What 'other people' mean to 'us'*

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1.   Introduction

While there is great diversity in the realization of person marking across languages of the world, there are also notable typologically unviolated restrictions on how person is encoded in natural language. In the tradition of finding the confluence of grammatical universals and universals of the type advanced by Greenberg (1963), much work (more than can be mentioned or reviewed for he purposes of this paper) has been done on the inventory and arrangement of person features, and morphosyntactic features more generally (e.g. Zwicky 1977, Greenberg 1988, Harley & Ritter 2002, Cysouw 2003, Bobaljik 2008, Harbour 2016). Ultimately the goal of these studies is the standard goal of all work within the generative tradition: produce all and only the observed patterns of language.

In this paper, I show that the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) and the extended geometry of Bliss & Jesney (2005) fail to capture two facts about Southwestern Ojibwe (Algonquian) person marking: (i) the surfacing of non-plural agreement morphosyntax in the exclusive and inclusive first person 'plurals', and (ii) the system of obviative marking. I argue both of these facts can be accounted for by extending the geometry to include an [Obviative] feature. I then show that all of the predicted inventories of the revised geometry are borne out, and argue that the geometry captures facts subsumed under the *Associative Plural Generalization* (Greenberg 1988, Cysouw 2003, Bobaljik 2008).

2.   Southwestern Ojibwe

Southwestern Ojibwe is a dialect of Ojibwe spoken in what is now Minnesota and Wisconsin. While further social and linguistic subdivisions are possible within the dialect, for the purposes of this paper the continuum of differences within Southwestern Ojibwe will not be vital. For details, the reader is referred to Sullivan (2016).

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Ojibwe is perhaps best know for its complex system of verbal morphology, which encodes clitics, agreement morphemes, transitivity/voice, tense, mood, and negation all within a single prosodic word. An example is given in (1), where the root *waab* meaning 'see' has post-verbal transitive morphology, object agreement, negative marker, and dubitative mood, as well as pre-verbal person marking indexing the subject and past tense morphology. Prior to the verbal complex, there is an additional negative marker *gaawiin*.

(1)   gaawiin nigii-waabamaasiidog

        gaawiin in-   gii-   waab -am   -aa   -sii -dog

        NEG   CL1- PAST- see   -TRANS -AGR3 -NEG -DUB

        'I must not have seen him/her'

In many cases, there is additional post-verbal agreement morphology indexing number and person, but in this paper a full detailing of these relationships will not be necessary. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the morphosyntax of matrix (i.e. INDEPENDENT order) and embedded (i.e. CONJUNCT order) verbs. I will also be setting aside these differences, restricting focus only to the independent order. Before turning to the verbal morphology, where the main puzzle is introduced, I present the pronominal distinctions of Southwestern Ojibwe.

2.1   **Pronominal distinctions**

Given the proliferation of both subject and object *pro*-drop, pronouns in Ojibwe are restricted in their occurrence, usually surfacing with focus. The form of the personal pronouns are given in (2), with the proposed morphological decomposition in (3).

(2)   *Personal pronoun inventory*

ϕ	Pronoun
1sg	*niin*
Excl	*niinawind*
Incl	*giinawind*
2sg	*giin*
2pl	*giinawaa*
3sg	*wiin*
3pl	*wiinawaa*

(3)   *Pronoun morpheme inventory*

Morpheme	ϕ
niin-	[speaker]
giin-	[addressee]
wiin-	3
-(a)waa	[group]
-(a)wind	[obv]

The proposed morphological inventory in (3) and the decomposition it suggests is indicative of the eventual analysis: while both the second and third person plural pronouns can be decomposed into two parts corresponding to person and number, the exclusive and inclusive do not have canonical 'plural' morphology—rather, they have a morpheme I argue will correspond to [obviative]. To preview the account in §4, I argue that this is because exclusive and inclusive in Southwestern Ojibwe are formulated from geometries that replace [group] with [obv].

The personal pronoun inventory does not encode every distinction present in the language, most notably the system of proximate/obviative marking. In short, obviation organizes third person animate referents. Within a discourse, there is a single proximate referent (which is unmarked) and all others are marked obviative. In general, the proximate referent is the topic or perspectival center. For example, in the ditransitive sentence in (4) the subject is proximate and the direct and indirect objects, both of which are grammatically animate, are obviative marked.

(4) o-gii-asham-aa-n   gwiiwizens-an ikwe   mishiimin-an
     3-PAST-feed-DIR-OBV boy-OBV   woman apple-OBV
     'The woman fed the boy an apple'

This system is at the center of the puzzle presented in the next section. While the personal pronouns do not distinguish proximate/obviative directly, the distinction is made in the demonstrative pronouns. The forms for animate gender only are given in (5).

(5) *Animate demonstrative pronouns*

DEM	φ	English
wa'aw	[prox]	this
a'aw	[prox]	that
ongow	[prox] + [group]	these
ingiw	[prox] + [group]	those
onow	[obv]	this/these
iniw	[obv]	that/those

This inventory highlights an important asymmetry in number marking. There is a distinction between singular and plural in proximate pronouns, but there is no distinction for obviative pronouns. Similarly for nouns, a proximate noun (6a) may be marked plural (6b), but an obviative noun (6c) may not be (6d). This fact will become central to motivating the analysis in §4

(6) a. *zhiishiib*, duck.PROX, 'duck'
     b. *zhiishiib-ag*, duck-PL, 'ducks'
     c. *zhiishiib-an*, duck-OBV, 'duck/ducks'
     d. **zhiishiib-ag-an*, **zhiishiib-an-ag*

2.2   Verbal agreement patterns

In work on agreement in the past 10 years, largely following Béjar & Rezac (2009), increasing attention has been paid to *direct-inverse* marking in Algonquian. In this system, certain agreement slots express different morphology depending on the arrangement of the internal and external arguments (henceforth IA and EA, respectively). In Ojibwe, and Algonquian

more generally, direct-inverse marking occurs on the THEME SIGN, the agreement marker realized to the right of the transitivity marker in (7) and (8).

(7) ni- waab -am -aa
CL1- see -TRANS -AGR3.prox
'I see him/her'

(8) ni- waab -am -igo
CL1- see -TRANS -INV
's/he sees me'

Descriptive accounts have captured direct/inverse marking via the person hierarchy in (9).[1]

(9)   { Addressee, Speaker } » Proximate » Obviative

Crucially, only singular arguments have been examined by both person-hierarchy-based and AGREE-based analyses, which has motivated the acceptance of hierarchy in (9) as observationally adequate. On the hierarchy account, DIRECT marking, exemplified in (7), is argued to appear when a higher ranked person is the External Argument (EA) of a lower ranker Internal Argument (IA), whereas INVERSE, exemplified in (8), appears when the hierarchy is violated.

    The paradigm of THEME SIGN agreement for transitive verbs with two animate arguments is given in (10), and the proposed features encoded by each morpheme in (11).

(10)   THEME SIGN *agreement in Southwestern Ojibwe transitive animate matrix verbs*

EA/IA	1sg	Excl	Incl	2sg	2pl	3sg.prox	3pl.prox	3.obv
1sg				in	in	aa	aa	imaa
Excl				igoo	igoo	aa	aa	imaa
Incl						aa	aa	imaa
2sg	i	i				aa	aa	imaa
2pl	i	i				aa	aa	imaa
3sg.prox	igo	igo	igo	igo	igo			aa
3pl.prox	igo	igo	igo	igo	igo			aa
3.obv						igo	igo	

(11)   THEME SIGN *morpheme identity*

-THEME	ϕ
-i	speaker
-in	addressee
-aa	proximate
-imaa	obviative
-igo	INVERSE
-igoo	INVERSE

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[1]Leading formal AGREE-based accounts (e.g. Béjar & Rezac 2009, Preminger 2014, Bhatia et al. 2016, Thivierge 2017) account for generalizations encoded in person hierarchies, including patterns of THEME SIGN agreement, with relativized probes. For ease of exposition, I present the patterns in terms of the hierarchy, noting that these generalizations can be and have been readily translated to AGREE-based accounts. The reader may refer to the papers cited above for details.

Given these data, two issues arise with past accounts. First, I argue that there has been a mischaracterization of what I argue to be the ADDRESSEE marker *-in* as an INVERSE marker, following claims by Béjar & Rezac (2009). This has recently been independently noted by Thivierge (2017), and will be assumed here as well. Second, and most crucially, plural arguments have not been examined by any account. The pattern that emerges from the full paradigm is summarized in the generalization in (12).[2]

(12)   *Generalization for* THEME SIGN *agreement*
        The THEME SIGN indexes the person features of the IA unless...

    a.   Proximate » Local, Obviative » Proximate, or Exclusive » Addressee, in which case inverse marking arises.
    b.   Prox » Obv, where agreement with the EA obtains.

The critical issue is that the hierarchy in (9), which again was put forth on the basis of singular arguments alone, cannot predict inverse marking with Exclusive » Addressee: no violation of (9) has occurred. One might hypothesize that ranking Addressee » Speaker could account for the pattern. However this would incorrectly predict inverse marking with 1sg » 2sg and 1sg » 2pl. This presents a ranking paradox (which trickles down to AGREE-based accounts as a failure to find a relativized probe that could possibly trigger this pattern) and raises the central question: why does Exclusive trigger inverse marking?

In the next section I review the feature geometric analysis of person and number advanced by Harley & Ritter (2002), highlighting two deficiencies: (i) the analysis of Exclusive fails to include a feature that could trigger inverse marking, and (ii) there is no account of proximate/obviative pronouns.

3.   Existing geometric analyses

Feature geometries have existed in linguistic theory, most notably phonological theory, since Clements (1985). The most prominent account arranging morphosyntactic features into a geometry is Harley & Ritter (2002). The critical subset of their proposed geometry is given in (13).

(13)   *Feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002)*

RE
PARTICIPANT   INDIVIDUATION
Speak   Add   Group   CLASS

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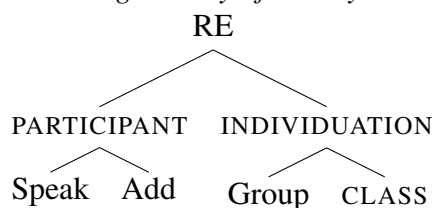
[2]I note an additional theory-internal issue for accounts that conceive of INVERSE marking as a morphological default by fallible AGREE (Thivierge 2017), or under an impoverishment operation (Oxford 2017). There are two INVERSE markers that show up in predictable slots in the paradigm: *-igo* appears with a prox » local or obv » prox violation, and *-igoo* appears with a Exclusive » Addressee violation. Short of advancing two default or elsewhere forms, it is not clear how to account for this fact under these analyses.

The geometry is argued to capture all and only the person and number marking distinctions present in natural language, and provides a framework to explain the relative frequency of various typologies. However, the data from Ojibwe presented in the previous section raises two critical issues with the geometry: (i) it is unable to predict the distribution of direct/inverse marking, and (ii) there is no way to capture the distinction between proximate and obviative pronouns. In the next two sections I expand each of these issues in turn.

3.1 Issues with first person

Critically, first person singular, exclusive, and inclusive are represented as shown in (14). First singular is distinguished from exclusive based of the absence/presence of [group], and inclusive is further distinguished from exclusive based on the absence/presence of [addressee].

(14)   *Singular, Exclusive, and Inclusive geometries of Harley & Ritter (2002)*

     a.
```
     RE
     |
    PART
     |
    Speak
```
     b.
```
       RE
      /  \
   PART   INDIV
     |      |
   Speak  Group
```
     c.
```
          RE
         /  \
      PART   INDIV
      /  \      |
   Speak  Add  Group
```
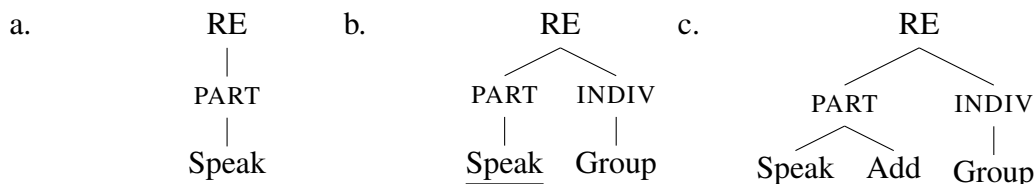
To review, the central puzzle presented in the previous section stemmed from the observation that the 1sg » {2sg, 2pl} configuration allows regular (i.e. DIRECT) agreement marking to surface, whereas Excl » {2sg, 2pl} triggers impoverished agreement (i.e. INVERSE). This is not predicted by accounts that take the person hierarchy in (9) as a starting point, as there is no ranking (and by extension to possible relativized probe) that can force inverse marking to be triggered in the exclusive without incorrectly predicting it with 1sg.

The issue straightforwardly extends to the first person geometries of Harley & Ritter (2002) in (14). Their account maintains that the only formal morphosyntactic distinction between 1sg and exclusive is the presence or absence of [group]. As both share a [speaker] feature, they are predicted to be equally implicated in the hierarchy. Furthermore, no solution can be found by including the [group] feature into the hierarchy, as shown in (15).

(15)   { Addressee, Speaker } » Group » Proximate » Obviative

There are a number of problems with such a proposal, but I will focus on one. Although this would correctly predict that Exclusive » 2sg should trigger inverse marking where 1sg » 2sg does not, it also incorrectly predicts inverse marking with 2pl »1sg. In contrast to this prediction, as shown in (10), this configuration triggers direct agreement.

3.2   Issues with obviation

As previously noted, proximate/obviative systems distinguish between two types of third persons. Proximate third persons are discourse topics, and obviative third persons are non-topical. As discussed in §2.1, at any given point in the discourse, only a single referent is designated as topic, therefore there is a single proximate referent, with the remainder being obviative marked. In the pronominal system of Southwestern Ojibwe, obviation is distinguished in the demonstrative pronouns.

There are no means by which to make this distinction in the original geometry proposed by Harley & Ritter (2002): all third persons are treated as the unmarked form. However, the geometry has been previously extended to account for the role of obviation in the agreement system of Blackfoot (Algonquian) by Bliss & Jesney (2005). The proposal is given in (16).

(16)   *Extended feature geometry of Bliss & Jesney (2005)*

```
                            RE
                 _____/\
                /             \
           SENTIENCE      INDIVIDUATION
           __/\__              |
          /      \           Group
    PARTICIPANT  STAGE
      /\          /\
  Speak  Add   Prox  Obv
```
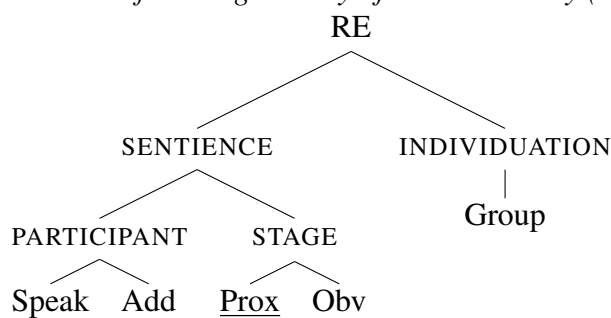
The crux of the proposal is the addition of two additional nodes: SENTIENCE and STAGE. SENTIENCE is argued to encode grammatical animacy, and dominates PARTICIPANT, which remains unchanged, and the second proposed node STAGE, which introduces the obviative system. For Blackfoot, such an arrangement is desirable for two reasons: (i) it encodes proximate as the default (i.e. unmarked) form, and (ii) it captures the fact that the participant-dependent features and the obviative system are only active with animate nouns.

While all documented languages with an obviative system have obviative as the marked form, making the first consequence of Bliss & Jesney's analysis desirable, the second consequence is called into question as it is not the case that obviation is universally restricted to animate nouns. For example, in East Cree inanimate nouns can be marked proximate (17a) or obviative (17b).

(17)   a.   masinahiikan   b.   masinahiikan-iyuu
              book.PROX   book-OBV
              'book'   'book'   (Junker et al. 2012)

This is problematic, as the stated goal of feature geometries is to capture universal constraints on morphosyntactic distinctions, rather than the inventory of single language. As the extension proposed by Bliss & Jesney (2005) is unable to capture systems where inanimate nouns participate in the obviative system, the proposal is observationally inadequate.

In the next section I propose a novel extension of the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) that resolves these issues. The proposal borrows from Bliss & Jesney (2005) in encoding obviation as a feature within the geometry, but places it as a dependent of the INDIVIDUATION node. This account has a number of advantages, which I consider in turn. First, it provides a solution to the puzzle of why inverse marking arises with Exclusive » 2. Second, it is argued to capture all and only the known possible pronominal distinctions of languages of the world. Finally, it captures two typological tendencies that emerge across the Algonquian family: (i) the syncretism of plural and obviative marking, and (ii) the conflation of proximate and obviative inanimate (pro)nominals.

4. Ojibwe Pronominals and Agreement

The proposed extension of Harley & Ritter (2002) is given in (18). The critical change is the addition of an [obviative] feature as a dependent of the INDIVIDUATION node.

(18)   *Revised feature geometry*

```
                    RE
            ┌───────┴───────┐
       PARTICIPANT    INDIVIDUATION
         ┌──┴──┐         ┌──┴──┐
       Speak  Add      Group  Obv
```
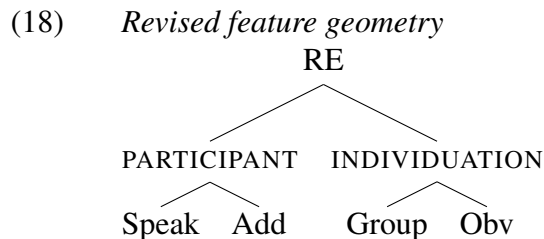
In the remainder of the section, I consider the representation of the Southwestern Ojibwe animate pronominals described in §2.1 and show how the proposal accounts for the puzzles raised in the previous sections.

Both first singular (19) and second singular (20) are represented as proposed by Harley & Ritter (2002), using only the [speaker] or [addressee] features. Being underspecified, INDIVIDUATION receives a default interpretation of singular.

(19)   *1sg*

```
            RE
        ┌───┴───┐
      PART    INDIV
        │
      Speak
```

(20)   *2sg*

```
            RE
        ┌───┴───┐
      PART    INDIV
        │
       Add
```
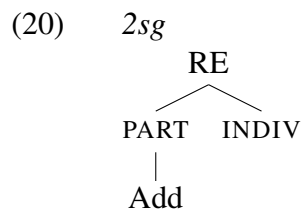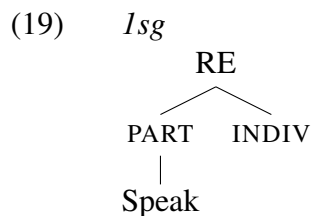
Second plural (21) makes use of the [group] feature paired with [addressee], also remaining unchanged from that of Harley & Ritter (2002).

(21)   *2pl*

```
          RE
       ┌──┴──┐
     PART   INDIV
      │       │
     Add    Group
```
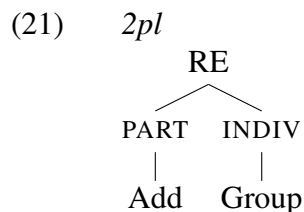
The current account critically diverges from Harley & Ritter (2002) in the specification of exclusive and inclusive, shown respectively in (22) and (23) below. Rather than being represented as [speaker] (+[addressee]) + [group] as described in §3.1, I argue that in Southwestern Ojibwe there is no plural feature for the inclusive or exclusive: plurality is implied by the combination of [speaker] (+[addressee]) + [obv], whose reference forms a set consisting of the speaker (and addressee) plus any non-topical referents in the discourse. To distinguish these from the exclusive and inclusive geometries described by Harley & Ritter (2002), and to preview the parallel I draw in §6 to the *Associative Plural Generalization* that details the ontological commitments of 'plural' pronouns without the plural feature (i.e. [group]), I refer to these formulations as the *exclusive associative* and the *inclusive associative*.

(22)   *Exclusive associative*
            RE
          /   \
      PART   INDIV
        | |
     Speak   Obv

(23)   *Inclusive associative*
            RE
          /   \
      PART   INDIV
      / \ |
  Speak Add   Obv
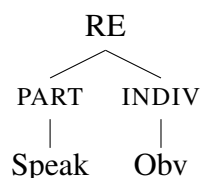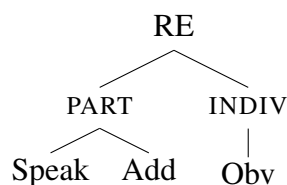
Replacing [group] with [obviative] in the inclusive and exclusive for Southwestern Ojibwe captures a number of important facts. First, it provides a path to explain why inverse is triggered with Exclusive » 2, but not 1sg » 2, while retaining the description put forth by the hierarchy in (9), repeated in (24). Inverse is triggered not due to a ranking between [speaker] and [addressee], which was already argued to be unsustainable, but because Exclusive contains an [obviative] feature, which is lower ranked on the hierarchy than the [addressee] feature of 2sg and 2pl. Descriptively, this violation of the hierarchy triggers inverse marking with this combination of arguments.

(24)   { Addressee, Speaker } » Proximate » Obviative

Second, the account converges with the fact that the inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns (*niinawind* and *giinawind*, respectively) cannot be decomposed to include the plural marker (-*(a)waa*) as 2pl (*giinawaa*) and 3pl (*wiinawaa*) can be. Instead, a morpheme -*awind*, which I gloss as [obviative], appears. The absence of plural morphology, and the presence of obviative morphology, further supports the present analysis.

Turning now to the representation of third person, I argue that the distinction between proximate singular and obviate singular is whether or not the obviative feature is present. In both cases, the [group] feature is unspecified, leading to a default singular interpretation.

(25)   *Proximate*
            RE
            |
          INDIV

(26)   *Obviative*
            RE
            |
          INDIV
            |
           Obv
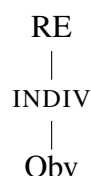
Finally, proximate plural is roughly analogous to second person plural, in that it also makes use of the [group] feature, but aligns with the other third persons in lacking PARTIC-IPANTS. The absence of obviative leads to the unmarked proximate interpretation.

(27)   *Proximate Plural*

RE
|
INDIV
|
Group

These representation predicts the remaining cells where inverse marking occurs: prox sg » {1,2}, prox pl » {1,2}, and obv » prox all violate the hierarchy, leading to inverse marking.

5.   The remaining predictions

There are a number of feature combinations predicted by the geometry, but not attested in Southwestern Ojibwe. In this section, I show that each of these predicted combinations are borne out in other languages. In the interest of space, I restrict focus to only those not already predicted and discussed by Harley & Ritter (2002). The undiscussed geometries are [Speak]+[Add], [Speak]+[Group], and [Speak]+[Add]+[Group].

The first predicted geometry, given in (28), is the obviative plural.

(28)   *Obviative Plural*

RE
|
INDIV
⁀
Group   Obv
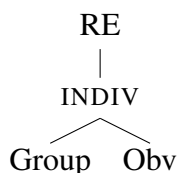
While there is syncretism between the obviative singular and plural in Southwestern Ojibwe, the distinction is attested in other dialects of Ojibwe, including the Severn Ojibwe (also known as Northern Ojibwe or Oji-Cree). The distinction between singular and plural obviative is present in the demonstrative pronouns (given below in (29)), and in the nominal inflection (Todd 1970).

(29)   *Distal animate demonstrative pronouns in Severn Ojibwe (Todd 1970)*

DEM	ϕ	English
ahawe	[prox]	that
ikiweniwak	[prox] + [group]	those
ahaweniwan	[obv]	that
ikiweniwan	[obv] + [group]	those

The next two predicted geometries, given in (30) and (31), are the Exclusive and In-clusive associative-true. In these cases, both the obviative and plural features are specified,

predicting morphology corresponding to both. In this way, they are a combination of the original Harley & Ritter (2002) proposal for inclusive and exclusive and the inclusive and exclusive argued for in the present paper.

(30) *Exclusive associative-true*

```
              RE
           ╱      ╲
      PART          INDIV
       │           ╱    ╲
     Speak     Group    Obv
```

(31) *Inclusive associative-true*

```
               RE
           ╱        ╲
      PART            INDIV
     ╱    ╲           ╱    ╲
  Speak   Add     Group   Obv
```
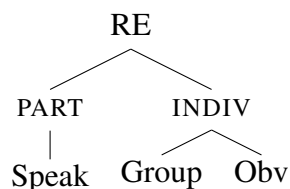
This geometry is active in Wampanoag, where the inclusive and exclusive personal pronouns contain the same plural morphology as 2pl and 3pl, plus an additional morpheme *-un*. This additional morpheme also appears in the verbal morphology for exclusive and inclusive, and has also been argued to be a plural marker (Fer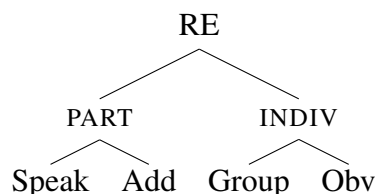mino 2000). However, in light of the present discussion, it may in fact be related to the associative plural, thus indexing [obv] rather than [group].

(32) *Personal pronoun inventory*

ϕ	pro
1sg	*neen*
Excl	*neenawun*
Incl	*keenawun*
2sg	*keen*
2pl	*keenaw*
3sg	*nakum*
3pl	*nakumaw*

(33) *Morpheme inventory*

morpheme	ϕ
neen-	[speaker]
keen-	[addressee]
nakum-	3
-aw	[group]
-un	[obv]

The final possible geometries are the second person obviative singular (34) and the second person obviative plural (35). Rather than creating as associative plural as when [obviative] combines with [speaker], I argue instead that (34) receives a singular interpretation. Interpreting these geometries critically hinges on treating the the [addressee] and [obviative] having a combinatorial relationship: rather than [obviative] signaling the presence of an additional person in the referent set, it marks the addressee as obviative. This raises questions about why the [obviative] feature stands in a different relationship to the participant node in the inclusive/exclusive and second person pronouns, which I consider in more detail in the next section.

(34) *Second person obviative*

```
            RE
          ╱    ╲
      PART      INDIV
       │          │
      Add        Obv
```

(35) *Second person obviative plural*

```
              RE
          ╱       ╲
      PART          INDIV
       │           ╱    ╲
      Add      Group    Obv
```
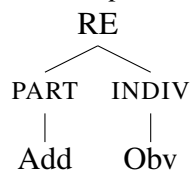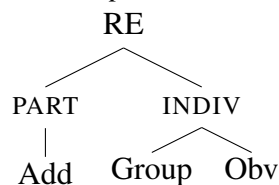
Critically, these geometries account for languages in which $1 > 2$ hierarchy effects are present without the need for specifying a ranking between 1 and 2. For example in Blackfoot, discussed in Bliss & Jesney (2005), inverse marking appears in cases where a second person is the external argument with a first person internal argument. This contrasts with Southwestern Ojibwe, which shows direct marking in these cases. These effects thus arise via the ranking of an [obviative] below the two participants, keeping the hierarchy in (9) unchanged.

(36)   THEME SIGN *agreement in Blackfoot transitive animate matrix verbs (Frantz 1991)*

EA/IA	1sg	Excl	Incl	2sg	2pl	3sg.prox	3pl.prox	3.obv
1sg				-o	-o	-a	-a	
Excl				-o	-o	-a	-a	
Incl						-a	-a	
2sg	-oki	-oki				-a	-a	
2pl	-oki	-oki				-a	-a	
3sg.prox	-ok	-ok	-ok	-ok	-ok			-yii
3pl.prox	-ok	-ok	-ok	-ok	-ok			-yii
3.obv						-ok	-ok	

6.   Remaining issues

There are two remaining issues. First, an explanation for the ontological commitments that are required to derive the difference in the behavior of the [obviative] feature in the second person geometries in (34)-(35) and the exclusive/inclusive pronouns of (22)-(23) is required. Second, how the present account relates to the *Associative Plural Generalization* must be detailed.

6.1   Towards an ontology

The difference in the interpretation of the [obviative] feature in the inclusive and exclusive associative of (22)-(23) and the second person obviative singular and plural of (34)-(35) boils down to whether the feature is treated as signaling the presence of another (third) person, or whether it marks one of the participant features as representing an obviative person. While I leave a fully formalized account to future work, I argue this is the result of a difference in the interaction of the obviative feature with [speaker] versus [addressee].

The critical difference between the inclusive/exclusive and the second person obviative singular/plural is the presence of [speaker]. This presence or absence of [speaker] correlates perfectly with the two interpretations. In the presence of [speaker], [obviative] is essentially interpreted as a third person. In the absence of [speaker]—and this includes both the second person obviatives as well as the third person obviative—it is interpreted as modifying the existing person marking in a combinatorial manner (i.e. it *obviates* the second or third person). The former interpretation forms an associative plural, which I discuss in more detail in the next section. The latter interpretation either retains a singular interpretation or forms a true plural depending on whether or not [group] is specified.

This observation highlights a fundamental difference between [speaker] and [addressee]. As a self-referential feature, [speaker] cannot be obviated—in fact, it can be seen as inherently proximate. It can be uttered and understood without respect to other participants in the discourse. On the other hand an [addressee] can be seen as necessarily obviative, as it must always be uttered with respect to a speaker. While in some languages the obviative nature of second person does not appear to be specified in the morphosyntactic representation (e.g. English, Southwestern Ojibwe), in others (e.g. Blackfoot) it has been formalized, and appears as 1 » 2 person hierarchy effects.

While the arguments above do not provide a full specification of the semantic representations involved in deriving the two interpretations, they do appear to fit neatly into some previous, which suggests a path forward. In the next section, I flesh out these relationships in slightly more detail with a discussion of how the present account relates to the Associative Plural Generalization.

6.2   Linking the Associative Plural Generalization

The *Associative Plural Generalization* (e.g. Greenberg 1988, Cysouw 2003, Bobaljik 2008, Wechsler 2010) stems from the observation that there is no language where a second-person plural is grammatically restricted to referencing only multiple addressees (a *True Plural* interpretation), and there is no language where first person plural is restricted to referencing only multiple speakers (also a *True Plural*). Both first and second person plural pronominals can reference, or even prefer to reference, groups that include other (i.e. third) persons— this has been termed the *Associative Plural*, and the resulting universal the *Associative Plural Generalization*.

At first this generalization may seem counter-intuitive. However, I believe this is largely due to the fact that the labels 'first person plural', and to a lesser extent 'second person plural', are misnomers. Considering for a moment the reference of *we* in English, one is hard-pressed to find an instance where a truly 'choral' reading is licensed—the possible exceptions having claimed to be instantiated in a scenario when a group of people collectively sing the chorus of the Queen song *We Are The Champions* or are engaged in a group prayer (Cysouw 2003). However even these examples do not truly restrict reference to only those speaking, which would be required to have a true first person plural, but rather the group that each given speaker considers themselves a member of. At any rate, the most natural interpretation of a first-person plural, whether inclusive or exclusive, is the associative rather than the true plural.

The case of the second person plural, *y'all* in many dialects, is less extreme. It is possible to reference either multiple addressees (a second person true plural) or a mixed group of addressee(s) and third person(s) (a second person associative plural). When looking across languages, the striking generalization is that these two interpretations never give rise to separate pronouns: they are universally conflated. This links to the interpretation of inclusive pronouns, which never distinguish forms referring to [speaker] + [addressee] and [speaker] + [addressee] + third persons.

A summary of the possible interpretations, and which pronouns they're realized under, is given in (37). From this a tension arises: the most immediate interpretation of so-called

first and second person plurals is the associative reading, so it seems that adding some type of third person feature to the geometry would be motivated to allow this interpretation to arise. However, having three person features over-predicts the possible typology of pronouns by violating the Associative Plural Generalization (Bobaljik 2008). The goal is then to find a system of features that predicts the typology of possible pronouns, while naturally giving rise to associative plural interpretations.

(37) *Possible plural person interpretations and attested persons*

Interpretation		Pronoun
1	True: Speakers only	Exclusive
1+3	Associative: Speaker and others	
1+2	True: Speakers and addressees only	Inclusive
1+2+3	Associative: Speaker, addressee, and others	
2	True: Addressees only	Second plural
2+3	Associative: Addressee and others	
3	True: Others only	Third Plural

The present account makes concrete steps in the right direction by adding the [obviative] feature, which as argued in the previous section is ontologically flexible in that, under predictable conditions, it gives rise to a plural interpretation or obviates the existing person marking. The claim stemming from this is that not all languages use the [group] feature (i.e. the true plural marker) in the inclusive and exclusive pronouns, but rather use [obviative] (i.e. an associative plural marker). In this way, the present account reifies the associative plural interpretation in the morphosyntactic representation in a way that past accounts have not succeed in doing.

Despite the dual strategy, it is still the case that there is no attested language that formally distinguishes between true and plural forms in the exclusive, inclusive, and second person plural pronouns—a given language seems to use a single strategy. How this restriction manifests itself should be the object of future work.

7.   Conclusion

The present paper argued for an extension of the feature geometry of Harley & Ritter (2002) that includes an [obviative] feature. The addition of this feature was primarily motivated by the need to capture the pronominal forms, the obviative marking system, and pattern of impoverished agreement known as inverse marking seen in Southwestern Ojibwe. The typology predicted by the addition of this feature was then shown to be attested in the pronominal systems of Oji-Cree, Wampanoag, and Blackfoot. While a full semantic analysis and solution to the issue of the Associative Plural Generalization are left to future work, further conceptual and theoretical motivation was found in the reification of the associative plural within the morphosyntactic feature representation.

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