

Affix suspension: intersection of morphology, syntax and semantics

Loose bonding and optional marking of morphological categories are commonly considered as 'hallmarks of agglutination' (Plank 1999). In this paper, I examine an intersection of these two parameters in co-ordinate structures, focusing on a phenomenon known in Turkish linguistics as suspended affixation (SA, Lewis 1967). I will extend this notion to comparable cases in Korean, interpreting SA as any case of optional affixation in non-final conjuncts via either optional dropping or optional marking of affixes (as shown in 1 and 2, where empty slots correspond to restorable affixes).

- (1) (default) $X'_{s1+s2+s3}$ and $X''_{s1+s2+s3}$ = (option) $X'_{_ _ _}$ and $X''_{s1+s2+s3}$
 (2) (default) $X'_{_ _ _}$ and $X''_{s1+s2+s3}$ = (option) $X'_{s1+s2+s3}$ and $X''_{s1+s2+s3}$

I address a number of empirical and theoretical issues in the context of SA. In particular, I ask whether loose bonding and optional marking are related phenomena and compare the conditions under which SA takes places in Turkish and Korean. I also investigate the interpretation of double marking of conjuncts when affix dropping is optional.

I will first outline the extent of SA in Turkish and Korean - two canonically agglutinative languages with different coordination strategies, co-ranking and chaining respectively. Both languages are known for their broad use of optionality in affixation of single words (when it is retrievable from the context). In coordinate structures, however, the optionality of affix dropping (in Turkish) or optionality of affix inserting (in Korean) constitutes the exception rather than the default: SA is licensed only under specific circumstances while the default models (full inflection for Turkish and non-affixation for Korean) need no precondition, and are mostly obligatory. This suggests that syntax resists optionality irrespective of which coordination pattern languages employ.

Second, we give an insight of the inner mechanism of SA in the two languages. It has been claimed that affixes can be optionally dropped in Turkish if omission leaves behind a "morphological word", i.e. an independent word that can stand alone (Kabak 2007). Accordingly, suspension of nominal affixes is widespread, since nominal stems are free morphemes in Turkish. Since verbal stems are bound morphemes, verbal inflection can be omitted only after specific aspectual/modal forms, which are treated as independent items. However, the concept of "morphological word" is not applicable to Korean, where semantic criteria are more likely to be involved. Korean nominal stems are also free morphemes but the coordination pattern conjoining nouns via the connective case marker tolerates optionality (i.e. optional marking) only for the animacy-marked dative, ablative, as well as plural. Likewise, semantic criteria are crucial for verbal affixation. For instance, the medial verb can be optionally marked with past tense suffix only in "pseudo-subordinate structures" (Yuasa & Saddock 2002), where changing the order of clauses does not affect the truth conditions. Therefore, SA is permitted under different conditions in different languages: morphological in Turkish and semantic in Korean.

Finally, focusing on Korean, I address the nature of double marking in structures, where omission is possible. It will be suggested that double affixation does not always lead to redundancy: in (3) it expresses contrastive conjoining ('while'), in (4) – additive ('as well as'), in (5) – distributive ('each')

- (3) NPsubj1 $\underline{VP'_{+s}}$ & NPsubj2 $\underline{VP''_{+s}}$
 (4) NPsubj $\underline{VP'_{+s}}$ & $\underline{VP''_{+s}}$
 (5) $\underline{NP'_{+s}}$ & $\underline{NP''_{+s}}$

Thus, examples of SA demonstrate that loose bonding characterizing the agglutinative type of morphology does not automatically guarantee optionality in affixation which is triggered by extra-morphological factors.

References

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