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1. Introduction

The Kenyah are a linguistically-diverse group of people that live in the upper areas of northern Sarawak, East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan. Kenyah is also the umbrella term for a group of languages spoken in northern Sarawak and eastern Kalimantan which descend from a common ancestor, Proto-Kenyah (PKen) (Smith, 2015). Some varieties of Kenyah are unintelligible with others, suggesting that they are multiple different languages belonging to a single subgroup (Smith, 2023). One of these divergent varieties is Lebo' Vo', a Western Lowland dialect of Kenyah (Smith, 2015), which is reportedly unintelligible to speakers of other Kenyah varieties. Though Lebo' Vo' is spoken at Long San and Long Ikang (Smith, 2017), this paper focuses on the variety spoken in Long San, a village with several hundred inhabitants along the Baram river in Sarawak, Malaysia.

The data used in this paper was gathered from a Field Methods course in the National University of Singapore in 2023. Past work about pronouns indicates a complex pronominal system and this paper improves on these claims. Our research shows some inadequacies in the exposition of pronouns and this paper serves to add on to existing literature on Lebo' Vo'.

This paper is organised as follows. In section 2, I give the necessary background on the pronominal system as described in previous works on Lebo' Vo'. Section 3 talks about the methodology involved in this project while Section 4 provides an overview of the results, along with claims made based on our dataset. Section 5 goes into the specifics of our findings, with the first half focusing on distinguishing between the environments where the long versus genitive forms of singular person pronouns appear. The second half of section 5 focuses on notable findings on the second person dual, trial, and plural pronouns, and the third person dual, trial, and plural pronouns, building upon existing literature surrounding these pronouns while making new claims based on the data available. Section 6 summarises

these findings while covering the limitations of this study and proposing directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pronouns – An Introduction

Kenyah has a very complex pronominal system that contains not only a distinction between inclusive and exclusive, but also five number distinctions (Smith, 2017). Lebo' Vo' shares these characteristics of a complex pronominal system, making distinctions of clusivity between the inclusive and exclusive while also reportedly maintaining a five number distinction within each personal pronoun category (Smith, 2017). These five number distinctions are namely the singular, dual, trial, paucal and plural pronoun categories. The following table illustrates the Lebo' Vo' pronouns along with its English gloss.

Table 1. Lebo' Vo' Pronominal System

| Type | Lebo' Vo' | | | English |
	Long	Genitive	Set 3	
1SG	akeʔ	keʔ	-	I, me
2SG	ikoʔ	koʔ	-	you
3SG	yɨ	nɨ	yah	he, her
1DL.IN	wɨ	-	wah	two of us, including you
1DL.EX	ameʔ wɨ	-	-	two of us, excluding you
2DL	kuɨ	-	-	two of you
3DL	ruɨ	-	ruah	two of them
1TR.IN	təlu	-	-	the three of us, including you
1TR.EX	ameʔ təlu	-	-	three of us, excluding you
2TR	kəlu	-	-	three of you
3TR	rəlu	-	-	they, them
1PAUC.IN	təpat	-	-	the group of us, including you

1PAUC.EX	(ameʔ pat)	-	-	the group of us, excluding you
2PAUC	(ikəm pat)	-	-	the group of you
3PAUC	(irɨ pat)	-	-	the group of them
1PL.IN	ilu	-	-	we, us all of us, including you
1PL.EX	ameʔ	-	-	we, us all of us, excluding you
2PL	ikəm	-	-	all of you
3PL	irɨ	rɨ	-	all of them

Lebo' Vo' contains at least three sets of pronouns. The first set of pronouns is the long form, which are generally used in most circumstances. The second set is the shorter genitive form (*keʔ*, *koʔ*, *ni*, *ri*), and these pronouns are usually marked as an enclitic. There is a third set of pronouns that were formed by lowering the final *ɨ* to *ah* in a subset of the pronouns, such as *yah*, *wah* and *ruah*. The exact function of this group of pronouns is not clearly understood at the present moment. While the first person paucal exclusive *ameʔ pat*, second person paucal *ikəm pat*, and third person paucal *irɨ pat* were provided in elicitations, most Lebo' Vo' speakers indicated that they were no longer in use (Smith, 2017). These paucal pronouns have been marked with parentheses in table 1.

2.2 Pronouns – Plurality and their Fusion

In PKen, the second person plural *ikəm was paired with the cardinal numbers *dua*, *təlu* and *pat* to give *ikəm dua* (second person dual), *ikəm təlu* (second person trial) and *ikəm pat* (second person quadral) respectively. In Lebo' Vo', some of these second and third pronouns appear as fused formed of their PKen predecessors, namely the second person dual *kuɨ*, third person dual *ruɨ*, second person trial *kəlu*, and third person trial *rəlu*, shown in Table 2.

Lebo' Vo' is asserted to be 'the only Kenyah language that uses fused forms for the second person' (Smith, 2017, p. 53) while the fusion in the third person is claimed to only appear in speech (Smith, 2017). While past research on pronouns have made these claims, I will attempt to improve upon them. Some of these fusions, along with their alleged unfused forms, have been observed in our dataset and would be elaborated in the coming sections. Out of all the non-singular forms of pronouns, this paper focuses on data surrounding dual, trial, and plural distinctions for the second and third person pronouns, and notably claims that the trial distinction is undergoing a simplification to the paucal based on the data available.

Table 2. Lebo' Vo' Pronominal System – Fused Forms

Type	PKen	Lebo' Vo'
2DL	ikəm dua	ikɨ luɨ ~ *kuɨ*
3DL	ida dua	irɨ luɨ ~ *ruɨ*
2TR	ikəm təlu	ikɨ təlu ~ *kəlu*
3TR	ida təlu	irɨ təlu ~ *rəlu*
2PL	ikəm	ikɨ
3PL	ida	irɨ

3. Methodology

<u>Overview</u>

In the course of our study, we covered six sessions with our consultant and Lebo' Vo' expert, Roland, over Zoom. Each session was video-recorded and uploaded onto a common Onedrive folder. These video recordings were made available to us for the purposes of transcriptions post-session, and as a cross reference for the accuracy of the field notes taken during each session.

We started out by eliciting sentences containing the first, second and third person singular pronouns in their long and genitive forms. Following that, we tested sentences containing the dual, trial, and plural second and third person pronouns.

<u>Prior to each session</u>

Prior to each session, we crafted sentences in English containing the aforementioned pronouns of interest. Specifically for the singular pronouns, we crafted separate sentences where the target pronouns were in the subject position and found in possessive constructions, in the interest of teasing out the use of their long versus genitive forms. We also came up with the expected Lebo' Vo' equivalent of each English sentence based on data found in the Kaipuleohone archive and the preliminary draft of the Lebo' Vo' dictionary. While we did not specifically create English sentences that incorporated the third person trial (*rəlu*) and third person plural (*iri*) pronouns, Roland used these two pronouns in our elicitations. We were thus able to include *rəlu* and *iri* in our analysis. Examples of the sentences we had crafted can be found in Table 3 below.

<u>During each session</u>

While Roland provided us with the Lebo' Vo' equivalent of our target sentences, we simultaneously noted down his utterances while checking them against our hypothesised

sentences in Lebo' Vo'. If the sentence provided differed from our hypothesised sentence, we clarified with Roland whether our expected sentence was grammatically correct. If the sentence was correct, we asked him which sentence was preferred or 'more correct' than the other. If our hypothesised sentence was wrong, we clarified it with him further and noted down his suggested sentence.

Post-session

After each session, we went through our session notes, sieving out any unexpected or notable findings. Each new session built upon the data and enlightenment that the previous one brought. We painstakingly transcribed each and every session, making sure to record the sentences uttered in Lebo' Vo' using the IPA system. The time-aligned transcriptions were done in Saymore, which in turn was fed to FLEx. In FLEx, we removed all the English sentences and retained only those in Lebo' Vo', ensuring that repetitions were removed from the data. We glossed the Lebo' Vo' sentences in FLEx, making sure to key in the relevant linguistic information required for words not encountered before.

Table 3: Example of sentences elicited

Pronoun	Long	Genitive
1S	I am his cousin	This is my cousin
	I sat down	My car broke down
2S	You are his cousin	This is your cousin
	You sat down	Your cousins are here
3S	She is his cousin	This is her cousin
	He sat down	His biscuit broke (crumbled)
2DL	Two of you sat down	
3DL	These are their two children (where 'their' refers to the two parents)	
2TR	Three of you sat down	

3TR	*did not craft*
2PL	<u>All of you</u> sat down
3PL	*did not craft*

4. Overview of Results

The following sections show the sentences gathered from our elicitations containing the first, second and third person singular pronouns in their long and genitive forms, as well as the dual, trial, and plural second and third person pronouns. The sentences for each pronoun are first presented, followed by their analyses and conclusions drawn.

We found that the genitive form *keʔ* for the first person singular pronoun was preferred whether in the subject position or in possessive constructions. For the second person singular pronoun, the long form *ikoʔ* was preferred as the subject of the sentence while *koʔ* in possessive constructions. The long and genitive forms of the third person singular pronouns *yɨ* and *nɨ* were each preferred in at least one instance where they each appeared in various possessive constructions. Roland added that *iyɨ* and *yɨ* could be used interchangeably, thereby suggesting a variant of the *yɨ* pronoun.

We also looked at the dual, trial and plural forms of the second and third person pronouns in our dataset and found that the second and third person dual pronouns appeared in both their fused and unfused forms. There is also evidence of a loss of the trial distinction, and its shift to a paucal.

5. Observation and Discussion

5.1 Singular person pronouns

We were interested in finding out the situations in which the long versus the genitive form of the singular pronouns were used. The following describes the observations of each

respective pronoun category followed by their analysis and claims made based on the data and existing literature.

5.1.1 First person singular pronouns *akeʔ* vs *keʔ*

We noticed that the long form *akeʔ* was used in instances where the first person singular pronoun appeared in possessive constructions. These can be seen in the example below.

1)

    a. lue itu kerita ake'

        luɨ   itu   kərita akeʔ

        two   these.prox   car   1S

        'These are my two cars'

    b. lue ine kerita ake'

        luɨ   inɨ   kərita akeʔ

        two   those.med   car   1S

        'Those are my two cars'

    c. lue ite kerita ake'

        luɨ   ite   kərita akeʔ

        two   those.dist   car   1S

        'Those are my two cars'

As the data from Example 1 was elicited in the very first elicitation session, we consider it possible that Roland used the long form *akeʔ* as opposed to his expressly preferred

ke? as he was being more conscious of his speech in an elicitation setting. In later sessions, Roland uniformly expressed a preference for the use of *ke?* when it appeared in both the subject position and in possessive constructions, sharing that it was better to simplify *ake?* for consistency. The follow Examples F and E demonstrate the *ke?* was the expressly preferred form, whether appearing in the subject position or in a possessive construction.

Example 2 shows an instance where both *ke?* and *ake?* can be used in possessive constructions, although *ke?* is preferred.

2)

    a. itu   panak ke'

         itu   panak   ke?

         this   cousin   1S.GEN

         'This is my cousin' (preferred)

    b. itu   panak ake'

         itu   panak   ake?

         this   cousin   1S

         'This is my cousin' (acceptable)

When the first person singular pronoun appeared in a possessive construction 'This is my cousin', Roland expressed that *ke?* was the preferred form.

Example 3 shows instances where both *ke?* and *ake?* can be used when appearing in the subject position, although *ke?* is preferred.

3)

    a. ke' itu panak ye

        keʔ   itu   panak yɨ

        1S.GEN   these.prox   cousin 3S

        'I am his cousin' (preferred)

    b. ake' itu panak ye

        akeʔ   itu   panak yɨ

        1S   these.prox   cousin 3S

        'I am his cousin' (acceptable)

    c. kajeng ke' tu

        kaʃəŋ keʔ   tu

        tired   1S.GEN   this

        'I am tired' (preferred)

    d. kajeng ake' tu

        kaʃəŋ akeʔ   tu

        tired   1S   this

        'I am tired' (acceptable)

When the first person singular pronoun appeared as the subject of the sentence in 'I am his cousin' and 'I am tired', Roland again expressed that *keʔ* was the preferred form.

Taking into account the data and context behind the elicitations in Example 1, it appears that the full form *akeʔ* is used in careful speech, while Examples 2 and 3 demonstrate

that there is a general preference for using the genitive form *keʔ* of the first person singular

pronoun, whether it appears in the subject position or in possessive constructions.

5.1.2 Second person singular pronouns *ikoʔ* vs *koʔ*

Interestingly for the second person singular pronouns, Roland opined that 'it's better

to start conversation with *ikoʔ*' while '*koʔ* is only…used in the middle of [a]... conversation'[a],

deviating from his preference for the first person singular pronoun. In our dataset, both *ikoʔ*

and *koʔ* were found in both the subject positions and possessive constructions, but one was

preferred over the other. This is illustrated by the following examples.

Example 4 demonstrates an instance where the genitive form *koʔ* is used in a

possessive construction (4a) and is preferred to the long form *ikoʔ* (4b).

4)

    a. itu panak ko'

        itu   panak   koʔ

        this   cousin   2S.GEN

        'This is your cousin' (preferred)

    b. itu panak iko'

        itu   panak   ikoʔ

        this   cousin   2S

        'This is your cousin' (acceptable)

When the second person singular pronoun appeared in the possessive construction

'This is your cousin', Roland expressed that the use of *koʔ* was preferred.

On the other hand, Example 5 demonstrates that the long form *iko?* (5a) is preferred to the genitive *ko?* (5b) when the second person pronoun appears in the subject position.

5)

    a. iko' ne panak ye

iko?	nɨ	panak	yɨ
2S	that.med	cousin	3S

        'You are his cousin' (preferred)

    b. ko'   ne   panak ye

ko?	nɨ	panak	yɨ
2S.GEN	that.med	cousin	3S

        'You are his cousin' (acceptable)

When the second person singular pronoun appeared as the subject in the sentence 'You are his cousin', Roland expressed that the use of *iko?* was preferred.

Corroborated with Roland's expressed preference regarding the use of the second person singular pronouns, these examples illustrate that *ko?* is preferred in possessive constructions while *iko?* is preferred when appearing in the subject position. However, it is still acceptable to use *iko?* in a possessive construction and *ko?* in the subject position.

5.1.3 Third person singular pronouns *yɨ* (*iyɨ*) vs *nɨ*

For the third person singular pronouns, Roland stated that '*iyɨ* is actually a full word for *yɨ*'[a], explaining that the latter was a simplification of the former that one used if 'comfortable with the word'[a]. Two sentences were compared as seen in the examples below,

with *akeʔ itu panak iyɨ* (6a) being described as 'comfortable for the beginner'[a] while *keʔ itu panak yɨ* (6b) as the perfect version of the sentence. Notably when talking about the 'simplified' form of the third person pronoun, Roland expressed that *yɨ* was the simplified version of *iyɨ* and showed preference for the former, while not making reference to *nɨ* at all. Furthermore based on existing research, *iyɨ* is not yet recognised as a variant of *yɨ*, making Roland's use of *iyɨ* interesting and worth noting.

Example 6 shows an instance where both *yɨ* and *iyɨ* can be used in a possessive construction, although *yɨ* is preferred.

6)

    a. ake' itu panak iye

        akeʔ   itu   panak iyɨ

        1S   this.prox   cousin 3S

        'I am his cousin' (used by beginners)

    b. ake' itu panak ye

        akeʔ   itu   panak yɨ

        1S   this.prox   cousin 3S

        'I am his cousin' (preferred)

Phonologically, Roland's expressed preference for *yɨ* over *iyɨ* exhibited the same pattern of his preference for *keʔ* over *akeʔ* (Examples 2 and 3) and *koʔ* over *ikoʔ* (Examples 4 and 5) in possessive constructions. Syntactically, however, his preference of *yɨ* cannot be explained by the use of a genitive form in a possessive construction as *yɨ* is the long form of the third person singular pronoun. However, as Roland used *iyɨ* along with *yɨ*, it is possible that *iyɨ* is a variant of the third person singular pronoun *yɨ*. Perhaps an expansion to the

current pronoun chart can account for Roland's use of *iyɨ*. Interestingly, Roland also used the genitive form *nɨ* along with *yɨ* and *iyɨ*. The following examples will illustrate Roland's use of the genitive form, *nɨ*.

Example 7 shows that both the long form *yɨ* and genitive form *nɨ* are used in possessive constructions, although *yɨ* is preferred.

7)

    a. ire pat itu asu ne

        irɨ   pat   itu   asu   nɨ

        3PL   four   this.prox   dog   3S.GEN

        'These are his four dogs' (acceptable)

    b. ire pat itu asu ye

        irɨ   pat   itu   asu   yɨ

        3PL   four   this.prox   dog   3S

        'These are his four dogs' (preferred)

However, the converse was observed, where Roland expressed a preference for *nɨ* over *yɨ* as seen in Example 8 below.

8)

    a. are pade' ye situ

        arɨ   padeʔ yɨ   situ

        to be   cousin 3S   here.prox

        'His cousins are here' (acceptable)

b. are pade' ne situ

    arɨ   paɗeʔ nɨ   situ

    to be   cousin 3S.GEN   here.prox

    'His cousins are here' (preferred)

The example above shows the third person singular pronoun appearing in a possessive construction. In this example, the genitive form *nɨ* is preferred to the long form *yɨ*, contrary to the preference expressed in Example 7.

In Examples 7 and 8 above, it can be observed that *yɨ* is preferred over *nɨ* in the former possessive construction but that *nɨ* is preferred over *yɨ* in the latter example, although both forms of the third person singular pronoun remain acceptable in each scenario.

5.1.4 Homophonous *nɨ*

Example 9 shows an instance where both *nɨ* and *yɨ* were not interchangeable.

9)

  a. itu panak ledo ne

    itu   panak ləɗo   nɨ

    this.prox   family woman   that.med

    'This is her cousin'

  b. #itu panak ledo ye

    itu   panak ləɗo   yɨ

    this.prox   family woman   3S

    #'This is her cousin'

c. itu panak ledo ye

itu	panak	ləɗo	yɨ
this.prox	family	woman	3S

'This is his wife/girls'

We were provided with *itu panak ləɗo nɨ* when asking Roland to provide the sentence for 'this is her cousin'. When asked whether *yɨ* (3S) could be used in place of *nɨ* (3S.GEN), Roland shared that using *yɨ* could not mean 'this is her cousin' (9b) and in fact changed the meaning of the sentence to 'this is his wife/girls' (9c).

This phenomenon can preliminarily be explained by the homophony of *nɨ*. When *nɨ* is used in itu panak ləɗo *nɨ*, it functions as the medial determiner 'that' and roughly translates to 'this cousin [of] that woman' which is rendered as 'this is her cousin' in English (9a). Theoretically if *nɨ* were to function as the third person singular genitive pronoun, the sentence would roughly translate to 'this cousin [of] his/her woman' which makes logical sense to the English speaker. However, this meaning was not available to Roland, where *nɨ* was not understood as the third person singular genitive worth. From this example, it can be seen that the contextual use of *nɨ* is crucial in understanding the overall meaning being conveyed through its use in the sentence. Further investigation into the exact mechanics, possible cultural contexts or nuances conveyed by the use of *nɨ* can be done to investigate how speakers of Lebo' Vo' differentiate between the use of *nɨ* as a third person singular genitive pronoun or as a variant of the medial determiner 'that'.

5.1.5 Singular person pronouns – Observation and conclusion

Based on the data shown with respect to the singular pronouns, it is possible that the first person singular pronoun in Lebo' Vo' is undergoing a simplification. The genitive form

of the first person singular pronoun is shown to be preferred whether appearing in the subject position or in possessive constructions. Examples 2 and 3 show that *keʔ* (1S.GEN) is preferred in both the subject position and possessive constructions. For the second person singular pronoun, it has been shown that the long form is preferred when appearing in the subject position while the genitive form is preferred in possessive constructions. Examples 4 and 5 show that *koʔ* (2S.GEN) is preferred in possessive constructions while *ikoʔ* (2S) is preferred when appearing in the subject position.

However, the same conclusion cannot be drawn for the third person singular pronouns. In fact more questions have been revealed through the comparison of environments that the third person singular pronouns have appeared in. First, while *yɨ* is preferred over *iyɨ* in a possessive construction (Example 6), *iyɨ* is not the genitive form of the third person singular pronoun *yɨ*. In fact, *yɨ* is the long form while *nɨ* is the genitive form. It is possible that *iyɨ* is a variant of the third person singular pronoun *yɨ*, and perhaps an expansion to the current pronoun chart can account for Roland's use of *iyɨ*. Furthermore, even a comparison between *yɨ* (long form) and *nɨ* (genitive form) reveals varying preferences when found in possessive constructions, where a preference is expressed for the genitive *nɨ* in some possessive constructions (Example 8), while the long form *yɨ* is preferred in other possessive constructions (Example 7). It is notable that *nɨ* is homophonous and can function as both the third person singular genitive pronoun or medial determiner 'that', depending on the context of its usage.

A summary of our findings on the singular personal pronouns are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of findings on singular personal pronouns

Pronoun	Findings
First person	*keʔ* (genitive form) is preferred in both the subject position and in possessive constructions
Second person	*ikoʔ* (long form) is preferred in the subject position *koʔ* (genitive form) is preferred in possessive constructions
Third person	*yɨ* (long form) and *nɨ* (genitive) can both be found in possessive constructions, with a preference for one varying based on context

5.2 Second and third person pronouns

Existing research suggests that Lebo' Vo' is the only Kenyah language that has fused forms for the second person, while fused forms for the third person are reported to appear only in speech (Smith 2017). In the following sections, we looked at the dual, trial and plural forms of the second and third person pronouns in our dataset and found the second and third person dual pronouns appeared in both their fused and unfused forms.

5.2.1 Second person dual pronoun *kuɨ*

The pronoun table lists *kuɨ* as the second person dual pronoun. Existing literature states that *kuɨ* was formed through the fusion of *ikəm*, the second person plural, and *luɨ*, the cardinal number two (Smith, 2017). In our dataset, both the fused and unfused forms of the second person dual pronoun, namely *kuɨ* and *ikɨ luɨ* respectively, appear when eliciting the sentences 'two of you ___', where the last word was a verb.

Example 10 shows instances where both *kuɨ* (fused) and *ikɨ luɨ* (unfused) were used.

10)

    a. kue tavap

        kuɨ   tavap   (fused)

        2DL   to fall

        'Both of you fell down'

    b. ike lue tavap

        ikɨ luɨ   tavap   (unfused)

        2DL   to fall

        'Two of you fell down'

    c. ike lue ngasa

        ikɨ luɨ   ŋasa   (unfused)

        2DL   to run

        'Two of you ran'

Interestingly, Roland made a distinction between *kuɨ* and *ikɨ luɨ*. He explicitly stated that *kuɨ* in the sentence *kuɨ* <u>tavap</u> (10a) meant 'both', while suggesting that the use of *ikɨ luɨ* more accurately conveyed the meaning of 'two of you', resulting in the sentence *ikɨ luɨ tavap* (10b). This indicated that Roland's native-speaker judgment made a distinction between the fused and unfused form of the second person dual pronoun. Again, the unfused form *ikɨ luɨ* appeared in the sentence *ikɨ luɨ ŋasa* (10c) which meant 'two of you ran'.

Despite the expressed distinction between *kuɨ* and *ikɨ luɨ*, Roland also used *kuɨ* in other instances where we had elicited sentences incorporating the pronoun 'two of you'.

However, *kuɨ* was used together with *luɨ*, the cardinal number two. This can be seen in Example 11.

11)

    a. kue lue kuman

        kuɨ   luɨ   kuman (fused)

        2DL   two   to eat

        'Two of you ate'

    b. kue lue menyon

        kuɨ   luɨ   meɲon (fused)

        2DL   two   to sit

        'Two of you sat down'

It is notable that Roland used *luɨ*, the cardinal number two, alongside what we currently understand to be the second person dual pronoun *kuɨ*. If Roland understood *kuɨ* as conveying the meaning 'both' as mentioned previously, it may account for his use of *luɨ* which explicitly states that there were two subjects involved in the sentence as opposed to lumping the subjects together through a group reference when *kuɨ* is used. His use of *luɨ* together with *kuɨ* suggests that it was necessary to indicated the number of people who had eaten through the use of *luɨ*, begging the question of the exact function of *kuɨ* in these sentences.

From these examples, it is evident that both the fused and unfused form of the second person dual pronoun were used. However, the fused form *kuɨ* seemed to be less specific than the unfused form *ikɨ luɨ*, thereby requiring the use of the cardinal number *luɨ* to specify the number of subjects involved when the *kuɨ* was used. This observation lends itself to questions

about the nuances conveyed by the use of the fused form *kuɨ* as opposed to the unfused form *ikɨ luɨ*, or whether contextual situations determine whether one form is preferred over the other.

5.2.2 Third person dual pronoun *ruɨ*

    The use of *ruɨ* was tested during our third session where Roland was asked if *ruɨ* could be used instead of *irɨ luɨ* in the sentence for 'these are their two children' in Lebo' Vo'. Example 12 shows the instance where the acceptability of using *ruɨ* was tested.

12)

    a. rue tu anak lue ne

*ruɨ	tu	anak	luɨ	nɨ	(fused)
3DL	this.prox	children	two	this.med	

'These are their two children' (unacceptable)

    b. ire lue tu anak lue ne

irɨ luɨ	tu	anak	luɨ	nɨ	(unfused)
3DL	this.prox	children	two	this.med	

'These are their two children' (acceptable)

    Roland expressed that 'that sound [sic] wrong'[b] and provided *irɨ luɨ tu anak luɨ nɨ* as the alternative sentence.

    However, we elicited the sentence for 'these are their two children' again in a later session and received a conflicting response. This can be seen in the (12c) below.

12)

   c. rue tu anak lue ne

rui	tu	anak	lui	ni	(fused)
3DL	this.prox	children	two	this.med	

'These are their two children' (suggested)

When we met Roland in person, we elicited 'these are their two children' again. Although we were provided with *iri lui tu anak lui ni* (12b) again, Roland suggested that *rui* was a better choice (12c). As the first acceptability judgment was done during an elicitation over *Zoom* while the later test was done in person, it is possible that the situational contexts in which this sentence was tested influenced Roland's judgment of *rui*. Smith's (2017) observation that the third person dual *rui* 'appears mostly in storytelling' (p. 53) can possibly account for Roland's judgment of *rui* as unacceptable in (12a) due to its appearance in an elicited setting. This brings about the need for closer investigation of the third person dual pronoun in its fused and unfused forms, and the contexts in which each form is used.

5.2.3 Second person trial pronoun *kəlu*

   The use of *kəlu* in its fused form was observed in our sessions. Example 13 shows the instance where *kəlu* appeared in our dataset.

13)

   a. kelu telu menyon

kəlu	təlu	meɲon
2TR	three	to sit

'Three of you sat down'

b. kelu mong menyon

kəlu   moŋ   meɲon

2TR   all   to sit

'All of you sat down'

As expected, Roland used the second person trial pronoun *kəlu* when referring to a group of three as seen in the sentence *kəlu təlu meɲon* (13a). It is interesting that *təlu* was used in the same sentence as *kəlu*, according to its categorisation as the second person trial pronoun, already specifies that a group of three is being referred to. Although the use of *təlu* appears repetitive when glossed to its English equivalent, Roland provided this sentence very naturally without hesitation.

Even more notable is the sentence *kəlu* moŋ meɲon (13b), where *kəlu* was used when referring to all of you. The use of *kəlu* in this sentence does not seem to encapsulate the reference to a trial.

When comparing both sentences provided in Example 13, it can be seen that the number of people was specified as 'three' and 'all' by *təlu* and moŋ respectively, while *kəlu* did not make reference to the number of people involved, possibly indicating a loss of the trial distinction. A similar observation can be seen for the third person trial pronoun *rəlu* in section 5.2.4 below.

5.2.4 Third person trial pronoun *rəlu*

The third person trial pronoun appeared in its fused form, *rəlu*, in our dataset. This runs counter to Smith's (2017) previous observation that the fusion appears 'only in speech' (p. 53), although it is in line with the general observation that dual and trial pronouns in

Lebo' Vo' have gone through a fusion with the cardinal numbers (Smith, 2017). While Roland used *rəlu* to refer to a group of three, he also used it to refer to an unnumbered, though small, group of people.

Example 14 shows an instance where *rəlu* was used to refer to three people.

14)

    a. are relu pade' ake' situ

        arɨ   rəlu   paɗeʔ akeʔ   situ

        to be   3TR   cousin 1S   here.prox

        'My three cousins are here'

In this instance, the fused form of the third person trial pronoun *rəlu* was used as opposed to its unfused form *irɨ təlu* when eliciting the sentence for 'my three cousins are here' (14a). As the cardinal number three was conspicuously absent in this instance, it can be concluded that *rəlu* implicitly made reference to the number of people being referred to – which was three.

However, there were also instances where *rəlu* was used to refer to an unnumbered group of people. Example 15 below shows the two sentences provided when we elicited the Lebo' Vo' equivalent for 'your three cousins are here', one of which contains *rəlu*.

15)

    a. are telu pade' iko' situ

        arɨ   təlu   paɗeʔ ikoʔ   situ

        to be   three   cousin 2S   here.prox

        'Your three cousins are here' (acceptable)

b. are relu telu pade' iko' situ

arɨ	rəlu	təlu	paɗeʔ	ikoʔ	situ
to be	3TR	three	cousin	2S	here.prox

'Your three cousins (small group) are here' (preferred)

We were initially provided with the sentence arɨ *təlu* paɗeʔ *ikoʔ* situ (15a). Notably, *rəlu* was not present in this sentence, unlike the sentence elicited in (14a). Instead, the cardinal number *təlu* was used to specify the number of cousins present (15a and 15b).

Upon further clarification, Roland revised the sentence by adding *rəlu* in front of *təlu*, and expressed a preference for this new sentence (15b). Even though *rəlu* was added to this sentence, it was not used in reference to three people, as this was already made explicit by the cardinal number *təlu*. Additionally, Roland explained that the addition of *rəlu* was done to indicate that the group being referred to was a small one. The fact that the sentences meaning 'your three cousins are here' could be expressed independent of the presence or absence of *rəlu* allows us to see that the specification of there being three referents was not reliant on *rəlu* in this instance.

The following sentence shows an even clearer instance where *rəlu* was used to refer to an unspecified number of children.

16)

a. relu tu anak lue ne

rəlu	tu	anak	luɨ	nɨ
3TR	these.prox	child	two	here.prox

'These are their children (unspecified number)'

In Example 16, we made it explicit that the number of children was left unspecified in this instance. For this reason, it can be confirmed that the use of *luɨ* refers to the two parents of the children while *rəlu* refers to the unnumbered group of children.

From Examples 15 and 16, it can be seen that *rəlu* was used to refer to an unspecified number of people, albeit a small number, rather than functioning as a third person trial.

In summary, while *rəlu* is still used as a third person trial pronoun as seen in Example 14, there is evidence that *rəlu* can also function as third person paucal pronoun (Example 16). These findings point towards the expansion of the meaning of *rəlu* to possibly include the notion of a paucal, which warrants further investigation.

5.2.5 Second person plural pronoun *ikɨ*

A distinction was made between the second person trial *kəlu* and second person plural *ikɨ*. The following examples illustrate this distinction.

17)

    a. kelu mong kuman

          kəlu   moŋ   kuman

          2TR   all   to eat

          'All of you ate' (small group, four to ten people)

    b. ike mong kuman

          ikɨ   moŋ   kuman

          2PL   all   to eat

          'All of you ate' (large group, more than hundred)

In Example (17a), Roland stated that *kəlu* should be used when referring to a small group of about four to ten people[c]. He contrasted this with the use of *ikɨ* in (17b), explaining that ikɨ was used to refer to a large group of people of around hundred people, when 'speaking to the entire Long San…everybody is there'[c]. Again, the absence of the trial distinction in the use of *kəlu* can be observed. More importantly, it appears that the plural distinction is retained for the second person plural pronoun *ikɨ*, making its use distinct from the second person trial pronoun *kəlu*.

5.2.6 Third person plural pronoun *irɨ*

A distinction was made between the third person trial *rəlu* and third person plural *irɨ*. The following examples illustrate this distinction

18)

   a. are relu pade' ake' situ

       arɨ   rəlu   paɗeʔ akeʔ   situ

       to be   3TR   cousin 1S   here.prox

       'My cousins are here' (small group, more than four)

   b. are ire pade' ake' situ

       arɨ   irɨ   paɗeʔ akeʔ   situ

       to be   3PL   cousin 1S   here.prox

       'Your cousins are here' (large group, more than ten)

In Example (Q18b), Roland stated that *irɨ* should be used when referring to a big group of more than 10[d]. He contrasted this with the use of *rəlu* in (18a), explaining that *rəlu* was used to refer 'to a small group of people' that was 'more than four'[d]. Again, the absence

of the trial distinction in the use of *rəlu* can be observed. More importantly, it appears that the plural distinction is retained for the third person plural pronoun, making its use distinct from the third person trial pronoun *rəlu*.

5.2.7 Second and third person pronouns – Observation and conclusion

It is evident that both the fused and unfused forms of the second and third person dual pronouns *kuɨ* and *ruɨ* respectively, are used. However, it is possible that the fused and unfused forms convey slightly different nuances, and the contexts in which one form is preferred over the other remains unclear.

From the use of the third person dual and trial pronouns *kəlu* and *rəlu* in 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 respectively, there is evidence that the third person dual and trial pronouns are losing their specific reference to a trial while taking on the meaning of a paucal. Example 13 is an instance where *kəlu* (2TR) is used as a paucal while Examples 15 and 16 are instances where *rəlu* (3TR) is used as a paucal. With our data provided, it is possible that Lebo' Vo' is undergoing a loss in trial distinction for the second and third person pronouns, indicating a simplification of the pronominal system in Lebo' Vo'. However, it should be noted that the second and third person plural pronouns retain their distinction, as shown in Examples (17) and (18). Table 5 summarises the observed changes to the pronominal system.

Table 5. Changes to the Lebo' Vo' Pronominal System

Pronoun	Old category	New category
kəlu	2TR	2PAUC
rəlu	3TR	3PAUC

6 Conclusion

Owing to robust existing literature on the Pronominal system of Lebo' Vo' Kenyah, we were able to dive deeper and gain a deeper understanding of the pronouns in Lebo' Vo'. A closer look at the singular person pronouns reveals that the genitive form of the first person singular pronoun *keʔ* is preferred over the long form *akeʔ*, independent of the sentence construction – i.e. whether in the subject position or in possessive constructions. On the other hand, the genitive form of the second person singular pronoun *koʔ* is preferred in possessive constructions while the long form *ikoʔ* is preferred when in the subject position. However, a comparison of the use of the third person singular *yɨ* in its long form and *nɨ* in its genitive form reveals preferences for each form when found in various possessive constructions. Future research could focus on teasing out the distinctions between *yɨ* and *nɨ* by comparing their presence in various sentence constructions and possibly their contextual usage.

The fused and unfused forms of the second person dual pronoun *kuɨ* (and *ikɨ luɨ*) were found in our elicitations, with both being acceptable although appearing to convey slightly different meanings – *kuɨ* reportedly conveys the group meaning of 'both' while *ikɨ luɨ* means 'the two of you'. Similarly, fused and unfused forms of the third person dual pronoun *ruɨ* (and *irɨ luɨ*) were found in our elicitations. However, *ruɨ* was judged as unacceptable in one instance (12a), yet was judged as acceptable and was even offered as the 'shorter' version of *irɨ luɨ* in another instance of the same sentence being tested (12d). Further investigation could be done to figure out if one variant is preferred over the other, and in what contexts these preferences exist – for instance whether one variant tends to appear in everyday speech while the other becomes more prominent when one is conscious of their speech like in elicitations.

The third person dual and trial pronouns appear to be experiencing a shift in meaning from the trial to paucal, indicating a possible loss in the trial distinction of the second and third pronouns. Future research could focus on eliciting whether the same loss of a trial

distinction can be observed in both the inclusive and exclusive first person trial pronouns, *təlu* and *ameʔ təlu* respectively, to gather more evidence in support of this preliminary observation regarding the shift of the trial to a paucal.

Word count: 6539 words

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Footnotes

[a] taken from our second session with Roland on zoom, under the file titled
Kenyah-Lebo-Vo-Roland-2023-09-21-1.mp4

[b] taken from our third session with Roland on zoom, under the file titled
Kenyah-Lebo-Vo-Roland-2023-09-26-1.mp4

[c] taken from our fourth session with Roland on zoom, under the file titled
Kenyah-Lebo-Vo-Roland-2023-10-12.mp4

[d] taken from our first session with Roland on zoom, under the file titled
Kenyah-Lebo-Vo-Roland-2023-08-31.mp4

Grade: 95