FACTA UNIVERSITATIS
Series: **Linguistics and Literature** Vol. 7, Nº 2, 2009, pp. 163 - 172

GRAMMATICAL GENDER: A CASE OF NEUTER IN OLD ENGLISH AND LANGUAGES OF EUROPE

UDC 81'362

Junichi Toyota, Flavia Vlasa Florea

University of Lund/University of Belgrade; Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai

Abstract. *The gender assignment of some neuter nouns such as 'child' or particularly 'girl' has been a puzzle, since their referents are human animate and possess natural sex. Why isn't the feminine gender used for a girl? In this paper, we argue that this peculiar gender assignment can date back to a period when Proto-Indo-European was spoken (ca. 6,000 years ago). The gender system in Proto-Indo-European was binary between active (animate referents) and inactive (inanimate referents) and the choice of gender was partially related to the ability to reproduce. The use of neuter for small children or girls can be seen as a residue of the world view commonly employed by Proto-Indo-European speakers. Therefore, historical analysis is indispensable in this case to reveal an underlying semantic system of gender assignment.*

Key words: *grammatical gender, neuter, Proto-Indo-European, gender system, reproduction, historical analysis, gender assignment*

1. INTRODUCTION

One may encounter some problems with assignment of grammatical gender in some languages. For instance English *ship* can be grammatically feminine, but *dog* can be neuter (Barber 2000: 160). There does not seem to be any logical reasons behind this assignment and this has been a puzzle for many scholars and learners of a new language alike. There may be some overt grammatical signs to indicate gender differentiation, but what is most certain is the use of agreement (Corbett 1999: 4-6), i.e. "the determining criterion of gender is agreement" (ibid.: 4). It may be common to use a natural sex as a base for gender assignment, e.g. a male person as masculine, a female person as feminine, and an inanimate object as neuter, but a number of languages exhibit unnatural gender assignment. In this paper, various features concerning the unnatural gender assignment are discussed. Naturally, the main focus of the paper is on the gender system, but other grammatical features such as the case marking system are analysed in order to highlight the gender system. The objective of this paper is to compare English from dif-

Received February 1, 2009

ferent periods with other languages spoken in Europe and see if historical development can be a key to understand unnatural gender assignment.

The paper is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the Old English (OE) grammar and presents how case and gender are used in this language. The next section covers several Indo-European (IE) languages and other non-IE languages spoken in Europe (namely Finno-Ugric and Basque), and analyse case and gender structure in these languages. These two sections provide what is required to understand the main discussion. The last section, the main discussion, examines some oddities within gender and case and identifies how such oddities can arise in some languages but not the others. The main discussion also deals with non-linguistic factors, such as social organisation and cultural history in different parts of Europe.

2. GENDER AND CASE IN OE

The grammar of Present-Day English is full of grammatical peculiarities in comparison with other IE languages (Toyota forthcoming), but earlier language, especially OE, share more common features with other earlier IE languages. In this sense, the gender assignment in OE was more or less the same as in other older Germanic languages, such as Old Norse, Old-High German, etc. OE nouns are divided into three gender classes: masculine, feminine and neuter. Its assignment, however, is very arbitrary at first sight. For example *wif* 'woman (of low degree)' is grammatically a neuter noun while a compound containing *wif*, *wifmann* 'woman' is a masculine noun. The gender assignment does not seem to be related to the natural sex of referents at all in OE: *stān* 'stone' is masculine, but *benc* 'bench' is feminine, and *cild* 'child' or *moðor* 'mother' are neuter. This is only a small part of the complex nature of the OE gender system.

It has not been much noticed, but the gender assignment is most clearly shown in relation to the case marking, as we shortly see various significant points in the following sections. OE had four main cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative and the fifth case, instrumental, for some adjectives and pronouns. It is common in many IE languages that masculine and feminine nouns normally have different case markings for nominative and accusative, but neuter nouns have an identical form for these two cases (see Table 6 and Table 7 for examples from Serbian and Latin, respectively). We will return to why this is so later in Section 4, but in this section, we simply demonstrate examples from OE. The nominative and accusative have in many cases the same inflection except for the feminine nouns in OE (see Table 1). Apart from the nouns, pronouns, demonstrative and adjective had inflections for case, and similar to the case in nouns, nominative and accusative case markings are normally not differentiated, except masculine and feminine singular demonstrative or possessive adjective and the first and the second person plural pronouns. For example, the masculine demonstrative singular pronoun has *sé* for nominative singular and *þæt* for accusative singular, but the singular neuter demonstrative has *þæt* for both nominative and accusative. The plural form, however, presents an identical form for both masculine and neuter. This difference is summarised in Table 2. When nouns are used in conjunction with demonstratives, it is easier to identify the case for singular masculine and feminine nouns. However, it is impossible to tell cases by just looking at the inflection for neuter singular and any plural nouns.

Table 1. Case markings in OE nouns

	stán 'stone (MASC)'	*giefu* 'gift (FEM)'	*scip* 'ship (NEUT)'
NOM (SG)	*stán*	*giefu*	*scip*
ACC	*stán*	*giefe*	*scip*
NOM (PL)	*stánas*	*giefa*	*scipu*
ACC	*stánas*	*giefa*	*scipu*

Table 2. Case markings in singular demonstratives in OE

	MASC	FEM	NEUT
NOM (SG)	*sé*	*séo*	*þæt*
ACC	*þone*	*þá*	*þæt*
NOM (PL)	*þá*	*þá*	*þá*
ACC	*þá*	*þá*	*þá*

Throughout the historical changes, English obviously lost the case marking system, and it was more or less completely lost by the end of the Middle English (ME) period. With the loss of case, it became impossible to see overtly the grammatical gender of nouns except for the pronominal agreement with pronoun. OE did have the case and gender marking system, but it was already in serious decline, and aided by the contact with Old Norse speakers, its fate was destined to its loss very quickly. In order to cope with this change, English started to fix the word order and the position in a sentence can allow speaker/hearer to identify what word functions as a subject, an object, etc.

3. Gender and case in other languages in Europe

The languages spoken in Europe exhibit a different distributional pattern of the grammatical gender from that of OE. Slavic languages, for instance, have three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, and Baltic or Romance languages have two genders, masculine and feminine. Finnish or Hungarian, on the other hand, have no grammatical gender. There are varying degrees of importance of natural sex on grammatical gender.

To illustrate this point, let us take examples from Russian first. Gender in Russian is clearly marked by the declension of nouns. Russian has six cases and four main noun paradigms, as demonstrated in Table 3 (Corbett 1999: 37). Only the singular form is shown for convenience and clarity. Nouns that belong to the declensional type I are masculine, nouns that belong to the type II and III are feminine, and the type IV contains neuter nouns. Like OE, Russian does not differentiate nominative from accusative, except for the type II feminine nouns.

Table 3. Russian gender and case (in singular)

	I (MASC)	II (FEM)	III (FEM)	IV (NEUT)
NOM	*zacon* 'law'	*škola* 'school'	*kost* 'bone'	*vino* 'wine'
ACC	*zacon*	*školu*	*kost*	*vino*
GEN	*zacona*	*školi*	*kosti*	*vina*
DAT	*zaconu*	*škole*	*kost'ju*	*vinu*
INSTR	*zaconom*	*školoj*	*kosti*	*vinom*
LOC	*zacone*	*škole*	*kosti*	*vine*

In case of these Russian examples, the gender difference is clearly identifiable due to, for instance, word endings or declension patterns. In Romanian, however, there is no such clear sign of nouns. The only way to see overtly what gender class each noun belongs to is through articles, although their declension is very minimum (only feminine nouns have different forms for genitive and dative singular) and the masculine and neuter nouns and articles have the same declension pattern, i.e. nouns do not change their form, and the article has different forms for genitive and dative singular. This pattern remarkably resembles the system in OE (cf. Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 4. Romanian nominal declension in singular

	copil 'child' (MASC)	*masă* 'table' (FEM)	*cort* 'tent' (NEUT)
NOM	*un copil*	*o masă*	*un cort*
ACC	*un copil*	*o masă*	*un cort*
GEN	*unui copil*	*unei mese*	*Unui cort*
DAT	*unui copil*	*unei mese*	*Unui cort*

These are merely major declension patterns, but some nouns can present grammatical oddities. For example, Russian nouns like *djadja* 'uncle' and *deduška* 'grandfather' pertain to the declension II, the feminine class, but they are in fact masculine (i.e. adjectives in agreement, for instance, show masculine declension. Note that the noun 'father' is masculine and belongs to the declension I and 'mother' is feminine and belongs to the declension II (Corbett 1999: 37). Apart from this, Serbian *gazda* 'landlord', German *die Memme* '(male) sissy' belong to the feminine gender, although their referents are male. Another case is a use of neuter to child or young female, e.g. German *Mädchen* 'girl'. In German, the diminutive suffix *-chen* strengthens the idea that the word is actually neuter, but the use of neuter to small children is in fact a very common fact in various IE languages, e.g. Serbian *dete* 'child'; German *kinder* 'child'; Icelandic *barn* 'child'. In Classical Greek, *pais* 'child' is masculine when referring to a boy, and neuter when its referent is a girl. Another odd case is found in Serbian, where some nouns shift grammatical gender between singular and plural forms, as demonstrated in 0, taken from Corbett (1999: 173). So for instance, *akt* 'document' is masculine in singular, but neuter in plural.

Table 5. Serbian hybrid nouns

Singular	Plural	Gloss
akt (MASC)	*akta* (NEUT)	'document'
oko (NEUT)	*oči* (FEM)	'eye'
mače (NEUT)	*mačići* (MASC)	'kitten'

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND CASE

So far, we have seen that case marking can sometimes distinguish different grammatical genders. However, the relationship between the case and gender can go beyond this issue of identifying gender class. One of the prime functions of the case marking is to identity the doer of action (i.e. actor or agent) and the recipient of such action (undergoer or patient). These functions are typically marked by nominative and accusative, respectively, although

undergoer can be expressed with genitive or dative for various functions (see Lass 1994: 229-230, 238; Toyota forthcoming for details). What is crucial in this case is that the action is prototypically carried out by animate, but not inanimate, actor, but the recipient can be either animate or inanimate undergoer. This means that the animate entities need to have two different forms, one for actor and another for undergoer, in order to express the chain of causality. The inanimate nouns do not need to have two different forms, since it is not likely to be an actor and it is undergoer by default. This relationship is most clearly shown in Serbian, as shown in Table 6. What is shown in this table is a system of declension based on animacy of referent. In each gender class, there is a clear division between animate referents, which have different form for nominative and accusative in masculine and feminine, but not in neuter. Inanimate referents have the identical form for both nominative and accusative regardless of the gender.

Table 6. Serbian nominal declension (nominative and accusative)

	NON-NEUTER				NEUTER	
	MASC		FEM			
NOM	*sin*	*voz*	*žena*	*noć*	*dete*	*selo*
	'son'	'train'	'woman'	'night'	'child'	'village'
ACC	*sina*	*voz*	*ženu*	*noć*	*dete*	*selo*

Different languages have different kind of mixture of animacy, case and gender. Among the different languages demonstrated so far in this paper, OE and Russian, for instance, only the feminine nouns has different forms for nominative and accusative (Table 1 and Table 3), but the demonstrative has a pattern where masculine and feminine have different forms, but not neuter (Table 2). Romanian, on the other hand, has the identical form for nominative and accusative regardless of gender (Table 4). Let us take a look at another language, Latin, as demonstrated in Table 7. This language demonstrates a clear division between masculine/feminine and neuter in a sense that neuter nouns do not differentiate nominative from accusative. However, due attention should be paid to the form here, too. The accusative in all gender and the neuter nominative have the ending *–m*. This is not a coincidence. The *–m* ending is a sign of inactiveness or inanimateness, and the earlier noun was organised in terms of active/animate and inactive/inanimate. This is the argument put forward by Gamkledidze and Ivanov (1995), Lehmann (2002), among others, concerning the origin of IE languages, commonly known as Proto-Indo-European (PIE) (see section 5.1. for further explanation). This seems to be clearer in ancient languages, as found also in Classical Greek or Sanskrit.

Table 7. Latin nominal declension (singular)

	numerus 'name' (MASC)	*via* 'road' (FEM)	*bellum* 'war' (NEUT)
NOM	*nemerus*	*Via*	*bellum*
GEN	*nemeri*	*Viae*	*belli*
DAT	*numero*	*Viae*	*bello*
ACC	*numerum*	*Viam*	*bellum*
ABL	*numero*	*Via*	*bello*

As these languages develop, they often lose the case marking and it is difficult to see the difference on form, except for genitive. In this type of distinction, the case is normally divided into nominative and oblique cases. This is what is found in most of modern Germanic and Romance languages, except for Romanian (Table 4) and Icelandic, Faroese and German.

Whereas the majority of European languages belong to the Indo-European family, there are some languages that do not belong to this family, e.g. Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian and some languages in the northern part of Russia (Finno-Ugric family) and Basque (language isolate). The Finno-Ugric languages are well-known for their rich case system, but they do not have the grammatical gender. This lack of gender extends so far that the third person pronoun does not distinguish between masculine and feminine forms, e.g. the Hungarian personal pronoun *ö* can be either 'he' or 'she' (Fenyvesi 2005: 16). In these languages, the nominative form is different from the case used for the direct object regardless of the natural sex of the referents. They do not use the accusative case, but its function in Indo-European languages can be achieved by either genitive or partitive. Examples are shown in Table 8 from Finnish. When the nominative form ends with a vowel *–a*, the partitive form resembles the nominative. However, since Finnish has a short and long vowel, a long vowel is used for the partitive in order to distinguish it from the nominative. Notice also that words referring to small children, e.g. 'boy' and 'girl', have different forms for the nominative and genitive/partitive (cf. Section 5).

Table 8. Finnish subject and object marking (Holmberg & Nikanne 1993: 92)

	poika 'boy'	*tyttō* 'girl'	*elān* 'animal'	*kynā* 'pencil'
NOM	*poika*	*tyttō*	*Elān*	*kynā*
GEN	*pojan*	*tyttōn*	*Elāimen*	*kynān*
PART	*poikaa*	*tyttōā*	*Elāintā*	*kynāā*

The relationship between case and gender is obvious in IE languages, especially in older ones. Animate entities are considered the only candidate to initiate actions, while the inanimate entities are often grammatically not able to act on its own and its mere function is a recipient of action. What is commonly found is a case marking pattern whereby nominative and accusative forms are differentiated for animate referents, but these forms are identical for the inanimate referents (i.e. Table 6). Other languages spoken in Europe, e.g. Finno-Ugric and Basque, do not show such pattern: they do not possess grammatical gender at all and the case marking clearly differentiate the nominative and genitive/partitive forms. Thus, there seems to be a clear difference between IE languages and non-IE languages spoken in Europe concerning gender and case.

5. EXCEPTIONAL CASES

We are inclined to assume that natural sex and grammatical gender normally correlate, but as we have seen, certain referents, e.g. small children, especially girls, and women, tend to show 'disagreement' and the neuter gender is normally assigned to them. We have already seen some examples in Section 3, e.g. OE *cild* 'child', Icelandic barn 'child', etc. Generally speaking, "in various languages small children are treated gram-

matically as not being quite human" (Corbett 1999: 14). It is argued in the following subsections that this disagreement is not an accident, but a reflection of how older languages considered grammatical gender.

5.1 Origin of disagreement

In order to search for the origin of disagreement, we need to go back in time ca. 6,000 years, when people in Europe spoke PIE, the mother language of modern IE languages. The gender in this language was binary, divided into active and inactive (Gamkledidze and Ivanov 1995; Lehmann 2002, among others). The nouns that belong to the active class are considered to be able to initiate an action, and inactive nouns are, on the contrary, considered incapable of acting on its own. Naturally, animate referents belong to the active class marked by an ending *-s*, and inanimate ones to the inactive class marked by an ending *-m*. The earlier active noun class can be split into masculine and feminine in daughter languages of PIE, and the inactive class became neuter. No one knows for sure where the feminine gender was derived from (cf. Ledo-Lemos 2003), but it seems certain that the feminine gender somehow came from the earlier active class, since it can contain a number of animate nouns.

The binary system based on animacy of referents in PIE is not a clear system, and some exceptions are involved: some inanimate nouns have both active and inactive forms, e.g. 'water' can be active **Hap^h-* 'water, river, stream (as a moving element)' and inactive *wot'ort^h* 'water (as a non-living element)' (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1995: 238-239). Those referents with two forms are normally considered as either something useful to speakers or being able to reproduce. This can be clearly shown in some ancient languages. In Latin, for instance, names of trees are feminine, but their fruits are neuter, e.g. *pirus* 'pear tree (FEM)' and the fruits *pirum* 'pear (NEUT)'. Note that the ending *-s* in Latin is normally a sign of masculine gender, but in names of trees, it is feminine. As already seen in Table 7 from Latin, the accusative form of the name of trees and the nominative form of their fruits are identical, i.e. the *-m* ending. This is so, since trees can bear fruits, i.e. a sign of ability to reproduce, but their fruits does not show this sign.

Surprisingly, this system based on the PIE active-inactive distinction can be still found in some modern IE languages, and this can be considered what makes the gender disagreement. In other words, referents that undergo gender disagreement are normally young children, especially female. This implies that they have not yet reached the sexual maturity to be able to bear offspring. Once they are old enough to be able to reproduce, their grammatical gender changes to feminine. This system is intricately implemented into their grammatical system in some modern IE languages. In southern dialects of Polish, the neuter is employed when the referent is an unmarried girl. After the marriage the gender changes to the feminine one. In Czech and Slovak, the female person is also referred to as neuter unless she is married (Corbett 1999: 100). In Konkani (Indic), words such as *bayl* 'woman' and *awoy* 'mother' have double gender: they have the agreement with the feminine gender when used to older women and the neuter when referring to young women. According to this system, Konkani has two separate feminine pronouns, e.g. *té* refers to a young woman and *ti*, to an older woman. This system in Konkani is in part due to the semantic change in the world *čedũ* 'child'. This word was originally neuter, like other older IE languages, but it came to refer specifically to a female child, i.e. 'girl', while maintaining its original gender. This is normally considered as a shift in the pronominal system to incorporate the shift of referents according to their age or sexual maturity.

Since the use of neuter to 'child' is originally derived from the gender system in PIE, it is natural that this is a generic system among the IE languages. For instance, the same pattern of disagreement can be found in Konkani: although it is spoken in India, it is an IE language. The generic linkage may be a key for non-IE languages in Europe not to have this disagreement system, but some non-IE languages in India, e.g. Dravidian languages, have this system, e.g. Tamil *makavu* 'child (NEUT)'. This could suggest that the Dravidian languages are related to the IE languages more closely than the Finno-Ugric languages or Basque. Further research is required, but it may be a clue to identify a wider generic linkage surrounding the IE languages. Thus, the gender system can be a good candidate to reveal a generic linkage.

5.2 Changes in grammatical gender

It is obvious by our argument so far that earlier IE languages used neuter for small children, thus causing a gender disagreement from our modern point of view. The general shift is that earlier agreement was based on grammatical gender, and it became semantic-based (i.e. natural sex) as languages evolved. Then how did the shit in gender agreement happen? Corbett (1999:240) claims that "the further it (target type) is removed from its controller, the greater the likelihood of semantic agreement". A gradual shift can be witnessed in a sample text in (1) from OE concerning a word *wīsdōm* 'wisdom (MASC).' The first reference made after a line below the noun follows a grammatical gender with a masculine pronoun *hiene* (MASC), but the second reference made another line later follows the natural sex and the neuter pronoun *hit* (NEUT) is used.

(1)...*ðæt ðū ðone* ***wīsdōm*** *ðe ðē God sealde, ðær ðær*
that you that wisdom which to you God gave there where
ðu ***hiene*** *befæstan mæge, befæste. Geðenc hwelc wītu*
you it.MASC implant may implant think what punishments
ūs ðā becōmon for ðisse worulde, ða ða wē ***hit***
to.us then came for this word when we it.NEUT
nōhwæðer ne selfe ne lufodon, ne ēac ōðrum
neither NEG ourselves NEG loved NEG also other
monnum ne lēfdon ...
men NEG allowed

'… that wisdom which God gave to you, where you may implant it, there implant it. Think what punishments would come to us for this world if we did not love it not allowed others to do so…' (*CP* 23-26)

As languages evolve, the nominal declension is often discarded. This is not a special case in English, but in other IE languages, too. The loss of case is also another factor for losing the grammatical agreement and instead, agreement based on natural sex is often introduced. For instance, German still preserves the declension, although this is becoming obsolete. Strictly speaking, due to the presence of the grammatical gender, *Mädchen* 'girl' should be agreed with the neuter declension and pronouns, but nowadays it often agrees with a feminine pronoun. Such a tendency indicates that the German gender assignment system is following the footstep of English, and *Mädchen* 'girl' could be given the feminine gender in the near future. Generally speaking, the gender seems to be prone to changes, as Shields (1979: 27) puts it, "the gender is quite like all other linguistic cate-

gories, which are in a constant state of flux." So the strict gender agreement is in a way historical relic in our modern language.

6. SUMMARY

In this paper, we have examined various types of gender assignment system in languages in Europe. Our analysis suggests that the gender assignment pattern is generic, i.e. it is common in IE languages, but not in non-IE languages in Europe. The deciding factor for this is the agreement for reference to small children, especially female children. In earlier IE languages, the ability to reproduce was used as a criterion for agreement, which assign neuter to these nouns, and this criterion have been preserved in some modern IE languages, too. The assignment pattern based on this criterion does not exist in Finno-Ugric languages. This system in IE languages can date back to PIE, where the active and inactive nominal distinction was the basic criterion for their grammatical structure. So the assignment of neuter to these nouns can be considered as a historical residue of earlier grammatical distinction in IE languages.

This earlier distinction can be also seen in the case marking. The animate referents, which are normally realised as masculine or feminine gender, normally have different forms for nominative and accusative. This is so, because speakers have to identify whether a referent is a doer of action (nominative) or a recipient of action (accusative). This type of distinction is absent in the inanimate referent, i.e. neuter, since they cannot act on its own and they can only be recipient of action. So the nature of gender assignment can be also seen in the case marking system.

Bearing these features in mind, OE *wif* 'woman (of low degree)' or *cild* 'child' as neuter nouns are not odd at all. The oddity from modern perspectives may be derived from different criteria employed earlier, but once we understand earlier system (i.e. ability to reproduce), the gender system in OE is very logical. In addition, the gender assignment system proves to be an important grammatical system in identifying generic linkage. A number of languages still preserve some criteria which emerged some 6,000 years ago. As our analysis shows, such a grammatical feature can be a concrete sign of generic linkage within a single language family.

REFERENCES

1. Barber, Ch. L. 2000. *The English Language: a historical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Corbett, G. G. 1999. *Gender* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Fenyvesi, A. 2005. Hungarian Language Contact outside Hungary: studies in Hungarian as a minority language. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
4. Gamkrelidze, T. V. and V. V. Ivanov 1995. Indo-European and Indo-Europeans: a recpnstruction and historical analysis of a proto-language and proto-culture (part 1): text. (English version by Johanna Nichols). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
5. Holmberg, A. & Urpo, N. 1993. *Case and other functional categories in Finnish syntax*, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter.
6. Lass R. 1994. Old English: A Historical Linguistic Companion. Cambridge.
7. Ledo-Lemos, F. J. 2004. Femininum Genus: A study on the origins of the Indo-European feminine grammatical gender. München: Lincom Europa.
8. Lehmann, W. P. 2002. *Pre-Indo-European*. Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph 41.
9. Shields, K. 1979. 'A theory of gender change.' *Glossa* 13, 27-38.
10. Toyota, J. forthcoming. *History of English: origins of peculiarities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

GRAMATIČKI ROD: SLUČAJ SREDNJEG RODA U STAROM ENGLESKOM I U JEZICIMA EVROPE

Junichi Toyota, Flavia Vlasa Florea

Određenje roda kod nekih imenica srednjeg roda, poput imenice "dete" ili "devojčica" uvek je predstavljalo zagonetku budući da su njihovi referenti ljudska živa bića i da poseduju prirodan pol. Zbog čega se ne koristi ženski rod za devojčicu? U ovom radu pokazujemo da se takvo neobično određenje roda može pratiti od vremena kada se govorilo proto-indoevropskim jezikom (približno pre 6000 godina). Rodni sistem tada je bio binaran i kretao se od aktivnog do neaktivnog (živi referenti, neživi referenti), a sam izbor određenja roda bio je delimično determinisan sposobnošću za biološku reprodukciju. Upotreba srednjeg roda za malu decu, pa i devojčicu predstavlja reziduum posebnog Weltanschauunga dominantnog kod tadašnjih govornika. Sledstveno tome, smatramo da je istorijska analiza nužna kako bi se otkrile karakteristike dubinskog semantičkog sistema u određivanju roda.

Ključne reči: *gramatički rod, srednji rod, Proto-indoevropski, rodni sistem, reprodukcija, istorijska analiza, određivanje roda*