

Overt gender marking depending on syntactic context in Ripano

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In a fully canonical gender system it is expected that gender is overtly marked on the noun and is expressed on other parts of speech, thus doubling the marking on the noun (Corbett 2006: 11). Though entailed by a canonical gender system, the marking of gender values on nouns by no means occurs in all gender systems, since the only necessary condition for grammatical gender is agreement. This tension makes overt gender particularly worth investigating.

We present new data from the dialect of Ripatransone, an Italo-Romance variety spoken in southern Marche, in which a subset of nouns systematically takes inflectional gender marking, though not in all syntactic contexts. Examples (1) and (2) from Harder (1988: 114-121) illustrate that overt gender marking occurs in bare noun NPs, but not in determiner NPs.

(1) Strong inflexion

	N	M	F
SG	'sala	'fijj-u	frə'kine
PL		'fijj-i	frə'kina
	'salt'	'son/-s'	'little girl/-s'

(2) Weak inflexion

	N	M	F
SG	lə 'sala	lu 'fijj-a	le frə'kine
PL		li 'fijj-a	lə frə'kina
	'the salt'	'the son/-s'	'the little girl/-s'

This is reminiscent of strong vs. weak adjective inflection in German, except that in German dependency on syntactic context affects agreement targets, whereas here controllers are involved. The complementary distribution of strong and weak inflection in Ripano occurs only with masculine nouns, not with feminine or neuter nouns.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the syntactic dependency of overt gender marking in this dialect through the analysis of new data, collected during our own fieldwork, to test the behaviour of gender agreement on targets and of gender marking on controllers, given their different morphology, morphosyntax and syntax.

References

- Corbett, G. G. 2006. *Agreement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Harder, A. 1988. *Laut- und Formenlehre der Mundart von Ripatransone*. Diss: Kiel.