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Gender inferences in non-bare uses of proper names

Gender features on pronouns and common nouns are understood as presupposition triggers, this is, they are assumed to introduce a partial identity function that restricts the gender of the entity (Cooper 1983, Heim & Kratzer 1998). As such, the gender inferences they trigger are not part of the *at issue* content, *i.e,* they are not entailments. In both pronouns and common names (except for different root pairs) the gender presupposition is only present in feminine forms, which gives rise to the *unmarked* behavior of masculine forms. Proper names show irregular behavior regarding gender features when they are used as predicates. Firstly, they don't show semantic asymmetry, this is, both masculine and feminine yield gender inferences even in plural or ignorance contexts:

(1) a. Los abogados (tanto abogados como abogadas) fueron a la fiesta.

b. Las abogadas (#tanto abogadas como abogados) fueron a la fiesta.

(2) a. Los Antonios (#tanto Antonios como Antonias) fueron a la fiesta.

b. Las Antonias (#tanto Antonios como Antonias) fueron a la fiesta.

The question is what is the nature of these inferences. Are they presuppositions, like other gender features? Are they part of the *at-issue* content of the proper noun? Are they pragmatic inferences and not encoded in the lexical meaning? Again, proper names behave unexpectedly compared to common names in projection and cancellation tests. It is expected that presuppositions survive certain operators that affect *at-issue* content (3), and also that they cannot be directly negated (4).

(3) a. Las víctimas no eran abogadas → The gender inference survives

b. Las víctimas no eran Alejandras → The gender inference doesn't survive

(4) a. #Juan tiene tres hermanas, pero dos son varones.

b. Hay tres Marianas, pero dos son varones.

On the contrary, in contexts where gender features do exhibit weakened projection, for instance, focus constructions (Sudo 2012, Sauerland 2013), proper names again show the opposite pattern to common nouns:

(5) De esta empresa, solo ella es abogada. ⟹ There are no male lawyers in the company.

(6) De este grupo, solo ella es/se llama Alejandra ⇏ There are no people called *Alejandro*

The patterns attested suggest that the connection between the gender identity of the referent and the gender features of the name is not as strong as observed in common nouns and pronouns, but this problem only arises in predicative uses of names. This could mean that gender features in proper names are encoded in a different way, or simply that they can be subjected to pragmatic accommodation in certain contexts. The goal of the presentation is to assess the different possibilities of analysis in hopes of approaching a unified account of gender features in both bare and non-bare uses of proper names.

References: Cooper, Robin (1983), Quantication and Syntactic Theory, D. Reidel, Dordrecht.● Heim, I., & Kratzer, A. (1998). Semantics in generative grammar. ● Sauerland, U. (2013, August). Presuppositions and the alternative tier. In Semantics and linguistic theory (pp. 156-173). ● Sudo, Y. (2012). On the semantics of phi features on pronouns (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology).