Translating discourse markers in theater: David Mence's *Convincing Ground* in Italian translation

Angela Tiziana Tarantini and Ruben Benatti
Monash University | University of Szeged

Abstract: This article examines the translation of discourse markers in drama dialogue. Discourse markers are an important feature of spoken language, and unsurprisingly, they abound in drama dialogue. Yet very few studies have addressed the issue of discourse markers in theater translation. While some scholars suggest that discourse markers do not add anything to the propositional content of the sentence (Bazzanella 1994), our study reveals that it is very difficult to omit them in translation. In this article we suggest that an approach based on pragmatics could inform the practice of translating discourse markers in a playtext without overriding the importance of the rhythm of a spoken utterance, which is vital for rendering a play in translation (Bartlett 1996).

Keywords: discourse markers; theater; theater translation; drama dialogue; rhythm; pragmatics

Introduction

This article tackles a largely neglected topic in theater translation: the translation of discourse markers in drama dialogue. Recent scholarship in translation studies in general, and in theater translation in particular, has tended to focus on the relationship between translation and performance (Marinetti 2013, 2018; Bigliazzi, Kofler, and Ambrosi 2013). Meanwhile, scholars working across disciplines such as linguistics and theater (and more specifically within the theoretical framework of discourse analysis) have analyzed various issues related to the language of drama dialogue: analogies between drama dialogue and naturally occurring conversation (Burton 1984, Herman 1995); how drama dialogue functions as interaction (Herman 1995); and how language functions as a characterizing tool in plays and other works of fiction (Culpeper 2001). Studies on the translation of discourse markers (DMs) have mainly taken place within the area of machine translation (Hardmeier 2012) or in corpus linguistics (Hajlaoui and Popescu-Belis 2013). Recent studies on the translation of DMs include Degand (2015) on film subtitles, Chiaro Nocella (2000) on the translation of a

specific type of DMs, i.e., tag questions, in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, and Mariano's thesis (2002) on the translation of DMs in the Italian version of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling. To the best of the authors' knowledge, the only study carried out on the translation of DMs in theater is that of Kruger (2004), who analyzes the role of DMs in an Afrikaans translation of *The Merchant of Venice.* None of the recent studies on DMs focuses on their translation in theater. This article addresses this gap in scholarship through a qualitative study on the translation into Italian of an Australian playtext rich in interactional DMs, David Mence's play *Convincing Ground* (2013a), which was translated into Italian as "Il Baleniere" (Tarantini 2018). The text was translated in collaboration with the playwright who, however, does not speak Italian, so he could not provide input on this specific issue. This case study aims to raise awareness among theater translation scholars of the relevance of DMs and to show how a thorough analysis of the pragmatic function of DMs can aid in their translation.

Drama dialogue and discourse markers

Discourse analyst Vimala Herman (1995, 6, original emphasis), who wrote one of the most comprehensive books on discourse analysis and drama, discusses the supposed similarity between everyday conversation and drama dialogue. The issue, she claims, is not:

> whether dramatic dialogue is seen to mirror faithfully some real life correlate or not, even assuming that some such exists to be mirrored. Even the most naturalistic form of dramatic speech do not quite reproduce the real life product. The mirror is not the point of reference between the two forms. Rather, it is a question of *mechanics*, in the exploitation by dramatists of underlying speech conventions, principles and 'rules' of use, operative in speech exchanges in the many sorts, conditions and contexts of society which members are assumed to share and use their interactions in day-to-day exchanges.

Thus, it is the dynamics of naturally occurring conversation, its rules and principles, that the dramatist exploits. Herman (1995: 6) goes on to state that:

> [t]he principles, norms and conventions of use which underlie spontaneous communication in everyday life are precisely those which are exploited and manipulated by dramatists in their constructions of speech types and forms in plays.

These principles, norms and conventions are what enables the audience to interpret dramatic dialogue with the same tools we use to understand conversation in "real" life (Culpeper 2001). Among the linguistic devices a playwright can use to reproduce the effect of spoken conversation are DMs.

Schiffrin (1987) is a seminal text in the research on DMs. She defines DMs as the parts of the sentence that mark sequentially dependent units of discourse. Drawing from a variety of disciplines, such as linguistics and sociology, she states that DMs can only be properly understood as a combination of semantic, pragmatic, and social factors. According to Schiffrin, DMs cannot be readily encompassed by a single linguistic class, since paralinguistic features and nonverbal gestures are vital to understanding DMs in the contextual discursive situation. Therefore, it is important, Schiffrin argues, to:

> try to find common characteristics of these items to delimit what linguistic conditions allow an expression to be used as a marker. But such an approach would require not only discovery of the shared characteristics of an extremely diversified set of expressions, in English; it would require analysis across a wide body of typologically diverse languages to discover what other linguistic resources are drawn upon for use as markers (Schiffrin 1987: 328).

Referring to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model, Schiffrin underscores that DMs are analyzable on a functional basis alone.

The most widely accepted theoretical model for discourse markers in Italian linguistics is Bazzanella's (1994). Bazzanella defines DMs as:

> quegli elementi che svuotandosi in parte del loro significato originario, assumono dei valori aggiuntivi e servono a sottolineare la strutturazione del discorso, a connettere elementi frasali, interfrasali, extrafrasali ed a esplicitare la collocazione dell'enunciato in una dimensione interpersonale, sottolineando la struttura interattiva della conversazione (Bazzanella 1994: 150).
>
> those elements which, partly deprived of their original meaning, take on an added value and are used to underline the structure of discourse; to connect phrasal, inter-phrasal, and extra-phrasal elements; and to make the collocation of the utterance explicit on an interpersonal dimension, thus underlining the interactive structure of conversation.[1]

Bazzanella states that DMs are better classified with a prototypical approach rather than with a classification based on discreteness, because one of the main features of DMs is their variability from a sociolinguistics point of view (Bazzanella 2001a). According to Bazzanella (2001a), the use of DMs in Italian varies on diachronic, diastratic, diamesic, diaphasic, and probably even diatopic levels.[2] The sociolinguistic dimension of DMs, however, is not an object of analysis in the present study.

Throughout the years, scholars have proposed several different descriptions and classifications of DMs. In Italian linguistics, DMs have been referred to in different ways:

[1] All translations from and into Italian are by Angela Tiziana Tarantini unless otherwise indicated.

[2] The terms are borrowed from Variational Linguistics, and were first used by Romanian-born linguist Coseriu (1973). The terms are currently used in Italian sociolinguistics to indicate language variants related to time, social predicament of the speaker, medium involved (written vs. spoken), and provenance of the speaker (Berruto 2006, 2012).

marcatori pragmatici (‘pragmatic markers,’ Stame 1999), *segnali discorsivi* (‘discourse markers,’ Bazzanella 1994, 1995), or *connettivi testuali* (‘textual connectors,’ Berretta 1984). In English, DMs have also been labeled ‘sentence connectives’ (Halliday and Hasan 1976), ‘discourse connectives’ (Blakemore 1987), ‘discourse operators’ (Redeker 1990), ‘phatic connectives’ (Bazzanella 1990), ‘pragmatic formatives’ (Fraser 1987), ‘pragmatic markers’ (Fraser 1988, 1990; Schiffrin 1987), ‘pragmatic operators’ (Ariel 1994), and ‘cue phrases’ (Knott and Dale 1994), among others. Biber (1988), in contrast, calls DMs ‘discourse particles.’ According to Biber, the main function of DMs is “to maintain conversational coherence and to monitor the information flow in discourse” (Biber 1988: 241). As Fraser writes: “[a]lthough most researchers agree that they [DMs] are expressions which relate discourse segments, there is no agreement on how they are to be defined or how they function” (Fraser 1999: 931).[3]

Due to their polyfunctionality and heterogeneity, the analysis of DMs has proven challenging. Not only can the same DM fulfill different functions according to the context, but a single DM in an utterance can have more than one function. The linguistic and extra-linguistic (i.e., situational) context is vital for the use and interpretation of discourse markers. This view is put forward by Swan (2005), who defines DMs as words or expressions that show the connection between the context and the utterances. DMs also defy traditional classifications because many of them are parts of speech, such as conjunctions, adverbs, interjections, and expressions, without an “actual” semantic value, and can therefore fulfill different functions. That is why they are so difficult to learn, understand, and teach (Sainz Gonzalez 2009). DMs are relatively syntax-independent, and from a semantic point of view they usually do not change the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence (Martinovic-Zic and Moder 2004).

An interesting exception is the theory developed by Khachaturyan (2010b, 2011), who remarks that there remain many outstanding issues concerning classification and translation of DMs. She rejects a pragmatic approach, proposing instead a classification based on formal-semantic factors. She then applies this approach in contrastive analyses of different languages, such as French and Italian (Khachaturyan 2010b), and Russian and Italian (Khachaturyan 2010a). She defines DMs as classes of units of a language (not pragmatic units) with specific formal, not just functional, properties (Khachaturyan 2010b). More

[3] An exhaustive list of the definitions and the different positions of scholars on the topic, however, goes beyond the scope of the present article.

recently, Zuckerman (2009) proposes a classification of DMs that focuses on their capacity to establish three kinds of relationships: among utterances; between the speaker and the message; and between speaker and hearer. McCormick's 2013 classification outlines nine classes of connectives based on their purpose.

Despite the great variety of definitions, denominations, and classifications, scholars tend to agree on some common features of DMs: first and foremost, their heterogeneity. DMs can belong to several different grammatical categories. That aspect, as we shall see later, can have strong implications for their translation. To understand DMs, we must look at both the linguistic and the extra-linguistic (i.e., situational) context, as both elements contribute to the speaker's use and the hearer's interpretation of DMs.

Theoretical framework

Since Italian is the target language of the translated text, we will adopt Bazzanella's (1994) theoretical framework for this study. Following Bazzanella's (1994) definitions and classifications, we divide DMs into two major classes: DMs with interactional function and DMs with metatextual function. Interactional DMs highlight the social aspect of communication, while metatextual DMs are connectives used "to mark the structuring of the discourse" (Bazzanella 1990: 630). DMs with metatextual function will not be an object of analysis in the present article for two reasons. First, because of their limited presence in David Mence's *Convincing Ground*, and second, because they are less relevant than interactional DMs for the study of spoken language (Bazzanella 1994).[4]

In this article we focus on interactional DMs because of their abundance in David Mence's play *Convincing Ground*. As in other categories of DMs, several microfunctions of interactional DMs can be identified. The following table reports Bazzanella's classification of the interactional functions of DMs:

[4] Bazzanella (2006: 456) recently added a third category: cognitive DMs, and consequently updated her definition. She now defines DMs as "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."

DMs on the part of the speaker:	DMs on the part of the hearer:
1. Turn-taking	1. Interruption mechanisms
2. Fillers	2. Back channels
3. Request for attention	3. Confirmation of attention
4. Phatisms	4. Phatisms
5. Politeness mechanisms	5. –
6. Reception control	6. Knowledge acquisition; request for explanation
7. Request for agreement and/or confirmation	7. Agreement/confirmation/reinforcement
8. Turn-giving	8. –

Table 1: Interactional functions of DMs (Bazzanella 2001b: 187)

Most of these functions are self-explanatory. Phatisms are DMs that fulfil the function of social cohesion, i.e., that are used "per sottolineare l'aspetto di 'coesione sociale' della comunicazione come strumento per creare, consolidare o evidenziare l'appartenenza di un individuo a un gruppo" [to underline the aspects of social cohesion of communication to create, to consolidate or highlight the belongingness of an individual in a group] (Bazzanella 1994: 155–156). Phatisms can also fulfil the function of "'modulazione' della forza illocutoria" ['modulation' of the illocutory force] (Bazzanella 1994: 156). Fillers are "expressions like 'ehm' that fill the time intervals that should be occupied by a word" (Vinciarelli, Chatziioannou, and Esposito 2015: 1) on the part of the speaker, while back channels are "short voiced utterances like 'ah-ah' that signal attention and encouragement to continue to others" on the part of the hearer (Vinciarelli, Chatziioannou, and Esposito 2015: 1). We will use Bazzanella's classification to analyze the interactional DMs in David Mence's *Convincing Ground* and its Italian translation.

According to Bazzanella, DMs are often used unconsciously by the speaker, who might prefer certain DMs over others, repeating them several times. She believes that listeners are often unaware of DMs or they do not pay attention to that sort of linguistic element (as they do not appear to contribute to the semantic content of the proposition). Bazzanella underscores that the use of DMs "è legato alla difficoltà di pianificazione tipica del parlato" [is connected to the difficulty of planning, which is typical of spoken language] (Bazzanella 1994: 147). Another typical feature of DMs is "la possibilità di cumularsi, o di giustapporsi linearmente. Questa possibilità deriva dalla parziale perdita di valore semantico." [the possibility of cumulating, or juxtaposing linearly. This possibility derives from the partial loss of semantic value.] (Bazzanella 1994: 147). Moreover, across languages there is divergence in the position of DMs (and in the value of the position they occupy) and in their frequency and usage, which might pose challenges during the translation process.

David Mence's *Convincing Ground*

Convincing Ground is set in 1830s Portland Bay, Australia, and depicts the life of the early whalers and sealers who pioneered the rugged Western coast of Victoria and their complex, violent relationships with the local population. The play is partly based on a controversial historical event known as the "Convincing Ground massacre," which allegedly took place in Portland Bay in 1833 or 1834. When a whale washed up on the shore, a dispute broke out between the white whalers and the local Gunditjmara people over who could rightfully claim it. What happened afterwards is unclear to this day. Some believe that a large number of Gunditjmara were massacred (Clark 2011; Russell 2012), while others maintain that the massacre never occurred (Connor 2005, 2007). The play originally featured twelve characters, all drawn from the historical archive, and a complex plot. Mence then decided to focus only on the two main protagonists: William Dutton (1811–1878), a real-life white whaler (Cumpston 1966), and Renanghi (circa 1815–1834), a young Indigenous woman and Dutton's "wife" for a time.[5] He felt that too many voices would distract the audience from the crux of his story: the conflicted love/hate relationship between the white whaler and the Indigenous woman within a colonial context,[6] which eventually led to a shocking confession about the Convincing Ground massacre, specifically, the role Dutton played in disposing of the bodies afterward. *Convincing Ground* is a relatively short one-act play constructed around the tension between the two main characters. The playwright carefully crafts their shifting power balance through rhythm, especially in exchanges where asking and answering questions is a tool to control the interaction and to establish dominance. In the play, Renanghi visits Dutton's old whaling hut every night. They talk—with a great deal of conflict—about the years they spent together in Portland Bay. We understand from Dutton that they go over the same ground interminably, night after night, until one final night—the night that the audience witnesses in real-time—Dutton confesses that after the massacre he helped get rid of the bodies. We soon learn that he has confessed because he is on the verge of death and does not want to die with this burden on his conscience. It is unclear whether Renanghi is a ghost or a figment of Dutton's imagination. The relationship between the two characters and their struggle to make peace with each other and with the past is the core of the play.

[5] It was common practice for sealers and whalers to keep an Aboriginal "wife," a woman to satisfy their sexual urges but also to help them survive on the harsh Australian frontier. See Taylor (2000) and, more recently and extensively, Russell (2012).

[6] Angela Tiziana Tarantini, in discussion with David Mence, Melbourne, February 2014.

Translating interactional DMs in David Mence's Convincing Ground[7]

DMs on the part of the speaker

The first act opens with Renanghi's appearing in Dutton's old whaling hut:

Source text		Target text	
DUTTON	Who's there?	DUTTON	Chi è là?[8]
Pause.		Pausa.	
	Who's there I said?		Chi è là, ho detto?

In this example, "I said" is an interactional DM that signals request for attention. In this case, the translation was not particularly problematic for two distinct yet related factors: First, the "literal" translation into the Italian "*ho detto*" is rhythmically very similar to the English. "I said" features two syllables, both of which are stressed, while "*ho detto*" features three syllables, two of which are stressed. The proposed translation is rhythmically as close as possible to the English line, since monosyllabic words are more common in English than in Italian.[9] Second, the DM's function is maintained in Italian, since it is a request for attention in both cases. Mence uses the interactional DM "I said" throughout the play. Since the whole play is a conflictual dialogue between two characters, both trying to dominate the conversation, "I said" is often used as a request for attention, sometimes in combination with a DM indicating reception control, as in the following example:

Source text		Target text	
RENANGHI	Don't you touch me. **You hear?**	RENANGHI	Non toccarmi, **capito**?
DUTTON	I'm half blind for Christ's sake. How am I supposed to clap eyes on you if you won't stand still?	DUTTON	Sono mezzo cieco, per Dio. Come faccio a vederti se non stai ferma?
		RENANGHI	**Ti ho detto** di non toccarmi!
RENANGHI	**I said** don't touch me!		

The first DM in the example above, "You hear?" was translated into Italian as "*capito?*" (lit. "understood?"), since here the meaning of the lexical item used as a DM is not as relevant as its function. Specifically, Renanghi wants to make sure that the message gets across and is received by the hearer. Thus, translating "You hear?" into the Italian equivalent of "Do you understand?" seemed like a feasible choice, since the verb "to hear" is not used in Italian with a discourse marking function. Much like in the previous example, "I said" functions here as a request for attention. This type of DM has not proven to be problematic in translation.

[7] The examples in this and the following sections use theater script conventions. Italics is used for stage directions, so we use boldface to emphasize the DM under examination.

[8] Mence chose to use the words uttered by Bernardo in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Shakespeare 1993 [1599–1602?]: I, i, 1). Tarantini, in discussion with Mence, Melbourne, November 2013.

[9] Even though English is an inflected language, it has features of isolating languages, such as the abundance of monosyllabic words (Berruto 2006).

As anticipated, and also as the study by Chiaro Nocella (2000) reveals, the translation of tag questions such as "don't you?" has proven somewhat challenging, as seen in the following examples.

Source text	Target text
DUTTON: Jesus, Sal, what are you doing in here? You know you shouldn't be in here, **don't you**?	DUTTON: Cristo, Sal, che ci fai qui dentro? Lo sai che non dovresti essere qui.

In this case, the tag question "don't you?" is a marker of agreement. Its function is to verify agreement between the speaker and the hearer. The lack of tag questions in Italian forces the translator to find different discourse markers with the same function when necessary (Chiaro Nocella 2000). Sometimes, as in this case, the translator may choose to omit a tag question where it would not add anything to the propositional meaning of the sentence and where adding a DM in Italian would make the target sentence much longer. In this case, the DM was not translated to preserve as much as possible the rhythm and the length of the sentence of the English playtext in the Italian translation. Moreover, the Italian sentence "*Lo sai che non dovresti essere qui*" without the question mark calls for a falling intonation, thus implying some form of request for agreement conveyed by suprasegmentals, without needing a DM such as "*vero*?"

The following example also includes a marker of agreement:

Source Text		Target Text	
DUTTON	You love playing games, **don't you**? Little blackfella[10] games.	DUTTON	Ti piace fare i tuoi giochetti da strega, **eh**, sporca negra? [lit. you like playing witches games, don't you, dirty nigger?]

In this instance, too, the tag question "don't you?" is used as a request for agreement. In this case, the translator chose to include a DM that fulfills the same function in Italian: the interjection "*eh*?" Unlike in the previous example, where the request for agreement could be conveyed with suprasegmentals, in this latter example, had the translator not included a DM such as "eh?" or "vero?" the sentence would not have come across as a request for agreement. So, even if the DM in the source text lacks semantic meaning, to use Bazzanella's words (1994), its pragmatic meaning is vital for the exchange.

[10] The word "blackfella" is an Aboriginal English word. It is used by the Indigenous population to refer to members of their own community. However, when used by white people, it takes on a pejorative connotation (Arthur 1996) and is considered offensive (Angela Tiziana Tarantini, in discussion with Professor Farzad Sharifian, Melbourne, June 2015). This exchange takes place at the beginning of the play, and the translator wanted to render Dutton's offensive use of language from the start. Since Indigenous Australians were believed to perform magic rites (Tarantini, in discussion with Mence, Melbourne, November 2013), the translator used both the offensive Italian expression *sporca negra*, used to refer to a black woman, and the word *strega* (lit. witch). This allowed the translator to combine both cultural elements: the belief that Indigenous people could perform black magic (which emerges elsewhere in the play) and the derogatory language to refer to disfavoured groups. Since this exchange takes place at the beginning of the play, the translator chose to render the derogation toward the Indigenous population embedded in Dutton's language from the very beginning.

Request for agreement and/or confirmation

Throughout the play we can find a number of tag questions and other DMs used as requests for agreement and/or confirmation. In the following example, the two protagonists argue about how Dutton should have behaved upon meeting the Hentys, that is, the family that had bought the whaling station. Renanghi thought they were not trustworthy, while Dutton chose to engage with them, partly because he had no option.

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	But I was right, **wasn't I**?	RENANGHI	Ma c'avevo ragione, **sì o no**?
DUTTON	Nobody was right, Sal.	DUTTON	Nessuno aveva ragione, Sal.

The Italian translation "*sì o no?*" (lit. "yes or no?") is the closest approximation to the tag question "wasn't I?" It fulfills the same function of request for confirmation and is rhythmically very similar to the English line.

The tag question "don't you?" is often used by the speaker as a request for confirmation, as in the following example:

Source Text		Target Text	
DUTTON	You think you're pretty smart, **don't you**? Go on then, if you're so fucken smart, tell me, what would you do?	DUTTON	Ti credi tanto intelligente, **eh**? Allora visto che sei così intelligente, dimmi, tu che cazzo faresti?

As in the example above, the tag question here was translated with the interjection "*eh?*" This is because, like in the previous example, without the inclusion of the DM "*eh?*" the sentence might not be perceived as a request for agreement and/or confirmation on the part of the speaker.

The following example, in contrast, reveals how a tag question can be omitted:

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	You could've picked a better spot **you know**? There ain't no whitefellas out here. Who's gonna bury ya?	RENANGHI	Potevi sceglierti un posto migliore. Non ce n'è mica di bianchi in giro. E a te chi ti seppellisce?

The above passage is rich in what Kruger (2004) defines as "features of involvement," that is:

> those linguistic features which are typical of face-to-face communication (e.g. private verbs, contractions, first- and second-person pronouns, analytic negation, demonstratives, emphatics, discourse markers, causative subordination, amplifiers, questions, time- and place-adverbials) (Kruger 2004: 304).

In the passage, rather than functioning as a request for agreement, the DM seems to contribute to the creation of a register that closely imitates spoken, non-standard language. This is corroborated by the use of contractions ("ain't"), Aboriginal English ("whitefella"), a place adverbial ("out here"), and a non-standard second-person pronoun ("ya" instead of

"you"). In this case, the translator chose to focus on transferring the "features of involvement" as a whole, rather than a single DM, which seemed to have no more than a phatic function. The DM was thus omitted in the translation, which features expressions such as "*non c'è ne mica*" (lit. "there ain't any," colloquial) and "*a te chi ti seppellisce*" (lit. "who's going to bury you," but with the repetition of "you" both as direct and indirect object). Such constructs are typical of the language variant spoken by people with a low level of education. People with little or no education in Italy speak a variety of language that is a mix of "regional Italian" and "popular Italian" ("italiano popolare," Berruto 1987), which may be influenced to some degree by local dialect but is not a dialect itself. Using a regional variety of Italian, or a dialect, would have major consequences for the level of reception of the translation. The audience would immediately identify a character as coming from a specific area, and that might trigger stereotypical associations. As writer, translator, and researcher Franca Cavagnoli maintains, the diatopic dimension of language is usually the most prominent in a fictional work, but more often than not it becomes secondary in translation, unless the translator decides to change the setting of the translated work (Cavagnoli 2014), be it a novel, a short story, or a play. Given the translator's choice not to relocate the play to an Italian setting and to render the language as closely as possible to a variety of spoken Italian, without regional traits, the proposed solution seemed the most feasible. The example above reveals how difficult the classification and the translation of DMs can be. While a linguistic analysis might lead to the classification of "you know" in the above example as a request for agreement, a more careful analysis of the whole passage reveals that "you know" in this context is a stylistic device aimed at crafting a specific register. Since that effect has been accomplished by the use of expressions typical of popular Italian, there was no need for the translator to include a DM for "you know" in the Italian version.

DMs on the part of the hearer

Some of the DMs on the part of the hearer in David Mence's *Convincing Ground* function as requests for explanation, as in the following example:

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	Me name's Renanghi.	RENANGHI	Mi chiamo Renanghi.
DUTTON	**What**?	DUTTON	**Eh**?
RENANGHI	You heard what I said.	RENANGHI	M'hai capito benissimo.
DUTTON	What are you talking about?	DUTTON	Ma che dici?
RENANGHI	RE-NAN-GHI. Go on. Say it. Say it a few fucken times.	RENANGHI	RE-NAN-GHI. Dai dillo. Dillo un paio di volte, cazzo.
Pause.		Pausa.	
	Gimme a drink.		Dammi da bere.
DUTTON	**What**?	DUTTON	**Come**?
RENANGHI	**I said** give me a drink.	RENANGHI	**Ti ho detto** di darmi da bere.

DMs abound in this passage. "Go on" seems to have a phatic function, while "I said" is a metatextual DM and so will not be scrutinized here. In both cases "what?" functions as a request for explanation. Therefore, the DMs cannot be omitted in the translation, since they fulfill a specific pragmatic function. In the first occurrence it was translated with the expression "eh?", in the second with "come?"; in both cases, Dutton's response is an explicit request for explanation, so it is necessary to convey the propositional meaning of the exchange.

The following two examples contain the expression "that's right" with a specific pragmatic function:

Source Text		Target Text	
DUTTON	I saved you. From him. From all of them. Don't you forget that.	DUTTON	Ti ho salvato. Da lui. Da tutti loro. Non dimenticartelo.
RENANGHI	Saved me?	RENANGHI	Salvato?
DUTTON	**That's right.**	DUTTON	**Certo**.

In the previous example, "that's right" signals confirmation and is therefore necessary for the audience to understand Dutton's position on the topic being discussed (his positive role in Renanghi's life), which is why the DM was translated with "*certo*" (lit. "certainly"). Much like in the previous example, in the following passage "that's right" is a specific answer to a question:

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	Not far. What does that mean?	RENANGHI	Cosa significa non lontano?
DUTTON	It means not far from here	DUTTON	Significa non lontano da qui.
RENANGHI	Narrawong?	RENANGHI	Narrawong?
DUTTON	**That's right.**	DUTTON	**Esatto**.

In both examples, "that's right" functions as confirmation. The Italian translation "esatto" (lit. "exactly") fulfills the same function of confirmation, as an answer to a question. In contrast, in the following example the same expression functions as reinforcement, rather than as an answer to a specific question:

Source Text		Target Text	
DUTTON	[…] I am a captain now. Did you now that?	DUTTON	[…] Sono capitano, adesso. Lo sapevi?
RENANGHI	Captain Bill Dutton.	RENANGHI	Capitano Bill Dutton.
DUTTON	**That's right**. Sperm whales, Sal. Huge bloody things. Off the coast of New Zealand. My own ship. My own crew. Everything. I had enough oil on the way back from Cloudy Bay I could have set half of Melbourne on fire.	DUTTON	**Già**. Capodogli, Sal. Bestie enormi, cazzo. A largo della Nuova Zelanda. La mia nave. Il mio equipaggio. Tutto. Avevo talmente tanto olio al ritorno da Cloudy Bay che avrei potuto bruciare mezza Melbourne.

So, even if the lexical meaning of the expression does not differ from the previous two examples, the function of the utterance is slightly different. This is what drove the translator to opt for different translations for the same lexical item. In this latter case, the DM "that's right" was translated with the Italian expression "*già*" which is literally closer to the expression "right" and functions more as reinforcement than as confirmation.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the use of "yeah." In some cases, "yeah" is used as a more informal realization of "yes" in answer to a question, as in the following two examples, when Renanghi questions Dutton about his wife:

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	Where's she at?	RENANGHI	Dov'è?
DUTTON	Right now?	DUTTON	Adesso?
RENANGHI	**Yeah**.	RENANGHI	**Sì**.
DUTTON	She's at the house.	DUTTON	A casa.

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	[…] What does she do?	RENANGHI	[…] Cosa fa?
DUTTON	Like during the day and that?	DUTTON	Tipo durante il giorno?
RENANGHI	**Yeah**.	RENANGHI	**Sì**.
DUTTON	She sits around and reads the Bible mostly. Pours out any bottles of grog she finds lying around. A lot of her energy goes towards trying to get me to see things her way.	DUTTON	Per lo più sta a casa a leggere la bibbia. Svuota qualsiasi bottiglia trova per casa. Passa la maggior parte del tempo a cercare di farmi vedere le cose a modo suo.

In the examples above, the translation was not at all problematic, since the lexical meaning of the item, which is technically not a DM, corresponded to its function, hence it was translated literally into "*sì*" ("yes").

In the following examples, when accompanied by "well," "yeah" seems to take on a phatic function:

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	You look like shit.	RENANGHI	Stai proprio di merda.
DUTTON	**Yeah, well**, wait until you get to my age.	DUTTON	**Sì, beh**, aspetta di arrivarci tu alla mia età.

Source Text		Target Text	
RENANGHI	[…] You should've stayed with me mate. The only time I'd get rid of a bottle of grog was when I'd throw it over me head and reach for another.	RENANGHI	[…] Dovevi rimanere con me, caro. Le uniche volte che mi sbarazzavo di una bottiglia era per buttarla via e prenderne un'altra.
DUTTON	Ha! **Yeah, well,** that was half the problem!	DUTTON	Ha! **Sì, beh,** quello era solo parte del problema!

In this case, rhythm played a pivotal role in the decision-making process. "Yeah, well" functions both as a confirmation and as a phatism. Here the translator chose a solution which would keep the rhythmic structure (two monosyllables) while preserving the lexical meaning and the function of the utterance.

Conclusion

Because DMs are typical of spoken language, their abundance in drama dialogue is not surprising. The analysis of interactional DMs in David Mence's *Convincing Ground* and their Italian transposition reveals that careful scrutiny of the various functions of DMs function can help the translator identify a suitable translation. Whether a lexical item has 'only' a discourse marking function or has a pragmatic function is a decisive factor in determining whether the DM might be omitted. Despite the abundance of DMs in *Convincing Ground*, two types of DMs were absent, namely fillers and back channels. The absence of such a typical feature of spoken language confirms that drama dialogue is "tied up speech" (Herman 1998: 24), that is, language that aims to imitate spoken dialogue but is deprived of precisely those features exclusive to spoken dialogue, such as fillers and back channels, as well as hesitations, false starts, and overlaps.

The analysis in this article confirms Mariano's stance on the relevance, for the translator, of the pragmatic function of DMs (Mariano 2002) but also adds another layer. Mariano (2002) states:

> [t]he nature of DMs adds a complication to the already difficult process of translation. Since DMs are a functional, instead of a lexical category, they can't be translated based on the meaning of the word. Some other method for translation must be found. The DMs must be understood in terms of their function within the discourse, so that the pragmatic value, rather than the lexical meaning, is translated (Mariano 2002: 3).

The "parziale perdita di valore semantico" [partial loss of semantic value] identified by Bazzanella (1994: 147) does have an impact on the translator's decision-making. However, the translation of drama dialogue poses a different challenge, that is, the rhythm of a spoken utterance. Bentley states that "[a]ny dramatist measures dialogue by split seconds. How long

a person speaks can be as important as what he says" (Bentley 1996: 80, as cited in Xu and Cui 2011: 48). Close attention to the rhythmic pattern of a spoken utterance is therefore vital in the translation of drama dialogue. This does not imply that rhythm is not relevant when translating works of other literary genres, such as novels. As Berman argues, "[t]he novel is not less rhythmic than poetry. It even comprises a multiplicity of rhythms. Since the entire bulk of the novel is thus in movement, it is fortunately difficult for translation to destroy this rhythmic movement. […] Poetry and theater are more fragile" (Berman 2000: 292). While a minor alteration in the rhythm of a sentence in the translation of a novel might not have a great impact on the novel's overall rhythm, the tiniest change in the rhythm of a spoken utterance in drama dialogue may significantly alter the rhythm of a passage. So, when the translation of a DM, that is, a lexical item which partially lost its semantic value, is not vital to convey the original pragmatic value of the utterance and would make the sentence significantly longer in the target language, the translator may choose to omit the DM. To further complicate the task, however, the polyfunctionality of DMs makes it difficult for the translator to omit such elements in translation. This confirms the importance of DMs in dramatic dialogue, much like in naturally occurring conversation, despite their lack of "actual" (i.e., lexical) meaning. As Chiaro Nocella (2000: 38) states:

> what may appear apparently unimportant words, in the sense of their not being content words but function words instead, are often not given due importance and this can greatly distort the original meaning.

In this case study, it was possible to omit DMs in only two cases: with some tag questions and when the DM was merely one of the "features of involvement" (Kruger 2004) aimed at recreating the effect of naturally occurring conversation. The absence of elements typical of spoken language, such as fillers and back channels, forces the translator to keep as many DMs as possible not only to render the effect of spoken conversation but also to highlight its interactive structure in the dramatic dialogue.

The findings of this case study confirm that close scrutiny of the pragmatic function of DMs in a playtext is helpful in deciding whether a DM can be omitted in translation. We suggest that an approach based on pragmatics, such as the one carried out for the present study, could help translators find a suitable option for the translation of DMs in the target language. Such an approach, however, should not override the importance of the rhythm of a spoken utterance, which is vital when rendering a play in translation (Bartlett 1996).

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our very great appreciation to Dr. Jim Hlavac for his constructive suggestions, which have proven invaluable for this article.

References

Ariel, Mira. 1994. “Pragmatic operators.” In *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. by R. E. Asher and J. M. Y. Simpson, 3250–3253. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Arthur, Jay Mary. 1996. *Aboriginal English: A Cultural Study*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Bartlett, Neil. 1996. “A different night out in the theatre. In conversation with David Johnston.” In *Stages of Translation*, ed. by David Johnston, 67–74. Bath: Absolute Press.

Bazzanella, Carla. 1990. “Phatic connectives as interactional cues in contemporary spoken Italian.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 14 (4): 629–647. doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(90)90034-B.

Bazzanella, Carla. 1994. *Le facce del parlare: Un approccio pragmatico all'italiano parlato*. Scandicci, Firenze: La Nuova Italia.

Bazzanella, Carla. 1995. “I segnali discorsivi.” In *Grande grammatica di consultazione*, ed. by Lorenzo Renzi, Giampaolo Salvi, and Anna Cardinaletti, 226–257. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Bazzanella, Carla. 2001a. Bazzanella, Carla. 2001a. “I segnali discorsivi nel parlato e nello scritto.” In *Scritto e parlato. Metodi, testi e contesti*, ed. by Maurizio Dardano, Adriana Pelo and Antonella Stefinlongo, 79–97. Roma: Aracne Editrice.

Bazzanella, Carla. 2001b. “Persistenze e variazioni nell’uso dei segnali discorsivi: primi risultati di un’analisi nell’italiano antico.” In *Semantica e lessicologia storiche*, ed. by Fábián Szuszanna and Giampaolo Salvi, 183–206. Rome: Bulzoni.

Bazzanella, Carla. 2006. “Discourse markers in Italian: Towards a ‘compositional’ meaning.” In *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, ed. by Kerstin Fischer, 449–464. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Berman, Antoine. 2000. “Translation and the trials of the foreign.” In *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Laurence Venuti, 284-297. London and New York: Routledge.

Berretta, Monica. 1984. “Connettivi testuali in italiano e pianificazione del discorso.” In *Linguistica testuale: atti del XV Congresso internazionale di studi, Genova, Santa Margherita Ligure, 8-10 maggio, 1981*, ed. by Lorenzo Còveri and Monica Berretta, 237–254. Roma: Bulzoni.

Berruto, Gaetano. 1987. *Sociolinguistica dell'italiano contemporaneo*. Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica.

Berruto, Gaetano. 2006. *Corso elementare di linguistica generale*. Torino: Utet.

Berruto, Gaetano. 2012. *Sociolinguistica dell'Italiano Contemporaneo*. 1 ed. Roma: La Nuova Italia scientifica.

Biber, Douglas. 1988. *Variation Across Speech and Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bigliazzi, Silvia, Peter Kofler, and Paola Ambrosi. 2013. "Introduction." In *Theatre Translation in Performance*, ed. by Silvia Bigliazzi, Peter Kofler, and Paola Ambrosi, 1–26. New York: Routledge.

Blakemore, Diane. 1987. *Semantic Constraints on Relevance*. New York: Blackwell.

Burton, Deidre. 1984. *Dialogue and Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Modern Drama Dialogue and Naturally Occurring Conversation*. Balmain: Law Book Co of Australasia.

Cavagnoli, Franca. 2014. "Italian writers meet Australian writers: The responsibility of writers as translators." Encountering Australia: Transcultural Conversations, Monash University Prato, 26 September 2014.

Chiaro Nocella, Delia. 2000. "The British will use question-tags, won't they? The case of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*." In *Tradurre il cinema: Atti del Convegno organizzato da G. Soria e C. Taylor, 29-30 Novembre 1996*, ed. by Christopher Taylor and Giuliano Soria, 27–39. Trieste: Università degli studi di Trieste.

Clark, Ian D. 2011. "The convincing ground aboriginal massacre at Portland Bay, Victoria: Fact or fiction?" *Aboriginal History* 35: 79–109.

Connor, Michael. 2005. "The Australian massacre that wasn't." *The Australian*, March 9. http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/15259. Last accessed 18 June 2019.

Connor, Michael. 2007. "Convincing ground: An invented massacre." *Quadrant Online*, December 1. http://quadrant.org.au/opinion/history-wars/2007/12/convincing-ground-a-history-2/. Last accessed 18 June 2019.

Coseriu, Eugenio. 1973. *Lezioni di linguistica generale*. Torino: Boringhieri.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2001. *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Cumpston, John S. 'Dutton, William (1811–1878)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University,

http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dutton-william-2011/text2463, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 3 August 2019.

Degand, Liesbeth. 2015. "Discourse markers in the translation of speech. Do film subtitles reflect spontaneous spoken conversation?" *Fourth International Symposium on Discourse Markers in Romance Languages*, Heidelberg, 6–9 May 2015.

Fraser, Bruce. 1987. "Pragmatic formatives." In *The Pragmatic Perspective: Selected Papers from the 1985 International Pragmatics Conference*, ed. by Jef Verschueren and Marcella Bertuccelli-Papi, 179–194. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Fraser, Bruce. 1988. "Types of English discourse markers." *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 38 (1/4): 19–33.

Fraser, Bruce. 1990. "An approach to discourse markers." *Journal of Pragmatics* 14 (3): 383–395. doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(90)90096-V.

Fraser, Bruce. 1999. "What are discourse markers?" *Journal of Pragmatics: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Studies* 31 (7): 931–52. doi: 10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00101-5.

Hajlaoui, Najeh, and Andrei Popescu-Belis. 2013. "Translating English discourse connectives into Arabic: A corpus-based analysis and an evaluation metric." *Proceedings of the CAASL4 Workshop at AMTA 2012 (Fourth Workshop on Computational Approaches to Arabic Script-based Languages)*, San Diego, CA.

Halliday, Michael A. K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Hardmeier, Christian. 2012. "Discourse in statistical machine translation: A survey and a case study." *Discours* (11). doi: 10.4000/discours.8726.

Herman, Vimala. 1995. *Dramatic Discourse: Dialogue as Interaction in Plays*. London: Routledge.

Herman, Vimala. 1998. "Turn management in drama." In *Exploring the Language of Drama. From Text to Context*, ed. by Jonathan Culpeper, Mick Short, and Peter Verdonk, 306-322. New York: Routledge.

Khachaturyan, Elizaveta. 2010a. "The function of mitigation in spoken language. Analysis of tak skazat' (Russian) and diciamo (Italian)." *OSLa - Oslo Studies in Languages* 2: 393–412.

Khachaturyan, Elizaveta. 2010b. "Si tu vois ce que je veux dire par là: l'analyse du verbe dire/dire en français et en italien." Congrès International de Linguistique et Philologie Romane, Valencia, 6–11 September 2010.

Khachaturyan, Elizaveta. 2011. “Una classificazione dei segnali discorsivi in italiano.” *OSLa - Oslo Studies in Languages* 3 (1): 95–116.

Knott, Alistair, and Robert Dale. 1994. “Using linguistic phenomena to motivate a set of coherence relations.” *Discourse Processes* 18 (1): 35–62. doi: 10.1080/01638539409544883.

Kruger, Alet. 2004. “The role of discourse markers in an Afrikaans stage translation of *The Merchant of Venice*.” *Journal of Literary Studies/Tydskrif vir Literatuurwetenskap* 20 (3-4): 302–34. doi: 10.1080/02564710408530359.

Mariano, Sonia. 2002. “A study of the translation of discourse markers in Italian in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, by J.K. Rowling.” B.A. thesis, Linguistics and Languages, Swartmore College.

Marinetti, Cristina. 2013. “Translation and theatre: From performance to performativity.” *Target* 25 (3): 307–320. doi: 10.1075/target.25.3.01mar.

Marinetti, Cristina. 2018. “Performative rewriting: Foreign language performance as translation.” Paper presented at the *Performance and Translation Seminar*, Misano Adriatico, 9–12 April 2018.

Martinovic-Zic, Aida, and Carol Lynn Moder. 2004. *Discourse Across Languages and Cultures*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

McCormick, Ian. 2013. *The art of connection: The social life of sentences.* Quibble Academic Publisher.

Mence, David. 2013a. *Convincing Ground*, Unpublished script, workshopped by the Melbourne Theatre Company in 2009. Revised edition.

Redeker, Gisela. 1990. “Ideational and pragmatic markers of discourse structure.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 14 (3): 367–381. doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(90)90095-U

Russell, Lynette. 2012. *Roving Mariners: Australian Aboriginal Whalers and Sealers in the Southern Oceans, 1790-1870*. Ed. by State University of New York and Muse Project. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sainz Gonzalez, Maria Eugenia. 2009. “¿Por qué resulta difícil comprender un marcador del discurso?” In *Orale e intercomprensione tra lingue romanze. Ricerche e implicazioni didattiche*, ed. by M.C. Jamet, 125–148. Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscariana.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 1987. *Discourse Markers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shakespeare, William. 1993 [1599–1602?]. “Hamlet.” In Grady Ward, ed., http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/hamlet.1.1.html. Last accessed 18 June 2019.

Stame, Stefania. 1999. “I marcatori della conversazione.” In *La conversazione. Un'introduzione allo studio dell'interazione verbale*, ed. by Renata Galatolo and Gabriele Pallotti, 169-186. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Swan, Michael. 2005. *Practical English Usage*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tarantini, Angela Tiziana. 2018. “Il Baleniere.” *inTRAlinea* www.intralinea.org/translations/item/2326. Last accessed 18 June 2019.

Taylor, Rebe. 2000. “Savages or saviours? — The Australian sealers and aboriginal Tasmanian survival.” *Journal of Australian Studies* 24 (66): 73–84. doi: 10.1080/14443050009387613.

Vinciarelli, Alessandro, Paraskevi Chatziioannou, and Anna Esposito. 2015. “When the words are not everything: The use of laughter, fillers, back-channel, silence, and overlapping speech in phone calls. (Report).” *Frontiers in ICT*. doi: 10.3389/fict.2015.00004

Xu, Jainzhong, and Bo Cui. 2011. “Drama language translation.” *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 19 (1): 45–57. doi: 10.1080/0907676X.2010.490301.

Zuckermann, Ghil’ad. 2009. “Hybridity versus revivability: Multiple causation, forms and patterns.” *Journal of Language Contact* 2 (2): 40–67. doi: 10.1163/000000009792497788

Address for correspondence

Angela Tiziana Tarantini (corresponding author)

U4 – 9/13 Kelvinside Road

Noble Park, 3174

VIC - Australia

angela.tarantini@monash.edu; angela.t.tarantini@gmail.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7142-7739

Ruben Benatti

Via Umbria, 9

13900 - Biella

Italy

ruben.benatti@gmail.com

Bionotes

Angela Tiziana Tarantini (MA Languages, MA European and American Languages, Literatures and Cultures, PhD Translation Studies) is Teaching Associate in Translation and Interpreting Studies at Monash University, where she carries out her research activity. Her interdisciplinary research encompassing translation studies, Practice-as-Research, and performance studies focuses on theater translation, specifically on the relationship between translation and performance. She is also an experienced teacher of English as a Second Language, Italian, and English-Italian translation.

Ruben Benatti (MA Linguistics, PhD Linguistics and Language Teaching) is Teaching Fellow of Italian Language at the University of Szeged (Hungary) and Adjunct Research Fellow at the *Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale Amedeo Avogadro* in Vercelli (Italy). He has taught courses on the Italian language at universities and institutes in Serbia, Turkmenistan, China, Australia, and Guatemala. He has also taught courses on neurolinguistics, general linguistics, language teaching, sociolinguistics, and Italian literature, in Italy and abroad.