

## Revising the semantic assignment typology of gender and its repercussions for the analysis of classifier systems

The earliest typologies of semantic gender assignment were strongly biased toward the opposition of feminine vs. masculine sex predominating in languages of Europe and the Near East. However, the increasing knowledge about non-European languages soon showed that there are numerous other semantic assignment criteria possible, raising the important question of their relation to each other both within language-specific systems and cross-linguistically. Nevertheless, even more recent approaches to the basic typology of semantic gender assignment based on wider cross-linguistic data prioritize almost invariably the sex feature, notably Heine's (1982: 190-3) distinction between a) "sex-based," b) "nature-based", and c) "mixed" assignment, and Corbett's (e.g., 2013a, b; 2014) binary opposition of "sex-based" vs. "non-sex-based" assignment. At the same time, these and other scholars, for example, Nichols (1992: 126-7), Croft (1994), and Dahl (2000a, b), have pointed out that the "most general level" of noun categorization relates directly to the nominal hierarchy, where the animacy- and human-based oppositions rather than sex play a central role. The suggestive synchronic and diachronic primacy of animacy- and human-based noun classification is supported by recent research on gender systems in Africa (cf. Güldemann and Fiedler 2022, Güldemann 2023). After outlining the revised typology of basic semantic classification features in the domain of gender, the presentation deals with the implications of this approach for the typology of semantic assignment in classifier systems.

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