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Romanian as a Second Language (RL2). Portraits of the RL2 User

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For a fairly long time, it was assumed that the aim of the L2 user should be the development of linguistic abilities (almost) indistinguishable from the ones of the native speaker, with the latter representing the only valid standard for language use. However, this idea started to fade once it was acknowledged that setting the native speaker as a standard was unrealistic. The profile of the L1 speaker was conditioned by many factors (age and cognitive development, level of education, other languages spoken, the L1 variety used, sociocultural background, etc.), resulting in a fluid model. As such, it became clear that it could not serve as a plausible reference point for the L2 user. One could observe a shift in focus from a comparative investigation of the L1 and the target language/of the L1 and the L2 user's language (using contrastive analysis, error analysis, obligatory occasion analysis methods, etc.) to the study of the characteristics of the L2 user's language. This shift led to the emergence of several interesting portraits of the L2 user.

Studies in cognitive linguistics, constructivism, Universal Grammar, sociolinguistics, etc. demonstrated differences in language use and processing between L2 speakers and their use of L1 and monolinguals. The former usually acquire a second language by marking subsequent stages at a rate that can be influenced by a series of individual differences, such as the role of L1 and other languages spoken by the L2 user, the age of onset, the general and specific abilities, motivation, the social and cultural background, and other personal characteristics.

Given the above-mentioned context, one could witness an increasing interest in similar studies, centred on speakers of Romanian as a second language (RL2), which explored the relationships between the languages in the L2 user's mind and how they develop, the stages of acquisition of the formal features in Romanian, the cross-linguistic influence related to different language aspects (phonological, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, etc.), the *inter-* and *intra-* RL2 speaker variation, and the factors that lead to it, etc. These results can be seen as puzzle pieces that render the most authentic portraits of the RL2 speaker in multiple contexts when put together in various ways. They can contribute to a better understanding of the learning/teaching/assessment processes, with possible implications for curriculum design and teaching materials.

In the gallery of portraits of the RL2 users, one can find exhibits attributed to short-term visitors (foreign students, employees for a specific period) or long-term inhabitants of Romania (immigrants), to national minorities (the RL2 user who lives in Romania but only learns/uses Romanian in school, during the Romanian language classes), and, obviously, to people driven by individual needs, who learn RL2 outside the national borders (usually enrolled in undergraduate courses or language training programs all over the world), etc.

The research of RL2 from such perspectives is relatively new; thus, the missing pieces of the puzzle and the results that complete the existing pieces are very much needed for the portraits of RL2 speakers to gain more substance. Papers from areas and subdomains that address the complexity of the portraits of the RL2 user, offering reflections on the following topics will be the focus of this issue:

- the phonology of the RL2 user;
- grammatical development in RL2;
- lexical representation and lexical processing in the RL2 user;
- RL2 pragmatics;
- RL2 user internal influences in acquiring/learning and using RL2 (age, aptitude, motivation, affect, personality, learning strategies, ethnic group affiliation, etc.);
- social factors in RL2 acquisition/learning and use;
- technology-enhanced RL2 acquisition/learning;
- the role of corrective feedback and classroom interaction in RL2 learning;
- fossilization and language attrition in the case of RL2;
- language teaching methodology and the RL2 user perspective;
- input processing in RL2;
- RL2 and cross-linguistic influence;
- etc.

Thus, we welcome contributions in English, French, Italian and Spanish, which will complement and refine the portraits of the RL2 user.

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Timeline:

- **15 May 2024** – proposal submission deadline (200-word abstract, 7 keywords, 5 theoretical references);
- **15 June 2024** – notification of acceptance;
- **15 January 2025** – submission of full papers (instructions for authors regarding formatting rules and style sheets can be found on the journal's webpage: http://www.studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/philologia/pdf/Instructions_En.pdf);
- **30 June 2025** – publication of the issue.

Please send abstracts and papers to editors: philologia.studia@ubbcluj.ro and to the guest editors of this issue cristina.bocos@ubbcluj.ro, alexandru.mardale@inalco.fr, lavinia.vasiu@ubbcluj.ro.