

PART I

STANDARDS AND

STANDARDIZATION IN

NATIONAL AND

GLOBAL CONTEXTS

CHAPTER 2

Prescriptivism in and about the Media:

A Comparative Analysis of Corrective Practices in Greece and Germany

Spiros Moschonas and Jürgen Spitzmüller

And what should they know of England who only England know?

(Rudyard Kipling)

2.1 Introduction

Metalinguistic discourse in the media is often referred to as prescriptivist insofar as it is a clear example of the kind of discourse whereby someone tries to tell someone else how to speak or write. Here prescriptivism is typically contrasted to descriptivism, that is, a ‘scientific’ discourse that aims to capture how people actually speak or write. Undoubtedly ‘telling other people how to use language’ is a central metapragmatic practice in the context of language ideological debates, and, as such, is a core topic of language ideology research. However, as has often been pointed out (e.g. Cameron 1995; Johnson 2001), the objective definition and delineation of ‘prescriptivism’, on the one hand, and ‘descriptivism’, on the other, is inherently problematic, not least since each concept is invariably subject to linguists’ self-perception of her or his own ‘scientific’ task. And although the definitional advantage might appear to be on the part of the descriptivist, it is rarely entirely apparent what prescriptivism is supposed to be and do, let alone how it should be accounted for in (socio-)linguistic terms. That

said, one thing remains clear: if language ideology research is to be acknowledged as part of the mainstream of linguistic research, we believe that it should similarly aspire to the descriptivist ideal of explaining what it is that people actually say and do when they tell other people how to speak or write. In other words, definitional and methodological precision remain fundamental concerns in language ideology research, not least since they apply to notions and practices that overlap with those employed by other kinds of linguists. In this regard, a key concern is the use of large-scale comparative studies. We believe that there is an urgent need to devise methodologies for the processing of large corpora, and particularly for the use of comparative corpus-based - or even corpus-driven - discourse analysis within the field of language ideology research alongside metalinguistic, metapragmatic or folk linguistic studies and the more traditional field of linguistic historiography (Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 1998; Kroskrity 2000; Niedzielski and Preston 1999; Jaworski et al., 2004). In this chapter we therefore set out to address each of these three issues: we provide i) a pragmatic definition of prescriptivism on the basis of which we then develop ii) a corpus-driven approach to prescriptivist media discourse in iii) a comparative context, namely that of Greece and Germany.

We will apply our comparative approach to two corpora of metalinguistic print-media texts from a selection of Greek and German newspapers. Our corpora consist of texts that contain references to media language - hence our dual focus on prescriptivism in and about the media, concentrating on the period from the mid-1990s to the early noughties, during which time both countries experienced a remarkable upsurge of public interest in media language use (Delveroudi and Moschonas 2003; Spitzmüller 2005a). In our analysis we will be focusing on metalinguistic references in newspapers only, i.e. a mere subset of reflexive discourse

about the media that appears in the media generally. The reasons for this will be explained in section 2.2 where we will describe and contextualize the data selection process for each of the two corpora. In section 2.3, we introduce our central theoretical concept of corrective practices, and elaborate on why we think that prescriptivism can, and should, be approached by means of a pragmatic analysis of so-called ‘corrective speech acts’. Section 2.4 then presents the results of our corpus-driven analysis of corrective repertoires in Greek and German newspapers. Finally, in section 2.5, we sum up our observations on prescriptivism in each of the two discourse communities. Here we discuss differences and similarities, identify further issues for possible future research, and conclude with a tentative re-evaluation of our overall approach in the hope that this might be fruitfully adapted to the study of such issues as standardization and purism more generally together with the institutionalization and the propagation of metalinguistic discourse.

2.2 Data selection and corpus construction

2.2.1 Why the press?

It goes without saying that the press is not the only arena where language, or even media language, are discussed. In Greece, for example, since the language reform of 1976, there have been numerous radio and television programmes dealing explicitly with questions of language use (see e.g. Kriaras 1988). Moreover, media language became the subject of many written guides or manuals, some of which were specifically addressed to media professionals (Moschonas 2001; 2005: 161–2).

Similarly, in Germany, the past two decades have witnessed considerable discussion

about the language of the media, much of it outside of the press. So, for example, the ('mis')-use of media language has been the key topic of many best-selling books (e.g. Sick 2004; Zimmer 2005). It has also been extensively discussed in talk shows both on radio and TV, in lay-linguistic Internet forums (Spitzmüller 2002) as well as in countless sites and chatrooms on the World Wide Web (Spitzmüller 2005a; Pfalzgraf 2006).

For the purposes of our study, however, there were many reasons why it was not only convenient but also appropriate to restrict ourselves to the analysis of newspaper texts (see also Paffey, Chapter 3, this volume). Despite what often appears to be a form of prejudice against broadcast and the new electronic media formats, the press provides us with the most representative sample of the kind of prescriptivism that is aimed at a range of media types. Moreover, the sheer volume of prescriptivist statements to be found in the newspaper texts has also to be seen in the context of a much longer tradition of 'philological' and/or 'linguistic' journalism that can be found in both countries (for Greece, see e.g. Majer 1959; for Germany, see e.g. Schiewe 1998). At the same time, the press is not just a vehicle for metalinguistic and/or metamedial commentary; it is also itself a popular target for prescriptivism. In Germany, newspapers were themselves branded 'corrupters of language' (Sprachverderber) as early as the beginning of the 17th century and there is a long tradition of criticizing 'newspaper German' (Zeitungsdeutsch). Meanwhile in Greece, criticism directed at the 'language of the newspapers' has been associated mostly with the so-called 'Language Question' (Browning 1982). Thus while supporters of the high 'Karathevousa' variety of Greek typically blamed journalistic jargon for being too lenient towards 'foreign words', the proponents of demotic Greek accused the high variety of being needlessly puristic, excessively archaic, and largely

incomprehensible to the wider public (Triandaphillidis 1905/7: 253–4). That said, it became clear over time that the press was itself slowly adjusting to, as well as actually promoting, a more vernacular model of literacy (Triandaphillidis 1915: 294–5) and the 1990s continued to witness widespread press criticism of the media in general for the excessive use of loan words and borrowings from other languages (Delveroudi and Moschonas 2003). Finally, within both Greece and Germany, newspapers have often been blamed for being the main propagator of (undesirable) forms of language change. In the contemporary discourse on Anglicisms in Germany, for instance, the press – and not least the electronic media – have been perceived as key driver behind the so-called ‘Anglification’ of the language, surpassed only by advertizing and business (Spitzmüller 2005a: 262–4).

Another reason for our focus on newspaper texts is that, in the context of prescriptivism, it is often (though by no means exclusively) written language – in particular, public written language - that is being criticized. Accordingly, the press (alongside the media in general) is very rarely cited as a purveyor of good language use. Instead newspaper language is often portrayed as the prototype of bad usage (at the other extreme, in both countries, it is poetry that is posited as the prototypical ‘high’ register; for German, see Spitzmüller 2005a: 302–6; for Greek, see Moschonas 2008b). At this juncture it is also important to note how prescriptivism both in and about the press appears to result in an interesting paradox: those very subjects who most typically engage in metalinguistic and/or metamedial critique, namely journalists and editors, are simultaneously subject to the greatest degree of criticism themselves. Perhaps it is for this very reason that such meta-medial reflexivity can be sustained over long periods of time in the form of protracted language ideological debates (Blommaert 1999).

Finally, it is impossible to overlook the sheer convenience of processing newspaper texts when engaging in this kind of research. This is insofar as metalinguistic texts are relatively easy to locate, do not require transcription (though potential translation), and can be moved between multiple databases, thereby allowing us to generate the kind of large-scale corpora that can enable us to identify the differing discursive patterns and intertextual relations that are of particular interest.

2.2.2 The corpora: size and comparability

Having specified the type of data required, the next task in this comparative study was to build and combine two corpora of newspaper texts. Here a key requirement was that of ‘comparability’, i.e. the two corpora had to allow for similar sets of observations. By ‘the Greek corpus’ we will henceforth be referring to a compilation of newspaper articles about media language that appeared in the Greek press in the three-month period between November 1999 and January 2000. This corpus consists of 80 texts on media language that were selected out of a larger set of 364 texts on several language issues (texts on media language = 22%) and was compiled via a press monitoring agency for 76 newspapers and 102 magazines, whereby no metalinguistic reference was excluded during the compilation phase.

The German corpus meanwhile consists of a similar set of texts albeit collected over a much longer period, namely January 1990 to June 2001, and was made up of 81 texts on media language that were selected from a larger corpus of 1,783 entries on a range of different language issues (texts on media language = 4.5%). This larger corpus, in turn, had been compiled manually from nine newspapers and three magazines that were archived in their entirety, and, additionally, from 42

newspapers and nine magazines that were archived more selectively. All texts that dealt with language evaluation were included, with one notable exception: texts exclusively about the spelling reform, a major topic in the given period (see Johnson 2005), were deliberately excluded since their sheer volume meant that questions of orthography were beyond the scope of the analysis at the time of compilation. In the German corpus, most references to media language appeared during the periods 1994 (10 occurrences) to 1995 (11) and 1999 (15) to 2000 (18).

Due to the different ways in which the two corpora were compiled, the large difference in the percentages of texts on media language relative to all metalinguistic texts should not be considered to be indicative of a difference in public interest in the two countries. Moreover, we believe that the two corpora remain comparable for the purposes of this study in view of the fact that each consists of approximately the same number of texts on a range of topics (all of which, however, deal with ‘media language’ or contain references to it). These texts also belong to comparable genres (see Table 1) and were published across broadly similar periods of time. Both the Greek and German corpora were compiled from within larger corpora on various language issues and over longer periods of time that formed part of our own individual and in-depth research projects on metalinguistic issues in Greece and Germany, respectively (e.g. Moschonas 2004, 2008b; Spitzmüller 2005a, 2007).

Table 1. Texts on media language – Genres

<u>Texts on media language</u>	<u>Greek corpus</u>	<u>German corpus</u>
letters to the editor	7	44
opinion articles	24 ‘usage columns’	23 commentaries [= 17 <u>Glossen</u> & 6 <u>Kommentare</u>]
	10 essays	7 essays
short comments	11	–

<u>Texts on media language</u>	<u>Greek corpus</u>	<u>German corpus</u>
news articles	21	3
Features	4	–
Reviews	–	4
Interviews	3	–
Total	80 / 364 (22%)	81 / 1,783 (4.5%)

For ‘usage columns’ (διορθωτικές στήλες), i.e. regular (bi-weekly or monthly) columns on language usage, see Moschonas (2001); ‘commentaries’ is the closest equivalent in the German press; Glossen are opinion articles with an explicit humorous/satirical aim.

A further pre-requisite for the comparability of the two corpora was that of the criteria for the selection of individual texts. Here our operational definition was as follows: ‘any text, in any newspaper genre, containing at least one reference to “media language” or “media language use”’. In this context we defined such references as occurring in metalinguistic discourse, i.e. ‘discourse about language’, whereby we draw on the notion of the metalinguistic ‘about-ness’ that characterizes, following Jakobson (1957: 388) an ‘autonomous mode of speech’ consisting of ‘overlappings’ or ‘messages referring to the code’. Both the larger Greek and German from which we had drawn dealt with metalinguistic aboutness at such a level of generality.

Finally, for the purposes of this particular analysis, although we were interested in principle in all so-called message-to-code references, we proceeded to search the selected texts for occurrences of a very specific type of speech act in order to operationalize our particular approach to prescriptivism. It is to this we now turn in the next section.

2.3 Correctives: a performative theory of prescriptivism

As noted in the introduction, prescriptivism can be a somewhat vague concept and, as Deborah Cameron (1995: 5) has pointed out, is often used by linguists as a means of stigmatizing ‘the threatening Other, the forbidden’, thereby defining ex negativo the linguistic identity of prescriptivism itself. We agree with Cameron that the binary opposition ‘descriptive/prescriptive’, as it typically applied in formal linguistics, is in fact itself a discursive construct (cf. also Spitzmüller 2005b). Nevertheless, we also believe that prescriptivism is an important practice in the context of metapragmatic discourse, and that we therefore need a well-defined concept of prescriptivism itself in order to achieve a greater understanding of the dynamics of prescriptivist discourse. Such a concept needs to account for the fact that, as already noted, prescriptive texts cannot easily be differentiated from descriptive ones as well as enabling us to explore the reasons why prescriptive statements so often masquerade as descriptivism. Thus, a strict ad hoc differentiation of the texts within our corpora as ‘professional’ vs. ‘folk linguistic’ (Niedzielski and Preston 1999: viii) or their categorization into ‘larger systems of discourse and enterprise’ (Silverstein 1979: 193) does not strike us as methodologically feasible, even though the print-media genres we have examined are undeniably good examples of such folk linguistic, popularizing accounts of linguistic phenomena.

Our approach to the concept of prescriptivism is ultimately a more pragmatic one: we assume that prescriptivism is most productively conceptualized as a sum of specific metalinguistic speech acts (or meta-speech acts), that is to say, speech acts with a corrective function. We refer to such speech acts as corrective instructions or, simply, correctives. Accordingly, prescriptivism can be defined as sets of correctives or ‘corrective repertoires’ that can then be explored by means of a pragmatic analysis of corrective speech acts. Following Moschonas (2005, 2008a), we define correctives

as directive speech acts of a metalanguage-to-language direction of fit. Typically such correctives consist of three parts: a prohibitive, a normative and an explicative with their ‘regular’ form as follows:

- one should neither say nor write X [prohibitive]
- instead one should say or write Y [normative]
- because Z [explicative]

For example, in Greek it has been suggested that one should avoid the use of ‘αποφασίζω ότι’ [to decide that]. Instead, one should say or write ‘αποφασίζω να’ [to decide to], because ...’ (example from Ioanna Papazafiri 1991). Alternatively, in German, one should neither say nor write geschockt [shocked]; instead one should use schockiert because [...] (a corrective proposed by Klaus Natorp 1996).

Of course, it is important to highlight how there is, in metalinguistic discourse, no explicit performative for a corrective (‘I hereby correct you’!). That said, it is still possible to identify specific grammar and discourse markers for the various constituent parts of correctives. So, for example, prohibitives and normatives can be typically identified by deontic expressions (‘must’, ‘should’, etc.) and explicatives by their causal markers (‘because’, ‘on account of’, etc.). Moreover, explicatives, more often than not, employ an evaluation of X/Y as ‘correct/incorrect’, ‘appropriate/inappropriate’ as in ‘one should not say or write X - one should say write Y because X is incorrect and Y is more appropriate’. Of course, if we disregard the synonymy of the terms employed, the deontic and the etiological parts are often tautological. In other words, the explanation provided is typically circular: ‘one should not say or write X because it is improper, incorrect, etc. to write or to say X’.

Thus in the Greek example cited, the explanation for the corrective regarding ‘to decide that’ (αποφασίζω ότι) goes as follows: ‘the verb “to decide” requires a non-finite construction; therefore, it cannot be constructed with a that-clause’ – itself a totally circular explanation (Moschonas 2008a: 43). In addition, correctives - like all other speech acts - can be implicit or indirectly expressed. But even where it is not explicit, it is still possible to test each component of a corrective by paraphrasing it according to the ‘regular’ form. Each part should also be defined relative to the other. In some cases, of course, it is the illocutionary force (the ‘import’) not of particular expressions but rather of the whole context that determines the prescriptiveness of a given corrective. In this sense, it is worth noting how correctives are often mistaken for constatives, i.e. descriptive speech acts. Notwithstanding, such ambiguity need not deter us since, for the purposes of classification, the overlap between prescriptivist and descriptivist uses is, as already noted above, itself taken for granted. Moreover, no part of a corrective is mandatory, and when all parts appear in a text, they are usually dispersed across the text as opposed to within the same sentence or statement.

A range of examples of correctives in the Greek corpus can be found in Moschonas (2005; 2008a). Here, by contrast, is an example from the German corpus:

Hated word of the week

Unkosten [= expenses, lit.: ‘un-costs’]

Never let it be said that the German language is logical (no one says this? er, never mind). Anyway, there’s a persistent little fad that gives rise to the suspicion that the Germans are masters of obscuratation, not to say of self-deception. What other explanation could there be for placing the unobtrusive negating prefix un- in front of certain quantities, leading to total confusion about the dimension of the cause?

Costs [Kosten] incurred? No, un-costs [Unkosten]. What amounts [Mengen] are stored? Huge amounts [Unmengen], not to say huge masses [Unmassen], which is according to the Duden dictionary equivalent to a ‘very big amount’. But why, the layman keeps asking, does one use a negation of all things in German, if one wants to highlight – for example – something really huge? Obviously, the urge is to use an unobtrusive prefix in order to make what are actually very big things small in front of the outside world which does not understand anything about all this. It must have something to do with an inexplicable depth [Untiefe] in the national character. To make matters worse, Untiefe can refer both to ‘depth’ and to ‘shallow’. Preposterous [ein Unding].

(AW 1996; our translation)

This example is taken from a series of columns called ‘Haßwort der Woche’ (‘Hated word of the week’). The text argues that the prefix un-, which can be used as a negating particle, but also as an intensifying morpheme, can only have one function (i.e., negating) since language should be ‘logical’ (i.e., the relation between form and function should be one-to-one). Consequently, words that employ the prefix un- as an intensifier run counter to the language’s inner logic. All three parts of the corrective can be located in specific areas of the text although some of them are implicit. We have the prohibitive: ‘there’s a persistent little fad ...’ (namely the use of Unkosten and similar word forms); the normative: ‘do not use the prefix un- in such a way’ (implied by phrases such as ‘producing total confusion ...’); and the implicit explicative: ‘... un- is a negating prefix [and thus it must not be used to denote anything else]’ (‘...why does one use a negation of all things in German, if one wants to highlight something really huge?’), which includes an explicit reference to a

usually implicit topos, namely ‘the German language should [ideally] be logical in itself’ (‘never let it be said that the German language is logical (no one says this? Er, never mind)’).

As becomes clear from this example, prohibitives and normatives can be more easily located in a text than explicatives. This is because explicatives are often implicit; they depend on a text’s overall meaning and force, relying on what are often hidden presuppositions that have to be provided by the reader. In what follows, we consider prohibitives and normatives as indices to a corrective practice (exemplified through corrective repertoires such as the ones discussed in section 2.4 below). By contrast, we take explicatives (expressed or implied) to index a more general conceptual scheme, a set of beliefs, a complex of shared presuppositions or what might be called ‘ideology proper’. Roughly speaking, prohibitive-normative pairs belong to what Niedzielski and Preston (2000: 302-14) call ‘Metalanguage 1’, while explicatives belong to ‘Metalanguage 2’ (or ‘Metalanguage 3’, according to Preston 2004; cf. Johnson and Ensslin 2007: 6-11). The following analysis concentrates on ‘Metalanguage 1’. At the present time, we are unable to suggest a definite methodology for identifying explicatives given that there is no precise means of predicting textual interpretation. However, it is highly likely that corrective practices will differ significantly across languages, periods and linguistic forms, i.e. they vary in the ‘courte durée’, to use Fernand Braudel’s well-known phrase (Braudel 1969). On the other hand, conceptual schemes tend to be long-term phenomena of wider (even supra-cultural) scope that persist in the ‘longue durée’ of the history of linguistic ideas. In other words, we expect patterns of German and Greek prescriptivism to be characterized by differing corrective practices operating nonetheless under similar conceptual schemes.

At this juncture it is important to stress that correctives do not appear in isolation. Rather, they form part of ‘répertoires correctifs’ (Moschonas 2008a: 45), i.e. sets of correctives that occur repeatedly within a text and/or across a group of texts. Specific kinds of corrective repertoires, we can assume, will then prevail within certain circles, in certain genres or registers, or in a particular period of time. In what follows, we will take a closer look at some specific examples of these phenomena.

2.4 Corrective repertoires in the Greek and German corpora

On the basis of the theoretical and methodological reflections outlined above, we proceeded to count all examples of prohibitive/normative pairs (henceforth: ‘X/Y-pairs’) from within our two corpora. By concentrating on X/Y pairs, our approach to prescriptivism becomes at least partially corpus-driven in the sense that ‘the discourse itself, and not a language-external taxonomy of linguistic entities [...] provide[s] the categories and classifications’ (Teubert 2005: 5) of our analysis. This means that the actual practices to be classified as prescriptivist emerge from within the data as opposed to either prefiguring the corpus or being applied post hoc. In this section, we present the results of this procedure starting with some general findings before turning to more specific phenomena.

2.4.1 Initial findings

In total, we counted 328 X/Y-pairs in the Greek corpus (an average of 4.10 pairs per text) and 239 X/Y-pairs in the German corpus (2.95 per text). X/Y-pairs can be

distinguished into token pairs and type pairs. ‘Token pairs’ refer to specific phrases, words, morphemes or other grammatical or discourse units (e.g., ‘Do not use the English word “media”; use the Greek phrase “μέσα μαζικής ενημέρωσης” instead’). ‘Type pairs’ meanwhile refer more generally to classes of words or other units (e.g., ‘Do not use foreign words, use Greek words instead’). In many texts, an X/Y-type is often exemplified by several X/Y-tokens although this is not strictly necessary. Accordingly, both type and token references had to be counted.

In addition to complete X/Y-pairs, we also encountered several X/Ø-references, i.e. references to a particular X-token that is not followed by any suggestion for a Y-replacement. There are 162 X/Ø-references in the Greek corpus (2.03 per text) and 388 X/Ø-references in the German corpus (4.79 per text), whereby it is interesting to note that the Greek corpus contains more ‘real’ X/Y-pairs while in the German data X/Ø-references predominate. This is due to the fact that texts about Anglicisms (and perhaps puristic texts in general) generally favour X/Ø-references (a point to which we will return later). The Greek corpus also contains a few instances of Ø/Y-references, i.e. ‘descriptive’, extensional references to word classes, exemplifying a particular linguistic phenomenon (e.g., ‘such and such a noun appears only in the singular’). Such references were not counted, unless they could be reconstructed as X/Y-pairs (e.g., ‘the [hypothetical] plural of such and such a noun should not be used; this noun should only appear in the singular’). Overall, there are 490 X/Y-pairs or X/Ø-references in the Greek corpus (6.13 per text) and 627 in the German corpus (7.74 per text).

The highest concentration of correctives in the Greek corpus was found in a single text, which contains 31 X/Y-pairs and 20 X/Ø-references (Charis, 2000 – incidentally an author who does not consider himself a prescriptivist). Zero

occurrences were found in 34 texts, which suggests that it is a particular genre, i.e. ‘usage columns’, that shows the highest concentrations of correctives (the Greek corpus also contains 21 news articles about ‘Greek in the new media’ containing general references to media language but no X/Y-pairs). In the German corpus, by contrast, the highest concentration of references was found in Natorp (1998: 38 pairs) and of real X/Y-pairs in another text by the same author (Natorp 1999: 23 pairs). Finally, there are seven texts on media language that contain no correctives. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Occurrences of correctives

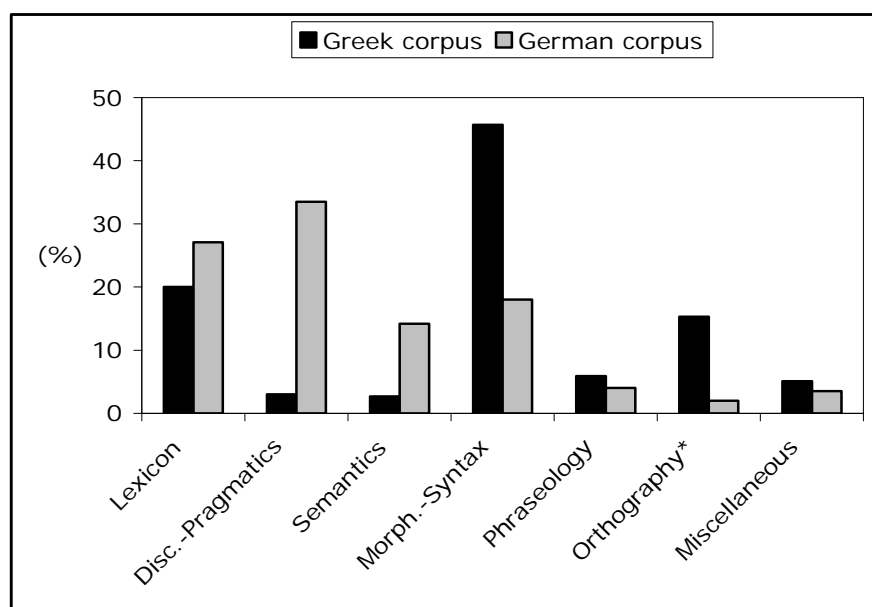
<u>Greek corpus</u>		<u>German corpus</u>							
490 (6.13 per text)		627 (7.74 per text)							
X/Y-pairs	328 (4.1 per text)	X/Y-pairs	239 (2.9 per text)						
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>token pairs</td> <td style="text-align: center;">252 (3.14 per text)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>type pairs</td> <td style="text-align: center;">76 (0.95 per text)</td> </tr> </table>		token pairs	252 (3.14 per text)	type pairs	76 (0.95 per text)	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>token pairs</td> <td style="text-align: center;">221 (2.73 per text)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>type pairs</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18 (0.22 per text)</td> </tr> </table>	token pairs	221 (2.73 per text)
token pairs	252 (3.14 per text)								
type pairs	76 (0.95 per text)								
token pairs	221 (2.73 per text)								
type pairs	18 (0.22 per text)								
X/Ø-references	162 (2.03 per text)	X/Ø-references	388 (4.79 per text)						

The next step was to categorize all metalinguistic references according to one of the seven grammatical or discourse phenomenon to which they referred as follows: 1. Lexicon, 2. Discourse/ Pragmatics, 3. Semantics, 4. Morpho-syntax, 5. Phraseology, 6. Orthography and 7. Miscellaneous. The percentage values for both corpora can be found in Figure 1, whereby it should be noted that the differences between the two

corpora for each major category were found to be statistically significant (with the exception of Phraseology, which can nevertheless be subsumed under Morpho-syntax - see section 2.4.5; Orthography and Miscellaneous were not tested for statistical significance).

As it becomes clear from Figure 1, German prescriptivism predominates in the fields of Lexicon, Discourse/Pragmatics and Semantics, while Greek prescriptivism is concentrated in Morpho-syntax, Phraseology and Orthography (as noted earlier, however, the issue of the orthographic reform was not exhaustively covered in the German corpus). After outlining the various types of correctives in each category in the following sections, we will go on to suggest that this difference is in fact significant in relation to the particular models of prescriptivism typical of the print-media in each of the two countries.

Figure 1. Major categories of correctives



* For orthography, consider corpus constraints.

2.4.2 Lexicon

Words – in the sense of individual lexical items - are the most popular target of prescriptivism. Loanwords, in particular Anglicisms, are a recurrent topic in the German corpus (see Table 3), where we find 157 references to English loans (25%). Here the percentage would have been considerably lower (11.2%) had we counted only complete X/Y-pairs but, as noted above, both measures are important since many texts about Anglicisms list only a number of undesirable words albeit without offering suggestions for replacements. In complete X/Y-pairs, by contrast, translated loans are often devised as substitutes for a ‘foreign word’ in both the Greek and German corpora, suggesting that translation is the preferred method of adaptation.

In addition to loanwords, there are many references in the Greek corpus to either archaic or modern demotic words suggesting ongoing concern about the diglossic situation in Greece. By ‘marked’ archaic or demotic forms, we mean words that are often referred to as ‘extreme’ (‘ακραίοι’) or as belonging to a ‘wooden language’ (‘ξύλινη γλώσσα’). Finally, it is interesting to note how in the German corpus there is only one corrective relating to a ‘vulgarism’ (or colloquialism).

Table 3. Lexicon

<u>Greek corpus</u>	<u>German corpus</u>
98	170
(20%)	(27.1%)

Greek corpus			German corpus		
foreign words	30 (6.1%)		foreign words	169 (27.1%)	
	English loans	24 (4.9%)		English loans	157 (25%)
	loans from other languages	3 (0.6%)		loans from other languages	9 (1.4%)
	loan translations	3 (0.6%)		loan translations	3 (0.5%)
marked demotic forms	17 (3.5%)		vulgarisms	1 (0.1%)	
marked archaic forms	38 (7.8%)				
dialectal	6 (1.2%)				
translation of archaisms	7 (1.4%)				

(z-test = 2.691, p-value = 0.070)

2.4.3 Discourse/Pragmatics

The use of stereotypical expressions, phrases or metaphors is another recurrent topic in the German corpus. Correctives in this category frequently refer to the overuse of certain expressions (e.g. idioms, metaphors, formulaic expressions, superlatives or fillers) at the expense of available alternatives, or their inappropriate use in a given context. It is for this reason that such items are placed here in the category of Discourse/Pragmatics rather than Phraseology. In such cases it is not the expression itself that is criticized but rather its careless or ‘unthinking use’ (see for instance, Natorp 1994, entitled gedankenlos dahergeredet [‘talking thoughtless rubbish’]). In the Greek corpus, it is interesting to note how most metalinguistic references in this

category refer not to the usage of particular words or set phrases but rather to the structure of media discourse more generally (i.e. how the journalists' discourse should be organized in order to be intelligible to a wider public). In addition to correctives found in various texts, there are also 21 articles concerning the standing of 'Greek in the new media', which contain no specific correctives. The results for Discourse/Pragmatics are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Discourse/Pragmatics

<u>Greek corpus</u>		<u>German corpus</u>	
15 (3%)		210 (33.5%)	
media discourse structure	13 (2.7%)	'overused'/inappropriate used words	110 (17.5%)
	+ 21 articles on 'Greek in the new media'	metaphors	64 (10.2%)
		formulaic expressions	30 (4.8%)
		superlatives	4 (0.6%)
euphemisms	1 (0.2%)	fillers	2 (0.3%)
politeness	1 (0.2%)		

(z-test = 12.508, p-value = 0.000)

2.4.4 Semantics

Table 5 presents the results for the field where prescriptivism in the German corpus appears to predominate: semantics. The correctives in these cases focus on the 'meaning' of a given word or expression, whereby meanings are imagined within the discourse as clear, distinctive and context-free. Many of these correctives seek to show what an allegedly 'incorrectly' used expression 'really' means, i.e. in its

‘original’ domain (in the case of a technical term) or language (in the case of loans). This ‘topos of logicity’ (Spitzmüller 2005a: 294–8) is evident in the popular notion of semantics as needing to be ‘logical’ (examples criticized include pleonasm and the use of reflexive verbs such as sich bedanken ‘to thank’ – lit. ‘to thank oneself’). This is then underpinned by the conviction that every object that can be perceived should be denoted by a single and distinct expression (and, vice versa, in the sense that the semantic extension of an expression results in a loss of perceptibility) as well as in the fear that words can be contaminated by past usages (a particularly sensitive topic in Germany). By contrast, several instances of correctives in the Greek corpus concern the obscurity of learned or archaic forms whereby it is implied that such forms should be avoided or replaced by corresponding vernacular and/or demotic expressions. Other instances concern the loss of semantic differentiation due to changes in meaning.

Table 5. Semantics

<u>Greek corpus</u>		<u>German corpus</u>	
13 (2.7%)		89 (14.2%)	
obscurity of learned/archaic forms	7 (1.4%)	incorrectly used foreign words	29 (4.6%)
semantic differentiation or change	6 (1.2%)	loss of semantic differentiation	26 (4.1%)
		‘illogical’ semantics	18 (2.9%)
		‘contaminated’ expressions	9 (1.4%)
		misapplications of technical terms	6 (1%)
		‘odd’ metaphors	1 (0.1%)

(z-test = 6.539, p-value = 0.000)

2.4.5 Morpho-syntax/Phraseology

Correctives in the fields of Morpho-syntax and Phraseology are presented together in Table 6 although it should be noted that Morphology and Syntax is not applied here in any of the modern senses of the terms. In other words, by ‘Morpho-syntax’, we mean that part of traditional grammar that deals with parts of speech, inflection (‘τυπικό’) and compounding. Syntagms, in this traditional conception, are understood on the basis of prototypical constructions. Accordingly, there is no real boundary between Morpho-syntax and Phraseology from the point of view of our corpora.

Most correctives in the Greek corpus occur in these two fields: if we add the number of phraseological to morpho-syntactic correctives, the total amounts to 228 occurrences (51.6%). According to Moschonas (2001: 61–4), this increase in phraseological and syntactic correctives is a relatively recent development in the evolution of Greek prescriptivism. Before the language reform of 1976, the traditional model for correctives had been almost entirely morphological.

Although ‘violation of archaic rules’ is categorized separately, most of the corrective instructions under the heading of Morphology/Syntax are in fact concerned in one way or another with the correctness of archaic forms. For example, agreement or attraction phenomena are only stigmatized with respect to learned forms, such as archaic participles: ‘των υπαρχόντων προβλέψεων’ [‘of the existing (masc.) predictions (fem.)’]. The demotic adverbial ending *-α* (‘απλ-ά’ instead of ‘απλ-ώς’) is, by contrast, like a red rag to a bull for the prescriptivists, who in turn criticize ‘extreme’ demotic standards provoking a plethora of different correctives. Stress movement in declension is also subject to the archaic-demotic dichotomy and is generally proscribed according to the more traditional rules. Of the formulaic

expressions, the distinction ‘αφορά σε N’ (‘it concerns N’) vs. ‘αφορά το N’ (‘it is about N’) seems to have become something of a puzzle for the prescriptivists (the ‘αφορά σε’ construction is actually an internal calque, based on the archaic ‘αφορά εις’ + acc.).

In the German corpus, we find correctives in relation to the notion of typical grammatical ‘infringements’ (‘wrong inflection’, ‘agreement’, etc.) as well as a critique of foreign influences on grammar and word formation. Again we find the notion of ‘logicality’, which manifests itself particularly with respect to ‘illogical’ morphology, i.e. word formations where ‘wrong’ or ‘misleading’ constituents are used (as in the Unkosten case discussed in section 2.3 above). Such forms are criticized primarily because they infringe the ‘internal logic of German’, which dictates that the semantics of the word should be derived from the semantics of its constituents (a folk linguistic principle of compositionality).

Table 6. Morpho-syntax and Phraseology

Greek corpus		German corpus	
Morpho-syntax			
199 (45.7%)		113 (18%)	
violation of archaic rules	27 (5.5%)	wrong inflection	43 (6.9%)
agreement / attraction	12 (2.4)	wrong prepositions	15 (2.4%)
demotic adv. ending (-α)	29 (6%)	agreement	3 (0.5%)
stress mov. in declension	25 (5.1%)	code-switching	3 (0.5%)
wrong affix	36 (7.3%)	word order	2 (0.3%)
augmented imperative	6 (1.2%)	wrong conjunction	1 (0.1%)
prep + relative clause	1 (0.2%)	wrong tense ‘foreign’ syntax	1 (0.1%)
nouns with no	60	‘illogical’	34

Greek corpus		German corpus	
plural / sing.	(12.2%)	morphology	(5.4%)
loan adaptation	25 (5.1%)	foreign word	11
mixed Greek-foreign compounds	2 (0.4%)	morphology	(1.8%)
foreign word morphology	1 (0.2%)		
29 (5.9%)		25 (4%)	
formulaic expressions	21 (4.3%)	foreignisms	25 (4%)
αφορά σε [to concern / be about]	8 1.6%		

(Morpho-syntax: z-test = 8.283, p-value = 0.000; Phraseology: z-test = 1.352, p-value = 0.176;
Sum of percentages for Morpho-syntax and Phraseology: z-test = 8.6, p-value = 0.000)

2.4.6 Orthography

Orthography (i.e. spelling and punctuation) is a huge topic in both Greece and Germany and, as many sociolinguists have pointed out (Jaffe 2000; Johnson 2005; Sebba 2007), is widely and popularly perceived to be an integral part of language, notwithstanding the linguistic division between speech and writing typically foregrounded by linguists.

In Greece, the central subject of the relevant discussions is the writing system itself (Greek vs. Roman alphabet) as well as its varieties (monotonic vs. polytonic). The orthographic reform of 1982 sanctioned a monotonic ('single-accent') system which, although widely used now, has still not been adopted by many prestigious publishers, nor has it prevailed in the 'high register' of poetry. Within the Greek corpus, there are five occurrences of X/Y types in favour of the monotonic system vs.

four against it. Meanwhile, there are only three references in favour of the Roman script in some registers (such as e-mails) vs. ten against the Roman script in any register.

In Germany, by contrast, the spelling reform that was introduced during the period of our analysis in the mid- 1990s was one of the main metalinguistic issues in the media, and certainly fuelled a high level of prescriptivism in and about the media. Which spellings a newspaper preferred became a crucial question that threatened the very implementation of the reform. A striking example of this was the return of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung to the ‘old’ orthography in 2000, itself a clear attempt to initiate a counter-reform (Johnson 2005: 81).

Table 7. Orthography/Spelling

<u>Greek corpus</u>		<u>German corpus</u>	
75 (15.3%)		13 (2%)	
in favour of monotonic	5 (1%)	spelling reform*	9 (1.4%)
against monotonic	4 (0.8%)	spelling of loanwords	1 (0.1%)
in favour of the Roman script in some registers	3 (0.6%)	miscellaneous	3 (0.5%)
against the Roman script in any registers	10 (2%)		
loan transliteration	7 (1.4%)		
‘final -v’ rule (assimilation)	5 (1%)		
CC clusters (dissimilation)	1 (0.2%)		
punctuation	2 (0.4%)		
misspellings	38 (7.8%)		

(* For orthography, see discussion of corpus constraints in 2.2.2)

2.4.7 Miscellaneous

Finally, Table 8 presents the results for a number of cases that do not belong to the previous categories and have therefore been classified as ‘miscellaneous’. Here it is interesting to note those correctives that refer to the pronunciation of loans (1.4% in either the Greek or the German corpus) – something which might be classified as a kind of ‘inverse purism’. In other words, although the purists’ concern is to prevent foreign words from intruding into their native language, those self-same purists are nevertheless criticizing e.g. the apparently ‘incorrect’ pronunciation of non-adapted loan words (urging a kind of pronunciation closer, say, to the original English), the ‘incorrect’ semantics of translated loans (where meanings do not match those of the original English words) as well as the ‘incorrect’ use of such loans (in those cases where their meaning differs from their English counterparts).

Table 8. Miscellaneous

<u>Greek corpus</u>		<u>German corpus</u>	
25 (5.1%)		22 (3.5%)	
pronunciation	2 (0.4%)	pronunciation	1 (0.1%)
pronunciation of loans	7 (1.4%)	pronunciation of loans	9 (1.4%)
false etymologies	6 (1.2%)	typos	12 (2%)
blunders/boners	10 (2%)		

2.5 Discussion and Conclusions: Prescriptivism and Standardization

At the beginning of this chapter, we proposed that the analysis of prescriptivism, in general, and the use of correctives, in particular, may well be able to tell us much about processes of language standardization - or re-standardization. This is insofar as the form and function of any language are to a considerable extent shaped both in and by public (and typically media) discourse about language. So, for example, the perennial ‘Language Question’ in Greece has meant that the diglossic situation in general has given rise to two conflicting and competing standards, the archaic or puristic standard, on the one hand, and the demotic or vernacular standard, on the other. Arguably, there is also a variety of standard between these two extremes. Standard Modern Greek is supposed to be based on the demotic model, permitting nevertheless a certain number of archaisms, especially in the higher registers of the language. And here it is interesting to observe how, as vernacular forms have gradually become accepted as standard, it is the archaic forms in turn that have been seen to be in need of corrective instruction and guidance. The new morpho-syntactic/phraseological model that corresponds to the ‘mixed’ standards of Standard Modern Greek is therefore supposed to be comprehensive (encompassing virtually any expression in the language), historical or pan-chronic (including all stages in the development of the language) as opposed to synchronic, conventional (based on the obligatory and arbitrary nature of lexical forms), and internal (i.e. concerned with internal rather than external purism).

In Germany, there has also been a long tradition of prescriptivism in relation to the process of standardization. In this regard, the 1990s saw particular efforts towards

forms of re-standardization in relation to: a) purism directed at Anglicisms and b) the spelling reform, whereby the latter can be also been seen as a battle over who, in particular, has ‘the right to prescribe’ (Johnson 2005). Similarly the pragmatic–semantic model that corresponds to these processes of re-standardization is meant to be all-embracing and pan-historical. Unlike the Greek model of re-standardization, however, the German approach favours a more ‘logical’ topos (based on a ‘regularized’ semantics of expressions and a ‘tight’ pragmatics of language use) and external (i.e. preoccupied with external rather than internal purism).

These differences in the conception and process of (re-)standardization can be seen clearly in practices that can be described as purist. If we count the total number of X/Y-pairs and X/Ø references to loans in all major categories (Lexicon, Semantics, etc.), we find a total of 62 correctives (12.7%) in the Greek corpus and a total of 254 correctives (40.5%) in the German corpus (z-test = 10.191, p-value = 0.000). Meanwhile references to diglossia in the Greek corpus amount to 158 (32.2%). It is apparent therefore that prescriptive practices in the Greek press are primarily concerned with, and shaped by, the diglossic situation in Greece as opposed to questions of borrowing or language contact. In the German press, on the other hand, Anglicisms have become a major focus for corrective practices.

Despite their differences, however, both the Greek and German models of standardization share certain presuppositions in relation to the kind of correctives (i.e. the speech acts) observed. For a corrective to be issued, it is presupposed - at the very least by those who do the issuing - that there is variation between the linguistic forms X and Y, and it is the task of those engaging in such corrective repertoires to try to promote language awareness of that variation to a wider public. Such variation is thereby conceived to be ‘transitional’, i.e. correctives (X/Y-pairs) raise awareness of

X and Y with the aim of ultimately replacing X by Y. The underlying presupposition of such corrective processes is therefore that variation is not considered to be the ‘norm’ (as it is widely held to be in, say, sociolinguistics). Instead, as a ‘transitional’ stage between two exclusive uses - X or Y – variation is like a pendulum in motion. Could correctives have a lasting impact under particular circumstances? Could an increase in awareness of X/Y in favour of Y stop the pendulum swinging towards X? This seems to be the prescriptivist’s main concern in the corpus data we have been analyzing.

In this chapter, we have only been able to touch upon the idea that shared presuppositions about the (undesirable) nature of language variation are what underpin corrective statements, in particular, and prescriptivism, in general. It will therefore be the task of future research to categorize more comprehensively the kinds of correctives and corrective practices that will allow us to access the ideologies of, say, prescriptivism at a higher meta-level. However, we genuinely believe – and indeed aim to have shown here - how corpus-driven procedures of classifying and categorizing those practices in order to access such underlying ideologies can be especially productive for language ideology research more widely. This is not least if we wish to avoid engaging in what Jan Blommaert (2008: 261) refers to as merely ‘[...] symptomatic discourse analysis that just confirms what we already knew or what we believe to be the case’, a criticism directed particularly at some strands of Critical Discourse Analysis (but see Milani and Johnson, 2008, for further discussion). It is our conviction that the kind of corpus-driven comparative approach that we have presented here, together with the concept of correctives, constitute one way of fleshing out what otherwise remains a rather vague concept of ‘prescriptivism’. This in turn will allow us to go some way towards an analysis of prescriptivism that

manifests itself at the level of actual discourse – in this case, print-media discourse – and can thereby be subject to the discursive analysis of actual linguistic performance that can and should, in our view, be an integral part of language ideology research.

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