This is to Say You're either In or Out: Some Remarks on Clusivity

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Abstract

This paper aims at contributing to the general understanding of the way linguistic indicators of inclusion and exclusion operate in political discourse. Clusivity, a fairly recent phenomenon comprising various linguistic means of expressing inclusionary and exclusionary reference to the actors presented in a discursive representation of reality, rests on at least two conceptualisation schemata: a) that of a container, with its elements inside, outside, and somewhere near the borderline, and b) centre-periphery, with the elements being manoeuvred inwards and outwards (Wieczorek 2009). Social groups themselves are structured in terms of the container metaphor, having a boundary, a centre, and areas inside and outside. The speaker may intentionally impose boundaries demarcating 'us' and 'them' territories along three complementary and overarching dimensions (i.e. spatial, temporal and axiological), all of which are metaphorically conceptualised in terms of space. Time bears spatial properties of length and front-back orientation and axiological relations closeness and remoteness (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Cognitive processes involved in clusivity comprehension induce the addressee to locate various discourse elements inside and outside the deictic centre. This anchor point for conceptualisations, from its very nature, is largely dependent on 'cognitive frames that embody conventional shared understandings of the structure of society, groups and relations with other societies' (Chilton 2004: 56). Therefore metaphors are employed as both devices of intrinsic reason about the location of actors with relation to the deictic centre and underlying frames for the speaker's linguistic choices.

Keywords: Political discourse, clusivity, deictic centre, distanciation, point-of-view operations

1. Introduction

Clusivity as a fairly recent phenomenon has been subject to studies in morphology, syntax, semantics, and, only to some extent, pragmatics and cognitivism (Cysouw 2005a, b, c; Filimonowa 2005, Adetunji 2006, Wieczorek 2008, 2009a, b). The publications suggest different, sometimes partially opposing, definitions of the notion. Initially, clusivity was defined narrowly as inclusion and exclusion marked in the first person plural, i.e. inclusive 'we' expressing belongingness and exclusive 'we' expressing lack of belongingness or rejection. Chilton claims, for example, that the use of the first person plural (we, us, our) 'induce[s] interpreters to conceptualise group

identity, coalitions, parties, and the like, either as insiders or as outsiders' (2004: 56). Further studies concern clusivity expressed in the first person both plural and singular and treat it as a general phenomenon encompassing linguistic forms expressing inclusive and exclusive reference by means of the first person (see e.g. Cysouw 2005c, Simon 2005). The first and third person (both plural and singular) are now taken into consideration in clusivity-oriented studies:

> Semantically, an inclusive refers to both first and second person, so it could just as well be analysed as a kind of second person. An exclusive refers to both first and third person and could thus just as well be considered a third person. (Cysouw 2005b: 73)

The majority of papers on clusivity are limited to studying the use of: plural and singular pronouns (see e.g. Cysouw 2005a, b, c, Simon 2005), honorifics (see e.g. Cysouw 2005a), deictic expressions (see e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987, Adetunji 2006), as well as imperatives (see e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987, Dobrushina and Goussev 2005). Filimonova (2005), however, treats clusivity in a more general manner, as a term that covers both inclusion and exclusion. In this paper, the notion is defined as a general phenomenon which includes a number of linguistic forms by means of which the speaker communicates (lack of) belongingness of chosen notions/actors in political discourse.

Cameron sees the social as an integral part of a linguistic analysis and defines it as: (a) factors referring to an action performed minimally by two people; and (b) the use of language linked to the speaker's identity and 'involved in the expression of ideology' (2007: 3). However, as I see it, the speaker holds a certain amount of authority over the addressees and control over the speech, as a representation of the world. Berger and Luckmann, however, differentiate between two types of socialisation: primary and secondary. The first is '[the] socialisation an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society,' while the latter refers to 'any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society' (1967: 130). With regards to clusivity enacted in discourse, primary socialisation is somewhat presupposed and rarely undergoes any modification, while secondary socialisation is deliberately worked on, or rather (re)shaped, by the speaker in pursuit of the attainment of a certain goal, increasing or decreasing the level of shared membership in a particular group. In other words, the speaker has some influence on the degree of proximity and distance between in-group members and out-group members. The excerpts used in this paper for illustrative purposes have been selected from a corpus of approximately 70 pre-election speeches delivered by Senator Barack Obama between 10th February 2007, the announcement of his candidacy for the presidency of the US, and 4th November 2008, the day of his election.

2. Metaphorical Foundations and the Deictic Centre

If clusivity should be treated as a term to account for linguistic forms which express inclusion and exclusion of chosen discourse elements, each of these

elements has to be assumed to occupy a particular position in relation to the speaker. Thus, clusivity in discourse rests on at least two conceptualisation schemata: that of a container, having its elements inside, outside and near the borderline and that of centre-periphery, with elements being manoeuvred inwards and outwards. Such discursive representation of reality depends, to a large extent, on pragmacognitive strategies employed by the speaker, some of which shall be discussed in this paper.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, 'we conceive of ourselves as being here rather than there, [...] now rather than then' (1980: 132), and by extension, as belonging to us rather than them. Moreover, depending on the speaker's purposes, s/he, in communicating a message, as well as the addressees in the process of comprehension of the message, may impose 'artificial boundaries' that mirror, in a metaphorical sense, the way physical entities (both inanimate and animate) are bounded by their surface:

> Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces, [as] there are few human instincts more basic than territoriality. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 29)

Marking off the territory is thus a way of comprehending the structure of any socio-ideological group, though they are sometimes constructed artificially for the attainment of the speaker's macro/micro-goals. The way clusivity operates in political discourse seems to be coherent with me-first orientation theory (Cooper and Ross 1975) and therefore 'the word whose meaning is nearest comes first'.

To discuss cognitive mechanisms behind clusivity in more detail, it is necessary to define a framework for the conceptualisation of political discourse, which is oriented around the notion of 'deictic centre'. The deictic centre is the anchor point for conceptualisation of the speaker's incoming messages (Cap 2006). Usually, the speaker is in the focal position in relation to the remaining discourse elements, namely actors and notions generated by the addresses in the process of comprehension. Other discourse elements both inside and outside the centre occupy different positions on three axes, which stem from the deictic centre itself: (a) on the spatial axis according to their physical/geopolitical location or their physical effect on the addressees, (b) on the temporal axis according to their historical location, and (c) on the axiological axis according to the values and ideology they represent.

The spatiotemporal and ideological location of particular actors and notions in relation to the deictic centre is dependent to a great extent on the speaker and results naturally from 'the inherent asymmetry between the speaker and the addressee' (Cysouw 2005: 13). The asymmetry is expressed directly by the speaker's control over the speech situation as opposed to virtual lack of such control on the part of the addressees. The speaker frequently presents events from her/his point of view and so is unlikely to locate her/himself outside the deictic centre, which affects the way addressees conceptualise incoming messages. The speaker is therefore capable of creating a representation of the self (as a trustworthy and potent leader), as well as of the remaining actors placing them either inside or outside the deictic centre in particular spatial, historical and socio-ideological circumstances. Thus, human discourse

elements, i.e. political actors (including the addressees), assume various roles: (a) partners (so called 'we') located, along with the speaker, in the deictic centre, (b) adversaries (so called 'them') located outside the deictic centre, and (c) potential partners/adversaries located on the boundary.

The addressees' values and ideologies bear primary importance in discussing linguistic means of expressing inclusion and exclusion. According to Chilton, processes of comprehension rest with group interests:

> It is shared perceptions of values that defines political associations. And the human endowment for language has the function of indicating – i.e. signifying, communicating – what is deemed, according to such shared perceptions, to be advantageous or not, by implication to the group, and what is deemed right and wrong within that group. (2004: 5)

Therefore the meaning recovered by the addressees is tacitly 'negotiated' and 'agreed upon' within a particular group (of addressees) on the basis of shared knowledge and dominant ideologies. In other words, interpretation depends on the addressees' common perception of extra-linguistic structure of the society, socio-ideological groups and relations between them (Chilton 2004). Since groups differ in defining what is beneficial and what is deleterious to them, the identities and ideologies of given groups are 'presupposed during or exist prior to [any] interactions' (Cameron 2007: 6).

2.1. Spatialisation

As has been mentioned above, the deictic centre is characterised by three inseparable dimensions related to physical, historical and socio-ideological localisation of discourse elements. Irrefutably, there is some kind of correlation between the notions of time and space. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) noticed that the concept of time in English is organised in two contradictory manners: a) most frequently, with the future in front and the past behind (e.g. weeks ahead of us), and b) with the future behind and the past in front (e.g. the following hours). Such double conceptualisation of time leads to the co-occurrence of the two time metaphors. This stems from the fact that time is comprehended both as a moving object and a stationary entity. Time is thus structured in terms of space (TIME IS SPACE), as the experience of space is one of basic human experiences, e.g. in such fixed phrases as 'going back in time,' 'distant time,' 'we're at a point when,' 'it's all behind us,' etc. Time is thus 'understood almost entirely in metaphorical terms' via spatialisation (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 118). We conceptualise all discursive elements as bearing spatial properties like length (for time) and closeness/remoteness (for ideology).

The experience of space may, on rare occasions, be comprehended in terms of time (SPACE IS TIME), e.g. 'it's ten minute's way from here'. However, space is more basic to human conceptualisation and is rooted firmly in 'the experience of containment and boundary setting' (Chilton 2004: 52). Socio-ideological groups are structured in terms of the container metaphor with boundaries, a centre, and areas inside and outside. According to Lakoff and Johnson, people conceive of themselves as entities contained within a surface, having an inside and an outside. Other entities are conceptualised as separate 'containers'. Crucially, however, if concepts 'have no distinct boundaries,' then

boundaries are projected upon them in a more or less artificial way (1980: 58). Hence, the GROUPS ARE CONTAINERS metaphor may capture how socio-ideological groups are conceptualised.

Socio-ideological distance between the speaker and the addressees, along with the control the speaker holds over the speech situation, are key factors for comprehension of clusivity-driven political discourse. It depends heavily on the asymmetry between the speaker and the addresses. Explicit as well as implicit indications of clusivity affect the way identities of particular actors/groups are conceptualised, which fosters categorisation of various discourse elements as belonging to the deictic centre or excluded from it. Such categorisation is 'primarily [the addressees'] means of comprehending the world' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 122).

2.2. Clusivity scales

The location of discourse elements on the three axes mentioned above may be represented by means of clusivity scales, and can be described in terms of [+proximal] and [+distal] features and arranged into 'zones'. Particular discourse elements are placed on the scales in relation to other elements. The positions of elements is relative rather than absolute since their exact location depends to a large extent on the addressees' own knowledge. The excerpt below, which illustrates locations of discourse elements on spatial, temporal and axiological scales, has been taken from Barack Obama's speech delivered on 18th March 2008. As with the majority of his speeches, Obama presents himself as a person of multicultural and multiethnic background, and thus deeply rooted in American history. The speaker claims a common point of view with the addressees, i.e. various ethnic groups, to create a representation of a bond between them and stress mutual understanding:

> (1)
> I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a white grandfather who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas. I've gone to some of the best schools in America and lived in one of the world's poorest nations. I am married to a black American who carries within her the blood of slaves and slaveowners – an inheritance we pass on to our two precious daughters. I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

The distribution of various elements is dependent on the speaker's goals – in this case, positive self presentation. The speaker presents himself as an insider sharing a point of view and values with other entities located in the deictic centre. In the spatial dimension, the elements are located on the scale on the basis of their geopolitical position. Thus, the speaker is located at the central point of the deictic centre where the three axes intersect. In such circumstances, 'I/we-here' indicators enable the speaker to present the events from a point of view shared with other actors who belong to the deictic centre:

Figure 1. The spatial scale – a representation of discourse elements from excerpt (1) in the spatial dimension.
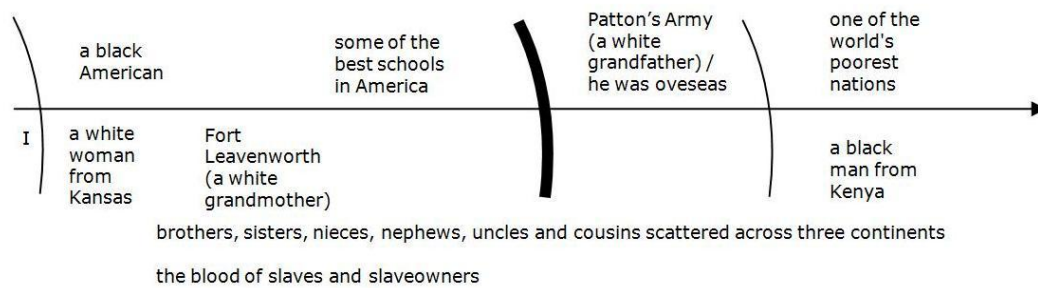
The geopolitical location of particular entities above affects the position they occupy in the discursive representation. Those in 'Kansas,' 'Fort Leavenswoth' and 'America' undeniably belong to the deictic centre in the spatial dimension. In the process of inference formation the addressees locate the notions represented by the phrases 'the blood of slaves and slaveowners' and partially by 'brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins scattered across three continents' inside the centre. Similarly, by means of implicit messages whose recovery depends on the number of premises available to the addressees, the notions and political actors represented by 'Patton's Army,' 'Kenya,' and 'one of the world's poorest nations' occupy positions in the spatial dimension outside fo the deictic centre.

In the temporal dimension, however, the same elements are placed on the temporal scale on the basis of their historical location. The 'I/we-now' indicators facilitate the speaker's representation of the discourse events from a point of view he shares with the addressees:

Figure 2. The temporal scale – a representation of discourse elements from excerpt (1) in the temporal dimension.
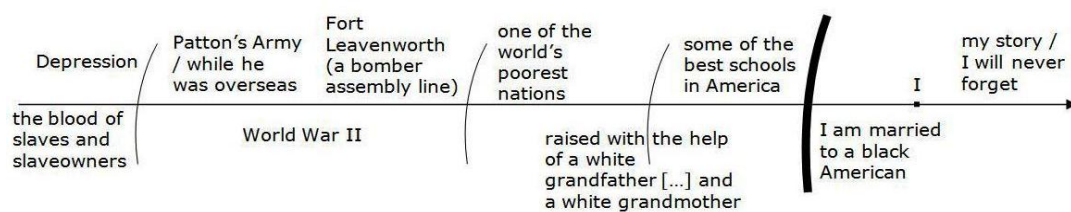
The temporal location of particular notions and actors also facilitates a representation of past, present and future events as more distant from the deictic centre. In the excerpt in question, biographical elements are located chronologically. Their localisation in the first two 'zones' outside the deictic centre can vary depending on the addressees' premises, however all representations will uphold high level of similarity, as in his pre-election speeches Barack Obama frequently mentioned his socio-ideological background. Thus, the marriage with Michelle Robinson is located inside the deictic centre, while the time spent at Harvard Law School, Columbia

University at New York and Occidental University at Los Angeles outside. Further outside the deictic centre is the period when a ten-year-old Obama lived with his mother and her husband in Jakarta ('one of the world's poorest countries'), and finally his return to the United States to live with his mother's parents ('white grandmother,' 'white grandfather'). The following zone on the temporal scale contains the periods of World War II and, further on, slavery in the US. Obviously, it is impossible to separate indicators 'I/we-here' from 'I/we-now' or pinpoint the exact historical location of a given discourse element irrespective of its physical/geopolitical location in relation to the deictic centre, as well as the remaining elements.

The axiological aspect in a particular discourse situation is not as inseparable as the two aspects mentioned above, however, it complements them fully. Since discourse elements are located on the axiological scale according to their values and the dominant ideology, the axiological dimension is crucial for clusivity-oriented studies in political discourse and affects, to a great extent, the final location of chosen actors/notions in or outside the centre. As in the previous cases, the speaker is located at the intersection of the three axes, however, the 'I/we' indicator comprises a far wider spectrum of meanings: 'I/we = our values = our ideology' in opposition to 'they = their values = their ideology.' Thus, in the axiological dimension, the speaker presents particular events from his point of view, as well as from the point of view of the actors belonging to the deictic centre. The elements from excerpt (1) are distributed on the axiological scale as follows:

Figure 3. The axiological scale – a representation of discourse elements from excerpt (1) in the axiological dimension.
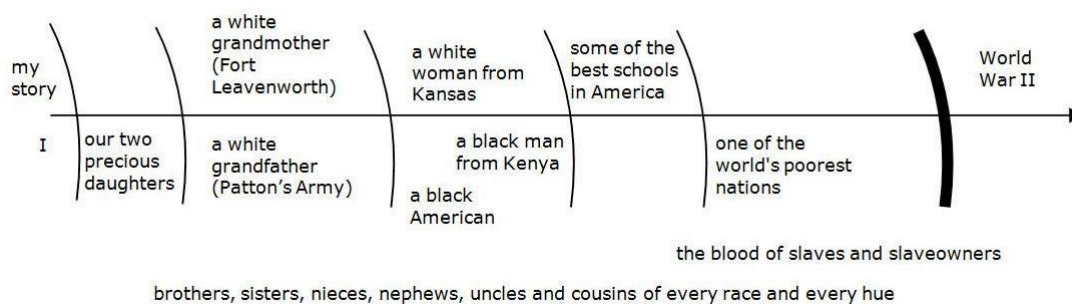
World War II, as a concept which represents opposing values to those inside the deictic centre, is placed outside the centre. The actors and notions representing the values and ideology of the deictic centre, on the other hand, are located inside. In this case, the speaker implicitly claims common ground with the addressees from a variety of racial, social, ideological and cultural backgrounds by means of a number of lexemes (e.g. 'black' and 'white' in this instance). The localisation of discourse elements in different zones of belongingness is directly influenced by the speaker's aim, i.e. creating a positive image of the self as a person of multicultural and multiracial background and thus deeply-rooted in American history.

Each discourse element may be located differently on the three axes, e.g. spatially and temporally the lexeme 'Patton's Army' is placed outside, however, axiologically it belongs to the deictic centre. The final position of a given discourse element is then the sum of its three locations, i.e. the point lies at the intersection of three lines parallel to each of the axes and going through the points representing the spatial, temporal and axiological locations of this particular discourse element.

3. Distanciation and Point-of-view Operations

The location the speaker assigns to particular discourse elements is by no means final. The initial position may be modified by a number of pragma-cognitive strategies. Distanciation, one of such strategies I shall discuss in the present paper, is used to convince the addressee that: (a) the actions taken are legitimate, generate positive effects or counteract unwanted and potentially harmful ones; (b) the speaker is a competent, efficient and powerful leader; and (c) elements outside the deictic centre constitute ideologically opposing entities with a potential to threaten the elements inside the deictic centre. It refers to the speaker's manner of relocating chosen discourse elements inside the deictic centre, as well as those outside the deictic centre, outwards. Thus, particular entities are presented as receding or fading away and gradually becoming remote spatially, temporally and, most importantly, ideologically.

Distanciation operates along the three axes stemming from the deictic centre – the framework for conceptualisation of clusivity. In its spatial dimension, the strategy enables the speaker to present a concept located inside/outside the deictic centre as receding, which brings about either beneficial or harmful/threatening results for the addressees. In its temporal dimension, on the other hand, a receding past or present event, as a remote entity, does not affect the present or future situation. On some occasions, however, temporal distanciation may indicate that the addressees' expectations towards the future are gradually less attainable, i.e. they are receding from the deictic centre. Finally, in the axiological dimension, elements from outside the deictic centre representing opposing values and ideology are receding, which either minimises any potential conflict or constitutes a potential threat widening the ideological gap. Theoretically, elements from inside the centre may also undergo axiological distanciation, yet no such instances occurr in the corpus used in this study.

The following excerpt, which illustrates the way distanciation operates, has been selected from Barack Obama's 18th March speech mentioned before. I have italicised those fragments I take to represent distanciation markers:

> (2)
> This is where *we* are right now. It's *a racial stalemate we've been stuck in for years*. Contrary to the claims of *some of my critics*, black and white, *I* have never been so naive as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy – particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own. But *I* have asserted a firm conviction – a conviction rooted in my faith in *the American people* – that working *together we can move beyond* some of our old racial wounds, and [...] continue on the path of a more perfect union.

Racial division within the society is presented in a series of assertive speech acts, which, by their very nature, are hardly deniable. Distanciation facilitates the speaker's attempt to 'remove' negative representation past situations (i.e. racial and economic issues), as well as present situations from the deictic centre by means of the entailment in 'together we can move beyond.' Moreover, using 'we' instead of 'American people' and 'I,' as he does elsewhere, may be here a strategy by which the speaker intends to communicate the sense of unity and belongingness to the addressees as opposed to exclusion of political actors bearing responsibility for the events. The speaker implicitly blames 'Washington,' i.e. Bush's administration and, by extension, all Republicans, which instils/enhances the aura of belongingness in the addressees. Once the so-called 'them' entities are distanced from 'us,' the risk of facing analogical aftermaths in the future diminishes.

Distanciation, then, operates on the centre-periphery schema shifting chosen discourse entities outwards. Point-of-view operations, the other strategy I shall discuss on this paper, have the potential to increase the distance, as well as to decrease it changing the status of particular discourse elements from in-group to out-group (exclusion) and from out-group to in-group (inclusion). This strategy facilitates the speaker's presentation of particular actors as central figures and discourse events from the actor's point of view. Depending on the speaker's goals, the distance between 'us' and the entity chosen diminishes or, less frequently, increases.

A (series of) shift(s) may take place along the spatial, temporal and axiological axes and come into being in the process of inferring spatial, temporal and axiological relations. A switch in the actors' physical/geopolitical location takes place along the spatial axis (e.g. from 'here' to 'there'). By the same token, any switch in their historical location takes place along the temporal axis, while any switch in their 'ideological position' occurs along the axiological axis. Again, the axiological dimension bears the most relevance in the discussion of clusivity. Therefore, employing point-of-view operations the speaker allows other 'voices,' often (but not exclusively) accepting the entities as 'us.'

The excerpt below illustrates the point-of-view operations strategy the speaker employs to modify the initial position of chosen discourse elements. As in the previous cases, it has been taken from Barack Obama's March speech. Here, however, the speaker introduces legitimizing elements to justify and cut himself off from his relationship with Reverend Jeremiah Wright:

> (3)
> [S]o many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons [...] But the anger is real; it is powerful [...] For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years. That anger may not get expressed in public, in front of white co-workers or white friends. But it does find voice in the barbershop or around the kitchen table. At times, that anger is exploited by politicians, to gin up votes along racial lines, or to make up for a politician's own failings.

Initially, Wright is presented as a person close to Obama, as his religious leader, who 'strengthened [his] faith, officiated [his] wedding, and baptized

[his] children.' Then, the speaker irrevocably distances himself from the Reverend's controversial statements and himself.

First, two parties in the affair are indicated, i.e. 'many people,' whose identities are implicit/hidden, and Reverend Wright. The speaker locates them on the axiological axis inside and outside the deictic centre, respectively.

Figure 4: The point-of-view switch illustrating discourse situation in excerpt (3).

memories of humiliation and doubt and fear

here, America

Wright

Wright

many people

men and women of Wright's generation

us

now

Then, he alters the axiological coordinate employing a switch along the axiological axis, as the Reverend's stance is presented from Wright's perspective. The temporal and spatial coordinates undergo a switch along their axes when the speaker makes an implicit reference to the atrocities committed against Afro-Americans that took place in America of the past affecting the entire generation of people who may share the Reverend's views. The speaker thus reduces the distance between Wright and the deictic centre. The Revered is still located outside the deictic centre, however, by the boundary, which may not be sufficient a means to provide Wright with 'us' status, yet surely constitutes a foundation for further legitimising strategies.

4. Conclusions and Findings

In defining belongingness or lack of it, values and ideologies play a decisive role. Meanings that addressees recover are tacitly 'negotiated' within groups on the basis of shared knowledge and dominant ideologies, which are presupposed and usually exist prior to any linguistic interaction. As the identity and ideology of a given group may be expressed or reinforced in a discourse, the speaker either enacts or creates social identities of chosen actors (himself included) through the use of particular linguistic means of

presupposing ideological polarisations between 'us' and 'them,' positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation, emphasizing power of the self and discrediting the other, and legitimising the self and delegitimising the other, etc.

The use of any clusivity-driven representations and strategies changing the location of chosen political entities presupposes that both the speaker and the addressees are directly involved in the occurring events. Distanciation and point-of-view operations, along with other such strategies (i.e. spreading and narrowing, proximisation, (im)personalisation, etc.), operate both inside and outside the deictic centre. The meaning they carry may be recovered either instantaneously or in the process of inference formation. This is to say that the speaker does not necessarily have to make explicit reference to 'them,' as the very existence of an in-group presupposes the existence of an out-group, a phenomenon inherent in political discourse.

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