

**A CORPUS ASSISTED ANALYSIS  
OF DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION  
OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES  
BETWEEN ROMANIA AND UKRAINE  
IN ROMANIAN NEWS  
DURING THE UKRAINEAN-RUSSIAN CONFLICT**

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10.07.2025

# Introduction

- Context: Ukrainian-Russian conflict (feb.2022-feb.2024)
- Romania's strategic position: EU border state, **neighbor** of Ukraine
- Media's influence in shaping national narratives

# Theoretical Framework

- CADS = Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies - Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) + Corpus Linguistics
- Fairclough's CDA Model:
  - Textual Level: language features
  - Discursive Practice: production/consumption
  - Social Practice: ideology, power structures

# Analytical Procedure

- **Textual analysis** - examined vocabulary, modality, and transitivity patterns to uncover ideologies and evaluations.
- **Discursive practice analysis** - explored intertextuality and genre blending (e.g., combining journalistic and political discourses).
- **Social practice analysis** - interpreted findings within the broader geopolitical context of EU-NATO alignment and post-Soviet regional tensions.

# Analytical Procedure

- Who produced the text and how?
- To whom is the text addressed, how is it distributed and how is it consumed?
- Who has the power within the text? Who has the power beyond the text?

# QUESTIONS

- How are the economic relations between Romania and Ukraine presented by the most popular mass-media in this context?
- What discursive strategies are used to represent cross-border cooperation?
- What are the notable linguistic patterns used by media in shaping the imaginaries of the (socio-economical) conflict?
- How does the Romanian press navigate narratives of national interest versus regional solidarity?
- What can quantitative and computational investigations tell us about this specific conflict discourse?

# Methodology

- Romanian-language articles (2022–2024)
- Sources: Adevărul, Digi24, HotNews, Libertatea, Romania TV, Stirile ProTV, Stiripesurse.
- Analytical Tools: Lancsbox
- Focus Topics:
  - Social solidarity
  - Energy cooperation
  - Economical challenges
  - Fake news indicators

# Key Linguistic Patterns

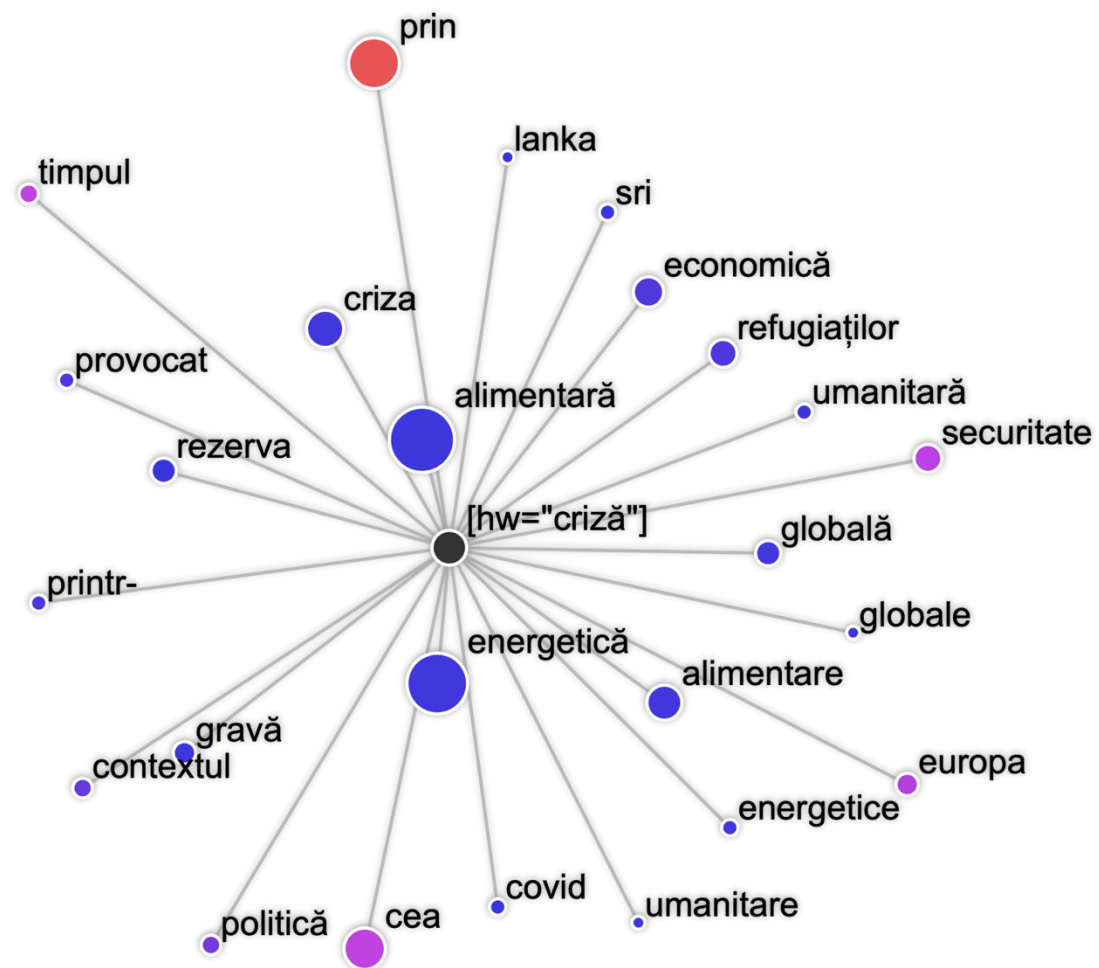
- **Keyword prominence:** *economie, securitate, ajutor, criză, vecini, parteneri, frontiere*
- **Collocations:**
  - *economie + presiune, costuri*
  - *Ucraina + partener, risc*
- **Evaluative prosody:** use of emotionally charged terms (pathos)

# Keyword Prominence (Frequency & Salience)

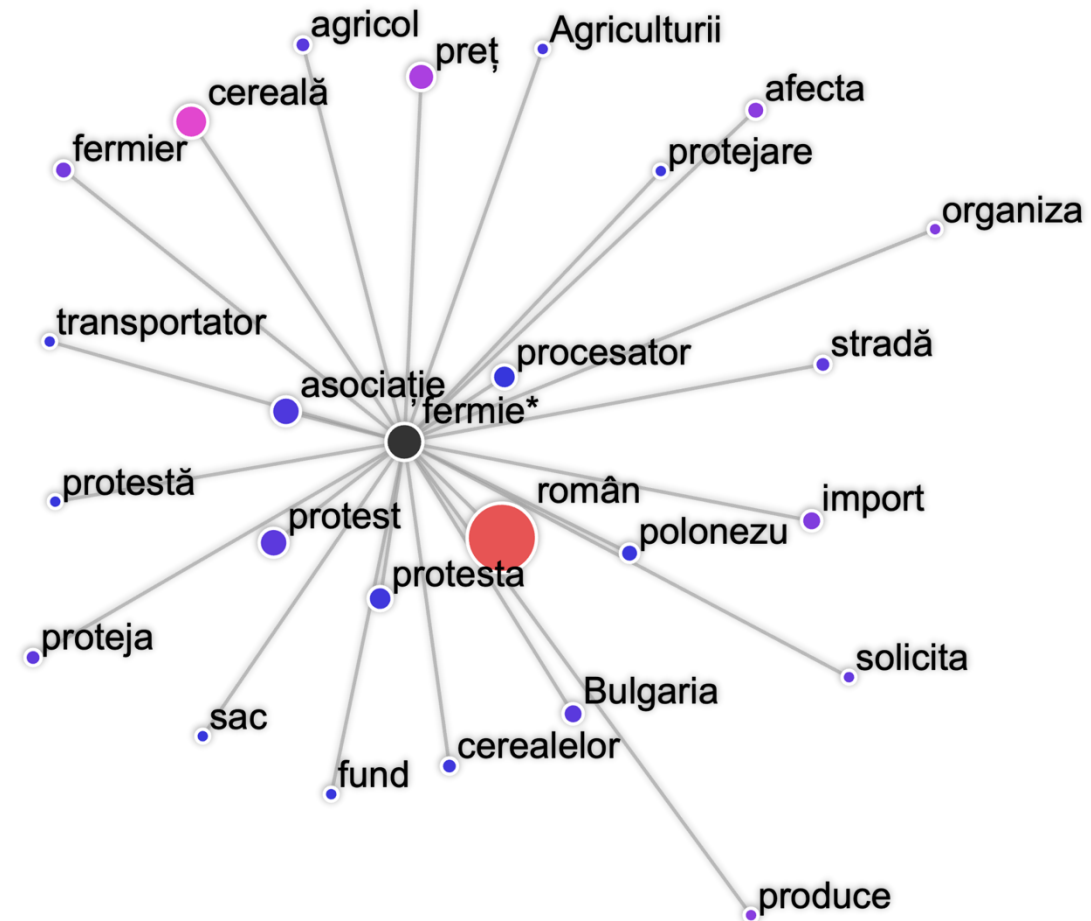
Certain terms occur frequently and carry discursive weight in constructing socio-economic realities:

Keyword	Semantic Domain	Function in Discourse
Refugiați (refugees)	Humanitarian/Policy	Could signal the presence of crisis or a social burden in another context, but in our corpus it's all about solidarity
Energie (energy)	Economy/Geopolitics	Central to discussions on dependency and security
Cooperare (cooperation)	Diplomacy/Economy	Frames bilateral actions as strategic or necessary
Criză (crisis)	Conflict/Economics	Used to amplify urgency or insecurity
Ajutor (aid)	Humanitarian	Evokes solidarity and support

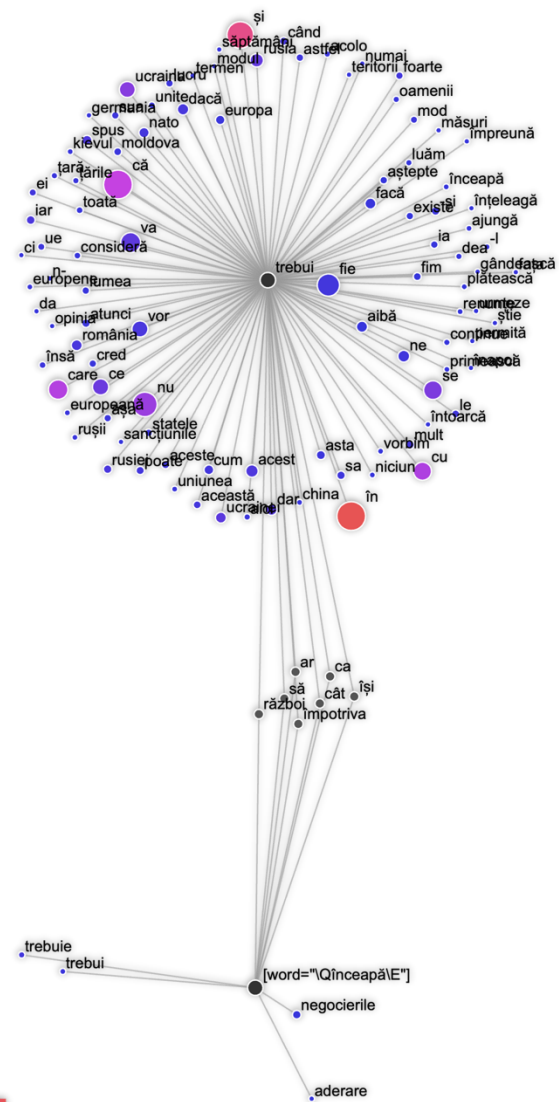
## Collocates “criza”



## Collocates “fermier”



## Collocates “trebui”



# Discursive Construction of the Issues

- Early framing: solidarity, empathy
- Later framing: economic strain, social pressure (rare and specific)
- Shift from ethos/pathos → logos (rare and specific)

Example: “*Val de refugiați sprijinit de comunități locale.*”

(“*Wave of refugees supported by local communities*”)

# Fake News Indicators & Media Manipulation

- Use of vague sources: “experții spun” (“experts say”),  
“surse anonime” (anonymous sources)
- Alarmist language: *criză, invazie, colaps economic*
- Politicization: rhetorical alignment with EU / **European** values

# Ideological Functions of Language

- Construction of “us” (Romanians) vs. “them” (Ukrainians)  
and “us” (EU) vs. “them” (Russians)
- Legitimation of policy choices: social limits, energy deals
- National interest vs geopolitical / historical context (rare and specific)

# Conclusions

- Romanian media construct Ukraine as an ally and not so much as a risk/burden
- Socio-economic issues are shaped by
  - a. emotion appeals (victims)
  - b. ethics appeals (humanitarian and religious values;  
eg. They switched Christmas to our calendar)
  - c. political appeals (let's forget the issues from the past, we face together a huge, imminent threat)
- CADS reveals hidden ideologies in journalistic language – political aim

# Conclusions

- Through a Faircloughian lens, we see how linguistic choices are embedded within and contribute to shaping geopolitical narratives.
- Textual features (e.g., modality, collocations) serve larger discursive strategies that reflect Romania's shifting position in regional politics.
- Economic discourse is central - often overriding humanitarian or cultural narratives (and military discourse) especially as the conflict persists.

# Conclusions

- The media's framing practices are not neutral reflections but active constructions of reality.
- They shape public attitudes, legitimize political decisions, and reproduce power relations.
- Particularly evident in the securitization of socio-economic issues, a consistent trend that was obvious during the **electoral propaganda** in the late 2024 and early/mid 2025.

# Implications & Future Work

- EU values strong – do they erode? - no – see electoral results
- Nationalist voices are louder, more visible - the numbers changed the electoral results – young people and elderly people –  
BUT “the spiral of silence” – polls!
- Expectations:
  - a. Audience reception studies – disappointment – the numbers will fall – EU values will be challenged even more
  - b. Nationalist discourse – switch of power – EU dictatorship / religious people and ‘patriots’ are ‘marginalized’/‘oppressed’ – they ‘suffer’

# Implications

- Polarized / enlisted media during elections and now
  - specific discourse

**Keywords:** masiv, bot, ferme de troli, diaspora, pleava, suveranist, luptam vs lgbtist, sorosist etc.

# Implications & Future Work

- Reinforces media literacy importance
- Highlights value of linguistic methods in political analysis
- Future directions:
  - a. Audience reception studies
  - b. Cross-linguistic/border comparisons  
(e.g., Poland, Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Turkey)

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