The Nature of Clusivity Features: Insights from two Syncretism Case Studies

In this talk, I discuss two detailed case studies in favor of binary clusivity features (e.g. Noyer 1992; Harbour 2016; Pertsova 2022) vs. privative clusivity features (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002; Moskal 2018). More precisely, I show that Didinga exhibits a hidden ABA pattern and Huehuetla Tepehua exhibits a B(BA)A pattern which is a pattern that arises by combining *ABA considarations (e.g. Bobaljik 2012) and extended exponence (e.g. Matthews 1972). I show that both patterns support the presence of a [−addressee] feature in the specification of the exclusive.

Clusivity Features – Clusivity describes the distinction between the 'inclusive' consisting of the author, potential others *and the addressee* vs. the 'exclusive' consisting of the author and potential others *without the addressee* (e.g. Moskal 2018). There are two approaches in the literature as to how this distinction is manifested in person features: privative features, see (1) (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002; Moskal 2018) and binary features, see (2) (e.g. Noyer 1992; Harbour 2016; Pertsova 2022). The crucial difference lies in how the parameter '*without the addressee*' is captured in the specification of the exclusive. While privative feature accounts codify this with the absence of the [addressee] feature (1-b), it is overtly codified with the presence of the [−addressee] feature in binary feature accounts (2-b).

(1) a. 1SG: [author]
b. 1PL.EXCL: [author, plural]
c. 1PL.INCL: [author, addressee, plural]

(2) a. 1SG: [+author, −addressee, −plural]
b. 1PL.EXCL: [+author, −addressee, +plural]
c. 1PL.INCL: [+author, +addressee, +plural]

Clusivity & *ABA – Moskal (2018) argues that *ABA holds in the triple of 1SG–1EXCL–1INCL and takes this as the main argument in favor of privative clusivity features where the inclusive properly contains the exclusive (see also the Conatinment Hypothesis in Moskal 2018; for *ABA in general see Wiese 2008; Bobaljik 2012; Smith et al. 2019; Müller 2020 among many others). *ABA in the context of clusivity refers to the following scenario: if there is a default form A (in the 1SG) and a more specific form B which appears in the exclusive, the default form A will not appear in the even more specific context of the inclusive. As shown in (3), this is straightforward in a privative feature system since the default marker A would be blocked by the more specific marker B in the context of the inclusive. In contrast, a binary feature system is able to derive an ABA pattern in the triple of 1SG–1EXCL–1INCL by using the [−addressee] feature in the vocabulary entry of the B exponent (see (4)). As a result, B does not block A in the context of the inclusive anymore.

(3) ⇒ **ABA with privative features*
a. A ↔ [author]
b. B ↔ [author, plural]

(4) ⇒ *ABA with binary features*
a. A ↔ [+author]
b. B ↔ [+author, plural, -addressee]

Didinga (ABA) – In my first case study, I argue that Didinga (Surmic/South Sudan) shows a hidden ABA pattern which provides evidence for binary clusivity features. The examples in (5) show the triple of 1SG–1EXCL–1INCL in Didinga. Agreement is expressed through the prefix *h-* (which appears in every first person) and different suffixes. For the purpose of the present talk, there are two crucial observations: (i) The suffix in the exclusive *-ta* does not appear in any other person (see also the whole paradigm in (7)), i.e. it is a specific exclusive exponent. (ii) The suffix in the inclusive *-ɪ* is syncretic with 3SG/3PL (see (5-c) and (6) and (7)). However, there is not a single common feature between the 1INCL and 3SG/3PL. Thus, in order to be able to capture the 1INCL-3SG/PL syncretism one needs to make reference to a radically underspecified elsewhere exponent (see (8-a)). Hence, the exponent in the inclusive is a default exponent. Using privative clusivity features, the specific exclusive exponent *-ta* can only be associated with a plural and an author feature (8-b). However, since both features are properly contained in the specification of the inclusive, the default exponent in (8-a) would always be blocked by the exponent in (8-b). This reveals that the pattern in Didinga is in fact a hidden ABA pattern where a default exponent (*-ɪ*) appears in the inclusive while there is a more specific exponent (*-ta*) in the exclusive. It is a hidden pattern because the default exponent does not appear in the 1SG. However, this seems to be a mere accident of the lexicon which includes a more specific exponent *-i* for the 1SG. Otherwise, it would be possible for *-ɪ* to appear in the 1SG as well.

(5) *Didinga* (own fieldwork)

a. h-à-ìrìt-í **X / (A)**
1-ASP-cough-1SG
'I am coughing'

b. h-à-ìrìt-tá **B**
1-ASP-cough-1PL.EXCL
'We (excl.) are coughing'

c. h-à-írìt-ì **A**
1-ASP-cough-1PL.INCL
'We (incl.) are coughing'

(6) a. à-írìt-ì
ASP-cough-3
'He/she/it/they is/are coughing'

(7) *Didinga subject agreement, intransitive verbs, incompletive*

	Singular			Plural	
1	h-	**-i**	(excl.)	h-	**-Ca**
			(incl.)	h-	**-ɪ**
2		-i			-Cu
3		**-ɪ**			**-ɪ**

(8) *VIs Didinga, privative features (attempt I)*

a. -ɪ ↔ [ ] A
b. -ta ↔ [author, plural] (↯) B

There would be a way to make an analysis of the Didinga data with privative features possible: This includes an Impoverishment rule that deletes the plural feature in the inclusive, i.e. which nullifies the containment relation (cf. Noyer 1992 and Moskal 2018 for Dolakha Newar). However, as can be seen in Didinga, this comes with the cost that privative features may be able to derive ABA patterns as well which weakens the arguments for privative clusivity features.

Huehuetla Tepehua (B(BA)A) – The second case study excludes the option to use an impoverishment rule which nullifies the containment relation. In this case study, I show that Huehuetla Tepehua exhibits a B(BA)A pattern which can only be analyzed using binary clsuivity features. Huehuetla Tepehua shows a prefix *k-* that appears only in the 1SG and 1EXCL and a suffix *-aw* which appears in the 1EXCL and 1INCL (see (9)). Looking at the attempt to formulate VIs for the pattern in Huehuetla Tepehua using privative features in (10), reveals the same containment problem as in the first case study. Neither the exponent in (10-a) nor in (10-b) can be associated with more features. However, having the VIs in (10), one would expect the *k-* prefix to appear in the inclusive as well. Thus, in a nutshell, the B marker cannot be made specific enough so that it does not match the specification of the inclusive anymore. In contrast to the first case study, there is no Impoverishment rule which might nullify the containment relation and allow a privative feature analysis of the Huehuetla Tepehua paradigm. Hence, it is impossible to analyze the B(BA)A pattern in Huehuetla Tepehua with privative features.

(9) *Huehuetla Tepehua* (Kung 2007: 177-178, glossing adapted)

a. waa k-talhtanan **B**
FOC 1-scared(IMPFV)
'I'm afraid.'

b. juu luw+ch k-jun-aw **BA**
ART snake+ALD 1-call(IMPFV)-1PL
'We (excl.) call it 'snake'.'

c. mapay-ni-y-aw juu ki-7asqat'a-7an **A**
love-DAT-IMPFV-1PL ART 1POS-child-PL.POS
'We (incl.) love our children.'

(10) *VIs Huehuetla Tepehua, privative features (attempt I)*

a. -aw ↔ [plural] A
b. k- ↔ [author] (↯) B

(11) *VIs Huehuetla Tepehua, binary features*

a. -aw ↔ [+plural]
b. k- ↔ [+author, –addressee]

Binary features can derive both patterns straightforwardly (see (12), (11)). While the ABA pattern in Didinga highlights the presence of the [–addressee] feature in the 1EXCL, the B(BA)A pattern in Huehuetla Tepehua shows that the 1EXCL shares this feature with the 1SG. This reflects the distribution of [–addressee] in binary clusivity features.

(12) *VIs Didinga, binary features*

a. -ɪ ↔ [ ]
b. -ta ↔ [+author, +plural, –addressee]

Selected References • Bobaljik, Jonathan David. 2012. *Universals in comparative morphology. suppletion, superlatives, and the structure of words.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. • Moskal, Beata. 2018. Excluding exclusively the Exclusive: Suppletion Patterns in Clusivity. *Glossa: a Journal of General Linguistics* 3(1). • Harbour, Daniel. 2016. *Impossible Persons*, vol. 74. MIT Press.