In this talk I will discuss some aspects of the grammaticalization of lexical verbs as passive auxiliaries in Romance and the reanalysis of reflexives as voice markers, focusing on the diachronic relationship between auxiliation and serialization, and the direction of the changes, trying to detect general and areal features of the grammaticalization patterns investigated (Bisang 2008; Heine & Kuteva 2011, among others).

More specifically, I will consider the grammaticalization of some motion (COME), activity (DO/MAKE) and change of state (BECOME) verbs in the transition from Latin to (Italo-)Romance, in relation to the status of serial/light verbs — whether intermediate stages in the auxiliarization process (Rosen 1977, Giacalone Ramat 2000, among others) or a different syntactic category (Butt 2003) — and to the linearity of the relationship between serial verb and auxiliary (following the path verbal lexeme > serial > auxiliary) (Heine 2003, Hopper & Traugott 2003 and recent discussion in Bisang 2011, Börjars & Vincent 2011, among others).

I will argue that, although characterized by maximal desemanticization on a par with auxiliaries, the serial uses of the verbs under investigation in (Italo-)Romance seem to exhibit a different type rather than a reduced degree of decategorialization. I will also show that the relationship serial verb-auxiliary is non-linear: the same lexeme, in fact, can have simultaneously auxiliary and serial uses, the latter developing, for some verbs, after their auxiliary uses (Cennamo 2006, 2007).

Other types of grammaticalization instead, appear to follow a linear path, like the reanalysis of the reflexive morpheme as a voice marker, proceeding from anticausative to passive and optionally to an impersonal/indefinite reinterpretation, the latter attested to a different degree in Romance (Cennamo 1993, 2014, forthc.). Evidence for this claim is also given by changes currently taking place in Brazilian Portuguese, involving the loss of the reflexive as a passive marker, whilst its impersonal/indefinite function is retained and widely used (Cyrino 2007, 2013).

References


