Why do affix changes due to reanalysis seem unidirectional?

Affix changes due to reanalysis are deemed unidirectional (Haspelmath 1995: 3, 21; 1998: 347) or nearly so (Haspelmath 1995: 20, 24), with AFFIX GROWTH prevailing over AFFIX REDUCTION. This paper offers an explanation of this asymmetry other than the general connection of cyclic language change to compensation for phonological reduction (cf. Haspelmath 1995; abandoned in Haspelmath 1999).

Affix changes result from three types of resegmenatation: BOUNDARY LOSS, BOUNDARY CREATION, and BOUNDARY SHIFT (cf. Langacker 1977). Affix growth involves boundary shift or boundary loss, whereas affix reduction – boundary shift or boundary creation. Following Detges and Waltereit (2002) and Szeptyński (2022; forthc.), this paper relies on the assumption that both boundary shift and boundary creation (but not boundary loss) require that a preexisting morpheme be falsely ("analogically") identified within the word's structure.

Since boundary shift may result in either affix growth or affix reduction (cf. above) and its status as an independent type of resegmentation is ambiguous (cf. below), the primary focus in this paper is on the contrast between affix growth resulting from boundary loss (TELESCOPING, Haspelmath 1995: 20) and affix reduction resulting from ("analogical") boundary creation (DISGLUTINATION, Haspelmath 1995: 3; see ex. 1 for Haspelmath's fictitious example; three real cases will be discussed, cf. exx. 2–4). This paper argues that the rarity of disglutination in comparison with telescoping is due to the former being severely constrained. So that an affix could be reduced, the preexisting morpheme to be falsely identified has to meet three conditions:

(i)   it has to match a substring of the affix,
(ii)   its meaning has to match the word's semantics (cf. Detges and Waltereit 2002: 161), moreover, in a metonymic or taxonomic rather than metaphoric way (Detges and Waltereit 2002: 165),
(iii)   it has to conform to the relevant morphotactic rules (e.g., pertaining to affix ordering).

The other two types of affix reduction predicted by Haspelmath (1995: 20) will also be addressed. First, the viability of SPLITTING has recently been questioned by Szeptyński (2022; forthc.) because of the lack of motivation (as well as evidence) for this type of change. Second, the case of INCRETION is more complex than that of disglutination, since the former relies on boundary shift, i.e., it probably combines boundary creation and boundary loss (cf. Langacker 1977: 66–67). The rarity of incretion, when compared with affix growth resulting from boundary shift (SECRETION, Haspelmath 1995: 8), can be explained by invoking the length of the root allomorph to be falsely identified: whereas incretion requires the preexistence of a longer allomorph which includes the root-adjacent portion of the affix, secretion involves a shorter one, which meets the relevant conditions (analogous to those discussed above) automatically.

Thus, the difference in frequency between affix growth and affix reduction arguably boils down to the constraints on boundary creation (also as part of boundary shift).

Examples:
1. "'Affix disglutination' […] requires that the language possesses an affix that is a substring of the reanalyzed affix. Thus, imagine German had a suffix *-el* deriving adjectives from verbs, e.g. **brechel* 'brittle' (from *brech(en)* 'break'). On the basis of this, the German suffix *-ling* (as in *Feig-ling* 'coward', from *feige*

'cowardly') could be disglutinated into **-*l* and **-*ing* (*Feig-ling > Feig-(e)l-ing*, cf. **brech-el → **Brechling 'brittle thing', and then *nett* 'nice' → **Nett-ing 'nice person')." (Haspelmath 1995: 20)

2. Substandard Slovene nominal suffix /-et-/ >> /-e-t-/ → hiatus filler /-t-/, as in *bimbo*, G.SG *bimbo-t-a* 'blockhead'. Cf. the preexisting allomorphy /-et-/ : /-e/. (Herrity 2006)

3. Substandard Slovene PRS.1DU /-va/ >> PRS.1DU-DU.M /-v-a/ → PRS.1DU /-v-/, as in PRS.1DU.F *gre-v-e* 'go'. Cf. the preexisting N.DU.M /-a/. (Jakop 2008)

4. Polish nominal suffix /-isk-/ >> /-is-k-/ → augmentative /-ix-/, as in *ogn-ich-o* 'big bonfire party'. Cf. the preexisting diminutive suffix /-k-/. (Szeptyński forthc.)

References:
DETGES, ULRICH, and RICHARD WALTEREIT. 2002. Grammaticalization vs. reanalysis: a semantic-pragmatic account of functional change in grammar. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 21(2), 151–195.
HASPELMATH, MARTIN. 1995. The growth of affixes in morphological reanalysis. *Yearbook of Morphology* 1994, ed. by Geert Booij and Jaap van Marle, 1–29. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
HASPELMATH, MARTIN. 1998. Does grammaticalization need reanalysis? *Studies in Language* 22(2), 315–351.
HASPELMATH, MARTIN. 1999. Why is grammaticalization irreversible? *Linguistics* 37(6), 1043–1068.
HERRITY, PETER. 2016. *Slovene. A Comprehensive Grammar*. 2nd ed. Abingdon/New York: Routledge.
JAKOP, TJAŠA. 2008. *The Dual in Slovene Dialects*. Bochum: Universitätsverlag Brockmeyer.
LANGACKER, RONALD W. 1977. Syntactic reanalysis. *Mechanisms of Syntactic Change*, ed. by Charles N. Li, 57–139. Austin/London: University of Texas Press.
SZEPTYŃSKI, RAFAŁ. 2022. Affix changes due to reanalysis: typology and directionality. Paper delivered at: *20th International Morphology Meeting*, Budapest, 1–4 September 2022. [http://www.nytud.hu/imm20/abstracts/main.pdf]
SZEPTYŃSKI, RAFAŁ. forthc. The reduction of affixes in morphological reanalysis: Polish neuters in *-ich-*. *Folia Linguistica Historica*.