

A crash course in Romanian

WWU Linguistics Club, Fall 2007

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1. GENERALITIES ABOUT THE LANGUAGE

1. The Romanian language is
 - a romance language
 - the fifth largest spoken romance language (counting the number of speakers) after Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian
 - spoken in the whole world by approximately 26 million people, of which 20 million in Romania
2. The Romanian language was born out of the mixture of Latin and the local Dacian language spoken by the people of Dacia (currently Romania) conquered by the Roman Empire
3. The grammar and morphology of the language is based on the vulgar Latin *with specific features not existent in the other romance languages*. The migration of the slav tribes, in particular, had a big influence on the Romanian language. In the Middle Ages, the religious sermons were conducted in slavic, therefore...
 - *approximately 15% of the Romanian language is of slavic origin.* Examples of slavic influenced words: **prieten**-friend; **iubi**-to love
 - *approximately 72% of the language is made of romance elements*
 - 31% old Latin (**frate**-brother; **ochi**-eye; **apă**-water)
 - 22% French (**birou**-office or desk; **avion**-plane; **exploata**-to exploit)
 - 15% savant Latin
 - 4% Italian
 - *approximately 13% of the language is influenced by other languages such as German, Hungarian, etc*

2. THE ALPHABET AND ORTHOGRAPHY

The alphabet is the *Latin* one with a few characteristic features.

- There are 7 vocals: the usual (a, e, i, o, u) and the specific ones (ă and â or î).
- There are 20 consonants, with two particularly related to s and t: ș and ț (pronounced as sh and ts in English). Examples: **școală**-school; **a ține**-to hold.

The orthography is *phonetic*. A characteristic of the language (that is non-existent in the other four romance languages) is the *definite article* that is attached at the end of the substantive. Examples: **om**-man, **omul**-the man; **casă**-house, **casa**-the house; **tată**-father, **tatăl**-the father; **mamă**-mother, **mama**-the mother; **copil**-child, **copilul**-the child.

The language contains the groups *chi, che, ghi, ghe, ci, ce, gi, ge* and they are pronounced as in Italian. Examples: **chiar**-really; **cheie**-key; **ghiveci**-pot; **ceață**-fog.

3. FIRST STEPS IN ROMANIAN

- **Eu, tu, el/ea, noi, voi, ei/ele**-I, you, he/she, we, you, they (masculin/feminin)

- **a fi**-to be: (eu) sunt, (tu) ești, (el/ea) este, (noi) suntem, (voi) sunteți, (ei/ele) sunt

- **a avea**-to have: am, ai, are, avem, aveți, au

- **Numere de la unu la zece**-numbers 1 through 10: unu, doi, trei, patru, cinci, șase, șapte, opt, nouă, zece

- **Numere 11-20**: unsprezece, doisprezece, treisprezece, paisprezece, cincisprezece, șaisprezece, șaptesprezece, optsprezece, nouăsprezece, douăzeci

- **Numere 21-30**: douăzecișiuunu, douăzecișidou,...,treizeci

- **Zilele săptămânii**-the days of the week: luni, marți, miercuri, joi, vineri, sâmbătă, duminică

- **Conjuncții**: și-and; sau-or

...some useful sentences...

1. **Salut!**-Hi! **La revedere!**-Bye! (See you!)

2. **Bună dimineața (ziua, seara)!**-Good morning (day, evening); but **Noapte bună!**-Good night!

3. **Numele meu este John SAU Mă numesc John.**-My name is John OR (word-by-word) Me name John.

4. **Care este numele tău? SAU (Tu) Cum te numești? SAU Pe tine cum te cheamă?**-What is your name? OR (You) how you named? OR (You) How they call you?

5. **Vorbești românește?**-(You) speak Romanian? **Vorbesc puțin românește!**-(I) speak little Romanian!

6. **Ce faci?**-What are you doing? (right now) BUT **Ce mai faci?**-How have you been? What's going on? **Bine, mersi (mulțumesc).**-Fine, thanks.

7. **Îți place muzica formației Beatles?**-Do you like the music by the Beatles? **Da!**-Yes! **Da, îmi place foarte mult!**-Yes, I like it a lot. **Nu!**-No! **Nu, prefer să o ascult pe Britney Spears.**-No, I

prefer listening to Britney Spears (...and if someone replies that way, you can say, for example: **De ce?**-Why? **Vorbești serios?**-Are you serious? **Glumești, nu?**-You're kidding, right?)

...and more (randomly chosen useful words)...

sete-thirst; **foame**-hunger; **a bea**-to drink; **a mânca**-to eat; **a vrea**-to want; **a dori**-to wish; **a învăța**-to learn; **te rog**-please; **bilet**-ticket; **pâine**-bread; **bere**-beer NOT **urs**-bear; **vin**-wine; **lapte**-milk; **cât**-how much? **a costa**-to cost; **a ajunge**-to get (to) or to be enough; **a zice**-to say; **unde**-where; **teatru**-theater; **(auto)gară**-(bus) train station; **tren**-train; **autobuz**-bus; **mașină**-car; **tramvai**-tramway; **troleibuz**-trolley; **metrou**-metro

*Vă doresc mult succes în învățarea limbii române!
La revedere!*