The modular locus of the Person Case Constraint
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1. Introduction

- There is a venerable tradition of viewing the Person Case Constraint (PCC) as a morphological effect
  - see Bonet (1991) (and, arguably, Perlmutter 1968, 1971)\(^1\)
  - the main evidence in favor of this view comes from the distribution of PCC effects
    - which tracks, to an overwhelming degree, the presence vs. absence of overt \(\epsilon\)-agreement with internal arguments
- Recently, some have argued that the PCC involves the syntactic encoding of a semantic property (perspective), and thus, is a syntax-semantics interface effect
  - the main evidence in favor of this view is that PCC effects seem to discriminate between perspective-holding 3rd-person DPs and other 3rd-person DPs
- Chronologically and conceptually in between these two views is some lesser-known work showing that the PCC must be syntactic in nature
  - see Albizu (1997) and Rezac (2008)
  - the main evidence in favor of this view is that the PCC is sensitive to fine-grained structural relations within the verb phrase

➢ Today: an argument that the PCC is a quintessentially syntactic phenomenon
  - i.e., that Albizu (1997) and Rezac (2008) were right

- Preview:
  - a syntax-semantics effect should not have access to the particular forms of the syntactic terminals involved
    - yet an empirically-adequate account of the PCC requires exactly that
  - a morphological effect should not have access to fine-grained syntactic relations like c-command, nor to unboundedly large structural domains
    - yet an empirically-adequate account of the PCC requires exactly that
    ⇒ the only viable account of the PCC is a strictly syntactic one
- A methodological take-home message:
  - an effect \(E\) occurring in module \(M_1\) may have side-effects in some other module \(M_2\);
  - crucially, that does not yet mean \(E\) is a “\(M_2\) effect”

2. Getting Started

- Example: \(^2\) (Stay tuned for another example, involving the English passive!)

(1) a. \(\text{ar} \ t\text{j'a-e-xut'}-\text{o} \ \text{ara-vi-s}\) (Georgian)
  NEG PVV-APPL-hug-OPT NC-WHO-OBJ
  ’Don’t hug\text{opt}ative anyone.’

b. \(\text{nu} \ t\text{j'a-e-xut'}-\text{eb-i} \ nura-vi-s\)
  NEG.IMP PVV-APPL-hug-NON-PST-1/2 NC.IMP-WHO-OBJ
  ’Don’t hug\text{imper}ative anyone’ \[Annemarie van Dooren, p.c.\]

- in Georgian, negative-concord items change their form when they are in the scope of the dedicated imperative negator, \(\text{nu}\)
  - e.g. \text{aravis} \(\rightarrow\) \text{nuravis}
  ➢ but it would be specious to conclude from this that negative concord is a “morphological effect”

\(^1\)Perlmutter (1968, 1971) was operating within a model of grammar in which the syntax-morphology interface was considerably less worked out than it is now. That said, a filter applying at Surface Structure (as he proposed for the PCC), understood in contemporary terms, arguably amounts to a PF filter.

\(^2\)Abbreviations: 1/2/3: first/second/third person; A(BS): absolutive; A(CC): accusative; APPL: applicative; ART: article; AUX: auxiliary; CL: clitic; D(ATT): dative; E(RO): ergative; F: feminine; HAB: habitual; IMP: imperative; IMPF: imperfective; INF: infinitive; LOC: locative; M: masculine; NC: negative concord; NEG: negation; NMI: nominalization; N(O): nominative; OBJ: objective case; OPT: optative; PL/PL: plural; PRT: participle; PVV: pre-verb; SBV: subjunctive; SG/SG: singular; \(\emptyset\): a phonologically-empty morphological slot; \(\sqrt{\text{}}\): lexical root.
By the same token:
  ○ the use of ditransitives (or perhaps all applicatives) turns out to have certain perspectival side-effects
    – this is what Charnavel & Mateu (2015) and Pancheva & Zubizarreta (2018) have shown
  ➢ but that is not sufficient grounds on which to conclude that, e.g., the PCC is a “perspectival effect”

Nothing said so far rules out these putative modular affiliations, of course (neg-concord ∈ morphology, or PCC ∈ syn-sem interface)

However, in the neg-concord case: we have independent reasons to think that the effect must involve syntax and/or semantics\(^3\)
  ○ and so, given that the morphological facts do not, by themselves, license the claim that neg-concord is morphological —
    – we can attend to these independent reasons;
    – and safely conclude that neg-concord lives in syntax and/or in semantics and/or at their interface;
    – and that the morphological facts in (1a–b) are a side effect of neg-concord, not constitutive of it.

Similarly, in the PCC case: we have independent reasons to think that the effect is morphosyntactic (see above; to be expanded in §4–§5)
  ○ and so, given that the perspectival facts do not, by themselves, license the claim that the PCC lives at the syn-sem interface —
    – we can attend to these independent reasons;
    – and safely conclude that the PCC lives squarely in morphosyntax;
    – and that the perspectival facts mentioned earlier are a side effect of the PCC, not constitutive of it.

That’s basically it.

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3. A quick refresher on the Person Case Constraint

• The Person Case Constraint (PCC; a.k.a., the “*me-lui Constraint”):
  ○ a family of restrictions limiting the person features of different arguments in relation to one another
    – usually affecting combinations of multiple internal arguments of a single predicate
    ⇒ most commonly illustrated using the DO and IO of a ditransitive verb

• Cross-linguistically, it has been claimed that there are (at least) six (!) varieties of the constraint: Strong, Weak, Me-First, Total, Super-Strong, and Ultra-Strong
  ○ varying in which combinations of arguments, exactly, are ruled in and ruled out

• Of course, calling all of these “PCC effects” is a terminological choice;
• The extent to which they are a unitary phenomenon is a matter of analysis
  ○ for example, the so-called Total PCC is just a prohibition on any combination of two weak pronominal objects
    – as such, it may be a purely prosodic effect
• For the remainder of this talk, I will assume that at least those variants that are sensitive to person features —
  (i.e., all but the Total variant)
  — can be treated as a unitary phenomenon at a sufficient level of abstraction.

Example:

(2)  **Strong PCC in Basque:** (first approximation)
In finite clauses, the direct object of a ditransitive verb must be 3rd person.
   ‘You have sold the book to me.’
   b. *Zuk harakin-ari ni saldu n-(a)i-∅-a-zu
   ‘You have sold me to the butcher.’

   [Laka 1996]

- As you can see from (3a–b), the PCC is asymmetric —
  - (2) is restriction on the features of the DO in the presence of an IO;
    - but a converse restriction on the features of the IO in the presence of
      a DO does not generally exist
- The PCC is also person-specific —
  - it is a restriction on the person features of the DO in the presence of
    an IO;
  - but a corresponding restriction on the number features of the DO in
    the presence of an IO does not generally exist


- Albizu and Rezac show that the PCC is a fundamentally syntactic effect
- They focus on two-place unaccusatives —
  - (verbs that take an ABS DP and a DAT DP, but no ERG DP)
  - which Rezac calls “applicative unaccusatives”
- It turns out that there are two classes of appl. unaccusatives in Basque:
  - DAT > ABS verbs
  - ABS > DAT verbs

   (for reasons that I won’t get into here, all true ditransitives, i.e., triadic verbs, are ERG > DAT > ABS in Basque; see Elordieta 2001, Rezac 2008 for independent evidence of this)

(4) DAT > ABS:
   a. DAT binding ABS: ✓
      Kepa-ri bere buru-a gusta-tzen zako
      Kepa-D his head-Artsg(A) like-HAB AUX
      ‘Kepa likes himself.’
   b. ABS binding DAT: ✗
      *Kepa bere buru-α-ri gusta-tzen zako
      Kepa(A) his head-Artsg-D like-HAB AUX
      Intended: ‘Kepa likes himself.’

(5) ABS > DAT:
   a. DAT binding ABS: ✗
      *Kepa-ri bere buru-a ji-ten zako isipilu-a-n
      Kepa-D his head-Artsg(A) come-prog AUX mirror-Artsg(A)-LOC
      ‘Kepa is approaching himself in the mirror.’
   b. ABS binding DAT: ✓
      Miren bere buru-α-ri mintzatu zaio
      Miren(A) his/her head-Artsg-D talk-PRT AUX
      ‘Miren talked to herself.’

[Rezac 2008:75]

NB: The order of ABS and DAT arguments in Basque is relatively free
- compare (4a) with (6):

(6) Haiek Itxaso-ri gusta-tzen ∅-zai-zki-o
    they(A) Itxaso-D like-HAB 3.A-√-pl.A-3sg.d
    ‘Itxaso likes them.’

[Rezac 2008:63]

➢ the arguments in (4b, 5a) are simply in the order that would give the
  example the best chance at well-formedness
- given a general dispreference for cataphora

4See Stegovec (2019) for a potential exception to this generalization, though one that
  crucially exists only if the language in question also exhibits the restriction described in the text.
5This is what Nevins (2011) calls the hypothetical Number Case Constraint, which would
  prohibit the occurrence of a plural DO in the presence of an IO. While it appears Nevins is right
  in that no such restriction on the internal arguments of a lexical verb has been documented, Coon
  et al. (2017) argue that German copular clauses do exhibit a PCC-like effect on NUMBER.
Now comes the crucial bit —

- only DAT ≫ ABS verbs show the PCC;
- ABS ≫ DAT ones don’t.

(7) DAT ≫ ABS verb:
   a. Haiek Itxaso-ri gusta-tzen ə-zai-zki-o
tax (A) Itxaso-D like-impf ə.ə- wound.A-3sg.d
   ‘Itxaso likes them.’
   b. */?? Nime Itxaso-ri gusta-tzen na-tzai-ə-o
      me(A) Itxaso-D like-impf ə.ə- wound.A-3sg.d
      ‘Itxaso likes me.’

(8) ABS ≫ DAT verb:
   Ni Peru-ri hurbildu na-tzai-ə-o
      me(A) Peru-D approach ə.ə- wound.A-3sg.d
   ‘I approached Peru.’ [Rezac 2008:63]

Notice:

- the putative auxiliary form in (7b) is identical to the one in the (well-formed) (8)
  - not only phonologically identical;
  - but morphologically identical:
    - expressing the same set of <case:φ> associations:
      <ABS:1sg>, <DAT:3sg>
  - the distinction between the two cases is only in the finer hierarchical organization of the ABS and DAT arguments
    (as well as, potentially, the thematic and/or semantic interpretation of the relevant arguments; stay tuned)

This has significant consequences:

- **First**, it shows that the PCC in ditransitives (at least in Basque) is a subcase of a broader pattern:

  (9) **Strong PCC in Basque**: (revised version)

  In those finite clauses that have a DAT argument located higher than the ABS argument, the ABS argument must be 3rd person.

  - ditransitives **always** show the PCC because—as noted earlier—they’re always ERG ≫ DAT ≫ ABS (Elordieta 2001, Rezac 2008)

- since I’ll be arguing later that certain phenomena (perspectival effects in ditrans./applicatives) should not be unified with the PCC —
  - let me say a few words about why the unification of (7–8) with the previously-noted effect in ditransitives is warranted

- the claim here is that whatever will account for (7–8) will also account for the PCC in ditransitives (e.g. (3b))
  - given Elordieta (2001) and Rezac’s (2008) evidence for ERG ≫ DAT ≫ ABS in ditransitives

- as we will see, perspective-based approaches cannot hope to account for the entirety of what commonly falls under the “PCC” umbrella
  - in particular, the sensitivity to whether the language happens to have overt morphological φ-agreement

- **Second**, these facts all but eliminate the possibility to account for the PCC in morphology proper

  - there is no morphological difference between the ABS or DAT morphology in (8) and their counterparts in (7)
    - neither in the dependent-marking morphology nor in the head-marking morphology

  ⇒ either:

  - the forms in question are morphologically licit (in which case (7b)) should be good; or
  - the forms in question are morphologically illicit (in which case (8) should be bad)

- Some other related comments, to head off various potential “rescue maneuvers” for a morphology-based account

  - we could endow one of the DAT DPs in (7–8) with a diacritic that’s absent on the other
    - but this would arguably be a restatement of the problem, rather than a solution to it
    - more damagingly, it would make the correlation with the binding facts in (4–5) accidental
we could grant the morphological module access to the finer hierarchical organization of arguments relative to one another

- but insofar as there is any meaningful distinction between the two modules —
  - finer hierarchical distinctions belong in syntax, not in morphology

⇒ the PCC is not “morphological” under any contentful definition of how morphology differs from syntax

5. Why it looks like a morphological matter: the distribution of PCC effects

- We just saw, in the previous section, that the PCC cannot be morphological in nature;
- But that is exactly what was claimed in work like Bonet 1991, 1994 (and, arguably, in Perlmutter 1968, 1971; see fn. 1)
  - where the PCC was treated as a morphological (or “surface”) filter

➢ Importantly, this was not a baseless move on the part of Bonet et al. —
  - there is a good prima facie reason for thinking the effect is a morphological one:

(10) THE DISTRIBUTION OF PCC EFFECTS: A DESCRIPTIVE GENERALIZATION

A construction C in language L will show PCC effects iff verbal elements in C show overt φ-feature agreement with at least one internal argument.

Let’s see some examples of (10) in action —

- First, cross-linguistically:

(11) ha-mehapnet-et ta-cig la-cofe et acmo
the-hypnotist-F FUT.3sg.F-introduce dat.the-spectator.M ACC REFL.M
‘The (female) hypnotist will introduce the (male) spectator to himself.’
(lit. ‘The (female) hypnotist will introduce [to the (male) spectator] [himself]’)

➢ crucially: Hebrew lacks overt agreement with either of the internal arguments in ditransitives

NB: There is, of course, overt φ-agreement with the subject in Hebrew; but that is irrelevant to (10), by definition.

⇒ comparing this state of affairs with, e.g., Basque, illustrates the effects of (10) across languages.

- But the same is true intra-linguistically:
  - recall (13), repeated from earlier:

(13) * Zuk harakin-ari ni saldu n-(ai)i-∅-∅-zu
‘You have sold me to the butcher.’
(Laka 1996)

➢ unlike finite clauses (e.g. (13)), non-finite clauses in Basque do not exhibit overt φ-agreement morphology;

➢ if we take the very same verb with the very same argument combination seen in (13) and embed it in a non-finite environment —

(14) Gaizki irudi-tzen ∅-∅-∅-t [ zuk ni harakin-ari
sal-tze-a ]
sold-∅-ARTsg(A)
‘It seems wrong to me for you to sell me to the butcher.’
(Laka 1996)

— the PCC goes away!

⇒ comparing (13) with (14) illustrates the effects of (10) within one and the same language.
importantly, this is a fact about overt \( \varphi \)-agreement morphology, not about finiteness —

- Spanish, for example, also exhibits overt agreement morphology reflecting the \( \varphi \)-features of internal arguments
  - or more precisely: it has internal argument clitics
- but unlike Basque, Spanish retains this agreement morphology in (some) non-finite environments
  - accordingly, the PCC persists in Spanish even in infinitives:

\[
(15) \begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \ast \text{Juan me los recomendó (Spanish; Rodrigo Ranero, p.c.)} \\
& \quad \text{Juan} \text{CL}\text{1sg CL}\text{3pl recommend.PAST} \\
& \quad \text{‘Juan recommended me to them.’} \\
& \quad \text{(okay as: ‘Juan recommended them to me.’)} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \ast \text{Recomendar-me-los es una sorpresa} \\
& \quad \text{recommend.INF-CL}\text{1sg-CL}\text{3pl COP DET}\text{3sg} \text{surprise} \\
& \quad \text{‘Recommending me to them is a surprise.’} \\
& \quad \text{(okay as: ‘Recommending them to me is a surprise.’)}
\end{align*}
\[
\Rightarrow \text{this shows that the language-internal comings & goings of the PCC are not about finiteness —}

- rather, they are indeed about the presence/absence of overt \( \varphi \)-agreement morphology
  - the presence/absence of overt \( \varphi \)-agreement morphology is, in turn, a language-specific (and, in fact, marker-specific) matter:
    - Basque \text{ABS} agreement disappears in non-finite contexts
    - while Spanish \text{ACC} clitics remain\(^6\)

\( \Rightarrow \) This raises the immediate (and rather pressing) question:

- \textbf{How can the PCC, which is crucially a syntactic phenomenon (as shown in the previous section), be sensitive to the presence of overt \( \varphi \)-agreement morphology (as shown in this section; see (10))?}

\(^6\)This leaves open the question of why a clitic (in the Spanish case) and a marker of pure \( \varphi \)-agreement (in the Basque case) would have, when present, the same effect vis-à-vis the PCC. If the PCC were indeed morphological, this would perhaps be less worrisome; but since that cannot be (§4), the question stands. I will not have time in this talk to discuss the matter in any detail, but the reasoning is as follows: what the PCC is really sensitive to is intervention in a particular kind of agreement relation; the relevant agreement relation is trivially present when the marker in question is a marker of pure \( \varphi \)-agreement; but, as it turns out, agreement of this sort is also a prerequisite to clitic doubling, due to the latter being an instance of long head movement. See Preminger 2019 for detailed discussion.

- \textbf{The answer, in a nutshell, is this:}

\( (16) \) **THE NO-NULL-AGREEMENT GENERALIZATION**

There is no such thing as morpho-phonologically undetectable \( \varphi \)-feature agreement.

- if the PCC arises due to particular kinds of (syntactic) \( \varphi \)-agreement intervention relations —
  \( \Rightarrow \) then it will not arise where there is no (syntactic) \( \varphi \)-agreement
- and if (16) holds —
  \( \Rightarrow \) then there is no syntactic \( \varphi \)-agreement where there is no overt \( \varphi \)-agreement morphology

- There is of course lots more to say, including:
  - why (16) is agnostic regarding the distinction between “pure” \( \varphi \)-agreement and clitic doubling
    \( \text{(HINT: because clitic doubling, qua long head-movement, requires a prior} \varphi \text{-agreement relation anyway)} \)
  - what is the formal status of (16)
    \( \text{(HINT: it’s not a principle of grammar, but the result of a particular acquisition strategy)} \)
  - whether (16) causes any trouble for theories of case & agreement
    \( \text{(HINT: only for those that are known to be wrong anyway, e.g. Chomsky 2000, 2001)} \)
  - but we have no time for all that . . .
    \( \Rightarrow \) see the paper for further details.
6. Why the PCC cannot be a “syn-sem interface effect”

6.1. A non-argument for \(X\) being a “syn-sem interface effect”

- In §2, I gave a sketch of How not to argue that an effect belongs in module \(M_2\) and not in \(M_1\)
  - based on the demonstration (from Georgian) that negative concord has morphological consequences
    - despite belonging, quite obviously, somewhere in \{syntax, syn-sem, semantics\}
  - notice that it would even be a mistake to characterize negative concord as a “syntax-morphology interface effect”
    - again, despite the fact that it has consequences in morphology

- The conclusion from this is the following:
  - showing that ditransitive/applicative structures have consequences in semantics —
    - e.g. a limitation on the co-occurrence of perspective-takers
    - does not license the inference that the PCC is a “semantic effect”
    - or even that it involves the syntactic encoding of a semantic property (perspective)
    - i.e., that it is a “syn-sem interface effect”
  - just like the negative concord results do not license the inference that negative concord is about the “syntactic encoding of the morphological \(ar/n\) alternation”

- Perhaps, though, you think that there is a deep ontological asymmetry between semantics and morphology —
  (there isn’t; but let’s suspend disbelief for a moment)
  - such that what is good for the goose is not, in fact, good for the gander

- I.e., showing that phenomenon \(X\) has semantic consequences really does show that \(X\) is a “semantic effect” —
  - or at least a “syn-sem interface effect” (in the sense outlined above)
  - whereas showing that \(X\) has morphological effects shows nothing about \(X\)’s modular affiliations
    - it’s just something for morphologists to worry about

- Let me show you, then, why this way of thinking (besides being based on a false ontological asymmetry) also doesn’t work
  - The demonstration comes from Pullum’s (2014) observations
    - concerning the interaction of the English verbal passive with information structure
  - Pullum shows that in the English passive, the grammatical subject must be at least as old, information-structurally, as the complement of by is:

(17) a. Have you heard the news about YouTube? It was bought by Google.
b. Have you heard the news about Google? *YouTube was bought by it/them.

> But no reasonable syntactician would ever take this to indicate that the English passive is a “syn-sem interface phenomenon”
  - or that it involves the syntactic encoding of some information-structural feature like [±newinfo] or [±given] or whatever

- No, what data like (17a–b) show is simply that when syntax makes a given structure available —
  - semantics can overlay additional conditions on the use of that structure
    - in this case, conditions having to do with givenness

- Suppose, now, that you had evidence that in ditransitives/applicatives, there could not be more than one perspective-holder

(18) a. Mateo piensa que se lo entregaste a la policía.
    Mateo thinks that CL.D CL.3sg.A handed.2sg to the police
    ‘Mateo thinks that you handed him over to the police.’
b. El paquete especifica que se lo entregues al portero.
    The package specifies that CL.D CL.3sg.A hand-SBJV.2sg to the doorman.
    ‘The package specifies that you should hand it over to the doorman.’

    [Spanish; Ormazabal & Romero 2007:328]
this could be evidence that the PCC is a “syn-sem interface effect”
  — and that it is tied to the syntactic encoding of perspective
    · cf. a theory of the English passive involving agreement in
      $\langle \pm \text{newinfo} \rangle$ or $\langle \pm \text{given} \rangle$
  or (as is actually the case in the passive), it could be evidence that
ditransitives/applicatives involve an extra usage condition
  — overlaid in the semantics
  — involving, in this case, a limit on the number of distinct
    perspective-holders in the verb phrase

6.2. What the PCC is, and where the PCC is

• As we have seen, the existence of perspectival effects associated with
ditransitives/applicatives does not —
  (in and of itself)
  — show that there is such a thing as syntactic encoding of perspective.

• That could still be the case; but it cannot be argued for on semantic
  grounds (cf. Pullum’s 2014 observations on the passive)
  ➢ it would have to be argued for on syntactic grounds

• Demonstrating that the crosslinguistic typology of PCC effects derives
  from the hypothetical syntactic encoding of perspective could serve as
  precisely such an argument
  ◦ i.e., a proper, syntactic argument in favor of the syntactic encoding of
    perspective
  ➢ So let me show you that, given the results of §4–§5, a perspective-based
    derivation of PCC effects is not, in fact, possible.

Claims:
C1: If the PCC arises via the syntactic encoding of perspective, then
to capture generalization (10) (repeated below) —

(10) THE DISTRIBUTION OF PCC EFFECTS: A DESCRIPTIVE GENERALIZATION
A construction $C$ in language $L$ will show PCC effects iff verbal
elements in $C$ show overt $\varphi$-feature agreement with at least one internal
argument.
— it must be the case that:
(19) Perspective is not syntactically encoded (or at least, not encoded in the
same fashion) when overt $\varphi$-agreement morphology is absent.

C2: P1 $\land$ P2 entails that (19) cannot be represented by the grammar
  ⇒ And hence, (19) cannot be innate, nor can it be learned by the little
language-acquirer.

Potential Objection:
O1: “Surely, what you have just shown is a reductio ad absurdum of P1 $\land$ P2.”
  • One could make an analogous argument, starting from P1 $\land$ P2,
    for the claim that the child could not possibly acquire, e.g., (20):

(20) ‘$a$’ has an indefinite interpretation and ‘the’ has a definite interpretation
  ◦ and since (20) is clearly both true and successfully acquired, the
    premise(s) must be flawed

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Retort:

R1: Not only are (20) and its ilk not true; they cannot even be grammatically represented.

(20) ‘a’ has an indefinite interpretation and ‘the’ has a definite interpretation

- Close examination of how syntax interacts with morphology reveals that claims such as —
  - there are ‘words’/‘morphemes’ sitting at the bottom of the syntactic tree;
  - and each of these ‘words’/‘morphemes’ has an interpretation
  — are simplistic and untenable (Halle & Marantz 1993, Harley & Noyer 1999, Marantz 1997, 2001, Noyer 1997, i.m.a.)

- A ‘morpheme’ is a piece of morphophonology that gets inserted in a particular syntactic context
- A ‘meaning’ is a piece of semantics that gets inserted in a particular syntactic context

➢ Crucially:
  - these insertion contexts get assembled by syntax;
  - and the bit of syntax that PF “bites off” need not (and often, does not) align with the bit of syntax that LF “bites off”
    - cf.: geese; went; in cahoots

⇒ morphemes don’t “have meanings,” and meanings don’t “have forms,” in any direct sense

- It may be the case that in something like ‘a’, the syntactic contexts for PF insertion and LF insertion happen to align —
  - though as a matter of fact, they probably do not;
  - the single morpheme ‘a’ probably corresponds to at least two meaning components (indeterminacy and atomicity; cf. ‘the’)
  — but even if that were so, it would necessarily be an accident of this particular example; it cannot be the design of the system

⇒ (20) is indeed false, and therefore, cannot support an argument against P1 and/or P2 (repeated below).

P1: Distinctions that are exclusively about meaning are inaccessible at the PF(=morphology) interface or beyond(=in morphophonology).

P2: Distinctions that are exclusively about sound/sign are inaccessible at the LF(=syn-sem) interface or beyond(=in semantics).

- What the child acquires when it comes to, e.g., ‘a’ and INDETERMINACY, is:
  - that there is a particular syntax $S_1$ that will (under the right circumstances) get spelled out as ‘a’;
  - that there is a particular syntax $S_2$ that will (under the right circumstances) get interpreted as INDETERMINACY;
  - and that $S_1$ and $S_2$ bear some interesting relation to each other
    – possibly identity; but more likely, overlap or containment

➢ Given all of this, it would be impossible for the child to learn that perspective co-varies with overt $\varphi$-agreement morphology
  - since that would violate P1 ∧ P2

- And in any event:
  - I’m fairly certain that speakers of, e.g., Hebrew have a semantically-pragmatic notion of ‘perspective’, too;
  - but they have no PCC.

⇒ What we have, then, is a dissociation between overt $\varphi$-morphology and perspective —
  ➢ and what the PCC tracks with is overt $\varphi$-morphology
    – not perspective.

- Finally, insofar as what we mean by ‘perspective’ is a syntactic feature —
  - it is one that must track more or less perfectly with overt $\varphi$-agreement morphology;
  - furthermore, the relation between this feature and the semantically-pragmatic entity of the same name is variable and inconsistent (cf. Hebrew)

⇒ it’s fairly misleading, then, to refer to the relevant syntactic features using the term ‘perspective’!

7See Kučerová (2018a,b) for recent discussion of related ideas.
7. Conclusion

- The PCC is a syntactic effect proper
  - not a PF interface effect or an LF interface effect
  - i.e., it is not morphological, nor is it perspective-based
    - insofar as what we mean by ‘perspective’ is something semantic-pragmatic
    - rather than a syntactic feature, whose relation to the semantic-pragmatic entity is contingent and cross-linguistically variable
    (in which case, calling it ‘perspective’ would be quite misleading)

⇒ What to make of the perspectival effects uncovered by Charnavel & Mateu (2015), Ormazabal & Romero (2007), Panccheva & Zubizarreta (2018), Roca (1992), and others?

  - answer: something analogous to whatever we want to make of Pullum’s information-structural effects in the passive —
    - namely: when syntax makes a construction (passive, ditransitive, applicative, etc.) available, semantics can overlay additional usage-conditions on it
    - e.g. “don’t have more than one perspective-holder within the verbal phase / within the set of non-Agents / . . .”

References


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