GENDER DETERMINERS IN AMERICAN ENGLISH
(A STUDY IN THE GRAMMAR OF LOANWORDS)

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1. Preliminary remarks.

The aim of the present paper is to give a structural description of the process of gender assignment to loan nouns from American English (later on AE) and English spoken in Canada after their importation into various languages spoken by immigrants from Europe in the United States of America, and Canada. The discussion will be limited to the languages of the Indo-European family. Three of them belong to the Germanic group: American German (Am. Ger.), American Norwegian (Am. Norw.) and some Icelandic dialects spoken in the USA (Am. Icel.), and two are the descendants of the Romance group: American Portuguese (Am. Port.) and Canadian French (Can. Fr.). The borrowing from American English into these languages is, as a rule, oral.

The illustrative material employed in the paper is taken from books and papers given in the bibliography. Supplementary examples referring to the borrowings from British English used here only when those from American English are few, have been placed in the text as notes.

All the works referred to have purely descriptive character and illustrate only some portions of the problem. None of them, however, makes the effort to give a global description of the causes of gender assignment. Therefore the working out of an overall pattern including and arranging all the elements of importance in this process, especially when the donor language is devoid of the category of grammatical gender, has seemed to be fully justified. Creation of this pattern is the second aim of the present writer.

American English has been chosen because the absence of the category of grammatical gender is one of the most characteristic features of its grammatical system, and consequently there is no direct suggestion what gender should be taken when an AE (L1) noun enters the grammar of the recipient language sys-
Gender determiners in American English

Am. Port. o lóia m., etc. (Pap 1949:103). Taking of masculine is very characteristic here since in all other instances A.E. -er [-a] receives [-a] interpretation, and consequently enters the class of feminines, because native Portuguese words ending in that vowel are normally feminine.

When A.E. coo is borrowed by Canadian French, it will appear there either as masculine or feminine noun according to the sex of its designation.

An isolated case of neutralization of sex can be found in American Icelandic, where A.E. constable > Am. Icel. constable n. (rarely m.) in spite of very strong impact of semantic determiners favouring logical masculine: S让自己 sex, and 

- its Icelandic equivalent ègriðamann m. 'constable' (the symbol S让自己 and the causes of gender misinterpretation will be given an explanation later on). In the same language a manifest influence of the natural gender can be seen when A.E. bronco appears as Am. Icel. broncho m. when it refers to 'a bronco' in general, but when a particular female of the class is in mind, the substitutory pronoun is usually, though not always, feminine (Stefansson 1992:356).

There also exists a tendency to generalize all loanwords signifying living beings as masculines. This can be observed, for instance, in American German where masculine is a kind of common gender where a living being is referred to, e.g. A.E. puppy > Am. Ger. der puppy, A.E. cat > Am. Ger. der katze. Only those nouns which have a distinctively feminine ending are feminine, e.g. A.E. countess > Am. Ger. die countess, or A.E. waitress > Am. Port. a waitress.

+S (general or cover term)

As has been shown, the preservation of gender occurs as a rule when sex is involved. To be more precise, the natural gender of American English is continued in Ln as grammatical category. When nouns denoting some animals or inanimate objects are borrowed, the semantic associations of general character become more exposed to the counteractions determining one gender or another. We can divide those loanwords into two major groups:

a) those governed by a noun in Ln semantically covering a number of Ln nouns with common semantic features; we may call this noun cover term or general term;
b) those belonging to one group with common class associations “...in which a word because of its functional relation to a group of associated words, tends to assume the gender of that group ...”, e.g. tools and implements, flowers, fruits, plants, vegetables, dances, etc. (Flom 1982/86: 25–26).

Naturally, there are instances where in one language a noun undergoing the importation will belong to the first group, but it may belong to the other in a different language according to whether in an Ln language there exists some 'general term' covering its semantic content. Ger. der Vogel functioned as such a cover term when masculine was assigned to A.E. bunting which was borrowed by American German (Aron 1930: 19). Normally -ing marks feminine in that language.
In Canadian French borrowings from English the names of materials take the masculine gender due to the general terms: Fr. coton m., drap m., and possibly matériau, itself a borrowing from English (Haden and Joliat 1940:847).

Note. In Spanish spoken in Argentina Eng. high-life > la high-life because of la sociedad functioning here as the general term (an example from R. Grossman 1926). Also Ch. B. Wilson (1899) maintains that all seven new terms for games like cribbage, cricket, etc. which entered continental German were assigned neuter on account of Ger. das Spiel, an obvious general term.

More numerous are the examples illustrating the attraction of borrowed nouns by the group of nouns not dominated by one word, but having similar semantic content to that of a loanword. Sometimes the general term may have its gender completely different from the one of the whole family it covers. In the Norse dialects of America some semantic classes seem to be established when a whole group of words of similar character enters the Lq system (here: Norwegian). Beverages are as a class masculines (AE. brandy > Am. Norw. brøndi m.) according to the already existing pattern, and when a noun denoting 'history' (AE. history) is borrowed as Am. Norw. histori, it joins the masculines, because of other masculines like Am. Norw. algebr (AE. algebra), Am. Norw. geography (AE. geography), though the -ers suffix regularly marks the neuter gender in Norwegian (Flom 1905:65.14). Correspondingly, neuter is the gender of matter, mass, and indefinite quantity when the transfer from English to the latter language takes place.

Note. Among the names for beverages borrowed by German from English (British), thirteen in fifteenth received the masculine gender assignment due to the analogy of der Schnaps, der Wein, although the two model nouns are not fully general terms, being rather the most typical gender representatives of the semantic class of nouns denoting beverages. Analogically, terms dealing with horse racing were assigned neuter on entering German, e.g. Ger. das Derby, das Handicap, das Match, das Training, though thinking out some general term for them is difficult (Wilson 1899). The assignment of neuter for Brit. English speedometer on its entering European Norwegian fits in with the names of other instruments of measure like barometer, thermometer (A. Steine 1845), but formal association with -meter could have, and probably has played its part here. In European Danish the tendencies of determining the gender by the class of objects can also be found with many groups of nouns like coins, vehicles, boats, articles of dress, liquors, sporting terms, which were regularly given the common gender assignment on entering Danish from English (D. K. Dodge 1898).

The reliability of setting up meaning classes, like fruits, flowers, bodies of water, etc. with some predominant gender which would impose itself on loanwords belonging to the same group has been strongly contested by Haugen, who considered all those efforts to have been unsuccessful. However, the evidence from many languages points to the obvious fact that such influence does exist (cf. Haugen 1969:445).

Sá (equivalent term)

Still narrower is the semantic association when the gender is assigned to borrowed nouns because of the influence of a particular word existing in Lq. This may be labelled as assignment of gender due to the impact of synonymous expressions. But the case of synonymity is not a simple one.

The first doubt is in whether the gender of the corresponding Lq word can be the reason for the choice of one of the genders for Lq noun. The psychological plausibility would, at first thought, seem not to be logical. If the speakers of Lq are sufficiently conscious of an Lq noun to transfer its gender, they would not be expected to employ the Lq word. But the existence of this type of influence can be illustrated by numerous examples.

For our purposes we can postulate here different types of synonymity or equivalence which can occur in the gender transfer:

a) the noun of the Lq can be a full equivalent of an Lq noun possibly differing in some minor features; this may be termed semantic equivalent;
b) the noun of the Lq can be the one disappearing from the lexical system of the target language after the importation of a semantically corresponding noun replacing, or displacing it; this we can label as lexical equivalent;
c) the noun of the Lq can be a variant of the full equivalent, because the latter may not exist in the Lq lexical system; the term partial equivalent seems most suitable here.

Ad n. AE. country > Am. Norw. kystn n. with Norw. land n. functioning as the semantic equivalent of the Lq gender determiner. Also AE. creamery on entering the same language becomes neuter (kristin) because of Norw. melke-kiste n. having the same meaning. AE. fire > Am. Norw. fire m. on account of Norw. elt m. 'fire'; AE. county > Am. Norw. kantn n. because of Norw. amt, district, eye, all neuter; AE. company > Am. Norw. kampn n. after the earlier borrowing in Norwegian (Norw. kompani n.) (cf. Flom 1905:65.14.17).

In American German the examples of semantic equivalents are found in abundance. On entering that language AE. belly becomes masculine on account of Ger. der Bauch, AE. fodder is assigned neuter after its German cognate das Futter with exactly the same meaning and similar phonetic structure; AE. chimney > Am. Ger. chimnay m. f., with the former gender on account of Ger. der Schornstein. Even strong formal attraction of the -er suffix (m., see +F) did not prevent the nouns like AE. corner, blinder, drawer from being given the die article, because of the equivalents die Ecke, die Binsen, die Schublade respectively. Similarly, the -mei suffix, which is normally neuter, may denote feminine gender when some semantic equivalent interferes; cf. Am. Ger. die pommel after Ger. die Belegung, Am. Ger. das (moving) picture.
after Ger. das Bild, and Am. Ger. das package with neuter obviously due to Ger. das Post. Finally, AE. business is not assigned feminine (cf. -ness, -ness f. suffixes in German), but neuter after Ger. das Geschäft, and AE. damage appears there as a masculine noun after Ger. der Schaden (Aron 1930:21-24).

In Pennsylvania German we can find das scholarship, with neuter on account of Ger. das Stipendium.

Portuguese spoken in the United States can also supply a number of examples where semantic equivalents cause the change of gender. Am. Port. a panha (<AE. pan) has its gender due to the native caparola f. 'pan'; Am. Port. a beira f. (<AE. beer) corresponds to a cerveja f. 'beer'; Am. Port. a corrn (<AE. court) is feminine after the native a cor, or Am. Port. a box (<AE. ad) after the Portuguese equivalent a caixa 'box' (Pap 1949:102-103).

Ad b. Sometimes the imported noun replaces some L₁ word which later on disappears. Such instances seem to be relatively frequent, though the linguistic literature does not offer us too many examples probably because it is not always easy to prove the existence of a disappearing noun. The classical example is the fate of the native Germanic word for 'cheese' reconstructed as *jaseta-, represented by Old Norse osti m., which disappeared giving way to the imported Latin noun casus which was also assigned masculine on entering various Germanic languages, although it denoted a different kind of 'cheese' from that represented by osti meaning 'liquid cheese'.

In Pennsylvania German der Boden and die Geisel have been displaced by the newly borrowed der flur (<AE. floor) and die wib (<AE. whip), at least in colloquial speech (Reed 1942:45).

Ad c. In colloquial American German image is preceded by das, because of das Bild. This illustrates the instance when a borrowed word is influenced in its gender assignment by some L₁ noun semantically not being its synonym, but having the meaning close to that of the L₁ word, or because there is some association in the mind of a speaker with some other noun. Also "... the gender of the native word which best translates the borrowed word can be adopted" (Ervin 1962:254).

Other words which follow that pattern are found in American German. Thus AE. soaping > Am. Ger. der soaping, because of Ger. der Baum, though other -ing nouns enter the class of feminines (cf. +F₂). Analogically, AE. greening > Am. Ger. der greening after Ger. der Apfel (Aron 1930:18). AE. society on entering American Norwegian (sosjitet) obtains masculine assignment due to the native forning m.; pitcher (<AE. picture) in the same language is neuter after Norw. porträt m., though -er in Norwegian marks masculine (cf. +F₂).

Also Canadian French gives us a handful of examples where imprecise equivalents influenced the gender assignment. So Can. Fr. bacon is masculine on account of Fr. lard m., Can. Fr. gis. m. takes its gender from an earlier borrowing whisky; Can. Fr. magazine is also masculine after Fr. quotidien, journal, both masculine. The assignment of masculine to Can. Fr. siliskine (<AE. skal- skin) can also be included into this group, if this noun really takes its gender from Fr. phoque f., an assumption of Haden and Joliat (1940:345).

Note. Also borrowings from British English show the same tendency. In Danish we have et circus n. on account of eld n. 'tent', though there is only little synonymity with both; en automobil after en auto, both common gender, may also be classified as the assignment due to the influence of the general term (J. Brendum-Nielsen 1966:277). In Swedish spring has become neuter because of lep n. 'run' (A. Steen 1945: 192). Ger. beefsteak is neuter due to das Rindfleisch n. (O. Jespersen 1924:229). In Argentinian Spanish la jazz-band is feminine after la banda de música, la Associated Press, because of la Prensa. The latter can also be treated as the 'general term' (R. Grossman 1926:182).

Lastly, in Polish whisky is feminine because of Pol. wódka f. (J. Fisiak 1963). In Polish and Russian, both Slavonic, the gender is usually a matter of formal associations, as the structure of the end of the borrowed noun usually determines the gender.


Semantic factors in the gender assignment are frequently accompanied by the formal ones. Some linguists consider them as having stronger impact on the choice of gender than those of meaning (Haugen 1969), and admit the weight of the semantic influence to be of value only when it is supported by formal similarity of the noun, in its phonetic and/or graphemic shape, to the concrete lexical item existing in the L₁ system.

The term 'formal' should be understood here as 'not based on semantic associations', thus comprising terminations, suffixes, phonetic and graphemic structures, and other non-semantic features. Those postulating the possibility of influence of the formal elements on the assignment of gender do not always make a clear distinction among at least three kinds of terminations: (1) ending or inflectional morpheme, (2) suffix or derivational morpheme, and (3) second element of a compound noun, or some larger final unit in a word, which may be associated with some corresponding full or partial congener in the system of L₁. For instance the term 'ending' should not be applied to such obvious suffixes like -tion, -er (as Plom 1903/05:13 does), and 'termination' will be used here from now on to denote the combination of phonemes (graphemes) at the end of a word to which the terms 'ending' and 'suffix' cannot be applied.

+ F₁ (structure of the whole word)

The imported noun on entering L₁ can be confronted with its congener (i.e., a word of the same descent) or with a noun having its phonetic or graphemic
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+Fr₁ (structure of the whole word)

The imported noun on entering L₂ can be confronted with its congener (i.e., a word of the same descent) or with a noun having its phonetic or graphemic
structure similar to that of an imported item. At times this identity or similarity may be quite accidental but can result in taking of the gender of the \( L_2 \) noun by the newly borrowed word. It is easy to observe that unless nouns designating living beings are involved, semantic associations operate only at the background, and the borrowing takes the gender of its full or partial homophone.

In American German \textit{army}, a loanword from American English, is always feminine because of Ger. \textit{die Armee} f., in spite of Ger. \textit{das Heer} (+S). When AE. \textit{pool} enters the same language, it does not follow the neuter gender of its \( S_2 \) (Ger. \textit{das Schwimmbad}) but assumes the masculine gender of Ger. \textit{der Pfahl} having different meaning. In like manner Am. Ger. \textit{das papier} owes its gender not to the synonymous Ger. \textit{die Zeitung, der Aufsatz}, but to Ger. \textit{das Papier} which has only little semantic resemblance to the former.

American Norwegian supplies other specimens of analogical generic interrelations, although this time the similarity (identity) of an \( L_1 \) item and its counterpart in the target language is purely casual. Thus Am. Norw. \textit{kort} n. (< AE. \textit{court}) takes its gender from Norw. \textit{kort} n. 'cord', Am. Norw. \textit{skrin} (< AE. \textit{screen}) from Norw. \textit{skrin} n. 'ghost', Am. Norw. \textit{fil} f. (< AE. \textit{field}) takes its gender from Norw. \textit{fil} f. 'file', and Am. Norw. \textit{not} f. (< AE. \textit{note}) is influenced by Norw. \textit{not} f. 'large fishing net'. In that case the new word even assumes unmarked plural \( (n.) \) of its Norwegian counterpart, which indicates very close association between the two (Haugen 1969:444).

Similarly, in American Portuguese AE. \textit{court} entering this language is assigned feminine from Port. \textit{a cortes} (Pap 1949:102).

Note. Similar is the fate of British English loanwords when their structure corresponds to that of native words in European languages. When Eng. (small-) \textit{beer} was transferred into German, it was assigned, as can easily be guessed, the neuter gender due to its \textit{das} \textit{Bier} congener (Wilson 1899:297). In the same language Eng. \textit{strike} was given masculine after its \textit{der Streich} counterpart (Wilson 1899:288).

\[ +S_2 \] (termination)

Occasionally, the structure of the end of the word in \( L_2 \) is associated with a similar final structure of some \( L_1 \) item. That formal resemblance can be only superficial, especially if there also exists some semantic similarity, though the latter is not a necessary condition. That phenomenon has been justly named 'rhyme analogy'. Aron (1930:19) also included here suffixes and infeudational endings, though this 'analogy' is, in principle, caused by the convergence of the final phoneme complexes irrespective of the morphological value. Typical cases of rhyme analogy can be as simple as the influence of Fr. \textit{-e} on the assignment of feminine in German to the imported nouns with that termination not indicating any particular gender in French, but found with many feminine German nouns.

Even more characteristic examples can be discovered among the American English loanwords in American Norwegian. In the latter AE. \textit{croo} [\textit{krøo}] appears as \textit{kru} \( f. \), because of Norw. \textit{bru, tru, ku, etc.}, all feminine, making a ready pattern for the assignment of feminine gender. On the other hand, neuter gender of Am. Norw. \textit{slør} (< AE. \textit{store}) has been modelled on the native series Norw. \textit{hår, kår, lår, sår, skår}, all neuter, though two 'rhyme' masculines can also be found (Norw. \textit{lår, vår}; cf. Haugen 1969:447-448).

\[ +S_2 \] (suffix or suffix-like element)

The instances of gender identification based on the similarity of an AE. suffix to some \( L_2 \) suffix are very numerous, and validity of this influence in the analysis for gender assignment is undisputable. Let us single out those AE suffixes which make the speakers of different \( L_2 \) associate them with some definite gender in their languages. This similarity, in spite of what Sachs (1933:259) says, does not need to be founded on the congruent type of suffixal association, i.e., when both meaning and sound are supporting the gender together.

AE. \textit{-age} — becomes masculine in Canadian French, e.g. \textit{carriage} m. (Haden and Jolliet 1940:844), but feminine in American German, e.g. \textit{die kutsche}, on account of the suffixal association (Aron 1930:23);

AE. \textit{-ent, -ant} — become masculine in American German: \textit{der adherent, der tenant}, primarily supported by \( +S_1 \) (Aron 1930:23);

AE. \textit{-ence, -ance} — are feminine in the same dialect of German due to Ger. \textit{-enz, -anz} feminine congener (Aron 1930:20);

AE. \textit{-ery, -ery} — in Canadian French appear as feminines: AE. \textit{grocery} > Can. Fr. \textit{la grocerie}, as Fr. \textit{erie} is feminine (Haden and Jolliet 1940:848). The same gender is assigned to them in American Portuguese, where AE. \textit{grocery} > a \textit{groseria} \( f. \), because Port. \textit{-eria, -aria} are feminine (Pap 1949:103). However, this group of derivatives would regularly enter the neutrals in American Norwegian, where AE. \textit{factory} > Am. Norw. \textit{faktori} n., AE. \textit{pantry} > Am. Norw. \textit{pantri} n. with AE. \textit{-ery} identified as Norw. \textit{-eri} \( n. \). Some exceptions are due here to the influence of semantic factors, cf. Am. Norw. \textit{histori} n. \( +S_2 \).

Note. Also cf. Eng. \textit{stock-jobbery}, which appears in Danish with neuter on account of the Danish \textit{-eri} \( n. \) suffix. In German spoken in Europe the suffixes under discussion correspond to the German suffix \textit{-rei} \( f. \) (Dodge 1898:29, Wilson 1899:276);

AE. \textit{-er} — usually has very stable interpretations and is identified as masculine after its association with terms denoting nomina
agentis. In Canadian French beaver 'silk hat' (<AE. beaver) becomes masculine, and so does Can. Fr. type (<AE. type writer), though -r is dropped (Haden and Jollit 1940: 843). In American Icelandic it is comparable with the native -ari masculine suffix denoting agency (Stefánsson 1902:356) and in American Lithuanian with -ērēs, a suffix of the same character (Haugen 1969: 446). Am. Norw. ellevētor (<AE. elevator) is masculine together with other nouns having that suffix, unless some semantic factor interferes, cf. pitch 7 a., +S3. German spoken in the United States also offers a handful of examples, like Penn. Ger. der kaufer m. (<AE. counter (Reed 1942: 26) or Am. Ger. der anker, der center, der arbor, der dresser, all masculine, although the latter four are semantically associated with +S3's: das Gezeih, die Mitte, die Laube, die Kommode respectively. That suffix has developed gender associations different from masculine only in Portuguese where it received the [a] phonetic interpretation subsequently treated as the native [-a] ending. So AE. corner > Am. Port. a cona f., AE. motor > Am. Port. a mora f., but Am. steamer > Am. Port. o estima (besides a estima f.) in account of the native noun o vapor m. (cf. +S3, and Pap 1949).

AE. -es

favours the choice of feminine in American German: die fürnness corresponding to Ger. -nis f. is the best example illustrating this tendency. In American Portuguese, when AE. business > as bisnes f., the latter gender is chosen because it bears closer phonetic resemblance to the English final sound complex than the -os masculine ending. Analogically, AE. office and tax become Am. Port. as offas, as tocos through naive identification of the final complexes.

AE. -ing

has very different developments according to the nature of the association with the native elements in the mind of the borrower. In most cases the class of feminines opens for American English nouns characterized by the presence of this suffix. Can. Fr. suplaine is derived from AE. suppling, with the -ine f. suffix substituting AE. -ing; when the latter is not substituted it also becomes feminine because of the phonetic resemblance to Fr. -ine f., e.g. Can. Fr. covering f. At times when purely semantic factors are at play -ing may receive masculine assignment on account of +S3 associations with a whole group of French nouns in -age m. Am. Norw. outing (<AE. meeting), Am. Norw. hunting (<AE. hunting) also become feminines, except for the cases when that suffix is preceded by -i, as the -ing combination is, in addition, attracted by masculines thus obtaining double gender, cf. Am. Norw. sitting < AE. seating (Flom 1903:05:18). In American German that development can be threefold. When AE. -ing is associated with the German -ung f. suffix, it is, of course, assigned feminine: die ähnlich from the same American English source word (Reed 1942:26). Semantic association, however, would result in the neuter gender, like in das boxing, das flying, following the pattern of das Sprechen in German (Aron 1930:19). In American Portuguese -ing is identified as the native -im masculine suffix, so when AE. puddle was borrowed it appeared there as o pudim m. (Pap 1949).

AE. -er

is not productive in American English, and therefore its suffixal function is sometimes very vague. Words with -l take different genders in various immigrant languages spoken in America. For instance, in American Norwegian they take masculine as a rule: AE. pencil > Am. Norw. penel m., AE. handle > Am. Norw. håndl m. (Flom 1903:05:14:18). In American Icelandic they have a tendency to be accepted as neutrals, and even AE. cons tacle is assigned that gender in spite of +S3. In Canadian French those nouns undergo double identification. When AE. -el is associated with Fr. -elle it becomes feminine; when the final -l is preserved it becomes masculine: AE. grezel > Can. Fr. gruezel f., AE. label > Can. Fr. label m. (Haden and Jollit 1940: 840).

AE. -tion, -sion

generic identification of this suffix depends in full on the gender of the corresponding cognate suffixes derived from Latin. Therefore in American Portuguese -iao f. replaces AE. -tion consistently, and the German -ion class of feminines takes all nouns having that suffix. Norse nouns in -tion are masculine, so AE. invitation, fashion appear in American Norwegian with masculine gender (Am. Norw. inviṭaṭison, fasṭion; Flom 1903:05:17).

AE. -et(f), -ul

those suffixes may also have different gender associations. Am. Ger. das basketball bat is neuter due to the -et n. suffix existing in German (Aron 1930: 24). But AE. pea nut on entering Portuguese is assigned masculine, because Am. Port. -ote in o pinote is a regular masculine suffix (Pap 1949).
AE. -y — is comparable with Ger. -ie, -ei, and consequently nouns with that suffix are assigned feminine: AE. party > Am. Ger. die party (Reed 1942: 25), AE. abbey > Am. Ger. die abbey (Aron 1938: 20). But when semantic aspect is involved some of these nouns can be assigned masculine in American Norwegian (Flom 1908/06: 16 - 17).

We may add here that when American English lends nouns to American German, those in -ment enter feminine (+S), those in -ure, -ture follow Ger. -er f. words, those in -ship are associated with their German -schaft f. congers (Aron 1938), and -est nouns appearing in American Norwegian are assigned masculine; cf. Am. Norw. vest < AE. vest, Am. Norw. harwest < AE. harvest, both m. (Flom 1908/06: 16 - 17).

Apart from the individual or 'group' tendencies in gender assignment, the existence of great systemic trends has been postulated by some for particular target languages. They seem to appear when major part of borrowed words enter one gender category. For the languages discussed in the preceding pages, two such trends have been postulated: masculine and feminine. The former is evident in American Norwegian (Flom 1908/06: 16), and American Portuguese (Pap 1949: 102), the latter in colloquial American German (Aron 1930: 25), and in Pennsylvania German (Reed 1942). The feminine tendency in German is the result of formal association of the American English definite article the, and the German feminine gender marker die.

The productivity of gender in the target language is also of first importance, as loanwords prefer those gender classes which are more numerous. Such most productive gender category tends to become a "habitual repository for new and unassimilated words" (Hagen 1956: 58, 1969: 441).


Loanwords from a language void of grammatical gender entering the vocabulary of a target language having that category are subject to gender identification. Their analysable features, called here gender determiners, can be classified as follows:

a) with regard to their semantic content:

+ S 1 — that semantic feature of an L1 noun which makes the borrower assign it to a concrete gender category of sex;

+ S 2 — that semantic feature of an L1 noun which makes the borrower assign it to some major group of nouns dominated by one noun, or a class of nouns, possessing a set of semantic features which include the one of the nouns undergoing the importation;

+ S 3 — that complex of semantic features of an L1 noun which makes the borrower assign it to some gender class of L1 nouns possessing the same or approximately the same complex of semantic features.

b) with regard to the formal (phonetic) structure of the loanword:

+ F 1 — complex of phonetic features identifiable with an identical or very similar complex of features of some L2 noun;

+ F 2 — sequence of phonemes at the end of an L1 noun devoid of independent morphological significance identifiable with an identical or very similar sequence appearing with one or usually more nouns in L2;

+ F 3 — an L1 suffix, productive or not, identifiable with some suffix or suffix-like element in L2 appearing in a whole class of nouns marked for the same gender.

Gender determiners can appear as complexes; when pointing to the same gender, such complex of determiners is usually a decisive factor in the gender assignment. When particular elements of the determiner complex point to different genders, the possibility of choice increases in a remarkable degree.

REFERENCES


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of determiner</th>
<th>L₁, noun</th>
<th>Gender association</th>
<th>The resulting form and gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+S₁</td>
<td>a) sex</td>
<td>AE. daddy, AE. aunty, AE. cub</td>
<td>male female generalized as male</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) sex generalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+S₂</td>
<td>a) cover term</td>
<td>AE. bunting, AE. geography</td>
<td>Ger. der Vogel 'bird' 'subject of study' m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) gender class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-S₂</td>
<td>a) semantic equivalent</td>
<td>AE. folder, AE. floor</td>
<td>Ger. das Futter, Ger. der Boden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) lexical equivalent</td>
<td>AE. floor</td>
<td>Fr. le lard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) partial equivalent</td>
<td>AE. bacon</td>
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<tr>
<td>+F₁</td>
<td>congener type</td>
<td>AE. paper, AE. court</td>
<td>Ger. das Papier, Fr. le coeur</td>
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