6th Prescriptivism Conference

Modelling Prescriptivism:
Language, Literature, and Speech Communities

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Poetry's for Kings: Prescriptivism and resistance in English poetry

Joan C. Beal (University of Sheffield)

One of the most frequently cited texts in historical accounts of the standardisation of English is the extract from George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), in which the author gives a detailed account of what kinds of English are suitable or unsuitable for poetry. Puttenham's is one of a number of texts written in the sixteenth century providing advice for poets as to what constitutes a good poetic style in English. Hitherto, notions of literary style and rhetoric had been based on classical sources. Jumping forwards some four hundred years to the poem which provides the title for this paper, Tony Harrison in 'Them and [uz]' recalls an incident at school when his teacher, objecting to Harrison's reading of Keats in his Yorkshire accent, tells him 'poetry's for Kings'. The rest of the poem is a passionate defence of the poet's right to use their own voice, pronouncing [uz] in the Northern manner.

In this paper, I provide a survey of advice to poets, critical reactions to poets using non-standard English, and the actual practice of poets. With regard to twenty-first century poetry, I discuss whether the turn towards oral performance has liberated poets from prescriptive constraints.

Prescription — a matter of taboo?

Kate Burridge (Monash University)

I have always believed that the concerns people have about the well-being of their language and the activities that accompany these concerns are the fall-out from our tabooing behaviour generally (Burridge 2010). Relevant here are insights from Mary Douglas' theory of taboo and pollution. In her anthropological classic *Purity and Danger* (1966), she described the distinction between cleanliness and filth (what is "in" and what is "out") as stemming from our basic human need to organize the chaos of our immediate experience — and by extension, the need to define language and to force into neat classificatory systems what Samuel Johnson once famously described as "the boundless chaos of a living speech" (1755, p. 28)

My focus in this talk is on the Australian English speech community, where I have first-hand experience of the fervour and the passion that can accompany these kinds of cleaning-up activities. In particular, I consider Australian resistance to American English influence, which ever since the arrival of the "talkies" (talking films) of the 1920s has been persistent and vocal. In personal correspondence I receive, Australians loudly denounce "this wholesale invasion and exploitation"; vehement objections are made to "American infiltration into our lingo", and blame is laid squarely on "the invidious impact of American TV" and "the Microsoft spell-checker".

There are always contradictions that accompany beliefs and behaviours around taboo, and Australian attitudes to American influence are no exception. Dirt is "in the eye of the beholder", and linguistic facts rarely get in the way of a personal opinion. Some kinds of American expression are readily assimilated, while others remain stigmatised and the focus for continuing objections; some named Americanisms are in fact not American at all; and despite the general opposition to American English influence, the bulk of this influence has gone unnoticed and unrecognised (Burridge & Peters 2020).

As with tabooing practices generally, linguistic purists see very clear distinctions between what is clean and what is unclean — what does and what doesn't belong in a language. Linguists who challenge these prescriptions are challenging people's "cherished classifications" (Douglas' description). I argue here that viewing prescription through the lens of taboo is a step towards a better and more constructive dialogue between linguists and the wider community — a dialogue that has for so long been stymied by the oversimplified prescription-description binary (see papers in Chapman & Rawlins 2020).

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'Not just a few dozen trouble spots': tallying the rules in English usage guides

Don Chapman (Brigham Young University)

Round table

Methods and approaches in determining normative success

Eline Lismont (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Universiteit Leiden)

& Machteld de Vos (Radboud Universiteit, Dutch Language Institute)

Whether and to what extent language norms spread to actual language use is a central question in the study of standardisation as a top-down process. Simple models of standardisation (e.g. Haugen 1966) have therefore been problematised by scholars in historical sociolinguistics (Joseph, Rutten & Vosters 2020), who have tried to determine the impact of imposed prescriptions on language use in an empirical way and for a range of European languages (e.g. Konopka 1996; Takada 1998; Auer 2009; Poplack & Dion 2009; Rutten et al. 2014; Anderwald 2016; Krogull 2018). The results of these studies, however, diverge greatly: sometimes normative influence is obvious, whereas in other studies, norms and usage appear to develop independently or in diverging directions, and in yet other cases, there is a simultaneous change in norms and usage. Despite the considerable number of case studies examining this topic, there is no one-size-fits-all answer to the question whether, when and under which circumstances normative injunctions affect language use (cf. Rutten & Vosters, forthcoming). Additionally, the approaches, data and methodologies applied vary enormously, ranging from scholars measuring the effect of one important grammarian (e.g. McLelland 2014) or focusing on a limited number of linguistic features (e.g. Langer 2001; Auer 2009), to more comprehensive studies investigating the relationship between norms and usage on a larger scale (e.g. Poplack et al. 2015; Anderwald 2016). An overarching framework to assess and determine the effect of norms on usage, however, is still lacking.

Such diverging methods and outcomes, of course, raise the question whether it really is possible to move beyond individual case studies and ad hoc investigations with a more limited scope to broader analyses of the effects of language norms on usage. We therefore intend to address the topic of top-down standardisation from a methodological point of view, in the format of an open workshop, where experts in the field (see below), as well as any conference participants interested in the issues raised, can engage in a discussion on the methodological challenges and opportunities of research on the relationship between language norms and usage in historical settings.

Central questions to be discussed may include:
- To what extent can we actually determine the effect of top-down standardisation in historical contexts? Which factors should we consider, and can they be operationalized in empirical studies?
- What are the (dis)advantages in addressing the issue from a quantitative or qualitative perspective? How can both approaches be fruitfully combined?
- How can or should more quantitatively oriented approaches account for different target audiences of normative publications, given the fact that many historical grammars targeted very limited, elite audiences?

Structure:
  Introduction (10 minutes)
  Presentations (10-15 minutes per panel member)
  Discussion with panel and moderators (30 minutes)
  Q&A (15+ minutes)

Panel of experts:
- Anita Auer / University of Lausanne
- Andreas Krogull / Leiden University Centre for Linguistics
- Shana Poplack / University of Ottawa

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Sessions

"Everyone here speaks well": metalinguistic awareness and language attitudes in Irish emigrants' letters

Carolina Amador-Moreno (Universidad de Extremadura, University of Bergen)

& Nancy E. Ávila-Ledesma (Universidad de Extremadura)

The National School system was introduced in Ireland with the Education Act of 1831. Schooling after this point in time is believed to have contributed to the promotion of English as a language, and to the consequent decline of the Irish language. Regardless of whether or not such a connection contributed hugely to the language shift in Ireland, what is evident is that a dramatic expansion in the number of schools took place during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries due to the demand for literacy. As Doyle (2018: 359) points out, 'the state, its major institutions, and the public identified education as an improving force', and this is clearly noticeable in the context of Irish emigration. Fitzpatrick (1994: 498–499) lists several examples in which Irish-Australian emigrants, in letters sent home to Ireland, underline the importance of schooling and education for the young generations. An interesting point raised by Fitzpatrick (1990: 172), in connection with this, is that while until the 1880s the illiterates in the population were the most likely to emigrate, from then onwards this tendency was reversed.

Many of the letters that form part of CORIECOR, the *Corpus of Irish English Correspondence* (McCafferty and Amador-Moreno, in preparation) are penned by writers whose social or educational status improved with emigration and, therefore, show a strong linguistic awareness. The present study intends to contribute to the analysis of discursive identities with a corpus-based examination of the relationship between emigration, schooling and language attitudes in the personal correspondence of Irish emigrants to the United States. Based on these historical texts, the ultimate objective of this investigation is to provide detailed insights into Irish emigrants' linguistic behaviour as well as the dynamics of prescriptivist discourse as articulated in CORIECOR.

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Old prescriptive standard vs neo-standard:
a look at the written Italian of university students

Silvia Ballarè & Emanuele Miola (Università di Bologna)

In recent years, the "state of health" of standard Italian has been a subject of the public debate: in 2017, a group of six-hundred scholars and intellectuals co-signed an open letter (https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By6yGMqrp9HqSkw3U2MySExnbkU/view) denouncing the lack of linguistic competence of university students, stating that 3/4 of undergraduates are to be considered "semi-illiterate". To put this episode in the bigger picture, it is crucial to consider that in the Italian sociolinguistic scenario, the co-existence of an old, 'literary' standard and a new one (neo-standard in Berruto 2012 [1987]) has been attested. The former is prescriptive in nature: it is ideally taught in schools and can be identified in highly formal productions of educated speakers. The latter emerged via demoticization (Coupland & Kristiansen 2011): it is a standard by mere usage, can be approximated to the so-called journalistic Italian and some of its features are still stigmatized by some members of the linguistic authority (Ammon 2003).

In this presentation, using a corpus of highly formal texts written by university students (thesis, written exam papers, 700.000 tokens), we will discuss the presence of two linguistic features that are attested in the neo-standard but are excluded from the literary one: namely (1) the lack of subject-verb agreement with group nouns (vs agreement); and (2) the use of the subjunctive (vs indicative) after the factual construction *il fatto che* ("the fact that"). (1) has been attested since the early studies on the neo-standard (Berruto 2012 [1987]: 89), while (2) has been recorded only in recent years (Renzi 2019).

Finally, we will compare the behavior of the same features in corpora representing "old" and "new" standards (juridical-administrative and academic prose, and press sections of the CORIS corpus, respectively), in order to empirically discuss whether students align more with the old standard or with the new one.

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"And, your petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray" — Prescriptive or descriptive letter-writing manuals in Late Modern England: a promise with a clue

Nuria Calvo-Cortés (Universidad Complutense Madrid)

It was not only in grammar books that instruction could be found on how to write and speak properly in the 18th and 19th centuries. Grammar was also explicitly or implicitly present in subsidiary grammars (Yañez-Bouza, 2018) such as letter-writing manuals. These became very popular as letters were common means of communication for people of all ranks. Many manuals indicated that the letters included were 'original', which leads to a descriptive interpretation of their content.

The present study concentrates on the descriptive and/or prescriptive role of these manuals through the analysis of the choice of the modal verb in the promise concluding all the petitions in the manuals, "and, your petitioner, as in duty bound, *shall/will* ever pray". Only manuals containing a specific section on petitions will be analysed, and they will be compared with about 100 actual contemporaneous petitions. In general, differences between these auxiliaries seem to have been rooted in prescriptive grammars (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2009). They have been studied in historical letter writing (e.g. McCafferty & Amador Moreno, 2012; Elsweiler, 2019), but this study focuses on their use in this particular expression only.

The results show that both auxiliaries were used in Late Modern England in this construction, with a higher percentage of *shall* in the earlier manuals as opposed to an increase in the use of *will* in later manuals. It is particularly interesting that later editions of some manuals reflect these changes too. In addition, the use of *will* seems to have been more extended in the real petitions analysed than in the manuals. This suggests that the authors of the manuals actually intervened in the editing process of the petitions. However, the question is whether they reflected changes introduced by grammarians or by writers of petitions.

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"Cahstle, (…) not kehstle": reflections of prescriptivism in Australian literature

Magdalena Cislerova (Charles University)

As soon as distinctive linguistic features started appearing in Australia, Australian English (AusE) was placed very low in the hierarchy of Englishes with its perceived informality, egalitarianism, swearing, and convict heritage, and it took a long time till it was perceived as a variety in its own right – even by Australians themselves. This linguistic insecurity is closely related to the construction of national identity and to this day Australia suffers from cultural cringe. National identity is, therefore, still an important topic of Australian literature.

This paper explores to what degree AusE features are represented through time based on Schneider's Dynamic Model, followed by a discussion of metalinguistic commentary that reveals prescriptive ideology and its meaning in the novels of contemporary writers Peter Carey and Hsu Ming Teo.

Keyword analysis of a small corpus of selected canonical novels has revealed that the distribution of 'Australianisms' across four periods roughly corresponds to the characteristics of each period as per Schneider's model and the corresponding historical events, with their highest concentration found in the Nativization period, when language was used as a tool in advocating independence, and in the Differentiation period, when AusE has achieved full linguistic independence. The numbers are much lower in the Exonormative stabilisation period, when British identity along with British English was the norm, and in the Endonormative stabilisation period, which was characterised by cultural cringe.

Exploration of both Carey and Teo and the metalinguistic commentaries support these findings. Carey's novels discuss the power dynamics between the British and Australians throughout the 20th century and explore the way Australians tended towards the Broad or Cultivated end of the spectrum based on their cultural identification with either country, with metalinguistic commentaries employed as part of Carey's critique of Australian culture. Teo's novel discusses the migrant versus white Australian experience and reveals how migrants now contend with AusE norms. In all novels the adherence to language norms plays a significant role in the construction of identity.

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Suppressed no more: prescriptivism and the appreciation of optional variability

Machteld de Vos (Radboud Universiteit, Dutch Language Institute)

& Marten van der Meulen (Radboud Universiteit)

Recent years have seen researchers challenge many of the previously held assumptions about prescriptivism. These include the strict descriptivism-prescriptivism dichotomy (e.g. Chapman, 2020), the effects of prescriptivism on language use (e.g. Anderwald, 2018), and the effect of usage on prescriptive rules (e.g. Ayres-Bennett, 2020). One aspect that seems to have gone relatively unchallenged is the idea of 'suppression of optional variability', introduced by Milroy and Milroy in their seminal book *Authority in Language* (1985), as one of the basic characteristics of the standard language ideology. However, when we try to match the conceptual to the empirical, problems start to arise with regard to this notion.

In this paper, we look at the way in which normative grammars and prescriptive publications relate to optional variability. We do this using morphosyntactic case studies from both the codification period (1550-1700) and the maintenance period (1900-2000) of the standardisation of Dutch. Our research indicates that, while a majority of prescriptive utterances does result in the suppression of certain linguistic variants, both 'suppression' and 'optional variability' as concepts are too limited. With regard to 'suppression', the sources we studied show that variation is frequently approached in a variety of different ways, such as appreciation, reallocation, creating awareness and even acceptance. Likewise, our data shows that 'optional variability' can encompass different kinds of optionality, including grammatical, socio-pragmatic and semantic. We argue that, as the study of prescriptivism matures, we need a more fine-grained framework to appreciate the many ways in which prescriptivism deals with variation.

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"Your not my type": effects of stigmatized linguistic variation in online dating

Carmen Ebner (Leiden University Centre for Linguistics)

This paper investigates the impact of linguistic norm violations in online dating. In particular, two types of norm violations are studied: (1) typos (e.g. *wirte* for *write*) and (2) grammos (e.g. *your* for *you're*) which, according to Queen and Boland (2016), are homophonous grammatical errors triggering stronger negative reactions amongst readers than typos. While there is a growing body of studies assessing the currency of stigmatized linguistic features in a de-contextualized manner, only few attitude studies incorporate features in naturally occurring contexts. One of these is Queen and Boland's (2016) study of typos and grammos in email responses to a flat share. Using a similar indirect and contextualized approach, I aim to assess attitudes towards typos and grammos in online dating – a social context which is, despite its popularity, still largely uncharted territory in language attitude studies.

What effects norm violations have on the selection of potential dating partners and whether social factors, such as age, gender, education and L1, have an impact on how candidates are perceived are just two of the research questions addressed in this paper. The tendency for women to disapprove of nonstandard language use (Trudgill, 1974) is investigated in more depth using the two different types of norm violations. Participants are asked to evaluate short extract of dating profiles, i.e. swipe right or left, to indicate whether they would like to find out more about the candidate or not. Each stimulus is followed by Likert-scales to assess the dating candidate's likability, friendliness, conscientiousness and suitability as a partner. To allow for richer data, participants have the option to comment on each candidate's profile.

Using an indirect attitude elicitation approach, this study sheds light on attitudes towards norm violations in the context of online dating. Confirming Queen and Boland's (2016) assessment of typos and grammos, the results show the negative impact of grammos on the perception of dating candidates. Furthermore, both types of norm violations are noticed more frequently and evaluated more harshly by female than male participants in this study.

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The making of linguistic authority in the postdigital age

Theresa Heyd & Morana Lukač (University of Greifswald)

In her paper on "popular prescriptivism in the twenty-first century", Beal (2010) points out that dynamics of language policing have recently shifted. Specifically, the notion that language ideologies and norms are tied to and reinforced by formalized authorities – grammarians, language associations, media platforms and the like – has to be questioned in the digital and postdigital age. Through forms of participatory culture, prescriptivist ideologies can be voiced, reproduced, and shared, and contribute to grassroots networks of everyday language policing. This observation ties in with Heyd's concept of *grassroots prescriptivism* (2014), bottom-up prescriptivist activity, which is often fostered and made visible through digital linguistic practice. Although some perceptive commentary on online forms of language policing precede ours (e.g. Lukač 2018; Drackley 2019), the need remains to answer the question of how linguistic authority is constructed in the age of destabilization of traditional power relations.

The case study presented in this paper is based on the premise that notions of correctness and the standard language ideology have been appropriated in digital practices. One stand of prescriptive debates embedded in this context concerns ambiguous pronunciation of internet-related neologisms (Witten 2012; van der Meulen 2020). In the digital sphere, and in what is essentially a text-based medium, different sociophonetic variants of certain words have emerged such as *gif* (/gɪf/ and /dʒɪf/), *imgur* (/ɪmgə/ and /ˈɪmɪdʒə/), and *meme* (/miːm/ and /mɪmɪ/), and with them grassroots prescriptive debates on which of the variants should be considered "correct". These cases contribute to the enregisterment of digital linguistic practice (Squires 2010), but they also transcend its boundaries by prescribing oral norms in a formerly written domain and thus highlighting processes of digital convergence. The analysis of such debates taken up in this paper serves as a backcloth for analyzing language policing by average speakers and larger shifts in late-modern publics (Heyd and Schneider 2019).

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The significance of stance in literary representations of prescriptive judgements

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In this paper I draw on the materials from the Database of Dialect in British Fiction 1800-1836 to focus on a range of instances where one character comments upon the language variety of another individual or group. The aim is to look for moments where the stance of the reader might be in question: should the character making the comment be admired for upholding good linguistic standards, or castigated for being an unthinking snob?

Elizabeth Le Noir's *Village Anecdotes*, for example, comprises a series of letters from Sophia Willars to her absent husband, detailing life in the village where she is staying with friends. In one letter she describes a new acquaintance, Miss Grove:

> She is pretty, very genteely drest, and altogether of so elegant an appearance, that I was astonished beyond expression.-- When, to Mrs. Peterson's question after the health of some acquaintance, she answered, literally thus—"I does not know, indeed; I hasn't zeed her this fortnight." Accustomed as I am to hear my poor mother tongue clipped and frittered, I confess to you, my dear Edward, such an answer, from so smart a lady, almost overcame my gravity: however, I might have laughed without offence; for Harriet was the only one present who would have suffered the cause: such is the negligence of grammatical propriety connived at here. (Vol. 1, pp. 123-124)

This passage maps a complex series of linguistic judgements and assumptions. Although he is not present, Sophia is confident that both her husband and Harriet will share her views of the "clipped and frittered" language, and the implication is that the reader will be comfortable with those judgements. Yet such views were not universal. Other novels from the period demonstrate quite different judgements, and overtly prescriptive attitudes in some cases become an object of critique.

I attempt to unpick the different layers of reader/character/writer within the text and to consider what evidence there is for the stance that the reader is invited to adopt towards prescriptive attitudes. In conclusion I consider what evidence these novels provide for the status of prescriptive attitudes in the early nineteenth century.

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Female characters as comic prescriptivists? Eighteenth-century *you was*

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Why did *you was* enter and then disappear from Late Modern Standard English? Our papers illuminate the development of second-person pronouns and of eighteenth-century language norms. We also consider the reciprocal significance of historical linguistics and comedy.

You was arose from below, in seventeenth-century colloquial English after the recession of second-person singular *thou* (Laitinen 2009). It became stigmatized by the early 1760s (*DENG*): Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2002) argued for the influence of Lowth (1762), showing that *you was* receded quickly from fiction in the 1760s.

Our 2018 survey of male playwrights found that *you was* was salient before the 1760s, similar if not identical to *thou* in its comic range of class and emotions, negative and positive (Nonomiya 2021). 'Micro' studies of correspondence in the 1750s suggest what it indexed for individuals. Lowth used *you was* only with his wife (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011), suggesting that for him the form was informal or intimate. Although *you was* was receding from men's letters, women's retained it for longer (Laitinen 2009).

You was did persist despite stigmatization—in letters by royalty, for instance (Laitinen 2009). Our June 2021 paper considers how female comic playwrights used *you was* after the 1760s. Like male playwrights, to signal combinations of class and attitude? Like women letter-writers, more often than men? While also considering their dialects, we observe first that women playwrights used *you was* similarly but less often than men.

For September, we focus on the sex of comic characters. Considering *thou* in comedies, Nonomiya (2021) finds no meaningful correlation with gender. But *you was* had viability offstage, and gender difference in letters (Laitinen 2009). (How) do theatrical patterns interrelate with prescriptivism?

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Orthographies in conflict – Low German writing systems as counteractions to dominant nationalist ideas in the 19th century

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In the 19th century, linguistic prescriptivism was closely linked to nation building and standard language ideology. While this so-called nation state nationalism was one possible outcome of nationalist activism, nation borders were not always identical with state borders at that time. Alternatively, scholarly publications of the 19th century provide evidence for macro-nationalist ideas of a Greater German Empire as well as for micro-nationalist concepts of growing regional identities. These concepts were often based on ethno-linguistic definitions of a nation and used linguistic similarity as an iconic sign of belongingness.

In view of this broad range of positions, the proposed paper will illuminate the impact of language ideologies on Low German writing systems in the 19th century. It investigates how nationalist, spatial and stylistic ideologies affected metalinguistic debates about Low German orthographies.

Firstly, the paper illustrates that the German label 'Niederdeutsch' and its Dutch equivalent 'Nederduits' are fuzzy terms that referred to various language area concepts. Some scholars used the labels to describe dialectal varieties, while others envisioned a national or even a pan-national standard language reaching from the kingdoms of the Netherlands and Belgium up to the Northern German Empire. Drawing on examples from these countries, the second part of the paper demonstrates that the writing systems linked to these language concepts were important for nationalist identity constructions and place-making practices. In particular, the presentation deals with the idea of a pan-national orthography from 'Dunkirk to Königsberg' that was developed by the Belgian scholars Victor Hubert Delecourt and Constant Jacob Hansen. Besides that, it will focus on the proposal of the Northern German scholar Klaus Groth who tried to establish Low German as a regional literary language aside from High German. Finally, it will be argued that these orthographic proposals were counteractions to a national standard orthography. The paper offers a historical perspective on orthographies as social practices and sheds light on the interplay between micro- and macro-nationalist language concepts in the 19th century.

Maintaining symbolic power through language shaming – A case study of a spelling reform

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In 2016, Swedish newspapers became the battleground for an intense language debate. The starting point was an opinion piece suggesting a modernization of the spelling of the Swedish definite pronoun 3 pers. plur. (subj.: *de*, obj: *dem*; both pronounced: *dom*). The following debate was loud and heated. A number of different positions emerged, with one thing in common: it was not about language itself, but about those who do not master the grammatical distinction.

With the analytical perspectives of language shaming (Piller 2016), language ideology and language as symbolic power (Bourdieu 1992) as our starting points, we analyze how debaters in a collection of 23 newspaper texts argue the pros and cons of a spelling reform. The aim of the paper is to examine how variation and change in a majority language, with the pronominal system of Swedish as an empirical case, gets linked to power and cultural capital.

The results show that the standard spelling is construed as the variety that provides access to school success, the labor market and society's resources. The debaters – mostly journalists and researchers – are already in a position where they have the symbolic power and cultural capital that they claim is provided through mastery of the standard. The linguistic variation therefore creates boundaries between those who master the standard and those who do not. Differences in status and symbolic capital become associated with the groups. The dominant group contributes to the maintenance of the social status that the mastery entails. They do so through the very media outlets that their mastery of the standard gives access to.

Debaters on both sides find linguistic variation a problem that needs to be addressed. Often, debaters connect language users who use non-standard forms with undesirable attributes: laziness, lack of knowledge, inability. Non-standard forms receive strong ideological signal value of what is "good" language, and what are desirable qualities in speakers who use that language. Language users who deviate from the standard get construed as stigmatized, and their varieties as problems (Hult & Hornberger 2016). The superiority and subordination of language use are evident.

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150 years of ideas about language:
the aims of metalinguistic works in American English

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English usage guides, or metalinguistic works more generally, have been described as a special type of reference works aimed at a linguistically lay audience of native speakers of the language (Busse & Schröder 2009); as such, what typifies them is their "external function" of offering advice on linguistic choices (Weiner 1988: 173). From a linguistic point of view, they are not neutral books of linguistic advice. They are notoriously rife with a whole range of ideological positions on language use in general, as well as on specific linguistic features in particular. Empirical investigations looking at the approaches of usage guide authors offering advice find that the majority of the statements are based on the personal opinions of the usage guide authors (Peters & Young 1997; Busse & Schröder 2010). This makes them problematic, because they may have a role to play in perpetuating misconceptions about language which are divorced from the realities of language use and language users. However, while the empirical basis of their statements, or the lack thereof, can be ascertained by looking at actual language use data, the basis for their ideological underpinnings are more ephemeral and difficult to establish. In this paper, I aim to investigate this question in the context of American metalinguistic works in general.

Specifically, in this paper I explore the general ideologies about language expressed in these metalinguistic works, and discuss their alignment with popular language ideologies and social processes of the time of publication. I apply a range of corpus-based analyses (i.e. collocations, topic modelling) of a self-compiled corpus of introductory sections (prefaces or introductions) from around 100 metalinguistic books published in the US from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. In these introductory sections, authors address their readers and present the work, as well as their general aims. Preliminary evidence from an exploratory qualitative analysis of a small sample of the data suggests that these introductory sections reveal general attitudes towards the use of language, the importance of language norms and standards, as well as the place of language correctness. Additionally, they also offer evidence for the commodification of language correctness, or the aspects of language use that are associated with professional success.

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Indian English usage in the 21st century:
enduring colonial norms and emerging local standards

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Countless Indian speakers of English have taken their cue concerning English usage from Wren and Martin's *High School English Grammar and Composition*, first published in 1935 and continuously in print ever since. The book is itself based on Nesfield (1898), thus essentially representing a continuation of 19th-century prescriptivist attitudes towards English usage despite several revisions of the main text. On the other hand, local contact-induced norms are becoming more and more entrenched, for example the use of a comma in the address line of emails (e.g. *to, Mrs. X*), modelled on formal usage in Hindi and other Indian languages.

This paper reports the findings from a survey of attitudes towards English usage across Western India (Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa). The survey targeted proficient second language users of English in metropolitan areas, more specifically teachers and their students. Both target groups rated their acceptance of a set of moot points of English usage, covering both morphosyntax and punctuation and both common core usage problems as well as specifically Indian English usage.

The results show the continuing tension between adherence to a prescriptivist tradition and acceptance of new, endocentric developments, thus enhancing our understanding of contemporary norms of Indian English alongside a "grassroots" understanding of standard (Indian) English (Peters 2020).

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Prescriptivism in outer-circle varieties of English: a view from Hong Kong English

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Outer-circle varieties of English, in Kachruvian terms (Kachru 1985), are second-language varieties which, according to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model, undergo different developmental phases ranging from exo-normative to endo-normative ones. Within this scenario, it is evident that the role played by prescriptivism in these varieties differs significantly from that played in inner-circle varieties of English. In this paper, we explore the four strands of prescriptivism described by Curzan (2014) in order to see how they affect the variety of English spoken in Hong Kong regarding two linguistic variables associated to linguistic democratization, which has been defined as "speakers' tendency to avoid unequal and face-threatening modes of interaction" (Farrelly & Seoane 2012: 393). Democratization involves variation regarding the specific use of some modal and semi-modal verbs (Myhill 1995), a decreasing use of titular nouns (Baker 2010), and an increasing frequency of gender-neutral language (Farrelly & Seoane 2012), among others.

This paper explores Hong Kong English and studies two linguistic sets of markers that include items representing the (old) undemocratic alternative and the (new) democratic option, namely modal *must* vs semi-modals HAVE (GOT) TO, NEED (TO) and WANT TO, and epicene pronouns including undemocratic generic HE, on the one hand, and democratic singular THEY and conjoined HE OR SHE, on the other. Using the Hong Kong component of the *International Corpus of English*, and adopting a register approach, we discuss how stylistic prescriptivism and politically-responsive prescriptivism contribute to the diffusion of democratic items in this outer-circle variety.

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What guides copy-editors' decisions?
From grammatical to sociolinguistic determinants

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In the attempt to account for prescriptivism as a sociolinguistic factor, researchers have primarily focused on institutionalised efforts to prescribe language usage. With few exceptions (e.g. Cameron, 1995, pp. 33–77; Pillière, 2020; Owen, 2020), little attention has been given to the activities of copy-editors who seemingly enforce the prescriptive rules in published work and are key actors in reproducing the standard language ideology. To the best of our knowledge, no study so far has quantitatively assessed the influence of multiple factors on editorial decisions.

This study focuses on the variation in copy-editors' treatment of the prescriptive rule against the singular use of *data*. *Data* has been reinterpreted as a mass noun in modern English, with the meaning of an agglomeration of pieces of information. For all that, academic registers have remained 'a stronghold for resisting the singular use of *data*' (Peters, 2018, p. 46). To test the extent to which this prescriptive rule is still applied, 670 copy-editors across the English-speaking world were solicited through an online survey to edit the same six fragments of academic writing, and the changes with respect to their treatment of *data* were compared. The examples of unedited texts used for the copy-editors' survey were retrieved from our 12.5-million-word self-compiled corpus of International Academic English. We aim to examine the extent to which the editorial decisions are influenced by grammatical determinants, prescriptive rules, and sociolinguistic factors, such as the editors' own variety of English and age. These findings have implications for our more nuanced understanding of the factors at play in the decisions of those who act as gatekeepers of published written language.

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Pinpointing prescriptive impact:
using change point analysis for the study of prescriptivism at the idiolectal level

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It has long been hypothesized that the literary review periodicals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a consistent source of prescriptivism, and that this prescriptivism had a significant impact on the language usage of reviewed authors (McIntosh, 1998; Percy, 2009). However, a lack of research in this area has left this hypothesis unsubstantiated by empirical data until now. As it is notoriously difficult to evaluate the success of prescriptivist endeavours in other contexts, attempting to do so in relation to these review periodicals poses a significant challenge. However, this paper demonstrates, through a single-author case study, that the application of a novel statistical method can provide substantial evidence of prescriptive impact at the idiolectal level.

The single author chosen for this case study is Fanny Burney (1752-1840), whose long life and prolific writing habit have allowed a purpose-built corpus of 3 million words to be compiled from her published prose writing, diaries, and outbound correspondence. Burney was, moreover, subject to specific, overtly-targeted, prescriptivism, in a *Monthly Review* article of 1796. Here, her third novel *Camilla* was reviewed, and her exposure to this article is documented in her correspondence. This paper reports that using change point analysis, a method of statistical modelling which has previously been applied to linguistic data only rarely, it is possible to discern a change in Burney's idiolectal usage which corresponds strikingly with the publication of the prescriptive review of *Camilla* in 1796.

These findings demonstrate the highly significant impact which prescriptivism mediated through the genre of the periodical review could have on the Late Modern author. However, the primary focus of this paper is methodological. In demonstrating how effectively change point analysis can provide a sophisticated correlation which is indicative of a causal link, it showcases the remarkable suitability of this statistical method to the study of prescriptivism.

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Literacy and self-prescriptivism:
a metapragmatic discourse analysis of attitudes towards orthographic regulation

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Writing has long been identified as a central factor in the standardization of languages. Yet, the effect of literacy on (standard) language ideologies remains understudied to this day (but cf. Johnson 2002, Dickinson 2015, Weth & Juffermans 2018), as do the public's attitudes on orthographic standardization. However, it is becoming increasingly important as the relation between authorities of language policy and the 'lay' people who are affected by policies has gradually changed, causing a new kind of 'twenty-first-century prescriptivism' (cf. Heyd 2014: 491) to evolve in which normativity is no longer negotiated exclusively top-down but is also constituted by bottom-up processes (especially of digital nature in the realm of the internet). This talk is devoted to an investigation of said prescriptivism.

In a recent pilot study, 21 semi-structured interviews with Austrian university students were conducted to investigate attitudes on (i) orthographic regulation, (ii) deviances from the written standard and denigrating public corrections of mistakes (so-called 'orthographic shaming'), as well as (iii) changes of orthography, i.e. spelling reforms and involved stakeholders.

Many of the participants' utterances, e.g. "Every time that I'm writing somewhere, I'm writing, and *therefore* it has to be correct", were entrenched in normativity and (self) prescriptivism, the most important aspects of which will be traced in this talk, as a metapragmatic discourse analysis of the interviews shows that in a literate community whose writing is orthographically regulated, (1) normativity appears to be inherent to literacy practices, which are strongly affected by standard language ideologies, (2) knowledge of various norms pertaining to the written standard is considered social/cultural capital and is instrumentalized in the establishment and reinforcement of hierarchies of power, and that, generally, (3) the public's nuanced attitudes towards orthography and literacy prove invaluable in examining the interaction between the status of prescriptive orthographies as central cornerstones of linguistic policy and everyday literacy practices.

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Prescriptivism and variation: the case of the Greek word for 'coronavirus'

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With the advent of the covid-19 pandemic, several Greek prescriptive or "descriptive" linguists and folk-linguists raised the issue: which form of the Greek loanword for 'coronavirus' is the "correct" one. We have consulted 74 metalinguistic texts on this issue, all published online over the period Jan. 22 – April 3, 2020. Four variants have been prescribed — κορον-ο-ϊός, κορων-ο-ϊός [koronoiós], κορον-α-ϊός, and κορων-α-ϊός [koronaiós] —, varying (1) the spelling of the first compound (<o> or <ω>) and (2) the linking 'thematic vowel' (-*o*- or -*a*-).

We have traced the use of the prescribed variants in multiple monitor corpora consisting mainly of texts published in news websites, mined with web scraping techniques and analyzed using NLP libraries in a Python programming environment. Monitor corpora allow the study of prescriptivism in real time, providing valuable insights into its workings. Phase 1 of our corpus (May 2013 and April-May 2014) consists of 71,343 texts (totalling 21,807,666 words), drawn from 6 news websites; the references in this period are to other corona viruses such as MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV; variation during this phase has been unattended by prescriptivists. Phase 2 (December 2019 - April 2020), the focus of our study, consists of a total of 123,250 texts (42,204,247 words), drawn from the same 6 new websites. Finally, Phase 3 consists of 20,706 texts (7,037,279 words) drawn from a much larger corpus of 18 websites at a later period of time (May 26 – June 1, 2020). We have also analyzed a Phase 3 corpus of radio broadcasts (total of 19h 21m).

Our statistical analysis shows:
1. A radical shift in usage between Phase 1 and Phase 2, suggesting a strong influence of prescriptivism.
2. Phase 2 and Phase 3 variation is increasingly compartmentalized (consistent use ranging from 68.18% to 88.84% in Phase 2 and from 73.76% % to 98.44% in Phase 3).
3. The variants with 'thematic' -*o*- are preferred over variants with -*a*- (87.91% vs. 12.07% respectively in Phase 3). The thematic -*o*- prevails in radio broadcasts (97.8%).

Our analysis supports the following claims:
a. Metalinguistic discourse is itself variable. Although prescriptivism aims at eliminating variation, it could also introduce or foster some variation, albeit in a highly compartmentalized manner.
b. The more "effective" prescriptions seem to be the ones that are compatible with an already established usage trend; but for this same reason these prescriptions could be considered to be "null".

Problematic prescriptivist word class categorization in Danish

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In Danish, there is a prescriptive ban on the occurrence of two adjacent conjunctions in subordinate clauses. The ban especially concerns strings consisting of a subordinating conjunction followed by the subordinating conjunction *at* 'that' (see references in Hansen 1983:68, but also Jacobsen & Jørgensen's 2020:83-85 writing guide and various other writing guides on the internet). See the following constructed examples:

(1) Jeg sove-r **fordi at** jeg har lyst.
I sleep-PRES because that I have.PRES desire
'I'll sleep because I want to.'

(2) Jeg sove-r **indtil at** sol-en stig-er.
I sleep-PRES until that sun-the rise-PRES
'I'll sleep until the sun rises.'

(3) Jeg sove-r **inden at** sol-en stig-er.
I sleep-PRES before that sun-the rise-PRES
'I'll sleep before the sun rises.'

(4) Jeg sove-r **før at** jeg rejse-r til Spanien.
I sleep-PRES before that I travel-PRES to Spain
'I'll sleep before I travel to Spain.'

The subordinate clauses in these examples are supposedly grammatically incorrect because *at* is said to be superfluous and because two conjunctions should not be adjacent (Hansen 1983:68-69). However, subordinate clauses such as the one in (5) are considered to be grammatically correct (Hansen 1983:64-65, 74-75; Jacobsen & Jørgensen 2020:84-85):

(5) Jeg sove-r **efter at** jeg har være-t i Spanien.
I sleep-PRES after that I have.PRES be-PAST.PART to Spain
'I'll sleep once I've been to Spain.'

(5) is grammatically correct because *efter* 'after' (the element before *at*) is considered to be a preposition, not a conjunction (Hansen 1983:74-75).

In our talk, we show that there is no reason to suppose that the elements immediately preceding *at* in (2)-(4) are conjunctions. Instead, on the basis of syntactic tests, we argue that *indtil* 'until', *inden* 'before', *før* 'before' and *efter* 'after' are all prepositions. The prescriptive ban should therefore not apply to cases such as (2)-(4).

Our analysis also has implications for descriptive grammars that regard elements such as *indtil*, *inden, før* and *efter* as both conjunctions as well as prepositions, depending on the context (e.g. Hansen & Heltoft 2011:208, 211, 1661). In our analysis, *indtil*, *inden*, *før* and *efter* are not conjunctions but unequivocally prepositions.

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Assessing prescriptivism: on the standardisation of the orthographic variants -*our/-or*, -*er/-re* and -*ce/-se* in Modern English

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Orthography is the linguistic level with the highest degree of standardisation in English. Such development is often attributed to the very nature of writing: its prevalence in time needs for fixedness and stability (Cook, 2004). The phenomenon, however, did not just overcome spelling. Rather, the standardisation of English orthography was a long due process which climaxed by 1650 (Nevalainen, 2006).[1] That this process should concur with the rise of printing and, most importantly, with the imminent spread of prescriptivism in England is no coincidence. Indeed, prescriptivism played an important role in the process of standardisation, its influence in the selection and codification stages (cf. Milroy & Milroy, 1999) being decisive for the final configuration of the English spelling system. Because its impact on the creation of a standard has not been properly assessed, the present paper aims to measure the role played by prescriptivism in the arrangement of the orthographic system during the Early and Late Modern periods. The linguistic items under study will correspond to the orthographic variants that still exist in Present-day English, exemplified by *colour/color*, *theatre/theater* and *deffence/deffense*. These have been chosen in light of their persisting orthographic variation and of their unsystematic distribution (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002). The data for the study will be drawn mainly from the *Early English Books Online* corpus and the *Corpus of Historical American English*. Finally, the quantitative results will be analysed against a precept corpus – as suggested in Auer (2012) – to enable the aforementioned assessment.

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[1] This is only true of British English: American spelling would not be standardised for nearly two centuries.

Curbing creativity? The influence of copyeditors on contemporary fiction

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A careful comparison of a manuscript and the printer's proofs reveals numerous suggested modifications that have been made during the copyediting stage. Such modifications range from rectifying the spelling and punctuation to lexicogrammatical changes, from 'smoothing' the text to more far-reaching changes. Many of these changes are the result of copyeditors following style and usage guides, in other words, prescriptive rules. Drawing on research carried out at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas in October 2019, this paper will explore the relationship between copyeditors and literary writers and analyse some of suggested modifications that have been made regarding the editorial proofs of writers such as Jim Crace, Penelope Lively and Kazuo Ishiguro.

I will concentrate particularly on suggested lexical changes, but also on grammatical structures that are identified as "information-packaging" by Chafe (1976). Huddleston and Pullum (2005: 238) outline eight different constructions that enable information to be presented in a way that is different from basic syntactic structures and that they label as "information-packaging constructions": passive clauses, extraposition, existential clauses, the *it*-cleft construction, pseudo-clefts, dislocation, preposing and postposing and reduction. These structures can often be compared to a canonical structure, so that in most cases the information-packaging construction is not a constraint but a stylistic choice. However, the fact that these structures often involve introducing additional elements to canonical syntax means that prescriptivist style and usage guides, such as Strunk and White, reject such structures as being too wordy or clumsy. I will therefore be examining how the suggested changes made by copyeditors may influence the narrative or textual voice and the author's style. Finally, I will address some of the underlying reasons for the proposed changes for, as Lefevere ([1992] 2016) points out, this rewriting is carried out under the influence of 'issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation'. While some of these changes can be identified as 'stylistic prescriptivism' (Curzan 2014), others are closely linked to marketing strategies.

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On "mens" and "pickney(s)": linguistic prescriptivism
in Naipauls's "Love, love, love, alone" and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

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Though literary texts are not the natural locus of explicit efforts to regulate language use, they can reveal attitudes of their authors' to linguistic prescriptivism. This happens in particular in heterolingual texts, i.e. texts that represent different and often non-standard varieties (Grutman, 1997). Found in literature in English at least since the 14th century (Blake, 1981), this tradition gained momentum after WWII with the growing representation of especially World Englishes and hybrid forms of language use. The emergence of this booming cross-cultural literary production runs parallel to an apparent decrease in prescriptivism (Beal, 2008, 2018), and seems to definitely open the gates to linguistic choices that used to be unnatural in literature.

Reality is however nuanced. Some authors in this heterolingual tradition do indeed challenge traditional prescriptivism — a few have even contributed to transform the perception of post-colonial varieties of English and to legitimize them (Kachru, 1991: 214). Others, however, maintain or even reinforce prescriptivist attitudes (Pandey, 2016). The aim of this paper is to illustrate these two divergent possibilities by comparing the functions, inclusion strategies and forms of representation of Caribbean creole in V. S. Naipaul's short story "Love, love, love alone", dated 1959, and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, dated 2001. This analysis — which bears in mind previous discussions of the two works (as Mair, 2003; Kollamagi, 2016; Watts, 2003) and the analytical tools for the study of language variation in fiction provided by Delabastita (2002) and Hodson (2014) — will confirm the curious ressurgence of prescriptivism in the UK identified by Beal (2008, 2018), and contribute to the discussion of literary approaches to prescriptivism aimed at in this conference.

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"It is still all icky and American": investigating British and Australian English speakers' attitudes towards verb conversions

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Prescriptivism abounds in English metalinguistic discourse and an increasing body of research has sought to examine this phenomenon in detail (see, e.g. Cameron, 2012; Curzan 2014; Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2018); however, there remain many linguistic phenomena which, while attracting the ire of English speakers, are yet to gain the focus of academic research. One such phenomenon is attitudes towards verb conversions such as *to hospitalise* (cf. *to go to hospital*) and *to burglarise* (cf. *to burgle*).

In this paper, we demonstrate how British English (BrE) speakers approach these forms as a matter of regional variation, classifying *to hospitalise* and *to burglarise* as abhorrent Americanisms (see also Ebner 2020); however, a different attitude is evident amongst Australian English (AusE) speakers, despite their being renowned for extreme prescriptive tendencies and disdain for purported Americanisms in particular (Severin & Burridge, 2020). Instead, online questionnaire responses from BrE and AusE speakers show that there is semantic differentiation of the variants *to hospitalise* and *to go to hospit*al in AusE, which contributes to the more favourable perception of the form than in BrE. The same is evident for *to burglarise*, albeit to a lesser extent, suggesting that differentiation of British vs American variants is perhaps a wider change in progress.

Through examination of both quantitative and qualitative data we collected from our British and Australian participants, we further investigate the attitudes towards these variants, examining the influence of other social variables such as age and gender on speakers' attitudes. In so doing, we show that while linguistic phenomena can be stigmatised for some speakers of a given variety, they may be openly accepted by other speakers of that variety; as such, we contribute to the growing body of research that demonstrates that prescriptivism is a complex social phenomenon and not a simple consequence of ignorance.

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Early twentieth-century pedagogical prescriptivism: the BBC and the press

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> The B.B.C. announcers are setting up a commonly accepted standard of Southern English speech. Their voices are penetrating into every nook of England and they are breaking down the linguistic barriers between county and county.
> (*The Radio Times*, 16 April 1926, p 151)

The role of Lord Reith, the first General Manager of the BBC, and his language policy dictated through the Advisory Committee on Spoken English, established in 1926, has also been the object of recent scholarly investigations (see, among others, Mugglestone 2008 and Schwyter 2008 and 2016). The Advisory Committee's prescribed pronunciation confirmed, in the early twentieth century, the BBC's role as "a codifying agent and a highly valued and effective propagator" (Leitner 1982: 91). Indeed, Reith held strong notions about correctness in spoken English and he saw BBC broadcasting as an important tool for educating the masses (cf. Schwyter 2016: 19), thus a form of, to use Crowley's words (2003: 139), "pedagogical prescriptivism". As rightly pointed out by Carley, "It was, however, made clear that this was done only for the purposes of in-house standardisation" (2013: 27), in order to provide announcers with some degree of protection against the criticism to which they were exposed, as claimed by Arthur Lloyd James, member and later secretary of the Advisory Committee, in his *Broadcast English I: Recommendations to Announcers Regarding Certain Words of Doubtful Pronunciation* (1928). Newspapers, as had already been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, served as a useful platform for disseminating prescriptive attitudes (see Sturiale 2018) and stigmatising language change. Listeners' criticisms towards the Committee's prescribed and codified forms of 'proper and correct' pronunciation soon flooded both the pages of the *The Radio Times*, the official BBC magazine, and also those of newspapers all over the country, and overseas. The data for my research, articles and listeners' letters, will be gathered from *The Radio Times* (https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/) and compared with articles and letters to editors extracted from electronic databases such as the *British Newspapers Archive*, *The Times Archive: 1785-1899* and *The Guardian and Observer Digital Archives (1791-2003)*. What I will argue is that the BBC, the newspapers, and their readers, made a concerted effort to indicate, and safeguard, a model accent as the linguistic ideal to be attained. Moreover, the press and their readers, but also the BBC and their listeners, mirrored the essence of language instability, of sociolinguistic change and also of the normative tradition which had dominated so far.

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Breaking the *who/whom* rule: the final taboo?

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A reviewer of the Dutch translation of Martin Amis's *Inside Story* (2020) commented on the writing tips this novel contains (unusually, he thought), illustrating them with the rule for the use of *who/whom* (van Essen 2021). As a usage problem, the distinction between these two forms, according to Lukač (2018: 158–186), has steadily been losing ground in British English (for American English, she notes, the process is less straightforward, but it is also disappearing). And yet its correct usage is made into an issue in the final episode of the British thriller series *Roadkill*, broadcast in the UK in October 2020, the US in November 2020 and The Netherlands in January 2021; it is used to make a grammatical point in the novel *The Grammarians* by Cathleen Schine (2019); and was used similarly by John Le Carré in *A Most Wanted Man* (2008) and Len Deighton in *Berlin Game* (1983).

Who/whom is an old chestnut: it is found in the usage guide tradition from its earliest days onwards, down even to the most recent publications included in in the HUGE database of English usage guides and usage problems. Despite the disappearance of *whom* though, it is striking that all most recent publications in the database – by Mignon Fogarty aka Grammar Girl (2008), Simon Heffer and Bernard Lamb, as well as Caroline Taggart (not in HUGE for *who/whom*), all from 2010 – conservatively advocate what they consider its correct usage. Why do these usage guides continue to do so while others have proved more accepting of changing usage? Why, moreover, does Martin Amis describe its correct usage when his father, Kingsley Amis, preached acceptance in his usage guide, *The King's English* (1997)? ("It has become safe to say that, except in funeral addresses …, or as a joke, *whom* is no longer heard from speakers of English", p. 242.) And why do literary authors draw on this particular issue in their writing to begin with?

In my paper I will try to find an answer to these questions, and in doing so will argue that in focussing on the *who/whom* issue, as well as on other popular usage problems, literary authors are less concerned with language than with other matters.

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Towards modelling past and present effects of prescriptivism
in Icelandic 19th- and 21st-century student essays

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The extent to which language is amenable to deliberate change is an issue of current theoretical interest (Auer 2009, Hinrichs et al. 2015, Anderwald 2016). Although scholars have frequently voiced scepticism about the effectiveness of prescriptive dicta, it is sometimes also assumed that changes imposed through formal schooling have been very successful, at least historically. Icelandic is widely considered to be a case in point (e.g. Kusters 2003).

In this paper I explore a range of features (morphological, syntactic, lexical) which differ in structural complexity and have been targeted as a part of the Icelandic prescriptive grammar tradition. I attempt to analyse variation in the (non-)use of prescribed forms using a mixed-effects model along the lines of Hinrichs et al. (2015) in a corpus of 500+ student essays (approximately 350,000 words). The essays were written by students aged 14–20 years, covering two time periods: a) Reykjavík Grammar School essays (1852–1906), b) compulsory school and matriculation exam essays (2000–2007). These data show some potential effects of prescriptivism, in particular the 19th-century material.

I will discuss the relevance of these findings from the perspective of Labov's (1993) INTERFACE PRINCIPLE, intended to capture the unobservability of (abstract) grammatical structure and for which there is conflicting evidence, as well as Haugen's (1987:61) more general claim that implementing a given norm is "a major educational issue" once we are no longer operating on a scale where "a small, elite group has a monopoly on education". In that regard, Icelandic appears to be less of an exception than some of the previous literature has suggested.

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Bad grammar and metalinguistic awareness

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This paper will contribute to the discussion of the relationship between developments in Modern English grammar and prescriptive metadiscourses about usage (Curzan 2014, Yáñez-Bouza 2015, Anderwald 2016, Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2019). The focus will be on the acceptability of non-standard uses of English pronouns, with an eye towards the taxonomy of linguistic prescriptivism developed in Curzan (2014). The discussion will be based on results from a survey of acceptability and language awareness that looked at how strongly speakers, especially language professionals (such as teachers and editors), feel about linguistic constructions often identified as "bad grammar" and whether or not they allow for any type of linguistic variation. Specifically, I will examine if greater metalinguistic awareness leads to more nuanced or to harsher acceptability judgments and if speakers respond differently to different types of prescriptive rules – standardizing, stylistic, or politically responsive —, as defined by Curzan.

In an electronic survey, 200 speakers of English, about 1/3 of them language professionals, rated the acceptability of 14 sentences as 'generally acceptable,' 'acceptable only in speech or informal writing,' or 'not acceptable' at all. All sentences exemplified some kind of non-standard grammatical use, including flat adverbs, preposition stranding, singular *they* with generic and specific antecedents, and non-standard case forms of pronouns (e.g., *a problem for my husband and I*). Additionally, speakers were invited to provide comments on test items as they saw fit. Comments (n= 270) were categorized with regard to whether or not they made reference to an existing prescriptive rule and whether or not they showed awareness of linguistic variation. Results from the survey show the following:

- The lowest acceptability rate was recorded for sentences with non-standard case marking.
- Sentences with non-standard case marking also elicited a high number of comments. Comments for *me* in the subject position were generally brief and dismissive, often referring to a rule. The use of nominative pronouns in object positions (*for my husband and I*) received higher ratings and respondents showed awareness of register variation. The use of singular *they* received the highest number of comments, and comments often referred to specific speech situations and personal experiences.
- Language professionals tend to provide more comments and show greater awareness of variation patterns than non-professionals.

What is considered 'Bad Grammar' shifts, but what stays the same is that metalinguistic awareness leads to a differentiated view towards prescriptive rules.

"To R a sound that's rough doth must obtain, As rage, rife, wretched, radish, rural, rain" – Attitudes towards pronunciation in 19th-century grammar writing

Marco Wiemann (University of Kiel)

The aim of this study is to scrutinise to what extent phonological variation in 19th-century English attracted the attention of grammarians and whether they adopted prescriptive attitudes towards certain features. Moreover, it aims to discuss in how far the way grammarians treated pronunciation in their works can yield insights into the phonology of English at the time.

The 19th century has a reputation for being the "century of prescriptivism" – an idea that has been labelled pretty much "alive and well" by Anderwald (2016: 2). Despite the fact that Anderwald (2016: 237) herself has demonstrated that, with respect to verbal phenomena, 19th-century grammars indeed display markedly prescriptive trends, her results show that not all features received the same amount of criticism. Unlike contemporary grammars, 19th-century grammars often include information on pronunciation (e.g., under *orthography* or *orthoepy*). In fact, Görlach (1998: 7–8) suggested more than two decades ago that investigating how grammarians treated pronunciation would constitute a valuable enterprise and lists it under a number of "topics [that] are in particular need of comprehensive study." Furthermore, Later Modern English phonology in general has largely been ignored in historical linguistics as it has often been regarded as being too close to present-day English and too similar to modern pronunciation (cf. Beal 2004: 124–5). While this has changed to some extent in recent years with, for instance, the compilation of the *Eighteenth-Century English Phonology* database, there is still some ground to be covered to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of Later Modern English phonology. To my knowledge, nobody has conducted a systematic study into comments on pronunciation in 19th-century grammars to this date. Therefore, I decided to analyse the *Collection of Nineteenth Century Grammars* to fill this research gap. Employing a qualitative and, where possible, quantitative approach, I will show that some features indeed attracted more attention than others and that we can find varying attitudes towards features such as /r/- and /h/-dropping, and the absence of "h" in <wh>-words such as *when* and *whale*.

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