This volume employs a range of empirical methodologies – including eye-tracking, direct observation, qualitative research and corpus analysis – to describe the use of discourse markers in second language acquisition. The variety of different approaches used by the contributors facilitates the observation of correlations between morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of discourse markers and enriches our understanding of the cognitive behaviour of L2 speakers, both in the understanding and production of texts. Some of the essays examine the acquisitional paths of discourse markers in instructional and natural contexts, with a particular focus on situations of language contact and social integration; others describe experimental studies that analyse the cognitive processing of discourse markers in L2 learners. All the contributions aim to offer new insights which will expand and develop existing theoretical claims about this area of study and open up avenues for further research.

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MARILISA BIRELLO AND ROBERTA FERRONI

7 The appropriation of discourse markers by students of Italian as a Foreign Language in a sequence of action-oriented learning tasks

Introduction

Face-to-face conversation is the result of a collaboration and continuous process of negotiation, which implies the participants' active involvement in the interaction in order to co-construct the message. Bazzanella compares face-to-face conversation to a piece of fabric 'in which the contributions from the speaker and the interlocutor(s) are woven together to a point where they almost blend into one another to create one single product' (Bazzanella 1994: 62, own translation). This fabric, as conversation analysis has masterfully shown (see, among others, Schegloff 1972; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), is internally organized by mechanisms that make it an orderly activity governed by its own rules,[1] like traffic.[2] The conversation flow is characterized by anything but linear turn-taking, being instead broken by a series of linguistic elements, which, together with the 'words of the body' (parole del corpo, Poggi 2006:11, own translation),[3] work to establish an atmosphere of participation and interest among the participants and contribute to characterizing spoken language as a unique

1 For turn-taking and repair mechanisms we refer to Schegloff (1972) and Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), among others.
2 Goffman (1981) identified a principle of order which controls an activity which is, after all, as chaotic and unclear as traffic.
3 'the words expressed by hands, eyes, body, face, trunk and legs movement and posture, physical contact and the distance we put between us and the others (Poggi 2006: 11).

form of communication.[4] More specifically, these elements are phenomena which have been extensively dealt with in conversation analysis (see, among others, Schegloff 1981; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), such as: dialogic repetitions,[5] appositional beginnings, used by speakers in turn taking;[6] self-initiated and other-initiated interruptions;[7] 'simultaneous starts' (Bazzanella 1994:178);[8] overlapping; hesitations such as 'mmmmm...', 'ehhhh ...' and 'ehmmmm'; sound elongation; lexicalized and non-lexicalized pauses; self-initiated and other-initiated repairs; and discourse markers,[9] used by both the speaker and the interlocutor.[10]

The final element does not seem to have been addressed enough in materials that are especially designed for foreign language teaching (on this subject, see Pernas et al. 2011). In the specific case of Italian as a Foreign Language (henceforth, IFL), a careful analysis carried out on a wide range of IFL course books used in the *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* in Spain (Gillani and Pernas 2013, 2014) has revealed that much of the oral input contained

4   For more detailed studies on spoken Italian, we refer to Sornicola (1981), Berruto (1987), Voghera (1992), Bazzanella (1994).

5   Repetitions are here understood as 'identical or partial repetitions of one or more lexical items from the previous speaker's turn by the current speaker' (Bazzanella 1994: 210). For a categorisation of the functions of repetitions, see Bazzanella (1994).

6   For instance, *bene, ma, e, allora*.

7   For a definition of interruption, refer to Bazzanella (1994).

8   Simultaneous starts occur when two speakers start talking simultaneously, and, successively, one of them gives up the turn (Bazzanella 1994:178).

9   In Italian, many terms have been used to identify discourse markers. Berretta (1984), for example, calls them textual connectors (*connettori testuali*), Bazzanella (1995) prefers discourse markers (*segnali discorsivi*), Stame (1999) uses the term pragmatic markers (*marcatori pragmatici*). In this work, we will adopt exclusively the term discourse markers, as it is the most widespread.

10   Bazzanella (1995, 2001) groups discourse markers (DM) into two macro-categories: interactional DMs, considered from the speaker's and interlocutor's points-of-view, are used by the participants in the interaction to highlight the co-construction of the message and the development of the interaction; the metatextual DMs are used by the speaker to signal the sequencing of different parts of the text (opening, development, closing and the relationship between the topics and the subjects addressed in the dialogue).

in the textbooks used for this study is characterized by a copious amount of discourse markers (henceforth DM), especially interactional DMs, to such an extent that interactions almost suffer from 'a certain forced ritualism' (Gillani and Pernas, 2013:82). However, the activities that these same course books propose in order to develop students' dialogic and interactive competences in foreign language (henceforth, FL) are not as efficient from a teaching perspective (Pernas at al. 2011).

In this study, we follow the assumption that being exposed to authentic speech,[11] together with the 'meaningfulness' of interaction (Pernas et al. 2011: 132) and 'participative involvement' of the students (Pernas et al. 2011:75), represent the cornerstones of the development of 'awareness' (Pernas et al. 2011: 77) and, consequently, the ability to use DMs. The results obtained in this investigation, clearly suggest that the majority of textbooks in the market are still resistant to IFL teaching practices that favour the 'management of verbal interaction' (Pernas et al. 2011: 66), either because they use input that rarely reproduces the typical features of oral speech, or because they do not propose meaningful activities.

In order to fill this gap, some operational proposals have been put forward so that learners of IFL and Italian as a second language can develop a greater sensitivity towards a pedagogy inclined to 'co-constructing conversation, turn taking and interrupting' (Pernas et al. 2011: 66, own translation). In this respect, we refer to the didactic sequence described by Pugliese (2015), who, influenced by a task-based approach (Willis and Willis 2007; Ellis 2009), presents some activities to promote the development and ability to use the DM *figurati*. In previous research carried out by the authors of this work (Ferroni and Birello 2016)[12] which examines the way in which course books present the DMs *via bene, ok, allora, certo!, no dai, beh, dai, e va bene, eh no, eh sì, ma, dunque, va bene ok, sì*

11   By authentic language the authors refer to a language that contains phenomena which are typical of the oral language and not necessarily a language that has been recorded live (Gillani and Pernas 2013, 2014).

12   The material used in class corresponded to Unit 6 of the Italian as a Foreign Language textbook Bravissimo!3-Br.

certo dai,[13] it emerged that one IFL textbook that follows the principles of the TBLT approach:

> shows a balanced sequencing and alternation between discovery activities and practice activities, sufficient to guarantee effective progress in the acquisition of DMs [...]. Moreover, not only does the material proposed in Unit 6 of the textbook *Bravissimo!3-B1* present and analyse DMs, but it also expects learners to reuse them in a meaningful work context, through some 'interactive spaces' in which students become more aware and test the rules that manage the co-construction of conversation in a FL without worrying about losing face, as these 'interactive spaces' are shared with peers. (Ferroni and Birello 2016: 49, own translation)

Considering that the development of authentic and meaningful pedagogical activities is a necessary condition for learning DMs (Pernas et al. 2011), the aim of the following work is:

- To explore how IFL learners start to use and understand the meaning of DMs *dai, no dai* while performing *analytical* activities taken from unit 6 of the textbook *Bravissimo!3-B1*;

- Verify if and how the use of these DMs occurs in the *free practice* activities that are performed in groups and are part of the same unit.

We will base our study on the analysis of two *corpora*, both collected among IFL university students at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (henceforth, CEFR, 2002). The students' mother tongue (henceforth MT) is similar to the FL: Brazilian Portuguese in the first case (henceforth, BP) and Spanish and Catalan in the second case (henceforth, SC).

In the following pages, after describing the approach that inspires the textbook *Bravissimo!3-B1* and analysing the context in which the research was carried out, we will conduct a microanalysis of the dialogic speech of Italian learners who performed activities among peers and whose MT is

13   These are DMs used by the speaker and the interlocutor (Bazzanella 1995, 2001) to express agreement and disagreement, to add information, to take the turn, to interrupt the turn and signal disagreement, to support the current speaker.

similar to the FL. This microanalysis, based on conversational studies (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), will allow us to verify how the DMs *dai, no dai* are perceived and ritualized for the purposes of the co-construction of conversation in a context favourable to action teaching. Finally, in the last section we present the conclusions.

Action-oriented approach in the textbook *Bravissimo!*

As anticipated, the activities observed for this study were taken from Unit 6 of the IFL course book *Bravissimo!3-B1*, entitled *A tavola non s'invecchia* (Birello and Vilagrasa 2014). It is an IFL textbook that, following an 'action-oriented approach' (Birello and Vilagrasa 2014: 2), aims to promote teaching practices that focus on the abilities necessary to perform tasks by resorting to a variety of resources that range from communicative-linguistic to cognitive and affective. Through this methodology, the concept of communicative competence is enriched by the concept of action competence (Long and Doughty 2009), which is understood as the ability to linguistically interact with other individuals in a participative and message-oriented way in order to complete a task and achieve specific goals. The adoption of such an approach shall be analysed schematically in order to see the effect it has on teaching practice. This approach presents the following characteristics:

- It values co-operative learning, since interaction among peers promotes language practice and negotiation, which are fundamental activities for FL learning/acquisition. Namely, practice allows the learner to notice and test their hypotheses (Swain 1985) and negotiation makes input comprehensible (refer to Long 1996, among others);

- It focuses on the text, since the text is the central piece in the organization of pedagogical activities, since the text is the basic unit of communication and 'there can thus be no act of communication through language without a text' (CEFR 2002: 93);

– It favours teaching based on tasks, which 'involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilising their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form' (Nunan 2004: 4);

– It promotes linguistic reflection through procedures that lead to the discovery of language regularity and favour reflective and metanalytical activities based on the texts (Long and Robinson 1998);

– It considers the intercultural dimension as integral to the communicative dimension, with implications on the affective, cognitive and communicative/behavioural level (Byram and Fleming 1998);

– It promotes students' autonomous learning abilities in the learning process (Nunan 1988).

To foster action-oriented learning, each unit of the course book *Bravissimo!3-Br* contains a series of activities that learners perform so as to complete a final task, presented in a section called *Il nostro progetto* [*Our Project*]. In this section, there are situations similar to those experienced outside the classroom, which strongly encourage linguistic action among partners and use of a type of communication that comes very close to everyday conversation.

Before moving on to describing the activities in detail, we believe it is important to clarify the nature of the input included in Unit 6 of *Bravissimo!3-Br*, since, as was stated in the introduction, presenting spontaneous language that contains mechanisms and discourse conventions typical of face-to-face speech is a necessary condition to appropriately learn the mechanisms and procedures typical of conversation (Gillani and Pernas 2013, 2014). Based on the categorization proposed by Pernas et al. (2011), the input presented in the unit on which we are focusing in this study is semi-authentic, that is, it presents dialogues that 'although created with pedagogical aims, starting from a simple outline or prompt, present intrinsic characteristics of oral language, such as false starts, overlapping and reformulations, which make them similar to spontaneous speech' (Pernas et al. 2011: 8, our translation).

To complete the final task, learners must work through a series of stages called 'sections'. Unit 6 of *Bravissimo!3-Br* consists of 45 activities distributed along the sections as illustrated below (Table 7.1):

Table 7.1. Activities in unit 6 of *Bravissimo!3-Br*

Primo contatto [First contact]	Testi e contesti [Texts and contexts]	Alla scoperta della lingua [Discovering language]	Qualcosa in più [A little something extra]	Risorse e un po' di allenamento [Resources and some practice]	In azione e ... il compito! [In action and ... the task!]
2	7	22	3	3	8

In the first section, called *Primo contatto* [*First contact*], the students – first individually and later in a discussion with classmates – have to activate their previous knowledge in identifying some typical Italian restaurants and eateries (*trattoria, osteria, tavola calda, piadineria, bar*), and then practice expressing their thoughts on these places. In the second section, *Testi e contesti* [*Texts and contexts*], after students have familiarized themselves with both oral and written texts about different eating styles (*street food, slow food, fast food*), they will present their favourite type of food to their classmates. At this stage, in the section *Alla scoperta della lingua* [*Discovering language*], students are encouraged to observe the use of the imperative form and to come up with a rule to determine the position of pronouns when they are preceded by the imperative, based on an Italian recipe. After noticing the connectors used to sequence the stages of a recipe in the past (*in primo luogo, intanto, adesso, infine*), and the DMs (*va bene, ok, allora, certo!, no dai, beh, dai, e va bene, eh no, eh sì, ma, dunque, va bene ok, sì certo dai*), learners will apply the rules they observed to their own productions and will expand their culinary vocabulary. Based on the example, learners will write a personal recipe for a 'carbonara'. In the section *Qualcosa in più* [*A little something extra*], students are provided with content that will give them access to more lexical and sociocultural aspects connected to the topic of the unit.

Later, we move on to the section *Risorse e un po' di allenamento* [*Resources and some practice*], which aims to conceptualize the resources

in the unit in order to check and revise the rules that were learned. More specifically, the contents dealt with are: the imperative conjugated in the second person plural, and the infinitive, both used to give instructions; agreement between the pronoun and the imperative in the affirmative and negative forms; connectors of time and sequence; reflexive verbs. The unit ends with the section called *In azione e ... il compito!* [*In action and ... the task!*], during which students autonomously and creatively use the tools presented and analysed previously. In order to complete the final task, which consists of setting up a classroom food blog used to share recipes, typical products, tips and tricks, advice, and news, the students will engage in a series of collaborative and organizational tasks which require both individual and group participation. At this point, students will have to draw on the knowledge and strategies acquired in the previous sections – including those about DMs – in a process that stimulates interaction and FL practice.

In relation to the activities on DMs, it is important to notice that they are distributed throughout the different sections of the unit and correspond to three typologies: *introductory activities, analytical activities* and *free practice activities*[14] (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2.   Types of activities proposed in Unit 6 based on Ferroni and Birello's categorization (2016).

	Total	Introductory Activities	Analytical Activities	Free Practice Activities
Unità 6 Bravissimo!3-B1	11	1	8	2

According to the categorization proposed by Ferroni and Birello (2016), *introductory activities* are participative and aim to motivate and get students involved in the topic presented in the unit. At this stage, the learner observes the functions of the DMs.

Analytical activities encourage students to notice the DMs and their pragmatic functions through a type of controlled practice that, based on

14   For a more detailed description of the different typologies in the unit, see Ferroni and Birello (2016).

the idea of *scaffolding* (Bruner 1983; Ellis 2003), makes use of examples, images, useful words and grammar tables.

Finally, in *free practice activities*, the student will have to autonomously and creatively use the tools previously presented and analysed.

Methodology

The data that will be analysed was collected in two universities where Italian is learned as a FL and where the MT is similar to the FL: Brazilian Portuguese in the first case and Spanish and Catalan in the second.

The Brazilian group consisted of 18 students[15] who were enrolled in the course *Lingua Italiana IV* (Italian Language IV).[16] These students, aged between 20 and 28 (the mean age being 23),[17] were given fictitious names for the purpose of anonymity. The course is aimed at students graduating in Italian Language and Literature from the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo in Brazil and it corresponds approximately to level B1 of the CEFR (2002).

The lessons took place twice a week[18] and were taught by a teacher who is an Italian native speaker, who graduated from an Italian university, and who had lived in São Paulo for at least nine years when the study was carried out. Out of 18 participants, only one had been to Italy, having stayed there for five weeks to do an intensive course in Italian. The rest declared that the only contact they had had with the FL was in the classroom.

15   Of these 18 students, 16 are female and two are male. All participants signed a consent form.

16   *Lingua Italiana IV* is a compulsory course that lasts a semester, as stated in the study plan of the Italian Language and Literature undergraduate course at the University of São Paulo. In order to enroll, it is necessary to be registered in the fourth semester.

17   In order to assess the sociolinguistic profile of each student before starting the research, the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire.

18   The course consisted of 50 hours of taught classes. Each lesson lasted about one hour and 40 minutes.

The Spanish group consisted of seven students, and it was very heterogeneous in terms of age, academic background and previous experience in learning foreign languages.[19] Out of these seven participants one had spent one semester in Italy on an Erasmus scholarship and two participants had frequent contact with Italians but had never lived in Italy. The B1 level course is one of the courses offered by the Academic Language Centre at the University of Barcelona, and the students who attend these courses are mainly university students who gain university credits for attending the courses; however, the courses are open to everyone. The participants had a wide linguistic repertoire, in addition to Spanish and Catalan, all of them had already studied English and some of them had studied French. A student from Morocco, who had lived in Barcelona since her childhood, spoke Arabic, French and German as well as Catalan and Spanish.

The classes took place twice a week, totalling four hours per week.[20] The teacher was an Italian native speaker who had graduated from an Italian University and who had lived in Barcelona for over 20 years when the study took place.

In both contexts, the material used in class was taken from the course book *Bravissimo! 3–B1*.

Data collection

This research, which used the tools offered by an ethnographic approach (Hammersley 2006), was conducted by observing two classes. The BP *corpus* is a total of eight hours and 20 minutes long and consists of audio and video recordings, taken over the course of five lessons. The SC *corpus* consists of six hours of recordings, taken over the course of three lessons.

In both contexts, data was collected using a camera on a tripod and positioned in a fixed corner of the classroom by the teacher-researcher. Audio data was also collected: in the Brazilian context, two portable

19 All students were given fictitious names. As with the Brazilian context, each participant was given a consent form.
20 The total amount of taught classes in the course amounted to 50 hours.

recorders were handed out to two groups at the beginning of the lesson and it was recommended that the students turn them on while performing the activities in pairs. Depending on the type of activity and on personal preferences, some students turned the recorder on from the beginning, whereas others decided to turn it on only after the activity had begun. To guarantee more uniform data, we opted to always record the same students. In the Spanish-Catalan context, three portable recorders were distributed and turned on from the beginning of the activities. Although students were free to turn them off and turn them on again, the three groups decided to record everything. As it was a small class, the teacher deemed it necessary to change the pairs. Each change was recorded in the teacher-researcher's field notes.

In both contexts, students were informed about the aims of the study. During peer interactions, the teachers tried to keep their interventions to a minimum, preferring to postpone them to the stage of whole group interaction.

The BP *corpus* groups were identified by numbers 1 and 2. The members of group 1 were Karla and Luciana and of group 2 were Laura and Marta.[21]

There were three SC *corpus* groups and students tended to organize themselves into two groups of two and a group of three students and, as anticipated, the members of each group changed throughout the lessons based on class dynamics.

Unit 6 of *Bravissimo! 3–B1* consists of 45 activities in total. Due to time constraints, we had to make some methodological decisions, therefore, in both contexts, 25 activities were performed, allocated as follows (Table 7.3).[22] Of these activities, 11 are focused on DMs. Due to the similarities of the two contexts – in both students are at the same level, their MT is similar to the FL and the material, the approach and the procedures followed to collect the data are practically identical – we opted to treat the collected data as one *corpus*.

21 As we only had simple portable recorders the groups were chosen based on which students had the clearest tone of voice to facilitate the transcription.
22 Activities lasted a maximum of 10 minutes.

Table 7.3. Total number of activities and activities that were actually performed out of Unit 6 of *Bravissimo! 3-B1*

	Primo contatto [First contact]	Testi e contesti [Texts and contexts]	Alla scoperta della lingua [Discovering language]	Qualcosa in più [A little something else]	Risorse e un po' di allenamento [Resources and some practice]	In azione e ...il compito! [In action and .... the task!]	Total activities
Number of activities in unit 6 of the course book	2	5	12	1	0	5	
Activities that were actually performed	2	7	22	3	3	8	

In the following pages, we aim to illustrate how IFL learners gradually start understanding and using the DMs *dai*, *no dai*. We will describe how the learners noticed and ritualized these DMs in dialogic speech, so as to co-construct the conversation while performing *analytical* and *free practice activities* taken from Unit 6 of the course book *Bravissimo!3-B1* in small groups.

Results and discussion

In Examples 1, 2 and 3, starting from some initial oral input which was also presented in written form, students are engaged in performing comprehension and analytical activities to acquire a range of competences and better understand the uses and functions of the DMs *certo!, no dai, va bene, eh no, ma, va bene ok, sì certo dai*. Referring to Bazzanella's (1995, 2001) taxonomy, the DMs *certo! va bene, sì certo dai, dai, va bene ok* are used by

interlocutors to express agreement; DMs *no dai! eh no* and *ma* help speakers signal turn-taking, interrupt the previous turn and show disagreement about the current speaker's propositional content.

In Example 1 Laura and Marta, BP *corpus* students, are focused on an *analytical activity* that consists in inferring the function of the DMs that appear in the initial input.

Esempio 1	Example 1
T1. Laura: ((mentre svolge l'attività)) che è *no dai?*	T1. Laura: ((while doing the activity)) what's *no dai?*
T2. Marta: ah è anche un'espressione che serve::: serve per tante cose per esprimere accordo disaccordo è::: sospettamento disospettamento anche per ((muovendo le mani)) dare coraggio *dai* facciamo la torta *dai!*	T2. Marta: oh it's also an expression which is used::: is used for many things to express agreement disagreement uh::: suspicion insuspicion even to ((moving hands)) encourage *dai* let's make the cake *dai!*
T3. Laura: per esprimere accordo io ho scelto ((leggendo)) certo va bene va bene ok sì certo	T3. Laura: to express agreement I chose((reading)) certo va bene va bene ok sì certo
T4. Marta: sì	T4. Marta: yes
T5. Laura: e per esprimere disaccordo ((leggendo)) eh no ma dai	T5. Laura: and to express disagreement ((reading)) eh no ma dai
T6. Marta: sì d'accordo	T6. Marta: yes, I agree
T7. Laura: sei d'accordo?	T7. Laura: do you agree?
T8. Marta: certo ((sorridono))	T8. Marta: certo ((they smile))
T9. Laura: vou chegar na Iralia e vou falar *dai dai dai dai*	T9. Laura: I'll go to Italy and say[23] *dai dai dai dai*
T10. Marta: *dai*	T10. Marta: *dai*
T11. Laura: eh no! *dai!* ((mentre ridono))	T11. Laura: eh no! *dai!* ((while laughing))

In this conversation, Laura, who is focused on identifying the DMs' functions, consults Marta and, using a direct question, asks for her help in understanding the function of DM *no dai* (Turn 1). Marta, given her better

23   Here the learner switches to Portuguese; her MT.

linguistic competence,[24] takes the role of more expert learner and, talking to Laura in the FL, explains the meaning of the DM *no dai* through a series of strategies that clearly reveal that not only has Marta fully grasped the use of this DM, but she is also capable of explaining it and coming up with an example to help her classmate understand its meaning and use (Turn 2). She first points out that it is used to express many functions: agreement, disagreement, but also surprise and, finally, encouragement. After that, to be more specific, she uses an illustrative gesture as she explains (Poggi 2006) and, shaking her hands, she comes up with a sentence in which the last meaning of the DM is contextualized: *dai facciamo la torta dai!*. In other words, by analysing the context, Marta proves she has understood the paradigmatic polyfunctions specific to the DM *no dai* (Bazzanella 2015: 37). From Turn 3 to Turn 5, the students compare their responses. It is important to notice that, while Laura reads the functions she identified for each DM, Marta uses the DM *sì, d'accordo* to show she agrees (Turn 6). Laura, realizing her classmate has used the DW perfectly, answers ironically, using an 'interactional repetition' (Bazzanella 1994: 209) of the DM *d'accordo*, which signals involvement and participation in the interaction (Turn 7). Marta plays along and answers in a playful tone using the DM *certo* to confirm her agreement (Turn 8). This way, the students' linguistic activities alternate with metalinguistic activities (Camps 2015), allowing for moments focused on code and moments focused on communication (Bange 1992). Turn 9 is when the speakers switch from Italian to Portuguese when Laura makes her classmate laugh by saying that, when she goes to Italy, she will only use the DM *dai*. A ludic interactive space is opened where the two students show off their interactional competence in Italian while playing with the DMs under analysis in a creative and natural way through a procedure that consists of 'dialogic repetition' (Bazzanella 1994: 210) of the DM *dai* (Turns 10 and 11).

Basically, we can notice that this activity opened up a space in which the students were given the opportunity to: 1) reflect and focus their attention on how to use the DMs to encourage someone to do something (*dai*), to

24 Marta, unlike the other students, had already lived in Italy for a while.

express agreement (*sì d'accordo, certo!*) and disagreement (*no dai!*); 2) reuse DMs to express agreement (*sì d'accordo, certo!*) in a context that encouraged their natural and spontaneous use by promoting reciprocal involvement and a collaborative attitude. This is particularly true for the second category of DMs, as it shows in the example, as they help to make the adjacent Turns that constitute the conversational exchange more cohesive and articulate, proving that the type of task achieved its goal, namely to develop the ability to linguistically interact with other individuals in a participative and message-oriented way.

Let us move on to see how learners Eva, Inma and Lola, from the SC *corpus*, understand the meaning of the DMs *dai* and *no dai* and use them while doing the same *analytical activity*.

Esempio 2	Example 2
T1. Eva: è come per dire a qualcuno di cominciare a fare qualcosa	T1. Eva: it's like saying to someone to start doing something
T2. Inma: sì	T2. Inma: yes
T3. Eva: no?	T3. Eva: right?
T4. Inma: come il nostro venga	T4. Inma: like our venga
T5. Lola: sì, no?	T5. Lola: yes, right?
T6. Inma: no leggi dopo *dai*!	T6. Inma: no leggi dopo *dai*!
T7. Lola: sì ma per esempio si usa in senso positivo ma ha un senso negativo anche	T7. Lola: yes but for example it's used with a positive meaning but it also has a negative meaning
T8. Eva: mh mh	T8. Eva: mh mh
T9. Lola: porque ti va bene *dai no dai* ((risate)) sì non so io credo che per:::	T9. Lola: porque it's ok for you *dai no dai* ((laughter)) yes I don't know I think that to:::
T10. Eva: no ma ce n'è altri per esempio qiu e::: qui e::: sì	T10. Eva: no but there are others for example here and::: here and:: yes
T11. Lola: ah sì	T11. Lola: oh yeah
T12. Eva: lo leggi dopo *dai*!	T12. Eva: lo leggi dopo *dai*! Here there's the
T13. Inma: è come per enfatizzare no?	T13. Inma: it's like to emphasize, right?
T14. Lola: sì sì	T14. Lola: yes yes
T15. Inma: ma si usa per tutto	T15. Inma: but it's used for everything

T16. Eva: sì sì i tanto! ((pausa 25 secondi))	T16. Eva: yes yes i a lot! ((25 second pause))
T17. Eva: ya están uno dos tres o cuatro?	T17. Eva: ya están uno dos tres o cuatro?
T18. Inma: sì sì (...)	T18. Inma: yes yes (...)
T19. Lola: sì allora la prima lo leggi dopo dai la seconda forse va bene dai	T19. Lola: yes, then the first lo leggi dopo dai the second maybe va bene dai
T20. Inma: dai dai dai! ((ridono))	T20. Inma: dai dai dai! ((they laugh))

In Turn 1, Example 2, Eva immediately points out the function of the DM *dai*, which is used to encourage someone to do something. In Turns 2–4, the students show they still have doubts and look to each other for confirmation. In Turn 4 Inma solves the problem by code-switching and comparing the DM *dai* with the Spanish DM *venga*, which has the same function.[25] Lola, in Turn 5, shows she does not feel confident yet and asks for confirmation, so Inma, in turn 6, as a reply, reads the example with *dai* from the input. Lola takes the turn again and expresses her doubts about the uses of *dai* and *no dai* (Turn 7 and 9) to the others. Eva, after thinking about it (Turn 8), points out to her classmate that there are other examples with the DM *dai* in the input (Turn 10) and reads an example again (Turn 12). In Turn 13, Inma proposes to her classmates that *dai* is used to emphasize something. The classmates agree and Inma concludes that the DM *dai* can be used in many cases (Turn 15), proving that she is aware of the paradigmatic polyfunctions of this DM (Bazzanella 2015:37). After a pause during which each learner checks their answers individually, in the three following turns (Turns 17–19) the students check the activity together and make sure they did what the teacher had asked. Inma closes this interactive exchange using the DM *dai* in a playful way, which makes the group laugh. In the CS *corpus*, as well as in the BP one, we observe that, once students have become aware of the uses and functions of the DM under analysis, they use the DM *dai* sometimes to talk about DMs and sometimes to clarify their functions and spontaneous use in the co-construction of the interaction. It is clear that students alternate linguistic activity with meta-linguistic activity. Furthermore, at the end of the task, they feel confident

25   Diccionario de Partículas Discursivas del Español, <http://dpde.es>.

they understood the meaning and comfortable enough to use the DM *dai* in an appropriate and playful way.

After completing the activity described above, the groups act out the dialogue in pairs and then proceed to a more detailed analysis of the DMs *dai* (used to encourage someone to do something), *va bene* (used to express agreement), and *va bene* (to show the speaker was convinced and accepted what the interlocutor proposed).[26] Finally, to consolidate the learning of DMs *ma, no dai, e va bene, eh no, no dai sì certo*, students ritualize the different forms improvising situations similar to those in real life (*role-play*). Group 1 of the BP *corpus* decided to create a dialogue in which to use the DMs *dai* and *no dai* to convince some friends to eat out (Example 3).

Esempio 3	Example 3
T1. Karla: allora scegliamo questo perché ci sono più persone ((indicando il biglietto))	T1. Karla: so we choose this because there are more people ((pointing to the paper))
T2. Luciana: va bene ok =	T2. Luciana: all right ok =
T3. Karla: =((mentre scrive)) andiamo al ristorante alla pasta stasera? È una trattoria nuova andiamo alla nuova trattoria quella quella ... in via ((muove la testa)) in via ... "	T3. Karla: =((while writing)) let's go to the restaurant *alla pasta* this evening? It's a new *trattoria* let's go to the new *trattoria* that that ... on road ((moves the head)) on road ... "
T4. Luciana: =in via garibaldi ((ride))	T4. Luciana: =on garibaldi road ((laughs))
T5. Karla: ok garibaldi in via garibaldi ((mentre scrive)) in via garibaldi come si chiama *dai*? ((scrivendo)) mangio tutto certo?	T5. Karla: ok garibaldi on garibaldi road ((while writing)) on garibaldi road what's the name *dai*? ((writing)) mangio tutto certo?
T6. Luciana: ((mentre scrive)) *no dai* io ho un'altra cosa	T6. Luciana: ((while laughing)) *no dai* I have something else
T7. Karla: ((mentre ride)) *no ma dai*	T7. Karla: ((while writing)) *no ma dai*
T8. Luciana: io ti ho fatto	T8. Luciana: I've made you
T9. Karla: io ti ho preparato ((mentre scrive e consulta il libro))	T9. Karla: I've prepared you ((while writing and checking the book))

26   Refer to Bazzanella (1995, 2001).

T10. Luciana: *ma no dai io c'ho preparato una lasagna alla puttanesca* ((ridono)) ed è proprio buona prima	T10. Luciana: *ma no dai I've prepared a lasagna alla puttanesca* ((they laugh)) and it's really good
T11. Karla: ah no perché non l'hai detto prima	T11. Karla: oh no, why didn't you say so before?
T12. Luciana: e va be volevo farti una sorpresa	T12. Luciana: e va be I wanted to surprise you
T13. Karla: certo certo tanto la trattoria resta sempre lì *va bene dai* mangiamoci questo capolavoro	T13. Karla: certo certo the trattoria is always there anyway *va bene dai* let's eat this masterpiece

In Turn 1, Karla self-selects and takes her turn through the DM *allora*, here used as appositional beginning (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). By doing this, she performs an act of power towards Luciana as she decides, without consulting her classmate, the topic they will have to talk about. Turn 2 consists in the completion of the adjacent pair (Schegloff 1972), where Luciana accepts Karla's proposal through the DM *va bene ok*.

Luciana and Karla overlap when Karla starts to write and dictate out loud the beginning of the dialogue (Turn 3). However, as she cannot find a proper Italian name for the street, she starts using repetitions, vowel elongation and body gestures in her speech, which makes it possible to infer that she is willing to give the turn to her classmate. Luciana sees Karla struggling and, close to the transition relevance place (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974), comes to her rescue suggesting the name of a street '*in via garibaldi*' (Turn 4). Karla accepts the suggestion using the DM *ok* and then continues to write the text and to dictate it out loud proposing the utterance '*come si chiama dai? mangio tutto certo*' (Turn 5). The irony contained in the name of the restaurant makes Luciana laugh but, following the instructions in the task, she refuses Karla's invitation and uses the DM *no dai* at the beginning of her turn (Turn 6). Karla accepts the proposal (Turn 7), while Luciana is still uttering her sentence (Turn 8), which is repaired in the following turn by Karla (Turn 9). Luciana accepts the repair substituting the verb *fare* with *preparare* and continues to produce her counterproposal, which provokes laughter again '*ma no dai io c'ho preparato una lasagna alla puttanesca ed è proprio buona*' (Turn 10). Karla accepts the invitation using the DM *ah no* at the beginning of the turn to emphasize her surprise (Turn 11), while Luciana replies with the DM *e va bene* to accept. The

dialogue ends when Karla accepts Luciana's invitation using the DMs *certo* and *va bene dai* (Turn 13), contextualized in the sentence '*certo certo tanto la trattoria resta sempre lì va bene dai mangiamoci questo capolavoro*'.

From this episode, some interesting observations about the use of DMs can be pointed out. Firstly, it is evident that the type of task provoked, on the one hand, a 'forced' use of the DMs, which were the study topic of the unit. Consequently, at an interactional level, there is an 'abundance' of the DMs *dai, va bene dai, no dai*, to the point that the fabricated dialogue is only at times plausible (the frequent laughter that interposes it could confirm this hypothesis). Furthermore, it is important to notice that the DMs used in the example do not correspond exactly to the target language. For instance, the DM *certo*, as it happens in BP, appears in the final position of the turn and is uttered by Karla with a rising intonation (Turn 5) as she wants 'support for the conversational progression or to request discursive approval' (Urbano 1997:96, own translation).[27]

On the other hand, apart from the repetitive style of the fabricated dialogue, there is another interactional thread, which is essential in order to weave the activity together. In fact, the learners' speech mirrors face-to-face conversation considerably more than the fabricated dialogue does. What makes the learners' speech more akin to face-to-face real conversation is the use of DMs, encouraged by the task procedures, which, as it has been mentioned before, were designed to promote collaboration. For instance, the DMs *va bene ok* (turn 2) and *ok* (turn 5) are inserted into the second turn of adjacent pairs to help the interlocutor support the current speaker.

At this point, after a guided practice that gradually turned into freer practice (Ferroni and Birello 2016), students came to the point where they had to perform the final task, which involved all the language content that was presented and worked on throughout the unit. The final task represents the ultimate free practice activity as it requires students to comprehend, manipulate, produce, interact (Nunan 2004) and use the unit contents and other linguistic resources they had already acquired autonomously. In the specific case

27 In Italian *certo* is used by the interlocutor to express their agreement (Bazzanella 1994:158).

of Unit 6, the task consisted of creating a food blog. In order to complete it, the students had to decide on the format and contents to use in the blog and did so through peer discussion. We will now look at Example 4, taken from the SC *corpus*, where Sara, Marta, Beatriz and Lucia discuss their ideas. In the negotiation that we will present here, the four students have just decided that their blog will be dedicated to fusion cuisine and move on to structure the contents of the blog in detail. Sara, who is the most fluent in the group and who frequently deals with food and wine because of her job, takes the role of the leader and suggests creating links for each ingredient. However, she does not know, or does not remember, the word 'link' and resorts to an explanation in which she refers to the colour blue, which distinguishes it, making her classmates laugh (Turn 1).

Esempio 4	Example 4
T1. Sara: e a volte anche quando mette l'ingrediente puoi metterla in azzurro in color azzurro e::: e quindi c'è l'azzurro? ((ride)) non trovo le parole ((inc)) trovi trovi trovi una una parola ((risate)) e che mette dentro ti spiega l'origine il significato	T1. Sara: and sometimes even when you put the ingredient you can make it blue the colour blue and::: and then there's blue? ((laughter)) I can't find the word ((inc)) ((laughter)) you find find find a a word and that puts inside and it explains the origin the meaning
T2. Marta: ah sì! un link –	T2. Marta: oh yes! a link –
T3. Sara: tipo un link – esatto::: entri ti spiega la proprietà come hai detto tu per esempio l'origine::: e l'azzurro ((inc)) ((risate)) Io devo studiare italiano per la martina perché di pomeriggio ... ((risate))	T3. Sara: like a link – exactly::: you click on it and it explains the properties as you said for example the origin::: and the blue ((inc)) ((laughter)) I have to study Italian in the morning because in the afternoon ... ((laughter))
T4. Marta: ((inc)) siamo stanche. ok	T4. Marta: ((inc)) we're tired. ok
T5. Sara: metti la freccia in azzurro ((riferendosi a una compagna che sta scrivendo)) ((risate))	T5. Sara: colour the arrow blue ((referring to a classmate who is writing)) ((laughter))
T6. Beatriz: ok?	T6. Beatriz: ok?
T7. Marta: *dai*	T7. Marta: *dai*
T8. Sara: allora	T8. Sara: so
T9. Lucia: *dai* ((cercando di riprodurre esagerandola, l'intonazione italiana)) ((risate))	T9. Lucia: *dai* ((trying to reproduce Italian intonation, but overdoing it)) ((laughter))

T10. Beatriz: dunque dunque:::	T10. Beatriz: so so:::
T11. Marta: dunque facciamo questo no? si mette diverse::: pagine	T11. Marta: so let's do that, right? We'll have lots of::: pages
T12. Sara: facciamo due	T12. Sara: let's make two
T13. Marta: du-due?	T13. Marta: tw-two?:
T14. Sara: una tradizionale e una fusione one	T14. Sara: a traditional one and a fusion one
T15. Marta:ok	T15. Marta: ok

In Turn 2, Marta suggests the word and Sara, in Turn 3, accepts the suggestion, explaining the reason why she is having difficulties finding the word, then she leaves the utterance incomplete and Marta completes it in the following turn (Turn 4). The turn ends with the DM *ok* to signal that the negotiation on the blog structure has ended. Everything happens in a relaxed atmosphere, as proved by the classmates. At this point, Sara self-selects (Turn 5) and makes a joke about the use of the colour blue, making a link to what was said in Turns 1 and 3.

From Turn 6 to Turn 10, the utterances consist of a series of DMs used by the students in the following order: to express agreement (*ok*), encourage to continue the activity (*dai*) and organize speech (*allora, dunque*). In Turn 9, Lucia uses *dai*, trying to imitate Italian intonation, which provokes the classmates' laughter. Sara and Beatriz use *allora* (Turn 8) and *dunque* (Turn 10), respectively, intending to close this interactive exchange and move on. The last part (Turns 11–15) is a dialogue between Marta and Sara. In turn 11, Marta uses the DM *dunque* again to introduce the proposal that puts an end to this part of the negotiation. Sara, in Turn 12, expresses the final decision, which surprises Marta (Turn 13). In Turn 14 Sara gives further information and in turn 15 Marta uses the DM *ok* to accept. This example extracted from the interaction that took place when the students were performing the final task shows that the learners have understood the meaning of and used the DMs that were analysed and practiced in the sequence of activities. After a lateral sequence in the beginning when a communication problem is solved, the students use a series of DMs whose functions are, in the following order: to close the lateral sequence and show agreement (*ok?* In Turn 6 and *dai* in Turn 7), and to organize speech (*allora* in Turn 8 and *dunque* in Turn 10). Furthermore, it can be noted that the use of DM *dai* provokes new laughter, showing that the attempt to reproduce

the DM with Italian intonation is not a source of frustration, but rather a source of amusement. We need to stress that the attempt to reproduce the intonation of the DM *dai* (Turn 9) is consciously exaggerated, conveying irony. We can conclude that the interactive spaces that are opened in the sequence of activities of an action-oriented approach not only promote activities to reflect on and to use DMs, but also create opportunities for students to show the acquired fluency through irony.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to explore how IFL learners understand the meaning of and use the DMs *dai, no dai* while performing *analytical activities* and to verify whether and how these learners use these DMs in the *free practice activities* taken from Unit 6 of the Italian textbook *Bravissimo!3-B1*. The analysis was carried out with university students at level B1 of the CEFR (2002) whose MT is similar to the FL. The results show that, during the analytical activities, group interaction consisted of exchanges that encourage metalinguistic activity, that is, activity that is focused on how the language works (Camps 2014). In these exchanges, the DMs *dai* and *no dai* became the object of reflections in which learners become aware of the DMs' paradigmatic polyfunctions (Bazzanella 2015) and of their use, thanks to a series of strategies such as code-switching from the FL to the MT (Example 1) and comparing the presence of similar phenomena in one's own language (Example 2). Although the roleplay activity encouraged a 'forced' use of the DMs *dai, no dai*, in this case we noticed a playful attitude in the learners, triggered by their awareness of the use of the DMs which were the focus of the activity (Examples 1, 2 and 3). As the guided practice gradually turns into free practice, metalinguistic activity leaves room for metacommunicative activity, that is, activity that is focused on communication (Ciliberti 2016). In these interactive spaces, we noticed that the use of DMs *dai* and *no dai* became gradually more natural and spontaneous, while laughter, which is limited to the attempt to imitate Italian intonation in an exaggerated way (Example 4), gradually disappears.

Moreover, we can state that collaborative work, which is present both in the *analytical* and *free practice* activities, favoured the spontaneous use of the DMs *sì, va bene, ok, d'accordo, certo* deployed by the speaker and the interlocutor with interactional function (Bazzanella 1995, 2001). These were used as well as a series of DMs which had previously been analysed by students, such as *allora* and *dunque*.

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