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ABSTRACTS

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How can we question one's relationship to norms? Presentation of the VAP-G protocol: preliminary results and analysis

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Abstract

This paper aims at studying the perception native people speaking British or American English may have of certain verbal forms belonging to the paradigm of *BE going to*, like *gonna*, but also other more marginal variants such as *gon* or *imma*. Our research shows that these variants can be found in spoken corpora as well as written web ones. Our initial hypothesis lies in the fact that some forms are socially codified and associated to certain people (rich/poor, educated/uneducated, White/Black, etc.). These associations between a linguistic form and a group of individuals influence the stereotypes attached to these forms, as well as their acceptability and grammaticality in the society. Some forms in particular (*gonna, gon*) seem to be attached to the African-American community in the US (Mufwene et al., 1998; Poplack & Tagliamonte, 1999). We hypothesize that social meaning or percep- tion (Preston's "language regard" (2013)) can guide the choice of one variant over another, whether consciously or not. In order to test our hypotheses, the VAP-G (*Variation, Ac- ceptability and Perception of gonna and its variants*) project was designed. It consists in a perception study online.

First, we shall present the protocol: a questionnaire made up of 3 tasks: i) a sociolinguistic questionnaire, ii) acceptability judgement tasks and socio-cultural perception task, iii) sev- eral questions on linguistic awareness. The stimuli used come from two corpora: on oral and a written web one.

Then the preliminary results will be discussed, with a particular focus on the third task of the questionnaire: linguistic awareness. Drawing from folk linguistic, this section con- fronts the participant to the potential awareness they may have of linguistic norms and their transmission when it comes to the paradigm under scrutiny. We will aim at demonstrating the potential relevance of such a protocol in linguistic studies, questioning one's perception of rules and norms, and one's uses of less prescribed linguistic forms.

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[*]Speaker

The Need for a Style Guide Database in the Study of Prescriptive Texts

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Abstract

Although much work has been done in building corpora of English language texts (e.g., COCA, OEC, TIME), creators have done little to acknowledge that many texts included in specialized corpora have been subjected to an editing process, including selecting texts for publication (*acquisitions editing*), curating content (*substantive editing*), and correcting for grammar and usage at the sentence level (*copyediting*). In other words, much of the pub- lished text included in corpora is not language occurring in a purley natural context; rather, it is curated, revised, and edited for the purpose of publication, what Hunston (2022) refers to as "elicitation" (p. 1). At the same time, the role of editors has become increasingly recognized in prescriptive processes (Pillière 2020) and therefore in language generally. An important source for editors in making language changes is style guides (e.g., CMOS, AP) which have increasingly included prescriptions on grammar and usage. Style guides have served as an authoritative and sometimes dogmatic influence on editorial decision-making since the early 20th century and continue to impact editorial practices today.

The groundwork for research into style guides and their impact on the editorial process and the language is already being laid. Robin Straaijer has noted the similarity of style guides to usage guides (Straaijer 2020, Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2020); but whereas much recent scholarship has been devoted to usage guides (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2018, 2020), much less has been devoted to style guides. Just as Straaijer et al. have created a database of usage guides (HUGE), I propose creating a database of style guides. Therefore, in this pa- per, I argue for the development of a robust database of style guides to aid in the research into the coherence of prescriptive texts and their contribution to the standardization of the language across the last century to our present day. I propose a methodology for building the database-including the inclusion of texts and limitations inherent in its development-and suggest a variety of applications for research. To that end, I present preliminary research based on my current collection of all seventeen editions of CMOS and various other style guides (including the guides for the AMA, AP, APA, MLA, and others). I also present a pilot study comparing the expanding database with specialized corpora, asking the question: How do style guides contribute to the enforcement of norms across time?

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[*]Speaker

Hi (student)! Variation in salutation and naming as image creation in university recruitment messages

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Abstract

Each year, universities in the United States send promotional materials to high school students via electronic and postal mail in an effort to convince those students to apply and, ultimately, matriculate. We investigate forms of salutation and address, since "correct" forms of address in letters and other forms of communication are explicitly taught to secondary students in the United States, and there is a long history of educators decrying students' use of nonstandard salutation and address forms in written communication (e.g., Fendrich 2008; Pisum odoratus 2023). Further, we know that formality (including adherence to prescriptive norms) influences behavior and reflects attitudes (Decock et al. 2021; see Evans et al. 2005 for universities specifically).

We obtained permission to track promotional messages sent by universities to a United States high school student from April 2020 to May 2023, collecting 3,853 messages. Each message was coded for salutation form, use of addressee-directed vocatives, whether materials came from an individual or an organisation, textual features such as emoji and punctuation, and general topic.

Most (64.7%) of the messages contained a salutation, of which plurality used the prescriptively mandated form *Dear X* (21.7%), with smaller universities less likely to follow prescriptive norms. Prescriptively mandated constructions were, perhaps counterintuitively, used less frequently by universities with higher selectivity and *US News & World Reports* rankings. There was no meaningful correlation between the topic of the message and adherence to prescriptive forms of address.

Universities use recruitment materials to craft an image that they hope will be appealing to potential applicants-and many of these involve conscious decisions to adhere to or flout prescriptive norms. Therefore, this study affords us a clearer picture of the ways in which organizations use prescriptive norms to shape views about themselves.

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Conduct books as a means of conveying polite speaking

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Abstract

Despite the increasing interest for historical pragmatics, conduct books are still an underexplored research subject. However, they can be a rich source both for language history and history of prescriptivism. Although conduct books can draw on a long tradition, in the 19th century Spain they became an essential part of education and, particularly, of language education. In quantitative terms, the production of conduct books reached its peak in the second half of the 19th century, only to decline in the first half of the 20th century.

In this paper we will focus on around twenty schoolbooks published in Catalonia in the mid-19th century in order to determine which are the socio-pragmatic norms specified in this genre. We will focus on the polite conversation in the social background of visiting. In addition, the aim is to identify the different ways staging normative discourse and thus to achieve an initial classification of these textbooks distinguishing between conduct books and etiquette books (cf. Paternoster 2022).

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[*]Speaker

Prescriptivism and official terminology trends in France (1970-2023)

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Abstract

It is timely to look at trends in prescriptivism in its link with official terminology. This is conveniently done in the French case from direct experience in this area. Prescriptivism and official terminology in France constitute a special case, that has the form of a well-organized State run process which recommends new official French terms in order to enrich French terminology. This process covers twenty domains, involves a collaboration between domain specialists, linguists and terminologists and concerns usages in scientific, terminological or more general domains. It comprises a set of committees "Collèges de terminologie", admin- istered by Délégation générale à la langue française, an entity of the Ministry of Culture. The recommended terms published in the "Journal Officiel de la République française" (Of- ficial Journal of the French Republic) are to be used in all governmental documents. They are also disseminated to a larger audience. The operational features of this system will be reviewed and its results in the form of recommendations will be assessed by extracting some illustrative examples. We first plan to focus on different steps of this process, its origin and history, and then discuss results obtained in a more recent period beginning in 1997. This will allow us to highlight domain dependent differences. In a second stage, we observe the evolution of specialized lexicography (through the *Trésor de la langue française* dictionary and the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*) and its link to official terminology. In the third stage we plan to underline some recent changes in naming fields and presenting termi- nology. Examining the current trend in this respect it appears that one may even question whether terminology should be "de-terminologised" and whether this orientation might help diminish the risk of ... prescriptivism?

Keywords : terminology, official recommendation, science, technology, history. References:

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*Speaker

Reassessing the Transmission of 'Usage': Can it be Anything besides a Challenge to Prescriptivism?

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Abstract

Actual usage is one of the longest transmitted concepts surrounding prescriptive rules. Horace's dictum is frequently repeated that *usus* is the arbiter and standard of speaking. Actual usage also lies behind the long-standing "prescriptive vs. descriptive" binary. Usage is most frequently cast as a challenge to prescriptive pronouncements, as when Sterling Leonard characterized 18th-century attitudes as "the appeal to usage and its practical repudiation." (1929: 139-165). Today, anti-prescriptivist writing invokes usage as a challenge to "nonissues" (McWhorter 1998: 81-82) and prescriptivist writing begrudgingly accepts usage as one authority but "not the only consideration" (Garner 2016: xiv). Actual usage has seldom been included among those considerations used to support a rule; instead, it is usually offered as a rebuttal.

While usage is well-suited for its role as a challenger, in principle it could be used both to support and rebut prescriptive claims. Casting actual usage primarily as a challenger has obscured several other issues in the transmission of prescriptive rules, issues that will be the focus of this presentation. One issue is the challenge of ascertaining usage. Only recently has it been possible to quantify actual usage with computer corpora, and without quantification, usage was in a better position to challenge rather than confirm prescriptive rules: *any* usage of a proscribed form could possibly challenge proscriptions, but any usage of a prescribed form could not confirm a prescription. With better quantifying methods, usage guides (e.g. Peters (2004), and Garner (2022)) have increasingly examined actual usage more neutrally, both in support and in rebuttal to prescriptive claims. A related issue has been identifying the meaning of actual usage. What does it mean for a proscribed form to occur, say, 20% of the time? A few scholars (e.g. Peters (2018)) have examined probabilistic data as both support and rebuttal of prescriptive rules. The final issue for this presentation is that actual usage is not altogether separate from "other considerations." A construction may appear more or less illogical or more or less ineffective to the degree that it is used. Garner's "other considerations" may depend to some degree on actual usage, so that usage is not merely a challenger to prescriptive rules in general, but it can be an additional way to support or rebut "other considerations."

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[*]Speaker

A raciolinguistic perspective on prescriptivism in schools

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Abstract

In this keynote I adopt a raciolinguistic perspective to demonstrate how prescriptivism is a ideological, durable, and structural force which undermines the language practices of working-class and racially marginalised children. Focusing on England, I show how raciolinguistic ideologies permeate education systems and arise under seemingly benevolent guises of social justice and equality, where marginalised communities are told that the modification of their language is in their own interest. I trace these ideologies to early British colonialism and demonstrate how they surface historically and today, under narratives of linguistic deficit and anti-Blackness. Finally, I examine anti-prescriptivist efforts by teachers and show how their critical work is creating linguistically conscious classrooms which disrupt dominant language ideologies.

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[*]Speaker

The part played by Walker's Dictionary (1791, 1809) in conveying prescription in matters of pronunciation.

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Abstract

En se fondant sur les données du Dictionnaire de Walker (1791), grâce à l'édition numérique qu'en a produite Nicolas Trapateau (2015), nous nous proposons d'entrer dans le détail des prescriptions du dictionnaire qui a influencé la norme phonétique de l'anglais de la fin du 18e s. au début du 20e s.

Plus d'un millier d'entrées du dictionnaire sont augmentées de remarques justifiant son car- actère critique et qui entretiennent un débat avec ses concurrents et contradicteurs.

L'analyse détaillée de ces remarques et notamment de celles qui comportent les qualificatifs de vulgar, learned, pedant, mais aussi common, font apparaître des thématiques précises. La plus fournie est celle de la prescription du placement accentuel (*blasphemous*) et de la qualité vocalique accentuée (*frequence*) sur la base des règles du latin pour les mots d'origine savante dans le lexique de l'anglais.

La compression syllabique (fattener vs fatner) remet en cause le respect porté à l'orthographe.

Un chapitre important de la prescription vise la palatalisation, qui oppose Walker à son concurrent Sheridan, coupable à ses yeux de n'avoir pas su analyser la différence entre syl- labes accentuées et inaccentuées pour l'entrée en scène de la palatalisation

La réanalyse des mots obscurs par l'étymologie populaire (asparagus/sparrowgrass) bénéficie d'une certaine bienveillance de Walker, qui met toute son érudition au service d'une critique des gens éduqués (*learned*) et manifeste au passage de l'humour, mais aussi du sarcasme et de l'ironie, dans des passages qui sont parfois délicats à interpréter.

Walker apporte au passage un témoignage précieux sur les changements en cours à la fin du 18e s. que l'on peut reconstruire en recoupant les arguments avancés pour des prononci- ations rejetées ou valorisées par la prescription.

La prescription de Walker est souvent teintée d'optimisme (a coarse pronunciation every day growing more vulgar, this shows a taste for improvement..., this impropriety seems daily to lose ground).

Pour les observateurs contemporains que nous sommes il est intéressant d'évaluer les pre- scriptions qui ont été ou non suivies d'effet. Souvent Walker a eu une bonne intuition de l'évolution en cours ou à venir, en particulier quand, après s'être rallié avec réticence à la prononciation recevant les suffrages d'une majorité de ses collègues lexicographes, il laisse deviner son penchant pour une tendance contraire que le "vernacular instinct" finit par imposer lors de la génération suivante. Ou parfois bien plus tard lorsque certaines prononci- ations palatalisées sont assumées par lui (*educate*, avec (d) au début de la deuxième syllabe) mais ne seront confirmées par les lexicographes orthoépistes qu'avec la 15e édition de l'*English Pronouncing Dictionary* de D. Jones par Peter Roach à la fin du 20e s.

Plus rarement Walker est démenti par l'histoire, par exemple lorsqu'il considère que le prononciation de *plant* avec un a d'arrière qui fait rimer ce mot avec *aunt*, "is gradually wearing away and is become a mark of vulgarity."

Un bilan des prescriptions couronnées de succès et de celles qui ont échoué donnera lieu à une analyse des processus qui leur ont fait prendre l'une ou l'autre voie.

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*Speaker

Orthographic transparency in teaching the reawakening language Luhchi Yoroni (Tunica)

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Abstract

Luhchi Yoroni (Tunica) is a reawakening language spoken and taught in Louisiana, U.S.A. (Tunica-Biloxi Tribe; Eberhardt et al 2020). Because the language has been reawakened and reconstructed through the adaptation of documentation from the late 19th and early 20th centuries rather than with the direct, minimally-mediated input of fluent speakers, balancing the prescriptivism of pedagogy with the reality and creativity of language-in-use is essential.

This talk examines how these motivations were balanced in the language's orthography, with specific focus on its relation to the acquisition and teaching of morphophonological processes. The talk also compares the orthographic solutions in Tunica to those in Hiaki (Uto-Aztecan) and Uspanteko (Mayan). In Luhchi Yoroni as described in the documentation, deletion of sounds and even full syllables is common:

a) deletion of /hk/ before continuants
takosusinima
ta- kosuhki -sinima
the crawfish 3.f.p
'the crawfish'   (Haas 1940:25)

b) devoicing of /u/ phrase-finally when preceded by /hk/ and with certain boundary tones
lahontŏhku̥
'very early'   (Haas 1940:14)

Stress and prosody are also the subject of variation in speech and prescriptivism in teaching. These are a particular challenge, as neither stress nor prosody is marked anywhere in the orthography; learners are expected to use stress rules and the morphologically transparent orthography to determine stress, though this continues to be a challenging area for learners. In general, the acquisition of these processes is left to exposure rather than explicit teaching methods, but for a subset of learners outside Louisiana, this exposure is largely through written materials like Rowina Taworu Luhchi Yoroni (Tunica Language Textbook). Though those materials make passing mentions of the differences between the morphologically-transparent orthography and the way Luhchi Yoroni is spoken, the orthography remains the primary input for those learning strictly from the textbook. Though every language revitalization project has unique needs and issues, the challenge of representing fluid, variable speech in writing is common. We situate our discussion by looking at how Uspanteko and Hiaki represent deletion and stress orthographically.

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*Speaker

Conduct books as a means of conveying polite speaking

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Abstract

In this paper I explore how the representation of foreign accents in film and television intersects with the transmission of prescriptivist attitudes. There is a well-established and growing body of literature on the representation of speakers of extraterritorial varieties of English in film and television, and how such representations serve to disseminate and reinforce discriminatory attitudes towards those speakers (see for example Lippi-Green 1994, Meek 2006, Walshe 2010). What has been less often considered, however, is how prescriptivism factors into such representations. In this paper I will consider the representation of characters who speak with a foreign accent in a number of recent films and television programmes (chiefly Korean English and Egyptian English) and consider to what extent these representations are underpinned by recognisably prescriptivist attitudes. I consider in particular the different ways in which "linguistic foreignness" can be signalled (e.g. through phonology, grammar, lexis, idiom, etc) and the extent to which that "linguistic foreignness" is foregrounded in the performance (e.g. through explicit commentary, the use of enregistered forms and comic misunderstanding). I begin to map out a range of different types of linguistic performance and their relationship to prescriptivist attitudes, from fluent speakers of English where prescriptivist attitudes are not foregrounded, to disfluent speakers who struggle to make themselves understood and for whom prescriptivist attitudes are specifically invoked in order to frame and interpret the performance. In conclusion I argue that the representation of speakers of extraterritorial varieties of English is a key site for the transmission and naturalisation of prescriptivist attitudes

Shaping prescriptivism throughout the century: the case of Estonian language planning

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Abstract

Estonians have assumed a creative attitude towards the development of their literary language at different times in their history. Firstly, after the publication of the Bible (1739). Secondly, from the middle of the 19th century by settling the new, Finnish-like spelling sys- tem (instead of former German-like orthography) and forming a unified national standard by the late 19th century, during the National Awakening. Thirdly, in the first decades of the 20th century, as the Estonian state was born in 1918. Since then the language planning as well as all the lexicographic work has been conducted by different national institutions and universities.

The first dictionary of Standard Estonian (DSE 1918), following the example of the *Du- den Ortographisches Wörterbuch* (9th ed. 1915), focused on orthography in order to help standardize and fix the literary norm. This was the starting point for a long tradition of dictionaries of this special prescriptive type, focusing on orthography, morphology, and on 'correct' language use. In the 1960s, compilation of the first comprehensive descriptive dic- tionary of Estonian (1988–2007, 2nd ed. 2009) was started – roughly 300-200 years later than those of French, English, or German, and 100 years later than in the Nordic countries. In 2019 we started integrating the data from both, prescriptive DSE as well as descriptive dictionary, into the unified database. The information for the users will be presented via the language portal *Sõnaveeb* ('Word Web'), where the next dictionary (DSE 2025) will be published also. The combined dictionary is meant to serve both, the language planning as well as language describing needs.

As for the principles of language planning they have changed with time, emphasizing system and purpose (1920s), the actual usage or evidence-based (less in 1930s, more in 2020s), strict norms (1950-70s), and recommendations (2000-10s). According to a Government regulation of 2006 the literary norm should be based on the most recent *Dictionary of Standard Es- tonian* issued by the Institute of the Estonian Language. In 2019, together with creating the unified database, we started assessing and updating the language planning principles and cases, following the usage-based theory (Diaz-Campos & Balasch 2023) and descriptive approach.

In our presentation we will discuss the possibilities of combining prescriptive and descriptive information in one dictionary (CombiDic 2024), expanding upon heated discussion in the so- ciety about whether the actual use or descriptive approach could endanger language survival.

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[*]Speaker

Charting the shades of prescriptive success

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Abstract

The intricate interplay between codified norms and actual usage has been a focal point in numerous studies investigating standardization from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective (e.g. Vosters, 2011; Rutten et al., 2014; Krogull, Rutten & Van der Wal, 2017; Krogull, 2018). Many of these studies seek to unravel whether the *implementation* and *acceptance* of codified norms, as delineated by Haugen (1966; 1972; 1987) in his theory of standardization, were successful processes in language use (Rutten, Krogull & Schoemaker, 2020). As such, these studies investigate the extent to which written varieties are standardized 'from above' (Rutten & Vosters, 2021), with codified norms articulated in prescriptive works like spelling guides and grammars being put into practice in actual usage.

Viewing prescriptivism as the attempts of norm givers in disseminating prescriptions and other metalinguistic comments on 'correct' language use via publication (Curzan, 2014, pp. 16-17), previous research suggests varying degrees of prescriptive influence on language use. While some studies demonstrate evident prescriptive impact (e.g. Simons & Rutten, 2014, p. 67; Krogull, 2018; Rutten, Krogull & Schoemaker, 2020), others indicate limited or lacking effects (e.g. Vosters et al., 2014; Krogull, 2018). Despite these disparate findings, Rutten & Vosters (2021) proposed a range of factors driving or impeding the implementation of codified norms in historical settings.

In this contribution, we build on the work of Rutten & Vosters (2021), and argue that the question of prescriptive impact need not be limited to direct influence of prescribed norms on language use in the actuation stage of language change. Drawing from our work on the standardization of Dutch in the Early and Late Modern period, based on a precept corpus of prescriptive publications and the multi-genre *Historical Corpus of Dutch* (Van de Voorde et al., 2023) as a usage corpus, we will discuss various possible scenarios outlining the relationship between norms and usage, including the possibility of more indirect influence. Through different case studies of orthographic and morphosyntactic features, we will work towards a typology of prescriptive success for Dutch, thus contributing to a more nuanced and multiperspective view of prescriptive influence and the historical standardization process more generally.

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Gender-Neutral Pronouns in Dutch and the Power of Prescriptive Influence

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Abstract

The discussions on gender-fair language, which is subversive to a binary notion of gender and prevents discrimination, has gained prominence within linguistic, political, and public spheres. This study delves into the evolving landscape of gender-fair language in Dutch, examining the acceptance and usage of gender-neutral pronouns *hen* (poss. *hun*) and *die* (poss. *diens*). Despite increased visibility in public discourse, prior research reveals a gen- eral unfamiliarity among Dutch speakers and prevailing neutral to slightly negative attitudes (Agema, 2021; Decock et al., 2023).

Presenting the results of an online survey, this study explores varying levels of acceptabil- ity of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns. Using acceptability ratings and sentence completion tasks, it compares adoption patterns among diverse Dutch speakers, considering variables such as respondents' attitudes and experiences with transgender individuals, their age, gen- der, sexuality, race, socioeconomic class, and political alignment.

The second segment addresses the impact of diverse prescriptive linguistic guidelines on usage. In contrast to earlier studies comparing usage in corpora against language advice publications (e.g., Rutten, Vosters, & Vandenbussche, 2014), this study innovatively ap- proaches the question experimentally. Recognizing that different values resonate with dis- tinct groups (authority for conservatives and empathy/fairness for liberals) (Dickinson et al., 2016), the hypothesis posits that diverse guidelines will impact different speakers. Prescrip- tive guidelines promoting consensus among linguistic authorities may increase willingness among politically conservative participants to adopt gender-neutral pronouns, while appeals to inclusivity and reducing misgendering stress may resonate more with liberal individuals.

This study thus aims to contribute to our understanding of the mechanisms behind pre- scriptive efforts embedded in the currently most prominent form of politically responsive prescriptivism (Curzan, 2014, p. 24).

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Prescriptivism beyond the monolingual tradition? Metalinguistic evaluations of English for Germans in a 19th-century English-German lexicon. A case study.

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Abstract

In this paper I analyse the metalinguistic comments contained in a little-known 19th- century English lexicon for German users, Alexander Hoppe's *Englisch-deutsches Supplement- lexikon: als Ergänzung zu allen bis jetzt erschienenen Englisch-deutschen Wörterbüchern, insbesondere zu Lucas (1871).* Hoppe's bilingual lexicon is intended to be the kind of bilin- gual dictionary already advocated by Lewis Chambaud in 1761, one that can be 'read through with pleasure, like any other book of Literature' (Chambaud 1761: vii), with many authentic quotations and attestations from recent literature in English. With the aim of enabling 'bet- ter comprehension of English writers in general' ("bessere(n) Verständnis englischer Schrift- steller überhaupt", Hoppe 1871: v), Hoppe's encylopaedic dictionary explained many words, names and peculiarities of English life that were either not found, or in his view insuffien- ciently or wrongly explained, in other dictionaries (p. V), using the recent English-German dictionary of Newton Ivory Lucas, which he called the most complete available (p. V), as his point of reference. For example, Hoppe provided copious detail on cricket and its numerous specialist terms, so that German readers might better understand novels such as the 1857 *Tom Brown's School Days* by Thomas Hughes (listed by Hoppe as one of his many sources). Besides explaining such terms, Hoppe also frequently commented on the use of English, with metalinguistic remarks on phrases and idioms such as *kaum englisch* (barely English), *un- englisch* (un-English), *noch nicht Englisch* (not yet English), "vulgar", "Americanism", etc. In this paper, I analyse and categorize the metalinguistic comments made by Hoppe, relat- ing, for example, to language change, neologisms, vulgarisms, and regional usages. Where available, I draw comparisons with attestations in monolingual English usage guides, as documented in HUGE, the Hyper Usage Guide Database (1770-2010) http://huge.ullet.net HUGE (Tieken, Straaijer et al.), e.g. for the usage "between you and I".

I thus consider how non-native speaker sources can inform our understanding of English language norms and their evaluation in the nineteenth century.

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[*]Speaker

Critical metaprescriptivism: An exploratory analysis of attitudes towards grassroots prescriptivism in a pertinent Facebook group

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Abstract

One focus of digital prescriptivism research has been corrections, especially in the con- text of what could be labelled *orthographic shaming*. This term denotes the practice(s) of people publicly correcting other people's linguistic mistakes (both concerning spelling and grammar). Crucially, the term is based on the fact that correctors – sometimes called 'grammar nazis' – are often ascribed the intent of discrediting or denigrating the corrected person and/or positioning themselves as superior while distracting from the actual argument at hand and thus disrupting the discourse. Both the practice itself and the question of how users perceive it – observable in (implicit and explicit) attitudes towards it, which are often negative (see Meletis 2022) – reveal how normativity and grassroots prescriptivism are negotiated by lay members of the general public. This talk focuses on the aspect of perception by adopting a metaperspective and exploring how users react – explicitly – to a specific type of correction: incorrect corrections. Specifically, in social media such as Facebook, incorrect corrections – which by no means target only linguistic 'mistakes' but also other domains of knowledge – are often corrected themselves in what here are called *re-corrections*. An intuitive observation that is supported by preliminary evidence (see Frick/Meletis submitted) is that correctors of incorrect corrections take pleasure in uncovering the hypocrisy of both incorrect correcting as a practice and often also incorrect correctors as stereotyped agents. Interestingly, this creates a situation in which a prescriptive practice is criticized – and possibly subverted – by another prescriptive practice. The intricacies of such instances of metaprescriptivism are at the core of this talk.

In a qualitative exploratory approach, select linguistically-themed posts and comments from the public Facebook group *People Incorrectly Correcting Other People* are analyzed. This group itself operates at a metalevel as it is dedicated to collecting and discussing anonymized and decontextualized screenshots of (often re-corrected) incorrect corrections to entertain the group's members. The questions addressed in the analysis are: Which attitudes can be deduced towards corrections in general, and what does the (often) gleeful reaction to incorrect corrections reveal about attitudes towards 'unsuccessful' attempts at prescriptivism? How can metaprescriptivism be critical of prescriptivism or even anti-prescriptivist while being a prescriptive practice itself? How do re-correctors position themselves as well as the incorrect correctors they correct? What are the different levels of awareness of prescriptivism among users and (how) do they distinguish between language and language use? At a macro-level, what do the architecture of this Facebook group and the activities of its members reveal about attitudes towards grassroots (meta)prescriptivism? What role does humor play? By critically examining these questions on the basis of specific examples, the talk aims to con- tribute to research on the public's attitudes towards prescriptivism.

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[*]Speaker

Accents in a monocentric culture: the historical transmission of English pronunciation norms in French education

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Abstract

From as early as the beginning of the 19th century, educational authorities unreservedly endorsed a prescriptive view on pronunciation models, particularly favouring norms associ- ated with upper-class London English. This led to the establishment of a standard British accent as the exclusive pronunciation model deemed worthy of instruction (Michari, 2023).

Even when curricula and textbooks began acknowledging other English varieties some two centuries later, a similar inconspicuous adherence to prescriptive logic persisted, openly des- ignating specific pronunciation models as 'correct' examples of English pronunciation.

This paper aims to delve into the historical factors influencing this choice of models in a country with a predominantly monolithic view of languages (Clyne, 1991) and with little to no recognition of variation (the *pluricentric languages* organisation).

Spanning two centuries (from 1829 to the present day), our investigation begins with a comprehensive review of educational materials ranging from primary and secondary national curricula to French learner- oriented phonetics textbooks and examiners' reports of compet- itive exams for teaching English. This initial exploration leads to analyses of the language representations and ideologies (e.g., Kroskrity, 1999) transmitted alongside pronunciation models, and which contribute to shaping the very conception of what constitutes 'English' in France (Glain & Wilson, forthcoming).

We argue that these representations and ideologies play a pivotal role in shaping *subjective* norms within French learners' individual and collective linguistic imaginaries. This perspec- tive aligns with a model developed by Houdebine (1982) to characterise the relationship of speakers to their language use.

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[*]Speaker

Learning a language through errors: Prescriptive attitudes in the history of the Greek language

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Abstract

While the notion of norms as the basis upon which language is constructed as a social phenomenon (Kauhanen 2006) has been the subject of linguistic and sociolinguistic research (Brennan et al. 2013), the idea of error still requires further investigation. From the perspective of historical sociolinguistics, the analysis of what has been conceived as a 'deviation from the norm' and the way in which it has been 'corrected' has much to offer for understanding the dynamics behind the development of prescriptive attitudes. In the case of the Greek language, which is characterized by a di(a)glossic situation (Toufexis 2007) in which the extreme poles are represented by high and low-register Greek, the high register was the only variety subjected to a process of codification and grammatical teaching. However, in the absence of a universally accepted standard, high-register Greek remained a dynamic system in which norms had to be constantly agreed upon. In this multifaceted high-register variety, errors became the feature against which norms were defined (i.e. don't say X), and also the means by which norms were taught (i.e. incorrect sentence correction exercises).

In this paper, we will discuss the sociolinguistic potential of what was defined as 'error', drawing on various Greek metalinguistic sources from antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern period. We will focus on different case studies by analyzing i) the way in which errors are used to establish a norm, ii) the error as an instrument of teaching, iii) the progressive integration of alleged 'errors' into normative language under the influence of usage. We argue that norms and errors are two concepts that are mutually defined and constantly redefined: their essential nature is defined in a continuous compromise between linguistic ideologies (the idea of recommended language), the concept of normativity (grammatical canon), and the influence of usage. Thus, the analysis of the function of errors can give us insights into the evolution of linguistic features and the development and change of prescriptive attitudes over the centuries.

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[*]Speaker

La France vs. anglicisms: from quaint quixotism to revanchist rancour

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Abstract

English, with its dominant status as a world language, features prominently among the lineup of usual suspects for the supposed demise of the French language (1). Far from an innocuous quirk having little impact on real-life French speakers, we explore corpus data
(2) to argue that this phenomenon's persistence and propagation by mainstream media and institutions contribute to normalizing and legitimizing fantasies of linguistic purity within public opinion.

While 'anglicisme' has been a French word for centuries, anglicisms have only been of par- ticular concern to the Académie française since the 1970s. It is under the late Secrétaire Perpétuel Carrère d'Encausse (elected 1999) that the fight against English borrowings be- came one of the institution's topmost missions. Their overrepresentation in the relatively recent (2011) online prescriptive section 'Dire, ne pas dire' is a case in point (3).

Though not always well-informed, and crucially focusing on the lexicon (probably because the most commonly stigmatized grammatical constructions cannot be said to be influenced by English syntax (4)), those proscriptions of English loanwords by the Académie are regu- larly echoed in mainstream media content involving disparaging epithets or semantic fields of invasion, disease or pollution (5).

They also make their way to the French establishment, as can be observed in the 2023 'Rapport au Parlement sur la langue française' of the DGLFLF, where English is the foreign language that attracts by far the most attention, and is exclusively designated as an enemy posing an existential threat not only to the French language, but also to what it is to be French (6).

This entirely subtractive conception of language contact relies on a shaky grasp of lexi- cography, grammar and linguistic history, but the prestige of its cultural and institutional vectors lends it legitimacy in the eye of the general public, a fact which can be quantified by looking at content such as the messages sent to the Médiatrice de Radio France (7).

In these circumstances, it is probably not surprising to see language join the political reper- toire of identity loss, a phenomenon perhaps culminating in the recycling of the 'Great replacement' theory (8).

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(5)   Ad-hoc corpus of press articles featuring the word 'anglicisme(s)'.

(6)   Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France, Ministère de la Cul- ture, 2023. https://www.culture.gouv.fr/Presse/Communiques-de-presse/Publication-du-Rapport- au-Parlement-sur-la-langue-francaise-2023

(7)   Vos messages adressés au Médiateur de Radio France. (n.d.). La Médiatrice. Retrieved 30 January 2024, from https://mediateur.radiofrance.com/message/

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*Speaker

Prescriptivism and Norms in the early Histories of the Greek Language Question

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Abstract

Prescriptivism and Norms in the early Histories of the Greek Language Question

Language Histories do not always provide neutral, impartial records of language change; they can also serve as conduits for the transmission of prescriptive ideologies and norms.

This presentation delves into a specific subgenre of Language Histories: the Histories of the Greek Language Question (HGLQs). The Greek Language Question can be narrowly defined as the debate over which written variety should serve as the standard of the Modern Greek language. Its Histories form a hybrid genre intertwining language history and the history of ideas.

The presentation focuses on the early period (1870-1927) of the Greek Language Question's historicization, during which five HGLQs were published, commencing with K. Sathas' inaugural Ιστορία του ζητήματος της νεοελληνικής γλώσσης (1870) and concluding with A. Megas' Ιστορία του γλωσσικού ζητήματος (vol. 1: 1925, vol. 2: 1927, supl. vol.: 1927). All the HGLQs of this period consistently demonstrate a preference for archaic and/or puristic (katharevousa) forms of written Modern Greek.
There are primarily five discursive strategies employed in HGLQs to define and prescribe norms:

a) Identifying and naming a written variety (often after the author who wrote in it).
b) Sampling a variety by citing "style samples" (Sathas' term) from an author's writings or/and excerpts from the author's own metalinguistic comments.
c) "Grammatising" a variety (in the sense of S. Auroux), by listing, in a seemingly descriptive manner, its main linguistic characteristics. Grammatisation is consistently conducted only by Megas: thirty-three grammatisations of authors' samples are found in his HGLQ, with ten compiled by other authors he cites.
d) Placing the variety in a semantic configuration that involves related terms such as: 'spoken', 'written', 'Greek', 'Ancient Greek', 'old Greek', 'katharevousa', 'Modern Greek', 'new Greek', 'romaic', 'common', 'vernacular', 'everyday', 'simple', 'demotic', 'language', 'dialect', 'idiom', 'style'…
e) Characterizing a variety through derogatory or praising comments such as 'vulgar' or 'elaborate'.

A comparative analysis of the five HGLQs of this period along the lines of a)-e) unveils the following trends:
1. The puristic norm emerges progressively through the grammatisation of language samples. These grammatisations can be viewed as precursors to modern 'prescriptive repertoires'.
2. The initial diaglossic understanding of linguistic variation gradually gives way to a diglossic one. Early HGLQs recognize various coexisting varieties, situating them on a continuum from Ancient Greek to regional vernaculars; however, by the time of Megas, a diglossic model had emerged, categorizing each and every variant as either high (katharevousa) or low (demotic), a model that has prevailed to this day.

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[*]Speaker

Revisiting the prescriptive rule on possessive pronouns "hans" and "sin" in cleft sentences in Danish

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Abstract

In Danish, the use of possessive pronouns, namely *sin* (GEN.REFL) and *hans* (his.NONREFL), has long been a subject of prescriptive debate. Traditionally, *sin* is prescribed when referring to the subject of the clause (e.g., *Han besøgte sin mor* – 'He visited his (own) mother'), while *hans* is recommended for all other cases (e.g., *Han besøgte hans mor* – 'He visited his (someone else's) mother'). However, in cleft sentences, a complexity arises as language users often oscillate between *sin* and *hans* when referring to the subject of the subordinate clause (e.g., *Det var sin/hans egen mor han besøgte* - 'It was his own mother he visited'). This discussion delves into the histor- ical origins of the prescriptive rule advocating for the reflexive use of *sin* in cleft sentences-a rule long endorsed by the Danish Language Council and by grammars (see e.g. Diderichsen 1976: 96; Mikkelsen 1975 (1911): 258–260; Hansen & Heltoft 2019 (2011): 595).

Through the analysis of two text corpora-one comprising data from 19th-century novels and another containing national newspapers-a striking discrepancy between prescriptive norms and actual language usage is revealed. The rule to use *sin* in cleft sentences appears some- what detached from common language practice, seemingly known primarily to grammarians well-versed in prescriptive rules.

Several factors contribute to the observed deviation from the rule. Firstly, the application of the rule presupposes familiarity with the principal rule, which itself is prone to common mistakes in distinguishing between *hans* and *sin* (see Brandt 1996: 8). Secondly, identifying cleft subordinate clauses, which formally resemble relative clauses, proves non-trivial.

The talk concludes with a discussion on whether and how the Danish Language Council should reconsider its recommendations in light of the empirical data. By offering insights into the intricacies of possessive pronoun usage in Danish cleft sentences, this talk contributes to a nuanced understanding of evolution of prescriptive rules.

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[*]Speaker

Sex Worker: a case of politically responsive (and provocative) prescriptivism

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Abstract

Sex worker, a term challenging pejorative euphemisms and condescending labels, exemplifies "politically responsive prescriptivism" (Curzan 38-39). Activist and sex worker Carol Leigh has described the term as acknowledging "commonality" among "good" and "bad" women, all "raised to trade sexuality for survival" (Leigh 1997: 229). This commonality encourages sex workers not to be ashamed of their own agency and identity (228-30). The term prospectively "unites all workers in the industry who are "enjoined by both legal and social needs under one labor force" (Leigh 1997: 229; Fuentes 225).

Leigh's claim to have coined the term exemplifies the "bottom up," "non-institutional" pro- cesses described by Cameron (25), promoted by "individuals or grassroot activists, with- out the support – and sometimes with the active opposition – of mainstream authorities." According to Leigh, opposition and censorship can generate publicity (Juhasz 206). The "quasi-symbiotic relationships" between political activists, media producers, and the "in- creased moral weight accorded to questions of identity and diversity" have led to a more rapid adoption of these terms, at least by some institutions. Leigh's obituary notes that sex worker has become widely accepted among public health officials, academic researchers, and others (*Globe and Mai* l 2022).

This paper will track the spread and extent of *sex worker* in some conventional ways, using corpora (e.g. Davies), feminist and conventional dictionaries (Russell), and various style manuals alongside Leigh's written and visual works, also employing critical discourse analy- sis to map trends in metadiscourse. It contributes to a larger project retelling the history of English through biographies of individual women.

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[*]Speaker

Linguistic Fieldwork and the Transmission of Prescriptivism: A View from Among the Hobongan

Marla Perkins[*1]

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Abstract

In this report on ongoing linguistic fieldwork among the Hobongan, a group of approximately two thousand people on the island of Borneo, I describe what transpired during an elicitation of the first material in Hobongan written by Hobongan speakers.
During a field visit in 2019, I had an opportunity to work with six high school students. They are primary speakers of Hobongan and had learned Bahasa Indonesian at school. The writing they did was for school, in Bahasa Indonesian, and they had not previously attempted to write in Hobongan, although they were and are able to read the Hobongan portions of the Bible.

Before elicitation, I discussed the possibility with the missionary who works with the Hobongan. Her idea, as a good English-education major, was that the students needed to be taught the principles of good writing before being encouraged to write. I clarified that my goal was to be able to collect and analyze Hobongan writing, prior to the introduction of ideas about what "good" writing is.

The students were presented with the general task: write something in Hobongan. While writing, the students discussed language concepts that they had not previously needed to consider: how to represent some sounds/phonemes, what sentences consist of and therefore where sentence breaks should occur, how to know when a written discourse had concluded, etc. As they discussed, they reached consensus, and whatever they wrote after reaching consensus, followed the rules that they had developed themselves.

When finished, the students' works were collected and printed. The missionary edited the students' writings to reflect the editorial policy she had developed for the translation. The students were given copies of their book, and further copies were made available to family and friends and other interested members of the community and became part of the literacy materials available in Hobongan.
The project raises a number of interesting questions, such as whether there are real differences between and among ungrammaticality, infelicitousness, and non-standard writing, especially given the fact that the students developed some prescriptivism while in the process of writing, or whether these kinds of acceptability judgments are more about a type or level of analysis of the language available. I suggest that there are relevant differences: certain things cannot be said and be called Hobongan, certain things might not be considered appropriate to say/write, and certain things can be written in different ways that, if spoken, would be the same utterances. A question of the possibility of descriptive writing also arises, or whether the transition between orality and literacy entails a transition toward more prescriptive ways of thinking about language.

[*]Speaker

The role of prescriptivism in Differential Object Marking in Catalan

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Abstract

The role of prescriptivism in Differential Object Marking in Catalan

One of the most controversial issues in the grammar of Catalan is Differential Object Marking (DOM), because there exists huge gap between what prescriptive grammars say and what speakers do (Salvador & Pérez-Saldanya 1993, Solà 1994, Sancho Cremades 2002, Pineda 2021, 2023a, 2023b).

(1) *He vist **a** la meva mare*

'I have seen DOM my mother'

DOM is commonplace in most Catalan varieties, and not just in colloquial or spoken registers but also in written or formal uses of the language, but it is forbidden in Standard Catalan (Fabra 1918, GIEC 2016). Solid empirical evidence comes from a large-scale dialectal sur- vey with more than 400 speakers and from a diachronic corpus study (11th-18th centuries) showing that DOM is endogenous to Catalan (Pineda forthc., in press).

The fact that standard and everyday language serve naturally different purposes accounts for the existence of a certain degree of divergence between the two in most languages of the world. However, to understand why such an enormous divergence governs Catalan DOM, one has to take into account that the establishment of a standard variety in the case of a *minoritized* language such as Catalan, so subject to grammatical pressures of all kinds coming from Spanish, must necessarily consider extralinguistic factors. It is thus not weird that, in certain cases, efforts are made to promote forms that are not the most widespread among the community of speakers. This explicit desire to differ from Spanish -even if this means to differ also from many other Romance languages- is clear in the statements of several of the great grammarians of the Catalan linguistic tradition. Interestingly, a corpus study on Contemporary Catalan (19th-20th centuries) shows that DOM was profusely used in written texts, but there is a sudden turning point once the first prescriptive grammar is published (Fabra 1918). The drop in the use of DOM, however, was only successful in written texts, authored or revised by authors aware of the norms, whereas the uses in the street continued to display a wide use of DOM, as they do today.

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GIEC (2016) = Institut d'Estudis Catalans (2016): *Gram àtica de la llengua catalana*. Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans.
Pineda (2023a): L'acusatiu preposicional en català: d'on venim i cap a on anem? *Caplletra. Revista Internacional de Filologia*, 74, 149-182.

*Speaker

Spelling Errors in Danish Newspapers

in 1999 and 2019

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Abstract

The motivation for this study stems from public criticism and assumptions about the de-clining linguistic correctness in journalistic media texts, which can be observed in the public Danish discourse (e.g., Hansen 2021). Our study utilizes newspaper corpora from 1999 and 2019. The two newspaper corpora consist of randomly selected newspaper texts from seven different newspapers. Each corpus contains approximately 100,000 running words, and they are composed in such a way that the most-read newspapers contribute the most text samples. Approximately 250 words per article have been extracted to ensure representativeness.

In the two corpora from 1999 and 2019, error detection was conducted partly manually, by three individuals identifying spelling errors in the texts and noting them, and partly mechanically, using the spelling and grammar checking program DanProof/RetMig (Bick 2015). Spelling errors are used here in a very broad sense. Thus, we have included actual orthographic errors (e.g., "agressiv" for "aggressiv"), morphological errors (including mor-phosyntactic errors like adverbial -t), and certain syntactic errors (e.g., word transposition). Additionally, there is a miscellaneous category (e.g., missing words). The 1999 corpus was checked against the Danish Orthography Dictionary from 1996, and the 2019 corpus against the Danish Orthography Dictionary from 2012.

A detailed analysis of error types, based on a typology developed by Jørgen Schack (as described in Rathje 2019: 419ff.), shows a marked improvement in 2019 in the error types "One or More Words" and "Orthographic Errors," likely influenced by updates to the Danish Orthographic Dictionary in 2001 and 2012, and technological advances like improved spell check systems. Conversely, there is an observed increase in errors related to "Morphology" and "Word Choice," which could be due to reductions in proofreading practices in newspapers.

Although an increase in some types of errors has been found, the overall number of errors has been reduced in 2019 compared to 1999. This indicates a positive trend in linguistic correctness, and the results challenge the common assumption in the Danish public discourse of deteriorating linguistic standards in the media.

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*Speaker

Differing prescriptive attitudes towards Maltese and English in Malta's (secondary/post-secondary) education system

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Abstract

Maltese and English are the official languages of the Republic of Malta. For a long time, Maltese remained largely spoken and was considered "the language of the kitchen". It has since gained prestige. The National Council of the Maltese Language (2005) works to promote and standardise it. Listed in the constitution as the national language, Maltese serves as a marker of Maltese identity. English on the islands is the result of British colonisation (1814-1964). As the Empire nurtured an embryonic education system, the language became intricately tied to a drive for universal education, and the social advancement this provided encouraged a working knowledge of English. Following a progressive shift from exonormative to endonormative stabilization (Schneider 2007), Maltese English is increasingly considered a distinct variety by its speakers and an identity carrier (Krug 2015: 13).

How are prescriptive attitudes towards English and Maltese conveyed and transmitted in the education system?

In this paper, we study the 2006 to 2019 examiners' reports for the Maltese and English language exams of the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) which students sit at age 16. We excerpted all comments about language use and coded for levels of linguistic analysis, mentions of linguistic contact, and stance.

Comments about language transfer are more prevalent in the Maltese reports. Besides reporting literal translations, L1 interference and use of foreign words (similar in the English reports), examiners also describe Maltese as not the L1 of the candidates and complain about the use of "words/phrases in English or Italian (even if they exist in Maltese)".

In a country characterized by language contact, there is pressure to maintain 'pure' versions of the languages even though this clashes with the sociolinguistic reality at hand where bilingualism and code-switching are the norms.

Perceived threats towards the vitality of Maltese reinforce prescriptive attitudes. A 2021 survey by the National Statistics Office of Malta indicates that a significant number of young people consider English their L1. The emphasis on purism could be counterproductive though, as it is likely to lead to speakers' linguistic insecurity, hence limiting their overall use of Maltese. In the course of its history, Maltese has survived by morphing with different linguistic varieties.

[*]Speaker

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'Blue pencil rules' in late nineteenth-century advice literature for novice journalists

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Abstract

This paper addresses a gap in existing scholarship by examining a hitherto neglected body of specialized Late Modern prescriptive texts. The ongoing professionalization of journalism in late nineteenth-century United States stimulated the production of a range of publications written by practitioners for the benefit of young men and women who needed advice on how to prepare for a career in journalism. The goal of this study is to explore the role that dedicated editorials (e.g., in the specialized trade journal *The Journalist*, edited by Allan Forman (see Sumpter 2010, 2018)) and early journalism textbooks (e..g, Luce 1889, Shuman 1894) played in transmitting prescriptive language norms to aspiring journalists. By analyzing selected sections containing instructions on the proper use of the English language in textbooks (e.g., "Errors Of All Sorts" in Shuman 1894: 168-191) and relevant editorials (e.g., "The Blue Pencil and How To Avoid It" compiled by Alex G. Nevins; John Palmer Gavit's "'What Is News?' A Manual For Newspaper Reporters And Correspondents" in *The Journalist*), I aim to show how experienced journalists made a contribution to the emerging ideology of standard American newspaper language (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2015, Kostadinova 2018) as reflected in their usage guidelines.

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[*]Speaker

Transmitting prescriptive norms and standards without institutional support

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Abstract

How successful can the transmission of prescriptive norms and an emerging standard be in a society with limited infrastructure? The focus in this presentation is on the sociolinguistic situation in late 19th century Iceland, when the Icelanders were struggling for independence after having belonged to the Danish kingdom for centuries. The national language had an important symbolic role during the struggle (sovereignty was aquired in 1918), entailing vivid discussions on the status and development of Icelandic, in which prescriptivism and purism prevailed. In the late 19th century the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic was compulsory for all children, and literacy was general. However, primary education had very little institutional support, and relied mostly on home-schooling, even if the number of primary schools was slowly increasing, especially in urban areas. There were few schools at the secondary level as well, and with small student groups. In order to reveal how successfully prescriptive norms were transmitted, given this background, we will compare the actual language use of three young siblings, a girl (b. 1865) and two boys (b. 1870 and 1874), in family letters written during their adolescence, with prescriptions of usage in Icelandic spelling guides, grammar books and dictionaries, available at the time, as well as usage prescribed and promoted in public language debates, e.g. in periodicals.

[*]Speaker

English compared to Dutch and German: three linguistic complaint traditions

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Abstract

A linguistic complaint tradition, according to Milroy and Milroy (1991: 77), is typically found in technologically advanced societies because such societies "require a heavily codified standard language". "(O)ne of the functions of linguistic complaint," they add, "is the promotion of the standard." In the UK (more so than in the US, Lukač 2016), linguistic complaints are expressed by the general public through the phenomenon known as the Letter to the Editor and more recently in below-the-line commentary of online publications on language. English also has a strong usage guide tradition, which started towards the end of the eighteenth century, and has a firm basis in attitudes to linguistic variability held by non-specialists; this is, indeed, what characterises authorship of the genre down to this day (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2020). Usage guides deal with usage problems, items of variable usage at all levels of the language which many users consequently feel uncertain about. Strobel (2023) claims that "(u)ntil now, there is almost no work that (explicitly) explores doubtful cases (i.e. usage problems) beyond German" (2023: 8). The many recent publications by members of the Bridging the Unbridgeable project as well as by linguists like Don Chapman and many earlier writers, however, prove the contrary. In this paper, I want to compare English and German with respect to their separate complaint traditions, to which I will add Dutch – my native language – based on the premise first expressed by van Haeringen ((1956)) that that language often occupies a middle position in between its two neighbours. My paper will show significant differences between the three complaint traditions, both in terms of their origins and as to how, in the absence of any language academies like the *Academie française*, notions of linguistic correctness are implemented among the three countries' respective speakers and writers.

Keywords: complaint tradition, usage guides, prescriptivism, usage problems, linguistic correctness

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[*]Speaker

Grammatical and lexical prescriptions in orthography manuals: the case of Czech and Croatian

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Abstract

In many language standardization traditions, orthography manuals are one of the funda- mental codification tools, along with grammars and vocabularies (Lebsanft & Tacke 2020). This is particularly characteristic of languages with writing systems strongly based on the phonemic principle (Sgall 1987), in which the spelling of words generally reflects their phone- mic composition. However, the phonemic principle is no *panacea* for all problems of writing, so the primary function of orthography manuals is to provide systematic solutions for its "blind spots", e.g. by codifying examples of non-phonemic spelling, hyphenation, capitaliza- tion, punctuation, etc.

Orthography manuals, however, sometimes also contain prescriptions that are not strictly orthographic. Czech orthography manuals traditionally prescribe some elements of the gram- matical norm, primarily details of nominal and verbal inflection with significant variation in use (Bermel 2006). On the other hand, Croatian orthography manuals codify elements of the lexical norm by proscribing some of the frequently used lexical units and by prescribing their replacements (Badurina 2017). Why do orthography manuals contain parts of grammatical and lexical codification and how do their authors decide which grammatical and lexical items to include?

Orthography manuals are usually officially recommended for use in schools, so they have wider range of regular users then grammars and dictionaries. In addition, they are com- monly less voluminous, so it is easily feasible to expand them with grammatical and lexical prescriptions that their authors consider particularly important to disseminate. However, these grammatical and lexical "appendices" are rarely methodically evaluated when ortho- graphic codification is subjected to a systematic analysis, which makes them more likely to fall victim to "unscientific" prescriptivism (Pullum 2023).

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The Making of Standard French: Prescriptivism and the stigmatisation of regional French in an eighteenth-century metalinguistic text

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Abstract

There exists in France a long tradition of prescriptive manuals which comment on the 'correct' usage of the French language, written by a series of authors known as the *Remarqueurs*, and commencing in 1647 with the publication of Claude Favre de Vaugelas's *Remarques sur la langue française*. These seventeenth-century manuals can be seen as an early manifestation of the diffusion of the French standard language, and they have been studied in depth by scholars such as Wendy Ayres-Bennett (1987, 2004, 2018) and Philippe Caron (2004). Similar prescriptive works continued to be produced from the eighteenth century on, but some texts evolved to become aimed not only at encouraging 'good usage', that is, at transmitting particular norms, but, specifically, at eradicating any usages that showed the influence of regional varieties, including, most notably, the publication of Desgrouais' *Les Gasconismes corrigés* in 1766. These texts have received far less scholarly attention, in spite of the fact that they highlight the centralising force of standardisation, in a period well before the use of French had spread across France. This paper examines the content and discourse of *Les Gasconismes corrigés*, including, first, the types of usage either promoted as 'correct' or condemned as 'incorrect' and the reasons given for such judgments; and second, the metalanguage used to discuss those usages that are either condemned or promoted, to determine whether Desgrouais displays similar language ideologies to those shown by the *Remarqueurs* and therefore transmits similar prescriptive norms.

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[*]Speaker

Language professionals and the implicit transmission of linguistic norms

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Abstract

This paper adds to the existing research on attitudes towards prescriptive rules and the constructions they target (e.g., Mittins et al. 1970, Straaijer 2016, Ebner 2017). It presents preliminary results from a mixed-methods study that seeks to understand which prescriptive rules speakers of Modern American English from different age groups and with different professional backgrounds are aware of and how these rules matter to them in their professional work. Emphasis is put on language professionals, who, as editors, teachers, writers, journalists, and instructors, may find themselves in linguistic gatekeeper positions where they influence the speech of others. Results from the first stage of the study (based on survey data) showed that such language professionals have strong opinions on constructions like split infinitives and non-standard pronouns ("a problem for my husband and I") but also show greater awareness of linguistic variation by context. The second stage of the project is based on in-depth interviews (n=20) that allowed for more organic responses on the role of grammar and grammar awareness in these professionals' work. Additionally, teachers were asked to provide feedback on a passage from a student writing sample. We found that most of the interviewees profess not to consider prescriptive rules in their work and to rely on their intuition and experience for speaking with a voice that is appropriate to the situation. None of the interviewees used any kind of reference grammar or style manual (beyond required style guides for specific publications). For teachers, there was an expressed desire to focus on teaching audience awareness to their own students, rather than teaching grammatical constructions, but this desire is in tension with the unique sense of responsibility to provide students with an understanding of and ability to navigate linguistic norms. We will discuss this tension in the larger context of how prescriptive norms are passed on implicitly, through choices speakers in gatekeeping positions make, even if they frame these decisions as supporting clarity or audience engagement.
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*Speaker

Never the Twain Shall Meet: Prescribing Coherence in Language Teaching and Learning in France

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Abstract

Any form of language teaching and learning almost necessarily involves the use – and transmission – of prescriptive, normative models of reference. A wealth of previous research has shown how this can also lead to the transmission, and potential reproduction, of certain language ideologies, notably native speakerism (Holliday 2006), standard language ideology (Lippi-Green 1997) and raciolinguistic ideologies (Cushing 2022).

This presentation builds upon recent work focusing on such ideologies in language teach- ing/learning in France by exploring a lesser studied – yet highly prevalent – prescriptive language ideology in this context, that of "coherence". This term is typically used in re- lation to spoken varieties of a target language, as in the following extract of a competitive exam jury report:

> Tous les accents regionaux sont acceptes (...) Il convient toutefois de veiller à la coher- ence de la variete acquise (All regional accents are accepted. (...) However, attention should be paid to the coherence of the aquired variety) (Agregation ext. d'anglais 2015, p.149)

By applying a critical sociolinguistic/discourse analytical lens to a varied corpus of teaching materials, institutional documents and fieldwork interviews with education stakeholders, I examine what "coherence" is used to refer to in the context of teaching/learning additional languages in France. I show how this term appears to stand for two prescriptive norms when it comes to pronunciation: 1) proscription of what are perceived as influences from outside a target language; 2) avoiding mixing together pronunciation phenomena that are seen as belonging to different reference models of the same language.

Following this, I explore how these ideas dovetail with the other language ideologies men- tioned above, as well as that of linguistic purism (Walsh 2016). Then, drawing upon both previous sociolinguistic research and different corpora of real-life interactions, I call into question these prescriptive dynamics, arguing that speakers are rarely "coherent" in their everyday language practices. Indeed, I show how incoherence and heterogeneity in pronun- ciation can have important socio-pragmatic functions.

By way of conclusion, I explore the potential sociolinguistic repercussions of this situation, in which commonplace linguistic behaviour is delegitimised by the transmission of prescriptive norms in language teaching/learning.

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*Speaker

The art of letter writing in the long eighteenth century: conventions for subscription formulae

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Abstract

In the mid-eighteenth century, W.H. Dilworth emphasises that "there is nothing more commendable, and at the same time more useful in life, than to be able to write letters on all occasions with elegance and propriety" (1758: v). The art of letter writing was portrayed as necessary knowledge and a polite accomplishment, and epistolary manuals offered the support needed in writing to different audiences and for various purposes (Bannet 2005). This historical genre was in steady demand from the Middle Ages, it expanded in both scope and numbers in early Modern England and became exceedingly popular throughout the eighteenth century (Hornbeak 1934). The very popularity of these self-help books testifies to a desire for norms with which writers would polish their epistolary skills and measure social respectability (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 1995, Tanskanen 2003, Nevala 2004).

Epistolary manuals have a dual nature: prescriptive in laying out instructions, and descriptive in their method of instruction by example, offering extensive collections of model letters to be imitated and adapted to the writer's sociopragmatic context. This way their significance goes beyond their role as guides to write letters – they are instrumental in encoding, transmitting and disseminating practices which convey stylistic, social, cultural, behavioural and linguistic conventions, and "like all arts", Bannet (2007: 27) remarks, these conventions "had to be learned and taught". The study of these manuals is thus invaluable in that it sheds light on the "socially prescriptive dimension" of the genre and on the "intertextuality" between their recommendations and usage in authentic letters (Tanksanen 2003, Shvanyukova 2019).

One of the common topics discussed is epistolary writing is forms of address, a customary feature which expresses and constructs social relations between correspondents (Nevala 2004). Subscription formulae are particularly intriguing in that they fulfil intersubjective and didactic functions with stronger implications of the writer's evaluation of the correspondents' social relationship than opening formulae, and in that they present more variability in structure and lexical choice to negotiate nuances of politeness (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1999, Shvanyukova 2018). They are therefore enlightening for tracing established practices and norms.

In this paper I will explore recommendations which transmit conventions for the appropriate use of subscription formulae in the long eighteenth century (c.1650-c.1800), with a focus on expressions with *(obedient humble) servant*, *yours (affectionately)* and *well-wisher*. The analysis covers explicit instructions in the prefatory part of sixty sources with epistolary advice as well as implicit guidance in the subscription part of the model letters (c.2500 items). It also considers sociopragmatic factors which may condition the writer's lexical choice, such as the theme of the letter, social distance, relative power and gender. This piece of research is part of the large-scale project *Unlocking the Mary Hamilton Papers*, which investigates letter writing and sociable reading practices. Tracing the conventions embraced in letter-writing manuals will help us to gain a deeper understanding of epistolary usage as a window onto eighteenth-century language, society and culture (Coulombeau et al. in prep).

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Polpismen 'semiliterate' as a label in grassroots prescriptivism for Slovene

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Abstract

The term *polpismen* 'semiliterate' and its derivatives is being used in grassroots prescriptivism for Slovene as a label of text, and by extension of speakers producing said text. Its function is to create a usage problem out of actual speech, and so it must primarily be understood as a means of transmitting one's prescriptive judgments online. *Polpismen* stands out as a curious label in a completely literate society. It first appears in the corpora in 1991 and appears to have been adopted from English, where the term is dated to 1927 by the OED and 1905 by COHA. There it denotes a person able to read but not write, which is also the first definition provided by the 2017 2nd edition of the Dictionary of Standard Slovene (the term is absent in the 1987 1st edition). The second definition, "someone who expresses themselves poorly, especially in writing" is closer to the meaning of the prescriptive label. This shift of *polpismen*'s meaning in relation to *(ne)pismen* '(il)literate' from complementary to graded antonyms is explained historically through the standardology of Slovene: although institutional prescriptivism shifted from the traditional prototypically moral concept of rule to one closer to technical rule (Auroux's linguistic normativity terminology), the traditional concept was slower to be shifted from the education system due to its prolonged role in the nation building process (cf. Subačius 2002). It is for this reason that the hangover of moral rules treating variation from the standard as infringement on language rules as such likely persists in the minds of people participating in grassroots prescriptivism. To evaluate this proposition, a multimodal corpus of grassroots prescriptivism is surveyed, consisting of both forum/Facebook comments preferred by the older generation as well as Instagram pages preferred by younger people. The corpus is coded for both typological (grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.) and social (older/younger generation, gender) variables so that it can provide a holistic contribution to the anatomy of grassroots prescriptivism for Slovene.

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