

## Revisiting the Person Case Constraint in Czech

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Parametric variation in the Person Case Constraint (PCC) across Slavic languages is a long-standing question in Slavic linguistics. Linguists agree that Bulgarian and Macedonian (both languages with verb-adjacent clitics) exhibit the Person Case Constraint (PCC), but there has been disagreement regarding the status of the PCC in other Slavic languages with weak pronominal elements. For instance, linguists disagree about whether the PCC is active in Czech (yes: Franks and King 2000, Béjar and Řezáč 2003, Bhatt and Šimík 2009, Medová 2009; no: Lenertová 2001, Haspelmath 2004, Migdalski 2006, Hana 2007). Through a two-part experimental study, we show that Czech does exhibit the weak version of the PCC. From a theoretical perspective, these results cast doubt on Migdalski's 2006 analysis of the weak PCC in Bulgarian and Macedonian on the one hand and the proposed lack of the PCC in Wackernagel-clitic Slavic languages, such as Serbo-Croatian and Czech.

The PCC, which was first noted by Perlmutter 1971 as the *me-lui* constraint, is a restriction on certain combinations of phonologically weak arguments of ditransitive verbs (see Bonet 1991 for a thorough investigation of the PCC in Romance). Two versions of the constraint exist. In the strong version, the direct object must be 3rd person, while in the weak version of the constraint, if there is a 3rd person, it must be the direct object. Czech exhibits the weak version of PCC. In (1), combinations of local dative clitics and 3rd person accusative clitics are felicitous, in (2), local accusative clitics and third person dative clitics are disallowed. Finally, local person combinations are allowed, (3).

We conducted a judgment task (1-7 scale) with 111 participants and a self-paced reading task (55 participants), which included all combinations of persons in the singular and plural (6 x 3 design; 108 stimuli, 276 fillers). The judgment task was not timed. In both studies speakers preferred sentences that obeyed the weak version of the PCC ( $p < .01$ ). This corroborates frequency data from the Czech National Corpus.

Anagnostopoulou 2005 suggests that the PCC arises when both dative and accusative clitics enter into a checking relationship with the same agreement head. The dative object, being higher in the structure, checks its features first, and, unless the direct object is third person, it cannot check its person features because those features have already been checked (this assumes that third person clitics lack person features). Our analysis of the Czech data follows Anagnostopoulou 2005 and Řezáč 2008. The PCC arises due to feature clash on the object agreement head:

(4)  $[IP \dots [AgrOP [AgrOF \underbrace{DAT_{1F} [VP \dots [VP t_1 ACC_F ]}] }_{\times} ]]]]$

Contra Migdalski 2006, this analysis assumes only one agreement projection and reduces all the effects to feature mismatch. Other approaches to the PCC include Haspelmath's 2004 frequency account. Given that these constructions are relatively rare in corpora, and it is not clear how speakers would generalize from sparse data, we follow a syntactic approach.

Migdalski 2006 argues that South Slavic languages that require clitics to be verb adjacent (Bulgarian and Macedonian) exhibit the weak version of the PCC, while Wackernagel-clitic languages (Czech and Serbo-Croatian) do not. To account for this, Migdalski suggests that the latter languages have two agreement positions (AgrIOP and AgrOP), which allows each object clitic to check features on its own head. However, our results show that Migdalski's analysis does not hold on empirical grounds and therefore cast doubt on his more theoretical conclusions. These results highlight the need for a new account of parametric variation in Slavic languages with respect to the PCC. This study also raises the question if other Slavic languages that have weak pronominal elements and have been assumed to not exhibit the PCC (e.g. Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene and Slovak) would, indeed, exhibit PCC effects upon closer investigation.

