

## The illocutionary basis of Information Structure

Cresti, Emanuela and Massimo Moneglia

The identification of reference units in a spoken corpus through syntactic and semantic devices which are employed in the analysis of writing is problematic (*Blanche-Benveniste 1997; Miller & Weinert 1998; Abeillé 2003; Izre'el 2005*). In accordance with a specific pragmatic tradition (*Austin 1962; Quirk et al. 1985; Biber et al. 1999*), research on spoken Romance corpora (*Cresti & Moneglia 2005; Raso & Mello 2012*) has led to the identification of the pragmatically defined *utterance* as the unit of reference for speech.

In the framework of Language into Act Theory (L-AcT, *Cresti 2000; Moneglia & Raso 2014*), prosody provides the means (through *terminal breaks*) of formally identifying the utterances within the flow of speech and segmenting it into information units (through *non-terminal breaks*) (*Danieli et al., 2004; Moneglia et al. 2010*).

Following the above criteria, LABLITA identified all the utterances of an Italian reference corpus and aligned them with their acoustic sources (WinPitch, Martin 2004). Using this large empirical dataset, the team developed the IPIC database (available online) where the Information Structure (IS) of a large sampling of this corpus is annotated (21,000 utterances, *Panunzi & Gregori 2011; Panunzi & Mittmann 2014*).

According to L-AcT, the Comment information unit accomplishes the illocution of the utterance and is the center of the IS. An utterance can be composed of a single Comment, which is necessary and sufficient for its performance, or a Comment together with additional, optional units which have different communication functions.

The identification of the Comment unit led to research on the actual variation of illocutionary values in spontaneous speech, producing a repertory of about 90 speech act types (*Cresti 2005; Cresti forthcoming*). The repertory is not a taxonomy grounded on logic criteria (*Searle 1979; Sbisà & Turner 2013*); it is based, rather, on pragmatic features in accordance with the *usage based* tradition (*Kawaguchi et al., 2006; Cresti 2006*).

It emerges from this that the illocutionary value accomplished by the Comment in spontaneous speech is *non-assertive* for at least 45% of utterances. This very general quantitative datum is of note because of its theoretical relevance to the conception of IS. In fact, it conflicts with the idea that IS corresponds to a Topic-Focus relation, meaning a proposition with a truth value (*Krifka 2007; Krifka & Musan 2012*). No truth value can be assigned to utterances whose Comment is, for instance, directive.

Given that the Comment accomplishes whatever illocution type, the Topic is defined as the *field of application of illocutionary force*, while the Topic and the Comment are related by a *pragmatic aboutness* function (*Cresti 2012*). Defined as such, the function is very far from a semantic relation between a Predicate-like Focus (or Comment) and a Subject-like Topic. More specifically, according to L-AcT the utterance doesn't correspond to a syntactic and semantic proposition but rather to a combination of information units which are functionally conceived (*Cresti 2014*).

This talk will present the illocutionary repertory and some instances taken from Romance and English spontaneous corpora supporting the above theoretical framework.

### References

- Abeillé, A. 2003. *Treebanks Building and Using Parsed Corpora*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic
- Austin, J.L. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad and S., Finegan, E. 1999. *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London : Longman.
- Blanche-Benveniste, C. 1997. *Approches de la Langue Parlée en Français*. Paris: Ophrys
- C-ORAL- ROM, <http://lablita.dit.unifi.it/coralrom/>
- Cresti, E. (2000), *Corpus di italiano parlato*, Vol I°, II°, CD-ROM, Firenze: Accademia della Crusca.

- Cresti , E. 2005. *Per una nuova classificazione dell'illocuzione a partire da un corpus di parlato (LABLITA)*, in E. Burr (ed.), *Tradizione e innovazione: il parlato. Atti del VI Convegno internazionale SILFI*, Pisa: Cesati, pp 233-246.
- Cresti , E. 2006. *Some comparisons between UBLI and C-ORAL-ROM* , In Kawaguchi Y., Zaima S. , Takagaki T.(eds.) *Spoken Language Corpus and Linguistics Informatics* . Amsterdam: Benjamins. pp.125-152
- Cresti, E. 2012. *The definition of Focus in the framework of the Language into Act Theory (LACT)*, in A. Panunzi, T. Raso & H. Mello (acd) *Pragmatics and Prosody. Illocution, modality, attitude, information patterning and speech annotation*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, pp 39-82
- Cresti, E. 2014, *Syntactic properties of spontaneous speech in the Language into Act Theory: data on Italian complements and relative clauses*, in Raso T. & Mello, H. (eds.), *Spoken corpora and linguistics studies*, Amsterdam: Benjamin, pp 365-410
- Cresti, E. forthcoming, *On the illocution*, in "CHIMERA. Romance corpora and linguistics studies", n 2
- Cresti, E. & Moneglia, M. (eds.) (2005). *C-ORAL-ROM. Integrated reference corpora for spoken romance languages*, DVD + vol., Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Danieli, M., Garrido,J. M., Moneglia,M., Panizza,A., Quazza,S., Swerts, M. 2004. Evaluation of Consensus on the Annotation of Prosodic Breaks in the Romance Corpus of Spontaneous Speech "C-ORAL-ROM". In: Draxler, Christoph, van den Heuvel, Henk and Schiel, Florian (eds.). *Speech Corpus Production and Validation. LREC 2004: Fourth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation*, 1513-1516
- Kawaguchi Y., Zaima S. & Takagaki T.(eds.) 2006. *Spoken Language Corpus and Linguistics Informatics* . Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Krifka, M. [2007], *Basic notions of information structure*, in C. Féry, G. Fanselow e M. Krifka (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Studies of Information Structure 6*, Potsdam, Universitätsverlag Potsdam, 13-55.
- Krifka, M. & Musan, R. 2012. (eds.), *The expression of information structure*, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- IPIC , <http://lablita.dit.unifi.it/ipic/>
- LABLITA, <http://lablita.dit.unifi.it/>
- Izre'el, S. 2005. Intonation Units and the Structure of Spontaneous Spoken Language: A View from Hebrew. In *Proceedings of the IDPO5 on Discourse-Prosody Interfaces*.
- Martin, P. (2004) *WinPitch Corpus: A text to Speech Alignment Tool for Multimodal Corpora*. Lisboa: LREC.
- Miller, J. & Weinert, R. 1998. *Spontaneous Spoken Language*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Moneglia, M. 2006. Units of Analysis of Spontaneous Speech and Speech Variation in a Cross-linguistic Perspective, In Kawaguchi Y., Zaima, S. & Takagaki, T.(eds.) *Spoken Language Corpus and Linguistics Informatics* . AMSTERDAM: Benjamins. 153-179
- Moneglia, M., Raso, T., Mittmann, M. M., & Mello, H. R. (2010). Challenging the Perceptual Relevance of Prosodic Breaks in Multilingual Spontaneous Speech Corpora: C-ORAL-BRASIL / C-ORAL-ROM. In *Prosodic Prominence Perceptual and Automatic Identification - Speech Prosody 2010 Satellite Workshop*. Chicago: Université de Neuchâtel.
- Moneglia, M. & Raso, T. 2014, *Notes on L-Act*, in Raso T. & Mello, H. (eds.), *Spoken corpora and linguistics studies*, Amsterdam: Benjamin, pp.468-494
- Panunzi, A. & Gregori, L. (2011). *An XML Model for multi-layer representation of spoken language*, in A. Panunzi, T. Raso & H. Mello eds (2011a) *Pragmatics and prosody. Illocution, modality,*

- attitude, information patterning and speech annotation*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, 133-150
- Panunzi, A. & Mittmann-Malvessi, M. (2012), *The IPIC resource and a cross-linguistic analysis of information structure in Italian and Brazilian Portuguese*, in T. Raso, H. Mello & M. Pettorino (eds.) *Speech and Corpus linguistics*, Amsterdam: Benjamins
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London and New York: Longman.
- Raso, T. & Mello, H. eds. (2012) *C-ORAL-BRASIL I: Corpus de referência de português brasileiro falado informal*, Belo Horizonte: Editora UFM A.
- Sbisà, M. & Turner, K. (eds.), (2013), *Pragmatics of speech actions*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter
- Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press