

TRENDS IN NOUN PLURAL FORMATION IN ISTRO-ROMANIAN¹

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Abstract. This study aims to present the pluralization strategies used in Istro-Romanian with nouns that belong, or once belonged, to the *genus alternans* class. We also attempt to establish a *terminus ante quem* for the loss of the *genus alternans* in the northern variety, and to reconstruct how the ending *-ure* spread through the nominal inflexional system of both varieties of Istro-Romanian. We hypothesize that the contact situation influenced these phenomena, as is apparent from the behaviour of nouns in simple and complex quantifier phrases.

Keywords: *genus alternans*, neuter nouns, *bilingualism*, numerical quantifier phrases, complex phrases

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims

The aim of this study is to suggest that traditional assumptions about the structure of the nominal system of Istro-Romanian (IR) have underestimated the nature of the changes which have affected it, and the role in those changes of intense bilingualism with Croatian. At issue is the fate of that class of nouns, part of the common inheritance of Daco-Romance, which is traditionally labelled ‘neuter’ or, in more recent terminology, *genus alternans* (‘alternating gender’). Its defining characteristic is that its singular forms select masculine agreement on adjectives, determiners, and pronouns, while its plural forms select feminine agreement. This can be illustrated by examples from Romanian (Table 1):

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Table 1

The Daco-Romance *genus alternans* in Romanian

	singular			plural		
masculine	un	băiat	înalt	doi	băieți	înalți
	a _{MSG}	boy	tall _{MSG}	two _{MPL}	boys	tall _{MPL}
		'a tall boy'		'two tall boys'		
	un	copac	înalt	doi	copaci	înalți
	a _{MSG}	tree	tall _{MSG}	two _{MPL}	trees	tall _{MPL}
		'a tall tree'		'two tall trees'		
	un	scaun	înalt	două	scaune	înalte
	a _{MSG}	chair	tall _{MSG}	two _{FPL}	chairs	tall _{FPL}
		'a tall chair'		'two tall chairs'		
	un	raft	înalt	două	rafturi	înalte
	a _{MSG}	shelf	tall _{MSG}	two _{FPL}	shelves	tall _{FPL}
		'a tall shelf'		'two tall shelves'		
	o	fată	înaltă	două	fete	înalte
	a _{FSG}	girl	tall _{FSG}	two _{FPL}	girls	tall _{FPL}
		'a tall girl'		'two tall girls'		
	o	cruce	înaltă	două	cruci	înalte
	a _{FSG}	cross	tall _{FSG}	two _{FPL}	cross	tall _{FPL}
		'a tall cross'		'two tall crosses'		
						feminine

The nouns *scaun* 'chair' and *raft* 'shelf' belong to the *genus alternans* class. Romanian *genus alternans* nouns have two further characteristics, semantic and morphological: they only ever have 'abiotic' referents (they never denote living entities, including plants: cf. Maiden et al. 2021: 55, 66); their singulars have a type of inflexional morphology distinctively associated, across the grammar, with masculine agreement (the fact of ending in a final consonant or *-u*) while their plurals have inflexional morphology (usually the ending *-e*, or *-uri*) distinctively associated with feminine agreement.⁴ The system in modern Romanian is – in these major characteristics – ancestral to all branches of Daco-Romance.

It is not our intention to explain the history of the *genus alternans* (see, e.g., Maiden 2016). Nor are we principally concerned with the vexed question (see, e.g., Corbett 1991: 150-152, Maiden 2016, Loporcaro 2016) of whether the *genus alternans* is a third gender, a 'neuter', beside 'masculine' and 'feminine', or an 'ambigeneric' class whose inflexional characteristics are such that its singulars necessarily select masculine agreement, and its

⁴ For this claim, and discussion of apparent exceptions, see Maiden (2016).

plurals feminine agreement, making it superfluous to invoke an additional ‘neuter’ gender. We will, however, comment on this issue in our conclusion.

Our enquiry has been conducted amid growing awareness by linguists of the complex history of the *genus alternans* in IR. Early assumptions that the system has evolved much as in Romanian have given way to a more nuanced view, in which the modern system appears significantly different from what we observe elsewhere in Daco-Romance, and in which the role of contact with Croatian has been profound and subtle. We begin with a brief review of the discussions offered by the three major monographic descriptions of IR.

1.2 Traditional views

Popovici (1914:70f.) makes no terminological or morphological distinction between the Daco-Romance ‘neuter’ and the Croatian neuter, thereby implying that they are entities of essentially the same kind. His remarks create the impression of a stable historical development not significantly different from that of his native Romanian. For Popovici, the IR ‘neuter’ class is simply robust and productive, as it is in Romanian, and as shown by his observation that there are twice as many ‘neuters’ in IR of ‘foreign origin’ as of Romance origin.

Pușcariu offers a more nuanced account, important aspects of which have been overlooked. Unlike Popovici, Pușcariu (1926: 141) observes – from his survey of then available data, including his own fieldwork – that the analogical attraction of inherited inflexional patterns in fact operates less consistently on loanwords than in Romanian so that, for example, inherited patterns of consonantal alternation between masculine singulars and plurals are not necessarily applied to loanwords from Croatian. He offers separate analyses of the IR ambigenics/neuters and Croatian neuters (cf. Pușcariu 1926: 144f., 150f.), thereby emphasizing that they are entities of a different kind. He observes how words which in Romanian are ambigenic and end in *-e* also have, or only have, IR plurals which correspond to Romanian plurals in *-i*, while plural *-ure* is found in words whose cognates in Romanian end in plural *-e* or are even masculines in *-i* (there are rarer cases in which plural *-i* corresponds to Romanian *-uri*). Moreover, he observes that the *-ure* plural is allowed in animate⁵ nouns. Sometimes both an *-ure* plural and a masculine plural exist for the same noun without any necessary difference of meaning.

Kovačec (1971: 86f.) focuses mainly on the northern variety of IR, that of Žejane. Here, *genus alternans* agreement – but not necessarily the associated inflexional morphology on the noun – is shown to have disappeared, so that the relevant nouns now show masculine agreement in the plural just as in the singular. Kovačec also alludes to a similar tendency in the southern dialects. He illustrates how, in speakers of all generations, originally ‘ambigenic’ nouns have also tended to acquire typically masculine plural endings, leading to situations in which one and the same noun may have both the inherited ending in *-ure* (or *-e*), and the innovatory masculine plural form. In these conditions, the endings *-ure* (and *-e*) have become liable to be extended into historically masculine, and

⁵ Pușcariu (1906: 4/82) gives ‘kròlure ‘kings’; Glavina (1929/[1904]a: 205) records ‘körturile ‘moles’.

animate, nouns. Taking a diachronic perspective, he recognizes the importance of Croatian influence on the disappearance of the *genus alternans* and on attendant morphological adjustments, while again recognizing that the IR ‘neuter’ is of a different kind from the Croatian neuter, indeed arguing that it is the lack of anything like a *genus alternans* in Croatian that has favoured its disappearance in IR.

1.3 Our study

Our study explores further the nature of the changes in the IR nominal system to which previous scholars have pointed. We both reinforce and refine their observations, and point to additional factors, involving numerical quantifier phrases (NQPs), which appear to play a role in the modern morphosyntactic evolution of the remnants of *genus alternans* plurals. We compiled an *ad hoc* corpus comprising: all the collections of dialect texts to which we had access; the linguistic atlases of Filipi (2002) and Flora (2003); the published volumes of the dictionary of Neiescu (2011-); the hitherto unpublished Oxford Hurren archive⁶ of material gathered in the late 1960s. From these combined sources we listed all words displaying double or multiple plural endings (masculine vs -ure or -e), attending to some potentially significant tendencies in their distribution and agreement patterns: among variables of interest were polysemy, the behaviour of the nouns in different kinds of NQP (especially the types ‘2 Xs’ and ‘2+modifier+Xs’), monosyllabic vs polysyllabic singulars, and etymological source (Romance vs Croatian or older Slavonic). These elements were tested in specially designed, questionnaire-based, pilot fieldwork conducted in 2020. Our findings are preliminary and provisional, being based on a limited range of speakers interviewed under difficult⁷ fieldwork conditions. But we believe that these preliminary results are significant.

2. THE MODERN SITUATION

2.1. Žejane

In Žejane, responses to our questionnaire confirmed the absence of *genus alternans* agreement.⁸ We stress *agreement*: nouns originally displaying masculine agreement in the singular, but feminine agreement in the plural, now show masculine agreement for both number values, but the inflexional morphology of the relevant nouns is a different matter. Historically *genus alternans* nouns may still end in plural -ure or -e. Because they are now masculine, it becomes possible for them to acquire typical masculine plural morphology as

⁶ See <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:9c7e2da8-ae4a-434c-8dbe-589afbaa2cb6>. The archive contains over 30 hours of recordings made by Tony Hurren in 1966/67.

⁷ We thank Dr Ana Werkmann Horvat for carrying out the survey on our behalf, Covid restrictions making it impossible to visit Istria ourselves. For this pilot test, involving 61 questions, we took 8 participants, 4 from the north, 4 from the south, 5 men, 3 women, aged from 51-70+.

⁸ As many of our examples show, the form of the suffixed definite article associated with the *genus alternans* plural remains the historically feminine -le. We intend to discuss this form elsewhere, but in our view it represents reanalysis of -le as part of the plural inflexional ending, a development with parallels in masculine singulars and promoted by the fact that Croatian lacks definite articles.

well. It also becomes possible for the *genus alternans* ending *-ure* and *-e* to become extended into originally masculine nouns, including ones that denote living entities. This breakdown in the correlation between gender and form has engendered a situation in which one and the same noun may have more than one plural form. What we have further observed in our survey, however, is that this emergent variation tends to become associated with a particular type of structure in quantifier phrases involving numerals.

For fifteen of the nouns tested, speakers from Žejane showed plurals with the ending *-ure* retained in simple quantifier phrases of the type ‘2 Xs’ and in complex phrases of the type ‘2+modifier+Xs’, where this ending is accompanied by an unambiguously masculine numeral (*doi*)⁹ and sometimes by an unambiguously masculine plural modifier (Table 2):

Table 2

singular	‘2 Xs’	‘2+modifier+Xs’	informant ¹⁰
zɛp ‘pocket’	doi 'zɛpure ‘twOMPLpockets’	doi rɛski'nits 'zɛpure	NR
		‘twOMPL tɔrɔnMPL pockets’	
		doiMPL rɛz'bitsMPL 'zɛpure	NM
		doiMPL rɛski'nitsMPL 'zɛpure	NŽ
gɔrd ‘fence’	doi 'gɔrdure ‘twOMPL fences’	doi rɛski'nitsMPL 'zɛpure	NS
		doi vi'soʃ 'gɔrdure	NR
		‘twOMPL highMPL fences’	
		doi vi'soʃ 'gɔrdure	NM
grɔu ‘grain’	doi 'grɔwure ‘twOMPL (kinds of) grain’	doi vi'soʃ 'gɔrdure	NS
		doi zdriɫ 'grɔwure	NR
		‘twOMPL ripeMPL (kinds of) grain’	
		doi zdriɫ 'grɔwure	NM
		doi zdriɫ 'gɔrvure	NŽ
		doi 'zdriɫi 'grɔwure	NS
lɔk ‘lake’	doi 'lɔkure ‘twOMPL lakes’	doi miʃ 'lɔkure	NR
		‘twOMPL smallPL lakes’	
		NM offers 'jezɔr, with two masculine plurals: doi 'jezɔrure and doi miʃ 'jezɔrure	
		doiMPL miʃ 'lɔkure	NŽ
		doiMPL miʃ 'lɔkure	NS
mɔk ‘poppy’	doiMPL 'mɔkure ‘twOMPL poppies’	doiMPL 'finiMPL 'mɔkure	NR
		‘twOMPL fineMPL poppies’	
		doiMPL 'finiMPL 'mɔkure	NŽ
kɫuʃ	doi 'kɫuʃure	doiMPL 'finiMPL 'mɔkure	NS
		doi zaruzi'nits 'kɫuʃure	NR

⁹ We focus here on the number ‘2’, which has the property of agreeing for gender. The behaviour of other numerals, especially those from ‘5’ upwards, is sometimes different, but this is an issue we address elsewhere (Uță and Maiden, in progress).

¹⁰ Informants speaking the northern variety (Žejane) are designated by ‘N’, those speaking the southern variety by ‘S’, the second letter identifying the individual.

'key'	'two _{MPL} keys'	'two _{MPL} rusty _{MPL} keys'	NŽ
		do _i zarja'vits 'klu _f ure	
nɔp 'turnip'	do _i 'nɔpure 'two _{MPL} turnips'	'two _{MPL} rusty _{MPL} keys'	NS
		do _i _{MPL} 'revi _{MPL} 'klu _f ure	
		'two _{MPL} bad _{MPL} keys'	NR
		do _i dul _f 'nɔpure	
klɔs 'ear of corn'	do _i 'klɔsure 'two _{MPL} ears of corn'	'two _{MPL} sweet _{PL} turnips'	NM
		do _i dul _f 'nɔpure	
klip 'corn cob'	do _i 'klɔsure 'two _{MPL} ears of corn'	do _i zdra _l 'klɔsure	NŽ
		do _i zdra _l 'klɔsure	NR
		do _i lun _z _{PL} 'klipure	
kup 'pile'	do _i 'kupure 'two _{MPL} corn cobs'	'two _{MPL} long _{MPL} corn cobs'	NR
		do _i lun _z 'klipure	
		do _i lun _z 'klipure	NM
		do _i mi _f 'kupure	NS
duh 'spirit'	do _i 'kupure 'two _{MPL} piles'	'two _{MPL} small piles'	NR
		do _i mi _f 'kupure	
		do _i 'duhure	NŽ
		'two _{MPL} spirits'	
hliv 'pigsty'	do _i 'duhure 'two _{MPL} spirits'	do _i 'təmni 'duhure	NM
		'two _{MPL} evil _{MPL} spirits'	NŽ
		do _i 'təmni 'duhure	
		do _i 'təmni 'duhure	NS
		do _i 'blɔtni 'hlivure	NR
nɔs 'nose'	do _i 'hlivure 'two _{MPL} pigstyes'	'two _{MPL} dirty _{MPL} pigstyes'	NM
		do _i 'blatni 'hlivure	
		do _i 'blɔtni 'hlivure	NŽ
		do _i 'blatni 'hlivure	NS
		do _i lun _z 'nɔsure	NR
kɔp 'head'	do _i 'nɔsure 'two _{MPL} noses'	'two _{MPL} long _{MPL} noses'	NM
		do _i 'lungi 'nɔsure	
		do _i lun _z 'nɔsure	NŽ
		do _i lun _z 'nɔsure	NS
um 'mind'	do _i 'kɔpure 'two _{MPL} heads'	do _i ʃe'la _v _{MPL} 'kɔpure	NR
		'two _{MPL} bald _{MPL} heads'	NM
		do _i pli'ʃiv _i _{MPL} 'kɔpure	
		do _i pli'ʃiv _i _{MPL} 'kɔpure	NŽ
		do _i pli'ʃiv _i _{MPL} 'kɔpure	NS
um 'mind'	do _i 'umure 'two _{MPL} minds'	do _i 'pɔmetni _{MPL} 'umure	NR
		'two _{MPL} clever _{MPL} minds'	NM
		do _i 'pɔmetni _{MPL} 'umure	
		do _i 'pɔmentni _{MPL} 'umure	NŽ
		do _i 'pɔmetni _{MPL} 'umure	NS

In Romanian, the cognates of the IR nouns of Romance origin, *grə̀*, *nə̀p*, *nə̀s*, *kə̀p*, *lək* have *genus alternans* or, occasionally, masculine forms (*napi*). The word *gord* is probably of substrate origin. The other nouns are loans from dialectal or standard Croatian.

For other nouns, informants use a different plural form in phrases of the type ‘2 Xs’ from that used in phrases of the type ‘2+modifier+Xs’, and here we have a kind of distinction not, to our knowledge, found elsewhere in Romance (Table 3):

Table 3

spir	do _i 'spirure	do _i uve'nits 'spire	NS
'thorn'	'twompl thorns'	'twompl wiltedmpl thorns'	
klef'ter	do _i klef'terure	do _i miŋ'klef'tere	NM
'stag beetle'	'twompl stag beetles'	'twompl smallmpl stag beetles'	
je'rəm	do _i je'rəme	do _i grev/gre _Λ mpl jermi	NM
'yoke'	'twompl yokes'	'twompl heavympl yokes'	
brəts	do _i 'brətsure	do _i 'mər _Λ mpl brəts / 'brətsure	NM
'arm'	'twompl arms'	'twompl bigmpl arms'	
'kodru	do _i 'kodrure	do _i guŋ'tmpl 'kodri	NM
'wood'	'twompl woods'	'twompl densempl woods'	
brig	do _i 'brigure	do _i vi'soŋ' brig/brigure	NM
'hill'	'twompl hills'	'twompl highmpl hills'	
k'ʦuk	do _i 'k'ʦukure	do _i mu'jətsmpl 'k'ʦuki	NM
'daffodil'	'twompl daffodils'	'twompl beautifulmpl daffodils'	
'pramen	do _i 'pramen	do _i əb 'prameni	NM
'tuft'	'twompl tufts'	'twompl whitempl tufts'	
	<i>but</i> fɪŋf' 'pramene		
	'5 tufts'		
fuf	do _i fuf / do _i 'fufi	do _i 'əbi 'fufure	NR
'tuft'	'twompl tufts'	'twompl whitempl tufts'	
lut ₁	do _i 'luture	do _i 'negri _Λ mpl luts	NM
'clay'	'twompl clays'	'twompl blackmpl clays'	
lut ₂	do _i mpl 'luture	do _i mpl 'negri _Λ mpl luts	NŽ
'puddle'	'twompl puddles'	'twompl blackmpl puddles'	
		(for lut 'clay', the same speaker gives another form in complex phrases: do _i 'negri 'luture)	
os	do _i 'osure	do _i miŋ'ose	NM
'bone'	'twompl bones'	'twompl smallpl bones'	
	do _i 'ose	do _i miŋ'os // osure	NŽ

We have some evidence that nouns which distinguish between the form used in ‘2 Xs’ and that used in ‘2+modifier+Xs’ may show a mixed distribution, such that the form selected for ‘2 Xs’ is also preserved in combination with the suffixed definite article (Table 4):

Table 4

br̥ts 'arm'	doḷ 'br̥tsure 'two _{MPL} arms'	doḷ 'm̥r̥ʎi br̥ts / 'br̥tsure 'two _{MPL} big _{MPL} arms'	'br̥tsurele 'the arms'	NM
'kodru 'wood'	doḷ 'kodrure 'two _{MPL} woods'	doḷ guʃt 'kodri 'two _{MPL} dense _{MPL} woods	'kodrurle / 'kodri 'the woods'	NM
lut ₁ 'clay'	doḷ 'luture 'two _{MPL} clays'	doḷ 'negri luts 'two _{MPL} black _{MPL} clays	'luturele 'the clays'	NM
lut ₂ 'puddle'	doḷ 'luture 'two _{MPL} puddles'	doḷ 'negri luts 'two _{MPL} black _{MPL} puddles'	'luturele / 'lutsi 'the puddles'	NŽ

The nouns listed above are of Romance origin or later borrowings from dialectal or literary Croatian.¹¹ The nouns *br̥ts*, *os*, and *lut* are *genus alternans* in Romanian. The nouns *'kodru* and *spir* are masculine in Romanian and other Daco-Romance varieties. Most of the nouns in Tables 2, 3, and 4 are loans from dialectal or literary Croatian, among them *klej'ter*, *je'rəm*, *brig*, *k'ʎuk*, *'pramen*. All of these are masculine in Croatian and have in the literary language plurals in *-ovi*, *-evi*; to these may be added *hər'bət*, also masculine in Croatian but presenting variant plural forms *hr̥pti* / *'hr̥ptovi*; *ʃuf* is of unknown origin.

That *genus alternans* agreement has disappeared in Žejane confirms what Kovačec and Hurren observed in the 1960s. But how did the extension of the plural *-ure* into historically masculine nouns happen? On the basis of comparison with all other Daco-Romance varieties we may reasonably assume that in earlier IR there was also a *genus alternans*. It was made up of a nucleus of nouns inherited from Latin, whose plural was formed with the desinence *-ure* (such as *l̥k*, *n̥s*), or with the desinence *-e* (such as *br̥ts*, *os*). Initially the *genus alternans* was limited to 'abiotic' nouns, as elsewhere in Daco-Romance. Different Daco-Romance varieties behave differently in respect of the *genus alternans*. For example, *spir* has masculine cognates everywhere else in Daco-Romance, while in IR it has entered the *genus alternans*, with plurals *'spirure* and *'spire*; the same is true of some nouns of substrate origin, such as *g̥rd*, and loans from Slavonic such as *duh*. When nouns such as *br̥ts*, *os* and the initially irregular *k̥p* (cf. Romanian *cap* - *capete*) acquired the ending *-ure* is unclear. In any case, the result is a new form of plural, *'br̥tse* and *'br̥tsure*, *'ose* and *'osure*, while for *k̥p* the result is elimination of the original irregular form. Most probably, loans from Croatian, especially from the local dialect, were also initially integrated into the *genus alternans*. Through intense contact with Croatian, masculines and *genus alternans* nouns were those most affected by the reorganization of the system. An inherited IR masculine inflexional pattern involved number marking

¹¹ Eighteen nouns of Slavonic origin were tested. These entered the language at different stages: some are ancient, probably loans from old Slavonic (*bob*, *koj*, *duh*), but they also have continuants in literary and dialectal Croatian, which means that their source in IR may be, more immediately, Croatian.

through alternation between plain and palatalized consonants (e.g., korb_{SG} vs $\text{korb}^{\text{pl}}_{\text{PL}}$) disappeared, due to the influence of Croatian, where for example labials are not palatalized; the outcome is a new pattern, where the number distinction is neutralized, $\text{korb}_{\text{SG=PL}}$. As we have said, there has been a further development in Žejane and this, we think, is at least partly due to Croatian influence, namely the shift of originally *genus alternans* nouns to masculine agreement. This development might have purely internal motivation, but Croatian influence is plausible, given that, on the one hand, nothing similar happens to *genus alternans* nouns in Romanian while, on the other, Croatian lacks a *genus alternans*. The lack of a *genus alternans* in Croatian, the fact that the singulars of masculine and *genus alternans* nouns in IR are inflexionally identical, and that most Croatian masculines have a zero desinence in the singular (just like *genus alternans* singulars), plausibly favoured the disintegration of the IR *genus alternans* and its wholesale transfer to masculine agreement in Žejane.

Originally *genus alternans* nouns acquired purely masculine agreement, but they did not necessarily lose their inherited inflexional morphology, often retaining *-ure*, so that *-ure* becomes a new *masculine* plural ending. Thus 'kodru is masculine in other Daco-Romance varieties and in IR it is also masculine, but it has developed two forms of (semantically indistinguishable) plural, 'kodri and 'kodrure, the latter being an innovation made possible by the fact that *-ure* can now appear in masculine nouns. The influence of Croatian, especially of the standard language, favoured extension of this desinence into the masculines, so much so that the inflexional type $-\emptyset \sim -ure$ came to rival the older pattern with neutralized number distinction (e.g., plurals $\text{n\ddot{o}p}$ and $\text{n\ddot{o}p}ure$, both masculine). The pattern $-\emptyset \sim -ure$ was initially preferred in monosyllabic masculines (exactly the class where in Croatian we find the so-called 'long plurals', with the similarly bisyllabic ending *-ovi*), but it began to extend even to some polysyllabic nouns. The original masculines also influenced the new masculines from the *genus alternans*, in that, alongside the pattern $-\emptyset \sim -ure$, other originally *genus alternans* nouns are now invariant for number (see, e.g., $\text{k\ddot{o}p}_{\text{SG}} = \text{k\ddot{o}p}_{\text{PL}}$, Filipi 2002: 176 J) or come to display a type of root allomorphy originally found in masculines (e.g., $\text{lut}_{\text{SG}} \sim \text{luts}_{\text{PL}}$ in our questionnaire and Filipi 2002: 56 L). So the nominal system of Žejane is characterized by loss of *genus alternans* but by emergence of new pluralization strategies in masculines.

The emergent apparent specialization of the variant plural forms according to NQP type has a sociolinguistic dimension which again perhaps indicates Croatian influence. Our informants most consistent in selecting the same plural form in all contexts are NS and NR (each provided just one noun with a differentiated plural, *spir* and *ʃuf*). Both speak IR daily but, while NS has never left the home community, NR has spent different periods outside the home community. Speaker NŽ behaves in an almost identical way, offering just two examples of nouns with differentiated plurals (*lut* and *os*). NŽ uses IR almost every day and has not been away from the home community for longer than six months. NM presented the greatest number of differentiated plurals, distinguishing the forms used in phrases of the type '2 Xs' from those used in '2+modifier+Xs' (compare Tables 2 and 3) and occasionally further differentiates the form used in combination with the definite article (Table 4). NM uses IR once a week and has spent the most time outside the home community. Our data at least hint that speakers who still use IR every day and have generally not left the community behave in a conservative way and prefer to use identical plural forms in the syntagms '2 Xs' and '2+modifier+Xs'. But even these speakers sometimes make the distinction and this is presumably due to the same factors of variant conditions of language contact and bilingualism.

2.2 Šušnjeвица

We found greater variation in Šušnjeвица, perhaps indicating that Žejane is at a more advanced stage than Šušnjeвица in the reorganization of its nominal system. The oldest texts present an inconsistent picture, but almost all the nouns also tested in our questionnaire already have both a form that is invariant for number or marks number through root alternation,¹² and another in plural *-ure*. The invariant forms select masculine agreement and those in *-ure* feminine. Gartner and other nineteenth-century sources seem to indicate that loans from Slavonic also have two forms, masculine and *genus alternans*. For example, Gartner (1882: nr 400) shows number-invariant зep ‘pocket’, but also the forms with definite article ‘зepи and ‘зepурле, the latter being attested also in Popovici (1909: 6), while plural ‘зepуре is recorded by Cantemir (1959, s.v. зep). For further examples compare Gartner (1882: nr 802, 174, 619, 1058); Glavina (1929/[1904]a); Popovici (1909 s.v. kl̥s, kup), Cantemir (1959, s.v. k̥l̥uʃf). What these early sources suggest is confirmed by more modern sources. Thus Filipi (2002: maps 276; 1045; 1128; 1153): h̥ər'bət, do h̥ər'bətur̥e, do̥j h̥ər'bət; k̥l̥uʃf, do 'k̥l̥uʃur̥e, do̥j k̥l̥uʃf; kl̥s, do 'kl̥s̥ur̥e ʃi do̥j kl̥s; kl̥s, do 'kl̥s̥ur̥e, do̥j kl̥s; kup, do 'kupur̥e, do̥j kup.

Our data for Šušnjeвица reveal very few cases where the same inflexional ending and the same type of agreement are found both for NQPs of the type ‘2 Xs’ and for NQPs of the type ‘2+modifier+Xs’. We find this situation only for three nouns, and then only for three out of the four speakers. And even for these nouns there is variation: only for one (‘jar̥əm ‘yoke’) did all speakers have the same form in both contexts. The other two nouns are hruʃt ‘insect’ and k̥p̥ ‘head’. SM, SS, SP opted for the masculine plural in $-\emptyset$ for hruʃt, but SI has *genus alternans* (do_{FPL} (mitʃ) ‘hruʃtur̥e). For k̥p̥, in contrast, SM, SS, and SP had *genus alternans* (e.g., do_{FPL} ‘tʃelave_{FPL} ‘k̥p̥ur̥e ‘two bald heads’), while SI had *genus alternans* in the ‘2 Xs’ construction (do_{MPL} ‘k̥p̥ur̥e) but masculine agreement for ‘2+modifier+Xs’ (do̥j_{MPL} pli ‘ʃiv_{MPL} ‘k̥p̥ur̥e). For the remaining nouns tested, we found all four possible correlations between the two types of gender agreement and the two construction types. Moreover, the inflexional morphology of the nouns in the two constructions displays an almost bewildering array of types. These agreement patterns, and the corresponding patterns of nominal morphology, are summarized in Table 5, and examples are given in Tables 5.1-5.4:¹³

¹² Plural-marking by alternation varies from one source to another. Croatian loans do not necessarily follow the patterns found in words belonging to the inherited lexicon. This could be explained by the bilingual contact situation, given that consonantal alternation in the Croatian nominal system is governed by different rules from IR. It would also show that at least some of these borrowed nouns were originally *genus alternans* but subsequently acquired a masculine plural form—at a time when the historically inherited IR system of consonantal alternation was no longer automatically productive.

¹³ Phonological variations between speakers which are irrelevant to our argument are ignored here for reasons of space.

Table 5

2 Xs masculine	2+modifier+Xs masculine	Exemplified in
-∅	-∅	(Table 5.1: 1-17; 29-SP)
consonantal alternant	consonantal alternant	(Table 5.1: 18-19)
-i	-i	(Table 5.1: 20-21; 29-SM)
-ure	-ure	(Table 5.1: 22)
-∅	-ure	(Table 5.1: 23-27)
-∅	-e	(Table 5.1: 28)
-ure	-∅	(Table 5.1: 32-33)
-ure	-i	(Table 5.1: 30)
-e	-ure	(Table 5.1: 31)
2 Xs masculine	2+modifier+Xs <i>genus alternans</i>	
-∅	-ure	(Table 5.2: 1-6)
2 Xs <i>genus alternans</i>	2+modifier+Xs <i>genus alternans</i>	
-ure	-ure	(Table 5.3: 1-19)
-e	-e	(Table 5.3: 21)
-∅	-ure	(Table 5.3: 22)
2 Xs <i>genus alternans</i>	2+modifier+Xs masculine	
-ure	-∅	(Table 5.4: 1-9)
-ure	-ure	(Table 5.4: 10-19)
-e	-∅	(Table 5.4: 20-22)
-ure	consonantal alternation	(Table 5.4: 23-24)
-ure	-i	(Table 5.4: 25)
-e	-i	(Table 5.4: 26)
-e	-e	(Table 5.4: 27)
-i	-i	(Table 5.4: 28)

Table 5.1

1	singular møk 'poppy'	'2 Xs' do _i MPL møk 'two _{MPL} poppies'	'2+modifier+Xs' do _i MPL mu'fɔt _M møk do _i MPL mu'fɔt _S MPL møk 'two _{MPL} beautiful _{MPL} poppies'	informant SS SI
2	zɛp 'pocket'	do _i MPL zɛp 'two _{MPL} pockets'	do _i MPL reski'nits _{MPL} zɛp 'two _{MPL} torn _{MPL} pockets'	SP, SI
3	klɔs 'ear corn' of	do _i MPL klɔs 'two _{MPL} ears corn' of	do _i MPL 'zdrili _{MPL} klɔs two _{MPL} ripe _{MPL} ears of corn	SS

4	koʃ 'basket'	do _i MPL koʃ 'two _{MPL} baskets'	do _i MPL miʃ koʃ do _i /do/do _i MPL miʃ koʃ 'two _{MPL} small baskets'	SS SI
5	klɔs ₂ 'corn cob'	do _i MPL klɔs 'two _{MPL} corn cobs'	do _i MPL lung _M klɔs 'two _{MPL} long _M cobs'	SP
6	glog 'hawthorn'	do _i MPL glog 'two _{MPL} hawthorns'	do _i MPL uve'nits _{MPL} glog 'two _{MPL} withered _{MPL} hawthorns'	SS
7	kup ₁ 'pile'	do _i MPL kup 'two _{MPL} piles'	do _i MPL miʃ kup 'two _{MPL} small piles'	SS
8	ʃep 'cork (in bottle)'	do _i MPL ʃep 'two _{MPL} corks'	do _i MPL miʃ ʃep 'two _{MPL} small corks'	SS
9	per 'lock of hair'	do _i MPL per 'two _{MPL} locks'	do _i MPL 'ɔbi _{MPL} per 'two _{MPL} white _{MPL} locks'	SM
10	'pramen 'lock (of hair)'	do _i MPL 'pramen 'two _{MPL} locks'	do _i MPL ɔb _{MPL} 'pramen 'two _{MPL} white _{MPL} locks'	SS
11	duh 'spirit'	do _i MPL duh 'two _{MPL} spirits'	do _i MPL zla _{MPL} duh 'two _{MPL} evil _{MPL} spirits'	SS
12	lut 'puddle'	do _i MPL lut 'two _{MPL} puddles'	do _i MPL negri _{MPL} lut 'two _{MPL} black _{MPL} puddles'	SS
13	nɔs 'nose'	do _i MPL nɔs 'two _{MPL} noses'	do _i MPL 'mɔre nɔs 'two _{MPL} big noses'	SS
14	ʎerm 'worm'	do _i MPL ʎerm 'two _{MPL} worms'	do _i MPL mik _M ʎerm ¹⁴ 'two _{MPL} small _M worms'	SS
15	kɔl 'lake'	do _i MPL kɔl 'two _{MPL} lakes'	do _i MPL miʃ kɔl 'two _{MPL} small lakes'	SS
16	lɔk 'lake'	do _i MPL lɔk 'two _{MPL} lakes'	do _i MPL miʃ lɔk 'two _{MPL} small lakes'	SI
17	'jazɔr 'lake'	do _i MPL 'jazɔr 'two _{MPL} lakes'	do _i MPL miʃ 'jazɔr 'two _{MPL} small lakes'	SM
18	hɔr'bɔt 'spine'	do _i MPL hɔr'bɔt 'two _{MPL} spines'	do _i MPL zɔ'vits _{MPL} hɔr'bɔt 'two _{MPL} bent _{MPL} spines'	SP
19	gut 'throat'	do _i MPL guts 'two _{MPL} throats'	do _i MPL us'kɔts _{MPL} guts 'two _{MPL} dry _{MPL} throats'	SS
20	'kodru 'mountain'	do _i MPL 'kodri 'two _{MPL} mountains'	do _i MPL vi'sɔʃ 'kodri 'two _{MPL} high mountains'	SM
21	'bɔrdo 'hill'	do _i MPL 'bɔrdi 'two _{MPL} hills'	do _i MPL vi'sɔʃ 'bɔrdi 'two _{MPL} high hills'	SM
22	ʃep 'cork'	do _i MPL 'ʃepure 'two _{MPL} corks'	do _i MPL miʃ 'ʃepure 'two _{MPL} small corks'	SM
23	zɛp 'pocket'	do _i MPL zɛp 'two _{MPL} pockets'	do _i MPL 'zɛpure rɔski'nits _{MPL} 'two _{MPL} torn _{MPL} pockets'	SS

¹⁴ Also do_iMPL ʎerm de kɔʃ 'two cheese worms'.

24	nɔp 'turnip'	do _i MPL nɔp 'twOMPL turnips'	do _i MPL 'dulʃi nɔp / do _i 'dulʃi 'nɔpure 'twOMPL sweet turnips'	SM
25	bob 'bean'	do _i MPL bob 'twOMPL beans'	us'kɔtsMPL 'bobure 'driedMPL beans'	SS
26	klɔs 'corn cob'	do _i MPL klɔs 'twOMPL corn cobs'	do _i MPL mɔr 'klɔsure 'twOMPL big corn cobs'	SS
27	k ^j uk / ʃuk 'owl'	do _i MPL k ^j uk 'twOMPL owls'	do _i MPL miʃ 'ʃukure 'twOMPL small owls'	SS
28	'jazɔr 'lake'	do _i MPL 'jazɔr 'twOMPL lakes'	do _i MPL miʃ 'jazɔre 'twOMPL small lakes'	SP
29	mɔk 'poppy'	do _i MPL mɔk do _i MPI 'mɔki 'twOMPL poppies'	do _i MPL mu'ʃɔtsMPL mɔk do _i MPL mu'ʃɔtsMPL 'mɔki 'twOMPL poppies'	SP SM ¹⁵
30	glog 'hawthorn'	do _i MPL 'glogure 'twOMPL hawthorns'	do _i MPL uve'nitsMPL 'glogi 'twOMPL witheredMPL hawthorns'	SM
31	bob 'bean'	do _i MPL 'bobe 'twOMPL beans'	us'kɔteFPL / us'kɔtsMPL 'bobure 'driedFPL/MPL beans'	SM
32	nɔs 'nose'	do / do _i MPL 'nɔsure 'twoFPL / MPL noses'	do _i MPL lungM nɔs 'twOMPL longM noses'	SP
33	kɔʃ 'cheese'	do _i MPL kɔʃure	do _i MPL 'friʃkiMPL kɔʃ 'twOMPL freshMPL cheeses' do _i MPL sa'rɔtM kɔʃ 'twOMPL saltyMPL cheeses' do _i MPL kɔʃ de 'kɔpre 'twOMPL goat's cheeses''	SS

Table 5.2

	singular	'2 Xs'	'2+modifier+Xs'	speaker
1	bob 'bean'	do _i MPL bob 'twOMPL beans'	us'kɔteFPL 'bobure us'kɔteFPL 'boburle ¹⁶ 'driedFPL beans'	SP SI
2	glog 'hawthorn'	do _i MPL glog 'twOMPL hawthorns'	doFPL uve'niteFPL 'glogure 'twoFPL witheredFPL hawthorns'	SI
3	k ^l uʃ 'key'	do _i MPL k ^l uʃ 'twOMPL keys'	doFPL zeruzi neiteFPL 'k ^l uʃure 'twoFPL rustyFPL keys'	SI
4	brɔts 'armful'	do _i MPL brɔts 'twOMPL armfuls'	doFPL 'plireFPL 'brɔtsure 'twoFPL wholeFPL armfuls'	SI
5	klɔs 'ear of corn'	do _i MPL klɔs 'twOMPL ears of corn'	doFPL 'zdrileFPL 'klɔsure 'twoFPL ripeFPL ears of corn'	SI
6	os 'bone'	doFPL / do _i MPL os 'twoFPL/MPL bones'	doFPL miʃ 'osure 'twoFPL small bones'	SI

¹⁵ Speaker also gives a *genus alternans* alternative in -ure.¹⁶ For these forms see Uță Bărbulescu and Maiden (in progress).

Table 5.3

	singular	'2 Xs'	'2+modifier+Xs"	speaker
1	zɛp 'pocket'	do _{FPL} 'zɛpɹure 'two _{FPL} pockets'	do _{FPL} reski'nite _{FPL} 'zɛpɹure 'two _{FPL} torn _{FPL} pockets'	SM
2	grəv 'grain'	do _{FPL} 'grəvɹure 'two _{FPL} kinds of grain'	do _{FPL} 'zdrile _{FPL} 'grəvɹure 'two _{FPL} ripe _{FPL} kinds of grain'	SI
3	ʃur 'sieve'	do _{FPL} 'ʃurɹure 'two _{FPL} sieves'	do _{FPL} reski'nite _{FPL} 'ʃurɹure 'two _{FPL} broken _{FPL} sieves'	SM
4	kʌʃ 'key'	do _{FPL} 'kʌʃɹure 'two _{FPL} keys'	do _{FPL} ruzi'nave _{FPL} 'kʌʃɹure 'two _{FPL} rusty _{FPL} keys'	SP
5	brɔts 'armful'	do _{FPL} 'brɔtsɹure 'two _{FPL} armfuls'	do _{FPL} 'plire _{FPL} 'brɔtsɹure 'two _{FPL} whole _{FPL} armfuls'	SM
6	klɔs ₁ 'ear of corn'	do _{FPL} 'klɔsɹure 'two _{FPL} ears of corn'	do _{FPL} 'zdrile _{FPL} 'klɔsɹure 'two _{FPL} ripe _{FPL} ears of corn'	SM
7	'kodru ₂ 'mountain'	do _{FPL} 'kodrɹure 'two _{FPL} mountains'	do _{FPL} mɔr 'kodrɹure two _{FPL} big mountains'	SP
8	kup ₁ 'pile'	do _{FPL} 'kupɹure 'two _{FPL} piles'	do _{FPL} 'mike _{FPL} 'kupɹure 'two _{FPL} small _{FPL} piles'	SP SI
9	k'uk ₁ 'daffodil'	do _{FPL} 'k'ukɹure 'two _{FPL} daffodils'	do _{FPL} mu'ʃɔte _{FPL} 'k'ukɹure 'two _{FPL} beautiful _{FPL} daffodils'	SI
10	ʃup ₁ 'lock of hair'	do _{FPL} 'ʃupɹure 'two _{FPL} locks'	do _{FPL} 'ɔbe _{FPL} 'ʃupɹure 'two _{FPL} white _{FPL} locks'	SI
11	ʃup ₂ 'tuft of wool'	do _{FPL} 'ʃupɹure 'two _{FPL} tufts'	do _{FPL} 'ɔbe _{FPL} 'ʃupɹure 'two _{FPL} white _{FPL} tufts'	SM
12	gut ₁ 'neck'	do _{FPL} 'gutɹure 'two _{FPL} necks'	do _{FPL} 'lunge _{FPL} 'gutɹure 'two _{FPL} long _{FPL} necks'	SP, SI
13	gut 'throat'	do _{FPL} 'gutɹure 'two _{FPL} throats'	do _{FPL} us'kɔte _{FPL} 'gutɹure 'two _{FPL} dry _{FPL} throats'	SP, SI
14	hliv ₁ 'pigsty'	do _{FPL} 'hlivɹure 'two _{FPL} pigsties'	do _{FPL} 'blɔtne _{FPL} 'hlivɹure do _{FPL} 'ʃporke _{FPL} 'hlivɹure 'two _{FPL} dirty _{FPL} pigsties'	SM SP
15	hliv ₂ 'henhouse'	do _{FPL} 'hlivɹure 'two _{FPL} henhouses'	do _{FPL} 'blɔtne _{FPL} 'hlivɹure 'two _{FPL} dirty _{FPL} henhouses'	SM
16	lut 'clay'	do _{FPL} 'lutɹure 'two _{FPL} types of clay'	do _{FPL} 'negre _{FPL} 'lutɹure 'two _{FPL} black _{FPL} clays'	SP
17	kɔl 'puddle'	do _{FPL} 'kɔlɹure 'two _{FPL} puddles'	do _{FPL} 'negre _{FPL} 'kɔlɹure 'two _{FPL} black _{FPL} puddles'	SI
18	os 'bone'	do _{FPL} 'osɹure 'two _{FPL} bones'	do _{FPL} miʃ 'osɹure doi/do _{FPL} miʃ 'osɹure 'two _{FPL} small bones'	SP SI

19	kɔʃ 'cheese'	do _{FPL} 'kɔʃure 'two _{FPL} cheeses'	do _{FPL} friʃke _{FPL} 'kɔʃure 'two _{FPL} fresh _{FPL} cheeses'	SI
20	'suflet 'soul'	do _{FPL} 'suflete 'two _{FPL} souls'	do _{FPL} 'bure _{FPL} 'suflete 'two _{FPL} good _{FPL} souls'	SM, SP
21	hər'bət 'spine'	do _{FPL} hər'bəte 'two _{FPL} spines'	do _{FPL} zvi'nite _{FPL} hər'bəturle 'two _{FPL} sprained _{FPL} spines'	SI
22	os 'bone'	do _{FPL} os 'two _{FPL} bones'	do _{FPL} miʃ 'osure 'two _{FPL} small bones'	SM

Table 5.4¹⁷

	singular	'2 Xs'	'2+modifier+Xs'	speaker
1	gɔrd 'fence'	do _{FPL} 'gɔrdure 'two _{FPL} fences'	do _{MPL} mɔr gɔrd 'two _{MPL} big fences'	SP
2	grəv 'grain'	do _{FPL} 'grəvure 'two _{FPL} kinds of grain'	do _{MPL} zdril _{MPL} grəv do _{MPL} zdril _{MPL} grəv 'two _{MPL} ripe _{MPL} kinds of grain'	SP SM
3	kluʃ 'key'	do _{FPL} 'kluʃure 'two _{FPL} keys'	do _{MPL} ruzi'navi _{MPL} kluʃ 'two _{MPL} rusty _{MPL} keys'	SM
4	nɔp 'turnip'	do _i / do _{FPL} 'nɔpure 'two _{MPL} / _{FPL} turnips'	do _{MPL} 'dulʃe nɔp 'two _{MPL} sweet _{MPL} turnips'	SI
5	koʃ 'basket'	do _{FPL} 'koʃure 'two _{FPL} baskets'	do _{MPL} mits koʃ 'two _{MPL} small baskets'	SP
6	ʃep 'cork'	do _{MPL} / do _{FPL} 'ʃepure 'two _{MPL} / _{FPL} corks'	do _{FPL} / do _{MPL} miʃ ʃep 'two _{FPL} / _{MPL} small corks'	SI
7	ʃup 'tuft of wool'	do _{FPL} 'ʃupure 'two _{FPL} tufts'	do _{MPL} vɔb _{MPL} ʃup 'two _{MPL} white _{MPL} tufts'	SI
8	hliv 'pigsty'	do _{FPL} 'hlivure 'two _{FPL} pigsties'	do _{MPL} 'blatni _{MPL} hliv 'two _{MPL} dirty _{MPL} pigsties'	SI
9	nɔs 'nose'	do _{FPL} 'nɔsure 'two _{FPL} noses'	do _{MPL} lunʒ nɔs 'two _{MPL} long noses'	SI
10	klɔs 'corn cob'	do _{FPL} 'klɔsure 'two _{FPL} corn cobs'	do _{MPL} lunʒ 'klɔsure 'two _{MPL} long corn cobs'	SM
11	nɔp 'turnip'	do _{FPL} 'nɔpure 'two _{FPL} turnips'	do _{FPL} / do _{MPL} dulʃ 'nɔpure 'two _{FPL} / _{MPL} sweet turnips'	SP

¹⁷ But cf. also the variation observed in:

Singular	2 Xs	2+modifier+Xs		speaker
kɔʃ 'cheese'	do _{FPL} 'kɔʃure	do _{FPL} 'friʃke _{FPL} 'kɔʃure 'two fresh cheeses'	do _{MPL} sa'rɔtm kɔʃ 'two salty cheeses'	SM
	do _{FPL} 'kɔʃure	do _{FPL} 'friʃke _{FPL} 'kɔʃure	do _{MPL} kɔʃ de 'kɔpre 'two goat's cheeses'	SP
ʎerm 'worm'	do _{FPL} 'ʎermure	do _{FPL} miʃ 'ʎermure 'two small worms'	do _{MPL} 'ʎermi de kɔʃ 'two cheese worms'	SP
	do _{FPL} 'ʎermure	do _{FPL} miʃ 'ʎermure	do _{MPL} ʎerm de kɔʃ	SI

12	koʃ 'basket'	do _{FPL} 'koʃure 'two _{FPL} baskets'	do _{MPL} miʃ 'koʃure 'two _{MPL} small baskets'	SM
13	kup ₁ 'pile'	do _{FPL} 'kupure 'two _{FPL} piles'	do _{MPL} miʃ 'kupure 'two _{MPL} small piles'	SM
14	kup ₂ 'group'	do _{FPL} 'kupure 'two _{FPL} groups'	do _{MPL} miʃ 'kupure 'two _{MPL} small groups'	SM
15	ʃep 'cork'	do _{FPL} 'ʃepure 'two _{FPL} corks'	do _{FPL} /do _{MPL} mik _M 'ʃepure 'two _{FPL} /MPL small _M corks'	SP
16	gut ₁ 'neck'	do _{FPL} 'guture 'two _{FPL} necks'	do _{MPL} lunʒ 'guture 'two _{MPL} long necks'	SM
17	gut ₂ 'throat'	do _{FPL} 'guture 'two _{FPL} throats'	do _{MPL} us'kɔts _{MPL} 'guture 'two _{MPL} dry _{MPL} throats'	SM
18	nɔs 'nose'	do _{FPL} 'nɔsure 'two _{FPL} noses'	do _{MPL} lunʒ 'nɔsure 'two _{MPL} long noses'	SM
19	kɔp 'head'	do _{FPL} 'kɔpure 'two _{FPL} heads'	do _{MPL} pli'ʃiv _{MPL} 'kɔpurle 'two _{MPL} bald _{MPL} heads'	SM
20	furni'gɔr 'anthill'	do _{FPL} furni'gɔre 'two _{FPL} anthills'	do _{MPL} miʃ furni'gɔr 'two _{MPL} small anthills'	SM
21	'suflet ₁ 'spirit'	do _{FPL} 'suflete 'two _{FPL} spirits'	do _{FPL} /do _{MPL} po'redni _{MPL} 'suflet 'two _{FPL} / MPL evil spirits'	SI
22	'suflet ₂ 'soul'	do _{FPL} 'suflete 'two _{FPL} souls'	do _{MPL} 'bure _{FPL} / bur _{MPL} 'suflet 'two _{MPL} good _{FPL} / MPL souls'	SI
23	lut ₁ 'clay'	do _{FPL} 'luture 'two _{FPL} types of clay'	do _{MPL} 'negri _{MPL} 'lutsi 'two _{MPL} black _{MPL} clays'	SM
24	lut ₂ 'puddle'	do _{FPL} 'luture 'two _{FPL} types of clay'	do _{FPL} / do _{MPL} 'negri _{MPL} luts 'two _{FPL} / MPL black _{MPL} clays'	SI
25	gɔrd 'fence'	do _{FPL} 'gɔrdure 'two _{FPL} fences'	do _{MPL} gɔrʒ / 'gɔrɔi vi'sotʃ 'two _{MPL} high fences'	SI
26	'suflet ₁ 'spirit'	do _{FPL} 'suflete 'two _{FPL} spirits'	do _{MPL} po'redni _{MPL} 'duhi / 'sufleti 'two _{MPL} evil _{MPL} spirits'	SM
27	'legɔr 'cradle'	do _{FPL} 'legɔre 'two _{FPL} cradles'	do _{MPL} miʃ 'legɔre 'two _{MPL} small cradles'	SM
28	'kodru 'hill'	do _{FPL} 'kodri 'two _{FPL} hills'	do _{FPL} /do _{MPL} vi'sotʃ 'kodri 'two _{FPL} / MPL high hills'	SI

Filipi (2002) gives excellent confirmation of the variation we observe in the southern varieties, and for almost all nouns tested by us.¹⁸ However, our survey shows that these nouns present even more extensive variation, in that one and the same speaker may access different forms of plural, these forms selecting different types of agreement or both selecting the same kind of agreement. Our data also show that forms in *-ure*, recorded by Filipi, are increasingly common.

3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

It is usually assumed¹⁹ that masculine agreement combined with *genus alternans* endings is limited to Žejane, but our data confirm it also for Šušnjevića. There is no reasonable doubt that Šušnjevića, like other Daco-Romance varieties, originally had *genus alternans* nouns. It is also plausible that, as in the north, there was a (masculine) class in which the number alternation was inflexionally neutralized through local sound change, another (masculine) class in which number was expressed by consonantal alternations, and a class in $-\emptyset_{SG} \sim -ure_{PL}$ specific to the (semantically ‘abiotic’) *genus alternans*. Under prolonged Croatian influence, Croatian masculine words ending in consonants, especially if ‘abiotic’, were liable to be assimilated into the *genus alternans*, or into the masculine. Thus *zep* ‘pocket’ can be *genus alternans* $zep_{SG} \sim 'zepure_{PL}$ or masculine $zep_{SG} \sim zep_{PL}$, while *kluŋf* ‘key’ may be *genus alternans* $kluŋf_{SG} \sim 'kluŋfure_{PL}$ or masculine $kluŋf_{SG} \sim kluŋf_{PL}$. This means that one and the same consonant-final noun could show two types of inflexional ending and two types of agreement. This differentiation in respect of inflexional morphology and agreement still persists, but because the coexistence of two plural-marking patterns for one and the same noun is unmotivated semantically, and because Croatian has nothing like the *genus alternans*, under Croatian influence speakers abandoned the alignment between inflexion type and agreement type. Thus the originally *genus alternans* type $-\emptyset_{SG} \sim -ure_{PL}$ or $-\emptyset_{SG} \sim -e_{PL}$ may display masculine plural agreement while, albeit it very exceptionally, we even find even nouns which have become inflexionally invariant for number but display *genus alternans* agreement (e.g., *do_{FPL}* os ‘two bones’).

The loosening of the tie between inflexional class and agreement pattern is apparent in the many examples of hybrid behaviour in our data. The plurals of masculine nouns in the construction ‘2 Xs’ may show a different ending and a different type of agreement when it comes to the construction ‘2+modifier+Xs’, while morphologically *genus alternans* nouns in the construction ‘2 Xs’ may show masculine agreement in ‘2+modifier+Xs’. Actually, nouns that show masculine agreement in ‘2 Xs’ yet show *genus alternans* agreement behaviour in ‘2+modifier+Xs’ show different morphological behaviour for the two types of phrase, while nouns that are *genus alternans* in ‘2 Xs’ and masculine in ‘2+modifier+Xs’ frequently have the same plural desinences, *-ure* and *-e*, in both contexts.

All of this plausibly reflects Croatian influence. In the Čakavian dialects, especially of the area where southern IR varieties are spoken, masculine and neuter nouns show distinct morphology according to the type of construction. Kalsbeek (1998: 276) indicates two situations in the Čakavian dialect of Orbanići which show one behaviour for masculines in simple quantifier phrases and another in complex phrases: the numerals *dvā*

¹⁸ See Filipi (2002) maps 56 and 1087, 65, 106 and 117, 161, 611, and 1265, 172, 276, 420, 624 and 1038, 909 and 927, 980, 1085, 1127, 1128, 1045, 1153, 1316 and 1373, 1504, 1509, 1709, 1752, 1796, 1848, 1849.

¹⁹ Cf. Kovačec (1971: 86-89).

‘two’ and *òba* ‘both’ (for neuter and masculine) are followed by the genitive singular case-form of a noun, while if a masculine noun in the nominative or accusative is modified by an adjective, then the noun and its modifying adjective have the nominative-accusative plural ending. This *distinction* is percolating into IR, not as a difference in case-marking (IR has at best minimal case-system), but as a differentiation of plural morphology or of plural agreement, *according to type of phrase*. Our data show that speakers in Šušnjevića adopt the following strategies for the two types: different endings and different agreement; different endings, but the same agreement; same ending, but different agreement.

The forms in Tables 5.1. and 5.3 show that in the southern variety nouns may show either masculine or *genus alternans* agreement, but that this variation is exploited to reproduce a distinction present in dialectal Croatian. Tables 5.2 and 5.4 show how the original differentiation is no longer being made by speakers, and the agreement patterns are no longer always those expected for masculine and for *genus alternans* nouns respectively. Tables 5.1 and 5.4 shows that *-ure* has been extended to masculines and can occur with masculine agreement.

It is hard to say when the IR system began to be modified in this way. And it is especially hard to say why the southern variety is apparently at an earlier stage in this development than in Žejane. In the nineteenth century, the nouns we have tested were already showing differentiated forms of plural requiring differentiated patterns of agreement. Thus, *zep* ‘pocket’ is attested with invariant plural in Gartner (1882), but also with a definite plural in *-urle* and a plural in *-i* in letters from Ive Jurman reported by Cantemir at the beginning of the last century. This was probably at first a matter of free variation and personal choice, but we lack sufficient attestations from the nineteenth century. That variation already occurred then is reflected in a neglected comment by Pușcariu (1929: 53f.) on Gartner’s interviews with Matei Glavina:

“The fact that for most ambigenic nouns we also have forms in *-i*, so two, three, even four variants for forms of the plural with the definite article (e.g., *kutsiti*, *kutsiti*, *kutsíturle*, *kutsítele...*) is indirect evidence of Glavina’s uncertainty” [our translation].

Pușcariu (1929: 53) believes this uncertainty had various causes because the plurals, definite or indefinite, were “formed mechanically by Gartner and were perhaps even suggested to Glavina, or [...] Glavina himself formed them mechanically, losing his certainty about his mother tongue because of continual and tiring interrogation”. Influenced by his native Romanian, Pușcariu took it for granted that all these plurals of *cușit* ‘knife’ were *genus alternans*. All they really show is that the nouns had both masculine and *genus alternans* inflexions. The apparent ‘uncertainty’ is not Glavina’s but reflects variation emergent in the late nineteenth century in the south. In any case, nouns in the southern variety have preserved the morphological and agreement distinctions longer than in Žejane. Our own data suggest that there was an intermediate stage in which a masculine singular could have variant plurals with two types of agreement, but only in respect of the selection of plural endings because, of course, all originally *genus alternans* nouns now have masculine agreement.

All the speakers from the south in our survey have forms with variant plural endings and / or variant agreement patterns. But there are detectable trends, mainly at the individual

level. Of our informants, SS, who spent the most time outside the community and often uses IR, prefers masculine agreement (12 out of 17 nouns) with invariance or consonantal alternation and selects plurals in *-ure* with masculine agreement, especially in ‘2+modifier+X’ constructions; he keeps *genus alternans* for plural *køpure*. On the other hand, SP, SI, and SM tend to prefer *genus alternans* (SI and SP for 9 nouns, and SM for 8 out of 17 nouns). SP has not left the community and constantly speaks IR, and SI and SM have been away for longer than six months and use the language more rarely. SI offers the greatest number of nouns with hybrid behaviour (SI gives 9 out of 12 *genus alternans* nouns as masculine in the ‘2+modifier+Xs’ construction), and SM offers the greatest number of nouns with heterogeneous agreement behaviour but keeping the ending *-ure* (9 out of 12). Even SP, who speaks the language daily, demonstrates all the above types, which indicates that the modern system is far from the impression of stability given by earlier studies.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Our tentative findings

Without proper consideration of its long-lasting, profound, and asymmetrical bilingualism with Croatian, one cannot properly assess the diachronic stability of the IR nominal system, and the place within it of the *genus alternans*. We maintain that IR originally had three classes of noun, masculine, feminine, and *genus alternans*, and that nouns from old Slavonic and Croatian were originally absorbed into these native, inherited, classes but that later, under pressure from Croatian, a language without *genus alternans*, the inherited system gradually disintegrated. Our data show that:

a) the constraint that all *genus alternans* words were semantically abiotic ceased to apply some time before the nineteenth century. The ending *-ure*, once uniquely associated with the *genus alternans*, extended to animates, a phenomenon observable from the later nineteenth century.

b) IR had inflexional types associated with masculines or *genus alternans* respectively. Inherited types of masculine plural marking, such as palatalization of root-final consonants, subsequently gave way to invariance for number, under the influence of Croatian which has no such thing as palatalized labials. Native consonantal alternation for number was originally applied even to words borrowed from Croatian, nouns assigned to the *genus alternans* receiving the ending *-ure*. But even these diachronically fairly stable types underwent reorganization, with generalization of the inflexional type associated with the masculine or with the *genus alterans*. By the nineteenth century the masculine alternation type is rivalled by the number-invariant type, and the *genus alternans* type \emptyset_{SG} vs $-e_{PL}$ by the type \emptyset_{SG} vs $-ure_{PL}$.

c) from the nineteenth century or earlier we find that one singular can have two kinds of plural or two kinds of agreement. If a noun ending in a consonant in the singular has an invariant plural, or consonantal alternation in the plural, plural agreement will be masculine; if the noun had plural *-ure*, the agreement was originally feminine and the noun was *genus alternans*. This creation of double or multiple plurals affects not only loans from Croatian, but also inherited Romance words. We have no evidence that there was ever a

stage in which Romance nouns preserved one morphological system but Croatian loans preserved another. Rather, Croatian nouns were initially integrated into the inherited system and, later, inherited Romance nouns succumb to the creation of double or multiple plurals.

d) Žejane probably went through this state of affairs, as shown by the different forms of plural selected in the phrase ‘2 Xs’ and ‘2+modifier+Xs’, but the correlation between the type $-\emptyset_{SG}$ VS $-ure_{PL}$ / \emptyset_{SG} VS $-e_{PL}$ and feminine agreement was lost, *-ure* plurals switching to masculine. In the southern variety, too, the ending *-ure* begins to show masculine agreement, which suggests that it is following in the footsteps of Žejane.

e) from the nineteenth century, or quite possibly earlier, there emerges a tendency to differentiate the forms of the plural as a function of numerals.²⁰ We have also uncovered a tendency to use different plural forms for ‘2 Xs’ as opposed to ‘2+modifier+Xs’. Thus double or multiple plural forms are no longer in free variation. It is hard to say when such specialization began to emerge, but the data we now have show that it is not yet general and that speakers vary in the extent to which they make such a distinction. In IR, on the Croatian model, there have been created oppositions which do not exist, for example, in Romanian, the existence of double / multiple plurals being exploited to mark these distinctions.

4.2 Wider implications

While the aim of this study has been to provide an initial sketch of the fate of the inherited *genus alternans* in IR, we may conclude with some observations on the theoretical implications. One general lesson is that minority languages must be analysed on their own terms and not through the possibly distorting lens of major standard languages with which they are cognate:²¹ we have seen at various points in our discussion that the projection of structures appropriate to standard Romanian onto the analysis of Istro-Romanian can be unhelpful. The status of the Daco-Romance *genus alternans* is an enduringly controversial topic in Romance linguistics. The history of the question is presented, for example, in Maiden (2016). In a nutshell, the debate is about whether the class of nouns traditionally (although not universally) designated ‘neuter’ in Romanian grammars is indeed a third, ‘neuter’, gender, in addition to masculine and feminine or, rather, there are only two genders, masculine and feminine, and the ‘neuter’ (*genus alternans*) is a class of nouns inflexionally split across both genders, its singulars being masculine and its plurals feminine. Maiden (2016) believes that postulation of a third ‘neuter’ gender in the history²² of Romanian is otiose and misleading because, in fact, the selection of masculine agreement in the singular and feminine in the plural has been a strict function of the inflexional nature of the singular and plural forms: *genus alternans* nouns are such that their singulars have a morphological structure uniquely associated with masculine, and their plurals have a structure uniquely associated with feminine. There are various facts in the history of Romanian which support this observation and which become inexplicable or appear arbitrary if the relevant class of nouns is simply labelled ‘neuter’.

²⁰ In Glavina (1929/[1904]b: 223) there is a distinction between the form selected after 2 and 3, and that selected after higher numerals: *doi trei brats* vs *safe p̄ra la șapte br̄tse*. We do not address this kind of differentiation here, but see Uță Bărbulescu and Maiden (in progress).

²¹ For discussion of this problem in Romance historical linguistics, see Maiden (2022).

²² Maiden’s view is, however, more nuanced than a flat rejection of the ‘third gender’ hypothesis: see Maiden (2016: 136-138).

Two aspects of the history of the *genus alternans* in IR seem strongly consistent with this view. The first is that, in intimate contact with a language which unquestionably has a third, *neuter*, gender, IR speakers have shown absolutely no sign of associating their *genus alternans* with the Croatian ‘third gender’, the neuter,²³ despite the fact that there is a way in which they could very easily have done this. Istro-Romanian has borrowed from Croatian morphologically neuter adjectives (and some nouns) in -o (see Kovačec 1971: 86f.). Croatian neuter adjectival forms really are available to IR speakers and really are borrowed, often with adverbial function, but there is no evidence anywhere in our data of Croatian neuter adjectival forms being especially associated with a *genus alternans* noun. Speakers simply do not connect the *genus alternans* with the Croatian neuter. The second point is that, in so far as the *genus alternans* survives in IR, it remains overwhelmingly associated with the survival of the relevant inflexional endings on the noun: in almost²⁴ no case do we find a *genus alternans* noun which has acquired purely ‘masculine’ inflexional morphology, yet retains the alternation between masculine in the singular and feminine in the plural.

Yet what we observe in southern IR also leads us to a paradox: *genus alternans* largely presupposes the relevant plural inflexional endings on the noun, but precisely because *genus alternans* is receding, and nouns in -e and -ure may now take masculine agreement, there is a kind of ‘twilight’ emergence of a third gender in IR, in which *genus alternans* is no longer strictly predictable for any given noun on the basis of its plural inflexions. Unfortunately, in a disintegrating system, it may simply be too late to proclaim the emergence of a genuine third gender in Istro-Romanian.

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²³ The two borrowed Croatian neuter nouns in our questionnaire show rather different behaviour from what we find in our corpus. Gartner (1882: nr 1176) has ‘jazər ‘lake’ as masculine, its plural showing invariance for number, the plural definite form being given as ‘jazeri. In contrast, Sârbu and Frățilă (1998) give this noun, in the singular, in a Croatian form, *iezero*, specified as a ‘neuter’ in the glossary. As for the Croatian neuter ‘bərdo, Filipi (2002: map 70) gives for Kostrčan masculine plural *doj ‘bərđi*. From our survey, both nouns are masculine regardless of their plural morphology. Such behaviour suggests that speakers do not equate the Croatian neuter with the Istro-Romanian *genus alternans*.

²⁴ We noted earlier *do_{FPL} os*. Filipi (2002: 933) gives for Šušnjevića *do_{FPL} plug* ‘two ploughs’ as an alternative to *do_{FPL} ‘plugure*. But such cases are exceptional and perhaps not greatly significant in a system which, overall, is disintegrating.

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