

## 39.–40. Inclusive/Exclusive Forms for 'we'

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### General introduction

The distinction between an inclusive and an exclusive pronoun is a commonly attested feature of linguistic structure, yet from a Eurocentric point of view this distinction is particularly exotic. For speakers of English (or any other European language), both the inclusive and the exclusive pronouns are to be translated as *we*. The difference between the two depends on the intended meaning. An inclusive pronoun necessarily includes reference to the addressee. For example, the Mandarin inclusive pronoun *zámen* means 'we, I and you'; others can optionally be included. An exclusive pronoun, like the Mandarin pronoun *wǒmen*, excludes the addressee from the reference, resulting in a meaning like 'I and some others, but not you'.

This distinction between inclusive and exclusive is not found in any European language, nor in the languages in its wider surrounding. Because of its absence, this possibility of linguistic structure was not part of any classical linguistic analysis. Its first description dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The discovery was made by the Dominican friar Domingo de Santo Tomás, as described in his grammar of Quechua, the language of the Incas, first published in 1560. Today, the most widely spoken languages that have this distinction are found among Austronesian languages (in particular Malay and Javanese), among Dravidian languages (in particular Tamil and Telugu) and among northern varieties of Chinese.

### 39. Inclusive/Exclusive Distinction in Independent Pronouns

## 1. Definition of values

Map 39 shows the distribution of inclusive/exclusive marking in independent pronouns. The basic distinction is between dots that are coloured red, which mark those languages that have such a distinction, and dots that are coloured blue, which mark those languages that do not have an inclusive/exclusive distinction. However, the actual typology for this map is finer grained: five different types of linguistic structure are distinguished. In the following description of these types, I will use the shorthand ‘we’ for a category that subsumes the inclusive and exclusive meanings (as in the English pronoun *we*).

@	1. No grammaticalised marking at all	2
@	2. 'We' and 'I' identical	10
@	3. No inclusive/exclusive opposition	120
@	4. Only inclusive differentiated	5
@	5. Inclusive and exclusive differentiated	63
	total	200

**1.1. No grammaticalised marking at all.** Some languages simply have no basic way of expressing any ‘we’-like concept. Of course, it is possible in all languages to express such meanings, but sometimes there is no specialized means for doing so. For example, in Pirahã (Mura; Amazonas, Brazil) the only way to express a ‘we’-like meaning is by a conjunction of the pronouns for ‘I’ and ‘you’.

- (1) Pirahã (Everett 1986: 281)
- ti gíxai pí-o ahápií*  
 1.PRON 2.PRON also-OBL go  
 ‘You and I will go.’

**1.2. ‘We’ and ‘I’ are identical.** Some languages have a pronoun for expressing ‘we’, yet this pronoun is the same pronoun as is

used for expressing 'I'. For example, the following sentence from Qawasqar (Alacalufan; Chile) can mean either 'I ran yesterday' or 'we ran yesterday'. There is no way to decide from this sentence alone which meaning is intended. The context must be used to disambiguate this sentence.

(2) Qawasqar (Clairis 1985: 201)

*cecaw qjeq'ja qjenaq afxat*

1.PRON run ? PST

'We ran yesterday.' or 'I ran yesterday.'

In some languages, the pronoun for 'I' can be used for 'we' (as in Qawasqar), but this usage is uncommon. For example, in Maricopa (Yuman; Arizona) there are no specialized plural pronouns. The existing pronouns "typically [...] refer to singular entities. Eliciting overtly plural-marked pronouns is difficult and they appear to be used extremely infrequently" (Gordon 1986: 58). Languages of this type have no inclusive/exclusive distinction, so they are marked blue. However, they are marked light blue because they resemble the previous type with no marking at all (marked white).

**1.3. No inclusive/exclusive opposition.** This type is well known, as it is the type to which English and many other commonly known languages belong. In this type, there is one pronoun like English *I* and a different pronoun like English *we*, but there is no inclusive/exclusive opposition. Languages of this type are marked in dark blue.

Also included in this type are languages that distinguish a dual without an inclusive/exclusive distinction, for instance Hmong Njua (Hmong-Mien; China and Vietnam; Harriehausen 1990: 124). In Hmong Njua, there are two pronouns for 'we', but the distinction is not inclusive/exclusive but dual/plural. The pronoun *wb* is used for dual reference (precisely two

persons) and *peb* is used for plural reference (more than two persons).

**1.4. Only inclusive differentiated.** This type consists of languages that have a special pronoun for the inclusive, but the marking of the exclusive is identical to 'I'. Such a structure is exemplified in (3) by Canela–Krahô (Ge–Kaingang; Brazil). In (3a), the pronoun *wa* is used in the meaning 'I'. This same sentence could also be used for the exclusive meaning 'we (I and some others, but not you)'. However, to express the inclusive meaning 'we, you included', a different pronoun *cu* must be used, as shown in (3b).

(3) Canela–Krahô (Popjes and Popjes 1986: 175–176)

a. *wa po pupu*  
 1.PRON deer see  
 'I see a deer.'

b. *ha cu jê ne po nã cura*  
 hey INCL relative and deer ART kill  
 'Hey, relative, let's go and kill a deer.'

Languages of this type have an inclusive/exclusive distinction which, however, is not fully differentiated lexically, so they are marked light red on the map. There is a clear asymmetry in the structure of the world's languages in that this combination exclusive + 'I' does exist (though it is rare), but that the combination inclusive + 'I' does not exist.

**1.5. Inclusive and exclusive are differentiated.** The final type distinguished on this map consists of those languages with specialized pronouns for both inclusive and exclusive reference. This is found, for instance, in Chamorro (Austronesian; Guam). The pronoun for 'I' is *hu*, the inclusive pronoun is *ta* and the exclusive pronoun is *in* (Topping 1973: 106–108). This type is marked dark red on the map.

There are many languages included in this type that also mark dual number in their pronouns. The basic and most common way to mark duality is exemplified in (4) by the pronouns from Lavukaleve (Solomons East Papuan; Solomon Islands). A special dual pronoun exists both for the inclusive and for the exclusive, both marked by a suffix *-l*.

(4) Lavukaleve (Terrill 2003: 170)

<i>ngai</i>	‘I’
<i>el</i>	‘exclusive, exactly two’
<i>e</i>	‘exclusive, more than two’
<i>mel</i>	‘inclusive, exactly two’
<i>me</i>	‘inclusive, more than two’

Another strategy is to mark duality only in the inclusive (Plank 1996: 130–131). In such paradigms, the dual inclusive aligns structurally with the singular pronouns, yet strictly speaking it is of course not singular in reference. The term **minimal inclusive** is used to refer to such a dual inclusive. Paradigms with a dual only in the inclusive are known as **minimal-augmented** structures (Thomas 1955). This lexical structure is exemplified in (5) by the pronouns from Southern Sierra Miwok (Penutian; California).

(5) Southern Sierra Miwok (Broadbent 1964: 93)

<i>kan·i</i>	‘I’
<i>mah·i</i>	‘exclusive, two or more’
<i>?oti·me</i>	‘inclusive, exactly two’
<i>?otic·i</i>	‘inclusive, more than two’

The opposite distribution of duality – dual in the exclusive but not in the inclusive – exists among the world’s languages, but it is extremely rare (Cysouw 2003: 221–222). In the present sample it is attested in the pronouns from Yagua (Peba–Yaguan; Peru; Payne and Payne 1990: 369–370). Just as exotic is the

division attested in Gooniyandi (Bunaban; Australia). Here the inclusive dual is expressed by the same pronoun as the exclusive, *ngidi*, but is different from the inclusive plural *yaadi* (McGregor 1990: 167–173). There are more cases like this among the world's language, but not many (Cysouw 2003: 93).

Finally, some languages with trial ('exactly three') or paucal ('a few') marking in the inclusive and the exclusive are also included in this type. Trial or paucal marking only occurs among Austronesian languages, but within this linguistic stock it is rather widespread. For example, in the present sample it is found in Paamese (Oceanic; Vanuatu; Crowley 1982: 80).

A special variant of trial marking are pronouns that only distinguish a trial in the inclusive, but not in the exclusive. This is analysed as an extension of the minimal–augmented pattern in (5), adding a category in between 'minimal' and 'augmented' known as **unit–augmented** (McKay 1978). This structure is attested almost exclusively in northern Australia (cf. Cysouw 2003: 232–236). In the present sample this type is attested in Mangarrayi (Merlan 1982: 102).

## 2. Geographical distribution

In general, the inclusive/exclusive distinction is rather uncommon in Africa and Eurasia. There is no distinction in any language in Europe and its wider surroundings. The nearest cases are a few languages in the Caucasus. The distinction is also relatively uncommon in Africa. In Asia, the Dravidian and the Munda languages have an inclusive/exclusive distinction, although the Dravidian language Kannada in the present sample has lost the distinction under the influence of the neighbouring Indo–Aryan languages. In northeast Asia there might be an area with an inclusive/exclusive distinction, as exemplified here by Evenki, Ainu and Nivkh. Originally part of this cluster, Khalkha (Mongolian) has lost the distinction, while the northern dialects of Chinese have acquired the distinction. There is an interesting

predominance of languages that do not differentiate ‘I’ from ‘we’ in Southeast Asia. It is rather common in this area for languages not to mark number at all, or to mark it only optionally (cf. chapter 34).

Off the Asian mainland, the inclusive/exclusive distinction is regularly attested. This is mainly due to the Austronesian languages and the non-Pama-Nyungan languages of northern Australia. In both groups, almost all languages have the distinction. In contrast, it is rather uncommon among the non-Austronesian (“Papuan”) languages of New Guinea. Among the Pama-Nyungan languages of Australia the distinction is roughly evenly divided (see next section).

In the Americas, there are about as many languages with an inclusive/exclusive distinction as without it. There seems to be no clear areal division between the two types here. Interestingly, the minor types (lightly coloured) are relatively common throughout the Americas.

### 3. Pama-Nyungan: a showcase for areality

There are no clear worldwide patterns in the distribution of the inclusive/exclusive opposition. The few patterns that are attested appear to be on a smaller scale. To exemplify the smaller scale, I carried out an in-depth investigation of the areal distribution of the inclusive/exclusive opposition among the Pama-Nyungan languages from Australia, as presented in Map 39A.

@	1.	No inclusive/ exclusive opposition	31
@	2.	Inclusive and exclusive differentiated	40
		total	71

**Values for Map 39A.** Inclusive/Exclusive Forms in Pama-Nyungan

[Map 39A about here]

The Pama–Nyungan stock covers Australia almost completely. Only in northern Australia are there languages which are not part of this stock, commonly called non–Pama–Nyungan (these languages are not included in this map). The Pama–Nyungan languages originally did not have an inclusive/exclusive opposition, although many Pama–Nyungan languages have developed it (Dixon 1980: 334–336).

Concerning the distribution of the inclusive/exclusive distinction among the Pama–Nyungan languages, Dixon (1980: 335) claimed that “there is no regularity to the distribution – languages of both types are found in every quarter of the continent.” However, as can be seen from the distribution in Map 39A, there are clear areas with languages that have an inclusive/exclusive distinction, and areas without. First, and most prominent, the whole area that borders on the non–Pama–Nyungan languages has developed an inclusive/exclusive distinction. In Western Australia, this area extends roughly to the 22<sup>nd</sup> parallel of latitude, as claimed by O’Grady et al. (1966: 104–105). At some time in the past, this area extended through central Australia downwards into southern Australia; currently, however, this connection has been interrupted because the Central and Southern Arandic languages have recently lost the inclusive/exclusive distinction (Koch 1997). Southeastern Australia appears to be a separate area with an inclusive/exclusive distinction. However, the situation is not completely clear, partly because there is not that much known about these languages.

The areal patterns are stronger than the genetic bonds among the Pama–Nyungan languages. For example, most languages of the Paman family in Cape York have an inclusive/exclusive distinction, except for the two southernmost languages Ngawun and Mbabaram; these border on the Maric

and Galgadungic families, which do not have an inclusive/exclusive distinction.

## 40. Inclusive/Exclusive Distinction in Verbal Inflection

### 1. Introduction

The inclusive/exclusive opposition is a distinction which marks two different forms that are both to be translated into English as *we*. The inclusive ‘we’ is used if the addressee is included in the reference; it means something like ‘you and I (and possibly others)’. In contrast, the exclusive ‘we’ is used if the addressee is *not* included in the reference. This form of ‘we’ means something like ‘I and others (not you)’.

Map 40 shows the distribution of the inclusive/exclusive distinction in verbal inflection. This map is related to the previous Map 39, which shows the distribution of the inclusive/exclusive distinction in independent pronouns. However, there are languages that do not show the same inclusive/exclusive patterning in their independent pronouns and in their verbal inflection. About 50% of the languages investigated here show the same type in both situations. Another 40% simply have no verbal inflection for person at all, so the question as to any inclusive/exclusive distinction becomes irrelevant. A final 10% show different marking in pronouns and verbal inflection. This is exemplified by Ngiti (Nilo-Saharan; Democratic Republic of Congo), as shown in (1). The independent pronouns distinguish *ma* (‘I’) from exclusive *mà* and from inclusive *a/è* (tone is a distinctive feature here). However, the verbal prefixes do not distinguish between ‘I’ and exclusive ‘we’, which are both marked by a prefix *m-*.

(1) Ngiti (Kutsch Lojenga 1994: 220–221)

a.	<i>ma</i>	<i>m-òdzǎ</i>
	1SG.PRON	1-cry

- 'I cry.'
- b. *mà*            *m-òdzř*  
 EXCL.PRON    1-cry  
 'We (exclusive) cry.'
- c. *alè*            *k-òdzř*  
 INCL.PRON    INCL-cry  
 'We (inclusive) cry.'

## 2. Definition of values

The definitions of the values that are distinguished in this map are almost identical to the definitions of the values used in the previous map:

@	1.	No person marking at all	70
@	2.	'We' and 'I' identical	12
@	3.	No inclusive/exclusive opposition	79
@	4.	Only inclusive differentiated	9
@	5.	Inclusive and exclusive differentiated	30
		total	200

The reader is referred to the text that accompanies the previous map for a detailed description of the various values. There are two small – but significant – differences in the definitions as used for this map.

First, when the inflection is distributed over two different morphological "slots" then I have only included the marking as found in the one slot that marks at least an opposition between 'I' and 'you'. In most cases, the other slot marks plural number, which I have ignored in this map. This is exemplified in (2) by Passamaquoddy–Maliseet (Algonquian; Maine and New Brunswick). In this language, there are person/number prefixes and suffixes. Together, these affixes distinguish 'I' from exclusive and from inclusive. However, the suffixes turn out only to appear in the plural, so they look like plural markers (which I

ignore). In the prefixes, there is no distinction between the marking for 'I' and the marking for exclusive, which are both marked with the prefix *n-*. There is a different prefix *k-*, which marks for inclusive. This implies that this language is classified as "only inclusive differentiated".

(2) Passamaquoddy–Maliseet (Leavitt 1996: 9)

- a. *n-tíhin*  
1-have  
'I have it.'
- b. *n-tíhin-èn*  
EXCL-have-1 PL  
'We (exclusive) have it.'
- c. *k-tíhin-èn*  
INCL-have-1 PL  
'We (inclusive) have it.'

Second, on this map, white means that there is no person marking at all in the verbal inflection of the language. For example, a language like Mandarin does not have any person marking at all on its verbs, so it is marked white here.

This definition of the value "no person marking" is closely related to value 1 from chapter 102. However, the definitions are slightly different, which causes some languages to be coded differently on the two maps. In some languages, the marking of person is neither an obligatory part of the verb (as in Latin), nor is it completely absent (as in Mandarin). Such in-between cases represent stages in a transition from no person inflection towards full person inflection. For the present typology, a (rather arbitrary) division of this continuum had to be made. The basic criterion that has been used is whether the person marking, when it is marked, occurs bound onto the main verb or not. This implies that languages with so-called clitic pronouns are included if the pronouns cliticize onto the main verb. This is exemplified in (3) by Yagua (Peba–Yaguan; Peru). The

independent pronoun *ráy* in (3a) is identical to the verbal proclitic in (3b). These proclitics are not obligatorily used. However, when they appear, they cliticise onto the main verb. Such verbal clitics are taken as cases of verbal inflection in this map.

(3) Yagua (Payne and Payne 1990: 367, 370)

- a. *ráy*                    *juváay*  
 1SG.PRON    do/work/make  
 'I'm working.'
- b. *ray=púúchiy*            *sa-dee-tu*  
 1SG=lead/carry    3SG-child-F  
 'I carry/lead his daughter.'

However, there are also languages that have clitic pronouns which do not cliticize onto the verb, but occur in a fixed position in the syntactic structure. For example, in Ngiyambaa (Pama-Nyungan; New South Wales, Australia; Donaldson 1980) pronouns can optionally cliticise onto the first word of the sentence, whatever that word may be. Such clitics are not included in this map as verbal inflection, so this language is coded as "no person marking".

A second type of person marking that is not included as inflectional marking is exemplified by Hindi in (4). In Hindi, the person features are marked on a verbal auxiliary, not on the main verb. Languages which consistently use such periphrastic constructions are coded as "no person marking" on this map.

(4) Hindi (McGregor 1995: 20)

- a. *maim̐*            *calt-ā*            *hūm̐*  
 1SG.PRON    go-SG            1SG.AUX  
 'I go.'
- b. *ham*            *calt-e*            *haim̐*  
 1PL.PRON    go-PL            1PL.AUX  
 'We go'.

### 3. Geographical distribution

The inclusive/exclusive distinction in verbal inflection is uncommon in Africa and Eurasia; only sporadic cases are attested. In contrast, it is regularly attested in the Pacific. A group of Austronesian languages around New Guinea have an inclusive/exclusive distinction in their verbal inflection. However, the languages from mainland New Guinea itself do not have the distinction on verbs. The non-Pama-Nyungan languages in northern Australia constitute another clear region in which the languages have an inflectional inclusive/exclusive distinction. The Americas are particularly interesting because all five values are attested frequently, including those values that are rare world-wide. However, areally there does not appear to be any regularity within the Americas. All five values occur throughout the continent without any typologically uniform areas.