Weak Pronoun Clusters in Polish: on the residue of the POC

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This paper addresses aspects of the order within the pronominal cluster. Most Slavic languages have deficient pronouns (Cardinaletti and Starke 1994) whose order is determined by:

(1) Person Case Constraint (PCC, Bonet 1991): When a weak DO and IO cooccur//(a) the DO has to be 3rd person (Strong)//(b) if one of them is 3rd person it has to be the DO (Weak).

Strong PCC can be found in e.g. Greek and French, while weak PCC occurs in e.g. Catalan and Spanish. In the case of Slavic languages, constraints on weak pronoun ordering are less obvious since these languages may instantiate slightly different orders of object pronouns, which led to proliferation of PCC varieties. This, in turn, motivated claims that some languages, like Polish, do not observe the PCC (since they lack clitic/weak pronouns with specific syntactic properties, e.g. Franks 2017). We argue below that, despite appearances, in a subset of pronominal combinations, Polish observes the PCC, reformulated as a Person Ordering Constraint (POC), and it uses pronoun order switching strategies available elsewhere:

(2) POC: In a combination of clitic pronouns, /strong: the last (the lowest one) has to be 3rd person/weak: if there is 3rd person, it has to be last/lowest. (Stegovec 2020, Franks 2017: 264-265)

We adopt and rely on a framework emerging from Franks (2017, 2018) and Stegovec (2020:292), which leaves little doubt: all languages with deficient pronouns (pro_{DF}) observe the PCC/POC:

(3) 'The proposed pronoun typology predicts that pronoun type correlates not only to whether the PCC is **active** or not (**deficient** vs strong pronoun) but also to the type of the PCC ('clitic pro_{DF}s' yield the Strong PCC, while 'weak pro_{DF}s' yield the weak PCC).'

In broad strokes, Stegovec proposes the structure for pro_{DF} licensing in (4a), where the unvalued 1st/2nd person features of pro_{DF} IO become valued against $v_{\{val\,\pi\}}$ upon moving to [spec,vP]. The second pro_{DF} DO has its [π] restricted to 3rd p, a default [π] setting. However, in some languages (Slovenian, Czech, Swiss Gm, or Polish as we submit) the pro_{DF}s can be optionally reordered by scrambling to ApplP, see (4b):

(4) a. $[_{vP}\ v_{\{val\,\pi\}}\ [_{ApplP}\ pro_{DF}\ IO_{\{\_\pi\}}\ [\ Appl\ [_{VP}\ V\ pro_{DF}\ DO_{\{\_\pi\}}]]]]$ (standard POC)
b. $[_{vP}\ v_{\{val\,\pi\}}\ [_{ApplP}\ pro_{DF}\ DO_{\{\_\pi\}}\ [\ pro_{DF}\ IO_{\{\_\pi\}}\ [\ Appl\ [_{VP}\ V\ \sout{pro_{DF}\ DO}_{\{\_\pi\}}]]]]]$ (reverse POC)

As the reordering happens in the domain of $v_{\{val\,\pi\}}$, a **reverse** POC effect is produced, whereby pro_{DF} DO has its 1st/2nd [π] valued and pro_{DF} IO is restricted to 3rd person.

Our Research hypothesis:

(5) If PCC/POC applies to pro_{DF}s their pairings should mostly comply with it. A minority of unexpected pairings should result from an adaptive strategy (e.g. pronoun switch through scrambling).

As substantial bulk of literature shows, Polish has pro_{DF}s (i.e. Franks and King 2000, Migdalski 2016, Cetnarowska 2004, Franks 2017). Following the literature, we assume that Polish pro_{DF}s are the ones which visibly differ from strong pronouns in size, which includes only 2acc/gen ***cię***, 3m.acc/gen ***go***, 1dat ***mi***, 2dat ***ci***, 3m/n.dat ***mu*** (Polish has lost 1acc ****mię*** pro_{DF} form). Polish pro_{DF}s **can't**: bear primary phrasal stress, stand in isolation, be modified by adjectives or constituent negation, etc. They cannot scramble out of the *żeby*-subjunctive clause. Certain monosyllabic pronouns are non-deficient (6d-e) and PCC/POC doesn't apply to them:

(6) a. tylko *go/jego; b. tylko *mu/jemu; c. tylko *ci/tobie; d. tylko ją; e. tylko je
a.only *pro_{DF}/him_{ACC}; b. only *pro_{DF}/him_{DAT}; c. only *pro_{DF}/you_{DAT}; d. only her_{ACC}; e. only $them_{ACC}$

Polish pro_{DF}s are idiosyncratic, because they neither appear in one strict position in the clause nor have to cluster. Yet, they have a limited range of positions, from an immediately postverbal one to the one at T-Agr. When Polish pro_{DF}s **do cluster**, they should, pretheoretically, allow for the following pairings in a ditransitive structure (pro_{DF}s as DO_{ACC} and IO_{DAT}) (we provide glosses for the first pronoun orders, while the reverse glosses hold of the reordered pronouns):

(7) a. mi cię/*cię mi; b. mi go/*?go mi; c. ci go/*?go ci; d. mu cię/cię mu; e. mu go/go mu
a.1st dat 2nd acc; b. 1st dat 3rd m.acc; c. 2nd dat 3rd m.acc; d. 3rd m.dat 2nd acc; e. 3rd m.dat 3rd m.acc

Ex. (7d) and (7e) allow for both orders, so 40% of the pairings seem to violate the PCC in (1) and the DAT-ACC order. The reordering is due to information-structure demands (Cetnarowska 2004, Migdalski 2016). Once POC replaces PCC, the pairing in (7e) can be neglected, as both pronouns are 3rd person, which possibly requires no/default valuation against $v_{\{val\,\pi\}}$ in (4a-b). This leaves us with only 25% of pairings violating the POC in (2). Furthermore, Cetnarowska (2004) and Migdalski and Hakyung-Sun (2020) observe that some pro_{DF}s are **maximally deficient**: they cannot support a person/number agreement clitic, while others can (interestingly, the division line runs between 1st/2nd vs. 3rd person):

(7) Naprawdę mu-ś /go-ś pokazał vs. Naprawdę mu /go pokazałeś.
really him_{DAT}+$_{2SG}$ $showed_{M}$ vs. really him_{DAT} $showed_{2SG.M}$
'You-masc really showed him to him.'

(8) *Wczoraj cię-śmy /ci-śmy /mi-śmy pokazali. vs. Wczoraj cię/ci/mi pokazaliśmy.
yesterday $you_{SG.ACC}$+$_{1Pl}$ $showed_{M}$ vs. yesterday $you_{SG.ACC}$ $showed_{1Pl.M}$
'We-masc showed you yesterday.'

This leaves us with three maximally deficient pro_{DF}s: *mi* (1st sg.DAT), *ci* (2nd sg.DAT), *cię* (2nd sg.ACC). They form four pairings of special interest, in that one total pairing of maximal pro_{DF}s is possible and three pairings of a maximally deficient pro_{DF} with another 3rd pro_{DF}:

(9) a. mi cię/*cię mi; b. mi go/*?go mi; c. ci go/*?go ci; d. mu cię/cię mu
a.1st dat 2nd acc/reverse; b.1st dat 3rd m.acc/rev; c. 2nd dat 3rd m.acc/rev; d. 3rd m.dat 2nd acc/rev

Our pilot poll and corpus search for these pairings, as shown in (10), confirm our judgements: these clusters of pro_{DF}s in Polish appear to be a residue of the POC.

(10) National Corpus of Polish (PELCRA search engine): the number of hits for clitic clusters in 11a-c

mi cię	394	*cię mi	0	mi go	4700	*?go mi	28	ci go	1569	*?go ci	25

(10) reflects the overwhelming tendency, so only 25% of the pairings with **maximal** pro_{DF}s allow for both orders, allegedly violating the PCC/POC. Under the POC in (2), the latter ordering in (10d) is primary (2nd DO > 3rd IO), with the ApplP-internal pro_{DF} order swap, see (4b). Otherwise 3rd IO pro_{DF} would block the valuation of [π] on 2nd ACC pro_{DF} as a defective intervener. A subsequent reordering via the scrambling of 3rd DAT *mu* above 2nd ACC *cię* must take place above vP (Stegovec 2020).

(11) $[_{XP}\ IO_{\{\pi\}}\ [_{vP}\ DO_{\{\pi\}}\ v_{\{val\,\pi\}}\ [_{ApplP}\ \sout{pro_{DF}\ DO}_{\{\_\pi\}}\ [\ \sout{pro_{DF}\ IO}_{\{\_\pi\}}\ [\ Appl\ [_{VP}\ V\ \sout{pro_{DF}\ DO}_{\{\_\pi\}}]]]]]$

On the theory in (4), if Polish has pro_{DF}s, they must obey PCC/POC. They allegedly do not, because in the average cluster: (a) not all monosyllabic pronouns are pro_{DF}s; (b) pro_{DF}s optionally use short DO over IO movement below vP, see (4b), and pronoun switch via scrambling above vP, see (12). But Polish is not an outlier, as such pro_{DF} distribution fits the typology of PCC languages in (Stegovec 2020) alongside Swiss Gm. Our aim in a further study is to check if Polish used to be a 'Me-first' POC type, when 1st sg.ACC pro_{DF} form (**mię*) was still in use.

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