

Aspectual and temporal values of the Italian pluperfect in written and oral language

The aim of this work is to analyze the impact of the specific aspectual and temporal values of the pluperfect (*trapassato prossimo*) on its multiple uses in contemporary Italian.

The Italian pluperfect is widely used both in subordinate and independent clauses in order to express events which occurred before a given point of reference situated in the past. Although its prototypical uses are strictly linked to resultativity, the pluperfect can be used both in perfective and imperfective contexts, assuming a certain variety of functions.

The first chapter provides the methodological, theoretical and terminological framework for the research, by defining the categories of time, aspect, and presenting the difference between the verbal and lexical aspect (*aktionsart*). The categories of perfectivity, imperfectivity and resultativity are defined by adopting the revised version of Reichenbach's model, developed by Apothéloz (2017/2021).

The second chapter is dedicated to the specific aspectual and temporal values of the Italian pluperfect. After considering different definitions found in textbooks of Italian for foreigners and prestigious grammar compendiums, *trapassato prossimo* is described thanks to Apothéloz's (2017/2021) chronograms. According to this model, the pluperfect presents two main aspectual interpretations: *resultative*, where the temporal reference localizes a *resultative state* produced by a previous event, and *processive*, which focuses on the event itself. The state produced by the resultative interpretation has an imperfective character, while the event expressed by the processive pluperfect displays a perfective point of view.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyze the different uses of the Italian pluperfect in contemporary literary prose. The third chapter is focused on the main storyline, while the second is entirely devoted to flashbacks (or *analepsis*). The distinction between these two narrative dimensions allows to isolate and identify several textual uses of *trapassato prossimo* which hadn't been investigated before

The final chapter focuses on the use of the pluperfect in spoken Italian. Most of the uses described in the written language appear in the oral form as well - even those which seemed to be strictly related to the structures of literary prose. On the other hand, several new usages directly linked with the pragmatical dimension of the dialogical context appeared.

While the Italian pluperfect is primarily used to freeze or push-back the narrative in the main storyline, inside analeptic fragments it can push forward the thread-of-discourse with a propulsive function, which is typical of perfective tenses such as the simple past (*passato remoto*). However,

this property doesn't seem to involve a change in its aspectual values, linked with the so-called *aoristic drift*. In fact, all the uses described in this thesis appear to be strictly related to the presence of a point of reference in the aspectual structure of *trapassato prossimo*.