"We're not being rude, are we?: impolite uses of 1st person plural forms."

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Abstract
1st person plural forms are generally considered to be less face-threatening, since they include the speaker in their ways to address the interlocutor. In this paper, I will use evidence from Spanish political discourse to show that there are various types of impolite uses of 1st person plural forms, and I will analyse the mechanisms for the ‘conversion’ of polite uses of 1st person plural forms into impoliteness strategies. Indeed, as a result of the interpretation of inclusive 1st person plurals as less face-threatening, these plurals allow for critiques which seem too face-threatening if construed with a 2nd person form, thus facilitating the expression of potentially impolite contents, e.g. We ought to be more careful.. Furthermore, 1st person plural forms may also be used – politely – with a reference to 2nd person plural forms (excluding the speaker), e.g. in teacher-pupil relationships (We’re going to be quiet now.). When applying these uses in inappropriate contexts...

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We’re not being rude, are we?: impolite uses of 1st person plural forms

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Indeed, as a result of the interpretation of inclusive 1st person plurals as less face-threatening, these plurals allow for critiques which seem too face-threatening if construed with a 2nd person form, thus facilitating the expression of potentially impolite contents, e.g. We ought to be more careful.

Furthermore, 1st person plural forms may also be used – politely – with a reference to 2nd person plural forms (excluding the speaker), e.g. in teacher-pupil relationships (We’re going to be quiet now.). When applying these uses in inappropriate contexts, for instance among adults of equal status, the construction becomes yet another instance of impolite 1st person plural use.

In my presentation, I will analyse these uses taking into account both internal linguistic factors and extra-linguistic aspects of the relationship between speaker and addressee.