
Regionalisms or non-standard French? The linguistic targets in an 18th-century metalinguistic text.

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Résumé

There exists in France a long tradition of prescriptive manuals which comment on the ‘correct’ usage of French, written by authors known as the *Remarqueurs*, and commencing in 1647 with the publication of Vaugelas’s *Remarques sur la langue française*. These seventeenth-century manuals can be seen as an early manifestation of the diffusion of standard French, and have been studied in depth by scholars such as Ayres-Bennett (1987, 2018) and Caron (2004). Similar prescriptive works continued to be produced from the eighteenth century on, but some texts evolved to become aimed not only at encouraging ‘good usage’, that is, at transmitting particular norms, but, specifically, at eradicating any usages that showed the influence of regional varieties, including, most notably, the publication of Desgrouais’ *Les Gasconismes corrigés* in 1766. These texts have received far less scholarly attention, in spite of the fact that they highlight the centralising force of standardisation, in a period well before the use of French had spread across France. This paper examines the content of *Les Gasconismes corrigés*, to determine the types of usage promoted as ‘correct’ or condemned as ‘incorrect’. It also compares it to similar volumes which focus on other regional varieties, e.g. French used in Lorraine (Dubois de Launay 1775) or in Lyon (Molard 1792), to determine whether the condemned usages are indeed local to Gascony or whether they are also found in volumes from other regions, where they may also be presented as arising from contact with local languages. This will allow an evaluation of whether such volumes of regionalisms simply reproduce more generalised forms of ‘non-standard’ French, rather than regional forms, and whether they overlap with the ‘errors’ described in previous volumes of more general remarks on French, rather than discussing genuinely regional usages.

Références

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Mots-Clés: French language, diachrony, remarqueurs, regional varieties