

The interface between proximative and avertive in Romance

Sarah Schwellenbach (University of Cologne)

sarah.schwellenbach@uni-koeln.de

avertive; proximative; semantics/pragmatics interface; grammaticalization; Romance languages

Since Kuteva (1998; 2001) the proximative as an imminent gram and the avertive expressing imminence, past time reference and counterfactuality are considered to be two distinct but closely related grams. However, the complex link between the two categories is still leading scholars to controversial assumptions about the more specific category, avertive. Furthermore, there has been no consensus on their diachronic relationship. Despite the grammaticalization path observed by Kuteva (1998; 2001) in Bulgarian, which gives rise to an avertive-to-proximative development via generalization (i.e. loss of specificity with respect to pastness and counterfactuality), Bellostá von Colbe (2001a; b) proposes the alternative route proximative-to-avertive (i.e. addition of specificities by the conventionalization of inferences) for Romance languages. This talk will discuss the interface between proximative and avertive in Romance languages based on both synchronic and diachronic corpus data. First, the constraints that determine the difference between the two categories will be explored both at the semantics/syntax interface and at the semantics/pragmatics interface of signs expressing the avertive meaning. Second, different grammaticalization paths in Romance languages will be discussed by empirical evidence. Finally, a comparative historical approach will try to elucidate the different stages of grammaticalization in Romance languages.