



The University of
Nottingham

School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies
Department of Modern Languages and Cultures

Comparing attitudes towards standard language use in French and Russian

Kathryn Birch

Submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of
Master of Research

2021-2022

Table of Contents

List of figures	ii
List of tables	ii
Introduction	1
1. Context and Literature Review	4
1.1 Standard languages, standardisation, and the SLI	4
1.2 Studying the SLI in online contexts	8
1.2.1 Twitter as a corpus	10
1.3 The (online) role of language academies	12
1.3.1 The French Academy	13
1.3.2 The Russian Language Institute and <i>Gramota</i>	16
1.4 Comparing standardisation in France and Russia: some existing studies	19
1.4.1 The standardisation of French	19
1.4.2 The standardisation of Russian	21
1.5 Summary	24
2. Methodology	25
2.1 Corpus creation: Twitter	25
2.1.1 Recent access to Twitter in Russia	25
2.1.2 Using Twitter's API	26
2.1.3 Twitter search terms and corpus creation	29
2.2 Corpus creation: Language academies' websites	32
2.3 Corpus analysis	35
2.4 Summary	37
3. Lay language commentary on Twitter	38
3.1 'Mistakes' and correctness	38
3.2 Education, literacy, and intelligence	45
3.3 Scrutiny of specific groups' language use	49
3.3.1 Teachers	49
3.3.2 Politicians	52
3.4 Difficulties of standard written Russian	55
3.5 Challenging the SLI	57
3.6 Summary	61
4. 'Expert' language commentary: The French Academy and <i>Gramota</i>	63
4.1 Topics of interest	64
4.1.1 Linguistic categorisation of question topics	64
4.2 Similarities between French and Russian metalanguage	79
4.2.1 Necessity and modal expressions	79
4.2.2 Correctness and mistakes	84
4.2.3 Dictionaries and grammars	91

4.3	Differences in metalinguistic discourse in France and Russia	94
4.3.1	French metalinguistic discourse	94
4.3.2	Russian metalinguistic discourse	98
4.4	Summary	99
	Conclusion	101
	References	104

List of figures

Figure 2.1:	Example search parameters in Postman	28
Figure 2.2:	Example tweet in JSON format	29
Figure 2.3:	Example post from the French Academy's Dire, ne pas dire	33
Figure 2.4:	Example post from Gramota's Spravka	34
Figure 3.1:	References to 'mistakes' by sub-corpus (%)	39
Figure 3.2:	References to education by sub-corpus (%)	46
Figure 3.3:	Handwritten note featured in tweet responded to in RuSp135	51
Figure 4.1:	Question categories in the Académie and Gramota corpora (%)	72

List of tables

Table 2.1:	Search terms used to create Twitter corpus	30
Table 3.1:	References to 'mistakes' by sub-corpus	39
Table 3.2:	References to education by sub-corpus	45
Table 4.1:	Linguistic categorisation of question topics (Humphries 2020)	65
Table 4.2:	Relevant categories and sub-categories with examples	71
Table 4.3:	Questions by sub-category in the Académie and Gramota corpora	73
Table 4.4:	Modal expressions in the Académie corpus	80
Table 4.5:	Modal expressions in the Gramota corpus	83

Introduction

This thesis compares the influence of the standard language ideology (SLI) on online metalinguistic discourse relating to two languages: French and Russian. These languages have both been influenced by the SLI to some degree, with long established histories of language standardisation existing in both France and Russia. Moreover, elements of the standardisation of Russian have been described as being based on the French model, owing in part to French cultural and linguistic influence in Russia during the 18th and 19th centuries (Rjéoutski 2013: 17; Mustajoki 2016: 294). However, clear social and political differences exist between France, a liberal democracy, and Russia, whose political system is seemingly becoming ever more autocratic. While sociolinguists have pointed out that similarities and differences exist between the workings of the SLI in different settings (Irvine and Gal 2000: 36, Walsh 2021a: 779), to my knowledge, no previous study has directly compared metalinguistic discourse in France and Russia, revealing a gap in the literature that this study aims to address.

In this thesis, the influence of the SLI is considered not only in two different contexts, but also at two different levels of authority. Standardisation is a process which has been studied ‘from above’ (see Rutten and Vosters 2021) in terms of language policy decisions taken at the state level, though also increasingly ‘from below’ (see Elspaß 2021) in terms of the involvement of lay speakers (i.e., people who do not have specialist linguistic knowledge) with the ongoing process of language standardisation. This thesis aims to bring together these two perspectives by examining two distinct corpora: one made up of metalinguistic discussions taking place between lay speakers on Twitter, a social networking site (SNS) where users interact with each another by sharing short posts referred to as tweets, and the other of advice on ‘correct’

language use from websites affiliated with the French and Russian state language academies. Language academies have been described as ‘instruments of implementation’ of top-down language standardisation (Rutten and Vosters 2021: 75), though their actual impact has been called into question (Percy and Davidson 2012: 15).

This thesis aims to address three overarching research questions:

1. Do French and Russian speakers use similar metalanguage and rhetorical devices to express their language attitudes online, or are there significant differences?
2. What similarities and differences exist between metalinguistic discussions taking place among lay people (i.e., on Twitter) and those taking place with language ‘experts’ (i.e., on the academies’ websites)?
3. How similar are the areas of language that speakers of French and Russian discuss online? Do they mainly comment on individual words, grammatical features, or something else?

Chapter 1 sets out the context of this study and outlines the concepts of standardisation, the SLI, and prescriptivism. It provides an introduction to the role of Twitter and its use in corpus-assisted studies of metalanguage, and to the organisations involved in language management of French and Russian. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology underpinning the study, explaining how the corpora were created from Twitter and the academies’ websites, and how the data were analysed. Chapter 3 focuses on discussions taking place between lay speakers on Twitter, taking a corpus approach to a sample of French and Russian tweets. Recurring themes of metalinguistic discourse are commented on, and similarities and differences between the French and Russian sub-corpora are highlighted. Having examined the attitudes of lay speakers on Twitter, chapter 4. then assesses the likely influence of language ‘experts’

on wider attitudes by examining a corpus of interactions taking place between lay speakers and state-sponsored language academies. The parts of language that website users most commonly ask questions about are investigated, and similarities and differences between features of metalanguage observed in the French and Russian sub-corpora are discussed in detail.

1. Context and Literature Review

As any discussion of standard language must first provide an adequate description of what the term can be understood to encompass, this chapter starts by looking at how the notion of standard language, and the related concepts of standardisation, SLI and prescriptivism, have been defined. Section 1.1 gives an overview of these concepts, drawing on some key works which have examined standardisation, and introduces the emerging concept of destandardisation. Section 1.2 outlines the role of the internet, and specifically Twitter, in facilitating metalinguistic discussions between lay speakers. Section 1.3 examines the role of language academies as instruments of language policy partly responsible for driving standardisation, and the possibility for lay speakers to interact with ‘experts’ via the language academies’ websites. Finally, section 1.4 sets out some existing literature which has focused specifically on French and Russian-speaking contexts, identifying the gaps that the present study attempts to address.

1.1 Standard languages, standardisation, and the SLI

A standard language can be described as a nation’s prestige language variety, which is typically viewed more favourably than other language varieties. However, various ideas exist about what form the standard language actually takes. Milroy and Milroy define a standard language as being characterised by “the minimum of misunderstanding and the maximum of efficiency” (2012: 19). That is, a standard language is seen as a single, homogenous form, intended to be used consistently across a speech community. While Milroy and Milroy see the standard language as based primarily on the written word (2012: 8), it has also been associated with the spoken variety used by a nation’s ruling social group (Lippi-Green 2012: 67), pointing to a clear link existing between standard language and socio-political power.

The standard language is arrived at through a process of standardisation. An early, influential model of language standardisation is set out by Haugen (1966), who identifies four key stages of the language standardisation process: *selection* of a single language variety to serve as the standard; *codification* of spelling and grammar rules; *elaboration* of the language, enabling it to be used across a range of functions; and *acceptance* of the standard variety by the speech community (1966: 18-24). While Haugen focuses on explaining the standardisation of modern Norwegian, he suggests that these four identified stages also apply to the standardisation of other languages, including English, French, Esperanto, Greek and Hebrew (Ibid: 19-22). The potential for this model of standardisation to be applied widely across different linguistic contexts means that it has influenced linguists working with different languages, including French (Lodge 1993). It has formed the basis of many later models of standardisation (see Ayres-Bennett 2021), though, as Haugen himself later acknowledged, his model does not deal fully with the ideological element of standardisation (1983: 74). As such, Haugen amended his original model slightly, renaming the *acceptance* stage of standardisation as *implementation*, and subsequently adding more details about the processes involved in each stage of standardisation (see Haugen 1987: 34).

The ideological element of standardisation was notably elaborated by Milroy and Milroy, who contend that standardisation exists first and foremost as an ideology (2012: 18). This points to the existence of the standard language ideology (SLI), the central premise of which is a belief in the superiority of the standard language compared to other varieties. Definitions of the SLI differ, however, in terms of their focus on written or spoken language, and the imagined, idealistic nature of the standard. Lippi-Green, for instance, defines the SLI as:

“a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (Lippi-Green 2012: 67).

Ricento, meanwhile, writes that the defining feature of the SLI is that it:

“elevates a particular variety of a named language spoken by the dominant social group to a (H)igh status while diminishing other varieties to a (L)ow status. This variety, based on prescriptive norms of the written language, is believed to be more “correct”, “logical” and “efficient” in communicative terms than other varieties, many of which are identified as being “nonstandard”, “illegitimate”, “ignorant”, or just plain “bad” (Ricento 2015: 530).

Despite contrasting ideas on whether the standard language is based primarily on spoken or written language – it is indeed possible that the basis for the standard may differ between different languages – a key aspect of the SLI appears to be the idea that the standard language is intrinsically ‘better’ than other, non-standard forms.

The SLI has been seen as one of Europe’s dominant language ideologies (Gal 2009: 14). Language ideologies have been characterised by Silverstein as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use” (1979: 193). Woolard takes a slightly different stance, defining language ideologies as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (1998: 3-4). A key difference between these definitions is Silverstein’s use of the word “articulated”, suggesting that language users are aware of the influence of language ideologies and can put them into words, whereas Woolard asserts that

ideologies may be either implicit or explicit. Kroskrity addresses the implicit/explicit aspect of language ideologies. He differentiates between, on the one hand, language ideologies which are “explicitly articulated by members” (2000: 18), such as feminist concerns over gendered language, and, on the other hand, “dominant” ideologies which are held implicitly, internalised as common-sense views, and therefore “must be read from actual usage” (2000: 18-19). The SLI is a clear example of a dominant ideology which is “held implicitly”, though it may also be articulated by speakers. By taking a corpus approach to analysing discussions about language taking place online, I hope to uncover implicit attitudes as well as those shared explicitly.

Another key concept discussed by Milroy and Milroy, which they see as closely connected to standardisation, is prescriptivism. Milroy and Milroy define prescriptivism as the idea that “in language use [...] things shall be done in the ‘right’ way” (2012: 1), i.e., in accordance with prescribed rules. They argue that standardisation “encourages prescription in language” (2012: 44), and other linguists have similarly emphasised this connection. For instance, Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Percy describe prescriptivism as “the final stage in the language standardisation process” (Percy 2016: 3). Humphries similarly writes that “prescriptivism is part of the standardization process in that it is one way in which the standard is maintained” (2022: 2). As such, it is likely that the SLI will be accompanied by prescriptivist beliefs or statements, with the standard variety (which complies with prescriptive norms) described as ‘right’, and non-standard deviations from prescriptive norms seen as ‘wrong’.

Until relatively recently, however, linguists have been reluctant to engage with prescriptivism, instead believing they should take an entirely descriptive, scientific approach to the study of language (Milroy and Milroy 2012: 6). Cameron adds that prescriptivism has traditionally had

a negative connotation among linguists, who have viewed it as the “disfavoured half of a binary opposition” to descriptivism (1995: 5). However, she challenges this perception, pointing out that “anti-prescriptive discourse makes value judgements about language, just as prescriptive discourse does” (1995: 5). As such, Cameron avoids the term ‘prescriptivism’, and instead refers to the “urge to improve or ‘clean up’ language” as “verbal hygiene” (1995: 1).

While standardisation, the SLI, and prescriptivism have until recently been seen as active forces which continue to shape language attitudes, in more recent years, research has emerged which suggests some reversal of standardisation. Kristiansen describes standardisation as the process by which “the norm is being progressively strengthened” (2021: 667), and destandardisation as the opposite process whereby the norm is progressively weakened. According to Kristiansen, the weakening of “the very belief in the existence of (or need for) a ‘best’ language” (2021: 671) is central to destandardisation. Kristiansen also points out that this is different to the process of restandardisation, whereby a shift in attitudes towards other language varieties leads to a certain variety being reassigned the ‘standard’ status, without a break from the SLI itself (2021: 671). While the present study focuses on the active influence of the SLI in France and Russia, it is worth also being aware of the potential for some weakening of the SLI, which is detectable in the Twitter corpus (see section 3.5).

1.2 Studying the SLI in online contexts

Linguists have used a range of methods to measure the influence of the SLI on language attitudes held by lay speakers. These include surveys (Walsh 2016), though also a growing number of corpus studies of metalinguistic discussions taking place on SNSs including Twitter (Humphries 2019), YouTube (Lunde 2014) and Reddit (Tarnarutchkaia and Ensslin 2020). This

relatively new approach has been made possible by the advent of the internet, facilitating an ever-greater volume of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in various speech communities. CMC refers to “electronic means of communication [which] have an increasing impact on the ways that language is being used across the world” (Baker 2010: 13), and includes emails, text messages, blogs, chatrooms, and SNSs like Twitter.

A large body of work has focused on CMC and the ways in which it differs from written and spoken language (see, for example, Crystal 2001 and Androutsopoulos 2006). The present study, however, focuses on *what* speakers say about language in contexts facilitated by CMC, rather than on *how* language is used in CMC. Although it is worth having an awareness of certain linguistic features which are unique to CMC (e.g., emoji), which do feature in material examined in this study, the nature of CMC itself is not the focus of this study. Therefore, these features are only discussed in relation to what they communicate about a speaker’s attitudes towards language.

As discussed in section 1.1, language ideologies may present themselves implicitly as well as explicitly, suggesting a potential challenge in assessing the presence of dominant, implicit language ideologies like the SLI, which are likely to be expressed as common-sense views. Vessey contends that “corpus linguistic methods can be fruitfully applied to the field of language ideology” (2017: 278) in determining “where language ideologies [are] more explicit or implicit” (2017: 279). This makes a corpus approach appropriate for this study, as rather than relying on language users articulating beliefs that they may consider common sense, the presence of internalised language ideologies in metalinguistic discourse can be directly investigated.

1.2.1 Twitter as a corpus

Twitter, in particular, is a valuable research tool for sociolinguists conducting corpus-assisted studies of language attitudes. The way in which content is shared on Twitter lends itself to corpus creation, as the process of finding a large number of tweets relating to a given topic is relatively straightforward (Tristram 2022: 5). Tweets are short social media posts, subject to a 280-character limit, which Twitter users share either publicly or with select followers, in accordance with their individually selected privacy settings. Other Twitter users can interact with published tweets by liking them, posting replies, or recirculating them as retweets, with the option to add a comment to a retweet described as a quote tweet. Users may also choose to include hashtags in a tweet to indicate the topic it relates to. For instance, the hashtag ‘#JeSuisCirconflexe’ was used by French speakers to comment on France’s proposed spelling reform of 1990, which re-emerged as a topic of metalinguistic debate on Twitter in 2016 (see Humphries 2019). While part of Twitter’s appeal for corpus-assisted studies comes from the fact that the data are primarily text-based (unlike, say, Instagram, which encourages users to share photos, or TikTok, which is based on users posting short videos), it is also possible to share tweets containing multimedia content. Examples of this have been included and commented on where relevant (e.g., Figure 3.3).

Twitter has a large global audience, ranking as the 15th largest SNS by number of active monthly users. A total of 436 million people use the site monthly (as of January 2022), according to data published by Statista.¹ These figures show that Twitter is outranked by the Meta platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram), as well as several Chinese SNSs which are used minimally outside of China (e.g., Weixin and Douyin). However, unlike content shared

¹ Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> [last accessed 20.09.2020]

on Facebook, a high proportion of tweets are available to view publicly. In a 2021 study, the Pew Research Center found that 89% of Twitter accounts were set to 'public', meaning that in the majority of cases, there is no need to have a mutual connection to a Twitter user to access the content they share on the platform.² This means Twitter represents a valuable option for researchers seeking an effective insight into public attitudes.

However, given the level of anonymity offered by Twitter relative to some other SNSs, there is no way of knowing who precisely is responsible for the tweets examined in the present study. Twitter users are not required to share personal details when creating an account, which means it is not possible to take details such as geographical location, nationality, language(s) spoken, age, or level of education into consideration. While it would undoubtedly be interesting to examine the tweets in relation to factors like geographical location and nationality, particularly given the transnational spread of French and Russian speakers on Twitter, this was deemed to be beyond the scope of the present study.

It is also worth noting that Twitter usage varies between different countries. In France, the most-used SNSs are largely consistent with the global picture, with the market led by American tech giants.³ Although Twitter is not the dominant SNS in France (Statista ranks Twitter seventh behind Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok), the fact that 28.6% of French internet users access the platform monthly suggests that Twitter will provide a relatively broad insight into the language attitudes of French internet users.

² Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/11/15/the-behaviors-and-attitudes-of-u-s-adults-on-twitter/> [last accessed 12.01.2023]

³ Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/284435/social-network-penetration-france/> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

In Russia, meanwhile, SNS usage differs considerably from the global picture, with a number of Russian-owned alternative SNSs such as VK, LiveJournal, and Odnoklassniki competing with the likes of Facebook and Twitter. According to Koltsova, Porshnev, and Sinyavskaya, this makes the “Russian Internet landscape [...] unique in terms of its ‘home-grown’ character” (2021: 336). In Russia, Twitter ranks behind “indigenous Russian” sites like VK and Odnoklassniki as the fifteenth most-used SNS (Roesen and Zvereva 2014: 73). However, Zherebtsov and Goussev argue that while Twitter’s user base in Russia is not as large as certain ‘home-grown’ Russian SNSs’ (2021: 539), Twitter has provided an “important and contested space for the politically engaged segment of the Russian population” (2021: 540).

In particular, Twitter has been seen as a key communication tool for journalists, bloggers, and politicians in Russia (Paulsen and Zvereva 2021: 90). Given the fact that Twitter users are a self-selecting group, and the likelihood in Russia for them to be more politically engaged than the wider population, it is likely that Russian Twitter users may not be representative of Russian speakers more generally. In contrast to VK, for example, which has been described as a particularly “local service [...] that is unacceptable for a social network in our global age” (Roesen and Zvereva 2014: 77), Twitter may attract a more educated, internationally minded userbase relative to indigenous Russian SNSs. Nonetheless, given the obvious practical advantages of using the same SNS for the French and Russian sub-corpora in terms of simplifying data collection and working with directly comparable material, Twitter was deemed an appropriate platform for this study.

1.3 The (online) role of language academies

While section 1.2.1 has outlined the insight Twitter can provide into metalinguistic discussions taking place between lay people, it is also worth considering interactions with state-endorsed

‘experts’, given the role played by the state in promoting standard language and perpetuating the SLI in both France and Russia. France and Russia both have national language academies, the *Académie française* (French Academy) and the *Institut russe de la langue* (Russian Language Institute), which have some level of (at least symbolic) involvement in regulating their respective national languages. Interestingly, the websites of both France and Russia’s language academies have sections which facilitate interaction between lay speakers and academy members. According to McLelland, these “online language advice fora sponsored by language academies [...] are increasingly the first port of call when language users seek advice” (2021: 298). French and Russian speakers can use these platforms to ask a range of language-related questions and receive responses from academy members.

To understand the purpose served by these online language advice fora, this section provides an overview of the French and Russian organisations which make use of them and the types of resources available on their websites.

1.3.1 The French Academy

Though language academies exist in a number of countries, including Italy and Spain, the French Academy has been regarded as “the most well-known” of this type of official language regulator (Percy and Davidson 2012: 15). The French Academy was founded in 1635 with the explicit aim of standardising the French language and imposing set norms. Its founding charter declares:

“La principale fonction de l’Académie sera de travailler avec tout le soin et toute la diligence possible à donner des règles certaines à notre langue et à la rendre pure, éloquente et capable de traiter les arts et les sciences”⁴

⁴ Available at: <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/linstitution/lhistoire> [last accessed 20.09.2020]

(“The main function of the Academy will be to work with all possible care and diligence possible to give our language precise rules and to make it pure, eloquent, and capable of dealing with the arts and sciences”)⁵

Historically, the establishment of the French Academy was seen as symbolically important in tying together the French language and state power, with “the link between language and the state [...] apparent in the creation of the French Academy in 1635” (Ayres-Bennett and Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2016: 106). Today, however, other governmental bodies exist in France with the aim of regulating and promoting the French language. Founded in 1989 as the *Délégation Générale à la langue française* (DGLF) (General Delegation for the French Language), before being renamed the *Délégation Générale à la langue française et aux langues de la France* (DGLFLF) (General Delegation for the French Language and the Languages of France) in 2001, the DGLFLF is the government body responsible for regulating French as well as the regional and minority languages spoken in France. While the DGLFLF is responsible for implementing France’s language laws, including the 1975 *Loi Bas-Lauriol* and the 1994 *Loi Toubon*, it does not in practice engage in active enforcement of these laws (Walsh 2016: 255).

Nonetheless, since “any legislative power lies with the DGLFLF” (Estival and Pennycook 2011: 334), the French Academy has been described as primarily “a French cultural rather than legislative institution” (Estival and Pennycook 2011: 334). Today, the only practical role of the French Academy at the official level is approving new terms proposed by the *Commission de l’enrichissement de la langue française* (Commission for the Enrichment of the French Language) before they can be published in the *Journal officiel de la République française*

⁵ All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

(Official Journal of the French Republic).⁶ However, since this process takes so long, any terms which are decided upon are rarely adopted in France (Walsh 2016: 84).

Perhaps, therefore, in an effort to retain relevance in the 21st century, the French Academy makes extensive use of its website, with a variety of language-related resources available at <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/>. This includes information about the organisation (its history, members, and internal processes), access to the latest edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (Dictionary of the French Academy), news about the various prizes awarded by the Academy, and a section outlining frequent errors made by French speakers. This *Dire, ne pas dire* (Say, do not say) section of the website is updated monthly with short posts, which identify common errors appearing in contemporary French usage, highlighting the standard equivalents which should be used instead.

In a subsection of *Dire, ne pas dire* entitled *Courrier des internautes* (Messages from the users), lay speakers can contribute directly to these discussions of language correctness by contacting the French Academy with their own questions about the French language. This is also updated monthly, typically with around five posts added each month. At the time of writing, approximately 600 interactions between French speakers and the French Academy were available on this section of the website. These questions and answers, involving direct interaction between the French Academy's *Service du Dictionnaire* (Dictionary Service) and lay speakers of French, form the basis of the *Académie* corpus examined in chapter 4.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.culture.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Langue-francaise-et-langues-de-France/Nos-missions/Developper-et-enrichir-la-langue-francaise/La-Commission-d-enrichissement-de-la-langue-francaise> [last accessed 20.09.2020]

1.3.2 The Russian Language Institute and *Gramota*

The idea that the French Academy is entirely unique and “resembles nothing else” (Estival and Pennycook 2011: 327) conflicts with descriptions of the equivalent body in Russia. Russia’s first language academy, the *Imperatorskaia rossiiskaia akademiia* (Imperial Russian Academy), was founded by Catherine the Great in 1783 as part of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). According to the RAS website, “the Russian Academy was based in large part on the model of the French Academy” (“Российская академия создавалась во многом по образцу Французской академии”),⁷ meaning there may be some interesting similarities between the two organisations.

The Imperial Russian Academy’s successor, the *Institut russkogo iazyka* (Russian Language Institute), was founded in 1944,⁸ and is also part of RAS. The Russian Language Institute is a multi-faceted organisation, comprising a research centre which runs a programme of publicly available seminars and conferences about the Russian language,⁹ and it is also the official body responsible for codifying the norms of the Russian language. The following extract from the Russian Language Institute’s website sets out the institute’s purpose:

“Институт русского языка им. В. В. Виноградова РАН является ведущим центром научных исследований по русскому языку в России и за рубежом, в задачи которого входит оценка речевых инноваций с точки зрения их нормативности и кодификация норм литературного языка в нормативных словарях, грамматиках, справочниках по культуре речи.”¹⁰

⁷ Available at: <http://www.ras.ru/rusacademy/f17a125b-68de-45a8-a72c-dc8eef524af5.aspx> [last accessed 20.09.2020]

⁸ Available at: <https://www.ruslang.ru/node/47> [last accessed 20.09.2020]

⁹ Available at: <https://www.ruslang.ru/konferencii-i-seminary-irya-ran> [last accessed 26.09.2020]

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.ruslang.ru/ceii-i-zadachi> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

(“The RAS Vinogradov Russian Language Institute is the leading centre for scientific research on the Russian language in Russia and abroad. Its tasks include evaluating the normativity of speech innovations and codifying the norms of the literary language in normative dictionaries, grammars, and reference books on speech culture.”)

Several members of the Russian Language Institute also act as editors of the website *Gramota.ru*.¹¹ According to the website, “the Vinogradov Russian Language Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the portal “Gramota.ru” run a joint Russian language reference service” (“Институт русского языка имени В. В. Виноградова Российской академии наук и портал «Грамота.ру» создают единое окно справочных служб русского языка”).¹² *Gramota* is an online portal established following a recommendation made by the *Komissii Russkii iazyk v SMI* (Commission for Russian language in the media) in 2000 and receives state funding from the *Ministerstvo tsifrovogo razvitiia, sviazi i massovykh kommunikatsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Russian Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media).¹³ According to the website, it was originally intended to serve as a resource for those working in the media following concerns of a deterioration in the quality of language seen in the Russian press. Today, however, *Gramota* claims its user base has expanded significantly, and it is now aimed at “all internet users who need qualified help and up-to-date information about the Russian language” (“всем интернет-пользователям, которые нуждаются в квалифицированной помощи и в оперативной информации о русском языке”).¹⁴

¹¹ Available at: <http://gramota.ru/gramota/about/council/> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

¹² Available at: <http://new.gramota.ru/spravka//> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

¹³ Available at: <http://gramota.ru/gramota/about/> [last accessed 26.09.2022]

¹⁴ Available at: <http://gramota.ru/gramota/about/> [last accessed 26.09.2022]

Like the French Academy website, a range of language-related resources are available on *Gramota*, including various dictionaries, a library of linguistic journals, and explanations of common mistakes observed in Russian. There is also a question-answer section referred to as the *Spravochnoe biuro* or *Spravka* (Helpdesk) – a name which appears more neutral in tone than the French Academy’s *Dire, ne pas dire*. There, Russian speakers can submit questions about language and receive answers from the website’s team of editors, who are mainly academics with roles at organisations including the Russian Language Institute and the government’s *Sovet po russkomu iazyku* (Russian Language Council).¹⁵ *Gramota* claims that over 280,000 questions relating to the Russian language have been answered by its team of experts, with nearly 110,000 answers available to view online at the time of writing.¹⁶

It is also worth noting that, as with Twitter (see section 1.2.1), limited data about users’ personal details are available on both *Dire, ne pas dire* and *Gramota*. While most users of *Dire, ne pas dire* choose to include their location along with their question, *Gramota* does not make comparable data available. Data is further limited by a lack of information relating to whether website users are native speakers or language learners. Although some users offer this information voluntarily in their questions (e.g., by mentioning how long they have been learning French or Russian), there is no way of knowing precise details about the linguistic background of each website user.

In sum, while the roles and aims of the French Academy and *Gramota* do not align entirely, they can both be characterised as state-endorsed, authoritative voices on their respective national languages. Both the French Academy’s *Dire, ne pas dire* and *Gramota’s Spravka*

¹⁵ Available at: <http://gramota.ru/gramota/about/council/> [last accessed 26.09.2022]

¹⁶ Available at: http://www.gramota.ru/gramota/help/rubric_420/ [last accessed 20.09.2022]

attract a significant volume of questions from lay people about language, with the responses likely to be viewed by users as the definitive, state-approved answers to these questions. Comparing posts from the two services may, therefore, reveal similarities and differences between how standard language is promoted at the official, state level in France and Russia.

1.4 Comparing standardisation in France and Russia: some existing studies

This section gives an overview of some existing works which have examined issues relating to the SLI and prescriptivism in relation to French and Russian, drawing particular attention to any themes that are addressed by the present study. Section 1.4.1 presents some existing studies which have focused on French, while section 1.4.2 turns to studies of Russian.

1.4.1 The standardisation of French

French is typically viewed as one of the world's most highly standardised languages. Whether or not this is the case is debatable, but existing literature commonly presents France in something of a unique position insofar as it has a strongly embedded SLI. For instance, Lodge claims there is a certain uniqueness to the SLI and prescriptivism in the context of French. He argues that "more efforts are devoted to [promoting the SLI] in France than in most other communities" (1991: 93) and that "prescriptive attitudes [...] seem to be more deeply engrained in France than in many other speech communities" (1991: 93). This attitude appears to be common within existing literature, with Lüdi contending that "French is often quoted as the forerunner and model of a very normative and top-down managed language, following the language policy of an archetypal monolingual nation state" (2012: 205). This perception is informed by several factors: French is a highly codified language with "a recognized dictionary and grammar, a standard pronunciation, institutions defining prescriptive norms, a constitutional status and an effective public use" (Lüdi 2012: 206).

However, the SLI and prescriptivist forces have also been shown to be very present in other language contexts, including the U.S. (Lippi-Green 2012) and Germany (McLelland 2013). As such, it is worth considering whether French is truly in a uniquely elevated position as the ‘forerunner’ or ‘model’ of a highly standardised national language by comparing it with Russian, another major global language which has been influenced by the SLI.

A large body of sociolinguistic work has examined the role of prescriptivism and the SLI in French with reference to a range of French metalinguistic texts, including the work of the *remarqueurs* in France (see Ayres-Bennett and Seijido 2011) and language columns in Quebec (see Walsh 2021b). A growing number of studies have also examined metalinguistic discussions of French taking place online, such as Vessey’s (2015) study comparing language ideologies relating to French in Canada’s news media and on Twitter. Humphries’ (2019) study of Twitter reactions to the French spelling reform of 1990 implemented in 2016 reveals several recurring themes in metalinguistic discussions on the platform. These include concerns about the potential decline of French, “an undesirable simplification of the language”, and French becoming poorer because of the spelling reform (Humphries 2019: 316-317). Humphries found that metalinguistic discussions taking place under the hashtag ‘#JeSuisCirconflexe’ were highly emotive, with French Twitter users expressing attitudes which indicated strong opinions about perceived non-standard language forms (2019: 319). The current study aims to draw on work done by Humphries by introducing a comparative perspective with Russian to investigate the extent to which findings concerning the influence of the SLI in France may be extrapolated more widely.

Linguists have expressed contrasting ideas about how influential the French Academy is. According to Shelly (1999: 309), the French Academy holds a “longstanding assumption of its

jurisdiction over the language” and “continues to exercise enormous influence”. While Lüdi points out the practical limitations to the French Academy’s power, he likewise argues it has a fair amount of ideological influence: “even if its rulings are only advisory today, not binding on either the public or the government, it enjoys a considerable prestige as a kind of guardian of *bon usage* and of a monocentric view of French” (2012: 208). However, others have questioned whether the French Academy holds any real influence over the French language. Percy and Davidson, for instance, state that the French Academy “has not always been very successful, either in their grammatical and lexical productions or [...] in their attempts to intervene in the dynamics of language use” (2012: 15). Similarly, Walsh (2016) finds that the French Academy, the DGLFLF and the terminology commissions have limited influence on language practices. The actual influence of the French Academy aside, the present study seeks to understand the ways in which the French Academy can be said to promote the SLI through its online interactions with lay speakers of French.

1.4.2 The standardisation of Russian

Despite the view held by some linguists working on French that France is uniquely influenced by the SLI (Lodge 1991; Lüdi 2012), those working on Russian have drawn parallels between French and Russian, contending that Russian has been influenced by the French model of standardisation, from the influence of the French Academy on the establishment of the Imperial Russian Academy in 1725 (Cubberley 2002: 46) through to the 2005 law *O gosudarstvennom iazyke Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (On the State Language of the Russian Federation), which supposedly “followed the French tradition of purism” (Mustajoki 2016: 288) with measures aimed at combatting the use of (predominantly English) loanwords.

Cubberley (2002) provides a useful overview of the historic standardisation of Russian. This process began later than the standardisation of French, with the need for “order” in written Russian not identified until the 17th century (Cubberley 2002: 46). Cubberley contends that the Imperial Russian Academy, established in 1725, was based directly on the model of the French Academy. However, a limitation to Cubberley’s work (and other works dealing with the standardisation of Russian) is a lack of engagement with some of the seminal sociolinguistic works discussed in section 1.1. Pavlenko offers a possible explanation for this: “sociolinguists generally lack familiarity with Russian and Soviet language management. Experts [...] have traditionally resided in departments of history, political science, and Russian studies” (2015: 651-2). Therefore, the SLI has not been widely discussed in relation to Russian – at least not in Russia itself. While some works have given detailed accounts of attitudes towards Russian in other countries – Kudriavtseva examines attitudes towards the Russian language in Ukraine (2021), Hogan-Brun and Ramonienė look at attitudes in Lithuania (2005), and Denman (2021) considers the attitudes of Russian heritage speakers in Ireland – to my knowledge, no works have dealt specifically with the language attitudes of lay speakers of Russian in Russia. This is clearly an area where more attention is warranted.

The bulk of the existing literature on the standardisation of Russian focuses on top-down language policy. Gorham (2014: 80), for instance, outlines a range of recent language policy measures implemented in Russia aimed at combatting a perceived “obliteration” of Russian national identity following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the sudden change to a market economy, which “required new terms [...] many of which did not exist in Russian”. These policies have included the implementation of a federal programme promoting the Russian language, the wide-reaching 2005 federal law On the State Language, which “sought

to restrict loanwords, vulgarity and other non-standard verbal practices” (2014: 115), and the use of state media with broadcasts like ‘Govorim po-russkii’ (‘We speak Russian’) and ‘Kak pravil’no?’ (‘What’s correct?’) aimed at correcting non-standard speech practices. Elsewhere, Gorham gives an account of language ideologies in Russia, citing *Gramota* as a tool used by linguists to “promote their opinions [on] good grammar and usage practices” (2009: 183). The Russian Language Institute and the government’s Russian Language Council have also received some attention in existing literature. Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade contend that “the future of the language may in fact lie in the hands of the Russian Language Institute [...] and of the Language Council” (1999: 336). Although Denman suggests that the Russian Language Institute has “tended in recent decades toward a less prescriptive mode of lexicography” (2021: 182), the basis for this statement is unclear, as to date little (if any) sociolinguistic enquiry has directly investigated the work and influence of this body. The actual influence of the Russian Language Institute, therefore, is a subject worthy of consideration.

Very few studies of Russian have looked at metalinguistic commentary taking place online, and none to my knowledge have used Twitter as the basis for a corpus-assisted study. One relevant work, however, is Lunde’s (2014) study, which analyses a corpus of metalinguistic discussion relating to Russian taking place in YouTube comment sections. Lunde identifies several recurring metalinguistic themes in the comments, including “nationalist discourse” (2014: 147). She also notes that a kind of “performative metalanguage” takes place in online comment sections, suggesting Russian speakers are eager to “challenge or subvert the traditional status of the standard language” (2014: 153) through playful language use online. Lunde finds that a key feature of Russian metalinguistic discourse online is that it is “less oriented towards standard language ideology” (2014: 142) than traditional media, in terms of

both “the ideological stance adopted in online discussions about language and the concrete linguistic practices witnessed online, which fancy deviations from the norms of standard language” (2014: 142). Importantly, Lunde suggests it would be useful to analyse “a larger data collection in different languages from diverse online venues” (2014: 153). This indicates an interesting point of comparison between language users participating in metalinguistic discussions on official language advice fora, and those making comments in more informal online spaces such as YouTube across different linguistic contexts.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has set out the context for the study in relation to standardisation, the SLI, online prescriptivism, and existing works dealing with these themes. Seminal works relating to language standardisation highlight the importance of viewing standardisation as an ideological goal rather than a purely practical process. Both France and Russia have an established history of standardising their respective national languages. However, in the Russian context, any relevant literature reveals a lack of attention to the seminal sociolinguistic works examined in section 1.1. Nonetheless, studies of Russian language policy show the SLI has been influential in Russia and that it therefore warrants further attention from the point of view of lay language attitudes. Taking a comparative approach with French, moreover, may help qualify whether claims about the distinctiveness of the SLI in France have been exaggerated. France and Russia’s official language regulators, the French Academy and the Russian Language Institute, constitute just one aspect of the countries’ language policies, and it is probable that their influence has been overstated. A corpus-based study examining both top-down and bottom-up discourse may, therefore, prove illuminating in further understanding the influence of the SLI on language attitudes in France and Russia today.

2. Methodology

This study compares metalinguistic discussions from two main corpora: a Twitter corpus made up of two French and two Russian sub-corpora (discussed in chapter 3), and a language academy corpus made up of two sub-corpora, one containing data from the French Academy website (the *Académie* sub-corpus) and one containing data from the *Gramota* website (the *Gramota* sub-corpus) (discussed in chapter 4). Section 2.1 details the methodology used to compile and examine the Twitter corpus, while section 2.2 outlines the methodology underpinning the creation and analysis of the language academy corpus.

2.1 Corpus creation: Twitter

2.1.1 Recent access to Twitter in Russia

As discussed in section 1.2.1, Twitter is a particularly useful tool for comparing attitudes across a range of social issues, including language attitudes. In recent months, however, the situation concerning Russian Twitter usage has been complicated by the ongoing war in Ukraine and the Russian government's consequent clampdown on internet access in Russia. While this study was underway, *Roskomnadzor* (The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media) reportedly blocked Russian access to Twitter following the invasion of Ukraine.¹⁷ This limited the number of current, relevant tweets available from internet users in Russia, who – at least in the immediate aftermath of the invasion – could only access sites including Twitter and Facebook via a virtual private network (VPN). Consequently, Statista estimates that the number of daily Russian

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/04/russia-completely-blocks-access-to-facebook-and-twitter> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

Twitter users was halved, going from 2.61 million to just 1.27 million.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the number of people accessing ‘home-grown’ Russian SNSs grew, with daily users of Telegram, for example, increasing from 31.24 million to 45.2 million.¹⁹ Given these limitations to the number of available tweets in Russia, a corpus of tweets predating the invasion of 24th February 2022 was compiled. Section 2.1.2 outlines the practicalities of the data collection process.

2.1.2 Using Twitter’s API

Tweets can be searched for and collected individually on Twitter’s user interface using the search tool. For example, if you enter the word ‘grammar’ into the Twitter search bar, tweets which contain this term are displayed. However, since tweets are ordered algorithmically according to engagement, i.e., numbers of likes and retweets, this function is not entirely appropriate for research purposes. Not only would this approach likely result in reduplicated material through the inclusion of retweets, the process of compiling the corpus would be unnecessarily time consuming and open to human error, as tweets would need to be copied and pasted into the relevant file one by one. To collect a large enough sample of tweets in a format which would enable a corpus-based approach and allow for retweets to be systematically removed, Twitter’s developer platform is more appropriate. This is available at <https://developer.twitter.com> and provides access to Twitter’s application programming interface (API) – a tool that can be used to search for and harvest a larger sample of tweets. Various ‘endpoints’ (acting as filters) are available via the API, enabling users to find tweets according to factors such as number of likes, replies, retweets (see section 1.2.1 for an

¹⁸ Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1297985/social-media-users-before-and-after-bans-russia/> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

¹⁹ Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1297985/social-media-users-before-and-after-bans-russia/> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

overview of these features), or based on certain words which are included in tweets. The basic level of access to Twitter's API allows users to search for tweets which were posted in the past seven days. To go further back and search between specified dates, it is necessary to apply for academic researcher level access, giving researchers the option to search the full Twitter archive from 2006 to the present. A separate application must be made to Twitter to gain researcher access, which is free of cost provided the proposal adheres to Twitter's research guidelines. Accessing the full archive was necessary in this instance, since it enabled access to tweets predating the current social media restrictions in force in Russia.

With the relevant permissions in place, it is possible to search the Twitter archive by date range, specifying a start and end date within which tweets must fall. Using the Twitter API typically requires some programming knowledge, with example code in programming languages including Java, Python, and R available on the developer platform.²⁰ However, for this study, Postman proved an effective alternative.²¹ This provides a graphical user interface, which allows users to make requests to the Twitter API without needing to write code. Twitter's developer platform provides an informative guide on how to use Postman to make requests to the Twitter API.²²

²⁰ Available at: <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/tools-and-libraries/v2> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

²¹ Available at: <https://postman.com> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

²² Available at: <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/tweets/search/quick-start/recent-search> [last accessed 20.09.2022]

	KEY	VALUE	DESCRIPTION	...	Bulk Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	query	orthographe	Required. Query for matching Tweets. Up to 1024 ch...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	start_time	2021-12-01T00:00:00Z	The oldest UTC timestamp from which the Tweets wi...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	end_time	2021-12-31T23:59:59Z	The newest, most recent UTC timestamp to which th...		
<input type="checkbox"/>	since_id		Returns results with a Tweet ID greater than (that is, ...		
<input type="checkbox"/>	until_id		Returns results with a Tweet ID less than (that is, old...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	max_results	100	The maximum number of search results to be returne...		
<input type="checkbox"/>	next_token		This parameter is used to get the next 'page' of resul...		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	tweet.fields	referenced_tweets	Comma-separated list of fields for the Tweet objec... ...		
<input type="checkbox"/>	expansions		Comma-separated list of fields to expand. ExpansiX ...		
<input type="checkbox"/>	media.fields		Comma-separated list of fields for the media objec... ...		

Figure 2.1: Example search parameters in Postman

In order to search the full Twitter archive, the ‘Full-archive search’ function available in the Postman Twitter API v2 collection was used. To authenticate the search, it was first necessary to enter the Twitter API credentials (including API key, secret key, bearer token, access token, and secret access token) generated when creating an account and applying for permissions. With the appropriate permissions in place, attaching ‘values’ to the ‘keys’ displayed in Figure 2.1 generates a search for relevant tweets. The values specified in Figure 2.1, for example, generate a request for 100 tweets (‘max_results’) containing the word “orthographe” (‘query’) posted between 1st December 2021 (‘start_time’) and 31st December 2021 (‘end_time’). The value ‘referenced_tweets’ attached to the ‘tweet.fields’ key means that additional details about the tweet will be recorded, i.e., whether it is a retweet, quote tweet, or a reply to another user (see section 1.2.1 for explanation of these terms). This resulted in the following request being sent to the API:

```
https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?query=orthographe&start_time=2021-12-01T00:00:00Z&end_time=2021-12-31T23:59:59Z&max_results=100&tweet.fields=referenced_tweets
```

This query returned 100 tweets in JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) format, with an example of how tweets were displayed at this stage provided in Figure 2.2.

```
{
  "data": [
    {
      "id": "1477066570996359170",
      "referenced_tweets": [
        {
          "type": "replied_to",
          "id": "1476971909308985348"
        }
      ],
      "text": "Les fafs, va falloir apprendre l'orthographe avant de commencer à écrire des menaces #racisme"
    }
  ]
}
```

Figure 2.2: Example tweet in JSON format

To prepare the tweets for analysis, the final step involved converting the data from JSON format into an Excel spreadsheet using a free online tool available at <https://www.convertcsv.com/json-to-csv.htm>. Analysis of the tweets, which involved close reading and making detailed notes of any recurrent metalinguistic themes, then took place within this Excel spreadsheet.

2.1.3 Twitter search terms and corpus creation

As detailed in Section 2.1.2, the first search completed using the API was for 100 tweets containing the word 'orthographe' posted in December 2021. Table 2.1 shows the four keywords which were used as search terms in this study: *grammaire* and *grammatika* (grammar), and *orthographe* and *orfografiia* (spelling). These search terms were chosen as they were easily comparable across French and Russian, and provided a wide perspective on how French and Russian speakers discussed two parts of written language which are often commented on online: grammar and spelling. While previous studies have focused on reactions to a specific linguistic phenomenon (e.g., Humphries examined a corpus of tweets

containing the hashtag ‘#JeSuisCirconflexe’ to gauge reaction to the implementation of the 1990 French spelling reform), it was difficult to find comparative language issues discussed on Twitter by speakers of both French and Russian. Therefore, these keywords relating to general areas of language were chosen to provide a broader overview of language attitudes not confined to a single linguistic issue.

French search term	Russian search term	English translation
<i>grammaire</i>	<i>грамматика</i> (‘grammatika’)	grammar
<i>orthographe</i>	<i>орфография</i> (‘orfografiia’)	spelling

Table 2.1: Search terms used to create Twitter corpus

Initially, 100 tweets were scraped for each of the four search terms for each month from August 2021 to December 2021 by repeating the process outlined in Section 2.1.2, which resulted in a total corpus size of 2000 tweets. However, carrying out some preliminary analysis revealed that relevant findings were emerging from a much smaller sample of tweets. Moreover, the time required to fully analyse a corpus of 2000 tweets was beyond the parameters of this study. As such, a smaller corpus made up of 300 French tweets (200 containing the word ‘orthographe’ and 100 containing the word ‘grammaire’) and 300 Russian tweets (200 containing the word ‘orfografiia’ and 100 containing the word ‘grammatika’) was compiled. While it would have been ideal to examine an equal number of tweets relating to spelling and grammar, the high proportion of relevant tweets from the existing samples along with practical constraints on a study of this scale meant this corpus size was deemed sufficient. Tweets were examined in reverse chronological order, starting with December 2021 and working back as far as was necessary to produce appropriately sized sub-corpora.

As well as managing the overall size of the corpus, it was also necessary to clean the data and prepare the corpus for analysis by removing any reduplicated material and irrelevant tweets. Any retweets were removed from the sample as these would lead to a reduplication of material, thereby skewing the study's findings. Although it is worth being aware of material multiple users have engaged with through retweets, since this could indicate that an opinion is widely shared among Twitter users, examining the level of engagement of individual tweets (i.e., numbers of likes and retweets) was beyond the scope of this study. Removing retweets from the sample was a straightforward process, which could be performed automatically by using the relevant filter in Excel.

The next step of cleaning the corpus involved inspecting each tweet individually to decide whether it was relevant to the study's focus on language attitudes towards standard French and standard Russian. While the chosen key words relating to broad areas of language (see Table 2.1) provided a wide perspective on metalinguistic discussions taking place on Twitter, they did also result in some irrelevant material being scraped. A noteworthy example of tweets which were ultimately deemed irrelevant and therefore removed from the corpus were those discussing languages other than French or Russian. While a number of these tweets did contain interesting metalinguistic discussions, they did not relate directly to how French and Russian speakers viewed the standard language, and they were therefore removed from the corpus. For example, of the 100 Russian tweets containing the word 'grammatika' from December 2021, 23 tweets focused explicitly on a language other than Russian. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the fact that 7,574,303 Russians claim to speak English,²³ nearly half of these tweets commented on English grammar (11 tweets). However,

²³ Available online: https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-05.pdf [last accessed 20.09.2022]

an interesting array of other languages were also commented on, namely Korean (three tweets), German (two tweets), Japanese (two tweets), Arabic (one tweet), Chinese (one tweet), Kazakh (one tweet), Latin (one tweet), and Spanish (one tweet). While these tweets fall outside the focus of this study, they nonetheless present an interesting area which could be explored in the future – i.e., how language learners use SNSs like Twitter to comment on their experiences of second language acquisition.

Each tweet has been given an individual identifier made up of two letters indicating which language it was posted in ('Fr' for French and 'Ru' for Russian), followed by two letters indicating which key word is present in the tweet ('Sp' for spelling and 'Gr' for grammar), and finally an individual reference number ranging from 001 to 200 (spelling sub-corpora) or 001 to 100 (grammar sub-corpora). For instance, the identifier 'RuGr012' denotes the twelfth tweet in the Russian grammar sub-corpus. Tweets are referred to by these identifiers throughout chapter 3, which examines the findings from the Twitter corpus.

2.2 Corpus creation: Language academies' websites

A different set of tools were used to collect relevant data from the French Academy's *Dire, ne pas dire* and *Gramota's Spravka*. Overall, creating this corpus was a more straightforward process than creating the Twitter corpus, because all relevant discussions were already contained within the specified sections of the two organisations' websites. Rather than sorting through a large number of tweets to create a relevant corpus, it was simply necessary to collate an appropriately sized sample of posts and save them in a format which would enable effective analysis.

At the time of writing, approximately 590 posts had been published on the *Courrier des internautes* sub-section of the French Academy's *Dire, ne pas dire* webpage. The first of these

posts was published over 10 years ago in October 2011; the date when each post was published is available to view alongside the question and answer. Generally, the webpage is updated monthly, meaning on average, between four and five questions have been responded to each month for the past decade. Figure 2.3: Example post from provides an example of how posts are displayed on *Dire, ne pas dire*, with the question followed by the corresponding answer from the French Academy. The user's name and location have been hidden.

Le 6 janvier 2022 Courrier des internautes

Bonjour,

Pourriez-vous me préciser si l'on écrit *soit-il* ou *soit il*. Le trait d'union est-il obligatoire ?

Cordialement,

L'Académie répond :

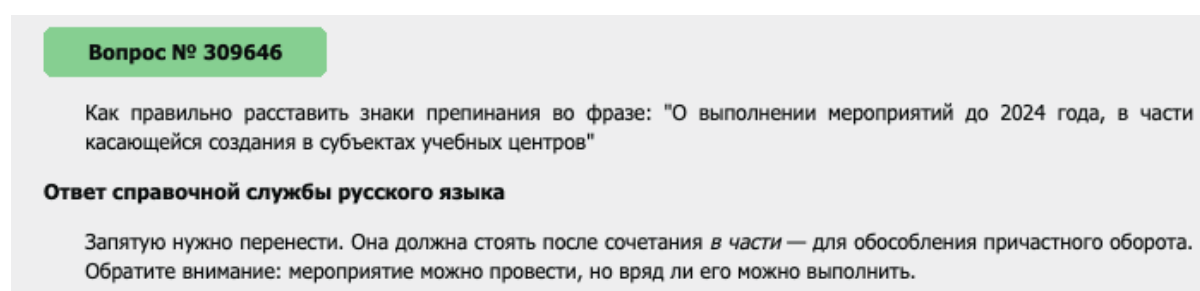
Quand *soit* est le subjonctif du verbe *être* à la troisième personne du singulier, il est lié au pronom *il* par un trait d'union en cas d'inversion : *Ainsi soit-il* ; *si puissant soit-il*, etc.

Quand *soit* est une conjonction marquant une alternative, il n'y a pas de raison de le lier au pronom qui suit et avec lequel il n'a pas de lien grammatical : *Soit il se met au travail, soit il échouera*. Il en va de même quand *soit* est un adverbe d'affirmation ; mais dans ce cas, il est suivi d'une virgule et le *t* se fait toujours entendre : *Eh bien soit, il a gagné*.

Figure 2.3: Example post from the French Academy's *Dire, ne pas dire*

Although it is not entirely clear whether either the French Academy or *Gramota* responds to and publishes all the questions they receive, *Gramota's Spravka* has significantly more posts available than its French counterpart, with nearly 110,000 posts visible on the website at the time of writing. Unlike the French Academy, though, *Gramota* does not display the dates

when posts were added, making it difficult to discern how frequently the website is updated with new content. However, since the website was established in 2000, it is possible that some of the older posts date back at least 20 years, with an average of over 400 posts published per month. Figure 2.4 shows an example of how question and answer posts are displayed on *Gramota's Spravka*.



Вопрос № 309646

Как правильно расставить знаки препинания во фразе: "О выполнении мероприятий до 2024 года, в части касающейся создания в субъектах учебных центров"

Ответ справочной службы русского языка

Запятую нужно перенести. Она должна стоять после сочетания *в части* — для обособления причастного оборота. Обратите внимание: мероприятие можно провести, но вряд ли его можно выполнить.

Figure 2.4: Example post from *Gramota's Spravka*

Initially, to scrape data from the official, academy-sponsored websites, I used the corpus creation tool available in Sketch Engine. Sketch Engine (<https://www.sketchengine.eu/>) allows users to build a corpus and analyse texts across a range of languages, including French and Russian. Users of Sketch Engine can create corpora by uploading their own downloaded texts or by scraping texts from websites. The latter function enabled me to scrape the relevant sections of the French Academy's website and *Gramota* by specifying the corresponding URLs: <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/dire-ne-pas-dire/courrier-des-internautes> and <http://new.gramota.ru/spravka/>.

Firstly, each page of the *Courrier des internautes* section of the French Academy's *Dire, ne pas dire* webpages was scraped. The 590 posts scraped using Sketch Engine produced a corpus which was a total of 81,196 words, meaning each post was an average of 137.62 words in length. To create a comparable Russian corpus from *Gramota*, a sample of 600 posts was scraped – a similar number of posts to the *Académie* corpus. However, at 30,505 words, the

resulting corpus was substantially smaller – just 37.57% the size of the larger French corpus. At an average of 50.84 words per post, it is clear that the *Gramota* posts are in general substantially shorter than the equivalent French posts – on average, 78.84 fewer words per post. The difference in average post length suggests that more detailed discussions about language correctness may take place on *Dire, ne pas dire* compared to *Gramota*, with the latter clearly not feeling the need to provide lengthy justifications for their answers. This may suggest that *Gramota* takes a more simplistic approach to issues of language correctness, as discussed in section 4.2.1. While it is worth being aware of the differences in word count between the average length of posts in the two corpora, it was decided that the corpora would be compiled based on number of posts rather than number of words. This was due to the fact that the shorter length of posts from *Gramota* relative to *Dire, ne pas dire* did not appear to limit the findings emerging during preliminary analysis.

Subsequently, a sample of 100 posts from the *Académie* corpus and 100 posts from the *Gramota* corpus were inserted into Excel spreadsheets, with each pair of questions and answers given corresponding identifiers (e.g., FrQ001 and FrA001 refers to the first question ('Q') in the French corpus and the answer ('A') received). Detailed close reading of the corpus material took place, and the metalinguistic features evident in each post were recorded in adjacent columns in Excel. Particular attention was paid to noting rhetorical devices, reference works or authorities mentioned, and any recurring imagery. The results of this analysis are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

2.3 Corpus analysis

The two corpora were analysed drawing on methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA), regarded by Walsh as “one traditional means of examining language ideologies” (2022: 21).

CDA is seen as an effective way of analysing language ideologies, since it involves examining “what kinds of social relations of power are present in texts both explicitly and implicitly” (van Dijk 1993: 249). As discussed in section 1.1, clear links exist between the SLI and socio-political power (see Lippi-Green 2012: 67). In the context of this study, which aims to explore the implicit and explicit presence of the SLI on language attitudes, this approach was deemed to be particularly helpful.

Walsh provides an overview of several parts of discourse which should be considered within the framework of CDA. These include “analysing vocabulary and grammar used in particular texts to determine whether they are associated with particular ideologies”; “examining metaphor usage; and analysing sentence formation to determine whether a particular meaning is revealed that would not be present if a different morpho-syntactical structure was used” (2021b: 873). In the present study, the corpora are analysed in line with this framework. The posts from the two corpora were read closely, with the relatively small corpus size allowing for in-depth qualitative analysis of all posts. Thematic analysis was a key consideration, with the theme of education, for example, being regarded as a foundational element of the SLI (Blommaert 1999: 10). Analysis also took place at the individual word level, with vocabulary making explicit references to ‘correctness’ or ‘mistakes’ taken into consideration. More implicit references to language correctness were also assessed, for instance the use of the indicative mood and modal expressions suggesting that language ‘should’ be used in a certain prescribed way.

While much of the analysis was qualitative, based on detailed reading and consideration of implied meaning, a quantitative approach was also taken where appropriate. Several features

of metalanguage were recurrent throughout the various corpora. Coding repeated features of discourse alongside the corpus material helped to reveal which features of metalinguistic discourse were most prevalent within the corpora. This analysis forms the basis of chapters 3 and 4, which focus on the most commonly recurrent metalinguistic themes and devices within both the Twitter and language academy corpora.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has set out the methodology underpinning this study. As discussed, distinct approaches were taken to create the corpora examined in chapter 3, which focuses on lay speaker discussions taking place on Twitter, and chapter 4, which turns to lay-expert interactions taking place on the French Academy website and on *Gramota*. Nonetheless, the consistent approach to analysing material across all corpora (i.e., noting similar, recurring features of metalanguage) ensures that effective comparisons can be made across the various platforms and language contexts examined in this study.

3. Lay language commentary on Twitter

With the Twitter corpus created and any irrelevant tweets removed from the sample (see chapter 2), the four sub-corpora were analysed to investigate the types of metalinguistic discussions which are taking place among French and Russian speakers on Twitter in relation to the general topics of spelling and grammar. This chapter examines the findings which emerged from the corpora, some of which demonstrate the influence of the SLI on French and Russian speakers. Section 3.1 considers non-standard language usages which are branded as ‘mistakes’ (‘fautes’ or ‘oshibki’) and discussions of language correctness which occur when internet users deviate from prescriptive norms. Section 3.2 examines discussions which focus on language use as an indicator of level of education, literacy, or intelligence. Section 3.3 looks at groups of people who are expected to use the standard language more so than speakers generally, namely teachers (see section 3.3.1) and politicians (see section 3.3.2). Section 3.4 deals with discussions appearing uniquely in the Russian corpus concerning the perceived difficulty of the Russian language – particularly grammar – and how this may contribute to a sense of linguistic insecurity. Finally, section 3.5 focuses on arguments observed in both the French and Russian corpora which do not fully align with the SLI.

3.1 ‘Mistakes’ and correctness

Explicit references to linguistic ‘mistakes’ can be found across all four sub-corpora, as set out in Table 3.1. However, as Figure 3.1 clearly shows, references to ‘mistakes’ appear most prominently in the sub-corpus of French tweets containing the word ‘orthographe’ (‘spelling’), and are much less common in the Russian corpus overall.

	French (%)	Russian (%)
Spelling	80 (40%)	13 (6.5%)

Grammar	22 (22%)	2 (2%)
Total	102 (34%)	15 (5%)

Table 3.1: References to 'mistakes' by sub-corpus

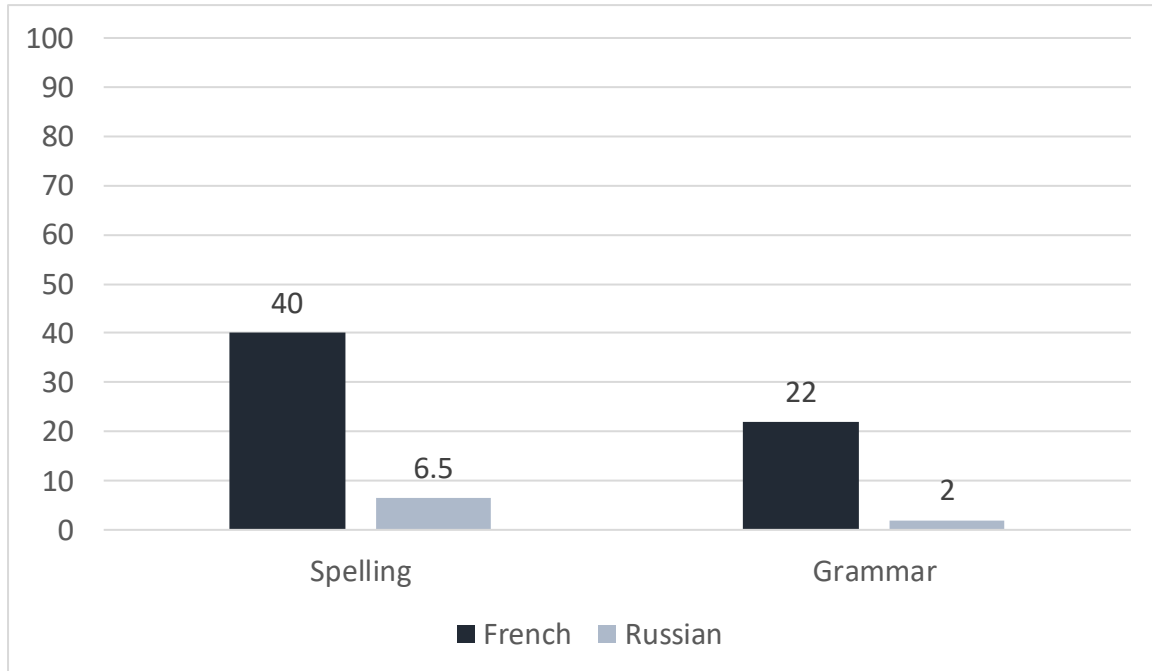


Figure 3.1: References to 'mistakes' by sub-corpus (%)

Within the French spelling sub-corpus, 78 tweets (39%) explicitly refer to a 'faute' ('mistake') occurring, and an additional 2 tweets (1%) to an 'erreur' ('error'). This characterisation of non-standard language aligns with the complaint tradition identified by Milroy and Milroy, which they describe as being "directed against 'errors' in either spoken or written language" (2012: 21). As such, French Twitter users who are keen to highlight and condemn spelling mistakes made by other people perhaps see themselves as language guardians responsible for "keep[ing] the notion of a standard language alive" (Milroy and Milroy 2012: 18) on Twitter.

FrSp011:

C'est ce n'est pas digne de pas de ta part de faire des fautes orthographe* ²⁴

²⁴ In this chapter and those that follow, all corpus material has been reproduced exactly as in the original. Ironically, as in this example, this includes several deviations from prescriptive norms.

[It's* it is not dignified of you to make spelling mistakes]

FrSp067:

*Je lis une chronique mais wowww les fautes d'orthographe c'est abusé ça fait mal
aux yeux carrément*

[I am reading a column but wowww the spelling mistakes are crazy it is hurting my
eyes actually]

FrSp009:

Elle fait des fautes d'orthographe la honte.

[She makes spelling mistakes, embarrassing.]

FrSp137:

*"Quand on NE sait pas écrire.... on NE fait pas".... Mais relisez-vous bon sang! Chacun
de vos messages ou presque contient une faute ou une approximation. Ce qui est
quand même un peu dommage quand on donne des leçons d'orthographe à tout le
monde.*

[When we do NOT know how to write... we do NOT do"... Read over what you write
for goodness' sake! Every one of your messages (or nearly every one) contains a
mistake or an approximation. Which is actually a bit of a shame given everyone gets
spelling lessons.]

FrSp011, FrSp067, FrSp009, and FrSp137 illustrate a highly negative attitude towards non-standard language, with language guardians vilifying other Twitter users for making mistakes. Deviating from standard written norms is described by various Twitter users as 'pas digne' ('undignified') (FrSp011), 'abusé' ('crazy') (FrSp067), a source of 'honte' ('embarrassment')

(FrSp009), and a sign that one French speaker ‘ne sait pas écrire’ (‘does not know how to write’) (FrSp137). It is also noteworthy that in FrSp011, the Twitter user deviates from standard written norms at several points, for instance with the omission of the preposition ‘de’ in “fautes [d’]orthographe” [spelling mistakes], while berating another Twitter user for making spelling mistakes. This suggests that they find certain mistakes more salient than others, with the mistakes made by the other Twitter user standing out as ‘undignified’. Meanwhile, they do not appear to notice their own deviations from prescriptive norms.

Mistakes are also mentioned explicitly in the French sub-corpus of tweets containing the word ‘grammaire’ (‘grammar’), though this occurs less frequently in comparison to the French spelling corpus. A total of 22 tweets (22%) refer to either a ‘faute’ (‘mistake’) (18 tweets), ‘erreur’ (‘error’) (2 tweets), ‘lapsus’ (‘slip-up’) (1 tweet), or ‘gaffe’ (‘blunder’) (1 tweet).

FrGr041:

ça fonctionnerait mieux sans la faute de grammaire...

[That would work better without the grammar mistake...]

FrGr032:

Essayez d’écrire sans fautes de français ou de grammaire.

Cela vous nuit.

[Try to write without making French or grammar mistakes.

It harms you.]

In both FrGr041 and FrGr032, grammar mistakes are seen as something which have a detrimental impact on the interlocutor’s messaging. FrGr041 makes the value judgement that a tweet would be ‘better’ if the speaker adhered to prescriptive norms, while FrGr032 implies

that the presence of grammar mistakes results in self-inflicted harm. Both of these rulings point to the influence of the SLI, with deviations from the standard seen as detrimental to the targeted speakers.

However, not all of the tweets which mention a ‘mistake’ focus on somebody else’s language use. Several French Twitter users who use the word ‘faute’ are actually concerned with their own non-standard spelling, suggesting a certain degree of embarrassment among French speakers who deviate from standard written norms. This includes FrSp006, where the user mentions deleting tweets after noticing that they contained a mistake.

FrSp006:

*Fois fois y’a des fautes d’orthographe dans mes tweets du coup jles supp jles refaits
pcq c horrible a voir*

[Sometimes there are spelling mistakes in my tweets, so I delete them I repost them
cos it’s horrible to see]

Similarly, the Twitter user who posted FrSp076 asks another user for forgiveness after noticing that they had previously posted a tweet containing a spelling mistake.

FrSp076:

Légère faute d’orthographe veuillez me pardonner mon erreur ma chère

[Slight spelling mistake please forgive my error my dear]

A sense of embarrassment at making spelling mistakes is also conveyed through the use of emoji. In FrSp018, the flushed face emoji signifies a sense of embarrassment felt by the user alongside the need to correct their spelling from a previous tweet. This could point to a sense of linguistic insecurity felt by this Twitter user in relation to their spelling ‘crime’. Indeed, in a

2015 study, Dargent found that over half the French population lacked confidence in their abilities to write standard French, suggesting that the embarrassment displayed in FrSp018 is not unique to this Twitter user.

FrSp018:

Mes quel délinquant de l'orthographe je fais 😬*

[My* what a spelling criminal I am 😬]

By comparison to French Twitter, references to mistakes, or 'oshibki', occur much less frequently in the Russian sub-corpora. As shown in Figure 3.1, just 6.5% of the tweets containing the word 'orfografiia' ('spelling') and 2% of those containing the word 'grammatika' ('grammar') make explicit references to mistakes. At face value, this could suggest that Russian speakers are less critical of deviations from standard spelling and grammar norms than French speakers. However, RuSp006 and RuSp040 demonstrate that some Russian speakers do view deviations from standard written norms negatively.

RuSp006:

хочу признаться

я ебаная душнила, когда дело касается грамматики, будь то орфография или

пунктуация

меня даже орфоэпические ошибки до жути бесят.

[I want to confess

I'm a fucking jerk when it comes to grammar, whether it's spelling or punctuation

Even incorrect pronunciation pisses me off.]

RuSp040:

направляю на согласование иск, человек отвечает 'проверь орфографию' с ошибкой в слове орфография.....

[I'm filing a lawsuit, this person is replying 'check your spelling' with a mistake in the word spelling.....]

In general, however, discussions of mistakes appear to be less confrontational compared to the French corpus, with fewer tweets commenting specifically on a mistake made by another Twitter user. While 63.7% of Tweets in the French corpus focus specifically on another Twitter user's language use, this is the case for only 41.3% of Russian tweets. Interestingly, in the case of RuSp019, the Twitter user suggests that they are far more concerned by their own non-standard language use than that of other speakers. They also display a very negative attitude towards their own standards of written Russian, feeling the need to delete their tweets after noticing spelling mistakes. This represents a clear contrast with the majority of French Twitter users, who instead focus on highlighting and commenting negatively on somebody else's spelling mistakes.

RuSp019:

у меня правильная орфография головного мозга но вообще даже если я замечаю ошибку в чужом твите я забываю об этом через секунду НО СВОЮ ОШИБКУ СЛОЖНО ЗАБЫТЬ и ты сидишь думаешь сто часов удалять твит или нет 😭

[I have the correct spelling in my head but even if I notice a mistake in a stranger's tweet I forget about it in a second BUT IT IS HARD TO FORGET YOUR OWN MISTAKES and you sit for a hundred hours thinking whether to delete the tweet or not 😭]

Therefore, while some similar discussions about deviations from prescriptive norms can be found in references to ‘mistakes’ in both the French and Russian Twitter corpora, it is noteworthy that feelings of linguistic insecurity are also expressed by both French and Russian speakers. A clear difference can also be observed in how frequently mistakes are discussed by French-speaking Twitter users (in 35% of tweets across both the spelling and grammar sub-corpora) compared to Russian-speaking Twitter users (in just 5% of tweets). Moreover, French speakers appear more inclined to criticise other speakers, whereas there are fewer directly confrontational tweets found in the Russian sub-corpora.

3.2 Education, literacy, and intelligence

Education is a key theme discussed by both French and Russian Twitter users in relation to standard language use, with frequent reference made to schools, literacy, and intelligence across the French and Russian sub-corpora. The numbers of references to these themes are fairly closely balanced between the French and Russian corpora, pointing to the role played by national education systems in promoting the SLI across different language contexts. This is illustrated in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2 below, which show the number of tweets from each sub-corpus dealing with themes relating to education.

	French	Russian
Spelling	39 (19.5%)	37 (18.5%)
Grammar	28 (28%)	22 (22%)
Total	102 (34%)	15 (5%)

Table 3.2: References to education by sub-corpus

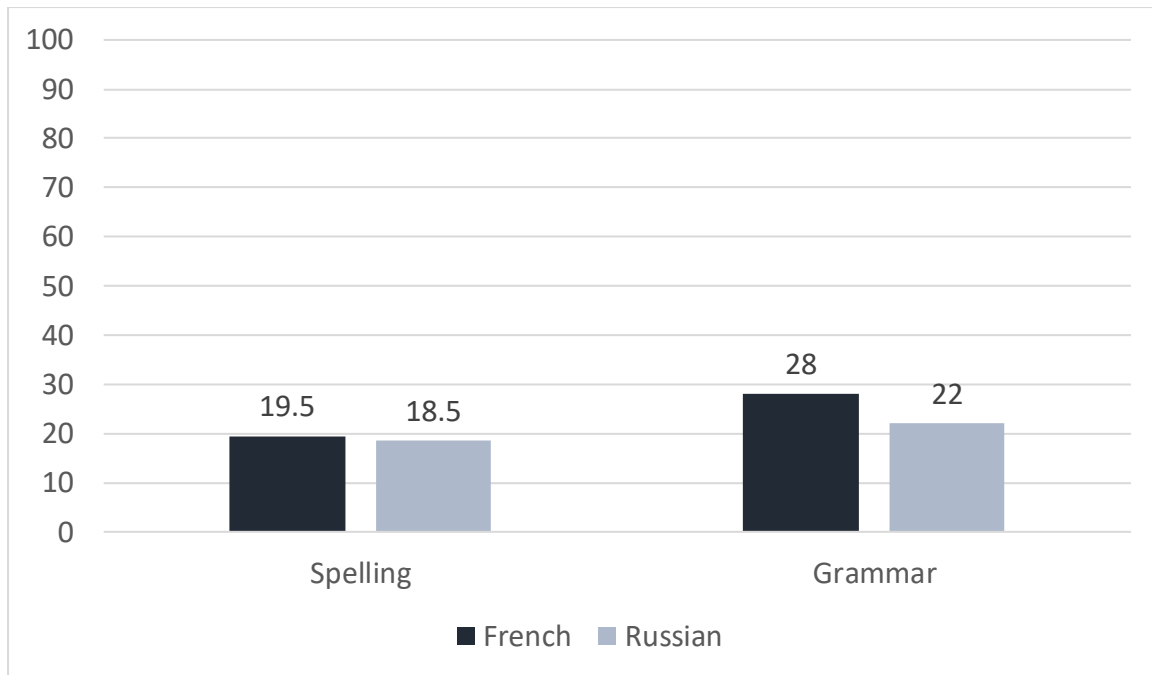


Figure 3.2: References to education by sub-corpus (%)

Looking first to the French corpus, 39 tweets (19.5%) containing the word ‘orthographe’ and 28 tweets (28%) discussing ‘grammaire’ allude to the theme of education. This may be unsurprising since the education system is seen as key in disseminating the standard language variety and the ideology underpinning its supremacy (Mooney and Evans 2015: 17). This is historically evident in France given the role of schools in spreading French across France in the 19th century through measures such as the *Lois Ferry*, which made French-language education free and compulsory from the 1880s (Judge 2000: 73). Moreover, the education system plays an important role in the context of the SLI. As Blommaert outlines, language ideologies are “reproduced by means of a variety of institutional, semi-institutional and everyday practices: campaigns, regimentation in social reproduction systems such as schools” (1999: 10). This results in a normalization of the dominant language ideology – in this context, the SLI – driven in part by schools.

In the eyes of certain French Twitter users, school appears to be one of the main places where mastery of standard written French is achieved. In FrSp086 below, deviation from standard written norms is regarded as a sign that French speakers need to go back to school, since they have failed in acquiring the level of competence in standard written French expected of educated speakers. Similarly, in FrSp130, differing from standard spelling norms is viewed as evidence of academic failure or, as in FrGr066, as evidence of absence from school.

FrSp086:

Putin alors toi retourne à l'école ton orthographe pique les yeux!c'est chaud

[Fuck go back to school your spelling is making my eyes sting! It's crazy]

FrSp130:

l'orthographe est mort, cela prouve aussi que t'étais (ou tu es) en échec scolaire

[the spelling is hopeless, which also proves you were (or you are) a failure at school]

FrGr066:

Tu étais où pendant les cours de grammaire et d'orthographe ?

[Where were you during grammar and spelling classes?]

FrGr037 goes further still, suggesting that unless another Twitter user 'concentrates' on learning to write standard French, they will struggle to find employment. Emphasising the importance of grammar and spelling classes to an adult Twitter user results in a condescending tone, implying that only children who are yet to complete their education could fail to write standard French.

FrGr037:

Vous feriez mieux de vous concentrer sur vos cours de grammaire et d'orthographe, c'est catastrophique, comment ferez vous pour trouver un emploi ? 😊 Sinon bonne année quand même.

[You would do better to concentrate on your grammar and spelling classes, it is catastrophic, how will you find a job? 😊 Otherwise Happy New Year anyway.]

Education and intelligence are also prominent themes in the Russian corpora, observed in 37 tweets (18.5%) which include the word 'orfografiia' ('spelling'), and 22 tweets (22%) which contain the word 'grammatika' ('grammar'). Examples RuSp092 and RuGr036 display a similar orientation to tweets from the French corpus, where non-standard written language is seen as childlike and as a sign that the speaker did not learn to write properly while at school.

RuSp092:

Орфография как у третьеклассника

[Spelling like a third grader's]

RuGr036:

пАрАшок. Это грамматика для третьего класса.

[pArAshok.²⁵ This is grammar for the third grade.]

These examples show that several Russian Twitter users see deviations from grammar and spelling norms as something basic, which even young children should learn to avoid during the early stages of their schooling; in the case of RuGr036, spelling phonetically is dismissed as something which even third graders would know to avoid. This relationship between

²⁵ The standard spelling is 'poroshok', meaning 'powder', with the stress falling on the final syllable [poroshók]. In Russian, the unstressed 'o' vowel is usually pronounced /e/ or /ə/, which may be seen as phonetically closer to the letter 'a'.

standard language and the education system in the minds of Twitter users is perhaps to be expected given the “decisive role” that the education system plays, according to Bourdieu, in “the construction, legitimation and imposition of an official language” (1991: 48). The importance of the education system in promoting standard language appears to have been internalised by speakers of both French and Russian.

3.3 Scrutiny of specific groups’ language use

While a large proportion of tweets comment indiscriminately on the language use of other Twitter users, there appear to be higher expectations for certain groups of people to use standard language due to their professional or political involvement with promoting the standard language. This section examines metalinguistic discussions relating to two groups which seem to be most affected by this phenomenon, namely teachers (see section 3.3.1) and politicians (see section 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Teachers

Given the focus on education within both the French and Russian Twitter corpora, it is perhaps unsurprising that the language used by teachers is subject to additional levels of scrutiny. Bourdieu (1991: 60) identifies teachers as playing an important role in promoting standard, or ‘legitimate’, language “through innumerable acts of correction”. As a result of their privileged position in promoting and defending standard language, it is possible that higher language standards exist for teachers than other speakers. According to Bourdieu, teachers act as “agents of regulation and imposition” of the standard language through their power “to subject the linguistic performance of speaking subjects to examination and to the legal sanction of academic qualification” (1991: 45).

FrGr024 below is posted as part of a confrontation with another French Twitter user. In the tweet, the poster suggests that if their adversary was a French teacher, they should stay anonymous on the platform. Given the role teachers play in promoting standard French and ensuring children are taught the language to an adequate standard, it would apparently be humiliating for the other Twitter user to reveal their identity while making grammar mistakes online.

FrGr024:

C'est vous qui me menacez de me ridiculiser dans une grammaire hasardeuse et puis vous vous étonnez.. Tout ça anonymement, quel courage! Ceci-dit, si vous êtes prof de français, vous avez raison de rester anonyme...

[You're the one threatening to ridicule me using dodgy grammar and then you are surprised.. All that anonymously, how brave! That said, if you are a French teacher, you are right to remain anonymous...]

Tweets commenting critically on teachers' language use also exist in the Russian corpus. Several of these tweets involve Russian speakers sharing examples of non-standard language use by teachers, presumably to display their surprise or concern that a teacher – who is expected more than most to use standard Russian – should deviate from prescriptive norms. For example, RuSp135 features in an interesting discussion between several Twitter users. User 1 shares a photo of a note written by a PE teacher; in response, RuSp135 implies that a good command of standard Russian is expected of certain teachers but not others, depending on what subject they teach.

User 1:

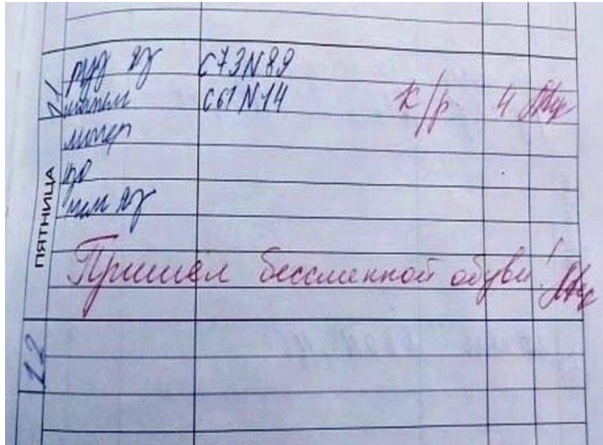


Figure 3.3: Handwritten note featured in tweet responded to in RuSp135

Образование 2021.. 🤖 😊

[Education in 2021.. 🤖 😊]

[Handwritten note reads: *Пришёл бессменной обуви!*]

Came without a change of shoes!²⁶]

RuSp135:

это же физкультурник(ца)

накропал(а), для них главное не орфография и синтаксис с пунктуацией, для

них главное - сердцем не стареть

[this is definitely a PE teacher

for them the main thing is not spelling and syntax and punctuation, for them the

main thing is not to grow old at heart]

Although RuSp135 expresses an opinion that certain teachers are not overly concerned with adhering to prescriptive norms, the overall expectation of both French and Russian Twitter

²⁶ The adjectival form 'bessmennoi' ('permanent', 'irreplacable') is used instead of the preposition 'bez' ('without') followed by the noun 'smeny' ('change').

users appears to be that teachers should model standard language use; a failure to do so is seen as problematic.

3.3.2 Politicians

Another group of people who seem to be subject to higher expectations when it comes to using standard language compared to other Twitter users are politicians. As people who either lead, or aspire to do so, politicians have a unique relationship with the official language: “The official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and in its social uses” (Bourdieu 1991: 45). Politicians are, therefore, expected to use legitimate, standard language, as is evident in several tweets within the corpus.

In the French sub-corpus of tweets containing the word ‘orthographe’, 22 tweets (11%) appear to be politically motivated or comment on a certain political figure. 16 tweets (16%) mentioning ‘grammaire’ do the same. The proportion of tweets relating to politics and politicians is particularly high in November 2021, with many French Twitter users commenting on the news that Éric Zemmour would stand as a candidate in the French presidential election. Several tweets mocked the candidate’s campaign launch video, with the subtitled version of the video posted to Twitter containing several spelling mistakes.²⁷

For instance, FrGr061 is sent in response to a since-deleted tweet by Zemmour, with the Twitter user suggesting that the candidate should ‘learn grammar’ before putting himself forward for the French presidency.

²⁷ See <https://www.programme-television.org/news-tv/Eric-Zemmour-candidat-a-la-presidentielle-pourquoi-le-choix-de-la-musique-de-son-clip-fait-polemique-4680452> [last accessed 20.09.2022]. Controversy over spelling mistakes made by presidential candidates became something of a feature of the French presidential campaign, with the following news article focusing on spelling mistakes made in tweets sent by another presidential candidate, Christiane Taubira: <https://www.ledauphine.com/insolite/2022/02/03/christiane-taubira-moquee-sur-les-reseaux-pour-des-fautes-d-orthographe> [last accessed 26.09.2022].

FrGr061:

@ZemmourEric Commencez par apprendre la grammaire..

[@ZemmourEric Start by learning grammar..]

Other tweets discussing Zemmour's command of standard written French focus on a spelling mistake he made in the opening chapter of his book published in September 2021, *La France n'a pas dit son dernier mot*,²⁸ which is referenced in FrSp169.

FrSp169:

Je suis sûr que @ZemmourEric a un programme pour cela, lui qui commence son dernier livre avec une belle faute d'orthographe. 😊

[I'm sure that @ZemmourEric has a programme for that, he who started his last book with a beautiful spelling mistake. 😊]

The overall impression given by these tweets is that Zemmour's spelling mistakes reflect poorly on his ability to lead France and make him unsuitable for high office. There appears to be an expectation, in the minds of French Twitter users, that the legitimacy of presidential candidates is in some way undermined if they do not adhere to prescriptive norms, presumably given the role senior politicians are expected to play in promoting the nation's standard language.

By comparison, just three Russian tweets (1.5%) containing the word 'orfografiia' and none which include the word 'grammatika' discuss language in relation to politicians. There could be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, Russians may feel less at ease commenting publicly

²⁸ Available at https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/elections/presidentielle/j-ai-peche-une-faute-d-orthographe-des-les-premiers-mots-du-livre-d-eric-zemmour_AN-202109150171.html [last accessed 20.09.2022]

on political figures compared to French people living in a liberal democracy. This is supported by Nisbet, Kamenchuk, and Dal's (2017) study. They contend that "the 2011-2012 anti-government protests against the Putin government in which social media played a mobilizing role [...] changed the government's views of the Internet as a possible threat" (2017: 960). In the aftermath of this, censorship both in traditional media and online intensified. Increased perceptions of risks that may occur from speaking out online could lead to "self-censorship and an online information environment free of citizen criticism" (2017: 970).

Secondly, many of the French tweets which focused on politics or politicians focused explicitly on a certain presidential candidate. With no major public votes taking place in Russia around the time of this study, these discussions would be unexpected. However, a similar phenomenon was observed in Russia in the summer of 2020 when the proposed ballot for Russia's referendum on constitutional amendments was published. The language used in the ballot made headlines after it was pointed out that the preposition 'в' ('v') ('to') was followed by the accusative case, rather than the prepositional case as would be expected if adhering to prescriptive norms in the question "Вы одобряете изменения в Конституцию РФ?" ("Do you approve of the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation?").²⁹

While a study taking place over a longer timeframe or overlapping with a national vote may feature more tweets commenting on politicians' language, RuSp083 is an interesting example of a Russian Twitter user making a judgement about a senior politician's language use. The tweet is sent in response to Anton Vladimirovich Belyakov, a member of Russia's Federation Council. The Twitter user clearly believes that non-standard language use is not something

²⁹ Available at: <https://ria.ru/20200626/1573537239.html> [last accessed 12.01.23]. No tweets relating to this matter are found in the corpus, likely because tweets were collected over a year after the incident took place. However, it received substantial media attention at the time (e.g. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4396242>)

associated with senior politicians and is more likely to be expected from a manual labourer.

This suggests certain prejudices existing towards speakers of non-standard varieties of Russian, whose language use would make them unsuitable for high office.

RuSp083:

Заранее прастити (орфография нарочная).

Блять, Антон Владимирович, ну хорош уже всякую ересь постить. Член СФ, а в Твиттере Вы как грузчик с порта.

[Sorry in advance (spelling on purpose).

Fuck, Anton Vladimirovich, enough with the heresy already. Member of the Federation Council [Senate], but on Twitter you're like a loader from a port.]

3.4 Difficulties of standard written Russian

One notable phenomenon observed in the Russian grammar sub-corpus is the frequency with which Russian Twitter users express a general sense of disdain towards Russian grammar, suggesting that they find writing standard Russian difficult. This can be observed in 18 tweets in the Russian grammar sub-corpus (18%), including RuGr002 and RuGr022.

RuGr002:

Грамматика это сложно

[Grammar is complicated]

RuGr022:

Грамматика может идти к чёрту

[Grammar can go to hell]

The use of *mat*, the Russian term for ‘obscene language’ (see Gorham 2014: 239), which is prevalent in the Russian corpora, similarly emphasises the negative opinion several Russian Twitter users have of standard Russian, particularly in relation to grammar. An example of this is evident in RuGr026. While Gorham points out that “*mat* has never been a recognized part of the Russian literary language” (2014: 239), it is interesting that he also writes that “proper use [of *mat*] actually functions as a source of linguistic capital” in certain contexts (2014: 239). CMC appears to be one such environment where a certain degree of linguistic capital is attached to the use of *mat*.

RuGr026:

ебаная грамматика

[fucking grammar]

While the above tweets are mainly characterised by a sense of frustration at the perceived difficulty of Russian grammar, other Twitter users seem to feel a sense of insecurity in relation to their non-standard use of language. For instance, the user posting RuGr028 judges that they could not write professionally, since they struggle with grammar.

RuGr028:

А копирайтинг, это не моё, у меня грамматика очень страдает, и плюс я

очень медленно пишу!{

[Copywriting is not for me, I really struggle with grammar, and plus I write very

slowly!{]

Meanwhile, other Russian Twitter users take a more humorous approach to their deviations from prescriptive grammar norms. Several tweets refer to grammar having ‘left the chat’,

suggesting that standard grammar norms have been abandoned. Examples of this can be seen in RuGr024 and RuGr025, with the crying with laughter emoji used in RuGr025 emphasising the Twitter user's comedic tone.

RuGr024:

грамматика вышла из чата

[Grammar has left the chat]

RuGr025:

Грамматика покинула чат, 😂

[Grammar has left the chat 😂]

RuSp180:

Блин, орфография покинула чат. Что б этот Т9 в окно кинули 😂

[Fuck, spelling has left the chat. I want this T9 thrown out the window 😂]

A similar, humorous approach to describing non-standard written language is present in RuSp180 in reference to Russian spelling. Here, the Twitter user appears to blame 'T9' predictive text technology for a typo occurring in a previous tweet, thereby distancing themselves from the cause of the spelling mistake. Clearly, therefore, some Russian Twitter users see certain prescriptive norms as challenging, particularly in relation to grammar.

3.5 Challenging the SLI

Various arguments are expressed in the Twitter corpus which do not wholly align with the SLI. This section outlines some of these arguments, including the idea that adhering to prescriptive norms is unnecessary in the context of CMC, the irrelevance of prescriptivist

arguments to wider debates on Twitter, as well as a small number of tweets which directly reject certain aspects of the SLI.

Some French Twitter users question the importance of adhering to prescriptive norms, particularly in the context of computer-mediated communication (CMC). For instance, FrSp073 adopts a sarcastic tone to ridicule the suggestion that ‘orthographe irréprochable’ (‘impeccable spelling’) ought to be used on Twitter. Similarly, FrSp177 asserts that making spelling mistakes in tweets is not ‘grave’ (‘serious’). Clearly, in the minds of these French speakers, different expectations exist for online language use in comparison to other registers or domains of usage.

FrSp073:

Ah ouais carrément on doit avoir une orthographe irréprochable sur ce réseau 🐼🐼

[Ah yeah definitely we must have impeccable spelling on this site 🐼🐼]

FrSp177:

Si je fais des fautes d'orthographe dans mes tweet c pas grave

[If I make spelling mistakes in my tweets it's not serious]

A similar sentiment is evident in the corpus of Russian tweets, where users appear critical of efforts to police language use online. For instance, RuGr051 suggests that Twitter is not the right place for someone who ‘needs’ (standard) grammar, while RuSp161 points to the idea that deviating from prescriptive norms may carry a degree of social capital in certain online groups, since there is an implied expectation that the user ought to know that ‘basic spelling’ is not adhered to in the original meme.

RuGr051:

This suggests the insignificance of prescriptivism, in the eyes of certain French speakers, relative to the broader debates taking place on Twitter.

FrSp008:

Il a tellement rien à dire qu'il te trouve une faute d'orthographe

[He has so little to say that he finds a spelling mistake for you]

FrGr025:

Et voilà, il ne vous reste plus que la grammaire à attaquer 🤪🤪🤪

[And there we have it, grammar is the only thing you have left to attack 🤪🤪🤪]

Moreover, in the Russian corpus, RuSp021 and RuSp033 also argue against the importance of adhering to prescribed norms, directly challenging some assumptions which are often implicit in comments influenced by the SLI. According to RuSp021, there is no correlation between the ability to produce standard written Russian and having a successful career, pointing to a real rejection of the SLI.

RuSp021:

Как вообще связаны орфографические ошибки и бизнес? Это явления из разных сфер жизни. Купил вагон металла, продал вагон металла. На каком этапе здесь задействуется орфография?

[How are spelling mistakes and business related? They are phenomena from different spheres of life. Bought a wagon-load of metal, sold a wagon-load of metal.

At what stage does spelling come into play here?]

RuSp033:

А я согласна с Королевой Детектива.

У меня, например, орфография на уровне рефлекса - без ошибок.

Но я никогда никого не тыкаю в ошибки, терпеть этого не могу.

Я знаю талантливых, образованных людей, которые ошибаются в правописании.

Ну и что такого-то?

[I agree with the Detective Queen.

For example, spelling is a reflex for me - without mistakes.

But I never poke fun at anyone for their mistakes, I can't stand it.

I know talented, educated people who make spelling mistakes.

And so what?]

Similarly, in RuSp033, the Twitter user outlines their opinion that making spelling mistakes is not an indicator of education, and that they do not enjoy seeing people correcting others' spelling mistakes online. This challenges some key assumptions of the SLI, suggesting a potential weakening of the SLI among certain Twitter users.

3.6 Summary

In summary, several similarities between the French and Russian sub-corpora are evident, suggesting that the SLI has had some similar effects on metalinguistic discourse 'from below' in France and Russia. French and Russian Twitter users generally characterise deviations from standard norms negatively, though this is more prevalent in the French corpus, where explicit references to mistakes made by other people are prolific. In both French and Russian metalinguistic discourse, non-standard language use is associated negatively with a speaker's intelligence, with particular concern expressed in relation to teachers deviating from prescriptive norms. Interestingly, discussions of politicians' language use were much more

frequent in the French corpus, reflecting the differences between France and Russia's political systems. Finally, the small number of tweets which appear to challenge the SLI have raised some interesting arguments relating to the significance of prescriptivism in the minds of certain Twitter users. It is now worth considering whether similar themes of metalinguistic discourse are present 'from above' by examining online discussions taking place between lay speakers and language academies.

4. 'Expert' language commentary: The French Academy and *Gramota*

This chapter examines the influence that the SLI has on metalinguistic discussions taking place between lay people and two state-endorsed language academies – the French Academy and the Russian Language Institute. Both the French Academy's website and *Gramota*, which is run by members of the Russian Language Institute, have sections where lay speakers can submit questions concerning 'correct' language use, providing a platform for metalinguistic discussions with state-appointed language experts. A total of 200 question and answer interactions are considered; 100 were published on a subsection of the French Academy's website entitled *Dire, ne pas dire* (Say, do not say) and 100 on *Gramota's Spravka* (Helpdesk). These interactions between lay speakers and members of the language academies have been collated into two corpora – the *Académie* corpus and the *Gramota* corpus – and analysed to reveal which linguistic topics are discussed most frequently in the two corpora and any recurring themes of metalinguistic discourse.

The chapter is organised into three main sections comparing key similarities and differences between discussions published on the French Academy's website and *Gramota*. Section 4.1 examines the subject matter of questions asked by French and Russian speakers using the websites, drawing on the categorisation system outlined by Humphries (2020: 117-118) to explore the areas of language in which these speakers show the most interest. Section 4.2 highlights several key similarities between metalanguage seen on the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora, including the use of modal expressions suggesting the necessity of using standard language forms, SLI-informed discussions of correctness and mistakes, and the repeated

recommendation of certain dictionaries and grammars. Finally, Section 4.3 explores the main metalinguistic differences between the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora.

4.1 Topics of interest

This section focuses on the subject matter of questions asked by users of the French Academy's *Dire, ne pas dire* service and *Gramota's Spravka*. It examines the central topics of these questions, comparing the areas of language in which French and Russian speakers show the greatest interest.

4.1.1 Linguistic categorisation of question topics

Topics of interest in the two sub-corpora were categorised by drawing on the model developed by Humphries (2020: 117-118), based on previous work by Ayres-Bennett and Seijido (2011) (see Table 4.1).

Category	Sub-category
Phonology	Consonants
	Vowels
	Liaisons
	<i>H aspiré</i>
	Foreign words
	Proper nouns
Spelling	General
	Punctuation
	Capitalisation
	Diacritics
Vocabulary	Word class
	Borrowings
	Gender
	Neologisms and archaisms
	Abbreviations
	Easily confused words and idioms
Meaning	Semasiology
	Onomasiology
	Semantic scope
	Synonyms
Morpho-syntax	Word order

	Derivational morphology
	Inflectional morphology
	Articles
	Valency
	Pronouns
Language history	Word
	Expression/idiom
	Spelling
	Grammatical point
Style	Register and politeness
	Pleonasm
Metalinguistic knowledge	
Opinions about language	

Table 4.1: Linguistic categorisation of question topics (Humphries 2020)

Since the categorisation model set out in Table 4.1 was developed to deal specifically with the French language, certain sub-categories are specific to French and do not apply to Russian, such as the phonological feature *H aspiré* (aspirated H). Similarly, other topics which are raised in the Russian sub-corpus do not fit easily into an existing category. For instance, word stress is an important feature of Russian phonology, with the meaning of certain words changing depending on which syllable is stressed. The categorisation model was therefore altered slightly to reflect these differences.

Table 4.2 shows which categories were used in this study, with alterations indicated with an asterisk, alongside examples from the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora where available. Punctuation has been changed from a sub-category of spelling in Table 4.1 to an independent category in Table 4.2, owing to the high proportion of Russian questions concerned with the use of punctuation within sentences. Some sub-categories were only discussed in one of the two corpora, while several sub-categories, including word class, neologisms and archaisms, and abbreviations, are not discussed in either the *Académie* or the *Gramota* corpus, and therefore are not included in Table 4.2. However, only a very small number of questions in Humphries' (2020) study related to these sub-categories: word class (eight questions),

neologisms and archaisms (10 questions), and abbreviations (two questions), from a much larger sample. Given the smaller scale of the present study, it is not unexpected that these sub-categories receive a lack of attention.

All questions were categorised into a single category, though this was not always straightforward, with the focus of some questions spanning multiple categories. For instance, in Table 4.2, FrQ075 is categorised as relating to the sub-category of gender. However, since the question relates to a borrowed word – the Italian noun *vespa*, referring to a particular brand of scooters – the question could also be categorised as relating to borrowings. With these kinds of questions which overlap more than one category, a level of subjectivity has been introduced, as I have chosen the category which was deemed to best match the question’s overall focus.

Category	Sub-category	French example	Russian example
Phonology	Consonants	FrQ077: <i>J’ai remarqué qu’un ami prononçait le p dans les mots sculpture et sculpteur [...] d’où vient ce p muet ?</i> [I noticed that a friend pronounced the ‘p’ in the words ‘sculpture’ [sculpture] and ‘sculptor’ [sculptor] [...] where does this silent ‘p’ come from?]	N/A
	<i>H aspiré</i>	FrQ033: <i>Pourriez-vous expliquer pourquoi le h de héros est aspiré, alors que celui d’héroïne et héroïque est muet ?</i> [Could you explain why the ‘h’ in ‘héros’ [hero] is aspirated, while the one in ‘héroïne’ [heroine] and ‘héroïque’ [heroic] is silent?]	N/A

	Proper nouns	FrQ014: <i>Il est d'usage de ne pas prononcer le s et le t de Christ quand ce mot est précédé de Jésus. Comment expliquer cette règle ?</i> [It is customary to not pronounce the 's' and the 't' in 'Christ' [Christ] when this word is preceded by 'Jésus' [Jesus]. How is this rule explained?	N/A
	Word stress*	N/A	RuQ021: <i>Скажите, пожалуйста, на какую букву упадет ударение в слове "полами" [...]?</i> [Tell me please, which syllable is stressed in the word "polami" [sexes] [...]?
Spelling	General	FrQ061: <i>Je souhaite donner une réponse à ma fille qui apprend à écrire ; pourquoi le mot carré prend-il deux r ?</i> [I would like to provide an answer to my daughter who is learning to write: why does the word 'carré' have two 'r's?]	RuQ032: <i>Почему "бешеный" пишется с одной Н?</i> [Why is "beshenyi" [mad] written with one 'N'?]
	Capitalisation	FrQ035: <i>J'aimerais savoir s'il faut, ou non, une majuscule aux points cardinaux.</i> [I would like to know whether or not there must be a capital letter for cardinal directions.]	RuQ036: <i>С прописной или строчной буквы пишется слово "министерство" в сочетании "министерство культуры России"</i> [Is the word "ministry" written with a lowercase or capital letter in the expression "ministry of culture of Russia"]
	Diacritics	FrQ052: <i>Pourquoi utilisons-nous l'accent circonflexe ?</i>	N/A

		[Why do we use the circumflex accent?]	
Punctuation*		FrQ016: <i>Pourriez-vous me préciser si l'on écrit soit-il ou soit il. Le trait d'union est-il obligatoire ?</i> [Could you explain to me whether to write 'soit-il' or 'soit il'. Is the hyphen obligatory?]	RuQ023: <i>Какой был мир раньше нам известно из раскопок. Нужна ли запятая?</i> [‘What was the world like before what we know from excavations.’ Is a comma needed?]
Vocabulary	Borrowings	FrQ051: <i>Les Allemands ont leur propre mot pour Football. J’aimerais savoir pourquoi, en France, nous n’avons pas traduit ce mot.</i> [Germans have their own word for Football. I would like to know why, in France, we didn't translate this word.]	N/A
	Gender	FrQ075: <i>Devons-nous dire une vespa ou un vespa pour parler du célèbre scooter italien ?</i> [Should we say 'une vespa' or 'un vespa' to speak about the famous Italian scooter?]	N/A
	Easily confused words and idioms	N/A	RuQ096: <i>"Будет предоставлено на выбор несколько вариантов" или "будет представлено на выбор несколько вариантов" ?</i> ["Multiple options will be ‘predostavleno’ [provided]” or "Multiple options will be ‘predstavleno’ [presented]?”]
Meaning	Semasiology	FrQ079: <i>Quel est le sens de dézinguer [...]?</i> [What is the meaning of ‘dézinguer’ [to shoot down]?	N/A

	Onomasiology	FrQ073: <i>Les petits des canards se nomment les canetons, mais comment se nomment les petits des cygnes ?</i> [Baby ducks are called 'canetons' [ducklings], but what are baby swans called?]	N/A
	Synonyms	FrQ023: <i>Quelle est la différence entre peler et éplucher, par exemple dans le cas d'un fruit ?</i> [What is the difference between 'peler' [to peel] and 'éplucher' [to peel], for example in the case of a fruit?]	RuQ081: <i>В речке летом «купаются» или «плавают»? В чем разница между этими глаголами</i> [In the river in summer do you 'kupaiutsia' [bathe] or 'plavayut' [swim]? What is the difference between these verbs [...]?]
Morpho-syntax	Word order	FrQ001: <i>Je voudrais savoir pourquoi le mot aussi, employé avec le sens de « c'est pourquoi », entraîne l'inversion du sujet quand il est placé en début de proposition.</i> [I would like to know why the word 'aussi' [so], used in the sense of 'that is why', leads to subject inversion when it comes before the preposition.]	N/A
	Inflectional morphology	FrQ008: <i>Dans la phrase : La brèche que cela a ouverte est immense, est-il correct de faire l'accord ?</i> [In the sentence: The gap that this has opened is huge, is it correct to make the agreement?]	RuQ015: <i>почему "два пути" слово "пути" тут не во множественном числе?</i> [Why in "dva puti" [two ways] is the word "puti" [ways] not in the plural?]
	Articles	FrQ044: <i>doit-on parler de la République du Pakistan ou de la République de Pakistan ?</i>	N/A

		[Should we speak about the Republic 'du' [of the] Pakistan or the Republic 'de' [of] Pakistan?]	
	Valency	FrQ099: <i>Je voudrais connaître votre avis sur l'utilisation d'« obliger de » et « obliger à » : quelle est la forme correcte, s'il vous plait ?</i> [I would like to know your opinion on the use of "obliger de" [oblige to] and "obliger à" [oblige to]: which form is correct, please?]	RuQ082: <i>Родом из Кубани или родом с Кубани? Как правильно пишется?</i>
	Pronouns	FrQ087: <i>« Joues-tu au tennis ? »</i> – <i>Oui, j'y joue parfois.</i> – <i>Oui, j'en joue parfois.</i> ["Do you play tennis?" – Yes, I play it ['y'] sometimes. – Yes, I play it ['en'] sometimes.]	N/A
Language history	Word	FrQ083: <i>Pour parler d'un « coupe-bordure » (l'outil de jardinage), on entend également le terme « rotofil ». Savez-vous quelle est l'étymologie de ce mot ?</i> [To speak about a trimmer (gardening tool), we sometimes hear the term 'rotofil'. Do you know what the etymology of this term is?]	N/A
	Expression/ idiom	FrQ017: <i>Je recherche désespérément la source de l'expression ironique C'est ainsi qu'on écrit l'histoire.</i> [I am desperately looking for the source of the ironic expression "C'est ainsi qu'on écrit l'histoire"]	N/A

		['and so history was written'.]	
	Spelling	FrQ007: <i>Je me demandais s'il était possible que des mots changent d'orthographe avec le temps.</i> [I was wondering if it was possible for the spelling of words to change with time.]	N/A
Metalinguistic knowledge		FrQ084: <i>Avez-vous déjà remarqué que les groupe (sic) bl, br, cl, cr, gl, gr, etc. n'ont pas de nom.</i> [Have you noticed that the group 'bl', 'br', 'cr', 'gl', 'gr', etc. do not have a name.]	RuQ044: <i>Скажите, пожалуйста, какими морфемами являются "ем" и "те" в глаголах типа "пойдёмте, прочтёмте"?</i> [Tell me please, which morphemes are "em" and "te" in verbs like "poidiomte, prochtente"?]
Opinions about language		FrQ047: <i>On rencontre de plus en plus souvent l'expression en souffrance [...] Qu'en penser ?</i> [We encounter the expression 'en souffrance' ['in suffering'] more and more often [...] What do you think of this?]	N/A

Table 4.2: Relevant categories and sub-categories with examples

Given the typological differences between French and Russian, it is to be expected that speakers express interest in different parts of language. However, there are also several areas where the two corpora overlap. Figure 4.1 illustrates several key similarities and differences between the main categories discussed in the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora. Clearly, there are stark contrasts between the two corpora in terms of the number of people asking

questions related to punctuation, meaning, and language history, while the number of questions about spelling and morpho-syntax are more balanced between the two.

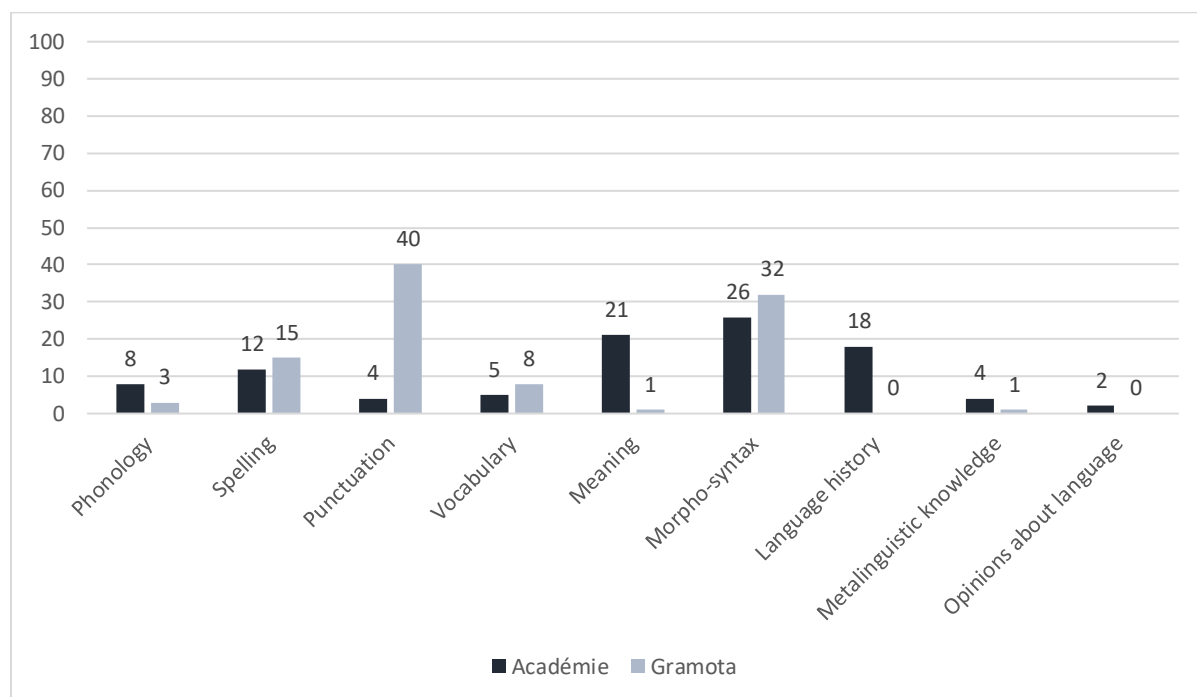


Figure 4.1: Question categories in the Académie and Gramota corpora (%)

The differences between the questions asked by French and Russian speakers are further illustrated by examining the sub-categories which feature most prominently in the two sub-corpora. Table 4.3 shows the number of questions relating to each category broken down by sub-category in the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora.

Category	Académie	Gramota
Phonology	8	3
Consonants	2	0
<i>H aspiré</i>	3	0
Proper nouns	3	0
Word stress	0	3
Spelling	12	15
General	8	8
Capitalisation	1	7
Diacritics	3	0
Punctuation	4	40
Vocabulary	5	8
Borrowings	1	0
Gender	4	1

Easily confused words/idioms	0	7
Meaning	21	1
Semasiology	9	0
Onomasiology	2	0
Synonyms	10	1
Morpho-syntax	26	32
Word order	1	1
Inflectional morphology	9	22
Derivational morphology	1	0
Articles	4	0
Valency	9	9
Pronouns	2	0
Language history	18	0
Word	9	0
Expression/idiom	8	0
Spelling	1	0
Metalinguistic knowledge	4	1
Opinions about language	2	0

Table 4.3: Questions by sub-category in the Académie and Gramota corpora

The starkest contrast between the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora in terms of the topics of questions is the number of questions about punctuation. Over a third of Russian questions are related to punctuation (38), with many asking about the use of commas or other punctuation marks in example phrases or sentences. For example, RuQ050 asks whether a comma is needed in a given phrase. Similarly, RuQ085 provides an example sentence which includes a colon, with the intention of finding out whether the colon was used in accordance with prescriptive norms. By contrast, only four French questions express an interest in punctuation, and all of these relate to the use of hyphens within words rather than commas or other punctuation marks used between separate clauses (see FrQ016 and FrQ018). The heightened focus on ensuring that punctuation use conforms with prescriptive norms in the *Gramota* corpus perhaps points to the historical focus on officially codifying the use of punctuation in Russian, with the entire second half of the lengthy 1956 *Pravila russkoi orfografii i punktuatsii* (Rules of Russian Spelling and Punctuation) dedicated to punctuation rules. The section dealing with commas is particularly comprehensive, with articles 136 to 158

setting out 12 distinct, codified usages of commas.³⁰ As such, it could be expected that Russian speakers express heightened levels of concern that their comma usage adheres to these detailed, official rules.

RuQ050:

Подскажите, пожалуйста, нужна ли запятая на стыке "ну" и "то есть" и по какой причине

[Please tell me, is a comma needed between “nu” (“well”) and “to est” (“that is”) and for what reason]

RuQ085:

здравствуйте! нужно ли двоеточие? Чек-лист: «Как побороть лень»

[hello! Is the colon needed? Check list: How to overcome laziness”]

FrQ016:

Pourriez-vous me préciser si l’on écrit soit-il ou soit il. Le trait d’union est-il obligatoire ?

[Could you explain to me if we write *soit-il* or *soit il*. Is the hyphen obligatory?]

FrQ018:

Bonjour Monsieur,

³⁰ These rules are available on the Gramota website: <http://new.gramota.ru/biblio/readingroom/rules/> [last accessed 29.09.2022]

Rédactrice-relectrice,³¹ je vous soumetts une question concernant la coupure des mots en fin de ligne. Le mot *imputrescible* a été coupé comme suit : *imputres-* cible. Cette coupure est-elle correcte ?

[Hello Sir,

As an editor-proofreader, I'm submitting a question to you about splitting words up at the end of a line. The word *imputrescible* [rotproof] was split like this: *imputres-* cible. Is this split correct?]

Another contrast between the French and Russian corpora which is clearly visible in Figure 4.1 is the amount of interest in language history. 18 French questions were categorised as enquiring about some aspect of language history – be that individual words (nine questions, see FrQ005), expressions and idioms (eight questions, see FrQ025), or spelling (one question, see FrQ007) – whereas not a single Russian post asked a question related to this topic. This could be illustrative of the historical foundations of the French Academy compared to the relative newness of *Gramota*. While the French Academy's website celebrates the organisation's role in standardising the French language since its foundation in 1635,³² *Gramota* focuses on the more recent need for its existence, with the website set up only in 2000 in response to perceived 'problems' relating to the use of Russian on the internet. Differing levels of interest in language history could also relate to the fact that the Russian language was codified much later than other European languages such as French (Cubberley 2002: 46).

³¹ The feminine version of 'rédacteur' (editor) and 'relecteur' (proofreader) are formed here using the '-rice' suffix. The term 'rédactrice' does appear in the French Academy's dictionary alongside the masculine 'rédacteur', despite historical resistance shown by the Academy towards feminised job titles.

³² Available at: <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/linstitution/les-missions> [last accessed 29.09.2022]

FrQ005:

J'aimerais savoir à quel moment et pourquoi le mot « cabaret » a évolué vers la définition en usage aujourd'hui.

[I would like to know when and why the word “cabaret” evolved towards its definition in current usage.]

FrQ025:

Je souhaiterais connaître l'origine de l'expression « à la six-quatre-deux ».

[I would like to know the origin of the expression “à la six-quatre-deux” [slapdash].]

FrQ007:

Je me demandais s'il était possible que des mots changent d'orthographe avec le temps.

[I was wondering if it was possible for the spelling of words to change over time.]

The third clear contrast between the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora in terms of question topic relates to meaning. Questions from the *Académie* corpus exhibit sizeable interest in meaning (21 posts), spread across the sub-categories of semasiology (nine questions, see FrQ080), onomasiology (two questions, see FrQ073), and synonyms (10 questions, see FrQ023). By contrast, only one post in the Russian corpus relates to this topic (RuQ081).

FrQ080:

Quelle est la définition exacte de vice-champion ?

[What is the precise definition of vice-champion?]

FrQ073:

Les petits des canards se nomment les canetons, mais comment se nomment les petits des cygnes ?

[Baby ducks are called *canetons* [ducklings], but what are baby geese called?]

FrQ023:

*Quelle est la différence entre *peler* et *éplucher*, par exemple dans le cas d'un fruit ?*

[What is the difference between *peler* [to peel] and *éplucher* [to peel], for example in the case of a fruit?]

RuQ081:

В речке летом "купаются" или "плавают"? В чем разница между этими глаголами [...]?

[In the river in summer do you 'kupaiutsia' [bathe] or 'plavayut' [swim]? What is the difference between these verbs [...]?]

Despite these clear contrasts, Figure 4.1 also illustrates some noteworthy similarities between the parts of language asked about in the two corpora. Firstly, both Russian and French speakers show substantial interest in morpho-syntax, though slightly more Russian speakers (32) ask questions related to this topic than French speakers (26). In particular, inflectional morphology emerges as a clear focus in both the *Gramota* corpus (22 questions, see RuQ006) and the *Académie* corpus (nine questions, see FrQ094). The increased focus on inflectional morphology in the *Gramota* corpus most likely reflects the fact that Russian is a more highly inflected language than French, featuring six nominal cases and three different genders.

RuQ006:

Подскажите пожалуйста, как склоняется фамилия Горх, и склоняется ли она?

[Tell me please, how does the surname 'Gorkh' decline, and does the feminine decline?]

FrQ094:

J'ai lu que le pluriel de madame n'était pas mesdames, mais madames. Qu'en est-il réellement ?

[I read that the plural of *madame* [madam] wasn't *mesdames*, but *madames*. What is it really?]

Secondly, broadly similar numbers of questions in the *Académie* corpus (12) and the *Gramota* corpus (15) ask questions related to spelling. This is consistent with the findings from chapter 3, which demonstrated substantial interest in ensuring standard spelling on both French and Russian-speaking Twitter. General spelling enquiries appear prominently in both corpora, with eight French and eight Russian speakers asking how to spell certain words, as in FrQ013 and RuQ016.

FrQ013:

Dans le cadre de mon travail nous procédons à une opération de « dessachage » quand la collecte sélective arrive en sacs. [...] Comment doit-il être orthographié : désachage, dessachage, déssachage ?

[At my work, we do a “dessachage” [debugging] operation when the sorted waste arrives in bags. [...] How must it be spelt: *désachage*, *dessachage*, *déssachage*?]

RuQ016:

Подскажите, в данном случае пишется одно "н" или два: "Его глаз и руки натренированы / натренированы, и душа может искать способ самовыражения"?

[Tell me, in this example is it written with one “n” or two: “His eyes and hands are *natrenirovany* / *natrenirovanny* [trained], and the soul can look for a way to express itself”?]

This indicates a clear desire on the part of both French and Russian speakers to comply with prescribed spelling norms. Even when a word’s spelling has not yet been codified in dictionaries, as in FrQ013, lay speakers still feel the need to consult the language academies for guidance on standard spelling.

4.2 Similarities between French and Russian metalanguage

While section 4.1 focused on *what* parts of language are most discussed in either corpus, this section turns to *how* language is discussed by comparing the metalinguistic discourse in the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora. Several similarities are evident in the metalanguage present in the two corpora, in terms of the questions asked by lay speakers as well as the answers provided by the language academies. This section focuses on three similarities which appear most prominently in both the French and Russian sub-corpora: namely, a focus on ‘necessity’ and the use of modal expressions, prescriptive characterisations of certain language forms as ‘correct’ or as ‘mistakes’, and references to authoritative works such as dictionaries and grammars.

4.2.1 Necessity and modal expressions

A range of modal verbs, e.g., ‘devoir’ (‘have to’), adjectives, e.g., ‘obligatoire’ (‘obligatory’) and adverbs, e.g., ‘nuzhno’ (‘needed’) suggest a requirement to either use or avoid certain

language forms. This kind of metalanguage is widespread in the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora, in the questions asked as well as in the answers received. Looking first to the *Académie* corpus, Table 4.4 details how widely a range of modal verbs and expressions appear within the corpus in a metalinguistic context. Modal verbs like ‘falloir’ (‘need to’) and ‘devoir’ (‘must/have to’), as well as adjectives like ‘nécessaire’ (‘necessary’) and ‘obligatoire’ (‘obligatory’) are frequently used to convey a sense of compulsion to use or avoid certain forms in accordance with prescribed norms.

French expression	English translation	No. of questions	No. of answers
Falloir (il faut, il faudrait)	Need to (it is/would be necessary to)	9	9
Devoir (‘on doit’, ‘il devrait’)	Have to/must (one has to/must, it should)	7	8
Nécessaire	Necessary	2	1
Obligatoire	Obligatory	2	1

Table 4.4: Modal expressions in the *Académie* corpus

Moreover, the use of the indicative mood in simple declaratives by the French Academy presents standard norms as linguistic facts rather than preferences. Here, a degree of implicit prescriptivism is evident, with the French Academy suggesting that a certain language variety should be used, and, by extension, there is another variety which should be avoided. This is more implicit than the explicit prescriptivism displayed with the use of modal verbs, but nonetheless points to the French Academy’s prescriptivist view that certain language forms are more legitimate than others. This is particularly evident in conjunction with the indefinite subject pronoun ‘on’ (‘one’), suggesting an impersonal approach to language based on a factual, prescribed way of speaking. For instance, in FrA065, in response to a question about how to write certain units of measurement, the French Academy uses the indicative ‘on écrit’ (‘it is written’) alongside the negated ‘elles ne s’écrivent donc pas’ (‘they are therefore not

written’) to emphasise a straightforward, binary view of language correctness, dismissing the legitimacy of alternative forms.

FrA065:

Les unités de mesure sont des noms communs, même si elles sont tirées de noms propres. Elles ne s’écrivent donc pas avec une majuscule mais elles prennent la marque du pluriel. On écrit donc un pascal, deux pascals, comme on écrit un watt, deux watts ou un ohm, deux ohms.

[Units of measurement are common nouns, even if they are based on proper nouns. They are not written with a capital, but they take the plural mark. We therefore write one pascal, two pascals, like one watt, two watts, or one ohm, two ohms.]

The use of expressions suggesting a ‘need’ to use certain language forms is particularly striking in the exchange between FrQ013 and FrA013, in which the French Academy is quick to make prescriptive rulings on the spelling of an innovative word which is not currently codified in dictionaries. In FrQ013, the website user informs the French Academy about an innovative word used in their workplace – ‘dessachage’ (‘debugging’) – and seeks clarity on how the word ‘needs to be spelt’ using the modal verb ‘doit’. The noun ‘dessachage’ does not feature in the French Academy’s dictionary or other popular online French dictionaries like *Larousse*. Despite this, the French Academy immediately prescribes a correct spelling in FrA013 to ensure consistency with orthographically similar words, using the future tense declarative ‘on écrira’ (‘we will write’). This is indicative of the Academy’s role as a prescriber of rules rather than a passive observer of norms, in spite of their claim that they are simply the ‘greffier de l’usage’ (‘usage clerk’) (Morvan 2019).

FrQ013:

Dans le cadre de mon travail nous procédons à une opération de « dessachage » quand la collecte sélective arrive en sacs. On doit en effet ouvrir ces sacs de manière mécanique. Se pose alors la question de l'orthographe du mot « dessachage ».

Comment doit-il être orthographié : désachage, dessachage, déssachage ?

[At my work, we do a “dessachage” [debugging] operation when the sorted waste arrives in bags. In effect, we have to open the bags in a mechanical way. This raises the question of how to spell the word “dessachage”. How does it need to be spelt: *désachage, dessachage, déssachage?*]

FrA013:

On écrira dessachage, par analogie avec d'autres termes similaires, comme dessablage, dessalage ou dessouchage. On évitera surtout la forme « déssachage », puisque la présence des deux « s » rendrait l'accent inutile. Il n'y a d'ailleurs pas de mot en français commençant par déss-.

[We will write *dessachage* [debugging], by analogy to other similar terms, like *dessablage* [de-sanding], *dessalage* [desalination] or *dessouchage* [stump removal]. In particular, we will avoid the form *déssachage*, since the presence of the double 's' makes the accent pointless. There are no words in French starting 'déss-'.]

The use of modal expressions denoting an obligation to use prescribed language forms is similarly evident in the Russian sub-corpus. Table 4.5 highlights some of the most common expressions of this type used in both questions and answers published on *Gramota*. Often, words such as 'nuzhen' ('needed') appear in very brief exchanges, like the two-word response provided by *Gramota* in RuA030, with lay speakers simply wanting to clarify whether a comma

is ‘needed’ in a given sentence. This type of metalanguage suggests a basic ‘need’ to comply to prescriptive norms in written Russian.

Russian expression	English translation	No. in questions	No. in answers
Должен (должен, должна)	Have to, must	1	2
Нужен (нужен, нужна, нужны)	Need, needed, necessary	23	14
Не нужен (не нужен, не нужна, не нужно, не нужны)	Not needed	3	5
Надо	Necessary	1	0
Следует	Ought to	1	3

Table 4.5: Modal expressions in the Gramota corpus

RuQ030:

Нужны ли тут знаки препинания? «Мозг есть не у всех и это нормально»

[Is punctuation needed here? “Not everyone has a brain and that is okay”]

RuA030:

Нужна запятая.

[A comma is needed.]

RuA010:

Запятые на месте вопросительных знаков нужны.

[Commas instead of question marks are needed.]

RuA085:

Двоеточие не нужно.

[The colon is not needed.]

The high proportion of questions (23) and answers (14) which use the word ‘nuzhen’ (‘needed’) (or a variant of it) is indicative of the high number of answers from *Gramota* which are very short in length, similar in formulation to RuA030. When asked, for instance, about the standard use of punctuation in example sentences (see RuQ030), responses from *Gramota* are generally very short in length, generally featuring a simple ruling on whether certain punctuation marks are ‘needed’ (e.g. RuA010) or ‘not needed’ (e.g., RuA085). The fact that no further explanation or justification is deemed necessary by *Gramota* suggests a binary approach taken to the issue of language correctness.

4.2.2 Correctness and mistakes

Discussions of language correctness and mistakes are a recurring feature of posts in both corpora. Seven questions and five answers in the *Académie* corpus characterise certain language forms as ‘correct’ (‘correct’, e.g., FrA076), while non-standard language forms are described by the French Academy as ‘fautif’ (‘wrong’, FrA077) or as an ‘erreur’ (‘error’, FrA089). This suggests that the French Academy sees deviations from prescriptive norms as wrong, rather than as alternative forms.

FrA076:

Cette phrase est parfaitement correcte.

[This sentence is perfectly correct.]

FrA077:

[...] *c’est prononcer -lpt- qui est aujourd’hui considéré comme fautif.*

[...] pronouncing the -lpt- is today considered to be incorrect.]

Similar themes are evident in the Russian corpus, with correctness also emerging as a key focus of both questions and answers. A greater variety of terms are used to characterise language as ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ in the *Gramota* corpus, including ‘pravil’no’ (‘right’) (38 occurrences), ‘verno’ (‘true’) (10 occurrences), ‘korrektno’ (‘correct’) (nine occurrences), ‘normativno’ (‘normative’) (three occurrences), ‘umestno’ (‘appropriate’) (two occurrences), ‘gramotno’ (‘properly’) (one occurrence), and ‘nekorrektno’ (‘incorrect’) (one occurrence). Some of these terms explicitly point to the acceptability or appropriateness of certain language forms, suggesting that language that does conform to prescribed norms is unacceptable and, therefore, ought to be corrected. For instance, the answer provided by *Gramota* in RuA046 explains the difference between the words ‘komponent’ (a part of something/element) and ‘komponenta’ (emphasising the mathematical sense of ‘component’). It then describes the word ‘komponent’ (‘element’) as the ‘appropriate’ word and, therefore, as the ‘correct’ choice.

RuA046:

Существует два слова: компонент и компонента. [...] В Вашем предложении уместно первое слово, поэтому корректно: ...исследование... их основных компонентов.

[There are two words: *komponent* [element] and *komponenta* [component] [...] In your sentence the first word is appropriate, therefore “...a study... of their main elements” is correct.]

Moreover, there are multiple examples of both the French Academy and *Gramota* correcting deviations from prescriptive norms in the questions they receive, even when these deviations are not the focus of the original questions. For instance, in FrQ088, the website user simply

seeks to clarify the normative spelling of the terms ‘en présentiel’ (‘in person’) and ‘en distanciel’ (‘distance’/‘remote’). While the French Academy does address this query in FrA088, they also treat it as an opportunity to urge the website user, whose spelling of ‘Covid’ with a capital ‘C’ differs from prescriptive norms, to spell the word with a lowercase ‘c’. Since the person who submitted FrQ088 mentions that they teach French as a foreign language and spelling remediation classes, it is possible that the French Academy has heightened expectations – like those expressed by Twitter users in section 3.3.1 – that this speaker should set an example of standard language practice by avoiding any deviations from prescribed spelling norms.

FrQ088:

Professeur de français langue étrangère et de remédiation orthographique, j’aimerais attirer votre attention sur deux mots que la Covid a mis à l’ordre du jour : « en présentiel » et « en distanciel ». Ou, peut-être, dois-je plutôt écrire « en présentiel » et « en distanciel » ? [...]

[As a teacher of French as a foreign language and spelling remediation, I would like to attract your attention to two words that Covid has put on the agenda: “en présentiel” [in person] and “en distanciel” [distance/remote]. Or, maybe, should I write “en présentiel” and “en distanciel”?

FrA088:

En 2019, le Centre national d’enseignement à distance a fêté son quatre-vingtième anniversaire. On emploiera donc la locution à distance plutôt que l’anglicisme distanciel ou distanciel. Et, par analogie avec cette locution, on dira en présence plutôt que cet autre anglicisme, presential [...]

D'autre part, nous nous permettons de vous signaler que covid est un nom de maladie, comme sida, et ne doit donc pas prendre de majuscule.

[In 2019, the National Centre for 'enseignement à distance' [distance learning] celebrated its eightieth anniversary. We therefore use the term 'à distance' rather than the anglicism 'distanciel' or 'distantiel'. And, by analogy with this term, we will say 'en présence' [in person] rather than this other anglicism, 'presential'. [...]

On the other hand, may we take the liberty of pointing out to you that 'covid' is the name of a disease, like 'sida' [AIDS], and therefore must not have a capital letter.]

Likewise, the editors responsible for answering questions on *Gramota* also engage in acts of language correction, even when this is not requested by the person asking the question. For instance, RuQ049 seeks clarification on whether a given sentence is punctuated in accordance with prescriptive norms. While RuA049 does address this part of the question, stating that the comma 'needs to be moved', the *Gramota* expert also corrects the lexical choice of 'выполнени́й' ('implementation'), suggesting what they consider to be a more appropriate collocation in its place. This comes despite the fact that lexical choice and word meaning were not referred to at all in the initial question.

RuQ049:

Как правильно расставить знаки препинания во фразе: "О выполнении мероприятий до 2024 года, в части касающейся создания в субъектах учебных центров"

[How do you correctly punctuate the phrase: "On the implementation of events until 2024, in terms of establishing training centres in the subjects"]

RuA049:

Запятую нужно перенести. Она должна стоять после сочетания в части — для обособления причастного оборота. Обратите внимание: мероприятие можно провести, но вряд ли его можно выполнить.

[The comma needs to be moved. It must come after the conjunction 'v chasti' [in terms of] to isolate the participle. Please note: an event can be 'provesti' [held], but it is unlikely to be 'vypolnit'' [implemented].]

However, elsewhere in *Gramota*, a less binary approach to language correctness can be observed. For instance, RuQ027 offers a spectrum of correctness ranging from 'normativno' ('normative') to 'kategoricheski nel'zia' ('categorically forbidden'). In response to this question, *Gramota* shows a tolerance of the notion of a hierarchy of acceptability. While RuA027 does make the prescriptive ruling that it is 'luchshe' ('better') to avoid using more than one colon per sentence, they do concede that two colons in a single sentence are 'vstrechaiutsia' ('encountered'). This shows a level of tolerance of and engagement with the hierarchical approach to language correctness presented in RuQ027.

RuQ027:

Здравствуй, Грамота! Вопрос такой: несколько двоеточий в одном предложении: нормативно, допустимо, стоит избегать, категорически нельзя?

[Hello [informal], *Gramota*! This is my question: are multiple colons in one sentence: normative, acceptable, worth avoiding, categorically forbidden?]

RuA027:

Два двоеточия в одном предложении встречаются, но лучше их избегать.

[Two colons in one sentence are encountered, but it is better to avoid them.]

Similarly, RuQ072 asks ‘naskol’ko dopustimo’ (‘how acceptable’) a certain language form is, implying that there are various degrees of acceptability in language. This suggests that some Russian speakers do not see a strict distinction between right and wrong when it comes to linguistic matters, and instead accept that certain varieties may be considered more or less correct to different extents. Again, the answer from *Gramota* displays a degree of nuance, ruling that there are grounds for including a dash. By describing rules published on another website (<https://orfogrammka.ru/>), which is run by linguists at Novosibirsk State University, as ‘osnovaniia’ (‘grounds’) for using a dash, rather than providing a strict yes/no answer, *Gramota* again shows a degree of tolerance towards a hierarchy of acceptability.

RuQ072:

Добрый день! Подскажите, пожалуйста, насколько допустимо [...]

постановка тире в словосочетании: Справки – по телефону.

[Good afternoon! Tell me please, how acceptable [...] is it to use a dash in the phrase: Enquiries - by telephone.]

RuA072:

Основания для тире есть. См. правило в Полном академическом справочнике под ред. В. В. Лопатина.

[There are grounds for using a dash. See the rule in the ‘Complete academic helpdesk’ edited by V. V. Lopatina.]

Varying levels of acceptability attached to certain language forms also relate to different contexts or register. Some answers provided by *Gramota* express a preference for different words or grammatical constructions in different contexts. For instance, RuA041 states that some language forms are ‘vozmozhno’ (‘possible’) in colloquial usage, though recommends a

different lexical choice if colloquial language is ‘neumestnyi’ (‘inappropriate’). Similarly, RuA088 rules that a certain construction is only acceptable in colloquial usage. This shows an acknowledgement that different language forms may be considered legitimate depending on context.

RuA041:

В разговорно-профессиональной речи такое употребление возможно. Если слова разговорной окраски неуместны, то можно заменить качок на движение, нажим, поворот — в зависимости от типа насоса.

[In colloquial professional speech, such use is possible. If colloquial words are inappropriate, then you can replace 'kachok' [pump] with movement, pressure, turn - depending on the type of pump unit.]

RuA088:

Подобные обороты с предлогом про сейчас довольно сильно распространены. Но лучше не использовать их нигде, кроме разговорной речи.

[Such usage of the preposition ‘pro’ [about] now is quite common. But it is better not to use it anywhere except colloquially.]

This notion of a ‘hierarchy of acceptability’ was also observed in relation to French by Humphries (2020: 187-188), who noted the phenomenon as a “familiar element of standard language ideology”. In the present study, however, evidence of this in *Académie* corpus is limited. Rather, answers provided by the French Academy share more in common with RuA041 and RuA088, with the acceptance of non-standard forms related more closely to context rather than a hierarchy of correctness.

FrA079:

Dézinguer est un terme argotique, tiré de zinc, au sens d'avion.

[‘Dézinguer’ is a slang term, based on ‘zinc’, in the sense of an aeroplane.]

For example, in FrA079, when questioned on the meaning of the verb ‘dézinguer’ (‘to take down’), the response from the Academy points out that it is a ‘terme argotique’ (‘slang term’) before clarifying the meaning, emphasising that the word should not be considered a part of standard French vocabulary.

4.2.3 Dictionaries and grammars

Another clear overlap between the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora comes in the form of frequent references to dictionaries and other reference works which codify standard language, such as grammars and usage manuals. 22 posts in the *Académie* corpus and 21 posts in the *Gramota* corpus make explicit references to a dictionary or similar authority.

In the *Académie* corpus, multiple references are made to the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (Dictionary of the French Academy). First completed in 1694, the French Academy has published eight editions of their dictionary to date, with the ninth currently underway. Interestingly, the French Academy does not refer solely to their most up-to-date dictionary when answering questions received from lay speakers. For instance, FrA003 refers to the first edition, while FrA089 mentions both the sixth and seventh editions, both of which were published in the 19th century.

FrA003:

Ce point est d'ailleurs mentionné dans la préface de la première édition du
Dictionnaire de l'Académie française.

[This point is also mentioned in the preface to the first edition of the Dictionary of the French Academy.]

FrA089:

On écrivait ainsi, jusqu'à la 6e édition du Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, « collège », même si l'on prononçait déjà « collègue ». L'éditeur Ambroise Firmin Didot avait plaidé, avec d'autres, pour rendre l'orthographe plus conforme à la prononciation. Cela fut fait à partir de la septième édition de notre Dictionnaire (1878)

[Until the 6th edition of the AF Dictionary, we wrote 'collège', even though it was pronounced 'collègue' at the time. The editor Didot pleaded with the others to make spelling conform more to pronunciation. This was done from the 7th edition of our Dictionary (1878)]

Surprisingly, however, the French Academy's own dictionary is not the one most frequently referred to in the corpus. While eight answers refer to the French Academy's dictionary, 14 refer to the *Dictionnaire de la langue française* edited by Émile Littré (commonly referred to as the *Littré*), published in 1863. Several answers provide lengthy quotes from the *Littré*, such as FrA071. Despite being published over 150 years ago, the French Academy still clearly regards the *Littré* as a credible authority on matters relating to standard language, pointing to the greater legitimacy attached to older reference works in comparison to more contemporary dictionaries. This is evidenced by the fact that widely used contemporary dictionaries like *Larousse* and *Le Robert* are not referenced at all in the answers provided by the French Academy.

FrQ071:

Bonjour,

Quelle est la différence entre cependant, toutefois et néanmoins ?

[Hello,

What is the difference between however, nonetheless and nevertheless?]

FrA071:

Madame,

Nous laisserons la parole à Littré, qui a par avance répondu à cette question dans son

Dictionnaire [...]

[Madam,

We give the floor to Littré, who previously responded to this question in his

Dictionary [...]]

Similarly, answers in the *Gramota* corpus frequently refer to the Russian Language Institute's own dictionary and encourage users to consult the various resources available via *Gramota*. In particular, Russian speakers are encouraged to access the *Orfograficheskii akademicheskii resurs* (Academy spelling resource), referred to as *Akados*. 11 answers in the corpus cite *Akados*, an online resource managed by the Russian Language Institute available at <https://orfo.ruslang.ru/>. According to its website, *Akados* 'postoianno popolniaetsia' ('is constantly updated'), pointing to a more dynamic approach to managing language use than the historical focus of the French Academy. Indeed, in response to RuQ007, which seeks clarity on whether to spell 'Vostochno-Pruskaia operatsiia' ('East-Prussian operation') with a hyphen, RuA007 states that the phrase will be added to *Akados* in the next update, thanking the user for their contribution.

RuA007:

Благодарим Вас за вопрос, название операции будет добавлено в академический орфографический ресурс при следующем обновлении базы.

[We thank you for this question, the name of this operation will be added to the academy's spelling resource when the database is next updated.]

4.3 Differences in metalinguistic discourse in France and Russia

Despite the similarities in metalinguistic discourse between the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora discussed in section 4.2, certain themes are distinct and emerge in only one of the two corpora. This section highlights some of these differences: section 4.3.1 focuses on particularities of the French corpus, highlighting a focus on etymology and literary references, while section 4.4.3.2 outlines the sense of linguistic insecurity commonly expressed by Russian speakers contacting *Gramota*.

4.3.1 French metalinguistic discourse

As observed in sections 4.1 and 4.2.3, the *Académie* corpus looks more at etymology and relies more heavily on older reference sources in comparison to the *Gramota* corpus. 18 posts in the *Académie* corpus ask questions related to language history, whereas not a single question in the *Gramota* corpus focuses on language history (see Figure 4.1). This fixation on language history is clear in questions (e.g., FrQ012) as well as answers, with French speakers contacting the French Academy in search of information about archaisms or etymology.

FrQ012:

Je recherche la signification d'un mot français qui n'existe plus (qui peut-être date du Moyen Âge) et je souhaite connaître sa signification avec certitude. Il s'agit de pourpens.

[I am looking for the meaning of a French word which no longer exists (which maybe dates back to the Middle Ages) and I am hoping to find out its meaning with certainty. The word is 'pourpens'.]

Moreover, in answers provided by the French Academy, references are often made to classical languages. Latin is a particular focus, mentioned in 21 posts, while eight answers refer to Ancient Greek. For the most part, however, discussions of Latin and Ancient Greek come from the French Academy's answers, rather than the questions received by lay speakers. Only one question (FrQ064) specifically mentions Latin. For the remainder, the French Academy discusses Latin even when etymology is not the focus of the question asked. For instance, in response to FrQ097, in which the website user simply seeks to clarify the semantic difference between 'oisiveté' and 'désœuvrement', the French Academy considers it necessary to clarify the meaning of the word 'oisiveté' by referring to its Latin roots.

FrQ097:

Bonjour je n'arrive pas à correctement différencier l'oisiveté et le désœuvrement.

[Hello I can't correctly differentiate between 'oisiveté' [idleness] and 'désœuvrement' [inactivity].]

FrA097:

Les deux termes sont proches, mais le désœuvrement est un état subi ; le préfixe dé- indique une privation. L'oisiveté peut être vécue sans peine et même choisie.

Ce mot est d'ailleurs issu de la même famille que le latin otium qui désignait le loisir, le repos loin de l'agitation du monde.

[The two terms are close, but ‘désœuvrement’ is a state of suffering; the prefix ‘dé-’ indicates a deprivation. ‘Oisiveté’ can be experienced without being sentenced or even chosen.

This word comes from the same family as the Latin ‘otium’, meaning leisure, rest away from the world’s hustle and bustle.]

In addition to the older dictionaries and language reference works discussed in Section 4.2.3, the answers provided by the French Academy also frequently quote from classic works of French literature to provide examples of certain language features. 14 answers from the French Academy refer to works of French literature, quoting from authors including Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), and Molière (1622-1673). Again, this phenomenon is simply not observed in the *Gramota* corpus. Providing examples of usage dating back several centuries points to a reverence for a Golden Age of French and a desire to uphold classic works of literature as examples for current usage, despite their datedness. For instance, FrQ049 enquires whether a certain language form is ‘correct’. In the eyes of the Academy, citing a poem by Victor Hugo is regarded as the ultimate proof that this language use is ‘correct’, showing a real reverence for classic works of literature over more contemporary examples of usage.

FrQ049:

Je me demandais, en discutant avec une amie, si la tournure de phrase J’en suis, pour désigner notre appartenance à un groupe chargé d’une tâche à venir, est correcte et existe ?

[I was wondering, while having a discussion with a friend, if the turn of phrase 'j'en suis', for describing our belonging to a group responsible for an upcoming task, is correct and exists?]

FrA049:

Ce tour existe, et il est correct. Il a même ses lettres de noblesse puisqu'on le trouve dans la dernière strophe d'Ultima verba de Victor Hugo :

« Si l'on n'est plus que mille, eh bien, j'en suis ! Si même

Ils ne sont plus que cent, je brave encor Sylla ;

S'il en demeure dix, je serai le dixième ;

Et s'il n'en reste qu'un, je serai celui-là ! »

[This turn of phrase exists and it is correct. It even has the approval of Victor Hugo, who uses it in 'My Last Word':

If there are only a thousand left, well, I am! If even

They are only a hundred, I still defy Sylla;

If there are ten remaining, I will be the tenth;

And if there is only one left, I'll be the one!]³³

Indeed, elsewhere the French Academy is dismissive of more up-to-date references and examples of usage. For instance, when faced with FrQ066 which remarks upon the various spellings of 'rapetisser' and 'rapetissir' ('to shrink') observed online, the French Academy suggests that the internet is not as trustworthy as their reference works which date back to

³³ English translation of *Ultima Verba* from [https://allpoetry.com/Ultima-Verba-\(My-Last-Word\)-](https://allpoetry.com/Ultima-Verba-(My-Last-Word)-) [last accessed 20.09.2022]

the 14th century. This longevity appears to lends a level of prestige to the French Academy's preferred spelling over more recent variations observed online.

FrA066:

*Il en va de l'internet comme d'une célèbre enseigne de magasins, on y trouve tout.
Mais les ouvrages de référence n'enregistrent que la forme rapetisser, attestée en français depuis le quatorzième siècle.*

[The internet is like a well-known retail chain, you can find everything there. But the reference works only record the form 'rapetisser', attested in French since the fourteenth century.]

4.3.2 Russian metalinguistic discourse

As in the Russian Twitter corpus, there is a tendency for Russian lay speakers to express greater levels of insecurity and embarrassment over their language use compared to French speakers. This is interesting given that French speakers are often assumed to display a high level of linguistic insecurity, with Dargent (2015) finding that over half the French population lack confidence in their written language abilities. The present study suggests that this linguistic insecurity may be equally – if not more – present in Russia. For instance, the website user who submitted RuQ022 apologises for making a mistake in a previous submission to *Gramota*, pointing to a perceived need to use standard language and avoid deviating from prescribed norms when communicating with *Gramota*'s language 'experts'.

RuQ022:

Простите ошибся в предыдущем сообщении.

[Sorry for making a mistake in the previous message.]

Moreover, there appears to be a greater degree of interaction between people asking questions and the ‘experts’ answering in the *Gramota* corpus compared to the *Académie* corpus, and a higher degree of urgency attached to receiving a response. For instance, RuQ026 complains that they have not received an answer from *Gramota*’s experts yet, despite having already submitted the question three times, while RuQ058 stresses the importance of receiving an answer. As such, receiving a definitive answer from *Gramota* seems to be highly important to some Russian speakers, who are willing to revisit the website and resubmit questions numerous times to ensure that they comply with prescriptive norms and have the approval of *Gramota*.

RuQ026:

*Ещё раз здравствуйте. Жаль, что не нахожу ответа на свой
животрепещущий вопрос.... Но задам в третий раз!*

[Hello again. It is a shame that I have not found an answer to my burning question...
But I'll ask a third time!]

RuQ058:

*Здравствуйте! Пожалуйста, не оставьте без внимания мой вопрос, задаю
его много раз, но не получаю ответа, а для меня это очень важно.*

[Hello! Please do not ignore my question, I have asked it many times, but I have not
received an answer, but for me this is very important.]

4.4 Summary

This chapter has revealed a number of similarities and differences in metalinguistic discourse taking place in the *Académie* corpus and the *Gramota* corpus. In section 4.1, clear differences emerged in terms of the parts of language French and Russian speakers showed the most

interest in, though this was not surprising given the typological differences between the two languages. It was, however, notable that despite differences in the parts of language being discussed, section 4.2 showed the presence of some similar themes of metalanguage in the *Académie* and *Gramota* corpora. This included frequent use of modal expressions, explicit discussions of language correctness, and references to the two organisations' official dictionaries. Finally, section 4.3 highlighted some differences in the way standard language is viewed in France and Russia respectively. While both French lay speakers and the French Academy showed a clear interest in language history, questions sent to *Gramota* underline the importance and urgency of receiving definitive, expert-informed answers on issues of language correctness.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how similar the effect of the SLI is on language attitudes expressed online by French and Russian speakers, taking into consideration lay speakers' interactions with each other on Twitter, as well as their interactions with language 'experts' on academy-sponsored language advice fora. Overall, it has found that strikingly similar themes of metalinguistic discourse are present in discussions of standard language across the various sub-corpora, though some subtle differences between language attitudes in France and Russia have also emerged.

Past studies of the standardisation of French have commonly presented the language as being defined by a particularly strong SLI relative to other languages (Lodge 1991: 93; Lüdi 2012: 205). While this study confirms that a strong SLI can indeed be observed in France, both 'from below' (Elspeß 2021) and 'from above' (Rutten and Vosters 2021), it also demonstrates that this is not a uniquely French phenomenon. To date, Russian language attitudes have not received the same attention from sociolinguists as French language attitudes. This study shows the value of taking a comparative approach between France and Russia, revealing similarities in the effect of the SLI in these two distinct contexts, as well as aspects of metalinguistic discourse which are more open to specific cultural influence.

On Twitter, both French and Russian speakers were found to criticise language use which differed from standard norms. Non-standard forms were routinely described as 'mistakes' in the French and Russian sub-corpora, and the intelligence of Twitter users whose language use differed from standard norms was called into question. However, French speakers by and large concentrated on pointing out instances of other Twitter users deviating from prescribed norms, acting as self-appointed 'language guardians'. Russian speakers, by contrast, more

commonly looked inwards and expressed a sense of linguistic insecurity in relation to their own 'mistakes' – often deploying humour or dismissing standard norms as too complicated. Previous studies have shown levels of linguistic insecurity in France to be high (Dargent 2015); further comparison with other contexts may provide more clarity on how this compares to other settings, including Russia.

Similarly, when French and Russian speakers consulted their respective language academies, they generally asked about issues related to language correctness, seeking definitive answers about which language forms to use and which to avoid. This was clear through the frequent use of modal expressions and the suggested binary between 'correct', 'standard' forms, and 'incorrect', 'non-standard' ones. Nonetheless, certain key differences were also present between the *Académie* corpus and the *Gramota* corpus. Notably, there was a clear focus on language history in the *Académie* corpus, with many questions and answers focusing on etymology, French literature, and reference works and dictionaries from the 18th and 19th centuries. Meanwhile, the *Gramota* corpus was dominated by questions from Russian speakers seeking judgements on whether punctuation was being used in accordance with prescriptive norms.

It is also worth noting that some evidence of a possible weakening of the SLI was detectable in both the French and Russian Twitter sub-corpora. While attitudes which appear to challenge the SLI, such as those suggesting the unimportance of using standard language in CMC or dismissing the value of prescriptivist arguments, were only present in a small proportion of tweets, they nonetheless suggest an interesting focus for future research. Working with a larger corpus may provide more evidence of whether this weakening of the SLI could in fact be considered as the beginnings of a possible destandardisation process.

Finally, the material examined in this study was all shared unprompted by people who cared enough about language to engage voluntarily in discussions about it online. Twitter users represent a specific, self-selected section of society, particularly in Russia, where the SNS-landscape is complicated by the existence of 'home-grown' SNSs. Given the asymmetry between both the numbers and demographic make-up of French and Russian Twitter users, a future study may benefit from conducting a cross-platform study examining material from Twitter alongside material shared on other sites such as VK and LiveJournal. This may enable a more complete understanding of language attitudes and help to determine the extent to which the findings from the present study can be extrapolated to wider society.

The similarities in the corpora examined here have allowed us to question the assumption that France is the archetypal embodiment of the SLI. However, the differences exposed point to the value of directly comparing language attitudes across a broader range of contexts in the future.

References

- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2006. 'Introduction: Sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 10: 419-38.
- Ayres-Bennett, Wendy. 2021. 'Modelling Language Standardization', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett and John Bellamy (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Magali Seijido. 2013. *Bon usage et variation sociolinguistique: Perspectives diachroniques et traditions nationales* (Lyon: ENS Éditions).
- Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Magali Seijido. 2011. *Remarques et observations sur la langue française: histoire et évolution d'un genre* (Paris: Classiques Garnier).
- Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade. 2016. 'Prescriptivism in a Comparative Perspective: The Case of France and England', in Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Carol Percy (eds), *Prescription and tradition in language: establishing standards across time and space* (Bristol: Channel View Publications).
- Baker, Paul. 2010. *Sociolinguistics and Corpus Linguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).
- Blommaert, Jan. 1999. *Language Ideological Debates* (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter).
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity).
- Cameron, Deborah. 1995. *Verbal Hygiene* (London: Routledge).
- Crystal, David. 2001. *Language and the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Cubberley, Paul. 2002. *Russian: A Linguistic Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Dargent, Françoise. 2015. 'Orthographe : les cinq bêtes noires des Français'. Le Figaro. [online] <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/livres/2015/03/12/03005-20150312ARTFIG00383-orthographe-les-cinq-betes-noires-des-francais.php>>
- Denman, Feargus. 2021. 'Russian speakers and 'The Russian Language' in Ireland: unity, hybridity, standard and variation', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(2): 178-94.

- Elspaß, Stephan. 2021. 'Language Standardization in a View 'from Below'', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett and John Bellamy (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 93–114.
- Estival, Dominique, and Alastair Pennycook. 2011. 'L'Académie Française and Anglophone Language Ideologies', *Language Policy* 10(4): 325–41.
- Gal, Susan. 2009. 'Migration, minorities and multilingualism: Language ideologies in Europe', in Patrick Stevenson and Clare Mar-Molinero (eds), *Language ideologies, policies and practices: Language and the future of Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 13-27.
- Gorham, Michael. 2009. 'Linguistic Ideologies, Economies, and Technologies in the Language Culture of Contemporary Russia (1987–2008)', *Journal of Slavic Linguistics*, 17(1/2): 163-92.
- Gorham, Michael. 2014. *After Newspeak: language, culture and politics in Russia from Gorbachev to Putin* (New York: Cornell University Press).
- Haugen, Einar. 1966. *Language conflict and language planning: the case of modern Norwegian* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).
- Haugen, Einar. 1983. 'The implementation of corpus planning: theory and practice', in Juan Cobarrubias and Joshua Fishman (eds), *Progress in Language Planning: International Perspectives* (Berlin/New York/Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter), pp. 269–89.
- Haugen, Einar. 1987. *Blessings of Babel: Bilingualism and Language Planning. Problems and Pleasures* (Berlin/New York/Amsterdam: Mouton de Gruyter).
- Hogan-Brun, Gabrielle, and Meilutė Ramonienė. 2005. 'Perspectives on Language Attitudes and Use in Lithuania's Multilingual Setting', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 26(5): 425–41.
- Humphries, Emma. 2019. '#JeSuisCirconflexe: The French spelling reform of 1990 and 2016 reactions', *Journal of French language studies*, 29(3): 305-21.
- Humphries, Emma. 2020. 'Judging French: Lay and expert language commentary in nineteenth- and twenty-first-century France' [Doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham].
- Humphries, Emma. 2022. 'Comparing the prescriptivism of nineteenth- and twenty-first-century language experts in France', in Janice Carruthers, Mairi McLaughlin and

- Olivia Walsh (eds), *Historical and Sociolinguistic Approaches to French* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Irvine, Judith and Susan Gal. 2000. 'Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation', in Paul Kroskrity (ed.), *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities* (Santa Fe: School of American Research), pp. 35-83.
- Judge, Anne. 2000. 'France: 'One state, one nation, one language'?', in Stephen Barbour and Cathie Carmichael (eds), *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 44-82.
- Koltsova, Olessia, Alexander Porshnev, and Yadviga Sinyavskaya. 2021. 'Social Media-based Research of Interpersonal and Group Communication in Russia', in Daria Gritsenko, Mariëlle Wijermars, and Mikhail Kopotev (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Digital Russia Studies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 335-352.
- Kristiansen, Tore. 2021. 'Destandardization', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett and John Bellamy (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 667–690.
- Kroskrity, Paul. 2000. *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities* (School of American Research Press: Santa Fe).
- Kudriavtseva, Natalia. 2021. 'Standard Ukrainian in the Multilingual Context: Language Ideologies and Current Educational Practices', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 42(2): 152–64.
- Lippi-Green, Rosina. 2012. *English with an accent: language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States* (Routledge: London).
- Lodge, Anthony. 1991. 'Authority, Prescriptivism and the French Standard Language', *Journal of French Language Studies* 1(1): 93–111.
- Lodge, Anthony. 1993. *French: from dialect to standard* (Routledge: London).
- Lüdi, Georges. 2012. 'Traces of monolingual and plurilingual ideologies in the history of language policies in France', in Matthias Hüning, Ulrike Vogl, and Olivier Moliner (eds), *Standard language and multilingualism in European history* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins), pp. 205-30.
- Lunde, Ingunn. 2014. 'Language on display: On the performative character of computer-mediated metalanguage', in Michael Gorham, Ingunn Lunde and Martin Paulsen

- (eds), *Digital Russia: The language, culture and politics of new media communication* (Abingdon: Routledge).
- McLelland, Nicola. 2013. 'Des guten Gebrauchs Wegzeigere: du bon usage dans la tradition allemande 1200-2000', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett and Magali Seijido (eds), *Bon usage et variation sociolinguistique: Perspectives diachroniques et traditions nationales* (Lyon: ENS Éditions), pp. 207-20.
- McLelland, Nicola. 2021. 'Grammars, Dictionaries and Other Metalinguistic Texts in the Context of Language Standardization', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett and John Bellamy (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 263-293.
- Milroy, James, and Lesley Milroy. 2012. *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English* (London: Routledge).
- Mooney, Annabelle, and Betsy Evans. 2015. *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction* (London: Routledge).
- Morvan, Malo. 2019. 'L'Académie, greffier du bon usage ? : Exploiter la polysémie de la notion d'usage pour construire un ethos d'autorité,' in Anne Dister and Sophie Piron (eds), *Les discours de référence sur la langue française* (Brussels: Presses de l'Université Saint-Louis), pp. 283-309.
- Mustajoki, Arto. 2016. 'Challenges in the Standardisation of Contemporary Russian', in Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Carol Percy (eds), *Prescription and Tradition in Language: Establishing standards across time and space* (Bristol: Channel View Publications), pp. 288-302.
- Nisbet, Erik, Olga Kamenchuk, and Aysenur Dal. 2017. 'A Psychological Firewall? Risk Perceptions and Public Support for Online Censorship in Russia', *Social Science Quarterly* 98(3): 958–975.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. 2015. 'Language Management in the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Post-Soviet Countries', in Robert Bayley, Richard Cameron, and Ceil Lucas (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 651-679.
- Percy, Carol, and Mary Catherine Davidson. 2012. *The languages of nation: attitudes and norms* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters).

- Ricento, Thomas. 2015. 'Language Policy, Ideology, and Attitudes in English-Dominant Countries', in Robert Bayley, Richard Cameron, and Ceil Lucas (eds), *The Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Rjéoutski, Vladislav. 2013. 'Apprendre la "langue de l'Europe": le français parmi d'autres langues dans l'éducation en Russie au siècle des Lumières', *Vivlīofika: E-Journal of Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies* 1: 5-19.
- Roesen, Tine, and Vera Zvereva. 2014. 'Social networking sites on the Runet: exploring social communication', in Michael Gorham, Ingunn Lunde and Martin Paulsen (eds), *Digital Russia: The language, culture and politics of new media communication* (Abingdon: Routledge), pp. 72-87.
- Rutten, Gijsbert and Rik Vosters. 2021. 'Language Standardization 'from Above'', in Wendy Ayres-Bennett & John Bellamy (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 65-92).
- Ryazanova-Clarke, Larissa, and Terrence Wade. 1999. *The Russian language today* (Routledge: London).
- Shelly, Sharon. 1999. 'Une certaine idée du français: the dilemma for French language policy in the 21st century', *Language and Communication*, 19(4): 305-316.
- Silverstein, Michael. 1979. 'Language structure and linguistic ideology', in Paul Clyne, William Hanks, and Carol Hofbauer (eds), *The Elements, A Parassession on Linguistic Units and Levels* (Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society), pp. 193-247.
- Tarnarutchkaia, Elizaveta and Astrid Ensslin. 2020. 'The myth of the "clarté française: Language ideologies and metalinguistic discourse of videogame speech accents on Reddit', *Discourse, Context & Media*, 33: 1-9.
- Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid, and Carol Percy. 2016. *Prescription and tradition in language: establishing standards across time and space* (Bristol: Channel View Publications).
- Tristram, Anna. 2022. 'Attitudes on Twitter towards French inclusive writing', in Janice Carruthers, Mairi McLaughlin and Olivia Walsh (eds), *Historical and Sociolinguistic Approaches to French* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Van Dijk, Teun. 1993. 'Principles of critical discourse analysis', *Discourse & Society*, 4(2): 249-283.

- Vessey, Rachelle. 2015. 'Food Fight: Conflicting Language Ideologies in English and French News and Social Media', *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 10(2): 253–71.
- Vessey, Rachelle. 2017. 'Corpus approaches to language ideology', *Applied Linguistics*, 38(3): 277-96.
- Walsh, Olivia. 2016. *Linguistic Purism: Language Attitudes in France and Quebec* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins).
- Walsh, Olivia. 2021a. 'Introduction: in the shadow of the standard. Standard language ideology and attitudes towards 'non-standard' varieties and usages', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(9): 773-782.
- Walsh, Olivia. 2021b. 'The French language: monocentric or pluricentric? Standard language ideology and attitudes towards the French language in twentieth-century language columns in Quebec', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(9): 869–81.
- Walsh, Olivia. 2022. 'Discourse Analysis of Print Media', in Ruth Kircher and Lena Zipp (eds), *Research Methods in Language Attitudes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 19-34.
- Woolard, Kathryn. 1998. 'Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry', in Bambi Schieffelin, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul Kroskrity (eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Zherebtsov, Mikhail, and Sergei Goussev. 2021. 'Tweeting Russian Politics: Studying Online Political Dynamics', in Daria Gritsenko, Mariëlle Wijermars, and Mikhail Kopotev (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Digital Russia Studies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 537-567.