

List Constructions: A specialised means of text progression

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This article presents a study of List Constructions in a corpus of spoken Italian, in particular those that end with a general extender, a functional class of expressions. They widen the scope and the meaning of what has been previously said: for example, *or something / and everything / and things / and stuff (like that), etcetera*. The main aim is to show that List Constructions exhibit some basic features that are particularly suited to the online process of spoken communication, although they also constitute a specialised means of text progression to give order to objects and concepts, which resembles the use of written catalogues.*

KEYWORDS: List Constructions, Spoken Studies, Corpus Linguistics, Italian, French

1. Speaking, listening, repeating: the effectiveness of a re-cycling model

In this article, I present a study of List Constructions (**LCs**) in a corpus of spoken Italian (VoLIP) and in particular those that end with a general extender, a functional class of expressions. They widen the scope and the meaning of what has been previously said: *or something, and everything, and things (like that), and stuff (like that), etcetera* (Channel 1994; Ovestreet 1999, 2001; Voghera 2012; Fiorentini & Sansò 2016). My main aim is to show that LCs exhibit some basic features that are particularly suited to the online process of spoken communication, such as structural repetition (Jefferson 1990, Selting 2007), although they also constitute a specialised means of text progression to give order to objects and concepts, which resembles the use of written catalogues (Goody 1977).

This article is structured in four sections. In the first section, I survey some fundamental properties of spoken texts, focusing on the relevance of reuse and repetition of linguistic material and schemes, while the second section shows how relevant repetition in LCs is and what form they usually take in spoken Italian. The third section pre-

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sents a structural and descriptive analysis of some kinds of LCs as well as their frequency and distribution in the different types of texts in the corpus; finally, the fourth section presents some conclusions, which take into account both structural analysis and textual distribution.

We learn to speak through dialogues, which constitute the most frequent communicative settings of our entire lives. Dialogues are by definition open to the contribution of every speaker and their progression is framed by turn-taking, which renders the development partially unpredictable. In natural and spontaneous conditions, dialogic texts are in fact the products of all the participants in the communicative event, who normally manifest a cooperative attitude in building the whole sense of the discourse.¹ The co-presence of the producer and the receiver and their always-possible interchange during the online process results in discontinuous texts, which typically include such features as interruptions, project changes, speakers' overlapping and insertions of the receiver. These conditions produce many structures that systematically diverge from what formal grammars predict and that are cross-linguistically widespread (Biber 1995; Miller & Weinert 1998; Miller & Fernandez-Vest 2006; Schegloff 1996; Voghera 2017).

Compared to written prose, spoken communication manifests an intrinsic discontinuity at a semiotic level. Speakers and listeners elaborate meanings through and from different sources (Sornicola 1981). Gestures, facial expressions and body movements are so essential to spoken communication that we can define speech as an audio-visual modality (Voghera 2017). Besides, speakers continuously infer meanings from context, which includes the setting in which the communication takes place, the interactional conditions, which include the interpersonal relationships, the degree and the possibility of turn-taking alternation and the cultural and ideational presuppositions that the speakers can rely on as members of a community. This implies that the speakers manage multiple systems and levels of signification, which compose a complex puzzle, made up of a plurality of integrated semiotic resources. Thus, a dialogue is a multidimensional product, resulting from the interaction among verbal and non-verbal language, context, speakers' interaction and their cultural background.²

While spoken texts can appear highly undetermined from a formal point of view, they function perfectly from a communicative one. Indeed, the transmission of information in dialogues is never disjunct from the construction of interpersonal relationships. The limited possibilities for linguistic planning, whose extent is framed by turn-taking, greatly constrain the construction of the whole sense of the discourse, and this explains why the cohesion and coherence of

spontaneous texts are open processes which are built incrementally (Schegloff 1996). Speakers and listeners normally have a cooperative attitude towards the semantic development and the syntactic structures that span more than one turn, which implies an unavoidable tolerance towards intrinsic indeterminacy and discontinuity. Because of this, natural spoken dialogues cannot simply be represented as a chain of utterances built along a linear sequence (phonemes, morphemes, words, sentences, etc.), but as complex texts, whose coherence is built incrementally and on different simultaneous planes. In actual fact, a verbal sequence evolves dynamically as a succession of related steps that build on each other, and both the semantic and the syntactic progression develop as a spiral rather than as a straight line.

The general discontinuity of spoken communication and the need to manage the online production and reception processes favour the use of strategies that make it possible to save time or optimise its use. A fruitful strategy is the use of short chunks of text and short utterances. Since texts are the result of a multiparty activity to which both speakers and receivers contribute, they know in advance that their utterances may be interrupted and that the initial textual strategy can be dramatically altered. In order to reduce the potential disruption of communication, speakers tend to produce short portions of text at a time, which can be easily controlled and recalled. Moreover, the lack of external memory encourages the structuring of information in serial patterns; the quantity of information follows additive paths, which can be reconstructed more easily in online production and reception processes in the event of project changes or interruptions. Syntactically, this means sequences of short clauses, since a hierarchical structure requires complex planning and, above all, long-term calculations that are impractical when speaking. On the contrary, a serial structure enables both speaker and hearer to progress step by step without overloading memory and thus reducing potential information loss. Semantically, spoken utterances exhibit constructions with a low semantic intension, such as deictic, general items (nouns and verbs) and polysemic structures, which are pervasive in dialogic speech (Mahlberg 2005; Voghera 2017). Short chunks and portions of texts, low intension items and polysemy are features that facilitate the construction of light and elastic texts which are necessary in order to reach an optimal balance between the transmission of information and the creation of an effective cooperative relationship between participants in the absence of steady and fixed reference points.

However, speakers use other strategies to ensure communicative success. One of the most powerful of such strategies is the itera-

tion of the same linguistic choices and behaviour, which is very often manifested in the reuse of the same linguistic items and constructions (Voghera 1992, Bybee 1995, Bazzanella 1996, Wang 2005, Tannen 2007², Du Bois 2014). Online production and perception, for instance in spoken dialogues or in written prose texts, are usually focused on content and social relationships and benefit from the rapidity and ease of employing ready-to-use constructions. Repetitions are widespread in all types of text and the reuse of verbal material is such a common form of economy that we can consider it a basic feature of human language. We know from numerous corpus-based works dating back to the 1960s that around 90% of what we say and write is covered by the 2000 most frequent lexical word types. This means that our texts present a high number of recurrent words and that relatively few words are repeated very often. Surprisingly, this happens in both spoken and written texts with only slight differences: in Italian, for instance, the first 2000 word types cover 91.1% of the lexicon that occurs in spoken texts *vs* 90.7% of that in written texts (Vedovelli 1993). The recurrent use of a relatively small part of what the system allows is a constant in verbal behaviour. This usage pattern is not limited to lexicon, but occurs at every level of linguistic codification, because speakers and writers are inclined to maximally exploit a core of verbal resources. The tendency to reuse words, grammatical features such as mood and tense of verbs, syntactic patterns and so on is very strong for both processing and communicative factors. Although the strength of literacy and the literary models attach a negative stigma to repetition and favour variation, it does not contrast with the capacity of highly creative production. Tannen considers it “the central linguistic meaning-making strategy, a limitless resource for individual creativity and interpersonal involvement” (Tannen 2007²: 97).

Given its pervasive role and frequency in speech, repetition can assume many different forms and perform different functions.³ First, however, we must make a distinction between repetitions that are the output of a sort of semi-automatic unconscious behaviour and those that result from a speaker’s choice. An example of the first kind are sound touchoffs, as in (1), or the repetitions derived from disfluencies, as in (2).⁴

(1) Voghera 1992a

C: *la barca... dentro i nani...*

'the boat... inside the dwarfs'

D: *la barca*

'the boat'

C: *ma dentro dentro la*

'but inside inside the'

D: [*molto forte*] *la barca te dici la barca*

[very aloud] 'the boat you say the boat'

C: *la barba ho detto*

'the beard I said'

F: *te prima avevi detto la banca*

'before you had said the bank'

S: *la Barbara*

'the Barbara'

C: *la barba*

'the beard'

D: *te prima avevi detto la banca*

'before you had said the bank'

S: [*fortissimo*] *LA BANCA!!!*

[very very aloud] 'THE BANK!!!'

F: *la banca? dove ci vanno i ladri?*

'the bank? where the thieves go?'

S: *la barca*

'the boat'

F: *la barca allora*

'the boat then'

C: *i sette nani e la barca*

'the seven dwarfs and the boat'

S: *guarda i sette nani e la barca*

'look at the seven dwarfs and the boat'

(2) Voghera 2010

so <sp> we're trying to we're we we we're sort of collecting those for a start we've also we've also got tapes of things like there's a there's a tape of <sp> it's to do with the National Curriculum actually [...]

In (1) there are four children aged between 4.5 and 4.8 years, who are chatting and drawing the Seven Dwarfs. The children begin to play with words and enjoy using words with similar sounds in a sort of collective sound touchoff: *barca* 'boat', *barba* 'beard', *Barbara* 'Barbara',⁵ *banca* 'bank'. In (2), the self-repetition of syllables is an example of disfluency which reveals processing difficulties and/or uncertainty; clearly in this case, repetition is a sort of automatic device to bring the discourse planning and the syntagmatic progression under control while maintaining the turn.

Whereas, in (3), the self-repetition of an entire sentence depends

on communicative factors, since the speaker uses it to intensify and strengthen her opinion:

(3) Voghera 2010

I I I me - I appreci- I understand women saying, wait a minute, you know, just 'cuz I am a woman I shouldn't pay more if I have short hair; and I agree with that, I do agree with that, I I do agree with that's er th- that's obvious...

In conversations, the repetition of the interlocutor's words and sentences is also very common as a form of acknowledgement and, at the same time, as an easy way to continue the conversation in a new turn (Schegloff 1996), as in (4). In this conversation an interviewer repeats the sentences of the interviewee during a television show to acknowledge their utterances and to stimulate the interaction (Tannen 2007²: 61).

(4) Voghera 1992a

1D: ci siamo conosciuti una sera <sp> abbiamo
'we met one night we have'

1C: sì ah
'yeah ah'

2D: cominciato a formare un piccolo gruppo così ci divertiamo un po'
'begun to make a small group so we have a little fun'

2C: ahah ahah un piccolo gruppo e
'ahah ahah a small group and'

3D: ci divertiamo un po' al nostro paese
'we have some fun in our village'

3C: vi divertite <sp> ecco vi divertite a fare che cosa?
'you have fun <sp> well you have fun doing what?'

4D: a presentare una scenetta cantata stralci di canzone ed esce...
'playing a sung gag pieces of song and it comes out...'

4C: scenetta
'gag'

In natural conversation we very frequently find an alternation of self- and allo-repetition (Tannen 2007), as in the conversation between four people in (5). They are speaking about a movie, *Dune*, which is going to be broadcast on television, and whether it is better to watch it or record it on a VHS cassette. In this conversation the use of other people's phrases and sentences seems the easiest way to proceed and build cohesion and coherence as the topic develops. The total or partial repetition is a manifestation of what Du Bois (2014: 20) defines as resonance, i.e. "the activation of affinities across utterances".

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(5) VoLIP MA1

B: *ahah Dune ahah dai quand'è che lo fanno io me lo vedo*
'ahah Dune ahah c'mon when do they show it I'll watch it'

A: *adesso? No_*
'now? No_'

B: *dai_*
'c'mon'

E: *Dune lo fanno bello_*
'Dune they make it good_'

B: *io non l'ho mai visto*
'I have never seen it'

A: *io l'ho visto in francese*
'I have seen it in French'

B: *non è giusto io non l'ho mai visto*
'it's not fair I have never seen it'

A: *in inglese questo film*
'in English this movie'

B: *mai visto mai visto ce l'hai la cassetta per registrarlo?*
'never seen it never seen it do you have the cassette to record it?'

A: *sì*
'yes'

B: *<??> FBI ma David Lynch è quello che ha fatto Twin Peaks?*
<??> 'FBI is David Lynch the one who made Twin Peaks?'

A: *sì sì quanto durerà?*
'yes yes how long is it going to be?'

F: *un paio d'ore*
'a couple of hours'

B: *due ore*
'two hours'

F: *un paio d'ore dai*
'c'mon a couple of hours'

A: *no_ di più non dura due ore dura di più sicuramente ahah ecco*
'no_ longer it's not a couple of hours long it's longer for sure ahah here'

Obviously, we can repeat words and utterances to check what we have heard and to ask for further information.

(6) VoLIP FA1

D: *ma cosa sono? non c'è?*
'but what are they? is it not there?'

A: *mi pare i Favolosi*
'I think the Fabulous'

D: *i favolosi?*
'the fabulous?'

B: *i favolosi?*
'the fabulous?'

A: *ahah favolosi*
'ahah fabulous'

C: *son grissini [SILENZIO]*
'they're breadsticks' [SILENCE]

D: *mi fai assaggiare?*
'can I taste?'

Finally, in spontaneous texts we can use repetition as a stylistic choice. An example is given in (7), a conversation between a parent and a child. In this case the child, speaker A, repeats without any variation the destination of his class trip *in Abruzzo Pescara parco nazionale* ('to Abruzzo Pescara national park') as a sort of joke, teasing his mother, just to mean that the concept should be clear enough and it should not be necessary to speak further about it.

(7) VoLIP FA1

- B: *dove andate in gita non ho mica⁶ capito*
'where are you going on your trip? I NEG didn't understand'
A: *in Abruzzo Pescara parco nazionale Pestè- [RIDE] Pescara*
'to Abruzzo Pescara national park Pestè- [LAUGHS] Pescara'
B: *ah*
A: *parco nazionale L'Aquila L'Aquila parco nazionale Pescara*
'national park L'Aquila L'Aquila national park Pescara'
B: *quanto tempo?*
'how long?'
D: *te al parco nazionale non ci sei stato?*
'have you not been at the national park?'
A: *tre giorni?*
'three days?'
B: *Pescara parco nazionale L'Aquila tre giorni?*
'Pescara national park L'Aquila three days?'

Summing up, speakers can repeat linguistic constituents of any kind or coding level: phones, syllables, prosodic profiles, words, phrases, entire clauses for processing, communicative and stylistic factors (Voghera 1992, Bazzanella 1996, Wang 2005, Tannen 2007²). This provides speakers and listeners with a sort of *discours prêt-à-porter*, which comprises a wide range of segmental and suprasegmental linguistic resources which are highly accessible and suitable in different functional contexts.

2. List Constructions

Because of its multiple functions, repetition is a ubiquitous discursive device which can affect many levels of codification (Halliday & Hasan 1976, Wang 2005, Tannen 2007²). In some cases this results in the creation of constructions proper, i.e. conventionalised schemes which can vary in size and complexity but have a recognisable func-

tion and meaning (Goldberg 2006, Masini 2017). LCs are among the constructions that exploit the mechanism of repetition. Although there is no unique definition of LCs, most researchers concur that they are a junction of two or more elements occupying the same structural position in a dependency structure (Jefferson 1990, Selting 2007, Blanche-Benveniste *et al.* 1990, Gerdes & Kahane 2009).

Some authors adopt a highly extensive definition, with all the coordinative structures, repetitions, reformulations and so on being included among the LCs (Blanche-Benveniste *et al.* 1990; Bonvino, Masini & Pietrandrea 2009; Gerdes & Kahane 2009; Masini & Pietrandrea 2010; Kahane & Pietrandrea 2012; Masini, Mauri & Pietrandrea 2012; Masini & Gorla 2017). Although all these processes share some properties, I think that if we intend to consider a list as a construction, i.e. a pair of meaning and functions, then a more restrictive definition is necessary. I therefore regard a LC as a construction which is mostly the junction of three elements occupying the same structural position in a dependency structure and expressed by different or partially different lexical material, as illustrated in the following examples:⁷

(8) VoLIP FA3

e quindi dividere le cose segmentare i testi_ le co<se> i discorsi

‘and so separating the things segmenting the texts the thi<ngs> the speeches’

DM	V	NPobj	LC
<i>e quindi</i> ‘and so’	<i>dividere</i> ‘separating’	<i>le cose</i> ‘the things’	
	<i>segmentare</i> ‘segmenting’	<i>i testi</i> ‘the texts’	
		<i>le cose</i> ‘the things’	
		<i>i discorsi</i> ‘the speeches’	

(9) VoLIP FD3

ogni feudatario o vassallo eh può dare questo terreno ad altri proprietari eh vassalli vassalli minori i valvassini i valvassori eccetera

‘any feudatory or vassal eh can give this land to other owners vassals minor vassals vavasours’ subvassals vavasours etcetera’

NPsubj	VP	NPobj	PP	CT
<i>ogni feudatario o vassallo</i> 'any feudatory or vassal'	<i>eh può dare</i> 'eh can give'	<i>questo terreno</i> 'this land'	<i>ad altri proprietari</i> 'to other owners'	
			<i>eh vassalli</i> 'vassals'	
			<i>vassalli minori i valvassini</i> 'minor vassals vavasours' subvassals'	
			<i>i valvassori</i> 'vavasours'	
			<i>eccetera</i> 'etcetera'	

The above definition implies that, as already said in note 3, not all coordinate constructions and not all repetitions are lists, but only those constructions constituted by the repetition of constituents, lexical categories (N, V, A etc.), phrases and clauses which perform the same syntactic role. Consequently, in my opinion the cases in which repetition develops in grammaticalised or semi-grammaticalised constructions should not be considered as LCs, as in the following.

- (10) *Era [buono, buono, buono]_A*
'(S/he) was [good good good]_A'
- (11) *La guardava e [rideva, rideva, rideva]_v*
'He looked at her and kept on laughing' (lit. 'laughed, laughed, laughed')
- (12) *[Cammina cammina]_{conv} ho trovato il mio equilibrio.*
'Walking (lit. 'walk walk') I found my balance'

In (10) the three occurrences of the adjective *buono* ('good') are a case of expressive reduplication that can be assimilated to a superlative form of the adjective (Grandi 2017); in (11) the reduplication of the verb *rideva* ('laughed') is a way to express an intensified continuous aspectual form of the verb⁸ (De Santis 2011, 2014); in (12), the reduplication of imperative forms is a grammaticalised pattern to express adverbial subordination. Thornton (2009) argues convincingly that structures like the one in (12) are converbs, i.e. "nonfinite verb form[s] whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination" (Haspelmath 1995: 3).⁹

The pattern of LCs may vary on the basis of formal and semantic features (Masini & Pietrandrea 2010; Kahane & Pietrandrea 2012; Masini, Mauri & Pietrandrea 2012). LCs can be introduced by an opening marker that introduces the list, such as *per esempio* 'for example', *tipo* 'for example' (lit. 'type') as in (13), and/or present an ending marker, which has the role of indicating when the list terminates.¹⁰ The ending markers may be general extenders (14). Other

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ending markers can be phatic signals, such as *no?* ‘right?’ (lit. ‘no?’), *capito?* ‘[have you] understood?’, as in (15):

(13) VoLIP FA4

con dei lavori di gruppo di pomeriggio tematici tipo arte arte e scienza arte e letteratura per filosofia

‘with some thematic group-works during the afternoon like art art and science art and literature for philosophy’

PP	Opening marker		NP	LC
<i>con dei lavori di gruppo di pomeriggio tematici</i> ‘with some thematic group-works during the afternoon’	<i>tipo</i> ‘like’		<i>arte arte</i> ‘art art’	
		<i>e</i> ‘and’	<i>scienza arte</i> ‘science art’	
		<i>e</i> ‘and’	<i>letteratura per filosofia</i> ‘literature for philosophy’	

(14) VoLIP MB24

quindi magari se voi mangiate la pasta con la carne o il pollo o la frutta eccetera eccetera

‘then maybe if you eat pasta with meat or chicken or fruit etcetera etcetera’

DM	VP	NPobj	Conjunction	PP	Ending marker	LC
<i>quindi magari</i> ‘then maybe’	<i>se voi mangiate</i> ‘if you eat’	<i>la pasta</i> ‘the pasta’		<i>con la carne</i> ‘with the meat’		
			<i>o</i> ‘or’	<i>il pollo</i> ‘the chicken’		
			<i>o</i> ‘or’	<i>la frutta</i> ‘the fruit’		
					<i>eccetera eccetera</i>	

(15) VoLIP FA4

in maniera autoritaria, in maniera scorretta, in maniera un poco così voglio dire capito?

‘in a despotic way, in a wrong way, in a way a bit like that I mean you know?’

CT	PP	DM	Ending Marker
	<i>in maniera autoritaria</i> ‘in despotic way’		
	<i>in maniera scorretta</i> ‘in wrong way’		
	<i>in maniera un poco così</i> ‘in a way a bit like that’	<i>voglio dire</i> ‘I mean’	<i>capito?</i> ‘you know?’

The junction among the members of a LC can be expressed at a phrasal level through conjunctions, as in (13) and (14), or at a suprasegmental level through prosodic contours, as in (16). What

is traditionally referred to as asyndesis should be more properly designated as segmental asyndesis, because the syndesis is actually present at a prosodic level. This is obviously true in spoken texts but there is now evidence that prosody is projected onto written texts even in silent reading and influences the parsing and the interpretation of a sentence (Fodor 2002). What prosodically characterises a construction as a list is usually the repetition of a contour with a rising pitch for each member. However, LCs do not have a unique prosodic form but, rather, according to Selting (2007: 9),

[...] a variety of similar contours plus the repetition of the chosen contour for at least some or even all of the list items. Furthermore, intonation is deployed to suggest the interpretation of a potential final list item as either a list completer or as another item of the list with some kind of gestalt closure still to come.

Thus, prosody changes according to textual factors, and the prosodic form is conditioned by the openness *vs* closeness of the list (Selting 2007). The most common pattern in Italian is a sequence of rising pitches for each member when the speaker signals that the set is not complete, as in (16), and a falling pitch on the last element when the set is complete. The falling pitch can be either on an ending marker (14), such as a general extender, or on a member of the list (18).

(16) VoLIP FC2

*quindi riguardo per esempio alla ai disservizi riguardo all'educazione dei minori
 riguardo alla per esempio maternità <??> nel mondo del lavoro*
 'as far for example as the the disruptions as far as the education of the children as
 far as for example the maternity leave <??> in the working world'

LC	<i>quindi riguardo per esempio alla ai disservizi</i>	
	'as far for example as the the disruptions'	
	<i>riguardo all'educazione dei minori</i>	
	'as far as the education of the children'	
	<i>riguardo alla per esempio maternità</i>	<??> nel mondo del lavoro
	'as far as for example the maternity leave'	'<??> in the working world'

(17) VoLIP FA2

poi c'è questa terrazza grandissima dove mettono i tavolini mangiano e poi ballano
 'then there is this very large terrace where they put the tables.DIM eat and then dance'

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DM	Clause	Conjunction	Clause	LC
<i>poi</i> 'then'	<i>c'è questa terrazza grandissima</i> 'there is this very large terrace'		<i>dove mettono i tavolini</i> 'where they put the tables.DIM'	
			<i>mangiano</i> 'eat'	
		<i>e poi</i> 'and then'	<i>ballano</i> 'dance'	

Semantically, a LC places parallelism on different items, whose compatibility is determined by the point of view chosen by the speaker (Barotto & Mauri *this issue*). In fact, the semantic relationship connecting the elements of a list may be of a different nature. Lists usually perform the semantic function of (a) incrementing the information with new items (18); (b) building or better specifying the discourse reference (19-20); (c) building the reference, which may or may not create a more or less definite category (21-22).

(18) VoLIP MC3

da tutte le realtà non solamente il carcere ma anche il carcere eh il manicomio e altri luoghi simili

'from all the situations not only the prison but also the prison eh the mental hospital and other similar places'

PP	conjunction	NP	LC
<i>da tutte le realtà</i> 'from all the situations'		<i>non solamente il carcere</i> 'not only the prison'	
		<i>ma anche il carcere</i> 'but also the prison'	
		<i>eh il manicomio</i> 'eh the mental hospital'	
	<i>e</i> 'and'	<i>altri luoghi simili</i> 'other similar places'	

(19) VoLIP NA11

B: perché poi insomma ho saputo che chiedono anche un po' il proprio curriculum ma insomma io cosa dovrei <?>? il certificato di laurea la

'because then so I found out that they also request one's own curriculum but then what should I <??> the degree certificate the'

A: ma anche quello insomma

'well also that one'

B: borsa di studio in Germania insomma que<ste> eh ricerche insomma queste cose così
'scholarship in Germany so these eh pieces of research so these things like that'

In this case, the list is interrupted by another speaker's turn, but continues in the following turn.

LC	NP	DM
	<i>il certificato di laurea</i> 'the degree certificate'	
	<i>la borsa di studio in Germania</i> 'scholarship in Germany'	<i>insomma</i> 'so'
	<i>queste eh ricerche</i> 'these eh pieces of research'	<i>insomma</i> 'so'
	<i>queste cose così</i> 'these things like that'	

(20) VoLIP FA4

ma mica vengon da Firenze vengono da Grosseto da Volterra da Cascina dai paesini più incredibili

'but NEG they do not come from Florence they come from Grosseto from Volterra from Cascina from the most incredible small villages'

VP	PP	LC
<i>ma mica vengon</i> 'but NEG they do not'	<i>da Firenze</i> 'from Florence'	
<i>vengono</i> 'come'	<i>da Grosseto</i> 'from Grosseto'	
	<i>da Volterra</i> 'from Volterra'	
	<i>da Cascina</i> 'from Cascina'	
	<i>dai paesini più incredibili</i> 'the most incredible small villages'	

(21) CLIPS Rdit_04_R

Madonna<aa> i Duran Duran insomma quei cantanti un po' così degli anni ottanta

'Madonna<aa> Duran Duran so those singers a bit like that from the Eighties'

LC	DM	NP	PP
		<i>Madonna</i>	
		<i>i Duran Duran</i>	
	<i>insomma</i> 'so'	<i>quei cantanti un po' così</i> 'those singers a bit like that'	<i>degli anni ottanta</i> 'from the Eighties'

The examination of the different forms of LC reveals a constant, repetitive and parallel structure and a preference for a sequence of three items, one of which may be the closing marker (Jefferson 1990, Selting 2007). This scheme seems particularly suited to creating effective constructions which can easily highlight evident similarities and differences between different elements. This may explain why, as we will see in the next section, LCs are prevalently used in texts in which knowledge transfer is the principal aim (Tannen 2007²).

3. List Constructions in context: some corpus-based data

The description of the previous section can be fruitfully integrated with some corpus-based data on the usage of LCs in different contexts. As constructions are typically shaped by the context in which they occur, knowledge of the type of texts in which they are more frequent can identify aspects of their meaning and function which are not otherwise detectable. As the meaning of a word is delimited by the contexts of its use, the functional meaning of a construction is delimited by the kind of texts in which it occurs. Indeed, the features of specific types of texts can stimulate or inhibit the emergence of a construction and therefore the textual dimension can have a diagnostic dimension for constructional development (Goldberg 2006; Bybee 2006; Masini 2017; Voghera 2018).

Accordingly, I have investigated whether LCs occur in all context types or whether they are more frequent in certain kinds. I studied the LCs in spontaneous Italian spoken texts using VoLIP, a web-based version of the LIP corpus (De Mauro *et al.* 1993), which allows parallel access to the acoustic files and orthographic transcriptions of the material.¹¹ As LCs may have different forms and present elements in different ways, I considered lists in which the members were elements of an addition and those which presented the members as part of a category set. For the first type, I looked at LCs marked by the general extenders *eccetera* 'etcetera' and *e/o così via* 'and/or so on', while for the second type I looked at those marked by the general extenders (*e*) *N del genere* 'N of the kind', (*e*) *cose così* 'things like that'.¹²

Eccetera 'etcetera' and *e/o così via* 'and/or so on' perform the basic function of indicating that the discourse could continue and that there could be other members belonging to the list.¹³ Generally speaking, they are used at the end of a list in which the members are added one to another, which is why I will refer to this kind of list as an additive list. Indeed, Fiorentini (*forthcoming*) explains that in this case *eccetera* has the function of an additive general extender. As we can see in examples (22-23), the members of the lists are juxtaposed and the speaker does not make the relationship between them explicit: while in (23) they are definitely co-hyponyms because they are all designated public bodies, in (22) they can be interpreted either as co-hyponyms or as reformulations of the same concept.

(22) VoLIP FA3

non ha sufficienti capacità di analisi cioè di dividere proprio in parti eh eh quello che ti dice fa tutto un groviglio quindi questo secondo me è uno dei punti principali su cui bisogna_ intervenire insomma analisi sintesi e quindi dividere le cose segmentare i

testi_ le co<se> i discorsi che fa eccetera
'he does not have sufficient capabilities of analysis that is of dividing in parts eh eh
what he tells you he does all a mess then this is in my opinion one of the principal
points on which it is necessary to work in short analysis synthesis and then separate
the things segment the texts the things the speeches he does etcetera'

(23) VoLIP FC4

di superare queste barriere che esistono tra le province i comuni le USL # le regioni e
così via
'of overcoming these barriers that exist among the district councils the municipalities
the sanitary agencies and so on'

The general extenders (*e*) *N del genere* 'N of the kind', (*e*) *cose così* 'things like that', have the function of stating more explicitly that the members of the list are part of a set of things or a category.

(24) VoLIP MC10

è riuscito a spostare le bancarelle che vendono frutta e verdura o formaggi e altri
prodotti del genere
'he was able to move the market stalls that sell fruit and vegetables
or cheese and other products like that' (lit. 'of the kind')

In (24) a coreference is built between *del genere* and *frutta e verdura o formaggi* ('fruit and vegetables or cheese'), whose common property is contextually determined by the speaker's point of view: in this case the focus of the discourse is on the sale of fresh products. In this way, *e N del genere* works as a category tag and makes the list a coherent set which is identifiable by an analogy with these contextual data.

- (25) [*frutta e verdura o formaggi*]_i e altri prodotti [del genere]_i
[fruit and vegetables or cheese]_i and other products [of the kind]_i
[products [of the kind]_A]_{NP} = products analogous to fruit, vegetables, cheese

The noun that precedes *del genere* 'of the kind' can be a general noun, such as *cosa* ('thing'), *roba* ('stuff') or an indefinite pronoun as *qualcosa* ('something') (Mahlberg 2005).

(26) VoLIP RC11

infatti oh dio si cercava di non mettere per traverso i tavoli eh delle lampade roba del genere
'in fact oh goodness we tried not to put the tables sideways eh some lamps stuff like
that' (lit. 'of the kind')

The same operation is valid for (*e*) *cose così*, which functions in the same way: in fact, the two general extenders are perfectly interchangeable. I will refer to this kind of list as a classifying list.

(27) VoLIP NA11

B: *perché poi insomma ho saputo che chiedono anche un po' il proprio curriculum ma insomma io cosa dovrei <?>? il certificato di laurea la*
 'because then so I found out that they also request a bit one's own curriculum but then what should I <?>? the degree certificate the'

A: *ma anche quello insomma*
 'well also that one'

B: *borsa di studio in Germania insomma que<ste> eh ricerche insomma queste cose così*
 'scholarship in Germany so these eh pieces of research so these things like that'

Figure 1 shows the number of registered constructions and their distribution in the five types of LIP texts. The quantitative data offer some surprises. The number of lists is small and the additive type is the most frequent. As we could expect, the most numerous LCs are those ending with *eccetera* ('etcetera'), a very frequent word, which is ranked in the 184th position in the frequency lexicon of spoken Italian (De Mauro *et al.* 1993). However, if we look at its frequency only 24% of its occurrences are used as a list ending marker.¹⁴ Similar percentages are registered for *e N del genere* ('and N of the kind'), 18% and *(e) cose così* ('(and) things like that'), about 30%. Thus, the function of list ending marker is not the principal use of these general extenders; only *(e) così via* ('(and) so on') is used as a list ending marker in 88% of its occurrences.

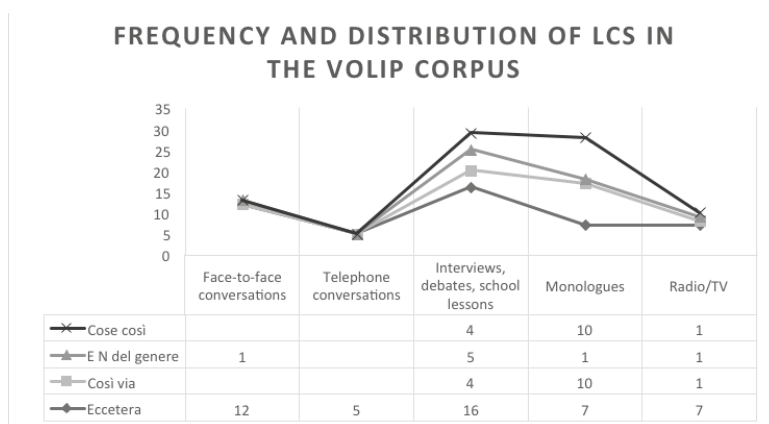


Figure 1. Frequency of LCS in the VoLIP corpus.

These data are consistent with those collected by Del Santo (2016), who compared the use of LCS in spoken Italian and French in two hours of the sections of VoLIP and two hours of the sections of the Eslo (*Enquêtes SocioLinguistiques à Orléans*) corpus. Del Santo found that additive lists constitute 70% of the Italian lists and that only

30% of LCs presented an ending marker in both languages. Moreover, the general extenders are not the most common ending markers. Table 1 presents Del Santo’s (2016) data in detail.

Del Santo (2016)	VoLIP conversations	VoLIP debates	Eslo dinner conversations	Eslo entertainment
Opening markers	30%	17%	50%	46%
Ending markers	30%	23%	35%	31%
Absence of markers	40%	60%	15%	23%

Table 1. Frequency of list markers in Del Santo’s (2016) collection.¹⁵

As we can see from Table 1, in Italian most LCs do not present a marker either at the beginning or at the end while in French, according to Del Santo, the opening markers, such as *c’est-à-dire*, (‘that is’), *donc* (‘so’), *alors* (‘then’), *bon* (‘well’), *comme on dit* (‘how to say’) etc., are frequent. If we look at different registers, in Italian the markers are more frequent in conversations, i.e. informal situations, while in French the difference between the two registers is not so clear-cut.

The chart in Figure 1 shows how the frequency of LCs changes in the five types of texts. All types of LC reach their minimum in the telephone conversations and their maximum in the debates, interviews or monologues. These data suggest that LCs are more probable in texts in which turn-taking alternation is not rapid: indeed, LCs tend to occur in relatively long turns. This may happen during an informal conversation, but it is certainly more common in a debate, an interview or in a lecture, while it does not typically occur in a telephone call, which usually comprises very short turns.

Once more, our data are consistent with those collected by Del Santo (2016), presented in Table 2. They clearly show the quantitative prevalence of LCs in texts with longer turns, also including French.

Del Santo (2016)	LIP conversations	LIP debates	Eslo dinner conversations	Eslo entertainment
LCs	32%	68%	31%	69%

Table 2. Frequency of LCs in Del Santo’s (2016) collection.

However, it is not the length of the turn that favours the presence of LCs, but rather its textual features: indeed, LCs are mostly present in turns that are strongly addressed to the receiver. In other words, LCs are mainly used when the speaker has to explain, convince, and show evidence. LCs perform the function of specifying and enumerating particular cases and build examples which aim to facili-

tate the acceptance of an assertion, an opinion or a request by the interlocutor (Manzotti 1998).

Semantically the members of the lists are mainly: (a) cohyponyms of a hyperonym, which can be explicitly expressed, as in (28), or only inferred from the previous discourse, as in (29); (b) synonyms or expressions belonging to the same semantic field (30); (c) expressions in a complementary relationship, and therefore added to one another in order to increment and expand the quantity of information of (31).

Interestingly, there is no correlation in the kinds of semantic relationship between the list members and the presence or types of conjunctions. In actual fact, 80% of the lists I have studied do not present any conjunctions and the connection between members is achieved prosodically. Once again, our data match those collected by Del Santo (2016), who found that around 70% of Italian lists and nearly 80% of French ones do not contain conjunctions.

(28) VoLIP FC6

[...] tra i numeri naturali non ci possono essere altri numeri altrimenti si passa a categorie di numeri quali le reali reali negativi eccetera

'in between the natural numbers there cannot be other numbers otherwise we pass to other categories such as the reals reals negative etcetera'

(29) VoLIP NA11

B: perché poi insomma ho saputo che chiedono anche un po' il proprio curriculum ma insomma io cosa dovrei <?>? il certificato di laurea la

'because then so I found out that they also request one's own curriculum but then what should I <?> the degree certificate the'

A: ma anche quello insomma

'well also that one'

B: borsa di studio in Germania insomma que<ste> eh ricerche insomma queste cose così

'scholarship in Germany so these eh pieces of research so these things like that'

(30) VoLIP FE15

B: camuffando cambiando i nomi però potreste_ tantissime storie di di di amori di conoscenze andate a buon fine non andate a buon fine insomma eh app<occi> approcci tentativi eccetera

'masking changing the names however you could a lot of stories of of of loves of happy encounters unhappy encounters well eh contacts attempts contacts etcetera'

(31) VoLIP FD4

i cambiavalute il cambiavalute era era logico che ci fossero perché c'era c'erano tante monete come immaginate oggi la gente si muovesse dalla Francia dall'Italia dalla Spagna dalla Cina dall'India eccetera

'the money changers the money changer it was logical that there were many currencies as if you imagine today the people would travel from France from Italy from Spain from China etcetera'

Notwithstanding the different semantic relationships between the members of the lists and the fact that they are uttered in different situations, the main textual function of LCs is basically the same: clarifying what is being told through examples or other elements useful to the development of the reasoning.

Interestingly, they are all open lists, i.e. they signal that although more content could be added, they do not convey incomplete or vague information. They instead indicate to the listener that the series of elements could obviously continue but this is not necessary. Moreover, they do not present the typical intonation of an open list, as we have described in section 2, because they usually have a lowering pitch on *eccetera* 'etcetera' as a closed list. Thus, *eccetera* conveys the meaning '<poss I item>', the label that Selting (2007) uses to represent a possible list item. This matches the data collected by Fiorentini (*forthcoming*) on the different textual function of *eccetera*, according to which its most frequent role is that of completion.

4. List Constructions as bridging-building constructions

In spoken discourse, both the thematic development and the whole meaning are the products of all the participants in the communicative event, and for this reason they manifest a basic indeterminacy. Cohesion and coherence are open processes which derive from multiparty negotiation and imply that speakers and listeners have the same objective. This cooperative task is helped by mechanisms that render production and elaboration smoother and swifter, reducing disfluencies, interruptions, project changes and all the typical speech hesitations. The repetition of verbal and non-verbal elements in these mechanisms, together with a preference for an additive way of linking the constituents in a non-hierarchical pattern (Biber *et al.* 1999, Miller & Weinert 1998) can be considered a functional correlate of the spoken modality. Functional correlates are processes and constructions that occur very frequently in a modality, because they facilitate the communicative exchange. This is the reason why it is highly probable, if not utterly predictable, that repetitions and additive constructions will be found in a spoken text (Voghera 2017).

List Constructions exploit both these basic mechanisms. On the one hand, they use the repetition of the same structural position in a dependency structure and prosodic profiles and, on the other, they are constituted by juxtaposed members. This makes the construction con-

venient, thanks to its great combinability and flexibility. At the same time, repetition at the prosodic and other levels produces automaticity, which facilitates recognition by the listener, even in the presence of project changes or interruptions (Selting 2007).

The frequency and distribution in spontaneous spoken texts of LCs ending with the general extenders *eccetera* 'etcetera', *e/o così via* 'and/or so on', *(e) N del genere* 'N of the kind' and *(e) cose così* 'things like that' (lit. 'and things so') facilitate the sketching of a more precise identikit of these constructions:

- the majority present neither an opening nor an ending marker;
- 80% do not present any conjunctions among the members, which are connected through the prosodic form of the constituents;
- most of the constituents are juxtaposed and, in fact, the *eccetera* 'etcetera' lists are the most frequent;
- they occur prevalently in monologic or semi-monologic texts, in reasoning developments with a slower rhythm of speech production.

Moreover, quantitative corpus-based analysis reveals that these constructions are not so frequent and apparently in spoken discourse are quite specialised, as also the data collected by Del Santo (2016) confirm. Although a more extensive analysis is required on different kinds of LCs, I think these data enable a better understanding of their textual function.

The occurrence mainly in argumentative contexts with the function of elaborating information and giving explanations recalls the reflections made by Goody (1977) on the epistemic role played by the lists in the first form of writing. The term *list*, as Goody notes, is a very polysemous word and one of its meanings is 'boundary', which developed in 'a place within which the combat takes place'¹⁶ and then in 'a space, which is more visible'. These changes enhanced the list with the meaning of 'delimited portion' of a text in which it is possible to sort out elements, isolate them from the flow of thought and give them visibility and order. The full development of this classification process implied by a List Construction took place prevalently after the diffusion of writing:

I do not wish to argue that the system itself is created by writing; classification is an obvious condition of language and knowing. But it is clear that the oral situations, the conditions of utterance in which individuals in most societies would formulate an exhaustive classification of terms for, say, trees or kin, are few and extra-ordi-

nary. This is not to say that such wider systems of classing linguistic items do not exist at another level [...]. But they are rendered explicit by writing, and possibly only by writing (Goody 1977: 105).

Thanks to these properties, lists were used very early on, not only to compile an administrative inventory but also as 'text books', to give a form and organisation to the knowledge. The Sumerian cuneiform tablets, the first written records in human history, include lists that are designated as *Listenwissenschaft*. These lists do not seem to have a specific goal but they group names of different concrete or abstract things; in actual fact, their function is to classify and order elements. Obviously, as Goody points out, many kinds of lists with different aims have developed throughout the history of humankind, yet most of them are conceived as strategies for shaping and keeping knowledge. Thus, lists are mainly a product to collect and organise data, to give order to otherwise scattered elements.

It would be naïve and simplistic to transfer the properties of written lists to those we find in spoken texts, but the relationship between LCs and the contexts in which they are used reveals some similarity. Undoubtedly, their primary function is to create knowledge: they constitute a specialised means of text progression, which performs a twofold function: (a) helping the producer to give an order to objects and concepts and (b) providing the receiver with a path to retrieve them in the flow of speech. This dual function creates a sort of bridging context for transferring contents and, when necessary, for developing or clarifying reasoning. Moreover, it is important to remember that the prosodic form plays a clear role in defining LCs (Selting 2007) and consequently making them a recognisable discourse strategy, as demonstrated by the fact that in most cases they need no signal as an opening marker. As a result, LCs can be considered constructions that build a bridge between the speaker and the recipient and offer both of them an easy solution to share their knowledge. This justifies the definition of LCs in spoken texts as interactional practices (Jefferson 1990).

Transcription conventions

,	syntactic boundary
bamb+	truncated words, fragments
<sp>	<i>short pause</i>
<lp>	<i>long pause</i>
<eeh> <ehm> <mhmh>	hesitation signals, so-called <i>filled pauses</i>
allora<aa>	vowel lengthening
<ss>senti	consonant lengthening
/	false start
mon_tato	interruption inside a word
<laugh>, <cough>, <breath>, <inspiration>, <tongue-click>, <clear throat> [...]	non-verbal vocal signals
#, ##, ###	comments
<?>, <??>, <??>	pauses, according to duration incomprehensible words
sta<te>	reconstructed part
-pe-	interrupted word
no_	vowel lengthening

Notes

¹ We are here speaking of typical spoken and typical written texts. Obviously there are spoken texts, such as lectures or formal speeches, and written texts, such as notes and family messages, which do not display these features.

² For the present discussion, we can overlook the fact that each component consists in turn of a set of elements and levels.

³ I will not take into consideration the cases of reduplication in word formation processes, although I am aware that the distinction between word formation and discourse functions is not always straightforward, for instance in the case of intensification processes; cf. Rubino 2005a, 2005b; Wang 2005; Thornton 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010.

⁴ All the data used for this analysis come from face-to-face conversations, mostly from everyday contexts, some also from radio or television programmes. Since they are taken from different corpora, they have been transcribed according to different transcription systems, whose conventions are listed in the Appendix. The examples are translated, while the glosses are used only when strictly necessary. In the grids, I sometimes provide a literal translation to facilitate reading.

⁵ The children speak a diatopic variety of Italian in which it is the norm to put a definite article in front of proper nouns.

⁶ *Mica* is an Italian negative particle: cf. Visconti 2009.

⁷ I use the grid representation proposed by Blanche-Benveniste *et al.* 1990.

⁸ Jefferson 1990 includes these kinds of constructions among LCs.

⁹ The following questions remain open: are forms such as *cammina cammina* inflectional forms of the verb *camminare* 'walk', or are they independent lexemes derivationally related to the base *camminare*? Traditional descriptive grammars of Italian do not include these forms among inflected verb forms, while the defi-

inition of converbs as nonfinite verb forms vouches for their inclusion in a verb's paradigm of forms. Another question is whether the reduplicated base forms are imperatives, as traditional analyses maintain, or simple verb stems, as argued by Thornton (2009: 1204). Both issues are orthogonal to the question whether these forms are LCs, and therefore will not be addressed here. Thanks to Anna M. Thornton for discussion in these issues.

¹⁰ I prefer to use the neutral labels *opening* and *ending markers* instead of the most known *pre-* and *post-detailing components* used by Selting 2007, because detailing of references is just one of the functions LCs may perform.

¹¹ The Corpus consists of about 500,000 word tokens and 60 hours of recording. It is divided into different categories of interaction types: (a) spontaneous face-to-face conversations, (b) telephone conversations, (c) bidirectional exchanges with constrained turn-taking, (d) monologues, (e) radio and television programmes. The VoLIP corpus is accessible on the website www.parlaritaliano.it.

¹² Naturally, these are not the only ways of forming such lists. Recently, for example, the conjunction and/or discourse marker *piuttosto che* acquired the new meaning of 'or' and is now used in additive lists (Mauri & Giacalone Ramat 2015).

¹³ Actually, *eccetera* 'etcetera' developed other discursive functions, that are not relevant for our purpose: cf. Fiorentini *forthcoming*.

¹⁴ I counted the occurrences of the repeated *eccetera* *eccetera* as a single occurrence, achieving the percentage out of a total of 192 occurrences.

¹⁵ Del Santo actually uses the labels 'pre-' and 'post-detailing element', from Selting (2007).

¹⁶ Cf. Italian *lizza* 'fenced place' and the idiom *entrare in lizza* (lit. 'go in lizza'), which nowadays means participate in a competition.

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