The Role of Analogy in Romanian Noun System. With Regard to the Analogical Influence of the Plural Forms on the Singular Ones

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Abstract: *Analogy represents one of the main causes that determined the reorganization of the grammatical system in its evolution from Latin to Romanian. A special case of analogy within the nominal system is represented by the influence of the plural forms on the singular ones. Thus, following a certain inflexional model, well represented in language, a whole series of nouns brought forth new singular forms under the influence of the plural ones and also changing their declension type. On the one hand, as far as the singular – plural opposition is concerned, the speaker aimed at the uniformization and normalization of the paradigms, where the differences between the forms were too obvious, and on the other hand, their distinction was taken into consideration in instances where there was a minimum difference or even an identity of the morphemes.*

Key words: *analogy, uniformization, regularization, paradigm, declension*

The issue of the influence of the plural forms on the singular ones has been extensively treated, as far as the Romanian language is concerned, by J. Byck and Al. Graur in their excellent study *Influenţa pluralului asupra singularului substantivelor şi adjectivelor în limba română* [The influence of the plural forms on the singular ones for the Romanian nouns and adjectives] (BL, I, 1933, pp. 14-57, republished in Byck, *Studies*, pp. 49-92). In the present paper we will summarize the most relevant aspects of this process, in order to emphasize the role of analogy within the nominal inflexional paradigm, since in the above-mentioned study the term analogy is nowhere to be explicitly noted (although there are often used such explanatory formulas as: "rebuilt after", "under the influence of", "modeled on", which implies, of course, a reasoning by analogy).

The mechanism by which the speaker creates new singular forms for nouns, based on their plural morphemic structure, is a perfect analogical one. It is the same process at work as, for example, in back formation, where the existence of some structural (inflexional) patterns in language plays a very important role in creating a new word (form).

For instance, since Romanian possessed an inflexional model represented by such singular / plural pairs as: *drac – draci, sac – saci* (according to which those nouns with the radical ended in velar *k* make their plural in pre-palatal *č*), a series of nouns which presented an etymologically normal ending *č* for both singular and plural forms (resulting a homonymous structure as far as the singular-plural opposition is concerned) underwent the analogical process of rebuilding a new singular form in *k*:

former singular form (the etimological one)	the plural form	the new (analogical) singular form
berbece (< Lat. *vervecis*)	*berbeci*	***berbec***
bocanci (from Hung. *bakancs*)	*bocanci*	***bocanc***
copaci (cf. Alb. *kopač*)	*copaci*	***copac***
colaci (from Sl. *kolači*)	*colaci*	***colac***
muci (< Lat. *mucci*)	*muci*	***muc***
papuci (from Turk. *papuç*)	*papuci*	***papuc***
şoarece (< lat. *soricis*)	*şoareci*	***şoarec***

Another inflexional pattern defining the singular / plural opposition in Romanian is represented by such pairs as: *miel – miei, chel – chei*, with the singular form ending in -*l*, and the plural one in -*i* (as a result of the palatalization of *l* under the influence of *i* – the plural

inflexion). By analogy with this pattern, some nouns changed their etymological singular form ended in -*i* and created a new one ended in -*l*:

former singular form (the etimological one)	the plural form	the new (analogical) singular form
ardei (*arde* + suff. -*ei*)	*ardei*	**ardel**
cristei (from Sl. *krastĕlĭ*)	*cristei*	**cristel**
ghizdei (u.et.)	*ghizdei*	**ghizdel**
grindei (*grindă* + *suff.* -*ei*; cf. Bg. *gredel*, SCr. *gredelj*)	*grindei*	**grindel**

The same analogical process happened with a number of nouns which remodeled their former singular ending *ţ* in *t*, following the pattern: *bărbat – bărbaţi, împărat – împăraţi.*

former singular form (the etimological one)	the plural form	the new (analogical) singular form
castraveţ (cf. Bg. *krastaveţ*)	*castraveţi*	**castravet(e)**
cârnaţ (< Lat. *carnacius)	*cârnaţi*	**cârnat**
glonţ (u.et.)	*glonţi*	**glonte**
grăunţ (< Lat. *granuceum*)	*grăunţi*	**grăunte**
obleţ (< *oblu* + suff. -*eţ*)	*obleţ*	**oblet(e)**
scripeţ (from Bg. *skripec*)	*scripeţi*	**scripet(e)**
ştiuleţ (u.et.; cf. Slov. *štulec*, Bg. *stulec*)	*ştiuleţi*	**ştiulet(e)**
zimţ (cf. Bg. *zăbec*, Sb. *zubac*) [1]	*zimţi*	**zimte**

Once created the new singular ending -*ete* for those nouns formerly ending in -*eţ* or –*et* [2], the speaker isolated it and then turned it into a suffix which began to combine with new different roots. This suffix is productive especially in Oltenian dialects: *burete* (cf. *buret*), *orbete* (cf. *orbeţ*), *scapete* (cf. *scapeţ*), *sticlete* (cf *stigleţ*) etc.

It seems that the reason for which the speaker reshaped the singular form for a number of nouns was to distinguish the plural ending from the singular one more clearly. For that reason, those nouns with the radical ended in -*ur* which have the singular declension -*e* and the plural declension -*i* incurred the process we discuss here, since the -*ure* / -*uri* opposition seemed to be insufficient to mark the very important difference between the singular and the plural forms of a noun. Thus, the ending -*uri* was "cut out" (probably because it was mistaken for the plural declension -*uri* of the neuter nouns, by analogy with: *câmp – câmpuri, rost – rosturi*) and the result was the new singular form: *ciuc*, instead of *ciucure*; *ţărm*, instead of *ţărmur(e)*, *sprenţ*, instead of *sprenţure* "male short coat tailored on the waist" etc.

Sometimes the reverse phenomenon occurred. Thus, by analogy with pre-existing models such as: *ciucur – ciucuri, brustur – brusturi, vultur – vulturi, fagur – faguri* etc., and under the influence of the plural form, other nouns reshaped their original singular form: *picur* < *picuri* (cf. former sg. *pic*), *ramură* < *ramuri* (cf. former sg. *ram*), *vreascur(ă)* < *vreascuri* (cf. former sg. *vreasc*) etc.

As discussed in another paper of ours, where we dealt with the role of analogy in the reorganization of the Romanian noun declension system in its evolution from Latin [3], the type of inflexion represented by such inherited words as *stea – stele* (functioning as the model

[4]) was the starting point in the process of rebuilding new singular forms in -ea, under the influence of the plural inflection -*ele:*

> Some singular forms are obviously remodeled with the help of analogy and under the influence of the plural form in -*ele*, the former singular endings -*elă*, -*eală* or -*ală* being replaced: *bretea < bretelă* (cf. Fr. *bretelles*), *flanea* (a variant of *flanelă* < fr. *flanelle*; there is another variant of this singular form, also analogical: *flanel*), *jartea < jartelă* (cf. fr. *jarretelle*); *sardea* (cf. MGr. *sardhélla*, It. *sardella*; the older and etymological form *sardelă* is now used only as a variant); *canea* (cf. MGr. *kanélla*, Bg. *kanela*; the former singular was, no doubt, *canelă*); *caramea* (a largely used variant of *caramelă*, which is, in its turn, rebuild on *caramele*, the plural form of *caramel* < Fr. *caramel*; cf. It. *caramella*) etc. Even old Romanian formations in -*eală* underwent the influence of the *stea – stele* inflexion pattern and rebuilt a new singular form in -*ea*: *podea < podeală* (u.et.), *proptea < propteală* (*propti* + suff. -*eală*), *vopsea* (*văpsea*) < *văpseală* (*vopsi* + suff. -*eală*), *zăbrea < zăbreală* (cf. sl. *zabralo*) etc.; another example to be mentioned here is *surcea*, formed by analogy from the obsolete etymological singular form *surcel* (< Lat. *surcellus*), with the plural form *surcele* [...]. However, it is obvious that analogy did not work in all situations.   We therefore say *capelă*, and not **capea*, *cartelă*, and not **cartea*, *femelă*, and not **femea*, *manivelă*, and not **manivea*, *nacelă*, and not **nacea* etc. (Apostolatu, *Declinările*, pp. 365).

An important role in the analogical process of rebuilding a new singular form under the influence of the plural inflexion was played by the morphophonemic alternation *ea / e* as an internal (and supplementary) mark of the singular / plural opposition. In Romanian there is a well defined pattern represented by such noun pairs as: *seară – seri, teacă – teci, țeapă – țepi, ceapă – cepe*, in which the singular / plural opposition is marked, besides the specific inflexions, by the vocalic alternation *ea* (for the singular inflexion) and *e* (for the plural one) [5].

According to this pattern, new analogical singular forms were created that have the *ea* diphthong, in alternation with *e*, from the plural form radical.

former singular form (the etymological one)	the plural form	the new (analogical) singular form
braslă (cf. Sl *bratistvo*)	*bresle*	**breaslă**
crangă (from Bg. *granka*)	*crengi*	**creangă**
mustață (< Lat. **mustacea*)	*musteţe* (dialectal form, probably by analogy with *faţă - feţe*)	**musteaţă** (dialectal form)
samă (from Hung. *szám*)	*semi*	**seamă**
strajă (from Sl. *straža*)	*streji*	**streajă** (dialectal)

The reconstruction of a new singular form under the influence of the plural one often resulted in changing the noun's declension type [6] and sometimes even in changing its gender class, as in the following examples:

former singular form (the etymological one)	the plural form	the new (analogical) singular form
1st declension > 2nd declension		
flanelă (fem. noun from Fr. *flanelle*)	*flanele*	**flanel** (dialectal form, neuter noun)
fragă (< lat. *fraga*)	*fragi*	**frag** (masc. noun)
nălucă (fem. n., back-formed from the verb *năluci*)	*năluci*	**năluc** (dialectal form, neuter noun)
oală (fem. n. < lat. *olla*, but under the influence of the plural form *oale*)	*oale*	**ol** (dialectal form, neuter noun)
2nd declension > 1st declension		

alic (neuter n., from MGr. *haliki*)	*alice*	**alică** (fem. n.)
buruian (neuter n., from Bg., SCr. *burjan*)	*buruieni*	**buruiană** (fem. n.)
cătun (neuter n., cf. Alb., SCr. *katun*)	*cătune*	**cătună** (fem. n.)
fruct (neuter n. < Lat. *fructus*)	*fructe*	**fructă** (dialectal form, fem. n.)
grăunț (neuter n. < Lat. **granuceum*)	*grăunțe* (but also *grăunți*)	**grăunță** (dialectal form, fem. n.)
potroc (neuter n., from Rus. *potroh*, Hung. *patroh*)	*potroace*	**potroacă** (fem. n.)
rod (neuter n., from Sl. *rodŭ*)	*roade*	**roadă** (dialectal form, fem. n.)
uluc (neuter n., from Turk. *oluk*)	*uluci*	**ulucă** (dialectal form, fem. n.)
1ˢᵗ declension > 3ʳᵈ declension		
fasolă (from MGr. *fasóli*)	*fasole*	**fasole**
livadă (from Bg. *livada*)	*livezi*	**livade** (dialectal form)
nădejdă (from Sl. *nadežda*)	*nădejdi*	**nădejde**
3ʳᵈ declension > 1ˢᵗ declension		
arame (< Lat *aeramen*)	*arămi* (obsolete form)	**aramă**
brățare (< Lat *brachiale*)	*brățări*	**brățară**
falce (< Lat. *falx, -cis*)	*fãlci*	**falcă**
găoace (u.et.)	*găoci*	**găoacă**
lindine (< Lat. *lendinem*)	*lindini*	**lindină**
nare (< Lat. *naris*)	*nări*	**nară**
plămâne (< Lat. *pulmonis*)	*plămâni*	**plămână** (dialectal form)
soarte (< lat. *sortis*)	*sorți*	**soartă**
2ⁿᵈ declension > 3ʳᵈ declension		
ghimp (cf. Alb. *gjëmp*)	*ghimpi*	**ghimpe**
glonț (u.et.)	*glonți* (obsolete form)	**glonte** (var.)
greier (< Lat. **grylliolus*)	*greieri*	**greiere** (var.)
mugur (cf. Alb. *mugull*)	*muguri*	**mugure** (var.)
nămet (from Bg. *namet*)	*nămeți*	**nămete**
pesmet (from Turk. *peksimet*)	*pesmeți*	**pesmete** (var.)
plastur (from MGr. *blástri*, Lat. *plastrum*, Germ. *Pflaster*)	*plasturi*	**plasture**
scripeț (from bg. *skripec*)	*scripeți*	**scripete**
3ʳᵈ declension > 2ⁿᵈ declension		
plămâne (from MGr. plemóni, cf. Lat. *pulmonem*)	*plămâni*	**plămân**
purice (< Lat *pulicem*)	*purici*	**puric** (var.)

tăune (< Lat. *tabonis)	*tăuni*	***tăun***
tutore (from It. *tutore*, cf. Fr. *tuteur*)	*tutori*	***tutor*** (var.)
vulture (< Lat. *vulturis*)	*vulturi*	***vultur***

Sometimes, in diachrony, we may note that a mutual influence happened between the singular and the plural forms. For example, in Romanian there are a series of native words which have the singular ending *-mânt* (< Lat. *-mentum*): *jurământ* (< Lat. *juramentum*), *legământ* (< *ligamentum*), *mormânt* (< Lat. *monumentum*) etc. This ending was later interpreted by the speaker as a kind of derivative suffix and then began to use it in combination with verbal stems to obtain new words such as: *îmbrăcământ, încălțământ, rugământ* etc, which normally have their plural form *îmbrăcăminte, încălțăminte, rugăminte* (cf. *jurământ – jurăminte*). First, the analogy affected the singular forms which suffered the influence of the plural ones, so much that they became homonymous: *îmbrăcăminte, încălțăminte, rugăminte* (both for the singular and plural inflexions). In modern Romanian, the analogy occurred again, but this time in a reverse way, since the plural forms in *-minte* were reshaped in order to be clearly distinguished from the singular ones. The new alternation for the singular / plural opposition was now *minte – minți*: *îmbrăcăminte – îmbrăcăminți, rugăminte – rugăminți* (by analogy with n. *minte – minți,* or adj. *cuminte – cuminți*). At the same time, the plural inflexion (*-minți*) of these nouns was also affected and actually replaced by the 'analogical extension' of the *-uri* inflexion, which is a very productive plural inflexion for the neuter nouns in Romanian. Due to this analogical extension there were created parallel plural forms for the nouns that are under discussion here: *acoperământuri, mormânturi, jurământuri, veșmânturi* etc. The forms are now obsolete and out of use.

To conclude our discussion about the influence of the plural forms on the singular ones within the noun system, we first want to make the general remark that every word with inflexion represents a class or a set of inflexional forms which constitute a paradigm, where these forms interact with each other. In fact, an inflexionable word exists and functions through any of its flexional forms, each of them being able to influence the other ones. On the other hand, the entire language as a whole is nothing but an impressive 'system of systems', a huge paradigm, where the inflexional forms of the words are linked together and organized in specific structures that result in structural patterns in such a way that the speaker could easily comprehend and use them as models for future innovations in language. Thus, whenever the speaker faces a "weakness" of the language mechanism (i.e. the system) which could prevent him in any way from understanding or performing in his own language, he proceeds analogically, by pouring the linguistic material into those structural patterns he knows and masters best, since they proved their efficiency in language practice. By doing so, the speaker – who, as Eugeniu Coșeriu said, "is always right" – triumphs over language anomalies and irregularities.

As for the phenomenon we are discussing in our paper, the analogical process by which some nouns changed their singular inflection under the influence of the plural form followed two different directions. On the one hand, as far as the singular – plural opposition is concerned, the speaker aimed at the uniformization and normalization of the paradigms, where the differences between the forms were too obvious. An example here is offered by the Romanian noun *oaspe* (< Lat. *hospis*), with the plural form *oaspeți*. By analogy with the pattern offered by such pairs as: *munte – munți*, the speaker rebuilt a more "normal" singular form for the plural *oaspeți*, which is *oaspet(e)*. The same happened with another Romanian noun: *cap* (< Lat. *caput*), whose irregular (but also etymological) plural form *capete* influenced the emergence of a new singular form: *capăt*, which brought about more regularity in the singular – plural opposition of this noun, though this meant also a change in its meaning. On the other hand, in instances where there was a minimum difference or even an identity (homonymy) of the singular – plural morphemes, the speaker was interested in their distinction. Here is an example

to illustrate this situation: sg. *copaci* – pl. *copaci* > new sg. *copac* (by analogy with *drac-draci, sac-saci* etc., where the singular – plural opposition is expressed in the consonant alternation *k / č*). These two different (and apparently contradictory) tendencies in fact fulfill the same role of establishing a right balance between the forms of the singular – plural opposition, and thus to avoid both striking differences and homonymy (see Dimitrescu et alii, *ILR*, p. 201).

Notes

[1] It is most likely that in order to remake such singular forms there appeared both analogy and the intent to avoid homonymy in the dialects by the tough pronunciation of *ţ*, which led to the disappearance of the final *i* as the plural ending. (cf. Apostolatu, *Les causes,* pp. 253).

[2] See for example the form *nămete*, a new singular form which replaced the former singular *nămet*, with the plural form *nămeţi*.

[3] See Ionel Apostolatu, *Rolul analogiei în sistemul flexiunii substantivului românesc. Cu privire la reorganizarea declinărilor*, in "Communication interculturelle et littérature", no. 4 (8), 2009, pp. 363-368.

[4]This type, well represented within the Romanian 1st declension has its origins in those native nouns (inherited from Latin) ending in *-**ea*** (< *-ll* + *a* under stress): *catella > căţea, *hirundinella > rândunea, margella > mărgea, maxilla > măsea, agnella > mia, novella > nuia*, *ollicella > ulcea, porcella > purcea, stella > stea, sella > ş(e)a, vallicella > vâlcea, vitella > viţea, *virgella > vergea* etc. In another period of evolution, this category was enriched with a series of borrowings of Turkish and Modern Greek origins, which were adapted to this type of inflexion (*-ea / -ele*): *acadea* (< Turk. *akede*), *belea* (< Turk. *belâ*), *cafea* (< Turk. *kahve*), *canapea* (< MGr. *kanapés*; cf. Fr. *canapé*, Germ. *Kanapee***)**, *catifea* (< Turk. *kadife*, MGr. *katifés*), *chiftea* (< Turk. *köfte*), *cişmea* (< Turk. *çeşme*), *fidea* (< MGr. *fidés*), *lulea* (< Turk. *lüle*), *manea* (< Turk. *mani*), *peltea* (< Turk. *pelte***,** MGr. *peltés, beldés*), *perdea* (< Turk. *perde*), *saftea* (< Turk. *siftah*), *saltea* (< MGr. *siltés*), *tejghea* (< Turk. *tezgah*), *tinichea* (< Turk. *teneke*) etc.

[5] Morphophonemic alternations are originally phonetic phenomenon. In time they acquire a morphological role, thus expanding by means of analogy and becoming, as far as Romanian is concerned, an additional means of marking and differentiating grammatical meanings that belong to the word forms" (Apostolatu, *Extinderi morfologice*, pp. 359).

[6] We refer here to the three noun inflexions described in Romanian traditional grammar.

Bibliographical abbreviations

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