

## CHAPTER 7

# A typology of honorific uses of clusivity

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In many languages, pronouns are used with special meanings in honorific contexts. The most widespread phenomenon cross-linguistically is the usage of a plural pronoun instead of a singular to mark respect. In this chapter, I will investigate the possibility of using clusivity in honorific contexts. This is a rare phenomenon, but a thorough investigation has resulted in a reasonably diverse set of examples, taken from languages all over the world. It turns out that there are many different honorific contexts in which an inclusive or exclusive pronoun can be used. The most commonly attested variant is the usage of an inclusive pronoun with a polite connotation, indicating social distance.

*Keywords:* politeness, respect, syncretism, clusivity

### 1. Introduction

In his study of the cross-linguistic variation of honorific reference, Head (1978: 178) claims that inclusive reference, when used honorifically, indicates less social distance. However, he claims this on the basis of only two cases. In this chapter, a survey will be presented of a large set of languages, in which an inclusive or exclusive marker is used in an honorific sense. It turns out that Head's claim is not accurate. In contrast, it appears that inclusive marking is in many cases a sign of greater social distance, although the variability of the possible honorific usages is larger than might have been expected. There are also cases in which an inclusive is used in an impolite fashion or cases in which an exclusive is used in a polite fashion.

Specifically, I will discuss the usage of inclusives with polite second person reference in Section 2. In Section 3, I will present examples of inclusives with humble first person reference. In Section 4, the slightly different usage of inclusives with bonding first person reference will be discussed. All these usages of inclusives can be characterised as having a polite connotation. In contrast, I will present some examples of inclusives with impolite first person reference in Section 5. Then there are also some languages in which the exclusive functions as a polite first person, as discussed in Section 6. Finally, all examples discussed are summarised and some generalisations are proposed in Section 7.

Although all these usages are attested, they are not all attested equally frequently. However, inferences from frequency are only to be taken with great caution. The data that form the basis for this chapter are inherently skewed for various reasons.

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First, the present compilation of cases is the result of rather *ad-hoc* collecting. I started from some cases, which I encountered during a typological investigation of person marking (Cysouw 2003). Investigating the linguistic areas and genetic families of those cases has subsequently enlarged this set. The present collection is large and varied enough to pass as a cross-linguistic sample, yet the procedure that lead to this sample is not one of controlled sampling (cf. Rijkhoff and Bakker 1998). Second, it is rather difficult to find information on honorific usage in reference grammars and other published works on ‘exotic’ languages. Except for a few studies that are explicitly devoted to the subject of honorific reference, I had to work on a basis of short indications about possible honorific usages of clusivity markers as they were made in grammars and other descriptive works. Often no more than a comment in passing is given, saying for example only that the inclusive is used for honorific address. When and under which circumstances such honorific address is used remains often enigmatic from the source. Also, when a source does not give any information on possible honorific usages of a clusivity marker, this should by no means be regarded as absence of such usage. The social aspects of language use are often disregarded in language description.

I will use the politeness framework of Brown and Levinson (1987) to analyse the linguistic variation attested. Specifically, the notions of positive and negative politeness are of central importance. Positive politeness “anoints the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, [the speaker] wants [the addressee’s] wants” (Brown and Levinson 1987:70). In other words, being positively polite roughly amounts to share the addressee’s attitudes. Negative politeness “consists in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee’s . . . wants and will not . . . interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 70). In other words, being negatively polite roughly amounts to leave the addressee alone as much as possible. I will use these two purportedly universal forces in human interaction to bring order to the various kinds of honorific usage of clusivity.

The main body of this chapter consists of a large collection of cases that show honorific use of clusivity.<sup>1</sup> In the final section, I will propose some generalisations over the present collection of cases. With this survey, I hope to stimulate new descriptions of honorific reference in human language - possibly with the result that the present generalisations become null and void. If so, then I will consider my mission complete.

## 2. Inclusive as a polite second person (negative politeness)

In the Western Malayo-Polynesian languages of central and southern Sulawesi (Indonesia), the use of the inclusive as a polite second person is particularly prominent. The pronominal elements themselves differ widely between the individual languages, which indicates that the shared usage of the inclusive as honorific origin-

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ated after the languages had differentiated from the proto-language. It is probably a contact-induced loan translation that has spread throughout the region. In Muna, the inclusive pronoun *intaida* is used for second person honorific reference (van den Berg 1989: 81). The inflectional subject markers show a difference between *do-* for inclusive and *to-* for second person honorific. However “the *do-* forms can also be used for the second person singular, in which case they have a rather formal connotation. Their use does not imply politeness but rather aloofness; the form is especially suitable for addressing foreigners” (van den Berg 1989: 51). In Konjo, the pronominal paradigm has been strongly reduced, leaving only four different pronouns: a first person *nakke*, a second person *kau*, a polite second person *gitte* and a third person *ia*. The first person has an exclusive connotation. Relating to the present topic, the polite second person can be used with an inclusive meaning: “the Konjo pronominal system differentiates only person, not number or gender. . . . The use of first person reflects the fact that the speaker excludes the hearer, while the use of the second person honorific reflects his inclusion” (Friberg 1996: 138, fn. 2). These pronouns are not very frequently used; the “free form pronouns occur mainly for emphasis in Konjo. . . . The person-marker clitics serve to clarify what the semantic subject (and object) of the verb are” (Friberg 1996: 138). These person-marking clitics, however, show exactly the same honorific usage as the free pronouns. Further, the inclusive pronoun is used for polite second person reference in the Sulawesi languages Bajau (Verheijen 1986: 15, 19), Wolio (Anceaux and Grimes 1995: 577) and in Sa’dan (mentioned by Blust 1977: 11).

Additional evidence for this usage can be found in some languages in central and southern Sulawesi, in which the inclusive/exclusive opposition is vanishing or has already disappeared. The exclusive pronoun is disappearing and the formerly inclusive pronoun is used both for all first person plural reference and for polite second person reference. For example, in Makassarese, the pronoun (*i*)*katte* is explained in the dictionary of Cense (1979: 312–13) as being basically a first person plural inclusive, though nowadays often used instead of the vanishing exclusive pronoun (*i*)*kambe*. As a second referential possibility, (*i*)*katte* can also be used as a polite second person (Matthes 1858: 69–70). In Bugis, the pronoun (*id*)*ikəŋ* is a general first person plural, although it can have an exclusive connotation. Another first person plural pronoun, *idi*’, without exclusive connotation, can be used as a second person honorific (Sirk 1979: 107–8; Matthes 1875: 197–8):

*ikəŋ* and *idikkəŋ* in general express the notion of plurality (= ‘we’). . . . The pronoun *idi*’, for the first person, means, likewise, ‘we’, but it is also used as an honorific form, for the second person (= ‘you’). . . . The notions of inclusive/exclusive are practically unexpressed in the language of the traditional literature of Bugis. Among the pronouns of the first person, *ikəŋ*, *idikkəŋ* and *ia*’ [but not *idi*’, MC] can have an exclusive value. (Sirk 1979: 107–8, my translation)<sup>2</sup>

Likewise in Banggai, the pronoun *ikita* is used for the first person plural. There is no mention of an inclusive–exclusive distinction in the grammar of van den Bergh

(1953: 44), although historically this pronoun is clearly related to the inclusive pronoun *\*(k)ita* from proto-Austronesian. In Banggai, this pronoun is also used for polite second person reference. Van den Bergh claims that this honorific function is a loan translation from Bugis. He also recorded a native explanation for this use:

As an explanation why the first person plural was used as a honorific plural, we were told thus: ‘if we address a person higher in rank with *ikita* and we accidentally say something unpleasant, then he cannot become angry that easily, because we have also included ourselves in the unpleasantness. (van den Bergh 1953: 44, fn. 1, my translation)<sup>3</sup>

In Tukang Besi, spoken on a small island within range of Sulawesi, the pronoun *ikita*, also clearly a reflex of the proto-Austronesian inclusive *\*(k)ita*, is the normal first person plural. It is also used for honorific reference: “respect may be paid to a group of people addressed, or a greater degree of respect paid to an individual by the use of the first person plural forms” (Donohue 1999: 114). The original exclusive pronoun *kami* is used with a paucal connotation, although paucal reference is also often made by use of *ikita* (Donohue 1999: 113–14).

Outside Sulawesi, yet within the same area (and also within the Austronesian stock), honorific usage of the inclusive is also found in the Timorese language Tetun. The inclusive pronoun *ita* “is also used as polite pronoun for second person singular . . . [yet] in practice *ita* is used rather little as a second-person pronouns” (van Klinken 1999: 113; cf. Williams-van Klinken et al. 2002: 26). The same is attested in North Maluku Malay (Donohue and Smith 1998: 70–1). Other examples are attested in Toba Batak, Duri, Palu and in Sulawesi Malay. These cases are discussed extensively in the next section, because the inclusive is used both for the second and first person in an honorific sense. Finally, distantly related to these cases within the Austronesian stock, a comparable use of the inclusive is found in Malagasy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 203, citing E.O. Keenan, p.c.) and in Hawaiian: “in greetings in Hawaiian, the inclusive first person dual is considered a polite form of address” (Head 1978: 178, citing Kahananui and Anthony 1970: 7). A discussion of many of these cases from a slightly different perspective is presented by Lichtenberk (this volume, Section 2.3).

Blust (1977: 11) presents additional evidence for the usage of an inclusive for polite address. He mentions the Austronesian languages Old Javanese, Coastal Saluan (Loinan) and Bimanese as examples in which the formerly inclusive *kita* has become the regular second person singular, without honorific connotation. Blust rightfully argues that such cases represent the endpoint of a ‘politeness shift’, in which an erstwhile form for polite address becomes the default second person reference - alike to the other politeness shifts that he has proposed for the history of Austronesian (Blust 1977: 8–12).

Completely independently from these cases in the Austronesian stock, the use of the inclusive as a second person honorific is also found in the Ainu language in Japan: “the inclusive forms of the first person plural are used as second-person

honorific forms” (Shibatani 1990: 28). The same usage of the inclusive is also attested in Limbu, a Kiranti (Tibeto-Burman) language from Nepal:

It is a common speech habit when talking to people with whom one is unacquainted or vis-à-vis whom one must retain a demeanour of respect to use the inclusive rather than second person forms. The apparent psychological reasoning behind the polite inclusive is that one implicates and, if such be the case, incriminates oneself in the verbal scenario. It is also polite by virtue of being less direct than the second person. (van Driem 1987: 221)

Another case of this honorific usage is found in the Cuzco variant of Quechua, spoken in Peru. The suffix *-nchis* “forms an inclusive for which there are two pragmatically governed interpretations, first person inclusive plural and second person polite” (Mannheim 1982a: 147; 1982b: 457). In a detailed study of plural reference in Cuzco Quechua, Lefebvre (1975; 1979) describes in more detail in which situations the inclusive is used as a polite second person:

first-person plural inclusive may also be used instead of second-person singular in order to indicate deference or respect. This form is found in my data for addressing a stranger, a person from a different social status, or for addressing a person in a formal context. (Lefebvre 1975: 28)

Finally, Brown and Levinson (1987: 201–3) describe the same phenomenon for the Dravidian language Tamil, spoken on Sri Lanka, where the inclusive *naam* is used as a ‘super-honorific’ form of address. This is a particularly interesting case, as the same pronoun is also used for high-ranked self-reference (cf. Section 4). Brown and Levinson explain the honorific address with the inclusive pronoun *naam* as a reaction to the high-ranked self-referential use of this same pronoun:

In village usage [*naam*] is the pronoun used by lower-status persons to higher-caste persons, especially in FTAs [Face Threatening Acts]. . . . In such a dyad, the higher-status person is likely to refer to himself with the ‘royal “we”’ - that is, with *naam*. So the use of the same pronoun to refer to the same referent by a different (lower-rank) speaker could be seen as a dramatic point of view operation in which the inferior adopts the superior’s point of view. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 202)

The last few cases show that the usage of an inclusive for polite second person reference can be found dispersed throughout the world’s languages, and is not restricted to Austronesian stock, among which it is nonetheless particularly prominent. Not all sources give information on the situations in which the inclusive can be used as a polite form of address. Yet, if there is an elucidation on the circumstance of usage, then the inclusive seems to be preferred in formal situations in which it is necessary to give deference to the addressee. Of course, the usage of an inclusive as a form of address is a kind of negative politeness, because it is a less direct way to refer to the addressee than a second-person pronoun. However, this does not yet explain why the inclusive can be used to express a difference in rank/status. Brown and Levinson (1987) also note this problem and they have to resort to quite exotic proposals

to explain the existence of this usage of the inclusive, explanations like the one for Tamil *naam* discussed above or like the following metaphor of ownership:

[A] possible source is the idiom of ownership: the master owns his servants, and they 'possess' him as their master. So to address him as 'you and I' is to convey the absorption of the inferior in the superior's domain. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 202).

These explanations seem somewhat far-fetched. What is missing in Brown and Levinson's work is the inherent asymmetry between speaker and addressee. The speaker, simply by the fact of being speaker, exercises control over the speech situation. The action of speaking itself is inherently threatening the negative face of the addressee. By using an inclusive form, the speaker offers to disregard this inherent supremacy. The speaker implicitly abases himself by including himself in the reference. The difference between speaker and addressee is softened by explicitly including both participants together in the reference. Interpreted this way, using an inclusive instead of a second person form is a way to give deference - one of the many ways to be negatively polite (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 178–86).

### 3. Inclusive as a humble first person (negative politeness)

A related kind of honorific usage of the inclusive is found in Sawu, a Central Malayo-Polynesian language spoken on the island Sawu, to the west of Timor (Indonesia), as described by Walker (1982). He says to "have textual evidence that *dii*, normally first person plural (inclusive), is also used as a 'polite' form for first person singular" (Walker 1982: 11). Probably, a polite first person singular is supposed to mean a deferential form of self-reference. If so, this boils down to the same social effect as a polite form for the second person as discussed in the previous section. Both usages of the inclusive are ways of expressing the same social setting, in which the speaker is lowering himself relative to the addressee. The idea that polite first and second person reference are related is nicely illustrated by Toba Batak, a Sundic language from Sumatra (Indonesia). The inclusive pronoun *hita* "is also used in place of *ho* [second person singular] and *au* [first person singular] when the speaker wishes expressly to be polite or when the kinship relationship is not known" (van der Tuuk 1971: 218). To express politeness in Toba Batak, both first and second person reference can be replaced by the inclusive pronoun. The same situation is apparently attested in the Sulawesi languages Duri (Valkama 1995: 49–50) and Palu (Donohue and Smith 1998: 73, citing P. Quick, p.c.), and in the Malay variety spoken in South and Southeast Sulawesi (Donohue and Smith 1998: 71–2). Some more examples are discussed by Lichtenberk (this volume, section 2.2).

Additional evidence for this deferential usage of the inclusive is found in a few Polynesian languages, in which the erstwhile inclusive has lost its clusivity completely and has become a special kind of first person singular. In the Polynesian lan-

guages, the proto-Austronesian inclusive *\*(k)ita* has been extended with number markers, leaving the bare form available for exaptation. In Samoan, for example, the inclusive plural is *'itātou* and the inclusive dual is *'itā'ua*, both consisting of the formerly inclusive marker *'ita* and a number suffix *-tou* for plural and *-ua* for dual. The bare inclusive marker *'ita* has become a special form of the first person singular expressing humility: “the emotional first person singular forms *'ita* and *ta'ita* frequently indicate self-abasement, humility, or an appeal for help, but they are above all an indication of affect showing that the speaker is emotionally involved in the situation” (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992: 121). Likewise in Tongan, where the pronouns *kita* and its variant *te* are used for first person singular reference “in the language of humility” (Churchward 1953: 127). The same phenomenon is also found in the Outlier Polynesian languages Mae and Nukuoro (Krupa 1982: 69–72) and Niuafō'u (Early 2002: 850). Finally, Besnier (2000), in the description of the Polynesian language of Tuvalu, is particularly keen to disentangle the cultural context of speech-acts. Here, it becomes clear that the pronoun *kita* can serve both for second person and for first person reference, comparably to the case of Toba Batak that was discussed above:

[*kita*] serves as a strongly affective index, connoting feelings of affection and empathy (*alofa*) when it refers to a second-person entity or to one's home island. Alternatively, when it refers to the first person, it connotes feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, and self-abasement (*fakaalofa*, i.e. feelings that bring about feelings of *alofa* in others). (Besnier 2000: 388)

The explanation for this humble usage of the inclusive is identical to the explanation for the usage of the inclusive for polite address in the previous section. The inherent asymmetry of the speech situation is an important factor. By way of speaking, the speaker has power over the speech situation. The usage of an inclusive instead of direct self-reference is a kind of negative politeness, in which the speaker abases himself by giving up his powerful position.

#### 4. Inclusive as a bonding first person (positive politeness)

Requests are situations in which politeness is particularly important. In Tzeltal, a Mayan language from Mexico, the “inclusive is often used to soften requests, as if pretending that [the addressee] wants the object or action requested as well. And equally to soften offers, pretending that [the speaker] is as eager as [the addressee] to have the action performed” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 127). The speaker invokes nearness between speaker and addressee by using an inclusive in such speech situations - a strategy to show positive politeness. The usage of the inclusive in a request is exemplified in (1a). An example in an offer is presented in (1b). In both cases, the inclusive is used with first person singular reference.

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- (1) Tzeltal (Mayan, Brown and Levinson 1987: 127)
- a. *hmahantik ʔaʔkʔuʔ*  
‘[Can] we (inclusive) borrow your blouse.’ (i.e. ‘can I?’)
  - b. *ya hpʔis-tik ta lokʔel*  
‘We (inclusive) will go fetch it.’ (i.e. ‘I will’)

In Tamil, the inclusive is most appropriately used as a form of self-reference in situations that require positive politeness. “One speaks as if everything were shared between members. Thus for instance between equals a speaker may refer to his wife as *namma sarasu* (‘our (inclusive) Sarasu’)” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 203, cf. 119–20).

In the West Papuan language Galela, spoken on Halmahera (Indonesia), the inclusive pronoun can be used in requests with self-reference. An example of this use is presented in (2). Formally, the second prefix *na-* is an inclusive marker. However, in this example the addressee is not included in the reference; the inclusive form is used here with exclusive reference.

- (2) Galela (West Papuan, Shelden 1991: 166)<sup>4</sup>
- pipi na-na-hike*  
money 2PL.SUBJ-INC.OBJ-give  
‘Please give us some money’

As an explanation, Shelden (1991) argues that this use is a way to relieve embarrassment on behalf of the speaker:

[This sentence] might be spoken in a situation where a man asks members of another family to give money to his own family. . . . His own family is referred to by *na-* [inclusive], which is interpreted to mean ‘exclusive polite’. Sociolinguistically, what happens is that by including the addressee grammatically, the man relieves his embarrassment for having to ask for money. (Shelden 1991: 166)

This explanation is reminiscent of the clarification that was presented for the polite use of the inclusive in Bugis (see Section 2). In both cases, mention is made of avoidance of unpleasantness. In Bugis, including yourself when addressing someone - using the inclusive instead of a second person form - can relieve the force of any unpleasantness for the addressee because it is shared. In the present case of Galela, including the addressee when referring to yourself - using the inclusive instead of a first person - causes any unpleasantness on your own side to be likewise shared and thereby lessened.

By using an inclusive, both speaker and addressee are depicted as being equally involved in the situation. In some of the examples presented in this section, this apparent equality is used to redress the threat to the positive face of the speaker (e.g. Galela). In other cases, the expressed equality is used to express a bond between speaker and addressee. The addressee is formally part of the reference of an inclusive, so using an inclusive is a potential threat to the negative face of the addressee - even more so in inherently face threatening acts like questions. Yet, the speaker



evades this potential threat by including himself into the address. The speaker thereby shows that any threat to the addressee's face applies to himself as well. This is a clear strategy invoking positive politeness to redress a face-threatening act (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987: 127–8).

### 5. Inclusive as an impolite first person

A rather different use of the inclusive is found in Santali, a Munda language of India. In this language, the inclusive can be used with first person singular reference in an impolite context:

There is a special use of the pronoun for first person inclusive dual *alaŋ*: It is used instead of first-person singular *iŋ* in threatening language. It does not mean two persons, but it seems that the speaker considers himself connected with the addressee while threatening him. (Neukom 2001: 37)

What this means exactly is nicely illustrated by the example presented in (3), in which a person is threatening an old woman. This person is referring to himself by use of an inclusive.

- (3) Santali (Munda, Austro-Asiatic, Neukom 2001: 38–9)
- ma bodhi, daka dɔhɔe-me, ar ba-m dɔhɔe-khan-dɔ*  
 MOD old woman rice put-2SG.SUB and NEG-2SG.SUBJ put-if-TOPJ  
*nāhāk'-laŋ ger-gitic'-gɔt'-me-a ar boge-te-laŋ*  
 just-INC.SUBJ bite-lie-MDF-2SG.OBJ-IN and good-INST-INC.SUBJ  
*thəyə-me-a*  
 kick-2SG.OBJ-INDD  
 'Old woman, put the rice down, and if you don't put it down, I shall just bite you that you will lie (there), and I shall give you a good kicking.'

A comparable usage of the inclusive is described by Chandrasekhar (1970) for Malayalam, a Dravidian language spoken in India. The inclusive pronoun *nammal* in Malayalam can be used as first person reference in the following situations (Chandrasekhar 1970: 246):

- in a friendly chat;
- in a spirit which implies some contempt for the listener;
- in an aggressive spirit.

The first situation — a friendly situation — might seem of a rather different matter as the other two situations, which are more aggressive contexts. However, a friendly situation may allow the use of an otherwise rude expression, as a sort-of conspiratorial act, which presumes that both know better than to interpret the linguistic expression as humiliation. Interpreted this way, the various usages of the inclusive pronoun in Malayalam can be unified as being basically an impolite way of self-reference, possibly extended to jocular language when speaking with friends.

The aggressive use of the inclusive as found in these languages can be explained by the fact that including reference to the addressee is a violation of the addressee's negative face. Such a face-threatening expression can, of course, be used if it is the objective of the speaker to be rude or aggressive. Or it can be used to re-establish a difference in rank, as is the case with the (older) inclusive pronoun *nam* in the Dravidian language Malayalam, which is used for self-reference by royalty and aristocratic people when talking to person of lower status (Chandrasekhar 1970: 246; 1977: 88). For Tamil - also a Dravidian language - a comparable use of the inclusive *naam* for self-reference by high-status persons is observed by Brown and Levinson (1987: 201–3). The same pronoun *naam* can also be used as polite address (cf. Section 2), leading to the possible situation that both participants in the speech act refer to the same participant with the same pronoun. Such a usage of the inclusive is also claimed for the Vietnamese pronoun *ta* (Thompson 1987; Nguyen 1996; Dinh-hoà 1997). Nguyen (1996: 9) explains “that *ta* ‘we (incl.)’ in many instances refers to an ‘I superior’ is a common phenomenon: think for example of the use of kingly *we* and *nous* in English and French respectively”. The superior self-referential usage of the inclusive is compared here with the well-known *pluralis majestatis* usage of a first person plural pronoun in European languages. However, in cases like the English *we*, there is no formal differentiation between an inclusive and an exclusive pronoun. The English *we* is probably best interpreted as basically an exclusive pronoun (see Daniel, this volume), so the *pluralis majestatis* in English can be analysed as pretending to include the addressee, but actually excluding the addressee, thereby expressing distance to the addressee (contrary to the analysis by Head 1978: 178; see also the next section).

The existence of an impolite usage of the inclusive as discussed in this section indicates that the inclusive need not have polite connotations, as discussed in the previous sections. When self-reference is intended, but the addressee is also included by use of an inclusive form, this threatens the negative face of the addressee. The ‘impolite’ usages of the inclusive, as discussed in this section, are examples of non-redressed acts against the negative face of the addressee.

## 6. Exclusive as a polite first person (negative politeness)

All examples that have been presented until now exhibit some kind of honorific use of the inclusive. However, it is also possible for the exclusive to have polite usage. For example, in Minangkabau, a Sundic language from Sumatra (Indonesia), the exclusive pronoun *kami* is used as a form of polite self-reference: “*kami* . . . is also used for polite first person reference: it softens the too strong self-assertive character of *I*” (Moussay 1981: 153, my translation).<sup>5</sup> For Malay, Donohue and Smith (1998: 71, n. 2) note that the exclusive pronoun *kami* can be used as a “highly stylized use of a ‘royal’ first-person singular pronoun, in certain speech styles.” A third case among the Austronesian languages of a polite usage of the exclusive is described for Malagasy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 203, citing E. O. Keenan, p.c.).

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The polite use of the exclusive appears to be widespread in the Munda family. In Kharia, as in Munda in general (with a few possible exceptions), the exclusive dual is simultaneously the honorific form. When speaking about oneself to a person deserving respect, the first person dual exclusive is used (J. Peterson, p.c.). However, it is difficult to find published accounts of this phenomenon. Osada (1992: 67) mentions in passing that “in the Ho language, which is closely related to Mundari, *alij* [dual exclusive] is used for the honorific first person singular”<sup>6</sup>

Among the Dravidian languages, Brown and Levinson (1987) describe the possibility of using plural forms for expressing respect in Tamil. For self reference expressing respect, the exclusive is used.

Tamil . . . provides clear cases of . . . respectful plurality deriving from the treatment of the individual as a member of a corporate group. Nouns which refer to groups or to group property (including group members) seldom take singular pronouns. Thus ‘my father’ is rendered *enke appaa*, meaning ‘our (exclusive) father’. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 199)

A comparable phenomenon — though apparently in the opposite diachronic direction — is observed in Vietnamese. Here, the exclusive pronoun *chúng tôi* (without an explicit polite connotation) is based on the pronoun *tôi*, which has respectful self-reference (*chúng* being a plurality marker from Chinese origin, Thompson 1987: 249).<sup>7</sup>

By using an exclusive instead of a first person singular, the speaker conceals the self-reference and gives the impression that he is not alone responsible for the utterance. In general, an exclusive can be analysed as an associative plural of the first person singular. An associative plural indicates a set of the form ‘X and his/her associates’ (Corbett 2000: 101). Transferred to the domain of personal pronouns, the associative plural of ‘I’ is ‘I and my associates’. This is exactly what is normally seen as the meaning of the exclusive. The exclusive is thus the plural of *I* (cf. Daniel, this volume), and thereby can be used to conceal self-reference in face-threatening situations because the usage of plural forms instead of singular ones is as a form of negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987: 198 ff.).

## 7. Analysis and conclusions

The possible origins of honorific reference are various and the developments often unexpected, intricately intertwined with the social structure of the community and the existing linguistic structures. Head’s (1978: 178) claim, that exclusive indicates greater social distance and inclusive less social distance, does not hold against the existing linguistic variation as summarised in Table 1 (see the appendix for a complete list of all examples discussed). Note that in Table 1, many languages are counted more than once, as they exhibit various honorific usages of clusivity (the last row of the table shows the frequencies with these multiple occurrences removed). Tamil is

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Table 1. Frequencies of attested usages of honorific clusivity

Usage	Attested in		
	No. of stocks	No. of families	No. of languages
Inclusive as a polite second person	5	9	17
Inclusive as a humble first person	1	3	5
Inclusive as a bonding first person	3	3	3
Inclusive as an impolite first person	2	3	4
Exclusive as a polite first person	3	5	7
TOTAL	14	23	36
(Multiple occurrences subtracted)	(8)	(14)	(26)

even mentioned four times. However, the frequent presence of Tamil is purely the result of the quality of description of honorific practice in Tamil as presented by Brown and Levinson (1987). This illustrates that more in-depth analyses will probably result in many more examples of honorific usages of clusivity. The present collection probably only scratches the surface of the real possibilities.

The most commonly attested development seems to be that an inclusive pronoun is used with a polite connotation - indicating social distance. The most commonly attested case is one in which inclusive is used for polite address (Section 2). Likewise, the inclusive can also be used for humble self-reference, although I have only found this among Austronesian languages (Section 3). In both these usages, the inclusive functions to express (or establish) distance between speaker and addressee, the speaker giving deference to the addressee. This usage of the inclusive for this goal is quite remarkable, because the inclusive - taken literally - implies a bond between speaker and addressee. I have proposed (see Section 2) that the distancing effect can be explained by reference to the inherent asymmetry between speaker and addressee. The speaker, simply by being speaker, has more control over the speech-act than the addressee. Using an inclusive diminishes this inherent power-position, in effect an abasement of the speaker.

The inclusive can also be used to establish a bond between speaker and addressee (Section 4). This can be explained as a way to relieve embarrassment on the side of the speaker. By including both speaker and addressee in the reference, both are depicted as involved in the utterance, which alleviates the responsibility for the utterance from the speaker. However, including the addressee can also be interpreted as threatening the negative face of the addressee, leading to the possibility to use the inclusive for self-reference with an impolite connotation (Section 5). In some languages, the inclusive can be used both for such impolite self-reference and for polite address (as discussed in Section 2). This can result in a communicative setting in which the same inclusive pronoun is used to refer to one of the speech-act participants: one participant uses the inclusive for impolite self-reference and the other participant uses the same pronoun for polite address of that participant.

Finally, a few cases are attested in which the exclusive is used as a (negative) polite kind of self-reference. This usage of the exclusive can quite straightforwardly be analysed similarly to the commonly attested polite usage of plural forms. An exclusive is a first person associative plural, which can get the meaning of a first person singular polite (Section 6).

The usage of clusivity for honorific functions is a typical phenomenon for South-east Asian languages (see Table 2). However, this prominence could very well be a result of selective descriptive practice. It is known that honorific usage of language is particularly prominent in the structure of languages in South-east Asia in general. This might lead to a greater sensitivity towards honorific usages of clusivity as well and thus to more available descriptions.

The question now remains whether these honorific uses observed exhaust the possibilities of human language, or whether it is simply by chance that I did not (yet) find any other kinds of honorific use of clusivity. First, the use of clusivity as honorific third person reference has not been attested so far. I do not see any principle reason why it should not be possible, for example, to use an exclusive as a third person honorific by using positive politeness. However, I do not know of any such case.

Second, the exclusive is only attested for polite self-reference, using a form of negative politeness (see Section 6). It is highly improbable that an exclusive will be used for other honorific usages. It will not be used for polite address, because the addressee is not part of the referential value of the exclusive. The only possibility would be an exclusive used for address with a strong kind of negative politeness, comparable to the usage of a third person for polite address (cf. Head 1978: 167–70). However, the exclusive includes (also) speaker reference, the usage of which is a face threatening act in itself (intending ‘you’ but saying ‘I’ is a highly imposing expression).

Third, I have attested one usage of clusivity that expresses impoliteness (see Section 5). However, given the right context, every expression can probably be used to

Table 2. Areal/genetic distribution of examples attested

Area/Stock	No. of examples	No. of languages
Southeast Asia/Pacific		
Austronesian	21	15
Austro-Asiatic	5	4
Dravidian	5	2
West Papuan	1	1
Others		
Tibeto-Burman	1	1
Mayan	1	1
Quechuan	1	1
Isolates	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27</b>

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Table 3. Logical possibilities and attested usages of polite inclusive

Polite Inclusive used for	Described in
First person reference with	
– Positive politeness	Section 4
– Negative politeness	Section 3
Second person reference with	
– Positive politeness	(not attested)
– Negative politeness	Section 2

be impolite. For example, it seems to be perfectly possible that an exclusive would be used as an impolite address.

Finally, there are three different polite usages of clusivity attested (see Table 3). The missing case could very well be imagined. The inclusive used for second person reference could eventually be used as a kind of positive politeness. Specifically strategy 7 as described by Brown and Levinson (1987: 119–220), “presuppose/raise/assert common ground”, argues that an inclusive should be able to function as positive polite address. By using an inclusive, both speaker and addressee are equally involved in the situation: “one speaks as if everything were shared between members” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 203). For example, if the speaker has a higher status than the addressee has, then the usage of an inclusive for address would be a strong example of positive politeness. The high status speaker lowers himself to assert a common ground with the addressee. This is in fact what happens in English (Quirk et al. 1985: 350–1) with the inclusive authorial *we* in serious writing (*As we saw in Chapter 3, . . .*) or with the doctor’s *we* (*How are we feeling today?*). Of course, English does not have a formal inclusive/exclusive opposition, but it still indicates that it might be possible to find a language in which the inclusive can be used as a kind of positively polite address.

From these theoretical possibilities, it can be inferred that there is much more conceivable in human language than I have been able to find in existing descriptive work. The real possibilities of honorific reference of clusivity are probably even more manifold than I have been able to sketch here.

### Acknowledgements

The basic work on this chapter has been conducted while I was at the Zentrum für allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS) in Berlin. Further, I thank Mixail Daniel, Laura Downing, Elena Filimonova, Frank Lichtenberk and Horst Simon and for tips and general comments on earlier versions of this chapter. Further, I thank John Peterson for help with the Munda data and Ruben van der Stoel for help with the Sulawesi data. Of course, the present content of this chapter remains completely my own responsibility.

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## Notes

1. The examples presented in this article show a strong overlap with the examples discussed by Lichtenberg (this volume). In particular, the Sections 2 and 3 in this chapter should be compared with Lichtenberg's Sections 2.3 and 2.2, respectively. He mentions more examples of the kind as discussed in this chapter, though only from Austronesian languages. Both our collections of examples had been collected separately.
2. "*ikəŋ* et *idikkəŋ* expriment généralement la notion de pluriel, (= 'nous'). . . . Le pronom *idi'*, à la première personne, signifie, semble-t-il, 'nous', mais il est également employé en tant que forme de politesse, à la 2ème personne (= 'vous'). . . . Les notions d'exclusion-inclusion ne sont pratiquement pas exprimées par la langue de la littérature Bugis traditionnelle. Parmi les pronoms de première personne, *ikəŋ*, *idikkəŋ* et *ia'* peuvent avoir une valeur exclusive."
3. "Als verklaring waarom men de eerste persoon meervoud voor beleefdheidspluralis gebruikt, zei men ons het volgende: 'Wanneer we een meerder met *ikita* aanspreken en we zeggen per ongeluk iets onaangenaams, dan kan hij niet zò gemakkelijk kwaad worden, omdat we ons zelf dan ook onder dat onaangenaams betrekken.'"
4. The following abbreviations are used in the interlinear glosses: SG - singular, PL - plural, SUBJ - subject, OBJ - object, INC - inclusive, INST - instrumental, NEG - negation, MOD - modal, MDF - modifier, TOP - topic, IND - indicative.
5. "*kami* . . . est encore utilisé pour se désigner poliment à la première personne: il estompe l'affirmation trop tranchée du *je*."
6. Deeney (1975: 5) only mentions that in Ho all dual forms can be used honorifically. He does not specify possible honorific usages of the dual exclusive.
7. Head (1978: 178) presents Auca (also known as Waorani), a yet unclassified language spoken in Ecuador, as an example of this kind. However, he misinterprets the rather difficult to interpret source. The source he used (Peeke 1973: 41) says "honorific includes dual or plural exclusive in the first person". Now, there appears to be a typo in this phrase. Instead of 'exclusive' it should read 'inclusive' (cf. Peeke 1973: 40 for some more discussion on this topic). From a different work by the same author (Peeke 1979: 52) it becomes clear that there is an inclusive (apparently without any honorific connotation) that is grouped together with some honorific forms in one paradigm because all pronouns have the same suffix, not because they are all honorific forms: 'para conservar la simetría, se incluye [el inclusivo] en la columna previamente dedicada al honorífico maternal (to retain the symmetry, the [inclusive] is included in the column previously dedicated to mother-honorifics)' (Peeke 1979: 52).

## Appendix: Survey of examples discussed

Within the lists of the various kind of honorific usages, the languages are grouped by genetic family relationship. Different families that belong to the same overarching stock are counted separately (e.g. various families within Austronesian). Some languages exhibit various kinds honorific usages of clusivity (i.e. they appear multiple times in different sections, e.g. Tamil). Such languages are counted more than once.

**Inclusive as a polite second person (see Section 2)**

Attested in 9 families, 17 languages: Muna, Konjo, Bajau, Wolio, Sa'dan, Duri, Palu (all Sula-

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wesi, Austronesian); Toba Batak, North Maluku Malay, Sulawesi Malay (all Sundic, Austronesian); Tetun (Timor, Austronesian); Malagasy (Borneo, Austronesian); Hawaiian (Polynesian, Austronesian); Ainu (Isolate); Limbu (Kiranti, Tibeto-Burman); Cuzco Quechua (Quechuan); Tamil (Dravidian).

Additional evidence attested in: Makassarese, Banggai, Tukang Besi, Coastal Saluan (all Sulawesi, Austronesian); Old Javanese (Sundic, Austronesian); Bimanese (Bima-Sumba, Austronesian).

**Inclusive as a humble first person (see Section 3)**

Attested in 3 families, 5 languages: Sawu (Bima-Sumba, Austronesian); Toba Batak, Sulawesi Malay (both Sundic, Austronesian); Duri, Palu (both Sulawesi, Austronesian).

Additional evidence attested in: Samoan, Tongan, Mae, Niuafo'ou, Nukuoro, Tuvaluan (all Polynesian, Austronesian).

**Inclusive as a bonding first person (Section 4)**

Attested in 3 families, 3 languages: Galela (West Papuan); Tzeltal (Mayan); Tamil (Dravidian).

**Inclusive as an impolite first person (see Section 5)**

Attested in 3 families, 4 languages: Santali (Munda, Austro-Asiatic); Vietnamese (Mon Khmer, Austro-Asiatic); Malayalam, Tamil (both Dravidian).

**Exclusive as a polite first person (see Section 6)**

Attested in 5 families, 7 languages: Minangkabau, Malay (both Sundic, Austronesian); Malagasy (Borneo, Austronesian); Kharia, Ho (both Munda, Austro-Asiatic); Vietnamese (Mon Khmer, Austro-Asiatic); Tamil (Dravidian).

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