snippets

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Fake indexicals, binding, and the PCC

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The Person Case Constraint (see Anagnostopoulou 2017) regulates combinations of clitics (or agreement) in many languages. While there is variation, the core case excludes an indexical (first or second person) accusative clitic in combination with a third person dative clitic, as in Italian (1a). A first person dative with a third person accusative is fine (1b).

(1) a. * Mi gli presenteranno.
1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT introduce.FUT.3PL.
'They will introduce me to him.'

b. Me lo presenteranno.
1SG.DAT 3SG.ACC introduce.FUT.3PL.
'They will introduce him to me.'

Morphological first and second person elements are not always interpreted as indexicals, as in *Only I did my homework*, where under the "fake indexical" reading, the first person pronoun *my* is interpreted as a bound variable: I am the only *x*, such that *x* did *x*'s homework (i.e., no one else did their homework) (Partee 1989; Heim 2008). To the limited extent we have investigated this, morphological first person accusatives are excluded in PCC contexts even where they are interpreted as bound variables and not as true indexicals, as in Italian (2). (There is some variation in the strength of the effect, but speakers agree that (1a) and (2) pattern together as a function of the person and case of the clitics. One speaker finds amelioration of both (1a) and (2) in some contexts.)

(2) * [(Solo io) mi gli sono presentato.]
(only 1SG.NOM) 1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT AUX introduced
'(Only) I introduced myself (lit: me) to him.'

Preliminary inquiries suggest the same holds in Greek, as in (3):

(3) * Monon ego nomizo oti tu me edikses.
Only I think.1SG that 3SG.DAT 1SG.ACC showed.2SG
Intended: 'Only I think that you showed me to him.'
(i.e., no one else thinks that you showed them to him)

The theoretical landscape of binding, the PCC, and fake indexicals is too varied to consider all combinatorial options here and we can only note some (im)possibilites. If cases like (2) and (3) are to be excluded by the PCC (see below for a different direction), fake indexical clitics must bear person features in the representation where the PCC is evaluated. Semantic approaches which manipulate, ignore or reinterpret the syntactically represented person features in some way

(e.g., von Stechow 2003; see Sudo 2012, Chapter 9 for an overview) are generally consistent with these facts. For example, under Sauerland's (2013) approach, fake indexicals bear person features in the syntax, but their person features (treated as presuppositions) are not carried over to the focus representation ("tier") and thus are interpreted as variables for alternatives. On the other hand, approaches where fake indexicals are featureless bound variables in syntax that acquire their person values through agreement or feature transfer (such as Kratzer 2009) must ensure that the PCC applies after such agreement (whether in the syntax or morphology).

Alternatively, (2) could be excluded by the Clitic Binding Restriction (CBR) (Bhatt and Šimík 2009), which prohibits a bound DO in a cluster with an IO regardless of the DO's person features. This generalization appears to hold in Italian, excluding clusters with reflexive clitics (of the form 'he$_i$ introduced self$_i$ to.her') as well as sentences with two third person clitics when the accusative is bound by a higher subject. The CBR would exclude (2), even if the PCC does not. Greek however might not be subject to the CBR, as suggested by the acceptability of (4). If we are interpreting this data point correctly, then the kind of data considered here could restrict choices among combinations of approaches to the PCC and the syntactic representation of reflexives and fake indexicals.

(4) I Maria$_i$ nomizi oti tu tin$_{i/j}$ ediksa.
the Maria think.3SG that 3DAT.MASC 3SG.ACC.FEM showed.1SG
Possible reading: 'Maria$_i$ thinks that I showed her$_i$ to him.'

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