Morphological person restrictions and the pressure to realize local persons

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1. Introduction. Recent literature on person restrictions in ditransitives (e.g., Person-Case Constraint, PCC) has seen a number of syntactic analyses, many of which attribute person restrictions to Agree with two potential goals (Anagnostopoulou 2003; Béjar & Rezac 2003; Stegovec 2019; a.o.). We argue that a full account of ditransitive person restrictions must also include purely morphological restrictions. In the ditransitives of Caquinte (Arawak; Peru), combinations of two local (i.e., 1st or 2nd person) objects are ungrammatical; all other person combinations, including 3>local configurations, are permitted (Table 1, with Strong PCC for comparison). Crucially, *local>local is obviated by Ā extraction of either argument. This, we argue, is due to morphological impoverishment under Ā extraction, which opens up a slot in the morphological template to realize the other local object. The Caquinte case study, which uses data from original fieldwork, reveals a gap in the typology of person restrictions, a need for morphological analyses, and a cross-linguistic pressure to realize [PART] features.

Table 1: Caquinte pattern

IO	DO	Caquinte	Strong
1	3	✓	✓
2	3	✓	✓
1	2	*	*
2	1	*	*
3	2	✓	*
3	1	✓	*
3	3	✓	✓

2. The Caquinte pattern. In Caquinte ditransitives, both objects are cross-referenced by suffixes on the verb. Caquinte morphology is highly templatic: local object suffixes always occur before non-local suffixes, and only one suffix of each type, local or non-local, may appear on the verb. When two local suffixes compete for exponence in the same morphological slot, that competition results in ungrammaticality (1a). 3>3 slot competition, however, is tolerated: the IO suffix appears on the verb and the applicative suffix *-nV* (where V represents a copy vowel) surfaces in the local suffix slot (1b).

(1) a. * *Yojokakenampi.*
i-ojok-k-i-**na**-**mpi**
3M-give-PFV-AR-1-2
Int: 'He gave you to me / me to you.'

b. *Pamakeneri   kentashireri isheka.*
pi-am-k-e-**nV**-**ri**
2-bring-PFV-IRR-APPL-3M human.M   3M-food.F
'Bring the human his food.' (3M>3F)

Unlike canonical person restrictions (e.g., PCC effects), combinations of local and non-local suffixes can be freely used in hierarchy-obeying (2a) and hierarchy-violating (2b) constructions. Given the strict morphological template, these suffix combinations are ambiguous as to which argument is the indirect object.

(2) a. *Pamenagetenari   nogepigairikitite.*
pi-amen-ge-e-**na**-**ri**   no-kepigairikiti-te
2-look.for-DSTR-IRR-1-3M 1-louse-POSS
'Look for my lice for me.' (1>3)

b. *...yojokabakokenari   Joanka.*
i-ojok-bako-k-i-**na**-**ri**   Joanka
3M-give-hand-PFV-AR-1-3M Juan
'...he gave me to Juan.' (3>1)

2.1. Anti-agreement. Caquinte shows anti-agreement under certain types of Ā extraction, which we analyze as morphological φ-feature impoverishment in the context of Ā features, following Baier & O'Hagan (to appear). Ā extraction makes available previously ungrammatical local>local configurations and allows the remaining (i.e., non-extracted) local person argument to be reflected as a verbal suffix (3). Anti-agreement as a morphological phenomenon can only delete features copied back to the verb by Agree. As such, any features which can surface in extraction contexts must be present in the syntax of non-extraction contexts. Any syntactic analysis which relies on failed Agree to derive person restrictions will have trouble accounting for the extraction repair in (3). We take this impoverishment repair as evidence that local-on-local ungrammaticality must be derived by a morphological constraint, which penalizes local person features that are present

(3) *Abigenti yojokakena.*
abigenti i-ojok-k-i-**na**
2FOC   3M-give-PFV-AR-1
'It is you he gave to me.'

in the syntax but not realized by the morphology. Furthermore, these data reveal an inherent asymmetry between local>local and 3>3 ungrammaticality: without extraction, local>local is simply ungrammatical, while 3>3 is easily expressed with a single instance of agreement (1b). The generalization emerges that local person features must be reflected by agreement if they are present, whereas 3rd person features do not.

3. Analysis. We argue that the Caquinte person restriction is purely morphological, resulting from a highly specified morphological template and competition of vocabulary items to occupy slots in that template. Slot competition itself does not derive ungrammaticality, given that 3>3 competition yields a grammatical utterance with a single object suffix. We propose an additional constraint, stated in (4), which requires that local person features copied by Agree be realized by overt morphology.

(4) REALIZEPARTICIPANT:
     A [PART] feature on T (i.e., copied back to a probe) must be realized by overt morphology.

The interaction of this constraint and slot competition, both of which are unranked and inviolable, blocks local>local configurations while allowing everything else. Note that this constraint will not apply to anti-agreement contexts, since impoverishment deletes φ-features on T.

The constraint in (4) is reminiscent of a Person Licensing Condition (Béjar & Rezac 2003), which states that local person features must be licensed by Agree with a functional head. REALIZEPARTICIPANT, however, places a requirement on overt local person exponence rather than an abstract licensing mechanism. The advantage of a morphological requirement is that it a) can capture languages like Caquinte, which always Agrees with local arguments but does not always realize their features, and b) can be explained in terms of information recoverability. In a *pro*-drop language like Caquinte, this constraint ensures that local person arguments are realized at least once in the clause; this can be understood as a way to avoid ambiguity, allowing hearers to recover the content of dropped arguments. A constraint on [PART] features captures the intuition that local persons are somehow more marked or salient than 3rd persons (Silverstein 1976; Harley & Ritter 2002), but a version that includes 3rd person features as well could be implemented for languages that ban *local>local and *3>3 (e.g., the Super Strong PCC).

4. Discussion. We argue that some restrictions on person combinations can be derived by independently motivated morphological mechanisms, such as a morphological template, slot competition, and the pressure to realize local persons. This last mechanism, formalized above as a mandate on [PART] feature exponence, reflects a cross-linguistic tendency to prioritize and ensure recoverability of local person arguments, which manifests itself in *pro*-drop systems, agreement paradigms, and, we argue, person restrictions.

While a morphological account is necessary for Caquinte, this paper does not argue that syntactic analyses of the PCC should be abandoned. Rather, it appears that person restrictions, and local-on-local restrictions in particular, can be derived in multiple ways. Potentially, these different mechanisms could operate simultaneously within a single language, conspiring to prioritize the realization of [PART] features; the availability of syntactic and morphological accounts of person restrictions can perhaps help explain the differences between Strong and Weak PCC languages. Our analysis of the Caquinte person restriction simply represents one morphological implementation of a broader typological pattern.

References

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