THE STRUCTURE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE IRREGULAR VERBS IN ROMANIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *The description of the irregularities in the verbal flexion highlights their system which has evolved according to the nature of the morphematic components of the lexical units.*

Keywords: *lexeme, flective, suppletivism, reduplication, alternation.*

1. The statement according to which "it is considered irregular any form and any verbal paradigm which departs to a greater or lesser degree from the current and repeatable schemes of flexion" (GALR, I, 2008: 562) is unable to distinguish between irregularities which are not marked in the grammatical analysis and irregular verbs which are marked as such.

The delimitation between verbs with absolute irregularity (with suppletive theme: *a fi*, *a lua*) and with relative irregularity (the others, without suppletive lexeme: IRIMIA, 2004: 180) is not functional, because verbs like *a mânca*, *a usca* which have only one irregularity (the syncope of the vowel from the theme, which loses the stress during the flexion) are included in the same subclass with *a da*, *a sta* ... which have four alolexems in their flexion (*dau, să dea, dădui, dând; stau, să stea, stătui, stând*).

The conditioned modifications must be excluded for a more accurate description. Thus, the phonetic alternation which is very common in old Latin verbs with vowel and consonant changes must be left behind: *plec – pleacă – să plece; simt – simţi, citesc – citeşte, să citească…*

There should also not be taken into account the verbs with a vowel theme, distributed to more conjugations (*a tăia, a apropia, a studia, a sui, a construi*…), because their changes, conditioned to the phonetic context, are to be included in a system of conjugation of the verbs with vowel theme (GĂITĂNARU, 2006).

Those verbs which, in addition to the prototypical form, have at least two different forms of the lexeme and / or the flective must be considered irregular.

Those who have a different form of radical and a different one of flective must be considered verbs with irregularities.

Therefore, irregular verbs are mainly the ones with suppletive forms of radical (*a fi: fi, fost, eşti, eram…; a lua: lua, iau, iei*). Also, the following verbs are also irregular and they must be marked as such in the grammatical analysis:

- verbs with four alolexemes :
  a da: da – dau, de – să dea, dăd – dădui, d- dând;
  a sta: sta – stau, ste – să stea, stăt – stătui, st- stand;
  a avea: a- am, av- avem, ar- are, aib – să aibă.
- verbs with three alolexemes:
  a bea: be- beau, bă – băut, b- bând;
  a vrea: vre- vreau, vr – vrut, vor (the forms contaminated with the ones of the verb *a voi* are in free variation (and non-literary, too) and they are not taken into account while establishing the irregularity degree.

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In order to determine the irregularity of the flective, their sub-classification in monosyllabic and polysyllabic verbs must be operated, the lexeme size selecting certain flectives (cf. IRIMIA, 2004: 181).

Thus, it can be found at all of them, except for the verb *a vrea* which at the 4th person has an irregular lexeme, the inflexion *-ŭ: eu – ei: dau, stau, beau, vreau…*

The verbs with irregularities are those which have only one modification in the radical and/or one in flective.

As shown before, verbs such as *a mânca, a usca, a sur(u)pa*, have only one modification in the lexeme (the syncope of the unstressed vowel), any other paradigm manifestations being normal.

The palatalized verbs (*tu spui, pui, rămâi, vii*…) have only one radical modification (also a phonetic accident, in this case the complete palatalization of the dental).

The verb *a veni* has another modification of the flective in the imperative: *vino!*

The verb *a ramâne* has an *â* in the lexem (in nasal position), which at perfect participle has changed into *a (rămas)* by losing the nasal position.

A modification of the radical display the irregular imperatives, preserved as such from Latin (*dic, duc, fac – zi, du, fă)*, losing the specific flective too.

2. The diachronic study of the irregular verbs in the Romanian language was treated in a recent fundamental study (ZAMFIR, 2005: 19-98).

For the verb *a fi* the author records the alolexemes: *săntu (sintu, sămtu, simtu); săntemu (sintemu, sămtemu, simtemu); săntеţi (sinteţi, sămteţi, simteţi),* based on their occurrence in the texts, in a geographical distribution attempt.

Some of the forms of those present at the 4th and 5th person *(săntemu, sănteti)* entered, beginning with the 16th century, in competition with older forms, evolved from the Latin present subjunctive *semu, seţi* ← lat. *simus, sitis*, on which bases they formed upon.

The insertion of the subjunctive forms in the indicative paradigm is not unique in the Romanian language. Such, the form of the perfect indicative (*cântasem, cântaseşi, cântase*…) is borrowed from the Latin perfect subjunctive (*cantavissem, cantavisses, cantavisset ...).* The reasons of this take over are not explained in a satisfactory manner by language historians.

Primary forms (*semu, seţi*) lost ground to the other ones in southern area, probably because of their reduced phonetic body, so it is found that, at the end of the 17th century, they are endangered: "We face here a radical change in the flexion of the verb *a fi*, consisting in an almost total elimination of the forms that still had in the century 16th (and not just in the rhotacized texts) a rather high frequency (*ibidem*, p. 38).

The alolexemes of 1st, 3rd, 4th persons have also short forms, etymological ones, some of them preserved until today, due to the very high frequency in communication.

Thus, lat. *sum, sunt* → *su, îs,-s*, lat. *east* → *e, ie, i.*

The verb *a lua* has been preserved under the same conditions (reduced phonetic body, very high frequency, comparable to the verb *a fi*).

The alolexems are reviewed, but only a formal analysis is made, not a functional one, the author remaining at the level of the studied texts, without mentioning the archaisms preserved by the dialectal texts. They would have stressed the value of *a lua* as a semi-auxiliary aspectual verb, a fact which was recorded by specialists (GRAUR, 1937: 68-69) and can be proved even today by the presence, in the very actual Romanian language, of many idiomatic expressions that demonstrate the

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productivity of the generated model *a lua la sănătoasa, a lua foc, a lua la rost, ia şi mănâncă, ia să vedem* (cf. CIORĂNESCU, 2001: 476).

Such a description would have included in the group of the auxiliaries and would have highlighted the motivation of the simple perfect and past perfect forms: *losei, loseşi…; losesem, loseseşi, losese*…

The verbs *a da* şi *a sta*, in addition to the alolexems passed through various stages of development (*să de, să dea…; să ste, să stea…*), keep the reduplicated form of perfect from Latin (*dădea, dădui…; stăteam, stătui*…); they are not subject of the mentioned diachronic study.

Instead, for the verb *a sta*, it is recorded in addition the irregular flective of the imperative in the 2nd person: *stăi, stai*! without prior assessment of the information: "The form *stăi* is obscure and was considered a loan from Bulgarian by Leca Morariu …and a Romanian creation by J. Byck, the result of the adjunction of the inflexion *–i* at the old form *stă;* the form *stă* may be indeed a borrowing (ZAMFIR, *ibidem*, p. 87)".

In reality, the transition from the older form *stă!* recorded in numerous texts, at the forms *stai! stăi!* obeys a rule of the imperative for the intransitive verbs: 2nd person forms, affirmative imperative, are homonymous with the corresponding forms of the indicative and not with the ones of the 3rd person: *tu mergi – mergi! tu cobori – cobori! tu stai – stai!*

The configuration of the irregular verbs, depending on the report between the lexemes and flectives, has separated them from the ones with irregularities, leading to their logical control in the learning process.

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