

Workshop
Expanding Romance linguistics - Crossing the boundaries

Graz, 22 July 2021

Constructs in language change
Examples from French, Italian and Spanish
diachronic corpora

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1. Introduction

- <http://www.stefan-schneider.at>
- Schneider (in print)
- Inspired by two approaches:
 - Cognitive linguistics/Construction grammar:
 - Distinction between *construct* and *construction* (Kay & Fillmore 1999)
 - Without adopting the definition of *construction*
 - Grammaticalization theory:
 - *Untypical, critical* and *isolating* contexts (Diewald 2002; Smirnova 2015)

1. Introduction

- Research tradition in diachronic construction grammar:
 - Israel (1969), Diewald (2009), Van Bogaert (2011), Hilpert (2013), Barðdal & Gildea (2015), Smirnova & Sommerer (2020)
 - Comprehensive (but much criticized) proposal in Traugott & Trousdale (2013)

1. Introduction

- Representative example: evolution/history of *imaginer*, *immaginare*, *imaginar*
- Historical French, Italian and Spanish corpora:
 - *Base de français médiéval (BFM)*
 - *Base textuelle Frantext (Frantext)*
 - *Biblioteca italiana (BIBIT)*
 - *Corpus del Tesoro della lingua italiana delle Origini (TLIO)*
 - *Corpus del Nuevo diccionario histórico del español (CDH)*

2. Construct and construction

- Constructs are (the result of) individual usage events
- Constructions are entrenched (individual) and conventionalized (society) generalizations or abstractions with different degrees of complexity and schematicity
- Constructs display idiosyncratic and isolated variation
- In general, language users have no problems associating constructs with constructions

2. Construct and construction

- Relation between constructs and constructions
- Grammatical theory:
 - Focus on constructions
 - Constructions 'sanction' constructs
 - Constructions are 'instantiated' by constructs
- Grammaticalization theory/diachronic linguistics:
 - Focus on constructs
 - How do constructs lead to constructions?
 - *Constructionalization* (Traugott & Trousdale 2013)

2. Construct and construction

- Continuum between individual variation → language change:
 - Extensional constructs
 - Polysemic constructs
 - Adaptive constructs
- Characteristic stages or phases:
 - Extension stage
 - Polysemy stage
 - Adaptation stage
- Aside: heterosemy (Persson 1988; Lichtenberk 1991)

2. Construct and construction

- Problems with 'construction':
 - Originally devised for idioms (Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988; Croft & Cruse 2004), non-compositional sequences
 - Compositional sequences
 - Goldberg (2006: 18): "it's constructions all the way down"
 - Phonemes? (Höder 2016)

3. Extensional constructs

- Comprise an element (= *meroconstruct*) tentatively employed with a modified meaning and/or expression
- Unusual, but not profoundly distinct combinations of existing constructions
- Extension based on comparison and analogy
- Extension of grammatical and semantic conventions
- "Familiar pieces unfamiliarly arranged" (Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988: 508)
- *Exploratory expressions* (Harris & Campbell 1995)
- *Host-class expansion* (Himmelman 2004)
- *Untypical contexts* (Diewald 2002; Smirnova 2015)

3. Extensional constructs

- Conversational implicature, invited inference (Geis & Zwicky 1971; Levinson 1983)
- Negotiation process between speaker and hearer (Györi 1995; Traugott & Trousdale 2013)

3. Extensional constructs

- French, Italian, Spanish, 13th and 14th centuries
- Verbs *imaginer*, *immaginare* and *imaginar* semantically linked to corresponding nouns *image*, *immagine* and *imagen*
- Prevailing meaning comprises mental or physical picture:
 - (1) como si alguno *imaginasse* cuerpo de omne (1275, Alfonso X, *General Estoria. Primera parte, CDH*)
 - (2) io le direi che sì tosto com'io *imagino* la sua mirabile bellezza, sì tosto mi giugne uno desiderio di vederla (1292/1293, Dante Alighieri, *Vita nuova, TLIO*)
 - (3) et avoit cellui sur son heaume *ymaginé* le Dieu d'Amors (1400, Anonyme, *Ysaÿe le Triste, Frantext*)

3. Extensional constructs

- 13th century (end) and 14th century
- Cognitive meanings not necessarily including a mental picture
- Considerable variation

3. Extensional constructs

- 'Bear in mind', 'consider':
 - (4) Ricorri a questa virtù ch' è detta Buono conoscimento, ed *immagina* bene il fatto c'hai tra le mani (1292, Bono Giamboni, *Il Trattato di Virtù e di Vizi, TLIO*)
- 'Estimate', 'suppose':
 - (5) Pensava il padre di maritar prima la savia, *imaginando* che dell'altra no lli potesse fallar maritaggio. (1318-1320, Francesco da Barberino, *Del Reggimento e costumi di donna, TLIO*)

3. Extensional constructs

- 'Machinate', 'plan':
 - (6) de *imaginar* algunas cosas contra personas baxas (1350, Anónimo, *Traducción de la Historia de Jerusalem abreviada de Jacobo de Vitriaco*, CDH)

- 'Ponder', 'reflect':
 - (7) Et aquestas cosas tractadas el mauro luengament pensso & *ymagino* sobre aquesto. (1385, Juan Fernández de Heredia, *Gran crónica de España, I*, CDH)

3. Extensional constructs

- 'Conclude', 'reason':

(8) si pensa sus ung petit et *ymagina* que il ne sejourneroit pas là longuement (1390, Jean Froissart, *Chroniques. Troisième livre, Frantext*)

- 'Know', 'realize', 'understand':

(9) car bien *imagineoit* au fort [que] ses sires li rois d'Engleterre n'oseroit courouchier le roi de France. (1400, Jean Froissart, *Chroniques, Frantext*)

4. Polysemic constructs

- Repeated use in extensional constructs modifies/extends meaning of meroconstruct
- Conventionalization of modified/extended meaning
- Meroconstruct associated with two constructions
- Constructional overlap
- *Critical contexts* (Diewald 2002; Smirnova 2015)
- *Bridging contexts* (Evans & Wilkins 2000; Heine 2002)

4. Polysemic constructs

- French, Italian, Spanish, 16th-18th centuries
- Conventionalization of 'suppose' alongside '(mental) picture':
 - (10) ma aspetto di veder quest'altra parte che va a torno, ed *imagino* che sia così mal concia come l'altra. (1586, Torquato Tasso, *Lettere, BIBIT*)
 - (11) je m'*imagine* qu'en votre faveur vous voudrez bien excuser les retours de mon coeur (1675, Madame de Sévigné, *Correspondance : t. 1 : 1646-1675, Frantext*)
 - (12) Félix: /Porque no *imagino*/que haya en el mundo tan necia/ingratitude (1762, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, *La petimetra, CDH*)

4. Polysemic constructs

- First person present indicative singular
- Both interpretations are possible
- Either mental picture or supposed state of affairs
- Grammatical structure has not changed

4. Polysemic constructs

- Polysemy within the 'suppose' meaning:
 - (13) /Pues lo mejor *imagino*/Será acabar con la muerte./ (1605, Lope de Vega Carpio, *Romances, en Segunda parte del Romancero general*, CDH)
 - (14) Doralice: *M'immagino* vi sarà dell'oro, o dell'argento nel drappo. (1750, Carlo Goldoni, *La famiglia dell'antiquario*, BIBIT)
- Two grammatical structures are possible: [V ⇒CL], [DM← CL]
- In the second structure *imagino* and *m'immagino* are discourse markers (DM)
- Reanalysis (Langacker 1977; Timberlake 1977)

5. Adaptive constructs

- Meroconstruct displays gradual adaptation/adjustment to new constructional association
- *Actualization* (Timberlake 1977)
- *Isolating contexts* (Diewald 2002; Smirnova 2015)
- *Switch contexts* (Heine 2002)
- In the case of *imaginer*, *immaginare* and *imaginar*:
 - Adaptation to the discourse marker construction
 - Detached/parenthetical position
 - Reduced valency
 - Formal reduction

5. Adaptive constructs

- Spanish in the 16th and 17th centuries
- (15) /Porque al fin con este enredo/gozar segura *imagino*/del amor de Bandalino./ (1594, Lope de Vega Carpio, *El maestro de danzar*, CDH)
- (16) /Git. Óyeme,/que zerán, *imagino*,/puez que los trez zon Magos,/hombrez de ezfera./ (1678, Vicente Sánchez, *Lira Poética*, CDH)

5. Adaptive constructs

- Italian and French in the 16th and 17th centuries
 - *M'immagino* and *je m'imagine*
- (17) et era (*m'immagino*) appunto della tacca del sudetto dottore.
(1596, Tommaso Costo, *Il fuggilozio*, LIZ)
- (18) /Vous l'avez fait, *je m'imagine*,/ce petit rondeau qui
rafine/tous les rondeaux de ce temps-cy./ (1649, Claude
Malleville, Œuvres poétiques : 1, *Frantext*)

5. Adaptive constructs

- French and Italian in the 18th and 19th centuries
 - *J' imagine* and *immagino*
- (19) la variété des objets et l'abondance des idées qui n'ont jamais, *j' imagine*, passé par aucune tête que la mienne. (1774, Denis Diderot, *Lettres à Sophie Volland : t. 2* (26 sept. 1762-1774, *Frantext*)
- (20) Enrichetta: Perché senza vederla carina? Sarà vostra amica, *immagino* ... adesso la farò chiamare ... (1870, Giovanni Sabbatini (ed.), *Commedie e drammi per gl'istituti d'educazione*)

6. Conclusion

- Extensional constructs:
 - Meroconstruct associated with 'old' construction
 - Indicate semantic/structural extension of 'old' construction
- Polysemic constructs:
 - Meroconstruct associated with 'old' and 'new' construction
 - May involve structural reanalysis
- Adaptive constructs:
 - Meroconstruct associated with 'new' construction
 - Display structural adaptation to 'new' construction

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