'Spoken' Sahidic. Gleanings from Non-Literary Texts[*]

Tonio Sebastian Richter, Leipzig

A few years ago, I was told the famous story about how Polotsky started reading a Danish grammar when he set sail from Israel, and was fluently speaking when he arrived in Copenhagen. Some time later, I heard the same story, with just one slight difference: according to this version, Polotsky was learning Danish during his *flight* to Copenhagen. Apart from the fact that Polotsky's – at any rate – amazing ability to learn languages is of less importance for our purpose than his admirable capacity for analyzing languages and thinking about language, one may learn from the example that there is, or can be, a strong teleological impetus directing the change of oral tradition. This is not at all the case with change and shift in natural languages. Although influenced by internal as well as external factors,[1] language change has no *telos*, and thus, no forseeable development; its 'guide' is sometimes called 'the invisible hand'.[2] If processes of language change cannot possibly be predicted, they still can be described, and it is wellknown what significant insights into language change are given to us by the Egyptian-Coptic language. However, there is a serious difficulty: the main site of change is always the spoken communication, where language occurs in its 'fluid' form, as it were.[3] What *we* have and know from written texts, however, yields evidence of written language, of language in a much more 'solid' state of matter, coagulated in one or several standard varieties.

A most intriguing issue concerning spoken vs. written language is their systemic relationship to each other.[4] According to currently valid ideas, no type simply depends on the other one, rather, both spoken and written represent different modes of basically identical possibilities of *the* language, the 'langue'. What *differences* are there? From a descriptive point of view, linguists have counted a number of 'universal' features, depending on the different modality of spoken vs. written language (see fig. 1) and resulting in structural differences at all levels of language use (see fig. 2).

SPOKEN LANGUAGE	WRITTEN LANGUAGE
• Exists in an aural medium in real time	• Exists visually and permanently
• Is accompanied by errors, hesitations, pauses, false starts, redundancy	• Hesitations and errors have been removed.

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1 Cf. e.g. Labov (1994); Milroy (1992); Chambers & al. (2002).
2 Cf. Keller (1994); García (1997).
3 Cf. Chafe (1984: 95), Jahandarie (1999: 135f.).
4 Cf. Akinnaso (1982); Biber (1986 and 1988); Chafe (1985); Chafe & Danielewicz (1987); Chafe & Tannen (1987); Cmejrková & al. (1994); Fiehler (1994); Firbas (1995); Gibbon & al. (1998); Gumperz & al. (1984); Halliday (1985 and 1987); Hildyard (1984); Jahandarie (1999); Olson & Torrance (1991); Redeker (1984); Stenström & Aijmer (2004); Tannen (1982, 1984b and 1984c); Wilson (2000).

• Hearer is present, giving a shared context between speaker and hearer which can be refered to implicitly, with words like *that*, *here*, *now*.	• No speaker is present, there is neither a shared context nor the possibility of feedback or interruption.
• Is contextualized by paralinguistic and kinesic features such as voice quality, gesture, and body language.	• Decontextualized speech, analysis in sentences, words, and segments is provided in the text.
• Has pragmatic advantages in many cases	• Usually has social priority

Fig. 1: Spoken vs. written language in terms of modality (Barton 1994)

Features typically to be attributed to spoken language are e.g. the preference of paratactic vs. hypotactic construction, a lower variety of conjuctions and clause conjugations, the frequent occurence of elliptic and anakolouthic constructions at the syntax level; a lower semantic variation, the frequency of semantic commonplaces and of deictic expressions referring to non-verbal contexts at the semantic level; variety in phonetic realizations, elision, reduction, assimilation etc. at the levels of phonetics and prosody, and, without direct correspondences in written language, varieties in pitch, volume, and speed of speaking.

SPOKEN LANGUAGE	WRITTEN LANGUAGE
• Paratactic constructions, 'horizontal' syntax: *and*'s and *then*'s	• Hypotactic constructions, 'vertical' syntax: *which*'s and *that*'s
• Lower variety of conjuctions and clause conjugations	• Higher variety of conjuctions and clause conjugations
• Lower semantic variety, frequent use of archilexemic words and commonplaces	• Higher semantic variety, homonymous expressions
• Anakolouthic and elliptic constructions	• Clear and complete sentences
• Basic unit: utterance or idea-unit.	• Basic unit: sentence
• Frequency of deictic expressions refering to non-verbal context actualities	

Fig. 2: Spoken vs. written language in terms of word choice and structure (Barton 1994)

However, at least the most syntactic and semantic features are by no means distinctive. Depending on genre and function, written texts can be more or less close to spoken language (and vice versa), be it with or without intention.[5] Some artificial dialogues in Jane Austen's novels, for instance, are highly 'written' in style and may not give an idea of spoken English of that time, while the utterances of underdogs from Charles Dickens' text-world may actually convey impressions of genuine contemporary sound. Modern literature provides famous cases of highly elaborate imitations of non-standard language within written texts, up to spoken dialects, linguistic group codes, and even the idiosyncratic, incoherent inner dialogue of human thought: just think of Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, or Joyce's Ulysses.[6] However, certain most common speaker strategies and features of spoken language can hardly be reproduced in written texts without a heavy loss of comprehensibility at the reader's end, due to the lack of the pragmatic setting (i.e., the 'modality' of Barton 1994) regularly surrounding spoken communication, which is indispensable for connoting meanings of speech units, or intentions of speech acts.

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5   On the overall 'permeability' between spoken and written medium, cf. Chafe (1992: 24).
6   Cf. Seltzer Krauthammer 1999; for a Latin example see Chafe (1981); cf. also Meurman-Solin (1999), Miethaner (1999), Taavatseinen & al. (1999) and Schneider (2002: especially his category 5 – 'invented', 79-81).

What about the evidence of Coptic? Can we catch a glimpse of spoken Coptic through the mirror of written texts?[7]

Hans Jakob Polotsky was the first scholar who applied the structuralist concept of language system to Coptic, and it was through him that terms like 'language standard', 'norm', and 'variety' have been introduced into Coptic linguistics. In his writing about Coptic grammatical structures, Polotsky himself revealed a bias towards the Biblical standard variety of Sahidic Coptic. Apart from its high degree of regularity, it is the direct comparability to the Greek *Vorlage* that probably awoke Polotsky's particular favour, for many of his carefully chosen examples receive their conclusive force just by comparison of grammatical strategies used in the Coptic target language to those employed in the Greek source laguage.[8] Although I do not consider Coptic to be a mixed language,[9] I do think Biblical Coptic was shaped by intentional imitation of stylistic registers of Biblical Greek as well as by unintentional choice of certain means of expessions which would not – at least not in the same frequency and distribution – be found in non-translated written texts, let alone in spoken Coptic. Such phenomena, called translationese features, are well-known to text linguists.[10] For my purpose, however, this kind of Coptic would be most inappropriate, representing eminently *written* language in some regards. It was Ariel Shisha-Halevy in his exploration of Shenoute's language who drew attention to quite another standard of Sahidic Coptic, different not so much in terms of single grammatical forms or dialectal features, but in a more general sense:[11] Repeatedly, he points to linguistic features of an informal, colloquial style far from the Biblical standard of Sahidic and other standard varieties attested in originally written texts.[12]

'Spoken' language, in its narrowest sense, is interlocutive speech, is conversation.[13] Narrative, even in the realm of the spoken, tends to be shaped by patterns and expectations of genre which come close to written structures.[14] So, what we are tracing should be sought and found most likely *in direct speech*. Are there any Coptic counterparts to those interferent examples of English literature mentioned above? Is there some evidence of direct speech passages preserving expressions from vernacular, spoken Coptic? I believe there actually are such phenomena, even though it may often be hard to estimate the level and degree of their deviation from the literary standard. Let me give you an example from a narrative *exemplum* within a Coptic homily on the archangel Gabriel (see Appendix, **Ex. 1**). The plot deals with a loan given by a pious rich man to a godless poor man, who attempts to defraud his benefactor, saying: ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲁⲩⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲕⲅⲣⲁⲙⲙⲁⲧⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲙⲁϩⲕ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ 'I owe you nothing. Show your document, and I will entirely satisfy you with it.' Finally, the bad guy takes an oath within the shrine of the archangel, swearing falsely: ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲕⲧⲓ ⲁⲁⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲁϣϥ ⲛϣⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲓⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲉⲛⲉⲅⲉⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ϩⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ. 'You have never given me any of

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7 On methodological implications of this question, see Cable (1990); Cummins (1994); Maynor (1988); Meurman-Solin (1999) and Schneider (2002: especially 67-68, 'Introduction: How to Listen without Hearing').

8 So e.g. in his 'classical' studies, Polostky (1944, 1960 and 1987/1990).

9 Pace Reintges (2001 and 2004: 2-3); cf. Oréal (1999).

10 Cf. Gellerstam (1986).

11 Shisha-Halevy (1986).

12 Shisha-Halevy (1986: e.g. p. 93, § 2.6.4).

13 Cf. Chafe (1992: 19); Miller & Weinert (1998).

14 Cf. Chamberlain & Thompson (1998b); Toolan (2001).

these sevenhundred Solidi that you are charging me for!', and as hardly needs to be said, subsequently he gets into deep trouble. Since the *exemplum* should serve for intensifying contemporaries' fear of the Archangel amidst their everyday life, it just deals with contemporary everyday matters, and it does so the more efficaciously, I believe, by inserting some contemporary colloquial expressions, like the verb ⲙⲟⲩϩ with two objects, literally 'to fill' somebody with something, actually meaning 'to pay in full',[15] and the Greek loan-verb ἐνάγειν,[16] literally 'induce', actually meaning 'to accuse somebody'. Otherwise, both expressions are strictly limited to documentary Coptic texts. But even if this case may be considered a deviation from the literary standard at the word choice level, it might still be far from spoken Sahidic. As a matter of course, linguistic norms of all literary texts including rhetoric genres always represent more or less highly standardized linguistic varieties. Non-litererary Coptic texts, on the other hand, usually represent linguistic non-standard varieties. So what I have done is to collect direct speech phrases occurring in documentary texts (see a selection in the Appendix, **Ex. 2,1-46**).[17] In order to get a homogeneous textual corpus, I restricted my research to 7th and 8th-century letters from the Theban area, were the teaching of writing was based on biblical Sahidic.[18] Unlike direct speech in a narrative, direct speech quotations in letters are non-fictional,[19] that means, they usually correspond to real utterances coming from living persons and actually heard by the writer. So it is significant, although not unexpected, to find the great majority of instances in overall keeping with common Sahidic structures as known from biblical texts and elsewhere, assuming that terse linguistic units such as those of **Ex. 2** permit any classification at all. Of course, some phenomena do occur, which might be less familiar to Coptologists accustomed to literary Sahidic only (**Ex. 3**). So we find the Theban future conjugation ⲟⲩⲁⲉϥ-ⲥⲱⲧⲙ (**Ex. 3.1 to 5**), the perfect participle ⲛⲧⲁϩ-ⲥⲱⲧⲙ (**Ex. 3, 6 & 7**) which likewise belongs to the Nag Hammadi subakhmimic standard, we find the omission of ϯ- 'to give' (**Ex. 3.8**)[20] and that of the object of the same verb (**Ex. 3.9 & 10**), and we find the negative conditional ⲙⲛⲧⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ[21] (**Ex. 3.11**). It must be emphasized however, that none of these phenomena occurs *exclusively in direct speech passages of letters*: they all are shared features of non-standard Theban texts of several genres, and some of them even of Upper-Egyptian literary varieties. So what happened? Obviously, almost all these originally spoken utterances must have been converted during the process of recording in keeping with the demands of written Coptic, be it even a non-standard variety, and that means a partial or total loss of their distinctive spoken language features. As for pronunciation, it is usually argued that genuine phonetic realizations of sounds are scarcely recorded as heard, i.e. by a phonological analysis *ad-hoc*, but have always been adapted to the writer's orthographic customs, and just the same must be assumed with regard to syntactic structures and word choice: writers might have re-shaped spoken utterances which they felt unfit to be written by homonymous expressions coming up to the expectations

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15 Cf. Richter (2002a: 38-40, 226-230).
16 Cf. Richter (2002a: 61, 117).
17 Cf. Schneider (2002: especially his catergory 3 ['imagined'], p. 78). For letters as a potential source of recovering spoken language cf. also Meurman-Solin (1999).
18 This is well-documented by the evidence of Coptic educational texts, cf. Cribiore (1996) and Hasitzka (1990).
19 Just the difference between 'invented' and 'imagined' according to Schneider (2002).
20 Cf. Depuydt (2002: 122); Emmel (1981); Richter (2004b: 102).
21 Cf. Till (1955: 150, § 295); Richter (1997: 387).

of a reader,[22] a decision which modern philologists still benefit from, but a real nuisance for curious linguists! Surely, almost all first- and second-person utterances[23] as well as utterances from more than one speaker[24] might have been changed heavily by recording. What thus remains are third-person singular quotations. I believe that the condition of the occurence of something like spoken Sahidic in non-fictional direct speech quotations is basically identical with the condition of deviations from literary standards in literary texts: Both depend on a writer's particular motivation and *explicit intention* of doing so. Like an author who assigns idiomatic ways of speaking to his figures in order to characterize them additionally at a subtle, non-narrative level, a letter-writer may quote words of a living person 'unplugged', if he intends to communicate not only *what* was said, but also the *way to put it*. In any way, the result would be an *internal evaluation*,[25] such as, exposing or unmasking the quoted person.

Only a few Coptic letters might actually meet this special requirement in one way or another. Some records from the realm of ecclesiastical disciplinary supervision are concerned with impudent remarks of clergymen. Sometimes the meaning of such statements escapes us. In **Ex. 4**, a person called Jakob has offended somebody by saing: ⲙⲁⲓⲱ︤ϣ ⲉⲡⲗⲉⲓⲧ ⲡⲁϩⲁⲙ ⲉⲛⲉϩ 'I won't read ever to my father Paham'. Crum, the editor, noted: "'read to (or for)' seems the only possible translation; but the meaning is obscure." I'm afraid we are in no better condition and must agree. According to **Ex. 5**, a monk had dared to say: ⲁⲩⲙⲓⲥⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲟⲩⲧ ⲛⲁⲡⲥⲟⲛ 'A Lût was born to the brother.' Unfortunately, we have no idea what monster a Lût is, but it must be horrible, since the offender has to pay a considerable fine. **Ex. 6** deals with quite a disgusting guy, who is not willing to go somewhere. When his mother tried to persuade him, he rebuked her,[26] as is explicitly told, ϩⲛⲟⲩⲙⲛⲧⲁⲧϣⲓⲡⲉ 'with impertinance', saying: ϩⲁⲡⲥ ⲧⲁϫⲟⲟⲣⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϯⲥⲣⲟⲩⲧ ⲁⲛ. The meaning of this apparently highly affective utterance may be: 'Is it really necessary that I finish you? I am not at leisure!' The next example (**Ex. 7**) is perhaps the most interesting one. Belonging to the archive of Bishop Abraham of Hermonthis, the text is a formal testimony against a priest called Viktôr, attested by his fellow-priest Papnute, who tells what he found himself confronted with when he entered the church on the night before Easter Sunday: ⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲁⲓϭⲛ̄ⲧϥ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲉϥⲥⲱ' ⲡⲉϫⲁⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϩⲣⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲟ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϯϩⲉ 'I approached him and found him eating and drinking. I rebuked him: Is it you being – and I (must) see (you)! – in this manner?' I have the impression that this utterance is quite far from what we would consider usual Sahidic syntax. The anakolouthic splitting of syntactic coherence – a typical spoken language feature – occurs, a structure corresponding here to the speaker's rage. But the reply of the caught sinner sounds even more interesting: ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲣϣⲁ' ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲉⲓⲣⲉ, literally (actually spoken words in bold, grammatical complements in brackets): '(If) **you wish** (to) **perform service**, **do** (it), (if) **you don't wish** (to) **perform** (it), **let** (it) **be**!' Even though easy to understand, the whole expression is full of elliptic omission, by far exceeding the usual degree of non-literary

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22 See Cable (1990) on concerned methodological issues; cf. also Miethaner (2000) with examples from orthographic transcriptions of African-American English, Müller 1995 with examples from medieval German sermons; Rösler (1995) with observations on 16t/17th-century Low German trial records.

23 For reasons of self-presentation and politeness, writers might rather not quote sub-standard utterances made by themselves or by their addressees.

24 Because it is simply impossible to quote several utterances literally by one statement only.

25 On the difference between internal and external evaluation in spoken conversation, cf. Labov (1972) and Tannen (1984b: 8ff.).

26 The semantic valeur of ϫⲱ/ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϩⲣⲁ⸗ (literally 'to speak into somebody's face') in Theban texts seems to lie somewhere near 'to rebuke sb.', 'to bark at sb.', 'to snap s.o.'s head'.

texts. Also in Coptic letter-writing, writers used to say explicitly ⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ '*if* you wish' and ⲉⲕⲧⲙⲟⲩⲱϣ '*if* you don't wish' (**Ex. 8**). On the other hand, there is still a second instance of ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ - ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲁⲛ within direct speech (**Ex. 9** = O.Crum 174). The telegraphic alternative structure 'you wish – you don't wish' with its strong restriction to the minimum of essential words, might thus be considered an echo of a spoken utterance.

To sum up: I could not show some broad and clear evidence of spoken language in written Coptic texts, not even in those of low standardization and linguistic prescriptivism, like personal letters from the 7th and 8th century Theban area. Admittedly, I doubt that many would have expected a large body of evidence. Polotsky's famous remark, understood here in a more general sense, still remains true:[27] "Über die Aussprache des klassischen Sahidisch befinde ich mich im Zustande völliger Unwissenheit, und ich wüßte nicht, daß Till oder sonst jemand in besserer Lage ist." So, what's up? Have I told a pointless story? I hope not. Despite, or shall I say, because of, the poorness of results, there *is* something to conclude. There are several thoroughly investigated, well-known standard varieties of Sahidic Coptic. On the other hand, there are some linguistically almost unexplored non-standard varieties, to be found in the corpus of the so-called documentary texts. "This corpus" to use Ariel Shisha-Halevy's words, "has had very scant attention hitherto…, and grammmatical investigation of this area is still a future goal – perhaps the greatest challenge to Coptic linguistics today".[28] Furthermore, as I have tried to demonstrate, within these different varieties, there are more or less formal, rhetorical, and informal, colloquial registers interfering with each other. Finally, it is just the multiplicity of non-standard Sahidic varieties which might answer questions relating to the diachronic diversity of Coptic from its rise around 300 C.E until its obsolescence in Mamluk Egypt.[29] All this would make up more than one field of really intriguing research, designated to enhance our understanding of the system, the 'langue' of Coptic, and therefore well suited to following in Polotsky's footsteps. I confess, it was part of my hidden agenda to recommend these fields to a closer attention.

27 Polotsky (1957: 227).

28 Shisha-Halevy (1991b: 199). On the language of Coptic documentary texts, cf. e.g. Crum (1926); Funk (1999); Kahle (1954); Nagel (1965); Richter (2002a and 2004a); Schenke (1990 and 1992); Worrell (1934: 99-121).

29 Late Coptic is a likewise badly unexplored field of Coptic linguistics. An approach to the language of late Coptic legal documents has been undertaken by myself, cf. Richter (2000: 98-102), and Richter (2002a: 157-160). Late Coptic varieties of the Bohairic dialect are currently studied by Ariel Shisha-Halevy and Eitan Grossman, cf. also Shisha Halevy (1991a: 58). On the impact of Arabic on late Coptic texts, cf. Richter (2004b) and Richter (2006).

Examples

Ex. 1: 'Colloquial' register in direct speech within a written narrative

BL Or 7028+, Homily on the Archangel Gabriel (ed. W.H. Worrell, The Coptic manuscripts in the Freer Collection, New York 1923, p. 25, col. ii-25, col. I): ⲙⲡⲧⲁⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲁⲩⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲕⲅⲣⲁⲙⲙⲁⲧⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲙⲁⲥⲕ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ... ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲧⲓ ⲁⲁⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲥ ⲍⲙⲡⲓⲥⲁϣϥ ⲛϣⲉ ⲛⲍⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲓⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲉⲛⲉⲅⲉⲓ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲍⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ. "I owe you nothing. Show your document, and I will entirely satisfy you with it. ... You have never given me any of these sevenhundred Solidi that you are charging me for."

Ex. 2: Direct speech as recorded in Theban letters

		Speaker 1ˢᵗ p. sg.	
2.01	O.Crum 179	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲕ ϫⲉ ⲁⲩⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲍⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲥⲉ ⲛ[ⲥ]ⲕⲉⲩⲏ	"Give the solidus for equipment!"
2.02	O.CrumST 259	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲕ ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲛ[ⲏⲩ] ⲉⲍⲏⲧ ⲛⲥⲁⲡⲁⲉⲓⲱⲧ	"I will come southwards after my father."
2.03	O.Crum Ad. 63	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛⲍⲁ ⲥⲙ ⲛⲥⲟⲡ ϫⲉ ⲥⲁⲣⲉⲍ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲕⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲍⲁⲥⲉ ⲧⲱⲛⲉ	"Take care, since times are very bad."
2.04	O.CrumVC 66	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲥⲟⲩⲁ ⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲙⲛ ⲕⲁⲧⲉⲣ ⲙⲛⲡⲉⲓⲟⲙ ⲙⲛⲡⲕⲉ[ⲥ]ⲩⲧⲉ	"My brother Swa is there together with Kater and Pjom and the rest."
2.05	O.CrumVC 70	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ ϯ ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲧⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲧⲁⲁⲩ ⲍⲁⲧⲡⲣⲟⲥⲫⲟⲣⲁ ⲛⲡⲁⲉⲓⲱⲧ	"Give me something that I may spend it for the offering for my father."
2.06	O.Mon.Epiph. 145	ⲁⲓⲭⲟⲟϥ ϫⲁⲉ ⲙⲁⲓⲣϩⲱⲃ ⲁⲭⲛⲧⲉⲕⲅⲛⲟⲙⲏ	"I cannot work without your approval."

		Speaker 2ⁿᵈ p. sg. m.	
2.07	O.Mon.Epiph. 168	ⲁⲕⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕϣⲁⲛⲅⲛⲥⲟⲛ ⲉϥⲣ ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲉⲕϫⲟⲟⲩϥ	"If you meet a brother who is in need, do send him!"
2.08	O.Vind.Copt. 152	ⲁⲕϫⲟⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲧⲛⲡⲱϣ ⲡⲏⲓ ⲛϥⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲙⲉⲣⲟⲥ	"It is fair that we divide the house into four parts."
2.09	O.CrumVC 93	ⲁⲕⲭⲟⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲃⲱⲕ ⲛⲍⲏⲧ	"I want to go northwards."
2.10	O.Mon.Epiph. 336	ⲁⲕⲭⲟⲟϥ ϫⲉ ⲙⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲉⲧⲉⲭⲓ ⲛⲉⲣⲡ	"I cannot go away before you (fem.) have got the wine."
2.11	O.Mon.Epiph. 283	ⲁⲕⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ϫⲉ ϣⲁⲓϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲛⲥⲱⲟⲩ	"I ask for them."
2.12	O.CrumST 260	ⲁⲕⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ϫⲉ ⲁⲗⲁ ⲁⲍⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ[...]	"Send them here ..."
2.13	O.CrumST 256	ⲡⲉⲭⲁⲕ ϫⲉ ⲉⲩⲛⲧⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ϯⲛⲁⲧⲁⲁϥ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲟⲛ	"If they bring it to me I will give it to you again."

		Speaker 3ʳᵈ p. sg. m.	
2.14	O.Vind.Copt. 265	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟϥ ϫⲉ ϣⲁⲓⲛⲧϥ	"I will bring it."
2.15	SBKopt. II 862	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓⲭⲟ ⲛⲍⲃⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲓⲭⲓ ⲡⲉⲛⲗⲁⲩ ⲛⲍⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲥⲓ	"I sent the clothes away, I received the two solidi."
2.16	O.Crum 248	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ϯⲣⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛⲁϥ	"I am in need of it."
2.17	O.Crum 368	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓϣⲟⲙⲥ ⲁⲓⲧⲛⲛⲟⲟⲩⲥ ⲉⲍⲟⲩⲛ ⲛⲁⲕ	"I cleaned it and sent it to you."
2.18	O.Vind.Copt. 272	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲉⲧϯ ⲙⲙⲟϥ	"It is you who gives it."
2.19	O.CrumVC 70	ⲁϥⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲟⲩⲑⲩⲙⲓⲁⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲙⲙⲱ ⲛⲡⲉⲓϫⲓⲧⲉ ⲃⲱⲕ ϫⲓⲧⲉ	"There is a cencer which I did not take; go, take it!"
2.20	O.Mon.Epiph. 455	ⲉⲁⲓⲁⲕⲱⲃ ϫⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲁⲣⲏⲩ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲣ ϫⲟⲗⲏ	"Perhaps he is angry."
2.21	O.Mon.Epiph. 379	ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉϣⲉⲡ ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲓ ⲛⲛⲉⲍ	"I would like to get a little bit oil."
2.22	O.Vind.Copt. 195	ⲡⲓⲥⲣⲁⲏⲗ ϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓⲁⲡⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲍⲉ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲕ	"I paid it to you."
2.23	O.Mon.Epiph. 466	ⲡ]ⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲥⲍⲙⲡⲙⲁ	"She is in the place."
2.24	O.Med.Habu 196	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲛⲁⲥⲙⲙⲉ ⲣⲟⲕ	"I will sue against you!"
2.25	O.CrumST 357	ⲡⲉϫⲉϥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲛⲧⲁⲓ ϯⲟⲩ ⲛⲍⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲓⲛⲟⲥ ⲁⲣⲟⲕ	"You owe me five solidi."
2.26	O.Mon.Epiph. 322	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲙⲛⲧⲏⲓ ϩⲱⲃ	"I have nothing (to do with it)!"
2.27	O.Crum 289	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲁⲉⲓⲥⲕⲓ ⲧⲉⲡⲁϣⲉ ⲁⲥⲕⲱⲗⲉⲩⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲉⲓ	"I ploughed the half (only), (as) she has hindered me!"
2.28	O.Crum 239	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ϯⲛⲁⲃⲓⲧϥ	"I will bring it."
2.29	O.CrumVC 97A	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲛⲏⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲙⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲓ	"Do you come to the clay (soil) with me?"
2.30	O.CrumST 261	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲙⲡⲓϩⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲛⲧⲁϯ ⲛⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲛⲁⲕ	"I didn't meet you to give you wheat"
2.31	O.CrumST 288	ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲛⲁϯ ⲟⲩⲃⲓⲣ ⲛⲟⲓⲕ ⲛⲁⲓ	"You shall give me a basket of bread"

2.32	O.CrumST 331	ΠΕΧΑϤ ΧΕ ΑΚΒΙ ΝΝΟΕΙΚ ΕϨΟΥΝ ΕΠΗΙ ΜΠΚΒΙΤΟΥ ΕϨΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟC	"You brought the breads into the house, you didn't bring them into the monastery"
2.33	O.Crum 379	ΠΕΧΕ ΠCΑΙΝ ΧΕ ΕΚΝΑCΩΜΝΤ ΝΠΕΙΚΕϨΟΟΥ CΝΑΥ ϢΑΝΤϤΤΩΚΡ ΚΑΛΩC	"You shall still wait these two days until it has been cleared well"

<div align="center">Speaker 3rd p. sg. f.</div>

2.34	O.Mon.Epiph. 455	ΝΤΕΡΕ(Τ)ΕϤΜΑΥΧΟΟϤ ΕΡΟϤ ΧΕ ΤΩΟΥΝ ΝΚΒΩΚ ΟΥΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ Α(Ν)ΠΕ ΠΑΙ ΕΚΟ ΝΧΑCΙϨΗΤ	"Stand up and go! This is not right, that you are so arrogant"
2.35	O.Mon.Epiph. 455	ΝΤΕΡΕΤΕϤCϨΙΜΕΧΟΟC ΝΑϤ ΟΝ ΧΕ ΑΡΙ [ΠΝΑ] ΝΚΒΩΚ ΝΚΟΥΩϢΒ	"Be so kind and go and give answer(?)!"
2.36	O.Medin.Habu 184	ΠΕΧΑC ΧΕ ϯΩΤΩΡΕ ΑΝ	"I do not vouch!"
2.37	O.Vind.Copt. 242	ΠΕΧΕC ΧΕ ϯCΟΟΥΝ ΑΝ	"I don't know."
2.38	O.CrumST 334	ΠΕΧΕC ΧΕ ΤΩΪ ΤΕ ΤΒΡΡΕ	"The basket is mine."

<div align="center">Speaker 2nd p. pl.</div>

2.39	O.Vind.Copt. 272	ΑΤΕΤΝΧΟΟC ΧΕ ϢΑΝΤΑΑΥ ΝΑΚ	"We will give it to you."
2.40	O.Vind.Copt. 271	ΝΤΑΤΕΤΝΧΟΟϤ ΧΕ ΜΝϬΟΜ ΜΜΟΝ ΕΤΑΛΟ ΝCΟΥΟ ΝΗΤΝ ΕΠΧΩΚ	"It is not possible for us to deliver you the wheat fully"

<div align="center">Speaker 3rd p. pl.</div>

2.41	SBKopt. II 846	ΑΥΧΟΟC ΕΡΟΟΪ ΧΕ ΟΥΑΝ ΠΡΟ ϢΕ ΝΡΩΜΕ ϨΑΤΗΚ	"Open the door! Hundred men are with you!"
2.42	O.CrumST 253	ΠΕΧΑΥ ΝΑΙ ΧΕ ΠΗΪ ΕΤΕΙΝϨΟΥΝ ΝϨΗΤϤ ΝΤΟϤ ΠΕ ΕΤΡΕϢΗΡΕ ΟΝϨ ΝΑΪ ΑΝ	"The house in which I am, that's why children don't live for me" (indirect speech)
2.43	O.CrumST 261	ΠΕΧΑΥ ΝΑΙ ΧΕ ΧΝΟΥϤ ΝϤϯ ΟΥΛΑΑΥ ΝΑΝ ΝΤΝCϨΑΙ ΛΟΓΟC ΝΑϤ	"Ask him that he gives us something and we write a logos (*i.e.*, a safe conduct) for him"
2.44	O.Mon.Epiph. 268	ΠΕΧΑΥ ΧΕ ΤΝCΟΟΥΝ ΧΕ ΑΝΒΩΚ ΕΝΗΙ	"We know, since we went to the houses."
2.45	O.Mon.Epiph. 156	ΠΕΧΑΥ ΤΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΤΕ ΕΤΡΕΝΧΙ ΝϬΟΝC ΕΤϨΙΧΩ[...]	"There is necessity that we use force…"
2.46	O.Crum 198	ΠΕΧΕΥ ΧΕ ΜΝΤΗ ΝΡΤΟΒ ΕΦΟΛΟΚ, ΝΑ[Κ?]	"Fifteen artabas per solidus for [you]"

Ex. 3: Nonstandard forms in direct speech passages from Theban letters

<div align="center">Future ΟΥΑ-ϥ-CΩΤΜ</div>

3.01	O.CrumVC 112	ΑΚΧΟϤ [Ν]ΗΪ ΧΕ ΕΠϢΑΕΪ <u>ΟΥΑΙϯ</u> ΝΑ]Κ ΝϨΑΜΤ	"When the feast comes I will [give y]ou the money."
3.02	O.Crum Ad. 62	ΠΕΧΕΚ ΧΕ <u>ΟΥΑΙΝΤϤ</u> ΑΡΗC ΝΑΚ	"I will bring it southwards to you."
3.03	O.Crum 174	ΕϤΧΩ ΜΜΟC ΝΤΙϨΕ ΧΕ ΤϨΟΙΤΕ ΠΛΕΝΤΙΟΝ ΕΤΜΗΡ ΜΜΟC <u>ΟΥΑΙϤΙΤΟΥ</u>	"The garment and the linen which is tied to it, I will bring them."
3.04	O.Vind.Copt 258	ΠΕΧΑϤ ΧΕ <u>ΟΥΑΑΙΒΙΤϤ</u> ΜΜΑΥ	"I will bring it there."
3.05	O.Crum 198	ΠΕΧΕϤ ΧΕ Ο[Υ]ΑΙϯ ΜΝΤϢΜΟΥΝ ΝΡΤΟΒ ΝΑΚ	"I will give you eighteen artabas"

<div align="center">Perfective participle ΝΤΑϨCΩΤΜ</div>

3.06	O.Mon.Epiph. 308	ΠΕΧΑΙ ΧΕ ΝΤΟΚ ΤΑϢΒΙ ΦΟΛΟΚΟΤCΕ ΝCΟΥΟ ΑΡΙ ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΝϯΤΑΑϤ [...]	"It is you who has brought the solidus for wheat, be kind enough and give it …"
3.07	O.Mon.Epiph. 544	ΕϤΧΩ ΜΜΟC ΧΕ ΠΛΕΙΩΤ ΑϢΤΝΝΟΟΥΤ ΧΕ ΤΑϤ ΝΑϤ	"It is my father who has sent me, (saying) «Give it to him!»"

<div align="center">Omission of ϯ ‚to give'</div>

3.08	O.Mon.Epiph. 332	ΑϤΧΟΟC ΕΡΟΙ ΧΕ ϢΑΪ ΝΗΚϤ Ε[Ν]ΑΝ[ΟΥ]Ϥ	"I will (give) it to you in good condition"

<div align="center">Omission of the object of ϯ ‚to give'</div>

3.09	O.Vind.Copt 181	ΠΕΧΑϤ ΧΕ ΜΑϯϯ ΝΑΚ	"I cannot give (it) to you."
3.10	O.Vind.Copt 181	ΠΕΧΑϤ ΧΕ ΕΚΤΟC ΝϤΕΙ ΕΡΗC ΜΑϯϯ ΝΑΚ	"Unless he comes southwards, I cannot give (it) to you!"

		Negative conditional ⲙⲛⲧⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ	
3.11	O.Med.HabuCopt. 136	ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲡⲕⲁⲙⲟⲩⲁ ϫⲓ ⲙⲁ̈ⲓⲉ̈ⲓ ⲉⲣⲏⲥ ⲙⲛⲧⲉⲕ ⲉϫⲓ ⲡⲗ(ⲟⲅ)ⲟⲥ ⲛⲁ̈ⲓ	"I cannot come to the south unless you get the logos (*i.e.*, a safe conduct) for me"

Ex. 4: What happened?

O.Crum 481: ⲙⲁⲓⲱϣ ⲉⲡⲁⲉⲓⲧ ⲡⲁϩⲁⲙ ⲉⲛⲉϩ 'I won't read ever to my father Paham!'

Ex. 5: What is a 'Lût'?

O.Crum 292: ⲛⲙⲟⲩⲧⲱϣ ⲉⲡⲉϥϣⲁϫⲉ ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲁϥϫⲟⲟϥ ϫⲉ ⲁⲩⲙⲓⲥⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲗⲟⲩⲧ ⲛⲁⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲁⲛⲕⲁⲡⲉⲡⲣⲟⲥⲧⲓⲙⲱⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲥ[...] ⲙⲁⲃⲯⲓⲧⲉ [...] ⲧⲟⲗⲙⲁ [...] 'as we considered his word about the brother that he spoke: "A Lût was born to the brother", we imposed the fine … thirty nine … dare …'

Ex. 6: Vehement utterances of a violent-tempered guy

O.Mon.Epiph. 455: ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉ<ⲧ>ⲉϥⲙⲁⲩ ϫⲟⲟϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϫⲉ ⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲛⲕⲃⲱⲕ ⲟⲩⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲁ(ⲛ) ⲡⲉ ⲉⲕⲟ ⲛϫⲁⲥⲓϩⲏⲧ ⲛⲧⲉⲓϩⲉ ⲉⲁϥϫⲟⲟϥ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲥ ϩⲛⲟⲩⲙⲛⲧⲁⲧϣⲓⲡⲉ ϫⲉ ϩⲁⲡⲥ ⲧⲁϫⲟⲟⲣⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϯⲥⲣⲟⲩⲧ ⲁⲛ 'When his mother said to him: "Stand up, go, it is not right that you are so proud," it was with impertinance that he rebuked her (*lit.* said into her face): "Is it really necessary that I finish(?) you(?) I am not at leisure!"'

Ex. 7: A fierce exchange recorded

O.Crum Ad. 59: ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉⲓⲉ̈ⲓ ⲉⲓⲛⲁⲣⲡϣⲁ ⲉⲡⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲓⲣⲟⲩϩⲉ ⲁⲥⲟⲩϣ ⲙⲡⲥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ ⲙⲡⲃⲱⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲁⲓϭⲛⲧϥ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲉϥⲥⲱ' ⲡⲉϫⲁⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϩⲣⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲟ ⲛⲧⲁⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̇ϯϩⲉ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲣϣⲁ' ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲙ̇ⲡⲣⲉⲓⲣⲉ 'When I, just about to perform the service, went to Papnute at the evening of the Saturday of breaking (the fasting), I approached him and found him eating and drinking. I rebuked him (*lit.* said into his face): "Is it you being – and I (must) see (you) – in this manner?" He said to me: "(If) you wish (to) perform service, do (it), (if) you don't wish (to) perform (it), let (it) be!"'

Ex. 8: Conditional clauses containing ⲟⲩⲱϣ in Theban documents

8.1	O.Crum 386	ⲉⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲧⲣⲁⲃⲱⲕ ϩⲛⲟⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ	'if you want that I go hastily'
8.2	CO Ad. 29	ⲉⲥⲧⲙⲟⲩⲱϣ	'if she doesn't wish'
8.3	O.Crum passim	ⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ	'if you want'
8.4	O.Crum Ad. 46	ⲉⲕϣⲁⲛⲧⲙⲟⲩⲱϣ	'If you don't want'

Ex. 9: ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ … ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲁⲛ in direct speech

O.Crum 174: ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉϣⲡⲧⲱⲣⲉ … ⲕⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉϣⲡⲧⲱⲣⲉ ⲁⲛ '(if) you want to vouch … (if) you don't want to vouch'

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