3-on-3 restrictions and PCC typology

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Restrictions on clitic combinations are generally in place when a ditransitive is expressed with both DO and IO clitics. The best-studied such restrictions involve local persons, as in classic person-case constraint (PCC) effects—e.g., in Basque, banning combinations of local person DO clitics with IO clitics (strong PCC). Many languages also impose restrictions on combinations of 3rd person clitics. Spanish, for instance, bans combinations of 3rd dative + 3rd accusative, requiring the dative to be replaced by the so-called "spurious *se*" (Perlmutter 1971). In contrast to core PCC effects, which have been convincingly shown to reflect syntactic mechanisms (Albizu 1997; Rezac 2008), analyses of this type of '3-on-3' restriction have typically appealed to morphological rules (Bonet 1995; Pescarini 2005; Nevins 2007, i.a.). However Pancheva and Zubizarreta 2018 [PZ18] have recently proposed a partial unification of *3-on-3 and classic PCC, treating both as reflective of syntactic licensing principles. A distinctive prediction of this theory is that 3-on-3 restrictions will be found only in languages that also constrain combinations including local persons. I argue that this prediction is false. In Ubykh (NW Caucasian), no restriction is imposed on clitic combinations involving local persons, but 3-on-3 combinations show clitic restrictions. This pattern cannot be captured on PZ18's unified approach but is naturally captured if 3-on-3 restrictions may arise via morphological rule.

Ubykh ditransitives. NW Caucasian languages have been noted as exceptions to Bonet's (1991) proposal that PCC effects are universal (Haspelmath 2004). Ubykh bears this pattern out. Its ditransitives feature DO, IO and S clitics, ordered DO$_{(abs)}$-IO$_{(dat)}$-S$_{(erg)}$-root; there is no restriction on clitic combinations involving local persons. (The alternations of a~$\underset{.}{a}$ '3pl' and $s\vartheta$~s '1sg' in (1) are phonological and each found outside of these particular combinations. The final vowel alternation reflects DO plurality. All Ubykh data are from Dumézil 1975 [D75].)

(1) a. s-ạ-n-t^{w}ən
      1SG-3PL-3SG-give.SG
      He gives me to them.

    b. a-sə́-n-t^{w}ạn
      3PL-1SG-3SG-give.PL
      He gives them to me.   (D75: 91)

In initial position, all 3rd person clitics are a-; see (1b), (2a-c). (3pl is underlyingly $\underset{.}{a}$-; initial /$\underset{.}{a}$/ becomes /a/.) 3sg clitics in medial position are null; see (2d-f). Combinations of a 3rd person initial clitic followed by a 3sg clitic are exceptional: rather than the expected a-∅-, the form $y\vartheta$, elsewhere absent, appears.

(2)

a.	a-sə́-n-t^{w}ən	3sg-1sg-3sg-give	He gives it to me	(D75: 90-91)
b.	a-wə́-s-t^{w}ən	3sg-2sg-1sg-give	I give it to you.SG	
c.	a-wə́-s-t^{w}ạn	3pl-2sg-1sg-give	I give them to you.SG (UR ạ-wə-s-t^{w}ạn)	
d.	wə́-∅-s-t^{w}ən	2sg-3sg-1sg-give	I give you.SG to him	
e.	ṡ^{w}ə́-∅-s-t^{w}ạn	2pl-3sg-1sg-give	I give you.PL to him	
f.	sə́-∅-w-t^{w}ən	1sg-3sg-2sg-give	You give me to him	
g.	yə́-s-t^{w}ạn	??-1sg-give	I give them to him (expected: a-∅-s-t^{w}ạn)	
h.	yə́-s-t^{w}ən	??-1sg-give	I give it to him (expected: a-∅-s-t^{w}ən)	

Beyond ditransitives. Substitution of $y\vartheta$- for a- also occurs outside of ditransitives, specifically in the context of 3-3sg-. Ubykh clitics are case-invariant (though placement in the cluster can affect their form, as noted above for 3sg). The verb 'hit (at)' is formally intransitive, with an absolutive subject and dative object; it takes clitics in S$_{(abs)}$-IO$_{(dat)}$-root order. 3-3sg- (3rd person absolutive S, 3sg dative IO) surfaces as $y\vartheta$-, again in contrast to an expected a-. The verb 'see' is formally transitive, and takes clitics in DO$_{(abs)}$-S$_{(erg)}$-root order. 3-3sg- (3sg ergative S, 3rd person absolutive DO) surfaces as $y\vartheta$-. The pattern is essentially linear; across all verb types, $y\vartheta$- appears only for 3-3sg- linear sequences, whether this reflects DO$_{abs}$-IO$_{dat}$- ('give'), DO$_{abs}$-S$_{erg}$- ('see') or S$_{abs}$-IO$_{dat}$- ('hit (at)'). This pattern can be captured as morphological dissimilation, (3), following Nevins' (2007) treatment of spurious *se*, (4).

(3) Ubykh *yə-* replacement:
Delete/alter the features corresponding to 3rd person on a clitic when it precedes 3sg.

(4) Spanish spurious *se*: Delete/alter the features corresponding to 3rd person on a dative [clitic] when it precedes another 3rd person. (Nevins 2007)

Against a syntactic approach. In contrast to the approach in (3)-(4), PZ18 connect 3-on-3 restrictions to PCC effects. They propose that a range of PCC restrictions (namely strong, weak, & ultrastrong PCC) arise from a requirement, grounded in the viewpoint semantics of ApplP, that IOs are [+PROX(IMATE)]. Local persons are inherently [+PROX]; 3rd persons IOs are [±PROX] only if the DO is 3rd person. Combinations of a 3rd IO and a local DO are thus ruled out. To capture spurious *se*, P&Z propose that [+PROX] and [-PART(ICIPANT)] are incompatible in Spanish, and thus [-PART] must be deleted from the IO in 3-on-3, yielding *se*. This approach clearly does not extend to Ubykh, where (a) 3 IO + local DO combinations are possible, (1a); (b) the special form in 3-on-3 ditransitives is the DO clitic, not the IO clitic; (c) the restriction overall is entirely independent of which clitic, if either, is IO. PZ18 also propose that 3-on-3 restrictions may arise when IOs are required to be [+PART]. They propose this setting for the so-called "super strong PCC" (Haspelmath 2004), a pattern in which both 3 IO > local DO and 3 IO > 3 DO are ruled out. This analysis, too, ties *3-on-3 to a *3>local effect and so is inapplicable to Ubykh. Indeed, in their system, a language allowing 3 > local and local > 3, as in (1), is possible only if there is, exceptionally, no featural requirement imposed on either IOs or DOs. This, however, makes it impossible to capture *3-on-3.

Implications for PCC typology. Nevins (2007) recognizes four types of PCC: strong, weak, ultrastrong, and me-first. Combining a syntactic approach to PCC effects with a morphological approach to *3-on-3 predicts that all types of PCC effects could optionally be combined with a 3-on-3 restriction. Typological evidence largely bears this out. Languages with a PCC but no *3-on-3 include French (strong; Perlmutter 1971), some varieties of Italian (weak; Bianchi 2006), and Czech (ultrastrong; Sturgeon et al. 2011). Varieties of Spanish instantiate all three PCC types, in each case with *3-on-3 (PZ18). Moreover, the "super strong PCC" pattern (found in Kambera [Malayo-Polynesian]) is simply a strong PCC plus a *3-on-3 restriction, and so there is no need to recognize this pattern as a distinctive, fifth type of PCC effect (*pace* PZ18). The final type of PCC, "me-first" (Nevins 2007), rules out 1st person DOs in ditransitive clitic clusters. This is the rarest PCC pattern, found only in a few languages of Eastern Europe (Romanian and Bulgarian; some speakers of Serbo-Croatian and Polish). While there is no known case of a language with me-first PCC plus *3-on-3 (as PZ18 note), this is plausibly an accidental gap, given that me-first PCC is already quite rare and, in contrast to other PCC types, highly areally confined. Finally, languages with clitics for both DO and IO but no PCC effect whatsoever include both Ubykh, with *3-on-3 as discussed above, as well as Moro, where there remains no PCC effect but is also no *3-on-3 restriction (Jenks and Rose, 2015). The overall picture is one where *3-on-3 effects and PCC effects are typologically independent of one another, as predicted on a view where *3-on-3 is morphological whereas PCC effects are syntactic. This result supports theories that allow the various types of PCC effects to be disentangled from *3-on-3 (e.g. Nevins 2007, Deal 2020, Coon and Keine To appear, all of which capture the four PCC varieties) over the proposed unified approach taken by PZ18.

Selected refs. Dumézil 1975. *Le verbe oubykh.* ● Nevins 2007. The Representation of Third Person and its Consequences for Person-Case Effects. *NLLT.* ● Pancheva & Zubizaretta 2018. The person case constraint: the syntactic encoding of perspective. *NLLT.*

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