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"Using movie corpora to explore spoken American English. Evidence from Multi-Dimensional Analysis", in *Variation and Change in Spoken and Written Discourse: Perspectives from Corpus Linguistics*, Julia Bamford - Silvia Cavalieri - Giuliana Diani (eds.), John Benjamins, Amsterdam (forthcoming).

Abstract

Face-to-face and movie conversation are usually claimed to differ: the first is often described as the quintessence of spontaneity, whereas the second as the quintessence of artificiality. In fact, there are few empirical studies that demonstrate this and, in spite of what is generally maintained by the literature, empirical data, which are investigated here by applying Biber's (1988) Multi-Dimensional approach, prove that the involved production typical of face-to-face conversation also characterizes movie conversation. This resemblance has interesting implications for the teaching of spoken discourse as movies may be effectively used as a potentially valid source of material. The present research also illustrates an experiment with 3rd year Italian students of English that proves this potentiality especially in the learning of elisions, blends, repetitions, false starts, reformulations, discourse markers, and interjections.

"Movie conversation: a reflection of face-to-face conversation and a source for teaching spoken language", in *Papers from the XXIV AIA Conference Proceedings*, Gabriella Di Martino - Linda Lombardo - Silvia Nuccorini, Edizioni Q, Roma (forthcoming).
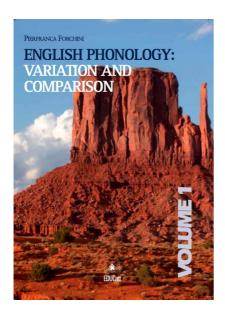
Abstract

Face-to-face and movie conversation are claimed to differ in terms of spontaneity (Taylor 1999, Sinclair 2004a). Face-to-face conversation is generally considered the quintessence of spoken language as it is totally spontaneous (Chafe 1982, Tannen 1982, Halliday 2005, Biber et al 1999, McCarthy 2003, Miller 2006), while movie conversation is usually described as non-spontaneous in that it is artificially written-to-be-spoken, prefabricated speech (Pavesi 2005) and consequently not likely to present the features that characterize conversation (Sinclair 2004a). The present paper investigates these two conversational domains in empirical data drawn from the Longman Spoken American Corpus, representing face-to-face conversation, and the American Movie Corpus (AMC), a corpus purposely built and manually transcribed to study movie language. Investigations employ corpus-driven criteria (Francis 1993, Tognini-Bonelli 2001) and Biber's (1988) Multi-Dimensional analysis approach, which applies multivariate statistical techniques, in order to study more than one statistical variable at a time. Preliminary results demonstrate that the linguistic features underlying involved production, non-narrative concern and situation dependent reference, typical of face-to-face conversation also characterize movie conversation. The resemblance between these two conversational domains has interesting implications for the teaching of spoken discourse as movies may be effectively used as a potentially valid source of material.

American English & Culture, second edition, DSU, Milano 2010. (First edition: Forchini Pierfranca - Lancellotti Sara - Schuster Chiara (eds.), *American English & Culture*, DSU, Milano 2008).

Abstract

The present work is a collection of readings and language notes which sketch out a picture of North America and aim to stimulate interest in further investigations and studies. More specifically, Part 1 offers a series of selected passages introducing American Culture, while Part 2 focuses on American English as a language variety, comparing it to British English. In particular, aspects of spelling, lexis, grammar and pronunciation are accounted for. The examples given in the notes are taken from reference books, movies and from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

English Phonology: Variation and Comparison. Volume 1, DSU, Milano 2010.

Abstract

English Phonology: Variation and Comparison on American English and describes the phonological variation that characterizes it and distinguishes it from other English varieties. More specifically, the volume is structured in three Chapters: Chapter 1 offers an overview of the historical evolution of American English and its dialects by emphasizing the influence that the main settlers had on the development of its phonology; Chapter 2 focuses on the differences between American English and British English; and Chapter 3 deals with the diatopic variation within American English and describes its main dialects.

"'Well, uh no. I mean, you know'. Discourse Markers in Movie Conversation", in *Perspectives on Audiovisual Translation*, Bogucki Lukasz - Kredens Krzysztof (eds.), "Lódz Studies in Language", vol. 20, Peter Lang, Bern 2010, pp. ……………..

Abstract

Film translation is a challenging and creative process which requires the ability to decode the linguistic and cultural features of the source text and to transfer them appropriately and effectively into the target text. Differences between the Source Language/Culture and Target Language/Culture require translators to compensate for gaps in shared knowledge or linguistic features in order to achieve successful communication.

Spoken discourse presents specific linguistic features (e.g. interjections, backchannels, attention signals, repetitions, reformulations, hesitators, discourse markers, vocatives, inter alia, cf. Halliday 1985, Biber et al. 1999, McCarthy 2003) which may not be readily transferred across languages. The present paper investigates whether the characteristics of spontaneous conversation are also to be found in movie language, an instance of non-spontaneous, prefabricated speech which is "written to be spoken as if it were not written" (cf. Gregory 1967 and Nencioni 1976) in order to sound authentic and if so, how they are translated in the dubbed version. In particular, the present paper focuses on the discourse markers you know and I mean. Their frequency of occurrence, semantics and pragmatics are investigated in a corpus of transcripts of dialogues from contemporary American movies directed from 2000 on and then compared to those found in the Italian dubbed versions of the same movies. The aim is to highlight the functional, rather than semantic, nature of discourse markers (cf. Bazzanella and Morra 2000) and to identify the strategies activated in the translation process to achieve an equivalent effect in the light of the constraints of the visual channel. A further aim is to verify whether the translation options provide evidence of universal features, such as simplification or normalization and leveling out, or whether they are influenced by cross-contact between the languages involved (cf. Baker 1998, Ulrych 1998).

The analyses are corpus-driven (cf. Francis 1993, Tognini-Bonelli 2001) in that the theory is built up in the presence of the evidence found in the US spoken sub-corpus of the Bank of English and in the corpus of transcripts of American movies and their dubbed Italian versions.

(in collaborazione con Amanda Murphy), "4-grams in comparable specialized corpora: perspectives on phraseology, translation, and pedagogy", in *Patterns, meaningful units and specialized discourses*, Ute Römer - Rainer Schulze (eds.), Benjamins Current Topics, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2010, pp. 87-103. The contributions to this volume were previously published in *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 13:3 (2008), pp. 351-367.

Abstract

This paper investigates the idiom principle realized as four-word phrases (4-grams) headed by prepositions in specialized corpora in English and Ital- ian. Concentrating on at the end of, it reports that

the collocates of at the end of regard time, and that apparently synonymic 4-grams are not used in the same contexts. It then explores realizations of at the end of in a specialized comparable corpus of Italian. Two findings emerge: firstly, that the most obvious equivalent, alla fine d*, occurs more frequently than in the English corpus; secondly, this n-gram is frequently used, but has weaker collocational relations, and several synonymic 3-grams share its collocates. This invites contrastive research on lexical variation and repetition and on the strength of collocations of multi- word units in English and Italian. Lastly, the paper recounts an experiment with students who gained awareness of language by concentrating on phraseology in comparable corpora.

"The get-unit in corpora of spontaneous and non-spontaneous mediated language: from syntactic versatility to semantic and pragmatic similarity", in *ECOLINGUA: The role of e-Corpora in Translation, Language Learning and Testing*, Christopher Taylor (ed.), EUT Edizioni Universitari, Trieste 2009, pp. 185-209.
Also available at:
http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/bitstream/10077/3231/1/10Forchini.pdf

Abstract
Several interesting observations have been made about the multiple facets of get. Interest has however mainly been focused on the degree of difference between structures such as get passive and be passive (cf. Hatcher, 1949; Gee, 1974; Haegeman, 1985; Collins, 1996, inter alia). Less frequently, contrastive studies between get and other verbs like have (cf. Kimball, 1973; Johansson and Oksefjell, 1996; Gilquin, 2003), give (cf. Cattel, 1984), become (cf. Quirk et al. 1991), be and keep (cf. Johansson and Oksefjell, 1996) have been put forward in order to investigate some specific features of get. Little attention seems to have focused on what this study calls the get-unit, namely, the framework determined by get and the environment in which it occurs. The aim of the present paper is to explore the syntax and semantics of the get-unit with particular regard to the functions it displays in spoken language (both spontaneous and written-to-be-spoken – cf. Gregory 1967, Nencioni 1976, Rossi 2002, Pavesi 2005).
The primary aim is to demonstrate that, despite its syntactic versatility (cf. also Quirk et al. 1991 and Biber et al. 1999), get can be depicted semantically as a general result marker, on the basis of the resultative quality of the sentences in which it locates. Secondly, the paper aims at providing an explanation for these semantic similarities. Hence I suggest two interrelating and complementary meanings on which the semantics of the get-sentence may exclusively depend: the core and the peripheral meaning of the get-unit. The underlying theory is based on Lindstromberg (1991) and Johansson and Oksefjell (1996). Lindstromberg (1991:285) suggests that get should not be seen as a polysemic verb in the common sense of the term, but as a verb which displays different shades of meaning which stand in a non-complex, semantically motivated relation to each other. Johansson and Oksefjell (1996:73) maintain that despite the variety in syntax and semantic content, there appears to be a prototype to which all get constructions conform more or less closely. Thirdly, the paper investigates whether the features and functions which the get-unit displays in spontaneous spoken language are reflected in written-to-be-spoken conversations. Particular attention is focused on the language of movies.
The analyses, which are based on authentic data retrieved from the US spoken subcorpus of the Bank of English (i.e. about 30 million words) and on transcripts of dialogues from American movies produced from 2000 on, are conducted according to both corpus-based and corpus-driven methodologies (cf. Tognini-Bonelli 2001): first, the uses of get described in various reference grammars (cf. Quirk et al. 1991 and Biber et al. 1999) are verified and illustrated by data from the Bank of English US spoken subcorpus; secondly, movie transcripts are used as a database from which occurrences of get are retrieved, and the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of the get-unit are explored.

"Spontaneity reloaded: American face-to-face and movie conversation compared", *Corpus Linguistics 2009*, Liverpool 21-23 luglio 2009, online proceedings: http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/publications/cl2009/
ALSO submitted for *Corpus Linguistics 2009 Proceedings* (Liverpool, 21-23 luglio 2009).

Abstract
This paper is an empirical investigation of the linguistic features characterizing American face–to–face and movie conversation, two domains which are usually claimed to differ in terms of spontaneity. Natural conversation is, indeed, considered the quintessence of the spoken language for it is totally spontaneous, whereas movie conversation is usually described as non–spontaneous, being artificially written–to–be–spoken and, thus, not likely to represent the general usage of conversation. However, empirical evidence from Multi–Dimensional and mono–analyses shows that the two conversational domains do not differ to

a great extent. The claim that movie language has a very limited value because it does not reflect natural conversation (Sinclair 2004:80) is thus confuted through quantitative and qualitative analyses. The major implication is that movie language can be regarded as a potential source for teaching and learning spoken language features.

Tesi di dottorato: *Spontaneity in American English: Face-to-face and movie conversation compared. Tesi di Dottorato*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, XXI ciclo, a.a. 2007/08, http://hdl.handle.net/10280/411 (di prossima pubblicazione nella collana del Dipartimento di Scienze Linguistiche, Peter Lang, Bern).

Abstract
The dissertation examines empirically the linguistic features characterizing American face-to-face and movie conversation, two domains which are usually claimed to differ especially in terms of spontaneity. Natural conversation is, indeed, considered the quintessence of the spoken language for it is totally spontaneous, whereas movie conversation is usually described as non-spontaneous, being artificially written-to-be spoken and, thus, not likely to represent the general usage of conversation. In spite of what is generally maintained by the literature, both the Multi-Dimensional analysis and the micro-analysis of the functions of you know based on authentic data retrieved from corpora show that the two conversational domains do not differ to a great extent and thus confutes the claim that movie language has "a very limited value" in that it does not reflect natural conversation and, consequently, is "not likely to be representative of the general usage of conversation".