

## **Morphological cumulation through phonological fusion? The case of person and number** [oral or poster]

For morphologically **separative** exponents to become **cumulative** by means of phonological **fusion** (with sandhi processes of various kinds obscuring and eventually obliterating internal morpheme boundaries), consistent or at any rate frequent **adjacency** is a precondition: the exponents of two co-occurring categories are not fused at a distance. Now, for the terms of any given pair of morphological categories, if we find their separative exponents equally often adjacent and non-adjacent across languages which have both categories, we may conclude, *ceteris paribus*, that phonological fusion cannot be such a forceful agent in transforming separation into cumulation – for adjacent exponents would otherwise be less frequent because, in the course of time, they would have become fused.

The pair of categories that we have investigated for present purposes are PERSON and NUMBER (or, more appropriately in connection with PERSON, ASSOCIATION or AUGMENTATION, formally sometimes distinct from and sometimes similar to plain nominal NUMBER).

For inflectional and clitical PERSON and ASSOCIATION markers it is overall far more common to be cumulated than to be separated. The usual explanation is that this is to be attributed to the historical origins of phonologically or morphologically bound PERSON-and-ASSOCIATION markers in independent pronouns, with these categories already cumulated. This explanation is unsatisfactory (i) because independent PERSON forms themselves can well be separative relative to ASSOCIATION and vice versa (cf. Mandarin *wo-men* SPEAKER-ASSOC etc., Turkish *b-iz* SPEAKER-ASSOC, *s-iz* ADDRESSEE-ASSOC, *on-lar* 3-PL etc.) and (ii) because the phonological and morphological processes attendant upon the grammaticalisation of such source forms are not guaranteed to be structure-preserving. (And if independent PERSON forms are frequently cumulated with ASSOCIATION marking, this inclination itself would call for an explanation.)

At any rate, instances of separative bound marking of PERSON and ASSOCIATION – for all or some PERSONS, for all or some ASSOCIATION terms (augmented/plural, restricted- or unit-augmented/dual, trial, paucal), for all or some series of bound forms (with verbs, nouns, adpositions, or other words as hosts/bases), for all or some contextual categories (tenses/aspects, with occasional splits between perfective and imperfective, or moods, with occasional splits between imperatives and indicatives) – are attested in a genealogically and areally diverse range of languages. There is a tendency for such separation, by comparison with more common cumulation, to run in families, which suggests some degree of diachronic stability.

One generalisation that emerges from our sample of currently some 100 languages is that separate PERSON tends to come before ASSOCIATION when both are bound, regardless of whether they are prefixes/proclitics or suffixes/enclitics or either. In the matter at issue, PERSON marking and separate ASSOCIATION marking are less frequently found to be adjacent than non-adjacent; but the difference is not really massive. From this line of reasoning, there is thus no overwhelming support for the assumption that morphological cumulation prototypically results from phonological fusion.

This negative result fits in with other evidence, not to be elaborated here, that fusion has traditionally been overestimated and morphological reanalysis (typically triggered by zero forms in paradigms) been underestimated as instrumental in creating cumulative morphology.

(Needless to add, this paper is a plea to terminologically distinguish between “cumulation” and “fusion” in morphological typology.)