The dual nature of the Romanian neuter

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1 Introduction
As discussed by Bazell 1937, Hall 1965, Jakobson 1971, Mallinson 1984, Hoffman 1989, and Croitor and Giurgea 2009, among others, every Romanian noun belongs to one of the three agreement classes: masculine, feminine and neuter or heteroclite. As illustrated in (1) and (2), in the singular neuter nouns (1b) take the same agreement marker as masculine nouns do (1a), while plural neuter nouns (2b) take the same agreement marker as plural feminine nouns (2c). This generalization obtains for all agreement targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. scaune interesante chairs interesting.F.PL</td>
<td>b. scaune interesante chairs interesting.F.PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. fete interesante girls interesting.F.PL</td>
<td>c. fete interesante girls interesting.F.PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three genders of Romanian therefore yield the following pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Most prior generative analyses of this pattern regard the neuter as the lack of gender and differ in their accounts of how the connection with number is derived.

1.1 Neuter as the lack of gender
Farkas 1990 proposes that the gender feature is binary, [α F], and assigned as in (4), and adds to this two defaults: in the plural the [+F] feature is inserted by default by a feature cooccurrence restriction rule (5a), and the lack of gender is realized as masculine, i.e., as [−F], as in (5b). While the latter is standard in Romance languages (subjects lacking gender, such as infinitives or clauses, agree in the masculine), the former is language-specific:

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The feature 
masculine: [-F]
neuter: []

Both rules in (5) are theoretically problematic. The former (5a) inserts a valued feature (which violates the Inclusiveness Condition), while the latter (5b) in its structural description makes reference to a feature lacking a value, which means the lack of a value in in fact the third value of the gender feature (see Corbett 2012:31 for a general discussion of this issue). The latter problem also arises with the Distributed Morphology approach argued for by Kramer 2015b.

1.2 Radical underspecification
Kramer 2015b casts her proposal in the framework of Distributed Morphology (DM) by assuming radically underspecified rules for Vocabulary Insertion: an exponent can be inserted into a node that is specified richer than its structural description. Thus the complex feature bundle [C],[+F],[+PL] can be exponed by the ending -e- and a node specified as [C],[−F] can be realized as zero.¹

(6) a. [C], [+F] ⇔ -â feminine singular
b. [C] ⇔ Ø masculine and neuter singular
c. [C], [−F], [+PL] ⇔ -i masculine plural
d. [C], [+PL] ⇔ -e feminine and neuter plural

Several issues need to be resolved within this proposal. The first of them is the order in which the rules in (6) apply. Some cases are easier, as within the DM framework Vocabulary Insertion rules are ordered by structural complexity: more richly specified rules are ordered before less richly specified ones, so (6a) is ordered before (6b) and (6c), before the rest. However, as easy to determine, the feature bundle [C],[+F],[+PL] can be resolved either by (6a), which would yield an incorrect result, as feminine plural would then be identical to singular, or by (6d). To ensure the use of (6d) and thus the right outcome, Kramer 2015b:174 follows Noyer 1997:1xxv on the assumption that plural is higher than gender on the feature hierarchy (and this is why gender is often neutralized in the plural, but not the other way around).

A theoretical advantage of Kramer’s proposal over Farkas’ is that it obeys the Inclusiveness Condition. Yet Kramer’s proposal is also inferior in that it links syncretism to specific exponents, while it has a principled nature. To see this, other classes of adjectives need to be considered. Thus the adjective mare ‘big.sg’ and others in its declension class (Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006:830-833) have the masculine singular ending is -e- rather than -Ø/ur-, and its neuter form, predictably, is also mare rather than *mar.

¹ The feature [C] stands for “lexical category” and permits Kramer to avoid the issue of having a featureless node as a structural description for a rule.
Cross-paradigm impoverishment (Kramer 2015a) is thus a better solution, which solves both issues at once: after the application of the rule in (7b), the feature bundle \([C],[+F],[+PL]\) is impoverished to \([C],[+PL]\), and can only be exponed by (6d). Likewise, the neutralization of neuter and masculine in the singular and of neuter and feminine in the plural is handled irrespective of a particular exponent.

(7) a. \([-F] \rightarrow \emptyset / \__ [-PL] \]  
   b. \([+F] \rightarrow \emptyset / \__ [+PL] \]  

One issue with this proposal is the use of the *ad-hoc* label \([C]\), which, if replaced with the proper category label ([A], [D], [DEM]) would remove the generality of the proposal. Furthermore, technically, the impoverishment rules in (7) are not the neuter merging with the masculine in the singular and with the feminine in the plural – this is the masculine and the feminine merging with the neuter (which is historically obviously incorrect).\(^2\) Finally, given that both values of the gender feature can be impoverished, the system could be the other way around for plurals (and then the neuter would merge with the masculine, as in French), for the singular (and then the neuter would merge with the feminine) or even for both (and we would have observed the exact opposite of what we do).

The obviously incidental nature of the morphological rules suggested in both approaches above is our first indication that something is wrong with the very idea of the default realization going in the opposite directions in the two numbers. There are also empirical problems with this view.

### 1.3 Other views

Two more approaches link gender features to number, essentially re-encoding agreement classes as a complex of number-gender features.

Giurgea 2008, 2014, Croitor and Giurgea 2009 propose that the (unique, binary) gender feature is generated on the number node (\(\text{Num}\)), whereas nouns

\(^2\) Two further issues arise with both proposals. On the one hand, as noted by Farkas 1990, the demonstrative pronoun resuming genderless referents takes the form that is morphologically feminine yet agreeing in the masculine (i). Secondly, the conjunction of two animates one of which does not refer to a female agrees in the masculine (ii). The former issue is resolved in both approaches by a separate set of morphological rules, and the latter is, I contend, irrelevant since the gender of a coordinate entity is computed by the pragmatic module and thus does not tell us anything about agreement or morphological gender neutralization.

(i) Petru e acasă. Asta e uluiitor/*uluitoare.  
   Peter is home \textit{this.F.SG} is amazing.M.SG/*F.SG  
   Peter is home. This is amazing.  
   Farkas 1990

(ii) Maria și persoana cu barbă au fost văzuti.  
    Maria and person.F with beard were \textit{seen.M.PL}  
    Maria and the person with a beard were seen.  
   Farkas and Zec 1995
can belong to one of the three nominal gender classes (I, II, III). The relation between Num and N is determined by selection:

(8)  
(i) Num [M.SG] selects for N in classes I and III  
(ii) Num [F.SG] selects for N in class II  
(iii) Num [M.PL] selects for N in class I  
(iv) Num [F.PL] selects for N in classes II and III  

Bateman and Polinsky 2009 consider a fuller picture of Romanian nominal declension and propose that the agreement class (gender) of each Romanian noun is determined on the basis of its class, which is established separately for the two numbers. In the singular the noun class is determined on the basis of both semantic and formal factors, and there are two of them, A and B:

- Semantic gender assignment: female-denoting animate nouns are in class A, male-denoting nouns are in class B
- Formal gender assignment: nouns that end in [ǝ] (spelled ă) or [e] are in Class A, and nouns with all other endings (consonant, -i, -o, -u) are in class B.

In the plural there are also two noun classes, C and D, although in order to obtain the right patterning for agreement purposes it is necessary to assume that the ending -i- corresponds to two different allomorphs:

- plural nouns ending in -i1 are in class C
- nouns taking all other plural markers (-e, -uri, -i2) are assigned to class D

In other words, Bateman and Polinsky introduce two sets of features (with values A/B and C/D). The values of these features are determined separately in the singular and in the plural by the denotation and the declension class of the noun (with some listed exceptions). Agreement markers, on the other hand, are also distinguished (sets I (M) and II (F)) and connected to nominal classes by additional rules:

(9)  
A → Set II, singular  
B → Set I, singular  
C → Set I, plural  
D → Set II, plural

Like the previous proposal, this view links gender and number and uses an additional mediational feature (class) to account for the existence of only two target genders in each number. A clear advantage of this view over all previous ones is that it brings into consideration a larger picture of Romanian declension and its connection to gender. Its disadvantage, on the other hand, is that it does not extend this consideration to adjectives, which is what we pass to now.

2 A fuller picture of Romanian declension
So far we have been looking at adjectives where all four cells of the direct case of the paradigm are distinct. However, Romanian also has a number of syncrretic adjective classes, where the same exponent is used for more than one cell of the paradigm:
a. no gender distinctions in the plural: *auriu* ‘golden-yellow’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>auriu</td>
<td>aurie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>aurii</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

b. no number distinctions in the feminine: *ateu* ‘atheist’

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>ateu</td>
<td>atee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>atei</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. no gender distinctions in the singular or plural: *mare* ‘big’

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>mare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>mari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These syncretic adjectives are characterized by two key properties: (a) for the adjectives where gender distinctions are neutralized in the plural (10a, c), the plural marker used is the masculine one, and (b) for all of these classes the feminine singular marker is *-e*-, even in case it is not identical to the feminine plural marker (10c).

The declension classes (10a, c) cannot be accounted for on either Farkas’ or Kramer’s account: on both views the masculine plural form *-i*- is marked, while the *-e*- ending is the plural default.

Several ways of dealing with this issue can be envisaged. One option is to insert the [*-F*] value in the context of relevant roots (11). As discussed above, this option violates the Inclusiveness Condition.

\[
\emptyset \rightarrow [\text{[}-F\text{]} / \_ \_] [+\text{PL}] \& \{\text{auri-}, \text{mar-}…\}
\]

A theoretically preferable but equally stipulative solution is to postulate a special plural allomorph *-i*- that is inserted in the context of relevant roots. Being more specified than (6d), (6e) precedes and bleeds it.

\[
[\text{C}], [+\text{PL}] \Leftrightarrow \text{-i} / \_ \_ \{\text{auri-}, \text{mar-}…\}
\]

The same issue arises for the feminine singular ending *-e*- in all declension classes in (10): it cannot be argued to be syncretic with the feminine plural in Farkas’ or Kramer’s account because the feminine plural is more specified. This *-e*- thus has to be treated as a separate allomorph.

Additional adjectival declension classes therefore provide evidence that *-e*- is the default ending for the entire paradigm rather than for plural and that the pattern observed in Romanian is not neutralization of feminine to neuter or vice versa but rather the simple Elsewhere case.

Even stronger evidence for this conclusion comes from oblique case cells. While the oblique (genitive/dative) case in Romanian is generally syncretic with the direct (nominative/accusative) case, in the feminine singular it is
usually syncretic with the nominative plural, which means that in general it is also -e-.

3 -e- as the paradigm default
In this section I will presuppose that -e- is the paradigm default and show that this assumption leads to simpler and empirically more adequate Vocabulary Insertion rules for Romanian case-agreement morphology.

If -e- is the default and what we observe for the neuter in the plural is not reduction to the feminine, but reduction to the elsewhere case, the neuter can no longer be analyzed as the lack of features: the neuter feature bundle is not realized as the default in the singular, so it has to be more specified than the default. Hence either the neuter should be encoded as a presence of a feature, and the masculine, as its absence, or a more complex two-feature system (12) is needed:

(12) Features and bundles
   [+F;−M] (feminine)
   [−F;+M] (masculine)
   [−F;−M] (neuter)
   [± SG] (as opposed to [± PL], for no special reason)
   [± OBL] (although a privative feature is also possible)

On the basis of these feature specifications I postulate a set of Vocabulary Insertion rules, which accounts for the productive feminine singular marker -ă- and the default masculine/neuter marker -Ø/u- in exactly the same way as those proposed by Kramer (6).

(13) Vocabulary Insertion rules
   a.  [+F][+SG] ⇐ -ă   feminine singular
   b.  [+SG] ⇐ -Ø/-u   masculine and neuter singular
   c.  [−SG] ⇐ -i   plural
   d.  otherwise -e   default

The differences between these rules and Kramer’s are twofold. On the one hand, plural exponence is realized as elsewhere cases: the presence of number that it not

3.1 Singular -e- exponence
In order to be able to revert to the elsewhere case in the feminine singular -e- in such adjectives as in (10a-b), as well as in some nouns (declension class VI-a, per Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006:836), an impoverishment rule such as (14), is necessary, removing morphological number (#) and gender (γ) features

3 In the adjectival classes (10a, c) feminine oblique is -i-. I return to this issue in Section 4.2.
4 A brief note is in order regarding the exponence of the masculine singular. It is realized as the phonological zero unless such realization would yield a vowel-final stem or a sonority-violating consonant-liquid coda. See Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006:835 for details.
from the feminine singular form of certain adjectives and nouns (for the latter, obviously, gender is inherent rather than assigned). As a result, none of the more specified rules in (13a-c) are applicable and (13d) must be used:

\[ [\gamma][#] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [±SG][+F] \{\sqrt{AURI}_-, \sqrt{ATE}_-, \ldots, VI-a \} \quad aurie_{SG}, aeie_{SG} \]

For two-ending adjectives, as in (10c), we specify a different environment (singular forms of both genders) for the same impoverishment rule:

\[ [\gamma][#] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [±SG]\{\sqrt{MAR}_-\ldots\} \quad mare_{SG} \]

Finally, the impoverishment rules in (16) deal with the oblique case, which is identical to the direct case, except in the feminine singular:

\[ (16) \quad \text{a. } [\text{CASE}][\gamma][#] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [+F][±SG][±OBL] \quad \text{feminine oblique} \]
\[ \text{b. } [\text{CASE}] \rightarrow \emptyset \]

To deal with the feminine singular oblique, we once again remove gender and number features, creating the environment for (13d) and ensuring the syncretism of the oblique feminine singular with the direct feminine plural without assuming that these two cells have anything in common. In all other situations the case feature is removed altogether, rendering the oblique case featurally identical to the direct case.

### 3.2 Plural exponence

By the rules in (13) the default plural marker is expected to be \(-i\). In order to handle the feminine and neuter plurals, we assume one more context for the application of the same number and gender impoverishment rule:

\[ [\gamma][#] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [±M][±SG] \quad \text{feminine and neuter plural} \]

The application of this rule needs to be blocked to handle the i-plurals in (10a, c). To do so we assume another impoverishment rule that, applying as it does in a more specific context, precedes the rule in (17) and bleeds it:

\[ [\gamma] \rightarrow \emptyset / \_ [±SG]\{\sqrt{AURI}_-, \sqrt{MAR}_-\ldots\} \quad aurii_{PL}, mari_{PL} \]

The system proposed above has a number of advantages over previous accounts. First of all, it is compatible with the diachronic development of Romanian and does not presuppose neutralization to the neuter. Secondly, the number of impoverishment rules that deal with the most productive adjective classes has diminished to just one, which applies in a number of environments. Thirdly, the oblique feminine singular syncretism is naturally explained: it is still a case of Elsewhere realization. Fourthly, the default to the masculine \(-i\)-in the plural of most e-adjectives is accounted for.

In addition, the system proposed above also deals with the oblique case and, as the coding of neuter in the lexicon becomes distinct from the lack of specification, the neuter is not identical to the lack of phi-features. This will be relevant for genderless referents.

One apparent clear advantage of Farkas’ and Kramer’s views is that they use one gender feature instead of two, yet this view cannot account for the fact that plural syncretism in the adjectival classes in (10) defaults to the masculine
rather than the neuter form. The masculine is also the default for animates in the singular, as in the plural (exx. from Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2013:6):

(19) a. Vorbește cu cineva priceput/*pricepută.
   talk.IMPF.2SG to somebody skillful.MSG/FSG
   Talk to someone skillful.

b. Respect profesorii.
   respect.1SG teacher.DEF.MPL
   I respect teachers (male and female).

We conclude that the masculine should be a possible default, which is only possible if it is less specified for some feature than both the feminine and the neuter. Yet in order to obtain -e- as the morphological default for the entire paradigm, it should be even less specified, which means that masculine should not be treated as total absence of features. We thus conclude that two features are necessary for proper encoding of Romanian agreement syncretism.

4 Other adjectival declension classes and nominal declension

The proposed impoverishment rules can account for the remaining (minor) adjectival declension classes and some nominal declension classes. In addition to the three types of adjectival declension in (10) and indeclinable adjectives, which take the same form in all cells of the paradigm, Romanian has a class of adjectives that has a separate masculine plural in -i- (with the rest in -e-) in (10d) below and its apparent mirror image in (10e).

(10) d. apparent dedicated masculine plural: tenace ‘tenacious’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>tenace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>tenaci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. apparent dedicated feminine plural: vechi ‘old’

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>vechi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>vechi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(10d) can be straightforwardly handled by pointing out that its singular (no gender distinctions) behaves as in (10c), while its plural is fully regular. This means that to account for (10d) it is enough to include the root √TENAC- and other roots in this class in the structural description of (15). Its plural will then be handled by regular rules:

(10) d’. apparent dedicated masculine plural: tenace ‘tenacious’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masculine</th>
<th>feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>tenace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>tenaci</td>
<td>tenace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The explanation for the pattern in (10e) comes from Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006:832. As they point out, the plural here can be treated exactly as in (10c), while the masculine singular ending is actually the regular Ø, and the final -i is part of the stem. Evidence for this comes from the fact that before the suffixal article (-l-) the masculine singular ending appears as -u-, just like in regular adjectives (vechiul ‘old.DEF’).

This means that no special rules needed for the pattern in (10e): to obtain the correct plural forms it is only necessary to include the root √VECHI- (and its kin) in the environment for the application of (18), and the singular follows the e-feminine pattern in (10a-b), which means that the root √VECHI- (and its kin) should be included in the environment for the application of (14).

We will now see that the system proposed above can also deal with most nominal declension classes as well.

4.1 Nominal declension

Even a superficial examination of Table 1 immediately shows that, just like in Latin, regular adjectives in Romanian share declension patterns with regular nouns: the nominal classes I (masculine), II-a (neuter) and IV-a (feminine) are identical to [+M, –F], [–M, –F] and [+F, –M] adjectives respectively.

Table 1: Romanian nominal declension (DSG 2006:836)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major types</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>direct oblique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ø/-u</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>băiat ‘boy’, maestru ‘master’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIa</td>
<td>Ø/-u</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>vas ‘vase’, teatru ‘theater’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIb</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>consiliu ‘council’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Ø/-u</td>
<td>-uri</td>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>gard ‘fence’, lucru ‘thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVa</td>
<td>-ă</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>fată ‘girl’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVb</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-le</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>stea ‘book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Va</td>
<td>-ă</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>vacă ‘cow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIa</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>iepure ‘rabbit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIb</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>carte ‘book’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next set of classes are either neuter (II-b, III) or feminine (V-a, VI-b, VIII and IX), yet have an i-plural instead of the expected -e-, like adjectives in the classes (10a, c). To handle this we make them also subject to the rule (18), which removes their gender features in the plural and therefore bleeds the more general impoverishment rule in (17). (In addition, the classes III, VIII and IX have a stem augment (-ur-) in the plural (which is orthogonal to our concerns.)

The classes VI (feminine and masculine), VII (feminine and neuter), IX (feminine) and X (masculine) all have an e-singular. While feminine nouns in these classes can be regarded as similar to adjectives in the class (10a), neuter and masculine nouns are more like adjectives in the class (10c). To simplify matters, we unify all these classes as subject to rule (14), removing φ-features in the singular and triggering the use of the Elsewhere -e- allomorph.

Finally, the unexpected consonants in the oblique and plural forms of the classes II-c and IV-b are in fact underlying and deleted in the singular by a phonological rule (see Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006:836 for discussion).

4.2 -i- obliques

What remains unexplained here is the systematic syncretism between the plural direct form of feminine nouns and adjectives and their singular oblique form. The system we have proposed, with -i- as the realization of plural, does not have a way of deriving i-obliques: there is no feature value that is shared between the plural direct form and the singular oblique form of feminine nouns and adjectives, with the exception of [+F], which they both share with the direct singular form. We therefore have to assume that [i] exposes also the feature [OBL] and that the application of (16a) is blocked for stems in classes V, VI, VIII-b (though not in VIII-a) and IX.5

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5 An alternative is to replace [-SG] in (13c) by [♯] and to introduce another impoverishment rule removing the value of the number feature for the oblique in these classes. I find this move theoretically suspicious.
Independent evidence for such an allomorph comes from demonstratives and other determiners, many of which have a full paradigm in the oblique case as well.\(^6\)

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& \text{this’} & \text{singular} & \text{plural} \\
& & \text{masculine} & \text{feminine} & \text{masculine} & \text{feminine} \\
\hline
\text{direct} & \text{ășt} & \text{astă} & \text{ăști} & \text{aste} \\
\text{oblique} & \text{ăstui} & \text{ăstei} & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

It is obvious from (20) that the oblique endings are distinct from the plural endings, and that furthermore the feminine oblique ending consists of both the default -e- ending and the marked -i- ending (also present in the masculine oblique, where it follows the -u- of the masculine singular). This strongly suggests that the syncretism between the feminine singular oblique and the feminine plural is, while prevalent, purely accidental – a conclusion to which we arrive also by evaluating their respective feature bundles.

I propose that stems in the classes that have i-obliques are not subject to (16a), whereas demonstratives are also not subject to (16b) and that additional Vocabulary Insertion rules are responsible for their exponence in the oblique.

5 Conclusion
A careful examination of the Romanian nominal and adjectival declension has shown that the prevalent generalization describing Romanian agreement patterns as neuter-to-masculine in the singular and neuter-to-feminine in the plural is empirically incorrect: the -e- suffix that appears in both feminine and neuter plurals is also the default realization of the feminine oblique, as well as the exponent of the singular in some adjectival and nominal declension classes.

To account for the actual observed syncretisms I propose to encode gender in Romanian as a bundle of two binary features, [αF] and [αM], and to appeal to two major impoverishment rules. One, in (14), (15) and (17), deletes gender and number features in certain environments and for certain stems, creating the environment for Elsewhere exponence. The other, in (18), removes gender features in the plural for certain declension classes, yielding plural syncretisms not accounted for in the previous accounts.

I further expanded the empirical coverage of the proposal by considering oblique case realization in Romanian and proposing two impoverishment rules responsible for the realization of the oblique as the default -e- in the feminine singular and as syncretic with the direct in all other cases.

6 References

\(^6\) All demonstratives are used primarily in the augmented form, with the postfix -a- (e.g., ăsta 'this.MSG', ăstea ‘this.FSG.OBL’, etc.).


