

USAGES AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN *TANTO* IN SPOKEN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT • This paper explores the meanings, usages in context and translations into English of several *tanto* constructions (e.g., *tanto meno*, *tanto poi*, *così tanto che*, *perché tanto*, *tanto è vero*, etc.). The phrasemes are searched for in a spoken Italian corpus, where frequencies, meanings and usages in context are accounted for and discussed. Translation options are then retrieved from Italian-English parallel corpora, where also occurrences and meanings are taken into consideration. Such translations are corroborated or challenged by consulting spoken American and spoken British English corpora. Relative frequencies, pragmatic meanings, and usages are compared across all corpora. The findings reveal that several translations of the *tanto* constructions are retrieved from the spoken American English corpus; some others are obtained from the British English corpus. Conversely, the parallel corpora sporadically give rise to infrequent or unnatural language samples, especially as far as idiomatic expressions are concerned. Hence, the paper findings bring to the fore different patterns and pragmatic meanings of the source and target expressions. In particular, the *tanto* expressions, their translations, frequencies, and language patterning may greatly differ in terms of content and context.

KEYWORDS • Corpus Linguistics; Spoken Language; Spoken language grammar; Corpus-based Translation.

1. Introduction

The Italian *tanto* (literally “much”) is an amount modifier and adverb (Montalto et al. 2010). It derives from the Latin *tantus*, which means “very big”, “so big”, “many” and “so numerous”¹. Indeed, *tanto* appears in literary works of both Old Italian and Modern Italian (see Bazzanella et al. 2007). According to scholars, *tanto* serves different lexical and syntactical functions. For example, it is a comparative parameter marker (as in *tanto... quanto*, “as... as”) (Rett 2020: 187, 194; Mazzaggio and Stateva 2023: 131); it can be modified by *così* (as in *così tanto*, “so much”) (Krapova and Cinque 2020: 165); it assumes a temporal value when preceded by *da* (*da tanto*, “since long ago”) (Mazzaggio and Stateva 2023: 131), or when followed by *tempo* (“time”), in phrases such as *tanto tempo fa* (“since a long time ago”) (O’Neill 2016: 124-125). It can also

¹ See https://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario_latino/Latino/T/tantus.shtml.

introduce a consecutive clause when followed by the conjunction *che* (e.g., *tanto che*, “so much that”) (Mazzaggio and Stateva 2023: 132), and it is used to form quantifier phrases such as *tanto meno* (literally “much less”, but meaning “not even” or “let alone”) (Olguín Martínez 2024: 28). Fuschi (2013: 135) finds that the expression *tanto vale, no?* (whose literal translation is “it might as well, no?”) may confer impatience as its actual meaning is “no need to discuss this, don’t you think?”. Caffi (2007: 105-106) explains that *tanto* can serve as a mitigator. For example, in a doctor-patient relationship, the phrase *ogni tanto* (“sometimes”) reduces the severity of the perception of a health issue.

According to Mazzaggio and Stateva’s (2023) research, Italian students overlap the usages of the quantifiers *tanto* and *molto* (both meaning “much”), as they perceive them as equal (i.e., as referring to the same “amounts”). There are cases, however, where only *tanto* is acceptable due to collocational or semantic reasons; for example, when the adverb is preceded by *così* (“so”), or when it means “anyway” (Mazzaggio and Stateva 2023: 126). Another study conducted by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2022) reveals that *tanto* is particularly frequent in children’s informal discourse. As a matter of fact, *tanto* is uttered earlier and in greater numbers than *molto* in children aged 0-36 months (Mazzaggio and Stateva 2023: 132). Similarly, by analysing the frequencies of usage of approximators and addition markers in conversations, Ghezzi (2022: 176) finds that *tanto* is fairly used by young adults, *molto* is preferred by the elderly, whereas *neanche tanto* (“not so much”) is generally opted for by the youngest.

1.1. Corpora

There are many strains of research dedicated to corpora and corpus linguistics for either language learning or linguistic analysis (O’Keeffe et al. 2007; Zanettin 2012; Bernardini 2022; O’Keeffe and McCarthy 2022). Corpora contain samples of authentic language in context (Farr 2008: 36). For this reason, they are beneficial when scrutinising language patterns over time (Cuskley et al. 2014), or language varieties (Giampieri 2025). They are also helpful in language learning, as well as in translator training and translation practice (Bernardini 2022: 490-492, O’Keeffe et al. 2007: 19). O’Keeffe and McCarthy (2022) show several first-hand applications of corpora in second language acquisition and in translator training.

Corpora can be accessed via online interfaces. The Sketch Engine platform (Kilgarriff et al. 2004) is one of these. It contains corpora of various genres, amongst which are corpora of spoken and written language, as well as European parallel corpora. Parallel corpora are composed of source texts and the related translations into various languages (Zanettin 2012: 152-154). As far as European parallel corpora are concerned, however, it should be pointed out that it is not always possible to ascertain the translation direction, i.e., which is the source and target text (Bernardini 2022: 488).

2. Aim of the paper and research questions

Given the varied usages and functions of the Italian *tanto*, this paper is aimed at investigating its meanings, occurrences, syntactical constructions, and possible English equivalents via corpus analyses. To this aim, the following corpora are consulted: an Italian corpus of spoken language, Italian-English parallel corpora of film subtitles and European parliamentary debates, as well as American English and British English spoken corpora.

The research questions that this paper wishes to address are the following ones: 1) Is corpus analysis effective to retrieve and understand meanings, occurrences, and equivalents of *tanto* constructions? 2) What are the advantages and challenges of consulting parallel corpora to retrieve

possible translations or equivalents of *tanto* expressions? 3) What are the differences in the results obtained from native-speakers' spoken corpora and parallel ones, as far as *tanto* phrasemes are concerned?

3. Methodology

The *tanto* constructions that this paper analyses are classified in different categories according to their syntactical and semantic functions. The categories are as follows:

1) Adverbial quantifiers for large amounts of quantities such as *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto*, and *così tanto* (*che*) (meaning “really much”, “very much”, “so much (that)” and alike), and adverbial quantifiers for reduced quantities such as *mica tanto* and *tanto meno* (and its contracted form *tantomeno*) (“not much” and “not even” or “let alone”);

2) Temporal phrases such as *ogni tanto* (“every now and then”), *tanto poi* (“because then”);

3) Explanatory adversative phrases, generally justifying idleness or negative reactions or attitudes, such as *perché tanto* (*non*), *tanto non* (both meaning: “given that I/it/you won’t”) and *è già tanto* (*che/se*) (literally “it’s already a lot of effort that/if”);

4) Adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities: *tanto vale che* (“we/you might as well”), *tanto è vero* (and its contracted form *tant’è vero*, “it’s so true that”), *tanto per cambiare* (“as usual” or “for a change”), and *tanto per dire* (“so to say” or “just to say (it)”);

5) Idiomatic expressions such as *tanto di cappello* (literally “much of a hat”) and *tanto di guadagnato* (literally “so much gained”).

The phrase *tanto... quanto* (“as... as”) is not addressed in this paper, given its standard usage as a comparative. To make the results consistent across the corpora, all searches exclude the plural and feminine forms of *tanto*.

3.1. Corpus-driven analyses

As mentioned, this paper aims not only at investigating the frequencies of the various *tanto* constructions, but also at finding possible translations and equivalents into English. For this purpose, corpus-driven analyses are carried out. More precisely, the following corpora are investigated: the Italian KIParla corpus (Mauri et al. 2019); the Italian-English Open Subtitles parallel corpora 2018 (Tiedemann 2012); the Italian-English Europarl spoken parallel corpora (Koehn 2005); the Open American National Corpus (spoken) (Ide 2008), and the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (Love et al. 2017).

The KIParla (henceforth abbreviated “KIP”) is a corpus of spoken Italian with more than 150 hours of conversations that were recorded, amongst others, in Bologna and Turin². KIP is composed of 1,624,750 tokens.

The Open Subtitles parallel corpora (“OS”) are collections of original and translated movie subtitles sourced from the opensubtitles.org database. The Europarl parallel corpora (“EP”) contain European Parliament Proceedings in the official languages of the European Union. Therefore, they are composed of various source texts and the related target texts. For the purposes of this paper, the Italian and English sub-sections of the Open Subtitles corpora (“IOS” and “EOS”, respectively) and of the Europarl parallel corpora (“IEP” and “EEP”, respectively) are consulted to find

² The corpus is available at <https://kiparla.it/en/>.

translation options of the Italian *tanto* constructions above mentioned. IOS comprises 573,531,295 tokens, whereas EOS contains 1,594,437,718. IEP is composed of 59,177,399 tokens, whereas EEP comprehends 60,741,877. The corpora are accessed via the Sketch Engine interface.

In addition, American English and British English spoken corpora are analysed to ascertain the naturalness or “authenticity” of the translation options. To this aim, the Open American National Corpus (spoken) (“OANS”) and the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (“SBNC”) are accessed. The former comprises transcripts of spoken American English produced from 1990 onward, whereas the latter contains transcripts of recorded conversations, gathered from the UK public between 2012 and 2016. The conversations took place in informal settings and among friends and family members. OANS and SBNC are available in the Sketch Engine platform. OANS comprehends 3,369,613 tokens, whereas SBNC comprises 11,832,933.

The methodology adopted in this paper is threefold: firstly, the *tanto* phrases are searched for in KIP, IOS and IEP, where occurrences (in terms of relative frequencies, i.e., frequencies per million tokens) are noticed. In such wise, it is possible to compare the rates of occurrences of the *tanto* constructions retrieved from authentic Italian conversations (i.e., from KIP) with the ones obtained from translated settings (namely, from IOS and IEP). Secondly, the same *tanto* constructions are queried in the Italian-English parallel sections of OS and EP in order to obtain English equivalents (namely, from EOS and EEP). Thirdly, such English translations are investigated in OANS and SBNC. In such manner, it is possible to assess the “authenticity” and actual occurrences of the translated constructions in real (or natural) spoken American and British English conversations. This is carried out not only by verifying translations’ frequency rates across corpora, but also via corpus-sourced sample phrases, where meanings and usages in context are scrutinised and compared.

4. Analysis

This section carries out corpus-driven analyses of the *tanto* constructions above mentioned. To this aim, three sets of tables are presented for each group of phrases.

The first set shows the relative frequencies of the *tanto* phrasemes in KIP, IOS and IEP.

Relative frequencies (“RF”) are calculated per million tokens. For example, if the *tanto tanto* phrase occurs 20 times in KIP, its relative frequency is 12.31, which is obtained by dividing 20 by 1,624,750 (the tokens composing KIP) and by multiplying it by 1 million.

The second set of tables shows the various English translations (reported in alphabetical order) sourced from EOS and EEP, as well as the RF of each translation option in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC (i.e., in all English (sub-)corpora). Therefore, the second set not only lists possible translation candidates, but it may also challenge some of them since it indicates the relative frequencies of English equivalents across all corpora. For reasons of space and consistency, only the most frequent translations are addressed. Finally, this paper reports corpus-driven sample phrases to ascertain meanings and usages in context in the two languages.

4.1. Adverbial quantifiers

This section explores and discusses the following adverbial quantifiers: *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto*, and *così tanto (che)* (back-translations: “really much”, “very much”, “so much (that)” and alike), and *mica tanto*, *tanto meno* and *tantomeno* (back-translations: “not much”, and, literally, “much less”). The searches exclude the plural and feminine forms of *tanto* for reasons of consistency. Table 1 shows the RF of *tanto* in adverbial quantifier phrases in KIP, IOS, and IEP. To foster comprehensibility, the highest frequencies per corpus are marked in bold.

Tanto constructions	RF in KIP	RF in IOS	RF in IEP
<i>Tanto tanto</i>	12.31	0.76	-
<i>Proprio tanto</i>	3.69	1.19	-
<i>Veramente tanto</i>	4.31	1.02	0.14
<i>Così tanto; (così tanto che)</i>	36.93 (0.62)	31.42 (1.80)	6.20 (0.15)
<i>Mica tanto</i>	4.31	0.71	-
<i>Tanto meno; tantomeno</i>	3.70	3.58	15.05

Table 1. Relative frequencies of *tanto* as an adverbial quantifier in KIP, IOS, and IEP

As can be seen, all *tanto* expressions (with the exception of *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*) are more frequent in KIP.

The expressions *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*, in fact, show a rather high rate in IEP (i.e., in the European spoken corpus). Table 1 also exhibits the preponderance of *così tanto* (“so much”) in KIP and IOS. It is noteworthy that the second most frequent expression is *tanto tanto* in KIP, but not in all other corpora. For example, in IOS, *tanto meno* ranks second. Also, it can be gathered that *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto* and *mica tanto* are not uttered in formal settings such as parliamentary speeches. If the word *tanto* is queried in IEP, in fact, its RF are 339.96, whereas by searching for *molto*, RF dramatically increase to 1,942.68 (both figures are not shown in Table 1).

KIP-sourced sample phrases are as follows (back-translations are reported in brackets): *ieri già ho mangiato tanto* (“yesterday I already ate very much”); *davvero tanto tanto* (“really a lot”); *Sherlock mi è piaciuto proprio tanto* (“I really liked Sherlock”); *c’è stata una selezione così io studiavo veramente tanto* (“there was a selection, so I studied really hard”); *non ci faccio più così tanto caso* (“I don’t even notice it that much”); *non c’è mica tanto da fidarsi, eh* (“there’s not much to rely on, uh”), and *non abbiamo nulla tanto meno un autografo* (“we’ve got nothing, let alone an autograph”).

It is observable that the expressions *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto* and *così tanto* are emphasisers of *tanto*, modified by the adverbs *tanto*, *proprio*, *veramente* and *così*. Conversely, *mica tanto* implies aversion, and *tanto meno* excludes possibilities. Differently from all other adverbial phrases, and despite containing the word *meno* (“less”), *tanto meno* is not a quantifier, but rather an aversion marker.

Table 2 displays the various renditions (with the related RF) of the above *tanto* constructions in EOS and EEP. Such translation options are queried in OANS and SBNC, where the related RF are also investigated. Phrases are listed in alphabetical order. The highest frequencies per corpus are marked in bold.

Tanto constructions	Translations sourced from EOS and EEP	RF in EOS	RF in EEP	RF in OANS	RF in SBNC
<i>Tanto tanto</i>	So + adj./adv.	1,058.32	503.13	1,913.87	2,115.28
	So much	145.87	53.88	305.08	201.47
	Very much	72.78	167.15	112.48	101.33
<i>Tanto tanto tempo fa</i>	Long ago	13.10	12.03	24.04	16.48
	Long long time ago	0.05	-	1.78	1.44
<i>Proprio tanto</i>	A good lot	0.02	0.02	-	0.17
	Real + adj.	46.66	26.55	604.52	19.35
	Real bad	3.45	-	17.81	1.44
	Really + verb	513.02	208.23	1,828.70	1,156.26
	So + adj./adv.	1,058.32	503.13	1,913.87	2,115.28
	So much	145.87	53.88	305.08	201.47
	Such a + adj.	70.47	58.15	64.10	79.95
	Terribly + adj./adv.	10.00	2.68	13.35	12.25
	This/that + adj.	19.49	0.89	0.30	25.18
	This/that much	26.65	10.32	170.94	76.57
	Very much	72.78	167.15	112.48	101.33
<i>Veramente tanto</i>	A lot	384.17	104.66	2,528.48	900.62
	Really + verb	513.02	208.23	1,828.70	1,156.26
	Really/real + adj.	274.93	63.43	1,485.93	1,388.24
	Very much	72.78	167.15	112.48	101.33
<i>Così tanto</i>	As + adj. + as that	3.25	3.03	2.08	7.44
	So + adjective	756.72	203.24	1,136.04	1,040.23
	So deeply	0.67	0.36	0.30	0.08
	So much	145.87	53.88	305.08	201.47
	This + adj./adv./past part.	0.36	0.36	-	0.76
	This/that much	26.65	10.32	170.94	76.57
<i>Così tanto tempo</i>	That / so long	41.12	15.39	56.98	58.90
<i>Mica tanto</i>	Negative verb + so + adv.	7.14	3.70	1.19	18.25
	Not only that	1.81	5.27	6.23	2.96
	Not really	50.92	21.96	160.85	159.98
	Not so + adj./adv.	27.46	25.25	56.68	34.73
	Not that + adj./adv.	22.42	2.47	63.51	67.19
	Not too + adj./adv.	18.50	6.98	96.75	43.02
<i>Tanto meno; tantomeno</i>	Least of all	1.01	0.95	-	-
	Let alone	4.93	6.44	5.64	5.32
	Much less [not followed by a noun]	2.58	6.03	7.72	2.54
	Not... either	68.29	40.50	42.73	103.44
	Still/even less [not followed by a noun]	1.25	6.47	0.30	1.44

Table 2. Translations of *tanto* as an adverbial quantifier in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC

At first glance, in Table 2 above, the majority of the English expressions are more frequent in OANS, that is, in the spoken corpus of American English. A reduced number of frequency rates appear in SBNC (i.e., in the spoken corpus of British English); fewer in parliamentary speeches and even fewer in the corpus of film subtitles. To some extent, it could be argued that the language of film subtitles does not “over-represent” authentic language, and, hence, there are no instances of “translationese” or “dubbese”³. There are no cases, in fact, where the rates of occurrences in EOS greatly outnumber the ones in the other corpora. Only the expressions “so deeply” (translating *così tanto*) and “least of all” (translating *tanto meno*) are slightly more frequent in EOS. In this respect, “least of all” does not appear in either OANS or SBNC, and shows some occurrences in EEP. Conversely, it can be argued that film dialogues tend to under-represent real language. This is the case, for example, of “really” followed by a verb to render *proprio tanto* (e.g., “it really depends on”, or “I really like to cook lamb”), and “real/really” followed by an adjective to translate *veramente tanto* (e.g., “real dumb” or “really beautiful”). In these instances, the RF in EOS are much lower than the ones in OANS or SBNC. For example, there are half a thousand frequencies of “really + verb” (rendering *proprio/veramente tanto*) in EOS, against almost two thousand in OANS and over a thousand in SBNC. Another case in point is “a lot” translating *veramente tanto*, with almost one-seventh the rate of occurrences in OANS (i.e., 384 against over 2,500).

The Italian expressions *tanto tanto tempo fa* and *così tanto tempo* have been added to Table 2 because of their relevance during corpus analysis. As can be seen, equivalent English expressions are “long ago”, “long long time ago” (mostly found in OANS), and “that long” or “so long” (mainly retrieved from SBNC).

British English produces significant expressions such as “so” followed by an adjective or an adverb corresponding to *tanto tanto* and *proprio tanto* (e.g., “so tasty”, “so unusual”, “thank you so much”, etc.).

Other recurrent options related to *proprio tanto* are “this/that” followed by an adjective (e.g., “it’s that old”, “they’re not that expensive”). The phraseme *mica tanto* can be rendered by negative verb forms followed by “so” and an adverb (e.g., “I can’t go so often”, or “he didn’t play so well”). English constructions translating *così tanto* are “this” followed by an adjective or an adverb, or a past participle (e.g., “this late at night”; “I’ve never this far been asked to make it”, or “in a city this congested”), and “as” followed by an adjective, “as” and “that” (e.g., “as old as that”). Finally, the phrases *tanto meno* and *tantomeno* find equivalents in “least of all”, “let alone”, “much less”, “not... either” and “still/even less”. When searching for “much less” and “still/even less”, nouns are eschewed otherwise expressions such as “much less memory”, “still less evidence”, or “even less interest” may come to the fore. The remaining sample phrases obtained are as follows: “I have trouble remembering my own name now much less trying to do a dissertation”; “she doesn’t wanna live off camera, much less talk” (IOS version: *non vuole vivere senza essere ripresa, tanto meno parlare*). Other corpus-sourced language samples are “nobody objects to admitting young IT professionals. Nobody objects to hiring young students either” (IEP version: *nessuno si oppone all’ammissione di giovani esperti di informatica, né tantomeno all’assunzione di giovani studenti*), and “cannot think of perfecting, even less of distinguishing themselves” (IOS version: *non hanno la possibilità di perfezionarsi né tantomeno di distinguersi*).

Finally, it can be noticed that parliamentary debates are not particularly rich in equivalents of *tanto* in adverbial quantifying expressions, with the exception of “very much”, “let alone” and “still/even less” (the last two translating *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*).

³ Paolinelli and Di Fortunato (2005: 20) define “dubbese” as “plain and redundant language” (see also Pavesi and Perego 2006). In the same way, the term “translationese” is non-natural language (Letizia 2012: 112).

4.2. Temporal phrases

Table 3 reports the RF of *tanto* in temporal phrases in KIP, IOS, and IEP. To allow for better comprehensibility, the highest RF per corpus are marked in bold.

Tanto constructions	RF in KIP	RF in IOS	RF in IEP
<i>Ogni tanto</i>	160.02	24.28	2.84
<i>Tanto poi</i>	14.77	0.19	0.02

Table 3. Relative frequencies of *tanto* in temporal phrases in KIP, IOS, and IEP

As can be seen, both *ogni tanto* and *tanto poi* are more recurrent in KIP. IEP produces the lowest RF of both constructions. Corpus-sourced sample phrases are as follows: *ogni tanto andiamo al cinema* (back-translation: “we go to the cinema every once in a while”); *ogni tanto è doveroso farlo* (EEP version: “sometimes it is my job”); *capita a tutti ogni tanto* (EOS version: “happens to everyone now and then”); *tanto poi la Commissione ti aiuterà a mettere le cose a posto* (EEP version: “and the Commission will help you at the end of the day”); *tanto poi va cambiata* (back-translation: “it must be changed anyway”); *non è un problema tanto poi lo taglio io* (“it’s not an issue, I’ll cut it anyway/afterwards”), and *non vale la pena prendersi il covid se tanto poi piove e dovete stare in casa* (back-translation: “it’s not worthy to take the covid if it then rains and you must stay at home”).

From the above sample expressions, it can be gathered that the expression *ogni tanto* is a full equivalent of “sometimes” (and similar expressions). It describes infrequent situations or rare occurrences. Conversely, *tanto poi* assumes an adversative meaning, despite containing the temporal adverb *poi*.

Table 4 shows the translations of *ogni tanto* and *tanto poi* in EOS and EEP, and the RF in the four English (sub-)corpora.

Tanto constructions	Translations sourced from EOS and EEP	RF in EOS	RF in EEP	RF in OANS	RF in SBNC
<i>Ogni tanto</i>	Every now and again	0.56	0.36	0.30	4.99
	Every so often	0.54	0.31	4.75	6.25
	(Every) now and then	6.09	1.32	29.97	10.39
	From time to time	4.25	6.31	11.87	4.06
	Occasionally	5.02	6.62	45.70	25.61
	Once in a while	7.39	0.53	59.65	1.10
	Periodically	0.37	1.99	5.05	0.68
	Sometimes	136.52	95.65	421.41	242.8
<i>Tanto poi</i>	Anyway	175.43	13.57	394.70	557.43
	At the end of the day	3.60	15.24	4.75	13.01
	Omission	-	-	-	-

Table 4. Translations of *tanto* in temporal phrases in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC

Almost all frequency rates are higher in the spoken American English corpus, with the exception of “every now and again”, “every so often” (translating *ogni tanto*) and “anyway” (corresponding to *tanto poi*), which prevail in SBNC.

The expression *ogni tanto* can be rendered with an array of temporal adverbial phrases or adverbs, such as “now and then”, “from time to time”, “sometimes”, etc.

Corpus-based sample phrases are as follows: “if you retired would you would you [*sic.*] go away every now and again?”; “we’ll call each other every now and then”; “these things arise during trials from time to time”, and “sometimes that needs to happen”.

The highest RF of the translations of *tanto poi* are found in SBNC (featuring “anyway”), and in EEP (where “at the end of the day” prevails). With regard to “anyway”, it is noteworthy that it conveys the same meaning of *tanto poi* by functioning as both a turn taker (or topic changer) and a tag (O’Keeffe et al. 2007: 39; Haselow 2015). When it acts as a topic changer, it appears in the left periphery of an utterance, whereas when it is a tag, it is placed in the right periphery of a sentence. Sample phrases are as follows: “anyway, it’ll grow right back” and “he’s gonna forgive us anyway” (IOS versions: *tanto poi ricrescono* and *tanto poi ci perdona lo stesso*). Conversely, *tanto poi* is generally placed in the left periphery, i.e., at the beginning of an utterance. Sample phrases with “at the end of the day” bearing the same meaning of *tanto poi* are “and the Commission will help you at the end of the day” (IEP version: *tanto poi la Commissione ti aiuterà a mettere le cose a posto*), and (from SBNC) “it’s hard to always keep yourself feeling like you’re doing something productive and at the end of the day your house still feels like it’s a mess”.

Finally, as already noticed in Table 2, film language does not over-represent natural language, as there are no instances where RF are much higher in EOS than in the other corpora. At the same time, however, there are no cases where the rates of occurrences in EOS are much lower than the ones in the other corpora.

4.3. Explanatory adversative phrases

Table 5 reports the RF of *tanto* in explanatory adversative phrases in KIP, IOS, and IEP. The highest RF per corpus are marked in bold.

Tanto constructions	RF in KIP	RF in IOS	RF in IEP
<i>Perché tanto; (perché tanto non)</i>	18.46 (2.46)	0.21 (0.07)	0.34 (0.05)
<i>Tanto non</i>	36.93	7.63	0.37
<i>È già tanto (che/se)</i>	5.54	0.23	0.03

Table 5. Relative frequencies of *tanto* in explanatory adversative phrases in KIP, IOS, and IEP

As can be noticed, all *tanto* explanatory and adversative constructions are more frequent in KIP, where *tanto non* prevails. It is also evident that *perché tanto non* is not particularly recurrent (its RF are reported in brackets). Sample phrases are the following ones: *quindi la gente va lì perché tanto sa che bene o male può starci* (back-translation: “so people go there because they know that, for better or worse, they can”); *devi prenderlo perché tanto non lo finisco io* (back-translation: “you must take it, as I won’t”); *quando succede qualcosa, la gente si rivolge ai suoi deputati, non si rivolge alla Commissione né al Consiglio, perché tanto non sa chi siete* (back-translation: “when something happens, people go to their Members, they do not turn to the

Commission or the Council, because they don't know who you are, after all"; EEP version: "when something happens the people look to the Members. They do not look to the Commission and they do not look to the Council and they do not know who you are"); *ma tanto non mi contatteranno perché hanno già fatto l'intervista* (back-translation: "they won't contact me because they already had an interview"); *è già tanto se ne pigliano uno di noi figurati se piglian tutti e tre* (back-translation: "it's hard enough if they get one of us, it's impossible they'll get all three"), and *è già tanto se riesce a centrare il piatto* (back-translation: "s/he's lucky if s/he can hit the plate"; EOS version: "it's luck when you hit the plate").

It is observable that both *perché tanto (non)* and *tanto non* are used to express and explain adversative argumentations, whereas *è già tanto (che/se)* provides justifications for or predictions about situations that are unlikely to occur, or things that are difficult to obtain.

Table 6 lists the translations of *perché tanto (non)*, *tanto non* and *è già tanto (che/se)* in EOS and EEP, and the RF in the four English (sub-)corpora. Translations are in alphabetical order.

Tanto constructions	Translations sourced from EOS and EEP	RF in EOS	RF in EEP	RF in OANS	RF in SBNC
<i>Perché tanto (non)</i>	And	-	-	-	-
	Anyway + <i>punctuation mark</i>	104.98	8.99	18.40	11.41
	Because	-	-	-	-
	Omission	-	-	-	-
<i>Tanto non</i>	And	-	-	-	-
	As	-	-	-	-
	But then... not/never/un-	1.52	0.81	5.94	41.92
	Not/never anyway	33.71	2.26	27.01	182.88
	Omission	-	-	-	-
<i>È già tanto (che/se)</i>	Even	-	-	-	-
	I'm / you're / you'd be lucky (if)	11.36	-	7.42	6.50
	If... that is fine	0.01	0.09	-	0.17
	It would be nice; it'd be nice	4.07	0.99	17.51	22.15
	It's good to; it's good enough	17.16	-	8.91	10.56
	It's hard enough (to)	0.73	-	0.89	0.42
	It's luck	0.07	-	0.30	0.17
	Just	-	-	-	-

Table 6. Translations of *tanto* in explanatory adversative phrases in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC

Given that words such as "and", "as", and "because" are used in a wide variety of contexts and may serve different syntactical and semantic functions, the calculation of their RF is omitted. As a matter of fact, too many occurrences would be retrieved, and they would not be representative of the cases in point.

As regards equivalents of *perché tanto (non)* and *tanto non*, the expressions “not/never... anyway”, and “but then” are more frequent in SBNC. The latter is generally followed by a negative verb (or “never” and a verb), or an adverb/adjective starting with the prefix “un”. Conversely, “anyway” is highly recurrent in EOS, thus highlighting a certain over-representation of the term.

The results obtained from Table 6 above also confirms that *tanto poi* (see Table 3 and Table 4) assumes an adversative meaning rather than a temporal value. This is corroborated by the translations of *perché tanto (non)* and *tanto non*, which are rendered as “anyway” (which, in turn, translates *tanto poi*)⁴. However, differently from the expression *tanto poi* (Table 4), “anyway” rendering *perché tanto (non)* appears in the right periphery of an utterance. Therefore, it functions as a tag. Tags are language elements appearing in the far-right periphery of a statement. They generally express afterthoughts and relate to what has been said (Clark 2017: 85; Giampieri 2025: 25-27).

Corpus-sourced sample phrases are as follows: “but then I’m not there so I don’t know that”; “I shouldn’t be watching TV anyway”; “I’ll tell him that, but then he’ll probably just want to know why there’s a 24-pound frozen turkey in the light grid” (IOS version: *glielo dico, ma tanto poi mi chiederà cosa ci fa un tacchino congelato di 12 chili sul traliccio luci*); “I don’t have anything to do anyway” (IOS version: *tanto non ho nulla da fare*), and “I’m not gonna tell anybody this time, ‘cause nobody believes you anyway” (IOS version: *questa volta non dirò un bel niente, perché tanto non mi crede nessuno*). In the latter statement, it is possible to notice the use of the second-person object pronoun in English (“nobody believes you”), and the singular first-person indirect pronoun in Italian (*mi*).

As far as the translations of *è già tanto (che/se)* are concerned, the highest RF are evenly distributed across the corpora. For example, the expression “it would be nice” prevails in SBNC, as well as “if... that is fine”, although “I’m / you’re / you’d be lucky (if)” is more recurrent in EOS. Sample phrases are the following ones: “it would be nice if it grows big... those palms are nice when they grow”; “if you wanna meet up with your friends that is fine”, and “if the guarantee funds operate at national level that is fine” (IEP version: *è già tanto che esistano fondi di garanzia a livello nazionale*). As mentioned, EOS generates more occurrences of “I’m / you’re / you’d be lucky if” and “it’s good to/enough”. Sample phrases are as follows: “I’m lucky if I get five minutes before you interrupt” (IOS version: *è già tanto se io riesco a stare cinque minuti senza che tu mi interrompa*); you’d be lucky to play arena football (IOS version: *è già tanto se ti fanno giocare una partita*); “at my age it’s good to be seen just about anywhere” (IOS version: *alla mia età è già tanto se riesci a vedermi ancora in piedi*), and “we got this far. It’s good enough” (IOS version: *siamo arrivati fin qui. È già tanto*).

4.4. Adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities

Table 7 lists the RF of *tanto* in adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities in KIP, IOS, and IEP.

⁴ Amongst others, the Cambridge Dictionary informs that “[w]e usually use *anyway* to mean ‘in spite of reasons or situations already mentioned’”. See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/anyway>.

<i>Tanto constructions</i>	RF in KIP	RF in IOS	RF in IEP
<i>Tanto è vero; tant'è vero</i>	6.77	0.07	0.59
<i>Tanto per cambiare</i>	1.85	1.20	0.17
<i>Tanto per dire</i>	7.39	2.45	0.07
<i>Tanto vale che</i>	1.85	2.27	0.03

Table 7. Relative frequencies of *tanto* in adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities in KIP, IOS, and IEP

With the exception of *tanto vale che*, all *tanto* constructions shown above are more frequent in KIP. It is also noticeable that *tanto è vero* and its contracted form *tant'è vero* are more recurrent in KIP.

Sample phrases with *tant'è vero* are the following ones: *ma sta qua si stava arrabbiando tant'è vero che aveva anche chiamato un due ragazzi* (back-translation: “but this one was getting angry so much that she even called one two guys”), and *questi pensano che i fondi di investimento siano paragonabili ai classici strumenti di risparmio e che possano offrire sicurezza a lungo termine, tant'è vero che erano anche noti con il nome di fondi di investimento e risparmio* (EEP version: “consumers - who expect investment funds to be comparable with a traditional savings agreement when it comes to long-term security, and indeed that is why they were known as investment savings”).

As can be gathered, *tanto è vero* and *tant'è vero* are used to confirm a previous statement made by the speaker. In this way, it is turned inwardly and it functions as a self-representation tool. This means that is a linguistic element used for introspective analyses, when the speaker self-assesses situations and proposes (self-)justifying comments.

Sample phrases with *tanto per cambiare* are as follows: *è bello sentire una risata tanto per cambiare* (EOS version: “it’s good to hear a laugh for a change”); *il suo obiettivo principale, tanto per cambiare, è quello di creare nuove tasse* (EEP version: “its main aim, by way of innovation, is to create new taxes”), and *tanto per cambiare avete litigato un'altra volta* (EOS version: “you quarrelled once more”). It is evident that the phrase *tanto per cambiare* functions as a confirmation or a rhetorical marker. In the first case, its meaning is literal (see the first EOS-sourced sample phrase), whereas in the second, it expresses the opposite, i.e., “as usual” (see the second and third EEP- and EOS-driven sample phrases: *il suo obiettivo principale, tanto per cambiare, è quello di creare nuove tasse* and *tanto per cambiare avete litigato un'altra volta*).

The expression *tanto per dire* is uttered to make examples, as an approximation or a face-saving device. An example of the former is *se lasciamo il tutto alla buona volontà degli uomini, tanto per dire, non si otterrà alcun cambiamento* (EEP version: “if we leave it to the goodwill of, let us say, men, nothing will change”), whereas instances of the latter are the following phrases: *diciamo, sei stata ad una festa, così tanto per dire, hai bevuto un po' troppi vodka lemon* (EOS version: “say, you’ve been at a party, off the top of my head, you’ve had too many Archers and lemonades”), and *era tanto per dire* (EOS version: “forget it, baby”).

Finally, *tanto vale che* aims to confirm or expand on a previous statement and to express (or impose) the speaker’s point of view. Sample phrases are as follows: *se vuoi leggere un libro del genere allora tanto vale che prendi una biografia un'autobiografia non un romanzo* (back-translation: “if you want to read a book of this genre, you might as well take a biography an autobiography, not a novel”), and *se dobbiamo uccidere 28 milioni di persone l'anno in Europa con il tabacco, tanto vale che provenga dalle colture da noi sovvenzionate* (EEP version: “if we

are going to kill 28 million people in Europe per year with tobacco, it may as well be with our own subsidised crops”).

Table 8 exhibits data on *tanto* in adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities.

<i>Tanto</i> constructions	Translations sourced from EOS and EEP	RF in EOS	RF in EEP	RF in OANS	RF in SBNC
<i>Tanto è vero; tant'è vero</i>	And	-	-	-	-
	Because	-	-	-	-
	In actual fact				
	In fact	-	-	-	-
	Indeed	-	-	-	-
	It's true that	0.01	-	-	-
	The truth is that	1.62	9.2	0.59	0.34
	So much so that	0.49	1.84	0.30	0.68
	So much that	2.94	1.33	15.43	5.58
	Thus	-	-	-	-
	Omission	-	-	-	-
<i>Tanto per cambiare</i>	Again	-	-	-	-
	(Just) For a change	4.13	2.49	1.48	1.52
	For once	25.29	24.15	6.23	6.59
	Just for fun	1.32	0.12	2.37	1.27
	Just for the novelty of it	0.01	-	-	-
	Once more	7.47	20.51	0.89	0.68
<i>Tanto per dire</i>	For nothing	13.93	2.93	5.94	0.68
	For the sake of argument	0.32	0.02	0.59	0.17
	I say/said it just like that	0.01	-	-	-
	I'm / you're joking	5.87	0.07	-	6.00
	I was (just) kidding	2.46	-	0.30	0.42
	Just saying/said	39.87	21.53	26.41	102.68
	Let us say; let's just say	3.07	0.12	1.19	1.61
	Negative verb + mean that/it	8.65	0.51	-	6.17
	, say,	4.9	2.35	1.19	-
<i>Tanto vale che</i>	It/we are/is/may/might just as well	1.28	1.17	1.19	1.94
	May/might as well	16.32	1.86	16.32	42.76
	Now that + subj. + verb	19.16	8.77	-	15.47

Table 8. Translations of *tanto* in adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC

For the same reasons explained above, common (or multi-purpose) words such as “again”, “and”, “because”, “in fact”, “indeed” and “thus” are not explored, as they would not be representative of the meanings and usages of the *tanto* phrases under scrutiny. Conversely, the RF of “for once” and “once more” (both translating *tanto per cambiare*) are accounted for, since rhetorical meanings come to the fore (see the argumentations that follow).

Some renditions of *tanto è vero* and *tant'è vero* prevail in parallel corpora (e.g., “the truth is that” and “so much so that”). For example, “it’s true that” is the only phrase appearing in EOS, albeit with very low frequencies. However, such translations are not frequent in native speaking contexts. For instance, only the phrase “so much that” significantly appears in OANS. Therefore, it could be claimed that EOS and EEP contain patterns of infrequent language.

Some corpus-sourced sample phrases are as follows: “the truth is that my girlfriend is you” (IOS version: *tanto è vero che la mia ragazza sei tu*—this statement, to some extent, tends to over-represent the English utterance); “rules have been stepped up in the compromises, so much so that in some respects, they are even stricter than those that were voted” (IEP version: *le regole contenute nei compromessi sono state irrigidite, tant'è vero che, per alcuni aspetti, sono addirittura più severe di quelle votate*), and “Plano has grown so much that um you know the restaurants and stuff are all so crowded now”.

As concerns the renditions of *tanto per cambiare*, EOS generates several occurrences of “(just) for a change” and “for once”. Additionally, “just for the novelty of it” is featured only in this corpus. Therefore, it is apparent that film dialogues use language patterns which are not frequent in native speakers’ contexts. The expression “for once”, for example, shows almost the same RF in EOS and EEP, being four times higher than the related frequencies in OANS and SBNC. Hence, as regards “for once”, it can be speculated that in both film language and in EU oral discourse, unrepresentative language patterning may come to the fore. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that “for once” is semantically different from *tanto per cambiare*, as the latter expresses a change (either literally or rhetorically), whereas the former implies a novelty which may not occur in other circumstances. Indeed, the meaning of “for once” can be “for this time (only)”. This is also evident in the following OES-sourced statement: “and, for once, I want to fit in” (IOS version: *e, tanto per cambiare, io voglio inserirmi*). In this case, the Italian OS version is ambiguous and it may actually confer the opposite meaning of “for once”. The phrase *tanto per cambiare*, in fact, could signify “for a change” or “as usual”. Alternatively, it may express a long-lasting change, such as “from now on”. The same occurs to the following statements: “I’ve decided to take things slow, for once” (IOS version: *ho deciso di andarci piano, tanto per cambiare*, back-translation: “I’ve decided to take things slowly, for a change”) and “you quarrelled once more” (IOS version: *tanto per cambiare avete litigato un'altra volta*, back-translation: “as usual, you’ve quarrelled one more time”). Finally, the phrase “just for fun” is particularly recurrent in OANS, although it may not be considered as a full equivalent of the Italian *tanto per cambiare*. The expression “for fun”, in fact, implies entertainment rather than changes. This is clear in the following EOS-sourced statement: “just for fun, Mrs Van Dijk wishes to propose an oral amendment” (rendered as *tanto per cambiare, l'onorevole van Dijk desidera proporre un emendamento orale* in IOS). Other examples are the following ones: “nothing, just for a change” (IOS version: *nulla, tanto per cambiare*), and “so I read a lot of history and uh a few novels an occasional mystery stories just for fun”. Only in the latter context, could “just for fun” be considered as a semantic equivalent of *tanto per cambiare*.

With regard to *tanto per dire*, film dialogues produce the highest frequencies of the prepositional phrase “for nothing” and verb phrases such as “I don’t/didn’t mean it”. Therefore, in these cases, fictional language tends to over-represent authentic language. Conversely, the expression “(I was) just saying” is far more recurrent in spoken British English. One last point

should be made about “just joking”, which does not appear in OANS. This corpus contains the expression “I was just kidding” together with many other related phrases, which are not reported in Table 8 for reasons of space (e.g., “no kidding” and “not kidding”). Some sample phrases of the equivalents of *tanto per dire* are the following ones: “you know, not for nothing, but this plan is crazy” (IOS version: *sai, non è tanto per dire, ma questo piano è folle*); “there is something to be said about or uh uh just just for the sake of argument”; “that’s like just saying some TV shows are like that”, and “I know you’re joking about the Facebook thing”.

The last *tanto* phrase of the group is *tanto vale che*. As can be seen, almost all English equivalents are found in SBNC; particularly, the expression “may/might as well”. Sample phrases are “they were like right well we might as well yeah go and enjoy it”, and “well you may as well give it a try”. Conversely, the expression “now that” followed by a subject and a verb is particularly recurrent in EOS. Sample phrases are as follows: “now that you’re here, give us a tow” (IOS version: *tanto vale che ci trainiate visto che siete qui*), and “now that I’ve seen them a few times they’re like my coworkers”.

4.5. Idiomatic expressions

The last set of tables focuses on idiomatic expressions such as *tanto di cappello* and *tanto di guadagnato* (see Table 9).

<i>Tanto constructions</i>	RF in KIP	RF in IOS	RF in IEP
<i>Tanto di cappello</i>	0.62	0.59	0.22
<i>Tanto di guadagnato</i>	0.62	0.06	0.08

Table 9. Relative frequencies of *tanto* in idiomatic expressions in KIP, IOS, and IEP

The highest frequencies are found in KIP. KIP-sourced sample phrases are as follows: *davanti a questa alzo le mani tanto di cappello impari tu* (back-translation: “before her I’ll raise my hands, I take my hat off, you’ll have to learn”), and *forse potremmo averne per un po’ eh? Almeno per un’oretta per me per me è tanto di guadagnato* (back-translation: “perhaps we could have some for a while, uh? At least for a little hour, for me for me it would be all the better”). Therefore, *tanto di cappello* expresses a praise or admiration for someone, whereas *tanto di guadagnato* conveys satisfaction for some gain or unexpected advantage.

Table 10 shows the translations of *tanto* in idiomatic expressions such as *tanto di cappello* and *tanto di guadagnato* in EOS and IEP, as well as the RF in the four English (sub-)corpora.

<i>Tanto</i> constructions	Translations sourced from EOS and EEP	RF in EOS	RF in EEP	RF in OANS	RF in SBNC
<i>Tanto di cappello</i>	Hats off (to)	0.49	0.05	-	0.17
	I raise my hat (to you)	0.01	-	-	-
	(I take) My hat off (to you)	0.19	0.20	0.30	0.42
	I'm impressed	4.67	0.63	1.78	1.69
<i>Tanto di guadagnato</i>	All the better	0.73	0.53	-	0.34
	Better that way	1.06	0.05	0.30	0.42
	(That's) Even better	7.59	4.89	5.05	7.27
	That's good news	1.58	-	-	1.27
	So be it	3.72	1.37	0.30	0.59
	So much the better	0.39	0.74	-	-
	That is all to the good	0.01	0.15	-	-
	That may be a blessing	0.01	-	-	-
	That would be by far the best way forward	-	0.02	-	-
	This would be a welcome bonus	-	0.02	-	-

Table 10. Translations of *tanto* in idiomatic expressions in EOS, EEP, OANS, and SBNC

With regard to *tanto di cappello*, the idiomatic “(I take) my hat off” appears in all corpora with similar RF (the highest being in SBNC). Other renditions are more recurrent in EOS. For example, the finite “raise my hat” is only found in EOS. The expression “I’m impressed” is almost four times more frequent in EOS than in the other corpora. Nonetheless, “I’m impressed” is not as idiomatic as the source phrase; it is rather a paraphrase. Some corpus-sourced examples are as follows: “always hats off to Freud” (IOS version: *sempre tanto di cappello a Freud*); “bravo. I’m impressed” (IOS version: *bravi! Tanto di cappello*); “you know hats off to him he puts himself out there he says right this is what I want now so I’m going to go and get it and I think that’s marvellous”, and “I just I take my hat off to you I think it’s absolutely wonderful what you’ve done”.

As far as *tanto di guadagnato* is concerned, the translations proposed are infrequent in native speakers’ conversations (i.e., in OANS and SBNC). In addition, “so be it” (mostly appearing in EOS) is actually a debatable rendition, as it implies a passive rather than a joyful acceptance. Some sample phrases of the various equivalents of *tanto di guadagnato* are as follows: “if he lost two men tonight, that’s good news” (IOS version: *ha perso altri due uomini, tanto di guadagnato*); “if anyone learns anything it’d be all the better” (IOS version: *se qualcuno impara qualcosa sarà tanto di guadagnato*); “that is why neither you nor any of your predecessors have ever used this atomic bomb, and that is all to the good” (IEP version: *ecco perché né lei né nessuno dei suoi predecessori ha mai utilizzato questa bomba atomica, ed è tanto di guadagnato*), and “you know if you’ve got a tent that’s good but if you’ve got a tent and ham then that’s even better”.

Finally, differently from all other analyses, Table 10 brings to the fore the fact that many translation options are predominantly retrieved from EOS and EEP, with the exception of “(I take) my hat off” (mostly found in SBNC). This raises questions on the authenticity of the language of such corpora, as far as idiomatic expressions are concerned.

5. Discussion

The analyses carried out in the sections above have uncovered several interesting patterns.

As concerns adverbial quantifiers, it is apparent that *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto*, *così tanto (che)* and *mica tanto* are more frequent in native speaking contexts (i.e., KIP) than in translated settings (namely, IOS and IEP). An exception regards the expressions *tanto meno* and *tantomeno* which prevail in EU-sourced debates. The phrasemes *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto* and *così tanto (che)* are used as intensifiers to describe large amounts. Conversely, *mica tanto* is used as a mitigator which refers to reduced quantities and/or different qualities. The constructions *tanto meno* and *tantomeno* are not quantifiers but aversion markers.

The translations into English of the above *tanto* constructions are varied and mostly emerging from the American and British English corpora (namely, OANS and SBNC). Amongst others, OANS generates the highest frequencies of multi-words such as “so much” (translating *tanto tanto*); “long ago” and “long long time ago” (corresponding to *tanto tanto tempo fa*); “so much”, “real” followed by an adjective, and “really” followed by a verb (to render *proprio tanto* and *veramente tanto*); “so” followed by an adjective (corresponding to *così tanto*); “not only that”, “not really” and “not so” followed by an adjective or an adverb (to translate *mica tanto*). Conversely, SBNC produces the highest number of occurrences of “so” followed by an adjective or an adverb (to render *tanto tanto* and *proprio tanto*); “that / so long” (corresponding to *così tanto tempo*), and “not that” followed by an adjective or an adverb (to render *mica tanto*).

The parallel corpora (i.e., OS and EP) do not produce many occurrences; EOS generates “so deeply” (which renders *così tanto*) and “least of all” (which translates *tanto meno* or *tantomeno* - not found either in OANS or SBNC). EEP yields the highest number of hits of “very much” (which translates *tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto* and *veramente tanto*), “let alone” and “still/even less” (both corresponding to *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*).

As a whole, it can be argued that the translations of adverbial quantifiers are varied and that the ones proposed by the parallel corpora are attested in native speakers’ corpora to a large extent. In the same way, it can be claimed that film dialogues and parliamentary speeches mirror naturally occurring language, at least as far as *tanto* adverbial quantifiers are concerned. Some concerns could only be raised with regard to a few constructions such as “least of all” and “still/even less” (corresponding to *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*). Particularly, these only appear in the parallel corpora.

With regard to temporal phrases, *ogni tanto* and *tanto poi* are more frequent in the Italian spoken corpus than in the parallel ones. As could be guessed, *ogni tanto* describes frequencies of occurrences. Conversely, *tanto poi* is not a temporal phrase, but an adverbial phraseme with explanatory and adversative functions. It is used to explain or justify situations or behaviours while conveying the acknowledgement of the impossibility to change things or circumstances.

As far as possible translations of *ogni tanto* are concerned, the spoken American corpus produces the highest frequencies of most of them, with the exception of “every now and again” and “every so often”, which are more frequent in SBNC. Therefore, temporal constructions such as “every now and then”, “from time to time”, “once in a while” and “sometimes” tend to characterise spoken American. The most frequent English equivalents of *tanto poi* are “anyway” (in SBNC) and “at the end of the day” (generally found in EU parliamentary speeches). The adverb “anyway” rendering *tanto poi* functions as both a turn taker (when it appears at the beginning of an utterance) and a tag (when uttered at the end of a statement).

As far as explanatory adversative phrases are concerned, *perché tanto (non)*, *tanto non*, and *è già tanto (che/se)*, the sample phrases retrieved confirm that such expressions are employed to justify idleness or negative reactions or attitudes.

The translations into English of the above constructions mainly revolve around common adverbs or conjunctions such as “and”, “as”, “because” and “even”. The adverb “anyway” comes again to the fore (especially in the rendering of *perché tanto (non)*). However, it mostly appears in the right periphery of statements, thus functioning as a tag. As for the various frequencies per corpus, the SBNC produces the highest rates of “but then (...) not/never” and “not/never anyway” (to render *tanto non*), and of the conditional clause “if (...) that is fine” together with “it would be nice” (to translate *è già tanto che/se*). Differently from all other equivalents of the *tanto* constructions, film language features the highest rates of occurrence of renditions of *perché tanto (non)* and *è già tanto (che/se)*. For example, “anyway” shows much higher frequencies in EOS than in the other corpora, as well as “I’d / you’d be lucky” and “It’s good enough” (both rendering *è già tanto che/se*).

Concerning adverbial phrases confirming or challenging possibilities, *tanto è vero*, *tant’è vero*, *tanto per cambiare* and *tanto per dire* show higher rates in KIP, whereas *tanto vale che* is notable in IOS. What emerges from the analysis of such constructions, is that *tanto è vero* and *tant’è vero* aim to confirm a previous statement made by the speaker, thus functioning as a self-referential element; *tanto per cambiare* is both a confirmation token (meaning “for a change”) and a rhetorical marker (meaning “again”); *tanto per dire* is uttered to make examples or as an approximator or face-saver, whereas *tanto vale che* confirms or expands on a previous statement by expressing (or imposing) the speaker’s point of view.

Also in this case, some translations of the above constructions are unmarked adverbs or conjunctions such as “again” “and”, “because”, or “indeed”. However, differently from the other circumstances, many translation options appear in EOS, such as “it’s true that” (rendering *tanto è vero* and *tant’è vero*); “(just) for a change”, “for once” and “just for the novelty of it” (all translating *tanto per cambiare*); “for nothing”, “I was (just) kidding”, “let us say”, “didn’t/don’t mean it”, and “, say,” (corresponding to *tanto per dire*), and “now that” followed by a subject and a verb (to translate *tanto vale che*). Amongst these, “it’s true that” and “just for the novelty of it” are only featured in EOS, thus revealing a certain over-representation of language in film dialogues. Other translation candidates mostly occur in EEP, such as “the truth is that”, “so much that” (to render *tanto è vero* and *tant’è vero*), and “once more” (corresponding to *tanto per cambiare*).

Higher frequencies of “so much that” (*tanto è vero*, *tant’è vero*) are found in OANS, as well as “just for fun” (*tanto per cambiare*), and “for the sake of argument” (*tanto per dire*). SBNC generates the highest rates of “just saying/said” and “I’m / you’re joking” (*tanto per dire*), as well as “may/might (just) as well” (*tanto vale che*).

In addition to the considerations above, doubts could be cast as concerns “for once” and “just for fun” translating *tanto per cambiare*. As discussed, the Italian expression can have a literal and a rhetorical meaning (i.e., “for a change”, and “as usual”, respectively). In either case, “for once” and “just for fun” are partly unsatisfactory equivalents. The former implies a novelty which may not occur again, and whose meaning is “for this time (only)”. The latter expresses an amusement, rather than a change.

Finally, the idiomatic expressions *tanto di cappello* and *tanto di guadagnato* prevail in KIP, albeit with low frequencies. The translations of such constructions are mostly featured in EOS, thus revealing another instance of possible language over-representation. In the case of idioms, Newmark (1988: 28) posits that “it is particularly difficult to match equivalence of meaning with equivalence of frequency”. However, the author also claims that “literal translation is likely to work best and most with written, prosy, semi-formal, non-literary language (...); worst and least with ordinary spoken idiomatic language” (Newmark 1988: 31; see also Eco 2012: 70). In the same way, paraphrasing must be avoided (Eco 2012: 277), as well as over-simplifications. These strategies actually come to the fore in several expressions in EOS and EEP, such as “I’m impressed”

(to render *tanto di cappello*). The statements retrieved from such corpora are not idiomatic, and are also rather infrequent in native speakers' conversations. As a matter of fact, many language options obtained from EEP and EOS do not appear in either OANS or SBNC. Examples in this regard are "that is all to the good", "that may be a blessing", "that would be by far the best way forward" and "this would be a welcome bonus", which supposedly render *tanto di guadagnato*, and "I raise my hat", which corresponds to *tanto di cappello*. Therefore, corpus analysis reveals that the idioms investigated are badly addressed in parallel corpora, which give rise to unnatural language patterns. In addition, false equivalences are suggested, as in the case of "so be it" rendering *tanto di guadagnato*. The expression in English suggests a passive acceptance, whereas in Italian it conveys a satisfactory welcome.

The idioms occurring the most in native speakers' contexts are "(I take) my hat off (to you)" (*tanto di cappello*) and "(that's) even better" (*tanto di guadagnato*).

6. Conclusions

This paper brought to the fore insightful results and novel linguistic patterns. First of all, it revealed many renditions into English of the various *tanto* expressions. The majority of such translations could be proposed thanks to native speakers' corpora, showing the same meanings and usages in context of the Italian phrases. Other times, parallel corpora produced translations which were not attested in American or British corpora, or which produced much low frequencies. Such patterns were marked as instances of unnatural or infrequent language. The parallel corpora yielding the majority of such constructions were the Open Subtitles ones. Examples were the phrases "least of all", or "still/even less" translating *tanto meno* and *tantomeno*; "it's true that" rendering *tanto è vero* and *tant'è vero*, and "just for the novelty of it" corresponding to *tanto per cambiare*. The *tanto* constructions which were addressed the worst in the parallel corpora were idioms, which were paraphrased or rendered with simplified expressions (e.g., "I'm impressed" corresponding to *tanto di cappello*). Other times, infrequent language patterns appeared (e.g., "that would be by far the best way foreword" and "this would be a welcome bonus" to translate *tanto di guadagnato*). Apart from such circumstances, the analyses allowed the retrieval of a number of translation candidates which could be considered as full equivalents of the various *tanto* constructions.

From a semantic and pragmatic perspective, this paper showed nuanced meanings in the various *tanto* expressions, mostly leaning towards intensifiers (*tanto tanto*, *proprio tanto*, *veramente tanto*, *così tanto*), mitigators (*mica tanto*), temporal elements (*ogni tanto*), explanatory devices (*perché tanto*), softeners or approximators (*tanto per dire*), rhetorical markers (*tanto per cambiare*), confirmation devices (*tant'è vero che*), convincing or exhortation tokens (*tanto vale che*), and idioms (*tanto di cappello*, *tanto di guadagnato*).

It also showed that *tanto meno* and *tantomeno* are not quantifiers, despite being composed of the word *meno* ("less"). Conversely, they are aversion markers, and convey the low possibility for something to happen, or a strengthened aversion to something. In the same way, *tanto poi* is not a temporal marker, despite featuring the adverb *poi* ("later"). By contrast, it is an explanatory marker with adversative functions, used to explain or justify circumstances and convey the impossibility to change the outcome. Finally, with regard to specific positions in an utterance, this paper revealed that *tanto poi* can be rendered as "anyway" when this adverb appears either at the beginning or at the end of a statement. The expression *perché tanto (non)* can also be translated as "anyway", provided that the adverb is placed at the end of a statement.

The research questions that this paper posed were the following ones: 1) Is corpus analysis effective to retrieve and understand meanings, occurrences, and equivalents of *tanto* constructions?;

2) What are the advantages and challenges of consulting parallel corpora to retrieve possible translations or equivalents of *tanto* expressions?, and 3) What are the differences in the results obtained from native-speakers' spoken corpora and parallel ones, as far as *tanto* phrases are concerned? The answer to the first question is affirmative: corpus consultation allowed the retrieval of insightful language samples, both in the source and in the target language. It helped grasp nuanced meanings and infer pragmatic issues, thus unveiling unexpected patterning. Corpus analysis also allowed the confirmation or challenging of translation options retrieved from parallel corpora.

In answering the second question, it was evident that parallel corpora helped find possible translation candidates with a great deal. Equivalents might have been difficult to source or retrieve otherwise. Nonetheless, some options had to be ruled out due to inconsistency and pragmatic or semantic differences from the source words. As a matter of fact, some discrepancies were noticed between the meanings of source expressions and corpus-retrieved target constructions. In answering the third question, language inconsistencies mainly revolved around different usages in context, contrasting semantic loads and, at times, opposite implications (e.g., *tanto per cambiare* rendered as “just for fun” or “for once”). Such divergences were mostly noticed in the translation of idiomatic expressions (as in the case of “so be it” and *tanto di guadagnato*).

The limits of this paper lie in the fact that only one corpus of spoken Italian was taken into consideration (i.e., the KIParla). Other spoken Italian corpora could have been explored, thus allowing a more comprehensive analysis and, possibly, the generalisation of the findings. In addition, it could be claimed that parliamentary debates are not representative of spontaneous discourse, as they could be scripted or prepared ahead. Nonetheless, the aim of this paper was, amongst others, to explore the use of *tanto* constructions in different spoken settings, amongst which scripted dialogues were comprehended. Future research could address the same or other *tanto* phrases by focusing on other contexts, such as the academic, judiciary or medical ones.

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