

# GENUS ALTERNANS AND NEUTER GENDER IN ISTRO-ROMANIAN: THE ROLE OF BILINGUALISM<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The relation between the *genus alternans* and the neuter in Istro-Romanian is not a mere problem of nomenclature, but a manifestation of bilingualism peculiar to the contact situation in which Istro-Romanian and Croatian/Čakavian have long found themselves. The adaptation and the morphosyntactic behaviour of Croatian and Čakavian neuter loans in *-o* vary in diachrony, revealing how autochthonous morphology gradually yields to the influence of the dominant language. This is manifested in modern Istro-Romanian not just through the fact that neuter loans in *-o* retain their morphosyntactic behaviour (if a neuter noun is borrowed, most probably it will keep not only its ending but also its agreement pattern), but also as interference effects (even nouns of Romance origin present a Croatian/Čakavian type of agreement with a neuter form in *-o* of the adjective, indefinite article, etc.) when the corresponding Croatian/Čakavian word is neuter.

**Keywords:** gender, bilingualism, *genus alternans*, neuter, interference, morphosyntactic behaviour.

## 1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

There is no easy answer to the question ‘how many noun classes/controller vs target gender distinctions are there in Istro-Romanian?’, and this for at least two reasons. First because Istro-Romanian has, in addition to masculines and feminines, nouns belonging to the *genus alternans* class and actual neuter nouns. Second because, in diachrony, the morphological adaptation and morphosyntactic behaviour of loans from Croatian/Čakavian neuters in *-o* have changed dramatically under conditions of asymmetrical bilingualism. It is a question we shall attempt to answer by tracing the history of the morphological adaptation and morphosyntactic behaviour of Croatian/Čakavian nouns in *-o*. Our approach is mainly descriptive but we shall try to identify the morphological implications in circumstances of linguistic contact and asymmetrical bilingualism. After a general introduction to the situation of Istro-Romanian, we shall discuss the main hypotheses presented by monographic studies of the language. We will then explore the morphological adaptation and morphosyntactic

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behaviour in diachrony of some loans from Croatian/Čakavian. In conclusion, we will present our own hypothesis about the development of neuters from old Slavonic and Croatian/Čakavian and its implications for Istro-Romanian morphology.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1. Istro-Romanian

Istro-Romanian – as it was first termed by scholars in the nineteenth century – is spoken in the Istrian peninsula, in Croatia, in a few villages and hamlets to the north and the south of Mt Učka, and has approximately 120 fluent active speakers,<sup>4</sup> mainly aged above 50. There are also emigrants who live in other towns or regions of Croatia and in the international diaspora. Of the number of speakers in the diaspora we have only relative, sometimes contradictory, estimates.<sup>5</sup> In the home community in Istria, speakers of Istro-Romanian are all bilingual. Istro-Romanian does not have the status of a national language nor does it have a literary tradition. The UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* classifies it as a “severely endangered” language, one reason for which is demographic decline. There are two varieties of Istro-Romanian, one spoken north of Mt Učka, called *zejănski* in the local dialect, the other one spoken in the south and called *vlăški* in the local dialect. Although mutually intelligible, the differences between them are sufficient for them to be treated separately.

### 2.2. Bilingualism

Any serious discussion of the linguistic structure of Istro-Romanian must bear in mind that its speakers are bilingual.<sup>6</sup> Vrzić and Doričić (2014: 107-108) describe the situation between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth as one of “individual bilingualism”, and the situation after the second world war as one of “pervasive individual bilingualism”. For the more recent situation, the data of Vrzić and Singler (2016: 52) show that speakers from the base community – at least as at 2013 – aged over 50 are “balanced bilinguals”, while the younger speakers are “typically Croatian-dominant”. We will not be concerned here with the nature of current bilingualism in Istro-Romanian. The situation in the Istrian peninsula is complex, in that Istro-Romanian has been profoundly influenced by Čakavian. Čakavian influence should be more carefully considered given that Istro-Romanian has long been in contact with it. There has also been influence

<sup>4</sup> Vrzić and Singler 2016: 52.

<sup>5</sup> See the estimate by Vrzić and Singler 2016: 52, who show that around 450 speakers are in Croatia outside their base communities (particularly in towns such Matulji, Opatija, Rijeka, Kršan, Labin, Pazin, Pula), and another 400-500 speakers are in the USA (especially New York) and eastern Australia. We do not know the ratio of L1 to L2 speakers, their distribution according to age and other sociolinguistic variables.

<sup>6</sup> That speakers from the base communities are bilingual (speaking Istro-Romanian and Croatian) was already observed in the late seventeenth century by Ireneo della Croce and was confirmed by the earliest surveys conducted in the nineteenth century, regardless of changes in terminology over time.

from standard literary Croatian, which has contributed to the emergence of asymmetric bilingualism in the Istro-Romanian community. The situation of linguistic contact is all the more complicated in that Venetian has also influenced both the Čakavian dialects and Istro-Romanian (the latter being affected either directly or through the intermediary of Čakavian dialects).

### 2.3. Corpus

Our data (see *Sources*) comprise materials gathered from the nineteenth century until 2010-2011 and consist of collections of dialect texts, linguistic atlases, glossaries, and the Istro-Romanian dictionary of Petru Neiescu (the last volume of which is in press), as well as recent archive material. We have made particular use of collections of dialect texts, despite their limitations (especially in those from the beginning of the nineteenth century, where there is a tendency to modify some forms on the model of Romanian). Although we have drawn on all the material available, our data are far from complete, because the materials were gathered only from the nineteenth century onwards and not all of them can be consulted directly (for example, most recordings made in the second half of the twentieth century are unavailable and we have only been able to consult fragments of them; this is the case with those made by Petrovici and Neiescu, by Kovačec, Sârbu and Frătilă, etc.).

## 3. THE BEHAVIOUR OF “NEUTERS” AND AMBIGENERICS AS PRESENTED IN MONOGRAPHS ON ISTRO-ROMANIAN

3.1. In Popovici (1914) the criterion for distinguishing gender classes is purely formal and is a function of the identity of the desinences (see Popovici 1914: 64). A few pages later, discussing the “declension of neuters”, Popovici (1914:70,71) maintains that there are twice as many neuter words of foreign as of Latin origin, and goes on to say, when discussing adjectives, that the neuter is of Slavonic origin and has developed in the Romanian of Istria under the influence of the use of the neuter in Slavonic. His approach is problematic because:

a) Popovici does not distinguish between the *genus alternans* and neuters proper, so that it is hard to understand how agreement works in the noun phrase. Popovici shows that in Istro-Romanian nouns of the type *arel*, *koptor* or *os* etc. are neuter, so one would expect them to select the neuter form of adjectives, in *-o*. Now this type of agreement is not actually attested in Popovici’s materials and so-called neuters behave as in Romanian, where the masculine form of the adjective is selected in the singular:

- (1) maĭ bur 'viru (Po<sub>1</sub>/3)
- (2) bur lok za 'lepuru u'fide (Po<sub>1</sub>/2)

b) Popovici does not distinguish between the morphological adaptation and morphosyntactic behaviour of nouns from old Slavonic and that of later loans from Croatian/Čakavian, creating the impression that they form an extremely compact group and that Istro-Romanian morphology has not changed at all under the pressure of bilingualism. Now, Popovici’s materials include a loan of the type 'srebro (Po<sub>1</sub> II/24, 25, 50), which keeps

the Croatian/Čakavian ending and of which we learn (in the glossary) that it competes with the inherited word *ar'zint* (indeed in Popovici's materials the inherited term is marginal, being attested by only one informant). Popovici's materials also contain the neuter noun from OCS *vrěmę* (< proto-Slavic \**vermę*)<sup>7</sup> which behaves like a feminine noun in selecting feminine agreement, just as it does in all other Daco-Romance varieties:

(3) 1\_a vrur fu 'rɔt 'pinezi 'ʃɔsta 'vrěmę ʃe n\_a fost a 'kɔsɛ (Po<sub>1</sub>/46)

while Cr./Čak. *'zlato* is adapted as *'złɔtə* (Po<sub>1</sub>/34, 37) and *'złɔta* (Po<sub>1</sub>/51), which might be feminine,<sup>8</sup> although the text does not provide an agreement context which could confirm this. As with *'srebro*, *'złɔtə/'złɔta* has replaced the inherited noun *aur* (attested in just one speaker, significantly the one who also uses *ar'zint*). Therefore, if we compare *'srebro* and *'złɔta*, we can observe that even in Popovici's materials there are at least two types of morphological adaptation of Slavonic/Croatian loans in *-o*.

**3.2.** However, Pușcariu (1926) distinguishes between ambigenics, in the inflexion of the noun, and neuter in the inflexion of the adjective (see the discussion on page 144, but also other observations on pages 147-148, but especially page 150, where Pușcariu shows that the morphology of the adjective in Istro-Romanian is different from that of the adjective in Daco-Romanian “in some essential points”, including the existence of a neuter form which has a specific marker in Istro-Romanian). The neuter form in *-o* of adjectives is explained by Pușcariu by the Slav model (150). Pușcariu's presentation also needs to be critically examined, especially the hypothesis that in Istro-Romanian there are different values and realizations for controller nouns and targets. Even if Pușcariu's hypothesis does no more than seize an intermediate stage in the development of Istro-Romanian nominal morphology, the question remains what determined the reorganization of the nominal system and how it emerged. In the texts gathered by Belulović for Pușcariu, there are nominalized adjectives which present Croatian/Čakavian morphology and for which no explanation is offered in the monograph. Thus, in the example:

(4) se 'kukɛ pre 'blɔtno (Pu I 16/46)

the form *blɔtno*, originally a neuter form of the adjective *blɔtən/blɔtan/blɔten* borrowed from Croatian/Čakavian (*blatan, blatna, blatno*), is nominalized through conversion of this adjective of Croatian/Čakavian origin in Istro-Romanian.

**3.3.** Kovačec (1971) distinguishes between the neuter of the Romanian type or the “so-called ambigenic gender” (89) and the Croatian neuter.<sup>9</sup> In his 1971 monograph there is a more extensive list of the lexico-grammatical classes in *-o*: nouns (101, 105), adjectives (104), possessives (110-111), the indefinite determiners (112), indefinites (113), relatives and interrogatives (113), pronominal/adjectival intensifiers (114), cardinal numerals (117), ordinal numerals (118).

<sup>7</sup> Derksen (2008: s.v.).

<sup>8</sup> Forms ending in *-a* are generally, but not exclusively, associated with feminines.

<sup>9</sup> In his 1998 monograph, in Croatian, he uses for the former *dvorod*, but for the latter *srednji rod*.

For nouns, Kovačec (1971) exemplifies the Croatian type of neuter by 'nebo, 'srebro, 'zloto (85, beside this the form 'zlota is also given, specified as being used by the older generation), to which may be added 'testo and 'svitlo, listed in Kovačec 1984: 559, 564. Kovačec (1971: 87) specifies that in the south as well there is a fairly powerful tendency to create a neuter gender of the Croatian type, which he illustrates with some types of agreement selected by the noun srebro and the different ways it is adapted by various speakers:

(5) 'ənsa<sub>F</sub> 'srebrɛ vs əns<sub>M</sub> 'srebro vs 'əns<sub>N</sub> 'srebro

Kovačec had already mentioned the problems raised by adaptation and morphosyntactic behaviour of Croatian/Čakavian neuters in *-o* in articles of 1963, 1966 and 1968. In all of these he mentions that what is involved are more recent loans and that agreement with the neuter form in *-o* of the adjective is especially characteristic of speakers of the younger generation who have been more exposed to Croatian influence, some of whom have left their home community (see Kovačec 1963: 33-36, 1966: 66-70, 1968: 84-90). Although Kovačec (1971) indicates for the variety spoken in the south agreement of the type 'ənsa<sub>F</sub> 'srebrɛ (in which the intensifier is feminine), and in his 1963 article he records the definite form srebra with feminine agreement ('srebra<sub>i</sub> tɛ), such examples are marginal in the corpus. Everywhere else, srebro represents, for the northern variety, a consistent example both as regards adaptation and morphosyntactic behaviour (although Kovačec 1966: 33 also acknowledges that in Žejane masculine agreement is possible), while in the southern variety its adaptation as a feminine (srebrɛ with feminine agreement) is marginal, the generally occurring form in *-o* having masculine agreement, or neuter agreement with the adjective in *-o*.

#### 4. SO HOW ARE NEUTERS IN *-O* OF CROATIAN/ČAKAVIAN ORIGIN ADAPTED INTO ISTRO-ROMANIAN?

Since Istro-Romanian is not attested until late (the first Istro-Romanian words are recorded by Ireneo della Croce at the end of the seventeenth century, but they are not relevant here), any attempt to reconstruct the development of the nominal system and recurrent processes of reorganization of the noun classes is perforce tentative. In this section we have chosen to follow the development of some neuters of Croatian/Čakavian origin which we have grouped into two major categories depending on their distribution across the Daco-Romance domain: the first contains nouns with counterparts in all Daco-Romance varieties and the second contains nouns only attested in Istro-Romanian. The first category might constitute an older stratum of loans and the second could represent later strata, in which we can discern different adaptations of neuters of Croatian/Čakavian origin.

**4.1.** In the first category we have included nouns which appear in all the other Daco-Romance varieties:<sup>10</sup> ko'pita/ko'pite 'hoof' (Dacorom. *copită*, Aro. *kupitə*, MeglRo. *kupitə*), mile 'mercy' (Dacorom. *milă*, Aro. *piłə*, MeglRo. *milə*), 'sita/'site 'sieve' (Dacorom. *sită*,

<sup>10</sup> On the age and chronology of loans from Slavonic see, e.g., Mihăilă 1956: 142, Mihăilă 1960: *passim*, Mihăilă 1980: 431-434, Mihăilă 1983: 43-53, Rosetti 1986: 283-284, Frățiță 2012: 87-114 etc. We have used the inventory from Mihăilă 1980: 431-434, Mihăilă 1983: 43-54 and Frățiță 2012: 87-114.

Aro., MeglRo. 'sitə), 'vreme 'time' (Dacorom. *vreme*, old Dacorom. 'vrəame, Aro. 'vreme, MeglRo. 'vremi). To these we may add *nako'vōla/nako'vōle* 'anvil' (but in Romanian *nicovaļă*), 'stəkla/stəkle 'glass' (Romanian *sticlă*, reg. *steclă*), with attestations in Istro-Romanian and Romanian, but for which Mihăilă 1980: 433 and Frăţilă 2012: 98, 103 give etyma from old Slavonic.

**4.1.1. Stable patterns.** In Daco-Romance varieties, neuter nouns from old Slavonic are adapted as feminine nouns, and attestations from Istro-Romanian from the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century show a unitary morphosyntactic behaviour for:

- *ko'pita/ko'pite/ko'pitə* (the latter in Maiorescu, where we find the first attestation of the noun in the mid nineteenth century)

(6)  $\text{Ḳ}_a$  pʎer'zut 'tote<sub>F</sub> 'pōtru ko'pitele (Pu<sub>1</sub> 31/8)

In Puşcariu's text, this noun means "horseshoe", and its morphosyntactic behaviour is still that of a feminine noun. Filipi's data confirm this behaviour, and in Fi 1458 (*Copită*) are given the forms from the southern villages: o ko'pita/ko'pite vs do ko'pite, and Fi 1519 (*Copita calului*), attests exactly the same behaviour in the north: o ko'pita vs do ko'pite. In old Slavonic (\*kopyto)<sup>11</sup> and in Croatian/Čakavian, the noun is neuter (*kopito*, see, among others, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v., Filipi and Buršić Giudici 2019: 1458, 1519 etc.).

- o'bele (attested by Popovici and listed in his glossary)/o'bjalə (the form indicated by Maiorescu)/?ob'kalə (also in Popovici). In old Slavonic (*objalo*)<sup>12</sup> is neuter. According to Popovici's data, this noun follows the -e vs -e inflexion type: o'bele<sub>SG</sub> vs o'bele<sub>PL</sub>.
- 'sita/'site/'sitə (the last form appears in Maiorescu, where we find the first attestation of the noun in the mid nineteenth century)

(7) [ $\text{ʃ}$ uru $\text{Ḳ}_i$ ] ʃa<sub>F</sub> 'mōre 'sita de 'γrəvu prosi'te $\text{Ḳ}_i$  (Ko<sub>3</sub>, for Žejane)

The same behaviour is recorded in Fi 627 (*Sito – Sită – Setaccio*) and 1038b (*Sito (za brasno) – Sită – Setaccio*): o 'sita/'site vs do 'site, both in the north and in the south. In old Slavonic (\*sito)<sup>13</sup> and in Croatian/Čakavian, the noun is neuter (*sito*, see, among others, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v., Filipi and Buršić Giudici 2019: 627 and 1038b).

- *nako'vōla/nako'vōle* (in the latter form it is attested first in Byhan's glossary (on the basis of information from Nanu)

(8)  $\text{Ḳ}_av$  'ʃela 'frōte ʃa<sub>F</sub> nako'vōla ka'tsōt (Ca 129).

<sup>11</sup> See also Derksen 2008: s.v. \*koryto, Miklosich s.v.

<sup>12</sup> Mihăilă 1983: 46.

<sup>13</sup> Derksen 2008: s.v.

In old Slavonic (*nakovalo*)<sup>14</sup> and in Čakavian, the noun is neuter (*nakovalo*, see, among others, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

- 'stəkla/'stəklɛ/'steklə (in the last form it appears in Maiorescu, where we also find the first attestation of the noun, in the mid nineteenth century)

(9) [ka'lunu] raz'bit\_a 'tote\_ 'stəklile (K<sub>03</sub>, for Žejane, with the meaning “window”).

The same behaviour is recorded in MALGI 50 in Letaj: o 'stəkla (? 'stsəkla) vs 'stəkle, 'stəklele (in Flora map 50 *Geam* in the other localities in the south investigated the response is *okna* or *fajba*, and in the north 'fjəba). In old Slavonic (\*stəklo)<sup>15</sup> and in Croatian/Čakavian, the noun is neuter (*staklo*, see, among others, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v.).

**4.1.2. Signs of change.** Despite the stability of this type of adaptation and of this morphosyntactic behaviour, the nineteenth century brings us the first signs of reorganization of the nominal system. But this is a change that only affects forms borrowed from old Slavonic. In the group in question, 'mile is affected, but so is the everyday term 'sita. Yet it would be a mistake to suggest that only original neuter nouns in *-o* are affected by subsequent readaptations in Istro-Romanian. This phenomenon also affected, for example, loans from the old *n-declension*, as we may show from the example of 'vreme, which begins to select an agreeing neuter form of the adjective and to appear with a plural form attributable to the Croatian/Čakavian model of the old *n-declension* (Galović and Jutronić 2020: 55).

The form 'mile is attested in this form in Byhan's glossary, but also in Weigand's materials from the end of the nineteenth century and Popovici's from the beginning of the twentieth (the noun only appears in the glossary). On the basis of comparison with other Daco-Romance varieties, mile is treated there as feminine, but in the absence of other attestations it is difficult to reconstruct the entire grammaticalization path as it appears in Romanian, for example. In Weigand we find both mile and milo:

(10) mj\_e 'milɛ (We<sub>2</sub> 146) cf. nu lj\_a fost 'milo (We<sub>1</sub> 252)

In any case, both forms are attested especially in the structure verb *fi* + 'mile/'milo + experiencer. The structure with 'mile is visibly in retreat already in the nineteenth century, being replaced by the structure with 'milo, which is originally a neuter form of the Croatian adjective *mio*/Čakavian *mil(i)* and also functions as a deadjectival adverb<sup>16</sup> (see also Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).<sup>17</sup> The form 'mile could be the older one, taken from old Slavonic (as assumed by Mihăilă 1983: 45). The replacement is complete in the twentieth century, as can be seen from examples gathered in the second half of the century:

(11) l\_a fost 'milo de 'mjje (K<sub>03</sub>, in Žejane)

<sup>14</sup> Mihăilă 1980: 433.

<sup>15</sup> Miklosich s.v.

<sup>16</sup> Hummel 2017: 21.

<sup>17</sup> The same holds for *kriv*, which in its neuter form 'krivo appears in the structure verb *fi* + 'krivo + Experiencer (see examples in K<sub>03</sub> 'fjelve a fost 'krivo/a lej a fost 'krivo).

- (12) kən se uʃi'deja 'porku 'mije fost\_a 'milo (Da, s.v.)

and also from material gathered in the 2000s:

- (13) 'mije\_ī hmo 'milo 'inka (MC – ruov017-1); mj\_e 'milo (SV – ruov033-1); kj/tē  
ʃa 'milo hmo ve'de (NP – ruov024-1)

but also in structures with the verb a've, which may be a case of nominalization:

- (14) n\_a vut 'milo ni 'drago (VM – ruov021-1)

The word 'sita was diachronically stable, but under the pressure of the model of the dominant language a form with the ending *-o* alongside the feminine form. Thus, in recent recordings (from 2009) there appears 'sito:

- (15) 'sitnitsa kum əi ma faʃ'ɛja se 'ʃfuru se kʌε'mɔja kum əi t'ʃela o'bɾuf de 'sito pa de  
zos se pu'reja tse'rɔda (MC – ruov017-1)

Our current data reveal that 'sito is a marginal form in relation to 'sita and 'sitnitsa but, even so, the presence of a form in *-o* for a word which has shown diachronic stability shows that speakers' tolerance of forms in *-o* has grown exponentially even in comparison with what Kovačec's mid-twentieth-century enquiries showed.

The noun 'vrēme/'vrēme also shows diachronic stability, at least in the second half of the twentieth century. Until the end of the twentieth century it shows only feminine agreement:

- (16) 'təmna 'vrēme (Pa, Pe-Ne J, Fi 19 *Timpul (Astăzi e o vrēme urâtă. Timpul trece repede)* pentru Žejane)/ 'grumba 'vrēme (Fi 19 southern villages)  
(17) mu'ʃɔte 'vrēme (K<sub>03</sub> southern villages)  
(18) ən 'mike 'vrēme (Pu<sub>1</sub> 16/74, Pe-Ne Šušnjevică)/ 'hmoʃe de 'mike 'vrēme (K<sub>03</sub> Šušnjevică)

This agreement is still preferred by speakers in materials gathered in the 2000s:

- (19) 'tota 'vrēme (MD – ruoz042-1)<sup>18</sup>

In recently gathered materials, some speakers use the variant 'vrime, closer to the Čakavian form (Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: *vrime*, cf. Kalsbeek 1998: *vr'eme*) which selects an agreeing adjective in *-o*. That is, it selects a neuter form according to the Croatian/Čakavian model:

- (20) 'drugo 'vrime (VB – ruov014-1)

<sup>18</sup> Space allows only limited examples.

In still more recent materials, the noun also acquires a plural form, with the whole paradigm approximating to the Croatian/Čakavian paradigm:

- (21) 'zlatna 'vremena (MK – ruoz020-1-1)  
 (22) 'vta 'vremena (VD – ruoz022-1-1)

Not only does the noun present the Croatian/Čakavian ending but so does the adjective, the indefinite form also presenting this kind of ending. Moreover, the noun follows the old *n*-declension and not the indigenous inflexional model. The phrase 'zlatna 'vremena might be considered to be a borrowing of the Croatian/Čakavian phrase *zlatna vremena*, and we could be dealing with a simple case of code-switching, but in 'vta 'vremena we have an indefinite form of Latin origin (Lat. ALTER, ALTA) which agrees with 'vremena. In the indigenous morphological system 'vta is a singular form, but given that 'vremena is plural, we have to assume that the indefinite form as well has adapted to Croatian/Čakavian morphology (cf. *druga vremena*).

**4.1.3.** In the Daco-Romance languages, the oldest stratum of loans from old Slavonic neuter nouns is uniformly treated as feminine, conforming to diachronically stable patterns. Yet in Istro-Romanian, under pressure from the Croatian/Čakavian model they begin to diverge from indigenous morphology. Count nouns from the old stratum continue to be morphologically stable, while abstract nouns, especially when used in a concrete sense seem to be more vulnerable to Croatian/Čakavian morphosyntax.

A thorny problem in the history of the Daco-Romance varieties is how old Slavonic neuters become adapted as feminines. Densusianu (1901: 273)<sup>19</sup> and Rosetti (1986: 306) offer phonological hypotheses, but with different kinds of explanation: Densusianu, who does not make a distinction between the treatment of medial unstressed *o* and unstressed final *o* in Slavonic words, invokes the influence of a preceding labial, while Rosetti maintains that final unstressed *o* had a very open pronunciation, appealing also to the treatment of south Slavonic *o* in Modern Greek and Albanian (see the entire discussion on page 306). Densusianu's explanation is problematic, because the same treatment is to be found in various nouns of Slavonic origin, regardless of the preceding stem-final consonant. Even if the southern Slavonic *o* had a very open pronunciation (as Rosetti shows), we have to recognize that a formal cue is not sufficient and that, probably, we have also to allow for inflexional cues. Slavonic neuters in *-o* becoming feminine in Daco-Romance may be thus explicable morphophonologically, but for the treatment as feminine of Slavonic neuters in *-e* the situation is more complicated, because in Daco-Romance a noun of Romance origin in *-e* may be either masculine or feminine. Nor can semantic cues be invoked.

#### 4.2. Later loans

Later loans show either the inflexional and agreement behaviour of the older loans, or diverge from that model to varying degrees. In what follows we treat Croatian/Čakavian loans in *-o* separately, according to how they were adapted into Istro-Romanian.

<sup>19</sup> On the same page, a few lines above, Densusianu invokes in passing the possibility that nouns such as *ocnă* (from Sl. *okno*) are explicable in the same way as *gleznă* și *sfeclă*, which he assumed to have entered in Romanian from Slavonic as masculines subsequently being assimilated to the feminines. However the pseudomorphological explanation is not supported by the evidence.

**4.2.1.** Croatian/Čakavian neuters in *-o* are adapted as feminine, in the inflexional type *-a/-ε* vs *-e*, while those whose roots end in a consonant cluster may be assigned to the inflexional type *-a/-ε* vs *-i*:

- 'blɔga/'blɔgɛ (but 'blɔgə in Popovici) behaves as feminine in the materials consulted (it appears first in Gartner, then Weigand and Byhan – all these attestations dating from the end of the nineteenth century). It is a loan from Croatian/Čakavian, *blago* (neuter, see Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

In Fi 1314 (*Vite*), the collective noun is uniformly feminine both in the north and in the southern villages:

(23) o 'blɔga/'blɔgɛ<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'blɔgɛ<sub>PL</sub>.

- 'debla/'deblɛ (dar 'deblə la Popovici) behaves as a feminine (while in Croatian/Čakavian, the noun *deblo* is neuter, see, among others, Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.):

(24) fa'kut<sub>av</sub> 'debla ne'rasti si la'sɔt<sub>av</sub> 'tsesta puł pre jɔ<sub>F</sub> (Pu<sub>I</sub> 4/86)

(25) 'kɔvɪtə ɛnr<sub>o<sub>F</sub></sub> 'deblə 'vɔrde 'sire (Po<sub>I</sub> 62/27), the same behaviour in Fi 1737 *Copacul acela nu mai înfrunzește*: tsa<sub>F</sub> dɔbla/ɤ<sub>F</sub> debla (Nosolo/Miheli).

In the southern villages (in Šušnjevića), Kovačec also notes the plural in *-i* in the inflexional type: 'deblɛ<sub>SG</sub> vs 'debli<sub>PL</sub>, but the noun remains feminine.

- 'dleta is attested in ALR II s.n. 2/546, but also in Dianich; both in ALR II s.n. and in Dianich it is listed as feminine, with a plural in *-e* (*dlete*, and the definite form *dletele*, Da s.v.).

In Čakavian and Croatian it is a neuter noun, Čak. *dleto/dl'eto*, Cr. *dlijeto* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

- dər'zɔla/dər'zɔlɛ (but dər'zalə in Glavina in *Glosarul istroromân-dacoromân* of 1904) is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *držalo* (Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

This noun, attested in various collections of the beginning of the nineteenth century, continues to belong to the inflexional type *-a* vs *-e*, and this, like its feminine morphosyntactic behaviour, is confirmed by Filipi's more recent survey:

(26) o dər'zɔla<sub>SG</sub> vs do dər'zɔlɛ<sub>PL</sub> (Fi 1021 *Mânerul coasei*, in Žejane).

- 'jɔpna/'jɔpɛ is attested in Byhan's and Gartner's glossaries from the nineteenth century, and in materials gathered in the first half of the twentieth century (see, e.g., Glavina and Diculescu, Popovici, Pașca, ALR II 117/3793) and subsequently in

Kovačec and Filipi. It is a loan from Čakavian *japno* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

The form in Istro-Romanian behaves as a feminine:

(27) 'jɔpna pre'viʃe 'ɣusta<sub>F</sub> (in Pašca)

and it adheres to the inflexion type -a/-ε vs. -e: 'japnε vs 'japne (Gartner s.v.).

- 'kola/'kolε (but 'kolə in Maiorescu, where the first attestation appears) behaves morphosyntactically in a way specific to feminines (in Croatian/Čakavian, *kolo* is neuter,<sup>20</sup> Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.):

(28) 'kolele kami'onuluĵ əs de'ʃɔrte<sub>F</sub> (Pe-Ne, Žejane), but also Fi 964 (*Roata carului*), which confirms the inflexional type: o 'kola/'kolε<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'kolε<sub>PL</sub> both in the north and in the southern villages.

- ko'rita/ko'rite (the latter variant is attested in Pușcariu) and in older or more recent materials it appears as feminine (in Croatian/Čakavian, *korito* is neuter, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.):

(29) da'jets<sub>m</sub> 'kɔde 'apε si o<sub>F</sub> ko'rite (Pu<sub>1</sub> 7/6), but also Fi 1375 *Troacă* and Fi 1593 *Albie, hârdău*, which records the word as a feminine belonging to the inflexional type: o korita/korite<sub>SG</sub> vs do korite<sub>PL</sub> (both in the north and in the south).

- 'okna (first attestation in Maiorescu, in the mid nineteenth century)/'oknε/'oknə (in Popovici) has numerous attestations in twentieth-century the s (in Popovici, Pușcariu, Cantemir, then Kovačec, in MALGI) and, subsequently, in Filipi. In Croatian, *okno* is neuter, but in some Čakavian dialects, beside 'ukno (neuter, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v.) the feminine form ukna is also recorded (Francetić s.v.).

In the materials consulted, it appears as a feminine noun and belongs to the inflexional type -a/-ε vs -e:

(30) do 'okne (Pe-Ne, Sâ-Fă 56), see MALGI 49 (*Fereastră*)

(31) orba<sub>F</sub> okna (ALR II 273), see also Fi 1318 (*Firidă*).

- o'lita/'olita is attested in twentieth-century in Kovačec, Petrovici and Neiescu and Dianich, and at the start of the twenty-first century in Filipi.

<sup>20</sup> Pușcariu (1926: 223) maintains that some of these words are also used with the ending -a by Croatians, thus *kola* (Bartoli P. 52) and *okna* (Byhan s.v.). Bartoli refers to 'slov. cars.', the (Gorizia)-Karst dialect.

In Čakavian, *olito* is neuter (see Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). Kovačec lists it as a *plurale tantum* (Ko<sub>3</sub> s.v.), but Filipi's data show that it is count noun, with the inflexional type *-a* vs *-e*:

(32) o 'olita vs do 'olite (Fi 289 *Intestin*, for various localities in the south, Brdo, Škabići, Trkovci, Zankovci, Miheli, Kostrčan).

- 'pisma, attested in Morariu, Iroaie, Cantemir and Sârbu and Frățiță is borrowed from Cr./Čak. *pismo*.

The attestations show that it is feminine, see, e.g., 'sveta 'pisma (Mo 6), a 'vostra 'pisma (Ca 149 etc.) and belongs to the inflexional type *-a* vs *-e* (Sâ-Fă, *Glosar*).

- 'sedla/'sedle, but also the variants 'sedlǝ/'sedlǝ (in Popovici) or 'jedla (in Maioreșcu) is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *sedlo* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

It is attested in the mid nineteenth century, in Maioreșcu, where it appears as belonging to the inflexional type *-a* vs *-e*: 'jedla<sub>SG</sub> vs 'jedle<sub>PL</sub>. In DDIr s.v. *sedla* the variant 'sedija, is also recorded and is attributed to the same etymon, Cr. *sedlo*. The noun 'sedija – attested in Kovačec and Fi 1553 *Șaua măgarului* – seems more likely to be a reflex of It./Ven. *sedia* and not of Cr./Čak. *sedlo*. It is attested later than 'sedla, so it can hardly have exercised any influence on the adaptation as feminine of the Croatian/Čakavian neuter.

- 'stǝbla/'stǝbla/'stǝble first appears in Gartner and in Byhan's glossary. It is feminine, unlike its neuter etymon *stablo* in Croatian/Čakavian (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v.):

(33) su o<sub>F</sub> 'stǝbla (Ko<sub>3</sub> in Žejane), the same morphosyntactic behaviour is confirmed by Fi 1737 *Copacul acela nu mai înfrunzește*: ʃb<sub>F</sub> 'stǝbla/tsa<sub>F</sub> 'stǝbla/ʃa 'stǝbla (Žejane/Šušnjevița/the other southern villages), see also Fi 1742 (*Copaci mari și groși*): mǝr si/ʃi 'grose<sub>F</sub>/'grose<sub>F</sub> 'stǝble (Šušnjevița/Nosolo/Letaj). In Fi 1742 the plural 'stǝbli (feminine) is also recorded in the south: mǝr ʃi 'grose<sub>F</sub> 'stǝbli (Brdo, Škabići, Zankovci, Miheli and Kostrčan), so with another inflexional type, but without change of gender.

- stra'fila/stra'file/stra'sile is attested in ALR II s.n. I/46, but its penetration into Istro-Romanian is confirmed by Filipi's material. It is borrowed from Cr./Čak. *strašilo* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.), which is neuter.

In Fi 1063 *Sperietoare*, the situation is uniform in the north and the south:

(34) o stra'fila/stra'sile/stra'file<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'strafile/'strasile<sub>PL</sub> (Žejane/Šušnjevița/remaining southern villages).

- 'sukna/'suknɛ, but 'suknə in Majorescu appears as feminine in all the materials consulted. It is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *sukno* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

In Fi 643 (*Sukno – Fustă – Panno*: the Romanian translation as 'fustă', 'skirt' is an incorrect rendering of Cr. *sukno* and it. *panno*) the noun belongs to the inflexion type -a/-ɛ vs -e:

(35) o 'sukna/'suknɛ vs do 'sukne (both in the north and in the south).

- 'tnɔla is recorded in the mid-twentieth century, in Kovačec and Petrovici and Neiescu, then Flora and might be related to Čak. *tnalo* (neuter, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

To judge from our data, this noun is limited to the northern area, being attested only in Žejane (see Ko<sub>1</sub>57, Ko<sub>3</sub>, Pe-Ne, MALGI 201). MALGI 201 shows the inflexion type:

(36) o 'tnɔla<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'tnɔle<sub>PL</sub>.

- 'zərna/'zərne is attested in Pușcariu and, later, in ALR I 1/19, ALR II s.n. 1/86, and in the dialect surveys carried out by Kovačec and Filipi.

It is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *zrno* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

In our corpus, the noun behaves as feminine and is adapted to the inflexion type -a/-ɛ vs -e, as can be seen from the data for Fi 40 *Grindină*, Fi 194 *Pupilă*, Fi 1142 *Bob de porumb* Fi 1220 *Bob de strugure* (for the various meanings of the noun): o 'zərna/'zərne<sub>SG</sub> vs 'zərne<sub>PL</sub> both in the north and in the south. Despite this stability, in certain fixed phrases or expressions a new form emerges (for the time being marginal and confined to that context,): thus, in the southern villages, beside the (most commonly found) 'zərne po 'zərne zbe'ri, Kovačec records (only in some informants) 'zərnu po 'zərnu zbe'ri (see Cr. *izabrati zrno po zrno*). The appearance of such a form nonetheless shows that adaptation may take different directions when it occurs precisely within a set (adverbialized?) expression.

**4.2.2.** Croatian/Čakavian neuters in -o are adapted as feminines, in some situations where they are non-countable (being count nouns)<sup>21</sup> but, in other situations, the lack of a plural form in the corpus could be accidental:

- lužilɛ (attested in Bartoli, in Šušnjevića), but glossed as "swill" appears to be a singular feminine form corresponding to Čakavian *lužilo* (in Čakavian it is neuter, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). However, the meaning is different from that indicated by Bartoli, in that in Čakavian it is synonymous with *lug* and *lužija* and it should better be glossed as "bleach".

<sup>21</sup> Mass nouns can, it is true, have plurals (usually meaning 'different kinds of'). Anyway the plural form does not appear in the corpus.

- 'nade is listed in DDIr s.v., with an attestation from Popovici. According to the DDIr is a feminine noun (in Croatian, where it is considered old-fashioned/Čakavian, *nado* is neuter, Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.):

(37) 'nɔda<sub>̣</sub> i maǰ 'tərdə 'nego 'fǝru

- 'olovε/'ulove is first attested in Gartner, then in Byhan's glossary, and later in Popovici and Kovačec. It is a loan from Cr./Čak. *olovo* (neuter, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). Kovačec lists it as feminine (the definite form is 'olova/'ulova).

While *luzile* and *olovε/ulove* are mass nouns and thus in principle not countable, we have to recognize that for other nouns the absence of a plural form is purely accidental:

- 'jɔdra (MALR II s.n. 2/667)/ 'jɔdrε (DDIr s.v.), borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *jadro* (*jedro*, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).
- ple'tila is recorded in Dianich, who shows this noun as having feminine gender.

In DDIr s.v. it is considered to be derived from the verb *ple'ti*, but the mechanism of this postverbal derivation is hard to explain. We believe that *ple'tila* is a loan from Čakavian, where it is neuter (*pletilo*, Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

- 'stupala/stu'pɔle/sto'pɔle (in this last variant it is first attested in Byhan's glossary, then in Popovici (where it is glossed not as "ankle", but as "sole of a boot") and in ALR I 1/59. It is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *stopalo* (see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.) listed as feminine in Istro-Romanian (DDIr s.v.).
- 'vesla is recorded in ALR II s.n. 3/841 and is a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *veslo* (Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

**4.2.3.** For some nouns it is hard to say whether the attested forms are singulars or plurals:

- 'dərva in Sârbu and Frățiĭlă, but the context is ambiguous:

(38) a'jɔ ɣleva'rits<sub>̣</sub> am ulo'zɪt de 'dərva (Sâ-Fă 174) (may be read as "thus I made a kiln of firewood", but also as "thus I made a wooden kiln"). In the glossary accompanying the texts, Sârbu and Frățiĭlă record the head-word 'dərvo, and according to their interpretation this is a neuter word which keeps the Croatian/Čakavian morphology: 'dərvo<sub>sg</sub> vs 'dərva<sub>pl</sub> (cr/čak. *drvo*, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). In DDIr (s.v.), however, the head-word is *dərva*.

- 'jɔta is attested in Dianich's dictionary (s.v. ən 'jɔta, listed as an 'adverbial expression'):

(39) 'fǝja oro'dε 'ulike ke<sub>̣</sub> i 'kʲ/tʲɔro ən' jɔta (Da)

The interpretation proposed by Dianich, adopted in DDIr (s.v.), assumes the adverbialization of a nominal. Indeed, ən 'jɔta is originally a PP: this noun, borrowed from Croatian/Čakavian (*jato*, see, among others, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.), where it is neuter, appears accompanied by a preposition. Dianich glosses this as “there the olive trees produce fruit, because it is a well sheltered piece of land”, translating ən 'jɔta with a singular form. In the absence of other attestations, the interpretation of the PP as an adverbial expression cannot be ruled out (cf. Romanian *la răcoare* etc.). On the other hand, 'jɔta could be a singular form.

**4.2.4.** The stable patterns in which loans are adapted may be modified under the influence of the dominant language. In such cases the modifications affect a part of the paradigm, and the plural form created according to the indigenous model begins to be rivalled by a newer form due to the influence of the dominant language.

- 'bedra/'bedrɛ/'bedrə (in Glavina, *Glosarul româno-istroromân* 1904) is attested from the mid-nineteenth century, in Maiorescu. In the materials consulted it appears as feminine, following the inflexional pattern -a/-ɛ vs -e or -a/-ɛ vs -i. It is borrowed from Cr./Čak. *bedro* (which is neuter, Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

The data from Fi 264 (*Coapsă*) clearly show the morphosyntactic behaviour of a feminine noun and both inflexional patterns: o 'bedrɛ/'bedra<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'bedrɛ<sub>PL</sub> (Šušnjevića, Nosolo/Jesenovik, Letaj, Trkovci, Zankovci) and o 'bedra<sub>SG</sub> vs do 'bedri<sub>PL</sub> (Žejane, Brdo, Miheli, Kostrčan, Škabići). At first sight 'bedra/'bedrɛ look unsurprising, yet in ALR II s.n. 6/1757 the form in which the noun appears and the agreement it selects could be due to Croatian/Čakavian influence:

(40) 'bedra de 'ɔte vɔʃ əs<sub>PL</sub> maɨ mɔr<sub>PL</sub> (ALR II s.n. 6/1757)

The agreement in this example might be explicable by attraction, where the constituents closest to the vɔʃ have the feature /+plural/. While we cannot rule out this hypothesis, 'bedra is a singular form according to indigenous morphology, but a *plural form* in Croatian/Čakavian.

That 'bedra could be a plural form may be indirectly confirmed by another noun, attested later in material from Sârbu and Frătilă:

(41) se vets voɨ obre'zi 'rebra a'tunʃe 'ənsa pan'tseta 'raməre (Sâ-Fă, *Glosar*, where the whole sequence is glossed as ‘if you scrape off the ribs, then only the meat between the bones is left’)

In the context, the plural reading is normal (the singular reading cannot be ruled out, but it is unnatural). Thus, 'rebra is thus the plural of 'rebro, which is precisely the Cr./Čak. neuter *rebro* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v.).

**4.2.5.** In diachrony, one observes either the coexistence of different types of adaptation or a gradual transition from the indigenous type of morphological adaptation to

that of the dominant language. We have found in some situations the coexistence of different types of adaptation, on the one hand adaptation to the indigenous system, on the other the direct assimilation of a form from the dominant language.

- 'selo appears with the Croatian/Čakavian ending in the material gathered by Weigand and in Byhan's glossary (also in Popovici's glossary):

(42) mes aŋ la ur 'selo (We<sub>2</sub> 126, where it selects a masculine form).

Beside 'selo there is also 'sela (in Pop) which behaves as a feminine, as can be seen from Fi 91 *Sat*:

(43) o 'sela/'sela vs do 'sele/'sele (in almost all the southern villages).

From our available attestations it is hard to be sure of the chronological relationship between 'selo and 'sela. Byhan is citing Weigand, so this does not constitute an additional attestation, and in Weigand and Popovici there is also 'selište. Attestations up to the mid-twentieth century show that 'selište is the preferred term and that 'selo/'sela seems to be speakers' second option. We can only suggest that the feminine noun 'selište (borrowed from the Croatian neuter *selište*) has always held (at least in Žejane) a more stable position, because it was borrowed before selo/sela. In the southern villages the situation appears to be more complicated, given that in Nosolo and Škabići the preferred term is still 'selište, while in Letaj, Brdo, Trkoveci, Zankovci, Miheli, and Kostrčan 'sela/'sela is preferred. In Jesenovik both terms are recorded, but 'selišta/'selište is the first option, before 'sela.

Another special case is 'srebro/'slebro. The noun is first attested in Gartner, at the end of the nineteenth century, after which it appears in Bartoli, Popovici, Pušcariu, Morariu at the beginning of the twentieth century, and later in Cantemir, and in the second half of the twentieth century in Kovačec. It is borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *srebro* (and regionally, *slebro*, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

In Glavina and Diculescu there appears the form 'srebru, which occupies a totally marginal position, being one of the very few attempts to adapt a Croatian/Čakavian neuter where final unstressed -o has become -u (probably as the result of an analogy with nouns in final *muta cum liquida* which also show -u). Kovačec indicates a more complicated morphosyntactic behaviour for this noun for speakers from Žejane. Beside agreement with an adjective in -o (where the noun behaves as a neuter following the model of the source language: 'srebro <sub>i</sub> 'yvevo, 'srebro <sub>i</sub> 'buro, 'srebro <sub>i</sub> 'drovo), Kovačec lists for some elderly speakers an adjectival form without -o: 'srebro <sub>i</sub> yrev (Kovačec 1963: 34). This can hardly be due solely to the influence of ar'đzint/ar'zint, because this inherited word had already gone out of usage, being replaced by the Croatian/Čakavian loanword. Most probably, 'srebro selects agreement with an unmarked form of the adjective, following the indigenous model. In the southern villages, this noun may also be adapted as a feminine (selecting feminine agreement), see the examples in 3.3.

In other cases the chronology of subsequent (re)adaptations is clearer. One such example is 'zlota/'zlotε/'zlotə vs 'zlato. The noun (borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *zlato*

(Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.) is first adapted as a feminine *zlōta/zlōte* (Bartoli, Glavina and Diculescu, Popovici, Pușcariu etc.), as can be seen from these examples from the corpus:

(44) 'zlōta ə̌i 'drōgε<sub>F</sub> (Pe-Ne, Škabići)

and in the count plurals:

(45) 'zlōte us'kōte<sub>F-PL</sub> (Iro<sub>1</sub> 20/34)

Beside this form, adapted to indigenous morphology, there begins to emerge corresponding directly to the etymon 'zlōto/'zlato (at the end of the nineteenth century, in Ive, Bartoli, then Popovici, Leca Morariu, and Kovačec). From these materials it appears that 'zlōto/'zlato does not have a count reading or have a plural, yet interference between indigenous morphosyntax and the morphosyntax of the dominant language still takes place. In his surveys in the second half of the twentieth century Kovačec (1963: 34) records two kinds of behaviour from speakers of a sociolinguistic nature (such as age):

a) speakers aged 50+ particularly use the feminine type *-a/-ε* vs *-e*, but also allow the form in *-o*, only with feminine agreement ('zlōta<sub>̌</sub> 'drōγa<sub>F</sub> ši 'ənsa<sub>F</sub> 'zlōto nu se 'pote 'ziŋfe 'ənsō 'zlōto);

b) while very young speakers, some between 12 and 17, particularly used the noun as a neuter, with neuter agreement ('zlōto<sub>̌</sub> a 'mevo/'zlōto je 'γrevo, 'zlōto<sub>̌</sub> 'γōbīro/'zlōto<sub>̌</sub> 'drōγo), but they also admit feminine usage ('zlōta<sub>̌</sub> 'γōbīra).

In recent recordings, even when the form in *-a* is selected (in the singular), the agreement may reflect the Croat/Čakavian model (neuter agreement, with an adjectival form in *-o*) and not the autochthonous model: 'zlōta ke<sub>̌</sub> 'skunso<sub>N</sub> ke<sub>̌</sub> (ruov011-1).

**4.2.6.** There are also situations in which only the Croatian/Čakavian form in *-o* is recorded in use:

- 'jutro is attested first in Pușcariu (Pu<sub>1</sub> 16/53), but appears only in salutation together with the adjective which preserves Croatian morphology: 'dobro 'jutro (Pu<sub>1</sub> 16/53, ALR II s.n. 4/1114, Pe-Ne Šušnjevića, Da s.v.), which means that in all other contexts speakers use the Latin term *dama'retsa/doma'retsa*, but in the salutation they are beginning to select the Croatian phrase (in Croatian/Čakavian, *jutro* is neuter, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).
- 'maslo is attested in Kovačec (in Brdo) and is undoubtedly borrowed from Croatian/Čakavian (*maslo*, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.)

The Istro-Romanian mass noun is listed by Kovačec as neuter (as in Croatian/Čakavian). Better attested are 'buro and 'butiro: 'buro is attested in Petrovici and Neiescu in the mid twentieth century, and then, at about the same period, in Kovačec, subsequently in Dianich and Filipi, while 'butiro is attested by Kovačec, Dianich, and Filipi. The situation in Istro-Romanian would have been much simpler if it had been possible safely to establish gender on the basis of the desinence. The data show that the desinence alone is

not a sufficient indicator of gender, especially given that Italian/Venetian nouns in *-o* have also entered Istro-Romanian. The nouns 'buro<sup>22</sup> and bu'tiro are two such examples, but the data from Fi 1497 (*Unt*) show that 'buro and 'butiro are masculine in the southern villages. Thus in Šušnjeвица the inflexional pattern is: un 'buro<sub>SG</sub> vs doǎ 'buri<sub>PL</sub> (also in Nosolo), un bu'tiro<sub>SG</sub> vs doǎ bu'tir<sub>PL</sub> (also in Miheli), while in the other southern villages the number opposition is realized as: un 'buro<sub>SG</sub> vs doǎ bur<sub>PL</sub>.

- 'nebo is first attested in the materials gathered by Nanu and then used by Byhan in his glossaries; it is further recorded at the time of the surveys for ALR I (1/94 Žejane), ALR II (185), ALR II s.n. 4/1217, but also in Kovačec and Filipi

A loan from Croatian/Čakavian, where *nebo* is neuter (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.), this noun retains the desinence from the source language and selects neuter agreement with an adjective in *-o*:

- (46) 'nebo<sub>ǎ</sub> 'vedro/'nebo<sub>ǎ</sub> 'modro/'nebo<sub>ǎ</sub> neobla'f̥ito, all recorded by Kovačec in Žejane (see Ko<sub>3</sub>: s.v.)

This type of agreement extends to the noun of Latin origin f̥er/tser, which normally behaves as belonging to the genus *alternans* class. Thus, under the pressure of the Croatian/Čakavian model, we find in Fi 35 a) *Cer senin*, beside vedru f̥er/'f̥eru ku'rat/'f̥eru 'vedru (Šušnjeвица, Brdo, Nosolo, Trkovci, Zankovci, Miheli/Nosolo/Letaj), 'f̥eru 'vedro (Jesenovik) and 'vedro f̥er (Kostrčan), where the adjective has a neuter form (*vedar, vedra, vedro* in Croatian/Čakavian). During his dialect surveys Kovačec also notes an agreement with a form of the adjective which is not in *-o*: 'nebo<sub>ǎ</sub> pl̥ov (Kovačec 1963: 34). This kind of agreement appears more rarely and only in some elderly speakers of Žejane where in any case *genus alternans* nouns have become masculine (but still select the form *-le* for the plural definite article). These speakers treat the loan 'nebo like any other masculine noun.

This type of interference or transfer tends to affect pairs of nouns one of which is inherited and the other its equivalent in Croatian/Čakavian. This is a phenomenon which happens regardless of whether the word exists as a loan from Croatian/Čakavian or not. In his surveys in the second half of the twentieth century, Kovačec records the nouns vir and 'l̥opte in contexts where the corresponding adjectives are in *-o*:<sup>23</sup>

- (47) 'k̥orle vir ver 'ŏbo (Kovačec 1963: 35) – in Cr./Čak. *bijelo vino/b'elo vino*.  
 (48) se 'pure 'l̥optele pre fok 'neka 'fije 'k̥ŏdo (Kovačec 1963: 35) – in Cr./Čak. *toplo mljeko/teplo miklo (ml'eko)*.

Also from the beginning of the twentieth century Petrovici and Neiescu record a case of agreement with a form in *-o* for the noun ğem:

- (49) 'ğemu əǎ zamo'teǎto (Petrovici și Neiescu, Nosolo) – in Cr. *klupko* (neuter)

<sup>22</sup> *Buro* are *bur* well attested in the Čakavian dialects, see all the forms in Filipi and Buršić Giudici 2019: 1497. This might show that in Istro-Romanian the noun has a multiple etymology.

<sup>23</sup> For further observations, see Maiden and Uță MS.

A similar phenomenon is also recorded by Filipi, where the noun *grəv* appears with adjective forms in *-o*:

(49) 'zrelo grəv (Fi 1159 *Cereale coapte* in Žejane) –in Cr./Čak. *zrelo žito/z(d)relo žito*.

Such interference or transfer is possible because bilingual speakers simultaneously access both the lexicon and morphosyntax of the L1 and those of the dominant language.

- 'oko, borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *oko* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.) appears in noun phrases where both constituents are borrowed and keep the morphology of the source language, 'slipo 'oko ("the blind eye = temple") in Petrovici and Neiescu for Žejane.
- 'pravo is borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *pravo* (there is apparently no consensus about the lexico-grammatical class to which this form belongs, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v. lists it as a neuter while Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v. treat it as a *čestica* ('particle'); we think that Kalsbeek's interpretation is correct, in origin, *pravo* being the neuter form of the adjective *prav(i)*, which became nominalized).

In Istro-Romanian, 'pravo is recorded as a noun in Glavina's *Glosarul româno-istoromân* (tu 'ari 'pravo) and subsequently in Pušcariu and Kovačec in the same structure with the verb *ave* (in the sense "to be right", but also "to have the right"). The noun appears in a singular form, but the sense seems to be plural:

(49) 'nbrodu ka'tsɔt\_a maĭ mund 'pravo (K<sub>O3</sub> în Šušnjevisa)

In Kovačec's mid-twentieth-century survey it appears with *-o* preserved, but feminine agreement:

(50) nu ver maĭ 'bura\_f 'pravo af'lb ni la 'svetile 'domnu (K<sub>O3</sub> in Žejane)

From the data that we presently have, it is hard to say whether the feminine of *pravo* is due to interference with *pravitsa* and *pravda* (these are loans from the Cr./Čak. feminines *pravica* and *pravda*, see Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

- 'proso is recently attested by Filipi and represents a loan from the Cr./Čak. neuter *proso* (see Filipi and Buršić Giudici 2019: 1156).

The noun appears only in Žejane (Fi 1156 *Mei*), while in the southern villages we have *meĭ/miĭ*, (most probably the reflex of Lat. *milium*).

- 'svitlo appears with reduced frequency until the mid twentieth century (but see Popovici). It is borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *svjetlo/svetlo* (Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

In Popovici (at the end of the nineteenth century), the nouns keep the desinence of the source language, but selects feminine agreement:

- (51) ve'zut\_a ke je o\_F 'svitlo (Po1 25) – lume (inherited from Lat. LUMEN) is feminine, so 'svitlo could have been influenced by this word

In Kovačec, the noun selects an adjective in *-o*, but this usage is recorded in schoolchildren who go to a school where they learn Croatian and in young people:

- (52) 'svitlo\_i 'roifo (Kovačec 1963: 34)

In Istro-Romanian, lume (in the sense “light”) occupies a marginal position as does svitlo, while svitloba and svitlost are in usage.

**4.2.7.** A special case is the loan from Croatian/Čakavian *leto*, which is used as a neuter and selects an adjectival form in *-o*:

- (53) 'novo 'leto (Fi 379 *Anul Nou*), both in the north and the south  
 (54) pres'tupno leto/pris'tupno lito (Fi 352 b) (*An bisect*), examples from Jesenovik and Letaj

Under the pressure of the dominant language, the phrase with the demonstrative 'festa on ‘this year’ (which is attested, see Petrovici and Neiescu) begins to be rivalled and replaced by to 'leto/'ovo 'leto (ALR II s.n. 6/1743/Ko<sub>3</sub> Šušnjeвица), in which both constituents are borrowed and keep their source morphology. Interference in the morphology of bilinguals results in extension of an agreement type from the loanword to the indigenous word. Thus in Fi 379 (*Anul Nou*) in Šušnjeвица we find novo on, where the adjective has a form in *-o*. The noun appears with a Čakavian genitive plural form in the structure of some phrases with numerical quantifiers, from the number 5 upwards (for the entire discussion see Kalsbeek 1998: 175-178)

- (55) do sto let (Ra)  
 (56) 'tristo let (Pu<sub>1</sub> 15/32)  
 (57) sedem'deset\_ji pet let (Sâ-Fă in the glossary to the texts)

The same form is selected with the indefinite 'søki(le):

- (58) 'søkile let (Sâ-Fă 93)

which means that speakers must have extracted the form let from phrases with numerical quantifiers and adapted it to indigenous morphology. Let no longer behaves as a neuter in the indefinite phrase but rather as a masculine (one would have expected 'sako 'leto).

The data from Fi 354 *Primavarã* confirm how speakers extract forms from various Čakavian phrases, which are lexicalized or grammaticalized in Istro-Romanian. Thus, in Fi 354 *Primavarã*, we find:

(59) 'mlado/' mlodo 'leto (Šušnjevića, Nosolo, Jesenovik/Miheli, Kostrčan)

but in Letaj, Brdo, Škabići, Trkovic:

(60) mlad/mlod 'leta

The latter example poses a problem of agreement if we interpret mlad / mlod as an adjective. On mlat / mlad in Čakavian, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v. *mlat* says that there exist contexts with “msg used independently, usually combined with leta”. In this case we do not have an agreement in the noun phrase but a genitive singular form of the noun.

**4.2.8.** Derived forms with the suffix *-stv(o)* are assigned to the neuter gender in Croatian/Čakavian. This is a “suffix attaching mainly to noun and adjective bases to build nouns denoting states (*pijanstvo* ‘drunkenness’), roles (*banstvo* ‘governorship’), occupations, dominions (*kapetanstvo* ‘captainship’, *kraljevstvo* ‘kingdom’), collectivities (*susjedstvo* ‘neighborhood’)” (Buljan 2018: 185). Buljan (2018: 185) maintains that it is “a functional counterpart of the English nominalizers *-dom, -hood, -ship, -ness, -ity*; German *-schaft, -heit, -keit, -ität*; French *-ance, -age, -erie, -ité, -itude, -isme*”. In Istro-Romanian such nouns have been borrowed, but the way in which they are adapted and their morphosyntactic behaviour differ in diachrony.

A version of the Lord’s Prayer was collected by Alberto Fortis most probably in 1774 (see Muljačić 1976: 51-55) in Poljica/Poglizza and is the oldest attestation of the Vegliote Romanian<sup>24</sup> spoken on the island of Krk/Veglia. The prayer contains the following noun phrase with a possessive: “Neca vire Craglietstvo attev”<sup>25</sup> ‘thy kingdom come’ (Muljačić 1976: 54-55, Doc. 15 sheet 1, but on sheet 2 the text is accompanied by the note „Pater noster in dialetto Poglizano dell’Isola di Veglia”). The noun ‘kraljestvo (Čak. *kra(l)jestvo/cr. kraljevstvo*) borrowed from Čakavian/Croatian is neuter and not only preserves the ending from the source language but also selects agreement with a neuter form of the possessive. On the other hand, the possessive form a ‘tevo is not taken as such from Čakavian/Croatian (where a form tevo has never existed either historically or dialectally),<sup>26</sup> but represents a Vegliot Romanian adaptation following the Čakavian/Croatian model (the possessive receives the neuter marker *-o*). Yet one line above a genus alternans noun of Latin origin selects a possessive form that does not have the ending *-o*: *sveta se nume attev* (Muljačić 1976: 54-55). Now, if ‘nume and ‘kraljestvo had belonged from the beginning to the same nominal class one would expect them both to trigger masculine agreement in the singular (and feminine in the plural), or agreement with the neuter form of the possessive.

<sup>24</sup> See Pușcariu 1929: 6-9.

<sup>25</sup> We have preserved the spelling used in the original, see Muljačić 1976: 54-55.

<sup>26</sup> In Čakavian and Croatian the neuter form of the possessive is *tvoje*, see Kalsbeek 1998: 168-170, Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: 40-46.

The variants of the Lord's Prayer and Născătoarea collected by Ivan Feretić in 1819 also in Poljica/Poglizza present two relevant forms in *-o*. In the Lord's Prayer we have the possessive noun phrase: "kraglietvo to"<sup>27</sup> (but "nomelu tev"). Even if Feretić's data should be taken with a pinch of salt, the phrase with the possessive demands our attention. For this form Pușcariu 1926: 162 assumes that it is a phonological development of \*tău and that the form attested by Feretić resembles the Romanian conjunct form with encliticized possessive *frate-to* 'your brother'. Pușcariu's hypothesis is problematic for at least two reasons: it does not explain why *tev* is selected with the noun *nomelu* and not *to*, hence the relationship between the two forms of possessive and offers no explanation of the certainly not accidental co-occurrence of the form *to* and the neuter noun *kraľestvo* borrowed from Čakavian/Croatian. It is conceivable that the form *to* is an adaptation to maintain the agreement with the neuter noun in *-o*. In an Istro-Romanian version of the second half of the twentieth century, obtained by Ascoli from the parish priest Mičetić, the same possessive noun phrase appears with a different form: *tă kraliestvo*<sup>28</sup> (Ascoli 1861: 75, where he also shows postposition of the possessive). The same form of the possessive is also attested with the noun *volja* (*volja tă*), which is feminine (both in Istro-Romanian and Čakavian/Croatian). In the Mičetić variant the noun *kraliestvo* – although it keeps the ending *-o* – no longer preserves the neuter gender of the original, but behaves as a feminine. The same type of (feminine) agreement is preserved in the Ive variant (Ive 1882: 2 *taē kraljestvo ŝi taē volja*). Both *tă* in Ascoli and *taē* in Ive must represent *te*.

In the materials consulted, derived nouns in *-stv(o)* are either adapted to the pattern of nouns in *-a/-ε*: *bo'gastve/bo'gōstve* (K<sub>03</sub> in the southern dialects < Cr./Čak. *bogatstvo*), *pijōnstva* (Pe-Ne in Kostrcan < Cr. *pijanstvo*), *zadovol'stva* (K<sub>03</sub> in Žejane < Cr. *zadovoljstvo*, cf. Čak. *zadovoljstvo*), or to the pattern of nouns in *-o*: *dje'tijstvo* (K<sub>03</sub> in Žejane < Cr. *djetinjstvo*, cf. Čak. *ditinjstvo*), *poľo'delstvo* (MALR II s.n. 1/7 < Cr. *poljodjelstvo*), *raľfuno'vodstvo* (Sâ-Fă < Cr. *raľunovodstvo*), *'tsōrstvo* (K<sub>03</sub> Žejane, Dianich, < Cr. *carstvo*).

In some cases, both adaptations are attested: *pri'ateľstvo/pri'jōtelstvo* (Popovici, glossary/Pașca < cr. *prijateljstvo*), but also *pri'jōteľstva* (Dianich), *siro'mōstvo* (Iro < Cr. *siromašstvo*), but also *siro'mōstve* (Pu<sub>1</sub> 13/37)/*siro'mōstve* (By). Variation may even be found in the usage of the same speaker, as shown by Sârbu and Frăiľă:

- (61) 'druľtva<sub>F</sub> 'lovaľka vs 'lovaľko<sub>N</sub> 'druľtvo (Sâ-Fă 63), in Croatian and in Čakavian it is neuter (*druľstvo*, see Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.).

As can be seen, these nouns present even more variation in the way they are adapted than the nouns in 4.2.1-4.2.7. Possible explanations of this fact are that these nouns are more recent loans which have never been generalized. They are mostly peripheral, in that they coexist with nouns, which are feminine both in Croatian/Čakavian and in Istro-Romanian, which have the same basis, but they present a different suffix: *bo'gōstve*, but *boga'tija*, *siro'mōstvo*, but *siro'mōstina* etc. In more recent material, nouns which preserve the ending *-o* combine with the neuter form of the adjective:

- (62) raľfuno'vodstvo tōrgo'vaľko (Sâ-Fă, glossary)

<sup>27</sup> With the spelling used by Feretić, and taken over by Mičetić.

<sup>28</sup> With the spelling used by Ascoli.

**4.2.9.** Do any masculines come from Croatian/Čakavian neuters? To answer this question, we have to ask whether a given noun belongs to an older or a more recent historical stratum. As a rule, nouns borrowed from old Slavonic neuters *-o* are not adapted as masculines (closure of final *-o* to *-u* is not found in these neuters at the older level). One example that a first sight deviates from the old model of adaptation is 'jɔzer/'jazər/'jezer, which both Frățiță 2012: 97 and Mihăilă 1983: 45 list among the old Slavonic loans, but which in Sârbu and Frățiță appears as 'jezero. Gartner and Bartoli record the form jazeru/jɔzeru and Popovici (Po<sub>1</sub> glossary), Pușcariu (Pu<sub>1</sub> 40/12), and Morariu (Mo 9) record the form 'jɔzer. In Maiorescu we find the form jezer (perhaps under the influence of the Romanian form?). In OCS the attested forms are *jezero* and *jezerъ* (which, as shown by Derksen 2007 s.v. \*ézero; \*ézerъ, reflect proto-Slavic \*ézero; \*ézerъ, so a neuter *o*-stem or, alternatively, a masculine *o*-stem). We might assume on the basis of its reflexes in the Daco-Romance domain (Romanian, Megleno-Romanian, and Istro-Romanian) that the form borrowed was not o.sl. *jezero*, but o.sl. *jezerъ* (see Mihăilă 1983: 45). According to the data from Popovici, the nouns seems to belong to the masculine class ('jɔzer<sub>SG</sub>- 'jɔzeru<sub>SG.DEF</sub> vs 'jɔzeri<sub>PL.DEF(?)</sub>)<sup>29</sup>. Likewise, Gartner (1882: nr 1176) lists jazər as masculine, with an invariable plural, but the definite plural form is 'jazeri. The same forms are confirmed at least in the usage of some speakers in our 2020 survey<sup>30</sup> (S-M: 'jazər<sub>SG</sub> vs doj 'jazər<sub>PL</sub>), but they a present a different pattern of inflexion in other speakers, see, e.g., S-P: 'jazər<sub>SG</sub> vs doj 'jazər, but doj miŋ 'jazəre. Without any information about the protocol followed by Gartner and Bartoli for gathering dialect material, we can only assume that jazeru/jɔzeru are forms with the definite article and not the Istro-Romanian reflexes of an old Slavonic form in *-o*. The form attested in Sârbu and Frățiță is in contrast and undoubted loan from Croatian/Čakavian, which preserves the desinence of the source language and also the gender, according to what Sârbu and Frățiță indicate:

- (63) 'jezero\_ĩ 'jezero na 'jezero\_a ke'mɔt 'isto 'jezero (Sâ-Fă 69), this example does not suggest that 'jezero is neuter ('isto is used adverbially).

In the case of 'jɔzer/'jezer and 'jezero we are dealing with later loans, the first forms of which are old and adapted according to the indigenous system while the form in *-o* is a more recent loan, at a time when the indigenous system is being reorganized and giving way to the morphosyntax of the dominant language.

A special case is 'bərdo, borrowed from the Cr./Čak. neuter *brdo* (Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). Filipi 70 (*Tipuri de înălțimi*) offers the following forms from Kostrčan:

- (64) un 'bərdo<sub>SG</sub> vs doj 'bərdi<sub>PL</sub>

<sup>29</sup> The grammatical information offered by Popovici in his glossary is chaotic, and in the absence of any examples from the texts he gathered in Istria caution is in order in the interpretation of the forms listed.

<sup>30</sup> This survey was carried out during the Covid pandemic, thanks to the help of our colleague Ana Werkmann Horvat.

In our 2020 survey by proxy, the masculine gender is conformed for this noun: *doj* 'bərđi *și* *doj* *vi* 'sof 'bərđi (see Maiden and Uță Bărbulescu 2022: 198). But the situation is far from simple, because the definite forms occur in some speakers from the south (in Kostrčan) as follows:

- (65) 'bərđo je 'visok<sub>SG</sub> vs 'bərđile<sub>S</sub> *vi* 'sof<sub>M</sub><sup>31</sup>.PL (Fi 70 *Tipuri de înălțimi*)

In the singular we find the formal neutralization of the definite/indefinite opposition, but the plural *bərđi* combines with the form *-le* of the definite determiner. Beside the definite form of the feminine nouns, where *-le* appears equally both in the north and the south, in all other cases the selection of this form may present variations. In the north, where nouns of the *genus alternans* class have become masculine, *-le* appears with masculines in plural *-ure* or *-e* (see, e.g., 'lukrur<sub>E</sub> vs 'lukrurle<sub>DEF.</sub>, also extended to nouns such as 'lupur<sub>E</sub> vs 'lupurle<sub>DEF.</sub>, 'omur<sub>E</sub> vs 'omurle<sub>DEF.</sub> etc., 'ose vs 'osele<sub>DEF.</sub>, pi 'fjore vs pi 'fjorle<sub>DEF.</sub> etc.). In the south, the form with definite determiner *-le* can not only appear with plural nouns in *-ure* and *-e* (which remain *genus alternans*), but also in the definite plural of one of the forms of the noun, although in the indefinite plural the noun may be masculine, with a different morphological content.<sup>32</sup>

- (66) un fup<sub>SG</sub> vs doj<sub>M</sub> fup<sub>PL</sub> (Fi 1401 *Un smoc/floc de lână*), but 'fupurle  
 (67) un križ<sub>SG</sub> vs doj<sub>M</sub> križ<sub>PL</sub> (Fi 120 *Cruce*), but 'križurle  
 (68) un klin<sub>SG</sub> vs doj 'kline/treji klin/'pōtru 'klinure<sup>33</sup> (Fi 981 *Pari la car cu coș*), but 'klinurle; see the forms in Zankovci and Miheli: un klin<sub>SG</sub> vs doj klin/'pōtru 'klinure or 'fuda 'klinure, but 'klinurle

The definite form can also belong to another gender class:

- (69) un grozd<sub>SG</sub> vs doj<sub>M</sub> 'grozdi<sub>PL</sub> (Fi 1216 *Ciorchine*, in Šušnjevića), but also in Šušnjevića, Petrovici and Neiescu record 'grozdile<sub>S</sub> 'bure<sub>F.PL</sub>.

That *-le* can appear in so many structures shows that it is no longer necessarily associated with feminine in the plural. It is sufficient for a noun to have a plural (whether it is the only plural or whether it is a plural form selected after small or large numbers) which ends in *-ure*, *-e* sau *-i*, and the definite form of the plural will take *-le*. In any case, 'bərđo is a Croatian/Čakavian noun which is treated in Istro-Romanian as masculine, and this could quite conceivably be due at least in part to interference from masculine brig or 'kodru.

Loans that do not belong to the old stratum present greater variation. They may have the desinence usually associated with the masculine (see 'srebru) or may select masculine

<sup>31</sup> Kovačec 1971: 94 indicates the neutralization of the gender opposition in the plural of this form. However the data from Fi 325 *Înalt* do not confirm this neutralization. In Filipi the form *visof* is exclusively masculine, while in the feminine only the form *visoke* is attested for all the localities investigated.

<sup>32</sup> We give only a limited number of examples for reasons of space.

<sup>33</sup> For the problem of the numerative, see Uță Bărbulescu and Maiden 2023: 1–26.

(see 'zlató, 'nebo, etc.) or feminine (see 'svitlo, 'pravo, etc.) agreement, even if they retain the desinence from the source language.

**4.2.10.** Sometimes the data from DDIr create the impression of a greater number of nouns which come from Croatian/Čakavian neuters and do not show the adaptation and behaviour specific to feminines, nor that specific to Croatian/Čakavian neuters. One such example is *krel*, which is exemplified, in DDIr s.v., by an example from ALR II s.n. 3/748 *Cari-de-pădure*:

(70) fur'niya ku 'krelu (glossed as “winged ant”).

Alas this form does not exist. In reality, what appears in ALR II s.n. 3/748 is:

(71) fur'niya ku 'krelute, for which the gloss “winged ant” offered in DDIr s.v. is correct, but the form is different from that given in the dictionary, being the plural of *kreluta/krelute*.

**4.2.11.** The extension of forms in *-o* may occur by analogy. Thus, Pașca records:

(72) kət je 'nebo fī 'zemło (Pașca in DDIr, s.v. *zemło*)

The ending *-o* of 'nebo has spread to 'zemło (which is feminine both in Istro-Romanian and in Croatian/Čakavian, whence it is borrowed, see also Fi 64, and for Cr./Čak. *zemlja* 'zemja, Kalsbeek 1998: s.v., Lukežić and Zubčić 2007: s.v.). The phenomenon of analogical spreading was possible where both terms belong to the same lexico-semantic field. And even if Pașca's example is marginal, an individual innovation, we do not think that is an error. Rather it shows how tolerant speakers are of the forms in *-o*, especially where there is a close relationship between the feinen forms and those in *-o* (in diachrony, Croatian/Čakavian forms in *-o* were adapted into Istro-Romanian as feminines in *-a/-ε*).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

**5.1.** The late attestation of Istro-Romanian is a serious obstacle to any attempt to reconstruct its diachronic development. The earliest data on the adaptation of nouns from Croatian/Čakavian neuters in *-o* are from the late eighteenth century. In any case, any discussion the adaptation of neuters in *-o* must take into account the date of their entry into Istro-Romanian. Loans from old Slavonic conform to the inflexional pattern specific to feminines, *-a/-ε* vs *-e*, selecting feminine agreement. This pattern has proved to be stable in diachrony, but not thereby impenetrable to pressure from the dominant system. Later loans follow the same pattern, which allows pluralization. But under the pressure of the dominant Croato-Čakavian model, forms in *-o* start to show up, initially as doublets of forms following the feminine pattern and then, gradually, as the only form used. Once this model of adaptation had been accepted, due to Croatian and Čakavian dialects, the problems of pluralization and agreement with targets began to appear. While the singular

form in *-o* was accepted, as Istro-Romanian was also influenced by Italian or Venetian, the plural of the Croatian/Čakavian neuters was problematic. Forms in *-a* are present in autochthonous morphology, but they are associated with the feminine singular. Although plural forms in *-a* are beginning to appear (see 'bedra and 'rebra), speakers still avoid associating a plural following the old type of adaptation to feminine gender with a singular *-o*, which continues to show neuter agreement. On the basis of our current data we can only say that speakers' tolerance of forms in *-a* is greater in the north than in the south (see also Loporcaro, Gardani, and Giudici 2021: 117-118). Clearly more data are needed for a correct assessment of the situation. As for the targets, the agreement may follow the Croatian/Čakavian model (with adjectives in *-o*) or it may follow the autochthonous masculine model or, more rarely, the feminine. But as masculines, the forms in *-o* allow pluralization, that is where forms in *-o* change their behaviour with respect to the Croatian/Čakavian neuter type.

So what kind of neuters do exist in Istro-Romanian? Neuters in *-o* are defective. Although they appear under the pressure of the dominant model, they do not have a complete paradigm. They have a complete paradigm only when they are not ...neuters.

**5.2.** This major variation in the behaviour of Istro-Romanian loans from Croatian/Čakavian neuters accords with the more recent data from Velnić (2020: 1-14) on the acquisition of gender by children. Velnić shows that in Croatian acquisition of the neuter is the most problematic and more difficult than for the feminine and the masculine, because of its lower frequency and of the syncretisms with the masculine. Our data indicate the existence of a hierarchy on the basis of number such that sg > pl, if a form has neuter gender in *-o*, it is more likely to keep that gender in the singular than in the plural.

In Croatian, nouns are traditionally assigned to four declensions / inflexion classes, (Stevanović 1989, but see Mrazović and Vukadinović 1990 for a three-class interpretation). As for the relation between inflexion classes and gender in Croatian, this is a long-standing matter of debate (see, e.g., Corbett 1983, Corbett 1991, Wechsler and Zlatić 2003, Alsina and Arsenijević 2012a, 2012b, Puškar 2017, Arsenijević 2021, etc.). However there is a relationship between grammatical gender and inflexion classes which is manifest as follows: class I ( $\emptyset$ /*-a*<sup>34</sup>) agrees with masculine, class II (*-o* sau *-e/-a*) with neuter, and class IV ( $\emptyset$ /*-i*) with feminine gender. Class III (*-a/-e*) is a "locus of incomplete match", in that it contains nouns which present hybrid gender agreement (Arsenijević 2021: 23). The Istro-Romanian inflexion classes have not yet completely aligned themselves with this pattern of organization, but as the neuters in *-o* come to select exclusively neuter forms of adjectives, indefinites, possessives, etc., so a mapping between nominal declension classes and gender values is going to take more definite shape. This phenomenon is purely the result of the contact situation and of bilingualism.

**5.3.** The fact that this alignment is not yet complete cannot explain why the forms in *-o* which preserve their neuter gender in Istro-Romanian are resistant to pluralization strategies. One explanation of this feature is morphological: the desinence *-a* (which appears in the plural of Croatian/Čakavian neuters) is associated in indigenous morphology only with the feminine singular. Recent research (see Arsenijević 2016, 2021) has argued that in

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<sup>34</sup> Genitive singular ending.

Croatian neuter count nouns “fail to formally express uniform atomicity”, which means that they are “quantized counterparts of collective nouns (i.e. quantized, non-uniformly atomic)” (Arsenijević 2016: 1). The implication is that “neuter nouns in SC are unable to derive proper plural forms, and that productively derived collective forms are used instead” and that “all neuter nouns in SC effectively have the status of singulatives – in the sense that they are expressions which refer to singularities and establish contrast in grammatical number with collective rather than with plural forms” (Arsenijević 2016: 1). For the moment, further tests are needed to verify Arsenijević’s hypothesis and to see whether the Istro-Romanian form have singulative status.

5.4. The data also show that nouns borrowed from Croatian/Čakavian do not behave like nouns of the *genus alternans* class (even when a noun in *-o* selects an unmarked form of the adjective in the singular, it does not select a feminine form of the adjective in the plural). The data from the corpus show that agreement with an adjective in *-o* is older in Istro-Romanian than was believed (for this issue see Kovačec 1966: 68) and that, due to interference, it can extend to nouns inherited from Latin if the Croatian/Čakavian equivalent is neuter, but regardless of whether that neuter is present as such in Istro-Romanian (see the discussion of interference effects above). This means that *genus alternans* or mass nouns are beginning to behave like Croatian/Čakavian neuters in selecting a form in *-o* only under strictly defined conditions: that is, if and only if the constraint of equivalence with a Croatian/Čakavian neuter is met. So far as we can tell at present, at least, this appears to be the constraint governing this type of agreement. But we should expect that interference between nouns of Romance origin and Croatian/Čakavian neuters should bring with it a shift of nouns of Romance origin towards the neuters proper. Now this shift could have, in turn, implications for the mapping between nominal declension classes and gender values, impeding alignment with the type of organization found in Croatian/Čakavian.

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