The Truth Alone Will Suffice: Traces of Spoken Language in Plato's *Apology of Socrates**

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Abstract: With the help of a theoretical framework proceeding from the study of the distinction between oral and written discourse in modern languages, this paper approaches some linguistic phenomena present in the *Apology of Socrates* — anacolutha, discourse markers, repetitions, enumerations, etc. — as traces of spoken language, consciously placed by Plato in his literary recreation of his master's oration. Thus, the claim made by Socrates at the beginning of the speech, that he has not prepared beforehand his defence, finds support in those stylistic marks, which contribute to enhancing the sense of spontaneity of his words.

Keywords: orality; immediacy; Plato; linguistics; stylistics; discourse analysis; spoken language in literature

1. Presentation

In the first few lines of Plato's *Apology*, Socrates tells us that his speech will lack the elaborate rhetotic of his prosecutors: he would rather speak 'with casual words' — τοῖς ἐπιτυχοῦσιν ὀνόμασιν — since the truth can be told plainly, with no complicated language:

> [1] 17b-c. οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἤ τι ἢ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἰρήκασιν, ὑμεῖς δέ μου ἀκούσεσθε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν — οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κεκαλλιεπημένους γε λόγους, ὥσπερ οἱ τούτων, ῥήμασί τε καὶ ὀνόμασιν οὐδὲ κεκοσμημένους, ἀλλ' ἀκούσεσθε εἰκῇ λεγόμενα τοῖς ἐπιτυχοῦσιν ὀνόμασιν — πιστεύω γὰρ δίκαια εἶναι ἃ λέγω — καὶ μηδεὶς ὑμῶν προσδοκησάτω ἄλλως· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δήπου πρέποι, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῇδε τῇ ἡλικίᾳ ὥσπερ μειρακίῳ πλάττοντι λόγους εἰς ὑμᾶς εἰσιέναι.[1]
>
> Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true; but you shall hear from me nothing but the truth. Not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged, but you will hear things said at random with the words that happen to occur to me. For I trust that what I say is just; and let none of you

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1 Greek text from Burnet's edition (1924). English translation by Fowler (1966) with some slight — and always noted — modifications.

> expect anything else. For surely it would not be fitting for one of my age to come before you like a youngster making up speeches.

Denying skill as an orator and shunning a style inappropriate for a man of his age are well-known *topoi* found in many forensic speeches;[2] furthermore, the seeming straightforwardness of the language serves to imply the veracity of the speech as a whole. The same idea underlies the dialogue between Socrates and Hermogenes reproduced in Xenophon's *Apology*.[3] Here Hipponicus' son warns Socrates to give more forethought to his defence speech:

> [2] X. *Ap*. 3.1-4. Οὐκ ἐχρῆν μέντοι σκοπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ὅ τι ἀπολογήσῃ; τὸν δὲ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀποκρίνασθαι· Οὐ γὰρ δοκῶ σοι ἀπολογεῖσθαι μελετῶν διαβεβιωκέναι;
>
> 'Socrates, ought you not to be giving some thought to what defence you are going to make?' That Socrates had at first replied, 'Why, do I not seem to you to have spent my whole life in preparing to defend myself?'

In this paper, I propose that Socrates' alleged improvisation in his speech is actually supported by the presence of some elements that evoke the unplanned, spontaneous nature of spoken language, in contrast to the formal completion to be found archetypically in written texts. These elements — most of which are no more than subtle brushstrokes, consciously placed by Plato in the text — serve to strengthen his argument and, at the same time, help to make his speech sound more realistic, natural and, in a word, human.

So, what oral-related phenomena are we referring to and how can we identify them in a written text? I initially read the *Apology* as part of a wider approach that takes into account the interrelation of orality and literacy in the composition of written works, with a view to identifying traces of spoken language. I will present my methodological framework in section (2). Section (3) contains my analysis of the data, providing in some cases contrastive examples obtained from a corpus of recorded conversations in modern English.[4] Illustrative passages have been extracted from the entire *Apology of Socrates*, but the initial parts of the first speech — *i.e.* exordium, proposition and refutation — have proven to be richer in the phenomena studied than the so-called digression, the epilogue and the second and third speeches.[5]

As a study of Platonic stylistics, this paper focuses on the defence speech of Socrates as a Platonic creation. To what extent this literary product relates to Socrates' *ipsissima*

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2 Cf. Riddell: 'The exordium [*sc*. of the *Apology*] may be completely paralleled, piece by piece, from the Orators' (1877, xxi). Riddell provides parallels for these two particular *topoi* taken from Lysias (xix. i, 2), Isaeus (x. i) and Isocrates (xii. 3).

3 This also appears in — and most likely originates from — the final chapters of *Memorabilia* IV.

4 I have used the records and transcript of *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English* database available online (SBCSAE in the references list).

5 The *Apology* has been traditionally divided in the following way: first speech (17a1-35d8): exordium (17a1-18a6), proposition (18a7-19a7), refutation (19a8-28b2), digression (28b3-34b5), peroration (34b6-35d8); second speech (35e1-38b9); third speech (38c1-42a5).

verba is beyond the scope and interest of my research.[6] Thus, there are a number of features of orality found in the speech whose presence does not necessarily represent what was actually said in Socrates' speech. The idea that the composition may contain some of Socrates' own linguistic idiosyncracies — which may well have been imitated by Plato and recognized by the audience — is indeed a very attractive one, but unfortunately cannot be proven from the data currently available.

2. The Study of Orality in Ancient Greek and the Language of the *Apology*

The study of orality raises some unavoidable questions when we are dealing with a dead language: first and foremost, whether the study itself is actually possible. It is certainly difficult to grasp how the linguistic analysis of literature that has been conceived and transmitted exclusively through writing would be able to provide relevant information about the way in which those who composed and read the texts talked in their everyday conversations. In addition, for obvious reasons, we are unable to witness these interactions directly. However, despite the fact that the only available source of the ancient Greek language is a corpus of written texts, using our intuition as speakers of a modern language we may identify in these texts certain elements of spoken language that we have never actually heard. Thus, the lively interactions of Attic comedy and the imagined conversations of Plato's dialogues have been repeteadly recognized by scholars as realistic recreations of the spoken language of the day. In these texts we find a different linguistic style to what we would expect in written works.

Orality and literacy are, therefore, more than physical means of communication; they involve two different ways of conceiving and producing discourse. The distinction between spoken and written goes beyond the material conditions of the message and sets specific linguistic conventions not necessarily associated with the nature of the transmision of a message. The possibilities arising from this distinction have been analyzed by students of modern languages used to working with corpora of both recorded natural conversations and literary texts originally written and intended for reading. Among other proposed frameworks,[7] that of German linguists Koch and Österreicher[8] has reaped especially fruitful benefits in its application to spoken/written variation in the Romance languages, addressing even historical stages for which the only

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6 Despite the considerable interest raised by this issue. See Slings & De Struycker (1994: 1-8), among others, on the reliability of Plato's *Apology* as a historical document.

7 The pioneering contributions of Chafe (1982 and 1987), Söll (1985) and, more recently, those of Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005) are worth mentioning. The framework proposed by Koch and Österreicher (see next note) is clearly related to them. All acknowledge the importance of the contributions made by Havelock (1963) in the methodological shift that led scholars to approach the question of orality differently. Within the field of ancient Greek, Thomas (1995) and Bakker (1997) are important points of reference, among other works. From a different but closely connected perspective, studies of linguistic interaction in ancient Greek literature based on Conversation Analysis approaches (cf. Minchin 2007 and van Emde Boas 2017) have also aided a better understanding of some aspects related to orality in ancient Greek.

8 Based on the book published for the first time in 1990 (Koch & Österreicher 1990), slighly modified in the Spanish translation of 2007 (Koch & Österreicher 2007, see 10-11 for an account of the additions introduced in the new edition).

evidence is found in written documents, assimilating them to so-called dead languages, such as ancient Greek or Latin.

Koch and Österreicher's proposal establishes a methodological distinction between medium (*Medium*) and mode or conception (*Konzeption*). *Medium* is concerned with how the message is physically transmitted by the speaker(s) or writer(s) to the addressee(s), whilst *Konzeption* deals with its inner composition: whether it is stylistically arranged and formulated in line with typical speech or writing standards, which the authors call 'immediacy' — typical of spoken language — and 'distance' — typical of written communication.[9] As the following figure [1] shows, the intersection of medium and conception produces a range of outcomes:

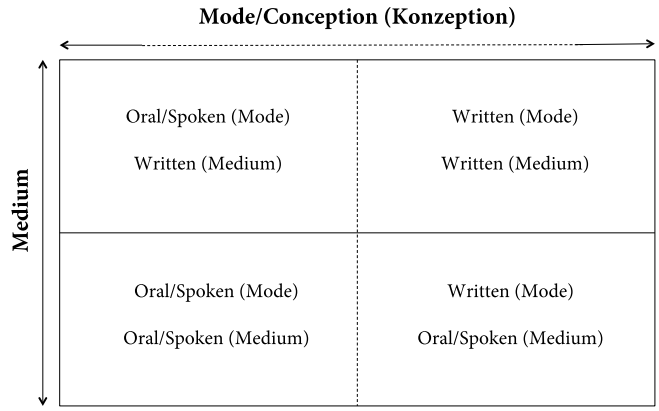

Fig. 1

Two of these prototypical situations present a harmonious combination between the material medium and the linguistic standard found in the message (oral/oral and written/written), while the other two demonstrate situations in which mode and medium do not coincide (oral/written and written/oral). At the same time, the division between the oral and written medium is clear, since most forms of communication are either written or spoken; the borders between written and oral conceptions are more subtle and many intermediate situations can be described between two extreme poles: at one end, the most typical spoken conception (the so-called *immediacy*) and at the other, the most typical written mode (the so-called *distance*).

Philosophical or theatrical dialogue, usually written as regards their medium, can be expected to show a number of features of orality since they strive for verisimilitude in the literary imitation of human speech (written in medium/oral in mode). This is actually the case of most of the dialogues of Plato, in which many of the phenomena that will be adduced in this paper may be also attested.[10] Professional oratory, on the other hand, is an activity that normally belongs to the opposed mixed category (oral in medium/written in mode), since it refers to the oral performance of speeches most likely prepared

9 Cf. also McCarthy 1993, 171 for a similar distinction using the terms 'medium' and 'mode'.

10 Cf. Verano (2018 and forthcoming a) for an approach to the literary dialogues of Plato from this methodological perspective.

beforehand, and writing is often involved in the creative process. For this reason, an orator is expected to employ a number of distance-related elements in his/her speech and produce a much more elaborate and complex type of discourse than otherwise found in oral interactions. Consequently, in a rhetorical composition like Plato's *Apology*, which claims to be a transcript of the speech made by Socrates but is most likely a piece of art created *ex professo* in a written format, the presence of this kind of elements is even more expected. As Slings & De Struycker write in their commentary, the *Apology* 'is a refined piece of work [that] can only be the fruit of long deliberation and patient polishing' (1996, 7). Features of linguistic distance typical of elaborate language are commonplace in Plato's text. Alongside these, however, we find some traces of archetypically spoken language that come to the surface here and there, reminding us that the speech is intended to seem spontaneous. They are neither mistakes nor oversights. On the contrary, the presence of these traces, elusive as they are, in a speech that opens with a claim for non-rhetorical diction, reveals the perfection of Plato's artistry.

3. Traces of Spoken Language (Immediacy) in Plato's *Apology*

This imitation of spontaneous discourse is reflected in some specific phenomena, which we will list and analyze in the following pages. These phenomena have been collected from certain corpus-based studies that offer different repertoires of the characteristics of spoken (modern) language.[11] Some of these phenomena, such as anacolutha or interjections, have been thoroughly discussed in the linguistic tradition, but we revisit them here with a view to understanding the stylistic aims defined above. Others, such as fragmentation, symmetry or enumeration have been paid less attention to in other studies but will be examined here.

3.1. Anacolutha (*ad sensum* Agreement / Contaminated Constructions)

One of the most obvious results of the interference of inmediacy patterns in written composition is the so-called anacoluthon or loss of syntactic coherence. Anacoluthon comprises a varying range of irregularities in syntax, such as *ad sensum* agreement, contamination of correlative constructions, deviant uses of cases, etc.[12] A very well-known example occurs at the beginning of the *Apology* in passage [3], where, after a parenthetical digression, the required infinitive of the verb πείθειν turns into a personal form — πείθουσι — breaking the syntactic scheme of the sentence:

> [3] 19e-20a. τούτων γὰρ ἕκαστος, ὦ ἄνδρες, οἷός τ' ἐστὶν ἰὼν εἰς ἑκάστην τῶν πόλεων τοὺς νέους — οἷς ἔξεστι τῶν ἑαυτῶν πολιτῶν προῖκα συνεῖναι ᾧ ἂν βούλωνται — <u>τούτους</u>

11 In the fourth chapter of their monograph (2007, 70-183), Koch & Österreicher gather a wide list of features of spoken discourse common in French, Italian and Spanish. Blanche-Benveniste (1998) proposes a classification of different syntactic figures repeteadly found in oral French. López Serena (2007) adapts and enriches Blanche-Benveniste's classification exploring both Spanish natural talk-in-interaction and its literary recreation.

12 For an inspiring and — as usual — pioneering contribution to the anacoluthon in ancient Greek and its relation to oral grammar, see Slings 1996. Reinhard published a classical study of the presence of anacolutha in Plato in 1920.

> πείθουσι τὰς ἐκείνων συνουσίας ἀπολιπόντας σφίσιν συνεῖναι χρήματα διδόντας καὶ χάριν προσειδέναι.
>
> For each of these men, gentlemen, is able to go into any one of the cities and persuade the young men, who can associate for nothing with whomsoever they wish among their own fellow citizens, to give up the association with those men and to associate with them and pay them money and be grateful besides.[13]

This loss of coherence can easily be interpreted as a sign of sponatenity in the production of discourse. The presence of an anacoluthon in a passage with a rather complex syntactic structure serves as to stop the growing communicative distance in the speech and return to the more informal tone that Socrates is supposedly employing. The following example, not far in the text from the first one, contains an instance of case disagreement between participle and personal pronoun:

> [4] 21c-d. διασκοπῶν οὖν τοῦτον — ὀνόματι γὰρ οὐδὲν δέομαι λέγειν, ἦν δέ τις τῶν πολιτικῶν πρὸς ὃν ἐγὼ σκοπῶν τοιοῦτόν τι ἔπαθον, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ διαλεγόμενος αὐτῷ — ἔδοξέ μοι οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ δοκεῖν μὲν εἶναι σοφὸς ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ μάλιστα ἑαυτῷ, εἶναι δ' οὔ· κἄπειτα ἐπειρώμην αὐτῷ δεικνύναι ὅτι οἴοιτο μὲν εἶναι σοφός, εἴη δ' οὔ.
>
> So examining this man — for I need not call him by name, but it was one of the public men with regard to whom I had this kind of experience, men of Athens — and conversing with him, this man seemed to me to seem to be wise to many other people and especially to himself, but not to be so; and then I tried to show him that he thought he was wise, but was not.

From this point of view, some of the fifteen anacolutha identified by Reinhard (1920)[14] in the *Apology* could be admired as intended rather than condemned as mere mistakes.[15]

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13 The passage has been discussed by almost every scholar and commentator of the *Apology*. Many have claimed indignation as a possible explanation for what is considered a deviation of the standard rule, but perhaps Slings and De Struycker (1996, *ad loc*.) are right when they see in the passage a great deal of irony instead of anger.

14 Located in the following passages: 19d, 19e-20a, 20c, 21c, 23a, 26e, 27d, 27e-28a, 28b-d, 29b-e, 37b, 40c-e, 40e-41a, 41a-b, 41b-c.

15 According to this, some places considered corrupt could be revisited. For instance, in the following passage:

> 17a. μάλιστα δὲ αὐτῶν ἓν ἐθαύμασα τῶν πολλῶν ὧν ἐψεύσαντο, τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἔλεγον ὡς χρῆν ὑμᾶς εὐλαβεῖσθαι μὴ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξαπατηθῆτε ὡς δεινοῦ ὄντος λέγειν.
>
> But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told — when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me, because I was a clever speaker.

The form χρῆν could be explained by attraction rather than be corrected to χρή as Slings & De Struycker suggest (1996, *ad loc*.):

> Although this [sc. χρῆν] is the reading of the primary MSS. (χρῆν BW: χρὴν T), confirmed by the old scholium ἔδει in T (ed. Greene, p. 4), it cannot possibly stand. According to Burnet, who defends it, the prosecutors had said 'it would have been well for you to be on your guard'; but they could only warn the judges beforehand on a future danger; they could not say that the jurors ought to have been on their guard for it in the past. ... so we should correct to χρή.

They become a powerful resource used to give the appearance of an unplanned speech, thus contributing to the verisimilitude of the display and helping to persuade the audience.

3.2. Discourse Markers

There is no required correspondence between the use of discourse markers and communicative immediacy. In other words, it is not entirely true that discourse markers appear more frequently in oral speech than in written texts. In all languages, however, there are specific subsets of markers or particles that are more likely to be found in natural occurring talk, as opposed to others more typical of communicative distance. One of these distinctly oral markers in ancient Greek seems to be the particle εἶεν — also spelled εἰέν — as in the following passage:

> [5] 18e. Εἶεν· ἀπολογητέον δή, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ ἐπιχειρητέον ὑμῶν ἐξελέσθαι τὴν διαβολὴν ἣν ὑμεῖς ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ ἔσχετε ταύτην ἐν οὕτως ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ.
>
> Well, then, I must make a defence, men of Athens, and must try in so short a time to remove from you this prejudice which you have been for so long a time acquiring.[16]

The particle[17] only occurs in drama, literary dialogue and oratory, that is, in genres highly engaged with spoken performance. Among other uses, it is employed to mark or establish boundaries in discourse, sometimes highlighting the importance of the new member for the argumentation line. It has been pointed out that the use of εἶέν as a progression marker instead of one of the more usual connectives of Attic prose creates an effect of spontaneity within a rather formal discourse structure (cf. Labiano 1998, 17). Indeed, transitions are crucial parts of the architecture of texts, and transition-marking elements tend to specialize, constituing specific subsets for the spoken and written standards. This seems to be the case of εἶέν. However, it is important to bear in mind that the oral specialization of an element does not always imply that the element has to be necessarily perceived as vulgar or informal. In fact, some studies suggest that

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Some other apparently irregular uses, such as the so-called apodotic καὶ δὴ καὶ in 18a1 (cf. Denniston 1954, 257; Slings & De Struyker 1996, *ad loc.*; the entire passage is quoted in example [15] could also be better understood as part of the pretended spontaneity of the speech).

16 It occurs again a few lines later in the speech:

> 19a-b. Ἀναλάβωμεν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τίς ἡ κατηγορία ἐστὶν ἐξ ἧς ἡ ἐμὴ διαβολὴ γέγονεν, ᾗ δὴ καὶ πιστεύων Μέλητός με ἐγράψατο τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην. εἶεν· τί δὴ λέγοντες διέβαλλον οἱ διαβάλλοντες;
>
> Now let us take up from the beginning the question, what the accusation is from which the false prejudice against me has arisen, in which Meletus trusted when he brought this suit against me. [Ø] What did those who aroused the prejudice say to arouse it?

And it appears again two times at the end of the work (34b and 36b).

17 The nature of this element as a part of speech is rather difficult to define. Labiano (1998) considers it an interjection that assumes, in some specific contexts, functions usually performed by particles (transition and thematic progression). A wider definition of the category of discourse markers could be inclusive of both usages. For a proposed adaptation of the concept of discourse marker to ancient Greek materials, cf. Verano (2018).

the transitional use of εἶεν, though characteristic of oral diction, should be considered as typical of a level of speech higher than that of everyday natural conversation.[18]

Typical of the lower varieties of common speech, on the other hand, would be the particle τοίνυν,[19] which also occurs in the *Apology* either with inferential value — see [6] within the dialogue with Meletus recreated by Socrates — or merely introducing a new element in a series (cf. Denniston 1954, 574-77), as in example [7]:

> [6] 26b-c. ὅμως δὲ δὴ λέγε ἡμῖν, πῶς με φῂς διαφθείρειν, ὦ Μέλητε, τοὺς νεωτέρους; ἢ δῆλον δὴ ὅτι κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν ἣν ἐγράψω θεοὺς διδάσκοντα μὴ νομίζειν οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει, ἕτερα δὲ δαιμόνια καινά; οὐ ταῦτα λέγεις ὅτι διδάσκων διαφθείρω;
>
> Πάνυ μὲν οὖν σφόδρα ταῦτα λέγω.
>
> Πρὸς αὐτῶν τοίνυν, ὦ Μέλητε, τούτων τῶν θεῶν ὧν νῦν ὁ λόγος ἐστίν, εἰπὲ ἔτι σαφέστερον καὶ ἐμοὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τουτοισί.
>
> But nevertheless, tell us, how do you say, Meletus, that I corrupt the youth? Or is it evident, according to the indictment you brought, that it is by teaching them not to believe in the gods the state believes in, but in other new spiritual beings? Do you not say that it is by teaching this that I corrupt them?
>
> Very decidedly that is what I say.
>
> Then, Meletus, for the sake of these very gods about whom our speech now is, speak still more clearly both to me and to these gentlemen.
>
> [7] 33d-e. πάντως δὲ πάρεισιν αὐτῶν πολλοὶ ἐνταυθοῖ οὓς ἐγὼ ὁρῶ, πρῶτον μὲν Κρίτων οὑτοσί, ἐμὸς ἡλικιώτης καὶ δημότης, Κριτοβούλου τοῦδε πατήρ, ἔπειτα Λυσανίας ὁ Σφήττιος, Αἰσχίνου τοῦδε πατήρ, ἔτι δ' Ἀντιφῶν ὁ Κηφισιεὺς οὑτοσί, Ἐπιγένους πατήρ, ἄλλοι τοίνυν οὗτοι ὧν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ διατριβῇ γεγόνασιν, Νικόστρατος Θεοζοτίδου, ἀδελφὸς Θεοδότου — καὶ ὁ μὲν Θεόδοτος τετελεύτηκεν ...
>
> And there are many of them present, whom I see; first Crito here, who is of my own age and my own deme and father of Critobulus, who is also present; then there is Lysanias the Sphettian, father of Aeschines, who is here; and also Antiphon of Cephisus, father of Epigenes. Then here are other whose brothers joined in my conversations, Nicostratus, son of Theozotides and brother of Theodotus, now Theodotus is dead ...

The distribution of the particle[20] suggests a conversational bias in the use of this element, perhaps connected to the etymological orientation towards the addressee present in τοι.[21] Again, Plato's choice of this particle over other possibilities helps us to

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18 Cf. Labiano 1998. His paper discusses thoroughly the 'colloquial' nature of this word, proposing a distinction between several levels of formality in spoken language (1998, 23). From my point of view, the distinction between immediacy and distance could be more suitable than its 'colloquial' condition to approach the stylistics of this element.

19 Cf. Denniston (1954, 568):

> τοίνυν is absent from Homer and Hesiod : it is rare in Lyric : much commoner in comedy than in tragedy : commoner in Attic, than in Ionic, prose : and commonest in those parts of Attic prose which approach most closely to the idiom of ordinary speech.

20 Cf. Rosenberg 1874.

21 The particle τοι itself occurs twice in the *Apology*, once with a clear addressee-oriented meaning (25c. ὦ τάν, ἀπόκριναι· οὐδὲν γάρ τοι χαλεπὸν ἐρωτῶ), once in combination with

position Socrates' intervention in the communicative context of the interaction between the orator and the audience.

3.3. Interjections

Typical of oral speech are full-blown uses of interjections and similar locutions such as imprecations and curse or swear words, which are usually unconsciously or even unintentionally uttered by the speaker in an outburst of anger, surprise or astonishment. The phrase οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία (17b and 26e) together with the more distinctively Socratic καὶ νὴ τὸν κύνα (22a) belong to the category of words connected with the spontaneity of talk-in-interaction in which they occur.

3.4. Traces of Discourse Production: Qualification Procedures and Comments

The continous flow of oral discourse is subjected to the constraints of temporality and, therefore, its formulation becomes a process in which the speaker has to confront different problems and difficulties as they appear, converting discourse production into a challenging activity that is not always successfully performed. Overcoming the problems that arise when putting a train of thought into words can leave certain traces behind in the final discourse, known as qualification procedures or comments and defined as 'somewhat like an explicit manifestation of a speaker's constant cognitive monitoring of his/her discourse production' (Gülich & Kotschi 1995, 35).

By introducing one of these qualification comments, the speaker announces that a given expression, despite being formulated by him/her, does not entirely correspond with his/her intended idea and should not be taken literally by the addressee. They are used by the speaker to acknowledge certain shortcomings in discourse production that can nonetheless be overcome by the addressee through the interpretation of the whole message. [22]

A very interesting formal procedure to mark qualification in ancient Greek is the use of the indefinite pronoun (τις, τι) to blur the literal meaning of an expression, as in examples [8] and [9]:

> [8] 22c. ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες ὥσπερ οἱ θεομάντεις καὶ οἱ χρησμῳδοί.
>
> But by [a sort of] nature and because they were inspired, like the prophets and givers of oracles.
>
> [9] 30e. ἐὰν γάρ με ἀποκτείνητε, οὐ ῥᾳδίως ἄλλον τοιοῦτον εὑρήσετε, ἀτεχνῶς — εἰ καὶ γελοιότερον εἰπεῖν — προσκείμενον τῇ πόλει ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὥσπερ ἵππῳ μεγάλῳ μὲν καὶ γενναίῳ, ὑπὸ μεγέθους δὲ νωθεστέρῳ καὶ δεομένῳ ἐγείρεσθαι ὑπὸ μύωπός τινος.

γάρ (29a. τὸ γάρ τοι θάνατον δεδιέναι, ὦ ἄνδρες, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ δοκεῖν σοφὸν εἶναι μὴ ὄντα· δοκεῖν γὰρ εἰδέναι ἐστὶν ἃ οὐκ οἶδεν) rendering a similar value of assent (of the speaker) to the new element introduced in discourse which Denniston adscribes (1954, 88) to the use of γάρ τοι after demonstratives. The use of these markers and other strategies involving the interlocutor's presence, such as vocatives or direct questions to the audience are clearly elements of immediacy in communication.

22 The Greek phrase ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν is usually employed with this function. Cf. Verano (2016) for a complete account of these procedures and the formal elements involved in the language of Plato's dialogues.

> For if you put me to death, you will not easily find another, who, to use a rather absurd figure, attaches himself to the city as a [sort of] gadfly to a horse.

When he adds τινί to the word φύσει and qualifies it as in the passage quoted in [6], Socrates admits that perhaps other words would be preferable to φύσις for conveying whatever he is trying to say, but that, since the flow of speech cannot stop — and the speech itself has not been prepared beforehand — he has to compromise and go on. The orator thus warns the audience and trusts that they will let him continue.[23] The use of the indefinite pronoun suggests that the speaker has not been able to find a better expression and ensures that the speech remains more typical of spoken language rather than of written composition.

3.5. Fragmentation

According to Chafe (1987), spoken language tends to lean towards fragmentation. Whilst written texts prefer complicated constructions, oral discourse is usually organized by juxtaposition of medium-sized independent intonation units, which appear one next to the other and avoid subordination. [24] The addressee processes the information contained in each of those 'chunks' and reconstructs the intended relationship between them by means of implicatures based on the principle of relevance. This makes the parataxis (*i.e.* apposition, non-specific coordination [καί], etc.) of intonation units a construction pattern typical of spoken language.[25] This pattern has been attested in ancient Greek, particularly in compositions with a distinct oral stamp, such as epic poetry or dialogue.[26] It can also be found in the *Apology*:

> [10] 18b. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνοι δεινότεροι, ὦ ἄνδρες, οἳ ὑμῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκ παίδων παραλαμβάνοντες ἔπειθόν τε καὶ κατηγόρουν ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἀληθές, | ὡς ἔστιν τις

---

23 It is difficult to establish a strict line of separation between the cases in which the pronoun is used as qualification marker and those in which it refers to an actual uncertainty, as in the following example:

> 20d. ἐγὼ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, δι' οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ διὰ σοφίαν τινὰ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ἔσχηκα. ποίαν δὴ σοφίαν ταύτην;
>
> The fact is, men of Athens, that I have acquired this reputation on account of nothing else than a sort of wisdom. What kind of wisdom is this?

See Verano (2016, 138-140) for a hypothesis on the theoretical relationship between modality and qualification related to this sort of expression.

24 Cf. Bakker (1997, 47):

> Chafe calls these units 'intonation units', emphasizing their physical, empirically observable quality as units of speech. It is intonation units that are mainly reponsible for what might be called the fragmented style of spoken discourse, as opposed to the more fluent and integrated quality of written discourse.

Cf. Chafe (1982 and 1987) on fragmentation and integration as structural features of written and oral discourse.

25 For the use and value of καί sentences as an orality feature in ancient Greek, see Trenkner 1960.

26 Bakker (1997) has shown the importance of this pattern in the composition of Homeric verse. Verano (2015 & 2017) studies its presence in Platonic dialogue.

> Σωκράτης σοφὸς ἀνήρ, | τά τε μετέωρα φροντιστὴς | καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς πάντα ἀνεζητηκὼς | καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν.
>
> But those others are more dangerous, gentlemen, who gained your belief, since they got hold of most of you in childhood, and accused me without any truth, saying, 'There is a certain Socrates, a wise man, a ponderer over the things in the air and one who has investigated the things beneath the earth and who makes the weaker argument the stronger'.

The bars marked at the end of the passage quoted in [10] show how Socrates includes each new intonational piece using mere juxtaposition and coordination, with each piece a new complete informational unit. The addition of a new discourse member often also leaves the way open to the generation of semantic nuances through conversational implicature. A very frequent case is the appositional construction that is interpreted as a reformulation in discourse, as in [11]:

> [11] 32a. Μεγάλα δ' ἔγωγε ὑμῖν τεκμήρια παρέξομαι τούτων, οὐ λόγους ἀλλ' ὃ ὑμεῖς τιμᾶτε, ἔργα.
>
> I will give you powerful proofs of this, not mere words, but what you honor more — actions.

Where the last element — ἔργα — serves as to reformulate and clarify the reference of the previous member — ὃ ὑμεῖς τιμᾶτε —, with no need to introduce an explicit marker of paraphrase (*v.g.* English 'that is to say', 'in other words', etc.).[27] The appositional construction, which relies on the intonational distinction between discourse members, brings to the forefront the oral nature of the communication process and connects with the procedures of self-correction and discourse monitoring formerly mentioned (3.4.), as well as the enumeration figures that will be dealt with below (3.7).

3.6. Figures of Symmetry

The so-called figure of symmetry comprises a number of discourse phenomena based on the repetition of lexical or syntactic material, either by the same interlocutor or by a different one (in dialogue).[28] Spoken language is extremely prone to reiteration; the following image shows the transcription of the extract of a conversation from the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*, which illustrates how iterativity works in actual modern conversations:

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27 Cf. Verano (2015, 258-307 and 2017) for a study of such appositions introducing paraphrases in Plato's *Republic*.

28 Cf. Blanche-Benveniste (1998) and López Serena (2007, 219-223) for a first approach to the figure and Bazzanella (1996 and 2011) for a thorough study of the values of repetition in discourse. Despite the fact that linguistic research has only recently focused on this kind of phenomena, repetition in speech has been paid a great deal of attention in rhetorical theory (cf. Lausberg 1963, §242-273 and Fréderic 1985 on this subject in particular).

```
384.13 384.93   JAMIE:          [She's] pregnant.
384.93 385.88                   She's totally pregnant.
385.88 386.33   HAROLD:         Oh.
386.33 387.78   JAMIE:          .. It's not .. eating too much,
387.78 388.38                   she's pregnant.
```

Apud SBCSAE (*Lambada* 384.13)

One of the participants in the conversation — the one named *Jamie* — is very interested in making it clear that her neighbour is pregnant, and she repeats the same words again and again in order to emphasize them. The following figure displays the structure of the figure:[29]

She	just	looks		**pregnant**
She's				**pregnant**
She's			totally	**pregnant**
[...]				
She's				**pregnant**

Fig. 2

In the ficticious conversations contained in Plato's dialogues, repetitions across interlocutors have different functions, particulary with regards to interpersonal coherence.[30] As the speech of a single orator, the *Apology* contains exclusively monological repetitions, which only partially resemble the one quoted above. Certainly, in Plato's text the repeated words or expressions are always fully integrated in syntactic periods, diverging from the merely emphatic reiteration shown in figure [2]. But, in any case, this kind of recurrence is a pattern of inmediacy rather than of distance. As a result, when it is used, the speech is far more reminiscent of spoken language. Thus, in the following passage:

> [12] 17a. μάλιστα δὲ αὐτῶν ἓν ἐθαύμασα τῶν πολλῶν ὧν ἐψεύσαντο, τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἔλεγον ὡς χρῆν ὑμᾶς εὐλαβεῖσθαι μὴ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξαπατηθῆτε ὡς δεινοῦ ὄντος λέγειν. τὸ γὰρ μὴ αἰσχυνθῆναι ὅτι αὐτίκα ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐξελεγχθήσονται ἔργῳ, ἐπειδὰν μηδ' ὁπωστιοῦν φαίνωμαι δεινὸς λέγειν, τοῦτό μοι ἔδοξεν αὐτῶν ἀναισχυντότατον εἶναι, εἰ μὴ ἄρα δεινὸν καλοῦσιν οὗτοι λέγειν τὸν τἀληθῆ λέγοντα· εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦτο λέγουσιν, ὁμολογοίην ἂν ἔγωγε οὐ κατὰ τούτους εἶναι ῥήτωρ.
>
> But I was most amazed by one of the many lies that they told — when they said that you must be on your guard not to be deceived by me, because I was a clever speaker. For I thought it the most shameless part of their conduct that they are not ashamed because they

29 These figures based on cells are inspired by those proposed by Blanche-Benveniste (1998) for the analysis of syntax of spoken French, also employed by López Serena (2007) for Spanish. They are intended to better visualize the symmetries and other phenomena in discourse, not to provide a specific segmentation of the elements included in the cells.

30 Cf. Verano (2016a) for a complete account of the functions of repetition in Platonic dialogue.

will immediately be convicted by me of falsehood by the evidence of fact, when I show myself to be not in the least a clever speaker, unless indeed they call him a clever speaker who speaks the truth; for if this is what they mean, I would agree that I am an orator — not after their fashion.

The triple occurrence of the adjective δεινός and the infinitive λέγειν in such a short space, as shown in figure [3], not only becomes a way of emphasizing an idea, it also attacks the principle of *variatio* expected of more highly elaborated texts and reproduces the redundancies typical of oral formulation, approaching the use of repetition as a mark of insistence — among other functions — in everyday conversations.

		ὡς	**δεινοῦ**	ὄντος			**λέγειν**	[...]
ἐπειδὰν μηδ' ὁπωστιοῦν	φαίνωμαι		**δεινὸς**				**λέγειν**	[...]
			δεινὸν		καλοῦσιν	οὗτοι	**λέγειν**	[...]

Fig. 3

Not all repetitions are merely emphatic. Some of them also contribute to the speech structure, helping the speaker organize discourse members based on the symmetries that they set out, occassionally, as in example [13], with the concurrence of other procedures, such as the correlative μέν... δέ particles:

[13] 17d-18a. ὥσπερ οὖν ἄν, εἰ τῷ ὄντι ξένος ἐτύγχανον ὤν, συνεγιγνώσκετε δήπου ἄν μοι εἰ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ φωνῇ τε καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ ἔλεγον ἐν οἷσπερ ἐτεθράμμην, καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν τοῦτο ὑμῶν δέομαι δίκαιον, ὥς γέ μοι δοκῶ, τὸν μὲν τρόπον τῆς λέξεως ἐᾶν — ἴσως μὲν γὰρ χείρων, ἴσως δὲ βελτίων ἂν εἴη — αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο σκοπεῖν καὶ τούτῳ τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν, εἰ δίκαια λέγω ἢ μή· ...

Hence, just as you would, of course, if I were really a foreigner, pardon me if I spoke in that dialect and that manner in which I had been brought up, so now I make this request of you, a fair one, as it seems to me, that you disregard the manner of my speech — for perhaps it might be worse and perhaps better — and observe and pay attention merely to this, whether what I say is just or not.

ἴσως	μὲν	γὰρ	χείρων
ἴσως	δὲ		βελτίων ἂν εἴη

Fig. 4

The repeated expressions can experience some changes, either related to inflexion, as in number [14], where a repetition occurs in the right periphery of two consecutive sentences: εἶναι δ' οὔ and εἴη δ' οὔ; or related to word order, as in number [15] and figure [5], where the words ἀληθές οὐδὲν reappear in reverse position:

[14] 21c-d. ἔδοξέ μοι οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ δοκεῖν μὲν εἶναι σοφὸς ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ μάλιστα ἑαυτῷ, εἶναι δ' οὔ· κἄπειτα ἐπειρώμην αὐτῷ δεικνύναι ὅτι οἴοιτο μὲν εἶναι σοφός, εἴη δ' οὔ.

... this man seemed to me to seem to be wise to many other people and especially to himself, but not to be so; and then I tried to show him that he thought he was wise, but was not.

[15] 17a-b. καίτοι ἀληθές γε ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν οὐδὲν εἰρήκασιν ...

... and yet there is hardly a word of truth in what they have said.

οὗτοι μὲν οὖν, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἤ τι ἢ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἰρήκασιν ...

Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true;

	ἀληθές	γε	ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν		**οὐδὲν**	εἰρήκασιν
[...]						
ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω				ἤ τι ἢ	**οὐδὲν**	
	ἀληθὲς					εἰρήκασιν

Fig. 5

Together with the repetition of ἀληθές οὐδὲν in chiastic position, it is worth noticing the presence of the formula ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω,[31] which makes the symmetry explicit and marks the end of the digression and the return to the main topic.

3.7. Figures of Enumeration

The figure of enumeration refers to the parataxis of different elements rendering the same syntactic function in a sentence, as in the English example, where the speaker repeats an utterance and substitutes ‘fine’ for ‘really fun’:

```
1250.35 1251.60 MILES:              [It- it-] it was interesting.
1251.60 1252.25 JAMIE:          (TSK) (H) No=,
1252.25 1253.05                 .. I <X went X> there before,
1253.05 1253.75                 it was fine.
1253.75 1254.80                 .. it was [really fun].
1253.92 1255.32 HAROLD:                   [You were the=re] before?
```

Apud SBCSAE (*Lambada* 1250.35)

it	was	**fine**
it	was	**really fun**

Fig. 6

This kind of enumeration is closely connected with discourse production processes. It shows how speakers constantly review, correct and rephrase their words, and how discourse production is a very dynamic activity. Perhaps contrary to what could be expected, this phenomenon, clearly associated to the most immediate standards of oral communication, occurs in Greek literature and is attested in the *Apology*:

31 Cf. des Places (1929) and more recently Verano (2016a) on these formulae.

[16] 25a. Ἀλλ’ ἄρα, ὦ Μέλητε, μὴ οἱ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, οἱ ἐκκλησιασταί, διαφθείρουσι τοὺς νεωτέρους;

But, Meletus, those in the assembly, the assemblymen, don’t corrupt the youth, do they?

οἱ	ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ	
οἱ	ἐκκλησιασταί	διαφθείρουσι τοὺς νεωτέρους

Fig. 7

In number [16] the paraphrastic activity that makes Socrates elaborate on the first expression — οἱ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ — with a second one, which is rather synonymous — οἱ ἐκκλησιασταί — is evidence of the speaker’s difficulty in finding the right expression, an issue typically associated with spontaneous oral discourse. Or in number [17]:

[17] 18b. ἐμοῦ γὰρ πολλοὶ κατήγοροι γεγόνασι πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ πάλαι πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη καὶ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς λέγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ μᾶλλον φοβοῦμαι ἢ τοὺς ἀμφὶ Ἄνυτον, καίπερ ὄντας καὶ τούτους δεινούς· ...

For many accusers have risen up against me before you, who have been speaking for a long time, many years already, and saying nothing true.

γεγόνασι	πρὸς ὑμᾶς	καὶ	πάλαι
			πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη

Fig. 8

Where πολλὰ ἤδη ἔτη appears to be a new attempt to express a notion of time, rephrasing with more accuracy the content already expressed (more ambiguously) by πάλαι. A similar instance is also noticeable in number [18], where the original local expression is succesively substituted, in such a way that every new verbalization adds a piece of new information, contributing towards a more complete picture of the event narrated by Socrates:

[18] 17c-d. καὶ μέντοι καὶ πάνυ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦτο ὑμῶν δέομαι καὶ παρίεμαι· ἐὰν διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν λόγων ἀκούητέ μου ἀπολογουμένου δι’ ὥνπερ εἴωθα λέγειν καὶ ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἐπὶ τῶν τραπεζῶν, ἵνα ὑμῶν πολλοὶ ἀκηκόασι, καὶ ἄλλοθι, μήτε θαυμάζειν μήτε θορυβεῖν τούτου ἕνεκα.

And, men of Athens, I urgently beg and beseech you if you hear me making my defence with the same words with which I have been accustomed to speak both in the market place at the bankers tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, not to be surprised or to make a disturbance on this account.

δι' ὥνπερ εἴωθα λέγειν	καὶ	ἐν ἀγορᾷ	
		ἐπὶ τῶν τραπεζῶν	
		ἵνα ὑμῶν πολλοὶ ἀκηκόασι,	καὶ ἄλλοθι

Fig. 9

Even more complex sequences could be revisited and perhaps better understood by bearing in mind that what Socrates is doing, or at least what Plato wants us to believe he

is doing, is improvising a spontaneous speech. Not surprisingly, in the passage quoted in [19], in which Socrates criticizes the affected and pretentious — that is, *distant* — style employed by his prosecutors, a thorough examination of the text reveals some of these figures of oral — that is, *immediate* — syntax, as shown in figures [10] and [11]:

> [19] 17b-c. οὖτοι μὲν οὖν, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ λέγω, ἤ τι ἢ οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἰρήκασιν, ὑμεῖς δέ μου ἀκούσεσθε πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν — οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κεκαλλιεπημένους γε λόγους, ὥσπερ οἱ τούτων, ῥήμασί τε καὶ ὀνόμασιν οὐδὲ κεκοσμημένους, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκούσεσθε εἰκῇ λεγόμενα τοῖς ἐπιτυχοῦσιν ὀνόμασιν — πιστεύω γὰρ δίκαια εἶναι ἃ λέγω — καὶ μηδεὶς ὑμῶν προσδοκησάτω ἄλλως· ...
>
> Now they, as I say, have said little or nothing true; but you shall hear from me nothing but the truth. Not, however, men of Athens, speeches finely tricked out with words and phrases, as theirs are, nor carefully arranged, but you will hear things said at random with the words that happen to occur to me. For I trust that what I say is just; and let none of you expect anything else.

οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία	ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι		κεκαλλιεπημένους γε	λόγους,	
			ὥσπερ οἱ τούτων		ῥήμασί τε καὶ ὀνόμασιν
		οὐδὲ	κεκοσμημένους		

Fig. 10

ἀκούσεσθε	εἰκῇ	λεγόμενα
	τοῖς ἐπιτυχοῦσιν ὀνόμασιν	

Fig. 11

4. Final Remarks

Our knowledge of the nature of spoken language has increased dramatically in recent decades. New frameworks and individual studies based on modern languages have provided a very helpful set of tools through which the research into orality and its presence in the written texts of corpus languages such as ancient Greek can be undertaken in better conditions than ever.

Despite the above, research of this nature must be carried out very cautiously. Reconstructing the actual way ancient Greek people spoke is a desideratum; but identifying oral-related constructions which are present in the texts and discovering the function that they may perform in the linguistic structure of discourse is now possible and desirable for many reasons: it would contribute towards explaining the difussion of linguistic changes and to our understanding of the configuration of stylistic traditions. Many of these phenomena have already been observed and studied as mistakes or deviations from the written standard and perhaps they should be revisited within a coherent frame, for example, as archetypically oral phenomena contained in written works.

In the particular case of Plato, the verbal patterns related to the oral domain play a very important role in the artistic language of the dialogues and also, as I have tried to show, in the *Apology*, a sophisticated piece of rhetorical art that contains a number of features of spoken language, introduced as traces of the pretended spontaneity claimed by Socrates for his speech. Phenomena such as anacolutha, repetitions, enumerations, the use of specific discourse markers and the appositional style engage the language of the *Apology* with some patterns of oral everyday communication and with the linguistic conventions of the standards of communicative immediacy. These phenomena are woven into the text alongside other elements in the complex nature of Plato's *modus scribendi*. Their study could shed some light on the inner structure of Plato's imitation of human speech, thus helping us to better understand some of the mysteries of his art.

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