Spoken English and Spoken Italian

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Grammar and Translation

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ABSTRACT

This book explores the grammar of spoken English and spoken Italian. It analyses and proposes Italian equivalents of spoken English discourse elements and English equivalents of Italian clitic constructions. It firstly outlines the main features of spoken English grammar by providing insights from the literature and examples from British and American spoken language banks and corpora. To this aim, the book examines English discourse markers, approximators, vague category markers, pragmatic markers, topic launchers, turn takers, pause fillers, non-words, and many others. It then outlines the characteristics of neo-standard Italian and what makes it peculiar, especially in the spoken form. Building on literature findings and on corpus-based evidence, it delves on the traits of spoken English and their related Italian equivalents. It scrutinises natural-occurring dialogues in spoken language banks, as well as in narratives, film dubbing and film subtitles. Insightful English-Italian equivalences are brought to the fore and analysed. The book then sources and proposes Italian corpus-driven equivalents of English discourse markers. Finally, it addresses possible English equivalents of Italian clitic constructions. The key findings of this book partly confirm literature research and partly challenge it. With regard to the Italian renderings of English discourse markers, new interesting equivalents emerge from the analyses. As concerns the English versions of Italian clitic phrases, the book highlights the fact that the English language does not make use of clitic pronouns to the same extent as the Italian language. Nonetheless, some correspondences are found as far as idiomatic expressions are concerned.

This book is innovative as no other academic work has focused so thoroughly on the translation of spoken English and spoken Italian. Its rigorous methodology (based on the consultation of fiction corpora, the literature, and spoken language corpora) is fully replicable thanks to detailed and comprehensive analyses. Its contribution to the academic world and to the world of professionals is vast, as the corpus-driven findings can be useful to academics, audiovisual translators, students in Translation Studies, linguists and researchers. The corpus-sourced Italian equivalents of one-word, two-word, multi-word and non-word discourse markers and the English versions of Italian clitic constructions can be consulted as useful reference tools.

Keywords: spoken language; spontaneous language; spoken English grammar; neo-standard Italian; spoken Italian; translation of spoken language; translating spoken grammar; discourse markers; clitic pronouns

INTRODUCTION

This book investigates the grammar of spoken English and spoken Italian in both natural-occurring conversations and in fictional dialogues. It proposes Italian equivalents of spoken English traits, and English versions of Italian clitic constructions. To do so, it firstly outlines the main characteristics of spoken English grammar by providing insights from the literature and examples from British and American spoken language databases. Then, it describes the features of spoken neo-standard Italian as highlighted in the literature and it analyses neo-standard traits in corpora of spoken Italian.

Amongst others, the book investigates discourse markers, approximators, vague category markers, pragmatic markers, topic launchers, turn takers, pause fillers, and non-words. As far as neo-standard Italian is concerned, it also delves into an analysis of cleft sentences, clitic pronouns, suspended conditionals, left/right dislocations, duplicated deixis, sub-standard relative clauses, and many others.

Building on literature findings and on corpus-based evidence, it explores the usages of the words (and non-words) characterising spoken English and spoken Italian. It scrutinises natural-occurring dialogues in spoken language banks and corpora, as well as extracts of scripted conversations sourced from narratives, film dubbing and film subtitles.

This book fills in an existing gap in the literature that concerns the traits of spoken grammar in two languages and the related possible equivalences or translations. So far, no academic work has focused on the translation of spoken English into spoken Italian and vice-versa.

The rigorous methodology applied in this book is based on the consultation of fiction corpora, literature findings, and spoken language banks and corpora. The methods followed are replicable thanks to comprehensive analyses which are described in detail in this book and reported thoroughly in the Appendices.

Therefore, the aims of this book are to investigate the grammar of spoken English and of spoken neo-standard Italian, bring to the fore their main features, and translate some of them. Amongst others, this work analyses and provides English and Italian equivalents of spoken language elements. It explores Italian renderings of English discourse markers, and English versions of Italian clitic expressions. To do so, it relies on spoken

language banks and corpora, literature findings, and fictional language databases.

Chapter 1 investigates and describes the grammar and characteristics of spoken English. It addresses the following elements: prefaces, tags, conversational non-words, ellipsis, deixis, mitigators, vagueness, reported speech, vocative usages, possessive case, left and right dislocations, particular position of adverbs, echo questions, declarative questions, false starts and repairs, contractions and truncations, idioms and conversational routines, as well as anomalies or aberrations of the spoken language.

In order to tackle the above-mentioned features, the first chapter sources sample dialogues from the IViE spoken bank (Intonational Variation in English, Nolan and Post 2014) and from the spoken section of the COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English, Davies 2010). The IViE corpus contains the transcripts of recordings of nine urban dialects of spoken English in the British Isles, whereas the spoken section of the COCA is a sub-corpus composed of transcriptions of spoken interactions in American English.

British and North-American film dialogues are also taken into consideration. Film conversations are tackled in this chapter (and in this volume as a whole) because they reflect naturally occurring interactions. Film dialogues, in fact, are rich in articulated constructions which resemble authentic spoken language. To some extent, they feature the ways people interact with one another in real life. For this reason, they contain relatively genuine language patterning and, to some extent, they can be considered as representative of the grammar of speaking.

The aim of Chapter 1 is to show and discuss the intricate interplay of spontaneous language among conversation participants, highlighting the dynamic nature of communication in real-time discourse. At the same time, this chapter wishes to investigate and retrieve spoken language elements in both spontaneous and scripted language.

Chapter 2 is divided into three main parts. The first one outlines the characteristics of spoken Italian, and what makes it peculiar in comparison to the written form. It addresses discourse markers, fillers, pragmatic markers, mitigation devices, hesitation markers, vagueness, self-corrections, tags and tag questions, and deixis.

After dealing with the traits of spoken Italian, the second part of the chapter addresses popular Italian, which is defined as a simplification of standard language or, better, a fusion between standard Italian and dialects. The second part ends with a categorisation of sub-standard and supra-standard Italian.

The third and last part of the second chapter is dedicated to neo-

standard Italian. It is a variety of national language which can be referred to as *italiano dell'uso medio parlato e scritto* ("average written and spoken Italian"). Neo-standard Italian is the language that is commonly used by educated people, in either formal or informal contexts. This part of the chapter explores and explains the following features of spoken neo-standard Italian: changes in the use of tenses and modes; changes in subject or object pronouns; multifunctional *che*; sub-standard relative clauses; actualising *ci* and other clitic pronouns; left/right dislocations; cleft sentences; presentational *c'è*; anacolutha; agreement with collective nouns; duplicated deictics; reduced polymorphism; intensifiers; *ma, allora* and *e* as turn openers; new usages of *piuttosto che*, and Anglicisms and borrowings.

Chapter 3 provides insights into the translation of and transition from spoken English into spoken Italian. The main findings discussed in the previous chapters are summarised and are further processed for linguistic and translation purposes. Considerations are made with regard to the translation of spoken English in Italian narratives, as well as in Italian film dubbing and subtitling. This chapter is divided into five parts.

The first part deals with the lessons learned from the previous chapters and summarises the key features of spoken neo-standard Italian which translators, scholars, and linguists should focus on when addressing such a linguistic variety.

The second part of Chapter 3 focuses on the translation of spoken English in the narratives. This part not only features literature findings and suggestions, but it also showcases some practical examples. Therefore, literature-driven translations of spoken English traits are proposed and discussed. In this way, the findings of this chapter can be used as a phrase and term bank.

The third part builds on literature findings related to dubbing and brings to the fore the most frequent translation solutions suggested by scholars. This part focuses on words, phrases, expressions, discourse markers, and idioms that are found in some film dialogues. This part also highlights instances of dubbese, calques, borrowings and pseudo-Anglicisms that often pervade Italian dubbing.

The fourth part deals with an in-depth analysis of the Italian dubbing of extracts of dialogues sourced from Anglo-American films. This section addresses dialogue excerpts in both the original and dubbed versions (i.e., English and Italian, respectively). Therefore, it carries out a critical analysis of the translations into Italian of Anglo-American film spoken interactions. These are analysed in the light of literature suggestions and on the basis of the findings discussed in the previous chapters. In this way,

successful and/or less effective translation solutions are examined.

The fifth and last part of the chapter is dedicated to hands-on examples in the field of subtitling. It carries out an in-depth examination of the translation of spoken English in Italian film subtitling. To do so, some of the discourse markers, expressions or phrases that emerge from the previous analyses are queried in parallel corpora of film subtitles. A small-scale quantitative and qualitative investigation is undertaken, focusing on the frequencies at word or phrase level and the retrieval of Italian equivalents of English discourse markers or English spoken traits.

The quantitative and qualitative findings of this part and of the third chapter as a whole can be used as reference tools by professional translators, students in Translation Studies, audiovisual translators and language adaptors, as well as scholars and linguists.

By drawing on the insights gathered from Chapter 1, 2 and 3, Chapter 4 is aimed at proposing a series of natural-sounding Italian equivalents of discourse markers in the English language. In Chapter 1, one-word, two-word and multi-word English discourse markers are taken into account and analysed. Therefore, Chapter 4 proposes the Italian renderings of such discourse markers by querying an Italian corpus of spoken language: the CorDIC (*Corpora Didattici Italiani di Confronto*, Cresti and Panuzzi 2013). The CorDIC contains 746,753 words and is composed of the transcriptions of a spontaneous speech corpus collected at the LABLITA (the Italian Linguistic Laboratory of the University of Florence). Literature findings are searched for in the CorDIC. Such findings revolve around the translations into Italian of English discourse markers as proposed by scholars and linguists. In this way, they can be corroborated or challenged by corpus evidence.

As indicated, Chapter 4 examines English discourse markers (DMs) and proposes Italian corpus-sourced equivalents. Some of the queried DMs are as follows: 1) one-word DMs: “absolutely (not)”, “anyway”, “like”, “now,” “really?”, and “right?”; 2) two-word DMs: “(a) kind of”, “(a) sort of”, “all right, “and everything”, “I mean”, “no way!”, and “you see”; 3) multi-word DMs: “and so on and so forth”, “as I was saying”, “at the end of the day”, “I don’t know if/whether”, and “you know what”, and 4) non-word DMs: “er” or “erm”; “hmm” or “mm”, “whoa”, “whoops”, and “wow”.

After bringing to the surface the Italian equivalents of the above-mentioned discourse markers, Chapter 4 draws conclusions and considerations on the basis of the data gathered. Literature findings may be confirmed or challenged by corpus evidence. The analyses carried out and the methodology followed are useful for further investigations and

research in the field.

Chapter 5 explores English equivalents of Italian clitic constructions. To this aim, a set of spoken Italian corpora are consulted together with the Italian-English sections of the Open Subtitles 2018 corpora (Tiedemann 2012). The retrieval of Italian clitic expressions from spoken Italian corpora allows for the examination of patterns of language, and the analysis of frequencies of occurrence. In this way, conclusions can be drawn with regard to their recurrence and usage in spontaneous conversations. In addition, the consultation of the Italian-English sections of parallel corpora of film subtitles helps obtain English equivalents, and scrutinise their usages in fictional dialogues.

The clitic pronouns focused on are *ci*, *ne*, *lo* and *li*, together the double clitic *a me mi*. Amongst others, the following *ci* constructions are dealt with: *ce l'hai il/la/lo* ("you've got it, the..."); *c'entra* (literally "enter" but meaning "regarding/about it"), and *ci vuole* ("you/we need", or "there must be"). Some of the *ne* expressions addressed are as follows: *del/dal/della/dalla quale (non) ne* (literally "of which (not)" or "from which (not)"), and *su questo/questa/questi/queste ne* (literally "about/on which"). The clitic pronouns in left and right dislocated sentences focused on are the object pronouns *lo* and *li* in phrases such as *gli/i... li* and *il... lo*.

The chapter investigates the extent to which the English language relies on clitic expressions and how these are similar to the Italian ones in terms of meanings and usages in context. The findings of the fifth chapter are insightful and may call for further investigations, for example in non-fictional contexts.

The research questions that this book wishes to address are the following ones: 1) Given the features of spoken English, how is it possible to retrieve Italian equivalents of spoken English (and in particular, discourse markers) by consulting spoken corpora?; 2) To what extent are the corpus-sourced Italian discourse markers similar to the English ones? Are they representative of Italian spoken language?; 3) Given the features of spoken neo-standard Italian, how is it possible to retrieve English equivalents of Italian clitic constructions?; 4) To what extent are the corpus-sourced English clitic expressions (if any) similar to the Italian ones? Are they representative of English spoken language?; 5) How is it possible to retrieve Italian equivalents of spoken English elements (and vice-versa) by relying on film dubbing and film subtitling?; 6) To what extent can the language of films be considered as naturally occurring, as far as spoken language and grammar are concerned?

The book contributions to the academic world and to the world of professionals are vast, fruitful and visible, as the corpus-driven analyses

provide fresh insights into the spoken language elements (and related translations or equivalents) in both spontaneous and fictional dialogues.

The book scrutinises and reveals the traits of spoken English and spoken Italian and, by comparing them, it brings to the surface commonalities and dissimilarities. A particular focus is put on English discourse markers and Italian clitic expressions. Nonetheless, the book embraces and explores spoken patterning as a whole, in both languages.

As mentioned, this book provides insights into the spoken language features of English and Italian and proposes corpus-driven equivalences or translations. It suggests corpus-sourced Italian equivalents of one-word, two-word, multi-word and non-word discourse markers, as well as of other elements of spoken English. In the same way, the book finds corpus-driven English versions of Italian clitic constructions.

The language patterns revealed in this book can be useful resource banks to students in Translation Studies, professional audiovisual translators, language adaptors, scholars, academics, linguists and anyone interested in the subject-matter.

It is hoped that the analyses undertaken will pave the way for further investigations in the field of spoken grammar and its corpus-driven translation into several languages.

CHAPTER 1

THE GRAMMAR OF SPOKEN ENGLISH

Spoken language does not follow the same patterns and grammar rules of written discourse (Carter and McCarthy 2015). Spoken interactions are claimed to be unstructured and spontaneous, as they rely on "real-time, face-to-face conversations" (ibid., 5) with "minimal planning opportunities" (Thornbury 2005b, 20). Spoken discourse, in fact, is characterised by a shared visual component (Conrad 2022) which is context-dependant. The following examples show how interactants rely on a shared context:

Example 1 (Thornbury 2005b, 20):
A: Coffee?
B: Thanks.
A: Milk?
B: Please.

Example 2 (IViE spoken database[1], Nolan and Post 2014):
Grant: Tea.
Alison: Cup of tea?
Bob: Coffee ready?
Alison: Yes it's ready.

As can be noticed, the conversations above are informal and very simple. Some elements are given and taken for granted by the interactants.

The grammar of speaking has its own characteristics. For example, the following utterance "hmm, I mean, I don't think she's up to the task she was assigned. In other words, she's going to fail" features several spoken language elements, such as non-words expressing a thinking attitude ("hmm"); a discourse marker aimed at signalling repair or a new direction of the discourse ("I mean"); a hedging device and a politeness marker ("I

[1] IViE (Intonational Variation in English), available at: http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/files/apps/IViE/)

don't think"), and reformulations ("in other words").

In the statement "will you would you like to sort of go out tonight?", the expression "will you" is a false start, whereas "sort of" is an approximator, or a vague category marker ("VCM", McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 6).

This chapter investigates and describes the grammar and characteristics of spoken English. It addresses the following features: prefaces, tags, conversational non-words, ellipsis, deixis, mitigators, vagueness, reported speech, vocative usages, possessive cases, left and right dislocations, particular position of adverbs, echo questions, declarative questions, false starts and repairs, contractions and truncations, idioms and conversational routines, and anomalies.

To tackle the above traits, sample dialogues are extracted from the IViE spoken bank (Intonational Variation in English, Nolan and Post 2014) and from the spoken section of the COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English, Davies 2010).

The IViE corpus contains the transcripts of recordings of nine urban dialects of spoken English in the British Isles[2], whereas the spoken section of the COCA is composed of transcriptions of spoken American English interactions.

In addition, British and North-American film dialogues are scrutinised. Film spoken interactions are tackled in this chapter (and in this volume as a whole) because they reflect naturally occurring conversations. Film conversations, in fact, are rich in articulated narratives which resemble authentic spoken language. To some extent, they feature the ways people interact with one another in real life. For this reason, they contain genuine language patterning and can be considered as representative of the grammar of speaking. Further reasons why film dialogues are tackled are discussed in a later section of this chapter (see § 1.2).

1.1 Corpora of spoken language

Spoken language can be analysed via corpus consultation. Several scholars have carried out research on spoken corpora and have unveiled the characteristics of spoken grammar thanks to corpus analysis (Biber et al.

[2] The IViE corpus website reports as follows: "Recordings of male and female speakers were made in London, Cambridge, Cardiff, Liverpool, Bradford, Leeds, Newcastle, Belfast in Northern Ireland and Dublin in the Republic of Ireland. Three of our speaker groups are from ethnic minorities: we have recorded bilingual Punjabi/English speakers, bilingual Welsh/English speakers and speakers of Caribbean descent." http://www.phon.ox.ac.uk/files/apps/IViE/.

1999; McCarthy and Carter 1995, 2001; Biber and Conrad 2010; McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014; Raso and Mello 2014; Carter and McCarthy 2015; Clark 2017; McCarthy and Carter 2019; McCarthy and McCarten 2019; Cresti and Moneglia 2023).

For example, McCarthy and Carter (1995), as well as McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2014), highlight some of the traits of spoken grammar and how they can be exploited in the second-language teaching classroom. In particular, they suggest a few text-based activities.

Biber et al. (1999) and Biber and Conrad (2010) develop corpus-driven books on English grammar. In their works, they explain spoken grammar by providing several examples and exercises for students.

Raso and Mello (2014) highlight the significance of compiling corpora for studying human language. The authors address spoken corpora compilation and annotation, prosody and syntax, through which they present innovative methodologies. Their analyses delve into a discussion regarding the study of spoken language in relation to information structures.

Clark (2017) reveals important concepts and discussions about the role of English in its social and cultural contexts. The author covers essential topics in the study of language patterning, including language variation, pragmatics, stylistics, critical discourse analysis, spoken grammar, etc. The work also features corpus-driven case studies and detailed analyses of sample texts.

McCarthy and Carter (2019) investigate multi-words retrieved automatically from a spoken corpus of British English. Many of the strings retrieved have pragmatic values, such as politeness, hedging, or vagueness markers. Examples are multi-words such as "and that sort of things", and "you know".

1.2 Spoken language and conversation analysis in film discourse

Film discourse is generally scripted and may lack spontaneity. Nonetheless, it is argued that film dialogues resemble authentic spoken language (Pavesi, Formentelli and Ghia 2015). In this regard, Zaichenko (2019) posits that one of the characteristics of film discourse is its "openness" (ibid., 634), as conversation participants interact with the environment and, as a consequence, their dialogues constantly change and develop. For these reasons, Ten Have (2007) finds that conversation analysis (CA) can be carried out not only in naturally occurring language situations, but also in institutional and semi-scripted settings. Bednarek (2015), in fact, postulates that film texts are worthy of analysis because

their dialogues contain sophisticated narratives whose language reflects the ways billions of people interact with one another.

Therefore, many scholars have explored and analysed film discourse and their conversational features given that they provide insights into real language in use (Wildfeuer 2014; Levshina 2017; Giampieri 2018; Limeranto and Ena 2022).

Chepinchikj and Thompson (2016) apply conversation analysis techniques to explore the spoken language traits of film dialogues. They bring to the fore both verbal and non-verbal elements and find that film conversation interactants make use of an array of purposeful conversational features such as turn-taking, gaps and overlaps.

Locher et al. (2023, 1) use fictional data to develop theories in pragmatics and, at the same time, they also use pragmatics to explore fictional elements. The authors argue, in fact, that adopting a pragmatic perspective allows them to grasp the essence of fiction.

In light of the above, it can be stated that films provide fertile ground for meaningful discourse analyses and for the investigation of spoken language features. For these reasons, the sections of this chapter present and discuss the spoken discourse traits characterising spontaneous conversations and films.

Before addressing spoken discourse features in detail, it is useful to mention that spontaneous language relies on pragmatics and prosody, which are outlined in the next section.

1.3 Pragmatics and prosody

Pragmatics relates to "unspoken or implicit meanings in language" (Clark 2017, 50) and is concerned with what speakers actually try to convey (that is, the illocutionary force of their utterances, Austin 1962). Prosody is defined as the "interface between the affective/pragmatic programming of the utterance and its linguistic fulfilling" (Cresti and Moneglia 2023, 2).

Most of the times, words carry more than their literal meanings; hence, utterances have implied meanings referred to as "implicature" (Grice 1989). This entails that interactants do not always say what they truly want or mean. For example, in the statement "it's warm in here", the speaker may actually signify "can you open the window?" (Clark 2017, 56). In this case, the illocutionary force of the utterance (i.e., the speaker's true intention, Austin 1962) is a request to do something.

In such circumstances, however, conversation participants could only grasp literal meanings and disregard the implied one(s). Clark (2017, 55) mentions the case of a mother in a toilet stall asking her child to "go and

see if the men's toilets have any toilet paper" as there is no more toilet paper in the women's stall. The boy goes, comes back and says "yes, mummy!". In this case, the child only considers the literal meaning of his mother's request and does not understand the implied message (that is "bring some here").

The following two dialogues shed light on the pragmatics arising from film speeches. Dialogue 1 is sourced from the film *Love in a branch line* (1994), whereas Dialogue 2 from the film *Domestic disturbance* (2001).

Dialogue 1:
A: May I ask you, professor, what it is about your job here that has encouraged you to live in obscurity, when you could be making a name for yourself in the universities or in White Hall?
B: You may indeed.
A: Well, I just have.
B: And I am considering my reply.

In Dialogue 1, the argumentation proposed by A is probably perceived as too intrusive, so B disregards the implicature and answers the "may I" question literally. As A insists, B remains vague in order not to lose face (Brown and Levinson 1987; Clark 2017).

Dialogue 2:
A: I can see why Rick fell in love with the place.
B: Uh uh.
A: I'm actually thinking about looking for some real estate myself.
B: Uh, no kidding?
A: I kid you not.
B: Ah ah.

In Dialogue 2, A takes the idiom "no kidding?" literally and replies accordingly. This makes the situation funny, so B laughs.

As can be noticed, whereas in Dialogue 1 a conversation participant dodges an implied question by answering it literally (A: "May I ask you what...?", B: "Yes you may"); in Dialogue 2, a generally unanswered question (B: "No kidding?") is taken pragmatically and answered (A: "I kid you not"). The next dialogue is retrieved from *Pulp Fiction* (1994). In this case, an invitation to greet someone is taken too literally.

Dialogue 3:
A: Say good night, Raquel.

Raquel: Good night Raquel.
A: I'll see you guys around. Stay outta trouble.

In Dialogue 3, A addresses Raquel and asks her to greet some people. As an exhortation, he mentions her name. Raquel, however, takes A's words literally and pronounces her name.

1.4 Prefaces and Tags

In spoken language, a distinction should be made between the body of a message and optional elements preceding or following it. These are often referred to as "prefaces" or "tags". The body of the message carries the main content, whereas prefaces and tags consist of an array of secondary spoken language elements, such as mitigation devices, turn takers, instances of listenership, etc.

For example, in the utterance "well, I think it's time for lunch" (Willis 2007), the discourse marker "well" functions as a preface (ibid., 6). In the following statement: "'cos otherwise they tend to go cold, don't they" (McCarthy and Carter 1995, 211), "don't they" is a tag aimed at obtaining approval.

1.4.1 Prefaces

Prefaces are also referred to as launchers (Biber et al. 1999), given that they function as conversational launching devices (Clark 2017, 84). They mark the beginning of a statement or a turn. For this reason, they can also be considered as turn takers.

Prefaces include the following elements: noun phrases (also referred to as left-dislocations or heads); fronting, and discourse markers (Clark 2017, 82ff).

In a **noun phrase preface**, conversation participants introduce their argumentation with a noun phrase followed by a pronoun referring back to it. An example is the statement "your little friend, he's in jail". The expression "your little friend" is a noun phrase preface followed by the pronoun "he" co-referring to it.

In **fronting**, features that are generally found in a post verbal position are placed at the beginning of a sentence to give relevance to them. In practice, fronting concerns fronted elements that come after a verb, such as objects, complements, and predicates. An example is the phrase "a hero I lived and a hero I will die" (Barrett 2014). In this utterance, "a hero" should be placed after "I lived" and "I will die". However, as the object is given great

prominence, it is placed before the subject and the verb. Fronting devices are used to organise the information flow, express contrast, and emphasise things. In this way, they function as cohesive elements.

Discourse markers are words or phrases used to catch the other conversation participant's attention. They manifest the intention to speak, organise the speech and monitor its progression. There are several types of discourse markers, ranging from non-words to non-minimal response tokens (O'Keeffe et al. 2007; McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014). Non-word discourse markers are speech elements such as "er", "ooh", "uh uh", or "mm", "umhum" (O'Keeffe et a. 2007, 141-142). For example, "er" is a pause filler, or filled pause (Rayson et al. 1997), which features thinking time; "ooh" is a discourse marker signalling a change in a cognitive state (Norrick 2007, 164); "uh uh" is an affirmative response token (Fadden 2008, 124) and a short form of listenership (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 142). Minimal response tokens are utterances such as "yeah" or "sure", whereas non-minimal response tokens show engaged listenership and can be adverbs, adjectives, or short phrases such as "is that so?" (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 143-145; McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014).

1.4.1.1 Discourse Markers

Discourse markers (DMs) characterise spoken discourse and occur systematically in conversations among native speakers of English or proficient users of English as a second language. According to De Cristofaro et al. (2022, 126), DMs are strictly related to prosody in the organisation of dialogues. Waltereit (2006), in fact, posits that their scope cannot be determined merely on grammatical but on discourse grounds.

Hence, DMs work not only at the level of turn taking, but also in shaping the overall conversation experience as topic-managing elements (De Cristofaro et al. 2022, 125-126; see also Walker 2012). In such a manner, they function as an interface between syntax, pragmatics and prosody (Schiffrin 1987).

Discourse markers can be non-words (such as "er"), single words (such as "well" or "really?"), or chunks (i.e., multi-word units) of various length (McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 5). Some examples of frequent discourse markers in the English language are "well", "now", "you know", "stuff like that", "at the end of the day", etc. (ibid.).

DMs can be turn takers, as they occur at the beginning of turns (Brinton 2010; Vella and Grech 2022, 296). Therefore, they are found in the left periphery of an utterance to make "syntactic projections" (De Cristofaro et al. 2022, 126). Scholars argue that turn-taking elements play

a crucial role in the organisation of discourse, as they connect topics and arguments, and signal what has to be said (García García 2021, 40).

DMs, however, also function as response tokens when they show instances of listenership (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 140ff). Examples are "really?", "is that so?", or "do you really think so?".

Some DMs appear in the middle of a sentence, such as "like" (Voghera and Borges 2017, 67), which can be used before lists, or as a vagueness marker. In the former case, it acts as a focuser (Voghera and Borges 2017).

The string "you know" (Vella and Grech 2022, 296) can also appear in the middle of a sentence, where it acts as a sharedness device.

Other DMs may function as reformulation tools, which are used to refine what a speaker has just said by resorting to more appropriate words (e.g., "I mean"). Alternatively, DMs draw attention to a particular word or phrase (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 172) and function as discourse monitors, such as "I mean", "in other words", or "as I was saying".

As can be inferred, there are several types of DMs, such as sharedness markers ("you see", "you know what I mean"); mitigation and face-saving devices ("I guess"); approximators or vague language tokens ("or whatever"); refiners ("as I was saying"), and textual monitors ("the thing is"). These elements can be placed at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a turn.

As can be guessed, DMs are pragmatic since they are used to show how discourse is related to previous statements or contexts (Vella and Grech 2022). More precisely, they signal the relevance of contextual support. They are forms of continuation (e.g., "'cos"), elaboration (e.g. "I mean"), digression or connection (e.g., "anyway"), transition (e.g., "so"), and segmentation (e.g. "okay") (Vella and Grech 2022, 292).

Tables 1-1, 1-2 and 1-3 below (adapted from Giampieri 2019, 119-121) summarise some relevant one-word, two-word, and multi-word discourse markers and their related functions, according to literature findings.

Table 1-1. One-word discourse markers and their functions (in alphabetical order) according to the literature

One-word discourse markers	**Function(s)**
Absolutely, Brilliant!, Terrific! [and similar]	-Non-minimal response token (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 142; McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014).

Anyway	-It signals returns to diverted or interrupted talk (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39). -It signals how to bracket discourse coherently into foreground / background or main structure / side structure (Ferrara 1997). -It has a *global* connective function when it is used at the beginning of an utterance, whereas it has a *local* connective function when it is uttered at the end (Haselow 2015).
Like	-Vague language marker (Clark 2017, 85). -A quotative marker, an approximator, a marker of exemplification, discourse link, and a hesitation devise. It can occur between clause constituents and in the expression "it's like" (Andersen 2001, 210).
Now	-It signals the speaker's intention to give instructions or change topic (Aijmer 2002, 95; Schourup 2011). -An attention marker signalling that a change in topic is about to occur (Frazer 2009).
Really?	-Surprise marker (Aijmer 2002, 136; Gomes Padilha 2006, 32).
Right	-Boundary or opening marker (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 34 and 39). -Signal of continued attention (Gomes Padilha 2006, 32).
Right?	-Sentence tag (Carter and McCarthy 2015, 12).
So	-Openings and closings marker; it signals returns to diverted or interrupted talk (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39). -It marks the conclusion to a previous discussion (Carter et al. 2011, 616).
Well	-It signals shifts in the discourse from expected or predicted directions (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 34). -Opening marker (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39). -Turn taking marker (Gomes Padilha 2006, 38).
Whatever	-Stance word (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 38).
Yeah	-Minimal response token (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 142; McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014). -It marks information that fits easily with pre-existing

	assumptions; it signals that the hearer needs confirmation before integrating new information (Aijmer 2002, 136).
Yeah?	-Question tag (Clark 2017, 85).

Table 1-2. Two-word discourse markers and their functions (in alphabetical order) according to the literature

Two-word discourse markers	**Function(s)**
(A) Kind of	-Hedge (face-saving function) (Erman 2001, 1341). -Bush (mitigator) (Caffi 2007, 98).
(A) Sort of	-An interactive and flow-sustaining marker (McCarthy 2010, 11). -Hedge (face-saving function) (Erman 2001, 1341). -Bush (mitigator) (Caffi 2007, 98).
All right	-Convergence response token; instance of listenership (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 151; McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 4).
And everything	-Vague language token which invites the listener to fill in absent members of categories from shared knowledge (McCarthy 2010, 8). -Face-saver (Erman 2001, 1341).
And then	-A textual monitor to create coherence (Erman 2001, 1340). -Aimed at exercising control over the addressee(s) (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39;160ff).
Come on!	-Amplifier (Shin and Nation 2008, 344).
Hang on	-A tool to signal repair or a new direction of the discourse (Erman 2001, 1340).
I guess	-Hedge (face-saving function) (Erman 2001, 1341).
I mean	-A tool used to monitor shared and nonshared knowledge (Caines et al. 2016, 350 quoting Leech et al. 2001), it signals repair or a new direction of the discourse (Erman 2001, 1340), it exercises control over the addressee(s) (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39, 160ff),

	it draws attention, it refines what speakers say (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 172). -A discourse marker that is highly recurrent in spoken discourse (McCarten 2010). -A pragmatic marker which invokes a frame of interpretation: it is used to show how discourse is related to other discourse (Vella and Grech 2022, 292). -A tool used when shared knowledge is not inferred and the speaker needs to reformulate (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 44).
No way!	-Non-minimal response token (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 147). -It expresses compliance with prohibition (Davidse et al. 2014).
Or rather	-A tool used to signal repair or a new direction of the discourse (Erman 2001, 1340).
Or something	-Vague language token (Caines et al. 2016, 350, quoting Carter and McCarthy 2006) with face-saving function (Erman 2001, 1341), inviting the listener to fill in absent members of categories from shared knowledge (McCarthy 2010, 8) . -An interactive and flow-sustaining marker (McCarthy 2010, 11).
Or whatever	-Vague language token (Caines et al. 2016, 350 quoting Carter and McCarthy 2006).
Wouldn't it?	-A social monitor eliciting a reaction from the addressee(s) (Erman 2001, 1340).
You know	-A tool used to monitor shared and nonshared knowledge (Caines et al. 2016, 350 quoting Leech et al. 2001; McCarthy 2010, 4), it signals repair or a new direction of the discourse (Erman 2001, 1340), it exercises control over and elicits a reaction from the addressee(s) (Erman 2001, 1337; O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 39, 160ff, 172), it keeps the conversation interactive (McCarthy 2010, 11; McCarthy and Carter 2019). -A textual monitor to build up discourse and create coherence (Erman 2001, 1337). -Hedge (face-saving function) (Erman 2001, 1341).

	-Typical chunk, or multi-word, of spoken discourse (McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 5). -A pragmatic marker which invokes a frame of interpretation: it is used to show how discourse is related to other discourse (Vella and Grech 2022, 292). -It projects shared knowledge and is a topic launcher (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 43-44).
You see	-A textual monitor to build up discourse and create coherence (Erman 2001, 1340). -A shared knowledge device and topic launcher (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 172).

Table 1-3. Multi-word discourse markers and their functions (in alphabetical order) according to the literature

Multi-word discourse markers	**Function(s)**
And so on and so forth	-Vague language token (Erman 2001, 1341; O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 177). -Face-saver (Erman 2001, 1341).
(And) stuff like that	-Vague language token which invites the listener to fill in absent members of categories from shared knowledge (McCarthy 2010, 8). -Typical chunk, or multi-word, of spoken discourse (McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 5).
And that sort of thing(s)	-Vague language token (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 160, 177; Caines et al. 2016, 350 quoting Carter and McCarthy 2006).
And things like that	-Vague language token (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 160; Caines et al. 2016, 350 quoting Carter and McCarthy 2006). -A tool to reduce processing time (McCarthy 2010, 5). -A vague category marker (VCM) which calls on shared cultural and real-world knowledge (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 6, 47).
As I was saying	-A tool to refine what speakers say or to draw attention (O'Keeffe et al. 2007, 172).