SLE2023 WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

Similarity of quality and denominal similatives: semantic sources, pathways, and types of usage

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Recognition of similarity has been proposed to be fundamental to human mental object representations and categorization (Rosch 1975; Goldstone 1994; Cooke et al. 2007; Hahn & Ramscar 2001; Hampton 2015 among others). *Like*, *way*, *such* and *as*, grouped under the category of similarity, have been listed among semantic primes, i.e. "simple universal concepts that are embedded in the lexicons of all (or most) human languages" (Goddard & Wierzbicka 2014: 11-12). One way or another, the concept of similarity is believed to be ubiquitous across languages. It has multiple facets: from physical resemblance to vague reminiscence to simulation (Fortescue 2010), from similarity of manner to similarity of quality (Insara 2021).

In linguistic literature, similarity has been largely examined in the context of 'sameness' and the discussion has focused on the question whether the two notions are considered parts of one conceptual continuum 'same' – 'similar' – 'different' or whether they are juxtaposed (Sovran 1992; Arutjunova 1990; Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998; Fortescue 2010; Treis & Vanhove 2017; Insara 2021; Umbach & Gust 2021). In this sense, similarity has been further classified along two dimensions of contrast: scalarity vs non-scalarity and equality vs inequality (Bužarovska 2005), covering both exactness between two objects (identical dimension or degree) as well as their partial similarity (being reminiscent of, seeming to, (vaguely) reminding of). Another fruitful avenue of research has been the study of the link between similarity on the one hand and irrealis, evidentiality and epistemic and non-epistemic modality on the other (Letuchiy 2008, Gipper 2018; Creissels 2017; Wiemer 2020). In various studies, similarity has been associated with secondariness (copying, pretending), vagueness (kind of), repetitiveness (the same as on a previous occasion or at a different place), and likeliness (likely to occur). Even though various subtypes of similarity depending on the base of comparison have been taken into consideration, including but not limited to physical resemblance (similarity in shape or other visual property), functional resemblance (acting in the manner of something else or having the same status), and evaluative resemblance (similarity in value), most of the studies have been engaged with inspection of similarity of manner (1), (consider Giomi 2022), while similarity of quality (2) remains understudied.

1) *He sings **like** a nightingale.* (Haspelmath & Buchholz 1998: 278)

2) *There is movement towards, I think, something **in the nature of** a pluralistic system.* (Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

In this workshop, we would like to refine the distinction between different types of similarity, and to draw particular attention to markers of similarity of quality. Typically being part of a nominal phrase, they reveal a tendency to be based either on a genitive structure (e.g. *tipo* in Romance languages < *del tipo*, Polish *typu*GEN, *pokroju*GEN), like in (3), or on a prepositional phrase, like in (4). The latter can involve various prepositions, such as *in + (Det) + N + of/Gen* in languages of various groups (e.g. English *in the nature of*, German *in der Art von*, French *dans le genre de*, Polish *w rodzaju* and *w stylu* or Russian *vrode* and *v duxe)* or *na* 'onto' *+ N +GEN* in Slavic languages (Russian *napodobie*, *na fason*, Ukrainian *na zrazok*, Polish *na kształt*, *na wzór*, *na obraz*, Czech *na způsob,* Serbian *na foru*), cf. French *à la (manière de), à l'image de*.

3) Pol. *zdarzali się takže ludzie   **pokroju**   krawca   Kujawskiego* (NKJP)
happen3PL.PAST also peopleNOM pokroju tailorGEN.SG.M KujawskiGEN.SG.M'
                                          <*pokrójGEN.SG

'there were also people like (similar to) Kujawski, the tailor'

4) Ru. *malen'kij xvostik   **napodobie**   porosjač'ego* (RNC)
smallNOM.SG.M tailNOM.SG.M napodobie pigADJ.GEN.SG.M
                             < na+podobieACC.N.SG

'a small tail similar to a pig's tail'

Similatives originate from various semantic classes, including demonstratives and a recently well-studied class of taxonomic nouns (TNs). The evolution of TN constructions proves that while entering the role of similatives, these items can gain approximative (quantifying and hedging), exemplifying, and quotative functions (Mihatsch et al. In Press). Achieving new functions may be paired with a change in the case assignment in the nominal complements in inflected languages, as well as opening up to non-nominal complements (phrases or clauses) (Janebová et al., In Press). However, it has also been observed that not all elements of the TN class follow this pathway and some, like Czech *druh* 'kind/sort', retain their subtype meaning. This begs the question why only some elements of one semantic class develop similative function and what enables such functional layering. We propose that investigating other semantic classes that give rise to constructions of similar developmental pathways, such as nouns with the meaning 'style' or 'spirit', can help us understand not only how similatives come to life but also what types of similarity they communicate and whether these strategies are shared by multiple languages.

In this workshop, we are especially interested in new markers that have undergone grammaticalization or other '-ization' processes to explore the function of similatives, their sources (semantic, structural), and their development paths. We also welcome papers that adopt synchronic perspective and present the scope of present-day usage of similatives, differentiate them from existing homographs, or contrast similatives from various languages.

The questions addressed in the workshop include but are not limited to:

- Which criteria can be used to distinguish various types of similarity (similarity of quality, degree or manner; intensional and extensional similarity)?
- What are the semantic sources of similarity markers?
- What are the mechanisms and motivation behind the change that results in the rise of a similarity marker?
- In what way constructions' morphosyntactic properties (e.g. the genitive and the prepositional phrase) are conducive to this process?
- Is similarity purely perceptually based in a natural language?
- What is the role of similatives in categorization?
- What is the scope of usage of particular similatives?
- Are there further paths of grammaticalization to which markers of similarity of quality are susceptible?

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