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# **Temporal expressions in Italian: a relevance-theoretic account**

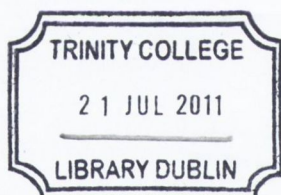
Laura Innocenti



A dissertation submitted to the University of Dublin  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences  
The University of Dublin, Trinity College

2011



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## SUMMARY

In this thesis we aim to give an inferential account of the Italian temporal expressions *allora* 'then', *ora* 'now', *adesso* 'now', *ancora* 'still', *già* 'already', *sempre* 'always', *poi* 'then, also', and *mentre* 'while'. The adopted framework is that of relevance theory; in our analysis we make extensive uses of the theoretical tools it provides, particularly the distinction between explicatures and implicatures on the one hand, and between conceptual and procedural meaning on the other hand.

The data for the present work were taken from two spoken corpora of contemporary standard Italian: LIP and CLIPS. These corpora allowed us to examine the temporal expressions in a wide context, which is essential for an analysis of their pragmatic uses. A further advantage of using these corpora is that they consist in transcriptions of recordings of naturally-occurring speech, which capture the authentic use of these temporal expressions in a wide range of communicative settings. An additional corpus, CoLFIS, was consulted occasionally to compare between spoken and written use.

In this thesis we argue that the temporal indexicals *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* are procedural expressions. In their temporal uses, they are claimed to constrain the construction of the basic explicature of the utterance by indirectly assigning a temporal coordinate to the proposition; in their non-temporal uses, they are claimed to constrain the context of interpretation. While *allora* restricts the search space for temporal coordinates and contextual assumptions to previous discourse, *ora* and *adesso* restrict the search space to the situational context.

We furthermore argue that aspectual adverbs *ancora* and *già* point to a contrast between a proposition and an alternative proposition which is salient in the context; the alternative is a value on a contextually evoked scale. These expressions are also argued to constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures concerning the speaker's attitude towards the proposition. Additionally, the hearer may gain contextual effects such as the derivation of new implications. We furthermore maintain that this account only partly applies to aspectual adverb *sempre*, since it does not point to a contrast between values

on a scale as often as *ancora* and *già*, and since it may contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance; *sempre* is analysed instead as a procedural quantifier.

Finally, we argue that *poi* and *mentre* do not form as a homogeneous group as the others, but that they encode similar procedures. Even though they are associated with the meanings of sequence and simultaneity respectively, they both indirectly contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance in their temporal uses (like the temporal indexicals) and they both may constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures in their non-temporal interpretations (similarly to the aspectual adverbs).

Overall we argue that these temporal expressions can be given individual unified accounts where a ‘core’, basic meaning is developed on the basis of context. We furthermore argue that a series of contextual cues make certain assumptions more salient in the context and that these will guide the hearer’s interpretive process.

With this thesis we seek to contribute to the development of relevance theory, by taking part in the discussion on some topical issues. Firstly, with our analysis of discourse-marking uses of temporal expressions we provide further evidence for the claim that discourse markers may contribute to the explicatures as well as the implicatures of the utterance. Secondly, our findings furthermore show that these temporal expressions may have interjective and contrastive uses, whose discussion can hopefully contribute towards the ongoing refinement of the relevance-theoretic account for these two types of meaning.

Finally, we aim to contribute to the study of the pragmatics of the Italian language. In this tradition, research on temporal expressions has so far been carried out in what we believe to be an unsystematic fashion, and by adopting mainly text-based approaches. We furthermore argue that an inferential account can clarify some aspects which pertain to the use of Italian discourse markers, such as the type of units they connect and their occurrences as ‘fillers’.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**  
**used for interlinear glosses (Leipzig Glossing Rules 2008)**

|       |                                                  |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | first person                                     |
| 2     | second person                                    |
| 3     | third person                                     |
| A     | agent-like argument of canonical transitive verb |
| ABL   | ablative                                         |
| ABS   | absolutive                                       |
| ACC   | accusative                                       |
| ADJ   | adjective                                        |
| ADV   | adverb(ial)                                      |
| AGR   | agreement                                        |
| ALL   | allative                                         |
| ANTIP | antipassive                                      |
| APPL  | applicative                                      |
| ART   | article                                          |
| AUX   | auxiliary                                        |
| BEN   | benefactive                                      |
| CAUS  | causative                                        |
| CLF   | classifier                                       |
| COM   | comitative                                       |
| COMP  | complementizer                                   |
| COMPL | completive                                       |
| COND  | conditional                                      |
| COP   | copula                                           |
| CVB   | converb                                          |
| DAT   | dative                                           |
| DECL  | declarative                                      |
| DEF   | definite                                         |
| DEM   | demonstrative                                    |
| DET   | determiner                                       |
| DIST  | distal                                           |
| DISTR | distributive                                     |

|      |                                                    |
|------|----------------------------------------------------|
| DU   | dual                                               |
| DUR  | durative                                           |
| ERG  | ergative                                           |
| EXCL | exclusive                                          |
| F    | feminine                                           |
| FOC  | focus                                              |
| FUT  | future                                             |
| GEN  | genitive                                           |
| IMP  | imperative                                         |
| INCL | inclusive                                          |
| IND  | indicative                                         |
| INDF | indefinite                                         |
| INF  | infinitive                                         |
| INS  | instrumental                                       |
| INTR | intransitive                                       |
| IPFV | imperfective                                       |
| IRR  | irrealis                                           |
| LOC  | locative                                           |
| M    | masculine                                          |
| N    | neuter                                             |
| N-   | non- (e.g. NSG nonsingular, NPST nonpast)          |
| NEG  | negation, negative                                 |
| NMLZ | nominalizer/nominalization                         |
| NOM  | nominative                                         |
| OBJ  | object                                             |
| OBL  | oblique                                            |
| P    | patient-like argument of canonical transitive verb |
| PASS | passive                                            |
| PFV  | perfective                                         |
| PL   | plural                                             |
| POSS | possessive                                         |
| PRED | predicative                                        |
| PRF  | perfect                                            |
| PRS  | present                                            |
| PROG | progressive                                        |
| PROH | prohibitive                                        |

|      |                                                |
|------|------------------------------------------------|
| PROX | proximal/proximate                             |
| PST  | past                                           |
| PTCP | participle                                     |
| PURP | purposive                                      |
| Q    | question particle/marker                       |
| QUOT | quotative                                      |
| RECP | reciprocal                                     |
| REFL | reflexive                                      |
| REL  | relative                                       |
| RES  | resultative                                    |
| S    | single argument of canonical intransitive verb |
| SBJ  | subject                                        |
| SBJV | subjunctive                                    |
| SG   | singular                                       |
| TOP  | topic                                          |
| TR   | transitive                                     |
| VOC  | vocative                                       |





# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This study aims to provide a new account of the pragmatics of the Italian temporal adverbs *allora* 'then', *ora* 'now', *adesso* 'now', *ancora* 'still', *già* 'already', *sempre* 'always', *poi* 'then, also', and finally the temporal connective *mentre* 'while'. These expressions were chosen for their particularly high frequency in spoken Italian (see section 1.5) and they will be analysed in their use in naturally occurring discourse. At the highest level a major aim of this study is to argue for an inferential account of the uses of these expressions; in particular we will argue that a text-based approach cannot convincingly account for all uses. Firstly, we will seek to demonstrate that a unified account can be given to each expression. Secondly, we will argue in each case for a monosemous account in which a core semantic structure is contextualised by inferential processes. A third main claim we will seek to support is that this type of account allows these expressions to fall into types or classes within which a unified account may be offered.

This study is couched within relevance theory (RT; Sperber & Wilson 1986/95).<sup>1</sup> We will argue that the theoretical stance and concepts of this approach provide the tools to test our hypotheses. The study further seeks to provide a contribution to the development of RT by extending its theoretical attention to the area of Italian temporal adverbs. Finally, we will seek to contribute to the ongoing discussion on three theoretical issues in RT, namely the relevance-theoretic account of contrastive markers, discourse markers and interjections. These topics will be introduced in section 1.4.

The rest of chapter 1 is articulated as follows. A more detailed description of the aims and objectives is the subject of section 1.2. Section 1.3 illustrates the hypotheses for this work. Section 1.4, as already mentioned, illustrates some theoretical issues to which we seek to contribute with our findings. Section 1.5 illustrates the methodological choices adopted for this work. In particular, section 1.5.1 deals with the choices associated with

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<sup>1</sup> The labels 'relevance theory' and 'RT' will henceforth be used interchangeably.

the use of corpora as a source of data; section 1.5.2 is devoted to the description of the corpora used; section 1.5.3 deals with choices of analytical approach, while section 1.5.4 describes the modality of exposition of data throughout the thesis. Finally, an outline of the content of the remaining chapters is the subject of section 1.6.

## **1.2 General aims**

### **1.2.1 Contribution to research on pragmatics of Italian**

A first general aim is to make a contribution to pragmatic research on present-day standard Italian (for a characterization of data, see section 1.5.2). This study intends to make a contribution to the study of Italian pragmatics through the adoption of an inferential approach to communication. In particular, we aim to show that the study of Italian discourse markers benefits from an inferential account. Work on these has often employed theoretical frameworks such as traditional grammar or text linguistics (see section 2.4.6). However, we will argue that these approaches fail to highlight parallels between uses of a single element, which are not immediately evident on the surface, but that do emerge through a cognitively-oriented analysis which also takes into consideration their semantic counterpart. We will furthermore seek to show that an inferential account allows us to account for isolated and discourse-initial occurrences, which are problematic cases for text- and coherence-based accounts (Rouchota 1996, 1998).

A number of studies deals with either the temporal, semantic or discourse-marking, pragmatic functions of Italian temporal expressions. The interjective uses of *allora* and *già* are treated in Poggi (1995); the deictic uses of *ora* and *adesso* are treated in Vanelli (1995); the phasal character of *ancora* and *già* is treated in Bertinetto (1986); discourse-marking uses – those that signal discourse structure or interaction – have received particular attention in the literature on discourse markers (Berretta 1984, Bazzanella 1994, 1995; for a comprehensive review, see section 2.4.6). Regrettably, these works concentrate on particular functions rather than seeing the lexical item as encoding a variety of uses; the latter will be our approach in the present study.

Some studies do indeed attempt to tackle the multifunctionality temporal expressions in their entirety, but adopt different perspectives from ours. Tovenà (1994)



offers an integrated account of both temporal and non-temporal uses of *ancora*; however, the approach of the paper is influenced by formal semantics, and its focus is the interaction of *ancora* with negation. Works by Bosco and Bazzanella (2005), Bazzanella *et al.* (2007), and Bazzanella and Miecznikowski (2009) on *allora*, as well as the study by Bazzanella *et al.* (2005) on *già*, do underline the need to single out a “configurazione complessiva” ‘overall configuration’ (2005: 51), as well as the role of context in the development of what is said; however, these works focus mainly on the comparative and diachronic levels of analysis. The comparative work by Hansen and Strudsholm (2008) provides a polysemous account of *già* and thus clearly differs from ours in terms of analytical approach. Finally, the study of *ora* by Baranzini and Saussure (2010) only focuses on a limited number of uses, and does not make use of naturally occurring discourse data.

We further seek to contribute to Italian linguistics through the descriptive part of this work, which is intended to be a comprehensive description of the behaviour of temporal expressions in spoken standard Italian. Although our focus is decidedly pragmatic, we do hope that this work has a broader appeal. It is hoped that the detailed description of the range of uses of the temporal elements in question (chapters 3, 4, 5) can be of use of those who are not familiar with or not directly interested in relevance theory.

### **1.2.2 Contribution to the advance of relevance theory**

A second aim is that of contributing to relevance theory. This we seek to do in different ways. Firstly, we deem it important to test relevance theory on a language other than English. Much of the early relevance-theoretic literature drew data from this language; as the theory has developed however, studies on languages other from English have proven to be interesting insofar as evidence for proposed cognitive mechanisms was also found in these languages (most notably, Blass 1990). It is hoped that a study on Italian, a Romance language, may help to check whether the key relevance-theoretic notions can help account for the functioning of other languages.

We also intend to offer our contribution by applying relevance theory to the specific domain of temporal expressions. This domain remains largely unexplored by

proponents of this theoretical framework, with a few exceptions: there are studies on temporal sequencing and additional meaning arising from the interaction of connectives *and* and *then* (Blakemore 2002; Blakemore & Carston 1999, 2005; Wilson & Sperber 1998). Furthermore, several recent studies see the application of RT to temporal sequencing, tense, aspect, as well as temporal connectives and adverbs in both their temporal and non-temporal functions (Moeschler 1997, 2002; Saussure 2003). The results of these studies are important in a twofold way; not only do they aim to provide a more accurate description of temporal expressions, but they also contribute to the ongoing relevance-theoretic debate on the conceptual/procedural distinction. This study intends to pursue the line of inquiry just described by focusing on similar aspects of meaning in the Italian language.

Finally, we seek to contribute with this work to the ongoing discussion on some theoretical issues, which will be introduced in section 1.4 after an illustration of our hypotheses for the present work.

### **1.3 Hypotheses**

For this study, three main hypotheses are posited. Firstly, that each of the elements in question can be shown to display internal uniformity: an inferential account reveals that semantic and pragmatic uses of the same element are in fact related. Secondly, that all of the expressions analysed in the present work can be given the same type of account, that is, a monosemous account with a procedure being adapted on a case-to-case basis to a fuller meaning. Thirdly, that these elements can be grouped into clusters on the basis of not only surface characteristics, but also and principally of cognitive properties.

#### **1.3.1 Temporal expressions and internal uniformity**

Our first hypothesis is that the words analysed in this study display a significant degree of internal uniformity. We will seek to show that their analysis reveals similarities in the cognitive roles that the different uses of a single element play in the process of utterance interpretation. The temporal, more semantic, and the non-temporal, more pragmatic uses will initially be presented separately in chapters 3, 4 and 5, but we will attempt to show



that they in fact share a common meaning, which will be described in relevance-theoretic terms as being a procedure.

We will call ‘temporal uses’ those uses associated with the indication of temporal location, aspectual information and temporal sequence. Some examples are: the uses of *allora* and *ora/adesso* expressing respectively distance and proximity in time (section 3.1.1); the uses of *ancora* and *già* expressing relations among phases of eventualities (section 4.1.1); the uses of *poi* expressing sequence between points on a timeline (section 5.2); and finally, the use of *mentre* expressing simultaneity (section 5.3.1). ‘Non-temporal uses’ include the indication of spatial location, the marking of discourse structure, and the communication of interactional meaning. Some examples are: the sequence-in-discourse use of *allora* (section 3.2.2), the interjective uses of *già* (section 4.3.2) and the contrastive use of *poi* (section 5.2.4).

We will argue that an inferential account of communication allows us to give a unitary account of temporal and non-temporal uses of these expressions. When we consider the inferential processes involved in the interpretation of the utterances marked by a given element, we can perceive a uniformity which may not be suggested by features characteristic of a given element, such as syntactic patterns or position within the discourse structure. Our account assumes that most of the message conveyed by words is implied rather than explicitly communicated, and therefore involves the study of the inferential paths that are necessary to arrive at the implied portion of meaning. This type of approach is therefore to be preferred to text- and coherence-based approaches, which limit themselves to the study of ‘what is said’, thus missing important generalizations, as we shall see.

A sub-hypothesis is that relevance theory is eminently suitable for this type of analysis. RT is a post-Gricean, inferential account whose main aim is to give a cognitively-based account of communication. The focus of this theory is on the processing of utterances on the part of the hearer, starting from the decoding of the linguistic input leading up to the processing of assumptions communicated by utterances in context. The two dichotomies of explicit/implicit communication and conceptual/procedural meaning will prove to be essential in the task of highlighting similarities among linguistic items. This type of account has the advantage of requiring no additional levels of description: although in the present work a descriptive component will be offered as a way of

introducing the expressions under investigation, we claim that a cognitively-based account is all that is needed to account for these elements in a comprehensive and accurate way.

The relevance-theoretic approach to meaning was preferred to other neo-Gricean approaches. In this work, the 'neo-Gricean' label will apply to Horn's (1984, 2004) and Levinson's (1995, 2000) systems (see section 2.2.3), although other authors have offered modifications of Grice's take on inferential analysis (for an overview of neo-Gricean theories, see Huang 2006). Relevance theory, Horn's approach and Levinson's approach are all attempts at devising a more economical account of communication than the Gricean approach by means of reducing in number the communicative principles at play. While Horn's and Levinson's approaches see the recovery of implicatures as depending on the interplay of various heuristics, often in specific sequence, in RT the principle of relevance is deemed to be sufficient to explain the process of comprehension of any utterance, more specifically the recovery of both Particularized Conversational Implicatures (PCIs) and Generalized Conversational Implicatures (GCIs) as defined by Levinson; these are in fact seen in RT as being placed on a continuum (Carston 2002a: 111). Furthermore, while the pragmatic processes which develop 'what is said' and those that participate in the recovery of implicatures are accounted for in separate ways by Levinson, they are seen by Carston as being the same in nature (Meibauer 2006: 576). We maintain that all instances of recovery of implicatures can successfully be accounted for by resorting to the principle of relevance as the sole principle regulating communication, as advocated within RT; a relevance-theoretic account is thus to be preferred for reasons of economy.

### **1.3.2 Temporal expressions and a monosemous approach**

The second main hypothesis is that all of the elements in this study can be given a monosemous account as opposed to a polysemous account. For each element, a 'core' meaning will be postulated which is encoded by all uses of a single element, and actualized on a contextual basis. Throughout our work, we shall adopt methodological minimalism (see Fischer 2006c: 441). That is, the existence of a single common meaning should be assumed first, and then, should this prove not to be possible, multiple



meanings should be postulated. The tendency to keep the number of meanings as low as possible follows from the Modified Occam's Razor ('Do not multiply senses beyond necessity') (see Vivien 2006). We argue that our account solves some of the main problems presented by polysemous accounts.

Firstly, we argue that the theoretical framework provided by relevance theory is able to provide a monosemous account with a proper degree of descriptive power, since the procedures at the core of the meaning of the elements in this study provide a degree of specification adequate to the purposes of semantic description. This responds to criticism against monosemous approaches, according to which these would offer descriptions of the 'core meaning' that are often too vague or general, and that therefore lack descriptive value: "the descriptions offered may, depending on the multiplicity of concrete uses of the marker in question, end up being so abstract and general that they neither exclude nonexistent uses nor distinguish adequately between different markers" (Hansen 2006: 24). In fact, we will argue that it is indeed possible to adequately describe differences among markers within a relevance-theoretic account. For example, several expressions will be shown to encode a procedure which constrains the context of interpretation, but the exact way in which this is done can and will be specified, as we claim that the procedure in question also restricts the search space for the assumptions that should form the context.

Secondly, we argue that a relevance-theoretic account is to be preferred to a polysemous account for reasons of general theoretic parsimony. While the latter approach contemplates contextualization as necessary to derive one of the many senses attributed to a word, in RT contextualization is involved both in the instantiation of procedures and in the lexical processes of narrowing and broadening, and is therefore the very element which dispenses with the postulation of multiple senses. Thus, while the same pragmatic processes are invoked by both approaches, in RT they can account for all types of inferential paths and they therefore prevent a proliferation of senses for a single expression.

Thirdly, we maintain that our approach is to be preferred as it is cognitively economical. Our account postulates that interpretations need not be all considered at the same time by the hearer. In compliance with relevance theory, interpretations are considered in succession, on the basis of accessibility of contextual assumptions, with a



constant comparison between contextual effects and processing effort, until the hearer strikes an adequate balance. We argue here that the following entailment is not automatic: "the notion of a core meaning which is held constant between contexts entails that all possible contextual interpretations of the linguistic item in question ought to be simultaneously available" (Hansen 2006: 36-37). Even in the work by Bazzanella *et al*, which proposes a monosemous approach to meaning, it is argued that "all the functions co-exist, to a certain extent, but depending on the configuration that is activated, some will more powerfully participate in determining the DM [discourse marker] interpretation" (2007: 26). Instead, according to our account some interpretations may not be taken into consideration at all. Finally, it is not clear how the notion of a constant, 'core' meaning entails availability of anything else than just this constant meaning itself.

In our account we will seek to account for the way in which the hearer finds out which inferential route to take, given the presence of a minimal meaning encoded by the word, and with so much meaning to be inferred on a case-to-case basis. We will argue that on each occasion the hearer will be guided by factors of a different nature, which participate jointly to make certain assumptions more accessible and therefore facilitate the hearer in his cognitive efforts. What follows is a brief illustration of the range of evidence the hearer can rely on in his search for the final interpretation. Particular instances will be mentioned throughout chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Syntax and focus have been found to influence the interpretation of an utterance (for a review, see Green 2004). A certain temporal expression might regularly be found in specific syntactic configurations, which in turn might be related to a specific informational focus. Although many of the expressions in the present work, as we will see, can perform as connectives and occur therefore mostly in clause-external position, some occurrences may take clause-internal position or occur immediately before or after a certain item in the utterance. These regularities can be used by the hearer in order to determine the final interpretation of the utterance.

The semantics of the linguistic context of a certain occurrence often constitutes a strong signal for a given interpretation. Given the temporal semantics of the expressions in the present work, a frequent clue will be shown to be the semantics of the verbs involved, more specifically tense and aspectual information. This type of clue may also allow the hearer to distinguish temporal from non-temporal uses. We will suggest that



another semantic clue is the presence of certain nouns and verbs which suggest by virtue of their conceptual content that a certain topic is being tackled. For instance, words related to spatial location raise the expectation that the element will encode spatial meaning. We will also argue that the occurrence of certain nouns and adjectives may make certain scales particularly salient in the context, in the case of the so-called scalar uses (see section 4.1.2).

Prosody is one of the types of evidence that the hearer relies on to fine-tune his interpretation (Wharton 2009: 141). For instance, a speaker may use an unusual (marked) prosodic pattern for a specific construction in a given language; for the hearer, this is the “costlier” inferential route, which will however yield more contextual effects (in the relevance-theoretic sense; see section 2.2.1; also Wharton 2009: 142).<sup>2</sup> Prosodic factors are not dealt with systematically in the present work (see 1.4.3 for discussion). However, as we recognize that prosody can be a decisive factor in interpretation, we will occasionally make suggestions as to which impact it may have on the interpretation of a given expression.

We define situational context as the coordinates valid for the communicative exchange being carried out at the time of utterance: time, location, speakers involved, medium involved. We will argue that the interpretation of some temporal expressions is regularly influenced by these parameters. We will furthermore argue that the hearer will expect the occurrence of certain uses in association with changes in temporal or spatial coordinates, participants and medium.

Notice that in a relevance-theoretic approach such as ours, context is made up of assumptions, derived from both linguistic and extralinguistic input. There is therefore no need to postulate additional notions such as “domains” (Schiffrin 1987, 2006; Fischer 2006c) or “contextual parameters” (Bazzanella 2006), suggested by other authors who use a monosemous approach. The relevance-theoretic notion of context is general enough to encompass all of these notions.

As a final remark on this hypothesis, we argue that our account is potentially compatible with diachronic research. Although this account provides a synchronic

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<sup>2</sup> For clarity, we will conventionally refer to the speaker as ‘she’ and to the hearer as ‘he’ throughout the present work.

snapshot of these elements in contemporary Italian, we do not exclude that a procedure could evolve to accommodate more functions. In our opinion, monosemous approaches do not rule out the possibility of dynamic processes taking place, such as the addition and the disappearance of uses, as argued by Hansen (2006: 24). In our view, the fact that a procedure does not exclude nonexistent uses does not constitute a problem, since this is exactly the mechanism that allows the emergence of new uses – a process that, according to advocates of the polysemous approach to meaning, monosemous approaches are not able to account for. We conclude that our account has the potential advantage of accounting for diachronic change; we leave this to be tested by further research.

### 1.3.3 Temporal expressions and groups

The third hypothesis is that the temporal expressions under discussion fall naturally into groups on the basis of shared cognitive properties. Traditionally, these temporal expressions are treated as distinct entities and not taken as a group, with the exception of some mentions of elements in pairs, mostly *allora/ora* (see chapter 3) and *ancora/già* (see chapter 4). However, we believe that the individual analyses of these temporal elements can benefit from analyses in groups since the latter can reveal interesting properties that they have in common.

The first sub-hypothesis is that the adverbs *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* (chapter 3) constitute one of these groups. These elements are mainly united by their indexical character. We will show that the three adverbs also show an affinity in cognitive terms, since all of their uses are related to procedural meaning, and more specifically they will be shown to constrain the context of interpretation of the utterance.

A second sub-hypothesis regards the aspectual adverbs *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* (chapter 4). We will seek to show that these expressions naturally form a class, since at a cognitive level they contribute to the explicatures of the utterance in most of their uses. In terms of the type of meaning they encode, uniformity limits itself to *ancora* and *già*: differently than these two expressions, *sempre* may contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance, and does not evoke a contrast between assumptions on a scale as regularly.

The two remaining elements, *poi* and *mentre*, which we discuss in chapter 5, remain outside this hypothesis. As we shall see, *poi* is associated with sequence while



*mentre* is associated with simultaneity; moreover, *poi* may take different positions in the utterance and interact with the meaning of other words, whereas *mentre* is tied to its clause-external position, being a connective. Nevertheless, our cognitive approach will highlight significant shared features: both expressions encode procedural meaning, and constrain the derivation of both basic and higher-level explicatures.

#### 1.4 Theoretical contribution

The findings of the present study present implications for several theoretical issues which are currently being discussed by relevance theorists, and proponents of other theories alike. In this section we briefly illustrate these issues and our intended contribution.

A first point concerns the indication of contrast by temporal expressions. We will argue that the expressions in chapters 4 and 5 are regularly used to draw the hearer's attention to contrasting propositions. These expressions share the characteristic of not being prototypically adversative or concessive conjunctions or adverbs, such as Italian *ma* 'but', *però* 'but', *comunque* 'however', and *tuttavia* 'however'. Contrastive meaning has been extensively studied in relevance theory. The most influential account is that of Blakemore, from her first major work (1987) up to her more recent analysis of English *but*, *however*, and *nevertheless* (2002). Her account has recently been challenged and modified (Hall 2004; Olmos 2009a, 2009b). On the other hand, contrastive uses of non-contrastive elements have not been the subject of much research within RT. An exception is English *and* (Blakemore & Carston 1999, 2005), which has been found to imply cause, temporal sequence, or indeed contrast. A similar behaviour will be shown to be observable for the temporal expressions in the present work. This phenomenon is an argument in favour of an inferential account, as these meanings are not directly encoded by the word but only retrievable through inference.

A further theoretical issue to which we hope to contribute is the relevance-theoretic analysis of interjections. In the present work, interjective uses were found to be performed by *allora* and *già*. Both these items are recognised as interjections in the Italian literature (Poggi 1995). The account of interjections is challenging as these expressions are seen as borderline between verbal and non-verbal communication (Wharton 2009). In relevance theory, there is a growing body of literature on interjections, the main



contributions coming from Wharton (2003, 2009) and Padilla Cruz (2009a, 2009b). We will base our account of the interjective uses of *allora* and *già* on Padilla Cruz's proposal and will argue that the procedures they respectively encode guide the retrieval of contextual assumptions which will lead to the derivation of higher-level explicatures.

A further theoretical contribution will hopefully be made to the area of studies on discourse markers, called discourse connectives within relevance theory (see section 2.4). The original relevance-theoretic account (Blakemore 1987) saw discourse markers as encoding procedural meaning: discourse markers were seen as instructing the hearer on how to process the utterance. However, subsequent studies have shown that the picture is in fact more complex: sentential adverbials, parentheticals and reformulation markers are said to contribute to the recovery of the explicatures of the utterance (Ifantidou 1993a, 1993b; Blakemore 1993, 1996; Wilson & Sperber 1993; see section 2.4.7). We seek to contribute to this by providing further evidence that not all discourse-marking uses contribute to the implicatures of the utterance. In fact, we will argue that a great deal of uses seen in this work constrains the derivation of either higher-level explicatures or the basic explicature. In the latter case, temporal expressions contribute to the development of the logical form up to the full explicature.

## **1.5 Methodology**

The object of this study is a group of eight temporal expressions, which have been chosen because they are highly frequent in the LIP corpus (see section 1.5.2). In this section, we will explain the rationale behind our choice of data, describe the corpora used for this work, discuss some analytical issues, and finally make some remarks on the way data is presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

### **1.5.1 Choice of data**

For this work, we chose to use authentic data from spoken corpora accessible on-line. This choice was informed by various factors. Firstly, since the present study is a pragmatic analysis, the choice of authentic data as opposed to 'invented' data seemed natural. However, this is not to be expected in all research in this field, as some pragmatic

approaches to language, including relevance theory, make extensive use of ad hoc, invented examples. While the latter are surely useful at times, we maintain that authentic data are the most reliable for an understanding of the actual workings of communication, since they mirror the actual performance of the speakers.

Three corpora were chosen as sources of authentic data. Two corpora of spoken Italian were chosen as a main source of examples, while a corpus of written Italian was used to study those expressions whose uses are more frequent in written discourse. An advantage of using data from corpora as opposed to invented, one-line examples lies in the availability of a broader context: corpora that make full texts available make it possible to extract a suitably wide context. Regrettably, the linguistic context of the occurrence under analysis in relevance-theoretic studies is often limited. As will be shown through the analysis of our data, linguistic context is crucial for utterance interpretation, and it is only rarely made up of one single utterance.

Spoken corpora were given priority over written corpora, since the present study focuses not only on the temporal but also on the non-temporal uses of temporal expressions: our working assumption is that spoken discourse displays a greater number of interpersonal, emphatic uses than written discourse, and therefore spoken corpora can provide us with a greater number of examples for such uses. A written corpus was consulted to study those uses that were reported or expected to be more frequent in written communication, and that were worth mentioning in the analysis; only a few examples from this corpus will be given.

Most of the communication featured in the spoken corpora is spontaneous. We deemed this important in order to capture present-day Italian at its most authentic. This is not only important for pragmatic analysis but potentially for other levels as well: “only through the analysis of spontaneous conversation can one obtain the full semantic and grammatical potential of the language system” (Romero Trillo 2008: 5).

Online corpora, rather than closed-access, electronic or written corpora, have been chosen as they are accessible at any time with very little cost; the gathering of such large amount of data would not have been practicable within the framework of the present study.



Finally, native speakers of Italian are occasionally used as informants to test the few constructed examples in the analysis; whenever that is the case, it will be marked in the text.

### 1.5.2 Description of corpora

The data for this work are taken from two spoken corpora and one written corpus. One of the spoken corpora used for the present study is the LIP - *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato*. The corpus is made up of 469 transcriptions of recordings collected between 1990 and 1992, for a total of approximately 500,000 words and corresponding to approximately 57 hours of recordings. Together with the CLIPS corpus (see below) it can be considered the most authoritative corpus of spoken contemporary Italian at the time of writing.

The texts are orthographic transcriptions of recordings collected in four Italian cities: Milano, Roma and Napoli – representing respectively the north, the centre and the south of Italy, with the addition of Florence, which played a crucial role in the development of standard Italian. Nearly all texts present speech in standard Italian, with some isolated texts displaying local dialect or regional dialect. A regional dialect is a dialect that has lost some of the characteristics of the local dialect, and is thus closer to standard Italian. The difference between the two, however, is difficult to ascertain (Pellegrini 1960, in Benincà 2003: 18; Serianni & Antonelli 2006: 44). In the present work we did not take into consideration dialectal variation; therefore, all occurrences of the eight temporal expressions were examined without considering the presence of dialectal expressions in the surrounding co-text.

Different types of spoken interaction are represented, ranging from most naturally occurring to least naturally occurring:

- Type A: bi-directional, face-to-face exchange, with free turn-taking:
  - conversations at home;
  - conversations at work;
  - conversations at school or at the university;
  - conversations during recreation or on means of transport.



- Type B: bi-directional, non-face-to-face exchange, with free turn-taking:
  - ordinary telephone conversations;
  - telephone conversations broadcasted on radio;
  - messages recorded by telephone answering machines.
- Type C: bi-directional, face-to-face exchange, with constrained turn-taking:
  - legislative assemblies;
  - cultural debates;
  - school meetings;
  - trade union meetings;
  - workers' meetings;
  - primary school oral examinations;
  - secondary school oral examinations;
  - university oral examinations;
  - courtroom interrogations;
  - radio or television interviews.
- Type D: unidirectional exchange, with the addressee being present:
  - primary school classes;
  - secondary school classes;
  - university lectures;
  - speeches held during party conventions or trade union meetings;
  - presentations at scientific meetings;
  - speeches held during electoral campaigns;
  - sermons;
  - presentations at non-specialist meetings;
  - court pleadings.
- Type E: distanced unidirectional exchange:
  - television programmes;
  - radio programmes.

The LIP examples for this study have been taken from the online version of the corpus, hosted on the Language Server of the Karl-Franzens-Universität: <http://badip.uni-graz.at/>. The free-access website is called *BADIP* (Banca Dati dell'Italiano Parlato), where it is

available both in Italian and in English. In transferring the corpus to the online edition, internal inconsistencies were rectified, and most of the annotations were excluded in the process (Bellini & Schneider 2006: 17); the latter, however, was not considered significant for the present work since annotations were not considered during the analysis. On the website, texts can be visualized in either the 'Badip' (revised) version or the original version; the query options only work for the former (2006: 18). In addition, the website displays several lists and tables that offer information on recordings, speakers and lemmata included.

The CLIPS - *Corpora e Lessici di Italiano Parlato e Scritto* - is a joint project by several Italian universities and institutes, including the universities of Naples, Pisa, Torino and Lecce, and the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. Data were collected between 1999 and 2004 and comprise approximately 100 hours of recordings, making it the greatest spoken corpus of Italian available at the time of writing. Recordings were made in 15 different Italian cities to reflect diatopic variation. As already mentioned earlier in this section, this type of variation was not investigated in the present work; examples have been extracted from texts independently of the geographical origin of the speakers involved. The corpus is hosted online on the website <http://www.clips.unina.it/>, where text files, both tagged and non-tagged as well as audio files, are available for download. At the time of writing, registration is necessary in order to access this material. For the moment no search engine is in place; however, several documents with detailed information on the construction of the corpus are made available with no need for registration.

The represented text types, ranging from natural to constrained types of communication, are the following (from <http://www.clips.unina.it/>; my translation):

- Radio and TV, both sub-divided into:
  - divulgative & cultural;
  - entertainment;
  - information and services;
  - advertisement.
- Dialogues:
  - 'map task';



- 'difference test'.
- Reading task:
  - list of sentences;
  - list of items in 'map task';
  - list of items in 'difference test'.
- Telephone conversations:
  - automatic;
  - 'Wizard of Oz'.
- 'Orthophonic':
  - list of sentences;
  - list of balanced sentences.

In a 'map task', a subject instructs the other on how to draw an itinerary on a map, with the two subjects' maps being slightly different; points of reference are items drawn on the map. In the 'difference test', two subjects must find differences in two seemingly identical images and describe them (Cerrato 2006: 6). In the 'Wizard of Oz', a human voice (the 'wizard') simulates the automatic replies by a machine (2006: 7). Since the analysis for this study requires examples from naturally occurring (that is to say, unconstrained) spoken Italian, only excerpts from text types a) and b) are used. The 'orthophonic' portion of the corpus is a collection of high-quality speech recordings for industrial use (for example, telephonometry).

Written data were taken into consideration as a means of comparison with spoken data, as well as a source of additional occurrences of those expressions that were expected to be more frequent in written discourse. *CoLFIS - Corpus e Archivio Lessicale dell'Italiano Scritto contemporaneo* (<http://www.ge.ilc.cnr.it/strumenti.php>) is a joint project of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, the CNR (National Research Centre) of Rome and Genoa, and the Universities of L'Aquila and Salerno. Texts were taken from newspapers, magazines and books published between 1992 and 1994 and selected on the basis of statistical studies on preferred readings among the Italian population. The number of occurrences exceeds 3 million. The search engine allows for searches according to text source. Unlike the spoken corpora described above, complete texts are not



available for consultation, but rather only the portion of text surrounding the searched term in all its occurrences.

### **1.5.3 Some notes on analytical approach**

The present study adopts a qualitative approach, with a mix of corpus-based and corpus-driven analysis. It furthermore seeks to give a synchronic depiction and leaves diachronic considerations for further studies. This section will further discuss these and other related methodological choices, and will conclude with some comments on the factors influencing the selection of occurrences from the corpora for the phase of analysis.

The approach to data chosen for this work is qualitative rather than quantitative: the focus is on the commonalities and differences among uses, regardless of their frequency. It was indeed noted that some uses are characterized by a particularly low number of occurrences. This may be due to external reasons: it might be that the corpus itself does not display enough examples of that particular function. This might, in turn, be due to any other criterion chosen for the compilation of the corpus; for instance, the text types or the type of speakers. On the other hand, it may be due to internal reasons: the use is simply not recurrent in a given language. In the latter case, the question is whether to give importance to these occurrences in comparison to ‘major’ uses. As the nature of this work is qualitative rather than quantitative, a decision has been made not to disregard these infrequent uses as idiosyncratic data, following the principle according to which “any attended use of a marker is of equal semantic interest” (Hansen 2006: 22).

Although corpus analysis was traditionally associated with quantitative studies, recent times have seen an increase in works which combine corpora use and pragmatic focus. More and more corpus compilers take into consideration the needs of pragmatics as they include information on context (Romero Trillo 2008: 2-6). We see no inconsistency in using a resource which might be originally conceived for a different level of analysis for the purposes of a pragmatic analysis, if this resource provides enough information to make such analysis possible.

This research may be described as a mix of corpus-based and corpus-driven approach. In a corpus-based study, the corpus is used mainly “as a source of examples to check researcher intuition”, whereas “a corpus-driven analysis is a more inductive process:

the corpus itself is the data and the patterns in it are noted as a way of expressing regularities (and exceptions) in language. A corpus-driven analysis tends to only use minimal theoretical presuppositions about grammatical structure" (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, in Baker, Hardie & McEnery 2006: 49). The present work has been characterized by both of these approaches at different stages. This working method is also a way to overcome the much-discussed dualism between rationalism and empiricism. The former is "an approach to a subject [...] which is based upon introspection rather than external data analysis", whereas the latter is "based upon the analysis of external data" (McEnery & Wilson 1996: 178). Defending the former stance, Noam Chomsky maintained that language can only be described by describing competence, of which performance was only a "poor mirror"; the design and use of corpora were therefore heavily criticized in his publications in the late '50s and '60s (McEnery & Wilson 1996: 5). However, it has been argued that a combination of both intuition and analysis of authentic data can lead to better results. Svartvik (1992) argues that corpus, elicitation and intuition should be complementary methodologies, since corpus data cannot entirely replace "careful manual analysis" in many linguistic fields (p. 10). According to Chafe (1992), corpora are the best way to observe language as "window to the mind" (p. 88) since they contain naturally occurring data; however, they have "accidental limits" (p. 89), that is, they may not display certain phenomena which only occur accidentally in language. The author therefore calls for the use of elicitation and introspection to complete – not replace – corpus methodology. Granted, there are certainly types of studies where introspection cannot be used, namely those involving historical linguistics and those analysing languages other than the linguist's own native language (Svartvik 1992: 9-10; Szwabe 2002: 119); in both cases, the use of corpora is advisable. However, neither case applies to the present study; intuition was used in the form of the writer's own judgement as native speaker, as well as judgement provided by native-speaker informants. Both were meant as supplements to what was observed.

The present study will provide a synchronic overview of the functioning of the temporal elements under analysis, with the awareness that "synchronic structure inevitably reflects its history in important ways" (Sweetser 1990: 10). We will therefore incorporate insights from diachronic studies on the elements under scrutiny as well as their equivalents in other languages and discuss their implications for our account. There



is clearly a need for further research on the same data to determine to which degree synchrony mirrors diachronic development. As a last comment on the matter, we deem it important to point out that in chapters 3, 4 and 5 temporal uses will be presented first, followed by non-temporal uses, with the latter sometimes divided into groups. This is solely done for clarity of exposition, and is not intended to reflect any development in diachronic terms. Those cases in which this does seem to be the case will be explicitly marked as such.

What follows is an illustration of the choices made in relation to other components of communication during the phase of analysis. Firstly, information on the geographic distribution of the linguistic items in question will be given when relevant; the same approach is used for comments on register (diaphasic variation). As for diastratic variation, personal information on the individual speaker is partly available for both the LIP and the CLIPS corpus, but was not factored in. Syntax, prosody and text type will only be considered to the extent to which they are believed to impact on the hearer's interpretation process (see section 1.3.2). Some of the expressions analyzed in the present work have nominal counterparts, which will be mentioned in the course of the analysis presentation; for the purposes of this study, we leave them aside, and leave open the question as to how our account applies to these nouns. Finally, although each of the elements under analysis may be used as part of various fixed constructions or composite connectives, we will not go very far in exploring all of them in depth, for reasons of time and space. We will however mention expressions such as “e allora” (section 3.2.2), “ah già” (section 4.3.2), “perché poi” (section 5.2.3), “che poi” and “non è poi” (section 5.2.4). We leave the analysis of expressions such as connectives “ora che”, “adesso che” and “sempre che” to future research.

#### **1.5.4 Some notes on data presentation**

All examples feature an interlinear gloss from Italian into English, compiled following the Leipzig glossing rules.<sup>3</sup> Since this study focuses on the semantic and pragmatic properties of temporal expressions, detailed morphemic information was not deemed necessary for

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<sup>3</sup> URL: <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php> (Last accessed 27 October 2010).



data presentation; therefore, glossing was limited to a word-by-word translation, plus the (mostly) semantic information required for the analysis. An extended translation into English is given immediately below the example. The occurrences under analysis are in bold. As there is no one-to-one correspondence of meaning, we adopted the policy of glossing the temporal expressions in this work with an English word which reflects the meaning of the expression in context. Our English translations of the Italian examples are to be intended as approximations.

The amount of co-text extracted for each occurrence was calculated on a case-to-case basis. As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, linguistic context is crucial for the interpretation of the elements under investigation, though some occurrences have a wider scope than others.

The LIP examples are taken indifferently from either the 'original' or 'badip' text format types found on the website: the difference is that the 'badip' examples are not annotated. The examples from CLIPS are reported as found on the website and feature annotations. Annotations of either corpus have not been used for analysis. Both types of example have been slightly adjusted in format for questions of space and editing, however with no modification in linguistic content. In addition to being numbered, examples are marked with a tag that indicates the corpus of provenance as well as the exact occurrence in the text. These tags differ depending on the corpus of provenance.

The tags assigned to the examples from the LIP corpus correspond to the names of the texts as given on the website, to which a number for the occurrence was added as for the CLIPS examples. The first letter indicates the location - Milano (M), Firenze (F), Roma (R), Napoli (N). The second letter marks text type, as follows:

- Type A: bi-directional, face-to-face exchange, with free turn-taking;
- Type B: bi-directional, non-face-to-face exchange, with free turn-taking;
- Type C: bi-directional, face-to-face exchange, with constrained turn-taking;
- Type D: unidirectional exchange, with the addressee being present;
- Type E: distanced unidirectional exchange.

The number preceding the slash is the text number as assigned on the website. For instance, in chapter (3) we find the following tag:

FD13/2 – F = Florence; D = unidirectional exchange, with the addressee being present; 13 = text 13 as numbered in the corpus; 2 = occurrence no.2 of item in text

The tags assigned to the examples taken from the CLIPS corpus correspond to the filename of the text files found on the website, to which a number was added to indicate the occurrence as it appears in the text. The first two to four letters indicate the text type:

- Radiotelevisivo: (radio and TV)
  - radiofonico (RD) (radio)
  - televisivo (TV) (television)
  - (subtypes) divulgazione e cultura (dc) (divulcation and culture)
    - intrattenimento (it) (entertainment)
    - informazione e servizio (is) (information and services)
    - pubblicità (pb) (adverts)
  - Dialogico (DG) (dialogues)
    - map-task (mt)
    - test differenze (td) (difference test)

The letter immediately before the slash indicates the location:

| LOCATION  | LETTER | LOCATION  | LETTER |
|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| Bari      | B      | Milano    | M      |
| Cagliari  | C      | Napoli    | N      |
| Bergamo   | D      | Perugia   | O      |
| Parma     | E      | Palermo   | P      |
| Firenze   | F      | Roma      | R      |
| Genova    | I      | Torino    | T      |
| Catanzaro | H      | Venezia   | V      |
| Lecce     | L      | Nazionale | Z      |

Table 1 - Locations for the recordings of the CLIPS corpus (adapted from Basile and Cutugno 2007: 9)



What remains between text type and location is the number assigned to the text in the corpus. Here is an example from chapter (3):

DGmtA02F/1 – DG = dialogico; mt = map-task; A02 = text A02 as numbered in the corpus; F = Florence; 1 = occurrence no.1 of item in text

The vast majority of the examples in the analysis are taken from the corpora just described. The remaining examples are either taken from the literature, or created to account for those uses that are neither documented in the corpora nor in previous research; these are not marked as being taken from any corpus as described above.

## 1.6 Chapter content

The content of the following chapters will be as follows.

In chapter 2 we present theoretical aspects pertaining to our work. Section 2.2 is devoted to relevance theory, with special focus on the main dichotomies that will be applied to the data in the analysis phase: the difference between explicatures and implicatures, and the distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning. Since the present study deals with expressions that display features proper of indexicality, the relevance-theoretic approach on indexicality will also be discussed. Section 2.3 illustrates the semantics and pragmatics of tense, aspect, and temporal adverbials, as well as models of temporal interpretation and temporal sequencing. Since the elements under analysis display discourse-marking uses, the literature and main issues surrounding discourse markers will be reviewed in section 2.4. This section also contains an overview of the studies on discourse markers in Italian. Finally, an overview will be given of the relevance-theoretic account of these expressions.

The analysis of temporal indexicals *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* is the subject of chapter 3. As in the rest of the analysis chapters, an introductory illustration of etymology, grammatical role and formal properties will be given for each element, followed by the analysis of temporal and then non-temporal uses. We will argue that *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* are procedural expressions which constrain the context for interpretation of the



utterance. This is the most homogeneous of all groups; this is also due to the fact that *ora* and *adesso* greatly overlap in their functions.

Chapter 4 deals with the analysis and discussion of aspectual adverbs *ancora*, *già* and *sempre*. These elements present a strong correlation at a semantic level, since they are all aspectual adverbs: they encode information on the internal structure of the eventuality described in the utterance. Firstly, we will argue that *ancora* and *già* are procedural expressions which point to contrast between a proposition and an alternative proposition on a contextually-evoked scale. Secondly, we will attempt to apply this account to *sempre*; this attempt will only be partly successful, as *sempre* will be claimed to contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance and to be not as markedly scalar as the other two adverbs.

Chapter 5 deals with the analysis and discussion of *poi* and *mentre*. These two expressions suggest different temporal information: *poi* expresses sequence whereas *mentre* expresses simultaneity. Nevertheless, we will argue that they encode similar procedures that contribute to the basic and higher-level explicatures of the utterance. In this they resemble the temporal expressions in both chapter 3 and chapter 4.

Finally, chapter 6 presents a final discussion of the aims and hypotheses in the light of the analysis results. A section will be devoted to the examination of the theoretical issues raised in this chapter. We will also present research from other areas of linguistics which might shed light on some of the phenomena observed in our study. Finally, indications will be given as to possible lines for research in order to further test our findings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we will present our theoretical framework, relevance theory, and illustrate the results of previous research on the expressions that constitute our object of study, both in Italian and in other languages. These have been classified as both temporal expressions and as discourse markers, depending on the focus of the study in question; we will therefore provide background knowledge on both classes of expressions. Since the meaning of temporal adverbials and connectives is often tied to that expressed by tense and aspect, we will also describe what progress has been made by research on the semantics and pragmatics of these two categories.

Firstly, we will present relevance theory (section 2.2). Relevance theory was developed around the 1980s on the basis of Gricean pragmatics as well as previous studies in other disciplines, such as anthropology and cognitive science. Despite its being a recent theory, the body of literature is already quite rich; on the other hand, many questions are still under investigation. Some of the current issues have already been introduced in chapter 1 and will be discussed again in chapter 6. In this chapter, we will briefly delineate the origins of relevance theory, its main tenets and the dichotomies associated with it, including the distinctions between explicit and implicit meaning, and conceptual and procedural meaning; these are central to our analysis. Relevance theory will be compared to other approaches such as truth-conditional approaches, coherence-based theories and other post-Gricean systems. Special attention will be given of a current field of development, lexical pragmatics. Finally, we will relate on how relevance theory treats indexicality. Both lexical pragmatics and indexicality are questions that will emerge regularly in the course of our analysis.

The semantics and pragmatics of time are the subject of section 2.3. Research on time is a multidisciplinary field; we will concentrate on the contribution given by studies in linguistics. This section will deal in brief with the semantics and pragmatics of tense and



aspect as well as the influence of temporal adverbials and connectives on the interpretation of time in discourse. Finally, we will illustrate some attempts that have been made to devise models to predict the way we process temporal interpretation across utterances. We will show in the course of data analysis that the eight temporal expressions that we picked as data interact with tense and aspect in manifold ways to give rise to pragmatic effects.

Finally, an overview will be offered of research on discourse markers (section 2.4). This area of linguistics is thriving although it only started to develop a few decades ago. It has been often argued that research on discourse markers can shed light on many issues among which the semantics-pragmatics interface and the nature of conceptual and procedural meaning. A great deal of research is concentrated on providing definitions and criteria for class membership; this has proven to be somewhat problematic as discourse markers are said to constitute a functional class rather than a grammatical class. Different solutions to these problems are illustrated in section 1.4. A brief overview of studies on the diachronic development of discourse markers will be given. Presenting all possible approaches to discourse marker analysis is impossible given the constraints of the present work (but see Fischer 2006a for a vast range of examples); we have therefore selected what we think are representative accounts for some of the most influential approaches. A subsection will be devoted to research on Italian discourse markers. Finally, we will present the relevance-theoretic approach on ‘discourse connectives’, as discourse markers are called within RT. In our analysis we will frequently encounter discourse-marking uses of temporal expressions, which will be occasionally explained by making reference to the literature on the subject.

## **2.2 Relevance theory**

Relevance theory was developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95). This theory builds upon the Gricean model of inferential communication (see Grice 1957, 1975, 1989). According to previously existing code theories of communication, of the type suggested by Shannon & Weaver (1949, in Sperber & Wilson 1986/95: 4), the thought of the speaker is the message to be delivered. This message is transmitted to a hearer via signals, that is, the “phonetic (or graphemic) representations of utterances” (Blass 1990: 34). The



correlation between the message and the signals is described by a code. The task of the hearer is that of decoding the message in order to find out the exact same thought produced by the speaker. At the end of the decoding process, the speaker's thought equates the hearer's thought.

Grice's work shows that there is more to human communication than simply the encoding and decoding of a message. According to Grice, the basic feature of human communication is the conveying of intentions on the part of the speaker and the recognition of such intentions on the part of the hearer. By virtue of this mechanism, Grice argues, there can be communication without the use of a code: the hearer will need to recognize the speaker's intention for communication to be successful. In order to do this, he will need the speaker to provide evidence for such intention, either of the non-verbal or of the verbal kind. Utterances can be considered pieces of verbal evidence of the latter kind. How does the hearer recover the intention on the basis of this type of evidence? The answer lies in the knowledge that humans have of specific principles and maxims which create expectations about the meaning of the speaker's utterances: the Co-operative Principle and the Maxims of conversation. The Co-operative principle is formulated as follows:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

(Grice 1975: 45)

The Maxims can be summed up as follows:

*Maxims of quantity*

- 1 Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- 2 Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

*Maxims of quality*

*Supermaxim:* Try to make your contribution one that is true.

- 1 Do not say what you believe to be false.
- 2 Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

*Maxim of relation*

Be relevant.

*Maxims of manner*

*Supermaxim*: Be perspicuous.

- 1 Avoid obscurity of expression.
- 2 Avoid ambiguity.
- 3 Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- 4 Be orderly.

(Sperber & Wilson 1986/95: 33-34; adapted from Grice 1975: 45-46)

The expectations determined by the above-mentioned principle and by the Gricean Maxims constrain the interpretation of the utterance and thus the recovery of the speaker's meaning (Blass 1990: 38; Wilson & Sperber 2006: 607). The material for the interpretation is the sentence itself, which must be decoded in the way envisaged by the code model; however, contextual information and inference rules play a crucial role in the interpretation process (Blakemore 1987: 21).

Sperber & Wilson (1986/95) argue that their theory has a sounder basis than the framework provided by the code model in many respects. First and foremost, it is highly implausible that speaker and hearer can entertain the same thought. After all, mutual knowledge "can never be certain" (1986/95: 20). The authors argue that each hearer may come up with a different interpretation, with the result that a single sentence may correspond to many different utterances. Thus, a realistic model of communication cannot describe the relation between a message and a signal by means of a code. Rather, it will have to show how utterance interpretation is constrained so that the hearer arrives at the interpretation intended by the speaker. In other words, there is a gap between sentences and utterances which cannot be accounted for by a code (1986/95: 9).

Notice, however, that Sperber and Wilson argue that linguistic processing does play a role in a theory of communication. This conclusion is suggested by the observation



that, as already mentioned earlier, the hearer does need to decode the linguistic input. In this system, the code model can be said to correspond to semantics - an “autonomous linguistic system” with the task of describing the mapping between the linguistic stimulus and the semantic representation; pragmatics, on the other hand, is the inferential system which “integrates the output of the decoding process with contextual information in order to deliver a hypothesis about the speaker’s informative intention” (Blakemore 2002: 60). As emerges from these definitions, grammar is still an input (albeit not the only one) to pragmatics.

### 2.2.1 The cognitive and communicative principles of relevance

Relevance theory may be defined as a “general cognitive theory of information processing” (Blakemore 1988: 185). In addition to the ideas of Grice discussed in the preceding sections, relevance theory is based on general cognitive assumptions about human nature. A first assumption is the existence of the so-called Theory of Mind: humans have the natural tendency to attribute beliefs, desires and intentions to whatever they perceive (and, therefore, also verbal stimuli). Secondly, it is assumed that humans have the capability to mentally represent said beliefs, desires and intentions and to *metarepresent* them. Carston defines the “capacity for *metarepresentation*” as “an ability to represent not just states of the external physical world but also other representations, and representations of still further representations, etc., up to several orders of complexity” (2002a: 43). Thirdly, a hearer is driven to interpret things by the aim of maximally improving his “overall representation of the world” (Blakemore 2002: 61).

An individual’s representation of the world may be improved through a change in his/her cognitive environment, which is defined as follows:

*A cognitive environment* of an individual is a set of facts that are manifest to him.

(Sperber & Wilson 1986/95: 39)

Manifestness, on the other hand, is defined as follows:

A fact is *manifest* to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true.

(Sperber & Wilson 1986/95: 39)

This tendency is well described in RT's Cognitive Principle of Relevance:

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance.

(Sperber & Wilson 2006: 610)

An individual's cognitive environment may be changed by conclusions derived from an inferential, non-demonstrative (that is, non deductive) process which is fed by two different types of premises: on the one hand, the communicated utterance with its linguistic import; on the other hand, the contextual assumptions entertained by the individual. The assumptions which make up the outcome of the inferential process may change the environment in three ways: they may be added as new assumptions; they may strengthen previously entertained assumptions; or they may delete a previously entertained assumption. All of these are the types of *contextual effects* that an assumption may have. Sperber and Wilson argue that when we recognise a speaker's intention to communicate, we automatically presume that the processing of the utterances she produces will bring cognitive effects. This is expressed by their Communicative Principle of Relevance:

Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

(Sperber & Wilson 2006: 612)

Why should an individual expect a given utterance to be relevant? The answer lies in the nature of communication. Sperber and Wilson make a distinction between non-ostensive and ostensive communication. While the former may involve non-intentional transmission of information, the latter provides "direct evidence of one's intention to convey it" (1986/95: 23). Ostensive communication is used to focus the hearer's attention; simply by



demanding attention, it triggers the hearer's expectation that it will be worthwhile to process this information, that is, that the processing will have contextual effects.

While maximal relevance cannot be assumed all the time, *optimal* relevance is expected in normal conditions, for the following reason. The notion of optimal relevance implies the involvement of both benefits and costs: the benefit is represented by the contextual effects, whereas the costly side of utterance processing is the effort. Effort is needed to access a context for the processing of the utterance and to process an assumption in that context. Therefore, communication will be aimed at achieving the greatest contextual effects while trying to limit the effort needed, that is to say, achieving the greatest possible relevance. The balance of effects and effort explains the mechanism by which the hearer is able to arrive at one single interpretation, that is, the one intended by the speaker: it is argued that the hearer will 'pick' the first accessible interpretation that yields "an adequate range of contextual effects for the minimum justifiable processing effort" (Blass 1990: 61).

The cognitive principle of relevance is different from the Gricean Co-operative Principle and the Maxims of conversation in more than one respect. Firstly, relevance is the single principle that regulates communication. Secondly, speakers and hearers need not know the principle of relevance in order to communicate successfully. Finally, while Grice contemplates cases in which a speaker may "fail to fulfil" his Maxims of conversation (1975: 49), for example by saying more than is necessary or by describing a state of affairs which does not correspond to observable reality, the principle of relevance "can neither be violated nor flouted" (Hansen 1998a: 29).

The interpretation process according to relevance theory is as follows. The decoding of the verbal input is carried out by an autonomous system: an input module. This decoding process yields a logical form, or semantic representation. That is where explicatures come into play - they are derived with the aim of filling the gap between the semantic representation and the full proposition communicated by the utterance. An explicature is any explicitly communicated assumption which is derived from the logical form. This logical form passes on to a "central inferential ability" (Blass 1990: 65) where the tasks of reference assignment, disambiguation, indexical resolution and pragmatic enrichment are performed. These processes are carried out inferentially, in the same way as with implicatures, and the outcome of the process is the full proposition.

Higher-level explicatures are derived by embedding a proposition in a speech act- or propositional attitude description. Typically, any utterance may communicate several higher-level explicatures. The hearer does not always retrieve all of them - only those necessary for the utterance to comply with the principle of relevance (Carston 2002a: 119).

An implicature is any implicitly communicated assumption or effect intended by the speaker. Implicatures may be defined as assumptions that “are needed if the utterance itself is to be seen as consistent with the principle of relevance” (Blass 1990: 68). Sperber and Wilson make a further distinction between implicated premises and implicated conclusions. The former “must be supplied by the hearer”, while the latter “are deduced from the explicatures of the utterance and the context” (1986/95: 195). Implicatures may also differ in strength. Strong implicatures are to be recovered if the utterance is to comply with the principle of relevance, and are more likely to be derived by just any hearer, whereas weak implicatures are not encouraged by the speaker and are recovered by the hearer on his own initiative (Blass 1990: 69-71). These types of assumptions are not necessarily retrieved sequentially: explicatures may very well be recovered after implicatures. The process in question is called ‘mutual parallel adjustment’.

It should be noted that there is a difference between the explicit-implicit distinction developed by Grice on the one hand, and that developed by Sperber and Wilson, and relevance theory scholars in general, on the other hand. Although Grice does not state so explicitly in his “Logic and Conversation” lectures (1975), he is believed to have maintained that explicit communication coincides with truth-conditional content, while implicitly communicated information is non-truth-conditional (Neale 1992). By contrast, according to Sperber and Wilson, truth conditions cannot help to draw the distinction between explicit and implicit content (see Blakemore 2002: 74-75). Proof is given by the existence of higher-level explicatures: expressions that contribute to higher-level explicatures do not seem to contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance; yet, they are not implicatures, either, as they are indeed derived from the decoded content of the utterance. Sperber and Wilson therefore argue that the two dichotomies are not co-extensive (see section 2.2.4).



A summary of the notions introduced in this section is given in the following example:

(2.1) Ann: Shall we play tennis?

Bob: It's raining.

Explicature: It's raining at location  $A/B$

Implicated premise: If it's raining in location  $x$  then it's not possible to play tennis at location  $x$

Implicated conclusion: Ann and Bob can't play tennis at location  $A/B$

(Carston 2002b: 144)

To which the following may be added:

(2.2) Higher-level explicatures: Bob says that it's raining at location  $A/B$

Bob believes that it's raining at location  $A/B$

### 2.2.2 Conceptual and procedural meaning

The relevance-theoretic distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning was first developed by Blakemore (1987). The notion of 'procedural semantics' has its roots into computer programming (Johnson-Laird 1983). Related to Artificial Intelligence is also the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge. A similar dichotomy found in Fodor (1983, in Rouchota 1998: 32) involves 'representations' and 'computations'. According to Fodor, communication consists essentially in "constructing symbolic representations, that is to say, language-like conceptual representations, and computing them in inferential processes" (Rouchota 1998: 32). Against this background, it is reasonable to assume the existence of two types of linguistically encoded meaning. A further basis for Blakemore's distinction is the Gricean conception of conventional implicature. According to Grice, elements such as *moreover* are non-truth conditional but seem to indicate higher-order speech acts, such as 'explaining'. This led to the conclusion

that some elements in language have the function to instruct or guide rather than to encode concepts.

In this view, conceptual items encode representations. Conceptual representations are given to utterances the same way as phonetic, phonological and syntactic representations, but, differently from these three, they have logical and truth-conditional properties (Wilson & Sperber 1993: 10). Procedural items, on the other hand, encode computations and guide the hearer in his inferential phase. More specifically, “they point the hearer to the context in which he is expected to process the utterance and the conclusions he should be drawing from it” (Rouchota 1996: 5). Providing a more precise characterization of procedural meaning has so far proven to be problematic for relevance theorists. An attempt of definition in terms of negative properties has been made by Wilson and Sperber (1993: 16): procedural meaning cannot be “brought to consciousness” (p.16), is not truth-evaluable and is not compositional, while all of this is possible for conceptual meaning.

Relevance theorists have brought more arguments in support of the existence of two types of meaning. As discussed in section 2.2, communication involves both decoding and inferring, that is to say, the process of constructing representations as well as their use in the inferential process. It is not surprising, therefore, that the linguistic input should contain elements which feed both processes (Rouchota 1996: 5). Furthermore, the existence of procedural elements is in line with the principle of relevance in general. The speaker should make sure that relevance is achieved with the best possible balance of contextual effects and effort; using a procedural element is a way to constrain the recovery of inferences, thus reducing the effort involved (Blakemore 2002: 79; Carston 2002a: 162).

Various authors, both in RT and outside RT, have been considering the possibility that words, or certain categories of words, may encode both conceptual and procedural meaning at the same time. One of the main conclusions of Pons Bordería's (2008) work is that conceptual and procedural meaning are not mutually exclusive, as Spanish verb *decir* seems to encode both types of meaning. The author analyses the Spanish verb *decir* in its use as introductory element of direct speech and argues that it is an example of an expression that simultaneously encodes a concept and a procedure, “at both the type and the token levels” (p. 1424). Nicolle shows how the verb *be going to* encode both types of



meaning: reference to future time is argued to be encoded procedurally, while the idea that the subject is progressing towards a goal is encoded conceptually (1998; see also Traugott and Dasher 2002: 10-11). Bezuidenhout (2004: 17) likewise argues that “some words have dual aspects and so both trigger procedures as well as are associated with concepts”. Bezuidenhout cites pronouns as an example, as they encode both a conceptual element (for example *she* – ‘third person singular animate female’) and a procedural element – the pronoun does not refer to a univocal person/object so the hearer is invited to recover that himself (p. 4-5). Iten (2005) regards the ‘double encoding’ possibility as “quite conceivable”. To support this, she mentions firstly the work of Takeuchi (1998, in Iten 2005: 75) who suggests an account of Japanese causal connectives *kara* and *node* as both encoding the same conceptual meaning, but different procedures. She then reports that Wilson (unpublished b, in Iten 2005: 75) hints at the possibility that even connectives which have usually been seen as procedural, such as *but* and *if*, might also encode conceptual meaning. Finally, the idea of the mutual exclusivity of conceptual and procedural meaning has been challenged by Fraser (2006a), who takes as basis for his argument all the cases taken in the relevance-theoretic literature as encoding either the one or the other type of meaning.

It is sometimes suggested that, if both encoded by the same item, conceptual and procedural meaning may vary in proportion, thus making it possible to describe a word as, for example, ‘mostly conceptual’. Moeschler (2002: 18) postulates that “procedural and conceptual items differ with respect to the relative strengths of their conceptual and procedural contents”. A similar assumption is made, but not discussed at length, in Bezuidenhout (2004) and Fraser (2006a). A further question is, which part of meaning is encoded conceptually, and which part is encoded procedurally? For example, as regards tenses, the directionality trait is, according to Moeschler, ‘located’ in the procedure. One might ask, though, why the same trait could not be encoded as a concept. Regarding this point, it is interesting to recall the idea that Hansen takes from Johnson-Laird (1983: 248): “the same piece of knowledge can in principle be stored in both ways” (Hansen 1998a: 77). A further insight into possible links between the two forms of encoding is given by Moeschler (2000: 2), according to whom “procedural information is tied to verb tenses, time adverbials and connectors, more precisely to the logical entry of the concepts to

which they correspond”.<sup>1</sup> This differs from Bezuidenhout’s (2004) opinion: according to her, procedural information cannot be stored in the lexicon together with concepts.

### 2.2.3 Truth conditionality and the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis

Relevance theory advocates for a cognitively-based account of communication as opposed to a truth-based account. According to truth-based approaches to communication, “linguistic meaning is best captured in terms of the relation between language and the world, which, in turn, is characterised by the notion of truth”. Although it is acknowledged that, intuitively, “we say things to talk about the world”, the truth-based approach is undermined by several elements (Iten 2005: 5).

Firstly, non-truth conditional elements do seem to exist. The meaning of elements such as indexicals seems to vary across contexts. This undermines the principle of ‘semantic innocence’ which is fundamental to truth-based approaches. According to this principle, “the linguistic meaning of any unambiguous expression must remain the same across all contexts” (2005: 4). Thus, some elements in natural language have to be analysed as being non-truth conditional.

Secondly, some basic assumptions of truth-conditional semantics have not been properly verified (Wilson and Sperber 1993: 23-24). To begin with, while it is recognized that humans do have intuitions about truth conditions, this has not been documented enough. Moreover, the fact that every utterance has only one set of truth conditions has been object of debate (see, for example, the treatment of parentheticals in Blakemore 1990; Ifantidou 1993b).

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, relevance theorists (notably Carston 2002a) argue that there is no one-to-one correspondence between natural language sentences and propositions, or other truth-bearing entities: “natural language sentences underdetermine truth conditional content” (Iten 2005: 6). Therefore, it is said that the logical form, or propositional representation, is a “conceptual representation” with no truth conditions – it is truth-evaluable only when it is developed into the full explicature.

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<sup>1</sup> “l’information procédurale est liée aux temps verbaux, aux adverbes temporels et aux connecteurs, plus précisément à l’entrée logique des concepts qui leur correspondent”.



There is therefore a shift of focus from the relationship between languages and the external world to the relationship between languages and the “cognitive information they encode” (Blakemore 2004).

The linguistic underdeterminacy thesis is thoroughly discussed by Carston (2002a). According to this thesis, there is a gap between the semantic representation and the full proposition of an utterance; this gap must be filled by pragmatic inference. In addition to cases involving reference assignment and disambiguation, the gap is evident when considering the following types of utterances:

- (2.3) (a) Paracetamol is better. [than what?]
- (b) Bob is well groomed.
- (c) She didn’t butter the toast in the bathroom with a knife.
- (d) The steak is raw.

(Carston 2002a: 22-27)

Firstly, some utterances seem to have missing constituents, as in (a). Secondly, as in (b), some fully sentential utterances do not seem to determine a full, truth-evaluable proposition, and there is no linguistic pointer to help the hearer in the retrieval of the information needed for it to be so. What does it mean to be ‘well groomed’? Thirdly, some elements might be undetermined in scope (for example negation, as in (c)). Lastly, conceptual items, like ‘raw’ in (d) are not always used ‘literally’; in some contexts, in this case for example a restaurant, a looser or narrower meaning is intended. This last point is based on early observations by Wilson and Sperber (1981, in Blakemore 2002: 66) who discussed the processes of loosening and narrowing of conceptual meaning under the label of ad hoc concept formation. All these are instances of the so-called ‘pragmatic enrichment’ phase of utterance interpretation.

The underdeterminacy thesis is at odds with the ‘convenient abbreviation’ view, according to which a speaker could theoretically provide an ‘eternal sentence’, that is to say a full, context-free proposition, in any case, but provides a shorter ‘version’ in order to save effort. According to the ‘essentialist view’, advocated by Carston herself, underdeterminacy is inherently part of the relation between language and thought, and no sentence can fully represent a proposition or thought (2002a: 29).

The underdeterminacy thesis focuses the attention on a particular ‘zone’, which is roughly located between the semantic representation and the Gricean implicatures. Several different accounts have been given of this ‘portion’ of meaning. Some differences are merely terminological, while some others are substantial. Firstly, according to Grice, pragmatics only plays a role in the recovery of *what is implicated*, that is, the aspects of meaning “due to the interaction of linguistic meaning with general communicative principles”, and not of *what is said*, that is, “those aspects of the total meaning of an utterance which can be attributed to linguistic knowledge” (Blakemore 1987: 21-22).

Bach (1994, in Levinson 2000) introduces the term ‘implicature’ to designate what is implied by what is said. Implicatures only include pragmatic enrichment and do not include reference assignment or disambiguation. According to Bach, this phase is not explicit and for this reason it should not be called ‘explicature’ (1994, in Carston 2002a: 171). The Gricean notion of ‘what is said’ in Bach’s account includes the semantic representation with reference assignment and disambiguation.

Levinson (2000) rejects the notions of explicature and implicature and places greater emphasis on the processes used to recover the different types of content. He develops the Gricean notion of Generalized Conversational Implicature, which represents a sort of middle step between what is said (which amounts to the semantic representation alone) and Particularized Conversational Implicatures, which correspond to the implicatures as conceived in relevance theory. The presence of GCIs in the model is justified with two arguments. The first one is based on a comparison with relevance theory: RT foresees a major role for context in the recovery of conversational implicatures, but, Levinson argues, there has to be a preferred interpretation. The recovery of GCIs is based on notions of heuristics shared by speaker and hearer – the inferencing process is thus constrained by such heuristics. Secondly, the inferential processes involved in the derivation of GCIs differ from those used to derive PCIs and this, as suggested above, is the main criterion for distinguishing two types of meaning.

As was discussed above, the relevance-theoretic position on the matter is that the whole process of enrichment of the semantic representation up to the full proposition falls under the name of explicature and is context-based: Wilson and Sperber and maintain, as already mentioned, that pragmatics also plays a role in the recovery of the



propositional form (Blakemore 1987: 24; Wilson & Sperber 2006: 607), which is part of the Gricean *what is said*.

#### 2.2.4 The three dichotomies

Three dichotomies have emerged so far from this description of relevance theory: the conceptual-procedural distinction, the distinction between truth conditional and non-truth conditional meaning, and explicit-implicit communication. It has been observed that these distinctions are not co-extensive.

Firstly, let us consider the linguistic elements which encode concepts. As noted by Wilson and Sperber (1993), most 'content' words are instances of truth-conditional elements which encode conceptual meaning and contribute to the recovery of the full proposition, that is to say, the main explicatures of the utterance. However, some conceptual items do not seem to contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance, and neither do they seem to contribute to the implicatures. It is argued that sentence adverbials such as *seriously* contribute to higher-level explicatures and thus to the explicit side of communication. As to the reason why they seem non-truth conditional, Ifantidou (1993a) suggests that sentential adverbs are seen as contributing to a higher-level explicature with its own truth conditions; this would explain why, intuitively, they seem non-truth-conditional: they achieve relevance in a different way.

The following is a characterization of procedural elements. One may suppose that all procedural elements are non-truth-conditional and contributing to the implicit side of communication. Such is the description proposed for discourse connectives such as *but* by Blakemore (1987, 2002): these expressions are said to guide the hearer in the recovery of the implicatures communicated by the utterance. However, Wilson and Sperber (1993) noted that some non-truth-conditional and procedural elements contribute to the explicit side of communication, as they constrain the recovery of higher-level explicatures. A notable example, the authors argue, is represented by personal pronouns such as *you* and *I*. Despite being truth-conditional, these elements encode a procedure which helps the hearer perform the task of reference assignment, which is part of the process of arriving at the full explicature of the utterance.

Finally, for all of the reasons illustrated in section 2.2.3, the role of truth-conditional semantics in an explanation of human communication has been questioned. Both Blakemore (2002) and Carston (2002a) maintain that this notion can be set aside as the cognitive notions of procedural and conceptual meaning, together with the explicit/implicit distinction, are sufficient in order to provide a cognitively-based account of human communication.

### 2.2.5 Descriptive and interpretive use

A further distinction is made by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95) between the descriptive use and interpretive use of language. An utterance may be used descriptively to represent a state of affairs in the real or hypothetical world which has to be true for the utterance to be true. An utterance may be used interpretively to represent another utterance or thought it resembles to; the latter may be the speaker's own, or someone else's. Here is an example:

(2.4) (Mary is reading a newspaper.)

Peter: What does the newspaper say?

Mary: Labour will win the next general election.

(Andersen 1998: 151)

In example (2.4), Mary's utterance may either be relevant as a description or as an interpretation. Taken as a description, the utterance describes Mary's belief that Labour will win the next general election. Taken as an interpretation, the utterance interprets someone else's thought or utterance written down on the newspaper.

The notion of interpretive use of language is based on the general observation that any phenomenon can be taken to resemble some other phenomenon. Because there is only resemblance, and not identity, between an utterance and another utterance or thought, the hearer cannot expect truthfulness from the speaker, but only *faithfulness*. The degree of faithfulness depends on how much is shared between the two elements in terms of logical or contextual implications. In RT, utterances may be relevant as a description or as an interpretation of something else.



Sperber and Wilson postulate alongside the notion of interpretive use the notion of *echoic* use. While an interpretive utterance may achieve relevance because it informs the hearer of something someone else has thought or said, an utterance may also be relevant in that it informs of the speaker's attitude towards that information. The latter type of utterance would be echoic. A related notion is that of *loose talk*. In a continuum of resemblance between utterance and thought, literalness would be placed on the one side of the spectrum; the 'loose use' of language would be placed on the other side. This use emerges because, as noted by Sperber and Wilson, speakers do not always want to represent a true thought with our utterance, simply because that might not be the most relevant thought to communicate. For example, when asked for the time, it might actually be more relevant to approximate than to give the exact time.

The ideas just introduced provide the instruments for a relevance-theoretic account of several linguistic phenomena. Firstly, irony is defined using the notion of echoic utterance: uttering an ironic utterance equals to "echoing a tacitly attributed thought or utterance with a tacitly dissociative attitude" (Wilson and Sperber 2006: 622). In other words, an ironic utterance is relevant in that it communicates the speaker's dissociative attitude towards an utterance or thought which is attributed to someone else. Secondly, the notion of loose talk is used to explain the use of metaphors: a metaphor is simply an instance of loose talk. Standardized metaphors will be cheap to process and the hearer is guided in the interpretation, whilst creative metaphors rely a lot on the responsibility of the hearer, and different hearers will come up with different readings (see Blakemore 1992: 155-171). The issue of figurative uses of language is mostly tackled in RT under the heading 'lexical pragmatics' (see section 2.2.6). Finally, the descriptive/interpretive distinction is used to account for different speech acts. For example, declarative utterances ('saying') are relevant as descriptions of an actual state of affairs; imperatives ('telling to') are relevant as descriptions of a potential and desirable state of affairs; interrogatives ('asking to') are relevant as interpretations of a desirable thought.

### **2.2.6 Lexical pragmatics**

A recent strand of relevance-theoretic research focuses on lexical pragmatics. The aim is to understand the nature of the processes whereby lexical concepts of single words are

recovered. The relevance-theoretic take on this is that such processes are pragmatic in nature: a basic concept is encoded in the word and is developed pragmatically into an ad hoc concept.<sup>2</sup> The tag *ad hoc* is due to the fact that the concept is developed on a case-by-case basis. This process of development grounds itself on considerations of context as well as “pragmatic expectations or principles” (p. 230). This phenomenon differs from the idea of *pro-concept* presented by Sperber and Wilson (1997), according to which there is no concept to start with, and the “entire meaning has to be contextually determined”.

Two different paths of concept enrichment are envisaged in the relevance-theoretic literature, *lexical narrowing* and *lexical loosening* (or *broadening*). Lexical narrowing involves selecting a narrower sense/denotation of the ‘original’ concept on a contextual basis. An example is:

(2.5) I’m not drinking tonight

(Wilson & Carston 2007: 232)

In (2.5), the speaker does not mean ‘drinking’ in a general sense, but in the narrower sense of ‘drinking alcohol’. Lexical loosening, on the other hand, involves broadening the sense/denotation of a concept. This pragmatic process can be further subdivided into the following:

(2.6) Approximation or hyperbole: That bottle is *empty*.

Metaphor: The agenda isn’t *written in stone*.

Category extension: Iraq is this generation’s *Vietnam*.

(p. 234)

In (2.6), *empty* may be a loose use for ‘nearly empty’; *written in stone* is a loose use for ‘fixed once and for all’; *Vietnam* is a loose use for ‘controversial war lost by the U.S. at the cost of many victims’. Narrowing and broadening were initially considered mutually exclusive processes. However, the most recent hypothesis is that they are in fact two possible outcomes of the same pragmatic process, and thus compatible in nature.

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<sup>2</sup> The original idea of ad hoc concept is credited to Barsalou (1987, 1993; in Wilson & Carston 2007: 230).



A further key idea, compatible with the underdeterminacy theory (see section 2.2.3) is that lexical narrowing and loosening contribute to the recovery of the explicatures of the utterance. This contrasts with the Gricean position, according to which the same processes would give rise to implicatures. In other words, the processes in question are part of the phase of interpretation called pragmatic enrichment in RT.

In comparison with other approaches, relevance theorists takes a fairly radical view on the matter of lexical pragmatics and suggest that “all expressions [are] context-sensitive” (Carston & Powell 2006: 12). Pragmatic ‘intrusion’ in the Gricean ‘what is said’ is thus taken very much forward. Further ‘power’ to context is given in that it is suggested that the possible interpretations of a word are potentially infinite. That is due to the fact that, “given that there are indefinitely many possible contexts, there are indefinitely many possible adjustments of the encoded sense(s)” (Wilson & Carston 2007: 237). This approach contrasts with “predominantly non-inferential accounts” (2007: 243; see for example Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Recanati 1994; Fauconnier & Turner 2002 for a mixed approach).

### 2.2.7 RT and indexicality

Indexes can be defined as “expressions whose semantic value systematically depends upon the context of the speech act” (Recanati 2007: 213). Words that are generally recognized as being indexicals are pronouns like *I* and *he*, demonstratives like *that*, and deictic expressions like *here* and *now*. As will be discussed later in this subsection, it is sometimes argued that these classes require different types of context for their interpretation. Indexicality is much debated because it seems to be located exactly at the interface between semantics and pragmatics. The different views on the matter depend on the author’s view of what is said, what is explicated and what is implicated. While it is generally acknowledged that the meaning of indexicals is related to context, there have been different suggestions as to the nature of such relation. While some scholars maintain that the specific relation to context is linguistically mandated, others maintain that interaction with context emerges on a contingent basis. In this section we will first present influential approaches to indexicality, and then the relevance-theoretic approach.

Finally, we will briefly illustrate different positions on the issue of unarticulated constituents.

One of the most influential works on indexicality is Kaplan's (1989). The key distinction in his approach is that between 'pure' indexicals and demonstratives. The truth-conditional value of a pure indexical is determined by looking at the context; for example, the truth conditions of pronoun *I* depend on the speaker's identity in the contingent situation. Indexicals of this type thus need context but of the 'narrow' (situational) sort, and do not require considering the speaker's intention for their interpretation. By contrast, demonstratives require the hearer to determine the speaker's intention in order to arrive at the correct reference. For instance, *she* only encodes the rule that says 'look for a female referent'; however, the final, exact reference requires taking into account the speaker's intention (see Iten 2005: 6-8).

Perry's (1998) approach can be considered similar to that of Kaplan. He too draws a distinction, that is, between 'automatic' indexicals, which rely on contingent coordinates like speaker etc., and 'intentional' indexicals, which require consideration of the speaker's intentions. However, Perry points out that elements such as 'here' and 'now', which are considered by Kaplan to be needing only narrow context, do require the assessment of the speaker's intentions (Iten 2005: 8). In this sense, Perry would seem to be allowing more pragmatics into the interpretation of indexicals. However, it should be borne in mind that, as pointed out by Carston, the role of context in Perry's account is semantic, "that is, extralinguistic contextual contribution of a value to an indexical affects the truth conditions of the utterance" (2000: 19).

Proponents of a semantic approach to indexicality tend to describe these intrusions of context in formal terms. According to Stanley (2000), even those values that are context-related can be traced to the logical form. Cappelen and Lepore (2004) are proponents of the so-called 'insensitive semantics', that is, semantics that is insensitive to context. Similarly to Stanley, they propose that "recourse to context is directed and restricted by conventional meaning alone" (Iten 2005: 9). James Higginbotham (1988) accounts for the meaning of indexicals by describing their truth conditions by means of a conditional construct. This way, the contextual component looks like it is still encoded semantically. For example, he solves the problem of the reference of indexical *she* in



(2.7) She likes chocolate.

as in

If  $x$  is referred to by *she* in the course of an utterance of (7), and  $x$  is female, then that utterance is true just in the case like ( $x$ , chocolate).

Indexicality is regarded by relevance theorists as evidence for the gap between logical form and the full proposition, since it requires recourse to context for its interpretation. The main advocate of the linguistic underdeterminacy thesis is Carston (2000, 2001, 2007; see section 2.2.3). Supporters of this thesis who have contributed to the debate on indexicality are Recanati and Bach.

Recanati (2002, 2007) argues like Perry that elements like *here* and *now* as well as demonstratives do depend on speaker's intentions, and that they require consideration of context in the broad sense. These elements cannot therefore be treated in the same way as pure indexicals, eg *I*, which encode a rule and can be solved with recourse to narrow context. As a footnote to this, recall the relevance-theoretic account of pronouns like *I*: they contribute to the explicatures of the utterance and encode a procedure. In this sense, the intuitively dual nature of this type of words is rendered through the conceptual/procedural distinction, with the 'rule' component being accounted for by means of procedural meaning.

Bach's (1994, 1999a, 1999b) support for Carston's underdeterminacy thesis is clear when he describes indexicality as one of the "ways in which what a speaker conveys can fail to be fully determined by the (conventional) linguistic meaning of the sentence he utters" (1999b: 66). Bach suggests that indexicals encode a "general concept [...] which always has to be enriched to someone much more specific before it can appear in the explicit content of the utterance" (Iten 2005: 94). As in the semantic approach, Bach distinguishes between narrow and broad context. The former comprises coordinates such as speaker's and hearer's identity, time and place of utterance; the latter comprises any type of information that may be useful for the hearer in order to give a value to the indexical. We will provide a relevance-theoretic analysis of temporal indexicals *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* in chapter 3.

Unarticulated constituents can be exemplified by the example

(2.8) Paracetamol is better. [than what?]

(Carston 2001: 7)

where, according to the underdeterminacy thesis, the linguistic content of the utterance underdetermines the speaker's message. As illustrated by Carston, "the concept in brackets, which is a component of what is said, has no linguistic correlate in the sentence uttered" (2007: 30). The question is whether the question in brackets is encoded in the logical form, is 'hidden' somewhere, or is retrieved from the context on a case-to-case basis.

The issue of unarticulated constituents is related to that of indexicality because one of the explanations to their emergence, suggested chiefly by Stanley (2000), is the existence of 'hidden indexicals'. For example, in

(2.9) No thanks. I've eaten

(Wilson and Sperber 2002: 234)

the questions would be eating what and when. According to this approach, variables would be postulated for both answers, so as to obtain

(2.10) I have eaten (x) at (t)

(Carston 2000: 35)

Relevance theorists criticize this solution by arguing that in this way a potentially infinite number of variables could be postulated, whereas it is more realistic to say that only those variables are recovered which are relevant in the contingent situation (see Carston 2000, 2001). According to relevance theory, the process of the recovery of these unarticulated constituents is part of the phase denominated 'pragmatic enrichment', which also comprises reference assignment and disambiguation. The specific process under discussion is called 'free enrichment' exactly because of its not being dictated by linguistic content. A further argument in favour of the relevance-theoretic approach is



that it does not require postulating superstructures or ad hoc notions, since the pragmatic processes involved are those that are also involved in the recovery of, for example, implicatures (Hall 2008: 433).

An alternative position to the 'hidden indexical' position is that elements can either be traced to the logical form or be implicatures (held by Stanley 2000; Stanley & Szabo 2000 and Taylor 2001, in Carston 2001: 10). While relevance theorists acknowledge that this is understandable, since chiefly semantic approaches aim "to preserve a systematic, compositional explanation of our understanding of truth conditions" (Hall 2008: 427; see also Carston 2001: 10), they also point out that there is a strong argument against this position, that is, the use of fragmented utterances – the very pervasive phenomenon whereby a word can be taken to express a proposition (Carston 2001: 11).

(2.11) Great haircut.

(2001: 12)

Carston argues that some constituents of the full proposition communicated by this utterance are not linguistically mandated and that the hearer will recover them via pragmatic processes (2001: 12).

### **2.3 The semantics and pragmatics of time**

The interpretation of temporal information in the utterance is a complex process which involves on various interwoven factors: tense, aspect and mood all characterize the eventuality (meaning any kind of state or process, after Bach 1981) predicated in the utterance and are heavily interrelated (however, mood will not be dealt with in the present work). The interpretation is furthermore constrained by temporal adverbials and connectives. According to certain approaches (see sections 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.3.6), context – in the form of immediate co-text and/or discourse type – is also a factor. A further, related issue is that of temporal sequencing, that is the interpretation of tense in successive utterances. The challenge is therefore to devise a model for temporal interpretation that takes into account all of these components and possibly also characterizes the processes

involved. In this section we will give an overview of the factors involved in temporal interpretation, with special focus on the pragmatic effects of tense and aspect.

**2.3.1 Tense**

The role of tense is to “embed the event at issue in one of the three temporal dimensions originating from the utterance time, i.e. past, present and future” (Bonomi 1995: 491). In doing so, tense expresses the speaker’s point of view and is thus an expression of speaker deixis. Tense may or may not be featured in a given language. Smith (2005b, 2006, 2007) researches the way time is interpreted in tenseless languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, that is, languages that do not require the appearance of “direct” temporal information. It has been shown that in those cases temporal information is derived from aspectual information in the sentence. By contrast, in the languages found in the examples of the following chapters (Italian, English, French and German), tense is expressed through morphemes, either inflections or auxiliaries (Smith 2007: 420).

An influential semantic account of tense is that by Reichenbach (1947/2005). This description makes use of three 'times' – speech, reference and event (sometimes called situation) time. Speech time is the speaker's time and event time is the time the eventuality takes place. Reference time is used for perspectival purposes, the most famous case being that of a pair of past utterances like the following:

- (2.12) (a) Leigh arrived
- (b) Leigh has arrived

(Smith 2007: 421)

For both utterances, event time precedes speech time, but while for (a) reference time is in the past, for (b) reference time is in the present, which explains why the event is perceived to have repercussions on the present state of things.

The semantics of tense thus results in the relation between reference time and speech time, and that between reference time and event time. This system allows to formulate the semantics of tenses and to describe the relations between tenses of different sentences in discourse (Moeschler 1994: 64). Although Reichenbach's account



has been occasionally shown to be defective in several ways, “confused” and failing to provide a convincing definition of reference time (Vlach 1993; see also Choueiri 2002), its notions have been highly influential for formal descriptions of tense semantics.

### 2.3.2 Aspect

Aspect “characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event” (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 202). It is generally recognized that aspect is expressed at multiple levels of communication. Chung and Timberlake distinguish four levels: the verb “and its inherent aspectual properties”, the predicate, the proposition, and the narrative/textual (1985: 214). However, the two components of aspect that are most broadly recognized in the relevant literature are situation type (or lexical aspect) and aspectual viewpoint (or grammatical aspect).

Situation type is also called *Aktionsart* or *mode d’action*. Because it is expressed at the lexical level, it is often called lexical aspect. Situation types are conveyed mostly by the “verb constellation”, that is the verb and its arguments (Smith 2006: 4). An influential classification of situation types is the one suggested by Vendler (1957/1995; see Saeed 2003: 123):

- states (e.g. *know*)
- activities (unbounded processes e.g. *run*)
- accomplishments (bounded processes e.g. *run a mile*)
- achievements (point events e.g. *stop*)

The main distinctions at play in this classification are: static vs dynamic, which gives the difference between states and processes, durative vs non-durative and telic vs atelic. The latter opposition refers to the presence as opposed to lack of an “inherent limit” in a process (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 217). An additional category which is occasionally included under the heading of lexical aspect is that of *semelfactive* eventualities, introduced by Smith (1991: 28) to designate atelic events that are instantaneous instead of iterative, for example *blink (once)*.

Aspectual viewpoint is also called grammatical aspect, since it is typically expressed by morphemes. This type of aspect marks the relation between the eventuality and “the time interval [*event frame*] over which it occurs” (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 213). The speaker may choose to focus on the entire duration of the event, or just a limited part of it. Progressive aspect designates cases in which the event is “dynamic over the event frame”. Perfective aspect indicates that the event has reached its “inherent limit” within the event frame, while imperfective aspect signals the absence of such limit. Perfect aspect is used when the event takes place before the event frame but it has repercussions up to the event frame (p. 219-220).

A significant regularity has been observed as to the ways in which aspectual viewpoint and temporal sequence are related. It is generally acknowledged that imperfective aspect marks backgrounded information, whereas perfective aspect marks foregrounded information. In this sense, aspect performs its function at the level of discourse, rather than at the level of the predicate. This, Hopper argues, is the main function of aspect: “[...] the fundamental notion of aspect is not a local-semantic one, but is discourse-pragmatic [...]” (1982: 5). Studies on the perfective/imperfective dichotomy typically take narrative texts as data, since it is in that text type is where the foregrounding/backgrounding dynamics shows the most (see Fleischman 1991b). In the Italian language, this phenomenon has been observed in *when*-constructions and in relation to quantification: *when* -clauses express 'whenever' or 'once' depending on the aspect in that clause (Bonomi 1997). Finally, restrictions on the use of aspect exist which are determined by the appearance of specific temporal connectives, such as English *while*, which typically imposes imperfective aspect in the secondary clause (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 257). The same phenomenon will be discussed for Italian *mentre* in chapter 5.

### 2.3.3 Temporal adverbials and connectives

Temporal adverbials and connectives are mentioned here in their quality as elements conveying temporal meaning and participating with other temporal information in the sentence in the process of temporal interpretation. However, as will be gradually clearer in the course of the present work, these elements are often multifunctional and can have deictic, anaphoric and discourse-marking uses.



Smith (2006) observed that temporal adverbials are always optional and always available in the languages she looked at. In semantic studies on temporal interpretation, temporal adverbials and connectives have mostly been the object of classifications, although their interaction with tense and aspect has occasionally been object of research (Heny 1982; Richards 1982; Mittwoch 1988; Vlach 1993). Bennett & Partee (1978, in Bach 1981: 72) postulate three main classes of temporal adverbials:

- frame adverbials (point e.g. *at 3 o'clock*; interval e.g. *today*)
- duration e.g. *(for) three hours*
- frequency e.g. *twice*

Vlach's (1993: 250) classification presents the following types of adverbials: punctual, inclusive, durative, and frequency (pattern). Saussure's classification (2003: 177) includes connectives:

- restriction of time frame e.g. *en 1678* ('in 1678')
- duration e.g. *toute la nuit* ('all night')
- connection e.g. *ensuite* ('then')

### 2.3.4 Pragmatics of tense

Although hints about the pragmatics of tense can be traced back to quite early in the literature (for a timeline, see Webber 1988/2005), it is generally acknowledged that the first important contribution to this specific topic is given by Partee (1984) with her parallel between temporal anaphora and nominal anaphora. In the example

(2.13) I didn't turn off the stove

(1984: 244)

the past tense does not point to an indefinite point in time prior to utterance time, but rather refers to a contextually defined point in time. This view has been widely discussed and at times criticized. Partee herself (1984, in Webber 1988/2005: 417) points out that

the notion of reference is perhaps inappropriate, although she still defends the role of context in tense interpretation. Vlach (1993: 232) maintains that, even though nominal anaphora and temporal anaphora are equivalent “formally and computationally”, these are not necessarily the same “in other respects”. Vet points out that this analogy is “far from being regular” (1991: 13). An articulated commentary on Partee’s proposal is given by Bonomi (1997), who notes that, in the case of the example above, the hearer cannot know the exact time when the action took place; therefore, all that can be said is that the tense refers to “a restricted portion of the temporal domain of quantification” (p. 487); the view of tense anaphora thus outlined would then differ from nominal anaphora, whose antecedent can be clearly identified. Perhaps the most compelling observation is made by Saussure, who says that it is trivially true that utterances are temporally anaphoric: “time can only progress, stagnate, regress, etc., with respect to another process” (2003: 112; my translation).<sup>3</sup>

Other instances in which tenses require a pragmatic interpretation are those of atemporal, or non-descriptive, uses. Most studies on the pragmatics of tense have been carried out on the use of past tenses in narrative sequences, both in English and French. A widely studied example is French *imparfait*, many uses of which express interpersonal or epistemic meaning. For example, Saussure and Sthioul (2005; see also Saussure 2008) observe that in cases such as

(2.14) J'étais le gendarme et tu volais un vélo

I was.IMPF a policeman and you stole.IMPF a bike<sup>4</sup>

(Saussure & Sthioul 2005: 117)

in which children are playing and impersonating different characters, it is mutually manifest that the truth conditions of the utterance have never been satisfied. This is one of the triggers that lead the hearer to search for a different meaning. Research has also been carried out on Spanish *imperfecto* (Escandell Vidal & Leonetti 2003). This tense may be used to express evidential meaning, more specifically reported speech:

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<sup>3</sup> “si le temps progresse, stagne, regresse, etc., c’est par rapport a un autre proces”.

<sup>4</sup> All glosses to examples are mine unless stated.



(2.15) A: —¿Qué sabes de Juan?

What about Juan?

B:—*Llegaba* el martes.

*He was arriving* Tuesday.

(2003: 135)

The reading in question is called ‘quotative reading’ and is shown to be emerging in the presence of specific contextual triggers, rather than being encoded in the semantics of the tense.

The future is another tense whose pragmatic uses have been observed in different languages. Future utterances are not about verifiable states of affairs and therefore lend themselves to an account by means of the relevance-theoretic notion of interpretive use. Unger makes an interesting observation about future as linked with interpretive use, putting it in relation with the ‘futate’ use of the present tense, which is also observable in Italian: “interpretive use is a pragmatic phenomenon, and doesn't have to be indicated. Thus, morphological systems that do not distinguish between present and future simply do not procedurally encode the relevant metarepresentation relation” (2003: 5-6). The following is an example of futurate present in English:

(2.16) The train leaves at seven.

(Smith 1990: 92).

A final example of interpretive use of tense is the historical present, as in the following hypothetical newspaper headline:

(2.17) Mary climbs the Matterhorn

(Smith 1990: 91)

The effect of the use of the present for a past event is to “heighten its relevance to the reader (on the assumption that, *ceteris paribus*, current events are generally likely to be more relevant than past ones)” (Smith 1990: 92) The use just described can be seen as an

instance of interpretive use, since the utterance does not describe an actual state of affairs represents another representation to which it resembles.

### 2.3.5 Pragmatics of aspect

There are meanings communicated by aspect that do not seem to be encoded semantically. Žegarac (1993) treats among others the overtones that emerge with the use of the English progressive. For example, the sentence

(2.18) Old Lily is always feeding the pigeons

(p. 202)

may in context communicate reproof. The author suggests a relevance-theoretic approach to the analysis of this case: the hearer recognizes that the speaker could have used the simple present but did not, and that the extra effort is paid for in extra effect, that is, the extra nuance. The hyperbole “is always feeding” may communicate weak implicatures (that is, the 'extra' element), such as ‘Lily feeds the pigeons more than she should’, which communicate the speaker's attitude of reproof. The claim is that a complete and thus correct interpretation of aspect requires taking into account both semantics and pragmatics.

The same conclusion is drawn by Sonnenhauser (2008) from a study on Russian imperfective. The author shows that, even when the interpretation of the imperfective at the semantic level is finished, several possibilities for interpretation are still available. This means that the hearer will have to employ pragmatic mechanisms to complete the interpretation process. The amount of information that has to be inferred from context and/or encyclopaedic knowledge varies according to language. The pragmatic process under examination is part of the pragmatic enrichment phase, that is, it contributes to the recovery of the full explicature of the utterance. Interestingly, Sonnenhauser indicates that “[a]n aspectualised verb encodes both kinds of information: conceptual information is provided by the Aktionsart, procedural information by the aspect operator.” (2008: 2084).



### 2.3.6 Temporal sequencing and models of temporal interpretation

Temporal sequencing may be described as the anchoring of events with respect to each other, independently of the speaker's position (Traugott 1975: 208). The issue of temporal sequence has been tackled in various ways (for a review, see Moeschler 1996). The main question is: what is it that makes speakers interpret utterances in a way that time progresses? Moeschler divides the approaches in code solutions and inferential solutions. Code solutions are based on semantics of tense (Kamp & Rohrer 1983, in Moeschler 1996: 5) and Dowty's Temporal Discourse Interpretation Principle (1986, in Moeschler 1996: 6-7). Both of these code-based accounts are believed by the author to be making wrong predictions when specific situation types are involved (for a detailed discussion, see Moeschler 1996). On the other hand, there are several types of inferential approaches, to which Moeschler seems to be more sympathetic. Among these, the Gricean approach uses the Gricean maxim of manner 'Be orderly' and the assumption that the speaker is cooperative (see section 2.2). Another example is that of the Neo-Gricean approach, which relies on the principle of informativeness, which allows the hearer to continue enriching his interpretation up to the point that it contradicts his previous knowledge.

A distinct inferential account is that of relevance theory (Carston 1993, Wilson & Sperber 1998), according to which temporal orderings derive solely from the principle of relevance. While in the Gricean account the process of temporal ordering gives rise to conversational implicatures, within relevance theory the process gives rise to explicatures. Wilson and Sperber (1998) claim that relevance theory is able to account for those cases that are problematic for Grice's account and those principles suggested in semantic-based analyses, like Dowty's Temporal Discourse Interpretation Principle. A thorough analysis of conjunct cases of *and* was made by Blakemore and Carston (1999, 2005), who however do contemplate the possibility that general principles govern temporal sequence.

Two notable attempts have been recently made to provide a model for temporal interpretation (Moeschler 1997, 2002; Saussure 2003). These are characterized by the inclusion of both semantic and pragmatic factors in the interpretation process. The challenge is to account for the complexity of the process, including all participating factors – tense, aspect, connectives and adverbials - at different levels/planes, as well as the directionality of text, sequence, subordinated sentences etc. The notion of a model with a



defined structure is mostly taken from SDRT (Segmented Discourse Representation Theory; Asher 1993, Asher & Lascarides 1995, 2003). SDRT is a revised version of DRT (Kamp 1981) that contemplates more influence from context in utterance interpretation. On this account, “the interpretation of an utterance can be modelled as a set of automatised and organised logic operations” (Saussure 2003: 70, my translation) and it is updated constantly and incrementally (Bras, Le Draoulec & Vieu 2003).

Moeschler’s (1997, 2002) account of temporal interpretation sees factors as organised in a hierarchical fashion. Such organization is due to the fact that these factors differ in force. The strongest factor is contextual information, which determines initial hypotheses. Then comes procedural information – connectives, tense and conceptual rules; the latter are mostly of the causal type. All of these elements are taken into consideration according to certain rules and principles.

Saussure’s work (2003) is a procedural account of temporal interpretation which is partly based on Moeschler’s work. From SDRT Saussure borrows the use of algorithms, which he finds to be of advantage because of their clarity. Saussure maintains that lexical aspect only, and not grammatical aspect, influences temporal sequencing. Another difference from Moeschler’s model is that temporal connectives and adverbials are prioritised over any other constraint.

In Saussure’s model, tense is seen as procedural. Each tense encodes a default instruction of the Reichenbachian type. Additionally, it may encode a ‘constrained’ instruction – in case the default one cannot be applied – as well as secondary instructions, which merely add information while not having any impact on temporal sequencing. For example, the default instruction encoded by French *passé simple* is the following: event time is anterior to speech time and concomitant with reference point. As regards the combination of tenses, the author’s hypothesis is that the current utterance entertains a relation with the representations that are the outcome of the processing of the previous utterances. Therefore, the tense in the current utterance is not related any previously occurring tense in itself, but rather to a coordinate in memory. The process starts off with interpretative possibilities, followed by choices made by the hearer. As in Moeschler’s model, preferred paths of interpretation are tied by constraints organized in a hierarchical fashion. This process is *non prudent*: trying each and every path would not be cost-effective in relevance-theoretic terms. Thus, if mistakes are made, repairs are admitted.



## 2.4 Discourse markers and the semantics-pragmatics interface

Research on discourse markers (henceforth DMs) is a relatively recent field. Most research has been carried out on English discourse markers; however, studies on DMs in other languages are spreading, as well as contrastive studies. Discourse markers are analysed within different theoretical frameworks; it is however fair to say that works in the areas of pragmatics and discourse analysis are predominant. Authors broadly agree on several distinguishing features, whilst the same cannot be said for a definition of what a discourse marker is. These expressions have proven to be resistant to analysis, mostly because their meaning is located on the interface between semantics and pragmatics. On the other hand, the very same characteristics make them a fascinating object of study. Discourse marker analysis involves taking into consideration several methodological issues, which will be described in the following sections.

### 2.4.1 Terminology and classification

Terminology in discourse marker research usually reflects the theoretical framework used, as well as the adopted approach towards classification. The absence of a single label reflects lack of agreement on both definition and classification of discourse markers.

The most widely used term is *discourse marker*, followed in popularity by *discourse particle*. Both of these tags feature the word *discourse*: this shows that there is widespread agreement on the fact that discourse markers “function primarily on the level of discourse, rather than that of the sentence” (Hansen 1998a: 4). The term *marker* is mostly used in research on English and French DMs, while the term *particle* is usually associated with research on German DMs, since it focuses on focus, modal, and discourse particles (Risselada & Spooren 1998: 131) (see section 2.4.6).

The choice of these two terms tends to be related to the approach taken – functional or formal. The term *marker* implies a functional choice, because it refers to the ‘marking’ function often assigned to discourse markers. Since it is not a formal criterion, it covers elements from different grammatical categories and is thus more inclusive. Some problems have been pointed out with this term. Firstly, some functions performed by markers are performed by other elements as well, therefore defining this ‘class’ only in

terms of functions may prove to be difficult. Secondly, a researcher might want to ascertain whether these elements do perform a marking function (Fischer 2006b: 4-6), and how. On the other hand, the term *particle* implies a formal choice: the elements taken into consideration belong to the word class of particles, that is to say small, uninflected words. The issues associated with this label are the following. Firstly, the term *particle* itself may be used in different ways; it is often used at a “tentative or pretheoretical” level (Schourup 1999: 229) and this would not necessarily be the case for all studies on discourse markers. Moreover, there is a typological issue to be considered: by narrowing the research exclusively to particles, one may overlook the fact that functions typical of this class may be performed by elements other than particles in another language (1999: 229). The label ‘discourse marker’ will be used throughout this work, merely because it is the most widely used. This choice does not imply any *a priori* assumption about the function of discourse markers.

A related issue, then, is whether discourse markers constitute a class of their own. A notable opinion on the matter is that of Blakemore (2002), according to whom the object of research should be discourse-marking functions rather than DMs as a class. This position is challenged by Pons Bordería (2008), according to whom the analysis of single DMs can be used to invalidate hypotheses by a certain theory. A further issue is the following: if discourse markers do constitute a class, what kinds of items are allowed to be members of that class? Should it be an ‘open class’ in terms of grammatical categories, and can it include non-verbal elements? Such choices will depend on the theoretical approach adopted. For example, coherence-based approaches will be more likely to ‘grant membership’ to connectives rather than, for instance, interjections, since emphasis in those approaches is often placed on the linking function of discourse markers. There is also the question whether DMs are part of the grammar of a language at all. Fraser (1988, in Traugott 2007: 150) maintains that they are, as they have “constrained syntactic as well as intonational properties” (Traugott 2007: 150). On the other hand, advocates of pragmaticalization claim that DMs are extra-grammatical as “they operate at the level of discourse rather than the clause or sentence” (Traugott 2007: 150).



### 2.4.2 DM meaning

A crucial issue in DM literature is the characterization of discourse marker meaning. Several points may be considered when trying to define the meaning of discourse markers. A fundamental dichotomy is that between semantic and pragmatic meaning: the question is whether a specific meaning is encoded by the word or inferable on a contextual basis. Another fundamental question is whether discourse markers are truth conditional. Regarding the latter issue, commentators are broadly agreed on the 'external' or 'peripheral' quality of discourse markers: these elements are generally seen as non-truth conditional and not contributing to the propositional content of the utterance. Finally, since most discourse markers have a non-DM lexical counterpart, that is, a word that has a discourse-marking use, one might want to account for the relation of meaning between the two; this is one of the aims of the present study.

Of particular interest for our work is also the characterization of DM meaning with the aid of the conceptual/procedural distinction as described by Blakemore (1987). The relevance-theoretic approach to discourse marker meaning will be illustrated in section 2.4.7. Besides RT, other approaches have seen discourse markers as procedural, that is to say, as encoding instructions, most notably Argumentation Theory (AT; Anscombe & Ducrot 1976, 1977). In AT, the 'deep structure' of an utterance is made up of the informational component and, most crucially, the argumentational component, that is "a set of instructions relating to how the utterance is to be interpreted" (Nyan 2006: 168). The meaning ascribed to discourse markers, here called 'argumentational markers', is procedural, as semantics is seen as "non-referential and purely instructional" (Hansen 1998a: 14). These markers, being part of the underlying argumentative structure, encode instructions that facilitate utterance interpretation.

As there is consensus on the fact that discourse markers are polyfunctional (Fischer 2006b: 12), the relation between all functions performed by a single discourse marker will have to be accounted for. Traditionally, the following approaches to this issue are distinguished: monosemy, homonymy and polysemy. According to the monosemy approach, a discourse marker has a 'core meaning', that is, a general, semantic meaning encoded by the item. The different uses are derived by using "general pragmatic processes" (Fischer 2006b: 13) characterized by the interaction between the core

meaning and context. According to the homonymy approach, a discourse marker has a number of meanings, all located at the same (semantic) level; these meanings are distinct and unrelated, and can be listed separately as different entries in the lexicon. In the polysemy approach, a discourse marker has a number of meanings that are related for example in a chain or in a prototype schema (Hansen 1998a: 87). Such relation may be of different types; it can be, for example, a rhetorical relation (for instance metonymy). The monosemous and the homonymic approaches have been associated to two different stances in the debate called, respectively, ‘meaning minimalism’ and ‘meaning maximalism’ (see Posner 1980). The terms refer to the fact that the two approaches ascribe, respectively, a small and a large portion of meaning to semantics. If one considers the recent collection of papers edited by Fischer (2006a) as representative of the spectrum of DM research in recent years, it appears there that the preferred approaches are the monosemy approach and polysemy approach, as none of the papers adopt a homonymy approach.

### 2.4.3 The development of discourse markers

Research on discourse marker development is made difficult by the lack of records of spoken communication from the past. Nevertheless, numerous studies have been carried out with interesting results, some of which are outlined in this section. There is broad agreement on the fact that the DM is diachronically subsequent to its non-DM counterpart. The most influential view is that of Traugott (1995, 2007; Traugott & Dasher 2002; Hopper & Traugott 2003; Brinton & Traugott 2005). Traugott (1995) argues for the existence of an adverbial cline, in addition to the nominal and verbal clines already acknowledged within grammaticalization theory:

Clause-internal Adverbial > Sentence Adverbial > Discourse Particle (of  
which Discourse Markers are a subtype)  
(1995: 1)

A pattern of development suggested later by the same author can also be said to regard discourse markers:



|                |              |            |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| External       | > internal   | > textual  |
| Metalinguistic | > subjective |            |
| Belief         | > state      | > attitude |

(Traugott & Dasher 2002: 94-96)

Traugott has recently commented on the relation between these developments and the process of pragmaticalization, which may be defined as “the process by which as syntagma or word form, in a given context, changes its propositional meaning in favor of an essentially metacommunicative, discourse interactional meaning” (Frank-Job 2006: 3610). Traugott maintains that there is no need to talk about pragmaticalization, which would seem to be the case for DMs, because movement towards pragmatic meaning can be found in other types of semantic change (Traugott 2007).

Findings of research by other authors are broadly in line with those of Traugott. Bolinger argues that the meaning of the non-DM counterpart is transferred to the DM item with a shift to the ‘illocutionary’ sphere (see the analysis of *well* by Bolinger 1989, in Schourup 1999: 251). As to what determines the rise of discourse markers, Lewis (2006: 52) suggests that the “functional split” between non-DM functions and DM functions is caused by the “repeated usage of a lexeme in particular context types”. A similar view is held by Waltereit (2002, 2006) in two studies on Italian discourse markers (see section 2.4.6). Waltereit and Detges (2007) add to this view by suggesting that communication is to be seen as a constant “negotiation” of the next move. Discourse markers are, in this framework, derived from “lexemes [...] used for argumentational procedures which are helpful in those negotiations” (p.72). Finally, Hansen (1998a: 89) argues for a relation of heterosemy (a term borrowed from Lichtenberk 1991, in Hansen 1998a: 89) and suggests that the non-truth conditional sense would be derived from a “diachronically prior and typically truth conditional” meaning (Hansen 2006: 28); however, these meanings are merely two uses of the same linguistic item.

Cognitive semantics, which plays a role in Traugott's account, is used to explain DM development in terms of meaning extension, associated to processes such as metaphorization and metonymization. Diewald (2006) adopts the view by Heine, Claudi and Hünemeyer (1991, in Diewald 2006: 410) and suggests that the diachronic rise of

German discourse particles might be seen as a process of metaphorization, for example a passage from local meaning to temporal meaning to a more abstract meaning; adopting the view of Sweetser (1988, 1990, in Diewald 2006: 411), DM and its non-DM counterpart would be bound together by a “basic semantic template”, that is, an “image scheme” which is persistent across all “semantic domains” to which it is transferred. Although our aim is to provide a synchronic account of temporal expressions in Italian, we will discuss some diachronic issues in chapter 6.

#### **2.4.4 Research on discourse markers: further methodological issues**

The following, additional issues may be worth considering when conducting an analysis on discourse markers. A fundamental question of a methodological nature regards data. Since it is generally agreed that discourse markers typically appear in spoken, informal language (Andersen 1998: 147), studies tend to use real spoken data taken from corpora. Some approaches (notably, relevance theory) privilege constructed examples for explanatory purposes. Finally, some studies are carried out on written texts in order to show that discourse-marking uses also appear in written communication (see for example Bazzanella 2001b).

Related to the data issue is the choice between an onomasiological and a semasiological approach. This dichotomy in turn is related to the place of discourse markers within a wider theory of meaning. On the one hand, some works seem to be aimed at verifying whether a theory is able to account for all uses of discourse markers (cf. Pons Bordería 2008). Roulet (2006) argues that a correct analysis of discourse markers requires placing them within a wider theory of communication. In Roulet’s opinion, models such as Argumentation Theory, Conversation Analysis and relevance theory do not comply with this requirement since they only concentrate on specific types of discourse. On the other hand, some studies are ‘explorative’ in kind and tend to be taking data as a starting point; the researcher will then try to find a satisfactory theory to account for what observed. Alternatively, he/she might pick different aspects from different theories: after all, discourse marker functions do not seem to be all the same in kind – that is the reason why some advocate for a ‘multidimensional approach’ (see Pons Bordería 2006: 77-78; Nemo 2006: 380).



A further issue regards the basic linguistic unit to be taken into consideration when analysing discourse markers. Linguistic units may be of many types, from discourse units to cognitive entities such as assumptions, as in the case of connectives in RT. However, many studies recognize that discourse markers may be active well beyond the boundaries of a sentence (see Traugott 2007: 141).

Some less widely discussed issues are the correlation of DM use to text type (but see for example Rudolph 1991 on discourse particles and text type) and correlation to social factors, such as gender, age, profession, etc. (but see Schiffrin 1987 and her use of sociolinguistic interviews, and Bazzanella & Fornara 1995 on the correlation between Italian discourse markers and female gender).

#### **2.4.5 English discourse markers: Schiffrin and Fraser**

Two influential accounts of discourse marker meaning outside relevance theory are given by Schiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1990, 1999, 2006b).

Schiffrin's (1987) work on discourse markers is one of the earliest exhaustive descriptions of English discourse markers in spoken language. The data are taken from sociolinguistic interviews; this choice is justified by the fact that discourse is seen "not only as a unit of language, but as a process of social interaction" (Schiffrin 2001: 56). Schiffrin's discourse model consists of five planes: 'exchange structure' (related to turn-taking); 'action structure' (related to speech acts); 'ideational structure' (about relations between propositions); 'participation framework' (about relations between interlocutors and between interlocutor and utterance); 'information state' (related to the "organization and management of various kinds of knowledge") (Hansen 1998a: 25). In this account, discourse markers are an open class which includes non-verbal elements, such as paralinguistic features. In order to be used as a discourse marker, an element has to be "syntactically detachable", must usually occur in clause-external position and have "a range of prosodic contours". Also, it must be able to operate both locally and globally "and on different planes of discourse" (Schiffrin 1987: 328).

The main function of discourse markers is that of displaying relations, thus contributing to discourse coherence. Relations are displayed by indexing the utterance to

preceding and/or following discourse and to speaker and/or hearer, as well as to different planes of talk. Relations within discourse can be local, that is to say, between adjacent utterances, or global, that is to say, “across wider spans and/or structures of discourse” (Schiffrin 2001: 57). The result is the integration of all components of talk. As regards discourse marker meaning, Schiffrin (2001: 58) argues for a continuum, stretching from those discourse markers which “reflect a meaning that is already semantically accessible” to those which “add a meaning to discourse”; each item can occupy a position between these two ends. As noted by Fraser (1999: 934), Schiffrin (1987) seems to suggest that every discourse marker has a core meaning. Hansen (1998a: 25) observes that Schiffrin’s approach “essentially minimalist”, as “fluctuations” in meaning are related in her account to “differences in discourse slot and the particular plane(s) to which the host utterance is indexed”.

Several problems in Schiffrin’s approach have been pointed out. Firstly, the planes in her model are not sufficiently defined, so that one may wonder whether they in fact overlap; for the same reason, there is the possibility that “areas of interpretation” might be left “unaccounted for” (Fraser 1990: 384). Furthermore, most discourse markers are related to all five planes, so “the framework becomes descriptively empty” as the planes do not help to distinguish between markers. Finally, literal uses of some items are seen as discourse-marking uses (Redeker 1991, in Hansen 1998a: 25).

According to Fraser’s account (1990, 1999, 2006b), discourse markers are non-truth conditional items which do not contribute to the propositional meaning of the sentence. They are exclusively lexical expressions which belong to different syntactic categories, and are typically free morphemes occurring in discourse-segment initial position. Discourse markers signal a relation between two contiguous discourse segments (which, occasionally, consist of multiple utterances). The relation can be of four types: elaboration, contrast, inference, and temporality; however, the existence of further kinds of relations is not entirely ruled out. The relation is already in place and the function of the discourse marker is merely that of signalling it. Fraser’s classification sees discourse markers as being a sub-class of pragmatic markers, i.e. non-truth conditional elements “which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intentions” (Schourup 1999: 238).

Fraser adopts a polysemous approach: each discourse marker has a core meaning, and the different meanings assumed are due to a combination of core meaning, the



interpretation of the segments, and verbal/non-verbal context. As mentioned above, the function of the discourse markers is that of signalling, and not encoding, a relationship; this type of meaning is procedural rather than conceptual (Schiffrin 2001: 59). As regards this distinction, Fraser (2006a: 200) argues for the co-presence of both conceptual and procedural meaning in every lexical expression.

Several aspects of Fraser's approach have been object of commentary. As noted by Schourup (1999: 239), some elements widely considered 'prototypical' in the class of discourse markers, such as *well*, are excluded by Fraser. Furthermore, as observed by Blakemore (1996: 326), some elements are included in the class although they play a very different role in utterance interpretation, as some are conceptual and some are procedural. Finally, Schiffrin (2001: 59) argues that Fraser's approach does not properly account for the polyfunctionality of discourse markers, as these elements are said not to be able to perform their 'sentential' and pragmatic function at the same time.

#### **2.4.6 Studies on Italian discourse markers**

Research on Italian discourse markers gained momentum in the 1980s. The most widely used label in Italian literature is *segnali discorsivi* ('discourse signals'). This can be said to be a functional label (see section 2.4.1), as the word *segnale* suggests that these elements are seen as 'signposts' for discourse structure. Research has mostly been carried out with a synchronic perspective, although recent accounts often involve diachronic considerations. Although most studies have been carried out on single elements, there have also been attempts at providing a global, exhaustive classification, most notably that of Bazzanella (see below in this section). Two theoretical frameworks have been privileged: text linguistics/coherence-based linguistics and discourse analysis. Research on German discourse markers has also been greatly influential (Bustorf 1974, Held 1983, Helling 1983, Mara 1986, Hölker 1993). Finally, the relevance-theoretic approach is seldom referred to (for a couple of exceptions, see Bazzanella 1989, 2006).

Early research on Italian discourse markers is characterized by a text-linguistic approach. A work influenced by both text linguistics and conversation analysis is that of Berretta (1984). This study aims to describe the discourse-planning function of 'textual

connectives' in spoken Italian – more specifically, monological, expository speech. According to Berretta, the two main types of connectives are: semantic connectives, which express semantic-discursive relations, and syntactic connectives, which help structuring the text, for example by marking opening and closing sequences. Stati (1986) argues for a text-linguistic approach to discourse markers (here called 'connectives'). In his account, the main function of these elements is to display a content relation (that is to say a coherence relation) between two clauses in the same text (1986: 309); such clauses are often contiguous. A further distinction is made by Stati between syntactic connectives, with functions such as coordination, subordination and iconic sequence, and meta-textual connectives, which may signal a reaction to the preceding turn or the type of linguistic act that the speaker intends to perform. Discourse markers as described by Serianni (1988) may have two functions: 'markers' are used for text planning and 'connectives' are used for establishing narrative/logic links.

Most contrastive studies on Italian discourse markers have been carried out with German as the reference language. These studies have been influenced by early research on Italian discourse markers (Spitzer 1922; Stammerjohann 1977; both in Mara 1986) and on German particles. The German language is notoriously rich in discourse particles, in comparison to both Italian and English. This might be due to the presence in German of the 'Mittelfeld', the middle field, defined as "unsyntactic topological area" between the forefield and the final field; another hypothesis is that Germanic languages are relatively word order free (Abraham 1991a: 2; 1991b: 14). The two key studies on the topic can be said to be those of Weydt and Gülich (respectively 1969 and 1970, in Hansen 1998a: 9). The latter work sees the introduction of the term 'Gliederungssignale' ('segmentation signals'). These elements are seen as non-semantic, largely interchangeable and acting as oral punctuation marks (Hansen 1998a: 10).

German discourse particles can be divided in two main groups: focus particles ('Gradpartikeln') and modal particles ('Modalpartikeln'). Focus particles (for example *gerade*) are syntactically related to a 'focus word' which is associated to "restricted set of possible alternatives, which are presupposed to exist" (Hansen 1998a: 48). As regards modal particles (for example *doch*), it is generally agreed that their primary function is not that of linking units but rather that of performing social functions and suggesting inferences, such as presuppositions: their meaning is described by Abraham (1991b: 12)



as “thin, bleached” if not “illocutive, inference-inviting”. Their scope always extends to the whole utterance; they usually do not carry an accent of their own; they cannot be coordinated but they can cluster. Finally, modal particles cannot constitute an isolated utterance (Hansen 1998a: 42-46).

An explorative paper on Italian with reference to German is that of Bustorf (1974). The items taken into consideration are called ‘fillers’ and belong to different grammatical categories. The author calls for more semantic and pragmatic analysis of these elements, arguing that only their syntactic counterparts had been analysed up to that point. Two studies on German particles and their Italian counterparts were carried out by Held (1983) and Helling (1983). Results show that there is no one-to-one correspondence between discourse markers in the two languages: different linguistic devices may be used in one of the two languages where a marker is employed in the other. Mara (1986) places emphasis on use in spontaneous speech, as well as interactional aspects and speaker’s strategies; the author’s categorization is carried out in functional terms and using labels borrowed from the German tradition (for example, *Abtönungspartikeln*, ‘downtoning particles’). Mara observes that a proper use of discourse markers by non-native speakers greatly adds to the fluency of the language but requires accurate knowledge of their meaning (1986: 178). Hölker’s paper (1993) presents an analysis of *poi* (‘then’) with a view to its translation into German. The label used by the author for DMs is that of connectives, although not all the items included can be said to belong to this category. Several possible classifications are proposed on the basis of the following criteria: form, syntactic category, function, and correlation to text type. Hölker argues that a characterization of each single marker is best given by taking into consideration all of these parameters. Finally, Nadiani (1996) presents some issues related to the translation of discourse markers from Italian into German in the specific discourse type of dubbing.

Recent works have made a significant contribution to the understanding of DM development in Italian. Waltereit (2002; 2006) illustrates a diachronic account of the multifunctionality of verb-derived discourse markers *guarda* ‘look’ and *diciamo* ‘let’s say’. According to the author, these discourse markers arise from the speaker’s need to fulfil a specific communicative function. To this purpose, the speaker starts to use a certain item with a secondary, more interpersonal purpose in contexts that would not justify its primary meaning. Subsequently, the hearer recognizes the shift in meaning and re-



analyses the item as a discourse marker. The multifunctionality of these elements is due to the fact that 'old' functions still persist after changes in meaning have taken place. Finally, it is argued that the diachronic rise of discourse markers is a case of subjectification. This process entails a shift from "objective, ideational meaning" towards "subjective, attitudinal meaning" (Waltereit 2002: 987; this is in line with Traugott's ideas in 1995; 2007).

An important contribution to Italian research on discourse markers at both the synchronic and diachronic level is given by Bazzanella in various publications. Some of her papers aim at a characterization and classification of discourse markers (1985, 1990, 1994, 1995, 2006); these studies are significant, since such "global descriptions" in a particular language are an important starting point for further analysis (Pons Bordería 2006: 79). Other papers focus on features usually associated with these elements, such as correlation with speaker gender (Bazzanella & Fornara 1995), correlation with types of text sequence (Garcea & Bazzanella 1995, with focus on Latin), and correlation with diamesic variation (2001b). A significant contribution is made up of recent studies on diachronic development (2001a, 2010; Bazzanella *et al.* 2005, 2007; Bosco & Bazzanella 2005). Bazzanella's approach to the analysis of discourse markers has evolved through time; accordingly, both her definition and classification of discourse markers have been slightly revised over the years. Early papers (1985, 1986) were influenced by text linguistics and the notion of cohesion; later work focuses on pragmatic and interactional aspects (2006: 450).

The characteristics usually associated with discourse markers, and to which the author broadly subscribes to, are the following. Firstly, discourse markers are non-truth conditional and do not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance. Bazzanella suggests replacing this feature with the notion of 'externality' to propositional content. Secondly, discourse markers are related to the situational context. Third, discourse markers express the speaker's mood, attitudes and emotions. Lastly, discourse markers are multifunctional and operate on different planes at the same time (2006: 449).

In an early corpus-based study (1990), the author presents a list 'in progress' of discourse markers (here called 'phatic connectives') with their translation into English. According to the author, these elements act as "interactional cues". The author underlines the impossibility of drawing up a complete list, because of the still scarce studies of Italian



discourse markers at the time and because of the high context-dependency and idiosyncratic nature of these elements (1990: 631).

In a later publication, Bazzanella (1995) proceeds to give a definition of discourse markers, which is frequently quoted in the literature and in the author's subsequent works: "Discourse markers are those elements that partially lose their original meaning to take on additional meanings. Their function is that of structuring discourse, by connecting intra-clausal, inter-clausal, and extra-clausal elements, as well as situating the utterance in an interpersonal dimension, by highlighting the interactional aspect of conversation" (Bazzanella 1995: 225).<sup>5</sup> Here, discourse markers are given a new label, *segnali discorsivi*, which echoes the English label 'discourse markers'. A list of items is not compiled; however, the classification is discussed in much more detail with the aid of numerous examples. Once again, the tentativeness of such classification is underlined, and two reasons are adduced. Firstly, since the functions of discourse markers often overlap, distinguishing them is only useful for taxonomic purposes. Secondly, diachronic change in the use of these elements is not monitored enough to allow for the development of an up-to-date taxonomy (Bazzanella 1995: 250). This classification (see below) differs from the earlier one in that it displays a greater number of the meta-textual functions in addition to the interpersonal functions.

- Funzioni interazionali (Interactional functions)
  - Dalla parte del parlante (Speaker)
    - Presa di turno (Turn-taking devices)
    - 'Riempitivi' (Fillers)
    - Richiesta di attenzione (Attention-getting devices)
    - Fatismi (Phatic devices)
    - Meccanismi di modulazione (Hedges)
    - Controllo della ricezione (Checking comprehension)

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<sup>5</sup> "I segnali discorsivi sono quegli elementi che, svuotandosi in parte del loro significato originario, assumono dei valori aggiuntivi che servono a sottolineare la strutturazione del discorso, a connettere elementi frasali, interfrasali, extrafrasali e a esplicitare la collocazione dell'enunciato in una dimensione interpersonale, sottolineando la struttura interattiva della conversazione".

- Richiesta di accordo e/o conferma (Requesting agreement, confirmation)
- Cedere il turno (Yielding the turn)
- Dalla parte dell'interlocutore (Addressee)
  - Attenzione in corso (Attention confirmed)
  - Accordo e/o conferma (Agreement, confirmation)
  - Ricezione e acquisizione di conoscenza (Back-channels)
  - Richiesta di spiegazione (Requests for clarification)
  - Meccanismi di interruzione (Interrupting devices)
- Funzioni metatestuali (Meta-textual functions)
  - Demarcativi (Textual markers)
  - Focalizzatori (Focusing devices)
  - Indicatori di riformulazione (Reformulation markers)
    - Indicatori di parafrasi (Paraphrase markers)
    - Indicatori di correzione (Correction markers)
    - Indicatori di esemplificazione (Exemplification markers)

(adapted from Bazzanella 1995)

A later work (Bazzanella 2001a) deals mainly with diachronic variation of Italian discourse markers. Because of the different object of research, some aspects of the approach are modified. To begin with, the corpus is made up of written texts, in order to allow for a comparison with Old Italian. Accordingly, the definition of discourse markers is partly modified: the term 'conversation' is replaced by 'text'. The classification is still based on functional criteria and is a slightly modified version of the one found in Bazzanella (1995). Since the focus here is on written language, the following meta-textual functions are added:

- Demarcativi (Textual markers)
  - Articolazione in parti (Structuring the parts)



- Introduzione/presentazione (Introduction)
- Passaggio/transizione (Transition)
- Elenco (List)
- Digressione (Digression)
  - Inizio digressione (Beginning of digression)
  - Fine digressione (End of digression)
- Chiusura (Ending)
- Indicatori di citazione e di discorso riportato (Quotation and indirect speech markers)
  - Focalizzatori (Focusing devices)
  - A livello locale (Local)
  - A livello globale (Global)

(adapted from Bazzanella 2001a: 187)

The prototype-based characterization of discourse markers is introduced here for the first time in Bazzanella's work. Following this model, discourse markers are given a value on a scale according to 1) the number of characteristic traits and 2) the central nature of such traits (more central traits are more prototypical). The traits are no more seen as necessary or sufficient in order for a linguistic element to be considered as an item of a class. Lastly, factors influencing variation, which were briefly discussed in previous papers, are explained in greater detail here; special reference is made to diachronic variation and variation related to text type, as they are particularly relevant for the study of DMs in Old Italian.

Bazzanella (2006) represents a further shift in the conception of discourse markers. The aim of the contribution is to argue for a 'compositional' meaning of discourse markers, based on the notion of pragmatic compositionality. According to this view, a correct analysis of discourse markers requires taking into consideration all co-textual and contextual parameters which influence their use. In this work, Bazzanella still advocates for a prototype-based approach. The data consist in a spoken corpus with various types of interaction. A significant modification is represented by the addition of cognitive function in the overall classification:

- Procedural markers (related to cognitive processes, e.g. inference)
- Epistemic markers (related to speaker's subjectivity and commitment)
- Modulation devices (related to propositional content and illocutionary force)

(Bazzanella 2006: 456)

Recent research by Bazzanella has also focused on specific expressions, mostly *allora* (Bosco & Bazzanella 2005; Bazzanella *et al.* 2007; Bazzanella *et al.* 2008; Miecznikowski, Gili Fivela & Bazzanella 2008; Bazzanella & Miecznikowski 2009). In these works, Bazzanella and her colleagues analyse *allora* not only as a discourse marker, but as an expression performing different semantic and pragmatic functions, some of which are discourse-marking; to this, they couple diachronic considerations and comparisons with similar expressions in other languages. Work on the class of discourse markers has therefore recently been complemented with analyses of specific discourse markers as polyfunctional elements.

#### **2.4.7 Relevance theory and discourse connectives**

In relevance theory, discourse markers are commonly called discourse connectives. Most of the research in this field has been carried out by Blakemore (1987, 1989, 1992, 2000, 2002). Since Blakemore produced the majority of the work on discourse markers in this theoretical framework, and since her account is “explicitly endorsed” by other authors in relevance theory, it will be assumed here that this is the relevance-theoretic view on discourse connectives, in line with Pons Bordería (2008: 1414n1). Although Blakemore's account has been modified over the years, its central prediction is that discourse connectives encode procedural meaning and that they contribute to the implicatures of the utterance. Discourse connectives are one of the points of disagreement between coherence-based theories and relevance theory (see Rouchota 1996, 1998). According to Blakemore, these expressions do not encode coherence relations, but rather guide the hearer's interpretation by suggesting the way the utterance achieves relevance. They do so by encoding instructions on how to process the utterance with respect to the context. Blakemore's approach to discourse marker meaning can be said to be minimalist, with the



exact determination of the interpretation being ascribed to pragmatic processes. What remains constant in all uses of a specific discourse marker is a procedure, which is vague enough to allow for contextual specifications.

Blakemore's account has changed along the years on the basis of two main factors. On the one hand, studies have attested to the possibility that elements considered as discourse markers be either non-truth conditional but not procedural, or procedural but not contributing to the implicatures of the utterance. On the other hand, Blakemore's original notion of procedural meaning has proven to be too narrow to account for the range of functions of the elements under discussion. Both these developments have led to a considerably more complex picture than was originally thought.

The starting point for the debate on discourse connectives is considered to be a series of cases highlighted by Grice (1989) involving the use of connectives *but*, *moreover*, *so* and *on the other hand*. Grice's view on the behaviour of these elements may be exemplified by the following:

(2.19) She is poor but she is honest.

She is poor and she is honest.

There is a contrast between honesty and poverty.

(Hall 2007: 150)

According to Grice, the connective *but* does not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance, but rather communicates a conventional implicature, that is, an implicature that is communicated regularly by the same element. Subsequent writings show how Grice intended *but* to communicate a higher-order speech act with its own truth conditions. Note that Grice considers higher-order speech acts to be part of implicit communication, since the only explicit information in Grice's view is *what is said*, that is, truth-conditional content; on the other hand, relevance theory considers whatever is developed from the logical form to be part of the explicature of the utterance (Wilson & Sperber 1993: 13-14). What Grice accounted for as a higher-order speech act is accounted for in Blakemore's account with the notion of procedural meaning. However, Grice's intuition that these connectives do not contribute to the main truth conditions is maintained.

In her earlier works (1987, 1992), Blakemore classifies discourse connectives in function of the contextual effect they are associated with. The three types of connectives are the following:

- elements related to the introduction of contextual implications, e.g. *so, therefore*:

(2.20) This suggestion can be cancelled without contradiction. Therefore/So it is an implicature.

- elements related to the strengthening of assumption, e.g. *after all, indeed, moreover, furthermore*, utterance initial *also*:

(2.21) You have to drink another drink. After all it is your birthday.

- elements related to the contradiction and elimination of an assumption, e.g. *however, still, nevertheless, but*.

(2.22) David is here. However, you can't see him.

(Blakemore 1992: 137-142)

In addition to this characterization in terms of contextual effects, other ways are suggested in which a connective may contribute to the relevance of the utterance (1992: 138; 142-146). A connective may:

- indicate the derivation of contextual effects parallel to the ones derived from the previous utterance, e.g. *too, also*:

(2.23) Simon's got a laser printer too.

- indicate the role of the utterance in the discourse in which it occurs, e.g. *anyway, incidentally, by the way, finally*;



- indicate what kind of contextual implications the hearer is expected to derive. An example is the performative expression *I warn*: the implications have to do with “the dangerous or unpleasant consequences of the state of affairs represented in the proposition it introduces” (Blakemore 1992: 152n3).

However, it is not immediately clear how this classification stands in relation to the previously described classification.

The initial picture, then, is one in which discourse connectives are a homogeneous group in that they all supposedly encoded procedural meaning while contributing to the implicatures of the utterance. Then, Wilson and Sperber's (1993) work “Linguistic form and relevance” argued for the lack of parallelism between truth-conditionality and the type of meaning encoded by a linguistic element (see section 2.2.4). Wilson and Sperber follow Ifantidou (1993a) in arguing that illocutionary adverbials such as *frankly* encode higher-level speech acts with their own truth conditions:

(2.24) Frankly, I can't help you.

(Wilson & Sperber 1993: 17)

The speaker says frankly that she can't help you.

Blakemore (1996) pursues this direction by analysing reformulation markers (which she calls 'apposition markers') such as *in other words* and *that is* as contributing to the explicatures of the utterance. These elements are said to be conceptual since they are formed by conceptual words. Contribution to explicatures is realized in two different ways. The ‘discourse sentence use’ of apposition markers is exemplified by the following:

(2.25) At the beginning of this piece there is an example of an anacrusis. That is, it begins with a unaccented note which is not part of the first full bar.

(Blakemore 1996: 339)

In this example, *that is* communicates the following higher-level explicature suggesting that the incoming utterance is an instance of interpretive use:

The speaker believes that P is a faithful representation of a thought Q.

(p.340)

Here, P is the successive utterance and Q is the idea that the beginning of the piece is an example of anacrusis. In their 'appositional use', apposition markers make a "contribution to the interpretation of the proposition expressed by the host utterance in the sense that it aids the hearer in reference assignment" (Blakemore 1996: 345). Reference assignment occurs in the phase of pragmatic enrichment; the contribution is therefore made to the main explication:

(2.26) The Republicans, that is, the third party in the centre-left coalition, disagreed with the legislation.

(p.329)

The analysis of reformulation markers thus provides further evidence for the fact that "expressions classified as discourse markers may encode different kinds of semantic meaning and may affect different aspects of the pragmatic interpretation of the utterances which they introduce" (Blakemore 1998: 58). It is clear, then, that the initial conception of discourse connectives does no longer apply at this stage.

A further development is made in Blakemore (2002), where a more in-depth analysis of contrastive connectives leads the author to conclude that the notion of procedural meaning introduced in her previous works is too narrow. As noted by Hansen (1998a: 35-36; 1998b: 252-253), the tripartite classification based on contextual effects may not be finely grained enough to capture the differences between certain discourse markers. However, it must be said that Blakemore does characterize that early classification as "broad" (1992: 138). In Blakemore (2002), the contrastive elements *but*, *nevertheless* and *however* are analysed as a group sharing the encoding of procedural meaning and association with the contextual effect of contradiction and elimination. The initial observation is that, despite their homogeneity, these elements are not always interchangeable. The suggestion is that this is due to *nevertheless* and *however* encoding a further instruction in addition to the one associated with contradiction and elimination. The procedure in question is called 'constraint on context' – a way of achieving relevance



which had not been contemplated before, but is nonetheless compatible with the notion of procedural meaning presented in previous works, as well as with the tenets of relevance theory in general: not only certain “inferential routes” (for example contradiction and elimination) must be activated in the interpretive process, but also certain contextual assumptions (2002: 128).

*Nevertheless*, for instance, constrains the context against which the utterance is to be interpreted. This context should contain an assumption which contradicts the utterance. Both should be answers to the same question. This question should be retrievable from previous discourse (Blakemore 2002: 126-127):

(2.27) A: She's had a very difficult time this semester.

B: Nevertheless, she should hand in at least some of the work.

Both turns in this example answer a question which emerges from previous discourse, namely whether the person in question should hand in her work. Both turns represent two possible answers. The answer introduced by *nevertheless* contradicts the answer in turn A. *Nevertheless* constrains the context in that it requires that the marked utterance is interpreted in a context that includes the answer in turn A. What follows from this analysis is that an element may encode more than one procedure at the same time, which may also be seen as a composite procedure.

The lack of a clear-cut taxonomy in Blakemore's approach is justified by the author by means of referring to her approach of analysis. Blakemore maintains that the tendency towards trying to classify discourse markers is typical of the coherence-based approach, where each item considered as discourse marker is 'assigned' a different coherence relation. However, the reason why these elements are worth studying, according to Blakemore, is the fact that they provide excellent data for research on the procedural/conceptual distinction. This, and the fact that the studies discussed above seem to point to a non-unitary analysis for this group of elements, lead Blakemore to suggest that the elements considered as 'discourse markers' do not actually constitute a class (2002: 184-185). As already mentioned in section 2.4.1, this position is contrasted by Pons Bordería (2008), who, throughout his paper, argues that exactly the analysis of

particular elements or homogeneous groups of discourse markers is useful for a theory like relevance theory, since it can confirm or invalidate more general hypotheses.

## **2.5 Discussion**

In this chapter we have presented theoretical notions that form the background for the analysis contained in the next three chapters. Our analysis will focus on eight temporal expressions and will aim to provide a comprehensive account which focuses not only on their temporal semantics, but also on non-temporal pragmatic meanings. The ‘double identity’ of these expressions makes it necessary to understand both the way their meaning interacts with other temporal and aspectual information in the utterance, and the way they interact with context to give rise to uses that pertain to spheres other than time. Therefore, in this chapter we gave an overview of research on both the semantics and pragmatics of time, as well as on the functional class of discourse markers.

We furthermore provided the reader with a brief sketch of relevance theory. In our analysis we will make extensive use of some of the instruments offered by this theory, namely the conceptual-procedural distinction and the notions of explicature, higher-level explicature and implicature. Our analysis will also raise questions that pertain to some of the issues that are currently debated by relevance theorists and other scholars alike. Finally, the relevance-theoretic contribution to the research on discourse markers and temporal expression was delineated.



## CHAPTER 3

### TEMPORAL INDEXICAL ADVERBS: *ALLORA*, *ORA* AND *ADESSO*

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will argue for an inferential account of three indexical expressions: *allora* 'then', *ora* 'now' and *adesso* 'now'. We will argue that they are procedural devices that constrain the derivation of the basic-level explicature as well as constraining the context for interpretation of the utterance. Indexicals have previously been seen as encoding computations, functions or procedures in studies pertaining to different domains (Perry 1977; Kaplan 1989; Smith 1989; Wilson & Sperber 1993; Saussure 2008). We will argue for a unitary account for each of these three expressions, and we will claim that these expressions encode a 'core' meaning which is then actualized in different ways depending on the context. While at first glance their temporal uses look significantly different from their non-temporal uses, we will show that the underlying inferential role of the expression is in fact the same in all of these uses.

We will furthermore argue that *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* are particularly homogeneous with regard to their cognitive import. All three expressions are procedural in all of their uses; moreover, they present a parallel in terms of the way the procedure is realized in their temporal and non-temporal uses. On the one hand, the temporal uses of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* help in the development of the logical form into the full explicature: the procedure helps the listener to establish the temporal coordinate for the utterance. The logical form is thus enriched (see Leonetti & Escandell Vidal 2004: 2) with a temporal coordinate and is truth-evaluable.<sup>1</sup> By determining the temporal coordinate for the proposition, these expressions indirectly contribute to the basic explicature (see Blakemore & Carston 1999: 9; Carston 2002a: 98). On the other hand, their non-temporal uses encode a procedure we have identified as 'constraint on context' (Blakemore 2002; see also section 2.4.7); that is to say, they constrain the context for interpretation for the incoming utterances, thus streamlining the comprehension process.

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<sup>1</sup> The quoted page numbers are those in the electronic version.

Our analysis of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* will testify to the explanatory power of an inferential account such as a relevance-theoretic account. We will provide evidence for our claim that discourse markers do not always link two adjacent utterances, but rather may involve greater 'chunks' of discourse. Not only will we demonstrate in this chapter that connectives may link an utterance to non-linguistically communicated assumptions, but we will also show that these expressions can have a much wider scope. This contrasts with coherence-based accounts, which predict that connectives encode a relation between "two textual units" (Schourup 1999: 230). Evidence for this claim will be mainly drawn from examples of discursive uses of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso*.

We will adopt a monosemous approach for the analysis of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso*, and we will identify several triggers that help the hearer actualize the procedure they encode. We will make suggestions as to the impact of syntactic, semantic and prosodic factors on their interpretation. Moreover, we will show how the interpretation of both temporal and non-temporal *ora* and *adesso* depends crucially on assumptions derived from the situational context, since their meaning is closely linked with the 'here and now' of the communicative act. In the next subsection we will present our relevance-theoretic approach to the analysis of the indexical trait in *allora*, *ora* and *adesso*.

### 3.1.1 *Allora*, *ora* and *adesso* as indexicals

In this work we characterize *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* as indexical elements, since they are parasitic on other elements in context for their interpretation. Such elements may be linguistic or not linguistic; the former case has been traditionally called anaphora, and the latter deixis. Both anaphoric and deictic traits have been observed in the uses of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso*. In this section we will firstly present an account of these expressions in terms of these traditional notions, and subsequently explain how the latter will be replaced in our account by the notion of assumption.

*Allora*, *ora* and *adesso* have been described in the literature as deictic expressions (Vanelli 1995), that is, lexical items which point at contextual coordinates such as time, space and participants, and whose interpretation depends on the knowledge of such coordinates. Temporal deictics such as the expressions analysed in this chapter are said to



require knowledge of temporal coordinates such as the time of utterance, the time of the event and the reference time in order to determine their reference.

According to the traditional terminology, we may further characterize *allora* as being the 'distal' element among these, and *ora* and *adesso* as being 'proximal' elements. While the former points to a location in time on a hypothetical timeline that is distant from the *origo* (which typically corresponds to utterance time), *ora* and *adesso* point to a location that is close to, or overlaps with, utterance time. The proximal/distal distinction has also been observed for the English pair of temporal adverbs *now* and *then* (Schiffrin 1987). The same features are described in the Italian literature in terms of negative or positive characterization: *ora* and *adesso* may be characterized positively with respect to utterance time, since they refer to either utterance time itself or to a period of time that includes it, whereas *allora* may be characterized negatively, since it refers to a point in time that is distant from utterance time, either in the past or the future (Cinque 1976: 108; Bertinetto 1986: 32; Vanelli 1995: 285).

In the course of this chapter we will use the notions of proximal and distal deixis as well as anaphora for presentational reasons, more specifically to describe the behaviour and directionality of indexicality of these items at a pre-theoretical level. However, in the present work we do not endorse the text-based notion of anaphora, which is usually associated with nominal anaphora and reference to a previous textual item; we will rather use this term as conceived by Partee (1984; see section 2.3.4) for tense in English – that is to say, a “more subtle” (p. 275) type of anaphora with respect to temporal anaphora, and one that doesn’t imply reference. From a relevance-theoretic perspective, the distinction between anaphora and deixis is rather artificial anyway, as in both cases the expression requires saturation from a source. The type of source – linguistic (textual) for anaphora, or non-linguistic (physical) for deixis – is irrelevant in our account, as in both cases these would be treated as assumptions.

The distinction between anaphora and deixis on the basis of the domain they draw upon (anaphora = textual; deixis = extratextual) has been questioned before in the literature (Lyons 1977, 1979; Ehlich 1982; Consten 2003; Cornish 1999, 2009). In particular, Cornish postulates a continuum along which he places linguistic items, ranging from fully deictic to fully anaphoric. The intermediate items are characterized by a degree of both deixis and anaphora; English “demonstrative adverb” *then* is included in this

middle field, and based on our data we would locate *allora* in the same position. Cornish argues that both deixis and anaphora can point to either linguistic or extralinguistic items, and calls them both “procedures” which point to mental representations. We follow him in acknowledging the procedural character of our indexical expressions and argue that, regardless of whether they point to an expression in previous discourse or to extralinguistic content, their occurrences are all particular instantiations of a more general backward-pointing procedure which takes assumptions for its arguments.

What we do wish to maintain from the traditional terminology, however, is the intuition that *allora* and *ora/adesso* differ along the proximal/distal axis. This will be accounted for in terms of the different procedural indications encoded by these expressions, as anticipated in the previous section. In the case of *allora*, the distal feature corresponds to a backward-pointing procedure: in its temporal uses, this procedure is realized as an instruction to look for a (past or future) temporal coordinate communicated in previous discourse; while in its non-temporal uses it becomes an instruction to look for previously communicated assumptions to constitute the context for interpretation. It might be asked why *allora* necessarily points to the past and not to the future, since it is a distal element and since, as we will see, it can indeed point to a point in time which is future with respect to utterance time. We argue that the emphasis on the past and the exclusion of the 'future' trait is due to the linearity of the communicative act. *Allora* thus necessarily points to something previous; we will note in section 3.2.1 that even when it points to a future point with respect to utterance time, such future point is made salient by a previous expression to which *allora* refers. *Ora* and *adesso*, on the other hand, are proximal expressions and as such they have to do with the 'here and now' of communication; the procedure they encode points to assumptions related to the situational coordinates. In their temporal uses, the procedure instructs the hearer to anchor the eventuality to present time, whereas in their non-temporal uses the hearer is instructed to interpret the utterance in a context that comprises assumptions communicated by the situational context. The next subsection will review previous studies on *allora*, *ora*, *adesso* and their counterparts in other languages.



### 3.1.2 Previous accounts

In the Italian literature, accounts of the polyfunctionality of *allora* have been put forward in three studies; these differ from ours in methodology and focus of analysis. The work by Bosco and Bazzanella (2005) deals with the diachronic development of *allora* and bases its observations on data taken from corpora of Old Italian and Present-Day Italian, as well as dictionaries. The authors argue that *allora* is subject to a “modal shift” from a spatial to a temporal element up to a “pragmatic marker”. However, the main focus of the paper appears to be the advantages and disadvantages of corpus research. The second paper is a contrastive study of *allora* and French *alors* (Bazzanella *et al.* 2007). Once again, data are taken from both Old Italian and Present-Day Italian. The focus is on the relations among its many uses, and the repercussions of this on its translatability into French. In this study, *allora* is found to be performing many functions at the same time, some of which will be more influential in the DM interpretation process than others. The work by Bazzanella and Miecznikowski (2009) is another diachronic study which compares Old Italian *allora* and present-day *allora*. Other works only focus on single specific functions of *allora*. Its use as a turn-taking device has been noted by Mara (1986: 186). Its use in correlation with *quando* 'when' as a temporal connective has been mentioned by Giusti (1995: 734). Its use as an interjection has been included by Poggi (1995) in her list of Italian interjections. Finally, its deictic properties have been shown in Vanelli (1995). Regrettably, these studies only offer a fragmentary picture of the wide range of functions *allora* performs.

In the foreign literature, near-equivalents of *allora* have been the object of extensive research. We will see in our analysis that *allora* and English *then* are not overlapping in all their uses, and that is why *allora* will be translated in many different ways in our examples, including *well* and *so*. Nevertheless, *then* is intuitively the main translation for this expression, as it translates *allora* in its temporal uses and some of its consequential uses.

*Then* has been studied in both its temporal and discursive uses by Schiffrin (1987; 1992), Brunaud (1991), Fretheim and Vaskó (1996) and Fretheim (2006). Schiffrin's work is particularly relevant to our analysis since it mostly focuses on the deictic function of *then*. Schiffrin (1992) focuses on both *then* and *now*, the deictic pair which is broadly equivalent to Italian *allora* and *ora*. On the other hand, works by Brunaud, Fretheim and Vaskó



mainly focus on the discursive uses of *then*. *Then* has been classified as an indexical in Castañeda (1981) and, more recently, in Bezuidenhout (2005). Moving on to French *alors*: In addition to Bazzanella *et al.* (2007), mentioned earlier in this section, French *alors* has been analysed by Hansen (1997, 1998). The author provides a polysemous account in which the various uses of *alors* are related as in a “radial category”. Although we rather advocate for a monosemous account, as explained in chapter 1, we will incorporate insights from these works. A comparative work on *alors* and *puis* has been carried out by Reyle (1999) within a formal semantics framework. More recent works on *alors* are those by Le Draoulec and Bras (2007) and by Bras, Le Draoulec and Asher (2009); in both, the theoretical framework adopted is that of SDRT (Segmented Discourse Representation Theory; Asher and Lascarides 2003; see section 2.3.6). Their aim differs significantly from ours, as their main aim is to ascertain which relations (as conceived in SDRT) are associated with *alors*.

To the best of our knowledge, no complete accounts of *ora* and *adesso* have been given in the Italian literature. The closest to this aim is the recent work by Baranzini and Saussure (2010), who however by their own admission provide invented examples without reference to corpus data; moreover, the study focuses on a limited range of uses. The temporal uses of *ora* and *adesso* have been discussed in Bertinetto (1986); in the course of this chapter we will make reference to his description of the use of *ora* called “pseudodeittico” (1986: 32; see section 3.3.1). A similar use has been observed by Frank-Job (2006: 32) for *adesso* and tagged “metacommunicative”. Both *ora* and *adesso* have been seen as deictic markers in Vanelli (1995). Finally, *ora* has been seen as a marker of discourse structure by Berretta (1984: 245).

In the non-Italian literature, the near-equivalents of *ora* and *adesso* have received particular attention because, despite the fact that intuitively they point exactly at utterance time, their reference is in fact quite vague and often indicates a point in time only close to utterance time. These are the considerations that emerge from the studies by Smith (1989), Recanati (2004) and Corazza (2004) on English *now* and by Saussure (2008) on French *maintenant*. The former focuses on the way the different options for reference of *now* and *here* are encoded in the expression, while the latter focuses on the pragmatics involved in the recovery of the exact reference of these adverbs. We will arrive



at similar conclusions for Italian *ora* and *adesso*; however, we deem it necessary to integrate these observations with a thorough analysis of their non-temporal uses.

### 3.1.3 Chapter content

The rest of this chapter is articulated as follows. Section 3.2 illustrates the uses of *allora*, starting from its temporal uses (3.2.1), on to its non-temporal uses. These are divided into: uses which structure the speaker's discourse/argumentation (3.2.2), discourse- and turn-initial uses (3.2.3), and finally uses that have an interpersonal/phatic function (3.2.4). The description and analysis of *ora* (3.3) starts once again with its temporal uses (3.3.1) and continues with its non-temporal uses (3.3.2). Section 3.4 is devoted to the analysis of *adesso*, divided in its temporal (3.4.1) and non-temporal (3.4.2) uses. Finally, section 3.5 will present the conclusions to this chapter and some preliminary (partial) conclusions for the present work.

## 3.2 Allora

In this section, we will argue that *allora* is a backward-pointing procedural expression in both its temporal and non-temporal uses. *Allora* is used in a range of situations to say that what is being said is to be understood on the basis of something that happened beforehand, thus bridging between past and present. We will argue that *allora* indirectly contributes to the basic explicature of the utterance by attributing a temporal coordinate to the state of affairs described by the utterance itself. We will furthermore argue that, in its non-temporal uses, *allora* guides the hearer's interpretation of the utterance by restricting the search space for contextual assumptions which are to make up the context for interpretation.

*Allora* is believed to be derived from the Latin *ad illa(m) ōra(m)* ('at that time') (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 41; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 71; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 65; Bosco & Bazzanella 2005: 449n; Frank-Job 2006: 366; Garzanti 2008: 91).<sup>2</sup> *Allora* can be

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<sup>2</sup> However, *illa hora* has been suggested by Bazzanella *et al.* as the real origin: "Since that phrase [ad illam horam] is not attested either in classical or in medieval Latin texts, a derivation from the ablative form, such as has been proposed for French *alors* in the Trésor de la Langue Française (Imbs 1973: 607) seems more

used as an adverb, as a connective, and occasionally as an interjection; as will be shown in the illustration of the temporal use, specific occurrences of it may also be seen as adjectival. Most sources report the adverbial variant as first in their description (see for example Devoto & Oli 1982: 82; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 71). Here is an example of *allora* as temporal adverb:

- (3.1)   Devi                   vederlo,           solo   *allora*   capirai.  
          must.IMP.2SG to see-it.OBJ   only   *then*   understand.FUT.2SG  
(Garzanti 2008: 91)<sup>3</sup>  
          'You have to see it, only *then* will you understand.'

We will return to the treatment of temporal adverb *allora* in the next section. What follows is an instance of *allora* as connective:

- (3.2)   Se       le       cose   stanno           così,           *allora* è       inutile  
          If       DET   things stay.3PL       like this       *then* is       useless  
          insistere.  
          to insist  
(Garzanti 2008: 91)

'If this is the way things are, *then* it is pointless to insist.'

In its connective function, *allora* tends to take clause-external position. In (3.2), it is used in correlation with conditional connective *se* 'if', and marks the utterance as expressing a consequence of what described in the previous utterance.

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plausible. *Ille hora* (abl.) is well attested in Latin; in French, it gives rise to *lors*, whereas in Italian it has survived only within prepositional phrases – most prominently in *allora*, but also in other forms such as *inlor(a)*, *allo* (Old Lombard)" (2007: 12n4).

<sup>3</sup> In chapters 3, 4 and 5, the italics in quotes from the bibliographic references are mine unless stated otherwise.



*Allora* may also occur in what Fretheim (2006: 48) calls ‘pre-nominal’ or ‘adjectival’ position for English *then*. *Allora* is in this case considered as an adjective by Zingarelli *et al.* (1993: 71) and Garzanti (2008: 91):

(3.3)

L'

*allora*

presidente

bocciò

la

proposta.

DET

*then*

president

reject.PST.3SG

DET

proposal

(Garzanti 2008: 91)

'The *then* president rejected the proposal.'

Here, *allora* occurs as part of a NP, is preceded by a definite article - here, *l'* – and followed by a noun.

*Allora* occasionally behaves like an interjection. This function, however, is not contemplated by any of the major Italian dictionaries: Zingarelli *et al.* (1983: 71) treats this use as instance of *allora* as a connective, either introducing an “indirect interrogative clause” or “an exclamatory expression” (my translation), while Devoto & Oli (1982: 82) treats these uses as instances of adverbs used with an interrogative form to solicit a certain response, as in the following example:

(3.4)

*Allora*, ti

decidi

a

studiare?

so

REFL

decide.2SG

to

to study

(Devoto & Oli 1982: 82)

'So, when are you going to start studying?'

The interjective use of *allora* is however mentioned by Poggi (1995); its functions are said to be ‘doubt, hesitation’ (p. 417; my translation). We will see in section 3.2.4 that *allora* may or may not be classified as an interjection depending on the way this class is defined in a given approach.

We will now proceed with some preliminary observations on the syntactic and prosodic configurations correlated with the temporal and discourse-marking interpretations of *allora*. The role of prosody for the disambiguation of linguistic expressions in Italian has received some attention (Avesani, Hirschberg & Prieto 1995, Hirschberg & Avesani 1997, 2000), however not with specific focus on temporal adverbs.

To the best of our knowledge, no studies on the interaction between uses of *allora* and syntax and/or prosody have been carried out. With the following examples, we will show that all positions in the sentence appear to be shared by different interpretations, whereas the distinguishing factor seems to be prosody. In initial position, *allora* can take a causal/deductive meaning (see section 3.2.2), when it is unstressed and prosodically integrated with the rest of the sentence:

- (3.5) Allora **capi** cos' era successo.<sup>4</sup>  
 then understood.3SG what AUX.PST.3SG happened

'Then he realized what had happened.'

In the same position, *allora* can be temporal if stressed and prosodically integrated with the sentence:

- |       |               |                |      |             |           |
|-------|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-----------|
| (3.6) | <b>Allora</b> | capi           | cos' | era         | successo. |
|       | then          | understood.3SG | what | AUX.PST.3SG | happened  |

'Then he realized what had happened.'

Finally, *allora* can, in this position, introduce an explanation or narrative sequence (see section 3.2.3), if prosodically isolated and followed by a pause (or separated by a comma from the rest of the sentence in writing). The following occurrence should be translated by English *so*:

- |       |              |                |      |                      |
|-------|--------------|----------------|------|----------------------|
| (3.7) | Allora, capì | cos'           | era  | successo.            |
|       | so           | understood.3SG | what | AUX.PST.3SG happened |

'So, he realized what had happened.'

<sup>4</sup> Words in bold are prosodically highlighted; in sentences with no words in bold, all items are equally important from the point of view of prosody.



When *allora* is in clause-internal position following the verb, it can be interpreted temporally when *allora* itself is stressed:

(3.8) Capi                            **allora**  cos'    era                    successo.  
understood.3SG          then  what  AUX.PST.3SG  happened

‘He then realized what had happened.’

However, if *capi* ‘understood’ were stressed and *allora* unstressed, it would allow for a causal/deductive interpretation:

(3.9) **Capi**                            allora  cos'    era                    successo.  
understood.3SG          then  what  AUX.PST.3SG  happened

‘He then realized what had happened.’

In a similar way, the sentence-final use allows for a temporal interpretation when *allora* is stressed, to suggest a contrast with another point in time:

(3.10) Capi                            cos'    era                    successo    **allora**.  
understood.3SG          what  AUX.PST.3SG  happened    then

‘He realized what had happened then.’

Another possibility for sentence-final *allora* is the causal/deductive interpretation, in case *allora* itself is unstressed and stress falls on either *capi* ‘understood’ or *successo* ‘happened’ (in the following example, only the former option is exemplified):

|        |                |      |             |          |         |
|--------|----------------|------|-------------|----------|---------|
| (3.11) | <b>Capi</b>    | cos' | era         | successo | allora. |
|        | understood.3SG | what | AUX.PST.3SG | happened | then    |

‘He realized what had happened then.’

From these examples we can tentatively conclude that *allora* is usually stressed in its temporal interpretation, unstressed in its causal/deductive interpretation, and isolated prosodically in its interpretation as introductory marker of explanation or narration. We can also suggest that prosody, more than syntax, guides the hearer in his interpretive process, as we observed that none of the illustrated syntactic positions is distinctive of any specific interpretation.

From this brief review it is already evident how the possibilities for interpretation for *allora* are numerous: *allora* proves to be a highly flexible element capable of being used in different contexts. We will show that, nevertheless, *allora* regularly signals that the interpretation of the marked utterance requires reference to something expressed beforehand. We will argue that this mechanism can be accurately described in relevance-theoretic terms by postulating the encoding of a backward-pointing procedure. We will present the temporal uses first, followed by the non-temporal uses.

3.2.1 Allora as a temporal adverb

In its temporal interpretation, *allora* points to a moment in time, either in the past or in the future, distant from utterance time. Most frequently, *allora* refers to a specific time in the past, or may take the meaning of ‘in that period/age’ (Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 71). In (3.12), the speaker is comparing the situation at the time of utterance to what happened in the past:

(3.12) FD13/2

|           |          |              |               |     |          |      |           |
|-----------|----------|--------------|---------------|-----|----------|------|-----------|
| A: domain | i        | vari         | segretari     | di  | partiti  | si   | recano    |
| tomorrow  | DET      | various      | secretaries   | of  | parties  | REFL | carry.3PL |
| a         | Budapest | perche' si   | celebrano     | il  | funerale |      | di        |
| to        | Budapest | because REFL | celebrate.3PL | DET | funeral  |      | of        |



|                 |             |                |                              |                    |              |                    |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Nagy            | generale    | ungherese      | che                          | fu                 | assassinato  | dai                |
| nagy            | general     | hungarian      | who                          | AUX.PST.3SG        | assassinated | by-DET             |
| sovietici nella | repressione | del            | millenovecentocinquantasei # | c'                 | e'           |                    |
| soviets in-DET  | repression  | of-DET         | 1956                         |                    | there        | is                 |
| ci              | sono        | anche          | partiti_# #che               | <b>allora</b>      | applaudirono | alla               |
| there           | are.3PL     | also           | parties who                  | <b>then</b>        | applauded    | to-DET             |
|                 |             |                |                              |                    |              | tragedia ungherese |
|                 |             |                |                              |                    |              | tragedy Hungarian  |
| noi             | siamo       | solidali       | alla                         | tragedia ungherese | [...]        |                    |
| we              | are.1PL     | solidarity.ADJ | to-DET                       | tragedy Hungarian  |              |                    |

‘Tomorrow, various party leaders are travelling to Budapest for the funerals of Nagy, the Hungarian general who was assassinated by the Soviets during the 1956 repression. There are also parties who **then** applauded the Hungarian tragedy. We do feel for the Hungarian tragedy’

Here, *allora* instructs the hearer to retrieve a contextually salient temporal coordinate and apply it to the current utterance. This coordinate is to be found in the preceding linguistic context: *nel millenovecentocinquantasei* ‘in nineteen fifty-six’. Here is an additional example:

- (3.13)

Devi

vederlo,

solo

*allora*

capirai.

must.IMP.2SG

to see-it.OBJ

only

*then*

understand.FUT.2SG

(Garzanti 2008: 91)
- ‘You have to see it, only then will you understand.’

Here, temporal adverb *allora* points to the moment in which the interlocutor sees the object in question, which is in the future with respect to utterance time. In addition to this ‘deictic’ function, though, *allora* also takes its reference from the verb *vederlo*, which indirectly evokes the moment in which the hearer sees the object in question. We argue then that the task of *allora* is that of guiding the hearer in the identification of the temporal coordinate for the proposition expressed by the utterance. The procedure could be spelled out as follows: “Find a temporal coordinate *t* that is made salient by previously communicated assumptions and apply it to proposition *p*”, where *p* is the proposition expressed by the utterance marked by *allora*. The proposition is thus enriched and truth-evaluable; *allora* can therefore be said to contribute indirectly to the basic explicature of the utterance. The process of retrieving the temporal coordinate, we argue, is guided by considerations of relevance: such coordinate will be made salient by the presence of certain time expressions, as in the examples above. We furthermore argue that the tense

and aspect of the sentence may help the hearer to arrive to a temporal, as opposed to non-temporal, interpretation. So for example, the simple past allows for both the temporal and non-temporal reading:

(3.14) *Allora* si        sentì        bene.  
         then   REFL   felt.3SG       fine

‘Then she felt fine.’

However, the present perfect favours the non-temporal interpretation:

(3.15) *Allora* si        è                sentita bene.  
         then   REFL   AUX.3SG       felt       fine

‘Then she’s felt fine.’

The use of the simple present precludes the temporal interpretation:

(3.16) *Allora* si        sente       bene.  
         then   REFL   feels       fine

‘Then she feels fine.’

The future tense, however, makes it possible:

(3.17) *Allora* si        sentirà       bene.  
         then   REFL   feel.FUT.3SG   fine

‘Then she will feel fine.’

These examples show that a clash between the distal nature of *allora* and the present and present perfect tense/aspect forms rules out temporal readings.



The next three sections focus on the non-temporal uses of *allora*. We will argue that the procedure associated with non-temporal *allora* is analogue to that encoded by its temporal uses, in that it points to previously communicated assumptions; however, it is exactly those assumptions that are called to constitute the context for interpretation of the utterance. *Allora* presents the widest variety of non-temporal uses among the temporal elements described in this work. Grouping them is no easy task, since there is occasional overlap between two uses; however, tentative groups will be employed for presentational purposes. The first group (section 3.2.2) includes uses that mark discourse structure; the second group (section 3.2.3) includes discourse-initial uses; the third group (section 3.2.4) includes interpersonal and phatic uses.

### 3.2.2 Allora: argumentative uses

The first group of non-temporal uses for *allora* includes those occurrences which help the hearer understand the structure of the speaker’s argumentation. As a first example, consider (3.18), where we gloss *allora* as so:

(3.18) NC4/6

|               |              |                        |               |               |             |              |               |         |          |
|---------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------|----------|
| A: [...]      | vi           |                        | torno         | a             | ripetere    | non          | voglio        |         |          |
|               | you.DAT.2PL  |                        | come back.1SG | to            | to repeat   | NEG          | want.1SG      |         |          |
| assolutamente |              | dilungarmi             |               | rispetto a    | questa      | cosa         | e             | non     |          |
| absolutely    |              | to talk at length-REFL |               | respect to    | this        | thing        | and           | NEG     |          |
| dico          | cose         | nuove                  | voglio        | dire          | perché_ il_ | il           | direttivo     |         |          |
| say.1SG       | things       | new                    | want.1SG      | to say        | because DET | DET          | managerial    |         |          |
| regionale     |              | che                    | si            | è             | tenuto      | [digression] | <b>allora</b> |         |          |
| regional      |              | that.REL.SBJ           | REFL          | AUX.3SGheld   |             | [digression] | <b>so</b>     |         |          |
| rispetto a    |              | questo                 | io            | torno         | a           | ripetere     | io            | credo   |          |
| respect to    |              | this                   | I             | come back.1SG | to          | to repeat    | I             | believe |          |
| che           | se           | e                      | sono          | convinto      | che         | noi          | tutt’         | quanti  | insieme  |
| that          | if           | and                    | am            | convinced     | that        | we           | all           | many    | together |
| questo        | vogliamo     |                        | difendere     | la            | nostra      | realtà eh    | del           | posto   |          |
| this          | want.1PL     |                        | to defend     | DET           | our         | reality      | of.DET        | place   |          |
| di            | lavoro [...] |                        |               |               |             |              |               |         |          |
| of            | work         |                        |               |               |             |              |               |         |          |

'A: [...] Once again I tell you, I won't be talking much longer about this, and also, this is no news really. Because the regional meeting which was held [*digression*]... **So**, against this background I'll repeat once again: I believe and I am deeply convinced that we all want this; we want guarantees about our jobs'

Here, *allora* is used after a digression to resume the original line of reasoning. Such occurrences are especially frequent in text types C and D of the LIP corpus, characterized respectively by longer turns and monologues (see section 1.5.2), where the speaker considers particularly useful to help the hearer understanding discourse structure. A similar use has been observed by Hansen for French *alors*, and is described as signalling the “return to an ‘unmarked’ frame of talk after a metadiscursive exchange” (1998a: 348).

Notice that *allora* in (3.18) is backed by an explicit indication of what the speaker intends to do at this point of discourse, that is: against the background of all she has just said, she is going to repeat the main point of the monologue. By contrast, in (3.19) below, there is no linguistic item besides *allora* to signal the speaker’s intention:

(3.19) FA2/5

|                  |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|------------------|--------------|----------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|--------|------------|--------|
| C:               | gli          | ho       |                | dato          | quattro         | temi <?> | uno #  | era        | di     |
|                  | he.DAT       | AUX.1SG  |                | given         | four            | topics   | one    | was        | of     |
| descrivere_      |              | la       | vita           | nel           | proprio_ paese  | o        | nella  | propria    | città  |
| to describe      |              | DET      | life           | in.DET        | own             | village  | or     | in.DET     | own    |
|                  |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            | city   |
| mettendo         |              | in       | evidenza_ # eh | il            | condizionamento |          | delle  | attività   |        |
| putting          |              | in       | evidence       | DET           | conditioning    |          | of.DET | activities |        |
| economiche       |              | cioè     | non            | so            | a               | Prato    | che    | sono       | tutti_ |
| economic         |              | that is  | NEG            | know.1SG      | at              | Prato    | that   | are.3PL    | all    |
| tessitori oppure | fanno        |          | i              | cenci         | fanno_          | dai      |        |            |        |
| weavers or       | make3PL      |          | DET            | rags          | make.3PL        | from.DET |        |            |        |
|                  |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
| dagli            |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
| from.DET         |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
| A:               | ahah         |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|                  | ahah         |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
| C:               | stracci      | ricavano |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|                  | rags         | get.3PL  |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|                  |              |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|                  | [RIDONO]     |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
|                  | [they laugh] |          |                |               |                 |          |        |            |        |
| C:               | la           | stoffa   | riciclata      | <b>allora</b> | siccome tutti   |          | fanno  | questo     |        |
|                  | DET          | fabric   | recycled       | <b>so</b>     | since everybody |          | do.3PL | this       |        |



|        |        |      |               |        |      |        |         |
|--------|--------|------|---------------|--------|------|--------|---------|
| lavoro | questo | si   | ripercuote    | sulla  | vita | del    | paese   |
| work   | this   | REFL | strikes again | on.DET | life | of.DET | village |

‘C: I gave him four topics. One was about describing life in your hometown, highlighting the influence of local economy... Like, in Prato you have the textile industry – they have shreds of fabric, and from these

A: Ah

C: shreds they produce [they laugh]

C: recycled fabric. **So**, the fact that everybody there has this job influences life in the area.’

Here, speaker C creates the background by providing an example, and then she uses *allora* to introduce a statement that can be made on the background of what has just been said. This sequence differs from (3.18) in that it presents no additional linguistic content that makes this function of *allora* explicit. The occurrence in (3.18) cannot, however, be considered 'superfluous', since it makes perfect sense on the part of the speaker to use all the instruments she has at her disposal to make sure that her argument structure is understood.

A variant of the use just illustrated is performed by *allora* co-occurring with the coordinative connective *e* ('and'). See for example (3.20): the speaker is drawing some conclusions from the comment on the Scriptures given during the sermon, which is again a long monologue.

(3.20) RD16/2,3

|            |               |          |          |             |                  |                |           |              |                |
|------------|---------------|----------|----------|-------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>e</b>   | <b>allora</b> | per      | questo   | dobbiamo    | ricordarci       |                |           | che          |                |
| <b>and</b> | <b>so</b>     | for      | this     | must.1PL    | to remember-REFL |                |           | that         |                |
| teniamo    |               | sempre   | presente | I'          | invito           | che            | Gesù      |              |                |
| hold.1PL   |               | always   | present  | DET         | invitation       | that.REL.OBJ   | Jesus     |              |                |
| oggi       | ci            | fa       | al       | al          | termine          | del            | vangelo   | che          | abbiamo        |
| today      | us.DAT        | does     | at.DET   | at.DET      | end              | of.DET         | gospel    | that.REL.OBJ | AUX.1PL        |
| ascoltato  |               | infatti  | egli     | ci          | dice             | vegliate       | dunque    | perché       |                |
| listened   |               | in fact  | he       | us.DAT      | says             | stay awake.IMP | therefore | because      |                |
| non        | sapete        | né       | il       | giorno      | né               | I'             | ora       | ecco         | quindi         |
| NEG        | know          | neither  | DET      | day         | nor              | DET            | hour      | here         | so             |
| ci         | chiama        | ad       | essere   | attenti     | a                | lui            | alle      | sue          | manifestazioni |
| us.OBJ     | calls         | to       | be       | attentiveto |                  | him            | to.DET    | his          | manifestations |
| nei        | nostri        | fratelli | nei      | nostri      | vicini           |                | nei       | poveri #     | <b>e</b>       |
| in.DET     | our           | brothers | in.DET   | our         | neighbours       |                | in.DET    | poor         | <b>and</b>     |

|                            |            |                         |               |                |              |                |           |                        |                |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------|----------------|
| <b>allora</b><br><b>so</b> | per<br>for | noi<br>us               | oggi<br>today | quale<br>which | tipo<br>type | di<br>of       | di<br>of  | vigilanza<br>vigilance | quale<br>which |
| tipo #<br>type             | di<br>of   | attenzione<br>attention |               | da<br>from     | noi<br>us    | vuole<br>wants | il<br>DET | signore<br>lord.SBJ    |                |

‘**Therefore**, because of this we have to remember that we always keep in mind the invitation made to us today by Jesus, at the end of the Gospel we have heard. He tells us: “Watch therefore, for you don’t know the day nor the hour”. So, He invites us to beware of him and of his manifestations in our brothers, our neighbours, the poor. **And so**, what kind of awareness, what kind of attention does the Lord want from us today?’

This compound connective is a rhetorical device mostly used in monologues where the speaker is trying to be persuasive: it is typically used towards the end of the speech to introduce some conclusions warranted by what has been said so far. The utility of *allora* in this type of text is that of marking discourse structure, since the hearer might get lost in a long monologue.

What is shared by all of the instances of *allora* seen so far in this section is the idea that the incoming information has a reason to be uttered, and that is to be found in some preceding utterance. In relevance-theoretic terms, this equals to say that the relevance of the utterance in question can only be established in relation to that of (a) previous utterance(s). In (3.18), the information communicated in the digression is the context against which the incoming discourse chunk is to be interpreted. In (3.20), *allora* introduces the conclusions of the sermon, which can be drawn on the basis of previous discourse, the extent of which is indefinite. We argue therefore that the function of this use of *allora* is to help the hearer understand discourse structure, by restricting the search space for contextual assumptions to previous discourse. We thus see that the procedure associated with *allora* is flexible, as it requires contextual actualization each time.

We now move on to a slightly different set of uses, albeit still pertaining to argumentation structure. First of all, we present the case of *allora* linking cause and consequence:

### (3.21) RDit\_01P

|           |                       |           |                       |                         |                     |                        |              |                      |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| p2#24:    | <eh>                  | le<br>DET | cose<br>things        | belle <eh><br>beautiful | sono<br>are.3PL     | difficili<br>difficult | da<aa><br>of | gestire<br>to manage |
| noi<br>we | pensiamo<br>think.1PL |           | che <sp>se<br>that if | ci<br>REFL              | accade<br>happens a | una<br>thing           | cosa<br>ugly | brutta <sp> <eh>     |



|                           |                                  |                              |                             |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| questo<oo><br>this        | ci<br>us                         | destabilizza<br>destabilizes |                             |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p2#25: e<br>and           | spesso<br>often                  | alcune #<p1#26><br>some      | volte<br>times              | è<br>is                   | vero# <inspiration><br>true |                              | se<br>if                        |                   |           |
| ci<br>us.DAT              | capita<br>happens a              | una<br>thing                 | cosa<br>beautiful           | bella<br>NEG              | non<br>us                   | destabilizza<br>destabilizes |                                 |                   |           |
| p1#26: #<p2#25>           |                                  | <mhmh>#<br>mhmh              |                             |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p2#27: <inspiration>      |                                  | <eh><br>eh                   | assolutamente<br>absolutely | falso<br>false            | questa<br>this              | è <unclear><br>is            | una<br>a                        |                   |           |
| conoscenza<br>knowledge   | che <unclear><br>that            | dico<br>say.1SG              | sembra<br>seems             | strano<br>strange         | ci<br>us                    | accade<br>happens            | spessissimo<br>very often       |                   |           |
| ma<br>but                 | non<br>NEG                       | lo<br>it                     | sappiamo<br>know.1PL        |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p2#28: cioè<br>that is    | noi <sp><br>we                   | sabotiamo<br>sabotage.1PL    | l'<br>DET                   | emozioni <sp><br>emotions | perchè<br>because           | l'<br>DET                    | emozioni<br>emotions            |                   |           |
| <tongue click> <eh>       |                                  | mettono<br>put.3PL           | sotto<br>under              | stress<br>stress          | la<br>DET                   | nostra<br>our                | capacità di <sp><br>capacity of |                   |           |
| di<br>of                  | sostenere<br>to sustain          | l'<br>DET                    | intensità<br>intensity      |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p1#29: <mhmh><br>mhmh     |                                  |                              |                             |                           |                             |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p2#30: e<br>and           | <b>allora</b> <eeh><br><b>so</b> | senza<br>without             | che<br>that                 | ce<br>REFL                | ne<br>it                    | accorgiamo<br>notice.1PL     | però<br>but                     |                   |           |
| {<laugh> questa<br>this   | è<ee><br>is                      | diciamo<br>say.IMP.1PL       | la<br>DET                   | fregatura<br>con          |                             | che<br>that.SBJ              | c'<br>there                     | è<br>is           |           |
| p2#31: <inspiration> <eh> |                                  | noi<br>we                    | sabotiamo<br>sabotage.1PL   | le<br>DET                 | cose<br>things              | belle <breath><br>beautiful  |                                 |                   |           |
| perchè<br>because         | le<br>DET                        | cose<br>things               | belle<br>beautiful          | ci<br>us                  | costringono<br>force.3PL    | a<br>to                      | cambiare <sp><br>to change      |                   |           |
| ci<br>us                  | costringono <eh><br>force.3PL    | ci<br>us                     | aiutano<br>help.3PL         | ci<br>us                  | spingono<br>push.3PL        | ci<br>us                     |                                 |                   |           |
| attirano<br>attract.3PL   | verso <ooh><br>towards           | un<br>a                      | nuovo<br>new                | modo<br>way               | di<br>to                    | definirci<br>to define-us    | un<br>a                         |                   |           |
| nuovo<br>new              | modo<br>way                      | di <eeh><br>of               | vivere<br>to live           | la<br>DET                 | realità <sp><br>reality     |                              |                                 |                   |           |
| p2#32: per<br>for         | cui<br>which                     | la<br>DET                    | realità<br>reality          | non<br>NEG                | è<br>is                     | più<br>more                  | lotta<br>fight                  | contro<br>against | le<br>DET |

|                    |                        |                    |                    |                        |           |           |              |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| cose<br>things     | brutte <sp><br>ugly    | che<br>that        | possono<br>can.3PL | accadere,<br>to happen | ma<br>but | la<br>DET | vita<br>life |
| comincia<br>starts | diventare<br>to become | migliore<br>better |                    |                        |           |           |              |

p2#24: Beautiful things are hard to handle. We think that, if something bad happens, that destabilizes us

p2#25: And often, sometimes that's true – If something beautiful happens to us, that doesn't destabilize us

p1#26: Mh

p2#27: Absolutely false, this is knowledge that... I say, it seems strange, it happens to us very often, but we don't know it

p2#28: That is, we sabotage our emotions, because emotions put a strain on our capacity to bear the intensity

p1#29: Mh

p2#30: And **so**, without us noticing, that is – that's the con, let's say, that there is here

p2#31: We sabotage pleasant things, because pleasant things force us to change, force us, help us, push us, attract us towards a new way to define ourselves, a new way to live reality

p2#32: So that reality is no longer a fight against bad things that may happen, but rather, life starts getting better

In (3.21), speaker p2 links the fact that we sabotage nice things without being aware of it, to the cause of this behaviour, namely the fact that emotions can be too intense. As in the previous examples, *allora* is a clue that what is being said is to be interpreted together with something that was expressed earlier. Notice that while the uses earlier in this section were metadiscursive (“because i said X, I'm going now to say Y”), this cause/consequence use is rather tied to states of affairs in the real world (“because X, Y”).

The following example is similar: *allora* introduces a deduction warranted by some previous piece of information. This use is called “initiation/response/evaluation” by Schiffrin for English *then* in similar exchanges (1992).

### (3.22) FA1/2

|    |                 |                    |               |               |                 |                    |
|----|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| A: | ormai<br>by now | son<br>be.3PL      | due<br>two    | anni<br>years | e<br>and        | mezzo<br>half      |
| B: | cazzo<br>dick   | piu'<br>more       | di<br>of      | me<br>me      | e<br>and        | lei<br>her         |
| A: | perche'<br>why  | quant'<br>how much |               | e'<br>is      | voi?<br>you.2PL |                    |
| B: | due<br>two      | anni<br>years      | e<br>and      | un<br>a       | mese<br>month   | domani<br>tomorrow |
| D: | no<br>no        | ma<br>but          | anche<br>also | loro<br>they  |                 |                    |



A:     ottobre dell'     anno\_     di     due     anni     fa  
          october of-DET     year     of     two     years     ago

D:     ahah  
          ahah

B:     ottobre ottantanove     o     ottobre ottantotto?  
          october eighty-nine     or     october eighty-eight

A:     ottantotto  
          eighty-eight

B:     tre     anni     fa     allora  
          three     years     ago     then

'A: It's two years and a half by now  
B: Shit, that's more than me and her  
A: Why, how long have you two been together?  
B: Two years and a month tomorrow  
D: No, well, but that's the same for them  
A: It was October of the year... two years ago  
D: Ah  
B: Was that October '89 or October '88?  
A: '88  
B: Three years ago **then**

Here, to borrow Schiffrin's terms, the initiation is the following question:

B:     ottobre     ottantanove     o     ottobre     ottantotto?  
          october     eighty-nine     or     october     eighty-eight?

The response is the following turn:

A:     ottantotto  
          eighty-eight

Finally, the evaluation is the final turn in the above example:

B:     tre     anni     fa     allora  
          three     years     ago     then

As in the cause/consequence use, the act of drawing a conclusion is warranted by the previous turn. In other words, the backward-pointing mechanism observed in the previous uses in this section is present here as well. A characteristic of this use is the integration of *allora* in the utterance: while in the previous uses it stands as isolated, in the deduction use it is both syntactically and prosodically integrated. This can be used by the hearer as a clue to distinguish this specific use, together with its utterance-final position. This feature is related to the scope of this use: the deductive use similar to the cause/consequence use in that its scope is narrower than in the argumentative use seen earlier. On the other hand, just like the argumentative use the deductive use is metadiscursive (“Because you said X, I say Y”) rather than involving states of affairs.

The deduction use of *allora* has been observed by Bazzanella *et al.* (2007: 13), who call it 'epistemic', since it contributes to the description of how the speaker came to know what she claims, and is derived from the cause-consequence use: “given A, I infer B”. The label 'epistemic' is also suggested by Schriffrin (1992: 774) for both the cause/consequence and the deduction use of English *then*. Working on English *so*, Blakemore captures the intuition that these two uses in English are similar by describing them as two types of a more general type of relation called 'consequential': the cause/consequence relation is called “causal effect” and is said to involve a “causal relation between states of affairs”, whereas the deduction relation is called “logical conclusion” and involves an “inferential relation between propositions” (1988: 183). As said before, this is also the case for these relations as signalled by *allora*.

We claim that it is not by chance that a temporal expression is used to express a link between cause and consequence. Causal relations have often been observed as being associated with time sequence. It has been suggested that expressions undergo the diachronic change from signifying time to causality, due to the fact that speakers establish the link between sequence and cause/consequence and thus interpret the word differently (Samardžić 2001: 303). The relation between sequence and consequence is described by Fretheim as “systematic” and “cognitively-motivated”; the author further highlights the common Latin etymology of the two terms (2006: 88). However, it is sometimes argued that causality does not always mirror temporal sequence. According to Wilson and Sperber (1998) and Saussure (2003: 195) cause-consequence relations involving states do not display a temporal sequence:



(3.23) Susan is underage and can't drink.

(Wilson & Sperber 1998: 282)

In (3.23), the fact that Susan is underage has as consequence the fact that she cannot drink. However, the two states of affair are in no relation of temporal sequence, since they involve states. Despite this, data in this section definitely point to a link between these two types of sequence, and testify to the flexibility of the procedure encoded by *allora*.

The illustration of the first group of uses will conclude with *allora* as correlated with *se* in a hypothetical construct of the *if... then* type:

(3.24) FA14/3

A: [...] capito? lei si sente sempre insicura  
understood she REFL feel.3SG always insecure

B: sempre insicura ahah  
always insecure

A: e quindi quando dice una cosa io lo vedo prima  
and so when say.3SG a thing I it.OBJ see before

la dice piano piano e poi **se** io gli dico ma  
it.OBJ say.3SG quietly quietly and then **if** I him.DAT say.1SG but

allora ma che stai dicendo? **allora** la ridice forte  
so but what AUX.2SGsaying **then** it.OBJ repeat.3SG loud

quindi eh si capisce che lei non ha il coraggio  
so eh REFL understand.3SG that she NEG has DET courage

a volte di dire delle cose\_ che\_  
at times of to say some things that

'A: [...] Understood? She still feels insecure  
B: still insecure ahah  
A: And so, when she says something, I see it, first she tells that in a hushed voice, and then, **if** I tell her, so, what is it that you're saying? **Then** she repeats it aloud. So, one understands that she does not have the courage sometimes to say things that...'

A similar case is *allora* in the construction *quando... allora* ('when... then'):

(3.25) RDit\_01C, 1

p1#3: <inspiration> prestare l' auto ai figli è diventato  
to lend DET car to-DET children AUX.3SGbecome.PTCP

|                      |                |               |          |               |                   |              |               |                      |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|
| questo               | lo             | si            | sa       | insomma       | più               | sicuro       | e             | meno                 |
| this                 | it             | REFL          | knows    | in sum        | more              | safe         | and           | less                 |
| traumatizzante       | per            | i             | genitori | ansiosi       |                   |              |               |                      |
| traumatizing         | for            | DET           | parents  | anxious       |                   |              |               |                      |
| p1#4:                | con            | l'            | aiuto    | di            | un                | sistema      | satellitare   | il<ll> <inspiration> |
|                      | with           | DET           | help     | of            | a                 | system       | satellite.ADJ | DET                  |
| Visata plus <sp>     | <tongue-click> |               | i        | genitori      | possono           | impostare    |               | un                   |
| visata plus          |                |               | DET      | parents       | can.3PL           | to set       |               | a                    |
| comando              | per {<NOISE>   |               | cui      | quando        | il                | piede        | del           | figlioletto          |
| command              | for            |               | which    | when          | DET               | foot         | of-DET        | little son           |
| spinge               | un             | po'           | troppo   |               | sull'             | acceleratore | sfilando      | alte                 |
| pushes               | a              | bit           | too much |               | on-DET            | accelerator  | unthreading   | high                 |
| e                    | pericolose     |               | velocità | <inspiration> | il                | sistema      | telematico    | di                   |
| and                  | dangerous      |               | speed    |               | DET               | system       | telematic     | of                   |
| bordo <inspiration>} |                | <b>allora</b> | invia    | un <sp>       | Esse - Emme -Esse |              | al            |                      |
| board                |                | <b>then</b>   | sends    | a             | sms               |              | at-DET        |                      |
| cellulare facendo la |                | spia          | al       | legittimo     |                   | proprietario | dell'         |                      |
| cellular making DET  |                | spy           | to-DET   | legitimate    |                   | owner        | of-DET        |                      |
| {<NOISE>             | auto}          |               |          |               |                   |              |               |                      |
|                      | car            |               |          |               |                   |              |               |                      |

'p1#3: Lending one's car to one's kids has become, we know this, well, safer and less traumatizing for anxious parents

p1#4: With the help of a satellite system, Visata plus, parents can set a command so that, when the young son's foot pushes on the accelerator a bit too much, causing high and dangerous speed, the on-board telematic system sends **then** a text to their mobile, spying for the legitimate owner of the car'

In (3.25), *allora* refers to the point in time referred to by the *when*- utterance. In correlation with *quando*, *allora* is called “avverbio di ripresa” by Giusti (1995: 734), in that it has an element of anaphoric reprise. A condition may be seen in the temporal use as well as in the more obvious case of (3.24), since the state of affairs described in the *allora* utterance verifies at a time specified in the temporal clause. The difference is that the *quando ... allora* use shows the link between condition and temporal sequence, by making this link explicit with the use of *quando* instead of *se*. This is an example of how the speaker has at her disposal different ways to relate content. She can use a conditional link like *se ... allora*, a temporal clause like *quando ... allora*, or simply link the two with *allora*, or just with *e* 'and' (an example could be “Spingi la porta, e questa si apre” 'Push the door,



and it will open'). Each of these modes will communicate a slightly different meaning: *se ... allora* puts more the emphasis on the condition, as it is often interpreted as “if and only if”.

This type of conditional construction too displays an anaphoric element, in that the protasis is the background for the interpretation of the apodosis (*se x allora y*). This meaning is similar to the factual causal use (as opposed to the deduction use) because it relates states of affairs: “If/when X, then Y”. We argue that the instruction encoded is the same as the previous uses. The context of interpretation is easily identifiable in this case as the protasis, and the use itself is easy to spot thanks to the presence of *se* or *quando*.

The conditional use concludes the uses of *allora* presented in section 3.2.2. We showed with multiple examples that *allora* is frequently used by the speaker to mark discourse structure. This is necessary either because the two chunks are linked within a wider argumentative structure, because they are linked by a cause/consequence or deduction relation, or because they make up a conditional structure. We argued that *allora* performs this discourse-marking use by guiding the hearer in its formation of the context for interpretation. *Allora* instructs the hearer to look for assumptions to form the context in previous discourse; the procedure encoded by *allora* is therefore that called in RT 'constraint on context' (see section 2.4.7). We maintain that the number of assumptions pointed at by *allora* is unspecified; this leads us to conclude that the discourse-marking uses of *allora* do not necessarily connect two adjacent utterances. We will return to this point in the next section, where we will argue that the discourse-initial uses of *allora* share the same procedure with the ones seen so far.

### 3.2.3 *Allora*: discourse-initial uses

In the uses that make up the second group, *allora* occurs in discourse-initial position to introduce a new sequence (see Bazzanella *et al.* 2007: 13; Bazzanella and Miecznikowski 2009: 11). Because of the relative frequency of this position, *allora* has often been analysed as a turn-taking or interrupting device (see Mara 1986: 186; Bazzanella 1994: 152; Bosco and Bazzanella 2005: 450n19). In addition to being turn-taking elements, these occurrences of *allora* may also be seen as ‘fillers’ (see Bustorf 1974), as it looks like the speaker uses *allora* to ‘take time’ or to communicate hesitation in planning the

incoming sequence. It is perhaps with this in mind that *allora* is described by Poggi (1995: 417) as an interjection expressing doubt and hesitation. Also, in Italian schools, students are often taught not to start speaking with *allora* as it sounds superfluous and denotes insecurity.

We will argue in this section that it is not by chance that *allora* is often used discourse-initially to introduce a new sequence. After all, many other elements could be used to take time to reformulate. Then, there must be a reason why *allora* is used, as opposed to a different discourse marker. We will argue that its occurrence as the introductory element in a sequence is part of a specific cognitive strategy, namely that of introducing a sequence which is warranted by a pre-established task. This strategy is parallel to what observed in the previous section: *allora* signals that the incoming content is to be interpreted in the light of previously communicated information.

*Allora* may introduce sequences of different types. At a more local level, it often introduces answers:

(3.26) NA10/4,5,6

|        |             |               |        |         |          |                          |         |          |             |
|--------|-------------|---------------|--------|---------|----------|--------------------------|---------|----------|-------------|
| E:     | il          | problema      | mio    | è       | questo   | mia                      | moglie  | è        |             |
|        | DET         | problem       | mine   | is      | this     | my                       | wife    | is       |             |
| morta  | a           | me            | mi     | servono | due      | una                      | per     | il       | certificato |
| dead   | to          | me            | me.DAT | serve   | two      | one                      | for     | DET      | certificate |
| di <?> |             |               |        |         |          |                          |         |          |             |
| of     |             |               |        |         |          |                          |         |          |             |
| A:     | allora      | qual          | è      | il      | nome     | quand' è                 |         | sposato? |             |
|        | so          | which         | is     | DET     | name     | when                     | AUX.3SG | married  |             |
| E:     | eh          | <b>allora</b> | eh     | quattro | febbraio | millenovecentoottantadue |         |          |             |
|        | <b>well</b> |               |        | four    | February | 1982                     |         |          |             |

'E: My problem is, my wife has passed away and I need two – one for the certificate of...  
A: Ok, what's the name and when did you get married?  
E: **Well**, it's 4 February 1982

Here, speaker A asks a question (introduced by *allora* itself) and speaker E introduces her answer with *allora*.



Secondly, *allora* often marks the beginning of an enumeration. In the following passage, the speaker announces that there are two more things she has to say, and then uses *allora* to introduce the first item:

(3.27) FB5/6

|         |        |                |              |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
|---------|--------|----------------|--------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----|--|
| A:      | ah     | va             | bene         | allora   | questo  | d'     | accordo        |               |               |     |  |
|         | ah     | go.3SG         | well         | so       | this    | of     | agreement      |               |               |     |  |
| B:      | questo | martedì        | dodici       |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
|         | this   | Tuesday        | twelve       |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
| A:      | ci     | vediamo        |              |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
|         | REFL   | see.1PL.RECP   |              |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
| B:      | mentre | invece         | poi          | ci       | sono    | altre  | due            | cose          | <b>allora</b> | una |  |
|         | while  | instead        | also         | there    | are.3PL | other  | two            | things        | <b>now</b>    | one |  |
| è       | tu     | quando         | hai          | fissato  | quando  | quando | ci             | rivediamo     |               |     |  |
| is      | you    | when           | AUX.2SGfixed |          | when    | when   | RECP           | see again.1PL |               |     |  |
| per     | la     | cosa           | di_          | a        | ecco    | allora | sta'           |               | a             |     |  |
| for     | DET    | thing          | of           | at       | here    | so     | stay.IMP.2SG   |               | to            |     |  |
| sentire | io     | qui            | c'           | ho       |         | la     | Patrizia Fares | che           | è eh          |     |  |
| to hear | I      | here           | there        | have.1SG |         | DET    | Patrizia Fares | who           | is            |     |  |
| colei   | che    | [INTERRUZIONE] |              |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |
| she     | who    | [interruption] |              |          |         |        |                |               |               |     |  |

'A: Oh, that's fine. So, this... ok  
 B: This is Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup>  
 A: I'll see you  
 B: Whereas... But there are two more things. **Now**, first one is, when did you arrange, when do we meet again for that thing... Ok, now listen, I'm here with Patrizia Fares, that's the one who...  
 [interruption]'

Thirdly, *allora* is regularly used to mark the beginning of a narrative sequence. In this excerpt, the speaker is asked to tell the interlocutors about an episode, and introduces the narration with *allora*:

(3.28) FA2/12,13

|    |              |                        |         |            |     |
|----|--------------|------------------------|---------|------------|-----|
| A: | allora       | vi                     | posso   | raccontare | di_ |
|    | then         | you.DAT.2PL            | can.1SG | recount    | of  |
| C: | dai          | raccontaci             |         |            |     |
|    | give.IMP.2SG | recount.IMP.2SG-us.DAT |         |            |     |

|    |               |         |         |      |     |            |        |
|----|---------------|---------|---------|------|-----|------------|--------|
| A: | <b>allora</b> | son     | partita | così | la  | mattina è  | sempre |
|    | <b>so</b>     | AUX.1SG | left    | so   | DET | morning is | always |

|         |              |        |
|---------|--------------|--------|
| tragico | arrivare a   | scuola |
| tragic  | to arrive to | school |

'A: So, can I tell you about...

C: Come on, tell us

A: **So**, I left, you know, it's always tragic to get to school in the morning'

Lastly, *allora* often occurs at the beginning of a speech or long explanation. This is typical of students in school during oral examinations, as in the following sequence:

(3.29) FC6/3

|    |               |     |       |              |         |       |      |          |     |
|----|---------------|-----|-------|--------------|---------|-------|------|----------|-----|
| E: | <b>allora</b> | il  | libro | che          | ho      | letto | s'   | intitola | L'  |
|    | <b>so</b>     | DET | book  | that.REL.OBJ | AUX.1SG | read  | REFL | titles   | DET |

|          |             |               |     |              |    |    |
|----------|-------------|---------------|-----|--------------|----|----|
| Infinito | Itinerari_  | Filosofici    | E   | Matematici   | Di | Un |
| infinite | itineraries | philosophical | and | mathematical | of | a  |

|          |    |       |         |    |       |          |              |
|----------|----|-------|---------|----|-------|----------|--------------|
| Concetto | Di | Base  | scritto | da | Lucio | Lombardo | Radice [...] |
| concept  | of | basis | written | by | Lucio | Lombardo | Radice       |

'E: **So**, the book I've read is titled "L'infinito. Itinerari Filosofici e Matematici di un Concetto di Base", written by Lucio Lombardo Radice [...]'

We argue that a procedural analysis of discourse-initial *allora* can correctly explain its position and render the label of 'filler' unnecessary. Discourse-initial *allora* is used to introduce a turn or section – an answer, a list, a story, an explanation – in order to signal that is warranted by the previous turn or by the contingent situation – a question, a request, an assigned 'task'. So, in (3.26), *allora* signals that the information given with the answer is warranted by the previous turn, that is, the question that requested such information. In (3.27), *allora* introduces content in the form of an enumeration; such enumeration is announced by the previous utterance. In (3.28), *allora* announces the beginning of a narrative sequence, which comes in response of a 'task' given by the interlocutors immediately before in the dialogue. Finally, *allora* in (3.29) introduces an explanation on the part of the speaker which was requested by the teacher; once again, the turn in question is warranted by a pre-existing 'task'. In relevance-theoretic terms, it can be said that *allora* encourages the hearer to look for salient assumptions which were



previously communicated and to process the incoming utterance with those assumptions in the interpretive context.

We thus argue that the use of discourse-initial *allora* is a choice made by the speaker in order to optimize the hearer's interpretive process: the speaker wants to ensure that the hearer arrives at the intended interpretation with minimal cognitive expenditure. The hearer will in this way be able to assimilate the information in the best way given the overall discourse structure. This happens by virtue of the fact that *allora* points the hearer to previously communicated assumptions for the interpretation of the incoming utterance and also subsequent utterances. The turn-initial position follows naturally from the necessity to make processing easier: the hearer needs to know straight away what to do in order to process the incoming content correctly. We argue, then, that the redundant or discourse-marking or filler quality of these uses derives from its isolated prosody and apparent unrelatedness to its surroundings.

In this section we aimed to describe the pragmatic process involved in discourse-initial uses of *allora*, which have been described in precedence by Bazzanella *et al.* (2007: 13); the author sums up schematically the uses presented in this section as follows: "reacting to what happened immediately before A, I perform speech act B" (Note however that, as noted earlier on, and as we will show with the incoming examples, *allora* does not always seem to connect the incoming unit with the immediately preceding one). We have also presented further evidence for the fact that discourse-marking uses of this expression do not necessarily link two adjacent sentences, but may link much longer portions of discourse. In the case of an answer these portions are of course very short, but in the case of a list, explanation or narration the sequences can be quite long. In the next section we will explore uses that involve the speaker's interaction with other participants in the conversation. The idea of 'task' developed in this section will be crucial for the explanation of some of these uses.

### **3.2.4 Allora: interpersonal uses**

The third group of uses of *allora* includes those occurrences that are particularly related to the interpersonal and phatic dimensions of communication. Firstly, in TV and radio

programmes with telephone calls from the audience at home, *allora* is often used at the beginning and/or at the end of a call. Consider:

(3.30) FB14/6

A:      ciao      non      è      quella      riprova      ciao      ciao  
         bye      NEG      is      that      try again.IMP.2SGbye      bye

D:      ciao  
         bye

A:      **allora**      forza      ragazzi      settantacinque      ventuno      cinquantuno  
         **so**      strenght boys      75      21      51

settantacinque      cinquantacinque      ve<ntinove> [...]  
75      55      29

'A: Bye, it's not the correct answer. Try again. Bye bye.

A: Bye.

A: **So** people, come on! 75 21 51 75 55 29'

Here, *allora* signals the switch to a different phase in the communicative situation: it marks the return to in-studio conversation, which is what was presumably happening before the phone call.<sup>5</sup> The status of the participants changes with this switch (Hansen 1998: 341-344), as well as time coordinates, space coordinates, and the medium (telephone, radio/TV programme, etc.). The audience at home, who during the phone call are the listeners of a conversation they do not take part in, get to be addressees of the DJ's utterances again.

We argue that *allora* here helps the hearer to interpret the utterance in the correct context, that is, previous conversation in studio as opposed to on the phone. *Allora* is used to suggest the hearer to access all the assumptions that made up the context for in-studio communication rather than telephone conversation; this involves retrieving the situational coordinates - participating speakers, time and space coordinates – that were valid for that specific communicative exchange. Differently from the uses examined in the previous two sections, *allora* does not clearly refer to a prior linguistic element, or to a task established in the previous turns. Rather, this use relies on the hearer's capacity to structure the conversation in his mind and keeping track of previous conversations and his capacity to retrieve assumptions from previous conversations. This

<sup>5</sup> This is not unlike the switch to a new *frame* as conceived by Goffman (1974).



can also be seen as the capacity to conceive of communication as a complex event which is made up by different 'threads' that start and finish at different times, and may overlap.

The following use of *allora* also relies often on assumptions communicated much prior to the current dialogue. *Allora* is here used in the initial phase of a conversation, either face-to-face or on the phone. The following is an excerpt from a telephone conversation:

(3.31) RB25/1

B: pronto?  
hello

A:      pronto    buonasera      chi      è?      Italo?  
hello      good evening      who      is      Italo

B: sì\_  
yes

|    |       |       |     |         |
|----|-------|-------|-----|---------|
| A: | ciao  | Italo | so' | XYZ     |
|    | hello | Italo | am  | XYZ.SBJ |

B:      ahah    XYZ    come   se    va?  
         ahah    XYZ    how    REFL   go.3SG

|    |      |         |     |        |      |         |           |     |
|----|------|---------|-----|--------|------|---------|-----------|-----|
| A: | bene | bene eh | mio | figlio | s'   | era     | sbagliato | non |
|    | well | well    | my  | son    | REFL | AUX.3SG | mistaken  | NEG |

|      |         |         |      |    |         |          |
|------|---------|---------|------|----|---------|----------|
| s'   | era     | accorto | che  | io | ero     | arrivato |
| REFL | AUX.3SG | noticed | that | I  | AUX.1SG | arrived  |

B:        ahah     capita  
             ahah     happens

A: capita capita s<enti>  
happens happens hear.IMP.2SG

B: allora che mi racconti?  
so what me.DAT tell.2SG

|    |        |      |   |         |           |     |      |
|----|--------|------|---|---------|-----------|-----|------|
| A: | allora | che  | i | sto     | perorando | la  | tua  |
|    | so     | that | I | AUX.1SG | pleading  | DET | your |

causa  
cause

'B: Hello?

A: Hello, good evening, who is it? Italo?

B: Speaking

C: Hello Italo, it's XYZ

B: Ahah, XYZ, how are things?

A: Fine, fine. My son was wrong, he didn't realize I was home already

B: Ahah happens  
 A: Yeah, it happens. Listen  
 B: **So**, any news?  
 A: So I'm pleading your cause'

In this example, *allora* marks the switch from an initial ‘greeting session’ to the ‘main body’ of the conversation. While the purpose of the initial phase is that of re-establishing contact with the other person in a conventional way, the central phase of the conversation focuses on the reason why the person called and it may therefore contain references to previous conversations/shared knowledge.

We argue that *allora* may be used here to tell the hearer that the incoming content is, unlike the immediately previous content, linked to something the interlocutors had discussed earlier in other conversations – in (3.31), it might be the thing speaker A is trying to promote for speaker B. As in the case of TV and radio shows, the immediately previous utterances – in the case of (3.31), the initial greetings – are not the context that *allora* is pointing to. Rather, *allora* marks a break in the conversation to remind the hearer that the incoming content is the ‘main body’ of the conversation, whose topic is main reason why the person called. The hearer is then asked to access those assumptions that may be useful in this sense – for instance, the hearer might already know the reason for the call, since it is one of a series of calls on the same topic. We argue, then, that the backward-pointing procedure is maintained: *allora* encodes once again an instruction for the construction of context.

In a way parallel to the function just illustrated, *allora* is frequently used in the final phase of a conversation, either in person or on the phone, where it may be repeated several times. See example (3.32):

(3.32) FB5/11,12

|    |                    |     |             |           |         |
|----|--------------------|-----|-------------|-----------|---------|
| B: | no                 | non | sarebbe     | male ahah |         |
|    | no                 | NEG | be.COND.3SG | bad       |         |
| A: | <???               |     |             |           |         |
|    | <???               |     |             |           |         |
| B: | sarebbe            | di  | grande      | utilità   | insomma |
|    | be.COND.3SG        | of  | great       | utility   | in sum  |
| A: | ahah ahah ahahahah |     |             |           |         |
|    | ahah               |     |             |           |         |



B: e niente **allora** salutami tutta la famiglia  
 and nothing **then** greet.IMP.2SG-me.BEN all DET family

A: ti ringrazia la Patrizia che sta qui l'  
 you.OBJ thanks DET Patrizia.SBJ who stays here DET

altr<a> la tua omonima [Ride]  
 other DET your homonymous

B: forse un giorno ci incontreremo anche\_  
 maybe a day RECP meet.FUT.1PL also

A: mh mh  
 mh mh

B: e va be'  
 and goes well

A: **allora** siamo d' accordo così eh se non ci  
**then** are.1PL of agreement so if NEG RECP

si sente più ci si vede venerdì pomeriggio  
 REFL hear.3SG anymore RECP REFL see.3SG Friday afternoon

alle cinque  
 at.DET five

'B: No, it wouldn't be bad  
 A: <???'>  
 B: Well, would be of great use  
 A: Ahah  
 B: Nothing, say hi to the whole family **then**  
 A: Patrizia says thanks – she's here, the other... your namesake [laughs]  
 B: Maybe one day we will actually meet  
 A: Mh mh  
 B: Anyhow  
 A: We've agreed **then**. If I don't hear from you beforehand, I'll see you at 5 on Friday afternoon'

This time, *allora* marks the switch from the 'main body' of the conversation to its final stage. The latter typically involves the speakers summing up what has been said and reminding each other of some arrangements, and furthermore includes conventional greetings.

The first occurrence in (3.32) marks the switch to a new section, with no evident link with a past element. One hypothesis is that *allora* is used by the speaker to suggest that, having concluded the main body of the conversation, she is 'allowed' to move on to the final greetings. The completion of the main body is what warrants the speaker to enter a new phase in the conversation (to use a notation seen in earlier sections, "Because I'm finished with X, I can now proceed to Y"). This metalinguistic explanation

might also apply to cases like (3.31): the pre-established task derives from the knowledge of the structure of a phone conversation. Exactly because these assumptions are not necessarily communicated by the immediately preceding utterance or utterances, it is difficult for the investigator to exactly ascertain which ones are activated. The second occurrence in (3.32) is more straightforward: it suggests that the incoming content refers to what was agreed upon earlier in the conversation. However, one can imagine a case in which arrangements were made even before, for instance in earlier conversations. Once again, *allora* has the function of introducing content that is linked to content communicated beforehand, and the understanding of this use relies on the hearer's capacity to access assumptions communicated in the past.

We now move on to the case of *allora* being used by the speaker while she is busy doing a practical activity. In this case *allora* indeed looks like an 'empty word' or 'filler', because it is pronounced in isolation and it does not apparently link any information in surface. Nevertheless, we will maintain that its use is determined by the speaker's need to connect present activity to a past element. Consider the following passage:

(3.33) FA10/5,6,7,8

|    |                            |                            |                     |                  |                             |                       |                 |                      |                  |              |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| A: | giusto<br>right            | sette<br>seven             | cinque <??><br>five |                  | quattro<br>four             | al <?><br>at.DET      | del<br>of.DET   | quattro<br>four      | sette<br>seven   | nove<br>nine |
|    | bene #<br>good             | va<br>goes                 | bene<br>well        | questa<br>this   | non<br>NEG                  | mi<br>me.DAT          | serve<br>serves | più<br>anymore       |                  |              |
| B: | <b>allora</b><br><b>so</b> | questa<br>this             | non<br>NEG          | ti<br>you.DAT    | serve<br>serves             | più<br>anymore        | e<br>and        | la<br>it.OBJ         | posso<br>can.1SG |              |
| A: | no<br>no                   | mi<br>me.DAT               | serve<br>serves     | questo<br>this   | invece<br>instead           |                       |                 |                      |                  |              |
| B: | ecco #<br>here             | <b>allora</b><br><b>so</b> |                     |                  |                             |                       |                 |                      |                  |              |
| A: | <b>allora</b><br><b>so</b> | licenza<br>licence         |                     |                  |                             |                       |                 |                      |                  |              |
| B: | aspetta<br>wait.IMP.2SG    |                            | che<br>that         | sto_<br>stay.1SG | tutto<br>all                | scompigliato<br>upset |                 |                      |                  |              |
| A: | ahah<br>ahah               | sì<br>yes                  | qui<br>here         | si<br>REFL       | scompigli<a> <??><br>upsets |                       |                 | riuscita?<br>managed |                  |              |
| B: | forse<br>maybe             | era<br>was.3SG             |                     | così<br>so       |                             |                       |                 |                      |                  |              |



|    |         |                 |               |          |        |         |         |          |      |
|----|---------|-----------------|---------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|----------|------|
| A: | sì      | no              | questa        | è        | un'    | altra   | cosa    |          |      |
|    | yes     | no              | this          | is       | a      | other   | thing   |          |      |
| B: | ah va   | bene            | <b>allora</b> | questo   | lo     | metto   | via     | questo   | si   |
|    | goes    | well            | <b>so</b>     | this     | it.OBJ | put.1SG | away    | this     | REFL |
|    | può     | tranquillamente | non           | so       |        | se      | ti      | devo     |      |
|    | can.3SG | quietly         | NEG           | know.1SG |        | if      | you.DAT | must.1SG |      |
|    | dare    | altri           | dati          |          |        |         |         |          |      |
|    | give    | other           | data          |          |        |         |         |          |      |

'A: Right. 7 5 <??> 4 to <?> of 4 7 9. Ok, ok, I don't need this anymore

B: **So**, you don't need this anymore and I can...

A: No. I need this instead

B: Here you are. **So**

A: **So** - license

B: Wait, I'm getting confused

A: Yeah, it's getting confusing... <??> Did you manage?

B: Maybe it was like this

A: Yes, no, this is something else

B: Ah, ok. **So**, I'll put this away. This one, we can just... I don't know if I have to give you any more data'

Here, *allora* is used several times by both speakers while sorting through some documents, as if *allora* helped them concentrate and focus on each action. This use is frequent when people have a task to perform. The notion of 'task' was already used in section 3.2.3 to explain discourse-initial uses of *allora*. Here, the task involved is not a linguistic one (answer, narration, explanation, enumeration) but rather a practical one. In (3.33) the speaker comments on various sub-parts of her activity of tidying up documents and marks such comments with *allora*, to signal that the practical activity the speaker is involved in is justified by a pre-established task. In this way the hearer will know that the speaker keeps working on the same task, that is to say, tidying up. We keep seeing, then, that the discourse-marking uses of *allora* do not always link adjacent utterances; this specific use seems to relate assumptions, none of which are linguistically communicated.

*Allora* is often used in class interaction on the part of teachers in order to encourage their students to do or say something:

(3.34) MD1/8,9,10

|    |               |        |       |       |      |            |        |          |
|----|---------------|--------|-------|-------|------|------------|--------|----------|
| A: | <b>allora</b> | prima  | di    | fare  | I'   | operazione | però   | dobbiamo |
|    | <b>so</b>     | before | of    | to do | DET  | operation  | but    | must.1PL |
|    | fare          | un'    | altra | cosa  | cosa | si         | scrive | di       |
|    | to do         | a      | other | thing | what | REFL       | writes | of       |
|    |               |        |       |       |      |            |        | solito?  |
|    |               |        |       |       |      |            |        | usual    |

C: io conosco  
I know.1SG

A: io conosco benissimo allora forza  
I know.1SG very well now strenght

C: maestra # questo problema chi lo sta  
teacher this problem.OBJ who it.OBJ AUX.3SG

facendo?  
doing

A: lo stiamo facendo insieme allora io conosco  
it.OBJ AUX.1PL doing together now I know

E: maestra io non conosco proprio nessuno  
teacher I NEG know.1SG really nobody

'A: **So**, before the operation we must do something else though. What do you usually write?

C: 'I know'

A: 'I know' – very good. **Now**, come on.

C: Teacher, who's solving this problem?

A: We are solving it together. **Now**, 'I know'...

E: Well, actually I don't know anyone, teacher'

In all instances, *allora* brings the attention back to the task being discussed after a comment, a digression or a pause. In this sense, this use is similar to the uses in the previous section. Intuitively, however, these occurrences also elicit an answer on the part of the students, and this incidentally is the reason why this use features in this section. Interestingly, a similar use is observed for French *alors* in the context of a class, where it is said to mark a switch from the content of the lecture to interaction among people in the class (Bouacha 1981, in Hansen 1998a: 347). The same can be assumed for this use of *allora*.

We argue that, when *allora* is used to accompany practical activities or class interaction, it signals that whatever the speaker is going to say - or do, as is especially the case in (3.33) - is due to the presence of a task to perform, similarly to what seen in section 3.2.3. However, the task at play is not a metadiscursive one in this case – for example, a question, an explanation, an argumentation, but rather a practical task whose sub-tasks are marked vocally with *allora*. The anaphoric element is present in that the task in question is pre-existent and possibly discussed in previous discourse, or just contextually salient. The procedure encoded by *allora* in this case instructs the hearer to access assumptions retrievable from previous discourse that allow for a relevant



interpretation of the incoming utterance. Such assumptions may or may not be linguistically communicated; sometimes the task is not explicitly communicated but made implicit by the type of communication, for example, class interaction.

Finally, we turn to the interjective use. *Allora* may be used as an interjection to express a range of different attitudes depending on the context. In the following sequence, the person is describing some objects but then wants to express surprise and disappointment, as well as exhort the audience at home, and does so with *allora*:

(3.35) ND9/4

|                 |                |         |        |             |         |            |              |           |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|--------|-------------|---------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| A: [...]        | parliamo di    | una     | cosa   | di          | rara    | bellezza # | u<na>        |           |
|                 | talk.1PL of    | a       | thing  | of          | rare    | beauty     | a            |           |
| una             | balza          | da      | trenta | centimetri  | per     | tutto      | il           | lenzuolo  |
| a               | flounce        | of      | thirty | centimetres | for     | all        | DET          | sheet     |
| pensate #       | [interruzione] |         | allora | che         | cos'    | è          | questo       | silenzio? |
| think.IMP.2PL   | [interruption] |         | hey    | what        | thing   | is         | this         | silence   |
| in              | questo         | momento | i      | telefoni    | sono    | liberi     | dovevano     |           |
| in              | this           | moment  | DET    | telephones  | are.3PL | free       | must.PST.3PL |           |
| scoppiare [...] |                |         |        |             |         |            |              |           |
| to burst        |                |         |        |             |         |            |              |           |

'A: [...] We're talking about something of rare beauty. The whole bed sheet has a 30 cm flounce, amazing isn't it [interruption] **Hey**, what's this silence for? Phone lines are open, they should have been jammed by now [...]'

In this example, *allora* appears to interrupt the monologue of the speaker and introduce a complaint. According to Poggi's (1995) classification, *allora* can be defined as a "semi-productive 'crystallized' interjection". It is plurivocal, as opposed to univocal, because the interjective interpretation exists alongside another use in discourse (in this case, the time adverbial).<sup>6</sup> It is crystallized, as opposed to 'semi-productive', because its meaning as an interjection is not immediately inferrable from the meaning of its non-interjective counterpart. However, notice that as already mentioned in the previous section the uses that Poggi refers to are probably the discourse-initial uses, rather than these, since the occurrences in (3.35) and (3.36) below do not express in our view 'doubt' and 'hesitation', but rather annoyance and exhortation. Here is a further instance:

<sup>6</sup> The notion of plurivocal interjection is parallel to Ameka's (1992) notion of *secondary* interjection.

(3.36) FC3/12

|                      |              |             |           |           |             |                 |             |           |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| A:                   | I'           | argomenti_  | e         | poi_      | formare i   | gruppi          | di          | lavoro    |
|                      | DET          | topics      | and       | then      | to form     | DET             | groups      | of work   |
| su                   | questi       | argomenti # | allora_   | nessuno   | chiaramente | ha              | idee        | per       |
| on                   | these        | topics      | so        | no one    | clearly     | has             | ideas       | for       |
| I'                   | amor         | di          | dio #     | ahah      | cioe'       | nessuno ha      | un          | argomento |
| DET                  | love         | of          | god       | ahah      | that is     | no one has      | a           | topic     |
| su                   | cui          | parlare     | di        | ordine    | sociale? #  | va              | be'         | io        |
| on                   | which        | to talk     | of        | order     | social      | go.3SG          | well        | I         |
| inizierei_           | un           | argomento   |           | potrebbe  | esse<re>    | ragazzi         | allora?     | I'        |
| start.1SG.COND       | a            | topic       |           | could.3SG | to be       | boys            | hey         | DET       |
| argomento            | potrebbe     | essere      | non       | so_ #     | la          | violenza negli  | stadi #     |           |
| topic                | could.3SG    | to be       | NEG       | know      | DET         | violence in_DET | stadiums    |           |
| [VOCI_SOVRAPPOSTE]   | che          | ne          | pensate?  | ragazzi   | aho'        | ma              | mi          |           |
| [overlapping voices] | what         | it.of       | think.2PL | boys      | hey         | but             | me.DAT      |           |
| sembra               | di           | parla'      | con       | delle     |             |                 |             |           |
| seem.3SG             | of           | to talk     | with      | some      |             |                 |             |           |
| mummie               | ma           | puttana     | Eva       | ma        | allora      | se              | dovete      | veni'     |
| mummies              | but          | whore       | eve       | but       | then        | if              | must.2PL    | to come   |
| allora               | rimanete     | a           | casa      | cioe'     | io          | non             | vi          |           |
| then                 | stay.2PL.IMP | at          | home      | that is   | I           | NEG             | you.2PL.OBJ |           |
| capisco              | proprio_ #   |             |           |           |             |                 |             |           |
| understand.1SG       | really       |             |           |           |             |                 |             |           |

'A: ...the topics, and then organize working groups on these topics. So, no one has ideas obviously, why do I even ask. This means that no one has a topic of a social nature we can talk about? Ok, I would start from... A topic could be... **Hey** guys? The topic could be, I don't know, football and violence [overlapping voices]. What do you think? Hey guys, looks like I'm talking to mummies. For fuck's sake, but then, if you have to come and behave this way, then just stay home. I mean, I just don't understand you guys.'

Differently from (3.35) above, *allora* is here in the interrogative form. The speaker is trying to get other people's attention and to communicate her impatience.

At first glance, this use does not appear to be in line with all the uses seen before, since it is not clear to what task or previously established element *allora* could refer to. For example, in (3.35), it is not clear what previous assumption could be needed as contextual material for the interpretation of the incoming utterance. It looks like the primary reason for the speaker to use *allora* in this case is because it will be recognized by the hearer as an expression of the speaker's attitude.



A relevance-theoretic account that can deal successfully with all types of interjections has yet to be found. The main problem has been shown to be that this class is very heterogeneous in terms of functions and degrees of conventionalization to allow for a uniform explanation to their contribution to relevance. An initial contribution was given by Wharton (2003), who proposed that interjections are procedural expressions which invite the hearer to derive higher-level explicatures. In case there is no propositional meaning for that, because the interjection occurs in isolation, Wharton suggests that such interjection communicates emotions, which are merely expressed since they are not representational. The latter point is however left partly unexplained (but see Wharton 2009 for some clarifications); an additional limit of that study is that it only focuses on univocal interjections (“primary interjections” in Ameka 1992) and on emotive/expressive interjections.

An alternative account is offered by Padilla Cruz (2009a; 2009b). The author aims to deal with both primary and secondary interjections as well, and extends his focus on conative/volitive interjections. While he agrees with Wharton that interjections may communicate attitudes through higher-level explicatures, he maintains that they may also communicate information, which would be derived in the form of propositional content. This content is obviously not explicitly communicated, but rather pointed at by the interjection. What happens is that the speaker uses an interjection to make a certain intention manifest. The hearer first attributes an intention to the speaker – intention to convey an attitude and/or information. The hearer may then retrieve higher-level explicatures, if there is propositional content next to the interjection; or else, he may be prompted by the procedure encoded by the interjection to look for contextual elements which can help him recover information in the form of a proposition. Padilla Cruz further argues that the process of recovering this proposition is constrained by encyclopaedic assumptions that the hearer has regarding interjections, as they have reached different stages of conventionalization (as defined by Nicolle and Clark 1998; see also Žegarac 1998): since they are regularly used in certain contexts, they by now make certain encyclopaedic assumptions particularly available. Finally, from the retrieved proposition the hearer may or may not derive implicatures. Overall, this account shows how interjections are difficult to pin down as a class, as different hearers might derive different higher-level explicatures and different propositions from the same occurrence.



This account, as Padilla Cruz argues, blends in nicely with relevance theory's explanation of the interpretation of exclamative and imperative sentences. Emotive/expressive interjections can be analysed in the light of the way exclamative sentences are analysed in relevance theory: these metarepresent a proposition that the speaker invites the hearer to entertain. Conative/volitive interjections on the other hand are paired with the analysis of imperative sentences, which too invite the hearer to recover a proposition.

In another paper, Padilla Cruz (2009b) further expands this account by suggesting that interjections may encode conceptual meaning as well as procedural meaning. While he recognizes the validity of Wharton's (2003) arguments against this eventuality, he suggests that the encoding of concepts might be a possibility on the basis of facts which, in the words of the author "have to do with the usage of interjections, their origin and evolution, production, acquisition in both first and second languages and translation into different languages" (Padilla Cruz 2009b: 252). We will not go through these arguments here. The type of concepts encoded by interjections would be related to emotions; because these are highly personal, different speakers might associate different emotions in the form of concepts to different interjections. A further complicating factor is that the pairing between concept and interjection may have reached different degrees of conventionalization. The resulting picture is therefore the same as resulting from the account by Padilla Cruz as previously described: not only is it not sure whether interjections might encode conceptual meaning, but it might also be that some do not encode conceptual meaning at all; for example, if a word were used as an interjection extremely rarely, a hearer would not have it associated with any concept regarding emotions. Padilla Cruz unfortunately does not dwell much on the function of procedural meaning in relation to conceptual meaning within the same interjection; what gleans from his comments is that the procedure would help develop the pro-concept, which is only a sketchy indication.

We will now attempt an analysis of the interjective use of *allora* along the lines proposed by Wharton and, subsequently, Padilla Cruz. We shall start from 3.23 above, where *allora* is followed by a question. We argue that in this case *allora* is used to communicate the speaker's attitude about what expressed in the following utterance, that is, the uncomfortable silence. A schematic representation can be the following:



- a. *Allora! Che cos'è questo silenzio?* 'So! What's this silence about?'
- b. The speaker is advertising excellent products. (contextual assumption – task at hand)  
 No phone calls have been made. (contextual assumption)  
 Usually when such excellent offers are made, many people call in. (encyclopaedic assumption)
- c. The speaker is upset that there are no phone calls at the moment (higher-level explicature)

We argue that the procedure which we showed is encoded by all uses of *ancora* restricts the search space for the contextual assumptions in b. From these, the hearer may derive the higher-level explicature in d. by embedding the content of the subsequent utterance under the attitudinal predicate associated with the interjection *allora*.

Another possibility of analysis suggested by Padilla Cruz (2009b: 250) which might apply to this case is that the utterance after *allora* would already communicate by itself a certain attitude, and the interjection merely reinforces it. *Che cos'è questo silenzio?* is a question, which in RT would be analysed as a representation of a desirable thought; in this sense, it already points to the fact that the speaker would like to know why that is the case, and that she would desire things to be different. This mood indicator, coupled with intonation, may already communicate higher-level explicatures on its own right; the interjective use would only reinforce it.

The picture we find in 3.36 is a different one, as *allora* is here isolated and comes as a question. The speaker might either be complaining that the hearers are making noise, or else exhorting the hearers to contribute to the discussion. A possible analysis is the following:

- a. *Allora?*
- b. No one has been contributing to the discussion. (contextual assumption)  
 Some people are talking among themselves and making noise. (contextual assumption)
- c. Don't talk among yourselves! (proposition)

Be quiet! (proposition)

Help me develop this topic! (proposition)

Contribute to the discussion! (proposition)

We argue that *allora* invites the hearer to retrieve contextual assumptions such as the ones in b., regarding the task that the people involved are undertaking. Note that in this case no higher-level explicatures can be retrieved by embedding some propositional content under a predicate, we therefore suggest that the hearer may retrieve one of the propositions under d., as predicted in the account by Padilla Cruz. As already said before, another possibility in this case is that being a question, the mood indicator and/or intonation may also communicate the speaker's attitude, although once again the formation of a higher-level explicature is precluded. The impact of intonation on the use of interjections cannot be dealt here because we cannot check the audio files.

Notice that in both examples the speaker is complaining about the hearer's behaviour; there is in the speaker's opinion a certain task that the hearer is not performing (making a phone call, participating). In this sense we can perceive, at an intuitive level, a link with the rest of the uses of *allora*. We will encounter other interjective uses for *già* in chapter 4. For the moment we can conclude, as Padilla Cruz himself suggests (2009b: 259; 264), that until a clearer and comprehensive relevance-theoretic account is developed, and perhaps also then, it is best to analyse interjections on a case-to-case basis.

### 3.2.5 Discussion: *allora* as a backward-pointing procedural expression

We have argued for a unitary account of *allora* which encompasses all of its uses, both temporal and non-temporal. We described *allora* as a backward-pointing procedural element that bridges between past and present: *allora* signals that the present utterance can only be interpreted correctly in the light of past discourse. This previous element can be of different types: for instance, previous conversations, a pre-established, unspoken communicative or practical task, or the content of the previous utterance. That is to say, *allora* relates the current utterance to assumptions that can be linguistically as well as non-linguistically communicated. Finally, we accounted for the interjective use of *allora*,



which in addition to restricting the search space for contextual assumptions constrains the formation of higher-level explicatures.

We showed that *allora* is frequently used to signpost discourse structure. It is used after digressions to get back to the main point of the talk, or towards the end of a monologue to introduce conclusions. We argued that *allora* signals that the hearer should interpret the incoming content in the light of assumptions communicated by previous utterances. We also observed *allora* at a more local level signalling cause-consequence relations between assumptions communicated by adjacent utterances, or deduction from previous turns in a dialogue. Finally, we observed how *allora* participates in constructions with conditional connective *se* 'if' and temporal connective *quando* 'when' to introduce the consequence to the condition.

We argued that the uses of *allora* in sequence-initial position are not 'fillers' that are uttered to take time, as we predict that they would be characterized in the Italian literature on discourse markers, but rather serve to signal that the sequence in question follows from a request or the existence of a task - recounting a story, describing a book, or enumerating items. Similarly, answers must be interpreted against the context that includes the assumptions communicated by the question, which itself can be considered a task of sorts ('providing requested information'). We thus argue that a precise characterization of the pragmatic processes involved in the interpretation of *allora* should prevent us to classify such occurrences as mere 'placeholders'.

Among the interactive uses of *allora* we have observed that of signalling the switch to a different communicative situation with changed speakers, place and medium, as happens in TV and radio shows; the hearer is therefore invited to update the assumptions for the context of interpretation. Often *allora* is used when there is a salient task taking place in the communicative situation, that is not hinted at linguistically but that however is referred to with *allora*. The hearer is in this way aware that what the speaker is saying or even doing must be interpreted in the background of that task. Finally, *allora* may be used as an interjection when the speaker wants to draw the hearer's attention on her attitude towards a proposition or a situation. In these cases, the procedure encoded by *allora* constrains not only the recovery of contextual assumptions, but also the construction of higher-level explicatures.

In our account, the polyfunctionality of *allora* is accounted for with the contextual variability of the procedure encoded by *allora*. Various elements in the context, we argued, increase the salience of a certain interpretation. Bearing in mind that a certain reading is determined each time by a variable number of cues of different types, we will suggest an informal summary of how the procedure is actualized:

(Procedure) “Find *x* that is made salient by previously communicated assumptions and apply it to the *allora* utterance”

- IF the context is temporal, *allora* is clause-internal and follows the main verb, THEN *x* is a temporal coordinate, and is to be applied to the *allora* utterance.
- IF the context is non-temporal, the verb of the *allora* utterance is in the present tense or present perfect, *allora* is correlated to *se* ‘if’, and is clause-external, THEN *x* is a contextual assumption, and is to be considered as context for the interpretation of the *allora* utterance
  - IF *allora* is syntactically and prosodically isolated, THEN it should be interpreted as an interjection
  - IF the text is a monologue or a lecture, THEN *allora* should receive an argumentative reading
  - IF *allora* is in clause-initial position, unstressed, prosodically integrated, and/or follows the main verb, THEN it should receive a causal or deductive reading
  - IF *allora* is prosodically independent, THEN it should be interpreted as introducing a narrative or an explanatory sequence

Our inferential analysis of *allora* allowed us to account for the fact that discourse markers do not necessarily link two adjacent sentences. Firstly, in our relevance-theoretic approach, expressions link the current utterance to assumptions rather than sentences. Secondly, the utterances which communicate these assumptions need not be adjacent, as we saw from the interpersonal *allora* pointing to assumptions communicated by previous conversations in a different setting (see section 3.2.4). Thirdly, we saw that the instruction encoded by a procedural element may instruct the hearer to perform computations involving more than two assumptions; in fact, the number is often indefinite.



We conclude that, despite the great variety of uses illustrated with examples in this section, *allora* displays a uniform semantic and pragmatic behaviour. While the analysis of the surface functions of *allora* displays a marked versatility, its cognitive analysis reveals a surprising convergence in terms of inferential paths that are taken. In the next section we will argue that *ora* is associated to the same type of procedure of *allora*, in that *ora* too constrains the context for interpretation of the utterance. However, as anticipated in the introduction to this chapter, *ora* points to the contingent dimension of communication rather than to previous discourse.

### 3.3 *Ora*

In this section we will argue for an account of *ora* as a procedural element which restricts the context of interpretation to assumptions communicated by the ‘here and now’ of the communicative act, regarding for example participants in the exchange, or the topic of the current discussion. When it is not used as a temporal adverb, *ora* is used as an interrupting and attention-focusing device in dialogues, and marks a switch in terms of the required context for interpretation. *Ora* signals to the hearer that the relevance of the utterance is best found if collocated in the situational context.

Earlier studies have hinted at the procedural nature of foreign counterparts of *ora*. Smith (1989) observed that English *now* may point not only to utterance time, but rather to other temporal locations or even non-temporal entities. He then tried to devise a set of rules that the hearer should master in order to predict the final interpretation for *now*. This approach is criticized by Corazza (2004: 306), who claims that “a picture suggesting that a competent speaker must master a single rule or character should be preferred insofar as it would be *cognitively* more economical”; this is exactly what we set to do in the present section for Italian *ora*, and in section 3.4 for *adesso*. A unified procedural account has also been invoked by Saussure (2008) for French *maintenant*. Saussure identifies three types of uses for this lexical item: ‘temporal deictic’, ‘temporal deictic plus change with respect to a previous state of affairs’, and ‘change at the level of discourse’; he then encourages the construction of an approach in which a single procedure can account for all three.

The word *ora* is derived from the latin *hōra*, ablative form of *hōra(m)* ('hour') (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 838; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1214; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 1394; Garzanti 2008: 1687). *Ora* is considered as both adverb and connective in the relevant literature. Temporal adverb *ora* typically occurs in initial or final position in the utterance:

(3.37) *Ora* non posso uscire.  
*now* NEG can.1SG to go out  
 'Now I can't go out.'

(3.38) *Ora* le cose vanno meglio.  
*now* DET things go.3PL better  
 'Now things are going better.'

(3.39) Se ne è andato *ora*.  
 REFL of AUX.3SG gone *just now*  
 'He left *just now*.'

(3.40) Arriverà *ora*.  
 arrive.FUT.3SG *shortly*  
 'He'll be here *shortly*.'

(Garzanti 2008: 1687)

As a connective, *ora* typically occurs in utterance-initial position:

(3.41) *Ora*, se le cose stanno così è meglio  
*Now* if DET things stay.3PL like this is better  
  
 sopassedere.  
 to postpone

(Garzanti 2008: 1687)



‘Now, if things look the way they do, it’s better to postpone.’

We were unable to find studies focusing on prosodic disambiguation as related to the different interpretations of *ora*. English adverb *now*, on the other hand, has been the object of Hirschberg and Litman’s study (1993), in which prosodic patterns associated with temporal adverb *now* and discourse marker *now* have been analysed. This study shows a marked correlation between intonational patterns and function in discourse; in particular, the discourse-marking use is regularly deaccented. Furthermore, the paper suggests a correlation between this deaccentuation and the contribution *now* makes to the structuring of discourse, rather than to “semantic content” (1993: 527). This seems to be confirmed by our account of *ora* and *adesso*, since, as will be shown, the non-temporal uses of these two expressions do not contribute to the semantic content of the utterance, that is to say its explicatures. We leave the verification of this parallel to further studies. Here, we will make some speculative comments on those syntactic and prosodic properties which might affect the interpretation of *ora*, by means of examples extracted from (3.38) above. All syntactic configurations below allow for a temporal reading, with contrastive stress favouring (3.42) and (3.45):

- (3.42) **Ora**    le       cose    vanno meglio.  
         now    DET    things go.3PL better

‘Now things are going better.’

- (3.43) Le       **cose**    ora       vanno meglio.  
         DET    things now    go.3PL better

‘Things now are going better.’

- (3.44) Le       **cose**    vanno ora       meglio.  
         DET    things go.3PL now    better

‘Things are now going better.’

(3.45) Le cose vanno meglio **ora**.  
 DET things go.3PL better now

‘Things are going better now.’

The non-temporal use is typically utterance-initial, as in (3.42), but prosodically isolated; as commented for *allora*, this is translated in writing with a comma after *ora* itself:

(3.46) **Ora**, le cose vanno meglio.  
 now DET things go.3PL better

‘Now, things are getting better.’

In certain cases, however, like (3.55) and (3.56) below, discourse-marker *ora* does seem to be prosodically integrated in the utterance. We therefore suggest that the prosodic cue is probably coupled with others in the search for the correct interpretation.

We will argue in the following sections for a unified procedural account for *ora*. The procedure that we identify as being the ‘core’ meaning of *ora* is similar to that of *allora*, in that in some cases it constrains the formation of the basic explicature, while in others it constrains the context for the interpretation of the utterance. However, the hearer will have to look for temporal coordinates and assumptions among those communicated by the situational context rather than among those communicated by previous discourse or previously entertained assumptions. We argue that this, as was mentioned in the introduction for this chapter, is related to the ‘proximal’ character of *ora*.

### 3.3.1 *Ora*: beyond ‘utterance time’

Temporal *ora* points to a stretch of time with unspecified bounds that includes utterance time and/or reference time. Similarly to what said about English *now* by Fillmore, “[w]e can talk about something occurring simultaneously with the speech act, or as having an



extent which includes the moment of the speech act” (1997: 68). The temporal reference of *ora* appears as varied, as we will show momentarily. A first example is shown in (3.47), in which was customary in the past is compared to what is customary ‘nowadays’:

(3.47) NE13/4

|          |             |              |                |                     |              |
|----------|-------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| B: [...] | esisteva un | linguaggio   | forbito nel    | dialetto napoletano | cantato      |
|          | existed a   | language.SBJ | refined in.DET | dialect Naples.ADJ  | sung         |
| una      | volta       | e            | <b>ora</b>     | c'                  | è            |
| one      | time        | and          | <b>now</b>     | there               | is           |
|          |             |              |                |                     | il           |
|          |             |              |                |                     | DET          |
|          |             |              |                |                     | linguaggio   |
|          |             |              |                |                     | language     |
|          |             |              |                |                     | tuo          |
|          |             |              |                |                     | yours        |
|          |             |              |                |                     | che          |
|          |             |              |                |                     | that.SBJ     |
| è        | anche       | il           | linguaggio     | dei                 | film eh      |
| is       | also        | DET          | language       | of.DET              | films        |
|          |             |              |                |                     | di           |
|          |             |              |                |                     | of           |
|          |             |              |                |                     | Troisi [...] |
|          |             |              |                |                     | Troisi       |

‘B: There used to be a refined language in the Naples dialect that was sung in the past, and **now** there's your language, which is also the language of Troisi's films [...]

Here, *ora* does not point to utterance time, but rather to an indefinite stretch of time that includes utterance time. A punctual example for *ora* could not be found in the corpora; here is a constructed example:

(3.48) Partite            al        mio    via.                    Uno,    due    tre... *ora*!  
Start.IMP.2PL   at-DET my    go.NMLZ            one    two    three *now*  
'Start at my signal. One, two, three... *now*!'

Here, *ora* refers to exactly utterance time: it does not refer to an earlier time, because the athletes are not allowed to run before that, and it does not refer to a later time, because obviously the athletes would not wait that long.

The mechanism whereby *ora* and *adesso* denote an indefinite point in time has also been observed for English ‘now’. Levinson (1983, in Nunberg 1993: 16) maintains that *now* denotes “the pragmatically relevant span that includes [the coding time]”. This dependency on context is also pointed out by Perry (1998), who argues that *now* may refer to stretches of time that vary in extent depending on the occurrence, thus displaying a degree of *intentionality*, that is to say, in this context, dependence on the speaker's intention. The property of intentionality contrasts with the *automatic* character of other indexicals such as pronoun *I*, which unequivocally refers to the speaker (1998: 8). For example, in (3.47) above, the stretch of time referred to by *ora* is undefined in that it

depends on when the language referred to developed. It also depends on the contrast between *una volta* ('once') and *ora*. Finally, it depends on the speaker's knowledge of the stretch of time involved in the state of affairs described.

Given the dependence of *ora*'s meaning on intentionality, and therefore its adaptability to encoding different meanings in different contexts, it is not surprising that *ora* frequently locates a point in time that is close to utterance time, either in the past or future, but does not coincide with utterance time (see Serianni 1988: 420; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1214; Vanelli 1995: 284). Let us start with a case of *ora* involving reference to past time:

(3.49) DGmtA02F/1

|                                  |                   |          |          |       |                  |             |                  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| p1G#143:                         | #<F#142> e        | quindi   | la       | mia   | torta            | sarebbe#    | il               |
|                                  | and               | so       | DET      | my    | cake             | be.COND.3SG | DET              |
| tuo? <sp>                        | la                | mia      | torta    | è     | sotto            | la          | tua<aa> macchina |
| yours                            | DET               | my       | cake     | is    | under            | DET         | your car         |
| rossa                            |                   |          |          |       |                  |             |                  |
| red                              |                   |          |          |       |                  |             |                  |
| p2F#144:                         | <ah> <lp> <eh>,   | perché   | io       | c'    | ho               |             | il               |
|                                  | ah eh             | because  | I        | there | have.1SG         |             | DET              |
| televisore <vocal> <sp> #<G#145> | sotto             | la#      | macchina |       | rossa            |             |                  |
| tv set                           | under             | DET      | car      |       | red              |             |                  |
| p1G#145:                         | #<F#144> li# <lp> |          | <mh>     |       |                  |             |                  |
|                                  | there             |          | mh       |       |                  |             |                  |
| p2F#146:                         | quella            | che      | che      |       | stavo            |             |                  |
|                                  | that              | that.REL | that.REL |       | AUX.PROG.PST.1SG |             |                  |
| girando <b>ora</b> ,             |                   | no?      |          |       |                  |             |                  |
| turning <b>just now</b>          |                   | no       |          |       |                  |             |                  |
| p1G#147:                         | #<F#148> sì#      |          |          |       |                  |             |                  |
|                                  | yes               |          |          |       |                  |             |                  |

'p1G#143: So, your cake would be the one that's yours? My cake is under your red car  
p2F#144: Ah, eh, because I have the TV set under the red car  
p1G#145: There, mmh  
p2F#146: The one I was circling **just now**, no?  
p1G#147: Yes'



Here, *ora* refers to a point in time that is in the past and very close to, but not coincident with, utterance time. Note that *ora* co-occurs with a verb in the past tense ('stavo girando'). The same happens in the direction of future time:

(3.50) TVit\_02F/1

|             |                 |         |    |            |              |         |               |             |
|-------------|-----------------|---------|----|------------|--------------|---------|---------------|-------------|
| p1#2:       | sostanzialmente | forse   | è  | [[dialect] | 'un          | proprio | a             | noi}        |
|             | substantially   | maybe   | is |            | a            | exactly | to            | us          |
| <sp>        | questo          | è       | un | po'        | brutale      | come    | <inspiration> | <sp>        |
| this        |                 | is      | a  | bit        | brutal       | like    | <eeh>         | #<NOISE>    |
| espressione | ma              | insomma |    | <b>ora</b> | sentiremo    | <sp>    | il            | presidente# |
| expression  | but             | in sum  |    | <b>now</b> | hear.FUT.2PL |         | DET           | president   |

'Basically maybe it's – exactly to ourselves – this expression is a bit brutal, but, anyway, **now** we'll hear from the president'

Here, *ora* is again accompanied by a verb, 'sentiremo', which does not point to utterance time, but to future time. Once again, *ora* suggests proximity in time.

As shown in examples (3.49) and (3.50), tense can be a clue in terms of whether *ora* refers to a past time or future time with respect to utterance time. However, note that this is not always the case; a speaker who intends to express the intention to leave soon after utterance time may utter:

(3.51) *Ora*                      vado.  
                  *shortly*              go.1SG  
                  I'll be leaving *shortly*.

Here, the verb is in the present tense. The hearer will understand that the speaker means 'soon' from the situational context: it will be clear from the speaker's behaviour that she is not moving at utterance time – then she is only saying that she has the intention of leaving some time soon.

We conclude this presentation of the temporal uses of *ora* with a time-related use which applies to the narration of past events in which reference time is moved to the past:

(3.52) FC6/10

|                         |                           |                   |                            |                         |                      |                                 |                     |                    |                                   |                    |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| A:                      | soprattutto<br>especially |                   | cambiava<br>change.PST.3SG |                         | la<br>DET            | loro<br>their                   | vita<br>life.SBJ    | perche'<br>because | <b>prima</b><br><b>beforehand</b> |                    |
| la<br>DET               | vita<br>life              | degli<br>of-DET   | ateniesi<br>athenians      |                         | era<br>was.3SG       | tutta<br>all                    | centrata<br>centred |                    |                                   |                    |
| I:                      | ahah<br>ahah              | si'<br>yes        |                            |                         |                      |                                 |                     |                    |                                   |                    |
| A:                      | su<br>on                  | un<br>a           | discorso<br>discourse      |                         |                      |                                 |                     |                    |                                   |                    |
| I:                      | democratico<br>democratic |                   | no?<br>no                  |                         |                      |                                 |                     |                    |                                   |                    |
| A:                      | pub<blico><br>public      |                   | democratico<br>democratic  |                         | di<br>of             | partecipazione<br>participation |                     | alla<br>to-DET     | vita<br>life                      | pubblica<br>public |
| I:                      | mh<br>mh                  | invece<br>instead | <b>ora</b><br><b>now</b>   | dovevan<br>must.PST.3PL | cercare<br>to search |                                 | uno<br>a            | scopo<br>aim       | per<br>for                        |                    |
| vivere [...]<br>to live |                           |                   |                            |                         |                      |                                 |                     |                    |                                   |                    |

'A: It was mostly their lives that changed, because **beforehand** life for Athenians was all centred  
I: Ahah, yes  
A: on an issue  
I: of democracy, no?  
A: public, democratic, of participation in public life  
I. Mmh. Instead, **now**, they had to look for a reason to live [...]

Here, *ora* is opposed to *prima* ('before') and points to a location in time that is not coincident with utterance time, but with reference time - in this case, a point in the past. Notice that both utterances feature the *imperfetto* tense which is a past tense in Italian. This phenomenon is usually called 'deictic projection' (Lyons 1977: 579): the Bühlerian *origo* (the deictic centre) is 'projected', shifted from utterance time to some past time. The same use is called "pseudodeittico" ('pseudo-deictic') by Bertinetto (1986: 32) since it is deictic in a 'fictional' way. Recanati (2004: 18) suggests that such cases should be considered as instances of perspectival use. That is, instead of indexing utterance time or an interval including it, *now* signals the 'closeness' of one point in time to reference time as compared to another one in the context (which is signalled in (3.52) by "prima"). On Corazza's account, this kind of *now* "works like an anaphoric term inheriting its reference from another noun phrase" (2004: 296). In other cases, such antecedent can be tacit, ie



not expressed, since it may be “presupposed by the discourse situation”. Both Recanati and Corazza maintain that this use is not indexical. In fact, both accounts see the interpretation of *now* as related to the interpretation of an additional temporal element in the utterance (that is, the antecedent).

To sum up so far, we have seen cases in which *ora* refers to utterance time, a stretch of time including utterance time, a point in time close to utterance time but prior or sequential to it, and finally cases of deictic projection where deixis is not calculated egocentrically but with respect to a different *origo*. How is it that the hearer arrives at the correct interpretation of *ora*, given that its meaning is so variable?

We argue that the interpretation process goes roughly as follows. Upon encountering an occurrence, the hearer will take into consideration other elements as triggers for the actualization of the procedure encoded by *ora*. Such procedure may be described schematically as follows: “Find a temporal location *t* that is close or coincides with utterance time, and which is made salient in the context, and attribute it to proposition *p*”, where *p* is the proposition expressed by the utterance. As was shown, the semantics of the verb can be a valid contextual cue: a past tense is an indicator for a past interpretation, while a future tense is an indicator for future interpretation. The linguistic context may indicate that the speaker is talking about a historical event, and that therefore the coordinate must be attributed to the proposition by taking account of this shift. In the same way, comments that extend to more than utterance time – nowadays – are to be discerned on the basis of context. These clues will make certain assumptions more accessible. More generally, we argue that this process is guided by considerations of relevance: the hearer will try to pursue a certain inferential path and, should it not yield adequate contextual effects, the hearer will try the next most accessible assumptions until relevance is achieved. Finally, we argue that no temporal interpretation of *ora* is more central than others, even though intuitively we commonly associate *ora* with utterance time. In fact, we have shown that that specific interpretation is one of the many possible.

### 3.3.2 *Ora* and situational coordinates

In this section we argue that in its non-temporal interpretations *ora* claims the hearer’s attention and directs it to the contingent communicative situation. We will describe this

function of *ora* in relevance-theoretic terms and say that non-temporal *ora* restricts the search space for interpretation to the current situational context. At the discursive level, *ora* marks a comment on the speaker's part on the topic being discussed. These discursive uses are claimed to be mostly associated with written discourse by Baranzini and Saussure (2010: 9); however, our data show that they are fairly frequent in spoken discourse.

*Ora* is frequently used to signal discourse structure. When performing this function, *ora* is called 'textual marker' by Berretta, as opposed to 'temporal marker' (1984: 245). This use is typical of monological, argumentative discourse. Consider the following excerpt:

(3.53) RDdc\_01V/1

|                           |                        |              |             |              |             |                |              |            |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|------------|
| p0#1:                     | buongiorno             | <sp> s+      | sono        | Pina Piccolo | da<aa>      | poco           | più          | di         |
|                           | good morning           |              | am          | pina piccolo | from        | little         | more         | of         |
| un                        | anno                   | sono         | la          | presidente   | dell'       | AISM,          | associazione | italiana   |
| a                         | year                   | am           | DET         | president    | of-DET      | AISM           | association  | Italian    |
| sclerosi                  | multipla               |              |             |              |             |                |              |            |
| sclerosis                 | multiple               |              |             |              |             |                |              |            |
| p0#2:                     | <inspiration> ora      | per<rr>      | parlare     | della        | malattia,di | che            | cos'         | è          |
|                           | now                    | for          | to talk     | of-DET       | disease of  | what           | thing        | is         |
| la                        | sclerosi multipla      | e<ee>        | anche       | per<rr>      | <breath>    | <sp>           | <eeh>        | collocarmi |
| DET                       | sclerosis multiple and |              | also        | for          |             |                |              | place.REFL |
| all'                      | interno di             | questa       | storia      | e<ee>        | di          | questa         | malattia     |            |
| at-DET                    | inside of              | this         | story       | and          | of          | this           | disease      |            |
| p0#3:                     | <inspiration>          | <sp>         | <eeh>       | <sp> vorrei  | precisare   | che            | la           | sclerosi   |
|                           | want.COND.1SG          |              |             |              | to specify  | that           | DET          | sclerosis  |
| multipla è                | una                    | associazione | <sp>        | che          | è           | nata           | nel          |            |
| multiple is               | a                      | association  |             | that         | AUX.3SG     | born           | in-DET       |            |
| millenovecentosessantotto | <inspiration>          |              | ad          | opera        | di          | alcune         | persone che  |            |
| 1968                      |                        |              | at          | work         | of          | some           | people who   |            |
| erano                     | affette da             | questa       | malattia,ed | i            | loro        | familiari      |              |            |
| were.3PL                  | affected by            | this         | disease and | DET          | their       | family members |              |            |

'Good morning, I'm Pina Piccolo. From slightly more than one year I have been the president of AISM, the Italian Association for Multiple Sclerosis. **Now**, in order to talk about the disease, about what multiple sclerosis is, and also in order to place myself within this story, this disease.. I'd like to



specify that Multiple Sclerosis is an association that was born in 1968 from the work of some people who suffered from this disease, and their family members’

In this passage, the speaker first introduces herself and thus provides background information. This is followed by an occurrence of *ora*, which marks the transition from factual, general information about the speaker to her own contribution to the topic of the radio show. The transition is made further explicit by the phrase “per parlare della malattia” (‘to talk about the disease’), which introduces the topic of the incoming sequence. *Ora* marks the switch from ‘a-temporal’, general information – the speaker’s identity - to highly topical information that is relevant to the situational context – in this case, a discussion on multiple sclerosis. The hearer is thus invited to retrieve contextual assumptions of the type “We are here to discuss multiple sclerosis”, and to use them as context for the interpretation of the incoming content. *Ora* is here used to mark the transition to a new phase in the argumentative structure. The structure could be described as follows: “After I said X, now I say Y” or “I said X before, now I say Y”. Here is a further example:

(3.54) Tvit\_01Z/1

|               |                  |                             |               |              |               |              |         |              |         |          |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|----------|
| p2#44:        | il               | flashback                   | è             | questo       | che           | la           | signora | ha           | oltre   |          |
|               | DET              | flashback                   | is            | this         | that          | DET          | lady    | has          | beyond  |          |
| settant' anni | <inspiration>    |                             |               | quindi       | oltre         | mezzo        | secolo  | dopo         | questo  | episodio |
| seventy years |                  |                             |               | so           | beyond        | half         | century | after        | this    | episode  |
| <inspiration> | <sp> capita, per |                             | una           | serie        | di            | coincidenze, |         | in           | una     |          |
| happens       | for              |                             | a             | series       | of            | coincidences |         | in           | a       |          |
| casa          | di               | campagna <inspiration> <lp> |               |              | e ve+         | vede         | un      | dipinto <sp> |         |          |
| house         | of               | country                     |               |              | and           | sees         | a       | painting     |         |          |
| dove          | c'               | era                         | rappresentata | proprio      | quella        | bambinache   |         | l'           | ha      |          |
| where         | there            | was.3SG                     | represented   | exactly      | that          | child.F      | who     | her.OBJ      | AUX.3SG |          |
| salvata       |                  |                             |               |              |               |              |         |              |         |          |
| saved         |                  |                             |               |              |               |              |         |              |         |          |
| p2#45:        | il               | punto                       | è             | questo, <sp> |               | che          | quando  | la           | bambina |          |
|               | DET              | point                       | is            | this         |               | that         | when    | DET          | child.F |          |
| la            |                  |                             |               |              |               |              |         |              |         |          |
| her.OBJ       |                  |                             |               |              |               |              |         |              |         |          |
| salvò <sp>    | era              | già                         | morta         | da           | circa         |              | un      | secolo <lp>  |         |          |
| save.PST.3SG  | was.3SG          | already                     | dead          | from         | approximately |              | a       | century      |         |          |

p2#46: questo arriva al punto  
 this comes to-DET point

la parola arriva è detta in modo velocissimo  
 (the word 'arriva' is pronounced very quickly)

p2#47: **ora,** questa storia, che mi ha raccontata ce ne  
**now** this story that.OBJ me.DAT AUX.3SGtold there of

sono molte io ho notato <sp> in tutte le latitudini <sp>  
 are.3PL many i AUX.1SGnoticed in all DET latitudes

storie che si assomigliano e perché evidentemente questi fatti  
 stories that REFL resemble.3PL and because evidently these facts

accadono molto di più di quanto noi pensiamo,  
 happen.3PL much of more of how much we think.1PL

soltanto che non<nn> si desta nessuna attenzione [...]  
 only that NEG REFL wake.3SG no attention

'The flashback is this – that the lady is over 70, so more than half a century after this episode. She happens to be, for a series of coincidences, in a country house, and sees a painting, where depicted is exactly the child who saved her. The point is this, that when the child saved her, she had already been dead for approximately one century. This leads to the point. **Now**, this story that she told me – there's many of them, I've noticed, at all latitudes, stories that resemble each other, and, because evidently these facts happen a lot more than we think, only that no attention is focused on them'

This use is similar to the one observed in (3.53): the speaker sets the background first, and subsequently draws the hearer's attention away from the reporting of facts and towards the speaker's own contribution to the discussion. Note that this transition is marked explicitly the same way it was in (3.53), with “questo arriva al punto” ‘this brings to the point’. While the background information preceding *ora* is typically factual and impersonal, the information which follows *ora* on the other hand is the speaker's own take on the matter, as well as contingent and relevant for the current social situation. The hearer may retrieve contextual assumptions such as, for example, “We are discussing topic x” or “This speaker came here to give contribution y to the discussion”. A further example is the following:

(3.55) FB14/15

j: sì ma infatti a me il fatto che mi  
 yes but in fact to me DET fact that me.DAT

ha aiutato il trucco sai quale è stato  
 AUX.3SGhelped DET make-up know.2SG which AUX.3SGbeen



|                          |                   |                       |                               |                        |                   |                       |                       |                   |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| che<br>that              | te<br>you         | hai<br>AUX.2SG        | detto<br>said                 | anch'<br>also          | io<br>I.SBJ       | una<br>one            | volta<br>time         | l'<br>DET         |  |
| anno<br>year             | lo<br>it.OBJ      | metto<br>put          | sicchè<br>therefore           | nel<br>in.DET          | periodo<br>period | di<br>of              | carnevale<br>carnival |                   |  |
| A:                       | di<br>of          | carnevale<br>carnival | ecco<br>here                  | giustamente<br>rightly | era<br>was.3SG    |                       | il<br>DET             | trucco<br>make-up |  |
| <b>ora</b><br><b>now</b> | però<br>but       | il<br>DET             | discorso<br>discourse         | è<br>is                | questo<br>this    | te<br>you             | hai<br>AUX.2SG        | detto<br>said     |  |
| il<br>DET                | trucco<br>make-up | il<br>DET             | rossetto che<br>lipstick that | quando<br>when         | c'<br>there       | è<br>is               | un<br>a               | quizze<br>quiz    |  |
| serio<br>serious         | la<br>DET         | prima<br>first        | risposta è<br>answer is       | quella<br>that         | che<br>that.SBJ   | conta [...]<br>counts |                       |                   |  |

'J: Yes, but, exactly, me, the fact that helped me – make-up – you know what it was, that you said: even I wear it once a year. Therefore, during the carnival period.

A: Carnival, that's it, right, it was the make-up. But **now** the point is this. You said, make-up, lipstick, that when there's a serious quiz show, the first answer is the one that counts [...]'

Here, the speaker concedes that the interlocutor gave the right answer, and after expanding on this sort of background information introduces her main argument with *ora*. The speaker first comments on the interlocutor's turn in a positive tone, while the *ora* utterance introduces criticism on the part of the speaker. Notice also that the speaker says explicitly that the main point is the following, by saying "però il discorso è questo" 'but the point is this'. We argue that while in its temporal uses *ora* points to utterance time or a point very close to it, in its non-temporal uses it points to current time of the discursive dimension. This is a type of use that, like some of the ones in *allora*, shows how connective uses of these temporal elements may connect longer chunks of discourse, rather than necessarily two adjacent utterances. We can also safely conclude that *ora* may link assumptions communicated either linguistically or non-linguistically.

The following argumentative use is characterised by *ora* occurring in utterance-initial position to introduce an apologetic point on the part of the speaker, while, later in discourse, an adversative or concessive connective is used to introduce some idea that goes against the very same point:

### (3.56) FC6/1

|    |                      |            |          |             |          |                    |                 |                 |
|----|----------------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| E: | Enriquez<br>enriquez | che<br>who | è_<br>is | uno_<br>one | una<br>a | persona_<br>person | cioè<br>that is | ancora<br>still |
|----|----------------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|

viv<a>  
alive

A: ancora vi<va> no **ora** non so se è morto  
still alive no **now** NEG know.1SG if is dead

E: nun lo so  
NEG it.OBJ know.1SG

A: **comunque** potrebbe anche essere ancora vivente e  
**however** could.3SG also be still living and

avere novant' anni  
have.INF ninety years

'E: Enriquez, who is a... a person, that is, still alive

A: Still alive. No, **now**, I don't know if he is dead

E: I don't know

A: **Anyway**, he could also be still living and be ninety'

In (3.56), *ora* introduces a confession on the part of the speaker, who is being tentative about her guess. The concessive connective *comunque* introduces a consideration that is more in line with her opinion as stated in the first instance. This instance of *ora* does not mark temporal information, because would not make much sense on the part of the speaker to inform the hearer that she does not know if the person is dead at the time of utterance. This instance must be therefore taken as a break in the discussion to introduce a personal consideration. The speaker might for example want to use *ora* to draw the hearer's attention to her facial expression. Now consider this excerpt:

(3.57) FA12/8

A: eh mi raccomando perche'\_qui se si comincia\_  
eh REFL recommend.1SG because here if REFL begins

ecco  
here

**ora** io capisco ad aprile maggio son stati due  
**now** I understand.1SG at april may AUX.3PL been two

mesi infernali per cui voi non li vedevate nemmen  
months infernal for which you.2PL NEG them.OBJ see.2PL.PST neither

**pero'** ora che il giugno mi porta purtroppo a  
**but** now that DET june me.DAT bring.3SG unfortunately to

meno noleggi vedete  
less rentals see.2PL.IMP



B: mh  
mh

A: un pochino # di porre un occhio sui gr<an>  
a little bit of to put a eye on-DET grand

sui gran turismo sui  
on-DET grand tourism on-DET

'Eh, please do this right, because here if we start... Here, **now**, I understand, April, May were infernal months, so you didn't even see them, **but** now that June unfortunately brings me fewer rentals, see

B: Mh

A: a little if you can keep an eye on the... on the grand tourers, on the [...]'

This case is similar to the one directly above. The speaker first concedes something to the hearer introducing it with *ora*, and then uses the adversative connective *però* to introduce a different point, which focuses on the speaker's real opinion on the matter. This structure can be summarized as "*p, ora, q, ma r*" (Baranzini & Saussure 2010: 14). *Ora* signals the imminent communication of the speaker's own contribution to the discussion. This information contrasts with the more general, impersonal content of the surrounding utterances. This mechanism, we argue, is due to the fact that the concession/apology actually serves to anticipate criticism on the part of the hearer, and is thus much more related to the contextual coordinates – in this case, participants – than the content preceding the occurrence of *ora*.

*Ora* may be used in utterance-initial position to introduce a question that is used by the speaker to ask about something she has forgotten about. Consider:

(3.58) FA10/11

A: ah non c' era ancora  
NEG there was.3SG still

B: infatti  
in fact

A: studio legale [risponde al telefono] sì un momento  
studio legal [answers the phone] yes one moment

B: allora guarda faccio **ora** dove l' ho  
then look.IMP.2SG make.1SG **now** where it.OBJ AUX.1SG

messa? ecco # questa io ti do\_ [...]  
put here this.OBJ I.SBJ you.DAT give

A: Ah, it wasn't there still  
B: Exactly  
A: Legal office [picks up the phone] yes, hang on a second  
B: So, look, I do... **Now** where did I put it? Here, I give you [...]

Here, the speaker forgot where she put something. In line with the previous uses, *ora* tells the hearer that the speaker is digressing from the conversation and about to say something that pertains to the situational context. For example, the hearer may take notice that the speaker is looking for something in her bag, and retrieve the relative contextual assumption. The hearer may also find it easier to establish the reference of the pronoun *l'* 'it' in *l'ho messa*, as the referent itself might appear in the surrounding environment, to which *ora* draws the attention. This last example makes the 'interrupting' function of *ora* all the more evident: *ora* introduces content that is unrelated or only partly related to the previous speech, and is certainly different in terms of contextual coordinates. The context required for the interpretation of the subsequent information is related to the real-world situation surrounding the communicative act.

### 3.3.3 Discussion: *ora* and the 'here and now'

In this section, we described *ora* as a procedural expression which points to the 'here and now' of communication. In its temporal uses, *ora* points to utterance time or to a point close to that. In its non-temporal uses, *ora* points to current time not intended as a temporal coordinate, but rather the set of situational coordinates valid for the communication at hand: participants, time, space, topic of discourse. Non-temporal *ora* thus interrupts discourse and marks a change of context for the incoming utterance or utterances, and frequently marks the break from background, factual information to the speaker's personal viewpoint on the matter being discussed. To pinpoint the exact assumptions that the hearer retrieves, or reactivates, is a difficult task for the researcher, as these assumptions are highly context-dependent.

The analysis of *ora* presents many parallels to that of *allora*. Their temporal uses indirectly contribute to the explicatures of the utterance by attributing a temporal coordinate to the basic explicature, whereas their non-temporal uses constrain the interpretation of the utterance. A further similarity is that *ora* too encodes the procedure called 'constraint on context' with its pragmatic uses: *ora* signals that the utterance in



question has to be interpreted against a context that is made up by assumptions pertaining to the 'here and now' of the communicative event. A relevance-theoretic account thus proves to be useful in the comparison between accounts of different expressions with a similar (in this case, time-related) semantics.

In this section we have argued that context is the main clue for the hearer to distinguish among the different uses of *ora*. The suggested picture is the following:

(Procedure) "Find *x* that is close or coincides with utterance time, and which is made salient in the situational context, and apply it to the *ora* utterance"

- IF the context is temporal, THEN *x* is a temporal coordinate, and is to be applied to the *ora* utterance
  - IF the verb is in the present tense, THEN the temporal coordinate is either in the present or in the near future with respect to reference time
  - IF the verb is in the past tense, THEN the temporal coordinate is in the near past with respect to reference time
- IF the context is non-temporal, *ora* is in clause-initial position and prosodically isolated, THEN *x* is a contextual assumption derived from the situational context, and is to be considered as the context for the interpretation of the *ora* utterance
  - IF *ora* co-occurs with expressions such as "per parlare della malattia"; "questo arriva al punto"; "però il discorso è questo", then it should receive an argumentative interpretation
  - IF *ora* is followed by a concessive or an adversative connective, THEN it should receive a concessive interpretation
  - IF *ora* is in a clause-initial position, is prosodically integrated and introduces a question, THEN it should receive the 'forgetfulness' interpretation
  - IF the text is monological or argumentative, THEN *ora* marks discourse structure

Finally, we have presented uses that confirm what claimed in the section of *allora* – that our inferential approach is able to account those uses which relate linguistically communicated assumptions to non-linguistically communicated assumptions, in all the uses of *ora*, since the latter points to assumptions retrieved from the situational context.

Furthermore we were able to further confirm that a connective like *allora* or *ora* does not necessarily link two adjacent utterances but may link greater chunks of discourse, as in some of the discursive uses.

### 3.4 Adesso

In this section we will argue that *adesso* is a marker of contingency, much like *ora*. More specifically, *adesso* will be argued to constrain the construction of the basic explicature in its temporal interpretations, and to restrict the search space for contextual assumptions to the situational contexts which characterizes of the communicative exchange at hand. The similarity in cognitive terms between *adesso* and *ora* is not surprising, considering that they are traditionally described as synonyms. The difference between these two expressions lies mainly in their diatopic distribution, as noted by Vanelli (1995: 284): *adesso* is mostly used of Northern and Central Italy, as well as Sardinia, whereas *ora* is typical of the Italian spoken in Tuscany, Liguria and Sicily. Another variant, which will not be contemplated in the present study, is *mo* (or *mo'*); this is only found in the dialects of Lombardia and the Centre-South (Serianni 1988: 420-421). The geographic distribution suggested by Vanelli can be partly verified by data in the LIP corpus. *Adesso* has 622 occurrences, 51 of which in Florence, 243 in Milan, 117 in Naples and 208 in Rome); *ora* has 380 occurrences, 217 of which in Florence, 55 in Milan, 59 in Naples and 49 in Rome. Since Liguria, Sicily and Sardinia are not represented in the LIP corpus, Vanelli's statement cannot be verified fully. Regrettably, the CLIPS corpus website as it stands at the time of writing does not allow for search according to area.

The above figures also suggest that *adesso* is overall more frequent than *ora* in spoken discourse, since *ora* is used mainly in a restricted area, namely Tuscany. By contrast, Baranzini and Saussure (2010: 7) claim that *ora* is statistically more frequent than *adesso* exactly because it is derived from the Tuscan dialect, which is more prestigious and more widespread in the literature. However, it is not clear what criteria are used to support these claims; moreover, Baranzini and Saussure's comments on frequency might be based on both spoken and written discourse, whereas our numbers only refer to spoken Italian. We do however agree with the authors' suggestion that *ora*



and *adesso* derive from different dialects, although nowadays they co-exist in standard Italian.

We will show that there are indeed discrepancies between *ora* and *adesso* in terms of the range of uses displayed in the spoken corpora. This suggests that there is a difference in the way these two adverbs are used in spoken communication. However, we have not correlated these discrepancies to the area of provenance of the speakers involved, as this is beyond the scope of our study. We will conclude our observations on the differences between *ora* and *adesso* here, and leave the questions we have only sketched above to further research.

The origin of the word *adesso* is uncertain. It is probably derived from Latin *ād ipsu(m) (tēmpum or tempus)* ('at the same time') (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1979: 20; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 30; Garzanti 2008: 45). *Adesso* is traditionally described exclusively as an adverb, with the exception of the use exemplified in the following:

(3.59)

*Adesso!*

*now*

Vengo

come.1SG

subito!

immediately

(Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 42)

'Now! I'm coming!'

Here, *adesso* is said to perform the function of an interjection. However, this use was not encountered in the analysis of the spoken corpora for the present work.

In the following, we briefly sketch our intuitions regarding the influence of syntax and prosody on the interpretation of *adesso* as either a temporal adverb or a discourse marker. We will make use of an excerpt from example (3.71) below. Utterance-initial *adesso* may be either temporal or discourse-marking. In the former case, (3.60), the accent would be contrastive and the intonation would be rising; in the latter, (3.61), *adesso* would be prosodically isolated and rendered in written Italian with a comma:

(3.60)

**Adesso**

*now*

io

I

in

in

geometria

geometry

non

NEG

sono

am

molto

very

brava

good

'Now I'm not good at geometry'

(3.61) **Adesso,** io in geometria non sono molto brava  
 now I in geometry NEG am very good

'Now, I'm not good at geometry'

The following options only allow for the temporal reading:

(3.62) Io adesso in geometria non sono molto brava  
 I now in geometry NEG am very good

'I'm now not very good at geometry'

(3.63) Io in geometria adesso non sono molto brava  
 I in geometry now NEG am very good

'I'm not very good, now, at geometry'

(3.64) Io in geometria non sono molto brava **adesso**  
 I in geometry NEG am very good now

'I'm not very good at geometry now'

As was observed for *ora*, the only position allowed for discourse-marking *adesso* is the discourse-initial; in this case, it has to be prosodically isolated. Once again, we have found an example in the corpora, (3.73), where *adesso* has a discourse-marking function but nevertheless seems to be prosodically integrated with the utterance. We will discuss the impact of the semantics of tense on temporal interpretation of *adesso* in the next section.

We shall now proceed with the description of temporal *adesso*, followed by the description of its non-temporal uses. We will argue for a unified account in which the 'core meaning' is a procedure, in line with *allora* and *ora*. We will demonstrate that, despite the existing differences between *ora* and *adesso* in terms of diatopic distribution, the two elements share the same cognitive analysis. Since our analysis will be roughly the



same as that of *ora*, we will refer back to section 3.2 for comments which are valid of both expressions.

### 3.4.1 Temporal uses of *adesso*

In its main temporal use, *adesso* indicates reference to present time (see Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 42). More specifically, *adesso* points to utterance time or to a stretch of time which includes utterance time – similarly to what was observed for *ora*:

(3.65) MB8/10

|           |         |            |                 |          |        |              |          |            |
|-----------|---------|------------|-----------------|----------|--------|--------------|----------|------------|
| A:        | il      | bandito    | Besso           | te       | lo     | ricordi?     |          |            |
|           | DET     | bandit     | Besso           | DAT.2SG  | it.OBJ | remember.2SG |          |            |
| B:        | eh?     |            |                 |          |        |              |          |            |
|           | huh     |            |                 |          |        |              |          |            |
| A:        | un      | altro      | famoso          | come     | non    | famoso       | come     | Mesina ma  |
|           | a       | other      | famous          | like     | not    | famous       | like     | Mesina but |
| B:        | sì      |            |                 |          |        |              |          |            |
|           | yes     |            |                 |          |        |              |          |            |
| A:        | dice ah | il         | banditismo      | non      | è      | più          | quello   |            |
|           | says    | DET        | banditism       | NEG      | is     | anymore      | that.DEM |            |
| di        | una     | volta      | <b>adesso</b>   | gli      |        | staccano     | le       |            |
| of        | one     | time       | <b>nowadays</b> | them.DAT |        | cut off.3PL  | DET      |            |
| orecchie_ |         | rapiscono  | i               | bambini_ |        |              |          |            |
| ears      |         | kidnap.3PL | DET             | children |        |              |          |            |

‘A: The bandit, Besso, do you remember him?  
 B: Huh?  
 A: Another one, as famous as... not as famous as Mesina, but...  
 B: Yes  
 A: They say, banditry is not what it used to be. **Nowadays** people’s ears are cut off, children kidnapped...

In (3.65), *adesso* does not refer to utterance time alone. The procedure will be actualized on the basis of the context and will therefore attribute a temporal coordinate akin to “nowadays” to the utterance at hand.

A further resemblance with *ora* lies in the use of *adesso* to refer to an unspecified point in time that is very close to utterance time, either in the past or the future. Consider:

(3.66) MA18/3

|    |                          |                          |                             |                          |                            |                          |             |                    |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| G: | nove<br>nine             | dieci<br>ten             | diritto<br>right            | civile<br>civil          |                            |                          |             |                    |
| H: | civile<br>civil          |                          |                             |                          |                            |                          |             |                    |
| G: | il<br>DET                | diciassette<br>seventeen | del<br>of.DET               | dodici<br>twelve         |                            |                          |             |                    |
| H: | sì<br>yes                | e<br>and                 | poi?<br>then                |                          |                            |                          |             |                    |
| G: | e<br>and                 | poi<br>then              | <b>adesso</b><br><b>now</b> | ho<br>AUX.1SG            | fatto<br>done              | anche<br>also            | un <?><br>a | proprio<br>exactly |
|    | recentemente<br>recently | diritto<br>right         | di -processur-<br>of        | processuale<br>trial.ADJ | comparato #<br>comparative | processuale<br>trial.ADJ |             |                    |
|    | comparato<br>comparative |                          |                             |                          |                            |                          |             |                    |
| H: | quando?<br>when          |                          |                             |                          |                            |                          |             |                    |
| G: | il<br>DET                | dieci<br>ten             | dell'<br>of.DET             | uno<br>one               |                            |                          |             |                    |

'G: 9/10 civil law  
H: Civil  
G: The 17<sup>th</sup> of 12  
H: Yes, and then?  
G: And then, **now** I've also done a... just recently, comparative trial law  
H: When?  
G: The 10<sup>th</sup> of 1

In (3.66), the speaker is talking about recent events rather than something that is true of utterance time. Note that the temporal adverb ‘recently’ occurs in the same utterance. Also, the verb *ho fatto* is in the present perfect tense, which too indicates proximity. The following is an example of *adesso* pointing to the near future:



(3.67) MB36/5

B:       mh sì     perché tu     tu     c'     hai               il     decoder?  
          yes     why     you     you     there     have.2SG     DET     decoder

A:       sì  
          yes

B:       ah  
          ah

A:       non     io     sono     a     casa     di     un     amico     mio  
          not     I     am     at     house     of     a     friend     mine

B:       mh  
          mh

A:       che               c'     ha     il     decoder  
          who.SBJ       there     has     DET     decoder

B:       allora   sì     perché fra     un     po'     lo fra\_   **adesso** dopo     i  
          then    yes    because in     a     bit     it.OBJ   **now**   after     DET

titoli   lo     schermano     si     vede   il     pallino verde  
credits it.OBJ encrypt.3PL REFL see.3SG DET dot green

'B: Mh, yes, because you, do you have a decoder?  
A: Yes  
B: Oh  
A: Don't... I'm at a friend's place  
B: Mh  
A: Who has a decoder  
B: Then yes, because in a bit it will... **Now** after the credits it'll get scrambled. You see the green dot'

Similarly to the previous example, the utterance features a phrase that points to the future: *dopo i titoli* ('after the credits'). Allegedly, both speakers know at the point of utterance that the credits still have not been shown. Note here that the 'futurate' present is used: as it is common in the Italian language, the present tense is used to point to the future, while it is clear from the context that reference to future is meant (see example 3.34). In (3.67), the temporal phrase *dopo i titoli* ('after the credits') overrides the rest of the temporal information because it yields the most relevant interpretation for the hearer; the hearer will then proceed to attribute the relative temporal coordinate to the proposition communicated by the utterance.

Just like *ora*, *adesso* may be used to refer to a reference time which does not coincide with utterance time, like in the following excerpt from the written corpus:

|        |        |                   |                         |               |        |        |             |
|--------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| (3.68) | LNC 16 | Egli              | esagerava               | <b>adesso</b> | in     | un     | senso, come |
|        |        | he                | exaggerate.PST.IPFV.3SG | <b>now</b>    | in     | a      | sense like  |
|        |        | <b>prima</b>      | esagerava               |               | nell'  | altro. |             |
|        |        | <b>beforehand</b> | exaggerate.PST.IPFV.3SG |               | in-DET | other  |             |

'He exaggerated **now** in a way, like he did **beforehand**, the opposite way'

Here, the narration takes place in the past with respect to utterance time. Nevertheless, *adesso* and *prima* are used as if reference time and utterance time coincided.

The following is an instance of one last use for temporal *adesso*:

(3.69) FD4/2

|                      |               |        |              |        |         |         |          |                      |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|--------------|--------|---------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| mettiamo             | che           | l'     | aumento      | del    | prezzo  | del     | bene     | x                    |
| put.IMP.1PL          | that          | DET    | increase     | of-DET | price   | of-DET  | good     | x                    |
| sia                  | conseguente   | alla   | introduzione | di     | una     | imposta | sul      |                      |
| be.SBJV.3SG          | consequent    | to-DET | introduction | of     | a       | levy    | on-DET   |                      |
| bene                 | x             | per    | cui          | il     | bene    | x       | che      | <b>prima</b> costava |
| good                 | x             | for    | which        | DET    | good    | x       | that.REL | <b>before</b> cost   |
| cento                | <b>adesso</b> | a      | seguito      | dell'  | imposta | viene   | a        | costare              |
| a hundred            | <b>now</b>    | at     | continuation | of-DET | levy    | comes   | to       | to cost              |
| centocinquanta [...] |               |        |              |        |         |         |          |                      |
| 150                  |               |        |              |        |         |         |          |                      |

'Let's say that the increase of the price of good x is caused by the introduction of a levy on good x, therefore good x, which cost 100 **before, now**, after the levy, ends up costing 150'

In (3.69), *adesso* refers to a point on an ideal timeline that is located after another point – *prima* ('before'). This occurrence does seem to refer to present time, however not in the real world, but in discourse. This type of use can be accounted for in terms of *metacommunicative* use, as suggested by Frank-Job (2006) when discussing the pragmaticalization process of discourse markers in several languages. *Adesso* is taken as an instance of a "temporal deictic" which "originally refers to the actual moment of conversation", and that may be used "in a metacommunicative way, no longer referring to the features of the situation but to the linguistic act itself" (p. 363).

In view of the foregoing we argue that the temporal uses of *adesso* indirectly contribute to the explicatures of the utterance, since they help recover the temporal coordinate of the utterance itself. We will now deal with the non-temporal functions of



*adesso* and argue that in these cases the procedure encoded by *adesso* constrains the context for the interpretation of the utterance.

### 3.4.2 Non-temporal uses of *adesso*

We will now proceed to analyse occurrences of *adesso* which do not saturate the proposition with temporal coordinates, but rather constrain the context for the interpretation of the utterance. As argued for *ora*, *adesso* may be used in discourse to mark a switch in context:

(3.70) RE2/2

|            |           |            |           |                 |              |               |         |              |             |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------|--------------|-------------|
| B: [...]   | io        | ho         | concluso  | o               | terminato    | la            |         |              |             |
|            | I         | AUX.1SG    | concluded | or              | finished     | DET           |         |              |             |
| persona    | che       | ha         | la        | nuca            | legata       | sul           | collo   | sa           | valutare    |
| person     | who       | has        | DET       | head            | tied         | on.DET        | neck    | knows        | to evaluate |
| da         | solo      | quello     |           | che             | vede         | se            | lo      | prendiamo    | se          |
| from       | alone     | that.DEM   |           | that.OBJ        | sees         | if            | it.OBJ  | take         | if          |
| lo         | stacciamo | dal        |           | televisore_     |              | brutti        | o       | belli        |             |
| it.OBJ     | take off  | from.DET   |           | tv              |              | ugly          | or      | beautiful    |             |
| questi     | segnali   | non        | si        | riceveranno     | più          | vale          | costa   |              |             |
| these      | signals   | NEG        | REFL      | receive.FUT.3PL | anymore      | is worth      | costs   |              |             |
| in         | negozio   | trentotto  |           | mila            |              | lire          | viene   | trattato a   |             |
| in         | shop      | 38         |           | thousand        |              | lire          | AUX.3SG | treated to   |             |
| ventinove  |           | e          | cinque    | in              | pubblicità   | televisiva    |         | da           | noi         |
| 29         |           | and        | 5         | in              | advert       | tv.ADJ        |         | from         | us          |
| lo         | pagate    | diecimila  |           | lire            | e            | <b>adesso</b> | se      | non          |             |
| it.OBJ     | pay.2PL   | 10.000     |           | lire            | and          | <b>now</b>    | if      | NEG          |             |
| smettono   |           | 'sti       | due       | che             | stanno       |               | a       | fare         |             |
| stop.3PL   |           | these      | two.SBJ   | who             | AUX.3PL      |               | to      | to do        |             |
| così       | e         | coli       | i         | sordomuti       | noi          | qui           |         | praticamente |             |
| like this  | and       | like that  | DET       | deaf-and-dumb   | we           | here          |         | practically  |             |
| faremo     |           | mezzanotte |           | d'              | Italia [...] |               |         |              |             |
| do.FUT.1PL |           | midnight   |           | of              | Italy        |               |         |              |             |

' [...] I'm finished, or concluded. The person whose nape is tied to their neck can evaluate on their own what they see. If we take it, if we detach it from the TV set, be it bad or good, this signal won't be received anymore. Its value, it costs in the shop 38.000 lire. It's bargained for 29.500 in tv ads.

Here with us you pay 10.000 lire for it. And **now**, if they don't stop, these two, who keep doing this and that, the deaf and dumb, here, basically, we end up doing "Midnight of Italy" '

In (3.70), the speaker is hosting a TV sale and interrupts the flow of conversation with *adesso* to introduce her comment on something that is happening in her physical environment. The hearer is thus asked to modify his context for interpretation accordingly. For example, the hearer will find it easier to understand to whom "questi due" refer to in the incoming utterance, since *adesso* refocuses his attention on what is happening in the environment surrounding the speakers.

A similar foregrounding function can be observed in the following example, in which *adesso* introduces an apologetic comment on the part of the speaker (see examples (3.56) and (3.57) for the same in *ora*). In this use *adesso* occurs in utterance-initial position and is prosodically separated from the rest:

(3.71) DGmtA04P

|                                 |                             |                       |                         |                                  |                          |                  |                  |               |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| p1G#136:                        | con<br>with                 | la<br>DET             | linea/<br>line          | la<br>it.OBJ                     | devi<br>must.2SG         | fare<br>to make  | sempre<br>always |               |
| tratteggiata #<F#137><br>dotted |                             | questa<br>this        | no? <sp><br>no          |                                  | okay#<br>ok              |                  |                  |               |
| p2F#137:                        | #<G#136> <breath><br>yes    | sì<br>yes             | sì<br>yes               | dico<br>say.1SG                  | questa<br>this           | linea#<br>line   |                  |               |
| tratteggiata<br>dotted          | dopo<br>after               | il<br>DET             | monte<br>moutain        | diciamo<br>say.1PL               | sulla #<G#138><br>on-DET |                  |                  |               |
| cima#<br>top                    |                             |                       |                         |                                  |                          |                  |                  |               |
| p1G#138:                        | #<F#137> sì<br>yes          | no#<br>no             | comincia<br>starts      | a<br>to                          | curvare<br>to curve      | verso<br>towards |                  |               |
| I'<br>DET                       | alto <sp><br>top            |                       |                         |                                  |                          |                  |                  |               |
| p2F#139:                        | sì <lp><br>yes              | okay <NOISE><br>ok    |                         |                                  |                          |                  |                  |               |
| p1G#140:                        | <b>adesso</b><br><b>now</b> | io<br>I               | in<br>in                | geometria<br>geometry            | non<br>NEG               | sono<br>am       | molto<br>very    | brava<br>good |
| dovrebbe {<laugh><br>should.3SG |                             | essere una<br>to be a | specie di<br>species of | iper+ {[whispering]<br>hvoerbola |                          |                  |                  |               |



|                   |    |             |                         |
|-------------------|----|-------------|-------------------------|
| [whispering]] non | lo | so <laugh>} | #<F#141> <inspiration># |
| NEG               | it | know.1SG    |                         |

|          |                 |    |                        |
|----------|-----------------|----|------------------------|
| p2F#141: | #<G#140> inizia | a# | curvare verso #<G#142> |
|          | starts          | to | to curve towards       |

|     |       |
|-----|-------|
| I'  | alto# |
| DET | top   |

'p1: With the line, you still have to make it dotted, this one, no? Ok

p2: Yes, yes, I say, this dotted line after the mountain, let's say on the top

p1: Yes, no, start curving towards the top

p2: Yes, ok

p1: **Now**, I'm not very good at geometry. It should be a sort of hyperbola... I don't know

p2: Start curving towards the top'

Here, the speaker warns the hearer that she is not very good at something. This cannot be a temporal use, in that the speaker does not seem to mean to say that she is not good at geometry at utterance time, neither means she that this is true of the current period as opposed to some past time. After the occurrence of *adesso*, the speaker continues with the description of the drawing. Consider now the following excerpt:

(3.72) ME8/3

|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              |               |        |
|-------------|--------|-------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|--------|
| L: [...]    | io     | avevo       | notato         | soprattutto  | all'               | inizio eh    | allo          |        |
|             | I      | AUX.1SG.PST | noticed        | especially   | at-DET             | beginning eh | at-DET        |        |
| scoppio di  | questa | guerra      | la             | posizione    | generale di        | molti        |               |        |
| burst of    | this   | war         | DET            | position     | general of         | many         |               |        |
| opinionisti | di     | molte       | persone        | tentavano    | di eh              | porre        | il            |        |
| columnists  | of     | many        | people         | try.3PL.PST  | of eh              | to put       | DET           |        |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              | problema      |        |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              | problem       |        |
| eh          | come   | per         | diciamo eh     | lavarsi      | la                 | coscienza    | <b>adesso</b> |        |
| eh          | like   | for         | say.1PL.IMP eh | to wash.REFL | DET                | conscience   | <b>now</b>    |        |
| sono        | parole | un          | po'            | grosse       | <b>comunque</b> eh | il           | tentare di    |        |
| are.3PL     | words  | a           | bit            | big          | <b>anyway</b> eh   | DET          | to try of     |        |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              | mostrar       |        |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              | to show       |        |
| tutto       | questo | da          | un             | punto        | di                 | vista        | puramente     | legale |
| all         | this   | from        | a              | point        | of                 | view         | purely        | legal  |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              |               | come   |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              |               | like   |
| un'         | azione | pienamente  | giustificata   | in           | quelli             | che          | sono          | i      |
| a           | action | fully       | justified      | in           | those              | that.REL     | are.3PL       | DET    |
|             |        |             |                |              |                    |              |               |        |
| canoni      | del    | diritto     | internazionale | mentre       | invece_ [...]      |              |               |        |
| canons      | of-DET | right       | international  | while        | instead            |              |               |        |

'L: [...] I had noticed, especially at the beginning, eh, at the outbreak od this war, the general position of many columnists, of many people. They were trying to, eh, present the problem, eh, like, to, let's say, eh, have their conscience clean. **Now**, these are strong words, **anyway**, eh, this

trying to show all of this from a purely legal point of view, like an action that is fully justified within those that are the rules of the international law, while instead [...]'

Example (3.72) displays the same construction observed in examples (3.56) and (3.57) of *ora*. *Adesso* introduces an apologetic element just like in (3.71) above. This is followed by the concessive connective *comunque* ('however'), which introduces a counter-argument. In (3.72), the speaker talks about war and then interrupts with *adesso* to introduce a comment about the tone of her words. With *adesso*, the speaker switches from the discussion of a topic to metadiscursive information which is a personal opinion of the speaker. Similarly to (3.71), the speaker follows *adesso* with the continuation of the preceding discourse: the utterance marked with *adesso* is a warning or an apology whose personal, contingent character is underlined by *adesso* itself.

A final example is the following; *adesso* may mark the admission of forgetfulness on the part of the speaker:

(3.73) MB30/1

|              |             |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------|-------|
| A:           | però        | il            | problema        | è            | che          | va       | bè    |
|              | but         | DET           | problem         | is           | that         | goes     | well  |
|              | comunque    | io            | ho avuto        | anche        | un           | altra    | casa  |
|              | however     | I             | AUX.1SGhad      | also         | a            | another  | house |
| I'           | indirizzo   | e             | I'              | ha           | dato         | XYZ      |       |
| DET          | address.OBJ | me.DAT        | it.OBJ          | AUX.3SGgiven |              | XYZ.SBJ  |       |
| B:           | mh mh       |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
|              | mh mh       |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
| A:           | e           | I'            | indirizzo te    | lo           | do           | domani   |       |
|              | and         | DET           | address you.DAT | it.OBJ       | give.1SG     | tomorrow |       |
| B:           | ah perfetto |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
|              | ah perfect  |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
| B:           | perché eh   | <b>adesso</b> | che             | ti           | volevo       | dire?    |       |
|              | because     | <b>now</b>    | what            | you.2SG      | want.PST.1SG | to say   |       |
| mannaggia    | mi          |               | sfugge eh       | va           | be'          | mi       |       |
| damn         | me.DAT      |               | escapes         | goes         | well         | me.DAT   |       |
| verrà        | domani      |               |                 |              |              |          |       |
| come.FUT.3SG | tomorrow    |               |                 |              |              |          |       |

'A: But the problem is that... Ok, anyway I've also had another house. XYZ gave the address  
B: Mh mh



A: And the address, I'll give it to you tomorrow

B: Ah perfect

B: Because, eh, **now** what is it I wanted to tell you? Damn, I can't recall it. Oh well, it will come back to mind tomorrow'

Here, speaker B, interrupts her own turn and the dialogue in general to ask a rhetorical question about something she forgot to tell her interlocutor. Such question is introduced by *adesso*. Once again, *adesso* marks a break in the main topic of conversation and introduce a sequence that is focused on the speaker's surroundings. This requires a change of context in order for the hearer to be able to process the incoming utterances correctly. The hearer is thus required to disregard the contextual assumptions that were being used to interpret the previous utterances. The presence of a procedural expression like *adesso* is justified by the need of focusing the hearer's attention on the *hic et nunc* of the dialogue.

### 3.4.3 Adesso: discussion

We have argued in section 3.4 that *adesso* may be given the same analysis as *ora*, thus confirming our expectations on the matter, given that the two words are broadly synonyms. *Adesso* was argued to be a procedural expression which is used by the speaker to anchor the utterance to a temporal location or to communicate a switch in context. This switch is needed since the incoming information is more contingent than what previously came and requires a different context of interpretation with respect to previous discourse. We argued for a unitary account of *adesso*, which is able to encompass all uses of this expression.

We have argued that *adesso* encodes procedural meaning. The procedure encoded by temporal *adesso* helps to attribute a temporal coordinate to the logical form of the utterance. The interpretive process of the hearer will be based mostly on considerations of context; the temporal information expressed by the predicate in the utterance is not always 'reliable', as it often contrasts with that expressed by *adesso* itself and may be overridden. We argue that the procedure is actualized as follows:

(Procedure) “Find *x* that is close or coincides with utterance time, and which is made salient in the situational context, and apply it to the *adesso* utterance”

- IF the context is temporal, *adesso* is clause-initial with contrastive accent and rising intonation, THEN *x* is a temporal coordinate, and is to be applied to the *adesso* utterance
  - IF the verb is in the present tense, THEN the temporal coordinate is either in the present or in the near future with respect to reference time
  - IF the verb is in the past tense, THEN the temporal coordinate is in the near past with respect to reference time
- IF the context is non-temporal, *adesso* is in clause-initial position and prosodically isolated, THEN *x* is a contextual assumption derived from the situational context, and is to be considered as the context for the interpretation of the *adesso* utterance
  - IF *adesso* is followed by a concessive or an adversative connective, THEN it should receive a concessive interpretation
  - IF *adesso* is in clause-initial position, is prosodically integrated and introduces a question, THEN it should receive the ‘forgetfulness’ interpretation

Finally, we have argued that our inferential approach is able to account for the discourse-marking uses of *adesso* which, as we have shown in the examples, do not link linguistic units but rather assumptions. It is the relevance-theoretic notion of assumption that allows us to account successfully for the fact that non-temporal *adesso* links the incoming utterance to situational coordinates. In these cases, the prediction made by coherence-based accounts – that discourse markers connect two adjacent linguistic units such as sentences – would be erroneous.

### 3.5 Chapter discussion

In this chapter we have argued that indexicals *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* may be given the same relevance-theoretic account: they were argued to be procedural expressions which constrain the derivation of the basic explicature of the utterance or the construction of



the context for its interpretation. With our account we aim to capture the idea, presented in a number of works on indexicality (Perry 1977; Kaplan 1989; Smith 1989), that this type of expression is operational in nature rather than representational. *Allora* was shown to point consistently to previous discourse, both for the determination of the temporal coordinates of the utterance and for the search for contextual assumptions in its non-temporal uses. On the other hand, *ora* and *adesso* were shown to be used as temporal adverbials to point to utterance time or to a nearby temporal location, and in their non-temporal uses as markers of a modification in the context needed for utterance interpretation; in this function, they frequently interrupt the flow of discourse to introduce the speaker's comment on the matter at hand. Although *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* point to different sources, we claim that they constitute a particularly homogeneous group on the basis of their cognitive import, as they all encode procedural meaning and contribute to the formation of the basic explicature of the utterance, as well as constraining the constitution of context for interpretation.

The only use to which our characterization does not apply fully is the interjective use of *allora*. We based our account on both Wharton's (2003) and Padilla Cruz's (2009a) works. According to both authors, interjections may communicate higher-level explicatures expressing the speaker's attitudes and emotions. On this basis we argued that interjective *allora* may communicate a range of different attitudes and emotions and that a case-to-case analysis is advisable. At the same time, the procedure encoded by this expression guides the recovery of contextual assumptions from which a higher-level explicature may be retrieved, in case *allora* does not co-occur with propositional content.

The analysis of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* brought to light a significant number of discourse-marking uses which connect discourse sequences rather than adjacent utterances; for example, the uses of *allora* introducing narrative sequences (see section 3.2.3) and the discursive use of *ora* which mark the passage from an introduction to personal discourse (see section 3.3.2). In our inferential account, the basic entity involved in cognitive processes is the assumption; this notion allowed us to account for cases like the ones we have just mentioned. We also verified repeatedly with examples of *ora* and *adesso* that a discourse marker can very well refer to assumptions that are not linguistically communicated. Our account is thus capable of accounting for cases that are

difficult to account with text-based and coherence-based approaches, which see text and discourse as a chain of sentences related by connectives.

In this chapter we adopted a monosemous account to analysis where the procedure encoded by the expression undergoes contextual actualization. Throughout the chapter we highlighted what the contextual clues are that the hearer can rely on in the search for the optimal interpretation. At a syntactic level, we have observed that *allora* mostly occurs in utterance-initial position, and we suggested that in that case the non-temporal uses may be distinguished by an isolated prosody. The deductive use can however take an utterance-final position. For both *ora* and *adesso*, position in the utterance tends to be initial, with the exception of the temporal use which is characterized by greater mobility in the utterance. At a semantic level, *allora* sees its temporal interpretation precluded by some tenses (simple present and present perfect); we suggested that this be correlated to its distal character. As regards *ora* and *adesso*, we have observed that verb tense is not always a clue as to which temporal interpretation to pick, so that as well must be supplemented with other clues, in this specific case other linguistic context. The co-occurrence with elements like *prima* 'before', 'earlier' and *un tempo* 'once' suggest a temporal reading. The discursive uses of *ora* and *adesso* are characterized by an independent prosody and occasionally by the participation in a construction with a concessive element. Finally, being aware of the type of communication taking place – whether monological or dialogical – and of the aim – to describe, narrate, argument – may refine the hearer's expectations on what uses to expect, although any type of occurrence may occur at any time.



## CHAPTER 4

### ASPECTUAL ADVERBS: *ANCORA*, *GIÀ* AND *SEMPRE*

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will argue for an inferential account of the aspectual adverbs *ancora* ‘still’, *già* ‘already’ and *sempre* ‘always’. Firstly, we will describe *ancora* and *già* as procedural expressions which trigger the construction of alternatives based on contextually-evoked scales. We will argue that these expressions introduce a contrast between alternative propositions, and constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures concerning the speaker’s propositional attitude on such contrast. We will argue that our analysis can account for all of their uses, both aspectual and non-aspectual. We will thus attempt to describe the inferential mechanism behind the indirect communication of contrast between two alternatives, which has been observed before in the relevant literature for Italian as well as for other languages (Vandeweghe 2006: 173; Hansen 2008: 172; Bazzanella *et al.* 2005: 57).

With this account we furthermore aim to explain the pragmatic processes underlying the trait of subjectivity which has been ascribed to aspectual particles (Hansen 2008: 171-172; Hansen & Strudsholm 2008: 487). We define here subjectivity as involving “the expression of self and the representation of a speaker’s [...] perspective or point of view in discourse - what has been called a speaker’s imprint” (Finegan 1995: 1). In our account, the speaker’s subjectivity is indirectly communicated by *ancora* and *già* in the form of higher-level explicatures expressing the speaker’s communicative intention and attitude towards the propositional content of the utterance. The possibility that procedural meaning constrains the formation of higher-level explicatures is contemplated by Leonetti & Escandell Vidal (2004: 2).

Secondly, we will proceed to ascertain whether *sempre* can be given the same account. Our attempt to apply the same analysis to this adverb is motivated by a number of studies on aspectual particles in languages other than Italian. In these studies, the near-equivalents of *sempre* has been argued to share not only aspectual, but also

pragmatic properties with the other aspectual items in the same languages (see Hansen 2008 and van der Auwera 1993 on French *toujours*; 625; Löbner 1999 on German *immer noch*). We will argue that the proposed analysis for *ancora* and *già* only partly fits *sempre*: although this adverb does occasionally constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures in its scalar uses, it does not do so as regularly as *ancora* and *già*. A further difference is that its aspectual uses it contributes to the basic explicature of the utterance. Finally, *sempre* does not appear to be as markedly scalar as *ancora* and *già*, due to its specific nature of marker of stasis. On our account, *sempre* is a quantifier which is used by the hearer to determine the duration and/or repetition of a certain eventuality over time. We will further maintain that the speaker may exploit this meaning in non-temporal contexts to trigger further effects, such as the recovery of higher-level explicatures or the elimination of previously entertained assumptions.

We will claim that these expressions can be seen as constituting a homogeneous group when considering their cognitive import. All three expressions are argued to encode procedural meaning; furthermore, they are argued to be able to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the explicatures of the utterance in both their aspectual and non-aspectual uses, and this sets them apart from the temporal expressions described in chapter 3 and 5. However, as already mentioned, we maintain that this group is somewhat less uniform than the one observed in chapter 3.

With this chapter we also aim to offer a comprehensive inferential account of Italian aspectual particles, which in our view the existing studies fail to provide. The only significant exhaustive study of *ancora* to the best of our knowledge is given in Tovenia (1994); this study however focuses on its interaction with negation and does not explain the pragmatic processes involved in its use. Literature on *già* is slightly richer: the work by Bazzanella *et al.* (2005) presents an analysis of this adverb together with its counterparts in other languages; it however lacks detail as to the inferential processes underlying its use. *Già* has also been analysed in a contrastive study with French cognate *déjà* in Hansen and Strudsholm (2008); this study differs from ours since it provides a polysemous account and since it makes reference to diachronic considerations. A comprehensive, inference-based analysis of *sempre* is non-existent to our knowledge. Some uses of the three expressions are taken singularly and described in the literature on discourse markers



or in grammars; in this chapter we will refer to the characterization of their aspectual uses by Bertinetto (1986) and to the mention of interjective *già* in Poggi (1995).

We will adopt a monosemous approach to the analysis of the polyfunctionality of *ancora*, *già* and *sempre*, in line with chapter 3, and will illustrate the range of contextual cues that the hearer can exploit in his interpretive process. We have already mentioned the main one: the occurrence with specific nouns, adjectives and adverbs will be shown to concur in the evoking of scales. These semantic triggers will be shown to be much more influent on the final interpretation of these expressions than syntactic or prosodic factors; the latter though will be shown to be involved in the identification of the interjective uses of *già*. Finally, we will maintain that tense and aspectual information may impact on the aspectual interpretations of these expressions. In the following section we will present a review of the literature on aspectual particles, which sets the background for our account. This will be followed by a review of the studies on the scalar uses of these expressions (section 4.1.2).

#### 4.1.1 *Ancora*, *già* and *sempre* as aspectual and phasal adverbs

*Ancora*, *già* and *sempre* may be described as aspectual adverbs; as such, they contribute to the description of the internal structure of the eventuality expressed by the utterance. While literature on Italian aspectual particles is not extensive, as shown above, a good deal of works has focused on their foreign counterparts. French *déjà*, *encore* and *toujours* are illustrated in several publications by Hansen (2002, 2005, 2008; Hansen & Strudsholm 2008), who adopts a polysemous account. German *noch* and *schon* are discussed by Löbner (1991, 1999), König (1991) and Mittwoch (1993). English *still* and *already* are extensively analysed by van der Auwera (1993) and Michaelis (1993, 1996). Spanish *ya* is discussed by García Fernández (1999), as well as by Delbecque and Maldonado (2010); finally, Spanish *siempre* has received attention by Cúrco (2004) as well as by Cúrco and Melis (2009).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a longer list of publications and languages studied, see van der Auwera (1998: 25) and Hansen (2008: 4).

In addition to being aspectual, *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* can also be said to be 'phasal', since they focus on the inception and cessation of phases (see Löbner 1991; van der Auwera 1993; Hansen 2002, 2008). A phase is to be intended here as a stretch of time for which a certain state of affairs can be said to apply or not apply. An example is German *schon* ('already'). An influential account of *schon* as a phasal adverb is given by Löbner (1991; also discussed in König 1991) and is as follows: given a sequence of phases  $p$  and  $\neg p$  of some state  $p$ , aspectual operators such as *schon* "locate a reference time  $t_e$  in such a sequence"; in the case of *schon*,  $t_e$  "falls into a positive phase 'p' after a preceding negative phase '-p' (König 1991: 144). Descriptions of the aspectual behaviour of phasal adverbs are usually accompanied by schematic illustrations like the following:

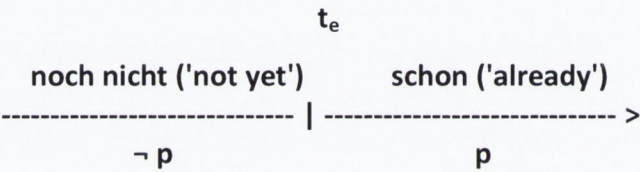


Figure 1 - Schematic illustration of German *schon* (adapted from König 1991: 145)

The phasal properties of *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* will be discussed informally in the course of this chapter.

In the relevant literature, aspectual adverbs are often said to be triggering presuppositions concerning "preceding" and "subsequent phases of the SoA" described by the predicate in which these adverbs occur, as well as the "earliness or lateness of the change of state" on which they focus (Hansen 2008: 113-119; see Löbner 1991; Mittwoch 1993: 71; for Italian, see Bertinetto 1986: 161). An example concerning change of state is that of the presupposition tagged 'premature eventuation', which is said to arise by means of the use of English *already* (see van der Auwera 1993; Michaelis 1996): *already* supposedly communicates that the inception of the eventuality described by the utterance took place before expected. Presupposition is one in a set of notions that have been used to account for that portion of meaning that constitutes the background information of an utterance. While in the past the notions of semantic presupposition (developed by Frege, Russell and Strawson) and pragmatic presupposition (Stalnaker 1970) were used, recently post-Gricean theories have been employing other notions,



principally generalized conversational implicature (Levinson 2000) and explicature as well as (particularized conversational) implicature (Carston 2002). Recent accounts have also employed the notion of conventional implicature (Hansen 2008). We will review this type of allegedly presupposed content as the chapter progresses, in correspondence with the relevant adverbs, and will propose that while some of this content is regularly communicated, some of it is only implicated on a contextual basis. We will argue that in the use of these particles may lead indirectly to the contextual effect of elimination of previously entertained assumptions, but that this effect is not encoded by the particles themselves and therefore does not necessarily arise all the time.

4.1.2 Ancora, già and sempre as scalar particles

Ancora, già and sempre may be defined as ‘scalar particles’, by virtue of the fact that they can be used to refer to a contextually relevant scale with the aim of characterizing an entity. Levinson (1983: 133) defines a scale as follows:

A linguistic scale consists of a set of linguistic alternatives, or contrastive expressions of the same grammatical category, which can be arranged in a linear order by degree of *informativeness* or semantic strength.

In order to illustrate the scalarity of these expressions, we anticipate here the scalar use of *già* which will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.3.2. In (4.1), the phrase *piccolo tavolo* ‘small table’ evokes a pragmatic, ad hoc scale which comprises alternative values ranging from ‘not a table’ to ‘small table’, to ‘large table’. *Già* is instrumental in characterizing the object in question as qualifying for the description of ‘table’, albeit a small one:

(4.1) RD11/2

|          |        |             |             |      |         |          |    |
|----------|--------|-------------|-------------|------|---------|----------|----|
| A: [...] | sempre | cominciando | dal         | più  | piccino | abbiamo  | un |
|          | always | beginning   | from.DET    | most | small   | have.1PL | a  |
| diametro | di     | ventidue    | centimetri  | per  | un’     | altezza  |    |
| diameter | of     | 22          | centimetres | for  | a       | height   |    |

|                         |                   |                             |                   |                     |                              |                             |                  |                 |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| guardate<br>look.IMP    | le<br>DET         | zampine<br>little paws      | come<br>how       | son<br>are.3PL      | lavorate<br>carved           |                             |                  |                 |
| di<br>of                | quarantadue<br>42 | andiamo<br>go.IMP.1PL       | a<br>to           | quello<br>that      | da<br>from                   | quattrocentomila<br>400.000 |                  |                 |
| lire<br>lire            | trenta<br>30      | centimetri #<br>centimetres | questo<br>this    | è<br>is             | <b>già</b><br><b>already</b> | un<br>a                     | piccolo<br>small | tavolo<br>table |
| può<br>can              | sempre<br>always  | svolgere la<br>to perform   | funzionedi<br>DET | base<br>function of | quarantasei<br>basis         | di<br>46                    | di<br>of         | ma<br>but       |
| altezza [...]<br>height |                   |                             |                   |                     |                              |                             |                  |                 |

‘A: Once again I’m starting from the smallest one. Here is a 22 cm diameter for a height of – look at the legs, how they are carved – 42 cm. Now the one for 400.000 lire, 30 cm. This is **already** a small table but it can still perform the basic function. The height is 46 cm.’

The contextually evoked scale in this example may be represented graphically as follows:

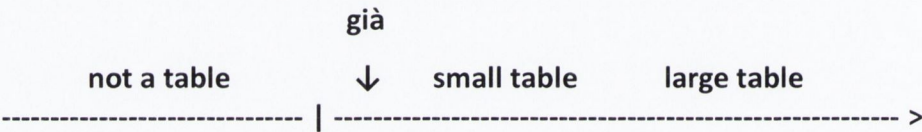


Figure 2 - Schematic representation of the scalar meaning of *già*

The graphics of a scale is well described in Michaelis’ (1993: 196) account of English *already*. The scale in question features a ‘threshold’ which divides said scale into a ‘safe region’ and a ‘dangerous region’. The scalar particle *già* locates the item or situation described at a specific point within a safe region, but not too far from the threshold.

We will observe that *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* draw the attention to a comparison between the value on the scale pointed at by the particle itself and an alternative value on a scale, much like in the case of what is described by Levinson (2000: 35ff) as the “first (Q-) heuristic”. This heuristic is said to be in play with the use of expressions like *some*, as a weaker member of the “scalar contrast set <*all*, *some*>”: “for a set of alternates, use of one (especially a weaker) implicates inapplicability of another (especially an otherwise compatible stronger alternate)” (2000: 36). We will argue in the course of the chapter that by drawing attention on a contrast, these three expressions evoke higher-level explicatures communicating different types of propositional attitudes, depending on the



context. We will furthermore argue that, although the ‘scalar’ uses of this type of expressions is commonly used in the literature to refer to non-temporal uses, the procedure whereby alternatives are compared applies to both a temporal scale, that is, a temporal axis, and non-temporal scales.

The idea that scalar uses are the result of a transfer of a schema from the temporal domain to other domains is widespread in the literature on scalar particles in languages other than Italian. For instance, according to König (1977, in Michaelis 1993: 196), English *still* has to do with “man’s ability to order [...] entities of various kind [and] to rank them along a scale”. This, as argued by Michaelis (1993), can be seen as a schema which can be applied to time as well as other scales. Similarly, according to Löbner (1991), the scalar use of *noch* is basically the same as its temporal use; however, a different type of scale is involved. Krifka also notes that the alternatives to which the stated is compared need not be points in time but may also be of a different type (2000: 6-7). The transfer of a schema from a domain to another is also discussed in more cognitive terms by Østergaard (2003). We will capture this transfer in our account by means of the different actualization of the core procedural meaning in different contexts; however, for the moment we will not claim that the original domain of application is the temporal domain. This issue will be discussed in the conclusion to the present work (see section 6.5.1).

## 4.2 *Ancora*

In this section we will argue for an analysis of *ancora* as a procedural expression which indicates a contrast between the proposition expressed by the utterance and an alternative proposition which is accessible in the context. We will show that these alternatives are values on scales which are constructed on line. We will first analyse the cases in which this scale is a temporal axis. We will argue that, in these contexts, *ancora* suggests that an eventuality is still ongoing, or was ongoing at a past reference time, against the expectations; in this case, the evoked alternative is a negative phase in which the eventuality in question does not obtain. Secondly, we will proceed to analyse those cases in which the involved scale is of types other than temporal. We will argue that in those contexts *ancora* evokes a comparison between different values on those scales. Finally, we will claim that in both types of contexts the hearer will retrieve higher-level

explicatures concerning the speaker’s propositional attitude, and might also retrieve additional implications on a case-to-case basis. We shall provide a unified account by arguing that what ties all these interpretations together is the core procedure encoded by *ancora*: a highly schematic indication that the hearer will actualize on a contextual basis.

*Ancora* originates in the Latin expression *hānc hōra(m)*, which literally translates to ‘at this hour’ (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 53; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 89; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 90; Garzanti 2008: 121). In Old and literary Italian, *ancora* has the additional meaning of *anche* (‘also’) (Serianni 1988: 420); this is particularly relevant to our analysis as we will show that *ancora* appears to indicate addition (see section 4.2.2).

*Ancora* is considered an adverb in the literature, with the following exceptions. Firstly, according to Zingarelli *et al.*, *ancora* may be a connective (“congiunzione”; the term is not further specified) as in the following:

(4.2)

Tu

sei

*ancora*

più

fortunato

di

me

you

are.2SG

*still*

more

lucky

than

me.

(Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 89)

'You are *even* luckier than me.'

However, note that this occurrence of *ancora* takes a sub-sentential scope and seems to modify the predicate in the way adverbs do. We will discuss this instance of *ancora* in section 4.2.2. Secondly, according to Garzanti, *ancora* functions as a connective in examples such as the following, where *ancora* occurs in clause-external position to mark the addition of an item in an enumeration:

(4.3)

La

situazione

economica

interna

impone

tagli

DET

situation

economic

internal

imposes

cuts

alla

spesa;

*ancora,*

essa

impone

prudenza

to-DET

expenditure

*also*

it

imposes

caution

nei

rapporti

commerciali

con

i

paesi

in\_DET

relations

trade.ADJ

with

DET

countries



esteri.  
foreign

(Garzanti 2008: 121)

'The domestic economic situation calls for cuts in the expenses. *Also*, it calls for caution in trade relations with foreign countries.'

Given its clause-external position and its marginality with respect to the content of the sentence, we agree in considering this as an instance of connective *ancora*; this use shall be further discussed in section 4.2.2.

We will now briefly sketch the possible syntactic and prosodic configurations of *ancora*. The picture appears fairly uncomplicated, since the only configuration that allows for a non-temporal reading in the example below is the one in which *ancora* is in sentence-initial position and prosodically isolated from the rest of the sentence. To be more specific, in this example *ancora* marks the addition of an item in an enumeration (see section 4.2.2):

|       |                |          |           |     |            |
|-------|----------------|----------|-----------|-----|------------|
| (4.4) | <b>Ancora,</b> | devo     | finire    | la  | relazione. |
|       | Still          | must.1SG | to finish | DET | report     |

'Also, I have to finish the report.'

However, when *ancora* is in sentence-initial position, but prosodically integrated in the utterance, it only allows for a temporal interpretation

|       |        |          |           |     |                   |
|-------|--------|----------|-----------|-----|-------------------|
| (4.5) | Ancora | devo     | finire    | la  | <b>relazione.</b> |
|       | Still  | must.1SG | to finish | DET | report            |

'I still have to finish the report.'

All other positions seem to only allow for a temporal interpretation; notice that in these cases, *ancora* is never stressed:

- (4.6) Devo            ancora            finire            la            relazione.  
          Must.1SG       still            to finish        DET       report

'I still have to finish the report.'

- (4.7) Devo            finire            ancora la            relazione.  
          Must.1SG       to finish        still       DET       report

'I still have to finish the report.'

When in sentence-final position, *ancora* seems to force a focused stress on *relazione* 'report':

- (4.8) Devo            finire            la        **relazione**       ancora.  
          Must.1SG       to finish        DET       report            still

'I still have to finish the report.'

We suggest that the blocking of non-temporal interpretations in the above examples is due to the fact that the interpretation of *ancora* depends crucially on the semantics of the surrounding constituents of the sentence. The constituents of the above sentence trigger a temporal scale, which in turn invites a temporal interpretation for *ancora*. On the other hand, a context which evokes non-temporal scales would trigger non-temporal interpretations. We shall review these contextual constraints as the chapter progresses. We will proceed now to analyse examples of *ancora* from the corpora and demonstrate that all uses, both temporal and non-temporal, have in common a basic schema by which they indicate that the proposition expressed by the utterance contrasts with an alternative proposition.



4.2.1 Ancora and aspectual meaning

As a temporal adverb, *ancora* is traditionally associated with a meaning of continuation (see Serianni 1988: 420; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 89). *Ancora* indeed suggests that the eventuality in question takes place at reference time, and has been continuing from the past, as in the following example:

(4.9) E'        *ancora*        presto.  
         is       *still*        early

(Bertinetto 1986: 130)

'It's *still* early.'

We analyse this example in the following way: *ancora* draws the attention to the possibility that such eventuality would have terminated earlier, and thus that the eventuality would not be true at reference time. The proposition “È presto” ‘It’s early’ contrasts with the alternative proposition “È tardi” ‘it’s late’. The speaker might want to draw the hearer’s attention to the alternative scenario for different reasons depending on the context; for example, the hearer might have suggested in the previous turn that they must leave soon in order to arrive on time for an event. The alternative proposition will therefore be already entertained by the hearer. However, we can imagine a scenario in which the hearer might have asked “Don’t you have an appointment today?” with no specific expectation about the possible lateness of the interlocutor. In that case, the alternative is made salient exclusively by the speaker by uttering *ancora*. The cognitive status of the contravened expectation is therefore a variable one in our account. The speaker may have wanted to use *ancora* to emphasize the propositional content as contrasting with what expected by the hearer; the latter may recover additional effects, for example the elimination of the assumption “It’s late”, in case it is previously entertained, or new implications, such as “The speaker does not need to leave any time soon”.

*Aspectual ancora* may also suggest repetition. While continuance is predicated of the eventuality in question, like in the previous example, there are intervals in the phase

where the property does not obtain. This use of *ancora* is accompanied by the use of the perfective aspect:

- (4.10) Vincenzo tornerà' ancora, vedrai.  
vincenzo come back.FUT.3SG again see.FUT.2SG  
(Bertinetto 1986: 195)  
'Vincenzo will be back *again*, you'll see.'

In this example, *ancora* signals that the activity designed by the verb *tornerà*, that is to say, ‘to be back’, will verify one or more times in the future in addition to a contextually relevant other time. This occurrence draws a contrast between a state of affairs in which Vincenzo returns, and a state of affairs in which he will not. The verb “vedrai” ‘you’ll see’ suggests that the speaker is trying to reassure the hearer, which may also be the reason for uttering *ancora*: the speaker needs to communicate that she is confident about what expressed in the proposition.

In chapter 3 we argued that the temporal uses of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance. In order to establish whether the same is true for *ancora* in these aspectual uses, we can check by means of two tests whether it falls under the scope of operators like conditionals and negation (Carston 2002a: 191). For instance:

- (4.11) Se Vincenzo tornerà (ancora), andremo con lui a Roma.  
If Vincenzo comes back again, we will travel to Rome with him.

Here, the condition appears to be the same with or without *ancora*, which suggests that the item does not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance.

- (4.12) Vincenzo tornerà ancora, vedrai.  
'Vincenzo will be back *again*, you'll see.'  
  
?No, non tornerà ANCORA, tornerà e basta.  
'No, he won't be back AGAIN, he will be back and that's it.'



This test shows that it is difficult for negation to take scope over *ancora*. We conclude that aspectual *ancora* does not contribute to the basic explicature of the utterance.

Earlier in this section we argued that the hearer chooses between the continuative and the iterative interpretation on the basis of the aspectual information of the predicate. We argue that an additional cue might be the telicity as expressed by the verb: atelic aspect will yield a continuative reading, while telic aspect will yield an iterative reading. However, note that some verbs, eg. *correre* ('to run'), may be both telic and atelic, thus making both readings possible:

(4.13)

Nuvolari

corse

*ancora*.

nuvolari

run.PST.3SG

*on*

(Tovena 1994: 10)

'Nuvolari went on racing.'

(4.14)

Nuvolari

corse

*ancora*

la

Millemiglia.

nuvolari

run.PST.3SG

*again*

DET

millemiglia

(Tovena 1994: 11)

Nuvolari raced *again* in the Millemiglia.'

These examples show that, although *ancora* interacts with aspectual information, context is still a determining factor; neither verbal aspect nor telicity can be tied to a specific interpretation for the totality of cases.

Before moving on to the non-temporal uses of *ancora*, a few comments shall be made on the so-called presuppositions communicated by *ancora* and its foreign counterparts. The presence, either in the situational context or in the co-text, of a preceding point in time when the state of affairs or event was already true, is called the ‘anaphoricity requirement’ by Greenberg (2006) for English *still*. Authors researching languages other than Italian account for this meaning as a presupposition (Michaelis 1993: 211-214, Pacelli Pebka 2003: 245 Greenberg 2006: 69; Hansen 2002; 2008). We share the intuition that this piece of information is communicated regularly on the part of *ancora*. Furthermore, *ancora* allegedly contravenes the expectation that the eventuality would have terminated earlier than at reference time. The most widespread position is

that this is part of the semantics of the counterparts of *ancora* (Doherty 1973 on German *noch*, van der Auwera 1993 on English *still*, Mittwoch 1993 on both *noch* and *still*). In our account we argue that the alternative evoked by *ancora* may be already expected or not: the alternative is evoked *on line* and may or may not be entertained by the hearer in advance.

To conclude this section, we have argued that aspectual *ancora* draws a comparison between the proposition expressed by the utterance and an alternative proposition which is triggered *on line*. The non-temporal uses of *ancora*, presented in the next section, will be argued to feature the same procedure, though undergoing a different contextual actualization.

### 4.2.2 Non-temporal uses of *ancora*

In this section we will argue that the non-temporal occurrences of *ancora* encode the same core procedure as described in the previous section. What changes is the type of scale involved: rather than a temporal scale, the examples in this section will be shown to involve semantic or pragmatic scales relative to spatial locations, measures or abstract attributes. *Ancora* operates on such scales by inviting the hearer to entertain two propositions in the same context and to retrieve higher-level explicatures regarding her attitude. In the following example, the speaker characterizes an answer on a scale from generic to specific:

(4.15) ND2/1

|          |          |                  |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
|----------|----------|------------------|-------|--------|-----------|-----|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| A: [...] | prima    | di               | tutto | qual'  | e'        | il  | tema         | qual' | e'      | il    |
|          | before   | of               | all   | which  | is        | DET | theme        | which | is      | DET   |
| fatto    | centrale | di               | tutto | questo | materiale |     | secondo      |       | voi     | qual  |
| fact     | central  | of               | all   | this   | material  |     | according to |       | you.2PL | which |
| e'?      |          |                  |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
| is       |          |                  |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
| D:       | il       | cartone animato  |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
|          | DET      | cartoon animated |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
| C:       | il       | cartone animato  |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |
|          | DET      | cartoon animated |       |        |           |     |              |       |         |       |



|       |         |               |              |        |          |               |          |          |
|-------|---------|---------------|--------------|--------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|
| A:    | il      | cartone       | animato      | e      | stiamo   | <b>ancora</b> | sul      | generico |
|       | the     | cartoon       | animated     | and    | stay.1PL | <b>still</b>  | on.DET   | generic  |
| pero' | eh?     | nel           | carto<ne>    | d<el>  | nel      | cartone       | animato  | che      |
| but   | eh      | in.DET        | cartoon      | of.DET | in.DET   | cartoon       | animated | what     |
| cosa  | abbiamo | curato        | soprattutto? |        |          |               |          |          |
| Thing | AUX.1PL | taken care of | above all    |        |          |               |          |          |
| CORO: | la      | musica        | la           | musica |          |               |          |          |
| choir | DAT     | music         | DAT          | music  |          |               |          |          |

'A: [...] First of all, what's the theme, what's the central fact of all of this material in your opinion? What is it?

D: The cartoon

C: The cartoon

A: The cartoon, and we're **still** around the generic, but, eh? In the cartoon... in the cartoon, what did we take care of especially?

CHORUS: The music, the music'

In this example, *ancora* helps the speaker characterizing the answer that was given. The scale in question can be defined semantic, as is evoked by the semantics of the adjective *generico*, which is the weaker item in the scale. With *ancora*, the speaker suggests that the answer that was given is located at the generic end of the scale, but also that a specific answer is desirable. We argue that the procedure encoded by *ancora* invites the hearer to draw a contrast between the proposition and the alternative proposition "siamo sullo specifico" 'we are being specific'. The hearer will also recover higher-level explicatures, for example "The speaker is disappointed that we are being generic".

Here is a further example of *ancora* locating values on a scale, this time involving spatial location:

#### (4.16) FD14/1

|          |           |           |          |              |               |     |        |         |       |
|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|---------------|-----|--------|---------|-------|
| A: [...] | c'        | era       | questo   | porticato    |               |     |        |         |       |
|          | LOC       | was.3SG   | this     | porch        |               |     |        |         |       |
| questa   | porta     | qui       | che      | si           | chiamava      | l'  | atrio  | delle   | donne |
| this     | door      | here      | that.SBJ | REFL         | called        | DET | atrium | of.DET  | women |
| lo       | spazio    | fra       | il       | secondo      | porticato     | e   | il     |         |       |
| DET      | space     | between   | DET      | second       | porch         | and | DET    |         |       |
| terzo    | porticato | quindi    |          | rimaneva     | <b>ancora</b> | eh  | nell'  | interno |       |
| third    | porch     | therefore |          | remained.3SG | <b>still</b>  |     | in.DET | inside  |       |
| [...]    |           |           |          |              |               |     |        |         |       |

'A: [...] there was this porch, this door here, that was called the women's atrium. The space between the second porch and the third porch, therefore, was **still** on the inside [...]

This passage involves the description of a building and the location of different parts of this building in relation to each other. This type of context evokes a spatial scale involving a gradient from indoor to outdoor locations; the occurrence of *ancora* marks the location of the porch as indoors on this scale. Using the cognitive notion of 'fictive motion' (Talmy 2000; Ramscar, Matlock & Boroditsky 2010: 76), we can describe this as an instance of the widespread phenomenon by which spatial staticity is rendered as motion. The inanimate object that is the porch is given the animate attribute of movement, and its location is described as a position on an ideal trajectory. Space is here conceptualized in terms of a metaphorical figurative journey from indoors to outdoors. The speaker might have wanted to utter *ancora* to underline the exceptionality of the location.

On other occasions, the alternatives evoked by *ancora* are only vaguely specified. Consider the following example:

(4.17) MC11/2

|                     |                  |          |         |             |                 |              |          |           |
|---------------------|------------------|----------|---------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| A:                  | ma               | questo   | perché? | perché      | inciderebbe_    | sui          | costi?   |           |
|                     | but              | this     | why     | because     | incide.COND.3SG | on.DET       | costs    |           |
| B:                  | perché           | tutti    | temono  | i           | produttori      | da           | una      | parte     |
|                     | because          | all      | fear    | DET         | manufacturers   | from         | one      | side      |
| i                   | trasportatori    | dall'    |         | altra       | i               | commercianti | dall'    |           |
| DET                 | transporters     | from.DET |         | other       | DET             | traders      | from.DET |           |
| altra               | <b>ancora_</b>   | che      | questa  | catena      | del             | freddo       |          |           |
| other               | <b>still</b>     | that     | this    | chain       | of.DET          | cold         |          |           |
| venga               | smascherata      | di       | fatto   | di          | fatto           | è            | molto    | difficile |
| comes               | unmasked         | of       | fact    | of          | fact            | is           | very     | difficult |
| mantenerla          |                  | si       | può     | mantenere_  | ci              | vogliono     |          |           |
| maintain.SBJ-it.OBJ |                  | REFL     | can.3SG | to maintain | LOC             | want.3PL     |          |           |
| alcune              | condizioni [...] |          |         |             |                 |              |          |           |
| some                | conditions.SBJ   |          |         |             |                 |              |          |           |

'A: But why this? Because it would weigh upon the costs?  
 B: Because everybody fears – producers on the one hand, freight sector on the other hand, traders on the other hand **still** – that this chain of the cold will be dismantled. In fact, in fact, it is very difficult to maintain. It can be maintained - some conditions are needed [...]





with an alternative proposition: the possibility that the speaker would not have added any further items to the offer. The expressed attitude could be one of pride, or delight.

A further variant of the scalar use, which was already presented at the beginning of section 4.2, sees *ancora* as part of comparative constructions, in co-occurrence with progressive forms such as *più* 'more' and *meno* 'less', followed by an adjective or an adverb, or adjectives and adverbs like *meglio* ('better', adv.) or *migliore* ('better', adj.). Here is an illustration:

(4.19) DGmtA03T/3

|          |               |        |               |             |        |             |              |             |          |
|----------|---------------|--------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| p2G#504: | #<F#503>      | subito | sotto#        | gli o+ /    | allora | subito      | sotto        | gli         |          |
|          | immediately   |        | under         | DET         | so     | immediately | under        | DET         |          |
| occhiali | sei           | alla   | sinistra      | della       | matita | di          | tre          | centimetri  |          |
| glasses  | are.2SG       | at-DET | left          | of-DET      | pencil | of          | three        | centimetres |          |
| p1F#505: | sì            |        |               |             |        |             |              |             |          |
|          | yes           |        |               |             |        |             |              |             |          |
| p2G#506: | <inspiration> | poi    | un            | po'         | più    | sotto       | sei          | alla        | sinistra |
|          |               | then   | a             | bit         | more   | under       | are.2SG      | at-DET      | left     |
| della    | matita        | di     | due           | centimetri  |        |             |              |             |          |
| of-DET   | pencil        | of     | two           | centimetres |        |             |              |             |          |
| p1F#507: | sì            |        |               |             |        |             |              |             |          |
|          | yes           |        |               |             |        |             |              |             |          |
| p2G#508: | <inspiration> | poi    | <b>ancora</b> | un          | po'    | <b>più</b>  | sotto sen+ / | sei         |          |
|          | then          |        | <b>still</b>  | a           | bit    | <b>more</b> | under        | are.2SG     |          |
| a        | sinistra      | della  | matita        | di          | un     | centimetro  | e            | mezzo       |          |
| at       | left          | of-DET | pencil        | of          | a      | centimetre  | and          | half        |          |

'p2: Immediately below the... Now, immediately under the glasses, you're left of the pencil by 3cm  
p1: Yes  
p2: Then, a little more below, you're left of the pencil by 2cm  
p1: Yes  
p2: Then, a little **more** below **still**... you're left of the pencil by 1.5cm'

Here, the speaker refers to a position that is 'lower' and then to another one that is 'lower still'. In this use, French *encore* is called "adverbe de degré" by Hansen (2002: 153), and refers to a scale formed by various "degrees of applicability of the predicate" in question. In (4.19), the predicate is 'being below', which applies to a greater degree in the second



occurrence. With *ancora* the speaker highlights the progression in movement, against what might have been the expectations of the hearer.

#### 4.2.3 *Ancora*: discussion

We have argued that *ancora* is an expression which encodes procedural meaning; with its occurrences, this adverb invites the hearer to consider two alternative propositions as contrasting: the one encoded by the utterance marked by *ancora*, and another which is determined contextually as a value on a scale. On the basis of this comparison, the hearer will retrieve higher-level explicatures expressing the speaker's stance on such contrast.

We argued that certain contexts evoke a temporal scale, to which *ancora* applies its procedure by contrasting a positive phase of an event with a possible alternative, that is to say a negative phase in which this event does not obtain. In its non-temporal uses, we argued, *ancora* operates on scales of different types, and suggests that the propositional content in question contrasts with a possible alternative. In both temporal and non-temporal uses, this alternative might be already entertained by the hearer, or only become salient at utterance time. We furthermore maintained that the speaker may want to point at a contrast to indirectly communicate various types of attitudes, which are recovered by the hearer in the form of higher-level explicatures.

We identified various contextual cues that, we argue, lead the hearer to picking an interpretation for *ancora*:

(Procedure) "Find a contextual assumption which can plausibly be an alternative degree on a scale to the proposition expressed by the *ancora* utterance"

- IF the context is temporal, THEN the contextually derived scale is temporal
  - IF the aspect of the verb is imperfective and atelic, THEN the eventuality is continuative
  - IF the aspect of the verb is perfective and telic, THEN the eventuality is reiterated in time
- IF the context is non-temporal and antonyms appear in the *ancora* utterance, THEN the contextually derived scale is non-temporal

- IF words like *più*, *meno*, *maggiore*, *minore* appear in the utterance, THEN *ancora* is to be given a progressive interpretation
- IF the context is spatial, THEN *ancora* is to be given a spatial interpretation

We observed in all uses of *ancora* that this aspectual particle focuses on the fact that the conclusion of a certain phase might have taken place, but has not. We will argue in the incoming sections that *già* too focuses on a ‘change of state’, but rather on the inception of a phase: it indicates that a contextually relevant phase has begun, contrary to expectation. We will nevertheless argue that *già* too constrains the formation of higher-level explicatures.

### 4.3 Già

In this section we will argue that *già* is a procedural expression which indicates a contrast between alternatives, much like in the case of *ancora*. We will claim that the aspectual use of *già* signals either that the eventuality in question started in the past and is true at utterance time, contrary to expectations; another possibility is that the eventuality took place and concluded in the past. The same schema may be applied to scales other than temporal. The “underspecified semantic structure”, in the words that Michaelis (1996: 501) used for English *already*, is a ‘core’ procedure which is developed on a contextual basis. We will also account for two interjective uses of *già*, and show that they too constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures.

*Già* derives from Latin *iām* (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 491; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 771; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 848; Garzanti 2008: 1059), which had numerous meanings, such as ‘still’, ‘then’, ‘furthermore’, ‘now, from now on’, ‘soon’ and the meaning of present-day *già* itself (Kroon & Risselada 2002, in Bazzanella *et al.* 2005: 51). *Già* is generally considered an adverb, with two exceptions. Firstly, the following use is listed as adjectival in Garzanti (2008: 1059) and “(quasi) adjectival” by Hansen and Strudsholm (2008: 472):



(4.20) Il        castello,        *già*        carcere,        ora        museo  
 DET    castle        *already*        jail        now        museum  
 (Garzanti 2008: 1059)

'The castle, *once* a jail, now a museum'

Secondly, *già* is classified as an interjection by Poggi (1995). The following sequence is taken from Poggi's description (p. 412):

(4.21) A:        Ricordati                                che        devi        telefonare  
               Remember.IMP.REFL.2SG        that        must.2SG        to phone  
  
               al                                mobiliere  
               to-DET                                furnisher  
  
 B:        *Già.*  
               *already*  
 (Poggi 1995: 412)

'A: Remember that you must phone the furnisher.  
 B: *Oh yeah, true.*'

We are now going to test *già* in different syntactic positions to see if any of them is distinctive of any of its intepretations. *Già* can indeed signal agreement in initial and final position if separated prosodically:

(4.22) **Già**,                zia        Anna    è        tornata.  
               Already        aunt    anna    is        returned

'Yes, aunt Anna is back.'

(4.23) Zia Anna è tornata, **già**.  
 Aunt anna is returned already

'Aunt Anna is back, yes.'

In all other configurations, however, *già* only allows for temporal interpretations:

(4.24) Già zia Anna è tornata.  
 Already aunt anna is returned

'Aunt Anna is already back.'

(4.25) Zia Anna già è tornata.  
 Aunt anna already is returned

'Aunt Anna is already back.'

(4.26) Zia Anna è già tornata.  
 Aunt anna is already returned

'Aunt Anna is already back.'

(4.27) Zia Anna è tornata **già**.  
 Aunt anna is returned already

'Aunt Anna is already back.'

The resulting picture is thus similar to that of *ancora*: the non-temporal interpretations of *già* are blocked by this example by virtue of its semantics. 'Tornare' is a motion verb which allows for aspectual interpretations of *già*, but blocks others. We thus conclude that the interpretation of *già* relies largely on semantic rather than syntactic cues. This will be confirmed by the examples in section 4.3.2.



We will argue for a unified account for *già*, according to which *già* encodes the same procedure in all uses: an instruction to process the proposition expressed by the utterance with an alternative proposition which is evoked by elements in the contexts. We will begin with the aspectual uses of *già*, which draw the hearer’s attention to the fact that the inception of an eventuality took place earlier than expected.

### 4.3.1 Aspectual uses of *già*

The aspectual uses of *già* evokes alternative scenarios on a timeline, similarly to what was observed for *ancora*. The following example is taken from Bertinetto's analysis:

(4.28)

Stava

*già*

mangiando,

Giovanni,

AUX.PROG.PST.3SG

*already*

eating

giovanni

in

quel

momento?

in

that

moment

(Bertinetto 1986: 130)

'Was he *already* eating, Giovanni, in that moment?'

In this example, aspectual *già* suggests that the eventuality in question started before reference time, contrarily to what expected. The alternative scenario is that at reference time Giovanni is not eating anymore. Depending on the context, the speaker may communicate different attitudes, for instance surprise, anger, or amusement. In (4.28), *già* is accompanied by the imperfective aspect and the action results as ongoing. However, compare:

(4.29)

Ada

ha

*già*

dormito

ada

AUX.3SG

*already*

slept

(Bertinetto 1986: 200)

'Ada has *already* slept' / 'Ada is already asleep'

Here, *già* occurs with the perfective aspect and the past tense, and suggests that the eventuality is concluded before reference time. An alternative scenario is evoked here in which Ada has not slept yet. The speaker may have different reasons to produce such utterance, for example, the speaker might be glad that this has already happened for some reason which is relevant in the context.

*Già* in its aspectual uses does not appear to contribute to the basic explicatures of the utterance. In order to be able to conclude this, we have tested *già* utterances for truth conditionality with a traditional test: by embedding it in a conditional construction, as illustrated by Levinson (1983, ch.4). Consider the following:

(4.30) Se      Ada    ha                    *già*                    dormito,      possiamo  
           if        ada    AUX.3SG        *already*            slept.PTCP    can.1PL

partire.  
 to leave

'If Ada has already slept, we can leave.'

(4.31) Se      hai                    *già*                    visto    questo      film,  
           if        AUX.2SG        *already*            seen    this        film

guardiamone            un      altro.  
 watch.IMP.1PL-of      a        other

'If you've seen this film already, let's watch a different one.'

(4.32) Se      sei                    *già*                    pronta,      possiamo    andare.  
           if        are.2SG        *already*            ready        can.1PL     to go

'If you're ready already, we can go.'



Since the condition remains the same with or without *già* in all three examples above, we conclude that *già* does not fall under the scope of the conditional connective, and that is thus non-truth conditional. This is in line with what we verified for *ancora* in its aspectual uses (see section 4.2.1).

We conclude this section by briefly discussing the alleged presuppositions communicated by aspectual *già*. Firstly, according to van der Auwera (1993), the use of German *schon* presupposes that there is a prior phase in which the state did not obtain ('presupposition of prior noninstantiation'). However, Michaelis (1996) argues with counterexamples that neither is necessarily raised for English *already*. The same conclusion is reached by Hansen and Strudsholm (2008) regarding French *déjà* and Italian *già* itself. The following example is adapted from Hansen and Strudsholm's work (2008: 278), who in turn adapted it from Mittwoch's (1993: 74):

(4.33) Ho appena fatto domanda per la cittadinanza italiana.

'I've just applied for the Italian citizenship.'

(4.34) E suo marito non fa lo stesso?

'And isn't your husband doing the same?'

(4.35) No, mio marito è nato in Italia, e quindi è già italiano.

'No, my husband was born in Italy, and therefore he is already Italian.'

In this example, there cannot exist a preceding negative phase for the predicate "being italian". Therefore, Hansen and Strudsholm suggest that a "change of state" should be considered as implied in some contexts (2008: 478), rather than presupposed. On our account, nothing prevents the speaker in (4.35) to evoke the alternative proposition "Mio marito non è italiano" 'my husband is not Italian', which the speaker in (4.34) might have entertained in advance.

Secondly, there is widespread agreement that the idea of 'premature inception' is communicated regularly by aspectual *già*. That is to say, *già* would communicate that a change of state has taken place earlier than expected. Given such regularity, this idea has been accounted for in terms of conventional implicature by Hansen (2008: 98). As already

suggested, we account for this portion of meaning of *già* by means of the communication of higher-level explicatures.

In this section we have argued that *già* is an aspectual adverb which encodes procedural meaning. The speaker uses *già* to characterize an eventuality as taking place earlier than expected, and thus draws a comparison between a positive and a negative phase of such eventuality. Depending on the semantics of the predicate it interacts with, it may indicate that the inception of a certain eventuality took place prior to reference time, or that an eventuality took place in the past and is concluded. In the next section we will show how the schema associated with the aspectual uses of *già* may also be applied to non-temporal scales.

### 4.3.2 Non-aspectual uses of *già*

In this section we will maintain that *già* may communicate the speaker’s attitude also scales different from the timeline evoked in the examples in the previous section. Here is an example of what we have tagged the 'scalar' use of *già*:

(4.35) MB28/1,2

|           |         |         |        |            |            |         |                |     |
|-----------|---------|---------|--------|------------|------------|---------|----------------|-----|
| A: [...]  | perché  | vendere |        | i          | prosciutti | l'      | è              |     |
|           | because | to sell |        | DET        | hams       | it.SBJ  | is             |     |
| bel       |         | perché  | quando | te         | vegna      | fori    | che            | t'  |
| beautiful |         | because | when   | you        | come.2PL   | outside | that           | you |
| ha'       |         | vendu   | dus    | prosciutti | a          | un      | cliente        |     |
| AUX.2PL   |         | sold    | two    | hams       | to         | a       | client         |     |
| hai       |         | fatto   | un     | bell'      | ordine     | è       | <b>già</b>     | un  |
| AUX.2PL   |         | done    | a      | beautiful  | order      | is      | <b>already</b> | a   |
| buon      | ordine  | via     |        |            |            |         |                |     |
| good      | order   | away    |        |            |            |         |                |     |

'A: [...] Because selling hams is good, because when you come out that you’ve sold two hams to a client, you’ve made a good order, it is **already** a good order, I mean’

We argue that here the speaker uses *già* to suggest that the proposition *È un buon ordine* ‘it’s already a good order’ contrasts with a possible alternative proposition ‘It’s a bad order’. Both can be seen as values on a scale evoked by the adjective *buon* ‘good’, which is



the weaker item in the <buono, cattivo> '<good, bad>' set. *Già* indicates that the order in question does qualify for a good order, despite what could have been expected. The hearer will also retrieve higher-level explicatures of the type “The speaker is satisfied that it's already a good order”; in addition, he might proceed to eliminate previously entertained assumptions such as “Selling only two items of a given product is a bad order”. The following is a further instance of scalar use:

(4.36) E10/2

|     |        |                |      |         |                         |        |       |     |       |          |  |
|-----|--------|----------------|------|---------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-----|-------|----------|--|
| F:  | allora | devo           |      | dire    | tecentosette            |        |       |     |       |          |  |
|     | so     | must.1SG       |      | to say  | three hundred and seven |        |       |     |       |          |  |
| C:  | se     | no             | è    | un      | vezzo                   | sembra | zero  | sei | il    | prefisso |  |
|     | if     | not            | is   | a       | vice                    | seems  | zero  | six | DET   | code     |  |
| per | chi    | chiama         | da   | fuori   | Roma                    |        |       |     |       |          |  |
| for | who    | calls          | from | outside | Rome                    |        |       |     |       |          |  |
| F:  | io     | <b>già</b>     | ce   | n'      | ho                      |        | tanti | di  | vezzi |          |  |
|     | I      | <b>already</b> | LOC  | GEN     | have.1SG                |        | many  | of  | vices |          |  |

'F: So, I must say three hundred and seven  
C: Otherwise it is a peculiar habit, it sounds like zero six, the code for those calling from outside Rome  
F: I **already** have many peculiar habits'

In this example, *già* draws a contrast between the speaker having many vices and the alternative of having even more of those. This alternative is part of a quantitative scale, involving the amount of vices that person has, triggered by the adjective *tanti* 'many'. We argue that the hearer will recover a higher-level explicature of the type “The speaker is upset that he has many vices”, and possibly proceed to recover additional implications, such as: “The speaker does not want any more of these vices”; “If I attribute to him this vice, he will have an exaggerate amount of vices”; “I should not attribute to him an additional vice”. Note that this use is distinguishable from the previously described uses both syntactically and prosodically: here, *già* typically occurs before the predicate it refers to, and is usually accompanied by prosodic emphasis. Hansen and Strudsholm suggest for this use that *già* marks the weakest among “potential arguments” (2008: 493). Here is an additional example:

(4.38) TVpb\_01E/1,2

|                        |                                    |                              |                                    |                              |                 |                          |                                        |                          |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| p2#4:<br>so            | <inspiration> allora <inspiration> |                              |                                    | <b>già</b><br><b>already</b> | è<br>is         | molto<br>very            | difficile<br>difficult                 | dare <sp><br>to give.SBJ |
| una / un solo<br>a / a | only                               | oggetto<br>object            | compreso<br>comprised              | nel<br>in-DET                | prezzo<br>price | perché<br>because        | pensate <inspiration><br>think.IMP.2PL |                          |
| al<br>to-DET           | prezzo<br>price                    | di<br>of                     | Novanzo Express<br>novanzo express | <inspiration>                |                 | avevate<br>have.PST.2PL  | Milady<br>milady                       |                          |
| oppure<br>or           | il<br>DET                          | mobile<br>piece of furniture | che<br>that                        | <b>già</b><br><b>already</b> | uno<br>one      | è<br>is                  | veramente<br>really                    | tanto<br>a lot           |
| cioè<br>that is        | tutti<br>all                       | e<br>and                     | due <inspiration><br>two           |                              | mi<br>me.OBJ    | mettete in<br>put.2PL in | croce<br>cross                         |                          |

‘Now, it is **already** very difficult to give only one object included in the price, because, think about the price of Novanzo Express. You had Milady. Or else the piece of furniture that, one is **already** a lot really, I mean, with both of them, you crucify me.’

In the case of the first occurrence of *già* in (4.38), *già* draws a comparison between the difficulty of offering an item and the even greater difficulty of offering more than one. The adjectival phrase *molto difficile* ‘very difficult’ evokes a scale with different degrees of difficulty. The speaker could be communicating her irritation. In the second occurrence, *già* basically communicates the same thing; a scale of quantity is evoked by the phrase *veramente tanto* “really a lot”. With *già*, the speaker marks the argument that adding one item has already reached a very high degree on a scale. Then, the speaker explicitly expresses a stronger argument on the scale (“cioè tutti e due mi mettete in croce” ‘I mean, with both of them, you crucify me’). A similar use is discussed for English *already* by Michaelis (1996: 488) under the heading “priority to process”. It is typical of argumentative situations, where it is used “to assert that a given procedure [...] is unnecessary”. One of the examples used to illustrate this is (4.39):

(4.39) Why would you need a permanent? You *already* have curly hair.

(Michaelis 1992, in Michaelis 1996: 488)

Here, a certain state of affairs is already in place without it having to be put in place by a process. The same mechanism can be observed in (4.36): the state of affairs represented by having many bad habits is already in place without the addition of the aforementioned



bad habit. The line between not having a lot and having many, thus, has already been crossed, and this position on a quantitative scale is communicated by *già*.

As with *ancora*, *già* may be used in co-occurrence with a scale related to space. Consider the following sequence:

(4.40) DgmtB01V/1

|                              |                                                  |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| p2G#202:                     | <inspiration> quando<br>when                     | sei<br>are.2SG              | a<br>at                       | livello<br>level               | del<br>of-DET             | polso<br>wrist              | della<br>of-DET                 |             |
| mano<br>hand                 | scendi<br>descend.2SG                            | un<br>a                     | attimino <sp><br>little while | cioè<br>that is                | vai<br>go.2SG             | un<br>a                     | po'<br>bit                      | più<br>more |
| vicino<br>near               |                                                  |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
| p1F#203:                     | #<G#202> okay <NOISE> <sp> <NOISE># <lp><br>okay |                             |                               |                                | vado<br>go.1SG            | giù<br>down                 |                                 |             |
|                              | <NOISE> #<G#204> aspetta <eh>#<br>wait.IMP.2SG   |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
| p2G#204:                     | #<F#203> cioè<br>that is                         | arrivi#<br>get.2SG          | vicino<br>near                | diciamo all'<br>say.1PL to-DET | inizio<br>beginning       |                             | del<br>of-DET                   |             |
| polso<br>wrist               |                                                  |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
| p1F#205:                     | #<G#204> <tongue-click># <ah><br>ah              |                             |                               | così<br>like this              | giù ?<br>down             |                             |                                 |             |
| p2G#206:                     | sì<br>yes                                        |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
| p1F#207:                     | ma<br>but                                        | quindi<br>so                | <b>già</b><br><b>already</b>  | al<br>at-DET                   | mignolo<br>little finger  | cominciava<br>start.PST.3SG | a<br>to                         |             |
| scendere? <lp><br>to descend |                                                  |                             |                               |                                |                           |                             |                                 |             |
| p2G#208:                     | <nn>no<br>no                                     | diciamo che<br>say.1PL that | sul<br>on-DET                 | mignolo<br>little finger       | la<br>DET                 | linea<br>line               | deve<br>must.3SG                |             |
| essere<br>to be              | parallela al<br>parallel to-DET                  | mignolo /<br>little finger  | la<br>DET                     | linea<br>line                  | è<br>is                   | proprio<br>exactly          | parallela al<br>parallel to-DET |             |
| mignolo<br>little finger     | però<br>but                                      | quasi<br>almost             | a<br>at                       | due<br>two                     | centimetri<br>centimetres |                             |                                 |             |

'p2: When you are level with the hand's wrist, move down a little bit, that is, get a little nearer  
p1: Ok, I move down... Wait

p2: That is, you get near to, say, where the wrist starts  
 p1: Ah, like this, down?  
 p2: Yes  
 p1: But, then, **already** at the little finger it started going down?  
 p2: No, no, let's say that, on the little finger, the line must be parallel to the little finger. The line is just parallel to the little finger, but almost 2cm from it'

Here, the context is that of a description of the spatial location of items on a drawing. *Già* indicates that the proposition “it started going down at the little finger” contrasts with the alternative proposition “it started going town at a lower position with respect to the little finger”. The speaker may additionally communicate the higher-level explicature “the speaker is surprised that it started going down at the little finger”. This context evokes a scale which, as we suggested for the same use of *ancora* (see section 4.2.2) can also be seen as a conceptualized path along which entities are described as moving.

Finally, we turn to a discussion of the interjective uses of *già*. *Ah già* (or simply '*già*') is used by the speaker when she suddenly remembers something that she knew but had forgotten:

(4.41) DGmtA01N/1

|                 |       |           |          |                  |            |       |                 |                  |          |            |
|-----------------|-------|-----------|----------|------------------|------------|-------|-----------------|------------------|----------|------------|
| p1G#43: #<F#42> |       |           | scende#  |                  | fino <eeh> |       | a               | arrivare all'    |          | altra      |
|                 |       |           | descends |                  | until      |       | to              | to arrive to-DET |          | other      |
| macchina        |       | rossa     | <sp> a   | passarci #<F#44> |            |       | sotto#          |                  |          |            |
| car             |       | red       |          | to pass-there    |            |       | under           |                  |          |            |
| p2F#44: #<G#43> |       |           |          | non              |            | c'    | è               | nessun'#altra    | macchina | rossa <sp> |
|                 |       |           |          | NEG              |            | there | is              | no other         | car      | red        |
| cioè            | ce    | n'        | è        | una              | blu /      | <ah!> | già,<br>already | tu               | sei      |            |
| that is         | there | of        | is       | one              | blue       |       |                 | ah               | you      | are.2SG    |
| daltonico       |       | vabbè,    | l'       | altra            | macchina   | è     |                 | blu <sp>         |          |            |
| colour blind    |       | goes well |          |                  |            | is    |                 | blue             |          |            |
|                 |       |           |          | DET              | other      | car   |                 |                  |          |            |

'p1: It descends until it gets to the other red car, it goes below it  
 p2: There is no other red car. That is, there is a blue one. **Oh, true**, you're colour blind, alright. The other car is blue.'

By virtue of performing this use, *già* is characterized by Poggi as a 'plurivocal' interjection, since it has uses in the 'articulated language' (that is, the uses illustrated so far in this section) in addition to its interjective use (1995: 411-412). The question is, why is exactly *già* used to convey this information? Intuitively, we can say that there is a link to the



aspectual use of *già*, because the interjective use indicates that the information it is referring to was already known by the speaker. In Poggi (1995), this use of *già* is claimed to replace a whole utterance, like “questo *già* lo sapevo (o ci potevo arrivare)” (‘this I already knew (or I could have figured it out)’) (p. 412). The process of ‘condensation’ as related to *già* is briefly discussed by Bazzanella (1985) in her paper on the use of discourse markers in spoken communication. Her example is different from (4.41), in that it does not involve an interjective use of *già*; however, it still seems able to (implicitly) ‘convey’ the content of a whole utterance which is similar to the one we are talking about:

(4.42)

Dov’ è già il convegno?

where is already DET conference

[ = Dove mi hai detto che sarà

where me.DAT AUX.2SG said that to be.FUT.3SG

il convegno?]

DET conference

(1985: 88)

‘Where is the conference *already*? [ = Where did you say the conference was?]

Here, the utterance ‘replaced’ by *già* would sound like “You have told me already”. A similar example is considered in Bazzanella *et al.* (2005: 55). It is observed that in this case *già* refers to previous conversation, and thus relies on mutual knowledge:

(4.43)

Dov’ era già il convegno?

where was.3SG already DET conference

‘Where was the convention *already*?’

Finally, *già* is often used as an interjection, either in isolation or preceded by *e* ('and') or *eh* (interjection) to signal affirmation, in a way similar to *sì* ('yes'):

(4.44) RDit\_010/1

|                       |                          |                         |                             |                                   |                             |                     |                           |                      |           |           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| p3#63:                | <inspiration> si<br>REFL | può<br>can.3SG          | trasformare<br>to transform | in<br>in                          | un<br>a                     | elemento<br>element | positivo<br>positive      |                      |           |           |
| <inspiration><br>much | tanto                    | che<br>that             | un<br>a                     | geriatra<br>geriatrician          |                             | *framoso<br>famous  | italiano<br>italian       | Antonini<br>antonini |           |           |
| parla<br>speaks       | che<br>that              | dopo<br>after           | <inspiration>               | il<br>DET                         | pensionamento<br>retirement | <sp>                | si<br>REFL                | può<br>can.3SG       |           |           |
| vivere<br>to live     | quello<br>that.OBJ       | che<br>that             | lui<br>he                   | dice<br>says                      | non<br>NEG                  | la<br>DET           | terza<br>third            | età<br>age           | ma<br>but | il<br>DET |
| tempo<br>time         | libero<br>free           | #<p1#64> <inspiration># |                             |                                   |                             |                     |                           |                      |           |           |
| p1#64:                | #<p3#63> e<br>and        | già#<br>already         |                             |                                   |                             |                     |                           |                      |           |           |
| p3#65:                | perché<br>because        | <sp>                    |                             | essendo sollevati<br>being lifted | <sp>                        | dice<br>says        | soprattutto<br>especially | dal<br>from-DET      |           |           |
| lavoro [...]<br>work  |                          |                         |                             |                                   |                             |                     |                           |                      |           |           |

'p3: It can transform into a positive element – so that a famous Italian geriatrician, Antonini, says that after retirement one can live what he calls not third age, but spare time.  
p1: **Yes**  
p3: Because, being lifted, he says, especially from work [...]'

In this use, *già* is defined by Serianni (1988: 420) as “avverbio olofrastico positivo” ('positive/affirmative holophrastic adverb'). The same use is defined as 'holophrastic' with an emphatic function by Bazzanella *et al.* (2005: 55). Although this use is clearly less related to the aspectual use of *già* than other non-aspectual uses, we still argue that there is a link: the speaker might say *già* because she 'already' had the interlocutor's opinion before he/she expressed it (see Hansen and Strudsholm 2008: 496-497).

We suggest an analysis which is compatible not only with the one given so far for *già*, but also with the one suggested in section 3.2.4 for interjective *allora*, which was based on Padilla Cruz’s (2009a, 2009b) proposal for a relevance-theoretic analysis of interejctions. We argue that in its interjective uses *già* draws the attention towards contrastive state of affairs and invites to construct higher-level explicatures. Thus, in



(4.41), the speaker draws a contrast between the proposition “I knew you were colour-blind”, and the alternative proposition “I didn’t know you were colour-blind”, which is not true in the situation; he also points to his attitude of emphasis in conveying the utterance.

In (4.44), the speaker utters *già* with the communicative intent of agreeing with the proposition communicated by the interlocutor. As we suggested above, interjective *già* appears to stand for a full proposition. We therefore argue that *già* in this case prompts to recover both a full proposition and higher-level explicatures. Firstly, on the basis of the previous turn, the hearer will retrieve the proposition “I already thought that retirement allows you to enjoy spare time”, which is contrasted to a proposition expressing the opposite state of affairs; he may then recover a higher-level explicature of the type “The speaker agrees that retirement allows you to enjoy spare time”.

As a final comment to both interjective uses, the idea that these elements stand for more than themselves is also found in Bernini (1995: 220-222), where both are described under the heading 'profrase', that is, an element that takes the function of a full sentence. In one of the examples given by the author, however, the occurrence of *già* in isolation is tagged as a discourse marker:

- (4.45) A:     Ti                   scriverò.  
          A:     you.2SG.DAT write.FUT.1SG
- B:     Dove?
- B:     where
- A:     Già.             Dove?
- A:     yes             where

(Bernini 1995: 222)

- 'A: I'll write to you.
- B: Where?
- A: Yes, where?

The reason for this distinction is not clearly explained. A possible interpretation is that *già* marks the fact that B's turn is evidence for A's question in the third turn. However, this

could also be taken as an affirmative marker as described above: speaker A agrees with speaker B in that she intended to ask the same question.

#### 4.3.3 *Già*: discussion

In this section we have argued that *già* is a procedural expression which draws a comparison between alternative propositions, and invites the retrieval of higher-level explicatures which express the speaker's attitude towards this contrast. This is the analysis that we argued can be applied to *ancora* as well; the two adverbials differ in the way they evoke alternatives: while *ancora* focuses on the termination of a positive phase, by suggesting that it may have turned negative before reference time, *già* focuses on the inception of a positive phase, and suggests that it may have not begun before reference time. In non-aspectual scales, these particles interact in the same way with values on the scale rather than with positive or negative phases on a temporal axis.

An informal overview of how the procedure which we claim to be encoded by *già* is the following:

(Procedure) "Find a contextual assumption which can plausibly be an alternative degree on a scale to the proposition expressed by the *già* utterance"

- IF the context is temporal, THEN the contextually derived scale is temporal
  - IF the aspect of the verb is imperfective, THEN the action is ongoing
  - IF the aspect of verb is perfective, THEN the action is concluded
- IF the context is non-temporal and antonyms appear in the *già* utterance, THEN the contextually derived scale is non-temporal
  - IF *già* appears in either clause-initial or clause-final position and is prosodically independent, THEN it should be interpreted as an interjection
  - IF the context is spatial, then *già* should receive a spatial interpretation

We furthermore claimed that in its non-temporal functions *già* draws a comparison between alternatives of different types, regarding for example spatial locations or quantities. We have seen that *già* may communicate a vast array of propositional attitudes. We furthermore showed that our approach to the meaning of interjections,



which we adopted for the interjective uses of *allora* and which follows that of Padilla Cruz (2009a, 2009b), is in line with our general account, since it predicts that interjective *già* constrains the recovery of higher-level explicatures. These uses are characterized by independent prosody and syntax, as well as co-occurrence with accompanying material like *ah* and *eh*.

#### 4.4 *Sempre* as a procedural quantifier

In this section we shall verify whether the account developed for *ancora* and *già* in the previous sections can apply to *sempre*. We can anticipate that our attempt will be only partly successful. We will argue that *sempre* is a procedural expression which guides the hearer towards the specification of the temporal interval in which the proposition described by the utterance is true. In this, it is similar to the expressions in chapter 3, as it contributes to the explicatures of the utterance. Borrowing a term from semantics, we will describe *sempre* as a ‘quantifier’, as it quantifies over contextually relevant times and indicates that the state of affairs which corresponds to the utterance is true at those times. *Sempre* has been described as a quantifier by Bonomi (1997: 482). English *always*, which translates Italian *sempre*, has been described as a quantifier famously by Lewis. As explained by Lewis (1975: 180), frequency adverbs like *always* may be used to quantify over cases, as in

The sum of two odd numbers is always even.

(Partee 1984: 269)

Similarly, *always* has been described as a quantifier by Moreno Cabrera (1992: 157), von Stechow (1998), and de Swart (1995: 311).

Furthermore, we will argue that the same account is to be given to those which we call here non-aspectual uses, that is to say, those cases in which *sempre* expresses the speaker’s attitude or marks discourse structure. We argue that in these cases *sempre* still behaves as a quantifier, but the mere expression of the temporal validity of the proposition is not enough for the utterance to achieve relevance: the speaker uses *sempre*

to indirectly point to additional, non-truth conditional effects such as the recovery of higher-level explicatures and the elimination of assumptions on the part of the hearer.

*Sempre* is similar to *ancora* and *già* as it is procedural in all its interpretations; moreover, since *sempre* with this function tells us whether a certain eventuality lasts in time or is repeated, we include it in the group of aspectual adverbs together with *ancora* and *già*, confirming traditional accounts. It is similar to both as it can be used in the non-temporal uses to express the speaker's opinion: the content of the surrounding utterances will lead the hearer to go beyond the 'mere' temporal interpretation and retrieve higher-level explicatures. However, the retrieval of a contrast and of higher-level explicatures is not as regular as with *ancora* and *già*. Furthermore, we shall see that the scalar feature is not as marked in *sempre* as it is for the other two expressions.

A particular mention will be given to those cases in which *sempre* is interchangeable with *ancora*: we will argue that, since both expressions can express continuity in time, they overlap in their use; however, they respectively lead to the recovery of different contextual effects, since *sempre* tends as a default to describe an 'eternal' state of affairs and *ancora* more probably signals a bounded eventuality. We argue then that the speaker may consciously decide to express duration with *sempre* rather than with *ancora* when the eventuality has no definite end for contextual reasons - in order to reassure the hearer.

*Sempre* is derived from the Latin *sēmpēr* (De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 1922; Garzanti 2008: 2313), which is a compound of the Indo-European root *sem-* ('once'), and *pēr* ('for'). The meaning of *sēmpēr* is deemed to be 'once and for all' (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 1180; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1676). *Sempre* is classified as an adverb in the above mentioned dictionaries as well as in Serianni (1988: 412). *Sempre* tends to occur immediately after the finite verb in its temporal use, as in (4.46) below, or, in case it takes subsentential scope, in initial position within the phrase it focuses on, as in (4.47):

|        |         |               |       |           |     |
|--------|---------|---------------|-------|-----------|-----|
| (4.46) | È       | <i>sempre</i> | stato | così      | e   |
|        | AUX.3SG | <i>always</i> | been  | like this | and |



|               |               |           |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| sarà          | <i>sempre</i> | così.     |
| to be.FUT.3SG | <i>always</i> | like this |

(Garzanti 2008: 2313)

'It has *always* been like that and it will *always* be like that'

|        |          |      |     |        |            |               |
|--------|----------|------|-----|--------|------------|---------------|
| (4.47) | Spero    | che  | le  | cose   | andranno   | <i>sempre</i> |
|        | Hope.1SG | that | DET | things | go.FUT.3PL | <i>always</i> |

meglio.  
better

(Garzanti 2008: 2313)

'I hope that thing will get *better and better*'

This adverb, however, can take other positions in the sentence depending on the speaker's communicative intention. Sentences a) and d) below are emphatic cases with a contrastive stress on *sempre*, while b) is the most neutral in terms of presentation of information:

|        |               |         |             |     |     |             |
|--------|---------------|---------|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| (4.48) | <b>Sempre</b> | ho      | apprezzato  | la  | sua | gentilezza. |
|        | Always        | AUX.1SG | appreciated | DET | his | kindness    |

'I have always appreciated his kindness.'

|        |         |               |             |     |     |             |
|--------|---------|---------------|-------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| (4.49) | Ho      | <i>sempre</i> | apprezzato  | la  | sua | gentilezza. |
|        | AUX.1SG | <i>always</i> | appreciated | DET | his | kindness    |

'I have always appreciated his kindness.'

|        |         |             |        |     |     |             |
|--------|---------|-------------|--------|-----|-----|-------------|
| (4.50) | Ho      | apprezzato  | sempre | la  | sua | gentilezza. |
|        | AUX.1SG | appreciated | always | DET | his | kindness    |

‘I have always appreciated his kindness.’

|        |         |             |     |     |            |                |
|--------|---------|-------------|-----|-----|------------|----------------|
| (4.51) | Ho      | apprezzato  | la  | sua | gentilezza | <b>sempre.</b> |
|        | AUX.1SG | appreciated | DET | his | kindness   | always         |

‘I have always appreciated his kindness.’

In none of these examples a non-temporal interpretation of *sempre* arises. From this we can conclude that no specific syntactic collocation is associated with a non-temporal interpretation. We will argue that this type of uses is rather triggered by contextually evoked scales or the presence of specific semantic content in the utterance. We will now proceed to examine the cases in which *sempre* receives a temporal interpretation.

#### 4.4.1 *Sempre* and quantification over times

In this section we will argue that *sempre* in its aspectual uses may be analysed as a quantifier. As such, *sempre* quantifies over a salient interval and communicates that a certain state of affairs is true for the totality of that interval. This adverb is here argued to be procedural; at the same time, *sempre* contributes to the explicatures of the utterance, thus proving that not all procedural expressions contribute exclusively to the implicatures (see section 2.2.4). Here is an example of *sempre* quantifying over time:

(4.52) ME6/1

|       |      |         |    |        |       |                                 |
|-------|------|---------|----|--------|-------|---------------------------------|
| A:    | come | va      | a  | scuola | sua   | figlia?                         |
|       | how  | go.3SG  | at | school | your  | daughter.SBJ                    |
| B:    | no   | però    | a  | scuola | va    | bene è <b>sempre</b> stata      |
|       | no   | but     | at | school | goes  | well AUX.3SG <b>always</b> been |
| brava | non  | ha      |    | avuto  | mai   | problemi                        |
| good  | NEG  | AUX.3SG |    | had    | never | problems                        |



‘How does your daughter get on in school?  
 B: No, but in school she does well. She’s **always** been good, she’s never had any problem’

In this example, the speaker says that the girl in question has always been good in school. This does not equal to say that the girl has been a good girl from the day she was born. What is meant here is that the girl has been good from the time she started school up until utterance time. As observed by Hansen for French *toujours*, the period referred to by this interpretation of *sempre* is the one that is “contextually relevant” (2008: 136). Such information will be matched to encyclopaedic (culture-specific) information – in this case, knowledge about the Italian education system – useful to make a rough guess of the time-frame involved. In order to retrieve the correct interpretation, the hearer needs to consider the conversational context; in this way, information is retrieved about the age and type of school of the girl.

We argue that the same analysis can be applied to an additional temporal use of *sempre* which we may call habitual. *Sempre* signals in this case reiteration (see Serianni 1988: 421; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1676). In the following excerpt, the verb *vedere* (‘to see’) is perfective and this in itself suggests an iterative reading:

(4.53) MB1/10

|    |         |       |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|----|---------|-------|---------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|----------|-----|--------|
| B: | ma      | dov’  | è             | giù_   | vicino  | al     | bar?    | perché   | non | lo     |
|    | but     | where | is            | down   | near    | to.DET | bar     | because  | NEG | it.OBJ |
|    |         |       |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|    | vedo    | mai   |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|    | see.1SG | never |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|    |         |       |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
| C: | ma      | a     | me            | lo     | ha      | detto  | XYZ     | che      |     |        |
|    | but     | to    | me            | it.OBJ | AUX.3SG | said   | XYZ.SBJ | that.REL |     |        |
|    |         |       |               |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|    | lo      | vede  | <b>sempre</b> |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |
|    | him     | sees  | <b>always</b> |        |         |        |         |          |     |        |

‘B: But where is he, down near the bar? Because I never see him.  
 C: But I was told by XYZ, who **always** sees him’

What is meant here is that the person sees the other person very frequently. We argue that *sempre* here quantifies on a contextually salient series of times which are quite regular, rather than on an interval like the one in (4.52).

Here is a further example:

(4.54) NA11/3,4

|    |               |      |             |        |       |        |      |     |         |
|----|---------------|------|-------------|--------|-------|--------|------|-----|---------|
| A: | [risate]      | ci   | incontriamo | due    | volte | all'   | anno | e   | diciamo |
|    | [laughs]      | REFL | meet        | two    | times | to-DET | year | and | say.1PL |
|    | <b>sempre</b> | le   | stesse      | cose   |       |        |      |     |         |
|    | <b>always</b> | DET  | same        | things |       |        |      |     |         |

'A: [laughs] We meet twice a year and we **always** say the same things'

Here, the foregoing utterance is crucial for the determination of the times over which *sempre* quantifies: it states that the people in question meet twice a year every year. *Sempre* will then be taken to mean "those two times we meet during the year, and those of the previous years".

In some temporal uses, *sempre* appears to take the same function as *ancora* (see Serianni 1988: 421; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1676; for French *encore* and *toujours*, see van der Auwera 1993: 625). Here is an example:

(4.55) RDit\_06D/1

|           |         |                              |                           |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
|-----------|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|-----------------|--------|----------|--------|--|
| p0#1:     | non     | abbiamo                      | altro                     | da       | aggiungere      |        |          |        |  |
|           | NEG     | have.1PL                     | other                     | to       | to add          |        |          |        |  |
| p0#2:     | abbiamo |                              | stimolato                 | speriamo | abbastanza      | la     | fantasia |        |  |
|           | AUX.1PL |                              | stimulated                | hope.1PL | enough          | DET    | fantasy  |        |  |
| e         | la      | curiosità                    | di <inspiration>          | <eeh>    | quelli          | che    | in       | questo |  |
| and       | DET     | curiosity                    | of                        |          | those           | who    | in       | this   |  |
| momento   |         | ascoltano                    | Number One                |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
| moment    |         | listen.3PL                   | number one                |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
| p0#3:     | è       | <b>sempre</b>                | Air Francy                |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
|           | is      | <b>still</b>                 | air francy                |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
| p0#4:     | siamo   | <b>sempre</b>                | con                       | Leggere  | Leggero e <eeh> | con    | la       |        |  |
|           | are.1PL | <b>still</b>                 | with                      | to read  | light.ADJand    | with   | DET      |        |  |
| seduzione |         | e                            | addirittura <inspiration> | i        | segreti         | della  | geisha   | questo |  |
| seduction |         | and                          | even                      | DET      | secrets         | of-DET | geisha   | this   |  |
| libro     | che     | capovolgendolo <inspiration> |                           | si       | scoprono        |        | altro    | che    |  |
| book      | that    | turn upside down.PROG-it.OBJ |                           | REFL     | discover.3PL    |        | other    | that   |  |
| segreti   |         |                              |                           |          |                 |        |          |        |  |
| secrets   |         |                              |                           |          |                 |        |          |        |  |

'We have nothing else to add. We've stimulated – enough, we hope – the imagination and the curiosity of those who, in this moment, are listening to Number One. This is **still** Air Francy. We're



**still** with Leggere Leggero, and with seduction, and also with “Memoirs of a geisha” – this book that, by turning it upside down... we discover something more than just secrets’

Here, the speaker does not mean that the show is Air Francy at all times: the context suggests that the salient period starts from the beginning of the show. In other words, the retrieved meaning is like that of *ancora*. Here is another example:

(4.56) MB1/2

|               |      |          |               |         |               |          |              |          |
|---------------|------|----------|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| B:            | e    | fa       |               | ma      | pensa         | che      | sono         | poi      |
|               | and  | make.3SG |               | but     | think.IMP.2SG | that.REL | are.3PL      | then     |
| anche         | più  | grasse   | le            | altre   | che           | invece   | hanno        | mangiato |
| also          | more | fat      | DET           | others  | who           | instead  | AUX.3PL      | eaten    |
| C:            | sì   | è        | <b>sempre</b> | modesta |               | questo   | le           | è        |
|               | yes  | is       | <b>still</b>  | modest  |               | this.SBJ | her.DAT      | AUX.3SG  |
| rimasto ahah  | la   | modestia |               | di      | quella        | vecchia  | culona       | è        |
| remained      | DET  | modesty  |               | of      | that          | old      | big ass.NMLZ | AUX.3SG  |
| rimasta [...] |      |          |               |         |               |          |              |          |
| remained      |      |          |               |         |               |          |              |          |

‘B: And she goes, but figure that they also are fatter, the others who, instead, did eat  
C: Yeah, she’s **still** modest, this has stayed with her, haha. The modestly of that old big-ass woman has remained’

Taken out of context, the *sempre* utterance could be taken to mean that the predicate applies endlessly towards the past and the future. However, the subsequent utterance “questo le è rimasto” suggests that speaker wants to emphasize continuation from the past: the state of being modest of the person in question has applied since a contextually relevant point in time in the past. Since the state still applies at utterance time, the hearer also gets an impression like with *ancora*.

Speakers sometimes use the two adverbs interchangeably in close sequence, as in the following excerpt:

(4.57) FD17/5;6

|          |        |              |                        |    |                |                       |               |            |
|----------|--------|--------------|------------------------|----|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------|
| A: [...] | qui    | siamo        | <i>ancora</i>          | a  | Tirana         | siamo # <b>sempre</b> | a             | Tirana # # |
|          | here   | are.2PL      | <i>still</i>           | in | tirana         | are.2PL               | <i>always</i> | tirana     |
| siamo    | nel    | museo        | etnico # <b>sempre</b> | a  | Tirana # [...] |                       |               |            |
| are.2PL  | in.DET | museumethnic | <b>still</b>           | in | tirana         |                       |               |            |

‘A: This is *still* Tirana, we are **still** in Tirana here. This is the ethnic museum, **still** in Tirana’

This ‘overlap’ in meaning between *ancora* and *sempre* is justified by us on the basis of the fact that both linguistic items express continuation in time. However, why does the speaker choose to use *sempre* instead of *ancora* in cases that would allow for both? We maintain that while *sempre* is a “marker of stasis” (Hansen 2008: 148); see Krifka *et al.* 1995: 16), the phase subsequent to *ancora* is undetermined (see section 4.2.1); this adverb would therefore convey a greater sense of uncertainty. *Sempre* might then be preferred by the speaker when she needs to communicate boundless continuation. Thus, in (4.55), the speaker is reassuring the audience that the radio show is still on by using *sempre*, and in (4.56) the speaker might want to underline that the person in question has never changed and never will, still by using *sempre*. Note that *ancora* would not be possible in (4.52), since as we mentioned in section 4.2.1 *ancora* can only yield a continuative interpretation in co-occurrence with imperfective verbs, whereas “è stata” expresses perfective aspect.

In the next section we will argue that *sempre* in non-aspectual uses encodes the same procedure as the occurrences of *sempre* considered so far; however, the particular non-temporal context will trigger additional effects such as the elimination of assumptions and the recovery of higher-level explicatures.

4.4.2 *Sempre*, quantification and non-temporal contexts

Let us continue with a use which can be considered parallel to the scalar uses observed for the other two aspectual particles. Consider the following example:

(4.58) DGtdB03H/4

|                            |     |        |          |                        |           |       |                |        |                       |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|----------|------------------------|-----------|-------|----------------|--------|-----------------------|
| p1#171: #<p2#170> sì# <lp> |     |        |          | sì <lp> <mh> <P> senti |           |       | alla<aa> /     |        |                       |
| yes                        |     |        |          | yes                    |           |       | listen.IMP.2SG |        |                       |
| at-DET                     |     |        |          |                        |           |       | at-DET         |        |                       |
|                            |     |        |          |                        |           |       |                |        |                       |
| sempre                     |     | alla   | sinistra |                        | del<ll> / |       | guardando      | il     | ragazzo <lp> hai <sp> |
| always                     |     | at-DET | left     |                        | of-DET    |       | looking        | DET    | boy have.2SG          |
|                            |     |        |          |                        |           |       |                |        |                       |
| uno                        | due | tre    | quattro  | cinque                 | sei       | sette | otto           | onde?  |                       |
| one                        | two | three  | four     | five                   | six       | seven | eight          | waves? |                       |



|         |               |        |     |     |       |         |        |     |       |
|---------|---------------|--------|-----|-----|-------|---------|--------|-----|-------|
| p2#172: | del bim+ <lp> | sì <P> | uno | due | tre   | quattro | cinque | sei | sette |
|         | of-DET        | yes    | one | two | three | four    | five   | six | seven |

|       |     |      |    |    |                    |         |       |     |
|-------|-----|------|----|----|--------------------|---------|-------|-----|
| otto  | e   | nove | io | in | alto <inspiration> | proprio | sotto | il  |
| eight | and | nine | I  | in | high               | exactly | under | DET |

muso,  
muzzle

|           |        |     |           |     |         |          |  |     |
|-----------|--------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|----------|--|-----|
| #<p1#173> | sotto# | I'  | orizzonte | sì  | ne      | ho       |  | due |
|           | under  | DET | horizon   | yes | of them | have.1SG |  | two |

|                   |           |      |     |     |       |         |        |
|-------------------|-----------|------|-----|-----|-------|---------|--------|
| p1#173: #<p2#172> | due# <lp> | poi  | uno | due | tre   | quattro | cinque |
|                   | two       | then | one | two | three | four    | five   |

|     |      |    |          |    |         |          |     |
|-----|------|----|----------|----|---------|----------|-----|
| e   | sei, | no | devono / | io | ne      | ho       | sei |
| and | six  | no | must.3PL | i  | of them | have.1SG | six |

|                |      |         |      |            |       |    |                  |
|----------------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|----|------------------|
| p2#174: allora | due  | quattro | sei  | sette <sp> | io    | ne | ho               |
|                | then | two     | four | six        | seven | I  | of them have.1SG |

|       |          |        |        |      |             |
|-------|----------|--------|--------|------|-------------|
| sette | compresa | quella | della  | riva | proprio<oo> |
| seven | included | that   | of-DET | bank | exactly     |

|               |    |      |      |     |    |                  |         |      |
|---------------|----|------|------|-----|----|------------------|---------|------|
| p1#175: <ah!> | la | riva | non  | I'  | ho | contata          | io <sp> | va   |
|               | ah | DET  | bank | NEG | it | AUX.1SGcounted I |         | goes |

bene se  
well if

|                           |    |                   |      |
|---------------------------|----|-------------------|------|
| p2#176: <eh> contala <sp> | è  | <b>sempre</b> un' | onda |
| count.IMP.2SG-it.OBJ      | is | <b>always</b> a   | wave |

'p1: Yes, yes, hm, listen, to the, always to the left, looking at the boy, do you have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight waves?

p2: Of the... Yes, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine. I... on top, exactly below the muzzle, under the horizon line... Yes, I have two

p1: Two. Then, one, two, three, four, five and six. No, they must... I have six

p2: Now, two, four, six, seven... I have seven, included the one exactly at the bank

p1: Ah! The bank, I didn't count it. I... it's ok if...

p2: Count it. It's **always** a wave'

The speaker is saying that what the hearer thinks is *not* a wave, actually *is* a wave. This effect is achieved by stating that the wave being talked about is a wave 'all the time'. The hearer will proceed to follow the procedure which we described earlier; however, to say that a certain wave is a wave all the time does not achieve relevance in this context. The hearer will thus be cooperative and retrieve additional assumptions. Here, it is clear that the speaker says that it is a wave in spite of what one may think – that it does not qualify for the status of wave because it is near to the shore, for example. There is a contrast therefore that is drawn between what the hearer thinks and what the speaker thinks. To

be more precise, there is a sort of concessive element, because the speaker says that, no matter what people think, the wave in question is a wave all the time. We argue therefore that the context will lead the hearer to eliminate entertained assumptions such as “this wave is not a wave”, and to retrieve as an implicature something along the lines of “The wave positioned at the bank should be included in my list of waves”.

Here is a further example:

(4.59) RA4/4

|                  |                |               |             |             |         |       |       |          |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------|-------|-------|----------|
| D: [...]         | io             | mi            | stavo       | tagliando # | un      | pezzo | di    | grana    |
|                  | I              | me.DAT        | AUX.PST.1SG | cutting     | a       | piece | of    | parmesan |
| di               | costosissimo   | grana         | che         | mi          | è       |       | stato |          |
| of               | very expensive | parmesan      | that.SBJ    | me.DAT      | AUX.3SG |       | been  |          |
| regalato         | ma             | <b>sempre</b> | grana       | era [...]   |         |       |       |          |
| given as present | but            | <b>still</b>  | parmesan    | was.3SG     |         |       |       |          |

‘D: [...] I was cutting a piece of parmesan cheese for myself, of very expensive parmesan cheese, which was given to me as a present, but it was parmesan **still**’

Here, the speaker is saying that, contrarily to what one may believe, the item in question does qualify for the status of parmesan cheese, since it does so all the time. In addition to following the procedure and finding the temporal coordinate, the hearer will also retrieve implications such as “This piece of grana should be consumed with parsimony” and proceed to eliminate previously entertained assumptions such as “This piece of grana cannot be said to be expensive, since it is a present”.

As observed by Hansen (2008: 178) for French *toujours*, in these scalar uses *toujours/sempre* is only faintly scalar, and only compatible with the weaker item in the scale; for example, in (4.58) the speaker is not asserting that the wave in question is an excellent example of wave, but only that it retains the basic defining properties of a wave. This being only compatible with weaker items on a scale is what makes it different from *ancora* and *già*.

In the following example, *sempre* is not strictly temporal but it is interchangeable with *ancora* in the same way as in examples (4.55), (4.56) and (4.57). This example is placed in this section because it does not involve a temporal reading of *sempre*; rather, it



presents a metadiscursive use as the one that was observed for *ancora* in (4.17) and (4.18):

(4.60) MA4/6

|    |                 |                |                |                           |                    |               |                |                                    |
|----|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| A: | questi<br>these | qui<br>here    | si<br>REFL     | incorniciano<br>frame.3PL | a<br>to            | giorno<br>day | a<br>to        | giorno<br>day                      |
| D: | a<br>to         | giorno<br>day  |                |                           |                    |               |                |                                    |
| B: | cosa<br>what    | vuol<br>wants  | dire<br>to say | a<br>to                   | giorno?<br>day     |               |                |                                    |
| D: | solo<br>only    | vetro<br>glass |                |                           |                    |               |                |                                    |
| A: | solo<br>only    | vetro<br>glass | con<br>with    | le<br>DET                 | grappette<br>clips | oppure<br>or  | vetro<br>glass | <b>sempre</b> a<br><b>still</b> to |
|    | giorno<br>day   | con<br>with    | un<br>a        | bordino<br>small edge     | intorno<br>around  |               |                |                                    |

'A: These here are to be framed *a giorno*, *a giorno*  
D: *A giorno*  
B: What does 'a giorno' mean?  
D: Only glass  
A: Only glass with clips. Otherwise, glass, **still** *a giorno*, with a small outline'

Here, the speaker is drawing the attention to the fact that the incoming phrase – *a giorno* - was mentioned previously in discourse. Here, *sempre* quantifies over times in which a certain word was repeated: it says that the trait *a giorno* applies to the glass being talked about in the host utterance as well as the glass mentioned in a contextually relevant utterance, in this case the immediately previous utterance. Here, *sempre* takes scope over a constituent rather than over the whole utterance; we suggest that it quantifies over the times that the expression *a giorno* is repeated. This interpretation is analogue to the one received in examples (4.53) and (4.54), and which we called habitual; the difference lies in the fact that no information about the validity of a state of affairs is given in the utterance in the example above.

Finally, consider the following example:

(4.61) FC1/1

|                                               |                     |              |                  |                  |                         |                          |                 |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| vogliamo<br>want.1PL                          | dunque<br>therefore | un'<br>a     | Europa<br>europe | del<br>of-DET    | pluralismo<br>pluralism | e<br>and                 | delle<br>of-DET |                 |
| autonomie<br>autonomy                         | in<br>in            | cui<br>which | le<br>DET        | istanze<br>needs | locali<br>local         | trovino<br>find.SBJV.3PL | uno<br>a        | spazio<br>space |
| <b>sempre</b> maggiore<br><b>ever</b> greater |                     |              |                  |                  |                         |                          |                 |                 |

'We want therefore a Europe based on pluralism and self-government, where local needs find an **ever** greater space'

*Sempre* occurs here in a similar use to the one that was observed for *ancora* (see section 4.2.2): they both may take scope over an attribute or an adverb to draw a comparison. In this case, however, they are not interchangeable. As explained by Hansen (2008: 166) about French *encore* 'still' and *toujours* 'always', *encore* draws in this use a comparison between two degrees on a scale, whereas the use of *toujours* evokes more than two, thus giving the idea of increment in time. The same can be said of *ancora* and *sempre*: in the above example, "uno spazio ancora maggiore" would have meant a greater space than in another case – probably at the time of speech: the comparison is made between two alternatives on a scale. On the other hand, "uno spazio sempre maggiore" means that the present state should increase to higher degrees incrementing on a constant basis (hence *sempre*) on a scale. This use shares with the habitual uses seen earlier in this section the effect of repetition: *sempre* suggests that the property denoted by the adjective or adverb, in (4.61) *maggiore*, is repeated over a contextually relevant time, which in this case is an undetermined amount of time in the future. This specific reading of *sempre*, we argue, is triggered by it taking scope over an attribute or an adverb such as *più* 'more' or *meno* 'less'.

4.4.3 *Sempre*: discussion

We argued that *sempre* is a procedural expression which performs several functions. In temporal contexts, *sempre* invites the hearer to find a contextually relevant time and to consider that the state of affairs described by the *sempre* utterance is true at that time. We have argued that this time can be a stretch of time or a series of times; in the latter case, we have argued, *sempre* receives a habitual interpretation. We have furthermore



observed that *sempre* may also be used to trigger quite different effects: when the speaker is characterizing an object, *sempre* may be used to say that the object in question retains certain features all the time. Specific contexts will trigger a concessive interpretation: the speaker may want to make a statement about the static character of certain properties to eliminate or add assumptions for the hearer to consider.

We argued that the general procedure encoded by *sempre* is developed on the basis of different types of cues:

(Procedure) “Find contextually relevant time  $x$  and find that the state of affairs which is described by the *sempre* utterance is true at those times”

- IF *sempre* takes narrow scope, THEN a linguistic item is repeated in discourse
- IF words like *più*, *meno*, *maggiore*, *minore* appear in the *sempre* utterance, THEN *sempre* should receive a progressive interpretation

In our analysis we have also presented several examples of how *sempre* is often used interchangeably with *ancora* in spoken Italian. Both adverbs, we argue, can communicate the idea of continuation in time and their functions may therefore overlap. We have suggested that what brings a speaker to prefer *sempre* to *ancora* is its unbounded character. While *ancora* suggests that the eventuality in question can end in the near future, *sempre* is a marker of stasis, and may therefore sound more reassuring for an audience in a given context where such effect is needed.

## 4.5 Chapter discussion

In this chapter we argued that aspectual adverbs *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* can be given individual unitary analyses on the basis of their contribution to utterance interpretation. We argued for each of them that a core, basic meaning is shared among all uses of the same expression. Firstly, we suggested a procedural account of *ancora* and *già*: these expressions are given the same account as Spanish *pero* and *aunque* as procedural expressions which point to a contrast between a proposition and an alternative one which could have taken place. Furthermore, these expressions are claimed to indirectly

communicate higher-level explicatures expressing the speaker's propositional attitude. We further confirmed with examples from our corpora that this analysis applies to both their aspectual and non-aspectual meaning, and we showed the wide range of attitudes that these expressions may convey. We also argued that the hearer may derive additional contextual effects from the communication of contrast, such as new implications. This does not imply that the specific linguistic item is regularly associated with that specific contextual effect. Finally, we accounted for the difference between *ancora* and *già* in terms of the type of alternatives they evoke: on the one hand, *ancora* focuses on the termination of a phase and indicates that the phase might have terminated but is still ongoing; on the other hand, *già* focuses on the inception of a phase and indicates that that phase might have not started yet but is in fact taking place.

We showed that these expressions regularly draw the hearer's attention towards a contrast between the proposition communicated by the utterance at hand and an alternative proposition which is made salient from the context. In the aspectual uses, these alternatives are negative or positive phases on a timeline where the eventuality in question does or does not take place. In its non-temporal interpretations, we argued that these alternatives are values on scales evoked by specific semantic material in the utterance, for example the scales <*esterno, interno*> '<outdoors, indoors>', or <*buon ordine, cattivo ordine*> '<good order, bad order>'.

Secondly, we attempted to ascertain whether *sempre* may be given the same relevance-theoretic account. We verified that *sempre* does retain some of the semantics of *ancora* and *già*, since it encodes a procedure which too may evoke a contrast between alternatives and constrain the construction of higher-level explicatures. However, we have not been able to confirm that *sempre* does so as regularly as *ancora* and *già*. Furthermore, we have argued that *sempre* contributes to the basic explicature of the utterance in its aspectual interpretations, which brings it closer to the temporal expressions in the other chapters in this thesis.

For these three expressions we were able to identify several contextual clues that guide the hearer to the retrieval of the final interpretation. While the expressions in chapter 3 were mostly clause-external in terms of syntactic position and usually taking sentential scope, *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* often take sub-sentential scope and regularly co-occur with certain words or phrases in some of their uses. As a result, while context still



provides important evidence, the interpretation of these three expressions will also rely significantly on clues of a semantic nature. We regularly observed how the aspectual uses predictably interact with tense and other aspectual information in the utterance; another trend was the association of the scalar uses with specific terms that, coupled with context, evoke gradable sets of items.





## CHAPTER 5

### PROCEDURAL MARKERS OF SEQUENCE AND SIMULTANEITY: *POI* AND *MENTRE*

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will argue for an analysis of *poi* ‘then, also’ as a procedural marker of sequence in time, space and discourse. More specifically, we will argue that *poi* indicates that the temporal coordinate or spatial coordinate of the utterance, or else the way it achieves relevance, need to be calculated on the basis of the previous utterance. We will furthermore argue that *mentre* ‘while’ is a procedural connective marking simultaneity, both in time and in discourse. We will argue for a unitary account of both expressions: in line with the other temporal expressions in the present work, we will argue that the procedure they encode is actualized on a contextual basis.

*Poi* and *mentre* do not form a particularly coherent group, in comparison to those presented in chapters 3 or 4: they intuitively communicate different types of temporal meaning, and they belong to different word classes: as we will argue, *poi* displays greater flexibility at a syntactic and a pragmatic level with respect to connective *mentre*. We will nevertheless argue that these two expressions will adduce further evidence for the fact that an inferential account of communication is to be preferred to a text- or coherence-based account; firstly, we will argue that on occasions *poi* may link an utterance to non-linguistically communicated material; secondly, we will argue that both *poi* and *mentre* may indicate contrast without encoding contrastive meaning at the semantic level, thus showing that a correct analysis of these expressions requires researchers to go beyond the mere examination of ‘what is said’. Finally, we will argue that both *poi* and *mentre* present similarities with other temporal expressions in the present study in terms of the pragmatic processes they trigger: with *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* they share the indirect contribution to the basic explication of the utterance, whereas with *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* they share the constraint on the derivation of higher-level explicatures.

In this chapter we will identify, as already done in the previous two chapters, contextual cues that constrain the actualization of the procedures encoded by *poi* and *mentre*. We will first of all ascribe a significant role to both tense and aspectual information, which may help distinguish between the two temporal interpretations of *poi* and may help distinguishing between temporal and non-temporal interpretations of *mentre*. Secondly, we will maintain that previous discourse and the communicative situation may suggest to the hearer whether the speaker is using *poi* and *mentre* to communicate her own attitude towards the facts exposed in the utterance. In general, while *mentre* is decidedly constrained in terms of prosody and syntax, *poi* will be shown to be able to take different positions in the sentence and to interact with other semantic material in the utterance; for example, the occurrence of *poi* in relative clauses will be shown to trigger a non-temporal interpretation with a contrastive nuance (see section 5.2.4).

We will begin by a summary of the research carried out so far on *poi* and *mentre*, as well as on their approximate equivalents in other languages. Our account of *poi* will be presented in section 5.2, while our account of *mentre* will be presented in section 5.3. A discussion of the analysis of these expressions will be made in section 5.4.

### 5.1.1 *Poi* and *mentre* in Italian and foreign research

Accounts of various uses of *poi* can be found scattered in different types of publications. *Poi* has been treated in both its temporal and non-temporal uses by Hölker (1993) in a paper which focuses mainly on translation issues. The deictic properties of *poi* are presented in Vanelli (1995: 311) in a work on deixis in Italian; its mitigating use and its temporal use are mentioned respectively in Mara (1986: 186; see section 5.2.4) and Bazzanella (1995: 226) in works on discourse markers. No detailed analysis of the pragmatic processes associated with *poi* has been offered, to the best of our knowledge.

The literature on what could be considered the foreign counterparts of *poi* in other languages is fairly wide, particularly on French *puis*. Hansen (1995) adopts a polysemous approach to analysis; our arguments against this approach are presented in section 1.3.2. Reyle (1999) presents a comparative study of *alors* and *puis* as markers of continuation in discourse, using formal semantics. The works by Bras, Le Draoulec & Vieu (2001, 2003)



and Le Draoulec and Bras (2006) adopt the theoretical framework of SDRT (see section 2.3.6); these works attempt to ascertain which relations (as conceived within SDRT) are associated with *puis*. The work on French *puis* that is the closest to our approach is that of Saussure (unpublished), in that the author makes use of cognitive explanations; however, the study focuses on the differences among *puis*, *et puis* and *ensuite* rather than giving a comprehensive account of all uses of *puis*. As far as English is concerned, *then* is the main translation for *poi*, although the latter will be translated in various ways in section 5.2 ('later', 'also', 'really', 'actually', 'in fact'). Notice that *poi* shares this translation with *allora* (see section 3.1.2); while *then* can translate the 'deictic' and the 'cause/deduction' uses of *allora*, it translates the sequential use of *poi*, as well as some non-temporal uses which express addition of items and contrast. For a review of works on *then*, see section 3.1.2.

*Mentre* has mostly been treated as a temporal connective in the Italian literature (see for example Giusti 1995; Bertinetto 1986), with its pragmatic effects only briefly mentioned. In our analysis we will frequently make reference to Traugott's (1982, 1995) studies on the transfer of meaning from temporal to the discursive/conceptual level in English *while*, which is very similar to *mentre* in both its semantic and pragmatic uses. While Traugott's research focuses on the diachronic dimension of this transfer, our analysis of *mentre* aims to contribute to this line of enquiry with a synchronic account.

## 5.2 *Poi* as a procedural marker of sequence

In section 5.2 we will argue for a procedural account of *poi*. This adverb has been traditionally accounted for as a marker of sequence. We will aim to characterize this meaning more precisely by giving an account of the pragmatic processes associated with this expression. We will do so by arguing that *poi* suggests that a) either the utterance has a temporal or spatial coordinate successive to the one of the previous utterance, or b) it achieves relevance in the same way as a contextually relevant, previously occurring utterance. *Poi*, in other words, helps the hearer determine the temporal coordinate of an utterance, or its spatial coordinate, or else the way it achieves relevance, in relation to a previously occurring utterance or a pre-existing assumption.

*Poi* is derived from the Latin *post* ‘behind, after’ (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 947; Devoto & Oli 1982: 1730; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1367; Garzanti 2008: 1867). *Poi* can be used as a noun, meaning ‘future’ (noun), as in this example:

(5.1)

Pensiamo

al

*poi.*

think.IMP.1PL

to-DET

*future*

(Garzanti 2008: 1867)

'Let's think about the future.'

All other uses are seen as adverbial by Zingarelli *et al.* (1993; 1367-9). However, according to Garzanti (2008: 1867), *poi* is an adverb only in its temporal use:

(5.2)

Prima

entrò

il

padre

*poi*

la

madre.

first

enter.PST.3SG

DET

father.SBJ

*then*

DET

mother

(Garzanti 2008: 1867)

'The father got in first, then the mother.'

In its non-temporal uses, *poi* is classified in Garzanti as a connective, as in the following:

(5.3)

Non

sarebbe

onesto,

e

*poi*

non

NEG

to be.COND.3SG

honest

and

*then*

NEG

ne

vedo

la

necessità.

Of

see.1SG

DET

necessity

(Garzanti 2008: 1867)

'It wouldn't be honest, and, besides, I don't see how it can be necessary.'

As anticipated, we will argue for a unitary account in which *poi* encodes a procedure which is updated on a contextual basis. In its temporal use (see section 5.2.1), *poi*



indicates temporal sequence by instructing the hearer to give the proposition a temporal coordinate which is subsequent in time to that of the previous utterance, or to utterance time. In its spatial use (see section 5.2.2), *poi* indicates sequence in space by instructing the hearer to attribute a spatial coordinate to the proposition which is further on a conceptualized path with respect to that of the previous proposition. Finally, in its many discursive interpretations (see sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4), *poi* suggests to the hearer that the utterance achieves relevance in the same way as a previously occurring utterance or, in some cases, a previously communicated assumption. We will argue that a unitary account is possible in that the procedure encoded by *poi* always ties the interpretation of the utterance with the interpretation of a previous utterance or, in some cases, the presence of an assumption in the context; the determination of the domain of application of the procedure – temporal, spatial, discursive – are in our account attributed to pragmatic adjustments of the procedure itself on the basis of contextual considerations.

### 5.2.1 *Poi* and sequence in time

Temporal adverb *poi* is traditionally described as marking two eventualities as sequential (Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1367; Bazzanella 1995: 226). For example, in (5.4), *poi* suggests that the eventuality of freezing is subsequent to that of thawing out:

(5.4) MC10/5

|    |           |                 |                  |                  |    |          |
|----|-----------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----|----------|
| A: | mai_      | scongolare      | <b>poi</b>       | ricongelare      | un | prodotto |
|    | never     | to thaw out.IMP | <b>then</b>      | freeze again.IMP | a  | product  |
|    | surgelato | mai             | farlo            |                  |    |          |
|    | frozen    | never           | to do.IMP-it.OBJ |                  |    |          |

‘A: Never thaw out **then** freeze again a frozen product. Never do that.’

Here, the temporal coordinate of the clause introduced by *poi* is subsequent to the temporal coordinate of the preceding clause. On our account, this occurrence of *poi* is explained as follows: *poi* encodes a procedure which instructs the hearer to retrieve the temporal coordinate *t* of the previous utterance and to apply a temporal coordinate to the current utterance that is successive to that previous one (*t*+1). A further temporal use is exemplified by the following excerpt:

(5.5) FD2/1

|             |               |              |               |                   |                    |               |             |  |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| A:          | i             | rami         | del           | parlamento        | svolgono           | le            | stesse      |  |
|             | DET           | branches     | of-DET        | parliament        | carry out.3PL      | DET           | same        |  |
| identiche   |               | funzioni #   | l'            | ultima fase_      | l'                 | ultima fase_  | e'          |  |
| identical   |               | functions    | DET           | last phase        | DET                | last phase    | is          |  |
| la          | fase_         | cosid<detta> | eh            | riguarda          | la                 | promulgazione | e           |  |
| DET         | phase         | so-called    | eh            | regards           | DET                | promulgation  | and         |  |
| la          | pubblicazione | nei          | manuali       | si                | chiama anche       | fase          |             |  |
| DET         | publication   | in-DET       | handbooks     | REFL              | calls also         | phase         |             |  |
| integrativa |               | dell'        | efficacia     | <b>poi</b>        | capiremo           |               | perche'     |  |
| integrative |               | of-DET       | effectiveness | <b>later on</b>   | understand.FUT.1PL |               | why         |  |
| integrativa |               | dell'        | efficacia     | comunque          | in                 | due           | parole la   |  |
| integrative |               | of-DET       | effectiveness | however           | in                 | two           | words DET   |  |
| legge       | e'            | gia'         | stata         | approvata         | dal                | parlamento    | che e'      |  |
| law         | AUX.3SG       | already      | been          | approved          | by-DET             | parliament    | that.SBJ is |  |
| il          | titolare      | del          | potere        | legislativo [...] |                    |               |             |  |
| DET         | holder        | of-DET       | power         | legislative       |                    |               |             |  |

'A: The parliamentary groups all perform the very same functions. The final phase, the final phase is the phase, the so-called, eh, it regards the promulgation and the publication of the handbooks. It is also called the integrative effectiveness phase. **Later on** we'll understand why 'integrative effectiveness'. Anyway, in a couple of words, the law has already been approved by the parliament, which holds the legislature'

In (5.5), the speaker is giving a lecture and makes a digression to say that a specific aspect will be dealt with 'later on', that is, at some point in time after utterance time, without specifying when exactly. This unspecified point in time in the future is indicated by *poi*. Here, the temporal coordinate of the *poi* utterance is subsequent not to the temporal coordinate of another utterance in discourse, but rather to utterance time. An application of the procedure in the same way as for the example above would not yield adequate effects, and therefore the hearer will attribute to the proposition a temporal coordinate that is subsequent to utterance time rather than to the temporal coordinate of the previous proposition.

In the relevant literature, the first use has been described as an anaphoric use, since *poi* refers to an entity internal to discourse, while the second use has been described as more generally deictic, as it refers to an entity external to discourse (Vanelli 1995: 311). We argue, however, that both cases are instantiations of the same procedure, as they



both feature two subsequent points in time that are ordered by *poi*. We furthermore argue that in both interpretations *poi* indirectly contributes to the basic explication of the utterance, since the recovery of the temporal coordinate, as seen in section 3.1, is part of the process of development of the logical form into a full explication.

We suggest that the two temporal uses of *poi* may be distinguishable on the basis of specific contextual cues. Firstly, we suggest that tense, aspect and person of the predicates involved in the construction tend to be similar in the case of the ‘anaphoric’ use, and may differ to a greater degree in the case of the ‘deictic’ use. Thus respectively, in (5.4) both “scongellare” ‘thaw out’ and “ricongellare” ‘freeze again’ are in the infinite tense and this uniformity in semantics suggests sequence between the two utterances. In (5.5) the verb “si chiama” ‘is named’ semantically describes a state, is in the present tense and in the first person singular, whereas ‘capiremo’ is a telic verb in the future tense and first person plural; discontinuity between the two utterances is thus more plausible. A further clue might be prosody: we hypothesize informally that in (5.5) a pause in the prosody, or a prosody suggesting a digression, will suggest the hearer that this instance of *poi* is not linked with the previous utterance. A final suggested clue is syntax; even though the two types of temporal *poi* share clause-external position, we foresee that a different behaviour would be evident in written language as opposed to spoken. Although the corpus does not feature detailed punctuation, we suggest that if (5.4) and (5.5) were to be written down with punctuation, the instance of *poi* in (5.4) would be preceded by a comma, whereas the instance in (5.5) would be preceded by a full stop. This, as already explained, would be rendered in spoken Italian with a different linking prosody between the two utterances. Additionally, the two temporal uses seem to be associated with particular syntactic positions. In (5.6), both the sequential and the ‘deictic’ interpretations are possible:

- |       |        |    |            |          |    |                  |
|-------|--------|----|------------|----------|----|------------------|
| (5.6) | Vado   | in | banca, poi | passo    | a  | trovarti.        |
|       | Go.1SG | in | bank then  | pass.1SG | at | find.INF-you.OBJ |

‘I’m going to the bank, then I’m going to call by.’/ ‘I’m going to the bank, I’m going to call by later.’

In (5.7), *poi* can only be interpreted as pointing to an indefinite point in future time:

(5.7) Vado            in        banca, passo            **poi**        a        trovarti.  
Go.1SG            in        bank   pass.1SG        later   at        find.INF-you.OBJ

‘I’m going to the bank, I’m going to call by later.’

The same applies to (5.8), where *poi* is in sentence-final position:

(5.8) Vado            in        banca, passo            a        trovarti            **poi**  
Go.1SG            in        bank   pass.1SG        at        find.INF-you.OBJ        later

‘I’m going to the bank, I’m going to call by later.’

Notice that none of the non-temporal interpretations of *poi*, which will be illustrated in the following section, emerge from the examples above, regardless of which syntactic configuration *poi* assumes. This suggests that other types of contextual cues must be in place in order for the hearer to arrive at a spatial or discursive interpretation of *poi*. We shall review these cues as the chapter progresses.

5.2.2 *Poi* and sequence in space

*Poi* may occur in descriptions of the disposition of items in space. In (5.9), the speakers are involved in a so-called ‘map task’. Both speakers are given a map with drawings and a path with a missing half. The speakers must help each other draw the missing part of the path with the aid of the drawings:

(5.9) DGmtA01M/7,8,9,10

|               |                    |    |               |             |         |        |
|---------------|--------------------|----|---------------|-------------|---------|--------|
| p1F#167: <eh> | perché <ehm>       | io | ho            | una         | specie  | di<ii> |
|               | because            | I  | have.1SG      | a           | species | of     |
| specie di     | collana , {<laugh> |    | cioè} <laugh> | di #<G#168> | perle   | con#   |
| species of    | necklace           |    | that is       | of          | pearls  | with   |



|                                      |                 |                      |                            |                           |                             |                           |                 |                           |                |               |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| delle<br>some                        | stelle<br>stars | in<br>in             | mezzo<br>middle            |                           |                             |                           |                 |                           |                |               |
| p2G#168: #<F#167>                    |                 |                      | <mh># <lp> #<F#169><br>mh  |                           | <ss>si#<br>yes              |                           |                 |                           |                |               |
| p1F#169: #<G#168>                    |                 |                      | <ehm># <sp> e<br>ehm and   |                           | praticamente<br>practically |                           | la<br>the       | prima,<br>first           | quella<br>that | più<br>more   |
| in<br>in                             | alto,<br>high   | è<br>is              | la<br>DET                  | più<br>most               | piccola <sp><br>small       | <b>poi</b><br><b>then</b> | in<br>in        | mezzo<br>middle           |                |               |
| subito,<br>immediately               |                 | come<br>like         | seconda,ce<br>second there |                           | n'<br>of                    | è<br>is                   | una<br>one      | che<br>that.SBJ           | è<br>is        | grande<br>big |
| p2G#170: #<F#171>                    |                 |                      | <mh>#<br>mh                |                           |                             |                           |                 |                           |                |               |
| p1F#171: #<G#170>                    |                 |                      | e<br>and                   | <b>poi</b><br><b>then</b> | come<br>like                | terza<br>third            | e<br>and        | <b>poi</b><br><b>then</b> | ce<br>there    | n'<br>of      |
| è<br>is                              | una<br>a        | media <sp><br>medium | <b>poi</b><br><b>then</b>  | ripiglia<br>resumes       | piccola<br>small            | grande<br>big             | media<br>medium | piccola<aa><br>small      |                |               |
| <inspiration> capito?<br>understood  |                 |                      | io<br>I                    | ce<br>there               | l'<br>it                    | ho<br>have.1SG            | in<br>in        | una<br>a                  |                |               |
| disposizione #<G#172><br>disposition |                 |                      | di<br>of                   | questo<br>this            | tipo#<br>type               |                           |                 |                           |                |               |

In this sequence, the speaker is trying to describe the disposition of objects in the drawing. This can be seen as an example of ‘fictive motion’ (see sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.2): the speaker invites the hearer to imagine moving along a line, and enumerates objects as subsequent in time when they are in fact juxtaposed in space, on a drawing. We argue that, considering this specific contextual setting, the hearer will interpret *poi* as a marker of spatial position rather than temporal location: the procedure is contextually ‘updated’ to accommodate the recovery of spatial coordinates. We argue that this procedure instructs to retrieve the spatial coordinate “at X” from the previous utterance and attribute the coordinate “at X+1” to the proposition expressed by the marked utterance, where “+1” is an advanced position on a conceptualized path. Since the specification of

location contributes to the formation of the full proposition (see section 2.2.1), we conclude that in this interpretation *poi* contributes indirectly to the basic explicature of the utterance, like its temporal interpretation.

### 5.2.3 *Poi* and sequence in discourse: ‘addition’

*Poi* has been argued to express sequence in discourse (Berretta 1984: 245, Hölker 1993: 68; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1367-1368); we shall account for this function of *poi* in inferential terms, arguing that *poi* indicates that the utterance is to achieve relevance in the same way as a previously communicated utterance or assumption. We will also argue that *poi* may indirectly give rise to the contextual effect of strengthening or elimination. Finally, we will argue that the procedure encoded by *poi* in non-temporal contexts is the same as that encoded by its occurrences in temporal contexts, except it is actualized in a different way: rather than pointing to the temporal or to the spatial coordinate of the previous utterance, it draws the hearer's attention to the way that utterance achieves relevance.

In the following example, the speaker is discussing the stratification of the Russian society in the past, characterized by an unexpected degree of inequality; the speaker gives the following description of this society:

(5.10) MC7/12,13

|                 |         |                 |                 |             |                  |         |             |               |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| B: [...]        | anche   | se              | la              | terra       | veniva           |         | suddivisa   |               |
|                 | even    | if              | DET             | land        | AUX.PASS.PST.3SG |         | divided     |               |
| comunque        |         | c'              | erano           | delle       | disparita'       | infatti | evidenzia   | una           |
| however         |         | there           | were            | some        | disparities      | infact  | highlights  | a             |
| stratificazione |         | della           | stratificazione | gia'        | presente         | a       | livello     | dello         |
| stratification  |         | of-DET          | stratification  | already     | present          | at      | level       | of-DET        |
| stato           | una     | stratificazione | presente        |             | all'             | interno | di          | etnie eh <?>  |
| state           | a       | stratification  | present         |             | at-DET           | inside  | of          | ethnic groups |
| i               | culachi | che             | sono            | contadini   | piu'             | ricchi  | <b>poi</b>  | ci            |
| DET             | kulaks  | who             | are.3PL         | peasants    | more             | rich    | <b>then</b> | there         |
| sono            | i       | contadini       | medi            | <b>poi</b>  | ci               | sono    | poveri      | che           |
| are.3PL         | DET     | peasants        | medium          | <b>then</b> | there            | are.3PL | poor        | who           |
|                 |         |                 |                 |             |                  |         |             | sono          |
|                 |         |                 |                 |             |                  |         |             | are.3PL       |





|                      |                  |                    |                           |                      |                 |                          |                                  |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| cazzo<br>dick        | a<br>to          | nessuno_<br>nobody | <b>poi</b><br><b>also</b> | voglio'<br>want.1SG  | di'<br>to say   | la<br>DET                | politica allora<br>politics then |
| se<br>if             | vuoi<br>want.2SG | far<br>to make     | della<br>some             | politica<br>politics | la<br>it.OBJ    | devi<br>must.2SG         | fa' come<br>to make like         |
| la<br>it.OBJ         | fa<br>make.3SG   | la<br>DET          | Stampa<br>press.SBJ       | cioe'<br>that is     | come<br>like    | la<br>it.OBJ             | fa <?><br>make.3SG               |
| come<br>like         | la<br>it.OBJ     | fa <?><br>make.3SG | ma<br>but                 | non<br>NEG           | puoi<br>can.2SG | farla<br>make.3SG-it.OBJ | come la<br>like it.OBJ           |
| facciamo<br>make.1PL |                  | noi<br>we.SBJ      | insomma<br>in short       | voglio<br>want.1SG   | di'<br>to say   | o<br>or                  | la<br>it.OBJ                     |
| fai<br>make.2SG      |                  | bene<br>well       | o<br>or                   | non<br>NEG           | la<br>it.OBJ    | fai_<br>make.1S          | insomma<br>in short              |

'A: No, I like La Stampa, eh?

B: No, it's very good

A: Nowadays, it's the newspaper I prefer

B: It's the best newspaper, there is no doubt, it's the newspaper that's the most...'

A: Because there's a bit of everything

B: Exactly. **Also**, they make such choices... No... **Also**, they devote entire pages to politics instead, stuff no one gives a shit about. **Also**, I mean, politics... Now, if you want to do politics, you have to do it the way La Stampa does it, I mean, the way, the way... But you can't do it the way we do it. So, I mean, either you do it properly, or you just don't, I mean'

In this extract, the claim made by speaker B is that *La Stampa* is the best newspaper. The first argument in favour is that it is varied in content. The second argument, left unfinished, is about the choices made by the newspaper, and that is introduced by *poi*. The third argument, also introduced by *poi*, is about some specific choices. Similarly to the previous example, we argue that *poi* indicates how the utterance is to achieve relevance; that is, in the same way as some previous utterance which the hearer will have to determine contextually. In this case, the utterance is the previous one. As an additional effect, the utterance will also indirectly strengthen a previously communicated assumption, that is, that *La Stampa* is the best newspaper. However, we argue that *poi* is not regularly associated with the contextual effect of strengthening; that is solely derivable from the content itself of the utterances and the context in general.

Interestingly, *poi* seems to be also used to mark the very first argument mentioned by the speaker; consider the following example:



(5.12) TVit\_04R/2

|                           |                         |                              |                        |                            |                                     |                           |                          |                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| p1#10:                    | tipo<br>like            | Parigi <sp><br>paris         | con<br>with            | un<br>a                    | ragazzo<br>boy                      | che<br>who.SBJ            | è<br>AUX.PST.3SG         | stato<br>been         |
| bombardato<br>bombarded   | da<br>from              | anni<br>years                | e<br>and               | soprattutto<br>especially  | in<br>in                            | quei<br>those             | giorni #<p2#11><br>days  |                       |
| probabilmente<br>probably | di<br>of                | antidolorifici<br>painkiller |                        | che<br>that                | è<br>is                             | Ronaldo# <lp><br>ronaldo  | che<br>who               | è<br>is               |
| #<p2#11> Ronal+#          |                         |                              |                        |                            |                                     |                           |                          |                       |
| p2#11: #<p1#10>           |                         | sì ,<br>yes                  | sì<br>yes              | mi<br>REFL                 | sembra<br>seems                     | un<br>a                   | un<br>a                  | collegamento#<br>link |
| #<p1#10>                  |                         | mi<br>REFL                   | sembra<br>seems        | un<br>a                    | collegamento<oo><br>link            |                           | verosimile,<br>plausible | per<br>for            |
| quanto,<br>how much       | io<br>I                 | lo<br>it                     | voglio<br>want.1SG     |                            | chiarire perché<br>to clear because | <b>poi</b><br><b>also</b> | quelli<br>those          | che<br>who            |
| ci<br>us                  | ascoltano<br>listen.3PL | son<br>are.3PL               | tanti<br>many          |                            |                                     |                           |                          |                       |
| p2#12: <inspiration>      |                         | noi<br>we                    | stiamo<br>AUX.PROG.1PL |                            | facendo delle<br>making some        | ipotesi<br>hypotheses     |                          | che<br>that           |
| non<br>NEG                | sono <lp><br>are.3PL    | tuttora <sp><br>still        |                        | supportate<br>supported    | da<br>by                            | vere<br>true              | e<br>and                 | proprie<br>proper     |
| <inspiration> <eeh>       |                         | situazioni<br>situations     |                        | scientifiche<br>scientific |                                     |                           |                          |                       |

‘p1: Like Paris, with a boy who was bombarded for years and especially during those days, probably with painkillers – that is Ronaldo, who is  
p2: Yes, yes, it seems to me a link, it seems to me a plausible link, in spite of the fact that – I want to make this clear, **also** because those who listen are many – we are making hypotheses that are still unsupported by real scientific situations’

Here, the speaker first says that he intends to clarify an issue, and then brings a reason for that introducing it by *perché*. This reason is also marked by *poi*. However, at first blush, there does not seem to be a preceding element in discourse to which *poi* refers to. That is, the anaphoric element observed so far does not seem to appear here, as there is no other utterance that achieves relevance by giving a cause as to why the speaker wants to clarify the issue in question. However, we claim that, though not linguistically expressed, another reason may exist; for instance, the speaker may have other reasons in mind which are not explicitly expressed, or she may assume that some reasons are so obvious that the hearer has already thought of them. In (5.12), for instance, an additional reason may be that it is

important to point out that there is no scientific foundation for the claims made, in order to ensure the credibility of the show. In this case, then, *poi* guides the hearer to the contextual recovery of a previous assumption which achieves relevance in the same way as the *poi* utterance.

### 5.2.4 *Poi* and sequence in discourse: contrast

So far, we have argued that *poi* indicates that the current utterance achieves relevance in the same way as some previously communicated assumption, which is usually communicated linguistically by the immediately previous utterance but may also be retrievable from context. We have seen that in some cases the utterance may also communicate assumptions which strenghten other assumptions, as *poi* often links arguments supporting the same idea. However, we have seen that this may or may not happen as in some cases *poi* merely marks additional items on a list. Another case in which this does not happen is when *poi* links elements that are actually meant to be contrasting (see Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1368) – in this case the effect of strengthening is ruled out altogether. In (5.13), a positive judgement, which is the speaker’s opinion on the topic, is juxtaposed to a negative judgement:

(5.13) MB4/12

|    |                              |                                 |                  |                            |                   |                              |                                      |              |
|----|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| F: | e<br>and                     | il<br>DET                       | romanzo<br>novel | si<br>REFL                 | chiama<br>calls   | riva<br>bank                 | d'<br>of                             | Arno<br>Arno |
| B: | oooo [RIDONO]<br>ooh [laugh] |                                 |                  |                            |                   |                              |                                      |              |
| F: | no<br>no                     | bo' ?<br>don't know             |                  |                            |                   |                              |                                      |              |
| B: | il<br>DET                    | top<br>top                      | del<br>of.DET    | top<br>top                 |                   |                              |                                      |              |
| F: | ispirante<br>inspiring       | <b>poi</b><br><b>then again</b> |                  | magari fa<br>perhaps makes | cagare<br>to crap | pero'_<br>but                | risorg<imentale><br>Risorgimento.ADJ |              |
|    | diciamo<br>say.IMP.1PL       | un<br>a                         | romanzo<br>novel | ambientato<br>set          | nel<br>in.DET     | risorgimento<br>Risorgimento | italiano<br>Italian                  |              |



|    |         |    |       |
|----|---------|----|-------|
| un | romanzo | d' | amore |
| a  | novel   | of | love  |

F: And the novel is called, 'The bank of the river Arno'

B: Ooooh (laughs)

F: No... don't know

B: The best of the best

F: Inspiring... **Then again**, it might be crap, but... Risorgimento: let's say, a novel set in the Italian Risorgimento, a love novel'

In this example, the word *ispirante* 'inspiring' is enriched to the proposition "The title of the book sounds inspiring". *Poi* introduces the utterance *poi magari fa cagare* 'then again, it might be crap'. We argue that *poi*, as in the examples in the previous sections, does tell the hearer that the utterance achieves relevance in the same way as the previous utterance: both are relevant as descriptions of a particular book which is being discussed. This is evidently not a case of strengthening, as the speaker presents two contrasting characterizations – one positive and one negative. Rather, the hearer may proceed to eliminate assumptions that he might have retrieved by the first proposition related to the book, such as "If the title is inspiring, then the content will be good". However, we argue that *poi* itself is not associated regularly with the contextual effect of contradiction and elimination.

In the following, slightly different passage, a contrast is drawn between two types of behaviour as shown by the same person:

#### (5.14) FA3/29

|    |        |             |  |              |         |     |      |         |
|----|--------|-------------|--|--------------|---------|-----|------|---------|
| B: | questa | scrittura   |  | piccolissima | perche' | lui | ecco | proprio |
|    | this   | handwriting |  | tiny         | because | he  | here | really  |

|    |         |    |    |        |         |        |            |        |
|----|---------|----|----|--------|---------|--------|------------|--------|
| C: | invece  | a  | me | mi     | ha      | sempre | presentato | cose   |
|    | instead | to | me | me.DAT | AUX.3SG | always | presented  | things |

leggibilissime ah  
very legible

|    |     |     |       |     |        |     |       |
|----|-----|-----|-------|-----|--------|-----|-------|
| A: | si' | si' | si' # | si' | si' eh | non | tanto |
|    | yes | yes | yes   | yes | yes    | not | very  |

|    |        |       |    |    |           |        |            |
|----|--------|-------|----|----|-----------|--------|------------|
| C: | nel    | senso | no | no | parlo     | dell'  | aspetto    |
|    | in.DET | sense | no | no | speak.1SG | of.DET | appearance |

|    |     |    |           |     |     |
|----|-----|----|-----------|-----|-----|
| A: | non | e' | leggibile | per | lui |
|    | NEG | is | legible   | for | him |

C:        ahah certo            quando **poi**        scrive    per        se'        fa        quelle    cose  
              ah sure                when    **then**        writes    for        self        does       those    things

'B: This really small handwriting, because he, now, really...  
 C: Instead, he's always given me very legible things  
 A: Yes yes yes yes yes, eh, not really  
 C: In the sense, no, no, I'm talking about appearance  
 A: It's not legible for him  
 C: Ah, sure, when he writes for himself **then**, he does those things....'

Note that there might be a sequential element in (5.14), in the sense that the two types of behaviour may occur in sequence on a regular basis. This is why the translation 'then' has been kept. However, a more appropriate translation taking into account context and the speaker's communicative intention is 'instead'. The point being discussed by the speakers in the example is that the boy in question displays two different and – in the speaker’s view – contrasting types of behaviour in two different situations, in whatever sequence they occur. We argue that the speaker uses *poi* to indicate that both the utterance and a preceding utterance pertain to the same point, that is, the description of the kid’s behaviour. The hearer is to know that the *poi* utterance achieves relevance in the same way as a previous utterance – in this case, a general group of utterances. The hearer may then retrieve further assumptions, regarding for example the speaker’s attitude towards the student’s behaviour. A use similar to this one of *poi* is observed for French *puis* by Bras, Le Draoulec and Vieu, who write that these “are not clear contrast cases; many of them describe events that indirectly presuppose incompatible states of mind” (2001: 132).

We will now present a group of uses in which *poi* occurs early in a relative clause; this clause seems to be a correction to a previously communicated idea. Here is the first excerpt:

(5.15) RB9/2

N:        sto                    parlando            come\_    rivestimento <F> [rivestimento]  
              AUX.1SG            talking            like        coating            coating

diciamo            quindi    a\_        a        muro    cioe'    il        Calibel    il        Calibel  
 say.IMP.1PL        so        at        at        wall    that is    DET    calibel    DET    calibel

normale  
 normal



H:      si'      e'      lana      di      vetro      piu'      fibra      di      vetro      piu'  
              yes      is      wool      of      glass      plus      fiber      of      glass      plus

cartongesso  
 cardboard plaster

N:      mh  
              mh

H:      cartongesso      da      tredici      centimetri      che      **poi**      e'      dodici  
              cardboard plaster of      thirteen      centimetres      which      **actually**      is      twelve

e      mezzo  
 and      half

'N: I'm saying, as facing, let's say, so, for the wall. That is the Calibel, the standard Calibel.

H: Yes, it's glass wool, plus fiberglass, plus cardboard plaster

N: Mh

H: 13 cm cardboard plaster, which is **actually** 12.5 cm.'

Here, the speaker first gives the measure that is commonly thought to apply to the object in question, and then tells the hearer that the actual measure is, in her opinion, a different one. The speaker might want to draw the attention to this contrast in order to make sure that the hearer does not believe that the measure of the material is actually 13cm. We argue for the same account as before: *poi* invites the hearer to find a previous utterance which pertains to the same point as the *poi* utterance, and suggests that the *poi* utterance achieves relevance in the same way as that utterance. In this case, the relevance lies in determining the length of an object. Clearly, there is more to the utterance, as the speaker wants the hearer to know that the length given in the *poi* utterance is (what she thinks is) the real one. The hearer may then retrieve higher-level explicatures of the type "the speaker believes that the measure is 12 cm" and may also proceed to eliminate previously entertained assumptions, for example "The measure written on the package is the actual measure of the product". We argue that these extra effects are retrieved by the hearer on the basis of the specific syntactic configuration of *poi* which characterizes this specific reading.

Here is a second example:

(5.16) RDit\_03M/1

|       |                                |                              |                                                |                                      |                          |                                     |                                |                    |                     |
|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| p0#2: | quindi <inspiration><br>so     |                              | appunto,<br>exactly                            |                                      | ripeto,<br>repeat.1SG    |                                     | non<br>NEG                     | l'<br>it-OBJ       | ho<br>AUX.1SG       |
|       | mai<br>never                   | fatto<br>done                | personalmente<br>personally                    | ma<br>but                            | vorrei<br>want.COND.1SG  | ringraziare {<NOISE><br>to thank    |                                |                    | proprio}<br>exactly |
| p0#3: | da<br>from                     | dicembre <sp><br>december    | quando<br>when                                 | abbiamo ottenuto<br>AUX.1PL obtained |                          | la<br>DET                           | prima<br>first                 |                    |                     |
|       | vittoria<br>victory            | col<br>with-DET              | sessanta<br>sixty                              | per<br>per                           | cento<br>cent            | a<br>at                             | Brescia, dove<br>brescia where | abbiamo<br>AUX.1PL |                     |
|       | sconfitto<br>defeated          | la<br>DET                    | sinistra <inspiration><br>left.NMLZ            |                                      | alla<br>to-DET           | grande<br>great                     |                                |                    |                     |
| p0#4: | <inspiration> sempre<br>always |                              | presentandoci <vocal><br>present.PROG-REFL     |                                      | solis<sp> e<br>alone and |                                     | con i+ <sp><br>with            |                    |                     |
|       | il<br>DET                      | simbolo del<br>symbol of-DET | movimento<br>movement                          | universitario<br>university.ADJ      | padano<br>po valley.ADJ  |                                     | che è<br>who.SBJ is            |                    |                     |
|       | <b>poi</b><br><b>actually</b>  | l'<br>DET                    | Albertino da Giussano<br>albertino da giussano | che<br>who.OBJ                       | voi<br>you.2PL           | conoscete <inspiration><br>know.2PL |                                |                    |                     |
|       | molto<br>very                  | bene<br>well                 |                                                |                                      |                          |                                     |                                |                    |                     |

‘So, exactly, I repeat, I’ve never done it personally but I would like to thank... Exactly... Since December, when we obtained the first victory with 70% in Brescia, where we defeated the left easily, still running on our own, and with the symbol of the Po Valley university movement, which is **actually** Albertino da Giussano, whom you know very well’

Here, the speaker first describes a person by saying what the person does, and then specifies the identity of the person with a relative clause, marking this content with *poi*. In this case, the contrasted proposition which the speaker wants to correct is not explicitly communicated, but it could be a range of alternatives that the hearer could be considering. The speaker might want to emphasize this contrast because she might assume that the hearers do not know that the “symbol of the university movement” and “Albertino da Giussano” are in fact the same person, or that they simply do not know who the “symbol of the university movement” is. We give this occurrence of *poi* the same account as above, and we argue that the additional assumptions retrieved which have to do with the speaker’s attitude are, as in the previous example, retrieved thanks to the specific syntactic configuration of *poi* in this example.



Example (5.18) below, taken from a TV show, is a further example of this use. Notice that in this case, there does not seem to be a correction with respect to an opinion previously stated, as the information marked by *poi* is the first offered on the object in question. This is similar to the ‘special’ argumentative use where *poi* marks the first argument in support of the speaker's idea (section 5.2.3):

(5.17) Tvit\_03T/4

|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| p1#21:                  | <inspiration> cosa     | sono                   | questi? #<p3#22> | li         | li           | vogliamo         |         |
|                         | what                   | are.3PL                | these            | them       | them         | want.1PL         |         |
| inquadrarli ?#          |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
| to frame-them           |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
| p3#22:                  | #<p1#21> <inspiration> | <NOISE># sì , {<NOISE> | allora<aa>}      | <eeh>      |              |                  |         |
|                         | yes                    |                        | so               |            |              |                  |         |
| p3#23:                  | noi                    | ci                     | tenevamo         | a          | precisare    | che              |         |
|                         | we                     | there                  | to hold.PST.1PL  | to         | to specify   | that             |         |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              | oltre            |         |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              | beyond           |         |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              | all'             |         |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              | at-DET           |         |
| offerta<aa><sp>         | classica               | {<NOISE>turistica<aa>} | <inspiration>    | <unclear>  | che          | ha               |         |
| offer                   | classic                | touristic              |                  |            | that         | has              |         |
| una<aa> tradizione      | per                    | quel                   | che              | riguarda   | I'           | agricoltura      |         |
| a tradition             | for                    | what                   | that             | regards    | DET          | agriculture      |         |
| #<p1#24> <inspiration># |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
| p1#24:                  | #<p3#23> sì# <sp>      |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
|                         | yes                    |                        |                  |            |              |                  |         |
| p3#25:                  | e                      | questa                 | è                | una<aa>una | piccola      | rappresentazione | di      |
|                         | and                    | this                   | is               | a a        | small        | representation   | of      |
| quelli                  | che                    | erano                  | <b>poi</b>       | gli        | attrezzi<ii> | che              | si      |
| those                   | that                   | were.3PL               | <b>in fact</b>   | DET        | tools        | that             | REFL    |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  | usavano |
|                         |                        |                        |                  |            |              |                  | use.3PL |
| una                     | volta                  | nelle                  | latterie         |            |              |                  |         |
| a                       | time                   | in-DET                 | dairies          |            |              |                  |         |

'p1: What are these? Do we want to show them?  
p3: Yes, let's see...  
p3: We really want to point out that, in addition to the classic touristic offer, that has a tradition in terms of agriculture  
p1: Yes  
p3: And this is a, a small representation of those that were **in fact** the tools that were used once in dairies'

In this example, the speaker is showing some objects to the audience, probably also pointing at them with gestures, and further characterizes them with the aid of a relative clause; this clause is also marked by *poi*. As mentioned above, there is no previous explicit

characterization of the same objects with which the speaker’s characterization could be contrasted. In fact, it is hardly possible to pin down what the speaker would want to contrast here; we suggest that it is whatever she believes that the hearer’s idea may be about the objects he is seeing. The hearer might then have to eliminate some of the previously entertained assumptions, depending on the context. For example, the hearer, that is to say the audience at home, may be thinking upon seeing the images that the objects were used for growing crops rather than producing dairy products.

This use of *poi* in a relative clause has been noted by Spitzer (1922, in Hölker 1993: 76), who observes that the added piece of information is a detail not known before. In fact, we have seen that it is difficult to ascertain whether the 'new' piece of information is actually new to the hearer – and it can tentatively be suggested that in some cases the speaker does not necessarily know, either. What is crucial is that *poi* does retain the anaphoric element which we have found in all its instances; additional effects are retrieved by virtue of its syntactic configuration, but are not encoded by *poi*.

We conclude this section with an example in which *poi* appears to function as a mitigating particle. Consider the following example:

(5.18) FC4/5

|                         |                       |                             |               |                    |                 |                          |                   |                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| F: [...]                | qui<br>here           | c’<br>there                 | è<br>is       | una<br>a           | grande<br>great | perplexità<br>perplexity | vedo_#<br>see.1SG | nei<br>in.DET                |
|                         | lavoratori<br>workers | una<br>a                    | paura<br>fear | immensa<br>immense |                 | addirittura<br>even      | questo<br>this    | privatizzare<br>to privatize |
| è<br>is                 | uno<br>a              | spauracchio<br>bugbear      |               | immenso<br>immense | ma<br>but       | io<br>I                  | tutta<br>all      | quella<br>this               |
| preoccupazione<br>worry |                       | <b>poi</b><br><b>really</b> | in<br>in      | fondo<br>bottom    | in<br>in        | fondo<br>bottom          | non<br>NEG        | la<br>it.OBJ                 |
|                         |                       |                             |               |                    |                 |                          |                   | vedo # [...]<br>see.1SG      |

‘F: There’s great perplexity here. I see an immense fear in workers. Even more so, this privatization is a huge scarecrow, but me, all of that worry, in the end I don’t **really** see it.

In this excerpt, the speaker explicitly refers to a previous assessment by someone other than the speaker. Furthermore, the *poi* utterance has the pronoun “I” as a subject, which makes it clear that the expressed opinion is the speaker’s. However, *poi* does indicate as in the previous examples that the utterance refers to a previous utterance which shares the same topic, that is to say the ongoing, or incoming, privatization: while workers are



afraid of it, the speaker maintains they should not be worried. It is unclear whether *poi* indirectly points to a contrast in this example, because this effect might also be due to the presence of the adversative connective *ma* 'but'.

The particular feature of *poi* in this example is that it has a mitigating function, as observed by Mara (1986: 186): the speaker's opinion is rendered less harsh by *poi* as well as other devices such as: the hedging expression *in fondo* ('in the end'), the repetition of the same expression, and finally the potentially negative information, that is the speaker's contrasting opinion, relegated to the utterance-final position. If it were only introduced by *ma* 'but', the speaker's opinion would sound harsher. We tentatively suggest that *poi* triggers this mitigating effect because it can be used to add a supplementary point of view in the way that we have also observed in examples (5.13) and (5.14). In this way, the speaker's point of view in the example above is brought to the attention of the hearer as if it were a corollary piece of information, pertaining to the same point, and therefore not the only one to consider. A similar phenomenon arises according to Caffi in the case of *oltretutto* ('what's more'), "which introduces the message as one among other possible topics, thereby decreasing its importance" (1999: 899). Similar 'buffering' uses are found for *tra l'altro* ('by the way', 'what's more') and *per caso* ('incidentally', 'by any chance') (p. 901), which all 'lateralize' the topic thus making it less urgent.

### 5.2.5 *Poi*: discussion

We have argued for a unitary analysis of *poi* as a procedural adverbial expressing sequence in time, space and discourse. In its temporal use, *poi* helps establishing the temporal location of the utterance in relation to that of the previous utterance or to utterance time. In the spatial domain, *poi* instructs the hearer to determine the spatial coordinate of the eventuality described in the utterance as related to that in the previous utterance. In these two uses, *poi* indirectly contributes to the basic explicature of the utterance. We furthermore argued that, in its non-temporal readings, *poi* helps the hearer determine the relevance of the utterance: by instructing to look for a contextually relevant utterance or a pre-existing assumption, *poi* suggests to the hearer that the two utterances achieve relevance in the same way. We finally argued that the hearer may

additionally derive higher-level explicatures and/or retrieve contextual effects such as the recovery of new implications or the elimination of a previously entertained assumption.

What allows us to provide a unified account for *poi* is the encoding on its part of a procedure which ties in all cases the relevance of the current utterance to a preceding element: temporal coordinate, position in space, utterance or assumption; in other words, the anaphoric element of *poi*. *Poi*, then, proves to be a flexible marker whose basic procedure ‘merely’ instructs the hearer as to the way the marked utterance achieves relevance.

*Poi* may be regarded as similar to *allora*, since it links the current utterance with a previous utterance; however, there are differences between the two in the type of link they impose. Differently from *allora*, *poi* connects items in lists that are not related by a deduction or a consequence or response; simply, the speaker decides to present them together (see Reyle 1999: 5, Le Draoulec & Bras 2006: 225-226 for observations on the same phenomenon in French *puis*). Thus, although both express continuation, *puis* has an extra element of personal perspective element which makes it possible for it to indicate contrast. We furthermore noticed parallels between some of the non-temporal instances of *poi* and the cases of contrast observed in chapter 4 for the aspectual adverbs: that is to say, the speaker may use *poi* to draw the hearer’s attention towards a contrast between the proposition and another one which may or may not be explicitly communicated; parallel to that, the hearer is encouraged to draw higher-level explicatures regarding the speaker’s attitude.

In order to decide on the appropriate interpretation for *poi*, the hearer will take into consideration various clues, both linguistic and extralinguistic. This is necessary since the procedure associated with *poi* is a sketchy schema which needs to be adjusted on the basis of context, as follows:

(Procedure) “Find relevant *x* in the immediately previous context and apply it to the *poi* utterance”

- IF the context is temporal, then *x* is the temporal coordinate of the preceding utterance, and is to be considered as preceding with respect to the temporal coordinate of the *poi* utterance



- IF tense, aspect and person of the verb are the same in both utterances, THEN *poi* is to be interpreted as anaphoric
- IF *poi* is preceded by a pause, is intrasentential and in final position, THEN it is to be interpreted as deictic
- IF the context is spatial, then *x* is the spatial coordinate of the preceding utterance, and is to be considered as preceding with respect to the spatial coordinate of the *poi* utterance
- IF the context is non-temporal and the sequence is a list or an argumentation, THEN *x* is the way the previous utterance achieves relevance, and is to be applied to the *poi* utterance
  - IF *poi* appears in a relative clause immediately after *che*, then the utterance should be interpreted as a specification to the previous utterance
  - IF *poi* co-occurs with negation, THEN it should be interpreted as expressing mitigation

In this chapter we showed that an inferential account can accommodate those uses of *poi* which point to assumptions that are not retrievable from linguistic context. We have observed this behaviour in the case of *poi* linking arguments, only one of which is linguistically expressed by an utterance (section 5.2.3). The same happens when *poi* appears in the construction *che poi*, which specifies a quality of an entity without there being a linguistic indication on what is to be specified (section 5.2.4). This phenomenon cannot be accounted for in text- and coherence- based approaches, which focus on text surface. Finally, the validity of an inferential account is evident in the case of *poi* signalling contrast between two propositions. Since we argue that *poi* does not encode the meaning of contrast, the only way for the hearer to get to a 'contrastive' interpretation is by means of a chain of inferences.

### 5.3 *Mentre*

We will argue in this section for an analysis of *mentre* as a procedural marker of simultaneity in time and in discourse. We will argue that in its temporal use *mentre* invites

the hearer to attribute to the proposition the same temporal coordinate as in the main clause. We will furthermore argue that speakers make use of this temporal expression to present two facts or points of view simultaneously, so that the hearer can retrieve higher-level explicatures and, possibly, additional contextual effects. Our proposal is thus that of a unified account for *mentre* which will show clear parallels between its temporal and non-temporal uses.

*Mentre* is said to originate in the Old Italian *domentre*, which is derived from the Latin expression *dŭm ĩnterim* ('while in the meantime') (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1976: 742; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1083; De Mauro & Mancini 2000: 1211; see also Garzanti 2008: 1501). With the exception of uses in locutions where it functions as a noun, such as *in quel mentre* ('meanwhile'), *mentre* is considered a connective by dictionaries (Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1083; Garzanti 2008: 1501).

Two syntactic options are available for the *mentre* utterance: it may either precede (*mentre* B, A), as in (5.20), or follow (A, *mentre* B), as in (5.21), the main clause:

(5.19)

*Mentre*

*while*

si

REFL

preparava

prepare.PST.IPFV.3SG

a

to

partire,

to leave

ha

AUX.PFV.3SG

ricevuto

received

un

a

contrordine.

countermand

(Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1083)

'While he was getting ready in order to leave, he received a countermand.'

(5.20)

Incominciò

start.PST.PFV.3SG

a

to

nevicare

to snow

*mentre*

*while*

andavamo

go.PST.IPFV.1PL

alla

to-DET

stazione.

station

(Garzanti 2008: 1501)

'It started snowing while we were going to the station.'



Since these positions are available for both temporal and non-temporal uses, we conclude that contextual cues of other types help the hearer in reaching the final interpretation. We will comment of such cues in section 5.3.2. In the incoming section we will argue that *mentre* indirectly contributes to the explicatures of the utterance by guiding the hearer in the retrieval of a temporal coordinate for the proposition.

5.3.1 *Mentre* as a marker of simultaneity

In its temporal use, *mentre* has been described as signalling simultaneity (Serianni 1988: 510; Zingarelli *et al.* 1993: 1083) between the eventuality expressed in the *mentre* clause and the one expressed in the main clause. We argue that the pragmatic processes underlying this type of meaning are the following: *mentre* encodes a procedure which instructs the hearer to attribute to the proposition expressed by the utterance the same temporal coordinate as the main clause. In (5.22), the eventuality described in the main clause, which is characterized by the use of a perfective verb, is not only simultaneous to, but also included in the eventuality expressed by the *mentre* clause, whose aspect is imperfective:

(5.21) RDis\_02B / 1

|                            |                               |                     |                                  |                               |                          |                        |                          |           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| p0#4:                      | <inspiration><br>in           | attesa<br>wait      | di<br>of                         | chiarimenti<br>clarifications | tre<br>three             | bambini<br>children of |                          |           |
| circa<br>approximately     | nove<br>nine                  | anni,<br>years      | della<br>of-DET                  | scuola<br>school              | elementare<br>elementary | Parini<br>parini       |                          |           |
| p0#5:                      | <b>mentre</b><br><b>while</b> | ieri<br>yesterday   | visitavano<br>visit.PST.IPFV.3PL | il<br>DET                     | museo<br>museum          | egizio<br>egyptian     | di<br>of                 |           |
| Torino<br>turin            |                               |                     |                                  |                               |                          |                        |                          |           |
| p0#6:                      | si<br>REFL                    | sono<br>AUX.PFV.3PL | sentite<br>felt                  | male<br>bad                   | tanto<br>much            | da<br>to               | richiedere<br>to request | l'<br>DET |
| intervento<br>intervention | del<br>of-DET                 | medico<br>doctor    |                                  |                               |                          |                        |                          |           |

‘While we’re waiting for clarifications, three girls of around 9 years of age, from the Parini primary school, **while** they were visiting the Egyptian museum in Turin, felt so sick that they requested the intervention of a GP’

Here, the *mentre* clause sets the background with a continuative action, expressed with the *imperfetto* tense, whereas the main clause describes a punctual event, which is included in the period of time designated by the first one. This construction is called 'schema incidenziale' ('incidence schema') by Bertinetto (1986: 165), and is characterized by “unbounded past situations [...] providing a background for one or more bounded events to occur [...]”. This interpretation is clearly signalled by cues of the semantic type: when *mentre* is used temporally, the action in the subordinate clause is durative, regardless of the type of eventuality described in the main clause (Giusti 1995: 723). The aspect of the verb will then be imperfective, and this is expressed through the use of the *imperfetto* tense or the present tense (Bertinetto 1986: 104n18).<sup>1</sup>

In the following example, *mentre* occurs between the main clause and the temporal clause:

(5.22) ND14/4

|           |         |             |              |               |       |                |            |             |
|-----------|---------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------|----------------|------------|-------------|
| A: [...]  | Antonio | discendendo | al           | motociclo     | e     | protendendo    | una        |             |
|           | Antonio | descending  | at-DET       | motorcycle    | and   | stretching out | a          |             |
| pistola   | inizia  | a           | sparare      | <b>mentre</b> | corre | anch’          | egli       | verso la    |
| gun       | begins  | to          | shoot        | <b>while</b>  | runs  | also           | he.SBJ     | towards DET |
| salumeria |         | e           | indirizzando | i             | colpi | al             | Puca [...] |             |
| deli      |         | and         | addressing   | DET           | shots | to-DET         | Puca       |             |

‘A: [...] Antonio, getting off his motorcycle and pointing a gun, starts shooting, **while** he too runs towards the cold meats shop and directing the shots towards Puca’

Here, the tense of both actions is the simple present for both utterances; however, the semantics of the verb *iniziare* suggests a punctual action, and thus sets the background for the other eventuality, which is expressed by the continuative verb *correre*. We argue that the occurrence of *mentre* in (5.23) encourages the hearer to establish that the temporal coordinate for the *mentre* utterance is the same as the one for the main clause. In doing so, *mentre* contributes indirectly to the explicatures of the utterance, as

<sup>1</sup> The presence of an imperfective verb has also been observed with the use of English near-equivalent while (Chung & Timberlake 1985: 257; see section 1.3.2)



suggested for *poi* and for the expressions in chapter 3. In the next section we will show that a parallel procedure is encoded by non-temporal uses of *mentre*. In that case, however, the arguments of the procedure are the propositions communicated by the temporal and the main clause, rather than their temporal coordinates.

### 5.3.2 *Mentre* as a marker of simultaneity of processing

Instead of juxtaposing two events that overlap in time, non-temporal *mentre* juxtaposes two events by virtue of them sharing a setting or a topic, or else two ideas that the speaker has an interest in presenting together for the sake of her argumentation. We will maintain that these non-temporal uses are procedural in the same way as the temporal use, in that they relate the temporal clause to the main clause. However, in this case *mentre* does not point to their temporal coordinates, but rather to their propositions: similarly to what observed for *poi*, the speaker invites the hearer to consider the two propositions as a unit in order for him to retrieve higher-level explicatures and/or gain different types of cognitive effects.

The case in which the two events that share a setting or a topic is illustrated in the following example:

(5.23) RDis\_07D / 1

|               |                  |                    |               |                   |          |              |        |         |       |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|--------|---------|-------|
| p2#12:        | <inspiration> in | Sicilia            | il            | mare              | forza    | sette        | e      | il      | vento |
|               | in               | sicily             | DET           | sea               | strength | seven        | and    | DET     | wind  |
| a             | ventinove        | nodi <inspiration> |               |                   | hanno    | causato      | al     | largo   |       |
| at            | 29               | knots              |               |                   | AUX.3PL  | caused       | at-DET | open    | sea   |
| delle         | coste            | siracusane         | il            | naufregio         | di       | una          | nave   | turca   |       |
| of-DET        | coasts           | Siracusa.ADJ       | DET           | shipwreck         | of       | a            | ship   | Turkish |       |
| <b>mentre</b> | un               | altro              | mercantile    | maltese stato     |          | investito da | un'    |         |       |
| <b>while</b>  | a                | other              | merchant ship | maltese been.PASS |          | run over by  | a      |         |       |
| ondata        | molto            | forte              |               |                   |          |              |        |         |       |
| wave          | very             | strong             |               |                   |          |              |        |         |       |

‘In Sicily, the force 7 sea and the 29 knot wind caused, off the Siracusa coast, the shipwreck of a Turkish ship, **while** another Maltese merchant ship was run over by a very strong wave’

In (5.24), the two events in the utterances linked by *mentre* may of course be simultaneous in other contexts, if the period were to be taken in isolation. However, the focus in this context is on the topic shared by the two events, as both are disasters caused by the weather condition. The hearer will expect that this is a case of non-temporal use on the basis of extralinguistic knowledge: it is implausible, although not impossible altogether, that a news report regarding bad weather in a place is followed by a similar piece of news that took place exactly at the same time. Another clue in this direction is semantic in the form of the indication of location - “in Sicilia” and “maltese” - indicating that the two events took place at a distance one from another. More generally, in the context of a news report the fact that the two events took place at exactly the same time is not particularly relevant; more relevant is the fact that the Mediterranean Sea was so rough that it caused multiple disruptions in different places, regardless of whether they took place exactly at the same time or not. Therefore, seeing that the temporal simultaneity interpretation would not yield adequate cognitive effects, because of its scarce informativeness, the hearer will actualize the procedure encoded by *mentre* in a different way: *mentre* does point to the *mentre* clause, but this time it points to the proposition it expresses, and instructs the hearer to process it together with the proposition of the *mentre* clause. The hearer may then gain new implications that he would not gain from only one proposition; examples are “The weather conditions were seriously bad this time” or “This time the winds were exceptionally strong all around Sicily”. The following is a case of two items juxtaposed in argumentation:

(5.24) ME10/1

|               |           |             |               |        |               |          |            |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|--------|---------------|----------|------------|
| A:            | io        | invito      | tutte         | le     | persone che   | hanno    | visto      |
|               | I         | invite.1SG  | all           | DET    | people who    | have.3PL | seen       |
| Roger Rabitt  | ad        | andare      | a             | vedere | Volere volare | perché_  | è          |
| Roger Rabbit  | to        | go          | to            | see    | Volere volare | because  | is         |
| assolutamente | diverso   |             |               |        |               |          |            |
| absolutely    | different |             |               |        |               |          |            |
| B:            | ah        |             |               |        |               |          |            |
|               | ah        |             |               |        |               |          |            |
| A:            | almeno    | potranno    | vederlo       | e      | non           | devo_    | spiegare   |
|               | at least  | can.FUT.3PL | to see-it.OBJ | and    | NEG           | must.1SG | to explain |



|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| i                                                                                                                | motivi  | delle  | diversità   |                        | fondamentalmente |          | <b>mentre</b> | Roger Rabitt |
| DET                                                                                                              | reasons | of.DET | differences |                        | fundamentally    |          | <b>while</b>  | Roger Rabbit |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| è                                                                                                                | un      | grande | film        | americano              | spettacolare     |          |               |              |
| is                                                                                                               | a       | great  | film        | american               | spectacular      |          |               |              |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| B:                                                                                                               | certo   |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
|                                                                                                                  | sure    |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| A:                                                                                                               | con     | parte  | con         | quaranta miliardi così | insomma          |          | noi           |              |
|                                                                                                                  | with    | starts | with        | forty billions so      | in sum           |          | we            |              |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| siamo_                                                                                                           | una_    | eh     | una         | storia                 | più              | semplice | una           | storia       |
| are.1PL                                                                                                          | a       |        | a           | story                  | more             | simple   | a             | story        |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               | d'           |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               | of           |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               | amore        |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               | love         |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| allora                                                                                                           |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| so                                                                                                               |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
|                                                                                                                  |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| 'A: I invite all the people who saw Roger Rabbit to go see Volere Volare, because it's completely different      |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| B: Ah                                                                                                            |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| A: At least they will be able to see it and I don't have to explain the reasons for the fundamental differences. |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| <b>While</b> Roger Rabbit is a big American film, spectacular                                                    |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| B: Sure                                                                                                          |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |
| A: with... Starts with 40 million, like that, basically... We are a, eh, a simple story, a love story. So'       |         |        |             |                        |                  |          |               |              |

In (5.25), it is true that the two predicates can be true at the same time, but this is due to the fact that they are both states. Exactly because this type of interpretation would not yield enough effects, the hearer looks for a different way for the utterance to achieve relevance. The procedure will then instruct the hearer to consider the propositions communicated by the two utterances as a unit. From that, and considering that in the context the speaker is advertising his new film, the hearer may retrieve higher-level explicatures concerning the speaker’s view on the matter – as she is clearly advertising her new film – as well as new implications of the type “Simple love stories are better than Hollywood blockbusters”.

The following example displays an even greater degree of polemical tone:

(5.25) MC7/1,2

|          |          |       |                |          |          |        |     |               |
|----------|----------|-------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|-----|---------------|
| A: [...] | dovete   |       | rendervi       | conto    | che      | e'     | una | situazione    |
|          | must.2PL |       | to render-REFL | count    | that.REL | is     | a   | situation     |
|          |          |       |                |          |          |        |     |               |
| di       | dovere   | cosi' | come           | ho       | il       | dovere | di  | venirci       |
| of       | duty     | so    | like           | have.1SG | DET      | duty   | of  | to come-there |
|          |          |       |                |          |          |        |     |               |
| io       | vengo    |       | per            | sette    | persone  | vengo  | per | venti         |
|          |          |       |                |          |          |        |     | ma            |

|             |               |               |         |                  |              |                   |               |            |        |          |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|--------|----------|
| I           | come.1SG      | for           | seven   | people           | come.1SG     | for               | twenty        | but        |        |          |
| lo          | stesso        | dovere        | c'      | e'               | dall'        | altra             | parte         | delle      | altre  | tredici  |
| DET         | same          | duty          | there   | is               | from-DET     | other             | side          | of-DET     | other  | thirteen |
| che         | non           | ci            | sono    | o <?>            | ci           | dovrebbero        | essere #      | per        | dire   |          |
| that.SBJ    | NEG           | there         | are.3PL | or               | there        | must.3PL.COND     | to be         | for        | to say |          |
| mio         | dovere        | adesso        | e'      | di               | lavorare     | lo                | stesso        | dovere     | ce     | lo       |
| my          | duty          | now           | is      | of               | to work      | DET               | same          | duty       | there  | it.OBJ   |
| avete       | voi           | <b>mentre</b> | non     | lo               | state        |                   | attuando      |            | se     | non      |
| have.2PL    | you.2PL       | <b>while</b>  | NEG     | it.OBJ           | AUX.2PL.PROG |                   | carrying out  |            | if     | NEG      |
| in          | minima        |               | parte   | e                | se           | lo                | attuate       |            | fate   | tutt'    |
| in          | minimum       |               | part    | and              | if           | it.OBJ            | carry out.2PL |            | do.2PL | all      |
| altro       | <b>mentre</b> | questa        | e'      | un'              | ora          | di                | storia        | o          | al     | massimo  |
| other       | <b>while</b>  | this          | is      | a                | hour         | of                | history       | or         | at-DET | maximum  |
| di          | filosofia     |               | e       | via              | di           | questo            | passo         | poi        | se     | invece   |
| of          | philosophy    |               | and     | way              | of           | this              | pace          | then       | if     | instead  |
| se eh       | reagisce      |               | a       | volte            | con          | un                | certo         | tipo       | di     |          |
| if eh       | react.3SG     |               | at      | times            | with         | a                 | certain       | type       | of     |          |
| scattosita' |               | che           | segnala | proprio          | l'           | insopportabilita' | della         | situazione |        |          |
| brusqueness |               | that.SBJ      | signals | exactly          | DET          | unbearability     | of-DET        | situation  |        |          |
| fate        | anche         | magari        | vi      | arrabbiate [...] |              |                   |               |            |        |          |
| do.2PL      | also          | perhaps       | REFL    | get angry.2PL    |              |                   |               |            |        |          |

'A: [...] you must realize that it is a situation of duty. The same way I have the duty to come here – I come for seven people, I come for twenty... But the same duty exists on the other side, of the other thirteen who are not there, or should be there. For example, my duty now is to work. The same duty, you have it, **while** you are not carrying it out, if not in the smallest part. And if you carry it out, you do something completely different, **while** this is the history hour, or philosophy at the most, and so on and so forth. Then, if one, instead, reacts sometimes with some kind of awkwardness, which signals the very unbearability of the situation, you even also... you may get angry'

Here, the speaker asserts that teachers and students have the same duty, and that students do not apply this duty. We argue that by using *mentre* the speaker encourages the hearer to consider the two propositions as a unit. In this case, the constraint on the derivation of retrieve higher-level is more evidently involved, than in the previous examples, simply because of contextual considerations: the speaker presents the two propositions jointly because she intends to communicate that she is upset and disappointed that the students are not being cooperative. This use, labelled 'adversative' by Zingarelli *et al.* (1993: 1083), allows for the use of the conditional mood (Giusti 1995:



721) and for the co-occurrence with a verb expressing a punctual event (p. 730).<sup>2</sup> A similar use has been observed by Traugott for English *while*. Traugott explains that this use is “more subjective”, “grammaticalized” and “developed later than the temporal element” (1995: 30). Elsewhere, Traugott treats adversative *while* as belonging to the level of communication called ‘expressive’, since it is a device that helps expressing “personal attitudes” (1982: 248). The intuition that these instances of *mentre* communicate the speaker’s attitude is captured in our account with the notion of higher-level explicature.

### 5.3.3 *Mentre*: discussion

In this section we accounted for connective *mentre* as a procedural marker which constrains the interpretation of the clause it introduces. When *mentre* is used as a temporal connective, it invites the hearer to attribute to the proposition the same temporal coordinate as the proposition expressed by the main clause; in this case, *mentre* contributes indirectly to the basic explicature of the utterance. We argued that the non-temporal occurrences of *mentre* draw a parallel or a comparison between pieces of information; in these contexts, *mentre* instructs the hearer to process the proposition of the temporal clause and that of the main clause as a single cognitive unit. On the basis of this unit, we argued, the hearer may proceed to yield different types of contextual effects, or else constructs higher-level explicatures concerning the speaker’s attitude. The latter case was argued to be arising when the speaker draws the hearer’s attention to a contrast between the two propositions. The procedure encoded by *mentre*, we claim, ties the temporal clause to the main clause in all cases, and we therefore argue for a unified account for *mentre*; the various interpretations are determined by a great deal of contextual actualization:

(Procedure) “Find x in the main clause and apply it to the *mentre* clause”

---

<sup>2</sup> As an example of occurrence with the conditional mood, Giusti brings the sentence “Giuseppe vuole che ci mettiamo in ghingheri, mentre / quando io mi vestirei sempre come capita” (‘Giuseppe wants us to dress up, while / when I would always dress casually’) (1995: 721).

- IF the sequence is narrative, the verb of the main clause is perfective and the verb of the *mentre* clause is imperfective, THEN *x* is a temporal coordinate, and is to be applied to the *mentre* clause
- IF the context is non-temporal, the sequence is descriptive or is a news report, THEN *x* is a contextual assumption, and is to be considered in the same context as the assumptions communicated by the *mentre* clause

The ‘contrastive’ use of *mentre* is an example of how much of our everyday communication is implied rather than explicitly stated, and is therefore an argument for a relevance-theoretic analysis. An inferential approach of this type is able to account for the fact that hearer can still arrive at a certain interpretation even when the linguistic input is reduced to a minimum. Our claim is that different types of contextual cues make certain assumptions more salient in the context and these will participate in the inferential process towards the final interpretation. In the case of *mentre*, we pointed out that syntactic position cannot be a significant cue, since both temporal and non-temporal uses of *mentre* can occur either between the two clauses in the period, or introducing the temporal clause in case it is followed by the main clause. Secondly, we showed how certain regularities can be spotted in the aspectual semantics of verbs in the *mentre* period: temporal *mentre* is often accompanied by imperfective predicates, while the main clause contains a perfective predicate; furthermore, the verbs involved in the constructions with non-temporal uses of *mentre* may coincide in tense and aspect, as in (5.24) and (5.25), or not, as in (5.26). We propose that sequence type may be helpful for the hearer: in a narrative sequence, temporal *mentre* is to be expected, because the focus is often on when events took place in relation to each other; in a descriptive sequence, as in (5.24), it is expected that the focus is not on temporal information but rather on states and properties of objects and individuals, therefore non-temporal *mentre* is likely to occur. This is even more likely so when the context is argumentative, as in (5.24) or (5.25): the focus is on the speaker's take on states of affairs, rather than on how these are ordered in time.



## 5.4 Chapter discussion

In chapter 5 we have argued for a procedural account of *poi* and *mentre* respectively. Firstly, we have argued that both expressions constrain the development of the logical form into the full explicatures by indicating the temporal coordinate to be attributed to the proposition; *poi* restricts the search space for such coordinate to the previous utterance, while *mentre* restricts it to the main clause from which the *mentre* utterance depends. Secondly, we have argued that in their non-temporal interpretations both expressions constrain the way in which the utterance is to be interpreted. *Poi* invites the hearer to process the proposition at hand and the proposition communicated by the previous utterance as a single unit; the procedure encoded by *mentre* does the same, but the two propositions involved are those communicated by the temporal clause and the main clause. We have maintained for both *poi* and *mentre* that the speaker may intend the hearer to retrieve different types of assumptions from the joint propositions: in some cases, the speaker's communicative intention is on the forefront and *mentre* and *poi* will constrain the formation of higher-level explicatures concerning the speaker's attitude towards the proposition. In other cases, though, the speaker intends the hearer to retrieve new implications or to eliminate previously entertained assumptions.

As anticipated in chapter 1, *poi* and *mentre* cannot be said to be a particularly homogeneous group as those presented in chapters 3 and 4. *Poi* suggests a general meaning of sequence, whereas *mentre* suggests that of simultaneity. Secondly, *poi* can constrain the determination of spatial coordinates for the proposition, whereas *mentre* cannot. Thirdly, when considering extracts from the corpora, *poi* appears to be more flexible in its non-temporal uses than *mentre*; this might be simply due to *poi* being an adverb and not a connective like *mentre*; the latter is necessarily more constrained in its action. Despite all this, we aimed to show that these two expressions have more in common than what it appears in surface, as their contribution to the different phases of utterance interpretation is essentially very similar, as illustrated in the paragraph above. We furthermore maintain that our account of *poi* and *mentre* reveals interesting similarities between these expressions and other temporal expressions in the present work. Both expressions contribute indirectly to the basic explicature of the utterance in their temporal interpretations, the way we also argued for *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* in

chapter 3. On the other hand, in their non-temporal interpretations they behaved more in line with aspectual adverbs *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* which we presented in chapter 4, as they often highlight a contrast between propositions and constrain the formation of higher-level explicatures.

Finally, the analysis of *poi* and *mentre* brought further evidence supporting our general claim, that is to say, the superiority of an inferential approach to communication as opposed to a text-based or coherence-based approach. Firstly, we have shown in section 5.2 that *poi* may relate the proposition at hand with a proposition that is not linguistically communicated, thus showing that discourse markers do not necessarily connect two adjacent utterances. Our relevance-theoretic account, on the other hand, is able to accommodate these examples as it contemplates the possibility that propositions can be constructed 'on the fly' on the basis of contextual assumptions; we have suggested the same for our account of interjections based on Padilla Cruz's account (2009a, 2009b; see section 3.2.4). Secondly, we have argued that both *poi* and *mentre* may point indirectly to a contrast between proposition, and indirectly prompt the hearer to eliminate previously entertained assumptions; however, we do not maintain that these two expressions are associated with the contextual effect of contradiction and elimination. A relevance-theoretic account therefore provides the theoretical tools to characterize discourse markers and connectives that, in specific contexts, may be interpreted as 'contrastive' markers.

In this chapter we also examined the triggers for actualization that lead the hearer to the 'saturation' of the meaning of the element in question from its 'core' procedure; as we have repeated throughout the present work, these triggers most likely co-operate in the determination of the final interpretation. We have identified semantic clues: frequently these consist in the tense and the aspectual information in the utterances surrounding the occurrence. In the case of *poi*, this information helps to distinguish between the two temporal uses, and in the case of *mentre* it helps to distinguish between temporal and non-temporal uses. Syntactic clues are less frequent, especially for connective *mentre*, as it has limited mobility in the utterance and tends to take a clause-external position. Syntactic-semantic clues are exploited in the case of the occurrences that are regularly found in fixed expressions, for example *che poi*.



To conclude, the analysis of *poi* and *mentre* seems to further confirm a general trend that we observed for the other temporal expressions in the present work: that relations at the level of temporality tend to be exploited iconically in everyday use to signal the same relation at a cognitive, ideational level. We argue that this is an instance of the way language exploits similarities at a cognitive level: the same word is used in different ways because speakers trust their hearers to be able to disambiguate it successfully and retrieve the correct interpretation. One possibility is that this is possible on the basis of the fundamental character of time as a cognitive domain. A related claim is that the non-temporal uses of these expressions developed at a later time with respect to their temporal uses. These issues will be further discussed in the next chapter.





## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the results emerging from the analysis presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5, and review our hypotheses as laid out in chapter 1. In brief, we have argued for the advantages of an inferential, and specifically relevance-theoretic account of eight Italian temporal expressions. In what we believe to be the first attempt to deal synchronically with this group as a whole we have aimed at correcting the traditional view of these as independent items, each with a large and idiosyncratic group of meanings. Instead we have argued that a cognitively-based inferential approach like relevance theory allows us to identify a coherent semantic and pragmatic structure for each expression. Furthermore it allows the identification of two main classes of temporal expressions: the indexical group (*allora*, *adesso* and *ora*) discussed in chapter 3 and the aspectual group (*ancora*, *già* and *sempre*) discussed in chapter 4. The two expressions *poi* and *mentre*, as discussed in chapter 5, fall outside these two main groups but still show internal coherence and similar inferential processes to the other items, leading to temporal and other readings. Two novel features of this study are firstly, as mentioned, the attempt to look at this whole group within a single investigation and secondly, the use of naturally occurring discourse data. There is clearly a need for further investigation into these expressions; we hope that this study will form a useful framework and stimulus to this future work. The rest of this chapter illustrates these points in further detail. In section 6.2 we discuss our hypotheses in the light of our findings. In section 6.3 we illustrate our contribution to the study of Italian pragmatics. In section 6.4 we will present our contribution to relevance theory, as well as the implications of our work for currently developed topics in this theory: the account of contrastive connectives, discourse markers and interjections. In 6.5 we will suggest further lines of research on the basis of trends that were observed in the present work, and issues left unsolved. Finally, a general conclusion will be given in 6.6.

## 6.2 Hypotheses

### 6.2.1 First hypothesis: a unitary account

We have argued that all eight expressions discussed in this work can insightfully be described in the same way: in terms of a core basic meaning that is then contextualized by pragmatic inferential processes. We were able to confirm, as hypothesized in chapter 1, that a relevance-theoretic account, and more generally an inferential account, is ideal as it helps the researcher to see trends and uniformities not visible otherwise. By concentrating on the cognitive processes underlying everyday communication, relevance theory provides the notions that allow us to see that the functions of these expressions present similarities more often than it is commonly presented in the literature. We were therefore able to provide for the first time a comprehensive account of single elements where all functions are treated together as they might or might not present cognitive similarities. We argued that the selected lexical items present particular uniformity in terms of the type of meaning they encode, as all eight of them were argued to encode exclusively procedural meaning. Overall, we have argued for a relatively restricted role ascribed to semantics as opposed to a prominent role to be ascribed to pragmatic processes in utterance interpretation.

We have also sought to describe the phases of interpretation to which these expressions contribute: the formation of what is said (explicatures) and the communication of what is implied (implicatures). We argued that the temporal uses of the temporal indexicals and of *sempre*, *poi* and *mentre* contribute to the basic explicatures of the utterance, whereas the temporal uses of *ancora* and *già* constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures. What is more interesting, though is that not all non-temporal uses of these temporal expressions, which could be seen as discourse-marking uses, contribute solely to the implicatures of the utterance: the non-temporal uses of *ancora*, *già*, *sempre*, *poi* and *mentre*, as well as the spatial use of *poi*, make a contribution to the explicatures, thus showing that discourse markers do not necessarily contribute exclusively to the implicatures of the utterance, as was indicated early in the RT literature (see section 2.4.7).



### 6.2.2 Second hypothesis: a monosemous account

In this work, we argued that relevance theory allows us to provide a monosemous account which solves several problems identified with this type of approach by proponents of polysemous accounts. Firstly, we showed that a monosemous account can indeed retain “descriptive precision” (Jucker 1993: 437; see also Pons Bordería 2008: 1431). While we did find that several discourse-marking uses are shared by several expressions, we also provided a description which we claim is finely-grained enough to distinguish them from one another. For example, as already mentioned in the previous section, the procedure called ‘constraint on context’ has been argued to be encoded by several of the expressions in this work, but we have also shown that each of them constrains the search space for contextual assumptions in a different way. A similar degree of precision was also shown in the description of the procedures as applied to the temporal uses of the expressions: these temporal uses invite the hearer to look for a temporal location in a specific set of assumptions; for instance, *allora* directs the hearer to previous discourse, whereas *mentre* restricts such search space to the main clause to which the temporal clause is connected. We therefore claim that relevance theory does have the potential to distinguish among markers with similar functions, and we encourage further research to confirm this with studies on other clusters of discourse markers.

In our account we clarified the way in which the procedures encoded by these temporal expressions are contextually actualized. We argued that procedures are only a minimal initial meaning (Wilson & Carston 2007; Hall 2007: 156); such basic meaning allows for speakers to use the word in a wide variety of contexts, trusting that the hearer will be cooperative and will look for evidence in the linguistic and extralinguistic context to arrive at the intended interpretation. These contextual cues make certain assumptions particularly salient; the latter are used by the hearer in his inferential path towards the final interpretation as premises to implicated conclusions. We furthermore argued that this process is pragmatic in nature, as it involves contextual considerations. This mechanism is also based on the notion of context as seen within the relevance-theoretic framework. In RT, context is seen as being constituted *on-line* and updated constantly, rather than being a ‘given’ (Sperber & Wilson 1986/95: 132-142). The dynamics surrounding utterance interpretation are complex and the interplay of all the involved



factors in a given situation is difficult to investigate. However, we argue that there is an important role to be attributed to context and, although as researchers we cannot predict which assumptions exactly are accessed by a given hearer and in which succession, we maintain that the occurrence alone is only a sketchy indication of how to process the utterance.

Throughout our work we have identified contextual cues of different kinds. Firstly, we observed the impact of syntax. We have noted that adverbs with connective uses tend to occur both internally and externally to the clause, and that the clause-external position is typically correlated with discursive uses; it can therefore be a distinguishing factor. This has been observed for *ancora*, which is particularly integrated in the utterance like all other aspectual particles, and is clause-external only in its use as a connective which takes sentential scope. We also detected specific uses characterized by a specific distribution, apart from the interjective uses of *allora* and *già*. The deductive use of *allora* is the only one in *allora* which is characterized by an utterance-final position. Finally, we observed that in some discursive uses of *poi* (section 5.2.4) the element can occur in clause-internal position.

Among the semantic cues, we have often identified aspectual and temporal information in the utterance. Firstly, we showed that tense may block the temporal interpretation for *allora*. Predictably, both tense and aspect influence the interpretation of the aspectual adverbs seen in chapter 4. The temporal uses of *poi* have been shown to be distinguishable on the basis of similarity in tense and aspect between the two predicates it links. Finally, *mentre* as a temporal connective is characterized by a specific aspectual configuration in its utterances, which may not exist in the case of non-temporal *mentre*.

We also have identified other semantic cues in the linguistic items co-occurring with specific uses of the temporal expressions in this work. Some examples are *e allora* with an argumentative function; *ah già* with an interjective function; *ora* and *adesso* participating in a contrastive construction with concessive expressions; the comparative constructions *ancora più* and *sempre più*; the mitigating phrase *non è poi*; finally, the connective *che poi* introducing a relative clause. Furthermore, we showed in the case of the aspectual particles (chapter 4) how the occurrence of certain nouns and adjectives evoke scales in certain contexts and are related to the use of these particles to collocate values on these scales.



Although we did not propose a systematic analysis of the prosody characterizing each of the uses discussed, we did speculate that prosodic traits like stress may help the hearer determining especially whether an occurrence is temporal or non-temporal. We furthermore proposed that the discursive interpretations of *allora*, *ora*, *adesso* and *ancora* are characterized not only by utterance-initial position, but also by isolated prosody. Finally, we suggested that the same pattern in *già* gives an interjective (affirmative) reading, and in *poi* it gives the temporal reading meaning ‘in the future’.

We suggested furthermore that assumptions derived from the situational context – which we defined as comprising coordinates such as speakers, time, place and medium of communication – play a crucial role in the interpretation of *ora* and *adesso*. In various points in our analysis we identified uses whose interpretation, we argue, may be conditioned by their occurrence in specific sequences or discourse types. For example, instances of monological discourse, like lectures or sermons, were argued to raise expectations of uses of *allora* structuring discourse. Sequences in which the speakers is giving directions may raise expectation of spatial uses for *ancora*, *già* and *poi*.

### 6.2.3 Third hypothesis: groupings of temporal expressions

As anticipated in chapter 1, the expressions presented in chapters 3 and 4 have been found to form groups on the basis of cognitive properties, while the expressions in chapter 5 have not been found to display such degree of similarity. Although this third hypothesis could not be verified for all three groups, we maintain that more can be understood of a single expression if studied together with other cognitively similar expressions rather than in isolation.

Our analysis identified temporal indexicals *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* as constituting a very homogeneous group. We argued that all three expressions constrain the context of interpretation of the incoming utterance: *allora* invites the hearer to look for contextual assumptions in previous discourse, and that *ora* and *adesso* invite to look for such assumptions in the situational context, that is to say, the contingent situation. The procedure, we argued, is the same for both temporal and non-temporal uses of a single expression – it just takes different assumptions as its arguments. A further point of convergence for all three expressions is the parallel between temporal uses and

contribution to explicatures on the one hand, and non-temporal uses and constraint on utterance interpretation on the other. All temporal uses of *allora*, *ora* and *adesso* instruct the hearer to retrieve a temporal coordinate and thus contribute to the formation of the basic explicature of the utterance.

*Ancora*, *già* and *sempre* have been defined as aspectual and phasal expressions. While we verified a high degree of similarity between *ancora* and *già*, we did not fully succeed in applying the same relevance-theoretic account to *sempre*. We firstly argued for a unified, procedural account for *ancora* and *già*. In their temporal as well as non-temporal uses, these expressions are used by the speaker to draw a contrast between a proposition and an alternative in the context. We argued that these alternatives are values on contextually evoked scales. These scales may be temporal, as in a temporal axis, or involving other types of entities, such as quantities and abstract properties. We furthermore argued that *ancora* and *già* constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures and may also lead the hearer to recover additional contextual effects from the utterance, such as the derivation of new implications or the elimination of previously entertained assumptions. *Sempre*, on the other hand, was analysed as a procedural expression which is used to quantify over times. While it sometimes points to a contrast between assumptions and indirectly invites the recovery of higher-level explicatures, it does not do so as regularly as *ancora* and *già*. A further difference is that, since it is a marker of stasis, it does not evoke scales as markedly as the other two expressions. Thirdly, it contributes to the basic explicature of the utterance in its temporal interpretations.

Finally, *poi* and *mentre* were shown not to form a homogeneous group: they exhibit different functions, suggest different types of temporal meanings (*poi* expresses sequence, while *mentre* expresses simultaneity), and display a different syntactic behaviour. Nevertheless, we were able to show through our inferential account that they both encode a procedure which constrains the formation of the basic explicature in their temporal uses, and constrains the derivation of higher-level explicatures in their non-temporal uses.



### 6.3 Aim: contribution to the study of Italian pragmatics

We attempted to give a contribution to the description of Italian temporal expression by means of an analysis based on authentic data and naturally occurring discourse. We hope to have shown that focusing on a semantic class like that of temporal expressions can yield interesting results as it allows to identify parallels among uses of different expressions in that class. We have argued that an inferential analysis of these elements is essential to appreciate parallels between the temporal and non-temporal uses of the same expression. Finally, with our account we sought to contribute towards a better understanding of Italian discourse markers.

We argued that our inferential account is able to account for discourse-initial uses and isolated occurrences. These can be problematic for text- and coherence-based accounts, because the expression does not seem to link two adjacent utterances. We argued that the uses of *allora* introducing a narration, enumeration or explanation point back to a previously established task, which is often not linguistically explained. The same was argued for isolated occurrences of *allora* in which the speaker refers back to a previously established task. An additional example is that of the discursive use of *ora* which marks the passage from an introduction to personal discourse (see section 3.3.2). We also observed occurrences which are neither discourse-initial nor isolated, but do not appear to link the utterance to any linguistic element: those of *poi* introducing an argument that is actually the first and only in a list, rather than an additional example in discourse (see example 4.8). There, we argued that *poi* signals that the argument is an addition to an assumption that is in the context rather than communicated linguistically beforehand. We were able to account for this type of uses thanks to a relevance-theoretic account, which postulates that inferential processes involve not linguistic entities but rather cognitive assumptions, which can be linguistically or non-linguistically communicated. In this way we also sought to make a contribution to the ongoing debate on the type, number and position of units that discourse markers link (Schourup 1999: 203-231).

A related issue which we claimed can be solved with the aid of an inferential approach regards the scope of action of discourse markers. While text- and coherence-based accounts see connectives as two-place relations which involve adjacent sentences,

we argued that this is only one of the possible cases, on the basis of our findings: for instance, the uses of *allora* marking argumentation in discourse and *ora* in its discursive interpretation were argued to potentially take scope over greater chunks of discourse than just one utterance. The methodological choice of looking for a wide co-text for every occurrence under analysis turned out to be useful to this purpose. Thus, the findings of the present study confirm that the scope of action of these expressions may extend to more than the two immediately adjacent utterances (see Unger 1996; Traugott 2007: 141). Unger's work is based on data from Kurdish, and shows that discourse connectives can take "global" as opposed to "local" scope. One of the questions Unger makes is how the hearer recognizes the scope of a connective which can take both. Unger makes a suggestion based however on written texts; in any case he suggests, as we did in 6.2.2, that text type can be influential, as an argumentative type raises expectations of global uses which signal discourse structure, while more informal texts raise expectations of a series of local uses (1996: 434-435).

An issue which specifically regards discourse markers and that in our view has not been solved adequately in the Italian literature is that of the so-called *riempitivi* 'fillers' (see section 2.4.6). Often in the literature it is said that speakers use discourse markers when they want to signal that they are 'taking time' in discourse formulation, perhaps because they are finding discourse planning difficult or because they need to take time. This position was probably mostly widespread when research on discourse markers was at its onset (see Bustorf 1974 – notice that the authors calls them 'so-called' and mentions *riempitivi* in inverted commas). However, we think this label is misleading. We argue that our approach successfully shows that there is a reason why a specific element is used in a specific situation - with the exception of simple slips of the tongue. What happens is that the inferential path associated with a specific marker is appropriate for the communicative intentions of the speaker at that moment. As Serianni observes, discourse markers are not as redundant as they seem, but are often used to "guarantee the communicative appropriateness of a text" (1988: 308; my translation).<sup>1</sup> As a result, even if

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<sup>1</sup> "[...] l'uso, anche apparentemente ridondante, di segnali discorsivi ha spesso il compito di garantire l'appropriatezza comunicativa di un testo [...]"



the marker is uttered in isolation, that marker still has an impact on the hearer's processing.

For example, many of the cases of discourse- or turn-initial *allora* may be seen as fillers, since it is thought that the speaker might want to take some time to plan the incoming speech – an explanation, for instance, or a narrative sequence. Regardless of whether this motivation is true or not, we argued that the appropriate question in this case is why exactly *allora* is used rather than some other element. We argued that *allora* announces to the hearer that what follows is in reply to what was said before and that, in spite of the (possible) hesitation, there is some incoming information that will be relevant to the hearer. This cognitive instruction is most effective, of course, if the particle in question occurs in initial position. Our account thus sheds light on the surface functioning of this marker by illustrating the underlying pragmatic processes.

#### **6.4 Aim: contribution to relevance theory**

With the present work we sought to give a contribution to the development of relevance theory. On the one hand, some of our methodological choices that we took might provide further evidence for its universality and its applicability to different semantic domains. On the other hand, our findings can hopefully shed light on some of the theoretical issues currently debated within RT.

As anticipated in chapter 1, we deemed it important to test relevance theory on a language other than English. We also hope to have given a contribution by applying this theory to the study of temporal expressions, which in relevance theory has been limited to the impact of *then* on temporal sequence. We have already discussed in section 6.2.2 that relevance theory can help account for these elements in an economical way, while still retaining descriptive power. We furthermore observed linguistic phenomena in our data which we claim can contribute to the current discussion on some relevance-theoretic issues. These will be reviewed in the next sections.

#### 6.4.1 Contrastive uses of temporal expressions

In our work we frequently encountered contrastive uses of the temporal expressions we studied. Firstly, we argued that the aspectual adverbs *ancora*, *già* and *adesso* in chapter 4 are used to draw the hearer's attention towards two contrasting propositions. We argued that the hearer may on the basis of that and on further contextual information proceed to eliminate previously entertained assumptions; however, we argued that it is not the case that these aspectual adverbs are regularly associated with the contextual effect of contradiction and elimination. A similar account was given of the non-temporal uses of *poi* and *mentre*. We argued that the speaker may use *poi* to bring the hearer's attention on the contrast between two elements by juxtaposing these elements in sequence; similarly, contrast and continuance/simultaneity are compatible in that, by predicating that two eventualities take place at the same time, one might be led to think that this should not have been the case (Hansen 2002: 18).

The existence of these uses is an argument for an inferential account of communication, since they show that much of what we communicate is implied. Within relevance theory, a continuum is discussed involving ostensive and explicit communication. It is argued in RT that all the hearer needs as a prompt to search for relevance is an instance of ostensive communication – evidence that the speaker is intending to communicate something. There is a continuum from ostensive communication of a non-linguistic kind – for example, a person yawning to mean that she is bored – to that of the linguistic kind that is totally explicit – for example, an utterance that already communicates a full explicature. We suggest that most instances of everyday communication are something inbetween – with some evidence of the speaker's message given linguistically and some to be inferred. Our temporal expressions are collocated exactly in this middle field and testify for the necessity of an inferential approach to account for everyday communication.

The observations made so far on contrastive uses of temporal expressions may be collocated within the wider discussion on contrastive markers in relevance theory. Connective *but* has received its main account from Blakemore (1987, 1989, 1992, 2000, 2002). This account has evolved over time; however, *but* has been generally associated with the contextual effect of contradiction and elimination. The idea was that, in the



process of contrasting two utterances, some assumptions would be deleted. Recently, however, a number of studies deny the link to this contextual effect (Hall 2004, 2007; Olmos & Ahern 2009) and suggest an account whereby a contrast involves two alternative propositions and the constraint on the derivation of higher-level explicatures. All cases of contrast found in the present work seem to confirm the latter scenario; this line of inquiry was further developed in Olmos, Innocenti & Saeed (2009).

Another related issue is whether the contrastive uses discussed in this section stem diachronically from the temporal use of the expression. It has been suggested (see section 6.5.1) that time is a fundamental cognitive schema that human minds easily export to other domains. When one starts from this assumption, one may then consider the possibility that adversative and concessive uses of temporal expressions tend to have developed at a later time with respect to their temporal use. We do not wish to take a position on the matter, since diachronic questions and considerations pertaining to cognitive domains fall outside the scope of the present work. However, we will present some positions in the debate on diachronic development, as well as on the relation between time and other cognitive domains, in section 6.5.1.

#### **6.4.2 Contribution to the study of discourse markers**

A further contribution to relevance theory concerns the study of discourse markers. We showed that not all expressions commonly considered discourse markers contribute to the implicatures of the utterance, as was originally postulated in early relevance-theoretic accounts (see section 2.4.7). Our evidence comes from aspectual adverbs as well as from *poi* and *mentre*. Firstly, we argued in chapter 4 that *ancora*, *già* and *sempre* constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures. The speaker, we argued, makes use of these adverbs in order to draw the hearer's attention towards a contrast between the proposition expressed by the utterance at hand and an alternative proposition in the context. Furthermore, the speaker intends the hearer to recover her attitude towards the proposition, against the background of such contrast. Neither of the expressions above, though, is associated with a specific attitude: these vary depending on the specific situation. The same account was given to the non-temporal uses of *poi* and *mentre*, although these two expressions do not regularly express a contrast between two

propositions: they may indirectly lead the hearer to the retrieval of higher-level explicatures, or else to the retrieval of contextual effects such as the recovery of new implications.

Previous evidence of this type was provided by Ifantidou (1993a, 1993b) with her studies on English sentential adverbials, such as ‘clearly’ or ‘obviously’ and parentheticals, such as ‘I think’ in mid-sentential position. Additional evidence was found by Blakemore (1993, 1993) in her analysis of English reformulation markers such as ‘that is’, which are argued to either constrain the derivation of higher-explicatures or aid in reference assignment, thus contributing to the phase of pragmatic enrichment. With our analysis of Italian temporal expressions we adduce further evidence for the fact that discourse markers may contribute to the explicatures and not only to the implicatures of the utterance.

#### 6.4.3 Interjective uses

In this work we have argued that the interjective uses of a given expression must when possible be traced back to the core meaning of the expression. We adopted this approach to the study of the interjective uses of *allora* and *già* as we chose to offer a monosemous account which keeps the number of senses as low as possible. We also accounted for the intuition that these uses are particularly different from the basic meaning of the expression by explaining that they have become conventionalized to express interpersonal and attitudinal types of meaning. We argued in line with what suggested by Wharton (2003, 2009) and Padilla Cruz (2009a, 2009b) that interjective *allora* and *già* make certain assumptions in the context particularly salient by virtue of the procedures they respectively encode, and that they constrain the derivation of higher-level explicatures. The speaker may communicate a vast array of attitudes in different situations. This account testifies to the fact that interjective uses are not marginal or anomalous in a language (see Wharton 2009: 71-72) but rather uses that respond to a precise cognitive strategy – the same strategy that is in play in the other uses of the same expression.

In relevance theory, the study of interjections limits itself to those elements which do not have a counterpart in another word class: those expressions called primary interjections by Ameka (1992), for example English *ouch* and *aha* (Wharton 2003, 2009).



Therefore, the relevance-theoretic account as proposed cannot be applied directly to our interjective uses, since they are performed by connectives and adverbs. Moreover, while in RT interjections are traditionally seen as procedural items communicating higher-level explicatures (Wilson & Sperber 1993), we encountered cases in which this seemed unfeasible (see example 3.24), as it is not clear what propositional content should be embedded under the predicate expressing the speaker's attitude. This has been observed for English examples by Wharton (2003: 56; 2009:87), who proposes a more articulated account according to which an interjection might or might not project the attitude towards propositional content. This point has been addressed by Padilla Cruz (2009a, 2009b) with the suggestion that interjections may constrain the derivation of propositions. Padilla Cruz furthermore suggests (2009b) that interjections may encode concepts, but concedes that the arguments that Wharton (2003) brought against this eventuality are strong. Although the development of a new relevance-theoretic account for interjections remains outside the scope of our work, we suggest that an account should be found which accommodates all instances of interjective uses, be it performed by an interjection or by an item of a different grammatical category.

## **6.5 Further research**

In this section we will present observed trends that fall outside the scope of our analysis, and propose that they be treated in future research. In section 6.5.1 we will attempt a reading of our results with the aid of notions from both diachronic pragmatics and cognitive semantics. In section 6.5.2 we propose further lines of research which could cover some of the aspects of communication that we did not factor in for reasons of time and space.

### **6.5.1 Cognitive semantics: time, space and discourse as cognitive domains**

Although we did not consider diachronic development as a factor in our analysis, we could not avoid seeing how the synchronic level described in the analysis matches certain types of diachronic variation. This is not surprising if one considers that, as already observed the introduction to this work, diachronic development is mirrored in the synchronic picture.

Firstly, we will draw parallels between these two levels with the aid of Traugott's (1982) results. Secondly, we will integrate this picture with notions that pertain to cognitive semantics, namely the relations between the domains of time, space and discourse.

The starting point for this discussion is Traugott's (1982) view of the process of grammaticalization, that is, the diachronic process whereby a grammatical form arises from a primarily lexical form. What is interesting for the purposes of the current study is that the variety of meanings found in the analysis seems to parallel the stages, or levels of this diachronic development. In what follows we will briefly review these levels and compare them with our findings.

The propositional level is described (1982: 247) as being made up of "resources to talk about something". These resources include truth-conditional meaning and deictics such as *now* and *then*. In the present study, we observed truth conditionality and deixis in the temporal and aspectual uses. The textual level (p. 248) encompasses "resources to create a cohesive discourse"; these include connectives and anaphora. This level can be said to coincide with the discursive uses found in the analysis. The last meaning level discussed is the expressive level (p. 248) (called by Waltereit (2002) 'attitudinal'), which is characterized by the expression of "personal attitudes". The interjective uses certainly belong here, as well as some others with a marked interactional component. From this we can suggest that the temporal meaning of these temporal expressions came first diachronically, followed by the discursive and then the interjective.

The cline of grammaticalization just described leaves out two categories of uses observed in the analysis: the concessive and the spatial uses. We already discussed how temporality and concession are tightly linked in section 6.4.2. In the next paragraphs we will suggest an approach of analysis for the relation between temporality and expression of spatial location, in order to suggest that this use as well might derive from the temporal use.

In the present study we have observed temporal and spatial interpretations for *ancora*, *già* and *poi*. However, we have not made any claim as to which interpretation appeared first on a diachronic level. In the following paragraphs we will present some ideas from the literature on time and space seen as related cognitive domains. The purpose of this is solely that of sketching a possible explanation to the development of



the temporal and spatial interpretations of the above-mentioned expressions, which may be of interest to those who wish to undertake a diachronic analysis.

Space and time are often considered two fundamental conceptual domains (Haspelmath 1997: 1). This reflects itself in verbal communication, as shown by research on various languages (Tenbrink, in press: 4). As far as the English language is concerned, it has been noted that temporal deictics are often associated or co-occurring with spatial deictic expressions (Brunaud 1991: 82). This is also observed by Fillmore, who maintains that “many locutions about time involve spatial metaphors based on the notion of movement” (1997: 74). In planned discourse, both spatial and temporal expressions have been found to be concurring in the metalanguage which shapes the structure of text belonging to this type (Fleischman 1991a). This trend has been claimed to characterize languages other than English: some words, comparable to the English *before*, are allegedly used in both time and space domains “in many, if not all languages” (Wierzbicka 1973, in Haspelmath 1997: 18). It is unclear, however, which languages exactly are involved; furthermore, languages still not researched may not display a similar tendency.

While there is agreement on the existing link between the cognitive domains of time and space, the type of link between the two is at issue. More specifically, the question is: which of the two is the most fundamental conceptual domain? The following is a brief description of two main alternatives. According to the ‘localist’ view (attributed to John R. Anderson by Lyons 1977: 718), space is more fundamental than time, as our conception of time is based on space. This is supported by observations in different fields of study. In the study of conceptual metaphors, it has been argued that “spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 18), hence their more fundamental character. In language change, it has been observed in numerous unrelated world languages that many temporal expressions are “patently derived from locative expressions” (Lyons 1977: 718). Further support at the diachronic level is brought by Traugott, who notes that, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, prepositions with both a spatial and a temporal meaning have developed the latter at a later date “in all instances” (1975: 209); this finding, however, only applies to the English language.

The position whereby time is more fundamental a domain than space is maintained by Talmy Givón and summed up by Langacker as follows: “the conception of



spatial relationships involves scanning, which requires processing time, and our notions of spatial extensions are intimately bound up with time-extended physical actions (e.g. movement and the manipulation of objects)” (1987: 149). A further argument in favour of this position has to do with the relation between time and spoken discourse on the one hand, and space and written discourse on the other hand. Since discourse in written communication occupies a material space onto a page (Cinque 1976: 109; Fleischman 1991a: 293), discourse deixis of the spatial type is mostly used in written communication, whereas discourse deixis of the temporal type is mostly used in spoken communication. Fleischman argues that speech has developed before written communication, thus suggesting that the related concept of time must have developed first.

Regardless of which one comes first, there seems to be general agreement that space and time seem to be tied by the notion of movement (Tenbrink, in press: 4). The passing of time is usually conceived as movement through space: this might be due to the need for time to be associated to a sense-based intuition, which is given by something that moves and changes (Perconti 1996: 387). In order to visualize this conception of time, Langacker suggests a time-line model as an axis along which reality evolves. This sequence of points located on an imaginary timeline is one-dimensional, unidirectional, and not bounded on either side (Haspelmath 1997: 21-23). On Langacker’s account (1987: 243), a fixed point G, called ‘ground’, represents the “speech event and its circumstances”, and is further defined as “the vantage point from which speaker and hearer conceptualize an expression’s meaning”. From this point, then, the notions of past, present and future can be developed. However, the unidirectionality of the time-line has been questioned by Traugott (1975), who brings as an alternative Bull’s (1960, in Traugott 1975: 214) representation of time as a non-directional line. Traugott also argues for a front-back directionality of time as opposed to a left-to-right directionality. The latter, she argues, is mostly dictated by printing requirements. This point is further stressed by Bonomi (1995: 485) who observes that left or right actually depends on “the observer’s (or the speaker’s) orientation”.

The literature on the subject is extensive and recent experimental evidence keeps pointing at a strong link between these two domains at the level of conceptualization, and that this manifests itself both in verbal communication and in gesture (see Núñez & Sweetser 2006; Torralbo, Santiago & Lupiáñez 2006; Casasanto & Boroditsky 2008). To



further discuss these results would be well beyond the scope of the present work; additional studies may be able to verify the application of these theoretical notions to the case of Italian temporal expressions. In the next section we delineate several further issues which we leave to future research.

### 6.5.2 Other ideas for further research

For the present work we selected eight temporal expressions on the basis of their frequency in the LIP corpus. Further research could integrate other temporal expressions to confirm the observed trends. For example, we argued in this work that these eight temporal expressions are best analyzed with a monosemous account; we leave open to further studies whether the same account can be applied to other temporal expressions in Italian, such as *finalmente*, *infine* (both 'finally'), *subito* 'immediately', and *ormai* 'by now'.

In this work we decided to focus on spoken Italian. However, as we noticed for *mentre*, some specific uses of some of the expressions are mostly found in the written register. A more accurate study of such uses could bring more insights into the global functioning of the word.

Ours is a synchronic account; however, many times throughout this work we have inevitably hinted at diachronic issues. The most pressing issue is the order in which the uses of a given word developed over time. On the basis of the considerations discussed in section 6.5.1, it seems that temporality is often the starting point for diachronic changes. Is it correct to say that the temporal or aspectual use was the initial one in all cases? This would need to be confirmed through a study of numerous temporal expressions.

Further research could incorporate an extensive study of all of those factors that we could not examine in detail in the present work: the impact of syntax, prosody and non-verbal communication on utterance interpretation; the latter is a promising area of development within relevance theory (see Wharton 2009). Finally, in this study we concentrated on standard Italian and mentioned geographical variation only when strictly necessary. However, since Italy has such a complex dialectal situation, it would be interesting to incorporate that into a pragmatic study.

## 6.6 Conclusion

What emerges from our account is that temporal expressions display a marked flexibility: these words lend themselves to expressing a vast range of different meanings. The speaker uses them in various contexts, trusting the hearer to be able to arrive at the intended interpretation. We argued that, due to the fundamental character of time as a cognitive domain, temporal expressions lend themselves particularly well to the transfer of cognitive schemas to other domains such as space and discourse. The result is the use of a single lexeme for a range of uses. In the case of spoken Italian language, we observed how certain temporal meanings, such as continuation, sequence or simultaneity, are used to express meanings ranging from contrastive to attitudinal. They thus become one of the possible instruments at the disposal of the speaker to express a certain idea that pertains to a non-temporal domain.

Relevance theory correctly explains that this mechanism is possible because of our fundamental ‘mind-reading’ capacities: we can attribute beliefs, hopes and intentions to other individuals and this allows us to go beyond what is offered as linguistic input, which is only a piece of evidence. As Carston says, “linguistic expressions are tools with certain inherent properties (phonological, syntactic and semantic) that we, as normally functioning adult humans, can employ very flexibly for our communicative purposes by virtue of certain characteristics of our psychological makeup (specifically, our ‘theory of mind’ capacities, and, in particular, our attunement to each other’s communicative intentions and our expectations of each other as rational speakers and hearers)” (2009a: 20-21). The idea of language that emerges from these considerations is of an instrument subservient to our intention to communicate and our communicative needs.



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