

Newness in the creative mind:

the constructional patterning of instrumental causality in Italian (future) events

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This paper deals with the expression of newness and creativity in instrumental processes. Not only is the ability to reflect upon our future central to human cognition, but human intentionality also involves planning and therefore acting causally on the future by means of old and new instruments. From a linguistic point of view, only limited work has been done on the expression and semantics of thinking this instrumental future in different types of (nominal and verbal) predications (Gross 2009, Gross et al. 2005). The goal of this paper is to better understand the conceptual and linguistic relation between causality (Sanders and Sweetser 2009), instrumentals and futurity in authentic discourse.

Instrumentals are parts of global causative action chains (Langacker 2008): in causing events, agents (intentionally) use instruments in order to achieve effects and goals (Talmy 2000), which appear in caused events. Here, the patient undergoing the transfer of energy performed by the agent is subject to change. This paper is part of a research line in which we examine the interaction between the instrumental role and causality in Romance languages (Sambre & Wermuth 2009, 2010, Sambre *fc.*).

We examine grammatical patterns which make reference to *new* and/or *creative* (use of) instruments. In these linguistic patterns for expressing “newness” at least three conceptual dimensions meet.

1. These expressions set up analogical or counterfactual spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 2002, Sambre 2005) where new instruments and new uses of existing tools are contrasted with existing uses of conventional instruments. In Langackerian terms, novel distinctions between the old, existing and the other or new “vertically” or spatially elaborate upon nominal instrumental types.
2. The instrumental role entails a “horizontal”, temporal dimension: (new, creative and/or future) instruments are parts of causing processes and frequently refer to (new) consequences or (new) goals set by agents (Ferrari 2004). Both instruments and goals can be situated in the conceptualizer’s present, or, more importantly, in the future. Creative thinking about the use of new instruments is therefore closely connected with strategies to foretell or forecast the future.
3. As a result of the prospective causing character of newness in instrumentals, future effects (on the long or short term) may be epistemically organized on a modal axis leading from projected reality, over probability and potentiality, to consequences labeled as unreal or unrealistic (Langacker 1991, 2008, Sambre 2012).

The corpus consists of collocations surrounding mainly nominal or verbal (Stukker et al. 2008) strings referring to “new/creative” “instruments and use” based on the Italian *La Repubblica* corpus (Baroni et al. 2004), e.g. *nuov(o/i) strument(o/i)*, *strumento|uso creativo*, *user(à|anno)*, *utilizzer(à|anno)* [English translation: new instrument(s), creative use(s), he|they will use]. These collocations we transcribe, following CxG conventions (Fried and Östman 2004, Sambre *fc.*), as clausal and transphrastic patterns surrounding the *creative*, future and/or *new* instrumental core. As a result, we present a conceptual template for thinking the (future-oriented) causality of new/ creative instruments and use, as well as some correspondent constructional grammatical patterns for saying so in Italian.

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