Humanness in the 3rd Person Singular Personal Pronoun in Alemannic Dialects

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This paper surveys the emergence of the category *humanness* in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun in Alemannic (southwest German) dialects. The first part shows that some Alemannic dialects have developed a human/nonhuman distinction in the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun: a marked form encoding the human direct object has emerged. The emergence of this form can be explained by the differential object marking hypothesis. The second part reports on a pilot study of the 3rd person singular personal pronoun in Sense Alemannic on the basis of new data. In this dialect, humanness is distinguished not only in the neuter but also in the masculine and feminine. Additionally, some instances are observed that violate the differential object marking principle. Thus, both principles (humanness marking and the differential object marking) form part of the grammar, but the latter one may be violated.[*]

Keywords: humanness, system change within paradigms, differential object marking, personal pronoun, Alemannic

1. Introduction.

This paper investigates the emergence of the category *humanness* in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun of Alemannic dialects. Alemannic dialects are German dialects spoken in southwestern Germany, in Alsace (France), in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, in Vorarlberg (Austria), and in some villages in the Aosta Valley (Italy). Alemannic dialects were also spoken in some villages in Romania and Hungary, as well as by the Black Sea and in Georgia. In some of these dialects, the

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neuter personal pronoun is used to refer to a female person. These dialects developed a new form for the accusative human neuter, which differs from the accusative nonhuman neuter. Thus, a human and a nonhuman paradigm are distinguished in the neuter: Subject and direct object forms differ from each other in the human paradigm but not in the nonhuman paradigm. This phenomenon has mainly been described from a sociolinguistic perspective (Christen 1998, Fleischer 2012, Nübling et al. 2013, Birkenes et al. 2014), but it has never been analyzed from a systemic point of view (that is, what that signifies for the language system), as is done in the first part of this paper (sections 1–4). The second part (sections 5–9) presents a pilot study of Sense Alemannic, where a human and a nonhuman paradigm are distinguished not only in the neuter, but also in the masculine and feminine of the 3rd person singular personal pronoun.

The first part investigates the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun in 17 Alemannic dialects based on already existing language descriptions. These dialects are situated in the different parts of the Alemannic speaking area. It is shown that the neuter gender is used with nouns that refer to female persons, which is already described in other papers (section 2). Section 3 gives a detailed description of how the category *humanness* is encoded in the Alemannic dialects based on my own analysis of these dialects: the paradigms, the origin of the new accusative neuter form, the areal distribution, and some deviations from the general pattern. Section 4 proposes an explanation for the paradigms of the Alemannic dialects, namely, the differential object marking hypothesis (DOM; Keenan 1976, Silverstein 1976, Bossong 1998, Aissen 2003).

What is presented in the second part should be considered to be a pilot study. For one Alemannic dialect, Sense Alemannic, the available descriptions are not exhaustive. It is for this reason that I collected new data from two native speakers of this dialect (section 5). Section 6 presents evidence that gender assignment to nouns that denote females does not only depend on the sociopragmatic context, but also on the morphology of the proper noun. Section 7 provides a detailed analysis of how *humanness* is encoded, showing that a human and a nonhuman paradigm are distinguished not only in the neuter, but also in the masculine and feminine. Section 8 presents instances found in Sense Alemannic contradicting DOM. However, other paradigms are in accordance with DOM. Based on the latter two sections, it becomes clear that there are two

principles (humanness marking and DOM) leading to conflicting results. It is shown that the humanness marking principle is never violated at the expense of the DOM principle (section 9). The paper concludes with a summary and an outlook (section 10).

2. Female Proper Names and Neuter Gender.

Most varieties of German have a three-gender system: masculine, feminine, and neuter. Gender assignment is lexically conditioned. However, as a general rule, if a noun or a pronoun refers to a male person or animal, it bears the masculine gender, and if a noun or a pronoun refers to a female person or animal, it bears the feminine gender. There are some exceptions: Some female persons are referred to by nouns with neuter gender, for example, *Weib* 'woman' (archaic, now with a pejorative meaning), *Mädchen* 'girl'. The neuter gender of *Weib* is lexically conditioned; the neuter gender of *Mädchen* is morphologically conditioned because **-chen** is a diminutive suffix that determines neuter gender.

However, neuter gender is assigned to female proper names in some German dialects (with no lexical or morphological conditioning). Consider the example in 1.

(1) Ds   Marie singt—Æs   singt.
    the.N Mary sings—it.PRS.PRN.3SG.N sings
    'Mary is singing.'

Interestingly, these dialects are located between the Benrather isogloss (though the neuter gender for nouns referring to females can also be found in some Low German dialects) and the Swiss Alps, mainly on the western bank of the Rhine (Nübling et al. 2013:152–153). Thus, this is the area where Alemannic dialects, amongst others, are spoken.[1] In most of these dialects, the feminine and neuter gender (marked on the article and personal pronoun) may be used to refer to a woman, depending on the sociopragmatic context: If the speaker knows the woman concerned well (family, friend) and likes her, the neuter gender is used, whereas if there is a certain social distance between the speaker and the woman, or if the

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[1] For further details and maps, see Nübling et al. 2013, as well as Elspass & Möller 2003.

speaker does not like the woman in question (pejorative), the feminine gender is used (Christen 1998:275, Nübling et al. 2013:154, 189, 192–193).

The two widespread hypotheses regarding the origin of the neuter gender referring to females are the following: i) often a diminutive is derived from female proper names, thus the female proper name becomes neuter in gender and, by analogy, the neuter gender expands to all female proper names; ii) some denotations for females (for example, *Weib* 'woman' (archaic), *Mädchen* 'girl') are neuter in gender (lexically or morphologically conditioned), so the neuter expands analogically to female proper names (Nübling et al. 2013:161–164).

This is a very short summary regarding the origins and the sociopragmatic factors that determine the distribution of gender when used to refer to women. More detailed descriptions and analyses (including questions regarding semantically and formally conditioned agreement) can be found in the following papers: Christen 1998, Fleischer 2012, Nübling et al. 2013, Birkenes et al. 2014. In this paper, I exclusively focus on the systems of morphological exponence of gender and humanness in the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun of Alemannic dialects, thus on the paradigms.

3. Humanness in the 3rd Person Singular Neuter Personal Pronoun.
3.1. The Paradigms.
Several Alemannic dialects have grammaticalized two paradigms in the 3rd person singular neuter of the personal pronoun: one for human beings and one for nonhuman entities. Table 1 displays the paradigm in Jaun Alemannic, which is representative of the Alemannic dialects investigated here in having both human and nonhuman paradigms. Note that all Alemannic dialects distinguish full (stressed) and reduced (unstressed) forms, as well as nominative, accusative, and dative in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun.[2]

The neuter human and the nonhuman paradigms differ only in the accusative. The nonhuman paradigm shows the usual, diachronically inherited forms distinguishing the dative from the nominative and

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[2] Some Highest Alemannic dialects have preserved a genitive, which I do not consider in this paper because it does not play any role in the following analysis and discussion.

accusative, which are syncretized. In contrast, the human paradigm has a new form in the accusative: *ẽs/is* in Jaun Alemannic, *in(ə)s* in all other Alemannic dialects under investigation here. As a consequence, in the human paradigm, the nominative and accusative are distinguished in the neuter.[3] That the nominative neuter form differs from the accusative neuter form is typologically uncommon, especially in Indo-European languages. The neuters referring to humans, however, can be considered as a special class of neuters (higher ranked in the animacy scale, Silverstein 1976), as Indo-European neuters usually refer to nonhumans/inanimates.

			NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**
stressed	3SG.M	human + nonhuman	*œr*	*im/ẽ*	*im*
unstressed			*er*	*na*	*mu*
stressed	3SG.F	human + nonhuman	*sia*	*sia*	*ira*
unstressed			*si*	*sa*	*ra*
stressed	3SG.N	nonhuman	*ǣs*	*ǣs*	*im*
		human	*ǣs*	*ẽs*	*im*
unstressed	3SG.N	nonhuman	*əs*	*əs*	*mu*
		human	*əs*	*is*	*mu*

Table 1. 3rd person singular personal pronoun
in Jaun Alemannic (Stucki 1917:280–282).

Three deviations from the general pattern displayed in table 1 are found in the Alemannic dialects under investigation here (regarding the syncretism patterns, as well as the use of forms of the demonstrative pronouns instead of the personal pronouns). Those deviations concern not only the neuter, but also the masculine and the feminine of the 3rd person singular personal pronoun. There is very little and only vague information about these deviations, so clearly more investigation is needed. Again, one should also bear in mind that the grammatical descriptions used in this

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[3] Mainland Scandinavian standard languages show a very similar pattern in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun: If the entity referred to is human (common human masculine and feminine), subject and object forms are distinguished morphologically; if the entity referred to is nonhuman (neuter and common nonhuman), subject and object forms are syncretized and derived from the demonstrative pronoun (see Howe 1996, Braunmüller 2000, Haberland 2002).

study do not specifically address the subject of humanness in the personal pronouns, but report the forms of the paradigm and their origins. Thus, the deviations (especially if information is lacking) may also be due to the fact that the authors of the grammars were not interested in the specific subject of humanness differentiations (absence of evidence is not evidence of absence).

First, in some dialects, the demonstrative pronouns are used instead of personal pronouns. In Issime Alemannic, the personal pronoun is used when referring to human entities, and the demonstrative pronoun when referring to nonhuman entities (Zürrer 1999:244–245, 257). The same applies to Zurich Alemannic, but nouns referring to human beings may be pronominalized by personal pronouns as well as by demonstrative pronouns (Weber 1987:159). In Elisabethtal Alemannic, the demonstrative pronoun is frequently used, whereas the personal pronoun is rarely used (Žirmunskij 1928/1929:52). In Petrifeld Alemannic, the demonstrative pronoun is preferred when strongly stressed (Moser 1937:65). Finally, in Stuttgart Alemannic, the demonstrative pronoun is frequently used, especially in the preverbal position in main clauses (Frey 1975:160–161).

Second, information is lacking for some dialects regarding the paradigm of the 3rd person singular neuter. In Alsace Alemannic, the personal pronoun can only pronominalize nouns referring to human entities, but nothing is said about the pronominalization of nouns with nonhuman referents (Beyer 1963:155). The same counts for Vorarlberg and Petrifeld Alemannic (Jutz 1925:274, Moser 1937:65), but only in the nominative and accusative, as well as for Visperterminen (Wipf 1910:141) and Sense Alemannic (Henzen 1927:197), but only in the accusative.

Third, a very interesting phenomenon may be found in 3rd person singular neuter nominative and accusative personal pronouns in Bern Alemannic (table 2). This dialect displays a systematic distinction between the human and nonhuman paradigms not only in the accusative (*inəs* versus *es*), but also in the nominative (*ǣs* versus *es*). This distinction is made by the stressed (*ǣs*) and the slightly reduced (*es*) personal pronouns.

Stressed personal pronoun			
	NOM	ACC	DAT
nonhuman	*es*	*es*	*īm*
human	*ǣs*	*inəs*	*īm*

Table 2. Stressed 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun
in Bern Alemannic (Hodler 1969:189–190, Marti 1985:92–97).

A very similar case is described in section 5, which deals with Sense Alemannic. Note that Bern Alemannic and Sense Alemannic are geographically adjacent dialects.

3.2. The Origin of the Accusative Neuter Human and Areal Distribution.
The only hypothesis regarding the origin of the new accusative neuter human form can be found in the Swiss idioticon (Staub & Tobler 1881). This hypothesis is adopted by Stucki (1917). According to this hypothesis, *ins* (and its variants, see table 1) is composed of *in* and *s*. *In* is the accusative form of the 3rd person singular masculine personal pronoun and *s* one of the numerous variants of the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun (Staub & Tobler 1881:512).[4] Additionally—and this is not mentioned by Staub & Tobler (1881)—the *s* may also be considered as a kind of default neuter marker in varieties of German because it is commonly used, for example, in the neuter of the possessive pronoun inflection (as in Jaun Alemannic *mī-s* 'my-NOM.SG.N', Stucki 1917:284) and in the adjective inflection (as in Jaun Alemannic *warm-s* 'warm-NOM.SG.N', Stucki 1917:273).

As for the areal distribution, the stressed form of the new accusative of the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun is found in only 6 of the 17 Alemannic dialects investigated here (with check mark in table 3); the unstressed form is found only in Jaun Alemannic.

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[4] Other variants are, for example, *īs* (Zürrer 1999:208), *es* (Weber 1987:157), *ǣs* (Beyer 1963:155).

Dialect group	Dialect	Stressed form	Unstressed form	Source
Highest Alemannic	Issime	(X)	(X)	Zürrer 1999
	Visperterminen	(X)	(X)	Wipf 1910
	Jaun	✓	✓	Stucki 1917
	Sense	(✓)	(✓)	Henzen 1927
	Uri	✓	X	Clauß 1929
High Alemannic	Bern	✓	X	Marti 1985
	Zurich	✓	X	Weber 1987
	Vorarlberg	(X)	(X)	Jutz 1925
Upper Rhine Alemannic	Kaiserstuhl	✓	X	Noth 1993
	Alsace (Rhine plane)	✓	X	Beyer 1963
	Colmar	(X)	(X)	Henry 1900
	Münstertal	X	X	Mankel 1886
Swabian	Huzenbach	X	X	Baur 1967
	Saulgau	X	X	Raichle 1932
	Stuttgart	X	X	Frey 1975
	Petrifeld	X	X	Žirmunskij 1928/1929
	Elisabethtal	X	X	Moser 1937

Table 3. New accusative form
in 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun.

Sense Alemannic is a special case to which the second part of this paper is dedicated (section 5–9). In these six Alemannic dialects (with the new form in the accusative) and in Sense Alemannic, the neuter (article or personal pronoun) is used to refer to a female. The same counts for Vorarlberg and Colmar Alemannic, but they do not show any special paradigms or forms for human entities, and, more precisely, the grammatical descriptions do not mention any special forms (Henry 1900, Jutz 1925). In Issime and Visperterminen Alemannic (both Walser dialects), the neuter is used to refer not only to females but also to males. However, those dialects did not develop any special forms in the neuter

either (Wipf 1910, Zürrer 1999; see also Christen 1998 for new data concerning the canton of Valais where Visperterminen is situated). This may be explained by the general observation that the Walser dialects show many archaic features (Baechler 2017). In the grammatical descriptions of Münstertal Alemannic and of all Swabian dialects, there is no mention of a possible use of the neuter for female proper names and their pronominalization. Thus, it can be concluded that the neuter referring to females is mainly a feature of Highest Alemannic (Walser dialects as a special case), High Alemannic, and Upper Rhine Alemannic dialects, but not of Swabian dialects. This conclusion is consistent with the observations made in the AdA (*Atlas der deutschen Alltagssprache* 'Atlas of the German everyday language', Elspass & Möller 2003). One should not, however, entirely exclude the possibility that this phenomenon may have also existed in the Swabian dialects.

It was observed that some grammatical descriptions are not very precise or that they lack information about the personal pronouns and the encoding of humanness. This leads to the question of why these grammatical descriptions can be used for this survey. The grammatical descriptions do not aim to answer the questions addressed in this paper, but rather to report the forms of a paradigm and to explain their origins. Furthermore, one cannot entirely exclude the possibility that the grammars are, at least partially, based on the author's intuitions. However, introductions to several of the grammars report that the data are based on interviews.[5] One also needs to bear in mind that there is still no corpus for Alemannic dialects that would cover the entire Alemannic-speaking area. Alemannic data are only available in grammars, dictionaries, and atlases.[6] Thus, if one aims to undertake a comparative investigation of dialects from very different Alemannic-speaking areas, the grammars used in this paper have proven to report valid data, as they provide fairly detailed and systematic descriptions.

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[5] For example, Wipf 1910 reports that she collected the data mainly during winter, as her informants had no time during the summer because of their work as farmers. Additionally, it is known that the dialect investigated by Elisa Wipf was not her mother tongue.

[6] There are literary texts written in Alemannic dialects (as a reviewer suggested). They may be the subject of a linguistic investigation. However, one needs to bear in mind that the language may be influenced by the rhyme, the verse, etc.

4. Explanation for the Nominative/Accusative Distinction.

The previous section showed that nominative and accusative are distinguished in the neuter human (new form in the accusative) and syncretized in the neuter nonhuman. This pattern can be explained by the so-called DOM hypothesis. Bossong (1998:201) assumes that in a transitive context, the prototypical subject is animate because it performs the action, whereas the prototypical object is inanimate because it undergoes the action. Hence, an animate object represents a potential subject and, thus, must be marked in order to be clearly distinguished from the subject (Bossong 1998:202). According to Aissen (2003:437), proposing a slightly weaker version, "it is those direct objects which most resemble typical subjects that get overtly case-marked." Typical—and thus unmarked—properties for subjects and marked properties for objects are agenthood, topicality, animacy, and definiteness (Aissen 2003:438, based on Keenan 1976). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Alemannic dialects, distinguishing a human and a nonhuman paradigm in the neuter, developed a new form in the accusative human, used for animates.

The same explanation applies to those Scandinavian languages with a two-gender system and humanness distinction in the personal pronoun. Only in the 3rd person singular human (masculine and feminine) do the subject and object forms differ from one other, whereas subject and object forms are syncretized in the nonhuman paradigm. A very similar case can be found in the inflection of nouns in Russian. Russian has a three-gender system (masculine, feminine, neuter; lexically distributed) and distinguishes animacy. Again, it is the accusative, which varies according to animacy: The accusative of a noun with an animate referent is inflected like the genitive, whereas the accusative of a noun with an inanimate referent is inflected like the nominative, as shown in table 4. As a consequence, the animate accusative always differs from the nominative (except in the neuter singular). Note that animacy is not morphologically distinguished in the feminine and neuter singular. However, the feminine conforms to DOM because the accusative always differs from the nominative. In the neuter singular, nominative and accusative are never distinguished, but very few neuter nouns are animate.

		MASCULINE		FEMININE		NEUTER	
		student	*dub*	*sestra*	*škola*	*čudovišče*	*vino*
		'student'	'oak'	'sister'	'school'	'monster'	'wine'
SG	NOM	*student*	*dub*	*sestr-a*	*škol-a*	*čudovišč-e*	*vin-o*
	ACC	*student-a*	*dub*	*sestr-u*	*škol-u*	*čudovišč-e*	*vin-o*
	GEN	*student-a*	*dub-a*	*sestr-y*	*škol-y*	*čudovišč-a*	*vin-a*
PL	NOM	*student-y*	*dub-y*	*sestr-y*	*škol-y*	*čudovišč-a*	*vin-a*
	ACC	*student-ov*	*dub-y*	*sester*	*škol-y*	*čudovišč*	*vin-a*
	GEN	*student-ov*	*dub-ov*	*sester*	*škol*	*čudovišč*	*vin*

Table 4. Inflection of Russian nouns, animate and inanimate
(shortened paradigm, Corbett 1991:166).

Thus, DOM seems to explain this phenomenon in many languages. However, the second part of the paper (sections 5–9) presents a system that in part contradicts this hypothesis.

5. Incomplete Data in Henzen 1927 and New Data.
Table 5 shows the paradigm of the 3rd person singular personal pronoun (stressed) in Sense Alemannic based on Henzen 1927. Concerning the 3rd person singular neuter, Henzen (1927:197) gives the following information in addition to the table showing the paradigm: "Der freie Akkusativ Neutrum Singular *æs* kommt nur selten in Anwendung, so für Frauen" [The free accusative neuter singular *æs* is used only rarely, for example, for women].[7] Thus, the neuter human paradigm has the inherited forms of the neuter (nominative=accusative versus dative). However, nothing is said about the accusative neuter nonhuman form. One hypothesis may be that the accusative neuter nonhuman form is replaced by the dative form as happened in the 3rd person singular masculine personal pronoun, as well as in the 1st and 2nd person singular personal pronoun (Henzen 1927:196–197).[8] Thus, it is not clear with which form

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[7] Translation is mine.

[8] OHG: 1st/2nd/3rd (masculine) person singular *mix*/*dix*/*inan* (accusative), *mir*/*dir*/*imo* (dative); Sense Alemannic: *mir*/*dir*/*īm* (accusative + dative; Braune 2004:241–245, Henzen 1927:196–198).

the 3rd person singular neuter nonhuman accusative is expressed. Furthermore, new data were collected in the *Projekt Dialektsyntax des Schweizerdeutschen* 'Project on Swiss German dialect syntax', but not for the entire paradigm of the personal pronoun. These new data show that the dative masculine/neuter form *īm* is not only used as an accusative masculine, but also as an accusative neuter human (Bucheli Berger 2010:77). In this case, the neuter paradigm would work like the Russian noun inflection, but the other way around (and thus, contradicting the DOM hypothesis): The dative form is used in the accusative nonhuman (nominative ≠ accusative), and the nominative form in the accusative human.

Stressed personal pronoun				
Gender	**Humanness**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
FEMININE	human + nonhuman	*sia*	*sia*	*ira*
MASCULINE		*ēr*	*īm*	*īm*
NEUTER	nonhuman	*ēs*	*???, ?īm*	*īm*
	human	*ēs*	*ēs*	*īm*

Table 5. 3rd person singular neuter
in Sense Alemannic (Henzen 1927:197–198).

As it is not possible to build up a paradigm with these data, I collected new data from two native speakers of the Sense dialect: Informant 1, female, 54 years old, and informant 2, male, 62 years old. The data were collected between January and April 2016. It was crucial to collect all the forms of the 3rd person singular personal pronoun, that is, three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter), human and nonhuman (of all three genders), three cases (nominative, accusative, dative), and full as well as reduced forms of all the corresponding forms. This is why I created sentences covering all these morphosyntactic properties and instructed the informants to fill in the blank spaces with a suitable personal pronoun (and, if a proper noun is concerned, the definite article). The informants were encouraged to discuss their results together while filling in the gaps. Each three to four sentences were arranged into a short story. Example 2 contains the sentences for the neuter human unstressed paradigm including nominative, accusative, and dative.

(2) … Marie, isch… chrankch?
    … Mary   is … ill?
       'Mary, is she ill?'

   Nei, i ha … grad bim   jogge   troffe.
   no I have … just while jogging met
   'No, I have just met her while jogging.'

   Mor   gan i mit … as Apero   ga   ha.
   tomorrow go I with … an aperitif drink
   'Tomorrow, I will go to drink an aperitif with her.'

The personal pronoun paradigms gathered of informant 1 are reported in tables 6–8, and the ones of informant 2 in tables 9–11.

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*as*	***das***	***dæm***	*əs*	*əs*	*um/* ***dæm***
human	*xin* 'child'	*as/ǣs*	***das***	*īmu*	*əs*	*əs*	*um*
	female proper name	*ǣs*	*ǣs/īns*	*īmu*	*əs/ǣs*	*əs*	*um*

Table 6. 3rd person singular **neuter** personal pronoun (informant 1).

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*æ/ǣr*	***dæ***	***dæm***	*ər*	*nə*	*um/dæm*
human	–	*æ/ǣr*	*īn*	*īmu/īm*	*ər*	*nə*	*um*

Table 7. 3rd person singular **masculine** personal pronoun (informant 1).

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*sī*	***di***	***dera***	*si*	*si*	***dera***
human	–	*sī*	*sī*	*ira* ***(dera)***	*si*	*si/sa*	*ira/ara* ***(dera)***

Table 8. 3rd person singular **feminine** personal pronoun (informant 1).

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*as*	***das***	***dæm***	*əs*	*əs*	*um/* ***dæm***
human	*xin* 'child'	*as*	***das****/æs*	*īmu*	*əs*	*əs*	*um*
	female proper name	*as*	*ǣs*	*īmu*	*əs/ǣs*	*əs*	*um*

Table 9. 3rd person singular **neuter** personal pronoun (informant 2).

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*ǣr*	***dæ***	***dæm***	*ər*	*nə*	*um/**dæm***
human	–	*ǣr*	*īn*	*īm*	*ər*	*nə*	*um*

Table 10. 3rd person singular **masculine** personal pronoun (informant 2).

		stressed			unstressed		
		NOM	**ACC**	**DAT**	**NOM**	**ACC**	**DAT**
nonhuman	–	*sī*	***di***	***dera***	*si*	*si*	***dera***
human	–	*sī*	*sī*	*ira* ***(dera)***	*si*	*si/sa*	*ira* ***(dera)***

Table 11. 3rd person singular **feminine** personal pronoun (informant 2).

This is only a pilot study and is not representative of the dialect. The results, however, are valid in the following respects: i) the answers of the informants differ only very slightly from one another, ii) the results represent the coherent systems of two native speakers of Sense Alemannic, and iii) all morphosyntactic properties are covered so all the cells of the paradigm are filled.

6. The Grammatical Gender of Nouns with Female Referents.
In section 2, it was explained that the feminine and neuter gender may be assigned to the same noun referring to a female person. Which gender is chosen depends on the relation between the speaker and the woman concerned. Thus, gender is sociopragmatically determined: closeness and appreciation (neuter) versus distance or antipathy (feminine).

Sense Alemannic has a slightly more complex system, and one needs to differentiate between the definite article preceding the proper name and the pronominalization of the proper name. Which article (feminine or neuter) is used depends on the morphology of the proper name and, additionally, in some cases, on the sociopragmatic context: If a female proper name ends in -*i* or in a consonant, the neuter or feminine gender is assigned to that proper name following the sociopragmatic considerations described above. [9] However, an ongoing change can be observed, as informant 2 uses both the feminine as well as the neuter; the choice can reflect this sociopragmatic difference, but does not do so obligatorily. An ongoing change from the neuter to the feminine for female proper names was observed in Christen 1998:280 and Nübling et al. 2013:162, 194, too.

Furthermore, there are female proper names in Sense Alemannic ending in -*a*. These proper names can never occur with the neuter definite article, only with the feminine one.[10] This may be because all nouns ending in -*a* in the singular are feminine (Henzen 1927:180–190) and because the majority of the feminine nouns in this dialect end in -*a* (=weak feminine nouns; Henzen 1927:188). Moreover, this class of weak feminine nouns is growing: Strong feminines as well as strong and weak masculines change to weak feminines. For example: *īx* > *īxa* 'oak' (strong feminine), *tsēɪjə* > *tsēɪja* 'toe' (weak masculine), *doərn* > *doərna* 'thorn' (strong masculine; Henzen 1927:189). Finally, -*a* is suffixed to French feminine loan words (Henzen 1927:189).

Thus, in addition to the sociopragmatic criteria, there is a morphological criterion, which is ranked higher. First, the speaker has to differentiate between those female proper names ending in -*a* (feminine gender) and those ending in -*i* or in a consonant (neuter or feminine gender). Second, regarding names ending in -*i* or in a consonant, the speaker has to differentiate between the two sociopragmatic contexts.

Regarding the pronominalization of proper nouns, the results are very clear: Personal pronouns always agree with the definite article in gender.

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[9] Note that the articles were not given in the questionnaire; see the example from the questionnaire in section 5 (example 2).

[10] The same name may end in -*a* as well as in -*i* (for example, Mari, Maria). Whether someone is addressed as Mari or Maria can depend on the socio-pragmatic requirements, but it does not have to. There are women who are always named Maria, and others who are always named Mari.

This can be explained by the short distance between the definite article and the personal pronoun in the questionnaire: According to Birkenes et al. 2014, the shorter the distance between the controller and the target, the more likely it is to find formal agreement, and the larger the distance, the more likely it is to find semantic agreement. In the questionnaire used for this study, the personal pronoun is always very close to the definite article and proper noun (see example 2 in section 5). Thus, it is possible that the personal pronoun may change in gender (for example, depending on the sociopragmatic context) if the distance to the controller is larger. Note, however, that this would not affect the paradigms that are at the center of my interest for the purposes of this paper.

7. The Marking of Humanness.
7.1. Demonstrative Pronouns.
Several cells of the personal pronoun paradigms show demonstrative pronouns (bold in tables 6–11). Their distribution is not random, but follows a clear pattern. In the stressed paradigm, the demonstrative pronoun fills the cells of the accusative and dative nonhuman; in the unstressed paradigm, the demonstrative fills the cells of the dative nonhuman. However, in the neuter and masculine, the demonstrative pronoun is in variation with the personal pronoun (*um*/*dæm*). Thus, human and nonhuman forms are distinguished by personal and demonstrative pronouns in the object cases only. The neuter noun *xin* 'child' is a special case, which is discussed in more detail in section 7.3. The dative feminine human forms *ira* and *dera* are not in free variation because *dera* for females is used only with a pejorative meaning. It is not very surprising that the demonstrative pronoun is used in these contexts: If a +/–pejorative meaning is distinguished and if a human and a nonhuman forms are available, it is more likely that the nonhuman form will be used in pejorative contexts.

Thus, Sense Alemannic distinguishes between a human and a nonhuman category not only in the neuter (like other Alemannic dialects), but also in the masculine and feminine, therefore independently of gender. At least to my knowledge, this phenomenon has never been systematically investigated and described, although there are some indications in the grammatical descriptions that the demonstrative pronoun is used instead of the personal pronoun (see section 3.2). Furthermore, in those grammatical descriptions a rather wide range of variation is assumed.

Interestingly, the demonstrative pronouns are also used to refer to nonhuman entities in some Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish), while personal pronouns are used to refer to human (feminine and masculine) entities.[11] Old Norse (with a three-gender system), unlike the other Old Germanic languages, expresses the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun by the demonstrative pronoun *þat*, and the masculine and feminine by the personal pronoun *hann*, *hon* (Krahe & Meid 1969:55–58; for a detailed discussion see Howe 1996).

That the demonstrative pronoun is in free variation with the personal pronoun in the dative masculine and neuter of the unstressed paradigm, and is, contrary to the stressed paradigm, not used in the accusative, needs an explanation. One hypothesis may be that this variation pattern represents a diachronic change toward using the demonstrative pronoun instead of the personal pronoun: This change took its starting point in the stressed personal pronoun and expanded only later to the unstressed personal pronoun. Another possible explanation is that demonstrative pronouns are better suited to function as stressed than as unstressed personal pronouns because when they are used as demonstrative pronouns they bear deictic semantics.

In summary, demonstrative pronouns replace personal pronouns, which leads to the human versus nonhuman distinction in all genders. Moreover, the stressed and unstressed paradigms differ in the use of the demonstrative pronoun (stressed: accusative and dative, unstressed: dative). In contrast, no differences are observed between the three genders: The demonstrative pronoun is used in exactly the same cases in all three genders within both (stressed and unstressed) paradigms. This uniform use of the demonstrative pronoun signifies that humanness is not connected to a specific gender but is distinguished in all genders.

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[11] Note that in Luxembourgish (Döhmer 2016) and Bavarian dialects (Weiss 2016) too, the demonstrative pronoun is used to refer to focused nonhuman neuters, and the personal pronoun for human neuters. However, this does not affect the case marking system because nominative and accusative are always syncretized.

7.2. Nominative and Accusative Neuter, and the Paradigm for Child.
First, I consider nominative neuter stressed forms. Informant 1 makes a clear distinction when referring to human and nonhuman entities in the nominative neuter: *as* for nonhuman entities and *ǣs* for human entities (for the paradigm of *xin* 'child', see below).[12] Unlike informant 1, informant 2 uses the same exponence (*as*) for human and nonhuman entities (as in the masculine and feminine). An explanation for the different paradigms used by informant 1 and informant 2 may be found in the diachrony. The form *ǣs* is taken as a starting point because the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun in Old High German (OHG) is *is* (nominative/ accusative; Braune 2004:243), and Henzen (1927:197) reports only *ǣs*. Consequently, *as* is a new form. Informant 2 uses the new form *as* throughout the nominative neuter stressed, whereas informant 1 uses *ǣs* and *as* depending on human/nonhuman semantics. Thus, I propose that informant 2 represents a newer stage of the language than informant 1: The former distinction (=informant 1) between human and nonhuman in the nominative neuter is leveled (=informant 2), in analogy to the feminine and masculine, which do not differentiate between human and nonhuman in the nominative.

Regarding the new form *as*, note that the stressed personal pronouns are always sentence initial in this investigation. Therefore, from a synchronic point of view, *as* and *das* are not phonologically conditioned allomorphs. However, I hypothesize that diachronically *as* may be traced back to the demonstrative pronoun *das*: Informant 1 uses *as* (nominative) exclusively for nonhuman entities where one would expect a demonstrative pronoun (as in the accusative and dative). As for nominative neuter unstressed forms, in this paradigm human and nonhuman entities are pronominalized with *əs*. If the pronoun refers to a female person, *ǣs* may also be used.

With respect to accusative neuter, informant 2 clearly distinguishes the accusative neuter human (*ǣs*) from the nominative neuter human (*as*) as well as from the accusative neuter nonhuman (*das*). Informant 2 has, thus, no form for the accusative neuter human of the type *īns* observed in other Alemannic dialects, where the neuter form is used to refer to females (section 3.1). In contrast, informant 1 uses the form *īns* as well as *ǣs* for

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[12] Please note that in Sense Alemannic, the neuter human forms can only be used to refer to females.

the accusative neuter human. As a consequence, the human versus nonhuman contrast emerges in the accusative neuter (*īns*/*æs* versus *das*); but now, if *æs* is chosen as the accusative human form, the accusative human *æs* syncretizes with the nominative human *æs*. Thus, this paradigm violates the DOM principle (see section 8).

Finally, there is a special paradigm for the neuter noun *xin* 'child'. The question raised here is whether the noun *xin* is considered grammatically as human or nonhuman.[13] The paradigms produced by both informants show a mix of human and nonhuman forms. The nominative in the paradigm of informant 2 tells one nothing because no distinction is made between human and nonhuman. In the accusative, both human and nonhuman forms are used to refer to a child, but in the dative only the human form. Informant 1 uses the human and nonhuman form in the nominative, the nonhuman form in the accusative, and the human form in the dative. Thus, the noun *xin* is grammatically considered neither exclusively human nor exclusively nonhuman. This may be because neuter nouns can have both human and nonhuman referents, with the former always being females. Of course, the noun *xin* has a human referent, but that referent may be either male or female, and it is clearly less concrete than a specific female person addressed by a proper name. It would be interesting to check with which pronouns the nouns *Weib* 'woman' (archaic) and *Mädchen* 'girl' are pronominalized: whether they behave like the noun *xin*, the neuter human, or the feminine human.

8. The Nominative/Accusative Distinction.

In OHG, the 3rd person singular masculine nominative and accusative are distinguished by the forms *er* (nominative) and *inan* (accusative; Braune 2004:243). Thus, *ær*/*ər* and *īn*/*nə* in Sense Alemannic are inherited distinctions. However, the question is whether or not the *n* in *ne* is part of the personal pronoun or if it is inserted to prevent hiatus. Both analyses are possible in principle because *n* is used in the Alemannic dialects by default to avoid a hiatus between words, as in 3.

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[13] The grammatical gender of *xin* is invariably neuter, lexically assigned.

(3) Wāre–**n**–er
     were.PL.PST–PREVENTS HIATUS–you.2PL.NOM
     'You were/were you'   (Noth 1993:321)

To rule out the use of the hiatus-preventing *n*, I ensured that the word preceding the personal pronoun in the questionnaire always ended in a consonant. The responses clearly show that the *n* forms part of the accusative masculine personal pronoun: Informant 2 noted *nə*, informant 1 *nə* and *ənə* as possible forms for the 3rd person singular accusative masculine personal pronoun.

Regarding the nonhuman stressed paradigm, it is important to note that the demonstrative pronoun only replaced the personal pronoun in the accusative and in the dative. Had the demonstrative pronoun been used in the nominative as well, the nominative and accusative forms would have been identical, due to syncretism, *dæ/dēr* (Henzen 1927:200).[14] Thus, nominative and accusative are always distinguished morphologically, either by inherited forms (*ēr/ər* and *īn/nə*) or by the personal and demonstrative pronoun (*ēr* and *dæ*).

OHG has one form, *is*, for the nominative and accusative of the 3rd person singular **neuter** personal pronoun (human and nonhuman) (Braune 2004:243). This form is maintained in the unstressed paradigm in Sense Alemannic (*əs*) with a minor exception: Females may be referred to by the form *əs* as well as by *ēs*. The latter corresponds to the human form in the stressed paradigm. Contrary to the unstressed paradigm, the stressed nominative and accusative forms differ from each other. In the nonhuman paradigm, these cases are distinguished, as the demonstrative pronoun replaces the personal pronoun only in the accusative and dative, but not in the nominative (the demonstrative pronoun—for example, masculine— has the syncretic form *das/dās* in the nominative and accusative; Henzen 1927:200).[15]

In the stressed human paradigm provided by informant 2, the nominative (*as*) and the accusative (*ēs*) are distinguished. This is due to the expansion of the nonhuman nominative form *as*, which is replacing the former human nominative form *ēs*. As discussed in section 7.2, this

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[14] *Dæ* (attributive) and *dēr* (substantival) are both used as nominative and accusative forms (Henzen 1927:200).

[15] Regarding the distribution of *das/dās*, see note 14.

expansion may be caused by a leveling of the human/nonhuman distinction in analogy to the masculine and feminine nominative. The stressed human paradigm of informant 1 shows either the inherited syncretic form *ǣs* or the new accusative form *īns*—the pattern observed in many other Alemannic dialects. Thus, the distinction/nondistinction between the nominative and the accusative is in free variation. To summarize, nominative and accusative are distinguished in the stressed neuter by different parts of speech or by changes in the personal pronoun (the new forms *as* and *īns*), but are not distinguished in the unstressed neuter (with a minor exception in both the stressed and unstressed paradigms).

In OHG, the nominative of the 3rd person singular **feminine** personal pronoun is *siu*, the accusative is *sia* (Braune 2004:243). Henzen (1927:197) reports *sia* for nominative and accusative. In present-day Sense Alemannic, the syncretism is preserved: *si* (unstressed human and nonhuman), *sī* (stressed human). In the unstressed human paradigm, nominative and accusative are distinguished, if *sa* (in free variation with the syncretic form *si*) is used in the accusative (informant 1). In the stressed nonhuman paradigm, nominative and accusative differ from each other because the demonstrative pronoun is used in the accusative and dative, but not in the nominative. Again, the feminine demonstrative pronoun has a syncretic form for nominative and accusative, namely, *dia*/*di* (Henzen 1927:200), as was already observed with neuter and masculine.[16] In summary, nominative and accusative are distinguished only in the stressed nonhuman paradigm due to the use of the demonstrative pronoun in the accusative.

At first glance, it seems rather surprising that the nominative and accusative nonhuman (stressed) differ from one another because there is a general tendency to syncretize these two forms: They are never distinguished morphologically in the entire nominal inflection, except in the aforementioned 3rd person personal pronoun (as well as in the 1st and 2nd person singular and plural personal pronoun). Additionally, it is striking that not all personal pronouns of the nonhuman paradigm are replaced by the forms of the demonstrative pronouns. However, the same DOM hypothesis may explain why the nonhuman paradigms show demonstrative pronouns in the accusative and dative, but not in the

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[16] Regarding the distribution of *di*/*dia*, see note 14.

nominative. Given that the prototypical subject is animate (see Aissen 2003:437–438), an inanimate subject must be marked. Thus, the personal pronoun in the nominative of the stressed nonhuman paradigm may be considered a marked form, whereas the demonstrative pronoun in the accusative and dative is the default, or unmarked form.

9. The *DOM* Principle and the Encoding of the Category *Humanness*.

It was shown in section 4 that marking of the accusative human follows a well-known typological pattern captured by the DOM hypothesis (Bossong 1998). This hypothesis can explain why the direct object is marked and thus distinguished from the subject when it refers to a human being, but not marked when it refers to a nonhuman entity. Under this hypothesis, one may expect that the changes in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun in Sense Alemannic would lead to a marking of the accusative in the human paradigm. However, this change applies only to the neuter (mainly in the stressed paradigm), and there are even instances undermining the DOM hypothesis.

One such instance involves the neuter gender. Although in IE languages, the neuter gender is typically reserved for nonhuman entities, I have shown that in some Alemannic dialects, neuter nouns may refer to humans, and more specifically, to females. Therefore, the DOM hypothesis predicts different marking for the nominative and accusative forms of neuter nouns referring to humans. This prediction is borne out in most cases, but not in all. In the stressed neuter human accusative, informant 1 uses *ǣs* (in free variation with *īns*), which is the same form as in the nominative. Paradoxically, nominative and accusative are distinguished at the same time in the stressed neuter nonhuman paradigm. This distribution clearly contradicts the DOM hypothesis. There is also variation in the unstressed human neuter paradigm in the data from both informants: They both use two distinct forms—that is, the nominative *ǣs* and the accusative *əs*—as well as the syncretic form *əs*.

Other examples that undermine the DOM hypothesis come from the feminine paradigms. The feminine gender also developed a human/ nonhuman distinction. Thus, one may expect that the feminine accusative human would be marked. This expectation is partially fulfilled in the unstressed paradigm, where one finds the accusative *sa.* This exponence, however, is in free variation with the exponence *si*, which corresponds to the nominative form. This distribution contradicts the DOM hypothesis at

least partially, depending on which form is chosen in the accusative human. The strongest deviation from the DOM principle can be found in the stressed feminine paradigm. Nominative and accusative are distinguished in the nonhuman paradigm (the demonstrative pronoun is used in the accusative and the personal pronoun in the nominative), but not in the human paradigm. Thus, the paradigms of the feminine do not generally fit the DOM hypothesis.

To summarize, the DOM principle applies throughout the masculine paradigm without exception (inherited form; see section 8). In the stressed neuter, DOM applies for the most part, as new forms have emerged to disambiguate syncretism. Furthermore, there are exceptions to the DOM principle in the unstressed neuter paradigm, due to inherited OHG syncretism, as well as in the unstressed feminine paradigm. Finally, the DOM principle clearly does not apply in the stressed feminine paradigm, due to new syncretism (see OHG). Thus, contrary to what one might expect under the DOM hypothesis, this principle does not apply uniformly, across the board.

With respect to encoding the category *humanness*, Sense Alemannic has developed a human/nonhuman distinction in the accusative and dative of the stressed paradigm for all genders, as well as in the dative of the unstressed paradigm (for all genders). Although there are syncretic forms that do not convey the human/nonhuman distinction, every nonhuman paradigm has at least one demonstrative pronoun form used exclusively for nonhumans. Thus, effectively, there is a human and a nonhuman paradigm for each gender.

Two marking principles are at play, whose application may lead to contradicting results. For example, the feminine paradigm did not have the human/nonhuman distinction and no nominative/accusative distinction, due to syncretism. Then the demonstrative pronoun started being used to refer to nonhumans. Since demonstratives replace the stressed nonhuman personal pronouns only in the accusative and dative, their use led to i) the human/nonhuman distinction in the feminine, and ii) the nominative versus accusative distinction in the feminine nonhuman. At the same time, the feminine human maintained the nominative/accusative syncretism.

So the question is how the encoding of the category *humanness* and DOM interact. I suggest that the interaction between these two principles may be captured within the framework of Optimality Theory, similar to what Aissen (2003) proposes regarding the DOM principle. Based on a

crosslinguistic comparison, Aissen identifies two conflicting principles: iconicity and economy. According to the iconicity principle, "the more marked a direct object *qua* object, the more likely it is to be overtly case marked" (Aissen 2003: 435), whereas the economy principle requires that case marking be avoided. In Sense Alemannic, every gender has a human as well as a nonhuman paradigm without any exception (thus, no violation of the human/nonhuman constraint). In contrast, nominative and accusative differ from one another in the stressed nonhuman, but not necessarily in the stressed human paradigm and, thus, contradict the DOM principle in some cases. Thus, it can be deduced that the encoding of the human/nonhuman distinction is ranked higher than the marking of the accusative human (and, as a consequence, the distinction between nominative and accusative human). Assuming a higher ranking for humanness also explains why the demonstrative pronouns did not enter the human paradigm (thus, not replacing all the personal pronouns but only some specific ones): If they did so, no distinction would be made between human and nonhuman.

10. Conclusion.

In the first part of the paper (sections 1–4), it was shown that Alemannic dialects distinguish between a human and a nonhuman paradigm in the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun, using a new form in the accusative human. As a consequence, the accusative human differs from the nominative human, while the inherited syncretism between nominative and accusative is conserved in the nonhuman paradigm. Some Scandinavian languages (with a two-gender system and humanness distinction in the personal pronouns) display a very similar system. The morphologically encoded (non)distinction between subject and object depending on humanness can be explained by the DOM hypothesis (Bossong 1998).

The second part (sections 5–9) was dedicated to the 3rd person singular personal pronoun of Sense Alemannic, where a human and a nonhuman paradigm developed in all three genders. The new forms referring to nonhuman entities correspond to those of the demonstrative pronoun; however, those forms are used only in the accusative and dative (stressed) or only in the dative (unstressed). Note that the Scandinavian languages use demonstrative pronouns as personal pronouns to refer to nonhuman entities, too. Additionally, there are two new forms in the

neuter of Sense Alemannic: *īns* and *as*. These two changes—that is, the development of the human versus nonhuman distinction and the emergence of two new forms—led to a nominative versus accusative distinction in the stressed nonhuman paradigm in all genders and in the stressed human paradigm in the neuter gender. The DOM principle, however, is violated in the unstressed neuter paradigm (inherited syncretism retained, see OHG) as well as in the stressed and unstressed feminine paradigm (new syncretism, see OHG). Thus, two principles operate in the system: Mark humanness and distinguish nominative and accusative in the human paradigm. The application of these principles may produce contradicting outputs. It was shown that the encoding of the category *humanness* is higher ranked in Sense Alemannic than the encoding of the nominative versus accusative distinction.

A third principle may be added, namely, syncretize nominative and accusative (see the feminine personal pronoun). Interestingly, the whole nominal inflection—except the instances in the personal pronoun presented in this article—displays a syncretism between nominative and accusative. This is not only true for Sense Alemannic but also for all the other Alemannic dialects, including the highly inflecting Alpine Alemannic dialects showing a very rich noun inflection with up to 18 inflection classes (Baechler 2017). As discussed in section 9, OT could capture the interaction between the three principles.

Furthermore, these three principles and the interaction between them raise further questions. Do other dialects (or languages) also use demonstrative pronouns or do they apply other strategies to encode nonhuman entities and, if so, how do those strategies affect the case marking system? Are there systematic relations between the changes in the nominative/accusative system and the category *gender*? How does the encoding of nominative and accusative (and other cases) change on the level of single parts of speech as well as on the level of noun phrases? Is the lack of morphological distinction between subject and direct object always compensated for elsewhere in the system (for example, by word order)? These questions arise especially with regard to the highly inflecting German Alpine dialects because the standard model of phonologically driven case loss and compensation by case marking on the article or by a fixed word order does not apply to these dialects: Alpine dialects show full vowels in nonstressed syllables, reduction of inflectional case marking (reduced noun inflection is not systematically compensated

for by case marking on the articles), and only partially fixed word order. Thus, further research (perhaps including other highly inflecting Germanic languages) is needed to explore how exactly these principles interact with one another in the inflectional system of the personal pronouns as well as throughout the nominal inflection system.

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