

SOME REMARKS ON THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE ITALIAN RELATIVE PRONOUN *CUI* AND THE ROMANIAN RELATIVE PRONOUN *CARE*

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Abstract: The article approaches a topic that is challenging primarily because of the terminology used in the source and target languages: the correspondence between the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, which is only used as an indirect object (i.e. a complement of specification, a receiver complement, a topical complement, etc.) and the corresponding Romanian pronoun *care*, acting as a pronominal modifier in the genitive case, as an indirect object in the dative case (without a preposition) or as a prepositional indirect object in the accusative case.

Keywords: *cui*, *care*, relative pronoun, terminology, correspondence.

1. This contrastive analysis of Italian and Romanian language approaches a linguistic issue that raises various challenges; this is mostly due to the diverse terminology in the source and target languages, as well as to the fact that, in Romanian, changes affect not only the article, but also the relative pronoun, depending on its position to the noun it modifies.

2. To begin with, we should remember that the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, which only operates as an indirect object, is invariable and can be used for both genders and numbers:

(1)

- a. *Questa è la signora di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
- b. *Il corso a cui partecipo è molto interessante.*
- c. *Questi sono i motivi per cui ti ho chiamato.*
- d. *Le fotografie tra cui stai cercando sono molto vecchie.*

Among the various types of Italian indirect objects, the complement of specification and the receiver complement occupy a special place; for this reason, we shall deal with the pronoun *cui* operating as a complement of specification, and then as a receiver complement.

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2.1. When acting as a *complement of specification*¹, the relative pronoun *cui* follows the relevant noun and is preceded by the simple preposition *di* (as in (2a)). An exception occurs when the invariable pronoun *cui* acting as a complement of specification is placed between a definite article (as in (2b)) or an articulated preposition (as in (2c)) and a noun:

(2)

- a. *Conosco di vista molte persone **di cui** però non ricordo il nome.*
- b. *Il signore **il cui** linguaggio è pieno di neologismi è filologo.*
- c. *Questo è il signore **del cui** figlio ti ho parlato.*

2.1.1. The Romanian equivalent of the invariable relative pronoun *cui*, preceded by the simple preposition *di*, acting as a *complement of specification*, is the variable pronoun *care* in the genitive case, acting as a pronominal modifier in the genitive case².

Let us look at this correspondence by means of examples. The noun from the main clause that is replaced is, in both languages, in masculine singular (example (3)), in feminine singular (example (4)), in masculine plural (example (5)) and feminine plural (example (6)), respectively. In both languages as well, the modified noun in the subordinate clause is in feminine singular:

(3)

- Claudio, **di cui** conosci l'intelligenza, è stato promosso.*
- Claudio, **a căru**i inteligență o cunoști, a fost promovat.*

(4)

- Paola, **di cui** conosci l'intelligenza, è stata promossa.*
- Paola, **a cărei** inteligență o cunoști, a fost promovată.*

(5)

- Claudio e Sergio, **di cui** conosci l'intelligenza, sono stati promossi.*
- Claudio și Sergio, **a căror** inteligență o cunoști, au fost promovați.*

(6)

- Paola e Luisa, **di cui** conosci l'intelligenza, sono state promosse.*
- Paola e Luisa, **a căror** inteligență o cunoști, au fost promovate.*

¹ The Italian complement of specification helps specify the meaning of the term it refers to. It always modifies a noun and is preceded by the preposition *di*, either simple or articulated (Maurizio Dardano – Pietro Trifone, *Grammatica italiana. Con nozioni di linguistica*, Terza edizione, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1995, p. 113).

² *Gramatica limbii române*, 2nd volume, 2nd edition revised and supplemented, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing, 1966, pp. 132–133.

As it can be seen, when Italian language uses the invariable relative pronoun *cui* preceded by the simple preposition *di* acting as a *complement of specification*, equivalent to the Romanian variable pronoun *care* in the genitive case acting as a pronominal modifier in the genitive case, the relative pronoun is placed after the noun(s) from the main clause that it replaces (examples (3)-(6)), in both languages. The difference is that the relative pronoun is invariable in Italian, while in Romanian it is variable, precedes the modified noun in the subordinate clause and has the forms *căru* (m. sg.) in (3), *cărei* (f. sg.) in (4), *căror* (m. and f. pl.) in (5) and (6), respectively. Moreover, in Italian, the pronoun is preceded by the simple preposition *di*, whose equivalent in Romanian is the variable possessive article (see later), here used in the feminine singular, because the possessive article agrees in gender and number with the noun modified by the relative pronoun in the subordinate clause.

2.1.2. We shall now deal with the case when the invariable pronoun *cui* acting as a complement of specification is placed between the definite article and the modified noun. In the equivalent Romanian structure, the pronoun *care* (variable) is placed between the possessive article³ (variable) and the modified noun.

2.1.2.1. Firstly, let us look at the situation when, in both Italian and Romanian, the replaced noun in the main clause is in masculine singular (as in (7)) and in plural (as in (8)), respectively. The modified noun in the subordinate, in both Italian and Romanian, is in masculine singular in (7a, 8a), in feminine singular in (7b, 8b), in masculine plural in (7c, 8c) and in feminine plural in (7d, 8d):

(7)

- a. *Questo è il signore il cui figlio sarà premiato.*
Acesta este domnul al căru fiu va fi premiat.
 b. *Questo è il signore la cui figlia sarà premiata.*
Acesta este domnul a căru fiică va fi premiată.
 c. *Questo è il signore i cui figli saranno premiati.*
Acesta este domnul ai căru fii vor fi premiați.
 d. *Questo è il signore le cui figlie saranno premiate.*
Acesta este domnul ale căru fiice vor fi premiate.

(8)

- a. *Questi sono i signori il cui figlio sarà premiato.*
Aceștia sunt domnii al căror fiu va fi premiat.

³ In Romanian, according to the expressed degree of individualization, a distinction is made between the definite and the indefinite article. The category of the definite article includes the definite article in its own right, the possessive or genitival article and the demonstrative or adjectival article (see *Gramatica limbii române*, 1st volume, 2nd edition revised and supplemented, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing, 1966, p. 97 and Mioara Avram, *Gramatica pentru toți*, 3rd edition, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 2001, p. 89).

- b. *Questi sono i signori **la cui figlia** sarà premiata.
Aceștia sunt domnii **a căror fiică** va fi premiată.*
- c. *Questi sono i signori **i cui figli** saranno premiati.
Aceștia sunt domnii **ai căror fii** vor fi premiați.*
- d. *Questi sono i signori **le cui figlie** saranno premiate.
Aceștia sunt domnii **ale căror fiice** vor fi premiate.*

As it can be noticed, the definite article only agrees with the modified noun in the subordinate clause in Italian language, since the pronoun *cui* is invariable. Unlike the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, the Romanian equivalent *care*, which is variable, agrees in gender and number with the noun in the main clause that it substitutes, hence it has the masculine singular form *căru* in (7) and the masculine plural form *căror* in (8), as it precedes the determined noun in the subordinate clause. The possessive article, as the definite article in Italian, agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause.

2.1.2.2. We shall now move on to the case when the noun in the main clause is in feminine singular in (9) and plural in (10). The determined noun in the subordinate clause is in masculine singular in (9a, 10a), feminine singular in (9b, 10b), masculine plural in (9c, 10c) and feminine plural in (9d, 10d):

- (9)
- a. *Questa è la signora **il cui nipote** sarà premiato.
Aceasta este doamna **al cărei nepot** va fi premiat.*
- b. *Questa è la signora **la cui nipote** sarà premiata.
Aceasta este doamna **a cărei nepoată** va fi premiată.*
- c. *Questa è la signora **i cui nipoti** saranno premiati.
Aceasta este doamna **ai cărei nepoți** vor fi premiați.*
- d. *Questa è la signora **i cui figli** saranno premiati.
Aceasta este doamna **ale cărei nepoate** vor fi premiate.*

- (10)
- a. *Queste sono le signore **il cui nipote** sarà premiato.
Acestea sunt doamnele **al căror nepot** va fi premiat.*
- b. *Queste sono le signore **la cui nipote** sarà premiata.
Acestea sunt doamnele **a căror nepoată** va fi premiată.*
- c. *Queste sono le signore **i cui nipoti** saranno premiati.
Acestea sunt doamnele **ai căror nepoți** vor fi premiați.*
- d. *Queste sono le signore **le cui nipoti** saranno premiate.
Acestea sunt doamnele **ale căror nepoate** vor fi premiate.*

As it can be noticed, in this case too the definite article only agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause in Italian language, since the pronoun

cui is invariable. Unlike the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, the Romanian equivalent *care*, which is variable, agrees in gender and number with the substituted noun from the main clause, i.e. it has the feminine singular form *cărei* in (9) and the feminine plural form *căror* in (10), since it precedes the determined noun in the subordinate clause. The possessive article, like the definite article in Italian, agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause.

2.1.2.3. Since Romanian language also has the neutral gender, unlike Italian, we shall now look at the cases when, both in Italian and Romanian, the substituted noun in the main clause is in masculine singular in (11a, b) and in plural in (11c, d). In Romanian, the determined noun in the subordinate clause is in neutral singular in (11a, c) and in neutral plural (in 11b, d), while the Italian equivalent is in masculine singular in (11a, c) and in masculine plural in (11b, d):

(11)

- a. *Questo è il signore **il cui romanzo** sarà presentato.*
*Acesta este domnul **al căru** roman va fi prezentat.*
- b. *Questo è il signore **i cui romanzi** saranno presentati.*
*Acesta este domnul **ale căru** romane vor fi prezentate.*
- c. *Questi sono i signori **il cui romanzo** sarà presentato.*
*Aceștia sunt domnii **al căror** roman va fi prezentat.*
- d. *Questi sono i signori **i cui romanzi** saranno presentati.*
*Aceștia sunt domnii **ale căror** romane vor fi prezentate.*

As it can be noticed, the definite article only agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause in Italian language, since the pronoun *cui* is invariable. Unlike the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, the Romanian equivalent *care*, which is variable, agrees with the substituted noun from the main clause, i.e. it has the masculine singular form *căru* in (11a, b) and the masculine plural form *căror* in (11c, d), since it precedes the determined noun in the subordinate clause. The possessive article, instead, like the definite article in Italian, agrees in gender and number with the determined noun in the subordinate clause and has the form *al* for neutral singular (similar to the masculine singular form) in (11a, c) and *ale* for neutral plural (similar to the feminine plural form) in (11b, d), as the neutral gender works like the masculine gender in the singular and like the feminine gender in the plural.

We shall repeat the demonstration changing the gender of the substituted noun in the main clause: the noun in the main clause is in feminine singular in (12a, b) and in plural in (12c, d). As in the previous point, in Romanian, the determined noun in the subordinate clause is in neutral singular in (12a, c) and in neutral plural (in 12 b, d), while the Italian equivalent is in masculine singular in (12a, c) and in masculine plural in (12b, c):

- (12)
- a. *Questa è la signora **il cui romanzo** sarà presentato.*
*Aceasta este doamna **al cărei roman** va fi prezentat.*
- b. *Questa è la signora **i cui romanzi** saranno presentati.*
*Aceasta este doamna **ale cărei romane** vor fi prezentate.*
- c. *Queste sono le signore **il cui romanzo** sarà presentato.*
*Acestea sunt doamnele **al căror roman** va fi prezentat.*
- d. *Queste sono le signore **i cui romanzi** saranno presentati.*
*Acestea sunt doamnele **ale căror romane** vor fi prezentate.*

As it can be noticed, the definite article only agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause in Italian language, since the pronoun *cui* is invariable. Unlike the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, the Romanian equivalent *care*, which is variable, agrees with the substituted noun from the main clause, i.e. it has the feminine singular form *cărei* in (12a, b) and the feminine plural form *căror* in (12c, d), since it precedes the determined noun in the subordinate clause. The possessive article, instead, like the definite article in Italian, agrees in gender and number with the determined noun in the subordinate clause and has the form *al* for neutral singular (similar to the masculine singular form) in (12a, c) and *ale* for neutral plural (similar to the feminine plural form) in (12b, d), as the neutral gender works like the masculine gender in the singular and like the feminine gender in the plural.

2.1.3. In Italian, in the sequence preposition – definite article, some prepositions and the article merge resulting in the so-called articulated prepositions. Let us analyse the case when the Italian invariable pronoun *cui* acting as a complement of specification is placed between an articulated preposition and the determined noun. In the equivalent Romanian construction, since Romanian language does not have articulated prepositions, the pronoun *care* (variable) is placed, as seen above, between the possessive article (variable) and the determined noun. In (13), both in Italian and Romanian, the substituted noun in the main clause is in masculine singular, while in (14) the substituted noun is in the feminine singular. The determined noun in the subordinate clause, both in Italian and Romanian, is in masculine singular in (13a, 14a), in feminine singular in (13b, 14b), in masculine plural in (13c, 14c) and in feminine plural in (13d, 14d):

- (13)
- a. *Questo è il signore **del cui figlio** ti ho parlato.*
*Acesta este domnul **despre al căruia fiu** ți-am vorbit.*
- b. *Questo è il signore **della cui figlia** ti ho parlato.*
*Acesta este domnul **despre a căruia fiică** ți-am vorbit.*
- c. *Questo è il signore **dei cui figli** ti ho parlato.*
*Acesta este domnul **despre ai căruia fii** ți-am vorbit.*

d. *Questo è il signore delle cui figlie ti ho parlato.*
Aceasta este domnul despre ale cărui fiice ți-am vorbit.

(14)

a. *Questa è la signora del cui figlio ti ho parlato.*
Aceasta este doamna despre al cărei fiu ți-am vorbit.
 b. *Questa è la signora della cui figlia ti ho parlato.*
Aceasta este doamna despre a cărei fiică ți-am vorbit.
 c. *Questa è la signora dei cui figli ti ho parlato.*
Aceasta este doamna despre ai cărei fii ți-am vorbit.
 d. *Questa è la signora delle cui figlie ti ho parlato.*
Aceasta este doamna despre ale cărei fiice ți-am vorbit.

It is obvious that the articulated preposition only agrees with the determined noun in the subordinate clause in Italian language, since the pronoun *cui* is invariable. Unlike the Italian relative pronoun *cui*, the Romanian equivalent *care*, which is variable, agrees with the substituted noun from the main clause, i.e. it has the masculine singular form *cărui* in (13) and the feminine singular form *cărei* in (14), since it precedes the determined noun in the subordinate clause. The Italian articulated preposition is equivalent to a sequence of two words in Romanian: the corresponding preposition and the possessive article, which agrees in gender and number with the noun in the subordinate clause and has the form *al* for masculine singular in (13a, 14a), *a* for feminine singular in (13b, 14b), *ai* for masculine plural in (13c, 14c) and *ale* for feminine plural in (13d, 14d).

2.2. When acting as a *receiver complement*⁴, in Italian, the relative pronoun *cui* is preceded by the simple preposition *a*, which can also be absent, as in (15), and replaces a noun that indicates the person or the thing “receiving” the action expressed by the verb.

2.2.1. Whereas the form *a cui* acting as a *receiver complement* replaces a noun that indicates the person “receiving” the action expressed by the verb, its Romanian equivalent is the pronoun *care* in the dative case, acting as an indirect object without a preposition (according to GLR I 1966: 76) and varying in gender and number – with the forms *căruia* (m. sg.), *căreia* (f. sg.), *cărora* (m. and f. pl.).

The correspondence between the Italian invariable relative pronoun *cui* acting as a *receiver complement* and the Romanian variable relative pronoun *care* in the dative case acting as an indirect object without a preposition results from the following examples, where the substituted noun in the main clause is, in order, in

⁴ The Italian receiver complement indicates the person or the thing “receiving” the action expressed by the verb (Maurizio Dardano – Pietro Trifone, *op. cit.*, p. 114).

both languages, in masculine singular (in (15a)), in feminine singular (in (15b)), in masculine plural (in (15c)) and in feminine plural (in (15d)), respectively:

(15)

a. *L'amico a cui / cui ho esposto il mio problema mi ha offerto il suo aiuto.*

Prietenul căruia i-am prezentat problema mea, mi-a oferit ajutorul său.

b. *L'amica a cui / cui ho esposto il mio problema mi ha offerto il suo aiuto.*

Prietena căreia i-am prezentat problema mea, mi-a oferit ajutorul său.

c. *Gli amici a cui / cui ho esposto il mio problema mi hanno offerto il loro aiuto.*

Prietenii căroră le-am prezentat problema mea, mi-au oferit ajutorul lor.

d. *Le amiche a cui / cui ho esposto il mio problema mi hanno offerto il loro aiuto.*

Prietenele căroră le-am prezentat problema mea, mi-au oferit ajutorul lor.

2.2.2. While the form *a cui* acting as a *receiver complement* replaces a noun indicating the object “receiving” the action expressed by the verb, the Romanian equivalent of *a cui* is the relative pronoun *care*⁵ in the accusative case, acting as a prepositional indirect object.

The correspondence between the Italian invariable relative pronoun *cui* acting as a *receiver complement* and the Romanian relative pronoun *care* in the accusative case acting as a prepositional indirect object results from the following examples, where the substituted noun in the main clause is, in order, in Italian, in masculine singular (in (16a)), in feminine singular (in (16b)), in masculine plural (in (16c)) and in feminine plural (in (16d)), respectively; in Romanian, instead of the masculine noun, we have a neutral noun:

(16)

a. *Lo spettacolo a cui sto pensando dovrà essere davvero grandioso.*

Spectacolul la care mă gândesc va trebui să fie într-adevăr grandios.

b. *La festa a cui sto pensando dovrà essere davvero grandiosa.*

Petrecearea la care mă gândesc va trebui să fie într-adevăr grandioasă.

c. *Gli spettacoli a cui sto pensando dovranno essere davvero grandiosi.*

Spectacolele la care mă gândesc vor trebui să fie într-adevăr grandioase.

d. *Le feste a cui sto pensando dovranno essere davvero grandiose.*

Petrecerile la care mă gândesc vor trebui să fie într-adevăr grandioase.

As it can be seen, irrespectively of the gender and number of the replaced noun in the main clause, in Italian we always have the invariable pronoun *cui*,

⁵ In the accusative case, *care* has the same form in all three genders and in both numbers (*Gramatica limbii române*, vol. I, p. 161) and is preceded by the preposition required by the context.

preceded by the preposition *a*. In this case, the Romanian relative pronoun *care* also has the same form, irrespectively of the gender and number of the replaced noun in the main clause, and is preceded by the preposition *la*, required by the context.

2.3. For all other cases when the Italian relative pronoun *cui* is preceded by a preposition, the Romanian equivalent is the relative pronoun *care* in the accusative case, acting as a prepositional indirect object.

Let us depict this equivalence with the situation when the Italian invariable pronoun *cui* acts as a topical complement⁶ and is preceded by the preposition *di*, while the Romanian equivalent *care* is preceded by the corresponding preposition *despre*. In (17), the substituted noun in the main clause is, in order, in both languages, in masculine singular (in (17a)), in feminine singular (in (17b)), in masculine plural (in (17c)) and in feminine plural (in (17d)), respectively; in (18), the substituted noun in the main clause is, in Italian, in masculine singular (in (18a)) and in masculine plural (in (18b)), while in Romanian it is in neutral singular (in (18a)) and in neutral plural (in (18b)):

(17)

- a. *Questo è il signore di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Acesta este domnul despre care am vorbit ieri.
- b. *Questa è la signora di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Aceasta este doamna despre care am vorbit ieri.
- c. *Questi sono i signori di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Aceștia sunt domnii despre care am vorbit ieri.
- d. *Queste sono le signore di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Acestea sunt doamnele despre care am vorbit ieri.

(18)

- a. *Questo è il volume di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Acesta este volumul despre care am vorbit ieri.
- a. *Questi sono i volumi di cui abbiamo parlato ieri.*
Acestea sunt volumele despre care am vorbit ieri.

It results that, irrespectively of the gender and number of the substituted noun in the main clause, the same phenomenon is seen in both languages, in both examples (17) and (18): in Italian we always have the invariable relative pronoun *cui*, preceded by the preposition *di*, while in Romanian we always have the invariable relative pronoun *care* preceded by the preposition *despre*.

3. In conclusion, regarding the correspondence between the Italian relative pronoun *cui* acting as an indirect object and the equivalent Romanian pronoun

⁶ The topical complement shows the topic that someone is approaching and is “preceded by *di*, *su*, *intorno a*, *a proposito di*” (Maurizio Dardano – Pietro Trifone, *op. cit.*, p. 118).

care, which can act as a pronominal attribute in the genitive case, as an indirect object without preposition in the dative case or as a prepositional indirect object in the accusative case, the following situations can be identified:

1. The Italian invariable relative pronoun *cui*, preceded by the simple preposition *di*, acting as a *complement of specification*, is equivalent to the Romanian relative pronoun *care* (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the substituted noun in the main clause), acting as a pronominal attribute in the genitive case and preceded by the possessive article (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the determined noun in the subordinate clause).

2. While the Italian invariable pronoun acting as a complement of specification is placed between the definite article and the determined noun, in Romanian we have the same sequence: possessive article (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the determined noun in the subordinate clause) + the pronoun *care* (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the substituted noun in the main clause) + the determined noun.

3. Whereas the Italian invariable pronoun *cui* acting as a complement of specification is placed between the articulated preposition and the determined noun, in Romanian we have almost the same sequence: preposition + possessive article (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the determined noun in the subordinate clause) + the pronoun *care* (variable, agreeing in gender and number with the substituted noun in the main clause) + the determined noun. The difference is that Romanian language makes no distinction between simple prepositions and articulated prepositions.

4. While the Italian invariable relative pronoun *cui*, acting as a *receiver complement* succeeding the substituted noun in the main clause and being preceded by the simple preposition *a* replaces a noun indicating the person “receiving” the action expressed by the verb, the Romanian equivalent is the relative pronoun *care* in the dative case, acting as an indirect object without preposition, placed immediately after the replaced noun and agreeing in gender and number therewith.

5. While the Italian invariable relative pronoun *cui*, acting as a *receiver complement* succeeding the substituted noun in the main clause and being preceded by the simple preposition *a* replaces a noun indicating the object “receiving” the action expressed by the verb, the Romanian equivalent is the relative pronoun *care* in the accusative case, acting as an indirect object and preceded by the relevant preposition.

6. For all other cases when the Italian relative pronoun *cui* is preceded by a preposition, the Romanian equivalent is the relative pronoun *care* in the accusative case, acting as a prepositional indirect object, with the relevant preposition.