Beiträge zur
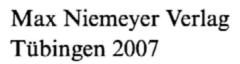Dialogforschung   Band 33

Herausgegeben von Franz Hundsnurscher und Edda Weigand

Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis

Selected Papers
from the IADA Chicago 2004 Conference

Edited by
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Bridging the Atlantic

1. Introduction: Defining and Framing Dialogue

In April 2004, a group of international scholars convened in Chicago under the aegis of the International Association for Dialogue Analysis to discuss issues related to theoretical approaches to dialogue analysis. Representing various theoretical and methodological perspectives, the selected papers presented in this volume offer a view of the breadth of dialogue analysis from its more traditional origins to recent developments in the areas of discourse studies.

While the term "dialogue" has gained much popularity in the public domain (even undergoing a functional shift in English to be used as a verb: *to dialog*), more traditional scholarship in dialogue analysis is not as familiar to scholars in the Americas. The conference and this volume, then, aim to provide an overview of dialogue analysis and its developments along with more familiar trends in discourse analysis and discourse studies.

Dialogue is defined by most English dictionaries as a conversation between two or more (i.e., two-way communication). Hundsnurscher (1980, this volume; see also Weigand 1989) characterizes dialogue in terms of a verbal interaction, the intended outcome of which is to produce a common goal among speakers through a series of moves. Consider, then, Schegloff's (2001) definition of discourse as emanating from "multi-unit talk production" or "the product of conversation" (230). Taken in this way, dialogue and discourse do not appear vastly different and may be conceived of in terms of process and product. Yet, despite the ostensible divide between dialogue and discourse, there has been a great deal of cross-fertilization among the scholars from both the European and American academe, rendering the lines less starkly drawn between the two.

Compare, for example, the classification of discourse presented by Jaworski and Coupland (1999), and further refined by Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2001). They categorize discourse according to three components: 1) features (i.e., elements – linguistic and nonlinguistic – that form part of the social practice associated with language 2) structure (i.e., beyond the level of sentence); and 3) function (i.e., how one uses the language). This framework parallels my own estimation of three essential considerations in dialogue analysis: 1) identifying the "unit of analysis"; 2) defining the nature of "interaction"; and

3) determining the role of "context". These considerations are taken up in the next section. Moreover, they are taken generally to define the structure of the chapters which will be organized along the following lines:

    I.   Dialogue as Text
    II. Dialogue as Interaction
    III. Dialogue as Discourse

The reader is encouraged to examine the various chapters for their treatment of the three considerations as well as their interpretation of dialogue while proceeding through the text.

1.1. Identifying the Unit of Analysis

In early linguistic studies, dialogue was idealized as a verbal interaction between two interlocutors (a speaker and a hearer) and the basic dialogic unit was conceived of as two moves: initiation and response (Halliday 1984). This "exchange" was viewed as "language as behavior," the natural counterpart to "language as code" (i.e., the traditional grammatical analysis). Thus, the dialogue embodies the semiotic acts of "signifying" or trying to create meaning through language (or from the original Greek *dialogos* meaning 'through words') and an understanding of its underlying systems. Furthermore, when combined with the work of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), much has been accomplished to help us understand that dialogue is not simply comprised of an initiative and a response (Flanders 1970), but extends into an ever-expanding variety of structures – moves, turns, transactions, exchanges, sequences, etc. (see Coulthard, Montgomery, and Brazil 1981; Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). While any of these could serve as a unit of analysis, some researchers choose to start from different points, smaller or larger. Thus, the phenomenon under investigation could be as broad or as narrow as the researcher wishes it to be, but the chosen unit of analysis and subsequent design must fit the question being asked.

    To assist in this matter, Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that any unit of analysis, regardless of the size, must minimally meet two criteria: independence and relevance. Independence relates to the notion of mutual exclusivity. Relevance is directly concerned with the research question in that the units of analysis, whatever they may be, are adequate to respond to the research question. In *Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis*, the various scholars define their units of analysis within the context of their own research, ranging from the varied uses of lexical items within the same language (Carota this volume; Mieznikowski this volume) or in cross-linguistic comparisons (Aijmer this volume; Szerszunowicz this volume), to themes as represented in literary texts (Langleben this volume).

1.2. Defining the Nature of Interaction

It was Hymes' (1964, 1972, 1974) original work that extended the unit of analysis beyond a purely linguistic unit into the analysis of speech as a communicative event (i.e., his "speaking" model). This extension has added new dimensions to doing things with words and recognizing how and when the accomplishment of those functions is deemed appropriate in a given language (i.e., developing a "communicative competence"). In Halliday's (1978, 1984) discussions of interaction, he has maintained that it is necessary to understand the connection between the linguistic system and conversational process. The merging of what he refers to as the logical-philosophical "code" and the ethnographic-descriptive "behavior" would prove to be a powerful step in the development of a comprehensive theory of dialogue. This evolving picture also situates dialogue analysis within the study of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor 2003; Jucker 1995; Jucker, Fritz, and Lebsanft 1999). As such, scholars in the field of pragmatics have been equally interested in examining how status, intentions (Brown and Levinson 1987; Grice 1975), themes, genres (Hyland 2002), *inter alia* function within dialogue as forces that can motivate interlocutors to verbally interact in certain ways. Likewise, particular features have often been the focus of study (e.g., discourse markers, suprasegmentals, keyword and phrase repetition).

Considering how two-way communication *through words* is not necessarily limited in time and space, dialogue analysts have begun to push the envelope beyond the traditional study of a pair of speakers exchanging some words. For instance, with the advent of technology as a means of communicating, visual semiotics has also begun to play a role in the analysis of dialogue as images included in e-mail correspondence, text-messaging, and advertisements where these images are intended to convey express messages to particular audiences (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). While a more traditional interpretation might argue that these components are outside the scope of dialogue analysis, their intended use – to convey meaning from a speaker/writer/presenter to a hearer/reader/receiver – is not compromised by their inclusion. Moreover, their inclusion does not exclude or negate the most basic level of dialogue: through words; it merely expands it.

The various chapters in *Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis* also range in their treatment of interaction, using both traditional and unique interpretations. Thus, while Hundsnurscher (this volume) presents a traditional, two-person interaction, Varenne (this volume); Hudelot (this volume); and Froment (this volume) examine group interactions. Taking a unique approach to interaction represented through a combined news/talk show format, Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (this volume) explore the intended message and humor of a television show, wherein the hearer/reader/receiver's response depends on shared meanings and is gauged by the increasing popularity of the show. Maurer-Lausegger (this volume) deals with the *observer's paradox* uniquely by making the videocamera a partici-

pant in the interaction and Berlin (this volume) offers examples where nonverbal responses can be considered as *part* of the conversation.

1.3. Determining the Role of Context

Within dialogue analysis, researchers often debate the importance of context. While some would prefer to focus solely (or at least primarily) on the language, others contend that features such as speaker intention can't be interpreted without consideration of the relationship of the interlocutors and the broader situation in which the language is being used. Context has a duality, however, in that the language itself indexes a particular context and it establishes a framework within which language can occur (Goffman 1974; Gumperz 1992). To expand on the earlier discussion of units of analysis, Halliday (1978) elaborates his code and behavior into "context of culture" and "context of situation" respectively. In this sense, language is situated within the broader culture and behavior occurs relative to the situation; such an interpretation fulfills the positioning of dialogue in a broader pragmatic framework and, simultaneously, reconciles the various disciplines that have seen language as central and have contributed to the theoretical foundations of linguistics. Thus, rather than taking us *beyond words*, it leads to a deeper understanding of their meaning (cf. Duranti & Goodwin 1992).

The duality of context can also manifest itself in terms of the paradigm the researcher follows. Within an ethnographic perspective, for instance, Spradley (1980) identifies the context along similar lines as Goffman (1974); he provides a framework for communication to take place, including a setting (or "field of action" after Goffman) and an activity ("focal event"). Spradley further includes the participants when examining, suggesting that their relationship fills an equal place in the framework. Taking another tack, context can be construed in terms of the influence it exerts on the communication. Thus, Bakhtin's (1981) notions of dialogicity and historicity are revealed in the synchronic and diachronic influences that have informed the texts (cf. Moerman 1988; Urban 1991).

Within *Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis*, many of the authors view context as critical to the analysis. Fetzer (this volume), for example, sees dialogue as context-dependent, echoing Goffman and Spradley's notion of a framing context for dialogue. Berlin (this volume) and Németh (this volume) explore Bakhtin's multiple "voices" as they occur within dialogue and index multiple layers beyond the immediate talk. Macbeth (this volume) and Hess-Lüttich (this volume) manage to bridge the two; the former in his discussion of the "double move" and the latter in his detailed model for literary dialogue.

2. Organization of the Volume

Organizationally, the chapters are divided into three sections according to their primary focus: Dialogue as Text, Dialogue as Interaction, and Dialogue as Discourse. The selected papers included in this volume feature scholars from both sides of the Atlantic whose contributions cover multiple perspectives. Thus, *Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis* presents a unique work that provides essential information for the scholar, researcher, and student of dialogue, as well as those interested in discourse, language, linguistics, pragmatics, and research methodology.

2.1. Dialogue as Text

The authors included in this section have focused their work on textual data, identifying particular lexical constituents and their syntactic and/or semantic interface as primary in their analysis. While all chapters deal with the interactional and contextual parts of dialogue, predominance is given to the examination of more traditional linguistic units of analysis in the emergence of dialogue as text.

To begin this section, Francesca Carota discusses contrastive discourse markers in Italian. Using examples of exchanges from a spoken corpus, she examines the linguistic environment of the contrastive connectors. Taking a typological approach, Carota then goes on to provide a descriptive taxonomy in which she details the functions of the various contrastive discourse markers and provides possible explanations for their usage.

Karin Aijmer begins this section with *Dialogue Analysis in a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. She uses parallel (translated) corpora to conduct a typological comparison of English, Swedish, and German. By focusing on a single lexical-semantic element, Aijmer chooses a cognate, the modal adverb *surely*, to explore how a simple modal can become grammaticalized, both intralingually and/or interlingually through the process of translation; that is, translation in parallel corpora can evince syntactic or even semantic changes that indicate the importance of intersubjectivity in dialogue, or the repositioning of a phrase relative to specific interlocutors.

In the next chapter, Joanna Szerszunowicz combines the work of the two former authors by taking a typological look at data from cross-linguistic corpora. Specifically, she focuses on small talk as a genre and describes the spontaneous speech of second language learners of English and Polish. The analysis identifies common topics generated by the learners and

provides their differential reactions (based on their first languages and cultures) to the importance of the various topics.

In *Modality and Conversational Structure in French*, Johanna Miecznikowski follows a similar path to Aijmer's earlier chapter in that both begin with a corpus, both choose a particular lexical item, and both investigate modality. It is here, however, that the similarities end. Miecznikowski, like many other contributors in this volume, contends that the focus in dialogue analysis should be on use, not merely form. Using a data-driven interactionist approach, she establishes that the multiple surface forms obtained (of the verb *vouloir*) in this dialogue analysis indicate a clear, sequential organization in the discourse. Thus, the surface manifestation of *vouloir* indexes user preferences for particular forms relative to the type of interaction. Miecznikowski therefore proposes that an interactionist perspective could prove informative for researchers in many areas of dialogue analysis from those who favor a more linguistic approach to conversation analysts.

2.2. Dialogue as Interaction

Moving beyond a primary focus on the textual, the authors in this section extend the units of analysis to include exchanges between two or more participants as interaction takes a central focus. Though representing differing theoretical perspectives and methodologies, these chapters reveal essential information about the nature of interaction and, in some cases, the critical influence that context can have on interaction. Consequently, in each chapter as the data are rendered, noteworthy aspects of the study of dialogue are made apparent. Again, the reader will find the treatment by each author of the units of analysis, the definition of interaction, and the role of context to be informative in developing a greater understanding of the breadth of the field of dialogue analysis.

The chapters focusing on dialogue as interaction begin with an offering by Franz Hundsnurscher, *The Principles of Dialogue Grammar*. He proceeds from a linguistic perspective and presents a traditional representation of dialogic interaction based in classical argumentation. To this end, Hundsnurscher identifies the quintessential unit of analysis within dialogue, defining it minimally in terms of three moves engaged in by at least two competent speakers: an initiation (in the form of a speech act), a reaction, and some form of uptake (relative to the reaction). He gradually builds up the model by using global types of illocutionary speech acts to demonstrate (i.e., representatives, directives, commissives, and expressives). The complicating information that may arise within the units of dialogue, however, affirm his assertion that perlocution is more essential to dialogue analysis than illocution, as the reactions and uptake may take on a variety of forms depending on previous moves by interlocutors. In this manner, we gain a fundamental view of two-way com-

munication. Hundsnurscher establishes a starting point for dialogue analysis by framing the most basic structure for conducting research.

Following Hundsnurscher, Anita Fetzer elaborates a more pragmatic view of dialogue, taking on the challenge of defining it in terms of both process and product. In her chapter, *Validity Claims in Context: Monologue Meets Dialogue*, she provides an overview of speech act theory, relevance theory, and conversation analysis as they relate to a deeper understanding of dialogic interaction within a communicative context. Contending that dialogue is a cooperative endeavor, Fetzer offers a unique approach by incorporating Habermas' notion of validity claims to express how coparticipants' contributions within a dialogue must have reference to the objective, social, and subjective worlds. As such, and in relation to the Gricean Cooperative Principle, Fetzer suggests that dialogue emerges as a resolution of individuals' inferencing and reasoning strategies (i.e., coparticipants' individual internal intentions and planned monologues) and collective inferencing and reasoning strategies (i.e., efforts to cooperate and meet interlocutors' face needs). Consequently, a theoretical perspective surfaces that outlines an intricate definition of interaction.

Ernest W. B. Hess-Lüttich extends dialogue theory beyond speech act theory and conversation analysis. Taking *A Sociosemiotic Approach: On the Pragmatics of Literary Communication*, he defines dialogue in terms of interaction, recognizing the limitations of terms such as 'interaction' which may be understood both in a generic, lay sense, and according to one or more disciplines wherein they take on a very specific use. Ultimately, Hess-Lüttich positions literary dialogue on multiple levels, between author and reader, between characters within a text (literature, play, or movie script), and – in the latter two cases – between actors and audience. Going beyond mere turn-taking and isolated speech acts, he presents an elaborate model that provides a pragmatic approach for the analysis of dialogue as defined by the social relationships between those communicating through a multiplicity of channels.

In *On the Explicitness of Themes in Dialogue*, Maria Langleben's contribution focuses once again on interaction as represented through dialogue in literature. Using Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* to exemplify her discussion, Langleben details the seven types of themes that can appear in a comprehensive thematic analysis. As an approach to dialogue analysis of literary works, especially the scripted dialogue within plays, Langleben identifies repetition and dialogic tension as key elements in the analysis. Through anaphoric and cataphoric identification of repetitive units of analysis (i.e., from individual words to entire propositions), themes emerge within a well-constructed text to provide cohesion. The chorus of voices work together to produce various levels of interaction – reminiscent of Hess-Lüttich – which, in turn, reveal the themes and make known the ultimate meaning of the author.

To round out this section, Lenke Németh shares *A Subjectivity Formation Model for Dialogue Analysis in Drama*. Focusing on extended segments of dialogue from the play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, Németh demonstrates how repetition in ostensibly discontinuous, elliptical dialogue can index essential components of character development, leading to a more complete understanding of the author's intentions. Subsequently, applying concepts forwarded by Bakhtin, she makes transparent meanings that the author intends to communicate to the audience by showing the interaction between the characters/interlocutors and their immediate context as a reciprocal process whereby extended stretches of dialogue construct a unique identity.

2.3. Dialogue as Discourse

The final section of the volume focuses on discourse, taking the stance that context holds a pivotal role in defining archetypes or orders of discourse from which text derives. Dialogic interaction, then, emerges as the fulfillment of context-driven behavior wherein actors understand the roles they fill and utilize that knowledge in their linguistic and extralinguistic performance.

In the first chapter of the section, Lawrence N. Berlin also explores a form of thematic analysis. In *Grounded Theory and its Benefits for Dialogue Analysis*, he claims that grounded theory enables researchers to overcome several methodological problems present in more traditional quantitative or merely descriptive analyses. Going through the procedures in step by step format, Berlin uses the script from the American movie classic *Casablanca* to illustrate how seemingly different approaches and designs can be integrated through the grounded theory methodology. Ultimately, the development of a matrix for constant comparison permits the triangulation of findings and the emergence of a theoretical model grounded in the data. Giving primacy to the interaction and the synchronic and diachronic contextual elements, Berlin arrives at his interpretive model weaving together critical discourse analysis, speech act theory, the cooperative principle, and politeness theory; thus, he asserts that seemingly disparate approaches – whether used independently or in tandem – will lead to the same conclusions under the rubric of grounded theory.

Richard Hallett and Judith Kaplan-Weinger also focus on the centrality of context. In *"And Now for Your Moment of Zen,"* they use a multimodal approach to demonstrate how it can be manipulated to specific ends in the construction of hegemony. Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger reveal how the discourse of humor emerges as the result of combining and exploiting recognized contextual elements in the dialogue of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, a news-variety show that been documented by several sources as having become the primary source of information for a growing number of people under 30. This critical

discourse analysis advances intertextuality as the key to analysis as Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger explain why an examination of the combined spoken, written, and visual elements is imperative to link the dialogue synchronically and diachronically to other recognized forms of discourse.

In another multimodal approach, Herta Maurer-Lausegger renders a "how-to" guide *par excellence* in *Audiovisual Dialectology: Methodology and Theoretical Considerations*. Combining technological advances with more traditional pursuits – in this case, the study of dialectology – she details a method that of conducting field research that could eventually function to preserve endangered languages. Within discourse studies, the methodology Maurer-Lausegger shares provides a way to record dialogues within their authentic contexts, demonstrating genuine interaction that can be digitized and analyzed for a variety of purposes.

Continuing into the realm of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology as a means to explore discourse, Hervé Varenne presents an anthropological viewpoint on dialogue in relation to culture. He distinguishes between "immortal" facts (i.e., cultural facts) as arbitrary and static versus the engagement of dialogue (i.e., "culturing through language) as temporal. Subsequently, he claims that "culturing" through language is instructed rather than learned. In other words, the existence of certain "immortal" institutions (e.g., hospitals, schools) does not determine the language use that unfolds there (i.e., the discourse); on the contrary, Varenne asserts that, in the enactment of dialogue as a form of play, humans will always attempt to push beyond the perceived limits of what is allowed. Asserting that certain acts – in this case, childbirth – are not as immutable as anthropologists (or structural linguists) would like to think, he traces the development of the dialogue as it creates the potential for altering the existing culture as it presents new facts that become part of the fabric of the discourse of giving birth.

Douglas Macbeth takes an interesting approach by positing an anti-theory. In his chapter, *Sequential Analysis in an Ethnomethodological Key: Order without Theory*, he elaborates on the existence of "pre-theoretical worlds." In a philosophical discussion, he recognizes the reality of human experience long before it was ever theorized. With the introduction of positivism and positivist thinking, however, Macbeth declares that humans have redefined their own reality to the extent that it becomes unthinkable to imagine it without a theory. He further cautions that even qualitative research within a naturalistic, postpositivist paradigm risks reifying a positivist mindset by attempting to reduce human experience to a theory. Tracing the emergence of Discourse (with a capital "D") from the discourses that no doubt existed before they gained such prominence in research in language-in-use, Macbeth presents a dialogue from a classroom to illustrate how people engage in sequential, rule-governed language behavior not because of theory, but in spite of it.

Following with another Bakhtinian-inspired study, Christian Hudelot compares the results of children's dialogue output relative to the input of the adult interlocutors. In *The Use of a Functional Dialogic Model of Verbal Interaction*, Hudelot evaluates the quantity and quality of the children's contributions in didactic interactions with daycare workers versus preschool teachers. The subsequent categorization of the various segments suggests that the inherent features of teachers' scaffolding may promote the acquisition of child language in general, as well as the specific acquisition of the nature of social interaction. As such, the study of child dialogue (even within didactic discourse frames) becomes informative as dialogue analysts can begin to understand how units of dialogue may be constructed, how interaction is triggered, and what role context plays in a formative environment.

Finally, Froment continues with an examination of the archetypal teacher-student discourse, focusing on how the teachers use their verbal contributions didactically to facilitate interaction and promote learning. Following the notion of Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development", the Cartesian table, then, becomes a locus for language development in preschool children.

The variety expressed in *Theoretical Approaches to Dialogue Analysis* makes it apparent that dialogue analysis remains an exciting and evolving field of study. In any single discipline, the depth and breadth of research conducted advance only portions of a picture that will eventually lead to a comprehensive theory. As an interdisciplinary field, dialogue analysis often yields theories, methods, and analyses that appear on the surface to be conflicting, but in reality enrich the field and provide a more robust outcome because of the multiple foci explored. I believe that this text will serve as an instructive tool for the novice, as well as a resource for the scholar for years to come.

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Francesca Carota

Gathering Common Ground on the Negotiated Topic: The Role of the Contrastive Markers of Italian

1. Introduction

The contrastive connectives of Italian, such as *ma* ('but'), *peró* ('but'; 'however'), and *invece* ('instead'), permeate spoken dialogue. For instance, as exemplified in (1), the abovementioned connectives open the possibility for continuing statement like (a), realized here by the utterances (b), (c), and (d).

(1)(a) Lo spettacolo è stato divertente stasera.
        The show was amazing tonight.
    (b) *Ma a che ora è finito?*
        But when did it finish?
    (c) *Peró è stato molto lungo.*
        But/However, it was very long.
    (d) *Invece ieri la cena com'è andata?*
        Besides that, how was the dinner yesterday?

A question of interest is why these linguistic elements are used in the contexts just sketched and how they contribute to the semantics and the pragmatics of their host utterances. It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the corresponding contrastive connectives of English, namely *but*, *however*, and *instead* can operate at the discourse level and form a homogeneous class within the main category formed by the discourse markers (Fraser 1998). A direct parallel with the respective contrastive connectives of Italian, however, is not straightforward, since their discourse functions have not been investigated systematically and remain poorly understood. In addition, no attempt to cluster them based on their potential discourse role has yet been undertaken.

Single connectives, in particular *ma*, have received special attention in previous work. In other words, the connective has been interpreted as a multifunctional marker, the synchronic uses of which would derive from a diachronic change (Bertinetto and Marconi 1984). Seen from a meta-textual perspective, *ma* signals the initial boundary of an utterance, a turn, or a wider unit in spoken dialogue, and marks the beginning of a paragraph in written text. In both cases, when opening a discourse unit, *ma* often correlates with a topic

shift (Serianni 2001). From an interactional point of view, it has been considered instead as a turn-taking device, whereby the speaker interrupts the turn of her interlocutor (Bazzanella 1995).

Corpus data acquired from information-oriented dialogues bring evidence that the turn initial position does not correlate significantly with *ma*. In fact, the connective tends to occur at the beginning of an utterance, after positive feedback (e.g. *sì*, *d'accordo*), produced within the same turn, like the example (2) turn (b) and example (3) turn (b) illustrate respectively.

> (2)(a) *L' Eurostar parte alle 14.00. Le va bene l'orario?*
>   (b) *Sì. Ma mi dice se ci sono delle soluzioni meno care?*
>
>   (a) The train Eurostar will leave at 2 PM. Is the hour ok for you?
>   (b) Yes. But can you tell me if there is any cheaper solution?
>
> (3)(a) *Controllo se c'è un treno che parte prima.*
>   (b) *D'accordo. Ma non c'è un treno diretto?*
>
>   (a) I will look for an earlier train.
>   (b) Okay, but is there no direct train?

It emerges from corpus-data that also *però* and *invece* share the positional behaviour just described with *ma*, occurring at the utterance opening after immediately preceding positive feedback.

Moving from these empirical observations, we advance the hypothesis that the discourse behavior of *ma*, *però*, and *invece*[1] is sensitive to essential organizing principles of dialogue structure, namely dialogue topic management and the grounding process.

The purpose of the chapter is to explain the pragmatic functions of the contrastive connectives, as well as to determine the contextual mechanisms underlying their discourse behavior motivating the interlocutors' preference towards the contextual use of a particular contrastive element. To this end, a corpus study was undertaken, focusing on the use of the contrastive connectives in the communicative contexts referred to so far.

The organization of the chapter is as follows. Section 2 sets up the theoretical framework on which the work is based and clarifies the terminology employed; in section 3, some representative examples from the corpus are analyzed; in section 4, a taxonomy of the contrastive connectives and their function is proposed. Lastly, section 5 raises some questions to be addressed in future work.

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[1] *Però* is an adverbial connective (Lonzi 1991), because of its free position within a clause or a sentence.

2. An Integrated Framework for Contrastive Markers

Collaboration and *negotiation* are intrinsic features of information-oriented dialogue. This typology of dialogue is shaped by the mutual cooperation between the co-participants involved into the conversation. Their active roles are fully engaged in establishing a shared path of navigation towards the accomplishment of a common conversational project (Bagerter, et al. 2004), which concerns the task of exchanging relevant information. Such a joint activity requires that the information to be discussed according to task-related needs is determined on line at any time of the conversation, assuming the form of a negotiation (Clark 1996; Linell 1999).

In the present chapter, a conceptual distinction is introduced between the negotiation of the domain-dependent task (i.e., the discussion of some alternative solutions for the same task-related issue [Larsson 2002]), like the alternative "train-plane" in the example (4), and the negotiation concerning the cognitive, ideational meta-scheme of dialogue (i.e., the dialogue topic). It is proposed to configure the latter in terms of *meta-negotiation* (Carota 2005). Accordingly, in example (5), *l'andata* ('the departure') is the topic that has already been negotiated and completed. Conversely, *il ritorno* ('the return') is a new macro-topic which will orient the next contribution by the interlocutor in which *il ritorno* is established as being the ideational reference-point for the incoming utterance.

(4) *Preferisce viaggiare in treno o in aereo?*
  Do you prefer to travel by train or by plane?

(5)(a) *L'andata va bene. Poi vorrei vedere gli orari del ritorno.*
  (b) *Allora, per il ritorno, vediamo...ci sarebbe un treno alle 8.30, troppo presto?*

  (a) The depature is okay. Afterward, I would like to know the return time.
  (b) So, for the return, let's see... there would be a train at 8.30 am; is that too early?

Importantly, it is assumed here that the meta-negotiation involves not only the management of the topic, but also the activity of its monitoring and its grounding.

The term *grounding* refers to a collaborative process, by which the co-participants coordinate their private mental states (i.e., their *attention*, *intentions*, *beliefs*, and *attitudes*) at every level of communication, in order to achieve a common ground on the information under negotiation. The process of grounding is usually schematically described as involving a presentation phase, in which a co-participant *contributes* or presents content that the partner tries to register, and an *acceptance phase*, whereby the interlocutor accepts the contributed content and provides some feedback in order to evidence that the presented topic has been grounded (Clark 1996). The *contribution model* just sketched has been often

criticized for admitting the possibility of *graded* evidence for grounding, in which an acceptance can also represent a contribution to be accepted and so on, along a regression potentially fed *ad infinitum* (Traum 1999). To avoid this inconvenience, two degrees of linguistic evidence for grounding can be postulated: a positive degree (+*grounded*), corresponding to the acceptance of some contribution and signalled linguistically by positive feedback, or an acknowledgement, such as the abovementioned *sì, okay, certo* and a negative degree (–*grounded*), signalled by negative feedback (Traum 1999).

Elaborating on these observations, the notion of common ground is conceived here as referring to a shared cognitive context in which the co-participants' mental states get coordinated, tending to converge towards a mutual agreement[2] with respect to the information to be negotiated (see also Traum and Dillenbourg 1998). The common ground is thus assumed to be a specific kind of cognitive context, which offers the contextual analytic line of the present chapter.

The context is mirrored in the cotext, the dialogue concrete linguistic dimension, constituted by 1) the feedback; 2) co-referential and phoric links between dialogue entities; and 3) information structural phenomena which package the information. The dialogue entities are considered to be the objects, states, and events which have been linguistically introduced in the dialogue cotext. They have the referential status of being given if already mentioned in previous discourse, or being new if not previously mentioned in discourse (Prince 1981; Gundel, et al. 1993). The dialogue entities are represented as being active, semi-active, or inactive in the co-participant's mental states, using the terminology proposed in Chafe (1994).[3] They are said to be *co-activated* if they are active with respect to the co-participants' common ground.

Information structure refers to the organization of the utterance in terms of theme/rheme patterns (cf. Langleben this volume), which are encoded linguistically through the interface syntax/intonation in Italian (Cresti 2000; Lombardi Vallauri 2002). The theme is conceived of as representing the optional element of the utterance, which sets a topical coordinate at the local level of the host utterance, specifying the relationship between the utterance itself and the global dialogue topic.[4] The rheme, on the other hand, is the obligatory element of the utterance, which performs the speaker's communicative goal by introducing some inactive information which has to be co-activated by the co-participants and submitted to their common ground. Being a pragmatic operator parallel to either the theme or the rheme or

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[2] The notion of common ground is distinct from the philosophical notion of shared knowledge which represents semantic knowledge about the world.

[3] The notion of consciousness employed by Chafe (1994) is replaced here with that of mental state described above.

[4] Cresti (2000) points out that the theme ("topic" in her terminology) usually occupies the first position of an utterance and is marked by rising intonation.

both, the focus highlights the salient information to be brought to the interlocutor's attention in order to be grounded.[5]

The interaction between the contextual and the cotextual factors depicted so far, along with the interplay of the local and the global levels, determine the semantic-pragmatic strategies which shape the dialogue structure[6] during communication. Dialogue structure is assumed to represent the cotextual analytic line in the present corpus study. Consistent with these perspectives, the connectives under study are proposed to be contrastive markers. The linguistic elements used by a co-participant to express her personal attitude toward the way the information in the local host utterance globally relates to the dialogue cotext and to the cognitive context. This hypothesis was tested and supported through a preliminary corpus study of *ma, però*, and *invece*.

3. Corpus Study

The material used here is drawn form the Adam Corpus (Soria, et al. 2000), which is a collection of information-seeking dialogues from the travel domain and consists of 58.000 words. The corpus analysis will focus on contrastive connectives[7] which occur in open questions, as well as in declarative utterances performing either a statement or a request dialogue act.

3.1. *Ma*

In the turn 3, example (6)[8], the sequence *si, ma* starts a turn belonging to an acceptance phase, where *si* is an acknowledgement dialogue act, which positively ratifies the accept-

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[5]   The prosodic focus is the peak in the intonational contour which is signalled by the fundamental frequency F_0.

[6]   Dialogue structure is modelled based on both common ground and topic. A detailed model of the dialogue topic structure cannot be made explicit here. For an overview, see Jaeger and Oshima (2002), Carota (2004, 2005).

[7]   Due to the shortness of the present chapter, it presents only a restricted number of representative examples. However, the interpretation proposed here is based on the analysis of about 200 occurrences of the contrastive connectives.

[8]   The notation used is the following: in 1 C/O, for example, the first number indicates the turn; C indicates the client, O the operator; text in brace brackets {...} followed by :|t| is marked as the theme, in square brackets [...] followed by [F] as the thematic focus.

-ance of the topic in the speaker's common ground.

(6) (a) O: { *Il* [*riTORno*]^F }:|t| *cosa voleva?*
     (b) C: { *Il ritorno* }:|t| *le avevo detto* [*doMEnica*]^F *domenica pomeriggio* [*sul PREsto*]^F.
     (c) O: *Si.* **Ma** *come* [*oRArio*]^F?

     (a) The return, what did you want?
     (b) The return, as I said, it is on Monday Monday *early* in the afternoon.
     (c) Yes. *But* what about the schedule?

The host utterance of ma is a question asking for new information about the discourse entity *orario* ('schedule'), brought to the hearer's attention by means of focus and co-referring to the temporal discourse entity under focus in turn 2: *sul presto* ('early'). More precisely, the utterance is an elliptical, open question and can be resolved[9] with respect to the main global discourse topic represented by the given entity *ritorno* ('return'), which is currently under meta-negotiation (as the contrastive theme {*Il* [*ritorno*]^F} in turn 1, as the theme {*Il ritorno*} in turn 2 indicates. As *orario* is a subcoordinate (i.e., a particular aspect of a previously established main global topic), it can be argued that *ma* correlates with a subtopic shift within a main global dialogue topic (i.e., flight), which is higher in the hierarchy of topicality. In conclusion, the *ma*-question starts a dialogue topic unit embedded in an overarching topic unit.

   In similar positions, *ma* expresses a contrast with previously given information which does not satisfy the expectations underlying the request in turn 3. In fact, before being grounded, the given information in focus, *sul presto* provided by the interlocutor in the previous turn, needs to be either corrected or clarified according to the entity currently highlighted by the focus *orario*. By using *ma*, the speaker temporarily blocks the current acceptance phase in order to manifest to the interlocutor that the presented topic needs to be partially changed or corrected before being grounded. For this reason, *ma* introduces a sort of request for repair of *sul presto*. It is used to reorient the grounding process toward a new perspective, by presenting a new subtopical coordinate to the common ground, which has to be accepted as being the current topic under meta-negotiation. In this sense, *ma* displays the speaker's attitude towards the status of the topic in the common ground and is significantly interrelated with the grounding process.

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[9]   The treatment of elliptical questions follows Ginzburg (1998).

3.2. *Però*

In example (7), the contrastive marker *però* follows positive feedback, by which the speaker accepts not only the informative content presented in the preceding turn, as in the previous example, but also the task proposed in the preceding question in turn 1.

(7)(a) O: *Le prenoto un* [POsto]^F?
  (b) C: *Si.* **Pero** *vorrei prenotare anche* [*il riTOrno*]^F.
  (c) O: *D'accordo.*

  (a) May I reserve a place?
  (b) Yes, *but* I would like to book the return too.
  (c) Okay.

The host declarative utterance performs a request dialogue act, whereby the speaker adds some inactive new information through the discourse entity *ritorno*. Specifically, the new information is evidenced by means of both focus and the additive particle *anche* ('too') (König 1993), which signals that the predication of the current rheme also holds for another homologous alternative already given in the previous context (Krifka 1999) (i.e., "the departure"). From the viewpoint of the discourse structure, such an alternative represents the previously managed subtopical coordinate of a main dialogue topic "reservation" and is situated at the same dialogue topic structure level than the current subtopical coordinate *ritorno*. The introduction of the inactive information within the *però* host utterance changes the current topical perspective: specifically, the given subtopical coordinate has to be replaced along with its related subtask.

In this context, *però* regulates the change of perspective, by introducing a new presentation to the common ground. It conveys an intersubjective meaning, whereby the speaker evidences that the task has not been fully accomplished. As a result, the interlocutor's attention needs to be reoriented toward a new meta-negotiation introducing a new subtopical coordinate in order to fix the instruction for performing a new task. From a structural viewpoint, *però*[10] cues an overlapping initial boundary for a new subtopic unit and its corresponding task, as well as for a new common ground unit.

3.3. *Invece*

In example (8), turn 4, *invece* follows positive feedback and opens an elliptical open question. This ellipsis can be resolved by referring to the topic in turn 1 (i.e., *i voli* ['flights']).

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[10] It marks a deeper discourse boundary than those signalled by *ma* in the example (1).