Introduction

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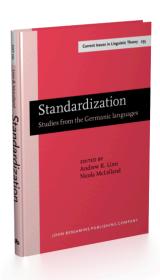
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The fourteen papers in this collection were first presented at the *Standard–Germanic* conference held 4–7 January 2001 at the University of Sheffield.[1] The conference was born of our awareness of the lack of diffusion of standardization studies across language subject boundaries, defined largely by the boundaries of nation-states. Working within our own areas — Norwegian and German — we had at best a nodding acquaintance with developments in one or two of the remaining dozen or so Germanic languages, despite the close historical ties and strong structural similarities among them.

Sadly, the admirable breadth of Heinz Kloss's (1952, [2]1978) monograph on standardization in what he calls the Germanic *Kultursprachen* (lit. "languages of culture") since 1800 has yet to be matched, though it will soon be joined by Deumert & Vandenbussche (forthcoming), whose collection deals with sixteen Germanic languages (not all of which have been traditionally recognized as languages in their own right). Of these sixteen, ten are also represented by contributions in the present volume, which constitute more focussed studies of them. They are: Afrikaans, Dutch (/Flemish), English, Frisian, German, Icelandic, Luxembourgish, Norwegian, Swedish and Yiddish.

The view of standardization in Kloss's study (1952, [2]1978) is a somewhat teleological one — the work is perhaps best known for the coining of the concept of a *Halbsprache*, or "semi-language" (later *Ausbausprache*, a language undergoing elaboration), which might ultimately become a fully-fledged *Abstandsprache* (a language so different from another as to warrant

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[1] In fact, this is not the only volume to result from our conference. The inspiration for Deumert & Vandenbussche's (eds.) forthcoming *Germanic Standardizations, Past and Present*, a comprehensive survey of standardization in the Germanic languages, also grew out of *Standard–Germanic*. The volume will include chapters on Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English, Faroese, Frisian, German, Icelandic, Luxembourgish, Low German, Norwegian, Swedish, Yiddish, Pacific Creoles, Caribbean Creoles, and Scots.

recognition as a separate language: for instance, Afrikaans, recognized as distinct from Dutch; see also Newton's study of Luxembourgish in this volume). The present volume does not aim to provide any such uniform treatment of the progress of standardization in the Germanic languages. Rather, the papers gathered here are valuable precisely because they illustrate a range of recurring themes in research, across the different language-specific disciplines: some well-established lines of enquiry in standardization studies, others new directions worthy of further research.

The 'traditional' view of language planning from above is not neglected here: De Groof provides a history of language planning in Belgium; Feitsma outlines competing democratic and elitist trends in the search for a Frisian standard since the 17th century; and Sandved looks at the (unintended) effects of the language policy of Norwegian governments in the 20th century. However, other trends in standardization studies also emerge.

Several papers in the collection bear witness to the contribution made to the field by historical sociolinguistics over the past two decades. These papers look less at standardization as a process imposed by authorities from above, and consider rather how norms diffuse through different societal groups. Deumert analyses the diffusion of Standard Afrikaans in a corpus of private correspondence between 1880 and 1922 from the perspective of social network theory. Her findings point firstly to the key role of ostensibly 'weak' ties where these are ties of 'mutual endeavour', and secondly show the importance of the notion of a 'critical mass', after which the diffusion of norms may become self-sustaining. Like Deumert, Elspaß also draws on the correspondence of private individuals — in this case letters sent home by migrants in North America — and questions the received view that German was largely standardized by the 19th century. Although German grammar was essentially codified by this time, Elspaß shows conclusively that ordinary people — particularly those with elementary education only — persisted in using regional norms which did not always coincide with codified forms.

Vandenbussche's study of orthography in 19th-century meeting reports from Bruges shows a similar pattern for the case of Dutch orthography in Flanders. He presents a number of spelling systems which existed at the time, but shows that writers from all social classes fail to follow any one system, though varying within clear limits. Zheltukhin's approach to 16th-century Swedish orthography is also a sociolinguistic one. He finds structured variation in spelling, comparable to that found by sociolinguists in modern speech communities, and argues that while the norms of different social groups (here: chanceries) change over time, these various social norms nevertheless remain distinct from one another.

A number of papers reflect the close link between language standardization (particularly maintenance/ control of a standard) and the emergence and preservation of cultural or national identity. Willson's paper on the Icelandic surname debate in the early 20th century demonstrates how an ideological battle was fought out vicariously over a question of onomastics. In ostensibly linguistic discussions about whether to introduce indeclinable surnames in addition to traditional patronymics, often spurious philological arguments formed a thin veil over the real conflict between maintaining the 'purity' of Icelandic culture (particularly as distinct from that of other Scandinavian countries) and the desire to conform to international practice. Likewise, Hohenhaus looks at the upsurge in puristic feeling in Germany against Anglo-American influence in recent years, and deconstructs how seemingly respectable linguistic reasoning is used to exaggerate a perceived 'threat' to the survival of the German language, and hence to the essence of German thought and culture.

De Grauwe, however, reminds us that the present-day sense of the word *Deutsch*, so rich in associations for purists, is a modern invention. The 'bifurcation' of Dutch and German — both jointly designated *diutesch, dietsch* until the Early Modern period — occurred only in the 17th century, and the cultivation of two distinct standards was contingent on political events, particularly the emergence of the Netherlands as a separate state. Some two centuries later, a further new standard was to emerge from Dutch in turn — Afrikaans — and here too cultural identity was an important factor, for Deumert suggests that nationalist Afrikaner discourse influenced individuals' actual linguistic practice. Luxembourg furnishes a contemporary example of bifurcation, for Luxembourgish — which can be viewed as a Central Franconian *dialect* of German (cf. Russ 1990) — was declared the national *language* of the Grand Duchy in 1984 (Newton).

The case of Luxembourgish is noteworthy for another reason, too. Newton shows in his contribution how this national language "defies homogenization", remaining unstandardized according to most definitions. While a *koine* based on Central Luxembourgish may be emerging, there is no prescriptive grammar, no dictionary suitable for laypeople, and no language academy. Only spelling has been codified, and even here numerous changes in spelling systems over the past century have led to considerable variation in published materials and hence to a widespread belief (and indeed pride) that no orthographical standard exists. Luxembourgish is thus an instance of an unstandardized national language, which nevertheless remains strong and whose written usage is indeed increasing.

Norwegian also appears to diverge from the classic teleological models of language standardization based on Haugen (1966), which assume an outcome of minimal variation in form (cf. Haugen 1972:107). Officially, Norwegian exists in not one, but two written standards, *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*, and Sandved argues that efforts by language planning agencies to amalgamate these into a single Common Norwegian have, far from succeeding, only resulted in a third set of norms. These norms are not officially recognized but are, Sandved claims, used by the majority of Norwegians in writing — an instance of what Mattheier (1997:4, following Gloy 1975) calls "subsistente Normen" in his reflections on de- and re-standardizing in modern European languages: norms "die zwar nicht offiziell kodifiziert sind, jedoch durchaus offiziell akzeptiert werden".

Feitsma's paper on Frisian provides a different illustration again of realignment of a standard to 'subsistent' or hidden norms. All speakers of Frisian, which has the status of a regional language within the Netherlands, are bilingual in Frisian and Dutch, and the latter is the language of most education and thus increasingly the dominant language of younger speakers. Feitsma notes that speakers' notions of correctness in Frisian are influenced by the internalized dominant Dutch standard, so that "Frisian elements are in danger of being suppressed by this hidden Dutch standard" (a situation reminiscent of changes to the Irish of Irish-English bilinguals). Interestingly, in the only paper which deals with orthoepics, Kleine observes that Yiddish too is increasingly being shaped by a generation of speakers for whom it is not the dominant language, but who learn it rather as a second or even a foreign language. As the number of Yiddish native speakers continues to decline, and as the language they use for everyday communication is in any case generally quite different from the standard, non-native speakers will increasingly become the bearers of standard Yiddish.

The important role of non-native speaker instruction in carrying or shaping a standard is evident in a number of other papers too. Langer (2001) explored the role of prescriptivist pronouncements in 17th- and 18th-century grammars in the stigmatization of auxiliary *tun* and polynegation in German, and his paper in the present volume looks specifically at such pronouncements in grammars for non-native speakers, though with ambiguous results. However, Langer is certainly right to look to L2 teaching grammars for early signs of prescriptivism — we are reminded of Newton's observation that the need to integrate the large immigrant population in Luxembourg is leading to language teaching which adheres to *de facto* norms based on the forms of Central Luxembourg. More controversially, Modiano actively embraces the notion that non-native speaker instruction can and should shape standard varieties. He

calls for recognition and vigorous promulgation of what he calls "Mid-Atlantic English", a culturally non-specific variety of English distinguished by a non-localizable accent and flexibility as to choice of marked English or North American lexemes and structures. Modiano argues that such a variety already exists *avant la lettre* amongst the very large numbers of speakers of English as a foreign language in Europe, and draws a parallel to areas of the globe where the use of English as a *second* language has yielded new national norms (Singapore English, Indian English).

We have grouped the contributions to this volume in three sections. In Section I, *Diffusing and Shaping the Standard*, Deumert, Vandenbussche and Elspaß each address the question of how norms diffuse through a particular community, for Afrikaans, Dutch and German respectively. Langer considers how the stigmatization of forms in Early New High German grammars may have helped shape the emerging standard, and Zheltukhin looks at changing norms in 16th-century Swedish spelling.

Section II contains four papers reflecting the relationship between *Standard and Identity*. De Grauwe traces how the awareness of Dutch and German as separate languages emerged, while De Groof explores the national linguistic situation in Belgium via the historical interaction between a range of different contributors to the language planning debate. Willson (Icelandic) and Hohenhaus (German) each show how ideologies about national identity interact with language planning debates. (Cf. also Gardt 2000 for a wider European perspective on the relationship between nation and language.)

The papers which make up the final section of the volume deal with what at first glance might look like the 'loose ends' of standardization theory, but which are increasingly coming into focus in their own right (cf. Mattheier & Radtke 1997): *Non-standardization, de-standardization and re-standardization*. Newton suggests that Luxembourgish is resisting standardization, Sandved argues that Norwegians' written usage has moved away from both of the officially defined standards, and Feitsma (Frisian), Kleine (Yiddish) and Modiano (English) each show how a standard language may be re-shaped and re-defined by its speakers.

We would like to conclude by thanking the editors at Benjamins for including our volume in this series, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*. Thanks too to our contributors for their hard work in assisting us with the preparation of the volume, as well as to Ms Anke de Looper of Benjamins for her guidance in numerous matters of editorial detail. Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance of the British Academy in mounting the *Standard–Germanic* conference, out of which this project emerged.

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