New speaker paradigm and historical sociolinguistics: Dynamics between Florentines and learners in early modern Italy*

Abstract: This paper aims to assess whether the emerging research paradigm of the new speaker may be useful in the study of language history. This question is tackled by exploring the dynamics which arose between Florentines and non-Florentine learners in sixteenth-century Italy. At the time, notwithstanding the peninsula's linguistic fragmentation, the written language came to be progressively standardised around an archaic variety of Florentine (the fourteenth-century vernacular used by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio). Florentines, initially, had no active role in this process and literary Florentine was living an autonomous life, becoming, at the written level, a "learner" variety progressively influenced by its new users. If at first Florentines themselves saw the emerging exogenous written standard in negative terms, they were not immune to its influence – an influence which grew stronger as the century progressed. The dynamics which arose between Florentines and learners concerning linguistic ownership appear similar to the ones which exist between "traditional" linguistic minorities and new speakers in some present-day revitalisation contexts. It is argued that the "new speaker" lens, mainly employed in the field of endangered languages, is valuable for capturing the dynamics which emerge between different groups during historical processes of language standardisation.

Keywords: new speaker paradigm, standardisation, prestige, linguistic ideology, Florentine, Italian.

1 Introduction

The new speaker paradigm, developed and employed within the field of minority languages with the aim of recognising learners as legitimate users of the language as well as agents of linguistic change, has been the object of much attention in recent years. Some of the functions and aims of the new speaker paradigm anchor it firmly to its original context of elaboration. However, there have been attempts to apply this lens beyond the

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field of endangered languages, as some of its implications appear relevant in a range of different contexts. This paper applies this paradigm to studies of historical sociolinguistics and, in particular, to the processes of standardisation that took place in sixteenth-century Italy. In the initial stages of the codification of literary Florentine, non-Tuscan "learners" played a major role and entered into complex dynamics with Tuscans and, in particular, Florentines. The new speaker paradigm serves to shed light on these dynamics.

Section 2 introduces the notion of "new speakerness" and discusses the applicability of this paradigm diachronically. Section 3 provides some background information on language standardisation in early modern Italy, and on the complex dynamics which arose between Florentines and non-Florentines in this context. In Section 4, the new speaker lens is applied to the dynamics that came into play between these different groups of language users, showing how the criteria for "new speakerness" are met in this context. Section 5 explores the way in which a new speaker lens sheds light on a range of issues that are relevant in historical accounts of language standardisation.

2 The new speaker and endangered languages

The label "new speaker" designates a social actor who claims ownership of a language that is not typically perceived as belonging to them and that has usually been learned through formal education. The term has been coined within the field of minority languages with the aim of recognising learners as legitimate users of the language. New speakers are "L2 learners", but generally present some peculiar characteristics that set them apart from other speaker profiles. The number of new speakers can be very large compared to that making up "native" communities. In social terms, new speakers are usually well-educated and stem from middle-class urban families. By positioning themselves as "experts", they unsettle the ideas of authenticity and national belonging tied to a concept of language that is typical of the modern period (O'Rourke and Pujolar in press). For these reasons, tensions may develop between new speakers and "native" speakers over issues of linguistic ownership. The new speaker paradigm sheds light on the complex dynamics that arise between "traditional" speakers and learners in those contexts where learners constitute a significant group and, at times, become agents of linguistic change themselves.

The idea of "new speakerness" first appeared in the literature on language revitalisation in the 1980s, where it was employed as both an academic and folk concept to describe learners of Basque (the term used in this case being *euskaldunberri*), Galician (*neofalante*) and Breton (*neo-brétonnant*) (O'Rourke et al. 2015). However, in the English-language literature the term "new speaker", first used by Robert (2009) to describe second-language speakers of Welsh, was only sanctioned as a general category of speakers (regardless of the language in question) in 2011, in a chapter by Grinevald and Bert in the *Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*. "Neo-speakers" are here defined as "learners of endangered languages in the context of revitalization programmes and activities" (Grinevald and Bert 2011: 52). They feature among the seven categories of speakers of endangered languages identified on the basis of the existing literature.[1]

In 2013, the "New Speakers Network" was established as a COST action,[2] with the aim of bringing together scholars working on the "new speaker" phenomenon within a European context. Consequently, many works concerning the theoretical and sociolinguistic underpinnings of "new speakerness" have been published.[3] The theme chosen for the 11th International Symposium on Bilingualism held at the University of Limerick in 2017, "bilingualism, multilingualism and the new speaker", testifies to the attention this paradigm has received in recent years.

In discussions of the functions and aims of the new speaker paradigm, a few points stand out which appear to anchor this notion and its relevance specifically to its original field of elaboration, i.e. the field of minority languages. Firstly, the "new speaker" is a speaker profile which is situated in a very precise historical and political context that has to do with globalisation and responses to globalisation. In today's globalised society, the emergence of these speakers as educated individuals who generally choose to adopt the endangered language as an act of identity, but remain by definition bilingual or multilingual, would challenge the idea of languages as bounded entities inscribed in

[1] The other six categories being: fluent speaker, semi-speaker, terminal speaker, rememberer, ghost speaker and last speaker. Another early discussion of this term is given in O'Rourke and Ramallo 2011.

[2] COST is a European framework fostering transnational cooperation among researchers and scholars across Europe, supporting networking of nationally funded research activities (http://www.cost.eu/). It complements the activities of the EU Framework Programmes.

[3] A complete list of publications is provided on the New Speakers Network's website: http://www.nspk.org.uk/about/

communities and territories, which is typical of the modern period (O'Rourke and Pujolar in press). The phenomenon has thus been said to contradict "the ways in which both majorities and minorities have historically used language to legitimize claims to nationhood and cultural authenticity" (O' Rourke et al. 2015: 2).

Secondly, the paradigm allows for a reflexive discourse in the field of minority languages, bringing into question the abstract notion of "nativeness" within linguistics and, in particular, highlighting a paradox that this notion has created within the field of minority languages: the consideration of the language of "native" or heritage communities as somehow more authentic, and the consequent neglect of the varieties and practices of learners and of their relevance in language revitalisation policies. The employment of the term "new speaker" is itself ideological in that it aims to empower the category it designates, and constitutes a reaction against older labels that have been used to describe speakers of endangered languages as somehow defective or indeed pathological (O'Rourke et al. 2015). It follows that this paradigm has very practical implications for the minority languages field, where it can be valuable in elaborating revitalisation policies in which the new speaker is meant to play an active role.

However, an examination of the most recent definitions of "new speaker" reveals that emphasis is moving progressively away from the field of minority languages to encompass other areas of research on multilingualism. Whereas many previous definitions (e.g. O'Rourke and Ramallo 2011; Jaffe 2015; O'Rourke et al. 2015) focused on the idea of new speakers as adults who achieve a certain level of competence in an endangered language through a formal, educational setting (rather than through intergenerational transmission), no mention of minority languages is made in the description of the new speaker paradigm given on the webpage of the 2017 International Symposium on Bilingualism (https://isb11.com/call-for-papers/), which is simply that of "an emerging research paradigm that considers all aspects of the linguistic and sociolinguistic competences and practices of bilingual and multilingual speakers", seeking in particular to "focus on the speaker's experiences and trajectories, including their reception by other speakers and communities of speech or practice". In the recent volume *New Speakers of Minority Languages: Linguistic Ideologies and Practices*, the editors are careful to emphasise that the "new speaker" profile is not necessarily specific to minority language contexts. Members of this category are here described as "social

actors who use and claim ownership of a language that is not, for whatever reason, typically perceived as belonging to them, or to 'people like them'" (Ó Murchadha et al.: 4).

Furthermore, this emerging paradigm is now being employed synchronically beyond the field of endangered languages. In recent years it has been applied to foci as diverse as immigrant communities (Duchêne et al. 2013; Márquez-Reiter and Martin Rojo 2014; Thissen 2015; Caglitutuncigil Martínez 2015; Sorgen 2015), multilingual families (Soler and Zabrodskaja 2017), transnational workers (Del Percio 2015; Kraft 2016), as well as the field of World Englishes (O'Rourke and Pujolar in press). In 2015, a special issue focusing on "new speakers and processes of new speakerness across time and space" was published with the aim of bringing together scholars from different areas in order to explore this phenomenon from a wider theoretical perspective (O'Rourke and Pujolar 2015). Contrary to what the title of the issue might suggest, however, the focus of these studies remained largely confined to present-day linguistic practices. Quite often, there seems to be an underlying assumption that this lens is only applicable to dynamics arising in a contemporary, global society (O'Rourke and Pujolar 2015; Ó Murchadha and Ó hIfearnáin 2018), and that the paradigm therefore cannot be historicised easily. However, Section 3 will discuss a moment in history in which a numerous group of "non-native" learners did position themselves as "experts" of a linguistic variety, contributing to its codification and promotion, and thus unsettling the notion of language as inherently bound to a specific territory.

In fact, there are suggestions in the literature that a diachronic application of this paradigm is desirable: in discussing the role played by particular individuals in historical movements of language revival, for example, O'Rourke and Pujolar (2013: 50) acknowledge that "there is an unwritten history of the role of 'learners' or 'new speakers' in such processes", and make reference to figures such as Sabino Arana (1865–1903) for the case of Basque, Douglas Hyde (1860–1949) for Irish, Rosalìa de Castro (1837–1885) for Galician, and Robèrt Lafont (1923–2009) for Occitan.

The new speaker lens has up to now been employed to shed light on a number of issues which are also relevant in historical accounts of language standardisation:

1. Questions of linguistic authority and legitimacy and subsequent struggles that arise between different groups (the "new" and the "traditional" communities);
2. the non-necessary equivalence between the prestige target of new learners and the "traditional" variety employed by local native communities (Ó hIfearnáin 2015; Nance et al. 2016; Ó Murchadha and Ó hIfearnáin 2018);
3. the importance of new speakers as agents of linguistic change (Hornsby 2015; Kasstan 2015; Mayeux 2015);
4. the problematic status of new speaker varieties (or "learner" varieties) in the eyes of traditional "native" communities (Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha 2011; O'Rourke and Ramallo 2011);
5. the perpetration of linguistic ideologies and the privilege attributed to the idea of "nativeness" in linguistic accounts (O'Rourke et al. 2015; Ó Murchadha et al. 2018).

A diachronic application of the new speaker paradigm therefore seems justified, and this paper will show how such a lens sheds light on the points outlined above. The paradigm will be used to examine the historical process of language standardisation as it took place in early modern Italy, where it involved a struggle between different groups over the ownership of the emerging literary standard.

3 The background: codification of the standard and "Questione della lingua" debates in early modern Italy

Italy's political fragmentation, which saw the peninsula divided into a number of separate entities until the country's unification in 1861, was reflected linguistically in a multiplicity of vernaculars[4] spoken as mother-tongues across the peninsula. In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, the Florentine vernacular acquired prestige and spread outside of Tuscany mainly as a written variety, because of the literary status of the works of the so-called three Florentine "crowns" (i.e. fourteenth-century authors Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio), and because of the centrality and impact of

[4] A terminological issue: the term "vernacular" is preferred here to "dialect" following Lepschy (2002), who using this label aims to emphasise that Italo-Romance "dialects" are sister-languages, rather than varieties of Italian: Italian is based on fourteenth-century Tuscan, and the other Italo-Romance varieties are sisters of Tuscan, all of these languages finding their ancestor in spoken Latin (Lepschy 2002: 37). The term "dialetto" was, however, used in the Renaissance to refer to the Italo-Romance vernaculars. On the terminology applied to these varieties in the early modern period, see Alinei (1981), Trovato (1984) and Lepschy (2002: 36-37).

Tuscan finance and trade. However, it was only in the sixteenth century that a real codification process began. The advent of the printing press doubtless had a major role in this process, as it made the need for a uniform written standard to be used across the pensinsula all the more urgent. As a consequence, the sixteenth century saw the flourishing of lively debates concerning the vernacular norm, i.e. the so-called *Questione della lingua*. Intellectuals of the time became engaged in heated discussions on issues concerning the linguistic norm for the literary vernacular, and wrote extensively about this topic.[5] It should be noted that, since these debates were closely linked with the rise of printing and the subsequent spread of written culture (Trifone 2006: 15–60), the *Questione della lingua* debates were primarily concerned with the written language.

Although Florentine was undoubtedly prestigious, one of the key points of the debate in the first decades of the century concerned whether the emerging written standard should be based on contemporary Florentine or fourteenth-century Florentine (the variety associated with fourteenth-century authors), and whether the literary language should be a "pure" Tuscan variety or rather incorporate elements from other Italo-Romance vernaculars and Latin. Highly simplifying, the positions of these sixteenth-century thinkers have been subsumed under three major "currents" (Migliorini 1988: 310).

The first current, which would eventually prevail, is an archaising one, upholding a norm based on the variety used by fourteenth-century Florentine authors, especially Boccaccio and Petrarch and, to a minor extent, Dante.[6] The first printed grammar of Italian, the *Regole grammaticali della volgar lingua* (1516) by Giovan Francesco Fortunio (c.1470–1517) from Pordenone, proposed such a model.[7] The major exponent of this proposal, however, can be identified as the Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), who produced a widely influential treatise in three books, *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525),

[5] The bibliography on the *Questione della lingua* is vast. For an account in English, see Migliorini and Gwynfor Griffith (1984). In Italian, see, for instance, Vitale (1984) and, specifically on the sixteenth century, Marazzini (1993a) and Trovato (2012).

[6] The canonical fourteenth-century authors were sometimes reduced to Petrarch as a model for poetry and Boccaccio as a model for prose, as the evaluation of Dante's language was more controversial: Pietro Bembo, in his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), compared the language of the *Commedia* to "un bello et spatioso campo di grano; che sia tutto d'avene et di logli et d'herbe sterili et dannose mescolato […]" [a beautiful and spatious wheatfield overgrown with oats and rye-grass and sterile and pernicious weeds] (Bembo 2001: 104).

[7] On the history and reception of Fortunio's *Regole*, see Richardson (2016) and Fornara (2017). The first grammar of Italian had been, in fact, the *Grammatichetta* by Florentine humanist Leon Battista Alberti, written in the previous century (between 1437 and 1441), but buried in a single manuscript and lost for centuries, only first being published in Trabalza (1908).

quite unusual in the grammatical tradition because it is set in the form of a Ciceronian dialogue, in which the grammar of fourteenth-century Tuscan is expounded in the last book by means of an exchange between the different speakers. In this work, Bembo (who in turn accused Fortunio of having plagiarised his unpublished manuscript; Richardson 2016: 364) proposed as a linguistic model a variety that had to be learned from books, since it was a language from two centuries before that had meanwhile undergone "corruption". In fact, the Florentine vernacular as spoken in the city had undergone quite radical changes throughout the end of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century (Manni 1979; Trovato 2012: 306–307).

The second current is the so-called *corrente "cortigiana"*, which promoted a language that was still essentially Tuscan-based but enriched with forms drawn from Latin and other Italian vernaculars. The exact nature of the *lingua cortigiana* is still a matter of debate among scholars (Drusi 1995; Giovanardi 1998), and it is possible that the term itself was used by different authors to refer to quite different concepts. Men of letters like Mario Equicola (c.1470–1525) from Alvito, near Rome, and Vincenzo Colli (c.1460–1508) from Chio, spoke specifically of a *lingua cortigiana romana*, which may have referred to a variety of the Roman vernacular which had undergone Tuscanisation. Others, like the Mantuan courtier and humanist Baldassarre Castiglione (1478–1529), author of one of the most successful conduct books in history, the *Cortegiano* (published in 1528 but written over a decade earlier and revised multiple times), when speaking about the *lingua cortigiana*, referred more generically to an elegant, eclectic language that was used in polite conversation at various Italian courts. The theories of the humanist Giovan Giorgio Trissino (1478–1550) from Vicenza, who claimed that the literary language was eclectic in nature, not being restricted to Tuscan, and who sparked controversy with his proposal of an orthographical reform that ultimately failed to be accepted, can also be placed under this current.

The third current, promoted by Florentines at the beginning of the sixteenth century, upheld a non-archaising Florentine norm, based on the contemporary spoken variety of educated Florentines. The text considered archetypical of this current is the treatise *Discorso intorno alla nostra lingua* (c. 1524), attributed to Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), a dialogue imagined to have taken place between the author and Dante himself

which, however, enjoyed a very limited circulation at the time and was only rediscovered in the eighteenth century.[8]

The linguistic model proposed by Fortunio and Bembo, promoting a norm based on fourteenth-century Florentine authors, was the one that prevailed in the course of the sixteenth century. One reason for its success was that it resonated well with the humanistic climate and its emphasis on the "imitation" of the classics. There were also practical reasons, again linked with the spreading of the press: namely, the partnership the grammarian Pietro Bembo had established with the most famous Italian printer, the Venetian humanist Aldo Manuzio (c.1450–1515), and his heirs. At the time, Venice was the European capital of the press, producing more books than all the other Italian cities put together and particularly strong in the production of vernacular works (Trovato 2012: 21). Thus, the city played a pivotal role in the selection and acceptance of the vernacular norm, since what was printed by the Venetian presses was circulated widely throughout the Italian peninsula and beyond.

What is particularly striking in the codification of the vernacular in Italy is that, in the first half of the century, authors of grammars, as well as their intended audiences,[9] were all characterised by their non-Tuscan origin. The first grammars were, in a way, instruments to teach Florentine "as a foreign language", targeted at and prepared by non-Tuscans as a way to master the language of the great Florentine authors. Grammatical works like the *Grammatichetta* (1528) by Giovan Giorgio Trissino, *Le tre fontane* (1526) by Niccolò Liburnio from Friuli, the *Fondamenti del parlar thoscano* (1549) by Rinaldo Corso from Verona (or Correggio), and the *Osservationi* (1550) by the Venetian polygraph Lodovico Dolce are only a few out of the many non-Tuscan works that were published in the first half of the century.

It was only in 1551, i.e. 35 years after the publication of Fortunio's work, that the first printed grammar produced in Florence by a Florentine author appeared in Italy. This was *De la lingua che si parla & scriue in Firenze*, by the man of letters Pier Francesco

[8] On the limited circulation of this dialogue, and on its attribution to Machiavelli, see Trovato (2014).

[9] The fact that the target audience was largely made up by non-Tuscans is sometimes made explicit in the dedicatory prefaces of these works. Rinaldo Corso, for instance, takes pride in having reduced the Tuscan tongue to rules that can be learned "da ciascuno quantunque Barbaro, et strano" [by anyone however foreign and alien] (Corso 1549: fol. 2^2), and Lodovico Dolce presents himself as a guide showing "la strada, per la quale i novelli discepoli hanno a caminare verso il colle della Thoscana eloquenza" [the road which new learners need to tread in order to walk towards the hilltop of Tuscan eloquence] (Dolce 2004 [1550]: 243).

Giambullari (1494–1555). This work set out the proposals of a linguistic norm based not only on the usage of the "migliori & piu approuati scrittori" [best and most approved writers] but also on the "vso comune delle persone qualificate, che la parlano & che la scriuono ne tempi nostri; & che la parleranno & la scriuerranno per lo aduenire" [common use of qualified persons, who speak and write the language at the present time, and will go on speaking and writing it in the future] (Giambullari 1551: 138–139). The writing of this grammar had been entrusted to Giambullari by the *Accademia fiorentina,* founded in Florence in 1540 as the *Accademia degli Umidi*. The academy's purpose – strongly political in intent, linked, as it was, to the projects and aims of Cosimo de' Medici (1519–1574) – was that of promoting the Florentine language through a number of initiatives such as public readings of Dante and Petrarch, and translations of classical literature into the vernacular (Sherberg 2003: 27). Along with Pier Francesco Giambullari, other key protagonists of the *Accademia* and of its linguistic efforts were Giovambattista Gelli (1498–1563), Carlo Lenzoni (1501–1551) and Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565). Gelli's linguistic reflections are preserved in his work *I capricci del bottaio* (1546), a satirical dialogue between a barrel-maker and his soul, and in the *Ragionamento sopra la difficultà di mettere in regole la nostra lingua* (1551), conceived as a preface to Giambullari's grammar. Carlo Lenzoni, on the other hand, is most famous for having penned the treatise *In difesa della lingua fiorentina e di Dante*, published posthumously in 1556. These works represented a major effort to "reclaim" linguistic authority, since their authors aimed to regain, for Florentines, a leading role in the codification of the vernacular.

A member of the *Accademia fiorentina* who proved to be particularly influential was the Florentine humanist Benedetto Varchi (1503–1565) who, in his famous treatise *Hercolano* (written in the first half of the 1560s and published posthumously in 1570), tried to introduce Bembo's classicist ideas in his own city by proposing a synthesis between two types of authority: the authority of fourteenth-century writers and the contemporary usage of educated Florentines. His proposal constituted a "compromise" between the ideas of non-Tuscans and Tuscans.

Towards the end of the century, the Florentine humanist and founder of the *Accademia della Crusca* Leonardo Salviati, with his *Avvertimenti della lingua sopra 'l Decamerone* (1584–1586), marked a turning point in Florence's linguistic "policy" as it wholly accepted Bembo's archaising linguistic norm based on fourteenth-century authors,

bringing its implications even further. For Bembo, who had claimed that "non si puo dire veramente lingua alcuna favella, che non ha scrittore" [a tongue cannot be called language if it does not have writers] (Bembo 2001: 36), the fourteenth-century variety was to be preferred because of the prestige fourteenth-century authors had bestowed upon it. Salviati went even further, arguing for the superiority of this variety in virtue of its inherent perfection. In his view, everyone who had written in Florence from the year 1200 to the year 1300, that is before the language had undergone a process of corruption, had written well. The compilers of the first edition of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (1612) accepted Salviati's ideas, including in their dictionary lexical items found in texts produced by minor as well as major fourteenth-century Florentine writers (Vitale 1986: 117–172).

The sixteenth century, therefore, saw Florentines on the one hand and non-Tuscans on the other involved in a struggle over the ownership of the emerging literary standard. It should be noted, however, that other Tuscans also took sides in the debate. In Siena, in particular, writers like Claudio Tolomei (1492–1556), Celso Cittadini (1553–1627), Diomede Borghesi (1540–1598), Scipione Bargagli (1540–1612) and Adriano Politi (1542–1625) proposed a linguistic norm that was either pan-Tuscan or went explicitly in the direction of Sienese rather than Florentine (Vitale 1984: 80–83; 105–110).

4 Applying the new speaker lens

The dynamics which arose in this context between Florentines (users of a local vernacular) and non-Tuscans (early codifiers of the Florentine literary variety) resemble the dynamics which exist in some present-day revitalisation contexts between "traditional" and "new speakers". The parallel drawn here is thus between the profile of the "new speaker" and the non-Tuscan learner of Florentine on the one hand, and between the "traditional" / "native" speaker and the Florentine speaker on the other.

Important consideration needs to be given to the term "speaker": in the context of early modern Italy, non-Tuscan learners were primarily acquiring a written variety, so the label "speaker" can appear misleading. The question about the extent and the contexts of the oralisation of literary Florentine is a complex one, debated to this day;[10] in any case,

[10] For studies on spoken Tuscan, see in particular Richardson (1987) and Richardson (2002). Further studies on the relationship between orality and written culture in Renaissance Italy have been conducted within the

spoken Florentine outside of Tuscany was usually confined to very formal contexts, or highly specific situations. In this paper, the term "new speaker" is applied to users of a written variety, which poses the question of whether there is a need to talk more specifically about "new writers".

Although the main focus in new speaker research has been on the spoken language, the written language, not widely discussed as yet, also emerges as a very important factor in understanding the dynamics of new speakerness. In present-day revitalisation contexts, many new speakers of minority languages often become more proficient in the written form (initially at least), and it is the written variety that is often acquired through formal learning of the codified standard. Older native speakers, on the other hand, will often only write in the dominant language (see, for example, Frekko 2009 for Catalan; Lane 2017 for Kven).

Discussions of the tension between ideologies of authenticity and anonymity, which have frequently been brought up in new speaker research (e.g. Woolard 2008; O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013) may be useful to shed light on this point. Traditional "native" speakers have been said to anchor their linguistic authority in the notion of authenticity, which sees language as an indicator of group membership and rootedness in place ("being from somewhere"). New speakers instead are said to anchor their authority in anonymity: they see language as potentially available to anybody regardless of geographical provenance, and replace the notion of ethnic/geographical origin with one of expertise ("what you know"). These ideologies may be useful in examining the relationship of "new speakers" with the written and spoken dimension. The ideology of anonymity, associated with new speakerness, can mostly be associated with the domain of writing: frequently, new speakers position themselves as "experts" in virtue of their ability to master the written variety. In the aforementioned treatise *Hercolano* by Benedetto Varchi (1570; posthumous), the character of the Count observes that the written variety used by non-Tuscan learners is superior in that 'quando i Fiorentini pigliano la penna in mano, per occulta forza della lunga usanza, che hanno fatto nel parlare del popolo, molte di quelle voci e molte di quelle maniere di dire […] che offendono e quasi macchiano le scritture non possono tutte fuggire e schifare il più delle volte' [when Florentines put pen to paper,

ERC-funded research project "Italian Voices: Oral Culture, Manuscript and Print in Early Modern Italy, 1450–1700" at the University of Leeds: see Degl'Innocenti et al. (2016) and Dall'Aglio et al. (2017).

because of their long acquaintance with the language of the common people, they are oftentimes not able to shun many of those words and idioms that offend and almost stain their writings] (Varchi 1995: 808–809). On the other hand, the authority derived from authenticity, mostly associated with traditional "native" speakers, seems very much anchored in the spoken dimension: Florentines were often said to drink the vernacular together with the mother's milk (Marazzini 1993b: 268).

Keeping in mind that we are mainly dealing with "new writers", learners of Florentine seem to meet the criteria that have been postulated by different scholars in order to operationalise the new speaker notion. They meet the six criteria proposed by Jaffe (2015):

1. New speakers acquire the language later in life compared to traditional speakers. The various local vernaculars were the mother tongues (or "lingua natia" / "lingua materna")[11] for all speakers, and literary Florentine would be acquired by non-Tuscans later in life.
2. New speakers acquire the variety in a formal, educational setting. This criterion poses some problems, since in metalinguistic texts the vernacular is often depicted as being learned naturally, as opposed to Latin. However, even though far more care was placed on the teaching of Latin in the school curriculum,[12] there were schools that taught the vernacular. These were the *abbaco* schools (Lucchi 1982; Grendler 1989: 306–319; Trovato 2012: 24–27), aimed at students apprenticed in a profession in trade or crafts. The physician and man of letters Francesco Tommasi from Colle Val d'Elsa, in his *Reggimento del padre di famiglia* (1580), written to instruct readers on domestic matters, acknowledges the existence of a practice of vernacular instruction and indeed recommends it in the absence of an alternative:

> caso che i padri non possino eseguire di fare imparare a' figliuoli le sopradette arti, e scienze in latino, […] gli debbono ammaestrare, à fare instruire al meno delle medesime facultà in vulgare [in those cases where fathers are not able to make their children learn

[11] On the history of the term "lingua materna", see Lepschy and Sanson (1999) and Lepschy (2002).
[12] Latin was the language in which children were taught to read (Richardson 1999), and this was true as much for humanistic schools as for those aimed at the lower ranks, such as the schools of Christian doctrine (Lucchi 1978: 607; Grendler 1984; Toscani 1984). The two most popular textbooks used to teach children to read – *Donatus* and *Psalter* – were written in Latin (Lucchi 1978: 600).

> the aforementioned arts and sciences in Latin […], they must at least have them instructed in those same subjects in the vernacular]. (Tommasi 1580: 152)

At any rate, the language would be learnt from books, thus the context of learning was still "formal". Vernacular grammars aimed to provide teaching material and, if Bembo's and Fortunio's works had been somehow "elitist" in format and content, aimed as they were at a literate audience, other grammarians that followed attempted to make the same linguistic norm more accessible and palatable to less educated readers. The publishing market came to see works of this kind as a profitable niche, and from very early on it is possible to observe a shift in target audiences of grammatical works, with the authors' aim being that of providing a set of simple and straighforward rules, often for beginners and/or women.[13]

3. "New speakers" have a higher level of metalinguistic competence, i.e. their ability to talk reflexively about the language distinguishes them from traditional speakers. The lack of metalinguistic competence on the part of native speakers is something that was even acknowledged by Florentines themselves. In Varchi's *Hercolano*, mention is made of how in Florentine schools at the beginning of the century it was forbidden to read works in the vernacular, since every effort should be placed on the study of the classical languages:

> a Firenze in vece di maestri che insegnassero la lingua fiorentina, come anticamente si faceva in Roma della romana, erano di quegli i quali confortavano, anzi sforzavano a non impararla, anzi più tosto a sdimenticarla [in Florence there were no scholars who would teach the Florentine language, as Latin had been taught in ancient Rome; there were instead those who suggested, and even forced students not to learn it, or rather to unlearn it]. (Varchi 1995: 807)

Forty years previously, Varchi explains, the strongest command generally made by fathers to sons and by teachers to students was that by no means should they read anything in the vernacular. Varchi himself tells of how he had almost been expelled from school for reading an edition of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (Varchi 1995: 807).

[13] For further information on the popularisation of vernacular grammars in the sixteenth century, see Sanson (2011: 83-90). On the target audiences of these works, see also Fornara (2013: 76-79). For a discussion on the evolution of Italian grammars also in terms of readership, see Arcangeli (2016).

4. Domains of usage for new speakers can be highly compartmentalised. Usage of literary Florentine was only recommendable in the written domain; speaking the language, especially in informal settings, would be taken as a display of affectation and incur ridicule. In the highly popular conduct book *Civil Conversatione* (1574), for example, Stefano Guazzo from Casale Monferrato, near Alessandria, devotes some pages to the reasons why "se è lecito lo scrivere, […] non […] sia lecito il parlar toscanamente" [if it is recommendable to write, it is not recommendable to speak Tuscan] (Guazzo 1993: 98).
5. New speakers "self-identify" as such, acknowledging their membership in a group distinct from that of traditional speakers. Jaffe (2015) points out that this may be done through narratives relating the challenges of becoming a new speaker. This criterion also seems to apply to learners of Florentine. In the lexicographic work *Le tre fontane* (1526), for example, the Venetian man of letters Niccolò Liburnio (1474–1557) confesses his own past struggles in achieving a good level of linguistic competence: "io per me confesso negli anni preteriti (si come non pochi altri di qualche nome nel comporre) sopra le cose della thosca loquela esser andato incertamente brancolando" [I confess that I personally (like many other writers of a certain reputation) in these past years have been grasping in the dark in my knowledge of Tuscan] (Liburnio 1526: fol. 1^{v}).
6. "New speaker" as a status can also be attributed by others: the (sometimes disparaging) labels used to define learners of Tuscan seem to point to this fact (see Section 5.1).

Hornsby (2015) identifies two further points which serve to capture important factors behind "new speakerness". One of these pertains to language attitudes: a new speaker is positively disposed to the language being learned. Learners of Florentine fulfil this criterion, in that they put much effort into learning the language and often describe the Florentine variety as inherently beautiful or sweet-sounding. In Bembo's *Prose* (2001 [1525]: 38), the sound of Tuscan is defined as particularly pleasant, referring, among other things, to the presence of geminates and to the majority of words ending in vowel-sounds – so that they have "più soave et più dilicato il fine" [a sweeter and more delicate ending]. Similarly, Girolamo Ruscelli (Ruscelli 2016 [1581]: I/186), in his *De' commentarii*, praises Italian for its "armonia delle voci che finiscono sempre con le sue

vocali" [harmony of words, which always end in vowel sounds]. The other criterion identifying new speakers according to Hornsby concerns their origin: they do not necessarily belong to the ethno-linguistic group of traditional speakers. This is by definition true of learners of Florentine and, as will be seen shortly, the idea that one needs to be from Florence in order to use literary Florentine was very frequently challenged in the writings of non-Tuscans. The new speaker lens may therefore be applied to non-Tuscan learners of Florentine.

It should also be noted that those discussions which, in the literature, have sought to anchor the "new speaker" notion to the present day have emphasised the fundamental role played by globalisation in the production of this type of speaker (O' Rourke et al. 2015). It could be argued that "globalising" factors also came into play in early modern Italy. According to the French historian of linguistics Auroux (1994: 73), the Renaissance, forming the axis for the second techno-linguistic revolution, was a real turning point for the language sciences. The advent of the printing press in early modern Europe brought about a profound change in the circulation of language, as well as a redefinition of local boundaries and a creation of new networks.[14] The dynamics that resulted from this process and which saw a struggle over linguistic ownership between Florentines and non-Tuscans may therefore be examined through a new speaker lens.

However, one point should be made: one should be aware that all Tuscans, not just Florentines, tended to position themselves as "native" speakers of the literary variety. Indeed, a serious point of controversy was whether the literary standard should be named Tuscan or Florentine (Vitale 1984: 43). This is due to the fact that, even though Tuscany was linguistically (and politically) fragmented, Tuscan vernaculars belong to one distinct branch (Giannelli 1997: 297–300), showing much more similarity to each other than to any other Italo-Romance variety, and could thus be perceived as quite similar. In fact, much of the change which took place in the Florentine variety between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century is to be ascribed to the influence of western and southern Tuscan vernaculars (Manni 1979). The position of speakers of other contemporary Tuscan varieties would therefore be worth exploring through a new speaker lens and, as we have

[14] For a general discussion on the invention of printing in Europe and its impact on the circulation of language and culture, see Hirsch (1967) and Eisenstein (1979). Concerning the Italian context, see Richardson (1994, 1999) in relation to the history of the book; see Trifone (2006: 15–60) and Trovato (2012: 19–24) in relation to the impact of the printing press on the vernacular.

seen, Siena might offer particularly fertile ground in this respect for the sheer amount of documents devoted to the *Questione della lingua* produced by Sienese intellectuals. For the sake of simplicity, this article focuses on the dynamics between Florentines and non-Tuscans, leaving aside, for the time being, the position of speakers of other Tuscan vernaculars.

5.1 Issues of linguistic authority and legitimacy: naming the new speaker

As suggested in the literature on new speakers, the terminology applied to the idea of "newness" may shed light on issues of legitimacy and ownership, and the struggles of individuals who aim to be recognised as "authentic" users. What matters in particular is who confers this label (whether it is adopted as a self-defining category by new speakers themselves, or whether it is attributed by others) and which connotations are associated with it. Even in contexts where explicit labellings of new speakers seem to be lacking, attention could be given to some terms which, even though apparently neutral, are in fact rarely used to refer to "native" speakers and are rather employed as derogatory labels to refer to new speaker profiles (Kabel 2000; O'Rourke et al. 2015).

In Early Modern Italian, the most frequent expression used in this respect is a verb, *toscaneggiare / toscanizzare / toscanoiare*, which appears to have been employed both by learners and by Florentines.[15] However, it does not appear to have been attributed to both groups. The verb, in theory, should simply mean "to speak / write Tuscan", and this is indeed the definition given by the preacher Francesco Panigarola (1548–1594) from Milan:

> Onde la base, per essempio, e la fondamental virtù della Greca locutione sarà il Grecezare, cioè il puro parlare Grecamente, che altro non vuol dire, che parlare nettamente in quella lingua: Et nella Latina sarà il latinizare, (per dir così,) cioè parlar latinamente: nell'Hebraica, hebraizare, cioè puro parlare hebraicamente: nella Toscana Toscanizare, cioè parlar puro Toscanamente, e cosi discorrendo per tutte le lingue. [Therefore, for instance, the main and fundamental quality of the Greek language will be *Grecezare*, that is to speak pure Greek, which only means to speak solely

[15] It was used mainly by non-Tuscans such as Lodovico Castelvetro from Modena (Castelvetro 1572: 34), Filoteo Achillini from Bologna (Achillini 1536: fol. 15^{r}), and Ascanio De' Mori from Mantua (De' Mori 1575: fols 15^{v}–16^{r}) along with many others, but also by Florentines such as Anton Francesco Doni.

> in that language; and for Latin it will be – so to speak – *latinizare*, that is to speak Latin; for Hebrew, *hebraizare*, that is to speak pure Hebrew; for Tuscan *toscanizare*, that is to speak pure Tuscan, and so on for all languages.] (Panigarola 1609: II/1)

In practice, however, the verb seems to have only been employed to refer to non-native speakers using Tuscan. This label was sometimes neutral (e.g. in the collection of short stories *Il Novellino* by Masuccio Salernitano, first published in 1476 [Masuccio 1940: 380], and in the dialogue *Giuoco piacevole* by Ascanio De' Mori from Mantua, published in 1575 [De' Mori 1575: fols 15^{v}–16^{r}]), but often had derogatory connotations. The man of letters Lodovico Castelvetro from Modena, for example, speaks disparagingly about some northern Italians who, "vsando alcun tempo in Toscana, toscaneggiano" [having spent some time in Tuscany, Tuscanise] and therefore speak Tuscan incorrectly (Castelvetro 1572: 34; notably, here reference is to the spoken language). In fact, the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* reports the implications of affectation which are often associated with this verb (Battaglia and Bàrberi Squarotti 1961–2002). There is even an attestation of a comical deformation via derivation in the verb form *toscanuzzare*, employed to mock Venetian learners of Tuscan by Sienese poet Pietro Nelli: "Cosi sono i vocaboli distrutti, / Cosi ueggiamo andare hoggi in Venegia / Toscanuzzando pedantuzzi, e putti" [So are words destroyed, so today in Venice we see pedants and boys Tuscanise] (Nelli 1603: fol. 63^{v}).

Although less frequent, a participle, *toscanizzante*, may also be employed to refer pejoratively to new users of Tuscan. This is, for example, the disparaging way in which the Roman man of letters Mario Equicola, belonging, as we have seen, to the *corrente cortigiana*, refers to learners of Tuscan in his treatise *Libro de natura de amore* (1525): "questi *toscanezanti* che non bene scriueno, ne bene parlano la lingua tosca, laqual se credeno benissimo hauer appressa, & essere in quella docti doctori & maestri" [these *Tuscanisers* who neither write nor speak the Tuscan language well, but are convinced to have acquired it perfectly and be learned scholars and masters] (Equicola 1525: fol. 24^{r}).

Finally, in order to mock learners of Florentine, another formula is sometimes used, which consists in the paradoxical expression "toscano da" [Tuscan from] followed by the name of a non-Tuscan location. The frequent occurrence of this expression in metalinguistic texts ("toscanissimo da Modena" [Caro 1558: 40]; "toscano del Monferrato" [Guazzo

1993: 101]; "toscano nostro gentilissimo da Brescia" [De' Mori 1575: fol. 15^{v}]) suggests this might have constituted a stereotypical formula, used satirically in order to mock learners.

There is therefore a whole range of terms employed to identify learners of Florentine as a separate category and, quite often, to question this category's legitimacy as "real" users of the language.

5.2 A "book" variety

It has emerged from studies on new speakers that, in those contexts where learners constitute a significant number, the target variety of this group does not necessarily coincide with the "traditional" variety of the language: proto-standards may emerge around "learner" or "post-traditional" varieties, with norms that are quite different from the ones recognised by "native" speakers (Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha 2011; O'Rourke and Walsh 2015; Costa 2015).

When we consider the emerging standard for new learners of Florentine we can indeed talk about a "learner" or "book" variety – with the target for the new users not coinciding with the language spoken in Florence, but rather with a variety to be studied from books. The term "book" variety is adopted here from the literature on new speakers, in the sense of a standardised or semi-standardised variety perceived as artificial,[16] and it is a particularly interesting label since it draws attention to the role of the written dimension in dynamics of new speakerness. In the case of early modern Italy, this preference of "new writers" for a "book" variety is also linked with the fact that the literary language was codified on the basis of an archaic variety of Florentine, so that it was deemed necessary to learn the language from books: there was no place, not even Florence, where the fourteenth-century variety could be acquired naturally, and contemporary Florentines were seen by many non-Tuscan learners as speaking and writing a "corrupt" variety. Nothing, perhaps, illustrates this point as clearly as Bembo's famous quotation from his dialogue *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), which presents an idea that was to be reiterated again and again by non-Tuscans throughout the sixteenth century:

[16] For discussion of the label "book Galician", see Iglesias Álvarez and Ramallo (2003); O'Rourke and Ramallo (2011: 151). On "book Irish", see Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha (2011: 102); Nic Fhlannchadha and Hickey (2016: 48).

> […] viemmi talhora in openione di credere, che l'essere a questi tempi nato Fiorentino, a ben volere Fiorentino scrivere, non sia di molto vantaggio. Perciò che oltre che naturalmente suole avenire, che le cose, delle quali abondiamo, sono da noi men care havute: onde voi Thoschi del vostro parlare abondevoli meno stima ne fate, che noi non facciamo: si aviene egli anchora, che percio che voi ci nascete e crescete, a voi pare di saperlo a bastanza: per la qual cosa non ne cercate altramente gli scrittori a quello del popolaresco uso tenendovi senza passar più avanti: il quale nel vero non è mai cosi gentile, cosi vago; come sono le buone scritture. Ma gli altri, che Thoscani non sono, da buoni libri la lingua apprendendo l'apprendono vaga et gentile. [I am sometimes inclined to think that for one who wants to write Florentine well, being born a Florentine nowadays is no great advantage. This is because, on the one hand, it is usually the case that things we have in abundance are not so dear to us, so that you Tuscans, who have your language in abundance, hold it in less esteem than we do; on the other hand, because you are born and raised with it, you think that you know it well enough and therefore you do not study the language of authors, picking up instead the popular usage without going any further; but this usage is never as gentle and beautiful as the one found in good writings. Those who are not Tuscans, instead, learning the language from books, learn a beautiful and elegant variety.] (Bembo 2001 [1525]: 40)

This "book" variety is thus different not only because it is standardised around a variety used and promoted by learners, and therefore diverging on these grounds from the traditional "native" one, but it is also different because it is based on an archaic norm. This additional layer produces a further divide between new speaker language and traditional speaker language, and is an issue which might also emerge in present-day revitalisation contexts. According to O'Rourke and Ramallo (2011: 150), the so-called "book-Irish" of new speakers is also often perceived as artificial by native speakers on the grounds that it contains archaic vocabulary and phrases. This issue may be especially relevant in those revitalisation contexts where there is a literary tradition for the minority language on which the written standard is based.

Non-Tuscan learners' preference for a "book" variety is also evident in the comments they made about the pronunciation of Florentine people, which they frequently portrayed as uncouth and unpleasant. For example, the intervocalic aspiration of voiceless stops (i.e. the so-called "gorgia toscana") is described in very negative terms in Stefano Guazzo's *Civil conversazione* (1574) [Guazzo 1993: 90] and in the manuscript version of Mario Equicola's *De natura de amore* [Equicola 1999: 213]. In his aforementioned

Osservationi (1550), the Venetian Lodovico Dolce states that "la pronuntia Thoscana […] la quale in Firenze medesima è più tosto spiacevole" [the Tuscan pronunciation which in Florence is rather unpleasant] should not be imposed "a coloro, che non son nati Thoscani" [on those who are not born in Tuscany] (Dolce 2004 [1550]: 395–396). In his *Frutti delle moderne commedie* (1628), Pier Maria Cecchini, playwright and actor from Ferrara, informs us that "molti Mantouani […] al dispetto della patria recitano in quelle lor'opere premeditate cosi bene, che il Sanese, & ogn'altro Toscano *potrebbe più tosto inuidiarli, che correggerli*" [many Mantuans despite their homeland recite in their own plays so well that people from Siena and the rest of Tuscany *should envy them rather than correct them*] [emphasis mine] (Cecchini 1628: 12). Therefore, in the pronunciation of Tuscan, the new speakers' target appears to have been a "learner variety" rather than a local and native pronunciation. This is in line with the observation that new speakers sometimes perceive a traditional variety as inauthentic and inappropriate for whoever is not "native" (e.g. McLeod and O'Rourke 2015; Nance et al. 2016).

At the same time, the prestige attributed to non-native varieties could be undermined by purist discourses which see the place where the linguistic variety originated as a "natural repository" for the language (Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha 2011; O'Rourke and Walsh 2015). In fact, the contemporary, local Florentine variety was not always stigmatised by "new speakers". We know, for example, that the preacher Panigarola along with other Franciscan friars was sent in his youth to spend a period in Florence in order to learn the language well (Marazzini 1989). Learned men would also be sent by their families to learn Tuscan in Florence, a practice which lasted for several centuries (Lepschy 2002: 20). This practice is also alluded to in contemporary dialogues such as the *Giuoco piacevole* by the Mantuan man of letters Ascanio de' Mori (1575: fols 15^{v}-16^{r}) and the *Ragionamenti* by the Florentine Agnolo Firenzuola (written around 1525 but published in 1548 [Firenzuola 1977: 115]). In the prologue to the comedy *L'Erofilomachia* (1586), the author, Sforza Oddi from Perugia, feels the need to apologise for any "mistake" made by the actors on the grounds that they do not have Tuscan origins. He adds that he will very much welcome any input from Florentines present in the audience, and definitely identifies the language spoken in Florence as the actors' target:

> Et se qualch'un'altro non riconoscesse in costoro la vera fauella Fiorentina, non voglia perciò incolpargli, perche di quelli, tra i quali nasce il caso della fauola, parte sono Genouesi, che hanno imbastardita la lingua, parte Perugini, che ancor si hanno ritenuta la loro natiua. Quando poi fossero alcuni, che per esser nati Fiorentini, loro dispiacesse a fatto la nostra Perugina, non sia lor graue di accommodarne alquanto della loro; che improметto loro, che gustata, & appresa la dolcissima lor lingua, parremo nati, & alleuati in Firenze. [And if someone does not recognise in them the true Florentine tongue, do not blame them, because those among whom this tale is born are in part from Genua, and so have a corrupt language, and in part from Perugia, and have thus retained their own native vernacular. In case there are some who, being born Florentines, dislike our tongue from Perugia, they are invited to teach us their own vernacular; and I promise that, once we have tasted and learned their sweet language, we will sound as if we were Florence-born and bred.] (Oddi 1586: fol. π24^{v})

5.3 Learners as agents of change and the perpetration of ideologies of nativeness within linguistics

Historians of the Italian language have often, explicitly or implicitly, tended to equate the fourteenth-century Florentine variety with the sixteenth-century learners' variety, and surprisingly little research has been carried out on the changes brought about by learners to the emerging standard. The neglect of this issue was, for example, raised by Brown (2017), when he discussed the implications of talking about koineisation rater than standardisation in the written variety employed in the north of Italy from the fourteenth century onwards. The seeming neglect of this issue may indeed be due to that same ideological bias in linguistics that the "new speaker" lens tries to challenge, i.e. the tendency to view the language of "native" communities as somehow more authentic and the variety acquired by learners as inherently defective.[17] Acknowledging the existence of an ideology of this kind in standardisation accounts is important, because this type of ideology may lead linguists to overlook phenomena introduced by learners. Some linguistic studies suggest this bias might exist for Italian, leading to an underestimation of the influence of "new users" on its structure. In her study on enclisis, for example, Fiorenza Weinapple (1993) argues that an exclusive focus on Florentine texts led linguists

[17] This bias also emerges in standardisation accounts in other linguistic traditions: see, for instance, the negative terms in which the practices of learners of Irish are described in Doyle's recent account of the revitalisation activities organised by the Gaelic League towards the end of the nineteenth century (Doyle 2015: 177–187; 237).

to incorrect conclusions about the status and occurrence of this phenomenon in the sixteenth-century literary language. By also taking into account texts produced in Florentine by non-Tuscan authors, she demonstrates that enclisis was overall much less frequent in sixteenth-century Italian dramatic texts than it had been in fourteenth-century Florentine, even if the aim of sixteenth-century writers was that of imitating the fourteenth-century variety. She identifies Tuscany as a more conservative area with respect to the preservation of the Tobler-Mussafia law (a "law" governing the distribution of preverbal or postverbal clitics in Old Romance) and, observing that usage of enclisis in non-Tuscan writers was much closer to the norm which would become established in the following centuries, postulates a centripetal influence of non-Tuscan literary Italian on literary Florentine (Weinapple 1993: 69).

Martin Maiden (1995: 8) also points to the existence of syntactic changes introduced by learners which eventually made it in the literary language, such as the Florentine clitic cluster type *lo mi dà* being ousted by the type *me lo dà*. Concerning the lexicon, a range of extra-Florentine words which have made it into the literary language is discussed by Vitale (1984: 10). However, despite the promising results, studies of this kind are rare. The new speaker paradigm would be useful here as a theoretical framework which questions the bias towards the concept of "nativeness" in historical accounts of language standardisation, and which shifts the focus of attention to the practices and varieties of learners of Tuscan, and to the influence they might have exerted on the standard.

5.4 The problematic status of "learner" varieties for traditional "native" communities

On the other hand, the "new speaker" lens also prompts us to ask questions about how the exogenous, learner variety was perceived by traditional speakers, in this case, Florentines. The complex relationship existing between prestige and standard has recently been investigated through this lens (Ó hIfearnáin and Ó Murchadha 2011): it has emerged that in those revitalisation contexts where new speakers play a major role, and standards or proto-standards emerge around "learner" varieties, native speakers might overtly stigmatise these standards, frequently applying derogatory labels to them. At the same time, however, a covert value system might be at work so that traditional speakers are

attracted to learner varieties subconsciously, using them and evaluating their speakers positively.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Florentines found themselves at the periphery of a process of codification that involved their own language. An examination of metalinguistic comments from Florentine writers regarding the "book" variety implemented and promoted by non-Florentines shows that indeed, overtly, the emerging standard was strongly stigmatised. The authority derived from a notion of "nativeness" is central in the discourse of Florentine authors. The character of Benedetto Varchi in the *Hercolano* (1570) reflects on the fact that non-Tuscan men of letters "confessano, anzi si vantano" [confess, indeed boast] to have learned the language "non dalle balie e dal volgo, ma solamente da' libri" [not from the wet-nurses and the common people, but only from books]. He comments that "tutti cotestoro vengono a confessare, o accorgendosene o non se ne accorgendo, che la lingua non è loro" [whether or not they realise this, all of them are confessing that the language is not their own] (Varchi 1995 [1570]: 942–943). It follows that, if non-Tuscans want to learn the language well, they must come to Florence, or at any rate learn the language from Florentine speakers. In his *Risposta alla Epistola del Trissino* (1525), written as a polemical reply to Trissino's proposed orthographical reform, the Florentine scholar Lodovico Martelli (1500–c.1527)) gives the advice to whoever wishes to practice the language to "venirsene in Toscana […] o condurre toscani huomini li quali atti fusseno ad insegnare le nostre grammatiche" [either come to Tuscany […] or import Tuscan men who are able to teach our grammar] (Martelli 1984 [1525]: 51–52). Not being "native" speakers, non-Tuscan writers were seen as creating an artificial and inauthentic language, often described as a monster made up of features taken from all over Italy rather than just Florence.[18]

However, some metalinguistic comments seem to suggest that this exogenous variety was, to a certain extent, appealing in Florence, especially for the younger generations. It is thus possible that this variety was enjoying some degree of covert prestige. In a dialogue preposed to Giambullari's grammar of Florentine, Giovanni Battista Gelli, observing how the new users of Florentine had influenced and altered the language

[18] See, for instance, Anton Francesco Doni's collection of satirical dialogues *I marmi* (1552), containing a vitriolic attack on the artificial quality of literary Florentine as promoted by the Venetian printing press (Doni 1928: 94–96).

through the addition of non-Florentine lexical items, harshly criticises "que' Fiorentini, che per compiacere a questi tali, o per altro lor comodo particulare, l'hanno accettate & usate ne' loro scritti" [those Florentines who, to please these people or to pursue some other personal advantage, have accepted and used them in their writings] (Giambullari 1551: 28).

Urging the need for Florentines to start codifying their own language, Carlo Lenzoni also criticises the adoption by young people of a variety influenced by foreigners:

> Ben dourebbe gia cominciarsi a ordinare queste cose della lingua; per non lasciar cadere in errore i nostri figliuoli; che solleuati dale false persuasioni di alcuni, ci introducono & parole & modi, strani & peruersi: Et se noi Fiorentini ce la dormiamo per l'aduenire, come si è fatto per il passato; ella si andrà guastando in maniera; che giustamente non potrà dirsi poi Fiorentina; ma […] Bergamasca.[19] [We should start to reduce this language to rules; so that our children will not err, convinced by the false beliefs of some who introduce foreign and incorrect words and ways. And if we Florentines keep sleeping as we have done in the past, the language is going to be ruined in such a way that it will be no longer possible to call it from Florence, but rather […] from Bergamo.] (Lenzoni 1556: 8)

In fact, the possibility of using an "archaic" variety of Florentine – a possibility which, as we have seen, had at an initial stage been promoted by non-Tuscans – was gradually accepted in Florence in the course of the century. This gradual acceptance went hand in hand with a renegotiation of authority on the part of Florentines as the real, "legitimate" users of this archaic variety. If, at the beginning of the century, usage of the contemporary Florentine language had been valued in Florence far more than usage of the "archaic" variety, attitudes became more mellow towards the second half of the century, so that the idea of "mixing", in writing, archaic and contemporary forms gradually made its way into Florentine metalinguistic texts (see, for example, Lenzoni 1556: 35; Giambullari 1551: 4; Firenzuola 1977 [1548]: 116). At the end of the 1500s, the situation in Florence was completely overturned compared to the beginning of the century, in particular through the influence of Leonardo Salviati (1540–1589). As we have seen, Salviati believed that,

[19] The vernacular from Bergamo was, for some reason, particularly stigmatised and often employed as an example of unrefined speech.

since the Florentine language had been at its peak in the fourteenth-century, whoever had written in Florence during that century – no matter their class or social status – had written well (Salviati 1809 [1584–1586]: 146–147). This view can be interpreted as the extreme outcome of the progressive rise in prestige of the "archaic", exogenous written standard. This rise in prestige, however, was accompanied by a renegotiation of authority on the part of Florentines. According to Salviati, the fact that contemporary Florentine was closer to fourteenth-century Florentine than any other Italian vernacular would place Florentines in a much better position to learn the language, because "a' Fiorentini uomini poche regole bastano a saper la favella, ma ai forestieri le molte non sono assai" [Florentine men need only few rules to know the language, but for non-Tuscans many are not sufficient] (Salviati 1809: 292). This meant, in turn, that Florentines were invested with authority. Being in an advantageous position in linguistic terms, they had the task of "mediating" and teaching this variety to foreigners:

> tante sono le proprietà del linguaggio, che sotto regola non si ristringono, che senza la pratica del nostro volgo, o de' nostri uomini, fine notizia di tutte quante non si può quasi aver mai [so many are the properties of our language that cannot be reduced to rules that without practising with our people or our men it is almost impossible to learn them all well] (Salviati 1809: 292).

In Florence, therefore, the "learner" variety, albeit overtly stigmatised at the beginning of the century, must have acquired prestige, perhaps at a covert level, if Florentines gradually opted for the "exogenous" selection of fourteenth-century Florentine forms instead of contemporary ones. This orientation towards the exogenous standard was accompanied, as we have seen, by a renegotiation of authority on the part of Florentines themselves, who, through notions of territoriality and authenticity, positioned themselves as the real, "legitimate" users of this variety.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the new speaker lens is a useful prism which is now being applied beyond the field of minority languages, and which can be successfully used in studies of historical sociolinguistics to examine those processes of language standardisation in which learners played an active role. The lens sheds light on the struggles over authority and legitimacy arising between "traditional" speakers and learners. It brings into focus the role played

by learners and their practices in the codification and promotion of the standard. It leads us to ask not just how one variety acquires prestige, but precisely which variety (a learner variety as opposed to a "traditional" variety) acquires prestige for which community (a community of learners as opposed to a "traditional", native community). It also helps us understand how the prestige status of one variety may shift as a result of a renegotiation of authority between different groups. Finally, this lens is useful for reflecting on the privilege that has been traditionally attributed to the idea of "nativeness" in standardisation accounts, and on the consequences of such biases in the writing of language histories. Applying the new speaker lens to past language stages, in turn, poses important questions regarding the role of the written language and of "new writers" in the dynamics which arise between traditional communities and learners.

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