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COMMUNICATING THE IMAGE OF VENICE: THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN WEBSITES AND DIGITAL TRAVEL GUIDEBOOKS IN ENGLISH

1. Introduction

The annual survey conducted by the City of Venice Tourist Board found out that, in 2015, the city was visited by tourists coming from 12 “top countries,” namely the USA, the UK, France, China, Germany, Japan, Spain, Australia, South Korea, Brazil, Canada and Argentina (Miraglia 2016, 11-12). The language employed to promote the city is preferably English, which is used as a *lingua franca*. Venice is also promoted through a wide range of channels, either traditional (printed brochures, travel guidebooks in bookstores, etc.) or innovative, such as applications on digital devices, or websites, which use the affordances of the Internet as the nowadays’ preferred medium to ‘sell’ the city and its surrounding territory.

This contribution follows three previous studies (Cesiri 2016; 2017a; 2017b) that examined the stylistic features used in online texts to promote Venice in English. In the present case, the use of discourse markers (henceforth, DMs) will be considered with particular attention to their semantic and pragmatic relationships with respect to the context of occurrence. First, an overview of the previous results will be presented with a description of the corpus under investigation. Then, the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the DMs found will be preceded by a discussion on the state of the art on DMs which will focus on the definition and classification approach adopted in this study.

2. Previous results

As already mentioned, the previous studies aim at understanding how the promotional message about the city of Venice is conveyed to a public of visitors who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Cesiri (2016) conducted a qualitative analysis on a corpus of digital travel guidebooks (DTGs), focusing on the investigation of the instances of the so-called ‘languaging’ technique (Dann 1996). ‘Languaging’ is particularly exploited in tourism texts; it is defined by Dann (1996, 184) as “the impressive use of foreign words, but also a manipulation of the vernacular, a special choice of vocabulary, and not just for its own sake.” Authors of tourism texts use ‘languaging’ whenever they presume their readers have little knowledge of some aspects of the host culture, such as typical elements from the eno-gastronomic field. Cesiri (2016) found out that terms in the Venetian dialect, or in Italian, are frequently used in texts promoting Venice. However, the translations, definitions or paraphrases, that often accompany these terms, are not always accurate, thus failing to communicate the real meaning and cultural value of the original term. In addition, these texts do not clearly differentiate, for instance through typographical devices, the terms in English from those in other languages. This aspect increases the overall sense of confusion that is generated by the poor rendering of the local culture. Cesiri (2017a) investigated another group of DTGs, tagged via the CLAWS Part-of-Speech Tagger, and searched for lexico-grammatical features by means of WordSmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012). The quantitative and qualitative analyses identified recurrent nouns, adjectives, and verbs, revealing the authors’ stylistic preferences and how they managed to convey their promotional message, providing at the same time effective practical information. The investigation found out that the DTGs use a language that is emphatic, showing a clear promotional aim; nonetheless, the authors keep their style emotionally balanced, thus they give the idea that, even though they are freely available and linked to a commercial website, the DTGs are all the same reliable and professionally-made supports to the tourist experience.

Finally, Cesiri (2017b) investigated, again, the use of ‘languaging’ in two groups of websites written in English: one set promotes Venice to international tourists and the other one to visitors from specific English-speaking countries. The analysis of the texts revealed that, also in this case, the websites make a consistent use of terms in Italian or in the Venetian dialect. However, the translations, paraphrases or explanations provided in

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English do not convey the cultural importance of the phenomena to which the terms refer, thus making it difficult for the potential visitor to fully understand and appreciate the local culture.

The present study uses the same corpora as the previous ones, but it shifts the focus on the semantic and pragmatic relationships between segments of discourse in the tourism texts. DMs were chosen since they are the items that usually signal the aforementioned relationships and negotiate the construction of discourse between the writer's intentions and the reader's expectations.

3. The Corpus

3.1. Texts collected

The texts investigated are listed in Table 1: the sub-corpus of the websites from Cesiri (2017b) is labelled Ws, while the two sub-corpora of DTGs are named DTGs1 (from Cesiri 2016) and DTGs2 (from Cesiri 2017a), respectively. In the DTGs1 and DTGs2 sub-corpora some texts are shared but the DMs were counted once. Indeed, the division into three sub-corpora was kept just to make the corpus search, and the following analysis, easier. The findings will be analysed in this study as a whole: the entire corpus will be referred to as VTTs (Venice Tourism Texts), while the sub-corpora will keep the acronyms as in Table 1.

Ws	DTGs1	DTGs2
1. travel.usnews.com/ 2. www.bbc.com/travel 3. www.flightcentre.com.au 4. vacations.aircanada.com/ 5. www.lonelyplanet.com (websites+two .pdf files: Venice+Venice Getting Started) 6. www.timeout.com/venice/ 7. www.in-venice.it	8. TripAdvisor's Venice Guide, 9. The Rough Guide to Venice and The Veneto, 10. The Venice City Guide (by Travelplan.it), 11. Venice Guide (by Venezia.net), 12. Introducing Venice (by Alison Bing for Lonely Planet).	13. Venice Guide (by TomsPortGuides.com), 14. Venice City Guide (by Tripomatic.com), 15. Venice Smart Tourism Guide (by the Italian Association of people with Down Syndrome, Equal Partners Foundation - Malta -, Společnost rodičů a přátel dětí Downovým syndromem, Os - Czech Republic - and Down Alapitvány - Hungary -), 16. City Guide (by WeeaGoo), 17. Venice (by Arrival Guides).

Table 1: Texts included in the study

The Ws column lists two different kinds of websites: one group explicitly addresses visitors from English-speaking countries (1 to 4), while the other websites (5 to 7) are aimed at a generally international public who uses English as a vehicular language. All the websites are organised in several sections, accessible from the homepage, that present the different aspects of the travelling experience and of the city. Some of the texts in the DTGs1 and DTGs2 sub-corpora are written by Italian authors and are available in the same website with the corresponding text in Italian. After comparing the English and the Italian versions, the former does not appear to be a translation of the latter – or vice versa – because they contain different kinds of information, tailored to meet the demands of a foreign and of an Italian tourist, respectively.

3.2. Quantitative data

The quantitative analysis – conducted by means of Wordsmith Tools 6.0 (Scott 2012) – used the British National Corpus (BNC) as reference corpus. The BNC is a corpus of general English, compiled between the 1990s and 2007, comprising samples of written and spoken language. In addition, data from the Tourism English Corpus (TEC), compiled and analysed by Kang and Yu (2011), were also compared to data from the



VTTs corpus to contrast the language they use with both general English and another domain-specific corpus. The results are illustrated in Table 2.

	VTTs	BNC (1990s-2007)	TEC (2011)
Tokens	615,606	97,860,872	107,981
Types	21,830	512,588	10,789
Type/Token Ratio	3.72	0.52	9.99
STTR	45.31	42.66	44.96
Avg. word length (letters)/sentences	4.66/24,079	4.68/4,754,513	4.77/5,166
Avg. sentence length	24.36	20.59	20.90

Table 2: Quantitative data from the corpus search

Considering the ratios for the reference corpus of general English, the Standardised Type-Token Ratio (STTR) for the VTTs corpus indicates that it is lexically dense, rich in word use. Mean word length values are similar, demonstrating that content words predominate, while the number of sentences is proportionate to the size of the corpus. The average sentence length is also similar in all the three corpora but the value for the VTTs corpus (24.36) indicates that sentences are complex since they are longer than in the BNC (20.59). This feature is typical of “a more formal style” (de Haan and van Esch 2007, 198). Moreover, if we compare data from the VTTs corpus to those from TEC, it is clear that the two domain-specific corpora have similar figures, demonstrating that the VTTs corpus shows stylistic features that are typical of “Tourism English.”

To summarise, the corpus statistics describe the VTTs corpus as having the textual complexity typical of the formal register, namely it shows lexical density, with a consistent use of content words, and lengthy sentences. Indeed, quoting Diemer and Frobenius (2013, 57), we can say that “usually the combination of high TTR, high word and high sentence length indicates specialised or possibly even restricted content and elaborate style.” This is also consistent with what Kang and Yu (2011, 133) state about their corpus of English tourism texts, namely that ‘Tourism English’ presents complex stylistic features since its aim “is to introduce large amounts of practical information such as location, history, culture, etc.”

4. Discourse Markers

4.1. State of the art

Despite early studies date as back as the 1970s, DMs are still considered some of the most elusive particles in the study of discourse. Many scholars have so far attempted at defining the nature and describing the various functions that DMs have in both spoken and written discourse; however, no consensus can be found in the terminology, definition and classification of DMs.

As for the definition of the terms that could also account for the nature of these “linguistic items,” one of the first attempts is Longacre (1976) who believed that DMs could vary freely in a given language. He was also the first to understand that their role in discourse went beyond the sentence level. This role was underlined also by Levinson (1983, 87-88) who stated that “what they [DMs] seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse.” Since these first definitions, the number of studies on DMs has increased, and the function of DMs in spoken and written language has been unravelled. However, DMs still keep an aura of vagueness which is testified by the number of different terms used to label them, namely: discourse markers (Blakemore 1987; Fraser 1988; Lenk 1998; Schiffrin 1987), discourse particles (Aijmer 2002; Schourup 1985), pragmatic markers (Andersen 1998; Brinton 1990; Erman 2001; Fraser 1996), pragmatic formatives (Fraser 1987), pragmatic connectives (Crystal and Davy 1975; van Dijk 1979), fillers (Brown and Yule 1983), conjunctions and continuatives (Halliday and Hasan 1976)¹. The element that this variety of terms share is that DMs are taken as “items which make the relation between one part of discourse and the preceding discourse or the surrounding context explicit” (Lutzky 2006, 4).

¹ The list is adapted from Lutzky (2006, 4).



The approaches adopted to classify DMs are also several. In this regard, we could list – among many others – works such as Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2001) and Urgelles-Coll (2010) who provide an account of DMs in the wider panorama of discourse studies as well as a syntactic and semantic formal analysis, respectively; Brinton (1996), and Jucker and Ziv (1998), describe the notion of function of DMs in language as well as their diachronic evolution. Aijmer (2013) contextualises the usage of DMs from English ‘standard’ discourse “to their occurrence in different varieties of English, text types and activity types” (2), while the volume edited by Degand, Cornilie, and Pietrandrea (2013, 1) aims “to investigate the intersection between modal particles (MP) and [DMs], and to discuss whether or not it is possible to draw a line between these two types of linguistic expressions.”

According to Schiffrin (2001, 55), we could summarise the various approaches to the investigation of DMs in three main strands: “Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) semantic perspective on cohesion [...]; next is [her] own discourse perspective (Schiffrin 1987); third is Fraser’s (1990; 1998) pragmatic approach.” The first strand considers DMs as textual cohesive devices that help create semantic relations. In fact, Schiffrin (1987, 31) defines DMs “as sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk.” In her view, DMs are thus items that do not coincide with the speech acts that characterise verbal communication, and that are therefore in relation to structures above that of the sentence. In this regard, Schiffrin (1987) thinks of units of talk as realizations of communicative acts, “sometimes those units are sentences, but sometimes they are propositions, speech acts, tone units” (34). In other words, DMs are considered expressions that

propose the contextual coordinates within which an utterance is produced and designed to be interpreted. [...] it is not only because markers propose such coordinates, but because they propose more than one contextual coordinate at once that they contribute to the integrations of discourse – to discourse coherence. (315)

Another perspective is taken by Andersen (2001), who uses the label “pragmatic markers” to “describe a class of short, recurrent linguistic items that generally have little lexical import but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation” (39). He also pinpoints that “pragmatic markers are generally associated with the communication of aspects of an utterance that lie beyond its propositional meaning, including higher-level explicatures and implicatures” (40).

In the third line of research, Fraser (2009a) considers DMs items that signal the intention and commitment of the speaker to the utterance. Even though Fraser’s perspective is defined a pragmatic one, Andersen (2001) argues that it, too, is oriented towards the DMs role of devices for discourse organization, rather than of particles with a pragmatic relevance. Andersen (2001), then, prefers to use the term “pragmatic markers” to refer to indicators of the speaker’s positive or negative evaluation of a certain proposition, which s/he might endorse or reject with the use of specific markers. Pragmatic markers, indeed, may “have speech act functions or serve to increase politeness and solidarity between speaker” (40). They accompany and facilitate the identification of the speaker’s position or communicative intention with respect to “the contextual background against which an utterance is to be interpreted.”

In addition to the commonly agreed role of DMs in linking an utterance to the following one(s), we find other common elements that, according to Schourup (1999), have emerged in the literature on DMs, and that account for the features “most commonly attributed to DMs” (230). These features are: connectivity, optionality, non-truth-conditionality, initiality, and multi-categoriality. Connectivity seems to be the feature that finds the most widespread consensus: DMs connect two utterances, or two discourse units, establishing a relation between the two. The relation adds cohesion and coherence to the text in general. DMs are also acknowledged as optional since, if eliminated, they do not modify the “grammaticality of its host sentence [...], they are typically said to ‘display’ or ‘reflect’ existing propositional connections rather than create them [...], they are also commonly said to ‘reinforce,’ or ‘clue’ the interpretation intended by the speaker” (Schourup 1999, 231-232). In this regard, the “non-truth-conditionality” feature indicates that DMs do not alter or condition the propositional truth of the utterances.

Another important feature is ‘initiality.’ Yet, if DMs generally occur in initial position in a sentence, studies such as Fraser (2009a), allow DMs to occur also in the middle or at the end of a sentence without losing their function of DMs. In this case, initiality does not refer to the actual position of DMs in a sentence; it actually



refers to their position “in relation to the central clause elements” (Schourup 1999, 233). Finally, multi-categoriality indicates the syntactic category of DMs: as it is also confirmed in Fraser (2009a), they can be adverbs, interjections, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, verbs and clauses.

4.2. Fraser’s approach and the Present Study

The present Section provides a more detailed account of Fraser’s view of DMs and his approach to their analysis. The overview will be useful to describe the approach adopted in this study and in the analysis of DMs found in the VTTs corpus. After a review of the three perspectives discussed in Schiffrin (2001; see Section 4.1. above), whose categorisation appears to be still valid to classify more recent contributions on the topic, the approach chosen as the most suitable for the present study is Fraser’s (1988; 1990; 1993; 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2001; 2009a; 2009b; 2015). This outline presents Fraser’s older studies since they establish the notion, definition, and categorization of DMs, which are the basis for his more recent publications. Fraser’s approach was chosen also because it particularly helps in the classification of DMs not only according to their semantic content, but also according to their pragmatic function in a text. In addition, it provides a large list of DMs that might possibly occur in written texts, while other studies focus on DMs in spoken language taking into considerations particles, such as interjections and exclamations, that are not likely to be found in the texts included in the VTTs corpus. The list provided in Fraser (2009a), indeed, was used to run an automated corpus search with the help of Wordsmith Tool 6 (Scott 2012).

Fraser (1988, 21) distinguishes between content meaning that is conveyed by lexical and syntactic structures (the propositional content of a sentence) and pragmatic meaning that “signals what message the speaker intends to directly convey by way of the uttering of this particular linguistic expression.” Pragmatic markers signal this specific intention and are classified in three types:

basic, which signal the speaker’s basic communicative intention [...]; commentary, which signal an entire separate message consisting of a speaker comment on the basic message; and parallel, which signal a message separate from but concomitant with the basic message. (21)

DMs belong to the commentary type of pragmatic markers and are, thus, defined as “lexical expressions which are syntactically [sic] independent on the basic sentence structure, and which have a general core meaning which signals the relationship of the current utterance to the prior discourse” (27). The relationship entails an agreement between interlocutors on the interpretation of the “core meaning” that the same interlocutors assign to each DM. The core meaning is also related to the grammatical category to which DMs normally belong: they might be “verbs (*look, listen*)²; adverbs (*now, then*); literal phrases (*to repeat, as a result*); idioms (*by and large, still and all*); interjections (*well*); coordinate conjunctions (*and, or*); subordinate conjunctions (*however, so*); and OK, which falls into no traditional category” (24).

Fraser (1993) further divides DMs in three classes, which depend on the relationship that the DM has with the surrounding discourse. Discourse Topic Markers indicate changes or re-orientation in the topic, Discourse Activity Markers specify the activity related to that part of discourse, such as explaining or summarising, Message Relationship Markers show the relationship between the current message and the surrounding parts of the discourse. In the latter class of DMs Fraser (2009a) indicates three other sub-classes in which DMs can be categorised. These categories will be the ones investigated in this study since they signal the specific stance of the authors of the tourism texts promoting Venice with respect to their readers. This might not be an exhaustive classification, considering the fuzzy nature of DMs, however it has the advantage of providing a rational and empirical categorisation to start a pilot study on a corpus of texts that has never been analysed before, as it is the case of the VTTs corpus.

The three main categories of Message Relationship DMs individuated by Fraser (2009a) are: contrastive (CDMs), elaborative (EDMs), inferential (IDMs). CDMs are used to illustrate a direct or indirect contrast between the segment of the utterance that precedes the DM (S1) and the segment following it (S2). EDMs indicate an elaboration in S2 to the information contained in S1, while IDMs anticipate that S1 provides a basis for inferring S2. Table 3 contains the list – taken from Fraser (1993, 12-14; 2009a, 300-301) – of the DMs searched in the VTTs corpus.

² In italics in the original.



CDMs	but, alternatively, although, contrariwise, contrary to expectations, conversely, despite (this/that), even so, however, in spite of (this/that), in comparison (with this/that), in contrast (to this/that), instead (of this/that), nevertheless, nonetheless, (this/that point) notwithstanding, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather (than this/that), regardless (of this/that), still, though, whereas, yet
EDMs	and, above all, after all, also, alternatively, analogously, besides, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, for example, for instance, further(more), in addition, in other words, in particular, likewise, more accurately, more importantly, more precisely, more to the point, moreover, on that basis, on top of it all, or, otherwise, rather, similarly
IDMs	so, all things considered, as a conclusion, as a consequence (of this/that), as a result (of this/that), because (of this/that), consequently, for this/that reason, hence, it follows that, accordingly, in this/that/any case, on this/that condition, on these/those grounds, then, therefore, thus

Table 3: DMs used for corpus search (from Fraser 1993, 12-14; 2009a, 300-301)

Finally, as regards the position of DMs in an utterance, Fraser (2009a) pinpoints that DMs, to be recognized as such, must be acceptable in the sequence S1-DM+S2 and they must meet three conditions: (1) a DM is a lexical expression, (2) a DM is part of the discourse segment S2, and (3) a DM does not add semantic meaning to the segment but signals a semantic relationship between S1 and S2. As for the actual position of the DMs in the S1-S2 sequence Fraser allows several positions saying that

While every DM may occur in segment-initial position, some DMs may occur in the segment medial, and/or segment final position, depending on the particular DM. This is determined by the DM's syntactic analysis and what it specifically signals. (2009a, 298)

4.3. Quantitative distribution of DMs in the VTTs Corpus

Table 4 shows the distribution of the three categories of DMs in the three sub-corpora and their total occurrence in the VTTs corpus. Considering that the three sub-corpora have different sizes, indicated in brackets below each sub-corpus, all the figures presented are normalised per 1,000.

	Ws (23,548)	DTGs1 (276,941)	DTGs2 (315,117)	VTTs Normalised Counts
CDMs	6.62	6.09	5.73	18.44
EDMs	40.38	30.44	30.74	101.56
IDMs	12.14	9.42	9.57	31.13

Table 4: Distribution of DMs

The normalised counts of the DMs include the actual instances of DMs found in the corpus. Results from the corpus search of the words and phrases in Table 3, in fact, were revised manually to exclude items that did not perform the function of DMs according to the sequence illustrated in Fraser (2009a). Figures in Table 4 show that EDMs occur with much greater frequency than the other two classes of DMs. This result indicates that the authors of the texts in the VTTs corpus show a clear stylistic choice: they prefer to add more details to S1, by providing them in S2, with the DM between the two segments performing the function of “topic orientation markers, by which the speaker’s intentions concerning the immediate future topic of the discourse can be conveyed” (Fraser 2009b, 893). We might even hypothesise that the authors’ strategy is to purposely



create a sense of anticipation in S1; the DM has the role of further enhancing this sense of anticipation, which will be finally fulfilled with the information provided in S2.

5. Qualitative analysis

What follows in the next Sections is the qualitative analysis of DMs as they occur in the corpus. The examples reported for each category of DM are those available in the VTTs corpus for the particular DM analysed. In the examples, the DMs are underlined to highlight their position in the S1-S2 sequence.

5.1. Contrastive DMs in the Corpus

As regards the first class of CDMs, they are generally used to show a direct or indirect contrast between S1 and S2 (Fraser 2009a). The CDMs found in the corpus indicate that some important information will follow, which contrasts with the information in S1; the contrast is signalled with some form of warning or advice on something that has already been pinpointed in the previous statement. A particular group of CDMs, namely “although,” “instead,” “however” and “but,” establish an even more specific contrastive relationship between S1 and S2. Examples (1) to (3) illustrate how “although” is used in the VTTs corpus to anticipate that something opposite to the general belief (stated in S1) follows.

- 1) The best way to get around Venice is by foot. Although a labyrinth of canals and weaving roads complicate getting around, getting lost is part of this city’s allure (Travel US News);
- 2) From fanciful Venetian Gothic to regal rococo and neoclassical minimalism there’s a palace to suit every taste and period, although all of them display a certain cosmopolitan Venetian flair (Lonely Planet);
- 3) Distances are short, although you’re bound to get lost whenever you venture off the well-marked central pedestrian routes (Vacations Air Canada).

The use of “although” in these examples indicates that it is used as a DM with the function of signalling that the authors are offering a solution to some problem that is commonly encountered in Venice by visitors. This creates a sense of trust in the readers who rely on the authors to offer them a safe experience in a city with a peculiar structure and traffic routes.

Examples (4) and (5) show that “instead” is used in the VTTs corpus to signal a suggestion for off-the-beaten-track experiences, that are indicated in S2:

- 1) To find the best Venetian food, dodge restaurants immediately around San Marco, near the train station and along main thoroughfares and opt, instead, for modest osterie (taverns) in local campi (squares) and backstreets (Lonely Planet);
- 2) Venice hotels tend to charge high prices to use the web; visit the Internet cafés instead (Time Out Venice).

Fraser (2007) identifies two uses of the CDM “instead.” One that he calls “pseudo-action [that] requires [...] that the second segment of the sequence, S2, specify a different action that was done, will be done, should be done, or was done” (303). In the second use of “instead,” the “actual-action use” (304), the CDM “requires that S2 specify a different, viable action that serves as an alternate for the action specified in S1. By ‘viable’ I mean that the S2 action must ‘make sense’ as an alternative in the particular discourse context” (304). As we see in the examples from the VTTs corpus, the use of “instead” is of the second “actual-action” kind. The contrast lies in the fact that S1 indicates the mainstream choice of most tourists. So, the CDM creates in the readers the expectation that what follows is an alternative choice that will make their experience unique and original.

Another CDM, “however,” anticipates that in S2 a solution is provided to some problem, or issue, normally encountered during the visit, and which was indicated in S1. This use is illustrated in examples (6) to (8):



- 1) Fewer people come to the city during the winter months. However, despite the cold, February is a popular time among Carnival-goers who fill the city with music and laughter (Venice Travel Guide);
- 2) From the station, you will be able to easily reach Rialto bridge by walking along the Strada Nova, the main road of Cannaregio district. However, we suggest you to get away from it in order to find quiet corners and historical areas worth a visit (Vacations Air Canada);
- 3) Venice empties out in fall after the summertime high season [...]. However, you will need a coat or some layers; November's temperatures range [...] (Travel US News).

According to Lenk (1998, 104), the DM “however”

Is usually used [in spoken language] to indicate the end of a digression from and the return to the main topic of the conversation, when the digression added some contrastive aspect to the main topic, or when the digression was relevant to the development of the main topic, or when the digression was of interactional importance.

In the case of the VTTs corpus, which contains written language, “however” is used to downplay the seriousness of the problem described and to anticipate that some positive aspects can be nonetheless found in that particular situation. Once again, the strategy of the authors is that of presenting themselves as the trustworthy, problem-solving experts that help visitors enjoy their stay in Venice.

A very interesting case is the usage of “but:” in the VTTs corpus, it occurs in two different situations. In the first one, exemplified in (9) and (10), “but” is part of the recurrent pattern “but...so” and used to signal that some opposition or some off-the-beaten-track solution follows in S2. In the second situation (examples 11-13), “but” occurs alone to indicate that something in contrast with some previous information stated in S1 will follow in S2.

- 1) Houses are numbered, but not usually in a straight line or by street, so finding a particular address is not always easy (BBC Travel);
- 2) But remember: half the fun of bàcaro-hopping is discovering new places for yourself. So if you are up for a little adventure, keep your eyes open [...] (Lonely Planet);
- 3) Because of its configuration and its 435 bridges, Venice may seem an inaccessible city. But that is not the case, because almost 70% of the city is accessible for people with impaired mobility (In Venice);
- 4) Judging by the crowd, you might think the Art Biennale must be happening – but no, that's just an average Wednesday night in Venice (Lonely Planet);
- 5) We know that it is quite characteristic to have a picture taken while the pigeons eat from your hands, but unfortunately this can lead to diseases and the pigeon droppings can seriously damage the monuments (Vacations Air Canada).

Norrick (2001, 858) stresses the “notion that but cancels meanings developed in the preceding discourse,” producing examples in which “but” is used by speakers to cancel a contradiction in the preceding utterance. Norrick (2001) quotes other studies, such as Halliday and Hasan (1976), in which “but” is found to

Further identify an ‘internal’ adversative meaning ‘contrary to expectation’ directed at the ongoing communication process. Similar is Schiffrin’s (1987) description of a ‘speaker-return’ from secondary to primary information, or alternatively to cancel the topic domain of the foregoing discourse in favor of a new perspective. Bell (1998) calls this function of but sequentially contrastive, saying that it cancels expectations about what should come next in the discourse [...] but as a DM is keyed to the organization of the ongoing discourse (Norrick 2001, 858)

The use of “but” in examples (11) to (13) from the VTTs corpus falls in the first notion introduced by Norrick (2001), namely it is used to cancel what has been said in S1 and to lead the readers’ attention to another



perspective from which the city of Venice can be seen. Examples (9) to (11) illustrate the use of “but” in the sense indicated by Bell (1998), namely that it cancels some expectation created in S1. However, the use of *so* balances the cancellation by providing an alternative option which does not leave the prospective visitor alone, thus reinforcing the role of the writer as the tourists’ personal guide to the city.

5.2. Elaborative DMs in the Corpus

Fraser (2009a) states that, in general language, EDMs signal that S2 contains an elaboration of the information contained in S1. This is also reflected in the EDMs used in the VTTs corpus, which shows also their usage for more specific stylistic purposes. In this regard, the most significant EDMs occurring in the VTTs corpus are “and” and “also.” The former elaborates the information already provided in S1, anticipating some empathic component present in S2 (examples 14 and 15), while the latter signals that S2 contains information on something that tourists will have to remember once at the destination (examples 16 and 17):

- 1) Many of the city’s most ornate facades are impossible to see from land, and the best views of nearly all of Venice’s 400 bridges are from its canals. And what a view it is [...] (Smart Tourism Guide);
- 2) But this city has been internationally famed (and notorious) for its party-throwing prowess since the 16th century, and you can see why at any of the city’s major shindigs (Lonely Planet);
- 3) For exceptional service though, a couple extra euros is always appreciated. Also keep in mind that water and bread are usually not free at meals (Travel US News);
- 4) Remember that Venice is visited each year by more than 25 million people. Also, remember to keep to the right when you walk in tight and crowded places (In Venice).

As we can see from the examples, “and” creates a sense of expectation between S1 and S2: in example (14), the DM anticipates the emphasis on the description of a stunning view, while in example (15) it marks a pause in the flow of the utterances, indicating that S2 explains why Venice is famous for the parties thrown by the population, especially during the Carnival season. Examples (16) and (17) show the uses of “also” in the corpus: the DM is used to signal that a reminder follows in S2, adding more information about something that had already been anticipated in S1.

5.3. Inferential DMs in the Corpus

As it happens in general language (Fraser 2009a), the IDMs found in the VTTs corpus are employed to ‘alert’ the readers that S1 provides a basis for inferring S2. What is worth analysing here is the particular use of one IDM, “so,” which is employed with two different uses. One is when it occurs as part of the “but...so” pattern already described in Section 5.1., examples (9) and (10); the second use is when it occurs alone. In this particular case, “so” is used to signal that S2 contains a warning or some advice for the tourist. The reason that prompts the warning/advice is anticipated in S1. Examples (18) to (22) illustrate this situation:

- 1) Carnevale occurs in February and it’s a huge event in Venice, so be prepared for large crowds of mask-wearing participants (Travel US News);
- 2) Acqua alta (high water) flooding occurs dozens of times a year, especially in the colder months, so make sure to pack a pair of rain boots (Travel US News);
- 3) Meals in Italy are expected to last long and it’s very common for patrons to linger. So don’t be surprised when your server does not bring your bill the minute you finish your meal (Travel US News);
- 4) Stay at least overnight in Venice, so you can see what the city is like after the crowd thins (Lonely Planet);
- 5) Spritz is a very strong beverage, so you take care when you drink it (Venezia.net).

Fraser (1990) assigns to the IDM “so” not only the function of signalling a result or a consequence, but also the function of indicating “that the speaker takes the message following to have a consequential relationship to the prior material” (393). Moreover, according to Müller (2005), the function of “so” as a DM “depends on the situation and speech context exactly what relationship so is meant to convey” (63). It can also have the



three functions identified by Blakemore (1988), namely: indicating that what is described in S2 is a result of what was described in S1, indicating that S2 is a “contextual implication” (188) of S1, indicating that the speaker does not understand the interlocutor, if “so” is uttered as a question at the end a statement (Müller 2005, 64). Clearly, the last situation is not the case of “so” in the VTTs corpus, which shows a usage that is closer to Blakemore’s (1988) second function. In fact, “so” signals that S2 provides information that is directly related to what is being said, and whose relevance to the ongoing discourse can be inferred only from the previous utterance (S1).

6. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of DMs conducted on the VTTs corpus showed that, regardless of their class, they are used to anticipate specific contents that will follow in S2. DMs are also used to signal that in S2 the reader will find a reminder, a warning, some advice. DMs are also used to add an emphatic component that anticipates the information given in S2. This is also confirmed by the position of DMs in the S1-S2 sequence. Indeed, the corpus showed that DMs occur in the segment-initial position, which corresponds to the usual position of DMs in a sentence as indicated by the relevant literature (Schourup 1999; Fraser 2009a). The DMs initial position in this case also corresponds to the feature of ‘initiality’ mentioned in Schourup (1999, 233), in which DMs indicate some specific semantic relationship between clause elements.

All in all, in the way they are used in the VTTs corpus, we can say that all the three classes of DMs have the pragmatic function of “topic orientation markers” (Fraser 2009b, 893). This subclass is listed as one of the types of pragmatic markers, defined “discourse management markers,” that signal an aspect of the organization of the ongoing discourse. In particular, topic orientation markers indicate “the speaker’s intentions concerning the immediate future topic of the discourse.” In the specific case of the VTTs corpus, the qualitative and quantitative analyses confirmed that attention is put especially on the fact that the author will provide some alternative option or some off-the-beaten-track solution to give the readers the impression that they are not being offered the usual mass tourism, standardized experience but a customized one.

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