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Morphological Case System of the Vilamovicean Noun – from the 20th to the 21st Century

Abstract

The present paper provides a detailed analysis of the declensional morphology of the Vilamovicean nominal system. The author describes all the declensional patterns of masculine, feminine and neuter nouns that are available in this language in the 21st century, and compares them to the situation attested to before the period of the Second World War. The evidence demonstrates that the Vilamovicean declensional system of nouns has undergone certain important changes over the last 100 years. While the regular case marking has essentially been maintained, various novel by-forms have emerged and in some instances even substituted the respective old patterns. The majority of changes seem to affect masculine nouns, while the feminine and, especially, neuter substantives are less affected by morphological modifications. The author concludes that the modern variants found in the shape of plural and singular forms are imposed both by the gender of a noun and its phonetic properties.

Keywords

Germanic languages, minority languages, Vilamovicean, nominal system, case

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule przedstawiona została szczegółowa analiza morfologii deklinacyjnej rzeczownika w języku wilamowskim. Autor opisuje wszystkie paradygmaty deklinacyjne rzeczowników rodzaju męskiego, żeńskiego i nijakiego występujące w tym języku w XXI wieku i porównuje je do stanu poświadczonego dla okresu przed II wojną światową. Dane językowe pokazują, że w ciągu ostatnich stu lat w wilamowskim systemie deklinacyjnym zaszły istotne zmiany. O ile regularne wykładniki przypadku zasadniczo zachowały się, pojawiły się różnorakie innowacyjne formy oboczne, w niektórych przypadkach wypierając nawet odpowiadające im starsze wzorce odmiany. Większość zmian można zaobserwować w przypadku rzeczowników rodzaju męskiego, podczas gdy rzeczowniki żeńskie i nijakie są mniej podatne na modyfikacje morfologiczne. Autor dochodzi do wniosku, iż współczesne warianty, które obserwujemy w formach mnogich i pojedynczych, są zależne od rodzaju jak i właściwości fonetycznych rzeczownika.

Słowa kluczowe

języki germańskie, języki mniejszości, wilamowicki, system rzeczownikowy, przypadek

1. Introduction

Vilamovicean (*Wymysiöeryś* [vɨmɨsø:ɾɨɕ]) is a Germanic language¹ that is employed in Wilamowice, a small town in the western-most part of Galicia, in the South of Poland. Although there is no agreement regarding the genetic classification of this tongue, Vilamovicean is most frequently viewed as being an East Central German dialect, derived from Middle High German (cf. Besch et al. 1983, Wicherkiewicz 2003 and Richie 2012; see also Ryckeboer 1984, Morciniec 1984, 1995 and Andrason 2013). Nowadays, Vilamovicean is the least-spoken Germanic language in the world. It is understood by approximately two hundred people, although only fluently spoken by less than forty. Almost all of the speakers of this tongue are more than 80 years old, which signifies that the future of Vilamovicean is acutely endangered. Indeed, if no changes are made in promoting the local usage of this language, Vilamovicean – being understood as a real, social phenomenon – will disappear within one or two decades.

Given this forthcoming and seemingly inevitable extinction, it is important for linguistic scholars to provide an extensive description and analysis of Vilamovicean before the language vanishes forever. In various papers published thus far (cf. Andrason 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2013 and 2014), the author of the present article has focused on the Vilamovicean verbal system. In the present study, however, properties of the nominal system will be analyzed. Particularly, the author will describe the declensional patterns of masculine, feminine and neuter nouns in 21st century Vilamovicean as documented by the forms recorded in a database developed by Alexander Andrason and Tymoteusz Król. This database – which has been in development since 2006 – reflects the state of the Vilamovicean language at the course of its gradual extinction, at the beginning of the 21st century.² Additionally, the author will compare the

¹ In this paper, Vilamovicean will be viewed as a language and not as a dialect. Although traditional scholarship classifies it as a colonial dialect of German (cf. Besch et al. 1983 and Lasatowicz 1992), there are sociological, cultural and political reasons to treat Vilamovicean as a “genuine” language. In this context, it should be noted that in 2006 the American Library of Congress provided Vilamovicean with its own language code and that in 2013 the Academy of the Vilamovicean Languages was established in Warsaw.

² During the compilation of evidence the following native speakers – ordered by the year of birth – have been consulted: Franciszka Bilczewska fum Frycki (born 1913), Kazimierz Grygierczyk fum Bieruniok (1913–2010), Anna Danek fum Pejtela (born 1916), Zofia Danek fum Stańcu (born 1917), Franciszek Mosler fum Mózler (born 1918), Helena Danek fum Kwaka (born 1919), Jan Biba fum Tüma-Jaški (born 1920), Anna Sznajder fum Pejter (born 1920), Elżbieta Mynarska fum Siöeba (born 1921), Helena Biba fum Płaćnik (born 1922), Elżbieta Babiuch fum Poükner (1923–2010), Anna Foks fum Prorok (born 1923), Elżbieta Kacorzyk fum Pütrok (born 1923), Elżbieta Sznajder fum Pejter (born 1923), Anna Zejma fum Lüft (1923–2010), Elżbieta Matysiak fum Hala-Mockia (born 1924), Anna Danek fum Küpsela (born 1924), Helena Gasidło fum Biöezniok (born 1924), Waleria Brzezina fum Cepok (born 1925), Roza-

declensional properties of nouns in Modern Vilamovicean with the situation attested to before the Second World War by Kleczkowski (1920) and Mojmir (1930–1936). This version of the language will be referred to as ‘classical’.

Kleczkowski’s grammatical sketch – although short and, in several aspects, rather limited – constitutes the most valuable position on the Vilamovicean grammar and on its nominal system, as well. In two parts – published in 1920 and 1921 – the author presents elements of phonetics, morphology and syntax. The section dedicated to nominal inflection, albeit very brief (cf. Kleczkowski 1920: 128–131), discusses and illustrates all the declensional paradigms of the language. As a result, Kleczkowski’s book may be regarded as a reliable and, despite its limited length, quite precise description of the language as it was spoken before the Second World War. Further evidence concerning the nominal system can be derived from the extensive dictionary of the Vilamovicean language composed by Mojmir (1930–1936). Being a lexicographic work, this impressive dictionary provides various pieces of information related to the grammar, including nominal declension.³

lia Kowalik fum Poüermin (born 1925), Jan Formas (born 1925), Katarzyna Balcarczyk fum Karol (born 1925), Stanisław Foks fum Lüft (born 1926), Elżbieta Formas fum Mözler (born 1926), Katarzyna Nowak fum Tobys (1926–2010), Rozalia Hanusz fum Linküs (1926–2009), Anna Korczyk fum Kołodziej (born 1927), Elżbieta Gąsiorek fum Anta (born 1927), Elżbieta Figwer fum Böba (born 1927), Anna Foks fum Lüft (born 1927), Kazimierz Sznajder fum Pejter (born 1927), Inga Danek (born 1928), Helena Nowak fum Holeczkla (born 1928), Jan Balcarczyk fum Siöeba (born 1928), Bronisława Pyka (born 1928), Helena Rozner fum Böba-Lojzka (born 1929), Emilia Biesik fum Raczek (1929), Józef Gara fum Tołer (born 1929), Elżbieta Merta fum Hala-Frana-Jaškia (born 1929), Katarzyna Danek fum Pejtela (born 1929), Elżbieta Nycz fum Ślęzok (1929–2007), Helena Dobroczyńska fum Osieçon (born 1929), Elżbieta Gandor fum Baranła (born 1930), Zofia Kozieł fum Sübert (born 1930), Anna Biba fum Küčlik (1930–2009), Hilda Kasperczyk fum Čiöe (1930–2005), Eugenia Foks fum Bröda (born 1930), Rozalia Danek fum Mira-Winca (born 1931), Elżbieta Nikiel fum Linküs (born 1931), Rozalia Węgrodzka fum Gadła (born 1931), Stanisław Zejma (born 1931), Stefania Kuczmiarczyk fum Jonkla (born 1932), Anna Nowak fum Hala-Mockia (born 1932), Emilia Danek fum Biöeźniok (born 1933), Kazimierz Foks-fum Baranła (born 1934), Anna Kuczmiarczyk fum Zelbst (born 1934), Anna Sznajder fum Pejter (born 1934), Barbara Tomanek (born 1935), Elżbieta Sznajder fum Frešlik (born 1938), Stanisław Merta fum Hala-Frana-Jaškia-Hala (born 1955), Janusz Brzezina fum Urbon (born 1956).

³ The four other studies devoted to the Vilamovicean language do not provide any relevant information on the nominal system. To be precise, the sections related to the grammar and nominal system in the books written by Młynek (1907) and Latosiński (1909 [1990]) are too sketchy and superficial. The data presented by Lasatowicz (1992) is highly suspicious: she fails to provide the source(s) of her examples and the Vilamovicean variety she describes is very suspicious, displaying an almost unnatural Standard German character (see especially pages 55–57; cf. Andrason 2011: 222). In fact, various forms quoted by Lasatowicz are regarded by native speakers who were questioned on the issue, as evident Germanisms. Finally, without undermining the relevance of Wicherkiewicz’s study from 2003, his grammatical discussion is limited and superficial (see, especially pages 421–423). Wicherkiewicz focusses on the translation of Biesik’s epopee and on cultural and sociolinguistic issues.

In the subsequent parts of this article, it will be demonstrated how the Vilamovicean declensional system of nouns has undergone certain important changes over the last 100 years. To be exact, if the language described by Kleczkowski (1920) and Mojmir (1930–1936) is compared to the evidence gathered in the second millennium, various analogical modifications and simplifications may be observed. In section 2.1, the changes affecting masculine nouns will be presented, and next, those relevant for feminine nouns (section 2.2.), and then those concerning neuter substantives (section 2.3.). Finally, main conclusions will be drawn about the subjects discussed (see part 3).

2. Development of case marking

In general terms, the Vilamovicean language possesses three cases which are productive in the nominal system: the nominative (NOM), accusative (ACC) and dative (DAT). The genitive case, which would otherwise be included, ceased to be a productive functional category before the 20th century. Its remnant – the ending *ś* – is limited to some fixed expressions, rigid phrasal contexts and certain proper nouns (cf. Kleczkowski 1920: 127). Vilamovicean substantives are also declined by number, showing singular (SG) and plural (PL) forms.

2.1. Masculine

2.1.1. Classical Vilamovicean

According to Kleczkowski (1920: 128–129), all the masculine words in the Vilamovicean language may be divided into three main declensional classes: nouns that derive their plurals with no ending (class 1: SG *kȳz* ‘cheese’ – PL *kȳz*);⁴ nouns that add a suffix *a* in the plural forms (class 2: SG *kajm* ‘sprout’ – PL *kajma*); and nouns that add *n* in the plural forms (class 3: SG *eŋŋəl* ‘angel’ – PL *eŋŋəlŋ*). Class 1 consists of three main subtypes. The first subtype (class 1.1) includes nouns whose singular and plural form (except the dative) are identical (see again *kȳz* ‘cheese’ – *kȳz*; cf. also a possible voicing of the last consonant

⁴ When quoting examples provided by Kleczkowski (1920) and Mojmir (1930–1936), the original spelling convention will be preserved. For the explanation of this orthography see Kleczkowski (1920) and Mojmir (1930–1936: xii–xv). However, 21st century forms extracted from our database will be given in the modern orthography that has been developed by Król and Andrason, and employed in various articles devoted to Modern Vilamovicean (see, for instance, Andrason 2010a, 2010b and 2011) and in contemporary literary works (Król 2011). It is also used in the Grammar of Modern Vilamovicean (Andrason and Król forthcoming a). For a detailed description of this spelling convention, see Andrason and Król (forthcoming a and b).

in the plural *tak* ‘day’ – *tāg*).⁵ The second subtype (class 1.2) consists of nouns that derive their plural with no additional suffix, showing, however, umlaut of the root vowel (SG *puš* ‘forest’ – PL *pyšš*).⁶ These two classes (1.1 and 1.2) show a special dative plural form in *a* (*kȳza* ‘cheeses’ and *pyšša* ‘forests’) or in *n* (*štəjln* ‘handles’ and *štīln* ‘chairs’) depending on the phonetic properties of the stem. The third subtype (class 1.3) contains indeclinable nouns that may end in *a* (*nōma* ‘name’) or in *um* (*būzum* ‘bosom’). Nouns that derive their plural by means of the suffix *a* (class 2) can be classified into three subtypes. The majority simply add the vowel *a* in all the plural forms (class 2.a, *kajm* ‘sprout’ – *kajma*). This subtype includes various nouns ending in a non-palatal consonant and words ending in *k(i)*, of Polish or German origin (*bezbuožnik* ‘atheist, godless person’). Some words, possess a special dative form (in *a*) in the singular (class 2.b): NOM-ACC.SG *ryk’k’* ‘back’ – DAT.SG *ryk’k’ja* (cf. the plural *ryk’k’ja*). Other nouns also display the ending *a* in the accusative (class 2.c): NOM.SG *menč* ‘man’ – DAT-ACC.SG *menčja* (cf. the plural *menčja*). With respect to the plurals in *n* (class 3), the following subcategories may be established. Various nouns in *l, ʃ* and *əl* add the ending *n* in the plural forms (class 3.1, SG *eηηəl* ‘angel’ – PL *eηηəl̃n*). In other substantives the suffix *n* is accompanied by the umlaut of the root vowel (class 3.2, SG *fö:gl̃* ‘bird’ – PL *fȳgl̃n*). Due to the suffixation of the ending *n*, certain nouns that end in *n* shorten the root vowel in the plural (class 3.3, SG *štān* ‘stone’ – PL *štann*). Nouns in *yr* derive the plural in *yn* (class 3.4) with umlaut (*fōter* ‘father’ – *fātyn*) or without it (SG *teller* ‘plate’ – PL *tellyn*). Finally, nouns ending in the long consonant *rr* substitute it with *nn* (class 3.5 SG *nuorr* ‘stupid’ – PL *nuønn*). These nouns also display special *nn* case endings in the accusative and dative singular (i.e. *nuønn*). All the declension patterns of the masculine nouns can be summarized in the following manner:

1 Plural in Ø

| | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| 1.1 | no-umlaut | (a) DAT.PL in <i>-a</i> | <i>kȳz – kȳz – kȳza</i> | ‘cheese’ |
| | | (b) DAT.PL in <i>-n</i> | <i>štəjł – štəjł – štəjln</i> | ‘handle’ |
| 1.2 | with umlaut | (a) DAT.PL in <i>-a</i> | <i>puš – pyšš – pyšša</i> | ‘forest’ |
| | | [a few end in <i>-a</i> in SG] | <i>šrumma – šrymma</i> | ‘scar’] |
| | | (b) DAT.PL in <i>-n</i> | <i>štūł – štīł – štīln</i> | ‘chair’ |
| 1.3 | Indeclinable | (a) in <i>-a</i> | <i>nōma</i> | ‘name’ |
| | | (c) in <i>-um</i> | <i>būzum</i> | ‘bosom’ |

2 Plural in *-a*

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| (a) | SG indeclinable | <i>kajm – kajma</i> | ‘sprout’ |
| (b) | DAT.SG in <i>-a</i> | <i>ryk’k’ – ryk’k’ja</i> | ‘back’ |
| (c) | DAT.ACC.SG in <i>-a</i> | <i>menč – menčja – menčja</i> | ‘man’ |

⁵ Most likely, voicing arose from an end vowel that had disappeared only quite recently.

⁶ The doubling of the consonant *š* mainly indicates that the preceding vowel (i.e. *y*) is short.

| | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------------|----------|
| 3 | Plural in <i>-n</i> | | |
| 3.1 | no-umlaut | <i>eŋŋəl – eŋŋəlŋ</i> | ‘angel’ |
| 3.2 | with umlaut | <i>fö:ɡł – fygłŋ</i> | ‘bird’ |
| 3.3 | shortening of the root vowel | <i>štān – štann</i> | ‘stone’ |
| 3.4 | <i>-yr > -yn</i> (possible umlaut) | <i>teller – tellyn</i> | ‘plate’ |
| | | <i>föter – fätyn</i> | ‘father’ |
| 3.5 | <i>-rr > -nn</i> DAT.ACC.SG in <i>-n</i> | <i>nuörr – nuönn – nuönn</i> | ‘stupid’ |

The evidence available in Mojmir’s dictionary, collected from 1930–1936, suggests that this “classical” paradigm of masculine nouns from 1920 experienced slight modifications before the Second World War. To be exact, certain nouns that formed their plurals in a suffix-less manner and that showed the DAT PL in *a*, regularized the ending *a* in all cases in the plural, e.g. *štāma* ‘star’, *hūfa* ‘hoof’, *tajxja* ‘pool, pond’ (cf. the plural forms *štām*, *hūf*, *tajx*’ respectively, in Kleczkowski’s study). As a result, such nouns passed from class 1.1.a to class 2.a. The words with umlaut seem to have been unaffected by this change, however. The ending *n*, which according to Kleczkowski, is present in the DAT.PL, was sometimes generalized in the entire plural declension. This regularization of the suffix *n* in the plural affected both non-umlauted and umlauted plurals: for example, SG *štəjł* ‘handle’ – PL *štəjłŋ* and SG *štūł* ‘chair’ – PL *štīł* and *štīłŋ*. Consequently, some nouns were transferred from class 1.1.b to class 3.1, while others moved from class 1.2.b to class 3.2. Additionally, limited nouns in *a* with umlaut in the plural (cf. a subtype of class 1.2.a SG *šrumma* ‘scar’ – PL *šrymma*) generalized the vowel of the singular in the whole paradigm. By losing the distinctive umlaut marking, they became fully indeclinable (e.g. SG *šrumma* – PL *šrumma*) in accordance with pattern 1.3 (*nōma* ‘name’).

2.1.2. 21st century

In comparison to the classical version recorded by Kleczkowski and Mojmir, the evidence gathered in the 21st century demonstrates that the masculine nominal declension has experienced various changes. In the present section, a detailed review of contemporary declensional patterns of masculine nouns will be offered.

In accordance with the state of affairs presented by Kleczkowski (1920), subtype 1.1.a commonly shows the regular non-suffixed (or \emptyset) plural, e.g. *kyz* ‘cheeses’ (cf. SG *kyz* ‘cheese’). Similarly to the period before the Second World War, in some cases, one encounters the voicing of the final consonant, e.g. *kyng* ‘kings’ (cf. SG *kynk*) and *tag* ‘days’ (cf. SG *tak*). Other examples are *štam* ‘star(s)’, *hūf* ‘hoof(s)’, *knāht* ‘lad(s), servant(s)’. Observe that the plural *halc* ‘necks’ can have both *hołc* and *halc* as its singular form. However, it is also possible to find alternative plural forms of nouns that originally belonged to class 1.1.a. Among such variants, the most frequent is the plural in *a* (e.g.

kyza ‘cheeses’, *kyngja/kynga* ‘kings’, *taga* ‘days’, *štama* ‘star’ and *šüja* ‘shoes’). These forms are quite common and are freely interchangeable with the “classical” suffix-less plurals. Additionally and quite infrequently plurals in *n* may be detected, e.g. *kyzn* ‘cheeses’ and *kyngjen* ‘kings’. In some cases, the voicing is missing and the plural form coincides with the shape of the singular, e.g. *kynk* ‘kings’ and *tak* ‘days’. It should also be noted that if a speaker is not certain about the correct form, he or she typically employs a diminutive in *la*, which, being indeclinable, has the same form in both the singular and plural. In all the cases where the plural is derived with no suffixes, the dative plural form of the original class 1.1.a regularly takes the ending *a*: *taga* ‘days’, *kyngja* ‘kings’, *knáhta* ‘lad, servant’, *štama* ‘star’, *hüfa* and ‘hoofs’ *šüja* ‘shoes’. Of course, the ending *a* is also present if a new plural is derived by means of the suffix *a*. All the modern varieties of the forms of Kleczkowski’s type 1.1.a may be summarized in the following manner:

| SG | classical PL | new PL | DAT | |
|-------------|--------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>kyz</i> | <i>kyz</i> | <i>kyza</i> | <i>kyza</i> | ‘cheese’ |
| <i>kynk</i> | <i>kyng</i> | <i>kyngja kynk (kyngjen)</i> | <i>kyngja</i> | ‘king’ |

Although class 1.2.a seems to be less liable to add extra suffixation in the plural, it does provide various cases where new plural forms appear. First of all, it should be noted that the original umlauted suffix-less plurals (such as SG *puš* ‘forest’ – PL *pys*) are far more frequent than other variants: *cöp* ‘plat’ – *cep*, *flug* ‘flea’ – *flej*, *flug* ‘plough’ – *flig*, *trök* ‘troughs’ – *tryg*, *wüm* ‘worm’ – *wjym*, *öeš* (‘leš’) ‘back’ – *aš*, *šrank* ‘wardrobe, case’ – *šrenk*, *zak* ‘bag’ – *zek*, *šlag* ‘strike’ – *štyg*, *štrauch* ‘bush, shrub’ – *štroüh*, *giöeta* ‘garden’ – *gat*, *rök* ‘skirt’ – *rek*, *gast* ‘guest’ – *gest*, *šejf* ‘boat’ – *šyf*, *fejš* ‘fish’ – *fyš*, *tejš* ‘table’ – *tyš*, *can* ‘tooth’ – *cyyn*, *boüm* ‘flower’ – *biöem*. Nevertheless, even in this subcategory of masculine nouns, one may find a number of examples with the plural in (j)a, both umlauted (*pyša* ‘forests’, *štroühja* ‘bushes’, *cyna* ‘teeth’, *flügja* ‘ploughs’, *zekja* ‘bags’) and non-umlauted (*puša* ‘forests’, *cannia* ‘teeth’, *zakja* ‘bags’, *štrauch(j)a* ‘bushes’). Infrequently, a non-umlauted and suffix-less form appears in the plural, which is identical to the shape of the singular, such as *puš* ‘forest(s)’, *can* ‘tooth/teeth’ and *zak* ‘bag(s)’. Again, some informants tend to employ the diminutive morpheme *la*, turning a given word into an indeclinable one (*pyšla* ‘forests’, *štroüchla* ‘bushes’). Additionally, isolated cases may be found where the plural is extended by the ending *n*, for example *štrojchyn* ‘bushes’. The word *šruma* ‘scar’ displays a typical vowel change in the plural *šryma*, although instances of non-umlauted forms are infrequently found. The dative plural ending is regularly *a* added to the nominative (most commonly umlauted) plural: *pyša* ‘forests’, *cepa* ‘plats’, *fleja* ‘fleas’, *fligja* ‘ploughs’, *trygja* ‘troughs’, *wjyma* ‘worms’, *zekja* ‘bags’, *giöeta*

'gardens', *šyfa* 'boats', *fyša* 'fishes', *tyša* 'tables', *cyyna* 'teeth', *biöema* 'flowers'.⁷ The contemporary declensional variants of the nouns belonging to class 1.2.a can be summarized as follows:

| SG | classical PL | new PL | | DAT | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| <i>puś</i> | <i>pyś</i> | <i>pyša, puša, pyšła</i> | (<i>puś</i>) | <i>pyša</i> | 'forest' |
| <i>can</i> | <i>cyyn</i> | <i>cyna, cannja</i> | (<i>can</i>) | <i>cyna</i> | 'tooth' |
| <i>zak</i> | <i>zek</i> | <i>zekja, zakja</i> | (<i>zak</i>) | <i>zekja</i> | 'bag' |
| <i>šruma</i> | <i>šryma</i> | <i>šruma</i> | | <i>šryma</i> | 'scar' |

Nowadays, the substantives that originally belonged to classes 1.1.b and 1.2.b display two forms in the plural: one is suffix-less (either non-umlauted (*štejł* 'handles') or umlauted (*štił* 'chairs')) and the other shows the ending *n*. Similarly, the ending *n* may be added to non-umlauted (*štejln* 'handles'; if a noun can be umlauted, forms such as *štiłn* 'chairs' are very rare) or umlauted forms (*štiłn* 'chairs'). The plurals in *n* are less common. In addition, the plurals in *a* or *ła* (which are indistinguishable in words ending in a liquid consonant) are also quite frequent: *štejła* 'handles', *štiła* / *stiła* 'chairs'. Only in rare cases does one find suffix-less plurals that lack the expected umlaut (*štił* 'chairs'). One informant also used an interesting form *štejłan* 'handles'. In this case, one is dealing with a double plural marking, an agglutination of two independent morphemes that were originally mutually exclusive: *štejł* + *a* + *n*. The dative plural form is regularly marked by the suffix *n*: *štejln* 'handles' and *štiłn* 'chairs'. The declension of this class of nouns can be summarized in the following way:

| SG | classical PL | new PL | | DAT | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|----------|
| <i>štejł</i> | <i>štejł</i> | <i>štejln, štejła (štejłan)</i> | | <i>štejln</i> | 'handle' |
| <i>štił</i> | <i>štił</i> | <i>štiłn, stiła, štüła (štił)</i> | | <i>štiłn</i> | 'chair' |

The class of masculine indeclinable nouns in *a* and *um* (type 1.3) fails to present any anomalies and follows the pattern described by Kleczkowski: SG *noma* 'name' – PL *noma* (see also *hoza* 'hare', *pöła* 'Pole', *uwa* 'oven', *zöma* 'seed') and SG *büzum* 'bosom' – PL *büzum*.

| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
|-------------|----------------|--------|
| <i>noma</i> | <i>noma</i> | 'name' |

The class of the (*j*)*a* plurals does not present any important changes in comparison to the situation at the beginning of the 20th century. The plural is typically derived by means of the morpheme *a* (SG *kâjm* 'sprout, shoot' – PL *kâjma*) or *ja* (SG *tâjh* 'pool, pond' – PL *tâjhja*). As further examples, one may quote: *štüh* 'stork' – *štühja*, *grof* 'count' – *grofa*, *zok* 'sock' – *zoka*, *wjyt* 'farmer' – *wjyta*,

⁷ The word *halc* 'neck' (cf. Kleczkowski SG *hołc* – PL *halc*) may nowadays form its plural according to the group 1.1.a (cf. *kysz* and *kung*), i.e. SG *halc* versus *haldz* or *halca*.

and *fjyšt* ‘prince’ – *fjyšta*, *kjyt* ‘shepherd’ – *kjyta*, *menć* ‘person, human being’ – *menća*, *büw* ‘boy’ – *büwa*, *öks* ‘ox’ – *öksa*, *ryk* ‘back’ – *rykja* as well as many Polish loan words in *k* such as *bezbožnik* ‘atheist’ – *bezbožnika*. Of course, all the dative plural forms likewise end in the vowel *a*.

As observed by Kleczkowski, some *a*-plurals also display special forms in *a* in the accusative (cf. class 2.b) and accusative-dative cases (cf. class 2.c). These singular endings are usually preserved in Modern Vilamovicean (cf. DAT.SG *wjyta* ‘farmer’, *rykja* ‘back’ and *fjyšta* ‘prince’ or DAT-ACC.SG *kjyta* ‘shepherd’, *menća* ‘man’, *fjyšta* ‘prince’, *büwa* ‘boy’ and *öksa* ‘ox’), although suffix-less dative and accusative singular forms may – although infrequently – be met.

| SG | ACC | DAT | PL (incl. DAT) | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------|
| <i>kåjm</i> | <i>kåjm</i> | <i>kåjm</i> | <i>kåjma</i> | ‘sprout’ |
| <i>tåjh</i> | <i>tåjh</i> | <i>tåjh</i> | <i>tåjhja</i> | ‘pool’ |
| <i>ryk</i> | <i>ryk</i> | <i>rykja</i> | <i>rykja</i> | ‘back’ |
| <i>kjyt</i> | <i>kjyta</i> | <i>kjyta</i> | <i>kjyta</i> | ‘farmer’ |

The third major class of the masculine nouns in Modern Vilamovicean consists of words that derive their plural by means of the ending *n*. This type includes various words in *(e/u)l* or *ł*. Many of these substantives follow the pattern 3.1 in Kleczkowski (1920): SG *engel* ‘angel’ – PL *engeln*. Other non-umlauted plurals in *n* are *štahuł* ‘thorn, prick’ – *štahułn*, *henkl* ‘handle’ – *henkln*, *śnowuł* ‘beak, bill’ – *śnowułn*, *nowuł* ‘navel’ – *nowułn* or *zotuł* ‘saddle’ – *zotułn*. However, one can distinguish two other techniques in forming the plurals which are almost as common as the regular plural marking in *n*. One method consists in adding the suffix *a* or *ła* (as the two forms are indistinguishable in forms that end in *l* or *ł*: *eng(i)eła* ‘angels’), while the other one corresponds to a suffix-less form (in this case, the plural is identical to the singular; cf. *engel* ‘angel(s)’). Various nouns show the expected umlaut in their respective *n* plural forms: SG *fögul* ‘bird’ – PL *fygln* (cf. class 3.2). Other examples of such umlauted plurals are *stoł* ‘sty, pigsty’ – *stoł(n)*, *opuł* ‘apple’ – *epułn*, *ciöel* ‘tail, weed’ – *cåln*, *niöel* ‘nail, claw’ – *nåln*, etc. The dative plural form in both subgroups regularly displays the consonant *n*: *engeln* ‘angels’ and *fygln* ‘birds’.

| SG | classical PL | new PL | DAT. | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>engl</i> | <i>engln</i> | <i>eng(i)eła (engel)</i> | <i>engeln</i> | ‘angels’ |
| <i>fögul</i> | <i>fygln</i> | <i>fgyła</i> | <i>fygln</i> | ‘birds’ |

The subtype of the *n*-plurals that originally displayed a shortening of the root vowel (see class 3.3) shows three tendencies. Some words preserve the expected pattern and shorten their vowel in the plural: SG *wiöen* ‘car’ – PL *wån*. More commonly, however, the singular (*štån* ‘stone’) or the plural (*hon* ‘cocks’ and *fan* ‘banners’) forms have been generalized for the entire paradigm:

SG *stån* ‘stone’ – PL *stån*, SG *hon* ‘cock’ – PL *hon*, SG *fan* ‘banner, flag’ – PL *fan*. Additionally, the noun *fan* ‘banner’ may also derive its plural by means of umlaut, viz. *fen*.

| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|----------|
| <i>wiöen</i> | <i>vån</i> | [classical PL form] | ‘car’ |
| <i>stån</i> | <i>stån</i> | [SG form generalized in PL] | ‘stone’ |
| <i>fan</i> | <i>fan</i> (<i>fen</i>) | [PL form generalized in SG or a new umlauted form in PL] | ‘banner’ |

The *n* plurals that are derived from singular words in *r* regularly follow the original declensions. Thus, the *er* masculine nouns substitute this ending by the morpheme *yn*: SG *teler* – PL ‘plate’ *tełyn*, SG *feter* ‘uncle’ – PL *fetyn*, SG *pater* ‘father’ – PL *patyn*, SG *koter* ‘cat’ – PL *kotyn*, SG *šiler* ‘teacher’ – PL *šilyn* (cf. class 3.4 in Kleczkowski). Some words preserve the vowel change: SG *foter* ‘father’ – PL *fatyn*. The nouns in *r*, such as *niöer* ‘fool, stupid, silly, dumb person’ (that belonged to class 3.5), regularly employ the plural in *en*: *niöen* (see also SG *fiöer* ‘priest’ – PL *fiöen*, SG *hjer* ‘lord, master, owner’ – PL *hjen*).⁸

| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
|--------------|----------------|----------|
| <i>teler</i> | <i>tełyn</i> | ‘plate’ |
| <i>foter</i> | <i>fatyn</i> | ‘father’ |

Finally, some rare masculine nouns preserve their irregular declensional patterns, although the speakers prefer synonymous words which are more regular as far as their declension is concerned: SG *üt* ‘place’ – PL *jytyn* (the word *płoc* ‘place’ is much more frequent), SG *mon* ‘man, husband’ – PL *menner* or SG *fulk* ‘folk, people’ – PL *felkjyn* (most frequently these words are replaced by *kłop* ‘man’). When the substantive *mon* ‘man’ is employed in compounds such as *koüftmon* ‘seller, trader’, its plural form is *lout*, viz. *koüfloüt*.

2.2. Feminine

2.2.1. Classical Vilamovicean

Similarly to the situation offered by the masculine nouns, all the feminine nouns can be divided into three main declensional classes in accordance with their plural form: nouns that derive the plural with no ending (class 1: SG *hand* ‘hand’ – PL *hend* ‘hands’); nouns that add the suffix *a* (class 2: SG *cajt* – PL *cajta* ‘time’); and nouns that display the ending *n* (class 3). Words that belong to the first class are very limited and regularly display umlaut in the plural: SG *gons* – PL *gens* ‘goose’ (analogically *banj* ‘bench’ – *benj*, *muøt* ‘girl, servant’ – *mād*, *kū* ‘cow’ – *kī*, *wond* ‘wall’ – *wend* and *Pulk* ‘Polish (woman)’ – *Pyłk*). On

⁸ The word *šwar* ‘abscess’ has its plural *šwan*.

the contrary, words from the second group, with plurals ending in *a*, are highly numerous. This group may be illustrated by substantives such as *byk'k* 'birch', *fuorv* 'color, paint', *ant* 'duck', *kraņkyt* 'disease', *gronn* 'fish-bone', *kyx'x* 'kitchen', *zax* 'thing, object'. The *a*-plurals seldom display umlaut: SG *kroft* 'force' – PL *krefta*. The plurals in *n* principally consist of three subtypes: class 3.1 – words that end in *l* or *l* add the ending *n* (SG *šul* 'school' – PL *šuln* and SG *āxsļ* 'axel, shoulder' – PL *āxsļn*); class 3.2 – nouns that end in *er* replace this suffix by *en* (SG *lāver* 'liver' – PL *lāvyn*; some may also display umlaut: SG *hūn* 'hen' – PL *hīnyn*); and class 3.3 – nouns that end in *n* in the singular display the ending *n* and the shortening of the root vowel (SG *cəjn* 'toe' – PL *cynn*). It should be noted that if the plural is suffix-less, the dative plural form regularly takes the ending *a* (cf. Class 1: DAT.PL *henda* 'hands', *benkja* 'benches'). In the remaining cases, the dative plural is identical to the shape of the other plural case endings (i.e. *a* or *n*). All the declension patterns of the feminine nouns available at the beginning of the 20th century, according to the evidence provided by Kleczkowski (1920: 131) can be summarized in the following manner:

| | | | |
|-----|---|---|----------|
| 1 | Plural in \emptyset (always with umlaut; DAT.PL in <i>-a</i>) | <i>hand</i> – <i>hend</i> – <i>henda</i> | 'hand' |
| 2 | Plural in <i>-a</i> | | |
| 2.1 | no-umlaut | <i>cajt</i> – <i>cajta</i> | 'time' |
| 2.2 | with umlaut | <i>kroft</i> – <i>krefta</i> | 'force' |
| 3 | Plural in <i>-n</i> | | |
| 3.1 | adding <i>-n</i> | <i>šul</i> – <i>šuln</i> | 'school' |
| 3.2 | <i>-er</i> > <i>-yn</i> | <i>lāver</i> – <i>lāvyn</i> (some with umlaut <i>hūn</i> – <i>hīnyn</i> 'hen') | 'liver' |
| 3.3 | <i>-n</i> > <i>-nn</i> and shortening | <i>cəjn</i> – <i>cynn</i> | 'toe' |

The evidence provided by Mojmir suggests that some feminine nouns which had originally formed their plural with no suffix (Class 1) could offer by-forms with the ending *a* in the entire plural paradigm, additionally losing the typical umlaut. For example, the word *zau* 'swine' may display the plural *zaua* beside the regular *zōj*.

2.2.2. 21st century

In general, feminine nouns are less susceptible to modifications of their original declensional patterns. Nouns belonging to class 1 most frequently continue to derive the plural by means of a mere umlaut, i.e. without any additional suffixes: SG *gonz* 'goose' – PL *genz*. This class is poorly represented, being restricted to a few, albeit highly frequent, words: *hand* 'hand' – *hend*, *bank* 'bench' – *benk*, *mīoed* 'girl, servant' – *mād*, *ku* 'cow' – *ki* and *Pulk* 'Pole (fm.)' – *Pylk*. Nevertheless, new plural forms may also be found, although highly infrequently. To be

exact, some words (for instance, *Pulk* ‘Pole’) present alternative plural forms in *a*, in either umlauted (*Pylkja*) or non-umlauted (*Pulkja*) forms. The dative plural regularly displays the ending *a*: *henda* ‘hends’ (cf. also *benkja* ‘benches’, *mada* ‘girls’, *kija* ‘cows’, *wenda* ‘walls’ and *Pylkja* ‘Poles’).

| SG | classical PL | new PL | DAT | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| <i>gons</i> | <i>gens</i> | | <i>genza</i> | ‘goose’ |
| <i>Pulk</i> | <i>Pylk</i> | (<i>Pylkja</i> , <i>Pulkja</i>) | <i>Pylkja</i> | ‘Pole’ |

The majority of the feminine nouns derive their plural through the employment of the suffix *a*: SG *cåjt* ‘time’ – PL *cåjta*. This is by far the most dominant declensional pattern of the feminine substantives by far, and the pattern is followed by a great number of nouns, e.g. *fiöerw* ‘color, paint’, *ånt* ‘duck’, *krankyt* ‘disease’, *gron* ‘fish-bone’, *zah* ‘thing, object’, *zoü* ‘pig’ and *kyh* ‘kitchen’ (PL *kyhja*), (and many others). It should be noted that since all the plural forms display the suffix *a*, the dative plural also presents the ending *a*, i.e. *cåjta*. Typically, the plural forms are non-umlauted although some umlauted forms may also be encountered: SG *kraft* ‘strength’ – PL *krefta*. On the other hand, one seldom finds non-umlauted variants of a word that originally displayed umlaut (*krafta* instead of *krefta* ‘strengths’).

| SG | classical PL (incl. DAT) | new PL | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <i>cåjt</i> | <i>cåjta</i> | | ‘time’ |
| <i>kraft</i> | <i>krefta</i> | (<i>krafta</i>) | ‘strength’ |

The third declensional paradigm of feminine nouns derives the plural by means of the morpheme *n*. In all such words, the dative plural is marked by the *n* ending as well. Subgroup 3.1 of the *n* feminine nouns, which consists of words that derive their plural by adding the suffix *n* to the non-umlauted form, is well preserved in contemporary Vilamovicean. It typically includes nouns that end in a liquid consonant *l* or *l*: SG *aksul* ‘axel, shoulder’ – PL *aksuln* (see also *wyndul* ‘diaper’ – *wynduln*, *gåsul* ‘whip’ – *gåsuln*, *måjl* ‘mile’ – *måjln* or *kwał* ‘well, spring’ – *kwałn*). However, the word *šül* ‘school’ – whose plural form was *šüln/šuln* at the beginning of the 20th century – nowadays regularly displays an umlauted shape, i.e. *šiln*.

| SG | classical PL (incl. DAT) | new Pl (incl. DAT) | |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <i>aksul</i> | <i>aksuln</i> | | ‘axel’ |
| <i>šül</i> | | <i>šiln</i> | ‘school’ |

The inflectional pattern of feminine nouns in *er* (class 3.2) remains almost unchanged and consists of replacing the ending *er* by *yn*: SG *fader* ‘feather’ – PL *fadyñ* (cf. also *lawer* ‘liver’ – *lawyn*, *moüer* ‘wall’ – *moüyn* and *müter* ‘mother’ – *mütyñ*). However, the word *hün* ‘hen’ which still offers the plural with a vowel

fluctuation, i.e. *hinyn* ‘hens’, also possesses an alternative new form with the identical vowel as in the singular, i.e. *hünyn*.⁹

| SG | classical PL (incl. DAT) | new PL (incl. DAT) | |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| <i>fader</i> | <i>fadyn</i> | | ‘feather’ |
| <i>hün</i> | <i>hinyn</i> | <i>hünyn</i> | ‘hen’ |

The last group of *n* plurals includes feminine nouns that, in accordance with the situation described by Kleczkowski (1920), shorten the root vowel in the plural: SG *bejn* ‘bee’ – PL *byn*, SG *šejn* ‘rail’ – PL *šyn* and SG *cejn* ‘toe’ – PL *cyn*. However, in several cases, the root vowel fails to experience any modification: SG *korün* ‘crown’ – PL *korün*, SG *mâšin* ‘machine’ – PL *mâšin*. It is possible to assume that such substantives were transferred to class 1, although without displaying the distinctive umlaut marking. They thus constitute a sub-type of the class of suffix-less plurals, a class that previously did not exist. Additionally, these words (especially those that have non-modified plurals) introduce a secondary *a*-ending in the dative plural: SG *krön* ‘crown’ – PL *krön* – DAT.PL *kröna*; SG *mašin* ‘machine’ – PL *mašin* – DAT.PL *mašina*; and SG *cejn* ‘toe’ – PL *cyn* – DAT.PL *cyna*.

| SG | classical PL | new PL | classical DAT | new DAT | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| <i>cejn</i> | <i>cyn</i> | | <i>cyn</i> | <i>cyna</i> | ‘toe’ |
| <i>mâšin</i> | | <i>mâšin</i> | | <i>mâšina</i> | ‘machine’ |

2.3. Neuter

2.3.1. Classical Vilamovicean

According to Kleczkowski (1920: 130–131), most neuter nouns have the same form in the singular and plural (class 1 of plurals in \emptyset): SG *bett* ‘bed’ – PL *bett* or SG *knī* ‘knee’ – PL *knī*. These words regularly form their dative plural by adding the ending *a*: *betta* ‘beds’ or *knija* ‘knees’ (class 1.1). This class also includes highly common (diminutive) neuters in *la*, in which the dative plural ending is, obviously, indistinguishable from the singular and plural forms: SG *rajnla* ‘stew-pan’ – PL (incl. DAT) *rajnla* (class 1.2). Few neuter nouns add the suffix *a* in the plural: SG *aug* ‘eye’ – PL *auga* (class 2.1). The dative plural is, again, identical with the nominative and accusative plural forms. Infrequently, such substantives also display the ending *a* in the dative singular: SG *hacc* ‘heart’ – PL *hacca* – DAT.SG *hacca*. As is the case with various masculine and feminine nouns, some neuter substantives derive their plurals by adding the suffix *n* (class 3). Nouns that end in a syllabic *l* or *l̥* merely add the ending *n* (class 3.1: SG *fākļ* ‘torch’ – PL *fākļn*) to form the plural. Nouns that end in *er*

⁹ The word *tjyr* forms its plural as *tjyn*.

substitute this ending by *yn*: SG *masser* ‘knife’ – PL *massyn* (class 3.2). Nouns that end in *n* shorten the root vowel: SG *bān* ‘bone, leg’ – PL *bann* (class 3.3). Some other nouns, which end in other consonants, add the ending *yn* (class 3.4): either to the non-umlauted form SG *kynt* ‘child’ – PL *kyndyn* or SG *klāt* ‘cloth’ – PL *klātyn*) or to the umlauted one (SG *glōs* ‘glass’ – PL *glȳzyn*). All the declensional patterns of the neuter nouns described by Kleczkowski can be summarized in the following manner:

| | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Plural in \emptyset | | | |
| 1.1 | Dat.Pl. <i>-a</i> | <i>bett</i> – <i>bett</i> | | ‘bed’ |
| 1.2 | indeclinable in <i>-la</i> | <i>rajnla</i> – <i>rajnla</i> | | ‘stew-pan’ |
| 2 | Plural in <i>-a</i> | | | |
| 2.1 | no ending in SG | <i>aug</i> – <i>auga</i> | | ‘eye’ |
| 2.2. | DAT.SG in <i>-a</i> | <i>hacc</i> – <i>hacca</i> – <i>hacca</i> | | ‘heart’ |
| 3 | Plural in <i>-n</i> | | | |
| 3.1 | <i>-n</i> | <i>fākļ</i> – <i>fākļn</i> | | ‘torch’ |
| 3.2 | <i>-er</i> > <i>-yn</i> | <i>masser</i> – <i>massyn</i> | | ‘knife’ |
| 3.3 | <i>-n</i> > <i>-nn</i> and shortening | <i>bān</i> – <i>bann</i> | | ‘bone’ |
| 3.4 | <i>-yn</i> | no umlaut with umlaut | <i>klāt</i> – <i>klātyn</i> <i>glōs</i> – <i>glȳzyn</i> | ‘cloth’ ‘glass’ |

The data offered by Mojmir indicates that, before the Second World War, certain nouns which had the suffix-less plural (class 1.1) introduced the vowel *a* to the plural declension, cf. SG *jēv* ‘field’ – PL *jēva* instead of the older plural *jēv*. As a result, such words were transferred to pattern 2.1: SG *aug* ‘eye’ – PL *auga*.

2.3.2. 21st century

Neuter nouns constitute the group of substantives that has experienced the most limited degree of modification when compared to the situation before the Second World War. The subtype of suffix-less plurals (class 1.1) is still widely documented. Various monosyllabic lexemes (such as *brat* ‘board’, *mjer* ‘sea’, *kni* ‘knee’, *kroūc* ‘cross’, *hemb* ‘shirt’, *flāk* ‘post, stake’, *moūl* ‘mouth’, *ban* ‘railway’, etc.) belong here. The dative plural is regularly marked by the ending *a*: *brata* ‘boards’, *hembra* ‘shirts’, *flāka* ‘posts’ or *moūla* ‘mouths’. In some dative plurals the glide *j* appears: *knija* ‘knees’ and *flākja* ‘posts’.

| | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|--------|
| SG | PL | DAT | |
| <i>bet</i> | <i>bet</i> | <i>beta</i> | ‘bed’ |
| <i>kni</i> | <i>kni</i> | <i>knija</i> | ‘knee’ |

The neuter nouns in *a* are indeclinable, showing the ending *a* in all cases in the singular and plural, e.g. *rajnla* ‘stew-pan’ (cf. class 1.2). This pattern is also representative of diminutives in *la*, such as *bichla* ‘book’.

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------|
| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
| <i>bichła</i> | <i>bichła</i> | ‘book’ |

Few neuter nouns continue deriving their plural by adding the vowel *a* (see class 2.1): SG *oüg* ‘eye’ – PL *oüga* (also *wang* ‘cheek’ and *celt* ‘tent’). The dative plural is logically in *a*, just like the remaining cases of the plural. It should be observed that, in contemporary times, the dative singular ending in *a* – which is still present before the Second World War in substantives belonging to class 2.2 – is lost, and the singular declension is entirely suffix-less: NOM-ACC-DAT.SG *hac* ‘heart’.

| | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|---------|
| SG | new DAT.SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
| <i>oüg</i> | | <i>oüga</i> | ‘eye’ |
| <i>hac</i> | <i>hac</i> | <i>haca</i> | ‘heart’ |

In accordance with the pattern described by Kleczkowski (1920), certain neuter nouns construct their plurals by means of the ending *n*. Words that end in the liquid consonants *l* and *ł* commonly add the bare *n*: SG *fâkl* ‘torch’ – PL *fâkln*, SG *tâl* ‘part’ – PL *tâln*, SG *bâjł* ‘axe’ – PL *bâjln*, SG *bynzul* ‘ribbon’ – PL *bynzuln* (class 3.1). Following the norm offered by Kleczkowski (1920), neuter nouns in *er* replace this ending by the morpheme *yn* in the plural: SG *masser* ‘knife’ – PL *massyn* or SG *oüter* ‘udder’ – PL *öutyn*.¹⁰ Likewise, the substantives that end in *-r* preserve their declension and substitute *r* by the ending *n*: SG *rür* ‘pipe, tube’ – PL *rün* (cf. also *ür* ‘ear’, *jür* ‘year’ and *tür* ‘gate’). As a whole, this class of neuter nouns fails to experience any modification in comparison to the state of Classical Vilamovicean.

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------|
| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
| <i>fâkl</i> | <i>fâkln</i> | ‘torch’ |
| <i>maser</i> | <i>masyn</i> | ‘knife’ |
| <i>rür</i> | <i>rün</i> | ‘pipe’ |

Finally, some neuter nouns, which end in consonants other than those enumerated above, add the ending *yn* in the plural. The plural form may itself be non-umlauted SG *kind* ‘child’ – PL *kyndyn* (cf. also *rynd* ‘cattle’, *klâd* ‘cloth’ and *bând* ‘band’) or umlauted SG *wüt* ‘word’ – PL *wjytyn* (cf. also *blot* ‘leaf’ – *blýtyn*, *głoz* ‘glass’ – *głyzyn*, *bod* ‘bath’ – *bydyn*, *łöh* ‘hole’ – *leh(j)yn*, *kołp* ‘calf’ – *kelvyn* and *fas* ‘barrel’ – *fasyn*). Again, no changes have taken place in the modern language.

| | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------|
| SG | PL (incl. DAT) | |
| <i>kynd</i> | <i>kyndyn</i> | ‘child’ |
| <i>wüt</i> | <i>wjytyn</i> | ‘word’ |

¹⁰ Observe that according to Mojmir (1930–1936: 309, 316), the word *oüter* was a masculine noun.

2.4. Addendum – vocative case

As mentioned before, the descriptions of the Vilamovicean language typically distinguish three cases which are productive in the nominal system: nominative, accusative and dative. The genitive case had already disappeared as a vivid functional category at the beginning of the 20th century (cf. Kleczkowski 1920: 127). No other case categories have been reported for Vilamovicean. In particular, no grammatical study devoted to the Vilamovicean language – especially not Kleczkowski (1920), Mojmir (1930–1936) and Lasatowicz (1992) – has detected the vocative case as a grammatical category relevant to this tongue. Our evidence, however, suggests that although the function of a vocative case is nowadays most commonly conveyed by the nominative, certain words possess a specific vocative singular form in *y*, which is distinct from the nominative and other cases. These words are: NOM *müm* – VOC *mümy!* ‘mom!’, NOM *büw* – VOC *büwy!* ‘boy!’, NOM *bow* – VOC *bowy!* ‘wife, woman’, NOM *pot* – VOC *poty!* ‘godfather’, NOM *loüt* – VOC *loüty!* ‘people’ and NOM *knâht* – VOC *knâhty!* ‘lad’. These instances of the vocative case present in the 21st century Vilamovicean are certainly archaic relics, unfortunately missed in the descriptions from the 20th century.¹¹

3. Conclusion

The evidence demonstrates that, although classical plurals frequently persist, various novel forms have emerged. As far as the masculine substantives are concerned, the ending *a* is nowadays widely employed with nouns that originally derived their plural in a suffix-less manner (\emptyset -nouns), either with umlaut (cf. new plurals *pyša*, *puša*, *cyna*, *cannja*, *zekja*, *zakja* and *šruma*) or without it (cf. new plurals *kyza* and *kyngja*). According to the classical pattern, both types displayed the vowel *a* only in the dative plural. The ending *la* derives common plural by-forms of nouns that initially only offered a suffix-less plural (cf. a new form *pyšla*) and nouns that formed their plurals with the ending *n* (cf. the new plurals of the following *n*-nouns: *eng(i)eła* and *fygyla*). Likewise, the \emptyset -nouns that end in *l* or *ł* (their original DAT.PL is in *n*) may show the new plural in *la*, cf. *štejła*, *štíła* and *štuła*. However, in this case, the suffix *la* may correspond

¹¹ This suffix has, most likely, been derived from older diminutive formations. Observe that in German (and other Germanic languages, for instance in Icelandic) the suffix *i* is employed as a productive derivational morpheme in hypocoristics such as *Mami*, *Opi* or *Berni* (cf. also Icelandic *Palli* or *Kalli*). Since hypocoristics are commonly used in addressing, they are also likely to be employed in a vocative function. On the other hand, however, it should be noted that in Vilamovicean diminutives are derived by means of the suffix *la*. Consequently, if the Vilamovicean vocatives are reflexes of an earlier diminutive, their generalization as vocatives must correspond to an old phenomenon.

to the suffixation of both the original *a* and *la* (i.e. *štejl* + *a* or *štejl* + *la*). Additionally, in certain cases, the shape of a new alternative plural corresponds to the shape of the singular form. Put differently, the singular has been generalized in the plural; for instance *kynk* (\emptyset -nouns: loss of voicing), *puš*, *can* and *zak* (\emptyset -nouns: loss of the umlaut), *štuł* (*n*-nouns: loss of the umlaut) and *štân* (*n*-nouns that end in *n* in the singular: lack of the vowel shortening). Sometimes, it is the plural form that has been generalized in the singular (cf. the new singular *fan*). In certain cases, the ending *n* appears in all plural forms of the \emptyset -nouns that originally had their dative plural in *n* (*štejln* and *štîln*), and very rarely in the plural of \emptyset -nouns that formed their dative plural in *a* (*kyngjen*). As already mentioned, various plural by-forms fail to present the original umlaut and display the vowel of the singular (cf. new plurals *puša*, *puš*, *cannja*, *can*, *zakja*, *zak*, *štuła* and *štuł*). Very infrequently, a new umlauted form is introduced to the plural (cf. *fen*). Likewise rarely, innovative morphemes that are doubly marked appear, e.g. *a* + *n*: *štejlan*.

With respect to the feminine nouns, all the classical plural forms are generally preserved. However, certain new by-forms have appeared. In some cases, such novel constructions have entirely substituted the old forms. The ending *a* appears in the plural of some \emptyset -nouns (cf. *Pylkja*, *Pulkja*). The vowel of the singular is sometimes generalized in the plural and, thus, the umlaut is lost (cf. *krafta* and *hünyn*). In the case of the word *mâšîn*, the singular form has entirely substituted the older plural. On the other hand, new umlauted forms may appear in the plural, cf. the plural *šîln* that has replaced the classical non-umlauted form. Some words that used to derive their plurals in *n* (and that end in *n* in the singular) have developed a new dative plural in *a*, and eventually they employ a double marking *n* + *a*: *cyna* and *mâšina*.

In contrast to the masculine and feminine substantives, neuter nouns seem to maintain the classical declension almost with no modifications. The only change corresponds to the loss of the ending *a* in the dative singular (cf. *hac*). In this manner, neuter nouns became entirely indeclinable in the singular, in comparison to the masculine substantives which typically preserve the accusative and dative endings in the singular.

If both gender and phonetic environment are envisaged, certain major tendencies in the development of cases may be detected. Masculine nouns that end in a consonant (including those that finish in *l* and *ł*) evolve towards the ending *a*. In this manner, an immense majority of nouns derive their plural in *a* (class 1, 2 and 3.1 and 3.2). Nouns that end in *n* in the singular tend to regularize the same vowel in the singular and plural. Substantives in *er* regularly preserve their pattern and offer the plural in *yn*. Additionally, substantives that end in *l* or *ł* develop towards the ending *n*. In this manner, masculine nouns in *l* or *ł* that had a suffix-less classical plural, present two types of adjustment: one is determined by the gender (in accordance with the majority of nouns, they

evolve towards the plural in *a*) while the other is conditioned by the phonetic context (in accordance with the *n* plural offered by various nouns in *l* and *ł*, including feminine and neuter substantives [cf. this paragraph, below], they develop towards the plural in *n*). Feminine nouns in consonants also tend to evolve towards the plural in *a* (this group was dominant already by 1920; cf. Kleczkowski's classes 1 and 2). The nouns that end in *l* or *ł* conserve the ending *n*. The words that end in the singular in *n* suffer regularizing changes: in most cases, they lose the umlaut (they also develop a new dative plural in *a*). The words in *er* consistently preserve the suffix *yn*. Neuter nouns that end in a consonant (other than *l* and *ł*) develop towards the \emptyset -plural. Those whose final consonant is *l* or *ł* regularly form their plural in *n*. Neuter substantives ending in *la* are indeclinable. And, yet again, nouns that finish in *er* maintain the ending *yn*. Finally, the masculine nouns seem to preserve the singular declension in the accusative and dative (the ending *a*), while the feminine and neuter fail to display any special case marking for oblique cases in the singular.

Consequently, it is possible to conclude that changes in the shape of various plural and singular forms are imposed upon both by the gender and the given phonetic context. In this manner, morphological and phonetic factors jointly determine the innovations in the nominal systems of the Modern Vilamovician language.

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