

## 4 free resources for Romanian language: Romanian for movie and poetry lovers

Congratulations on picking up Romanian - the only Romance language spoken in Eastern Europe, which also happens to have a sentence about sheep made up of only vowels.

*Oaia aia e a ei, eu i-o iau.*

*That sheep is hers, I take it.*

You can listen to it [here](#). It sounds a bit funny, doesn't it?

Romanian is spoken by 28 million people, of whom 25 million are native speakers.<sup>1</sup>

It belongs to the Balkan-Romance group, which includes Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian Greek, Hellenic, Albanian and Romani and it is the only surviving Eastern-European Romance language.

Since it kept close contact with the Balkan population (the above mentioned Balkan Sprachbund) this language developed quite differently compared to other Romance languages.

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<sup>1</sup> The Grammar of Romanian, Oxford Linguistics.

It is like that weird brother who grew a mustache and decided to do its own thing.



Source: [unravellingmag.com](http://unravellingmag.com)

About 80 percent of Romanian words are of Latin origin<sup>2</sup>, and there is a big number of French (almost 40% of the modern Romanian Vocabulary, how fancy) and Slavic loanwords, especially from Russian, Bulgarian, Slavonic. I guess this explains the quirky sound of the language, like Italian spoken with a strong Russian/ Slavic accent. Before we talk about pronunciation, take a look at the word *prieten-friend* coming from Slavonic and how standoffish it looks here.

### Words for “friend”

Romanian – *prieten*

Spanish – *amigo*

French – *ami*

Italian – *amico*

Portuguese – *amigo*

Catalan – *amic*

Latin – *amicus*

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<sup>2</sup> Romanian Grammar, Mika Sarlin.

The Romanian alphabet has 31 letters, 5 of which have diacritical marks: ă, ș, ț, â, î. Meet the 5 little weirdos, everyone. The letter ț appears only in the Romanian alphabet.

ș ț ă â î

Fortunately, we read words the way they are spelled in Romanian (phonological orthography), so what you see is what you get, generally. Probably that's why there are no spelling contests in Romania.

However, there are some elements that deserve special attention, so pause and stare longer before reading the words that have these: the vowel *i*, the 5 little weirdos mentioned above and the 8 clusters.

Regarding the pronunciation of the vowel *i*, keep in mind it is usually silent when placed as the last letter. This means that when you read the word *surori* –*sisters*, you will barely hear the final sound *i*.

The 5 little weirdos and the 8 clusters: *ce, ci, che, chi, ge, gi, ghe, ghi* (which began to be used at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the model of Italian orthography<sup>3</sup>) have a special pronunciation.

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<sup>3</sup> The Grammar of Romanian, Oxford Linguistics.

The little weirdo that tends to create most confusion is *Â* , which does not have an English equivalent sound. It is a guttural sound, like that sound you make after you take a sip of rotten milk, *eugh*.

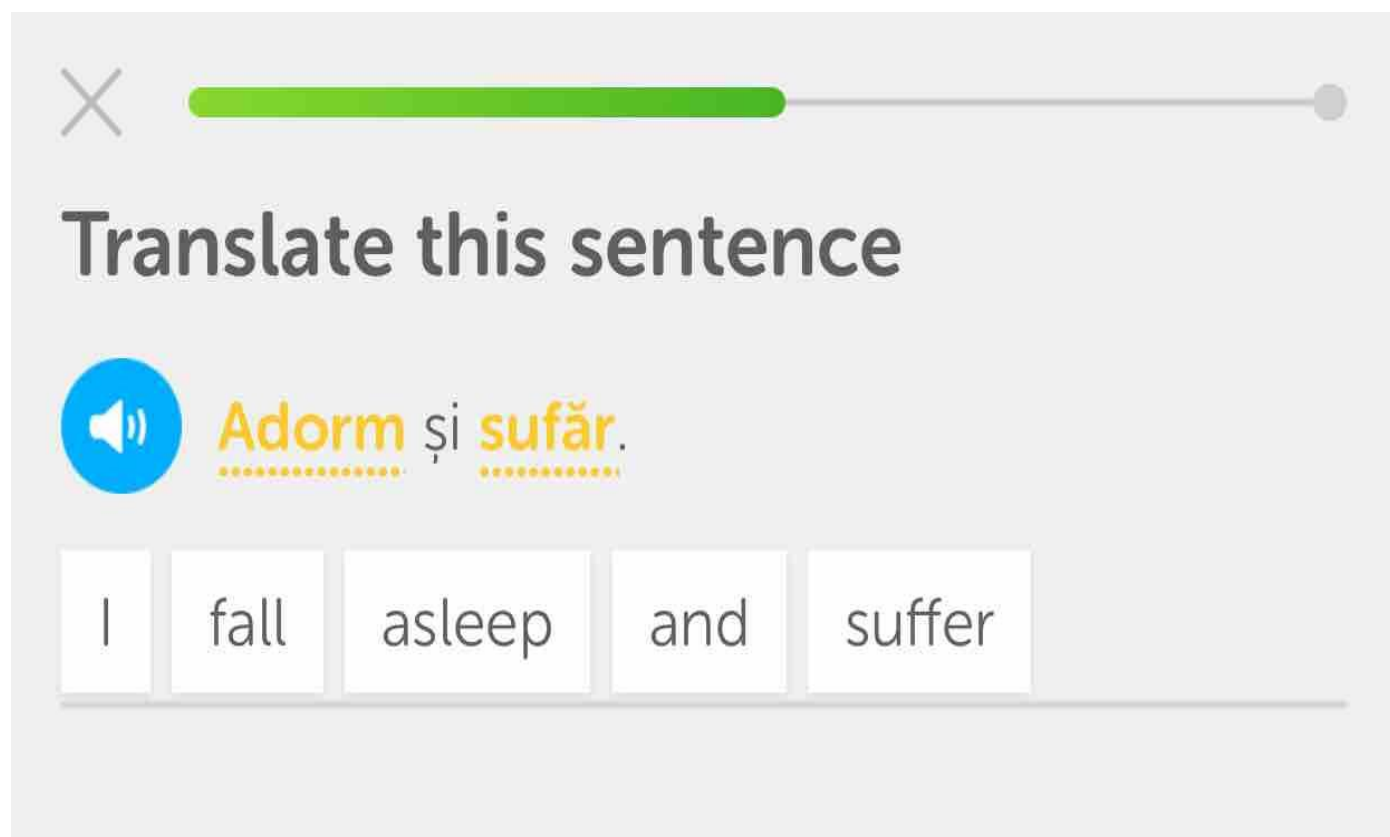
In other Romance languages, nouns are either masculine, either feminine, but surprise, Romanian preserved the 3<sup>rd</sup> gender: neuter. This is usually reserved for inanimate objects and loanwords such as *weekend, job, laptop*. Yes, those are words that we actually use on a daily basis.

Another feature that individualizes Romanian is the fact that the definite article takes the form of a suffix, unlike Spanish, French or Italian. So we say *casa* for *the house*, and the final *a* in *casa* stands for the definite article.

What makes Romanian special in a *not-the-easiest-language* kind of way is the declension of nouns. This means the nouns are inflected for number, gender and case and the adjectives have to match them in form. Next time you read a sentence in Romanian, notice how all the elements modify one another to line up properly.

And finally, here are your online resources.

1. Take the Romanian beta course on DuoLingo- *DuoLingo Romanian course* and join my classroom [here](#).



*Source : one of my students sharing his progress with me while getting a better insight into the Romanian culture.*

## 2. Watch Romanian movies with English subtitles:

I highly recommend this [channel](#), where you can find Romanian feature films, shorts, documentaries.

→ [Legături bolnăvicioase](#), 2006:

→ [California Dreaming](#), 2007

→ [Boogie](#), 2008

→ [Cel ales](#), 2015

## 3. Read this general [overview](#): Getting Acquainted with Contemporary Romania.

## 4. Read Romanian poetry and listen to music, you bohemian soul you .

If you are into poetry, click on this [link](#) to download a file with 6 poems translated into English.

And here is some music:

→ *Baba Novac- Pastel Acid, Versuri (lyrics)*

→ *Omul cu șobolani, Versuri*

→ *Vița de vie, Versuri*

→ *Vama veche, Versuri*

→ *Șuie paparude, Versuri*

→ *Zob*

→ *Timpuri noi*

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