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Discourse markers in spoken Italian
The functions of *sentì* and *guarda*

Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde

vorgelegt von

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1. Introduction

This work presents a functional analysis of the Italian discourse markers *sentì* ('listen'/'hear') and *guarda* ('look'). Based on two corpora of natural data, the study intends to offer a detailed description of the pragmatic tasks accomplished by these two linguistic items in present-day spoken Italian, and to point out differences in their functioning by comparing features of their contexts of use.

It has often been emphasized that discourse markers were for a long time neglected by linguists; they were disdained as a sort of “linguistic detritus” (Schourup 1999: 228) or discounted as marginal elements whose only purpose is to keep the contact with the interlocutor and fill the silence (Dostie 2004: 12), a view that has radically changed over the past few decades. A broad range of studies have amply demonstrated that these elements fulfil a spectrum of tasks that are essential for the organization of discourse and the management of interpersonal relationships.

It is certainly a fact – and it has been a reason for their neglect – that discourse markers do not contribute to the construction of a speaker’s message as other words do; indeed, one of their defining features is precisely that they do not add to the propositional content expressed by utterances, but function on a pragmatic level, situating utterances in the ongoing discourse and in an interpersonal dimension. Their use is mostly unconscious¹ and their meanings are difficult to grasp and explain. Exactly because of this, if one wants to describe the workings of a language, it is indispensable to understand what these elements do. Understanding discourse markers can, moreover, help us shed light on aspects of verbal communication such as the structuring of discourse and speakers’ cognitive processes.

It is not surprising that ever since the role of discourse markers in communication was brought to attention in the 1970s, starting with the pioneering work of Elisabeth Gülich (1970) on “Gliederungssignale” (‘structuring signals’) in spoken French, this topic has acquired increasing space in research. Discourse markers have entered areas as varied as text linguistics (e.g. van Dijk 1977), Conversation Analysis (e.g. Heritage 1984), grammaticalization and pragmatization studies (e.g. Brinton 2001, Dostie 2004)², and they have been discussed within general theories of communication such as Argumentation Theory (e.g. Anscombe/Ducrot 1988) and Relevance Theory (e.g. Blakemore 1987). Thereby, as Salvador Pons Bordería (2006: 94) puts it, discourse markers have become “a melting pot of problems and perspectives”. The subject has indeed been approached from a great variety of angles. While some studies focus on the question of the definition, delimitation, and systematization of the whole category, more often than not taking quite different views (Pons Bordería 2006, Fraser 2006), others analyze the

¹ At least by the native speakers of a language.

² While some scholars speak of “grammaticalization” (e.g. Brinton 2001, Marín Jordà 2005), others prefer the concept of “pragmatization” with respect to discourse markers (e.g. Dostie 2004, Frank-Job 2006).

functions and meanings of single items (Travis 2005) or their distribution in language use (Romero Trillo 1997), compare markers from different languages (Bazzanella et al. 2007a, Hasund 2001), or examine them in translation (Aijmer/Foolen/Simon-Vandenbergen 2006, Bazzanella 1999). In the last decade, the rise of discourse markers from words belonging to other part-of-speech classes has received growing attention (Waltereit/Detges 2007, Brinton 2009, Diewald 2008). Several studies have also pursued the question of discourse markers' acquisition by non-native speakers and of their teaching (Möllering 2004, Pellet 2005, Müller 2005).

The present work intends to add a small but well-founded and hopefully useful contribution to this broad field of studies by proposing an in-depth analysis of the functions of the markers *senti* and *guarda* in contemporary spoken Italian.

The markers *senti* and *guarda* formally correspond with, and can be traced back to, the second person imperative of the verbs "sentire" ('to hear', 'to listen') and "guardare" ('to look'). With regard to the English translation, it has to be specified that "guardare" indicates intentional visual perception, while "sentire" indicates both unintentional and intentional auditive perception.³ The forms *senti* and *guarda* are not invariable, but are inflected for person and number according to the interlocutor: along with the second person singular *senti*, we have the form *senta*, used when the interlocutor is addressed formally, and corresponding with the third person singular; when there is more than one addressee, the second person plural *sentite* is used. In the same vein, the form *guarda* becomes *guardi* (polite form, third person singular) and *guardate* (second person plural). *Senti* and *guarda* thus belong to the cross-linguistically widespread type of discourse markers that can be called "deverbal", i.e. originating in verb forms. Some further examples are the English markers *you know*, *listen*, *look*, and *you see*, German *weißt* ('you know') and *verstehst* ('you understand'), French *écoute* ('listen') and *disons* ('let's say'), and, again looking at Italian, *sai* ('you know'), *diciamo* ('let's say'), and *(hai) capito* ('(have you) understood'), to mention just a few. These pragmatic elements are characterized by the fact that they refer to the participants in the conversation, to the activities of perception and production accomplished by the speakers, and to their cognitive processes and states (understanding, knowing). This makes these markers especially interesting from an interactional point of view, as devices whose functions are directly connected with the interpersonal aspect of verbal communication.

The markers *senti* and *guarda* occur very frequently in spoken Italian and are currently mentioned in – to my knowledge – all works presenting inventories of Italian discourse markers. However, few studies have been specifically devoted to them and it seems that we are still lacking insight into wide areas of their functioning. Their use is not restricted to informal speech, although this is often regarded as the most typical

³ We can say, for example, "sentire una conferenza", meaning "to listen to a conference" (example from *Il dizionario della lingua italiana* (De Mauro 2000: 2409)). The verb "ascoltare", conversely, only indicates intentional auditive perception. There exists a discourse marker *ascolta*, but it is not as frequent as *senti*: in my corpora, I could only find 25 instances of *ascolta* – which I was therefore not able to analyze – in contrast to 170 instances of *senti*.

environment for discourse markers: *senti* and *guarda* are found in contexts as varied as familiar conversation, talk-shows, and courtroom trials. Their wide use makes it all the more interesting to closely investigate how they work. This will be the goal of the present thesis.

The analysis will be strictly corpus-driven, as the pragmatic role of the markers will be worked out directly and exclusively from the data. Thereby, the analytical procedure can be defined as bottom-up, as it starts from the examination of the single tokens found in the corpora and their role in context in order to work out general functions that subsume the contextual uses. As a result, the study will present for each marker a set of main functions that account for its bearing on different levels of interaction, and finally, one basic function by which all its uses shall be explained in a unified way. Besides describing *senti* and *guarda* individually, I will also carry out a comparison of the markers' use in the corpora, in order to highlight some specific properties of each and to let their differences emerge. The study thus intends, on the one hand, to contribute to a deeper understanding of the two items, but also to create a basis for comparative analyses of discourse markers, which could be extended to other items as well. The study will be enriched, in a final excursus, by a small-size empirical investigation of the interpretation of *senti* and *guarda* by native speakers. Employing deletion and substitution tests, this investigation will endeavour to give some insight in the markers' bearing on the interpretation of utterances by non-linguists, and thus allow us to evaluate the adequacy of the functional descriptions resulting from the corpus analysis as a representation of the markers' values.

The work is structured as follows: I will begin by discussing the definition of the object "discourse markers" (chapter 2). The linguistic elements I have been referring to thus far could, in fact, also be called "pragmatic markers", "discourse particles", or "discourse connectives", among others. It is well-known that countless terms have been and are applied to these morphosyntactically heterogeneous pragmatic items. The scope of the category is not agreed upon, either: scholars have different concepts of what features should be considered as characteristic of the class. Consequently, I will start by giving an overview of the most frequent labels and of some influential – and by no means equal – definitions; I will then discuss a number of properties that are commonly recognized as typical of the class and state how the concept of "discourse markers" is meant in this work. In chapter 3, my goal will be to give a survey of the interests and goals that have informed the study of discourse markers. A complete review of the whole field is of course not possible within the time and space limits of this study; I will instead discuss in some detail the areas that are relevant for my work: I will start with the area of Italian discourse marker research and then extend the focus to research on deverbal markers in other languages. Chapter 4 will then offer a state of the art about *senti* and *guarda* specifically: a survey of the analyses and descriptions found in the literature will show what we already know about our object; this will be a point of departure for a concrete statement of the study's aims in chapter 5. Chapter 6 will be devoted to the description of the data and the method used in the corpus analysis. Chapter 7 will display

the results: sections 7.1 and 7.2 will present the functions of *senti* and *guarda*, respectively; section 7.3. will compare features of their contexts of use. Finally, in chapter 8, I will provide an excursus detailing an empirical investigation into the interpretation of *senti* and *guarda* by native speakers. Conclusions and perspectives will close the work in chapter 9.

2. Definition of discourse markers

It is a notorious problem in the study of discourse markers that the object of study is not univocally defined. Discourse markers constitute a relatively new research field; neither the exact categorization of the linguistic elements meant – and thus the scope of the whole category – nor the terminology employed to talk about them are universally shared in the community. On the contrary, each scholar tends to define them in a slightly or sometimes very different way.

The problem of definition is thus twofold: on the one hand, distinct names are used to make reference to what is more or less the same group of linguistic elements; on the other hand, the same name is sometimes applied to different or only partially overlapping groups of items. Such variation depends on many factors: the approach taken and the aims pursued by a given study, the research tradition in which a scholar participates, the theoretical framework she or he is working in, and not least the language considered.

As in any study of discourse markers, therefore, the first thing to be done is to orient ourselves in this variegated landscape and to clarify what is meant under the label “discourse markers” in the present work. Thereby, I do not strive to make a proposal about how discourse markers should be defined as a whole class – such an endeavour would of course be far beyond the scope of a work that focuses on two items only. The goal will rather be to clarify what uses of the forms *senti* and *guarda* I will be talking about, i.e. what properties these uses manifest which distinguish them from other possible readings.

In what follows, I will give a brief overview of the different ways in which the elements that I call “discourse markers” have been labelled and defined in the literature.

2.1. “Discourse markers” and other labels

Let us consider the terminological problem first. Many terms have been used to name the formally heterogeneous pragmatic elements we are interested in; distinct terms often implicate a certain characterization of their functions.

The first label that – to my best knowledge – has been used with reference to these kind of elements is “Gliederungssignale” (‘structuring signals’), as introduced by Gülich (1970) for elements of spoken French such as *ah*, *ben* (derived from *bien* ‘well’),⁴ *donc* (‘so’, ‘thus’), *alors* (‘then’, ‘so’), *puis* (‘then’, ‘next’), *mais* (‘but’), and *tu sais* (‘you know’). The label puts emphasis on the organizing value of these items and corresponds to Gülich’s

⁴ All discourse markers from languages other than English are provided with translations in brackets. The reader should bear in mind that the translations cannot be but literal translations of the lexical items in question and cannot account for the diverse pragmatic meanings of a marker. Note that a given marker will not be translated every time it appears, but only when mentioned for the first time.

text-linguistic perspective, which focuses on their structuring role on a macro-syntactic level. The term “Gliederungssignale” was also adopted by Lichem (1981) with reference to items of spoken Italian like *ah*, *bene* (‘well’), *ma* (‘but’), *allora* (‘then’), *sentì*, or *direi* (‘I would say’), and has its equivalent in the expression “elementi di articolazione”, as used by Stammerjohann (1977).

A widespread label is that of “connectives”, which generally stresses the property of some linguistic elements to mark logical connections between utterances. This term is employed, for instance, by Blakemore (1987), who considers items like *so*, *after all*, *moreover*, and *however*, in the framework of Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) Relevance Theory, as devices that constrain the retrieval of contextual assumptions in the process of interpreting utterances, thus indicating how a given utterance is to be interpreted as relevant⁵ (Blakemore 1987: 122, but see also 1992: 137). It is not uncommon, however, to find the term “connectives” referring to pragmatic elements in general, independently from their having a principally connective function or not. For example, Manili (1986) characterizes “connettivi” as elements that appeal to the interlocutor and control and maintain the communication contact, including the items *vedi* (‘you see’), *sai*, *sentì*, and *guarda*. A rather broad use of the terms “connectives” and “connettivi” is also found in early works by Bazzanella (1985, 1990) and in Stati (1986). Briz Gómez (1993) employs the label “conectores pragmáticos” for elements like *porque* (‘because’), and *sin embargo* (‘nevertheless’), which, besides having a connective function at a clause level as conjunctions and adverbials, step to a pragmatic level when they are used not to link clauses, but speech acts, or turns. At the same time, the label comprises items with a less pronounced connective value, like *bueno* (‘good’) and *bien* (‘well’). The relation of the term “connectives” (or in this case “conectores”) with a specific type of function becomes a central issue in the work of Pons Bordería (1998a) on pragmatic elements of Spanish. The author distinguishes between elements that are more prototypically connective – according to formal and functional features that are commonly attributed to connectives in the literature – as for example *y* (‘and’), *o* (‘or’), and *pero* (‘but’), and elements that are only peripherally connective, like *oye* (‘hear’), *mira* (‘look’), *bueno* (‘good’), and *claro* (‘clear’, ‘of course’). In his opinion, even though the latter can assume connective

⁵ According to Relevance Theory, a hearer who is presented with a new utterance tries to establish a connection between the new information and her representation of the world – i.e. beliefs and assumptions she already has – so to improve this representation; in other words, she establishes the proposition’s relevance (Blakemore 1987: 49). The hearer has a large amount of information stored in memory, but only a part of this constitutes the context that is immediately available to process a new proposition; extending this context – i.e. accessing more information – in order to process the proposition involves a cost. The relevance of a proposition depends both on the contextual effects it brings about, causing an improvement in the representation of the world, and on the costs involved in its processing: the greater the contextual effects, the greater the relevance, but the higher the processing costs, the less the relevance (Blakemore 1987: 54). In this framework, “discourse connectives” are devices that constrain the choice of assumptions a hearer brings to bear in the interpretation process: they make the hearer retrieve contextual assumptions that are in accordance with their meanings, and thereby constrain utterance interpretation (Blakemore 1987: 122, 1992: 137). For example, *after all* “indicates that the proposition it introduces is evidence for an assumption which has just been made accessible”; so, when we say “You have another drink. After all it is your birthday” the second utterance is relevant as a justification for the first (Blakemore 1992: 140).

functions related to formulation and topic structure, they have their primary functions in modalization (*bueno* and *claro*) and addressing (*oye* and *mira*) (Pons Bordería 1998a: 204ff.). It should be noticed that, in recent years, this distinction seems to have become less problematic as other terms have come into use (particularly the term “discourse markers” and its translations, as we shall see below).

Other labels that are currently used in research to name the elements in which we are interested include “pragmatic markers” (Fraser 2006, Aijmer/Foolen/Simon-Vandenberg 2006, Andersen 1998), “discourse operators” (Redeker 1991), “Gesprächswörter” (‘conversation words’) (Koch/Oesterreicher 2011), “mots du discours” (‘discourse words’) (Paillard 2000), and “segnali discorsivi” (‘discourse signals’) (Mara 1986, Bazzanella 2006b, Khachaturyan 2001).

At the present state, the two most widespread terms appear to be “discourse particles” (e.g. Aijmer 1988, Hansen 1998, Fischer 2006b, Nemo 2006; see also “partículas discursivas” in Briz Gómez et al. (2008)) and “discourse markers” (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Travis 2006), with its equivalents “Diskursmarker” (Auer/Günthner 2005), “marqueurs discursifs” (Dostie 2004, Gülich 2006), “marcadores del discurso” (Borreguero Zuloaga/López Serena 2011), and “marcatori discorsivi” (Contento 1994).

Already one and a half decades ago Jucker and Ziv (1998: 2) observed that “discourse marker” was, among many terms, “the one with the widest currency”, suitable for a broad range of items. Schourup (1999: 229f.) observes a prevalence of the term “discourse marker” over “discourse particle”, which he attributes to a number of problems inherent in the word “particle”: it is traditionally a syntactic term, whereas the pragmatic items in question are usually identified on a functional basis; even as a syntactic term, it is not used univocally (for example, conjunctions and prepositions are sometimes called “particles”); finally, there is a tendency for this word to be used more specifically for scalar and modal particles. Schourup finds that the term “discourse particle” is used in a more pre-theoretical fashion and with a broader reference than “discourse marker”. His focus lies in particular on definitions of “discourse markers” centred on the connective value, which exclude items such as *all right*, *like*, *ouch*, or *mhm*; such items have, conversely, been referred to as “discourse particles”. Although it is true that many scholars understand “discourse markers” as primarily connective, and some indeed restrict the label to items such as *so*, *but*, or *after all*, it seems that, at present, an equally large number of scholars do use the term “discourse markers” for more comprehensive groups of pragmatic items, including for example *oh* and *like* (see Fox-Tree 2007), French *tiens* (‘hold’) and *regarde* (‘look’) (see Dostie 2004), Italian *diciamo* (see Waltereit 2006a), and Spanish *bueno* (see Travis 2005).

Once the terminological variety has been outlined, we can go a step forward and ask what exactly is meant by the above labels, i.e. how discourse markers (or discourse particles, connectives etc.) have been defined.

2.2. Definitions of the category

As was anticipated, no universally accepted definition of discourse markers exists; a few features are usually agreed upon by most scholars, but differences in the approach, in the sets of elements under study, as well as in the type of functions focussed on, inevitably lead to great discrepancies.

In this section, I would like to review in some detail a few influential definitions, so as to give an overview of some of the different ways in which discourse markers can be understood. In forty years of research, myriads of definitions have been given, so the review has of course no pretension to be exhaustive.⁶ Rather, it is intended to provide a picture of the variety of existing definitions and, thus, the complexity of the field.⁷

2.2.1. Deborah Schiffrin: a coherence-based view on discourse markers

A very influential definition was given in the early years of discourse marker research by Deborah Schiffrin (1987) in her seminal book *Discourse Markers*. In regard to the type of elements meant by the label, the book focuses in particular on *well, oh, but, or, and, because, so, then, now, y'know, and I mean*, but other items are mentioned as belonging to the category as well, for example *look, here, why, gosh, boy, anyway, and this is the point* (Schiffrin 1987: 327). Two definitions of the category are given: first an operational definition, then a theoretical one, which constitutes the outcome of the study. According to the operational definition, discourse markers are “**sequentially dependent** elements which bracket units of talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 31, emphasis in the original). The “units of talk” can be sentences, propositions, speech acts, as well as tone units; “sequentially dependent” means that discourse markers are not dependent on syntactic structures like clauses and sentences, but are “sequentially dependent on the structure of the discourse” (Schiffrin 1987: 40).

The theoretical definition that results from Schiffrin’s study is framed in a more comprehensive model of discourse and discourse coherence. The model describes five planes or structures of discourse (later called “domains” by Schiffrin (2006)). The “exchange structure” is made up of turns and all of the activities related to the sequential ordering of turns; it also comprises those activities that concern the “mechanical requirements of talk”, such as contact signals and turnover signals (Schiffrin 1987: 24). The “action structure” consists of speech acts and their linear ordering in patterns; this

⁶ For instance, I will not be able to review here the work that has been done on discourse markers in the framework of Relevance Theory by Blakemore (1987), within Argumentation Theory by Anscombe and Ducrot (1988), or by Roulet et al. (1987) from the Geneva School. Since time and space limits of the present thesis do not allow me to do justice to several influential approaches, I will restrict myself to discussing those that have been particularly relevant for my own work.

⁷ The reader is referred to Pons Bordería (1998) for a systematization of 70 definitions. Moreover, the challenging task of giving an overview of approaches to discourse markers has been taken up by volumes like those edited by Jucker and Ziv (eds.) (1998), by Drescher and Frank-Job (eds.) (2006), and by Fischer (ed.) (2006); in the latter, every paper explicitly discusses the definition problem.

ordering is viewed as the result of the decision procedures of the speakers which characterize the acts as “situated” (Schiffrin 1987: 25). The “ideational structure” is constituted by propositions or “ideas”. Ideas are linked by cohesive relations (given by semantic relationships for which an element in a clause is interpretable by means of information from a prior clause), topic relations (between topics and subtopics) and functional relations (given by the role of one idea with respect to another; e.g. one idea can act as a reason for another) (Schiffrin 1987: 26). A further plane is the “participation framework”, which regards the relationship between speaker and hearer and the relationship of speakers and hearers to utterances (the latter comprises e.g. how speakers evaluate ideas, the degree of commitment they show, their stance in performing actions, and how they manage the turns) (Schiffrin 1987: 27). Finally, there is an “information state”, which pertains to the organization and the management of speakers’ knowledge (i.e. the information available to them), and metaknowledge (i.e. the knowledge about their own state of knowledge and that of the others) (Schiffrin 1987: 28).

Schiffrin defines local coherence in discourse as the result of speakers’ and hearers’ efforts to integrate parts of one plane with each other (an idea with another idea, an action with another action), to integrate different planes with each other (e.g. action structures with exchange structures), and to integrate parts of one plane with parts of another (Schiffrin 1987: 29).

Within this model, discourse markers are characterized as contextual coordinates of talk, that is to say that they “propose the contextual coordinates within which an utterance is produced and designed to be interpreted” (Schiffrin 1987: 315). Discourse markers place utterances with respect to the five planes of discourse and indicate that a given utterance is realized and has to be interpreted in relation to them. Every marker possesses one core meaning (e.g. *but* is related to contrast) and fundamentally refers to one single plane. However, its use at places in the discourse at which activities from different planes are carried out (for example a change of speaker and simultaneously an update in the information state) causes it to function on several planes at once (Schiffrin 1987: 317f., 325).⁸ Discourse markers also have an indexical value in the sense that they index utterances to the participants and the text by signalling a focus on the speaker or the hearer, as well as making reference to the previous or the following unit of discourse (Schiffrin 1987: 326). Because they anchor utterances on different discourse planes, markers contribute to the integration between planes and, hence, to discourse coherence (Schiffrin 1987: 330).

As was said above, the category of discourse markers as conceived of by Schiffrin includes morphologically heterogeneous elements which go back to conjunctions, adverbs, verb forms, interjections, and sentences, like *well, oh, but, and, so, now, and I mean*. These elements share features which allow for their use as discourse markers: they are syntactically independent, appear at the beginning of utterances, have different prosodic

⁸ See also Schiffrin (2006: 322): “this functional range – establishing coordinates in different domains of discourse – helps to integrate the many different simultaneous processes underlying the construction of discourse and thus helps to create coherence.”

contours, affect the discourse at a local and a global level and on different planes, and have either no meaning, or a vague meaning, or are reflexive of the language and the speaker (Schiffrin 1987: 328).

The model and the definition of discourse markers just summarized are essentially confirmed by Schiffrin (2006) in a paper that focuses more specifically on the characterization of discourse markers as indexicals. Schiffrin argues that viewing discourse markers as indexicals offers a means to account for many, often problematic features of these elements. Just as traditional deictic expressions like *here* and *now* point to different aspects of context (space, time) and are able to expand their reach (spatial deictics can be used as temporal), discourse markers point to certain domains of discourse, but can also work on others, and thereby acquire multiple functions (Schiffrin 2006: 335). Both deictics and discourse markers make reference to points whose location varies along “a scale of proximity and distance from a symbolic centre” (Schiffrin 2006: 335); this scale refers to the situation of speaking in the case of deictics and to text in the case of discourse markers, which may thus have a local scope (adjacent utterances), or a global one (distant utterances) (Schiffrin 2006: 336). Also, both classes are open, have members whose status varies between a categorial core and a periphery, and in both classes the meanings and uses of single items are context-dependent (Schiffrin 2006: 336).

Schiffrin also addresses the distinction between discourse markers and particles. This distinction relies in part on the idea that particles “create” meanings, adding them to the discourse, while markers “display” already existing meanings; furthermore, there is the question as to “whether markers (or particles) portray speaker stance and attitude” (Schiffrin 2006: 336). As for the distinction between creating and displaying meaning, viewing markers as indexicals leads Schiffrin to an alternative interpretation: because markers select contextual coordinates and the domains to which such coordinates refer, they “select from a range of possible meanings”; so they can appear to add a new meaning to the discourse (Schiffrin 2006: 337). With regard to the second question, it is taken that markers are connected to sequential units of discourse; however, in Schiffrin’s view, it is not only discourse units like acts, turns, and propositions that display relations to each other, but also aspects of text and context. There are relationships between the “self” and the “other” (e.g. solidarity, distance), as well as between the “self” and the “content of talk” (commitment to, detachment from a belief). The marking of speaker/hearer alignment and of stance, which is generally attributed to particles, can thus be understood as the marking of relationships between parts of the discourse (Schiffrin 2006: 337).

2.2.2. Gisela Redeker: a revised model of discourse coherence

The model elaborated by Schiffrin was reviewed by Gisela Redeker (1991), whose contribution resulted in a different model of discourse coherence and a new definition of discourse markers.

Redeker starts by pointing out some shortcomings in Schiffrin's model and in the definition and classification of markers. In her view, Schiffrin's inclusion of some of the uses of the elements under study in the class of discourse markers, and the exclusion of others, is not always in accordance with the definition given (Redeker 1991: 1165). Redeker also argues that most of the markers in question can work on more discourse planes than is claimed by Schiffrin (Redeker 1991: 1151); furthermore, she finds that the attribution of the markers to certain discourse planes, the core meanings proposed, and the indexical dimensions are not sufficient to draw a distinction between single elements (Redeker 1991: 1159). Concerning the model itself, Redeker reasons that the planes of information structure and participation framework cannot be regarded as being on a par with the others because the cognitions and attitudes of which they consist pertain to individual utterances, while the units of the other planes are relational (Redeker 1991: 1162).

Redeker proposes a revised model of discourse coherence and an operational definition of "discourse operators". Her model (also described in Redeker 2006) has three components: an "ideational structure", a "rhetorical structure", and a "sequential structure". The ideational structure concerns propositional relations (e.g. cause, reason, and consequence): "two discourse units are ideationally related if their utterance in the given context entails the speaker's commitment to the existence of that relation in the world the discourse describes" (Redeker 1991: 1168). The rhetorical structure is about the relations that exist between units because of the illocutionary intentions that they convey; finally, the sequential structure concerns paratactic relations between units, i.e. transitions from one issue or topic to the next, and hypotactic relations, i.e. transitions into and back out of asides, digressions, commentaries, corrections, etc. (Redeker 1991: 1168, but see also 2006: 354). Any discourse unit manifests relations to its context with respect to all of the three component structures, but usually one type of relation, i.e. one of the three components, is most relevant (1991: 1168 and 2006: 354).

A "discourse operator" is defined as "a word or phrase – for instance, a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, interjection – that is uttered with the primary function of bringing to the listener's attention a particular kind of linkage of the upcoming utterance [sic] with the immediate discourse context" (Redeker 1991: 1168).⁹ An utterance is "an intonationally and structurally bounded, usually clausal unit (an *idea unit* as defined in Chafe [1980: 14])" (Redeker 1991: 1168). With reference to sequential relations, discourse operators can indicate that the issues currently being focussed on have to be closed or suspended by the insertion of a subordinate segment; with respect to the rhetorical relations, operators "express or create illocutionary relations and contribute to the listener's or reader's conception of the discourse purpose"; as for the ideational component, their use is related to the speaker's conception of what the addressee knows and might infer (Redeker 1991: 1169).

⁹ Redeker (2006: 341) specifies that discourse context does not have to be a linguistic context. Operators can also mark relations with situationally available events or states of affairs.

Following the above definition, the range of items – or uses of items – that are included in the category of discourse operators is partially different from that included in Schiffrin’s discourse markers: for example, Redeker excludes elements that act only on a part of an utterance, such as intrasentential *oh*, which has scope over single words or phrases within utterances. In contrast, she includes anaphoric uses of the adverbs *now* and *then*, as far as they have scope over a whole clause or utterance; these are considered operator uses on the ideational level (Redeker 1991: 1165ff.).

In Redeker (2006), discourse operators are furthermore positioned with respect to other types of pragmatic elements. The article actually focuses on a subtype of discourse operators and it reports on an empirical study of these items’ effect on listeners’ attentional processing, ultimately presenting the model of discourse coherence as a conceptual framework for the development and testing of theories about operators’ functions.

Discourse operators are described here as a subgroup within a broader category, that of “discourse markers”. Discourse operators are those discourse markers that fulfil discourse structuring functions, while those which serve to “modulate the interpretation of utterances” form the subgroup of “discourse particles” (although it is noted that many items can play either role) (Redeker 2006: 340).¹⁰ Resting on the proposed model, Redeker furthermore distinguishes, within the class of discourse operators, ideational and rhetorical connectives from segment transition markers (Redeker 2006: 342). The author points out that, according to the definition given, discourse operators are not necessarily optional, nor syntactically or intonationally independent, and they may be truth-conditional (Redeker 2006: 342). The category includes all intersentential connectives and “clause-combining uses” of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (simple subordinators as well as semantically rich items like *because* and *although*), contrastive uses of indexicals (e.g. *now* and *here*), and other adverbial expressions such as *the next day* (Redeker 2006: 342).

2.2.3. Bruce Fraser: a grammatical-pragmatic perspective

Another influential definition of discourse markers has been given by Bruce Fraser (2006, but see also 1999 for a previous version), according to what the author himself has termed a “grammatical-pragmatic perspective” (Fraser 1999: 936).

Fraser identifies a class of elements which do not form a part of the propositional content of the discourse segments in which they occur and do not contribute to propositional meaning; this class he calls “pragmatic markers”. As for their typical features, these elements “are free morphemes, are discourse-segment initial, signal a specific message, and are classified not syntactically but in terms of their semantic/pragmatic functions” (Fraser 2006: 189). Pragmatic markers are divided into four types:

¹⁰ As we understand, elements that work at an intra-utterance level, such as hedging, focusing, editing elements, and hesitation phenomena do not belong to discourse operators (Redeker 2006: 340).

- “basic pragmatic markers” indicate the illocutionary force of a discourse segment (e.g. *I promise, please*)
- “commentary pragmatic markers” signal a message that is separate from the basic one and represents a comment on it; they are divided into “assessment markers” (*fortunately, sadly*), “manner-of-speaking markers” (*frankly, bluntly speaking*), “evidential markers” (*certainly, conceivably*), and “hearsay markers” (*reportedly, allegedly*).
- “parallel pragmatic markers” convey a message that is separate from the basic one; they include “deference markers” (*Sir, your honor*), and “conversational management markers” (*now, well, ok*)
- “discourse markers” indicate a relation between the discourse segment in which they occur and the preceding one (*so, and, but, anyway, although, however*) (Fraser 2006: 189f.)

Focussing on the latter subclass, the author defines discourse markers as follows:

“For a sequence of discourse segments S1 – S2, each of which encodes a complete message, a lexical expression LE functions as a discourse marker if, when it occurs in S2-initial position (S1 – LE + S2), LE signals that a semantic relationship holds between S2 and S1 which is one of:

- a. elaboration;
- b. contrast;
- c. inference; or
- d. temporality.” (Fraser 2006: 191)

Corresponding to these four semantic relationships, four classes of discourse markers are identified: “contrastive markers” (e.g. *but, alternatively*), “elaborative markers” (*and, above all*), “inferential markers” (*so, after all*), and “temporal markers” (*then, after*) (Fraser 2006: 196-197).¹¹

In Fraser’s definition, hence, the presence of a complete message in segment S2 is a condition for a given item to be considered a discourse marker (Fraser 2006: 192, but see also 1999: 940).¹² As for the function of linking discourse segments, some specifications are added. Even if S1 and S2 are usually contiguous, detached segments can be related, too; a segment can consist of one single utterance or of several; a marker can occur before S1 instead of before S2: for example, “John didn’t take the letter. Instead, he left it” can become “Instead of taking the letter, John left it” (Fraser 2006: 192). Moreover, markers may occur without any S1 and relate S2 to the non-linguistic context (Fraser 2006: 197, also 1999: 938). With respect to the relating function of discourse markers, Fraser

¹¹ The categorization is slightly different in Fraser (1999): there we find discourse markers which a) relate messages and b) relate topics. Group a) includes contrastive markers (indicating that the explicit interpretation of S2 is in contrast with an interpretation of S1, e.g. *in comparison, nevertheless, but*); collateral markers (connecting aspects of both messages, e.g. *furthermore, above all, also*); inferential markers (indicating that S2 is a conclusion drawn from S1, e.g. *thus, so*); and additional subclasses with a smaller number of members (e.g. *after all, since, because*), which present the content of S2 as a reason for that of S1. Group b) includes items like *incidentally, or to return to my point*, which indicate a digression and a reintroduction of a topic (Fraser 1999: 946ff.).

¹² Fraser only considers lexical expressions. Gestures, syntactic structures, and prosodic features do not belong to discourse markers (Fraser 2006: 191).

considers that these elements only *show* relations holding between discourse segments, but do not create any: a relation between S1 and S2 is already present (e.g. contrast, temporality) and the marker just makes it clear for the hearer. This being their function, discourse markers do not add to the propositional meaning of the segments and are not truth-conditional (Fraser 2006: 193).

The author also characterizes the behaviour of discourse markers on different linguistic levels. Discourse markers do not exhibit any uniform tendencies as for the phonologic realization (they are normally stressed, but might be unstressed; under some conditions they are followed by a pause), and they are morphologically varied (monosyllabic, polysyllabic, or consisting of entire phrases). Syntactically, they belong to the categories of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions (*and, but, although*), prepositions (*despite, in spite of*), adverbials (*anyway, besides*), and prepositional phrases (*above all, after all*). Their respective syntactic category determines their placement in S2; for example, conjunctions are always segment-initial (Fraser 2006: 193f.).

Looking back to the definitions summarized in the previous sections, we can see that Fraser's "pragmatic markers" roughly correspond to Schiffrin's and to Redeker's "discourse markers", whereas his "discourse markers" are rather comparable – though not co-extensive – with Redeker's "discourse operators". Besides the divergences in terminology, the differences in the definitions lead to a broad variation in the range of items considered: a number of elements that are regarded as discourse markers by Schiffrin as well as by Redeker, such as *well, now, or you know*, cannot be included in this class according to Fraser's view (see also Fraser 1999: 942).

2.2.4. Carla Bazzanella: an interactional-pragmatic perspective

I will conclude this – inevitably limited – overview with the definition given by Carla Bazzanella (2006a), which is the one towards which my own concept of discourse markers is most closely oriented. With this definition we move to the area of Italian discourse marker research. Bazzanella defines discourse markers as follows:

"Discourse markers are items external to propositional content which are useful in locating the utterance in an interpersonal and interactive dimension, in connecting and structuring phrasal, inter-phrasal and extra-phrasal elements in discourse, and in marking some on-going cognitive processes and attitudes." (Bazzanella 2006a: 456)

The author considers it as a defining and generally accepted characteristic of discourse markers that they do not affect the truth-conditions of utterances and do not contribute to the propositional meaning; instead, they affect the pragmatic meaning (Bazzanella 2006a: 454). Their contribution draws on their core meanings (for example, there is a contrast-feature in the marker *ma*), which can assume distinct values depending on the linguistic and extra-linguistic context (Bazzanella 2006a: 454).¹³

Bazzanella argues that the specific meaning of a marker in a given occurrence is determined by a number of cotextual and contextual parameters. Cotextual parameters

¹³ The externality to propositional content allows for a partial replaceability (Bazzanella 2006a: 454).

include textual components (syntagmatic position, anaphoric and cataphoric relations, coherence devices), paralinguistic components (prosody, pitch variations, phonetic correlates of emotional states, variations in volume), and gestural components (gestures that accompany a marker's production). Contextual parameters encompass sociolinguistic components related to space, time, social identity, style, register, and channel; pragmatic components like speech acts, presuppositions, implicatures, or mutual and shared knowledge, as well as emotive components which have a bearing on the linguistic production (Bazzanella 2006a: 458f.). Accordingly, the author regards the meaning of discourse markers as "compositional". She points out, though, that context- and cotext-dependence is not specific of discourse marker meaning only, but also holds for non-literal meaning in general and even for literal meaning (Bazzanella 2006a: 461).

In regard to formal properties, Bazzanella observes that discourse markers come with a variety of prosodic contours; they are generally described as intonationally independent, but other realizations are possible. Their position in the utterance can vary: the initial position is often considered typical, but this varies from one language to another (Bazzanella 2006a: 454f.). Bazzanella also remarks that items functioning as discourse markers come from different word classes; therefore, she speaks of a "transverseness" of this category with respect to others, in the sense that the identification of discourse markers is based on their contextual use, not on morphosyntactic properties (Bazzanella 2006a: 451, see also 2001b: 42). Note that the author includes in the category – as can be seen from her examples – items as varied as *ma*, *diciamo*, *allora*, *voglio dire* ('I mean'), *vero?* ('true'/'really'), *no?* (tag question), and *praticamente* ('practically/I mean').¹⁴

Bazzanella (2006a: 456f.) proposes a taxonomy of the functions that discourse markers can fulfil,¹⁵ based on Italian markers. She identifies three macro-functions, which are further divided into micro-functions. One type of macro-function is that of "cognitive functions", which encompass:

- procedural markers (related to cognitive processes such as inference)
- epistemic markers (related to speaker's subjectivity and commitment)
- modulation devices (related to propositional content and illocutionary force)

A second type of macro-function is that of "interactional functions", which are distinguished between those pertaining to the speaker and those pertaining to the hearer:

- on the speaker's side we have the following micro-functions: turn-taking devices; fillers; attention-getting devices; phatic devices; hedges and boosters; checking comprehension; requesting agreement and confirmation; yielding the turn
- on the hearer's side: interrupting devices; back-channels; attention confirmed; phatic devices; comprehension confirmed and requests for clarification; agreement, confirmation, support; partial or complete disagreement

The third macro-function is that of "metatextual functions", which include:

¹⁴ The translations are given in the original.

¹⁵ It is pointed out that discourse markers can act on several levels simultaneously (Bazzanella 2006a: 456).

- textual markers: markers structuring the parts (introduction, transition, list, digression, ending); quotation and indirect speech markers
- focusing devices: local; global
- reformulation markers: paraphrase markers; correction markers; exemplification markers

We can observe that the class of discourse markers as defined by Bazzanella is much more inclusive than that of Fraser, and rather similar to Schiffrin's. However, because the characterization of the items and the overall approach are obviously different in Bazzanella's and in Schiffrin's work, it is actually difficult to compare the two views. Also, Bazzanella's definition is not centred on connectivity, but delimits the class based on functions that concern the interpersonal relationship and the organization of parts of the discourse.

It is also interesting to note that Bazzanella includes modalization among discourse-marking functions. Her taxonomy (see above) comprises functions related to speakers' subjectivity and commitment, as well as to propositional content and illocutionary force, which represent "cognitive functions of modalizers"; it also includes "hedges and boosters", which constitute "interactional functions of modalizers" (Bazzanella 2006a: 463). Bazzanella explains that "[m]odalizers, such as German *Modalpartikeln*, should be considered as hyponyms of DMs [discourse markers]" (Bazzanella 2006a: 463, emphasis in the original). Note that these items are explicitly separated from discourse markers by Fraser (1999: 942).¹⁶

Concluding, one can see well that there is only a partial overlap between the ways in which discourse markers are defined and in the terminology used to make reference to them. Regarding the terminological side, the label "discourse marker" is widespread, but its reference is by no means univocal and other labels are in use as well. Terminological divergences are interwoven with differences in the characterization and delimitation of the class, which reflect different approaches and foci. The formal heterogeneity and functional variety of the items in question of course contributes to the variety of perspectives taken in their study.

In spite of the broad variation just sketched, some common points between definitions can be found. In the next section I would like, then, to outline some features that are most often regarded as typical of discourse markers by different scholars. This should help us find a path through the multiplicity of characterizations and, at the same time, allow us to further detail the properties of these items.

2.3. Commonly recognized features of discourse markers

I will try to outline the main features that are usually viewed as typical of discourse markers based on 15 definitions which mirror different approaches to the object. The

¹⁶ They are explicitly distinguished also by Waltereit and Detges (2007), Fischer (2000), and Hansen (2006), among others.

definitions are those given by: Andersen (1998), Bazzanella (2006a), Blakemore (1987, 1992), Dostie (2004), Fischer (2000, 2006b), Fraser (1999, 2006), Gülich (1970), Hansen (1998, 2006), Nemo (2006), Pons Bordería (2006), Redeker (1991, 2006), Schiffrin (1987, 2006), Schourup (1999), Travis (2006), and Waltireit (2006a).

2.3.1. Morphosyntactic heterogeneity, functionally determined categorization

A feature that seems to be generally recognized as characteristic of discourse markers is their morphosyntactic heterogeneity. By this, I mean that the forms that are attributed discourse-marking functions pertain to different morphosyntactically definable part-of-speech classes: adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives, nouns, verbs, and interjections, up to syntactically quite complex structures such as *per così dire* (literally ‘so to say’) (see among others Dostie 2004: 43, Fraser 2006: 194, Gülich 1970: 297, Hansen 1998: 65, Nemo 2006: 383, Schiffrin 1987: 328).

Discourse markers’ status as a class can thereby be conceived of in different ways. As noticed by Schourup (1999: 234), the focus on the diachronic development of markers from the corresponding nouns, adjectives, etc. is associated with a view of discourse markers as a class of its own; in other cases, these items are seen as members of different morphosyntactic classes which do “extra duty” by assuming discourse-marking functions. Discourse-marking functions are then seen, using Hansen’s (2006: 37) term, as “orthogonal” to part-of-speech class-membership.

In general, there is agreement on the fact that discourse markers should be best defined functionally, and not on the basis of formal properties, in contrast to more traditional parts of speech. Some delimitation can nevertheless be drawn on formal grounds, too: Nemo (2006: 385) specifies that “discourse particles” have to be understood as “lexical items”, ranging “from grammaticalised lexical units (e.g. evidentials) to rather ‘free’ particles.” This excludes metalinguistic comments that are not lexicalized, or constructions like the French connective pattern *encore + verb + il* (Nemo 2006: 402).

Due to the morphosyntactic heterogeneity of discourse markers, the borders with other classes – particularly adverbs, conjunctions, interjections, and modal particles – take a different shape according to the definition proposed. Elements like *now* and *here*, which have traditionally been accounted for as adverbials, are treated as discourse markers by some scholars (see Redeker 2006: 342), but not by others (see Hansen 1998: 75). Similarly, no agreement exists on the inclusion of conjunctions; for example, an item like *because* is straightforwardly included in the class of discourse markers by Redeker (2006: 340) by virtue of its clause-combining function, while Hansen (1998: 75) only admits instances that operate on an epistemic or speech act level, not on propositions.¹⁷

¹⁷ The following examples show *because* operating on:

- propositions: “John married Sue because she was rich”
- the epistemic level: “Cecily couldn’t have killed Algernon, because she was out of town on the night it happened”

Looking at interjections, one can observe a similar situation. It is often said in the literature that interjections can work as discourse markers (see Bazzanella 2006a, Gülich 1970, Schiffrin 1987); elements such as *ah* and *oh* have frequently been assigned a discourse-marking role. However, some scholars exclude interjections from the class of discourse markers: in Fraser's (2006: 203) view, interjections are "pragmatic idioms" and therefore not pragmatic markers. Fischer (2000: 275, 2006b: 432) admits interjections into the class of discourse particles, but distinguishes them functionally from other types, namely "hesitation markers" and "segmentation markers". According to Fischer, all discourse particles have under-specified meanings that are specified by the context and refer to speakers' mental states, but the kind of state displayed is different. Hesitation markers "indicate a current process: 'I am thinking'"; segmentation markers are divided into two types: those whose meaning involves the interlocutor (German *ja* ('yes'), English *yes*), and those displaying the results of cognitive processes (German *gut* ('good', 'well'), English *well*); interjections, in contrast, "display the sudden recognition of some kind of information".

The relation between discourse markers and modal particles is treated in different ways, too. First of all, modal particles are problematic in that they are typical of some languages only, in particular of German, which has a long tradition of studies on the subject (e.g. Weydt 1969, Helbig/Kötz 1981, Helbig 1991, Diewald 2006 and 2008); this peculiarity makes it difficult to draw a principled distinction from other pragmatic elements as soon as one looks at different languages. Moreover, while formal attributes apparently allow for quite a straightforward distinction, functional attributes do not. Modal particles are morphologically invariable, monomorphemic, and syntactically integrated into the host sentence, which is not true of discourse markers. Nevertheless, many items that are generally considered as discourse markers can assume functions that are comparable to those of modal particles, namely when they act on an interpersonal level and convey attitudes of the speakers towards the interlocutors or the utterances produced. This leads, once more, to different delimitations of the classes in question: some scholars separate the class of modal particles from that of discourse markers (Fischer 2000, Hansen 1998), while some others view modal particles as a type of discourse marker (Bazzanella 2006a, Pons Bordería 2006).¹⁸

2.3.2. Syntactic non-integration, scope variability

The lack of syntactic integration in the host utterance is largely agreed upon as a constitutive property of discourse markers (see Dostie 2004: 44, Fischer 2000: 26, Gülich 1970: 16, Pons Bordería 2006: 80, Travis 2006: 229, Waltereit 2006a: 65). Of course, this does not apply to the totality of the items that may be considered as discourse markers: it does

- the speech act level: "Have you got a minute? – because there's something I wanted to discuss with you" (Hansen 1998: 55, emphasis in the original)

¹⁸ For comprehensive surveys of the definitions of these "bordering" classes, see Hansen (1998) and Pons-Bordería (1998).

not hold for adverbials such as *now* and *here* (which are discourse markers for Redeker 2006), or to conjunctions like *although* (see again Redeker 2006: 342, Fraser 2006: 195), and it is not true of modal particles either (assigned to discourse markers by Bazzanella 2006a: 463).

The non-integration of discourse markers in the syntactic structure of their host utterances has been related to the syntactic independence of the items from which they derive (see Waltereit 2006a: 75; Schiffrin 1987: 328). Waltereit (2006a: 75) notes that many discourse markers arise from items that can build independent utterances, and whose “immediate environment” is, therefore, not given by syntactic structures, but by discourse structures. As he argues, even if in their discourse-marking readings these items lose their status as autonomous utterances, they retain their syntactic independence.

Syntactic independence is also related to the scope variability, i.e. the ability of discourse markers to refer to and act on discourse units of almost any size. Hansen (1998: 73) points out how the scope of a marker may vary from sequences of several utterances to subsentential units or even single intonational patterns associated with certain illocutionary functions; the latter is the case of an utterance like “eh bien?”.¹⁹ As remarked by Waltereit (2006a: 64) scope variability is not exclusive of discourse markers, but holds for conjunctions, too. For example, *and* can have scope over a single noun phrase, as in “Ed and Doris loved each other”, or over a full sentence, as in “Ed worked at the barber’s, and Doris worked in a department store”. But while a conjunction’s scope can be determined in grammatical terms, the scope of a discourse marker cannot, for it does not make reference to grammar but to discourse.

2.3.3. Externality to propositional, truth-conditional content

The externality to the propositional, truth-conditional content of utterances is a further feature on which the great majority of definitions agree (see Andersen 1998: 147, Dostie 2004: 44, Fischer 2000: 16, Fraser 2006: 193, Hansen 1998: 74, Schourup 1999: 232). This means that one can freely add a marker to or delete it from an utterance, and that utterance will continue to be true – or false – under the same conditions.

Note that this quality is still not universally shared. It does not hold, for instance, for Redeker’s discourse operators, which can also be truth-conditional, according to the author’s definition (Redeker 2006: 342). Pons Bordería (2006: 80) considers as discourse markers some expressions with propositional meaning like *as a result*, and Nemo (2006: 387) includes truth-conditional elements such as the French *et encore* (‘even then’). The quality of non-truth-conditionality can sometimes pose problems even for items that seem

¹⁹ Hansen argues that there might be a lower limit to the extension of markers’ scope, which she identifies with functional units named “discourse acts” (Hansen 1998: 74). These units are characterized following Roulet (1991: 65) as sub-sentential units which do not possess any illocutionary force, but have a rhetorical function in “supporting, preparing, arguing against, or elaborating on the main point of the communicative act of which they form a part” (Hansen 1998: 126). For example, in “mon voisin, le pauvre homme a perdu tous ses biens”, the topicalized unit “mon voisin” is functionally autonomous inasmuch as it prepares the following act (Roulet 1991: 64f.).

uncontroversially pragmatic in nature. Andersen (1998: 161f.) points out that non-truth-conditionality seems to be challenged by some uses of *like*. For example, in the utterance “we were having baths together when we were *like* two years old” as opposed to “we were having baths together when we were two years old”, the presence/absence of *like* does indeed make a difference. Andersen reasons that in both cases, “two years old” is not meant as an exact indication, but whereas in the latter case the non-exactness would have to be inferred by the hearer, *like* underlines this in the first case and supports the inference process. This role is typical of a pragmatic marker. At the same time, because *like* is similar in meaning to adverbs like *roughly* or *approximately* here, it could be assumed to be truth-conditional after all.²⁰ Even though non-truth-conditionality is, then, not universally taken as a defining property or is not always clearly determinable, most definitions do mention it as a fundamental feature of discourse markers.

Besides the opposition between truth-conditional and non-truth-conditional meaning, a further distinction has been pointed out: that which exists between conceptual and procedural meaning (see Blakemore 1992: 150). It seems that elements understood as discourse markers are more often procedural, but some of them also have a conceptual meaning. A word like *frankly*, for example, is not truth-conditional in “Frankly, this party is boring”, but it is still possible to reply: “That’s not true. You’re not being frank. I’ve just seen you dancing with the blond beauty in blue” (Schourup 1998: 246). There is a conceptual representation related to the word *frankly* which does not act on the truth-conditions of the whole utterance, but can nevertheless be true or false in itself; so the meaning conveyed is non-truth-conditional, but conceptual. This does not hold, conversely, for the word *so* in “Tom can open Bill’s safe. So he knows the combination”: the message of *so* could not be denied. Hence, *so* does not have any conceptual meaning here, but is merely procedural (Schourup 1998: 246). Similarly, there is a procedural meaning, but not a conceptual meaning in the marker *like* (Andersen 1998): to the utterance “You were sort of drunk last night weren’t you?” one can reply by saying “I wasn’t SORT OF drunk I was DRUNK”; in contrast, one cannot react to the utterance “You were like drunk last night weren’t you?” by saying “*I wasn’t LIKE drunk I was DRUNK” (Andersen 1998: 164, emphasis in the original). The fact that *sort of* can be metalinguistically negated, but *like* cannot, is taken to reveal that *like* does not encode a concept, but a procedure, “helping the hearer in arriving at the intended interpretation of an utterance” (Andersen 1998: 163).

Finally, the meaning of discourse markers is often qualified as reduced or underspecified (see Gülich 1970: 297, Fischer 2000: 284). A typical trait of this meaning is to be contextually determined: the precise message that a discourse marker expresses in a given situation depends on several contextual parameters which contribute to its interpretation (see Bazzanella 2006a: 454, Fischer 2000: 274).

²⁰ Note that Andersen considers *like* as a genuine pragmatic marker. He points out that it differs from those adverbs in that it can indicate approximation both at a content and a form level, i.e. the level of the proposition conveyed and that of the linguistic expression used. The adverbs, in contrast, can only refer to the content.

2.3.4. Functioning on a pragmatic level

Being external to the proposition, discourse markers work on the pragmatic level of discourse. The range of pragmatic functions that are regarded as typical of the class, however, can vary. A function that is most often considered as fundamental is connectivity. Despite different views, connectivity can be identified as a common denominator in many definitions (see Fischer 2000: 283, Fraser 2006: 191, Hansen 1998: 171, Redeker 1991: 1168, Schiffrin 1987: 326, Schourup 1999: 230). For example, we have seen in section 2.2 that according to Fraser (2006: 191), discourse markers connect discourse segments by displaying semantic relations, and Redeker's (1991: 1168) discourse operators display connections between the utterance they refer to and the immediate discourse context. In Fischer's (2000: 284) view, discourse particles have the role to "mark a contribution by the speaker as non-initial"; this means that they present the speaker's mental states and processes as being in accordance with the situation, and thus present the speaker's utterances as integrated into and naturally following from the interaction.

Together with the connective power, discourse markers are generally attributed a role in creating or maintaining discourse coherence (see Blakemore 1987: 122ff., Hansen 1998: 75 and 2006: 25, Schiffrin 1987: 330, Schourup 1999: 230). Needless to say, the way in which the effect of discourse markers on coherence is understood varies according to the approach taken. In Schiffrin's (1987) model, for instance, discourse markers contribute to coherence by supporting the integration between different discourse planes. In the framework of Relevance Theory, Blakemore considers the notion of coherence as being embedded in that of relevance: coherence arises from the fact that the interpretation of one segment relies on information made available by the interpretation of another (Blakemore 1987: 112). So, in coherent discourse, utterances display "dependent relevance", which means that the relevance of one utterance depends on the interpretation of another.²¹ Elements like *so*, *moreover*, and *you see* assume the role of indicating relations of dependent relevance between utterances (Blakemore 1987: 122).

Discourse markers are also assigned a wide range of functions related to the organization and structuring of discourse, for example from the viewpoint of turn-taking, topic structure, or the construction of argumentation (see Andersen 1998: 147, Bazzanella 2006a: 456, Dostie 2004: 45, Gülich 1970: 297, Waltereit 2006a: 64). They are furthermore assigned functions associated with the display of cognitive processes and attitudes (see Andersen 1998: 147, Bazzanella 2006a: 456, Travis 2006: 224f.). Not all of these functions, however, are considered as discourse-marking functions by every scholar.

On a more general level, a common view is that discourse markers work as instructions, as a sort of "road signs" which help hearers in processing – and speakers in

²¹ "In a coherent discourse two utterances may be connected either in virtue of the fact that the interpretation of the first may include propositions used in establishing the relevance of the second, or in virtue of the fact that a proposition conveyed by one is affected by the interpretation of the other. In either case we might say that the relevance of one is somehow *dependent* on the interpretation of the other" (Blakemore 1987: 122)

producing – the unfolding discourse (see Andersen 1998: 151, Blakemore 1987: 103ff., Hansen 1998: 75, Schiffrin 1987: 315, Travis 2006: 224).²²

It should be remarked that even if functional and formal features can be identified that are generally considered typical of discourse markers, the decision as to what items should be included in the class and what items should be excluded is no straightforward matter. Not all items that one may want to call discourse markers manifest all features; on the contrary, many items possess some features, but not others. That's why it has been suggested from many sides that the class should be treated in prototypical terms, rather than in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions (see Bazzanella 2006a: 450, Hansen 1998: 62, Pons Bordería 1998: 82). Correspondingly, some elements will be ranked as more central and some others as more peripheral members of the category, a conception that seems to respond well to the complexity of the phenomenon.

2.4. *The concept of discourse markers in the present work*

After having examined some of the ways in which discourse markers are defined, and having seen what features are most often regarded as typical of them, it should now be stated how this category is understood in the present work. In what follows, I will state what features I take to be constitutive of discourse markers, so as to clarify what is meant by this label and, with reference to the object of my analysis, what kind of uses of the forms *senti* and *guarda* I will be concerned with.

First of all, the adoption of the label “discourse markers” needs some explanation. I choose this label because, firstly, it is probably the most widely used term at present (see Pons Bordería 2006: 79 and above section 2.1); moreover, I prefer it to other widespread terms like “connective” and “discourse particle” because it does not imply any particular function or morphological form (apart from the very general and obvious characteristic of working at discourse level). The term “connective” would be inappropriate because neither *senti* nor *guarda* can be said to fulfil genuinely connective functions, but instead they convey other types of messages. As will become clear in chapter 7, *senti* can contribute to maintain coherence, but it is not comparable to openly connective elements like *allora* (“then”). The term “particle” would be problematic, too, because it generally indicates monomorphemic, non-inflectable elements (see Hansen 2006: 27). In contrast, both *senti* and *guarda* are clearly analyzable in a lexical and an inflectional morpheme, and they are inflected for number and person to *senta/sentite* and *guardi/guardate*. The label “discourse marker” thus seems best suited to refer to these two items.

With regard to the reference of this label, my concept of discourse markers is oriented towards that of Bazzanella (2006a, see above), in that it rests on a similar set of main defining features and pays attention not only to discourse structuring aspects, but also to interpersonal ones. By “discourse markers” I mean **linguistic elements (or uses of**

²² Similarly to the other features mentioned, the instructional character of course takes different shapes depending on the approach.

linguistic elements) that are produced to accompany discourse segments of different sizes, without thereby contributing to the propositional content that such segments express and without being syntactically bound to them, and that encode messages which indicate to the interlocutors how to receive and interpret the accompanied discourse segments with respect to different aspects of the ongoing interaction.

The externality to propositional content is a fundamental and largely agreed upon feature of discourse markers (see section 2.3.3 above). For the forms *senti* and *guarda*, this means that a distinction has to be made between uses in which the two forms express actual requests to look at or listen to something or somebody, and uses in which they express no such request, but convey messages situated on a metadiscursive level. The distinction can be appreciated in (1) *vs* (2), and in (3) *vs* (4) (the latter is taken from an online chat).^{23,24}

(1)

Da sotto viene su un fragore di mestoli (...) Emiliano: **Senti, senti**. Fanno sul serio anche quelli laggiù.

A crash of ladles is heard from below (...) Emiliano: Listen, listen. The people down there mean business, too.

(Manili 1983: 66, emphasis added)

(2)

Senti, parla! Non mi va questo genere di scherzi.

Listen, speak! I don't like these kind of jokes.

(Manili 1983: 57, emphasis added)

(3)

La ragazza: **Guarda** quello! **guarda** quello!

The girl: Look at that one! Look at that one!

Cosma: Chi vuoi che veda con questo casino?

Cosma: How am I supposed to see anybody in this mess?

(Manili 1983: 74, emphasis added)

²³ Almost all translations of the examples that I quote from the literature are mine. When a translation is provided in the original, I keep it and specify its provenance in brackets.

²⁴ The translations of the examples are intended to render as close as possible the semantic-pragmatic meaning of the Italian original. I believe that this is essential for the comprehension of the pragmatic aspect of the reported interactions and, thus, of the role of our markers. For this reason, discourse markers occurring in the examples will be, as a general rule, translated by (roughly) equivalent items of English. It is obvious that discourse markers hardly have any direct equivalents in different languages, so a given item may have different translations or no translation at all in distinct examples. As for *senti* and *guarda*, I treat them as follows: in the present chapter and in the chapter concerning the analytical methods (chapter 5), I translate the forms *senti* and *guarda* in all their uses: literal, discourse-marking, and interjectional. The aim is to make the semantic-pragmatic value of the distinct uses as clear as possible. In the chapters that present the results of the analysis (chapters 6 and 7), in which only the discourse-marking uses are discussed, I will opt, instead, to leave *senti* and *guarda* untranslated, so as not to confuse the reader about their functions in Italian.

(4)

Ale. **Guarda**... in chat ho incontrato l'amore della mia vita...Ale. **Look**... I met the love of my life in a chat...

(Bazzanella 2001a: 91, emphasis added)

Variability in the size and form of the discourse segment referred to, and syntactic independence from it, are further features of discourse markers on which researchers largely agree. Positing this feature implies that I do not consider as discourse markers uses such as those in (5)-(7), where the forms *sentì* and *guarda* take an object: in (5) and (6), the two forms govern the phrases that follow them (formed by the pronoun "che" (here: 'what a') and a noun); in (7), *guarda* is bound through the conjunction "che" ('that') to a complement clause:

(5)

Ma **sentì** che baccano!Literally: *But listen (to) what a noise!* (meaning, roughly, 'what a noise!')

(Manili 1983: 65, emphasis added)

(6)

Ma **guarda** che caso!Literally: *But look (at) what a coincidence!* (meaning, roughly, 'what a coincidence!')

(Manili 1983: 80, emphasis added)

(7)

[...]

B: <?> l'hanno ammazzato era ricchissimo qualcuno l'avrà fatto fuori

*They killed him. he was very rich somebody murdered him*A: **guarda** che soffriva di cuore _ eh?²⁵*Guarda he had a bad heart DM?* (meaning: 'take into account that he had a bad heart')

(Waltereit 2002: 990, original translation, emphasis added)

These uses have sometimes been included in analyses of *guarda* and *sentì* as discourse markers – Manili (1983) includes the types in (5)-(7), and Waltereit (2002) and Schwarze (1988) include the type in (7). They are certainly not straightforward invitations to listen to or to look at something, but rather routinized uses in which the two forms are associated with certain non-literal meanings. However, I believe that due to their formal and functional characteristics, these uses cannot be treated as being on a par with those in (2) and (4); instead, they have to be given a distinct status on the scale between verb forms and discourse markers proper.

I have stated above that I conceive of discourse markers as encoding indications about how to receive and interpret a certain stretch of talk with respect to different aspects

²⁵ According to the transcription conventions of the corpus used by Waltereit (*Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* (De Mauro et al. 1993)), the symbol " _ " indicates a lengthened sound.

of the interaction. We have already seen (section 2.3.4) that the instructional character represents a most commonly recognized feature of discourse markers, but also that scholars have different views on what type of instructions should be considered as instances of discourse-marking functions. I consider as “discourse markers” uses that refer to – i.e. giving instructions about – the formal organization of discourse, the process of its formulation, the interaction between speakers, their interpersonal relationship, and the relation of the speaker to what is being said. This means that I do not restrict my focus to discourse structuring, or purely connective uses. Discourse-marking functions are understood here as ranging from indicating how a portion of discourse is intended to relate to others in terms of an ongoing argumentation or of the topics talked about (e.g. marking an exemplification, a topic shift), to helping allocate speakership (e.g. signaling that a speaker is going to take or to yield the turn), displaying the activity of formulation (marking hesitation, reformulation), preparing the interlocutors to listen to a stretch of talk (calling for attention), displaying interlocutors’ participation (back-channels), indicating the attitude of the speaker towards the interlocutor (modalization through the expression of agreement or disagreement, appeal to shared knowledge), or expressing the speaker’s stance towards what is said (modalization through the expression of high or low commitment).

I would like to specify that, for some discourse markers, the “instructions” just mentioned can not only be directed towards an interlocutor who is actually present, but also to a potential interlocutor. In fact, we can well use some discourse markers when we have no hearer: for example, we may use *allora* or *dunque* (‘so’, ‘thus’) to bridge a formulation problem when rehearsing a talk on our own. In such cases, speaking about “giving instructions to the hearer” is not appropriate; it should be specified that the presence of a hearer can be just projected. For *senti* and *guarda*, however, it seems that the use of the markers is indeed always bound to the appeal to an interlocutor, as is also demonstrated by their morphological variation of number and person (*senti/senta/sentite* and *guarda/guardi/guardate*).

Taking the instructional value as a defining characteristic entails that I restrict my view to uses of *senti* and *guarda* which function exclusively as instructions regarding some segment of the ongoing discourse, that is to say: elements whose use is tied to the presence of another stretch of talk, to which they refer. For this reason, I do not consider as discourse markers uses such as those in (8) and (9):

(8)

Ma **senti**... e io ero all’oscuro di tutto.

But **listen**... and I didn’t know anything (meaning: ‘Can you imagine? And I didn’t know anything!’)

(Manili 1983: 65, emphasis added)

(9)

Guarda guarda! e così dovrei fare io il primo passo!*Look look! So it's me who should make the first step!* (meaning: 'Go figure! So it's me who should take the first step!')

(Manili 1983: 83, emphasis added)

Uses of *senti* like the one in (8) are described by Manili (1983: 60ff.) as calling attention to some interesting circumstance, indicating that an event contradicts our expectations, and expressing astonishment, annoyance, and real or simulated admiration and surprise, sometimes with an ironic value. The use of *guarda* as in (9) – *guarda* is repeated, but does not have to be – represents, according to Manili (1983: 79ff.), a way to indicate that some event is at odds with our expectations, and to manifest astonishment, indignation, or annoyance; it can also be meant ironically to display simulated surprise, or encode criticism; in Manili (1986: 172) this use is regarded as an interjection. Bazzanella (1990: 639) mentions this same use of *guarda* as a “phatic connective” which – when produced with a rising-falling intonation – indicates “surprise and partial disappointment”. Waltereit (2002: 992) describes it as a “phatic marker” expressing admiration. Both *senti* and *guarda* are, moreover, paraphrased by Manili (1986: 172) as “ma davvero!” (‘really?’), “non l’avrei mai immaginato!” (‘I would never have thought it’).

These descriptions clearly show that in this sort of use, the forms *senti* and *guarda* encode pragmatically autonomous content and actually constitute utterances²⁶ in themselves. They could be uttered in complete isolation and convey a perfectly independent message. This is indeed the case in the following example from Waltereit (2002: 992), where *guarda* expresses admiration:

(10)

A: proporrei l’antipastino di mare bellino

I would recommend the seafood starter sweetheart

B: ah _ ah

ah ah

A: con cozze

with mussels

B: ah _ ah

ah ah

A: eh eccetera eccetera

*DM etcetera etcetera*B: **guarda*****guarda***

²⁶ When I use the term “utterance”, I follow the definition adopted by the C-ORAL-ROM (see Moneglia 2005: 15f.). By “utterance”, I mean a string of talk which accomplishes an action in itself; its autonomous pragmatic function can thereby be recognized by competent speakers by means of prosodic clues. In what follows, when it is not relevant to point out whether we are talking about single utterances or sequences of them, I will use – for simplicity – the term “utterance” in the singular.

A: un bell'antipastino di mare
the nice seafood starter
 (Waltereit 2002: 992, original translation, emphasis added)

In cases like these, *sentì* and *guarda* are functioning as interjections. According to Wierzbicka (1992: 164), an interjection is

"[...] a linguistic sign expressing the speaker's current mental state (1) which can be used on its own, (2) which expresses a specifiable meaning, (3) which does not include other signs (with a specifiable meaning), (4) which is not homophonous with another lexical item that would be perceived as semantically related to it, and (5) which refers to the speaker's current mental state or mental act (for example 'I feel ...', 'I want ...', 'I think ...', 'I know ...')."

The author further clarifies point (4) as follows: "which is not homophonous with another lexical item whose meaning would be included in its own meaning (that is, in the meaning of the putative interjection)" (Wierzbicka 1992: 165). This clarification is meant to account for interjections such as *hell* or *christ*; for example, the meaning of *hell* does not include the meaning of the noun "hell", so this form can be considered as an interjection. More precisely, it is a "secondary interjection", as opposed to "primary interjections" like *wow* (Wierzbicka 1992: 165). The uses of *sentì* and *guarda* in (8)-(10) would then constitute secondary interjections: they have specifiable meanings concerning the speaker's mental state, they can be uttered alone, and though being homophonous with other lexical items, they have a meaning that is independent from that of those items.

I am well aware that some scholars include interjections among discourse markers (e.g. Bazzanella 2006a, Schiffrin 1987) and that interjections can assume typical discourse-marking functions: for example, the English *oh* can be used to mark self-repair (Schiffrin 1987: 75), thus fulfilling a clear discourse-related role. Nevertheless, this use of *oh* draws on the item's ability to indicate the recognition of information, a message which it can in principle convey as an independent utterance. There is a noticeable difference between elements such as *like*, *so*, or the Italian *diciamo*, and elements like *ah* and *ops*: while the former can never be uttered alone, but only as comments on some other portion of talk, the latter can be uttered on their own and convey autonomous messages (though of course highly context-dependent ones).²⁷ Note also that, while discourse markers are often

²⁷ In underlining this difference I am influenced by the work of Fiehler et al. (2004) on fundamental units of spoken language. The authors address the question of how to sub-segment turns at talk and suggest an analysis in "funktionale Einheiten" ('functional units'), i.e. parts of talk to which participants in a conversation can assign a function for the ongoing interaction in an online comprehension process (Fiehler et al. 2004: 203). For example, in "Peter, sag mal, kannst du mir zehn Euro leihen" ('Peter, say, can you lend me ten Euros?') there are three minimal units: an address term, an interpretation instruction, and a question (Fiehler et al. 2004: 212). The authors distinguish three types of elementary functional units: potentially autonomous units, which can build a turn alone (such as the question above); associated units, which require a host unit and can only form a turn together with it; and projecting units, which make a further unit expectable and depend on it to build a turn (Fiehler et al. 2004: 213). Interjections, such as *ach*, are included in the first type. In contrast, elements such as "Gliederungssignale" ('structuring signals') and "Modalisierungen" ('modalizations'), e.g. *sozusagen* ('so to speak'), belong to the second type. Units called "Operatoren" ('operators'), i.e. short, formulaic instructions for the understanding of following units, like *allerdings* ('nevertheless') or *kurzum* ('brief'), are assigned to the third type (Fiehler et al. 2004: 216ff.). This taxonomy underlines that there is a

described as having scope over discourse units of various size and shape, these elements do not have any scope at all.

The difference between these two types of function is all the more visible in the case of *senti* and *guarda*, as these two forms cannot be conjugated for number and person when they work as interjections, while they are normally conjugated as discourse markers. One could not say, for instance, “Ma senta... e io ero all’oscuro di tutto” or “Guardate guardate! e così dovrei fare io il primo passo!”. The formal invariability characterizes them as fixed formulas encoding a precise and autonomous message, and it seems to point to an evolution path different from that of the discourse-marking uses proper. Therefore, when I speak about *senti* and *guarda* as discourse markers, I do not include uses like those just seen, in which the two elements do not comment on some other portion of discourse, but instead encode pragmatically autonomous messages and can be used alone.

To sum up the content of this section, what I understand under the label “discourse markers” in the present work are uses that 1) accompany discourse segments of different sizes, though 2) without being syntactically bound to them and 3) without adding to propositional content, and 4) whose content represents an instruction about how to receive and interpret a certain stretch of discourse with respect to different aspects of the ongoing interaction. This concept informs the delimitation of the study’s scope: we will be concerned with those readings of *senti* and *guarda* that represent instances of their discourse-marking use.

functional and perceptual difference between elements that can appear alone, like interjections, and elements that must refer to other units in order to be interpretable and fulfil a communicative function.

3. Overview of existing approaches

After having discussed how the object “discourse markers” has been defined in the literature, and what is meant by this label in the present work, we should now turn our attention to the ways in which this object has been approached. More precisely, we will be concerned with those areas of discourse marker research that are particularly relevant for the present work: section 3.1 will give an overview of research that has been done on Italian discourse markers, outlining the different perspectives adopted; section 3.2 will extend the view to studies which analyze deverbial discourse markers in different languages, and outline the main interests and goals that have been pursued with regard to these type of markers. There is of course an overlap between these two areas, which is constituted by cross-linguistic works that study deverbial discourse markers of Italian and of other languages together. To avoid repetitions, I have opted to mention these works in the first section only.

Among the studies named in the present chapter, those which include *senti* and *guarda* will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4, which provides a state of the art concerning these two items.

3.1. Approaches in Italian discourse markers research

Research on Italian discourse markers has produced, since the late 1970s, a considerable amount of studies taking a multiplicity of perspectives on the subject. A large part of the available literature consists of works that offer an overview and systematization of the category as a whole. Starting from the early years of discourse marker research, we find the overview proposed by Stammerjohann (1977), who applies the taxonomy developed for French markers by Gülich (1970) to Italian discourse markers in a corpus of natural spoken data; we furthermore have the work of Lichem (1981), who presents a further elaboration on the systematics inspired by Stammerjohann and Gülich, and the study of Mara (1986), who takes an interactional rather than text-oriented perspective and first introduces the term “segnali discorsivi”, which is now common in Italian research. Stati (1986) suggests a classification of “connettivi interfrasali” (‘intersentential connectives’) which, however, mainly considers written texts. Further functional systematizations have been given in Bazzanella’s papers on “connettivi” (Bazzanella 1985) and “phatic connectives” (Bazzanella 1990), and in book chapters on “segnali discorsivi” (Bazzanella 1994a and 1995). The classifications proposed in these works mirror a development from a text-linguistics approach (Bazzanella 1985) to an interaction-oriented one, centered on the active roles of both the speaker and the addressee (Bazzanella 1990), and finally to one that puts emphasis on interactional as well as metatextual functions. Bazzanella’s (2006a) paper on the semantics of discourse markers is to a large extent devoted to their definition and classification as well (see section 2.2.4). Furthermore, a similar work has been done

for discourse markers of Old Italian (Bazzanella 2010), in a dedicated part of the *Grammatica dell'italiano antico*.

With a somewhat different intent, Khachaturyan (2011) proposes a functional taxonomy of discourse markers that was originally developed through studies on French and Russian (see also Paillard 2010), illustrating it with Italian discourse markers. Khachaturyan describes, for this purpose, the classification of *davvero* ('really'), *veramente* ('in reality', 'really'), *d'altronde* ('in the end'), *dico* ('I say'), *diciamo*, and *per così dire*, with the addition of the French *disons* and *tu vois*.

Frank-Job (2006), then, presents an analytical view on discourse markers which underlines the interactional origin of their pragmaticalization and regards their multifunctionality as a result of the multilayered mechanisms of discourse processing, illustrating these characteristics with Italian discourse markers such as *va bene* ('okay'), *dimmi* ('tell me'), and *di* ('say', 'tell me').

A number of studies have, moreover, been devoted to the use of discourse markers in particular types of interaction. This is the case in Contento's (1994) study on discourse markers in psychological consulting, and in Bazzanella's papers on discourse markers in classroom interaction (Bazzanella 1994b), in spoken communication as opposed to writing (Bazzanella 2001a), and in the conversational moves of task-oriented dialogue (namely in a differences game) (Bazzanella 2006b).

Besides works that embrace the category of discourse markers as a whole, a large number of studies have been devoted to the analysis of single markers, or small subsets of them. Most frequently, the interest lies on the interactional and structuring functions accomplished by markers in synchrony, either in general usage or in specific types of interaction. Starting from the early 1980s, we find Manili's (1983) brief monograph on *vedi*, *senti*, and *guarda*, which illustrates various readings of these forms ranging from discourse-marking uses, to more or less routinized uses, and to literal ones (more details in chapter 4), based on a corpus of written Italian. A later essay (Manili 1986), summing up parts of the previous work, presents readings of *vedi*, *sai*, *senti*, and *guarda*. In a further paper, Manili (1988) gives an overview of discourse-marking as well as syntactically integrated uses of the forms *sai/sa* (second and third person singular of "sapere" ('to know')), drawing again on data from written sources.²⁸

In more recent years, Stame (1994) has analyzed the discourse-marking use of *no* ('no') based on a corpus of spontaneous spoken language from psychological consulting.

²⁸ Manili uses data from fictional writing compared with collections of spoken dialogues. Unfortunately, it is not clear how the comparison is carried out. Manili writes: "[...] mi sono basata sullo spoglio di alcune opere di narrativa contemporanea (Bassani, Pratolini, Morante), e soprattutto su numerose opere teatrali di autori diversi. Ho però messo a confronto tale *corpus* con altri testi dialogici parlati di carattere popolare (come quelli raccolti da Rovere 1977) e con testi registrati (come quello della Poggi Salani 1977 e della Sornicola 1981), in considerazione del fatto che *sai*, *sa* compaiono con la massima frequenza nel dialogo e nella conversazione libera" (Manili 1988: 179, emphasis in the original). '[...] I have relied on the search of contemporary narrative works (Bassani, Pratolini, Morante), and, above all, on numerous plays by different authors. I have, however, compared that corpus with other colloquial spoken dialogical texts (like those collected by Rovere 1977) and with recorded texts (like that of Poggi Salani 1977 and of Sornicola 1981), in consideration of the fact that *sai* and *sa* most frequently appear in free dialogue and conversation.'

Focussing on particular a type of context, then, Bazzanella et al. (2007b) have considered the use of *allora* in different kinds of spoken and written communication; Ziccolella (2007) has studied discourse markers, and especially *senta*, in courtroom interaction (more details in chapter 4). Some attention has also been paid to the phonetic aspect by Ericsson and Abete (2007), who examine functions and phonetic realizations of *hai capito* in Pozzuoli Italian.

We then have a number of studies by Khachaturyan (2001, 2002, 2009, 2010) that approach Italian discourse markers in the framework elaborated by the *Laboratoire de linguistique théorique* of the University Paris-7 (see Paillard 1998), which provides a formalism for the description of discourse markers' meaning. Within this framework, Khachaturyan describes the meaning of the marker *senti* (Khachaturyan 2001, details in chapter 4), of *diciamo* (Khachaturyan 2002), and, in a cross-linguistic perspective, the meaning of *diciamo* compared to that of its French counterpart *disons* (Khachaturyan 2009), and to that of the Russian *tak skazat* (literally 'so to say') (Khachaturyan 2010). The two latter articles incorporate a comparison of the uses of the corresponding verbs, i.e. the Italian verb "dire", French "dire", and Russian "skazat".

Cross-linguistic comparison between parallel forms is also the main interest of studies like that of Bazzanella et al. (2007a) on the Italian *allora* and the French *alors*, and that of Borreguero Zuloaga and López Serena (2011) on *allora* and Spanish *entonces*. We also have the article of Waltereit (2006b, details in chapter 4) on the Italian *guarda*, Spanish *mira*, French *regarde*, and Portuguese *olha* ('look'), which combines the cross-linguistic perspective with a diachronic interest in the markers' development, and the paper of Fagard (2010, details in chapter 4) on *mira*, *olha*, *guarda*, *regarde*, and the Romanian *uite* ('look'), again with a primary interest in their diachronic rise.

Further works lay their main focus on the development of discourse markers. For example, Bazzanella and Cristofoli (1998) have studied the current evolution of *piuttosto che* ('rather than') into a discourse marker with a disjunctive function, observable in some Northern varieties of Italian. Waltereit has worked on the development of *guarda* (Waltereit 2002, details in chapter 4) and *diciamo* (Waltereit 2006a) out of the corresponding verb forms. Starting from an inventory of the markers' present functions as they emerge from corpora of spoken Italian, Waltereit formulates hypotheses about their evolution and proposes a model to describe it. In addition, Waltereit argues against the tenet that the rise of discourse markers represents an instance of grammaticalization.

Finally, some work has been done on discourse markers' use by second language learners, notably by Bini and Pernas (2007) and by Guil et al. (2008), both concerning Spanish-speaking learners of Italian.

3.2. *Deverbal discourse markers in other languages*

Let us now move on to those studies that focus on deverbal discourse markers in different languages.²⁹ In general terms, one can recognize two main types of interest with respect to these kind of markers: on the one hand, there is an interest in their present pragmatic uses, oftentimes with a comparative intent; on the other hand, and predominantly, there is an interest in the pathways of their development out of the corresponding verb forms. It appears that discourse markers deriving from verbs of perception have attracted particular attention, presumably due to their frequency of use and their cross-linguistic presence, as compared to forms originating from verbs related to other cognitive activities (e.g. “think”, “know”, “understand”) and to speaking (“say”).

A synchronic study of deverbal discourse markers with a cross-linguistic interest is that of Romero Trillo (1997), which carries out a comparison of the distribution of Spanish and English markers in two spoken corpora. The Spanish *oye*, *mira*, *escucha* (‘listen’), and *fijate* (‘notice’, ‘pay attention’), and the English *look* and *listen* are compared with respect to their general frequency and their distribution in distinct types of interaction (interviews *vs* spontaneous conversations).

In a qualitative perspective, the study of Pons Bordería (1998b) on the Spanish *oye* and *mira* describes different functions of these two forms, with the aim of distinguishing between those which have a connective value and those which do not. Pons Bordería arrives at the conclusion that *mira* and *oye*, though exhibiting connective functions, have a primarily phatic value; considering the category of connectives in prototypical terms, then, *oye* and *mira* would be included as peripheral members. These observations are inserted in a broader framework in the monograph on *Conexión y conectores* (Pons Bordería 1998a); here, a larger set of markers are assessed for their degree of connectivity based on a careful examination of formal and functional properties that are commonly recognized in the literature as typical of the class of connectives.

Among the strictly synchronic studies, that of Rodríguez Somolinos (2003) builds on the previous work of Dostie (1998, see below) to analyze the meaning of the French marker *écoute*; the study shows two main types of uses of *écoute* sharing a central meaning.

The works of Dostie (1993, 1998, 2004), then, represent a particular perspective. They carry out semantic analyses of French deverbal markers aiming at their representation in dictionaries. In Dostie (1993), the elements *je comprends!* (‘I understand!’) and *penses-tu!* (‘you think!’) are analyzed; a later paper (Dostie 1998) focuses on the items *regarde* and *écoute* (‘listen’). The monograph *Pragmaticalisation et marqueurs discursifs*.

²⁹ As the reader will have noticed, several works among those mentioned in the previous section concern deverbal discourse markers: Manili (1983, 1986, 1988), Khachatryan (2001, 2002), Ziccolella (2007), Waltereit (2002, 2006a), Ericsson and Abete (2007), and, from a cross-linguistic perspective, Khachatryan (2009, 2010), Waltereit (2006b), and Fagard (2010). In this section, I will turn to those works that are not part of Italian research, but instead refer to deverbal markers of other languages. I remind the reader that works concerning specifically *sentì* and *guarda* will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Analyse sémantique et traitement lexicographique (Dostie 2004), then, combines a synchronic and a diachronic view. A large number of markers of Québécois French are studied: *disons*, *tiens*, *regarde*, *écoute*, *dis donc* (literally ‘so say’),³⁰ *voyons* (‘let’s see’), *mettons* (‘let’s put’), *admettons* (‘let’s admit’), and *coudon*, deriving from *écoute donc*. According to a polysemy approach, several meanings are identified for each of them; every marker is analyzed in itself and in comparison with others. At the same time, the markers’ relationship with, and development out of, their source items are investigated using data from previous periods of Québécois French and *français hexagonal*. The markers are subsequently described as dictionary entries, according to a scheme which distinguishes between information about the headword and about the single meanings, and comprises a set of descriptive parameters concerning formal properties such as phonology, morphology, and syntax, and semantic-pragmatic properties such as meaning, function, and realized speech acts.

We then have a large number of studies that concentrate especially on the question of deverbal discourse markers’ development (i.e. their grammaticalization, or pragmaticalization process). Some are essentially synchronic as for the data employed, while others reconstruct the rise of the markers by means of diachronic corpora.

Marín Jordà (2005) studies the Catalan markers *miri* (‘look’), *escolti* (‘listen’), *a veure* (deriving from *anem a veure*, literally ‘let’s go and see’), and *aviam* (deriving from *a veiam/vejam*, ‘let’s see’), in a corpus of political debates from election campaigns. Besides describing their pragmatic functions in that type of interaction, the author underlines the semantic, morphosyntactic, and phonetic differences between the markers and their verbal sources, and relates the formal and functional features of the markers with their degree of grammaticalization.

Van Olmen (2010a), in a paper which I unfortunately only happened to read after having completed my own analysis, examines the present functions and the rise of the English *look* and *listen* and their Dutch counterparts *kijk* and *luister*. Van Olmen compares the four items with respect to their overall frequency of distribution in different types of interaction, based on two corpora of spoken English and Dutch; he also compares the different readings they display, from more literal to pragmatic ones. He then offers an explanation of the differences in frequency, distribution, and available readings of the items as following from the different potential of the verbs “look/kijken” and “listen/luisteren” as attention-getters. He also explains some differences in the use of *look/kijk* and *listen/luister* by the type of perception (visual *vs* auditory) indicated by the verbs. In van Olmen (2010b), the markers *look* and *kijk* are analyzed again with respect to their frequency, distribution, and readings, and their functions are compared with those of the French *regarde*, Italian *guarda*, and Spanish *mira*, as described by other scholars.³¹ The aim is to investigate the rise of these markers out of the verb forms, and a proposal is

³⁰ Recall that I consciously opt for literal translations. Providing pragmatic equivalents is virtually impossible out of context, and would require complex explanations.

³¹ I have mentioned this paper here, and not in the previous section, because it is only marginally concerned with the Italian form. In fact, van Olmen uses, for *guarda*, data from Waltereit (2002).

made to explain the process. Van Olmen also expresses his position with respect to the question whether discourse markers' recruitment is a case of grammaticalization: in his view, both positive and negative positions are essentially ideological and not informative about the markers' evolution.

We then find some works that are strictly based on diachronic data. This is the case of Brinton's (2001) study of *look*-forms, namely of (*now*) *look (here)*, *look you*, *lookee*, *lookahere*, and *lookit*. Based on corpora from Middle to Modern English, Brinton reconstructs the pathway of morphosyntactic development from the free collocation "*look that/how* + subordinate clause", to the morphologically fixed, unverbated, extrasentential forms (*now*) *look (here)*, *look you*, *lookee*, *lookahere*, and, similarly, from "*look to* + NP", through the formula *look to it/that*, to the marker *lookit*. Brinton also compares the process observed for the *look*-forms with the one undergone by other sensory verbs that have given rise to discourse markers (*see*, *listen*, *hear*, and *hark*). Finally, she turns to the question of grammaticalization to argue that *look*-forms indeed manifest most features of grammaticalized elements, though not all of them.

Company Company (2006) addresses the question of the diachronic development with reference to a set of Mexican Spanish deverbal markers: *sepa!*, *dizque*, *dale! ándale!*, and *tate!*.³² The author is interested in the syntactic aspects of their subjectification process, i.e. the process by which "the speaker's appraisals, points of view and attitudes about the event (subjective meaning) and his/her interaction, social or affective distance-proximity with regard to the hearer (intersubjective meaning) may find explicit codification in grammar" (Company Company 2006: 98). Using evidence from a diachronic corpus, the author outlines a change from an initial stage of syntactic integration as verb forms to syntactic isolation as markers.

³² The translation of these items is especially complex due to their high degree of pragmaticalization. For a very brief explanation: *sepa!* corresponds to the third person singular of the subjunctive of "saber" ('to know') and is described as a marker of unknowing and uninvolvedness; *dizque* derives from "diz que" (third person singular of the indicative of "decir" ('say') and the conjunction "que" ('that')), and it is a marker of evidentiality; *dale!* derives from "dar" ('to give') and the pronoun "le" (third person singular, dative), and it is a marker of annoyance; *ándale!* originates from "andar" ('to go', 'to walk') and the same pronoun "le", and it is a marker of exhortation and confirmation; *tate!* comes from "estate", i.e. the second person singular of the imperative of "estar" ('to be') with the second person reflexive pronoun "te", and it marks unexpectedness (see Company Company 2006: 104ff.).

4. *Senti* and *guarda*: a state of the art

In this section I would like to give a somewhat extended survey of the mentions of *senti* and *guarda* found in the existing literature, in order to provide as complete a picture as possible of what we already know about these two items.

Senti and *guarda* are currently mentioned in works concerning the whole inventory of Italian discourse markers as examples for certain categories or for certain functions and properties. Only a few studies are specifically devoted to them: the articles of Khachatryan (2002) and Ziccolella (2007) on *senti*, that of Waltereit (2002) on *guarda*, and, though not concerning these two items exclusively, Manili's (1983) study of *vedi*, *senti* and *guarda*, Waltereit's (2006b) paper on *guarda*, *mira*, *regarde*, and *olha*, and Fagard's (2010) on *mira*, *olha*, *guarda*, *regarde*, and *uite*. I will start with the mentions that appear in works on Italian discourse markers in general, and then come to the studies that concern more specifically *senti* and *guarda*.

In Stammerjohann's article *Elementi di articolazione dell'italiano parlato* (1977) there is an early mention of the marker *senti*. Stammerjohann classifies discourse markers from a corpus of spoken Florence Italian, following the taxonomy of Gülich (1970). He orders them in the categories of opening signals (divided between those used in dialogues and in those used in tales), correction signals, and closing signals (divided between statements and questions). Furthermore, he adds a hierarchical ordering of opening signals based on the type of units they introduce: he distinguishes between those which open up a whole conversation or tale, and those which open only a part of it. *Senti* is mentioned among the opening signals used in dialogues and it is assigned the highest hierarchical position in this category because it most often opens a whole contribution. The author observes that signals of this type are often followed by a pause, which has the effect of detaching them from the co-text and thereby expanding their scope over a larger unit of talk (Stammerjohann 1977: 114f.). Furthermore, as is the case for most opening signals, *senti* is used at the beginning of reported speech (Stammerjohann 1977: 116).

Lichem (1981) mentions both *senti* and *guarda* in an article that presents an overview of Italian discourse markers based on a corpus of radio interviews. Though inspired by Gülich (1970) and Stammerjohann (1977), Lichem develops a slightly different taxonomy, featuring opening signals (in tales and in dialogues), resumption signals, closing signals, hearer's signals, and hesitation phenomena. *Senti*, *guarda*, and the compound signal *ma guarda* are found among the opening signals introducing the speaker's talk (Lichem 1981: 71); moreover, *senti*, *ma guarda*, and *e senti* ('and listen') appear in the subcategory of opening signals introducing a topic change (Lichem 1981: 72). *Guarda* is also classified as a hesitation phenomenon (Lichem 1981: 78).

The two markers are also mentioned in Mara's (1986) taxonomy of Italian discourse markers. Mara posits three overarching categories, namely speaker's signals, hearer's signals, and turn-taking signals. The first contains the subcategory of dialogic-

strategic signals, characterized by interactive functions. *Senti* and *guarda* are placed in this subcategory, more exactly in the sub-group of preposed dialogic elements, which are used to create the conditions for the reception of a communicative act and to attract the interlocutor's attention and expectations (Mara 1986: 186). Mara furthermore notes, unfortunately only in a brief footnote, that *guarda* can only be found in reactive moves (Mara 1986: 189).

In Schwarze's (1988) Italian grammar book *Grammatik der italienischen Sprache* both *senti* and *guarda* are listed among the "phatische Routineformeln" ('phatic routine formulas'), i.e. fixed pragmatic expressions which control the communicative contact, and they are provided with brief explanations. According to these, *senti* indicates that the speaker wants to say something, whereas *guarda* announces an argumentatively important statement and invites the addressee to take it seriously. Schwarze adds that the statement to be introduced with *guarda* can also form a subordinate clause and be introduced by the conjunction *che*. The author thus seems to consider the structure *guarda che* followed by a subordinate clause as pragmatically equivalent to the syntactically independent *guarda* (Schwarze 1988: 356).

The two markers are also mentioned by Koch and Oesterreicher (2011) in their monograph on spoken romance languages, as examples of "Gesprächswörter" ('conversation words'). In particular, they appear in the group of "Gliederungssignale" ('structuring signals'), as opening elements used in dialogic discourses, as well as in the group of "Kontaktsignale" ('contact signals'), as devices employed by speakers to create and keep the contact with the interlocutors (Koch/Oesterreicher 2011, 46ff.). Beyond the classification given, the authors repeatedly stress that one element can fulfil different functions; for instance, structuring signals can also function as turn-taking and contact devices, hesitation phenomena, and even as modalizers (Koch/Oesterreicher 2011: 46ff.).

Several statements about the two markers are found in the works of Bazzanella. The main function that the author generally attributes to them is that of attention-getting; in addition, further aspects are pointed out in the different studies. According to Bazzanella's article on "phatic connectives" (1990), *senti* is mostly used at the beginning of an utterance with the function of an attention-getter, and sometimes as an interrupting device; it can also occur in the middle of the utterance as a signal for topic change (Bazzanella 1990: 634). The function of calling for and keeping attention is taken to be the main function of *senti*; its frequent use in phone calls, where the participants have no visual contact, is taken as a proof of this (Bazzanella 1990: 637). *Guarda* is also classified as an attention-getter when it is produced by the current speaker in utterance-initial or medial position; in contrast, when it is uttered by the interlocutor with rising-falling intonation, often after the marker *ma*, it is said to express "surprise and partial disappointment" (Bazzanella 1990: 639), a description which probably refers to the interjectional use of the form *guarda*. In a study of interruptions, the author furthermore mentions *guarda* as a device used to weaken the aggressive character of an interruption (Bazzanella 1991: 288). The attention-getting function of *senti* is described again in Bazzanella's study of discourse markers in classroom interaction (1994b), where this

element is found to occur particularly often before the teachers' questions (Bazzanella 1994b: 241). The use of *senti* before questions is also observed in Bazzanella's (1994a) monograph *Le facce del parlare*, together with a turn-taking and an attention-getting function. Here we also find the variant *senti un po'* (literally 'listen a bit'), which is considered to be more colloquial and less self-asserting (Bazzanella 1994a: 153).

In the chapter about discourse markers of the *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione* (Renzi et al. 1995), in which Bazzanella gives a definition of the category and suggests a classification system, the marker *senti* is mentioned among the attention-getting devices, which can also be used to interrupt the current speaker and to shift the attention to a new topic; it also appears among the metatextual markers, which mark the relations between topics and the organisation of discourse in an opening, a continuing, and a closing part, and can signal a change in topic or a digression (Bazzanella 1995: 246f.). The form *senti un po'* is described here as highlighting the solidarity between the participants (Bazzanella 1995: 235f.). *Guarda* is also considered to be an attention-getter (Bazzanella 1995: 235f.); in addition, the author states – as an example of the role of position and prosody for the interpretation of discourse markers – that in utterance-initial position with rising intonation *guarda* primarily calls attention, thereby establishing shared understanding, while in final position with falling intonation it strengthens the utterance and underlines the speaker's conviction (Bazzanella 1995: 230).

Both *guarda* and *senti (un po')* are again described as attention-getters in a study that analyzes the use of discourse markers in spoken and written texts (Bazzanella 2001a). More precisely, *senti* and *guarda* call the addressee's attention – both in spoken and in written discourse – on some aspect of the situation that is specific, neglected, unknown, or that can be surprising (Bazzanella 2001a: 90f.). Bazzanella (2006b: 149) also points out that *guarda* can additionally function as a turn-taking device and a modalizer.³³

Guarda is one of the objects of Fagard's (2010) study on discourse markers derived from imperatives in Romance, together with the Spanish and Catalan *mira*, Portuguese *olha*, French *regarde*, and Romanian *uite*. On the basis of information available in the literature, compared with and completed by data from a corpus study (for *guarda*, Fagard uses the corpus *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano parlato* by De Mauro et al. (1993)), the author describes the pragmatic functions of these forms; he then checks their characteristics against the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic criteria of grammaticalization, to conclude that their rise is indeed a case of grammaticalization, though an atypical one. Fagard also notices that the French *regarde* has fewer pragmatic functions than its counterparts, and discusses possible causes for its lesser degree of grammaticalization. Then, based on diachronic data about *regarde*, *mira*, and *guarda*, Fagard argues that these items have followed a "cline" going from propositional readings, through textual and expressive, to intersubjective ones. The functions thereby attributed to the present-day discourse marker *guarda* are: introduction of a topic or subtopic, turn-taking and interruption, hesitation, introduction of reported speech, and what is called the

³³ Unfortunately, the author does not further explain what exactly *guarda* does as a modalizer.

“evaluative use”. Regarding the latter, Fagard explains that the markers under consideration convey attitudes such as surprise, disapproval, and admiration, or emphasize what the speaker says. This use seems more complex than the others and its definition is actually not completely clear to me. The expression of surprise, disapproval, and admiration is typical of the interjectional reading of *guarda*, in which this form builds a pragmatically autonomous utterance. Fagard makes reference to Waltereit’s (2002: 992) statement that *guarda* conveys admiration, a statement which refers, in Waltereit’s paper, precisely to the interjectional reading (for Waltereit’s (2002) analysis see below). However, the example given by Fagard to illustrate the evaluative use is, in my view, not an instance of the interjectional reading, but instead an instance of the discourse-marking use *stricto sensu*: “Claudia non potrei mai guarda fare del sesso con te” (‘Claudia I could never look have sex with you’) (Fagard 2010: 251, original translation). According to Fagard, this *guarda* conveys emphasis, with which I certainly agree; however, this use is not on a par with the interjectional one expressing surprise, admiration, or disapproval. So, the evaluative use seems to comprise different pragmatic functions in Fagard’s systematics.

Let me now move to Manili’s (1983) study on *vedi*, *sentì*, and *guarda*. The study contains a list of discourse-marking, but also literal and more or less routinized uses of the forms in question³⁴, based on a corpus of novels and dramas from the 1910s to the 1970s, and newspapers from 1980. Different readings are ordered according to morphological and syntagmatic features. I will restrict myself here to the discourse-marking readings, which are relevant for the present work. For *sentì*, the following functions are described: *sentì* is employed to get the interlocutor’s attention and to reinforce the speaker-hearer contact, to open a turn (thus marking speaker change), introduce a new topic, gain time for formulation, and interrupt the partner. When it is followed by an imperative, it also invites the interlocutor to accomplish an action. The chain *dunque sentì* can also create expectation and involve the partner emotionally, or express an invitation to state an opinion; *ma sentì* and *be’ sentì* (where *be’* comes from *bene*, ‘well’) can indicate hesitation before expressing a doubt. Finally, *sentì un po’* is described as softening the impact of a question or a request and signaling reticence before an unpleasant question (Manili 1983: 51ff.). With respect to the marker *guarda*, Manili lists several functions: attention-getting, emphasizing the utterance, expressing disagreement, gaining time and indicating reticence, mitigating an unpleasant or embarrassing message, marking the re-opening of an explanation, and expressing the speaker’s involvement (Manili 1983: 75ff.).

Many of these functions are found again in the later article on *vedi*, *sai*, *sentì*, and *guarda* (Manili 1986), with a few additions: *guarda* is attributed the functions of opening, signaling a change in the topic or a shift to a completely new one, and closing an

³⁴ These include the interjectional uses of *sentì* and *guarda* (also in chains like *oh sentì!* and *guarda un po’*), syntactically integrated, routinized uses like “guarda che prenderai un raffreddore!” (‘be careful, you will get a cold!’) (Manili 1983: 77), as well as the forms “sentilo”/“sentitelo” (‘listen to him/it’). Finally, some uses are mentioned which are clearly literal, for instance “Non sentì? Piove” (‘Don’t you hear? It’s raining’) (Manili 1983: 62) and “Guardate: una coccinella. E’ di buon augurio” (‘Look, a ladybug. It brings luck’) (Manili 1983: 74).

utterance. Moreover, both *senti* and *guarda* are said to be pragmatically necessary when the speaker radically disagrees with the interlocutor (Manili 1986: 169). The role of the markers in this kind of context is not further explained, but one can assume a mitigating effect.

We now come to the studies that are specifically devoted to *senti* and *guarda*. Stefania Ziccolella (2007) studies discourse markers in courtroom interaction, focussing in particular on *senta* (the polite form *senta* is obviously more common than *senti* in courtroom interaction). The paper contains some remarks on the items *e*, *va bene*, *allora*, *ma*, *però* ('however', 'but'), and *quindi* ('so', 'hence'), but it is almost entirely dedicated to *senta*. Ziccolella observes *senta* in its sequential position, that is, with respect both to the following turn and to the preceding ones. Her analysis reveals that *senta* is used to call for attention, underline a change of addressee, change the topic, and to accomplish a number of tasks concerning the shift between different aspects of one topic: the "referent-shift" (to a new aspect of a topic), the shift from a specific to a more general aspect, the shift from a subject/agent to another, and the shift from an object/patient to another.³⁵ Ziccolella underlines that turn-initial discourse markers are able to indicate the connection of a question with the answer just preceding it as well as with the previous question; *senta*, in particular, shows the speaker's control over topics and referents. The relations between questions and answers, and between one question and another, reveal the line of questioning followed by the judge.

Elizaveta Khachaturyan (2001) presents an analysis of *senti* based on a corpus of novels and the spoken corpus *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* (De Mauro et al. 1993). The study starts from the assumption that the meaning of discourse markers is derived from constant semantic components which undergo different realisations in context (Khachaturyan 2001: 128). According to the approach of the *Laboratoire de linguistique théorique* of the University Paris-7 (Paillard 1998), all markers are described by the formula "X R Y", where *R* represents the marker, called "mot-relateur" ('relating word'), and *X* and *Y* are the elements connected; more precisely, *Y* is the marker's scope. In the case of *senti*, the formula takes the form "Z *senti* p", in which *Z* represents a state of affairs, and *p* an utterance describing *Z* (Khachaturyan 2001: 129f.). Utterance *p* contains new information that cannot be deduced from the context; this determines the frequent use of *senti* at the beginning of a discourse or at a topic change. In such contexts, *senti* preserves discourse coherence; without it, *p* would be too sudden. It is observed that *senti* differs from *guarda* in this respect: the latter always introduces information which is connected to the preceding context (Khachaturyan 2001: 130f.). The interlocutor to whom *senti* is directed reacts to *p* and takes the new information into consideration. For this reason, *senti* always refers to utterances that imply a reaction from the interlocutor, such as demands, questions, and subjective judgements. With *senti*, the speaker assigns the interlocutor a certain role:

³⁵ For example: in one question, the judge asks the accused what part of the victim's body she aimed at (the object/patient of the action is the head of the victim). In the next question, the judge asks where the accused threw the gun afterwards (the object/patient is now the gun).

- The interlocutor is sympathetic and the speaker wants to establish a friendly relationship with her.³⁶ As a consequence, *senti* often introduces utterances containing some negative element and signals that the speaker is forced to utter them; it cannot introduce any positive contents
- The interlocutor has the competence to perform the requested action
- The speaker thinks that the interlocutor needs the information conveyed by *p*
- The speaker wishes for a positive reaction to *p* (Khachaturyan 2001: 131ff.).

Since *senti* is described by the formula “Z *senti* p”, the features of Z and the type of relation holding between Z and *p* define the meaning of the marker, called “scenario generale” (‘general setting’). The general setting is described as follows:³⁷

“*Senti p* significa che il locutore introduce una sequenza *p* per descrivere uno stato di cose Z. Il locutore è sicuro che la sequenza *p* sarà accettata dall’interlocutore. L’accettazione di *p* è predefinita dall’esistenza di un’altra sequenza *q* che descrive lo stesso stato di cose Z e adduce motivi alla realizzazione di *p*.” (Khachaturyan 2001: 134)

‘*Senti p* means that the speaker introduces a sequence *p* to describe the state of affairs Z. The speaker is sure that sequence *p* will be accepted by the interlocutor. The acceptance of *p* is determined by the existence of another sequence, *q*, which describes the same state of affairs Z and provides reasons for the realisation of *p*.’

Depending on the realisation of *p* and *q*, this meaning is subject to three contextual variations. In the first case, the presence of *p* presupposes the existence of *q*. For example:

(11)

Pronto Ludmilla... – Pronto. // La tua voce si fa calda, suadente, incalzante: – **Senta**, Ludmilla, io devo vederla, dobbiamo parlare di questa cosa, di queste circostanze, coincidenze, discordanze.

Hello, Ludmilla... – Hello? // Your voice becomes warm, persuasive, insistent: – **Senta**, Ludmilla, I have to see you, we must speak about this thing, about these circumstances, coincidences, discordances.

(Khachaturyan 2001: 135, emphasis in the original)

Here, sequence *p* (underlined), which describes the situation Z, presupposes the existence of *q*, an element which is related to Z and encourages the speaker to say *p*. *Senti* recalls the element *q*. In the second case, *q* is present in the context and justifies the introduction and acceptance of *p*. *Senti* reinforces the relation between *p* and *q*:

³⁶ When talking in general terms about individuals who might be female or male, I will follow the currently widespread practice of using the female pronoun only, as to avoid specifying the alternative “him or her”.

³⁷ For a discussion of the position of my own study with respect to these results, the reader is referred to chapter 7, subsection 7.1.7.

(12)

“Non è malattia di corpo, Taniné, ma d’animo. **Senti**, mi vado a corcare ch’è meglio”
 “It’s not a physical disease, Taniné, it’s a disease of the mind. **Senti**, I will go and lie down, that’s better”

(Khachaturyan 2001: 136, emphasis in the original)

Here, *q* (underlined) is the description of the disease, and the sequence *p*, which follows *senti*, is a continuation of *q*. In the third case, *p* continues *q*, but it contains unexpected information:

(13)

Io respiro forte e sparo di botto: Jean-Claude, io ho un amante, parto con lui. /.../ Lui dice: vabbe’, ho capito, vuoi andarci da sola. **Senti**, per questa sera ho invitato un paio di persone a cena, eh, spero che tu abbia fatto la spesa al mercato biologico stamattina...
 I breathe in deeply and burst out: Jean-Claude, I have a lover, I’m leaving with him. /.../ He says: okay, I see, you want to go there alone. **Senti**, I have invited some people for dinner tonight, I hope you went shopping at the organic market this morning...

(Khachaturyan 2001: 136, emphasis in the original)

The sequence *q* (underlined) is a reaction to the news. *Senti p* indicates that *p*, which is a reaction to the same news, is expected as a continuation of *q*, but the information it contains is new and sudden.

Let us now turn to the analyses of the marker *guarda*. Richard Waltereit (2002) studies *guarda* with particular regard to the recruitment of the corresponding verb form as a discourse marker and the evolution of its various pragmatic functions. Before discussing the diachronic development, Waltereit gives an overview of the present functions of the marker, based on 336 tokens of the form *guarda* from the corpus of De Mauro et al. (1993). The functions are listed together with the respective contexts of occurrence as follows:³⁸

- Turn-final: *guarda* highlights the contribution
- Turn-initial at a non-transition-relevance place: *guarda* serves to interrupt and to call the others’ attention to one’s own idea
- Turn-medial, at topic shift: introducing a new topic
- Introducing reported speech: *guarda* is a part of the quote. Since quotations introduce a new point of view, they frequently also constitute a topic shift; *guarda* is used to underline this.
- Turn-medial as a hesitation phenomenon
- Turn-initial after a transition-relevance place: *guarda* introduces a new aspect of the topic and calls for the interlocutor’s attention. This function is illustrated by an example in which the form *guarda* is part of the structure *guarda che* + subordinate clause.

³⁸ The position of my own work with respect to these results will be expressed in chapter 7, section 7.2..

- As a turn itself: *guarda* is a phatic marker expressing admiration and surprise towards something that is presented to the speaker. According to the concept of discourse markers I adopt, this use of *guarda* is interjectional (Waltereit 2002: 990ff.).

It is then argued that the marker originated from the use of the imperative *guarda* in order to interrupt the current speaker, and further functions subsequently developed out of this. *Guarda* indicates that the speaker has seen something that the other participants have not noticed, and thus allows her to take the floor before the other has stopped talking. This has led to the use of the form *guarda* for floor-seeking, independently from whether or not one has anything to show, and, ultimately, to the reanalysis of the verb form into a discourse marker for self-selection (Waltereit 2002: 998ff.). The imperative use furthermore yields a range of conversational side-effects (speaker change, floor-taking, gaining of time, topic shift, and the highlighting of the ensuing part of the discourse as particularly important), which thus gave rise to its other pragmatic functions (Waltereit 2002: 1001f.). Waltereit concludes the study with theoretical considerations on the question of whether the rise of discourse markers can be seen as grammaticalization. He argues that, according to the features of grammaticalization stated by Lehmann (1985), the process undergone by discourse markers is not an instance of grammaticalization.

Parts of this analysis are resumed in Waltereit's (2006b) paper on the Italian *guarda*, French *regarde*, Spanish *mira*, and Portuguese *olha*. The purpose of the paper is to support the view of these discourse markers as polysemous – as opposed to monosemous – drawing on a comparison between them. Waltereit compares the functions of the four items as described in his previous work on *guarda* and in studies from other scholars. *Guarda* is attributed the roles of an attention-getter (both preposed and postposed), a device for focus shift, and a hesitation phenomenon; in addition, a back-channel function is mentioned (Waltereit 2006b: 143f.). The latter function is not illustrated by any Italian example,³⁹ but it could correspond to the interjectional *guarda* mentioned in Waltereit (2002). Over and above the description of the functions, Waltereit's aim is to point out that the functional spectra of the four markers do not coincide, which in his view contradicts the assumption of a single core meaning. In fact, one would expect such a meaning to be the same in all languages, due to the common lexical source. Consequently, he argues that the items possess more than one meaning each, which have developed through time; that is, the items are polysemous. He finally proposes to explain this semantic change in terms of a conventionalization of the implicatures attached to the verb form, which have crystallized into different meanings (see also Waltereit 2002 above).

To conclude this chapter, let me briefly sum up what functions have been attributed to our two discourse markers up to now. For *senti*, the various descriptions available can be systematized as follows:

- getting or keeping attention, creating or keeping contact
- turn-taking, turn-opening, indicating the beginning of a contribution

³⁹ The function is illustrated by a Spanish example containing *mira*.

- interrupting
- changing the addressee
- hesitation
- changing to a different topic or aspect of a topic
- opening reported speech
- marking the organization of discourse
- preserving discourse coherence
- creating expectation and emotionally involving the addressee
- when followed by an imperative, inviting the addressee to accomplish an action
- indicating certainty about the acceptance of the utterance as being motivated by some other sequence (verbalized or not)
- softening the impact of unpleasant utterances
- softening the impact of a question or request
- used in cases of disagreement

As far as *guarda* is concerned, the following functions are found:

- getting or keeping attention, creating or keeping contact
- turn-taking, turn-opening
- closing an utterance
- interrupting
- hesitation
- changing to a different topic or aspect of a topic
- opening reported speech
- announcing an argumentatively important statement and inviting the addressee to take it seriously
- strengthening an utterance and underlining the speaker's conviction
- emphasizing an utterance
- modalization
- weakening the aggressive character of an interruption
- softening the impact of unpleasant utterances
- used in cases of disagreement
- expressing disagreement
- expressing surprise, disappointment, disapproval, or admiration (probably referring to the interjectional use)

5. Aims of the present study

The present work intends to carry out a parallel analysis of the discourse markers *senti* and *guarda* with the aim to give an in-depth, synchronic functional description of these two items and allow for a comparison between them. By “parallel analysis”, I mean that the items will be subject to the same analytical procedure, based on a fixed set of clearly defined criteria. This work is thus meant to contribute, on the one hand, to that area of studies within Italian discourse markers research which are concerned with the in-depth analysis of single items. On the other hand, it aims to provide a basis for comparative analyses of different elements.

In spite of their frequent mention in works on Italian markers and their pervasive use in spoken language, only very few studies have been specifically concerned with *senti* and *guarda* up to now, as was shown in the previous chapter. At the same time, the various mentions describe a range of most disparate functions, from attention-getting to the expression of disagreement, and they show that the two markers have – correspondingly – a bearing on multiple levels of the interaction, such as the allocation of turns, the organization of topics, and the management of the participants’ attention. While this is well compatible with the notorious multifunctionality of discourse markers, the question arises of whether such heterogeneous functions can be given some unified account, and how they may be connected to each other. Collecting a wide spectrum of possible contextual functions, though mirroring the variety of effects a marker can produce, does not really contribute to understanding the workings of the element itself and the ways in which its manifold effects arise.

What can help in disentangling this multifunctionality is searching for a possibly limited number of basic functions, or even a single core function that can subsume the different contextual effects. The analysis to be conducted in the present thesis will strive to do this: to detect a basic function for each marker, which should enable us to make sense of its various contextual functions in a unified way. This will be done by examining, in the corpus data, how the tokens of the markers affect different aspects of the conversations in which they occur. I will systematically analyze the relation of each token with different aspects or components of the conversation (such as the turns-at-talk, sequence organization, and topic structure; see chapter 6), according to a rigorously defined list of criteria.

This analysis will at the same time make it possible to compare *senti* and *guarda* by contrasting their behaviour with respect to the different aspects of conversation considered. While there are several works that compare the functions of Italian discourse markers with those of equivalent forms in other languages, often with the goal of tracing a common line of development, there has been a surprising lack of interest in contrasting two Italian markers with each other. This does not seem uninteresting, though, especially for two items like *senti* and *guarda* which display formal similarity, but no functional

equivalence. According to the descriptions found in the literature, *sentì* and *guarda* appear to have several functions in common: both are classified as hesitation phenomena, attention-getters, turn-opening signals, interrupting devices, and as markers of topic change. However, they are certainly not equivalent, as is also noticed by Khachaturyan (2001: 127) in her article on *sentì*. This is well visible if one compares, for example, (14a) and (14b):

(14a)

A: Sono Mauro Bianchi. Vorrei parlare con la signora Rossi.
This is Mauro Bianchi speaking. I would like to speak to Mrs Rossi.
 B: **Guardi**, la signora non è in casa. Se vuole chiamare più tardi.
Guardi, Mrs Rossi is not here. Would you please call later?
 (Bazzanella 1995: 236, emphasis added)

(14b)

A: Sono Mauro Bianchi. Vorrei parlare con la signora Rossi.
This is Mauro Bianchi speaking. I would like to speak to Mrs Rossi.
 B: **Senta**, la signora non è in casa. Se vuole chiamare più tardi.
Senta, Mrs Rossi is not here. Would you please call later?

Speaker B is showing two different attitudes in the two versions of the exchange: in (14a) she is more kind than in (14b), where she sounds somewhat irritated. Both *sentì* and *guarda* open the turn, but they have further consequences on the understanding of the utterance. While apparently playing similar roles, *sentì* and *guarda* manifest discrepancies that cannot be explained by means of the functions we already know. It is, then, necessary to analyze them in greater detail, both individually and in comparison with one another.

The intent of reducing the multiple functions of markers to general subjacent meanings, the idea of applying a unified analytical procedure to distinct items, and the interest in comparing them get fundamental impulse from a number of studies that have been done on discourse markers of different languages. Important inspiration comes from the work of Fischer (2000) on English and German discourse markers (“discourse particles”, in her terminology), and on the marker *okay* in Fischer (2006b). Fischer suggests that every marker encodes one core meaning, which interacts with contextual factors to yield different functional interpretations. She elaborates a model of markers’ multifunctionality, consisting of three components: the invariant meaning, “communicative background frames”, and “constructions”. The meaning of a marker is interpreted by reference to “communicative domains”, i.e. aspects of the communicative process and situation which are relevant for the speakers, such as perception, understanding, speech management, and topic structure. The domains that are relevant in a given situation are described in “communicative background frames” (Fischer 2006b: 442). The functional interpretation of a particle is also connected with its structural position; this connection is represented in “constructions”, i.e. form-meaning pairs which describe, on the formal side, the structural context in which a particle can occur (its

position in the turn and the utterance, its intonation contour), and, on the functional side, their reference to certain communicative domains and the corresponding functions fulfilled (Fischer 2006b: 443).

An essential impulse also comes from the work of Travis (2005) on Colombian Spanish discourse markers (*bueno*, *entonces* ('then'), *pues* ('since', 'then'), and *o sea* (literally 'or be it')). Travis detects different discursive functions of these markers in a corpus of spoken data; then, she formulates for each of them a small number of mutually-related meanings which share a semantic core. This core meaning is, in turn, examined for its relationship with the meaning of the source item from which the marker has originated. Thereby, it is stressed that the multiple functions of a marker do not necessarily correspond to multiple meanings, but multifunctionality can be found to rely on a central meaning component. The markers' meanings, constituting the source of their various pragmatic functions, are given a unified representation in the framework of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (see Wierzbicka 1996).

I am substantially influenced, moreover, by Hansen's (1998) analysis of French discourse markers (*bon* ('good'), *ben*, *eh bien*, *donc*, and *alors*). As an analytical procedure, Hansen defines a set of contextual factors to be considered in the examination of the corpus data. These contextual factors include global factors (the kind of discourse and the goals of the interaction), local factors (the sequential environment of the relevant utterances and the presence of metadiscursive utterances), and micro-level factors such as the information structure of host units, the presence of certain syntactic structures (e.g. left dislocations), pauses, and stress.

I am furthermore influenced by the work of Dostie (2004) on Québécois French deverbial markers (see chapter 3, section 3.2). In Dostie's study, every item is not only analyzed individually – both synchronically and diachronically – to find out what meanings it carries, but also compared with one to four other items which display functional vicinity, what the author terms the "mise en parallèle" – the drawing of a parallel – between markers. The comparison helps in defining and highlighting specific properties of each of the items under study.

Turning now again to the present work, concrete goals to be pursued here will be:

- to analyze *sentì* and *guarda* according to a coherent procedure, following clearly defined criteria that account for several aspects of conversation
- to arrive, by means of such analysis, at a unified account of the various functions of each marker, and
- to carry out, drawing on the same analysis, a comparison between the two markers' behaviour with respect to different aspects of conversation

Over and above the contribution to the understanding of *sentì* and *guarda* in particular, by developing a "parallel" analysis of the two markers, this thesis will elaborate analytical procedures and categories which are apt to be applied to different items and can therefore become useful for the in-depth investigation of further markers and for cross-linguistic studies. In contrast to a major trend in research on deverbial markers, I will not strive to trace back the rise of *sentì* and *guarda* out of the verb forms. I believe that it might be

useful to first provide a detailed description of the markers' present-day functioning, which can in turn form a solid basis for the formulation of hypotheses about their development, to be tested on diachronic data. The methodological tools presented can, in this sense, also be employed to study previous stages of discourse markers' usage and facilitate the comparison with the present use.

6. Data and method

6.1. Data

The present study is based on two corpora: the Italian sub-corpus of the C-ORAL-ROM (Cresti/Moneglia 2005) and a corpus collected by myself.⁴⁰

The C-ORAL-ROM is constituted by four parallel corpora of spoken French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and it was created with the goal of providing comparable corpora for the main Romance languages. The Italian sub-corpus is taken from the LABLITA corpus, which has been collected starting from the 1970s and is kept by the Linguistics Laboratory of the Italian Department at the University of Florence (see Cresti/Panunzi/Scarano 2005: 75). The data are divided into formal and informal speech. Formal speech data consists of conversations from the media (e.g. talk-shows), from natural contexts (e.g. courtroom interaction), as well as telephone conversations, which include private conversations and human-machine interactions. Informal speech includes interactions from private environments, for example from get-togethers among friends, and from public settings like shops and bars. Both the data for private informal speech and for public informal speech are subdivided into monologues, dialogues, and multi-party conversations. The whole Italian sub-corpus has a total duration of ca. 36.5 hours.

The transcriptions of the C-ORAL-ROM are orthographic and based on the CHAT transcription system (MacWhinney 2000), but they integrate a prosodic annotation in tone units. Speech is segmented into utterances, which are defined as “the linguistic counterpart of speech acts” (Moneglia 2005: 15) and identified by means of prosodic breaks. Terminal breaks (represented in the transcripts by the symbol “//”) mark the end of an utterance, i.e. of a tone unit that corresponds from a pragmatic point of view to an autonomous speech act; non-terminal breaks (symbol “/”) mark the end of tone units that do not build speech acts in themselves and are therefore not independent utterances (Moneglia 2005: 15ff.).

My own corpus consists of recordings of private, informal conversations and interviews from television talk-shows, for a total duration of 5 hours and 45 minutes. The corpus was first collected as a pilot corpus, but due to the amount of interesting data contained in it, it has also been employed in the main analysis. Notwithstanding the limited size of the corpus, which did not allow for representativity, I strived to include different types of interaction in order to favour the occurrence of as many different uses of the relevant discourse markers as possible.

⁴⁰ In what follows, the examples quoted from the C-ORAL-ROM corpus will be marked with the name C-ORAL-ROM and the name of the file from which they are taken (e.g. “C-ORAL-ROM, ifamd101”); those from my own corpus will be marked with the name of the respective alignment file (e.g. “PC1”).

The three private conversations contained in this corpus have a total duration of 3 hr 7 min, and they took place at Bielefeld University among Italian undergraduate and graduate students who were in Germany for a study stay. Some of the speakers had already known each other for some weeks or months at the time of the recording, whereas others met for the first or second time. Consequently, the data include both familiar conversations between friends, and informal, but not intimate conversations between fellow students who do not know each other well. For ethical reasons, I decided not to hide the digital recorders, so it was necessary to take into account that their presence could influence the speakers. In order to help the speakers overcome possible difficulties related to the recording, I decided to open each of the recording meetings by a short game, namely the organization of a fictional trip, for which information materials (about flights, hotels, and leisure activities) were provided. Although this inevitably characterized the first part of the recordings as non-spontaneous, in the sense that the topic and aim of the interaction were arranged, it indeed helped the speakers “break the ice” and allowed for the conversation to continue spontaneously and touch on a diversity of topics. Depending on the degree of mutual acquaintance, speakers engaged in informal but not familiar, up to very intimate conversations, with topics ranging from the participants’ subject of study to very personal issues like current problems in a relationship. The occurrence of such personal topics shows that the participants’ attention to the recorders did – as was hoped – decrease and let spontaneous conversation take place.

The second group of recordings consists of interviews from television talk-shows, with a total duration of 2 hr 38 min. The interviews took place in the shows *Le Invasioni Barbariche* and *Parla con me* and are available on the websites of the respective channels La7 and Rai 3.⁴¹ Actors, singers, and journalists are interviewed by the respective talk-show hosts about their professional and private lives. I intentionally chose talk-shows characterized by an informal atmosphere, where the hosts do not restrict their contributions to questions, but engage in discussions with the interviewees, and the turn-taking is not strictly ruled by the interviewer, but relatively free. The markers *sentì* and *guarda* are always directed to an interlocutor (see the considerations on their inflection in chapter 2, section 2.4), so it seemed advisable to choose interviews with a high degree of interactivity between speakers, where the markers are more likely to be used.

All interactions – both private conversations and talk-show interviews – have two to three participants each. The whole corpus features a total of 18 speakers, all native speakers of Italian, aged between 21 and 56, and coming from seven Italian regions: Emilia-Romagna, Friuli, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, Piedmont, and Apulia.⁴²

⁴¹ Web addresses (last accessed on 31st January 2011):

www.la7.it/invasionibarbariche/video.php?page=3&cat=0 and

www.rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-55f7c8ba-04d4-4c00-98bf-334d42d7d0a5.html#p=0.

⁴² Age and home region of the speakers in the talk-show interviews are found in publicly available sources.

The parts of the recordings relevant for the analysis have been transcribed⁴³ according to the conventions of GAT 2 (Selting et al. 2009). This transcription system appears well suited for the present study as it provides for a clear representation of phenomena that are of great relevance for the purposes of the analysis. Overlap between speakers can be rendered precisely, which is fundamental for the study of such interactional elements as are discourse markers. Several prosodic factors – e.g. the prosodic segmentation of the talk, the intonation contour of segments, the position of focal accent, and the duration of pauses – can be transcribed in detail and allow for an objective representation of the recorded talk. The transcription conventions of the C-ORAL-ROM and of GAT 2 are displayed in Appendix 1.

6.2. Method

The present study can be defined as strictly corpus-driven, in the sense that it does not start with previously established functional categories in which to arrange the corpus data, but instead aims to discover what functions *sentì* and *guarda* fulfil as a result of corpus analysis.⁴⁴ In view of the numerous and heterogeneous functions that have been attributed to *sentì* and *guarda* in research, establishing categories at the outset would hinder, rather than help in drawing a unified picture of their workings. It appears preferable to “start from scratch” and work out the markers’ functions directly from the data. The analysis is primarily qualitative, as are the results, which take the shape of functional descriptions of the two markers. However, information of a quantitative nature is incorporated into the analysis to support the identification of the markers’ functions and their comparison (details follow).

As a preliminary step, I have searched the corpora for all instances of the verbs “sentire” and “guardare” that can be recognized as being used as discourse markers. Concretely, this means that I have checked every instance found in the data against the criteria which define the concept of discourse markers I have adopted. As detailed in chapter 2, section 2.4, I consider as discourse markers items which accompany other discourse segments without being syntactically bound to them, and which do not add to the propositional content, but instead convey instructions about how to receive and interpret a given stretch of talk. Accordingly, I have excluded those tokens that are, for instance, actual requests to look at or listen to something (which could be recognized by means of contextual information), other less literal, but still semantically full uses (e.g. “tu

⁴³ The recordings have been transcribed with the software *Folker* (Schmidt/Schütte 2010a), which allows for the alignment of text and sound files (for a presentation of the software see Schmidt and Schütte (2010b)).

⁴⁴ Following Virtanen (2009) I understand “corpus-driven” as opposed to “corpus-based” studies, which are “concerned with topics and problems predicted from advance in other fields of language study” (Virtanen 2009: 1047). A similar distinction, but with a different terminology, is made by Lemnitzer and Zinsmeister (2006: 18f.) between “korpusgestützt” (‘corpus-supported’) and “korpusbasiert” (‘corpus-based’); the former refers to studies which use corpora to test and correct theoretical statements, the latter to studies in which corpus data represent the primary source of insight. The present study would thus be “korpusbasiert”.

guarda / quello che stanno facendo / [...] a Civitavecchia / preempio" 'look at what they are doing [...] in Civitavecchia, for example', where *guarda* conveys a request to consider an event, i.e. to "mentally observe" it, and is syntactically bound to a personal pronoun and a subordinate clause), as well as interjectional uses. Through this first selection process, I traced a total amount of 170 tokens of the marker *sentì* (in the forms *sentì*, *senta*, *sentite*) and 169 tokens of *guarda* (in the forms *guarda*, *guardi*, *guardate*⁴⁵).

After a further inspection, 30 tokens of *sentì* and 27 of *guarda* have been excluded because the utterances in which they occurred were interrupted or not fully intelligible, and, as a consequence, fundamental information for the analysis was missing. In some cases, functional properties can still be pointed out: for example, in the following excerpt, one can quite straightforwardly hypothesize a role of *guarda* as a turn-opening device. However, the early interruption of B's turn prevents us from detecting any other function that may possibly concern, for instance, the content of the envisaged turn or its formulation (the symbol "yyy" in the transcription substitutes for the name of speaker B):

- (15)
- 01 A: e TU. (-)
and you
- 02 hai il VIdéo, (-)
have a video...
- 03 B: sì;=
Yes
- 04 A: =ai caRAIbi, (-)
in the Caribbean...
- 05 B: [(con i)]
With th-
- 06 A: [col costu]mino brasiLIAno-
in a Brazilian bikini.
- 07 B: (-) hm;
Hm.
- 08 [sì;]
Yes.
- 09 A: [ma non ti] ci VEdo però yyy.
But I can't imagine that, yyy.
- 10 B: °h **guarda** (-) tu=
Guarda, you-
- 11 A: =tu devi essere un po' una MATta eh?
You must be a bit nuts, aren't you?
- 12 B: hm: b[e'. (--)]
Hm... well...
- 13 A: [((ride))]
(laughs)

⁴⁵ On one occasion I have found the form *guardino* (imperative, third person plural) used as a discourse marker. It occurs in a speech held in a courtroom. This form is very rare: apart from showing up only once in the corpora, it is hardly ever heard in usage and no mention is made of it in the literature. This is not surprising, since the third person plural as a polite form (e.g. "cosa desiderano?" ('what do you wish?', literally 'what do they wish?')) is not usual in present-day Italian and the second person plural is normally used instead ("cosa desiderate?"). The occurrence of *guardino* in the data is likely to be due to the very formal situation.

- 14 B: sicuraMENTe::.
for sure...
- 15 ((ride)) ci sono aspetti cuRiOsI insomma.
(laughs) there are some curious aspects.⁴⁶
- (IB3/1)

Five more tokens (four of *sentì* and one of *guarda*) present the problem that they appear exactly at the beginning of the respective recordings, so important information for sequential analysis is missing. These tokens are taken into consideration inasmuch as they can help in shaping hypotheses about the markers' functions, but cannot be fully analyzed. The subtraction of problematic cases gives a total amount of 136 tokens of *sentì* and 141 tokens of *guarda* as a data-base for the analysis.

The analysis then proceeds as follows: every token is examined qualitatively in and with respect to the segment of conversation in which it is embedded, in order to detect its functional value in context. The single contextual functions furnish the basis for the identification of more general functions, and eventually of one basic function for each marker (the whole procedure will be detailed below).

For the qualitative analysis of the individual tokens, I draw on methods from conversation analysis (henceforth: CA). CA methods have proven useful also outside the genuine objects and goals of CA as a means to analyze talk-in-interaction, and they have been fruitfully employed to address a range of linguistic questions, including the study of discourse markers (e.g. in Fischer (2000) and Hansen (1998)).

As observed by Fischer (2000: 36), the functions of discourse markers can only be uncovered with interpretative methods, which imply a component of subjectivity. In order to carry out interpretative analysis reliably, the data-driven, yet methodologically constrained approach of CA offers itself as a suitable means (Fischer 2000: 45). Well established analytical categories can be adopted for a systematic investigation of relevant stretches of conversation (see also Deppermann/Elstermann 2008: 110). In addition, CA states a clear analytical procedure which can be used to interpret the role and import of what speakers do and say in a given interaction, namely that of analyzing one speaker's turn's talk based on the other participants' understanding of it, as it is displayed in subsequent turns (see Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson 1974: 729). Thus, the methodological tools of CA seem well suited to analyze in a reliable, consistent, and detailed way what is being done in the relevant segments of conversation, so as to understand under what conditions our discourse markers are produced; this should in turn provide the basis upon which their workings can be understood.

How is this analysis carried out concretely? Because *sentì* and *guarda* are taken to fulfil a multiplicity of functions, ranging from turn-taking, to topic shift, to the expression of disagreement, it is essential for the analysis of the individual tokens to consider

⁴⁶ Recall that I translate all discourse markers appearing in the examples, with the exception of *sentì* and *guarda*. The translations are meant to render the semantic-pragmatic meaning of the Italian original as closely as possible. *Sentì* and *guarda* are left untranslated in order to avoid confusing the reader through the use of different equivalents; instead, I let the different functions of the two markers emerge from the specific context.

different aspects of the conversation on which the markers could have a bearing. Moreover, this must be done according to a fixed set of criteria for all tokens, in order to ensure comparability both between the different instances of a marker, and between the two markers.

To determine what aspects of interaction to look at, I have first drawn on the literature to define a set of aspects which could be taken to be relevant; I have then tested this first set via two pilot analyses conducted on my own corpus.⁴⁷ During this pilot phase, important aspects emerged which had not been taken into account based on the literature at first, but which turned out to be fundamental in order to grasp the function of the markers (e.g. the sequential structure of the conversation, as described under point 6 below). This process yielded a set of analytical criteria encompassing several aspects or components of the conversation. Let me detail them in what follows.

(1) As a first criterion, I consider the position of the token to be analyzed with respect to its scope, i.e. the stretch of talk it refers to. We know that *sentì* and *guarda* can be placed both before and after their scopes. The position occupied can be connected with a particular interactional value: a discourse marker produced before the unit upon which it acts has – by virtue of its very position – a projecting and preparing effect on that unit, and it will affect its interpretation in a different way than one that is postponed to its scope. In the latter case, no projecting or preparing value will be at play, but the element will rather have to be understood as an *ex-post* comment on what has been said. As we shall see later from the results (chapter 7), this feature is not at all trivial, and *sentì* and *guarda* turn out to be used quite differently with respect to it.

To understand whether a token is related to what has preceded it or to what is to follow, the degree of prosodic integration in the preceding and following speech is observed. As has been shown by Elordieta and Romera (2002) in a study of the Spanish *entonces* ('then'), there is a relation between a marker's prosodic integration in a segment of speech and its functional connection to it. In order to determine with which segment of speech in the surrounding talk a token of a marker is most strongly integrated, I look at a number of prosodic phenomena: pauses and micro pauses before and after it, pitch resets at its onset (which show separation from the preceding segment) or after it (which show separation from the following segment), lengthening of sounds before it or at its end, and increasing/decreasing speed. These phenomena are indicated by Selting et al. (2009: 370) as signals of borders between prosodic segments.⁴⁸ The prosodic integration of the tokens

⁴⁷ The pilot analyses included, besides *sentì* and *guarda*, the discourse markers *scusa*, *(hai) capito*, *diciamo*, and *sai*, and the interjections *dai* and *vedi*, for a total amount of 120 tokens. The idea was to work out an analytical tool suitable for the study of different pragmatic elements, although the scope of the study was eventually restricted to two of them, due to the degree of detail envisaged.

⁴⁸ With respect to prosodic features, I have consciously decided not to analyze the intonation contour of the markers alone. This feature has proved not to contribute significantly to the identification of a marker's function. For example, Fischer's (2000) study of the German particle *ja* ('yes'), has shown that each of its functions is associated with several intonation contours, and the same contour may be found in different functions. In the automatic assignment of tokens to functional categories by means of a neural network simulator, the use of prosodic contours in addition to "positional features" (e.g. the position in the turn and the utterance) did not increase the correct functional assignment significantly. It is interesting to point out

in the surrounding speech is first measured perceptively, but in complex cases instrumental visualisation and measurement are added.

(2) A second criterion concerns the position of the token in the turn: I consider whether it occurs turn-initially, turn-medially (i.e. internally), or turn-finally. The unit “turn” is measured as the talk produced between two speaker changes, or in other words, the talk produced by one participant from the point at which she starts speaking to the point at which another participant takes over.⁴⁹ Back-channels such as *mh* or *sì* (‘mh’, ‘yes’) are not regarded as turns because they are not aimed at a speaker change; on the contrary: participants who produce them confirm themselves as current non-speakers. In fact, because of this role with respect to the turn, such elements can also be termed “continuers” (Schegloff 2000: 5).⁵⁰

The tokens of *sentì* and *guarda* are recorded as turn-initial when they occupy the very first position in a speaker’s turn-at-talk, and when they are produced at the beginning of a turn together with other discourse markers, building chains such as *allora senti* or *ma guarda*. In the latter case, the relevant marker obviously occupies the second position, but it is regarded as belonging to the initial part of the turn because the actual semantic-pragmatic content still follows it. Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974: 719) describe elements like *well*, *but*, and *so* as “turn-entry devices” and “pre-starts” because they enable the speaker to begin a turn without having a clear plan for the envisaged sentence (or better: for the envisaged turn-constructive unit, which can be a sentence). These items make it possible to avoid that overlap at turn-beginning might impair analyzability and the first sentence’s constructive development. Hence, a distinction can be made between the moment in which a speaker starts talking and the beginning of turn-content proper. The whole area that precedes the production of the “actual” message is considered as turn-initial in the analysis, and any token of *sentì* and *guarda* appearing in this area is classified as turn-initial, regardless of whether it is the very first word uttered by the speaker in her turn or not.

Similar considerations are valid for a small number of cases in which, before uttering the marker, speakers address the interlocutors by their name. The name is not a part of turn content, but has the only function of attracting the interlocutor’s attention, similarly to discourse markers themselves (in fact, address terms like “Sir” are considered pragmatic markers by Fraser (2006)).⁵¹

that, conversely, the addition of information about the utterances’ pragmatic function did produce a significant increase in the accuracy of category assignment (Fischer 2000: 117ff.).

⁴⁹ See also the definition of turns in Fischer (2000: 18).

⁵⁰ Continuers are elements “by which recipients of another’s talk can show precisely that they understand that the speaker is in the course of an extended turn at talk which is not yet complete” (Schegloff 2000: 5).

⁵¹ There are few borderline cases (four in all corpus data) in which the relevant marker is uttered between a left dislocated personal pronoun “io” and the rest of the utterance, as in the following example:

*PAO: [<] <ma a te> da quant’ è che ti garban / insomma / che tu ascolti / i Depeche Mode ?

But how long have you lik- uh have you been listening to Depeche Mode?

*SAB: ma / io / **sentì** / perché c’ era il mi’ fratello / che gli ascoltava quand’ era giovane //

Well, as for me, senti, because my brother used to listen to them when he was young.

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamd109)

Tokens produced after the beginning of turn-content proper are classified as turn-medial. The amount of material preceding the marker in this case can vary from one single utterance to several, but this is not relevant for this part of the analysis. The purpose of the distinction between turn-initial and turn-medial position is to detect functions related to turn-opening and turn-allocation, and while these kinds of functions can be present in tokens produced in the turn-initial area, they cannot be at play in tokens appearing when turn-content has already started to be constructed, no matter how long.

Regarding the turn-final position, it has to be pointed out that I do not expect *senti* and *guarda* to function as turn-closing and turn-yielding devices. In fact, one could disregard this position altogether: for example, Travis (2005: 86) classifies tokens of the marker *bueno* appearing at the end of turns as turn-medial, because their function is not connected to floor-yielding, but is equivalent to that of turn-medial tokens. However, for reasons of symmetry, I opt for keeping the turn-final position as a category on its own, also to allow for comparability with other markers such as *sai* or *(hai) capito* in future studies.

(3) Again with regard to the system of turn-taking, I am interested in detecting possible uses of *senti* and *guarda* to interrupt the current speaker. Therefore, I observe whether the tokens are produced in overlap with other speakers' talk, and if yes, whether the current turn had reached a transition-relevance place (TRP) (see Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson 1974: 721) at the moment of the overlap.

(4) In order to discern potential functions related to the management of formulation problems, I look at the presence of phenomena that may evidence such troubles next to the analyzed tokens (or to the chain, if the token appears in a chain with other markers). More exactly, I observe silent pauses, filled pauses such as *mh* or *eh*, and lengthened sounds. In the data from the C-ORAL-ROM, I analyze these phenomena perceptively, but instrumental measurement is added in complex cases. As for the data from my own corpus, all silent and filled pauses and lengthened sounds have already been measured instrumentally during the process of transcription.

With respect to the detection of formulation problems, I also consider the presence of reformulations, as for example "perché / facendolo / o meglio / annunciando di voler [...]" ('because in doing this, better: in announcing that he wants to [...]'); I also look at repetitions of words and phrases, such as "ti mostro=ti mostro una COsa;" ('I'll show you-I'll show you something'). Expressions that introduce reformulations, like "o meglio" above, or that indicate difficulties in finding appropriate words or contents, such as "non lo so" ('I don't know') or "come dire" ('how can I say'), are taken into account as well.

(5) I furthermore observe what actions the speakers carry out in the interaction by means of the utterances in which *senti* and *guarda* occur. By "actions", I mean for example

The pronoun "io" is not needed from a syntactic point of view – Italian being a pro-drop language – and cannot be integrated in the following sentence ("perché c' era il mi' fratello"). Its function is rather pragmatic in nature: it underlines that the facts to be recounted concern the speaker personally, and it is probably also a way to begin the expected answer without having planned what to say, so as to gain time for formulation. In view of these facts, I consider the whole sequence "ma / io / senti" as a turn-initial area.

that speakers express an opinion, make an offer to their interlocutors, or ask a question. This is a fundamental aspect of the interaction which is often overlooked in the study of discourse markers, and of *senti* and *guarda* in particular, or is confined to sporadic observations but not systematically investigated. However, we know that discourse markers do act on this level: Schiffrin (1987) has shown that discourse markers interact with what is called, in her discourse model, the “action structure”, i.e. the level of discourse that concerns the speech acts realized by the speakers and the patterns in which they are ordered (Schiffrin 1987: 25). In Dostie (2004), the relation of discourse markers with the action-related aspect of talk is reflected by the fact that her descriptions of markers systematically comprise lists of speech act types that are accompanied or realized by them. The relevance of this relation is also mirrored in the classification of a subset of markers as “marqueurs illocutoires” (Dostie 2004: 47), defined by the functions of guiding the interpretation of illocutionary acts or realizing illocutionary acts in themselves. Also Bazzanella (2006a: 463) affirms that discourse markers that fulfil modalizing functions relative to speakers’ cognitive states “concern propositional content, speakers’ commitment, and illocutionary force”. So, it seems important to ask what actions the participants in a conversation are accomplishing when they use *senti* and *guarda*, and what actions the two markers relate to.

To be precise, a distinction should be made between the concept of speech acts and illocutionary force on one hand, as defined within Speech Act Theory by Austin (1962) and further by Searle (1969, 1975, 1979), and the broader concept of “action” on the other hand. In the present work, I do not refer to Speech Act Theory for the analysis of my data, so I prefer not to use the term “speech act”. Of course, Speech Act Theory has played a central role in the emergence of the very idea that speech should be looked at as the performance of actions, and the description of what a speaker is doing with an utterance cannot be separated from the recognition that utterances have a “point”, corresponding to certain intentions of the speaker.⁵²

However, the application of the traditional speech act categories to the analysis of natural data has proven problematic. The concept of speech acts and the types of acts considered by Searle do not originate from an empirical procedure; besides, as noted by Fiehler et al. (2004: 182), the theory regards a limited number of prototypical acts only. For these reasons, the complexity of real utterances, which derives from their production and interpretation in context, poses several problems for treatment in terms of speech acts. Therefore, for terminological and methodological clarity, and even if I refer to studies that do talk about “speech acts”, I will not use this term, but rather stick to the more neutral term “action”.

Turning to the concrete way in which speakers’ actions are identified and described, I rely on evidence that is present in the conversation. According to Sidnell (2010: 61ff.), there are three kinds of evidence we can use – in addition to our own

⁵² Not only the illocutionary point, but also the other 11 “types of differences” which according to Searle (1979: 2f. and 1975: 1f.) define an illocutionary act are inevitably involved in the description of the actions that speakers accomplish by means of their talk.

intuition – to ascertain the action accomplished by a speaker in a certain stretch of conversation. First, we can exploit formal (e.g. syntactic, but also prosodic) features: we can compare the relevant utterance with other utterances that have similar features, and ask if they accomplish similar tasks. Secondly, we can consider the interlocutors' responses, as these reveal how the other participants in the conversation actually understood the utterance (the so-called "next-turn proof procedure"). Thirdly, we can look at the preceding turn, to which the utterance in question was meant to respond.

As we shall see later, looking at what speakers are doing at the moment in which they use a marker provides insightful information about its function, and both *senti* and *guarda* will turn out to be strongly related with specific types of actions.

(6) On a higher level of description, speakers' actions are known to be functionally tied together in sequences. For example, they can be organised as question and answer, request and granting, or offer and acceptance, to start with most basic adjacency pairs, and they can build complex sequences extending over several turns (see Schegloff 2007: 22ff., Liddicoat 2007: 125ff.). As it reflects the speakers' accomplishment of joint activities,⁵³ this is a central aspect or component of the interaction and it is essential to see whether and how *senti* and *guarda* relate to it. I therefore observe whether the tokens appear at points in the conversation that are relevant for sequential organisation; more precisely, I examine whether they are produced in places where speakers start a sequence, carry on a sequence that has already been started, or resume the construction of a sequence that has previously been started and then suspended (for example, by the insertion of an embedded one).

(7) Moving on to a still higher level, I consider the relation of the tokens to what is called the conversation's "macrostructure" ("Makrostruktur", Spiegel/Spranz-Fogasy 2001: 1242), "superstructure" (Frank-Job 2006), "global structure" (Frank-Job 2006, see also "globale Organisationsstruktur" ('global organization structure') in Gülich/Mondada (2008: 86)), or "overall structural organization" (Schegloff/Sacks 1973: 289, Sidnell 2010: 150); that is, the conversation's organization in an opening, a core, and a closing part. I observe whether the tokens to be analyzed appear at points that are relevant for the transition from one part to another, and if yes, which of the transitions is concerned. As this constitutes an important aspect or component of the conversation to which speakers orient, and which they cooperate to construct, it is interesting to see whether and how our discourse markers relate to it and possibly act on its development.

Out of the different labels used for this level of conversation structuring, I will adopt, in what follows, that of "global structure", which appears general enough to be theoretically unambiguous and at the same time clear in its reference.

(8) A further criterion relates to the topic structure of the conversation. As both *senti* and *guarda* have been assigned to those categories of markers that signal topic change, it is interesting to see what role they play exactly in the structuring of topics. To this end, I observe whether the tokens occur at places that are relevant for topic

⁵³ "Sequences are the vehicle for getting some activity accomplished" (Schegloff 2007: 2).

organization or not. More concretely, I ask whether they occur at a shift from a topic or subtopic to a new one,⁵⁴ or inside a stretch of conversation in which the topic remains constant.

It is well-known that identifying the topic of a given stretch of talk and determining where topic shifts occur can be a rather complicated issue, especially because speakers often move from one topic to another gradually. Still, it is possible to orient to formal features of talk in order to understand what topic speakers attend to and where a different topic is brought up.

Sacks (1995 vol. 1: 752) observed that there are phenomena in conversation that manifest that speakers are engaging in topical talk. The way a person or a place is referred to, for instance, can display that a speaker is orienting to a certain topic: referring to a person as “the woman who lives there now” displays orientation to a topic: a house for rent; referring to the same person as “a widow” displays orientation to a different topic: the reason why she is moving. Sidnell (2010: 224) points out how speakers’ uses of “referring expressions” can be taken as evidence for attendance to a given object as the current topic. The use of nouns, pronouns, and deictic expressions pointing to the same thing, fact, or situation, display the continuing attention of speakers to the same topic.

In addition to this kind of evidence, speakers oftentimes explicitly announce their intention to leave the current topic and talk about something else with expressions like “ti volevo dire” (‘I wanted to tell you’), or they state the next topic by means of utterances with a metadiscursive value, such as “arriviamo alle politiche” (‘let’s turn to the politics’) or “torniamo a quella ragazza” (‘let’s go back to that girl’). Orientation to a topic can also be displayed by asking for information about a certain subject (e.g. “tuo marito?” (‘what about your husband?’)), or by the use of so-called left dislocations (e.g. “la tua preparazione / com’è?” (‘your preparation, how is it?’)), which bring a subject to the participants’ attention (see Gülich/Mondada 2008: 85ff.). Traces of this organizational work can be used to reconstruct the development of topics in the conversations and, thereby, allow us to observe whether and how *sentì* and *guarda* relate to topic structure.

(9) Finally, I register whenever the tokens occur in quoted speech. By “quoted speech” I mean all instances of reported direct speech that speakers embed in their turns, regardless of whether they actually reproduce what somebody has said before, or not. Consequently, besides actual quotations of utterances previously produced by another person or by the speaker herself, I include embedded direct speech constructed by speakers in order to illustrate what somebody could say or have said in a certain situation, for example: “je deve di’ / guardi / è successo questo ...”⁵⁵ (‘you must say to him:

⁵⁴ By “subtopics” I mean topics that can be recognized as aspects of a more global, overarching topic talked about in the same conversation; in Stenström’s (1994: 150) words: “particular aspects of the main topic”.

⁵⁵ The form “je” is a diatopically marked form for the Standard Italian pronoun “gli” (‘to him’). The form “di” stands for “dire” (‘to say’). The metadata of the transcript from which this example is taken (C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv13) state that the speaker comes from Terni, in Middle Italy. The reader should bear in mind that many examples contain diatopically marked features. As this is not relevant for the present work, I will not explain every single case, but only those that might be particularly difficult for readers who have no advanced knowledge of Italian.

guardi, this has happened...'). I also include direct speech embedded in fictional tales, such as: "e il re / gli dice / senti / se tu vuoi restare / io ho qualcosa / da farti fare //" ('and the king says: senti, if you want to stay, I have a task for you').

In sum, a systematic analysis of each token of *senti* and *guarda* is carried out according to the following criteria, corresponding to different aspects or components of the conversation:⁵⁶

- 1) position with respect to the scope (identified by prosodic features that mark borders between prosodic segments: pauses, pitch resets, sound lengthening, speed)
- 2) position in the turn
- 3) occurrence with phenomena pointing to interruption: overlaps, turn-begin before TRPs
- 4) occurrence with phenomena pointing to formulation problems: silent pauses, filled pauses, and lengthened sounds; reformulations and repetitions
- 5) actions carried out by the speakers by means of the utterances in which the tokens appear
- 6) position with respect to the conversation's sequential organization
- 7) position with respect to the conversation's global structure
- 8) position with respect to topic structure
- 9) occurrence in quoted speech

The qualitative analysis of the individual tokens according to these criteria constitutes the first step of the whole analysis, which eventually leads – through a bottom-up procedure – to the identification of basic functions. Let us see how this procedure is shaped.

The analysis starts out from the examination of *senti* and *guarda* separately. Every token is first analyzed according to the criteria exposed above in order to identify the functions it accomplishes in context – for example, it may serve to signal that the speaker is going to close the conversation, or to resume a previous topic, and so on. Then, all tokens of a marker – with their respective contextual functions – are compared with each other so as to detect common functional features. On this basis, hypotheses are formulated about more general functions of the marker, which should enable us to account for several instances of its use.

⁵⁶ I am aware that more "global" aspects of conversation, such as the situation in which the conversation is held, the goals of the interaction, and the roles of the speakers, could be taken into account as well, as is done for example in the analyses conducted by Fischer (2000) and Hansen (1998). Even though I do keep such global aspects in mind when I analyze the corpus data, I do not register them systematically and I do not include them in quantitative analyses, because it seems to me that such aspects are not fundamental for the aim of discovering the markers' functions. Let me explain this better. Global features such as the type of interaction and the roles of the participants determine, and are consequently reflected in, more local features; so, the consideration of the former is entailed in the consideration of the latter. For example, an interview will certainly contain many uses of a marker as a topic shift device, but the use for topic shift is not directly determined by the genre interview, but rather by the recurrence of topic shifts which is entailed in this genre. The use of a marker to signal topic shift can be best detected on a local level by considering the topic structure of the relevant stretch of talk, rather than by observing the type of interaction. While global aspects are certainly interesting in order to learn about a marker's overall distribution in language use, it seems to me that they are not indispensable in discovering its concrete functions.

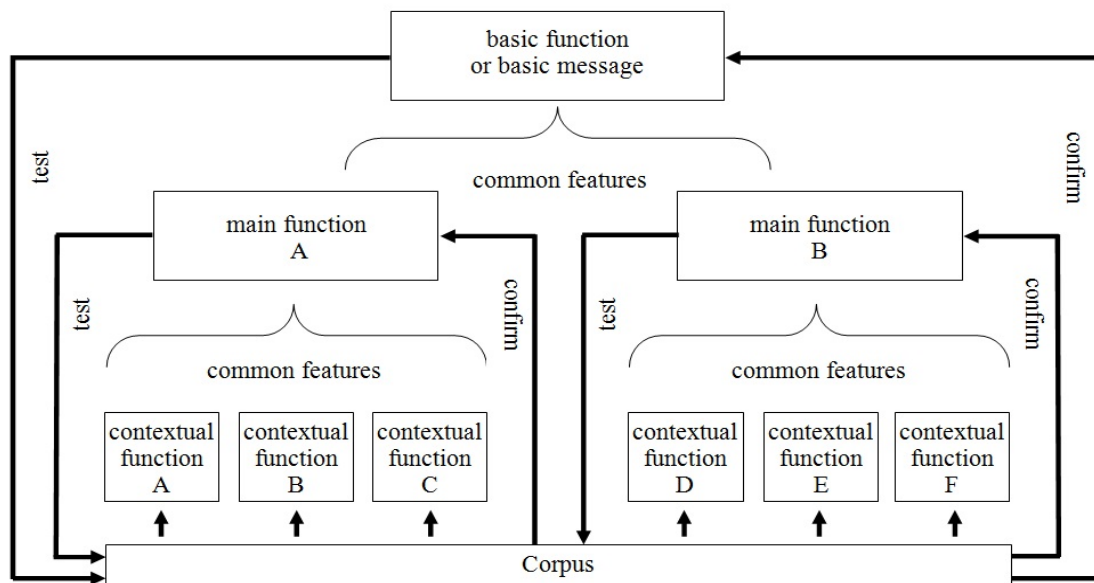
At this stage, some basic quantitative data are incorporated into the analysis. The information about the relation of the tokens with the different aspects or components of conversation – as obtained from the first step of the analysis – is apt to be quantified: it is possible, for instance, to observe how often a marker appears in turn-initial position, or before a topic shift, etc. This reveals tendencies in the marker’s use which can be exploited to form hypotheses about its workings.

In addition, differences between the two markers *sentì* and *guarda* are taken into consideration: by comparing their distribution with respect to the aspects or components of conversation examined, one is able to see some clearly divergent patterns (for example, *sentì* is used extremely often in questions, but *guarda* never is). Such divergences call for an explanation in terms of the respective functions of the markers, so their observation contributes to the formulation of hypotheses about the markers’ workings.

The hypothesized functions are then tested against the single tokens in the corpora, corrected, and re-tested in a recursive process. The result is a relatively small set of observably recurrent functions by means of which all instances of a marker can be explained accurately. I shall refer to them as “main functions”.

While affecting different levels of the interaction – for example, we shall see that *sentì* is used, among others, for turn allocation and for sequential organization – these main functions manifest common features which point to a still more general function as their common root. Therefore, a further process of hypothesis formulation and testing is conducted in order to work out one fundamental function from which all uses of the marker can be derived. I shall call this the “basic function” or “basic message” of the marker. This bottom-up analysis is schematically represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The analysis starts from the contextual functions of the individual tokens; then the main functions of a marker are worked out; finally, a basic function is identified.



The procedure just described calls for some explanation with regard to the opposition – amply discussed in the literature – between three approaches to the

multifunctionality of discourse markers, known as monosemy, homonymy, and polysemy approaches. In the homonymy approaches, every reading of a given form is considered as a meaning on its own, and no relations are taken to hold between the readings; this type of approach is, however, far less common in literature than the other two (see Fischer 2006a: 13). The monosemy approach, in contrast, is advocated by several scholars. It assumes that a given form is tied to a single core meaning, and that this core meaning gives rise to different interpretations due to pragmatic processes that take place in contextual use (see Fischer 2006a: 13). Some models have been elaborated to account for the derivation of distinct interpretations from one core meaning via contextual factors (e.g. Fischer 2000, Diewald 2006). Finally, in polysemy approaches, it is assumed that a form has different meanings, which are nevertheless connected to each other by, for instance, metaphorical or metonymic relationships, or by the fact that one implicates the other; sometimes, however, the different meanings are not taken to have any common components (see Fischer 2006a: 13).

Scholars who take different approaches adduce different arguments for their choices. Dostie (2004: 50), who takes a polysemy approach, observes that the core meanings elaborated within monosemic descriptions are sometimes so general that they could be applied to just any lexical unit. On the other hand, Diewald (2006: 423) argues that distinguishing separate lexeme-inherent meanings from contextual variations of one and the same meaning is difficult for a number of reasons: firstly, because the items in question have abstract and non-referential meanings; secondly, because many factors have to be taken into account in the distinction, such as frequency, stereotypicality, and register; and thirdly, because there are permanently stereotypical contextual interpretations in the process of being semanticized, so the border between meaning and contextual variation is actually fluid. As Waltereit (2006b: 145) notices, the decision for one of the approaches is oftentimes not so much guided by empirical considerations and dependent from the case in question, but it is rather founded in theoretical or even ideological choices.⁵⁷

As far as the present study is concerned, I originally set out with the idea of describing different functional types of *sentì* and *guarda*, but I have eventually come to identify one basic function for each marker. The reason for this development is that the functions I was gradually discovering in the analysis of the data appeared to be too closely interrelated not to look for a common root, and it seemed to me that finding this root would be fundamental to the understanding of the markers' multifunctionality and of the way in which different functions often shade into each other. So, in the present work, the search for one fundamental function does not follow from a theoretical decision made at the outset, but indeed from the consideration of the items under study.

⁵⁷ "Il s'agit en effet non seulement d'un problème empirique, que l'on peut résoudre d'une façon ou d'une autre selon le cas, mais aussi d'un choix d'ordre théorique ou presque idéologique" ('it is in fact not only an empirical problem, which can be solved in one way or the other depending on the case, but a theoretical or almost ideological choice') (Waltereit 2006b: 145). Waltereit himself favors a polysemy approach (see chapter 4 above).

7. Analysis

This chapter will present a functional description of the discourse markers *senti* and *guarda* as resulted from the analysis of corpus data.

Section 7.1 will be dedicated to *senti*, section 7.2 to *guarda*. For each marker I will describe a set of main functions, i.e. observably recurrent functions that account for the use of the element with different purposes and on different levels of the interaction. Then, I will come to describe its basic function or basic message, i.e. a more general, fundamental function encoded in the item that gives origin to all of its more specific uses. Through the identification of a basic function, it will be possible to give a unified account of the marker's usage.

Section 7.3 will be devoted to a comparison between *senti* and *guarda*. This will be done by contrasting their distribution relative to several aspects of the conversation (such as the turns-at-talk, the topic structure etc.), in other words: by comparing the environments in which they are used by speakers.⁵⁸ This will provide a tangible basis for comparison between the two items and allow us to underpin their functional descriptions.

7.1. *Senti*

7.1.1. Opening a turn, gaining attention

I shall start by illustrating how speakers use *senti* to open a turn-at-talk and call other participants' attention to it. The two functions are discussed together because attention-getting can hardly be separated in usage from other functions: the call for attention is always associated with the signalization that the speaker is about to say something.⁵⁹ In fact, attention-getting will also be implied in the functions that I will examine next.

Consider example (16). Speakers JHO, SIM, ROD, and SAR are taking part in a role-play game. JHO and SIM talk about a sword that is part of the game equipment; ROD is concerned with some glasses on the table.⁶⁰

(16)

*JHO: la mia spada / dov' è ?

Where is my sword?

⁵⁸ Given that the functions of *senti* and *guarda* are the result of the analysis and cannot be a basis for comparison themselves, the only way to compare *senti* and *guarda* is by contrasting the contexts in which they are used, which in turn give clues about their workings.

⁵⁹ An interjection like *ehi!* can be used to call attention without being followed by any utterance. *Senti*, instead, can never come alone (not in its discourse-marking use); it always accompanies an utterance and thereby prefigures its production.

⁶⁰ All translations of the examples are mine. Metatextual comments in transcripts from the C-ORAL-ROM, however, were written in English by the transcribers.

*SIM: eh ?
 %exp: cough
 Uh?
 *JHO: la mia spada l' ho io ?
My sword, do I have it?
 *ROD: **senti** / codesti <bicchieri> / son tutt' e due ...
Senti, these glasses, are they both...
 *SIM: [<] <no> //
 %add: he answer to JHO. [sic]
 No.
 %par: SAR points out the glass [sic]
 *ROD: ah / è mio //
Oh, it's mine.
 *SAR: no // volevi che n' avesse due lui e <te punti> //
Duh! You thought he has two and you don't have any?
 *ROD: [<] <no nel senso> se era / uno te / uno lui ...
No, I mean, if it's like: one for you, one for him...
 *SIM: uno te / uno lui / uno l' altro //
One for you, one for him, one for the other.
 *ROD: tutt'e due lui anche // se magari xxx / aveva detto che c' aveva sete //
Or both for him. Maybe if xxx, he said he was thirsty.
 (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamcv07)

JHO has asked the question “la mia spada l’ho io?” (it is not clear whether the question is addressed to some participant in particular). Before any answer is given, ROD selects himself as the next speaker to ask whom two glasses on the table belong to. His turn is overlapped by SIM, who answers JHO’s question (“no”). SAR reacts to ROD’s question by showing or perhaps handing out one glass to him, from which ROD understands that that glass belongs to him (“ah / è mio //”).

ROD’s question, introduced with *senti*, initiates a new adjacency pair right in the middle of the one just started by JHO, and it concerns a completely unrelated subject. In view of these conditions, we can assume that ROD needs to announce his question and call attention to it in order to get the answer he is looking for. In this context, the marker *senti* in turn-initial position assumes the function of directing the participants’ attention to the upcoming talk, and at the same time announcing the beginning of the turn. This analysis is in line with the generally agreed upon interpretation of the marker as an opening signal and attention-getter (see among others Stammerjohann (1977), Lichem (1981), Mara (1986), Bazzanella (1994a, 1995, 2001a), Ziccolella (2007), Koch/Oesterreicher (2011)).

Senti can also be exploited to select an interlocutor in cases where more than one participant could be addressed, a use also noticed by Ziccolella (2007: 368). In example (17) we observe an excerpt from a talk-show interview, where host CAT is talking with two interviewees called FRA and PAO.

(17)

*FRA: alla fine / possiamo dire che &l [/] che [/] che [/] che il meccanismo &darvi [/] &da
 [/] darviniano / della / come dire / della +

*In the end we can say that th- that- that- that Darw- Da- Darwin's mechanism of- how can I say?
 Of-*

*CAT: dell' evoluzione //

Of evolution.

*FRA: / dell' evoluzione della specie / è sempre lo stesso / dopo di che / <si cerca> +

Of species evolution is always the same. Then, one tries to-

*CAT: [<] <il sapere> non cambia nulla ?

Doesn't knowledge change anything?

*FRA: il sapere / cambia // e uno / si deve sforzare di essere migliore //

Knowledge does change things. And one should strive to improve.

*CAT: bene //

Okay.

*PAO: non è facile //

It's not easy.

*CAT: no //

It isn't.

*FRA: no / però ...

It isn't, but...

*CAT: **sentì** / Paola / hai [/] hai dichiarato di essere una persona / focosa / di avere [///] di
 prendere [///] d' infiammarti / <facilmente> //

*Senti, Paola, you have said that you are a hot-blooded person, you have- you catch- your feelings
 are easily inflamed.*

*PAO: [<] <è vero> // è un mio grave <difetto // sì sì> //

Yes, that's a very bad defect of mine, yes.

*CAT: [<] <ecco // per che cosa> ? che cos' è che ti / suscita / che fa <scattare quella
 scintilla> ?

Yes, for what reasons? What makes you- what makes that spark start?

*PAO: [<] <innanzitutto / le ingiustizie> //

Injustice, first of all.

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedts08)

The first six turns are exchanged between talk-show host CAT and interviewee FRA. Then, the other interviewee, PAO, intervenes to assess the precept stated by FRA, with the turn “non è facile”; CAT and FRA respond to the assessment (with “no ///” and “no / però ...”). After the completion of FRA’s last turn, CAT starts a new sequence, and this time she selects PAO as her interlocutor (and as the next speaker, since she asks a question), addressing her by name. In sum: CAT was first engaged in an exchange with FRA, in which PAO intervenes; from now on, however, CAT addresses PAO only. The presence of *sentì* at the beginning of her turn, besides announcing the upcoming talk, calls attention and helps manage the change to the new addressee.

7.1.2. Interrupting the current speaker

In the next example we shall observe another use of *sentì* for purposes related to the management of turn-taking. Example (18) shows a segment of a phone call between university professor ELA and teacher MIC. MIC is going to give a seminar for ELA's students; the two speakers are making arrangements.

(18)

*ELA: [...] perché poi / sono anche [/] anche &st + bisogna anche dire che sono stanchi / perché la maggior parte di questi / la mattina / hanno lavorato // arrivano / di corsa // &he / come dire / hanno mangiato un panino / e stanno tutto il pomeriggio lì // sono un po' bombardati / quindi / io capisco / anche la loro difficoltà / la loro / stanchezza / insomma // però / se ci fosse bisogno / appunto / un po' di allungare +

because, in addition, they are also- also t- one also has to say that they are tired, because most of them, in the morning, they work; they hurry up here; uh how can I say, they have eaten a sandwich and they spend all afternoon there. They are a bit bombarded with things, so I understand that it's hard for them, that they are tired, I guess. But if you need to extend-

*MIC: <ma non c' è> +

But there is no-

*ELA: [<] / <il> tempo legale / arriva fino alle sette / <e quindi> ...

The official time is until seven, so...

*MIC: [<] <sì / non [/] non> è un problema / figurati // non +

Yes, it's not- it's not a problem, absolutely, not-

*ELA: **sentì** / scusami / ti volevo chiedere anche una cosa tecnica / perché / forse tu me l'hai scritto però / ho dei problemi sul computer / non leggo più la [/] la posta // tu / hai bisogno di un data-show / di un video proiettore / non me lo ricordo //

Senti, sorry, I wanted to ask you about a technical thing, because maybe you have written it to me, but I'm having some problems with my computer, I can't read my emails. Do you need a data-show projector, a video projector, I don't remember.

*MIC: sì / io ho preparato una presentazione con power point //

Yes, I have prepared a presentation with PowerPoint.

*ELA: con power <point> //

With PowerPoint.

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv06)

After saying “sì / non [/] non è un problema / figurati //”, MIC starts a new utterance with “non”, but he stops on the last sound of these word, which is thereby lengthened to 0.5 seconds, evidently trying to overcome some formulation problems. Even if it is not visible from the transcript, at this point ELA starts speaking in overlap with MIC's lengthened “non”. Despite not having completed the TCU, MIC stops talking and ELA obtains the turn-at-talk. Here, *sentì* is not simply used to call attention to the upcoming talk, but also – and primarily – to take the turn away from the other speaker. Note the presence of “scusami” (‘sorry’), which demonstrates the speaker's awareness of breaking a rule by interrupting the other. This analysis confirms statements made by Bazzanella (1990, 1995) and Manili (1983), who mention *sentì* as an interrupting device. Another interesting case is

displayed in (19). The segment is a part of a trial; speaker SAM is the accused, PUM is the prosecutor, and PRE is the judge.

(19)

*SAM: lo vedo // non [/] non [/] non [/] non me lo ricordo / onestamente // ma &sicurame
[///] ma magari l' ho anche fatto / per carità // non ho mica detto che + ho detto che non me
lo ricordo // però / non è che tutti gli appuntamenti poi siano stati +

*I can see that. I don't- I don't- I don't- I don't remember, honestly. But for su- I may well have
done it, I haven't said that- I have said that I don't remember. But it's not like all meetings were-*

*PUM: voglio dire / su questo punto / intendo avvalermi della facoltà di non rispondere /
è una cosa / non me lo ricordo / è un' altra cosa //

*But I mean, "on this point I exercise my right to refuse to answer" is one thing, "I don't
remember" is another thing.*

*SAM: allora / se vuole dico / <su questo punto / non intendo rispondere> //

Then, if you want, I will say "on this point I refuse to answer".

*PRE: [<] <no no / eh **senta** / **senta** / non se vuole> o non se vuole // e lei / dice / o se [/] se
non [/] se non vuol rispondere / ce lo dice chiaramente // se no dice / non ricordo //

*No, no, uh **senta**, **senta**, no "if you want" or not "if you want". Uh you say, if- if you don't- if
you don't want to answer, you say it clearly, otherwise you say "I don't remember".*

*SAM: io ho detto / <non ricordo> //

I've said "I don't remember".

(C-ORAL-ROM, inatla03)

In the third and fourth turns there is a large overlap between speakers SAM and PRE. After SAM's "allora / se vuole dico /" PRE starts speaking in overlap with him, although no transition relevance place has been reached yet. PRE begins saying "no no"; by this he expresses a disapproval that will turn out to refer to SAM's previous utterance: SAM should not use the words "se vuole" – which would mean giving up the responsibility for his declaration – but instead state clearly how things are. In such a conflict situation, it is clear that PRE is intentionally overlapping SAM. Despite the overlap, SAM goes on with his TCU; PRE, in turn, continues as well with "eh senta / senta / non se vuole", until SAM eventually relinquishes the turn.

Similarly to the case in (18), the speaker who uses *senti* is not just calling attention to what he has to say, but he is doing so to interrupt the current speaker. SAM keeps talking after PRE's "no no", so PRE cannot go on with what he has to say, namely with the request to make clear statements. *Senti* provides for the possibility to overlap the other's turn, thereby signalling that one has something to say, and at the same time it enables the speaker to delay the production of the turn-content until the other has given up the turn. Note how the repetition of the marker ("senta / senta /") in PRE's turn underlines this intention.

7.1.3. Managing formulation troubles

Closely related to the functions just described is the use of *sentì* to maintain attention and the turn-at-talk at points in the interaction at which they are at stake. Example (20) is a segment of an interview conducted in a private environment. The post-graduate student PAO is interviewing a man called BEP, who is a projectionist in a cinema.

(20)

*BEP: [...] ecco / questo seguita / ad affascinarmi // da lì / la mia / proprio / ignoranza di meccanica / perché se no / insomma / un tecnico / niente / lo [/] lo prenderebbe come / cosa acquisita / normale // però / io resto imbambolato di fronte + mi sembra un miracolo / tutte le volte //

[...] now, this keeps fascinating me. Hence my – really – my technical ignorance, because otherwise, I mean, a technician, well, he would take it for granted, as something normal. But I stare at it- it's like a miracle to me, every time.

*PAO: eh / **sentì** / ma ti + lo rifaresti / questo [/] <questo lavoro> ?

Uh **sentì** but do- would you do it again, this- this job?

*BEP: [<] <&sen + questo> lavoro // questo lavoro / io l' ho fatto per caso // l' ho fatto per caso / e non per scelta // l' ho fatto per bisogno / non per caso // il caso / è stato un caso / eccezionale / il fatto che l' abbia potuto incontrare / perché io vengo dall' artigianato // e da un artigianato / che m' ha portato a dover chiudere una ditta / perché non si guadagnava più nemmeno i soldi / per pagar la luce // [...]

Sen- this job. This job, I got it by accident. I got it by accident, and not out of choice. I got it out of necessity, not by accident. The accident was an exceptional one, that I could find it, because I come from a small business. And from a small business that forced me to close a company, because one didn't even earn enough money to pay the electricity bills. [...]

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamnm13)

The token of *sentì* in this example is again in a turn-initial position, but this time the speaker does not need to call the interlocutor's attention. Interviewee BEP has finished his turn, which was the answer to a previous question, and PAO, as an interviewer, is now expected to take over the turn again. Interestingly, PAO begins her turn with a series of hesitation phenomena. After a long "eh" (1.12 seconds), the marker *sentì* introduces the beginning of an utterance ("ma ti"), but this is left incomplete: the speaker stops on "ti", whose vowel is lengthened to 1 second; then she makes a pause of 1.7 seconds and starts again with a different syntactic structure. Evidently, PAO has not yet planned what to say at the moment at which she starts her turn. In this context, the marker *sentì* assumes the function to help her keeping the interlocutor's attention and the turn-at-talk, despite the fact that she has not yet planned the following utterance.⁶¹ To my knowledge, the use of *sentì* for the management of formulation problems was pointed out only by Manili (1983). By saying *sentì*, the speaker signals that she is about to say something, and is able to keep the other's attention and the turn, thereby gaining some time for formulation.

⁶¹ Obviously, this *sentì* is also a turn-opening signal. A marker can hardly ever be assigned one single function. However, the opening function is superseded in this case by that of maintaining the attention and keeping the turn-at-talk as more relevant activities at this point of the conversation.

7.1.4. Introducing a new activity: topics, sequences, and parts of conversation

We now move to a function, or one could say a group of functions, in which *sentì* acts on the structure of conversation. Example (21) shows an excerpt from a phone call between university professor ELA and researcher ANT. The two participants talk about a third person who is going to give a talk (apparently at a conference or an exam), and then about ANT's current preparation for an exam.

(21)

*ANT: speriamo bene // penso che sia &po [/] un po' preoccupato hhh //

Let's hope for the best. I think he's a bit worried hhh.

*ELA: no / ecco / questo bisognerebbe dirglielo / che lui è / come dire / talmente superiore alla situazione / come tu hai visto / che + io ho cercato di dirglielo / ma lui mi sembrava 'un ci credesse // invece + ho paura che sarà una grossa delusione // ma / insomma ... magari facciamogli delle domande noi / ecco / insomma // cose di questo genere // **sentì** / la tua preparazione / com' è ?

*No, well, this, we should tell him. That he is – how can I say – so overqualified, as you could see, that- I tried to tell him, but it looked like he didn't believe me. But I'm afraid he's going to be very disappointed, but anyway... Maybe we can ask him some questions, something like that. **Sentì**, how is your preparation going?*

*ANT: insomma / ho fatto un po' di cose // ho [/] ho deciso che scrivo / le cose / così <poi>

...

Not bad, I've done some things. I've- I've decided to write down things, so...

*ELA: [<] <mh> // ti butti giù <delle scalette> / forse è meglio / eh //

Mh. You're writing down an outline, maybe that's better.

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv04)

In contrast to the previous examples, *sentì* is not related to the activities of calling for attention, opening, taking, or keeping the turn. Speaker ELA is not beginning a new turn, there is no evidence of hesitation, and her rights to the turn are not in danger. It is rather another event that is important for the development of the conversation here: between the segments “magari facciamogli delle domande noi / ecco / insomma // cose di questo genere” and “la tua preparazione / com' è ?”, ELA leaves the current topic (a third person's talk) and switches to a new one (ANT's preparation).⁶² I argue that the main role of *sentì* here is precisely that of introducing the change of topic.

By producing *sentì*, the speaker is able to move the interlocutor's attention from what has been talked about up to that point to what is going to be talked about in the upcoming stretch of talk, and change the direction of the discourse without “disorienting” the interlocutor. In fact, one would feel that the new topic comes quite suddenly, if *sentì* were not there.⁶³ This analysis is in accordance with descriptions of *sentì* as a marker of

⁶² In Fischer's terminology (2006: 441), we could say that topic structure is the communicative domain, i.e. the aspect of the interaction, to which the speakers are attending here.

⁶³ This is confirmed by the empirical investigation in chapter 8.

topic shift, as found in previous studies (see Khachaturyan 2001, Manili 1983, Bazzanella 1990 and 1995, Ziccollella 2007). Besides calling attention and helping in taking and keeping the turn, *sentì* is able to perform what we can call, borrowing Travis's (2005: 102) term, a "reorientation". With this expression, Travis refers to discourse markers' uses such as initiating or closing a topic, returning to a previous topic, and marking "other kinds of breaks in the flow of conversation". The idea of "reorientation" seems very appropriate to describe *sentì* here: the marker re-directs the attention to something new and prepares the addressee for the shift.⁶⁴

The reorientation function of *sentì* can also work at another level, namely that of sequences. The actions brought about by speakers in a conversation are connected to each other to build sequences, starting from simple adjacency pairs like greeting-greeting and question-answer up to complex sequences of several turns. The beginning of a new sequence mostly corresponds to a change in topic or subtopic; there are, however, cases in which speakers begin a new sequence without changing the topic. In cases of this kind, *sentì* seems to be used precisely to call attention to and prepare the addressee for the beginning of the new sequence.

Let us examine example (22), an excerpt from an interview conducted in a familiar environment. Speaker ELA is interviewing an old family friend, a lady named LID. LID talks about a dog and a cat from the neighbourhood that she sometimes feeds. First, she recounts how the dog, called Duna, enjoys getting biscuits from her, then she focuses on the cat, Pallino, which does not like biscuits and gets pieces of meat. Then, ELA asks LID how often she takes the cat home with her.

(22)

*LID: quande / e gli dico / Duna / dico / se tu ti metti seduta / ti butto i' biscotto // lei la guarda 'n su / verso la terrazza / la si mette seduta / l' aspetta che gli butti i' biscotto // allora / poi l' è tutta contenta / eh // allora Pallino / il gatto l' è straordinario / si mette / accanto / anche lui / alla cagna / e guarda 'n su perché aspetta &lu [/] anche lui qualche cosa //

%exp: straordinario is a reconstructed word

%exp: they both laugh

When I say to her "Duna" – I say – "if you sit down, I'll throw you a biscuit"; she looks up to the terrace, she sits down, she waits for me to throw the biscuit. Then she's so happy. And then Pallino, the cat, he's extraordinary, he stands next to the dog and looks up to me because he expects something, too.

*LID: e se gli butto i' pezzettino / della carne / che / i' biscotto / lui / fa la corsa pe' prendilo / ma ...

And if I throw a small piece of meat to him, because a biscuit, he runs there to take it, but...

⁶⁴ 80% of the tokens in the corpora occur before a stretch of talk that has a clearly different topic or subtopic as the preceding one. Although this does not mean that topic shift must be the only or main task of *sentì* in all cases, the striking frequency of this environment strongly suggests that the introduction of topic shift may have quite some weight in the overall functional spectrum of *sentì*. Interestingly, the marker *guarda* hardly ever co-occurs with a topic change (as we shall see in section 7.3). Introducing a new topic seems to be a specific function of *sentì*.

*ELA: poi non lo mangia / <i' biscotto> //

Then he doesn't eat it, the biscuit.

*LID: [<] <no> // non lo mangia / perché / che vuoi / biscotto ... no / ma poi / il gatto / il biscotto / 'un c' è // gli piace la carne / no ? gli butto qualche ritaglino di carne / lui / fa la corsa / con la zampa / za // la mette sopra la carne / perché se arrivano la Duna / la [/] la gliela mangia // sicché lui / tutto contento ...

No, he doesn't, because a biscuit... no, and a cat, a biscuit is not- he likes meat, you see. I throw him some meat chunk, he runs there, and "bang!" with his paw. He puts it on the meat chunk, because if Duna comes, she- she will eat it. And so he's so happy...

*ELA: **senti** / ma che lo prendete sempre / ogni tanto ...

Senti, but do you take him regularly, or every once in a while...

*LID: &m &s / quando lo prendo in &ca + via prendo / una volta l' ha portato la bambina su // non mi riconosce //

M- s- when I take him ho- well, the girl took him home only once. He doesn't recognize me.

*ELA: come no ?

Really?

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamd102)

ELA's turn "ma che lo prendete sempre / ogni tanto ..." is introduced with *senti*. As in example (21), *senti* cannot serve to call for particular attention or to get the turn-at-talk; LID has finished her turn (the symbol "... " stands for a conclusive prosodic break and means that the utterance has an intentionally suspended intonation) and ELA not only can take over, but, as an interviewer, is expected to do so. In contrast to (21), however, one would not say that there is a shift to a new topic: ELA is asking for new information, but she is still talking about the cat. The continuity of topic is shown by the use of the pronoun "lo", which refers back to the same object as, in the previous turn, "gli" and "lui", all pointing to "Pallino / il gatto".

What is interactionally relevant at this point is that the speaker is about to initiate a new sequence of actions, which is characterized by, using Schegloff's (2007: 2) words, "some shape or trajectory", and which both participants will have to construct together. Similarly to the reorientation of attention towards a new topic, *senti* performs here a reorientation towards a new sequence of actions.

Sometimes it appears that speakers use *senti* to navigate complex sequences, with or without topic shifts, by marking with it the transition from main sequences to embedded ones and/or back. We can observe this use in example (23), a segment from a phone call between two friends. Two women called SIL and HED are talking about their plans for the following Sunday. There is going to be some street event (a race, a parade, or a procession) which SIL is planning to attend, and HED has not yet decided whether she will join her.

(23)

*SIL: senti / io / ti ho chiamata / anche / perché voleo sapere / cosa vuoi fare / domenica // *Senti, I have called you because I also wanted to know what you want to do on Sunday.*

*HED: ecco // **sentì** un pochino // come tu avresti predisposto / la cosa di domenica ?

*Yes, **sentì** a minute, how have you planned the thing on Sunday?*

*SIL: io / non ho predisposto niente // stavo chiedendo a Guido / lì / come era organizzata // non ne sa niente // perché lui / quest' anno / è fuori // e va / domani / o stasera / a sentire dove l' hanno messo di postazione //

I haven't planned anything, I was just asking Guido how it is organized. He doesn't know. Because this year he's outside. And he's going there tomorrow or tonight to know where they have placed him.

*HED: eh //

Ah.

*SIL: mh //

Mh.

*HED: ho capito //

I see.

*SIL: quindi / non so che giro fanno //

So I don't know the route.

*HED: ecco //

Okay.

*SIL: mh //

Mh.

*HED: ma / **sentì** / no / a me / mi potrebbe anche andar bene // tanto per il pomeriggio / si torna a casa / no ?

*Well, **sentì**, actually it could be fine for me. We will be going back home in the afternoon anyway, won't we?*

*SIL: no // anche a mezzogiorno / si torna a casa // perché lì partono [///] bisogna andare su presto / che chiudono &l [/] la strada // <ti ricordi> ?

No, even at noon. Because they start- We have to go there early, because they are going to close the road, remember?

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv01)

SIL asks HED what she wants to do (incidentally, the turn is opened by *sentì*), but HED cannot answer the question: she first has to understand what SIL's plans are. Note how the presence of *ecco* (literally 'here/there it is', or 'here/there you are') suggests that the question about SIL's plans for Sunday is something HED had been thinking about and intended to discuss. With the question "come tu avresti predisposto / la cosa di domenica?" HED starts a pre-second insert expansion.⁶⁵

SIL answers the question (or, more precisely, she says that she cannot answer, and explains why), and after a series of acknowledgments the embedded sequence is completed. HED now goes back to the higher-level sequence⁶⁶ and states that she may join

⁶⁵ That is, an expansion "preliminary to some particular type of second pair part which has been made relevant next by the type of first pair part to which it is responding" (Schegloff 2007: 106), or in other words: an expansion inserted "between the base FPP and the base SPP" (Liddicoat 2007: 125). In the present example, the expansion is preliminary to the answer made relevant by the preceding question.

⁶⁶ The second token of *sentì* is preceded by *ma*. I do not analyze *ma* in this work, but the reader can refer to Bazzanella (1995: 233), who considers it to be a turn-taking signal.

the trip. Both the transition to the embedded sequence and the one back to the main sequence are marked by *sentì*.⁶⁷

In view of cases like (22) and (23), I suggest that *sentì* signals the beginning of what we could call, in general terms, a new “activity”. By changing to a new topic, or engaging in a new sequence, speakers turn to a new course of action, they set out to accomplish a new job through their interaction. *Sentì* helps speakers make the beginning of such an activity clear for their interlocutors.

As a natural consequence, *sentì* also serves to indicate shifts at the level of the conversation’s global structure. This is exemplified in (24), the initial part of a phone call in which speakers LIA and MAX make arrangements for an appointment that MAX will have with a third person.

(24)

*MAX: pronto //

Hello?

*LIA: Massimo ?

Massimo?

*MAX: sì ?

Yes?

*LIA: **sentì** / ti volevo dire / su per giù / su che ora lo vuoi l’ appuntamento ?

Sentì, I wanted to ask you: roughly, at what time should the appointment be?

*MAX: mah / &he [///] e / perchè / a che ora / &he incomincia / <a ricevere> ?

Well, uh uh why? When do the office hours start?

*LIA: [<] <non lo so> / appunto // a che ora ti va bene / a te ? io non lo so / se <lui> mi dice / alle quattro / alle tre / alle <sei> //

I don’t know, that’s the point. When would it fit you? I don’t know if he says at four, at three, at six.

*MAX: [<] <eh> // <è> di pomeriggio / comunque //

Uh so it’s in the afternoon, in any case.

*LIA: sì // diamine / <lui / te> +

Yes. Gosh, he-

*MAX: [<] <sì sì> // no no / va bene // prima possibile / naturalmente // <le quattro> //

Yes yes, no no, it’s okay. As early as possible, of course. At four.

(C-ORAL-ROM itelpv07)

In (24) we recognize the typical elements of a phone call’s opening. The opening part of telephone conversations typically includes a summons/answer-sequence, a mutual identification, greetings, and the introduction of the first topic as the reason for calling, which ends the opening part and leads to the core of the conversation (see Gülich/Mondada 2008: 7, Spiegel/Spranz-Fogasy 2001: 1247).

⁶⁷ Since SIL has opened her initial question with *sentì*, one can hypothesize a priming effect as a cause for the subsequent occurrence of *sentì*. This may be the case. Still, it does not change anything for our observations, since the following tokens could have been uttered independently from the presence of the first.

After MAX has answered the phone (“pronto?”), LIA identifies her interlocutor by saying “Massimo?”. With the following “sì?”, MAX confirms the identification and signals that he is listening and LIA can go on. LIA’s following turn states the reason for the call (see “ti volevo dire /”) and thereby introduces the first topic of the conversation, namely the arrangements for MAX’s appointment (“su per giù / su che ora lo vuoi l’ appuntamento?”). This turn by LIA is prefaced by *sentì*. Once more, we can assume that by uttering the marker, LIA is not trying to calling for attention, since MAX has just signalled that he is listening to her. Rather, what is important here is that LIA is leaving the opening moves and coming to the main point of her call. At this point of the conversation, she may well want to make sure that MAX follows her, and she uses *sentì* to prepare the transition.⁶⁸

This use is also observed by Manili (1983: 51), who remarks that *sentì* can be found at the beginning of the discourse or of a new topic; similarly, Khachaturyan (2001) states that *sentì* preserves discourse coherence at the beginning of conversations or at topic shifts; Bazzanella (1995) includes *sentì* in the category of “demarcativi”, which mark the structuring of discourse and the relation between topics.

Just as it introduces the core part of a conversation, *sentì* can be used at the transition from the core to the closing part. In example (25), speakers SER and ROB are talking on the phone about ROB’s intention to report a theft to the police. ROB is planning to go to a nearby police station, but SER advises her to call the emergency number first and ask which station she should go to. After agreeing on this, the participants end the call.

(25)

*SER: [<] <comunque può esse'> che tu la denuncia la devi anda' a fare / sul nucleo / che corrisponde / all' Ikea //

But it may be that you have to report to the unit in Ikea's district

*ROB: no // <xxx su> ?

No way! xxx up there?

*SER: [<] <coi carabinieri> // eh / mi sa // telefonagli prima // <telefona al centododici direttamente> per chiedere //

To the police. I'm afraid so. Call them first. Call the 112 directly and ask them.

*ROB: [<] <eh / no // io ce l' ho> # [/] <ce l' ho> dietro casa //

Oh no! There is one- ... There is one just next to my place.

*SER: [<] <perché> + eh lo so / però xxx là // 'un so / così // <&dipartimenta> +

Because- yes, I know, but xxx there. I don't know, like, department-

*ROB: [<] <mh> //

Mh.

⁶⁸ I have posed myself the question whether *sentì* may be a conventionalized device to mark the transition to a conversation’s core part. I have examined the human-to-human phone calls from the C-ORAL-ROM as a sample – for the simple reason that recordings made in interactions of other kinds most often do not include any opening part – and I have found that out of 14 recordings which contained the opening of the conversation, seven featured *sentì* at the transition between opening and core part. A larger set of data would be necessary to prove or disprove this hypothesis.

*SER: però chiediglielo //
But do ask them.
 *ROB: va bene //
Okay.
 *SER: chiederai / e fanno +
You ask them, and they will do-
 *ROB: va bene //
Okay.
 *SER: vabbuo ?
Okay?
 *ROB: **senti** / niente // va bene // ci sentiamo domani allora //
Senti, that's it. Okay. I'll talk to you tomorrow, then.
 *SER: mh // ciao //
Mh. Bye.
 *ROB: ciao //
Bye.
 (C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv14)

With the turn “*senti / niente // va bene // ci sentiamo domani allora //*”, ROB is clearly beginning the closing part of the conversation. Just before it, there are the turns “*va bene*” – “*vabbuo ?*” (note that SER’s “*vabbuo ?*” has an interrogative intonation, but it does not have the function of a question addressed to ROB, and indeed ROB does not treat it as such), which together form a pre-closing. These are turns “whose business seems to be to ‘pass’, i.e. to indicate that [a speaker] has not now anything more or new to say” (Schegloff/Sacks 1973: 304). By avoiding the production of further topically coherent turns, or the initiation of a new topic, both speakers manifest that they do not have anything to add. In the turn opened by *senti*, then, ROB further confirms that the topic can be closed (“*niente // va bene*”) and proposes an arrangement for the next call (“*ci sentiamo domani allora*”), which is accepted by SER (“*mh*”). SER then starts the terminal exchange with the FPP “*ciao*”, to which ROB responds (on closings see Schegloff/Sacks 1973, Gülich/Mondada 2008: 82, Spiegel/Spranz-Fogasy 2001: 1248). *Senti* thus appears again at a transition point, in this case at the transition between the conversation’s core and the closing part. Once more, the marker helps the speaker move on by signalling a change from what was said and done up to that point to something new and ensuring that the interlocutor will keep pace.⁶⁹

7.1.5. Expressing a speaker’s attitude

I will now turn to a use of *senti* which acts on a different aspect of conversation: it does not concern the conversation’s structure, but rather the attitude of the speaker to the addressee, and therefore the interpersonal relationship between participants. In example

⁶⁹ Interestingly, a similar use of French *écoute* is shown by Gülich/Mondada (2008: 82). In a conversation-analytical perspective, we would say that *senti* constitutes one of the devices that the speaker uses to properly initiate the closing.

(26), we observe a telephone conversation in which two friends called SIL and HED are talking about HED's state of health. The excerpt contains two tokens of *sentì*.

(26)

*SIL: domenica / sei andata poi a camminare // come sei stata ?

Did you go hiking on Sunday? How was it?

*HED: sì // oh // d' un bene // bellissimo / guarda //

Yes. Oh, great! Wonderful, guarda.

*SIL: sì ma / ih stavi male / come corpo ?

Yes, but uh did you feel bad, physically?

*HED: ma / **sentì** / quando son andata via / non riuscivo a camminare //

*Well, **sentì**, when I started I couldn't walk well.*

*SIL: mh //

Mh.

*HED: poi faceva anche caldo //

Moreover it was hot.

*SIL: mh //

Mh.

*HED: xxx mal + a parte la schiena / ce l' ho sempre uguale / ecco // quella / non non + perché quella / deve esser' un' altra cosa // io voglio far anche la radiografia / **sentì** / a questo punto // mentre poi / camminando / stavo meglio //

*xxx ache- Apart from the fact that the back is still the same, that's not not- Because that must be something different; I also want to take an x-ray, **sentì**, at this stage. But after walking for a while I felt better.*

*SIL: eh //

Ah.

*HED: quando camminavo / come quando siamo andati a Monte Morello / eh lo sento / i muscoli // &cap +

While I was walking, the same as when we went to Monte Morello: uh I can feel the muscles, you kno-

*SIL: eh //

Yes.

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv01)

In the first turn, SIL asks if HED went for a walk on the past Sunday and how she felt. HED's response begins with *ma sentì*. In this turn, none of the functions of *sentì* seen up to now is at play. Since SIL has asked a question and selected HED as the next speaker, there is no need for HED to call for attention, nor is there any evidence of formulation troubles. By answering SIL's question, HED carries on the adjacency pair and the topic initiated by SIL, and no shift is operated.

What is relevant at this point of the conversation is that HED is expected to answer a question, but, as it turns out, she cannot make any straightforward answer: SIL has asked a polar question ("stavi male / come corpo?"), but HED cannot simply chose between "yes" or "no". Instead, she begins a long report which depicts an unstable state of health. HED's answer is what is called a "nonconforming" answer (Raymond 2003).

Raymond (2003: 944) observes that “the grammatical forms of many FPPs project, in varying degrees of specificity, a particular item or shape for response they make relevant”; in particular, yes/no interrogatives “ostensibly reduce the response they make relevant to a choice between alternative tokens: prototypically ‘yes’ and ‘no’”. Raymond’s study demonstrates that answerers depart from this constraint when a question is somehow problematic for them, e.g. when it comes with presuppositions which the answerer cannot accept, but which she would appear to accept if she gave a type-conforming answer. SIL’s question implies that HED’s state of health was the same all day long, and by answering with “yes” or “no”, according to the preference set by the question’s design, HED would implicitly confirm this. Instead of giving a yes/no SPP, HED describes how her state of health changed during the day.

I would like to argue that the use of *senti* here is due precisely to the fact that HED’s answer does not follow the preference set by the question. In giving this answer, the speaker does something which does not fit the interlocutor’s expectations. In this context, *senti* signalizes that the speaker wishes the interlocutor to accept her answer despite the fact that it is not completely adequate. It will be shown later (see chapter 8) that tokens of *senti* occurring in this kind of context are interpreted by native speakers as evidence of troubles in answering and of a self-asserting attitude.

Incidentally, all answers preceded by *senti* in the corpora were characterized by being somehow “inadequate” with respect to the questions. In some cases, the speaker affirmed that she did not exactly know the facts asked about, or could not explain them. In other cases, the answer was, as the one above, not type-conforming: either the question aimed at specific information (which one? how long? at what time?), but the answer did not contain it, or it set two possible alternatives (polar question, question about preference between two objects), but none of them was chosen in the answer.

Let us now go back to example (26). While answering SIL’s question, HED comes to speak about her plan to take an x-ray picture. The utterance “io voglio far anche la radiografia” is followed by *senti*. This is the only token in the corpora which is postposed to its scope. This position must therefore be assumed to be quite rare, but it is indeed perfectly possible. Although it is not visible from the transcript, the prosodic features clearly manifest the marker’s connection with the preceding segment. There is a continuously falling pitch movement over “io voglio far anche la radiografia / *senti*” and a pitch reset associated with increased speed after *senti* at the onset of “a questo punto”. In this turn-medial and scope-final position, the marker cannot play any role in attention-getting, nor in turn-management, because it does not have any introductory value. Instead, it has the effect of stressing the preceding utterance by giving it an insistent tone.

Consider that HED has just described her plan in a rather strong way (“io voglio”) and the action she is talking about is not quite ordinary: people do not take x-ray pictures for just any backache, but only for serious afflictions. *Senti* seems to add to this utterance an appeal to agree with the speaker, i.e. to approve of her intention, even if it may surprise us. The plan announced by HED corresponds to what we can call, using Vaskó’s (2000: 261) words, “a state of affairs that differs from what the speaker would consider

'standard' or 'usual'". A speaker describing such a state of affairs may well need to prevent doubts or rejections by means of appropriate pragmatic devices.⁷⁰ In sum, both tokens of *senti* in this example concern the interpersonal relationship between the participants; their role is to convey the speaker's request for a certain kind of reaction towards her utterance.

It should be noted that the function just described belongs to the kind of functions that are generally subsumed under the label of modalization. *Senti* is not normally considered to be a modalizer, and it is generally associated with turn-taking and discourse structuring functions. Still, some of the functions attributed to it in the literature (softening the impact of an unpleasant utterance, creating emotional involvement) point to modal uses. Khachaturyan's (2001) paper is the only work that focuses on this facet, though not calling it modal (I will come to the position of my study with respect to that of Khachaturyan later).

Pons Bordería (2006: 87) characterizes modalization as including "the expressions of the self"; processes like hedging, stressing, signalling agreement and disagreement are modal inasmuch as, through them, a speaker "includes his or her point of view in language". This is what *senti* does here: it signals the speaker's point of view, putting it into a relationship with that of the addressee.

One can easily notice the resemblance of the function just analyzed with functions that are typically attributed to, for instance, modal particles. According to König and Requardt (1991: 70), modal particles show "the degree of strength (evidence, confidence, insistence) with which a statement is made or a directive is uttered". Weydt (1969: 68) affirms that modal particles serve to express the attitude of the speaker towards what she is saying. By this I do not mean that *senti* should be equated with modal particles. The class of modal particles is defined not only by functional but also by morphosyntactic features (they are monosyllabic, uninflectable, syntactically integrated) which are not valid for *senti*. The class is actually typical of some languages only, in particular Germanic ones, and even if some items classifiable as modal particles have been identified in Romance languages, too (for example the French *bien*, according to Waltereit and Detges (2007)), this could obviously not be the case for an inflectable, syntactically independent item such as *senti*. However, a brief look at a class of typically modalizing elements such as that of modal particles, which might otherwise seem quite dissimilar from *senti*, is sufficient to reveal that *senti* has a decidedly modal value in some of its uses.

The next example further illustrates this use. The segment is taken from a familiar conversation between an old lady called LIA, her son MAX, and another relative, a woman called ELA. They are looking at some family pictures.

(27)

*LIA: guarda com' era bellina / qui / la mi' cugina // mamma mia //
 Look how pretty she was here, my cousin. Oh my God.

⁷⁰ We can see this in Vaskó's paper on the Hungarian discourse particles *de* ('but') and *is* ('too, either').

- *ELA: ah / non la riconosco / perché l'è una neonata // sì bellina / la [/] la Elena //
Oh. I can't recognize her because she's a baby. Yes, she's pretty, th- this Elena.
- *LIA: mah // da vecchiona è / ora //
Yeah. She looks so old now.
- *ELA: eh / <non> +
Uh no-
- *MAX: [<] <non> è vero nulla //
That's not true at all.
- *LIA: eh / un po' vecchiona / <l' è> //
She does look quite old.
- *MAX: <non è vero nulla //
That's not true at all.
- *ELA: [<] <sì / però / &a> [/] avrei avuto difficoltà / a riconoscerla //
Yes, but I- I wouldn't have recognized her.
- *LIA: <bah / se> +
Well, if-
- *ELA: [<] <perchè / è> cambiata tanto // era &ca [/] molto carina qui // <molto carina> //
Because she has changed a lot. She was pre- very pretty here. Very pretty.
- *LIA: [<] <sì / sì / non è mica brutta> // come persona specialmente / era fatta benino ...ora
 che vò / tutta gobba gobba / tutta &sl +
*Yes yes, she wasn't ugly at all. Especially the physique, she was well-proportioned... But now, what
 are you going to do? She's all hunched, all-*
- *ELA: mah / porina // **senti** noi / s' è [/] s' è trovata anche abbastanza bene //
*Oh, poor her. **Senti**, we found she looked quite fine.*
- *LIA: eh / sommato tutto //
Well, altogether.
- *ELA: rispetto / al matrimonio / <s' è [/] s'era trovata / parecchio più giù> //
Compared to the wedding; we- we found she looked much lower then.
- *LIA: [<] <ah / sì eh> // <meglio / di quando> ...
Oh, sure. Better than...
- *ELA: [<] <più giù di spirito> //
Much lower in spirit.
- (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamcv01)

Senti is again in a turn-medial position, where the speaker is by no means in danger of losing the turn, and is produced before an utterance that continues the current topic. But similarly to (26), what the speaker is about to say creates some contradiction with an idea of the interlocutor. In (26), the first utterance featuring *senti* was in contradiction with the preferred answer format, and the second one diverged for its content from “what the speaker would consider ‘standard’ or ‘usual’”. In the present example, LIA affirms that her cousin used to be good looking (“come persona specialmente / era fatta benino ...”), but she is not anymore (“ora che vò / tutta gobba gobba”); ELA expresses a different evaluation: “noi / s' è [/] s' è trovata anche abbastanza bene //”. The addition of *senti* underlines the contrast and clarifies that the speaker intends to assert her idea against the one of the interlocutor.

What emerges from (26) and (27) is that *senti* can be used on an interpersonal level to convey a request for a certain response: accepting a non-type-conforming answer, agreeing with (or approving of) the speaker's plans, and agreeing with her evaluation of things.⁷¹ In general terms, then, we can say that *senti* is able to convey a request to respond in a way that corresponds to the goals the speaker pursues with the utterance.

7.1.6. Marking quoted speech

I will now illustrate the last main function I detected in the corpus data: that of marking quoted speech. 11 out of the 136 analyzed tokens of *senti* were found in this kind of context. Recall that by "quoted speech" I mean not only actual quotations of what somebody said at some previous point, but also the embedment of constructed direct speech (see section 6.2).

Let us examine this function in example (28), a segment from a phone call between a young man named CRI and his uncle ZIO. CRI's mobile phone has been stolen from his apartment while he was sleeping. His flat mate had left, and the door was accidentally left open. The circumstances lead CRI to suspect the cleaning lady. CRI has then learned from the police that the mobile phone operator registered a call to Romania after the theft. After recounting these facts to ZIO, CRI is now discussing with him the idea of talking to a person from the house administration in order to find out whether the cleaning lady is Romanian, and whether there is any way to recover the phone.

(28)

*ZIO: se invece questa è rumena / no +

But if she IS Romanian – okay? –

*CRI: mh //

Mh.

*ZIO: / uno / all' amministratore / je fa un bello discorso // je dirà [/] je dice / **senta** / noi / non famo niente / no / ecco // per lo meno facci artrova' 'sto [/] 'sto cazzo di cellulare / parlace tu / no //

One makes a nice proposal to the administrator. One will say- One says: "senta, we won't do anything, okay? Alright. But at least let us find this- this bloody mobile, talk to her."

*CRI: sì / <infatti> //

Yes, exactly.

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv13)

ZIO advises CRI what to say to the house administrator by directly "showing" the prospected talk in a quotation. The quotation is introduced with a *verbum dicendi*, "je dice"⁷² (the verb is in the third person singular because the subject is the same as in the previous sentence: "uno"). *Senta* appears immediately after the *verbum dicendi*, at the beginning of the quotation, and it is part of it: ZIO is certainly not addressing CRI with

⁷¹ That is: the response can concern the content of the speaker's utterance (agreement on the plan, on the evaluation expressed) and/or the utterance's function (acceptance of it as an answer to the question).

⁷² Recall that "je" is a geographically marked form of the pronoun "gli" ('to him') (see footnote 55).

the marker, as demonstrated by the choice of the polite form *senta*, but is simulating the interaction between CRI and the administrator. *Senti* is typically used when some interlocutor is present (in contrast to markers like *allora* or *dunque*, which we can well use when talking to ourselves), and it constitutes a direct appeal to the interlocutor, as is evident from the inflection for person and number. Its presence thus recreates a situation of direct speech and can be exploited to characterize a quotation as such. Using *senti*, a speaker can underline the change from her own perspective to that of the quoted speaker; or we could also say: she clarifies the change of deictic origo operated by the quotation. Redeker (2006: 344) remarks that quotations “shift the deictic center of the discourse [...] and refer indexically to the context in which the quoted speech was uttered or is imagined to be uttered.” The marking of the deictic shift by means of *senti* is well visible in ZIO’s turn, as the polite form *senta* clearly makes reference to a different situation – and a different addressee – than the present one. Surprisingly, the use of *senti* in quotations was mentioned, to my knowledge, only by Stammerjohann (1977).

Note that this function has to be regarded as a “second-level” function as compared to the others. While the other functions are inherent in the marker and directly arise from its property of performing some kind of appeal to the addressee, this one is based on the fact that the marker’s presence recalls a certain type of interaction and helps in creating the illusion of it. As Travis (2005: 117) observes regarding the use of the Spanish *bueno* in quotations, this “is best treated as a secondary function, and [...] the role of *bueno* in this environment is to ‘quote’ one of the other functions”.

7.1.7. A unified account: a basic function of *senti*

Summing up the functions described up to now, *senti* can be used to create attention while opening a turn-at-talk, interrupt another speaker, and keep the turn in case of formulation troubles. It can also redirect attention from what was said and done before to some new activity, and thereby introduce the shift to a new topic, the start of a new sequence, or the transition to the next part of a conversation; moreover, it conveys an appeal to respond to the utterance according to the speaker’s goals. Finally, it fulfils the “second-level” function of marking quotations by simulating a situation of direct speech.

Each of these functions can be the main or even the only function of *senti* in a given context. Very often, however, a single token of the marker fulfils more than one task, affecting different aspects of the interaction at once. This is what Bazzanella (2006a) calls the “syntagmatic multifunctionality” of discourse markers: not only can different instances of a marker perform different functions – i.e. the “paradigmatic multifunctionality” – but one single token can also accomplish many tasks simultaneously. Similarly, Pons Bordería (2006: 79) speaks of polyfunctionality at a “type level”, meaning that an element is able to express different values on different occasions, and at a “token level”, meaning that one token of an element can manifest functions at different levels of discourse at the same time.

This property can be observed in example (29). In a television interview, speaker A is interviewing the journalist and TV-cook B and her husband C, a sport journalist. A has remarked that B is always wearing somewhat sexy clothes; B and C react to her statement.

- (29)
- 01 C: [io? io non] [sono una] persona geLOsa,
I'm not a jealous person,
- 02 B: [haha]
Haha (laughing)
- 03 A: [mh-]
Mh.
- 04 B: [no,]
Indeed not.
- 05 C: (-- e trovo che sia MOLto bello?
and I think it's very nice
- 06 che::: che LEI.=
that... that she
- 07 =ins insomma diMOStri anche; °h
w- well, that she shows
- 08 B: [(no? eh?)]
No- uh-
- 09 C: [la sua belLEZ]za oltre alla sua pre[parazione ()]
her beauty, besides her education ()
- 10 B: [ma **senti** GIA' sto in]
cucina tutto il [giorno.=]no,=
But senti, I spend all day in the kitchen, to start with. You understand?
- 11 A: [((ride))]
(laughs)
- 11 B: =e anCOra mica mi devo [mettere pure il gremBIUle;=dai=-]
I don't have to wear an apron on top of everything, come on!
- 12 A: [(già) almeno mi metto due due TAC]
[chi;=eh-]
Yes, at least I will wear high heels.
- 13 B: [=qualche soddis]faZIOne;
Some satisfaction...

(IB3)

While C is responding to A's statement, explaining that he is not jealous and approves of his wife's style, B starts talking in overlap with him. B makes a first attempt to talk at line 08, starting with "no? eh?", but immediately gives up. Then she tries again (line 10), this time beginning with the markers *ma senti*, which she utters in a louder voice, and she goes on her first TCU. Now, it is C who relinquishes the turn. Even if his current TCU is not complete at the moment of the overlap, C does not fight to keep the turn; instead, he decreases the volume to the extent that the last syllables are not understandable (and therefore transcribed with the blank space "()"), and he stops. B goes on with her turn, which gives an ironic justification of her dressing preferences: since she spends all day in the kitchen – which probably represents a rather boring occupation, or even a sign of little emancipation as a woman – she wants to at least be satisfied with her clothes.

B's turn is directed to A as a response to her previous comment on B's outfit. That B is addressing A, and not C, is evidenced by the eye gaze in the video, but also by A's reaction, which expresses understanding ("già") and adds to B's argumentation ("almeno mi metto due due TACchi;=eh-"). So, B is taking A's attention away from C's turn and directing it to her own. The *senti* placed at the beginning of the overlap allows the speaker to announce the upcoming talk, call attention on it, and thereby take the turn-at-talk and interrupt the current speaker. At the same time, the presence of *senti* adds an insistent tone to B's statement, signalling her wish that A agree with what she says and accept it as a justification for the facts discussed. The justification, which is evidently not serious (note A's laughter), gets a more resolute tone with *senti* and its humorous character is thereby underlined. In short, *senti* fulfils more than one function at once; it helps the speaker manage different tasks related to one stretch of talk, both with regard to its production and to the goals pursued with it.

Along with the observation of this multifunctionality, it will be noticed that the various functions of *senti* do not seem to be completely separate from one another. They do not appear as the result of distinct messages attached to the same form, but instead as mutually related. Let us leave aside, for the moment, the function of marking quoted speech, which is obviously related to the others in the sense that it "reproduces" them inside quotations. The function of indicating that the speaker is about to start what I have called a new "activity", and that of inviting the interlocutor to respond to the utterance in accordance with the speaker's goals, are possibly two interpretations of a more generic appeal to cooperate in what the speaker is about to do (or has just done, in the rare case of postposed *senti*) on different interactional levels. Such an appeal of course entails the announcement of some upcoming talk and attracts attention to it, which has consequences for the management of attention and turns. It should then be possible to account for the multifunctionality of *senti* by means of a unified functional description, that is, the description of a general, more abstract, but more comprehensive function from which more specific ones can be derived.

I would like to propose that the basic function of *senti* can be formulated as that of **expressing an appeal to attend to the activity currently being carried out by the speaker in a way that complies with the speaker's intentions**. Depending on what the speakers are doing in a given context, this basic function – or we could call it "basic message" – will be exploited for different purposes: it will work as a request to pay attention, and/or to redirect one's attention to something new, and/or to respond in a way that corresponds with the goals pursued by the speaker; any function can be in the foreground, according to the context. In addition, the very presence of the marker signals that something else is going to be said and thus draws attention, due to the fact that it cannot be uttered alone, but always accompanies some other utterance.

Thinking of *senti* this way helps us explain the fact that even if it is most commonly regarded as an attention-getter and opening-signal, it is not equivalent to other markers that are classified in the same way, such as *guarda* or *vedi*. *Senti* – and the others as well – encodes a message that goes beyond the simple appeal to listen; it conveys

complex information about the speaker's intentions and has therefore further consequences for the interpretation of the utterance, which cannot be the same as for other markers.

Incidentally, the description proposed seems consistent with the semantics of the verb "sentire". According to dictionaries,⁷³ "sentire" can have the readings of "udire" ('to hear'), "ascoltare" ('to listen'), "dare retta" ('to pay attention', 'to heed', 'to give credence'), and "ubbidire" ('to obey'). The present work is not concerned with the development of *senti* out of the corresponding verb form; however, it is interesting to note that the semantics of the verb are not dissimilar from the message of the marker as proposed above. The fact that the form "senti" as an imperative verb form can not only be a request to listen to something, but also a request to act in a given way (in the meanings of "dare retta" and "ubbidire"), gives the proposed description of *senti* some diachronic plausibility.

The proposed description is also supported by the fact that, in the corpora, the utterances accompanied by *senti* are utterances that require, for different reasons and on different levels, the addressee's adjustment to some intention of the speaker. Most often *senti* is used in questions, which by their very nature imply that the addressee respond by doing something in the direction established by speaker; requests are also frequent. In addition, *senti* is used by the speakers when expressing opinions that contradict those of the interlocutors (see e.g. (27)), in descriptions of facts that do not match the interlocutors' expectations and wishes or "normal" expectations, and in answers that are not type-confirm or do not provide the information asked for (e.g. (26)). In all of these contexts, what the speaker says and does may be difficult for the interlocutor to accept or comply with. The occurrence of *senti* under these conditions strongly suggests that the marker may be functionally related to the need for a cooperative response.

Similar observations have been made by Khachaturyan: "[g]li enunciati introdotti con *senti* (domanda, incitazione, giudizio soggettivo) presuppongono sempre la reazione dell'interlocutore" ('the utterances introduced by *senti* (question, invitation, subjective judgement) always presuppose a reaction by the interlocutor'); the reaction is expected to be a positive one (Khachaturyan 2001: 131).

Like the present work, Khachaturyan's paper identifies a single fundamental function for *senti*, in terms of a "scenario generale" (see chapter 4). Let me briefly recall how this "scenario generale" is described: *senti p* (*p* being the sequence of utterances introduced by the marker) means that the speaker is sure that the interlocutor will accept *p* as being motivated by the existence of another sequence *q* (Khachaturyan 2001: 134). Sequence *q* can be verbalized, but does not have to be. We understand that *senti* reinforces or recalls the link between *p* and *q*, thereby creating coherence at points like the beginning of a conversation or a topic shift, where coherence would otherwise be in danger (Khachaturyan 2001: 135ff.).

⁷³ See De Mauro (ed.), *Il dizionario della lingua italiana* (2000: 2409) and Simone (ed.) *Il vocabolario della lingua italiana* (2005: 1643f.)

My analysis confirms these statements to a large extent. The request of a reaction, the expectation that the reaction be positive, and the idea of acceptance are supported by my corpus data, which show that *senti* expresses the appeal for a response, and in particular for one that complies with the speaker's intentions.⁷⁴ At the same time, my data are not in complete agreement with Khachaturyan's description in some respects. I could find no evidence that *senti* points to a sequence *q* as a reason for *p*; instead, it seems to me that it is the fact of announcing a new activity *per se* which helps maintain coherence: by appealing to attend to the speaker's upcoming activity, *senti* prefigures a shift and prepares the addressee for it. In other words, I believe that *senti* contributes to coherence by making disruptions explicit, rather than by indexing connections. The existence of a reason for producing *p* could be an inference that we draw when hearing the utterance, probably supported by the request for cooperation expressed by *senti*, rather than being encoded in the marker. Furthermore, I suggest that *senti* does not indicate the speaker's certainty about the interlocutor's acceptance, but rather conveys a request for it, as is suggested by the imperative form.

Summarizing the content of this section, I have proposed that the multifunctionality of *senti*, both in a paradigmatic and in a syntagmatic sense, can be accounted for by assuming a basic function to which more specific ones can be traced back. The functions examined in the preceding sections are oftentimes accomplished simultaneously by one and the same token of the marker and appear to be interrelated, which suggests that they might be instances of a more general function. I have identified the basic function of *senti* as that of expressing an appeal to attend to the speaker's activity in a way that complies with the speaker's intentions – intentions that can concern different levels of the interaction.

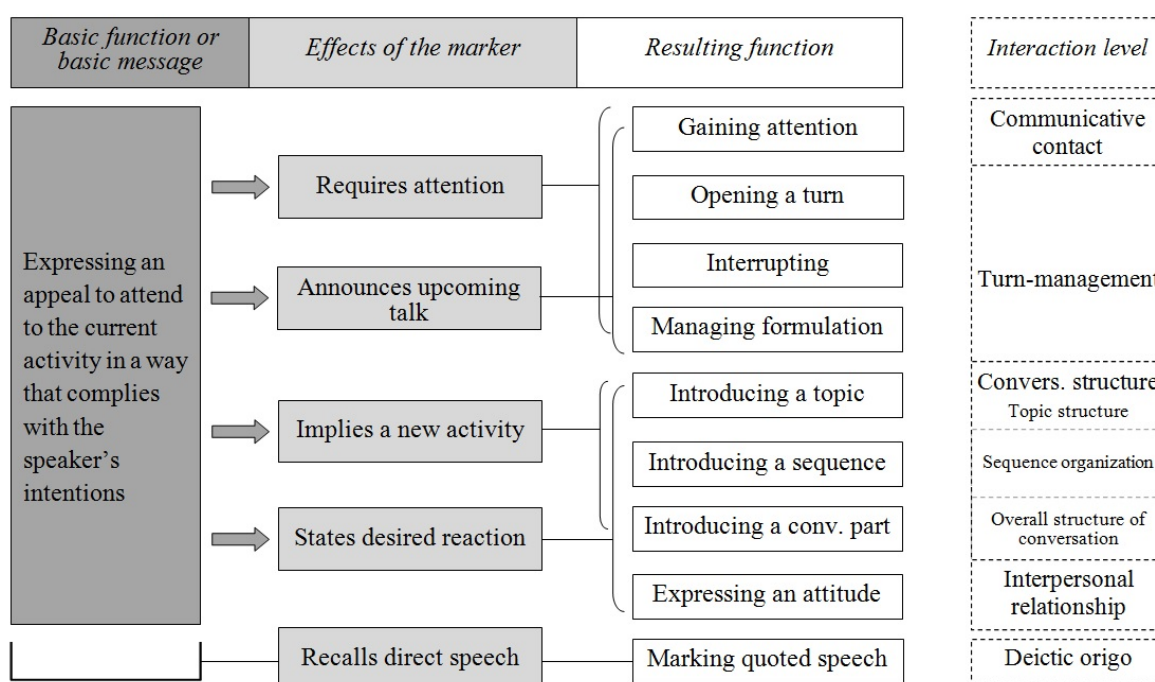
By virtue of this basic message, *senti* is able to assume functions which pertain to different interactional levels (see Figure 2). On a "superficial" level, by conveying an appeal to attend to some activity, *senti* creates attention and announces upcoming talk. As a consequence, it can work as an attention-getter, thereby affecting the level of the communicative contact between participants, and it can be used to mark the beginning of a turn, interrupt another speaker, or hold the turn in case of formulation problems, functioning on the level of turn-management. At the same time, as the message prepares the addressee for the beginning of a new activity, thereby signalling moreover that she will have to cooperate in it, *senti* is used to initiate sequences, introduce new topics, or move to a new part of the conversation, aspects that are of course tightly interwoven.

⁷⁴ I prefer not to talk about "acceptance" in relation to the *basic* function of *senti*, though. Even if in some contexts the term "acceptance" undoubtedly represents a suitable description of the message of *senti*, it seems to point too strongly to the content of utterances (e.g. accepting the idea expressed by the speaker), or to their communicative function (e.g. accepting a suggestion, accepting an answer to a question). My data show that what the addressee is supposed to respond to can concern other levels of the interaction as well; for example, she can be requested to "follow" the speaker in the shift to a new topic. We can still say that the addressee is requested to "accept" the change of topic, but this would not give the due importance to the fact that she is also supposed to cooperate in it. Speaking of "complying with the speaker's intentions" seems to me a more comprehensive description.

When it is employed for these purposes, *sentì* thus acts on the internal structure of the conversation. The marker is also apt to indicate a speaker’s wish for a cooperative response to utterances that can, for various reasons, be at odds with the ideas or expectations of the addressee. So, besides its structuring role, the marker can have a bearing on the level of the interpersonal relationship between participants.⁷⁵

Finally, since the message presupposes the presence of an addressee, and *sentì* is thus typical of direct speech, speakers may use it to mark quotations. In this case, *sentì* works on the level of the deictic origo, in the sense that it contributes to clarifying the change of deictic origo carried out in the quotation.

Figure 2: functioning of *sentì*. The basic message gives rise to different functions on different interactional levels.



⁷⁵ It is clear that, on each of the interactional levels involved, a range of still more specific, circumscribed contextual values can then arise through the use of *sentì* in different situations.

7.2. *Guarda*

7.2.1. Opening a turn

I shall begin the description of *guarda*⁷⁶ by illustrating its use in opening turns-at-talk. Let us look at example (30), which displays a segment from a television interview. Journalist BIA is interviewing VAL, the chief executive and heir of a large company founded by VAL's own family.

(30)

*BIA: la politica / è un aiuto / o un ostacolo ?

Is politics an aid or an obstacle?

*VAL: **guardi** / per uno che fa l'industriale / da un industriale / che vive ed opera nel mondo / la politica / potremmo dire che in quel senso / &aiu [//] non &ser [///] aiuta poco / stavo per dire non serve a niente / la politica / invece / intesa come cittadino / che opera in questa nazione / potrebbe essere una cosa / di grande aiuto / ma non / aiutando le imprese / ma cercando di complicargli la vita il meno possibile //

Guardi, for a company owner, as a company owner who lives and works in the world, one could say that, in this sense, politics is of- is use- is of little help. I was about to say it's useless. On the other hand, politics in the sense of a citizen working in this country could be of great help, but not by helping companies, but by trying to complicate their lives as little as possible.

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedin02)

BIA asks for VAL's opinion about the influence of politics on industry. VAL's answer begins with the marker *guardi*, the polite form of *guarda*. *Guardi* is in turn-initial position, immediately following the transition relevance place. On the basis of this position, we can assume that *guardi* is used as an opening signal here, in the sense that by means of it the speaker signals that he is about to begin the expected turn. Turn-opening belongs to the functions that are most often assigned to the marker *guarda* (see Lichem 1981, Manili 1983, Koch/Oesterreicher 2011).

A further example is given in (31). The interaction takes place in a television talk-show; talk-show host CAT has just quoted an Indian saying about evilness and she asks her guests what they think about it.

(31)

*CAT: [...] // allora / questa senteza indiana / vi ispira qualcosa ?

So, does this Indian statement say anything to you?

*FRA: è una bellissima definizione / <innanzitutto> //

It's a beautiful definition, first of all.

*CAT: [<] <tu> / dove lo senti il tuo veleno ?

%add: refered to Francesca Reggiani [sic]

Where do you feel your poison?

⁷⁶ Part of the analysis carried out in this chapter can also be found in a dedicated paper, see Fuschi (in press).

*FRA: **guarda** / io / ho [/] so di avere una faccia difficile +

Guarda, I have- I know I have a difficult side-

*CAT: eh //

Aha.

*FRA: / so / di avere / moltissimi amici / persone di fiducia eccetera / alcuni li amo molto / e sono un pezzo di pane / mi rendo conto di avere degli sbalzi di umore / spesso con tante persone / i miei amici mi dicono / non hai un carattere facile / io mi ritengo però / una persona buona +

I know I have a lot of friends, people I trust, and so on; some of them I love very much, and I am very kind to them; I'm conscious that I often have mood swings with many people; my friends say: "your character is not easy", but I think I am a good person-

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedts08)

CAT has asked FRA what her evil side is (where her "poison" is); an answer from FRA is now relevant. The *guarda* that prefaces FRA's talk indicates that FRA is about to begin her turn and provide the relevant response.

7.2.2. Interrupting the current speaker, gaining attention

Example (32) shows a segment of a conversation between the members of two bands who share the same rehearsal room and are considering the purchase of some new equipment. They talk about the fact that the microphone they have at present emits an annoying beep.

(32)

*GPA: ma è strano //

But that's strange;

*SRE: io +

I-

*GPA: ché a fischiare /dovrebbero essere le frequenze alte // le frequenze alte / <a lui /xxx>//
'Cos it should be high frequencies that beep. High frequencies, to him xxx

*ANG: [<] <ma **guarda** / l'ho provato> veramente in tutte le posizioni // se mi metto lì / non fischia // però / non mi sento io / <più io> //

*But **guarda**, I've tried it really in all positions. If I stand there, it doesn't beep, but then I can't hear myself anymore.*

*SRE: [<] <anche> [/] anche con me / fischia /spesso //
Also- Also when I sing, it often beeps.

*GPA: eh / ragazzi io / eh ... il [/] l'impianto [/] l'impianto / che vuol dire ? <in termini> +
Well people, I uh... the- the equipment- The equipment, what does it mean? In terms of-

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamcv02)

Guarda appears at the beginning of ANG's turn.⁷⁷ When ANG starts speaking, GPA has not yet reached a completion point, as is visible from the fact that the segment "le

⁷⁷ *Guarda* is preceded by *ma*. As I have already pointed out (subsection 7.1.4, footnote 66), I cannot analyze *ma* here, but it should suffice to say that this item has been classified as a turn-taking signal (Bazzanella 1995: 233). In the present example, the contrastive value of the conjunction *ma* could also be at play, in line with the role of ANG's utterance.

frequenze alte /" is neither semantically nor syntactically autonomous and ends with a non-terminal prosodic break. The two participants speak in overlap for some seconds: GPA continues his turn (whose content is not understandable, though) and produces a terminal break; then, he leaves the turn to ANG.

Note that the situation is characterized by some contrast between GPA's and ANG's view: GPA is expressing his doubts about the problem with the microphone ("è strano", "a fischiare dovrebbero essere le frequenze alte"), and ANG describes some facts which reaffirm this problem. First, she says that she has tried singing from all possible positions (and strengthens the statement with "veramente"), then she concedes that there could be a solution to the problem: the microphone does not beep if she stands at some other place in the room; however, she immediately denies the validity of this solution by saying that she cannot hear herself singing when she stands there.

ANG's turn is designed to counter the reserves expressed by GPA. This argumentative role supports the assumption that ANG's overlap and subsequent interruption have a strategic function and are likely to be done deliberately, in order to defend ANG's position. In this context, *guarda* does not only signal the opening of the turn, but it also works as an interrupting device (see also Fagard 2010, Waltereit 2002). By projecting that the speaker is going to say something, the marker enables her to take the others' attention away from the current speaker and to get the turn for herself.

I already pointed out that attention-getting can hardly be separated from other functions, because the creation of attention is associated with the announcement of upcoming talk (see section 7.1.1). The reader may wonder why I discuss the function of attention-getting here, while in the case of *senti* I discussed it together with that of turn-opening. Because *guarda* is most often found in responsive moves (as is also noticed by Mara (1986: 189)), in most cases of turn-opening *guarda*, speakers actually already have the attention of their interlocutors. Cases in which *guarda* assumes a clear attention-getting role are rather associated with situations in which the speaker has to fight for the turn.

It should be noticed, finally, that while projecting the upcoming talk, the marker also provides the speaker with the opportunity to start speaking without yet presenting any content. So, the speaker has time to get the turn-at-talk while avoiding the risk that some substantial part of her talk may be overcome by the overlap.

7.2.3. Managing formulation troubles

The following example illustrates the use of *guarda* as a means to hold the turn while dealing with formulation problems. This use will be illustrated in example (33), an excerpt from a talk show. Two participants appear in it: the journalist and talk-show-host ANN, and MAS, a member of the parliament.

(33)

*ANN: onorevole Mastella / come mai / ci sono state tante polemiche / sull' annuncio di Berlusconi di voler / formare xxx / queste tre commissioni d' inchiesta // non è la prima volta che si / fanno delle commissioni d' inchiesta //

Mr Mastella, why is there so much quarrelling about Berlusconi's announcement that he wants to form xxx these three boards of inquiry? It's not the first time that boards of inquiry have been used.

*MAS: ma / **guardi** / perché / facendolo / o meglio / annunciando di voler / commissionare al Parlamento / queste tre commissioni d' inchiesta / in realtà / dà l' idea / ancora di essere opposizione / anziché maggioranza // maggioranza / ha possibilità / strumenti / per fare accertamenti / su quelli che sono / le presunte verità / o le presunte bugie // quindi / pare più un atto intimidatorio / rispetto all' opposizione / per dire / stati calmi / buoni / non vi preoccupate / garantisco io / non mi disturbate // il che / evidentemente / insomma crea / un qualche problema //

*Well, **guardi**, because in doing this, better: in announcing that he wants to order the Parliament to form these three boards of inquiry, he actually gives the impression of being still in the opposition and not in the majority party. The majority party has the possibility, it has tools to ascertain supposed truths or supposed lies; so it rather looks like an intimidation towards the opposition; like saying: "be quiet, be calm, don't worry, I will guarantee, don't bother me", which of course creates some troubles.*

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedts04)

ANN has asked for MAS's opinion about some events in the Italian parliament, thus selecting him as the next speaker and making his answer relevant. MAS's answer does not follow immediately, though. What happens here is not shown in the transcript, but is well hearable in the recording: first, MAS breathes in for 1.25 seconds, he utters the markers *ma guardi*, and stops again for 0.61 seconds; then, MAS utters the words "perché/ facendolo /", lengthening the final sounds of both (the last vowel in "perché" has a duration of 0.59 seconds, that of "facendolo" of 0.77 seconds). After another pause of 1.26 seconds, he operates a repair ("o meglio / annunciando di voler / commissionare al Parlamento / queste tre commissioni d' inchiesta /"), and eventually moves on.⁷⁸ In view of MAS's evident difficulties in deciding on the formulation, or possibly on the content of his answer, the marker *guarda* at the beginning of the turn seems to have the primary function of managing the speaker's planning troubles. *Guarda* announces the upcoming content and thus makes it possible for the speaker to start talking, as he is expected to do after ANN's FPP, while gaining time for formulation. This kind of use is also mentioned by Waltereit (2002), who describes *guarda* as a hesitation phenomenon.

7.2.4. Expressing a speaker's attitude

The following example will show the use of *guarda* for the expression of a speaker's attitude towards the addressee. With this function we move to another level of the interaction: that of the interpersonal relationship between speaker and addressee. As I

⁷⁸ In a GAT transcription, the segment would read:

01 A: °hhhh ma (.) **GUARDi**; (--)
 hhh well, **guardi**.
 02 perché:: faCENdolo::.. (1.26)
 because... in doing this...
 03 o MEglio;
 better:
 [...]

pointed out already about *senti*, this belongs to the type of functions that is generally labeled as modal. Let us examine it in example (34), which displays a segment from a telephone conversation between two friends. Two women, called HED and SIL, are making arrangements for a joint trip, when HED notices that her rabbit is gnawing on the ironing board.

(34)

*SIL: [...] appena so qualcosa / ti chiamo / però //
 (...) but as soon as I know something, I'll call you.

*HED: ecco //
 Okay.

*SIL: eh ?
 Alright?

*HED: hei //

%add: Helda is speaking to her rabbit that is nibbling the ironing board while she is speaking on the phone

Hey!

*SIL: mi faccio sentire io //
 I'll call you.

*HED: questa qui / mi mastica anche il coso / **guarda** // è tremenda //

%sit: the rabbit is nibbling the ironing board

This one is chewing even the thingy here, **guarda**. She's terrible.

*SIL: ohi ohi //
 Oh dear!

*HED: questa mi &ma [/] mi masta i &pie [/] mi mangia i piedi &de [/] dell'asse da stiro //

%alt: (5) mastica

She's chew- she's chewing the fee- she's eating the feet of the ironing board.

*SIL: oh figurati //
 Indeed!

(C-ORAL-ROM, itelpv01)

Guarda follows the utterance “questa qui / mi mastica anche il coso /”. The marker is produced in turn-medial position, at a place where the speaker already has the turn and no formulation problems can be detected. For these reasons, its presence cannot be motivated by the functions seen up to now. In fact, no function involving the projection of upcoming talk can be at play: *guarda* evidently refers to the utterance which precedes it, as is manifested by the weaker prosodic break between that utterance and the marker, and the stronger, conclusive break which separates *guarda* from the following speech. Hence, the marker must rather be thought of as a comment on what has been said.

It is worth noting that most frequently, *guarda* occurs precisely in a non-initial position: in the corpora, 30% of the tokens were turn-initial, 60% turn-medial, and 10% turn-final. Also looking at the unit it refers to, i.e. to its scope, one notices that *guarda* does not always introduce it, but often follows it: 60% of the tokens occur before the scope and 40% after it. This means that the role of *guarda* is by no means restricted to announcing

upcoming speech. A closer look at the conversation segment in (34) reveals that *guarda* is indeed playing another role, which concerns the actions performed by the speaker and the content of her utterance.

By saying “questa qui / mi mastica anche il coso /”, HED is describing a fact, and a quite unusual one: the rabbit is “chewing” her ironing board. The adverb “anche” (‘also’ or ‘even’) indicates that the event exceeds what can be called “normal” expectations. The reaction of SIL, namely “ohi ohi” – actually produced just after HED’s utterance, in overlap with “è tremenda” – shows that HED’s utterance has indeed been interpreted as the description of something unexpected and unpleasant. The addition of *guarda* at the end of this statement has the effect of strengthening it, underlining that things are really as the speaker says, although they can appear odd, or even surprising. Note that when saying something which does not correspond to usual expectations, it may well be desirable to stress one’s reliability. In this kind of context, *guarda* assumes the function of signaling that the speaker can be trusted about what she is saying, thereby emphasizing the content and showing the speaker’s involvement. This can be observed by considering the same utterance without the marker: the bare statement “questa qui / mi mastica anche il coso /” is less emphasized and conveys less involvement.⁷⁹

This analysis is, to a large extent, in line with Schwarze’s (1988: 356) explanation of *guarda* as announcing an argumentatively important statement and inviting the addressee to take it seriously. To be precise, my data cannot confirm that utterances featuring *guarda* are generally presented as argumentatively important; in fact, in many of the utterances containing *guarda* this does not seem to be the case, nor is there any evidence that speakers would be trying to present them as so. Conversely, the claim that *guarda* invites the interlocutor to take a statement seriously goes in the same direction as my description: conveying the message that one can trust the speaker – as I have formulated it – can represent an invitation to take seriously what the speaker is saying. This analysis is also in line with Bazzanella’s (1995: 230) statement that *guarda* can strengthen an utterance by stressing the speaker’s conviction. In some contexts, underlining that one can be trusted about what one says can indeed be a way to show that one is convinced about it.⁸⁰

Interestingly, a similar value has been observed for the English *look*. As we read in Brinton (2001: 180), among other functions, the forms *lookee*, *look you*, (*now*) *look (here)*, *lookahere*, and *lookit* can assume the meaning of “believe me when I say...”; moreover, they are said to express epistemic certainty.⁸¹ With regard to *look* and the Dutch parallel form *kijk*, van Olmen (2010b: 228) states that “what is typical of ‘look’ and *kijk* is that the

⁷⁹ As will be shown in chapter 8, native speakers found utterances with *guarda* to express greater certainty.

⁸⁰ However, I prefer to describe the marker as indicating that the speaker can be trusted, and not as indicating conviction, because it seems to me that the first description can be more broadly applied to account for different cases. A speaker can be convinced about an opinion, but when one is – for example – simply reporting on some fact, it becomes problematic to speak about “conviction”. Based on my data, I believe that the marker more generally signals that the speaker can be trusted with respect to her utterances; conviction is one of the possible reasons for which speakers may want to stress their reliability, and is inferred from the specific context rather than being encoded in the marker.

⁸¹ This does not mean that *guarda* and *look* are equivalent. In fact, Brinton (2001) mentions uses of *look* which would not work for *guarda*.

speaker is committed to what follows or, in other words, that, in his of [sic] her opinion, the rest of the utterance is an important and truthful contribution to the conversation" (see also van Olmen 2010a: 80). It seems that a value of commitment, a value of certainty, and an invitation to believe the speaker can also describe the use of *guarda* just shown.⁸²

Let us consider a further example in which this function becomes visible. In (35), we see a part of a private conversation between two young women, SAB and PAO. SAB has recently attended a concert of one of her favorite bands and is talking with PAO about them, in particular about the singer.

(35)

*PAO: [<] loro sono> inglesi // anche lui <è inglese ?

They are English; is he English, too?

*SAB: [<] <si / loro sono> / vicino Londra // di &v + e [///] anche se poi ora vivono in America // sì / in Florida / mi sembra // e nulla / sicché s'è detto / <io> +

Yes, they are from somewhere close to London, from v- and- Even though now they live in America; yes, in Florida, I think. And so we said I-

*PAO: [<] <e lui> con chi sta / xxx ?

And who is he with?

*SAB: lui s'è + c'ha la terza moglie / ora // s'è sposato tre volte // sì / infatti s'è detto / forse ci sa qualche speranza // se le cambia così // c'ha quarant'anni // però **guarda** / non li dimostra per nulla // proprio / più che invecchia / e più che migliora / <**guarda**> //

*He has- he now has his third wife; he got married three times. Yes, that's why we said: "maybe we can still hope, if he changes wives like this." He's forty years old, but **guarda**, he doesn't look like that at all. Really, the older he gets, the better he looks, **guarda**.*

*PAO: [<] <come> il vino //

Like wine.

*SAB: davvero // io / son rimasta proprio / flescata // (...)

Really. I was really dazzled.

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamd109)

The excerpt contains two tokens of *guarda*. The first precedes the segment "non li dimostra per nulla //". This constitutes a very positive evaluation: the singer does not look like a

⁸² I would like to add something to this point. According to van Olmen, *look* generally takes an utterance-initial position, and *kijk* only occurs utterance-finally as an expression of surprise ("utterance final expressive"), which appears to be roughly equivalent to the interjectional *guarda* (see chapter 2, section 2.4). Van Olmen seems to consider the expression of commitment as a property of utterance-initial, but not utterance-final uses. While I cannot judge about *look* and *kijk*, I would like to note that such a restriction does not apply to *guarda*. Van Olmen compares the functions of *look* and *kijk* detected in his corpora with those of *guarda*, *regarde*, and *mira* as have been described by other scholars, with the aim of investigating the rise of the discourse-marking uses from the verbal sources. For *guarda*, he relies on the analysis of Waltereit (2002). He quotes an example of utterance-final *guarda*: "eh no ma ho sbagliato radio guarda" ('huh no but I've made a mistake I've chosen the wrong radio station look') (van Olmen 2010b: 236, original translation, quoted from Waltereit (2002: 990)) and he describes this instance as "adding force" to the utterance. When he comes to the development of the discourse-marking uses in the five languages, however, it seems that utterance-final uses are not taken to express commitment, while only utterance-initial ones are. I argue, instead, that a sense of commitment is also present in utterance-final *guarda*. *Guarda* has the effect of adding force to the utterance exactly *because* it indicates that we can trust the speaker.

forty-year-old, but definitely younger (note the emphasizing use of “per nulla”). The second token modifies the utterance “proprio / più che invecchia / e più che migliora /”, which expresses a further positive evaluation, and is at the same time the statement of a fact which evidently contradicts normal expectations. The playful reaction of PAO, “come il vino //”, demonstrates that this statement is not meant literally, but is rather a slightly exaggerated way for SAB to express her appreciation of the singer’s good looks. Both utterances convey an evaluation that exceeds what can be considered “neutral”, or “average”, and because of this, some support may be required. In this context, the presence of *guarda* stresses that we can trust SAB when making these statements, despite the fact that they may sound excessive.⁸³ By utilizing *guarda*, the speaker shows that she is reliable when saying what she says, and she stresses her involvement.

This function can of course be exploited in contexts where nothing is being stated which contradicts or exceeds normal expectations *per se*, but where it can become useful for other discourse strategic purposes. In (36), *guarda* occurs in an utterance in which the speaker openly contradicts the opinion of the interlocutor. The conversation takes place in a television broadcast. The participants are interviewer A and her two interviewees B and C, a married couple. B, the wife, is a journalist and TV-cook, and C, the husband, is a football commentator (C’s name is replaced by “yyyyyyy” in the transcript). C has worked as a commentator during the Football World Cup, and A affirms that since then he has become somewhat conceited.

- (36)
- 01 A: duemilaSEI i monDIALi?=
In two thousand and six, the World Cup,
- 02 =tu ti sei un po’ montato la TESTa, (-)
you got somewhat of a big head...
- 03 B: [n:o:::.]
No.
- 04 A: [diCIAmolo yyyyy][yy:]
Let’s be honest, yyyyyyy
- 05 C: [grazie a] [grazie a LEI forse no.]
Thanks to- thanks to her maybe not.
- 06 B: [no::;=**guarda**;]
*No, **guarda**.*
- 07 (---)
- 08 C: cioè (.) LEI [le::]
I mean, she-
- 09 A: [siamo] sicuri;
Are you sure?
- 10 C: sì sì.=sono abbastanza siCUro;
Yes, yes, I’m pretty sure.

(IB2/1)

⁸³ In arguing that *guarda* underlines the speaker’s reliability, I do not wish to claim that speakers consciously think about potential doubts of their interlocutors. It is clear that discourse markers are used in a largely automatic way. The proposed analysis does not intend to describe speakers’ thoughts, but is meant as a way to represent the message that is behind the marker’s use.

Speaker B first reacts to A's statement by expressing her disagreement with "n:o:::"; at the same time A adds "diCIAmolo yyyyyyy";, by which she urges the interlocutors to admit that she is right. B then repeats her utterance "no::;", this time with *guarda*. The repetition, and the straightforward formulation of the contradiction – note, in contrast, C's less confident "forse no" – characterize this utterance as a clear attempt by B to affirm her version of the facts against A's insistence. The addition of *guarda* underlines B's intention to persuade A, by emphasizing that B can be trusted and, hence, that A is wrong and should rethink her evaluation. At the same time, showing reliability for what one says also implies that one has concerned oneself with the issue talked about, and is not contradicting the interlocutor recklessly. The speaker is trying to convince the other by indicating that she can be trusted, she is not just enforcing her own view. As a result, the speaker's position is underpinned, but the contrast with the interlocutor's idea is expressed in a less face-threatening way. This mechanism is pointed out by Weydt (2006: 209) with reference to German particles: particles which indicate that a speaker is taking into account the interlocutor's point of view lead hearers to perceive the speech as friendly. The association of this effect with *guarda* is consistent with descriptions of this marker as mitigating unpleasant messages (Manili 1983), and as being used in case of disagreement (Manili 1986).

7.2.5. Marking quoted speech

The last function of *guarda* that emerged from my data is that of marking quotations. 41 out of the 141 analyzed tokens were found in quoted speech. The use of *guarda* in this context is illustrated in example (37), which shows a part of the intervention of an education inspector during a teacher training. The inspector (ISP) is talking about the importance of teachers informing children's parents about their didactic plans; she makes a comparison with what a medical doctor would say to a patient's mother.

(37)

*ISP: [...] se prendo invece un medico serio / cosa dice / **guardi** signora / rispetto a questi sintomi / allora / io credo che sia opportuno fare questo piano // prima gli facciamo questo / poi questo poi questo / dopo di che vediamo dove siamo arrivati / facciamo questo tipo di xxx ... fa un progetto // [...]

[...] if I take a serious doctor instead, what does he say? "**Guardi** Madam, in view of these symptoms, I think it's advisable to make this plan: first we do this, then this, then this, then we see how far we have come, we make this kind of xxx..." He creates a project. [...]

(C-ORAL-ROM, inatpe03)

ISP wants to give an example of what a serious doctor would say to a child's mother, and she does so by quoting the doctor's (fictitious) words. After the introduction with a *verbum dicendi*, "cosa dice", the quotation begins with "guardi signora". The marker, combined with the address term, stresses the shift to the perspective of the doctor talking

to the mother, or put differently, the shift from the deictic centre of speaker ISP to that of the quoted speaker. As I have argued about *senti*, *guarda* also presupposes the presence of an interlocutor, so uttering *guarda* recreates the situation of direct speech and contributes to marking the following talk as a quotation.

This use has been observed by Fagard (2010) and by Waltereit (2002). Waltereit argues that *guarda* occurs in quotations because it enables speakers to stress the change of viewpoint, which is often also a change of topic (Waltereit 2002: 993). Although my data do not support the assumption that *guarda* serves to change the topic (see section 7.3.3 below), I completely agree with the interpretation that *guarda* signals the change to a distinct viewpoint.

As in the case of *senti*, the function of marking quotations represents a “second-level” function, because in contrast to the others, it does not follow from the marker’s inherent properties, but instead from the fact that *guarda* is typical of direct speech and usefully contributes to simulating it.

7.2.6. A unified account: a basic function of *guarda*

We have seen that *guarda* can serve to open a turn, to interrupt the current speaker, thereby also attracting attention, to hold the turn in case of formulation troubles, and to convey the message that we can trust the speaker, with the effect of emphasizing and underpinning statements. Finally, it is exploited to mark quoted speech.

Needless to say, even though these functions have been presented separately, more often than not they are co-present. Consider the following example from a television interview: interviewer A asks the interviewee, actress B, whether her colleagues resent her for having married a film director (probably implying that, in their view, B would owe her career to the husband and not to her own talent).

- (38)
- 01 A: ma? e? ti FANno sentire in COLpa=
But- and- do they make you feel guilty?
- 02 =che tu sei la moglie del reGIS=
Because you are the wife of the direct-
- 03 =dai;=ci PROvano un po'; (-)
come on, they do try, sometimes,
- 04 [o NO;]
don't they?
- 05 B: [ma] non lo SO?=
Well, I don't know,
- 06 =perché io non: non non SENTo.=
because I don't- I don't hear,
- 07 =n: a me non arRivano?=
n- I don't get
- 08 [=<<ride queste VOci->>]
these rumors,

- 09 A: [be ANche perché.=]
Well, after all,
- 10 B: [e quindi non lo SO;]
so I don't know.
- 11 A: [=è reCENTe il matri]MOnio,=no?=
the marriage is recent, isn't it?
- 12 B: =sì [due ANni.]
Yes, two years.
- 13 A: [da quanto vi siete spoSAti.]
How long have you been married?
- 14 B: due ANni; °h
Two years.
- 15 A: e quindi tu (l) eri GIA';
And so you were already
- 16 brava da PRIma,
good before then,
- 17 e quindi [non lo diRANno-]
and so they will not say that.
- 18 B: [ma? **GUARda**. =]
Well guarda
- 19 =non: in::=
no- in-
- 20 =?in realTA' questo non ci:=
actually, this I don't-
- 21 =non ci BAdo TANTo==
I don't pay attention to it,
- 22 =perché faccio il mio laVOro; °h
because I do my job,
- 23 LEGgo i coPIONi;=
I read the screenplays,
- 24 =CERco di capire qual'è giusto;=
I try to understand which one is right
- 25 =e quale mi SENTo. °h
and which one I feel,
- 26 perché voglio SEMpre cercare di:; °h
because I always want to
- 27 di essere CARica e trasmettere:. (--)
to be energetic and communicate
- 28 quello c che c'è SCRITto. (-)
what is written.
- 29 QUEsto poi alla fine:.
That's it, in the end.

(IB4)

In lines 15-17, A expresses the assumption that B's colleagues probably do not resent B after all, because B got married to the director only recently, and she had already proven to be a good actress before then. B reacts by stating that she does not give much importance to these kinds of things, but simply thinks about doing her job well. In stating this, B contradicts A's presupposition that she does care about what other people say about her. The presence of *guarda* as an introduction to this turn emphasizes that B is going to be honest in her statement, although it will contradict an idea of A.

At the same time, the introduction through *guarda* enables B to manage some tasks concerning the allocation of the turn. Note that B's turn begins just after a possible completion point, namely after "e quindi tu (l) eri GIA'; brava da PRIma", which suggests that B is trying to take the first chance to talk and correct A's presuppositions.⁸⁴ However, a series of hesitation phenomena evidence that B has not completely planned the first utterance when she starts talking (see the lengthened "non:" and "in:;", the repetition of "in" and later of "non ci"). The use of *guarda* allows B to announce her contribution and take the turn as soon as it becomes possible, despite not having fully planned what to say.

Examining the marker's use throughout the corpora, it appears that the observed multiplicity of functions can be subsumed under and explained by one more basic function, which is precisely that of **signalizing to the addressee that the speaker can be trusted with respect to the utterance(s) produced**. By virtue of this message, the marker can be used to convey a speaker's attitude towards what is said and the addressee, for a variety of interactional purposes; at the same time, as the marker announces – when preposed to the scope – that some stretch of talk is going to be produced and creates expectation for it, it can become useful for turn-managing tasks. Any of the functions can gain a prevalent weight over the others, or many functions can be active at once, depending on the aims of the speaker at a given point in the interaction. The function of marking quotations is obviously derived from the same basic one, because it draws on the fact that *guarda* is typically directed to an interlocutor (in accordance with the message it conveys), and therefore recreates a situation of direct speech.

Note that when I describe the basic function as "signalizing that the speaker can be trusted with respect to the utterance(s) produced", I do not intend to say that it is necessarily an invitation to *believe* in what the speaker says, though in many cases – for instance those seen in section 7.2.4 above – this would be an appropriate definition. For a description that strives to be general and explain all instances of use, further aspects have to be taken into account.⁸⁵ In fact, when *guarda* is employed, for instance, to underpin a proposal, it is not so much the belief in the utterance's content that is at stake, but rather the utterance's appropriateness as a proposal in a certain situation. Let me try to illustrate this point in example (39). Speakers A and B are planning a visit to some museums. B remarks that there are too many museums to choose from; A proposes to skip those that are furthest away from the point of departure.

(39)

01 B: =FORse: .
Maybe...

⁸⁴ It should be added that across the whole interview B tries to prevent A from praising her; so it is possible that, also in this case, she wants to avoid that A further praise her talent.

⁸⁵ For this reason, even though in section 7.2.4 I have referred to Brinton's (2001) mention of an epistemic value of *look*-forms and to van Olmen's (2010) characterization of *look* and *kijk* as markers of commitment, I do not describe *guarda* as a marker of commitment, or as an epistemic marker. These would be valid characterizations of *guarda* in many cases, but they would not be precise enough as general explanations.

- 02 A: quin[di potremmo FAre-]
So we could do-
- 03 B: [ci sono troppi muSEI,]
There are too many museums.
- 04 (-)
- 05 A: sì==?allora questo=
Yes. So, this one-
- 06 =se no possiam fare coSI' **guarda**, °h
Or we can do it like this, guarda.
- 07 questi due li lasciamo PERdere? (-)
These two we leave out.
- 08 B: sì?
Yes.
- 09 A: (-) che sono lonTAni?
Because they are far apart.
- 10 B: sì;
Yes.
- 11 A: (--) cioè il museo di castelVECchio=
That is, the Museo di Castelvecchio,
- 12 =?e il museo lapidario maffeIAno?
and the Museo Lapidario Maffeiano.

(PC3)

Once more, *guarda* is clearly attached to the utterance that precedes it (note the prosodic integration in the preceding segment and the breathing that separates it from the following one, which builds a new prosodic unit). Because of its position, *guarda* lacks all projecting value, and one must assume that it is working as a comment qualifying the preceding utterance. This utterance constitutes a proposal for the joint activity of A and B: “possiam fare così” (the reference of “così” follows in the next utterances, which elucidate A’s concrete plan). As in other examples, the effect of the marker is that of underpinning what is said; in this case, more exactly, of underlining A’s wish to convince B that her idea is good. It becomes apparent that the underpinning intent expressed by *guarda* does not necessarily refer to the content of utterances, but it can instead refer to the intentions (we could say: the illocutionary points) that inform them. Put differently: *guarda* does not always refer to what a speaker says, but also to what a speaker does. Brinton (2001) affirms that in the development from the structure “verb form *look* + clause” to the corresponding discourse markers (e.g. *look*, *lookahere*), the forms have undergone a change in scope to the effect that “rather than relating merely to the event expressed in the complement clause, they come to relate to the entire speech event”. I will not go into the discussion of how *guarda* has developed, which is not the focus of my work, but it seems to me that this is precisely what happens with this marker: its message relates “to the entire speech event”.

The assumption of the basic function or basic message above is supported by a number of observable facts concerning the contexts in which *guarda* is used. Across the whole corpora, *guarda* almost exclusively occurs in contexts which not only are well compatible with, but often call for the use of an element able to underline that we can trust the speaker. A large majority of tokens accompany expressions of speakers’

opinions, frequently characterized by being particularly positive or negative, or conflicting with the interlocutors' ideas or expectations, and reports about facts and situations which contradict normal expectations or the assumptions of the interlocutors. *Guarda* is also employed when speakers give accounts of facts or of their personal ideas, defend themselves from criticism, and when they make proposals to the addressees. In all of these cases, we have to do with contexts that favor or require, for different reasons, that the reliability of the speaker be stressed.

At a lexical level, utterances featuring *guarda* often contain adjectives whose meaning implies the contradiction of expectations, such as "strano" ('strange') and "incredibile" ('incredible'), interjections indicating (positive or negative) astonishment, like "Madonna" and "mamma mia" (roughly equivalent to 'boy', 'gosh'), as well as adjectives and adverbs expressing a particularly positive or negative evaluation, e.g. "decisiva" ('decisive'), "bellissimo" ('beautiful'), "perfetti" ('perfect'), "splendidi" ('splendid'), "tremendo" ('terrible'), "allucinante" ('hallucinating', here in the sense of 'unbelievable'), "molto volentieri" ('very gladly'), "proprio simpatica" ('really likeable'), "assolutamente irripetibile" ('absolutely unrepeatable').

Moreover, *guarda* accompanies sentences and phrases that convey evaluations in a hyperbolic way, as for example "credevo di morire" ('I thought I would die', said about waking up in very cold weather), "ne sono rimasta sconvolta" ('I was shocked by that', referred to a statement judged as grossly stupid), "non cascava uno spillo" ('not even a needle would fall', said in relation to a crowded place), and "roba da pazzi" (literally "madmen's things", an idiomatic phrase employed for something which is disapproved of or considered weird). Sometimes assessments accompanied by *guarda* are stressed through repetition, for example: "è tremenda / guarda // è tremenda // è tremenda // è tremenda" ('she's terrible, guarda, she's terrible, she's terrible, she's terrible').

It is also worth noting that the marker often co-occurs with expressions related to truthfulness and trustworthiness: "veramente" ('really'), "sinceramente" ('honestly'), "su' i' serio" ('seriously'), "in realtà" ('in reality'), "bisogna dica la verità" ('I must tell the truth'), "devo dire che" ('I have to say that'), "ti giuro" ('I swear'), "credimi" ('believe me'), "non ti racconto bugie" ('I'm not telling you lies').

The recurrence of these features across the data strongly supports the assumption that the message concerning the speaker's reliability may be constantly activated in *guarda* as its most fundamental, basic message.

Incidentally, using the marker in contexts which are not compatible with such a message seems impossible, or at least odd. Let us look at example (40), quoted from Waltereit (2002: 993). This *guarda* is described by Waltereit as a hesitation phenomenon, and indeed it appears that the speaker utters it in order to gain time while searching for the proper wording.

(40)

A: ma io no _ non mi piace pero' no _ no no preferirei fare una **guarda** pubblicazione pura delle lettere

DM no, I don't like it but no no I'd prefer to **guarda** publish the letters as they are

B: pura delle lettere così?

The letters exactly as they are?

A: sì _ che però _ cioè con un cappello in cui spieghiamo ecco nonostante _ si è si è parlato di pacifismo

Yes but with an introduction where we explain that nevertheless pacifism has been discussed

(Waltereit 2002: 993, original translation, emphasis added)

A explains to colleague B what format he would like for the publication of a collection of letters, as opposed to another idea (see “non mi piace però”, “preferirei”). The turn verbalizes the contrast and presents A’s personal opinion. If A were doing something else, say describing his new house, the insertion of *guarda* to bridge a formulation problem would not be acceptable, as we can see in example (41) (constructed):⁸⁶

(41)

A: * abbiamo due bagni, uno studio e una **guarda** stanza per gli ospiti

*We have two bathrooms, a workroom, and a **guarda** guestroom*

Here, there is no need for the speaker to stress that we can trust her, so the use of *guarda* becomes superfluous and confusing.⁸⁷ The message concerning the speaker’s reliability seems to be constantly present and impose constraints on the use of the marker, even in cases where other functions (here formulation management) are in the foreground.

Assuming this message also enables us to explain why *guarda*, though being able to occur in similar contexts as *senti*, is not equivalent to it. Recall examples (14a) and (14b) from chapter 5, repeated here as (42a) and (42b):

(42a)

A: Sono Mauro Bianchi. Vorrei parlare con la signora Rossi.

This is Mauro Bianchi speaking. I would like to speak to Mrs Rossi.

B: **Guardi**, la signora non è in casa. Se vuole chiamare più tardi.

***Guardi**, Mrs Rossi is not here. Would you please call later?*

(Bazzanella 1995: 236, emphasis added)

(42b)

A: Sono Mauro Bianchi. Vorrei parlare con la signora Rossi.

This is Mauro Bianchi speaking. I would like to speak to Mrs Rossi.

⁸⁶ No doubt, almost any example can become acceptable once put into an appropriate context. Still, the very fact that this example is unacceptable under “standard” conditions shows that *guarda* is indeed not compatible with just any context, due to the interaction between the context and the marker’s message.

⁸⁷ Conversely, the following version would be acceptable: “abbiamo due bagni, uno studio e persino una **guarda** stanza per gli ospiti” (‘we have two bathrooms, a workroom, and even a **guarda** guestroom’). The addition of “persino” implies that, in A’s view, the addressee would not expect the house to feature a guestroom. As soon as something is stated which may for any reason violate expectations, *guarda* becomes acceptable and assumes the value of a confirmation that we can trust the speaker despite the surprising character of her statement. I thank Vahram Atayan for this example and for our interesting and fruitful discussion.

B: **Senta**, la signora non è in casa. Se vuole chiamare più tardi.

Senta, Mrs Rossi is not here. Would you please call later?

As was observed, speaker A sounded kind in (42a), but somewhat annoyed in (42b). The basic functions proposed above provide an explanation for this divergence: *guarda* indicates that the speaker is seeking the interlocutor's trust, so (42a) gives us the impression that the speaker is trying to justify her response, thereby putting herself in a weaker position as compared to the interlocutor; *senti*, by conveying a request to comply with the speaker's intentions, gives us the impression of a more self-assertive attitude, and makes the turn in (42b) sound rude.

At this stage, one may ask how this basic function or basic message can be reconciled with the marker's source item, the verb "guardare". I suggest that, first of all, *guarda* should not be understood as an appeal to pay attention to the speaker and the talk being produced – in contrast to what one might spontaneously think – but rather to some object or event to which the speaker wants to point. A call to pay attention to the speaker is typical of *senti*, which indeed appeals to attend to the speaker's activity. The orientation towards the speaker is particularly evident in the form *stammi a sentire*⁸⁸ through the presence of the personal pronoun "mi" ('me'). For *guarda*, no such form exists, nor is it conceivable to introduce any utterance with "stammi a guardare". The oddity of such a form makes us immediately notice that the meaning of *guarda* is not about looking at the speaker.⁸⁹ Instead, I believe that *guarda* constitutes an invitation – of course a metaphorical one, at least in the present use – to consider some object or event from the interactional context or from some context that the speaker is talking about. A metaphorical appeal to observe something can be used to indicate evidence and become a way to tell our interlocutors that they can trust us.⁹⁰ Brinton (2001) notes that the epistemic quality present in the English marker *look* goes back to the conventionalization of the invited inference that "what is visible must be believed" (Brinton 2001: 193). It may well be that something similar has happened with *guarda*, too. A form that points metaphorically to some observable thing can well turn into a device for indicating a speaker's reliability.

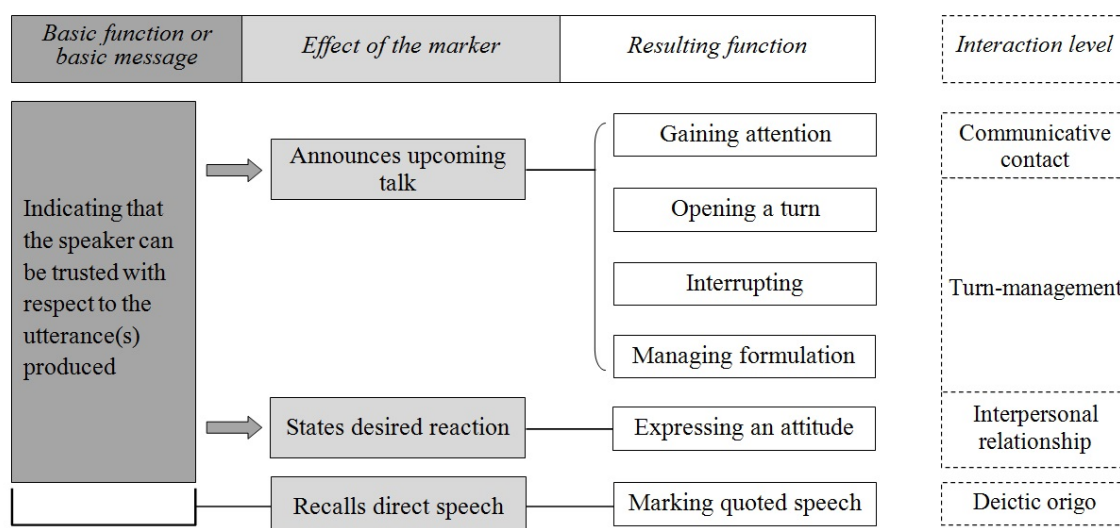
⁸⁸ This form, translatable as "listen to me", is not as frequent as *senti*, and did not occur in the data, but is currently used in Italian. Bazzanella (1990: 640) mentions it together with *senti* in her inventory of Italian discourse markers.

⁸⁹ If we allow ourselves some freedom and construct the form "sentimi", this still seems to work, although being odd. We can see this if we modify example (24) from section 7.1.4: "?Sentimi / ti volevo dire / su per giù / su che ora lo vuoi l'appuntamento?". A form "guardami" is, at least according to my native competence of Italian, not acceptable at all. Using example (35) from section 7.2.4, we observe that we cannot not say: "*c'ha quarant'anni // però guardami / non li dimostra per nulla". We notice immediately that the message of *guarda* is not about looking at the speaker.

⁹⁰ Although I do not analyze the diachronic evolution of *guarda*, I have to note here that these ideas are at variance with the proposal of Waltereit (2002: 998ff.). Waltereit argues that the marker has originated from the use of the imperative for interruption: the imperative suggests that the speaker has seen something that the others have not noticed, and it allows her to take the turn immediately (see chapter 4 above). An alternative suggestion would be to look for the origin of *guarda* in its potential for supporting one's statements by metaphorically pointing to some evidence.

Summing up the present section, I have proposed that *guarda* has a basic function or basic message which consists of signalling that the speaker can be trusted with respect to the utterance(s) produced. This can be the main function of the marker in some cases, or it can stay in the background while other functions become more relevant (see Figure 3). Because it creates expectation of further talk – when it is not postponed – *guarda* is exploited for tasks related to the management of turns and to the addressee’s attention: opening a turn, holding the turn while overcoming formulation troubles, taking the turn by interrupting another speaker, and calling attention to one’s upcoming talk. Correspondingly, depending on the speakers’ aims, *guarda* is able to act on different interactional levels: on the interpersonal relationship between speaker and addressee, on the management of turns, and on the communicative contact between participants. In addition, since its basic function implies the direct appeal to an addressee, *guarda* can be used in quotations to reproduce direct speech; it will then play a role on the level of the adopted deictic origo.

Figure 3: functioning of *guarda*. The basic function gives rise to different functions on different interactional levels.



7.3. *The use of senti and guarda: a comparison*

After having examined *senti* and *guarda* separately, I would like to offer, in this section, a comparison between the two markers.

Some facts can already be pointed out based on the results from the two preceding sections. The analyses carried out have led to the identification of a number of main functions and a basic function or basic message for each marker. Looking at those results, we can see that *senti* and *guarda* have decidedly different basic functions: *senti* has been found to essentially convey an appeal to the addressee to attend to the speaker's activity in a way that complies with the speaker's intentions; *guarda*, in contrast, conveys the message that the speaker can be trusted with respect to the utterances produced. The two markers are able to assume, in a sense, analogous functions in context: both markers can open up a new turn, attract the interlocutor's attention, help to interrupt a current speaker, serve to manage formulation problems, and mark quoted speech, but their use for these purposes draws on distinct basic messages. Both of them can also modalize utterances through the expression of a speaker's attitude, which is, however, not the same. In addition, *senti* can perform tasks that have not been registered in the case of *guarda*: introducing a new topic, a new sequence, or a new part of a conversation. Hence, even if some of the functions fulfilled by *senti* and *guarda* are analogous, due to the fact that both markers are able to work on – partially – the same levels of interaction, they do not do so in the same way.

How can this statement be further substantiated? As was announced at the beginning of the chapter, I intend to provide such evidence by comparing features of the contexts in which *senti* and *guarda* are employed; such features follow from, and thus mirror, the markers' respective functional properties.

In chapter 6, I explained that the analysis of corpus data would follow a set of criteria which account for different aspects or component of the conversation. The examination of each token according to these criteria primarily formed the basis for the qualitative analysis of the markers, but it also allows for a quantification of their distribution with respect to those aspects of the conversation. These data can now be directly contrasted to see how the behaviour of the two markers diverges. The comparison will enable us to further develop and deepen the descriptions given in the previous sections and to directly appreciate differences between the two markers.

Concretely, I will compare *senti* and *guarda* with regard to their relation to the management of turns and the units in their scope (subsection 7.3.1), their relation to the various types of actions carried out by the speakers (subsection 7.3.2), and their relation to sequence organization, the conversation's global structure, and topic structure (subsection 7.3.3) (the various aspects will be discussed in groups, due to their functional relatedness). We shall see that *senti* and *guarda* manifest observably distinct patterns with respect to most of the aspects examined.

In addition, I will consider – this time in a qualitative perspective – differences between *senti* and *guarda* in quoted speech. The two markers function analogously in this

kind of context, namely as devices recalling direct speech. However, I will ask whether, in line with their distinct basic functions, the two markers contribute different messages to the quoted utterances.

7.3.1. Relation to the organization of turns and the scope

I will start the comparison by considering the relation of *senti* and *guarda* with the organization of the turns-at-talk. Let us first observe the position that the two markers occupy in the turns. *Senti* appears in 65.6% of its tokens in turn-initial position and in 34.4% in turn-medial position; *guarda* is turn-initial in 30% of the cases, turn-medial in 60%, and turn-final in 10%⁹¹ (see Table 1). Hence, in the majority of the cases, *senti* occurs in a position that enables it to function as an introductory element for the whole turn; in contrast, *guarda* does so in a much smaller number of cases, and speakers tend to use it more often within their turns.

While it is generally claimed that *senti* and *guarda* work as opening signals, the distribution just displayed encourages us to consider more carefully this characterization and consider that this function might have a different weight for the two markers. Obviously, turn-initial placement does not necessarily imply that a marker is performing turn-opening as its main function in every case, but as a matter of fact *guarda* has much less chance of doing so than *senti* has. So, while both items can perform turn-opening, this task may be more important for *senti* than for *guarda*.

Two further criteria of analysis that are related to the organization of turns concern the use of *senti* and *guarda* at places where a speaker takes, or attempts to take, the turn away from another speaker, and at places where speakers encounter difficulties in formulation. The examination of these aspects in the corpus data was intended to reveal a potential role of the markers in interrupting current speakers and keeping the turn in cases of formulation troubles, functions that both markers were found to fulfil. With respect to these criteria, we observe, again, discrepancies between *senti* and *guarda*; however, the limited number of tokens found at such places does not enable us to argue that the discrepancies observed may evidence a difference in the markers' functioning. If we look at how often *senti* and *guarda* occur at places where a speaker is clearly interrupting or trying to interrupt another,⁹² we find that 13.6% of the tokens of *senti* and 7% of *guarda* appear in such an environment. As for their use in cases of formulation problems – which are evidenced in the data by silent and filled pauses, lengthened sounds, reformulations, repetitions, and linguistic expressions related to formulation –

⁹¹ These values refer to a total number of 125 tokens of *senti* and 100 tokens of *guarda*. The 11 tokens of *senti* and 41 of *guarda* that appear in quoted speech are of course treated separately later, when the use of the markers for that specific function is considered.

⁹² I only include cases in which speakers are *clearly* interrupting others, that is, I do not include those cases in which there is the doubt that a speaker may simply have selected herself as the next speaker simultaneously with another, or started speaking after a possible completion point which turns out not to be the end of the previous turn. I also restrict myself to those cases in which clear formulation troubles can be recognized; so, for example, pauses with a stylistic value are not considered.

18.4% of the tokens of *senti* and 9% of *guarda*⁹³ occur in this kind of environment (see Tables 2 and 3). Since these numbers are low overall, one cannot draw any conclusions about functional differences between *senti* and *guarda*. Rather, it seems that this distribution is entailed in the higher frequency of *senti* as an introductory device as compared to *guarda*, which I have already observed in relation to their position in turns.⁹⁴

Table 1: position of *senti* and *guarda* in the turns

Discourse marker	Turn-initial		Turn-medial		Turn-final	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	82/125	65.6%	43/125	34.4%	0/125	0.0%
<i>guarda</i>	30/100	30.0%	60/100	60.0%	10/100	10.0%

Table 2: occurrence of *senti* and *guarda* when a speaker interrupts or tries to interrupt another

Discourse marker	In interruptions		No interruptions	
	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	17/125	13.6%	108	86.4%
<i>guarda</i>	7/100	7.0%	93	93.0%

Table 3: occurrence of *senti* and *guarda* in cases of formulation problems

Discourse marker	With formulation problems		No formulation problems	
	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	23/125	18.4%	102	81.6%
<i>guarda</i>	9/100	9.0%	91	91.0%

An interesting point for comparison is the position occupied by *senti* and *guarda* with respect to their scopes, i.e. the units of talk – of various form and size – to which they refer and upon which they act. In the corpora, *senti* strongly tends to be placed before its scope: 99.2% of the tokens occur before, and only 0.8% after the unit of reference. So, it can be assumed that in almost all cases, *senti* possesses a projecting value: it prefigures that the speaker will say something and prepares the addressee for it. Note that this does not mean that announcing the upcoming talk must be the primary function in all cases, but it is brought about by the very fact of uttering the marker. Since *senti* cannot be uttered alone, it creates expectation for further speech, attracting attention to it and preparing for its reception.

The distribution of *guarda* is very different: *guarda* occurs in 60% of the cases before its scope, and in 40% after it. This means that the marker can have a projecting value in

⁹³Note that I am not claiming that 18.4% of the tokens of *senti* and 9% of *guarda* function *only* for floor-holding, nor that 13.6% of *senti* and 7% of *guarda* are *only* interruptions devices. The multifunctionality of discourse markers would make such a count quite questionable: more often than not, one token performs various tasks at once and cannot be assigned a single function.

⁹⁴One observation is due as to the occurrence of *senti* with hesitation phenomena. We have seen that *senti* is often used at the shift to a new topic or a new sequence of a conversation. The beginning of a new topic or sequence can require some additional planning and formulation work, so it will not be surprising that *senti* is exploited to signal the upcoming shift while gaining some planning respite.

60% of the tokens, but it also works very often as a retrospective comment on what has been said, without any introductory function for the turn or parts of it (see Table 4).

Table 4: position of *sentì* and *guarda* with respect to their scopes

Discourse marker	Before the scope		After the scope	
	N.	%	N.	%
<i>sentì</i>	124/125	99.2%	1/125	0.8%
<i>guarda</i>	60/100	60.0%	40/100	40.0%

As a result of this comparison, it can be concluded that *sentì* must be more strongly associated with the function of introducing talk than *guarda* is (and it thus performs functions such as taking, opening, and holding the turn more often than *guarda* does). *Guarda*, in turn, appears to be particularly suitable for qualifying utterances *ex post*.

These facts were taken into account in the elaboration of the functional descriptions of *sentì* and *guarda* that have been presented in the preceding sections. How do the functions I have proposed account for the distribution just observed? If one assumes – as I have done – that *sentì* constitutes a request to attend to the speaker’s activity, and thus includes the projection of upcoming talk as a part of its basic message, one can naturally explain its use at points where a unit of talk – a whole turn or an utterance that is part of it – is being started or re-started, and where the speaker has to secure the addressee’s attention and the right to speak. Regarding *guarda*, I have argued that its basic function is to indicate the speaker’s reliability with respect to her utterance; if this is correct, it will not be surprising that speakers – though employing *guarda* with a projecting function as well – will very often use this marker to qualify what they say on an interpersonal level, by adding it at the end of utterances and turns.

7.3.2. Relation to speakers’ actions

In the analysis of corpus data, I furthermore took into account what actions the speakers carried out in the interaction by means of the utterances in which *sentì* and *guarda* appeared, as for example asking a question or making an offer. My aim now will be to look at what kind of actions *sentì* and *guarda* accompany in the corpus data, and discuss some striking differences between the two markers.

The types of actions which *sentì* and *guarda* accompany in the corpora are displayed in Tables 5 and 6. Types whose label might be unclear will be elucidated in the following part of the section. Note that in the tables, the types are ordered by their frequency, but at the same time some of them are grouped together due to their similarity: for example, “asking a question” and “requesting to report on something” are considered to be functionally similar.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ In relation to the categories and the numbers displayed in Tables 5 and 6, it should be born in mind that the identification of the actions performed by speakers is not always clear-cut. It is notorious that speakers can do many things with an utterance. While this complexity was taken into account in the qualitative analysis of the individual tokens, for the quantification of the types of actions, as is represented in the tables, I stick to those

Table 5: actions accomplished by the speakers with the utterances in which *sentí* occurs

Senti: actions accomplished by the speakers	N.		%	
Asking a question	65	73	52.0	58.4
Asserting B-events	3		2.4	
Assessing B-events	3		2.4	
Requesting to report on something	2		1.6	
Describing facts/situations (out of which 3 answers to questions)	12		9.6	
Expressing opinions (1 answer to a question)	3	11	2.4	8.8
Assessing something (3 answers to questions)	7		5.6	
Expressing feelings in reaction to something	1		0.8	
Making requests	8		6.4	
Taking leaves	5		4.0	
Announcing actions to be performed by the speaker	4		3.2	
Making arrangements	2		1.6	
Issuing invitations	2		1.6	
Giving instructions	2		1.6	
Defending oneself (1 answer to a question)	2		1.6	
Wishing something to somebody	1		0.8	
Accepting proposals	1		0.8	
Complaining	1		0.8	
Warning	1		0.8	
Total	125		100.0	

Table 6: actions accomplished by the speakers with the utterances in which *guarda* occurs

Guarda: actions accomplished by the speakers	N.		%	
Assessing something (out of which 5 answers to questions)	37	56	37.0	56.0
Expressing feelings towards something (1 answer to a question)	10		10.0	
Describing a personal reaction to something	4		4.0	
Expressing an opinion (2 answers to questions)	5		5.0	
Describing facts/situations (6 answers to questions)	23		23.0	
Giving accounts (2 answers to questions)	6		6.0	
Defending oneself	4		4.0	
Making proposals	3		3.0	
Announcing actions to be performed by the speaker	3		3.0	
Downgrading compliments	2		2.0	
Justifying another utterance on a metadiscursive level	1		1.0	
Issuing invitations	1		1.0	
Threatening (ironically)	1		1.0	
Total	100		100.0	

actions that I could recognize as the primary ones, based on sequential analysis. Due to the nature of the object, it is well possible that another analyst could come to a slightly different categorization of the actions; nevertheless, the distribution of the markers shows such clear patterns that, even in that case, I feel confident that the observations I am to make in this section would remain valid.

As the tables show, many types of actions appear only a few times (e.g. complaining, warning), presumably due to the fact that they simply do not occur very often in interaction. I will not consider these types in the comparison between *sentì* and *guarda* because they obviously cannot be safely expected to reflect any functional differences between the markers. What I will consider are some highly frequent types of actions, which can be seen as “typical” environments of use for the two markers. We will see that, with respect to these action types, *sentì* and *guarda* show remarkable differences.

Let us start with *guarda*. *Guarda* accompanies a large number of utterances that one can characterize, in general terms, as expressing a speaker’s personal evaluation of or position about something. The largest part of the tokens (37.0%) is found in assessments of things, persons, situations, and events. By “assessment”, I mean the action of “evaluating in some fashion persons and events being described within [the speakers’] talk” (Goodwin/Goodwin 1987: 6). Some examples in the corpora are utterances like “gl’è strano” (‘it’s strange’), or “è tremendo” (‘it’s terrible’).⁹⁶ In addition, *guarda* occurs in utterances that convey speakers’ evaluations of things in a less direct way. Some of them (10.0%) express the feelings of a speaker in reaction to something: this is the case for interjections like “mamma mia” and “ohi ohi”, and clauses with an exclamatory value such as “quest’omo / icché gl’è //”⁹⁷ (‘what a man he is!’). These kinds of utterances can indicate, depending on the context, feelings of surprise, admiration, annoyance, or discomfort – among others – towards some object or event. They are thus functionally close to evaluations.⁹⁸ Another group of tokens (4.0%) are found in utterances which describe the speakers’ reaction towards some fact talked about. To give an example: “credevo di morire”, said about waking up on a very cold morning, and in response to a prior remark on the weather, is obviously not a mere report about an event, but a manner of conveying a very strong, negative evaluation of the weather, and it is thus comparable to an assessment. Finally, *guarda* appears in expressions of speakers’ opinions about some topic under discussion (5.0%). Altogether, more than half of the tokens of *guarda* (56.0%) are produced in situations where speakers express their personal evaluation of and position about something.

The second largest group of tokens (23.0%) occur in descriptions of facts and situations: speakers report on an event or they state that some situation is the case, e.g. “a svegliarmi stamattina alle sette / ‘un ce la facevo //” (‘waking up this morning at seven: I couldn’t do that’). As was noted in section 7.2, the content of these descriptions is often at

⁹⁶ To be precise, Goodwin and Goodwin (1987: 6f.) make a terminological distinction between “assessment segment”, which is the linguistic unit (e.g. an adjective) that indicates the evaluation; “assessment signal”, which is any phenomenon displaying a speaker’s involvement in an assessment (such as intonation, or an assessment segment); “assessment action”, which is the action thereby performed by a speaker (as the authors put it, the “type of speech act”); and “assessment activity”, i.e. the interactive activity of assessing something, which involves multiple speakers and encompasses further actions related to the assessment (such as monitoring the other’s response). When I talk about “assessments”, I mean the third reading: the type of action performed by a speaker through her utterance(s).

⁹⁷ This utterance contains some diatopically marked features (the speaker comes from Tuscany). In Standard Italian it would sound “quest’uomo che è.”

⁹⁸ For instance, in Goodwin and Goodwin (1987: 11), the interjection “Ah:::;” is taken as an assessment.

odds with the assumptions of the interlocutors or with what can be considered “normal” expectations.

Let us now turn to *senti*. We could reason that the types of actions just seen are simply frequent in interaction, and therefore expect them to occur with *senti* as often as with *guarda*. However, *senti* accompanies descriptions of facts only in 9.6% of the cases, and expressions of speakers’ personal positions and evaluations in 8.8% (comprising assessments (5.6%), expressions of feelings (0.8%), and opinions (2.4%)). In turn, it often introduces questions, on which I will comment later.

Even if both markers *can* be used in similar contexts, as soon as we look at their overall occurrence in the data, it becomes evident that speakers *do not* use them in quite the same contexts after all. Why could this be the case?

It seems to me that *guarda* might be so often used in these types of actions because of the message it encodes. If we assume that *guarda* indicates that the speaker can be trusted about her utterance, with the corollary effect of underpinning her position and, in some contexts, also of demonstrating consideration for the interlocutor’s assumptions, it is not surprising that *guarda* will often be exploited by speakers when expressing their personal opinions or evaluations, and when recounting facts that the interlocutors did not experience themselves.

Senti can support the expression of an opinion or the statement of some facts, too, but it does so by virtue of a different meaning. If this meaning consists, as I have argued, in an appeal to attend to the speaker’s activity in a way that complies with her intentions, *senti* will signal a somewhat self-assertive attitude. While this can be suitable for supporting the expression of one’s position in some situations, it is certainly more rarely appropriate than the message encoded in *guarda*.

Regarding the distinct attitude associated with the two markers, the data provide an interesting example, which is shown in (43). In this familiar conversation, a mother (MAR) and her grown-up children, university students MIC and ANT, are heatedly discussing the importance for actors to “feel” the characters they play. MIC has until now vehemently advocated the idea that good actors should be able to hide their own personality completely, while his sister ANT has argued that one cannot possibly suppress one’s own personality altogether. MAR has taken a similar position as ANT. As was mentioned in chapter 4, Manili (1986: 169) considers *senti*, *guarda*, as well as *vedi* to be pragmatically necessary when speakers radically disagree with their interlocutors; we will see in this example that, although both *senti* and *guarda* can be used in cases of disagreement, they do not seem to express the same intention with regard to it.

(43)

*ANT: *mamma sta dicendo proprio questo // sta parlando di interpretare // perché uno se lo deve sentire <addosso / quel personaggio> //*

Mom is saying exactly this, she’s talking about performing, because one has to feel the character on oneself.

*MIC: [<] <dev' essere / quel personaggio> //
You must be that character.

*ANT: <se lo deve sentire addosso // ma non dev' essere> / quel personaggio //
You must feel the character, but you mustn't be the character.

*MIC: [<] <oh // hai visto // oh> // eh / 'u [///] 'a minghia / sì // mo' / <scusate // m' è scappata> //
 %exp: (6) il; (7) la
There. There you are. Uh th- Shit, you must! Sorry, it slipped out.

*MAR: [<] <sh> //
 %act: MAR waves her hand to MIC, to be silent [sic]
Shush!

*MIC: m' è scappata // eh ... non ci posso fare + <&scus> +
It slipped out, uh... I can't do any- sorr-

*MAR: [<] <no> / ma **guarda** // dipende // per esempio // alla Gina Lollobrigida / mica li possono far fare <la> +
*No, but **guarda**, it depends. For example, Gina Lollobrigida, they couldn't let her perform th-*

*MIC: [<] <eh> / sì // <Gina Lollobrigida> //
Yeah, right! Gina Lollobrigida.

*MAR: [<] <la donna brutta> / la poveraccia ...
The ugly woman, the poor one...

*ANT: no / ma a parte ma' / che quella lì <secondo me / un'attrice non è> +
 %exp: (5) mamma
No; but not to mention the fact, mom, that I don't think she is an actress at all-

*MIC: [<] <sentì / Gina Lollobrigida [/] Gina Lolobbriggida> +
Sentì, Gina Lollobrigida- Gina Lollobrigida-

*MAR: [<] <né> ad Anna Magnani / gli potevano far fare la bellezza mondiale // scusa //
And they couldn't have Anna Magnani perform the most beautiful woman in the world, either.

*MIC: **sentì** / ma' / Gina Lolobbriggida / <se fosse stata> giovane oggi +
 %exp: (2) mamma
Sentì, mom, if Gina Lollobrigida were young now-

*MAR: [<] <va bene / è yyy / yyy> ...
Okay, it's yyy yyy...

*MIC: avrebbe fatto tutt' altro tipo di film //
She would act in a completely different kind of movies.

*ANT: ma +
But-

*MIC: e [/] e chiudiamo // parliamo di [/] di artisti seri // <di gente che sa recitare> //
And- and let's close the topic. Let's talk about- about serious artists, people who can actually act.
 (C-ORAL-ROM, ifamdl01)

MIC is visibly irritated by the disagreement; this can be not only heard in the tone of his voice, but also recognized by the repeated overlaps (see “<dev' essere / quel personaggio>”, “<oh // hai visto // oh>”) and by his impolite “‘a minghia / sì”. To the latter utterance, MAR reacts by waving her hand to MIC and saying “sh”: she expresses her disapproval of the swearword (note MIC’s “scusate // m' è scappata”) and tries to calm down her son. Then, MAR presents an opinion that is in contrast with that of MIC (see

“no” at the beginning of the turn), but that is constructed in a way which clearly seeks his agreement. Beginning with “dipende”, MAR shows that she is taking a moderate position and looking for reconciliation. Also, the use of concrete examples (see “per esempio”) can generally make an opinion appear more reasonable. Even after the negative reaction of both children to the example “Gina Lollobrigida”, MAR tries to bring forward her argument in a face-saving way, by closing her turn with “scusa”. MAR has introduced the expression of her opinion with *guarda*. If we take it that this marker has the function of indicating that one can trust the speaker, it will be very well suited to strengthen MAR’s idea while showing respect for the others’, in line with her reconciling intention.

In contrast, MIC’s utterances manifest quite an aggressive character. MIC plainly shows his annoyance (see “a minghia / sì”) and repeatedly tries to prevent the others from speaking. He first overlaps MAR’s turn with a sarcastic “eh / sì // Gina Lollobrigida”; then, while ANT is herself commenting on Gina Lollobrigida, he overlaps her turn with “<sentì / Gina Lollobrigida [/] Gina Lolobbriggida> +”. Later in the discussion ANT will complain about MIC’s interruptions, and he will declare: “io devo imporre le mie idee // [...] e meno parla / l’ altro / e meno alternativa c’ è” (‘I must impose my ideas [...] and the less the other speaks, the less alternatives there are’). The first *sentì* appearing in MIC’s turn can be accounted for as an interruption device, in view of MIC’s clear attempts to get the floor. At the same time, it can signal that the speaker wants the other participants to “adjust” to his intentions, that is, in this case, to accept his arguments, a function that fits well with MIC’s behaviour in this conversation. This function is all the more plausible for the second token of *sentì* in “sentì / ma’ / Gina Lolobbriggida / <se fosse stata> giovane oggi +”. Being uttered when MIC has finally got the floor, this *sentì* appears to underline above all MIC’s intention to impose his own view over the others.

In sum, in this excerpt both *sentì* and *guarda* appear at the beginning of turns in which speakers express contrasting opinions. The action accomplished by the two speakers is the same, but the use of the markers is associated with different attitudes and points to a subtly but substantially different functioning.

Let us go back to the inventory of the types of actions in Tables 5 and 6. Looking at *sentì*, one is struck by the high frequency of questions (52.0%). In addition to questions, *sentì* introduces some requests for reports (1.6%), as for example: “raccontami della fiera / di luglio //” (‘tell me about the July fair’). Formally, these are requests (falling intonation, verbs in the imperative form), but since the speaker is demanding that the addressee recount some facts, the function is comparable to that of a question. There are, furthermore, a few cases of what I have termed after Sidnell (2010: 257) “asserting B-events” (2.4%). Assertions of B-events are assertions of “events (or whatever else) about which the recipient knows more or better than the questioner”, which are “routinely understood as constituting a request for confirmation and thus as doing questioning” (Sidnell 2010: 257). In our corpus data, the questioning function of these assertions is made even clearer by the fact that they show up in interviews and are produced by interviewees in regard to events that concern the interviewees, as for example in (44):

(44)

*CON: Biaggi / **sentà** / il + di mercato / parleremo di mercato del calcio // ma si parla anche di mercato / di piloti // e / proprio la Stampa / il quotidiano la Stampa di Roberto Beccantini / oggi riporta / di un suo possibile / passaggio all' Aprilia / per la prossima stagione // anzi un ritorno / sarebbe in questo caso //

*Mr Biaggi, **sentà**, th- the football transfers, we will be talking about football transfers, but they also talk about riders' transfers. And "La Stampa", the newspaper "La Stampa" by Roberto Beccantini wrote today about your potential transfer to Aprilia in the next season. Actually it would be a return, in your case.*

*BIA: beh / in effetti / io / ho sempre lasciato le porte aperte / alla casa italiana / che m' ha dato tanti successi // &he / sì / ci potrebbe essere anche / qualche possibilità // però al momento / è tutto un &p [///] mi pare un po' prematuro // &he / le possibilità sono tante // [...]

Well, indeed I've always left the door open for the Italian company that has brought me so much success. Uh yes, that could be a possibility, but for the time being everything is a bi- I think it's premature; uh there are many possibilities.

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedsp01)

Very similar to assertions of B-events are actions that I have labelled "assessing B-events" (2.4%). In this case, interviewers not only describe but also assess events about which the interviewees can be taken to be better informed; the events are then assessed by the interviewees as a response.

In total, questions and other types of speakers' actions that are functionally similar to questions account for 58.4% of the cases in which *sentì* is used. In contrast, *guarda* does not accompany one single question throughout the corpora. One cannot help but ask a) why this is the case, and b) if *guarda* can actually be employed in questions at all. Fischer (2006a: 437) illustrates how *okay* is apparently restricted to some illocutionary acts only, and argues that this could be due to the marker's inherent properties. Could *guarda* then be subject to such a restriction for questions?

As for point b), it appears indeed that *guarda* cannot be employed in questions. To give an example, in excerpt (45), saying *guarda* instead of *sentì* before the question "quest' anno / &i / dove tu sei stata ?" would yield a very odd result:⁹⁹

(45a)

*ELA: / so / che andate / &sem [/] insomma / abbastanza spess' <all' Elba> / vacanze ...

I know you alw- I mean, quite often go to Elba; holidays...

*LID: [<] <tutti gl' anni> //

Every year.

*ELA: anche quest' <anno> ?

This year, too?

⁹⁹ I am aware that constructed examples are at odds with a strictly data-driven approach and with the methods of CA upon which I have drawn. Notwithstanding, I believe that constructing examples can be helpful and should not be excluded *a priori*: corpus data only show us what is possible, but it can sometimes be useful to see what is *not* possible, and ask why.

*LID: [<] <si sì sì> / anche quest' anno // so' &sta [///] ho / saltato solamente un anno //
Yes, yes, this year, too. I stay- I've only skipped one year.

*ELA: avete fatto de' lavori in casa //
You were renovating the house.

*LID: sì / ecco // motivi finanziari // o si metteva i' riscaldamento / o ci si &risca [/] o ci si bagnava l' estate //
Yes, indeed. Financial reasons. We could either install the heating, or heat- or take baths in summer.

*ELA: **sentì** / quest' anno / &i / dove tu sei stata ?
Senti, this year, i- where have you been?

*LID: a Cavo // <sempre [/] sempre> a Cavo //
To Cavo, as usual- as usual, to Cavo.

*ELA: [<] <ah / sempr' a Cavo> //
Oh, in Cavo, as usual.

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifamd102)

(45b)

*ELA: / so / che andate / &sem [/] insomma / abbastanza spess' <all' Elba> / vacanze ...
I know you alw- I mean, quite often go to Elba; holidays...

*LID: [<] <tutti gl' anni> //
Every year.

*ELA: anche quest' <anno> ?
This year, too?

*LID: [<] <si sì sì> / anche quest' anno // so' &sta [///] ho / saltato solamente un anno //
Yes, yes, this year, to. I stay- I've only skipped one year.

*ELA: avete fatto de' lavori in casa //
You were renovating the house.

*LID: sì / ecco // motivi finanziari // o si metteva i' riscaldamento / o ci si &risca [/] o ci si bagnava l' estate //
Yes, indeed. Financial reasons. We could either install the heating, or heat- or take baths in summer.

*ELA: ?? **guarda** / quest' anno / &i / dove tu sei stata ?
Guarda, this year, i- where have you been?

*LID: a Cavo // <sempre [/] sempre> a Cavo //
To Cavo, as usual- as usual, to Cavo.

*ELA: [<] <ah / sempr' a Cavo> //
Oh, in Cavo, as usual.

The version “guarda / quest' anno / &i / dove tu sei stata ?” is hardly possible. Introducing the question with *guarda* raises the expectation of some further action, for which the question would constitute a mere premise, e.g. “guarda, quest'anno dove tu sei stata? Perché pensavo che potremmo andare all'Elba insieme a settembre” (“guarda, where have you been this year? Because I was thinking that we could go to Elba together in

September'). Just as it is, the turn with *guarda* is not acceptable.¹⁰⁰ So, the non-occurrence of *guarda* in questions is not an accident: the marker does not work in that environment.

We can now reformulate question a) above: why is *guarda* not compatible with questions, while *senti* occurs extremely often in this type of action? It seems possible to give an explanation starting from the basic functions of the two markers. For one thing, it was shown that *senti* is amply used to open new sequences in a conversation (see section 7.1.4), a use which was traced back to the basic function of requesting to attend to the speaker's activity. Questions constitute by their nature the beginning of an adjacency pair and thus of a new sequence, so *senti* can be usefully employed to open them. At the same time, the basic function of *senti* fits well the purpose – we could say: the illocutionary point – of questions. A question implies that the speaker wants the addressee to follow her in the activity she has started, namely by giving her an answer; so, *senti* is ideally suited to help signal this intention. Conversely, the message encoded in *guarda* – that the speaker can be trusted with respect to her utterance – is obviously not appropriate for a question: we may well underline our reliability when presenting some content to our interlocutors, but not when we ask them for one.

Interestingly, the same difference has been observed by van Olmen (2010a) for the English and Dutch markers *look* and *kijk*, as opposed to *listen* and *luister*. *Look* and *kijk* are not followed by real questions, but only by rhetorical ones, which van Olmen takes as evidence for the fact that these two markers express the speaker's involvement (van Olmen 2010a: 81). In contrast, *listen* and *luister* are followed by mostly real questions (van Olmen 2010a: 84). Van Olmen also reasons that, when used as real directives to look at something, the forms *look* and *kijk* have to be accompanied by statements about the presence of some object or the occurrence of some event, and that this restriction is maintained in the pragmatic usage. *Listen* and *luister*, deriving from directives to simply listen to the speaker, are apt, instead, to accompany any message (van Olmen 2010a: 88). The explanation I have suggested above for the contrast between *senti* and *guarda* with respect to questions is different from van Olmen's, and it should be pointed out that it is not meant to counter van Olmen's argument, for the obvious reason that one cannot assume *senti* and *guarda* to be exactly equivalent to *listen/luister* and *look/kijk*. However, it is interesting to note that facts analogous to those observed above are found in other languages as well, and that the search for an explanation goes in a similar direction.

To conclude, we have seen that there are some types of actions in which *senti* and *guarda* are most often used by speakers. For *guarda*, expressions of opinions, evaluations, and descriptions of facts or situations represent the most typical environment; *senti* can also occur with such actions, but it does so much more rarely than *guarda* (and with a different role, as we have seen in example (43)). For *senti*, questions and actions functionally akin to questions are the most frequent action types; *guarda*, however, is not compatible with them. Hence, although one may expect that *senti* and *guarda* could be

¹⁰⁰ This is of course my own perception as a native speaker of Italian, but other native speakers have confirmed this to me. I repeated this test with several questions, always with the same result.

employed in the same types of actions, this is only partially true; their actual distribution shows clear differences in their use, which in turn point to differences in function.

7.3.3. Relation to sequence organization, global conversation structure, and topics

Moving on to a higher level, we shall now take into consideration three criteria corresponding to three further aspects or components of conversation: the organization of speakers' actions in sequences, the topic structure, and the global structure of conversation as divided into an opening part, a core, and a closing. These aspects will be discussed together because of their mutual connection: the beginning of a new sequence often corresponds with a shift in topic and vice versa; the change from one part of the conversation to the next is also a shift to a new sequence.

In section 7.1.4, I have described the use of *senti* to mark the beginning of sequences, topic shifts, and changes from one part of the conversation to another. I have argued that the marker helps manage such ruptures, as it allows for a reorientation of the participants' activities. Since I did not register these functions for *guarda*, this is a particularly interesting point for comparison. Let us observe how *senti* and *guarda* behave with respect to these aspects in the corpus data.

Concerning sequence organization, the vast majority of the tokens of *senti* appear at places where speakers begin a new sequence (77.6%), or resume a sequence that had previously been started and suspended for some reason (3.2%) (for example an adjacency pair suspended by an insert expansion, or a story-telling suspended by comments of other participants). In total, 80.8% of the tokens appear at points where speakers start or re-start a sequence, and only 19.2% are found in utterances that develop an already ongoing sequence. In the case of *guarda*, barely 5.0% of the tokens occur at the beginning of a new sequence, and 2.0% at the resumption of a sequence, whereas 93.0% of the tokens are found inside sequences (see Table 7).¹⁰¹

Table 7: position of *senti* and *guarda* with respect to sequence organization

Discourse marker	Within a sequence		At the beginning of a new sequence		At the resumption of a sequence	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	24/125	19.2%	97/125	77.6%	4/125	3.2%
<i>guarda</i>	93/100	93.0%	5/100	5.0%	2/100	2.0%

In regard to the level of global conversation structure, the divergence between *senti* and *guarda* is not as great as the one just seen, because both markers occur rather seldom at the transition between conversation parts. This is quite natural, considering that there

¹⁰¹ Recall that 40 tokens of *guarda* (corresponding to 40.0%) and one of *senti* (0.8%) are postposed to their scope, i.e. they refer to the units of talk that precede them. It is clear that these tokens cannot introduce the beginning of a new sequence, topic, or conversation part. The frequent use of *guarda* as an *ex post* comment, as opposed to the mostly introductory use of *senti*, has its corollary on different levels of analysis.

are not as many shifts between conversation parts as there are between sequences or topics, and considering moreover that most recordings in the corpora do not contain full conversations, but only their core part or segments of it. However, one can still appreciate some differences between the two markers. 11.2% of the tokens of *senti* are produced at points of transition between parts of a conversation; 88.8% appear inside conversation parts, and not at their borders. Out of the 11.2% occurring at borders, 6.4% are found at the beginning of the core part, 4.0% at the beginning of the closing, and 0.8% preface a return to the core part after an attempt to start the closing. For *guarda*, we have only one token (1.0%) that apparently occurs at the shift from the opening to the core part – I will explain later why the shift is apparent rather than real – against 99.0% that are produced within conversation parts (see Table 8).

Coming to topic structure, 80.0% of the tokens of *senti* are found before stretches of talk which clearly have a different (sub)topic than the prior one; 20.0% of the tokens, instead, do not. *Guarda* shows an opposite situation: only 5.0% of the tokens preface a shift to a new (sub)topic, while 95% do not (see Table 9).

This distribution strongly suggests that while *senti* must be functionally related to the tasks of introducing new sequences and topics (and conversation parts, although the occurrence in that environment is not as frequent), these can certainly not be central functions of *guarda*, if this marker can have such functions at all.

Table 8: position of *senti* and *guarda* with respect to the global structure of conversation

Discourse marker	Within one part of the conversation		At the transition between two parts					
			Before core part		Before closing part		Before return to the core part	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	111/125	88.8%	8/125	6.4%	5/125	4.0%	1/125	0.8%
<i>guarda</i>	99/100	99.0%	1/100	1.0%	-	-	-	-

Table 9: position of *senti* and *guarda* with respect to the topic structure

Discourse marker	Preceding a shift in topic or subtopic		Not preceding a shift in topic or subtopic	
	N.	%	N.	%
<i>senti</i>	100/125	80.0%	25/125	20.0%
<i>guarda</i>	5/100	5.0%	95/100	95.0%

A closer examination of the few cases in which *guarda* does appear at such transition points reveals that, even there, the new sequence, conversation part, or topic is actually very closely connected with what has been done and talked about before, and that *guarda* does not actually serve to signal any transition, but is instead there to perform other tasks.

Example (46) illustrates one of the cases in which *guarda* precedes the beginning of a new sequence. Speakers A and B are looking at a list of hotels and trying to choose an accommodation for twenty students on a school trip:

- (46)
- 01 A: c'è posto in questi alBERghi,
There are free rooms in these hotels:
- 02 B: mh;=
Mh.
- 03 A: =bed and breakfast il vianDante,
Bed and breakfast "The Wanderer",
- 04 (-)
- 05 B: camere doppie e triple più [colaZIO:ne;]
double and triple rooms with breakfast,
- 06 A: [xxxxxx]
xxxxx
- 07 B: zero virgola cinque chiLOmetri.
point five kilometres
- 08 dal centro quarantadue euro a perSO:na;
from the town, forty-five euro per person.
- 09 A: mhm,
Mhm.
- 10 (1,14)
- 11 B: poi questo è in centro cinquanta euro a perSO:na,
Then, this one is in the town centre, fifty euro per person;
- 12 (-)
- 13 B: e (.) QUEsto;=
and this one
- 14 =senza [colazione sempre in centro quarantaci]
Without breakfast, in town as well, forty-fi-
- 15 A: [(xxx xxx) quaran (xxx xxx) quaran]tat quarantaDUE-
xxx fort- xxx forty-t- forty-two.
- 16 (1.2)
- 17 A: a::hm,=
Uhm...
- 18 B: =GUARda. (-)
Guarda...
- 19 io per (.) quei sei per quegli otto euro in PIU' -=
for just six- eight euro more
- 20 =opterei per QUEsto perché è in CENTro comunque;
I would choose this one because at least it's in town.
- 21 (--)
- 22 A: °hh stavo pensando anch'io la stessa COsa;=
I was thinking the same,
- 23 =anche perché se loro sono
also because if there are-
- 24 quanti sono VENTi?
how many of them? Twenty?

(PC2)

The turn introduced with *guarda* is a proposal of speaker B to A and, as such, it begins a new sequence and makes A's acceptance or rejection relevant. However, the ensuing sequence is just a part of a longer stretch of interaction centred on one main task: the choice of an accommodation. The process begins several turns before, with A reading aloud the information about the first hotel in the list, and it results in B's proposal. The

turn opened by *guarda* is indeed beginning a new sequence, but a sequence that is embedded in a superordinate task which A and B are already trying to accomplish.

Note that the presence of *guarda* here is by no means unacceptable. The marker is simply there for reasons other than the introduction of the new sequence. It opens the turn, possibly also providing time for formulation (the pause after *guarda* suggests some formulation difficulties), and at the same time it underpins B's proposal by underlining that A can trust her.

Example (47) below displays the token of *guarda* that occurs – apparently – at the border between the opening and the core part of a conversation. In a radio call-in show, the show-host CON holds a series of telephone calls with people who wish to express their opinion on a previously established topic (namely, idleness). In this excerpt, CON ends the call with a participant named GIA and immediately starts a new call with GIM.

(47)

*GIA: [<] <purtroppo questo> [/] quest' educazione al [/] alla solidarietà / alla mondialità / come si diceva una volta / nella mia generazione / &he / è messa veramente in un angolino estremo //

Unfortunately this- this education to- to solidarity, to global awareness, as they used to say before, in my generation, uh- it is really relegated to a remote corner.

*CON: però è molto praticata dalla gente / dalle persone // questo anche va detto // Gianni / la ringraziamo <di [/] del suo punto di vista // &he> / ci ha fatto molto piacere //

But it is done by people, by individuals, this should be said, too. Gianni, thank you for giving your point of view. Uh- we were very happy to hear it.

*GIA: [<] <prego // è stato / un piacere // grazie> //

You're welcome, it was a pleasure. Thank you.

*CON: Giampiero // pronto ?

Giampiero, hello?

*GIM: sì // buongiorno //

Yes, good afternoon.

*CON: buongiorno / Giampiero //

Good afternoon, Giampiero.

*GIM: mah / **guardi** / io / in effetti / &he / la ringrazio di aver chiamato // ma / &he / diciamo che il mio intervento avrebbe dovuto farlo / o l' [/] l' autore del libro che ho citato / cioè Daniel Mothe / alle sue collaboratrici +

*Well, **guardi**, actually uh I thank you for calling, but uh this contribution should have been made by th- the author of the book I have mentioned – that is Daniel Mothé – to your collaborators.*

*CON: ci parli di questo libro / perché non <ne sappiamo molto> //

Tell us about this book, because we don't know much about it.

*GIM: [<] <sì / no> / lo sto leggendo //

Yes, well, I'm reading it.

*CON: ah // lo sta leggendo <e di &co> [///] com' è / com' è il titolo ?

Oh, you're reading it. And what- what is the title?

*GIM: [<] <ma> + si chiama / l' utopia del tempo libero //

But- It's "The utopia of free time".

(C-ORAL-ROM, imedin03)

Guarda (here in the form *guardi*) appears just after the mutual greetings and opens a turn in which GIM comments in advance on what he intends to say (he will not finish the comment because CON will take advantage of a short hesitation to take the turn). At first glance, *guarda* seems to be prefacing the transition from the opening to the core part of the conversation. However, the situation is more complex. GIM is not initiating a completely new interaction; he is intervening in one that has already been going on for some time, adding his own viewpoint to the discussion. The conversation between CON and GIM has just begun, but it is a part of a longer conversation in which other speakers have participated. In addition, the utterance “la ringrazio di aver chiamato” seems to refer back to some immediately prior interaction which must have taken place between GIM and CON or between GIM and some of CON’s collaborators (see “che ho citato / [...] / alle sue collaboratrici”) before the broadcast. The presence of “in effetti” (‘in fact’ or ‘actually’) points to the prosecution rather than to the beginning of a conversation. In sum, the turn opened by *guarda* is not a genuine transition from the opening to the core, but rather it follows up a preceding core part.

Finally, let us examine the occurrence of *guarda* at points of topic shift. In previous studies, *guarda* has been attributed the function of marking topic shift (Lichem (1981), Manili (1986), Waltereit (2002)), but this function cannot be confirmed by my data. Only five tokens occur before utterances whose topic is not the same as the prior and, as we shall see, *guarda* does not seem to be functional to the shift. In two of these five cases, *guarda* introduces utterances that comment on somebody’s immediately preceding talk. Example (48) is a case in point. The interaction takes place during a seminar, and the participants are two students (CEC is one of them) and two professors, ELA and MAX. ELA cannot remember a taxonomy that she has developed, and MAX expresses his disapproval of ELA’s bad memory in a sarcastic way. In her next turn, ELA comments on MAX’s attitude:

(48)

*CEC: [<] <ma non> le copule // # perché + no / perché / c’ era una frase copulare // mentre / <per gli articoli> +

But not the copula. ... Because- No. Because there was a copular clause. While for articles-

*MAX: [<] <perché c’ era> una frase <copulare> //

Because there was a copular clause.

*CEC: [<] <eh> //

Yes.

*MAX: allora / perché si incrociava / una classificazione / di tipo / generale / # linearizzazione tipo bi due / eh / <secondo le> +

That is, because it criss-crossed a general classification... a linearization of a B2-type, right? According to the-

*ELA: [<] <dunque / non> me lo ricordo pi# / se l’è bi due / %he / <su questo / &he> +
I don’t remember if it’s B2. Uh on this uh-

*MAX: [<] se ‘un tu te lo ricordi te / Manuela> / <chi se lo deve ricordare> ?
If you don’t remember, Manuela, who should?

*ELA: [<] <eh / figurati> // hhh <eh> +

%exp: laugh (hhh)

Indeed. hhh uh-

*MAX: [<] <me> deo [/] deo piglia' nota anche delle [/] delle tue classificazioni ...

Should I- should I write down your- your classifications, too?

*ELA: no // è / m& + se hhh + hhh **guarda** / è tremendo // e non mi sembra che sia bi due // mi sembra che sia nelle / <&he + &ve [///] cioè / scusami> +

%exp: laugh (hhh)

*No, it's m- se- hhh hhh (laughs) **Guarda**, he's terrible. I don't think it's B2, I think it's in the uh ve- No, sorry-*

(C-ORAL-ROM, inatte03)

ELA's utterance "è tremendo" refers to a new topic as compared to the preceding stretch of talk: she is not speaking about the taxonomy anymore, but about MAX. However, MAX's sarcasm has already been made relevant in the ongoing interaction by MAX's prior turn, so ELA's comment cannot be seen as actually introducing a new topic in the conversation, but she is rather responding to something that has just happened in the interaction.

Three tokens, then, occur before utterances which do introduce completely new topics; still, their use appears to be better explainable by functions other than the marking of topic shift. Let us observe example (49), taken from a public speech:

(49)

*VER: [...] allora noi / riteniamo / che il nostro sindacato / debba radicalmente cambiare rotta // debba affermare dei punti precisi // non possa rilanciare una strategia / con questo congresso // non possa e non debba rilanciare una strategia / che può essere anche proposta e accolta in buona fede / ma che ci porta a una &n [/] a una &l [/] a una nuova / e ulteriore sconfitta // io **guardate** / evito / per correttezza e per onestà intellettuale / nei confronti del compagno che sarà a a illustrare la mozione di maggioranza / e che stimo e &per [///] fra l'altro ci lega un'amicizia anche / personale da tempo + quindi / lascio da parte tutte le questioni dei lettori // io lo so che avrei / molti argomenti / in questo specifico congresso / su cui farvi riflettere // quindi me ne asterrò // [...]

*[...] so, we believe that our labour union should radically change direction, it should assert some precise ideas, it cannot put forward a strategy, with this congress, it cannot and should not put forward a strategy that may be proposed and accepted with the best intentions, but would lead to a n- to a l- to a further defeat. **Guardate** I will renounce, out of intellectual fairness and honesty towards the colleague who will present the majority's motion, and whom I esteem, and for- incidentally, we are bound by a long friendship- for this reason I will leave aside all readers' questions. I know that I have many topics for you to consider in this specific congress, so I won't touch on them. [...]*

(C-ORAL-ROM, inatps03)

Guarda prefaces a series of utterances with which speaker VER announces his intention not to talk about something which the audience might have expected ("le questioni dei lettori"). This topic is new, for until now VER has talked about something else: the acting

strategy of the labor union. In spite of the fact that there is a change of topic, I believe that *guarda* is not put there as a marker of topic shift. VER is describing something that can be surprising for the audience: he could talk about many things that would make the audience think, but he will not do so. In this context, *guarda* seems to be working at an interpersonal level, rather than on topic structure: it has the effect of underlining that the intention described by VER can be taken seriously, even if contradicts our expectations. Note that Khachaturyan (2001), in her study of *senti*, remarks a difference between *senti* and *guarda* with respect to topics: while *senti* occurs at topic shifts, *guarda* introduces information that is connected with the prior context. This is amply confirmed by my analysis. It can still be specified that *guarda* can of course precede utterances which start a new topic, as in the example just examined, but indeed its presence in such an environment is not functional to the shift.

In sum, not only does *guarda* occur very seldom at points of transition between sequences, conversation parts, and topics, but when it does, the transition is mostly not clear-cut, and the ensuing stretch of talk is actually tightly connected with, and follows from, what has been done before it. Moreover, even when a clear shift is accomplished, the presence of the marker can be better accounted for in terms of other functions. In this sense, *guarda* is thus clearly different from *senti*, which is – as we have seen – often used at such transitions and does serve to mark them. It should be noticed that this characteristic of *guarda* is in accordance with the proposal that the item primarily functions on an interpersonal level to indicate that we can trust the speaker. In fact, this message is well suited for use within an ongoing discussion, but it is not particularly apt to prepare interlocutors for a rupture in the conversation. In contrast, this can be ideally done with *senti*, as it calls the addressee to attend to the speaker's activity.

7.3.4. *Senti* vs *guarda* in quoted speech

Before concluding, I would like to briefly discuss the use of *senti* and *guarda* in quoted speech. We have seen in sections 7.1.6 and 7.2.5 that the corpora contain 11 tokens of *senti* and 41 tokens of *guarda* produced in quotations with the function of reproducing direct speech.¹⁰² This constitutes a “second-level” use, in the sense that it is based on the markers' ability to recreate, by their very presence, a certain type of interaction.

For the comparison between *senti* and *guarda*, this use has two facets. On the one hand, the markers work analogously: by virtue of expressing an appeal to the interlocutor, they recall a situation of direct speech and are thus exploited to characterize

¹⁰² One could wonder why the speakers in the corpora marked more quotations with *guarda* than with *senti*. This question will not concern us here because it does not contribute to the purpose of describing the functions of the markers, but rather to that of describing quotations (although it would certainly be interesting *per se* to understand what markers are more typical of quotations). To make some hypotheses, it may be that i) since there are hardly any topic shifts and sequence shifts inside quotations, *senti* may simply have fewer occasions of use; ii) the encoded message of *guarda* may be, for some other reason, more often suitable than that of *senti* to accompany reported direct speech; iii) *guarda* might be developing into a sort of default quotation-marking device. A study on a large number of quotations would be necessary to answer this question.

quotations as such. On the other hand, they contribute different messages to the quotations of which they form a part. The distinction is certainly not always sharp in quoted speech. For example, if one substitutes *senti* in (50a) – taken from a story-telling – for *guarda* in (50b), there seems to be no great difference:

(50a)

*ANG: [...] e allora il soldato / gli racconta tutto // dice / io son venuto qua perché ero disperato // facevo tutto giusto / tutto quello che bisognava fare / eppure mi prendevo sempre delle botte // e il re / gli dice / **senti** / se tu vuoi restare / io ho qualcosa / da farti fare // da qualche tempo a questa parte / c'è qualcuno che mi rompe tutte le piante / del giardino / che spezza i rami // e / mi sta rovinando / proprio tutto il giardino // tu dovresti stare qui / fare la guardia / cercare di capire chi è / e fare in modo / che questo disastro / non succeda più // [...]

[...] and then the soldier tells him everything. He says: "I have come here because I was desperate. I did everything properly, everything one should do, but they would always beat me. And the king says: "**Senti**, if you want to stay, I have a task for you. For some time somebody has been breaking the plants in my garden. They break the branches, and they are spoiling all of my garden. You should stay here and watch, try to find out who it is, and stop this disaster."

(C-ORAL-ROM, ifammn20)

(50b)

*ANG: [...] e allora il soldato / gli racconta tutto // dice / io son venuto qua perché ero disperato // facevo tutto giusto / tutto quello che bisognava fare / eppure mi prendevo sempre delle botte // e il re / gli dice / **guarda** / se tu vuoi restare / io ho qualcosa / da farti fare // da qualche tempo a questa parte / c'è qualcuno che mi rompe tutte le piante / del giardino / che spezza i rami // e / mi sta rovinando / proprio tutto il giardino // tu dovresti stare qui / fare la guardia / cercare di capire chi è / e fare in modo / che questo disastro / non succeda più // [...]

[...] and then the soldier tells him everything. He says: "I have come here because I was desperate. I did everything properly, everything one should do, but they would always beat me. And the king says: "**guarda**, if you want to stay, I have a task for you. For some time somebody has been breaking the plants in my garden. They break the branches, and they are spoiling all of my garden. You should stay here and watch, try to find out who it is, and stop this disaster."

It seems to me that *senti* and *guarda* do recall different intentions here, but since they do not constitute a real appeal to the interlocutor, their encoded messages are less relevant: what is important here is to simulate direct speech. Moreover, due to the lack of context for the quoted utterance, either of the messages is appropriate, and the difference between the two items bleaches out.

However, in other cases one can appreciate a clear distinction between the markers. Consider (51a) and (51b). PAO is quoting a conversation between her daughter's teacher and herself: PAO meets the teacher at a demonstration, and the teacher expresses his surprise about seeing PAO there; PAO then explains the reason why she is there, namely that she is a member in an association called "3 febbraio" ('February third'):

(51a)

*PAO: [...] ah alla manifestazione a [/] a Firenze / ho incontrato un ex professore della [/] della yyy / mi' figliola / il quale è di Rifondazione comunista / io lo so benissimo / ma / ho fatto finta di non saperlo // l' ho salutata / ah anche lei qui / &ecc // [...] dice / non &cre [/] non sapevo che anche lei / fosse / in consiglio // io **guardi** / dico / faccio parte del tre febbraio / e gli ho spiegato / che cos' era // [...]

[...] *oh, at the demonstration in- in Florence, I met an ex-teacher of - of yyy – my daughter – who is in the Communist Refoundation Party. I know that very well, but I acted as if I didn't know. I greeted him, "Oh, you're here, too" and so on. [...] He says: "I didn't thin- I didn't know you are in the committee, too", and I say: "Guardi" – I say – "I'm a member in '3 febbraio'" and I explain to him what it is. [...]*

(C-ORAL-ROM, ipubcv01)

(51b)

*PAO: [...] ah alla manifestazione a [/] a Firenze / ho incontrato un ex professore della [/] della yyy / mi' figliola / il quale è di Rifondazione comunista / io lo so benissimo / ma / ho fatto finta di non saperlo // l' ho salutata / ah anche lei qui / &ecc // [...] dice / non &cre [/] non sapevo che anche lei / fosse / in consiglio // io **senta** / dico / faccio parte del tre febbraio / e gli ho spiegato / che cos' era // [...]

[...] *oh, at the demonstration in- in Florence, I met an ex-teacher of - of yyy – my daughter – who is in the Communist Refoundation Party. I know that very well, but I acted as if I didn't know. I greeted him, "Oh, you're here, too" and so on. [...] He says: "I didn't thin- I didn't know you are in the committee, too", and I say: "Senta" – I say – "I'm a member in '3 febbraio'" and I explain to him what it is. [...]*

If *guarda* is substituted for *senti*, the quoted utterance becomes odd; it sounds somewhat annoyed and not at all appropriate for the represented situation, where the speaker is simply explaining a reason for a certain fact. The type of appeal conveyed by *senti* gives rise to an interpretation which does not fit the context, whereas *guarda*, indicating the speaker's reliability, is perfectly suitable here. We can thus see how *senti* and *guarda*, besides performing the task of recreating direct speech, affect the quoted utterances in different ways, in line with their respective encoded messages.

7.3.5. Conclusions

In this section I have examined the distribution of *senti* and *guarda* with respect to different aspects or components of conversation, so as to see whether and how their usage differs. I have shown that even if it is possible to employ *senti* and *guarda* in similar contexts, speakers do not actually do so. The placement of the tokens relative to their scope, the positions they occupy in the turns-at-talk, the types of actions they accompany, their position in sequence organization, in the global structure of conversation, and in topic structure are decidedly different. This has led to considerations about the markers' functions that seem to support in all respects the functional descriptions proposed.

Finally, the observation of the tokens found in quotations has shown that *senti* and *guarda* convey recognizably different messages in this environment as well.

8. Excursus – Native speakers' interpretations of *senti* and *guarda*: an empirical investigation

This chapter will present a small-size empirical study of native speakers' interpretations of *senti* and *guarda*. The goal is to find out whether and to what extent the functional descriptions proposed in chapter 7 are able to account for what native speakers actually perceive to be the role of *senti* and *guarda* in context and, thus, whether they are tenable as descriptions of the markers' functioning.

Any work that aims to discover the functions of a discourse marker implies a component of interpretation,¹⁰³ which ultimately relies on the researcher's linguistic competence: after accurate observation of corpus data, we must draw on our competence of the language to understand why the marker has been used in the way we observe, and what its bearing is. We know, however, that linguists' ideas about the meaning of a word may sometimes differ from speakers' actual use and understanding of it (see e.g. Fox-Tree 2007: 299). So, it appears interesting to look at speakers' interpretations of *senti* and *guarda* to see whether the claims made here about their functions are able to accommodate the understanding of them by native speakers, and to what extent the analysis proposed is thus tenable as a description of how these markers work in language use.

Despite the considerable amount of research that has been done on discourse markers, only very few studies have been concerned with speakers' interpretation of them (e.g. Hentschel 1981, 1982; Fischer 2000; Fox-Tree/Schrock 1999; Fox-Tree 2001, 2007; Redeker 2006). So, the empirical study to be presented here is also intended as a contribution to the development of this question, and as a way to explore possible methods of approaching it.

8.1. Method

The study is not conceived to test the proposed functional descriptions directly, but instead it intends to investigate speakers' interpretations of *senti* and *guarda* independently from my own analysis. First, I will find out what effects *senti* and *guarda* have on the speakers' interpretations of utterances, and only then the effects identified will be qualitatively compared with the proposed descriptions.

In this respect, the study departs from the procedure most commonly adopted in works concerned with speakers' interpretations of discourse markers, which usually start from previously observed functions (e.g. Hentschel 1981, Fox-Tree/Schrock 1999, Fox-Tree 2001, Redeker 2006). Instead, I intend to start from the responses of the participants and

¹⁰³ See Fischer (2000: 36) and Hansen (1998: 214). Hansen writes: "An interpretative approach of course has an inescapably subjective dimension, which means that one cannot in any sense of the word *prove* the correctness of one's analyses, but can only hope to demonstrate it as convincingly as possible".

detect the markers' functions based on them, as is done e.g. by Fox-Tree (2007). The aim is to avoid that the respondents' views be restricted to aspects I have in mind: because the workings of discourse markers are notoriously difficult to grasp, the danger exists that respondents might limit themselves to confirm the interpretations proposed, but not say what they actually perceive. In contrast, I aim to take any function into account that may turn out to be relevant for the respondents.

8.1.1. Deletion and substitution tests

As a methodological tool, deletion and substitution tests are employed. In the deletion tests, two versions of the same utterance, one containing a discourse marker, and one without it, are evaluated; in the substitution tests, the same utterance is given in two versions with two different markers (see examples below). A total of 12 tests were compiled, namely six deletion tests and six substitution tests. The format of the deletion tests is illustrated by the following example:

(A)

A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove ...

B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio, **guarda**.

A: Dicono di sì, che cambia il tempo.

A: *In the morning, I would be glad to go, unless it rains. If it rains...*

B: *No, not if it rains. But I really don't think it's going to rain, **guarda**.*

A: *They say it is, that the weather is going to change.*

(B)

A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove ...

B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio.

A: Dicono di sì, che cambia il tempo.

A: *In the morning, I would be glad to go, unless it rains. If it rains...*

B: *No, not if it rains. But I really don't think it's going to rain.*

A: *They say it is, that the weather is going to change.*

An example of a substitution test:

(A)

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: **Guarda**, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

A: *This one in the town centre costs fifty euro per person, and this one without breakfast, in town as well...*

B: *Forty-two.*

A: **Guarda**, for just eight euro more I would choose this one because at least it's in town.

(B)

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: **Senti**, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

A: *This one in the town centre costs fifty euro per person, and this one without breakfast, in town as well...*

B: *Forty-two.*

A: **Senti**, *for just eight euro more I would choose this one because at least it's in town.*

Discourse markers are commonly understood to be interpretative instructions which help the addressee process the utterances they accompany. Hence, it should be possible to trace the function of a marker in a given context by examining how the interpretation of the utterance changes when the marker is deleted, or when the same utterance is presented in two versions with distinct markers.

Another procedure, which is used in studies that pursue similar questions as this one, is that of explicitly asking the respondents to describe the meaning and the conditions of use of a marker. This procedure is not adopted here because, looking at previous works, it appears that it leads to results of very variable significance. In a study on *um/uh*, *you know*, and *like*, Fox-Tree (2007) found, using explicit questions, that respondents had clear "folk notions" of the meanings and use of those markers, and they provided consistent descriptions of their meanings (Fox-Tree 2007: 306). In contrast, in Fischer's (2000) study of the German particles *oh*, *ach*, *äh*, *ähm*, and the English *oh*, *ah*, *er*, *um*, the answers given by the respondents did not display any clear pattern (Fischer 2000: 42f.) Differences in the results' significance may partially depend on how the responses are evaluated and the number of participants involved, but they also show that, altogether, explicitly asking speakers to formulate the meaning of discourse markers might be a risky procedure.

For these reasons, it is preferred to uncover the functions of the markers indirectly: in deletion and substitution tests respondents are not requested to formulate the meaning of a marker themselves, with the difficulties that such an abstract meaning poses; instead, they are asked to describe their perception of the whole utterance. The test dialogues in which the markers are embedded should provide the respondents with enough information to interpret them.

Another reason for choosing this methodological procedure is that it is to be expected that linguistically-untrained speakers may not be able to take into account the ways a marker is used in different situations, but they would rather resort to the first use they can think of. Deletion and substitution tests represent a means to control for this, because the markers are presented in dialogues representing a variety of conditions.

8.1.2. Questionnaires

The 12 deletion and substitution tests are arranged into four questionnaires; two questionnaires include two deletion tests and one substitution test each (questionnaires 1 and 3), and the other two include one deletion test and two substitution tests each (questionnaires 2 and 4). This distribution is meant to provide for some variation, so as to prevent the respondents from getting tired by repeating the same task, and – importantly – from simply replicating their answers. The number of three tests per questionnaire is determined by the fact that deletion and substitution tests require some introspection and are mentally quite demanding, so it appears advisable not to strain the respondents to ensure that they carry out the tasks as carefully as possible.

The content of the questionnaires is as follows: a brief introduction attracts attention to the fact that a single word can “change things”,¹⁰⁴ and that the respondent will be requested to evaluate utterances that differ by only one word; then, the three tests follow. Each of them consists of the two versions of a short dialogue followed by a question. Respondents are asked whether they can perceive any difference between the two versions, and if yes, to describe it in their own words. In choosing to ask an open question, it is taken into account that the answers might turn out quite heterogeneous; however, an open question is preferred over other types of questions (e.g. multiple choice) because it allows respondents to describe any difference they may perceive. Asking *whether* they notice any difference should prevent respondents from feeling forced to find a difference when they do not perceive any, which would be counterproductive for the purpose of the study. The questionnaires end with a few demographic questions concerning the respondents' place of birth and residence, the duration of their residence there, their sex, and their age (the full questionnaires are displayed in Appendix 3).

8.1.3. Test dialogues

For the compilation of the test dialogues, I used excerpts from real dialogues. I considered that constructing dialogues entails the risk of suggesting through their design particular functions that I could have in mind, a risk that should of course be avoided. Moreover, real dialogues ensure authenticity of situations and language.

To gather real dialogues for the tests, I exploited the two corpora previously analyzed, selecting excerpts in which speakers use *sentì* and *guarda*. The selection followed two main criteria: understandability of the excerpts, and representation of different conditions of use of the markers.

According to the first criterion, excerpts should be well suited to be presented as autonomous short dialogues, that is, they should remain comprehensible when taken out of the whole conversation. Furthermore, they should not contain any elements that could hamper comprehension, such as subtle jokes or dialectal expressions.

¹⁰⁴ I intentionally avoided using more technical terms in the introduction to the tests, in consideration of the fact that the respondents were not linguists.

As for the second criterion of selection, the size of the study excludes any pretension to represent in the test dialogues all possible conditions of use, but at least some variety should be reproduced. This poses an operationalization problem: how are a marker's conditions of use to be reduced to some discrete units?

I have established a set of features that may characterize the conditions under which a marker is used, drawing on the corpus analysis already carried out. The features I have taken are: the placement of the marker in turn-initial, medial, or final position, its being preposed or postposed to the scope, its placement before a topic shift or before the continuation of a topic, and the type of action carried out by the speaker through her utterance(s). These features proved particularly relevant for understanding the markers' workings during the corpus analysis.

We have seen (chapter 7, subsection 7.3.1) that *senti* occurred turn-initially (65.6%) and medially (34.4%), mostly preceding its scope (99.2%), and seldom following it (0.8%); *guarda* was found in turn-initial (30.0%), medial (60.0%), as well as final position (10.0%), and appeared both before its scope (60.0%) and after it (40.0%). Accordingly, I have chosen excerpts that cover all of these features. *Senti* often occurs in utterances that start a new topic or subtopic (80.0%), as well as in utterances continuing on a current topic (20.0%), whereas *guarda* is very rarely found before topic shifts (5.0%) and, as was demonstrated (chapter 7, subsection 7.3.3), is not functionally related to them. I have thus selected excerpts containing a topic shift for the deletion tests on *senti*, and without any topic shift for the deletion tests on *guarda* and for the substitution tests, which have to represent conditions valid for both markers.

In regard to the actions performed by speakers, the selection of suitable excerpts proves to be more complex. As a point of departure, I have looked at what types of action are most frequent for each marker, and what types occur with both markers – the second question being relevant for the substitution tests. For *senti*, we have most often questions (58.4%), in fewer cases descriptions of events and situations (9.6%), expressions of personal positions (8.8%), requests (6.4%), leave-takings (4.0%), and announcements of actions the speaker intends to perform (3.2%). For *guarda*, the most frequent are expressions of personal positions (56.0%), followed by descriptions of events and situations (23.0%), and to a smaller proportion by accounts (6.0%), self-defenses (4.0%), proposals (3.0%), and announcements of actions (3.0%). This data have been taken as a guide for the selection of excerpts, but the frequency of the different types of action has not been taken as a strict rule, due to practical reasons. We observe that there is a considerable gap between a few highly frequent types of action and the other types; this situation poses the following problem: on the one hand, it seems advisable to include the less frequent types in the tests, so as to provide for broader variety; on the other hand, for these types of actions there are simply not many instances in the corpora from which one can choose (especially taking into account the criterion of understandability). As a result, I have selected excerpts representing the most frequent actions for each marker, excerpts representing the most frequent actions common to both markers, and excerpts representing some of the less frequent actions, but without strictly following their degree

of frequency. The representation of the features in the test dialogues are displayed in Tables 10-12.

Note that I have not included any instance of *sentì* or *guarda* as used in quoted speech. Because this use only serves to reproduce the usage in direct speech, its consideration is not necessary in investigating the question of how speakers interpret the two markers.

The selected excerpts have been rewritten according to Italian orthographic rules to make them readable for linguistically-untrained persons. Some have been subjected to minor editing: to prevent the respondents from losing the thread, long turns have been shortened and disfluencies have been partially deleted; expressions with possibly unclear meanings have been substituted by more explicit ones (the test dialogues can be seen in Appendix 2 and inside the questionnaires in Appendix 3).

Table 10: Deletion tests for *sentì*: features represented in the dialogues

Conditions under which <i>sentì</i> appears		Dialogue		
		A	B	C
Position in topic structure	Before topic change			
	Before continuing current topic			
Position in the turn	Turn-initial			
	Turn-medial			
	Turn-final	-	-	-
Position in the scope	Before the scope			
	After the scope	-	-	-
Speaker's action	Description of facts (answer)			
	Question			
	Request			

Table 11: Deletion tests for *guarda*: features represented in the dialogues

Conditions under which <i>guarda</i> appears		Dialogue		
		D	E	F
Position in topic structure	Before topic change	-	-	-
	Before continuing current topic			
Position in the turn	Turn-initial			
	Turn-medial			
	Turn-final			
Position in the scope	Before the scope			
	After the scope			
Speaker's action	Proposal			
	Description of facts			
	Expression of an opinion			

Table 12: Substitution tests: features represented in the dialogues

Conditions under which <i>guarda</i> and <i>sentì</i> appear		Dialogue					
		<i>sentì</i> > <i>guarda</i>			<i>guarda</i> > <i>sentì</i>		
		G	H	I	J	K	L
Position in topic structure	Before topic change	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Before continuing current topic						
Position in the turn	Turn-initial						
	Turn-medial						
	Turn-final	-	-	-	-	-	-
Position in the scope	Before the scope						
	After the scope						
Speaker's action	Description of facts						
	Proposal						
	Expression of an opinion (answer)						
	Announcement of an action						

At this stage, a brief comment on the choice of written dialogues is due. The alternative option of presenting respondents with the recordings was considered, but was eventually discarded for two reasons. For one, creating substitution tests would require an amount of work on the sound files that is far beyond the scope of this study. More importantly, written dialogues have been used in previous studies (e.g. Fox-Tree 2007, Hentschel 1981, 1982), which do not report on any disadvantages. In Hentschel's (1982: 231) study, it is assumed that respondents resort to what is called a "Standardintonation" ('standard intonation'), and this is confirmed by the relative homogeneity of responses; further confirmation was provided by studies in which participants had to read texts aloud. In view of these facts, written dialogues have been considered adequate for the purposes of the present investigation.

8.1.4. Respondents

Twenty-four respondents took part in the study (15 women and 9 men). All of them were native speakers of Italian, aged between 19 and 65, and coming from different regions of Italy. 20 out of 24 respondents had always lived in Italy; four were living in Germany at the time of the study, but they had grown up in Italy until at least the age of 24 and had been in Germany for at most 4.5 years, so their competence of Italian could safely be considered native. The demographic data are shown in Table 13.

In order to reach a sufficient number of speakers from different Italian regions, the questionnaires were compiled as online forms and sent to the respondents by electronic mail. Each of the four questionnaires was filled out by six of the 24 respondents.

Table 13: demographic data about the respondents

	n.	Region of birth	Region of residence	How long resident	Age	Sex
Questionnaire 1	1	Campania	Campania	19 years	19	M
	2	Lombardy	Aosta Valley	1 year	29	F
	3	Lombardy	Lombardy	25 years	25	M
	4	Emilia-Romagna	Emilia-Romagna	65 years	65	F
	5	Lombardy	Lombardy	21 years	21	F
	6	Piedmont	Lombardy	21 years	21	F
Questionnaire 2	7	Sicily	Lombardy	16 years	29	F
	8	Campania	NRW (Germany)	4,5 years	29	M
	9	Lombardy	Lombardy	29 years	29	M
	10	Campania	Lazio	10 years	46	F
	11	Lombardy	Lombardy	26 years	26	M
	12	Lombardy	Lombardy	26 years	26	F
Questionnaire 3	13	Lombardy	Lombardy	28 years	28	F
	14	Lombardy	Lombardy	30 years	30	F
	15	Trentino-Alto Adige	Berlin (Germany)	5 months	25	M
	16	Lombardy	Lombardy	24 years	24	F
	17	Veneto	NRW (Germany)	11 months	28	M
	18	Lazio	NRW (Germany)	6 months	27	M
Questionnaire 4	19	Piedmont	Piedmont	24 years	24	F
	20	Piedmont	Piedmont	24 years	24	F
	21	Piedmont	Piedmont	24 years	24	F
	22	Piedmont	Piedmont	24 years	24	F
	23	Lombardy	Lombardy	21 years	21	M
	24	Lombardy	Lombardy	23 years	23	F

8.2. Results

8.2.1. Some preliminary remarks on the respondents' answers

A total amount of 71 answers were given, including 35 answers in the substitution tests and 36 answers in the deletion tests. As expected, due to the use of open questions in the tests (that is: whether the respondents perceived any differences between the two versions of a dialogue, and if yes, what differences) the answers showed some heterogeneity. The respondents took different perspectives on the test dialogues, which can be classified in four types: a) they described the pragmatic interpretation of the utterances and of the markers; b) they assessed the dialogues from a normative point of view; c) they judged the markers' acceptability; d) they commented on the markers' semantics. However (and happily), the majority of the answers took perspective a), i.e. they focussed on the

pragmatic interpretation of the utterances, thereby providing exactly the type of information wanted for the study. To be precise, 63 out of the 71 answers contained statements about the pragmatic interpretation (more exactly: 18 answers out of 18 in the deletion tests for *senti*, 14 answers out of 18 in the deletion tests for *guarda*, and 31 answers out of 35 in the substitution tests).

8.2.2. Do *senti* and *guarda* affect utterance interpretation?

In the deletion tests, the question of whether there was any difference between the two versions of a dialogue was answered affirmatively in 30 cases out of 36. This shows quite convincingly that the presence/absence of the markers did make a difference in the way respondents understood the utterances. In the substitution tests, the question was answered affirmatively in 33 cases out of 35, which shows that the presence of *senti* as opposed to *guarda* – and vice versa – clearly affected the interpretation; hence, the two markers were not felt to be equivalent by the respondents.

Considering the six negative answers (i.e. those affirming that the two versions of a dialogue were equal), two of them were given in deletion tests for *guarda* (dialogues E and F), four in a deletion test for *senti* (dialogue C), and two in a substitution test (dialogue G). The fact that most negative answers were given in relation to the same dialogues is interesting, too: apparently, the degree to which the markers affected the interpretation varied depending on the context.

8.2.3. What effects do *senti* and *guarda* have?

Turning to the question of *what* differences respondents noticed, the answers showed quite clear patterns. To mention some examples, two respondents judged that the statement of an opinion beginning with *senti* sounded more aggressive than the same statement beginning with *guarda*, and two others found it threatening. According to three respondents, a proposal beginning with *senti* sounded aggressive, arrogant, and impatient.

Based on similarities like these, it was possible to build categories of relatively homogeneous statements for each marker (6 categories of statements concerning *senti* and 5 categories of statements concerning *guarda*). Due to the small size of the study, two similar statements by different respondents were considered enough to form a category; however, this was the case for only three of the 11 categories, while the others were made up by several (up to 13) statements each.

There were of course some answers that did not exhibit any common traits with others. As Fox-Tree (2007: 302) points out, open questions inevitably yield a number of idiosyncratic responses. For example, one respondent stated that an utterance in which a speaker described some actions and their disappointing result sounded more “desperate” with *senti* than with *guarda*. According to another respondent, the version with *senti* of this utterance gave the impression that the speaker had acted following somebody’s advice,

whereas in the version with *guarda* she had acted on her own initiative. Despite the presence of idiosyncratic answers like these, the majority of the statements did show similarities with others and could thus be ordered into categories.

It should be noted that respondents often made several statements within one answer. Consequently, I have not grouped whole answers into categories; instead, I have segmented each answer into single statements and then grouped the statements into categories. Each of the categories manifests a distinct effect of *sentì* or *guarda*.

In what follows, I will list the effects that have emerged for each marker, illustrating them with some examples from the respondents' answers. For the marker *sentì*, the following effects emerge:

1) Indicating a topic shift and an attitude towards the topic. When *sentì* occurred in utterances starting a new topic, respondents interpreted it as indicating the intention to change topic and call attention to the shift. It was also described as a device to quit a discussion which the speaker did not completely approve of, and to change topic in a resolute way. So, it appears that *sentì* is interpreted as signalling a topic shift, and furthermore as conveying a certain attitude towards the previous topic or the shift itself.

2) Indicating resolution and self-assertiveness. This effect results from a number of statements according to which, for example, a proposal introduced with *sentì* sounded arrogant, aggressive, or irrevocable (while it had a calm tone with *guarda*). One respondent paraphrased a *sentì* embedded in a proposal with "ascolta bene perché devi scegliere quello che ti consiglio io" ('listen carefully because you must choose the one I recommend'), and another found that the speaker sounded impatient and was implying "tanto vale, no???" (in that context, something like: 'no need to discuss that, don't you think?'). Answers to questions beginning with *sentì* were judged as self-confident or even aggressive and threatening. One respondent found that, in a dialogue where a speaker announced the intention to do something, the announcement sounded more decided with *sentì*, and the interlocutor's participation was demanded. Altogether, statements from this category show that *sentì* is felt to index the intention to impose one's own will on others.

3) Indicating a self-defensive attitude. *Sentì* was interpreted as expressing a self-defensive attitude when preposed to a nonconforming answer. In an utterance that could be interpreted as a justification, *sentì* suggested that the speaker implied "non posso farci niente" ('I can't do anything about it'). It appears that *sentì* is understood as a sign that the speaker, who is facing some problematic situation, wants to defend herself and decline responsibility.

4) Indicating annoyance. When *sentì* introduced answers to questions, some respondents interpreted it as a sign of the speaker's disagreement and aversion towards the subject of the question; in some cases it was taken as a sign that the speaker was bothered or annoyed by the question, or had trouble answering it. It thus seems that *sentì* indicates annoyance about a question, or maybe – more generally – about some event in the interaction.

5) Strengthening a statement. Some respondents affirmed that the content of utterances was strengthened, emphasized, or reaffirmed by the presence of *sentì*.

6) Indexing a close relationship between speakers. Respondents perceived utterances with *senti* as more colloquial and familiar than without *senti*. Also compared to *guarda*, an utterance with *senti* recalled a closer relationship.

Let us now turn to *guarda*. Concerning this marker, the following effects have been found:

1) Calling for attention and introducing talk. When *guarda* was opening the answer to a question, respondents described it as calling for attention and introducing colloquial speech. Calling for attention and introducing speech can be regarded as two distinct tasks, but they are clearly interdependent (attention is always called on some upcoming talk, and projecting the beginning of a stretch of talk evokes attention from the addressee).

2) Indicating certainty. A *guarda* following the expression of an opinion was interpreted by respondents as a sign that the speaker was sure about what she said.

3) Indicating consideration for the ideas of others. A proposal introduced by *guarda* was judged as friendly and calm, while it became more direct and assertive without it; one respondent specified that the marker signaled that the speaker had taken into account the needs of others, while the same utterance without *guarda* implied “è così e basta” (in that context, something like: ‘we are going to do it this way and that’s it’). Compared to *senti*, *guarda* made a proposal sound friendly, whereas *senti* made it aggressive. In addition, two respondents provided interesting paraphrases of *guarda*: “secondo me” and “secondo il mio parere” (‘in my opinion’). Summing up, from the statements in this category it emerges that *guarda* makes utterances sound friendly, and that it does so because it indicates that the speaker takes other perspectives into consideration and regards her own idea as just one of many.

4) Indicating resignation. In utterances that presented some solutions to problems, *guarda* was felt to express the speaker’s resignation.

5) Strengthening a statement. According to some respondents, *guarda* strengthened, underlined, or confirmed the content of utterances.

8.3. Discussion

8.3.1. Speakers’ interpretations and the proposed description of *senti* and *guarda*

The deletion and substitution tests have led to the identification of a range of effects that *senti* and *guarda* produced on the interpretation of the utterances presented to the respondents. Based on these results, we shall now go back to our initial question: can the functional descriptions of *senti* and *guarda* that I have proposed in chapter 7 account for native speakers’ interpretations of the markers?

Because both the results from my corpus analysis and the findings from the tests just displayed are of a qualitative nature, the answer to the above question will be looked for by means of a qualitative evaluation of what explanations the basic functions I have

proposed can offer for the effects that the markers were found to have in the context according to the results of the tests.

8.3.1.1 *Senti*

I have argued that *senti* can be described as an appeal to the interlocutor to attend to the speaker's activity in a way that complies with the speaker's intentions. Can this description account for the contextual effects mentioned by the respondents?

1) Indicating a topic shift and an attitude towards the topic. Concerning the effect of indicating a topic shift, this has already been detailed in chapter 7, so it will already be clear how the proposed basic function accounts for it. In regard to the second function (that of indicating an attitude towards the topic), respondents affirmed that *senti* was used to quit a discussion the speaker did not fully approve of, and to change topic in a resolute way. It seems to me that this is well compatible with the basic function above: *senti* is not just a call for attention, it is a direct appeal to the interlocutor to attend to the beginning activity by acting correspondingly. So, its use can well give an impression of resolution and be interpreted as a sign that the speaker does not approve of the previous topic.

2) Indicating resolution and self-assertiveness. This label subsumes descriptions which range from an attitude of self-confidence and resolution to aggressivity. These descriptions refer to test dialogues in which speakers make proposals (dialogue J), describe facts as an answer to a question (A), express an opinion as an answer to a question (K), announce an action they intend to perform (H), or give a description of facts that can also be seen as a justification (L). The proposed basic function seems able to account for the perception of the attitudes above: when a speaker is performing these types of actions, adding an appeal to the addressee to comply with her intentions can easily be interpreted as a sign that the speaker wishes to impose her idea or opinion over others.

3) Indicating a self-defensive attitude. This effect has emerged in relation to a dialogue in which *senti* accompanies the description of an activity which has brought disappointing results (I), a description of facts that can be understood as a justification (L), and a description of facts that constitutes a nonconforming answer (A). Briefly: it has emerged in dialogues in which the speakers say something which is particularly exposed to criticism or refusal. The basic function proposed can explain the perception of a self-defensive attitude in the following terms: in cases where statements are exposed to criticism or refusal, the appeal to comply with the speaker's intentions can give rise to the inference that the speaker is trying to eliminate possible resistance and, hence, that she is trying to protect herself.

4) Indicating annoyance. This effect has become apparent in answers to questions (one type-conforming, expressing an opinion (K), and one nonconforming, describing some facts (L)). Again, I believe that we can explain the effects reported by the respondents in terms of an interaction of the basic function with the situation represented in the dialogues. I have argued that *senti* can be used in nonconforming answers to signal

that the interlocutor should accept the answer despite its inappropriateness (see chapter 7, section 7.1.5), because it more generally signals the wish that the interlocutor “adjust” to the intentions of the speaker. This can well lead to the inference that the speaker is somewhat annoyed by the question and by the fact that she cannot properly answer it. The same inference can of course also arise in cases in which the answer is type-conforming, if *senti* is added.

Looking back to point 3), it appears that, put more generally, when a speaker produces an utterance that may encounter some resistance by the interlocutor, either with respect to its function (e.g. justification) or its content (e.g. opinion, nonconforming answer), the addition of *senti* is immediately felt as a sign that the speaker wants to overcome such resistance. As a consequence, the tone will be perceived as resolute and self-assertive, and we will infer that the speaker is trying to protect herself from some affront, or that something is annoying her.

5) Strengthening a statement. In order to discuss this effect it is necessary to remark that by saying that *senti* “strengthens” (or emphasizes, or reaffirms) a statement, the respondents have described the statement’s impact on them as readers, but this description does not reveal what the marker adds to the statement concretely. It seems plausible that this effect might be related to the expression of resolution and self-assertiveness; and indeed the descriptions as “strengthening” occurred in the same test dialogues as the effects in 2) and 3). The basic function can thus accommodate this effect in the sense that the appeal to comply with the speaker’s intentions can enhance the utterance’s impact on the addressee.

6) Indexing a close relationship between speakers. This judgement is likely to derive from the fact that discourse markers are normally considered, also among linguistically-untrained speakers, as typical of colloquial speech. At the same time, it has to be noted that *senti* was perceived as more colloquial than *guarda*. So, the association of *senti* with a close relationship might also be due to the particular message it conveys, which is less face-saving than that of *guarda*, and thus more likely to occur among speakers who know each other well.

8.3.1.2 *Guarda*

I have identified the basic function of *guarda* as that of indicating that the speaker can be trusted with respect to what she is saying. Let us now see how this function is able to explain the effects resulting from the tests.

1) Calling for attention and introducing talk. These functions have already been discussed in the analysis of *guarda* in chapter 7, subsections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, where I have shown how the basic function proposed accounts for them. While conveying its basic message, *guarda* has the effect of projecting upcoming talk; it thus creates attention and can help introduce a turn.

2) Indicating certainty. This effect was reported in relation to an utterance expressing the speaker's opinion about a future event (D); respondents found that the speaker sounded more certain in the version with *guarda* than without it. The proposed basic function fits this interpretation well. If we assume that *guarda* signals that we can trust the speaker, when one expresses an opinion about something that has not yet happened, the presence of the marker can well be interpreted as a sign that one is sure about what one says.

3) Indicating consideration for the ideas of others. This effect resulted from statements according to which *guarda* made utterances sound more calm and friendly, and suggested that the opinions or needs of others had been taken into consideration. These statements were mostly made in relation to dialogues in which *guarda* accompanied a proposal (J, E) and the expression of an opinion (K). In these situations, an appeal to trust the speaker can suggest that – while expressing her own idea – the speaker does not want to enforce her view, but rather wants to justify it for the addressee, thereby putting herself in a weaker position. The marker can therefore lead to the inference that the speaker is considering the opinions and needs of the others, and that she regards her position as just one of many (recall the paraphrases “secondo me” and “secondo il mio parere”). As a result, the utterance will be perceived as friendly.

4) Indicating resignation. The effect of signalling resignation is at first glance more difficult to reconcile with my analysis, although it does not seem to be incompatible with it. This effect was reported on in relation to dialogues in which a speaker made a proposal (J) or announced what she wanted to do in order to solve a problem (H). I have said above that *guarda* can serve to justify a position; in these contexts, its presence may cause the inference that the speaker has thought about other solutions but eventually resigned herself to the one she is now suggesting or announcing. It should also be noticed that this effect was reported by respondents only in substitution tests, so the interpretation as a sign of resignation might be partially due to the contrast with *sentì*.

5) Strengthening a statement. As I have remarked about *sentì*, saying that a marker “strengthens” a statement does not actually give any clue about what the marker adds to the statement in question. However, this effect seems well compatible with the basic function proposed: by adding to the utterance an appeal to trust the speaker, the marker can give more prominence to what is said.

Concluding, the functional descriptions of *sentì* and *guarda* provided in chapter 7 have turned out to be suitable in explaining the understanding of these two markers by native speakers. Some of the effects reported on by the respondents can be motivated as directly following from the basic messages, or from the property of announcing upcoming talk that is associated with them; others effects are explainable as deriving from inferences that are drawn by the hearers/readers on the basis of the same fundamental messages and the situations in which the markers are embedded.

8.3.2. Suitability of the method

For the purpose of uncovering the ways in which discourse markers affect the perception of utterances by native speakers, deletion and substitution tests have proved to be well suited. By comparing the overall impressions described by the respondents in relation to the two versions of an utterance, it has indeed been possible to get clues about how *senti* and *guarda* contribute to utterance interpretation.

The use of an open question (whether respondents could perceive any differences between the two versions, and if yes, what differences they perceived) was expected to yield heterogeneous answers, and thus pose difficulties for the evaluation of the results, but it was chosen in order to constrain the respondents' views as little as possible. Indeed, the answers collected are quite complex: most of them contain more than one statement, and some of them touch on different aspects of the markers' use (such as their acceptability from a normative perspective, or their semantics), which makes them difficult to compare. Nevertheless, the answers have turned out to be less problematic than expected, since the great majority of them contain exactly the kind of information needed: only two respondents took a purely normative perspective, while the remaining 22 focussed on the markers' pragmatic functions, sometimes adding remarks about their acceptability or semantics. Moreover, the statements present similarities which allow for systematisation.

The answers provided by the respondents have also shown that native speakers are able to identify via introspection the way in which markers act, and to verbalize it; native speakers' introspection can thus be a valuable means to study the functions of discourse markers.

The methodological tools employed here can of course be improved upon. For example, the presentation of the markers in dialogues representing possible contexts of use could be integrated by their presentation in contexts in which they never appear in the corpora, and in contexts that, according to my analysis, can be expected to be incompatible with their functions (e.g. *guarda* in questions). Moreover, by enlarging the set of tests, one could address the question of the correlation between a marker's interpretation and its context of occurrence, which could be addressed only marginally here. In fact, the tests developed here have aimed to represent different features of the markers' contexts of use – e.g. the type of action performed by the speakers, the presence of topic shifts etc. – but the total number of dialogues was by far too small to have these features appear in all possible combinations. A larger number of dialogues would make it possible not only to detect, as has been done here, recurrent effects of the markers, but also to investigate how these effects relate to the different contextual features.

9. Summary and prospects

The present work has presented an in-depth corpus-driven analysis of the discourse markers *sentì* and *guarda*, with the goal of providing a coherent, unified account of their broad range of use. It has relied on the conviction that looking for a general, fundamental function as the basis of the various tasks fulfilled by a marker can add greatly to our understanding of it. Discourse markers are notoriously multifunctional; nevertheless, the variety of their contextual values can be reduced and their complexity made more transparent by the identification of some more general, underlying pattern. In line with this objective, I have presented, for each marker, a range of main functions which account for its use on different levels of interaction; then, I have identified, as the common root of those functions, one basic function or basic message. This message is encoded in the marker in all of its instances and can yield different effects depending on the activities pursued by the speakers in context. By positing this message, it has become possible to explain the existence of multiple functions associated with a single marker, and the frequent co-activation of several functions in one and the same token.

Besides analyzing *sentì* and *guarda* individually, the work has aimed to bring their differences into focus. As it was observed at the outset of the study, although the two markers are able to fulfil partially similar functions (e.g. turn-opening, interruption), they cannot be freely exchanged without affecting the interpretation of utterances. This fact, however, could not be explained in terms of the previously available descriptions, and no comparative analysis existed. Therefore, I have conducted a comparison of the distribution of *sentì* and *guarda* relative to several aspects of the conversation (turns, actions, sequence structure, topic structure etc.), so as to gauge divergences in their use. Clearly distinct patterns have emerged and have shown that the use of the two markers is associated with quite different activities. For example, *sentì* frequently announces a stretch of talk, whereas *guarda* often comments retrospectively on it; *sentì* is most frequently used in questions, *guarda*, instead, in expressions of evaluations. The emergence of such patterns has provided tangible evidence for the functional difference between *sentì* and *guarda*. At the same time, the comparison has helped us complete the picture of the markers' workings, underpinning the functional descriptions proposed.

Over and above the intent to deepen our knowledge of *sentì* and *guarda* specifically, I hope that this work has provided an example of a methodological procedure that can turn useful for other, potentially more extensive analyses. I have shown that a multi-layered analysis, based on a well-defined list of criteria and categories, can offer a solid basis to illuminate the role accomplished by discourse markers by providing both qualitative and quantitative information about their use in corpus data; moreover, it creates an essential precondition for an objective and sound comparison between markers. It was furthermore demonstrated how contrasting distinct items can be a means to better

defining the characteristics of each of them, and it can ultimately lead to a more comprehensive understanding of them.

Finally, I have presented, in an excursus, a small-size empirical study of native speakers' interpretations of *sentì* and *guarda*. In a series of deletion and substitution tests, respondents described how their interpretations of utterances varied according to the presence or absence of the markers. Their statements, grouped together by content similarities, pointed to a number of effects that the two items brought about. The investigation has given an insight into the way *sentì* and *guarda* contribute to the interpretation of utterances by native speakers, thereby demonstrating that, even from the point of view of linguistically-untrained persons, the two items possess clear and distinctive meanings. I have then discussed whether the perceptions reported on by the respondents can be explained by the functional descriptions of the two markers that I have put forward, so to measure the tenability of my descriptions as adequate representations of the markers' functioning in language use. I have come to the conclusion that the proposed descriptions indeed seem to account well for native speakers' interpretations of *sentì* and *guarda*. Last but not least, considering that empirical research on discourse markers' interpretations is still in its infancy, the study has also intended to make a contribution to its development by trying methodological tools that had not yet been applied to this kind of question.

Altogether, I hope that this work can not only shed light on the circumscribed phenomena it focuses on, but also become a useful starting point for further research. The analysis presented here could be profitably extended to other items, both at an intralinguistic and a cross-linguistic level. Such an extension would also be an opportunity to include more aspects in the analysis, which could prove relevant for the characterization of other markers.

An aspect which could not be investigated here, but which could certainly be taken into account for more precise and insightful descriptions, is the co-occurrence of a given marker with others. The study of Fraser (2011) on the sequencing of contrastive discourse markers in English has shown how interesting facts about the function of individual items can be discovered by observing how the items cluster together. Another interesting point would be the phonetic realization of markers, meaning by this not only their pitch contour,¹⁰⁵ but also, for instance, the volume, the speed, and the voice quality with which they are produced.

Looking at the cross-linguistic level, it is well-known that discourse markers hardly have any direct correspondents in different languages (see, for example, the observations about discourse markers' translations made by Aijmer, Foolen, and Simon-Vandenberg (2006)). It would therefore be interesting to apply an analysis like the present one to markers from different languages, so as to investigate – semasiologically –

¹⁰⁵ The pitch contour of markers is sometimes taken into account, but mostly in a rather simplified way, i.e. by measuring whether it is falling, rising, or level. This factor has been found not to play any important part, by itself, in establishing the function of a marker (see chapter 6, section 6.2, footnote 48); considering it together with a larger set of prosodic factors could, in contrast, be a valuable source of insight.

to what extent similar forms are functionally equivalent or divergent, and – onomasiologically – what forms accomplish a certain function in distinct languages.

An issue I have not touched upon, then, is the diachronic rise of discourse markers. This topic represents a main point of interest in current research, especially in the area of deverbial markers. In passing, I have made some observations about how the the messages that I have argued to be encoded in *senti* and *guarda* can be put into relationship with the meanings of the corresponding verbs; still, I have aimed at a purely synchronic analysis, in the belief that a careful examination of the present discourse-marking functions is a necessary point of departure for the formulation of hypotheses about their evolution. As a natural extension of the present work, the analysis conducted here on present-day discourse markers could be applied to forms appearing in previous language periods; such an analysis could enable us to highlight the properties that characterize the items at distinct stages and trace back the changes that have occurred over time.

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Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

C-ORAL-ROM transcription conventions (Cresti/Moneglia 2005):

//	conclusive prosodic break
?	conclusive prosodic break, utterance with interrogative value
...	conclusive prosodic break, utterance intentionally suspended
+	conclusive prosodic break, utterance interrupted
/	non-conclusive prosodic break
[/]	non-conclusive prosodic break caused by a false start
[/]	non-conclusive prosodic break, false start with partial repetition
[//]	non-conclusive prosodic break, false start without repetition
<>	overlapping speech
[<]	overlapping relation between two bracketed sequences
*XYZ:	turn of overlapped speech by non-identified speakers
:/	turn forms a linear sequence with the preceding turn of the same speaker
&	speech fragment
hhh	paralinguistic or non-linguistic element
xxx	incomprehensible word
yyy	non-transcribed word
#	pause > 0.25 seconds
%act:	depending line indicating the actions of a participant
%sit:	events or state of affairs
%add:	participant to whom the turn is addressed
%par:	gestures or paralinguistic aspects
%exp:	explanation necessary for understanding the turn or the sign “hhh”
%amb:	description of the setting in a media emission
%sce:	description of the scene in a media emission
%com:	transcriber’s comment
%alt: (5)	alternative transcription referred to the fifth word in the turn

GAT 2 transcription conventions (Selting et al. 2009):

[]	overlapping speech
°h / h°	breath in / breath out, approx. 0.2-0.5 seconds
°hh / hh°	breath in / breath out, approx. 0.5-0.8 seconds
°hhh / hhh°	breath in / breath out, approx. 0.8-1.0 seconds
(.)	micropause < 0.2 seconds
(-)	short pause, 0.2-0.5 seconds
(--)	medium pause, 0.5-0.8 seconds
(---)	long pause, 0.8-1.0 seconds
(1.2)	measured pause
haha hehe	syllabic laughter
((ride))	laughter

<<ride> parola>	laughing speech
()	incomprehensible passage
(xxx)	incomprehensible syllable
(incomprensibile, 3 s)	incomprehensible speech with duration
(allora)	reconstructed word
(allora/ancora)	alternative reconstructions
perSONa	focal accent
=	latching between intonation phrases
guarda;= è un'IDEA	discourse marker attached to intonation phrase
guarda è un'IDEA	discourse marker integrated in an intonation phrase
:	lengthening of sound, approx. 0.2-0.5 seconds
::	lengthening of sound, approx. 0.5-0.8 seconds
:::	lengthening of sound, approx. 0.8-1.0 seconds
?	high rising intonation ¹⁰⁶
'	rising intonation
-	continuing intonation
;	falling intonation
.	low falling intonation

¹⁰⁶ For the categories “rising intonation” and “falling intonation”, I set a pitch movement of 1.5 tones (rising or falling) as a threshold. Movements over 1.5 tones were transcribed as “high rising” and “low falling”.

Appendix 2: Test dialogues

Deletion tests: *senti*

Dialogue	Version	Text
A.	1.	A: Ma a te da quant'è che ti piacciono... insomma che ascolti i Depeche Mode? B: Ma io... senti , perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane. Quindi io son cresciuta un po' a pane e Depeche Mode, Smiths, questa gente qui.
	2.	A: Ma a te da quant'è che ti piacciono... insomma che ascolti i Depeche Mode? B: Ma io... perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane. Quindi io son cresciuta un po' a pane e Depeche Mode, Smiths, questa gente qui.
B.	1.	A: Quello montato era un po' più bruttino, però ha detto che si poteva cambiare i colori, delle cose così. Quindi niente. B: Mh. A: Senti , quando tornate voi? B: Mah, ora non lo so. Torneremo verso le otto.
	2.	A: Quello montato era un po' più bruttino, però ha detto che si poteva cambiare i colori, delle cose così. Quindi niente. B: Mh. A: Quando tornate voi? B: Mah, ora non lo so. Torneremo verso le otto.
C.	1.	A: Io chiudo a mezzogiorno, ti vengo a prendere... all'una. B: All'una. A: Eh? Andiamo in macchina. B: Mh. Senti , dammi un succo, va'. A: Mh. D'arancia... B: No, dammelo al cedro, va'.
	2.	A: Io chiudo a mezzogiorno, ti vengo a prendere... all'una. B: All'una. A: Eh? Andiamo in macchina. B: Mh. Dammi un succo, va'. A: Mh. D'arancia... B: No, dammelo al cedro, va'.

Deletion tests: *guarda*

Dialogue	Version	Text
D.	1.	A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove ... B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio, guarda . A: Dicono di sì, che cambia il tempo.
	2.	A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove ... B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio. A: Dicono di sì, che cambia il tempo.
E.	1.	A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro... B: Quarantadue. A: Guarda , io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.
	2.	A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro... B: Quarantadue. A: Io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.
F.	1.	A: Dovrai pur venire a prenderti un caffè italiano! Mi son portato moka e caffè! B: Cosa?! A: È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano, guarda . L'unica.
	2.	A: Dovrai pur venire a prenderti un caffè italiano! Mi son portato moka e caffè! B: Cosa?! A: È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano. L'unica.

Substitution tests: original *sentì* substituted for *guarda*

Dialogue	Version	Text
G.	1.	A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata ? B: Ma sentì , quando sono andata via non riesco a camminare. La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...
	2.	A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata ? B: Ma guarda , quando sono andata via non riesco a camminare. La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...
H.	1.	A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata ? B: La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Io voglio far anche la radiografia, sentì , a questo punto... Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...

H.	2.	A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata ? B: La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Io voglio far anche la radiografia, guarda , a questo punto... Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...
I.	1.	A: Sono andata poi, a vedere i mobili. Però boh... Senti , sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è. B: Ah
	2.	A: Sono andata poi, a vedere i mobili. Però boh... Guarda , sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è. B: Ah

Substitution tests: original *guarda* substituted for *senti*

Dialogue	Version	Text
J.	1.	A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro... B: Quarantadue. A: Guarda , io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.
	2.	A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro... B: Quarantadue. A: Senti , io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.
K.	1.	A: La politica è un aiuto o un ostacolo? B: Guardi , per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco. La politica invece intesa come cittadino che opera in questa nazione, potrebbe essere una cosa di grande aiuto.
	2.	A: La politica è un aiuto o un ostacolo? B: Senta , per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco. La politica invece intesa come cittadino che opera in questa nazione, potrebbe essere una cosa di grande aiuto.
L.	1.	A: L'ondulato verde ce l'hai, tu? B: Oh, no, non ho posto per tenerlo. Lo cercava anche lui, guarda . Ma eh, purtroppo... A: Volevo cinque metri, ho da coprire un'arnia delle api.
	2.	A: L'ondulato verde ce l'hai, tu? B: Oh, no, non ho posto per tenerlo. Lo cercava anche lui, senti . Ma eh, purtroppo... A: Volevo cinque metri, ho da coprire un'arnia delle api.

Appendix 3: Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1

Una parola cambia le cose... come?

A volte una parola può fare la differenza.

Qui di seguito troverete dei brevi dialoghi, estratti da conversazioni reali.

Ogni dialogo è presentato in due versioni, che differiscono solo per una parola: nella seconda versione una parola manca o è sostituita da un'altra.

Sotto ogni coppia di dialoghi sono riportate di nuovo, per comodità, le due frasi che differiscono. Dopo averle lette, descrivete brevemente se percepite una differenza tra le due versioni, e quale. Grazie!

I.

1

A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove...

B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio, guarda.

2

A: La mattina andrei volentieri, a meno che non piova. Se piove...

B: No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio.

> No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio, guarda.

> No, se piove no. Ma non credo proprio.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

II.

1

A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata?

B: Ma senti, quando sono andata via non riesco a camminare. La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...

2

A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata?

B: Ma guarda, quando sono andata via non riesco a camminare. La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...

- > Ma senti, quando sono andata via non riuscivo a camminare. [...]
- > Ma guarda, quando sono andata via non riuscivo a camminare. [...].

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

III.

1

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: Guarda, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

2

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: Io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

- > Guarda, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.
- > Io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

I dialoghi sono finiti. Per concludere, avrei bisogno ancora di qualche informazione:

La persona che ha compilato il questionario è nata a...

e vive a...

da quanto tempo?

Età:

Sesso: M / F

Questionnaire 2

Una parola cambia le cose... come?

A volte una parola può fare la differenza.

Qui di seguito troverete dei brevi dialoghi, estratti da conversazioni reali.

Ogni dialogo è presentato in due versioni, che differiscono solo per una parola: nella seconda versione una parola manca o è sostituita da un'altra.

Sotto ogni coppia di dialoghi sono riportate di nuovo, per comodità, le due frasi che differiscono. Dopo averle lette, descrivete brevemente se percepite una differenza tra le due versioni, e quale. Grazie!

I.

1

A: Dai, vieni da me a prenderti un caffè italiano! Mi son portato moka e caffè!

B: Te li sei portati in Inghilterra?!

A: È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano, guarda. L'unica.

2

A: Dai, vieni da me a prenderti un caffè italiano! Mi son portato moka e caffè!

B: Te li sei portati in Inghilterra?!

A: È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano. L'unica.

> È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano, guarda. L'unica.

> È l'unica cosa che ho messo in valigia di italiano. L'unica.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

II.

1

A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata?

B: La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Io voglio far anche la radiografia, senti, a questo punto... Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...

2

A: Domenica sei andata poi a camminare? Come sei stata?

B: La schiena è sempre uguale, ecco, perché quella deve essere un'altra cosa. Io voglio far anche la radiografia, guarda, a questo punto... Mentre poi camminando stavo meglio...

> Io voglio far anche la radiografia, senti, a questo punto...

> Io voglio far anche la radiografia, guarda, a questo punto....

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

III.

1

A: Sono andata poi, a vedere i mobili. Però boh... Senti, sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è.

B: Ah

2

A: Sono andata poi, a vedere i mobili. Però boh... Guarda, sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è.

B: Ah

> Senti, sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è.

> Guarda, sono andata all'Ikea, e lì praticamente gli armadi son belli belli, però l'angoliera non c'è.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

I dialoghi sono finiti. Per concludere, avrei bisogno ancora di qualche informazione:

La persona che ha compilato il questionario è nata a...

e vive a...

da quanto tempo?

Età:

Sesso: M / F

Questionnaire 3

Una parola cambia le cose... come?

A volte una parola può fare la differenza.

Qui di seguito troverete dei brevi dialoghi, estratti da conversazioni reali.

Ogni dialogo è presentato in due versioni, che differiscono solo per una parola: nella seconda versione una parola manca o è sostituita da un'altra.

Sotto ogni coppia di dialoghi sono riportate di nuovo, per comodità, le due frasi che differiscono. Dopo averle lette, descrivete brevemente se percepite una differenza tra le due versioni, e quale. Grazie!

I.

1

A: La politica è un aiuto o un ostacolo?

B: Guardi, per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco. La politica invece intesa come cittadino che opera in questa nazione, potrebbe essere una cosa di grande aiuto.

2

A: La politica è un aiuto o un ostacolo?

B: Senta, per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco. La politica invece intesa come cittadino che opera in questa nazione, potrebbe essere una cosa di grande aiuto.

> Guardi, per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco.

> Senta, per un industriale che vive ed opera nel mondo, la politica potremmo dire che in quel senso aiuta poco.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

II.

1

A: Quello montato era un po' più bruttino, però ha detto che si poteva cambiare i colori, delle cose così. Quindi niente.

B: Mh.

A: Senti, quando tornate voi?

B: Mah, ora non lo so. Torneremo verso le otto.

2

A: Quello montato era un po' più bruttino, però ha detto che si poteva cambiare i colori, delle cose così. Quindi niente.

B: Mh.

A: Quando tornate voi?

B: Mah, ora non lo so. Torneremo verso le otto.

> Senti, quando tornate voi?

> Quando tornate voi?.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

III.

1

A: Io chiudo a mezzogiorno, ti vengo a prendere... all'una.

B: All'una.

A: Eh? Andiamo in macchina.

B: Mh. Senti, dammi un succo, va'.

A: Mh. D'arancia...

B: No, dammelo al cedro, va'.

2

A: Io chiudo a mezzogiorno, ti vengo a prendere... all'una.

B: All'una.

A: Eh? Andiamo in macchina.

B: Mh. Dammi un succo, va'.

A: Mh. D'arancia...

B: No, dammelo al cedro, va'.

> Mh. Senti, dammi un succo, va'.

> Mh. Dammi un succo, va'.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

I dialoghi sono finiti. Per concludere, avrei bisogno ancora di qualche informazione:

La persona che ha compilato il questionario è nata a...

e vive a...

da quanto tempo?

Età:

Sesso: M / F

Questionnaire 4*Una parola cambia le cose... come?*

A volte una parola può fare la differenza.

Qui di seguito troverete dei brevi dialoghi, estratti da conversazioni reali.

Ogni dialogo è presentato in due versioni, che differiscono solo per una parola: nella seconda versione una parola manca o è sostituita da un'altra.

Sotto ogni coppia di dialoghi sono riportate di nuovo, per comodità, le due frasi che differiscono. Dopo averle lette, descrivete brevemente se percepite una differenza tra le due versioni, e quale. Grazie!

I.

1

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: Guarda, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

2

A: Questo in centro costa cinquanta euro a persona, e questo senza colazione sempre in centro...

B: Quarantadue.

A: Senti, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

> Guarda, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

> Senti, io per quegli otto euro in più, opterei per questo perché comunque è in centro.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

II.

1

A: Ma a te da quant'è che ti piacciono... insomma che ascolti i Depeche Mode?

B: Ma io... senti, perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane. Quindi io son cresciuta un po' a pane e Depeche Mode, Smiths, questa gente qui.

2

A: Ma a te da quant'è che ti piacciono... insomma che ascolti i Depeche Mode?

B: Ma io... perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane. Quindi io son cresciuta un po' a pane e Depeche Mode, Smiths, questa gente qui.

> Ma io... senti, perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane.

> Ma io... perché c'era mio fratello che li ascoltava quand'era giovane.

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

III.

1

A: L'ondulato verde ce l'hai, tu?

B: Oh, no, non ho posto per tenerlo. Lo cercava anche lui, guarda. Ma eh, purtroppo...

A: Volevo cinque metri, ho da coprire un'arnia delle api.

2

A: L'ondulato verde ce l'hai, tu?

B: Oh, no, non ho posto per tenerlo. Lo cercava anche lui, senti. Ma eh, purtroppo...

A: Volevo cinque metri, ho da coprire un'arnia delle api.

> Lo cercava anche lui, guarda. Ma eh, purtroppo...

> Lo cercava anche lui, senti. Ma eh, purtroppo...

C'è differenza tra le due versioni? Se percepite una differenza, descrivetela con parole vostre.

I dialoghi sono finiti. Per concludere, avrei bisogno ancora di qualche informazione:

La persona che ha compilato il questionario è nata a...

e vive a...

da quanto tempo?

Età:

Sesso: M / F

Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, die vorliegende Dissertation selbstständig erarbeitet zu haben, keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel verwendet zu haben, und wörtlich oder inhaltlich übernommene Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht zu haben.

Laura Fuschi

Bielefeld, Oktober 2013