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Parodying incompetence in (I)europa: Hearing glide insertion and communism in a Romanian politician's speech

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Abstract

My paper asks which linguistic features become enregistered to a politician's image, and how this process occurs. I examine glide insertion in the speech of former Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă and parodies of her. As parody requires exaggeration of salient features in order to be legible, I use it to investigate what is heard as salient in Dăncilă's speech. Although glide insertion is uncharacteristic of Dăncilă's speech, parodies overrepresent Dăncilă's use of the feature. To explain this, I investigate social meanings of glide insertion through metalinguistic commentary and historical memory, finding that glide insertion links Dăncilă to Romania's Communist era. Though Dăncilă rarely uses glide insertion, the feature emblematizes her political persona. Treating parodic performance as reflecting a wider listening subject, I show the listening subject's ideologies influence the enregisterment of a feature to an individual; the process by which a politician's linguistic image arises is dialogic and heavily involves listeners.

KEYWORDS
communism, indexicality, parody, Romania, sociolinguistics

Rezumat

Lucrarea mea investighează care trăsături lingvistice devin asociate cu imaginea unui politician și cum are loc acest proces. Analizez utilizarea inserției de semivocale în discursul fostului prim-ministru român Viorica Dăncilă și în parodiile care o vizează.

Deoarece parodia necesită exagerarea trăsăturilor distinctive pentru a fi recunoscută, o folosesc pentru a identifica ce este perceput ca fiind important în discursul Dăncilei. Deși inserția de semivocală nu caracterizează discursul lui Dăncilă, parodiile exagerează folosirea acestei trăsături. Pentru a explica acest fenomen, investighez semnificațiile sociale ale inserției de semivocală prin comentarii metalingvistice și memorie istorică, descoperind că inserția de semivocală o leagă pe Dăncilă de vremea comunistă a României. Deși fostul prim-ministru folosește rar inserția de semivocală, această trăsătură simbolizează personajul ei politic. Folosindu-mă de parodie ca o reflecție a unui public mai larg, arăt cum ideologiile acestui public influențează asocierea unei trăsături cu un individ; adică, procesul prin care imaginea lingvistică a unui politician se formează este dialogic și implică în mare măsură ascultătorii.

Parodic performances have been a means to study enregisterment (Agha, 2005; Sclafani, 2012), providing insight into how communities of speakers emerge or are seen (Hall, 2019; Pratt & D'Onofrio, 2017). Due to the genre's overrepresentative nature, the imitation of a speaker can function as a linguistic snapshot of how the speaker is heard (Inoue, 2003) or voiced (Bakhtin, 1981). Expanding on this work, this study examines how parody enregisters an overall political persona for Viorica Dăncilă, former Romanian prime minister and social democratic party (Partidul Social Democrat, PSD) leader. I investigate which linguistic resources become emblematic of a politician's overall political persona—which linguistic version of a politician becomes enregistered to their holistic image, and how listener ideologies contribute to this process.

Politicians vary their speech in socially meaningful, goal-oriented ways to project qualities like competence or charisma, or engage different demographics of voters, as shown by variationist literature such as D'Onofrio and Stecker (2022), Holliday (2017), Kirkham and Moore (2016), and Podesva et al. (2012). This literature also focuses on *variation* in a politician's speech and use of a variable range of styles and features. Expanding on this knowledge, this paper analyzes both production and uptake of politician speech, relates it to historical context, and in doing so, traces the process by which a feature has gained specific politically related social meanings. I also turn from intraspeaker *variation* to consider the consistent and unified images that *typify* a politician's speech. Analyzing Dăncilă's speeches from 2019, widely popular televised parodies of her by comedian Irena Boclincă from the same time, and metalinguistic commentary on both speakers, I show that the politician's rate of glide insertion is very low, but the parodies overrepresent the frequency. From analyzing metalinguistic commentary, I present two areas of social meaning associated with the feature: one of stigmatization in prescriptive grammar due to association with regional stereotypes and one of association with Romania's communist era. Despite low rates of glide insertion, the feature has become emblematic of Dăncilă's speech and the parodist relies on the feature's social meanings to create a performance that resonates with her audience as an accurate picture of Dăncilă's political persona. Using the framework of Silverstein's indexical order (Silverstein, 2003), I connect this pattern to a contemporary political ideology among liberal Romanians that links Dăncilă and her party to the social-semiotic landscape

(Eckert, 2019) of the communist era. I exploit Boclincă's parody as a tool to understand Dăncilă's image by treating parody as reflective of listening subjects (Inoue, 2003) and argue that from Boclincă's overrepresentative performance, Dăncilă's imagined glide insertion is heard by some as too linked to the communist era—and more generally, that an analysis of Romanian political parody and metacommentary compared with the politician's actual performance can bring to light how even at the phonetic level, language can be a site for the recontextualization of sociopolitical history.

STYLE AND POLITICIANS

Literature on politician speech has focused on registers, that is, "alternate ways of 'saying the "same thing"' considered 'appropriate to' particular contexts of usage" (Silverstein, 2003, 212).

These studies have examined how speakers move between registers and how the use of particular resources varies from one register to the next (Eckert, 2012). The assumption behind this is that speakers are able to agentively engage in stylistic practices and perform relevant personae through which their linguistic style is mediated and understood on the ground. The growing body of work on politician speech investigates the linguistic production of politicians, asking how politicians create stylistic practices in accordance with their political goals and arguing that politicians use variation to project different characterological qualities, to take stances, and to adjust to the expectations and interests of their audiences. Much work has focused on the speech of United States politicians, using assumptions surrounding US American society and its relationship with politics. Holliday (2017) investigates the speech of Barack and Michelle Obama, reporting that Barack has higher rates of coronal stop deletion in informal interview contexts than in speeches, performing a casualness desirable in informal settings, while Michelle patterns similarly but has overall higher rates of deletion in both contexts. Alim and Smitherman (2012) use Barack Obama's style-shifting as a case study in understanding the politics of race through the lens of language, arguing Obama's agility in shifting between Mainstream American English and African American Language in speaking to different audiences contributed to his success as a politician. Podesva et al. (2012) asks which features are used in the construction of a public political identity, finding that Condoleezza Rice avoids regional features of the places in which she has lived, but rather uses features indexing a high degree of education and political conservativeness, and elements of Standard African American English—constructing her political persona as that of a conservative and professional African American. Examining the speech of six prominent US politicians, Podesva et al. (2015) finds that while speakers recruit released /t/ as a resource for performing qualities like articulateness, the social meaning of released /t/ is ultimately affected by listener perceptions of the speaker, which suggests examining not only politician speech but politician speech in tandem with parody (or other content that highlights perceptions of social meanings) is valuable. Outside of the United States, Kirkham and Moore (2016) find that former leader of the UK's labour party, Ed Milliband, varies his use of /t/ glottalization in order to establish rapport with his audience or perform competence. Some of the literature I have mentioned focuses on a single variable, as I do in this paper. Kirkham and Moore (2016) motivate their choice of examining /t/ glottalization with the volume of metalinguistic commentary and media attention the feature has received. Holliday (2017) justifies her selection of coronal stop deletion (CSD) with the fact that CSD is one of the most consistent variables in its occurrence with African American English but not Mainstream US English, and has been found to function as a marker of authenticity for Black speakers. Lastly, Podesva et al. (2015) select /t/ release as their object of study as many studies find a wide range of varied, but ideologically linked social meanings for the variable

(Bucholtz, 2001; Levon, 2006; Podesva, 2006) that had not yet been studied in the political sphere. I choose to analyze what I am calling "glide insertion" due to its stigmatization in prescriptive grammar and perceptual salience in Romania.

Expanding on what constitutes a politician's style, D'Onofrio and Stecker (2022) examines the use of ING and /t/ release in the campaign rallies of three US presidential candidates, and finds the degree of linguistic variability a candidate exhibits across different events is socially meaningful and contributes to a holistic public image of flexibility or consistency. In a similar vein, Lempert (2009) argues that the variability or consistency of stance acts (DuBois, 2007) done in political discourse are one way in which politicians gain character-ological attributes such as "conviction" or "flip-flopping."

In a different vein from this body of literature, I follow Inoue (2003) to shift the locus of study not onto the linguistic production of politicians, but rather to the listening practices that construct politician speech as a sociolinguistic category, and political anxieties which shape these listening practices. Knowing politicians exploit variation in production to advance their political goals and index personae with politically desirable characteristics, I ask *which* particular speech style becomes enregistered (Agha, 2005) to the political persona and broader public image of a politician, and what social motivations structure this choice. To explore this question, I examine the speech of one Romanian politician, Viorica Dăncilă, and parodic imitations of her speech.

VIORICA DĂNCILĂ

Dăncilă's speech provides a lens to understand how a speaker's linguistic image arises. Dăncilă was the Romanian prime minister from January 2018 to November 2019, and the first woman to ever occupy this role. She was also the first female leader of Romania's social democratic party (PSD, *Partidul Social Democrat*) in a tumultuous time during which the party was associated with several corruption scandals. A divisive political figure—Dăncilă was ousted from her seat as prime minister following a vote of no confidence, but still ran for president in late 2019, losing with 34% of votes, against the incumbent Klaus Iohannis. Given her prominent political positions and her status as a woman in a male-dominated field, Dăncilă is highly visible and subject to scrutiny. Furthermore, her speech itself has received a great deal of condemnation—myriad articles and social media posts criticize Dăncilă's speech on grammatical, phonological, and lexical levels, as well as her perfor-mance in multilingual settings. Critiques of Dăncilă's language often co-occur with critiques of Dăncilă's politics; in fact, in critiques of Dăncilă's politics, Dăncilă's language is referenced as evidence of her unsuitability as a politician. For instance, the tweet in example (2) criti-cizes Dăncilă's stances on European politics, linking the critique of Dăncilă's politics to her language in two ways. The tweet mockingly voices Dăncilă by adopting a structure she used in an interview:

(1) **Orice** om îi este teamă de o plângere penală

any.NOM man 3.SG.DAT be.3.SG fear of one.FEM complaint penal.FEM

"Anyone is afraid of a criminal complaint."

Example (1) was uttered by Dăncilă in an interview and is considered one of Dăncilă's most recognizable and notorious linguistic "errors," due to her use of the nominative form *orice* instead of the prescriptively preferred form, *oricărui*. (2), @patrasconiu's tweet uses the same marked grammatical feature to indicate that the tweet is mockingly spoken through Dăncilă's voice.

(2) "***Orice Ieuropă** îi este teamă să fie condusă de Viorica Dăncilă #parereamea*" (@patrasconiu, 2019)

"Any Europe is afraid of being led by Viorica Dăncilă #myopinion."

The tweet orthographically represents Dăncilă's pronunciation of the word for "Europe" /europa/ as [jeuropa]. While the use of the nonstandard morphosyntax is significant in directly calling out Dăncilă's language as the object of mockery, the orthographic representation of glide insertion via the <ie> graphemes explicitly attribute a nonstandard phonology to Dăncilă in writing—which suggests the feature has risen to a high level of perceptual salience (Levon & Fox, 2014). Pre-/e/ glide insertion is a nonstandard stigmatized feature whose social meanings I will further discuss in the paper. In this tweet, it is evidenced along with the marked use of the nominative that criticisms of Dăncilă's politics often recruit metadiscourse around her linguistic practices. Another example is *Orice om îi este teamă*, a book by cultural critic Radu Paraschivescu (Paraschivescu, 2018), titled after Dăncilă's utterance in Example (1). The book purportedly discusses the recent tumultuous era faced by the PSD, but dedicates an entire chapter to discussion of Dăncilă's linguistic behavior. Blog posts, listicles, and Youtube compilations put Dăncilă's language on comedic display and include titles such as *Cele mai tari gafe ale Vioricăi Dăncilă. Fostul prim ministru al României a împlinit 58 de ani* "Best of Viorica Dăncilă's mistakes. The former prime minister of Romania turned 58" for a listicle on wowbiz. ro (Nistor, 2022) (Figure 1), or *Viorica Dăncilă—Maraton de gafe, premierul Romaniei* 'Viorica Dăncilă—Mistake marathon, Romania's prime minister' for a video compilation on YouTube with 1.6 million views (Medici, 2018). Her language is criticized at various levels of structure: at the phonological level, Dăncilă is mocked for her nonstandard pronunciations that often involve phonological reduction, such as her pronunciation of the word for "immunoglobulin." During her remarks in a government meeting, while discussing the lack of immunoglobulin in Romanian hospitals and steps taken by the Ministry of Health to address it, Dăncilă realized the word six times as [i.mu.no.gloˈbi.nə] instead of the standard [i.mu.no.glo.buˈli.nə], which has an additional syllable (Digi24, 2018). At the lexical level, Dăncilă is mocked for using unexpected lexical items and often having to correct herself—for example, in another set of remarks given at the beginning of a government meeting, she discusses a project for modifying laws related to public acquisitions and simplifying such processes. She mistakenly said *democracy* when intending to say *bureaucracy*:

(3) *Putem spune pe scurt că reducem democrația … ăăă… reducem birocrația*

In brief, we can say that we are reducing democracy…uhhh…we are reducing bureaucracy.

This event was introduced on the Republica news site (Republica, 2018), as "*O nouă gafă a șefului Guvernului*"—that is, "another mistake from the head of government," displaying the fact that Dăncilă's "mistakes" are treated as regular and humorous occurrences.

Other times, Dăncilă is mocked for behavior in multilingual situations—during an official visit to Israel in 2018, upon meeting Benjamin Netanyahu, who greets her in English with "*pleasure to see you*," Dăncilă simply responds "[hehe]." This particular event was mocked in a YouTube video with 92,000 views, with the title "Viorica Dăncilă 'He, he!'" (FS ANP, 2018) (Figure 2). The video is 7 s long and highlights only that moment of Dăncilă's interaction with the Israeli head of state. Dăncilă's handshake and *hehe* are so widely mocked that there are ready-to-use gifs of the moment online.

These are just a few of the widely discussed examples that illustrate the attention paid to all levels of Dăncilă's language and behavior in public settings. Because of Dăncilă's visibility as a political figure and the public attention paid to her speech, she makes an informative subject to understand the development of a speaker's linguistic image.

FIGURE 1   Screenshot from wowbiz.ro, *Cele mai tari gafe ale Vioricăi Dăncilă. Fostul prim ministru al Românei a împlinit 58 de ani* "Best of Viorica Dăncilă's mistakes. The former prime minister of Romania turned 58."

FIGURE 2   Screenshot from a YouTube video, "Viorica Dancila 'He, he!'" (FS ANP, 2018), in which Dăncilă can be seen shaking hands with Benjamin Netanyahu.

PARODY AND ENREGISTERMENT

Parody can reveal what linguistic version of Dăncilă has been enregistered. Processes of enregisterment (Agha, 2005) are those by which certain speech forms become recognized as indexical of speaker attributes or linked to particular populations. This paper recruits parody as a tool to learn which features of Viorica Dăncilă's speech are perceived as salient. Specifically, the parody data for this paper come from widely viewed parodies of Dăncilă by comedian Irena Boclincă from the 2019 iUMOR television competition, which Boclincă won. Though a few other performances mock Dăncilă, (such as Toni Grecu and Nuami Dinescu's reading of a parodic letter addressed to Santa Claus on Dăncilă's behalf at the National Theater) these are rare, less comprehensive in terms of the semiotic resources they exploit, and are nowhere near Boclincă's performances in terms of popularity—hence why I focus on Boclincă's performances for this paper. The semiotically dense (Calhoun, 2019) genre of parodic performance is a useful site for understanding the meanings of semiotic resources as they apply to individuals, because parody involves, as Sclafani (2012) argues, "(1) the selection of a limited number of stylistic variables, (2) the exaggeration of these features, and (3) the inversion of indexical meaning of these features" (Sclafani, 2012, 123). Parodists perform personae in a recognizable and legible way, emphasizing particular characterological attributes of the individual or persona they are parodying. The parodist's selection and overrepresentation, in quality or rate of use, of stylistic features illuminates for the audience particular attributes of the parodied individual—to which the stylistic features are indexically linked—that are being commented on within the parodic frame. Further, parody is a form of varidirectional double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) such that the performance holds both the voice of the parodied and of the parodist, but that of the parodist is valorized as superior to that of the parodied individual. Parody deauthenticates (Chun, 2009; Coupland, 2001) the original speech, by making clear through exaggeration and the missing of linguistic or other semiotic targets, that the speech of the parodist is to be taken as put on for the sake of performance and artificial. This exaggeration also draws attention to form over content. While oftentimes parody may emphasize linguistic behaviors typical of the speech of the individual being parodied, parodists can also ascribe behaviors to a speaker that the speaker does not actually use in order to paint the parodied individual as having qualities associated with those behaviors. Parody thus highlights how a speaker is heard in light of listener ideologies that shape perceptions of that speaker.

To explain how parody can represent how a speaker is heard, I turn to Inoue's (2003) theorization of listening subjects. Inoue explains the emergence of Japanese women's language through masculine listening subjects—men whose ideologies and anxieties surrounding changing gender dynamics in Japan's era of modernization influence them to hear Japanese schoolgirl's speech as a problematic sociolinguistic category. Inoue considers how ideologies around social categories influence what is heard by listeners, that is, how ideologically motivated listeners hear particular social categories as producing certain forms, regardless whether those forms are actually in use by speakers. The listening subject concept has been expanded beyond the context of masculinity in Meiji era Japan: Flores and Rosa (2015) treat racialized language as a problematic category constructed by a white listening subject, Calder (2021) argues that sociolinguists determine the social meanings of signs often through the lens of a white, cisgender listening subject, and Pak (2023) develops the notion of a state listening subject that constructs certain speech in Singapore as racist and offensive to maintain a state-ordained racial order. I expand on Inoue's notion of the listening subject by treating parody as reflecting listening subjects—parody reflects listening practices with which the parodist hears the parodied individual, but parody also reflects the broader listening subject of the particular segment of the Romanian population for which the parodies are intended.

The performance genre of parody bears significant resemblance to mock language (Hill, 1998). Jane Hill discusses the phenomenon of mock Spanish, where in order for mock Spanish to "work" for, and be understood by white speakers as humorous, it requires the recall of negative racial stereotypes of Latinos. Not only does the White listening subject feature in treating Spanish, a language spoken by Latinos in the United States, as deficient and worthy of mockery, but the humorous effect of the deployment of mock Spanish forms like *el cheap-o* and *hasta la vista, baby* only functions when Latinos are believed by the white listening subject to be politically corrupt/stupid/lazy etc. The use of mock Spanish both relies on, and reinforces these ideologies. In a similar vein, parodists rely on meanings of a feature to portray the parodied individual as possessing those qualities. Because of the overrepresentative nature of parody, the features and their rates of use as presented in parody are not necessarily reflective of the actual speech of the individual being parodied, and because the public image of a speaker is shaped by listener ideologies, the parodic imitation of that speaker is a linguistic snapshot of how the speaker is heard by a public holding political and social ideologies influencing their view of that speaker. Parodic imitations of Dăncilă's speech are thus a useful point of comparison with Dăncilă's actual speech to understand which stylistic version of Dăncilă has become stereotypical of her, and which features have become emblematic of her speech. In this case, it is not Dăncilă as a speaker who controls her own linguistic image, but rather her listeners.

Besides highlighting what is enregistered to a speaker's image, parody also contributes to the enregisterment process for both linguistic and embodied forms. Parody and other forms of speech play articulate particular identities and their relation to their audience (Sherzer & Webster, 2015). Hall (2019) examines MOUTH (i.e., the vowel in the lexical set of words with the same stressed vowel phoneme as MOUTH in a given variety). She finds that White men in Bermuda reproduce racist stereotypes of Black Bermudeans by producing MOUTH vowels in parodic performances that resemble the MOUTH vowel of Black speakers more so than their own vowel in non-performance settings. The White men further reinforce the linguistic stereotype by overgeneralizing production of the Black MOUTH vowel, ignoring the variation Black speakers employ. Parody also uses non-linguistic semiotic resources in performing personae including aspects of embodiment (which is beyond the scope of the current paper, but should not be ignored in discussions of parodic performance). In this paper, I focus on glide insertion as a feature enregistered to Dăncilă's speech, and that becomes further enregistered through parody, as the parodist relies on the meanings made available in the feature's indexical order to convey aspects of Dăncilă's political persona.

THE INDEXICAL ORDER

If parody shows *which* linguistic features are enregistered to a public figure's image, the indexical order answers *why those* features in particular. Tracing the indexical order of a feature helps us understand which social meanings the parodist is evoking, how these meanings have come to be attached to the feature, and how different possible meanings indexed by a feature relate to each other. In his seminal (2003) paper, Silverstein argues that a form can initially become pre-ideologically linked to a demographic category, often through repeated spatiotemporal contiguity of the form and demographic category, such that the speech community perceives a correlation between the form and its frequent users. This instance, when a form indexes a population, is called a first-order index. Then, ideology—around what qualities, characterological attributes, or personae are associated with the demographic category—fuels the jump from a first to the second order, such that at the second order, the form indexes not only the demographic category, but the qualities ideologically linked to it as well. In other words, a feature can come to index not only a demographic

category, but social evaluations of it, at which point it is called a second-order index. These possible indexical meanings are not static, but rather always reinterpretable. That is, a form can always have a possible emergent $n+1$ order meaning coming from its nth usage, and these meanings are fluid and available for continuous reinterpretation—the indexical order does not entail temporal or causal linearity.

For the case described in this paper, I use the indexical order to explain the several social meanings I find for glide insertion. I use metalinguistic commentary and Romanian historical memory to investigate how these meanings come to be linked to glide insertion and how they relate to each other at different n-levels.

GLIDE INSERTION

In comparing the speech of Viorica Dăncilă to parodic imitations of her performed by Irena Boclincă, I examine glide insertion in the environment preceding word initial-/e/—for example, the realization of the word for "exists" as [jegzistə], in contrast to the standard form [egzistə]. I choose to examine glide insertion due to its stigmatization in prescriptive grammar. Dialectological studies find this nonstandard feature, when it occurs in the environment preceding word-initial /e/, is associated with stigmatized populations of Eastern Romania and Moldova (Bochmann, 2000), and is stigmatized in prescriptive grammar due to this association. This stigmatization occurs at a high level of awareness, as there exists significant metalinguistic commentary (which I discuss later in this paper) criticizing users of glide insertion, and sometimes associating it with Romania's communist era, which I discuss in the next section. This feature is a stereotype (Labov, 1990; McGowan & Babel, 2020). Additionally, studies of sociophonetically understudied languages often select perceptually salient features as their objects of study (Halonen & Vaattovaara, 2017; Pharao et al., 2014). Stigmatization, which is evidenced in this case by metalinguistic commentary, and articulatory distance, which in the case of glide insertion is visible in the spectrogram (see Figures 3 and 4), are indicators of perceptual salience (Auer et al., 1998; Trudgill, 1986).

GLIDE INSERTION AND THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST ERA

One area of social meaning for glide insertion is an association with the Romanian communist era. Democratic socialist parties in the Romanian post-communist era—including the present social democratic party, as well as its predecessor—are ideologically ingrained in the historical memory of Romanians as linked to the communist party, regardless of the actual political positions of the parties (Gherghina & Jiglau, 2011; Hogea, 2010; Shafir, 2008). The Social Democratic Party, of which Dăncilă was the leader for nearly 2 years, is considered to be the present-day descendent of the former communist party. Comparing the perception of Dăncilă to Nicolae Ceaușescu, the former dictator during Romania's communist era, both politicians are stereotyped as using glide insertion, despite neither having any connections with the dialectological region in which this feature is found. Thus, beyond its connection to Eastern Romania, glide insertion invokes communist era chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1981) in Romania. In the present day, some Romanians use Ceaușescu's stereotyped pronunciation of the word for Europe when criticizing attitudes of nostalgia for the communist past, or implying others hold such attitudes. For instance, in the comment section for an article about Romania possibly joining the Schengen zone, a user writes the following:
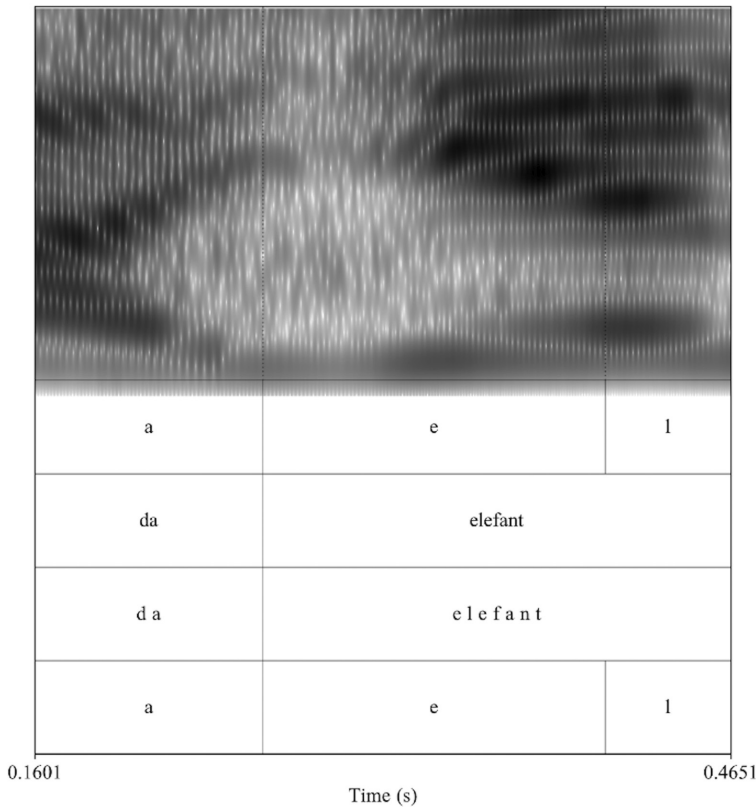
FIGURE 3 Glided /e/ token in *elefant*.

(9) "*ma, in ieropa ta de la scornicesti si radovanu, acolo o sa traiesti tu bine. Deja esti*

fericit." (bec, 2012)

"hey, you're gonna have a good life in your europe in Scornicesti and

radovanu. You're already happy."

In response to another comment on a news article about political polarization, the author of this comment uses the orthographic representation of Ceaușescu's stereotyped pronunciation, <ieropa>, and makes mention of Scornicesti, which is the town in which Ceaușescu grew up.

This suggests a belief that the person to whom the comment is addressed has regressive ideas in line with communist era thinking. In the following example, we can see how the pronunciation is overtly attributed to Ceaușescu.

(10) "*votantii analfabeti politic (majoritari-90%) vor vota pdsreii. asa ca domnu*

Dragnea si-a pregatit discursul de multumire ..iar ministrii..vor administra neajunsurile

..actualului guvern care nu a indeplinit normele..etc..etc...IEROPA..vorba luio Ceausescu

se va uita uimita la Romania…Ungaria va cumpara terenuri in Transilvania…altii ..pe

valea Muresului..iar romanii vor vota unirea cu…..Moscova??" (Belcin, 2016)

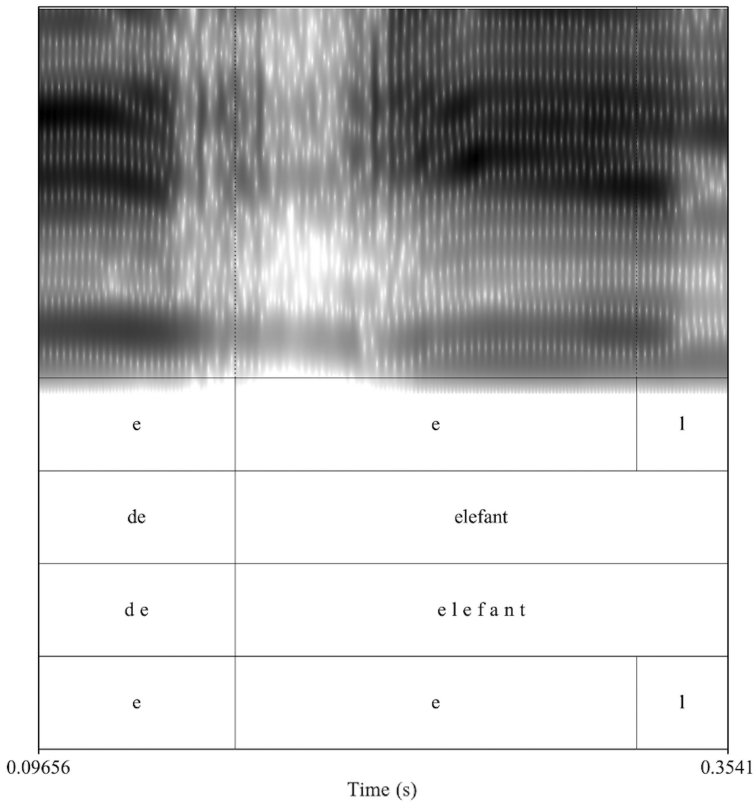"Politically illiterate voters (most of them – 90%) will vote the PDSR guys … so Mr

FIGURE 4   Unglided /e/ token in *elefant*.

> Dragnea has his acceptance speech ready … and ministers … will manage the
>
> shortcomings of the current government that didn't meet its goals..etc..etc…EUROPE..as
>
> Ceaușescu would say, will watch Romania in shock… Hungary will buy land in
>
> Transylvania… others will buy land in the Mureș valley… and Romanians will vote to
>
> unite with … Moscow??"

Here, the commenter accuses some Romanians of having regressive politics and implies voting for the PDSR party (one of the predecessors of the current social democratic party) will lead to chaos, including uniting with Moscow, which is a reference to the Soviet occupation of Romania, shortly before Ceaușescu ascended to power. When mentioning Europe, the comment's author selects the variant stereotypical of Ceaușescu, orthographically realized as <ieropa>, and directly attributes this variant to Ceaușescu.

These last two examples illustrate that pre-/e/ glide insertion is stereotypically thought to have been used by Ceaușescu. The feature became emblematic of Ceaușescu's speech during the communist era. After the communist era, Ceaușescu himself became emblematic of the era, allowing the feature to become associated not just with his speech, but the whole period of time he was in power, and the politics of the era. The feature now gets used to imply that an interlocutor's political opinions are too backwards-facing.

Because of Dăncilă's strong involvement with the Social Democratic Party, and the association of glide insertion with Ceaușescu, glide insertion links Dăncilă to the communist era, such that Ceaușescu and Dăncilă inhabit character types of the same chronotope.

Ceaușescu and Dăncilă's imagined use of glide insertion is ideologically interpreted inter-textually because of the dialogism in their political traditions.

STIGMATIZATION OF GLIDE INSERTION VIA EASTERN ROMANIAN STEREOTYPES

For the other social meaning of glide insertion Boclincă deploys, I turn to Ochs' (1992) model of direct and indirect indexicality. I argue glide insertion as used in this performance directly indexes qualities like incompetence, lack of education, or lack of refinement, and indirectly indexes populations of Eastern Romania and Moldova. Stigmatization of glide insertion in prescriptive grammar is due to the feature's association with lower-class speech, and according to Bochmann (2000), it is a regional feature of varieties of Eastern Romania and Moldova. Populations from these regions are stereotyped as being unrefined, uneducated, and less progressive than Western populations, and they are often the subject of jokes portraying them as such, likely because these regions have traditionally been agriculturally oriented and economically disadvantaged (Mihăilescu, 1993; Stanciu et al., 2017). Boclincă's portrayal of Dăncilă as using glide insertion is notable because Dăncilă has not lived for a significant time in places dialectologically connected to the feature, and she would not be expected to access glide insertion as a non-local.

Stigmatization of glide insertion in prescriptive grammar, in contrast to the standard unglided variant, occurs at a high level of awareness, as a number of language authorities chastise speakers who use the feature. For instance, a 2019 article from the newspaper Timpul criticizes a television presenter for using this feature when saying the word for Europe.

(11) “*Am auzit însă şi greşeala inversă: 'Sunt afecţiuni necunoscute faţă de Europa*

[ieuropa].' Prezentatorul nu ştia că […] la începutul cuvântului, litera „e" se pronunţă

[e], nu [ie].” (Timpul.md, 2019)

“I also heard the opposite type of error: 'These are diseases unknown to Europe.' The

presenter didn't know that […] at the beginning of words, the letter "e" is pronounced [e], not [ie].”

As exemplified here, the Romanian orthographic representation of this phonetic feature is realized by the graphemes <ie>. The article's author claims the presenter mistakenly realized /europa/ as [jeuropa], and provides a prescriptive rule stating that word-initial /e/ should not be realized as /je/— or in other words, that glide insertion should not occur. As another example, in a televised interview on ANTENA3, an alleged diction expert claims this feature is mistakenly used on television.

(12) “*Cele mai frecvente greşeli auzite la televizor sunt Iuropa (Europa), ievaluare*

(evaluare). E şi cazul domnului Dragnea.. la ultimul discurs a spus Ieuropa.. un om care

sunt convins că în copilărie nu a vorbit cu i înainte de e.” (ANTENA3.RO, 2018)

“Some of the most frequent mistakes heard on television are *Iuropa* (*Europa* ['Europe']),

ievaluare (*evaluare* ['evaluation']). It's the case for Mr. Dragnea.. in his last speech he

said *Ieuropa* .. he's a man who I'm sure didn't pronounce *i* before *e* in childhood.”

This commentary provides evidence for stigmatization of this feature in prescriptive grammar, while also suggesting that negative associations enregistered to the feature are heightened when it is used by visible individuals on television or politicians like Liviu Dragnea. Dragnea was the leader of the PSD party who was replaced by Dăncilă after

being sent to prison for corruption, and the typification of him as a user of the feature further supports the ideological link between glide insertion and politicians seen as connected to communism.

Whether in metalinguistic commentary, or in parody, direct indexical meanings of glide insertion are exploited to convey an image of Dăncilă that is rube-like (Bauman & Feaster, 2005), incompetent, uneducated, and unrefined, while indirect indexical meanings of the feature index Eastern Romanian and Moldovan populations with whom these negatively viewed qualities are associated. Further, Eastern Romania and Moldova form the historical transnational region of Moldavia.[1] The territory that is now the Republic of Moldova was part of the USSR, and with its sizable Russian population is viewed as being Russified and regressive. Although Eastern Romania and Moldova obviously are subject to different political and economic conditions, Moldova's stronger association with communism and Russia may extend to the rest of the transnational region. During fieldwork I conducted in Iași, a city in Eastern Romania, one 30-year old man I met said "when you step foot into Moldavia, it's like going 50 years into the past." In other words, to him, the region still lives in the communist era. There are also more direct indexical links between the region and the PSD party: Generally, voters in the area tend to vote PSD for presidential and parliamentary elections. Upon hearing that I was planning to conduct my fieldwork in the region, a professor at the university in Iași said with concern, "Are you sure you want to work here? The area is full of PSD-ers." These are some possible links between the different kinds of meanings indexed, but this remains an open question to further investigate ethnographically. Ultimately, regardless of how the two indexical meanings are related, Boclincă exploits them both in her performance.

BOCLINCĂ PARODY VIDEOS

For this analysis, I consider three sets of data: two video corpuses—a parody corpus and a politician corpus and metalinguistic commentary about glide insertion and the parodic performances. The parody corpus consisted of parodic imitations of Dăncilă performed by comedian Irena Boclincă. These parodic performances became widely viewed and extremely popular through Boclincă's participation in Romania's televised iUmor comedy competition, which Boclincă won with her parodies of Dăncilă. Over several months, contestants are eliminated in multiple phases, and the competition culminates in a finale event. All parody videos used in this study come from this competition. These parodies are generally very well received by many Romanians as indicated by the fact she won the televised competition, but they rely on the parodist's assumptions that the audience is anti-PSD or sees Dăncilă's political conduct problematic, which can be seen from the denotational content of the jokes in the performances.

I selected videos in which Boclincă mocks Dăncilă' political speeches, as opposed to interviews or other interactional settings. I include 49 min of speech, split over five parodies in this style. The parodies occur between January and November of 2019, and the parodic frame indicates a general Romanian setting, given the background and props imitating government headquarters, and the fact the parodist addresses Romanians broadly, and not any particular region or subgroup of Romanians.

DĂNCILĂ'S POLITICAL SPEECHES

The politician corpus consisted of Dăncilă's speeches available from the Romanian Government website and the website of the PSD party. In total, I include 331 min of speech,

which I transcribed and analyzed myself, spread over 30 videos. While the discrepancy in corpus sizes may seem problematic, this is a natural consequence of the fact a politician produces much more speech data than a parodist. The smaller corpus size for the parodist actually highlights the salience of any feature that she uses—given that there is less overall content, a feature a parodist chooses to employ will necessarily take up a higher proportion of the temporal real estate.

As the parody performances occurred between January and November of 2019 and de-authenticate (Chun, 2009; Coupland, 2001) the act of political speech given to a general Romanian audience, I selected videos of Dăncilă speaking under similar circumstances. I chose videos from January through November of 2019 in which she speaks to a broad Romanian audience (as opposed to abroad or in diplomatic settings, or intended for a local audience while on a regional visit). The speeches I selected include speeches given in government meetings, at PSD party headquarters, press conference speeches, speeches relating to her presidential election campaign, and speeches addressing the Romanian public in response to national tragedies.

YOUTUBE COMMENTS ON PARODY VIDEOS AND OTHER METALINGUISTIC COMMENTARY

While metapragmatic commentary is not directly part of the quantitative analysis, I treat it as another data set. YouTube comments on Boclincă's parody videos expose how viewers receive the performances, and the ideologies Boclincă believes her ideal viewers will possess. I also rely on other metapragmatic commentary about glide insertion from social media and news sources, in order to understand its meanings in and outside the context of the parody. For each parody video in the corpus, I read through every individual Youtube comment. I did not perform a quantitative analysis of the comments, but took note of comments which were relevant and gave somewhat detailed evaluations of the performance (beyond, for example, comments saying "haha" which could be construed as positive evaluations of the performance, but are not particularly informative). Two main categories of comments arose: comments that positively evaluate the performances and those that negatively evaluate them. Within the positive comments there are some prominent types of praise: some indicate that the parodies express sad truths, some connect the parody to critiques of the PSD party.

Within the comments that praise the performance, some do so by expressing the parodies are entertaining but too accurately depict what viewers see as a sad political reality.

(4) *Pe cat e de amuzant pe atat e de trist* 😕 (Sas, 2019)

It's as sad as it is funny😕

(5) *GENIALA DOAMNA !!!! RADEM, DAR SITUAȚIA-I GRAVĂ !!!!* (Peti Peti, 2019)

GENIUS LADY !!!! WE LAUGH BUT THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS !!!!

Examples (4) and (5) indicate that the parodies are funny, but the actual situation of Dăncilă's role as prime minister is "sad," "serious," or "too real." These kinds of comments do not make reference to particular denotational content or jokes, but rather suggest Boclincă's performances capture the spirit of Dăncilă's behavior and role, which they view as a concerning yet laughable situation.

Another category of praise for the Boclincă is one which connects the parodies to critiques of the PSD party.

(6) *Aștia care dau dislike sunt PSD-iști, clar!.* (Cocioaba, 2019)

The people who are clicking dislike have got to be PSD supporters!

Example (6) suggests the performance is so humorous that the only reason one might dislike it is if they are part of the group being mocked in the parody, which once again suggests that.

While positive commentary largely dominates, some comments disparage Boclincă's performance. These comments take issue less with specific aspects of Boclincă's performances, but rather with the act of parodying Dăncilă at all.

(7) *ce este mai usor in romania decat sa barfesti si sa faci misto,gluma este gluma dar*

asta deja este bataie de joc (Ella eliana, 2020)

what is easier in Romania than gossipping and making fun, a joke is a joke but this is just

disrespectful

(8) *Viorica a fot prim ministru tu ești fiță și cei de lângă tine gugusituci nu va e rușine va*

faceți TARA DE RIS OK. (Constantin, 2022)

Viorica was the prime minister, you are an obnoxious woman, and the people with you

are birds aren't you ashamed that you are making a MOCKERY OF THIS COUNTRY OK.

These comments indicate that the act of joking about the prime minister is detrimental and disgraceful to the country. It seems that even if Boclincă's performance had been less exaggerated or did not directly poke fun at the PSD, these kinds of commenters would nonetheless take issue with it. Comments such as these were rare in the YouTube comment sections, however they indicate that the parody is clearly geared toward non-PSD supporters, who are likely to think Dăncilă is mockable—whether in her speeches, political stances, or her conduct and embodiment more generally.

Outside of the realm of parodic performance, Dăncilă's imagined use of glide insertion is also subject to metalinguistic commentary. The tweet from Example (2) in the introduction by user @patrasconiu mocks Dăncilă's use of the feature, as well as an instance of prescriptively incorrect grammar for which she was widely criticized. Using a marked grammatical structure for which Dăncilă was widely criticized, with the spelling <ieuropa>, the tweet legibly voices and mocks Dăncilă and orthographically represents Dăncilă's pronunciation of /europa/ as [jeuropa]. Dăncilă's use of glide insertion is thus interpreted not just through its link to communism, but is also understood as linguistic inadequacy linked to prevalent views of her as uneducated and inexperienced.

SOCIOPHONETIC ANALYSIS

Videos were transcribed orthographically in ELAN, and force-aligned in WebMaus (Kisler et al., 2017). All instances of word-initial /e/ were extracted via Praat script, so as to then determine which are preceded by glides. I discarded tokens occurring with background noise, or otherwise unclear speech, as well as tokens of the copula or pronouns, which are canonically realized with a glide preceding the /e/. Tokens occurring after /j/, /i/, or word-final palatalization, were also discarded as it would be unreliable to determine syllable boundaries in

these cases and these tokens might be mistakenly categorized as having glides. Following Podesva's (2016) handling of categorical phenomena such as deletion or insertion, presence of glide insertion in each token was determined auditorily by the author, a fluent heritage speaker of Romanian. That is, alignments for the tokens were manually adjusted auditorily, but in ambiguous cases, transitions in the first two vowel formants, F1 and F2, were used to decide on boundaries.[2] A glided token is characterized by a change in F1 and F2. In Figure 3, representing a glided token, we see a slight rise in F1 and visible drop in F2. The beginning of the vowel area on the spectrogram shows a larger difference between F1 and F2 than the end. For an unglided token this will not be the case. In Figure 4, representing an unglided token, we see that F1 and F2 remain relatively constant across the duration of the vowel. In total, 535 tokens were analyzed for the politician corpus, and 30 tokens were analyzed for the parody corpus.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Because the goal of this work is to understand what linguistic image of Dăncilă is being represented in parody, the small number of tokens in the parodist corpus should not over-shadow the *proportion* of them which make use of the variant in question. In other words, even though there is less overall time in the parodic corpus for the parodist to deploy vari-ous features, they choose to use glide insertion more frequently in terms of proportions, suggesting the feature is doing heavy lifting in constructing the character for the audience. Following Labov's principle of accountability (Labov, 1972), rate of glide insertion is calcu-lated as the number of actual instances of glide insertion divided by the number of instances of the phonological environment where glide insertion could have occurred, which in this case is word-initial /e/. In the politician's corpus of speech, 2.2% of Dăncilă's word-initial /e/ tokens had glides inserted (12/535 tokens). In the parodic corpus, 50.0% of Boclincă's 30 word-initial /e/ tokens had glides inserted (15/30 tokens). Further, Boclincă inserts glides in a wider range of preceding phonological environments, and in a wider range of lexical envi-ronments—all but two of Dăncilă's tokens are in words indexed to the lemma of the word for *Europe*, while the parodist inserts glides in a wider range of words.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to guess at Dăncilă's motivations for her narrow usage of glide insertion, but the inclusion of a marked feature in words indexed to the same lemma—*Europe*—may bring those lexical items to heightened attention, in addition to the fact Dăncilă's party has had mixed stances about Romania's European involvement, which I discuss later in the paper.

INDEXICAL ORDERS OF GLIDE INSERTION

Though Dăncilă uses glide insertion only rarely and in limited linguistic environments, the feature is overrepresented in parodies of her speech. To interpret this pattern, I explore the indexical potential of glide insertion in the context of the parody and beyond. Boclincă draws on the two general areas of indexical meaning I discussed: association with the Romanian communist era, and stigmatization in prescriptive grammar due to its association with un-educated and rural populations, especially of Eastern Romania. We can understand the association between the communism, Eastern Romania and Moldova, and the relationship of these social meanings to the present through an indexical order (Silverstein, 2003): at the N level, glide insertion indexes Moldavia, through its distinctiveness as part of the regional dialect. At the $N+1$ level, glide insertion indexes the communist era, and at the $N+1+1$ level, glide insertion indexes the PSD party. The jump from the $N+1$ order meaning of

communism to the $N+1+1$ level meaning of the PSD party comes from the ideology I have discussed earlier on where historical memory treats the PSD as the successor and modern day iteration of the Romanian communist party. The indexing of Eastern Romania and Moldova at the Nth level relates to the $N+1$ level via ideologies that associate the region with communism. This could come from several reasons that merit further exploration: one possibility is that Eastern Romania may be seen as having been more affected by communism, as anti-communist resistance movements were fewer and smaller than those in other parts of the country, and farmers in the area were somewhat more easily persuaded to collectivize (Totok & Macovei, 2016; Verdery & Kligman, 2011). It is possible that the link between stigmatized populations of Eastern Romania and Moldova and Communist era politics two social meanings may emerge through the "Party apparatchik" or "Party functionary" character type, salient across Communist era Eastern Europe (Hanley, 2003). Specifically in Romania, this consisted of an oftentimes gendered trope of an uneducated individual—typically a woman—with no political experience placed in a bureaucratic role within the party due to personal connections with party officials (Stoica, 2005). This trope is also geographically specified for rural locations relatively disconnected from the centralized government.

While Boclincă does not portray Dăncilă as a party functionary, as this persona is temporally specified for the communist era, qualities associated with the persona may be summoned via glide insertion, to suggest Dăncilă occupies her political position in the same way party functionaries of the communist era were seen as occupying theirs—undeservingly, due to cronyism and lack of political experience, and engaging in corruption. This is congruent with how Dăncilă's politics have been discussed by the media: at the beginning her time in office, many news outlets called Dăncilă the "puppet" of Liviu Dragnea, implying Dăncilă lacked agency and was unthinkingly executing another person's corrupt plans.

Boclincă relates the glide's two areas of social meaning to each other while performing Dăncilă's persona, by portraying Dăncilă's incompetence as occasioning her Communist politics. Boclincă's mocking performances of Dăncilă seem to present a layered image to question Dăncilă's politics. Dăncilă is portrayed as incompetent through the parodist's use of prescriptively incorrect linguistic features, bumbling by forgetting the subject of discussion, or saying an utterance opposite in meaning to what was intended and correcting herself, or visibly reading her speech from a piece of paper—all things for which Dăncilă's speech has been criticized.

Along with the performance of incompetence, Boclincă also performs Dăncilă as corrupt. This happens in moments where Boclincă performs Dăncilă's incompetence by mistakenly saying one thing while meaning another, and the mistake utterance reveals Dăncilă's "true character." In the following example, which I have transcribed and translated, Boclincă's Dăncilă begins a speech, appearing incompetent by speaking very slowly, reading her speech off a piece of paper (something which Dăncilă has been criticized for), and realizing too late that she has been reading off the wrong piece of paper. However, the content of the character's slip-up exposes her as being greedy for power, and invokes negatively viewed communist era rhetoric, by addressing the intended PSD audience as *comrades*.

Romanian (transcribed by breath group to indicate timing)

1. Dragi tovarăși
2. Ăăă scuze asta a rămas aici de la o ședință internă
3. Ăăm da <<shuffles papers around, clears throat>> gata
5. Aceasta este țara noastră
9. România
10. Cu bogațiile ei
11. Cu pădurile ei

12. Cu aurul și petrolul ei
13. Este doar a noastră
14. Și nimeni
15. Nu ne-o poate
16. Lua
17. Vreodată
18. Noi suntem aici stăpâni
19. Vom face aici ce vrem noi
20. Când o să vrem noi <<looks down>>
21. Ăă ăăm scuze
22. E tot de la o ședință internă <<shuffles papers around>>

English

1. Dear comrades
2. Uh sorry this is leftover from a party internal meeting
3. Um
4. Yes <<shuffles papers around on lectern, clears throat>> ready
5. This is our country
6. Romania
7. With its riches
8. With its forests
9. With its gold and its petroleum
10. It is ours only
11. And no one
12. Can
13. Ever
14. Take it from us
15. We are the masters here
16. We will do here what we want
17. When we want to <<looks down>>
18. Uh um sorry
19. This is also from an internal meeting <<shuffles papers around on lectern>>.

This example contains no glide insertion but illustrates very explicitly who Boclincă takes Dăncilă to be—an incompetent but corrupt PSD member tied up in communist era ideologies, and greedy for power. Other examples containing glide insertion do not convey this as transparently, but the use of the feature makes the glide's meanings cohere as part of a unique persona.

(14) *România merită mai mult dar poporul nu trebuie să știe asta. Sub domnia mea ca*

prim ministru aș vrea să desființez și serviciul secret. Dacă știe toată lumea de el chiar

nu văd ce rost mai are. În politica externă [jeksternə] am reușit lucruri uimitoare în

ultimii ani. Am reușit ca de exemplu să nu ne intereseze decât politica internă.

'Romania deserves more but the people can't know that. Under my lordship as prime

minister, I'm going to shut down the secret service. If everyone knows about it, then I

really don't see what the point is. In external [jeksternə] policy, we've accomplished

some incredible things in the last years. For instance, we have been able to only stay

interested in domestic policy.'

(15) *Nu sunt mulțumiți de corupția din țara noastră. Vom lucra și la asta. Avem un plan pe zece ani în care țara să dispară. Cor- corupția să dispară. Europa [jeuropa] se retrage din România și chiar și din Africa.*

'They are unhappy with the corruption in our country. We'll work on that too. We have a ten year plan for the country to disappear. The cor-coruption[sic] to disappear. Europe [jeuropa] is leaving Romania, and even Africa.'

In both of these examples the character produces nonsensical and contradictory content ("In external [jeksternə] policy, we've accomplished some incredible things in the last years. For instance, we have been able to only stay interested in domestic policy."), and content that demonstrates a lack of basic knowledge ("…I'm going to shut down the secret service. If everyone knows about it, then I really don't see what the point is.") In the absence of other utterances in these bits of performance, Boclincă's Dăncilă could seem innocently incompetent and bumbling. However, the other utterances suggest corruption and desire for power: "We have a ten year plan for the country to disappear. The cor- coruption to disappear," suggests that Dăncilă is knowingly involved in anti-Romanian corruption. In "Romania deserves more but the people can't know that. Under my lordship as prime minister, I'm going to shut down the secret service," the performed Dăncilă appears to wilfully mistreat Romanians and hide information from them (such as the fact Romania "deserves more") and the lexical choice of "lordship" suggests Dăncilă understands herself as having total power. The use of glide insertion that co-occurs with these instances of incompetence and corruption enable the parodic portrayal of Dăncilă as simultaneously corrupt by standards of the post-communist era, and incompetent in her role as prime minister and party leader.

To further illustrate how Boclincă's parody creates this multifaceted image of Dăncilă, and how this relates to Dăncilă's actual speech, I provide three examples we can compare: an instance of Boclincă's parody where she uses glide insertion, one where she does not use glide insertion, and one of the rare instances where Dăncilă uses glide insertion. (See Table 1 for examples 16, 17, 18). In Example (16), Boclincă inserts a glide on the initial vowel of "emotion." In this moment, she is visibly nervous and unconfident, and says the emotion is causing her mouth to dry up, which may not be considered appropriate speech content for a politician. She uses the phrase "Romania is in my hands," which indicates that the parodied speaker understands herself to be solely responsible for Romania's wellbeing, which further emphasizes the dictator-like, antidemocratic image Boclincă's performance overall conveys. At the same time, Boclincă's parody indexes incompetence because she takes the phrase "in my hands" literally, when she says that sometimes she sets Romania down because she gets tired, which indicates a lack of education or understanding of figurative convention. By contrast, in Example (17), Boclincă does not use a glide which could give a layered image of incompetence occasioning corruption, but rather indicates corruption linked to the PSD through denotational content.

Boclincă's character tells voters not to worry about upcoming elections, because there are more PSD voters than Romanian citizens. This portrayal of the PSD as fraudulent is both relevant at the time the parody aired, because the PSD had been accused of electoral fraud by their main opposing party, but also is a reference to communist era electoral practices, where election results are now understood to have been exaggeratedly rigged in favor of the communist party. This example shows how Boclincă portrays the PSD as fraudulent and engaging in the same types of corruption as the communist party.

In Example (18), Dăncilă is speaking at a press conference at PSD headquarters, in which she admonishes the president Klaus Iohannis for not having approved the Romanian representative to the European commission, and accuses him of disobeying the constitution. Her use of the glide is in *European*, which is the lexical context in which most of her glided tokens

TABLE 1 Three juxtaposed examples with translation from the parody and politician corpus.

Speaker	Transcribed example	English translation	Glide insertion
Boclincă parody	(16) Scuze timorația. Vă zic mă usucă în gura **emoția** asta ceva de speriat. Eu nu mai vreau să vă promit ce o să facem și ce o să dregem. știu ce am de făcut. România e în mâinile mele. Uneori o mai las și eu jos că obosesc.	Sorry, nerves. I'm telling you the **emotions** are drying up my mouth like crazy. I don't want to make any more promises of what we're going to do and what we're going to resolve. I know what I need to do. Romania is in my hands. Sometimes I set it down because I get tired.	**Yes**
Boclincă parody	(17) Am văzut îngrijorarea multora în privința partidului nostru. Stați liniștiți. Stăm bine. Ca la ultimele alegeri sunt mai mulți votanți PSD decât cetățeni Români.	I've seen the concern of many toward our party. Don't worry. We are doing fine. Like in the last elections there are more PSD voters than Romanian citizens.	**No**
Dăncilă speech	(18) Asistăm la un precedent periculos pentru România încălcarea Constituției sabotarea propriului candidat în Parlamentul în ăă în Parlamentul **European**	We are observing a dangerous precedent for Romania the flouting of the constitution, sabotage of its own candidate in uhh Parliament in the **European** Parliament	**Yes**

Note: Lexical items are given in bold to indicate they contain a glide.

are found. In this particular speech, she argues that Romania's future depends on being able to participate in the European parliament. At the same time, the PSD has been associated with eurosceptic stances. Despite Romania's having been in the EU since 2007, many young Romanians view Western EU states as benchmarks of progress that Romania fails to match, and believe Romania has not succeeded in becoming truly European (Gubernat & Rammelt, 2021).

At the same time, eurosceptic discourses originating from the PSD had increased in the years right before Dăncilă became prime minister. Despite the fact that the PSD initially pushed for EU integration, during Liviu Dragnea's term as prime minister before being arrested for corruption, the party circulated discourses that the EU is over-involved in Romanian politics and is a threat to Romania's sovereignty. (Dragoman, 2021; Stoica, 2023). Dăncilă's use of the glide makes the word *European* salient, by virtue of the feature's social and acoustic markedness, and to some audiences might highlight a possible contradiction between Dăncilă's discursive emphasis on the importance of the European parliament, and her party's ambivalent stance toward the EU.

Though Dăncilă's actual glide insertion may be salient, it is not exploited in the same way as in the parody. Given the qualities Dăncilă is portrayed as having, we might say that glide insertion is being put to use to index attributes such as greed, corruption, incompetence, and nostalgia for the communist era. These could be indexed at a third level of indexical order. If PSD party members are indexed at the $N+1+1$ level, social evaluations of that population that might include such characterological attributes that Boclincă's performance conveys can be indexed at the next order of indexicality, and widely viewed performances such as Boclincă's may contribute to the expansion of the indexical meanings associated with the

feature, or at least showcase how the ideological landscape is allowing for new indexical meanings to emerge.

PARODY AND THE LISTENING SUBJECT

Boclincă's parody of Dăncilă is an instance of indexical inversion. Inoue (2003) places Japanese women's language as an instance of indexical inversion, as the masculine listener ideologies produce certain linguistic forms in their perception of female speech. Typically, the use of the indexicality analytic is to discuss how signs index (and produce) social information. Indexical inversion, on the other hand, is when language ideologies produces signs— or rather, produces in a listener, the perception of linguistic forms (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Inoue, 2003).

If we understand parody as a snapshot of how an individual is heard, Boclincă's representation of Dăncilă indicates that Dăncilă is either heard by her audience as frequently using glide insertion, despite the fact she uses it only rarely, or that her rare uses of glide insertion are heard as so salient that they are interpreted as typifying her speech. In either case, the ideologies surrounding Dăncilă create indexical inversion. Rather than a high rate of glide insertion in Dăncilă's actual speech causing listeners to perceive her as incompetent, corrupt, etc., listener beliefs that Dăncilă possesses these qualities cause listeners to manifest in her speech the linguistic forms associated with these qualities.

In voicing Dăncilă, Boclincă relies on glide insertion's place in the social semiotic landscape (Eckert, 2019), including the communist era and the association of the feature with Eastern Romanian regions stereotyped as backwards and uneducated. Thus, glide insertion functions to critique Dăncilă's politics as being too associated with Communism, and simultaneously shows her as possessing negative qualities associated with Eastern Romania.

Given the popularity of the parodies, and Dăncilă's position as a visible politician, it is likely Boclincă's parodic voicing not only reflects how Dăncilă is heard, but further enregisters current images of Dăncilă's speech. In relying on humor that portrays Dăncilă as communist, the parodies semiotically repackage Dăncilă's speech as invoking communist era chronotopes, even when it does not invoke communist era discourses.

CONCLUSION

In her parodic performances mocking Viorica Dăncilă, parodist Irena Boclincă exploits two social meanings of glide insertion: association with the Romanian communist era, and stigmatization, including qualities like incompetence or lack of education, due to the feature's association with populations of Eastern Romania and Moldova. Through this feature and its social meanings, the parody reveals the listener ideologies that condition how the politician is heard. Auditory analysis reveals that in her speeches, Dăncilă is an infrequent user of glide insertion, while Boclincă presents her as a frequent user of the feature. I link this pattern to metalinguistic commentary and Romanian political ideologies to argue that listeners treating Dăncilă as an embodied site of ongoing political anxieties imagine her use of the feature as meaningfully linking her to the communist era, and characterological qualities considered unsuitable for politicians. Dăncilă's positioning is highly vizibilized through her juxtaposition with the male-dominated culture of Romanian politics, through her leadership of the social democratic party which is seen as linked to the communist party, and the fact she is considered uneducated and politically inexperienced. This situates her as the embodied site of political anxieties among Romanians. These include anxieties around corruption in established political parties, emerging populist movements, and Romania's role in the European

Union (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2018). Through the lens of these anxieties, the broader public listening subject constructs Dăncilă's speech as a linguistic category indexing negatively viewed political stances and characterological attributes, while Dăncilă's observable speech does not match this construction. Dăncilă's rare instances of glide insertion instances of usage are socially meaningful and contribute to her overall political persona. Dăncilă has a low rate of glide insertion, so while her speech is not typified by *quantity* of glide insertion the social meanings of the feature make her rare uses of it salient. Indexical inversion then creates the perception of a high rate of glide insertion: listener ideologies that Dăncilă is nostalgic for the communist era and unqualified create the perception of forms that index these qualities.

Parody serves as a reflective tool for understanding the wider listening subject, in this case, a presumed Romanian public that is liberal, anti-PSD, educated, urban, and sees Dăncilă as part of the timeline of Romanian communism. By exaggerating linguistic features and linking them to broader social and historical contexts, parody not only highlights but also helps solidify the enregistered features of a politician's speech. This case is an example of how both speakers and listeners actively participate in the enregisterment of figures through language—a process that is ultimately dialogical.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
The author declares no conflict of interest.

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ENDNOTES
[1] Somewhat confusingly, in Romanian, both Eastern Romania and the state of Moldova, as well as the entire transnational region, can each be referred to as *Moldova*. I use "Moldavia" to refer to the entire historical transnational region, and Moldova to refer to the Republic of Moldova.

[2] Vowels and vowel-like phones such as glides and nasals are phonetically analyzed by measuring formants (Ladefoged, 2001). Formants are concentrations of acoustic energy around particular frequencies in the speech wave which result from acoustic resonances in the vocal tract. We distinguish vowels by the differences in formants, most notably the first and second resonances in the vocal tract, which we call F1 and F2, respectively. F1 corresponds inversely to height, such that a low F1 is associated with high vowels such as /i/ and a high F1 is associated with low vowels such as /a/, whereas F2 corresponds to frontness, such a high F2 is associated with front vowels such as /i/, and a low F2 is associated with back vowels such as /u/.

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