

Senaya (Neo-Aramaic): Structural Person Case Constraint Effects in Progressives

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1. Introduction

We present novel data from Senaya (fieldwork by Laura McPherson and Kevin Ryan), a Neo-Aramaic language originally spoken in Iran, that reveal an intriguing pattern of person-restrictions in progressive transitives. In particular, object agreement in progressives is limited to third person when this agreement appears on the progressive auxiliary, as seen in (1)–(2), with object agreement bolded.¹

- (1) OBJECT AGREEMENT ON VERB BASE: ✓ 3RD PERSON, ✓ 1ST/2ND PERSON
- a. Ooya on talmiide molp-aa-**luu**=∅-lee.
she the students teach.IMPF-3SGF.S-**3PL.L**=be-DFLT.L
'She is teaching the students.'
- b. Ooya molp-aa-**lii**=∅-lee.
she teach.IMPF-3SGF.S-**1SGF.L**=be-DFLT.L
'She is teaching me.'
- (2) OBJECT AGREEMENT ON AUXILIARY: ✓ 3RD PERSON, *1ST/2ND PERSON
- a. Ooya on talmiide molp-aa-lee=∅-**luu**.
she the students teach.IMPF-3SGF.S-DFLT.L=be-**3PL.L**
'She is teaching the students.'
- b. *Ooya molp-aa-lee=∅-**lii/an**.
she teach.IMPF-3SGF.S-DFLT.L=be-**1SGF.L/S**
Intended: 'She is teaching me.'

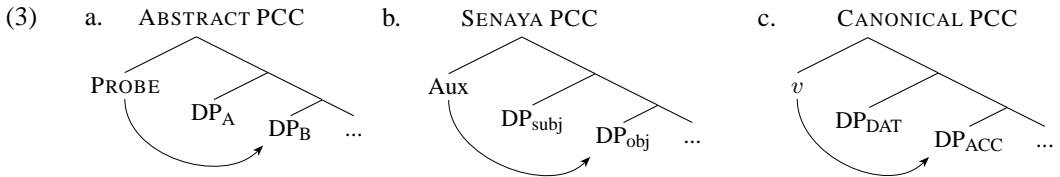
Ignoring for the moment the complexity of the verbal complex, there are two crucial observations here. First, object agreement in a progressive transitive can appear either on the verb base, (1), or on the progressive auxiliary, (2). Second, object agreement on the auxiliary is restricted to third person, as seen by the ungrammaticality of (2b); object agreement on the verb base has no such restriction, as seen by the grammaticality of both sentences in (1).

We argue that this restriction on object agreement on the auxiliary is attributable to the Person Case Constraint (PCC), whereby a first or second person argument is ungrammatical in certain configurations, crucially involving the presence of another argument in the same domain (Bonet, 1991). Specifically, we aim to show that the PCC effect seen in (2) arises when a defective intervener (the transitive subject) blocks a particular licenser (the φ -probe on the progressive auxiliary 'be') from person-licensing a lower DP (the transitive object).

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¹ We make use of the following abbreviations: 1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person, ACC = accusative, DAT = dative, DFLT = default, F = female, FUT = future, HIJ = hijacked, IMPF = imperfective, L = L-suffix, M = male, PERF = perfective, PL = plural, S = S-suffix, SG = singular.

The main implication of our analysis is that PCC effects can be entirely divorced from both ditransitives and the presence of a DAT intervener. Rather, PCC effects arise in a certain abstract structural configuration, given in (3a), regardless of the particular heads and arguments involved, as shown in (3b) for the PCC configuration in Senaya and (3c) for canonical ditransitive PCC configurations.



This paper is laid out as follows. In §2, we give a brief overview of the PCC. In §3, we introduce basic Senaya grammar and present the syntactic structures proposed by Kalin & van Urk (2012b). §4 lays out the crucial data involving progressives and argues for a PCC analysis of these facts. §5 concludes.

2. The Person Case Constraint

It is well-known cross-linguistically that first and second person DPs may behave differently from third person DPs, especially in being more restricted (see, e.g., Nichols (2001), Rezac (2011)). One such restriction on first/second person DPs is the PCC, a widely attested empirical phenomenon (seen in, e.g., Basque, Finnish, and Georgian), stated by Bonet (1991) as follows:

- (4) **STRONG PCC:** For two arguments in a domain X, the lower argument has to be third person.

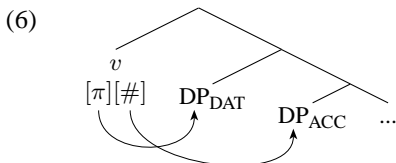
Typically, PCC effects are found in the interaction between the two internal arguments of a ditransitive, restricting the direct object (the lower internal argument) to third person, as can be seen in French:

- (5) Lucille *la*/**nous* leur présentera.
 Lucy her.ACC/*us.ACC them.DAT introduce.3SG.FUT
 ‘Lucy will introduce her/*us to them.’

The ACC (direct object) clitic can be third person, e.g., *la*, but cannot be non-third person, e.g., *nous*.

A common thread among many theoretical accounts of the PCC (e.g., Anagnostopoulou (2003), Béjar & Rezac (2003), Nevins (2007)) is that PCC effects arise in configurations where a licenser (usually *v*) is separated from a DP that needs licensing (usually accusative) by another DP (usually dative). The intervening DP is referred to as the ‘defective intervener’, because it interacts enough with the probe to block full licensing of the lower DP, but does not itself get licensed by that probe.

We hone in on the specific details of Béjar & Rezac’s (2003) account of the Strong PCC. For Béjar and Rezac (building on work by Chomsky (2000) and Anagnostopoulou (2003)), φ -probes decompose into a separate person probe, $[\pi]$, and number probe, $[\#]$, with person probing first. In ditransitives in languages that have clitic doubling, the probes may agree with different DPs, as illustrated in (6).



$[\pi]$ probes first and finds the highest argument, DP_{DAT} . $[\pi]$ clitic doubles DP_{DAT} , rendering DP_{DAT} invisible to further probing. When $[\#]$ probes, it probes past the the invisible DP_{DAT} and finds DP_{ACC} , instantiating an agree relation. Notice that the DP_{ACC} , the lower argument, only agrees for number.

In order to explain why the lower DP (the one that only agrees for number) must be third person, Béjar and Rezac propose the following condition (2003:53):

- (7) **PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC):** An interpretable 1st/2nd person feature must be licensed by entering into an Agree relation with a functional category.

Since the lower argument (DP_{ACC} in (6)) agrees only with a number probe, that DP can only be third person. If the lower DP were first or second person, the derivation would violate the PLC and crash, since the DP has not agreed with a person probe.² Thus, due to the PLC, the Strong PCC arises when “two elements [enter] into a syntactic relation with a single AGR head, the first one for person and the second for number” (Béjar & Rezac, 2003:49).

After an introduction to Senaya in the following section, we will see data in §4 that are reminiscent of the Strong PCC, but appear in progressive transitives. We will argue that this is indeed a PCC effect, amenable to treatment similar to that of the canonical ditransitive PCC effects discussed in this section.

3. Senaya: Basic syntax

In this section, we introduce basic Senaya grammar and show that φ -agreement is a necessary component of argument licensing in Senaya. We then present the structures proposed by Kalin & van Urk (2012b) for the perfective and imperfective, which we adopt and expand upon in §4.

3.1. Aspectual bases and φ -agreement

Senaya is an SOV language which, characteristic of Semitic languages, uses ‘root and pattern’ morphology. There are two basic aspectual bases, the perfective and the imperfective. For example, the trilateral root for ‘sleep’, *dmx*, is realized as *dmex* in the perfective and *daamx* in the imperfective.

Additional (concatenative) morphology that can be added onto these verb bases includes agreement marking and the auxiliary ‘be’ (in progressives, §4). Agreement tracks subjects and definite/pronominal objects, and has a (superficial, at least) NOM/ACC alignment in both the perfective and imperfective, in that the same set of suffixes marks both transitive and intransitive subjects, while objects are treated uniquely. There are two sets of agreement morphemes – the so-called S-suffixes and L-suffixes:

(8)	a.	S-SUFFIX SERIES	b.	L-SUFFIX SERIES
		1SGM -en 1PL -ox		1SG -lii 1PL -lan
		1SGF -an		2SGM -lox 2PL -looxon
		2SGM -et 2PL -iiton		2SGF -lax
		2SGF -at		3SGM -lee 3PL -luu/lun
		3SGM -Ø 3PL -ii		3SGF -laa
		3SGF -a		

There are no case distinctions on DPs in Senaya, so agreement is our window into argument alignment.

The agreement paradigms interact in a fixed manner with the base’s aspect, resulting in an interesting aspect-based agreement split (Kalin & van Urk, 2012). On the perfective verb base, there is exactly one slot for agreement, an L-suffix slot, marking the transitive or intransitive subject (agreement bolded):

(9)	a.	Axnii <i>dmex</i> - lan .	INTRANSITIVE PERF.
		we sleep.PERF- 1PL.L	
		‘We slept.’	
	b.	Axnii xa ksuuta ksuu- lan .	TRANSITIVE PERF., INDEF. OBJ.
		we one book write.PERF- 1PL.L	
		‘We wrote a book.’	

The imperfective base has two potential slots for agreement, an S-suffix slot followed by an L-suffix slot. Subjects are now marked with S-suffixes, (10a-b), while objects are marked with L-suffixes when they are definite/pronominal, (10b):

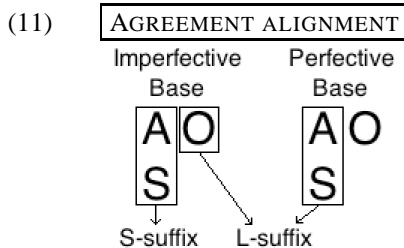
(10)	a.	Axnii <i>damx</i> - ox .	INTRANSITIVE IMPERF.
		we sleep.IMPF- 1PL.S	
		‘We sleep.’	

² Other places the PLC has been invoked are in accounts of person-based split-ergativity and person-conditioned auxiliary selection (Coon & Preminger, 2011) as well as properties of the Kichean Agent-Focus construction (Preminger, 2011).

- b. Axnii oo ksuuta kasw-**ox-laa**.
 we that book write.**IMPF-1PL.S-3SGF.L**
 ‘We write that book(fem.).’

TRANSITIVE IMPERF., DEF. OBJ.

Senaya’s aspect-based agreement split is schematized in (11):^{3,4}



In the perfective, subjects trigger agreement as an L-suffix. In the imperfective, L-suffixes mark objects instead of subjects. Finally, the S-suffix series surfaces uniquely to mark subjects in the imperfective.

In Senaya, φ -agreement seems to be required for argument-licensing. The perfective verb base, with its single agreement slot, cannot grammatically appear with a definite object, no matter how one tries to restructure the agreement morphology on the perfective base:

- (12) *Axnii oo ksuuta ksuu(-**laa/-a**)-**lan(-laa/-a)**.
 we that book write.**PERF(-3SGF.L/S)-1PL.L(-3SGF.L/S)**
 ‘We wrote that book(fem.).’

It is not grammatical for a definite object to simply not trigger agreement, nor can agreement with the object surface as an S- or L-suffix either before or after subject agreement, *-lan* (1pl.L). It is also not possible for the single agreement morpheme to mark the object instead of the subject (not shown here).⁵

The ungrammaticality of using the perfective base with a definite object seems to reduce to the fact that the perfective base cannot host agreement with an object. The imperfective base appears in stark contrast – it can agree with an object, and accordingly it can appear with a definite object, as was seen in (10b). We pursue this further on a theoretical level in the following section.⁶

3.2. The syntax of the perfective and imperfective

To account for the fact that subjects and definite objects must trigger agreement to be licensed (established above), we propose that the following condition holds in Senaya:

³ This figure was inspired by Kevin Ryan.

⁴ The transitive perfective thus construed looks like an antipassive (since the object seems to be demoted, i.e., must be indefinite and cannot trigger agreement), while the transitive imperfective is the regular (non-antipassive) configuration. However, this cannot be so, since the agreement configuration changes from the imperfective to the perfective in intransitives as well; intransitives shouldn’t be able to be antipassivized. The agreement split in Senaya, then, is not the result of antipassivization from the imperfective to the perfective.

⁵ How, then, does a speaker express perfective sentences that have a definite object? The language allows for the imperfective base to be used in just these cases, since it can host object agreement. A perfective interpretation of the imperfective base is achieved through the prefix *tm-*, which seems to indicate that the imperfective structure has been ‘hijacked’ by the perfective for argument-licensing (hence the gloss HIJ below). This is shown in (i), cf. (10b):

- (i) Axnii oo ksuuta tm-kasw-**ox-laa**.
 we that book HIJ-write.**IMPF-1PL.S-3SGF.L**
 ‘We wrote that book(fem.).’

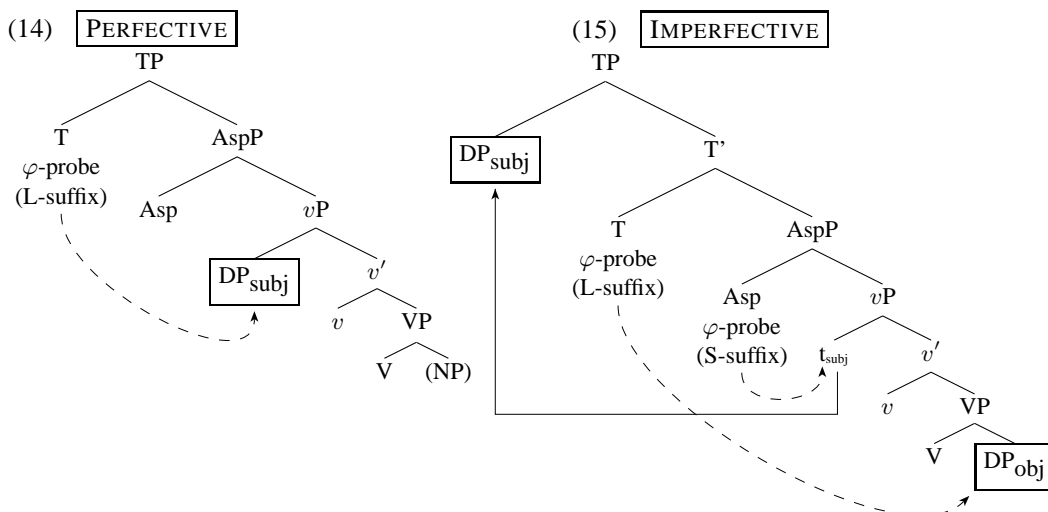
An account of this construction is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁶ We follow Kalin and van Urk (2012) in assuming that indefinite objects pseudo-incorporate into the verb as NPs (Dayal, 2011; Massam, 2001), and therefore are exempt from the licensing requirements on DPs.

- (13) **ARGUMENT-LICENSING CONDITION (ALC):** Every argument DP must enter into an Agree relation with a unique φ -probe.

Applying the ALC, there must be exactly one φ -probe in the perfective (since only one argument DP can be licensed), and in the imperfective, there must be two φ -probes (two argument DPs can be licensed).⁷

A syntactic account of the perfective and imperfective that is compatible with our proposal is presented in Kalin & van Urk (2012b). Kalin and van Urk derive Senaya’s aspect split by positing that there is a single φ -probe in the perfective, which is on T and whose spell-out is an L-suffix, (14). In the imperfective, (15), there is an additional φ -probe, which is on Asp and whose spell-out is an S-suffix. In addition, Kalin and van Urk posit a movement step to spec-TP in the imperfective to allow T to probe the object unhindered (following similar proposals by Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir (2003), Anand & Nevins (2006), Legate (2008), Preminger (2011), *i.a.*). The structures they propose are shown below.



In the perfective, the subject DP satisfies the ALC, (13), by agreeing with T; agreement with the subject is therefore spelled out as an L-suffix; there can be no DP object in the perfective, since there is no φ -probe to license it. In the imperfective, the subject DP satisfies the ALC by agreeing with Asp; agreement with the subject is therefore spelled out as an S-suffix. Finally, the subject raises to spec-TP, making it possible for T to agree with the object DP and resulting in an L-suffix marking object agreement.

In the next section, we present the complexities of the progressive and show that the movement of the subject to spec-TP (posited by Kalin & van Urk (2012)) makes the correct predictions with respect to the defective intervention that arises in the progressive.

4. Senaya: Progressives

Progressives in Senaya reveal an alternation involving the position of object agreement in the verbal complex. We argue that the person-based restrictions on this alternation are symptomatic of the PCC.

4.1. Person restrictions in progressives

Progressives display a complex agreement pattern. To form a progressive, the imperfective base is used plus an enclitic auxiliary ‘be’ (-y/ii/∅)⁸ which comes with its own agreement slot, paradigm in (16). This paradigm is unusual because for non-third person, the auxiliary inflects with S-suffixes (unbolded forms), and for third person, the auxiliary inflects with L-suffixes (bolded forms).

⁷ We include the specification of “unique” in (13) to rule out a single φ -probe licensing more than one argument, à la Multiple Agree (Anagnostopoulou (2005), Nevins (2007), *i.a.*), which would make it very hard to explain the inability of the perfective verb base to license agreement with a definite object, (12).

⁸ We take the auxiliary to be -y underlyingly, but in the third person it is vocalized to -ii, since it is before a consonant, and this deletes following a vowel.

AUXILIARY + INFLECTION			
1SGM	y-en	1PL	y-ox
1SGF	y-an		
2SGM	y-et	2PL	y-iiton
2SGF	y-at		
3SGM	(ii)-lee	3PL	(ii)-luu
3SGF	(ii)-laa		

In progressive intransitives (or transitives with an indefinite object), the subject agrees twice – once on the imperfective verb base (with an S-suffix, as usual), and once on the auxiliary (suffix from (16)).

- (17) a. Axnii damx-**ox**=y-**ox**.
 we sleep.IMPF-**1PL.S**=be-**1PL.S**
 ‘We are sleeping.’
- b. Aanii xa ksuuta kasw-**ii**= \emptyset -**luu**.
 they one book write.IMPF-**3PL.S**=be-**3PL.L**
 ‘They are writing a book.’

Due to (16), the two instances of subject agreement match in non-third person but not in third person.

In progressive transitives (with a definite object), there are three ways for the verbal complex to be structured. First, the subject can agree twice (just like it did in (17)), while object agreement is added to the verb base and is marked with an L-suffix, as is normal on the imperfective base; this is shown in (18a). Second, differing minimally from the previous structure, the auxiliary may host a default third person agreement morpheme (*-lee*, 3SGM.L) instead of subject agreement; this is shown in (18b). Finally, again differing minimally from the previous structure, the default agreement morpheme and object agreement can switch places, such that object agreement appears on the auxiliary and default agreement appears on the verb base, in the L-suffix slot, (18c). (In the following examples, subject agreement is bolded, object agreement is bolded and italicized, and default agreement is plain italicized.)

- (18) a. Aana maxy-**an-aa**=y-**an**.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-3SGFL**=be-**1SGF.S**
 ‘I(fem.) am hitting her.’
- b. Aana maxy-**an-aa**= \emptyset -*lee*.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-3SGFL**=be-*DFLT.L*
- c. Aana maxy-**an-ee**= \emptyset -*laa*.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-DFLT.L**=be-*3SGFL*

The three verbal complexes in (18) are in free variation, and do not generally effect a change in meaning.⁹

However, the variation in the verbal complex is restricted with a non-third person object. Comparing with the utterances in (18), respectively, we have the following examples with a non-third person object:

- (19) a. Aana maxy-**an-ax**=y-**an**.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-2SGFL**=be-**1SGF.S**
 ‘I(fem.) am hitting you(fem.).’
- b. Aana maxy-**an-ax**=ii-*lee*.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-2SGFL**=be-*DFLT.L*
- c. *Aana maxy-**an-ee**=y-*at/lax*.
 I hit.IMPF-**1SGF.S-DFLT.L**=be-*2SGF.S/L*

Just as with a third person object, (19a) and (19b) are grammatical, where object agreement is on the verb base and subject agreement is either doubled, (19a), or appears only on the verb base while default agreement appears on the auxiliary, (19b). Interestingly, however, (19c) – the variant where object

⁹ Our consultant sometimes tells us that the different versions of (18) and (19) convey a different amount of speaker certainty. However, we have found it difficult to find a consistent generalization about where more/less certainty is conveyed; it seems to vary idiosyncratically. We therefore put this issue aside for the purposes of this paper.

agreement appears on the auxiliary – is ungrammatical. (This was also shown in (1) in the introduction.) The generalization that arises is that non-third person objects cannot trigger agreement on the auxiliary.

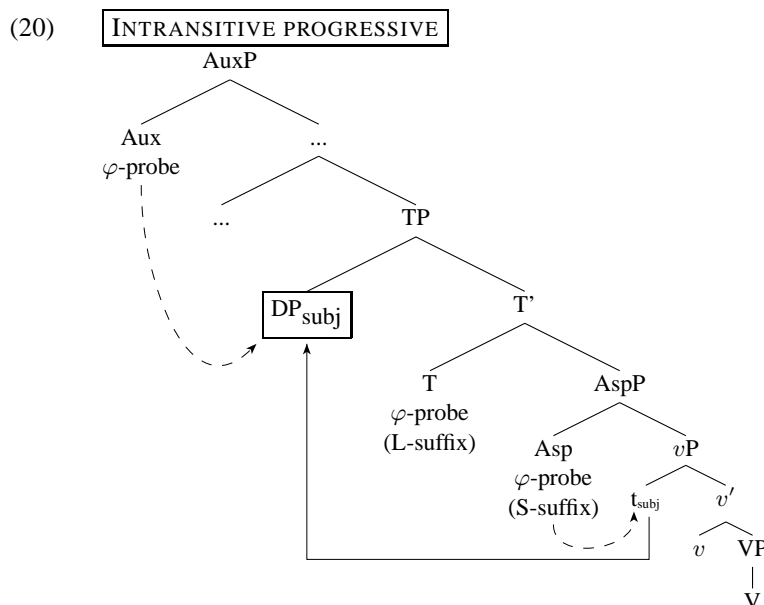
Before we move on to a syntactic account of this phenomenon, let us review the crucial empirical observations. First, DP arguments must trigger φ -agreement to be licensed (§3.1), as reflected in the ALC, (13). DP objects can, in principle, trigger agreement either on the verb base or on the auxiliary: (18b) and (18c). Crucially, the progressive auxiliary is able to host first or second person agreement, so long as it is agreement with a subject: (17), (18a), and (19a). However, the auxiliary cannot host non-third person agreement with an object: (27)/(2b).

4.2. Syntactic intervention in the progressive

The big puzzle we seek to explain is why a non-third person object cannot trigger agreement on the progressive auxiliary. A purely morphological account of this restriction would not be able to adequately explain why the auxiliary can morphologically host non-third person agreement (namely, with a subject), but not non-third person object agreement; this would be especially hard to explain morphologically given that both subject and object agreement on the auxiliary draw from a single morphological paradigm, (16). It is therefore more likely that there is a syntactic, structural reason for this restriction, which is exactly the idea pursued in this section.

Given that the progressive builds on the imperfective base (including its two agreement slots – an S-suffix slot for subject agreement which is followed by an L-suffix slot when there is an object DP), we take the structure of the imperfective as proposed by Kalin & van Urk (2012) in (15) to form the basis of the progressive. We build on this structure by adding another functional head with a φ -probe, which we call AuxP. We add this syntactically on top of the imperfective TP since the auxiliary appears outside the imperfective verb base and all of its associated morphology.

We begin by presenting the structure for an intransitive progressive. We build the imperfective TP as usual, then add Aux/AuxP, which carries a φ -probe.¹⁰



The subject agrees with Asp while in spec-*vP*, then raises to spec-TP and agrees again with Aux. It is clear from this derivation that while agreement is a necessary component of argument-licensing, as per the ALC, agreement can also occur superfluously (i.e., when not required for licensing): the subject in (20) satisfied its need to agree in spec-*vP* but also agrees in its raised position, spec-TP.

¹⁰ We do not pursue an analysis where the subject is generated in spec-AuxP (and controls a lower PRO) or raises to spec-AuxP because we already have evidence that Aux can agree downwards with a lower argument, e.g., the direct object, (18c). Further, the subject serves as an intervener in the probing of Aux, as will be discussed below.

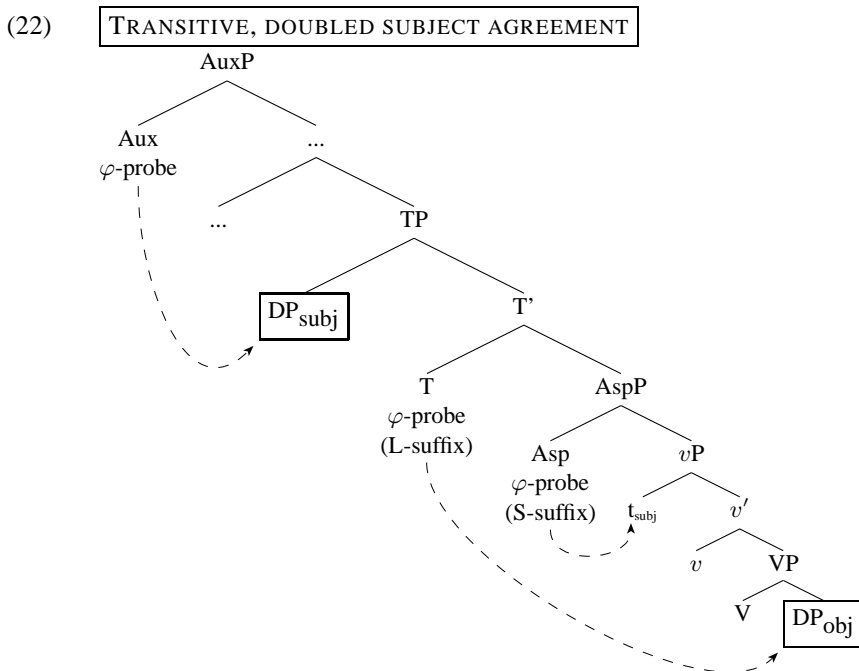
By adopting Béjar & Rezac's (2003) proposal (§2) that φ -probes split into separate person and number probes, we can make a generalization about the mixed agreement paradigm of the auxiliary, (16). Taking non-third person features to be privative (following Béjar & Rezac (2009), Preminger (2011), *i.a.*), we can say that if $[\pi]$ agrees with a DP that carries a [participant] feature (true of first and second person DPs only), then agreement spells out as an S-suffix; otherwise, agreement spells out as an L-suffix. We take this to have no further consequences in the syntax.

We turn now to progressive transitives, which are significantly more complex. The verbal complex in progressive transitives can be realized in three ways for third person objects, as was seen in (18): (i) with doubled subject agreement, (18a); (ii) with object agreement on the verb base, and default agreement on Aux, (18b); (iii) with object agreement on Aux, and default agreement on the verb base, (18c).

The first of these (doubled subject agreement), (18a)/(19a), has the following verbal complex:

(21) V.IMPF-AGR.S(SUBJ)-AGR.L(OBJ)=AUX-AGR(SUBJ).

This is relatively easy to account for: the structure looks just like that of the intransitive in (20), with the addition of an object that triggers agreement on the imperfective verb base just as it did in (15).



The subject agrees with Asp and Aux; the object agrees with an unhindered probe on T, just like in an imperfective. There is no restriction on the person of the object, just as there is not in a plain imperfective.

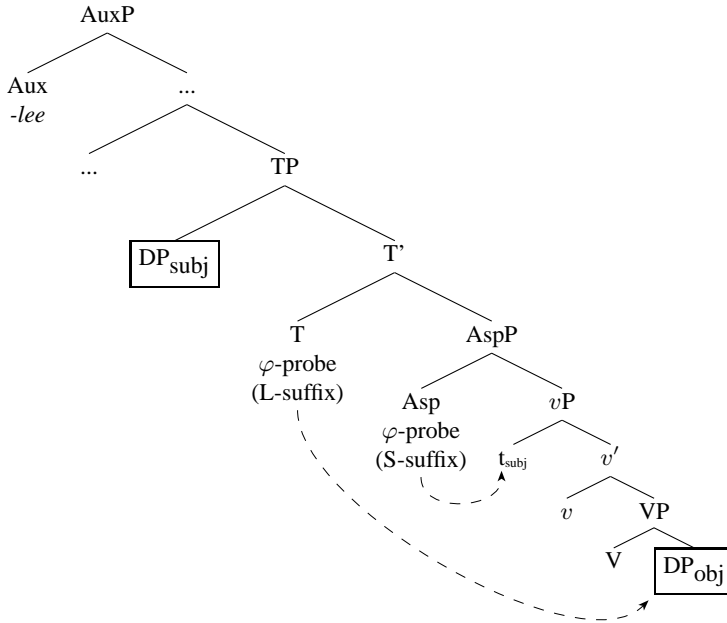
To derive the second two possibilities – both of which involve the appearance of a default agreement morpheme, *-lee* (3SGM.L) – we need an additional stipulation: Senaya allows for a dummy φ -probe to merge on T and Aux in progressive transitives, preventing that head from probing.¹¹ With this stipulation in place, we can see that the φ -probe on Aux in (22) is not, strictly speaking, required for licensing; the DP that Aux agrees with – the subject – has already satisfied the ALC by agreeing with Asp.

Since Aux is not needed for licensing, *-lee* can merge on Aux (preventing it from probing) to create the verbal complex in (23) (from (18b)/(19b)), derived syntactically in (24).

(23) V.IMPF-AGR.S(SUBJ)-AGR.L(OBJ)=AUX-AGR(DFLT)

¹¹ We would like to thank Amy Rose Deal for suggesting this possibility to us. What is needed here is a mechanism for stopping the probing of Aux or T in just those cases where default *-lee* surfaces. It would not be sufficient to say that *-lee* surfaces when Aux or T probes and finds nothing to agree with, since we see empirically that arguments that have already been agreed with can be re-probed, e.g., in the case of doubled subject agreement in (18a). Both T and Aux c-command at least one DP in (24)/(26), so if they were to probe, they would find a DP to agree with.

(24) TRANSITIVE, DEFAULT AGREEMENT ON AUX

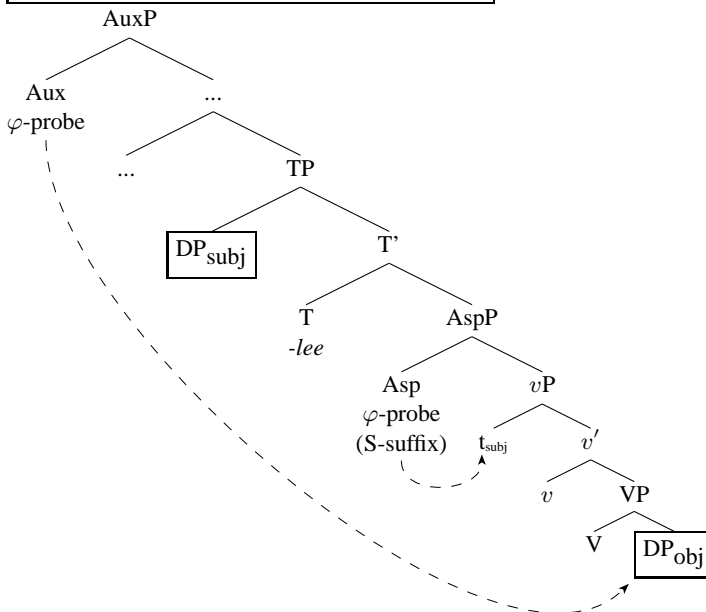


With *-lee* merged on Aux, all the DPs in the structure are still able to be licensed: the subject agrees with Asp and the object agrees with T. Again, as in (22), there is no restriction on the person of the object in these cases, since T is unhindered on its path to probing the object.

Finally, the φ -probe on T is also not strictly necessary for licensing, so long as Aux remains a licenser. Thus, the dummy φ -probe *-lee* can merge on T, (26). This derives the verbal complex in (25).

(25) V.IMPF-AGR.S(SUBJ)-AGR.L(DFLT)=AUX-AGR(OBJ)

(26) TRANSITIVE, DEFAULT AGREEMENT ON T



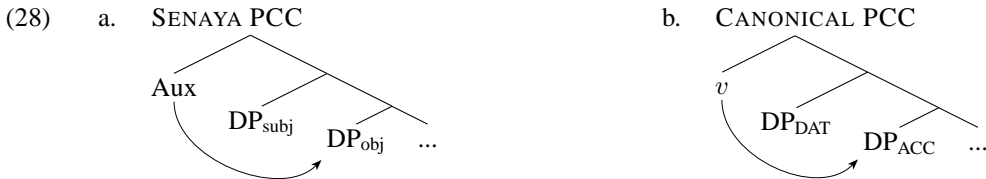
In this derivation – unlike all the previous ones – the path of agreement of Aux on its way to the object crosses over another DP, the subject. Additionally, it is in this verbal complex/derivation that there is a restriction of the object to third person ((27), repeated below):

- (27) *Aana maxy-**an-ee=y-at/lax**.
 I hit.IMPFF-1SGF.S-DFLT.L=be-2SGF.S/L
 Intended: ‘I(fem.) am hitting you(fem.)’

The co-occurrence of these observations – namely, that agreement in (27) crosses over the subject and that the object in such a derivation is limited to third person – is not coincidental. Rather, we propose that the restriction to third person is a direct result of defective intervention by the already-licensed subject on the probe’s path to licensing the object. We explore this further in the following section.

4.3. PCC analysis

The licensing configuration in (26) looks just like a PCC configuration. In (28), we compare the canonical PCC (two internal arguments), (28b), to the (simplified) derivation of (26), (28a).



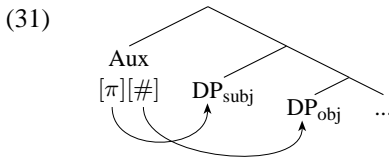
In both, the probe crosses over an already-licensed DP, and thus the lower DP is restricted to third person.

The person restriction in Senaya is also amenable to theoretical treatment as a PCC configuration, along the lines of Béjar & Rezac (2003), presented in §2. In order to fully account for the PCC effect in Senaya, we need to add the PLC to the ALC, both repeated below.

- (29) **PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC):** An interpretable 1st/2nd person feature must be licensed by entering into an Agree relation with a functional category.
- (30) **ARGUMENT-LICENSING CONDITION (ALC):** Every argument DP must enter into an Agree relation with a unique φ -probe.

The PLC, (29), picks out a subset of the DPs picked out by (30), namely, first/second person argument DPs. This subset of DPs now must not only enter into an agree relation (as per the ALC), but also must have their person features checked (by a $[\pi]$ probe); third person DPs, on the other hand, can be licensed by entering into any agree relation at all (with a $[\pi]$ or $[\#]$ probe).

We can now make sense of the fact that non-third person object DPs in progressive transitives cannot be licensed via agreement on the Aux. Agreement from Aux crosses over another DP, the subject, which acts as a defective intervener, using up the $[\pi]$ probe and only allowing $[\#]$ to reach the object.



Due to the PLC, the object cannot be first or second person in such cases.

The question now arises as to why $[\#]$ on Aux is allowed to probe past the subject in (31). In canonical PCC configurations, the higher argument is clitic doubled, resulting in invisibility to further probing (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Béjar & Rezac, 2003). We do not see an overt clitic representing the higher argument (the subject) in the PCC configuration in Senaya, a rarity among instances of the PCC. However, we nonetheless stipulate that there is a covert/null subject clitic in just these cases.¹²

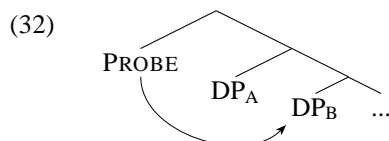
¹² We recognize that this is a stipulative way to derive Senaya’s PCC effect. However, the configuration in Senaya in which there is a restriction to third person looks just like the canonical PCC, (28), making it undesirable to appeal to different theoretical accounts of the two phenomena. We leave it as an open question whether ours is the right analysis, or whether (perhaps) there is another way for the subject DP to become invisible to further probing. One potential piece of support for our analysis comes from the fact that several closely-related Neo-Aramaic languages do have clitics, arguably generated through agreement with a clitic-doubling $[\pi]$ probe (Kalin & van Urk, 2012a).

Specifically, we propose that $[\pi]$ in Senaya is a last-resort clitic doubler. What this means is that, when there is no probe that can directly probe/license an object DP (i.e., when *-lee* is merged on T in a transitive progressive, (26)), $[\pi]$ may clitic double the subject; this allows the second part of the φ -probe on Aux, $[\#]$, to skip past the clitic-doubled (invisible) subject and license the object, (31). $[\pi]$ must be a *last-resort* clitic doubler, since Aux can only agree with the object if the object has not yet agreed, i.e., if the object still needs licensing. Finally, since we do not see an overt subject clitic in such cases, we must therefore also stipulate that the clitic and agreement compete for the same morphological slot on the auxiliary, and agreement always wins out.

In sum, the restriction on object agreement on the auxiliary – namely, that it can only be third person – results from the fact that the subject intervenes on Aux's path to license the object. This intervention does not arise when it is T that probes the object, since the subject has raised to spec-TP.

5. Conclusion

We have shown that there is a Person Case Constraint effect in Senaya progressives, where the DP subject acts as a defective intervener for the φ -probe on Aux, which attempts to establish a relationship with the DP object. Our findings support Béjar and Rezac-type (structural) approaches to the PCC over ones in which PCC effects are tied to special properties of the particular DPs and/or heads involved with two internal arguments (e.g., Anagnostopoulou (2003), Nevins (2007)). Rather, we argue that the PCC results from a purely structural configuration, representable abstractly as in (32):



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