

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MORPHEMATIC STATUS AND ON THE PARSING OF THE ROMANIAN FINAL VOWEL -Ă IN COMMON NOUNS FORMED THROUGH MOTIONAL DERIVATION

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ABSTRACT. *Observations on the Morphematic Status and on the Parsing of the Romanian Final Vowel -ă in Common Nouns Formed through Motional Derivation.* This study represents the result of research on the morphology of the contemporary Romanian language and concerns the situations in which the final vowel -ă appears in the flexible lexical-grammatical classes specific to this language system. It focuses, in particular, on primary common nouns and on common nouns formed through motional derivation. In all of these cases, the morphematic category of -ă has been determined. As regards the nouns obtained through motional derivation, in order to ensure the compatibility between its morphematic status and the parsing of the lexemes in which the final vowel -ă appears, only one of three possible parsing versions has been chosen as valid. In the case of the other two, the ones “not accepted”, their “procedural errors” have been highlighted. This study has proved that, in the class of common nouns, there are two instances of motional derivation in which -ă appears at the end of the lexemes, bearing the common name of a lexical-grammatical morpheme: when this speech segment is both a derivational suffix and a desinence-flective, coinciding with both throughout its entire length; when the same speech segment is both an allomorph of the derivational suffix and a desinence-flective, coinciding only with the flective throughout its entire length. Thus, in these contexts, by simultaneously focusing on the morphematic status and on parsing, we have reached the conclusion that: at the level of the name, the final -ă plays a cumulative role, as it cumulates two opposable types of content, namely lexical and

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grammatical, while at the speech level, it plays a decumulative role, the final vowel *-ă* being forced to occur in both positions in parsing: to the left, next to the root, as a motionally derived suffix, and to the right, as a desinence-flective, so as to do justice to this name.

Key-words: *morphematic status, motional derivation, lexical-grammatical morpheme, parsing, derivational suffix, flective, root, radical.*

REZUMAT. Observații asupra statutului morfematic și a segmentării grafice în arbore ale lui *-ă* final românesc în contextul substantivelor comune derivate moțional. Lucrarea de față reprezintă rezultatele unei cercetări de morfologie a limbii române contemporane și vizează situațiile în care *-ă* final apare în clasele lexico-gramaticale flexibile specifice acestui sistem lingvistic, cu privire specială asupra substantivelor comune primare și derivate moțional. În toate aceste situații, ca note comune, s-a stabilit încadrarea morfematică a lui *-ă* final, iar, în ceea ce privește substantivele derivate moțional, în vederea respectării unei compatibilități între statutul morfematic al acestuia și segmentarea grafică în arbore a lexemelor în care apare, s-a ales, ca validă, doar o variantă de segmentare dintre trei posibile, în cazul celor „neacceptate”, invocându-se și „viciile de analiză”. S-a dovedit că, în clasa substantivelor comune, există două situații ale derivării moționale în care *-ă* apare la finalul lexemelor, purtând denumirea comună de morfem lexico-gramatical: atunci când acest segment de expresie este și sufix derivativ, și flectiv de tip desinență, coincidând în toată lungimea sa cu ambele; atunci când același segment de expresie este și un alomorf al sufixului derivativ, și flectiv de tip desinență, coincidând în toată lungimea sa numai cu flectivul. Astfel, în aceste contexte, urmărind simultan statutul morfematic și segmentarea grafică în arbore, s-a conchis că, în planul denumirii, *-ă* final are rol cumulativ, deoarece cumulează două tipuri opozabile de conținut, lexical și gramatical, iar, în planul expresiei, are rol decumulativ, *-ă* final fiind nevoit să apară deopotrivă pe ambele poziții în cadrul segmentării grafice: în stânga, alături de rădăcină, ca sufix derivativ moțional, în dreapta, ca flectiv de tip desinență tocmai pentru a respecta această denumire.

Cuvinte-cheie: *statut morfematic, derivare moțională, morfem lexico-gramatical, segmentare grafică, sufix derivativ, flectiv, rădăcină, radical.*

0. Introduction

The present study is the result of research on the morphology of the contemporary Romanian language, which uses exclusively a synchronic approach and concerns both the morphematic status of the final vowel *-ă* in the

phonetic body of the flexible parts of speech¹ – with a special focus on the common Romanian nouns², in the particular context created by the appearance of some motional derivational suffixes – and the realisation of the parsing of the latter³.

From a phonetic-phonological point of view, the Romanian language system has, just like any other language, its own sounds. Some are specific to it in relation to other languages; hence, they are a distinguishing feature of it. The vowel *ă* is such a specific sound. It may occur at the end of words. In this context, the respective speech segment acquires a grammatical content. This is commonly the case with the flexible morphological values of the Romanian language. More precisely, the final vowel *-ă* becomes the expression of a flectional grammatical category⁴.

By way of motivating such a research direction, let us draw attention to the following aspects:

a. From a morphological point of view, the Romanian language is still, by and large, an inflectional language. It has many morphological values, such as the noun, the pronoun, the adjective, the numeral and the verb, as parts of speech that have, to a large extent, an inventory of flexible lexemes⁵. However, Romanian morphology studies are very few, with a very limited analytical scope⁶, and rather outdated. Moreover, the allomorphs of the different morphemes are approached, as a rule, “vertically rather than horizontally”.

b. From a formative-structural point of view⁷, the majority of the Romanian linguistic studies focus, to a large extent, on the morphematics of primary words – with particular reference, of course, to those morphological values that can enrich the vocabulary by means of derivation with suffixes⁸ – but not on derivatives or compounds.

However, in Romanian, there may be situations in which, in the process of attaching a derivational suffix – in this case, a motional suffix – the changes that occur within the fleective have effects both at the level of the

¹ For the situation of final *-a*, see Roman, 2017a, pp. 291-298.

² In this paper, we will refer exclusively to the Romanian common nouns.

³ Graphically, the morphematic analysis can be performed in two ways: *using a parse tree* or in a *linear way*. For details, see Neamțu, 2005. In the present study, the *parsing analysis* is conducted solely using a parse tree.

⁴ On the opposition *flectional grammatical categories vs non-flectional grammatical categories*, see Roman, 2017b.

⁵ On the *lexeme*, see Neamțu, 2014a, p. 283.

⁶ For specialised studies in which *morphematic parsings* are provided, see Neamțu, 2014a, pp. 249-269.

⁷ For a *formative-structural* classification of words, see Neamțu, 2005.

⁸ For the distinction between *derivational suffix* and *grammatical suffix*, see Graur, Avram, 1989, pp. 5-13.

morphematic status of the speech segments it is composed of, and at that of the corresponding parsing.

That is why, in the literature, it has been argued that “the distinction between the various elements of the morphological structure of a word and the values of an element is not always firm and clear. There are times when one and the same affix has two or three different values in the structure of a word” (Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, I, 1966, 45). This suggests that derivation, as a means of word-formation, is drawing very close to morphology (Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, I, 1966, 18-23).

1. The Romanian final -ă in the phonetic body of primary flexible⁹ parts of speech, with the exception of common nouns

When the primary flexible parts of speech, with the exception of the common nouns, are inventoried and analysed regarding the possibility of the final speech segment -ă being materialised, two working coordinates specific to the Romanian language system emerge: on the one hand, certain situations may arise in which -ă is present in the phonetic body of the flective of the morphological values in question; on the other hand, there may appear contexts in which -ă is not present in the phonetic body of the flective, *being substituted*, each and every time, by another speech segment in the given position:

a. *As a component of the flective*, in other words, materialised as a speech segment with positive realisation¹⁰, the Romanian final vowel -ă can be:

a. 1. A *flectional unit*¹¹ of the desinence type, which means that it is not part of the same phonetic unit with any other flectional subunit. In such situations, it coincides with the flective itself, being a *monomorphematic flective*¹².

a. 2. A *flectional subunit*, exclusively of the desinence type, which means that it is part of the same phonetic unit with another flectional subunit/with other flectional subunits, being a *plurimorphematic flective*.

a. 3. It does not coincide with either a flectional unit or a flectional subunit, but represents an *allomorph*¹³ of a flectional subunit of the desinence type.

⁹ For details on the concepts of *flexible*, *non-flexible*, *variable* and *invariable*, see Roman, 2017c, pp. 653-661.

¹⁰ On the *positive vs negative* opposition in Romanian language morphematics, see Bidu-Vrănceanu, Călărășu, Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Mancaș, Pană Dindelegan, 2005, p. 166, p. 575, Neamțu, 2005.

¹¹ On the opposition *flectional unit vs flectional subunit*, see Neamțu, 2014a, pp. 270-281.

¹² On the opposition *monomorphematic flective vs plurimorphematic flective or monomorphematic flective vs bimorphematic flective*, see Neamțu, 2014a, pp. 270-281.

¹³ On the *allomorph vs morpheme* distinction, see Guțu Romalo, 1968, pp. 46-54, Coteanu, 1985, pp. 86-93.

Taking into account all of the situations described above, it can be concluded that, in any of the illustrated variants, the final *-ă* of the primary flexible parts of speech *is* or *is part of* a grammatical morpheme, which is exclusively one of the *desinence-flective* kind. The final *-ă* becomes the expression of certain flectional grammatical categories that are syncretically realised¹⁴ and it can never be replaced in the given position by either a flectional unit or a flectional subunit.

From the point of view of the content of the flectional grammatical categories¹⁵ manifested inside this desinence-flective, the following possibilities specific to the Romanian language emerge:

(1.) The Romanian final *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric categories a.1.*¹⁶ of gender, number and case: demonstrative pronouns of differentiation: *Cealaltă nu dorește să mai vorbească cu mine.* [The other one does not want to talk to me anymore.]; indefinite pronouns: *S-a făcut albă toată când m-a văzut.* [She turned white when she saw me.]; interrogative-relative pronouns: *Nu știu câtă să-ți mai spun să pui în ciorbă...* [I do not know how much more of it you should put into the soup...].

(2.) The Romanian final *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric categories a.1.* of gender and case: cardinal numerals with a pronominal value: *Numai două dintre ele ne-au mai căutat.* (Only two of them have stayed in touch with us.); collective cardinal numerals with a pronominal value: *Să fi știut că vor veni amândouă, puneam altfel problema.* [Had I known that both of them would come, I would have addressed the matter differently]¹⁷.

(3.) The Romanian final *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric categories a.2.* of gender, number and case: adjectives proper: *Ioana este o fată frumoasă.* [Ioana is a beautiful girl.]; demonstrative pronominal adjectives of proximity: *Această (fată) m-a căutat ieri.* [This (girl) was looking for me yesterday.]; demonstrative pronominal adjectives of differentiation: *Cealaltă (fată) nu m-a mai sunat așa cum mi-a promis.* [The other (girl) did not call me as promised.]; indefinite pronominal adjectives: *A risipit toată făina.* [He scattered all the flour.]; relative-interrogative pronominal adjectives: *Nu știu câtă răbdare să mai am cu tine.* [I don't know how much more patience I should have with you.]; possessive pronominal adjectives: *Cartea voastră nu va fi cumpărată prea curând.* [Your book won't be bought anytime soon.]; ordinal numerals

¹⁴ On the interpretation variants of *syncretism*, see Bidu-Vrănceanu, Călărașu, Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Mancaș, Pană Dindelegan, 2005, p. 479.

¹⁵ For details on the expression and content of the nominal group categories, see Roman, 2017b.

¹⁶ For details on the opposition *deictic categories (d.1.) vs anaphoric categories (anaphoric a.1. vs anaphoric a.2.)*, see Roman, 2016a, pp. 335-346, 2017b.

¹⁷ For an interpretation in which the number of the Romanian numeral is not considered a grammatical category, but a *lexical-semantic* one, see Roman, 2016b, pp. 278-287.

with adjective value: *O primă idee ar fi să stabilim un plan de lucru*. [A first idea would be to establish a working plan].

(4.) The Romanian final *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric categories a.2.* of gender and case: cardinal numerals proper with adjective value: *Două (fete) treceau pe stradă*. [Two (girls) were passing on the street.]¹⁸; collective cardinal numerals with adjective value: *Amândouă (fetele) mi-au spus că pleacă*. [Both (girls) told me they were leaving].

(5.) The Romanian final vowel *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric categories a.2.* of number and person, appearing in the singular and the plural, third person, indicative, present tense¹⁹, in two categories of verbs from the point of view of the conjugation pattern: verbs of the first conjugation, regardless of the presence or absence of the grammatical suffix *-ez*: *el/ei lucrează, el/ei cântă* [he is/they are working, he is/they are singing]; some verbs of the fourth conjugation, with the final *-î*, in the absence of the grammatical suffix *-ăsc*: *el/ei doboară, el/ei coboară* [he is/they are felling (something) down, he is/they are climbing down], etc. but also verbs of the fourth conjugation, with the final *-i*, in the absence of the grammatical suffix *-esc*: *el/ei diferă, el/ei descoperă* [he differs/they differ, he discovers/they discover], etc. (Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, 403-406).

(6.) The Romanian final *-ă* is the expression of the *anaphoric category a.2.* of number, in two variants:

(6.1.) When the final *-ă* coincides with the flecional subunit of the desinence type, i.e. in the singular, third person, indicative, perfect simple, in verbs of the first conjugation, *el cântă, el dansă* [he sang, he danced], etc.;

(6.2.) Where the final *-ă* is the allomorph of the flecional subunit of the desinence type *-ră*, that is, in the great class of the verb, third person, plural, in two tenses of the indicative mode, regardless the conjugation: the perfect simple - conj. I, *ei plecară* [they left], conj. II, *ei văzură* [they saw], conj. III, *ei merseră* [they went], conj. IV, *ei citiră* [they read], *ei coborâră* [they went down] and *past perfect* - conj. I, *ei plecaseră* [they had left], conj. II, *ei văzuseră* [they had seen], conj. III, *ei merseseră* [they had gone], conj. IV, *ei citiseră* [they had read], *ei coborâseră* [they had gone down] (Pană Dindelegan, 2016, 251-256).

b. In situations where the Romanian final *-ă* is a component of the *flective*, but necessarily absent, substituted in the given position, the following observations can be made:

¹⁸ For more details about the type of cardinal numerals proper, in terms of their manifestation at the speech level, see Roman, 2017d, pp. 793-802.

¹⁹ At the level of the personal synthetic verb forms, the only indicative tense that does not have a final *-ă* in its inflection is the "imperfect" past tense, see Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, pp. 423-433.

b.1. In these contexts, too, whatever the morphological value of reference, this speech segment is exclusively a flectional unit of the desinence type and appears substituted also in the feminine, singular, NAc;

b.2. Depending on the part of speech considered, that speech segment is always substituted by other flectional units that are never of the same inflectional type:

b.2.1. By a *pronominal formative article* type of flective, in the case of certain pronouns²⁰: personal pronouns of politeness, *dânsa* [she], a series of compound apersonal pronouns, indefinite pronouns, *vreuna* [any of them], negative pronouns, *niciuna* [none of them] (Neamțu, 2014a, 278-279);

b.2.2. By a *deictic particle* type of flective²¹, in certain demonstrative pronouns of proximity: *Aceasta nu ne-a mai căutat* [She hasn't stayed in touch.];

b.2.3. By a *numeral formative article* type of flective, in the case of certain cardinal numerals proper, with pronominal value: *una* [one] in ordinal numerals with pronominal value and with adjective value: *A doua care a venit după mine a fost Ioana*. [The second that came after me was Ioana.]; *A doua (fată) care a sosit după mine a fost Ioana*. [The second (girl) who arrived after me was Ioana] (Neamțu, 2005, Roman, 2017d, 793-802).

2. The Romanian final -ă in primary and in motionally derived common nouns

When the Romanian common nouns are approached through the lens of a morphematic analysis, specialised studies often focus solely on primary words. While inventorying and analysing the forms of the primary common nouns, as regards the possibility of materialising the final expression segment -ă, only one working coordinate is individualised, which highlights the possible situations in which -ă manifests as a *mandatory component of the flective*. Two variants are described:

a. A *desinence type of flectional unit*, which is not part of the same phonetic unit with any of the other flectional subunits, coinciding with the flective itself; hence, it is a *monomorphematic flective*. This is the case of the non-determined common feminine nouns, of the type *masă* vs *mese* [table vs tables], *casă* vs *case* [house vs houses], *mamă* vs *mame* [mother vs mothers]; of the type *limbă* vs *limbi* [language vs languages], *ușă* vs *uși* [door vs doors]; of the type *lipsă* vs *lipsuri* [lack vs lacks], *treabă* vs *treburi* [chore vs chores],

²⁰ For the trichotomy *determinative article* vs *case article* vs *formative article* (*pronominal formative* vs *numeral formative*), see Neamțu, 2014a, pp. 270-281.

²¹ For the full discussion of the situations in which the deictic particle -a becomes a component of the flective in Romanian, see Roman, Bocoș, 2016c, pp. 516-527.

noră vs *nurori* [daughter-in-law vs daughters-in-law], *soră* vs *surori* [sister vs sisters]; and of a few common masculine nouns: *tată* vs *tați* [father vs fathers], *popă* vs *popi* [priest vs priests] (Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, 78-83). Having the status of a *flectional unit, grammatical morpheme of the desinence type*, in the class of the common nouns, the final *-ă* becomes the expression of some flectional grammatical categories, more specifically, the expression of the *deictic categories d.1.* of number and case, appearing in the singular, NAc, in common nouns of the feminine and masculine genders²²;

b. A *desinence type of flectional subunit*, which is part of the same phonetic unit with another flectional subunit; hence, it is a *mandatory bimorphemic, discontinuous flective*. This is the case of common feminine and masculine nouns that are indefinitely determined: *o casă* [a house], *o veioză* [a bedside lamp], *o fată* [a girl], *un tată* [a father], *un popă* [a priest], etc. With this status of *flectional subunit, grammatical morpheme of the desinence type*, in the class of the common nouns, the final *-ă* becomes the expression of some flectional grammatical categories, more precisely, the expression of the *deictic category d.1.* of number, appearing in singular, NAc²³.

While, within the context of primary lexemes, there are no special situations that might pose problems in interpreting this speech segment, in terms of either its morphematic status or its parsing, thus leaving no place for further observations, in the case of lexemes derived with affixes²⁴ from the category of motional derivational suffixes, things can get complicated.

Most Romanian theoretical studies on the gender of nouns implicitly also refer to the ways of grouping them according to the way of expressing the semantic-grammatical distinction of gender in nouns that “designate animate entities, whose grammatical gender corresponds to the natural gender” (Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, 66). One of these consists in expressing the gender opposition through gendered pairs of nouns. This may occur in two ways:

(a.) First of all, there are situations in which the words have radically different meanings, as in the case of personal animate nouns, such as “*bărbat* vs *femeie*” [man vs. woman], “*băiat* vs *fată*” [boy vs. girl], etc.

(b.) Secondly, there are situations in which the words differ not in terms of the radical, which is and remains the same during the declination, but

²² The gender of the Romanian noun is not considered a grammatical category, but a *lexical-semantic* one. For details, see Roman, 2016d, pp. 27-43.

²³ For this approach, see Neamțu, 2005, Roman, 2017b, 2017e, pp. 695-709. For an alternative interpretation, one in which the flectional *-ă* is considered to be the *expression of the flectional grammatical categories* of number and case, while the speech segment *o*, as a flective of the type of the indefinite determinative article, is considered as the expression of the flectional grammatical category of the indefinite determination, see Neamțu, 2005.

²⁴ On the *affix*, see Bidu-Vrănceanu, Călărașu, Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Mancaș, Pană Dindelegan, 2005, p. 33.

in terms of derivational suffixes, a phenomenon known in the literature as *motion* (Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, 1966, 62; Coteanu, Bidu-Vrănceanu, 1975, 142), generating *mobile nouns* (Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, 67). Two other situations may occur, including the following:

(b.1.) By means of *motional derivation*, from a base noun, hence a primary noun, of the masculine gender, another noun, of the feminine gender, can be obtained through derivation. The “transition” is realised through the following motional *suffixes*:

(b.1.1.) “-ă: avocat → avocată [male lawyer → female lawyer], elev → elevă [male pupil → female pupil];

(b.1.2.) -că: român → româncă [Romanian man → Romanian woman], țăran → țărancă [male peasant → female peasant];

(b.1.3.) -easă: împărat → împărăteasă [emperor → empress], preot → preoteasă [priest → priestess];

(b.1.4.) -iță: doctor → doctoriță [male doctor → female doctor], măgar → măgăriță [jack-ass → jenny-ass];

(b.1.5.) -oaică: lup → lupoaică [he-wolf → she-wolf], zmeu → zmeoaică [ogre → ogress]” (Guțu Romalo, 2005, I, 67).

Regarding the morphematic classification of the final -ă in all of the above examples, Romanian linguists have constantly drawn attention only to the context that appears in (b.1.1.): “Sometimes the same component *can function differently, as a lexical or grammatical morpheme, depending on the term with which the comparison is made*. Thus, in the form of the noun *elevă* [female student], if the morpheme -ă is related to the plural form *eleve* [female students], it functions as a *grammatical morpheme* (plural desinence), and if it is related to the lexeme *elev* [male pupil], it functions as a *lexical morpheme* (a motional derivational suffix, to create a feminine noun from the corresponding masculine noun)” [emphasis ours] (Pană Dindelegan, 2016, 10)²⁵.

It was concluded that in the situations described in point (b.1.1.), the final -ă represents “the distinctive marker of most feminine nouns and is the most important motional suffix in the Romanian language” (Sinteze de limba română, 1984, 80), so it plays the role of a *lexical-grammatical morpheme*. This confirms that “the relationship between grammar and word formation is so close that it is sometimes considered that word formation is a grammatical phenomenon or, more specifically, a morphological phenomenon” (Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, 1966, I, 18). Once the name is accepted and circulated, the final -ă certainly has a *double morphematic status* as a speech segment in this context.

Thus, the final -ă becomes a *special case* in the morphology of the Romanian language by the sheer fact that, in the situation described in (b.1.1.), it *cumulates*

²⁵ For the same line of interpretation, see also Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, 1966, I, p. 45.

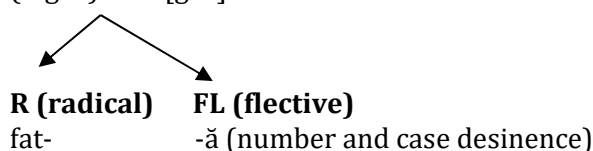
two completely opposite and well individualised contents: a lexical content, given the fact that it is considered a motional derivational suffix, lexical suffixes serving “to form new words,” unlike flexional suffixes, which are also known as “morphological or grammatical” suffixes and “serve to realise some forms of the same word” (Graur, Avram, 1989, 7); and a grammatical content, given the fact that this is considered a desinence-flective, as an expression of number and case.

Its proposed name – lexical-grammatical morpheme – should be accurately conveyed in the parsing. This aspect is crucial for teaching and learning the morphology of the contemporary Romanian language, as it completes the analysis and confirms its morphematic status.

Determining the morphological structure of a flexible word can only be achieved through *morphematic parsing*. As a general rule, any flexible word, regardless of the part of speech to which it belongs, is subject, in a first stage, to a *binary parsing*. More precisely, it is necessary to precisely delineate two complementary components of any flexible word: the *radical* vs the *flective*. The former carries the *lexical content* of the word, while the latter carries the *grammatical content* of the word²⁶. In conclusion, it is a *rule* that no word declared to be flexible can exist within a language in the absence of one of the two components (Neamțu, 2005).

In order to illustrate the above-mentioned distinction, there are two ways of realisation on a graphic level: *linear segmentation* and *parsing*. In the case of the latter²⁷, the radical is always located on the left side, while the flective is on the right side (see fig. 1) (Neamțu, 2005, Neamțu, 2014a, 249-269):

(Fig. 1) **fată** [girl]



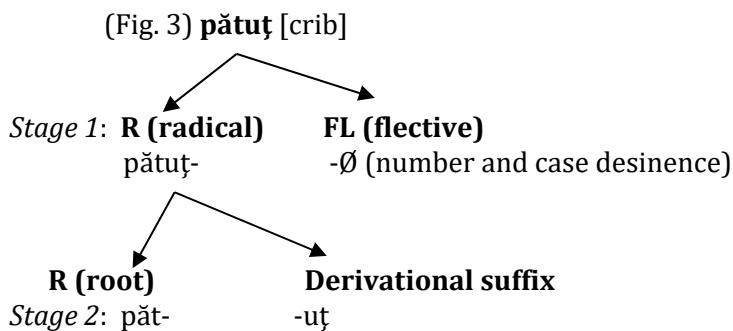
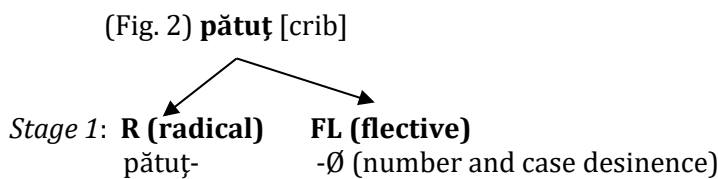
Of course, in the derivational situations²⁸, because the phenomenon demands the presence within the flexible word of derivational affixes, such as

²⁶ If the flective is *monomorphematic*, the parsing is exhausted in a single stage, in which the *radical* vs the *flective* are released. However, if the flective is *plurimorphematic*, parsing necessitates successive stages.

²⁷ In this study, the discussion focuses exclusively on *parsing using a parse tree*, a very well-known method in the academic environment of Cluj, thanks to the courses and seminars on the contemporary Romanian language delivered there, with particular emphasis on the *morphology* segment.

²⁸ For details on the phenomenon of *derivation* in Romanian, see Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, 1966, I, pp. 29-54, *Sinteze de limba română*, 1984, pp. 66-95.

suffixes and prefixes, simultaneously or separately, the parsing is complicated. The presence of these speech segments requires going through two stages in succession. In the first stage, the radical is delimited from the flective. Then, on the left side, pertaining to the lexical meaning, the radical is divided into the root²⁹ and the derivational affixes³⁰ (Neamțu, 2005):



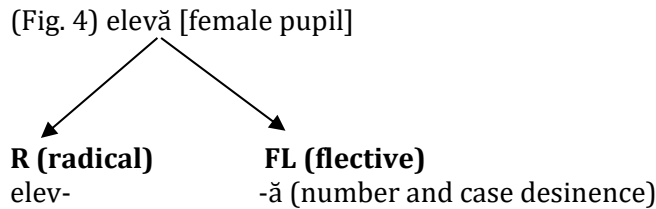
As regards the position of the final *-ă* in the parsing using a parse tree, in the situation described at point (b.1.1.), the one who aims to perform it is objectively faced with three possibilities or three analysis variants (models):

(1) The first variant (model) of parsing is one in which final *-ă* is positioned exclusively on the right-hand side, on the site of the flective. Priority is given to the fact that, by way of analogy with the other nouns of the same gender (feminine), which are, however, not derived and, hence, are primary, these words cannot remain without a flective: *elevă* [female pupil] vs *casă* [house], *avocată* [lawyer] vs. *mamă* [mother].

“Procedural error”: in such a situation, the parsing would suggest the fact that a word like *elevă* [female pupil] is, in fact, a primary word, not a *motional derivative*. This would contradict the morphological structure of the respective lexeme and, implicitly, the additional lexical meaning “carried” by the motional derivational affix. It cannot, therefore, be accepted.

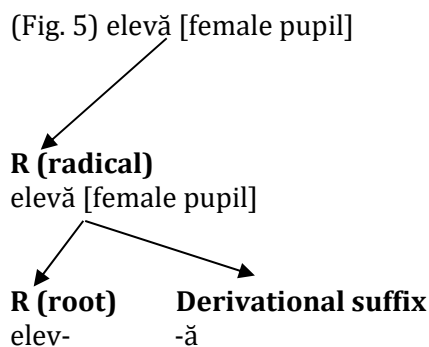
²⁹ On this concept, see Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, 1966, I, pp. 41-44, Neamțu, 2005.

³⁰ The same thing happens when the flective is *bimorphemic* or *plurimorphemic*, i.e. it is necessary to subsequently segment the flective into two or more flectional subunits, depending on the situation.



(2) The second variant (model) of parsing would be the one in which the final *-ă* is located on the left-hand side, within the radical, which will be subsequently divided into the root and the derivational suffix. Priority is given, this time, to the phenomenon of derivation, taking into account the presence of a motional derivational suffix which *produces a new word*, in this case, a common noun of the feminine gender from a common noun of the masculine gender: *elev* [male pupil] → *elevă* [female pupil].

“*Procedural error*”: in such a situation, the parsing reflects the fact that a word of this type, in other words, a *flexible* common noun, recognised as such – despite the fact that it has a *variable component* depending on certain flectional grammatical categories, number and case, *elevă* [female pupil] vs *elev* [female pupils], specific to the entire class and manifested accordingly – is not, in fact, flexible. Put differently, it does not possess a flective, either as a positive or as a negative realisation. This contradicts again the morphological structure of the respective lexeme, which means it cannot be accepted.



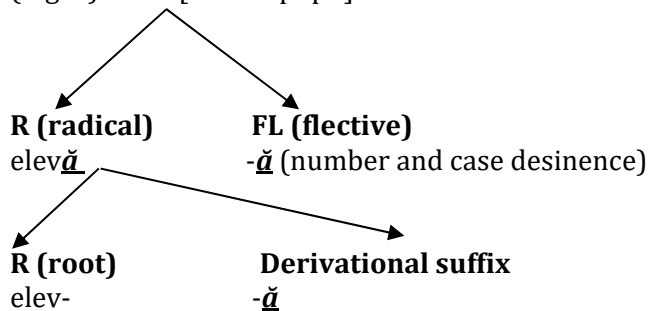
In Romanian, it has already been proved that those lexemes declared/ considered non-flexible, which have been integrated within the flexible morphological values, whatever these are, are not carriers of the flective. Their grammatical categories are regarded as non-flectional. To be precise, it has been concluded that the respective lexemes manifest by analogy with the

flexible lexemes only at the level of the content. However, at the expression level, they can materialise neither positively nor negatively³¹. In any case, such common nouns cannot be declared as non-flexible, since the flective is “visible” and “functional”.

(3) The third variant (model) of parsing is that in which the final *-ă* is located *physically* in both positions. In other words, it appears twice within the same parsing, attesting the *decumulative role*³² it has in such a situation. Two different contents are *cumulated* in its expression: “Although the two classes of morphemes (lexical and grammatical) are distinguished quite clearly, it sometimes happens for a certain morphematic segment to *cumulate* both types of meaning” [emphasis ours] (Sinteze de limba română, 1984, 205).

Therefore, while the *cumulative role of the final -ă* is highlighted by its morphematic name or classification as a lexical-grammatical morpheme, its status changes and its *decumulative* role is emphasised on a graphic level. Therefore, the simultaneous presence of the final *-ă* in both positions – as a desinence-flective and as a motional derivational suffix – is mandatory and necessary, despite the fact that, at first glance, it seems redundant. It is compulsory precisely in order to respect the reality of the proposed name. Within the parsing, thanks to its physical presence in both positions, the final *-ă* satisfies, in fact, two “needs” of the respective lexemes: from a lexical point of view, the presence of the derivational suffix is mandatory because these are words obtained through motional derivation and, from a grammatical point of view, the presence of the flective is mandatory as well because they are flexible words.

(Fig. 6) elevă [female pupil]



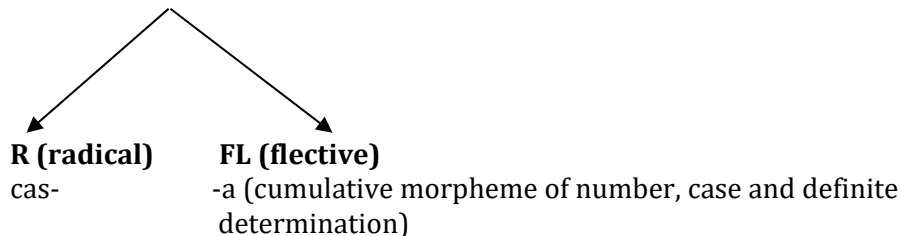
³¹ For details on these issues, see Roman, 2017c, pp. 653-661, 2017f, pp. 782-792, 2017g, pp. 245-262.

³² See the situation of *cumulative relatives*, which *decumulate* in a university code, see Neamțu, 2014b, pp. 389-393.

In the morphematics of the contemporary Romanian language, the phenomenon of *cumulation* is well-known in the great class of nouns and adjectives proper, when the desinence-flective is eliminated or suppressed. In the case of the first morphological value, two specific situations can be delineated. These are, in fact, two members of the category of gender, when the final *-ă* is substituted: *masc. sg. NAc: tată* [father] → *tata* [the father]; *popă* [priest] → *popa* [the priest]; *fem. sg. NAc: casă* [house] → *casa* [the house]; *fată* [girl] → *fata* [the girl]; *masă* [table] → *masa* [the table]. In the case of the class of adjectives proper, the phenomenon³³ manifests when they precede the nouns to which they are subordinated: (*fată*) *frumoasă* [beautiful (girl)] → *frumoasa (fată)* [the beautiful (girl)], etc. (Neamțu, 2005, Neamțu, 2014a, 270-281).

However, unlike in the situation of the final *-ă*, in the situations in which the final *-a* appears, several syncretically expressed flectional grammatical categories are *cumulated*: number, case and determination (definite determination), so what are *cumulated* are several *grammatical contents* whose position is to the right of the radical, not both to the right and to the left. In his case of the final *-a*, in the above examples, which refer to primary lexemes, the *phenomenon of decumulation* cannot be represented through parsing, because the speech segment in question *occupies a single position* – that of a coincident flectional unit – across its entire length, with the flective of the respective part of speech, a common noun or an adjective proper (Fig. 7)³⁴.

(Fig. 7) casa [the house]



³³ This is what the literature calls *positional articulation*, see Neamțu, 2014a, p. 277.

³⁴ It goes without saying that, in all of the three analysis variants presented above, when the derived lexemes are definitely determined, the position of the final *-ă* is occupied by the final *-a*. The final *-ă* is *suppressed* and the final *-a* follows the same positioning pattern within the parse tree, that is, it occupies the already discussed positions of the final *-ă*. In the third analysis variant, its decumulative role will be the same: through its physical presence both to the right and to the left, it is confirmed that the final *-a*, which replaces the final *-ă*, must serve both as a motional suffix and as a flective (a flective of the definite determinative article), hence as a carrier of some grammatical contents. In the latter case, it is the expression of three synchronically manifested flectional grammatical categories: number, case, and definite determination.

The final *-ă* also appears within some speech segments that Romanian linguists describe as motional suffixes, making reference to all the contexts in paragraphs **(b.1.2.)**, **(b.1.3.)**, **(b.1.4.)**, **(b.1.5.)**, but without specifying very clearly that they are lexical-grammatical morphemes as well: “In a noun such as *poetă* [poetess], *-ă* is, on the one hand, a lexical suffix underlying the formation of a feminine noun (other than the masculine noun *poet* [poet]; cf. *doctoriță față de doctor* [male doctor compared to female doctor])...” [emphasis ours] (Graur, Avram, Vasiliu, I, 1966, 45).

Regarding all of these contexts, the following observations can be made:

a. Once any of the suffixes listed under paragraphs **(b.1.2.)**, **(b.1.3.)**, **(b.1.4.)**, **(b.1.5.)** is considered as a *motional derivational suffix*, it goes without saying that it also functions as a *lexical morpheme*, according to the model in **(b.1.1.)**, so it is the basis for the creation of some feminine nouns from corresponding masculine nouns. This makes it impossible to cancel its morphematic incorporation within the radical, since it is a component of the latter, alongside the root;

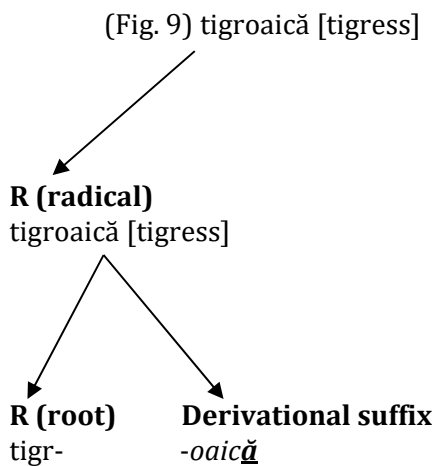
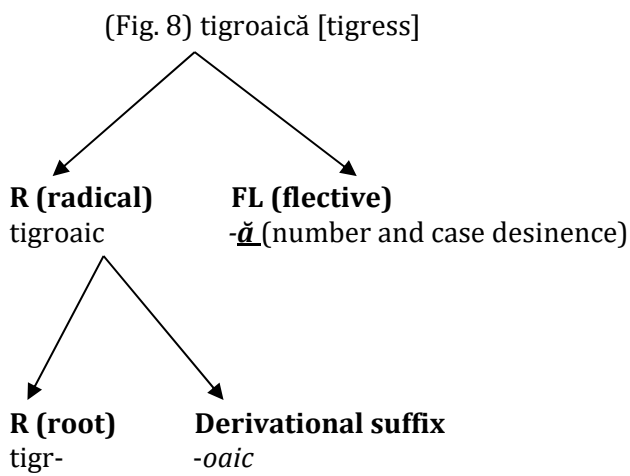
b. At the same time, all the lexemes listed under paragraphs **(b.1.2.)**, **(b.1.3.)**, **(b.1.4.)**, **(b.1.5.)**³⁵, included in the class of the noun, have all of the morphological characteristics specific to that part of the speech. The forms *românce* [Romanian women], *țărănci* [female peasants], *împărăteșe* [empresses], *preotese* [priestesses], *doctorițe* [female doctors], *măgărițe* [jenny-asses], *lupoaițe* [she-wolves], *zmeoaice* [ogresses] result from the marked number and case oppositions of feminine nouns of the type *casă* [house] vs *case* [houses], so they are the ones that realise the number and case oppositions *-ă* vs *-e*.

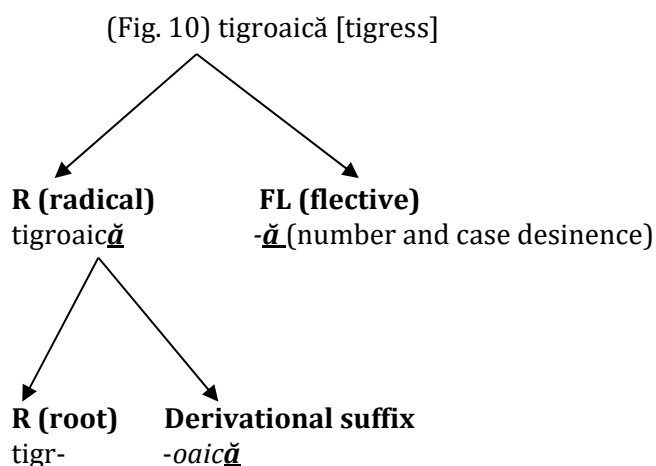
Therefore, in such contexts, following the model in **(b.1.1.)**, it is admitted that the speech segment to which the final *-ă* belongs is a lexical-grammatical morpheme, too, for several reasons: on the one hand, from a lexical point of view, it is part of the motional derivational suffix and, on the other hand, from a grammatical point of view, it must also fulfil the role of the flective of the nouns in question, after the model of the lexemes in **(b.1.1.)** However, in all the situations from **(b.1.2.)**, **(b.1.3.)**, **(b.1.4.)**, **(b.1.5.)**, the flective of the nouns no longer coincides with the motional derivational suffix itself, but is much shorter, being reduced exclusively to the final *-ă*. This complicates the parsing even further.

In the parsing analysis, there would be three variants for the position of the final *-ă*, according to the models presented above: (1) *exclusively to the right*, in the place of the flective, leaving the lexeme without an allomorph of the derivational suffix (Fig. 8), the situation corresponding to the one in fig. 4; (2) *exclusively to the left*, along with the rest of the derivational suffix, leaving

³⁵ By way of exemplification, a single situation was chosen, the *tigroaică* [tigress] model, as all the others follow the same parsing pattern.

the word without a flective (Fig. 9), the situation corresponding to the one in fig. 5; and (3) *both to the left*, as a constituent of the derivational suffix (hence, as an allomorph,) from which it cannot be divided since the suffix forms a single whole and there are no derivational or even motional suffixes that can be subjected to a sequential parsing analysis of the derivational suffix into smaller components with morphemic individuality, *and to the right*, in the position of the flective, respecting the realisation of the marked number and case oppositions of nouns (see Fig. 10), the situation corresponding to the one in fig. 6.





3. Conclusions

In Romanian, the vowel *ă* is a specific sound which may also appear at the end of flexible primary words: nouns, adjectives proper and pronominal adjectives, synthetic forms of the personal verbs, pronouns, numerals with pronominal and adjectival value. In these cases, the vowel *ă* occupies the position of a flective.

From the point of view of the flectional typology of these Romanian morphological values, the final *-ă* can be either a flectional unit or a flectional subunit, of the desinence type, sometimes in the inflection of synthetic personal verbal forms, manifesting as an allomorph of a flectional subunit, also of the desinence type. In any of these situations, the final *-ă* becomes the expression of some flectional grammatical categories that behave in syncretic manner.

In the great class of the Romanian common nouns, when the morphemic analysis is carried out, what is mandatory to take into consideration both at the level of the morphemic status and at the parsing level are not only the primary lexemes, but also those derived motionally, given that there may appear some contexts with several apparently possible variants (models).

It has been pointed out that, in Romanian, in the case of the motional derivation of common nouns, there are two situations in which the lexemes end in *-ă*: when it coincides entirely both with the derivational suffix and with the desinence-flective and when it does not coincide completely with the derivational suffix, being an allomorph of the latter, but only with the desinence-flective. In both cases, the name of the segment is the same: lexical-grammatical morpheme.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, as far as the name is concerned, this type of morpheme plays a *cumulative* role, as it *cumulates*, within one and the same speech segment, *two opposable types of content*: lexical vs. grammatical, whereas, at the expression level, in the parsing analysis, it plays a *decumulative* role, its *simultaneous appearance in both positions* – as a derivational suffix and as a desinence-flective – being compulsory in order for it to comply with the suggested name.

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