Historical Dialogue Analysis

Edited by Andreas H. Jucker, Gerd Fritz and Franz Lebsanft

Offprint
Court Records and Cartoons
Reflections of Spontaneous Dialogue
in Early Romance Texts

Peter Koch
Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen

1. Introduction

Philology need not be divorced from life. For people with historical interests even written texts from past times are occasionally a window to a wonderful vista of colourful and even earthy forms of communication. It is my intention to demonstrate this with recourse to two text types from the early period of Romance languages, in which "dialogicity" – the meaning of which is to be defined – plays an important role.

2. Orality, literacy, and historical dialogue research

The title of this volume points to two seemingly conflicting domains of language. We generally think of dialogue as a sequence of oral utterances, whereas an historical investigation of the language of past centuries can be based only on written sources. This apparent contradiction becomes resolved, however, in the framework of a more complex conceptualisation of orality and literacy as developed in particular by Ludwig Söll (1985: 17-25). He distinguishes between the phonic and the graphic medium on the one hand and spoken and written conception on the other. If two, in medial terms, totally neutral expressions like "communicative immediacy" vs. "communicative distance" are allocated to the latter contrast, the following combinations of conceptualisation and medium arise (cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1985: 17-19; 1990: 5-12; 1994: 587f.):
For communicative distance the opposite values of these parameters will be true, namely: (i) physical distance, (ii) publicness, (iii) lack of familiarity of the partners etc. The values of parameters (i) to (x) may well vary in ratio, thereby contributing decisively to the continual character of the conception of linguistic utterances. On this basis it is easy to see what combination of parameter values and what position in the conceptional continuum may be allotted, for example, to a panel discussion, a newspaper interview, a sermon etc.

Within the framework of the subject under discussion, it is, of course, parameter (vii), “dialogue”, which particularly attracts our attention (cf. Table 1 above). To be accurate, it is exclusively the aspect of turn-taking that is meant here: the dialogue as a communication form with completely free turn-taking between the conversation partners, as opposed to the monologue as a communication form in which, without any turn-taking, only one of the communication partners speaks (of course with continual transitions between both extremes: think of discussions, correspondence etc.).

This understanding of the term “dialogue” must not mask the fact that different academic fields (such as linguistics, sociology and philosophy) and specialised areas within these fields sometimes use the terms “dialogue” and “dialogicity” to mean quite different (groups of) communication forms. If the parameters listed in Table 1 are applied, we may arrive at a relatively precise definition of the salient points of the variety in terminology observed here. From the conceptual point of view, we may distinguish between three prototypical concepts of dialogue:

### Table 2: Dialogicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dialogue₁</th>
<th>Dialogue₂</th>
<th>Dialogue₃</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) physical (spatial, temporal) immediacy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) privacy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) familiarity of the partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) high emotionality</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) context embeddedness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) deictic immediacy (ego-hic-nunc, immediate situation)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(thou)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) dialogue</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) communicative cooperation of the partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) free topic development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x) spontaneity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Dialogue,” means a whole family of communication forms which have one parameter, i.e. (vii) “dialogue”, in common (hence ‘0’), whereas all the other parameters are specified at random (hence ‘0’). This family of communication forms ranges from dialogues characterised by full communicative immediacy, such as spontaneous everyday conversation, to dialogue forms which are essentially distant, such as courtly conversation or official correspondence. (As can be seen here, the medium is evidently indifferent.)

The term “dialogue,” also appears to be quite widespread. Here “dialogicity” first and foremost means address orientation. It thus implies a certain familiarity (iii), a certain emotionality (iv), a certain context embeddedness (v), and a predominant address orientation (vi). Dialogicity in the sense of parameter (vii), on the other hand, does not necessarily have to be realised (hence ‘±’); the remaining parameters are likewise conceptionally indifferent here (hence ‘0’).

Finally, there is the concept of “dialogue,” mentioned at the beginning, which implies spontaneous everyday dialogue; here all the parameters (i) to (x) – of course including (vii) – are specified in the sense of communicative immediacy.

As far as the medium is concerned, dialogue and dialogue, undoubtedly have an affinity to phonic realisation (area A in Figure 1). Given the bounds of historical linguistics, however, it goes without saying that we may gain access to these dialogue forms only through written records, in other words via area C in Figure 1. The data I treat below therefore oscillate, within the graphic medium, between the dialogue, and dialogue, types. In the case of type C data, two questions must necessarily be asked. First, to what happy circumstances do we owe the fact that these written testimonies emerged with a conceptional character which was not totally prototypical? and second, to what degree do these written testimonies reflect features of the communication forms of area A?

Cultural history and linguistic history teach us – more and more over the last few decades – that the communication forms of area C in Figure 1 are definitely widespread. They form one facet of what is labelled “orality in literate cultures”, usually without any differentiation (cf. Koch 1997: 152f., 161ff.). Nevertheless, as their specific combination of conceptional and medial aspects is rather ambivalent, it is definitely worth examining how they came into being and how they should be typified. In various publications, Wulf Oesterreicher (e.g. 1995, 1997: 200-206) has designed a typology of “writing characterised by linguistic immediacy” (nähesprachlich geprägtes Schreiben) comprising the following eight types:

| (1) Writing by semiliterate persons |
| (2) Writing by (semiliterate) bilingual persons in a di-/triglossic situation |
| (3) Sloppy writing (also by educated writers) |
| (4) “Documentation” of informal speech |
| (5) Writing adapted to the language competence of less educated recipients |
| (6) Writing subjected to “simple” discourse traditions or genres (as a pragmatic option) |
| (7) Writing in the stilius humilis (as a rhetorical-poetic option) |
| (8) Mimetic or simulated orality in literature, parody and similar contexts |

These types of writing characterised by linguistic immediacy are encountered, for instance, in the Romance languages at widely varying times in the history of the respective languages: we find them in sources relevant for the investigation of the so-called “Vulgar Latin”, in the most ancient Romance writings, in Spanish colonial historiography of the early modern period, in sources relevant for the investigation of the history of spoken French, in the French Revolution, in letters from prisoners of war in our own century etc. My data are at the crossroads between the two perspectives “writing characterised by linguistic immediacy” and “earliest Romance writings.” As we shall see, Oesterreicher’s types (4) and (8) play a particular role here.

Before proceeding I briefly want to add the following basic consideration. Sources characterised by linguistic immediacy – especially dialogue, sources – from earlier periods and realised in the graphic medium may be examined for a variety of linguistic reasons. Here it is important to distinguish between the following levels and areas of human language taking up and specifying some of Coseriu’s basic ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>universal</td>
<td>language activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical</td>
<td>specific language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical</td>
<td>discourse tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual/actual utterance</td>
<td>discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since linguists use discourse realised in the form of individual and actual utterances merely as data and must not see it as an end in itself, their focal
interest can only remain in the universal and the two historical domains. The
analysis of the relevant sources for research into the history of oral varieties,
which corresponds to the domain of specific languages, is very widespread.7
The sources may, however, also be regarded as samples of certain discourse
traditions and serve for the study of the history of dialogue traditions
("dialogue forms" in the sense of Fritz 1994 and 1995). Finally – and this is the
decisive aspect for what follows – the relevant sources may, of course, also be
analysed with regard to the level of language activity, in other words the level
of the basic variables of human communication. The problem then arises of the
authenticity or the filtering processes to which the texts in area C in Figure 1
compared to area A have been subjected. How much dialogicity39, how much
immediacy is contained in the relevant written testimonies and in what
configuration? What are the motives for the conceptional form of these texts?
Within the latter perspective, the relation to the discourse-traditional area of
the historical level becomes obvious.

I should like to illustrate this point briefly by means of two sample texts
which date from outside the period of my research. In example (1), 1, 3-4, angry
exclamations are quoted which the Romans shouted out when Pope Vigilus,
who had made himself extremely unpopular, set sail. In (2) we find an excerpt
from eye-witness accounts, in which direct speech is again quoted.

(1) Rome, 545 (Liber Pontificalis, cit. Herman 1990: 147)

1 Videntes Romani quod movisset navis, in qua sedebat Vigilium,
   "When the Romans saw the ship moving on which Vigilius was sitting,
2 tunc populus coepit post eum lactare lapides fastes cacabos et dicere:
   the people began to throw stones, sticks and metal pots at him and to say:
3 "famis tua tecum! mortalitas tua tecum! male fecisti cum Romanis,
   "Hunger to you! Death to you! You did wrong to the Romans,
4 male inventas ubi vadis."
   "may evil accompany you wherever you go."

(2) Siena, 715 (Breve de inquisitione, cit. Roncaglia 1965: 146)

1 Ego respondi ei: "Cave ut non interrogerit; nam si interrogatus fuero,
   "I replied to him: "Prevent him from asking [me], for if I am asked,
2 veritatem dicere habeo." Sic respondit mihi: "Ergo tace tu viro.
   "truth to tell." He replied to me: "So, you be silent to a man
3 qui est missus domni regi."
   "who is the ambassador of the king!!"

(1) is in principle a purely "Latin" text. As it contains a quotation of the
dialogue, type, its authenticity with regard to the Latin spoken at that time
("Vulgar Latin") has been discussed.40 Text (2) is likewise basically a Latin
text, but it reveals clear signs of vernacular elements which can, of course, be
pin-pointed.41 All this, however, purely concerns the domain of a specific
language as described above, in which there is comparatively little to be seen
on the surface. By contrast, the matter looks completely different if – on the
level of language activity – the interest lies in the characteristic style of
dialogue, or dialogue, in the instances of speech quoted here, and from this
point of view both texts are relevant to my questions.42

3. Court records

3.1. The data

Following example (2), let us remain in the law courts and look at excerpts
from court records.

My first example comes from the Atti dei podestà of Lio Mazor, an island
in the Lagoon of Venice destroyed by the Genoese in 1380. They are records
relating to trials on disputes. Our text is written in a vernacular variety which is
not identical to Venetian, but which is certainly very similar to it. It originated
in the year 1312 and thus belongs to the early texts of the region.43

(3) Lio Mazor (near Venice), 1312 (atti dei podestà di Lio Mazor, cit. Levi
1904: 17f.; my quotation marks)

1 Die martis X mense otiur Felip Musolin de S.to Nicolò currà
   'On 10th October F.M. of S.N. swore
2 li comandamenti de miser la potestà et de dir la verità dela briga
   obedience to the Podestà and <he swore> to tell the truth about the dispute
3 ch’el ave cum Pero Seren e colo Saracho da Maçoorro.
   which he had with P.S. and S.d.M.
4 Lo qual dis ch’el mançà e beuè cum li diti Pero et Saracho
   He said that he ate and drank with the said P. and S.
5 in casa d’Andrea Dalmatin, creando ch’el fos sui amisi;
   at A.D.’s house believing them to be his friends;
6 et cui ne partisem delà duà casa e çesem ensembra via.
   and then we left the said house and went away together.
7 Et cum nu fossem a Sto Antolin, et eli s’auri cum entranbe le barche
   And when we got to S.A., they moved their boats apart
8 et mis-me denter si, et in quasta Pero Seren me dis:
   and put me between them, and then P.S. said to me:
9 "Felipo, el è ça II anni che t’ò wardà d’auerte a sto parti;
   "F., two years ago I warned you not to show up in these parts;
10 che se t'asses entes en canal Corno quando tu me dis\: for if I had heard you say to me in the Corno canal
11 ch'el me nasce lo verno con, e 'l tauraud pur morto!": that you wish a mangy dog on me, I would have killed you!"
12 et e 'dis: "Fra', qua non è grande fato,
And I said to him: "Brother, that is no great matter,
13 se te lo dis per cercar la uia de verità
I said it to you for the sake of truth,
14 ch'el me campagniya no pares larol!"
so that my companion wouldn't appear to be a thief!"
15 et el 'dis: "Tu menti per la gula!"
and he said: "You are lying through your back teeth!"
16 et e 'li dis: "tu menti per lo cul!"
and I said: "You are lying through your arse!"
17 et en questa el fo a ladi dela mia barcha per volerme sair en barcha,
and then he got alongside my boat in order to get into my boat
18 et he 'me-lo spensi da dos per no soler briga;
and I pushed him off my back because I didn't want an argument;
19 et en questa el leuà lo rem et vos-me dar ço per la testa: [...] and then he raised the oar and wanted to hit me on the head with it; [...]"

Our interest focuses on dialogue, quoted in lines 9-16 (in particular l. 16). Note the textual layers in which this dialogue is embedded (cf. also Figure 2 below):

Level I: Legal framework of questioning with mention of the cause (l. 2: briga) and of the swearing of the oath (l. 1: c'urà).

Level II: Report of the statement by Felip Musolin (from l. 4: Lo qual dis ch(e) ...). A noteworthy feature is the abrupt jump in l. 5 from indirect speech in the 3rd person singular (l. 4/5: el mançà et bene ... cregando ch'ei fos sui amisi) to direct speech in the 1st person (l. 6: ne partisem).

Level III: Embedded in Level II, a dialogue is rendered as a quotation (l. 9-16).

This threefold layering may serve as a model case for the text organisation of the following documents, too, even if not all the levels are reported, depending on the respective editions (which concentrate on the vernacular passages in the text).

Our next group of examples comes from court records of statements in slander suits. These records are the Libri criminali of Lucca in the period 1330 to 1384. In the context of the emergence of the vernacular in Tuscan, this is actually no longer particularly early (by way of comparison, Dante died in 1321), but even at this point in time in Tuscan numerous discourse traditions were still practised in Latin. As opposed to the case of Lio Mazor, this was apparently also true of court records, so that the fragments of the dialogue, type which are of interest to us occur as vernacular quotations within a Latin text (or as in case (4b), even appear partly in Latin). This in itself is particularly pertinent to our purposes: the vernacular brings us closer to the reality of dialogue, within texts which are basically still Latin.

(4) Luca: 1335, 1330 (Libri criminali, cit. Marcheschi 1983: 22, 19)

(a) Sosso cane, asciuo fastigioso.
'Dirty dog, puffed up donkey.'

(b) Tu fecisti me predare: operet q(uod) te int(e)rioric, soço ladrone
'You wanted to have me robbed; I must kill you, dirty thief,
che me venisti a robbare, che maledecia scia la poesia che ti cachò.
who wanted to rob me, damn the whore who crapped you.'

The examples quoted belong to level III of the system defined under (3). (The Latin texts from the other levels are not quoted in the edition available to me.)

Our third group of examples comes from court registers (Registres audientiery) belonging to various administrative districts in the Forez ((5a) Malleval, (5b) Saint-Maurice-sur-Loire, (5c) La Tour-en-Jarez; all in today's Département Loire). Linguistically this is the Franco-Provençal area. According to the documents which have survived, written vernacular in the Forez did not emerge until the 1280s, so documentation in particular from the 14th century may be reasonably considered as "early".¹¹


(a) [angry culprit to the bailiff wanting to take his sword off him:]
Ven la me oitar, que va la te bailrey par la poinia.
'Come and take it off me; I'll give it to you with the point.'

(b) tu murmurs de malveys mort, comme tes pares.
'You will die a nasty death, like your father.'

(c) Johannes Jaqueri Oleri, de Strata, ... quia eidem imponebatur.
'J.J.O. of St., ... since he is accused of
vocasse J. Boniti filii de la tres orra vil puta merdosa, que moz pares
calling J.B.: Son of the very dirtiest vilest bloody whore; my father
a foto ta mare mais de e. weis en ung an,
had fucked your mother more than a hundred times in one year.'

As particularly exemplified by (5c), levels I and II are rendered in Latin (level I: Johannes ... imponebatur; level II: vocasse J. Boniti). Only level III is again
quoted in the vernacular (and the edition restricts itself mainly to these quotations).

3.2. Analysis of conceptional aspects

The texts or passages under scrutiny here contain clear reflexes of the dialogue, type. The philologists who have examined these texts unanimously stress the proximity to actual speech. Even if the supposed authenticity of the quotations can only be of a relative nature (see also below 3.3.), salient signs of communicative immediacy may be detected in the quotations or from the respective context in which they are embedded. I should like to define this more precisely using parameters (i)-(x) of Table 1 above:

(i) Level II of the text reveals that the quoted utterances go back to the physical immediacy of a face-to-face situation — if, that is, this level is visible in the edition. On level II the I-thou speech situation can be reconstructed metacommunicatively as in: (3) l. 6 česem ensebna uía etc.; (5c) Johann „Jaquieri Olertii imponentebar vocasse J. Boniti.

(ii) It may be deduced mostly from the content of the insults that these scenes are very private; in (3) this becomes directly visible in the edition through the inclusion of text level II (account of the events).

(iii) The intimacy between the interlocutors is particularly apparent in (3): after a meal in company — where the wine probably flowed freely — three people, evidently long acquainted with each other, leave the house together. The narrator erroneously considers the others to be his friends: l. 5 creçando ch'eli fos sui amisì; anyway, they have had some common — and also unpleasant — experience which is partially referred to quite implicitly in l. 9-14. In other texts, intimacy is also revealed indirectly, such as in the allusion to (supposed) knowledge about the insulted party or his relatives: (5b) how the father of the insulted party died; (5c) alleged sexual intercourse between the speaker’s father and the mother of the insulted party.

(iv) The high degree of emotionality is no doubt the most significant parameter in these texts on slander suits. The purpose of the quotations in the legal context is indeed to reveal that a basic rule of politeness in spoken language has been infringed by the accused: his emotionality has caused him to threaten the plaintiff’s negative and positive face and he has brutally invaded the latter’s personal territory. Linguistically, this effect arises through certain semantic and pragmatic options.

The choice of words is of prime importance. The expressions are derogatory (in the framework of a characteristic syntactic type of the appellation of the interlocutor: (4a) sosso cane, ascino fastiggioso; (4b) sosso ladrone; (5c) filius de la ... puça). Here and elsewhere, the use of swear words of a faecal and sexual nature flouts language taboos: (3) l. 16 cul, (4b)/(5c) posta/puça, (5c) merdosa, foire, (4b) cachare (the last example is an extreme dysphemism for ‘to give birth’). In (5a) balir par la pointa for ‘to stab’ there is a scurrilous challenge within the linguistic representation of the situation.

Emotional expressiveness is heightened by intensifications which outdo each other, such as in (3) l. 15/16 mentir per la gula and mentir per lo cul. But this kind of hyperbole concerns not only linguistic expression but often also the content, the immodesty of which gives rise to a lawsuit as in (5e), particularly in the second part, possibly also in (4b) (where apart from the possibly unfounded accusation of theft, there is the indirect insinuation of descent from a whore).

The speech acts in the individual utterances are also extremely emotional: derogatory address ((4a) and (5c) filius ... merdosa); reproach ((3) l. 15/16: tu menti per la gula/per lo cul); accusation ((4b) tu fecisti me predari ... sosso ladrone que me vinisti a robbare); threat (4b) oportet quod te interficiam; (5a)); curse ((5b)). The speech act of cursing (4b) maledecta scia ... is a downright flaming of a taboo.

(v) The context embeddedness is generally only indirect: as a rule, we are dealing with insults resulting from a conflict of action. By contrast, (5a) is set very directly in an extremely violent conflict, where a speech act of challenge is followed by a speech act that can only through the given situation be interpreted as threat.

(vi) In the personal deixis, there are unmistakable elements of referential immediacy. The first and second person are well represented in the utterances. A pronounced dialogic, reference to the addressee is, of course, implicitly contained in the abusive appellation (see above under (iv)). There is a marked referential immediacy, too, in (5a) where reference to the sword in the form of an exophoric pronounce in the third person (la) may only be understood in the context of the situation. On the other hand, however, a certain degree of referential distance must be conceded if one considers the numerous references to factors extraneous to the situation, i.e., mothers, fathers and (alleged) earlier actions such as robbery, sexual intercourse etc. and even prior communication ((3), l. 9-14).

(vii) All the relevant passages are dialogical in the sense of this parameter. In (3) this is quite explicit in the threefold layering (I – II – III). But even where the edition does not reveal this fact, we may safely assume that
such accusations, insults, challenges etc. always occurred only in real, lively dialogue.

(x) When we consider the parameter of spontaneity, it is necessary to distinguish between the marked deliberation of quoting and of record-taking during the trial on the one hand, and on the other the spontaneity of the utterance quoted – a spontaneity which is preserved (or must be preserved; I shall come back to this point in 3.3.) as far as the quoter’s memory will allow. From the purely linguistic point of view, certain elements of authenticity cannot be overlooked: for example, the syntax of (5c) reveals the uncomplicated, polyvalent que situated between hypotaxis and parataxis, which keeps the logical link implicit;* moreover, the wording generally tends towards accumulation or even climax ((4a), (4b), (5c)).

3.3. Motivation for writing characterised by linguistic immediacy

The records just examined belong to type (4) in Oesterreicher’s model for writing characterised by linguistic immediacy (see Table 3): “documentation” of informal speech. Besides the fact of reading aloud, Lüdtke (1964) already highlighted records as a communicative type in earlier Romance texts. By contrast, Wunderli (1965) gave prominence to reading aloud and assigned a more marginal role to records. Obviously, our texts (3) and (5) do not belong to the central documents of early Romance, but they are at least relatively early in the history of the language in question. Records therefore play an interesting role here, at any rate in certain regions (cf. Koch 1993: 46).

The motivation for the style of immediacy in these court records is of a legal nature. Their starting point is to be found in spontaneous, immediate, dialogue-type utterances in the phonemic medium, which are addressed to a hearer H by a speaker S. Depending on the circumstances, they are experienced by a witness W: S \rightarrow H (W). Once such utterances have been heard, they would normally “die out”, but for the fact that they belong to a context which, thanks to H’s reaction, later becomes justiciable. Thus, the primary communication act S \rightarrow H (W) triggers off a chain of further communication acts, the textual end-product being a mirror reflection of the layers III – II – I.

A perfect model of this is to be found in example (3).

In the framework of the courtroom, there is a secondary communication S' \rightarrow H' (W') in which S' = H or W makes a statement as the plaintiff or witness. Within the statement by S', the relevant utterance made by S is quoted as literally as possible. Statement (II) and quotation (III) together with the communicative-legal modalities of statement (I) are then recorded in writing by a court clerk S'' = W in a tertiary communication act S'' \rightarrow R'' for a later reader R''.

In a conceptional-medial respect (i.e. with reference to Figure (1)), the tertiary communication act S'' \rightarrow R'' on textual level I should lean towards communicative distance and thus in the main belong to area D. The secondary communication act of the statement S' \rightarrow H' (W') presumably tends towards communicative immediacy (area A), which under certain circumstances is even perceptible to a certain degree in the graphic medium on textual level II (area C?).

The primary communication act S \rightarrow H (W) was most definitely characterised by a very pronounced communicative immediacy (area A). As it is on account of their emotionality and spontaneity that the utterances themselves become justiciable, the use of Latin on textual level III poses a great problem. By this level at the latest a “translation” into Latin is therefore dispensed with (in Lío Mári also on all upper levels) and there is an attempt to reproduce the utterances as authentically as possible with regard to the specific language and the conceptional aspects. The lexical level is of particular relevance here. It is therefore the legal context which provides the root for a later written conservation of immediate language, which, as we saw in 3.2., may definitely be allocated to area C in Figure 1.
As it is the spoken facts themselves that are justiciable, philologists generally assume that the texts are highly authentic - authentic, it should be observed, with regard to the writer, S", who records the linguistic part of the secondary communication act $S' \rightarrow H$ ($W$) on textual levels II and III. However, even a record of this kind must be expected to contain a certain degree of mediation and filtering. Indeed, part of a quotation is even translated into Latin at the beginning of (4b). More complex still is the relationship between text passages on level III and the primary (!) "original utterances" $S \rightarrow H$ ($W$), because the power of memory and honesty of $S'=H$ or $W$ come into play here, but above all because the communication form used for quoting is different from the quoted communication form itself. We must not forget that a quotation is not the same as a tape-recording.

As confirmed by the analysis in 3.2., the institutional framework, strictly speaking, only guarantees that the wording on level III is sufficiently expressive in its immediacy to become legally relevant at all - no more and no less.

4. Cartoons

4.1. The data

The second group of data I would like to treat here is of a completely different nature. We now turn our attention to inscriptions from the 11th to the 12th century in northern and central Italy.

Our first example is the famous *Iscrizione di San Clemente* (Rome, late 11th century), which belongs to a fresco - sadly now fading - in the lower basilica of the church of San Clemente. It is one of the ten oldest vernacular documents in Italy altogether (excluding Sardinia) and the third oldest in Rome. The reproduction of the inscription here is the more readily legible watercolour painted by Carlo Tabanelli at the beginning of the 20th century after a negative by Pompeo Sansaini (text (6a)); there then follows a reconstruction by Marazzini of the dialogue, to which I have supplied an English translation (text (6b)).

The background to this little scene is a legend about Saint Clement (the fourth Pope at the end of the 1st century). Theodora, a Christian convert married to the heathen Sisinnius (a friend of the Caesar, Domitian), goes to Mass, which Clement is celebrating. Sisinnius suspects she has become unfaithful to him and follows her, whereupon he is struck with blindness and deafness. Although
Clement heals him, Sisinnius assumes that it is Clement who visited this evil on him. He orders his vassals to overpower Clement and take him away. Then the miracle depicted in the fresco takes place. While held by the vassals, Clement is transformed into a stone column which they now attempt to carry away.

What we have here is basically a precursor of present-day cartoons,\textsuperscript{31} even if the notation conventions are rather different. As the distribution of linguistic elements on the fresco is not easy to follow, they have become a bone of contention. I opt for the interpretation which now appears to be the most likely (cf. Raffaelli 1987: 40ff., 51-53). The mosaic contains two pure name labels, namely 

Sisinnium (F) for the person standing on the far right and Gosmari (E) for the vassal standing next to him on the left. Sisinnius first cries to the vassals: Fili dele pue traitae! (G). Then it is either Gosmari or Sisinnius who shouts the following command to the vassal Albertello (the third person from the right): Albertel trai(te)! (D). Albertello or Gosmari then calls out to Carboncello (the vassal on the far left): Faiite dereto colo palo Carvoncelle! (A). Finally, Saint Clement, “offstage” as it were, speaks the, grammatically not totally correct, Latin words: Duritiam cordis vestris saxa traere meruistis (B and C).

The next two examples are the oldest vernacular texts from Piemont. Within Italy as a whole, their chronological ranking is just, or at least almost, as high as text (6).\textsuperscript{33} The first is a mosaic from the church of S. Maria Maggiore in Vercelli (about 1040):

This portrays two fighters duelling with shields and swords. The utterances they shout at each other are reproduced in written form: fol! 'idiot' on the lefthand edge of the picture and fel! 'villain' on the righthand.

The other Piemontese mosaic (mid 11th/early 12th century) used to be in the cathedral of S. Evasio in Casale Monferrato. As the current photograph (8a) reveals, restoration work on the cathedral rendered the inscription illegible; however, it has been passed down to us in the form of a sketch by Mella, (8b):

(8) Casale Monferrato (Piemont): mid 11th/early 12th century (Mosaic in the cathedral of S. Evasio; illustration (a) and reconstruction (b) from Coppo 1965/66: 254)
Here again we are presented with two fighters armed with shields and swords. The lefthand edge of the picture bears the inscription TOSCANA, which presumably should be read as a cartoon-style caption shouted out by one of the fighters. From the purely linguistic point of view, there are two interpretations compatible with the northern Italian character of the vernacular used here: 1. tò scannâ! (corresponding to present-day standard Italian ‘tò, sconna!’ ‘Hey, go on, kill me’?); 2. tò scanâ! (in line with present-day standard Italian ‘tò, scanerò!’ ‘I’m going to kill you!’ (cf. Coppo 1965/66: 258ff.; Stella 1994: 78).

4.2. Analysis of conceptual aspects

Communicative immediacy is clearly apparent in these cartoon-style inscriptions, too. Their immediacy predominantly stems from the iconic component. Let us now run through all the conceptual parameters:

(i) The physical immediacy of a face-to-face situation is produced by iconic means in all these cases: in (6) between the four protagonists, in (7) and (8) between the two respectively.

(ii) (7) and (8) are unequivocally private scenes. In (6) this is also the case for the violent part of the story, but the saint’s words in Latin ex cathedra produce a higher degree of publicness.

(iii) No conclusions may be drawn about the degree of intimacy in (7) and (8). In (6) the intimacy between the master and his vassals is relatively strong, but the intimacy between the four perpetrators and the saint is not. This links up well with (ii).

(iv) As is the case with the court records, the high degree of emotionality is poignant here. The choice of words is derogatory (in the frame of the syntactic type of the appellation of the interlocutor): (7) foi, fol; (6) fili dele pute (the latter case blatantly flouting a taboo). The implementation of scanâ in (8) is particularly expressive. The negative and positive face of the opposite partner is constantly threatened. In (6) the master can afford to goad on his vassals in this way; in (7) and (8) this verbal violation of territory reinforces the challenge in a fight.

(v) Context embeddedness, too, is a prominent parameter of the most startling kind. (7) and (8) contain but mere traces of language; everything else concerning the action is expressed in the physical images into which these “speech bubbles” are firmly integrated. Of particular note are the verb forms and the speech acts they express, all of which are distinguished by a strong, direct action reference. Whereas (7) contains no verb form at all, elsewhere it is the imperative which is the most dominant. In (6), traitre, trait(e) and faillte dereito stand for directive speech acts with the additional support of the vocative, which goads into action: fili dele pute, Albertello, Carboncello. According to one of the interpretations, scanna in (8) is an imperative expressing a speech act of challenge, intensified by the discourse particle tò. The other interpretation defines this as a future form, with which a speech act of threat (and in the final analysis an overpoweringly directive speech act) is performed.

(vi) A large proportion of referential immediacy is evident here. Where verbs actually do exist, the only grammatical person is the second person of the imperative: (6) trai, trait(e), faillite; (8) scanna (however, the latter may be understood as a component of the first person singular, tò scanâ, depending on the interpretation).

In the vernacular parts of the inscriptions, the referential expressions all relate explicitly or implicitly only to people or things which are located in the hic-nunc area; no reference is made to people or things extraneous to the situation. In (6), for instance, the exophoric reference plays an important role: in -li- (in faillite) in the pronominal form, in -lo palo with a definite article + description. The object of trair or traitre remains purey implicit, but of course Saint Clemente/the column is meant here on the grounds of his/its presence in the situation. The vocatives fili dele pute, Albertello and Carboncello refer eo ipso to the addressee within the speaking situation (likewise fel and fol in (7)). A special role has, of course, to be assigned to the saint’s dictum in (6) as it is distinguished from the vernacular utterances not only on account of the choice of language, but also owing to its conceptual style. The use here of the abstract durità and the generic plural saxa (instead of a singular saxum) is an indirect reference to elements of the situation (and the form of the second person plural is, of course, a direct reference to the addressees in the situation), but nevertheless it transcends this situation referentially, simply on account of the generic style. – If we are to adopt the interpretation tò scanâ in (7), we find here a clear exophoric reference to the addressee.

(vii) It is not easy to speak of “dialogicity” in our three inscriptions in the sense of this conceptual parameter. (6) does not present real turn-taking in the vernacular, but rather shouts fired in all directions. The saint’s voice offstage, of course, stands quite apart in its own right. (7) and (8) may well illustrate a constellation of two (in a duel), but the written text in (7) sketches the bare minimum of an exchange and may be classified as an absolute border case of dialogicity; in (8) there is only one rudimentary utterance without any real exchange of words. However,
these mosaics are indeed examples of dialogue, characterised by immediacy in many parameters, not least of all thanks to the frequent reference to thou/ye.

(x) As we saw in the court records (3.3.), we must again distinguish between two levels: when considering the parameter of spontaneity. On the one hand, there are the iconic and graphic elements of the cartoon, due to an artistic act which certainly involves deliberation, and on the other the spontaneity of the communication processes invented by the artist. On the latter level, a high degree of spontaneity is most definitely indicated by the choice of words, the references to the situation and the use of the vocative.

4.3. Motivation for writing characterised by linguistic immediacy

The final parameter considered in 4.2., parameter (x), makes clear the essential difference between the texts examined in sections 2 and 3. Whereas the focus of section 2 was the quoting and recording of dialogues, in a three-step process (Figure 2), the inscriptions of section 3 do not pretend to be a written record of the occurrence of communication acts; on the contrary, these dialogues, are a fictional and staged creation in word and illustration. According to Oesterreicher’s typology of writing characterised by linguistic immediacy (Table 3), the inscriptions may be categorised as type (8): mimetic or simulated orality in literature, parody and similar contexts.

Cartoons may be considered a form of literature in the broadest sense of the term. Indeed, it is in this form of literature, thanks to the omnipresence of illustration, that the problem of immediacy and distance is posed most drastically. (This does not, however, mean that all cartoons embody the same high level of immediacy.) Both the Iscrizione di San Clemente and the mosaic inscriptions are most definitely precursors of cartoons characterised by immediacy of language, and their role in early writing in certain regions of Italy is not to be neglected (cf. Koch 1993: 46).

It is, of course, legitimate to ask why the authors of these texts chose the form of the cartoon to reproduce dialogic, emotional oral language. The reason in the case of the Iscrizione di San Clemente (6) possibly lies in social and ecclesiastical tensions in Rome under Pope Paschal II (1099-1118). While Paschal II stood for the traditional power of the Church, at the same time there was a revolting laity supporting the counter-popes (Theodoricus, Albertus, Silvester IV). It was presumably at this “incorrigible” laity that the Church propaganda was levelled. The cartoon may well have been implemented as a propaganda device, depicting the contrasts in the Church and society by means of contrasts in language and conception. St. Clement’s Latin dictum implying reserve and distance symbolises the traditional power of the Church whereas the spontaneity and immediacy of the vernacular is used to represent the coarse, incorrigible laity.

The inscriptions of Casale and Vercelli are also Church propaganda, this time as part of attestations for moral campaigns against the iniquities of ira. In those days duels frequently took place as a trademark of ira. The Church took up the issue and campaigned for the Christian ideal of temperantia. The particularly effective medium of comic-like cartoons was chosen as a persuasive means, the component of caricature applying both to the language and to the illustrations. If these interpretations are right, it must be assumed that in all three inscriptions, the produced communicative immediacy, supported by vivid illustration, had an ideological-persuasive function. In this framework, Latin would not have been able to reproduce adequately the depravity of the emotionality depicted – particularly as read out to a lay person – and this may well explain the choice of the vernacular, as well as the contrast between the vernacular and Latin in (6).

5. Conclusion

The paths along which spontaneous dialogical immediacy in early Romance texts reaches the graphic medium belong, as we have seen, first and foremost to types (4) and (8) according to the typology in Table 3. Writing characterised by linguistic immediacy of types (4) and (8) apparently requires a kind of staging, a specific frame, but one which is completely different in both cases.

Where immediacy of type (4) is documented, the setting is institutional, the stage being a courtroom providing a record of the justiciability of the facts treated. In the case of examples (4) and (5), this institutional frame makes its mark on the specific language itself right down to level II (defined in 3.1.), whereas Latin is used (for the main part not reproduced in the editions used here), whereas the vernacular does not emerge until on level III in quotations within the Latin framework. The pattern in example (3) is different, since the vernacular is already in use on levels II and I. The choice of the specific language apart, the conceptional style of the text is narrative as far down as level II; it is only within this narrative framework that the high degree of dialogicity, can be implemented on level III.

The mimetic type (8) is set in a frame of persuasive propaganda, which in turn implements the special medium of illustration in order to stage in a comicstrip-like form spontaneous dialogue, with linguistic immediacy.

Full
Types (4) and (8) both require a motive for a permanent written record of dialogues of the immediate kind, a motive which lies in the nature of the reproduced (type 4) or fictional (type 8) communication itself. In line with parameter (iv), this communication is, in both cases, highly emotionally expressive since its basis is conflict. The dialogues in the court records and the cartoon-type scenes both revolve around arguments. In example (6), we are assisting at a conflict between Siainus in his anger and blindness and the wisdom of Saint Clement, a conflict which is staged by the specific language and conceptual contrast as outlined above.

One point strikes me as being worthy of note. In all the examples analysed here, the writing characterised by dialogica immediacy projects — either implicitly or even explicitly — a negative image of the protagonists. Quarrels and conflicts are the order of the day, whether they are set within the framework of a lawsuit or of persuasive fiction.

Notes

1. In a historical perspective, the affinities between medium and conception can, however, in part be differently represented. Thus, thanks to the omnipresent medial transcoding process of reading aloud/reciting and dictating, communicative distance in the phonetic medium (area B) is particularly typical of the European Middle Ages (cf. Koch 1997a: 150, 157-160).

2. Add to this the fact that all communicative parameters bar (i) are of a continual nature.


26 Cf. Raffaelli (1987: 57f). — Many points here remain hypothetical and indefinite. The arrest of Paschal II by Emperor Henry V in 1111 cannot be connected to the fresco as it was created prior to this year. On the other hand, if Paschal II, who was a cardinal-priest at the church of St. Clemente before being elected pope, really did commission the frescoes in the lower basilica (Frank and Hartmann 1997: II, 13), the inscription would have been too early for the dispute over his papacy.

27 Cf. Coppi (1965/66: 247-253, 257). Apart from the brutality of the fighting, the cartoon style comes to the fore in the fact, for example, that both mosaics depict one of the opponents with black skin. This does not mean that a black man is involved, but rather black is a symbol here of the power of darkness.

28 These early documents — especially in Italy — do also bear testimony to other forms of communicative immediacy (area C in Figure 1), but these cannot be classified as dialogical/2/ to the same extent. Here we should bear in mind the Graviti della catacomba di Commodilla (Rome, end of the first half of the 9th century) or the record-like Testimonianze di Trasleve (Tuscany, 1158); cf. Koch (1993: 45f); Frank and Hartmann (1997: No. 1001 and 73.005).

References

Allan, Keith, and Kate Burridge

Bulliard, Renée

Benincà, Paolo

Bongi, Salvatore (ed.)
1890 Ingiurie, improperi, costrimelle, ecc. Saggio di lingua parlata del Trecento cavato dai libri criminali di Luca. Il Propugnatore N.S. 3/1, 75-134.

Brown, Gillian, and George Yule
Brown, Penelope, and Stephen C. Levinson
1987 Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use. (Studies in International

Bruni, Francesco

Bubner, Rüdiger

Castellani, Arrigo
1976 I più antichi testi italiani. Edizione e commento. (Storia della lingua italiana

Coppi, Angelo
1965/66 Tre antiche iscrizioni volgari su frammenti musivi pavimentali di Casale
e di Verceil. Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia 38,
237-266.

Coseriu, Eugenio
1973 Die Lage in der Linguistik. (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft,
Vorträge 9). Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft.
Narr.

D’Achille, Paolo
1990 Sintassi del parlato e tradizione scritta della lingua italiana. Analisi di testi

Durante, Marcello
1981 Dal latino all’italiano moderno. Saggio di storia linguistica e culturale.
(Fenomewi linguistici 1). Bologna: Zanichelli.

Durand, Paulotte (ed.)
1975 Documents Linguistiques du Lyonnais (1225-1425) (Documents linguistiques

Ehrlich, Gerhard
1985 Gesprächen Französisch zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts. Direkte Rede in
Jean Hérodard “Histoire particulière de Louis XIII” (1595-1610) (Beihexe
gericht für Romanische Philologie 204). Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Fichter, Reinhard
1990 Kommunikation und Emotion. Theoretische und empirische Untersuchungen
der Rolle von Emotionen in der verbalen Interaktion. Berlin/New York: de
Gruyter.

Frank, Barbara, and Jörg Hartmann
1997 Inventaire systematicatique des premiers documents des langues romanes. 5 vol.
(Scriptorialia 100). Tübingen: Narr.

Fritz, Gerd
Historical Pragmatics. Pragmatic Developments in the History of English.
(Pragmatics & Beyond. New Series 35). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benga-
mins, 469-498.

Fritz, Gerd, and Franz Hundesh narrower (eds.)

Gasca Queirazza, Giuliano

Goffman, Erving

Gonon, Marguerite (ed.)
1974 Documents Linguistiques du Poitou (1260-1498). (Documents linguistiques

Gülich, Elisabeth
(Structura 2). München: Fink.

Habermas, Jürgen
1971 Vorbereitende Bemerkungen zu einer Theorie der kommunikativen
Kompetenz. In: Jürgen Habermas and Niklas Luhmann (eds.), Theorie der
Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie – Was leistet die Systemforschung?

Heig, Klaus
1963 Die Bezeichnung temporal-deiktischer Begriffskategorien im französischen
und spanischen Konjugationsystem. (Beihexe zur Zeitschrift für

Herman, Joseph
1990 Sur un exemple de la langue parlée à Rome au VIe siècle. In: Gualterio

Holtus, Günter, Michael Metzelin, and Christian Schmitt (eds.)

Holtus, Günter, and Wolfgang Schieweard
1991 Zum Stand der Erforschung der historischen Dimension gesprochener
Sprache in der Romania. Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie 107, 547-574.

Humboldt, Wilhelm von
Mukačevský, Jan

Muller, Henri François, and Pauline Taylor (eds.)

Oesterreicher, Wulf


Petrucci, Livio

Radke, Edgar

Raffaelli, Sergio

Renzi, Lorenzo

Romagnoli, Aurelio

Schiffrin, Deborah

Schlieben-Lange, Brigitte

Schmitt-Riese, Roland

Schmitz, Joachim

Selig, Maria, Barbara Frank and Jörg Hartmann (eds.)

Seranni, Luca, and Pietro Trifone (eds.)

Stille, Ludwig

Spitzer, Leo

Stella, Angelo

Stempel, Wolf-Dieter

Stimm, Helmut (ed.)

Strazzulla, Gaetano

Stussi, Alfredo (ed.)