Joshua Brown and Anita Auer*

The role of merchants in language standardisation

Abstract: This issue of the Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics aims to contribute to our understanding of the role of merchants in language standardisation by focussing on how merchants can be seen as agents of linguistic change across various European vernaculars at various points in time. By analysing data from a varied set of languages, including Italian, Norwegian, Spanish, and Dutch, the authors provide insight into merchant writing in relation to language standardisation from different perspectives and at different times. The extant material available from merchants, their role as intermediaries in the commercial world, their functional and variable literacy, and their social and geographical mobility, all mean that merchant writing is able to offer unique insights into the vicissitudes of language history.

Merchants[1] and written documents produced by merchants continue to provide fascinating source material for historical sociolinguists. While business writing has been studied from many perspectives in language history, the focus of this special issue is on the role of merchants in language standardisation.[2] Part of the motivation for greater attention to merchant writing in recent years has been a re-evaluation of

---

1 The terms 'merchants' and 'traders' will be used synonymously in this introduction even though their roles may have varied in different countries and time periods (see for instance the distinction made in Middleton 2003).
2 Standardisation as a topic in historical sociolinguistics continues to attract much attention in its own right (Vandenbussche 2022). For Romance, there now exist a manual of standardisation (Lebsanft and Tacke 2020), and chapters on standardisation feature in major compendia of Romance (e.g. Pountain 2016). For historical investigations of business and official correspondence in English, see Dossena and Fitzmaurice (2006), and for a contemporary study of the role of modern business writing and standardisation from a sociolinguistic perspective with a focus on English, see Linn et al. (2018).

---

*Corresponding author: Anita Auer, Université de Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland,
E-mail: anita.auer@unil.ch
Joshua Brown, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, E-mail: joshua.j.brown@uwa.edu.au

language history 'from below', as studies of variation in the past aim to incorporate a greater range of texts and textual variation (Ayres-Bennett 2004; Elspaß 2021; Elspaß et al. 2007; Graser and Tlusty 2011).[3] The extant documentation available from merchants, their role as intermediaries in the commercial world, their functional and variable literacy, and their social and geographical mobility, all mean that merchant writing is able to offer unique insights into certain vicissitudes of language history.[4] Nevertheless, the role of merchants has so far been the object of few monographic studies or edited collections in studies of language standardisation. Most recently, Wagner et al. (2017) brought together a series of papers which considered the particular trade argots developed by merchants across several languages, including English, Judaeo-Arabic writing, Norwegian, Italian, Yiddish, German, and others. While that volume is not specifically concerned with the question of standardisation, the authors noted that "traders play an important role in promoting and spreading language standards" (Wagner and Beinhoff 2017: 5). The role of merchants in language contact and their agency in terms of innovation (i.e. the introduction of new variants in a language community) are just a few ways in which they have been involved in processes of standardisation, either directly or indirectly. This is especially the case for particular forms of supralocalisation or the development of urban vernaculars. The papers contained in this special issue, on the other hand, focus more specifically on the role of merchants as protagonists in the various processes associated with standardisation, across a range of languages, some from Germanic and some from Romance. Our overall aim has been to zoom in on particular communities, historical periods, or textual exchanges which deal directly with merchants and merchant writing, and which can help to place merchant language and their deliberate or unintentional promotion of written dialects in a broader sociolinguistic context for different vernaculars across Europe.

Scholars have returned repeatedly to merchant writing, particularly correspondence, in studies of standardisation, largely as part of a broader effort to

---

3 Elspaß reminds us that the term 'from below' can evoke two concepts, the first referring to 'the operation of internal, linguistic factors' and processes of language change which are 'below the level of social awareness' (Labov 1994: 78), whereas *standardisation from below* calls to mind the 'language history from below' in the studies cited above (Elspaß 2021: 93). Here we use the term in the historical-sociolinguistic sense, describing "both the development of a vernacular to become a standard variety, understood as a 'a uniform and consistent norm of writing that is widely accepted by its speakers' (Haugen 1994: 4340), and the emergence of language variants from vernaculars into a standard variety, even despite the preference of other variants by language authorities" (Elspaß 2021: 93).

4 We use the term 'merchant writing' in a broad sense here to refer to all textual material produced by merchants, including letters, bills of exchange, accounts etc. Some of these are discussed below. An overview of different text types of business and official correspondence from a historical perspective is available in Dossena and Fitzmaurice (2006); see also Gobber and Milani (2002).

investigate processes of language change. The focus on merchant language can be explained by several reasons. In part, for many European vernaculars there exists a copious amount of written material that merchants have bequeathed us, not to speak of the abundant unpublished material that lays buried in archives and that is yet to be explored. Editions of merchant letters continue to appear with regular occurrence (for Italy, for example, see Braunstein 2021; Formentin 2018; Tomasin 2016a), providing a wide array of source material from which to choose. Furthermore, merchant writing can provide a window into how communication was successfully facilitated across early modern Europe, at a time of widespread linguistic variation. As a mobile and geographically widespread presence, merchants "were involved in building up a shared language of diplomacy, such as linguistic and intermediatory skills, local know-how, or a developed inclination for letter-writing, data-recording, and information-gathering" (Lazzarini 2015: 38). The heterogeneous typology of merchants, some 'big' and some 'small', has meant that they performed different negotiating roles across various trade and border zones.[5] For all these reasons, merchant writing continues to offer useful data for studies of standardisation processes.

Another reason for the ongoing interest in merchant correspondence relates precisely to their position as trade 'intermediaries' in European society and the emergence of a middle social class. In this sense, merchants occupy an intermediate position along the continuum for those seeking evidence of language change 'from below'. While most merchants were part of a professional organisation such as a guild, they often acted independently of themselves with little to no regulation in their writing. Thus, merchant texts are some of the least likely to be subject to influences from authorities, that is, language 'from above'.[6] In most histories of standardisation in European vernaculars, such influences from above can be identified with the interventionist attempts from a state institution or linguistic academy. Oftentimes these attempts were aimed at regulating language in a particular way; at the same time, writers may have been subject to influences from literary or other external models of writing (for English, see for instance Magnusson 1999: 114–138 on merchant discourse and letter writing manuals). This is rarely the case with merchant writing, however. In general, merchant letters are composed quickly. Writers needed to be able to send large quantities of correspondence in order to facilitate the rapid exchange of business information relating to currencies, exchanges rates, weather, ships and shipping, movement of peoples, not to mention the relative prices of goods and services (Spufford 2002). Originating in Italy, a

---

5 See the useful review article by Carboni (2014), and the section *Lingue senza nazioni* [Languages without nations].

6 For an excellent overview of language standardisation 'from above', see Rutten and Vosters (2021).

bespoke script was developed precisely for this purpose known as *la mercantesca*.[7] This script was cursive, quicker to write compared to previous types of script that had been circulating, such as Gothic or miniscule. Depending on the type of merchant, their education, their network, and their background, merchant writing can therefore be considered at one end of a continuum of formal/informal writing. Merchants with greater literacy may be more likely positioned somewhere along the middle of this continuum, perhaps incorporating the most local and dialectal features into their writing while still attempting to aim for a higher degree of formality. For these reasons, merchant texts allow greater access to a 'language of immediacy' (Koch and Oesterreicher 2012: 445–451) for studies of standardisation, with a more immediate focus on 'language in use' that is free from any authority. In this sense, Graser and Tlusty (2009) have spoken of 'layers of literacy' and a distinction between non-professional versus professional writing in sixteenth-century Germany. In line with this, Rees Jones (2014: 220) links merchant writing in Late Medieval England (amongst other text types produced in cities) to 'civic literacy', i.e. the creation of records and archives for self-government as well as "writing in creating a sense of identity and purpose within a civic community", e.g. writing produced by individual merchants or merchant guilds.[8] In short, it is the very nature of merchant writing itself that allows for a deeper investigation into aspects of standardisation from below. In this sense, it is here where *conventionalization* and a "widespread *acceptance* of varieties and variants" are likely to be found (Elspaß 2021: 93, his emphasis).[9]

The dispersion of merchants over large geographical distances has also led to a re-examination of how communication was effectively carried out, given the high degree of dialectal variation of many European vernaculars. In the case of Italy, previous scholars had stressed the 'mutual unintelligibility' of vernaculars, a point stressed by modern dialectology and its emphasis on the high degree of diatopic variation (Muljačić 1997).[10] Merchant writing has been used as evidence to reassess the degree of mutual intercomprehension present in Late Medieval Italy. By looking at the successful, and continual, communication between merchants as a case study, scholars have argued recently that the typological differences between vernaculars was not as pronounced as had once been thought (Carlucci 2020; Tomasin 2021). The existence of pluricentric/pluriareal languages has given researchers the possibility

---

7 Ceccherini (2008, 2009, 2010).

8 See Schaeken (2019) about writing on birchbark for correspondence and administration in the Medieval merchant city of Novgorod and other cities in the Northwest of Russia.

9 On the meaning of 'acceptance' in standardisation, see Milroy and Milroy (1991: 27–28). The concept of *acceptance* was also part of Haugen's original model, although often conceptualized in broader, social terms (Haugen 1966).

10 For a reassessment of this position, Vincent (2006).

to exploit genres, text types, writing traditions etc. which permit these regional elements to come to the fore. Unsurprisingly, merchant or commercial texts (as well as private writing, government writing) "has allowed scholars to chart not only the development and use of regional norms […] but also the swift effect of legislation and the accompanying shift in actual writing practices" (Vandenbussche 2022: 223). The social and geographical mobility of merchants is precisely the type of writing which is more likely to provide evidence for regional variation.[11] Attention to the pluricentric/pluriareal linguistic traditions has often been a prominent feature in studies of language standards in historical sociolinguistics (Brown 2020; Li 2020; Regis 2017). The incorporation of a plurilingual perspective allows a more nuanced, more complete picture to come to the fore. This is the case, for example, in Sadovski-Kornprobst's recent work on multilingualism in Venetian Dalmatia, who has shown that "Slavic is quite visible as a spoken language in the extant administrative sources, while it was not used as a written language by the Venetian administration or by the inhabitants of Split in their communication with this administration" (2021: 226–227).

One particular research finding from recent years has been a focus on language selection in merchant writing. What has emerged from the application of this research paradigm is the importance of the "symbolic aspect of the choice" in a business context and its political value (Lazzarini 2015: 241). Here the question of accommodation theory has also been applied, since merchant sellers are clearly willing to accommodate to their interlocutor in a linguistic sense (when their linguistic skills enabled them), in order to "butter up" their business partner for a better deal (Brown 2017, 2023). In some cases, merchants mixed their languages in a free way; in other cases, they made full use of their linguistic repertoire for strategic gain (Guidi Bruscoli 2011, 2014b). Part of this strategy involved circulating information to particular actors at particular times, revealing the competitive advantage that news about certain markets could bring. It is unsurprising, in a sense, that merchants made "strategic choices", sometimes facilitated by a non-vehicular language, in order to curry all sorts of favours, thus mirroring forms of linguistic accommodation in other domains of activity. This was the case, for example, on the occasion of a famous embassy sent by Florence to France in the winter of 1461–1462 to congratulate the new king, Louis XI. The choice of the vernacular over Latin in this case meant that "the symbolic value of the linguistic choice was more important than the primary goal of being understood" (Lazzarini 2015: 246). In other cases,

---

11 In some cases, itinerant merchants provide a "semi-permanent presence" in weekly markets, such as in the towns of Achi (Guatemala) allowing particular vernaculars to survive. For centuries, "market networks have sustained multilingual regional spaces in which languages such as K'iche', Q'eqchi' and Kaqchikel are regularly spoken beyond their traditional areas in Guatemala" (Romero 2021: 630).

merchants played a role in spreading new variants in a community. Nevalainen and Raumolinen-Brunberg (2003), for example, found that the English Royal Court was influential in the diffusion of new northern variants but that these northern forms "were adopted by London merchants and first spread through correspondence in the City" – this is just one example of linguistic features that can be seen as a standardisation process from below (Elspaß 2021: 106).

Another particularly fertile area of investigation has been the study of merchant texts in order to discern evidence of mixed language writing (Wright 1999, 2012, 2013). More and more, scholars are looking to merchant writing for early evidence of how communication was negotiated among multilingual merchants, across distances that were geographically vast (Bowles and Brown 2022; Manni 2016; Sosnowski 2003). There has also been a renewed emphasis on the various typologies of merchant writing, and the different ways in which that writing might show a patterned linguistic variation. While the articles contained in this special issue take 'correspondence' in a broad sense to focus on letters and letter writers, merchant writing can also encompass a wide range of text types such as bills of exchange, accounts and account books, receipts, invoices, bills of lading and many more (for Italy, see Gobber and Milani 2002). One issue that still needs further investigation is a cross-cultural or cross-linguistic comparison of how merchant language varies across these different typologies. Even the question of what a 'letter' is, when viewed in historical perspective, is not straightforward when thinking about the past, especially as merchant writing is often found mixed together with other types of writing such as travel accounts, literary references, or interspersed with private and public accounts. Indeed, Meluzzi's (2023) recent investigation of the various languages present (Italian, German, French) in the Menzes family of merchants in Bolzano distinguishes between private, commercial and official correspondence, noting that "these documents show an elevated level of linguistic awareness in selecting different linguistic codes according to both the content and addressee of the letter" (Meluzzi 2023: 261).

What this research trajectory has revealed is the much greater presence of morpho-phonological variation than what had previously been recorded, as well as the high degree of lexical (and therefore cultural) exchange in much early European business writing. Scholars have for instance exploited merchant writing to investigate the presence of loanwords in merchant texts (Bowles and Brown 2022; Cella 2007, 2009, 2010; Kaislaniemi 2017a, 2017b; Scharinger 2023; Tiddeman 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023). Studies of lexical exchange have led to reinterpretations of the role of merchants in language history and standardisation, especially with regard to the degree of integration between different languages and the extent of code-mixing. By following the 'social life of words', new research paradigms are emerging such as 'lexical sociolinguistics' (Wright 2022), stressing the mixed nature of historical

non-literary writing. Other studies have sought to highlight the dialectal variety inherent in merchant texts. For example, Tomasin (2019) has recently provided a critical edition of merchant letters with full philological apparatus, showing the interesting mixed forms of early Tuscan and Occitan. Other studies of merchant communities in overseas territories have led to new insight into merchants and lexical exchange, such as the Italian communities in the City of London (Bradley 2018), while others still have been able to shed light on how languages can function as network formation in early modern Europe (Guidi Bruscoli 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016; Guidi Bruscoli and Lutkin 2017).[12] Indeed, languages themselves could form part of a broader communication strategy across various groups, resulting in often partial or semi-communication practices (Braunmüller 1996, 1997, 2000). Even merchant ship names can provide evidence for language mixing in the multilingual environment of medieval Britain (Trotter 2003). What these cases all point to is the multilingual competence of merchant writers, quickly adopting and adapting their linguistic repertoire to a multilingual environment and acquiring new skills to be able to engage in trade. The implications for language standardisation are that the histories of standard languages will need to be revised in order to account for this variation – and extension – of language at their origins.

In fact, Wright (2020) has recently suggested that the history of English can be rewritten in terms of a paradigm of variation. By considering the multilingual nature of business writing, it is possible to consider the multilingual origins of the history of English more generally. More precisely, Wright (2020: 13) notes that "[t]rade and craft guilds correlate with early adoption of monolingual supralocal English". Parallels across differing language traditions must be drawn carefully, however. For example, in the history of Italian, it is more difficult to suggest a similar hypothesis. It is well known that Italian was born as a written, literary language, following the success of the so-called 'three crowns' of Florence (Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio). Consequently, Italian has remained 'locked into literature' for most of its existence. Its codification in the early sixteenth century was based on this writing of the fourteenth century, while Italians continued to speak their local vernaculars (and in many centres of activity, also to write them). Nevertheless, certain authors are beginning to investigate the so-far untold history of 'Italian in contact with other languages', particularly with regard to non-literary writing (Carboni 2014; Petrocchi and

---

12 Much archival work is still to be done in order to recover the 'hidden' groups of merchants in foreign lands and territories, in order to reconstruct the history of particular trading groups who often travelled across large geographical distances. See Guidi Bruscoli (2016) for Italian merchants in English archives, as well as Guidi Bruscoli (2014b) on a Florentine merchant in Lisbon during the Portuguese empire. Other work on Italian merchants in London and Paris has looked as evidence of language contact (Trotter 2011). For a Florentine merchant and his correspondence with German-speaking clients, see Weissen (2000).

Brown 2023). Pioneering work by Tomasin has begun to look at the languages of non-Venetians and linguistic interaction, for example, but also the mixed language nature of merchant writing between Tuscans and non-Italian writers further afield (Tomasin 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2019). As new research becomes available on the large merchant networks that became established in early modern Europe (e.g. Puttevils 2016; Stanley 2018; Crailsheim 2020), historical sociolinguists will be better positioned to explore various aspects of social structure and linguistic variation in historical perspective in language standardisation.

As mentioned above, the articles in this special edition of *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* each address a specific question of the role of merchants in processes of standardisation in each author's particular language speciality. The commonality underlying each author's approach has been the focus on merchant writing and an aspect of language standardisation, looking at how merchants can be seen as agents of linguistic change across various European vernaculars at various points in time in historical perspective.

Joshua Brown's article "Dialect levelling and merchant writing in Renaissance Italy" focuses on one specific process in language standardisation, dialect levelling, in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century writing. He looks at verb polymorphy and the presence of devoicing in past participles to illustrate the infiltration and spread of these features in writing from north Italy, a typologically distinct linguistic area from Tuscan. He shows how merchants adopt a wide variety of forms, noting that the degree of polymorphy is generally much more present in merchant writing than in other types of writing from the past. Overall, Brown finds that the spread of the 1pl. verb Tuscan verb ending and unvoiced variants in past participles can be seen as a case study for the broader patterns of language evolution 'from below' that were unfolding in Renaissance Italy.

The focus of Andrea Sánchez Vicente's article "The acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by multilingual merchants: The case of seventeenth-century Spanish" is on multilingual merchants from the Low Countries and how they accommodated towards the Spanish norm of the seventeenth century. More precisely, she looks at these 'agents of linguistic change' in a total of 131 letters written in Spanish by four Dutch merchants to look at how multilingual merchants differ from monolingual norms and why this might be the case. The study reveals a large number of intra- and inter-speaker variation, showing how both accommodation and non-accommodation towards the standard is played out in the letters. The article shows how this variation can be seen as an instance of broader societal trends, showing how linguistic variation can be explained by considering the economic and social conditions underlying merchants' acquisition of linguistic repertoires.

The article "Comparing the register of seventeenth-century Dutch business letters to private letters: Formulaic language and French-origin items" by Marijke van der Wal and Gijsbert Rutten is based on the *Prize Papers,* i.e. documents that were confiscated during war times. Beginning with a definition of genre based on the situational context and communicative purpose, van der Wal and Rutten describe how commercial letters can be characterized in terms of particular phrases or expressions that are repeatedly exchanged between business partners during trade deals. Adopting both a quantitative and qualitative approach, they focus on formulaic phrases as well as specific foreign borrowings from French. This analysis allows them to consider the characteristics of traders' letters, showing how formulae do not constitute genre differences per se, but that the frequency of differences between the genres indicate different registers. Van der Wal and Rutten call for further research into the distribution of grammatical phenomena in the future, such as schwa-apocope and negation, noting that register differences may be even more pronounced when professional correspondence produced by large trading companies is taken into account.

In her article on "Dialect polishing and solidarity with 'the others': Merchants as language creators in the nineteenth century", Agnete Nesse looks at the linguistic choices at an intergenerational level, focusing on a group of merchants and their sons in Bergen during the nineteenth century. These merchants wrote Danish but also had some competence in German, English, and some French. At the time of Romanticism and national building, these men took a step back from their mixed city dialect and began studying Old Norse and rural dialects. In 1868, they formed an organization called *Vestmannalaget* 'the Westmen' that aimed at contributing to the creation of a new Norwegian standard. In contrast to 'the Westmen', in other parts of Norway, most promoters of the new standard language, who prided themselves in the use of their own dialects and cultures, had a rural background. As regards the Bergen merchants, Nesse finds that they had an ideological agenda to 'cleanse and polish' dialects in order to produce a refined, language standard.

The contributions to this special issue provide an insight into merchant writing in relation to language standardisation from different perspectives, with a focus on different languages and countries, different periods during which processes of language standardisation were going on. Given the wealth of material still to be explored, historical sociolinguistics will have the opportunity for years to come to further explore aspects of merchant writing, be it correspondence, accounts or other relevant texts, and their role in different processes of language standardisation in a wide range of languages.

References

Ayres-Bennett, Wendy. 2004. *Sociolinguistic variation in seventeenth-century France: Methodology and case studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bowles, Karissa & Joshua Brown. 2022. On the transfer of loanwords and code-intermediate phenomena from English to Italian. *Italiano LinguaDue* 14(2). 1392–1401.

Bradley, Helen. 2018. 'Saluti da Londra': Italian merchants in the City of London in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In Helen Fulton & Michele Campopiano (eds.), *Anglo-Italian cultural relations in the later middle lges*, 103–127. York: Boydell and Brewer.

Braunmüller, Kurt. 1996. Forms of language contact in the area of the Hanseatic League: Dialect contact phenomena and semicommunication. *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* 19(2). 141–154.

Braunmüller, Kurt. 1997. Communication strategies in the area of the Hanseatic League: The approach by semi-communication. *Multilingua* 16(4). 365–373.

Braunmüller, Kurt. 2000. On types of multilingualism in Northern Europe in the late Middle Ages: Language mixing and semicommunication. In Guðrún Thórhallsdóttir (ed.), *The Nordic languages and modern linguistics*, vol. 10, 61–70. Reykjavík: University of Iceland.

Braunstein, Philippe (ed.), 2021. *Alvise Mocenigo dalle Gioie, Ambasciatore di Venezia. Lettere e dispacci dalla Germania e dalla Francia, 1502–1506*. Rome: Viella.

Brown, Joshua. 2017. Multilingual merchants: The trade network of the 14th century Tuscan merchant Francesco di Marco Datini. In Esther-Miriam Wagner, Bettina Beinhoff & Ben Outhwaite (eds.), *Merchants of innovation. The languages of traders*, 235–251. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Brown, Joshua. 2020. Language history from below. Standardization and koineization in Renaissance Italy. *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* 6(1). 1–28.

Brown, Joshua. 2023. Untraced polymorphy and vernaculars in contact in Renaissance Italy. In Alessandra Petrocchi & Joshua Brown (eds.), *Languages and cross-cultural exchanges in Renaissance Italy*, 95–120. Turnhout: Brepols.

Carboni, Florence. 2014. L'ibridismo linguistico medievale e il ruolo dei mercanti nella nascita dell'italiano. In Carolina Pizzolo Torquato & Sergio Romanelli (eds.), *Estudos italianistas: ensino e aprendizagem da língua italiana no Brasil = Studi italianisti : insegnamento e apprendimento della lingua italiana in Brasile*, 195–224. Chapecó: Argos.

Carlucci, Alessandro. 2020. Opinions about perceived linguistic intelligibility in late-medieval Italy. *Revue Romane* 55. 140–165.

Ceccherini, Irene. 2008. La genesi della scrittura mercantesca. In Otto Kresten & Franz Lackner (eds.), *Régionalisme et Internationalisme. Problèmes de Paléographie et de Codicologie du Moyen Age*, 123–128. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Ceccherini, Irene. 2009. Merchants and notaries: Stylistic movements in Italian cursive scripts. *Manuscripta* 53. 239–283.

Ceccherini, Irene. 2010. Le scritture dei notai e dei mercanti a Firenze tra Duecento e Trecento: unità, varietà, stile. *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 24(26). 29–68.

Cella, Roberta. 2007. *Anglismi e francesismi nel registro della filiale di Londra di una compagnia mercantile senese (1305–1308). Identità e diversità nella lingua e nella letteratura italiana*, 189–204. Firenze: Franco Cesati.

Cella, Roberta. 2009. *La documentazione Gallerani-Fini nell'Archivio di Stato di Gent (1304–1309)*. Firenze: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo.

Cella, Roberta. 2010. Prestiti nei testi mercantili toscani redatti di là dalle Alpi. Saggio di glossario fino al 1350. *La lingua italiana: Storia, strutture, testi* 6. 57–99.

Crailsheim, Eberhard. 2020. Flemish merchant networks in Early Modern Seville. Approaches, comparisons, and methodical considerations. In Florian Kerschbaumer, Linda von Keyserlingk-Rehbein, Martin Stark & Marten Düring (eds.), *The power of networks. Prospects of historical network research*, 85–109. London: Routledge.

Dossena, Marina & Susan M. Fitzmaurice (eds.). 2006. *Business and official correspondence: Historical investigations*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Elspaß, Stefan, Nils Langer, Joachim Scharloth & Wim Vandenbussche (eds.). 2007. *Germanic language histories 'from below'*, 1700–2000. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Elspaß, Stephan. 2021. Language standardization in a view 'from below. In Wendy Ayres-Bennett & John Bellamy (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of language standardization*, 93–114. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Formentin, Vittorio. 2018. Una lettera mercantile in volgare romanesco della fine del Trecento. *Lingua e Stile* 53. 167–188.

Gobber, Giovanni & Celestina Milani. 2002. *Tipologia dei testi e tecniche espressive*. Milan: Vita e Pensiero.

Graser, Helmut & B. Ann Tlusty. 2009. Layers of literacy: Non-professional versus professional writing in a sixteenth-century case of fraud. In Marjorie Elizabeth Plummer & Robin Barnes (eds.), *Ideas and cultural margins in early modern Germany: Essays in honor of H. C. Erik Midelfort*, 31–47. Farnham/ Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Graser, Helmut & B. Ann Tlusty. 2011. Sixteenth-century street songs and language history 'from below. In Nils Langer, Steffan Davies & Wim Vandenbussche (eds.), *Language and history, linguistics and historiography*, 363–388. Oxford & New York: Peter Lang.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco. 2011. Circolazione di notizie e andamento dei mercati nel basso Medioevo. In Isa Lori Sanfilippo & Antonio Rigon (eds.), *Fama e Publica Vox nel Medioevo*, 121–146. Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco. 2014a. *Bartolomeo Marchionni "Homen de grossa fazenda" (ca. 1450–1530). Un mercante fiorentino a Lisbona e l'impero portoghese*. Florence: Olschki.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco. 2014b. Creating networks through languages: Italian merchants in late medieval and early modern Europe. In Andrea Caracausi & Christof Jeggle (eds.), *Commercial networks and European cities, 1400–1800*, 65–79. London: Pickering & Chatto.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco. 2015. I mercanti italiani e le lingue straniere. In Isa Lori Sanfilippo & Giuliano Pinto (eds.), *Comunicare nel Medioevo. La conoscenza e l'uso delle lingue nei secoli XII-XV. Atti del convegno (Ascoli Piceno, Palazzo dei Capitani, 28–30 novembre 2013)*, 103–131. Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco. 2016. London and its merchants in the Italian archives, 1380–1530. In Martin Allen & Matthew Davies (eds.), *Medieval merchants and money. Essays in honour of James L. Bolton*, 113–135. London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research.

Guidi Bruscoli, Francesco & Jessica Lutkin. 2017. Perception, identity and culture: The Italian communities in fifteenth-century London and Southampton revisited. In W. Mark Ormrod, Nicola McDonald & Craig Taylor (eds.), *Resident aliens in later Medieval England*, 89–104. Turnhout: Brepols.

Haugen, Einar. 1966. Dialect, language, nation. *American Anthropologist* 68(4). 922–935.

Haugen, Einar. 1994. Standardization. In R. E. Asher (ed.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*, 4340–4342. Oxford: Pergamon.

Kaislaniemi, Samuli. 2017a. *Reconstructing merchant multilingualism. Lexical studies of early English East India Company correspondence*. Helsinki: Unigrafia.

Kaislaniemi, Samuli. 2017b. The linguistic world of the early English East India Company: A study of the English factory in Japan, 1613–1623. *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 17(3). 59–82.

Koch, Peter & Wulf Oesterreicher. 2012. Language of immediacy – language of distance: Orality and literacy from the perspective of language theory and linguistic history. In Claudia Lange, Beatrix Weber & Göran Wolf (eds.), *Communicative spaces: Variation, contact, change. Papers in honour of Ursula Schaefer*, 441–473. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Labov, William. 1994. *Principles of linguistic change. Part I: Internal factors*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lazzarini, Isabella. 2015. Merchants. In Isabella Lazzarini (ed.), *Communication and conflict. Italian diplomacy in the Early Renaissance, 1350–1520*, 37–41. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lebsanft, Franz & Felix Tacke (eds.). 2020. *Manual of standardization in the Romance languages*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Li, Michelle. 2020. Language history from below: Pidgins and Creoles as examples. In Émilie Aussant & Jean-Michel Fortis (eds.), *Historical journey in a linguistic archipelago: Descriptive concepts and case studies*, 115–128. Berlin: Language Science Press.

Linn, Andrew R., Guro Sanden & Rebecca Piekkari. 2018. Language standardization in sociolinguistics and international business. Theory and practice across the table. In Tamah Sherman & Jiri Nekvapil (eds.), *English in business and commerce. Interactions and policies*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Magnusson, Lynne. 1999. *Shakespeare and social dialogue: Dramatic language and Elizabethan letters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Manni, Paola. 2016. Mercanti toscani in Europa. Sulla lingua delle Lettere dei Ricciardi ai loro compagni in Inghilterra (1295–1303). In Augusta Brettoni, Ernestina Pellegrini, Sandro Piazzesi & Diego Salvadori (eds.), *Studi per Enza Biagini*, 323–332. Florence: Firenze University Press.

Meluzzi, Chiara. 2023. Traders of goods, traders of languages: A historical sociolinguistic investigation of Bolzano archives. In Rita Franceschini, Matthias Hüning & Péter Maitz (eds.), *Historische Mehrsprachigkeit. Europäische Perspektiven*, 243–264. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Middleton, John. 2003. Merchants: An essay in historical ethnography. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9(3). 509–526.

Milroy, James & Lesley Milroy. 1991. *Authority in language: Investigating language prescription and standardisation*. London: Routledge.

Muljačić, Žarko. 1997. The relationship between the dialects and the standard. In Martin Maiden & Mair Parry (eds.), *The dialects of Italy*, 498–505. London: Routledge.

Nevalainen, Terttu & Helena Raumolin-Brunberg. 2003. *Historical sociolinguistics: Language change in Tudor and Stuart England*. London: Longman.

Petrocchi, Alessandra & Joshua Brown (eds.). 2023. *Languages and cross-cultural exchanges in Renaissance Italy*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Pountain, Christopher J. 2016. Standardization. In Adam Ledgeway & Martin Maiden (eds.), *The Oxford guide to the Romance languages*, 634–643. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Puttevils, Jeroen. 2016. *Merchants and trading in the sixteenth century*. New York: Routledge.

Rees Jones, Sarah. 2014. Civic literacy in later Medieval England. In Marco Mostert & Anna Adamska (eds.), *Writing and administration of Medieval towns: Medieval urban literacy I*, 219–230. Turnhout: Brepols.

Regis, Riccardo. 2017. How standard regional Italians set in: The case of standard Piedmontese Italian. In Massimo Cerruti, Claudia Crocco & Stefania Marzo (eds.), *Towards a new standard: Theoretical and empirical studies on the restandardization of Italian*, 145–175. Berlin-New York: Mouton De Gruyter.

Romero, Sergio. 2021. When ethnic boundaries and language boundaries mismatch. Standardization in Mayan languages in multilingual situations. In Wendy Ayres-Bennett & John Bellamy (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of language standardization*, 621–644. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rutten, Gijsbert & Rik Vosters. 2021. Language standardization 'from above. In Wendy Ayres-Bennett & John Bellamy (eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of language standardization*, 65–92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sadovski-Kornprobst, Lena. 2021. Multilingualism in Venetian Dalmatia: Studying languages and orality in written administrative documents from Split (fifteenth/sixteenth centuries). *Mediterranean Historical Review* 36(2). 217–236.

Schaeken, Jos. 2019. *Voices on birchbark. Everyday communication in Medieval Russia*. Leiden: Brill.

Scharinger, Thomas. 2023. The influence of French on sixteenth-century Italian. In Alessandra Petrocchi & Joshua Brown (eds.), *Languages and cross-cultural exchanges in Renaissance Italy*, 299–327. Turnhout: Brepols.

Sosnowski, Roman. 2003. Alcune osservazioni sulla influenza dell'italiano bancario e contabile sulle altre lingue europee (XIV -XVII secolo). In Stanisław Widłak, Maria Soro Maślanka & Roman Sosnowski (eds.), *Lingua e Letteratura italiana dentro e fuori la penisola*, 485–492. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Spufford, Peter. 2002. *Power and profit: The merchant in medieval Europe*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Stanley, Joseph F. 2018. Negotiating trade: Merchant manuals and cross-cultural exchange in the Medieval Mediterranean. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 30(1). 102–112.

Tiddeman, Megan. 2018. Lexical exchange with Italian in the textile and wool trades in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. In Robin Netherton & Gale Owen-Crocker. (eds) *Medieval clothing and textiles*, vol. 14, 113–140. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer.

Tiddeman, Megan. 2020. More sugar and spice: Revising Medieval Italian influence on the mercantile lexis of England. In Laura Wright (ed.), *The multilingual Origins of standard English*, 381–410. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Tiddeman, Megan. 2022. *The Cantelowe accounts. Multilingual merchant records from Tuscany*, 1450–1451. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tiddeman, Megan. 2023. Libri alienigeni: Evidence of Anglo-Italian language contact from the fifteenth-century port of Southampton. In Alessandra Petrocchi & Joshua Brown (eds.), *Languages and cross-cultural exchanges in Renaissance Italy*, 40–67. Turnhout: Brepols.

Tomasin, Lorenzo. 2016a. Documenti occitanici e balearici trecenteschi in un registro della cancelleria veneziana. *Cultura Neolatina* 76(3/4). 321–342.

Tomasin, Lorenzo. 2016b. Urban multilingualism. The languages of non-Venetians in Venice during the middle Ages. In Maria Selig & Susanne Ehrich (eds.), *Mittelalterliche Stadtsprachen*, 61–73. Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner.

Tomasin, Lorenzo. 2017. Testi in italiano antico di scriventi provenzali e catalani (secoli XIV-XV). *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, classe di Lettere* 9(2). 391–422.

Tomasin, Lorenzo. 2019. Sul contatto linguistico nella Romània medievale: le lettere di Bartolo de Cavalli alias Bartol de Savalls. Prima parte. *Estudis Romànics* 41. 267–290.

Tomasin, Lorenzo. 2021. *Europa romanza. Sette storie linguistiche*. Turin: Einaudi.

Trotter, David. 2003. Oceano vox: You never know where a ship comes from: On multilingualism and language-mixing in medieval Britain. In Kurt Braunmüller & Gisella Ferraresi (eds.), *Aspects of multilingualism in European language history*, 15–33. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Trotter, David. 2011. Italian merchants in London and Paris: Evidence of language contact in the Gallerani accounts, 1305–08. In Dominique Lagorgette & Tim Pooley (eds.), *Le changement linguistique en français: études en homage au professeur R. Anthony Lodge*, 209–226. Chambéry: Presses de l'Université de Savoie.

Vandenbussche, Wim. 2022. The pursuit of language standardization research as a mission for true sociolinguists. *Sociolinguistica* 36(1-2). 219–229.

Vincent, Nigel. 2006. Languages in contact in medieval Italy. In Anna Laura Lepschy & Arturo Tosi (eds.), *Rethinking languages in contact: The case of Italian*, 12–27. London: Legenda.

Wagner, Esther-Miriam & Bettina Beinhoff. 2017. Merchants of innovation: The languages of traders. In Esther-Miriam Wagner, Bettina Beinhoff & Ben Outhwaite (eds.), *Merchants of innovation. The languages of traders, 3–16*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Wagner, Esther-Miriam, Bettina Beinhoff & Ben Outhwaite (eds.), 2017. *Merchants of innovation. The languages of traders*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Weissen, Kurt. 2000. *Ci scrive in Tedescho!* The Florentine merchant-banker Tommaso Spinelli and his German-speaking clients (1435–72). *The Yale University Library Gazette* 74(3/4). 112–125.

Wright, Laura. 1999. Mixed-language business writing: Five hundred years of code-switching. In Ernst Håkon Jahr (ed.), *Language change: Advances in historical sociolinguistics*, 99–117. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Wright, Laura. 2012. On variation and change in London medieval mixed-language business documents. In Merja Stenroos, Martti Mäkinen & Inge Særheim (eds.), *Language contact and development around the North Sea*, 99–115. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Wright, Laura. 2013. Mixed-language accounts as sources for linguistic analysis. In Judith A. Jefferson & Ad Putter (eds.), *Multilingualism in medieval Britain (c. 1066–1520)*, 123–136. Turnhout: Brepols.

Wright, Laura. 2020. Introduction. In Laura Wright (ed.), *The multilingual origins of Standard English*, 3–15. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Wright, Laura. 2022. *The social life of words: A historical approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.