

## THE OBLIQUE CASES IN THE EVOLUTION OF CHILD LANGUAGE \*

BY

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Although the material of concrete facts and the attestations of specialized literature show that the rendering of genitive-dative has — roughly and depending, to be sure, on the structure of the language — a similar evolution, at least on an ontogenetic plane, in various other languages, we shall here bring to discussion mainly facts of Rumanian. We are prompted to this, both by the originality of such a research concerning Rumanian, and by the fact that in this language the forms of the nominal inflexions of the oblique cases are more numerous and display a greater variety — also owing to popular speech variants —, thus allowing a more detailed analysis. The complexity of these forms requires their gradual and more difficult assimilation, as well as a sequence of the stages of learning in which the imitation — with the selecting mostly of popular forms at the beginning — joins with the child's tendency to creating or, better, with a *sui generis* remaking of the language in agreement with the specific character of every new stage of development.

Upon learning the language, the child appears to dismantle and then rebuild its system, playing, but in fact constructing finally a logical system which is dynamically being changed as the child grows up. He makes crystallized linguistic facts appear thus in a new light, brings into existence forms shaking synchrony through their archaic aspect, and unembarrassedly removes established forms for those "proscribed" as abnormal — which yet on closer analysis appear in logic agreement to the "rule" — or having correspondances in remote regions, outside the linguistic area to which the child belongs.

\* The English version of the article published in *Studii și cercetări Lingvistice*, XII (1961), 2, p. 215—229. It contains, as compared to the Rumanian version, an addition at page 87.

The assimilating of the nominal flexional forms, particularly of the "oblique cases" (genitive-dative) evinces uncommonly great difficulties for children. This arises not only from difficulties inherent to their contents, to the logic relations expressed by them, but also from the inconsistency of the morphologic-syntactical expression in literary Rumanian. (This partially accounts for the mistakes and frequent variations in popular speech, and is both a reason for — and a result of — their slow gaining ground, all along the evolution of the language, as well as of the hesitations to be noticed on a diachronic plane, up to their being sanctioned within the literary rules). It is precisely owing to the fact that in Rumanian these case forms are complex and diverse (as compared to English, for example, where the rule of the possessive case — the Saxon genitive — may be quite easily generalized)<sup>1</sup> that we have the possibility to analyze a richer and more significant material for the evolution of child language.

1. Rumanian, under the influence of Slavonic languages, has preserved, like Latin, different case forms, contrary to the tendency of Romance languages towards blending them.

For the masculine and neuter nouns *without article* or declined with an *indefinite article*, the genitive and the dative, as well as all the other cases, have been reduced, as compared to Latin, into one single form for the singular and one for the plural. The feminine has two forms in the singular, namely one for the genitive-dative and one for the nominative-accusative (for the masculine noun *om* ["man"] and the feminine one *casă* ["house"]: genitive singular [al, a; ai, ale unui] *om*, [al... unei] *case*; dative singular [unui] *om*, [unei] *case*). In these circumstances, the difficulty arises mainly because of the rather complex inflexion of the indefinite article. In the declension with *definite article*, the noun gets even more different forms according to gender, number and case, owing to the inflexions of the definite article (genitive singular [al ...] *omului*, [al ...] *casei*; dative singular *omului*, *casei*). Finally, the declension is complicated also by the derogation of the masculine proper nouns which do not change their form but are preceded by a definite article (genitive [al ...] *lui Mihai*, dative *lui Mihai*)<sup>2</sup> unlike the feminine ones, declined as common feminine nouns (genitive [al ...] *Mariei*, dative *Mariei*).

To these possibilities of literary declension some exceptions and particularly variants or "substitutes" existing in popular, colloquial and regional speech may be added and among which some preserve obsolete linguistic forms. We shall mention here, first of all (as being the most usual constructions and therefore those the child may hear around him at any rate)<sup>3</sup>, the preference of popular and familiar speech for prepositional constructions replacing for instance the proper dative: *dau nutreț la vite*,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Berko's researches, *The Child's Learning of English Morphology*, in *Word* 1958, 2-3, p. 166-167.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also *Gramatica limbii române*, vol. I, Bucharest, Ed. Acad. R.P.H., 1954, pp. 114, 148-149, 151, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Less wide spread variants — e.g. regionalisms — or some archaisms which the children we observed could not hear around them — will be mentioned in subsequent footnotes.

*spune la omul ăsta*<sup>1</sup>, *arăta la toată lumea* [*I give the cattle fodder, tell this man, he showed it to everybody*] (Ispirescu)<sup>2</sup>; see also the proverb *Corb la corb nu scoate ochii* [*Ravens never pluck each other's eyes*], etc. Likewise, in popular and colloquial speech the genitive is very frequently formed by means of the definite article *lu(i)* placed in front of the noun, this being considered either as normal (*Măriuca lui moș Andrei, i-am spus lui Irinel, (a) lui tată-meu*, etc.), [*Uncle Andrei's Măriuca, I told Irinel, my father's (of my father)*]; or as a mistake (in front of some feminine proper nouns — for instance *a lu(i) Maria* [*Maria's*]; or even of some common nouns referring especially to living beings: *pălăria lu(i) tata, dă-i lu(i) omul acela*, [*father's hat, give it to that man*] etc.<sup>3</sup>).

2. Which of these forms appear first in the child language, which are the favourite forms he uses and, in general, how is the function of the genitive-dative expressed all along the ontogenetic evolution?

Our observations have been gathered directly or experimentally during investigations regarding the development of child language in general. The material for data concerning the rendering of the oblique cases has been gathered from the speech of more than two hundred children from different Bucharest preschool institutions (among them a hundred and two children between two and three years old and over a hundred between three and seven years old).

Technically we have resorted mainly to integral tape recording of spontaneous speech or speech induced in experimental situations (in order to watch the children's way of expressing the cases, they were set in various concrete situations — as, for instance, a play with the doll —, in which they had to use spontaneously, among others, various inflected nouns or, for answering questions — such as: *al cui este șorțul?* (*al păpușii*) [*whose apron is this? the doll's*]<sup>4</sup> — they had to resort to a way of expression using constructions with oblique cases or a construction with a similar value).

3. As for the use of the oblique cases proper or of different prepositional constructions having the value of a genitive and a dative, one

<sup>1</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română contemporană*, Bucharest, Ed. Ministerului Învățământului, 1956, p. 513—646. *La* is here a synonym of the ancient *a* which continued the Lat. *ad* becoming in all Romance languages the mark of the dative (cf. Iorgu Iordan, *op. cit.*, p. 646); see also similar forms with *a* in Old Rumanian: (XVth cent.) *dăde (el) a lucrători* (*dădu el lucrătorilor*) [*he gave the workers*]; *nimea nu poate a doi domni lucra* (*nimeni nu poate lucra la doi domni*) [*nobody can work at two masters*]; cf. Al. Rosetti, *Limba română în secolele al XIII-lea — al XVI-lea*, Bucharest, Ed. Acad. R.P.R., 1956, pp. 129, 155.

<sup>2</sup> K. Sandfeld, H. Olsen, *Syntaxe roumaine*, I, Paris, Droz, 1936, pp. 70, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Iorgu Iordan, *op. cit.*, p. 333, 334 and *Gramatica limbii române*, ed. cit., pp. 171, 172.

<sup>4</sup> With elder children, it would be very interesting, of course, to apply the method of illustrations too, as well as that of a questionnaire with meaningless created words, used by J. Berko (*op. cit.*, p. 153 sq.). Having written the present article, I made experimental corroborations with this method too (adding also cut-up drawings) and I obtained data contradicting in no point those previously gathered. Yet, owing to the artificiality of the situation some results might have altered the conclusions, if the other tests were missing; therefore, the method of direct contact with concrete things during a play seems much more suitable, especially for smaller children, than that of an arid questionnaire in a relatively artificial situation, even when accompanied by illustrations.

may trace a clear evolution, the same, as a matter of fact, as in the rendering of the accusative.

From a stage — mainly round the age of two — in which words are merely in juxtaposition (*coada calu* [= *coada calului*; *the tail of the horse*]<sup>1</sup>; *fac mînca[r]e pisioa* [= *fac mîncare pisicii*; *I cook food for the cat*], they pass on to another one with various “analytic”<sup>2</sup> constructions among which different prepositional constructions (*picioru lu mama, dădea la un copil*) [*mother's leg, he gave to a child*], occurring in manifold variants, up to the age of seven. The third stage, that of the crystallization of the “synthetic”<sup>3</sup> forms, starts in fact about the age of six-seven (exceptionally rare occurrences before three years and sporadically, beginning with the age of four-five). The “sanctioned” analytic forms continue to be still the favourite ones later on, until, at school, the conscious study of language and the systematic correcting of speech steps in.

The stage of juxtaposition is characterized, as a matter of fact, by the joining of uninflected words<sup>4</sup>. The use of such like constructions — elementary, “rough”, undifferentiated<sup>5</sup> — is compensated by adding mimico-pantomimic auxiliaries and especially by observing a certain word order, to avoid great hindrances in the necessities of communication. The use of a “significant” word-order means a step forward towards the differentiating expressing and among cases: for instance *coada calu* [= *coada calului*; *the tail of the horse*] is yet a developed expression as compared to *calu coada*, which has an ambiguous meaning as the two words seem completely isolated (possible meanings: “uite calul, uite coada” [*here is the horse — here is the tail*] or “calul și coada” [*the horse and the tail*]; or “coada calului” [*the tail of the horse*], and so on).

The richest stage as to the number of variants and the most specific for the child's way of speaking, particularly between three and seven years old, is the second one, in which analytic forms appear or prevail, sometimes being clichés of constructions heard round about, sometimes

<sup>1</sup> In square brackets: the correct, complete or literary forms and the English translation. The age of the children from whom the various examples have been gathered is given in tables 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> Resorting to the proclitic definite article and prepositions to express grammatical relations; cf. also Iorgu Jordan, *Limba română contemporană*, cit. ed., p. 513, J. Marouzeau, *Lexique de la terminologie linguistique*, Paris, Geuthner, 1951, s.v.

<sup>3</sup> Through modifying the form of the word (inflections): *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> A wide-spread or, possibly, even general phenomenon — in the ontogenetic evolution of other languages as well (cf. Decroly, apud W. Leopold, *Speech Development of a Bilingual Child*, vol. III, Evanston, Northwestern Univ. Press, 1949, p. 77). W. Leopold also mentions this first “amorphous” stage, giving examples noticed in his child: at 1; 8 *mama shoe* [= *mama's shoe*]; at 1; 9 *baby dress* [= *baby's dress*] (*op. cit.*, p. 83 cf. also p. 2); such forms are recorded by W. Leopold before the age of two. (As a general fact, in English, the correct forms of the possessive are completely assimilated during preschool age, cf. J. Berko's investigations, *op. cit.*, p. 166—167). Similar constructions occur about the same age in French also: i. e. at 2; 0 *pate bébé* [= *bolte de bébé*]. (A. Grégoire, cf. H. Kahane, R. Kahane, S. Saporta, *The development of verbal categories in child language*, in *Internat. Journal of American Linguistics*, 1958, 4, p. 25).

<sup>5</sup> We mention that, at this age, there is a lack of inflected forms properly and not a dropping or silencing of finals as, for example, in some regional variants of the Rumanian genitive-dative, (Mold.) *umeri obrazulu* [= *umerii obrazulul*; *the cheek bones*], (Trans.) *limba clopotulu* [*the tongue of the bell*] (*ALR*, I, I, map. 24; *ALR* II, I, map. 181).

containing changes, or being new coined expressions through contamination.

Among the most striking peculiarities regarding the genitive-dative is the use of the article (*a*) *lui*—almost always in the form *lui*—before the noun (see Tables). The child uses very frequently the genitive with (*a*) *lui* even in cases in which such constructions are not in accordance with the literary grammatical rule: *bunica lu un băiat* [= a unui băiat; *the grandmother of a boy*]; *farfuria lu boieroaica* [= a boieroaicei; *the plate of the gentlewoman*]; *a lu păpușica* [*of the doll*]. Sometimes, smaller children, under three years old, omit the *a* in situations requiring it (*e lu Daniela* [= este a Danielei; *it is Daniela's*] or—in answer to the question: whose . . . is it?—*Lu păpușica* [= a lu păpușica, a păpușicii; *of the doll*], *a[s]ta lu cățelu* [= asta a lu cățelu, a cățelului; *that of the dog*], as well as in the pronominal declension, for instance: *mîna este lu aia* [= a lu aia, a aceia; *the hand of that girl*] or, on the contrary, they use it omitting *lu(i)*: *aia a Co[r]nel* [= aia a lui Cornel; *that of Cornel*]<sup>1</sup>. Also with small children, *lu(i)* appears sometimes as *u*: *coada u cu[r]canu* [*the tail of the turkey*].

A frequent construction—a “substitute”—in rendering the function of the genitive is that in which the noun occurs in the accusative with the preposition *la* (the whole phrase having but a genitival value): *gura la Dorel* [= gura lui Dorel; *Dorel's mouth*]; or—to the question: whose . . . is it?—*La un copil* [= a unui copil; *a child's*]<sup>2</sup>.

Sometimes, with small children, constructions with *a* occur, in which it is not altogether clear if this proceeds from the elision of the *l* from the preposition *la* [*to/at*] or from the form of the declined article *a lui*: in utterances like *A Dolu papușă ala. A mea!* [*That doll is Doru's. Mine!*] we may speak of an *a* from *a lui* [*his*]; by analogy with the declension of the pronoun (*a mea*) [*my*]; therefore: *a lui Doru* [*e*] *păpușă aia*, [*that is Doru's doll*]; and not: *la Doru* [*to Doru*]; whereas in [*r*]ochița *a mămica* [*the frock of mummy*], we may consider it as *la* without the *l* being uttered [= rochița *la* mămica] (see also the dative *a Gabi nu cumpără* [= *la Gabi nu cumpără*; *for Gaby they do not buy*]; or the parallel answers to the question: whose . . . is it?: *a păpușica* and *la păpușica* [*the doll's*].

<sup>1</sup> A phenomenon occurring in the Macedo-Rumanian dialect: *fișor al amiră* [= feciorul împăratului; *the emperor's son*]; *moașa al darac* [= moașa dracului; *the midwife of the devil*]; *al frate* [*the brother's*]; (cf. also Th. Capidan, *Aromânii. Dialectul aromân*, Bucharest, Impremeria Națională, 1932, p. 386). Besides, in Old Rumanian similar forms appear, in which *a* is a preposition: (XVth cent.) *treștie a cărtăriei* [= cărtărarului; *the reed of the learned*]; *veselie a toate făpturile* [= a tuturor făpturilor; *the mirth of all beings*], cf. Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> A rather frequent form, attested regionally by the ALR (yet, not having such a clear and certain genitival value as in child language): (Mold.) *umerile la obraz* [= umerii obrazului; *the cheek bones*], ALR I, I, map 24; *gleznele la picior, ouăle la picior* [= gleznele, ouăle picioarelor; *the ankles, the shinbone*], ALR II, I, map 76; *limba la clopot* [= the tongue of the bell], ALR II, I, map 181. Or, dialectally (the Megleno-Romanians): *capu la lamă* [= capul balaurului; *the head of the dragon*], (Th. Capidan, *Meglenoromânii*, I, Bucharest, 1925, p. 148). In popular French too, there are similar forms in which the preposition *à* replaces the *de*: *la femme à Eugène* [= *la femme d'Eugène*], (H. Bauche, *Le langage populaire*, Paris, Payot, 1928, p. 88).

## Forms of expressing the oblique

## A. In spon

	Constructions without inflexions (juxtaposition)		Analytic	
Genitive (or constructions with a genitival value)	Coadă calu [tail of the horse] (Gh. 2; 2) Mama Crețu [=lul Crețu; mother of Crețu] (Sa. 2; 6) Coadă asta cățelu [this tail of the dog's] (S. 2; 7) Urechea calu [=the horse's ear] (Mi. 2; 7)	A Dolu păpușă ala. A mea! [That doll is Doru's. Mine!] (Do. 2; 4) [R]ochița a mămică [the frock of mum] (Ma. 2; 5) ... ala a Co[r]nel [that one of Cornel] (Sa. 2; 6) F[il]oare a cal = [flower of the horse] (Mi. 2; 7)		Gura Ia Dorel [Dorel's mouth] (Al. 2; 2)
Dative (or constructions with a dative value)	Fac mîncă[r]e pisica [I cook food for the cat] (Ge. 2; 5)	A Gabi nu cumpără scaun [for Gabi they do not buy chair] (Sa. 2; 6)		Dă și Ia Sanda [Give Sanda too] (Lu. 2; 5) La păpușile mele [to my dolls] (Li. 3; 1)

## B. In experimental situations (in answer)

	Constructions without inflexions		Analytic
Genitive (or constructions with a genitival value)	Păpușica [little doll] (Adr. 2; 4)	A păpușica [to the doll] (Dn. 2; 4) A păsărica [to the bird] (Mi. 2; 7) A lupu [to the wolf] (Mi. 2; 7)	La păpușă [to the doll's] (P. 2; 7) La un copil = to a child (P. 2; 7)
Dative (or constructions with a dative value)	Păpușele [dolls] (Adr. 2; 4) Cățelu [the dog] (Sa. 2; 7)	A păpușica [to the doll] (Nu. 2; 7)	

\* A = Ia(?)

\*\* A = Ia or a [=lul]

\*\*\* A = Accuz. with prep., with genitival value

\*\*\*\* Mixed analytic and synthetic constructions

\*\*\*\*\* Exceptional

1

cases (2.3 years old)

aneous speech

constructions			Synthetic constructions
E <i>lu Daniela</i> [I/s Daniela's] (Le. 2; 7)	Coadă <i>u cu [r]eanu</i> [the turkey's tail] (D†. 2; 7)	Fonu [= telefonu] <i>lu Onică</i> [Onică's phone] (Dor. 1; 10) Picioaru <i>lu mama</i> [mother's leg] (Gh. 2; 2) Pa[n]talonu <i>lu copiii</i> [children's trousers] (Gh. 2; 2) Mama <i>lu calu</i> [horse's mother] (Ga. 2; 5)	*** Păru <i>de la cocoș</i> [the cock's hair] (T. 2; 8) **** Papu [=capul] <i>păpușii</i> [the doll's head] (Gab. 2; 6)
		<i>Lu liana am dat</i> [I gave Lily] (Ge. 2; 6) <i>Spun lu mama</i> [I tell mother] (Lil. 2; 6) ... și <i>lu fetița asta</i> = to this girl also (Mi. 2; 8) <i>Face mîncă [r]e lu pupușică</i> [I make the doll food] (2; 6)	

to the question: cui; ai, a, ai, ale cui? [whom; whose?]

constructions

constructions		****
<i>Lu Andrușca</i> [to Andrușca] (V. 2; 3) <i>Lu păpușica</i> [to the doll] (Dn. 2; 4) A [s]ta <i>lu cățelu</i> [that of the dog's] (S. 2; 7) [E] <i>lu păpușele</i> [it's the dolls'] (S. 2; 7)	<i>A lu păpușă</i> [the doll's] (Doi. 2; 2) <i>A lu tanti</i> [auntie's] (V. 2; 3) <i>A lu cocosul</i> [the cock's] (Ro. 2; 6) <i>A lu păpușica</i> [the doll's] (E. 2; 9)	<i>La păpușii</i> [of the doll] (P. 2; 7)
<i>U cățelu</i> [to the dog] (Sa. 2; 7) <i>U păpușă</i> [to the doll] (Nu. 2; 7)	<i>Lui Andrușca</i> [to Andrușca] (V. 2; 3) <i>Lu păpușele</i> [to the dolls] (Dn. 2; 4)	

## Forms of expressing the

## A. In spon

		Analytic	
Genitive (or constructions with a genitival value)	[găina] <i>a lu tanti</i> [auntle's hen] (Cr. 3 ; 11) [cîntecul] <i>al lu cucu</i> [the cuckoo's song] (Adr. 4 ; 11)	<i>farfuria lu boieroaica</i> [the gentlewoman's plate] (L. 6 ; 5) <i>bunica lu un băiat</i> [a boy's grandmother] (F. 6 ; 4)	<i>a lu iepurași</i> [the hare's] (Vl. 3 ; 9) <i>roata lu mașină</i> [the car's wheel] (Val. 3 ; 3) <i>casa lu vrăjitor</i> [the witch's house] (Ga. 6 ; 9)
Dative (or constructions with a dative value)		<i>i-a dat lu Marga</i> [he gave Marga] (Adr. 4 ; 11) <i>i-a dat lu puia ei</i> [he gave her chicken] (Ro. 5 ; 7) <i>i-a spus lu tatăl ei</i> [she told her father] (Ion. 6 ; 0)	<i>a dat lu câțel</i> [he gave the dog] (Adr. 4 ; 9) <i>a dat lu miei</i> [he gave the lambs] (L. 5 ; 6) <i>a adus lui elefant</i> [he brought the elephant] (L. 5 ; 6) <i>să aducă lu vrăjitor</i> [to bring the witch] (G. 6 ; 9)

## B. In experimental situations (in answer

		Analytic constructions	
Genitive (or constructions with a genitival value)	<i>A lu păpușica</i> [the doll's] (Li. 3 ; 1)	<i>A lu păpușe</i> [the doll's] (Li. 3 ; 1. S. 4 ; 1)	
Dative (or constructions with a dative value)	<i>Lu păpușa</i> [to the doll] (Li. 3 ; 1)	<i>Lu păpușe</i> [to the doll] (G. 3 ; 7. S. 4 ; 1). <i>Lu păpuși</i> [to the dolls] (S. 4 ; 1).	

- \* Well-known (cf. etc.).
- \*\* Accus. with prep., genit. value
- \*\*\* Accus. with prep. *la*, dative value
- \*\*\*\* Mixed analytic synthetic prepositions

oblique cases (2-7 years old)

aneous speech

constructions	Synthetic constructions		
<p>Ochii <i>e de om</i>. Ochii <i>e de la om</i> [Man's eyes; genit. value?; the eyes are from the man] (Căl. 3; 10)</p> <p>Părțile <i>de la corp</i> [the parts from the body] (Căt. 6; 8)</p> <p>Mîna <i>despre nene</i> = [the hand about the uncle] (Ir. 3; 1)</p> <p>Parte-alaltă <i>de lemn</i> [the other part of wood] (M. 6; 7)</p>	<p>****</p> <p>cîntecele <i>păsărele</i> [songs of the b'irds] (Adr. 4; 11)</p>	<p>****</p> <p>[mama] <i>a lui iepurașilor</i> [the mother of the hares'] (VI. 3; 9)</p> <p>[Sărbătoarea] <i>a lu muncitorilor</i> [the feast of the workers'] (Sa. 3; 11)</p>	<p>A spus <i>mamii</i> [he told mother] (Cr. 3; 9)</p> <p>Cîntecele <i>păsărelelor</i> [the birds' songs] (Mg. 6; 7)</p> <p>Mămica <i>Scufteței Roșii</i> [Little Red Riding Hood's mother] (Ga. 5; 5)</p>
<p>***</p> <p><i>La</i> <i>mămica lor</i> <i>le place</i> [their mother likes] (Cr. 4; 1)</p> <p>Îi <i>spune la</i> <i>tăticul lui</i> [tells his father] (D. 5; 10)</p> <p>Dădea <i>la un copil</i> [gave a child]</p>	<p>***</p> <p><i>muncitorii</i> [i] <i>le pare bine</i> [the workers are glad] (L. 6; 5)</p> <p><i>Brada</i> . . . <i>nu-i cade crăcile</i> [the fir tree don't fall the boughs] (Gh. 6; 0)</p> <p><i>Copilu</i> <i>ăla</i> <i>ii crește coarne</i> [horns grow to that child] (Al. 6; 9)</p>		<p>Să <i>zică șoricilor</i> [to tell the mice] (Ion. 6; 0)</p>

to the question: cui? al, a, ai cui?)

Synthetic constructions	
<p>A <i>păpuși</i> [the doll's] (G. 3; 7)</p>	<p>****</p> <p>A <i>păpușii</i> [of the dolls'] (G. 3; 7).</p> <p>A <i>lu păpușii</i> [of the dolls'] (G. 3; 7)</p> <p>A <i>lu păpușilor</i> [of the dolls'] (G. 3; 7)</p>
<p><i>La</i> <i>păpușa</i> [to the doll] (Li. 3; 1)</p>	

As to the rendering of the value of dative we notice a similar preference for the definite article in proclitic position: *face mînca[r]e lu păpușică* [= *face mîncare păpușicii*; *she (he) cooks for the doll*]; the elision of the *l* occurs here also by small children: (*u cățelu, u păpușa*) [*for the dog, for the doll*]. At the same time, instead of the specific inflexion of the dative, the form of the accusative preceded by the preposition *la* is used with a dative value (having the function of indirect object): *dă și la Sanda* [= *dă-i și Sandei*; *give Sanda also*]; *dădea la un copil* [= *dădea unui copil*; *he (she) gave to a child*]; *mama a spus la tramvai să oprească* [= *a spus tramvaiului*; *mummy told the tram to stop*]; with the small children the *l* sometimes does not appear: *a păpusica* [*to the doll*]; *a lupu* [*to the wolf*], etc.

Very frequent and characteristic of elder children is the use of the proclitic article, the noun itself having no article. In such instances, instead of the zero-article bringing forth an absence of grammatical actuality, the noun seems on the contrary to be set forth and individualized, having become "well-known" like a proper name. Thus, e.g. in the dative: *îi da să mănînce lu cățel* [= *cățelului*; non-literary *lu cățelu* [1]; *she (he) gave the dog to eat*]; [*Vulpea*] *i-a adus lui elefant un cadou* [= *elefantului*; non-lit. *lu(i) elefantu* (1); *the fox brought the elephant a present*]; *i-a spus ursoaica lu ursulet* [= *ursulețului*; non-lit. *lu(i) ursulețu*(1); *the She-bear told the Teddy bear*]; *să aducă lu vrăjitoare* [= *vrăjitoarei*; non-lit. *lu(i) vrăjitoarea*; *that she (he) should bring the witch*]. In the genitive: *roata lu mașină* [= *mașinii*; non-lit. *lu(i) mașina*; *the wheel of the car*]; *mama lu vulpe* [= *vulpăii*; non-lit. *lu(i) vulpea*; *the mother of the fox*]; *tata lu copil* [= *copilului*; *the child's father*], etc.<sup>1</sup>

Especially after the age of three, other variants appear also with the value of genitive-dative. If the form of accusative with the preposition *la*, for the genitive, almost disappears after the age of three, the inflexion characteristic of the genitive is instead sometimes replaced by the accusative with various other prepositions (e.g.: *de, de la, despre*) having a genitive value: *e mîna despre nene* [= *mîna lui nenea*; *the hand about the uncle*]; *ochii e de om* [*the eyes are of man*]; the same child goes on saying: *ochii e de la om* [*the eyes are from the man*]; *s-a dus... de parte-ailaltă de lemn* [= *a lemnului*, *a punții*; *he went on the other side of the wood, of the bridge*]<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In Daco-Rumanian, in popular speech, they use constructions like: *lu(i) omu(l) aeala (ăla)* [*to that man*]; *lu(i) vulpea ăla* [*to that fox*]; but never *lu(i) om, lu(i) vulpe*. Dialectally, however such forms are attested: in Istro-Rumanian *a lu frate* [*al lui fratele, al fratelui; the brother's*] etc. (cf. S. Pușcariu, *Studii istro-române*, Bucharest, 1926, p. 149); in Macedo-Rumanian *ali feală* [*of the girl*]; *ali ursă* [*of the She-bear*]; *ali lupoaia* [*of the she-wolf*]; *ali primăvară* [*of the spring*] (cf. Th. Capidan, *Aromânii*, pp. 386, 395); in Megleno-Rumanian *numea lui feală* [= *numele lu(i) fata, numele fetel*; *the girl's name*]; see above at page 75: *moașa al darae* [*the midwife of the devil*], etc.

<sup>2</sup> Though the value might seem equivocal, the circumstances in which these expressions have been gathered determine us to assign them a genitive meaning. In favour of this is also the very wide spreading attested by the ALR of the (sometimes also ambiguous) substitution of the genitive by the prepositional construction with *de(la)*: (Banat) *fluieroău dă la pișor* [= *fluierul piciorului*; *the shinbone*]. ALR I, I, map 58; (Banat) *albașu dă la ochi* [*the white*

Likewise, during the assimilation of the synthetic forms, some confusions arise: for instance, inflected forms, characteristic of the nominative, are used such as *ca s-audă cîntecul păsărelele* [that she might hear the song birds] (says a little girl, 4; 11<sup>1</sup> years old; her sister, 6; 7 years old, correcting her: *păsărelelor*, she then reconsiders: *cîntecul păsărelelor* [the song of the birds]; or *muncitori[i] le pare bine* [the workers are glad]; such like constructions may also be interpreted as a reminiscence of juxtaposition; see pp. 74 and 83-84).

The "wrong" use (unconformable to the rules of literary language) of the form of genitive-dative of the article (*a*)*lui* in proclitic position is correlated also with a significant uncertainty as to its use in post-position under various forms which appear particularly after the age of three (for instance, the article may appear simultaneously in both positions: [mama] *a lu iepurașilor* [= a iepurașilor; the mother of the hares]; [e sărbătoarea] *a lu muncitorilor* [= a muncitorilor; it is the workers' feast]; syntactic contaminations: *a lu muncitori* [of the workers] + *muncitorilor* [the workers']; frequently, hesitations or different variants occur: for instance, a six years old child: *Băiețelu a luat sabia ... lu bunic* [the boy took the grandfather's sword] ... *lu bunicului* [of the grandfather]; it is not quite clear if he says *bunicu[l] lui* [his grandfather] or *bunicului* [of the grandfather]; "Whose sword?", asked the experimenter: *Lu bunică ... lu bunicu lor* [of their grandfather; avoidance of the difficulty may be observed by using the determinant in the plural]. This agglomeration is specific to the stage of uncertainty as well as of the beginning of a vague use of synthetic forms.

Among other variants of the formation of the genitive-dative we mention also: *un prieten de-al tata lui* [= de-al tatălui lui; a friend of his father]; *tata a fetei* [= tatăl fetei; the girl's father]; *pușorii găinii și cocoșii* [= găinii și cocoșului; the chickens of the hen and of the cock] an analogical form and somehow a symmetry; the child, of 5; 5, upon correcting himself, resumes: *a lu găina și cocoșu*, etc.

The correct, literary rendering of the genitive and dative cases is seldom met with, as we said before, and if so, especially by elder children and particularly in the tales they had previously heard the grown-ups tell or read. For instance: *S-a dus copilul acasă și a spus mamei* [the child went home and told the mother] (a 3; 9 years old child); *Năzdrăvia* [= *Năzdrăvănia*] *vulpiei* [The cunning of the fox] (title of a story; a child of 4; 7); *mămica Scufiței roșii* (5; 5) [the mother of Little Red Riding Hood]; *Pășania vulpoiului* [The adventure of the fox; title of a story;

of the eye]. *ALR I, I*, map 18; compare them also with other regional variants of the form *stăter de picior* (in the Dobroudja for instance, both *stăiera dă kișor* and *stăteru kișorului* being recorded, *ALR I, I*, map 58); regional forms also, in Daco-Rumanian, such as: *limba de clopot* [= limba clopotului; the tongue of the bell]; *ALR II, I*, map 181; *albu di ochi* [= albul ochiului] *ALR I, I*, map 18, etc.; and in the dialects south of the Danube: Macedo-Rumanian *alblaf di oc'la* [= albeața ochiului, globul ochiului; the white of the eye], *ALR I, I*, map. 18, *pulpa di êor* [= piciorului; the calf of the leg], cf. Th. Capidan, *Arominii*, cit. ed., p. 386; see also in Old Rumanian: (XVth cent.) *casa de domnul* [= casa domnului; God's house]; *pren mijloc de casa me* [= în mijlocul casei mele; in the middle of my house], Al. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>1</sup> The child's age: the first figure indicates the years, the second, the months.

child of 6;7]. But sometimes, the children (even some elder ones) try to avoid such forms if meeting with difficulties in expressing them: for instance, a child of 3;10, instead of saying "sînt ochii omului", attempts at a roundabout way such as: *Că ochii e de om* [that the eyes are of man]; "How's that, de om?", asked the grown-up, and the child: *Ochii sînt de la om* [the eyes are from the man].

At the stage of the prevalence of the analytic forms, the value of genitive-dative is therefore rendered by means of constructions with the article *a*, *a lu*, *lu*, with the prepositions *la* or *de*, *de la*, etc. (for the genitive), or with *lu*, *la* (for the dative), sometimes even with a noun having no article, which has become well-known or with various morphological agglomerations, as well as with confusions of case forms.

4. Concerning therefore the children's way of rendering the genitive-dative cases, a special difficulty may be noticed as to the assimilation of the literary forms and generally a long evolution which comprises first of all the passing on from a way of expression by means of uninflected juxtaposition of words, to the selecting of the analytical forms of the language heard or even to spontaneous appearance of some forms, similar to archaic, dialectal or remote regional variants.

Why does the child select, or why does it create particularly such means of expression? The complexity and variety of the forms existing in the language heard by the child do not entirely explain the later occurrence of literary forms or the selection of variants, frequent in popular and colloquial speech, as well as the engendering of some forms with certain peculiarities. The reason for selecting or forging certain forms must be sought both in the complex contents the respective cases express and in the fact that the forms of the synthetic literary declension themselves are more difficult, especially in the Rumanian language.

The grammatical category of case reflects relations among objects or between objects and actions. This category is one of the most abstract — perhaps even the most abstract grammatical category<sup>1</sup> —, and within it, it is chiefly the genitive-dative cases which require a certain level of abstraction as well as a shaded differentiation, allowing an understanding of the real relations reflected by these cases in the developed language. The genitive, for instance, expresses relations of possession or belonging (besides the still more abstract relations of the objective or subjective genitive — e.g. *exploatarea omului*)<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, for a correct rendering, and which should attain a high level of abstraction, of the genitive, for instance, the notion of this case must crystallize (that is, the notion referring to a certain relation) in contrast to the other cases; at the same time, within this notion the various shades of relations must be precisely outlined and concurrently, the relation as such must be conceived at a

<sup>1</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română contemporană*, cit. ed., p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 294. Certainly, numerous other functions of constructions with genitival value may be distinguished, by analysis (see M. Grigorescu, *Atributul substantival în limba română*, în *Studii și cercetări lingvistice*, V (1954), 1-2, p. 995 sq., but on the one hand these are causal and of secondary importance, and on the other hand almost all are reduced to the fundamental functions (see *ibidem*, p. 110).

high level of abstraction. Likewise, the difference of contents — and hence of form — must be clearly realized among the members of the relation, namely between a category to which possession is attributed and one belonging to the other. But, till reaching this concept, one may follow various stages of the abstracting of some relations as well as of their verbal generalization.

At an altogether inferior level, the relation expressed in the developed language by the genitive may be felt not as the abstract notion of belonging but as a mere concrete relation of contiguity, as a pure spatial joining (see the expression by juxtaposition, of the type *coada calu* [=the tail of the horse]) or, at best, as mere belonging or concrete dependence ("belongs to..."). It may be felt, finally, as a permanent associating of an object with another to which it is always joined or in the structure of which it is frequently met with (see, e.g. the accusative with genitival value *gura la Dorel* [*Dorel's mouth*]); in these expressions, the connection with the concrete, individual, particular situation is almost always obvious.

Therefore, till reaching the definite abstract relation, the genitival relation evolves from the concrete contiguity towards a vague belonging; likewise, the "dative" relation lacks from the very beginning the clear meaning of a somewhat abstract link, with a dynamic sense, of the two moments of the aiming of the action (from  $x$  to  $y$ ), these moments being either merged into one (the dative merged with the genitive) or thoroughly isolated — adjoined in parallel — or the action appears to take place on a very concrete plane, as if the relation were established by a material link (a fact which is reflected by the means of expression)<sup>1</sup>.

Hence, the expression in the beginning, by means of mere juxtaposition, indicating very vague comprehension of the case relation at a certain abstraction level, e.g. as mere concrete contiguity; hence also, the oscillations and vacillations in utterance, during the second stage, when the formation process of the respective notion begins. May be, as long as the respective concepts are not definitely crystallized at a high abstraction level, clearly differentiated among them and then generalized in integrant notions "of genus" — of the case in general —, the mode of expression is wavering, oscillating among various forms<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, the low

<sup>1</sup> That we are faced with an incipient stage in the evolution of the notion of case, that — on the plane of thought — the isolation of the functions is performed with difficulty, that there is no clear consciousness of the actual relations, and that, on an active as well as on a passive plane of language, the system of the forms of expression is not yet achieved, is proved also by the fact that during our tests the children were met with greater difficulty in answering quickly and correctly the questions requiring use of the oblique cases, than in using the respective case in spontaneous speech.

<sup>2</sup> We do not think that, at an early age, the child would have a distinctly shaped idea of belonging and that, for instance, he merely lacks some correct forms of rendering it (W. Leopold, *op. cit.*, p. 83). There is a close link between language and thought, and the absence of some form reflects a certain stage of development of the thought itself in which the respective relations have not yet become clear. On the other hand, it may happen that a developed form occurs in child language as a mere automatism or as a mere mechanically imitated syntagm. The contents of abstract thought comprised in that form by a grown-up is lacking, without denoting a discrepancy between the child's (apparently developed) language and his thought (which is at an inferior stage): the language itself, in which such mechanic forms exist, is in

abstraction level is reflected by the choice of certain rudimentary forms of expression.

Originally the child singles out the simplest possibilities of expression. Such a vague, morphologically almost undifferentiated way of expression, as uninflected juxtaposition, reflects, from the point of view of contents, the stage of thinking linked with the concrete, with the particular, individual fact, in which the premises of future notions are but sketched. From the point of view of form, it has the advantage of eliminating any addition which might be difficult to the "neuter" form of the word — up to the extreme limit from which the function of communication can no longer be achieved (the understanding is possible, to a great extent, just because the point in question is a particular fact and the referring to the concrete situation renders the relation more explicit).

During the following stage, the child keeps in mind, from the language heard around him — or from its latencies — the likewise simpler forms, corresponding to the stage of incipient formation of the case concepts (at the same time, the system of these forms is the most frequent in environmental language of the child). Such are the analytic, "unfolded" forms. Indeed, the existence of a link-word between the two members of the relation allows no such direct establishing of the relation (through an immediate connection with the object)<sup>1</sup> as is the case with the synthetic mode of expression. The relation becomes thus, clearer and more explicit, nearer to the concrete relation and therefore easier to grasp. It has been noticed that particularly the preposition, which has also a lexical meaning in contrast to the mere inflexion or morpheme, renders the utterance more concrete and expressive by the somewhat "material" agency of the particle<sup>2</sup>. In Rumanian, the proclitic article, under the form of [a . . .] *lu(i)*, is likely to play the same part, all the more so as it may be

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fact undeveloped and corresponds exactly to the real level of the development of thought (see also: T. Slama-Cazacu, *Aspecte ale relațiilor dintre gândire și limbaj în însușirea structurii gramaticale de către copilul antepreșcolar (2-3 ani)*, în *Revista de psihologie*, 1960, 2, p. 57 sq.

<sup>1</sup> In the synthetic construction (and vice-versa, in the prepositional one), the intimation is direct (respectively indirect), if we refer to the object; but if we refer to the relationship as such, the intimation is indirect (resorting to the characteristics of the object), whereas in prepositional constructions the relation is directly intimated, even through its formal expression (see also R. Jakobson, *Beitrag zur allgemeinen Kasuslehre*, în *Travaux du Cercle linguistique Prague*, 1936, vol. 6, p. 246).

<sup>2</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română contemporană*, p. 543, 646; cf. also *Introducere în lingvistica romanică*, Bucharest, Tipografia și litografia învățământului, 1957, p. 337, *L'emploi du datif en roumain actuel*, în *Bulletin linguistique*, VII (1939), p. 62; A. Meillet has noticed in Slavonic also (*Le slave commun*, Paris, Champion, 1934, p. 461), the use of prepositions in constructions with a concrete meaning and their absence where there is an abstract meaning. See also F. Sommer, *Vergleichende Syntax der Schulsprachen*, Leipzig-Berlin, Teubner, 1921, p. 11; the prepositions, which were in the beginning independent adverbs, facilitate by means of their very significance, rather than the case form proper, the understanding of the prepositional construction (G. Tarde also, asserted long ago — in *L'opinion et la foule*, Paris, 1922, IV ed., p. 233 — that a clearer means of expression is the analytic one; but he also added the subjective appreciation which may hardly be supported by logical arguments, that this means is at the same time "bereft of charm", of "elegance"). L. Hjelmslev has voiced the opinion that, during the development of languages, the prepositions become more and more abstract (*La caté-*

assimilated, through formal analogy, to the system of prepositional construction. These constructions have likewise the advantage of letting the noun unchanged whereas the forms of the synthetic declension are more varied and complex. Yet, we must notice that in some languages, in which the constructions with prepositions — which as a rule do not form the compulsory system of declension — imply just a very complex semantic differentiation, a development of these constructions subsequent to the synthetic ones might be possible. (A. N. Gvozdev noticed, for instance, the fact that in Russian, the child under his observation was omitting the prepositions up to the age of two — two and a half, making use only of synthetic means)<sup>1</sup>. On the contrary, in a language like French, the constructions with certain prepositions (*de, à*) being fewer, compulsory and almost stereotype, they may early become automatisms, being learned as cliché-syntagms.

In Rumanian, this intermediate stage of the development of the oblique cases by the child, between the rendering — by means of juxtaposition — of certain concrete relations and the rendering — by means of synthetic forms — of certain contents soon reaching a high level of abstraction, is, as we have seen, long enough and full of vacillations, proving that the system is not yet defined and giving birth to multiple variations on the theme of the analytic form. During the child's learning of Rumanian, the stage in which synthetic expression becomes prevalent — and, upon generalizing, seeks to eliminate the other variants — coincides with the period of gradual maturation of the notion of case which will be achieved during the process of schooling.

An analysis of the child's learning of the forms of expression with genitive-dative function reveals a peculiar aspect of the general law of development of the child's thought and language: from the concrete to the abstract, from juxtaposition to constructions based on declension and, within the latter, from the most simple forms of the respective language to the most complex ones, from unanalyzed forms towards a clearer differentiation leading at the same time to the forming of the concepts. Likewise, it offers one more argument in favour of the thesis that language and thought develop in parallel, that, as long as a notion is not assimilated, there is no form of its definite and developed verbal utterance either, the crystallizing of the form occurring together with the comprehension of case relations at a higher abstraction level. The analysis of the facts which occur during the assimilation of Rumanian by the child show that in this language the trend goes from analytic forms towards synthetic ones, which are more difficult and imply a much higher level of abstraction.

5. The problem of the child's rendering the oblique cases in Rumanian offers one of the possibilities of illustrating the importance of analyzing

*gorie des cas*, Copenhagen, 1935, I, p. 77); however, for speakers (such as the children) with whom the prepositional constructions have not yet become automatisms, these constructions maintain, as it seems, their concrete value.

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Gvozdev, *Formirovanie u rebenka grammatičeskogo stroja russkogo jazyka*, Moskva, IAPN, 1949, p. 85.

the child's language both for general linguistics and for the study of the Rumanian language. The interest proceeds on the one hand from the fact that the language used by the child is, after all, an aspect of the common language or, better, a dynamic development upon stages, a gradual evolution towards integrating into the common language, a phenomenon that cannot be overlooked in general linguistics or in the study of any language. On the other hand, the analysis of the child's language reveals interesting affinities of the child to *certain* forms of the language: to those of popular and colloquial speech. Without agreeing to the thesis of the child's assimilation to the "primitive peoples" (a thesis pleaded against by both historical considerations and psychological ones regarding the fundamental difference resulting from age peculiarities), we might say, that the study of the child's mode of expression allows, up to a certain point, a concrete verifying, by means of analogy, of some hypotheses concerning the development of language; or even that, in certain cases, it proposes solutions or adds some arguments — in the treatment of which one should be certainly most cautious — there, where facts of historical grammar at best suggest *questions*. Even if the solutions cannot be final, or even if they might seem lacunose to the linguist who rejects the hypotheses, the genetic perspective is nevertheless excessively and unjustly avoided by the linguists. At any rate, regardless of the fact that analogies are made or not with the general genetic plane, confrontings with the ontogenesis are at least interesting, if not altogether fruitful.

☞ This thread we have followed in the development of child language — but which also passes through the history of Rumanian, bringing down to our days, through certain dialectal, regional or popular forms, echoes from more remote stages — is this "thread" really valuable for the evolution of other languages also? Indeed, some parallelisms may be observed in other languages too, on the one hand between the forms frequent in the child's speech and the forms surviving in the regional or popular speech, and on the other, between the development of child language and the evolution of some languages during certain periods of the development of the respective populations' mentality, particularly during the periods of decreasing linguistic conscience in populations with a low cultural level. This is the case, for instance, with Latin taken over by autochthonous populations in the various provinces of the Roman Empire.

The faults arising, for example, in Late Latin as spoken by the native population of Gaul prove the difficulty it encountered in rendering the subtle case distinctions of Latin<sup>1</sup>. The break-up of state authority and consequently the disappearance of its normalizing role in the language, the decrease in linguistic conscience and cultural level worked the disappearance of the clear concept of differentiated case, rousing sundry faults and variants, leading afterwards to a gradual replacing of the synthetic genitive-dative forms by means of the existing analytic ones, easier to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Brunot, Ch. Bruneau, *Précis de grammaire historique de la langue française*, Paris, Masson, 1937, p. 262.

wield<sup>1</sup>. In literary Rumanian these forms have been gradually replaced by synthetic ones, which became more and more abundant<sup>2</sup>, the analytic constructions surviving, as we have seen, especially in the popular and regional language as well as in spatially remote dialects, as a *vestige* of an archaic stage. Iorgu Iordan explained the adult's preference for these analytic forms through their more concrete character (see note at page 84); at the same time, the preference for the analytic forms is an argument which made him suggest the hypothesis that present Rumanian tends towards abstracting<sup>3</sup>.

Actually, traces of such older stages which also coincide with the facts noticed in the evolution of the child language are to be found in other languages too, in popular speech, under the form of juxtaposition of uninflected words. For instance, in Old French, constructions as *le fils Hugon* [= *le fils de Hugon*]; *le corn Rollant* [= *le cor de Roland*], *li num's Joiuse l'espee fut dunet* [= *le nom de Joyeuse à l'épée fut donné*] (from "Chanson de Roland"); traces of such constructions have been preserved down to our days, in expressions like *fête-Dieu*, *Hôtel-Dieu* etc.<sup>4</sup>.

In literary Rumanian the inflections and more generally the use of the morphological tools is characteristic of a developed stage of language<sup>5</sup>.

Starting from such considerations, there can be no question, certainly, of placing the existing languages or some stage of their evolution, in a hierarchy based upon unjustified estimations of value. We cannot assert that all the languages evolve from analytic forms towards syn-

<sup>1</sup> See also Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română contemporană*, p. 338, 513, and W. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax*, Heidelberg, C. Winter, 1931, p. 198. In Old Rumanian, the analytic forms mentioned during the study of child language were prevalent; to these, other forms with proclitic article are also added, as for instance, *ei case* [= *casei*; of the house] (Iorgu Iordan, *op. cit.*, p. 300). *li Ana* [= *Anei*; Anna's] (*Gramatica limbii române*, cit. ed., p. 172; a form used down to our days in the Apusenî Mountains).

<sup>2</sup> See, concerning the dative, the material in Iorgu Iordan, *L'emploi du datif en roumain actuel*, ed. cit., pp. 29-65.

<sup>3</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *L'emploi du datif en roumain actuel*, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> F. Brunot, Ch. Bruneau, *op. cit.*, pp. 269, 270; cf. also H. Bauche, *Le langage populaire*, Paris, Payot, 1928, p. 87. It might happen that the construction frequent in Old and popular Rumanian — in which the noun representing a definite person and accompanied by the possessive pronoun is used in the nominative (*in locul soră-mea* [at the place of my sister]), cf. Kr. Sandfeld, H. Olsen, *op. cit.*, p. 68; or: *in urma morții mamei-mea* [after my mother's death] cf. B. Cazacu, *Remarques sur l'emploi des adjectifs possessifs en roumain*, in *Bulletin linguistique*, XV, 1947, p. 99 — should represent also a trace of the process of juxtaposition (at the same time, the construction is felt as a whole in which the pronoun has the function of expressing the genitive, cf. Iorgu Iordan, *Limba română contemporană*, cit. ed., p. 604).

<sup>5</sup> Similar archaic constructions, based upon juxtaposition, must not be mistaken for modern expressions formed by means of a shortening, an ellipsis as for example *timbre-poste* (F. Brunot, Ch. Bruneau, *op. cit.*, p. 270). The fact that Modern Germans is *ein Glas Wasser*, compared to *Mittelhochdeutsch ein Glas Wassers* (O. Behagel, *Die Deutsche Sprache*, Halle, Niemeyer, 1953, p. 243), does not mean that a regress occurred or that, in German, a certain juxtaposition might be compatible only with a more developed stage; it is certainly a matter of elliptic constructions, the result of the passing through more complex and developed forms of expression: "... die Flexion ein Luxus vollentwickelter Sprachen ist" (W. F. Leopold, *Das Sprechenternen der Kinder*, in *Sprachforum*, 1956, 2, p. 124; cf. also *Patternings in children's language learning*, in *Language Learning*, 1953-1954, p. 10).

thetic ones, always representing a higher level of abstraction<sup>1</sup>, but we must needs reject the thesis of the peremptory assertion of an universal evolution from synthesis to analysis<sup>2</sup> (evolution which is moreover contrary to the natural way which psychology designates for the process of the human thought).

There is a doubtless progress in the evolution of language, as well as a link between the crystallization and unification into a system of certain literary forms and the development of linguistic conscience, therefore also of thought in general (whence the amplification of the abstraction and generalization process leading to the creation and consolidation of the notion of the respective grammatical category). The oscillations and variants (when the latter are not literary stylistic creations proper) are characteristic for the archaic, popular and colloquial speech. Likewise, in the genesis of speech, constructions by means of uninflected juxtaposition must have represented a very remote stage unlike the constructions by means of inflections. The analytic forms are likely to represent in certain languages, as compared to synthetic constructions, either the vestige of some older stage<sup>3</sup> (or indicating the return to more concrete means of thinking) or a peculiarity of popular speech<sup>4</sup>. The validity of this hypothesis might not be proved in any case by applying it at any time, no matter how and with no shade whatsoever. To achieve this, we have but to refer to the moments significant for the genesis of a language and not to any moment of its subsequent development. For instance, the moment of the birth of the Romance languages meant initially, as far as declension is concerned, a "decay" of Classical Latin, through the transition to Late Latin and then, to the old Romance languages, where the preference for the analytic constructions meant, in the beginning, relative régress, as compared to the stage of synthesis and differentiation reached by Latin. Subsequently, the languages developed in accordance with their own peculiar historical conditions, with the influence of other languages and upon the basis of the laws of development proper to the whole linguistic system. French, for instance, has preserved the analytic<sup>5</sup> forms whereas in Rumanian, where the possibility of maintaining the synthetic

<sup>1</sup> According to Schleicher, for instance, (see O. Jespersen, *Progress in Language*, London-New York, 1894, p. 13, 112 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> O. Jespersen, *op. cit.*, p. 127; the same with H. Jacquier, *Noțiunea de „limbă analitică” și problema valorii tipurilor de limbi*, in *Bul. Univ. „V. Babeș și Bolgai” Cluj*, Social Science Series, I (1956), 1-2, p. 266; see also the criticism in Al. Graur, *Studii de lingvistică generală*, Bucharest, Ed. Acad. R.P.R., 1960, p. 439, and L. Wald, *Aspecte ale progresului în evoluția categoriilor gramaticale*, in *Probleme de lingvistică generală*, I, Bucharest, Ed. Acad. R.P.R., 1959, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also W. Havers, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> But, we insist, depending on the peculiarities of the respective language and on its stage of development (at present, in English, the child does not use, as being simpler, some analytic forms of expressing the possession which seem translation loans from French). In J. Berko's experiments (*op. cit.*, p. 174) no child said, for instance, *the hat of the niz* [niz being a created word].

<sup>5</sup> Other West-European languages, also, prefer prepositional constructions, which even appear to augment (J. W. kernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*, Basel, Birkhäuser, 1924, vol. II, p. 216; see also F. Sommer, *op. cit.*, p. 17: in German, English, French, there occur continually,

forms occurred through the influence of the Slavonic languages, the way has been opened towards the selecting and extending, in literary language, of the synthetic forms especially.

The state existing in Rumanian for instance, and the evolution of child language within it — where the developed forms are just the synthetic ones — refute the thesis according to which all languages should tend towards the analytic forms as towards a superior stage. On the other hand, the proliferation, in some languages of the rest of Europe, of prepositional constructions may mean in itself also a progress in those languages. The linguistic conscience of the respective speakers uses as an advantage the fact that the prepositions exhibit a better case distinction in those languages, as well as a more convenient means of expression, through the unity of the paradigm<sup>1</sup>. This does not refute our thesis that, at a certain moment of the evolution of those languages (of the evolution of French, for instance) or of some other ones — like Rumanian —, the prevalence of prepositional constructions and of analytic forms generally has characterized, on the genetic plane, the stage lacking (or having lost) a clear linguistic conscience of the respective case. This was the stage in which, no abstract notion of case existing and the value of the synthetic forms being undifferentiated because of their less obvious connections with the concrete plane, thought resorted to the more concrete guidemarks of the prepositions and, in general, of the forms in which the link between objects, or objects and actions, appeared more explicit.

In order to estimate the progress of a language, to set a value on the stage it reached, we must, the same as we proceeded in estimating the forms in child language, take into account not so much the form as such of certain constructions, but their contents, their value, from the point of view of the thought they mirror, as well as the crystallization of various forms in unitary systems, based upon the abstract grammatical notions attained only upon the moment of the existence of a developed linguistic conscience.

more "Ersatzmittel"); but after all, underlined R. Jakobson (*op. cit.*, p. 245), the so-called transition from the flexional construction to the analytic one is but a transition from the simultaneous existence of a flexional and an analytic system, to the prevalence of the latter.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also W. Havers, *op. cit.*, p. 198.