

# INTERFACES BETWEEN INFLECTIONAL AND DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY IN ROMANIAN

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**Abstract.** In this paper I present a few cases from Romanian where the distinction between inflectional and derivational morphology is not clear-cut or where an affix crosses from one category to the other: a derivational suffix which becomes a plural/inflectional desinence marker in section **1**, the use of a plural desinence with derivational value in section **2**, the use of the definite article (inflectional suffix) as a derivational affix in section **3**, and the analysis of an affix as either derivational, inflectional or both in section **4**. The examples provided are from standard and regional contemporary Romanian, with a few diachronic observations.

**Keywords:** derivation, inflection, plural, article, irregular nouns.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that each language has areas of interfaces or interactions between inflectional and derivational morphology, although a strict distinction of what inflection and derivation are can be difficult to make (see Stump 2005, Booij 2006 and many more). The aim of this paper is to briefly present several of these interfaces from contemporary Romanian language.

## 2. THE DERIVATIONAL AFFIX AS A PLURAL MARKER

Romanian has a three-way gender system, with masculine, feminine and neuter nouns (all of them with animate and inanimate referents):

- (1) un cartof ‘a potato’ – masculine  
o carte ‘a book’ – feminine  
un radio ‘a radio set’ – neuter

Most neuter nouns take the plural ending *-uri* or *-e* (phonetically changed into *-i* when the stem ends in *-i*), both inherited from Latin (see ILR 2018; Maiden et al. 2021). A few irregular nouns have the desinences *-ă* or *-ete* (see GALR I: 87–91):

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- (2) caiet ‘notebook’ – caiete ‘notebooks’  
 bol ‘bowl’ – boluri ‘bowls’  
 ou ‘egg’ – ouă ‘eggs’  
 cap ‘head; end’ – capete ‘heads; ends’

The words used to express the plural of some abstract neuter nouns (with verbal meaning) seem to display the irregular desinence *-ete*, similarly to *capete* (‘heads’) above:

- (3) plâns ‘cry; weeping’ – plânsete ‘fits of crying, weeping’  
 râs ‘laugh, laughter’ – râsete ‘laughters’

In the case of *cap* ‘head, end’, the irregular paradigm is inherited from Latin, from the noun CAPUT (pl. CAPITA). The singular form CAPUT was inherited as *cap*, while the plural *capita* was inherited as *capete*, resulting in an irregular paradigm<sup>2</sup>. The abstract noun *râs* ‘laughter’ is inherited from Latin RISUS and, according to dictionaries, it has the regular plural desinence *-uri*, specific to neuter nouns (*râsuri*). The noun *plâns* ‘weeping, cry’ is the nominalized supine form of the verb *a plânge* ‘to weep, to cry’ and in the dictionaries it has the regular plural form *plânsuri*, with the desinence *-uri*. The two regular plural forms (*râsuri*, *plânsuri*) are not largely used. In contemporary language, the forms *râsete* and *plânsete* are used as plural counterparts of *râs* and *plâns*, analogously to *cap* – *capete*. In fact, these plural forms belong to the inflectional paradigm of two nouns derived with the suffix *-et<sub>1</sub>*: *râset* ‘laughter, laughing’ (from *râs* and *-et<sub>1</sub>*) and *plânset* ‘weeping, crying’ (from *plâns* and *-et<sub>1</sub>*). The deverbal<sup>3</sup>, unstressed, suffix *-et<sub>1</sub>* is very productive in Romanian and it is used to derive abstract nouns denoting the action or the result, as in (4)<sup>4</sup>.

- (4) a tuna ‘to thunder’ > tunet ‘thunder’  
 a zâmbi ‘to smile’ > zâmbet ‘smile’

Usually, this suffix is attached to the infinitive stem of the verb, as in (4) above. In some cases, it is attached to a nominal stem, as in (5) or to the supine/participle stem, as in (6):

- (5) tuse ‘cough’ > tuset ‘coughing’  
 clește ‘pincers’ > cleștet ‘clenching; grip’
- (6) plâns (supine/participle of *a plânge* ‘to wheep’) > plânset ‘wheeping; crying’  
 râs (supine/participle of *a râde* ‘to laugh’) > râset ‘laughter, laugh’  
 mers (supine/participle of *a merge* ‘to walk; to go’) > merset ‘walking; going’

<sup>2</sup> If we segment the plural form as *capet-e*, the plural marker would be regular *-e*, while the stem form *capet-* would display an irregular variation (*cap<sub>SG</sub> – capet-PL*).

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the deverbal suffix *-et<sub>1</sub>*, Romanian has two other homonymous suffixes: a collective one (*brad* ‘fir tree’ > *brădet* ‘forest/group of fir trees’) and a diminutive one (*vagon* ‘railroad car’ – *vagonet* ‘small railroad car’).

<sup>4</sup> We should note that many of the derived nouns are regional or obsolete, see Contraș 1962; FCLR 2015: 479–486.

The plural form of deverbal nouns derived with *-et<sub>1</sub>* has the inflectional desinence *-e*: sg. *tunet* – pl. *tunete*, sg. *zâmbet* – pl. *zâmbete*, sg. *tuset* – pl. *tusete*, sg. *cleștet* – pl. *cleștete*. Therefore, the plural forms *plânsete* (sg. *plânset* + *-e*) and *râsete* (sg. *râset* + *-e*) are regular plural forms of the derived nouns *plânset* and *râset*, where *-ete* represents the suffix *-et<sub>1</sub>* followed by the inflectional plural marker *-e*. The singular forms *plânset* and *râset* are rarely used, as the non-derived nouns *plâns* and *râs* are more common. Therefore, in actual use a new paradigm emerges: sg. *plâns* – pl. *plânsete*, sg. *râs* – pl. *râsete*. The ‘migration’ of the plural forms *plânsete* and *râsete* to the paradigm of *plâns* and *râs* is facilitated by: (a) the synonymy of the derived and non-derived singular nouns: *plâns* – *plânset*, *râs* – *râset*, as they all have an abstract, verbal meaning (denoting the action and its result); (b) their formal similarity: the derived nouns *plânset* and *râset* have a stem identical to the non-derived nouns *plâns* and *râs*; we should note that the suffix *-et<sub>1</sub>* was inherited from Latin *-ĭrus* (Pascu 1916: 35; Contraș 1962; FCLRV: 115; FCLR 2015: 484), a participial suffix used for the verbs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation; (c) the plural noun *capete* could have triggered an analogy, but since it is an irregular noun, its influence on the paradigm of other nouns is questionable.

The other noun derived with *-et<sub>1</sub>* from the participial/supine stem, *merset* ‘walking; going’ (see (6) above), is registered in DLR with the regular plural form *mersete* but there are no attested examples listed in the dictionary (in general, DLR provides attested examples from various types of texts). Therefore, it seems that *mersete* is not used as a plural of the neuter noun *mers* ‘walking, going’ (from *a merge* ‘to walk; to go’), which has the regular plural form *mersuri*.

In conclusion, cases such as *plâns* – *plânsete*, *râs* – *râsete* illustrate instances of a deverbal plural (i.e. derivational) suffix being re-categorized as an inflectional morpheme, analogous to the irregular (but frequently used) noun *cap* – *capete*. It is important to note that plural forms with *-e* of the non-derived nouns are ungrammatical (*\*plânse*, *\*râse*); it is the entire affix (*-et<sup>1</sup>* + *-e*) that functions as a plural marker.

The irregular noun *cap* saw a new regular form emerge in its paradigm: the singular *capăt* (meaning ‘end, edge’). According to dictionaries, its etymology is the plural form *capete* (from the paradigm of *cap*) and the singular form *capăt* represents a regularization of its paradigm. The new noun, sg. *capăt* – pl. *capete*, is a regular neuter noun, with the desinences sg.  $\emptyset$  – pl. *-e*, similar to many neuter nouns, old and new (for the declension of Romanian nouns, see GALR I: 87–91). Although it seems to be derived from *cap* with the suffix *-ăt* (FCLR 2015: 481), it is more likely derived from the plural *capete* by back formation and morphological regularization.

### 3. THE PLURAL MARKER AS A DERIVATIONAL AFFIX

#### 3.1. The desinence *-le*

In Romanian plural feminine nouns have several desinences inherited from Latin (ILR 2018: 372–374): *-e*, *-i* or *-le*. These are illustrated in (7).

- (7) sg. *casă* ‘house’ – pl. *case* ‘houses’ (< Latin *CASA*, pl. *CASAE*)  
 sg. *noapte* ‘night’ – pl. *nopti* ‘nights’

(< Latin NOCTE(M), from the paradigm of NOX; pl. NOCTES)  
 sg. *stea* ‘star’ – pl. *stele* ‘stars’ (< Latin STELLA, pl. STELLAE)

Most feminine nouns take the desinences *-e* or *-i*. The plural desinence *-le* occurs with nouns ending in a stressed *-a* in the singular form (see Graur 1961); some of them are inherited from Latin, others are borrowed from Turkish (*basma* ‘kerchief’ < Tk<sup>5</sup>. *basma*, *lalea* ‘tulip’ < Tk. *lâle*, *perdea* ‘curtain’ < Tk. *perde*, *rindea* ‘scraper’ < Tk. *rinde*), French (*jaluzea* ‘windowblind’ < Fr. *jalousie*, *livrea* ‘livery’ < Fr. *livrée*) or Modern Greek (*fidea* ‘noodles’ < MGr. *φιδέζς*). The final *-a* was added to these borrowings as a means of adapting them to the Romanian morphological system. In Romanian, feminine nouns do not end in stressed *-e*; most of them fall into the three categories in (7): sg. *-ă* (unstressed) – pl. *-e*; sg. *-e* (unstressed) – pl. *-i*; sg. *-ea/-a* (stressed) – pl. *-le*. Therefore, these borrowings were adapted into the third category, of the type *stea* – *stele*, inherited from Latin.

A similar adaptation happened to plural nouns borrowed from Modern Greek: words like *giuvaerica* ‘jewellery’, *politica* ‘political matters’, *zaharica* ‘sweets’ are plural nouns borrowed from Modern Greek nouns in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and had a plural meaning at the time of the borrowing. Since Romanian plural nouns do not end in *-a*<sup>6</sup>, after a while, these nouns were adapted to the Romanian morphological system by adding the plural desinence *-le*: *giuvaericale*, *politicale*, *zaharicale* etc. The Greek etyma are formed with the suffix *-ικά* (in the plural) and the borrowings are morphologically analysable in Romanian as well (meaning that the speakers recognize a stem and a suffix). These Greek plural borrowings can be re-analysed as in (8):

- (8) *giuvaericale* – *giuvaer* ‘jewel’ + *-icale*  
*politicale* – *politic* ‘political’ + *-ale*  
*zaharicale* – *zahar* ‘sugar’ + *-icale*

This new suffix shows its derivational capacity in *politicale*, which has an adjectival stem. Other similar borrowings from Greek went through the same process of morphological adaptation (the stems are nouns and adjectives, such as *poetic*):

- (9) *diamanticale* ‘diamonds, jewellery’  
 (< MGr. *διαμαντικά*) = *diamant* ‘diamond’ + *-icale*  
*istericale* ‘hysteria crises’ (< MGr. *ύστερικά*) = *isterie* ‘hysteria’ + *-icale*  
*poeticale* ‘poetic writings’ (< MGr. *ποιητικά*) = *poetic* ‘poetic’ + *-ale*  
*vasilicale* ‘a collection of juridical texts started by the Byzantine emperor Basil I’  
 (< MGr. *βασιλικά*) = *Vasile* + *-icale*

Since the stems of the Greek borrowings are independent words in Romanian as well (i.e. *diamant*, *isterie*, *poetic*, *Vasile* etc.), the re-analysis led to the emergence of a new suffix: *-ale* / *-icale*, used to derive plural nouns, from nominal (with change in meaning) or verbal stems:

<sup>5</sup> The abbreviations used in this article for names or languages are: Alb. = Albanian, Engl. = English, Fr. = French, Hung. = Hungarian, MGr. = Modern Greek, Tk. = Turkish.

<sup>6</sup> Masculine nouns have the plural desinence *-i*; the desinences for neuter nouns are *-e* and *-uri*, the ones for feminine nouns are given in (7).

- (10) burtuc ‘stomach’ + *-ale* > burtucale ‘intestines’  
 a trăncăni ‘to chatter; to make noise’ + *-ale* > trancanale ‘chatter, small talk’  
 turtă ‘round bread’ + *-ale* > turtale ‘cakes made for specific celebrations’  
 (for more examples, see Croitor 2017)

The plural desinence *-le* is part of this derivational affix which derives plural nouns. Another derivational affix which contains the plural desinence *-le* is *-(e)le*, homonymous to the plural form of the diminutive feminine suffix *-ea* (inherited from Latin *-ELLA*). Nouns derived with *-ea* have the desinence *-le* in the plural, therefore their paradigm is similar to *stea–stele* in (7).

- (11) lumină ‘light’ > luminea ‘faint light’, pl. luminele  
 pasăre ‘bird’ > păsărea ‘small bird’, pl. păsărele

The affix *-ele* originates in plural diminutives such as the ones in (11). It derives *pluralia tantum* nouns from verbal (12a) or adjectival stems (12b):

- (12) a. a ațâța ‘to ignite’ > ațâțele ‘sticks of wood, good for igniting a fire’  
 picat (the participle of *a pica* ‘to fall down’) > picățele ‘small spots on  
 textiles’  
 a păcăni ‘to click’ > păcănele ‘electronic poker games’  
 a țâșni ‘to squirt’ > țâșnele ‘a type of plum’  
 b. flocoș ‘fluffy’ > flocoșele ‘several types of plants with fine hairs’  
 iute ‘peppery’ > iuțele ‘peppery vegetables’

This is another instance where the plural marker acquired a derivational function. The affix *-ele* marks the plural, but it also has the function of a derivative suffix (for more details on this type of derivatives, see Croitor 2017).

### 3.2. The desinence *-e*

In Romanian the supine or participial feminine plural form (with the desinence *-e*) can be used as an adverbial, preceded by the preposition *pe* ‘on’ (see Mîrzea Vasile 2012: 121–128 for more details):

- (13) tăcut (participial form of *a tăcea* ‘to shut up; to be silent’) > pe tăcute ‘silently’  
 sărit (participial form of *a sări* ‘to jump’) > pe sărite ‘omitting some parts’  
 ales (participial form of *a alege* ‘to choose’) > pe alese ‘carefully selected’

Romanian has several adverbial suffixes, amongst which the adverb *-e*, inherited from Latin in adverbs like *bine* < Lat. BENE, *repede* < Lat. RAPIDE. In Latin, it originated in the desinence *-ē* from the instrumental case (*benē* < *bonus*, *certē* < *certus*, *doctē* < *doctus* etc., see ILR 2018: 189). The suffix *-e* is not a productive suffix in standard Romanian, but it was quite frequent in academic neologisms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which could have been derived language internally or borrowed from Latin (see Avram 1992a). This suffix is also

part of the complex adverbial suffix *-ește* (very frequent in Romanian, see Avram 1992b), composed of the adjectival suffix *-esc* and the adverbial suffix *-e*<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, many Romanian adverbs end in *-e* (see Avram 1992b), a fact that contributed to the strengthening of the affix *-e* as an adverbial marker. Consequently, the final *-e* in structures like (13) above could be interpreted as a suffix, deriving adverbs from participles, instead of a plural desinence. The verbal form it attaches to could be a supine or a participle (in Romanian, they are homonymous). In support of this non-inflectional is the fact that in this type of structures the participle/adverb can have variants where *-e* is followed by other adverbial affixes: *-a*, *-le* and *-lea* (for which see Section 3 below). The structures in (14) are from attested examples in Mîrzea Vasile 2012: 125:

- (14) scris ‘written’ > pe scrise**lea** ‘in writing’  
 ocolit ‘avoided’ > pe ocolite**a** ‘in an avoiding manner’  
 tăcut ‘silent’ > pe tăcute**lea** ‘silently’

#### 4. THE DEFINITE ARTICLE AS A DERIVATIONAL AFFIX

##### 4.1. The adverbial *-a* and *-le*

Some Romanian adverbs have a variant with an enclitic final *-a* (or *-ea*, in some phonetic contexts). The difference between the two variants is not necessarily semantic, but pragmatic. Sometimes the variant with *-a* is more colloquial:

- (15) atunci – atun**cea** ‘then’  
 acum – acum**a** ‘now’  
 acolo – acol**ea** ‘there’

This *-a* is usually referred to as a deictic particle and its origin is disputed: it could be inherited from the Latin adverb *ILLAC* or the adverb *HAC* (see Maiden *et al.* 2021: 238–240); at least in some adverbs, it could be analysed as the definite article (it is homonymous to the definite article for feminine singular nouns, in the Nominative–Accusative case: *casa* ‘the house’); in support of this analysis is the fact that the plural form of the definite article, *-le*, can also function as an enclitic adverbial particle (usually in regional varieties):

- (16) aici – acil**e** ‘here’  
 încai – încail**e** ‘at least’

The two particles can combine:

- (17) pururi – pururil**ea** ‘forever’  
 încai – încaile**a** ‘at least’

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<sup>7</sup> Other hypotheses have been advanced for the origine af the adverbial suffix *-ește*: it could be inherited from Latin suffix *-isce* or from the Thracian language (spoken in this area before the Roman conquest) – see Geană & Corbeanu (in press).

Another argument in support of the definite article origin is the fact that feminine nouns with a temporal meaning can be used as adverbs, with an iterative meaning, if they have the definite article (usually in the singular form, *-a*, sometimes in the plural form *-le*):

- (18) vară ‘summer’ – vara / verile ‘every summer; in the summer’  
 toamnă ‘autumn’ – toamna ‘every autumn; in the autumn’  
 duminică ‘Sunday’ – duminica ‘every Sunday; on Sundays’  
 luni ‘Monday’ – luna ‘every Monday; on Mondays’  
 vineri ‘Friday’ – vinerea ‘every Friday; on Fridays’

The use of *-(e)a* and *-le* as adverbial affixes could have originated in structures like (18), where the article was interpreted as an adverbial marker, instead of an article.

Another type of structure which could have facilitated the reanalysis of the definite article as an adverbial affix (or ‘particle’, as it is generally called in the Romanian linguistics tradition) is with the prepositions *de* and *a* followed by a noun or an adjective with the definite article:

- (19) (fem. noun) dură ‘(metal) wheel’ – de-a dura ‘rolling over’  
 (adj.) lung ‘long’ – de-a lungul ‘along; throughout’

The structures with *de-a*, expressing manner, are somewhat frequent and idiomatic. A first sign that *-le* and *-a* are grammaticalized as adverbial affixes (instead of feminine definite articles) is their ability to combine with masculine nouns, (20a), adverbs, (20b), or participles, (20c):

- (20) a. (masc. noun) buş (pl. buşi) ‘fist’ – de-a buşile(a) ‘on all fours’  
 b. (adv.) bine ‘well’ – de-a binelea ‘completely’  
 c. (participle) zburat (from *a zbura* ‘to fly’) – de-a zburatele ‘with an ample movement of the hand’<sup>8</sup>

The particle *-(e)a* can derive adverbs from nouns even in structures without *de-a*:

- (21) rânduri (plural of rând ‘row; line’) > rândurea ‘sometimes’

When these adverbial affixes (or ‘particles’) are used to form new words from existing ones, as in (20) and (21), they can be analysed as derivational suffixes.

#### 4.2. The definite article *-ul*

The definite article for masculine or neuter nouns in the Nominative–Accusative form, *-ul*, was grammaticalized as part of the complex suffixes<sup>9</sup> *-uleţ*, *-uleaşă*, with diminutive meaning (formed with the diminutive suffix *-eţ*, of Slavic origin):

<sup>8</sup> The meanings and forms of the words used as examples in this article are indicated according to MDA and DLR.

<sup>9</sup> Complex suffixes are formed from two suffixes glued together or a suffix and phonetic fragment (without affixal status) – see FCLR 2015.

- (22) a. brad ‘fir’ > brăduleț ‘small fir’  
 gard ‘fence’ > gărduleț ‘small fence’  
 prunc ‘infant’ > prunculeț ‘little infant’  
 b. mamă ‘mother’ > măicuța ‘dear mother’  
 dungă ‘streak’ > dunguleța ‘small streak’

The grammaticalization of the definite article as a segment of a complex suffix started with masculine proper nouns, in which the diminutive suffix has an affective value, such as the anthroponyms *Răduleț* (from *Radu*), *Murguleț* (from *Murgu*) or the toponym *Lunguleț* (from *Lungu*), which are formed with the definite article in its phonetic variant *-u* (the apocope of the final consonant *-l* is very common in Romanian). Proper nouns with the suffix *-uleț* are attested before common nouns, so before the 16<sup>th</sup> century (FCLRV: 119).

In these derivatives, *-ul* is no longer interpreted as an article, therefore, it can attach to feminine nouns as well, as in (21b), and the derivatives receive their regular definite article, as seen in (23):

- (23) brădulețul ‘the small fir’  
 dunguleța ‘the small streak’

## 5. DERIVATIONAL SUFFIX OR INFLECTIONAL MARKER?

### 5.1. The affix *-ă*

The affix *-ă* can be attached to masculine nouns to form the feminine counterpart. This affix is homonymous to the most frequent desinence of feminine singular nouns in the Nominative–Accusative case (see the type *casă* – *case* in (7) above):

- (24) birocrat ‘bureaucrat’ > birocrată ‘woman bureaucrat’  
 copilăș ‘little child’ > copilașă ‘little girl’  
 taximetrist ‘taxi driver’ > taximetristă ‘female taxi driver’  
 terapeut ‘therapist’ > terapeută ‘woman therapist’

Therefore, this affix is both a desinence/inflectional suffix (for feminine singular, Nominative and Accusative forms) and a derivational one, used to create semantically feminine nouns from masculine nouns – so it is not just a shift in grammatical gender (inflection)<sup>10</sup>. In the Genitive–Dative case, it changes to *-e* (e.g. *unei<sub>a,G/D</sub> terapeute<sub>sg,G/D</sub>* ‘of a woman therapist’ / ‘to a woman therapist’), while in the plural it is replaced by the desinence *-e* (homonymous to the Genitive–Dative one). This is what differentiates it from other suffixes. In Romanian linguistics it is usually described as a “lexical-grammatical suffix” (Dominte 2001; FCLR 2015: 443–453).

In some pairs of masculine (or neuter) – feminine nouns, the affix *-ă* does not have a derivational role, because it does not create a word with new meaning. In Romanian

<sup>10</sup> There are more suffixes which derive feminine nouns from masculine ones: *-că*, *-iță*, *-easă*, *-oai*, *-oaică* etc. (see Pascu 1916, Croitor 2013, FCLRV, Vasiliu 2009, FCLR 2015: 532–553).



linguistics (see FCLR 2015, for instance) this type of words are not analysed as derivatives, because their formation does not fall into the classical definition of derivation (the creation of a new word from an existing one using a suffix). In (25), for example, the masculine or neuter nouns are used in relation to female referents, and the addition of the affix *-ă* has the role to make these nouns more Romanian-like, by integrating them into the morphological class sg. *-ă* – pl. *-e* (*casă*–*case*). Therefore, the suffix is used to categorize the neologism in terms of grammatical gender.

- (25) babysitter ‘babysitter’ > babysitteră  
fotomodel ‘(female) fashion model’<sup>11</sup> > fotomodelă

Another type of words where the desinence (inflectional) *-ă* could be analysed as a derivational suffix is formed by back-formation from a verb<sup>12</sup>. The words in (26) are feminine nouns derived by back-formation from a verb.

- (26) dovadă ‘proof’ < (a) dovedi ‘to prove’  
bârfă ‘gossip’ < (a) bârfi ‘to gossip’  
poruncă ‘order’ < (a) porunci ‘to order’ (see Croitor 2013: 605)

## 5.2. Verbal suffixes *-a*, *-i* and *-î*

Romanian verbs end in *-a*, *-ea*, *-e*, *-i* or *-î* in the infinitive form. These affixes are analysed as inflectional suffixes, because they contrast the infinitive form with other form in the verbal paradigm. Some of them (*-a*, *-i* and *-î*) can also be used to derive verbs from nouns, adjectives, adverbs, numerals or interjections (Vasiliu 1989: 132–143; Croitor 2013):

- (27) mobilă ‘furniture’ > a mobila ‘to furnish’  
roșu ‘red’ > a roși ‘to redden’  
vifor ‘snowstorm’ > a viforî ‘to be a snowstorm; to storm (with snow)’  
cuminte ‘quiet, calm’ > a cuminți ‘to quiet’  
alături ‘near’ > a alătura ‘to join’  
patru ‘four’ > a împătri ‘to multiply by four; to divide by four’

Vasiliu (1989: 24–26) considers them to be only grammatical/inflectional suffixes, without lexical/derivational value, because, unlike other derivational suffixes, they are not preserved throughout the entire paradigm of the verb. For instance, in the indicative mood, present tense, the verbs *roși* ‘to redden’ and *cuminți* ‘to quiet’ have the suffix *-esc* (followed by inflectional endings for person and number); the verb *mobila* ‘to furnish’ has the suffix *-ez* in the indicative present. These inflectional suffixes and the endings (desinences) are attached to the stem (*roș-*, *cuminț-*, *mobil-*):

<sup>11</sup> The nouns *babysitter* and *fotomodel* are used with a female referent, unlike the masculine nouns in (24), as they denote jobs usually associated with female subjects: *Ana este fotomodel*. (‘Ana is a model.’) vs \**Ana este taximetrist*. (‘Ana is a taxi driver.’). Both nouns have the plural ending *-e*, specific to feminine nouns (*babysittere*, *fotomodele*).

<sup>12</sup> Masculine and neuter nouns formed by back formation do not involve the addition of an overt desinence: *auz* ‘hearing’ < (a) *auzi* ‘to hear’, *pisic* ‘tomcat’ < *pisică* ‘cat’.

- (28) Ion roșește ouăle.  
 ‘Ion dyes the eggs red.’  
 Ei se cumiñesc.  
 ‘They become quiet.’  
 Maria mobilează dormitorul.  
 ‘Maria furnishes the bedroom.’

In contrast, other verbal suffixes are preserved in the entire paradigm of the verb: *-iza* (*ardelean* ‘Transylvanian’ > (*a*) *ardeleniza* ‘to become Transylvanian’), *-ifica* (*zeu* ‘god’ > (*a*) *zeifica* ‘to deify’), *-ăni* (*balang* ‘ding-dong’ > (*a*) *bălăngăni* ‘to ding-dong, to jingle’), *-ui* (*dispreț* ‘contempt’ > (*a*) *disprețui* ‘to despise’) etc.:

- (29) a. El se ardelenizează.  
 ‘He becomes Transylvanian.’  
 b. Ei disprețuiesc munca.  
 ‘They despise work.’

Therefore, the attachment of the affixes *-a*, *-i* or *-î* is described in Romanian linguistics as a case of ‘immediate derivation’<sup>13</sup> (Vasilu 1989: 24–26), an intermediate situation between lexical derivation (proper derivation, as with the suffixes *-iza*, *-ifica*, *-ăni*, *-ui* etc.) and conversion (when the suffix is zero).

### 5.3. Foreign stems

Some nouns and verbs in which a suffix can be recognized do not have a Romanian base word, but a foreign one. In the process of borrowing that word into Romanian, a suffix was attached (so the suffix was not borrowed together with the word). In the examples below we have several nominal and adjectival suffixes attached to a foreign word borrowed into Romanian (*nineacă* and *druete* are regional and from older stages of the language, *jaluzea* is a neologism from standard Romanian; *goldan* is very recent and colloquial; *tărcat* is from standard Romanian):

- (30) a. Rom. *nineacă* ‘mother’ < Tk. *nine* + suf. *-acă*  
 b. Rom. *druete* ‘log’ < Alb. *dru*<sup>14</sup> + suf. *-ete*  
 c. Rom. *jaluzea* ‘window blind’ < Fr. *jalousie* + suf. *-ea*  
 d. Rom. *a antișambra* ‘to wait in the antechamber’ < Fr. *antichambre* + suf. *-a*  
 e. Rom. *a embossa* ‘to emboss’ < Eng. (to) *emboss* + suf. *-a*  
 f. Rom. *goldan* ‘a thick golden chain’ < Eng. *gold* + suf. *-an<sub>1</sub>* (FCLR 2015: 142)  
 g. Rom. *tărcat* ‘mottled’ < Hung. *tarka* + suf. *-at<sub>1</sub>*

<sup>13</sup> In the case of *a împătri* from (27) the verb is formed by adding the prefix *îm-* (a phonological variant of *în-*, converted from the preposition *în* ‘in’) and the verbal affix *-i* (in Romanian linguistics this is analysed as a type of parasynthetic derivation, see FCLR 2015).

<sup>14</sup> This etymology (mentioned in DER, MDA) is disputed; according to DLR, *druete* is related to *drug* ‘bar, stick’, of Slavic origin.

These affixes are used with two functions: (i) to make the words more ‘Romanian-like’, by adapting them to the morphological system of the language; words like *nine* or *jalousie* have different endings than Romanian feminine nouns (see the main classes of feminine nouns in (7) above) and the addition of the affix makes them compatible with the Romanian morphological classes; (ii) to create new words from a foreign base word, via a suffix, as in (30f, g). In the first five examples, the affix could be analysed as a mere morphological marker or categorizer, not a derivational suffix, as the etymon and the Romanian word have the same meaning. In the last two examples, the affix adds more meaning to the etymon, therefore it is considered a derivational suffix (see FCLR 2015).

## 6. FINAL REMARKS

In this brief survey of the interfaces between inflectional and derivational morphology in Romanian I looked at several types of phenomena: the grammaticalization of a derivational suffix into a plural marker; the use of a plural desinence with derivational value; the use of the definite article as a derivational affix; the double nature, inflectional and derivational, of some affixes from nominal and verbal formatives. Some of the morphological structures described are relevant to the dynamic of some specific affixes, which can migrate from the inflectional to the derivational domain or vice versa, others pertain to the theoretical distinction between inflection and derivation. Of course, this brief survey cannot comprise all the cases of interfaces between inflectional and derivational morphology in Romanian and does not go into a very detailed analysis of each situation presented.

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