Sex-based Gender

Differentiation in languages with gender categories (see Grammatical Gender) may be based on or linked to a biological differentiation between male and female referents, as in ‎(1). In languages with a masculine-feminine differentiation, nouns denoting inanimates or non-humans can be assigned masculine or feminine gender too.

1. Ushojo [ush] (Indo-Aryan)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | ek | **phoó** | | asíl-**u**, | | | se | seekel-aá | yáa | áal-**u**. |
|  | one | boy(m) | | be.pst-msg | | | 3sg.nom | bicycle-loc | going | come.pfv-msg |
|  | ‘There was a boy, he came riding on a bicycle.’ (USH-PearStoryAH:001) | | | | | | | | | |
| b. | ek | **phuí** | | ... | | seekal-aá | yáa | mušíin | tarapayá | áal-**i**. |
|  | one | girl(f) | |  | | bicycle-loc | going | to.near | in.direction | come.pfv-fsg |
|  | ‘A girl… came in his direction, riding on a bicycle.’ (USH-PearStoryAH:012) | | | | | | | | | |
| c. | axeér | | **oóš** | | čóku | | bíl-**i**. | | | |
|  | finally | | wind(f) | | quiet | | become.pfv-fsg | | | |
|  | ‘Finally the wind gave up.’ (USH-NorthwindAH:007) | | | | | | | | | |

A majority of our sample varieties display evidence of sex-based noun classification, while only 14 of the sample varieties lack this property.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 45 | 76 |
| Absent | 14 | 24 |
| Indeterminate | 0 | 0 |