

Constructions and Context(s) 2022

Université Paris 8, Vincennes – St. Denis
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Book of Abstracts



Conference Programme

9.30	Welcome & Registration	
9.50	Workshop opening Leclercq, Desagulier, Glynn	
10.00	Keynote Dominique Legallois (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) L'imprégnation contextuelle des formes linguistiques	
11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	Room MR.002	Room MR.005
11.30	Combettes & Dargnat L'« héritage » du contexte dans l'évolution des constructions	Erb Pronominal possessives in Modern Hebrew
12.00	Pinson The adversative value of <i>by the same token</i>	Romain <i>et al.</i> Context, construal and constraints
12.30	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14.00	Ivorra Ordines Un hambre que da calambre	Keromnes This construction would have had deserved more attention
14.30	Raineri Déconstruction du sens en contexte	Van den Stock <i>et al.</i> User-related determinants in attitudes towards productivity
15.00	Willich & Ziem Contexts in constructicography	Gavruseva Let's Drop the Object
15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16.00	Levshina & Lorenz The Principle of No Synonymy vs. communicative efficiency	Wiesinger Sémantique et pragmatique des constructions des verbes à particule
16.30	Politt Turning a construction and its context into a usage recipe	Pahontu La construction <i>a fi pe cale</i> 'être en voie de' en roumain
17.00	Tizón-Couto & Lorenz Co(n)text and the constructional status of coalesced variants	Pisciotta Beyond the written/spoken distinction

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Beyond the written/spoken distinction:

**Dialogicity, plannability, and the constructions with *sembrare*
'seem' in Italian**

In our study we investigate the contextual constraints of three constructions with *sembrare* 'seem': *sembrare* + infinitive, *sembra che* 'it seems that', and *mi sembra che* 'it seems to me that'. Research from a functionalist perspective has found differences in their evidential meanings, both in Italian and other European languages (Cornillie 2007, Aijmer 2009, Musi 2015), and highlighted preferences in their extra-linguistic context of use, suggesting an effect of formal vs. informal style (Kratschmer 2006) and of written vs. spoken modality (Cornillie 2007). However, our hypothesis is that these accounts are not integrated and specific enough to explain the distribution of these constructions. Consequently, we advocate for a finer-grained subdivision of production contexts, modelled as textual genres, and analyse how these affect the distribution and evidential values of *sembrare* + infinitive, *sembra che* and *mi sembra che*. We extract 216 total occurrences of these constructions from the written Italian corpus CORIS (Rossini Favretti *et al.* 2002) and 189 from the spoken Italian corpora LIP (De Mauro *et al.* 1993) and KIParla (Mauri *et al.* 2019). Occurrences are coded for the textual type they are from, distinguishing between eight levels, ordered from the most dialogic/less plannable to the most monologic/plannable (Voghera 2017). We also code their evidential/epistemic value, distinguishing between five levels: Inference, Perception-based Inference, Reportive, Belief, and Memory. We test the correlation between the frequency of each construction and the textual type (treated as an

ordinal variable) using Spearman correlation test. Evidential/epistemic values are investigated via a finer-grained qualitative analysis. Results show that the plannability/monologicity of texts has a high positive correlation with *sembrare* + infinitive ($r = 0.952381$), a high negative correlation with *mi sembra che* ($r = -0.9761905$) and no correlation with *sembra che* ($r = 0.1666667$). This suggests a preference for the expression of the experiencer in dialogic contexts, and a dispreference for more integrated structures, like *sembrare* + infinitive, in unplanned contexts. Furthermore, there is also an effect on the meaning of the constructions: as an example, Perception-based Inference, typical of speech situations, is also present in dialogic written genres, while Memory meanings show up only in unplanned genres and not in Monologic speech. These findings encourage to further study contextual constraints on syntactic constructions, and to overcome a sharp distinction between written and spoken language by looking at them as two poles of a continuum from more to less dialogic/plannable texts.

References

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