

**‘Language Issues’
after the ‘Language Question’:
On the Modern Standards
of Standard Modern Greek***

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Language standards as ideologies

According to a widely held view in sociolinguistic research, a standard language is neither a particular variety nor a well-defined process or practice. As James and Lesley Milroy have argued:

it seems more appropriate to speak more abstractly of standardization as an *ideology*, and a standard language as an idea in the mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent.¹

A standard language, according to this view, is a mental construct, not an actual linguistic state or process. A standard language is a standard rather than a language. The obvious purpose of any set of standards is the ‘imposition of uniformity’ upon linguistic variety.² Because absolute standardization can never be achieved, language uniformity exists only as an ideological rationalization. A standard language is a language *perceived* as standard.

I wish to inquire into the methodological and theoretical implications of this approach to standardization. Since changes in a standard language are, by definition, changes in ideological standards (that is, in the ways a language is perceived rather than the ways a language actually is), it should always be possible, in principle at least, to trace changes in standard languages through respective changes in language standards.

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¹ Milroy and Milroy (1999) 19.

² Milroy (2001).

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I consider Modern Greek standardization as a case of language ideology. My aim is to trace the changes in the standard language *presumed* to have occurred since the language reform of 1976 *as* changes in the language standards. Such changes in standards are evidenced in public, metalinguistic representations of a language. I shall only be concerned here with the metalinguistic attitudes expressed in the Greek print media in the period following the 1976 reform, when an official standard, based on the demotic norm, was finally established. I shall provide evidence for two interrelated claims:

(i) After 1976, several seemingly disparate 'language issues' were raised in the Greek press and, to a lesser degree, in the electronic media. In time, these post-diglossia issues formed a coherent communicative sequence, a collective media narrative, so to speak, which developed in accordance with the presuppositions of a new 'regime ideology' of Standard Modern Greek. To the formation of this collective narrative, language professionals, folk ideologists and journalists have all contributed generously.

(ii) According to this new ideology, the one and only language of the state, Modern Greek, should itself be pictured as a state, a territory or a regime, which comprises a pure and sacred interior that has to be kept intact by everything surrounding it. This 'regimentation'³ of the Modern Greek language also marks an important shift in public concern, a shift from 'internal' issues of norm definition and elaboration to 'external' issues of language contact, maintenance and spread.

The 'language regime change' of 1976 (the γλωσσική μεταπολίτευση, as it was prophetically called by Manolis Triandaphyllidis in 1938)⁴ marks an important shift in the ideology of the standard language. A series of new 'language issues' has gradually replaced the perennial Greek 'language question' (Γλωσσικό Ζήτημα). My hypothesis is that the new issues are the markers of a new ideology of the standard language.

I wish to argue that there are actually no 'regimes of language',⁵ no basic facts about language 'depending', as it were, 'simply upon the fact of their fact'.⁶ There are only regimes of language ideology, which involve complex facts about both language and public representations of language. All public representations of language are ideological.⁷

³ Kroskrity (2000).

⁴ Triandaphyllidis (1981) 168.

⁵ Kroskrity (2000).

⁶ Poe (2004) 9.

⁷ Following Silverstein (1979) 193, I understand language ideologies as metalinguistic systems of value and belief. Language ideologies function metapragmatically (Silverstein (1976) 48–51 and (1979) 207–8), referring not to language itself but rather to '*perceived* language structure and use': Silverstein (1979) 193. Accordingly, in taking account of language ideologies, one has to shift the emphasis one level up, from the presumed 'regimes of language' to the vast (and largely unaccounted for) regimes of language ideology. One has to ascend from language to metalanguage. Ideologies are often thought to have a rationalizing function. But since ideologies might very well be incoherent or unsound systems of belief, a general definition of ideologies should not, on a priori grounds, single out any one of their 'ideological strategies' (Eagleton (1991) 33–61) or 'functions' (Silverstein (1993) and (1979) 205–8)

Language issues

In what follows, I consider articles printed in the Greek newspapers and in wide-circulation magazines as indexes of the issues raised and debated within the Greek linguistic community at large, or, at least, within the community sector of active 'ideology brokers':⁸ intellectuals, educators, politicians, planners, journalists, opinion makers and the like.

Indexing language issues through newspapers articles is, of course, a perilous enterprise.⁹ In Greece, only a handful of trained linguists cultivate the peculiar genre of linguistic journalism ('writing about language issues'). However, columns advising on proper usage are quite common. Debates, when they occur, are rarely carried out in the same newspaper; they are carried over to different newspapers and they unfold in front of separate audiences. Newspapers are not an interactive medium. Active access, for both the experts and the public, is usually restricted to writing letters to the editor. It is clear that public opinion should not be confused with *expressed* opinion; but expressed opinion is certainly an index of assumed or implicit opinion. After all, this is how an index works. An index is a perspectival representation attached to a *denotatum* in such a way that the *denotatum* and its indexed representation cannot be separated. Indexes form part of the situations they index (in much the same way as a road sign forms part of a traffic situation, which it also helps to define). 'Being in the newspapers' remains, after all, a decisive criterion for what it is to count as an issue.

I do not adopt the 'view from below'.¹⁰ Newspaper articles provide no such perspective. As George Thomas has pointed out,¹¹ language ideologies propagate in waves, continuously expanding to outer concentric circles. Since there is no ideology without believers, my preferred view is from the mid circle of followers and devotees. I find the discourse of the 'intermediaries' much more revealing than the refined discourse of the originators ('grand' ideologists, 'fathers' of a standard language, 'visionaries of the nation', linguists and lexicographers, literary experts). It is an advantage for the researcher that journalistic 'entextualization'¹² is highly stereotypical, and stereotyping accelerates the 're-contextualization' process. Mediating discourse thus manages to become public in ways that the higher registers cannot achieve. It has not yet become folk-ideological (in the sense of

at the expense of all the others. Ideologies are 'unifying, action-oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing and naturalizing' (Eagleton (1991) 45). Ideologies are also 'integrative' (Geertz (1973); Ricoeur (1986), ch. 15): they facilitate the integration of individuals into social groups. They are representative: the Subject interpellated by Ideology – Althusser (1971) – usually speaks for and in the name of others. They are confrontational: ideologists are constantly engaging in battles. But no matter what their other functions are, language ideologies are specifically metapragmatic.

⁸ Blommaert (1999).

⁹ See Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) 190–1, for some necessary methodological precautions.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 189.

¹¹ Thomas (1991), ch. 6.

¹² Silverstein and Urban (1996).

Niedzielski and Preston),¹³ but it is an efficient means for conditioning public reflexes.

My research is based on an archive of articles from 76 Greek newspapers (including 31 national dailies) and about 100 wide-circulation magazines (dealing with non-linguistic subject matter). The publications I consider cover more than two decades (1976–2001), but only the period from November 1999 to January 2002 has been exhaustively covered (3,706 entries in 2000 and 5,170 in 2001). The earlier period of 1990–9 is covered by a representative sample from the newspapers with the widest circulation (about 1,500 articles). However, even in this underrepresented period, issues that roused intense public concern over a continuous period of time (mainly issues (1)–(7) below) are considered in detail. The earlier period from 1976 to 1989 is represented by a less coherent sample of newspaper articles and letters to the editor. However, the issues of this period have already been documented and commented on in the scholarly literature.¹⁴ Most of the newspaper articles written by the protagonists from this early period have also been reprinted.¹⁵ All relevant publications (more than 10,600 articles) have been summarized and classified by author, place, date of publication, genre, topic, cross-references and keywords.¹⁶

The main language issues raised in the Greek newspapers in the period from 1976 to 2001 are listed in Table 1, and may be divided into three main groups. Issues (1)–(6) in the first group are the ones that have provoked a ‘moral panic’ (see below). Issue (7) is actually a cluster of related issues, raised immediately after the official resolution of diglossia; these issues form a coherent group in their own right, but only the debate on whether Ancient Greek should be taught in secondary education acquired the impetus of issues (1)–(6). Issue (7) is not the group I focus on, but it could be considered a starting point for many of the issues raised in the wake of the 1976 language reform. In the third group, (8)–(10), are issues that never caused intense public concern, yet continue to recur; I call them ‘routine issues’. Item (11), in contrast, is a category for issues that *do not* arise in the press: they are avoided, if not literally censored. Item (12) is the usual catch-all category (‘*varia*’). The order of listing in Table 1 is semi-chronological: issues (1)–(7) appear in reverse chronological order, while issues (8)–(10), and possibly some of (12), recur from time to time:

¹³ Niedzielski and Preston (2000).

¹⁴ Landsman (1989); Frangoudaki (1992), (1997).

¹⁵ E.g. Kriaras (1979), (1984), (1988), (1992); Babiniotis (1994a), (1994b), (1994c).

¹⁶ Owing to the large number of articles involved, I have opted for a piecemeal analysis based on several small-scale case studies. Here I draw on previous publications of my own and of my students: respectively, Moschonas (2001a), (2001b), (2001c), (2002a), (2002b), (2004), (2005a), (2005b), and Moschonas (2004/5). The numerical results in Table 2 and Table 3 below are derived from a pilot study, which focused on the ‘control’ period of November 1999–January 2000, a period with no moral panics (see Moschonas (2001a) 92–3, 99).

Table 1

New 'language issues' (1976–2001)

(1)	English as a 'second official language'
(2)	'Romanization' of the alphabet
(3)	Bulgarians versus Babiniotis
(4)	'Macedonian'
(5)	The 'five-language regime' in the EU
(6)	'Word poverty'
(7)	Post-diglossia issues [teaching Ancient Greek, 'monotonic' orthography, the 'language problem']
(8)	Foreign words, influence of English, purism
(9)	'Monotonic' versus 'polytonic' orthography
(10)	'Greek abroad', Greek as a second language
(11)	Censored [minorities etc.]
(12)	Miscellaneous [local issues etc.]

What follows is a very short description of each entry in Table 1:¹⁷

(1) In November 2001, the Greek Commissioner in the EU, Anna Diamandopoulou, proposed having English institutionalized as the 'second official language' of the Greek state. The proposal was widely criticized in the press and the media; it was judged to be 'outrageous' or even 'inconceivable'. Under pressure from its critics, the proposal was immediately withdrawn. However, disapproving articles and letters continued to appear in the press well into 2002.

(2) In January 2001, forty members of the Academy of Athens signed an open letter calling for a crusade against the use of the Roman alphabet for transliterating Greek texts, especially in new technologies (e-mails and the like). Most journalists approved this call against 'Romanization', but specialists received it with considerable reserve.¹⁸ The Academy's open letter was, in a way, Greece's unscheduled launch event into '2001: European Year of Languages'.

(3) In a dictionary of Modern Greek published by George Babiniotis in 1998, there was a sport-slang entry under the word Βούλγαρος ('Bulgarian'), referring to a fan of (or a player in) a sports team from northern Greece. The entry was judged unworthy of inclusion in a dictionary: it was read as an insult to northerners and 'a move that divides the nation'. The case was brought to court and the dictionary was temporarily banned. The Supreme Court later annulled this decision (1998–9). However, the entry disappeared from later editions of the dictionary.

(4) In the mid-1990s, several articles argued against the use of the name 'Macedonia' in reference to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The political turmoil of this period encouraged state-sponsored demagogism against FYROM, which was represented in the media as a 'usurper of Greek symbols'. The

¹⁷ For details see Moschonas (2004) 180–5.

¹⁸ See e.g. Kriaras (2001); cf. Chartoulari (2001).

official position of Greek foreign policy still is that neither the newly formed state nor its language should be given a 'Greek name'.

(5) In December 1994 the media reacted strongly to a suggestion by the French presidency of the EU to reduce to five the number of 'working languages' in the European Parliament and in other EU representative organizations. Greek politicians and 'men of letters' called for a crusade against such a 'barbaric act'. Their rhetoric was later stigmatized as 'exaggerated' and 'hysterical' by members of the 'linguistic opposition'.¹⁹

(6) In 1985, during the national Examinations for Admission to the Institutions of Higher Education, the failure of the examinees in essay writing to recognise the meaning of two learned words, ευδοκίμηση ('prosperity') and αρωγή ('assistance'), was considered by many to be an alarming indicator of the younger generation's growing λεξιπενία ('word poverty': that is, inadequate vocabulary). Youth slang, 'marred' as it was with foreignisms, was offered as additional testimony to 'word poverty'. Ignorance of learned words and youth slang are often invoked as factual premises in arguments favouring the 're-introduction' of Ancient Greek in secondary education.²⁰

(7) Diglossia did not end with the official resolution of the 'language question' in 1976. The late demoticists' standardization formula (Standard Modern Greek = *demotic* + a few archaisms as necessary)²¹ allowed – even encouraged – a 'residual diglossia', which persists to this day. The question how much *katharevousa* (of the archaistic, puristic variety) is to be allowed is frequently debated in newspapers usage-columns and in popular language-guides.²² However, the 'language question' has lost its impetus. What was once capable of causing a moral panic has now become a routine issue. Several post-diglossia versions of this issue may be singled out:

(a) Ancient Greek still functions ideologically as a substitute for *katharevousa*. This explains why the question whether Ancient Greek should be taught in secondary education had such publicity in the 1980s. From 24 November 1986 to 1 June 1987, a single newspaper, *Ελευθεροτυπία*, published one to three articles on this question almost every day. It is still presumed, even among linguists, that learning Ancient Greek is a prerequisite for students 'coming to know' Modern Greek or becoming fluent in it.

(b) A 1982 reform of the orthography made the use of the 'monotonic' (single-accent) system official. However, a few magazines and a considerable number of 'high-register' books (of poetry mostly) are still published in the traditional 'polytonic' (multi-accent) orthography. Maintaining the use of the polytonic system may be interpreted, by implication, as a continuing challenge to the 1976 reform. Several writers believe that the monotonic system 'alienates' Greeks from

¹⁹ E.g. Maronitis (1995).

²⁰ See Androutsopoulos and Iordanidou (1999).

²¹ Triandaphyllidis *et al.* (1978).

²² See Moschonas (2001b), (2005a).

traditional Greek literature.²³ Some writers consider the new accentuation system 'a step towards Romanization'.²⁴ Still others hold that the simplified orthography may cause learning disabilities and dyslexia, which could be cured by the use of the complicated polytonic orthography.²⁵

(c) During the 1980s, George Babiniotis, an influential conservative linguist, argued insistently that a new 'language problem' had now taken the place of the perennial language question: the language was diagnosed to be 'in a bad state' and 'in need of correction'. To help solve this 'problem', a Language Association was formed in 1985.²⁶ At about the same period, several 'progressive' linguists (mainly from the University of Thessaloniki) formed what could retrospectively be described as a loosely organized 'linguistic opposition'. The members of this opposition argued strongly in favour of a 'descriptivist' attitude, their typical conclusion being that 'the Greek language is in as good a state as ever'. The two camps have obvious connections to the former proponents of *katharevousa* and demotic respectively.²⁷

The following three items are routine issues:

(8) A recurrent issue in the 1980s and the early 1990s was the adoption of loan words, mainly from English.²⁸ Around this period, linguistic purism ceased to be *diglossic* and became *biglossic*: translating *katharevousa* into the demotic was not seen as a problem any more; what was now considered the main problem was the adoption and adaptation of English loan words in Greek. It should be stressed that during this period purism was practised on a massive scale, mainly through translations (not only of literary works but also of technical books, such as computer manuals). Thus the 'spirit of *katharevousa*' survived in the 'continuing calquing of words and expressions'.²⁹ In the press, purism manifested itself as an outward rejection of bilingualism and language contact.

(9) The 'monotonic' system has been another topic of occasional concern. Defence of the traditional 'polytonic' system mainly stresses its symbolic advantages, while the new orthography's main advantage, simplicity, cannot be overemphasized. It looks as if the dispute cannot be settled. As indicated already (7*b*), the issue of

²³ E.g. Elephanidis (1998) 384.

²⁴ E.g. Droumboukis (n.d.); Vrahniis (1992); Tsikopoulou (1995); Gotsis (1997).

²⁵ Tsengos, Papadaki and Vekiari (2005); see Moschonas (2006) for a critique of such absurdities.

²⁶ Greek Language Association (1984), (1986).

²⁷ The existence of a linguistic opposition underlines the fact that language ideologies are confrontational: there is never one ideology only; there are at least two, and they are in opposition. Bourdieu (1991) placed particular emphasis on the confrontational character of language ideologies within fields ('champs') of practice. See also Kroskrity (2000) 12, and the essays collected in Blommaert (1999). The confrontational character of language ideologies has an important methodological consequence: when speaking of ideologies, one needs to specify first the general conceptual framework within which both consent and dissent are exercised. Language ideologies are not the subject matter; rather, they are the condition of 'language ideological debates': Blommaert (1999). They are the conceptual minimum necessary for any general 'folk-linguistic' statements to make sense.

²⁸ On this issue see Delveroudi and Moschonas (2003).

²⁹ Horrocks (1997) 364.

orthographic reform has been overblown mainly through its association with other, 'bigger' issues (like the 1976 language reform and the 'danger of Romanization'). (10) Greek as a second language has become a new topic – but not a language issue – in the newspapers, marked by a gradual increase in the number of relevant publications during the past two decades. It is also a brand-new area of research in Greek linguistics. Greek is valued as a second language mainly because it serves the politics of assimilating immigrants, repatriated Greeks or minority groups within Greece. In the wake of the success of Greek as a second language, a new politics is slowly emerging: that of Greek as a *foreign* language; in other words, a politics for 'extending' the use of Greek outside Greece or reinforcing its use in what is called, in an interesting spatial metaphor, 'dialect enclaves' of the Greek language.³⁰ Language issues rarely make it to the front page, and for this reason a recent front-page headline from the newspaper *Η Καθημερινή* (18 November 2005) could be read as a portent: 'Η ελληνική γλώσσα περιζήτητη σε όλες τις βαλκανικές χώρες' ('Great demand for the Greek language in all the Balkan countries').

In the interest of a more complete description, two more categories are added in Table 1. Item (11) is an open category, which contains issues that are systematically *not* raised in the press. Item (12) comprises miscellaneous issues that belong to the classification in less systematic ways.

(11) The issues in this category are the ones 'erased'³¹ by the language ideologists. They are issues to be avoided, or to be handled with tact. There is, for example, a notable scarcity of publications about language minorities in Greece. On this issue, the press follows or 'respects' the state's official 'politics of silence'.³² It should be stressed that the attitude of the press involves no compulsion: the press is not censored; it chooses to be silenced.

(12) The last category in a classification ('*varia*') typically comprises whatever cannot be reasonably assigned to the main categories. It is a taxonomist's confession of his miscategorizations. Among other things, the following could be placed in this miscellaneous category:

(a) Issues raised only or mainly in local newspapers. In 2001, for example, more than one hundred shop owners in the city of Volos were brought to court because, in defiance of the law (1491/84), they used the Roman script exclusively in their shop signs.³³

(b) Issues raised only or mainly in the Greek Cypriot press; for instance, the debate on whether the official language(s) of the University of Cyprus, which was founded in 1992, would be English only, Greek only, or Greek and Turkish,³⁴

³⁰ Christidis (1999).

³¹ In the sense of Irvine and Gal (2000) 38–9.

³² Kostopoulos (2000) 352.

³³ Moschonas (2001c).

³⁴ Karyolemou (1994) 257–9.

likewise the debate prompted by the government's efforts to standardize Greek Cypriot place names on the phonetic norm of Standard Modern Greek.³⁵

(c) Issues raised only or mainly by certain writers, on particular occasions or in specific genres. For example, regular newspaper columns advising on usage should be treated separately; such columns elaborate and propagate the norms of the written language, providing interesting clues as to when and under what conditions the norms change.³⁶ Letters to the editor are representative of a smaller circle of followers and devotees; they employ an unsophisticated discourse echoing the much more elaborate discourse of the elite.³⁷ On the other hand, articles written by trained linguists – or by the 'linguistic opposition' – should not be treated only as simplified accounts that attempt to communicate linguistic wisdom to a wider public;³⁸ such texts are testimony to the ideological involvement of the professionals, whose presuppositions they betray.³⁹ Sponsored campaigns, such as the EU campaign, '2001: European Year of Languages', should also be dealt with in the same spirit.⁴⁰ The merits of multilingualism should not deter us from considering such events for what they really are: organized forms of linguistic propaganda.

Indexing language issues

If newspaper coverage is to be considered as an index of language issues, the question to be asked is: in what ways are all these diverse publications dispersed? The obvious answer is: publications are distributed across different newspapers, journalistic genres, times and audiences. Since there are no readership surveys of language-interested groups specifically, I omit audiences and examine the first three points of reference in turn.

Newspapers

Table 2 lists the four Greek newspapers which published the largest number of articles on language matters over a relatively short period of time (November 1999–January 2000), a period in which no major language issue was raised in the newspapers or the electronic media. Not accidentally, these four newspapers are the ones with the widest circulation. Two measures are used in Table 2. In the

³⁵ Karyolemou (2000).

³⁶ Moschonas (2001b), (2005a).

³⁷ Moschonas (2002b).

³⁸ As Johnson (2001) has implied.

³⁹ As Silverstein (1979) 193, has stressed, '[i]f we compare such ideologies [about language] with what goes on under the name of 'scientific' statements about language, we might find that in certain areas the ideological beliefs do in fact match the scientific ones, though the two will, in general, be part of divergent larger systems of discourse and enterprise'. It should be noted, however, that folk-linguistic conceptions of language, in sharp contrast to their professional counterparts, are rarely, if ever, apolitical, asocial or non-ideological. They may be erroneous or blatantly wrong, but this has not been much of a problem for the non-specialist. In contrast, the ideological conceptions of the professionals are easily identified as such by the very fact that they profess to be non-ideological.

⁴⁰ See Moschonas (2002a).

first, all articles referring to linguistic matters, even *en passant*, are counted. In the second, articles containing only passing references to such matters are omitted:

Table 2

Number of articles per newspaper (November 1999–January 2000)

Newspaper	N=364	(%)
ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ	49	13.5
Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ	39	10.7
ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ	31	8.5
ΤΑ ΝΕΑ	30	8.2
		40.9
	N=284	(%)
ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ	35	12.3
ΤΑ ΝΕΑ	23	8.1
ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ	21	7.4
Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ	18	6.3
		34.1

Table 2 shows that 41% (or, by the second count, 34%) of all the publications on language matters occur in wide-circulation daily newspapers. One may well feel unsure how to articulate this finding. Obviously, a large number of articles *do* appear only in wide-circulation newspapers; equally, a large number of articles *do not* appear in the wide-circulation newspapers (that is, they appear only in newspapers with a modest readership, or in local weeklies, bi-weeklies or monthlies; linguistic articles do not appear in magazines of general readership). Be that as it may, Table 2 provides sufficient reason to mistrust research approaches that take into account only ‘mainstream publications’.⁴¹

Genres

The reason why two counts are used in Table 2 is that one might or might not want to take into account references to language issues made in passing, during an interview perhaps, or in an article of otherwise non-linguistic subject matter. However, the significance of such *en passant* references should not be underestimated. Interestingly enough, the proposal by the Greek Commissioner in the EU to institutionalize English as a second official language – Table 1, Issue (1) – was made during an interview about EU political issues; this means that it qualifies as a reference *en passant*. The necessary inference is obvious: even a passing reference, when it comes from the authorities, or when it fulfils other conditions that need to be specified, can cause a major communication event (a ‘moral panic’). Passing references should not be disregarded. One could also put into the *en passant* category references to ‘body language’, the ‘language of politics’,

⁴¹ Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) 190.

the ‘language of sports’ and the like. References to literary style (common in book reviews) could also be considered to be *en passant* if the reviews are not dealing with a book on language, or if a review focuses on the content rather than the form of a literary work.

Most *en passant* references appear in wide-circulation newspapers. I cannot offer precise figures, because they are difficult to calculate (it is easy for *en passant* references to be overlooked during the archiving process), but my estimate is that they amount to some forty per cent of the whole corpus. They are characteristic of journalists’ ‘language awareness’, of their training in matters linguistic, or of a newspaper’s propensity to account for such matters. One should in any case take into consideration the fact that, in a sense, all references to language issues in newspapers and non-linguistic magazines are, by definition, accidental. Newspapers do not regularly cover language matters; and language matters, in sharp contrast to all the other matters a newspaper does cover, are not easy to define.

Table 3, using two counts as before, shows how the relevant publications are distributed across newspaper genres:

Table 3

Types of article (November 1999–January 2000)

Type	N=364	(%)	N=284	(%)
Opinion	70	19.2	70	24.6
News	70	19.2	70	24.6
Book reviews	34	9.3	34	12.0
Short comments	33	9.1	33	11.6
Features	24	6.6	24	8.5
Letters	23	6.3	23	8.1
News in brief	21	5.8	21	7.4
Interviews	9	2.5	9	3.2
Editorials	0	0.0	0	0.0
References <i>en passant</i>	80	23.0	–	–

Features (or ‘reportages’) typically consist of a number of related articles; they attempt ‘in-depth’ coverage of an issue; they are polyphonic; and they attract expert opinion. They form a safe index of what is actually *recognised* as a language issue (in contrast to what a researcher assumes a language issue to be). In my corpus, there are features dedicated to all the issues in the categories (1)–(8) of Table 1, but no features for categories (9), (10) or, of course, (11). ‘News in brief’ is a convenient (if perhaps awkward) cover-term for references to event listings, announcements, and notices of, for instance, public presentations of books on language or of language survey results. ‘Short comments’ appear mainly in the so-called *παραπολιτικές στήλες* (‘asides’). Book reviews, letters to the editor and interviews I consider to be well-defined genres. So too are front-page editorials, but there are none during

this period. There are scarcely any in my corpus; editorials on language issues tend to occur only in periods of 'moral crusades' (or, possibly, in August).

The remaining categories are the two major ones: opinion and news articles. They cover the largest proportions of occurrences (19.2% or 24.6%, depending on the measure employed), significantly higher than the figures for any of the other categories. Although not at all homogeneous, these two genres are the most comprehensive. News articles might also be taken to subsume 'news in brief' (yielding 25% in total) and possibly feature articles too (in which case the total would be 31.6%). Opinion articles might likewise be taken to subsume 'short comments' (28.3% in total) and book reviews (the total now would be 37.6%). The question is how to define each genre and how to distinguish them from each other.

Opinion articles are, I suggest, quite easy to define and isolate from within a corpus; for instance, 'usage' columns are clear cases of opinion articles. A free-standing essay on (say) 'The merits of our great language, Greek, the world's most ancient tongue' is also not difficult to place in the category of opinion articles. But then, what is a 'linguistic piece of news'? We can all very easily provide examples of non-linguistic news (9/11, election results, the referenda on the EU constitution, bird flu, a train collision). Of course, there is always the possibility that a news item is not properly classified or named (witness such terms as a 'terrorist act'). But what is 'news' about language? And what does a linguistic 'news item' *name*, that is, on what terms is it related, metalinguistically, to language?

A researcher may employ technical and operational criteria in order to identify linguistic news items. Such criteria may be textual (involving, for instance, the use of event sentences or past tenses, the formation of narrative or tense sequences); alternatively, they may be communicative or discursive (the position of a text in a newspaper's overall layout, its relation to other texts in a sequence); or they may be conceptual – that is, language-ideological – criteria, as suggested already. I propose that linguistic news items and, more generally, language issues, cannot be defined independently of language ideologies, therefore of conceptual criteria. As I wish to show, neither communicative sequences nor even the dichotomy presupposed between news and opinion make much sense outside the conceptual framework of a language ideology.

Time

How are the issues distributed over time? What are the types of sequence by means of which language issues are sustained?

Articles do not occur in isolation. They form communicative sequences,⁴² which exhibit thematic and intertextual relations. Of such sequences, linguists are familiar mostly with those under the rubric of a 'moral panic'.⁴³

⁴² Moschonas (2004) 185.

⁴³ Cameron (1995), ch. 3.

For a 'moral panic' to impinge as such, it is not sufficient that the relevant articles assume a moralizing or spiritualizing tone. We need to have a sudden increase in the number of publications and the number of persons involved in the debate (journalists, opinion-makers, audiences). According to Thompson, Goode and Ben-Yehuda, and others,⁴⁴ the normal communicative sequence for a moral panic is the following: something or someone is first defined as a threat to a community's values or interests; in the media the threat is portrayed 'disproportionally', in an oversimplified manner; those involved in a moral panic show 'a high level of concern', and an 'increased level of hostility' towards the perceived threat; the relevant articles assume a spiritual, moralizing tone; moral panics appear suddenly but are short-lived; there is a rapid build-up of public concern, followed by a response from authorities or opinion-makers, before the panic recedes, never to appear again with the same intensity.

This is one type of communicative sequence. Routine issues, as I have already called them, follow a very different pattern: the media do not necessarily respond to any moves or initiatives perceived as threatening; coverage of routine issues has a very low 'news value'; debates on such issues draw excessively on a limited repertoire of types of argument (bringing forth an issue seems more important than trying to resolve it); the presentation of the issue is not addressed to the 'general public' but rather to a smaller circle of experts, followers, devotees; finally, media coverage is characterized by low intensity and non-periodic recurrence. A moral panic disappears. Routine issues persist.

The two types of communicative sequence can be, and often are, combined. After the panic recedes, the problem that was perceived as a threat would normally turn into a routine issue. It will be recalled but it will not reappear. In sharp contrast to this pattern, there is only one case of a routine issue becoming a moral panic in my corpus – 'Romanization' of the alphabet (Issue (2) in Table 1), and this happened only when the issue was taken up by the authoritative Academy of Athens; even then, it did not acquire the intensity of other issues. Moral panics are caused by issues that need to be resolved. Routine issues, on the other hand, only need to be reaffirmed; they *cannot* be resolved, because they touch on the most conventional aspects of language (such as orthography); or they *need not* be resolved, because there is an almost unanimous consensus about them (for instance, teaching Greek as a second language and adapting English loan words to Greek).

⁴⁴ Thompson (1998) 8–9; Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) 33–41; see also Johnson (1999) 2–3.

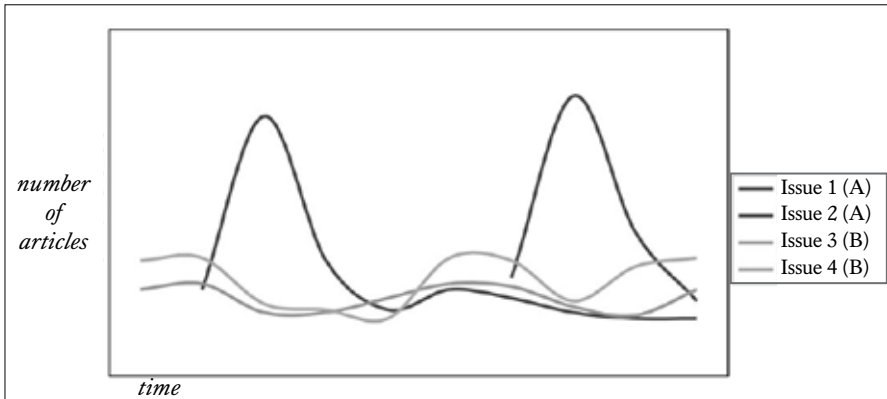
Figure 1*Two types of issue*

Figure 1 is an idealized graphical representation of the types of time sequence associated with each type of issue. Type A sequences are characteristic of moral panics; type B sequences characterize routine issues. Each type of sequence is associated with a different graph. Type A graphs reach a peak (a maximum value) very quickly, and then gradually decrease, never to recur with the same intensity. Type B issues, on the other hand, have considerably lower maximum values, but the issues recur persistently and form intermittent sequences. Otherwise, both type A and type B graphs are irregular and non-periodic.

A general ideological framework

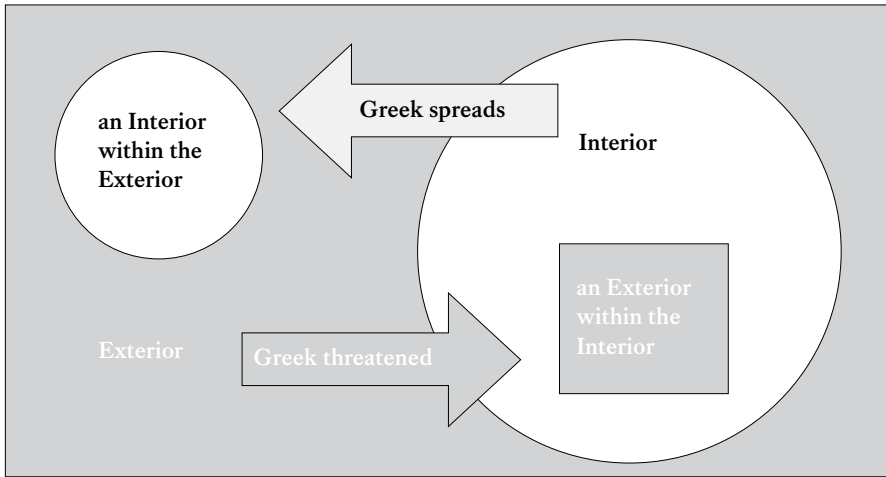
I have sketched several ways in which a corpus of newspaper articles could be used to index particular language issues. We are now left with the task of correlating language ideologies with the language issues that they index. My assumption has been that public representations of language are always ideological. There are no language issues unless there is a language ideology that informs, supports and sustains them. According to my assumption, language ideologies function through this double indexing, of language issues with types of publication (or perhaps more generally with discourse types) and then of conceptual frames (or ideologies) with language issues.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ I employ Sir William Hamilton's period term (*ideologies*) in order to stress the fact that language ideologies are idealizations or conceptualizations. Recent literature on language ideologies also stresses their *iconicity* (Irvine and Gal (2000) 37). But, as I wish to show, iconicity should be captured by iconic means, such as 'mental maps'. Language representations are images, depictions, illustrations of language, therefore representations of something that cannot be pictured – except, perhaps, in writing, which might very well be the reason why language ideologies are so preoccupied with the written form of a language. I understand 'iconicity' through the notion of 'mental maps' or 'mental spaces', which are tools employed mostly in cognitive linguistics. But see Preston (1989) and Niedzielski and Preston (2000) 45–96, for surveys of research on perceptual dialectology, which is perhaps the most interesting application of mental maps to language ideology; see also Gårdenfors (2000) on what could be a general

If the indexes of the language issues are distributed over newspapers, genres and periods of time, the issues themselves are distributed over a conceptual space through which language is pictured in one way or another. In our case, language is pictured as a territory, as a 'regime' or a state. The issues arise only within this 'regime of language', which is necessarily a regime of language ideology. The regime ideology of the Modern Greek language is represented in Figure 2:

Figure 2

The conceptual map of a language ideology



According to this regime ideology, language can be defined by associating an Interior to an Exterior of the language. Interior and Exterior are relative terms, but the Interior is pretty much like a 'vantage point'⁴⁶ from which this relationship can be defined. The Interior of Greek is (say) Greek *per se*, or 'pure Greek'. The Exterior of Greek is 'non-Greek', consisting of (say) English or some brand of 'mixed' or 'improper' Greek (such as youth slang). Loans are typically regarded as belonging to the Exterior of a language. The Interior is conceived as 'surrounded' by the Exterior. Their relationship is a dynamic one. Either one can expand or contract under pressure from the other. Either one can also form a duplicate of itself *within* the other, creating an Exterior-within-the-Interior or an Interior-within-the-Exterior. In the first case, Greek is pictured as 'threatened'; in the second case, Greek is said to 'spread' or to have 'conquered' the Exterior. Generally, the Exterior is pictured as a 'threat' to the Interior. The expansion or reduplication of both the Interior and the Exterior can be either 'real' or 'symbolic'. It can be as 'real' as the learning of the Greek language by foreigners; or it can be as 'symbolic'

theory of conceptual spaces. The Interior/Exterior dialectic presented here was, in part, inspired by Antoine Culioli's theory of notional domains: Culioli (1995).

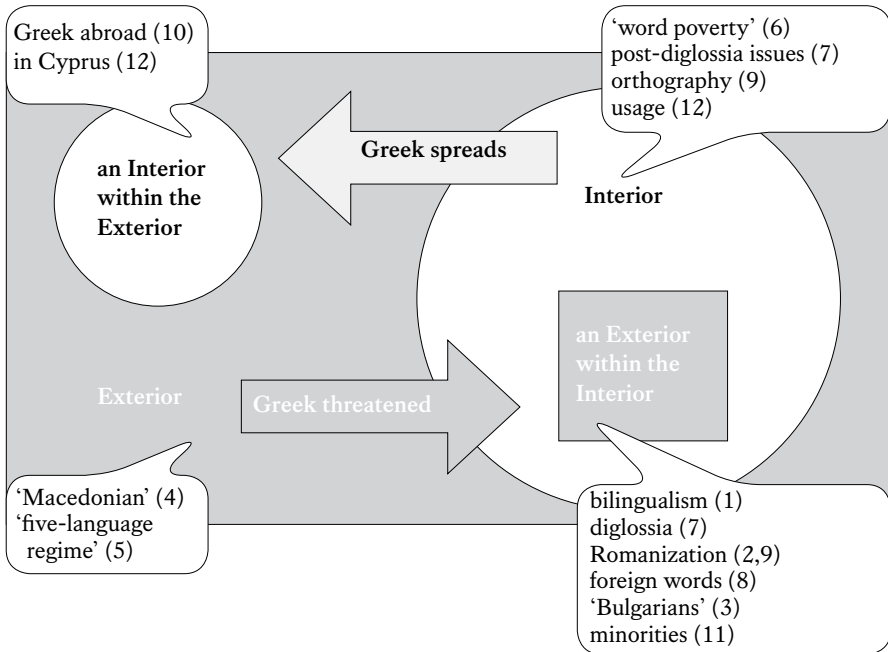
⁴⁶ MacLaury (2002).

as an expansion of the language's authority. Figure 2 represents the conceptual map of this ideology of the Modern Greek language. It is the pictorial representation of the idea of a language as a realm or regime. It is the picture of a picture.

With the help of Figure 2, one can now confront 'the most difficult question of all': 'why the panic?',⁴⁷ or, in more general terms, 'why those issues?', and why do they become issues at all, worth putting on the busy agenda of the media? My answer to this question is that language issues are defined as such only through a language ideology. It is clear now that all the issues raised in Greece after the resolution of the perennial diglossia situation can be defined in accordance with this new regime ideology of the Modern Greek language. In Figure 3, all the issues of Table 1 are placed on the conceptual map of this ideology. Issues can be now classified in conceptual terms into four categories: (a) issues relating to the Interior, (b) issues relating to the Exterior, (c) issues relating to an Exterior which has intruded into the Interior, and (d) issues relating to the expansion of the Interior into the Exterior. As we shall see shortly (Figures 4 and 5), the four categories are also related chronologically.

Figure 3

Language issues placed on a conceptual map



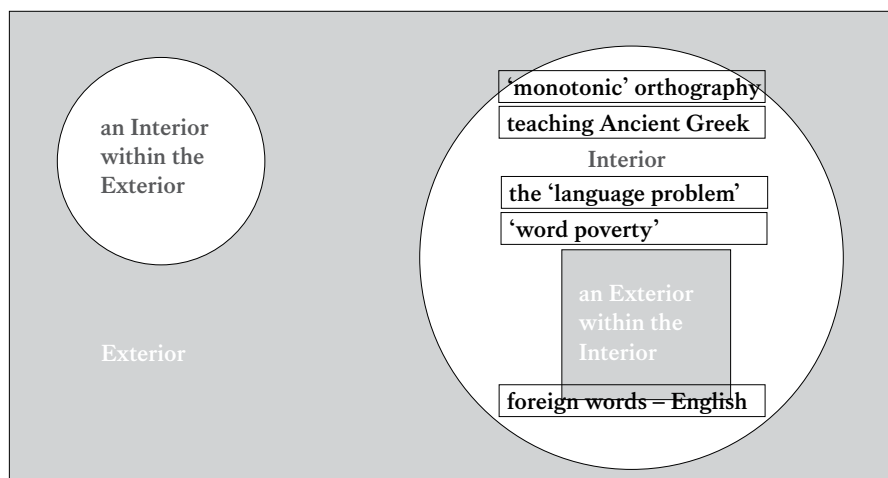
⁴⁷ Johnson (1999) 5.

Let us consider two straightforward examples, relatively easy ones: the names 'Macedonian' and 'Bulgarians'. We have here two clear cases of moral panic focusing, at least in part, on the metalinguistic issues raised by the use of these names. In the way the issues have been presented and debated, the trained linguist would probably uncover a primitive or mystical faith in nominal essentialism, an unjustifiable belief in the non-arbitrariness of names. But the issues could not be so easily dispensed with. They lasted for months. They were related to the national interest, to the foreign and internal policies of the state, to issues of identity. In both cases, the issue, to be sure, was not conventionalism. The issue was about whatever all the other issues were about. Any issue is sustained as such only through a uniform framework, through a conceptual map that relates it to all the rest. If 'our language' is a uniform, pure language (an Interior) that has to be kept intact by everything surrounding it (an Exterior), then a name of 'our language' ('Macedonian') cannot be given over to the enemy, because the name is 'ours'. In similar terms, we cannot allow a foreign name ('Bulgarians') to name *us*; such a name cannot appear in a dictionary (an esteemed and authoritative work) whose aim is to define *our* language. That would be equivalent to using our language (the uniform Interior) in ways that divide it, and this cannot be allowed. 'Macedonian' cannot be a name of the Exterior. 'Bulgarians' cannot be a name of the Interior. Clearly, both issues presuppose the conceptual map of Figure 2 and, with it, the whole topology of the regime ideology.

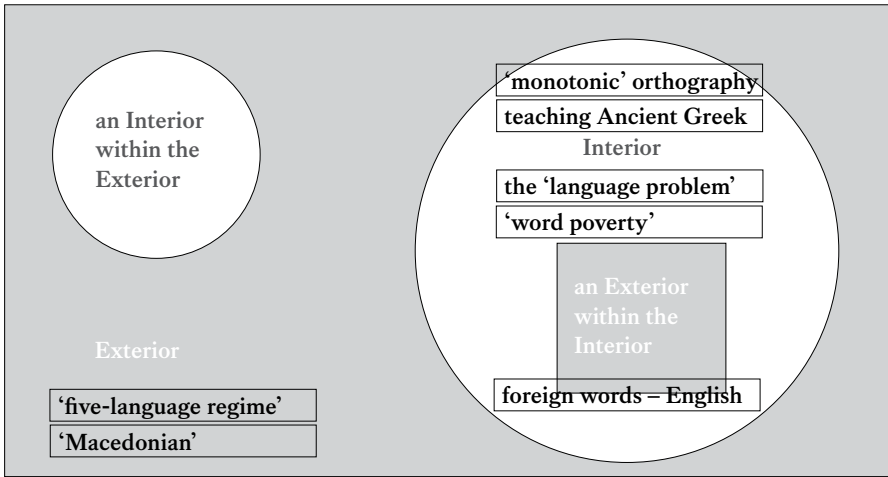
That all the issues are somehow related is evident not only topologically but also chronologically. The issues occur in a semi-chronological order, forming a more or less coherent media narrative. Figure 4 displays the four phases of this narrative:

Figure 4

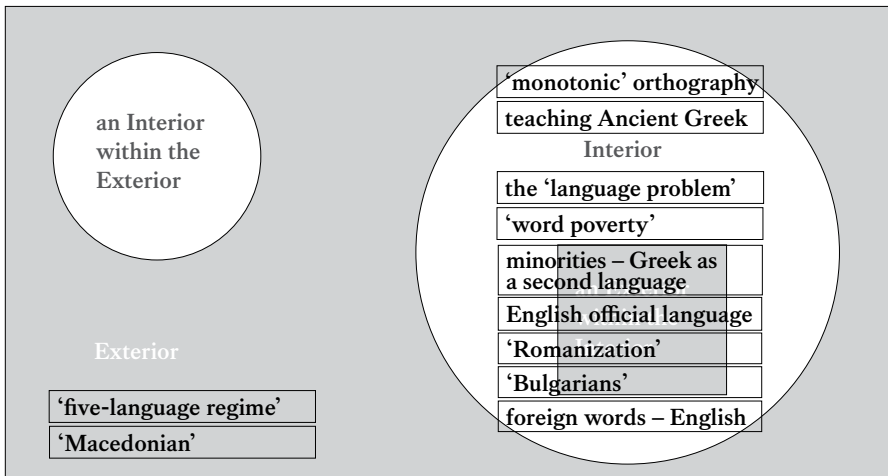
Language issues as a media narrative: A



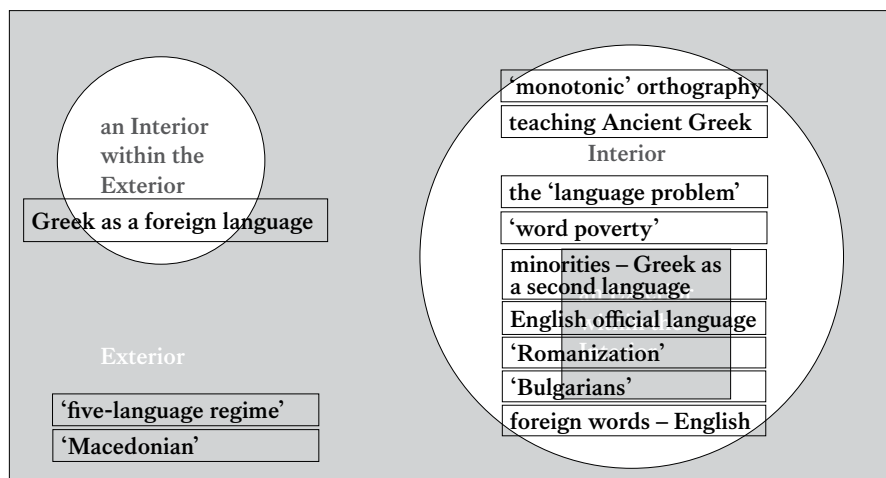
Language issues as a media narrative: B



Language issues as a media narrative: C



Language issues as a media narrative: D



Phase A mainly involves the immediate post-diglossia issues. They are all related to several, often conflicting, efforts, after years of divided usage, to define a uniform, standard language (an Interior). The post-diglossia issues do not so much arbitrate between demotic and *katharevousa* or seek to decide which of the two belongs to the Interior (that was the issue of the 'language question'); rather, they are concerned with the extent to which each of the two belongs to the Interior. Immediate post-diglossia issues push the question of the synchronic uniformity of the Standard Language to the background. The issue that is being foregrounded now is whether the Interior is diachronically uniform. The 'language problem', the debate about whether Ancient Greek should be taught in secondary education, the reservations about orthographic reforms which 'detach' the present language from its glorious past, are all manifestations of this new concern. Late in this period, the Exterior is entering the conceptual horizon of the new regime ideology through language contact and loan words. English is identified as the enemy of the state, of the Greek language in its fight to become uniform.

Phase B focuses still more on the threatening Exterior, which is now being uncovered: in the Exterior lurk the usurpers of our names (FYROM) and the enemies of our language (the EU).

This uncovering of the Exterior as an area occupied by the enemy gives rise to several issues concerning the status of the Exterior within the Interior. Emphasis, once again, shifts to the 'internal front'.⁴⁸ In Phase C, we first have the 'Bulgarians', a threat that can divide the internal front, and then the danger of Romanization, which should unite all against the common enemy, English. And then, suddenly, comes the 'inconceivable': the proposal in favour of English as an official language.

⁴⁸ Delveroudi and Moschonas (2003) 9–12.

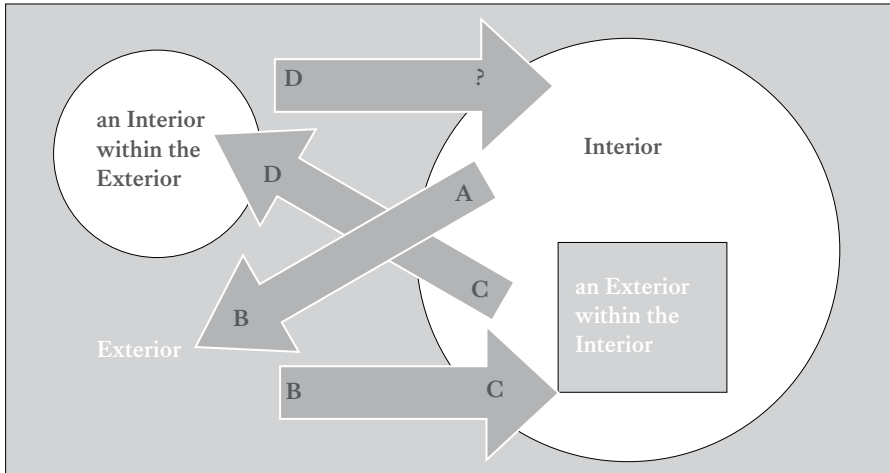
Together with the realization of an Exterior-within-the-Interior comes the discovery of a new means of dealing with the Interior's uniformity: Greek as a second language. The assimilating power of Greek is coupled with the discovery that Greek can also be taught to minorities and foreigners in order to expand the borders of the state; Greek can itself become an Interior-within-the-Exterior. We have reached the stage of Greek as a foreign language (Phase D).

One can only hypothesize about the prospect of a new phase in this developing scenario and hope that the renewed discovery of Greek through the lenses of a foreign language may lead, this time with significant support from the professionals, to a more sophisticated redefinition of the 'Interior'.

The four Phases, which largely coincide with the four conceptual categories of issues marked in Figure 2, are summarized again in Figure 5. It should be observed that the four phases form chains: <A B><B C><C D><D ?>. Language ideological (metalinguistic) stages are just like linguistic ones.⁴⁹ They are not uniform. Ideologies do not develop in a completely straightforward manner. At each stage in their development there is variation and confrontation. New sets of motifs emerge through new encounters and redefinitions of the older issues:

Figure 5

The four phases of the media narrative



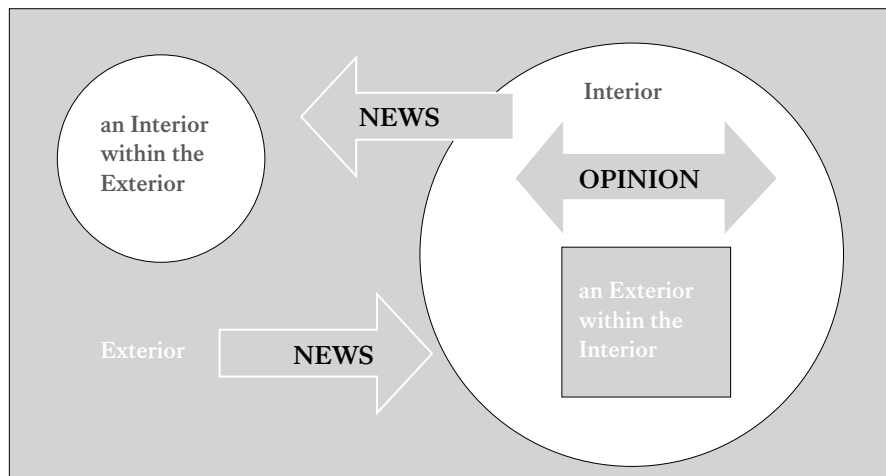
The conceptual map of Figure 2 can also help us redefine the problematic dichotomy (problematic, that is, as far as the language issues are concerned) between news and opinion. Language news is mostly 'foreign news': thus, the 'relinquishing' of a name with a symbolic status ('Macedonia') to a 'foreign enemy' will be seen as newsworthy; the 'threats' facing the Greek language in the political

⁴⁹ Saussure (1983) 178–81.

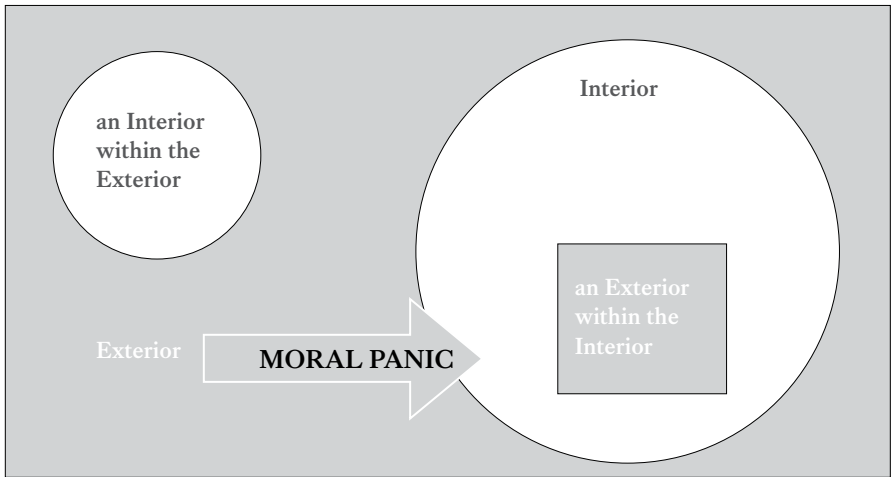
environment of the EU will be reported as 'news'; likewise, initiatives taken for teaching Greek as a second language to foreigners, either in Greece (in the Interior) or abroad (in the Exterior), will also be considered newsworthy. Opinion articles, on the other hand, are mainly concerned with the Interior's constitution, its composition, and its form. All this is summed up in Figure 6:

Figure 6

The news-opinion dichotomy



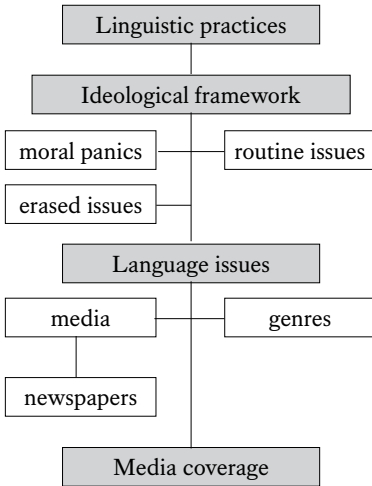
Finally, we can now define the case of moral panic with much more precision, with respect to a particular language-ideology conceptual framework. Moral panics are also associated with foreign news. A moral panic, within this particular ideological framework, can be identified as the communicative sequence provoked by an item of linguistic news that reports on the expansion of the Exterior towards the Interior (see Figure 7). A moral panic is the declaration of a linguistic war. This, of course, is a metaphorical statement, and one which cannot stand as a general definition of moral panics, nor even as a general definition of moral panics about language. In different ideological frameworks, moral panics will be focused on quite different threats.

Figure 7*The case of moral panic***Conclusions**

In this chapter I have sought to show that the 'regime ideology' of the Modern Greek language affects the ways seemingly disparate 'language issues' are defined and covered in the press. The conceptual topology of this new ideology offers a general framework for the development of coherent communicative sequences involving several actors with distinct stances on the issues raised. I have adopted a research procedure based on multiple indexing. I have used media coverage (and, in particular, articles in the print media) as an index of language issues. Language issues, both explicit and implicit, are employed, in turn, to index a comprehensive ideological framework, within which both consensus and dissent are exercised. This conceptual ideological framework can then be assumed to affect or to control certain linguistic practices pertaining to standardization, such as the collective practice of purism.⁵⁰ My research procedure is summarized in Figure 8:

⁵⁰ On the affective aspect of language ideologies, see Silverstein (1979) 231–4; Silverstein (1985); Woolard (1998) 10–11; Moschonas (2005a) 165–7.

Figure 8

Multiple indexing

Once the issues are associated and combined, one can analyse their hidden presuppositions, their stereotypes, their rhetorical strategies and their traces in unguarded discourse. Language ideologies are riddled with clichés, prejudices, myths and *idées reçues* about language,⁵¹ which can be analysed as presuppositions shared by members of a linguistic community;⁵² ideologies are often implicit⁵³ and are semantically organized on the basis of conceptual metaphors, such as the territorial metaphor of language.⁵⁴ To a large extent, deciphering a language ideology is tantamount to exposing its surreptitious or unavowed stereotypes, such as the 'myth of the uniformity of language', the understanding of synchronic identity through historical continuity (evidenced in all etymology-based orthographic systems), a belief in nominal essentialism, the conception of language contact in confrontational terms. One can also associate such widespread stereotypes with social hierarchies, power, prestige and mechanisms of the state. A less obvious correlation is the one between language standards and the specific linguistic practices collectively exercised within a linguistic community.

The 'regime' conception of a standard language can be shown to affect, or to have been affected by, a change in language standards. It is interesting that the *prescriptive* standardization formula of late demoticism ('Standard Modern Greek = *demotic* + learned forms') has now assumed the status of a *descriptive* principle

⁵¹ Yaguello (1988); Bauer and Trudgill (1998).

⁵² Preston (2004) 87.

⁵³ Tsitsipis (2003).

⁵⁴ For analyses of conceptual metaphors, see also the studies collected in Dirven, Hawkins and Sandikcioglu (2000) and Dirven, Frank and Ilie (2001). Spitzmüller (2005) 204–49 provides an excellent analysis of the metaphorical discourse on purism.

and prevails in reference works about Modern Greek. As I have argued elsewhere,⁵⁵ proper usage is now prescribed by a new elite of ‘craft professionals’ (linguists, writers, editors, proof-readers) who place emphasis on ‘syntax’, phraseology and idiomaticity, irrespective of any morphological differences between demotic and *katharevousa*. Finally, linguistic purism has long ceased to be *diglossic* and has become *bi-glossic*; it is being practised on a massive scale, mainly against English loanwords; and it is manifested in the press as an outward rejection of bilingualism and language contact.

As many linguists have observed, *katharevousa* continues to maintain a shadowy but by no means unimportant existence alongside demotic. Archaisms or ‘learned forms’ appear in many registers of Standard Modern Greek. The ‘spirit of *katharevousa*’ survives in purism. My presentation of the language issues that have followed the language question suggests that *katharevousa* does not exist merely on a *linguistic* plane: *katharevousa* has also shaped the metalanguage of the new standard. In an important sense, *katharevousa* survives as an ideology of the demotic. By this I do not mean only that the demotic (or, rather, its successor, Standard Modern Greek) now adopts a puristic (*katharevousa*) attitude and practice. I mean above all that the language issues raised in Greece after the language question would be inconceivable outside an ~~ideology of the standard language unrelated to the~~ ideology of *katharevousa*.

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⁵⁵ Moschonas (2001b).

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