

The Rarity Scale of Addition

This paper tackles the generally accepted classification of additive constructions. My sample is the first explicitly described worldwide one for this purpose (300+ languages, cf. HANKE 2005). The rarity scale of addition will be expanded and adjusted. By the way, numeralization gets back to recent methods of grammaticalization theory and typology.

The most common type of sums is unmarked like *thirty-eight*. GREENBERG (1978: 264f.) discusses the following marked types, recognized by the source of their simple links:

1. the second most common “comitative” type: ‘and, with’
2. superessive links: ‘on, over’,
3. possessive links,
4. rare expressions for additional objects: ‘extra’, ‘left’.

This classification and the ascending rarity are generally accepted, apparently without further research (cf. HURFORD 1987: 237, HEINE 1997: 33f., GREENBERG 2000: 777).

I present the following modifications:

1. Coordination – including verbal constructions – is common. But: comitative constructions occur only as an indirect source on the pathway ‘with’ – ‘and’ – ‘plus’.
2. The superessive is frequent. But: other locative sources occur, including ‘under’ and movement expressions like ‘to place’ or ‘come inside’.
3. Possessive sources include ‘have’ and ‘get’ constructions.
4. Greenberg's hypothesis, that augends are always unexpressed with ‘left’, is falsified. Its base was apparently only the first decade in Germanic and Baltic languages.

In addition, there are a range of other rare types, including overcounting and overtly bodily concepts. Independent from their complexity or rarity, asymmetric sources occur only in serial addition (+1, +2, +3 ...), as predicted by Greenberg (1978: 265f.).

As a main conclusion, sums are not restricted to simple links. The rare and not-so-rare sources make up a new classification. The range of constructions shows that numeralization is a good example of complex conventionalizations. Previous accounts explain only the frequent parts of the scale or even a wrong range of sources.

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