

## A current trend or a historic remnant? The case of a Lovari verb-forming suffix

Márton András Baló (PhD student, Theoretical Linguistics PhD Programme, Doctoral School in Linguistics, Eötvös Loránd University and the HAS Research Institute for Linguistics)

The only means to separate the verbs from each other in the Vlax Romani dialect, Lovari, as spoken in Hungary, is the stem-final vowel. There are five such vowels (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/) and, based on that, Hungarian grammars, like Hutterer-Mészáros (1967) traditionally set up five verb classes. The one with the largest number of verbs in it is the class containing an /e/. As it comes clear from its inflection, the stem of these verbs in fact end in a consonant. This consonantal class is also special in that most loan verbs are inserted into it with the help of certain loan-verb adaptation markers. (Loan-verb adaptation is a very common phenomenon due to the ways and circumstances in which Lovari and, in a wider sense, Romani is used and it seems to rely heavily on existing patterns and exemplars.) The most conspicuous one among these is -sar, for instance *zhutisarel* ‘help’ (from Romanian), *ashisarel* ‘dig’ (from Hungarian), *indulisarel* ‘leave’ (from Hungarian). However, as can be seen from the table below, this suffix also appears in certain forms of the standard verbal paradigms. This phenomenon is described as gradual defectiveness in Baló (2008).

At first sight it seems that the other four paradigms are complete, too, but if we take a closer look, it comes clear that alternative bound stems appear for the -i- stem and the -u- stem verbs, derived by the suffix -sar. Even the actual existence of this latter class is not obvious, as certain speakers only confirmed one verb, the modal *trubul*. For them, *sunul*, for example, is replaced by an -i- stem verb, *senil*. (The -i- stem verbs, although not so numerous as the consonantal verbs, have a high token frequency and thus, loan-verb adaptation is possible straight into this class, cf. *repülil* ‘fly’ from Hungarian, *faggatil* ‘ply with questions’, also from Hungarian.)

Matras (2002), claims that there are only two verb classes in Vlax Romani, a consonantal one and a vocalic one, which corresponds to the -a- stem verbs. The -i-, -o- and -u- classes are formed through derivation or the reduction of -sar, which implies that all of these verbs should be considered loan verbs, which may or may not be true but is definitely not transparent for a native speaker. The derivational marker -sar is also broken down into two parts on a historical basis: the particle -s- derives from Greek aorist forms and the second element is a suffix which was already present in Early Romani and which is still in use: -ar is a transitive marker taking part in internal verb derivation.

The data and the extremely productive use of -sar in both internal verb formation (cf. examples like *zuralo* ‘strong’ → *zuralosarel* ‘strengthen’, *phenel* ‘say’ → *phenosarel* ‘promise’) and loan-verb adaptation suggest, however, that there are ongoing changes in Lovari, which are facilitated by -sar, as opposed to the suggestion that the forms containing it may have preceded the forms lacking it.

present tense	consonantal stem	-a- stem	-i- stem
indicative	<i>kinel</i> ‘buy’	<i>loshal</i> ‘be glad’	<i>trajil</i> ‘live’
singular	kinav kines kinel	loshav loshas loshal	trajiv/trajij/trajisarav trajis/trajisares trajil/trajij/trajisarel
plural	kinas kinen kinen	loshas loshan loshan	trajinas/trajisaras trajin/trajisaren trajin/trajisaren
present tense	-o- stem		-u- stem
indicative	<i>kerdjol</i> ‘become’	<i>kinol</i> ‘shake’	<i>sunul</i> ‘feel pity’
singular	kerdjuvav kerdjos kerdjol	kinoj kinos kinoj/kinol	sunuj sunus sunul/sunuj
plural	kerdjuvas kerdjon kerdjon	kinonas kinon kinon	sununas/sunusaras sunun/sunusaren sunun/sunusaren

## References

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