SLI 2023 – 14-16 settembre – Torino – WS3: Linguistica teorica e trattamento automatico delle lingue: verso nuove sinergie

Applicazione delle risorse disponibili per l'italiano all'annotazione automatica delle relazioni discorsive in testi scolastici:

Alcune implicazioni teoriche

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Outline

What are we going to talk about?

annotazione automatica delle relazioni discorsive

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Discourse parsing

Aim: parse the discourse structure of a text automatically according to a "discourse grammar" (e.g., DLTAG > PDTB, Webber 2004; Prasad et al. 2008; Webber et al. 2019)

risorse disponibili per l'italiano

- Manually annotated resources (Feltracco et al. 2017; Pareti & Prodanof 2010; Tonelli et al. 2010)
- Lexica (Feltracco et al. 2016; Stede et al. 2019)

Alcune implicazioni teoriche

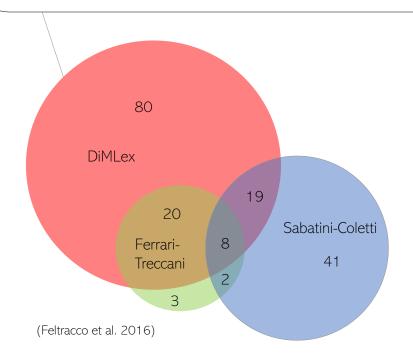
Segmentation of the text

Definition of connective

LICO: A Lexicon of Italian Connectives

LICO in short (Feltracco et al. 2016)

- 173 Italian connectives
- Info about: variants, syntactic categories, discourse semantics, usage examples, synonyms in the German DiMLex
- Definition of 'connective' by Ferrari (2010)
- Composed of:
 - Ferrari's (2010) list of connectives (33) in Enciclopedia Treccani
 - Sabatini-Coletti «congiunzioni testuali» (70)
 - German DiMLex equivalents (127). Some of the connectives found in each source overlap with other sources.



a causa di

Italian LICO c1

Synonyms: aufgrund dimlexk19, aufgrund dessen, dass dimlexk21, wegen dimlexk160

prep

CONTINGENCY:Cause:reason

Example: A causa del maltempo il St. Gotthard è rimasto chiuso.

Example: Una chiusura a causa del maltempo verrà presa in considerazione.

Positive definition

Formal criterion

+

Functional criterion

«Il termine connettivo indica ciascuna delle forme morfologicamente invariabili che offrono istruzioni su come legare gli eventi evocati dal testo o gli atti linguistici di composizione testuale attraverso relazioni logicoargomentative»

(Ferrari 2021: 145)

Negative definition

«Non vanno considerati connettivi:

- elementi che, pur essendo parole grammaticali invariabili, non indicano relazioni logico-argomentative → no relative pronouns & complementizers
- le preposizioni che indicano entità semantiche di primo grado, come persone, animali, cose, astrazioni > no prep. + first order entities
- quelle espressioni che, pur essendo associate a una relazione logicoargomentativa, sono morfologicamente variabili» → no morphologically variable expressions: e.g., da ciò discende che, per questo fatto

(Ferrari 2021: 146),

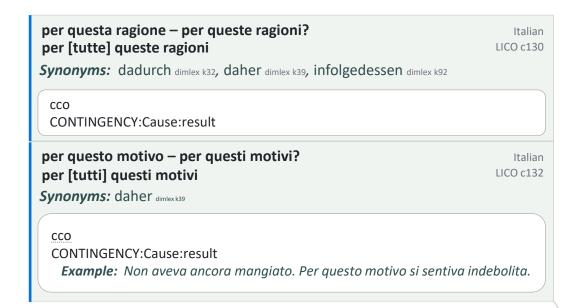
Definition of 'connective' (Ferrari, 2010; 2014; 2021)

Bridging theory and practice

Is LICO consistent with Ferrari's (2010) definition of 'connective'?

"In our work, we partly drop the invariability criteria; we do not include forms which exhibit morphological inflection or conjugation"

(Feltracco et al. 2016)



"but we do include connectives which show a certain degree of lexical variability that is, multi-word expressions which are not totally rigid from a lexical point of view".

(Feltracco et al. 2016)



LICO admits a 'certain' paradigmatic variability.

- Which degree of paradigmatic variability is ammitted?
 - And at which degree of variability the form starts to be counted as a different entry and not a variant anymore?

Is syntagmatic variability admitted?

Research questions

What do we want to achieve?

Research questions

RQ1: How do methodological choices regarding the segmentation of discourse units and the definition of connective influence the reconstruction and analysis of the discourse structure of students' texts?

RQ2: To what extent do these choices influence the performance of an automatic string-matching approach for connective detection based on the LICO?

Data & methods

How do we want to achieve it?

Research questions

RQ1: How do methodological choices regarding the segmentation of discourse units and the definition of connective influence the reconstruction and analysis of the discourse structure of students' texts?

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Data: two datasets of Italian student writing of different ages and proficiencies.

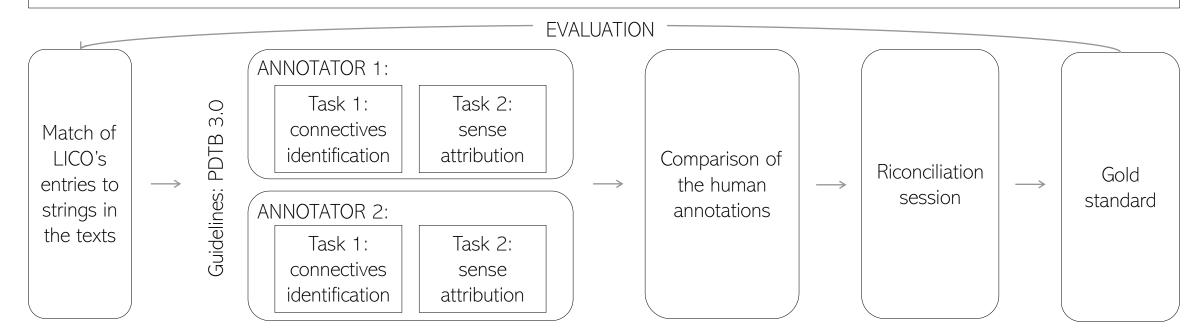
LEONIDE (Glaznieks et al. 2022)

- L1 & L2 users
- Grade 6-8
- 18 picture stories and opinion texts
- 2015 tokens

ITACA

- L1 users
- Grade 12
- 12 argumentative essays
- 7661 tokens

Methods: human vs. automatic annotation

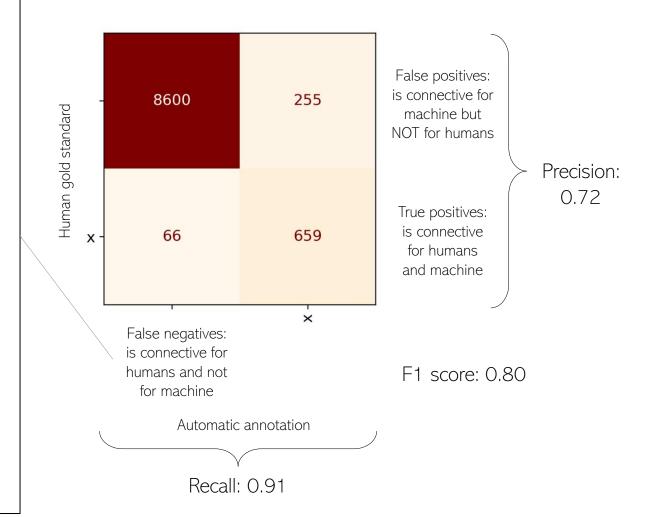


Results

Overall performance of the automatic annotation in the identification of connectives

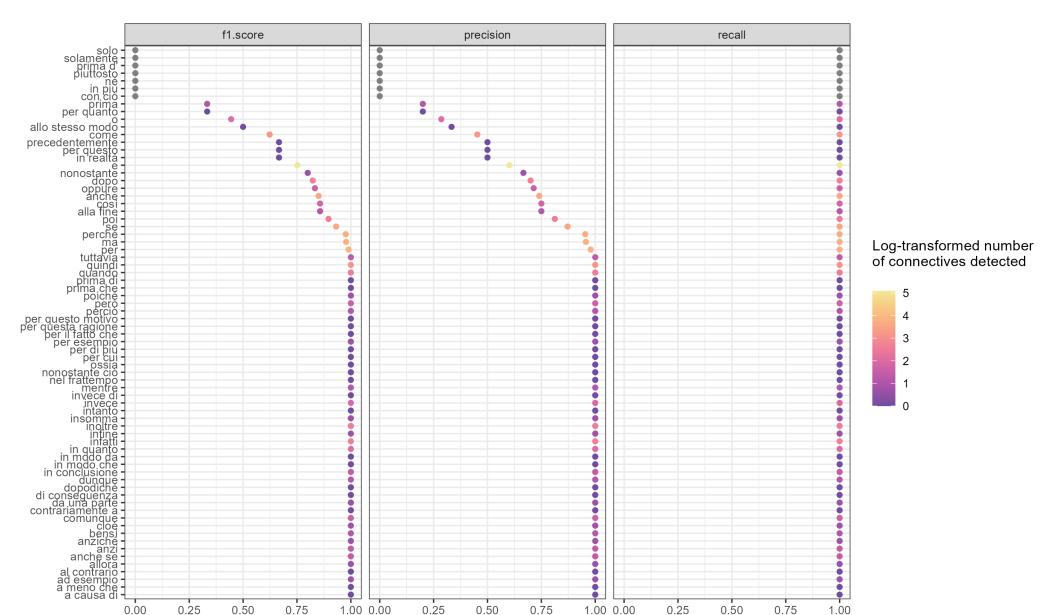
False negatives:

- Orthographical variants: ed, od
- Spelling: ho (o), ou (o), è (e), pero (però), per quand
- Variants of *in conclusione*: per concludere, come conclusione, concludendo
- Morphosyntactic variants: per quanti (per quanto)?
 (es. "per quanti aspetti positivi si possano trovare della DaD, non penso comunque che questa possa essere migliore della scuola in presenza"), al contempo (nel contempo)
- Forms present in connective lexicon of other languages: senza che, senza (VP inf)
- Analogous forms: dopo che (prima che exists)
- Synonyms of existing forms: ovvero (ossia), al fine di (a tal fine), per via di/dei/del/delle (a causa di), in aggiunta (in più)
- Varia: seppur/seppure, ora? (es. se prima la scuola era un godere e un soffrire con gli altri, ora è diventato un isolamento sociale), dato che, per (un motivo)? (es. lo sostengo che in Alto-Adige sia molto importante lo studio del tedesco per un motivo, cioè quello che sapendolo e dopo aver studiato il tedesco si ha molte opportunità di lavoro sia in Alto-Adige sia all'estero).



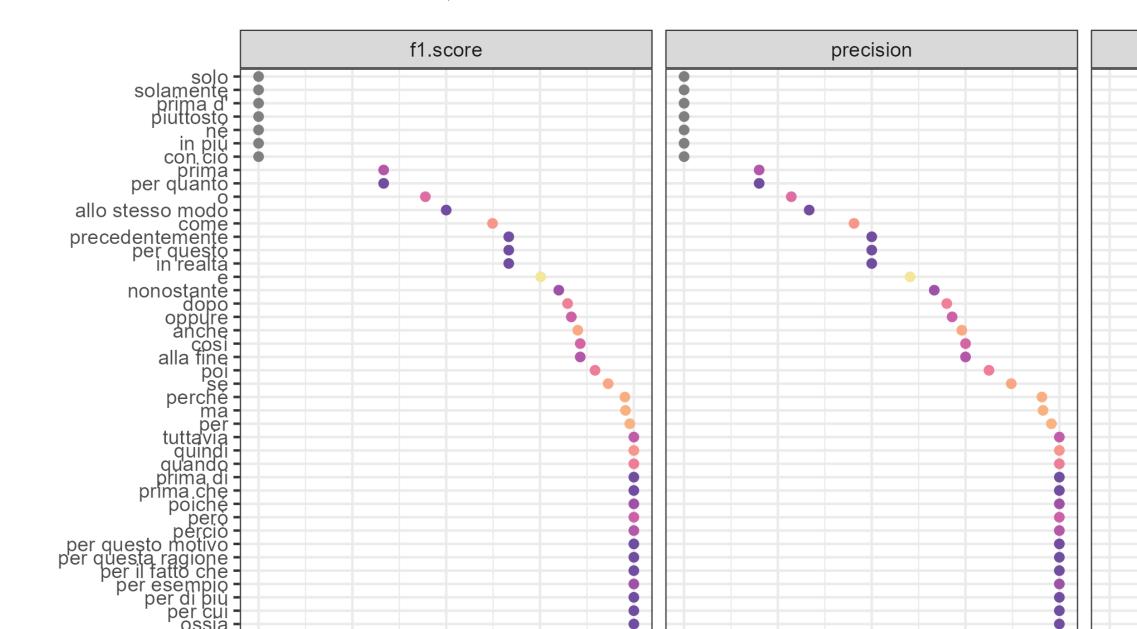
Results

F1, precision and recall of the automatic annotation per connective



Results

Automatic annotation vs. human annotations — True and false positives



Discussion

Some connective forms show low precision because of:

Multicategoriality

The same form can perform different syntactic functions depending on the context in which it appears.

Es. solo (De Mauro):

- avv. sono <u>solo</u> due anni che lo conosco;
- cong. È molto bello, solo non è il mio genere.

Es. prima (De Mauro):

- avv. Ci siamo visti prima;
- agg. I'ora <u>prima</u>;
- ma anche cong. (LICO): *Domani vado in Spagna. Prima* c'è ancora molto da fare.

Es. perché (De Mauro):

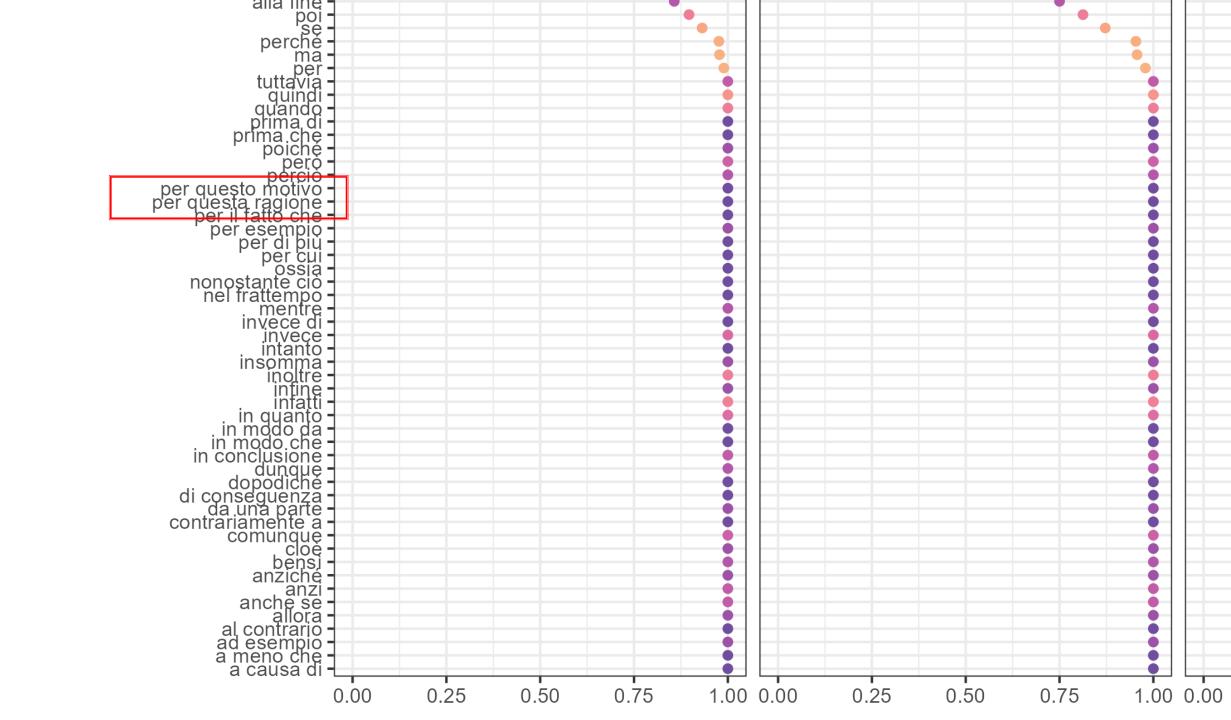
- avv. in interrogative dirette o indirette
- cong. prendi l'ombrello perché potrebbe piovere
- s. m. inv. *spiegami il perché del tuo comportamento*

Multilevel operators

The same form performs the same function at different levels of the discourse/syntactic structure.

Es. e, né.

- Discourse level (inter- and intra-sentential): Ormai l'essere umano ha vissuto sulla terra più di duecentocinquantamila anni e col passare del tempo si è evoluto e con lui le varie tecnologie che l'uomo ha utilizzato e utilizza tutt'ora per sopravvivere.
- Sentence level (between PPs): in un futuro prossimo essa potrebbe non essere più in grado di provvedere né ai nostri bisogni né a quelli della flora e della fauna.
 - → The low precision of coordinate conjunctions (e, o, ma) depends heavily on the segmentation of the text: what do we consider as a possible argument of a connective?



Discussion

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Reliability of variable composite forms vs. plain conjunctions:

"Anzitutto, all'interno dell'ovvio rapporto non biunivoco tra forme e funzioni, vi è un massimo di ambiguità nelle forme meno esplicite e morfologicamente più semplici, come e, e al capo opposto invece una totale trasparenza nelle forme più complesse ed esplicite". (Berretta 1984: 245).

Possible changes to the LICO:

Delete forms that more often than not perform other functions instead of the connective one?

Possible improvements to the method:

Add rules based on the PoS-tagging to control (partially) for multicategoriality and rules based on dependency parsing to reduce the error on coordinate conjunctions.

Adding/keeping forms that might be composite and variable but clearly convey a specific discourse relation (and are reliably detectable)?

- Keeping "primary" and "secondary" connectives apart (Danlos, 2018)?
- How to check formal and functional criteria in a systematic/empirical way (excluding linguistic introspection) (e.g., querying corpora to find out how forms occur)?

Still some questions remain...

- What is the merit of an only functional vs. a functional/formal criterion of defining connectives?
- Quantitative a-theoretic approach for defining a connective (Tamburini et al. 2002)?

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Results

Automatic annotation vs. human annotations — True and false positives

