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## Orality in Literate Cultures

Peter Koch

When dealing with 'orality in literate cultures', we must first examine several terminological and conceptual questions. From the distinctions proposed in section 1. it follows that 'orality in literate cultures' does not constitute a unitary problem and has to be discussed from at least four very different angles: these are addressed in sections 2.-5.

### 1. Linguistic medium, linguistic conception, and cultural orality/literacy

Over the last two decades, insights from cognitive psychology have revealed the internal prototypical structure of perceptual and conceptual categories (cf. Rosch 1978). This applies to everyday concepts, but frequently - at least in the humanities - to academic concepts as well<sup>1</sup>. 'Orality' and 'literacy' seem to be fairly good examples of the latter. It goes without saying that intimate, spontaneous conversation is an instance of prototypical orality and that statutes are instances of prototypical literacy. The university lecture and the private letter might be regarded as instances of less prototypical orality and literacy respectively. But what about oral poetry in nonliterate cultures? Although literacy does not by definition exist in non-literate societies, we would hesitate to call oral poetry prototypical orality - especially when compared to spontaneous conversation in those same societies.

I am convinced that prototypical concepts are legitimate in linguistic research inasmuch as they reflect the prototypical organization of the object under consideration. Let us now examine the prototypical nature of the concepts 'orality'/'oral' and 'literacy'/'written'.

*1.1.* Unfortunately, 'oral'/'written' are polysemous terms covering two different - though related - aspects of communication that have to be strictly distinguished:

the **medium** and the **mode** of communication. This discrimination is not entirely new in linguistics and has been discovered and rediscovered by a number of scholars, in part independently of each other: Behaghel 1899; De Mauro 1970; Nencioni 1976, 1; Akinaso 1985; Chafe and Danielewicz 1987; Halliday 1987, 66; Horowitz and Samuels 1987 etc.

Chafe (1982, 36) distinguishes four styles of language within the data used in his investigation on speaking and writing: (1) informal spoken language, from dinnertable conversations, (2) formal spoken language, from lectures, (3) informal written language, from letters, (4) formal written language, from academic papers.

In my opinion, however, the most straightforward approach to the problem dates back to 1974, when the romanist Söll proposed his distinction between linguistic medium (*code phonique* vs. *code graphique*) and linguistic conception, i.e. mode (*langue parlée* vs. *langue écrite*)<sup>2</sup>.

In the medial sense<sup>3</sup>, 'oral' (= 'phonic') and 'written' (= 'graphic') are clearly dichotomous, non prototypical concepts. A given discourse can only either be uttered acoustically or written down. *Tertium non datur*. Certainly, it is always possible to read a written discourse or to write down a spoken discourse. But these are cases of the so-called medium-transferability (Lyons 1981, 11), typical of human language. In any concrete act of communication we have to choose one of the two existing media or to combine them, but there is no "compromise" between the phonic and the graphic realization.

In contrast to this, linguistic conception only involves the communicative mode of a given discourse. What is at stake here, is a higher or smaller degree of textual coherence, of syntactic complexity and of lexical refinedness as well as the selection of different language varieties. In this sense, 'oral' and 'written' are clearly prototypical concepts. It goes without saying that a spontaneous conversation is a more prototypical instance of oral conception than an interview with a politician and that a statute is a more prototypical instance of written conception than an editorial.

Even the combinations of medium and conception are of a prototypical kind: in present-day societies at least, we observe clear affinities between oral conception and the phonic medium on the one hand (e.g. spontaneous conversation) and between written conception and the graphic medium on the other hand (e.g. statutes). But at all times, the two other logically possible combinations have existed: oral conception in the graphic medium (e.g. the private letter) and written conception in the phonic medium (e.g. the university lecture). In certain cultures and epochs, these combinations are of paramount importance and perhaps more "prototypical" than the others (see below 2.1. and 3.2./3.). At all events, the above-mentioned medium-transferability of human language always

assures the possibility of such combinations, including extreme and somewhat "artificial" cases like the transcription of a spontaneous conversation (= utmost degree of oral conception in the graphic medium; see below 4. and 5.6.) or a statute read aloud (= utmost degree of written conception in the phonic medium).

1.2. A very interesting approach in this respect is the one proposed by Biber (1988), who factorizes the "prototypical" situational characteristics [i.e. linguistic conception] of each mode [i.e. linguistic medium]. He uses "the term 'oral' discourse to refer to language produced in situations that are typical or expected for speaking, and the term 'literal' discourse to refer to language produced in situations that are typical for writing" (161).

Now, a terminological problem arises. If we have to split the field of orality and literacy into the two aspects of linguistic medium and linguistic conception, why on earth should we continue to use the etymologically "medial" terms 'oral' and 'written/literate' to denote the aspect of conception? It would be more sensible to choose neutral terms such as the ones proposed by Wulf Oesterreicher and myself: communicative 'immediacy' for oral conception and communicative 'distance' for written conception. Thanks to their metaphoricity, these terms encompass a series of different situational characteristics or communicative parameters that are highly relevant at the level of linguistic conception:<sup>4</sup>

- I. physical immediacy vs. distance:  
face-to-face interaction of partners vs. distance in space and time;
- II. social immediacy vs. distance:
  1. private vs. public setting of the communicative event,
  2. familiarity vs. unfamiliarity of the partners,
  3. emotional involvement vs. detachment,
  4. context embeddedness vs. contextual dissociation of a discourse;
- III. referential immediacy vs. distance:  
reference to the EGO-HIC-NUNC and to elements of the immediate situational context vs. reference to elements that are far from the EGO-HIC-NUNC and from the situational context;
- IV. elocutional immediacy vs. distance:
  1. dialogue vs. monologue,
  2. maximum vs. minimum cooperation of partners,
  3. free topic vs. fixed topic,
  4. spontaneity vs. reflection.

Each of these parameters, except I., is of a scalar nature. So the varying degrees of privateness/publicness, of familiarity/unfamiliarity etc. and the interac-

tion between varying values of the different parameters produce a continuum of overall values of immediacy vs. distance, that can be represented as follows:

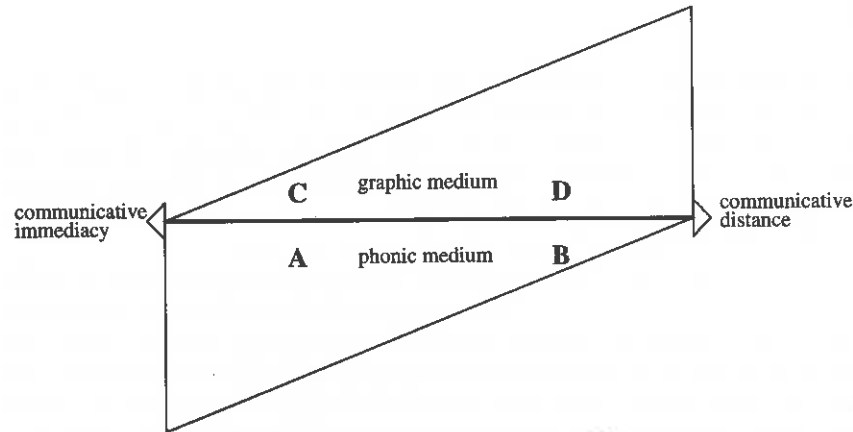


Figure 1. Medium and conception

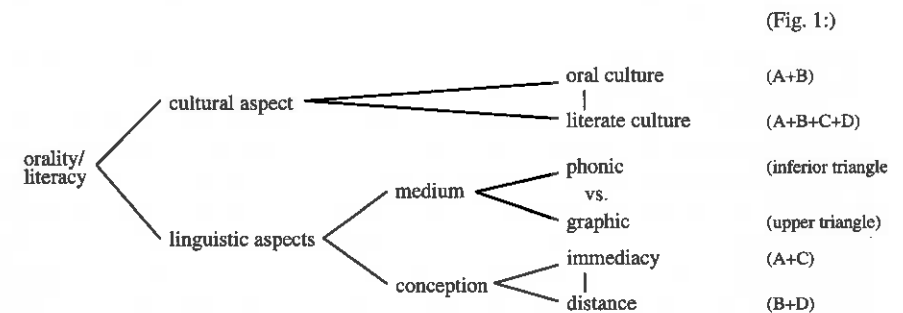
This parallelogram symbolizes not only the immediacy-distance continuum, but also the more or less prototypical combinations between conception and medium, as described above: A = phonic immediacy; B = phonic distance; C = graphic immediacy; D = graphic distance.

Furthermore, Fig. 1 symbolizes the centrality of linguistic conception. In contrast to current opinion, not only our strategies of verbalization, but also the medium of realization itself are chosen as a function of parameters I.-IV., i.e. of the position on the immediacy-distance continuum in a given situation. Obviously, physical parameter I is most important in this respect. If your partner is absent, you have to rely on the graphic medium (and write a letter, for example). In the age of the telephone, you can certainly choose the phonic medium as well. Even in this case, however, your medial choice depends, once more on parameters of linguistic conception, especially II.1.2.3. and IV.1.4.: for a spontaneous, dialogic communication with a friend, in a private, emotional setting, you will in general prefer the phonic medium (phone call) despite the physical distance; on the other hand, a communication between strangers in a more public, non emotional setting will favour the choice of the graphic medium (letter).

1.3. In view of our heading 'orality in literate cultures', there remains a fundamental problem with Fig. 1: it shows us the situation in a fully fledged literate

culture, where both the phonic and the graphic medium are present. But what about the so-called oral cultures? We have to acknowledge that in primary orality people have only the inferior triangle of Fig. 1 at their disposal, because members of those cultures move exclusively within the phonic medium<sup>5</sup>. Note that there is a radical asymmetry between communication in primary oral and in literate cultures: the graphic medium is inconceivable in oral cultures (which doesn't mean that communicative distance is inaccessible: see below 2.1.), whereas literate cultures still comprise communication in the phonic medium (and, of course, communicative immediacy).

Consequently, we may distinguish, after all, three senses of 'orality'/literacy' that are logically independent, though interwoven with each other:



(Fig. 1:)

Figure 2. Orality and literacy; cultural, medial, conceptual.

Thus, the question of 'orality in literate cultures' turns out not to be a unitary problem. 'Literate culture' clearly concerns cultural literacy, but 'orality' may refer either to 'oral culture' or to 'phonic medium' or to 'immediacy'. Hence, we can deduce from Fig. 1 and 2 that there are a number of different problems to be treated here:

- the problem of oral culture (A+B) within literate cultures (A+B+C+D): chapter 2.
- the problem of phonic distance (B) within literate cultures (A+B+C+D): chapter 3.
- the problem of graphic immediacy (C) within literate cultures (A+B+C+D): chapter 4.
- the problem of immediacy as a whole (A+C) in relation to distance as a whole (B+D) within literate cultures (A+B+C+D): chapter 5.

## 2. Oral culture within literate cultures

2.1. In 1. we noted that poetry in primary oral cultures could not be regarded as 'orality' in the same sense as spontaneous conversation. On the basis of Fig. 1, we now become aware of the fact that primary oral cultures are certainly confined to the inferior triangle (i.e. to the phonic medium), but they nevertheless include a considerable range of variation at the level of linguistic conception. On the one hand (sector A), there is everyday spontaneous conversation, on the other hand (sector B), there are discourse traditions like oral poetry, riddles, proverbs, ritual utterances etc., which clearly belong to phonic distance (cf. Chafe 1982, 49-52; Schlieben-Lange 1983, 78-80; Akinnaso 1985, 332 ss.).

As we see, our decision to choose the "medially" neutral terms 'immediacy' and 'distance' to denote linguistic conception proves to be of great advantage. Speaking of 'written' conception for sector B in primary oral cultures would be absurd, whereas we can easily recognize the existence of some kind of communicative distance in them.

Undoubtedly, sector B traditions in a primary oral culture ( $B^{[A+B]}$ ) differ from sector B traditions in a literate culture ( $B^{[A+B+C+D]}$ ). Firstly,  $B^{[A+B]}$  traditions rely entirely on mnemotechnical resources to realize communicative distance, independently of the graphic medium: music, rhythm, assonance, rime; formulas and stereotypes. Secondly, taking the performance of oral epics (by a singer) as a paradigmatic case (cf. Oesterreicher 1997, 207-211), we can state with regard to the level of linguistic conception that it is of a - temperate - distance type, implying, it is true, face-to-face communication (parameter I in 1.2. above), involvement (II.3.), and a certain cooperation with the public (IV.2.), but also public setting (II.1.), contextual dissociation (II.4.), referential distance (III.), monologue (IV.1.), formal rendition of a fixed topic (IV.3.), and reflection in the composition or memorization of (the rules for producing) poems (IV.4.).

Consequently, sector B communication in primary oral cultures ( $B^{[A+B]}$ ) is not simply 'orality', but represents a special kind of phonic distance that could be denominated elaborated orality (where 'orality' refers to the phonic medium and 'elaborated' to communicative distance; cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1985, 29-31; 1994, 588, 593.)

2.2. We may now compare in a highly schematic way primary oral societies to literate societies by characterizing their members and their communicative habits (according to Fig. 1) as follows:

		primary oral societies	literate societies
members		nonliterate	literate
communicative habits	sector A	phonic immediacy	phonic immediacy
	sector B	$B^{[A+B]}$ = phonic distance of the elaborated orality type	$B^{[A+B+C+D]}$ = phonic distance, dependent on the existence of the graphic medium
	sector C	—	graphic immediacy
	sector D	—	graphic distance

But in real cultural history, things are much more complicated, and - once more - we come up against prototypical concepts. As we know, the transition from oral to literate culture is a very slow, non unidirectional process with many intermediate stages, regressions and much historical variation (cf. Graff 1987; Burns 1989; Günther and Ludwig 1994, articles 33., 34., 36.-38., 40., 66.-74.). The Sumerian society and pharaonic Egypt were only "protoliterate" or "oligoliterate" (Goody and Watt 1968, 34). During the Greco-Roman Antiquity, script remained the privilege of a small, though increasing minority. In the Dark Ages "both Western Europe and the Byzantine East reverted to conditions of severely restricted literacy under theocratic governments and caste systems reminiscent of the ancient empires of Mesopotamia and Egypt" (Burns 1989, 193). Levels of literacy rose again from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on, but it still remained the privilege of a minority, even after the invention of print, until the systematic alphabetization campaigns of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What about the members of the society and the communicative habits in the transitional stages between a primary oral culture and a fully fledged literate culture? Are we to suppose that elements of oral culture continue to play a certain role in literate cultures?

2.3. During the millenia of transition from primary oral to literate culture, the societies concerned were made up of different groups of members as regards their participation in (medial and cultural) literacy. In the European context, we have to distinguish not only literates and nonliterates, but at least four groups (cf. Grundmann 1958, 8; Havelock 1976, 2 ss.; Bäuml 1980, 246 s.):

- full literates (*litterati*).
- quasi-literates, participating in literacy without being (fully) acquainted with the graphic medium - a situation typical of the Middle Ages (see below 3.3.).
- semi-literates: especially in periods of expanding alphabetization, there is a growing proportion of persons acquainted (more or less) with the

graphic medium, but with limited experience in communicative distance (see below 4, 1)).

-illiterates (*illitterati*).

At no moment of the long transitional phase to fully fledged literacy is the status of the *illitterati* in such a cultural context to be simply identified with that of the nonliterate members of a primary oral society, because the *illitterati* within a literate culture are in contact with the institutions of literacy to some degree.

The implications of this contact may be judged differently in psychological terms and in terms of cultural history. From a psychological point of view, the results of Luria's investigations into illiterate subjects in Uzbekistan and Kirghizia (1976) urge Ong not to overestimate the influence of literacy on illiterates' thinking: "Writing has to be personally interiorized to affect thinking processes" (1982, 56). From the point of view of cultural history, we have to consider every epoch separately in order to assess the impact of literacy on illiterates. In the Western European Middle Ages - a particularly instructive example (cf. Grundmann 1958; Graff 1987, 34-52) - it was the church that represented the central agency of literacy (juridical and political literacy, too, was incumbent on the clergymen, who, up to the 12<sup>th</sup> century at least, were virtually the only *litterati*). So, the sphere of contact between medieval *litterati* and *illitterati* comprised sermons, prayers, confession forms, oaths etc. - in short the communicative habits of public lecture and recitation that all belonged to sector B<sup>[A+B+C+D]</sup> in Table 1. In other words, specific types of phonic distance managed by the *litterati* constituted a crossroads that led *illitterati* in medieval literate societies to a certain participation in cultural literacy without having command of the graphic medium<sup>6</sup>. Thanks to this form of acculturation, called "ungeschriebene Verschriftlichung" by Ivan Illich (1984, 49), medieval *illitterati* had a not negligible access to communicative and cultural domains inconceivable for nonliterate in a primary oral society.

2.4. Even though *illitterati* in a literate society can participate, at least to some extent, in phonic distance of the B<sup>[A+B+C+D]</sup> type and thereby in cultural literacy, communicative habits and discourse traditions of elaborated orality (B<sup>[A+B]</sup>; see 2.1. above) do not fail from one day to the next. What is particularly interesting in this respect, is the ancient Greek and the medieval heroic epos<sup>7</sup>. If the research of the last few decades in this field is accurate, the form of these texts resembles very much the form of real oral poetry: formular style, stereotypes, redundancies, "mouvance" (Zumthor 1983, 253) etc., according to the requirements of the singer and to the performance in front of an audience.

We are faced, however, with the fact that all these texts have come down to us only in a graphic form. This is not a purely medial problem, because we now seem to be in sector D of Table 1, typical of literate cultures. Actually, the above-mentioned epic poems belong to the oldest written documents of the languages concerned. So they all have undergone certain transformations due to the literate culture that enables people to write them down. At the moment of their "redaction", they already represent declining discourse traditions, that are consciously preserved (and sometimes exploited for ideological purposes), but also partly (not totally!) reshaped at the level of linguistic conception. The French *chanson de geste*, e.g., constitutes "le legs d'une tradition essentielle-ment orale à une société basculant vers l'écrit" (Martin 1988, 159)<sup>8</sup>.

For a long time, there remain certain transitional zones between culturally oral traditions of distance B<sup>[A+B]</sup>, literate phonic distance B<sup>[A+B+C+D]</sup> and literate graphic distance (D). When literacy begins to expand and we get to a higher rate of - sometimes rather modest - alphabetization and instruction, oral traditions still furnish many a matter for the new reading public as well as for the alphabetic audience to whom the texts can be read (cf. the *Bibliothèque bleue* from Troyes in Ancien Régime France; see Martin 1975). But independently of the oral or literate origin of the reading matter, (modestly) alphabetized people often treat it like oral material, reading it again and again and learning it by heart (cf. Schlieben-Lange 1983, 69).

Indeed, (culturally) oral traditions and communicative habits possess a certain tenacity, but become more and more residual in a developed literate culture. Nevertheless the example of the Serbo-Croatian *guslari* (cf. Lord 1960; Foley 1977) shows that traditions of oral improvisation can survive even in an - at least partially - literate society of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Phonic distance within literate cultures

As we saw in 2.3., sector B was the crossroads of *litterati* and *illitterati* within medieval literacy. Generally speaking, the importance of sector B<sup>[A+B+C+D]</sup> in "ofgoliterate" societies is much greater than in fully fledged literate societies. Thus Ong seems to be right in saying that "manuscript culture in the west remained always marginally oral" (1982, 119). However, what is meant by 'manuscript culture' (3.1.) as well as by 'oral' (3.2. and 3.3.) needs to be specified.

3.1. It is well known that in Antiquity and during the Early and most of the High Middle Ages graphic documents used to be read aloud or at least with minimal phonation (cf. for instance Chaytor 1945, 10 ss.; Saenger 1982; Illich

1993); i.e. the medial transfer  $D \Rightarrow B$  (according to Fig. 1) was almost indispensable for the realization of communicative distance. Typically, texts with a culturally highly important (religious, literary or political-ceremonial) content, belonging to the domain of communicative distance, were recited in the presence of an audience ("recitation literacy" according to Havelock 1976:21).

From the medial point of view, *scriptio continua* (that was given up only between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) considerably hampered the visual recognition of linguistic units (words, sentences etc.) within texts, and this had to be compensated for by reading aloud as a kind of acoustic "scanning" (cf. Saenger 1982, 371).

It was not until the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. that silent reading was fostered by the medial achievements of "modern" layout (word separation, punctuation, sentence-initial capitals, chapter headings etc.; cf. Raible 1991b, 6-10; Frank 1994; Günther 1994). So these innovations already culminated within manuscript culture in the age of scholasticism (paralleled by an increase in - handwritten - book production and by the appearance of urban booksellers and lay stationers in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>).

Consequently, we can say that the shift from reading aloud to silent reading as normal realization of communicative distance took place long before the invention of printing. Printing may have further encouraged silent reading, but was not crucial for its development<sup>10</sup>.

3.2. Ascribing certain 'oral' characteristics to manuscript culture (especially in the Middle Ages) would certainly be much too simplistic. The transfer  $D \Rightarrow B$  as a particular mode of being of communicative distance in an (oligo)literate culture has to be distinguished not only from silent reading as the mode of being of communicative distance typical of fully fledged literate societies ( $D^{[A+B+C+D]}$ ), but also from elaborated orality  $B^{[A+B]}$  (see 2.1.) and from the residues of elaborated orality  $B^{[A+B]}$  within a literate society  $A+B+C+D$  (see 2.4.).

Thus, the *Chanson de Roland*, as rooted in elaborated orality ( $B^{[A+B]}$ ), cannot be put on a par with, say, the *roman courtois* or the poetry of the troubadours (cf. Koch 1993a, 53 s.). Despite their reliance on recitation and/or their - partially - phonic diffusion, these latter came in to being in the very lap of literacy ( $A+B+C+D$ ).

Nevertheless it is worth taking into account the importance of the phonic medium for these and other medieval literary discourse traditions. Thanks to Zumthor, we have become aware of "vocality" as an essential feature of medieval literature, based on recitation and performance (cf. Zumthor 1987; Schaefer 1992).

These communicative characteristics inevitably impinged upon the level of conception. Since recitation of medieval literature implied the presence of an audience (cf. I. in 1.3.), some kind of emotional involvement (cf. II.3.), and the impossibility of total reflection (cf. IV.4.), certain concessions to communicative immediacy are not surprising: redundancies, reduced syntactic complexity, apostrophes to the audience, author's interventions, references to the situation of performance etc.<sup>11</sup> This yields a special type of "théâtralité" (Zumthor 1987, 289).

On the other hand, we have to keep in mind that in a literate society this "theatricalism" cannot be altogether spontaneous, but may result to some degrees from conscious design (cf. e.g. Stempel 1993). Furthermore, typically vocal techniques such as rhythm and assonance or rhyme are particularly well suited to support communicative distance. So, the vocality of medieval literature is distance, albeit attenuated distance.

Vocal distance was an indispensable element not only of medieval literature, but also of some nonliterary quasi-ritual discourse traditions fundamental for medieval communication: the preambles of charters and the exordia of official letters, redacted in rhythmic prose (*cursus*) and making appeal to stereotyped moral values, were meant to be declaimed in a solemn setting as a kind of monarchal or ecclesiastical propaganda. In this case, vocality conveyed an extreme degree of communicative distance ("repräsentative Öffentlichkeit" according to Habermas; cf. Koch 1992a, col. 880).

3.3. Note that the importance of sector B (in Fig. 1) for ancient and medieval literacy was not confined to the reception of distance type texts (along the path  $D \Rightarrow B$ ). Sector B was involved on the production side as well: we know that literate people used to dictate their texts, transferring them along the path  $B \Rightarrow D$  (cf. the references cited above in 3.1. as well as Ludwig 1994, 56-60).

The fact that autographs of Rome's ruling class members contained misspellings, proves that they were more familiar with dictation to a secretary than with the direct use of the graphic medium. But even when writing by themselves, they stuck to a kind of self dictation in a low voice, analogous to minimal phonation on the reception side (cf. Saenger 1982, 371 s.).

In the Middle Ages, besides the groups of medieval *litterati* and *illitterati*, there was a group of quasi-literates (see 2.3. above), who were not (fully) acquainted with the graphic medium, but had access to full literacy including text production in the realm of distance, whether in sector B or via  $B \Rightarrow D$  (which is not the case with the *illitterati*). Charlemagne, for example, who knew Latin and Greek, was able to make speeches, probably knew how to read, but never really learnt to write.

But even within the group of medieval *litterati*, we find a systematic distinction between the *dictator*, who formulated the text, and the *scriba* (or *amanuensis*), who wrote it down. Interestingly, it is the *dictator* that should be regarded as the exponent of medieval literacy. In a metonymical sense, *dictare* is 'compose a distance type text (called *dictamen*)', which is restricted either to poetry<sup>12</sup> or - more typically - to prose, especially to legal documents and letters (as for the *ars dictandi*; see below).

Now a somewhat paradoxical problem arises: although medieval distance type texts were typically produced by dictation, this medial practice did not necessarily fit to all the requirements of maximal distance according to parameters I.-IV. in 1.3.: without (direct) access to the graphic medium one has to cope with certain spontaneity effects (IV.4.), and it is much more difficult to plan one's text coherently and concisely (a fact those of us who dictate letters are still aware of nowadays). There were two possible strategies for dealing with this problem.

On the one hand, people could make concessions at the level of conception, producing texts that did not avoid all features of immediacy, such as redundancies, reduced syntactic complexity etc. (cf. Mair 1982) - a production strategy that was partly in harmony with features of typically medieval vocal reception (see 3.2. above).

On the other hand, the *dictator* of very formal, official texts needed aids for formulation in order to assure maximal communicative distance. That is why *ars dictandi*, as a central branch of medieval rhetoric (12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century), offered to the user of its manuals rules for standardized text patterns and collections of model letters or documents and official forms (cf. Murphy 1974, 194-268; Camargo 1991).

3.4. At first glance, the situation of a *dictator* dictating his text (B  $\Rightarrow$  D) and that of an *orator* formulating his speech (B) seem to be quite different. After all, the *orator* acts in front of an audience, whereas the *dictator* is separated in space and time from his recipients (cf. parameter I. in 1.2.). In the last analysis, however, the two situations have many features in common: public setting (II.1.); (presupposed) unfamiliarity with the recipients (II.2.); contextual dissociation of the text (II.4.); referential distance (III.); elocutional distance (IV.1.-4.).

So the *dictator* as well as the *orator* had to face a considerable degree of communicative distance within the phonic medium (B),<sup>13</sup> and, consequently, both tended to rely on an *ars* providing them with - more or less - standardized text structures, models, tropes, *topoi* etc. Not very surprisingly, then, we observe osmotic processes between these and other communicative activities in-

volving sector B: when justifying the canonical parts of medieval letters, masters of the above-mentioned *ars dictandi* were inspired - rightly or wrongly - by the *partes orationes* pattern of classical rhetoric; vice versa, 13<sup>th</sup> century *ars arengandi*, providing models of political speeches in Italian *comuni*, took up elements of *ars dictandi*, but also of *ars predicandi*, the art of preaching (cf. Koch 1992b, col. 1035-1038).

#### 4. Graphic immediacy within literate cultures

We should note the fact that writing was not "invented" specially for distance type texts (sector D in Fig. 1). The early graphic records in Babylonia, that paved the way for writing, were made up of book-keeping lists accessible only to a small group of users and largely embedded in economic activities and non-verbal contexts. In short: they were characterized by central - though certainly not all - elements of communicative immediacy (in particular II.1., 2., and 4. in 1.2.; cf. Koch 1997, 51-54). In other words: from the outset of writing, the graphic medium and elements of communicative immediacy were not incompatible.

Admittedly, the graphic medium implies a reification of the written text that later fostered a development of communicative distance unknown in primary orality, producing an apparently "natural" affinity between the graphic medium and distance (cf. Jechle 1992; Ehlich 1994; Koch 1997, 62-64).

But even though, from then on, it was the combination of the graphic medium with immediacy (sector C in Fig. 1) that seemed to require justification, sector C has never, since the beginnings of literacy, been something out of the ordinary. We are able to identify recurrent motives that continually induce literates to realize - at least partial - immediacy in the graphic medium: C<sup>[A+B+C+D]</sup>. Oesterreicher proposes a typology of communicative constellations in which linguistic elements of immediacy occur in the graphic medium (cf. Oesterreicher 1995 and 1997, 200-206; see also Koch 1993b, 235-237, and the references cited there):

1) *Writing by semi-literate persons*. Semi-literates (see above 2.3.) are more or less acquainted with the graphic medium (or at least in a position to dictate their texts), but due to their limited experience in the realm of communicative distance, they cannot help using linguistic elements typical of immediacy and inappropriate to the target discourse tradition (or producing hypercorrections). Examples of such writing include common people's inscriptions, diaries, autobiographies, accounts of journeys, and private letters, merchants' letters, spell

tablets etc. (cf. e.g. Bruni 1984, 187-236, 486-517; Gibelli 1993; Oesterreicher 1994).

2) *Writing by bilingual persons in a triglossic situation.* In certain speech communities, a dominant language  $L_1$ , comprising a 'high' variety for distance and a 'low' variety for immediacy, coexists with the 'low' (immediacy) variety of a dominated language  $L_2$ . In this situation, semi-literate persons may have command of 'low'  $L_1$  and 'low'  $L_2$ , but not of 'high'  $L_1$  and write their texts in a language close to 'low'  $L_2$  (possibly with interferences from 'low'  $L_1$ ). We find examples of this type - with  $L_1$  = Greek and  $L_2$  = Latin - in the private letters of Roman soldiers in Egypt (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.).

3) *Relaxed writing.* Even literate writers do not strive for communicative distance, when addressing close friends in a private setting and with emotional involvement and/or when writing in a hurry (cf. II.1.-3. and IV.4. in 1.2.), e.g. in very private letters or personal notes and records.

4) *(Subsequent) records of spoken utterances.* In everyday life, exact recording of spontaneous spoken utterances is quite unusual (and literal recording is, strictly speaking, unrealizable before the invention of the tape recorder). Nevertheless, in certain juridical contexts (actions for defamation) it has always been indispensable to take down the - putative - wording of insults and injuries, even in ancient times (cf. Koch 1993a, 46 and n. 21). What is much rarer than this is a merely documentary, quasi-scientific motivation for recordings of spontaneous spoken utterances (in this respect the meticulous records of the French dauphin's spontaneous spoken utterances in the *Journal d'Héroard*, 1601-28 (cf. Ernst 1985), constitute an extraordinary document).

5) *Writing adjusted to lower competence of readers.* When addressing people that are less familiar with communicative distance (like children, pupils, even certain adults), highly literate authors feel compelled to produce texts characterized by features of immediacy in order to facilitate comprehension.

6) *Writing subjected to 'simple' discourse traditions.* In the case of 5), adjustment to communicative immediacy was an individual decision of the author. In other cases, this kind of adjustment is an inherent characteristic of a given discourse tradition, especially in popularizing texts on religious subjects (cf. the *sermo piscatorius* of Roman Christian authors) or in practical disciplines (medicine, architecture, agriculture, cookery etc.).

7) *Writing according to plain style rhetoric.* Even when addressing highly literate people, authors of certain literary genres adhere to the old rhetoric and poetic tradition of *stilus humilis/planus*, adopting a "simple", "natural" manner of writing, that is not aimed at imitating true communicative immediacy proper (see 8)), but at avoiding any excess of communicative distance (as for example in manneristic styles).

8) *Mimesis of immediacy or simulated orality.* In several literary or quasi-literary discourse traditions, the simulation of communicative immediacy for mimetic-realistic or satiric purposes is widespread: in stage plays (especially in comedies), in realistic novels, in parodies, in comic strips (back to their earliest precursors in inscriptions), in "speaking" inscriptions, in advertising etc.

With respect to spontaneous phonic immediacy (sector A), these text types provide only indirect and selective evidence, because they are characterized by inexactness and/or by concessions to communicative distance, to the prescriptive norm (see below 5.1. and 5.4.), to the standard of the discourse tradition concerned etc. This holds even for those text types that seem to have a particularly high "fidelity": note that subsequent records of spontaneous speech (4) cannot be more accurate than human memory and that literary "orality" (8) is always simulated and filtered through the artistic will of the author (cf. also Koch 1993b, 237).

It is only with the invention of tape and video recordings that we are able to store genuine phonic immediacy and to transfer it exactly into the graphic medium (sector C). But this is not a usual communicative practice. It is limited to the secret services and - at a metalinguistic level - to conversational analysts (see below 5.6.).

## 5. Immediacy in relation to distance within literate cultures

5.1. The existence of the graphic medium creates a fundamental asymmetry in the communicative "space" of a given speech community. Literacy splits the totality of utterances into two classes: on the one hand genuine phonic immediacy (sector A) and on the other hand everything that is organized in a certain sense around graphic distance:

-sector D, i.e. graphic distance itself.

-sector B: phonic distance is a central part of cultural literacy, in certain historical situations an even more prototypical form of communicative distance, as we saw in 3.2.-3.4. In any case, phonic distance in a literate society ( $B^{[A+B+C+D]}$ ) relies heavily on the possibility of developing and recording communicative distance in the graphic medium (sector D).

-(parts of) sector C: even though graphic immediacy in the form of constellations 4) - 8) seems to be a less prototypical part of "literacy" due to its particularities at the level of conception, it is widely diffused, as we saw in 4., and, thanks to its graphic realization, constitutes an integral part of cultural literacy from the outset.



The division of the literate communicative "space" into A vs. D(+B+C) has important consequences for language varieties and language history (5.2.-5.4.), linguistic consciousness (5.5.), and linguistic investigation (5.6.).

5.2. It would be wrong to think that oral societies have no special language norms for communicative distance: even in primary orality we meet with archaic varieties reserved for poetic or ritual purposes and alien to everyday communication, as e.g. Homeric epic language (cf. Browning 1982, 49; Ong 1982, 23, 47; Zumthor 1983, 137 ss.; Akinnaso 1985, 350 s.).

But it is not until the beginning of literacy that the reification achieved by the graphic medium enables literate people to establish what we might call a prescriptive norm, i.e. a language variety designed to assure an ideal stability required by maximal - graphic and phonic - distance (cf. Koch 1988, 331 s., 340 s.; Koch and Oesterreicher 1990, 16). By overruling diatopical variation, the prescriptive norm lends itself to communication across a larger speech community (spatial distance: I. in 1.2.). By overruling diastratical and diaphasical (low) variation, the prescriptive norm enhances the prestige of a speaker/writer in public communication between strangers (social distance: II.1. and II.2. in 1.2.). By overruling diachronic variation and - ideally - language change, the prescriptive norm lends itself to communication not only with contemporaries, but also with posterity (temporal distance: I. in 1.2.).

The prescriptive power of a distance norm in literacy may be implicitly - but not unconsciously - based on exemplary (literary, religious etc.) texts. Sooner or later, however, the prescriptive norm will be supported by explicit codification (grammars, dictionaries, antibarbari etc.). The higher the degree of literacy is, the more urgent is the need for codification. The invention of printing combined an additional reification of language in the graphic medium with the printers' and publishers' economical interests and thus simultaneously encouraged the expansion of literacy and the standardization of European vernaculars, which definitively codified their prescriptive distance norms from the Renaissance on: upper-class London dialect for English; Parisian *bon usage* of the 17<sup>th</sup> century court for French; Meißen chancery language for German; 14<sup>th</sup> century literary Florentine for Italian; etc.<sup>14</sup>

5.3. Now, a feature that characterizes literate speech communities are the permanent conflicts and interactions between the prescriptive distance norm on the one hand and the varieties reigning in the realm of immediacy on the other (dialects at the diatopical level, popular speech at the diastratical level, low registers at the diaphasical level etc.).

Establishing a prescriptive norm is a paradoxical kind of language change, because it is aimed at overriding language variation and language change (see above 5.2.). It follows from this that, once a prescriptive norm has been established in a literate speech community, a fundamental tension arises between the ideal stability of the prescriptive norm, applying to the whole realm of communicative distance (sectors B+D), and the kind of unplanned language change that permanently takes place in the immediacy varieties (sectors A and even C)<sup>15</sup>.

There are two fundamental reactions to such norm conflicts to be observed in the history of all great cultural languages: puristic defence and re-standardization.

Purists tend to cut off the realm of distance from all influences of immediacy varieties. This results in a total petrification of the prescriptive norm, a process that can be clearly seen in the history of French, where the strict adherence to the 17<sup>th</sup> century prescriptive norm produced a real bipolarity, setting *français écrit* (for distance) against *français parlé* (for immediacy) as two very divergent varieties (cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1990, 140 s., 150-165).

In the long run, such a petrification of the prescriptive norm leads to a situation of diglossia, as defined by Ferguson (1959): in a diglossic speech community, there are two extremely divergent varieties, a 'high' variety (H) for distance and a 'low' variety (L) for immediacy (without any functional overlapping). Famous examples of this type of diglossia are: the Latin-Romance world of the Middle Ages (H = Latin; L = Romance vernaculars), the Arabic world (H = Classical Arabic; L = regional Arabic dialects), Swiss German (H = *Hochdeutsch*; L = *Schwyzerdütsch*); Modern Greek (H = *καθαρεύουσα*; L = *δημοτική*; but see below)<sup>16</sup> etc.

A quite opposite reaction to norm conflicts between distance and immediacy consists in a process of re-standardization, in which the prescriptive norm assimilates elements of immediacy varieties. In the history of Spanish, for instance, we observe a sort of continuous re-standardization; more drastic processes of re-standardization can be observed between Old and Middle/Modern French and - even more radically - between Old and Middle English (cf. Koch 1993b, 238). Diglossic situations are likely to end up, sooner or later, in a process of re-standardization: cf. the emergence, since 1974, of a Standard Modern Greek on the basis of *δημοτική*, but absorbing *καθαρεύουσα* elements, too (cf. Browning 1982, 57 s.).

Re-standardization is a dynamic typical of literate speech communities (and fostered by social upheavals). Firstly, elements of immediacy varieties may invade the prescriptive norm via the graphic medium, because there are transitional zones between graphic immediacy (sector C) and distance (sector D),

including the activities of semi-literates (see above 4, 1) and 2)), certain types of literature (see 4, 7) and 8)) and - especially nowadays - journalism. Secondly, elements of immediacy varieties may invade the prescriptive norm via the phonic medium, because there are transitional zones between phonic immediacy (sector A) and phonic distance (sector B), which in turn is closely related to graphic distance (sector D).

This latter path of innovation is open to even more radical changes like language replacement in the realm of distance. It is no coincidence that the earliest vernacular texts, in which German and Romance languages began to replace Latin, were largely designed for a "vocal" realization in sector B, the crossroads of medieval *litterati* and *illitterati* (see 2.3. and 3.2.): oaths, forms of confession, prayers, benedictions and incantations, sermons, religious poetry, religious theatre (cf. Feldbusch 1985, 169-200; Koch 1993a, 49-54).

5.4. Note that the tensions and dynamics characterizing literate speech communities are not unidirectional. Besides the effects of immediacy varieties on the prescriptive distance norm (5.3.) we have to consider effects in the opposite direction.

We already saw in 4. that under normal conditions - disregarding modern transcriptions - graphic immediacy (sector C) never is perfect, extreme immediacy. Among other things, it is through the graphic medium that prescriptive norm has a partial, often clandestine effect upon texts of the types 4, 1) - 8). But even phonic immediacy (sector A) does not always remain immune to influences of the prescriptive norm.

Thanks to the fundamental social, economic or cultural changes of the last two centuries (industrialization, urbanization, migration, administrative centralization, military service, compulsory education, boom of the press etc.) literacy pervaded many speech communities, so that a lot of newly alphabetized illiterate people came into contact with graphic distance (sector D). For the most part, this was only passive contact (by reading), but many people even got used to writing by themselves (often producing, however, texts of type 4, 1) in sector C). Be this as it may, a large proportion of the speech community acquired an at least passive competence of the prescriptive norm.

We may add to this the more recent impact of the modern audiovisual mass media (radio, cinema, television). Their national (sometimes international) diffusion requires a unified language norm, and the prescriptive norm presents itself quite naturally, all the more so since much, though not all audiovisual media communication pertains to phonic distance (sector B: e.g. news, reports, documentaries, talks). Furthermore elements of the prescriptive norm can easily invade even the realm of immediacy, because especially in the audiovisual me-

dia there are transitional zones between sectors B (distance) and A (immediacy): for example, interviews with politicians (cf. 1.), discussions etc.

All in all, contact with graphic distance (sector D) and the path B → A within the audiovisual media led to an infiltration of prescriptive norm elements into phonic immediacy (sector A) and produced novel varieties of immediacy in the speech communities concerned:

- regional dialects: *Modified Standard, français régional, regionale Umgangssprache, italiano regionale, español regional, kyo-otuu-go* (Japanese) etc.
- nationwide popular sociolects: *italiano popolare, español popular* etc.
- nationwide low registers: *colloquial English, français familier/populaire, Umgangssprache, italiano familiare, español coloquial* etc.
- nationwide 'spoken' varieties: *spoken English, français parlé, gesprochenes Deutsch, italiano parlato, español hablado* etc.

By replacing the old local dialects above all, these novel varieties involve a complete reorganization of the realm of immediacy typical of modern literate societies (cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1990, 138-141, 172-176, 206-208; 1994, 600.). In some speech communities this reorganization is already going to extinguish local dialects (centre of Northern France, Northern Germany) and even autonomous vernacular languages (think of the precarious situation of Irish or Occitanian, threatened by English or French even in the realm of immediacy). Once a vernacular language is extinct, we can speak of language replacement in the realm of immediacy (cf. the case of Manx in the English speech community, of Vegliotic in the Serbo-Croatian speech community etc.).

5.5. Literacy restructures consciousness (Ong 1982, 78 ss.) and, thus, the split A vs. D(+B+C), described in 5.1., restructures linguistic consciousness. Literate people usually identify language with the graphic manifestation of language (C+D), with communicative distance (B+D), or, more commonly, with the prototypical combination of both (D). Consequently, literate people are usually taken in by two typical fallacies:

At the level of the medium, literate people speak of the "pronunciation" of a word, overlooking the fact that a *signifiant* is primarily a phonic reality and only secondarily a graphic representation.

At the level of conception, linguistic varieties and even languages pertaining exclusively to the realm of communicative immediacy (dialects, popular speech, vernacular languages etc.) are considered deformations of the "only", "correct" variety or language reserved for communicative distance (standard language or vehicular language), even though this is absolutely false on phylogenetic, ontogenetic, pragmatic, and/or historical grounds. From a historical

point of view, this fallacy proves to be a corollary to the development of a prescriptive norm in literate societies (see above 5.2.).

The attitude resulting from these two fallacies can be denominated **scriptism**.

5.6. Inasmuch as literacy restructures linguistic consciousness and produces scriptism, it also impinges upon the conditions of **linguistic investigation** - or rather creates them. The reification achieved by the graphic medium is the prerequisite of systematic reflection on language, and scriptism is its legacy<sup>17</sup>: from the beginnings, reflection on language essentially has been reflection on language in the graphic medium and/or on communicative distance. It is not until about 1800 that linguistics is established as a real empirical and historical science, which respects language in its graphic and its phonic realization and in all its varieties, including distance and immediacy.

But since authentic phonic immediacy (sector A) is ephemeral, the investigator is faced with considerable technical problems. So the traditional dialectologist, for instance, had to content himself with questionnaires, which potentially reduce spontaneity and authenticity, or with dialect texts in the graphic medium, that, at best, belong to text types 4, 1), 2), 4), or 8) in sector C.

Things improved with the availability of tape and video recordings that could serve as a basis for transcriptions. Today's dialectologists, sociolinguists, and conversational analysts have a more direct access to sector A in its authentic manifestations via exact transfer to the graphic medium (A → C), but we should not cherish the illusion that we succeed in capturing *every* linguistic and nonlinguistic element of a spontaneous conversation - even by means of video recordings and their subsequent transcription.

At any rate, the foregoing considerations hold only for the investigation of modern contemporary immediacy. In case we want to study authentic phonic immediacy of the past, we have to cope with the fundamental division A vs. D(+B+C), produced by literacy (see above 5.1.); in other words: a division between those texts that (can) come down to posterity through a written record and those that do not.

As we saw in 3.2.-3.4., on the side of communicative distance the phonic sector B and the graphic sector D often are so closely interwoven with each other that many texts of sector B are reflected in written documents of sector D. In contrast, spontaneous phonic immediacy belonging to sector A generally leaves no direct traces in sector C. The text types described in 4, 1) - 8). provide only indirect, distorted evidence of a past state of affairs in sector A (see above 4.)

In a methodological perspective, this is a very important point for linguistics. Authentic phonic immediacy of the past is lost for ever and therefore inaccessi-

ble to direct scientific observation (whereas our sound and video recordings will constitute a most interesting material for future researchers). The lack of authentic material compels present-day linguists to get their informations about sector A in the past - with all reservations - from indirect documents:

-sector C texts of the types 4, 1) -8).

-metalinguistic sources:

- linguistic material stigmatized by purist grammarians or lexicographers, a profession that is accustomed to condemning everything close to immediacy (elements marked diatopically, low on the diastratical or diaphasical scale, belonging to the 'low' variety in diglossia etc.). Take the well-known example of the Latin *Appendix Probi* (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.).
- glossaries and phrase books from the past, inasmuch as they are destined for private use (II.1. in 1.2.; e.g. certain glossaries as the *Glossario di Monza*, 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) or contain dialogical parts (IV.1.; e.g. the French *Manières de langage* of the Middle Ages and the early Modern Times).

Whenever linguists study varieties of immediacy in the past, they inevitably resort to the above types of sources: investigating, for example, vulgar (i.e. spoken) Latin or the history of spoken French and Italian (cf. e.g. Ernst 1980; Radtke 1984; Koch and Oesterreicher 1990, 137, 173; Koch 1993b, 235 s.; 1995; Oesterreicher 1994; 1995).

## 6. Conclusion

The heading 'orality in literate cultures' does not refer to a unitary question, but to a ramified complex of problems. In the light of our threefold distinction between cultural orality/literacy, medium (phonic/graphic), and conception (communicative immediacy/distance), we have been obliged to discuss quite different aspects of "literacy":

- In (partially) literate cultures, illiterate members and residual oral traditions coexist with literate members and literate traditions, and the former are naturally in contact with the latter (chapter 2.).
- Even in (cultural) literacy, the phonic medium can play an important role in the realm of communicative distance, as for example in reading aloud, dictation, and especially medieval "vocality" (chapter 3.).

- An integral part of (cultural) literacy is made up of certain types of texts in which - relative - communicative immediacy appears in a graphic format (chapter 4.).
- Cultural literacy splits the communicative space into texts belonging to the graphic medium and/or communicative distance on the one hand and texts belonging neither to the graphic medium nor to communicative distance on the other. This split, and the resulting tensions and interactions between distance and (phonic) immediacy, decisively affect language varieties and their history, linguistic consciousness and linguistic investigation (chapter 5.)

To sum up: cultural literacy is characterized by multiple interactions between oral and literate cultural traditions, between the phonic and the graphic medium, and between communicative immediacy and distance.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> As regards the necessary distinction that has to be drawn between these two types of prototypical concepts, cf. Koch 1996, 224-226.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Söll 1974, 11-19 (<sup>3</sup>1985, 17-25); see also: Koch and Oesterreicher 1985, 17-19; 1990, 5 s.; 1994, 587 s.; Raible 1994, 4-6.

<sup>3</sup> For the aspect of the medium cf. several contributions to Coulmas and Ehlich 1983 and to Pontecorvo and Blanche-Benveniste 1993; numerous contributions to Günther and Ludwig 1994; see also Glück 1987; Günther 1988; Raible 1991a; Olson 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1985, 19-23; 1990, 6-12; 1994, 587 s. -Frith's discussion in Pontecorvo and Blanche-Benveniste 1993, 246-248, suggests that autistic individuals seem to be impaired in communicative immediacy, whereas some of them can achieve high standards in communicative distance.

<sup>5</sup> As for the fundamental step from primary oral culture to literate culture, cf. several important publications by Goody (e.g. Goody and Watt 1968) and by Havelock (especially 1976); cf. also Ong 1982; Schlieben-Lange 1983, 52-64; Finnegan 1988. But note the pleas against the simplifacative "Grand Dichotomy", against the "Great Divide", and against the "threshold" thesis: Graff 1987, 2-14, 381-390; Hornberger 1994 (see also below 2.2./3.).

<sup>6</sup> For the traces of this contact to be found in the vocabulary of Romance languages, cf. Koch 1993b, 231 s.

<sup>7</sup> Think of the *Iliad*, OE. *Beowulf*, OIr. *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, OHG. *Hildebrandslied*, OIcel. *Edda*; OF. *Chanson de Roland*; OSp. *Cantar de Mio Cid* (cf. Lord 1960; Zumthor 1983; Foley 1990; Parry 1971; Kullmann 1984; Schaefer 1992; Tristram 1988; Wolf 1991; Kellogg 1991; Rychner 1955; Duggan 1973; Montgomery 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Koch 1993a, 53; Oesterreicher 1997, 213 s. -Cf. also the - partially - analogous case of bodies of customary law on the Iberian Peninsula: Koch 1993a, 59 s.; 1993b, 232.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Chaytor 1945, 135-137; Febvre and Martin 1971, 17-37; Eisenstein 1979, 12, 22. For the general expansion of literacy, especially in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> centuries, cf. Graff 1987, 53-74; Koch 1993b, 232; Raible 1994, 7 s.

<sup>10</sup> This insight contradicts the thesis of several authors as, e.g., Chaytor 1945, 5-21; McLuhan 1962; Eisenstein 1979, 10 s., 698; cf. the critical remarks in Saenger 1982, 367-369; Raible 1994, 7 s.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. for instance Chaytor 1945, 10-21, 52 s., 135-147; Ong 1982, 26, 41, 61; as for references to the situation of performance, cf. also the discussion in Scholz 1980, 35-103, and Green 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, II, vi, 4: *dictatores illustres* 'famous poets, i.e. troubadours'; cf. also Germ. *dichten* 'to write poetry' < Lat. *dictare*; see Ernout 1951.

<sup>13</sup> Note that rhetoric is not simply "speaking", but the art of planned distance type communication in the phonic medium (cf. Ong 1982, 9 s., 108-111, 116; Koch and Oesterreicher 1994, 593).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Ong 1982, 106 s.; Mattheier 1988; Koch/Oesterreicher 1990, 134-136, 169-172, 201-204; 1994, 598 s. - For the role of printing in cultural, economic and linguistic history cf. Eisenstein 1979; Schlieben-Lange 1983, 49 s., 89; Giesecke 1991.

<sup>15</sup> For the conservatism of written language cf. Chafe 1985, 113-116. Certainly, 'innovative' vs. 'conservative' as overall qualifications for orality and literacy deserve a more detailed discussion: cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 1996, 64-68.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ferguson 1959; Browning 1982, 52-56; Bauer 1996; Koch/Oesterreicher 1990, 129 s., 133, 166, 199; 1994, 596, 599 s.; Coulmas 1994, 739-743 (note that Coulmas's larger concept of 'diglossia' includes cases of different languages functioning as H and L).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Harris 1980, 6; Koch 1988, 342-348; Koch and Oesterreicher 1990, 18 ss.; Olson 1991, 258 ss.; Ehlich 1994, 20, 29. -Note that we are speaking here about systematic reflection on language and not about metalinguistic consciousness in general, that certainly exists even in primary oral societies (cf. Finnegan 1988, 45-58; Feldman 1991). For the exceptional case of systematic reflection on language in the primary oral culture of Ancient India cf. Falk 1990, 116-118.