Person restrictions depend on overt agreement, not nominal licensing*

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1. Introduction

Crosslinguistically, many constructions prohibit 1st- and 2nd-person DPs from appearing in the presence of a structurally higher DP (e.g. Strong PCC effects, Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions). Since Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Béjar and Rezac (2003), such person restrictions are commonly attributed to failures of nominal licensing: the lower 1st/2nd-person DP requires special licensing through Agree with a person ϕ-probe, but this Agree relation is disrupted by the presence of the higher DP, resulting in ungrammaticality. Recently, Coon and Keine (2021) have argued that such person restrictions do not result from licensing failures but rather from FEATURE GLUTTONY: if the lower DP is 1st/2nd person, the probe agrees with both DPs, which may result in an irresolvable morphological conflict. This paper investigates a person restriction in Algonquian ditransitives and "pseudo-transitives," including the novel observation that the person restriction disappears when the verb is elided (§2). The Algonquian facts are problematic for a nominal licensing account (§3) but follow naturally under a gluttony account (§4).

2. Data

Although much work on the morphosyntax of person in Algonquian languages has focused on the direct-inverse agreement pattern shown by transitive verbs (e.g., Béjar and Rezac 2009), the languages exhibit person restrictions in other domains as well. Two such restrictions are well-established in the descriptive literature (Goddard 1969:37, Rhodes 1990:408, Lochbihler 2012:118). First, in ditransitives, the lower object (i.e., the THEME) cannot be 1st/2nd person, as shown for Oji-Cree in (1a).[1] Second, there is a class of "pseudo-transitive" (Bloomfield 1958) or "AI+O" (Goddard 1969) verbs that take an object but show intransi-

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[1]Oji-Cree (Anihshininiimowin), ISO 639-3 `ojs`, is a variety of Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin) spoken in northwestern Ontario and adjacent parts of Manitoba. All data in this paper are from fieldwork with a single speaker of Oji-Cree conducted by the second author.

tive morphology; the object of such verbs also cannot be 1st/2nd person, as shown in (1b). These restrictions hold independently of the direct–inverse system.[2]

(1) a. Menii okii-ataawaanaan {iikweniwan / *__niin__ / *__kiin__} ehaan Tepitan.
Mary.3SG 3.PST-sell.to.3SG>3′ {that.3′ / *__1SG__ / *__2SG__} DEM David.3′
'Mary sold {that one (animate) / *me / *you} to David.'

b. Tepit kiih-kimooti {iikweniwan / *__niin__ / *__kiin__}.
David.3SG PST-steal.3SG {that.3′ / *__1SG__ / *__2SG__}
'David stole {that one (animate) / *me / *you}.'

Since ditransitive themes and pseudo-transitive objects are never indexed by person agreement on the verb, we might assume that the ban on 1st/2nd-person DPs in these positions is a consequence of the lack of agreement. This cannot be correct, however, because there are several other positions that permit 1st/2nd-person DPs despite a lack of agreement. These include the subject and predicate of verbless copular clauses (2a), unresumed topics (2b), and the standard of a comparative (2c) or equative (2d), shown for Oji-Cree below.

(2) a. __niin__ sha __kiin__!
__1SG__ FOC __2SG__
'I'm you!'

b. __kiin__ kaana kaawin awiya ci-tepwewic.
__2SG__ perhaps NEG someone.3SG IRR-speak.truth.3SG
'To you, nobody is truthful.' (= in your opinion)

c. Menii mistahi sakahswe ahpiihc wiin __niin__.
Mary.3SG a.lot smoke.3SG extent EMPH __1SG__
'Mary smokes more than me.'

d. Menii pimohse toohkaan __kiin__.
Mary.3SG walk.3SG same.kind __2SG__
'Mary walks like you.'

The examples in (2) all share the characteristic that the boldfaced 1st/2nd-person DPs are not arguments of an agreeing verb. The lack of person restrictions in contexts that lack an agreeing verb is familiar from the literature (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Preminger 2011, 2019). The new observation that we contribute is that even in contexts where person restrictions do exist, the overtness of the agreeing verb plays a crucial role. Strikingly, the person restrictions shown for ditransitives and pseudo-transitives in (1) disappear when the agreeing verb is elided, as in the stripping cases in (3). In (3a), the elided ditransitive verb has a 1st-person theme; in (3b), the elided pseudo-transitive verb has a 1st-person object. Neither of these 1st persons would be grammatical if the verb were overtly realized (cf. (1)).

[2] Abbreviations follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following additions: 3 = animate proximate third person; 3′ = animate obviative third person; EMPH = emphatic particle.

(3) a. Menii okii-ataawaanaan Tepitan ehaan maci-anihshininiwan, kaawin
Mary.3SG 3.PST-sell.to.3SG>3′ David.3′ DEM evil-person.3′ NEG
△ **niin**.
1SG
'Mary sold DAVID to the evil people, but not ME.'

b. koohkoohsh kiih-kakwe-kimooti Tepitan onaako, ekwa kaya △ **niin**.
monster.3SG PST-try-steal.3SG David.3′ yesterday and also **1SG**
'The monster tried to steal David yesterday, and me too!'

The same effect arises in the gapping example in (4), in which the ditransitive verb in the final clause is elided but both of its objects are pronounced ('me', 'Mary'). The 1st-person theme would not be grammatical if the verb were overtly realized (cf. (1a)).

(4) Naape okii-ataawaakaanaan Piitanan ehaan Cenan, ekwa △ Cooshap ehaan
man 3.PST-sell.to.3SG>3′ Peter.3′ that.3′ Jane.3′ and Joseph that.3′
Shenawan, ekwa miina △ **niin** ehaa Menii.
Sarah.3′ and also **1SG** that Mary
'The man sold Peter to Jane, Joseph to Sarah, and me to Mary.'

The generalization that emerges from the Oji-Cree facts is stated in (5), taking into account the absence of person restrictions not only in contexts that lack an agreeing verb altogether, as in (2), but also in contexts where an agreeing verb is elided, as in (3)–(4).

(5) Person restrictions do not hold in the absence of an overtly realized agreeing verb.

This generalization recognizes a connection between agreement and person restrictions, but it suggests that the connection differs from what is commonly assumed, as argued below.

3. Verb agreement vs. nominal licensing

Beginning with the seminal work of Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Béjar and Rezac (2003), the standard approach to person restrictions appeals to *nominal licensing*. The guiding idea is that 1st- and 2nd-person DPs must agree in [person] with a ϕ-probe in order to be licensed. In some constructions (e.g., ditransitives), a higher (dative) DP intervenes for this Agree relationship, leading to a licensing failure if the lower DP is 1st or 2nd person.

The Algonquian facts just discussed pose an immediate challenge to such an approach. First, we saw that no person restrictions arise in positions that are not associated with an agreeing verb (2). All else equal, a nominal-licensing approach to person restrictions would lead one to expect 1st- and 2nd-person DPs to be banned from these positions due to the lack of ϕ-Agree. In order to maintain a licensing approach, additional stipulations would be necessary to understand the grammaticality of these forms; these could include (i) the presence of covert ϕ-probes in these constructions, (ii) a caveat to the licensing

requirement (Preminger 2011, 2019), or (iii) some ad hoc rescue mechanism (e.g., default Case assignment in Anagnostopoulou 2003).

Second, on a nominal-licensing approach it not clear why the person restriction normally found in Oji-Cree ditransitives and pseudo-transitives disappears when the agreeing verb is elided. We will take for granted here an approach that attributes to the ellipsis site regular syntactic structure that goes unpronounced (see, e.g., Ross 1969, Merchant 2001, van Craenenbroeck 2010, and the references cited there). Importantly, the 1st/2nd-person DP whose appearance is normally ruled out in non-ellipsis cases is outside the ellipsis site in (3) and (4). As such, if the person restriction is due to the presence of an unlicensed *nominal*, then it is unclear why this restriction should be obviated by ellipsis of the *verb*.

A nominal-licensing account also cannot appeal to "rescue by deletion" (e.g., Ross 1969, Chomsky 1972, Merchant 2001) to derive these facts. Importantly, rescue by deletion applies only to material inside the ellipsis site (Fox and Lasnik 2003, Merchant 2008). Because a nominal-licensing account locates the source of the ungrammaticality in the unlicensed DP, which is outside the ellipsis site, repair-by-ellipsis accounts do not reconcile (3) and (4) with nominal-licensing accounts of person restrictions.[3]

4. Proposal

We propose that the facts above are best handled by locating the source of ungrammaticality not with the licensing needs of the 1st/2nd-person nominal, but rather with the agreeing verb itself, as in Coon and Keine's (2021) *feature gluttony* system. In a nutshell, Coon and Keine (2021) propose that person restrictions arise if a single ϕ-probe enters into Agree with two DPs. This results in the coexistence of two [ϕ]-values on the probe, which creates a lethal conflict in the morphological realization of this probe.[4] Coon and Keine (2021) refer to a configuration in which a single probe agrees with more than one DP as *gluttony*, and to a probe in this configuration as *gluttonous*, terminology that we adopt here.

For our concerns here, there are two key differences between an approach to person restrictions in terms of gluttony compared to nominal licensing. First, a gluttony account attributes the problem that causes the restriction to the verbal ϕ-probe, not to a nominal—nominal licensing plays no role in this account. Second, gluttony is not itself ungrammatical but it may lead to irresolvably conflicting requirements on subsequent operations. In the domain of agreement, the conflict arises in the morphological realization of the syntactic structure. This shift in perspective offers an immediate explanation of the Oji-Cree facts in section 2: If the source of the person restriction is the morphological realization of the verbal agreement probe, it follows that (i) 1st/2nd-person DPs are not subject to person

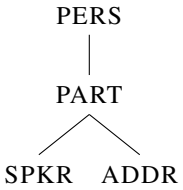
[3]The ellipsis cases are also problematic for Preminger's (2019) version of a person-licensing account, which requires licensing of 1st/2nd-person DPs only if they occur in the same clause as a ϕ-probe. In addition to being conceptually unattractive, this condition would still require ϕ-Agree with the 1st/2nd-person DPs in (3)–(4), given the ϕ-probe in the ellipsis site. Licensing should again fail for the lower DP and ungrammaticality should arise, contrary to fact.

[4]Coon and Keine's (2021) account differentiates between probes that trigger clitic doubling and probes that are realized as genuine ϕ-agreement. Because the Oji-Cree data discussed here involve ϕ-agreement, not clitics, we focus on the agreement part of their account.

restrictions in configurations that lack such a probe, and (ii) 1st/2nd-person DPs can evade person restrictions when the verb is not morphologically realized, that is, when it is elided.

We assume that person features consist of smaller segments (Harley and Ritter 2002) that are organized in the feature geometry in (6). Person values differ in the number of segments they comprise, as shown in (7).

(6)



(7) a. *3rd person* = [PERS]
b. *2nd person* = [PERS, PART, ADDR]
c. *1st person* = [PERS, PART, SPKR]

Probes may also be articulated, potentially consisting of multiple segments (Béjar and Rezac 2009). Each segment searches and agrees independently of the others, as in (8).

(8) *Agree*: A probe segment [*u*F] agrees with the closest accessible DP in its domain that bears [F]. If Agree is established, the hierarchy of segments containing [F] is copied over to the probe, valuing and thus removing [*u*F].

Because individual segments of an articulated probe search independently of one another, they may find different goals, resulting in gluttony. Gluttony arises exactly in configurations in which a lower goal contains more segments sought by the probe than a higher goal. Upon Agree between a probe and a DP, *all* of the person segments of the goal DP are copied to the probe (Béjar and Rezac 2009). As a result, gluttonous probes acquire a complete person value from each DP. Gluttony is not itself illicit but, assuming a postsyntactic approach to morphology, the coexistence of multiple values may result in contradictory instructions as to which vocabulary item to insert, leading to ineffability and hence ungrammaticality.

4.1 Gluttony in ditransitives

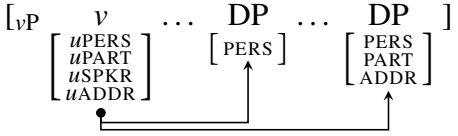
We assume a formal analysis of Algonquian morphosyntax in which there are ϕ-probes on *v* and Infl, realized as distinct layers of agreement inflection on the verb (Coon and Bale 2014, Oxford 2019; what we call "*v*" corresponds to Oxford's 2019 "Voice"). In ditransitives, both objects are in the domain of *v*'s ϕ-probe. This probe is specified as in (9), containing the full set of person segments in (6).

(9) *v*: [*u*PERS [*u*PART [*u*SPKR] [*u*ADDR]]]

If the lower object is 1st or 2nd person, gluttony results because at least one segment of the probe is present on the lower direct object but not the higher indirect object. This is shown for 3>2 in (10) but generalizes to 3>1, 1>2, and 2>1 configurations. In (10), *v* therefore acquires two person values: 3rd person and 2nd person (11). Each value calls for a distinct vocabulary item in its morphological realization: *-aa* '3', *-in* '2'. This conflict leads to ineffability: only a single vocabulary item can be inserted and the vocabulary item

for either value fails to realize the other value (see Asarina 2011, 2013, Bjorkman 2016, Coon and Keine 2021, and Keine and Mendia 2022 for discussion of the principles at play). The ungrammaticality of (1a) is thus derived from morphological conflict in the realization of the verbal agreement probe.

(10) *Ditransitive 3>2 → gluttony*

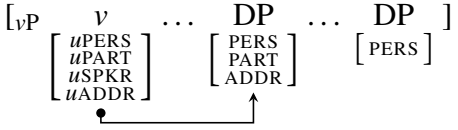


(11) v: $\left[\phi : \left\{ [\text{PERS}], \begin{bmatrix} \text{PERS} \\ \text{PART} \\ \text{ADDR} \end{bmatrix} \right\}\right] \Longrightarrow$ *conflict in morphological realization*

The proposal that the coexistence of multiple values of a single feature leads to an irresolvable morphological conflict and hence ineffability is not new and has been independently proposed based on evidence from Right Node Raising and ATB constructions (Citko 2005, Asarina 2011, 2013); free relatives (Lumsden 1992); Icelandic dative–nominative constructions (Schütze 2003); and the English *go-get* construction (Bjorkman 2016).

If the lower DP is 3rd person, it does not bear any segments sought by the probe that are not already present on the higher DP, and so the probe only agrees with the higher DP (shown for 2>3 in (12)). The probe thus acquires a single person value, which does not cause morphological problems. This correctly derives the empirical generalization that ditransitives permit direct objects to be 3rd person, but not 1st or 2nd person.

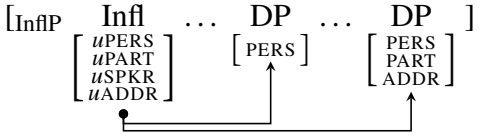
(12) *Ditransitive 2>3 → no gluttony → no conflict*



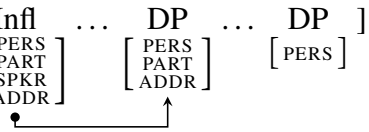
4.2 Gluttony in pseudo-transitives

Pseudo-transitives contain the regular ϕ-probe on Infl but lack the probe on v (Tollan and Oxford 2018). The absence of a ϕ-probe on v in pseudo-transitives is reflected by the absence of the relevant layer of agreement inflection. The probe on Infl is maximally specified as well, bearing the same segments as the probe on v in (9). The Infl probe always agrees with the subject, and it additionally agrees with the object when the object is 1st or 2nd person, resulting in gluttony, as shown in (13). As in the case of the ditransitives, this gluttony results in an irresolvable conflict in the morphological realization of the probe, deriving the ungrammaticality of (1b). If the object is 3rd person, no gluttony arises (14).

(13) *Pseudo-transitive 3>2 → gluttony*



(14) *Pseudo-transitive 2>3 → no gluttony → no conflict*



4.3 Grammaticality under ellipsis

We now turn to the central empirical observation that the person restriction disappears if the verb (including the verbal agreement) is elided. This interaction follows from our analysis given independent evidence in the recent literature that ellipsis prevents conflicts that otherwise arise in the morphological realization of a node (Keine and Mendia 2022). Abels (2019), Mendes (2020), and Mendes and Nevins (2020) observe that ellipsis repairs morphological gaps. For example, the Russian verb *pretit'* 'repulse' lacks a 1st-person singular present form. But notably gapping of the verb in such configuration is grammatical, as shown in (15), from Mendes (2020:161). (15) is ungrammatical without the gapping.

(15) Ty pretiš mne, a ja △ tebe.
you repulse me.DAT and I you.DAT
'You repulse me, and I you.'

Abels (2019), Mendes (2020), and Mendes and Nevins (2020) document similar effects in other constructions and languages. They analyze morphological gaps of this type as a conflict in the realization of a node: the vocabulary-insertion algorithm is unable to resolve two conflicting vocabulary items, leading to ineffability. The fact that this problem disappears under ellipsis of the node is attributed to (16): if elided nodes are not targeted by vocabulary insertion, conflicts that ordinarily arise in the course of insertion no longer arise.

(16) Vocabulary insertion does not apply to elided syntactic structure.

Because our gluttony analysis attributes the Oji-Cree person restriction to a conflict that arises in the course of vocabulary insertion into a gluttonous probe, the lifting of the restriction under verbal ellipsis follows as an immediate consequence of (16).

4.4 Monotransitives

Our account has focused on the person restriction in (1), which affects ditransitive themes and pseudo-transitive objects. No such restriction applies to the objects of ordinary monotransitive verbs, which can freely be 1st/2nd person. The absence of person restrictions in monotransitives follows if our account is combined with Oxford's (2019) analysis of the Algonquian direct–inverse system. Oxford proposes that in monotransitives, the probe on *v* attracts its goal, the object DP, to the specifier of *v*P, as shown in (17). The result is a configuration in which both DPs are equidistant from the probe on Infl, which can thus agree directly with either of the two DPs without first having to agree with the other.

(17) $[_{\text{InflP}}$ Infl $[_{v\text{P}}$ DP DP $v \ldots$ ~~DP~~]]

In a 3>2 form, for example, the equidistance of the two DPs makes it possible for Infl to agree with the 2nd-person object without first agreeing with the 3rd-person subject, thereby avoiding a gluttony configuration. This effect does not extend to ditransitive themes and pseudo-transitive objects because neither of these positions is ever successfully agreed with by *v*, and therefore no movement of the object to Spec,*v*P takes place: in grammatical ditransitive constructions, *v* agrees only with the goal, not also with the theme (Lochbihler 2012; cf. (12)), and pseudo-transitives lack a *v* probe altogether (Tollan and Oxford 2018). We thus explain why person restrictions in Algonquian languages apply to some kinds of objects (ditransitive themes, pseudo-transitive objects) but not others (monotransitive objects, ditransitive goals): only objects that take part in the direct–inverse system—that is, objects that can successfully be agreed with and raised by *v*—gain a structural prominence that prevents the creation of a gluttony configuration on Infl.[5]

One remaining complication arises in monotransitive 1>2 and 2>1 configurations. These are grammatical and Infl can show portmanteau agreement (Oxford 2019). As it stands, our account predicts gluttony in these cases: despite both DPs being equidistant from Infl, Infl will agree with both because both DPs bear a segment that the other DP lacks. As such, our account would fail to distinguish between 1>2 and 2>1 monotransitives on the one hand and 1>2 and 2>1 pseudo-transitives on the other because both would result in gluttony. We cannot present a comprehensive solution to this problem in this paper but we would like to point out an analytical direction. We have so far assumed that Infl hosts a single, highly-articulated probe containing the specification [*u*PERS [*u*PART [*u*SPKR] [*u*ADDR]]]. As an alternative, suppose that Infl in fact contains two separate probes, one specified as [*u*PERS [*u*PART [*u*SPKR]]], the other specified as [*u*PERS [*u*PART [*u*ADDR]]]. In configurations in which one of the two DPs is 3rd person, this difference does not matter. But in 1>2 and 2>1 configurations, monotransitives and pseudo-transitives now give rise to different Agree behavior by Infl. In pseudo-transitives, one of the two probes will be gluttonous because the subject matches fewer of the probe's segments than the object and so this probe agrees with both subject and object. In monotransitives, on the other hand, the subject and object are equidistant from Infl, and so each probe agrees with the DP that fully matches it, avoiding gluttony: while the two probes each agree with a different goal, neither probe agrees with two goals. The result is a grammatical structure with portmanteau agreement on Infl.

5. Conclusion

We have presented new data from Oji-Cree showing that person restrictions in ditransitive and pseudo-transitive clauses disappear when the agreeing verb is elided. This observation suggests that the connection between agreement and person restrictions is grounded not in the licensing requirements of DPs, as often assumed, but instead in the morphological

[5]The probes assumed for Infl and *v* in our account of person restrictions are not identical to the probes that Oxford (2019) assumes in his account of variation in the distribution of inverse marking. The question of the relationship between person restrictions and variation in inverse marking must be left to future research.

realization of the agreeing verb, as in a feature gluttony account. By locating the problem in the morphological realization of a probe, it follows immediately that no problem with 1st/2nd-person DPs arises in configurations that lack a probe. Further, because the problem created by a gluttonous probe lies in its morphological realization, we derive that ellipsis of such a probe obviates the problem because no vocabulary insertion takes place (Abels 2019, Mendes 2020, Mendes and Nevins 2020).

More broadly, our proposal unifies the new empirical generalization regarding Algonquian person restrictions with patterns of hierarchy effects in unrelated languages that have been shown to disappear in environments which lack agreement (Preminger 2019, Coon and Keine 2021, Keine and Mendia 2022). It also points to a new domain of investigation—i.e., hierarchy effects in ellipsis environments—in other agreement-rich languages.

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