[In *Representing Language: Essays in honor of Judith Aissen*, ed. by Rodrigo Gutiérrez-Bravo, Line Mikkelsen and Eric Potsdam, 173-179. California Digital Library eScholarship Repository. Linguistic Research Center, University of California, Santa Cruz (2011)]

ON PRONOUN-PERSONAL AFFIX CONNECTIONS: SOME LIGHT FROM ALGONQUIAN*

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Many languages show connections between personal pronouns and verbal person affixes, understandably, since both are often functionally equivalent with identical real-world referents. This relationship is variously manifested. First, pronouns can affect corresponding personal affixes in form (as in New Mexican Spanish *hablaba-nos* 'we were speaking', for older *–mos*, based on the free pronoun *nos(otros)*). Second, the ending can affect the pronoun, like *hablabanos* but with opposite directionality, as in Judeo-Spanish *mosotros* 'we' for older *nosotros*, based on the ending *–mos*. Yet another manifestation, in the "canon" of grammaticalization theory, involves pronouns as the historical source of personal affixes (cf. Givón 1971, Lehmann 1982). Importantly, too, there are countervailing processes that build up rather than reduce pronouns, as shown by Hale (1982) for Warlpiri. I examine here the pronoun-affix connection in Plains Cree, and argue that it shows an elaborative, not reductive, connection. I then use that evidence, with reference as well to Modern Greek, as a caution for grammaticalization theory with its intense interest in the source of affixes as opposed to that of pronominal systems more generally.

There is an undeniable relationship in language between personal pronouns and verbal affixes that mark person (recognizing of course that not all languages have such affixes). The existence of such a connection is understandable, given that both personal pronouns and personal affixes have the same real-world referents and are thus functionally equivalent in a certain sense. They may of course differ in some ways, e.g. pragmatically with regard to matters of emphasis, as in languages like Spanish or Greek, typical "pro-Drop" languages, where the occurrence of an overt pronoun is emphatic in ways that the mere appearance of verbal affixes alone is not, as in (1):

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* It is a great pleasure to be in a position to write a paper honoring Judith Aissen, from whom I learned much during my graduate work at Harvard University. Not only was I a student in several of her classes but she also served as my primary academic advisor for a few years before she left to take a position at Yale. She was then an exemplary teacher, whose style I have tried to emulate in my own approach to teaching, and as a scholar, she was equally formidable. It is fair to say that without her guidance and the knowledge of and enthusiasm for the study of syntax, I would not have produced the dissertation that I did, on a topic in the historical syntax of Greek (Joseph 1978/1990). I salute you, Judith, and happily dedicate this small contribution to you!

(1) a. Escribo / γrafo 'I write'
b. Yo escribo / eγo γrafo '*I* write' (i.e., "I am the one who is writing")

The final *–o* on the verbs and the pronouns *yo*/*eγo* fill (or refer to, at least) the same argument slot semantically (subject, in this case) but the presence of the pronoun in (b) adds a pragmatic effect that is absent in (a).

This connection between pronouns and affixes is manifested in several ways. First, there are well-documented and well-understood cases in which a pronoun has affected the form of corresponding personal affixes. For instance, as discussed in Joseph 2004, dialectally in Macedonian and Bulgarian a first person plural (1PL) ending *–ne* occurs, as in *sne* 'we are', *vidofne* 'we saw' (Mac.), as opposed to the more widespread *–me*, as in standard Macedonian *sme*/*vidofme*, and this innovative *–ne* is best explained as the ending being affected analogically by the free pronoun *nie* 'we'. Similarly, in early Slavic, as discussed in Dunkel 2002, the first person dual ending *–vě* occurs for expected *–va*, due, apparently, to the influence of the dual pronoun *vě*. Further, in New Mexican Spanish, the innovative 1PL ending *–nos* occurs for more widely distributed and etymologically prior *–mos* as a result of pressure from the free pronoun *nos(otros)*, as demonstrated by Janda (1995).[1]

Second, another reflection of this connection comes from instances in which the pronoun is affected by the ending; this involves the same sort of pressure as that described above, but with the opposite directionality. Spanish provides a pertinent example, in that there are dialects, including Judeo-Spanish, that have *mosotros* as the 1PL pronoun, instead of the more usual *nosotros*, where the 1PL ending *–mos* seems to provide the best basis for explaining the innovative, and etymologically unexpected, initial consonant of the pronominal form.

There is yet another manifestation of this relationship, one that is to be found in what may be called the "canon" of grammaticalization theory: pronouns as the historical source of personal affixes. Lehmann (1982), for instance, offers the following scenario for the development of verbal agreement markers:

(2)	lexically empty noun	=>	free personal pronoun	=>	clitic personal pronoun	=>	agglutinative personal affix	=>	fusional personal affix

This notion actually has a long history, extending back at least to the early work on Indo-European morphology by Franz Bopp, who noticed the obvious relationship within reconstructed Proto-Indo-European between the *–m-* of first person singular and plural endings and the *–m-* of oblique forms of the 1st person pronoun, as in (3):

(3) AccSg **m*e, DatSg **m*e-bhei, (etc.) ~ 1SG *–*m*(i) / 1PL *-*m*es

[1] For some other such examples, see Joseph 2004, 2006.

And, to bring this closer to the area of study, geographically speaking at least, that the honorand is best known for,[2] we can point to the early work on Zapotec and other languages of Oaxaca by de Angulo (1926), who, in looking into Zapotec, Mixtec, Chinantec, Mazatec, Cuicatec, Chatino, and Chocho, suggested that some of these languages can be viewed as being "essentially monosyllabic [and] … undergoing an evolution toward the development of a system of pronominal suffixes … [which] can be traced through a series of dialectical variations all the way from a mere repetition of the pronoun after the verb, through agglutination, to fused 'inflection' of verbal endings". Thus for de Angulo, the Cuiatec verb forms in (4a-b):

(4) a. nu reenu
1PL.EXCL.PRONOUN eat+1PL.EXCL
'We (Excl.) are-eating'
b. inya reenya
3PL.PRONOUN eat+3PL
'They are-eating'

show the "suffixes *–nu* and *–nya*" and he notes that they involve "repetitions of the independent pronoun". He thus had in mind a pronoun-to-verb-ending line of development as a way of characterizing the differences among some of these languages and some dialects within these languages with regard to person marking.

Moreover, the development of free pronouns into affixal markers has been documented in the relatively recent history of French by Sauvageot (1962) and Auger (1993). Such studies mean that this well-recognized development is not subject to the potential whims and pitfalls one encounters when dealing with reconstructed material and to the inevitable speculativeness that such data occasions; rather it can be taken as instantiated within the known history of at least one language.[3] In these accounts, the pronominal forms in a French string like (5):

(5) je=le=vois
I him see
'I see him'

have characteristics of affixes (showing morphological idiosyncrasy in certain ways, for instance) and thus are no longer free pronouns, but neither are they simply phonologically cliticized onto the verb.

It is fair to wonder whether there can be countervailing processes that build up rather than reduce pronouns, and this issue is the real focus of the present discussion. That is, in addition to

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[2] I have in mind, of course, Judith's important work on Mayan, especially Tzotzil (e.g., Aissen 1987), though I note that Judith has done important work on Spanish syntax (e.g., Aissen and Perlmutter 1983), work that I was privileged to hear about first-hand from her while a student in the mid 1970s.

[3] The fact that this sort of development can be documented for at least one language, namely French, means that Bopp's internal reconstruction of the origins of the Indo-European personal endings may well be right; however, as with most internal reconstruction, and especially that done on a reconstructed proto-language, it is impossible to be completely certain as to its correctness.

all of the foregoing, there is yet another way that the relationship between pronouns and verb endings can be realized, and this is exemplified nicely by some Algonquian data, though parallels with similar situations in Australian languages and in Modern Greek can be adduced. In the end, moreover, these developments provide the basis for a cautionary warning for grammaticalization and its intense interest in where affixes come from as opposed to where pronominal systems more generally come from.

First, by way of introducing the issue, it can be noted that various Australian languages exhibit a pronominal system with bound elements on verbs that are quite different from their corresponding independent form. For instance, as discussed in Hale 1982, Warlpiri has an independent pronominal subject form *nganimpa-rlu*, shown in (6) in bold, and a reduced bound pronoun consisting of the discontinuous pieces *rna…lu*, shown in (6) in italics:

(6) Pura -mi =nya =*rna*=ngku=*lu* **nganimpa-rlu**=ju?
follow -PRES =INTRG =1PL.EXCL=2SG.OBJ 1PL.ERG =DEF
'Do we follow you?'

Such forms have been conjectured by Hale (1973:340) to have arisen as follows:

> The source of pronominal clitics in Walbiri is in fact independent pronouns which, at some stage in the prehistory of the language, became unstressed and were attracted into clitic position (that is, second position) in accordance with a principle of clitic placement which is extremely widespread among languages of the world. The processes of destressing and cliticizing pronouns eventually became an obligatory rule and subsequently, independent pronouns were re-created from other sources available to the language, such as oblique forms of pronouns like those found in possessive or other functions not normally subject to cliticization. Such a sequence of events seems quite suggestive and is, moreover, entirely compatible with the synchronic state of affairs in which pronominal clitics no longer necessarily resemble, in phonological constituency, the determiners which they most closely approximate in grammatical feature composition.

When the phonological forms are as different as they are in Warlpiri, Hale's scenario, even if just speculative, is quite reasonable and believable.

But there are cases where the phonological forms are somewhat similar, sharing a fair amount of phonological material. In such instances, unlike the Warlpiri situation, there is rather the potential for thinking in terms of the second type of relationship, the one enshrined in the grammaticalization canon, in which the affixal form is a reduction of the independent form (as in the first part of Hale's scenario), even though, as it turns out, it may not be the right view.

An example of that sort is offered by Plains Cree, which shows both affixes and pronouns, as in (7), whose phonological forms are close enough to suggest a relationship via the reduction scenario, starting from the use of free pronouns as the subject of verbs and drawing on stresslessness, as Hale suggests; positing reduction of the strong forms would thus be a way to account for the origin of the affixal elements:

(7) a. Affixes: 1st person: *ni-*; 2nd person: *ki-*

b. Free pronouns: 1st person: *nīya*; 2nd person: *kīya*
e.g. ***ki****-wāpin* 'you have a vision'; *tanisi* ***kīya*** 'How (are) you?'

These forms have overlapping phonological material, sharing *n* and a high front vowel in the 1st person and *k* and a high front vowel in the 2nd person, though it must be admitted that the vowel is short in the affix and long in the full form. Not only that, but Cree also has a morphophonemic reduction of some sequences of VyV to a long vowel, V: (Wolfart 1973:81), and a short outcome, such as is found in the personal affixes, could plausibly be accounted for if, as Hale suggests for Warlpiri, the reduction occurred in a weak prosodic context; admittedly the particular vowels involved in the pronouns are not ones that occur in the morphophonemically reduced sequences, but by assuming that the weak prosodic context took in a wider range of input sequences, one at least gets close to the desired result. Thus, contraction of *kīya* could yield a presumed *kī* from which the short *ki* could plausibly have arisen; it must be recognized that these steps are ad hoc assumptions but at least they are phonologically natural.

Still, once one takes a more comprehensive set of data into consideration, the picture alters somewhat, in a few ways. First, as shown in (8), *ki*/*ni* are used to mark possession too:

(8) ki-maskisin (2nd – 'shoe') / ni-maskisin (1st – 'shoe') => 'your/my shoe'

This means that they are not just *verbal* person markers but rather are person markers more generally, and their use in possession constructions would not necessarily be amenable to the same sort of reduction scenario; in particular, the strong pronominal forms are not generally used in possessive constructions. Second, although the reduction of *kīya* to *ki* seems plausible, it is really so only for Plains Cree; dialectally within Cree, the Plains Cree *–y-* in this word finds correspondents with *–l-* (Moose Cree), *-n-* (Swampy Cree), and *-đ-* (Woods Cree), sounds that are more robust phonologically and thus less likely to delete. And, this is so also across Algonquian, where the pronoun has forms with medial *–l-*, *-n-*, etc. Finally, *ki*/*ni* are used in pronoun-like derivation, as in what Wolfart (1973: 38) calls the "affirmative" pronoun: *kīsta* / *nīsta* 'you/I too'.

All of these additional facts suggest that the strong forms *kīya*/*nīya* are built up out of the affixes *ki*/*ni*, added onto some other material, rather than *ki*/*ni* being reductions of *kīya*/*nīya*. Indeed, the reconstruction of Algonquian personal pronouns found in Bloomfield 1946 takes this very view: "A set of personal pronouns is based on a suffix *–iil-* with prefixes . . . [e.g.] *niila 'I'", and this seems to be generally agreed on, in that other available Algonquian sources (e.g. Aubin 1975) do not dispute this account. Thus, the pronouns consist of prefixal person marker *ki-*/*ni-* combining with a "base", the exact analysis of which, as a root or a stem or whatever, is not at issue here. That is, the Cree case is really rather like the Australian situation, where the strong form is built from a weak form taken as the starting point. Thus, even when one is dealing with phonological similarity between affixal forms and strong pronominal forms of person marking, caution is needed when it comes to drawing historical inferences about the forms in question; phonological similarity does not always point to the full-form-reducing-to-affix scenario.

The situation in Modern Greek with regard to strong versus weak pronominal forms is instructive here, since one finds similar-looking forms for which the history can be documented.

In particular, the Modern Greek accusative forms are those given in (9), with strong forms that are opposed to weak forms:

(9)	1SG.Strong:	eména	1SG.Weak:	me
	2SG.Strong:	eséna	2SG.Weak:	se

Based on the similarity in form between the strong and weak forms in (9), with *me* in both 1SG forms and *se* in both 2SG forms, if one only had the modern forms to work with and had no access to the history involved, one could (quite reasonably) take *me*/*se* to be reductions from *eména*/*eséna*. In fact, though, the *–na* in the strong forms represents the result of two additions onto older strong forms, *emé*/*esé*. These accretions took place in two waves, and consisted, first, of the vowel-stem accusative marker *–n* being added to the strong pronominal form ending in *–e*, which apparently was treated as a vowel-final stem, and second, of the consonant-stem accusative marker *–a* being added to the newly created strong forms *emén*/*esén*, treated as consonant-final stems. The Ancient Greek forms were as in (10):[4]

(10)	1SG.Strong:	emé	1SG.Weak:	me
	2SG.Strong:	sé	2SG.Weak:	se

meaning that the modern weak forms continue the ancient weak forms directly, while the strong forms have been independently reshaped.

As noted above, there is an important lesson in all of this for those who look to grammaticalization as a way of doing language history. In particular, all too often conclusions are drawn from nothing more than a correspondence of two similar forms at some synchronic stage; while that might be warranted on occasion and even in general, what Algonquian and Greek show is that in particular cases the actual history can be quite different. Moreover, with the Australian evidence added in, it is clear from these cases that morphological change is not always reductive in nature.

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[4] The Post-Classical strong form *esé* most likely has the initial *e-* analogically based on the first person form.

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