

Good example of spanish morphology: feminine and masculine articles research pape...

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The Spanish language uses masculine and feminine determiner articles. The masculine article is *el*. It would be found before masculine words such as *cielo*. Meanwhile, the feminine article is *la*. It is utilized before feminine words such as *cara*. It should be noticed that nouns ending in *o* are partnered with *el* while nouns ending in *a* use the article *la*. However, this is not always the case, especially with words that end in neither *o* nor *a*. The words *mano*, *radio*, and *moto* are three of the exceptions among nouns. One would think the article to use with these words is *el*. However, these nouns use *la*. The opposite also applies. The words *clima*, and *planeta* do not go with *la*. Instead, they utilize *el*. Some of the words not ending on both the vowels are *aceite* and *crisis*. *Aceite* goes with *el* while *crisis* comes after *la* (Eddington and Hualde 5; Eisenberg).

In the given examples, the articles used depended on the gender of the noun. Yet in order to determine the gender of a word, one must study its origin. The most popular confusion in utilizing the gender articles is that many feminine words take *el* rather than *la*. This is because the proportion of words that goes with *el*, regardless of noun gender, is greater than *la* (Eddington and Hualde 5; Eisenberg; Nix, Davey, Messer, and Smith 1).

Take *el agua* for example. The word *agua* has a stressed initial *a* and it also ends with *a*, yet it goes with *el*. Past studies interpreted the unique determiner *el* as morphologically feminine with the masculine form.

Moreover, researchers found gender flexibility in the *a* nouns that take this determiner (Varis "The Masculine Art" 1).

This is not the only time that gender morphological change takes place. The history of the Spanish language could substantiate what the gender

agreement in words has become. The el and la articles originated from Latin demonstratives ille and illa. Determiners in the Old Spanish language have two phonological allomorphs, namely el and la, which are produced from one basic feminine form ela. This is closely related to the Latin form. It was common for feminine forms to delete the final vowel. Thus, ela turned to el. This meant the existence of the masculine el and the feminine el. The feminine el equals the masculine because of the Latin form similarity in which they came from (Varis “ The Spanish Feminine El” 120-122; Varis “ The Masculine Art” 1).

Meanwhile, the ela form was simplified to la in the Modern Spanish language, and it follows a prescriptive system. There were more restrictions in the usage of the feminine el, such as only in stressed a, and other times only with nouns. Moreover, the simplification of the ela made recent generations familiar with only two articles, the el and la. Here, la is utilized only for feminine forms. El, on the other hand, is primarily used for masculine forms. However, there is an exception in forms with the prosodic and phonological conditions for the feminine el (Varis “ The Spanish Feminine El” 122-124; Varis “ The Masculine Art” 2).

Given that the articles in the history of the Spanish language have undergone a morphological gender change, it can be said that the el article has an irregular morphology (Nix, Davey, Messer, and Smith 1). With this, let us analyze further the nouns that take the feminine el. The word azúcar encapsulates this morphological gender change.

Azúcar is a borrowed word, which originated from the Arabic word sukkar or as-sukkar. It was originally masculine as it was el azúcar in Old Spanish. The

morphological gender of the noun azúcar back then was open to question due to having an initial a phonological sameness with the feminine el words. It is important to note that the switch with the determiner in the Old Spanish language was not dictated through stresses. When the phonological initial a has undergone restrictions, demanding a stressed a, el azúcar was likely corrected to la azúcar. Due to this contradictory gender understanding for the noun azúcar, it paved way for the acceptance of both gender forms in the Modern Spanish language. Thus, both el azúcar and la azúcar are correct. Azúcar establishes the change in the noun's gender, depending on the various versions of the determiner or its allomorph. This is a positive indication of change from Old Spanish grammar to the Modern one. Moreover, the language users' awareness of the gender morphology and phonology is practiced.

In summary, the issue of gender articles can be traced back in the history of the Spanish language. At each point in time, the usage of the articles follows certain rules. As time progresses, the rules have also changed. This led to some words taking both gender articles, as well as the existence of an article indicating both genders. The issue on gender articles is widely recognized as a confusing subject. Nonetheless, with further studies, there can be ways to simplify and make the rules more understandable.

Works Cited

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