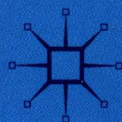


STANDARDIZATION, IDEOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS

Nigel Armstrong and Ian E. Mackenzie



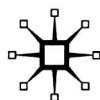
Standardization, Ideology and Linguistics

Nigel Armstrong
University of Leeds, UK

Ian E. Mackenzie
Newcastle University, UK



palgrave
macmillan



© Nigel Armstrong and Ian E. Mackenzie 2013

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-0-230-29675-6

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

Standardization, Ideology and Linguistics

Also by Nigel Armstrong

SOCIAL AND STYLISTIC VARIATION IN SPOKEN FRENCH: A Comparative Approach

TRANSLATION, LINGUISTICS, CULTURE

TRANSLATING VOICES, TRANSLATING REGIONS (*co-edited with Federico Federici*)

SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN CONTEMPORARY FRENCH (*co-edited with Kate Beeching and Françoise Gadet*)

SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC CHANGE IN EUROPEAN FRENCH (*co-authored with Tim Pooley*)

Also by Ian Mackenzie

UNACCUSATIVE VERBS IN ROMANCE LANGUAGES

SPANISH: AN ESSENTIAL GRAMMAR (*co-authored with Peter T. Bradley*)

A LINGUISTIC INTRODUCTION TO SPANISH

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHY

THE SEMANTICS OF SPANISH VERBAL CATEGORIES

Einen Satz verstehen, heißt, eine Sprache verstehen.
Eine Sprache verstehen, heißt eine Technik beherrschen.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative case marked by the Spanish preposition <i>a</i> (known as the prepositional accusative)
AUX	Auxiliary verb
CDE	Corpus del Español (Davies 2002–)
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies 2008–)
CORDE	Corpus diacrónico del español (Real Academia Española, undated (a))
CREA	Corpus de referencia del español actual (Real Academia Española, undated (b))
DP	Determiner Phrase (equivalent to ‘Noun Phrase’ as found in earlier models)
EPP	An abstract feature that attracts another constituent such as a subject or an object (see note 13 to Chapter 4)
EETS	Early English Text Society (http://users.ox.ac.uk/~eets/)
FEM	Feminine
FRANTEXT	Base textuelle FRANTEXT (http://www.frantext.fr/)
INF	Infinitive
MASC	Masculine
NEG	Negative marker
OV	Object-Verb (word order)
PLU	Plural
PP	Prepositional Phrase
RP	Received Pronunciation (hyper-standard variety of British English)
SING	Singular
SUBJ	Subject
SUBJUNC	Subjunctive
VO	Verb-Object (word order)
VP	Verb Phrase
v*P	Transitive verb phrase together with its left periphery (see note 12 to Chapter 4)

Contents

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction	1
The issues studied in this book	1
Standardization and the linguist	3
Structure of the book	4
<i>Notes to Introduction</i>	4
1 The nature of the standard	5
1.1 The standard as an ideology	5
1.2 The socially dominant variety	12
1.3 The synecdochic variety	16
1.4 The standard overlying the vernacular	18
1.5 The standard as supralocal	21
1.6 Folk-linguistic judgments	22
1.7 The role of ideology	23
1.8 Conclusion	26
<i>Notes to Chapter 1</i>	27
2 Grammaticality	28
2.1 Introduction	28
2.2 Grammaticality by fiat	29
2.3 Case study 1: impersonal <i>se/si</i> in Romance	35
2.4 Case study 2: long <i>wh</i> extraction	42
2.5 Conclusion	54
<i>Notes to Chapter 2</i>	55
3 Prestige speech patterns	58
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Hypercorrection in pronunciation	59
3.3 Grammatical viruses	65
3.3.1 Introduction	65
3.3.2 Anatomy of a virus	67
3.3.3 Viral case studies	72
3.4 Conclusion: viruses and ideology	98
<i>Notes to Chapter 3</i>	102
4 Language change	106
4.1 Introduction	106
4.2 Two dogmas of standardization	107

4.3	The illusion of systemic change	111
4.4	Motivations of linguistic change	123
4.4.1	Introduction	123
4.4.2	Mechanisms governing the construction of social identity	126
4.4.3	Acts of identity, prestige	133
4.4.4	Conclusion to Section 4.4	138
4.5	Case studies in language change	138
4.5.1	/o/-fronting in French	138
4.5.2	Variable negation	142
4.5.3	Variable <i>wh</i> interrogatives	149
4.6	Conclusion	155
	<i>Notes to Chapter 4</i>	156
5	Social levelling, or anti-standardization	161
5.1	Introduction	161
5.2	Contextualizing the debate	162
5.2.1	Methodological limitations	162
5.2.2	Postmodernism and the cultural turn	166
5.3	Levelling as a social phenomenon	169
5.3.1	Studies of social levelling	169
5.3.2	The timescale of social levelling	177
5.3.3	Economic influences on socio-cultural behaviour: real or symbolic levelling?	180
5.3.4	Other expressions of social levelling	190
5.3.5	Conclusion to Section 5.3	192
5.4	Linguistic manifestations: the erosion of the standard	194
5.4.1	Horizontal dialect levelling in UK English	195
5.4.2	Vertical dialect levelling in UK English	201
5.5	Conclusion	206
	<i>Notes to Chapter 5</i>	207
6	Away from the Anglo-Saxon model: the case of French	208
6.1	Introduction	208
6.2	Cultural conservatism	208
6.3	The ideology of French	217
6.3.1	Introduction	217
6.3.2	Homogenization in French pronunciation	219
6.3.3	Variation in French grammar	222
6.3.4	Style variation in French	223
6.3.5	Diversity in French	226
6.4	Conclusion	227
	<i>Notes to Chapter 6</i>	228
	<i>References</i>	229
	<i>Index</i>	243

List of figures and tables

Figure

1.1	Haugen's model of standardization (1972: 110)	12
-----	---	----

Tables

2.1	Spanish impersonal <i>se</i> with the prepositional accusative: Google hits for plural and singular verb forms (as at 29 December 2011 – repeated entries are excluded)	39
2.2	Acceptability of <i>that</i> -trace structures among American college students (based on Sobin 1987: Appendix A)	47
4.1	Enclisis of Spanish <i>le</i> on preterite forms of the verb (data from Corpus del Español)	115
4.2	Placement of <i>le</i> in infinitival clauses headed by a preposition (data from Corpus del Español)	120
4.3	Comparison of four young male Vineyarders' treatment of the (ay) and (aw) variables (adapted from Labov 1972b: 32)	136
4.4	Degrees of /o/-fronting in French based on formant frequency analysis	141
4.5	Variable <i>ne</i> retention: Coveney's results (adapted from Coveney 1996: 86)	147
4.6	Variable interrogation: Behnstedt's (1973) results (adapted from Valdman 1982: 225)	153
5.1	Changing distribution of income in Britain (adapted from Hobson 1999: 692)	181
5.2	UK accents perceived as being very or fairly honest (Aziz Corporation: adapted from the <i>Economist</i> , 7 December 2002, p. 37)	188
5.3	Top 10 names for England and Wales – Male (Source: Office for National Statistics)	191
5.4	Glottal reinforcement [ʔt] and glottal replacement [ʔ] of /t/ in Tyneside English (adapted from J. Milroy <i>et al.</i> 1994: 348)	197

5.5	Social distribution of variants of /o/ in Tyneside in <i>goat</i> word-set (adapted from Watt and Milroy 1999: 44)	198
5.6	Variable use of (r) by gender in Middlesbrough (NE England)	200
5.7	Educational background of 100 members of the UK 'power elite', 1972–2002	202

Introduction

The issues studied in this book

In this book we explore some of the ways in which standardization, ideology and linguistics are connected. Standardization in language has received a fair amount of scholarly attention, and in Chapter 1 we undertake a conspectus of the various ways in which the phenomenon has found expression and been theorized. Standardization is of course the manifestation of an ideology, and we consider here, as well as its effects on speakers in general, those which press upon the practitioners of linguistics, both in the 'theoretical' branches and in sub-disciplines relying on empirical methods.

An ideology is a set of shared beliefs that, while partial, presents these as the objective way of looking at things, or at least as 'received wisdom' where 'received' has the usual sense of 'generally accepted'. While it is perfectly obvious that the Milroys' 'ideology of the standard' (Milroy and Milroy 1999) is a term referring to the view that favours a dominating or hierarchical situation, not only in language but in the ordering of society, the counterpart of this ideology, that which opposes standardization, has no one name that comes very readily to mind, at least in linguistics. This state of affairs can perhaps be explained, in part at least, by reference to the time interval that commonly precedes the adoption of a social change. It may be that much change follows the so-called S-curve pattern, comprising a slow onset or 'lag phase' followed by a rapid or 'log phase' where the majority of elements are affected, in turn followed by a further gradual phase where the residual elements may or may not fall in line with the majority that have undergone change. The S-curve model was first applied in linguistics by Chen (1972) to account for exceptions to sound change; the motivation behind this model is not wholly clear, but Chen suggests (1972: 474) that 'as the phonological innovation gradually spreads across the lexicon [...] there comes a point where the minor rule gathers momentum and begins to serve as a basis for extrapolation.' The cumulative S-curve is a model applied to other forms of social change such as product adoption and the diffusion

of technology, and commonly refers to adopters rather than the objects of adoption. Certainly the notion is intuitive, and awareness of its effects is widespread among laypersons; for instance, Gertrude Stein remarked informally, apropos of modernism in the arts, 'for a very long time everybody refuses, and then almost without a pause everybody accepts'.

The model is more complicated where an ideology is in question, for one of the essential features of ideologies is that they work at an unconscious level. In this they differ both from products that are the object of conscious adoption, like MP3 players, but also from 'memes' like linguistic variants, where diffusion seems to take place more intuitively. We discuss this in more detail in Chapter 1, but in general it seems implausible that people should adhere to an ideology while recognizing it as such. We shall explore in what follows some of the consequences of the implicit adoption in theoretical linguistics of the ideology of the standard. These include, but go beyond, the rather well-known rejection by Chomsky and his followers of the acceptability of certain 'non-standard' forms, and the consequences of this rejection for the robustness of their theories.

The obvious corollary of an acceptance of the ideology of the standard is that its rejection offers a standpoint from which criticism can be directed by those concerned to demonstrate the distorting effects of standardization in everyday language use and perhaps in linguistics too, as does J. Milroy (2001). But beyond this is an element of subtlety that sees a lack of readiness on the part of those who study variation and change in language from a speaker-oriented viewpoint to consider closely what we called above the counterpart of the ideology of the standard. It is quite plain that standardization and its associated ideology, in its primary form rather than as an object of reflection by scholars, has a long attestation, so that sufficient time has passed for this ideology to become apparent as such, and to attract criticism. The obvious point here is the presence since around 1945, although of course foreshadowed well before then, of the ideology that opposes the standard and what lies behind it. The readiest term for it is perhaps 'egalitarianism'. Mention of it is by no means new; anyone who has read a sample of British novels published in the late 1940s and early 1950s will have encountered references to 'levelling down', and this period was of course marked by socialist measures designed to promote equality, like high marginal taxation rates, a nationalization programme and the widespread introduction of social welfare schemes that previously had been patchy. The then Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, remarked at the time that levelling down for the few meant levelling up for the many. Few today would deplore the achievements in relative social and economic equality brought about by the welfare programmes introduced in recent times in the advanced economies. Egalitarianism remains none the less an ideology, and we are in any event interested here in tracing its effects in culture, not economics or politics. The fact that equality, and one of its opposites, elitism,

are delicate subjects should not discourage investigation. In his *Dictionnaire philosophique* Voltaire attacks received wisdom in the following terms:

Quelqu'un répand dans le monde qu'il y a un géant haut de soixante et dix pieds. Bientôt après, tous les docteurs examinent de quelle couleur doivent être ses cheveux, de quelle grandeur est son pouce, quelles dimensions ont ses ongles: on crie, on cabale, on se bat. Ceux qui soutiennent que le petit doigt du géant n'a que quinze lignes de diamètre font brûler ceux qui affirment que le petit doigt a un pied d'épaisseur. «Mais, messieurs, votre Géant existe-t-il? dit modestement un passant. – Quel doute horrible!» s'écrient tous ces disputants; quel blasphème! quelle absurdité!» Alors ils font tous une petite trêve pour lapider le passant; et après l'avoir assassiné en cérémonie, de la manière la plus édifiante, ils se battent entre eux comme de coutume au sujet du petit doigt et des ongles.¹ (Moland/Voltaire 1877–85: 87)

The image of the giant evokes the contemporary cliché of the elephant in the room. The existence of the ideologies of interest here is not in question, clearly; what Voltaire's formulation captures more comprehensively is the tendency to focus on the minutiae of a phenomenon while ignoring its totality; and to accept received wisdom.

Standardization and the linguist

This linkage was identified tellingly in J. Milroy's (2001) article entitled 'Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization'. Milroy argues that linguists of most persuasions are susceptible to the influence of the standard ideology, and we examine this influence upon theoretical linguistics in some detail here. In particular, we suggest that many of the grammaticality judgments on which linguistic theorizing relies do little more than recapitulate the normative dynamic of the standardization process. Criticisms directed by a sociolinguist against those who focus on idealized abstractions are hardly surprising, but Milroy in his article taxes variationists too as suffering from 'the consequences of standardization'. One of these is a tendency to regard the standard as a benchmark against which other varieties are measured. This is not necessarily reprehensible; it may be convenient methodologically to use this approach, since standardized situations tend to have only one standard variety. Again, a sociolinguistic enquiry that seeks to extrapolate change from variation may well be interested in the assimilation by the legitimate variety of non-standard forms, such that a comparison in these terms is integral to the enquiry. Milroy's criticisms go deeper than this, however. Use of the standard as a benchmark, in comparison with which other varieties are measured, can easily lead to a distorted description; thus a non-standard variety may be characterized as

having 'copula deletion' where in fact absence of copula is the default state. Characterizations of this type seem implicitly to assume deviation from the standard. But the more fundamental criticism of Milroy's that concerns us here has to do with an ideology prevailing in linguistics that may have the effect of discouraging enquiry. He remarks (p. 548) that 'to undertake a study of an urban variety for its own sake was, until as late as the 1960s, a grave risk to any young scholar in Britain'; the present authors hope to run no such risk, but the point stands that any ideology, perhaps especially one that is currently prevalent, has a weight and momentum of its own that can discourage examination.

Structure of the book

This book is organized as follows. Chapter 1 gives an overview of standardization in some of its forms as linguists have theorized them. Chapter 2 considers the issue of grammaticality as defined by theoretical linguistics within the context of the standard ideology, while Chapter 3 examines the phenomenon of so-called 'prestige constructions' (Sobin 1997), together with the associated notion of hypercorrection, within the same framework. Chapter 4 considers language change, broadly in the light of the opposed parametric and speaker-based approaches to the subject. In Chapter 5 we examine the thesis that much current linguistic change constitutes a form of anti-standardization, a process that tends towards a leveling of the distinction between standard and non-standard. In Chapter 6 we look at anti-standardizing tendencies in contemporary France, arguably the European country in which the notion of the standard language is crystallized at its most extreme.

Notes

1. A report is spread that there is a 70-foot-high giant. Soon doctors argue about what colour his hair must be, how big his thumb is, how long his nails are: there is shouting, plotting and fights. Those who believe that the giant's little finger is only 12 lignes in diameter burn those who say it is a foot wide. 'But, gentlemen, does your giant exist?' asks a passer-by modestly. 'What an appalling lack of faith,' scream the arguers, 'what blasphemy, what absurdity!' They then agree a brief truce so that they can stone the passer-by; and after ritually killing him, in the most edifying manner, they go back to fighting among themselves over the giant's little finger and his nails.

1

The nature of the standard

In this chapter we attempt to characterize the essential features of standard languages. In the interests of clear exposition we set out these features below in separate sections, although it will be seen that they overlap. These features of the standard refer to the following attributes: the standard as an ideology, which includes beliefs about its beauty, logical nature and efficiency; the socially dominant variety; the overlay acquired subsequent to the vernacular; the synecdochic variety; that which is regionless. We then look at some examples of folk-linguistic perceptions of the standard, before considering more closely the essential characteristics of ideologies as they concern us here.

1.1 The standard as an ideology

Milroy and Milroy (1999) suggest that a standard language is an abstraction, or more specifically, since all languages are abstractions, an ideology. The terms 'standard' and 'non-standard' are of course used by specialists in an ostensibly value-neutral sense, even if this specialized use of these terms does not match with their everyday currency; but normative terms like 'sub-standard', among many others, are frequent among linguistically naive speakers who have absorbed the 'ideology of the standard' (Milroy and Milroy 1999), which sees the standard as the only language worthy of the name, and the associated non-standard varieties as imperfect approximations to it. One view current in sociolinguistics sees standardization as a form of cultural oppression, most obviously by the upper classes, and indeed it is hard from this viewpoint to see the social advantage accruing to most speakers through their acceptance of the ideology of the standard. The notion of this ideology also explains style variation, which is linguistic accommodation determined by social situation; very few speakers enjoy such linguistic security that they can neglect to adapt their speech to someone of different social status, and this is the root of stylistic or situational variation. L. Milroy (2003: 161) cites Silverstein's (1979: 193) definition of

language ideologies, which is as follows: they are 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use'. The view we adopt in this book is that standardization is the expression of a broader ideology, to do with a hierarchical, as opposed to an egalitarian, view of how society should be ordered. From that perspective, the sets of beliefs alluded to in Silverstein's definition of language ideologies can be understood as 'second-order' ideologies, such that, in a fairly obvious way, the standard borrows prestige from the power of its users. Less obviously perhaps, the perceived invariance of the standard derives too from the hierarchical viewpoint that opposes change.

It should be pointed out in this connection that the oppressive view of social and linguistic hegemony highlighted above neglects the importance of 'culture', in the sense of the individual's subjective experience. It has been assumed until fairly recently that social class is generally the major element that determines social structure and that drives changes in it. The more recent development in cultural studies known as the 'cultural turn' lays stress on the difficulty of disentangling the various social and economic elements in any cultural phenomenon under examination – the phrase is calqued on the earlier 'linguistic turn' applied to positivist philosophy, and refers to a turn to, or emphasis on, the study of culture in disciplines that attempt to theorize social and cultural history. The cultural turn is in contrast to, say, a 'vulgar' Marxist approach (Eagleton 1991) that lays stress on the economic as underlying the social, and on an 'objective' view of any given situation as against the 'false consciousness' that may be held to afflict a social class. Clearly, however, economic, social and cultural elements and effects can scarcely be separated out in a hierarchical way, for instance in the rather crude Marxist 'base-superstructure' model according to which the cultural and social merely express the economic (we recognize that other Marxist approaches have greater subtlety). The 'vulgar' view cannot be supported in any strong sense, since the perspective of an individual or community on their socio-cultural experience forms an integral part of that experience, and cannot be overridden by any 'objective' viewpoint, as no cogent argument supports the theorist's claim to that privilege. The point need not be laboured any further, beyond saying that the complex congeries of factors that determines a speaker's response to the pressure of standardization is resistant to any straightforward analysis. Speakers' responses are in any event not of a piece, either with each other or with their behaviour; it is well known that working-class speakers pay (or paid) lip service to the standard while using their vernacular in the local networks which are meaningful to them. We shall have occasion to consider this global-local opposition when we come to examine the role of ideology more closely, below.

The schematic and static view of the standard, which for clear exposition ignores the fact of standardization as a process, reifies and opposes the standard language (or languages) and non-standard varieties. The process