

THE INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE DISTINCTION IN EJAGHAM

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This study¹ demonstrates that there is a type of formal distinction between the inclusive and exclusive first person plural in Ejagham, even though this distinction has not been grammaticalized as an obligatory categorial distinction for every occurrence of a first person plural referent. The actual factors involved in the use of the formal marking of the distinction are complex and involve syntactic, pragmatic and stylistic questions.

Cette étude montre qu'il y a une distinction formelle entre l'inclusif et l'exclusif pour la première personne du pluriel en ejagham, même si cette distinction n'est pas grammaticalisée comme une distinction catégorielle obligatoire pour tous les cas où on se réfère à une première personne du pluriel. Les vrais rôles de cette distinction sont complexes et incluent les domaines syntaxique, pragmatique et rhétorique.

0. INTRODUCTION

The difference between inclusive and exclusive first person plural has been defined by Ingram (1978) as a difference in deictic features, rather than features in person or number. By 'deictic' he means that the given form refers to an object which has an assigned role in the speech act. Thus, whether the object 'you' (singular or plural) is included within or excluded from the first person plural category depends on whether the object designated by 'you' is being referred to as part of the role of speaker [+speaker, +hearer] or not [+speaker, +3rd person(s)]².

It is common to find languages with either an obligatorily marked morphological inclusive/exclusive distinction or with no such morphological distinction at all. Many of the Bantu related languages to the east of Ejagham fall into the first category e.g. Aghem and Noni (Hyman 1979:47-58, 1980:15) as do certain Bantu Zone A languages e.g. Akoose (Hedinger 1981:285-289), while English and French fall into the second category. However, a third possibility would be a language in which the marking of this distinction is possible but not obligatory.

In Watters (1981:318) it is claimed that the Ejagham pronoun system does not formally distinguish in the first person plural category between an inclusive and an exclusive sense. But in apparent contrast to this claim, utterances such as the following are found:

- (1) a. è-kí-jǻ³ 'we are going'
lpp-cont-go
b. è-kí-jǻ ên 'we (inclusive) are going'
lpp-cont-go 2pp
c. è-kí-jǻ êt 'we (exclusive) are going'
lpp-cont-go lpp

The formal difference between the three utterances in (1) is that in (1b) and (1c) the verb is followed by a pronoun form that is not found in (1a). The pronoun forms êt and ên are equivalent to the first and second person plural independent personal pronouns as shown in the following paradigm.

- (2) ñmè 'I' êt 'we'
wè 'you' ên 'you all'
yê 'he, she' ábǝ 'they'

The pronoun êt and ên can serve both as subject and as object pronouns, but ên can also be used following the verb to indicate plural number in the subject: specifically, to distinguish between second person singular and plural as follows:

- (3) a. ð-kí-jǻ 'you (sg.) are going'
2ps-CONT-go
b. ð-kí-jǻ ên 'you all are going'
2ps-CONT-go 2pp

The semantic difference between the three utterances in (1) is that in (1b) there is an unambiguous inclusive reading, in (1c) an unambiguous exclusive reading, while in (1a) the reading is ambiguous as to whether it is exclusive or inclusive. It was this variation, exemplified by the utterances in (1), and especially the ambiguity of utterances like (1a), which led to the conclusion in Watters (1981). Nonetheless, it is clear from the examples in (1) that the distinction between inclusive and exclusive first person plural can be formally made. This distinction, however, is not obligatorily marked, a significant difference from other languages in which the distinction has been grammaticalized as an obligatorily marked category.

This study will develop as follows: first certain syntactic features of the inclusive/exclusive distinction will be spelled out in section 1, and then pragmatic and stylistic factors will be discussed in section 2.

1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES

1.1 INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE IN GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS

The distinction between inclusive and exclusive first person plural can be formally made in the subject, the direct object and the indirect object grammatical relations. It cannot be made in the locative, the comitative or the possessive. There is a formal criterion which distinguishes these two sets of grammatical relations (apart from the possessive): Namely, the presence or absence of a preposition. With subjects, objects and those types of indirect objects in which the inclusive/exclusive distinction can be made, there is no preposition. But with locatives and comitatives there is a preposition present. This distinction is clearly seen in the case of the indirect object, because this grammatical relation can be marked in two different ways. A preposition can be used, in which case the inclusive/exclusive distinction cannot be made; or, instead of a preposition, the immediately post-verbal position can be used, in which case the distinction can be made.

Consider the following grammatical relations:

1.1.1 Subject

The examples in (1) show the formal marking of inclusive and exclusive first person plural in the subject position. The distinction is made by a combination of the first person plural prefix *ê-* and the independent pronoun which immediately follows the verb: Namely, *ên* 'you all' (=inclusive) and *êt* 'we' (=exclusive).

1.1.2 Direct Object

The marking of the distinction in the direct object relation is shown in (4).

- (4) a. *â-sûm êt* 'he hit us'
 3ps:PFV-hit 1pp
- b. *â-sûm ên êt* 'he hit us (inclusive)'
 3ps:PFV-hit 2pp 1pp

In this case the possibilities are either to indicate unambiguously an inclusive first person plural as in (4b) or to leave the distinction ambiguous as in (4a). There is no formal way to indicate unambiguously the exclusive [+speaker, -hearer] distinction in the object relation. Note that in the object relation the inclusive distinction is marked by the compound form *ên êt* 'you all + us'.

1.1.3 Indirect Object

In the case of the indirect object which occurs in the immediately post-verbal position, the marking of the distinction is identical to that of the direct object.

- (5) a. á-kà-kàré êt é-dí 'she did not give us
3ps-NEG-give 1pp 5-food food'
- b. á-kà-kàré ên êt é-dí 'she did not give
3ps-NEG-give 2pp 1pp 5-food us (inclusive food)

In these examples the indirect object occurs in the position between the verb and the direct object édí 'food'. Example (5a) is ambiguous while that in (5b) unambiguously indicates inclusive first person plural. It is also possible to mark the indirect object with the preposition mbâ 'to, at' as in (6).

- (6) a. á-kà-kàré é-dí mbâ èy-àré
3ps-NEG-give 5-food to 9-POSS:1pp
'she did not give food to us'
- b. *á-kà-kàré ên é-dí mbâ èy-àré
3ps-NEG-give 2pp 5-food to 9-POSS:1pp
'she did not give food to us (inclusive)'
- c. *á-kà-kàré é-dí mbâ èy-àné èy-àré
3ps-NEG-give 5-food to 9-POSS:2pp 9-POSS:1pp
'she did not give food to us (inclusive)'

In this case, it is no longer possible to distinguish formally between inclusive and exclusive first person plural. Only (6a) is grammatical. The ungrammatical examples (6b) and (6c) show that it is not possible to indicate the inclusive distinction indicated in (5) either by using the pronoun ên in post-verbal position as in (6b) or by using a complex possessive pronoun as in (6c).

A further occurrence of the inclusive/exclusive distinction involves indirect objects co-occurring in the immediately post-verbal position. These may co-occur with a possessive pronoun in the direct object noun phrase. Consider the following examples:

- (7) a. à-gbê N-jû èy-àré
3ps:PFV-build 9-house 9-POSS:1pp
'he built our house'

- b. à-gbê ên N-jû èy-àré
 3ps:PFV-build 2pp 9-house 9-POSS:1pp
 'he built our (inclusive) house'
- c. à-gbê êt N-jû èy-àré
 3ps:PFV-build 1pp 9-house 9-POSS:1pp
 'he built our (exclusive) house'

In (7a) a simple possessive noun phrase is used in the direct object position with no further deictic specification. However, in (7b) the additional element ên 'you all' is present. It indicates that the possessive pronoun èy-àré 'our' should be taken in an inclusive sense. There is also the option that this can be used to indicate contrastive focus. Meanwhile in (7c) the additional element êt 'us' is present. In this case it indicates that the possessive pronoun should be taken in an exclusive sense. There is also the option that it can be used to indicate contrastive focus.

A partial paraphrase of (7b) is (8a) where both indicate inclusiveness. However, the utterance in (8a) has a definite benefactive sense while that in (7b) does not. The counterpart to the inclusive form in (8a) is that in (8b). This utterance is a partial paraphrase of (7a) rather than (7c) in that there is not a clear exclusive interpretation, the distinction being left unmarked. However, like (8a), (8b) has a definite benefactive reading which is not found in (7a).

- (8) a. à-gbê ên êt N-jû
 3ps:PFV-build 2pp 1pp 9-house
 'he built us (inclusive) a house'
- b. à-gbê êt N-jû
 3ps:PFV-build 1pp 9-house
 'he built us a house'

These facts of interpretation could be summarized with the following rules. On the left of the arrow are given the relevant person, number and semantic role features, while on the right of the arrow are given the various possible interpretations with regard to the inclusive/exclusive distinction. The interpretation 'ambiguous' refers to the fact that in the given case there is no formal marking of the inclusive/exclusive distinction.

(9)	<u>Features</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
a.	$\left[\begin{array}{l} + \text{ 1pp possessive} \\ - \text{ IO} \end{array} \right]$ ----->	ambiguous (7a)
b.	$\left[\begin{array}{l} + \text{ 1pp possessive} \\ + \text{ 2pp IO} \end{array} \right]$ ----->	inclusive, (contrastive) (7b)
c.	$\left[\begin{array}{l} + \text{ 1pp possessive} \\ + \text{ 1pp IO} \end{array} \right]$ ----->	exclusive, (contrastive) (7c)

- d. $\left[\begin{array}{l} - \text{ possessive} \\ + \text{ 2pp-1pp IO} \end{array} \right] \text{ -----} > \text{ inclusive, benefactive} \quad (8a)$
- e. $\left[\begin{array}{l} - \text{ possessive} \\ + \text{ 1pp IO} \end{array} \right] \text{ -----} > \text{ ambiguous, benefactive} \quad (8b)$

1.2 TRANSITIVITY AND THE MARKING OF INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE

Transitivity (i.e. the valency of the verb) is relevant to the marking of the inclusive/exclusive distinction. Consider the following utterances.

- (10) a. ò-fi ên (ê) nònò
2p:PFV-seize 2pp (1pp) well
'you took good care (of us)'
- b. è-fi ên ábhǒ nònò
1pp:PFV-seize 2pp 3pp well
'we (inclusive) took good well care of them'
- c. è-fi ên nònò
1pp:PFV-seize 2pp well
'we (inclusive) took good care of someone'
'we took good care of you all'
- d. à-fi ên êt nònò
3ps:PFV-seize 2pp 1pp well
'he took good care of us (inclusive)'
- e. à-fi ên êt è-kùml
3ps:PFV-seize 2pp 1pp 5-meeting
'he led a meeting for us'

The question that arises here concerns the syntactic role that the ên in the immediate post-verbal position plays. Three generalizations can be made. First, if the subject prefix is the second person ò-, then the ên functions as part of the subject and indicates the plural number of the second person. This is exemplified in (10a).

Secondly, if the first person plural subject prefix è- is present, ên functions as part of the subject and indicates inclusiveness, as long as there is either a direct object present as in (10b) --- note ábhǒ 'them' --- or an understood direct object which has been deleted under rules of anaphora as in (10c). However, if there is no direct object present and no rules of anaphora operating, then ên is interpreted as the direct object and the subject is ambiguous as to whether it is inclusive or exclusive. This fact is exemplified by the second gloss of (10c).

Thirdly, if the subject is third person, then the ên is interpreted as being part of the object as in (10d) or as part of the indirect object if a direct object is present as in (10e). The example in (10e) is possible because the verb -fŷ 'to take hold, seize, take care of' is optionally tri-valent.

These facts could be formulated as in (11). The column on the left specifies the subject features indicated by the subject prefix plus the presence or absence of a direct object other than ên, the middle column specifies the syntactic role that ên plays under those conditions specified by the given prefix, and the right column specifies the semantic interpretation of ên in light of the given syntactic role and subject features.

(11)	<u>Relevant features</u>		<u>Syntactic role</u>		<u>Semantic interpretation</u>
a.	$\begin{bmatrix} -1p \\ +2p \end{bmatrix}$	----->	subject	----->	plural
b.	$\begin{bmatrix} +1p \\ -2p \\ +DO \end{bmatrix}$	----->	subject	----->	inclusive
c.	$\begin{bmatrix} +1p \\ -2p \\ -DO \end{bmatrix}$	----->	object	----->	second person plural
d.	$\begin{bmatrix} -1p \\ -2p \end{bmatrix}$	----->	object (DO/IO)	----->	second person plural

In the case of an intransitive verb such as -béné 'to run', the ên in the immediately post-verbal position can only be interpreted as part of the subject. Thus, examples (12a) and (12b) are acceptable but example (12c) is not.

- (12) a. ð-béné ên 'you all ran'
 2p:PFV-run 2pp
- b. è-béné ên 'we (inclusive) ran'
 1pp:PFV-run 2pp
- c. *à-béné ên *'he you all ran'
 3 ps:PFV-run 2pp

1.3 THE QUANTIFIER CENCEN AND THE FEATURE OF INCLUSIVENESS

The notion of inclusiveness can be indicated not only by the compound pronoun of ên 'you all' in combination with êt 'we, us' as in (1b), (4b), (5b) and (8a), but also by the quantifier cécén 'all' in combination with êt. In this case, the quantifier substitutes for ên. Consider the following examples.

- (13) a. **êt céncén é-gbò**
 1pp all 1pp:PFT-fall
 'we have all failed'
- b. **à-yên êt céncén**
 3ps:PFV-see 1pp all
 'he saw all of us'
- c. **à-kàré êt céncén é-dî**
 3ps:PFV-give 1pp all 5-food
 'she gave all of us food'
- d. **à-kàré é-dî òbà èy-àré céncén**
 3ps:PFV-give 5-food to 9-POSS:1pp all
 'she gave food to all of us'
- e. **á-kí-jí nà êt céncén**
 3pp-CONT-go with 1pp all
 'they are going with all of us'
- f. **à-ká-'bá òbà èy-àré céncén**
 3ps:CONT-come to 9-POSS:1pp all
 'he is coming toward all of us'
- g. **N-jú èy-àré céncén à-nòb**
 9-house 9-POSS:1pp all 9:PFT-good
 'the house of all of us is nice'

In each case the quantifier immediately follows **êt** 'we, us', and in each case the interpretation is an inclusive one. In (13a) the form **êt céncén** 'all of us' is the subject, in (13b) the object, in (13c) the indirect object without a prepositional marker, and in (13e) the committative. In (13d) the form **èy-àré céncén** occurs as the indirect object following the preposition **òbà** with a benefactive sense, in (13f) as the object of the same preposition with a locative sense, and in (13g) as a possessive noun phrase.

2. PRAGMATIC AND STYLISTIC FACTORS

2.1 AMBIGUITY, MOOD AND THIRD PERSON PARTICIPANTS

In the examples in (1) it was mentioned that the reading of (1a) was ambiguous as to whether it should be interpreted as inclusive or exclusive. The ambiguity is resolved in each case by the context in which the expression is uttered. The 'context' would include both linguistic and non-linguistic factors.

Of special interest in the resolution of the ambiguity is the way in which mood and speech-situation participants affect the assignment of an interpretation. The relevant distinction in terms of mood has to do with the realis/irrealis distinction. The relevant distinction in terms of participants has to do with the presence or absence of a third party other than the speaker and hearer in the speech situation. Consider the following examples in the realis mood.

- (14) a. **é-jǐ é-jǐ-yèn yê nâ ò-fú N-bí**
 1pp:PFT-go 1pp:PFT-go-see 3ps with 14-morning this-14
 'we have gone and seen him this morning'
 'we (exclusive) have gone to see him this morning'
- b. **è-j-ǎg è-jǐ-yèn yê é-nyàné**
 1pp-go-IMPV 1pp:PFV-go-see 3ps 5-yesterday
 'we went and saw him yesterday'
 'we (exclusive) went and saw him yesterday'
- c. **è-kí-jǐ ò-yén yê òfá-òfá**
 1pp-CONT-go 14-see 3ps here-here
 'we are going to see him now'
 'we (exclusive) are going to see him now'
- d. **è-j-ǎg è-yén-á yê kpè bàgé ò-fú**
 1pp-go-IMPV 1pp:HAB-see-IMPV 3ps even what 14-morning
 'we go and see him every day'
 'we (exclusive) go and see him every day'

Note the following concerning the utterances in (14). First, each utterance is in the realis mood, with (14a) in the perfect aspect, (14b) in the perfective, (14c) in the continuous and (14d) in the habitual. Secondly, in each case the subject is indicated only by the subject prefix *e-*, leaving the inclusive/exclusive distinction unmarked. Thirdly, for each utterance there are two possible interpretations. The first leaves the inclusive/exclusive distinction unresolved (i.e. ambiguous), while the second specifies a definite exclusive interpretation. The difference in the two interpretations is determined by the presence or absence of shared knowledge concerning a third person in the speech situation. If the speaker and hearer do not share knowledge concerning a third person, then the first, ambiguous interpretation holds, meaning that further linguistic or non-linguistic information is needed for the hearer to resolve the ambiguity. The hearer may very well ask a question as in (15) to determine if he or she is included or excluded.

- (15) **nâ é-nê** 'with whom?'
 with 5-person

However, if a third person in the speech situation is shared knowledge between the speaker and hearer, then the hearer will clearly understand the speaker as indicating an exclusive interpretation as indicated in the second reading for each utterance.

This distinction is different in the case of the irrealis mood. Consider the following utterances:

- (16) a. è-kí-jY òò
 1pp-CONT-go warning
 'we (inclusive') are going!'
 'we are going!'
- b. é-jí'´
 1pp:HORT-go
 'let us (inclusive) go!'
 'we should go'
- c. é-jY tík è-yên yê
 1pp:COND-go, FUT 1pp:PFV-see 3ps
 'if we (inclusive) go, we (inclusive) will see him'
 'if we go, we will see him'
- d. tík è-j-ǎg
 FUT 1pp-go-IMPFV
 'we (inclusive) will go'
 'we will go'
- e. kán è-j-ǎg
 ABL 1pp-go-IMPFV
 'we (inclusive) can go'
 'we can go'

Note the following concerning the utterances in (16). First, each utterance is in the irrealis mood, with (16a) in the continuous aspect but with a future, monitory sense, with (16b) in the hortative mood, with (16c) in the conditional mood followed by a future modal clause, with (16d) using the future modal particle and (16e) using the abilitative modal particle. Secondly, in each case the subject is indicated only by the subject prefix e-, leaving the inclusive/exclusive distinction unmarked. Thirdly, for each utterance there are two possible interpretations. The first specifies a definite inclusive interpretation, while the second leaves the inclusive/exclusive distinction unresolved (i.e. ambiguous). The difference in the two interpretations is again determined by the presence or absence of shared knowledge concerning a third person in the speech situation. If there is no shared knowledge concerning a third person between the speaker and hearer, then the first, inclusive interpretation holds. However, if there is shared knowledge concerning a third person in the speech situation, then the inclusive/exclusive is ambiguous and further linguistic or non-linguistic information is needed on the part of the hearer to resolve the ambiguity. The hearer may very well ask again a question as in (15) to determine if he or she is included or excluded.

These facts give a curious mirror image which may be shown by the matrix in (17) and specified by the interpretive rules in (18). The parameters of the matrix in (17) concern the presence or absence of shared knowledge concerning a third person in the speech situation and the realis/irrealis modal distinction. Meanwhile, the rules in (18) use the parameters of (17) as binary features:

(17)

	+Third Person	-Third Person
REALIS	exclusive	ambiguous
IRREALIS	ambiguous	inclusive

(18)

	Mood and Participant Features		Semantic <u>Interpretation</u>
a.	[+realis] [+3p]	----->	exclusive
b.	[+realis] [-3p]	----->	ambiguous
c.	[-realis] [+3p]	----->	ambiguous
d.	[-realis] [-3p]	----->	inclusive

The question which rises in relation to (17) and (18) concerns the interplay of the realis/irrealis distinction with the presence or absence of a third person in the speech situation so as to give these various interpretations. How can the mirror image of the matrix in (17) and the semantics of the rules in (18) be further clarified? The answer no doubt has to be couched in terms of the options which the speaker has in forming the given utterance or the hearer has in interpreting it. In specifying a realis situation with shared knowledge of a third person in that situation, the speaker would know whether the hearer had also been present in the given situation or not. If he or she had been present, the speaker would obligatorily use the inclusive form with *en* in the immediately post-verbal position. So the absence of *en* suggests to the hearer that he or she is excluded, an interpretation which is assisted by the shared knowledge of a third party to include within the first person plural reference.

In specifying an irrealis situation without any shared knowledge concerning a third person, the speaker leaves no other person with which the hearer can index the first person plural form apart from him or herself and the speaker. The fact that it is an irrealis rather than a realis situation indicates that no one else is privy to the information expressed in the utterance apart from the hearer, who is alone with the speaker.

By contrast, whenever the situation being specified is realis with no shared knowledge concerning a third person, or irrealis with shared knowledge concerning a third person, the hearer on the basis of only the given utterance and the speech situation has not been given sufficient information with which to index the first person plural form. Many of these types of ambiguities are resolved by the larger situation. For example, a given utterance may appear as the answer to a specific question in a question-answer situation in which the question has already defined referential sets. Thus, in (19) the question with 'you all' sets the answer up to be 'we (exclusive)'.

- (19) a. tɪk ò-j-ǎŋ ên fǎn
FUT 2p-go-IMPFV 2pp where
'where will you all go?'
- b. tɪk è-j-ǎŋ kǎ ò-gâm
FUT 1pp-go-IMPFV to 14-market
'we will go to market'

2.2 INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE MARKING AND CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

Besides the interplay of mood and speech situation with the inclusive/exclusive distinction, there is also the pragmatics of contrastive focus (see Watters 1979 for this terminology) involved in an utterance like (1c). In such cases the construction stands in the paradigm where the object is indexed to the same referent as the subject, and serves to emphasize the subject in contrast to another potential subject, as in (20).

- (20) a. ñ-kí-bĩŋ ðm ñwèt
1ps-CONT-call 1ps 9:book
'(you may be doing x,) but I'm reading a book'
- b. ò-kíbĩŋ wâ ñwèt
2p-CONT-call 2ps 9:book
'(he may be doing x,) but you are reading book'
- c. â-kí-bĩŋ yê ñwèt
3ps-CONT-call 3ps 9:book
'(you may be doing x,) but she is reading a book'
- d. è-kí-bĩŋ êt ñwèt
1pp-CONT-call 1pp 9:book
'(you may be doing x,) but we are reading a book'

- e. ò-kí-bĩŋ ên ñwèt
 1p-CONT-call 2pp 9:book
 '(we may be doing x,) but you all are reading a book'
- f. á-kí-bĩŋ ábð ñwèt
 3pp-CONT-call 3pp 9:book
 '(we may be doing x,) but they are reading a book'

In this paradigm, (20d) is identical to (1c), an utterance which indicates exclusive first person plural. Thus, in every case, a construction like (1c) or (20d) is exclusive, but it can also be optionally interpreted as also indicating contrastive focus.

3. STYLISTICS

Besides the various morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic facts concerning the marking of the inclusive/exclusive distinction in Ejagham, there is also the question of stylistics -- the speaker's knowledge of how to use the various systems in the language to construct an utterance which is aesthetically acceptable. Take the sentences in (21).

- (21) a. à-sàrè ên êt tík à-kàrè êt é-dĩ
 3ps:PFV-say 2pp 3pp that FUT 3ps:PFV-give 1pp 5-food
 'she told us (inclusive) that she will give us food'
- b. à-sàrè ên êt sè tík à-kàrè ên êt é-dĩ
 3ps:PFV-say 2pp 3pp that FUT 3ps:PFV-give 2pp 3pp 5-food
 'she told us (inclusive) that she will give us (inclusive) food'

The utterances in (21) are both grammatical. However, (21a) is more acceptable stylistically than (21b). In (21b) both clauses have a fully specified indirect object noun phrase, whereas in (21a) the ên in the indirect object noun phrase of the second clause has been deleted under identity with that in the indirect object noun phrase of the first clause, thus reducing the redundancy found in (20b). The process occurs without any loss or change in the inclusive meaning established in the first clause. This example demonstrates in another way that the marking of the inclusive/exclusive distinction is not obligatory in Ejagham. As such, the optional markings of first person plural leads to the problems of potential ambiguity discussed above in section 2.1.

2.4 AUX, SERIAL CLAUSES AND INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE MARKING

The question of focus, stylistics and pragmatic ambiguity are also raised when constructions involving auxiliaries and serial clauses are considered. Consider the utterances in (22) and (23).

- (22) a. è-nyónè ên è-dí-g
1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV
'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- b. è-nyónè è-dí-g ên
1pp:PFV-still 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV 2pp
'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- c. ?è-nyónè ên è-dí-g ên
1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV 2pp
'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- (23) a. è-kí'-wóm ên é-yén N-tûfâm
1pp-CONT-want 2pp 1pp:HORT-see 1-chief
'we (inclusive) want to see the chief'
- b. è-kí'-wóm é-yén ên N-tûfâm
1pp-CONT-want 1pp:HORT-see 2pp 1-chief
'we (inclusive) want to see the chief'
- c. ?è-kí'-wóm ên é-yén ên N-tûfâm
1pp-CONT-want 2pp 1pp:HORT-see 2pp 1-chief
'we (inclusive) want to see the chief'

The sets of utterances in (22) and (23) appear to involve three variants of the same basic utterance, each with a different marking of an inclusive first person plural subject. Each utterance has the same truth values as the other utterances of the given set. However, utterances (22c) and (23c) are questionable stylistically with their repetition of the inclusive *ên* form. Then in the case of (22a) versus (22b) or (23a) versus (23b) there appears to be a difference in focus. Consider the example in (24) in this regard.

- (24) a. Q: é-dí ên à
1pp:PFT-eat 2pp QUEST
'have we eaten?'
- b. A: ê, è-nyónè ên é-kà-dí kpè è-jûm
no, 1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp-NEG-eat even 5-thing
'no, we haven't eaten anything yet'
- c. A: *e, e-nyône e-ka-di en kpe e-jum

In (24), the question in (24a) requires the answer in (24b) rather than that in (24c), which is unacceptable in this context. This can be attributed to the fact that the question focuses on the aspect of the given situation rather than on the activity specified by the verb *-dí* 'to eat'. The presence of the *ên* after the perstitive auxiliary *-nyónè* 'to be still present' in (24b) puts the focus on the auxiliary and the aspect. The unacceptable second answer in (24c) has the *ên* following the main verb *-dí* 'to eat' and puts the focus on that verb, which is not the focus of the question in (24a).

This focus phenomenon is further exemplified in (25) and (26).

- (25) a. Q: è-nyónè ên è-yîm-á jěn ñfá
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-do-IMPFV what here
 'what are we still doing here'
 ñ-jî à-tèm á-jî
 REL-5 2-friend 3pp:PFT-go
 'since the others have gone?'
- b. A: è-nyónè ên è-dí-g
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV
 'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- c. A: *è-nyónè è-dí-g ên
 1pp:PFV-still 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV 2pp
 'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- (26) a. Q: è-nyónè è-yîm-á ên jě
 1pp:PFV-still 1pp:HAB-do-IMPFV 2pp what
 'what are we (inclusive) still doing here'
 è-kâ-jî à
 1pp:HORT-NEG-go QUEST
 'that we shouldn't leave?'
- b. A: *è-nyónè ên è-dí-g
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV
 'we (inclusive) are still eating'
- c. A: è-nyónè è-dí-g ên
 1pp:PFV-still 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPFV 2pp
 'we (inclusive) are still eating'

In (25a) the question contrasts the aspects of the two clauses. The first clause is in the perstitive marked by -nyóné 'to be still present' while the second is in the perfect. The second clause in this context implies that the others 'had already eaten'. In such a case, the acceptable answer is (25b) with the ên immediately following the auxiliary rather than (25c) with the ên following the main verb. By contrast, the question in (26a) puts the focus on the activity: 'what else is there to do now that we finished the current activity?' The acceptable answer in this case is not (26b) but (26c) with the ên following the main verb and placing it in focus: 'we still have to eat'.

Finally, with regard to this phenomenon of focus consider the utterances in (27), all of which involve contrastive focus.

- (27) a. **è-nyǎnè ên mǎ́ è-dí-g é-dí,**
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp here 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPV 5-food
 'we (inclusive) are still here eating food,
ábǒ á-rò-dí
 3pp 3pp:CESS-eat
 (while) they are no longer eating'
- b. **è-nyǎnè ên mǎ́ è-dí-g é-dí,**
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp here 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPV 5-food
 'we (inclusive) are still here eating food,
â-tèm tà á-kí-jí
 2-friend already 3pp-CONT-go
 (while) the others have already gone'
- c. ***è-nyǎnè ên mǎ́ è-dí-g é-dí**
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp here 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPV 5-food
 'we (inclusive) are still here eating food
ábǒ á-nyǎnè á-cí-g-'á
 3pp 3pp:PFV-still 3pp:HAB-wait-IMPV
 (while) they are still waiting'
- d. **è-nyǎnè è-dí-g ên**
 1pp:PFV-still 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPV 2pp
 'we (inclusive) are still eating
ábǒ á-nyǎnè á-cí-g-'á
 3pp 3pp:PFV-still 3pp:HAB-wait-IMPV
 (while) they are still waiting
- e. ***è-nyǎnè ên è-dí-g**
 1pp:PFV-still 2pp 1pp:HAB-eat-IMPV
 'we (inclusive) are still eating
ábǒ á-nyǎnè á-wó-'g
 3pp 3pp:PFV-still 3pp:HAB-drink-IMPV
 (while) they are still drinking'

In (27a) the focus is on the verbal operators such as aspect and negation rather than on the lexical item itself. Thus, still eating is focused and contrasted with will not eat. In this case the *ên* in the first clause follows the perstitive auxiliary. The same holds for (27b). In this case, it is true that the second clause has a different lexical verb, but the implication of this verb is 'they have eaten (and so are leaving)'. Again, the *ên* follows the perstitive auxiliary. By contrast, in (27c) and (27e) there is no longer a contrast of the verbal operators but of the main verbs: Namely, *-dí* 'to eat' and *-cí-g* 'to wait' in (27c), and *-dí* and *-wó* 'to drink' in (27e). In both cases it is inappropriate for the *ên* to follow the auxiliary. Instead, it should follow the main verb as in (27d).

Turning to the case of serial clauses, it can be seen in (28) that there is a difference to be made between serial clauses which are coordinate structures and those which are complex ones.

- (28) a. è-kô ên è-kâg è-yâm ên è-dî (ên)
 1pp:PFV-take 2pp 1:PFV-put:in 1pp:PFV-cook 2pp 1pp:PFV-eat
 2pp
 'we (inclusive) took (it) and put (it) in and cooked (it)
 and ate (it)'
- b. è-kô ên è-b-ág
 1pp:PFV-take 2pp 1pp-come-IMPFV
 'we (inclusive) brought (it)'
 'we brought you all'
- c. è-kô è-b-ág ên
 1pp:PFV-take 1pp-come-IMPFV 2pp
 'we (inclusive) brought (it)'
- d. è-gbût ên à-màn è-fî (ên)
 1pp:PFV-cut 2pp 6-palm:frond 1pp:PFV-seize (2pp)
 'we (inclusive) cut some palm fronds and took (them)'

Serial constructions in (28) which are complex are those involving -kô 'to take, receive'. Whether it goes together with -kâg 'to put in' as in (28a) or -bâ 'to come' as in (28b) and (28c), the inclusive marker ên can only appear either after the first or the second verb, but not after both. By contrast, coordinate structures such as the last two clauses in (28a) or the two clauses in (28d) may have the ên marker after both verbs, or only after the first. The difference between (28b) and (28c) is that in (28b) the ên after the first verb can be interpreted as either the inclusive subject marker or the object of the first verb, while in (28c) the ên can only be taken as an inclusive subject marker.

3. CONCLUSION

There is clearly a formal distinction of sorts between the inclusive and the exclusive first person plural in Ejagham. However, the distinction has not been grammaticalized as an obligatory categorial distinction for every case involving reference to a first person plural referent, as is the case in other languages with this distinction. The actual factors involved in the use of the formal marking of the distinction are complex and involve syntactic, pragmatic and stylistic questions.

NOTES

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²Of course, in languages which do not have an inclusive/exclusive distinction, the first person plural features would be [+speaker, +/-hearer, +/-third person(s)] (see Ingram 1978:284).

³Tones are indicated as follows: high ^ˊ, low ^ˋ, falling ^ˆ, rising ^ˊ, and downstep ^ˋ. The vowels *ɛ* and *o* have been written here as *e* and *o*, respectively. The following abbreviations have also been used: PFT (perfect), PFV (perfective), CONT (continuous), HAB (habitual), HORT (hortative), COND (conditional), CESS (cessative), FUT (future), ABL (abilitative), NEG (negative), QUEST (question), REL (relative), 1ps (first person singular), 2p (second person), 2pp (second person plural), 3ps (third person singular), 1pp (first person plural), 3pp (third person plural).

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