

Prescriptivism and Variation: The Greek Word for ‘Coronavirus’

Spiros A. Moschonas, Costas Mourlas and Thodoris Paraskevas

1 Introduction

With the advent of the COVID pandemic, newspapers and news websites witnessed a remarkable increase in the use of the Greek translation loan for *coronavirus*. The newly rediscovered word appeared in four main variants (*κορονοϊός*, *κορωνοϊός*, *κοροναϊός*, *κορωναιϊός*), while several metalinguistic texts prescribing the one or the other variant were also published in various news outlets. In this chapter we report on the effects which these prescriptive texts might have had on the variation of the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’.

Our case study is structured as follows. In Section 2, based on available literature reviews, we present the research design that has been utilized in corpus-linguistic approaches that seek to detect the effects of prescriptivism on language change, and we indicate the ways in which our approach differs from and improves on previous work. In Section 3, we define our units of analysis, both at the metalinguistic level (corrective instructions) and at the linguistic level (orthographic variants). In Section 4, we present the metalinguistic corpus consisting of texts that prescribe the ‘correct’ spelling of the Greek loanword. We present the rationale for each proposal and argue that there is an internal logic to prescriptivism, a generator of prescriptions that vary with respect to the values assigned to just two binary metalinguistic features. In Section 5, we present the linguistic corpora that we have searched for variation, which are of three kinds: texts about the pandemic mined from news websites, tweets about the pandemic, and news radio broadcasts. The corpus of news articles is further divided into three phases: an early phase from 2013 and 2014, when the *coronavirus* was introduced as a technical term for viruses such as MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV; a second phase covering the early stage of the COVID pandemic (December 2019 – April 2020), which is the focus of our study; and a post-phase (a week in May 2020), during which, we hypothesized, the dominant trends, if any, would have crystallized. Radio broadcasts and tweets were only considered during this later phase. In Section 6 we present the quantitative results of our

research, which we discuss in Section 7. When our research started, our main research question was whether usage followed prescriptivism or whether prescriptivism was merely responding to usage (see Section 2). In the process of our research, we came to realize that the interaction of prescriptivism with usage, or of metalanguage with language, was an issue more complicated – and more interesting – than we had anticipated. The thorny issue of the possible effects of prescriptivism on language is discussed in Section 7 from the acquired perspective of the existence of differing, even contradictory, prescriptivisms, whose combined effect is not to eliminate variation but rather to legitimize and restrain it.

2 Literature Review

Whether – and under which conditions – prescriptivism is effective is a major issue in the fields of historical sociolinguistics and standardology. There are several studies that seek to prove or disprove the effects of prescriptivism on language change. Auer (2006), Yáñez-Bouza (2023), and Moschonas (2022) provide extensive reviews and comparisons of the relevant corpus-linguistic studies, whose basic design we present here. These studies make use of at least two types of corpora: a metalinguistic corpus (in which prescriptive instructions appear) and a linguistic corpus (typically, a large historical corpus in which changes in variation attributed, *ex hypothesi*, to prescriptivism could be traced). Auer (2006; 2009) employs the terms *precept* and *usage* for what we here call, respectively, *metalinguistic* and *linguistic* corpus.

The idea behind this two-corpora design is the following: a prescriptive instruction or ‘corrective’ *c* (see next section for a definition of correctives) mentioning variants v_1 and v_2 appears in certain metalinguistic texts (traditional grammars, usage guides, newspapers columns, etc.), where v_1 is said to be preferred over v_2 or it is considered to be an unconditionally ‘correct’ form, or the more appropriate variant under a certain condition. If some time after stating the corrective *c*, a significant increase occurs in the use of the variant v_1 (and a concomitant decrease of the variant v_2), then the change in question *could* be attributed to the corrective *c*.¹

Moschonas (2022: 343–351) points out a few ways in which the basic design could be improved. (a) The units of analysis should not be vaguely defined, especially at the

¹ The importance of a “time lag” between the metalinguistic statement and the discerned linguistic change is stressed by Auer (2006: 48; 2009: 71).

metalinguistic level. Corrective instructions that are proscriptive in character should be differentiated from more permissive instructions, which do not aim at eliminating variation but rather at imposing a certain condition on the use of the perceived variants (see Section 3). (b) The variation in the metalanguage (i.e. the cases of different writers employing different prescriptive repertoires) should also be accounted for; studies such as Poplack *et al.* (2015) and Yáñez-Bouza (2015) are exemplary in this respect. (c) The studies of prescriptivism should try, as much as possible, not to reproduce the prescriptive bias towards the written language; they should not focus exclusively on written corpora. Historical studies, of course, might have access to written corpora only; for a “historical” use of speech corpora, see, again, Poplack (2015). (d) Prescriptivism that is being exercised by example and, perhaps, has not been honored with explicit metalinguistic comment, as it is often the case in editorial practices,² should also be accounted for. (e) As regards deducing the effect of prescriptivism from a detected language change, there are no unique ways of correlating the linguistic corpus with the metalinguistic one. There aren’t even agreed upon ways of quantifying the metalinguistic corpus. Counting *mentions* (as in Anderwald, 2014; 2016: 70–84) is not enough; the number of mentions should be weighted against other factors such as the authority of the prescriptivist author, the repertoire a corrective instruction belongs to, the number of its reproductions by other writers, its reinforcement through language education, etc.³ Consequently, as admitted by Langer (2001: 4), the change detected in a linguistic corpus could be attributed to prescriptivism only after all other conceivable explanations have been excluded. It is for this reason that, often, it cannot be decided whether prescriptivism had caused or simply followed an independent usage trend, such as colloquialization (Hinrichs *et al.*, 2015: 830–831), “demotization”, or “restandardization” (Kristiansen & Coupland, 2011: 27–30).

In the next sections we present a methodology that has some advantages over the basic corpus-linguistic design. We use multiple monitor corpora, which allow for a

² Percy (1997), Owen (2020), and Pillière (2018; 2020) offer detailed accounts of editorial practices.

³ Yáñez-Bouza (2015: 24–31, 51–105) offers a detailed account of such factors; Hinrichs *et al.* (2015) employ “prescriptivism-related predictors”, a significant improvement over the basic corpus-linguistic design.

synchronic study of the effects of prescriptivism in real time – well, in *almost* real time.⁴ With monitor corpora one can follow variation as it unfolds on a day-to-day basis, without losing sight of the everyday workings of prescriptivism. In our research we take notice of the variation in the metalanguage (the existence of differing or conflicting instructions) and we also account for tacit prescriptivism exercised by example, through repetition and editorial practices. Information about the actors, the situations, and the context of language use were all readily accessible to us, the researchers, at the time of the research, i.e. our research has benefited from the pragmatic salience of the situation under study. We have defined countable units of analysis at both the metalinguistic and the linguistic level. We analyzed the metalinguistic corpus both qualitatively and quantitatively: we identified the most authoritative authors and counted the references to them; we detected opposite tendencies and varying justifications for their proposal. However, we did not try to correlate, in any quantitative sense of the term, the metalinguistic corpus with the linguistic corpora. The metalinguistic corpus only shows which linguistic variables are within the cognitive grasp of the prescriptivists; whether usage followed a prescription can only be deduced by studying patterns of variation in multiple linguistic corpora.

In the next section, we define our units of analysis at both the metalinguistic and the linguistic level.

3 Units of Analysis

Our basic unit at the metalinguistic level is that of a *corrective*: a ‘directive’ or an ‘exercitive’, in the speech-act terminology. There are at least two types of correctives: ‘correctives proper’ and ‘permissives’.⁵ A corrective proper is a piece of linguistic advice or an instruction that contains a prohibition and it is typically expressed – or *could* be expressed – with stereotypical formulations such as: “use v_1 instead of v_2 , because Z ”. Thus, a corrective proper consists of three parts: a proscriptive part (“do not use v_2 ”), a normative part (“do use v_1 instead”), and an explicative part (“for this or that

⁴ We have been inspired by Poplack (2015), who employs multiple linguistic corpora for studying prescriptivism *in apparent time*; cf. De Smedt (2021) for a study thematically and methodologically related to ours, published after we had completed our research.

⁵ For a ramified taxonomy of correctives, see Moschonas (2019; 2020; 2022: 317–332); cf. also de Vos and van der Meulen (this volume).

reason”). A permissive, on the other hand, consists of one or more normative parts that are conditional (“use v_1 under condition c_1 , v_2 under condition c_2 ”) and an explicative part; it can be formulated as follows: “use v_1/c_1 and v_2/c_2 , because Z ”. A corrective can be explicit or implicit. In order not to disregard tacit prescriptivism, i.e. prescriptivism exercised silently (by example, through repetition), one has to assume that an implicit corrective *could* be formulated explicitly either as a corrective proper or as a permissive. Doing so is, of course, a matter of interpretation.

It should be stressed that it is mentions which appear in a corrective, not actual uses of the variants (even when variants are given as examples). Consequently, there need be no direct correspondence between mentions “ v_1 ”, “ v_2 ”, ... and actual variants v_1 , v_2 , ..., as we might expect from the many cases in which correctives misconstrue actual usage (documented in critiques of prescriptivism such as Pullum, 2009; cf. Straaijer, 2016: 235–236).

Four main variants of the Greek loanword for coronavirus are mentioned in the prescriptive metalinguistic texts: *κορον-ο-ϊός*, *κορων-ο-ϊός* (both pronounced [koronoíós]), *κορον-α-ϊός*, and *κορων-α-ϊός* (both pronounced [koronaiós]); a fifth variant, *κορωνιός* ([koronios]) was only invoked as a hypothetical form. Needless to say, more variants than the ones prescribed are attested in the linguistic corpora. Variation is not only under-represented in the metalinguistic texts; it is also misrepresented. Moreover, variation is understood merely as a difference in spelling, whereas, in fact, the variants differ with respect to both the spelling (of the first constituent: <ο> or <ω>) and the ‘thematic’ or ‘linking vowel’ between constituents (-ο- or -α-; more on the ‘thematic vowel’ in the next section). In other words, the variable we consider is a complex one, partly orthographic (<ο/ω>) and partly morphological (-ο/α-). The <ο/ω> variation does not affect pronunciation, while the -ο/α- variation does ([koronoios] vs. [koronaios]).

In the next section we look at some more ways in which the metalinguistics of the Greek word misconstrue its linguistics.

4 The Metalinguistic Corpus

We have consulted 74 metalinguistic texts concerning the spelling of the Greek compound word for ‘coronavirus’, all published online between 22 January and 3 April 2020. The series of metalinguistic publications starts with flash.gr (22/01/2020). The end date was set, more or less, arbitrarily, once the prescriptive furor over ‘coronavirus’

had passed.⁶ Our list of metalinguistic texts is exhaustive for this specific period. The only references we managed to locate online at an earlier period were in a discussion forum for translators: lexilogia.gr (21/04/2014). It seems, then, that, in the case under study, prescriptivism was prompted by the increased frequency of the term and as a response to variation.

Four out of the 74 metalinguistic texts did not include any explicit corrective (or permissive); they treated the issue as a curiosity or were concerned with the related subject of the naming of the disease by the World Health Organization (COVID-19), an issue we consider in a sequel article (Moschonas & Paraskevas, in preparation). All remaining texts are explicitly prescriptive, in the sense that they contain an explicit permissive or an explicit corrective. Out of the 70 texts, 13 issue unconditional permissives (for two, or even for all four variants); see e.g. flash.gr (22/01/2020) or news247.gr (28/01/2020). The remaining 57 texts are corrective, i.e. proscriptive. This is evident already in their headlines, often formulated as alternative questions that share the presupposition of their affirmative counterpart, i.e. of a corrective that “ v_1 should be used instead of v_2 ”; see e.g. gazzetta.gr (30/01/2020), Sarantakos (06/02/2020). *Wh*-words and deictics linking the headline to the text are very common (and obviously used for clickbaiting).

Republications (i.e. almost verbatim reproductions of texts with or without acknowledging their source) are not uncommon; compare, e.g. iefimerida.gr (01/02/2020), enikos.gr (30/01/2020), and news247.gr (28/01/2020). Only 14 of the 74 texts were signed, 10 of these by non-journalists: G. Babiniotis, a linguist (2 texts); N. Sarantakos, a translator and blogger on language issues (2 texts of his own, and an interview); teachers (philologists) (2 texts); a pathologist (1 text); a “PhD in Behavioral Sciences” (1 text); bloggers (2 texts). The debate on “the correct orthography” seems to be centered around two protagonists, G. Babiniotis and N. Sarantakos: 60 out of 74 texts refer to either one or both (more on these authors below). The mentions or expositions of Babiniotis’s views in texts written by others outnumber those of Sarantakos (58 vs. 13), while Sarantakos’s views are only mentioned in combination with Babiniotis’s.

⁶ Only a few texts appeared after 3 April, such as Annastasiadis-Symeonidis (06/04/2020), Charalampakis (16/04/2020), and a dictionary by Katsoyannou and Stefanidou (2020) – mentioned here because all three were written by ‘descriptive’ linguists and/or lexicographers, opting for the variant *κορονοϊός*. Obviously, their response to variation was rather slow.

Several articles (38) simply reproduce Babiniotis’s position, stating so in the headline; see e.g. *gazzetta.gr* (30/01/2020). Other sources cited are National Public Health Organization (ΕΟΔΥ, 6 texts), Wikipedia (4), Hellenic Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ΚΕΕΑΠΠΟ, 3), Ministry of Health (2), and ICTV (2).

As seen in the previous section, prescriptive recommendations vary with respect to the spelling of the first constituent (<ο> or <ω>) and the linking ‘thematic vowel’ (-ο- or -α-). Although four variants are possible, only three are recommended in prescriptive texts: there is no explicit recommendation of the variant *κορωναιός* (see Table 1). An additional variant with a palatalized stem-final nasal and no thematic vowel (*κορων-ιός* [koropós]) was considered to be ‘correct’ by Babiniotis (26/01/2020), but it was rejected because “it might be taken to mean ‘he who comes from Koroni’”, Koroni being a town in the Peloponnese. Konstantinidis (21/03/2020) also accepts this variant *κορων-ιός*, but does not preclude *κορων-ο-ιός* either, and thus his text was classified with the permissives. Table 1 lists the four main variants mentioned in metalinguistic texts and the number of texts that recommend each one. It should be reminded that there was no explicit corrective recommending *κορωνα-ιός*. Table 1 shows the distribution of explicit correctives only. The 13 permissive texts are not plotted on the table; let it be noted, however, that eight permissive texts allow for all four variants, four texts allow only for the variants *κορον-ο-ιός* and *κορονα-ιός*, while one text permits the variants *κορον-ο-ιός* and *κορων-ο-ιός*.

Table 1 Variants and number of metalinguistic texts recommending them

	-ο- [koronoiós]	-α- [koronaiós]	total
<ο>	<i>κορον-ο-ιός</i> 5	<i>κορονα-ιός</i> 3	8
<ω>	<i>κορων-ο-ιός</i> 49	<i>κορωνα-ιός</i> 0	49
total	54	3	57

The authors of the prescriptive texts describe the four variants in traditional grammatical terms. ‘Thematic vowel’ is the traditional term for the semantically empty, linking element of compounding – arguably an “interfix” (see Ralli, 2007: 31–77; 2013: 47–73). There is only one thematic vowel, namely -ο-; -α- is not ‘thematic’, it is the suffix of the first constituent. With a few exceptions (such as classical compounds and uninflected first components), -ο- appears when the second constituent begins with a consonant or with a vowel lower in the sonority hierarchy (i.e. [i] or [u], but not [a] or

[e]), provided the first constituent is a stem (not a full word). Since [i] is lower than [o] in the hierarchy, [koron-o-ios] is well-formed, with [koron-] being a stem. But notice that the sonority hierarchy does not preclude [koron-a-ios] either, a compound whose first constituent, *κορώνα* or *κορόνα*, is not a stem but a full word, whose inflectional suffix is *-α* (sing. nom.). This analysis is reinforced by the fact that the Greek [koronaios] is a hybrid calque of the English ‘coronavirus’.

However, prescriptivists are ignorant of theoretical linguistics. The morphophonological restrictions on the compounding of Modern Greek words are altogether ignored in the metalinguistic corpus. As we have already noted, most of the metalinguistic texts consider variation to be an issue of spelling rather than morphology. They misconstrue *-α* (i.e. the suffix of the first constituent, [koron-a]), as an alternative thematic vowel. They also assume, explicitly or tacitly, that the difference between the two ‘thematic vowels’ is a matter of frequency, *-o-* being “the most frequent” one. Some metalinguistic texts, admittedly, invoke the criterion of past usage to justify the variant *κοροναϊός*, but none have proposed the variant *κορωναϊός*, which, as we will see in Section 6.1, is perhaps equally or even more congruent with past usage.

It is of course an issue of orthography (an issue that could only be decided arbitrarily) whether the first constituent of the word should be written with <ο> or <ω>. There are two views on this. Sarantakos (24/01/2020; 06/02/2020) and, later on, Anastassiadis-Symeonidis (06/04/2020), Charalampakis (16/04/2020), and others, abide by a vague principle that was set in the institutional grammar of Modern Greek by Triantaphillidis *et al.* (1978: 407), according to which “Modern Greek words with no clear relation to Ancient Greek words and, generally, Common Era words and suffixes *of foreign origin* (emphasis in the original) should be transcribed phonetically and written with simple vowels”, i.e. with <ο> instead of <ω>. This principle is often presented as part of an endeavor to “simplify” or “modernize” the orthography of Modern Greek (Papanastasiou, 2008: 184–185, 190). According to Babinotis (26/01/2020), on the other hand, *κορώνα* is reborrowed (an *αντιδάνειο*, a *Rückwanderer*) through Latin from Ancient Greek *κορώνη* and, for this reason, it should keep its “original spelling”. Notice that both views are based on etymological grounds, they only differ in scope.

We mentioned in the introduction section of this chapter that there is an internal logic to prescriptivism concerning the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’. Indeed, each recommended variant can be represented by a matrix of values assigned to just two

binary metalinguistic features: [+/-simplified] and [+/-frequent], the first one applying to the spelling of the first constituent and the second one to the perceived frequency of the ‘thematic vowels’. Although the need for congruence with earlier usage is also a principle invoked by some authors, its use in metalinguistic discourse was rather limited; by this principle, both *κοροναϊός* and *κορωναιός*, and not only the former, should be commendable – which is not the case. The classification of variants in terms of these three metalinguistic features is presented in Table 2, with the shaded area representing the redundant feature.

Table 2 Metalinguistic classification of recommended variants

	<i>κορονοιός</i>	<i>κοροναϊός</i>	<i>κορωνοϊός</i>
simplified	+	+	–
frequent	+	–	+
past usage	–	+	–

For prescriptive discourse to be effective it has to be construed as authoritative. The question is: who has the authority to prescribe? Georgios Babinotis, a linguist and former professor at the University of Athens, often scorned by his colleagues for his extremely prescriptive attitude, is widely recognized in the Greek media as the ultimate authority on linguistic issues. On the other hand, Nikos Sarantakos, a ‘language maven’ whose views are often marked as being in direct opposition to those of Babinotis, assumes, presumably, a more descriptive stance. Both the prescriptive linguist and the non-prescriptive non-linguist have their readers and followers. They both think within the framework and with the categories of traditional grammars. They spend much of their time separating what is wrong from what is not, and, despite assurances to the contrary, neither one seems to tolerate variation. Descriptive prescriptivism is indeed no less prescriptive than prescriptive prescriptivism.

The language experts fight for authority on two fronts: an internal front, among themselves, and an external front, on which they stand united against other professions, against the science experts (medical doctors, biologists, epidemiologists) who preceded them and whose terminological preferences had to be delegitimized when the language experts, the only experts on language, arrived on the scene. When asked whether past usage should be respected, a linguist (personal communication, 15/09/2022) put it like this: “what do they [medical experts] know of language?” (“Τι ξέρουν από γλώσσα

αυτοί;”). We come back to this issue of delegitimization in Section 6.1. Next, we describe the linguistic corpora under study, what they consist of and how they were compiled.

5 The Linguistic Corpora

Three types of linguistic data have been analyzed: news articles, tweets, and radio broadcasts. Our rationale was that these three types of data can be placed on a scale from written to spoken discourse, with tweets occupying an intermediate, hybrid area. They also form a hierarchy “at the intersection of mode and formality” (Szmrecsanyi & Engel, 2022): written formal (news articles), written informal (tweets), spoken informal (radio broadcasts). Twitter is an interactional, discursive medium (Dayter, 2016: 91–95) with characteristics of orality (see Wikström, 2017, on “the spokenness of Twitter”). The radio programs selected are also interactive; the hosts discuss the news among themselves and with their guests in an informal and lively way. Thus, the three linguistic subcorpora of our study promise to show not only which variants prevailed within particular genres or domains of the written discourse, but also how widely these variants spread in speech – or in ‘language in general’.

Accordingly, the prescribed variants were first tracked in a corpus of news articles published on several news websites. This linguistic (usage) corpus was kept separate from the metalinguistic corpus (i.e. the metalinguistic texts were not included in the linguistic corpus). The linguistic corpus consists of three subcorpora with texts from three different periods, which we call Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3. Phase 1 (May 2013 and April–May 2014) consists of 71,343 texts (totaling 21,807,666 words), 207 of which contain occurrences of one or more variants of those mentioned in metalinguistic texts. During this period, the references are to other coronaviruses such as MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. For additional evidence, we looked at two reference corpora of Modern Greek, the Corpus of Greek Texts (CGT/ΣΕΚ) and the corpus Greek Web 2019 (elTenTen19); we also consulted several medical textbooks, dictionaries, and research articles to see if these scientific works had a normative influence on the term for ‘coronavirus’ in this early period. Phase 2 (1 December 2019 – 15 April 2020), the focus of our study, consists of a total of 123,250 texts (42,204,247 words), 33,199 of which contain at least one occurrence of a prescribed variant. Phase 3 (26 May – 1 June, 2020) consists of 20,706 texts (7,037,279 words), with 6,922 texts containing one or more occurrences of the variants under study.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 texts are drawn from six news websites. Phase 3 texts spread over a shorter span, but they are drawn from a much larger group of 18 news websites. The websites selected were the most visited ones, according to the Reuters Institute's *Digital News Reports* for 2019 (Newman *et al.*, 2019: 89); the report for 2020 (Newman *et al.*, 2020: 72) was not available at the time of the compilation of the corpus. Two websites (gr.yahoo.com, mixanitouxronou.gr) in the Reuters 2019 list had to be excluded (the former because it mainly reproduces texts from other websites, the latter because its content is limited to historical texts), while four more were added (lifo.gr, naftemporiki.gr, efsyn.gr, news.gr), all of which ranked high in the alternative lists greek-sites.gr and alexa.com (the first two also appear in the Reuters list for 2020).⁷

Table 3 gives a precise description of the corpus. Listed for each website and phase are the total number of articles mined, the number and percentage of articles containing the variable under study, and the number of words in the articles. The Reuters rankings for website traffic are shown under the labels R19 for 2019 and R20 for 2020; the rankings range from 1 (most visited) to 16 (less visited). The total number of texts in the corpus for all three phases is 215,299 (71,049,192 words). The total number of texts containing at least one variant is 40,328 (15,102,901 words). Let it be noted that the articles with any variant in Phase 1 reach only 0.29% of the total number of articles; there is a huge increase in Phase 2 (26.94%) and Phase 3 (33.43%), as the public interest in the pandemic intensified.

⁷ For the construction of the corpus, we employed web scraping techniques, adapted to the particularities of each website. For data mining and processing we used the Python Programming Language together with its available NLP libraries. Beautiful Soup and Requests were used for the scraping and parsing of web pages. The data were organized into dataframes using Pandas. Using regex, phrases within quotation marks were removed, since a disfavored orthographic variant might be preserved in direct quotation. The variants were counted after they were rewritten as dictionary entries (i.e. headwords in sing. nom.). The Numpy and Scikit-learn libraries were used to convert the texts to a matrix of token counts. The groupby() function from the Pandas library was used to group the results by date and sum up the frequencies of each variant. The timeline barcharts in Figures 1.1–1.6 were plotted using the Matplotlib and Seaborn libraries and were refined with Inkscape; they are here reproduced in grayscale.

Table 3 The corpus of news articles

PHASE 1							
websites	R19	R20	articles total	articles with variants		words total	words in articles
				#	%		with variants
			#	#	%	#	#
news247.gr	4	4	7,215	37	0.51	2,599,821	15,882
in.gr	5	3	14,057	36	0.26	4,502,215	10,003
newsbeast.gr	8	10	18,925	42	0.22	4,775,762	13,605
kathimerini.gr	11	6	16,143	57	0.35	6,209,239	17,493
lifo.gr	-	13	3,747	14	0.37	711,894	5,255
news.gr	-	-	11,256	21	0.19	3,008,735	10,310
			71,343	207	0.29	21,807,666	72,548
PHASE 2							
websites	R19	R20	articles total	articles with variants		words total	words in articles
				#	%		with variants
			#	#	%	#	#
news247.gr	4	4	17,374	5,668	32.62	5,758,550	1,844,697
in.gr	5	3	33,131	7,613	22.98	12,205,097	2,998,228
newsbeast.gr	8	10	31,656	8,520	26.91	8,397,557	2,673,774
kathimerini.gr	11	6	18,830	4,413	23.44	8,532,671	2,059,278
lifo.gr	-	13	10,081	3,590	35.61	3,727,904	1,352,080
news.gr	-	-	12,178	3,395	27.88	3,582,468	1,104,938
			123,250	33,199	26.94	42,204,247	12,032,995
PHASE 3							
websites	R19	R20	articles total	articles with variants		words total	words in articles
				#	%		with variants
			#	#	%	#	#
news247.gr	4	4	923	388	42.04	345,163	160,763
in.gr	5	3	1,739	595	34.22	760,798	326,462
newsbeast.gr	8	10	1,525	518	33.97	429,545	185,380
kathimerini.gr	11	6	964	370	38.38	431,806	185,016
lifo.gr	-	13	576	246	42.71	223,720	101,989
news.gr	-	-	605	244	40.33	194,822	96,368

newsbomb.gr	1	1	1,941	534	27.51	643,083	259,724
dikaiologitika.gr	2	2	770	258	33.51	285,620	115,864
skai.gr	3	7	760	360	47.37	302,784	161,453
newsit.gr	6	8	1,786	563	31.52	445,979	184,659
protothema.gr	9	5	2,126	327	15.38	578,572	151,734
cnn.gr	10	9	851	349	41.01	375,209	178,249
zougla.gr	12	12	1,869	573	30.66	473,735	194,663
ert.gr	13	-	432	138	31.94	157,288	64,123
iefimerida.gr	14	14	1,581	600	37.95	544,499	242,265
enikos.gr	15	-	113	32	28.32	27,575	8,884
naftemporiki.gr	-	16	1,154	475	41.16	367,693	184,273
efsyn.gr	-	-	991	352	35.52	449,388	195,489
			20,706	6,922	33.43	7,037,279	2,997,358

To find out which variants had also penetrated speech and the less formal registers of the language, and to what degree, we compiled two supplementary Phase 3 corpora: a corpus of tweets and a speech corpus of radio broadcasts. Our corpus of Phase 3 tweets consists of 12,039 tweets, of which 1,822 (15.13%) contain at least one variant. The period covered is 3–11 June 2020 (a week later than the Phase 3 period considered for news articles).⁸

As pointed out in Section 2, most of the corpus-linguistic studies for detecting the effects of prescriptivism employ historical corpora of *written* texts, thus reproducing the written-language bias of prescriptivists. We believe that a corrective instruction, provided it is not just about spelling, could be said to have had a wider effect only if it has also affected speech. As seen in Section 4 (Table 1), the four orthographic variants of the Greek word for the ‘coronavirus’ collapse to two speech variants, [koronoios] and [koronaiois], differing only with respect to -o- (the thematic vowel) or -α- (the suffix of the first constituent). We traced Phase 3 radio broadcasts for these two variants. In particular, we listened to 36 radio news broadcasts (19h 21m) from four different news programs in four different radio stations and counted the number of occurrences of each

⁸ Tweets were scraped using the Twython Python library, the search keyword was *covid* and the language was set to Greek (‘el’).

variant. The speech corpus is described in Table 4; the total number of words is estimated on the basis of representative samples.

Table 4 The speech corpus of radio broadcasts

Radio station	Radio program	Broadcast hours	Host(s)	Total duration	# words (estimated)
Alpha 98,9 FM	Δελτίο θυέλλης (Storm Alert)	Mon–Fri 12:00–13:00	K. Makri	03:49:18	22,522
Θέμα Radio 104,6	Οι ανελέητοι (Ruthless)	Mon–Fri 12:00–13:00	Th. Tsekouras G. Papachristos	04:38:42	34,334
Σκάι 100.3 FM	Ό,τι να ’ναι (Whatever)	Mon–Sat 12:00–13:00	M. Voularinos P. Nikolaou	03:24:24	36,318
Real FM 97,8	—	Mon–Fri 12:00–14:00	A. Pavlopoulos M. Niflis	07:28:41	60,497
Total				19:21:05	153,672

6 Results

Table 5 shows the number and percentages of occurrences of the four main variants for each website in all three phases of the corpus. In successive columns we list the number of articles containing at least one variant and the number and percentage of its subset of articles containing two or more variants. As already explained in Section 5, all the variants were counted, not only those prescribed in metalinguistic texts. When a variant could be explained as an obvious typographic error, it was reassigned to its proper variant; variants other than the four main forms here examined, such as *κορωνιός, κορονιός* (discussed in Section 4), were assigned to the category ‘other’. The number of ‘other’ variants is negligible. It should be pointed out that variation exists not only on the same website but also within the same article, with two or more variants appearing in 5.10%, 12.21%, and 6% of the articles respectively in Phases 1, 2, and 3.⁹

⁹ See, for example, ‘Κοροναϊός: Στην Ελλάδα από ώρα σε ώρα δύο Έλληνες από την Ουγκάν’, in.gr, 9 February 2020, <https://www.in.gr/2020/02/09/greece/koronaioi-stin-ellada-apo-ora-se-ora-dyo-ellines-apo-tin-ouxan/>, in which all four variants appear (perhaps on purpose, in order for the article to be more accessible to internet searches).

Table 5 Occurrences of variants in the corpus of news articles**Phase 1**

websites		articles	articles with more		Variants										Total
		with any			than 1 variant	<i>κορωνοϊός</i>		<i>κορονοϊός</i>		<i>κοροναϊός</i>		<i>κορωναιϊός</i>		other	
		variants	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1	news247.gr	37	4	10.81	4	2.78	34	23.61	102	70.83	4	2.78	0	0.00	144
2	in.gr	36	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	2.40	118	94.40	4	3.20	0	0.00	125
3	newsbeast.gr	42	1	2.38	0	0.00	28	21.05	97	72.93	8	6.02	0	0.00	133
4	kathimerini.gr	57	4	7.02	27	12.56	57	26.51	127	59.07	4	1.86	0	0.00	215
5	lifo.gr	14	0	0.00	0	0.00	17	54.84	12	38.71	2	6.45	0	0.00	31
6	news.gr	21	2	9.52	2	3.33	18	30.00	37	61.67	3	5.00	0	0.00	60
Total		207	11	5.31	33	4.66	157	22.18	493	69.63	25	3.53	0	0.00	708

Phase 2

websites		articles			Variants										Total
		with any variants	articles with more than 1 variant												
					<i>κορωνοϊός</i>		<i>κορονοϊός</i>		<i>κοροναϊός</i>		<i>κορωναιϊός</i>		other		
		#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
1	news247.gr	5,668	412	7.27	421	2.79	12,364	81.91	2,284	15.13	20	0.13	5	0.03	15,094
2	in.gr	7,613	1,584	20.81	2,206	8.57	1,881	7.31	21,433	83.30	167	0.65	42	0.16	25,729
3	newsbeast.gr	8,520	526	6.17	461	1.98	20,681	88.68	2,142	9.18	33	0.14	4	0.02	23,321

4	kathimerini.gr	4,413	318	7.21	8,797	86.14	705	6.90	655	6.41	47	0.46	8	0.08	10,212
5	lifo.gr	3,590	475	13.23	8,699	68.18	568	4.45	3,392	26.59	94	0.74	5	0.04	12,758
6	news.gr	3,395	740	21.80	206	1.56	1,231	9.32	11,730	88.84	29	0.22	7	0.05	13,203
Total		33,199	4,055	12.21	20,790	20.72	37,430	37.31	41,636	41.50	390	0.39	71	0.07	100,317

Phase 3

websites		articles			Variants										Total
		with any variants	articles with more		<i>κορωνοϊός</i>		<i>κορονοϊός</i>		<i>κοροναϊός</i>		<i>κορωναιός</i>		other		
			#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	
1	news247.gr	388	9	2.32	41	5.18	749	94.57	2	0.25	0	0.00	0	0.00	792
2	in.gr	595	74	12.44	130	10.51	135	10.91	971	78.50	1	0.08	0	0.00	1,237
3	newsbeast.gr	518	9	1.74	14	1.44	952	97.94	6	0.62	0	0.00	0	0.00	972
4	kathimerini.gr	370	18	4.86	515	89.41	59	10.24	1	0.17	1	0.17	0	0.00	576
5	lifo.gr	246	15	6.10	501	94.89	22	4.17	1	0.19	4	0.76	0	0.00	528
6	news.gr	244	43	17.62	5	0.69	72	9.99	644	89.32	0	0.00	0	0.00	721
7	newsbomb.gr	534	24	4.49	66	5.98	1035	93.83	2	0.18	0	0.00	0	0.00	1,103
8	dikaiologitika.gr	258	12	4.65	54	12.50	376	87.04	2	0.46	0	0.00	0	0.00	432
9	skai.gr	360	58	16.11	548	73.76	192	25.84	3	0.40	0	0.00	0	0.00	743
10	newsit.gr	563	16	2.84	26	1.66	1536	98.15	3	0.19	0	0.00	0	0.00	1,565
11	protothema.gr	327	16	4.89	437	89.00	37	7.54	9	1.83	6	1.22	2	0.41	491

12	cnn.gr	349	19	5.44	955	95.98	40	4.02	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	995
13	zougla.gr	573	17	2.97	791	87.79	107	11.88	0	0.00	3	0.33	0	0.00	901
14	ert.gr	138	6	4.35	23	9.79	211	89.79	1	0.43	0	0.00	0	0.00	235
15	iefimerida.gr	600	45	7.50	1356	93.91	82	5.68	2	0.14	2	0.14	2	0.14	1,444
16	enikos.gr	32	1	3.13	1	1.56	63	98.44	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	64
17	naftemporiki.gr	475	27	5.68	496	85.08	78	13.38	6	1.03	3	0.51	0	0.00	583
18	efsyn.gr	352	6	1.70	19	3.68	494	95.55	2	0.39	2	0.39	0	0.00	517
Total		6,922	415	6.00	5,978	43.01	6,240	44.90	1,655	11.91	22	0.16	4	0.03	13,899

In what follows, we discuss the most important patterns of variation identified in Table 5, sorting out the results by phase and identifying the types of change from each phase to the next.

6.1 Phase 1: Variation without prescriptivism

The percentages for the four prescribed variants in the corpus of Phase 1 are: 4.66% for *κορωνοϊός*, 22.18% for *κορονοϊός*, 69.63% for *κοροναϊός*, and 3.53% for *κορωναιϊός*. Hence, the preferred spelling of the first constituent in Phase 1 was <o> and the preferred ‘thematic vowel’ was -α-. (The term ‘thematic -α-’ will be used hereafter without quotation marks; the reader should be reminded however that -α- is actually the suffix of the corona-constituent and not a thematic vowel.)

As pointed out already, Phase 1 has been unattended by prescriptivism; that is, we have not located in the media any metalinguistic text of that period suggesting a particular variant, apart from a discussion in *lexilogia.gr* (21/04/2014). It seems that the standards of this period were set by the medical doctors and the related professions – tacitly, without metalinguistic comment. *Κορωναιϊός* is perhaps the term appearing most frequently in scientific reference works of the period, in medical textbooks and dictionaries, such as Michailidis and Vezou-Magouti (2005), Gardikas (2005), Papatsiros (2015), and Chatzipanagiotou and Legakis (2017). The other variant with thematic -α-, *κοροναϊός*, is also common and it appears in publications such as Hellenic Society for Infectious Diseases and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2015), Bennett *et al.* (2020), and others.

A whole paradigm of neological compounds in these reference works seems to follow the same morphological pattern: *αρεναϊός* (arenavirus), *παπιλομαϊός* (papillomavirus), *παποβαϊός* (papovavirus), *πικορναϊός* (picornavirus), *τογκαϊός* (togavirus) (*lexilogia.gr*, 21/04/2014). In a search of 1 April 2022 in Google Scholar, we found 30 scientific publications before 2018 using the variants with -α- (*κοροναϊός*: 18 texts; *κορωναιϊός*: 12 texts) and only 16 using the variants with thematic -ο- (*κορονοϊός*: 13 texts; *κορωνοϊός*: 3 texts). All publications were in medicine and related fields. After 2019, this trend was reversed: 576 publications use the variants with thematic -ο- (*κορωνοϊός*: 313 texts; *κορονοϊός*: 263 texts) and only 67 the variants with thematic -α- (*κοροναϊός*: 46 texts; *κορωναιϊός*: 21 texts). Most of the newer publications were in fields other than medicine, several in linguistics and discourse analysis.

For additional evidence, we looked at two reference corpora of Modern Greek. As of 17 May 2020, no variants of the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’ were found in the reference Corpus of Greek Texts (CGT/ΣΕΚ) (2011), a corpus of 30 million words with texts in the period 1990–2010 classified by genre (Goutsos, 2010). In the corpus Greek Web 2019 (elTenTen19, <https://www.sketchengine.eu/eltenten-greek-corpus/>), a monitor corpus of internet texts totaling 2.5 billion words up to January 2020, we found occurrences of all four variants under the genre/topic labels ‘News’ (N) and ‘Health’ (H): *κοροναϊός* (N: 38, H: 39 occurrences), *κορονοϊός* (N: 23, H: 23), *κορωνοϊός* (N: 1, H: 2), and *κορωναιός* (N: 6, H: 0). Clearly, in both genres the preferred spelling was <o> and the preferred thematic vowel was -α-.

A reasonable hypothesis on the basis of the above data could be that the trend towards the variants with thematic -o- (see Figure 3) had already started in Phase 1, following the increased appearance of the word in the mass media. This continuing change towards orthographically and morphologically ‘simpler’ forms is also what we see when we examine the data for Phases 2 and 3, to which we now turn our attention.

6.2 Phase 2 and Phase 3: Variation with prescriptivism

As mentioned in Section 4, early in Phase 2, at the beginning of the pandemic, four out of the six websites (news247.gr, in.gr, newsbeast.gr, lifo.gr) hosted one or more metalinguistic texts, briefly mentioning the rationale of different prescriptions and adopting one or the other variant. None of those texts was explicit about the editorial policy of the website, and it is a matter of postulation whether any of the websites followed a strict editorial policy; only kathimerini.gr, in.gr, and news.gr confirmed that they were following an explicit editorial policy (personal communication, April 2020). Hence, the effects of prescriptivism, if any, could only be deduced from the patterns of variation observed in the linguistic corpus.

In Table 5 we see that (i) the websites kathimerini.gr and lifo.gr used predominantly the variant *κορωνοϊός* (86.14% and 68.18% respectively); (ii) both news247.gr and newsbeast.gr employed *κορονοϊός* (81.91% and 88.68% respectively); and (iii) in.gr and news.gr favored *κοροναϊός* (83.30% and 88.84% respectively). Comparing the figures for Phase 2 to those of Phase 1, we see that four out of six websites showed a radical shift in usage, opting for a variant different from the one they had used in Phase 1. The percentage of the variant *κορωνοϊός* in kathimerini.gr was only 12.56% in 2013–2014 but it peaked to 86.14% in 2019–2020; this is also the preferred variant in lifo.gr

(68.18%), a website with no occurrences of the word in 2013–2014. The variant *κορονοιός* saw an impressive increase in two websites: news247.gr (from 23.61% in Phase 1 to 81.91% in Phase 2) and newsbeast.gr (from 21.05% to 88.68%). There are fluctuations in the use of the third variant, *κοροναϊός*: its use dropped in in.gr from 94.40% to 83.30% but it increased in news.gr from 61.67% to 88.84%.

Whereas Phase 1 has been unattended by (overt) prescriptivism, Phase 2 and Phase 3 belong, we argue, to a period of variation-with-prescriptivism. Looking at the results in succession, one can discern whether there are changes in the patterns of variation. We have charted the results on the timelines for each website in Figures 1.1–1.6. In each timeline, the grey flag pointing to the left indicates the publication of Sarantakos (24/01/2020); the dark flag pointing to the left marks the publication of Babiniotis (26/01/2020); a right flag indicates the publication *on* the website of a metalinguistic text, cited in the references list of this chapter. Sarantakos (24/1/2020) and news247.gr (27/1/2020) recommend *κορονοιός*, while Babiniotis (26/1/2020), newsbeast.gr (27/1/2020), lifo.gr (30/1/2020), and in.gr (30/1/2020) recommend *κορωναιός*. Two websites, kathimerini.gr and news.gr, did not publish any metalinguistic text. Each variant in the legend and in the timelines of Figures 1.1–1.6 is represented by a different shade; the flags are also shaded accordingly.

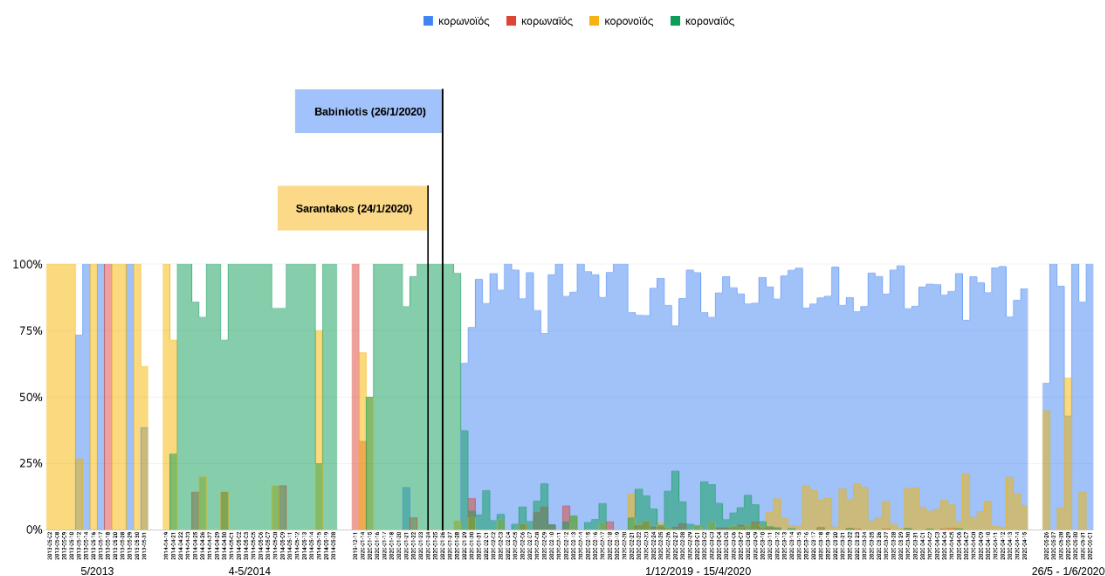


Figure 1.1 Timeline for the website kathimerini.gr

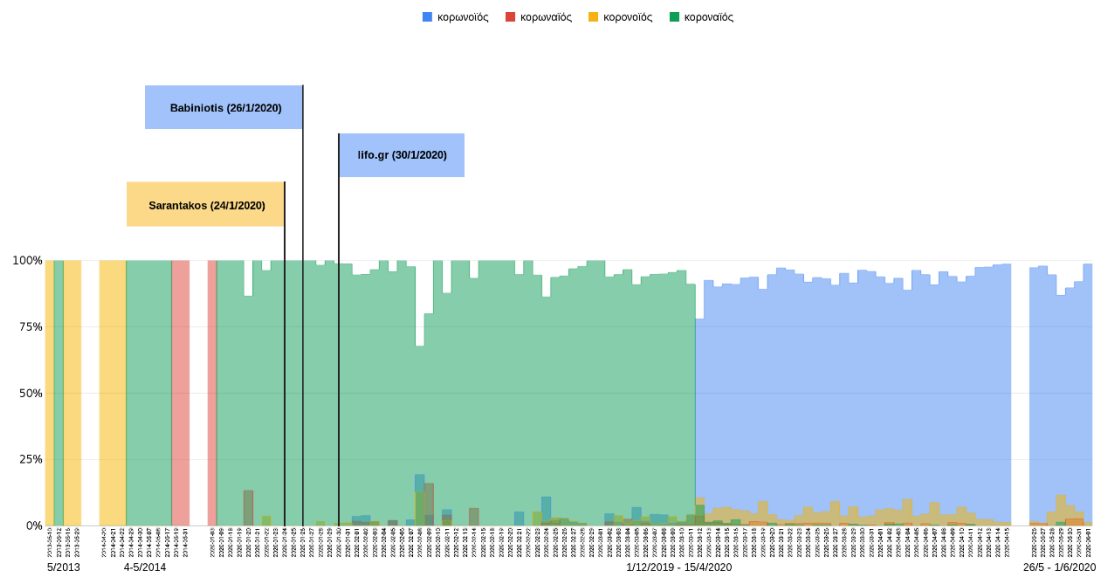


Figure 1.2 Timeline for the website lifo.gr

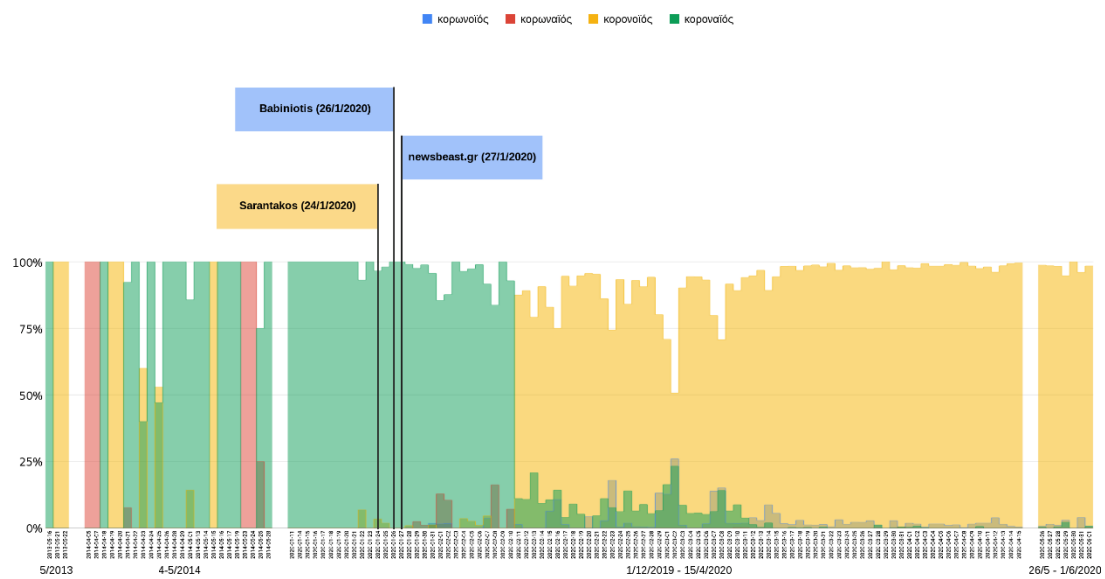


Figure 1.3 Timeline for the website newsbeast.gr

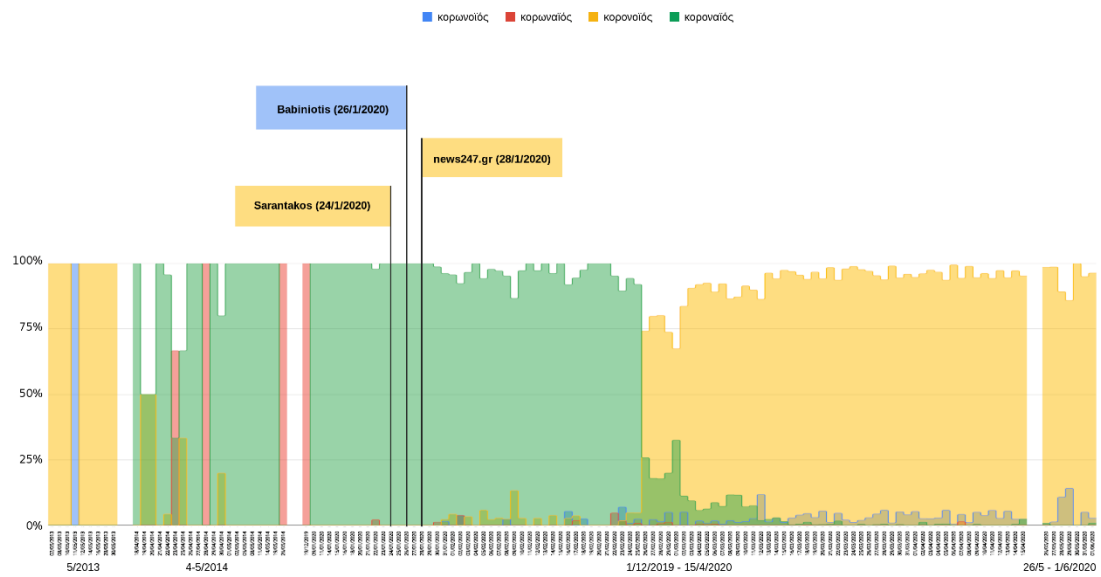


Figure 1.4 Timeline for the website news247.gr

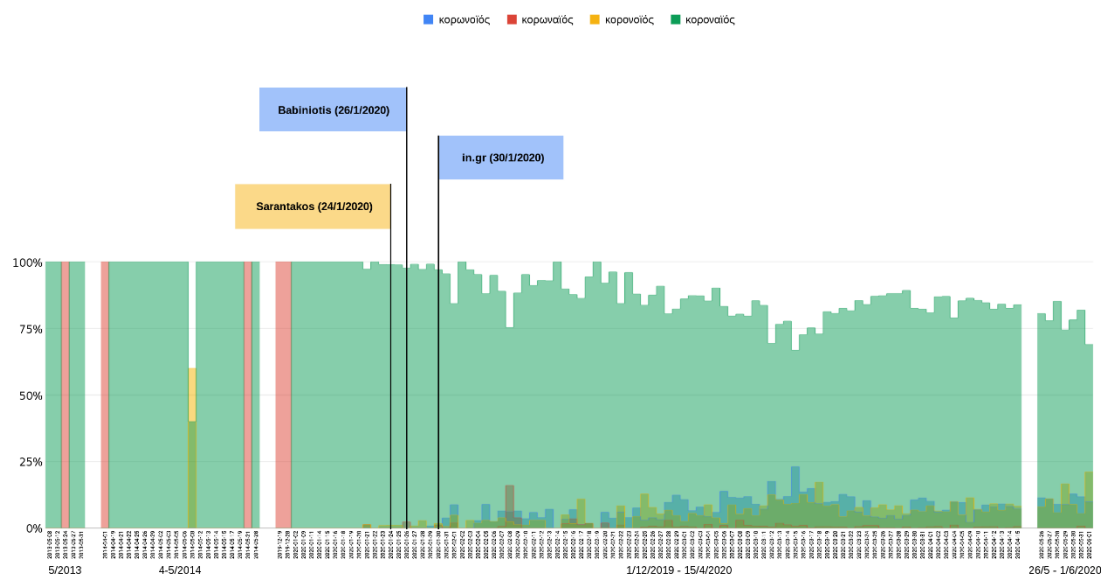


Figure 1.5 Timeline for the website in.gr

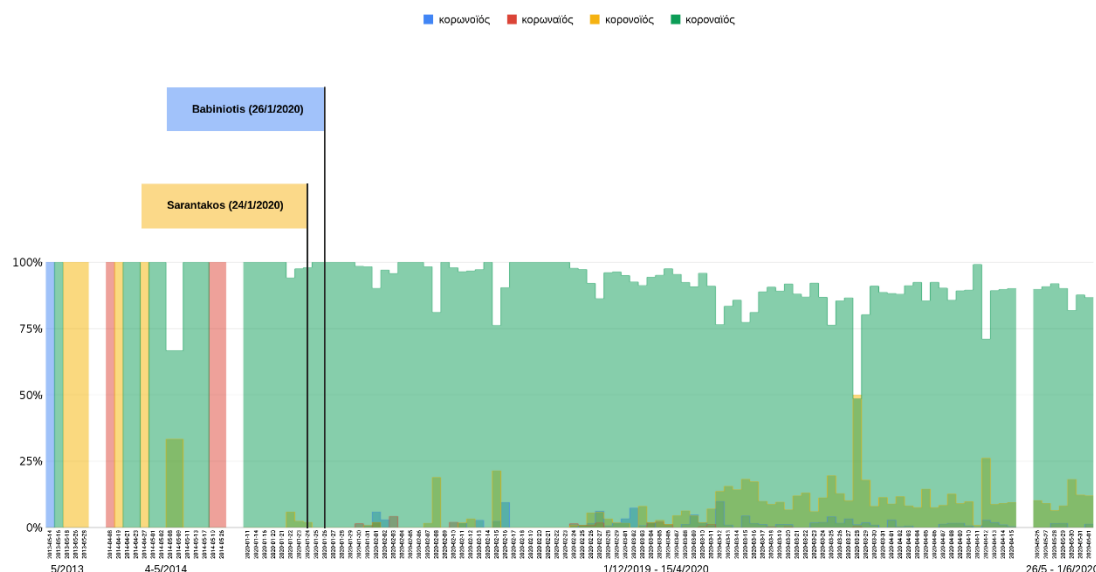


Figure 1.6 Timeline for the website news.gr

At least two different patterns can be discerned in the above timelines. In the timeline for kathimerini.gr (Figure 1.1) and lifo.gr (Figure 1.2) we see a pattern with considerable variation in Phase 1 followed by a sudden change some time after the beginning of the pandemic and – most importantly – after the publication of metalinguistic texts: *κορωναιός* is abandoned and replaced by *κορωνοϊός*. There is a “change point” (see Malory, 2021) which signals a possible influence of prescriptivism or a change in editorial policy or both (kathimerini.gr, as already mentioned, confirmed this editorial change). The same pattern is also detected in the timelines for newsbeast.gr (Figure 1.3) and news247.gr (Figure 1.4), but this time the change is towards a different variant: *κορωναιός* is replaced by *κορωνοϊός*. Finally, in.gr (Figure 1.5) and news.gr (Figure 1.6) are the two websites that seem to have employed consistently the variant *κορωναιός* through all three phases of the corpus. Again, this consistent use, in which no change points can be discerned, signals the influence of a lasting editorial policy (confirmed for news.gr through personal communication, as above-mentioned) and, hence, of prescriptivism.

There is a legitimate question: Is there a winner? Which variant is most common overall, irrespective of particular websites? The enlarged Phase 3 corpus, with data from 18 websites, was compiled in order to answer this question. Table 6 shows the percentages of the use of each variant in all three phases, first for the six websites (first

three columns) of Phases 1 and 2, and then for the total of the 18 websites (last column). (The negligible percentages for ‘other’ variants are omitted.)

Table 6 Overall (column) percentages of the four main variants in news websites

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 3
	6 sites			18 sites
<i>κορωνοϊός</i>	4.66	20.72	24.99	43.01
<i>κορονοϊός</i>	22.18	37.31	41.21	44.90
<i>κοροναϊός</i>	3.53	0.39	00.12	0.16
<i>κορωναιός</i>	69.63	41.50	33.67	11.91

The most common variants are *κορονοϊός* and *κορωνοϊός* (44.90% and 43.01% respectively); thus, overall, the variants with thematic -o- (87.91%) are preferred over variants with -α- (12.07%). The variant *κορονοϊός* seems to be the winner: 41.21% in six websites, 44.90% in all 18 websites.

However, comparing the percentages of each variant for their overall use in the three phases of the corpus should not hide from our view an important fact about their distribution, for which we must look more carefully at the data in Table 5. In Phase 3, the highest percentages for *κορωνοϊός* range from 73.76% to 95.98% in eight different websites, for *κορονοϊός* from 87.04% to 98.44% in eight different websites, while *κοροναϊός*, as already seen, is employed consistently in only two websites, in.gr (78.50%) and news.gr (89.32%). This means that the use of each variant is highly ‘compartmentalized’: starting with Phase 2, all websites make consistent use of a dominant variant (in other words, there is a preferred variant for each website). Compartmentalization occurs already in Phases 1 and 2, but it seems to persist and increase in Phase 3: in Phase 2, the lowest value is 68.18% and the highest is 88.84% across variants, but in Phase 3 the lowest is 73.76% and the highest is 98.44%.

This tendency towards compartmentalization is displayed in the boxplot graph of Figure 2.

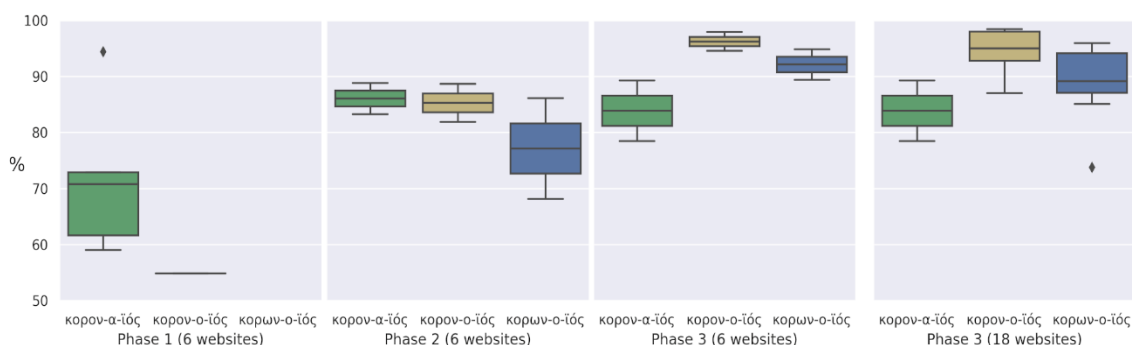


Figure 2 Compartmentalization in the use of the variants

Compartmentalization indicates that there is no clear winner. And perhaps we should not have worried to check whether there was one – this, after all, is the concern of prescriptivists. But even if there is no clear winner, it should not be underestimated that, overall, as seen in Table 6, in all 18 websites (Phase 3), the variants with thematic -ο- (87.91%) are preferred over the variants with -α- (12.07%). What's more, there is a clear tendency over time, shown in Figure 3: in all six websites for which we have comparable data, the variants with -ο- (solid lines) are on the increase; the opposite is the case for the variants with -α- (dotted lines), irrespective of the spelling of the first constituent (<ο> or <ω>). It seems, then, that morphology (the thematic vowel) and not orthography (the spelling of the first constituent) is leading the changes shown in Figure 3. One would expect the opposite to be the case, if this change was the effect of prescriptivism: since the rules of spelling are entirely normative, spelling rather than morphology is the area where prescriptivism should be more influential. We come back to this issue in the conclusions.

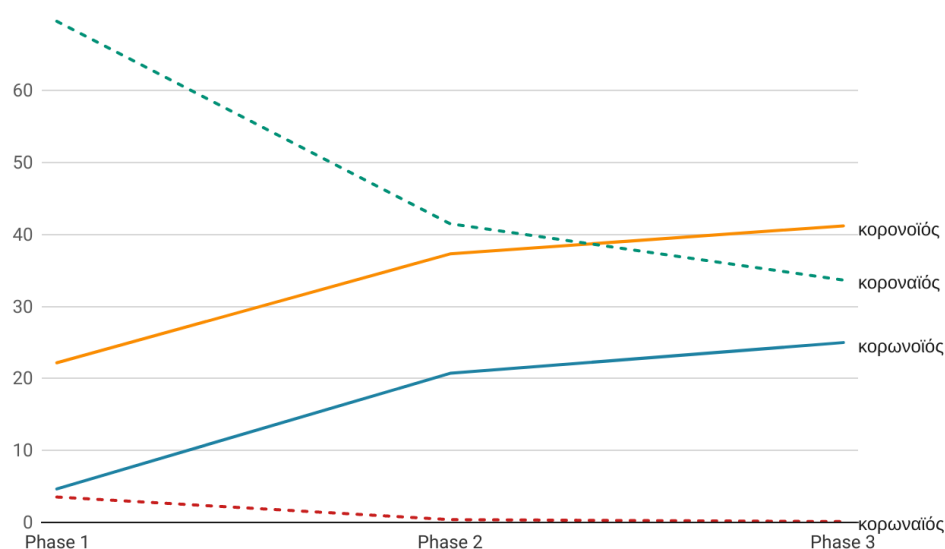


Figure 3 Percentages of the prescribed variants by phase

A further corroboration of the tendency towards thematic -o- depicted in Figure 3 is provided by the study of neologisms with the same first constituent, *κορωνο-* or *κορονο-*, such as *κορωνο-ομόλογο* or *κορωνομόλογο* (‘corona bond’), *κορωνοπάρτι* (‘corona party’), etc., as well as derived words such as the adjective *κορωνοϊκός* or *κορωνοϊκός*. Neologisms increased with time, from zero occurrences in Phase 1, to four in Phase 2, to 143 in Phase 3. The thematic -o- variants are dominant in all these neological compounds. Overall, from the 148 detected occurrences of 28 neologisms (lexemes), 139 appeared with thematic -o- and only nine with -α-. Of those with -α-, seven occurred in in.gr. Indeed, the -α- variant is the dominant one in this website; however, only seven of the 52 neological compounds in in.gr had thematic -α-, a very low score (13.56%) compared to the percentage of the preferred variant *κορωνοϊός* in the same website during Phase 3 (78.50%). The most frequent neologism proved to be *κορωνο(-)ομόλογο* (‘corona bond’) with 84 occurrences.

Let us now look at Phase 3 tweets. Table 7 shows the results for all occurrences of each variant, with or without the hashtag symbol #. The variant *κορωνοϊός* dominates (60.61%), the thematic -o- is preferred in 93.41% of the cases, and the first constituent is spelled with <o> in 65.61% of the cases. Perhaps it is of some importance that the variant *κορωνοϊός* shows similar frequencies with or without hashtags (≈33%), while *κορωνοϊός* appears much more frequently with a hashtag. Variants with -α- are very rare in hashtags (just six occurrences, 0.53%). To put it metonymically, Twitter abides by

Sarantakos rather than Babiniotis (see Section 4 on the two main poles of prescriptivism).

Table 7 Occurrences of the prescribed variants in tweets

tweets with variants		tweets with more than 1 variant		tweets with more than 2 variants							
#		#	%	#	%						
1,822		202	11.09	32	1.76						
variants											
κορωνοϊός		κορονοϊός		κοροναϊός		κορωναιός		other		total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
683	32.80	1,262	60.61	104	5.00	28	1.34	5	0.24	2,082	100

The results for the Phase 3 corpus of radio broadcasts are shown in Table 8, where the occurrences of [koronoios] are distributed between hosts and guests. The percentages are calculated relative to a few other variants heard in the corpus (such as [koropos] – see above, Section 4 – and [koviⁿd], ‘covid’). Interestingly enough, there was no occurrence of the variant [koronaios]. In the speech corpus, the dominance of [koronoios], i.e. of the thematic -o-, is overwhelming: 97.80% (100% relative to [koronaios]).

Table 8 Occurrences of [koronoios] in the speech corpus

radioshow	[koronoios]						other					
	host		guest		Total		host		guest		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Storm Alert	21	100	3	100	24	100						
Ruthless	17	100	2	100	19	100						
Whatever	22	91.67	2	100	24	92.31	2	8.33			2	7.69
	16	100	6	100	22	100						
Total	76	97.44	13	100	89	97.80	2	2.56			2	2.20

7 Discussion and Conclusions

In our study of the possible effects of prescriptivism on usage, we followed an established corpus-linguistic research paradigm, whose basic design we presented in

Section 2. The use of monitor corpora has been necessitated by the fact that the neologism under study, the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’, was almost contemporaneous with our research and it had not been extensively recorded in linguistic corpora.

We treated the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’ as a complex variable, with manifestations at both the linguistic and the metalinguistic level. As a linguistic variable, the Greek word for ‘coronavirus’ exhibits variation which is both orthographic, <ο>/<ω>, and morphological, -ο-/-α-, the latter alternative being attested also in speech. Considerable variation was also found at the metalinguistic level, with various authors opting for different variants of the word.

Phase 2 (December 2019 – 15 April 2020) and Phase 3 (26 May – 1 June 2020) are the two periods we focused on in our study. The monitor corpus we compiled for Phase 2 contains texts from six websites, while the monitor corpus for Phase 3 contains texts from 12 additional websites at a slightly later period. The idea was to use the Phase 3 corpus to test whether any tendencies detected in Phase 2 had by then crystallized. We also looked back at an earlier period, Phase 1 (May 2013 and April–May 2014), when the terms for the word ‘coronavirus’ were first introduced to the public.

Phase 1, unlike the two subsequent phases, was a period of variation-without-prescriptivism, i.e. without overt prescriptivism. If there was a norm, it was being exercised silently and did not surface in metalinguistic discourse. We found that during that early period the variant(s) with thematic -α- prevailed in the news websites (73.16%), with *κορωναιός* as the dominant variant (69.63%), while the number of thematic -ο- variants was not negligible either (26.84%), with *κορονοιός* as the most common of the two (22.18%). As for the orthography of the compound, 74.29% of the variants used <ω> in the first constituent (see Table 6). On the basis of these data, it was reasonable to assume that the news articles followed the norm of the professionals, who, during that early period, were the health experts, not the linguists. And indeed, a glimpse into medical textbooks, dictionaries, and journal articles by health professionals suggests a pattern of variation similar to the one found in news articles: the variants with thematic -α- and with <ω> in the first constituent of the compound prevail in all reference works, while *κορωνα-* (or *κορονα-*) is also used as the first constituent in a whole series of compound virological terms. In other words, in Phase 1 the discourse of news articles seemed to ‘correlate’ with the discourse of the experts.

Phase 2 (December 2019 – April 2020) is almost contemporaneous with the publication of most of the metalinguistic texts (January – April 2020). The time lag

between metalinguistic and linguistic texts, if any, would have been too short to be considered significant (by the standards of the corpus-linguistic design we were following). Besides, it seems that the opposite could very well be the case: the metalinguistic texts were being published as a response to the variation accompanying the exploding use of ‘coronavirus’.

There was a significant change of roles in Phase 2. New actors, the ‘language experts’ (craft professionals and folk-linguists), had now entered the scene. While their most preferred spelling was still <ω> (49/57), the variants which the language experts most strongly recommended were now the variants with -o- (54/57) (see Table 1) – the opposite of what used to be the case in Phase 1. Usage showed a similar pattern: the variants with -o- were dominant (58.03%), while the preferred spelling of the first constituent was <ω> (62.22%). Again, usage seemed to correlate with the prescription, despite the lack of a time lag between metalanguage and language.

In Phase 3 (the period with the longer time lag from the metalinguistic texts), *κορονοϊός* established itself as the dominant variant (41.21%). Thematic -o- was preferred in 66.20% and <ω> in 58.66% of all cases. We hypothesized that, if there was a trend in the six websites that we had also searched for Phase 1 and 2, this trend would show more clearly in the much larger corpus of news articles from the 18 websites with the highest traffic. Indeed, this last corpus of news articles showed the thematic -o- variants (87.91%) to predominate, with *κορονοϊός* as the most common variant (44.90%), while the <ω> spelling had lost some of its momentum (54.92%). Thematic -o- was also dominant in the formation of several neological compounds used in journalistic discourse (but not in medical texts). The rising percentages of the -o- variants from Phase 1 of the corpus (26.84%), to Phase 2 (58.03%), Phase 3 (six websites, 66.20%) and on to Phase 3 (18 websites, 87.91%) reveal a solid tendency, which was further corroborated from our analysis of tweets (93.41%) and radio broadcasts (97.80%). The medium of the text (written, hybrid, oral) or its formality (written formal, written informal, spoken informal) also affected the spread of the -o- variants; the alternative -α- variants were not tolerated in hybrid, oral, or informal media. It seemed that the two parts of the linguistic variable, the morphological (-o-/-α-) and the orthographic (<o>/<ω>), were following divergent paths, with the morphological part leading the change (see Figure 3).

But this trend, we argued, should not hide from our view the fact that the percentages for each and every variant in particular websites remained high. Even the least preferred

variant, *κοροναϊός*, was employed consistently in at least two websites, *in.gr* (78.50%) and *news.gr* (89.32%). The use of each variant was found to be highly compartmentalized. Compartmentalization had already started in Phases 1 and 2, and reached new peaks in Phase 3 (see Figure 2).

These two changes in usage, the rise of the thematic *-o-* variants, on the one hand, and the compartmentalization of the variants, on the other, point towards slightly different, if not opposite, directions: towards the prevalence of one variant, on the one hand, and towards the entrenchment of a mediatic territory for each variant, on the other. Which one was the effect of prescriptivism?

The answer lies in variation, but variation exists not only in the language but also in the metalanguage. Metalinguistic discourse was itself variable, with prescriptions varying with respect to the authority issuing a corrective instruction, the preferred variants, the rationale behind each proposal. It is customary for a standard (i.e. a prescribed) variety to be spoken of as being uniform or tending towards uniformity under pressure from prescriptivism (Milroy, 2001). This conception of uniformity forms part of the standard language ideology and should not be taken at face value (Moschonas, 2019: 35; Rutten & Vosters, 2021: 77–78). Just as there are no uniform varieties at the linguistic level, there might also be no uniformly prescribed varieties at the metalinguistic level.¹⁰

The existence of metalinguistic variation implies that the spread of a prescribed variant need not be uniform across different genres, registers, platforms, or media in order for prescriptivism to be considered effective. But if metalinguistic discourse is itself variable, then it cannot correlate with linguistic variation in any direct and quantifiable way. The success of one prescription could very well be the failure of another. Furthermore, abrupt breaks in the patterns of variation could be indications of prescriptivism as much as the lack of change. A change in the frequencies of variants might be the effect of prescriptivism as much as no change at all.

¹⁰ As Moschonas (2019) points out, Greek prescriptive metalinguistic discourse exhibits, historically, a high degree of variation, i.e. it is structured around different and sometimes conflicting usage instructions, which form part of diverging larger repertoires, subject to different language ideologies and policies. For metalinguistic variation in English, see, among others, Anderwald (2016: 246); see Moschonas (2022: 345–347) on how other studies of prescriptivism handle variation in the metalanguage.

The more effective prescriptions seem to be those which are promoting an already established usage trend. Hinrichs *et al.* (2015) have shown prescriptivism to be more effective when it follows the usage trend that they call “colloquialization”. Poplack (2005: 317) stresses the priority of “tacit variable constraints [...] over all other influences”. The dominance of the thematic -o- in Greek compounds might very well be such a usage trend, subject to “an underlying grammar of variability” (Poplack, 2015: 317). In the case of the Greek variants for ‘coronavirus’, it cannot be easily decided whether this trend had been reinforced by prescriptivism or whether prescriptivism had only managed to legitimize an independently evolving trend (see Rutten & Vosters, 2021, for several examples that delve into this issue). But if the most prescriptivism can do is to serve an already established usage trend, then, for this same reason, it should be considered to be vacuous, superfluous, or redundant. Erroneously, this kind of trendy prescriptivism is often thought of as descriptive.

The variables most susceptible to prescriptive influence, are, one would think, the spelling variants, for the obvious reason that spelling can only be decided arbitrarily, i.e. by prescription. Yet, what we have seen in this chapter is that it is with respect to spelling variants that prescriptivism fails. The variants that acquired currency were morphological, not orthographic. Even if prescriptivism had not failed the test of morphology, it would certainly be the case that it has been defeated on its own ground of orthography.

On the other hand, the compartmentalization of variation, i.e. the fact that different policies and practices are exercised, more or less consistently, in different cases or domains (as we have seen to be the case with the news websites), could be a more reliable indicator of the influence of prescriptivism. Although prescriptivism aims at eliminating variation, it could also, on a larger scale, introduce or foster some variation, albeit in a highly compartmentalized manner.

Finally, let it be noted that any attempt to “correlate” prescriptivism with patterns of variation depends on how the metalinguistic and the linguistic corpora are compiled. If, as it is often thought, certain genres, registers, or media are the laboratories of prescriptivism, the battlefield where prescriptivism is being practised and tested, then, perhaps, what is considered to be a linguistic corpus could not, after all, be purely linguistic. Any linguistic corpus is also in part *metalinguistic*. It could function as an exemplar or a model for other texts possibly influenced by it. It would then be necessary

to examine a whole series of linguistic corpora, a series that extends as far as prescriptivism and variation can reach.

Acknowledgements

The opportunity for a study of prescriptivism “in real time” was foreseen by Spiros Moschonas, who supervised our research project and wrote this chapter. Alex Hasani and Thodoris Paraskevas (Spiros’s students in his undergraduate class of Media Sociolinguistics in the spring of 2020) studied several news websites, other than those reported on here, and came up with very promising preliminary results. Finding ways to ask big data whether usage was responding to metalinguistic mandates or actually following a pattern of its own, proved to be a complex task, much more challenging than we had anticipated; it was carried out by Costas Mourlas and Thodoris Paraskevas. Let it be said that all research was conducted while all three of us were in quarantine. We wish to thank Vivi Savvidou for the data – or perhaps the reassuring scarcity of data – from the two older corpora, CGT/ΕΣΚ (2011) and Greek Web 2019 (elTenTen19). We are thankful to Angela Ralli for her clarification of several issues related to the morphology of the Greek compounds. We are also grateful to the editors and the two anonymous reviewers for their careful and generous review; we have followed most of their ‘correctives’.

References

Primary Sources (in chronological order; last accessed 8 April 2022)

lexilogia (21/04/2014 – 10/12/2021) ‘coronavirus = κορονοϊός, κοροναϊός’.

<https://www.lexilogia.gr/threads/coronavirus-κορονοϊός-κοροναϊός.14814/flash.gr> [=Komninou, E. originally attributed to Konstantopoulou, A.] (22/01/2020)
 ‘Κορονοϊός ή κοροναϊός: Πώς γράφεται ο ιός που έχει προκαλέσει παγκόσμια ανησυχία’ [‘Κορονοϊός or Κοροναϊός? How is the virus stirring worldwide concern spelled?’]. <https://www.flash.gr/world/1569953/koronoios-i-koronaiois>

Sarantakos, N. (24/01/2020) ‘Κορονοϊός ή κοροναϊός;’ [‘Κορονοϊός or κοροναϊός?’].
<https://sarantakos.wordpress.com/2020/01/24/coronavirus/>

Babiniotis, G. (26/01/2020) ‘Κινεζικός ιός με πρόβλημα και γλωσσικό!... κορωνΑϊός ή κορωνΟϊός ή κορωνιός; Και: κορώνα ή κορόνα;’ [‘Chinese virus also poses a linguistic problem! κορωνΑϊός or κορωνΟϊός or κορωνιός; Also: κορώνα or κορόνα;’].

- https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=796375910866391&id=100014819679993 [= Babiniotis, G. (n.d.) ‘Κινεζικός ιός: κορωνΑϊός ή κορωνΟϊός ή κορωνιός;’. <https://www.babiniotis.gr/lexilogika/leksilogika-2/467-kinezikos-ios-koronaivos-i-koronoios-i-koronios>
- Wictionary (n.d. [January 2020]) s.v. κορονοϊός.
<https://el.wiktionary.org/wiki/κορονοϊός>
- newsbeast.gr (27/01/2020) ‘Ο Γιώργος Μπαμπινιώτης απαντά: ΚορωνΑϊός ή κορωνΟϊός ή κορωνιός;’ [‘Giorgos Babiniotis answers: ΚορωνΑϊός or κορωνΟϊός or κορωνιός;’]. <https://www.newsbeast.gr/greece/arthro/5941128/o-giorgos-mpampiniotis-apanta-koronaivos-i-koronoios-i-koronios>
- news247.gr (28/01/2020) ‘Κορονοϊός ή κοροναϊός; Ποιο είναι το σωστό τελικά’ [‘Κορονοϊός or κοροναϊός; Which after all is the correct one’].
<https://www.news247.gr/koinonia/koronoios-i-koronaivos-poio-einai-to-sosto-telika.7572513.html>
- enikos.gr (30/01/2020) ‘Κορονοϊός, κορωνοϊός ή κοροναϊός; – “Μάχη” για την ορθογραφία’ [‘Κορονοϊός, κορωνοϊός or κοροναϊός; – “Battle” for orthography’].
<https://www.enikos.gr/society/koronoios-koronoios-i-koronaivos-machi-gia-tin-orthografia/1372223/>
- in.gr (30/01/2020) ‘Κοροναϊός ή κορωνοϊός; -Τι απαντά ο Μπαμπινιώτης;’ [‘Κοροναϊός ή κορωνοϊός: What Babiniotis answered’].
<https://www.in.gr/2020/01/30/plus/perierga/koronaivos-koronaivos-ti-apanta-o-mpampiniotis/>
- iefimerida.gr (01/02/2020) ‘Κοροναϊός ή κορονοϊός; Ή μήπως, τελικά, κορωνοϊός; – Ποια γραφή είναι προτιμότερη’ [‘Κοροναϊός or κορονοϊός; Or maybe, after all, κορωνοϊός? – Which is the preferred spelling’].
<https://www.iefimerida.gr/ellada/koronaivos-i-koronoios-i-mipos-telika-koronoios>
- lifo.gr (30/01/2020) ‘Ο Μπαμπινιώτης εξηγεί γιατί είναι Κορωνοϊός κι όχι Κοροναϊός’ [‘Babiniotis explains why it is Κορωνοϊός and not Κοροναϊός’].
<https://mikropragmata.lifo.gr/zoi/o-mpampiniotis-eksigei-giati-einai-koronoios-ki-ochi-koronaivos/>
- gazzetta.gr (30/01/2020) ‘Ούτε κορονοϊός, ούτε κοροναϊός: Ο Μπαμπινιώτης εξηγεί γιατί είναι κορωνοϊός’ [‘Neither κορονοϊός nor κοροναϊός: Babiniotis explains why it should be κορωνοϊός’]. <https://www.gazzetta.gr/plus/koinwnia/article/1440493/oyte-koronoios-oyte-koronaivos-o-mpampiniotis-exigei-giati-einai-koronoios-pic>

- Sarantakos, N. (06/02/2020) ‘Ποιο από τα δυο είναι σωστό;’ [‘Which is the correct one?’]. <https://sarantakos.wordpress.com/2020/02/06/ert3/>
- Konstantinidis, Th. (21/03/2020) ‘επίκαιρο: κορονοϊός, κοροναϊός, κορωναϊός, κορωνοϊός ή κορωνιός;’ [‘Topical: κορονοϊός, κοροναϊός, κορωναϊός, κορωνοϊός or κορωνιός’]. <https://efkozani.gr/επίκαιρο-κορονοϊός-κοροναϊός-κορωνα/>
- Anastassiadis-Symeonidis, A. (06/04/2020). ‘Στα χρόνια της κοινωνικής απόστασης’ [‘In the years of social distance’]. <https://filologos1962.blogspot.com/2020/04/blog-post.html?m=0>
- Hellenic Society for Terminology (14/04/2020) *Αγγλοελληνικό και ελληνοαγγλικό γλωσσάριο όρων της πανδημίας COVID-19, version 1* [English-Greek and Greek-English Glossary of the terms of the pandemic COVID-19, version 1], no longer available. <http://www.eleto.gr/gr/LexicaAndGlossaries.htm> (version 13)
- Charalampakis, Ch. (16/04/2020) ‘Κορονοϊός και ηθικός πανικός’ [‘Coronavirus and moral panic’]. *Χάρτης* 16. <https://www.hartismag.gr/hartis-16/klimakes/koronoios-kai-hoikos-panikos>
- Katsoyannou, M. and Z. Stefanidou (2020) *COVID-19: Το Λεξικό* [COVID-19: The Dictionary]. Athens: Kavvadia Crew [also available online: <https://covid19.algolysis.com/glossary>].

Medical Texts

- Bennett, J.E., Dolin, R. and Blaser, M.J. (2020) *Λοιμώδη νοσήματα: Βασικές αρχές* [Infectious Diseases: Basic Principles] (N. Sypsas, D. Kofteridis, P. Ioannou, trans.). Athens: Parisianou.
- Chatzipanagiotou, S. and Legakis, N. (2017) *Τα μικρόβια και ο άνθρωπος* [Microbes and Humans]. Athens: Ιδιωτική.
- Gardikas, K. (2005) *Ειδική νοσολογία* [Special Nosology]. Athens: Παρισιάνου.
- Hellenic Society for Infectious Diseases and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2015) *Κατευθυντήριες οδηγίες για τη διάγνωση και τη θεραπεία των λοιμώξεων* [Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Infections]. <https://www.openbook.gr/kateythyntiries-odigies-gia-ti-diagnosi-kai-ti-therapeia-ton-loimoxeon/>
- Michailidis, G. and Vezou-Magouti, N. (2005) *Αγγλοελληνικό – Ελληνοαγγλικό Λεξικό των ιατρικών όρων* [English-Greek – Greek-English Dictionary of Medical Terms]. Athens: Κωνσταντάρας.

Papatsiros, V. (2015) *Ειδική παθολογία πεπτικού συστήματος του χοίρου* [*Pathology of the Digestive System of Pigs*]. <https://www.openbook.gr/eidiki-pathologia-peptikou-systimatos-tou-xoiron/>

Secondary sources

- Anderwald, L. (2014) Measuring the success of prescriptivism: Quantitative grammaticography, corpus linguistics and the progressive passive. *English Language and Linguistics* 18 (1), 1–21.
- Anderwald, L. (2016) *Language between Description and Prescription. Verbs and Verb Categories in Nineteenth-Century Grammars of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Auer, A. (2006) Precept and practice: The influence of prescriptivism on the English subjunctive. In C. Dalton-Puffer, N. Ritt, H. Schendl and D. Kastovsky (eds) *Syntax, Style and Grammatical Norms: English from 1500–2000* (pp. 33–53). Frankfurt and Bern: Peter Lang.
- Auer, A. (2009) *The Subjunctive in the Age of Prescriptivism: English and German Developments during the Eighteenth Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dayter, D. (2016) *Discursive Self in Microblogging: Speech Acts, Stories and Self-Praise*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- De Smedt, K. (2021) Contagious “corona” compounding by journalists in a CLARIN newspaper monitor corpus. In C. Navarretta and M. Eskevich (eds) *Selected Papers from the CLARIN Annual Conference 2020* (pp. 83–92). Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings 180, accessed 10 April 2020.
<https://ecp.ep.liu.se/index.php/clarin/article/view/10/10>
- De Vos, M. and Van der Meulen, M. (this volume) Suppressed no more: Prescriptivism and the evaluation of optional variability.
- Goutsos, D. (2010) The Corpus of Greek Texts: A reference corpus for Modern Greek. *Corpora* 5 (1), 29–44.
- Hinrichs, L., Szmrecsanyi, B. and Bohmann, A. (2015) Which-hunting and the Standard English relative clause. *Language* 91 (4), 806–836.
- Kristiansen, T. and N. Coupland (2011) SLICE: Critical perspectives on language (de)standardization. In T. Kristiansen and N. Coupland (eds) *Standard Languages and Language Standards in a Changing Europe* (pp. 11–35). Oslo: Novus Press.

- Langer, N. (2001) *Linguistic Purism in Action: How Auxiliary tun was Stigmatized in Early New High German*. Berlin and New York: de Gruyter.
- Malory, B. (2021) Prescriptivism in action: Evaluating the production and reception of reviewer prescriptivism in Late Modern English. PhD thesis. Lancaster University.
- Milroy, J. (2001) Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5 (4), 530–555.
- Moschonas, S.A. (2019) From language standards to a Standard Language: The case of Modern Greek. *Diacronia* 10 (A142), 1–44.
- Moschonas, S.A. (2020) Correctives and language change. In S. Raineri, M. Sekali and A. Leroux (eds) *Linguistic Correction/Correctness* (pp. 207–224). Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre.
- Moschonas, S.A. (2022) Detecting prescriptivism’s effects on language change: The corpus-linguistic approach. In N. Lavidas and K. Nikiforidou (eds) *Studying Language Change in the 21st Century: Theory and Methodologies* (pp. 315–357). Leiden: Brill.
- Moschonas, S.A. and Paraskevas, Th. (in preparation) ‘Coronavirus’ vs. ‘COVID’: Prescriptivism and variation in the Greek news media.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A. and Nielsen, R.K. (2019) *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019*, accessed 8 April 2022.
<https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2019/>
- Newman, N. Fletcher, R., Schulz, A., Andi, S. and Nielsen, R.K. (2020) *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019*, accessed 8 April 2022.
<https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2020/>
- Owen, J. (2020) Practicing prescriptivism: How copyeditors treat prescriptive rules. In D. Chapman and J.D. Rawlins (eds) *Language Prescription: Values, Ideologies and Identity* (pp. 292–306). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Papanastasiou, G. (2008) *Νεοελληνική ορθογραφία: Ιστορία, θεωρία, εφαρμογή*. Thessaloniki: Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών.
- Percy, C. (1997) Earlier editorial practice vs. later linguistic prescript: Some eighteenth-century illustrations. *English Language Notes* 34 (3), 23–39.
- Pillière, L. (2018) Imposing a norm: The invisible marks of copy editors. In L. Pillière, W. Andrieu, V. Kerfelec and D. Lewis (eds) *Standardising English: Norms and Margins in the History of the English Language* (pp. 252–276). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Pillière, L. (2020) US copy-editors, style guides, and usage guides and their impact on British novels. In D. Chapman and J.D. Rawlins (eds) *Language Prescription: Values, Ideologies and Identity* (pp. 264–291). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Poplack, Sh. (2015) Norme prescriptive, norme communautaire et variation diaphasique: Les variations diasystématiques et leurs interdépendances dans les langues romanes. In K. Kragh and J. Lindschouw (eds) *Actes du Colloque DIA II à Copenhague (19–21 November 2012)* (pp. 293–319). Strasbourg: Société de linguistique romane/ÉliPhi.
- Poplack, Sh., Jarmasz, L.-G., Dion, N. and Rosen, N. (2015) Searching for standard French: The construction and mining of the *Recueil historique des grammaires du français*. *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* 1 (1), 13–55.
- Pullum, G.K. (2009) 50 Years of stupid grammar advice. *The Chronicle of Higher Education – The Chronicle Review* 55 (32), B15.
- Ralli, A. (2007) *Η σύνθεση λέξεων: Διαγλωσσική μορφολογική προσέγγιση*. Athens: Πατάκης.
- Ralli, A. (2013) *Compounding in Modern Greek*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Rutten, G. and Vosters, R. (2021) Language standardization ‘from above’. In W. Ayres-Bennett and J. Bellamy (eds) *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (pp. 65–92). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Straaijer, R. (2016) Attitudes to prescriptivism: An introduction. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 37 (3), 233–242.
- Szmrecsanyi, P. and Engel, A. (2022). A variationist perspective on the comparative complexity of four registers at the intersection of mode and formality. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*, accessed 1 November 2022.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/cllt-2022-0031>
- Triantaphyllidis, M. et al. 1978. *Νεοελληνική Γραμματική (της Δημοτικής)*. Thessaloniki: Ινστιτούτο Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών. [First published 1941.]
- Wikström, P. (2017) I tweet like I talk: Aspects of speech and writing on Twitter. PhD thesis, Karlstad University.
- Yáñez-Bouza, N. (2015) *Grammar, Rhetoric and Usage in English: Preposition Placement 1500–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yáñez-Bouza, N. (2023) Methodological approaches to the study of codification, prescription, and prescriptivism. *Studia Neophilologica* 22 (3), 334–364.