

REEXAMINING THE STATUS OF INCLUSIVE PRONOUNS

The main goal of this talk is to test the hypothesis that inclusive person is not a type of 1st person using a new pronoun database. While typology of pronouns has been thoroughly discussed in the literature (Forchheimer 1953, Cysouw 2001, Daniel 2005 and others), most of these studies rely on custom private databases that are not accessible to the rest of the research community with few exceptions (cf. Noval Smith's database of Free Personal Pronouns and Simon Greenhill's developing database). We are also constructing a pronoun database (to be made public) with the ultimate goal of exploring a number of hypotheses about the structure of morphological primitives underlying pronominal distinctions and more generally constraints on morphological paradigms. As a first step, we use this database to look at the status of inclusive pronouns.

Our database is built by assigning languages and genera from WALS to 6 geographical areas of Dryer (1989), then picking 40 random genera for each region (the smallest number of genera in any region) and 2 random languages from each genus. Due to the fact that some genera only have one language, and some languages listed in WALS are close dialects, as well as the fact that we could not find resources for some languages, the final target was reduced to 64 languages per area. This yielded a final sample of 384 languages, of which 221 have been documented so far. The database lists both free and bound pronouns (including clitics and pronominal affixes on the verbs.)

The traditional view is that inclusive and exclusive are types of 1st person plural, which are neutralized in many languages to yield the English-style "we." Contrary to this view, Daniel (2005) argues that only exclusive is a true 1st person plural in languages that mark clusivity, while inclusive is a distinct person all-together as different from the exclusive as 2nd person. If the traditional view is right, we would expect to see languages in which inclusive has a clear morphological relation to 1st person singular or to 1st person exclusive. This expectation is not born out in Daniel's sample of "not quite 100 inclusive languages" (a subset of the WALS sample). He finds only one language in which inclusive is related to 1st singular (but not 2nd person) and two languages in which exclusive is derived from the inclusive. This fact, Daniel says, is in sharp contrast with the 1st person plural formation: about 20% of languages from the 250 WALS languages derive the 1st person plural from the 1st person singular. However, these 20% include both languages that mark clusivity and those that do not. Arguably, a better comparison would be to limit attention only to languages that mark clusivity and see how many of them show a morphological relation between 1st singular and inclusive (with exclusive patterning independently or being derived from the inclusive) vs. those in which exclusive is derived from 1st singular (with inclusive patterning independently or being derived from the exclusive). This is the comparison we undertake examining the sample of 77 languages with inclusives (from the 221 languages currently in our database).

Although our sample is smaller than the one used by Daniel, we find 4 languages in which inclusive appears to be derived from 1st singular with exclusive being independent or sharing a root with the inclusive and 1st singular. In one more language, exclusive is derived from the inclusive, but is not obviously related to 1st singular. We also find one language with a so-called "singular inclusive," in which there are two morphologically singular 1st persons — inclusive and exclusive and the plural forms are derived from them respectively. Three more languages derive inclusives from 1st singular by combining them with a 2nd person morpheme. Looking at exclusives, we find 8 languages in which exclusive is related to 1st singular with inclusive being

independent, and 2 languages in which inclusive is derived from exclusive. We conclude that this data from a balanced sample does not provide sufficient evidence to warrant a conclusion that inclusive is not a type of a 1st person while exclusive is.

Overall, just as others have found, we find that in the majority of cases there are no discernible morphological relationships between pronouns, including 1st person pronouns. In the few languages that show such relationships, although it is more likely that 1st singular serves as the base for exclusive non-singular than for inclusive non-singular, the reverse pattern is nevertheless attested, possibly not as rare as thought before, and likely non-accidental. One possibility is that languages that mark clusivity differ in whether inclusive or exclusive is the default. When exclusive is the default, inclusives are independent or derived via combinations with 2nd person morphemes or inclusivizers. When inclusive person is the default, exclusive is derived from it or is independent. In these latter rare languages, inclusives will have a speaker-only interpretation in the singular (presumably due to greater prominence of speakers over listeners) if in this language morphological singularity corresponds to singleton sets. In the presence of plural morphology inclusives will be interpreted as expected, i.e. including both speakers and listeners. Languages of this type in which morphological singularity corresponds to some other semantic primitive (e.g., minimality as in Noyer’s 1992 proposal for Winnebago), will display two different 1st persons: inclusive and exclusive, each of which can be used for deriving plural forms as in Ngankikurungkurr. What about languages that do not mark clusivity? These only mark the presence/absence of a speaker, and though they look similar to the languages in which the default 1st person is exclusive, they are not identical to them since they do not have a secondary specification for inclusion/exclusion of a listener.

TABLE 1 Languages with 1(sg) → incl, incl → excl., or both + 1 language with sing. incl.

Language info	Pattern	Comments	Reference
Panare (Caribbean, South-America)	1(sg) → incl(du) → incl(pl) “me” = ju; “me+you” = ju-to “me+you+others” = ju-ta-kon excl.pl = “ana”	-kon is a pl. suffix seen in other persons, -to/ta is not associated with 2nd person pronoun. Exclusive patterns with singulars in possessive prefixes.	Payne (2013)
Puquina, (Puquina, South America)	1(sg) → incl(pl) “me” = ni; “me+you” = “ni-tʃ” excl.pl. = seŋ	-tʃ is a pl. suffix seen in all other persons except exclusive	Aguiló (2000)
Tojolabal (Maayan, North America)	1(sg) → incl(pl) → excl(pl) keʔn-a → keʔn-tik → keʔn-tik-on	-on is likely an exclusiviser	Furbee-Losee (1976)
Amuzgo (Amuzgoan, North America)	1(sg), incl(pl), and excl(pl) share the same segmental stem but differ in tone	2nd and 3 person are segmentally different from 1st person and across number	Stewart & Stewart (2000)
Tübatulabal (Tübatulabal, North America)	incl(du) → excl(du) ɪŋgila → ɪŋgila-ʔaŋ	There’s an unexplained gap for pl.exclusive in the grammar	Voegelin (1935)
Ngankikurungkurr (Southern Daly, Australia)	incl(sg/du) → incl(pl); najin → najin nime excl(sg) → excl(pl), excl(du) ŋaji → ŋagurr, ŋagarri	incl(sg) has no expected plural or dual affixes and in prefixal form combines with sg. forms of the verb.	Hoddinott and Kofod (1998)