interjection		
IPFV	imperfective		
IR	Ibero-Romance		
M	masculine		
MN	manner		
MS	mass		
N	neuter		
NOM	nominative		
OBV	obviative		

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS FOR SURVEYED AREAS OF ASTURIAS

AdC	Arenas de Cabrales		UV	Uviéu
AV	Avilés		VEG	Vegadeo
AY	Ayer		VILI	La Vilieḻḻa
BAÑ	Bañugues		VILL	Villamiana
BIEM	Biembibre		XI	Xixón
BLI	Blimea			
CAB	Cabrales			
CAND	Candás			
CAR	Conceyu Carreño			
CdN	Cangas del Narcea			
CdO	Cangues d'Onís			
CIR	Ciriegu			
CUA	Cuaña			
FELE	Felechosa			
GRA	Grau			
GÜE	La Güeria Carrocera			
IB	Ibias			
INF	L'Infiestu			
LLAN	Llanera			
LLNG	Llangréu			
LLUA	Lluanco			
LLU	Ḻḻuarca			
LLUG	Llugones			
MIE	Mieres			
MDC	Mieres del Camín			
NAV	Nava			
NAVI	Navia			
NOR	Noreña			
ON	Onís			
PIL	Piloña			
PLLA	Pola de Llaviana			
PLLE	La Pola Ḻḻena			
POD	Samartín de Podes			
PRA	Pravia			
PSIE	La Pola Siero			
PUE	La Pola Ayande (La Puela)			
RIA	Riañu			
RIB	Ribeseya			
SAN	San Cloyo			
SeLL	Llangréu			
SMRA	Samartín del Rei Aurelio			
TIN	Tineu			
TRE	Tresona			
TRU	Trubia			

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Motivation

Asturian, spoken in the northwestern part of the Peninsula, is perhaps the most interesting of the IR languages due to its current language status. Spain does not consider Asturian to be a co-official language as it does with other languages like Basque, Galician and Catalán. Furthermore, as the Spanish Constitution leaves each autonomous region up to their own language status, it is curious that even in the Principality of Asturias the Asturian language is not considered to have official status (cf. BOE, 1978, 1981). However, despite this discrepancy in status, Asturian has 699,000 speakers in Spain and about 709,000 speakers world-wide (Eberhard et al., 2023)[1].

One major component that drives my work is the desire to bring Asturian to the forefront of linguistic research. The focus of my dissertation centers on an interesting linguistic feature that is typically referred to as mass neuter. This phenomenon is mostly mentioned in the context of the central variety of Asturian, which has groups of nouns in which different theme vowels appear to correlate systematically with a difference in meaning.

Some Asturian nouns can distinguish between count or mass interpretations by ending in *-u* or *-o*, respectively, although the majority of Asturian nouns are not reported to morphologically distinguish between count and mass (ALlA, 2001: 76). The nouns in (1a) end in *-u* and are interpreted as countable entities in comparison to the nouns in (1b), which end in *-o* and denote mass interpretations.

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[1] This is the reported number as of the deposit of this dissertation [June, 2023].

(1)   a. fierr-u   pel-u   fil-u

          iron-MASC.COUNT   hair-MASC.COUNT   thread-MASC.COUNT

          'an iron object'   *'a hair'*   *'a thread'*

        b. fierr-o   pel-o   fil-o

          iron-MASC.MASS   hair-MASC.MASS   thread-MASC.MASS

          'iron material'   *'hair'*   *'thread'*

This characteristic extends further in the language, as Central Asturian also has a particular kind of agreement morphology in noun-adjective agreement in which the adjective agrees with something other than grammatical gender. Post-nominal adjectives that modify a mass noun are said to agree in mass and are also referred to as neuter (see ALlA, 2001), as shown in (2) where the adjective appears as an *-o* form, similarly to the nouns in (1).

(2)   Mass Agreement (adapted from San Segundo Cachero, 2015: 16)

       a.   el   carbón   asturiano

            the.M.SG   coal.M.MS   Asturian-N.MS

            'the Asturian coal'

       b.   la   farina   blanco

            the-F.SG   flour-F.MS   white-N.MS

            'the white flour'

Outside of mass noun contexts *-o* form Asturian adjectives can also appear in phrases that have generic readings. The noun *piedra 'stone'* in (3) is found within a generic phrase that references how difficult the stone business is. This general description is what has been reported to be what generates the *-o* form adjective *complicao 'complicated'*.

(3)   Generic Readings (adapted from Viejo Fernández, 2002: 42)

       la   piedra   viéronlo   complicao

       the.F.SG   stone.F.MS   view-PST.3PL=ACC.N   complicated-N

       'They view the stone business as complicated [it's hard to export it]'

So-called mass neuter agreement is not attested in pre-nominal adjectives, like the ones in (4), where only gender agreement holds between the article, adjective and noun despite the mass interpretation of the nouns *carbón 'coal'* and *ropa 'clothing'*.

(4) Mass Agreement (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 322)

    a.   el   duru   /   *duro   carbón
        the.M.SG   hard-M.SG   hard-N.MS   coal.M.MS
        'the hard coal'

    b.   la   guapa   /   *guapo   ropa
        the-F.SG   nice-F.SG   nice-N.MS   clothing-F.SG
        'the nice clothing'

Otherwise, independent of the adjective's pre- or post-nominal position, full gender agreement appears in cases where the noun that is being modified is interpreted as count. This explains the agreement distribution in (5) below where the count nouns *páxaru 'bird'* and *xera 'assignment'* are ungrammatical unless the post-nominal adjective agrees in gender.

(5) Gender Agreement (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 74, 80)

    a.   el   páxaru   mariellu   /*mariello
        the.M.SG   bird-M.SG   hard-M.SG yellow-N.MS
        'the yellow bird'

    b.   xera   dura   /*duro
        assignment-F.SG difficult-F.SG difficult-N.MS
        'difficult assignment'

The above phenomenon has been researched under various aliases like mass neuter, the mass/count distinction or the count/non-count distinction, and similar analyses have also been extended to Castilian Spanish (see ALlA, 2001; Arias Cabal, 2015; Fernández-Ordóñez, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Harris-Northall, 2005, 2010; among many others). However, the morphological characteristics of nouns and adjectives mentioned above have not received a fully integrated explanation that unites a theory of word markers with grammatical gender and semantic versus formal agreement. The main aim of this thesis is to develop a theory couched within the framework of Distributed Morphology that does this.

1.2. Some History and Varieties of Modern Asturian

Those familiar with Asturian know that there is a rich tradition of studying the historical relevance of the *-u/-o* distinction by way of linguistic evolution from Latin. For some, how Asturian came to distinguish *-u* from *-o* is not a remnant of Latin but instead from a novel way to differentiate between the neuter and masculine gender (de Granda, 1963). For others the neuter adjective is a direct descendent from Latin (Alarcos, 1962; Alonso, 1963). There are also approaches that focus more on how number (singular, plural, and non-count) interacts with the count versus mass interpretation of a noun and how this influences morphology (Arias Cabal, 1998; Neira Martínez, 1978), as well as those with specific interest in the post-nominal modification of singular nouns that denote material (Menéndez Pidal, 1897).

Turning to history, during the Roman Era in the Iberian Peninsula around first Century B.C., there was a *Conventum Asturum* that was composed of the regions of Asturias, Leon, the northeastern part of Zamora and Miranda (see Figure 1). This matter allowed for a certain level of separation between these territories, although the descriptive features of the Astur-Leonese language family today correspond to their geographical limits (García Arias, 2013; Janson, 1991; Viejo Fernández, 2005).

Figure 1- Conventum Asturum (Viejo Fernández, 2005: 89)[2]

Due to *leonization*[3] in the 11th century that interrupts this linguistic continuum via the gradual expansion of territory until the 13th century, an early use of Astur-Romance emerged. While there are ecclesiastical texts written in Asturian in the 13th and 14th century, there is a lack of texts from the 15th and 16th century, leaving a two-hundred-year gap evidencing language use (ALlA, 2001; García Arias, 2013; Viejo Fernández, 2005).

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[2] Permission to reproduce this image has been granted from the author, Dr. Xulio Viejo Fernández via personal communication [May 19, 2023].

[3] This term refers to the process in which Astur-Leonese began to take on more characteristics of Leonese.

Between the 16th and 17th century there are some texts that affirm the use of a local language like Astur-Leonese, but this language was being replaced due to pressure by Castilian Spanish (Viejo Fernández, 2005). Despite this linguistic back and forth there was a literary resurgence of Asturian in the 18th century, but with the arrival of Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975), Asturian and other minority languages suffered under his control of Spain. Although there was a slower evolutionary path for Asturian, its path from Latin can be explained primarily through the standard view of three main form classes based on the final vowel, front, central and back (cf. (17)). This account is best explored through work based on this basic characteristic (García Arias, 2003), which divides Asturian's journey into two different subsystems of final atonic vowels[4], namely Western and Centro-Oriental Asturian, WA and COA, henceforth.

From a linguistic lens Asturian can be divided into three main linguistic umbrellas, so to speak, that consist of Western (WA), Central (CA), and Eastern Asturian (EA), in (6a), (6b) and (6c), respectively (García Arias, 2003: 41-42). Aside from these three main groupings there is much more linguistic variation present across the principality of Asturias than can be included here[5].

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[4] I only treat final atonic vowels here because the tonic vowel system is not entirely relevant to the matter of mass agreement. It may however be of interest in the case of variants that utilize metaphony, or vowel raising, as a consequence of the noun ending with a *-u*. For more on this topic, I refer the reader to Hualde (1992) who examines particular regions where Cantabrian, Pasiego and Ḻḻenense Asturian are spoken, and Penny (1994), who also treats Cantabrian and some variants of Italian.

[5] To illustrate my point there is previous work on the Asturian spoken in Cabrales (Álvarez Fernández-Cañedo (1963), Somiedo (Cano González, 1981), Cabranes (Canellada, 1944), Sobrescobio (Conde Saiz, 1978), Cabo de Peñas (Diaz Castañón, 1966) and Candamo (Díaz González, 1986), among many others.

(6)   a. **WA:** system of five tonic vowels and three atonic final vowels
adjectives of two endings (*-u, -a*)
two pronominal referents (*lu/la*)

b. **CA:** system of five tonic vowels and five atonic final vowels
adjectives of two (*-u, -a*) or three endings (*-u, -a, -o*)
three pronominal referents (*lu/la/lo*)

c. **EA:** system of five tonic vowels and five atonic final vowels
adjectives of two endings (*-u, -a*)
three pronominal referents (*lu/la/lo*)

Though a great deal of language variation is at play, CA is considered "standard" Asturian,

with the Academia de la Llingua Asturiana, ALlA henceforth, centered at Asturias' capital,

Oviedo. Although ALlA has greatly contributed to CA's prescriptive grammars it has also played

a less exclusive role in the process of language standardization, often accepting various

allophones from other varieties of Asturian (Ridruejo, 2005).

However, some of the most noteworthy characteristics of Asturian in general are the position

of clitics, and the word order of articles, nouns, and possessors within the noun phrase, among

other linguistic features (Lorenzo, 2022). Asturian is mostly an enclitic language in that clitics

directly follow the verb, in (7a), but under certain conditions, like negation, Asturian behaves as

if it were a proclitic language, as the clitic precedes the verb, in (7b)[6].

(7)   Clitic Placement (adapted from Lorenzo, 2022: 3-4)

a.   cómpro**lu**
buy-PRS.1SG-ACC.3PL.M.SG
'I buy it'

b.   Xuan   nun-**yos**   da   manzanes   a
Xuan   NEG-DAT.3PL   give-PRS.3SG   apples   to

los   neños
the   boys
'Xuan doesn't give apples to the boys'

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[6] I refer the reader to work by Fernández-Rubiera (2009) for a more thorough analysis of how clitic placement
functions in Western Iberian Romance.

Furthermore, (8a) through (8c) depict possible word orders in Asturian within the noun phrase with respect to the article, noun and different types of possessors. Example (8d) is interpreted the same as the other examples but it utilizes a *preposition+possessor* structure to encode this meaning.

(8) NP order (adapted from Lorenzo, 2022: 6)

    a. les   tos   neñes
       the-F.PL   your-PL   girl-F.PL

    b. les   neñes   tos
       the-F.PL   girl-F.PL your-PL

    c. les   neñes   tuyes
       the-F.PL   girl-F.PL your-F.PL

    d. les   neñes   de   to
       the-F.PL   girl-F.PL of   yours
       'your girls'

The above examples make Asturian unique compared to Spanish for various reasons. First, the enclisis in (7a) would be expected in the context of an affirmative command, but in other cases proclisis typically holds in Spanish, like the position reflected in (7b)[7]. Furthermore, Spanish does not have the same flexibility within the nominal phrase as Asturian does in (8), particularly because in Spanish the possessive adjective and article occupy the same syntactic position and therefore cannot co-occur (see Zagona, 2002: 93).

I now turn to a brief overview of some of the assumptions that will be necessary throughout this dissertation for a more theoretical analysis of the data.

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[7] I wish to clarify that I merely refer to the pre-verbal position of the Spanish clitic—it would not attach to the negative adverb like it does in Asturian.

1.3. On Distributed Morphology and Minimalism

Two components that will form the theoretical background of my work are Minimalism and Distributed Morphology. There are several assumptions in Minimalism that are relevant to my work. For example, the language faculty that we possess as humans is a major component, and under Universal Grammar (UG), there are innate and natural constraints to possible structures in human language (Chomsky, 1995). Syntax also follows an economical system where operations occur as necessary (Lasnik, 2002), such as movement for the checking of features or the exclusion of syntactic structure that is not needed in the projection. Finally, syntactic, morphological, and phonological components interact with each other at different interfaces, such as Logical and Phonological Form (Chomsky, 1995). This innate possibility of language production, feature checking, and interaction at interfaces is also useful for derivational operations as seen in Distributed Morphology (DM).

The general premise of DM (DM) (Halle & Marantz, 1993; Harley & Noyer, 1999; Marantz, 1997; among others) is that an individual stores listed information in their mental grammar that interacts with the different stages of word derivation (see Figure 2). Specifically, syntactic nodes can be manipulated and put in the necessary order through syntactic operations, after which the individual's mental vocabulary can be accessed for morpheme insertion onto the linearized nodes. In the end stage of the derivation the Encyclopedia is what maps meaning onto the derived word.

LISTS ACCESSED	STAGES OF THE DERIVATION

Access to
Syntactic Terminals

Syntactic Derivation

Access to
The Vocabulary
prior to PF

(Spell Out)

PF   LF

Access to
The Encyclopedia
at LF

(Interpretation)
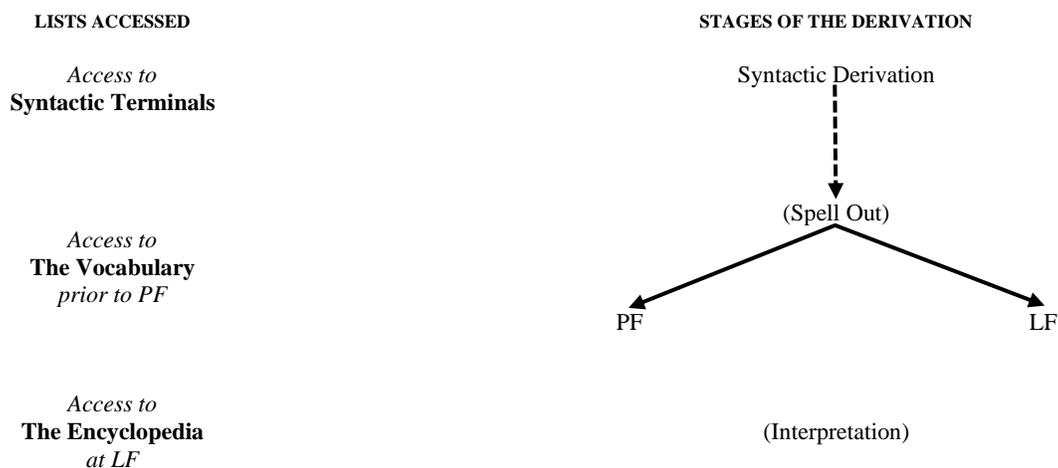
Figure 2 - Grammars and Lists (Embick, 2015: 20)

The above schema can be visually described as the process in (9) below. Focusing on the *n*P, (9a) shows the base position between the *n* head and the root that eventually moves to the left of *n* and merges with it. The result of this operation is a *n* head that classifies the root as nominal, in (9b).

(9) Abstract Nominal Root Formation (Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005: 45)

a.

DP

D   nP

n   √

b.

n

√   n
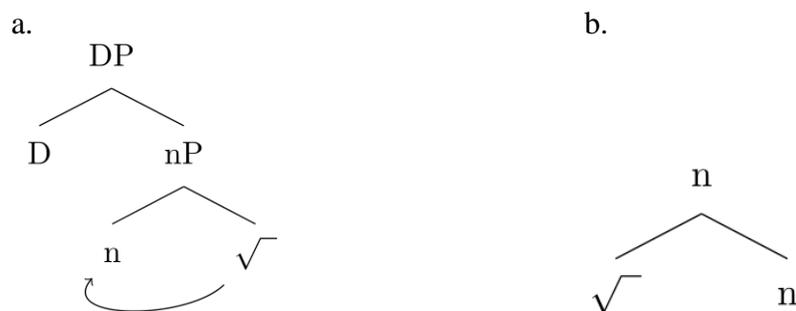
After a few other operations that I will describe in more detail in chapter three, the result is demonstrated in (10). In all four examples the root and nominalizing head, or adjectivizing head in (10c) and (10d), have been categorized and a theme vowel node is later inserted and acts as the locus of insertion for final vowels.

(10) Spanish Theme Vowel Examples (Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005: 48)

a. [	√	[n	**Th**]]
	més	Ø	**a** '*mesa' (table)*
b. [	√	[n	**Th**]]
	ver	dád	**Ø** '*verdad' (truth)*
c. [	√	[a	**Th**]]
	vérd	Ø	**e** '*verde' (green)*
d. [	√	[a	**Th**]]
	colér	ic	**o** '*colérico' (furious)*

I have briefly introduced DM here because it is the main framework in which I have couched much of my linguistic analysis throughout this dissertation. The motivation for adopting this framework has mainly centered around how it separates a noun's final vowel from the root and places gender on a separate head within the *n*P. This general assumption falls in line with previous analyses that the final vowel does not denote gender, but rather it provides a link to the class to which the noun belongs which can also sometimes be conditioned by the root (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013; Harris, 1991, 1992 and Kramer, 2015, 2016, among many others).

Integrating Minimalism and DM into my work allows for the nouns be dissected into their different components, and therefore the noun's internal structure can be more thoroughly considered in the context of Asturian mass neuter—namely the interaction between word markers and nominal gender. Furthermore, Minimalism opens up additional channels to considering the role that syntactic operations and features play in Asturian adjective agreement to better analyze the agreement patterns represented in the data.

1.4. A Distribution of Chapters

Aside from my introductory and concluding chapters there are three main content chapters that support the weight of my work, and below I will briefly describe their contents.

1.4.1. Outline of Chapter 2

Chapter two examines the declension system of Latin and how the formal appearance of nouns, adjectives and determiners indicate values such as gender, number, and case. Based on these details I set out to explore the evolutionary changes that took place parting from Latin to general Ibero-Romance in order to describe the gender, number and form class marking that we see in languages like Spanish and Asturian today.

I then review the literature published on the system of word markers in Spanish as we know it today, mainly the types of endings that we see on nouns, adjectives, and determiners. I also examine the Spanish nominal gender system to better determine the role that it might play in the appearance of the final vowels that are generally assumed to indicate gender. This big picture description is what then informed me to open a dialogue about the possible existence of a Latin neuter remnant in Spanish today, for example in demonstratives like *esto 'this'*, *eso 'that'* and *aquello 'that [far]'*.

The entirety of this chapter lays the foundation for me to generalize how the Asturian system either might be similar or different to what has previously been established for Spanish and other well-studied Ibero-Romance languages. This comparison is especially relevant in the context of nouns in Asturian that morphologically indicate a mass interpretation, as well as the morphology that shows up on some adjectives under mass or other types of post-nominal agreement.

Through previous literature in this chapter, I demonstrate how Spanish nouns have been grouped into three basic form classes each marked by their own vowel, *-o*, *-a* or *-e*. As an

extension of this idea, I collected examples of Asturian nouns, adjectives, and determiners to propose different methods of grouping Asturian words by class. Ultimately, I show that Asturian follows Spanish in that there are also three form classes, instead marked by *-i/-e*, *-a*, and *-o/-u*. I follow the relevant literature analyzing that Spanish theme vowels are not an indication of gender (mainly Bermúdez-Otero, 2013 and Harris, 1991, 1992), and I show that the same characteristic holds in Asturian. Finally, I argue that this separation of grammatical gender and form supports the analysis that there are no neuter forms in either of the two languages, contrary to many general descriptions that have been made to date.

1.4.2. Outline of Chapter 3

In chapter three I expand on the assumptions made about the Asturian noun system in the context of gender, form class, and word markers. I then summarize what the literature has reported on Asturian as far as a possible expectation for the distribution of *-o* forms on different parts of speech and in different contexts.

After establishing the necessary background of Asturian *-o* forms I describe the relevant details surrounding the Qualtrics survey that I disseminated through crowdsourcing methods on social media. I include results that indicate native speaker preference when faced with the mass versus count interpretation of nouns that end in either *-u* or *-o* to determine acceptability, and I use this as the basis to suggest different language profiles across speakers.

The second half of chapter three outlines the theoretical assumptions of the Distributed Morphology (DM) framework. I subsequently breakdown how gender and word markers are analyzed under a DM approach using examples from languages like Spanish, Romanian and Swahili. Finally, I propose a system couched within DM to account for Asturian noun morphology in a way that also considers the role played by gender and mass.

The results of the survey show that the *-o* morpheme is more productive in Asturian than has been previously assumed, as it also extends past cases of mass interpretation where, for some speakers, *-o* can coerce a generic interpretation of certain nouns or differentiate two nouns that are semantically related.

Building on previous work (Kramer, 2015), I present a system for inanimate noun derivation that is driven by nominalizing *n* heads. These heads distinguish between count nouns with default masculine gender, *n* [-MASS], and fixed feminine gender, *n u* [+FEM]. I also propose a *n* [+MASS] head to account for the derivation of nouns like *fierro 'iron material'*, *pelo 'hair'* and *filo 'thread'*, which indicate mass interpretations morphologically with *-o*. My main contribution in this chapter merges the above theoretical account with new data to not only show the morphological nature of overt mass marking in Asturian, but also to argue that Asturian speakers possess different mental grammars that are responsible for any and all morphological variation in nouns.

1.4.3. Outline of Chapter 4

In my final content chapter, I review the role that determiners and adjectives play regarding characteristics like syntactic position, gender agreement and semantic interpretation in languages like Spanish, Catalan, Dutch and Scandinavian languages. Next, I extend this background to Asturian to establish a general linguistic characteristic of how Asturian adjectives can be described.

With this background in place, I present the results of a second Qualtrics survey dedicated to adjective agreement patterns which was also crowdsourced to native speakers on social media. I apply the comments and examples provided by the participants to propose a distribution of contexts in which gender versus *-o* form agreement appears. I then analyze the contexts in terms

of grammaticality on a proposed grammaticality scale determined by the participants' linguistic intuitions.

I close chapter four with a literature review of how adjective position and agreement has been analyzed thus far. I then formalize the necessary theoretical components to propose a system that derives Asturian adjectives in the different interpretive contexts indicated in the survey responses. Finally, I establish a connection between the nominal derivation presented in chapter three to account for Asturian agreement patterns under one system.

One main contribution in this chapter is the indication in the data that some native speakers use *-o* form adjectives to modify both count and mass nouns, and that *-o* morphology on adjectives is salient in both mass noun and generic DP interpretations, and this is of course in addition to the expected gender agreement found among adjectives. Based on these agreement patterns I show throughout chapter four that Asturian agreement can be best described in two flavors. Namely, grammatical agreement accounts for noun-adjective gender agreement while semantic agreement (Corbett, 1979; Enger, 2004; 2013, among others) allows us to better capture the mass-induced and genericity-induced agreement morphology that appears on adjectives.

As a secondary contribution, I build on my system of nominal derivation (in chapter three) to both situate the position of Asturian adjectives in the syntax, as well as account for adjectives to find mass features on nouns or genericity within the DP via an *unspecified* probe, while a probe for phi-features triggers gender agreement.

CHAPTER TWO: WORD MARKERS FROM LATIN TO IBERO-ROMANCE

2.1. Introduction

Ibero-Romance languages, IR henceforth, are well-known for having grammatical gender

systems that interact in complex ways with the final vowels of nouns and adjectives, among

other morphologically inflected parts of speech. It is a common occurrence to generally associate

gender with these final vowels such that masculine Spanish nouns end in *-o*, feminine ones in *-a*

and *-e* encodes masculine or feminine gender. However, since Harris' (1991) seminal article on

the topic, we have known that final vowels are not gender markers, but rather word markers that

allow us to indicate to which class a word belongs. In (1) the three main form classes, I, II, and

III, contain Spanish words of both genders ending in either -o, -a or -e, with the addition of some

words that end in consonants[8]. These word markers are tied to their theme classes—not gender.

(1)　　Spanish Nouns and Adjectives (Harris, 1992: 65)

	I						II		
pas-o	m	*'step'*				pas-a	f	*'raisin'*
man-o	f	*'hand'*				map-a	m	*'map'*
re-o	m/f	*'culprit'*				may-a	m/f	*'Maya'*

III

	A			A'			B		
jef-e	m	*'chief'*	as	m	*'ace'*	pas-e	m	*'pass'*
nub-e	f	*'cloud'*	col	f	*'cabbage'*	prol-e	f	*'progeny'*
verd-e	m/f	*'green'*	común	m/f	*'common'*	inmun-e	m/f	*'immune'*

	IV				V	
tórak-s	m	*'thorax'*		tax-i	m	*'taxi'*
dos-is	f	*'dose'*		trib-u	f	*'tribe'*
mochal-es	m/f	*'batty'*		yet-i	m/f	*'yeti'*
				chef	m/f	*'chef'*
				esnob	m/f	*'snob'*
				golf	m	*'golf'*

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[8] For clarification, (1) does not indicate the orthographic representation of these words, but rather it aims to capture the segmentation of roots and word markers.

The class representation in (1) can also be adapted to Asturian, in (2). Comparing the Asturian system in (2) with the Spanish version in (1), it becomes apparent that aside from the split between same-group words ending in *-e* or a consonant, there is also an additional split between *-u* and *-o*. This *-o* is said to appear on a very small class of masculine nouns in Asturian and it generally indicates a mass interpretation, also referred to as mass neuter (see ALlA, 2001).

(2) Asturian Word Markers (*à la* Harris, 1992; based on data from ALlA, 2001: 85-95)

-U/-O						-A		
pas-u	m	*'step'*				pas-a	f	*'raisin'*
man-u	f	*'hand'*				map-a	m	*'map'*
re-u	m/f	*'culprit'*				may-a	m/f	*'Maya'*
fierr-o	m	*'iron'*						
man-o	f	*'hand'*						
			-E/-Ø					
xef-e	m	*'chief'*	pas-e	m	*'pass'*	as	m	*'ace'*
ñub-e	f	*'cloud'*	prol-e	f	*'progeny'*	lluz	f	*'light'*
verd-e	m/f	*'green'*	inmun-e	m/f	*'immune'*	común	m/f	*'common'*

The above account is a very brief sketch of the grammatical gender system of Spanish and Asturian, but it leaves general questions unanswered as to how these systems came to be and how they might work in other IR languages. Namely, we know how declension classes and gender in Latin changed over time to give rise to form classes in modern IR languages. We also have a clear idea of how to analyze the main form classes and their relation to gender in Spanish (see previous work by Bermúdez-Otero, 2013; Harris, 1991, 1992; Kramer, 2015, 2016; among others).

What remains to be fully established is how we can analyze form classes and gender in other Western Iberian Romance languages, and how me might analyze other challenging issues related to certain *-o* forms in both Spanish and in Asturian especially. To address these needs this chapter provides a descriptive characterization of noun, adjective and determiner form classes and their relation to gender in Asturian. I will also argue that there is no neuter gender in Spanish

or in Asturian, but rather that there are certain *-o* forms that are used to mark a range of semantic values that have to do with non-referentiality, genericity and mass.

In §2.2 I discuss the inflectional endings and what they encode in Latin in detail. The main focus here is the case, number, and gender marking found on nouns, adjectives, and determiners which to date has been well studied (Lloyd 1987; Moreland & Fleischer 1977; Penny 2002; Tuten et al. 2016; among others).

In §2.3 I trace the general changes that took place from Latin to IR to better motivate the discussion around word forms and gender. I show how one commonality among IR languages in general is that they lost case marking on nouns and adjectives, and in particular, they lost the Latin grammatical neuter gender that was once productive for certain nouns.

The final two content sections explore a more theoretical account of how Spanish (§2.4) and Asturian (§2.5) nouns and adjectives are organized by final vowel word markers into three different form classes that evolved from the more complex Latin system. Following previous literature, I argue that word markers are just indicators of the class a word belongs to and that they are separate from gender. I apply this critical eye to Asturian as part of my proposal and ultimately use it as evidence to take the stance that Spanish and Asturian possess no surviving neuter gender from Latin, despite cases like demonstratives traditionally referred to as neuter. Finally, §2.6 briefly summarizes the main points of each section to conclude this this chapter.

2.2. Latin Nouns, Adjectives and Determiners

Latin nouns and adjectives have a stem that reflects lexical meaning and an inflectional ending that marks case and number on nouns, and case, number, and gender agreement on adjectives. Case and number inflection are fused in that they are not recognized as just nominative or just plural, for example, but rather nominative plural (Pinkster, 2015: 35-42).

Furthermore, the combination of a stem and inflectional ending is referred to as a lexeme (Pinkster, 2015: 36) which relates to the various forms that a noun or adjective can take within a paradigm. In the context of nouns, these paradigms are also called declensions, of which there are five, and they are based on the inflectional endings of the nominal lexemes[9]. The main question that drives this section revolves around how Latin morphologically marks different types of inflection across different parts of speech.

2.2.1. *Latin Nouns and Gender*

One analysis of Latin nouns treats the notion of grammatical gender as a separate type of inflection (Pinkster, 2015: 39-41), loosely relating it to the different declensions' patterns. For animate nouns the biological sex of the referent plays a more definite role in the noun's gender, (cf. NAUTA *'sailor'* animate masculine despite ending in *-a*). Certain semantic relations are also useful for the gender assignment of inanimate nouns, (cf. masculine IANUARIS 'January' due to semantic extension of masculine MENSIS 'month'). This reliance on semantic information also extends to the names of winds, and most rivers and mountains, which are masculine. However, the names of countries, islands, cities, and plants or trees, are usually feminine in Latin (cf. Pinkster 2015: 39). Aside from the link that sex and semantic extension has to grammatical gender, the formal properties of nouns are also relevant, as shown in Table 1 below.

FORM	EXAMPLE	GENDER	EXCEPTION
nominative singular *-a*	mensa 'table'	feminine	sex *or* semantic referent
nominative singular *-us*	hortus 'garden'	masculine	sex *or* semantic referent
nominative singular *-um*	bellum 'war'	neuter	sex *or* semantic referent
nominative singular *-or*	labor 'toil'	masculine	sex *or* semantic referent

Table 1 - Formal Gender (adapted from Pinkster, 2015: 40)

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[9] We will see that many of the same details here also apply to Latin determiners, which also fully inflect for case, number, and gender, in addition to marking distance of the referent between the speaker and/or hearer (Penny, 2002: 143).

The above table captures that the gender of some nouns is related to the inflectional ending of the noun itself. This is not an uncommon characteristic in Latin as nouns are also classified as either *-a* stem, *-o* stem, consonant stem, *-u* stem or *-e* stem declensions (Pinkster, 2015: 42). The nouns MENSA, HORTUS, BELLUM and LABOR in Table 1 are respectively gendered in relation to their nominative singular endings in the left-most column, and a different gender of other nouns in the same classes might be assigned differently depending on exceptions like NAUTA mentioned in the previous paragraph.

This notion of grammatical gender mapping in Latin nouns very much echoes the literature on Spanish morphology and gender (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013; Harris, 1991, 1992; Kramer, 2015; among many others), as the inflection endings on Latin nouns do not clearly and consistently equate to gender. In the following subsections I will further unpack the Latin nominal system and the organization of nouns into declension classes to consider the relationship, or lack thereof, between morphology and gender.

2.2.2. *The Declension of Latin Nouns*

Declension, or inflectional classes, are endings used to group different words by their respective classes. This characteristic extends to parts of speech in Latin like nouns, adjectives, and determiners, to name a few examples. The five Latin declension classes are based purely on the form of the ending and are not clearly tied to gender (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977; Pinkster, 2015; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011). Throughout §2.2.2 I present examples of nouns from each of the five declensions, which for simplicity I will refer to as Class 1 through 5.

Nouns that have a singular genitive *-ae* ending are grouped into Class 1 and follow the paradigm in Table 2 below. Class 1 nouns can be either feminine, FĒMINA, or masculine, NAUTA,

although they mostly tend to be feminine (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 27). Class 1 is also

referred to as *-a* stem declension (Pinkster, 2015: 42).

	F/SG	M/SG	F/PL	M/PL
NOM	fēmina	nauta	fēminae	nautae
GEN	fēminae	nautae	fēminārum	nautārum
DAT	fēminae	nautae	fēminīs	nautīs
ACC	fēminam	nautam	fēminās	nautās
ABL	fēminā	nautā	fēminīs	nautīs
	'woman'	*'sailor'*	*'women'*	*'sailors'*

Table 2 - Class 1 Nouns (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 27-28)

Class 2 nouns, in Table 3, are identified by their singular genitive *-ī*. Independent of the

endings found in this table, nouns are either feminine, masculine or neuter, with the majority of

examples being nouns of the latter two genders (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 47). There are also

cases of masculine nouns that exhibit a different inflectional ending for the singular nominative,

in Table 4. Class 2 is also referred to by *-o* stem declension (Pinkster, 2015: 42).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	domus	nātus	saxum	domī	nātī	saxa
GEN	domī	nātī	saxī	domōrum	nātōrum	saxōrum
DAT	domō	nātō	saxō	domīs	nātīs	saxīs
ACC	domum	nātum	saxum	domōs	nātōs	saxa
ABL	domō	nātō	saxō	domīs	nātīs	saxīs
	'house, home'	*'son, child'*	*'rock, stone'*	*'houses, homes'*	*'sons, children'*	*'rocks, stones'*

Table 3 - Class 2 Nouns (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 47-48; 104)

	M/SG	M/PL
NOM	puer	puerī
GEN	puerī	puerōrum
DAT	puerō	puerīs
ACC	puerum	puerōs
ABL	puerō	puerīs
	'boy, child'	*'boys, children'*

Table 4 - Class 2 Nouns (-r;-er) (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 47-48)

The inflectional endings for Class 3 nouns, also called consonant and vowel stems, account

for most Latin nouns (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 97-98; Pinkster, 2015: 42). The commonality

that links the nouns in Table 5 and Table 6 is the singular genitive *-is*, which marks nouns as

Class 3 declensions. Nouns of all three grammatical genders can be accounted for in this declension pattern, but there are two variants in some of the inflectional endings below. Namely, the singular nominative has no dedicated ending, and the paradigm for Class 3 splits into *non-i-stem*, (Table 5) and *i-stem*, (Table 6), marked by the addition of an *-i-* in some forms (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 97-98).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	māter	rumor	sīdus	mātrēs	rūmōrēs	sīdera
GEN	mātris	rūmōris	sīderis	mātrum	rūmōrum	sīderum
DAT	mātrī	rūmōrī	sīderī	mātribus	rūmōribus	sīderibus
ACC	mātrem	rūmōrem	sīdus	mātrēs	rūmōrēs	sīdera
ABL	mātre	rūmōre	sīdere	mātribus	rūmōribus	sīderibus
	'mother'	*'rumor, gossip'*	*'star, constellation'*	*'mothers'*	*'rumors, gossips'*	*'stars, constellations'*

Table 5 - Class 3 Nouns (NON-I-STEMS) (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 97-98)

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	nox	mōns	mare	noctēs	montēs	maria
GEN	noctis	montis	maris	noctium	montium	marium
DAT	noctī	montī	marī	noctibus	montibus	maribus
ACC	noct-em	mont-em	mare	noctēs; noctīs	montēs; montīs	maria
ABL	nocte	mont-e	marī	noctibus	montibus	maribus
	'night'	*'mountain'*	*'sea'*	*'nights'*	*'mountains'*	*'seas'*

Table 6 - Class 3 Nouns (I-STEMS) (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 97-99)

Table 7 below contains examples of some Class 4 nouns, so-called *-u* stems, which are grouped together by the singular genitive *-ūs*. Masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns are part of this class, but nouns ending in *-us* are masculine for the most part (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 128; Pinkster, 2015: 42).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	manus	frūctus	cornū	manūs	frūctūs	cornua
GEN	manūs	frūctūs	cornūs	manuum	frūctuum	cornuum
DAT	manuī	frūctuī	cornū	manibus	frūctibus	cornibus
ACC	manum	frūctum	cornū	manūs	frūctūs	cornua
ABL	manū	frūctū	cornū	manibus	frūctibus	cornibus
	'hand, band, troop'	*'enjoyment'*	*'horn'*	*'hands, bands, troops'*	*'enjoyments'*	*'horns'*

Table 7 - Class 4 Nouns (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 128, 132; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 495)

Finally, Table 8 shows the paradigm for Class 5 nouns, defined as such by the inflectional ending *-ēi* in the singular genitive. Also referred to as *-e* stem declensions (Pinkster, 2015: 42),

all nouns in this class are feminine except for masculine DIĒS, and there is a very limited number

of nouns that follow this declension pattern in general (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 128)

	F/SG	M/SG	F/PL	M/PL
NOM	rēs	diēs	rēs	diēs
GEN	rēi	diēi	rērum	diērum
DAT	rēi	diēi	rēbus	diēbus
ACC	rem	diem	rēs	diēs
ABL	rē	diē	rēbus	diēbus
	'thing'	*'day'*	*'things'*	*'days'*

Table 8 - Class 5 Nouns (adapted from Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 128, 132)

2.2.3. *The Declension of Latin Adjectives*

Latin adjectives agree with the nouns that they modify in gender, number, and case (Moreland

and Fleischer, 1977: 49). In (3a) the neuter singular noun SAXĪ has a singular genitive ending, so

the adjective MAGNĪ, in (3b), shows agreement via the same inflectional ending for the singular

genitive neuter. In (3c) the noun FĒMINAE is singular dative and the adjective MISERAE, in (3d),

agrees with it.

(3)   Noun-Adjective Agreement (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 49)
        a..   saxī
               sax-ī
               rock-GEN.SG;N
               'of a rock'

        b..   saxī   magnī
               sax-ī   magn-ī
               rock-GEN.SG;N   large-GEN.SG;N
               'of a large rock'

        c..   fēminae
               fēmin-ae
               woman-DAT.SG;F
               'to/for a woman'

        d..   fēminae   miserae
               fēmin-ae   miser-ae
               woman-DAT.SG;F   wretched-DAT.SG;F
               'to/for a wretched woman'

There are also cases of noun-adjective agreement that have different inflectional endings between the two. The first declension masculine noun POĒTA in (4b) has a singular nominative *-a* ending, while the adjective MAGNUS shows a first-second[10] declension adjective form ending in *-us* (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 48). Example (4d) shows as similar case but in the plural with the noun POĒTAE modified by the adjective MAGNĪ.

(4) Noun-Adjective Agreement (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 49)
    a.. poēta
         poēt-a
         poet-NOM.SG;M
         'poet'

    b.. poēta   magnus
         poēt-a   magn-us
         poet-NOM.SG;M   great-NOM.SG;M
         'great poet'

    c.. poētae
         poēt-ae
         poet-NOM.PL;M
         'poets'

    d. poētae   magnī
         poēt-ae   magn-ī
         poet-NOM.PL;M   great-NOM.PL;M
         'great poets'

The difference in inflectional endings on the adjectives in (4b) and (4d) is merely a problem for the formal appearance associated with their class (see Table 9 and Table 10). Class 1-2 adjectives have a distinct inflectional ending for each of the three genders in the nominative case. Furthermore, a sub-class of masculine adjectives exhibit an *-er* ending, such as DEXTER in Table 10, mirroring some second declension masculine nouns (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 48).

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[10] From this point on I will refer to the first-second declension adjective class as Class 1-2 adjectives to be consistent with the noun classes that I presented in the last section. When Class 1-2 adjectives agree in masculine or neuter gender with the noun, they follow the Class 2 noun declensions. When they agree with a feminine noun, however, they follow the Class 1 noun forms.

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	magna	magnus	magnum	magnae	magnī	magna
GEN	magnae	magnī	magnī	magnārum	magnōrum	magnōrum
DAT	magnae	magnō	magnō	magnīs	magnīs	magnīs
ACC	magnam	magnum	magnum	magnās	magnōs	magna
ABL	magnā	magnō	magnō	magnīs	magnīs	magnīs

'large, big, great'

Table 9 - Class 1-2 Adjectives (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 48)

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	dextra	dexter	dextrum	dextrae	dextrī	dextra
GEN	dextrae	dextrī	dextrī	dextrārum	dextrōrum	dextrōrum
DAT	dextrae	dextrō	dextrō	dextrīs	dextrīs	dextrīs
ACC	dextram	dextrum	dextrum	dextrās	dextrōs	dextra
ABL	dextrā	dextrō	dextrō	dextrīs	dextrīs	dextrīs

'right [as opposed to left], favorable'

Table 10 - Class 1-2 Adjectives (-er) (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 48-49)

Class 3 adjectives follow a similar paradigm to that of Class 3 nouns, but there is variation in how they present themselves formally. The first paradigm type in Table 11 shows a set of adjectives that have three different forms in the singular nominative, and this is much more salient when compared to the two-ending and one-ending adjective forms in Table 12 and Table 13, respectively.

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	ācris	ācer	ācre	ācrēs	ācrēs	ācria
GEN	ācris	ācris	ācris	ācrium	ācrium	ācrium
DAT	ācrī	ācrī	ācrī	ācribus	ācribus	ācribus
ACC	ācrem	ācrem	ācre	ācrēs; ācrīs	ācrēs; ācrīs	ācria
ABL	ācrī	ācrī	ācrī	ācribus	ācribus	ācribus

'sharp'

Table 11 - Class 3 Adjectives (three endings) (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 126)

Class 3 adjectives, like OMNIS and OMNE in Table 12 have only two endings as both the feminine and masculine share the same form, while the neuter falls under its own set of inflectional endings. As for single-form Class 3 adjectives, in Table 13, the only deviations in the paradigm are found in the singular and plural accusative and plural nominative inflection endings for neuter adjectives (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 127).

	F,M/SG	N/SG	F,M/PL	N/PL
NOM	omnis	omne	omnēs	omnia
GEN	omnis	omnis	omnium	omnium
DAT	omnī	omnī	omnibus	omnibus
ACC	omnem	omne	omnēs; omnīs	omnia
ABL	omnī	omnī	omnibus	omnibus

'every, all'

Table 12 *- Class 3 Adjectives (two endings) (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 127)*

	F,M,N/SG	F,M,N/PL
NOM	ingēns	ingentēs, ingentia (neut.)
GEN	ingentis	ingentium
DAT	ingentī	ingentibus
ACC	ingentem, ingēns (neut.)	ingentēs; ingentīs, ingentia (neut.)
ABL	ingentī	ingentibus

'huge'

Table 13 - Class 3 Adjectives (one ending) (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 127)

While case and number marking are just as present on Latin adjectives as they are on nouns, it is important to reiterate the following. Adjectives reflect the gender of the noun that they modify even if the inflectional ending does not match the noun's morphological appearance (cf. (4)). This linguistic feature will also be relevant for Latin determiners in the following section, as they can be used as either adjectives or pronouns depending on the context.

2.2.4. The Declension of Latin Determiners

It has previously been established that Latin does not have articles[11] as we know them in Romance languages (Moreland and Fleischer, 1977; Penny, 2002; Resnick & Hammond, 2011; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011), and that this is instead a consequence of language evolution (cf. §2.3.1). Latin does have demonstratives that function like adjectives when they modify a noun, in (5a), and as pronouns when they occur in place of a noun[12], in (5b).

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[11] Throughout this section I use determiner to refer to both articles and demonstratives, and I also use demonstrative to include both their adjective and pronominal use (cf. (5)), unless otherwise specified.

[12] I show the omission of the noun by including it in square brackets.

(5)   Demonstrative Adjectives and Pronouns (Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 72-73)
    a.   hic   liber
           hic   liber
           this-   book-NOM.SG.M
           NOM.SG.M
           'this book'

    b.   hic   [liber]
           hic   [liber]
           this-   [book-NOM.SG.M]
           NOM.SG.M
           'this [book]'

Demonstratives also have inflectional endings that denote case, number, and gender (Penny, 2002: 143). As Table 14 shows, there are shared word forms in the singular genitive and dative, and the singular nominative inflectional endings tend to differ from what would normally be expected for nouns (Pinkster, 2015: 49).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	haec	hic	hoc	hae	hī	haec
GEN	huius	huius	huius	hārum	hōrum	hōrum
DAT	huic	huic	huic	hīs	hīs	hīs
ACC	hanc	hunc	hoc	hās	hōs	haec
ABL	hāc	hōc	hōc	hīs	hīs	hīs

'this'

Table 14 - HIC, HAEC, HOC (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 110)

An additional linguistic future of Latin demonstratives is the ability to indicate distance from the referent noun to varying degrees from the speaker or receiver of the message, and sometimes both parties. The accusative form of HIC in (6) refers to a noun that is closer to the speaker (Lloyd, 1987: 92).

(6)   HIC, HAEC, HOC (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)
           Hunc   virum   vidēs
           hunc   vir-um   vidē-s
           this.ACC.SG;M   man-ACC.SG;M   see-PRS.2SG
           'You see this man'

While the ISTE forms, in Table 15, show formal similarities with those of HIC, they also refer to a noun that is nearer to the person that the speaker is addressing, in (7), and as shown in

example (8), ISTE can also be used in a belittling manner (Lloyd, 1987: 92; Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 206; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 72).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	ista	iste	istud	istae	istī	ista
GEN	istīus	istīus	istīus	istārum	istōrum	istōrum
DAT	istī	istī	istī	istīs	istīs	istīs
ACC	istam	istum	istud	istās	istōs	ista
ABL	istā	istō	istō	istīs	istīs	istīs

'that (of yours)'

Table 15 - ISTE, ISTA, ISTUD (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 206)

(7)   ISTE, ISTA, ISTUD (Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 72)
Iste   liber
Iste   liber
that.NOM.SG;M   book.NOM.SG;M
'that book, that book of yours'

(8)   Disparaging ISTE, ISTA, ISTUD (Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 72)
Ista   īra
Ista   īr-a
that-NOM.SG;F   anger-NOM.SG;F
'that awful anger of yours'

As for ILLE, in Table 16, the paradigm follows as expected regarding formal ambiguities in comparison with the paradigms in Table 14 and Table 15 above. Furthermore, as shown in example (9), the referent of this demonstrative is located away from both the speaker and hearer of the utterance (Lloyd, 1987: 92).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	illa	ille	illud	illae	illī	illa
GEN	illīus	illīus	illīus	illārum	illōrum	illōrum
DAT	illī	illī	illī	illīs	illīs	illīs
ACC	illam	illum	illud	illās	illōs	illa
ABL	illā	illō	illō	illīs	illīs	illīs

'that'

Table 16 - ILLE, ILLA, ILLUD (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 110)

(9)   ILLE, ILLA, ILLUD (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)

Illum	virum	vidēs
ill-um	vir-um	vidē-s
that-ACC.SG;M	man-ACC.SG;M	see-PRS.2SG

'You see that man'

The demonstrative IS forms, in Table 17, can be used as possessive adjectives denoted as such through genitive case marking, although pronominal use of this demonstrative is also attested (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011: 89). The first of these two contexts are shown in example (10), while the second in shown in (11).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	ea	is	id	eae	eī; iī	ea
GEN	eius	eius	eius	eārum	eōrum	eōrum
DAT	eī	eī	eī	eīs; iīs	eīs; iīs	eīs; iīs
ACC	eam	eum	id	eās	eōs	ea
ABL	eā	eō	eō	eīs; iīs	eīs; iīs	eīs; iīs

'this or that (unemphatic)'

Table 17 – IS, EA, ID (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 110)

(10)   Adjective IS, EA, ID (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)

Eius	librum	habēo
eius	libr-um	habē-o
this/that-GEN.SG;M/F	book-ACC.SG;M	have- PRS.1SG

'I have the book of this (that) man (woman)'

(11)   Pronoun IS, EA, ID (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)

Eum	vidēs
Eum	vidē-s
this/that-ACC.SG;M	see-PRS.2SG

'You see this (that) [man]; you see [him]'

The demonstrative IPSE can be used intensively to emphasize its referent and can also refer to nouns or pronouns in both subject and predicate position (Lloyd, 1987: 92; Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 16). The paradigm for the IPSE forms is in Table 18 below, while an example of its intensive use is in (12).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
NOM	ipsa	ipse	ipsum	ipsae	ipsī	ipsa
GEN	ipsīus	ipsīus	ipsīus	ipsārum	ipsōrum	ipsōrum
DAT	ipsī	ipsī	ipsī	ipsīs	ipsīs	ipsīs
ACC	ipsam	ipsum	ipsum	ipsās	ipsōs	ipsa
ABL	ipsā	ipsō	ipsō	ipsīs	ipsīs	ipsīs

'self, very'

Table 18 - IPSE, IPSA, IPSUM (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 206)

(12)   Intensive IPSE, IPSA, IPSUM (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)

Virum	ipsum	vīdit
vir-um	ips-um	vīdi-t
man-ACC.SG;M	self/very-ACC.SG;M	see- PST.3SG

'He saw the man himself, he saw the very man'

As was discussed for both nouns and adjectives, Latin demonstratives appear to be equally versatile in their case and number marking via inflectional endings. However, demonstratives can carry the additional feature of marking a referent's distance in the discourse, emphatically refer to some referent, or be used in place of a noun all together. In §2.2.5 I summarize some key points that were discussed throughout this section regarding Latin inflectional endings.

2.2.5.   *An Interim Summary of Latin Inflection*

Latin nouns inflect for both case and number, and gender assignment appears to be linked to class in some cases. In other instances, the inflectional ending determines a noun's gender, but only if the biological sex or semantic extension of a noun does not override formal gender assignment (cf. Table 1). For the most part Latin nouns of all genders are found across the five different classes (see Table 19).

DECLENSIONS	FEMININE	MASCULINE	NEUTER	CLASS MARKER
1	✓	✓	■	genitive *-ae*
2	✓	✓	✓	genitive *-ī*
3	✓	✓	✓	genitive *-is*
4	✓	✓	✓	genitive *-ūs*
5	✓	✓	■	genitive *-ēi*

Table 19 - A Summary of Nominal Gender and Declension

Latin adjectives agree with the case, number, and gender of the noun that they modify (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977; Pinkster, 2015), and can agree with all three grammatical genders in Latin. They either follow the forms for Class 1 and 2 nouns (cf. Table 3 and Table 4), or make up a subdivided group similar to the forms of Class 3 nouns (cf. Table 5 and Table 6)), as summarized in Table 20.

DECLENSIONS	FEMININE	MASCULINE	NEUTER
1-2	✓	✓	✓
3/3	✓	✓	✓
3/2	✓	✓	✓
3/1	✓	✓	✓

Table 20 - Summary of Adjective Gender and Declension

Finally, the Latin demonstratives shown in §2.2.4 have both a pronominal and adjectival function, (cf. (10) and (11)), they are declined for case, number and gender, and may also be used as distance markers for some nominal referent, (cf. (6), (7) and (9)), in relation to the speaker and hearer in the discourse (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977; Pinkster, 2015; Wheelock & LaFleur, 2011). Demonstratives seem to follow their own inflectional endings in the sense that their paradigms differ from the nominal and adjectival system, but despite the morphological repetition across their paradigms, they still have endings for case as well as masculine, feminine and neuter gender.

The most important detail, however, is that nouns are organized into five classes by their genitive ending, summarized in Table 21. This is particularly important because declension classes in Spanish and Asturian (cf. (1) and (2)) are a product of language evolution from Latin to Romance. I will undertake a brief historical account in §2.3 to explore the linguistic changes that took us from the complex five-class nominal system in Latin to what will be described as a more economic three-class system in IR.

DECLENSIONS	CLASS MARKER
1	genitive *-ae*
2	genitive *-ī*
3	genitive *-is*
4	genitive *-ūs*
5	genitive *-ēi*

Table 21 - Latin Nominal Case Markers

2.3. From Latin to Ibero-Romance:

The previous section outlined the Latin word markers that indicate the class system that

organizes nouns, adjectives, and determiners into groups by their like endings. Case, number and

gender features aside, it is apparent that Latin inflectional endings are quite different than the

class system of Spanish and Asturian (cf. (1) and (2)), and this more than likely extends to IR in

general too. In this section I will first discuss some general processes that led to the IR system,

particularly regarding the nouns, adjectives, and determiners. I will then apply this background to

focus on the Spanish and Asturian systems with supplemental data from some other IR

languages.

2.3.1. *On the General Changes*

An added benefit to the Latin case system is that word order is mostly free due to inflectional

case marking on nouns and other parts of speech that help clarify their grammatical function in

the sentence. However, this began to shift by the end of the third century BC as evidenced by

documentation in popular written dramas where preposition use started appearing in addition to

case marking on nouns (Penny, 2002: 115), shown in example (13).

(13)　Preposition DE (adapted from Penny, 2002: 115)
- a.　　DĪMIDIUM DE PRAEDĀ
　　　　'la mitad del botín/half of the loot'　　(Plautus)
- b.　　DE MARMORE TEMPLUM
　　　　'un templo de mármol/a marble　　(Virgil)
　　　　temple'
- c..　　PAUCĪ DE NOSTRĪS
　　　　'pocos de los nuestros/a little bit of　　(Caesar)
　　　　ours'

While the words PRAEDĀ, MARMORE and NOSTRĪS have inflectional endings that mark ablative case, at the same time the preposition DE is present in place of the genitive case marker indicated on the words instead, and this preposition use eventually carried over to the use of *de + noun* in Spanish (Penny, 2002: 115), as seen by the translations in (13).

An additional, often-mentioned catalyst for linguistic evolution is the loss of the final consonant of Latin inflectional endings that began around the first century AC (Banza & Gonçalves 2018; Ferreiro, 1999: 143; Lloyd 1987; Penny 1980, 2002; Williams 1962). This matter is ultimately responsible for the loss of case distinction as well as the neuter gender in Spanish, and the same initial processes happened similarly in Asturian, Portuguese, and Galician. Examples (14a), (14b) and (14c) show the general evolution of Class 1, 2 and 3 singular accusative Latin nouns (Ferreiro, 1999: 143; Williams, 1962: 118-123).

(14)　Final Consonant Loss (adapted from Ferreiro, 1999: 143)
- a.　　RŎSAM　　>　　RŎSA　　> rosa
- b.　　AMĪCUM　　>　　AMĪCU　　> amigo
- c.　　LĔŌNEM　　>　　LĔŌNE　　> león

In addition to final consonant loss and case reduction it has also been argued that there was subsequent confusion between different grammatical cases (Lloyd, 1987: 157). In (15) below the nominative and ablative case can be distinguished by the ablative *-ā* word marker, but the loss of the *-m* in the accusative ROSAM eventually caused confusion with the nominative.

(15) Declension Collapse of rosa 'rose' (adapted from Lloyd, 1987:151)

ROSA[NOM]

ROSA(M)[ACC]   [rosa]

ROSĀ[ABL]
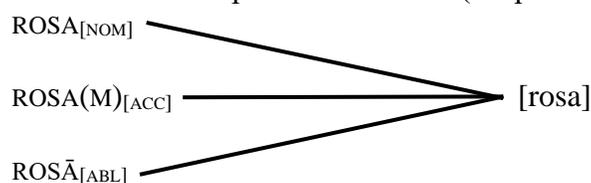
A similar process took place for *vino*, in (16), in that the dative and accusative already formally existed alongside each other. The subsequent loss of *-m* in the nominative and accusative later ambiguated the morphology of the two cases (Lloyd, 1987: 151).

(16) Declension Collapse of vino 'wine' (adapted from Lloyd, 1987: 151)

VĪNU(M)[NOM]

VĪNU(M)[ACC]

                  [βino̝][13]

VĪNŌ[DAT]

VĪNŌ[ABL]
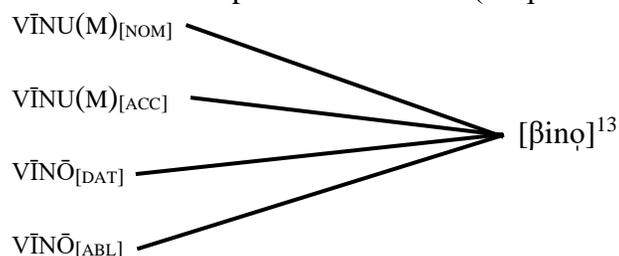
Another analysis has also posited that clinging to the Latin accusative case as the sole ancestor of Spanish noun forms is more of a phonetic argument, and furthermore, it side-steps the issue of the syntax (Penny, 1980: 503; Penny, 2002: 117). Namely, how is it that one noun form that once indicated the verb's direct object can now serve as either a direct object or the subject of the sentence in IR under the same noun form? It is for this reason that Penny specifically mentions the case system of spoken Late Latin, LL henceforth, as shown below in Table 22[14].

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[13] I use the IPA symbols β and o̝ for the voiced bilabial fricative and a vowel that is more closed, respectively, in lieu of the symbols used by Lloyd (1987).

[14] This more recent table from Penny (2002: 117) suffices to make the point explained in the prose above, but for a table containing more examples I refer the reader to Penny (1980: 503).

CLASS	CASE	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 (*a*-class)	Nominative	/rósa/	/rósas/
	Oblique	/rósa/	/rósas/
2 (*o*-class)	Nominative	/ánnos/	/ánni/
	Oblique	/ánno/	/áannos/
3a (*e*/cons.-class)	Nominative	/léo/	/leónes/
	Oblique	/leóne/	/leónes/
3b (*e*/cons.-class)	Nominative	/núβes/	/núβes/
	Oblique	/núβe/	/núβes/

Table 22 - Case in Late Spoken Latin (adapted from Penny, 2002:117)

LL would have more than likely shown the declension pattern that is indicated in the above table in the spoken register, which is made up of the nominative and oblique case. Furthermore, nominative case would have survived from Latin, while the oblique represents an amalgam of the accusative, ablative, genitive, and dative cases, and singular inflectional endings hail from the accusative and ablative, while the plural forms more closely resemble the Latin accusative (Penny, 1980: 501-503).

2.3.2. *General Atonic Final Vowel Changes for IR*

As a brief interim summary and a precursor to what we will see in the following sections I include (17) below. What I would like to highlight is that due to the collapse of the Latin declensions and subsequent phonological changes in word-final endings, previous research appears to point towards the same output in IR languages in general—from the 10 different Latin vowels we get, minimally, three main word markers, *-e*, *-a* and *-o*.

(17)   Atonic Final Vowel Evolution
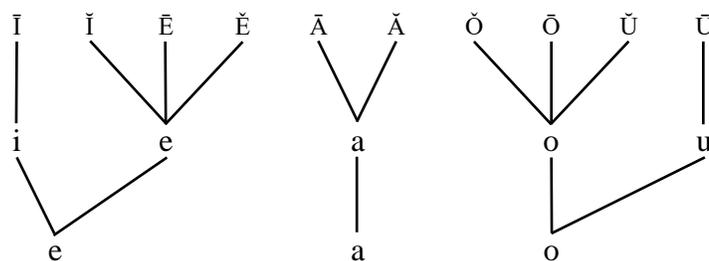
The diagram in (17) can be described via different processes: (i) -*e* and -*o* are a product of vowel shorting and assimilation between short high vowels (ĭ, ŭ), and long and short mid vowels (Ē, Ĕ, Ŏ, Ō), and (ii), -*a* comes from length changes and assimilation of long (Ā) and short (Ă) low central vowels (Resnick & Hammond, 2011: 96-99).

These three vowels at the endpoint of linguistic evolution from Latin are constants in modern IR languages in general[15], though language variation may also be responsible for other final vowel options. Throughout the rest of §2.3 I will explore these difference and similarities in IR, but mainly between Spanish and Asturian.

2.3.3. *From Latin to Spanish Nouns, Adjectives and Determiners*

Spanish nouns ending in -*a* predominately come from the first declension, which mostly accounts for feminine nouns in Latin, in (18a). The -*o* is mostly a consequence of second and fourth declension fusion, with the second declension mainly being made up of masculine Latin nouns, in (18b). Finally, the -*e* , in (18c), typically hails from the third and fifth declension in Latin and does not relate to any one specific gender within its class. This redistribution over time also accounts for exceptions in some inanimate nouns, notably why *mano* has word marker -*o* in Spanish but the noun is feminine, and this is a consequence of the feminine noun having followed the fourth declension forms in Latin (cf. Table 7).

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[15] I point the reader to historical sources for Portuguese (Banza & Gonçalves, 2018 and Williams, 1962) and Galician (Ferreiro, 1999) for more information related to language evolution. Historical work has also been done on the Leonese language (Menéndez Pidal, 1962), which is part of the same Astur-Leonese family as Asturian and it is spoken in regions of Asturias, León, Zamora, Salamanca, Miranda do Douro and a small part of northeast Portugal and (Morala Rodríguez & Egido Fernández, 2019: 508). The general idea behind three basic form classes in these languages can also be corroborated by more theoretical approaches (for European Portuguese see Bisol, 1998; Sousa e Silva, 2020; Vigário, 2003 and Villalva, 2008, for Brazilian Portuguese see Alcântara, 2003; Alcântara, 2010, and for Galician see Martínez-Gil, 2022). Leonese, however, lacks such theoretical contributions and therefore requires more work to be done on it.

(18) Spanish (adapted from Penny, 2002: 116, 120, 126-127)

a. MENSA > mesa *'table'*

b. VĪNUM > vino *'wine'*

c. MONTEM > monte *'hill'*

Neuter nouns also disappeared and there are instances of their reassignment to masculine and feminine gender in Spanish. There are attested examples that represent the confusion between the second declension neuters ending in -UM and the masculine -US of the same declension where the neuter made a switch to the masculine, (cf. PRĀTUM, PRĀTA > *prado, prados 'meadow(s)'* and VĪNUM > *vine 'wine'* from Penny, 2002: 120).

There are also examples of the neuter plural -A that was redistributed into the *a*-class, or Class 1, and later became feminine nouns with a collective reading (cf. FOLIA 'leaves' > *hoja* 'foliage' or LIGNA '(pieces of) wood'> *leña* 'firewood' from Penny, 2002: 122). In Spanish the neuter is only said to have survived as a reinvention to denote a neuter article and the neuter demonstratives.

The characteristics outlined above in the nominal system also influenced adjectives in Spanish and they serve the same function as in Latin, save for some restrictions on adjective position (Penny, 2002: 127). Recall that there are Latin adjectives that follow the forms of Class 1 and Class 2 nouns which are inflected for all three genders, (cf. Table 9 and Table 10), and those that follow the paradigm for Class 3 nouns, (cf. Table 11-Table 13). This second type divides into three sub-classes where some adjectives have one form for each of the three genders, while some have two forms of inflection, and others only one form to correspond to all three genders (see §2.2.3 for relevant discussion).

The multi-form adjectives (Penny, 2002: 127) are what became the four-ending adjectives in Spanish (cf. ALTUS, ALTA, ALTUM > *alto, alta, altos, altas*), while those that had limited forms

ended up with two endings, (cf. FORTIS, FORTE > *fuerte, fuertes*). The former of these adjective types clearly shows a gender and number distinction, while the latter shows no clear variation in gender but distinguishes between singular and plural. A basic example of noun-adjective agreement in Spanish is shown in (19), where the masculine singular noun *hombre* agrees with the masculine singular adjective *anaranjado*. Furthermore, the noun *manos* shows feminine plural agreement with the adjective *pequeñas*. I note the difference in final vowels across the nouns and adjectives in this sentence.

(19)   Spanish Noun-Adjective Agreement
El   hombre[M/SG]   anaranjado[M/SG]   tiene   manos[F/PL]   pequeñas[F/PL]

'The orange man has small hands'

Regarding Spanish determiners we now must consider articles and demonstratives (paraphrasing Penny, 2002 below). It is speculated that articles may have come about from contact between Latin and Greek speakers, and that definite articles served as a reference to something or someone that was not present in the discourse, but that could be defined by the individuals in the conversation. These articles derive from the accusative of the ĬLLUM forms, both singular and plural, while an additional article, neuter article *lo*, comes from the neuter ĬLLUD. As for the indefinite articles from the singular and plural of the numeral adjective ŪNUM, their early function was to refer to something or someone out of the view of the discourse that was also unknown (see the paradigm in Table 23 for reference).

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬLLA	ĬLLE[16]	ĬLLU(D)	ĬLLĀS	ĬLLŌS	ĬLLA
SPAN	la	el	lo	las	los	--
		'the'			*'the'*	

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ŪNA(M)	ŪNU(M)	ŪNUM	ŪNĀS	ŪNŌS	ŪNA
SPAN	una	uno	--	unas	unos	--
		'a,an'			*'any,some'*	

Table 23 - Articles (adapted from Penny, 2002: 143, 145; RAE, 2010: 262, 265; Resnick & Hammond, 2011: 174)

Spanish demonstratives evolved from their Latin ancestors, but from the nominative singular and not the expected accusative. Furthermore, their plural forms derived from their singular counterparts and did not evolve from the plural nominative of the Latin demonstratives (Ferreiro, 1999: 260-262). Of the three groupings of demonstratives in Table 24 below, two features that have remained from Latin are the notion of distance marking (cf. §2.2.4) and the availability of a masculine, feminine and neuter form, though the latter of these only exists in the singular.

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬSTA	ĬSTE	ĬSTUD	--	--	--
SPAN	esta	este	esto	estas	estos	--
			'this/these (near the speaker)'			

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬPSA	ĬPSE	ĬPSUM	--	--	--
SPAN	esa	ese	eso	esas	esos	--
			'that/those (near the hearer)'			

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	*ACCU ĬLLA	*ACCU ĬLLE	*ACCU ĬLLU(D)	--	--	--
SPAN	aquella	aquel	aquello	aquellas	aquellos	--
			'that/those (far from both)'			

Table 24 - Demonstratives (adapted from Penny, 2002: 143-145; RAE 2010: 329; Resnick & Hammond, 2011: 177)

The main point I take from the details above is that there was a collapse of the Latin declension system which caused nominal gender to become redistributed. The loss of case, final consonants, and a reduction in the vowel system over time condensed the classification of

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[16] The evolution from Latin *ĬLLE* to Spanish *el* happened in different stages: *ĬLLE > elle > ele > el* (Resnick & Hammond, 2011: 175).

Spanish nouns into three main classes, ending in *-o*, *-a* and *-e*, with nouns of the masculine and feminine gender scattered about. In §2.3.4 I consider a similar trajectory to arrive from Latin to Asturian.

2.3.4. *From Latin to Asturian Nouns, Adjectives and Determiners*

One generality shared between WA and COA concerns the /a/ that follows the expected trajectory as did the Spanish system presented in §2.3.3. Another common factor that is present in all Asturian, though less common in COA, is the tendency for final atonic vowels to show varying degrees of closure, generating multiple pronunciations like the examples in (20). More specifically, from *-a* to *-e*, in (20a), from *-o* to *-u*, in simple coda (20b), or in contexts where a coda is present, like the *-s* in (20c), and also *-e* to *-i*, in (20d).

> (20) Final Atonic Vowel Closure (Canellada, 1983: 25; Garcia Arias, 2003: 19-20, 125)
> a. sidra / sidre
> *'cider'*
>
> b. velorio / veloriu
> *'vigil'*
>
> c. nenos / nenus
> *'boys', 'children'*
>
> d. nueche / nuechi
> *'night'*

Another set of Asturian vowels worth discussing are the palatal, /i e/, and velar vowels, /o u/, in final atonic position. For example, WA neutralizes these vowel pairs, and the literature therefore represents them as archiphoneme /I/ for the palatal vowels and /U/ for the velar ones (Cano González, 1992; García Arias, 2003)[17]. More specifically, WA speakers may produce

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[17] Palatal vowels may be phonologically represented as the allophones [i], [i̯], [e] or [ɛ], while the archiphoneme /U/ may be represented as [u], [u̯], [o] or [ɔ] (García Arias, 2003: 134-135). Aside from this issue, it is a commonality in all of Asturian that final atonic vowels may undergo varying degrees of closure as their underlying phonological representation (García Arias, 2003: 121-125), thus leading to varying examples, like those in (20).

either *velorio* or *veloriu*, or *nueche* or *nuechi*, and the final vowel does not carry a difference in meaning.

A more salient context for distinction is found in a sub-variety of COA known as Central Asturian (henceforth CA), which I will now refer to in examples (21) through (24). In CA, the opposition shared between the final atonic velar vowels, *-u* and *-o*[18], also referred to as the *mass/count distinction*, or *mass neuter* in the literature (Arias Cabal 1998; Harris-Northall 2005; and San Segundo Cachero 2015, among others). For example, some nouns in CA use *-u*, like *fierru* in (21a), to denote a countable iron object, while *fierro* in (21b) ends in *-o* and denotes iron as a material.

> (21) Mass/Count Distinction (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 76)
>   a. el   fierr-u
>   the.M   iron-M.CT
>   *'the iron [object]'*
>
>   b. el   fierr-o
>   the.M   iron-M.MS
>   *'the iron [material]'*

The same difference in meaning between count and mass is found in *pelu/pelo*, (22a) versus (22b), and *filu/filo*, (23a) versus (23b).

> (22) Mass/Count Distinction (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 76)
>   a. el   pel-u
>   the.M   hair-M.CT
>   *'the [strand of] hair'*
>
>   b. el   pel-o
>   the.M   cider.M.MS
>   *'the hair'*

---

[18] Examples can also be found in the literature of variable nouns like *fresnu/fresno ('ash tree')*, in which speakers may or may not make a distinction based on their individual use of the language. There are also vestiges from Latin gender that produce different results in COA, for example, neuter Latin GĔLUM to masculine *xelu 'ice'* but not *xelo*, or masculine Latin RĪUUM to masculine *río* but not *ríu* (García Arias, 2003:21,138).

(23) a. el   fil-u
              the.M   thread-M.CT
              'the thread'

      b. el   fil-o
              the.M   thread-M.MS
              'thread'

This matter is intriguing due to the lack of *-o* word marker usage on nouns in Asturian. Nonetheless, there are attested examples where nouns make a size distinction[19] between *-u* and *-o*, such as *goxo 'fruit basket' / goxu 'fruit basket [smaller than goxo]'* or *güertu 'small garden' / güerto 'medium garden' / güerta 'big garden'* (García Arias, 2003: 139).

In cases where a noun does not distinguish meaning through the atonic final vowel, the *-u/-o* distinction is also encountered in the context of post-nominal adjectives in CA, as in (24) below, in which the post-nominal modification of a mass noun results in a neuter adjective that ends in *-o*. If the adjective were to be pre-nominal it instead agrees with the gender of the noun, masculine *-u* in example (24c) and feminine *-a*, in example (24d).

(24) Mass Neuter (adapted from Faber, 2015: 13)
      a. el   quesu   {   fresc-o   / *fresc-u}
          the.M   cheese.M   fresh-MS   /fresh-M
          'the fresh cheese'

      b. la   sidra   {   fresc-o   /*fresc-a}
          the.F   cider.F   fresh-MS   /fresh-F
          'the fresh cider'

      c. el   { *fresc-o   /   fresc-u}   quesu
          the.M   fresh-MS   /   fresh-M   cheese.masc
          'the fresh cheese'

      d. la   { *fresc-o   /   fresc-a}   sidra
          the.F   fresh-MS   /   fresh-F   cider.F
          'the fresh cider'

---

[19] I refer the reader to Burner (2022) for an analysis done on pairs such as these and their difference in meaning.

Returning examples from WA and COA, the two main varieties of Asturian discussed in this section, the inventory of possible atonic vowels for both Asturian systems are summarized in Table 25. However, the question that still arises is whether or not Asturian has developed a contrast between the word marker *-o* and other word markers to indicate certain semantic differences that are unrelated to grammatical gender.

WA	COA
• /a/ from -Ā, -Ă in Latin • Neutralization of /i, e/, /o, u/ • 3 segments 2 degrees of opening: /I a U/	• /a/ from -Ā, -Ă in Latin • /i e/, /o u/ from a late Latin process • 5 segments 3 degrees of opening: /i e a o u/

Table 25 - Asturian Sub-systems of Final Atonic Vowels (adapted from García Arias 2003: 116)

I argue that Asturian has a similar nominal class system to that of Spanish, in (25), but that its final atonic vowel inventory slightly differs to that of what the literature has proposed for Spanish. For example, Spanish nouns and adjectives that end in *-i* and *-u* have been treated as following irregular phonological patterns or as being foreign words, like *cursi* or *tribu*, and have therefore been analyzed as having no theme vowel (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013; Harris, 1991, 1992).

(25)   Spanish Atonic Final Vowel Evolution
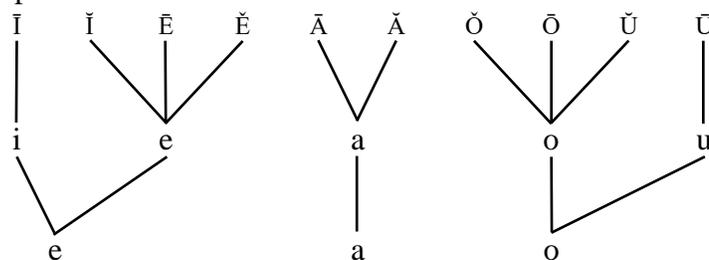
However, the Asturian literature (ALlA, 2001; Canellada, 1983; Faber, 2015; García Arias, 2003; among others) has provided examples where there are in fact five atonic final vowels in WA and COA, *-i*, *-e*, *-a*, *-o*, and *-u* (cf. mainly (20)) but with a slight difference. Given the details above I propose that WA's and COA's final atonic vowel evolution should look something like the three-class system depicted in (26), where the main difference between this and Spanish is that there are two classes with two vowels, the *-i/-e* class and the *-o/-u* class.

(26)   WA & COA Atonic Final Vowel Evolution
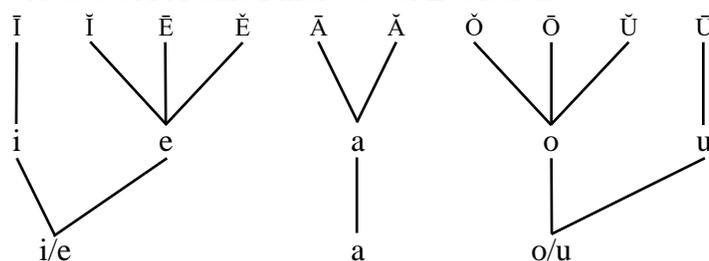
The WA system is a product of vowel neutralization between *-i/-e* and *-o/-u*, and there is a tendency of free variation in final atonic palatal and velar vowels (cf. *tarde/tardi*, *concu/conco*, respectively). This accounts for the morphological and phonological variation mentioned in the literature (García Arias, 2003), even though there is no reported difference in meaning. The main distinction between the COA and the WA systems is that in the former variety the final atonic velar vowels (cf. (21) through (24)) have developed a way to distinguish a specialized meaning.

I now move to the Asturian determiner system, in Table 26, where both the definite and indefinite articles derive from the same Latin words as Spanish did. The only difference between them is the morphology of the Asturian plural feminine *les* and *unes*.

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬLLA	ĬLLE	ĬLLU(D)	ĬLLĀS	ĬLLŌS	ĬLLA
SPAN	la	el	lo	las	los	--
AST	la	el *'the'*	lo	les	los *'the'*	--

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ŪNA(M)	ŪNU(M)	ŪNUM	ŪNĀS	ŪNŌS	ŪNA
SPAN	una	uno	--	unas	unos	--
AST	una	un *'a,an'*	--	unes	unos *'any,some'*	--

Table 26 - Articles (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 97, 115; García Arias, 2003: 240, 275; Penny, 2002: 143, 145; RAE, 2010:262, 265; Resnick & Hammond, 2011: 174)

Table 27 shows a similar evolutionary process in Asturian demonstratives. The *-e* in the feminine plural Asturian examples also persists here, but one additional difference when compared to Spanish are the masculine singular forms *esti*, *esi* and *aquelli*, which end in *-i*.

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬSTA	ĬSTE	ĬSTUD	--	--	--
SPAN	esta	este	esto	estas	estos	--
AST	esta	esti	esto	estes	estos	--

'this/these (near the speaker)'

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	ĬPSA	ĬPSE	ĬPSUM	--	--	--
SPAN	esa	ese	eso	esas	esos	--
AST	esa	esi	eso	eses	esos	--

'that/those (near the hearer)'

	F/SG	M/SG	N/SG	F/PL	M/PL	N/PL
LATIN	*ACCU ĬLLA	*ACCU ĬLLE	*ACCU ĬLLU(D)	--	--	--
SPAN	aquella	aquel	aquello	aquellas	aquellos	--
AST	aquella	aquel, aquelli	aquello	aquelles	aquellos	--

'that/those (far from both)'

Table 27 - Demonstratives (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 103; García Arias, 2003: 280; Penny, 2002: 143-145; RAE, 2010; 329)

In §2.3.3 and §2.3.4 I have provided a brief historical account for how Spanish and Asturian came to possess their final vowel system. For the remainder of this chapter, I will now work on both Spanish (§2.4) and Asturian (§2.5) word markers from a more theoretical point of view.

2.4. On Spanish Word Markers:

It was shown in §2.2 that Latin had a complex system of case and number marking on nouns that was organized into five different declension classes marked by a genitive ending, and gender was not consistently tied to these forms, as nouns of all genders could mostly be found in each class. Elements like adjectives and determiners also established case, number, and gender inflection, reusing most of the same classes and forms. In §2.3 we saw how this Latin system collapsed, how linguistic change over time did away with case marking, and how the once five Latin declension classes eventually redistributed into the three basic form classes in IR languages with their final vowel markers—a mixture of *i/e*, *a*, *o/u*—depending on the specific language.

In this section I will adopt a root-based approach to account for the interaction between form class and gender in Spanish. This will provide the necessary basis to apply a similar analysis to Asturian in §2.5.

There are a few noteworthy analyses of Spanish word markers where one commonality that they share is the grouping of nouns and adjectives into different classes, identified as such by a word marker tied to that class. While this word marker does have some interaction with nominal gender, it does not mark gender in and of itself. One approach in past work organized Spanish nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, referred to as substantives, into five different classes (see Table 28 adapted from Harris, 1992: 65)[20].

Class I substantives end in *-o* while class II substantives end in *-a*. Class III substantives either end in *-e* or have no word marker, and for this reason subdivisions are made in this group[21]. Subclass IIIA accounts for substantives that require that *-e* be inserted to respect Spanish syllabicity. For example, the combination Vf, where V represents a vowel, is not an acceptable coda in Spanish. Therefore, *jefe* ends in the word marker *-e*[22]. Substantives that make up subclass IIIA' have no word marker because Spanish allows for them to end in the segments that they end in[23], but they do add an epenthetic *-e* when in plural form (cf. *as* → *as-e-s* in Harris, 1992: 73). There is a small number of substantives that fall into subclass IIIB which appear to have a similar

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[20] Earlier work created a division between seven different markers, *-o*, *-a*, *-Vs*, *-u*, *-i*, *-s* and *-e*, which also included substantives of all genders across the different classes (Harris, 1991: 30-31).

[21] Class IIIA and IIIA' are ultimately combined into a single IIIA class, but I keep them separate to help guide the discussion (Harris, 1992: 70).

[22] Vld, Vbl, Vps, Vrn, Vdy, Vdr, Vyl, Vyp, Vp, Vb, Vp, Vt, Vč, Vk, Vg, and Vm are additional contexts where an epenthetic *-e* must appear for syllabic reasons, account for examples like rebeld-*e*, tabl-*e*, eclips-*e*, carn-*e*, nady-*e* *nadie'*, madr-*e*, bayl-*e* *'baile'*, naip-*e*, top-*e*, nub-*e*, jef-*e*, aret-*e*, bach-*e*, chequ-*e*, azogu-*e*, sublim-*e*, respectively (Harris, 1992: 70).

[23] The contexts mentioned are V# *'capó'*, Vy# *'ley'*, Vd# *'sed'*, Vs# *'tos'*, Vθ# *'cruz'*, Vn# *'sien'*, Vl# *'él'*, Vr# *'ser'*, where # represents the word boundary (Harris, 1992: 70).

syllabic structure to IIIA' substantives in that they should respect syllabicity without a word marker, but they must end in -*e*[24] (Harris, 1992: 70-71). Class IV contains substantives with word markers of the /s/ type, where either the word ends in -*s* or any of the five Spanish vowels plus -*s*. Finally, class V substantives are mostly less-common Spanish words that either end in -*u* or -*i*, or are foreign words (Harris, 1992: 66).

I						II		
pas-*o*	m	*'step'*				pas-*a*	f	*'raisin'*
man-*o*	f	*'hand'*				map-*a*	m	*'map'*
re-*o*	m/f	*'culprit'*				may-*a*	m/f	*'Maya'*
dentr-*o*		*'inside'*				cerc-*a*		*'near'*

III								
A			A'			B		
jef-*e*	m	*'chief'*	as	m	*'ace'*	pas-*e*	m	*'pass'*
nub-*e*	f	*'cloud'*	col	f	*'cabbage'*	prol-*e*	f	*'progeny'*
verd-*e*	m/f	*'green'*	común	m/f	*'common*	inmun-*e*	m/f	*'immune'*
delant-*e*		*'ahead*	atrás		*'behind'*	adred-*e*		*'on purpose'*

IV				V		
tórak-*s*	m	*'thorax'*		tax-*i*	m	*'taxi'*
dos-*is*	f	*'dose'*		trib-*u*	f	*'tribe'*
mochal-*es*	m/f	*'batty'*		yet-*i*	m/f	*'yeti'*
lej-*os*		*'far'*				
				chef	m/f	*'chef'*
				esnob	m/f	*'snob'*
				golf	m	*'golf'*

Table 28 - Classes of Spanish Substantives (Harris, 1992: 65)

Of the examples in Table 28 I draw particular attention to the masculine class II noun *mapa*, class IIIB substantives and the feminine class I noun *mano*. First, the word marker -*a* is tied to class II under Harris' system, so a masculine noun ending in -*a* stores that it is class II at the lexical level, and this accounts for why the noun ends in -*a* despite its gender. Gender is however relevant for an adjective like *media*, where feminine agreement is established at the syntactic

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[24] Other examples mentioned here are obo-*e*, va[y]-*e*, sed-*e*, pos-*e*, cruc-*e*, en-*e*, el-*e*, er-*e* (Harris, 1992: 70), and these juxtapose the IIIA' substantives mentioned (cf. fn 23).

level, and a redundancy rule applies at morphology that links feminine gender to class II,

ultimately spelling out -a (see (27) below).

(27) Class II Derivations (adapted from Harris, 1992: 68-69)

	mapa	*media*	
LEXICON:	'map'	'half'	
	/map/	/medi/	
	Noun	Adjective	
	II		
SYNTAX:		f(eminine)	by concord
MORPHOLOGY:		f → II	redundancy
	[[map]$_N$]$_N$	[[medi]$_A$]$_A$	
	[[map]$_N$ a]$_N$	[[medi]$_A$ a]$_A$	marker spellout
PHONOLOGY:	/mapa/	/media/	input
	ma.pa	*me.ðia*	output

   To explain the other two cases, we can take class IIIA as a starting point. As mentioned above

nouns like *jefe* and the plural form of *as* (cf. *ases*) have an -e inserted for well-formedness, and

this happens in a phonological process called Marker Epenthesis (Harris, 1992: 72). However,

class IIIB substantives are considered exceptions (see the summary above) and Marker Epenthesis

cannot apply. Instead, Harris argues that these kinds of lexical entries, in (28), are stored with a

stem-final unspecified vowel, V, which is a placeholder for where the default vowel /e/ is spelled

out (Harris, 1992: 73).

(28) Class IIIB exceptions (adapted from Harris, 1992: 73)

    a.   IIIB: obo-e
           Lexicon: [obo+V]$_i$

    b.   IIIB: hero-e
           Lexicon: [ero+V]$_i$

    c.   IIIB: sed-e
           Lexicon: [sed-V]$_i$

    d.   IIIB: en-e
           Lexicon: [en-V]$_i$

Though Harris does not take a firm stance on how to explain what happens with *mano*, he offers at least two possibilities. First, the morphological redundancy rule "f → II", see (27), that would assign the class II marker -*a* due to the noun's feminine status could simply not apply, inserting -*o* as a default option. A second possibility is that *mano* could be likened to the class IIIB examples in example (28), where the noun is specifically stored as [man+o]$_i$ and a second root *man-* can be found in the lexicon to handle other derivational examples (cf. *man+u+al* '*manual*' from Harris, 1992: 69).

The approach summarized above is largely a root-driven one, as everything builds up from the root as a starting point. Another way to look at Spanish word markers is to take a stem-driven approach. Instead of organizing nouns into numbered classes they can also be thought of as *o-stem*, *a-stem* or *e-stem* classes, and word markers are not combined with the root to create a stem, but rather the lexicon stores word markers together with their roots (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 6-7).

Table 29 shows that the *o*-stem and *a*-stem class contain nouns that are of both masculine and feminine gender. The *e*-stem class has two subdivisions, ordinary *e*-stems and *e*-only stems. The former shows two theme choices, -*e*- or null -*Ø*, and ordinary *e*-stems are considered as such

because the theme is decided by the natural phonotactic behavior of Spanish[25], while *e*-only

stems have but one theme option and end in *-e* when it would otherwise be expected that the

stem would be athematic (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 10-11).

CLASS		THEME	SINGULAR	PLURAL	GLOSS	GENDER
o-stem		/-o-/	[lí-o]	[lí-**o**-s]	*'muddle'*	M
			[mán-o]	[mán-**o**-s]	*'hand'*	F
a-stem		/-a-/	[dí-a]	[dí-**a**-s]	*'day'*	M
			[kán-a]	[kán-**a**-s]	*'grey hair'*	F
e-stem	ordinary *e*-stem	/-{e,Ø}-/	[lúθ-Ø]	[lúθ-**e**-s]	*'light'*	F
			[páðɾ-e]	[páðɾ-**e**-s]	*'father'*	M
			[máðɾ-e]	[máðɾ-**e**-s]	*'mother'*	F
	e-only stem	/-e-/	[kɾúθ-e]	[kɾúθ-**e**-s]	*'crossing'*	M
			[éliθ-e]	[éliθ-**e**-s]	*'propeller'*	F

Table 29 - Spanish Theme Vowels and Classes (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 10)

To expand a little more on *e*-stems, nouns like *[rej] / [ré-ɟe-s]* and [lápis-Ø] / [lápis-e-s] are

treated as ordinary e-stems because they only take *-e* in the plural. Examples like *[kúrsi-*

s] and *[kafé] / [café-s]* are athematic and have no theme vowel even in the plural (Bermúdez-

Otero, 2013: 11)[26]. We now arrive at the crux of this analysis having established the general

classification system above.

Bermúdez-Otero (2013) also views roots as uncategorized in his system, which stores entire

stems in the lexicon—in other words *root + theme* vowel combinations. This method accounts

for feminine singular *man-o* and treats it like all other stems across the classes shown in Table 29

as they are all stored with their theme vowel save any athematic examples.

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[25] This does not deviate too far from Harris' (1992) work in that the contexts in which we see -*Ø* is when the stem ends in a vowel, a postvocalic glide or any one consonant within the grouping /ɾ, l, n, s, θ, d/, and elsewhere we see -*e*- (cf. fn 23).

[26] The nouns *cursi* and *café* would fall under *residue* in the Harris (1991) sense, but under Harris (1992: 70) the would be considered class v substantives.

Suffix stumps, also referred to as derivational suffixes, are offered as additional evidence for a stem-based approach because they rely on the gender inherited from the base word. This inherited gender is what allows the suffix stump to select the theme vowel (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 18-23; cf. Lázaro Mora, 1999: 4656 and references therein), with the outcome being a different theme vowel than the non-augmented word, shown in (29).

(29)   Suffix Stumps[27] (adapted from Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 19-20)

	BASE	DERIVATIVE	
a.	[mán-o]	[man-áθ-a]	
	hand-TH$_o$[F]	hand-AUG-TH$_a$[F]	
	'hand'	*'big hand'*	
b.	[pɾoβlém-a]	[pɾoβlem-áθ-o]	
	problem-TH$_a$[m]	problem-AUG-TH$_o$[M]	
	'problem'	*'big problem'*	
c.	[saɾtén-Ø]	[saɾtén-áθ-a]	[saɾtén-áθ-o]
	frying_pan-TH$_e$[F]	frying_pan-AUG-TH$_a$[F]	frying_pan-AUG-TH$_o$[M]
	'frying pan'	*'big frying pan'*	*'blow struck with a frying pan'*

One additional issue to note with the examples in (29) is that the theme vowel in the base is not maintained in the derivative form on the right. This matter is resolved through a process of stem-final theme vowel deletion when the theme vowel is followed by a vowel in the suffix (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 43-44)[28]. In (30) additional examples further drive home this message with the incorrect derivations on the right if the theme vowel were to remain attached to the stem.

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[27] There are several other suffix stumps mentioned that engage in similar behavior (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 19-20). Diminutive -ít- is an interesting example because in one outcome it is an infix to the base [mán-o] and inherits both gender and inflection class to form [man<ít>-o], while another outcome is that it is a suffix, like the examples in (29), where the derived word is [man-ít-a].

[28] This analysis follows from instances of deverbal derivation that have vowel-initial suffixes, like [akus-ón-Ø] *'(one) who makes accusations too often'* from [akus-**á**-ɾ] *'accuse.INF'*, or [reβent-ón-Ø] *'that bursts or is about to burst'* from [reβent-**á**-ɾ] *'burst.INF'*. For more discussion see section 2.4 of Bermúdez-Otero (2013).

(30)   Stem-final Vowel Deletion (adapted from Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 43-44)

	BASE	DERIVATIVE	
a.	[éɾo-e]	[eɾo-ísm-o]	*[eɾo-e-ísm-o]
	'hero'	*'heroism'*	
b.	[koɾpóɾe-o]	[koɾpoɾe-jðáð]	*[koɾpoɾe-o-jðáð]
	'corporeal'	*'corporeality'*	
c.	[kɾáne-o]	[kɾane-áθ-o]	*[kɾane-o-áθ-o]
	'cranium'	*'cranium.*AUG*' / 'headbutt'*	
d.	[líne-a]	[line-ál-Ø]	*[line-a-ál-Ø]
	'line'	*'linear'*	

I pull from both authors in this section to discuss the Spanish pronouns and determiners in Table 30. One analysis is that the masculine singular has no theme vowel, and the feminine forms fall under class II marked by *-a* (Harris, 1991: 42), or the feminine forms are *a*-stems (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 17). The so-called *neuter* formally opposes the masculine and feminine versions via its *-o* ending. It has been described as acting like inner core masculine substantives that end in *-o* (Harris, 1991: 42), or a just a regular *o*-stem used as evidence to say that the *-o* should not be involved with default masculine gender (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013: 17)[29].

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	
NOMINATIVE PRONOUN	él	ella	ello	*'he, she, it'*
ARTICLE	el	la	lo	*'the'*
DEMONSTRATIVE	este	esta	esto	*'this'*
	ese	esa	eso	*'that'*
	aquel	aquella	aquello	*'that (distant)'*

Table 30 - Gender Exponence of Spanish Pronouns and Determiners (Harris, 1991: 41)

I follow the argument that the forms *él*, *el*, and *aquel* are athematic while the other masculine forms in Table 30 end in *-e*, and the feminine forms do indeed have *-a* as their theme marker. I

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[29] Bermúdez-Otero (2013: 17) does not include much on these paradigms, only mentioning in a footnote the singular forms *aquel/aquella/aquello* and the plurals *aquellos/aquellas*. He treats the masculine singular *aquel* as being part of the e-stem class with a null theme vowel.

will undertake the interesting case of how we might account for the so-called neuter forms in §2.4.1, but first I briefly summarize the work of Harris (1992) and Bermúdez-Otero (2013).

To begin, both authors are essentially arguing in favor of the same concepts but in slightly different ways. They both tie theme vowels to their class system but Harris refers to his classes by their numbers and has a total of five classes, with class I-III being the most important. Bermúdez-Otero organizes his three classes by the theme vowel, but he maintains a similar subdivision for *e*-stems, what Harris would refer to as IIIA/IIIA' versus IIIB. Class IV nouns are treated as ordinary *e*-stems and class V nouns are treated as athematic.

As for their general analysis they differ in that Harris employs a root-driven theory where derivational or inflectional suffixes attach directly to the root. This creates the need for class IIIB substantives like *obo-e* and examples like *man-o* to be treated as exceptions in that their roots may be stored with some information for their theme vowel insertion. Bermúdez-Otero avoids this issue by couching his analysis in a stem-driven theory where the root and theme vowel are stored together in the lexicon as a complete stem. This however requires him to develop a theme vowel deletion component for cases where the theme vowel appears in the base word but not in the derived word (cf. (29) and (30)). I treat Harris and Bermúdez-Otero as working towards the same goal, and I analyze the former as taking an additive approach while the latter takes a subtractive one.

A third approach to Spanish word markers is another root-driven theory that is couched in the DM framework, that has considered the same questions discussed in this section, and that has also been based on the work summarized above. One difference with this approach is the class grouping is much more simplified. There are still three classes, but CLASS III is not subdivided

into different types (see discussion above). However, the *-e/Ø* word marker allomorphy is maintained (Kramer, 2015: 236).

The stipulations under Kramer's method to account for much of the same examples above (cf. Table 28 and Table 29 in particular) lie predominately in the morphosyntax of gender within different DM processes, which structurally derive node order to provide later mapping of morphemes onto said nodes via phonological rules. I provide a detailed account of how this system can derive nouns, in chapter three, and adjective agreement, in chapter four according to the Asturian data.

The relevant portion of Kramer's (2015) system to conclude this section on Spanish theme vowels is to simply show how nouns are grouped together in their classes with the theme vowels that mark them, in Table 31. It should come as no surprise that CLASS I nouns end in *-o*, CLASS II nouns end in *-a*, and CLASS III nouns can end in *-e* or *Ø*, and these nouns can be of either gender.

While I use the paradigm below as the basis for grouping Asturian nouns and adjectives into classes indicated by their word markers in §2.5, we will see how some aspects of the other work summarized above need not be fully discarded, particularly the analysis of ordinary *e*-stems (see discussion of Bermúdez-Otero, 2013 above). However, before I begin to lay out the Asturian case, the matter of a possible neuter gender in Spanish must still be discussed.

FORM CLASS	THEME VOWEL	NOUN	GLOSS	GENDER
I	*-o*	lí-o	*'muddle'*	masculine
		man-o	*'hand'*	feminine
II	*-a*	dí-a	*'day'*	masculine
		pas-a	*'raisin'*	feminine
III	*-e/Ø*	padr-e	*'father'*	masculine
		madr-e	*'mother'*	feminine
		lápiz-Ø	*'pencil'*	masculine
		luz- Ø	*'light'*	feminine

Table 31 - Spanish Form Classes (Kramer, 2015: 236; built on Bermúdez-Otero, 2013)

2.4.1. On the Existence of the Neuter in Spanish:

The *-o* marker found on what has traditionally been referred to as neuter forms appears to be a more involved case in Spanish. First, the authors mentioned in §2.4 abstracted away from taking much of a stance on the existence of a Spanish neuter. They simply refer to the examples in Table 30 by their forms in that they end in *-o*. Second, while the article *lo* and the demonstratives *esto*, *eso* and *aquello* do come from neuter Latin forms (cf. Table 27) any real notion of neuter gender in the pronoun and determiner system, nouns and adjectives in Spanish have been lost (cf. §2.3.3)[30].

In fact, the cases in which we see the article *lo* or any of the demonstratives *esto*, *eso*, or *aquello* are contexts that depend on some agreement target other than the noun itself. For example, *lo* in (31a) refers to an abstract thing or idea, *esto* in (31b) refers to a general situation, and *aquello* in (31c) refers to the concept of someone complaining a lot.

(31) "Neuter" forms
  a. ¿Qué es **lo** que quieres?   (Ojeda, 1984: 172)
    'What is it that you want?'

  b. **Esto** del género gramatical   (Hall, 1965: 423)
    'This business of grammatical gender'

  c. Sé que se quejan mucho, pero **aquello** no me importa   (Klein, 1988: 111)
    'I know they complain a lot but that doesn't matter to me'

Additional evidence for the inexistence of a neuter gender in Spanish is that neuter nouns in Latin could be referential, while in Spanish they cannot. The Latin demonstrative HOC in (32) morphologically agrees in number and gender with the singular neuter noun referent, DŌNUM. In Spanish the equivalent demonstrative does not precede nouns because there is no neuter gender

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[30] This terminology poses more of a question for Asturian, where the "mass neuter" phenomenon extends to various parts of speech (see chapter three and four for a discussion on nouns and adjectives, respectively).

to agree with, and therefore the only distributions are those like in (32). For this reason only masculine or feminine gender agreement holds (compare *¿viste **esto** regalo?* with *¿viste **ese** regalo?*).

(32) "Neuter" forms (Moreland & Fleischer, 1977: 111)
      Vidēsne **hoc** (**illud**, **id**) dōnum?
      *'Do you see **this** (**that**; **this/that**) gift'*

Finally, the previous sections show that the *-o* does evolve from a Latin neuter gender, but for the reasons mentioned above I argue that there is no longer a real neuter gender in Spanish. I take the position that the term *neuter* is a misnomer, and it is as much a morphological issue as it is a terminological one. Although it provides a means for juxtaposition with the masculine and feminine forms, it has been a recurring theme in §2.4 that gender is not necessarily reflected in the final vowel that appears in Spanish. For this reason, I will simply call them *-o* forms[31]. In §2.5 I will discuss how word markers apply to the Asturian case and will follow a similar organization to the presentation of Spanish in §2.4. Additionally, we will see how the question revolving around a potential neuter gender is much more relevant in Asturian.

2.5. On Asturian Word Markers:

The main difference between Asturian and the previously mentioned IR languages is that masculine nouns typically end in *-u* instead of *-o*, but the *-a* continues as a feminine word marker in the language, as explained by ALlA (2001: 85). This gives us the vowel chart in Table 32 below, where /a/ is an open central vowel, /e/ is a mid-front vowel and /i/ is a closed front one. The back vowels /o/ and /u/ are mid- and closed vowels, respectively (ALlA, 2001: 24).

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[31] In the context of Table 30 it is clear to which sets of words the term *-o* form refers, as the masculine and feminine counterparts do not end in *-o*. As there is no grammatical neuter gender attested in Spanish nouns and adjectives my position is also unproblematic, as *-o* form would clearly refer to any noun or adjective in CLASS I, irrespective of gender.

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
CLOSED	*i*		*u*
MIDDLE	*e*	*o*	
OPEN		*a*	

Table 32 - Asturian Vowel Chart (ALlA, 2001: 23)

To provide some idea of Asturian vowel phonology the tables below show how phonetic

realization can vary in different contexts, first in the tonic syllable. In Table 33 the /a/ is palatal

in *hachu*, velar in *prau*, it is realized as nasal in *mano* and has a middle degree of aperture in

falar (ALlA, 2001: 24).

/a/	[a̯]	**ha**chu	*'axe'*
	[a̯]	pr**a**u	*'field'*
	[ã]	m**a**no	*'hand'*
	[a]	fal**a**r	*'to speak'*

Table 33 - /a/ in Tonic Syllables (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 24)

The examples in Table 34 show that /e/ can vary between closed aperture in *xente* and an

open one in *pex*. It has a labial realization in the word *fueu* and is nasal in *neña* (ALlA, 2001:

24).

/e/	[ẹ]	x**e**nte	*'people'*
	[ę]	p**e**x	*'fish'*
	[ö]	fu**e**u	*'fire'*
	[ẽ]	n**e**ña	*'girl'*

Table 34 - /e/ in Tonic Syllables (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 24)

As for Table 35 /i/ is closed in *filu*, open in *risa*, and it is nasal vowel in the noun *mina*. It also

has additional phonetic realization as the semi-consonant in *mieu* and the semi-vowel in *algaire*

(ALlA, 2001: 24).

/i/	[i̯]	f**i**lu	*'a thread'*
	[i̯]	r**i**sa	*'laugh'*
	[ĩ]	m**i**na	*'mine'*
	[j]	m**i**eu	*'fear'*
	[i̯]	alga**i**re	*'wild cat'*

Table 35 - /i/ in Tonic Syllables (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 24)

Different phonetic realizations of /o/ are found in Table 36, where the aperture can be closed

like in *llocu*, or open in the verb form *voi*. There is also a context in which the phoneme is

nasalized, in *monxa* (ALlA, 2001: 24).

/o/	[o̞]	ll**o**cu	*'crazy'*
	[ɔ̞]	v**o**i	*'I go'*
	[õ]	m**o**nxa	*'nun'*

Table 36 - /o/ in Tonic Syllables (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 24)

Finally, Table 37 captures some differences with the phoneme /u/. It can be a closed vowel, in

camuda, or an open one, in *turria*, and there is also a nasal representation in *munchos*. Like /i/, it

can also be a semi-consonant or semi-vowel representation, in *güei* and *pautu*, respectively

(ALlA, 2001: 24)

/u/	[u̞]	cam**u**da	*'He/She/It changes'*
	[ʊ̞]	t**u**rria	*'incline'*
	[ũ]	m**u**nchos	*'many'*
	[w]	g**ü**ei	*'today'*
	[u̯]	pa**u**tu	*'pact'*

Table 37 - /u/ in Tonic Syllables (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 24)

In the context of atonic syllables, the phonemes /i/ and /e/ are orthographically represented as

"i" and "e", respectively, (cf. *m**i**dir 'to measure'* but not **m**edir*, or *est**i** 'this'* but not **est**e* , and

pequeñín 'very small', not **p**iquiñín*, or *nuech**e** 'night'* not **nuech**i*). Phonologically they are

interchangeable in that their pronunciation falls on a spectrum from more closed, [i̞], to more

open, [e̞] (ALlA, 2001: 24-27; 30-32).

The orthographic representation of /o/ and /u/ are always "o" (cf. *at**o**par 'to find'*, not

atu*par*) and "u" (cf. *c**u**chiellu 'knife'* not **c**o*chiellu*). They can also be phonologically

interchangeable within a range of aperture from closed, [u̞], to open, [o̞]. These two vowels when

in atonic final position prove to be a special case, as according to the prescriptive literature *-o* can only appear in very specific cases[32] (ALlA, 2001: 27-29; 32-34).

Finally, in standard Asturian /a/ can be realized as [a], [e] or [i], although it is always represented as "a" (cf. *día 'day'*, not **díe* or **díi*). It can also be dropped all together in certain cases in either word-initial or word-final position (cf. ***a****topar* or *topar 'to find'*, and *la primer****a*** *casa* or *la primer casa 'the first house'*), though the word-final position appears to pertain to adjectives specifically (ALlA, 2001: 29-30). Asturian vowel behavior in general appears to be volatile in terms of phonetic realization, but in looking at the forms for nouns, adjectives, determiners, demonstratives, and pronouns below, we see that there seems to be more organization regarding word morphology. In a first pass of Asturian theme vowels in Table 38 through Table 40 I have bolded potential word markers to set them apart for any athematic forms.

Asturian nouns, in Table 38, are either masculine or feminine, they can end in *-o*, *-u*, *-a*, *-e* or *-Ø*[33], and there is no one gender tied to any one theme vowel. Three noun pairs of interest are *fierru/fierro*, *filu/filo* and *pelu/pelo*, where the final vowel entails a semantic difference between count, when they end in *-u*, and mass when they end in *-o*. Both forms, however, are masculine.

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[32] I refer the reader to reader to chapter two for further discussion on the types of nouns that end in this word marker. The use of *-u/-o* for count/mass distinction is at the heart of chapters three and four.

[33] The prescriptive grammar does not attest the *-u* form *manu*, instead opting for *mano*. However, *manu* does appear in Asturian despite the Academy's position so I include it here (cf. *Gárra-y una manu tou delicáu 'He grabbed his hand very delicately'* from Díaz, 1994 [example recovered from the Eslema corpus, Viejo Fernández et al. (2008)]).

NOUNS					
aut**o**	av**e**	calor	camín	camión	canal
m	*f*	*f*	*m*	*m*	*f*
'car'	*'bird'*	*'heat'*	*'path'*	*'truck'*	*'channel'*
cabás	dí**a**	esmolición	favor	ferr**e**	fierr**o**
m	*m*	*f*	*m*	*m*	*m*
'basket'	*'day'*	*'worry'*	*'favor'*	*'hawk'*	*'iron material'*
fierr**u**	fil**o**	fil**u**	fontán	furac**u**	llebr**e**
m	*m*	*m*	*m*	*m*	*f*
'an iron object'	*'thread'*	*'a thread'*	*'spring'*	*'hole'*	*'hare'*
llei	man**o**	man**u**	map**a**	pel**o**	pel**u**
f	*f*	*f*	*m*	*m*	*m*
'law'	*'hand'*	*'hand'*	*'map'*	*'hair'*	*'a hair'*
puert**a**	rapaz			rei	xarabal
f	*m*			*m*	*m*
'door'	*'adolescent'*			*'king'*	*'school [fish]'*

Table 38 - Asturian Noun Groups (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 85-95; Díaz, 1994)

The adjectives in Table 39 have masculine, feminine and neuter forms. Masculine and feminine adjectives can end in the same theme vowels as nouns except for *-o*, which is reserved for some neuter adjectives in addition to *-e*, or *-Ø*[34]. I come back to whether there is a neuter gender in Asturian at the end of this section.

ADJECTIVES					
avilesín	avilesin**a**	avilesin**o**	cangués	cangues**a**	cangues**o**
m	*f*	*n*	*m/n*	*f*	*n*
'from Avilés'	*'from Avilés'*	*'from Avilés'*	*'from Cangas'*	*'from Cangas'*	*'from Cangas'*
europe**a**	europé**u**	europe**o**	faceder**a**	faceder**o**	faceder**u**
m	*m*	*n*	*f*	*n*	*m*
'European'	*'European'*	*'European'*	*'doable'*	*'doable'*	*'doable'*
intelixent**e**	**l**libr**e**	mal**a**	mal**o**	mal**u**	manguán
m/f/n	*m/f/n*	*f*	*n*	*m*	*m*
'intelligent'	*'free'*	*'bad'*	*'bad'*	*'bad'*	*'lazy'*
manguan**a**	manguan**o**	metid**a**	metí**u**	metí**o**	moyad**a**
f	*n*	*f*	*m*	*n*	*f*
'lazy'	*'lazy'*	*'put'*	*'put'*	*'put'*	*'wet'*
moyá**u**	moya**o**	zulú			
m	*n*	m/f/n			
'wet'	*'wet'*	*'from Zulu'*			

Table 39 - Asturian Adjective Groups (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 86-95)

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[34] There are also examples where the neuter adjective has two possible endings, for example *agua puercón/puercono 'filthy water'*. The first option is synonymous with masculine agreement, *pisu puercón 'filthy floor'*, and both are distinguished from feminine *mesa puercona 'filthy table'* (ALlA, 2001: 90).

Determiners, demonstratives, and pronouns, in Table 40, have a similar morphology to that of nouns and adjectives. They have masculine, feminine, and neuter genders, but here the *-o* is reserved exclusively for the neuter forms. It is noteworthy that the masculine demonstrative forms end in *-i*, and that direct object *lu* is the only *-u* form[35].

DETERMINERS, DEMONSTRATIVES AND PRONOUNS					
aquel	aquel**la**	aquel**li**	aquel**lo**	el	él
m	*f*	*m*	*n*	*m*	*m*
'that [far]'	*'that [far]'*	*'that' [far]*	*'that'*	*'the'*	*'he'*
ell**a**	ell**i**	ell**o**	est**a**	est**i**	est**o**
f	*m*	*n*	*f*	*m*	*n*
'she'	*'he'*	*'it'*	*'this'*	*'this'*	*'this'*
es**a**	es**i**	es**o**	l**a**	l**o**	l**o**
f	*m*	*n*	*f*	*n*	*n*
'that'	*'that'*	*'that'*	*'her/it'*	*'it'*	*'the'*
l**u**					
m					
'him/it'					

Table 40 - Asturian Determiner, Demonstrative and Pronoun Groups (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 103-104, 142)

Table 38 through Table 40 indicate that Asturian may have a theme vowel inventory of *-o*, *-u*, *-a*, *-e*, *-i* or *-Ø*, which falls in line with the historical account provided in §2.3.4. I will devote the rest of this section to reorganizing Asturian words into their respective classes, but we first must consider some patterns and deviations with plural formation to more accurately do so.

Like Spanish, *-s* is a typical marker for plural inflection in Asturian and it appears after the word marker unless the word is invariable. A general characteristic for masculine singular nouns and adjectives that end in *-u*, in (33a), and feminine singular nouns and adjectives that end in *-a*, in (33b), is that they undergo a theme vowel change in the plural, giving *-os*[36] and *-es*, respectively. Masculine singular demonstratives, which end in *-i*, also change to *-o* in the plural, in (33c).

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[35] I clarify here that *aquel* is the athematic shortened form of *aquelli* in prenominal position (ALlA, 2001: 103).

[36] The plural *manos* is not considered standard but can be found in other works (cf. González Arias, 2003, among other literary texts).

(33) Generalizations 1 (collected from ALlA, 2001; González Arias, 2003)

	SG		PL		EXAMPLE(S)		
a.	*-u*	→	*-os*		fil**u**	→	fil**o**-s
					'thread'		*'threads'*
					mal**u**	→	mal**o**-s
					'bad [m.sg]'		*'bad [m.pl]'*
					man**u**/man**o**	→	man**o**-s
					'hand'		*'hands'*
b.	*-a*	→	*-es*		puert**a**	→	puert**e**-s
					'door'		*'doors'*
					map**a**	→	map**e**-s
					'map'		*'maps'*
					mal**a**	→	mal**e**-s
					'bad [f.sg]'		*'bad [f.pl]'*
c.	*-i*	→	*-os*		est**i**	→	est**o**-s
					'this'		*'these'*
					es**i**	→	es**o**-s
					'that'		*'those'*
					aquell**i**	→	aquell**o**-s
					'that [far]'		*'those [far]'*

Nouns and adjectives like *monte 'mountain'* and *intelixente 'intelligent'*, in (34a), end in *-e* because the syllabic structure of Asturian requires them to do so, as *mont* and *intelixent* are phonotactically ill-formed. Words with consonantal endings like *llagar 'winery'* or *cangués 'from Cangas'*, in (34b), are athematic in the singular but require an epenthetic *-e* in the plural, and endings with an accented vowel, *xalé 'chalet'*, or a glide, *rei 'king'*, in (34c), are athematic in both the singular and plural forms. Here no syllabic violation occurs, and nouns of this type are structurally acceptable. Finally, invariable forms like *virus*, in (34d), are athematic in the singular and plural as no plural inflection is added.

(34)   Generalizations 2 (collected from ALlA, 2001)

	SG		PL	EXAMPLE(S)		
a.	*-e*	→	*-s*	mont**e** *'mountain'*	→	mont**e**-s *'mountains'*
				intelixent**e** *'intelligent [sg]'*	→	intelixent**e**-s *'intelligent [pl]'*
b.	*-Ø*	→	*-es*	llagar *'winery'*	→	llagar**e**-s *'wineries'*
				cangués *'from Cangas [sg]'*	→	cangues-**e**-s *'from Cangas [pl]'*
c.	*-Ø*	→	*-s*	xalé *'chalet'*	→	xalé-s *'chalets'*
				rei *'king'*	→	rei-s *'kings'*
d.	*-Ø*	→	*-Ø*	virus *'virus'*	→	virus *'viruses'*

In (35) and (36) are what I analyze as some exceptional cases that deviate from the patterns in (33) and (34). In standard Asturian the feminine singular noun *manu 'hand'* in (35a) appears as the feminine plural *manes 'hands'* instead of the expected *-os* ending in the variant example (cf. (33a))[37]. Very few nouns of the (35b) type are attested, where the singular form ends in *-u* and the vowel is maintained in the plural (ALlA, 2001: 34).

(35c) accounts for the observation that shortened versions of nouns (cf. *auto(móvil) 'automobile', foto(grafía) 'photograph'*, and a handful of others) as well as three mass nouns (cf. *fierro 'iron material', filo 'thread'*, and *pelo 'hair'*) appear as *-o* forms (ALlA, 2001: 93)[38]. I apply the same logic of *manu 'hand'/manes 'hands'* to the example *mano 'hand'/manes 'hands'* in (35d)—the theme vowel *-o* would not be expected to appear as *-e* in the plural form.

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[37] I wish to clarify that while *manes 'hands'* falls under standard Asturian, I include the example as an exception because the change *-u > -es* is not the typical pattern of *-u* form nouns when pluralized. Instead, it appears that grammatical gender has more influence over the morphology than the theme vowel class in this case.

[38] These are included under exceptions because the *-o* is not purported to be productive in Asturian nouns in general. Furthermore, the "mass *-o*" is non-count and does not have a plural form according to the literature (ALlA, 2001: 93).

(35)   Exceptions 1 (collected from ALlA, 2001)

	SG		PL	EXAMPLE(S)		
a.	*-u*	→	*-es*	man**u**	→	man**e**-s
				'hand'		*'hands'*
b.	*-u*	→	*-s*	trib**u**	→	trib**u**-s
				'tribe'		*'tribes'*
c.	*-o*	→	*-s*	aut**o**	→	aut**o**s
				'car'		*'cars'*
				fierr**o**	→	--
				'iron material'		
d.	*-o*	→	*-es*	man**o**	→	man**e**-s
				'hand'		*'hands'*

I include the last set of exceptions in (36) below, which is representative of the irregular patterns found for singular nouns and adjectives that end in *-e* and *-Ø*. (36a) and (36b) are an interesting case as two different forms of the singular are attested, which is why I include them here. Nouns like *pexe 'fish'* and *viaxe 'voyage'* end in *-e* while the equally acceptable versions *pex 'fish'* and *viax 'voyage'* are athematic[39]. In (36c) the singular masculine noun and adjectives are athematic, but their plurals look like typical masculines. Examples like *marxe 'margin'* and *resume 'summary'*, in (36d), have an epenthetic *-n-* inserted in the plural, after which an epenthetic *-e* must also be added inside plural inflection to respect syllabic structure. One explanation for this is that words of this kind end in *-n* underlyingly in the singular, but it remains unpronounced except in the context of plural inflection.

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[39] Some additional examples are *él texe/él tex 'he knits'*, *clase/clas 'class'*, *frase/fras 'phrase'*, and *él cuese/él cues 'he sews'* (ALlA, 2001: 30).

(36) Exceptions 2 (collected from ALlA, 2001)

	SG		PL	EXAMPLE(S)		
a.	*-e*	→	*-s*	pex**e**	→	pex**e**-s
				'fish'		*'fish'*
				viax**e**	→	viax**e**-s
				'voyage'		*'voyages'*
b.	*-Ø*	→	*-es*	pex	→	pex**e**-s
				'fish'		*'fish'*
				viax	→	viax**e**-s
				'voyage'		*'voyage'*
c.	*-Ø*	→	*-os*	rapaz	→	rapaz-**o**-s
				'adolescent'		*'adolescents'*
				avilesín	→	avilesin**o**-s
				'from Avilés [sg]'		*'from Ávila [pl]'*
d.	*-Ø*	→	*-es*	marxe	→	márxen**e**-s
				'margin'		*'margins'*
				resume	→	resúmen**e**-s
				'summary'		*'summaries'*

According to the generalizations and exceptions in (33) through (36) it is clear that Asturian is like the Spanish model in that it minimally has three different classes, but in this case marked by *-u* (CLASS I), *-a* (CLASS II), and *-e/-Ø* (CLASS III). Some decisions now must be made about the potential theme class status of *-o* and *-i*.

In the singular we see *-o* in very specific cases—shortened nouns, exceptions like *mano*, three mass nouns, and neuter adjectives, determiner *lo*, demonstratives and pronouns. As for *-i*, it mainly shows up on the masculine singular demonstratives and subject pronoun *elli*.

In the plural *-o* generally appears on all masculine forms except for nouns like *manu/mano* *'hand'* → *manes 'hands'* and *mapa 'map'* → *mapes 'maps'*, which follow the feminine plural pattern. This also does not explain the disappearance of the singular *-u* in favor of the *-o* before plural inflection, or the singular *-a* to plural *-es* in the feminine forms for that matter.

The question is then raised as to the status of *-o* and *-i*. One argument that they are theme

vowels are the shared roots between gender forms. For example, masculine adjective *malu 'bad'*,

feminine *mala 'bad'*, and neuter *malo 'bad'* all share the root √MAL. There are also cases where

the athematic masculine form opposes the neuter form via addition of *-o*, as is the case between

manguán-Ø 'lazy' and *manguano ''lazy'*. The same shared-root argument can be applied to

singular *-i* demonstratives, for example masculine √EST-*i* but feminine √EST-*a* and neuter √EST-*o*.

Provided that my logic is correct in that *-o* and *-i* are theme vowels, one way to explain the *-

os* and *-es* plurals is to apply previous analyses (Bermúdez-Otero (2013) and a little bit of Harris

(1991)). It could simply be that Asturian also stores stems—roots and theme vowels together—

and under plural inflection the theme vowel is deleted due to preceding another vowel, in (37).

(37) Asturian Plural Theme Vowel Deletion

	SG		DELETION		PL	
a.	fil**u**		fil(**u**)-os		filos	*'thread → threads'*
	mal**u**	→	mal(**u**)-os	→	malos	*'bad [m.sg] → bad [m.pl]'*
	est**i**		est(**i**)-os		estos	*'this' → 'these'*
b.	puert**a**		puert(**a**)-es		puertes	*'door' → 'doors'*
	mal**a**	→	mal(**a**)-es	→	males	*'bad [f.sg] → bad [f.pl]'*
	est**a**		est(**a**)-es		estes	*'this → these'*

Another question to consider is the range that vowels have in Asturian, as phonologically

speaking the value can change in both tonic and atonic syllables (cf. Table 33 through Table 37

and the paragraphs that follow). Written "o" and "i" could be phonologically realized by the

speaker as any flavor between [o] and [u] and [e] and [i], respectively. This could very well

mean that *-os* and *-i* may just be orthographic conventions and these vowels are not

phonologically produced as [o] and [i]. Due to the degree of variation between these vowels,

detailed phonetic work is a necessary path forward to tease apart the inner workings of vowel

production in Asturian. I therefore base my analysis of *-os* and *-i* on their orthographic

representation.

In a simpler approach I follow the analysis that feminine plural *-es* arises from a tendency for *-a* to undergo vowel palatalization to *-e* when *-n* or *-s* is in the coda (García Arias, 2003: 21-22)[40]. The singular *-u* to plural *-os* shift could entail some centralizing feature in the *-s* coda context (see Hualde, 1992), or Asturian maintained this ending from Latin plurals and the singular *-u* never lowered to *-o*. Masculine plural inflection could have just as well extended to the shift from singular *esti 'this'* to *estos 'these'*.

Taking the above information into account a Kramer-style distribution of Asturian theme vowels is included in Table 41 below. Just like Spanish (cf. Table 31), Asturian has three form classes, each with its own set of theme vowels. The difference here is that I include *-i* as part of CLASS III and CLASS I has *-u/-o* allomorphy.

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[40] The *-n* is more relevant in the context of CLASS I *-ar* verbs, for example *falar 'to speak'*, where the same general *-n/-s* coda rule applies to explain the present indicative forms *tú fales 'you speak'/ellos falen 'they speak'*, instead of the expected *falas/falan* (ALlA, 2001: 191).

III	*-e/-i/-Ø*	av-e_F *'bird'*, avilesín-Ø_M *'from Avilés'*, aquel-Ø_M *'that [over there]'*, aquell-i_M *'that [over there]'*, calor-Ø_F *'heat'*, camín-Ø_M *'path'*, camion-Ø_M *'truck'*, canal-Ø_F *'channel'*, cabás-Ø_M *'basket'*, el-Ø_M *'the'*, él-Ø_M *'he'*, ell-i_M *'he'*, esmolición-Ø_F *'worry'*, es-i_M *'that'*, est-i_M *'that'*, favor-Ø_M *'favor'*, ferr-e_M *'hawk'*, fontán-Ø_M *'spring'*, intelixent-e_{M/F} *'intelligent'*, llebr-e_F *'hare'*, llei-Ø_F *'law'*, llibr-e_{M/F} *'free'*, manguán-Ø_M *'lazy'*, rapaz-Ø_M *'adolescent'*, rei-Ø_M *'king'*, xarabal-Ø_M *'school [of fish]'*, …
II	*-a*	avilesin-a_F *'from Avilés'*, aquell-a_F *'that [over there]'*, dí-a_M *'day'*, ell-a_F *'she'*, es-a_F *'that'*, est-a_F *'this'*, europe-a_F *'European'*, faceder-a_F *'doable'*, mal-a_F *'bad'*, manguan-a_F *'lazy'*, map-a_M *'map'*, metid-a_F *'put'*, moyad-a_F *'wet'*, l-a_F *'the/her/it'*, puert-a_F *'door'*, …
I	*-u/-o*	aut-o_M *'car'*, avilesin-o_N *'from Avilés'*, aquell-o_N *'that [over there]'*, ell-o_N *'it'*, es-o_N *'that'*, est-o_N *'this'*, europe-o_N *'European'*, europé-u_M *'European'*, faceder-o_N *'doable'*, faceder-u_M *'doable'*, fierr-o_M *'iron'*, fierr-u_M *'an iron [object]'*, fil-o_M *'thread'*, fil-u_M *'a thread'*, furac-u_M *'hole'*, l-o_N *'the/it'*, l-u_M *'him/it'*, mal-o_N *'bad'*, mal-u_M *'bad'*, manguan-o_N *'lazy'*, man-o_M *'hand'*, man-u_M *'hand'*, metí-o_N *'put'*, metí-u_M *'put'*, moya-o_N *'wet'*, moyá-u_M *'wet'*, pel-o_M *'hair'*, pel-u_M *'a hair'*, …

Table 41 - Asturian Form Classes (à la Kramer, 2015)

As a final note the grouping in Table 41 contains singular forms and there is a way to potentially subdivide these parts of speech further based on their plural inflection due to the interesting cases between where some singular forms appear to be part of a different class than their plural counterparts. The most stable of the three classes appears to be CLASS II (cf. (33b)), but there are inconsistencies among some members of class I and III in that in plural inflection sometimes theme vowel *-e* appears and other times we see *-o*.

Under CLASS III, singular athematic nouns and adjectives like *rapaz 'adolescent'* and *avilesín 'from Avilés'*, in (36c), and singular *-i* form demonstratives, like *esti 'this'*, *esi 'that'* and *aquelli 'that [far]'*, in (33c), all have plural forms that are more like CLASS I plurals like *rapazos 'adolescents'*, *avilesinos 'from Avilés'*, *estos 'these'*, *esos 'those'*, *aquellos 'those [far]'*. The

nouns *manu/mano 'hand'*, and any other possible exceptions like them, are CLASS I singular

forms that end in *-u/-o*, respectively. However, when pluralized they are more akin formally to

CLASS II plurals (*manu/man**es** 'hand/hands'* in (35a) and *mano/man**es** 'hand/hands'* in (35d)

juxtaposed with *puerta/puert**es** 'door/doors'* in (33b)).

One possible explanation for these details is that gender has more influence on theme vowel

spell out for these specific examples, since *rapaz 'adolescent'*, *avilesín 'from Avilés'*, *esti 'this'*,

esi 'that' and *aquelli 'that [far]'* are masculine and fall in line with the general masculine plural

morphology, and *manu/mano 'hand'* are feminine nouns that look more like feminine plurals. If

this were the case then these specific examples are what I refer to as *Thematic Class Jumpers*,

(see Table 42 below), where the singular CLASS III examples mentioned above would jump to

CLASS I when plural, and CLASS I singular *manu/mano 'hand'* would jump to CLASS II. The

horizontal arrows represent pluralization across the three classes as expected (cf. (33a), (33b) and
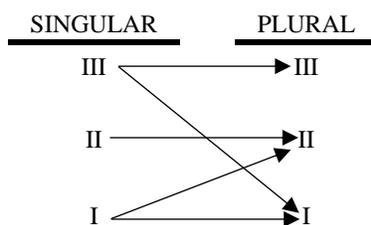
(34)).

Table 42 - Thematic Class Jumpers

However, this analysis is very *ad hoc* and would not explain other exceptional cases like

mapa 'map', a CLASS II masculine singular that respects the typical feminine plural morphology.

Perhaps a better path would be to further develop the theme vowel inventory to describe the

plural options together with *-s* to mark plural inflection, in Table 43.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
III	*-e/-i/-Ø*	*-es/-Øs/-os/-Ø*
II	*-a*	*-es*
I	*-u/-o*	*-os/-es/-us*

Table 43 - Asturian Singular and Plural Theme Vowels and Classes

Under the CLASS III plural column *-es* accounts for plurals like *montes 'mountains'*, *llagares 'wineries'* and *pexes 'fish'*, while *-Øs* represents *xalés 'chalets'*, *-os* explains *estos 'these'* and *rapazos 'adolescents'*, and *-Ø* accounts for less common invariable plurals like *virus*. The *-es* under CLASS II plurals is representative of standard cases like *puertes 'doors'*. Finally, under CLASS I we have *-os* for the typical plural masculine forms, like *filos 'threads'*, as well as *-es* for cases like *manes* and *-us* for the very few nouns like *tribus 'tribes'*, which end in *-u* in the singular and maintain this theme vowel in the plural.

This approach does not forcefully apply gender rules when they do not denote a particular theme vowel in the first place, there is no jumping between classes, and it leaves the potential opening to involve any rule-based operations under DM for phonological spell out of the right vowel candidates. I tentatively opt for the full representation of theme vowels and classes in Table 43. Iterations of Table 41 will also resurface as part of the bigger picture surrounding the DM analysis used predominately in chapter three.

2.5.1. *On the Existence of the Neuter in Asturian:*

I now turn to the open question regarding mass neuter and the possibility of a neuter grammatical gender in Asturian, the latter of which is often made synonymous with the final vowel *-o*. In Asturian the article *lo*, the demonstratives *esto 'this'*, *eso 'that'* and *aquello 'that [far]'*, and the clitic *lo* can be clearly traced to the Latin neuter. Because these exist in opposition to masculine and feminine articles and pronouns, it may not be implausible to refer to them as

neuter forms. However, the situation appears to be different when it comes to *-o* marking on Asturian nouns.

Table 38 includes a few *-o* form Asturian nouns (*fierro 'iron material'*, *pelo 'hair'* and *filo 'thread'*) that denote mass and that are generally referred to as part of the same mass neuter phenomenon (Arias Cabal, 1998; Fernández-Ordóñez, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; García Arias, 2003; Gómez Seibane, 2003; Hall, 1968; Neira Martínez, 1991; among others). However, all three nouns are masculine in Asturian, and while there is a clear link between *fierro 'iron material'* and *filo 'thread'* to the Latin neuter forms FERRUM and FĪLUM (Alonso, 1973: 177; Barrow et al., 1968: 691, 701), the noun *pelo 'hair'* descends from the masculine form PILUS (Alonso, 1973: 177). Masculine and feminine mass nouns that do not end in *-o* are also included under the same mass neuter umbrella. Nouns like *pan 'bread'*, *nieve 'snow'*, and *agua 'water'* descend from masculine PĀNIS and feminine NIX/NĬVIS and AQUA, respectively (Alonso, 1973: 177). While a select few *-o* form Asturian mass nouns (cf. *fierro 'iron material'*, *filo 'thread'*, etc.) derive directly from neuter Latin forms, not all Asturian mass nouns end in *-o* or have Latin neuter origins for that matter. This would suggest that mass *-o* marking on Asturian nouns is not necessarily related to a neuter gender, but instead it arises through innovation[41].

Regarding adjectives, other evidence for the evolution of mass neuter in Asturian is the leveling between phrases like those in (38), where the gender-agreeing adjective in examples like (38a) existed in Asturian alongside the neuter-agreeing version in (38b). One analysis for the agreement pattern in (38b) posits that a copular phrase containing a neuter predicative adjective,

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[41] In fact, there is work in support of the *-u/-o* distinction coming about in Asturian through innovation. Paraphrasing Viejo Fernández (2005: 281-284), both vowels coexisted during the 13th century where *-o* was generalized to be the written norm. While Castilian Spanish imposed the use of *-o*, a local, spoken norm pushed back and *-u* was largely conserved in Eastern Asturian. Central Asturian then standardized the use of *-o* to represent so-called neuter forms between the 13th and 14th centuries. It is García Arias (2003), however, that explicitly analyzes the *-u/-o* distinction as a morphological tool that began developing at an early stage for Asturian nouns via an innovative need to distinguish between count and mass.

which denotes a generic quality of snow as being white, such as (38c), simply elides the copular

verb *ye* (Viejo Fernández, 2005: 281-284).

(38) a. l-a   nieve   blanc-a
         the-FEM   snow-FEM   white-FEM
         'the white snow'

      b. l-a   nieve   blanc-o
         the-FEM   snow-FEM   white-NEUT
         'the white snow'

      c. l-a   nieve   ye   guap-o
         the-FEM   snow-FEM   be-PRES.3SG   pretty-NEUT
         'the snow is pretty'

The argument being made by the author is that the neuter attributive adjective in (38b) is the

result of the deletion of the copular verb *ye* in (38c). However, if (38b) were the result of copular

verb deletion, we would end up with segments like *La nieve (ye) blanco présta-yos a los guajes*

'The snow (is) white-N is to the liking of the children' in Asturian. This does not seem very

accurate unless predication is created in a different derivational space, eliding the copula, and

then inserting the resulting segment.

Regarding adjective morphology itself, it seems more plausible that adjectives were also

innovated to exist as *-o* forms in Asturian. If we consider Latin three-form adjective examples

like ALTUS *(m)*, ALTA *(f)*, ALTUM *(n)* *'tall'*, or BONUS *(m)*, BONA *(f)*, BONUM *(n)* *'good'* (Barrow et

al., 1968: 110, 238) there are neuter forms (cf. ALTUM, BONUM) that do descend directly from the

Latin neuter. However, as it was shown in §2.3 that nominal neuter grammatical gender was lost

over time from Latin to IR, and the morphological make up of nouns and adjectives eventually

changes too. In this case, the loss of the final consonant *-s* and *-m* would create similar forms for

the masculine and neuter adjectives (cf. ALTU *(m); (n)* *'tall'*, BONU *(m); (n)* *'good'*), where

innovation of the *-o* could oppose the neuter form *bono* to masculine *bonu*. Nonetheless, because

adjectives agree in gender and number with nouns, and only masculine and feminine nouns exist in Asturian today, it appears that *-o* form adjectives came about through language evolution and innovation and are not necessarily linked to a neuter grammatical gender.

The facts above indicate that while the mass neuter *-o* did directly originate from a Latin neuter form, there is also evidence in favor of treating the phenomenon as more of an innovative process. For similar reasons the mass in mass neuter is also not entirely indicative of the data, and I therefore take the position that while it serves to diachronically describe the phenomenon—in a synchronic sense—it is a misnomer and does not truly capture the linguistic phenomenon in present-day Asturian. I would also be inclined to refer to the neuter gender in Asturian as *unspecified* given the details summarized in §2.4.1, but for consistency and in consideration of the data will maintain the use of *-o* forms[42].

2.6. Conclusion:

In §2.1 I briefly introduced one system for organizing Spanish and Asturian nouns and adjectives into three different form classes based on their final vowels, *-e*, *-a* and *-o* in Spanish and *-e*, *-a*, *-o* and *-u* in Asturian. I presented one side of the ongoing debate between final vowels and their relation to gender, as the sketches for both languages clearly show that nouns and adjectives of any gender can end in either of the word markers. This characteristic, as it pertains to Spanish, has largely been exhausted by past and current literature, but less research has been done on how gender and theme vowels interact in Western Iberian languages—particularly Asturian which as designated a special *-o* morpheme to indicate different semantic interpretations in certain varieties.

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[42] We will see in chapters three and four that there is a correlation between underspecification and Asturian *-o* forms in general.

§2.2 provides the necessary background of how Latin declension classes function in the language. This includes a description of how nouns, adjectives and determiners are organized into their different groups, as well as how the different noun and adjective endings morphologically indicate case and gender marking for agreement. Notably, nouns rely on the genitive ending to indicate to which of the five declension classes they belong, and for the most part, nouns of all genders can be found across the classes. This directly parallels the class system discussed for Ibero-Romances in later sections.

§2.3 set out to trace the history of how Latin declension classes collapsed over time. The loss of case and gender marking was a slow process that occurred generally across Ibero-Romance as nouns were ultimately redistributed from the five different Latin declensions and 10 final atonic vowels into the three main form classes each marked by a vowel in Ibero-Romance, *-e*, *-a* and *-o*. Central to this process was the reduction of Latin's three-gender system—masculine, feminine and neuter—to only masculine and feminine gender in most of modern Romance. More notable yet is the survival of certain demonstratives, articles and pronouns that are considered vestiges of the Latin neuter and are still often referred to as neuter forms in Spanish and Asturian by linguists today. Marked by *-o* in both languages, this characteristic further motivated investigation of the link between final vowels and gender, especially when Asturian takes this a step further to license so called mass marking with *-o*.

§2.4 summarizes two modern theoretical takes on Spanish word markers that explain how nouns are organized into three form classes by their *-e/-Ø*, *-a* or *-o* ending. These root-based approaches also show how Spanish final vowels do not denote gender as both masculine and feminine nouns can be found across all three classes. Guided by these characteristics I adopt the stance that the *-o* form demonstratives, articles, clitics and pronouns should not be referred to as

neuter forms. The term *underspecified* better describes the meaning that they convey but I refer to them as *-o* forms for the relevance that the theme vowel has, particularly in the case of Asturian.

In §2.5 I discussed Asturian word forms to clearly present the distribution of gender and theme vowels. Namely, I describe nouns and how they can be grouped into potential classes based on their word markers and the forms that they take in the singular and the plural. I show that while there are phonetic influences that can alter the theme vowel that surfaces, there are still three form classes that group Asturian nouns and adjectives together—for CLASS III *-e/-i/-Ø*, for CLASS II *-a*, and for CLASS I *-u/-o*. Finally, I extend the Spanish argument to Asturian in that, despite the historical link between some mass nouns and Latin, there is no neuter gender in Asturian either—especially under the view that final vowels do not mark gender to begin with.

Considering the summary of the above sections I have made two main contributions in this chapter. The first of these is I have laid the groundwork for creating a formal theory of form class and gender an Asturian, which I further explore in subsequent chapters. Second, I have argued that the term "neuter" is a misnomer given the loss of this gender distinction from Latin, among other reasons.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF THE *-O* THEME VOWEL IN ASTURIAN NOUNS

3.1. Introduction

Throughout the previous chapter nouns were categorized by their form or by their gender, and this notion of noun categorization will also underlie many aspects of the present chapter regarding their semantic interpretation. Another way to put nouns into categories is by whether they have a mass or a count interpretation, and previous studies have examined how these interpretations can be distinguished from one another vis-à-vis the internal structure of the noun, or by the syntactic context in which it is used (De Belder, 2008; Borer, 2005; Bosque, 1999; Jackendoff, 1991; among others).

In general, the most fundamental difference between the mass and count interpretation is known as divisibility (Borer 2005; Jackendoff 1991). When a mass noun like *water* is divided up multiple times the outcome can still be described as *water*. On the other hand, a count noun like *an apple* does not yield another whole apple when divided multiple times, but rather the result is slices of that apple (Jackendoff, 1991).

To explain these facts nouns can be thought of as feature-bearing in that they can be bounded or not, [±b], and they either have internal structure or they lack it, [±i]. The feature for boundedness is what codifies the limitations of the noun's form, for instance some inherent form that the noun in question takes, while internal structure is responsible for the absence or presence of plurality (Jackendoff, 1991: 20). In fact, it is the different combinations of these features that allow for the different noun categories shown in the following examples.

Individuals are bounded and lack internal structure (feature set) {[+b], [-i]} and constitute prototypical count nouns, in (1).

(1)   Individuals (adapted from Jackendoff, 1991: 20)
          a pig
          {[+b], [-i]}

The {[+b], [+i]} feature set that pertains to groups, in (2), does not have an inherent shape or form, but it is instead bounded by the quantity of individuals that make up the group. This same quantity, the minimum of two individuals, also accounts for the plural internal structure that group nouns have.

(2)   Groups (adapted from Jackendoff, 1991: 20)
          a committee
          {[+b], [+i]}

Moving now to substance nouns, in (3), which are normally non-count, they are defined by the feature set {[-b], [-i]} as there is no inherent form that delineates substance, and they are not countable without extralinguistic context or measure words. For example, water can be counted via measurement in the utterance *two glasses of water*. This can be further extended to some context, in a restaurant for example, where a patron requests *two waters* and the *measure word+of* is omitted, yet the message is understood by the server.

(3)   Substances (adapted from Jackendoff, 1991: 20)
          water
          {[-b], [-i]}

Finally, under aggregates we find nouns that are usually plural, or thought of as collective nouns, and are also considered bare mass nouns. Their corresponding feature bundle is {[-b], [+i]}, as there is no inherent form or shape associated with these nouns, but they imply multiple entities.

(4)   Aggregates (adapted from Jackendoff, 1991: 20)
          buses, cattle, furniture
          {[-b], [+i]}

Aside from internal structure, syntactic context can also be used to discern between count and mass, as indicated in the Spanish examples in Table 1 below (Bosque, 1999). Count nouns like *libro/book* can be counted with cardinal numbers and, when quantified, are compatible with plural quantifiers, like the quantifier *muchos*. Finally, when count nouns appear as verbal complements they appear as bare plurals. As for mass nouns, like *pan/bread*, they combine with measure words which are then counted, and they appear with singular quantifiers or as bare singulars when they are verbal complements.

count 'we can count it'	mass 'we can measure it'
Cardinal numbers	**Measure words**
Tres libros 'Three books'	*Una barra de pan 'A loaf of bread'*
Plural quantifiers	**Singular quantifiers**
Muchos libros 'Many books'	*Mucho pan 'A lot of bread'*
Bare plurals	**Bare singulars**
Compro libros 'I buy books'	*Compro pan 'I buy bread'*

Table 1 - Syntactic Contexts for Count v Mass (Bosque, 1999)

Some languages show a morphological distinction between mass and count interpretations of nouns. One of the most common ways of marking the distinction is so-called "gender shift.". This shift entails a change from a mass interpretation of a noun to a count interpretation when there is a change in grammatical gender in languages like Breton, Syrian Arabic and Fox, an Algonquian language. (Cowell, 2005; Goddard, 2002; Mathieu, 2012; Trépos, 1980).

In Breton, a Celtic language spoken in France, masculine mass nouns like (5a) and (5c), become count nouns when the feminine gender suffix *-enn* is added as in (5b) and (5d).

(5)   Mass Gender Shift in Breton (Mathieu, 2012: 654 cf. Trépos, 1980: 67)
    a.   geot
        grass.M.MS
        'grass'

    b.   geot-enn
        grass-F.SG
        'blade of grass'

    c.   louzou
        weed.M.MS
        'weeds'

    d.   louzou-enn
        weed-F.SG
        'blade of weed'

The same suffix can be added to collective nouns and pulls an individual out of the collective group, which upon further derivation can then be counted as shown in (6).

(6)   Collective Gender Shift in Breton (Mathieu, 2012: 653 cf. Stump, 2005: 62)
    a.   buzhug
        worm.M.COL
        'worms'

    b.   buzhug-enn
        worm-F.SG
        'a worm'

    c.   kraon
        walnut.M.COL
        'walnuts'

    d.   kraon-enn
        walnut-F.SG
        'a walnut'

This system is also attested in the Damascene variety of Syrian Arabic for mass and collective interpretations, in (7a) and (7c) respectively, to count interpretations, in (7b) and (7d), with the difference being that the feminine suffix is instead *-e*.

(7)   Gender Shift in Syrian Arabic (Mathieu, 2012: 654-655 cf. Cowell, 2005: 297-298)

    a.   ˀamˤh
        wheat.M.MS
        'wheat'

    b.   ˀamˤh-e
        wheat-F.SG
        'a grain of wheat'

    c.   dəbbān
        fly.M.COL
        'flies'

    d.   dəbbān-e
        fly-F.SG
        'one fly'

Finally, Fox accounts for gender shift in a similar manner, but instead of shifting from masculine to feminine gender like the previous examples, the shift takes place from inanimate to animate, as grammatical gender in Algonquian languages is semantically based on animacy and not masculine, feminine, or neuter, as we commonly recognize in the context of most Indo-European languages (Corbett, 1991: 20-24). With this in mind, the inanimate mass noun in (8a) and inanimate collective noun in (8c) can be measured or individualized, respectively, as represented in (8b) and (8d) by shifting to animate gender, falling in line with the above examples in Breton and Syrian Arabic.

(8)   Animacy Shift in Fox (Mathieu, 2012: 664 cf. Goddard, 2002: 213)[43]
   a.   owiiyaas-i
        meat/flesh-INAN.MS
        'meat, flesh'

   b.   owiiyaas-a
        meat/flesh-AN.CT
        'a piece/cut of meat'

   c.   zhooniyaah-i
        silver/money-INAN.COL
        'silver, money'

   d.   zhooniyaah-a
        silver/money-AN.SG
        'a coin, a bill'

Let us now turn back to the mass/count distinction in Asturian that was mentioned in the

previous chapter. Recall that some nouns show a morphological distinction between mass, with

word marker *-o*, and count, with word marker *-u*, as shown in the repeated examples in (9)

through (11). However, these examples have one factor in common as well as one difference

with the languages described above.

   (9)   Mass/Count Distinction (adapted from ALlA, 2001: 76)
      a.   el   fierr-u
           the.M   iron-M.CT
           'the iron [object]'

      b.   el   fierr-o
           the.M   iron-M.MS
           'the iron [material]'

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[43] I use Mathieu's (2012) spelling convention and not the one utilized in Goddard (2002).

(10) Mass/Count Distinction (adapted from ALlA, 2001:76)
    a. el   pel-u
       the.M   hair-M.CT
       'the [strand of] hair'

    b. el   pel-o
       the.M   hair.M.MS
       'the hair'

(11) a. el   fil-u
       the.M   thread-M.CT
       'the thread'

    b. el   fil-o
       the.M   thread-M.MS
       'thread'

The commonality that the Asturian examples share with Breton, Syrian Arabic and Fox is that there is a shift from a mass to a count interpretation. However, the gender does not change, as the examples in (9) through (11) are all masculine, independent of their count versus mass interpretation. This then poses the questions that will be at the heart of this chapter regarding the mass/count distinction in Asturian nouns. Namely, (i) do Asturian speakers note a semantic difference between *-o* form and *-u* form nouns? and (ii) can the *-o* form that denotes mass be extended to multiple nouns, or is the phenomenon limited, and is the *-o* form fossilized onto select nouns?

With these questions in mind, chapter three will be organized as follows. In §3.2 I will provide a brief account of what the expected distribution of nouns bearing *-o* forms in Asturian is based on the content of traditional grammars. This will lay the foundation for §3.3, in which I take the reader through part one of the Qualtrics surveys that I conducted, which was filled out by speakers of all varieties of Asturian across various geographical locations of Asturias. I also interpret and discuss the survey results. Penultimately, I offer a summary of DM framework in §3.4 to propose a working hypothesis of how Distributed Morphology might account for the use

of word markers in Asturian that both captures nominal derivation in tandem with their count/mass interpretation. In this section I also develop the concept of different Asturian grammars based on the survey data. Finally, in §3.5, I briefly conclude this chapter.

3.2. A Brief Literature Review on *-o* form Nouns in Asturian

The Asturian language can be divided into a few different varieties, which from west to east are Gallego-Asturiano (GA), Western Asturian (WA), Central Asturian (CA), Eastern Asturian (EA), and Cantabro-Asturian (CanA), as the map in Figure 1 shows. However, it is CA, found in zone IV of the map, that distinguishes between mass and count interpretations of nouns via the -*u/-o* opposition of final vowels, as in examples (9) through (11) that were shown at the end of the previous section. As I addressed the historical context revolving around this phenomenon in Asturian in Chapter 2, we will now take a more descriptive look at the examples provided in the literature to reach a better understanding of what can be typically expected from nominal behavior in Asturian.
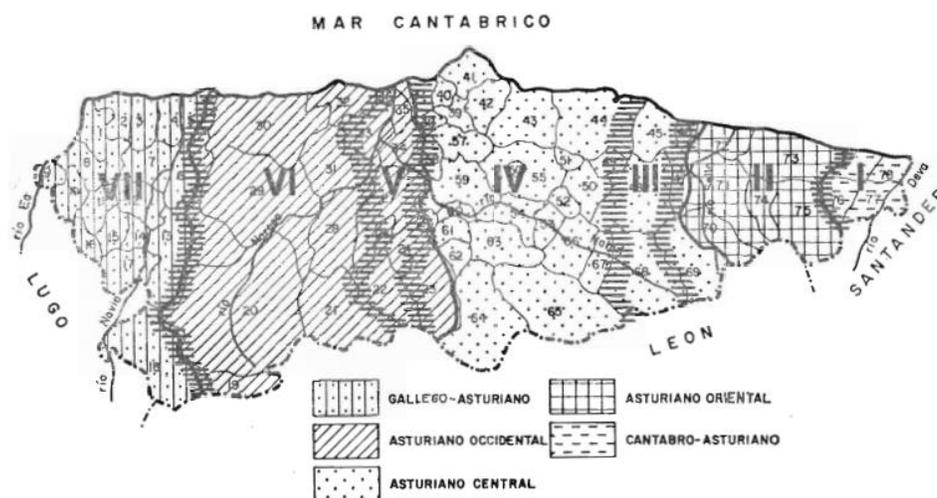

Figure 1 – Variants of Asturian (García González, 1986: 372)

The terminology used to refer to this phenomenon in the literature varies. While it appears that many linguists treat it as relating to neuter grammatical gender, it has also been referred to as the difference between discontinuous versus continuous (d'Andrés, 1993; Fernández-Ordóñez, 2006), discrete versus continuous (Arias Cabal, 2015), as well the specification of a singular and plural number system versus non-count (Arias Cabal, 1998). Due to this complexity, and the matter of adjectives appearing to have a neuter gender while nouns lack it (cf. chapter four), I will simply refer to nouns as either count or mass, and where applicable, I use mass agreement instead of neuter agreement.

While the *-o* ending on nouns is usually associated with a mass interpretation, there are cases in Asturian where nouns simply end in *-o*. Reported examples are the feminine noun *mano 'hand'*, shortened forms like *foto 'photo'* from the full form *fotografía 'photograph'*, and the initial adjectival element in some compounds such as *asturianolleonés 'Astur-Leonese'*, to name a few. While proper names of male individuals may end in *-u*, such as *Alfonsu, Alexandru, Llorienzu*, etc., they can also end in *-o*, *Alfonso, Alexandro, Llorienzo,* etc. (ALlA, 2001: 32-33).

Turning now to mass interpretations, distinguishing nouns (cf. fierro/fierru *'iron/an iron object'*), are not widely attested in the literature, and in general, most Asturian nouns do not employ the *-o* form to indicate mass (d'Andrés, 1993: 53; Arias Cabal, 1998: 35). For this reason, I start with the Asturian noun system as presented in the literature to take inventory of the kinds of nouns that typically have mass interpretations[44], like the ones in Table 2, which refer to people, animals, things and material, and grouped things.

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[44] The aim of this section is to follow the literature to account for the base interpretation of these nouns without forcing additional interpretations by providing additional context, i.e. sentential examples, and adjective agreement.

PEOPLE	ANIMALS	THINGS, MATERIAL	GROUPED THINGS
xente *'people'*	ganáu *'cattle'*	fariña *'flour'*	cacía *'silverware'*
profesoráu *'faculty'*	reciella *'flock'*	carbón *'coal'*	ferramienta *'tools'*

Table 2 - Mass interpretation (d'Andrés, 1993: 52)

Parting from this tendency, the matter is further complicated by the observation that certain nouns can only have mass interpretations, while other nouns are able to be interpreted as mass or count nouns, as laid out in Table 3 below, which is by no means an exhaustive list (d'Andrés, 1993: 53).

ALWAYS MASS	MASS OR COUNT
agua *'water'*	figu *'fig'*
vinu *'wine'*	fueya *'leaf'*
lleche *'milk'*	piedra *'stone'*
madera *'wood'*	papel *'paper'*
xente *'people'*	turrón *'nougat'*
ropa *'clothing'*	monte *'mountain'*

Table 3 - Singular vs Singular/Mass Interpretation (d'Andrés, 1993: 53)

Abstract nouns, which are nouns that are typically interpreted as ideas and are not concrete objects (Bosque, 1999: 7), also have mass interpretations in Asturian. The examples below in Table 4 include nouns that describe emotions, abstract concepts, and generic names.

FEELINGS, SENSATIONS	ABSTRACT CONCEPTS	GENERIC NAMES
felicidá *'happiness'*	llibertá *'liberty'*	lliteratura *'literature'*
gayola *'joy'*	verdá *'truth'*	cine *'film'*
murnia *'mourning'*	tiempu *'time'*	música *'music'*

Table 4 - Abstract Nouns (d'Andrés, 1993: 53-54)

Additionally, the literature explains that there are some Asturian nouns, as in Table 5, that can be interpreted by speakers as either a sole individual or as mass, and that in spoken Asturian are typically not expressed in the plural or with numbers (**estes llunes 'these moons'* cf. d'Andrés, 1993: 54-55)[45].

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[45] I classify these nouns as ambiguous solely based on the description of the author and wish to clarify that his argument appears to be that, in the context of *lluna 'moon'*, the Earth only has one moon so we would not refer to it naturally in the plural, i.e., **estes llunes 'these moons'*. While we might know of only one moon in our natural environment, it is unclear why this would make *mundu 'world'* uncountable, as there is a difference between divisibility and the existence of a sole entity in the world. Furthermore, it appears that the author means to say that the noun's morphology itself does not convey a difference in meaning, but rather the adjective's form will indicate

AMBIGUOUS NOUNS
mundu *'world'*
lluna *'moon'*
mar *'sea'*
sol *'sun'*
cielu *'sky'*
suelu *'ground'*

Table 5 - Ambiguous Nouns (d'Andrés, 1993: 54-55)

The final set of nouns that I will mention, which will not be included in any analysis, are toponyms. Toponyms are place names, such as *Asturies, Lluanco, Portugual* or *Les Arriondes*, and I mention them because they sometimes end in *-o* and can sometimes have mass interpretations depending on how speakers use them (d'Andrés, 1993: 54). The main point to understand from the examples presented above is that, in most of the cases, Asturian nouns like *xente 'people', profesoráu 'faculty', ganáu 'cattle', reciella 'flock', etc.*, do not appear with an *-o* morpheme to denote a mass interpretation via forms like *xento, profesorao, ganao, reciello, etc.* Specifically, the literature explains that these forms are not productive on most nouns, and they only appear in the few minimal pairs that have already been mentioned (cf. examples (21)-(23)).

Interestingly, even though the difference between mass and count is not manifested in that many nouns, adjectives commonly show the distinction. In example (12) the noun *piedra 'stone'* is interpreted as mass in (12a) and count in (12b) but does not change form (i.e. – there is no form *piedr*-o for mass interpretation). Instead, this difference is expressed on the adjective.

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interpretation instead, i.e. the individual reading of *El mundu véolu permal 'I think the world [Earth] is in bad shape'* versus the generic reading *Ta fastidiao, el mundu 'The world in general is bothersome'* (d'Andrés, 1993: 53-54).

(12)   Mass/Count Behavior (d'Andrés, 1993: 52-53)

a. | El | camín | ta | pavimentáu | con |
     |----|-------|-----|-----------|-----|
     | the.M.SG | path.M.SG | be-PRS.3SG | paved-M.SG | with |

piedra	**menudo**
stone-F.SG	small-MS

'The path is paved with small stones'

b. | Mancóse | con | una | piedra | **menuda** |
     |---------|-----|-----|--------|-----------|
     | hurt-pst.3SG=REF.3SG | with | a-F.SG | stone-F.SG | small-F.SG |

'S/he hurt her/himself with a small stone'

A valid question is why we do not see the presence of *-o* on more nouns to mark the fact that they are mass. Theoretically speaking, this should be a characteristic of all nouns, not just a small set that allows these minimal pair interpretations. To answer this question, I designed a survey to see if the use of *-o* as a marker of mass interpretations is actually more widespread than reported. In the next section, I demonstrate the results of this survey to show that this is indeed the case.

3.3. Surveying Mass Nouns in Asturian

The main gap in the literature is predominately due to the recycling of the same data over many years to make different arguments as to how mass morphology works in Asturian. In the literature only three nouns are generally cited as examples in which *-u* alternates with *-o* to mark the difference between a count and a mass interpretation. My major contribution to both the field of Linguistics and the topic of mass neuter in Asturian is the creation of a Qualtrics survey to obtain new data. While this survey was inspired by both formal and semantic accounts of mass in Asturian (d'Andrés, 1993; Viejo Fernández, 2002), my main goal, aside from obtaining new data, is to investigate the idea that has been put forth in previous literature that the *-u/-o* distinction applies to only a few nouns, and I aim to utilize my survey as a tool to test whether this difference is applied to other nouns by speakers of the language.

First, I describe the methodology of the survey, some important demographic information, and the geographical situation surrounding the participants of the survey. I will then take the reader through the first half of the survey, which treats Asturian nouns in isolation, and this will lead to an explanation of the second half, which attempted to make participants think about the -*o/-u* forms when treated together. Finally, I will conclude §3.3 with a discussion of the relevant data.

3.3.1. *Methodology, Demographics and Geographical Explanation*

Due to the high level of variation in Asturian it was of great importance to cast a wide net and allow for all native speakers that are 18 or older to participate in the survey[46]. The survey was distributed to colleagues in Asturias and was also disseminated across several Asturian language and culture Facebook groups. At the time of survey dissemination, these groups had a high number[47] of members that could potentially participate in the survey, as seen in Table 6.

GROUP NAME	# OF MEMBERS
Pola oficialidá l'asturianu y a la fala eonaviega	1.7k
Frikillingüismu	3k
Foru del traxe tradicional asturianu	1.5k
La mio palabra asturiana	2.6k
Al platu vendrás Arbeyu, si nun ye de Xoven sedrá de vieyu	3.2k
Asturianu.org	846

Table 6 - Asturian Facebook Groups

The survey was programmed to only allow for the same participant to complete the survey once, and due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union, all submitted surveys were anonymized and each participant was issued a random ID Number that they could contact the research team with to either view or withdraw their data at any time. In

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[46] Both Qualtrics surveys mentioned throughout this dissertation have been approved and exempted by the *Educational and Social/Behavioral Science IRB* at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Submission ID # 2020-0042).

[47] These numbers reflect the totals at the time of writing this chapter [December, 2022].

total there were 145 surveys submitted, but after eliminations due to some participants not

answering the questions in a relevant manner, and others backing out of the survey after a few

questions, the working number of entries for analysis ended up at a total of 112.

The origin in Asturias of these 112 participants, based on their provided answers on the pre-

task survey, spans the entirety of the Principality and includes one speaker from León. The

participants hail from the following places; their locations are shown in Figure 2 below:

> Ayer, Avilés, Arenas de Cabrales, Biembibre, Cabrales, Candás, Cangas del Narcea, Cangues d'Onís, Ciriegu, Felechosa, Ibias, Infiestu, La Felguera, La Güeria Carrocera, La Pola Llaviana, La Pola Ḷḷena, La Pola Siero, Les Regueres, Llanes, Llangréu, Lluanco, Ḷḷuarca, Llugones, Mieres, Mieres del Camín, Nava, Noreña, Onís, Piloña, Podes, Pravia, Riañu, Ribeseya, Sama, Samartín del Rei Aurelio, Tineu, Tresona, Trubia, Uviéu, Villamiana, Xixón
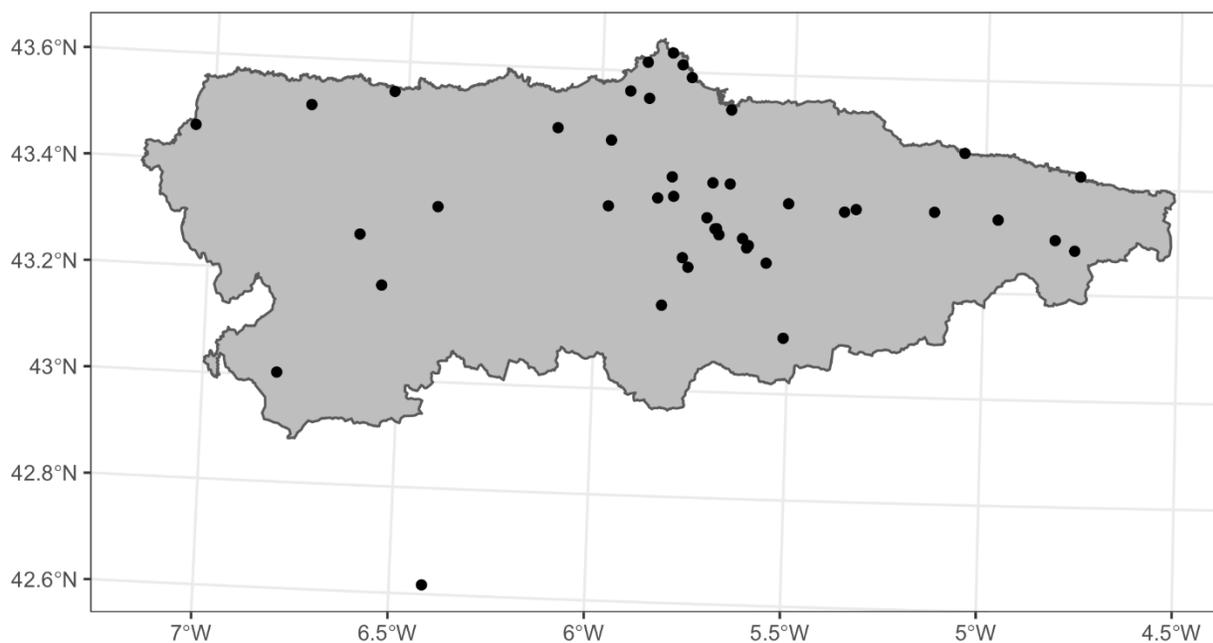

Figure 2 - Geographical Distribution of Survey Participants in Asturias[48]

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[48] This map was created by Erwin Lares and his R wizardry.

The sex and age group of the participants is shown in below in tables 7 and 8.

SEX	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Male	69
Female	40
Prefer not to say	3

Table 7 - Participants by Sex

AGE GROUP	# OF PARTICIPANTS
18-35	26
36-50	54
50+	32

Table 8 - Participants by Age

3.3.2. *Asturian Nouns in Isolation*

The goal of the first half of the survey was to test if Asturian speakers admit *-o* forms on nouns in isolation. To achieve this, ten words were divided into six different groups, and the groups were individually presented to the participant so that only one group could be worked with at a time.

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5	GROUP 6
fierru *'iron object'*	llibru *'book'*	quesu *'cheese'*	sidra *'cider'*	deo *'finger'*	cuchu *'manure'*
asturianu *'asturian'*	puquería *'nonce word'*	fumu *'smoke'*	asturiano *'Asturian'*	pelu *'a hair'*	cuaderno *'notebook'*
cielo *'sky'*	figo *'fig'*	deu *'finger'*	neñal *'nonce word'*	xente *'people'*	figu *'fig'*
ganáu *'cattle'*	vinu *'wine'*	pelo *'hair'*	bolígrafo *'pen'*	vellal *'nonce word'*	papel *'paper'*
pan *'bread'*	mundo *'world'*	ganao *'cattle/livestock'*	café *'coffee'*	chorizu *'sausage'*	mañenu *'nonce word'*
chorizo *'sausage'*	filu *'a thread'*	muyer *'woman'*	mundu *'world'*	vino *'wine'*	fierro *'iron material'*
fueya *'leaf'*	gate *'nonce word'*	ciudá *'city'*	filo *'thread'*	cielu *'sky'*	bolígrafu *'pen'*
homi *'nonce word'*	tiempo *'time'*	cuadernu *'notebook'*	caxil *'nonce word'*	home *'man'*	fumo *'smoke'*
queso *'cheese'*	carbón *'coal'*	trinéu *'sled'*	tiempu *'time'*	trineo *'sled'*	estilléu *'nonce word'*
dineru *'money'*	cucho *'manure'*	puertera *'nonce word'*	dinero *'money'*	boltón *'nonce word'*	llibro *'book'*

Table 9 - Noun Forms Presented in Isolation

Of the 60 total words in Table 9, 10 were random words in Asturian and 40 were minimal pairs that distinguished *-u/-o*. The remaining 10 were nonce words, which were used to distract the participants from trying to figure out the task, and each group contained one to two nonce words. The main purpose of the grouping was to keep participants from seeing *asturianu 'Asturian'* at the same time they were seeing *asturiano 'Asturian'*, to not influence their answers.

Looking at the data holistically, did the participants accept an Asturian noun in isolation with the word marker *-o*? The three noun pairs that are always mentioned in the literature (*fierru 'an iron object'/fierro 'iron material'*, *pelu 'a hair'/pelo 'hair'*, *filu 'a thread'/filo 'thread'*) will be mentioned first, in Table 10, followed by the other minimal pairs grouped by likeness.

For each noun mark YES if it is correct. If a noun is incorrect, please mark NO.

	FIERRO	FIERRU	PELO	PELU	FILO	FILU
Y	68%	85%	62%	87%	50%	12%
N	32%	15%	38%	13%	50%	88%

Table 10 - fierro/u, pelo/u, filo/u

As indicated in Table 10 and based on my participants' responses, if they were to encounter any of the six words above, the majority would accept *fierro 'iron material'*, *fierru 'an iron object'*, *pelo 'hair'* and *pelu 'a hair'*, but regarding *filo 'thread'* and *filu 'a thread'*, the participants' judgement of the *-o* form produced a fifty-fifty acceptance rate while the *-u* form was not generally accepted by the participants (only 12%). The acceptance rates for the other minimal pairs are shown in Table 11.

For each noun mark YES if it is correct. If a noun is incorrect, please mark NO.

	Y	N
BOLÍGRAFO	26%	74%
BOLÍGRAFU	88%	12%
CUADERNO	16%	84%
CUADERNU	93%	7%
DEO	17%	83%
DEU	92%	8%
LLIBRO	16%	84%
LLIBRU	95%	5%
TRINEO	13%	88%
TRINÉU	93%	7%

Table 11 - Individuals

It was of interest to the study to see how native Asturians judge *-o* form nouns that are clearly countable individuals, and therefore should not be acceptable with that word marker. While there are still some cases of *-o* form acceptance, what we see in the category of individuals is a majority rejection of this word marker and a preference for *-u*.

Collective and mass nouns are more likely to be accepted with *-o* (acceptance rates between 34-67%), but most speakers consulted prefer *-u* forms for these nouns as shown in Table 12.

For each noun mark YES if it is correct. If a noun is incorrect, please mark NO.

	Y	N
CUCHO	45%	55%
CUCHU	87%	13%
DINERO	34%	66%
DINERU	62%	38%
GANAO	67%	33%
GANAU	81%	19%
FUMO	60%	40%
FUMU	87%	13%

Table 12 - People, Animals, Things/Material, Group Things

The literature reports that some nouns in Asturian are ambiguous and can be interpreted as either mass or count—these include *chorizo 'sausage', figu 'fig', quesu 'cheese'* and *vinu 'wine'*. Participants rejected the *-o* form on the nouns *chorizo 'sausage'* and *queso 'cheese'* at rates similar to those observed for unambiguous individuals (see Table 11). For *figo* and *vino* there is a slightly higher acceptance rate, which mimics those of collective and mass nouns in Table 13.

For each noun mark YES if it is correct. If a noun is incorrect, please mark NO.

	Y	N
CHORIZO	10%	90%
CHORIZU	96%	4%
FIGO	30%	70%
FIGU	94%	6%
QUESO	12%	88%
QUESU	90%	10%
VINO	52%	48%
VINU	68%	32%

Table 13 - Singular vs Singular/Mass Interpretation

Similar results are observed for abstract nouns reported to be ambiguous in the literature. As shown in Table 14, *asturiano 'Asturian'* is accepted at rate similar to *vino 'wine'* while all the nouns in the group have a much lower acceptance rate.

For each noun mark YES if it is correct. If a noun is incorrect, please mark NO.

	Y	N
ASTURIANO	46%	54%
ASTURIANU	93%	7%
CIELO	35%	65%
CIELU	90%	10%
MUNDO	28%	72%
MUNDU	87%	13%
TIEMPO	14%	86%
TIEMPU	96%	4%

Table 14 - Abstract and Ambiguous Nouns

Table 15 summarizes acceptance rates for the 40 isolated *-o/-u* nouns that the 112 participants judged. Overall, there were 4480 examples; *-o* form nouns showed 24% acceptance rate, while 76% accepted *-u* form nouns.

TOTAL EXAMPLES	-O	-U
4480	24%	76%

Table 15 - Total Morpheme Count of Isolated Nouns

The low acceptance rate of nouns ending in *-o* correlates with an apparent lack of awareness between the distinction between nouns in ending in *-u* and *-o*. When asked explicitly if they make a distinction between nouns ending in *-u* and those ending in *-o*, only 14% responded positively.

TOTAL EXAMPLES	DISTINCTION	NO DISTINCTION	N/A
2240	14%	53%	33%

Table 16 - Total Morpheme Count of Minimal Pair Nouns

This concludes the formal part of the survey. We now need to know if the participants have just merely accepted nouns that end in *-o* in Asturian as forms, or if there was indeed an interpretable semantic change that led the participants to accept these *-o* forms in contrast to their *-u* form counterparts. This is addressed in the next sub-section.

3.3.3. *Distinguishing Between Noun Pairs in Asturian*

Moving on from treating nouns in isolation, the second part of the survey presented the participants with minimal pairs in which they were asked if, for example, *fierro* and *fierru* had the same meaning. An answer of "yes" indicates that the participant does not attach any semantic distinction between nouns ending in *-u* and *-o* (though they may recognize two formal variants). If a participant answered that "no", *fierro* and *fierru* do not mean the same thing, they were then asked to provide a context in which each word was acceptable to them, as well as an example for each context.

Due to time limitations of the survey, every participant was presented with the pairs *fierro/fierru 'iron'*, *tiempo/tiempu 'time'*, *dinero/dineru 'money'*, *figo/figu 'fig'*, *pelu/pelo 'hair'*, *ganao/ganáu 'cattle'*, *llibro/llibru 'book'*, *filo/filu 'thread'*, *deo/deu 'finger'*, *cucho/cuchu 'fertilizer'*. To minimize fatigue, participants then had the option to review a group of additional noun pairs or conclude the survey. For the participants that requested to view the second group, they had the option to review one more group of noun pairs or conclude the survey. Due to this setup, there is a disparate quantity of participant responses on this half of the survey. For the noun pairs that were not judged by a portion of the 112 participants, I have included an N/A

column in the tables below. The results for the three nouns that are most commonly reported to encode the mass vs. count distinction in -o vs. -u endings are shown in Table 17.

	Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?		
	FIERRO/FIERRU	PELO/PELU	FILO/FILU
Y	53%	48%	54%
N	47%	43%	33%
N/A	--	9%	13%

Table 17 - Mass/Count for fierro/u, pelo/u, filo/u

The results show that the majority of participants that saw each of these pairs indicate that they mean the same thing. Moving to the individual nouns in Table 18, we see here that these pairs were judged as exhibiting no difference in meaning at a far greater rate than the pairs in Table 17.

	Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?		
	Y	N	N/A
BOLÍGRAFO/BOLÍGRAFU	46%	2%	52%
CUADERNO/CUADERNU	33%	4%	63%
DEO/DEU	75%	12%	13%
LLIBRO/LLIBRU	72%	16%	12%
TRINEO/TRINÉU	36%	2%	62%

Table 18 - Mass/Count of Individuals

Collective and mass nouns show similar results, as can be observed in Table 19. They are judged to show no difference in meaning at a higher rate than the noun pairs in Table 17.

	Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?		
	Y	N	N/A
CUCHO/CUCHU	76%	11%	13%
DINERO/DINERU	86%	6%	8%
GANAO/GANÁU	65%	24%	11%
FUMO/FUMU	38%	11%	51%

Table 19 - Mass/Count of People, Animals, Things/Material, Group Things

The group of nouns that are reported to be ambiguous between mass and count interpretations are also judged to exhibit no difference in meaning between the *-o* and *-u* forms. However, there is a higher rate of meaning distinction for *figo-figu* and *vino-vinu*, which correlates with the higher rate of acceptance of these forms in Table 13.

Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?		
	Y	N	N/A
CHORIZO/CHORIZU	45%	4%	51%
FIGO/FIGU	79%	13%	8%
QUESO/QUESU	33%	4%	63%
VINO/VINU	27%	10%	63%

Table 20 - Mass/Count of Singular vs Singular/Mass Interpretation

Finally, Table 21 contains abstract nouns that are reported to be ambiguous. For the most part, participants do not detect a meaning difference in these nouns related to the *-o* and *-u* endings.

Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?		
	Y	N	N/A
ASTURIANO/ASTURIANU	33%	15%	52%
CIELO/CIELU	44%	4%	52%
MUNDO/MUNDU	35%	3%	62%
TIEMPO/TIEMPU	81%	11%	8%

Table 21 - Mass/Count of Abstract and Ambiguous Nouns

Taking into account the data shown above in Table 17 through Table 21, as well as those in §3.3.2, there is a clear avoidance of the use of Asturian *-o* form nouns by the participants of this survey. Aside from the lack of data, there are a few reasons that could have attributed to this number. For example, it is commonly accepted that the mass *-o* in Asturian is a stigmatized form, and it was purported by the literature to not be productive on nouns to begin with. But in referring to some of the participant-provided explanations, at times there was uncertainty of word marker use, in (13a), and the *-u* was interpreted as sounding more "Asturian", in (13b). Aside from these cases, some participants also showed metalinguistic awareness of the phenomenon, in (13c).

(13)   Participant Explanations

      a. En principiu yo siempres sintí cielo. Pero nun sé yá si toi   [S1_P55_PLLE]
      influenciáu pol asturianu oriental…
      'At first I always felt the word was sky. But now I do not know if I
      am influenced by Eastern Asturian…'

      b. En asturiano, [chorizo] nun ye correcto. Suena castellán.   [S1_P10_UV/XI]
      'In Asturian, [sausage] is not correct. It sounds Castilian.'

      c. neutro materia. El fierro ye bon material, Cuando no designa a un   [S1_P14_UV]
      obxetu concreto y fálase en xeneral.
      'mass neuter. Iron is good material, When it does not designate a
      concrete object and is spoken of in general.'

If we consider the lack of *-o* form noun acceptance that the survey has suggested, the data

analysis becomes a bit more interesting in the scope of language variation in Asturian. Recall

that it is CA that is considered the *-o/-u* distinguisher between mass and count interpretations, but

the distinction is not characteristically attested in WA and EA. However, in the map of

participant distribution that has been modified to show the regional variations of Asturian, in

Figure 3, most of the participants come from where CA is spoken.

Taking this matter into account, one would expect a higher concentration of *-o/-u* distinction,

and while it is not possible to argue whether the percent of distinction would go up had more

participants completed more of the survey, the trend that the data suggests is that distinction

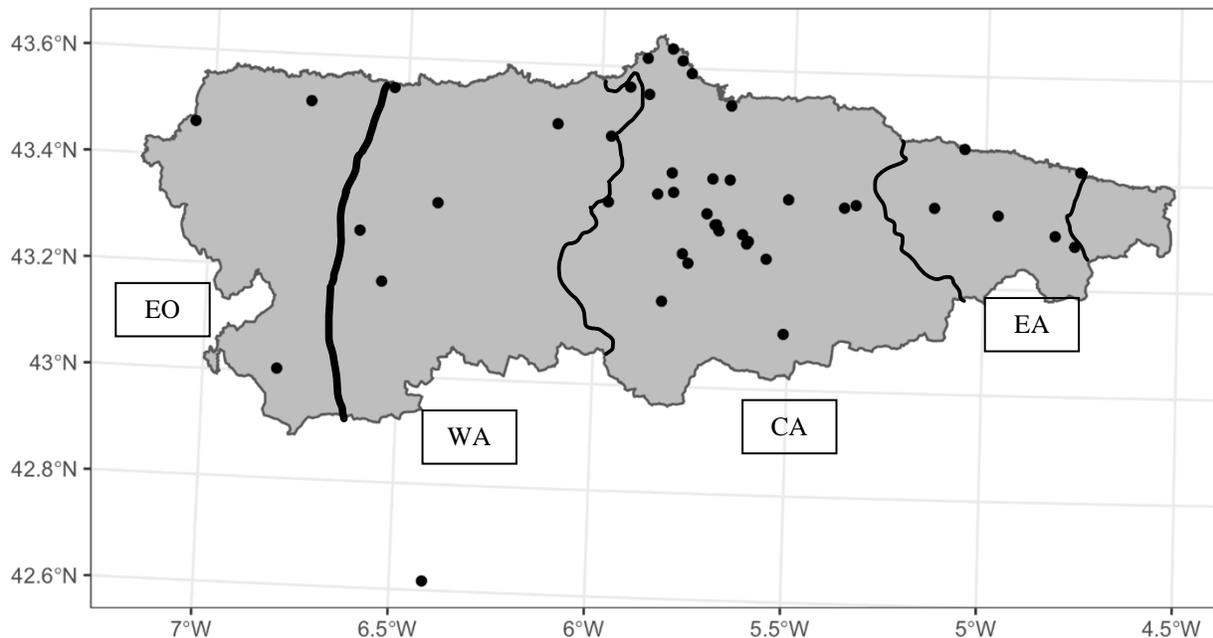would still be less admissible than no distinction.

Figure 3 - Participants by Region[49]

The data breakdown at the beginning of this section shows that it is inconclusive from a sheer number perspective if native Asturian speakers mark mass on nouns with the *-o* morpheme. However, recall that participants answered the question "*Do X-u and Y-o mean the same thing?*", and a "no" response prompted each participant to provide a context for each word form that was unacceptable to them along with an original example. Therefore, what I can contribute from the survey are elicited novel examples that show that *-o* can mark mass interpretations on a wider range of nouns than those presented in §3.2, where *fierro*, *pelo* or *filo* are the only acceptable choices. The elicited examples can be broken up into four different types: (i) mass *-o* can extend to other nouns outside of *fierro, pelo* and *filo*, (ii) the *-o* morpheme can appear on nouns to make a semantic distinction other than that of mass, (iii) there is no apparent semantic difference

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[49] The isogloss lines were approximated based off a Wikipedia photo created by Freixeiro (2008), which was created based off information in ALPI (2016), Fernández Rei (1991), ILG (2021), and Zamora Vicente (1989).

between *-u* and *-o* noun marking for some speakers or they are just unsure, and finally, (iv) some

speakers outright reject of the *-o* form on Asturian nouns.

Type (i) examples are shown in (14) through (17) below. In (14), *queso* was provided in a

mass context while *quesu*, in (15), was used in a count context. The participant's metalinguistic

explanation in the gray cell below each example also shows that they were aware of a mass/count

distinction for this noun.

(14) QUESO [S1_P50_AV]

Ayer	comí	munchu	**queso**	pa	cenar
yesterday-Ø	eat-PST.1SG	a.lot.of-THV	cheese-THV	for	eat.dinner-INF

'Yesterday I ate a lot of cheese for dinner'
Queso is neuter.

(15) QUESU [S1_P50_AV]

Un	**quesu**
a.M.SG	cheese-THV

'A cheese'
Quesu is correct in the context of masculine singular.

Examples (16) and (17) further corroborate this. The participant uses *queso* in a mass context

and *quesu* in a count context, even they do not explicitly describe this in their metalinguistic

explanation of the difference.

(16) QUESO [S1_P15_XI]

Nun	m	gusta'l	**queso**
NEG	DAT	like-PRS.3SG.the.M.SG	cheese-THV

'I don't like cheese'
Queso is correct when you are talking about the derivative of milk.

(17) QUESU [S1_P15_XI]

Merqué	un	**quesu**	pa	mañana.
buy-PST.1SG	a.M.SG	cheese-THV	for	tomorrow-THV

'I bought a cheese for tomorrow'
Quesu is correct when you are talking about a specific cheese.

Among the data pool, other nouns that appeared as *-o* forms to denote mass were *figo* and

vino, with no clear indication as to how many of the countless other nouns the mass *-o* might

extend to.

Type (ii) examples are shown in (18) and (19). Here, the distinction between *tiempo* and

tiempu cannot be understood purely in terms of mass and count, but is also accompanied by an

idiosyncratic semantic change. *Tiempo* describes chronological time or in (18), while *tiempu*, in

(19), refers to a season.

(18)   **TIEMPO** [S1_P92_UV]
Nun   pierdas   el   **tiempo**
NEG   waste-IMP.2SG   the.M.SG   time-THV

'Don't waste the time'
Tiempo is correct when talking in general about chronological time or
meteorology.

(19)   **TIEMPU** [S1_P92_UV]
Pal   **tiempu**   les   castañes
for.the.M.SG   time-THV   the-F.SG   chestnut-THV.PL

'For chestnut time'
Tiempu is correct in the context of speaking about a concrete time.

Other *-o* form nouns of this type that appeared in the data are *deo*[50], *ganao, asturiano,*

chorizo, cielo, fierro, dinero, figo, filo, fumo, pelo, queso and *vino*.

An example of type (iii) is provided in (20). Here, the participant cites an example with the

noun *cielu*, but notes that they are unsure of the form that they would use due to language contact

with another variety of Asturian. This example is important as it indicates that some Asturian

speakers may employ *-o* or *-u* on the same noun interchangeably with no difference in meaning.

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[50] I note that while there is probably no clear idiosyncratic meaning that can be determined between *deu* and *deo*, one participant did provide an example of *deo* with the context of pointing out someone as an action. More testing would be required to clarify different contexts in which a speaker may use *deu* versus *deo*, but I include this *-o* form example throughout the chapter as reported by the participant and leave open any other potential interpretations.

(20) CIELU [S1_P55_PLLE]

Mira	pal	**cielu**	de
look-IMP.2SG	towards.the.M.SG	sky-THV	of

nueche	y	vas	ver
night-THV	and	go-PRS.2SG	see-INF
les	estrelles		
the-F.PL	star-THV.PL		

'Look towards the night sky and you'll see the stars'

At first, I always felt *cielo* was correct. But I don't know anymore if I am influenced by Eastern Asturian (with which I don't have a family connection) or what, but *cielu* I have pretty assimilated, even though I'm not fully comfortable with it.

Examples of type (iv)—outright rejection of some *-o* form nouns—are shown in (21) and (22). *Chorizu* in (21) can only end in *-u*, as the form *chorizo* would be Castilian to this participant. More indicative of this *-o* form rejection, is *llibru* in example (22), where the participant explained that *llibro* would be impossible and incorrect for them to say. This type of response was typical of nouns that we tend to think of as countable individuals.

(21) CHORIZU [S1_P55_PLLE]

El	**chorizu**	que		se	fai
the.M.SG	sausage-THV	that		IMPS	make-PRS.3SG

en	Ca Mador	ye'l		más	ricu
in	Ca Mador	be-PRS.3SG.the.M.SG		more	rich-THV

de	toos
of	all.the.M.PL

'The sausage that is made in Ca Mador is the most flavorful of them all'

Always "chorizu". When I speak Castilian, I use *chorizo*.

(22) **LLIBRU** [S1_P10_UV/XI]

Esti	**llibru**,	comprelu	n'una
DEM.M.SG	book-ThV	buy-PST.1SG=ACC	in.a-F.SG

llibrería	n'Uviéu.
bookstore-ThV	in.Uviéu

'This book, I bought it in a bookstore in Uviéu'
Llibru is the only correct option for me. It references a physical object that we read or buy in a bookstore. *Llibro* is impossible. For me it's incorrect to say *llibro*.

Considering the contents of §3.3, the research questions for this chapter can now be answered. First, a minority of the speakers surveyed formally distinguish between *-o* forms and *-u* forms of the same noun. At least some of these speakers make use of both the *-o* and the *-u* to indicate a difference in meaning. Sometimes this difference in meaning is mass vs. count, but it may also correlate with idiosyncratic aspects of meaning. Furthermore, in many examples there are participants that simply judged the word pairs as a matter of correct or incorrect, or Spanish and Amestáu[51] use compared to their attested Asturian use, and nouns that we typically never use in mass contexts were highly rejected as *-o* forms and make up some of the lower attested percentages for *-u/-o* distinction.

Second, it is inconclusive whether mass *-o* marking can extend to multiple nouns or if the phenomenon is instead limited to certain ones. Though the literature tends to specify the same three minimal pairs, and the results of my survey have clearly extended the phenomenon to other nouns, it is still unclear how many of these minimal pairs would be acceptable to native Asturian speakers. For this reason, new pairs of nouns will continually have to be tested in different contexts to keep building the corpus of attested mass/count distinction in Asturian nouns.

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[51] Amestáu often refers to the mixture of Asturian and Spanish spoken predominately in urban settings in Asturias, but not all speakers identify with this term (Galán y González, 2014). Other work has been done to classify Amestáu as dialectal variety but not one that evolved from standard Asturian (del Teso, 2015).

Moreover, the elicited examples show that the phenomenon is not entirely limited to *fierro*, *pelo* and *filo*, and that there is some level of productivity outside of what the literature suggests.

Because of the variability in the responses, the data suggest that there are subtle differences in how nouns are built in the individual grammars of the surveyed participants. In §3.4 I will propose a theoretical account for how we might account for these subtle differences.

3.4. Proposal for a DM approach

Recall from the previous chapter that under Distributed Morphology (DM) nouns are a *root+word marker* combination, and in Spanish, word markers are either a vowel or a null morpheme that are not dedicated to any one gender (Bermúdez-Otero, 2013; Harris, 1991, 1992). I extended this system to Asturian in Chapter 2 where I proposed that its word markers are [-*e*, -*a*, -*o*, -*u*, -*∅*]. Building on this, I follow the literature that is in support of the nominal root not being the locus of gender, but rather *n*. Furthermore, theme vowels are loosely related to the concept of gender in the form of a head that is disassociated from *n*, and due to this relationship, theme vowels have an indirect link to this *n*, gender, and also form class through spell-out rules (Embick 2010, 2015; Kramer, 2015, 2016). In §3.4 I will map out some key issues behind DM to better couch my later proposal in the framework, and then I will briefly review Kramer (2015)'s system. I will then show how we can use a DM approach to mass morphemes in Asturian to account for theme vowel assignment, general word formation, and the participant elicited data from my survey.

3.4.1. A Basic Approach Under Distributed Morphology (DM)

As an introduction to DM, I use an early abstract sketch of my analysis of Asturian word formation, in (23) below, to highlight some of the tenets that are the foundation of this theoretical

framework. The idea behind the morphosyntactic representation below is that nouns are fully decomposed down to their roots. They have no category that indicates if they are a noun or adjective, for example, and therefore must be categorized with a functional head, say *v* for verbs, *n* for nouns and *a* for adjectives (Embick, 2010, 2015; Embick & Marantz, 2008; Kramer, 2015, 2016; Marantz, 1997, to name a few).

(23) Abstract Sketch of Asturian Word Formation
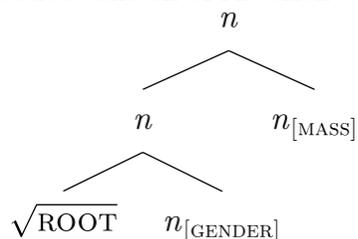
Looking to example (23) above, gender is located on the *n* that is most adjacent to the root, as argued in the literature (Kramer, 2015, 2016). My additional proposal is to include a higher *n* for mass to derive the nouns in Asturian that spell-out *-o* when under a mass interpretation, which I will discuss in more detail in §3.4.2 and §3.4.3.

One basic concept that drives DM is the idea of listed information. For example, in the Syntactic Terminals we find the listing of roots and functional morphemes, which are features like [±pl] or [±def], that have no phonological information tied to them for pronunciation in the grammar themselves. The Vocabulary is concerned with the actual phonological features that match those of the functional morphemes. For example, the past tense morpheme *-ed* in English is inserted at a terminal node with the feature [+past]. Finally, under The Encyclopedia is where we find semantic meaning, or the part of the derivation that allows for interpretation (Embick, 2015: 7-20). This general process is sketched out in Figure 4 below (repeated from Figure 2 in chapter one) *à la* Embick (2015).
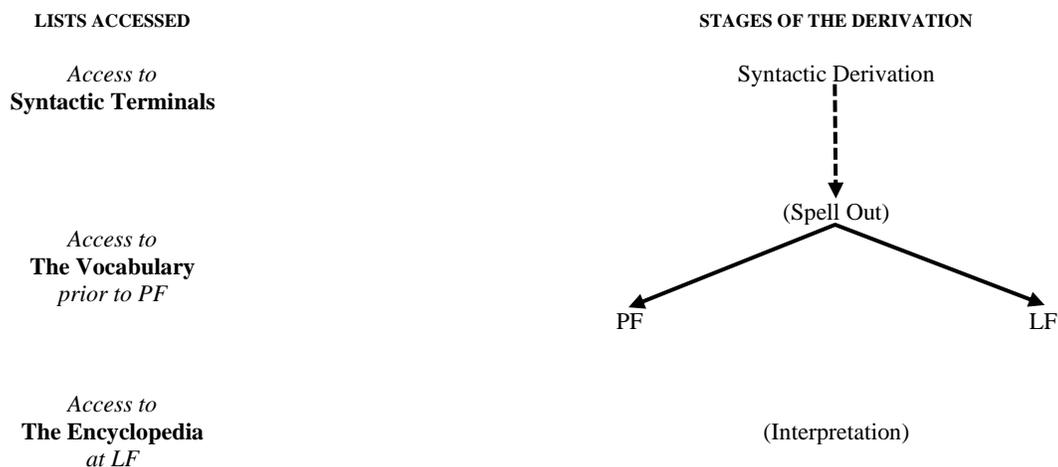
LISTS ACCESSED   STAGES OF THE DERIVATION

Access to   Syntactic Derivation
Syntactic Terminals

Access to   (Spell Out)
The Vocabulary
prior to PF

                                                    PF   LF

Access to
The Encyclopedia   (Interpretation)
at LF

Figure 4 - Grammars and Lists (modified from Embick, 2015: 20)

However, there are additional components to DM that can clarify the right margin of Figure 4, from Syntactic Derivation to Interpretation. Returning to the point that roots are acategorical, they must be assigned a category, for example, to create a noun. We see via head movement in (24a) that the root moves to the *n* head that is directly adjacent to it. These heads adjoin and create the complex head shown in (24b), thus categorizing the root as noun.

(24) Abstract Nominal Root Formation (Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005: 45)

a.   b.

DP

D   nP

      n   √

                                                          n

                                                    √   n
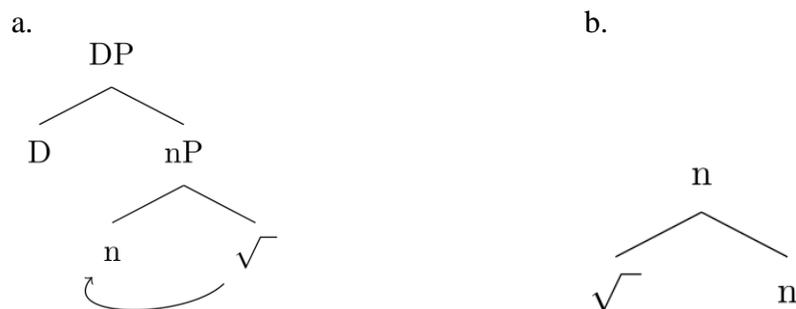
The process shown above corresponds to the Syntactic Derivation stage of Figure 4, where we are concerned with the linearization of the different functional heads. After this stage, but before spell-out, there is an additional step not shown in Embick's (2015) graphic, which is referred to as Morphological Structure (MS). This is where processes like fusion, which is the combination of nodes so that they share features of one morpheme, or fission, the splitting of morphemes, can take place. It is also at MS that a theme position is added as a

disassociated node, acting as an insertion site for the theme vowel, and it is a requirement that all functional heads project this node (Oltra-Massuet, 1999 and references therein), shown in example (25).

(25) Post-Syntactic Theme Node Adjunction

```
          n
         / \
       √     n
            / \
          n    Th
```
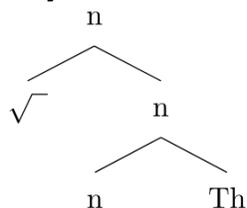
Finally, in the second to last stage in Figure 4, spell-out of the theme vowel occurs in a process of Late Insertion (Halle & Marantz, 1994), which takes place at PF based on rules that assign a morpheme, and this morpheme matches a subset of features on the node where it will be spelled-out. It is this sense of waiting to insert this morpheme after all other necessary processes take place that gives rise to the term "Late Insertion" (see Embick, 2010, 2015; Halle & Marantz, 1994; Oltra-Massuet, 1999; and Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005 for more application of this). The general idea of theme vowel insertion is laid out in bracket form for the nouns and adjectives in example (26).

(26) Spanish Theme Vowel Examples (Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005: 48)

a. [√   [n   **Th**]]
        més   Ø   **a**   '*mesa' (table)*

b. [√   [n   **Th**]]
        ver   dád   **Ø**   *'verdad' (truth)*

c. [√   [a   **Th**]]
        vérd   Ø   **e**   *'verde' (green)*

d. [√   [a   **Th**]]
        colér ic   **o**   *'colérico' (furious)*

To briefly walk the reader through the above examples, it is the *n* or the *a* that categorizes the root as either a noun or an adjective. Examples (26a) and (26b) show the spell-out of theme

vowel *-a* in the noun *mesa 'table'*, and null morpheme *-Ø* in the athematic noun *verdad 'truth'*, respectively. As for the adjective examples, (26c) forms the word *verde 'green'*, whose theme vowel is *-e*, and in (26d), *colérico 'furious'* with theme vowel *-o*. There are more details pertaining to the rules that determine spell-out, but I abstract away from this until §3.4.2 where I can explain this process using concrete examples in my revision of Kramer's (2015) approach to the locus of nominal gender. I now return to the abstract representation from example (23), repeated in (27) below.

(27) Abstract Sketch of Asturian Word Formation [revisited]
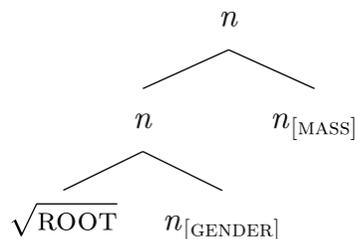
In looking at the abstract representation above, there are at least two main issues. While the condition of the root being categorized by an *n* head is met, there is no projection of any theme vowel node, which must accompany both the $n_{[\text{GENDER}]}$ and $n_{[\text{MASS}]}$ functional heads. This issue feeds into the second one, which requires a little bit more explanation on the cyclicity of functional heads in DM (Embick, 2010).

The structure above assumes cyclic head movement in a local relationship between heads. The idea behind this is that the root moves to $n_{[\text{GENDER}]}$ to form the complex head $\sqrt{ROOT}\text{-}n_{[GENDER]}$, which then moves to $n_{[\text{MASS}]}$, resulting in the complex head formation of $\sqrt{ROOT}\text{-}n_{[GENDER]}\text{-}n_{[MASS]}$, represented structurally in (27). Each of these so-called "pit-stops" on the way to complex root formation are referred to as phases. However, these assumptions do pose some problems within the DM framework.

First, the $n_{[MASS]}$ head can interact with the features of the $n_{[GENDER]}$ head, but it cannot establish any relationship with the root because $n_{[GENDER]}$ intervenes. Second, if n is a phase morpheme spell-out would occur first on $n_{[GENDER]}$ and then on $n_{[MASS]}$. Finally, the mechanism for either deleting one of the morphemes would remain unclear and stipulating that spell-out only occurs on $n_{[MASS]}$ would create more questions for how mass nouns, like *ropa 'clothing'*, would not be incorrectly generated as an *-o* form.

To remedy these issues and maintain the structure represented above, I could argue for a complex process of fusion that would take place at MS post-syntactically, and before spell-out at PF, in order to fuse the $n_{[GENDER]}$ and $n_{[MASS]}$ nodes. This operation would create one n node with the feature bundle {[GENDER], [MASS]}, thus creating only one location for spell-out of the morpheme that fits a subset of the necessary features in this bundle[52]. However, I discard this as a viable option due to its complexity and the fact that this operation is out altogether due to the gender and mass nodes not being in a sister relationship (Embick, 2010). Instead, in §3.4.2 I will argue for a formalization of Kramer's (2015, 2016) approach to gender location and noun derivation in DM as a simpler and clearer approach to derivation in Asturian, while capturing the mass/count system as it relates to theme vowels along the way.

3.4.2.   Gender and Little nPs

Having outlined the basic concepts that were laid out in §3.4.1, I will now outline Kramer's (2015) work, whose main contribution is typologically arguing that gender is not located on the root, nor on number, as others have maintained (see Kramer, 2016 and references therein for a detailed review of this matter). Before entering any structural assumptions, the general idea

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[52] For a more detailed explanation of fusion as it applies to Latin verb derivation, I refer the reader to Embick (2015: 213-216), who references the initial discussion of this process as coming from Halle and Marantz (1993).

behind the author's analysis is that gender is located on *n*, and therefore nouns for languages like

Amharic, Swahili, Spanish, Romanian, Fox and Ojibwe, to name a few, can be organized into the

different types of *n*s that fit their gender systems. The *n*s for two gender languages like Spanish,

three gender languages like Romanian, and animacy-based gender in Algonquian languages, like

Fox and Ojibwe, are shown in examples (28), (29) and (30), respectively.

(28)   Spanish *n*s (Kramer, 2015: 96)
        a. *n i* [+FEM]
        b. *n i* [-FEM]
        c. *n*
        d. *n u* [+FEM]

(29)   Romanian *n*s (Kramer, 2015: 115)
        a. *n i* [+FEM]
        b. *n i* [-FEM]
        c. *n*
        d. *n u* [+FEM]
        e. *n u* [-FEM]

(30)   Algonquian *n*s (Kramer, 2015: 113)
        a. *n i* [ANIMATE]
        b. *n*
        c. *n u* [ANIMATE]

To quickly take the reader through the above examples under Kramer's (2015) system, the

plain *n*, (28c), (29c) and (30b), triggers these languages' default gender, which would be the

masculine in Spanish, the neuter in Romanian and inanimate in Algonquian. The *i*nterpretable

gender features in (28a), (28b), (29a) and (29b) trigger the difference between feminine gender,

with the [+FEM] feature, and masculine gender, with the [-FEM] feature, of animate nouns. These

features are interpretable because animate nouns in most cases semantically acquire gender from

the biological sex of their referent.

Spanish makes use of the *u*ninterpretable [+FEM] feature, in (28d), to trigger default or fixed

feminine gender on inanimate nouns. Romanian has the same *u*ninterpretable feature, in (29d),

for inanimate feminine nouns, but since the plain *n* in (29c) corresponds to the neuter, the author

proposed a *n* with an *u*ninterpretable [-FEM] feature, in (29e), to trigger inanimate masculine

gender. This leaves the *n*s with *i*nterpretable and *u*ninterpretable animate gender for Algonquian

in (30a) and (30c), respectively. The *i*nterpretable one is for animate nouns like *woman* and *dog*,

and the *u*ninterpretable one was proposed to cover cases like the word *raspberry*, which is an

inanimate noun by default that will show animate agreement with other elements in the language

(Kramer, 2015: 112-113). The pairing of roots and *n*s under the author's system is shown in

bracket notation in examples (31) through (33) below.

(31) Spanish *n* Licensers (Kramer, 2015: 96-97)
    a. [*n i* [+FEM][√HIJ]]   = 'hija'   [daughter]
    b. [*n i* [-FEM][√HIJ]]   = 'hijo'   [son]
    c. [*n* [√LIBR]]   = 'libro'   [book]
    d. [*n u* [+FEM][√PER]]   = 'pera'   [pear]

As different gender nouns can share a root, as is the case with *hijo 'son'* and *hija 'daughter'*

in Spanish in (31a) the only feature that separates them is the *i*nterpretable [±FEM] feature due to

being animate nouns. Example (31c) shows how plain *n* triggers default masculine gender on

roots like the one that corresponds to the noun *libro 'book'*. Finally, example (31d) provides an

example of a fixed feminine gender inanimate noun in Spanish, in this case *pear*, that is licensed

by the *n* with the *u*ninterpretable [+FEM] feature. The same is extended to Romanian below[53].

(32) Romanian *n* Licensers (Kramer, 2015: 96-97, cf. Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea, 2013: 7-8)
    a. [*n i* [+FEM][√SOR]]   = 'soră'   [sister]
    b. [*n i* [-FEM][√FRAT]]   = 'frate'   [brother]
    c. [*n* [√GLAS]]   = 'glas'   [voice]
    d. [*n u* [-FEM][√VIEZUR]]   = 'viezure'   [badger]
    e. [*n u* [+FEM][√CĂLĂUZ]]   = 'călăuză'   [guide]

---

[53] Kramer (2015) drew from Chitoran (2002) and Iscrulescu (2003) to make the basic assumptions about final vowels and gender in Romanian, referred to as vocalic morphemes. I further reviewed Chitoran (2002: 32-37) and Iscrulescu (2003: 14-15) regarding noun desinences in Romanian to better organize the roots in this example.

In examples (32a) and (32b), we have another case that shows different root nouns separated by gender that are animate, in which the same distinction between the *i*nterpretable [±FEM] holds, but between them this *n* licenses different roots. The plain *n* in example (32c) captures roots that are licensed by this *n* to derive neuter nouns like *glas* in Romanian. It then follows that fixed gender masculine and feminine inanimate nouns are licensed by the *n*s containing *u*ninterpretable [-FEM] and [+FEM] features, in (32d) and (32e), respectively. The set of *n* licensers below contains examples from Fox that demonstrate a similar process in the Algonquian system.

(33)   Algonquian (Fox) *n* Licensers (Kramer, 2015: 106-107, cf. Dahlstrom, 1995: 56)[54]
        a. [*n i* [ANIM][√ANEMOꞏH]]   = 'anemoꞏha'   [dog]
        b. [*n* [√AHKAN]]   = 'ahkani'   [bone]
        c. [*n u* [ANIM][√ WIꞏTAWIꞏH]]   = 'wiꞏtawiꞏha'   [raspberry]

The animate noun *anemoꞏha 'dog'* in (33a) is derived by licensing its root under the *n* with an *i*nterpretable animate feature. This compares to the noun *wiꞏtawiꞏha 'raspberry'*, in (33c), which is inanimate but shows animate agreement with other elements, hence the *n* with the *u*ninterpretable animate feature that licenses these types of roots. The plain *n* licenser in example (33b) is considered default, and therefore would derive inanimate nouns in Algonquian, like the noun *ahkani 'bone'* in Fox.

Up to this point I have summarized Kramer's (2015) analysis by showing how it keeps gender off the root, and instead places it on different types of *n*s whose number varies across different languages, notably in a comparison between Spanish, Romanian, and Algonquian, for the sake of presenting this system (cf. (28)-(30)). I then showed examples of some roots that are licensed by these *n*s to derive nouns of different genders in the three languages (cf. (31)-(33)). Having covered these bases, I turn now to how the correct theme vowel is spelled-out in relation to the *n*

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[54] I maintain the raised dot that Kramer (2015) kept as the standard for indicating a long vowel in for Algonquian transcriptions.

licensers and gender. I focus on Spanish, as this is what will serve as the transition to the

Asturian data. The declension class theme vowels for Spanish are included in examples (34) and

(35) below.

(34) Spanish Declension Classes (adapted from Kramer, 2015: 236)[55]

III	-e/-Ø	madr-e *'mother'*, padr-e *'father'*, lápiz-Ø *'pencil'*, luz-Ø *'light'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, pas-a *'raisin'*
I	-o	lí-o 'muddle', man-o *'hand'*

(35)   Spanish Theme Vowels (Kramer, 2015: 239)
     a. [THEME, III]   ↔ *-e/-Ø*
     b. [THEME, II]   ↔ *-a*
     c. [THEME, I]   ↔ *-o*

It has been shown in the literature that Spanish has three different declension classes, that

each of these classes correspond to the theme vowels (also called word markers) as demonstrated

in the examples above, and that gender is not necessarily determined by the vowel that is spelled-

out[56], as both masculine and feminine nouns are part of all three declension classes (Bermúdez-

Otero, 2013; Kramer, 2015; Harris, 1991, 1992; among others). However as applied to Spanish,

in order to spell-out the correct theme vowel for the particular feature, or features, on a given

node, the rules laid out in example (36) below operate on the Elsewhere Principle (Pāṇininan

Principle) and the Subset Principle, such that theme vowels are in competition for spell-out, and

the most specific rule must be met first. Application of more general rules leads to an *elsewhere*

morpheme, or a context in which the default theme vowel is spelled out (Kramer, 2015: 7, 239;

cf. Halle, 1997).

---

[55] The author based the original table on Bermúdez-Otero (2013).

[56] Referencing back to the notion of word markers as presented in Chapter 2, masculine nouns typically make up the first declension class, ending in *-o*, feminine nouns are typically members of the second class, ending in *-a*, and the third class is a mixture of the two genders, either ending in *-e* or *-Ø*. However, I again stress that nominal gender operates in relation to, but independent of theme class.

(36)   Theme Node Rules (adapted from Kramer, 2015: 239)
    a. i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √MADR, √PADR, √LÁPIZ, √LUZ …
        ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ …
        iii. Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN …
    b. Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
    c. Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

To further explain (36) going from top to bottom, they are ordered from most specific to least specific, where the most specific rule must be met first. It is exactly this ordering that accounts for both feminine and masculine nouns, like *madre 'mother'* and *padre 'father'* that end in *-e*, as well as any athematic roots in Spanish, like *lápiz 'pencil'*[57]. Essentially, any roots specified in this first rule under (36a) must be joined first with the CLASS III theme vowel, and therefore will not spell-out any of the other theme vowels related to the other classes. This concept continues as we look to the second specification that is part of rule (36a), which accounts for exceptional cases like the root for masculine *día 'day'*, despite ending in *-a*. On the same note, the third and final rule for (36a) accounts for roots that derive feminine nouns but end in *-o*, as is the case with *mano 'hand'*.

If the root in question is one not stipulated in rule (36a), we move to the less specific rule in (36b), in which any root that is found in the context of an *n* with a [+FEM] feature is spelled-out with the CLASS II theme vowel, *-a*, hence we would derive a feminine noun as *pera 'pear'*, not *pero*. Finally, if no specific contexts are stipulated at all, rule (36c) is the elsewhere rule in which theme vowel *-o* is spelled-out, as would be the case for default masculine nouns in Spanish, which is why the theme class is plain here.

Recall from §3.4.1 that theme vowels are adjoined to *n* as a dissociated node post-syntactically (Embick, 2010; Oltra-Massuet, 1999; Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005; to name a few

---

[57] For phonological and syllabification reasons in Spanish, nouns like *lápiz 'pencil'* and *luz 'light'* are athematic, represented by *-Ø*, as no word marker is required to complete the syllable. Compare the correctly formed *madre* to the ill-formed *madr*.
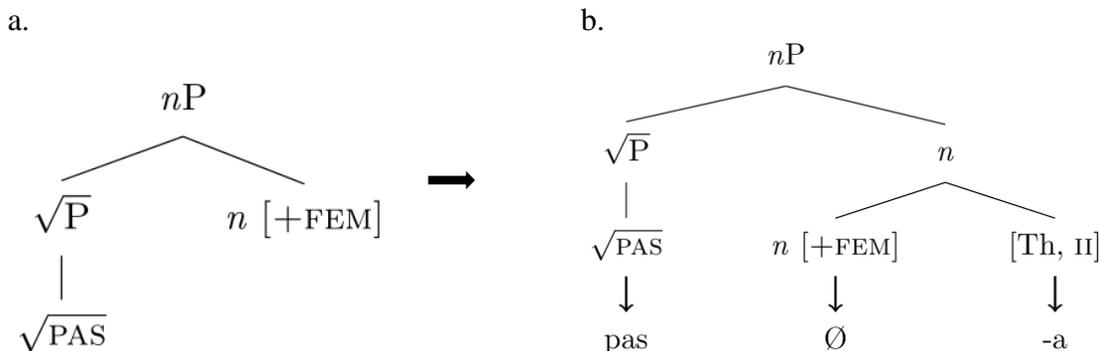
different analyses), and this builds on the process of syntactically merging a root with a

classifying *n* so that the theme node can then be adjoined to the structure via subsequent theme

vowel spell-out.

These assumptions are applied to Spanish by Kramer (2015: 240-241) and account for all the

DM processes outlined thus far. First, example (37) takes us through the process with a noun that

is part of Class III.

(37) Derivation of a Class III noun: *madre* 'mother' (Kramer, 2015: 240)

Syntax   **PF: Theme Node Insertion**

a.   b.
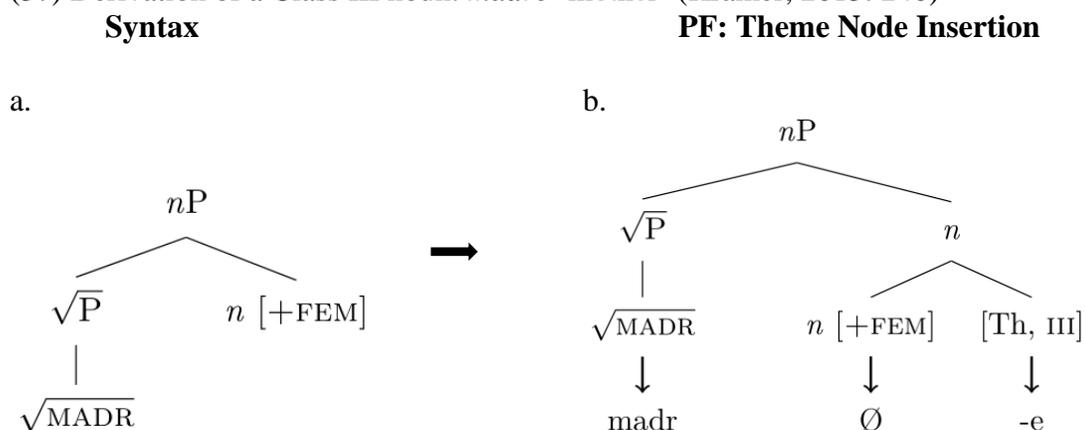
In (37a), √MADR is categorized by the *n* [+FEM] head in the syntax and then the THEME III

node is inserted in (37b) due to the rule stipulated in (36a). Since the theme vowel is spelled-out

on this node, and not on *n*, no overt morpheme is spelled out on *n* (a matter that is consistent with

the following examples as well). The reason *-e* is spelled-out here is because it is the Vocabulary

Item that is paired to THEME III, in (35a). Now let us turn to a CLASS II noun below.

(38) Derivation of a Class II noun: *pasa* 'raisin' (Kramer, 2015: 240)

Syntax | **PF: Theme Node Insertion**

a.

```
        nP
       /  \
    √P      n [+FEM]
    |
   √PAS
```

b.

```
              nP
            /    \
          √P       n
          |      /   \
        √PAS   n [+FEM]   [Th, II]
          ↓      ↓          ↓
         pas     Ø         -a
```

The derivation in (38a) is similar to the (a) example above, but the root is √PAS to derive the feminine noun *pasa 'rasin'*. Since this is a CLASS II noun, it is a THEME II node that is instead inserted post-syntactically, due to the (36b) rule that inserts this theme node when the *n* has a [+FEM] feature. For this reason, *-a* is spelled-out as shown in (35b). One major point that Kramer (2015: 240) highlights between example (37) and (38) is that in the first case, theme node spell-out relies only on the fact that √MADR is a root that is specified as THEME III. In the second case, the context is contingent upon the [+FEM] feature, and although the theme vowel is still spelled-out on the dissociated theme node (THEME II in this case), it is still close enough to interact with the gender feature on *n*, though it need not rely on it for theme vowel assignment.

(39) Derivation of a Class I noun: *mano* 'hand' (Kramer, 2015: 241)

Syntax | **PF: Theme Node Insertion**

a.

```
        nP
       /  \
    √P      n [+FEM]
    |
   √MAN
```

b.

```
              nP
            /    \
          √P       n
          |      /   \
        √MAN   n [+FEM]   [Th, I]
          ↓      ↓          ↓
         man     Ø         -o
```
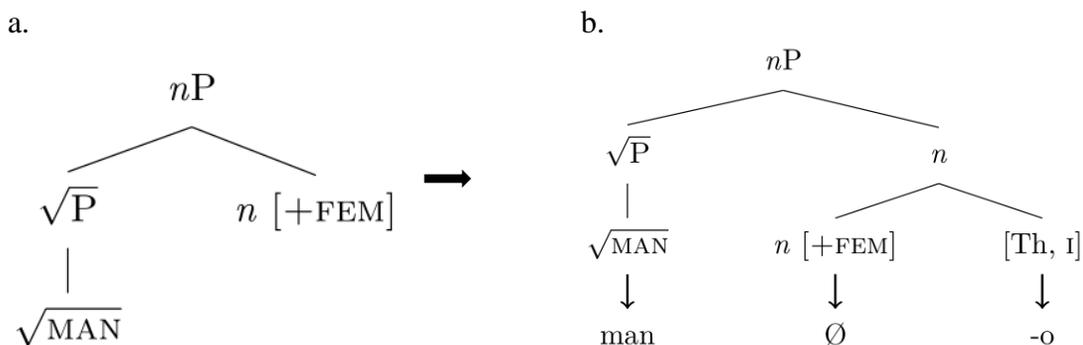
In the derivation for *mano 'hand'* above, in (39), the syntax again behaves as expected. However, in this case since the root √MAN is to contextually have THEME I inserted, per part three of rule (36a), the node for CLASS I is inserted post-syntactically in (39b). Consequently, the theme vowel *-o* is spelled-out as this is the Vocabulary Item that is linked to this theme class, in (35c). Finally, in example (40) below, we consider an example that relies on the Elsewhere Principle in the process regarding theme vowel spell out.

(40) Derivation of *lío 'muddle'* (Kramer, 2015: 241)

Syntax   **PF: Theme Node Insertion**

a.   b.
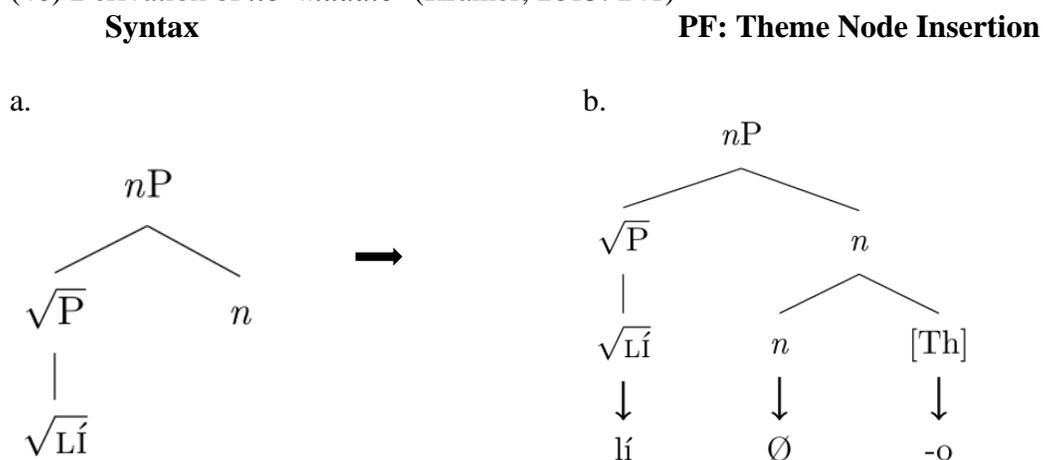
There are two main differences with the derivation above. The first is, being that *lío 'muddle'* is considered a default masculine noun, the *n* that licenses its root in (40a) is plain. The second difference, in (40b), refers to the theme node that is being inserted, which is just a plain THEME. The reason for this is nouns like *lío 'muddle'* do not spell out *-o* because of gender or theme class, but rather because they are assigned this theme vowel by default and not due to a rule specification like the other examples. Furthermore, feminine nouns that do not have roots specified for certain contexts are covered by the [+FEM] rule which must occur first, and therefore, these nouns will never be assigned *-o* (Kramer, 2015: 241). I will now apply these concepts to Asturian based on the reported language use from my survey participants in sub-sections that follow.

3.4.3. Earlier Derivations for "Asturian"

Before formalizing Kramer's (2015) system as summarized in the previous section and

applying it to Asturian, it is important to look at the only previous analysis of theme vowels that

has been applied to Asturian data: Harris (1992) , which is based on data from Hualde (1992). In

this section of his article, he superficially applied his system of Spanish form classes to also

account for data in what was referred to as dialects of Asturian and Cantabrian in Northwestern

Spain, or NS dialects (Harris, 1992: 82). The relevant data is shown in (41).

(41)   Summary of Basic Facts (adapted from Harris, 1992: 82)[58]

		masculine	feminine
a.	singular:	'dry hair(s)'	'dry fruit(s)'
	count:	pIl-*u* sIk-*u*	frut-*a* sIk-*a*
	mass:	pIl-*o* sIk-*o*	frut-*a* sIk-*o*
b.	plural:	pIl-*o*+s sIk-*o*+s	frut-*a*+s sIk-*a*+s

The (a) examples in (41) show the masculine mass noun and the adjective modifying it ending

in -*o*, while the feminine mass noun ends in -*a* and its modifying adjective agrees in mass,

marked by -*o*. However, we see no such distinction in the singular count or the plural. Based on

these data, it was then determined that the masculine singular word marker for nouns was

interpreted to be -*u*, as compared to the Spanish -*o*, and NS mass adjectives end in -*o*, instead of

the CLASS II -*a* for feminine adjectives in Spanish (Harris, 1992: 83). This now brings us to the

rules included below.

(42)   NS redundancy rules (adapted from Harris, 1992: 83)

$$\text{fem} \rightarrow \begin{cases} \text{Ø/[\_\_\_\_, Adj, M]} & \text{a.} \\ \text{II} & \text{b.} \end{cases}$$

---

[58] The purpose of the archiphoneme *I* accounts for possible raising of the tonic -*e*- to an -*i*- due to final atonic vowel
influence, which is referred to as metaphony in the NS varieties mentioned.

The relevant aspect for the redundancy rules presented above is the Mass (M) feature in (42a), as it is argued to account for the mass agreement of adjectives and not seen as problematic for form classes for NS nouns. Furthermore, these redundancy rules apply after agreement has already taken place in the syntax (Harris, 1992: 82-83). To interpret the rule in (42a), a feminine adjective essentially has the theme vowel that would correspond to CLASS II is blocked from being inserted when the adjective shows mass agreement. If no such context is present, the CLASS II theme vowel wins out. This idea then leads into the candidates for marker spell-out in example (43).

(43)   NS Marker Spell-out (adapted from Harris, 1992: 83)

$$\langle v \rangle \rightarrow \begin{cases} o/\{M, \text{Plur}\} & \text{a.} \\ a/\text{Class II} & \text{b.} \\ u \text{ (default)} & \text{c.} \end{cases}$$

Based on the author's proposed choices for marker spell-out, in the presence of either mass or plurality, in (43a), the theme vowel is spelled out as -*o*. However, in the context in which THEME CLASS II is present, such as the case in (42b), -*a* is inserted per the marker in (43b). With no other relevant value present, the default -*u* is then inserted (Harris, 1992: 83). A sample derivation is shown in (44).

(44) Sample Derivation (adapted from Harris, 1992: 83)

	pIlu	*sIku*	*pIlo*	*sIko*	*fruta*	*sIka*	*fruta*	*sIko*	
LEXICON:	'hair' /pIl/ Noun	'dry' /sIk/ Adj	'hair' /pIl/ Noun M	'dry' /sIk/ Adj	'fruit' /frut/ Noun fem	'dry' /sIk/ Adj	'fruit' /frut/ Noun fem M	'dry' /sIk/ Adj	
SYNTAX:				M		fem		fem M	by concord
MORPHO- LOGY:			pIl-o	sIk-o	II frut-a	II sIk-a	II frut-a	fem → Ø sIk-o	
	pIl-u	sIk-u							

PHONOLOGY: vowel harmony, etc.

By interpreting the above schema in (44) we see how Harris (1992: 83) accounts for the derivation of *pIlu sIku*, *pIlo sIko*, *fruta sIka* and *fruta sIko*. Working from left to right, *pIlu sIku* appears as such because there is no specification for M or CLASS II throughout the derivation process, and therefore, the default *-u* is spelled-out. As for *pIlo sIko*, the *-o* is spelled out due to the M marking on the noun in the lexicon, and for the adjective, the same value appears in the syntax via agreement. Turning to *fruta sIka*, gender agreement holds because of the CLASS II specification for both the noun and adjective. Finally, *fruta sIko* is accounted for in the schema above as the CLASS II value in the case of the noun, and the rule in (42a) for the adjective, in which the marker for CLASS II is blocked because of the M value in the syntax, thus allowing *-o* to be inserted per (43a). While Harris (1992) is on the right track with his specification of the masculine count *-u* word marker, and the use of *-o* as a marker of mass on masculine nouns and mass agreeing post-nominal adjectives, there are some issues that I must bring up before concluding this revision and moving on to the Asturian survey data.

The first issue that I raise is that the approach greatly generalizes the entirety of the mass/count distinction in Asturian to but a few varieties in Asturias and Cantabria, as Hualde

(1992) treated the Asturian variety spoken in Ḷḷena, and Pasiego, which is spoken in Cantabria. This system essentially only accounts for the minority spoken in already minority languages.

Second, the redundancy rules and NS markers included in (42) and (43) appear to only favor the derivation of post-nominal adjectives. The gives rise to two problems. For the context of pre-nominal adjectives that show gender agreement, even though this characteristic is briefly mentioned in the article, it is left entirely open as to how this system could account for this pre-nominal agreement pattern. Additionally, the application of the redundancy rules and marker spell-out appears to only apply to adjectives. For this reason, even though *fruta* is mass and the M and II values should be in competition, the only explanation under this system for not deriving *fruto* is because it is not an adjective. Provided that this is the case, and since the system as it was presented throughout Harris (1992) seems to only include a syntactic concord level in the derivation when adjectives are present, how is it that marker spell-out would apply solely to NS nouns if it is that only after syntactic concord is determined can the redundancy rules apply?

The last issue that I bring up is more of a structural one, as the schema in (44) does not seem to fully conform to the ideas as presented in §3.4.2 regarding derivation under DM. The main concern here is at the first level of the derivation it appears that there is reliance on some lexical information, such as whether it is a noun or adjective, or specification of mass or feminine gender, and the syntax level is responsible for adjective agreement. However as presented in the previous section under a more recent analysis, it is a syntactic operation that combines a root with a *n* that can categorize it, and on this *n* is where there are features that indicate gender.

However, where Harris' (1992) proposal is on track is the presence of both an *-o* and an *-u* theme vowel in his analysis, a matter that I will also adopt in the following section. However, due to the level of variation in Asturian and the survey responses that were provided regarding

the count/mass distinction in the language in §3.3 I will base my analysis along the line of more recent approaches to DM (Embick, 2010, 2015; Kramer, 2015).

3.4.4. *Deriving Asturian Nouns*

Recall from example (28), repeated in (45), that Spanish has four *n*s to account for the categorization of roots that derive feminine and masculine nouns for both animate and inanimate nouns, and that the plain *n* in this system triggers default gender, which for Spanish is the masculine one. I propose that this system also extends directly to Prescriptive Asturian, P-Asturian henceforth, in (46) below with one modification[59]. The need to make the P-Asturian distinction at this juncture is because this is the system as presented by the *Academia*, in which masculine nouns generally end in *-u* except for the three mass nouns *fierro 'iron material'*, *pelo 'hair'* and *filo 'thread'*, which end in *-o*.

(45)   Spanish *n*s (Kramer, 2015: 96)
         a. *n i* [+FEM]
         b. *n i* [-FEM]
         c. *n*
         d. *n u* [+FEM]

In comparison with the Spanish *n* system in (45), the proposed P-Asturian *n*s in (46) have some similarities. First, both systems have four types of *n* that derive nouns. Second, animate nouns are licensed by the *i*nterpretable [±FEM] feature, in (46a) and (46b). Third, for inanimate nouns a root in the context of a *n* with no gender feature, (46c), triggers default masculine gender while fixed feminine gender is triggered by the *n* with the *u*ninterpretable [+FEM] feature, in (46d).

---

[59] See Burner (2022) where I partially worked out this system to derive nouns in Asturian that change in meaning, for example in size or dimension, via a process that is typically referred to as *gender shift* (Mathieu, 2012).

(46)   P-Asturian *n*s
     a. *n i* [+FEM]
     b. *n i* [-FEM]
     c. *n* [±MASS]
     d. *n u* [+FEM] [±MASS]

The main formalization for the P-Asturian system however, is that the inanimate *n*s, in (46c)

and (46d), contain a [±MASS] feature. Therefore, a masculine noun that denotes mass and ends in

-o and a masculine count noun that ends in *-u* are both licensed by *n* in terms of gender, but mass

-o is derived specifically via *n* [+MASS] while the count *-u* form is derived via *n* [-MASS]. In the

examples that follow I will further develop the implications for mass *-o* versus count *-u* spell-out,

as well as how the addition of [±MASS] on (46d) will be unproblematic for mass nouns that do

not present as *-o* forms (cf. feminine noun *ropa 'clothing'*).

Another approach instead of including [±MASS] on (46c) and (46d) would be to apply the

Kramer's treatment of Somali plurals and the singulative in Algonquian (Kramer, 2015: 161-162,

202-204), to name two examples, which bundled features on a single *n*. This, however, bypasses

any discussion on the node fusion needed to create these bundles (Embick, 2010, 2015), and

leaves open how the recursive *n* structures would involve post-syntactic theme node

adjunction[60]. By accepting the proposed system of *n*s in (46) above, the details extend

unproblematically from the Spanish *n* licensers, in (31) as repeated in (47), to the ones for P-

Asturian, in (48).

(47)   Spanish *n* Licensers (Kramer, 2015: 96-97)
     a. [*n i* [+FEM][√HIJ]]   = 'hija'   [daughter]
     b. [*n i* [-FEM][√HIJ]]   = 'hijo'   [son]
     c. [*n* [√LIBR]]   = 'libro'   [book]
     d. [*n u* [+FEM][√PER]] = 'pera'   [pear]

---

[60] A related issue is why spell-out occurs at the highest *n*, and not at the lowest first, which would have to involve some kind of haplology rule to stipulate what keeps theme vowel insertion from occurring lower in the structure first (Dr. R. Kramer, personal communication, December 7, 2020).

(48)   P-Asturian *n* Licensers
          a. [*n i* [+FEM][√FI]]   = 'fía'   [daughter]
          b. [*n i* [-FEM][√FI]]   = 'fíu'   [son]
          c. [*n* [-MASS][√FIERR]]   = 'fierru'   [an iron object]
          d. [*n* [+MASS][√FIERR]]   = 'fierro'   [iron material]
          e. [*n u* [+FEM][-MASS][√PER]]   = 'pera'   [pear]

Looking to the P-Asturian *n* Licensers in example (48) above, we see similarities to Spanish

(compare (47)). The *n*s in (48a) and (48b) license roots that form feminine and masculine

animate nouns, respectively, and as such they are distinguished by the *i*nterpretable [±FEM]

feature. The *u*ninterpretable [+FEM] *n*, in (48e), also accounts for roots that are licensed to form

fixed feminine gender nouns that are inanimate. However, the main distinction here is found

between (48c) and (48d). *n* [-MASS] licenses our default, or fixed, masculine gender nouns in P-

Asturian that are inanimate, end in *-u*, and are also synonymous with count interpretations, while

roots that form masculine mass inanimates are licensed under *n* [+MASS]. Where the [±FEM]

feature in (48a) and (48b) is responsible for distinguishing *fía* and *fíu*, it is the [+MASS] feature in

(48d) that distinguishes *fierro* from *fierru*. Theme node insertion in P-Asturian differs from

Spanish as follows.

(49)   Spanish Theme Vowels (Kramer, 2015: 239)
          a. [THEME, III]   ↔ *-e/-Ø*
          b. [THEME, II]   ↔ *-a*
          c. [THEME, I]   ↔ *-o*

(50)   P-Asturian Theme Vowels
          a. [THEME, III]   ↔ *-e/-Ø*
          b. [THEME, II]   ↔ *-a*
          c. [THEME, I]   ↔ *-u/-o*

If we compare the Spanish theme vowels from example (35), repeated above in (49), we see

that there is no change in THEME CLASS III or II in P-Asturian, as the theme vowel inventory is the

same in these classes. However, where a difference does occur is within THEME CLASS I, as there

are two allomorphic theme vowels. As it is only the three masculine inanimate nouns *fierro*, *pelo*

and *filo* that indicate a mass interpretation with -*o*, and no feminine nouns, it follows that this

theme vowel would be included in THEME CLASS I. Finally, just as Spanish has rules to pair theme

nodes to roots, as shown in (34) and (36) and repeated in (51) and (52) below, the same can be

adapted for P-Asturian.

(51) Spanish Declension Classes (Revisited)

III	-e/-Ø	madr-e *'mother'*, padr-e *'father'*, lápiz-Ø *'pencil'*, luz-Ø *'light'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, pas-a *'raisin'*
I	-o	lí-o 'muddle', man-o *'hand'*

(52)   Theme Node Rules (Revisited) (adapted from Kramer, 2015: 239)
    a.   i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √MADR, √PADR, √LÁPIZ, √LUZ …
          ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ …
          iii. Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN …
    b.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
    c.   Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

Taking the classes for Spanish declension and theme node rules from above, some

modifications have been made to better describe the language profile of P-Asturian. First, the list

of declension classes in (53) have added all the Asturian survey nouns to the list that was

originally provided for Spanish, and second, the noun pairs that distinguish count from mass

have been bolded so that they stand out. This grouping presents the Asturian language as

prescribed by the *Academia*.

Like in Spanish, in CLASS III we see masculine and feminine nouns that are both athematic and

end in -*e* (café-Ø *'coffee'* (m), ciudá-Ø *'city'* (f), hom-e *'man'* (m), xent-e *'people'* (f)). The

masculine noun *día* also forms part of CLASS II, aside from the expected feminine nouns, such as

fueya 'leaf', *ropa 'clothing'* and *sidra 'cider'*. However, it is CLASS I that is most relevant to our

discussion. The feminine noun *mano 'hand'*, like Spanish, expectedly forms part of this class,

but importantly, the *Academia* stipulates that it end in -*o* and not -*u*. The other nouns that are

masculine and would typically end in -*u*, either because they are count or they make no

distinction, are included in CLASS I, as well as the three mass nouns *fierro 'iron material'*, *filo*

'thread' and *pelo 'hair'*, which end in -*o*. Two special cases that I would like to mention,

however, are the nouns *foto 'photo'* and *radio 'radio'*. The *Academia* says that they are

shortened forms of *fotografía* and *radiotelefonía*, respectively, that end in -*o*. For shortened

forms like this in Spanish, namely *foto(grafía)* and *moto(cicleta)*, the -*o* is not said to behave as a

word marker (Harris, 1991: 37). For this reason, I place them in CLASS III as athematic nouns,

thus resolving why they end in -*o* without warranting any further attention.

(53) P-Asturian Declension Classes

III	-e/-Ø	café-Ø *'coffee'*, carbón-Ø *'coal'*, ciudá-Ø *'city'*, foto-Ø *'photo'*, hom-e *'man'*, llápiz-Ø *'pencil'*, lluz-Ø *'light'*, madr-e *'mother'*, muyer-Ø *'woman'*, padr-e *'father'*, pan-Ø *'bread'*, papel-Ø *'paper'*, radio-Ø *'radio'*, xent-e *'people'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, fuey-a *'leaf'*, pas-a *'raisin'*, rop-a *'clothing'*, sidr-a *'cider'*
I	-u/-o	asturian-u *'Asturian'*, bolígraf-u *'pen'*, choriz-u *'sausage'*, ciel-u *'sky'*, cuadern-u *'notebook'*, cuch-u *'manure/fertilizer'*, deu *'finger'*, diner-u *'money'*, **fierr-o *'iron material'*, fierr-u *'an iron object'***, fig-u *'fig'*, **fil-o *'thread'*, fil-u *'a thread'***, fum-u *'smoke'*, ganá-u *'cattle'*, llibr-u *'book'*, llí-u *'muddle'*, man-o *'hand'*, mund-u *'world'*, **pel-o *'hair'*, pel-u *'a hair'***, ques-u *'cheese'*, tiemp-u *'time'*, triné-u *'sled'*, vin-u *'wine'*

The details describing the form classes above then carry over to the theme node rules for

proper theme vowel spell-out, in (54). The same general principles apply here in that the rules

are listed top to bottom from most specific to least specific, where the most specific rule applies

first. Additionally, underspecification leads to the Elsewhere Principle. The first rule in (54a)

accounts for roots that are paired with THEME III and therefore end in -*e* or -*Ø*. The second rule

carries over from Spanish directly in that it accounts for exceptional masculine nouns that end in

-*a* due to linking their roots to THEME II.

Adding to the same rule that gives some feminine nouns THEME I insertion, rule three in (54a)

captures this in P-Asturian as well, although they are specifically derived with the theme vowel

-o. The next rule that could possibly apply is the one in (54b), which would handle spell-out for the roots that would typically form feminine nouns under CLASS II, thus ending in *-a*. Finally, rule (54d) covers all underspecified cases where *-u* is spelled out under plain *n*, hence the plain theme class carried over to P-Asturian as well (cf. example (40)).

(54)   P-Asturian Theme Node Rules
        a.   i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √CAFÉ, √CARBÓN, √CIUDÁ, √FOTO, √HOM, √LLÁPIZ, √LLUZ, √MADR, √MUYER, √PADR, √PAN, √PAPEL, √RADIO, √XENT, …
             ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ, …
             iii.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN, …
        b.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
        c.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √FIERR, √FIL, √PEL
        d.   Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

The rules in (54) pair theme vowels to theme nodes, therefore, an additional specification must be made to distinguish between theme vowels *-o* and *-u*. I argue that these CLASS I markers are determined by contextual allomorphy (Embick, 2010: 43) and that in the grammar of P-Asturian speakers, there is a contextual rule that takes place before theme vowel insertion. To better clarify this matter, the abstract representation in (55) can be used as a guide before presenting the contexts for P-Asturian allomorphy.

(55) Structure for ROOT-X-Y-Z
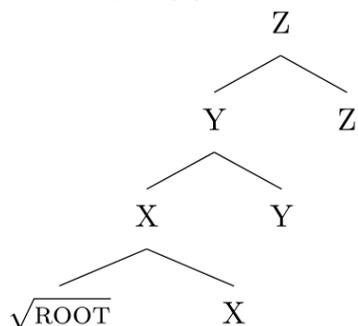
The idea behind contextual allomorphy is that a morpheme that is to be inserted on a node further out in the structure can look inward to the immediate interior node, and this interior node can provide the condition in which the competing outer morpheme is spelled-out. The X node

can look inward to the root and interact with anything that might affect the morpheme that is inserted at X. Likewise, Y can access X, and Z can access Y. However, Y cannot see across X to the root unless X has no overt morpheme, otherwise it would block any context from being established, and the same holds for any context that Z is looking to pick up from X. As this approach is considered localist, inside-out and cyclic, morphemes cannot establish context with an outer node, as it is not yet present in the derivation. X cannot be provided a context for morpheme spell-out based on some feature located on Y (Embick, 2010).

The behavior above is what drives the contextual allomorphy demonstrated in (56) for the following reasons. The specification in (56a) shows that the morpheme *-o* is spelled-out in the context of the root √MAN being licensed by *n u* [+FEM], deriving *mano*. (56b) explains the nouns *fierro*, *filo* and *pelo* in P-Asturian, which are the only ones that appear with *-o* in mass contexts. Finally, the count *-u* nouns *fierru*, *filu* and *pelu*, as well as all other default masculine nouns, are accounted for in (56c), where *-u*, and not *-o*, is inserted elsewhere due to underspecification.

(56) *-o/-u* Contextual Allomorphy
    a.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√MAN][*n u* [+FEM]]], …}___
    b.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√FIERR][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√FIL][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√PEL][*n* [+MASS]]]} ___

    c.   [Th]   ↔ -u

Since P-Asturian follows Spanish in that theme vowels are added post-syntactically via Late Insertion on the theme node, I argue that this will not pose a problem under the assumptions made above. To be specific, the morpheme *-o* will be inserted on the theme node based on the context of *n u* [+FEM] or *n* [+MASS], and these *n*s, in turn, by the context of the roots specified in (56a) and (56b), respectively. In this way the appearance of the *-o* morpheme is not necessarily contingent on a mass interpretation, but rather it has the option of being so.

Taking the previously summarized literature into account and formalizing it to P-Asturian (namely Embick, 2010, 2015; Kramer, 2015; Oltra-Massuet, 1999), I have established the necessary framework to present the relevant structure for deriving P-Asturian nouns as part of my proposal to account for the survey data. I will derive seven P-Asturian nouns across the three different form classes, examples (57) though (63), to demonstrate how this system works. While this approach is largely based on Kramer's (2015) work, I will show my structural assumptions in a slightly different stylistic manner with the aim of highlighting the minute details of the morphosyntactic process through DM.

At the syntax level in (57a) the root is uncategorized, so via head movement it raises to adjoin to the *n i* [+FEM] node and forms a complex head, in (57b), which in turn also categorizes the root as a nominal one. Post-syntactically, in (57c), the theme node is adjoined to the *n i* [+FEM] head as a dissociated node (per (54ai)). CLASS III nouns rely on declension class and not gender for theme vowel assignment, and in this case the [Th, III] node is able to look across the null *n* head to spell out *-e* in the context of the root √MADR (per (50a)), as shown structurally in (57d) below.

(57) Derivation of Class III noun: madre *'mother'*

a. SYNTAX

$$nP$$

$$n\ i\ [+\text{FEM}] \qquad \sqrt{P}$$

$$\vert$$

$$\sqrt{\text{MADR}}$$

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{MADR}} \qquad n\ i\ [+\text{FEM}]$$

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{MADR}} \qquad n$$

$$n\ i\ [+\text{FEM}] \qquad [\text{Th, III}]$$

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{MADR}} \qquad n$$

$$\qquad\qquad n\ i\ [+\text{FEM}] \qquad [\text{Th, III}]$$

$$\downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow$$

$$\text{madr} \qquad \varnothing \qquad \text{-e}$$
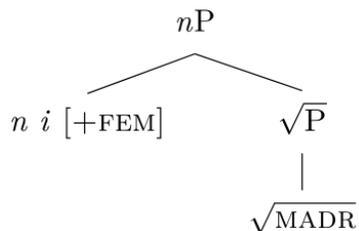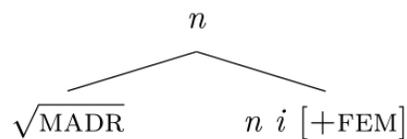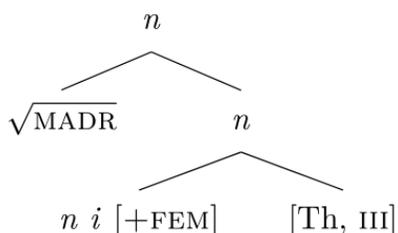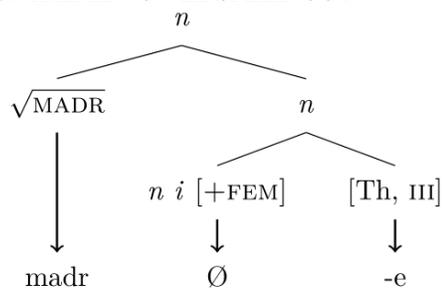
Example (58) shows the same process with another CLASS III noun, but this time an athematic one. The first difference here is that *n* [+MASS] licenses this root in the syntax, as demonstrated in (58b). Post-syntactically, however, (58c) shows the same process with the dissociated [Th, III] node insertion (per (54ai)), but in example (58d) there is instead null morpheme spell-out (per (50a)) due to the syllabic structure of the noun *carbón*. Because the rule regarding the roots of athematic nouns must be applied first, *carbón* cannot be generated as **carbono* despite the [+MASS] feature on *n*.

(58) Derivation of Class III noun: carbón *'coal'*

a. SYNTAX

nP
n [+MASS]   √P
|
√CARBÓN

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

n
√CARBÓN n [+MASS]

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

n
√CARBÓN n
n [+MASS]   [Th, III]

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

n
√CARBÓN n
| n [+MASS]   [Th, III]
↓   ↓   ↓
carbón   Ø   -Ø
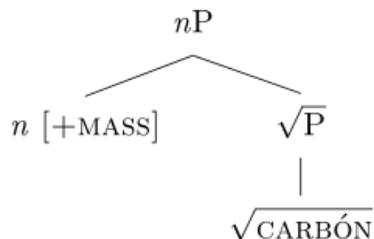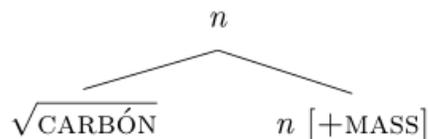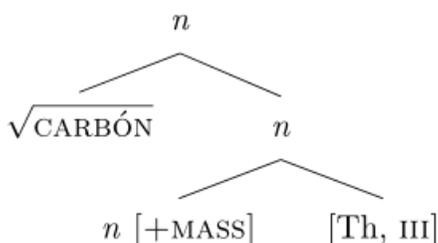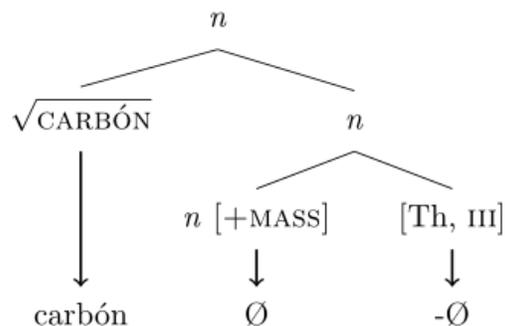
In the derivation of *fueya*[61], in (59), we now have the structure for a CLASS II noun. A complex head is syntactically formed in (59b), this time categorized by a *n u* [+FEM] head because the fully derived noun is inanimate and has fixed feminine gender. The step in (59c) shows the node for [Th, II] being inserted post-syntactically, however in this case spell-out is conditioned by the [+FEM] feature found on *n* (per (54b)).

---

[61] I note that in (59) *fueya 'leaf'* is depicted as having a count interpretation indicated as such by [-MASS]. However, this noun can also be used in mass contexts, which would instead have *n* [+MASS], but the noun would still be derived as *fueya* and not **fueyo*. Referring once again to the spell-out rules in (54), the insertion of CLASS II in the context of [+FEM] must apply first, therefore blocking the appearance of the *-o* morpheme here.

(59) Derivation of Class II noun: fueya *'leaf'*

a. SYNTAX

$$nP$$
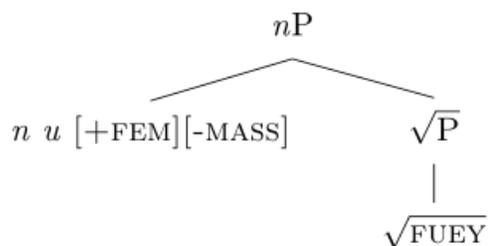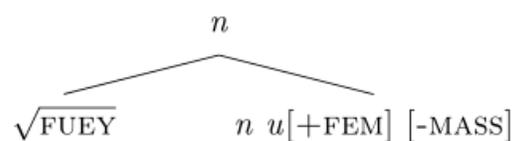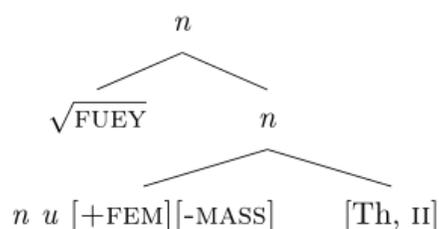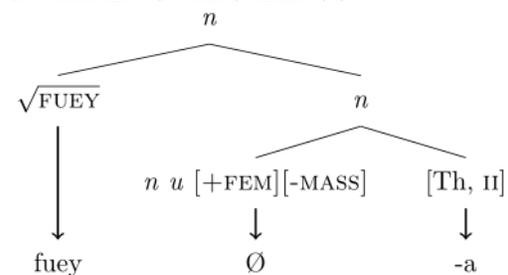
$n\ u\ [+\text{FEM}][-\text{MASS}] \qquad \sqrt{P}$$

$$\sqrt{\text{FUEY}}$$

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{FUEY}} \qquad n\ u[+\text{FEM}]\ [-\text{MASS}]$$

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{FUEY}} \qquad n$$

$$n\ u\ [+\text{FEM}][-\text{MASS}] \qquad [\text{Th, II}]$$

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

$$n$$

$$\sqrt{\text{FUEY}} \qquad n$$

$$n\ u\ [+\text{FEM}][-\text{MASS}] \qquad [\text{Th, II}]$$

$$\downarrow \qquad\qquad\qquad \downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow$$

fuey   Ø   -a

In an exceptional case, example (60) shows how *mano* can be structurally accounted for in P-Asturian. The √MAN is syntactically licensed in (60b) via complex-head formation, similarly to the above examples, and this case by *n u* [+FEM]. However, in (60c) the theme node that is post-syntactically inserted is [Th, I] in the context of √MAN (per (54aiii)). Finally, theme vowel *-o* is shown being spelled-out in (60d) below (per joint rules (50c) and (56a)).

(60) Derivation of Class I noun: mano *'hand'*

a. SYNTAX

$$
\begin{array}{c}
n\mathrm{P} \\
\diagup \diagdown \\
n\ u\ [+\textsc{fem}][-\textsc{mass}] \quad \sqrt{\mathrm{P}} \\
| \\
\sqrt{\mathrm{MAN}}
\end{array}
$$

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

$$
\begin{array}{c}
n \\
\diagup \diagdown \\
\sqrt{\mathrm{MAN}} \quad n\ u\ [+\textsc{fem}][-\textsc{mass}]
\end{array}
$$

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

$$
\begin{array}{c}
n \\
\diagup \diagdown \\
\sqrt{\mathrm{MAN}} \quad n \\
\diagup \diagdown \\
n\ u\ [+\textsc{fem}][-\textsc{mass}] \quad [\mathrm{Th},\ \textsc{i}]
\end{array}
$$

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

$$
\begin{array}{c}
n \\
\diagup \diagdown \\
\sqrt{\mathrm{MAN}} \quad n \\
\qquad \diagup \diagdown \\
n\ u\ [+\textsc{fem}][-\textsc{mass}] \quad [\mathrm{Th},\ \textsc{i}] \\
\downarrow \qquad \downarrow \qquad \downarrow \\
\mathrm{man} \qquad \emptyset \qquad \text{-o}
\end{array}
$$

Following the similar process shown above, we see that *fierru* gets its start in the syntax with *n* [-MASS], and its root √FIERR moves up to adjoin with this *n* to categorize it as a nominal root, in (61a) and (61b), respectively. At the post-syntactic stage, this time a plain [Th] is adjoined to the structure (per (54d)), and *-u* is then spelled-out via the rules in (50c) and (56c). The details laid out in this example show the derivation of the count version of √FIERR, however example (62) will give us its mass counterpart.

(61) Derivation of Class I noun: fierru *'an iron object'*

a. SYNTAX

```
            nP
         ╱      ╲
   n [-MASS]    √P
                 │
               √FIERR
```

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

```
              n
           ╱     ╲
      √FIERR    n [-MASS]
```

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

```
            n
         ╱     ╲
    √FIERR      n
             ╱     ╲
       n [-MASS]   [Th]
```

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

```
              n
           ╱      ╲
      √FIERR        n
         │       ╱     ╲
         │   n [-MASS]  [Th]
         ↓       ↓       ↓
       fierr     Ø      -u
```

In the derivational process below we come to our first mass noun marked by *-o* in P-Asturian. The main difference to highlight here at the syntactic level, in (62a) and (62b), is that the root √FIERR combines with a *n* [+MASS] head in order to both categorize the root and provide the further context for correct theme vowel spell-out post-syntactically. Then, in (62c), we see that the dissociated [Th, I] node is correctly inserted in the context of {[√FIERR][*n* [+MASS]]]} (per (54c)), and subsequently theme vowel *-o* is spelled-out due to the context specified in (50c) and (56b). Additionally, following the steps listed below predicts no issues in deriving the mass *-o* forms *pelo* and *filo*, as they would follow the same process as *fierro*.

(62) Derivation of Class I noun: fierro *'iron material'*

a. SYNTAX

$$nP$$
$$n\,[+\text{MASS}] \qquad \sqrt{P}$$
$$\mid$$
$$\sqrt{\text{FIERR}}$$

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

$$n$$
$$\sqrt{\text{FIERR}} \qquad n\,[+\text{MASS}]$$

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

$$n$$
$$\sqrt{\text{FIERR}} \qquad n$$
$$n\,[+\text{MASS}] \qquad [\text{Th, I}]$$

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

$$n$$
$$\sqrt{\text{FIERR}} \qquad n$$
$$\qquad\qquad n\,[+\text{MASS}] \qquad [\text{Th, I}]$$
$$\downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow$$
$$\text{fierr} \qquad \emptyset \qquad \text{-o}$$
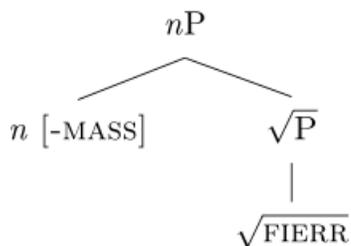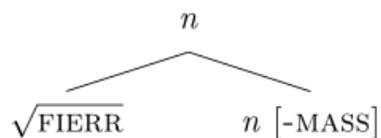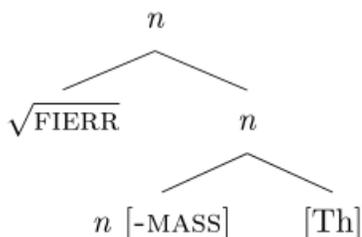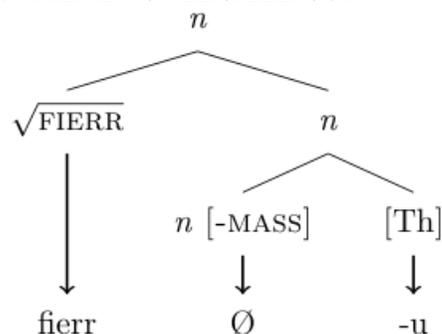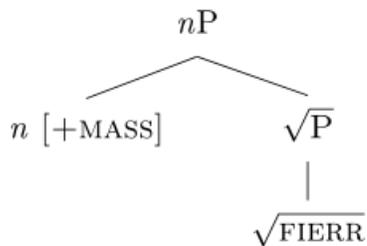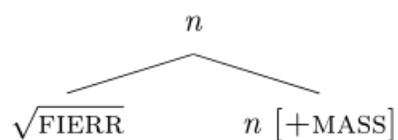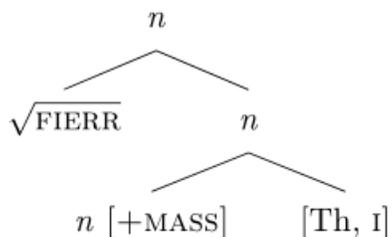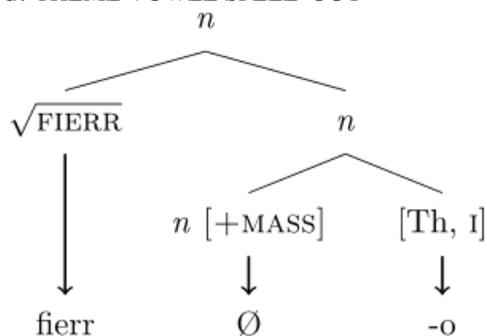
Finally, the derivation below includes a regular example for P-Asturian that is default masculine and does not have a distinguishing *-o* form. Again, the root combines with a plain *n* to form a complex head for root classification, in (63a) and (63b). In (63c) a plain [Th] is post-syntactically inserted as a dissociated node (per (54d)), and finally, in (63d), theme vowel *-u* is spelled-out (per (50c and (56c)).

(63) Derivation of chorizu *'sausage'*

a. SYNTAX

```
           nP
          /  \
  n [-MASS]   √P
               |
            √CHORIZ
```

b. COMPLEX-HEAD FORMATION

```
           n
          /  \
    √CHORIZ   n [-MASS]
```

c. THEME NODE INSERTION

```
           n
          /  \
    √CHORIZ   n
             /  \
      n [-MASS]  [Th]
```

d. THEME VOWEL SPELL-OUT

```
              n
             /  \
       √CHORIZ   n
          |     /  \
          |  n [-MASS]  [Th]
          ↓     ↓       ↓
        choriz  Ø      -u
```
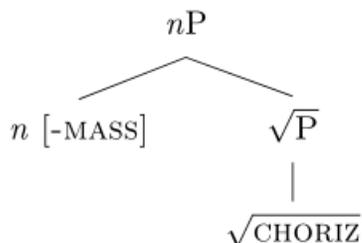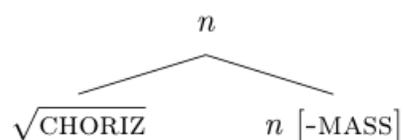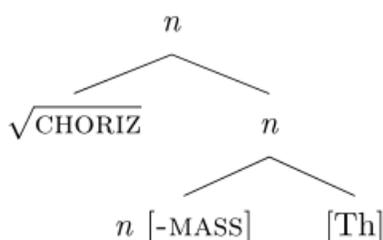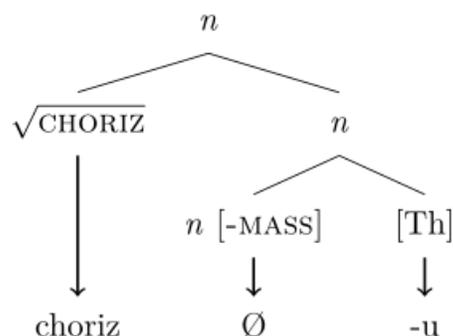
Before moving on to discuss speaker variation in the survey data, which departs from the P-Asturian grammar, I must first tie up one structural loose end. Having made clear that there are only three nouns in P-Asturian that formally show mass via the theme vowel *-o*, we must still consider that there are nouns that are interpreted as mass but show no indication of this on the noun in an explicit way (*ropa 'clothing', sidra 'cider', carbón 'coal' and quesu 'cheese'*). I argue that this can be explained by the stipulations and ordering in the spell-out rules themselves, as theme vowel spell-out for *ropa 'clothing'*, *sidra 'cider'* and *carbón 'coal'* applies before the *n* [+MASS] rule. Furthermore, in P-Asturian *quesu 'cheese'* does not have a mass-specified root that conditions the insertion of *-o*, and *-u* is therefore inserted by default because no specific rule is applied.

To foreshadow the following chapter, which focuses on *-o* form adjective agreement patterns in Asturian, I show a snapshot of the *n*Ps in (64a) and (64b) which contain a {[±FEM], [±MASS]}

feature set just below the mother node. These features are located below this node assuming the possibility of feature percolation from the *n* head up (Selkirk, 1982), where [+FEM] and [-FEM] indicate feminine versus masculine gender, respectively, while mass versus count is indicated by [+MASS] versus [-MASS]. This feature bundle will serve the sole purpose of explicitly showing how adjective agreement works under my system in chapter four.

(64) Feature Percolation

<div style="display:flex">

a. *fueya [mass]*

```
           nP
          [+FEM]
          [+MASS]
            |
            n
        /       \
   √FUEY          n
     |         /      \
   fuey   n u [+FEM][+MASS]   [Th, II]
              ↓               ↓
              Ø               -a
```

b. *fueya [count]*

```
           nP
          [+FEM]
          [-MASS]
            |
            n
        /       \
   √FUEY          n
     |         /      \
   fuey   n u [+FEM][-MASS]   [Th, II]
              ↓               ↓
              Ø               -a
```

</div>
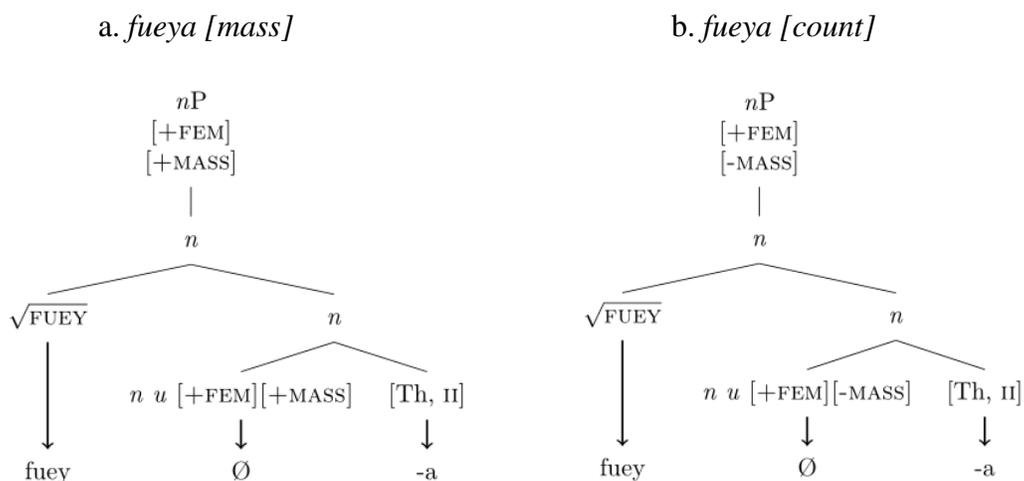
To conclude §3.4.4, using P-Asturian as a starting point, I have shown how deriving nouns via a DM approach is but one way to theoretically account for the language system described above. in §3.4.5 I will demonstrate the different possible Asturian grammars based on the survey results that have been obtained.

3.4.5. *Multiple Asturian Grammars*

I maintain that the proposed structures in §3.4.4 for deriving Asturian nouns remains consistent across the entirety of the collected data, and I will therefore move away from presenting more examples of structure. However, the differences between the Asturian grammars can be developed by making modifications to both the declension classes and in some cases, potentially the *n* licensers as well. As a point of comparison, in (65), (66) and (67) I repeat the P-

Asturian declension classes, the contexts for theme vowel spell-out and the theme node rules

((53), (50) and (52), respectively) in order to highlight some aspects that will be developed

differently for the other Asturian grammars.

The main point to remember about P-Asturian, looking to the schema in (65), is that there are

only three admitted CLASS I noun pairs that end in *-o* when they are mass and *-u* when they are

count. These are shown in bolded font. Additionally, the feminine noun *mano* must also end *in -*

o, but this is for prescriptive reasons and not related to mass.

(65) P-Asturian Declension Classes

III	-e/-Ø	café-Ø *'coffee'*, carbón-Ø *'coal'*, ciudá-Ø *'city'*, foto-Ø *'photo'*, hom-e *'man'*, llápiz-Ø *'pencil'*, lluz-Ø *'light'*, madr-e *'mother'*, muyer-Ø *'woman'*, padr-e *'father'*, pan-Ø *'bread'*, papel-Ø *'paper'*, radio-Ø *'radio'*, xent-e *'people'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, fuey-a *'leaf'*, pas-a *'raisin'*, rop-a *'clothing'*, sidr-a *'cider'*
I	-u/-o	asturian-u *'Asturian'*, bolígraf-u *'pen'*, choriz-u *'sausage'*, ciel-u *'sky'*, cuadern-u *'notebook'*, cuch-u *'manure/fertilizer'*, de-u *'finger'*, diner-u *'money'*, **fierr-o *'iron material'*, fierr-u *'an iron object'***, fig-u *'fig'*, **fil-o *'thread'*, fil-u *'a thread'***, fum-u *'smoke'*, goná-u *'cattle'*, llibr-u *'book'*, llí-u *'muddle'*, man-o *'hand'*, mund-u *'world'*, **pel-o *'hair'*, pel-u *'a hair'***, ques-u *'cheese'*, tiemp-u *'time'*, triné-u *'sled'*, vin-u *'wine'*

Naturally, the three declension classes above must be paired to the different theme vowels

that are available to P-Asturian, where in some cases there are specified contexts to spell-out the

correct vowel, in (66c) and (66d), specifically.

(66)   P-Asturian Theme Vowels[62]
          a.   [Th, III]   ↔ -e/-Ø
          b.   [Th, II]   ↔ -a
          c.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√MAN][n *u* [+FEM]]], …}___
          d.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√FIERR][n [+MASS]]], [[√FIL][n [+MASS]]], [[√PEL][n [+MASS]]]}
          e.   [Th]   ↔ -u

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[62] I have modified the original list of theme vowels to include the allomorphic contexts for THEME CLASS I.

Finally, the theme node rules must pair this information together so that the correct theme node is inserted post-syntactically in the context of the correct root, if specified. Here I emphasize that the theme vowels above are in competition, so the ordering of the rules is paramount in the correct derivation of nouns.

(67)   P-Asturian Theme Node Rules
  a.   i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √CAFÉ, √CARBÓN, √CIUDÁ, √DEU, √FOTO, √GANÁU, √HOM, √LLÁPIZ, √LLUZ, √MADR, √MUYER, √PADR, √PAN, √PAPEL, √RADIO, √TRINÉU, √XENT, …
      ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ, …
      iii.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN, …
  b.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
  c.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √FIERR, √FIL, √PEL
  d.   Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

Based on the survey results that were presented in §3.3, there is evidence of a grammar that further extends the mass *-o* morpheme to other CLASS I nouns, despite what the *Academia* prescribes. I will refer to this grammar as Distinguisher Asturian, or D-Asturian, and the declension classes are included in (68) below with the bolded new distinguishing pairs added to the list.

(68) D-Asturian Declension Classes

III	-e/-Ø	café-Ø *'coffee'*, carbón-Ø *'coal'*, ciudá-Ø *'city'*, foto-Ø *'photo'*, hom-e *'man'*, llápiz-Ø *'pencil'*, lluz-Ø *'light'*, madr-e *'mother'*, muyer-Ø *'woman'*, padr-e *'father'*, pan-Ø *'bread'*, papel-Ø *'paper'*, radio-Ø *'radio'*, xent-e *'people'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, fuey-a *'leaf'*, pas-a *'raisin'*, rop-a *'clothing'*, sidr-a *'cider'*
I	-u/-o	asturian-u *'Asturian'*, bolígraf-u *'pen'*, choriz-u *'sausage'*, ciel-u *'sky'*, cuadern-u *'notebook'*, cuch-u *'manure/fertilizer'*, de-u *'finger'*, diner-u *'money'*, **fierr-o *'iron material'*, fierr-u *'an iron object'*, fig-o *'figs'*, fig-u *'a fig'*, fil-o *'thread'*, fil-u *'a thread'*,** fum-u *'smoke'*, ganá-u *'cattle'*, llibr-u *'book'*, llí-u *'muddle'*, man-o *'hand'*, mund-u *'world'*, **pel-o *'hair'*, pel-u *'a hair'*, ques-o *'cheese'*, ques-u *'a [block of] cheese'*,** tiemp-u *'time'*, triné-u *'sled'*, **vin-o *'wine'*, vin-u *'a [glass of] wine'***

Aside from the pairs *fierro/fierru*, *filo/filu* and *pelo/pelu* present in P-Asturian, there are also speakers that attested to the forms *figo/figu*, *queso/quesu* and *vino/vinu*, where the *-o* form denotes mass. For example, *queso* is cheese as a mass or substance, while *quesu* would be a block or chunk of cheese, which is countable. Naturally, this will lead us to develop the theme vowels for this grammar, in (69).

(69)   D-Asturian Theme Vowels
     a.   [Th, III]   ↔ -e/-Ø
     b.   [Th, II]   ↔ -a
     c.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√MAN][*n u* [+FEM]]], …}____
     d.   [Th, I]   ↔ -o/{[[√FIERR][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√FIG][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√FIL][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√PEL][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√QUES][*n* [+MASS]]], [[√VIN][*n* [+MASS]]], …} ____
     e.   [Th]   ↔ -u

In (69d), the two characteristics to highlight for D-Asturian theme vowels that set them apart from the prescribed standard are the following. First, the additional mass *-o* forms that were reported in the survey are also included as contexts for *-o* spell-out under *n* [+MASS]. Second, it is unknown if these mass nouns are the only additional ones that are attested, or if these are just the consequence of the participants that answered the survey. Therefore, the ellipses allow for any other additional roots that might be found in this context that were not accounted for. Finally, in (70) I also make the necessary adjustments to the theme node rules.

(70)   D-Asturian Theme Node Rules
     a. i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √CAFÉ, √CARBÓN, √CIUDÁ, √DEU, √FOTO, √GANÁU, √HOM, √LLÁPIZ, √LLUZ, √MADR, √MUYER, √PADR, √PAN, √PAPEL, √RADIO, √TRINÉU, √XENT, …
        ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ, …
        iii.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN, …
     b.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
     c.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   *n* [+MASS]
     d.   Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

The only difference between the P- and D-Asturian grammar is the variation found in the mass -*o* forms that would be licensed under rule (70c), where -*o* is inserted at *n* [+MASS], which can only merge with certain roots (cf. (69d)). Any count -*u* forms in the speaker's grammar will then fall under the Elsewhere Principle, licensed by plain *n*, in (70d).

Aside from the two grammars presented above, there are also varieties of Asturian that present no -*o* form, such as Eastern Asturian, where nouns end in word marker -*u*, henceforth U-Asturian. The count/mass distinction exists in this variety at the post-nominal adjective level[63], but regarding nouns, there is no formal distinction between interpretations (San Segundo Cachero, 2015). Consequently, to account for U-Asturian, we must not only make a change at the word marker level, but also regarding this grammar's *n* system. As shown in (71) below, U-Asturian has the same number of *n*s as Spanish, and in this grammar there is no need to stipulate anything for CLASS I mass noun derivation, since there is no formal marking on the difference between mass and count nouns.

(71) U-Asturian *n* Licensers
   a. [*n i* [+FEM][√FI]]   = 'fía'   [daughter]
   b. [*n i* [-FEM][√FI]]   = 'fíu'   [son]
   c. [*n* [√FIERR]]   = 'fierru' [iron material/an iron object]
   d. [*n u* [+FEM][√PER]] = 'pera'   [pear]

The adapted *n* system then carries over to form the U-Asturian declension classes, in (72), where THEME CLASS I only contains the theme vowel -*u* for nouns. Due to any ambiguity between mass and count interpretations, I have simplified the example glosses for simplicity. I emphasize, however, that a noun like *pelu*, among others, could refer both to *'hair'* or *'one hair'*, for example.

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[63] I clarify here that mass and count marking on adjectives in this variety of Asturian are ambiguously both -*u*.

(72) U-Asturian Declension Classes[64]

III	-e/-Ø	fotu-Ø *'photo'*, radiu-Ø *'radio'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, fuey-a *'leaf'*, pas-a *'raisin'*, rop-a *'clothing'*, sidr-a *'cider'*
I	-u	asturian-u *'Asturian'*, bolígraf-u *'pen'*, choriz-u *'sausage'*, ciel-u *'sky'*, cuadern-u *'notebook'*, cuch-u *'manure/fertilizer'*, de-u *'finger'*, diner-u *'money'*, fierr-u *'iron material; an iron object'*, fig-u *'figs; a fig'*, fil-u *'thread; a thread'*, fum-u *'smoke'*, ganá-u *'cattle'*, llibr-u *'book'*, llí-u *'muddle'*, man-u *'hand'*, mund-u *'world'*, pel-u *'hair; a hair'*, ques-u *'cheese; a [block of] cheese'*, tiemp-u *'time'*, triné-u *'sled'*, vin-u *'wine; a [glass of] wine'*

Example (73) below reflects the theme vowels available to U-Asturian for each theme node. Some observations here include that the only difference between Spanish and U-Asturian is that the marker for THEME I is *-u* instead of *-o*. Additionally, U-Asturian differs from the other grammars previously presented due to its simplicity. Notably, while (73a) and (73b) maintain the theme vowels in CLASS III and II, we can dispense with any specification for deriving feminine nouns like *mano*, or any of the previously mentioned roots for the *-o* form mass nouns.

(73)   U-Asturian Theme Vowels
      a.   [Th, III]   ↔ -e/-Ø
      b.   [Th, II]   ↔ -a
      c.   [Th]   ↔ -u

Finally, in (74) we see that not much change is needed at the level of the U-Asturian theme node rules. In fact, there is no stipulation for the specific context of *-o* form roots like the P-Asturian and D-Asturian grammars. Since U-Asturian shows no formal distinction of mass on its nouns, this interpretation will instead be accounted for syntactically via the absence of any division in the structure. Aside from this matter, the other spell-out rules remain untouched.

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[64] For better readability, I have removed any of the CLASS III nouns that that have no apparent change in form between *-o* and *-u*, (cf. *xent-e 'people'*, *carbón-Ø 'coal'*). I make these minute changes in the examples to follow as well.

(74)   U-Asturian Theme Node Rules
    a.   i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √CAFÉ, √CARBÓN, √CIUDÁ, √DEU,
                                                          √FOTO, √GANÁU, √HOM, √LLÁPIZ,
                                                          √LLUZ, √MADR, √MUYER, √PADR,
                                                          √PAN, √PAPEL, √RADIO, √TRINÉU,
                                                          √XENT, …
          ii.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   √DÍ, …
          iii.   Insert [THEME, I] in the context of   √MAN, …
    b.   Insert [THEME, II] in the context of   *n* [+FEM]
    c.   Insert [THEME] in the context of   elsewhere

Up to this point, I have taken three different Asturian grammars that have been indicated in
the elicited data, P-, D- and U-Asturian, and worked them into a *n* approach to theoretically
account for their noun derivation. Yet, there is also an indication in the survey responses that
there are Asturian speakers that alternate between *-u* and *-o* in their grammar, and quite possibly
for no apparent reason. The distinction of this grammar is borne out of uncertainty of which
word form was correct, or from reporting that the *-u/-o* form is synonymous in some cases. I call
this grammar Assimilated Asturian (A-Asturian), and in (75) I include its declension classes
having bolded the three nouns that were reported solely as *-u* forms, as *bolígrafo*, *cuaderno* and
llibro were said to be either incorrect, inexistant or Castilian.

(75) A-Asturian Declension Classes

III	-e/-Ø	foto-Ø/fotu-Ø *'photo'*, radio-Ø/radiu-Ø *'radio'*
II	-a	dí-a *'day'*, fuey-a *'leaf'*, pas-a *'raisin'*, rop-a *'clothing'*, sidr-a *'cider'*
I	-u/-o	asturian-o/asturian-u *'Asturian'*, **bolígraf-u *'pen'***, choriz-o/choriz-u *'sausage'*, ciel-o/ciel-u *'sky'*, **cuadern-u *'notebook'***, cuch-o/cuch-u *'manure/fertilizer'*, de-o/de-u *'finger'*, diner-o/diner-u *'money'*, fierr-o/fierr-u *'iron'*, fig-o/fig-u *'a fig'*, fil-o/fil-u *'thread'*, fum-o/fum-u *'smoke'*, gana-o/ganá-u *'cattle'*, **llibr-u *'book'***, llí-o/llí-u *'muddle'*, man-o/man-u *'hand'*, mund-o/mund-u *'world'*, pel-o/pel-u *'hair'*, ques-o/ques-u *'cheese'*, tiemp-o/tiemp-u *'time'*, trine-o/triné-u *'sled'*, vin-o/vin-u *'wine'*

To describe the matter of theme vowel spell-out in A-Asturian, I claim that both the word marker inventory and the theme node rules is a question of idiolects. Either the speaker's grammar is more like D-Asturian (developed in (68)-(70)), or it is more like U-Asturian (developed in (72)-(74)), with the an additional possibility being that it pulls from both of these grammars. Where A-Asturian speakers fall on the spectrum between D- and U-Asturian varies by the individual, as it depends on which combination of the system they acquired, and therefore, it is something that is processed within the mind of the individual. Nevertheless, in (75) I have attempted to capture this variation to the closest degree possible to conform A-Asturian to similar system constraints as has been previously developed in this section.

Specifically referencing the chart below, (76a) and (76b) apply across the board. However, the THEME I word markers show a split between two grammars, where a speaker that more closely follows the tendencies of D-Asturian would have the contextual theme vowel allomorphy in (76c) and (76d) in their grammar, while a speaker whose system is more like A-Asturian has no such specification. With this theme vowel there might also be a mixture of possibilities in one speaker as well. The default theme vowel in (76e), much like THEME III and III is shared regardless.

(76)   A-Asturian Theme Vowels
    a.   [Th, III]   ↔ -e/-Ø
    b.   [Th, II]   ↔ -a

		A-ASTURIAN	D-ASTURIAN
c.	[Th, I]	*n/a*	↔ -o$_{[D\text{-}AST]}$/{[[√MAN][*n u* $_{[+FEM]}$]], …}____
d.	[Th, I]	*n/a*	↔ -o$_{[D\text{-}AST]}$/{[[√FIERR][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], [[√FIG][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], [[√FIL][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], [[√PEL][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], [[√QUES][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], [[√VIN][*n* $_{[+MASS]}$]], …} ____
e.	[Th]	↔ -u	

Consequently, the theme node rules in (77) follow with the theme vowel contexts explained above, in which the correct node will be inserted post-syntactically depending on the root, and the further specification for the theme vowels should spell-out the nouns according to the A-Asturian grammar that the speaker acquired.

(77)   A-Asturian Theme Node Rules
    a. i.   Insert [THEME, III] in the context of   √CAFÉ, √CARBÓN, √CIUDÁ, √DEU, √FOTO, √GANÁU, √HOM, √LLÁPIZ, √LLUZ, √MADR, √MUYER, √PADR, √PAN, √PAPEL, √RADIO, √TRINÉU, √XENT, …
        ii. Insert [THEME, II] in the context of √DÍ, …
        iii. Insert [THEME, I] in the context of √MAN, …
    b. Insert [THEME, II] in the context of *n* [+FEM]
    c. Insert [THEME, I] in the context of *n* [+MASS]
    d. Insert [THEME] in the context of elsewhere

Initially I presented P-Asturian, which only marks three nouns with mass *-o*. Second, I modified the system to represent D-Asturian, which extends this mass *-o* marking to three other nouns, and potentially countless others that were not accounted for in the survey data. Third, I have used the same system to account for U-Asturian, where there is no use of theme vowel *-o*. What followed this was a somewhat putative model of A-Asturian, which has a grammar composed of some mixture between D- and U-Asturian. Finally, out of the data there is evidence of what I will call Strategic Asturian, S-Asturian, which pushes the previously discussed grammars further. For example, several survey responses showed a distinction between *-o* and *-u* that did not distinguish between count and mass specifically, but instead showed a different strategy to differentiate meaning between noun forms.

In the organization of S-Asturian declension classes below, I have bolded the *-o* and *-u* forms for better readability among the different examples and I only include CLASS I, as classes II and III would be like the other grammars. The distinction that was mostly mentioned in the survey was

the use of *-o* to mark a generic interpretation, while the *-u* denotes a specific one. For some

speakers, the theme vowel distinction was even more targeted in examples like *asturiano*

'Asturian [language]' versus *asturianu 'an Asturian [man/person]'*, or *tiempo 'meteorology;*

time' versus *tiempu 'time*[65]*; weather'*.

(78) S-Asturian Declension Classes

I	-u/-o	**asturian-o** *'Asturian; less concrete'*, **asturian-u** *'an Asturian [man/person]; concrete'*, **choriz-o** *'lazy person/thief'*[66], **choriz-u** *'sausage'*, **ciel-o** *'epithet'*, **ciel-u** *'sky'*, **cuch-o** *'generic manure/fertilizer'*, **cuch-u** *'countable manure/fertilizer; specific'*, **deo-Ø** *'pointing'*, **deu-Ø** *'finger'*, **diner-o** *'general money; abstract money'*, **diner-u** *'money I lent/borrowed; specific money'*, **fierr-o** *'chemical element Fe'*, **fig-o** *'price of figs; general figs'*, **fig-u** *'a specific fig'*, **fil-o** *'general thread; sewing'*, **fil-u** *'one thread; sharp'*, **fum-o** *'general smoke; non-count'*, **fum-u** *'specific smoke; specific'*, **gana-o** *'generic cattle'*, **ganá-u** *'specific cattle'* **pel-o** *'general hair'*, **pel-u** *'one hair'*, **ques-o** *'milk derivative; neuter'*, **ques-u** *'specific cheese; masculine singular'*, **tiemp-o** *'meteorology; time; general time'*, **tiemp-u** *'time; weather; concrete time'*, **vin-o** *'ingredient; neuter'*, **vin-u** *'type of wine; masculine singular'*

While in some cases a speaker might judge the *-o* versus *-u* form in the opposite way of

another speaker, the marker *-o* in Asturian is not just a mechanism for denoting mass, but rather

it also has a more strategic use for some speakers. Regarding generic versus specific

interpretations like the ones above, I move away from them here. Instead, Chapter 4 examines

this distinction using participant elicited data from a second survey. This survey focused on the

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[65] I wish to specify that the use of *tiempu* versus *tiempo* varies across speakers. Some participants reported *tiempu* as chronological time while others reported *tiempo* as weather, and other participants reported the inverse. Additionally, some speakers saw *tiempu* as a reference to a specific season, such as the time of year in which chestnuts are prepared. While some participants probably meant no difference between meteorology or weather, the wording of the glosses in (78) is what was provided by the participants.

[66] It is important to recognize that this form may be due to Spanish contact, as the term *chorizo* in Spanish ends in *-o* and is also used in the context of someone being a thief. It was anecdotally reported to me that there have been protests in Spain with signs that said *No hay pan pa' tanto chorizo 'There's not enough bread for so much sausage, i.e. There is no end to the thievery of the person in question'*.

interpretation of the entire phrase instead of the derivation of individual nouns, as there are also contexts for mass agreement in Asturian outside of the noun itself.

As for the additional strategic meanings presented for S-Asturian in this chapter, they are outside the scope of the theoretical account that I can provide here, as this extended phenomenon for *-o* form nouns in Asturian reaches into other pragmatic contexts than what the focus is for this investigation. Continuing with a localist approach (Embick, 2010), however, one possibility would be to list out all the roots involved to derive different word pairs, like *chorizo 'lazy person/thief'/chorizu 'sausage'*, or *asturiano 'Asturian [language]'/ asturianu 'an Asturian [man/person]'*. These nouns share a root but could be argued to be homophonous (see Burner, 2022 for an additional application) as one root pairs with *-o* and the other with *-u* (for example $\sqrt{\text{CHORIZ}_1}$, $\sqrt{\text{CHORIZ}_2}$, …; $\sqrt{\text{ASTURIAN}_1}$, $\sqrt{\text{ASTURIAN}_2}$, …) and these characteristics would have to be memorized by the speaker. This matter would be tangential however in the sense that it would take the present dissertation away from the basic idea that has been shown in this chapter: based on new data, there is at least some productivity of a mass *-o* in Asturian, but there is also the use of *-o* that serves some other purpose.

To conclude §3.4.5, the nouns for the different varieties of Asturian grammar discussed in this section are derived, structurally speaking, in the same way that my formalization of Kramer (2015) was adapted to P-Asturian in §3.4.4. I claim that this is the case because the language variation across these grammars is due to changes in theme vowel inventory and the contexts in which their word markers are spelled-out, not how they are spelled-out structurally. Additionally, while approaching this matter from a DM perspective has theoretically accounted for the derivation of Asturian nouns, it is but one way of treating the mass/count distinction in Asturian, although other approaches may be just as reasonable.

Based on the facts of the data presented here, I assume that the grammar of any given speaker is defined by their idiolect. In other words, the exact flavor of the grammar is an individual question. My motivation here for delineating the grammars mentioned in this section was purely for organization and ease of discussion, but I would not find it surprising if there are Asturian speakers whose idiolect is a combination of the grammars outlined above. As these results would be endless, making these determinations in an exact manner lies outside the scope of this theoretical account of Asturian noun derivation, and for this reason, I reiterate that the true contribution of this chapter is presenting the data possibilities as reported on the survey responses, which in turn yielded over 500 examples of original, new data, that does not come from previously published sources.

3.5. Conclusion

In §3.1 we saw some languages that have morphosyntactic tools at their disposal for encoding mass versus count distinctions. By looking at some examples, it was shown that Breton, Damascene Syrian Arabic, and Fox all use gender to make this semantic difference, but Asturian only shows a formal difference via word markers *-o* and *-u*, and the gender does not shift. Comparatively, Spanish relies more on syntactic context to denote the difference between count and mass.

In §3.2, a brief literature review took the reader through the types of Asturian nouns that only have mass interpretations, nouns that may have mass or count interpretations, and other nouns that are ambiguous between mass and individual readings. The most salient characteristic, however, is that very few masculine nouns show mass with an *-o* morpheme, notably *fierro*, *pelo* and *filo*.

Then, in §3.3 the Qualtrics survey on Asturian mass nouns was explained from the methodology, to the participants' demographics, and finally, the data was presented in terms of the percentage that the participant population accepted *-o* form nouns when presented in isolation from their *-u* form counterpart, and also the degree to which the participants noted a semantic difference between *-o* and *-u*. Though more data needs to be collected, the survey data revealed that the majority participant population rejected *-o* form nouns and did not note a distinction between *-o/-u* minimal noun pairs. However, examples elicited from certain participants allude to the fact that mass *-o* forms on Asturian nouns are probably more productive than the literature suggests. Furthermore, while *-o* is a marker for mass in Asturian speakers do rely on it to denote particular meanings in some nouns as well.

Finally, in §3.4 I proposed a DM approach to deriving Asturian nouns in a way that both accounts for the mass/count distinction on select nouns, yet still treats nouns uniformly in relation to nominal gender and final word markers. I then concluded in §3.4.5 with an adjusted system that allows for native Asturian speakers of different grammars to fall into their own category in a way that supports the great work that the prescriptive literature has carried out, but also in a way that accepts individual speaker variation.

CHAPTER FOUR: ADJECTIVE AGREEMENT PATTERNS IN ASTURIAN

4.1. Introduction

Adjectives have their own characteristics regarding their morphological form and syntactic position, and these differ depending on the language. While Spanish has been well-studied in this regard, there is a lack of research on Asturian. In this introductory section I will use Spanish as a case study to outline a brief description of how adjectives have been characterized in general, I will include some other non-Spanish data to summarize the relevant literature on semantic interpretation, and I will apply this established background to create a case of Asturian adjectives that will motivate the rest of this chapter.

In Spanish it is widely understood that adjectives agree in number and gender with the noun, or nouns, that they modify. This can be seen clearly in examples where there is matching noun-adjective morphology (el gat*o* negr*o*, la gat*a* negr*a*, los gat*o*s negr*o*s, las gat*a*s negr*a*s; cf. Martínez, 1999: 2722), though some cases of agreement are less formally apparent (cf. the cat breed known as *el ruso azul* 'Russian Blue').

Spanish adjectives can also be characterized as either attributive or predicative and can have different syntactic positions, which depending on the adjective's class, may also be restricted (Cinque, 2010; Demonte, 1999b; RAE, 2010). Attributive adjectives are DP/NP internal and part of the constituent that includes the head noun and any other nominal modifiers (cf. el gato grande/el gran gato), while a copulative verb is usually present with predicative adjectives (cf. el gato es alto, el gato está grande).

The same general characteristics can also be extended to Asturian adjectives (ALlA, 2001), which agree in number and gender with the noun that they modify. We will see, however, that there are also some restrictions in the ways that agreement is established. The prescriptive

literature suggests that post-nominal adjectives that modify a mass noun obligatorily agree in mass, in (2a), while pre-nominal adjectives, like in (2b), must agree in gender. Asturian *-o* form adjectives[67] are also morphosyntactically strategic in cases where a noun does not formally show mass with *-o*, as the post-nominal adjective can sometimes be used as an indication of overt mass agreement, in (2)[68].

(1)   Agreement in Asturian (ALlA, 2001: 322)
    a.   el   carbón   duro
        the.M.SG   coal.M.MS   hard-MS
        'the hard coal'

    b.   el   duru   carbón
        the.M.SG   hard-M.SG   coal.M.SG
        'the hard coal'

(2)   Mass Agreement in Asturian (ALlA, 2001: 90)
    a.   carbón   malo
        coal.M.MS   bad-MS
        'bad coal'

    b.   lleche   bebío
        milk-F.MS   drunk-MS
        'drunk milk'

There is no post-nominal mass agreement of the adjective when a noun has a count interpretation. In this context gender agreement holds independent of the adjective's position, as in (3a). Gender agreement also obligatorily surfaces when the adjective is in pre-nominal position, shown in (3b)[69].

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[67] This morpheme is relevant for adjectives that have three forms ending in *-u*, *-a* or *-o*, but so-called mass and masculine gender agreement between two-form adjectives (cf. trabayador/trabayadora 'hard-working') is ambiguous—compare *Ye xente muy **trabayador** 'They're very hard-working people'* with *Ye un hombre muy **trabayador** 'He's a very hard-working man'* (D'Andrés, 1993: 70-71).

[68] An *-o* form adjective can also appear when then noun is omitted, *[El mariscu] Yera bien car**o** fai tiempu '[Seafood] used to be very expensive a while ago'*, or aside from mass, with generic reference to some element, *Nun salgas de casa, que güei ta mal**o** 'Don't leave home, because today [the weather] is bad'* (D'Andrés, 1993: 71).

[69] Pre-nominal adjectives will not factor largely in my analysis due to the rejection of *-o* forms attested in Asturian. I will however reference these contexts where appropriate and as needed for expository purposes.

(3)   Agreement in Asturian (ALlA, 2001: 322)
   a.   el   llobu   gafu
         the.M.SG   wolf.M.SG   angry-M.SG
         'the angry wolf'

   b.   el   gafu   llobu
         the.M.SG   angry-M.SG   wolf.M.SG
         'the angry wolf'

Outside of the typically cited prescriptive language use elicited examples[70] suggest that post-nominal adjectives have the option to agree in gender or mass, independent of the noun's interpretation, in (4) and (5), where the post-nominal adjective can establish gender or mass agreement with the mass noun *madera 'wood'*.

(4)   MOYADA [S2_P20_UV]
         Una   **madera**   **moyada**   cayome   na   cabeza
         a-F.SG   wood-THV   wet-THV   fall-PST.3SG=ACC   on.the-F.SG   head-F.SG

         'A wet wood fell on my head'

(5)   MOYAO [S2_P20_UV]
         Una   **madera**   **moyao**   nun   puede   prender
         a-F.SG   wood-THV   wet-THV   NEG   can-PRS.3SG   light-INF

         'A wet wood can't light'

This is unsurprising considering previous analyses, where the value of the article, whether definite or indefinite, can influence the interpretation of the phrase. Compare the Spanish definite and indefinite noun phrases, DNPs and INPs henceforth, in (6) where a DNP defines a unique referent in the discourse and therefore has a specific interpretation, while on the other hand, an INP is usually non-specific.

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[70] Examples that come from my survey data are marked throughout this chapter in brackets, indicating which of the two surveys that they come from, the participant number and where the participant is from.

(6)   DP Interpretation (adapted from Leonetti, 1999: 861)[71]
   a.   Ana   también   quería   ver   la   película
        Ana   also   want-IPFV.3SG   see-INF   the-F.SG   movie-F.SG
        'Ana also wanted to see the movie'

   b.   Ana   también   quería   ver   una   película
              also   want-IPFV.3SG   see-INF   a-F.SG   movie-F.SG
        'Ana also wanted to see a movie'

Closer yet to the Asturian examples in (4) and (5) are the kind/unit interpretations in (7).

Recall that nouns can be interpreted as either count or mass, and mass nouns typically have

generic readings (cf. chapter three). However, INP structures can also coerce a count reading of

mass nouns, where *linen*, in (7a), and *chocolate*, in (7b), can be ambiguously interpreted as a

certain kind of thing or a countable unit[72]. I note that the Dutch counterpart in (7c) only appears

to have the kind reading available (Borer, 2005; De Belder, 2008).

(7)   Kind/Unit Readings of INPs (adapted from De Belder, 2008: 117-118)
   a.   This   is   a   good   linen.
        kind: *'This is a good certain kind of linen'*
        unit: *'This is a good cut of linen'*

   b.   I   tasted   a   chocolate.
        kind: *'I tasted a certain kind of chocolate'*
        unit: *'I tasted a piece of chocolate'*

   c.   Ik   proefde   een   chocolade.
        I   tasted   a   chocolate
        kind: *'I tasted a certain kind of chocolate'*
        unit: #*'I tasted a piece of chocolate'*

Moreover, Asturian adjective morphology is equipped to discern the difference between

individual readings, and other types like mass, circumstantial, and state and generic substance

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[71] The DNP in (6a) is specific in that the movie in question is identifiable by both the speaker and interlocutor, while in (6b), the INP is non-specific and refers to any movie.

[72] I use unit and individual interchangeably throughout this section.

readings. The noun-adjective gender agreement in (8) indicates that *papel* is interpreted by the speaker to be an individual, while an *-o* form adjective modifies the same noun in (9) and (10).

(8)   Individuals in Asturian (adapted from Viejo Fernández, 2002: 33)

el	papel	blancu	que	dexesti	enriba
the.M.SG	paper.M.SG	white-M.SG	that	leave-PST.2SG	on.top

la	mesa
the-F.SG	table-F.SG

'The white paper that you left on the table'

In the circumstantial reading in (9) the adjective agrees with a concept or situation that the speaker interprets based on their view, understanding, or personal experience regarding the noun in question—the adjective does not agree with the noun itself (Viejo Fernández, 2002: 33).

(9)   Circumstantial Readings (adapted from Viejo Fernández, 2002: 33)

el	papel	ye	más	prestoso	que
the.M.SG	paper.M.SG	be-PRS.3SG	more	enjoyable-MS	than

l'ordenaor
the.M.SG.computer.M.SG

'[Writing on] paper is more enjoyable than [writing on] the computer'

A similar use of *-o* form agreement also extends to cases where the phrase has a type reading that references the state of the noun or a generic substance reading, in (10a) and (10b), respectively (Viejo Fernández, 2002: 33).

(10)   States and Generic Substances (adapted from Viejo Fernández, 2002: 33)

a.

el	papel	reciclao	viéndese	peor	que
the.M.SG	paper.M.SG	recicyled-MS	sell-PRS.3SG=PASS	worse	than

el	papel	nuevo
the.M.SG	paper.M.SG	new-MS

'Recycled paper is not sold as well as new paper'

b.

el	papel	bono	val	pa	munches
the.M.SG	paper.M.SG	good-MS	worth-PRS.3SG	for	many-F-PL

coses
thing-F-PL

'Good paper serves many purposes'

In fact, an agreement pattern similar to (8) through (10) can also be observed in Scandinavian *pancake sentences*, in (11) and (12), which has more recently been treated as a form of semantic agreement triggered by a concept or idea (Enger, 2004, 2013), such as eating pancakes is good in (11a) or drinking vodka is healthy in (11b) and (12a)[73]. This differs from syntactic agreement, in which a referent's gender and number is the target of agreement, as has been shown throughout this section in many cases.

(11) Pancake Sentences – Predicate Adjectives (adapted from Enger, 2004: 6)
    a. Pannekaker   er   godt.
        pancakes-PL   *are*   *good-NEUT.SG*
        'Pancakes are good'

    b. Vokda   er   sunt.
        vodka-MASC.SG   *is*   *healthy-NEUT.SG*
        'Vodka is healthy'

    c. Grammatikk   er   morsomt.
        grammar-MASC-SG   *is*   *fun-NEUT.SG*
        'Grammar is fun'

In addition to predicative adjectives the phenomenon also extends to other contexts, like in (12), where left-dislocation can also generate a neuter pronoun that agrees in gender with the predicative adjective, both of which are associated with an activity related to *vodka* and *pannekaker*.

(12) Pancake Sentences – Pronouns (adapted from Enger, 2004: 19)
    a. Vodka,   det   er   sunt.
        vodka-MASC.SG   *it-NEUT*   *is*   *healthy-NEUT.SG*
        'Vodka, it is healthy'

    b. Pannekaker,   det   er   godt.
        pancakes-PL   *it-NEUT*   *is*   *good-NEUT.SG*
        'Pancakes, it is good'

---

[73] (11a) is a case of a lack of number agreement and (11b) and (11c) show a lack of gender agreement.

Whether or not syntactic and semantic agreement obtains seems to be a question of scale (see Figure 1) where the further left an element falls the more likely it is that syntactic agreement holds, whereas working towards the right there is a greater chance of the element in question exhibiting semantic agreement (Corbett, 1979: 204; Enger, 2004: 20, 23-24; 2013; Sasse, 1993). Being that Scandinavian predicative adjectives can already show semantic agreement it then follows that the pronouns in (12), which are further to the right on the scale, can also agree semantically (Enger, 2004: 20-21).

| attributive | predicate | relative pronoun | personal pronoun |

Figure 1 - Agreement Hierarchy (adapted from Corbett, 1979: 204)
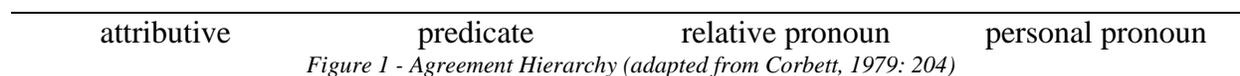
Individuation is also a scalar concept (see Figure 2) where the right-most three items correspond more to non-countable entities that typically are not interpreted as individuals. It then becomes unsurprising that pancake sentence subjects are typically inanimate, they tend to be indefinite, and are also typically formed with NPs that are further to the right—inanimate concrete things, abstract references, and mass nouns (Enger, 2004: 23-24; cf. Dowty, 1991: 572).

| Proper names | Humans | Animals | Inanimate concrete things | Abstracts | Mass nouns |

Figure 2 - Continuum of Individuation (adapted from Enger, 2004: 24; cf. Sasse, 1993)
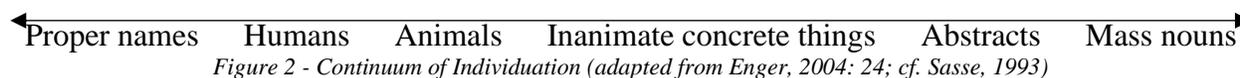
Applying the agreement hierarchy to Asturian it appears then that semantic -*o* form agreement is available as far left as attributive adjectives. In terms of individuation, I have thus far accounted for examples of -*o* form adjectives agreeing with mass nouns and inanimate concrete things. I now turn solely to Asturian where -o forms have also been attested on demonstratives and clitics (d'Andrés, 1993)[74].

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[74] Many types of examples are included in this author's analysis, but here I mention those that are instrumental in moving the discussion along, and I refer the reader to d'Andrés (1993) for more details. See Loporcaro (2018) and the references therein for specific examples on the variety of Asturian spoken in Ḷḷena.

The generic reference of demonstratives encoded in *eso*, in (13a), is what licenses the *-o* form predicative adjective *malo*. The post-position of demonstratives can also generate an *-o* form, in (13b), but in pre-nominal contexts *esto carbón* would be blocked by the gender-agreeing *esti carbón*.

(13) Demonstratives (d'Andrés, 1993: 61, 73)

a. *Eso*   ye   **malo**.
    DEM-N.SG   be-PRS.3SG   bad-MS

    'That is bad'

b. El   *carbón*   **esto**   ye   de
    the.M.SG   coal.M.MS   DEM-N.SG   be-PRS.3SG   from

    La Camocha.
    La Camocha

    'That coal is from La Camocha'

The abstract article *lo* also appears as an *-o* form when an adjective is nominalized[75], in (14a), but this article does not appear with mass nouns proper (cf. *lo carbón *'the coal'*/*lo ropa *'the clothing',* but el carbón/la ropa). Example (14c) accounts for contexts in which the referent is a count noun thereby blocking the appearance of an *-o* form nominalized adjective.

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[75] For clarification, the adjective in (14c) essentially takes on the function of the noun, hence the term nominalized adjective.

(14) Article *lo* (d'Andrés, 1993: 64, 67)

a. **Lo**   **alto**   d'esi   edificiu
    the-N.SG   high-MS   of.DEM.M.SG   building-M.SG

    ta   mal   *midío*.
    be-PRS.3SG   poorly   measured-MS

    'The tallness of that building is measured poorly'

b. ***El***   ***frío (-u)*[76]**   aguánto*lo*   mal.
    the.M.SG   cold-M.SG   endure-PRS.1SG=it-MS   poorly

    'The cold, I endure it poorly'

c. ***El***   [coche]   ***blancu***   dex*élu*
    the.M.SG   car-M.SG   white-M.SG   leave-pst.1sg=it-M.SG

    aparcáu   ehí   cerquina.
    parked-M.SG   here   close

    'The white one (car), I left it parked here pretty close'

The last context that I describe is the clitic *lo* that agrees with a mass noun referent in (15a).

Predictably, when referring to an abstract or general situation, which in (15b) is some situation

involving Xuacu, the mass clitic *lo* also appears.

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[76] While the adjective here could appear with a *-u* in agreement with the masculine gender of the article that precedes it, in Central Asturian the adjective tends to appear as an *-o* form (d'Andrés, 1993: 67).

(15) Referent *lo* (d'Andrés, 1993: 77)[77]

    a. *La*   *forgaxa*   recoyí*lo*   y

         the-F.SG   shaving-F.MS   pick.up-PST.1SG=it-MS   and

         tiré*lo*   a   la   basura.

         throw-PST.1SG=it-MS   to   the-F.SG   garbage-F.SG

         'I picked up the shavings and threw them in the garbage'

    b. Súpi*lo*   pel   periódicu

         find.out-PST.1SG=it-MS   from.the.M.SG   newspaper-M.SG

         [lo de Xuacu]

         [the thing about Xuacu]

         'I found it out from the paper [the thing about Xuacu]'

Throughout this section I have summarized analyses of basic adjective behavior in Spanish, and Scandinavian languages and applied them to previous descriptions of Asturian agreement patterns, specifically, the contexts in which the *-o* morpheme appears on a post-nominal adjective that agrees with a mass feature on the noun or with some external semantic or pragmatic conditions that may or may not be restricted by linear order (d'Andrés, 1993; Arias Cabal, 1998; among others). The existing literature typically focuses on accounts of agreement revolving around mass noun modification in central Asturian varieties. For this reason, it is important to examine a wider distribution of Asturian *-o* form adjectives across the region of Asturias. To move the field forward in this respect this chapter will undertake the following.

§4.2 details the results of my Asturian survey data to better organize the necessary theoretical questions. The elicited grammaticality judgements and interpretative descriptions were gathered through Qualtrics surveys by native Asturian speakers across various regions of Asturias. With the support of these data, I show that contrary to previous descriptions, the *-o* is more than just

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[77] One matter to note is that when the referent is a count noun, the clitic will be *lu* for masculine singular (cf. (14c)) or *la* for feminine singular.

mass agreement. Specifically, it also surfaces in the following contexts: generic interpretations of both count and mass nouns, and circumstantial references to nouns coerced by extra-linguistic information imparted by the speaker.

In §4.3 I will outline a proposal that accounts for these novel contexts in which *-o* appears on adjectives, and to undertake this I shall organize this proposal in the following way. I will show that my system can treat both the novel data in conjunction with the mass-centered traditional view of Asturian agreement. Second, I aim to clarify the underlying structure of Asturian adjectives so that syntactic position and agreement can be treated under one unified front. Through this proposal we will also see that much of the nominal derivation presented in chapter three also applies to Asturian adjectives.

Finally, §4.4 will briefly summarize the main points included in each section of this chapter.

4.2. Qualtrics Survey on Mass Adjectives and Agreement in Asturian

In addition to the research gap on *-o* form nouns in Asturian there is also a need to account for *-o* form production on adjectives. I disseminated a second survey to bridge this gap that was inspired by previous analyses (d'Andrés, 1993; Viejo Fernández, 2002) with the aim of exploring the acceptability of forms by native Asturian speakers.

As the main methodological approach of this second survey is the same as the first, I will not repeat the details here (cf. §3, chapter three). Both surveys were carried out at two separate times, and the participants' backgrounds do differ, but this matter is unproblematic because the surveys aimed to acquire new data by casting a wide net instead of focusing on the individual production of Asturian *-o* marking.

To better address the data analysis in §4.2 and the theoretical contribution in §4.3, I will briefly summarize the facts with the aid of the figures below. Here the main division, other than mass and count, also lies between specific and non-specific interpretations.

Under the specific interpretation of mass nouns, in Figure 3, DNPs identify a known mass noun referent in the discourse while INPs denote a countable kind or unit interpretation. For the non-specific interpretations mass nouns in definite contexts have a generic reading while in indefinite contexts they describe characteristics of an entire class. I include definite non-specific pancake sentences under mass nouns due to their generic interpretation and *-o* form morphology in Asturian.

MASS NOUNS	
Specific interpretations	Non-specific interpretations
Definite contexts – identifies a contextually salient mass noun 'I ate the soup'.	**Definite contexts** – has a generic reading 'Sand is used for cement'.
Indefinite contexts – creates a kind or unit interpretation of a mass noun 'I ate a soup' or 'I touched a (kind of) sand that felt different from any other sand I have touched'.	**Indefinite contexts** – refers to an individual but describes a characteristic of the entire class, not just one or a few members of the class 'A spoiled milk shouldn't be drunk'.

PANCAKE SENTENCES
Definite, non-specific contexts – has an event/circumstance reading related to the noun 'Paint is fun' *[using paint is fun]*.

Figure 3 - Interpretations of Mass Nouns

As for count nouns, in Figure 4, the specific interpretations of DNPs and INPs are the same with the exception being that in both cases the noun denotes an individual or a unit instead of mass. The non-specific interpretations of count nouns function the same as they do with mass nouns—generic or class description readings hold. Definite specific pancake sentences are included here because they denote count noun or individual referents.

COUNT NOUNS	
Specific interpretations	Non-specific interpretations
Definite contexts – identifies a contextually salient individual 'I read the book'.	**Definite contexts** – has a generic reading 'The book is the best invention of all time'.
Indefinite contexts – has a unit interpretation and identifies some unit in particular 'I read a (specific) book'.	**Indefinite contexts** – refers to an individual but describes a characteristic of the entire class, not just one or a few members of the class 'A book has pages'.

PANCAKE SENTENCES
Definite, specific contexts – identifies a contextually salient count/individual noun 'The paint is fun *[the one I'm using to paint with now]*'.

Figure 4 - Interpretations of Count Nouns

Bearing these similarities and differences in mind, I describe the Qualtrics survey and results throughout the rest of this section to lay the foundation for my theoretical analysis in §4.3.

4.2.1. *Demographics and Geographical Explanation*

Originally, a total of 77 participants completed survey two, but 14 responses were discarded due to non-related answers. This left a total of 63 accounts that make up the basis of the attested examples. The locations from which the participants of survey two hailed are listed below, and the map with their pinned locations is included in Figure 5:

Avilés, Blimea, Cabrales, Carreño, Grau, La Pola Siero, La Vilieḻḻa, L'Entregu, Llanes, Llanera, Llangréu, Ḻḻuarca, Llugones, Mieres, Nava, Navia, Pola Llaviana, Pravia, San Cloyo, Tinéu, Uviéu, Xixón
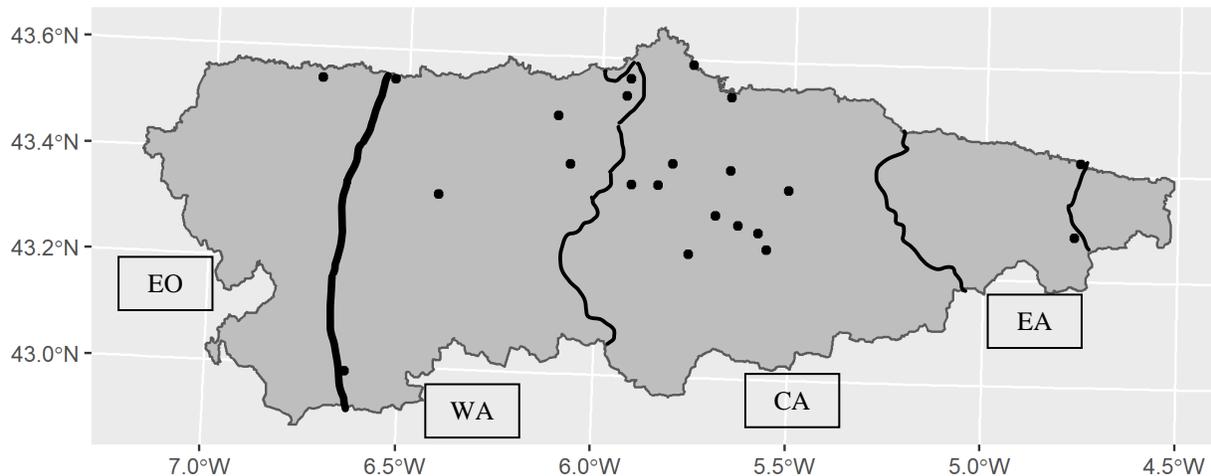
Figure 5 - Geographical Distribution of Survey 2 Participants in Asturias

As for the sex and age group of the participants, as shown in Figure 6, we can see that a majority of males completed the survey, and the age groups 36-50 and 50+ share a majority of the survey responses, as demonstrated in Figure 7.

SEX	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Male	40
Female	21
Prefer not to say	2
TOTAL	63

Figure 6 - Participants by Sex

AGE GROUP	# OF PARTICIPANTS
18-35	15
36-50	26
50+	22
TOTAL	63

Figure 7 - Participants by Age

4.2.2.   *The Acceptability of Gender versus -o Form Agreement on Adjectives*

The second survey focused on the agreement of Asturian adjectives and was centered on two tasks. In the first task participants were shown one minimal pair at a time and were asked to indicate if each phrase was acceptable or not with a yes or no answer. In total, 24 minimal pair sentences were included in the survey. The only difference between each pair was that the post-

nominal adjective showed gender agreement in one phrase, in (16), the adjective appeared as an *-o* form in the other, in (17).

(16) **UNA MADERA MOYADA**
Una　　**madera**　　**moyada**　　nun　　ambura　　　　bien.
a.F.SG　wood-F.SG　wet-F.SG　NEG　burn-PRS.3SG　well

'A wet wood doesn't burn well'

(17) **UNA MADERA MOYAO**
Una　　**madera**　　**moyao**　　nun　　ambura　　　　bien.
a.F.SG　wood-F.SG　wet-MS　NEG　burn-PRS.3SG　well

'A wet wood doesn't burn well'

To minimize time to completion the sentence pairs were divided into three groups. The main group consisted of eight pairs that were presented to all participants, and each participant was allowed the choice of either reviewing one or two additional groups of eight-word pairs, or they instead could continue to task two of the survey.

For task one I include the total number of 63 participants that judged each sentence as acceptable with Y, unacceptable with N, and N/A for cases where no response was given. The ELICITED column shows a check mark for the sentence pairs that generated an example request when judged as acceptable by the participants (cf. §4.2.3 for some examples).

The testing of the examples below serves to probe if a speaker would judge a gender-agreeing adjective as acceptable when modifying a mass noun that was individualized with the indefinite article *un, una 'a/an'*. Similarly, it was of interest to see if a count noun with a generic interpretation could lead speakers to judge mass adjective agreement as acceptable.

For the pairs of phrases in Table 1 below, the participants' judgement of modifying the indefinite mass noun *madera 'wood'* with a gender-agreeing adjective was equally acceptable as it was unacceptable, but the *-o* form adjective was the preference. In the indefinite examples

containing *aceite 'oil'* this preference was also maintained, though there was a greater degree in which the *-o* form adjective was accepted. For definite count nouns *llibru 'book'* and *moneda 'coin'*, gender agreement of the post-nominal adjective was overwhelmingly accepted.

For each phrase, please indicate YES if it is grammatical. If the phrase is not grammatical, please indicate NO.

ELICITED	EXAMPLE	Y	N	N/A	TOTAL
✓	Una madera **moyada** nun ambura bien.	32	31	--	63
✓	Una madera **moyao** nun ambura bien. *'A wet wood doesn't burn well'*	41	22	--	63
	Lleí el llibru **clásicu**.	61	1	1	63
	Lleí el llibru **clásico**. *'I read a classic book'*	7	55	1	63
✓	Un aceite **podrecíu** nun se come con pan.	20	42	1	63
✓	Un aceite **podrecío** nun se come con pan. *'A rotten oil isn't eaten with bread'*	46	16	1	63
✓	La moneda **pequeña** vien de Colombia.	51	10	2	63
✓	La moneda **pequeño** vien de Colombia. *'The small coin comes from Colombia'*	17	44	2	63
	Comí un aceite **podrecíu**.	22	37	4	63
	Comí un aceite **podrecío**. *'I ate a rotten oil'*	35	24	4	63
	Merqué una madera **moyada**.	30	29	4	63
	Merqué una madera **moyao**. *'I bought a wet wood'*	31	28	4	63
✓	El llibru **clásicu** nació en Francia.	43	16	4	63
✓	El llibru **clásico** nació en Francia. *'The classic book was born in France'*	16	43	4	63
	Pisé la moneda **pequeña**.	53	2	8	63
	Pisé la moneda **pequeño**. *'I stepped on the small money'*	9	46	8	63

Table 1 - Adjective -o Forms (Main Group)

The pairs in Table 2 were only presented to 24 of the 63 total participants. Here the results for the indefinite mass noun *carne 'meat'* show that either gender agreement on the adjective or an *-o* form adjective was acceptable, but gender agreement for the mass noun *xabón 'soap'* was mainly preferred by these participants. The gender-agreeing adjective was largely accepted with the definite count noun *bollu 'roll'*, while *manzana 'apple'* was acceptable when the adjective agreed both in gender and as an *-o* form in the generic DP.

For each phrase, please indicate YES if it is grammatical. If the phrase is not grammatical, please indicate NO.

ELICITED	EXAMPLE	Y	N	N/A	TOTAL
✓	Una carne **bona** nun se merca nos Estaos Xuníos.	12	12	39	63
✓	Una carne **bono** nun se merca nos Estaos Xuníos. *'A good meat isn't bought in the United States'*	16	8	39	63
	Vendí el bollu **duru**.	23	1	39	63
	Vendí el bollu **duro**. *'I bought the hard roll'*	3	21	39	63
✓	Un xabón **mariellu** nun s'usa na ducha.	19	5	39	63
✓	Un xabón **mariello** nun s'usa na ducha. *'A yellow soap isn't used in the shower'*	7	17	39	63
	Alcontré un xabón **mariellu**.	22	2	39	63
	Alcontré un xabón **mariello**. *'I found a yellow soap'*	10	14	39	63
✓	La manzana **roxa** vien de los Estaos Xuníos.	17	7	39	63
✓	La manzana **roxo** vien de los Estaos Xuníos. *'The red apple comes from the United States'*	14	10	39	63
	Comí una carne **bona**.	15	9	39	63
	Comí una carne **bono**. *'I ate a good meat'*	11	13	39	63
✓	El bollu **duru** cómese pela nueche.	21	3	39	63
✓	El bollu **duro** cómese pela nueche. *'The hard roll is eaten at night'*	3	21	39	63
	Comí la manzana **roxa**.	23	1	39	63
	Comí la manzana **roxo**. *'I ate the red apple'*	5	19	39	63

Table 2 - Adjective -o Forms (Extra Group I)

Only 8 of the 63 participants opted to review the stimuli in Table 3, where the indefinite collective noun *xente 'people'* was judged as more acceptable when modified with an *-o* form adjective, as was also the case with indefinite mass noun *pan 'bread'*. The Definite count noun *fueya 'leaf'* was just as accepted with a gender-agreeing or *-o* form adjective, but these participants preferred gender agreement with the definite count noun *home 'man'*.

For each phrase, please indicate YES if it is grammatical. If the phrase is not grammatical, please indicate NO.

ELICITED	EXAMPLE	Y	N	N/A	TOTAL
✓	Una xente **pacífica** nun s'alcuentra fácilmente.	1	7	55	63
✓	Una xente **pacífico** nun s'alcuentra fácilmente. *'Peaceful people aren't found easily'*	7	1	55	63
	Comí un pan **blandiu**.	3	5	55	63
	Comí un pan **blandio**. *'I ate a soft bread'*	6	2	55	63
✓	Un pan **blandiu** nun se merca pela tarde.	2	6	55	63
✓	Un pan **blandio** nun se merca pela tarde. *'A soft bread isn't bought in the afternoon'*	6	2	55	63
	Conocí a una xente **pacífica**.	2	6	55	63
	Conocí a una xente **pacífico**. *'I met a peaceful people'*	6	2	55	63
✓	La fueya **guapa** sal na seronda.	5	3	55	63
✓	La fueya **guapo** sal na seronda. *'The pretty leaf comes out in the fall'*	6	2	55	63
	Vi al home **ricu**.	8	--	55	63
	Vi al home **rico**. *'I saw the rich man'*	1	7	55	63
✓	L'home **ricu** tien muncha familia.	8	--	55	63
✓	L'home **rico** tien muncha familia. *'The rich man has a lot of family'*	1	7	55	63
	Recoyí la fueya **guapa**.	7	1	55	63
	Recoyí la fueya **guapo**. *'I picked up the pretty leaf'*	6	2	55	63

Table 3 - Adjective -o Forms (Extra Group II)

These data clearly indicate that although the percentage of acceptance will vary, an adjective can modify a count noun and appear as an *-o* form. Conversely, gender agreement between an adjective and a mass noun can also take place.

In task two of the survey the participants were presented with 10 pairs, and they were asked to briefly explain what their interpretation of each one was. Based on the participants' metalinguistic explanations, I divided up their responses into categories in which the phrase was interpreted as INDIVIDUAL, CIRCUMSTANCE, INCORRECT, OTHER or N/A.

The INDIVIDUAL reflects the cases where the participants overtly stated a specific or concrete referent in their interpretation of the phrase. On the other hand, CIRCUMSTANCE phrases entail some idea or concept that the participants related to said referent—similarly to pancake sentences. INCORRECT interpretations are when the participant explicitly stated that the phrase

was incorrect, OTHER interpretations are cases where an unrelated response was elicited, and N/A represents responses that were not provided.

When a predicative adjective shows gender agreement with their subject referent, the interpretation was generally that the referent was an individual. On the other hand, predicative *-o* form adjectives were generally interpreted as having a circumstantial relationship with their referent. There were, however, some outliers to the participants' interpretations that are worth mentioning[78], as shown in Table 4.

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[78] With each phrase in the left-most column, I include a basic reading to discern between an individual (*el papel ye bonu*) and circumstantial (*el papel ye bono*) interpretation. An individual reading would be interpreted in the context of Dwight Schrute holding up an individual sheet of paper while mockingly telling Jim Halpert that *the paper is good* (of good quality), and he sells more of it than any other sales rep in the office. However, a circumstantial reading is more like Michael Scott telling corporate that *paper is good* (the business of it) because he doesn't want his Scranton branch to succumb to the competitors and be closed down.

For each phrase, please briefly explain what your interpretation is.

EXAMPLE	INDIVIDUAL	CIRCUMSTANCE	INCORRECT	OTHER	N/A	TOTAL
La bicicleta ye **dura**. *'The bicycle is hard'*	**51**	--	--	3	9	63
La bicicleta ye **duro**. *'Biking is hard'*	--	**42**	8	4	9	63
La moto ye **cara**. *'The motorcycle is expensive'*	**49**	1	--	4	9	63
La moto ye **caro**. *'Motorcycling is expensive'*	---	**39**	11	4	9	63
La oveya ye **problemática**. *'The sheep is problematic'*	**48**	--	--	6	9	63
La oveya ye **problemático**. *'Sheep herding is problematic'*	--	**37**	12	5	9	63
La sidra ye **cara**. *'The cider is expensive'*	**38**	1	7	7	10	63
La sidra ye **caro**. *'The cider business is expensive'*	--	**21**	5	27	10	63
La borona ye **costosa**. *'The cornbread is costly'*	**27**	10	6	8	12	63
La borona ye **costoso**. *'The cornbread business is costly'*	1	**26**	6	18	12	63
El llobu ye **problemáticu**. *'The wolf is problematic'*	**38**	1	3	7	14	63
El llobu ye **problemático**. *'The wolf situation is problematic'*	2	**20**	8	19	14	63
El papel ye **bonu**. *'The paper is good'*	**39**	--	4	4	16	63
El papel ye **bono**. *'The paper business is good'*	--	**10**	4	33	16	63
El café ye **malu**. *'The coffee is bad'*	**38**	--	5	3	17	63
El café ye **malo**. *'The coffee business is bad'*	--	**23**	2	21	17	63
El xenru ye **simpáticu**. *'The son-in-law is nice'*	**37**	--	3	5	18	63
El xenru ye **simpático**. *'Being a son-in-law is nice'*	4	**3**	31	7	18	63
El frixuelu ye **costosu**. *'The crepe is costly'*	**29**	8	2	3	21	63
El frixuelu ye **costoso**. *'The crepe business is costly'*	--	**22**	11	9	21	63

Table 4 - Pancake Sentences in Asturian

The noun *'sidra' cider* had an almost even number of CIRCUMSTANTIAL versus OTHER interpretations when the adjective appeared as an *-o* form, namely reference to cider in general. This was similar for the noun *llobu 'wolf'* and *café 'coffee'*. As for *papel 'paper'*, the participants also understood it as a generic referent when the adjective ended in *-o*, accounting for the majority. Finally, the noun *frixuelu 'crepe'* modified by a predicative *-o* form adjective was

interpreted as unacceptable by half of the participants that responded, and *xenru 'son-in-law'* was overwhelmingly interpreted as unacceptable in this context. In §4.2.3, I reorganize the tables above into terms better suited for the discussion of grammaticality.

4.2.3. *Interpretation and Discussion of the Results*

Moving towards a theoretical analysis of the data I propose a way to account for the grammaticality of the survey examples based on their reported interpretations (cf. §4.2.2, Table 1-Table 4), but much more data would be needed to make a more statistically solid determination.

Grammaticality was decided in consideration of the *yes* responses given, and therefore the N/A column was discarded. This explains the difference in response totals of Table 1 through Table 4 in comparison to Table 6 through Table 9. The grammaticality system in Table 5 works on a spectrum of percentages, where phrases with an acceptability range from 100% to 80% are grammatical, within a range of 79% to 50% is marginally grammatical, between 49% and 20% the examples are variable and within a 19% to 0% range they are ungrammatical[79].

RANGE			GRAMMATICALITY
100%	→	80%	grammatical (blank)
79%	→	50%	marginally grammatical (?)
49%	→	20%	variable (??)
19%	→	0%	ungrammatical (*)

Table 5 - Schema of Grammatical Range

In Table 6 through Table 9 the left-most column shows the grammaticality marking that corresponds to each percentage range. Grammatical phrases are blank, marginally grammatical

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[79] The left-most column of Table 6 through Table 9 show the grammatically marking that corresponds to each percentage range, where grammatical phrases are blank, marginally grammatical phrases are indicated as such with ?, variable phrases with ??, and ungrammatical ones with *. A corresponding color scheme is also included for further visual clarity.

phrases are indicated as such with ?, variable phrases with ??[80], and ungrammatical ones with *.

A corresponding color scheme is also included with the percentages and raw numbers in

parenthesis for further visual clarity.

	EXAMPLE	Y	N	TOTAL
?	Una madera **moyada** nun ambura bien.	51% (*32*)	49% (*31*)	63
?	Una madera **moyao** nun ambura bien.	65% (*41*)	35% (*22*)	63
	Lleí el llibru **clásicu**.	98% (*61*)	2% (*1*)	62
*	Lleí el llibru **clásico**.	11% (*7*)	89% (*55*)	62
??	Un aceite **podrecíu** nun se come con pan.	32% (*20*)	68% (*42*)	62
?	Un aceite **podrecío** nun se come con pan.	74% (*46*)	26% (*16*)	62
	La moneda **pequeña** vien de Colombia.	84% (*51*)	16% (*10*)	61
??	La moneda **pequeño** vien de Colombia.	28% (*17*)	72% (*44*)	61
??	Comí un aceite **podrecíu**.	37% (*22*)	63% (*37*)	59
?	Comí un aceite **podrecío**.	59% (*35*)	41% (*24*)	59
?	Merqué una madera **moyada**.	51% (*30*)	49% (*29*)	59
?	Merqué una madera **moyao**.	53% (*31*)	47% (*28*)	59
?	El llibru **clásicu** nació en Francia.	73% (*43*)	27% (*16*)	59
??	El llibru **clásico** nació en Francia.	27% (*16*)	73% (*43*)	59
	Pisé la moneda **pequeña**.	96% (*53*)	4% (*2*)	55
*	Pisé la moneda **pequeño**.	16% (*9*)	84% (*46*)	55

Table 6 - Grammaticality of Main Group

	EXAMPLE	Y	N	TOTAL
?	Una carne **bona** nun se merca nos Estaos Xuníos.	50% (*12*)	50% (*12*)	24
?	Una carne **bono** nun se merca nos Estaos Xuníos.	67% (*16*)	33% (*8*)	24
	Vendí el bollu **duru**.	96% (*23*)	4% (*1*)	24
*	Vendí el bollu **duro**.	13% (*3*)	88% (*21*)	24
?	Un xabón **mariellu** nun s'usa na ducha.	79% (*19*)	21% (*5*)	24
??	Un xabón **mariello** nun s'usa na ducha.	29% (*7*)	71% (*17*)	24
	Alcontré un xabón **mariellu**.	92% (*22*)	8% (*2*)	24
??	Alcontré un xabón **mariello**.	42% (*10*)	58% (*14*)	24
?	La manzana **roxa** vien de los Estaos Xuníos.	71% (*17*)	29% (*7*)	24
?	La manzana **roxo** vien de los Estaos Xuníos.	58% (*14*)	42% (*10*)	24
?	Comí una carne **bona**.	63% (*15*)	38% (*9*)	24
??	Comí una carne **bono**.	46% (*11*)	54% (*13*)	24
	El bollu **duru** cómese pela nueche.	88% (*21*)	13% (*3*)	24
*	El bollu **duro** cómese pela nueche.	13% (*3*)	88% (*21*)	24
	Comí la manzana **roxa**.	96% (*23*)	4% (*1*)	24
??	Comí la manzana **roxo**.	21% (*5*)	79% (*19*)	24

Table 7 - Grammaticality of Extra Group I

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[80] In the context of my data, I consider the term *variable* to largely represent the examples that are producible by native speakers, but that are in between what would be considered within grammatical and ungrammatical range.

	EXAMPLE	Y	N	TOTAL
*	Una xente **pacífica** nun s'alcuentra fácilmente.	13% *(1)*	88% *(7)*	8
	Una xente **pacífico** nun s'alcuentra fácilmente.	88% *(7)*	13% *(1)*	8
??	Comí un pan **blandiu**.	38% *(3)*	63% *(5)*	8
?	Comí un pan **blandio**.	75% *(6)*	25% *(2)*	8
??	Un pan **blandiu** nun se merca pela tarde.	25% *(2)*	75% *(6)*	8
?	Un pan **blandio** nun se merca pela tarde.	75% *(6)*	25% *(2)*	8
??	Conocí a una xente **pacífica**.	25% *(2)*	75% *(6)*	8
?	Conocí a una xente **pacífico**.	75% *(6)*	25% *(2)*	8
?	La fueya **guapa** sal na seronda.	63% *(5)*	38% *(3)*	8
?	La fueya **guapo** sal na seronda.	75% *(6)*	25% *(2)*	8
	Vi al home **ricu**.	100% *(8)*	0% *(0)*	8
*	Vi al home **rico**.	13% *(1)*	88% *(7)*	8
	L'home **ricu** tien muncha familia.	100% *(8)*	0% *(0)*	8
*	L'home **rico** tien muncha familia.	13% *(1)*	88% *(7)*	8
	Recoyí la fueya **guapa**.	88% *(7)*	13% *(1)*	8
?	Recoyí la fueya **guapo**.	75% *(6)*	25% *(2)*	8

Table 8 - Grammaticality of Extra Group II

	EXAMPLE	INDIVIDUAL (GENDER)	CIRCUMSTANCE (-*O* FORM)	INCORRECT	TOTAL
	La bicicleta ye **dura**.	100% *(51)*		0% *(0)*	51
	La bicicleta ye **duro**.	84% *(42)*		16% *(8)*	50
	La moto ye **cara**.	100% *(50)*		0% *(0)*	50
?	La moto ye **caro**.	78% *(39)*		22% *(11)*	50
	La oveya ye **problemática**.	100% *(48)*		0% *(0)*	48
?	La oveya ye **problemático**.	76% *(37)*		24% *(12)*	49
	La sidra ye **cara**.	85% *(39)*		15% *(7)*	46
	La sidra ye **caro**.	81% *(21)*		19% *(5)*	26
	La borona ye **costosa**.	86% *(37)*		14% *(6)*	43
	La borona ye **costoso**.	82% *(27)*		18% *(6)*	33
	El llobu ye **problemáticu**.	93% *(39)*		7% *(3)*	42
?	El llobu ye **problemático**.	73% *(22)*		27% *(8)*	30
	El papel ye **bonu**.	91% *(39)*		9% *(4)*	43
?	El papel ye **bono**.	71% *(10)*		29% *(4)*	14
	El café ye **malu**.	88% (38)		12% *(5)*	43
	El café ye **malo**.	92% *(23)*		8% *(2)*	25
	El xenru ye **simpáticu**.	92.5% *(37)*		7.5% *(3)*	40
*	El xenru ye **simpático**.	18% *(7)*		82% *(31)*	38
	El frixuelu ye **costosu**.	95% *(37)*		5% *(2)*	39
?	El frixuelu ye **costoso**.	67% *(22)*		33% *(11)*	33

Table 9 - Grammaticality of Pancake Sentences[81]

The following examples were all elicited from the survey participants as means to tie in new data and provide a glimpse into perhaps the true variability of Asturian -*o* form adjectives. Moreover, the proposed grammaticality system (cf. Table 6-Table 9) seems to accurately

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[81] The pancake sentences are a little different as participants were asked for their interpretation of the sentence pairs, not their acceptability. Because the difference between INDIVIDUAL and CIRCUMSTANCE is relevant for the type of interpretation and not grammaticality, as both examples are grammatical in their context, Table 9 was adapted to compare individual and circumstantial interpretations against those that were indicated as unacceptable—INCORRECT—and the N/A and OTHER columns were discarded due to their representation of a missing or unrelated answer, respectively.

describe most textbook cases that would be corroborated by the prescriptive Asturian literature—mass nouns agreeing with *-o* form attributive adjectives, in (18), and count noun gender agreement, in (19). The same agreement pattern is mirrored in the predicate adjectives in (20) and (21), respectively.

(18) MOYAO [S2_P11_XI]

La	**madera**	**moyao**	nun	val	pa
the-F.SG	wood-THV	wet-THV	NEG	worth-PRS.3SG	for

esto					
DEM-N.SG					

'Wet wood isn't good for this'

(19) PEQUEÑA [S2_P8_UV]

La	**moneda**	**pequeña**	dióme**la**'l		tenderu.
the-F.SG	coin-THV	small-THV	give-PST-3SG=DAT.1SG=it-THV		clerk-THV

'The small coin, the clerk gave it to me'

(20) PACÍFICO [S2_P11_XI]

La	**xente**	**normal**	ye	**pacifico**
the-F.SG	people-THV	normal-Ø	be-PRS.3SG	peaceful-THV

'Normal people are peaceful'

(21) PEQUEÑA [S1_P13_XI]

La	**moneda**	**pequeña**	ye	**mariella**
the-F.SG	coin-THV	small-THV	be-PRS.3SG	yellow-THV

'The small coin is yellow'

Some speakers also clearly make a distinction between count and mass for easily recategorizable nouns like *fueya.* In (22) the noun has a count interpretation while in (23) the interpretation is mass, indicted as such by the gender agreeing morphology on the adjective and clitic.

(22) GUAPA [S2_P8_UV]
      la   **fueya**   **guapa**   perdí**la**
      the-F.SG   leaf-THV   pretty-THV   lose-PST.1SG=it-THV

      'The pretty leaf, I lost it'

(23) GUAPO [S2_P8_UV]
      la   **fueya**   **guapo**   barrí**lo**
      the-F.SG   leaf-THV   pretty-THV   sweep-PST.1SG=it-THV

      'The pretty leaves, I swept them'

The above cases are dictated by the noun's interpretation, but what of possible interpretations regarding specificity (cf. Figure 3 and Figure 4) in Asturian? Generic contexts do not appear to always be salient for the speaker to the point where the adjective surfaces with *-o* form morphology, in (24)[82].

(24) DURU [S2_P34_LLNG]
      El   **bollu**   **duru**   cómese   cuando   les
      the.M.SG   roll-THV   hard-THV   eat-PRS.3SG=PASS   when   the-F-PL

      fiestes.
      party-THV-PL

      'Hard rolls are eaten during parties'

A mass noun, like *aceite* in (25), though counted in an INP context is also not always relevant for adjective agreement. In the example below the *-o* form indicates that perhaps the mass value of the noun is what dictates adjective agreement for some speakers.

(25) PODRECÍO [S2_P34_LLNG]
      Un   **aceite**   **podrecío**   ye   **malo**   pa
      a.M.SG   oil-THV   rotten-THV   be-PRS.3SG   bad-THV   for

      la   salú.
      the-F.SG   health-Ø

      'A rotten oil is bad for health'

---

[82] Another explanation could be that a given speaker might not possess a specificity-induced *-o* form in their mental grammar.

Data elicited from other participants, however, allude to the importance of specificity for

adjective agreement. The specific reading of the nouns *carne*, in (26), and *aceite*[83], in (27),

shows gender agreement with the adjective even though the nouns themself indicate mass[84].

Additionally, in the generic interpretation of *llibru*, in (28), and *bollu*, in (29), the modifying

adjective is an *-o* form. This is particularly interesting despite the overwhelming

ungrammaticality of the *-o* form modification of these nouns (cf. Table 6 and Table 7,

respectively).

(26)   **BONA** [S2_P60_UV]
La	**carne**	**bona**	cuesta	más
the-F.SG	meat-THV	good-THV	cost-PRS.3SG	more

   'Good meat costs more'

(27)   **PODRECÍU** [S2_P11_XI]
Esi	**aceite**	ta	**podreciu**
DEM.M.SG	oil-THV	be-PRS.3SG	rotten-THV

   'That oil is rotten'

(28)   **CLÁSICO** [S2_P1_XI]
El	**llibru**	**clásico**	ye	lo	meyor
the.M.SG	book-THV	classic-THV	be-PRS.3SG	the.N.SG	best

que	tien	la	literatura	mundial.
that	have-PRS.3SG	the-F.SG	literature-THV	world-Ø

   'Classic books are the best that world literature has'

---

[83] A specific reading is further helped with the demonstrative in this example.

[84] Participants 60 and 11 produced adjective *-o* forms in other elicited examples, further justifying the argument for specificity and adjective gender agreement with mass nouns.

(29) DURO [S2_P60_UV]

El	**bollu**	**duro**	ye	**malo**	por
the.M.SG	roll-THV	hard-THV	be-PRS.3SG	bad-THV	during

la	nueche
the-F.SG	night-THV

'The hard roll is bad at night'

Finally, additional examples of interest from the survey data were elicited from some speakers. These were not of specific focus to the investigation at hand, but I mention a few of them below for expository purposes. In (30) and (31) the article *lo* appears with nominalized adjectives (see example (14)), where both the article and the adjective are *-o* forms. Being that the nominal referent in both examples is a feminine noun, this difference in form is particularly salient.

(30) MOYAO [S2_P28_UV]

La	**madera**	**moyao**	pesa	más que
the-F.SG	wood-THV	wet-THV	weigh-PRS.3SG	more than

lo	**seco**
the.N.SG	dry-THV

'Wet wood weighs more than dry'

(31) ROXO [S2_P50_UV]

La	**mazana**	**roxo**	ta	abondo	más
the-F.SG	apple-THV	red-THV	be-PRS.3SG	in.excess	more

caro	que	**lo**	**mariello**.
expensive-THV	than	the-N.SG	yellow-THV

'Red apples are excessively more expensive than the yellow'

We see in (32) that the adjective *podrecío* appears as an *-o* form, yet the direct object pronoun does not appear as *lo*. Instead, the gender agreeing *lu* is the pronoun that surfaces. A similar issue is found in (33), this time with the mass noun *madera* and the direct object pronoun *la*[85].

(32)　**PODRECÍO** [S2_P3_XI]
Esti　　　　**aceite**　**podrecío**　hai que　　　　tira**lu**
DEM.M.SG　oil-THV　rotten-THV　must-PRS.IMPS　toss-INF=it-THV

'This rotten oil, you must toss it'

(33)　**MOYAO** [S2_P32_PRA]
Apartó　　　　la　　　**madera**　**moyao**　pa
separate-PST.3SG　the-F.SG　wood-THV　wet-THV　to

dexa**la**　　　　　　secar
leave-INF=it-THV　　dry-INF

'S/he separated out the wet wood to let it dry'

Asturian pancake sentences offer an additional argument for how extralinguistic contexts can indeed influence a native speaker's interpretation. Agreement in this case has nothing to do with mass but rather it is driven entirely by noun-external factors. In support of previous literature (Viejo Fernández, 2002) there is evidence to suggest that gender agreement holds when the referent is specific. When the referent is some circumstance related to the referent the adjective instead surfaces as an *-o* form, in (34) and (35)[86].

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[85] I do not consider the agreement of clitics in this work, but the gender agreeing clitics in (32) and (33) offer more support for the salience that specificity has for some speakers in that the nominal referent was introduced previously and explicitly in the discourse, and therefore specific.

[86] I note that the bolded examples in (34) and (35) come from Viejo Fernández (2002) and influence the rest of the pancake sentence examples that were created for the survey. The contribution that my work makes here is twofold: (i) the author's explanation is further strengthened by corroborating data, and (ii), I have provided additional examples that fit this context to move the discussion forward.

(34)   [S2_P12_LLNG]
        La bicicleta ye dura:
        Cuesta trabayu pedaliar por cómo ta la bici.
        'It takes work to pedal because of the state of the bike'

        La bicicleta ye duro:
        Ye un deporte duru.
        'It's a tough sport'

(35)   [S2_P2_PSIE]
        El llobu ye problemáticu:
        esi lobu en particular ye problemáticu.
        'That specific wolf is problematic'

        El llobu ye problemático:
        el problema del llobu n'asturies ye complicao (en xeral).
        'The problem of wolves in Asturies is complicated (in general)'

To provide another example, in (36) the interpretation of a certain cornbread being expensive

holds under gender agreement, but when the intention is that making cornbread is difficult, we

see the *-o* form adjective appear.

(36)   [S2_P5_XI]
        La borona ye costosa:
        La boroña cuesta munches perres.
        'The cornbread costs a lot of money'

        La borona ye costoso:
        Facer boroña lleva xera
        'Making cornbread takes effort'

Even in a highly rejected and ungrammatical example, such as *xenru* in (37), there were still a

few cases reported where a circumstantial reading was possible. Again, having a certain son-in-

law in mind that is nice yields gender agreement on the adjective, but the circumstantial relation

with sons-in-law in general shows what has traditionally been referred to as mass agreement in

the literature.

(37)   [S2_P15_PSIE]
El xenru ye simpáticu:
Una persona, que ye xenru de daquien, ye simpaticu.
'A person, that's someone's son-in-law, is nice'

El xenru ye simpático:
Tolos xenros sonlo.
'All sons-in-law are nice'

I now mention a few unexpected agreement patterns that were attested by some survey participants before concluding this section. We see that the count noun *moneda* in (38) is modified by a gender-agreeing attributive adjective, but the predicative adjective *guapo* appears as an *-o* form. A similar case is present in (39), with *llibru* modified by the attributive adjective *clásicu* and the predicative adjective *caro*. In (40) the attributive adjective *pequeño* that modifies the count noun *moneda* is an *-o* form. However, the predicative adjective *incómoda* agrees in gender.

(38)   PEQUEÑA [S2_P41_XI]
La	**moneda**	**pequeña**	ye	**guapo**.
the-F.SG	coin-THV	small-THV	be-PRS.3SG	pretty-THV

'Small coins are pretty'

(39)   CLÁSICU [S2_P37_MIE]
El	**llibru**	**clásicu**	suel	ser	más
the.M.SG	book-THV	classic-THV	usually-PRS.3SG	be-INF	more

caro
expensive-THV

'The classic book is usually more expensive'

(40)   PEQUEÑA [S2_P47_LLNG]
La	**moneda**	**pequeño**	ye	**incómoda**
the-F.SG	coin-THV	small-THV	be-PRS.3SG	awkward-THV

'Small coins are awkward'

The underlying characteristics across the data are that nominalized adjectives contain some target agreement other than the mass noun itself. Furthermore, in this case the noun is not overtly present, and the adjective is contained in an entirely different clause from the overt noun in which it supposedly agrees with in mass. I argue that the *-o* form adjective can appear with article *lo* because agreement is established with some abstract idea and not the noun itself.

Clitics can also appear as *-o* forms when their referent is interpreted as mass. Conversely, they can also agree in gender in the correct contexts. This suggests clitic agreement can reach across clauses and establish gender or *-o* form agreement based on the value possessed by the referent that was previously established in the discourse.

Also present in the data, the way gender and *-o* form agreement manifests itself can vary from speaker to speaker. There are clear cases that some speakers rely more on whether the noun is mass or count. For these speakers their mental grammar would dictate *-o* form or gender agreement morphology on the adjective in the contexts that are appropriate for them. For other speakers, specificity can supersede the mass-count value of a noun, and instead determine the adjective agreement morphology that surfaces.

The data I have included in this section indicate these characteristics are one clear contribution to the field because some elicited examples favor previous prescriptive and descriptive analyses, and others expand beyond these examples to include additional cases of both the gender and *-o* form agreement of Asturian adjectives.

Additionally, that an *-o* form adjective can modify a count noun would be unexpected on its own and therefore it poses a problem for the traditional argument that the *-o* morpheme is mass neuter, or even just mass agreement. The reality is that the data show that other factors, in some cases, are more relevant for the types of agreement patterns attested for adjectives, and this

argument is further strengthened by the *-o* form adjective agreement of pancake sentences. This description must now be formalized in a way that allows for a theoretical contribution to be made in §4.3.

4.3. Deriving Asturian Adjectives in DM:

There are very few Asturian-centered theoretical descriptions of so-called mass neuter, but those that exist have aimed to explain adjective agreement patterns from the perspective of different frameworks. I will briefly outline a few of these studies to more clearly show how my system moves the field forward in a theoretical manner.

A more generative account like Camblor Portilla and Wood Bowden (2005) explains post-nominal *-o* form adjectives through noun movement to a higher functional phrase and subsequent noun-adjective feature checking with the adjective. They treat *-o* form adjectives as showing full agreement because a weak [MASS] feature on the noun is activated on the adjective during the checking process.

Noun movement and feature checking were also relevant for González Escribano (2012) but the *-o* form adjective was a matter specifically left to number features and not gender proper. Namely, the incompatibility of number with the countless nature of mass nouns creates a null number feature that resides within a number phrase acting as the subject of post-modifiers. Under this analysis post-nominal adjectives do not agree with a noun's gender, but rather its number features, and the null number feature therefore leads to a post-nominal *-o* form.

Faber (2015), through Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar, and Carretero García (2017), under Lexical-Functional Grammar, have a similar analysis that involves the distinction between CONCORD and INDEX. Grammatical agreement is driven by CONCORD—such gender agreement—while referential agreement is taken care of by INDEX, thus accounting for the semantically

salient mass interpretation of uncountable nouns. Both authors explain the post-nominal *-o*

form/pre-nominal gender agreement split via the stipulation that pre-nominal agreement is a

product of CONCORD while post-nominal agreement happens via INDEX. A [±COUNTABILITY]

feature is a subcategory of INDEX and the post-nominal *-o* form adjective, which agrees in INDEX

and not CONCORD, is then licensed by a [-COUNTABILITY] feature found on the mass noun.

The above summary of work details a few different theoretical treatments of Asturian *-o* form

adjectives and their agreement patterns. Their analyses cleanly account for the distribution of

adjective agreement morphology—in the traditional *mass neuter* sense—in that the features that

are central to their arguments are the noun's mass interpretation or uncountability. While the

previous literature is on the right track in that the noun's interpretation is relevant in some

contexts, and they provide explanations for post-nominal *-o* form adjective agreement with a

mass noun, they are unable to account for other semantic interpretations that generate *-o* forms in

Asturian. Namely, it is unclear how *llibru* in (41) and *bicicleta* in *La bicicleta ye duro* in (42),

repeated from (28) and (34), respectively, could be captured by the above systems as the both

nominal referents are count nouns, which should generate gender agreement.

(41)　CLÁSICO [S2_P1_XI]

El	**llibru**	**clásico**	ye	lo	meyor
the.M.SG	book-THV	classic-THV	be-PRS.3SG	the.N.SG	best

que	tien	la	literatura	mundial.
that	have-PRS.3SG	the-F.SG	literature-THV	world-Ø

'Classic books are the best that world literature has'

(42)   [S2_P12_LLNG]
       La bicicleta ye dura:
       Cuesta trabayu pedaliar por cómo ta la bici.
       'It takes work to pedal because of the state of the bike'

       La bicicleta ye duro:
       Ye un deporte duru.
       'It's a tough sport'

Over the remainder of this chapter, I intend to build on this previous work and advance the theoretical conversation in the following way. Namely, I aim to present a unified system that derives *-o* form adjective agreement not only in the contexts of mass noun agreement, but also in contexts where other forms of semantic agreement hold. With this analysis I also aim to account for the different contexts in which *-o* form adjectives appear under one overarching system—not by relying solely on the mass value of the noun[87].

4.3.1. A Brief Summary of Asturian Agreement

The data in §4.2 has shown that adjective agreement in Asturian can be thought of via two different operations. Gender-agreeing adjectives fall into the grammatical category insofar that they agree with gender and number features, while *-o* form adjectives appear under more semantic means of agreement, such as mass or generic interpretations.

Some Asturian speakers rely on the mass interpretation of a noun, while other speakers are more partial to the generic interpretation of the entire phrase. Additionally, speakers that have productive or semi-productive *-o* form adjectives in their mental grammar also have intuitions about when noun-adjective gender agreement holds. For speakers that do not possess *-o* form agreement patterns in their grammar may interpret mass or genericity, but their morphological system only formally indicates gender agreement. Despite these differences among speakers,

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[87] The overall goal here is to theoretically show how the noun's interpretation may be relevant for agreement in some cases, but also account for more nuanced agreement patterns like pancake sentences.

their adjective agreement patterns, which are supported by the data, still fall into either the

grammatical (via more syntactic operations) or semantic category of agreement.

To briefly review the facts, the noun *bollu 'roll'* and *duru 'hard'* show gender agreement in

example (43). Additionally, because the noun is not mass and the phrase is not interpreted as

generic, it follows that the *-o* form adjective is ruled out in this context.

(43) DURU [S2_P5_XI]

Distime	el	**bollu**	**duru**,	y
give-PST.2SG=DAT.1SG	the.M.SG	roll-THV	hard-THV	and

había	3	que	yeren	blandos
there.be-IPFV.IMPS	3	that	be-IPFV.3PL	soft-THV-PL

'You gave me the hard roll, and there were 3 that were soft'

Two more interesting patterns in Asturian, however, are when the mass interpretation of the

noun or the generic interpretation of the phrase act as the agreement controllers. I consider these

cases, of which I will show three, to be examples of semantic agreement. The mass-induced *-o*

form adjective *moyao 'wet'*, in (44), agrees in mass and not in feminine gender with the noun

madera 'wood', in spite of the fact that the most salient interpretation is one leading to an

individual reading, in which case gender agreement would ensure.

(44) MOYAO [S2_P7_LENT]

Pon	a	secar	esa	**madera**	**moyao**
put-IMP.2SG	to	dry-INF	DEM-THV	wood-THV	wet-THV

'Put that wet wood out to dry'

In the second case, the generic interpretation of the phrase in (45) results in the appearance of

the *-o* form adjectives *podrecío 'rotten'* and *malo 'bad'*. In generic contexts adjectives do not

agree with the noun because specificity is not a feature of nouns. Agreement is instead

established with the specificity value found on D°.

(45) **PODRECÍO** [S2_P34_LLNG]

Un	**aceite**	**podrecío**	ye	**malo**	pa
a.M.SG	oil-THV	rotten-THV	be-PRS.3SG	bad-THV	for

la	salú.
the-F.SG	health-Ø

'A rotten oil is bad for health'

The inverse of the generic interpretation in (45) is the specific interpretation in (46) below, and in this case we see gender agreement between the noun and adjective. Being that *aceite 'oil'* is a mass noun it would be expected that *podrecíu 'rotten'* appear instead as an *-o* form[88]. I posit that the specific interpretation of the phrase blocks this possibility and a gender-agreeing form appears for reasons that I will make explicitly clear in §4.3.3.

(46) **PODRECÍU** [S2_P4_UV]

Un	**aceite**	**podrecíu**	como'l	que
a.M.SG	oil-THV	rotten-THV	like.the.M.SG	that

que	nos	sirvieron	ayer
that	DAT.1PL	serve-PST.3PL	yesterday-Ø

dionos	cagalera	a	tolos	que
give-PST.3SG=DAT.1PL	the.shits-THV	DOM	all.the-M-PL	that

tábemos	comiendo	nel	restaurante.
be-IPFV.1PL	eat-GER	in.the.M.SG	restaurant-THV

'A rotten oil like the one they served us yesterday gave all of us that were eating in the restaurant the shits'

Having briefly reviewed the agreement characteristics found in the data, I turn to some theoretical questions that have thus far been left open. This will allow me to apply the necessary theory couched within my proposal of how Asturian adjective agreement functions in §4.3.3.

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[88] I note that this assumption is strengthened by other *-o* form examples provided by Participant 4 on their survey responses. In other words, this participant has demonstrated that these forms are accounted for in their mental grammar, yet they chose gender agreement in this context despite the mass noun that is being modified.

Upon doing so, I will apply my system to concrete examples of the grammatical and semantic agreement found in Asturian adjectives.

4.3.2. *Some Theoretical Background*

In this section I will show how the syntactic position of adjectives and agreement processes are an open theoretical question, especially in frameworks like Minimalism and Distributed Morphology. Namely, there is no set way to account for how adjectives are positioned in the syntax with respect to the noun. Nor is there a consensus on how an adjective acquires the necessary features to explain agreement morphology.

There have been several different proposals for how adjectives should be projected in the syntax so that linear order can be explained respective to the noun. One such approach (Bosque & Picallo, 1996; following observations made by Chomsky, 1993; Giusti, 1992 and Kayne 1994) proposes that adjectives are projected in specifiers. Additionally, the word order in (47) is accounted for through movement operations of the noun, the classificatory adjective (C-adj), and the thematic adjective (Th-adj), while the qualitative adjective (Q-adj) remains in situ.
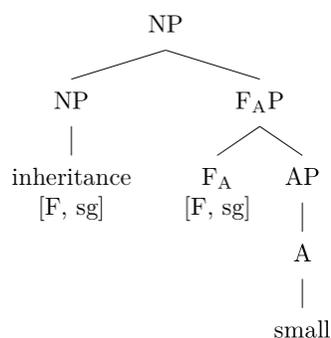
(47) adapted from Bosque & Picallo (1996: 376)

una	guerra$_N$	religiosa$_{C\text{-}ADJ}$	fratricida$_{TH\text{-}ADJ}$	devastadora$_{Q\text{-}ADJ}$
a-F.SG	war-F.SG	religious-F.SG	fratricidal-F.SG	devastating-F.SG

'a devastating fratricidal religious war'

The word order in (47) is obtained mainly through the movement of the noun (see (48)) which begins at the lowest t_i[89]. Then noun overtly raises successively via head movement to each t_i position until it ultimately, and obligatorily, reaches a Kase Phrase, KP, to check its case, gender,
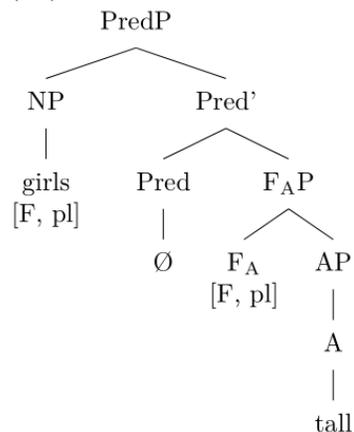
---

[89] I have bolded each t_i landing site for clarification.

and number. The *C-adj religiosa 'religious'* and the Th-adj *fratricida 'fratricidal'* then raise

together while the Q-adj *devastadora 'devastating'* remains below in situ.

(48) Abstract Structure (adapted from Bosque & Picallo, 1996: 374)

$[_{DP} [_{D}] [_{KP} [_{K} N_i] [_{AGRP} [_{SPEC}] [_{AGRP} [_{AGR°} (t_i)] [_{AGRP} [_{Q-AP}] [_{AGRP} [_{AGR} (t_i)] [_{NP} [_{TH-AP}] [_{NP} [_{N} (t_i)] [_{NP} [_{C-AP}]$

$[_{NP} [_{N} t_i]]]]]]]]]]]]$

Adjectives have also been analyzed as being generated in specifiers of functional heads with a

rigid and universal order (Cinque, 2010). Under this approach word order is attained either by no

movement at all, by phrasal movement of the NP alone, or by so-called roll-up movement where

the NP also pied-pipes the adjective that it passes over as it raises.

These movement variants are borne out of the need to describe the position of attributive

adjectives relative to the noun in a way that cross-linguistically accounts for order differences

summarized in example (49) below, where of the four patterns, (49c) is not purported to exist in

any language (Cinque, 2009: 166; Cinque, 2010: 38; Hetzron, 1978; Plank, 2006; Sproat & Shih,

1991).

(49)   Attributive Adjective Order adapted from Cinque (2010: 38; 2009: 166)
   a. $A_{SIZE} > A_{COLOR} > A_{NATIONALITY} > N$ *[English, Chinese, Serbo-Croatian, ...]*
   b. $*A_{NATIONALITY} > A_{COLOR} > A_{SIZE} > N$ *0*
   c. $N > A_{SIZE} > A_{COLOR} > A_{NATIONALITY}$ *[Welsh, Irish, Maltese, ...]*
   d. $N > A_{NATIONALITY} > A_{COLOR} > A_{SIZE}$ *[Indonesian, Yoruba, ...]*

How the above orders are accounted for cross-linguistically can be summarized by the bracket

notation in (50), where the NP remains in-situ to produce the order in (49a), or conversely, it

raises to the highest position to obtain the order in (49c). Yet a third option is available in which

the NP raises to the top past each adjective, pied-piping the AP that was immediately dominating

it in the process, thus deriving the order in (49d) which is also the canonical order in Spanish (Cinque, 2010: 40).

(50) Abstract Structure (adapted from Cinque, 2010: 41)

$[_{AGR_wP}$ $[t_i$ $]$ $[_{AGR_w'}$ $[_{AGR_w}$ $]$ $[_{WP}$ $[AP_{size}$ $]$ $[_W$ $[_W$ $]$ $[_{AGR_xP}$ $[t_i$ $]$ $[_{AGR_x'}$ $[_{AGR_x}$ $]$ $[_{XP}$ $[AP_{color}$ $]$ $[_{X'}$ $[_X$ $]$ $[_{AGR_yP}$ $[t_i$ $]$

$[_{AGR_y'}$ $[_{AGR_y}$ $]$ $[_{YP}$ $[AP_{nationality}$ $]$ $[_{Y'}$ $[_Y$ $]$ $[NP$ $]]]]]]]]]]]]]]$

It is also argued that different semantic interpretations are anchored to adjectives in pre- versus post-nominal position (Cinque, 2010: 33). Direct modification adjectives, also referred to as attributive adjectives, are projected lower, they are closer to the noun so as to *directly* modify it and they are not possible as predicates. Indirect modification adjectives, however, are projected higher up in the structure, and can be found in predicative positions due to their reduced relative clause (RC) nature (see Table 10).

The general premise of the author is that in Romance a post-nominal adjective could ambiguously be interpreted as specific or non-specific, while in pre-nominal position, the adjective is unambiguously specific, and the movement as summarized above would alter the order of the noun respective to the direct and indirect modification adjectives (Cinque, 2010: 5-6).

Indirect (reduced RC) modification	Direct modification
[Det. [stage-level (or individual-level)	[individual-level NP]]]
[Det. [specificity- or non-specificity-inducing	[specificity-inducing NP]]]
…	…
further away from N	closer to N
not rigidly ordered	rigidly ordered
possible in predicate position	not possible in predicate position

Table 10 - Types of Modification (adapted from Cinque (2010: 33)

The third and final option that I will consider regarding adjective position argues that APs are NP adjuncts (Baker, 2008). These APs are also dominated by a functional adjective phrase (F_AP)

that contains a probe for the adjective's agreement features. This F_AP is then projected as an NP adjunct, as demonstrated with the attributive adjective in (51), or it is instead projected as the complement of the PredP, as shown with the predicative adjective in (52).

(51) Attributive Structure (52) Predicative Structure

(adapted from Baker, 2008: 45, 50)

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Baker's (2008) work is how he captures agreement. He modifies the traditional analysis of Agree (Chomsky, 2000, 2001), which can be briefly described as a process in which a c-commanding probe enters an agree relation with a relevant goal it its c-command domain—provided that there is no intervening element that would disrupt the probe from reaching its goal.

This conceptualization of Agree is problematic for noun-adjective agreement since F does not c-command the NP goal where it values its gender and number features. Baker gets around this by proposing that Agree can be bi-directional, thus allowing the F_AP head to probe downward, and after finding nothing below it to agree with, it then probes upward and finds the features on the NP and agrees with it in number and gender (Baker, 2008: 44-48). However, other literature evidences the lack of consensus in the field about how we should analyze agreement cross-linguistically.

In Zazaki, an Iranian language, the term *ezafe* refers to a morpheme that agrees with different elements within the DP, particularly with the noun (Toosarvandani & van Urk, 2012). Though the authors also assume bi-directional Agree, as did Baker (2008), the notable aspect of their work is the manner in which they assume Agree to function in Zazaki. In (53), the *ezafe* cannot value case or φ-features on the adjective, as adjectives do not possess these features. Agreement[90] is then explained by the ezafe probing upward to find the φ-features on the N and case features on the D that are above it.

(53) *ezafe* concord on adjectives

DP

D
[case : **val**]

NP

N
[φ: **val**]

NP

EzP

NP
⟨N⟩

Ez
φ:
case:

AP
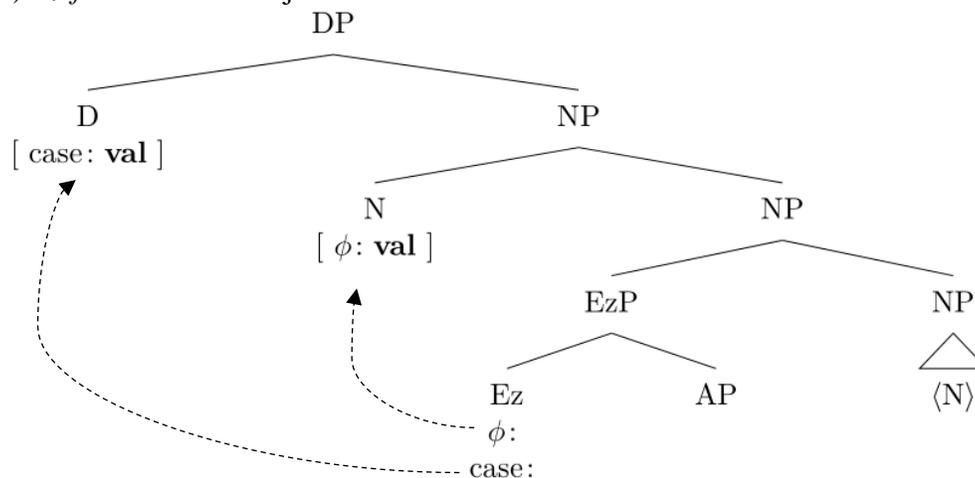
(adapted from Toosarvandani & van Urk, 2012: 7)

The analyses above from Baker (2008) and Toosarvandani and van Urk (2012) rely on downward probing to be unsuccessful so that upward probing can occur for the correct valuation of features. Though largely similar in basic syntactic structure compared to most work, other approaches treat agreement as a process of collecting features through percolation down from different locations that are higher up in the structure and the copying of features onto agreement-

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[90] Another term used in the literature is nominal concord, where elements that agree with different features of the noun are said to possess concord markers (Norris, 2014). For simplification, and consistency with my other work contained here, I will refer to concord as agreement and concord markers as agreement markers.

bearing heads like the post-syntactically inserted Agree (Agr°) node (see Embick, 1997; Kramer, 2010; Norris, 2012; 2014; Noyer, 1997; and references therein).

In other applications, probes and targets have been argued to be relativizable in languages like Kaqchikel[91] to explain why either the subject or object can trigger agreement on the transitive verb in Agent-Focus structures (see Preminger's (2014) seminal work and references therein[92]) like the ones in (54). Here, both (54a) and (54b) have the same overt second person singular morpheme on the verb despite the fact that the subject in (54b) is third person singular. Furthermore, upon comparing the third person examples in (54c) and (54d) there is a lack of number agreement as the morpheme that surfaces on the verb in (54d) is third person plural while the subject is third person singular.

(54)   Kaqchikel Agent-Focus Constructions (Preminger, 2014: 40)
a. ja   rat   x-**at/*Ø**-ax-an   ri   achin
    FOC   you(SG)   COM-**2SG/*3SG.ABS**-hear-AF   the   man
    'It was you(SG) that heard the man.'

b. ja   ri   achin   x-**at/*Ø**-ax-an   rat
    FOC   the   man   COM-**2SG/*3SG.ABS**-hear-AF you(SG)
    'It was the man that heard you(SG).'

c. ja   rje'   x-**e/*Ø**-tz'et-ö   rja'
    FOC   them   COM-**3PL/*3SG.ABS**-see-AF   him
    'It was them who saw him.'

d. ja   rja'   x-**e/*Ø**-tz'et-ö   rje'
    FOC   him   COM-**3PL/*3SG.ABS**-see-AF   them
    'It was him who saw them.'

Preminger's flavor of Agree is slightly different from the other analyses mentioned above for two main reasons. The first reason is that through relativized probing the morphological

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[91] Kaqchikel is a Kichean language spoken in Guatemala that ultimately forms part of the Mayan language family.

[92] Namely, the system in his book adapts *omnivorous agreement*, *à la* Nevins (2011), and *Relativized Minimality*, *à la* Rizzi (1990).

mismatches in (54b) and (54d) are summarized by the following. In (54b) a probe is specified to search for a [participant] feature that denotes second person pronouns[93]. In (54d), the probe instead searches for a [plural] feature. In both cases, because the subject does not have these features the probe can skip over them to find the agreement target that does have the features that have been specified (Preminger, 2014: 40-41).

As for the second reason, the Kaqchikel examples in (54) are all grammatical despite the seemingly incorrect morphological markers on the verb. This plays into the main idea in Preminger's proposal that (54b) and (54d) are instances of *failed agreement*, as the incorrect agreement morphology on the verb does not crash the derivation (in a formal linguistic sense) and the derivation is therefore permitted to follow through to the output phrases.

The main point that I wish to reiterate after undertaking the above summary of adjective structure and agreement is the following. It does not appear that any one version of Agree can account for the cross-linguistic agreement pattern shown in previous studies, and this begs the question of which of the theoretical approaches can be applied to Asturian *-o* forms. In §4.3.3, I intend to take full advantage of this lack of theoretical consensus on adjective position and agreement and I aim to indicate which aspects of these previous analyses I will involve in my proposed system of Asturian adjective agreement. Namely, adjectives probe upward, and probes can be relativized to search for certain features. These two tenets allow for an account of noun-adjective agreement in Asturian.

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[93] The process functions via a feature geometry hierarchy where [PERSON] contains a [participant] feature responsible for differentiating first and second person pronouns from third person pronouns. Because [participant] supersedes the [author] feature that differentiates first from second person pronouns, the successful probe-goal for the [participant] feature blocks the necessary values that would spell out first or third person. This functions the same with the privative [plural] feature under [NUMBER] to differentiate between singular and plural (Preminger, 2014: 45-46; borrowing from Harley and Ritter, 2002 and McGinnis, 2005).

4.3.3.   Towards a Theoretical Description of Asturian -o Form Adjectives

I now formalize the characteristics borne out in the Asturian data that *-o* forms appear under both generic and mass interpretations, while specific and count interpretations produce gender agreement between the noun and adjective. In doing so I will also account for the structural differences between attributive and predicative adjectives in an application of the assumptions below.

Attributive adjectives are NP adjuncts and pre-nominal attributive *a*Ps adjoin to the left of *n*, while post-nominal attributive *a*Ps adjoin to the right (cf. Baker, 2008). Predicative adjectives with a pre-verbal DP subject are projected in a canonical small clause (SC) while an inverse SC accounts for post-verbal DP subject position (cf. Moro, 1997). The *a*P under a DM approach, as with nouns, contains an uncategorized root that is linearized in relation to some head, in this case an adjectivizing *a* head (see Oltra-Massuet & Arregi, 2005 for a basic application). Finally, in place of the post-syntactic insertion of an Agr° node under some analyses (see Embick, 1997; Kramer, 2010; Norris, 2014; 2012), I maintain the use of a theme node as the locus of theme vowel spell out as I did with noun derivation (cf. §3.4.4).

The order of operations within the DP I assume to take place in a specific order. First the *n*P is fully formed and then the *a*P adjoins to it with a dominating *n*P above. Within the *a*P, the *a* head and root are then linearized. After these syntactic operations within the *a*P the theme node is inserted. However, feature probing and valuation, and theme vowel spell out happen later because the DP must first adjoin to the *n*P-*a*P structure (applying Toosarvandani & van Urk, 2012).

Considering the above assumptions, a DP containing a noun and post-nominal adjective is

represented below in (55) for expository purposes, but I shall present additional structures with

concrete examples towards the end of this section.

(55) Abstract Structural Representation of the DP

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{D}° \qquad \qquad n\text{P} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
n\text{P} \qquad \qquad a\text{P} \\
\diagup \diagdown \qquad \qquad \mid \\
\sqrt{\text{ROOT}} \ldots \text{Th} \qquad a \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\sqrt{\text{ROOT}} \qquad a \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
a \qquad \text{Th}
\end{array}
$$
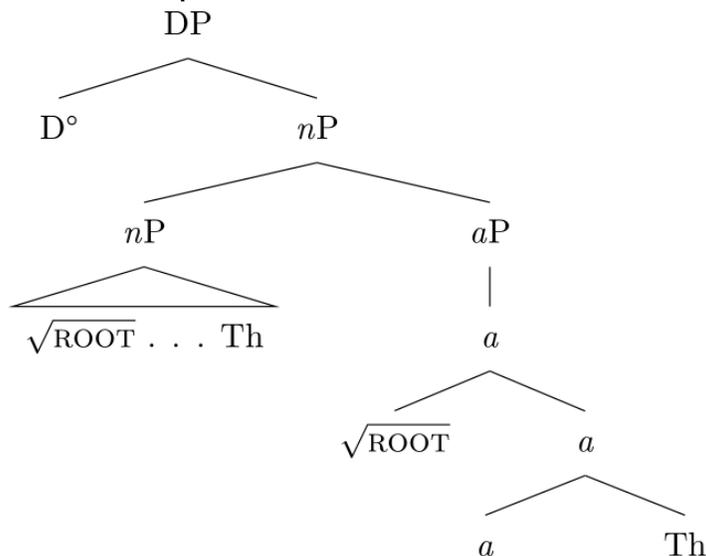
Basic structural matters aside, I now transition to the features within my system. First, the

data from §4.2 support a link between specificity and gender while genericity and gender share

no such link. Therefore, I explicitly show in Figure 8 that Asturian adjectives are gender-

agreeing under specific readings[94].

[+SPECIFIC]   [-SPECIFIC]

|
↓

[±FEM]
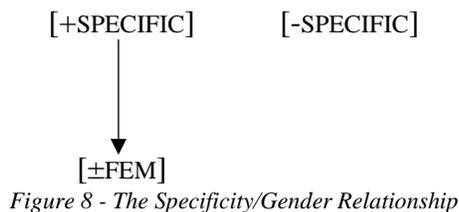
Figure 8 - The Specificity/Gender Relationship

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[94] To strengthen this argument, though pre-nominal adjectives are not the focus of this dissertation, this relationship
between specificity and gender would also explain why only gender agreement is attested in Asturian pre-nominal
adjectives. Additionally, it has also been independently motivated that the pre-nominal position of adjectives
generally entails a specific interpretation in Romance (see Cinque, 2010 for discussion). Finally, I considered a
similar relation between pre-position and specificity under a completely different framework where a Degree Phrase
allowed for adjective movement (see Burner, 2015; 2016).

On the other hand, genericity and mass are both related in that they are unspecified. Genericity is synonymous with an unspecified referent while mass is synonymous with unspecified quantity (see Figure 9). Furthermore, genericity is linked to [-(SPEC)IFICITY], which I will show to be found on D°, and mass is obviously linked to [+MASS][95], which is located on the noun. But what of the other relevant features in Asturian agreement and how do they map onto the syntactic structure?

unspecified

generic phrase
readings

mass noun
interpretations

[-SPEC]

[+MASS]

Figure 9 - The Genericity/Mass/Unspecified Relationship
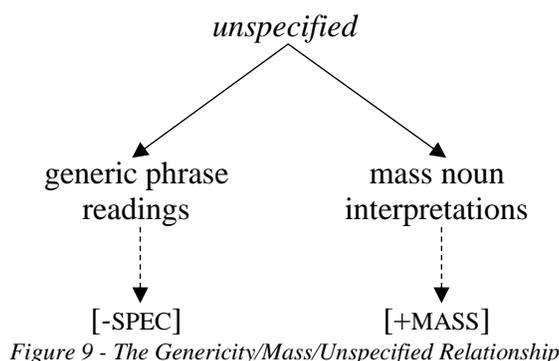
With the support of the data, I argue that *a* is a probing head with two types of probes that are relativized to search our specific features (Preminger, 2014). Grammatical agreement, such as gender, is a product of phi feature probing, while semantic agreement, like genericity and mass, surfaces via an unspecified probe that looks for [-SPEC] or mass. These probe types, as well as the assumptions for how D° obtains gender features, are clarified in Figure 10 below.

---

[95] Because a mass is a feature that is not inherent to adjectives and must instead be interpreted through an agree relation with the noun, mass is more likely expressed as [*i*MASS]. However, to simplify the mechanisms involved here I will assume this also be expressible with [+MASS].

PROBE	DESCRIPTION
D° [phi]	• Probes downward (Chomsky, 2000, 2001) • Must be valued as [+FEM] or [-FEM] • Copies it's features from the noun
a [*u*UNSPEC]	• Probes upward (Baker, 2008) • Must be valued as [UNSPEC] • Finds [+MASS] from the *n*P that directly c-commands the adjective, otherwise [-SPEC] from D°
a [phi]	• Probes upward (Baker, 2008) • Must be valued as [+FEM] or [-FEM] • Copies it's features from the *n*P that directly c-commands the adjective

caveat: pre-nominal adjectives only find D° upon looking up, and therefore inherit [±FEM] from it

Figure 10 - Probes and Targets

Figure 10 can therefore be summarized as follows. Asturian adjective agreement is ultimately driven by the work of two *a* probes: [phi] values *a* as [±FEM] while [*u*UNSPEC] values *a* as [UNSPEC], which is an umbrella term to include both generic readings and mass nouns. In other words, [phi] yields the most normal, expected scenario—gender agreement—and [*u*UNSPEC] accounts for the exceptional default case in which we see a lack of gender agreement under mass or genericity. Below I include an abstract representation of these probes and targets, as well as the specific order in which they can occur.

At this stage the noun has been fully derived and the gender and mass features have percolated up to the mother *n*P (see §3.4.4, example (64)). The *a*P then adjoins, its nodes are linearized, and the theme node is inserted, but no features are yet valued. The DP merges with the *n*P, and now feature probing and checking begin across the entire DP, in (56).

(56) Abstract Feature Probing
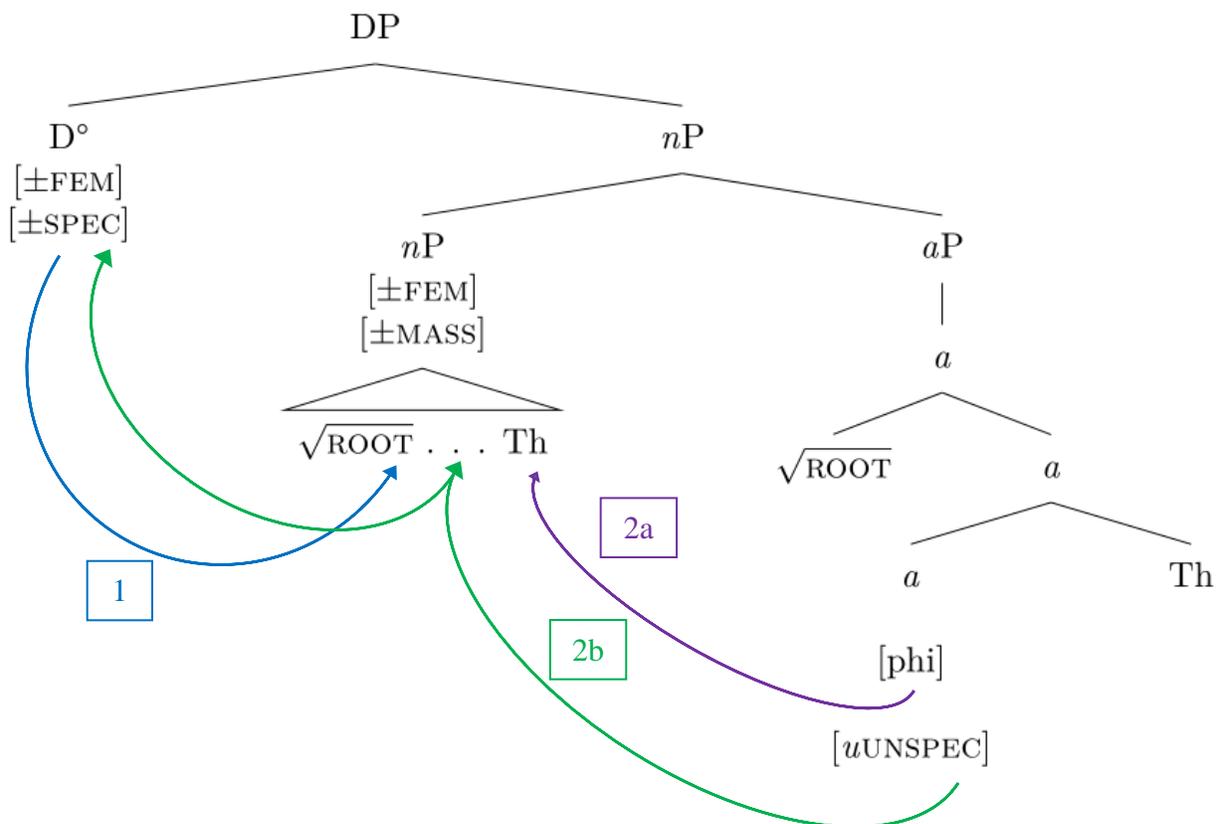
First, D° probes down to the noun and copies the gender features that it finds there. Following

this the second step has two different possibilities[96]. If the adjective is to agree in gender the

[phi] probe will search up and find the [±FEM] feature that percolated up to the *n*P and *a* will be

valued as either [+FEM] or [-FEM]. Not depicted here is the pre-nominal adjective that agrees in

gender under the same probe (see example (59) below for application). If instead the adjective

appears as an *-o* form, one of two things will happen.

Either the [*u*UNSPEC] probe first locates a [+MASS] feature on the *n*P and *a* is assigned an

[UNSPEC] value, accounting for *-o* form adjective agreement of a mass noun. The second of the

two scenarios would be if the noun were count, but there is an *-o* form adjective under a generic

---

[96] Here I use 2a and 2b to show that either option would be the second step after determiner-noun agreement, not to show that one or the other happens first.

interpretation of the DP. [*u*UNSPEC] would encounter [-MASS] on the *n*P, but it cannot be valued under this circumstance (cf. Figure 10). To resolve this [*u*UNSPEC] can pass over the noun that does not contain compatible features (applying Preminger, 2014) to continue probing upward to D°, where it ultimately finds [-SPEC]and as a result *a* is [UNSPEC].

What we gain by assuming the above probing characteristics is the following. Standard cases of gender agreement surface in an unproblematic manner and in line with most literature. Asturian *-o* forms are also generated according to the data, as mass and genericity are unified under the same umbrella, *unspecified*. Therefore, the correct *-o* form adjective morphology appears within one system regardless of how much more salient mass versus genericity, or vice versa, is for some speakers. The only matter we now have left to consider is the insertion of adjective theme vowels.

Like with nominal derivation (see chapter three, §3.4.4) I also assume Late Insertion for the spell out of adjective theme vowels. At this stage the feature probing depicted in example (56) has taken place and the *a* head has received the appropriate feature, either [+FEM], [-FEM] or [UNSPEC]. Under the context of these features the appropriate theme vowel is then spelled out onto the theme node, in (57).

[+FEM] is spelled out as *-a*, in (57a), which accounts for most feminine adjectives, while [-FEM] is spelled out as *-u*, in (57b), explaining most masculine adjectives[97]. Finally, (57c) shows that [UNSPEC] is spelled out as *-o* whether via mass or genericity, which follows my account thus far.

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[97] This is a basic approach in order to account for the general tendencies that are relevant for gender versus *-o* form agreement in Asturian because it does not include a description of adjectives ending in *-e* or a consonant. Nor does it address adjectives like *socialista 'socialist'* or *egoísta 'selfish'* that always end in *-a*. One way to address this is to posit that *-ista* is a lexicalized derivative morpheme that would prevent **socialisto* or **egoísto* from occurring. However, I leave these matters aside to mainly focus on the juxtaposition between theme vowels *-a*, *-u* and *-o*.

(57)   Adjective Theme Vowels
  a. [+FEM] ↔ *-a*
  b. [-FEM] ↔ *-u*
  c. [UNSPEC] ↔ *-o*

As an interim summary I have shown thus far that Asturian *-o* form agreement appears under mass interpretations of the noun or generic interpretations of the DP, and that gender agreement is linked to specific DP interpretations and count nouns. Following previous work, the features relevant to these contexts are accessed through a process of the *a* head's upward relativized probing that triggers gender or *unspecified* features on *a*, which influence the final vowel that is inserted on the theme node.

Having laid this foundation, I will spend the rest of this section applying my proposal to concrete examples. As a general note, the examples below reflect the derivational stage of adjectives at the time of probing up for features. I will include either [±FEM] or [USPEC] under the *a*P to explicitly show the features valued by the different *a* probes while at the same time simplifying the syntactic structure.

In (58) the adjective *podreciu 'rotten'* that agrees in gender with the mass noun *aceite 'oil'* is an example of post-nominal gender agreement. This pattern is a product of the *a* [phi] probe agreeing with the [-FEM] gender feature on the *n*P, spelling out *-u* on the adjective.

(58) **un aceite podreciu** ye peligrosu [S2_P47_LLNG]
   'A rotten oil is dangerous'

$$DP$$

- D°
  un
  [-FEM]
  [-SPEC]
- nP
  - nP
    [-FEM]
    [+MASS]
    - $\sqrt{\text{ACEIT}} \ldots \text{-}e$
  - aP
    [-FEM]
    - $\sqrt{\text{PODRECI(D)}} \ldots \text{-}u$
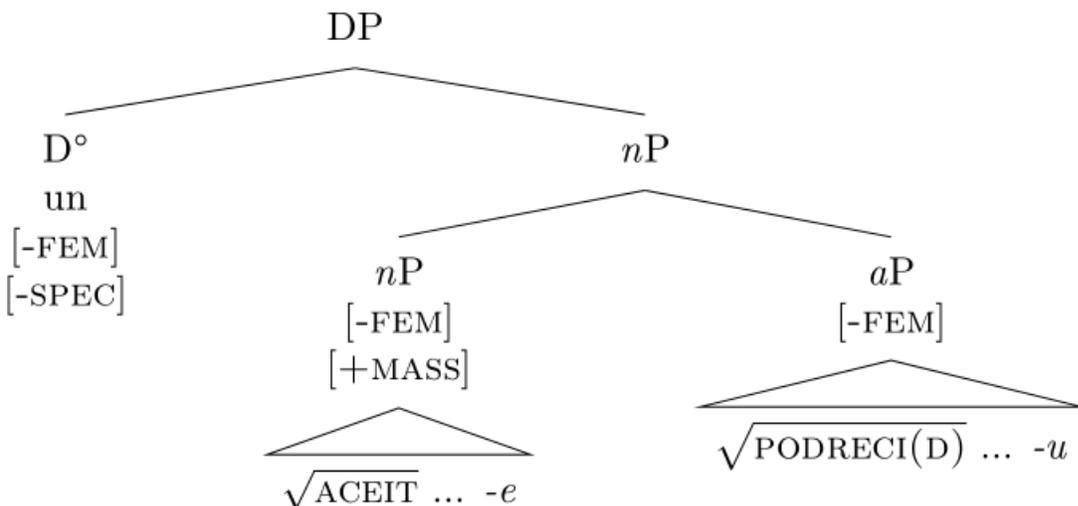
Example (59) shows how my analysis also accounts for pre-nominal adjectives, like *duru*

'hard'. Here when *a* probes upward the noun is below it and the [phi] probe can only value [-

FEM] on D°, explaining the insertion of *-u* onto the adjective.

(58) and (59) are normal cases where gender agreement holds, but foreshadowing ahead the

post-nominal adjective, *ferruñoso 'rusty'*, is one of the more interesting agreement patterns that

will explain below with another example.

(59) **[el] duru fierro** ferruñoso (Arias Cabal, 1999)
   '[the] rusty iron material that's hard'

$$DP$$

- D°
  el
  [-FEM]
  [+SPEC]
- nP
  - aP
    [-FEM]
    - $\sqrt{\text{DUR}} \ldots \text{-}u$
  - nP
    - nP
      [-FEM]
      [+MASS]
      - $\sqrt{\text{FIERR}} \ldots \text{-}o$
    - aP
      [UNSPEC]
      - $\sqrt{\text{FERRUÑOS}} \ldots \text{-}o$
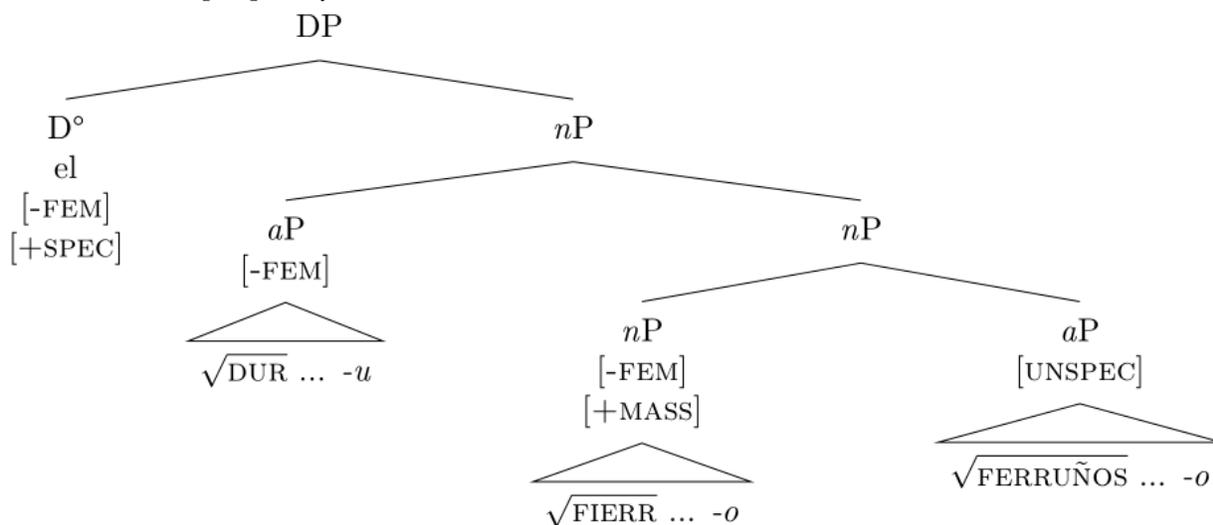
(60) demonstrates a post-nominal *-o* form adjective, in this case *moyao 'wet'*, that agrees with a mass noun, *madera 'wood'*. The [*u*UNSPEC] probe that *a* sends up searches out the [+MASS] on the *n*P, explaining both the [UNSPEC] feature on *a* that spells out as *-o* and why the adjective appears as an *-o* form within a specific DP. Essentially, the mass interpretation of the noun is the target of agreement.

(60) pon a secar **esa madera moyado** [S2_P7_LENT]
   'Put that wet wood out to dry'
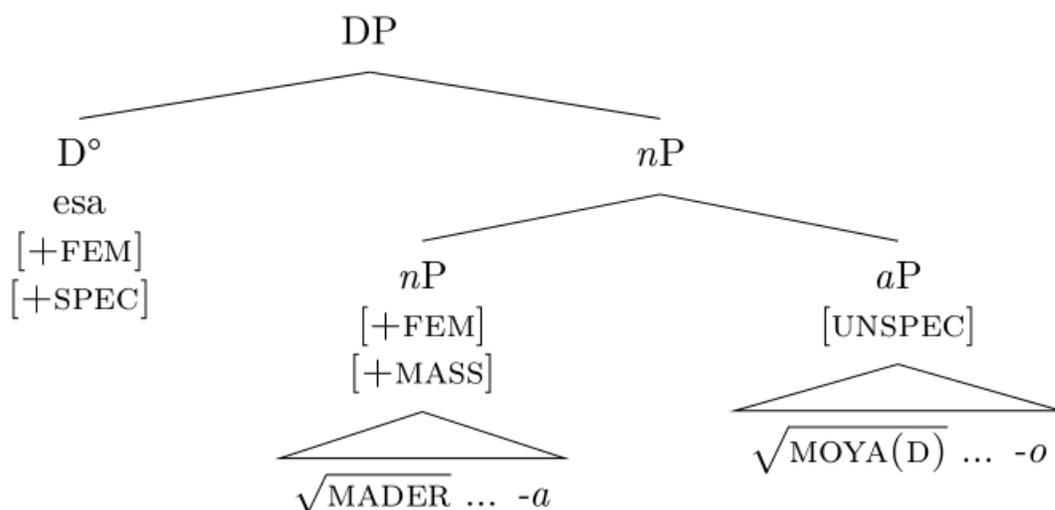
To further highlight the intricacies of the [*u*UNSPEC] probe, (61) includes the post-nominal *-o* form adjective *clásico 'classic'*, but the noun *llibru 'book'* is masculine count. I argue that the [UNSPEC] feature assigned to *a* in this case comes from the [-SPEC] feature found on D°. When [*u*UNSPEC] probes up to the noun it finds [-MASS] which cannot value the probe. For this reason, it must continue up to D° where the [-SPEC] feature is to avoid a crash.

(61) **el llibru clásico** ye lo meyor que tiene la literatura mundial [S2_P1_XI]
   'Classic books are the best that world literature has'
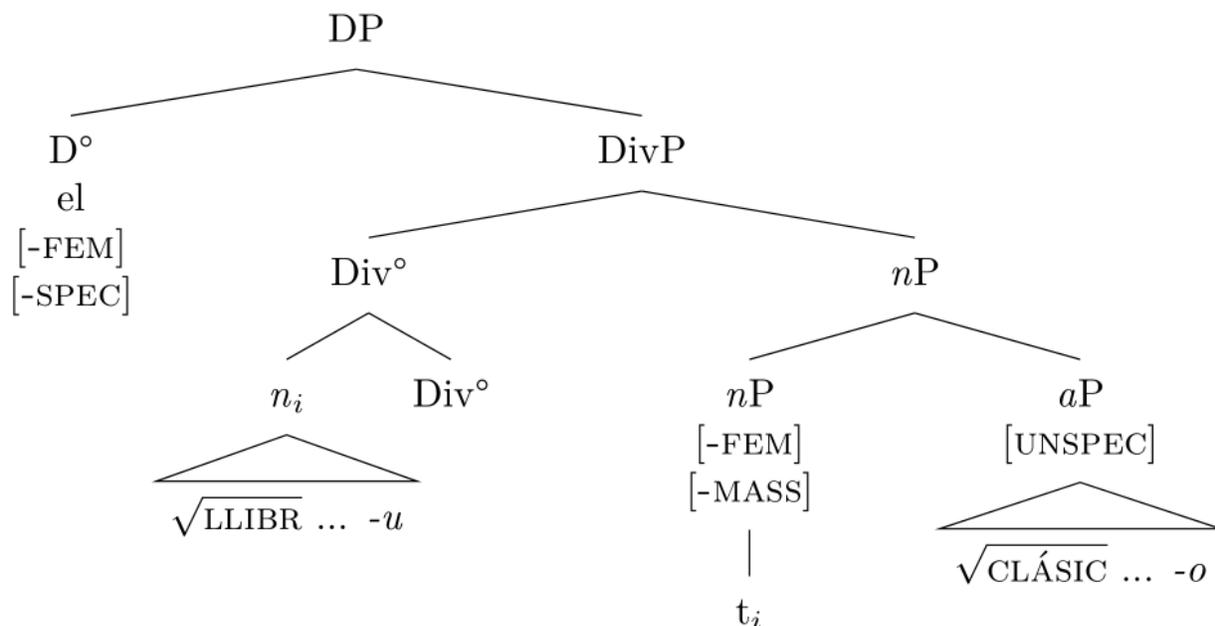
Finally, (62) below shows the *-o* form adjective *podrecío 'rotten'* agreeing with the mass noun *aceite 'oil'*. Based on the system thus far, it is expected that the [*u*UNSPEC] probe in this case finds [+MASS] on the noun, subsequently spelling out *-o*. I note that the outward morphological forms are ambiguous as to whether the adjective shows this agreement due to mass or instead due to genericity. However, should the noun not possess a mass feature, for whatever reason, the probe still would make its way up to the determiner to avoid ungrammaticality. The derivation in this sense has a built-in fail safe due to this potential redundancy in the machinery.

(62) **un aceite podrecío** estropia el pan [S2_P30_UV]
  'A rotten oil ruins bread'

DP
├─ D°
│   un
│   [-FEM]
│   [-SPEC]
└─ nP
    ├─ nP
    │   [-FEM]
    │   [+MASS]
    │   └─ √ACEIT … -e
    └─ aP
        [UNSPEC]
        └─ √PODRECI(D) … -o
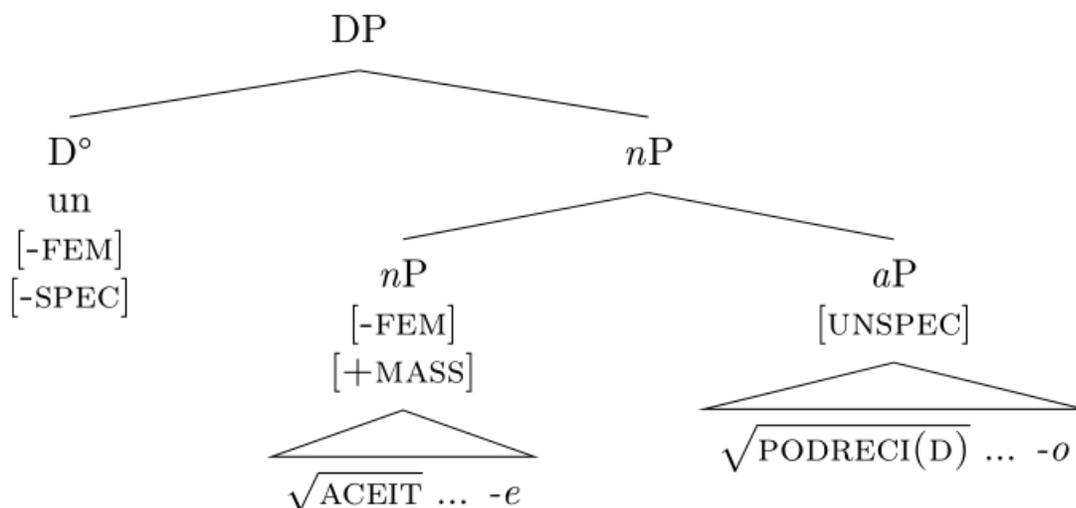
In fact, the Asturian pancake sentences in (63) and (64) below clearly demonstrate the distinction between generic and specific DPs having isolated the count versus mass value of the noun. In both examples the noun *bicicleta 'bicycle'* is count, but what coerces the adjective agreement that surfaces are the specific versus generic interpretation of the DP.

When the noun is interpreted as a specific individual indicated by [+SPEC] on D°, the adjective, *dura 'hard'* in (63), agrees in feminine gender. This agreement pattern is easily captured with the *a* [phi] probe due to the link between specificity and gender.

(63) **la bicicleta** ye **dura** [S2_P21_CAR]
     'this bicycle has tight pedals'

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\diagup \qquad \diagdown \\
\text{DP}_i \qquad\qquad \text{VP}
\end{array}
$$

DP$_i$: D° *la* [+FEM] [+SPEC] — nP [+FEM] [-MASS] — √BICICLET … -*a*

VP: V *ye* — SC: aP [+FEM] (√DUR … -*a*) — t$_i$
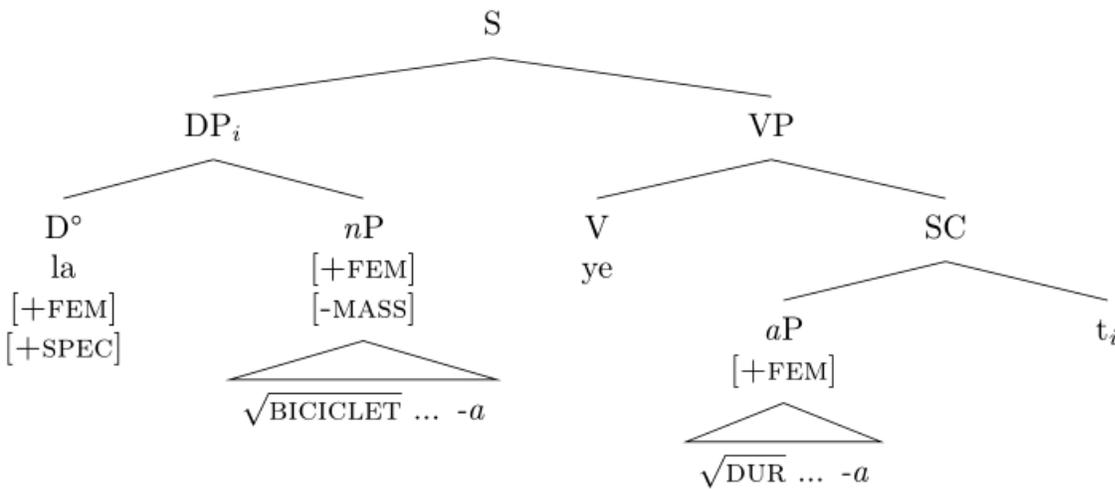
On the other hand, the adjective *duro 'hard'* in (64) that appears as an -*o* form spelled out by [UNSPEC] is the work of the [*u*UNSPEC] probe that passes over the noun to find the [-SPEC] feature on D°. Because the noun *bicicleta 'bicycle'* is not mass, [*u*UNSPEC] in this case relies on the generic interpretation of the DP for feature matching.

(64) **la bicicleta** ye **duro** [S2_P21_CAR]
     'Riding a bicycle is tiring'

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\diagup \qquad \diagdown \\
\text{DP}_i \qquad\qquad \text{VP}
\end{array}
$$

DP$_i$: D° *la* [+FEM] [-SPEC] — nP [+FEM] [-MASS] — √BICICLET … -*a*

VP: V *ye* — SC: aP [UNSPEC] (√DUR … -*o*) — t$_i$
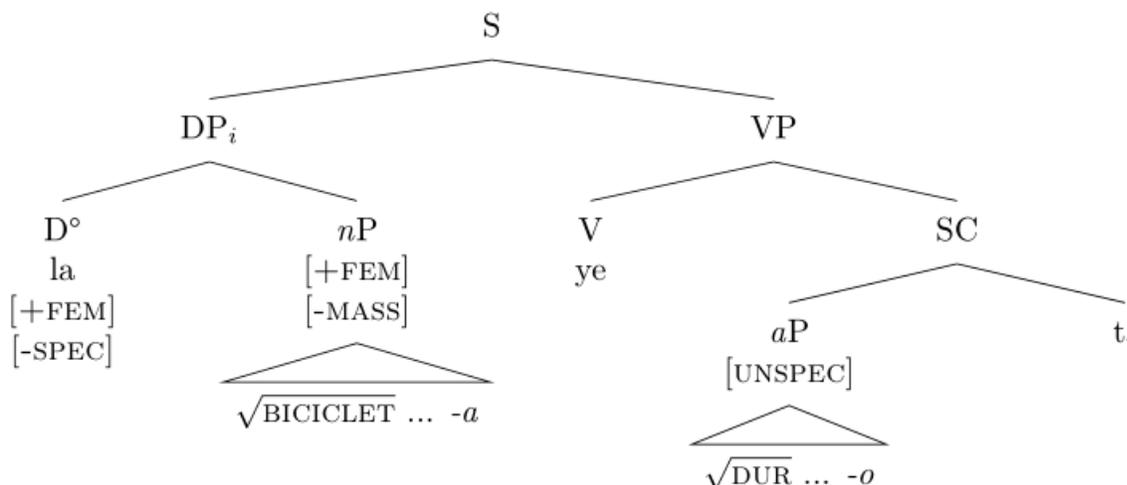
My system also applies to other exceptional examples like (65) below. An inverse small clause with a null copular verb captures the general structural assumptions, while the same

process of feature probing that I have laid out above accounts for the agreement morphology. Namely, [*u*UNSPEC] probes upward and finds [+MASS] on the noun, which subsequently values the *a* as [UNSPEC] and *-o* is inserted. I stipulate that probing and spell out occur before the adjective raises for case reasons.

(65) **bebío la lleche**, Xuan coló (Loporcaro, 2018: 187)
     'Having drunk the milk, Xuan left'
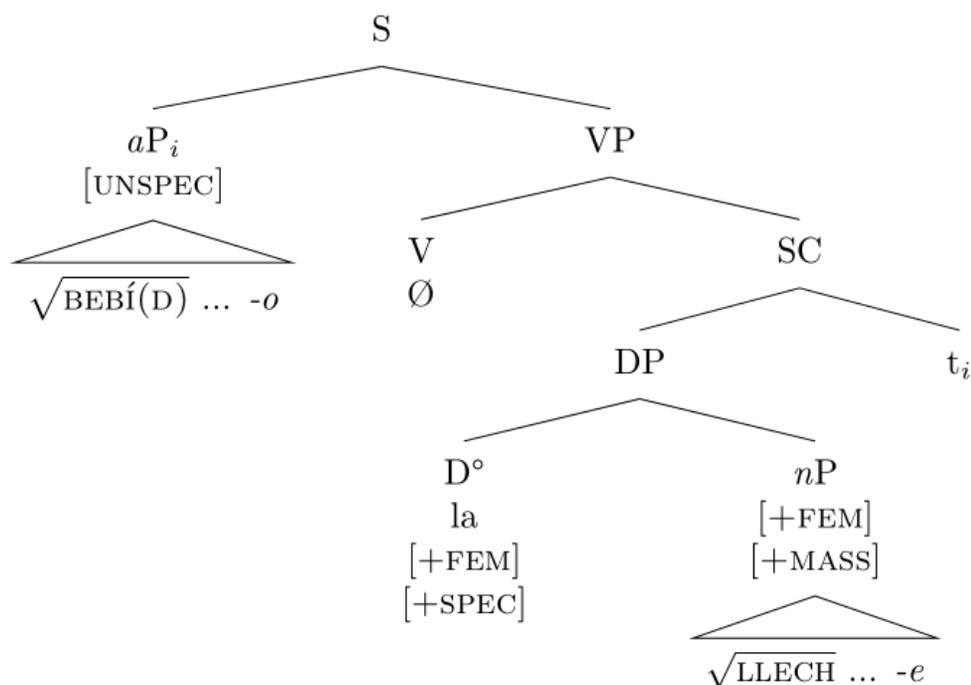
4.4. Conclusion:

§4.1 briefly outlines the necessary background for the characteristics of Romance adjectives. Included in this summary are different ways that previous analyses have described the interpretation and agreement patterns found in languages like Spanish, and some Scandinavian languages like Norwegian, both regarding adjective position in some cases and the use of the determiners and pronouns in other cases. These descriptions provided the necessary foundation to examine how these morphosyntactic characteristics manifest themselves in Asturian, where, according to previous literature, post-nominal adjectives can appear as *-o* forms to seemingly

agree in mass with mass nouns or serve as a morphological indication of a phrase's generic interpretation. This is in opposition to specific interpretations or count noun modification, which are contexts that have been reported to manifest post-nominal adjective gender agreement.

Next, §4.2 aims to open a dialogue with these descriptive agreement patterns in Asturian by presenting new data provided by native Asturian speakers from various regions via Qualtrics surveys. Here the degree to which speakers rely on generic versus specific interpretations, or mass versus count interpretations, when faced with the gender versus *-o* form agreement opposition in post-nominal adjectives is explored. Namely, the agreement patterns in question were attested to go beyond what was reported in both the prescriptive and descriptive literature, in that the data suggest a more fluid system in which speakers rely more on specificity than mass, or vice versa, or potentially an intent-based system in which the speaker can manipulate freely.

Finally, §4.3 proposes a theoretical way to account for more traditional analyses of the data while at the same time incorporating new data obtained from native Asturian speakers across Asturias. Previous work has relied almost exclusively on the mass value of nouns, but this approach falls short with post-nominal *-o* form adjectives that surface in generic contexts where the noun is not the target of agreement. Building on descriptions of semantic agreement in Asturian (cf. Viejo Fernández, 2002), among other prior analyses of mass neuter, and applying the DM system of nominal derivation in chapter three to adjectives, §4.3 theoretically details how adjectives are derived through various processes. Namely, probes search out phi-features to account for grammatical agreement like gender, or [+MASS]/[-SPEC] mass or generic interpretations that fall under the purview of semantic agreement. Probing is responsible for feature valuation on the *a* head that interfaces with phonology for the spell-out of theme vowels. Overall, this system outlines a way to analyze mass noun centric cases of post-nominal *-o* form

adjective agreement in line with a more traditional view of the data, while also providing a path

forward to account for specificity induced agreement phenomena.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH PLANS

5.1. Chapter Two – General Conclusions

In this chapter I took a well-traveled voyage through the historical linguistic characteristics that can be traced from Latin to modern-day Ibero-Romance. Despite the quantity of previous work that is already available on this topic, reviewing the facts was vital to better understand how special mass marking came to be in Asturian and how we might approach it differently. I presented the five different declension classes of Latin nouns, as well as how a similar system extended to adjectives, and determiners. Latin has a more complex system that formally indicates gender, number and case on nouns and other agreeing parts of speech. Furthermore, genitive case markers serve as the indicator as to which declension class a noun belongs.

Due to the various changes from Latin to Ibero-Romance, such as the loss of case marking and final consonants, the collapse of declension classes, and the redistribution of gender, a completely different picture is painted for modern Ibero-Romance languages like Spanish and Asturian. Namely, I showed in this chapter that Ibero-Romance languages in general are organized into three main form classes that are marked by the vowels *-o*, *-a* and *-e*. This differs slightly from that of the central variety of Asturian where the main vowels are *-u*, *-a* and *-e*.

My general findings were that, while Spanish and Asturian are not so different in broad terms when it comes to how their nominal form classes are organized, what sets Asturian apart is the use of the *-o* on some masculine nouns to denote mass, like *fierro 'iron material'*, *pelo 'hair'* and *filo 'thread'*. Their masculine count opponents are *fierru 'an iron object'*, *pelu 'a hair'* and *filu 'a thread'*, which all end in *-u*. Due to the mass interpretation that these *-o* form nouns have, paired with the fact that they are remnants of Latin neuter forms, has led to the tendency to refer to this phenomenon as *mass neuter* in the literature.

As one final point I argued against the term neuter in Spanish that is typically used to refer to the demonstratives *esto 'this'*, *eso 'that'* and *aquello 'that [far]'*, as well as the article *lo 'the'*, for example. The basic facts surrounding the loss of the grammatical neuter gender from Latin to Ibero-Romance has led me to propose that we abandon the term neuter and instead we should opt for *unspecified*, because this better captures the role that these determiners and articles grammatically play—they are used to refer to unestablished entities in the discourse or they denote concepts. I proposed the same abandonment of the term neuter in Asturian for the same reasons, in addition to the fact that the *-o* form mass nouns *fierro 'iron material'*, *pilo 'hair'* and *filo 'thread'* are masculine and not neuter.

5.2. Chapter Three – General Conclusions

The main conclusions that should be drawn from this chapter are both descriptive and theoretical in nature. Descriptively speaking, and based on the survey results for Asturian nouns, the *-u/-o* distinction is much more productive than what is typically considered in the literature. Furthermore, *-o* does not always indicate mass for certain speakers, as noted in the difference between *tiempo 'weather'* and *tiempu 'time'*, in (66) and (67) respectively.

(66)   **TIEMPO** [S1_P30_TRE]

Esta	mañana	fai	mui	mal	**tiempo**
DEM-F.SG	morning-THV	make-PRS.3SG	very	bad-Ø	weather-THV

    'This morning there's very bad weather'
    Tiempo is correct in the context of meteorology.

(67) **TIEMPU** [S1_P30_TRE]

Va	un	**tiempu**	que	nun	veo
go-PRS.3SG	a.M.SG	time-THV	that	NEG	see-PRS.1SG

a	Manuel
DOM	Manuel

'It has been some time since I have seen Manuel'
Tiempu is correct in the context of talking about time as a dimension: the passing of time.

The survey results also captured a lot of language variation across the region of Asturias, and this directly impacted the more theoretical conclusions that I made in this chapter.

By assuming a Distributed Morphology (DM) analysis of the Asturian data I was able to capture many different linguistic components of the so-called mass neuter phenomenon. Because DM assumes a lexically decomposed approach to nominal derivation this allowed for all components of the noun to be a possible access point to cracking the derivational difference between *-o* form mass nouns and *-u/-a* form count nouns.

The Asturian data was therefore predicted though my application of Kramer's (2015) work on the morphosyntax of gender in that a *n u* [+FEM] head licenses feminine inanimate nouns while *n* [±MASS] licenses default masculine inanimate nouns. Finally, I proposed that a *n* [+MASS] head derives *-o* form nouns that are morphologically dependent on a mass interpretation.

This system of nominalizers paired with the post-syntactic contextual insertion of the final vowels also allowed me to propose that there are different mental grammars in Asturian that capture language variation that has traditionally been represented by isogloss lines on a map. Of these grammars that are supported by the data I have proposed:

P-Asturian: follows the prescriptive model in that mainly *fierro 'iron material'*, *filo 'thread'* and *pelo 'hair'* can appear as -o form mass nouns.

D-Asturian: there is no known limit to the mass -o/count -u distinction in speakers with this grammar.

U-Asturian: encompasses Asturian varieties that use *-u* and not *-o* on masculine nouns independent of mass interpretation.

A-Asturian: this grammar uses *-u/-o* interchangeably with no apparent difference in meaning between the two.

S-Asturian: speakers use the *-u/-o* distinction more strategically, cf. *tiempu 'time'* / *tiempo 'weather'*

5.3. Chapter Four – General Conclusions

In my final content chapter, I explored some previous descriptions of adjective and DP behavior in different languages, including Spanish, Catalan, and some Icelandic languages. Specifically, I explored the link between an adjective's pre-nominal position and specific interpretations, and how the structure of the DP can coerce different readings. In Spanish, *el café está en la bolsa 'the coffee is in the bag'* has a specific interpretation because a salient *coffee* is being referred to. However, *el café es bueno 'the coffee is good'* has a generic reading. Despite the use of the definite article there is no specific reference to one specific coffee, just coffee in general. A similar process occurs for the indefinite article in that it can either count an individual, *Un café fuerte me dañó el estómago 'A strong coffee messed up my stomach'*, or generally refer to some exemplar that fits a particular description, *Un café fuerte no se toma por la noche 'Strong coffee isn't drunk at night'*.

I compared the general characteristics above to Asturian as they formed the basis of a second Qualtrics survey that was disseminated to native speakers online. The aim was to see if a generic reading can force *-o* form adjective modification of a count noun or if a specific reading can

force gender agreement between a mass noun and adjective. I also tested how speakers interpret pancake sentences in Asturian when presented with both forms (cf. *La borona ye costosa 'The cornbread [that I'm looking at] is expensive'* versus *La borona ye costoso '[The business of] cornbread is expensive'*).

Through interpretation of the survey results I found that there are speakers that produce an *-o* form adjective solely because it modifies a mass noun, while count noun modification generates gender agreement on the adjective. For other speakers, the specific versus generic interpretation of the phrase carries more weight, and therefore this drives the agreement pattern that is produced. For these speakers a generic interpretation will generate an *-o* form adjective, and due to the link between specificity and gender, they produce a gender-agreeing adjective under specific readings.

Asturian pancake sentences are a completely different beast. In short, I corroborated Viejo Fernández's (2002) work on the semantics of the Asturian adjective in that the participants largely interpreted the phrases from his paper accordingly (cf. *El llobu ye problemáticu 'The [individual] wolf is a problem'* versus *El llobu ye problemático 'Wolves [as a species] are a problem'*). I extended this idea to additional phrases that fit a similar structure and discovered that native speakers mainly interpret an individual when the adjective agrees in gender, but they interpret a concept, idea or situation that relates to the noun when the adjective is an *-o* form.

Finally, I proposed a way to account for the mechanisms that underlyingly derive these agreement patterns, both morphologically and syntactically. Much of my DM analysis of the nominal system in Asturian was applicable here in terms of the basis derivation of adjectives—the linearization of the root and adjectivizing head. Regarding the adjective's syntactic position

and method of agreement I argued that there is no agreed upon theory in the field to account for these characteristics.

I therefore argued that the Asturian data is borne out of two different probes that *a* sends out so that it can be valued with different features. In this way, I explained gender agreement as a [phi] probe that searches out the gender features on the noun or determiner to value *a* as [+FEM] or [-FEM]. Conversely, the adjective surfaces as an *-o* form when a [*u*UNSPEC] probe looks for [+MASS] on the noun or instead finds [-SPEC] on the determiner. In both cases *a* is valued as [UNSPEC] as a default. The context of *a*'s features then interfaces with the phonology to spell out the appropriate theme vowel, *-u*, *-a* or *-o*.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

5.4.1. *Limitations*

In my opinion the only real limitation to my work has been access to data. Previous literature has typically recycled the same types of examples over the years that mass neuter has been worked on. This was mainly what motivated me to search out new data from native speakers of Asturian across the region so that I could add more to the conversation. Though I gathered over a thousand tokens of new data, there is still the need to keep growing this database of examples and native speaker perceptions. This leads me to my future research plans below.

5.4.2. *Plans for Future Research*

My general plans include extending my analysis to other contexts in Asturian where *-o* forms appear. This includes diving deeper into demonstratives, clitics, and nominalized adjectives with the *-o* form article *lo*. There are instances of these cases among my data, but they were not the primary focus of my dissertation. Therefore, I plan to slowly work them into my overarching

analysis of Asturian *-o* forms to see what can and cannot be accounted for. To facilitate this research, I plan to re-organize my data into a tagged set that allows me to more easily search out *-o* forms and analyze the context that they are found in. Additionally, I hope to continue adding nouns that exhibit the *-u/-o* distinction to the list of attestable forms. As a short-term goal I plan to continue pushing out surveys, but mid- to long-term I would like to interview Asturians on the ground to see how they interpret these noun pairs.

Post-dissertation I will begin to work on a tagged and searchable corpus of the Asturian language. I plan to make this an ongoing career goal that will both facilitate my personal research, but also serve as a public, open-access source for researchers and members of the Asturian community. This project will be carried out through interdisciplinary work with linguists and programmers and has the potential to involve undergraduate and graduate students looking for research experience. I aim for the corpus to be searchable in many ways: part of speech, gender/number, mass/count, and even by collocation.

Other plans related to this corpus extend to conducting field work in Asturias to add audiovisual tokens to the database. This is motivated by an interest in any phonological influence that might be at play in Asturian *-o* form agreement. Audio and video contributions that can be made available within the same corpus will also serve as a language documentation and cultural preservation tool that can be accessed by research and Asturian speakers alike. With this project I also intend to collect data on the Spanish that is spoken in Asturias. There is a growing interest in the Spanish spoken in this region, and more data might create more opportunities for researching how contact with Spanish might also influence the Asturian spoken in the Principality.

Other future collaborative research might include, but not be limited to: (i) asking for native speaker perceptions on my survey responses that were produced by other native speakers, (ii)

having native speaker record my data set for acoustic analysis, (iii) eye tracking research with my data to see if there are any noteworthy components of the sentence that participants focus on, among many other possibilities.

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APPENDICES

6.1. Different *-o* versus *-u* Interpretations

6.1.1. *Fierro/u*

FIERRO VS FIERRU (47%)	
general vs particular object	non-count vs countable
generic vs concrete	general vs specific
mass vs singular, masculine, countable	neuter vs masculine singular
general thing vs countable noun	material in general vs specific object
material vs object made of iron	generic vs countable
mass neuter vs concrete object	non-count vs individual
material vs piece of iron	generic vs singular use
chemical element vs object made of iron	a pile of iron vs countable unit
being made of iron vs one iron	non-count vs one iron; a chunk of iron
material vs countable piece of iron	non-count material vs an iron tool
material vs a bar of iron	group of files vs one iron
group vs unit	

6.1.1. *Pelo/u*

PELO VS PELU (43%)	
hair vs one hair	general vs a unit
non-count vs masculine singular countable	collective hair vs an individual hair
general vs count	wooden club vs stick; pole
collective vs one hair	entire group vs singular use
non-count vs countable	neuter vs masculine singular
group of hairs vs one hair	general use vs singular
group of hairs vs a unit	Castilian vs stick in Asturian
hair vs hair stylist	group of head hairs vs piece of wood
all the hair vs one follicle	group of hairs vs one strand
quantity vs a concrete hair	

6.1.2. *Filo/u*

FILO VS FILU (33%)	
non-count vs singular masculine countable	mass neuter; verb vs referring to sewing thread
general things vs count noun	neuter vs singular masculine
material vs an element made of material	sewing vs sharp; cutting
non-count vs count	thread in general vs one thread
group of threads vs countable	material vs concrete singular
I have no idea vs limit/edge	non-count vs one thread
material vs unit	generic vs singular concrete
general vs one thread	rolled up thread vs a unit cut from a sewn item
material vs one thread	I don't use it vs a blade; edge
fabric; group of threads vs concrete thread; blade	material vs a specific thread
generic vs concrete part of material	pastry dough vs being on edge
material vs individual	Castilian vs Asturian; sewing; blade
group of thread/linen vs a unit of thread/linen	material vs a strand

6.1.3. Ganao/u

GANAO vs GANÁU (24%)	
cows vs past participle	*general; non-concrete vs animals; concrete*
farm animals vs incorrect	*raising of animals vs past participle*
neuter past participle vs masculine past participle	*past participle vs animals*
participle with count nouns vs with non-count	*non-count; mass neuter vs reference to domestic animals*
group of animals vs masculine past participle	*group of animals vs I don't use it*
past participle vs cattle/livestock	*correct vs incorrect*
flock of animals vs past participle	*general vs specific*

6.1.4. Llibro/u

LLIBRO vs LLIBRU (16%)	
incorrect vs a book	*verb vs school context*
verb vs masculine noun	*I don't use it vs book*
verb vs noun	*incorrect vs correct*
verb vs book	*doesn't exist vs book*

6.1.5. Asturiano/u

ASTURIANO vs ASTURIANU (15%)	
singular non-count vs masculine singular (ADJ)	*generic vs masculine singular*
abstract vs specific	*quality vs language; person*
neuter vs masculine count	*Asturianess as group vs language; person; thing*
neuter vs masculine (ADJ)	*language vs people; man*
language vs person	*mass neuter vs language; man*
non-concrete; general vs concrete; language	*language vs non-traditional form*
non-count; language vs man; masculine	*non-count vs countable*
language vs man	*less concrete vs concrete*

6.1.6. Figo/u

FIGO vs FIGU (13%)	
incorrect vs fruit	*figs vs a fig*
I don't use it vs I do use it	*Amestáu vs Asturian*
not correct vs correct	*general reference to fruit vs a piece of fruit*
price of figs vs reference to a fruit	

6.1.7. Deo/u

DEO vs DEU (12%)	
incorrect vs correct	*I never use it vs finger; toe*
I don't know vs part of hand/foot	*no comment vs countable*
I have no idea vs finger	*not correct vs colloquial use*
pointing vs physical sense	*doesn't exist vs digits of human extremities*
I never use it vs concrete finger on the hand	*not correct vs joints of the hand*

6.1.8. Cucho/u

CUCHO vs CUCHU (11%)	
generic vs countable	*verb vs noun*
not Asturian vs manure/fertilizer	*verb vs manure/fertilizer*
incorrect vs correct	*Amestáu vs Asturian*
I don't know vs manure/fertilizer	*material vs specific*

6.1.9. Fumo/u

FUMO vs FUMU (11%)	
material in general vs specific entity	*verb vs product of combustion*
verb vs noun	*verb vs smoke*
verb vs air	*non-count vs specific*

6.1.10. Tiempo/u

TIEMPO vs TIEMPU (11%)	
Castilian vs climate; season change in Asturian	*general time; meteorology vs concrete time*
meteorology vs time as a dimension; passing of time	*dimension of time vs weather*
non-count vs countable	*Castilian vs Asturian*
incorrect vs correct	*meteorology vs beginning and end*
they're synonyms	*I don't use it vs countable*
chronological marking vs weather	

6.1.11. Vino/u

VINO vs VINU (10%)	
ingredient vs type of wine	*neuter vs masculine singular*
verb vs drink; liquor; wine	*verb vs noun*

6.1.12. Dinero/u

DINERO vs DINERU (6%)	
general vs money I lent or borrowed	*Castilian translation vs monetary value in Asturian*
correct vs incorrect	*I don't use it vs countable*
abstract reference vs concrete quantity	

6.1.13. Cielo/u

CIELO vs CIELU (4%)	
incorrect vs correct	*adjective vs sky*
epithet vs sky	*I don't use it vs I use it*
they're synonyms	

6.1.14. Chorizo/u

CHORIZO vs CHORIZU (4%)	
lazy person; thief (insult) vs sausage	*Castilian vs Asturian*

6.1.15. Cuaderno/u

CUADERNO vs CUADERNU (4%)	
incorrect vs correct *Castilian vs Asturian*	*I never use it vs I always use it*

6.1.16. Queso/u

QUESO vs QUESU (4%)	
Castilian vs Asturian *incorrect vs correct* *milk derivative vs specific cheese*	*neuter vs masculine singular* *I never use it vs correct*

6.1.17. Mundo/u

MUNDO vs MUNDU (3%)	
Castilian vs correct in Asturian	*incorrect vs correct in context of people*

6.1.18. Bolígrafo/u

BOLÍGRAFO vs BOLÍGRAFU (2%)
incorrect vs correct

6.1.19. Trineo/u

TRINEO vs TRINÉU (2%)
Castilian vs Asturian

6.2. Level of Distinction of *-u* versus *-o* Form Nouns

WORD PAIR	DISTINCTION	NO DISTINCTION	NO RESPONSE
fierro vs fierru	47%	53%	n/a
pelo vs pelu	43%	48%	9%
filo vs filu	33%	54%	13%
ganao vs ganáu	24%	65%	11%
llibro vs llibru	**16%**	**72%**	**12%**
asturiano vs asturianu	15%	33%	52%
figo vs figu	13%	79%	8%
deo vs deu	12%	75%	13%
cucho vs cuchu	11%	76%	13%
fumo vs fumu	11%	38%	52%
tiempo vs tiempu	11%	81%	8%
vino vs vinu	10%	27%	63%
dinero vs dineru	6%	86%	8%
cielo vs cielu	4%	44%	52%
chorizo vs chorizu	4%	45%	52%
cuaderno vs cuadernu	**4%**	**34%**	**63%**
queso vs quesu	4%	33%	63%
mundo vs mundu	3%	35%	63%
bolígrafo vs bolígrafu	**2%**	**46%**	**52%**
trineo vs trinéu	**2%**	**36%**	**63%**