Editorial

PRESENTATION of SPECIAL ISSUE: Variation and Change in Language Norms in *Languages*

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This Special Issue (SI) sheds light on the relationship between geographical, sociocultural, historical, functional, or stylistic variation and language norms, understanding by these both objective implicit social habits and prescriptive explicit codifications. Indeed, the concept of norms as habits, as common practices, i.e., the Coserian sense of norms, can acquire an exemplary (Coseriu [1962] 1989) character and can also subsequently be codified. This is actually attested worldwide in the phenomenon of linguistic pluricentricity, with many of its language models only having an informal standardization (Stewart (1968)). This SI welcomed all theoretical and methodological frames employed to address language variation and change, particularly contributions referring to language prescription and standard languages in different communities.

Linguistic normativity is inherent to the use of language and the perception of variation. When we speak or write we always orient our linguistic production within a context of socially constituted norms (Cameron 1995; Valle 2014). "A non-prescriptive notion of normativity has not such authority apart from the social control provided by the society itself" (Laasanen 2019, p. 175), but normativity as a fundamentally prescriptive fact is closely related to the establishment of the so-called standard languages, whose maintenance is closely linked to the notions and ideologies of correctness, prescriptivism, and highly dependent on writing. As it is very well known in the language of policy and planning literature, the development of a theory on language standardization can be traced back to Einar Haugen's seminal works from the 1960s within the framework of a European liberal democracy (Valle 2020). Language standardization became the conventional mould by which Western societies have organised linguistic normativity since the Renaissance period, and this enforcement of standards gave rise to the standard languages (Joseph 1987, p. 53; Milroy 2001; Wright 2004; Burke 2006), but above all language standardization was the outcome of a historical, philosophical, economic, and sociopolitical project: modernity and the emergence of nation-states.

Since Haugen's model, the term language standardization has covered "a broad spectrum of meanings" (Hornberger 2006, p. 31), embracing both the sociohistorical cultural and linguistic processes and their resulting products, i.e., the production of grammars, spelling manuals, or dictionaries. Indeed, standardology, as recently defined by Lebsanft and Tacke (2020, p. 33), is "the study of linguistic standardization", which includes corpus, status, and language-acquisition planning; both the circumstantial or engineered emergence of a synechdochic dialect serving as the basis of the standard (Joseph 1987, p. 95); the processes of graphization, grammatization, and lexication (Haugen 1983; Kaplan and Baldauf 1997, pp. 40–43); and the continuous elaboration of the standard that can lead to processes of language restandardization, demotization, or destandardization, escaping the teleological character of classic models of language standardization (cf. Auer and Spiekerman 2011; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2012; Kristiansen and Coupland 2011; Kristiansen and Groendelaers 2013; Amorós-Negre 2018, 2019; Ayres-Benett 2020).

Therefore, standard languages are the outcome of a particular prescriptive idea of language and of the conceptualization of languages as clear and discrete entities. These supra-local language varieties were developed, among other aims, to ensure internal linguistic cohesion and external distinction. Standard languages were presented as natural links of union of imagined national communities (Anderson 1983), whose emergence, codification, and elaboration are of utmost importance to understand the history and evolution of Western linguistics (Linn 2013). The superimposition of a variety of the variational continuums generates a standard/non-standard oppositional relationship, whereby the rest of the varieties tend to be negatively judged by speakers as deviations and errors in relation to the linguistic ideal enshrined as the standard. In fact, the standard was defined by James and Lesley Milroy as "an idea in the mind rather than a reality", in one of the crucial texts on standardology [1985]: 19; (Armstrong and Mackenzie 2013).

In this context, the contributions of this Special Issue play their part in accounting for the commonalties and differences between language-standardization experiences in large- and small-language communities, a fundamental aim of the comparative standardology approach (Joseph 1987). The ideological, sociohistorical, political, and economic factors underpinning different language-standardization experiences in many parts of the world explain why comparative standardology "is a valuable undertaking" (Linn et al. 2018; cf. Deumert and Vandenbussche 2003; Metzeltin 2004; Coupland and Kristiansen 2011; Hüning et al. 2012; Lane et al. 2016; Dollinger 2019; Costa-Carreras and Amorós-Negre 2021) to address both formal and informal aspects of "the construction—and subsequent dissemination—of uniform supradialectal normative [varieties]" (Ferguson 2006, p. 21). In this respect, it is interesting to point to the fact that many ethnolinguistic communities undertook processes of language standardization at very different chronological moments and under diverse sociohistorical and political conditions. In this sense, it is relevant to account for the established distinction between early dialect-selection standards, in the terms laid out by Subačius (2004) (cf. Vogl 2012, pp. 22–26; Amorós-Negre 2018); the distinction lies between early standard languages—such as English, Spanish, French, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, for which the choice of the dialectal basis for the SL was initiated quite early in the Renaissance or Early Modern Age—and late standard languages, such as Lithuanian, Finnish, Nynorsk, Romanian, Catalan, Galician, and Basque, whose standardization occurred after the French Revolution, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These late normalization processes can sometimes explain the unequal social implementation of some standards, particularly of minority or minoritized languages in certain fields, such as education, science, advertising, or business, as illustrated by the Catalan case. The five articles included in this Special Issue precisely exemplify the need to reconsider the role of standard languages across diverse societies in the 21st century: how different standard languages are currently politically contextualized, ideologically constructed, and linguistically reelaborated. It is clear that hierarchization and changes in prestige are taking place in different European communities with a "continuum stretching from communities with very strong standard languages" (at least in terms of ideology, and in terms of the varying degree of implementation/acceptance in the context of language usage) to communities with very weak standard languages and related ideologies (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011, p. 27).

As a result, apart from the top-down perspective in standardization studies, with the focus on the language authorities and institutions underlying the codification and modernization of standard languages (Lebsanft and Tacke 2020, p. 33), it is necessary to dwell on the bottom-up aspects of the process. Consequently, much more research should be targeted towards the non-institutionalized facets of language standardization and, specifically, speakers' language attitudes and ideologies in relation to the emergence, configuration, and elaboration of standard varieties at a time when social changes, including mediatization, the intersection between the global and the local, and democratization are impacting the standard language cultures. This bottom-up perspective (Elspaß et al. 2007; Rutten et al. 2014) helps understand how standard and regional vernacular varieties are

adopted, contested, reappropriated, and recontextualized by speakers themselves in current space-time coordinates, one of the great pending tasks, as indicated in the introduction to the recent *The Cambridge Handbook on Language Standardization* (Ayres-Bennett and Bellamy 2021).

More favourable attitudes towards the alternation between the standard and the vernaculars in the media may indicate greater dynamism and flexibility when it comes to language ideologies and the questioning of the existence of a single model of linguistic correctness or 'idea of the best language'. In fact, recent research (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011; Kristiansen and Groendelaers 2013; Groendelaers et al. 2016) indicates that language varieties used in oral media are valued not only for embodying traditional qualities associated with the standards, such as power and social status (intelligence, competence, good sense, etc.), but also for signalling empathy and dynamism (versatility, affectivity, sense of humour, etc.)

Not surprisingly, Coupland (2010, 2014) has referred to vernacularization as a sociolinguistic change in process, "a shift towards a more positive valorization of vernaculars" (Coupland 2014, p. 86; cf. Androutsopoulos 2014), an ideological change regarding the emergence of more dynamic relationships between standards and vernaculars (Milroy 2001; Groendelaers et al. 2016; Cerruti and Tsiplakou 2020).

> "Standard and vernacular languages are currently being reconfigured, with the latter becoming more prominent in contexts and genres where the standard language used to be de rigueur, while the tension between standardizing and vernacularizing forces is intensifying and their relationship becoming more complex [. . .]" (Jaspers and Van Hoof 2015, p. 35)

Therefore, the five different contributions of this Special Issue fall into the standardology research and deal with the emergence, elaboration, and implementation of two standard languages: Dutch (Van der Meulen 2022; de Vos 2022) and Catalan (Cuenca 2022; Dols 2022; Llopart-Saumell 2022). Whereas the Dutch language initiated the standardization path already in the 16th century, Catalan can be considered a late standard language (Subačius 2004; Vogl 2012; Amorós-Negre 2018), whose implementation is still deficitary in certain fields of the Catalanophony.

Both van der Meulen and de Vos' contributions adopt a diachronic perspective to set out specific issues about the nature and effects of language prescriptivism regarding the Dutch language. In his paper, Marten van der Meulen addresses empirically and quantitatively Arnold Zwicky's (2005) proposed illusions regarding the Dutch language: the recency illusion, "the false idea that certain language variation is new"; and the frequency one, "the erroneous belief that a particular word or phrase occurs often". The author explains that educated language users are much more influenced by these language misapprehensions, due to their contact with prescriptive publications. Drawing from a corpus of Dutch prescriptive works (1900–2018), he offers a fine-grained corpus analysis of metalinguistic statements of Dutch disputed usages and shows that the perceived recency and frequency of many spelling, lexical, and grammatical features are not based in actual facts. Van der Meulen's article shows that recency-illusion statements apply basically to lexis, while the allusion to frequency is much more directed towards grammatical usages in the Dutch prescriptive tradition. Apart from framing the study of Dutch prescriptivism in an innovative way, van der Meulen provides a far-reaching model for the study of language prescriptivism and opens the path to a subsequent qualitative approach.

For her part, Machteld de Vos also performs a quantitative analysis on metalinguistic texts associated with the language ideologies that encompass the codification of Dutch in its initiating phase (1550–1650), which should be distinguished from the (post)modern standardization period. In this sense, it should be emphasized that Dutch standard language ideology came into existence in the decades around 1800, which confirms the fact that, as it has been reported for other European language cultures, the monoglossic ideology with a marked emphasis on fixity, norm, and correctness was typical of the Enlightenment period (Lodge 1993, pp. 2–3; Gal 2006). In order to examine language ideologies, de Vos examines

grammarians' types of arguments used in the process of selection and codification of the Dutch language. Therefore, she focuses on the emergence of the questione della lingua in the Netherlands in the Renaissance period; its emergence preceded the existence of a Standard Language Ideology (SLI)—the belief that language should be used uniformly and that one form of language is inherently better than another (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011, p. 28; cf. Milroy and Milroy [1985] 1991)—an ideology that is the putative outcome of institutionalized prescriptions. Thanks to de Vos' detailed analyses of metalinguistic comments, we learn that early-modern Dutch grammars, often explicitly referred to as prescriptive treatises, were, on the contrary, only implicitly prescriptive, a tendency that changed to an explicit normative and proscriptive discourse in the 20th and 21st centuries. In the formative period, though, there was much less consensus about the criteria according to which Dutch linguistic variants were selected as standard. As de Vos remaks (2022), "there was less canonisation of the normative discourse itself".

And turning to the articles devoted to variation and change in Catalan language norms, it should be pointed out that, as it is generally the case with Romance-speaking countries, the process of Catalan language standardization is primarily associated with the labour of a parastatal institution, the Institut d' Estudis Catalans (IEC), founded in 1907 with the aim of planning the language and giving explicit recognition to Catalan language norms. Nonetheless, since 2006 there is a legal, official bicentricity in the Catalan language standardization-speaking sphere: the Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua (AVL) promotes a more convergent and pluricentric codification of the Catalan Language (Costa-Carreras 2020, p. 182).

Cuenca makes the point that explicit prescriptions regarding the Catalan language have influenced the usage of four contrastive connectives mainly used in formal (written) language: nogensmenys 'nonetheless', emperò 'but', no obstant (això) 'nevertheless', and tanmateix 'however'. Based on the treatment of these connectives in dictionaries and descriptive/prescriptive Catalan grammars, together with a quantitative corpus analysis, Cuenca concludes that Catalan's usage has experienced a remarkable change during the 20th century due to internal (i.e., paradigmatic relations) and external factors (i.e., the bilingual Spanish-Catalan context as well as the standardization process itself).

Dols' paper, entitled "Hypercorrection as a symptom of language change. Majorcan Catalan Standard Pronunciation", adopts Auer's (2005) and Cerruti and Regis' (2014) theoretical approach to defend the existence of a diaglossic repertoire (cf. Cerruti and Tsiplakou 2020) in speakers of Majorcan Catalan. He uses the term hypercorrect to refer to the abandonment of prescribed correct forms in favour of more general ones. Dols' research is based on data obtained from television programs included in the Corpus Oral de la Llengua Catalana and concentrates on three examples of hypercorrection in Majorcan Catalan phonological features. The results show centripetal normative tendencies to adapt the endonormative Majorcan pronunciation to the Central Catalan standard in the Balearic oral media, which can also be explained by an increasing exposure of Majorcan Catalan speakers to central Catalan mass media during the last decades.

The last paper of this Special Issue, "The Transgression of Word-Formation Rules as a Sign of Linguistic Change in Catalan: The Case of -isme, -itis, and -metre", is written by Elisabet Llopart, who focuses on the fact that these transgressions are lexical innovations that deviate from the norms described and prescribed in Catalan reference works. Llopart explains that these lexical innovations break different types of morphological or pragmatic restrictions due to linguistic change. Indeed, they are the result of new productive rules in Catalan word-formation, as it has also been attested in other languages, such as Spanish, English, and French. The neologisms analysed, ending in -isme, -itis, and -metre, were obtained from the bank of neologisms of the Observatori de Neologia (BOBNEO, Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

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