

More on ‘Lexical DP Blocking’ effects in the PCC: Evidence from Mixtec

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Overview

The PCC in Zapotec: In S/O clitic combinations, with the twist that object clitics are also banned when the subject is a **lexical DP**.

- Framed as **Lexical DP Blocking (LDB) effect** by Sichel & Toosarvandani (t.a.) (‘S&T’): the subject is a **defective intervener**, blocking a higher probe from licensing the object clitic.

This project: Clarifies status of full DPs within existing typologies/theories of the PCC.

- Comparative evidence from Mixtec:** Mixtec also displays the LDB—but undermines the intervention-based logic of S&T:
 - DP subject does not always block object clitic
 - Object cliticization involves **low probe, below subject**

Proposal: Object preference account of PCC (Béjar & Rezac 2009; Deal t.a.), in that Agree with object may bleed Agree with subject.

- Appearance of subject intervention reducible to **subject licensing**.

The LDB in (Southeastern Sierra) Zapotec

Zapotec is Eastern Otomanguean, VSO; pronouns realized as **strong pronouns** or **enclitics**. (Data from S&T and Foley & Toosarvandani 2022.)

- Strong PCC:** Bans 1/2 object clitics if subject is 1/2/3 clitic.

- (1) Wdill=**ba'** **nada'** (2) Blenh=**ba'**=**b**
 stung=3.AN 1.SG carried=3.HU=3.AN
 ‘It stung me.’ (*1.SG =a’) ‘S/he carried it.’

- LDB:** Bans all object clitics if subject is lexical DP.

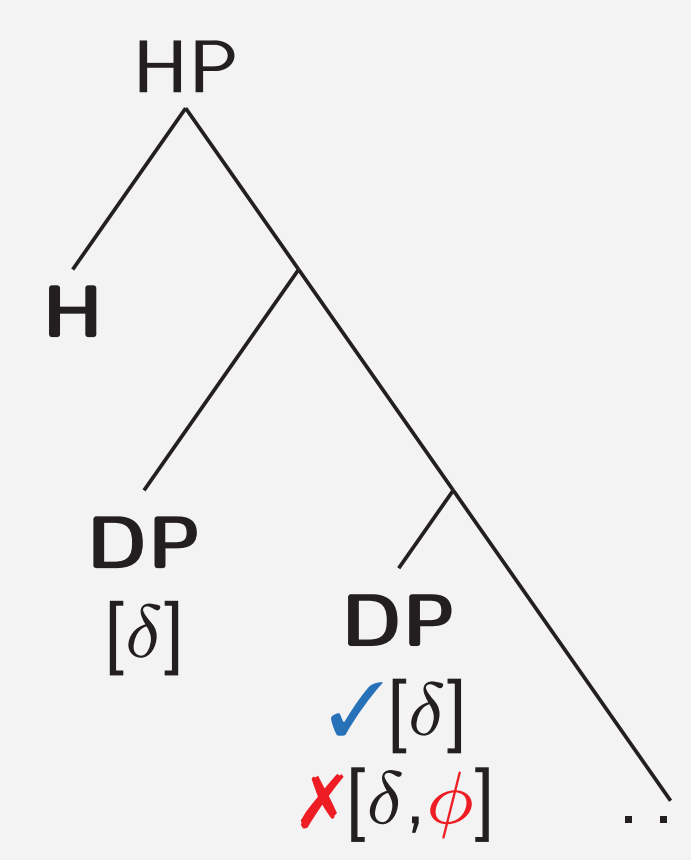
- (3) Dzalalle' **Xwanha'** **lhe'** (4) Blenh **Xwanha'** **leb**
 forgot Juana 2.SG carried Juana 3.AN
 ‘J. forgot you.’ (*2.SG =o’) ‘J. carried it.’ (*3.AN =b)

S&T’s analysis: Feature geometry includes DPs and pronouns; clitics are generated by Agree; multiple Agree must be specially activated.

- Feature specifications:** DP: $[\delta]$, 3: $[\delta, \phi]$, 1/2: $[\delta, \phi, PART]$

- Multiple Agree conditions:**

- Probe H c-commands both S (G_1) and O (G_2) and Agrees with G_1 first
- H also Agrees with G_2 only if G_2 is not more featurally specified than G_1 .



Therefore: For S&T, the PCC/LDB obtains when **H cannot license object clitic**, due to featural intervention of the subject.

Comparison with (San Juan Piñas) Mixtec

Mixtec is Eastern Otomanguean; VSO; **also displays PCC/LDB among S/O clitic combinations**. (Data from San Juan Piñas variety.)

- Strong PCC:** Bans 1/2 object clitics if subject is 1/2/3 clitic.

- (5) ji¹³ni³¹=ti⁵ ndo⁵?o¹ (6) ji¹³ni³¹=ti⁵=ra³
 saw=3.AN 2.PL saw=3.AN=3SG.M
 ‘It saw you(pl).’ (2.PL *=ndo⁵) ‘It saw him.’

- LDB:** Bans only 1/2 object clitics if subject is lexical DP—**minimal but important contrast with Zapotec!**

- (7) ji¹³ni³¹ [ti⁵ kwa⁵zu¹] ndo⁵?o¹
 saw D.3.AN horse 2.PL
 ‘The horse saw you(pl).’ (2.PL *=ndo⁵)

- (8) ji¹³ni³¹ [ti⁵ kwa⁵zu¹] =ra¹
 saw D.3.AN horse =3SG.M
 ‘The horse saw him.’

This pattern identical to **Romance “fancy constraint”** (Postal 1989, Sheehan 2020)! (See supplementary data in handout.)

- Although S&T claim that LDB in Zapotec is novel in PCC typology, Mixtec pattern shows that LDB is in fact **cross-linguistically familiar**.

More broadly: Variation between Zapotec and Mixtec should be analyzed (**micro-**)parameterization within similar grammatical systems.

Against subject intervention

But Mixtec pattern incompatible with S&T’s analysis:

- Featural contradiction:** Assuming S&T’s feature geometry, 1/2 and 3 are featurally more specified than DP.

- Yet DP ($[\delta]$) subjects in Mixtec block 1/2 pers. ($[\delta, \phi, PART]$) but permit 3 pers. ($[\delta, \phi]$) object clitics.

- Low probe:** Object clitics in Mixtec target position **below** subject.

- Not immediately obvious with $V=Cl_s=Cl_o$ sequences, but revealed in **licit V DP=Cl_o** configurations, e.g., (8).

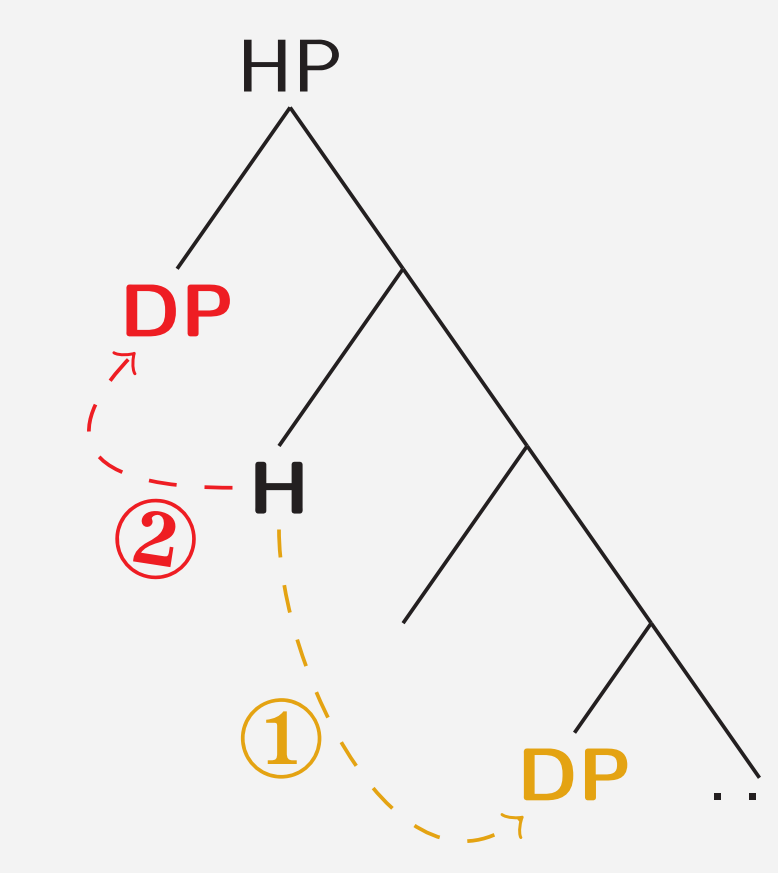
- Compatible with available Zapotec facts as well. (See handout.)

Put together:

- If Agree obeys strict c-command, **probe H should first encounter object**.

- Subject** then targeted in **second-cycle Agree** (Cyclic Agree; Béjar & Rezac 2009).

- ★ **Consequence:** Subject never an intervener for object (**opposite of S&T!**)



Analysis, in brief (details in handout)

Will adopt Deal’s (2023) **interaction/satisfaction** model of the PCC.

- Probes are specified for **int/sat conditions**, dictating which features are **copied** vs. which also **halt probing**.
- PCC effects arise whenever **second-cycle Agree is bled/unsuccessful**, e.g., if probe is satisfied or dynamically updated in first cycle.

Application to Mixtec: Probe H has $[INT:\delta, SAT:PART]$.

- If object is **1/2 pron.** ($[\delta, \phi, PART]$), H is satisfied in first cycle and does not probe for the subject → **strong PCC/LDB effect**.
- If object is **DP** ($[\delta]$) or **3 pron.** ($[\delta, \phi]$), H may probe again for the subject → **no PCC/LDB effect**.
- Same analysis for Zapotec + **dynamic interaction** with ϕ .

Low subject licensing

PCC/LDB violations arise if subject is not Agreed with. But why?

- Proposal:** PCC/LDB reducible to **failure to license subject DPs**—connected to broader properties of Eastern Otomanguean clause structure.

- VSO in Mixtec (Hedding & Yuan t.a.):**

- Object moves to Spec-vP; VP remnant moves to Spec-TP.
 - Subject generated in Spec-VoiceP and **does not move**.

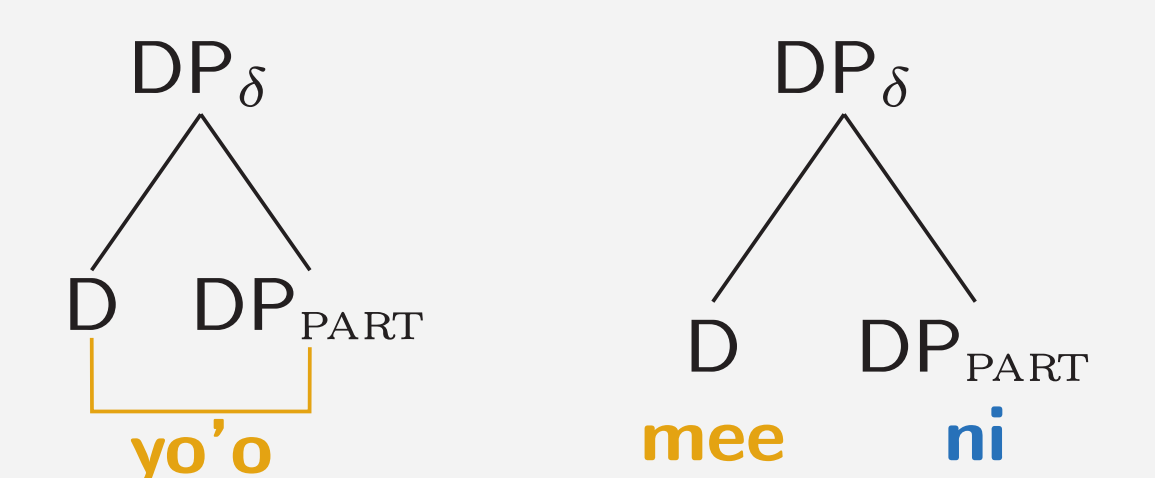
- Object licensed by c-commanding v^0 ; subject only licensed by **Voice⁰ in second-cycle Agree**.

- T^0 not a licenser; only targets VP.

Obviating the PCC/LDB: Strong pronouns are enclosed in additional DP structure, i.e., are $[\delta]$.

- Using strong pronoun **counterbleeds** subject licensing by $Voice^0$.
- Extra DP layer is visible in San Sebastián del Monte Mixtec, which lacks a strong pronoun exponent for 2SG.HON (Mantenuto 2020):

- (9) Kàni **Juan yo'o** / **mee=ni**
 hit Juan 2SG 2SG.HON
 ‘J. hit you / you(hon.).’
 (*2SG =o, *2SG.HON =ni)



Typological implications

- The LDB, claimed to be only found in Zapotec, is a feature of Eastern Otomanguean subfamily (and beyond).
- Variation b/w Zapotec and Mixtec wrt **probe specifications**; future comparative work should yield finer-grained typology.

Thank you: C. Juárez Chávez, G. Caballero + other SJPM project members; J. Coon, A.R. Deal, A. Hedding, J. Royer, audiences at WLMA@UCSC and WSCLA 26.