

**PROLang PGR Seminar  
Spotlight on... Romanian  
3pm, Tue 5th March  
The Masaryk Room, SSEES**

**Titles of Presentations, Abstracts and Speakers' Bios**

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Liu Jianrong:

Title: A Deviation Analysis of Chinese Students in the Process of Learning Romanian Phonetics

Synopsis: In recent years, with the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, the exchanges between China and Romania have become increasingly close, leading to a rising demand for foreign language talents. China has seen the establishment of Romanian language undergraduate programs in seven universities, contributing to a significant increase in the number of Chinese students studying Romanian. As Romanian and Chinese belong to different language families with substantial differences in their phonetic systems, Chinese students learning Romanian tend to exhibit certain regularities and commonalities in phonetic deviations. This paper employs a comparative analysis approach, studying audio recordings and dictation assignments of Chinese freshmen learning Romanian. It compares the similarities and differences in the phonetic features of Standard Mandarin Chinese and Modern Romanian, analyses the difficulties encountered by Chinese students in the process of learning Romanian phonetics, and provides suggestions for phonetic teaching methods.

Bio: Liu Jianrong is a first year doctoral student at Beijing Foreign Studies University, specializing in Romanian language and literature. She obtained undergraduate and master's degrees in Romanian language from Beijing Foreign Studies University (2009-2013). After graduating, She started teaching Romanian at Beijing International Studies University (2016-present), and was promoted to lecturer in 2018. Her main courses taught include: Elementary Romanian I-II, Intermediate Romanian I-II, Romanian National Conditions, History of Sino-Romanian Relations, Romanian-Chinese Translation.

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Jorina Fener:

Title: Speaking Romanian in Mallorca – Exploring Language Practices along Linguistic Domains and Attitudes

Synopsis: Romanian migration to Spain started in the early 1990s (cf. e.g. Anghel et al., 2019, p. 10; Marcu, 2022, p. 4), and in 2023 Romanians were the second largest migrant group in Spain (Ambasada României în Regatul Spaniei, 2024). Motives for migration to Spain may be found in the comparatively favourable economic conditions and low cost of living in Spain but also in the linguistic similarities between Romanian and Castilian-Spanish (Marcu, 2018, p. 3). With Balearic Catalan speakers of Romanian encounter another Romance language on

Mallorca which competes with Castilian-Spanish and the various languages of tourism (cf. e.g. Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2015; Moranta, 2015). Drawing on a series of semi-structured interviews, language portraits and linguistic landscape data my study explores the language practices and language attitudes of Romanian speakers in this multilingual context. In my presentation, I will show preliminary results that imply that the importance of Romanian is particularly based on the language domains of family and religion. Castilian-Spanish dominates the other parts of life and acts as a lingua franca between migrant communities as well as with the majority population. Catalan, however, plays a minor role in the language practices of Romanian speakers, although it was previously found as an important factor for social integration in Barcelona (Garrido, 2019).

Bio: Jorina Fenner is a PhD student in Romanian Studies at the Friedrich-Schiller University Jena and a research assistant for the project CRAFT-OA at TIB Hannover. Her dissertation project focuses on case studies of Romanian used outside of Romania or Moldova, more specifically in Serbia, Spain and Germany. She also has a special interest in the applications of open science and digital methods in the Humanities, especially in Romanian Studies.

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Inga Galben:

Title: Digital Communication and Language Hybridization: Exploring the Impact of Technology on Linguistic Evolution

Synopsis: The study examines some aspects of the impact of digital communication on language and the evolution of contemporary communication. Focusing on the intersection of technology and linguistics we will bring some results of our investigation of how digital platforms such as media, instant messaging, and online communities (most of them professional ones), serve as catalysts for linguistic innovations and the formation of hybrid aspects of language. The study also addresses some dynamics of language in its transition from one influence to another in the context of political and social changes. Rapid exchanges and cultural convergences foster the proliferation of hybrid forms. Understanding these processes is vital for monitoring the evolving nature of languages and for building a framework for language policies and identity.

Bio: Inga Galben is a PhD candidate in the field of sociolinguistics, with an academic background in Philology and International Relations. Inga draws her experience from activity in multinational companies and teams. Her research focuses on the hybridization of language, professional communication, and bilingualism.

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Fabian Heimlich

Title: Aspect in Istro-Romanian

Synopsis: Through contact with Chakavian Croatian, as well as Venetian, Istro-Romanian has several features that make it stand out quite distinctly from other Eastern Romance varieties and Romance at large. One of those features is concerned with the encoding of aspect in verb

stems, which closely resembles the Slavic aspect system. My thesis aims to offer a detailed description of aspect in Istro-Romanian, as well as contribute to theoretical discussions of aspect based on my findings. As a critically endangered language, it is vital to archive and describe Istro-Romanian now, when this is still possible. In my presentation, I will give a brief introduction of the contact situation which has shaped Istro-Romanian and showcase some of its aspectual characteristics with reference to Daco-Romanian, as well as Croatian, based on data from Zvezdana Vrzić's Documentation of Vlashki/Zheyanski (2018).

Bio: Before coming to Oxford, Fabian Heimrich completed his BA in Russian and Serbian/Croatian at UCL SSEES with a semester abroad each at the University of Sarajevo and Novosibirsk State University. He then earned an MPhil in Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics at Oxford, where he is now in the second year of his PhD. Throughout his studies, he has had a keen interest in language contact, especially in the context of marginalized and minoritized speech forms. Fabian's current research looks at a Vlaški/Žejanski, or Istro-Romanian, a Romance variety spoken on the Istrian Peninsula, Croatia. Other research interests include morphology, Queer linguistics, questions of language and identities, as well as the Balkan Sprachbund.

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Simina Dragos:

Title: The far-right visual grammar in present-day Romania: the case of the map of Greater Romania

Synopsis: In this presentation I use visual examples to trace the way the map of Greater Romania (the term refers to the borders of the Romanian state during 1918-1940) has been turned into a symbol used by far-right groups in the post-1989 period. Alongside analysing far-right imagery and symbolism, I show how Greater Romania is normalised as a political goal through maps curated for history education. Ultimately, I argue that the nationalism perpetuated in history education is reflected in far-right discourses, highlighting the politicisation of education and the ubiquitous nature of exclusionary politics perpetuated through cultural means in Romanian society.

Bio: Simina Dragoş (she/her) is an ESRC funded PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge. Her doctoral research explores aspects of historical culture in post-1989 Romania: maps, the national history curriculum, film and public remembrance spaces. Her MPhil dissertation received a Distinction from the University of Cambridge, and she has been invited to present her research in many fora in the UK and beyond, including Erasmus University Rotterdam, University of Bristol and the European Centre for Minority Issues. She is currently an Associate Lecturer in Sociology of Education at Anglia Ruskin University. She tweets @siminadragos26.

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Iona Ramsay:

Title: Transnational Orthodoxy and the Translation of Romanian Anti-Communism

Synopsis: This paper examines how accounts of 'spiritual resistance' to communism in Romania were translated and circulated transnationally through Orthodox networks from the 1970s to the 1990s. In doing so, this paper argues, linguistic translation also served as a form of political translation, helping to reframe spiritual resistance to communism as a model for other forms of political resistance around the world. The first part of the paper explores the role of linguistic and political translation during the late Cold War, focussing on the translation of important Romanian Christian anti-communist texts such as Gheorghe Calciu's 'Seven Sermons to the Youth' into English, French and German. It shows how these translations helped mobilise new forms of counter-cultural resistance against the de-spiritualised West. The second part of the paper examines the new wave of translation of Romanian religious texts in the 1990s, following the development of new transnational Orthodox exchanges, and the development of a politicised transnational 'spiritual nostalgia'. By tracing the translation, circulation and reception of these texts, the paper highlights the understudied role of Orthodox Christianity as an important, multi-lingual, transnationally interconnected space.

Bio: Iona Ramsay is an AHRC-funded fourth-year PhD candidate in history at the University of Exeter, supervised by Professor James Mark. Her thesis examines the memory and politics of Romanian 'spiritual resistance' to communism in transnational context, with particular attention to the development, circulation and political instrumentalization of Romanian memory in France and the United States. She has a BA in Theology and Religious Studies from the University of Cambridge and an MA in Religion in Global Politics from SOAS, University of London. Her main research interests include the relationship between religion, memory and sacred/secular spaces of democratic contestation.

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Stefania Costea

Title: When Balkan meets Latin and theory meets data: the case of Daco-Romance

Synopsis: My research focuses on the morphosyntactic developments that took place in early stages of Daco-Romance/common Romanian, as well as on the variation encountered in present-day Daco-Romance varieties, i.e. Daco-Romanian, Megleno-Romanian, Aromanian, and Istro-Romanian. It is often said that in the absence of extant texts we cannot have access to the language spoken by the local Balkan population before the arrival of Romans in Dacia. While it is true that we may never know how it sounded like, we can indeed reconstruct its structure at least partially using language contact theories and the comparative method. In my presentation I will offer a short description of the main Daco-Romance varieties (Romanian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, and Istro-Romanian) and I will explain to what extent their common ancestor can be argued to pattern with Balkan and (early) Romance varieties.

Bio: Stefania Costea is currently a final-year PhD student at the University of Cambridge where she works on comparative Daco-Romance diachronic and synchronic morphosyntax with Prof. Adam Ledgeway. Stefania is also teaching Romanian at Cambridge. Prior to this, Stefania completed her undergraduate and a masters in Bucharest, before completing an MPhil in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at Cambridge.

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Oana Borlea:

Title: Isolated and/or Remote: perception and perspectives on a Romanian Mountain Village

Synopsis: The present research examines the emic and etic views on remoteness and isolation in a Romanian mountain village. Its geographical location means it is not accessible by car, which makes it a curiosity for outsiders. The locals, however, embrace and make the most of their circumstances, without totally rejecting the label of 'remote' or 'isolated'. Following data gathering during fieldwork between 2021-2023, by means of participant observation, informal and semi-formal interviews and autoethnography, and a survey of the literature, this study illustrates that remoteness and isolation are products of subjective experience. Similarly, distance and connectedness are victims of perception and circumstances as well as positionality, as is becomes evident from the accounts of the different participants.

Bio: Oana has a BA in History from Universitatea de Vest, Timisoara, Romania (2009) and an MA in Social Anthropology from Goldsmiths, University of London (2023). She is currently a PhD candidate with the University of Kent, where she hopes to expand her MA research into perceptions of remoteness and isolation in Rural Romania and better understand how the country's past and the present social changes affect the locals' lives.

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Anna Borowy:

Title: The Merchant of Venice – Greek as the borrowing channel of Italian loanwords into the Romanian language.

Synopsis: From the very beginning, the Romanian language has been influenced by the Greek language. Broadly, we can identify three groups of Greek loanwords in Romanian: Ancient Greek elements, Byzantine Greek loanwords and Modern Greek loanwords. While researchers discussing this topic have emphasized the significance of Slavic languages in relation to Romanian and their role as a path for Greek influence, Greek language as a path of other influence was not paid the right attention yet. In my presentation I will analyse the Italian lexemes (especially from the Venetian dialect), which may have found their way into the Romanian language through the Greek path. These lexemes are associated with merchants or their products traveling from Venice, through Greece to reach Wallachia and Moldova. My analysis will employ methods from comparative historical linguistics, with a specific focus on phonetic and semantic changes.

Bio: Anna Borowy is a Ph.D. candidate in linguistics at the Doctoral School in the Humanities at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, with Ph.D. research focuses on Greek loanwords in the modern Romanian language. Anna holds degrees in Classics, Romanian philology, and General and Indo-European Linguistics. Anna's research interests include the history of the Romanian language, diachronic linguistics, and the study of loanwords.

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Adriana Ieremciuc:

Title: The Translation between Necessity and Opportunity

Synopsis: In Romanian literature, translations play an important role, serving as models or points of access to different cultures. Our communication aims to highlight the importance of a translator in carrying out the translation process from language A to language B. The operation he performs is of great complexity because he tries to be faithful both to the original text and to the translated text. There are many difficulties that prevent the success of a translation act: the temporal distance between texts, a difficult language to translate, elements closely related to the culture of the language in which the original text is written, etc. The main objective of translation remains to produce a text as if the author had created it in the language in which the transposition is carried out. A text can be considered a good translation when the reader does not have the feeling that what he is reading is the product of the transposition of the text from language A to language B. The greatest difficulty faced by a person who wants to make a good translation is the possibility of expressing a communicative flow through a multitude of variants. They seem, at first glance, synonymous, but each time different semantic nuances appear.

Bio: Adriana Ieremciuc graduated from the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology of the West University of Timișoara, in 2018, Romanian-French section, subsequently enrolling in two master's programs, which she followed in parallel: one that concerns synchrony and diachrony in Romanian language and one in French. Currently, she is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of Humanities, under the guidance of prof. dr. habil. Simona Constantinovici. She researches, from several perspectives, the paradoxes of Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette's creation, having as benchmarks the biography, the texts and the translations published in Romanian. Since 2023, she has been a research assistant at the Department of Romanian Studies of the West University in Timișoara.

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Megan Palmer

Title: Social networks and local institutions in the late Habsburg city of Brașov, Transylvania

Synopsis:

Megan Palmer's doctoral research investigates the social history of local institutions in the Transylvanian city of Brasov (Kronstadt, Brasso). Brasov, like the other Transylvanian Siebenburgen, was accustomed to a high degree of local autonomy until 1867 and developed its own particular identity and priorities. It was also a border town, with the Romanian capital significantly closer than the Hungarian or Austrian ones. These factors make Brasov an

interesting urban history case study within the late Habsburg Empire in a field which has been heavily weighted towards the study of the Austrian half of Austria-Hungary. Using primary source material including business registers, parish records and school archives, this research has compiled a social network dataset of membership across key local institutions in which social identities and relationships were cultivated: the city's religious communities, its schools, its local government, and its business community. This allows us to identify patterns in community development, cohesion and expression by tracking named individuals within and across institutions over several generations. By building a comprehensive picture of the networks of individuals that populated local institutions, the research explores how established and emerging loyalties interacted with and controlled local power structures in this period of substantial political and economic change.

Bio:

Megan Palmer is an ESRC doctoral student at the University of Nottingham, supervised by Dr Jonathan Kwan. Her research uses quantitative and qualitative analysis to examine the interactions between the Transylvanian city of Braşov's informal social networks and its formal local and imperial institutions in the period 1867–1914. She has also worked as a Post Graduate Teaching Assistant at UCL SSEES and is an LSE IDEAS Associate (2021–present) on the Central and South-East Europe Programme. [ahxmp5@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ahxmp5@nottingham.ac.uk)

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Jack Dean:

Title: Medical Populism: A Snapshot of Romania Post-2015

Synopsis: Rising populist movements have fuelled a rise in literature about the phenomenon, but one area where there has been less exploration is on health policy. Whilst Lasco and Curato's concept of medical populism is a growing source of knowledge, most scholarship in this regard has looked at Brazil, Italy or Dengue outbreaks. In doing so, there has been limited literature on isolated instances or in various incidents within the same country. There is a similar lack of research on Central Europe. To try and combat this, this study will draw from three case studies in Romania, applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the rhetoric of Romanian politicians in the aftermath of the Colectiv fire, the fire at Crevedia, and during the COVID-19 pandemic. By using this framework of medical populism, this study aims to explore the impact of said rhetoric on political debates about health and healthcare in Romania, providing further insight into the effects of medical populism.

Bio:

Jack Daniel Dean is a postgraduate research student at University College London's School of Slavonic & East European Studies. He obtained his MA in Central and South East European Studies from UCL SSEES (2021-2022) and his BA in European Politics (2018-2021) from King's College London. Jack's primary research is on Medical Populism, drawing from both Medical Sociology and Medical Anthropology. Outside of this, his research interests also include populism and populist rhetoric more broadly; state, public and political response to crises (such as CBRN incidents or healthcare crises); the politics of foreign policy. These can apply to a

number of European countries, but Jack has particular experience in the study of Central Europe.

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