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How the Latin neuter pronominal forms became markers of non-individuation in Spanish*

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This paper aims at adequately analyzing and classifying an important functional change inside the Spanish pronominal system. This system seems to formally preserve forms of the Latin neuter, which now have the very specialized function of denoting non-individuated referents, one of the whole set of functions of the former Latin neuter pronouns. This article aims at retracing and revealing the main changes in the (pronominal) feature geometry from Latin to Modern Spanish, building on earlier work (cf. Pomino & Stark 2007), after having given a short overview of the functions and the morphology of the so-called Modern Spanish neuter. As will be shown, neither formal (gradual loss of morphophonological material, "attrition" or "morphologicalization") nor syntagmatic (broadening of "structural scope") parameters of grammaticalization theory (following Lehmann 1985 *et passim*) are fulfilled for this special change. Furthermore, the notion of exaptation in the sense of Lass (1990) does not seem to be adequate either, even if seemingly "old" material fulfills a new function in Spanish. Instead, we argue that the analyzed change has to be considered as an example of basic metonymic change (restriction of the meaning of a form by at the same time generalization of its function).

1. Introduction: The so-called "neuter" in Modern Spanish and its origins

Spanish nominal morphology is normally considered to include a two-gender-system, which, as is well known, has developed from the Latin three-gender-system (cf. Penny ²2002). Thus Spanish nouns have two lexical genders, masculine and feminine, which are visible via agreement, e.g. with adnominal adjectives:

(1) a. la_{fem} $flor_{fem}$ $alta_{fem}$ 'the big flower'

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b.   el$_{masc}$ árbol$_{masc}$ alto$_{masc}$ 'the big tree'

c.   esta$_{fem}$ soleada$_{fem}$ mañana$_{fem}$ 'this sunny morning'

d.   este$_{masc}$ soleado$_{masc}$ día$_{masc}$ 'this sunny day'

However, when we look at the Spanish determiner *lo*[1] (vs. *el*$_{masc}$, *la*$_{fem}$), the personal pronouns *ello* (< ILLUD) and *lo* (< ILLUD) (vs. *él*$_{masc}$, *ella*$_{fem}$, *lo*$_{masc}$, *la*$_{fem}$) as well as at the demonstrative pronouns *esto* (< ISTUD), *eso* (< IPSUM) and *aquello* (< *ACCU ILLUD) (vs. *este*$_{masc}$, *esta*$_{fem}$, *ese*$_{masc}$, *esa*$_{fem}$, *aquel*$_{masc}$, *aquella*$_{fem}$), it seems as if the Latin neuter gender, normally considered as completely lost in the Romance languages, is suddenly resurrected (cf. e.g. Ambadiang 1999), because the corresponding masculine and feminine forms differ in many cases formally from these "neuter" forms.

Yet, there are several arguments in the literature against such a treatment: First, in contrast to Latin (cf. *templum ill-ud*$_{neut}$ 'that temple'), there are no clear separate morphological endings for neuter forms in Spanish (cf. Hall 1968; Ojeda 1984; Hare 1994), the *-o* being the usual marker for masculine singular forms (cf. the examples under (1b) and (1d) and the masculine singular accusative pronoun *lo*). There is thus no pattern of a special "neuter" agreement, the "neuter" pronominal forms following the masculine agreement pattern. Second, the gender of pronouns is normally determined by the noun (phrase) which they "substitute", but there are no nouns with neuter gender in Standard Spanish (cf. Bosque 1999). And third, in contrast to other determiners and pronouns as well as to the Latin neuters, the so-called Spanish "neuter" does not allow plural forms (cf. Hare 1994):

(2)   a.   *el útil ~ los útiles* 'the useful one(s)/useful thing(s) or person(s)' vs. *lo útil* ~ **lo útiles* 'what is useful/that which is useful/the usefulness'

b.   *el peor ~ los peores* 'the worst one(s)/worst thing(s) or person(s)' vs. *lo peor ~ *los peores* 'the worst'

Especially this last fact seems to indicate that semantic factors are relevant for an adequate description of the Spanish "neuter", and there are indeed several publications which describe the phenomenon at issue using denotational properties of the intended referents: the features [–animate], [–countable] and above all [+abstract] and [+propositional] are considered relevant for the "neuter" forms to appear (cf. Ojeda 1984, 1992; Penny [2]2002; Hare 1994; Bosque 1999).

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1.   In this paper we will not enter into the ongoing debate on the categorial status of *lo* as either a pronoun – i.e. the atonic counterpart of *ello* – (cf. Bello 1847; Fernández Ramírez 1951b; Luján 1972; Lázaro Carreter 1980; Bosque & Moreno 1990; Hämäläinen 2004), an article (cf. Alarcos 1970a and 1970b; Contreras 1973) or an external derivational 'affix' (cf. RAE 1983: 408; cf. Bosque & Moreno 1990: 12ff. for arguments against this assumption) (cf. Rigau 1999: 321ff.; Leonetti 1999 for more detailed discussion).

But these descriptions suffer from several shortcomings. In Modern Spanish the features [–animate] (or [–human]) are not able to capture the semantic difference between "neuter" and feminine/masculine pronominal forms. As we can see, *el* in (3a) and *la* (3c) as well as *lo* (3b) and (3d) can refer to non-human and, more generally, inanimate objects (cf. as well Manoliu Manea 1970: 244):

(3)   a.   Me parece mejor *el* que Carlos hizo.   (Otheguy 1978: 246)
'The one [thing] which Carlos made seems better to me.'

b.   Me parece mejor *lo* que Carlos hizo.   (Otheguy 1978: 246)
'What Carlos did seems better to me.'

c.   Alcánzame ese diccionario. A ver, aquí está *la* que quiere decir 'serendipity'.
(Otheguy 1978: 247)
'Give me this dictionary. Let us see, here is the one [the word] which means 'serendipity'.'

d.   Alcánzame ese diccionario. A ver, aquí está *lo* que quiere decir 'serendipity'.
(Otheguy 1978: 247)
'Give me this dictionary. Let us see, here is what 'serendipity' means.'

For the above mentioned semantic difference between masculine/feminine and "neuter", the feature [+abstract] is not relevant either. This becomes clear if we consider, for example, the denomination of Hegel's concept by *el absoluto* (cf. Lapesa 1984: 177): *el absoluto* (= masculine) is as abstract as *lo absoluto* (= "neuter") would be. What is relevant instead is the fact that *el absoluto* denotes a well-defined concept located in Hegel's oeuvre while *lo absoluto* is the undefined, undelineated 'absoluteness', something which is also taken into account in the quotation of Otheguy below:

> [E]l/la convey the meaning of clear, well-delineated boundaries; *lo* conveys the meaning of unclear, diffuse, and not well-delineated boundaries. [...] I propose, then, that the forms *el* and *la* mean 'Discrete', and the form *lo* 'Nondiscrete' (Otheguy 1978: 243).

One indication of this analysis being true is the use of the neuter forms in questions where the class of the focused referent is completely unclear:

(4)   a.   ¿Qué es eso?   vs.   *¿Qué es ese/esa?
'What is that?'   *'What is he/she?'

b.   ¿Quién es ese? vs.   *¿Quién es eso?
'Who is this?'   *'Who is that?'   (cf. Manoliu-Manea 1970: 243)

Thus in contrast to the proposed features [–animate], [–countable] or [+abstract], [+propositional], we argue that the basic distinction between feminine/masculine and "neuter" forms has to do with the individuation of the intended referent. *Individuation* means to identify a potential individual referent (concrete or abstract), i.e. individuation thus mainly concerns the difference of the denotation of the nominal or pronominal as "an undifferentiated concept or as an individual" (Lehmann

1991: 206).[2] In this sense, the so-called "neuter" in Spanish is a case of non-individuation (for a similar analysis see Hall 1965, 1968; Manoliu 1970; Mariner 1973; Velleman 1979; Klein-Andreu 1981; Lüdtke 1988; Lapesa 1984; Rodríguez Díez 1996; Álvarez Menéndez 1999; Garcés Gómez 2002).

We assume that the so-called Spanish pronominal "neuters" prototypically refer to intentional objects like e.g. propositions (e.g. *lo que Carlos hizo*, cf. (3b)) or to abstract 'unlocatable' concepts such as *lo bueno*. The important semantic property of these entities is the absence of spatial or temporal delineation; i.e. they do not have perceptual properties, and they do not take place (cf. the distinction between propositions and events in Zucchi 1993). In sum, they cannot be individualized in a way parallel to concrete entities like objects or things or to abstract entities like e.g. the historical destruction of Carthago by the Romans (cf. Seiler 1979).

In the remainder of this paper, we will describe the language change which the development of the Spanish "neuter" out of the Latin system of (demonstrative) pronouns represents (cf. Section 2) and ask how this language change could be classified (cf. Section 3). Thus we do not only want to argue for the characterization of the so-called "neuter" Spanish pronominal forms by referring to (non-)individuation, but our aim is also to show in detail how it came to be that Latin neuter forms were recategorized as markers of non-individuation.

2. The "neuter" in Latin and the "neuter" in Romance

In order to start the discussion of the diachronic analysis of the "neuter", please compare the following quotation of Fernández Ordóñez (2007: 429) below where she seems to assume that the denotation of the Latin neuter has nothing to do with the neuter in Spanish, with the immediately following quotation of Manoliu Manea (1970: 246) who clearly assumes an at least partial continuity with regard to the function of the Latin and the Spanish neuter:

> El valor semántico asociado a esta morfología 'neutra' románica no coincide con la denotación del género neutro latino, [...]. Perdido el género léxico neutro del latín, los pronombres neutros románicos adquirieron nuevos valores semánticos, que implican el establecimiento de una referencia imprecisa en la que se anula contextualmente la expresión del género y el número: *esa casa/ese libro/ese arroz/esa carne es lo que quiero (esos libros son lo que quiero)* (Fernández Ordóñez 2007: 429; our emphasis).[3]
> Todo esto no quiere decir que el 'neutro' español no tenga ninguna relación con las

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2. Cf. also the similar definition of Bisang: individuation as the operation of "[...] explicitely referring to [the, ES/NP] *inherent boundaries* [of a concept, ES/NP], i.e. [...] referring to it as an individual" (Bisang 2002: 301).

3. 'The semantic value associated with Romance 'neuter' morphology does not correspond to the denotation of Latin neuter forms, [...]. After the loss of the Latin neuter in nouns, the neuter pronouns in Romance acquired new semantic values which imply an imprecise reference leading to the contextual omission of gender and number marking: *esa casa* ['this$_{fem}$ house$_{fem}$']/*ese libro* ['this$_{masc}$

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funciones del neutro latino. Pero, mientras que, en latín, la capacidad de aludir a una oración o a un objeto cuya clase se desconoce era *una de las variantes semánticas contextuales del género*, en español, el neutro no es un género [...], sino un medio para expresar la 'no-determinación' [...] (Manoliu Manea 1970: 246; our emphasis).[4]

In what follows we want to show the nature of this continuity. In order to do so, we will use the feature geometry elaborated in Harley & Ritter (1999ff.) (cf. (5)) to describe the semantic features of personal pronouns in different languages. We will illustrate the features usually associated with or expressed by gender and review this in several respects.

(5) Feature geometry for personal pronouns (Harley & Ritter 1999, 2002a: 486)
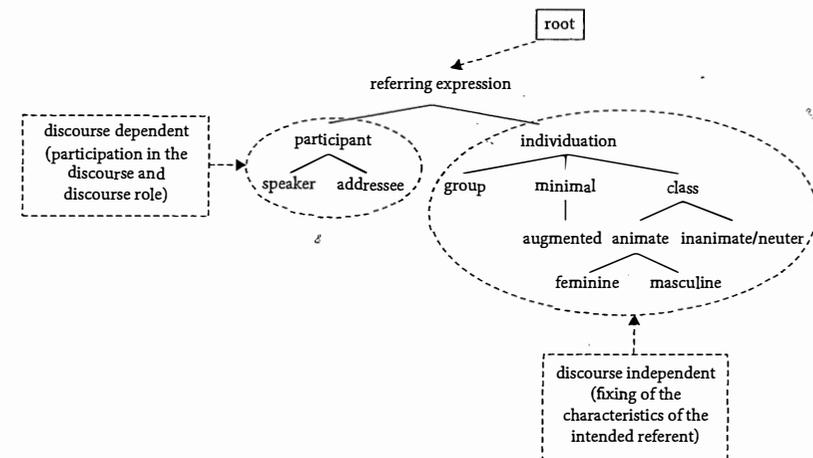
Harley & Ritter depart from the assumption that referring expressions (e.g. *I, you, he*) consist of a set of hierarchically structured privative features: Some features are discourse dependent and specify, in case of personal pronouns, firstly whether the referent participates in the discourse (1st and 2nd person) or not (3rd person) and secondly, in case the referent participates, whether the discursive role is speaker or addressee (cf. the left part of the above geometry).[5] Other features (cf. the right part of the geometry) are

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book$_{masc}$']/*ese arroz* ['this$_{masc}$ rice$_{masc}$']/*esa carne es lo que quiero* ['this$_{fem}$ meat$_{fem}$ is that$_{neut.sg.}$ what I want'] (*esos libros son lo que quiero* ['these$_{masc.pl.}$ books$_{masc.pl.}$ are that$_{neut.sg.}$ what I want'])'.

4. 'All this does not mean that the Spanish 'neuter' has no relation with the functions of the Latin neuter. However, while in Latin the capacity to refer to a sentence or to an object the class of which is unknown was one of the contextual values of gender, in Spanish, the neuter is not a gender [...] but a means to express 'non-determination' [...]'. – Manoliu Manea (1970) uses the term 'non-determination' in order to refer to the absence of individuation.

5. The different pronouns (e.g. personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, and demonstrative prounouns) differ with respect to the left part of the geometry, whereas the right part is the same for all. For example, in the case of demonstrative pronouns, it is completely irrelevant

discourse independent and fix the characteristics of the intended referent: "Individuation" means the selection of an individual referent or of a limited group of individual referents out of a set of possible referents. First person and second person pronouns, i.e. pronouns indicating a participant role, can be represented as the realization of the feature [participant, (speaker)] plus [individuation], whereas third person results from the absence of the [participant]-node. The features dependent on [individuation] – [group], [minimal] and [augmented] – are used to represent number systems. The [class]-node[6] encodes gender and other class information, and, according to Harley & Ritter (1999, 2002a and b), the features dependent on [class] or [classification] distinguish mainly between animate or inanimate/neuter objects. The feature [animate] is further subdivided into [feminine] and [masculine] and accounts for the distinction between these two genders. Thus as the right part of the geometry shows, the authors consider the features [animate] and [inanimate] as basic for the gender distinction.

As the aim of this paper is to sketch the development of the Latin neuter pronominal forms and as the feature [neuter] is entailed in the right part of the geometry, we focus in the following exclusively on this part, the discourse independent one. The relevant part of the geometry is given in (6):[7]

(6)   Discourse independent part of the geometry in (5)

A basic idea of feature geometries is that the *valeur* of each possible combination is defined contrastively. For example, if an expression refers to an animate referent, we could assume the following feature combinations: [individuation, class, animate, feminine] for the feminine, and [individuation, class, animate, masculine] for the masculine. Yet this specification is a bit redundant because the *valeur* masculine can be defined by contrast as the lack of the feature [feminine]. That is, in contrast to the specification given above for the feminine, the masculine can be expressed by the following combination: [individuation, class, animate]. Thus there is no need to fully specify each combination in order to obtain a certain *valeur* (a minimal contrastive under-specification is sufficient) so that we can reduce the geometry in (6a) as illustrated in (6b). If the feature [feminine] is absent in the geometry (6b) (cf. the combination in (7b)), the obtained interpretation will automatically be [masculine], while the absence of the feature [animate] (cf. (7c)) will result, per default, in [inanimate/neuter]. The possible feature combinations of the geometry (6b) are summarized in (7):

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whether the referent participates in the discourse or not. Thus instead of having the feature [participant], they will have features like [location] and [distant from the speaker], [close to the speaker] etc. (cf. Pomino & Stark 2007 for more details).

6.   Related to an operation of *classification* in the sense of Seiler: "[...] a mental operation that causes an object or a multitude of objects to fall under a concept X" (Seiler 1986: 95).

7.   Since there is neither a dual nor a paucal neither in Latin nor in Spanish, we have omitted the features [minimal] and [augmented].

Yet, we will not accept the assumed subdivision for Latin or Spanish under the [classification-node]. It is not possible to assume, neither for Latin nor for Spanish, that [feminine] and [masculine] are subnodes of the feature [animate], while [neuter] is linked to [inanimate]. There are abundant counterexamples like those in (8), which clearly show that [feminine] and [masculine] are also possible with inanimate referents.[8] This is excluded in the above given geometry.

(8) a. inanimate and feminine: Lat. *silva* 'forest', *turris* 'tower'; Sp. *casa* 'house', *silla* 'chair'

b. inanimate and masculine: Lat. *labor* 'work', *dolor* 'pain'; Sp. *libro* 'book', *dedo* 'finger'

Even if these counterexamples are nominal expressions, masculine and feminine demonstrative pronouns like *ese* or *esa* can refer to inanimates without any problems in Spanish; and even personal pronouns like the accusative clitics *lo* or *la* are not sensitive to animacy at all. So feminine and masculine cannot be clearly associated with the feature [animate] in Spanish.

But if we want to keep on assuming a semantically based gender system for Latin (at least for pronouns), we have to ask ourselves which feature could be responsible for the distinction between feminine/masculine on the one side and neuter on the other. According to Hofmann & Szantyr (²1972: 9), the Latin neuter denotes in some cases an unstructured mass or something not well contoured or delineated: "[D]as Neutrum [bezeichnet] eine ungegliederte Masse [...] und dessen Plural [war] [...] ursprünglich [...] eine singularische Kollektivbildung [...]".[9] The neuter *caseum* refers, for example, to a 'mass of cheese', while the masculine form *caseus* denotes 'a piece of cheese' (the opposition between feminine *oliva* 'olive' and neuter *oleum* 'oil' is similar) (Hofmann & Szantyr ²1972: 10).

Thus we can assume that, in Latin, the neuter is sometimes associated with something uncountable and in this sense non-discrete (cf. Brugmann 1911: 86 and Matasović 2004 for similar observations concerning already Indo-European neuter nouns). This seems to hold even more for Latin demonstrative pronouns. At least in the examples in (9), *illud* refers clearly to propositions:

(9) a. *Illud* excruciat: discessus ab omnibus bonis (Cicero Tusc. 1,83; Menge 2000:104)
'This torments him: (he had) to say goodbye to all goods'

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8. Though it is true that in Latin neuter nouns normally denote inanimate referents, apart from some cases of metonymy like Lat. *scortum* 'prostitute' and *mancipium* 'slave' (cf. Hofmann & Szantyr ²1997: 6–12).

9. 'The neuter denotes an unstructured mass and its plural was originally a collective form in the singular'.

b. Ne *illud* quidem intellegunt ita necesse fuisse (Cicero Brut. 289; Menge 2000: 104)
'They do not even understand this, which is so necessary'

c. Hoc *illud* est, quod quaesisti (Stowasser et al. 1979: 216; s.v. *ille*)
'This is what you had asked for before'

d. Venio nunc ad *illud* tuum: non deieci (Cicero, Caec. 64; OLD, s.v. *ille*)
'I come now to your words (to what you have said): I have not forgotten them'

For this reason, we assume that in Latin the right part of the geometry has to be illustrated as in (10) where the three Latin genders are associated directly or indirectly with the opposition between [discrete] vs. [non-discrete]:

(10) Latin
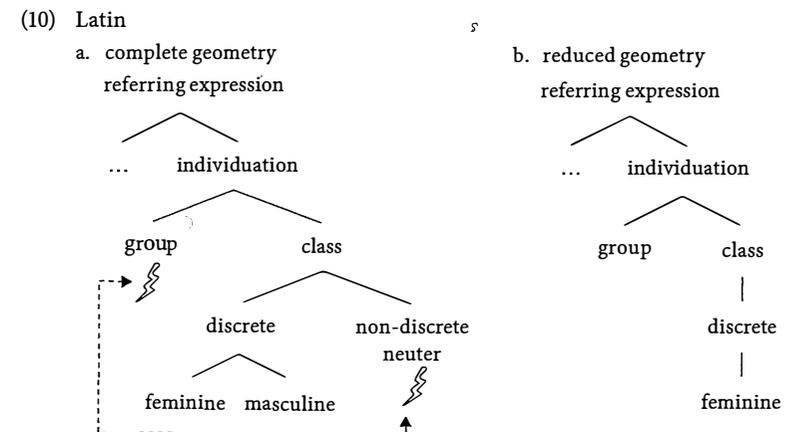
As symbolized by the lightning, this geometry has a weak point: the feature [group] is logically incompatible with the feature [non-discrete]. That is, if neuter gets to be associated with the feature [non-discrete], as we have assumed, the plural forms should not be possible. This situation is reflected in the Latin morphosyntax: In table (11) we see that the endings of *iste* and *ille* show several cases of syncretism.[10] Somehow surprising is the fact that, with the exception of /-ud/, the neuter forms have no proper endings. Yet, as we have shown elsewhere (cf. Pomino & Stark 2007), /-ud/ (as well as the corresponding Spanish /-o/) can be analyzed as the absolute default, i.e. /ud/ is not associated with neuter but is a *default*-exponence expressing no particular feature. Furthermore, if we consider the pronoun *ipse*, we can state

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10. Assuming that vowel length is a distinctive feature, the nominative and ablative forms in the feminine singular are not a case of syncretism. For reasons of space we will not enter into the discussion here of whether the Latin endings should be segmented further, for example into theme vowel + number/case.
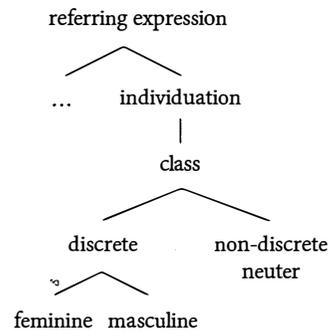
that there is no specific neuter ending at all, for in this case the neuter singular in nominative and accusative case is *ipsum* (vs. *ipsud) just like the masculine singular accusative:

(11)   endings for *iste* and *ille*

	m.sg. F°	f.sg. F°	n.sg. F°	m.pl. F°	f.pl. F°	n.pl. F°
nom.	-e	-a	-*ud*	-ī	-ae	**-a**
gen.	-īus	-īus	-īus	-ōrum	-ārum	-ōrum
dat.	-ī	-ī	-ī	-īs	-īs	-īs
acc.	-um	-am	-*ud*	-ōs	-ās	-a
abl.	-ō	-ā	-ō	-īs	-īs	-īs

All this leads to a strange situation for a real neuter gender, like the one still attested in Latin. We assume thus, in order to resolve the conflicting situation, a slight modification in an intermediate step. As a result of this change, we get two coexisting geometries: one for the singular (cf. (12a)) and a different one for the plural (cf. (12b)):

(12)   a. complete geometry (singular)   b. complete geometry (plural)
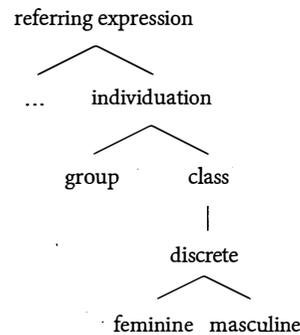
The possible combinations of these geometries are given in (13):

(13)   a. specific combinations of geometry (12a)
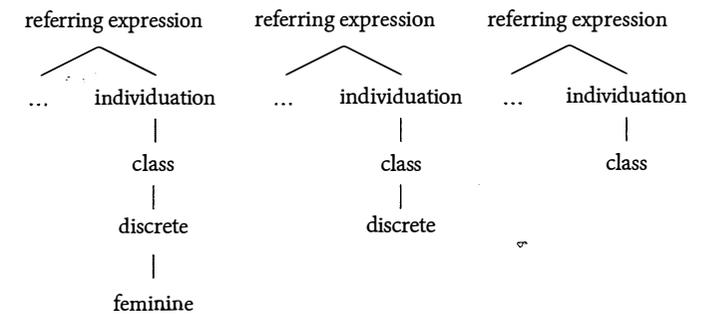
   b. specific combinations of geometry (12b)
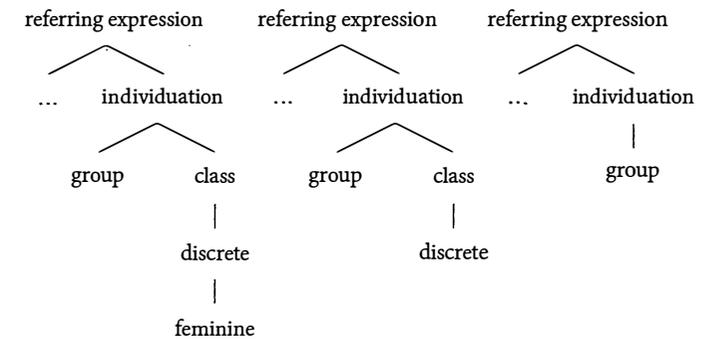
In (13a), the difference between neuter and feminine/masculine lies in the presence or absence of the feature [discrete]. Yet, in the case of (13b), the neuter is a kind of non-classification since the [class]-node is missing. The only thing which is explicitly expressed in this case is the feature [group], i.e. plural.

Furthermore, if we consider the opposition between [discrete] and [non-discrete] in (12a), we have to state that this opposition is strictly speaking not a matter of classification, i.e. one of gender, but a specification of the operation of individuation. As mentioned before, individuation means to identify a potential individual referent (concrete or abstract) and concerns mainly the difference between the denotation of the nominal or pronominal as "an undifferentiated concept or as an individual" (Lehmann 1991: 206). The geometry must reflect this fact, that is the features [discrete] and [non-discrete] cannot depend on the [class]-node. As far as individuation is concerned, the distinction between masculine/feminine and neuter must be located higher in the hierarchy with the effect that the [class]-node gets lost:

(14)   discrete = individuation

       complete geometry (singular)   complete geometry (plural)
       referring expression   referring expression

            ... individuation nonindividuation   ... individuation

                      class   group   class

              discrete   nondiscrete   discrete
                             neuter
           feminine masculine   feminine masculine
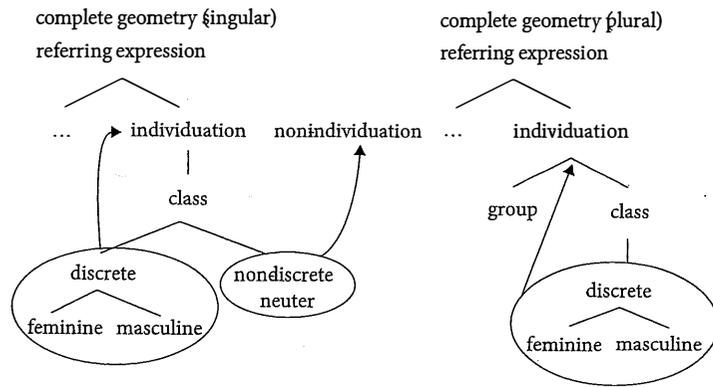
The resulting geometries are given in (15):

(15)   a.   complete geometry (singular)   b.   reduced geometry (plural)
            referring expression   referring expression
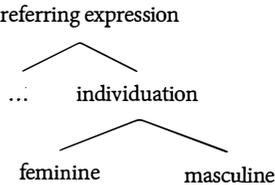
                 ... individuation   ...   individuation

              feminine   masculine   group   feminine masculine
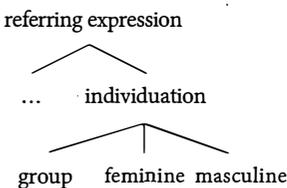
In these geometries, the interpretation of the so-called "neuter" results automatically from the absence of the [individuation]-node.

Note that the geometry (15b) implicitly entails the one in (15a). That is, after the above mentioned change, the assumed coexistence of the two geometries, one for the singular and another for the plural, is no longer necessary. The resulting geometry (cf. (16)) is the one that we think holds for Modern Spanish (cf. the discussion in Section 1):

(16)   Modern Spanish
       a.   complete geometry   b.   reduced geometry
            referring expression   referring expression

                 ... individuation   ... individuation

            group feminine masculine   group   feminine

If the feature [feminine] in (16b) is absent (cf. (17b) and (17d)), the resulting interpretation will be 'masculine', and the absence of [individuation] (cf. (17e)) results in what mistakenly is called "neuter", i.e. in a non-discrete interpretation, in something where the referent is not individuated.

(17)   a.   feminine plural   b.   masculine plural
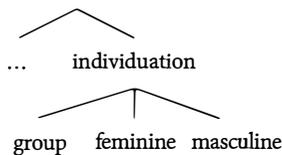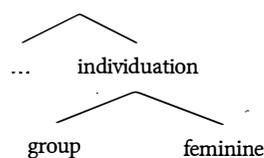   referring expression   referring expression

            ...   individuation   ...   individuation

            group   feminine   group
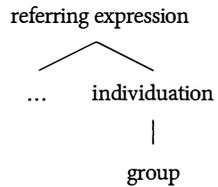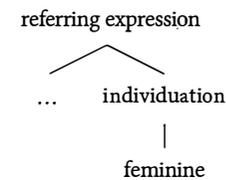
       c.   feminine singular   d.   masculine singular   e.   "neuter"
            referring expression   referring expression   referring expression

            ...   individuation   ...   individuation

                feminine   ...

Please note that the feature [group] depends on [individuation] and as such can only be present if [individuation] is present. Therefore, this feature geometry also explains why the so-called Spanish "neuters" do not allow plural forms.

3.   What kind of language change?

Under the assumption that any diachronic study has to differentiate between different types of language change and can thus contribute to our general understanding of different processes of language change, we will try to categorize the case under discussion here also, but not exclusively, in terms of grammaticalization theory. In order to reach this aim, we first want to clarify some basic assumptions.

It looks as if the notion of *grammaticalization* became broadened over the years, starting from Meillet's original definition to rather vague "some linguistic element > more grammatical" (Campbell 2001: 114, where the notion of "more grammatical" is far from being clear), or to Lehmann's (2004) recent and very general definition: "Grammaticalization of a linguistic sign is a process in which it loses in autonomy by becoming more subject to constraints of the linguistic system" (Lehmann 2004: 155). The seemingly most important characteristic of grammaticalization, i.e. the creation of new grammatical categories, items and structures (cf. Lehmann 2004: 183; see below), are not mentioned in this definition and yet might be the decisive characteristic

to distinguish grammaticalization from other types of linguistic change. Campbell's (2001) result of a detailed analysis of several cases of language change is that there are mainly four well-known mechanisms of language change, i.e. sound change, semantic change, reanalysis and analogy, and that these mechanisms underlie phenomena of grammaticalization in the same way as other types of linguistic change[11] and thus suffice to account for any diachronic study. This might hold also for the linguistic change in question here, a point which we discuss below.

Campbell (2001) ultimately argues for the phenomenon of grammaticalization as being derivative, as it seemingly "[...] has no true status of its own, but rather relies on other processes and mechanisms of linguistic change which exist independently of grammaticalization but which provide the explanations for the phenomena involved in grammaticalization" (Campbell 2001: 113). This would mean that grammaticalization in itself certainly has an heuristic value, but no theoretical status and probably little or no explanatory power on its own. Van Gelderen (2004), without giving up the notion of grammaticalization, can be quoted in this context as a successful example of explaining many different phenomena of grammaticalization by two independent underlying mechanisms ("Spec-to-head" and "Late Merge", in minimalist terminology). Thus she uses the term *grammaticalization* to *describe*, not to *explain* certain phenomena of language change, like e.g. demonstratives becoming articles or full verbs becoming auxiliaries. We cannot go into more detail here – suffice it to say that the multitude of different definitions, concepts and criteria in grammaticalization (theory) render it at least difficult to be operationalized. But what we want to do in the following is to check whether the concepts and categories provided by grammaticalization theory can help us describe or even explain the language change in question here or whether we have to classify it as another type of language change.

In the realm of grammaticalization theory, many different sub-concepts of gradual linguistic change have been introduced over the years, so that *grammaticalization* in whatever persuasion is surrounded by other, yet closely related concepts of grammatical change. In what follows, we want to focus on a discussion of the notion of *grammaticalization* in contrast to or competition with the younger term and concept of *exaptation*.

The development of the Spanish "neuter" forms out of Latin neuter forms just described could, in fact, be considered a case of "linguistic exaptation" (cf. Lass 1990; Vincent 1995) in that their new function seems to be systematically associated with 'old', 'useless' "junk" morphological material (the Latin "neuter" ending /-ud/). This could be seen then as a complementary process to the classical concept of grammaticalization going back to Meillet's original definition:

> [...] the 'grammaticalization' of certain words creates new forms and introduces categories which had no linguistic expression. It changes the system as a whole (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 22).

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11. Cf. Hopper (1991: 21) with a similar insight.

The difference between *exaptation* and *grammaticalization* relative to this definition is summarized in the following scheme proposed by Vincent (1995):

(18) | | Form | Content or function |
|---|---|---|
| Grammaticalization | NEW | NEW |
| Exaptation | OLD | NEW | (cf. Vincent 1995: 437)

As in our case we do not deal with the creation of new grammatical forms out of lexical material, but with the introduction of a new category using already 'old grammatical material', i.e. a marker of non-individuation, this could be a case of exaptation.

On the other hand, the emerging explicit and obligatory coding of '(non-)discreteness' in Spanish looks like a very good instance of the concept of grammaticalization, being an innovation rather than a mere diachronic correspondence between different forms coding the same function in different language stages: it is, in Meillet's words, the introduction of a category which had no linguistic expression in the older system (cf. in a similar perspective Lehmann 2004: 165). From a structuralist perspective, this changed the system as a whole, i.e. it would be a case of grammaticalization.

In contrast to these two opposing views of our change in question, the loss of the Latin neuter as a real gender in Romance is traditionally considered to be simply a loss of (formal) categories. And we have shown in our analysis that the contradictions in the original feature geometry in fact led to the loss of the classification-node, i.e. to a functional reduction or loss as well, without creating something "genuinely new" (Lehmann 2004: 165).

Finally, we will discuss one by one the often mentioned single characteristic elements of grammaticalization processes in order to check their descriptive adequacy for our case of linguistic change to be classified correctly: First, we observe a very slight phonetic change corresponding to well-known sound changes in Romance. The development from ILLUD > *lo* can, of course, be seen as a case of *phonetic erosion*, but is not specific to our "neuter" forms at all (cf. masc. ILLUM > *lo*) and occurred in one or another form in the realm of genuine lexical items too (cf. "erosion of form is not unique to grammaticalization, but is normal phonological change", Campbell 2001: 121).

Concerning syntax, there is no major change like e.g. broadening of structural scope discussed as one parameter of grammaticalization (cf. Lehmann 1985), beside word order changes, cf. the Spanish translations in (19) of the examples already mentioned in (9):

(19) a. *Illud* excruciat: discessus ab omnibus bonis (Cicero Tusc. 1,83; Menge 2000: 104)
'Esto *lo* atormenta: (tenía) que despedirse de todos los bienes'
b. Ne *illud* quidem intellegunt ita necesse fuisse (Cicero Brut. 289; Menge 2000: 104)

'No entienden ni si quiera *lo* que era tán necesario'

c. Hoc *illud* est, quod quaesisti (Stowasser 1979: 216; s.v. ille)
'Esto es *lo* que has preguntado antes'

d. Venio nunc ad *illud* tuum: non deieci (Cicero, Caec. 64; OLD, s.v. ille)
'Vengo ahora a *lo* que has dicho: no lo he olvidado/rechazado'

Neither is there a strict morphological change (except cliticization of formerly free pronouns, typical for grammaticalization, but again not specific to the "neuter" clitic forms). Based on the notions of underspecification and default, we argue that especially the morphosyntactic diachronic analysis shows that the development is neither a case of "exaptation" nor a case of grammaticalization: Spanish /o/ just preserves the default status of Latin /ud/. As we have argued before, the Latin neuter is associated with non-discreteness. Yet, as can be seen in table (20), there is no exponent specified for non-discreteness in the Latin pronominal system. The exponents in bold are only specified for individuation, number and case, /ud/ being underspecified even for these features.

(20)   Latin

		Individuation	class	discrete	feminine	group	
a.	/-a:rum/	+	+	+	+	+	fem (gen.)
b.	/-a:s/	+	+	+	+	+	fem (acc.)
c.	/-ae/	+	+	+	+	+	fem (nom.)
d.	/-am/	+	+	+	+		fem (acc.)
e.	/-a:/	+	+	+	+		fem (abl.)
f.	/-a/$_1$	+	+	+	+		fem (nom.)
g.	/-o:s/	+	+	+		+	masc (acc.)
h.	/-i:/$_1$	+	+	+		+	masc (nom.)
i.	/-um/	+	+	+			masc (acc.)
j.	/-e/	+	+	+			masc (nom.)
k.	/-o:/	+					masc/neut (abl.)
l.	/-o:rum/	+				+	masc/neut (gen.)
m.	/-i:s/	+				+	fem/masc/neut (dat.)
n.	/-a/$_2$	+				+	'collective' (nom.)
o.	/-i:us/	+					fem/masc/neut (gen.)
p.	/-i:/$_2$	+					fem/masc/neut (dat.)
q.	/-ud/						default

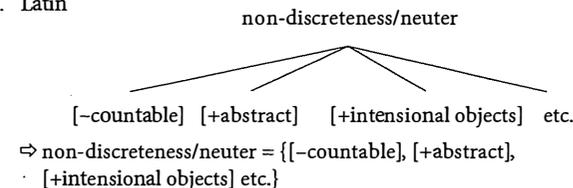The same is true for Spanish with a considerable reduction of the features involved:

(21)

		individuation	feminine	group	
a.	/-a/	+	+		fem
b.	/-e/	+			masc (singular)
c.	/-o/				default
d.	/-s/			+	plural

We thus assume that Spanish /o/ and Latin /ud/ are both default exponents, i.e. in case of the absence of a specific exponent for a certain feature combination they get automatically inserted, without expressing any specific feature.
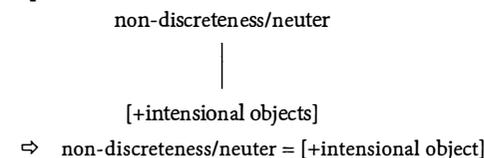
These observations show that many of the grammaticalization parameters (cf. e.g. Lehmann 1985) cannot be observed, either not at all (no change in the morphological status of the respective forms) or not specifically for our "neuter" forms (erosion, cliticization). And it is doubtful whether we are dealing here with a "loss in weight and variability and gain in cohesion" (Lehmann 2004: 155).

All that remains then is a change in content or function, i.e. a semantic change in a broad sense, in two respects: First, in Latin the neuter had a multitude of related functions as designating [–animate], [–countable], [+abstract], [+propositional] etc. discourse referents, all subsumable under the heading NON-DISCRETENESS/NEUTER. In the evolution to Spanish, as Vincent (1995: 436) puts it, "some feature values have been suspended while others have been held constant". In our case, only one of the features in question is preserved. And as such, it became identical with the former matrix feature (or 'hypernym'); compare (22a) with (22b):

(22)   a.   Latin

non-discreteness/neuter

[–countable]   [+abstract]   [+intensional objects]   etc.

⇨ non-discreteness/neuter = {[–countable], [+abstract], [+intensional objects] etc.}

b.   Spanish

non-discreteness/neuter

[+intensional objects]

⇨   non-discreteness/neuter = [+intensional object]

Is this then a case of "semantic bleaching"? The answer to this question depends on the definition of "semantic bleaching" one chooses (cf. e.g. "grammaticalization rips off the lexical features until only the grammatical features are left", Lehmann 1995: 127; "a filtering device that bleaches out all lexical content and retains only the grammatical content of the entity concerned", Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer 1991: 40), but the available definitions do not seem to apply here directly as all features discussed are rather abstract and as there is reduction, i.e. semantic and functional specialization rather than semantic or functional broadening of our "neuter" forms.

Still there is functional loss, also in a second sense: As shown in Section 2, the feature geometry got modified in that the binary opposition between masculine/feminine on the one hand and neuter on the other hand was replaced by the distinction of

individuation vs. non-individuation – which is located higher in the geometry. Classification as one available feature in Latin (pro)nominal morphology, got lost – but this is a loss in the feature structure of a linguistic system rather than a lexical item, so probably the concept of "semantic bleaching" does not apply. Thus the change in question is, at best, a functional or even a purely semantic one, and its adequate description is not possible in terms of grammaticalization theory. It is surely a functional change without any related proper or specific phonetic change, i.e. this case does not corroborate the "parallel reduction hypothesis" (Bybee & Pagliuca 1985: 76) of grammaticalization theory.[12] Further, if "[g]rammaticalization is a process in which function and structure go hand in hand" (Lehmann 2004: 158), then our case of language change is most probably simply outside the field of grammaticalization (theory).

If we broaden the types of semantic change accompanying cases of grammaticalization to principled semantic changes such as metaphor or metonymy (cf. e.g. Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer 1991: 72), we are more successful in understanding our change: The ontologically superordinate distinction makes the classification node obsolete. In other words: there was an 'up-climbing' in the feature geometry, i.e., an originally subordinated node rises into a higher position. We are thus dealing with a wide-spread mechanism of linguistic change, i.e. with a case of functional generalization based on metonymy. Yet metonymy is widely recognized as a, or maybe the, general motor of semantic and/or functional change and is not specific to grammaticalization.[13]

The change in question can thus be related to general properties of human language and conceptualization and to general principles of language change like metonymy. Rather than being a case of grammaticalization, it is a functional change in the semantics of a special subclass of Spanish pronouns, preserving their default status from Latin but generalizing their semantics to [non-individuation].

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12. Cf. the discussion in Campbell (2001: 121–124).

13. Cf. with a similar result Campbell (2001: 121).

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