

Grammaticalization of the Masculine and Non-masculine Personal Category in the Polish Language

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The paper is a study on the category of masculine and non-masculine personal gender in the Polish language and it deals with the reasons behind the changes of the plural nominative, as well as singular and plural accusative endings of nouns, adjectives, and participles. The reasons for changes of nominative and accusative endings are syntactical. Plural nominative endings are modified as a result of equalization among isofunctional endings (as the words have the same syntactic function). However, changes of accusative endings are a result of interference between complementary constructions, that is, negation and corresponding positive statements. The aim of negation is to establish a single form of co-verb object in parallel constructions.

Changes of endings led to the division of the older, single masculine gender into three: the masculine personal, the masculine animal (masculine personal and masculine animal nouns are both masculine animate), and the masculine inanimate. The final part of the paper attempts to formulate a definition of grammatical genders of nouns. The definition is based not only on noun-adjective collocation but also takes into consideration morphological properties of nouns of a given gender. Paradigms typical of nouns of given grammatical genders confirm that one can speak about grammaticalization in the Polish language.

The Term *Grammaticalization* and Its Synonyms

Throughout this paper, the term *grammaticalization* is understood not as the acquisition of grammatical function by contentful lexemes that by undergoing delexicalization and desemantization change into grammatical morphemes – a process best exemplified by the formation of the conditional mood morphemes from older forms of the aorist of the verb *być* [to be], for example, *chcialby* [he would like], *chciałaby* [she would like]. The process of grammaticalization is understood broadly as pertaining not to individual lexemes or phrases but to whole notional categories. Grammaticalization seen from this angle means that certain categories are reflected in grammar and language structure. This process is based on specialization of certain morphemes, which results in non-linguistic semantic categories gaining specific and distinct morphological exponents. Such an outlook on grammaticalization is shared by Jolanta Mindak,¹ who relates it to the linguistic animate category of gender in the Slavonic languages. In the Polish linguistic literature, a term that is used in reference to this understood process of grammaticalization is *morphologization*, which is most commonly used in the phrase *gender morphologization*.² Alternatively, the term *semantization*³ is used. It is believed

1 Jolanta Mindak, *Językowa kategoria żywotności w polszczyźnie i słowiańszczyźnie na tle innych języków świata. Próba ujęcia typologicznego* [The Linguistic Category of Animate Gender in Polish and Slavonic Languages against Other World Languages] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990).

2 Marian Kucala's opinion on this subject can be found in *Rodzaj gramatyczny w historii polszczyzny* [Grammatical Gender in the History of Polish] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978).

3 Cf. Marian Kucala, "Zmiany semantycznych podstaw rodzaju gramatycznego" [Changes of Semantic Reasons behind Grammatical Gender], *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych*, 5th series. *Językoznawstwo* (Warszawa: PWN, 1978), pp. 137–142; or by the same author, "Semantyzacja wariantowości fleksyjnej w języku polskim" [Semantization of Inflectional Variants in the Polish Language] in Marian Kucala and Wojciech Ryszard Rzepka, eds., *Studia historycznojęzykowe* [Studies in Historical Linguistics], vol. 2, *Fleksja historyczna* [Historical Inflection] (Kraków: IJP PAN, 1996), pp. 35–41.

that the main manifestation of the semantization of Polish inflection is the emergence of the category of masculine personal gender on the one hand and the emergence of the category of masculine animate gender⁴ on the other. This defined category of masculine animate gender comprises the singular of nouns of the masculine personal and masculine animal gender whose accusative singular is equal to the genitive. Furthermore, the category of masculine personal gender is expressed by the masculine personal gender that is characterised on the one hand by usually specific nominative plural endings such as *-owie* lub *-i/-y*⁵ and on the other hand by the syncretism of the plural accusative and genitive, as in words such as *mężowie*, *studenci* and *mężów*, *studentów* [nom. *mężowie* “husbands,” *studenci* “students,” gen. and acc. *mężów*, *studentów*]. Only the category of masculine personal gender is distinct in contemporary Polish because the exponent of the masculine animate gender, that is, the syncretism of the singular accusative and genitive, is spreading among more and more lexeme classes.⁶ However, this syncretism of the singular accusative

4 Cf. Krystyna Długosz-Kurczabowa, Stanisław Dubisz, *Gramatyka historyczna języka polskiego. Podręcznik dla studentów polonistyki* [Historical Grammar of Polish: A Handbook for Students of Polish] (Warszawa: Wyd. UW, 1998), p. 222: “Przejawami semantyzacji jest powstanie kategorii żywotności//nieżywotności w liczbie pojedynczej i kategorii męskoosobowości//niemęskoosobowości w liczbie mnogiej” [Semantization manifests itself in the emergence of the category of animate gender and non-animate gender in the singular and masculine and non-masculine personal gender in the plural].

5 In the plural nominative of the masculine personal gender, there is also a co-functional ending *-e* also typical of the remaining masculine genders and of the feminine gender as well.

6 Recent publications on this subject by Mirosław Bańko, *Wykłady z polskiej fleksji* [Lectures on Polish Inflection] (Warszawa: Wyd. Nauk. PWN, 2002), pp. 150–154; Marek Łaziński, *O panach i paniach. Polskie rzeczowniki tytułowe i ich asymetria rodzajowo-plciowa* [Sir and Madam: Polish Titular Nouns and Their Asymmetry with Regard to Gender and Kind] (Warszawa: Wyd. Nauk. PWN, 2006), pp. 180–183; and also Wiesław Tomasz Stefańczyk, *Kategoria rodzaju i przypadku polskiego rzeczownika. Próba synchronicznej analizy morfologicznej* [The Category of Gender and Case of the Polish Noun: An Attempt at Synchronic Morphological Analysis] (Kraków: Wyd. UJ, 2007), pp. 86–92.

and genitive is usually acquired by whole classes of nouns, not by individual lexemes. This means that semantization, that is, the connection of a given inflectional ending with the meaning of a noun, concerns only large groups, but also smaller semantic classes such as names of dances, fungi, games, food, cars, etc., such as *mam opla*, *mercedesa*⁷ [I have an Opel, a Mercedes].

The term *semantization* may be understood broadly as the connection between the choice of inflectional morphemes with the meaning of nouns, and may refer to not only new grammatical genders formed in the Polish language (that is, to the masculine personal, masculine animal, and inanimate genders) but also to older, traditional ones, such as the feminine and neuter gender. The reason is that all grammatical morphemes are the smallest meaningful language units; therefore, they are equally monosemantic, as for instance the ending *-a* in the accusative singular (as in the forms *męża*, *studenta*). There are also endings such as *-ę* in the accusative singular of the feminine gender (as in *żonę*, *studentkę*) or *-y//i* in the plural accusative of the feminine gender, which is syncretic with the plural nominative and vocative (for example, *żony*, *studentki* [wives, students]). Semantization understood narrowly and only in reference to the category of masculine personal gender (on the one hand) and to the category of masculine animate gender (on the other) is based on the formation of endings that are typical of these categories and on their repartition based on rules slightly different than previously used: in the case of the masculine personal gender, the rules are clear and distinct.

Grammaticalization is described among the synonymous terms presented here as denoting a certain specialization of inflectional morphemes, which is based on the connection of their repartition with the meaning. *Grammaticalization* understood as the reflection of semantic categories in grammar, such as the above-mentioned masculine personal gender or masculine animate gender, can refer only to nouns as lexemes whose grammatical gender is a selective category ascribed to

⁷ The remaining masculine inanimate nouns retain the original singular accusative ending, which is syncretic with the nominative singular, that is, *widzę stół*, *las* [I can see a table, wood].

each noun as a lexical unit.⁸ Moreover, the grammaticalization of the masculine personal category is also present in the inflection of adjectives and numerals and in personal gender verb forms whose gender is solely the inflectional category (they are inflected by gender and do not have a given grammatical gender); therefore, there are no semantic grounds for such paradigms. Henceforth, grammaticalization is treated in a broader sense—as a specialization of inflectional morphemes of groups of words that have semantic grounds (that is, nouns) and of lexemes binding with nouns on the basis of congruence.

Grammaticalization of the Masculine and Non-Masculine Personal Gender in Adjective and Participle Inflection

Grammaticalization is closely connected with the specialization of individual morphemes. This specialization refers both to noun paradigms and to adjectives and adjectival participles.⁹ A number of adjective endings are homonymic and are not diversified by gender. However, in a couple of grammatical cases in adjective inflection, the very same cases are generated in the inflection of adjectives as in the inflection of nouns. Sets of parallel adjective and noun endings differ between themselves, but the names of adjective genders remain the same as the names of noun genders.

For the purpose of distinguishing adjective gender, four cases only will suffice, that is, the singular and plural nominative and the singular and plural accusative. The sets of endings for each of these four grammatical cases are separate as illustrated in table 1.

The variant endings of the nominative singular of the three masculine genders are conditioned by the stem, that is, after hard and hardened consonants such as *-c*, *-dz*, there occurs the vowel *-y* (for example,

8 The term *selective category* is understood as the fact that each noun has an inherent grammatical gender and does not decline by particular genders.

9 Synchronically speaking, present adjectival participles such as *czytający* [reading] and *czytany* [read] are in fact regular verbal adjectives, and that is why further in the paper, simplified-term adjectives will be used to include both adjectives and participles.

Table 1: Sets of Adjective Endings Used in Determining Their Gender Diversity

Case	Grammatical Gender				
	masculine personal	masculine animal	masculine inanimate	neuter	feminine
sing nom. and voc.	-y// <i>-i</i>	-y// <i>-i</i>	-y// <i>-i</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>a</i>
sing acc.	- <i>ego</i>	- <i>ego</i>	-y// <i>-i</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>ą</i>
pl. nom. and voc.	-i// <i>-y</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>
pl. acc.	-ych// <i>-ich</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>e</i>

zdrowy, dobry, obcy [healthy, good, alien]), while after soft consonants, including *k'*, *g'*, there occurs the vowel *-i* (for example, *letni, wysoki, drogi* [summer-like/lukewarm, tall, expensive/dear]). The same morphological limitations pertain to the remaining cases whose endings begin with the vowel *-i* or *-y*, yet the inflectional stems prove the existence of alterations that are typical of Polish. Therefore, example adjectives in nominative plural of the masculine personal gender have the following forms: *zdrowi, dobrzy, obcy, letni, wysocy, drodzy*.

The same set of endings is also binding in the inflection of gender pronouns (such as the possessive pronouns of the *mój, swój* type or the demonstrative ones, such as *ten, tamten, ów*). Differences are seen only in the singular nominative and vocative of all masculine genders where there is a zero ending, and in the singular nominative, accusative, and vocative of the neuter with hard-consonant-ending pronouns with the ending *-o*, such as *to, tamto, or owo*.

A number of adjective endings are homonymic morphemes, as illustrated in table 1, and which to a considerable degree also concern the remaining cases (as can be seen in table 2).

Endings of Polish adjectives included in table 2 prove the demorphologization of gender in the plural; in the singular, the range of demorphologization is limited to the masculine and neuter gender.

Moreover, both tabular sets of adjective endings show endings that are different from other manifestations of the plural. The table shows masculine personal endings of the nominative plural (the ending *-i//*-y**) and of the accusative plural (the ending *-ych//*-ich**, which is syncretic

Table 2: Remaining Endings of Polish Adjectives

Case	Grammatical Gender				
	masculine personal	masculine animal	masculine inanimate	neuter	feminine
sing. gen.	<i>-ego</i>				<i>-ej</i>
sing. dat.	<i>-emu</i>				<i>-ej</i>
sing. instr.	<i>-ym//im</i>				<i>-ą</i>
sing. loc.	<i>-ym//im</i>				<i>-ej</i>
pl. gen.	<i>-ych//ich</i>				
pl. dat.	<i>-ym//im</i>				
pl. instr.	<i>-ymi//imi</i>				
pl. loc.	<i>-ych//ich</i>				

with the genitive), which do not occur in any other gender. Therefore, in this respect, one can talk about grammaticalization of the category of masculine personal gender in adjective inflection. This change is typical of the Polish language. Comparison with Old Slavonic (and Old Polish) enables us to make a determination that it is generally based on two different processes: limiting the original masculine endings only to masculine personal forms in the nominative plural, and acquiring the genitive plural in the accusative. In the nominative plural, the category of masculine personal gender is determined clearly against other ending changes of this case, which are caused by equalization within its isofunctional endings. They are based on the fact that the initial neuter ending *-a*¹⁰ became obsolete, that the older masculine ending was limited

10 Only in the oldest fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts do the old neuter forms with the ending *-a* occur; these are for instance words such as *słowa znamienita* in *Kazania Świętokrzyskie* [The Holy Cross Sermons] or *sidła śmiertna, słowa boża, drwa polna, usiedlona miasta, wszystkie pokolenia* in *Psalterz floriański* [The Saint Florian Psalter]; more examples can be found in Alina Kępińska, *Kształtowanie się polskiej kategorii męsko- i niemęskoosobowości. Język wobec płci* [The Formation of the Polish Category of Masculine and Non-masculine Personal Gender: Language towards Gender] (Warszawa: Wyd. Wydziału Polonistyki UW, 2006), pp. 38–46.

only to masculine personal forms,¹¹ and that endings that were becoming obsolete were substituted with endings that were originally feminine. The domination of the initially feminine ending *-e* in all forms with the exception of masculine personal forms distinguishes the whole group as a non-masculine personal one. Therefore, this is how the category of masculine personal and the category of non-masculine personal gender (which is distinct in the plural) came into being.

The ending *-e* in the nominative plural is characteristic of the so-called complex declension that emerged after the contraction of vowels in the final sound group of *-yje*, in old forms such as *dobryje* → *dobre* [good]. The same changes in the repartition of nominative plural endings also occur in the old active past participles of the second type, analytic components of personal verb forms, but the ending of all non-masculine forms becomes the plural feminine nominative ending *-y* of the simple adjective and of participle declension. The gender paradigm of personal verb forms is reduced to only the genetic nominative forms of old participles. This is why among those varying with respect to gender, there are only

1) forms of the past tense, previously analytical of the *pisał, pisała, pisało* [he wrote, she wrote, it wrote] type with three basic genders in the singular and *pisali, piwały* [they wrote (masc. & fem.)] with masculine and non-masculine personal forms in the plural;

2) analogical forms of the conditional mood such as *pisałby, pisałaby, pisałoby*, and *pisaliby, piwałyby* [he would write, she would write, it would write, they would write (masc. & fem.)]; and

3) one of the two ways of analytical expression of the future tense of imperfect verbs¹² such as *będzie pisał, będzie pisała, będzie pisało* and *będą pisali, będą piwały* [he will write, she will write, it will write, they will write (masc. & fem.)].

11 In the eighteenth century, the ending was still used in masculine animal forms such as in *źli wilcy biegli* [evil wolves were running].

12 The second way of expressing the future occurs for analytical forms with an infinitive such as *będzie pisać* or *będą pisać*. Also, the future simple tense is expressed by perfect verbs that are not limited by gender (as in the case of the present tense).

Gender variety refers to each grammatical person, not only to the above-mentioned third person, for instance, the first person plural *pisaliśmy*, *pisaliśmy* and *pisalibyśmy*, *pisalibyśmy* etc. [we wrote (masc. & fem.), we would write (masc. & fem.)].

The three basic genders, the masculine, feminine, and neuter of the personal verb forms, occur very rarely in the plural even in old fifteenth-century manuscripts, which is attested to by few old neuter forms with the ending *-a*. In the case of the past tense, these are usually full analytic verb forms consisting of the auxiliary *są* (they are) and the old plural neuter nominative active past participle of the second type with the ending *-a*, as in the example sentences of the fifteenth-century *Psalterz floriański* [The Saint Florian Psalter]:

1. *Nakłoniła są sie* krolestwa (45, 6) – The old neuter verb form *nakłoniła są sie* today has a counterpart that is common to all non-masculine forms, that is, *nakłoniły się*; the English equivalent of the phrase is: Kingdoms bowed (to God).

2. *Kako uwieliczyła sie są* działa Twoja, Gospodnie (91, 5) – The original neuter verb form *uwieliczyła sie są* would be equivalent to the present day verb *uwieliczyły się*, whose English equivalent is: How mighty are Your works, God.

However, this excerpt also includes a few sentences in which one can observe ellipsis of the auxiliary *są*, as in the example below:

3. *Słowa złych przemogła sie* nad nami (64, 3), with the form *przemogła się*, whose contemporary counterpart is *przemogły się*; the English equivalent of the phrase is: The words of the evil ones have defeated us.

4. *Ziemia ruszyła sie* jest i zaprawdę niebiosa *sie rozkapala* od oblicza bożego Synaj (67, 9); in this fragment, the neuter form *sie rozkapala* was finally taken over by the common non-masculine personal form *się rozkapaly*; the English counterpart of the phrase is: The earth moved and verily the heavens wept (rained) at the sight of the Son of God.

Historical changes in gender forms of past tense verbs are based on 1) retention of the *-i* ending, a previously characteristic form of all masculine forms, only in masculine personal forms, and 2) the process of making obsolete the neuter ending *-a* and on substituting the less-used

endings with *-y*, which was originally typical of the feminine gender. Therefore, only two forms were established: the masculine personal with the ending *-i* and the non-masculine personal with the ending *-y*. They were formed due to interference and equalization within the older endings of the plural nominative past participles. The change was strengthened by avoiding homonymy (which is undesirable for the system) in the way of expressing the third person feminine singular and third person neuter plural by common forms, such as *była* as in the following example sentences: *ziemia była* [the earth was] and *słowa była* [words were]. Homonymy (which lasted briefly in fifteenth-century Polish), confirmed by examples 3 and 4, emerged after the disappearance of auxiliary words in older analytical forms of the past tense, that is, the third person singular *jest* and third person plural *są*.

Therefore, parallel changes led to the grammaticalization of the category of masculine and non-masculine personal gender in the plural, which means both adjectives and gender verb forms.

Moreover, other noun modifiers (as numerals) also adapt to the category of masculine and non-masculine personal gender, which appeared in the plural by obtaining two gender exponents as well, the masculine and non-masculine personal, which can be confirmed by the following example forms:

1) Nom.: *trzej, czterej mężczyźni* [three, four men], but *trzy, cztery kobiety, konie, dzieci, or zeszyty* [three, four women, horses, children, or notebooks] and also *pięciu, sześciu synów* [five, six sons], but *pięć, sześć córek, psów, jabłek, or książek* [five, six daughters, dogs, apples, or books] and

2) Acc.: *widzę trzech, czterech mężczyzn* [I can see three, four men], but *trzy, cztery kobiety, konie, jabłka, and zeszyty* [three, four women, horses, apples, and notebooks] and also: *widzę pięciu, sześciu synów* [I can see five, six sons], but *pięć, sześć córek, psów, jabłek, or książek* [five, six daughters, dogs, apples, or books].¹³

13 The transformation of numeral paradigms was a long-lasting and complicated process that has been recently discussed by Mirosława Siuciak, *Kształtowanie się kategorii gramatycznej liczebnika w języku polskim* [The Formation of the Grammatical Category of Numeral in Polish] (Katowice: Wyd. Uniwersytetu

Grammaticalization of the Category of Masculine Personal and Masculine Animate Gender in Inflection of Nouns

Moreover, grammaticalization appears in noun inflection and occurs not only in the masculine personal category but also in the masculine animate category (to a small part of it). Due to grammaticalization, one masculine gender is divided into three: the masculine personal, the masculine animal, and the masculine inanimate.

Historical changes in the Polish language that led to the division of a single masculine gender into three separate ones, that is, the masculine personal, the masculine animal, and the masculine inanimate, boil down to the disappearance of some endings on the one hand, and on the other hand, to extending (and decreasing) the range of use of others. These are endings of words that play the same syntactic role either in analogical constructions (change of repartition of isofunctional endings, including the nominative plural, taking place regardless of older gender divisions) or in self-complementary constructions, which comprise the object occurring in verbs with the accusative regimen taking the form of the genitive under negation (hence, the equation of the accusative with the genitive).

It is believed that the ending *-y* in further groups of masculine nouns such as *chleby*, *stoły* [loaves of bread, tables] or *psy*, *kruki* [dogs, ravens] was acquired from the plural masculine accusative.¹⁴ However, new gen-

Śląskiego, 2008) and by Izabela Stapor, *Kształtowanie się normy dotyczącej fleksji liczebników polskich od XVI do XIX wieku* [The Formation of the Norm pertaining to the Inflection of Polish 16th–19th Century Numerals] (Warszawa: Wyd. Wydziału Polonistyki UW, 2008). Apart from numeral masculine and non-masculine personal forms, mass numerals such as *troje*, *czworo*, *pięcioro* czy *sześćioro* were preserved in vestigial form, which additionally complicates the state of numeral paradigms. Mass numerals are used only with some neuter nouns, for example, *troje*, *pięcioro* dzieci [three, five children], *dziesięcioro* przykazań [The Ten Commandments], and with some nouns that do not have the singular such as *dwoje* sań [two sleighs] and *troje* skrzypiec [three violins].

14 Cf. Marian Kucala, *Rodzaj gramatyczny*, pp. 167–168; *Ibid.*, see also views of various linguists.

der endings of pronouns, adjectives, and gender-varying predicates in the nominative plural were originally plural feminine nominative endings.¹⁵ One may come also across analogical equalization in the case of nouns – the plural feminine nominative ending *-y* of the hard consonant declension took over in the masculine plural nominative as early as in the Old Polish period, in old endings of masculine inanimate nouns (the change in Old Polish of exceptional forms such as *domowie*, *obłocy* into *domy*, *obłoki* [houses, clouds]), and then in old endings of masculine animal nouns (the change of forms such as *psi*, *orłowie* into *psy*, *orły* [dogs, eagles]). The change did not affect only masculine personal forms, which retained endings specific to them such as *-i*, *-owie*, for example, *sąsiedzi* [neighbours], *synowie* [sons]. Moreover, nominative plural masculine personal nouns have an ending that is shared by soft consonant nouns, that is, the *-e* ending, for instance, the masculine personal *cesarze* [emperors], the masculine animal *konie* [horses], the masculine inanimate *talerze* [plates], and the feminine *panie* [ladies].

Changes of inflectional endings are primarily conditioned by syntax. Those that took place in the nominative plural are the same alterations in isofunctional endings as in the remaining cases of the plural,¹⁶ and they are not comprehensive but limited and partial and do not encompass only one semantic group. The process of equalization of endings of the same grammatical case is analogous to changes concerning the remaining endings of the plural, such as the dative, the instrumental, and the locative. In these cases, the scope of usage of one of the isofunctional endings increased while the other ones became obsolete. This process resulted in

15 More on this subject by Krystyna Kleszczowa, “Zbiory różnorodzajowe a problem genezy rodzaju męskoosobowego” [Multi-gender Sets and the Issue of the Origin of the Masculine Personal Gender], in Janusz Anusiewicz, Kwiryna Handke, eds., *Język a Kultura* [Language and Culture], vol. 9, *Płeć w języku i kulturze* [Gender in Language and Culture] (Wrocław: Wiedza i Kultura, 1994), pp. 75–84; or by the same author, “Staropolskie pogranicza fleksji i derywacji” [Old Polish Borders of Inflection and Derivation] in Kucala, Rzepka, eds., *Studia historycznojęzykowe*, vol. 2, *Fleksja historyczna*, pp. 23–30; or Kępińska, *Kształtowanie się polskiej kategorii*, pp. 163–181.

16 With the exception of the accusative; more on this further in the paper.

the demorphologization of gender in the above-mentioned grammatical cases. Nowadays, there is only one ending, that is, dat. *-om*, loc. *-ach*, and instr. *-ami* and recessive *-mi*.¹⁷

The change stops at the same moment for semantic reasons, that is, in order to retain in Polish the previous varying forms referring to men and women. After the change in the nominative plural endings, which were previously characteristic of all masculine forms, they were limited only to masculine personal forms. They have remained solely in these and have disappeared from the masculine non-personal forms. This process does not give bias to the male gender but enables masculine and personal nouns and words that are in congruence with them to retain dissimilar morphological characteristics by distinctly differing them from others, among which there are also feminine personal forms. Even though feminine personal nouns (and the lexemes that they are in concord with) alone are not considered to be a separate group, the morphological and syntactic differences in the plural between nouns denoting persons of male gender on the one hand and of female gender on the other refer to differences in gender between humans. The range of changes in the plural nominative indicates anthropocentrism. These changes stopped exactly in this place in order to retain a different way – also in the plural – of communicating between people of different gender. This anthropocentrism is conspicuous in the whole Polish gender classification, as even though only masculine personal names are formed in a separate masculine personal gender, within the feminine gender, there is only one distinct, compact, and numerous group distinguishing names of persons of the female gender. On the other hand, asymmetry occurs in Polish gender classification and masculine personal forms are biased.

Apart from the changes in the nominative plural, the alterations in the Polish gender classification depend on changes based on acquiring

17 This is how Wojciech Ryszard Rzepka, the creator of the term and researcher of the process, wrote on the changes in the plural dative, instrumental, and locative in his study *Demorfologizacja rodzaju w liczbie mnogiej rzeczowników w polszczyźnie XVI–XVII wieku* [Gender Demorphologization in the Plural of Nouns in the Polish Language of the 16th and 17th Century] (Poznań: Wydawn. Nauk UAM, 1985).

genitive endings by the accusative, which is limited to specific semantic groups: in the case of singular to masculine animate nouns and in the case of plural to masculine personal ones.

This feature of the Polish language and of Polish syntax is commonly known and referred to by, for example, Greville G. Corbett,¹⁸ who quotes sentences with masculine personal forms of the verb next to non-masculine personal nouns. Difficulty in selecting one or two verb gender forms in the plural arises in the presence of a serial subject that can comprise nouns of various genders including any nouns of one of the three masculine genders. In this case, masculine personal forms of verbs are selected, as the masculine personal gender is the marked element of gender classification.

In the Polish language, there are numerous equalizations and reductions in parallel endings of a given grammatical case, while interferences between endings of different cases are rare. Systematic acquisition of an ending of a different case, characteristic not only of individual nouns but of whole noun classes, only concern some masculine nouns that have obtained an originally genitive ending in the singular and plural accusative. There are syntactic reasons behind these two changes: equalization of isofunctional endings, that is, parallel to a given case, arise because analogical words play the same syntactic function; equalization in the accusative is a result of interference between complementary constructions – negation and positive statements that correspond to it and whose aim is to set a single form of a co-verb object in parallel constructions. Verbs with the accusative regimen (which is the most common in Polish) under negation require an object not in the accusative but in the genitive; for example,

Widzę żonę (żonę – acc. [I can see a wife /acc./]), but *nie widzę żony* (żony – gen. [I can't see a wife /gen./]).

Only one form of the object is distinguished, irrespective of whether the verb is negated or not. The changes relate to verbs with the accusative regimen, which are the only ones that require a different form of the object in negation and a different one in a corresponding positive

18 Greville G. Corbett, *Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 285.

statement. After the changes in both parallel constructions, a common form is created in the object, which is a beneficial syntactic change.¹⁹ This change is limited – in the singular, it pertains to masculine animate nouns and in the plural, it concerns only masculine personal nouns. For instance, there are various sixteenth-century examples (such as *pany – /acc./*, *ich – /gen./*) as shown below:

Pany swe wszystkie mógł pobić, a ich nie pobił

changes into ones in which the object always has the same form as the genitive, that is, the above-mentioned old phrase has become

Panów swych wszystkich mógł pobić, a ich nie pobił. [He could have beaten all his masters, but he didn't.]

Moreover, the parallelism of changes in the singular and plural and the fact that they go beyond nouns and include attributes indicates that the reason for the process is rather syntactic and is not concerned with the independent reconstruction of nominal paradigms. In this very example, to a limited extent, the regimen of the verb changes.

The limitation of changes in the accusative singular to only masculine animate forms is explained by the need to differentiate – in the light of a flexible word order – the form of the subject and of the object, as in the following archaic sentence: *Ojciec widzi syn* [The father sees the son]. After the historical change of the form of the object, the above sentence became *Ojciec widzi syna*, and the new form of the object *syna* is the same as under the following negation: *Ojciec nie widzi syna* [The father does not see the son]. The need to differentiate the form of the subject and the form of the object in sentences following the *ojciec* (subject) *widzi* (predicate) *syn* (object) structure is only a co-factor in the change and influences its scope. Changes that took place in the Old Polish period in the accusative singular initially concerned masculine animate nouns, as they are the ones that most commonly play the role of nominative subject and accusative object. Nowadays, syncretism of the singular accusative and the genitive is extending to various groups of masculine inanimate nouns. “A considerable group of inanimate nouns that obtain the ending *-a* (as in the singular genitive) are company and

19 More on the causes of plural and singular accusative changes in Kępińska, *Kształtowanie się polskiej kategorii*, pp. 231–244.

brand names such as *ford*, *żywiec* (a brand name of beer), and *mars* (a brand of chocolate bar).²⁰ Even though nouns of this type do not have any “metonymic or metaphoric relation to living creatures,”²¹ they are similar to animate names, including personal names, as ones that are individual and that similarly distinguish²² proper names or names of species such as *wróbel* [a sparrow], *pies* [a dog]. This is why among inanimate nouns such syncretism is obtained by hyponyms, while hypernyms, which are superior to them, most commonly remain in an unchanged accusative form equal to the nominative, as in the examples below:

mam opła, mercedesa, but *samochód* [I have an Opel, a Mercedes, but I have a car];

znalazłam prawdziwka, maślaka, but *grzyb* [I have found a boletus, a boletus luteus, but I have found a mushroom];

jem banana, ananasa, but *owoc* [I am eating a banana, a pineapple, but I am eating a fruit]; and

tańczę kankana, walca, but *taniec* [I am doing the cancan, I am dancing a walze, but I am doing a dance].

Only some hypernyms (those that are most common and used in specific reference) obtain analogical syncretism as hyponyms, which are subordinate to them, for example,

palę kenta, dunhila, and therefore also *papierosa* [I am smoking a Kent, a Dunhill, and therefore also I am smoking a cigarette].

Equalization of singular accusative and genitive endings is limited to only a group of masculine gender nouns; there is no such equaliza-

20 Stefańczyk, *Kategoria rodzaju*, p. 87; (Pol.: “Znaczną część rzeczowników nieżywotnych, otrzymujących zakończenie –a – podobnie jak w D lp. – stanowią nazwy firmowe, markowe, gatunkowe, np.: *ford, żywiec, mars*”); Ibid., see also views of various linguists on the reasons behind the change.

21 Łaziński, *O panach i paniach*, p. 181; Pol.: “metonimicznego czy metaforycznego związku z istotami żywymi.”

22 Marian Kucala argues for a semantic category of isolation, cf. Marian Kucala, “Zanikanie kategorii żywotności – nieżywotności w jednej z gwar polskich” [The Disappearance of the Category of Animate Gender in One of the Polish Dialects] in *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej* [Polish and Slavonic Philological Studies], vol. X (1971), pp. 43–57.

tion in the neuter or feminine gender. The lack of equalization in the neuter is explained by the weakness of gender – in Polish, neuter nouns create (especially in comparison to nouns of other genders) a relatively small group, which is confirmed by the research of Wiesław Tomasz Stefańczyk;²³ for instance, the recent *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego*²⁴ [Universal Dictionary of Polish] records around 1,960 neuter nouns with their typical and characteristic (only of them) nominative singular ending *-e*. Interestingly, the largest group of lexemes (amounting to 1,750) are morphologically determined verbal nouns such as *spanie* [sleeping], *mówienie* [speaking], or *mycie* [washing, cleaning]. There are also only few neuter nouns that within the same sentence can play the role of nominative subject and accusative object that is expressed in the same way (neuter nouns are characterised by the same singular accusative and nominative syncretism that remains in the majority of masculine inanimate nouns.)

The acquisition of genitive endings by the accusative singular does not include feminine nouns, probably due to the fact that the endings of all cases in which there is equalization, that is, the nominative, genitive, and accusative singular, are distinct in the feminine gender and are different; compare cases of the example word: *żona*, *żony* and *żonę* [a wife].

In order to answer the question of why analogical alignments of accusative endings to genitive are limited in the plural only to masculine personal nouns and do not take place in other masculine animate nouns, one has to take into consideration the chronology of all three changes that determine the division of one masculine gender into three: the masculine personal, the masculine animal, and the masculine inanimate. And the sequence of these changes is as follows:

1) Equalization of accusative singular forms to the genitive, which pertains to masculine animate nouns and occurred in the oldest fourteenth-century texts

Even in that period, older forms such as *miał koń* (present: *miał konia* [he had a horse]) are scarce; contemporarily, they appear only in fixed idioms and only in prepositional phrases such as *siaść na koń* [to

23 Stefańczyk, *Kategoria rodzaju*, pp. 35–36.

24 Dictionary edited by Stanisław Dubisz, vol. 1–6 (Warszawa: PWN, 2003).

mount a horse], *wyjsć za mąż* [to get married], which can be opposed to regular ones such as *mieć, kochać konia, męża* [to have, to love a horse, a husband].

2) Change of nominative plural endings that took place simultaneously and finally ended later. However, older masculine inanimate forms such as *domowie, obłocy* [houses, clouds] were rare as early as in the fifteenth century, but older forms of masculine animal nouns such as *psi, wilcy* [dogs, wolves] appeared rarely even in the nineteenth century.

3) Equalization of plural accusative forms to the genitive, which concern only masculine personal forms, did not occur in sixteenth-century texts. What can be found there are consistent equalizations in the accusative singular, while there are no such equalizations in the plural accusative; therefore, in texts from this period, one can read the following sentences: *widzę syna, męża, psa, konia* [I can see a son, a husband, a dog, a horse] next to older ones such as *widzę syny, męże, psy, konie* [I can see sons, husbands, dogs, horses], which changed finally into *widzę synów, mężów* [I can see sons, husbands], but the following words remained unchanged: *psy, konie* [dogs, horses].

The answer to why plural accusative and genitive syncretism pertains only to masculine personal forms is given by the chronology of all the above-mentioned sentences. The form of plural nominative forms of feminine and masculine non-personal forms became similar as a result of

1) acquisition by masculine non-personal nouns ending in hard vowels of the ending *-y // -i* (after the vowels *k, g*) in the place of the older ending *-i // -y* (after hardened consonants) or of *-owie*, which is confirmed by feminine forms such as *żony, córki, gwiazdy* [wives, daughters, stars] and masculine forms such as *koty, domy, obłoki* [cats, houses, clouds], formerly *koci, domowie, obłocy*;

2) extension of the scope of usage of the ending *-e*, typical of masculine and feminine nouns ending in a soft vowel having a hardened consonant at the back, to all masculine non-personal nouns whose endings are as described above that temporarily might have had the ending *-owie*, for example, the old word *oltarzowie* [altars] occurring only in the fifteenth century or the word still occurring in the nineteenth century *wróblowie* [sparrows], which finally changed into *oltarze, wróble* with

an ending just the same as in plural nominative of feminine nouns such as *panie, dziewice, studnie* [ladies, virgins, wells]. The ending *-owie* is still rare in the inflection of masculine personal nouns ending in the above-mentioned way, compared to the more common ending *-e*, for example, *królowie, stryjowie, mężowie* but *cesarze, tłumacze, kowale, złodzieje* [kings, uncles, husbands but emperors, translators, smiths, thieves]; in the inflection of some nouns, there are two correct forms: the older one with the ending *-owie* and the newer one with the ending *-e*, for example, *samurajowie* and *samuraje* [samurai].

Due to the changes in the nominative, masculine non-personal nouns incidentally also acquired syncretism in the plural accusative and nominative,²⁵ which until then had been present only in the feminine and neuter forms. The changes in the nominative plural were extensive and also took place in adjective inflection. As a result, a common adjective form was developed for all non-masculine personal forms (and for neuter ones with the new ending *-e*, instead of the older *-a*), for example, *dobrze żony, psy, domy, jabłka* [good wives, dogs, houses, apples], while the older masculine endings remained only in the personal forms, such as *zdrowi, dobrzy synowie, sąsiedzi* [healthy, good sons, neighbours]. The syncretism of the plural nominative and accusative – both the old one that from the very beginning was present in the inflection of feminine and neuter nouns and adjectives, and the new one obtained by masculine non-personal forms due to changes in the plural nominative that have been taking place since the beginning of Polish writing – has become an important, common feature distinguishing all non-masculine personal forms. This is why the changes slowly taking place by the end of the sixteenth century based on replacing plural accusative forms with genitive ones included only masculine personal nouns.

The new plural accusative and nominative syncretism, which was characteristic of all non-masculine personal forms, effectively blocked the spread of the plural accusative and genitive beyond masculine personal forms, including masculine animal forms that already had singular

²⁵ Syncretism of the plural accusative and nominative did not happen for its own sake but resulted from changes in isofunctional endings of plural nominative – not only of nouns but also of adjectives.

accusative and genitive syncretism. Characteristic of only masculine personal forms, this syncretism became another indicator (besides plural nominative endings) of the masculine personal gender. The plural accusative and genitive syncretism of masculine personal nouns, which spread from the end of the sixteenth century, was beneficial because it copied the singular accusative and genitive syncretism that had previously been obtained by these nouns and it also levelled the form of the object in sentences with the accusative regimen and under negation; compare identical accusative and genitive forms in sentences such as *widzę syna, synów* and *nie widzę syna, synów* [I can see a son, sons and I can't see a son, sons] as opposed to very old phrases such as *widzę syn* [I can see a son] and those still used in the sixteenth century such as *widzę syny* [I can see sons]. It is also conspicuous that the main reason for accusative and genitive syncretism is not the need to differentiate the form of the nominative and accusative because masculine personal nouns – before they obtained plural accusative and genitive syncretism – had plural nominative and accusative forms that were distinctly different, as in the following sixteenth-century example sentences:

To byli ci mili sąsiedzi, synowie [These were those nice neighbours, sons] and *Widzę te mile sąsiady, syny* taken over by *Widzę tych miłych sąsiadów, synów* [I can see those nice neighbours, sons].

Similar syncretism of the singular and plural accusative and genitive also occurs in other Slavonic languages, for example, Russian. In Russian, as in Polish, in the singular, only masculine animate nouns are referred to, as in

ètogo studenta (Pol. *tego studenta*, Eng. this student[’s]), *ètogo orla* (Pol. *tego orła*, Eng. this eagle[’s]).

In comparison to Polish, the syncretism of the accusative and genitive in the plural is much broader and includes animate nouns of all three basic genders, that is, the masculine, the feminine, and the neuter, for example,

masculine animate *ètix studentow* (Polish masculine personal: *tych studentów* [these students]), *ètix orlov* (Polish masculine animal acc. = nom.: *te orły* [these eagles]);

feminine animate *ètix sester* and *ètix korov* (Polish acc. = nom.: *te siostry, te krowy* [these sisters, these cows]); and

neuter animate *ètix ćudowišć*²⁶ [these monsters] (Polish acc. = nom., for example, *te straszydła* [these freights]).²⁷

Similarly to Polish, such changes also took place in Russian in the plural nominative of nouns, yet in Russian, the originally feminine ending took over all forms (as well as the masculine personal forms), with the exception of neuter nouns (as is also the case in Polish), which in both languages had their own specific and distinct ending *-a*.²⁸ See the following Russian examples,

masculine: *studenty* [students], *duby* [oaks],
 feminine: *sestry* [sisters], *školy* [schools], but
 neuter: *ćudowišća* [monsters], *vina* [wines],

as opposed to their Polish counterparts: masculine personal gender, *studenci*, with the characteristic ending, while other nouns finish in a hard consonant with the *-y* ending, for example, *dęby*, *siostry*, *szkoly* [oaks, sisters, schools], but in the neuter, similar to Russian, the *-a* ending is used, for example, *wina*, *straszydła* [wines, freights].

In Polish, in the plural nominative, only two genders are distinguished – not only (and not above all) in nominal paradigms, but also in paradigms of adjectives and pronouns (and of numerals, as well as gender personal forms of verbs); compare the example masculine personal

26 Cf. on the same subject Corbett, *Gender*, pp. 166–168.

27 In Polish, there is no neuter animate noun *ćudowišće* but all neuter nouns, including personal ones, such as *dziecko* [a child] and also those morphologically determined and created with the use of the suffixes *-sko* or *-isko/-ysko*, which are augmentative and pejorative names for men and women (for example, *chłopisko* [augmentatively about a man] or *babsko* [augmentatively about a woman] share the same plural nominative and accusative syncretism that is just the same as in masculine non-personal and feminine nouns, that is, for instance, the nominative and accusative plural *te dzieci*, *chłopiska*, *babska* [these children, these men, these women]).

28 In Russian, the range of isofunctional equalizations of plural nominative endings is wider, which is confirmed by such few neuter forms as for instance *jabłoki* (Pol. *jabłka* [apples]) or *pleći* (Pol. *ramiona* [shoulders]); some neuter nouns, especially these denoting double body parts, retained the old dual ending, cf. *oči* (Pol. *oczy* [eyes]), *uši* (Pol. *uszy* [ears]), or *koleni* (Pol. *kolana* [knees]).

forms of the pronoun *ci* [they] as opposed to the form *te* [these ones] in the other genders; in Russian, there is a common form *èti*.

In Polish, the occurrence of only two gender forms of all words in the plural nominative differentiated by gender results in the fact that there appear forms of masculine personal nouns such as the regular and non-marked Russian *studenty*. They occur rarely and in most cases in colloquial Polish. These are mainly nominative and rarely accusative forms syncretic with the nominative; therefore, Zygmunt Saloni positions them within the category of depreciativeness.²⁹

Within the range of plural nominative endings, the situation closest to standard Polish is in the Upper Sorbian language in which the plural nominative of adjectives (and of pronouns) of masculine personal gender is also distinguished, while other genders have a common ending, for example,

masculine personal: *dobri susodzi* (Pol. *dobrzy sąsiedzi* [good neighbours]),
 masculine animate: *dobre konje* (Pol. *dobre konie* [good horses]),
 masculine inanimate: *dobre štomy*³⁰ [good trees],
 feminine: *dobre żony* [good women], Pol. *dobre żony* [good wives], and
 neuter: *dobre słowa* [good words] – identical in both languages.³¹

The current status of gender classification in various Slavonic languages proves the common mechanism of changes, but also shows their different scope.

29 Zygmunt Saloni, “O tzw. formach nieosobowych rzeczowników męskoosobowych we współczesnej polszczyźnie” [On the So-called Impersonal Forms of Masculine Personal Nouns in Contemporary Polish], *Biuletyn PTJ* XLI (1988), pp. 155–166; similarly, also recently, Zygmunt Saloni, Włodzimierz Gruszczyński, Marcin Woliński, Robert Wołosz, *Słownik gramatyczny języka polskiego. Podstawy teoretyczne. Instrukcja użytkownika* [Grammar Dictionary of Polish: Theoretical Foundations: Instruction Manual] (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 2007), pp. 38–41.

30 In Polish, the counterpart to the Upper Sorbian *štom* is the neuter noun *drzewo* [a tree] but the example Polish word *dąb* [an oak] is of analogical masculine inanimate gender that in the plural nominative and in adjective phrases has endings that are just the same as in Upper Sorbian, that is, *dobre dęby* [good oaks]

31 Corbett, *Gender*, pp. 192–193.

Gender Classification of Polish Nouns

Noun gender classification is a result of a certain categorization within the lexical system formed by the whole set of Polish nouns. According to this categorization, each noun has a selective grammatical gender that is ascribed to a particular semantic and morphological group, and its position in this and not in any other group is shown by a proper paradigm connected with the generalised meaning. This meaning is usually determined only on the basis of the most general, minimalistic semantic references and on the basis of negation of the marked element, which in the case of Polish declension is the masculine personal and broadly masculine gender. Each grammatical gender has its own inflectional paradigms, which means that grammaticalization took place in the Polish language.

The masculine personal gender and, to a lesser degree, the masculine animal gender are distinguished contemporarily as marked elements of gender classification due to the above-mentioned changes in inflectional endings that resulted in the grammaticalization of both categories of gender. Today in Polish, only two genders have firm semantic foundations, namely the masculine personal gender and, to a limited extent as it is still expanding and has fuzzy borders, the masculine animal gender.

Out of these two genders, only the masculine personal gender is apparent as it refers to male persons and is also expressed by a larger number of means that are varied and characteristic only of it. Namely, only this gender has in the plural its own definite exponents of the plural nominative and accusative as well as the ability to connect with specific forms of adjectives, numerals, and gender verb forms.

The masculine animal gender in the plural does not have any specific endings but common ones that are typical of all non-masculine personal forms. Nouns having a zero or *-y* ending in the nominative singular are distinguished by the singular accusative and genitive syncretism (which is shared with the masculine personal ones), for example, *kota* [cat – in acc. and gen.], *chodzonego* [name of a dance – in acc. and gen.]. Nouns having the *-a* ending (which are rare in this grammatical gender) do not share the singular accusative and genitive syncretism. However, adjectives that modify them show syncretism: compare sing. gen.

tego głupiego ofermy [of this stupid moron] and sing. acc. *tego głupiego oferme* [this stupid moron].

This singular accusative and genitive syncretism,³² which is common with the masculine personal gender, along with the lack of the plural accusative and genitive syncretism characteristic only of masculine personal nouns, enables us to distinguish the masculine personal and masculine animal gender.

The zero ending in the nominative singular is typical of all masculine genders – masculine nouns having other endings are scarce.³³

The only indicator of membership of nouns with the nominative singular ending to the masculine animal gender is the singular accusative and genitive syncretism connected with the plural nominative and accusative syncretism. Such gender is shared by a few marked and pejorative names for women such as *babsztyl* [an old cow], *garkotuk* [a clumsy cook]. All this indicates that the term *masculine animal* is no longer valid today. It is retained only because among the nouns of this gender, the only consistent group includes the names of animals with the zero ending in the nominative singular and most commonly numerous names of species such as *orzeł*, *lew*, *pająk*, or *wróbel* [an eagle, a lion, a spider, or a sparrow]. The semantic and inflectional characteristic of this group of nouns is the following: masculine names of animals with the zero ending. It does not take into consideration any biological gender reference. In fact, only few nouns of this gender refer to natural gender:

32 Its own syncretism in the accusative and genitive singular is shared only by masculine personal nouns with the following endings, zero, *-y*, and *-i* (these are rare lexemes after adjective substantivization of adjectives such as *znajomy*, *bliźni* [an acquaintance, a neighbour]), as well as rare (and typical only of the Polish used among family members) nouns with the ending *-o* such as *dziadzio* [a grandpa], and the singular accusative and genitive *tego dobrego syna*, *znajomego*, *bliźniego*, *dziadzia* [of this good son, acquaintance, neighbour, grandpa]. Masculine personal nouns ending in *-a* have their own, distinct singular genitive and accusative endings, and plural genitive and accusative syncretism refers only to adjectives that are connected with, for example, gen. *tego dobrego poety* [of this good poet] or acc. *tego dobrego poetę* [this good poet].

33 Detailed information on the endings of particular nouns is included in the above-mentioned study by Wiesław Tomasz Stefańczyk.

the only exceptions are names of animals that are important for humans, in the majority of cases, domesticated ones such as *byk* [a bull], *ogier* [a stallion], or *baran* [a ram].

Another masculine gender, namely the masculine inanimate gender, is distinguished in the context of negation of the two remaining masculine genders. This gender is also shared by inanimate nouns with the nominative singular zero ending, which have both accusatives syncretic with their nominatives; these nouns in the singular genitive have the ending *-a* or *-u*.

All masculine genders have their own characteristic paradigms, yet differences between them obtained as a result of grammaticalization of the category of masculine personal and masculine animate gender boil down to only three paradigms: the accusative singular, and the nominative and the accusative plural.

The feminine and neuter gender in accordance with minimalist semantic and inflectional reference is distinguished as non-masculine without any specific (as a whole class) or common semantic characteristics. However, each of them has its own, specific paradigms that as a whole differ from masculine paradigms, which, in accordance with minimalist treatment of the semantic and inflectional criterion, enable us to determine each of the two genders respectively as *non-masculine*. Even nominative singular endings make these two genders different from one another.

Semantic and inflectional foundations of the feminine gender in the case of nouns referring to female persons are not only negative, but *non-masculine*. The positive semantic and inflectional criterion considering one semantic group is names of women, young women, and children of the female gender with the nominative ending *-a*. These are definitely nouns of the feminine gender.³⁴ These are typical nouns denoting females; they amount to about 90 percent of all nouns referring to women.

34 In the twentieth century, the semantic and inflectional criterion expanded to uninflected feminine nouns with the zero ending: all such nouns are used to name persons of the female gender, for example, *rektor* [a rector (about a women)].

Apart from this, women can be also referred to by means of a few masculine animal nouns such as *babsztyl*, *garkotłuk* [an old cow, a clumsy cook] or neuter ones such as *dziewczę* [a girl, a lass].

As far as usage is concerned, in particular texts, the gender of the noun is expressed by certain grammatical means. These means – both morphological and syntactic – are the exponents of the category of gender. They include

1) morphological characteristics, that is, the gender pattern of inflection (the whole paradigm), which even in the sing. nom. co-identifies (along with the general meaning) the appropriate noun gender;³⁵

2) congruence as a type of syntactic relation determining mutual agreement of noun forms and parts of speech whose gender is an inflectional category in the narrow sense, that is, those that are inflected by gender; and

3) syntactic rules of collocation with some types of cardinal or group numerals.

The list of the five basic noun gender values proposed by Witold Mańczak³⁶ and included in Roman Laskowski's³⁷ classification has not changed. These are the following genders: the masculine personal, the masculine animal, the masculine inanimate (also known in Polish as the masculine objective), the feminine, and the neuter. Defective nouns within the category of number can be added to these genders as the masculine personal without the singular and non-masculine personal without the singular. Only two separate sets of inflectional exponents of these nouns – the masculine personal, for example, *studenci* [students – re-

35 Particular gender values are distinguished in such a situation according to the semantic and inflectional criterion.

36 Witold Mańczak, "Ile rodzajów jest w polskim?" [How Many Genders Are There in Polish?], *Język Polski XXXVI* (1956), pp. 116–121.

37 Roman Laskowski, "Kategorie morfologiczne języka polskiego – charakterystyka funkcjonalna" [Morphological Categories of the Polish Language: Functional Characteristics], in Renata Grzegorzczkova, Roman Laskowski, Henryk Wróbel, eds., *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Morfologia* [The Grammar of Contemporary Polish Morphology] (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), pp. 121–169; no changes in further editions, for example, in the 1999 one.

ferring to both genders³⁸] and the non-masculine personal, for example, *sanie* [a sleigh], *urodziny* [birthday] – clearly prove the shaping of the category of the masculine and non-masculine personal gender in Polish in the plural. Detailed analysis of nouns that do not have the singular and of syntactic partnerships containing these nouns is not the subject of the present paper.

The grammatical gender of nouns is temporarily defined as a syntactic category by invoking diagnostic contexts. However, determining the gender of nouns only by diagnostic context creates a false impression that a noun can have a constant, unchangeable form and that it acquires its grammatical gender due to its collocation with adjectives, numerals, and verbs of a given gender. Nevertheless, Polish nouns also have their own, differing gender paradigms, while adjectives, numerals, and gender forms of verbs acquire a gender that is required by the noun. The gender of each noun is determined (identifiable) in the same degree both due to the noun's inflectional pattern connected with its generalised meaning and also due to syntactic collocation rules of the noun with other gender-varying components of the utterance. The grammatical gender of nouns is described as “a property consisting of requiring that words entering into syntactic relations with them have a strictly determined form”³⁹; however, the gender of a noun is also its gender inflectional paradigms, which to a large extent are connected with the meaning.

Definitions of noun gender values based only on accusative and nominative plural diagnostic contexts (such as the one given below) are incomplete, clumsy, and do not reflect actual usage.

38 In the group of masculine personal nouns without the singular, there are also old, neuter mass nouns such as *państwo* “pan i pani lub panowie i panie” [sir and madam, sirs and madams] and nowadays, the less productive *generalostwo* “general z żoną” [a general and his wife]. In fact, they build syntactic structures of not the *ad formam* but of the *ad sensum* type such as *Państwo byli. Generalostwo przyszli.*

39 Saloni et al., *Słownik gramatyczny języka polskiego*, p. 32; Pol.: “właściwość polegająca na wymaganiu od wyrazu wiążącego się z nim składniowo ściśle określonej formy.”

Masculine personal gender is shared by nouns in whose syntactic surroundings there are forms of the <*tego, innych, którzy, byli*> type.⁴⁰ This definition was created on the basis of the following context: „Zobacz tego chłopca i innych chłopców, którzy tam byli” [See that boy over there and other boys who were there].

This is why for the five basic noun gender values I propose the following definitions, taking into account parameters that are vital for the category of gender, which are the semantic and morphological parameters and the basic parameter, namely, congruence. The nominative singular is always included in definitions as “it is the nominative singular that is the form that is coded in the mental dictionary; it functions in the memory as the initial form in creating other paradigm forms”⁴¹; it is also the initial form in determining the grammatical gender of other words in the syntactic partnership. Definitions of particular genders are given in the following order:

40 Magdalena Derwojedowa, Alicja Gałczyńska, Włodzimierz Gruszczyński, Dorota Kopcińska, Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz, Izabela Winiarska-Górska, *Język polski. Kompendium* [The Polish Language: A Compendium] (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2005), p. 177; Pol.: rodzaj “męskoosobowy (mos) mają rzeczowniki, w których otoczeniu składniowym występują formy typu: <*tego, innych, którzy, byli*>.”

41 Thomas Menzel, *Zasady rozwojowe polskich rzeczowników i przymiotników* [Developmental Rules of Polish Nouns and Adjectives], in Zdzisława Krążyńska i Zygmunt Zagórski, eds., *Poznańskie Spotkania Językoznawcze*, vol. VII (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk, 2001), p. 124; Pol.: “M. lp. jest formą zakodowaną w słowniku mentalnym, funkcjonuje on w pamięci jako forma wyjściowa do tworzenia wszystkich innych form paradygmatycznych.” Cf. also remarks on p. 128: “w ciągu rozwoju historycznego języków słowiańskich zwiększyło się znaczenie formy mianownika liczby pojedynczej jako ‘formy podstawowej’ całego paradygmatu (...). W ten sposób mianownik liczby pojedynczej przejął rolę punktu orientacyjnego dla wszystkich zakodowań ikonicznych – zarówno segmentalnych, jak i strukturalnych” [In the course of the historical development of the Slavonic languages, the meaning of the nominative singular as the “basic form” of the whole paradigm increased... Thus, the nominative singular took over the role of the orientation point for all iconic codes – both for segmental and for structural ones].

Names of men and boys that in the nominative singular end in $-\emptyset$, $-a$, $-o$, or $-y$, or $-i$ and whose plural accusative is syncretic with the plural genitive⁴² have the masculine personal gender.

In the case of the masculine personal gender, one does not have to speak about the basic syntactic exponent, that is, about congruence with adjectives of identical gender, as the nouns of this gender are sufficiently distinguished by their own syncretism in the plural accusative and genitive. However, the same feature of the masculine personal gender that is defined by accusative and plural nominative contexts is conveyed by the following statement with which one can supplement the above-mentioned definition:

Masculine personal nouns connect with masculine personal adjectives, that is, with those that have both accusatives syncretic with their genitives.⁴³

Within the range of the masculine animal gender, there are nouns ending in the plural nominative in $-\emptyset$, $-a$ or $-y$, which today are only conventionally thus called, as a whole, masculine animal nouns and which enter into syntactic relations with adjectives of the masculine animal gender characterised by the syncretism of the singular accusative and genitive and of the plural accusative and nominative.

The masculine inanimate gender includes such masculine and inanimate nouns with the ending $-\emptyset$ in the nominative singular, which have

42 The masculine personal gender may even be defined only on the basis of the inflectional criterion in the following way: the masculine personal gender is shared by those Polish nouns whose plural accusative is syncretic with the genitive. Such syncretism is not present in the remaining nouns.

43 The above-mentioned statement precisely conveys the same content that is present in diagnostic context-based definitions. Personally, I prefer the statement suggested here from the references to diagnostic statements because it is not the case that we first have texts and then on their basis distinguish the gender of words that they consist of. Quite the contrary; we can produce texts because we know the gender of nouns due to their semantic and morphological properties. Of course, the gender of each noun can be verified by referring to its collocation with the appropriate gender adjectival form. We do that mainly when the gender status of a given noun is doubtful, which is the case with a few masculine nouns, especially masculine animal and masculine inanimate nouns.

both accusatives syncretic with nominatives. The definition in accordance with the syntactic criterion is that the masculine inanimate gender is shared by those inanimate nouns that enter into syntactic relations with adjectives of the same gender having both accusatives syncretic with their nominatives.

Within the feminine gender, there are feminine nouns, that is, non-masculine ones, with the *-a*, *-i*, or *-ø* endings in the nominative singular, which remain in concord with feminine adjectives.

Within the neuter gender, there are neuter nouns, that is, non-masculine ones, ending in the nominative singular in *-o*, *-e*, *-ę*, or *-um*, which connect with neuter adjectives.

Generally speaking, the neuter gender is shared by uninflected nouns (usually borrowed ones), which have atypical endings such as *etui*, *kombi* [a case, estate car] or Polish endings such as *widzimi się* [a whim]. Those uninflected, atypically ending and borrowed nouns that denote persons are either masculine personal (for example, *guru* [a guru]) or feminine (for example, *lady* [a lady]).

Different nominal gender paradigms indicate grammaticalization of the gender.

Conclusions

The grammaticalization of the category of the masculine and non-masculine personal gender can be described as the formation of two different paradigms of nouns, adjectives, numerals, and gender-varying forms of verbs in the plural in the Polish language. Masculine personal forms and all the remaining ones (that is, non-masculine personal) differ between themselves only in the plural nominative and accusative.

The term *grammaticalization* may also refer to the gender classification of Polish nouns, and grammaticalization itself may be treated as the formation of an inflectional paradigm specific for each gender. Nowadays, the only gender that, due to inclusion of names of male persons, has positive references to extra-linguistic reality is the masculine personal gender. Due to grammaticalization, it has its own, specific inflectional exponents at the same time. The masculine animal gender emerges to a lesser extent (because the borders are fuzzy nowadays) on the basis of

positive semantic and inflectional criterion. The third and last masculine gender is distinguished as an element unmarked in comparison with the first two. However, the other two genders – the feminine and the neuter that have their own, specific paradigms – are distinguished (in agreement with the most general semantic and inflectional criterion) individually as unmarked, non-masculine elements in opposition to the three masculine genders treated jointly.

The category of masculine and non-masculine personal gender is treated in two ways: 1) as a property of the plural and 2) as a basis (next to the fuzzy category of masculine animal gender) of the whole gender classification. The mere treatment of this category as the basis for gender classification of nouns confirms language asymmetry because the unmarked elements are distinguished only as unmarked ones that do not have any common semantic characteristics. Each of them (that is, each of such defined genders) has however its own, specific inflectional paradigms. And this means that one can talk about the grammaticalization of gender. Grammaticalization is then treated as an encoded in a language system, semantic category. This grammaticalization in the Polish language is known as *gender morphologization*. However, the common use of the term *grammaticalization* is used for the decline of some old meaning of a word and getting a grammatical function of that word. This creates a main analytical construction, like the Polish conditional in which there is the old form of the verb *być*. Due to the grammaticalization we got the imperative conditional particle *niech* which is short for *niechaj* (old verb *niechać* ‘nie ruszać, zostawić, nie zajmować się czymś’ [‘don’t touch, leave, not taking care of something’]). Most often this way, syntactical constructions emerge with modal verbs, for example: *mieć, musieć, pozwolić, dać* and other, for example *mam zrobić* [have to do], *muszę przeczytać* [have to read], *pozwolę wyjechać* [allow to leave], *dać się lubić* ‘być miłym, zasługiwać na sympatię’ [be likable, deserve regard]. In today’s modal constructions not only verbs are used, but also old nouns, which went through grammaticalization, for example *trzeba* (now ‘have, should’, for example *trzeba uczyć się* [have to study]). Old adjectives can also be a part of these constructions. For example *wolno* ‘można, przystoi, godzi się’ [can, befits, agrees]), as for example *Czy wolno zapytać?* [Can I ask?] or the old generically diverse adjective *pow-*

inien, powinna, powinno 'he should, it's desirable, necessary that someone do something', for example, *powinien zapłacić* [he should pay].