



National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies

Regimes of Language Ideology

S. A. Moschonas

“Regimes of Language” or Regimes of Language Ideology?

Paul V. Kroskrity, ed., 2000. *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press / Oxford: James Currey.

- » Seemingly disparate “language issues” form coherent communicative sequences, which develop in accordance with the presuppositions of a new “regime ideology” of the Modern Greek language.
- » According to this ideology, the one and only language of the state, Greek, should itself be conceived of as a state, as a “territory” comprising a pure and sacred interior that has to be kept intact by everything surrounding it.

Language ideologies are ...

- » ... just like all other ideologies:
 - ▶ partially conventional semiotic systems,
 - ▶ whose semantic organization is based on implicature and underlying presuppositions.
 - ▶ Ideologies evolve over time
 - ▶ within a field of social oppositions
 - ▶ through a structured communication network.
 - ▶ By performing certain discourse functions (legitimation, rationalization, etc.),
 - ▶ they exercise their normative power and
 - ▶ they refer to reality in a partial and distorted manner.

- » Language ideologies are *metalinguistic* systems.

Language ideologies are ...

- » *stereotypical*; they presuppose a conceptual structure (Irvine & Gal, 2000: “iconization”; Preston, 2004: “underlying presuppositions”)
 - ▶ territorial conception of language

- » *oppositional*; ideologies (in the plural) are always in opposition
 - ▶ language ideological debates (Blommaert, ed., 1999)

- » *performative*; they partly shape or “construct” the reality they refer to
 - ▶ there are no “language issues” independent of language ideologies

Articles in the Greek press

- » Research is based on an archive of articles from 72 Greek newspapers. The publications considered cover more than two decades (1980-2001). All relevant publications (more than 10,000 articles) were summarized and classified by author, place and date of publication, genre, topic, cross-references, and keywords.
- » The period November 1999-January 2002 has been covered in full (3,706 entries in 2000, 5,170 in 2001).
- » The earlier period of 1990-1999 is covered by a representative sample from the newspapers with the widest circulation (about 1,500 articles).
- » Issues that arose intense public concern over a continuous period of time (mainly issues 1-7 below) are considered in detail.
- » Pilot study: November 1999-January 2000.

References

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- 2004. "Relativism in Language Ideology: On Greece's Latest Language Issues". *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 22.2:173-206.
- ed., 2004/5. *Όψεις της γλώσσας στον Τύπο* [Aspects of Language in the Press]. *Γλώσσα* 59 (2004):45-93, 60 (2005):32-88.

Articles / Newspaper (Nov. 1999 – Jan. 2000)

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

Types of articles (Nov. 1999 – Jan. 2000)

Type	N=364	(%)	N=284	(%)
Opinion	70	19.2	70	24.6
News	70	19.2	70	24.6
Book review	34	9.3	34	12.0
Short comment	33	9.1	33	11.6
Feature	24	6.6	24	8.5
Letter	23	6.3	23	8.1
News in brief	21	5.8	21	7.4
Interview	9	2.5	9	3.2
Editorial	0	0	0	0
Ref. en passant	80	23.0	-	-

Types of articles

- » opinion articles
 - ▶ e.g., usage columns

- » news articles
 - ▶ what is a “linguistic piece of news”?
 - > discursive
 - > communicative
 - > conceptual
 - ▶ **news items and, more generally, language issues cannot be defined independently of language ideologies**

- » en passant / metonymic references
 - ▶ 40% of the entire corpus

Communicative sequences – “Moral panics”

- » Moral Panics (Cohen, 1972/80; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Cameron, 1995)
 - ▶ Something or someone is first defined as a threat to a community’s values or interests.
 - ▶ The threat is portrayed in an easily recognizable manner in the media.
 - ▶ The relevant articles assume a spiritual moralizing tone.
 - ▶ There is a rapid build-up of public concern, followed by a response from authorities or opinion-makers.
 - ▶ Finally, the panic recedes.

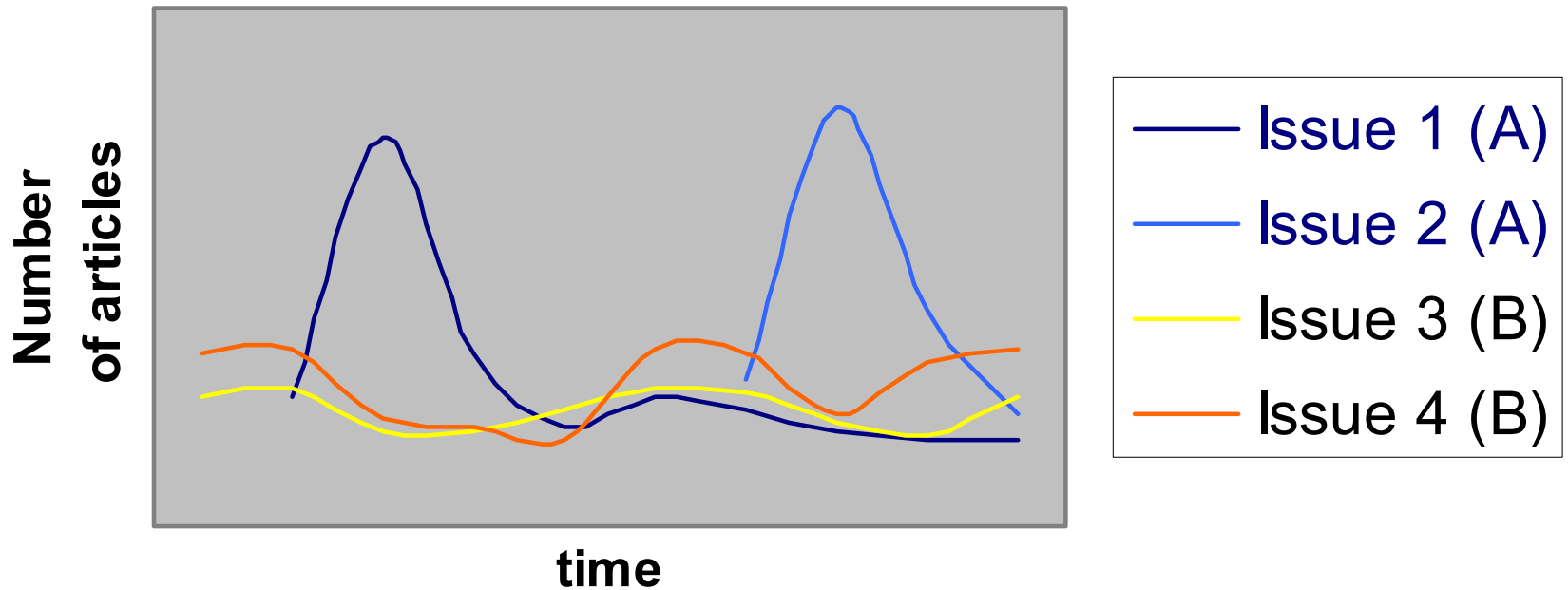
- > Not all moral crusades are “moral panics” (e.g., the “2001 European Year of Languages” campaign)

» recurrent issues

- ▶ The articles do not necessarily respond to any moves or initiatives perceived as threatening.
- ▶ They have a low “news-value”.
- ▶ They draw excessively from a limited repertoire of argument types; bringing forth an issue seems to count more than trying to resolve it.
- ▶ They are not addressed to the “general public” but rather to a smaller circle of experts, followers, devotees, etc.
- ▶ They are characterized by low intensity and persistence and they show non-periodic recurrence.
 - > e.g., “monotonic” (single-accent) orthography

Communicative sequences

Two types of issues



Issue #1: The “Greek Language Question”

- » lasting diglossia
 - ▶ katharevousa (high variety, archaistic & puristic)
 - ▶ demotic (low variety)
- » late demoticism’s standardization formula
Standard Modern Greek = demotic + archaisms
- » official resolution of the “Language Question” (1976)
- » residual diglossia
 - › SMG is a high variety in Cyprus

The new “language issues”

1. English as a “second official language”
2. “Latinization” of the alphabet
3. “Bulgarians” vs. Babiniotis
4. “Macedonian”
5. The “five-language regime” in EU
6. “Word poverty” (“ευδοκίμηση” and “αρωγή”)
7. Post-diglossia issues [teaching Ancient Greek, “monotonic” orthography, the “Language Problem”]
8. Foreign words, influence of English, purism
9. “Monotonic” vs. “polytonic” orthography
10. “Greek abroad”, Greek as a second language
11. Censored [minorities, etc.]
12. Miscellaneous [usage columns, letters to the editor, etc.]

Regimes of Language Ideology – A territorial conception

Greek abroad (10)
in Cyprus (12)

**an Interior
within the
Exterior**

Greek spreads

Interior

post-diglossia
issues (7)
orthography (9)
usage (12)

**an Exterior
within the
Interior**

Exterior Greek threatened

“Macedonian” (4)
“five-language
regime” (5)

bilingualism (1)
diglossia (7)
latinization (2,9)
foreign words (8)
“Bulgarians” (3)
minorities (11)

Regimes of Language Ideology – A narrative

an Interior
within the
Exterior

“Greek abroad”

Exterior

“five-language regime”

“Macedonian”

“monotonic” orthogr.

teaching Ancient Greek

the “Language Problem”

“word poverty”

minorities

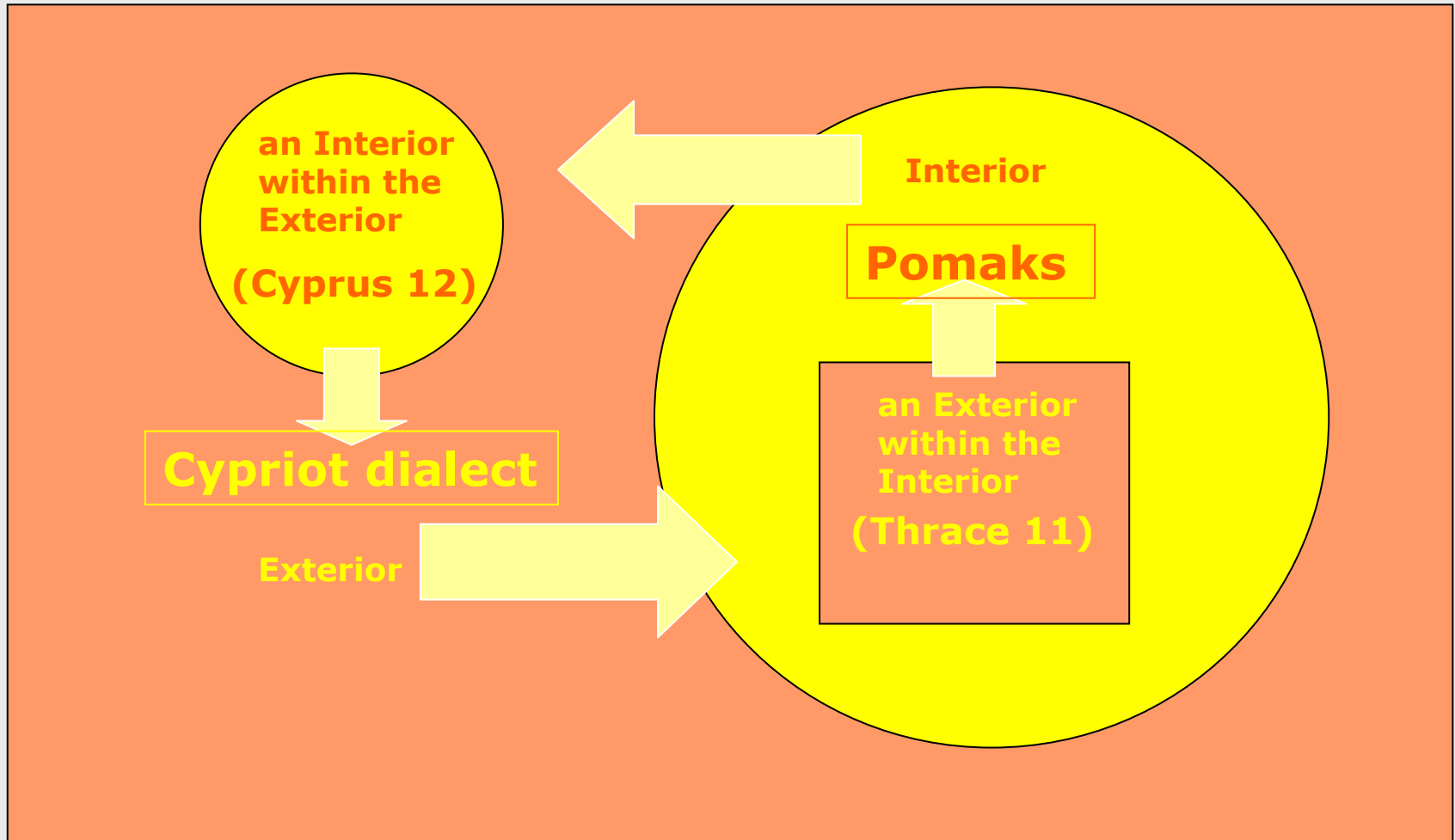
English official language

“latinization”

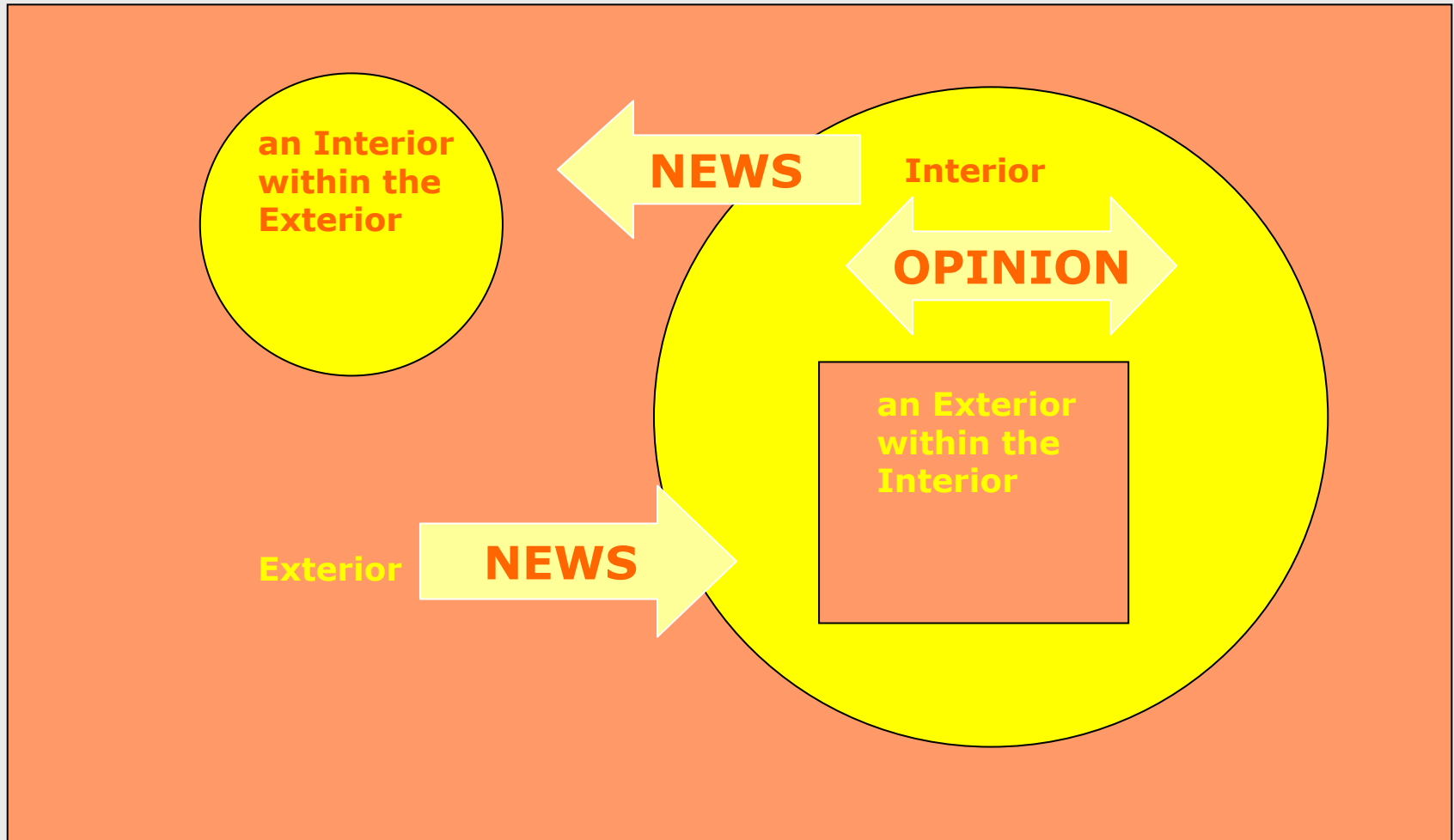
“Bulgarians”

foreign words - English

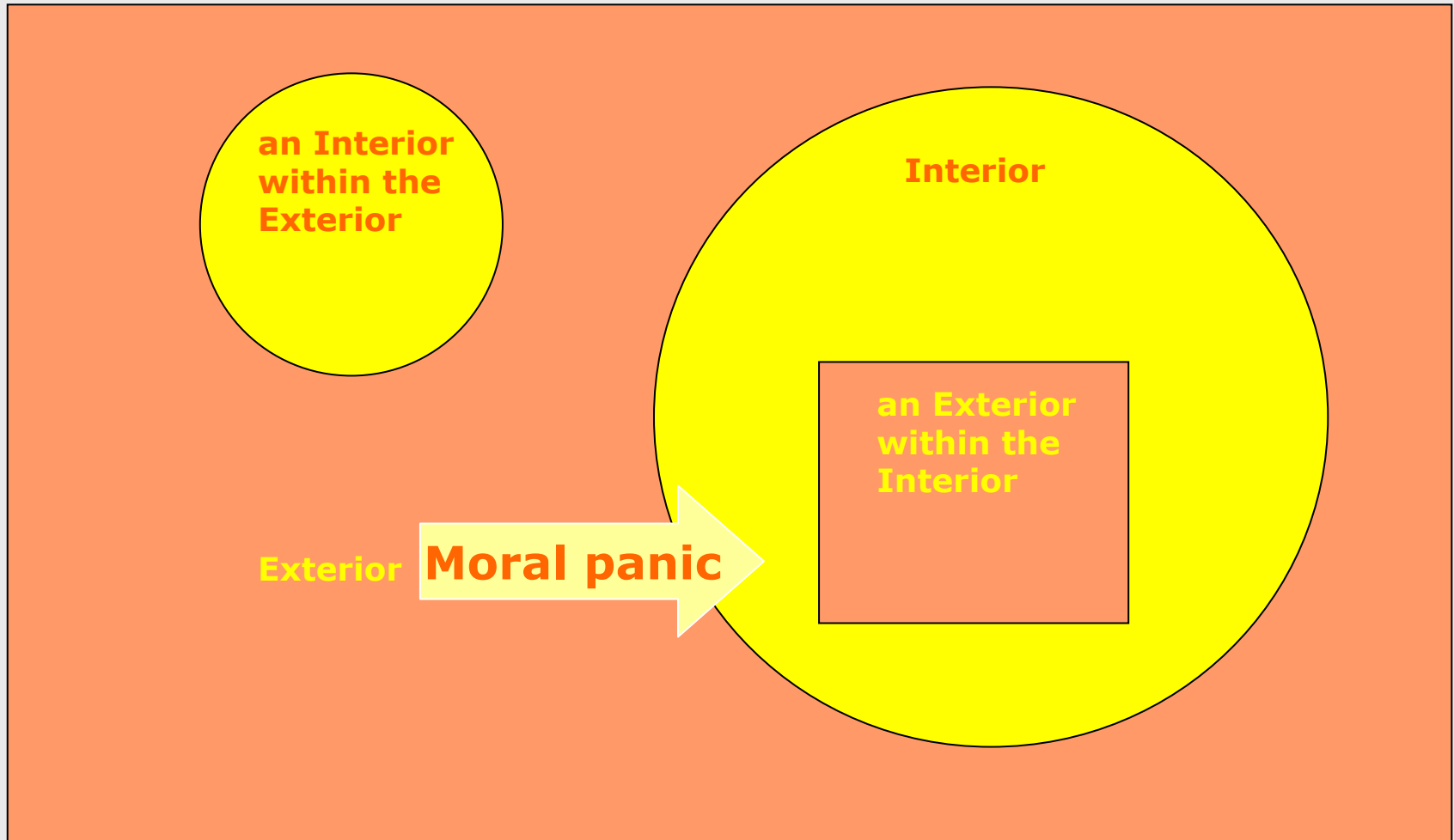
Regimes of Language Ideology – Test cases



Regimes of Language Ideology – Opinion and news articles



Regimes of Language Ideology – Moral panics



Regimes of Language Ideology - Conclusions

- » The “regime ideology” of the Modern Greek language has been shown to affect the way seemingly disparate “language issues” are defined and covered in the press.
- » The conceptual topology of the regime ideology offers a framework for the development of coherent communicative sequences.
- » A similar territorial conception, it could be argued, underlies the way language issues are debated in countries other than Greece.