



Gender-inclusive language as an impossible endeavour: The representation of non-binary linguistic proposals in a language-focused TV show



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FRAMEWORK AND FOCUS

- **Framework:** interface between language ideology research & prescriptivism/ &/ critical discourse studies
- **Key concepts:** standard language ideology (Milroy and Milroy 1999, Lippi Green 2011), prescriptivism & prescription (Curzan 2014, Ayres-Bennett 2020) , framing (Entman 1993, N. Fairclough 1995, I. Fairclough 2018), footing (Goffman 1981)/ epistemic/emotional/effective stance (Langacker 2009, Gray & Biber 2014, Marín-Arrese et al. 2024, Domínguez Romero & Bobkina 2024)
- **Focus:** metalinguistic discourse in the media =
- A language-centred TV show (Pe cuvânt cu Ana Iorga), which offers an expert opinion regarding a recent gender-inclusive proposal by LGBTQIA+ associations in Romania
- **PARTICULAR FOCUS OF THE PRESENTATION:** The episode [Exprimarea neutră de gen în limba română. Exemple de limbaj incluziv](#). 15 March 2024. (*Gender-neutral Romanian. Gender-inclusive examples*, 4.04 minutes) of a short-form TV show with bite-sized episodes. RO transcript; English translation of the transcript

ROMANIAN CONTEXT

- **General context concerning language policy, standardization, prescriptivism:**
 - Top-down standardization
 - The linguists of the Romanian Academy = main language policy makers
 - The interplay between prescriptive and descriptive dimensions in establishing linguistic authority in Romania (professional linguists also act as prescriptivists, see Vişan 2016)= the descriptive-prescriptive continuum (Ayres-Bennett 2020)
 - The linguists of the Romanian Academy emerge as ‘language guardians’ in the eyes of the Romanian public (Vişan 2016; see also ‘grassroots prescriptivism’)
- **Gender-inclusive language policy in Romania:**
 - Focus on feminization – sporadic codification in dictionaries/grammars and positive stance of Academy linguists, media (see Vişan 2026)
 - Gender-neutral & non-binary language proposals = predominantly negative representations (by Academy linguists) in the media (see Vişan 2024, 2026)

CONTEXUALIZING A NON-BINARY LINGUISTIC PROPOSAL

- **EXPLORATION**
- Source text (ST): On 13 March 2024, A discussion of –x-based gender-neutral forms in Romania in a feminist essay in the framework of post-structuralist linguistics <https://cutra.ro/catre-o-limba-romana-mai-queer-forma-neutra-de-gen-cu-terminatia-in-x/>
- **“POLITICALLY RESPONSIVE” PRESCRIPTIVISM** (see Curzan 2014)
- Target text 1 (TT1): On 13 March 2024, Recontextualization of the proposal by a leading LGBTQIA+ organization in Romania (Accept) on its social media page, negotiation concerning ‘gender-inclusive’ language as prescription (see also Bradley 2023,) [„În căutarea unei forme neutre de gen în limba... - Asociația Accept | Facebook](#)
- **BACKLASH IN THE MEDIA**
- Reception of TT 1: Backlash in the Romanian media (mainstream media representations and social media comments) = representation in terms of pathologization (“abnormal”, “unnatural” as keywords) or derision (“ridiculous”) (see Vișan 2024, 2026; Vișan, in progress)
- **NEGATIVE STANCE OF EXPERTS**
- ! Negative stance of Academy linguists in the media - keywords and phrases: “not normal”, “not natural” (see a discussion of in Vișan 2026)

RECONTEXTUALIZING THE PROPOSAL IN Pe cuvânt cu Ana Iorga, 15 March 2024

- TT 2: A current short-format show focusing on language issues on a popular network:
- **Pe cuvânt cu Ana Iorga** <https://www.antena3.ro/emisiuni/pe-cuvant/>; described on the network's website as "a brief survival course in the jungle of the Romanian language"
- **A time-honored tradition in Romania:** The language-focused TV show as a popular subgenre of educational programmes in Romania (e.g. popular TV shows the 1990s, *Doar o vorbă să-ți mai spun*)
- Language-focused shows in Romania as part of 'verbal hygiene' (Cameron 1995); an instance of 'usage-guide prescriptivism' (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2020, Kapović 2026) = correcting language through usage-advice; focus on proscription of certain structures
- **The linguist as the voice of authority** ('usage-guide prescriptivism' as a type of 'institutional prescriptivism'): Ana Iorga guiding and correcting the general public (*It's not x, it's y, because...*)
- **The interplay between prescriptive and descriptive dimensions in the show:** Ana Iorga offers prescriptive advice to Romanian users but the advice is often based on descriptive grammars (She has an affiliation with the Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy; She has contributed to reference grammars of Romanian; She has authored research in descriptive linguistics)
- The show is: (a) **prescriptive in intent**; (b) **like many Romanian usage guides, predominantly descriptive in expression**: based on a combination of both prescriptive and descriptive metalanguage (for prescriptivism see Ayres-Bennett 2020)



RECONTEXTUALIZATION & COMPLEX ROLES

- **Framing** = diagnosing, evaluating & prescribing
- “To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described.” (Entman, 1993: 52; italics in the original.)
- **Footing** (Goffman 1981: 128): “the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance”
- Framing as an evaluative act of alignment or disalignment & footing as an early model of our understanding of stancetaking (Park 2011)

RECONTEXTUALIZATION IN AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

ANIMATOR: A complex role in a language-centered TV show: Ana Iorga = expert/linguist ; a journalist/reporter; an educator/guide at the same time

IMAGINED PARTICIPANTS: implied audience, ‘imagined participants’ (Goffman 1981)

audience positioned as discourse participants, addressed directly

‘dialogue’ = monologue in the explicit presence of an audience

STANCE & EXPERTISE

THE IMPARTIAL EXPERT

- The linguist adopts the role of an impartial fact-checker (Bradley 2023)
- A TRIPARTITE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF STANCE
- Epistemic stance = the speaker's commitment towards the truth-value of a proposition
- Effective stance = evaluative positioning towards the realization of an event
- Emotional/Affective stance = affect, judgement, appreciation
- (Marín-Arrese et al. 2024, Domínguez Romero & Bobkina 2024)

Evaluating a non-binary linguistic proposal

- **Epistemic stance:** CAN/MAY (Rom. A putea/poate) as the main epistemic modal. Increased reliance on reported speech, reporting verbs and on examples. Hedges employed to balance boosters.
- **Emotional stance:** The linguist uses few affective/evaluative adjectives/adverbs/nouns. In her representation of non-binary Romanian, she uses keywords such as *complicated* or *problem* = ambiguous between an epistemic/effective/emotional reading.
- **Effective stance:** The linguist focuses on potentiality at its interface with normativity (CAN/MAY = Rom. a putea/poate as the most frequent marker in the text)

Framing, report, & decision- making

“...when the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to ‘frame’ it, how to contextualize it, in terms of other parts of the text – about relations between report and authorial account” (N. Fairclough 2003)

“...a particular premise is made more salient or emphasized by the arguer as an overriding consideration that the audience should reason from” (I. Fairclough 2018)

PART 1: Securing neutrality: Reporting and disaffiliation

- Can we have a gender-neutral form of expression in the Romanian language? Journalists from *Cutra* magazine wrote that *several groups of activists* for the rights of non-binary people have come up with a proposal for inclusive language—that is, a **linguistic solution** in Romanian through which the masculine/feminine distinction would be removed. They propose, they say, a gender-neutral form in Romanian, so that things are fair for *those who identify outside the masculine and feminine genders*. (Iorga 2024, My emphasis; trans. by ChatGpt, 20 February 2026)
- Ana Iorga = ‘animator’
- She addresses an ‘open question’ to the implied audience
- Modality: CAN is ambiguous between a deontic and dynamic interpretation
- She avoids affiliating the statement she reports by carefully nominating a ‘principal’
- Disavowing implication of ‘authorship’= Disavowing that gender-neutral language is a linguistic solution

FRAMING THE PROPOSAL: Focus on EXCLUDING gendered forms versus INCLUDING a gender-neutral form

- TT2 : A **linguistic solution** in Romanian through which the masculine/feminine distinction would be **removed**.
- [>>The prescription of gender-neutral language = proscription of gendered language, 'standardizing prescriptivism', Curzan 2014; echoes of previous media representations, see a discussion in Vişan 2026]
- TT1 & ST: emphasise that they seek to include a gender-neutral form= gender-inclusive proposal
- "In search of a gender-neutral form in Romanian, several queer groups and activists propose the use of the ending in "x", which would replace gendered endings for nouns, adjectives or pronouns.
- The use of the "x" form has several functions. On the one hand, it opens up the possibility of a more inclusive language for people on the non-binary spectrum, who identify outside the masculine or feminine gender. At the same time, it is a proposal for a neutral form that is not, automatically, masculine.
- The experimental nature of the language with "x" is also reflected in the fact that some people either use or are open to using other forms that indicate neuter. The "x" form does not become regulated, imposed, mandatory. Rather, we can talk about a process of collective exploration to rethink the rules.“ [„În căutarea unei forme neutre de gen în limba... - Asociația Accept | Facebook](#)

Part 2 : Reinforcing neutrality: Avoiding direct evaluative adjectives

- The solution they propose is to add the ending -x to nouns, adjectives, or pronouns. I've included here a screenshot of the article's title, which you can find on the magazine's website: the gender-neutral form with the -x ending. It's a very interesting article. The journalists interview several people who identify as non-binary, and they say they are trying to integrate this method into everyday language, but sometimes **it feels easy and natural, while other times it is difficult—it sounds unnatural in Romanian and is hard to pronounce** (Iorga 2024, My emphasis).
- Significantly, the only evaluation that the linguist uses here directly is the ambiguous 'very interesting'.
- Evaluative adjectives concerning non-binary Romanian are used in reported speech, emerging only as attributed 'quotes': **easy, natural, difficult, unnatural, hard**

PART 3: FRAMING
THROUGH
'CONCRETE'
EXAMPLES:
'MISPRONOUNCING'
= 'MISQUOTING'/
EDITING

- Let's look at a few concrete examples of inclusive language using this method, examples that appear in the article I mentioned. Yes, let's look together: *prietenxs* (friend, neutral form instead of masculine *prieten* or feminine *prietenă*), *prietenxii* as a neutral plural form, even though the plural ending still appears... **complicated**... *prietenxlor*, to make it valid for both feminine and masculine. There was another example: *Putem învăța unxs de la alțx* (we can learn from each other), instead of masculine or feminine forms (Iorga 2024, My emphasis)

- The linguist = editor of the examples: While the written examples are accurate quotes, their pronunciation is not.
- The linguist reproduces a pronunciation which is not used by non-binary Romanians: The neo-suffix -x is pronounced /iks/ by LGBTQIA+ members and allies (see Prisacariu 2021, see a discussion of non-binary Romanian in Vișan 2024, 2026)
- **prietnx [pronounced /prientenks/ by the linguist]** vs
- prietnx [pronounced in fact /prieteniks/ by LGBTQIA+ members and allies]
- The linguist's pronunciation choice is considerably more difficult than the one adopted by non-binary Romanians (the vowel-based /iks/)

Mispronouncing non-binary Romanian & ‘framing effects’

- Whether intentional or unintentional, the linguist’s mispronunciation & emphasis on its difficulty generates ‘framing effects’ “ where (often small) changes in the presentation of an issue produce (sometimes large) changes of opinion” (Chong & Druckman 2007, qtd. in I. Fairclough 2018)
- Different ‘voice’/‘other’ voice vs a ‘faceless voice’

DIRECT **HD**

EXEMPLE DE LIMBAJ INCLUZIV

pe **limbă** *cuvânt*

prietenx
prietenxii
prietenxlor
Putem învăța unx de la altx
Sursa: cutra.ro

Business Park, clădirea 14
Locul și temporar va fi în Oltenia, Muntenia, 08:50

examples that appear right in the article I cited Yes we we forget together

PART 4: Non-binary Romanian as a source of problems rather than a solution

- Well, countless problems arise. Even those promoting this change ask: should the -x be added to the masculine or feminine form of the word? How is the plural formed? How are nouns correctly articulated (with definite articles)? Someone also pointed out another risk: if we always attach -x to the masculine root, aren't we just creating another masculine-based neutral? And in Romanian, the masculine is already considered neutral because of patriarchy, as it is said there, which exists in society and is reproduced through language. So, we are heading toward another issue, according to those interviewed. Many problems of this kind arise... It is therefore not ideal for the masculine to function as a general, all-encompassing form covering all genders.
- Yes, you may recall the effort to create more feminine forms in many languages, precisely to avoid discrimination—I'm thinking, for example, of feminine forms of profession names. The article also says that -x could represent a community project for reshaping language, beyond simply applying what is correct or incorrect. That may be so, but perhaps only in a limited sense... (Iorga 2024, My emphasis)

- A noun repeated in the text is the Romanian *problemă* (versus *solution*, which is used twice only in attributed quotes).
- It appears in intensifier-based collocations: **countless problems, many problems, another issue**
- In contrast with
- instances of epistemic uncertainty expressed by *perhaps, may, I am thinking*
- a series of free indirect questions - which illustrate the uncertain/problematic representation of non-binary Romanian
- The linguist also uses hedges to reject the non-normative post-structuralist representation of non-binary Romanian, making use of the phrase "in a limited sense" which reinforces a normative view of Romanian, and of non-binary Romanian as beyond the norm/ as fringe.

PART 5: FRAMING THROUGH ADDITION: Constructing examples

I've added a few more examples.

What do we do in contexts like these? *Dana a rămas însărcinatx* (Dana became pregnant, using a neutral form so we don't associate Dana with the feminine gender). Could we have such an example? *Ursula von der Leyen a fost văzutx la congres* (was seen at the congress), since here we have a participle functioning as an adjective. *Ioana a rămas perplex...* There are words that already have this ending—so do we add it or not? What happens? *Românii sunt chematx la vot* (Romanians are called to vote), to avoid associating with a masculine plural. I've given a few examples based on the principle stated in the article. (Iorga 2024, My emphasis)

The constructed examples are based on incongruence:

E.g. Misgendering a cisgender woman:

Ursula von der Leyen a fost văzutx la congres.

[Ursula von der Leyen was seen-x at the congress]

seen-x instead of *seen-fem.infl.*

EMOTIONAL STANCE THROUGH PARALINGUISTIC MEANS

- Laughter contributes to framing the linguistic proposal: Non-binary Romanian emerges not only as problematic to pronounce but also as ridiculous

DIRECT HD

pe link
curant

Dana a rămas însărcinatx.
Ursula von der Leyen a fost văzutx la congres.
Ioana a rămas perplex.
Românii sunt chematx la vot.

constituirea dreptului de proprietate asupra unor terenuri depusă la Primăria Dumbra 08:51

SUBSCRIBE

PART 6: Providing an answer; Delegitimization of non-binary Romanian: 'Impossible' (= an ineffective means of communication) in the expert's opinion

- Of course, you can innovate, as a kind of manifesto in certain contexts, but extending the phenomenon to official documents, or speaking fluently like this, I think, is impossible. Similar initiatives also exist in French. The French have added a third form for the personal pronoun: il (he), elle (she), and iel, which is meant to be somewhat neutral. This form has been widely debated and has been included in the digital versions of some dictionaries, though not in printed ones—we'll see how it evolves over time. Grammatically, this form works. It's much more complicated with -x at the end of words.
- In any case, it's a discussion that is very legitimate in the public space, and I'm very curious what you think. (Iorga 2024, My emphasis)

- **Epistemic stance:** Making use of hedges (*kind of, certain, I think, somewhat*), in order to balance boosters (*much more, very, widely*) and to reinforce 'objectivity'
- **Effective stance** (at its interface with epistemic stance): The discussed gender-inclusive proposal is impossible
- **Implicature:** The linguist provides a 'partial/particular' answer to the 'general' question she launched at the beginning of the discourse>>
Implicature: Gender-neutral forms are impossible in Romanian.
- **Politically responsive prescriptivism**= Meddling with language = theoretically/generally possible in principle but not a viable/legitimate part of national language policy
- **Prestige:** Insisting on the opposition between print resources (as prestige) versus digital ones; between 'grammatical' French initiatives as prestigious models /vs./ (presumably ungrammatical) Romanian ones
- **Legitimacy:** The linguist uses a concessive marker to mitigate her representation and proclaims the discussion (yet not the proposal) as a nevertheless legitimate one.
- **Power (Legitimate & Expert):** The show's avowed purpose is an educational one, in which the linguist acts as a guide; a heavily marked teacher-learner relationship. Since the linguist's position is one of expert power, the role of the indirect question "what do you think" is rhetorical, that of securing alignment from the imagined participants in the exchange.

Conclusions: Reinforcing Standard Language Ideology

Significantly, unlike other media representations of non-binary Romanian, this does not rely on pathologization (see Vişan 2024, 2026; Vişan in progress).

Nevertheless, while it does not provide explicit backlash, it is a particularly effective means of delegitimizing a non-binary linguistic proposal &, potentially, future proposals concerning non-binary Romanian: As an instance of ‘subtle framing’ (N. Fairclough 1995), it presents an expert opinion based on facts (‘concrete examples’) rather than on ‘emotions.’

The language-centred show = relying on media framing that reproduces and reinforces Standard Language Ideology

Standard Language Ideology as “a bias towards an abstractized, idealized language, imposed and maintained by dominant institutions (...)” Lippi-Green 2011

Conclusions:
Non-binary
Romanian as
non-standard
=
'complicated',
'problematic'
Romanian

A TRANSPARENT NEGOTIATION

Politically responsive prescriptivism:

Gender-inclusive proposals in Romania emerge as 'politically transparent' linguistic intervention (see also Bradley 2023, Kapović 2026)

Negotiating 'standardizing' dimensions: The fact that LGBTQIA+ members have made the -x-based proposal public underlines that it is a relevant gender-inclusive strategy. However, to what extent the -x-based form is adopted/preferred or criticized by members of the LGBTQIA+ community should be further explored based on surveys and interviews with the members of the LGBTQIA+ community (An aspect already emphasized by both the post-structuralist source text and the Accept target text).

A representation deeply entrenched in dominant ideology:

In the linguist's framing of non-binary Romanian as an impossible endeavour, the relation between language and social identity is opaque ('grammaticized'): Non-binary Romanian emerges as structurally impossible (impossibility= only about language, see Bradley 2023)

Significantly, in her representation of non-binary Romanian, the linguist fulfils the only role that is available to her in this particular TV subgenre = she gives 'commonsense' guidelines and abides by 'the law of what can be said' Foucault 1969

1. Staging a 'neutral' representation and maintaining the illusion of 'unmarkedness' which underlies Standard Romanian = Standard Romanian remains the most effective means of communication
2. Emphasizing that the Romanian standard is based on a negotiation between experts' opinions and actual usage (the usage endorsed by the majority of Romanians)[!Yet Romanian linguists currently base grammars and dictionaries on expert decisions and not on corpus studies = they rely on a selective interpretation of general usage]
3. Safeguarding the boundaries of Standard Romanian (boundaries imagined as fixed/vs/fuzzy)= Maintaining a *status quo* (Emphasis not on standardization/destandardization as processes, but on INVARIANCE and CONSISTENCY >>> Non-binary Romanian as an EXTRINSIC element, an ILLEGITIMATE ATTEMPT to change the STANDARD

Further directions of research

- Providing a comparison between linguists' metalinguistic discourse concerning non-binary Romanian/and/ laypeople's metalinguistic discourse (Areas of overlap? Cameron 1995)
- A focus on the comments and reactions to expert metalinguistic discourse ('prescriptivism in effect' Ayres-Bennett 2020)
- A focus on the multimodal dimensions (MDA) in the metalinguistic discourse concerning gender-inclusive language in Romania
- Exploring the role of the Romanian (/Eastern European) 'wooden language' representation (at its interface with the Orwellian 'Newspeak') in the negative media representations of 'gender-neutral' language (see Pfalzgraf 2024, gender-inclusive language as oppressive discourse)

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Appendix 1: Full transcript of the Romanian text

- Putem avea o exprimare neutră ca gen în limba română? Jurnaliștii de la revista Cutra au scris că mai multe grupuri de activiști pentru drepturile persoanelor non-binare au venit cu o propunere pentru un limbaj incluziv, adică o soluție o soluție lingvistică în limba română prin care să fie înlăturată distincția masculin/feminin, o formă, spun ei, neutră de gen în limba română, asta ca lucrurile să fie corecte pentru cei care se identifică în afara genurilor masculin și feminin. Soluția pe care o propun e să se adauge terminația -x la substantive, la adjective sau pronume. Și am făcut aici o captură a titlului articolului pe care îl găsiți pe site-ul revistei, forma neutră de gen cu terminația -x. E foarte interesant articolul. Jurnaliștii interviuează mai multe persoane care se identifică non-binar și ele spun încercăm să integrăm procedeul ăsta în limbajul zilnic dar uneori e ușor, natural, alteori e dificil, sună nefiresc în limba română și e greu de pronunțat.
- Haideți să vedem concret câteva exemple de limbaj incluziv cu acest procedeu, exemple care apar chiar în articolul pe care l-am citat. Da, ne uităm împreună, prietenks, ca să nu fie nici prieten nici prietenă, prietenxii, ca să fie o formă neutră la plural, deși apare desinența asta de plural aici...Complicat...Prietenxlor, ca să fie valabil și pentru feminin și pentru masculin. Și mai era un exemplu acolo, Putem învăța unx de la alțx, unii de alții sau unele de la altele ca să nu apară masculin sau feminin.
- Ei, apar nenumărate probleme, se întreabă chiar cei care promovează această schimbare, Se pune -x-ul după forma masculină sau feminină a cuvântului ? Cum se formează pluralul ? Cum se articulează corect substantivele? Cineva spunea apoi că apare alt pericol: Dacă punem mereu un -x la rădăcina masculină, nu cumva se creează un alt neutru masculin ? Iar limba română, în limba română masculinul e déjà considerat neutru din cauza patriarhatului, se spune acolo, care există în societate și e recreat prin limbaj. Deci ne ducem către o altă problemă, spun cei interviuați. Foarte multe probleme de tipul acesta...Nu e bine deci ca masculinul să fie acoperitor, generalist, să acopere toate genurile...Da, vă amintiți și lupta pentru a crea foarte multe feminine care există în toate limbile, tocmai ca să nu se facă discriminare, mă gândesc la femininele de...nume de profesii. Se mai spune în articol -x poate să reprezinte un proiect comunitar de coreare a limbajului, dincolo de a aplica ce e corect și greșit. Poate fi asta (Hesitant), dar cred că poate fi în sens restrâns...
- Și am mai adăugat niște exemple. Ce ne facem în contextele astea ? Dana a rămas însărcinatx, ca să nu considerăm, Dana să nu asociem Dana cu femininul, nu ? Am putea avea un astfel de exemplu ? Ursula von der Leyen a fost vazutx la congres, pentru că aici avem un participiu care e un adjectiv. Ioana a rămas perplex. Există anumite cuvinte care, uite, au deja terminația asta și atunci mai punem, nu mai punem, ce se întâmplă? Românii sunt chematx la vot, ca să nu asociem cu un masculin plural.
- Am dat câteva exemple pe principiul enunțat în articol. Sigur că poți inova, așa ca un manifest în anumite contexte, dar a extinde fenomenul până la documente oficiale, mă gândesc, sau până la a vorbi fluent așa, cred că e imposibil. Inițiative similare să știți că există și în franceză. Francezii au adăugat o a treia formă pentru pronumele personal. Avem il, el, elle pentru ea și un iel, care să fie neutru cumva. Ei, forma asta a fost intens discutată și a fost inclusă în varianta informatizată a unor dicționare, nu și în forma tipărită, vom vedea evoluțiile în timp. Acuma, gramatical e funcțională forma asta. E mult mai complicat cu -x la finalul cuvintelor.
- În orice caz e o discuție care e foarte legitimă în spațiul public și sunt foarte curioasă ce părere aveți (Iorga 2024, My transcript 20 February 2026)

Appendix 2:

Full transcript of the English translation

- Can we have a gender-neutral form of expression in the Romanian language? Journalists from *Cutra* magazine wrote that several groups of activists for the rights of non-binary people have come up with a proposal for inclusive language—that is, a linguistic solution in Romanian through which the masculine/feminine distinction would be removed. They propose, they say, a gender-neutral form in Romanian, so that things are fair for those who identify outside the masculine and feminine genders.
- The solution they propose is to add the ending -x to nouns, adjectives, or pronouns. I've included here a screenshot of the article's title, which you can find on the magazine's website: the gender-neutral form with the -x ending. It's a very interesting article. The journalists interview several people who identify as non-binary, and they say they are trying to integrate this method into everyday language, but sometimes it feels easy and natural, while other times it is difficult—it sounds unnatural in Romanian and is hard to pronounce.
- Let's look at a few concrete examples of inclusive language using this method, examples that appear in the article I mentioned. Yes, let's look together: *prietenx* (friend, neutral form instead of masculine *prieten* or feminine *prietenă*), *prietenxii* as a neutral plural form, even though the plural ending still appears... complicated... *prietenxlor*, to make it valid for both feminine and masculine. There was another example: *Putem învăța unx de la alțx* (we can learn from each other), instead of masculine or feminine forms.
- Well, countless problems arise. Even those promoting this change ask: should the -x be added to the masculine or feminine form of the word? How is the plural formed? How are nouns correctly articulated (with definite articles)? Someone also pointed out another risk: if we always attach -x to the masculine root, aren't we just creating another masculine-based neutral? And in Romanian, the masculine is already considered neutral because of patriarchy, as it is said there, which exists in society and is reproduced through language. So we are heading toward another issue, according to those interviewed. Many problems of this kind arise... It is therefore not ideal for the masculine to function as a general, all-encompassing form covering all genders. Yes, you may recall the effort to create more feminine forms in many languages, precisely to avoid discrimination—I'm thinking, for example, of feminine forms of profession names. The article also says that -x could represent a community project for reshaping language, beyond simply applying what is correct or incorrect. That may be so, but perhaps only in a limited sense...
- I've added a few more examples. What do we do in contexts like these? *Dana a rămas însărcinax* (Dana became pregnant, using a neutral form so we don't associate Dana with the feminine gender). Could we have such an example? *Ursula von der Leyen a fost văzutx la congres* (was seen at the congress), since here we have a participle functioning as an adjective. *Ioana a rămas perplex* (laughing). There are words that already have this ending—so do we add it or not? What happens? *Românii sunt chematx la vot* (Romanians are called to vote), to avoid associating with a masculine plural. I've given a few examples based on the principle stated in the article.
- Of course, you can innovate, as a kind of manifesto in certain contexts, but extending the phenomenon to official documents, or speaking fluently like this, I think, is impossible. Similar initiatives also exist in French. The French have added a third form for the personal pronoun: *il* (he), *elle* (she), and *iel*, which is meant to be somewhat neutral. This form has been widely debated and has been included in the digital versions of some dictionaries, though not in printed ones—we'll see how it evolves over time. Grammatically, this form works. It's much more complicated with -x at the end of words.
- In any case, it's a discussion that is very legitimate in the public space, and I'm very curious what you think (ChatGpt translation, 20 February 2026)