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# The Babanki pronoun system<sup>1</sup>

Pius W. Akumbu

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5767-145X>

[pius.akumbu@cnr.fr](mailto:pius.akumbu@cnr.fr)

CNRS-LLACAN Villejuif

Roland Kießling

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4151-0210>

[roland.kiessling@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:roland.kiessling@uni-hamburg.de)

University of Hamburg

## Abstract

Pronominal systems of Grassfields Bantu languages stand out in a cross-linguistic perspective by their high degree of referential precision when it comes to specifying the internal composition of groups, as instantiated by the device of pronoun compounding. A comparison of available descriptions of Grassfields Bantu pronoun systems reveals a high degree of diversity with respect to categorical distinctions and compounding principles. Thus, cumulative pronoun compounding in which individual meanings of components are simply added on top of each other is attested side by side with incorporative compounding in which this is not the case, but rather the first pronominal component establishes a unifying bond by also incorporating the reference of the second component. Insights into the principles of pronoun compounding have rarely been exploited for the understanding of synchronic variation of pronoun systems across Grassfields and their historical dynamics. The present contribution seeks to remedy this situation for Babanki of the Central Ring group, following the descriptive lines of Gehling (2004) and Cysouw (2009) and fertilizing the historical study of Grassfields pronoun systems by synchronic insights from compounding in Babanki.

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## ጻጻጹ ጻጻጹ ጻጻጹ [Babanki (Kəjòm) Abstract]

A tʃi əmbyi yèn, təgà? tə Kwì ጻጻጹ? tə di? nənkwon a dʒi a vi?i gà?à byì kəjù a vi?i vəyoʔtə və nè. Sətsèn vi?i ndi? a ətʃə ə kəjù a mu?u mu və zì və tsèntə əgà? byì vi?i navyi a mu?u. Wù yì lye təgà? tə Kwì ጻጻጹ? wù à yèn la noʔə əgà? əkòɔ ɣə kyì? dʒi a və gà?à fa tsu byì vi?i a və di?i a əchə ə kəjù a mu?u. Vi? vətsevə tsèntə vi?i noʔə vətsem ta kəntəmə kə gà? kə mù?, vətsevə zìtə nè wì? mu? və mè kwù?sə wutsen kɔɔ vi? vətsevə tsu. A lì və ko ntimə laynsə əlye la dʒi nasen sə a vi?i Kwì ጻጻጹ? ə gà?à byì ጻጻጹ a vi? vəyoʔtə və nè sə shè?è a lɛ lɔ. Və ko ntimə laynsə əlye la sə dʒè? a lɛ mimbu ndi? a dʒi a sə di?i fa tsu lɔ. A chì nwà?lè a shè yès tənjkè la yès lye dʒisə a vi?i əgà?à Kəjòm ə nèe fa tsu. Yès tənjkè la yès dzimtə dʒi a vi?i a nè Gehling (2004) wenə Cysouw (2009) ə tise fa tsu. A dʒi nayèn yès bò?tə dʒi a və zì və zi?i byì fətiti fə dʒisə a vi?i gà?à byì kəjù a vi?i vəyoʔtə və nè.

Keywords: Compound pronouns; minimal; augmented; Babanki; Grassfields Bantu

### 1 Introduction

Pronominal systems of Grassfields Bantu languages stand out in a cross-linguistic perspective by their high degree of referential precision when it comes to specifying the internal composition of groups, as instantiated by the device of pronoun compounding. Systems of compound pronouns have been reported for most branches of Grassfields Bantu, e.g., Ring: Aghem (Hyman 1979: 52–55), Men (Schröter 2016: 66–73, Mua 2015: 28–30), Kom (Shultz 1997: 23–24), Babungo (Schaub 1985: 193–198), Lamso' (Grebe and Siyatan 2015: 89–90); Menchum: Obang (Asohsi 2015: 89–90); Momo: Mundani (Parker 1986); Nun: Bali-Mungaka (Stöckle and Tischhauser 1993: 13), Chufie' (Hamm 2021); Ngemba: Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 53–57), Mankon (Leroy 2007: 204–223), Mbili (Ayuninjam 1998: 237); Northern Mbam-Nkam: Limbum (Fransen 1995: 179–180); Bamileke: Medumba/Bangangté-Bamileke (Voorhoeve 1967), Ngiemboon (Anderson 1985), Bangwa (Nguendjio 2014: 119–123). Beyond Grassfields, they also seem to radiate into neighbouring groupings such as Beboid, e.g., Noni (Hyman 1981: 17f.) and Nchane (Boutwell 2020: 155–7), Yemne-Kimbi, e.g., Mundabli (Voll 2017: 167–72), and also Bantu A, e.g., Akoose (Hedinger 1981), Makaa (Heath & Heath 1998) and Nkosi (Dorsch 1911: 249–50). While Cysouw (2009: 326) was still inclined to grant this spread zone in central-western Cameroon universal uniqueness in this regard, compound pronouns have come to be reported

elsewhere, e.g., in Mande-speaking areas of West Africa (Vydrin 2010, Khachaturyan 2019).

The phenomenon of pronoun compounding integrates into a larger typological framework for the paradigmatic structure of person marking (Cysouw 2009) which deconstructs the category of pronominal plural reference in terms of reference to groupings of single participants. Comparison of available descriptions of Grassfields Bantu pronoun systems reveals a high degree of diversity with respect to categorical distinctions and compounding principles. Thus, cumulative pronoun compounding in which individual meanings of components are simply added on top of each other is attested side by side with incorporative compounding in which this is not the case, but rather the first pronominal component establishes a unifying bond by also incorporating the reference of the second component. Insights into the principles of pronoun compounding have rarely been exploited for the understanding of synchronic variation of pronoun systems across Grassfields and their historical dynamics. The present contribution aims at remedying this situation for Babanki, following the descriptive lines of Gehling (2004) and Cysouw (2009) and fertilizing the historical study of Grassfields pronoun systems by synchronic insights from compounding in Babanki of the Central Ring group. The study is based on data from the first author, a native speaker of Babanki, supplemented by WhatsApp discussions with five other native speakers, as well as secondary sources.<sup>2</sup>

Section 2 outlines the structure of the Babanki basic pronoun system, highlighting the special status of the first person dual pronoun **yúwù** which restricts reference to the immediate participants of speech, i.e., speaker and addressee. Section 3 presents the compound pronouns that come in three series, i.e., dual reference pronouns (3.1) and the compound augmented pronouns that refer to bipartite groups centered on an individual or on more than one person (3.2). Subsequent sections describe the ways of including non-pronominal components in compound pronouns (3.3), specific syntactic constructions involving compound pronouns as postverbal appositions (3.4) and the behaviour of the logophoric pronoun in compounding (3.5). Since pronoun compounding may hold the key to a more profound understanding of the synchronic variation and diachronic changes in Grassfields pronoun systems, Section 3.6 widens the frame to develop a historical perspective on the etymology of 1 + 2 dual pronouns across Grassfields Bantu and beyond. Results are wrapped up in a conclusion in Section 4.

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## 2 Basic pronouns of Babanki

The basic pronoun system of Babanki, a Central Ring Grassfields Bantu language of North-West Cameroon, has been described in traditional ways based on the distinctions of person, number and inclusiveness vs. exclusiveness, as indicated in Table 1 adapted from Akumbu & Chibaka (2012: 60).

Table 1: Babanki basic subject pronouns

person	pronoun form
1SG	<b>mà</b>
2SG	<b>wù</b>
3SG	<b>γə̀</b>
3SG.LOG	<b>yì</b>
1DUAL	<b>yúwù</b>
1PL.INCL	<b>və́'γə́ŋ</b>
1PL.EXCL	<b>yès</b>
2PL	<b>γə́ŋ</b>
3PL	<b>və̀wé</b>

Beside three singular and three plural pronouns for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person, the system is remarkable for its contrast of three distinct forms for the non-singular 1<sup>st</sup> person, i.e., a dual form which is minimally inclusive in its reference to a group of precisely two persons, i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person (1 + 2), in (1a), an augmented inclusive plural form which refers to a group of three persons at least including the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and at least one other 3<sup>rd</sup> person (1 + 2 + 3(+)) in (1b), and a plural form which excludes reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, including the 1<sup>st</sup> person and one or more other 3<sup>rd</sup> persons (1 + 3(+)) in (1c).

### (1) Babanki non-singular 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronouns

- (a) **yúwù tə̀ ʒì kə́báyn**  
 1 + 2 P2 eat fufu  
 ‘We (speaker and listener) ate fufu.’
- (b) **və́'γə́ŋ tə̀ ʒì kə́báyn**  
 1 + 2 + 3(+) P2 eat fufu  
 ‘We (speaker, listener and one or more persons) ate fufu.’
- (c) **yès tə̀ ʒì kə́báyn**  
 1 + 3(+) P2 eat fufu  
 ‘We (speaker and one or more persons excluding listener) ate fufu.’

Labels such as ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ pose descriptive and analytical problems since they remain vague with respect to the type and number of persons included or excluded. In order to avoid this vagueness, the composition of groups referred to in the non-singular pronouns needs to be specified by number combinations that refer explicitly to the type of persons included, as sketched in Table 2.

Table 2: Babanki basic subject pronouns (arrangement according to number)

	singular	plural	
		<b>yúwù</b>	1 + 2
		<b>vǎ'ǵǎŋ</b>	1 + 2 + 3(+)
1	<b>mà</b>	<b>yès</b>	1 + 3(+)
2	<b>wù</b>	<b>ǵǎŋ</b>	2 + 3(+)
3	<b>ǵǎ</b>	<b>vǎwé</b>	3 +

Following conventions introduced by Cysouw (2009), the plus symbol + placed between two numbers denotes the referential conflation of the person concepts indicated by the respective numbers, while a terminal plus symbol with no number following refers to two or more units of the respective person concept indicated by the preceding number. The bracketed plus indicates that reference to two or more persons is optional. In contrast to Table 1, the specification in Table 2 thus brings out that among the pronouns referring to groups it is only the pronoun **vǎ'ǵǎŋ** that includes reference to three persons at least. The pronoun **yúwù** refers to precisely two persons, whereas the rest refer to minimally two persons.

The display of the entire pronominal system can still be reorganized along the lines of a basic distinction of minimal vs. group or augmented reference replacing the number category in pronominal systems following Cysouw (2009), as realized in Table 3. The reason is that the introduction of the dual category and the contrast of inclusive vs. exclusive both of which are restricted to the non-singular first person incur a waste of descriptive apparatus, as obvious from the empty cells in Table 2.

Table 3: Babanki basic subject pronouns arranged according to minimality vs. augmentation

	minimal	augmented	
1 + 2	<b>yúwù</b>	<b>vǎ'ǵǎŋ</b>	1 + 2 + 3(+)
1	<b>mà</b>	<b>yès</b>	1 + 3(+)
2	<b>wù</b>	<b>ǵǎŋ</b>	2 + 3(+)
3	<b>ǵǎ</b>	<b>vǎwé</b>	3 +

This rearrangement aligns the dual pronoun **yúwù** (1 + 2) with the ordinary singular reference forms for first, second and third person and thus assigns it a special minimal, i.e., non-group, status which is justified by the following strands of evidence: First, **yúwù** (1 + 2) is the only one among the basic pronouns which refers to precisely two persons, i.e., speaker and addressee, the immediate speech-act participants, thus setting it apart from the augmented pronouns which all make reference to two or more persons. Second, it is the only non-singular basic pronoun which does not include reference to a third person, excluding it from the rest of the augmented basic pronouns. Third, **yúwù** (1 + 2) patterns with the rest of the minimal pronouns, i.e., those with singular reference, in its behavior with respect to compounding since it is used as base to derive a secondary dual form instead of the first person singular pronoun **mà**, as detailed in Section 3.1 below. Fourth, **yúwù** (1 + 2) is the only dual pronoun which cannot be decomposed morphologically, at least on a synchronic level (see Section 3.6). From a historical perspective though, it looks like a contraction of a prior compound of an opaque initial element **yú** plus the second person singular pronoun **wù**.

The system of independent pronouns (I) diverges from the subject pronouns (S) presented in Table 3 above in only two positions, i.e., the first person singular **mò** contrasting with the subject form **mà** and the third person singular **èwén** contrasting with the subject form **γè**, as presented in the unified overview in Table 4.

Table 4: Babanki basic subject vs. object pronouns (unified overview)

	minimal (S)	minimal (I)	augmented	
1 + 2		<b>yúwù</b>	<b>vá'γéη</b>	1 + 2 + 3(+)
1	<b>mà</b>	<b>mò</b>	<b>yès</b>	1 + 3(+)
2		<b>wù</b>	<b>γèη</b>	2 + 3(+)
3	<b>γè</b>	<b>èwén</b>	<b>vèwé</b>	3 +

While subject pronouns are restricted to identify the pronominal subject in a predication as illustrated in (2) below, the independent pronouns are required in direct object position (2), as prepositional complements (3) and as copula complements or predicative nouns (4).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Babanki is a s(aux)vo language, where the object, whether nominal or pronominal follows the verb.

(2) Examples of Babanki basic pronouns in subject and direct object position

- (a) **yúwù t̀ dzàŋ v̀wé**  
1 + 2 P2 call 3 +  
'We (you and I) called them.'
- (b) **m̀ t̀ dzàŋ ẁ**  
1 P2 call 2  
'I called you.'
- (c) **ɣ̀ t̀ dzàŋ m̀**  
3 P2 call 1  
'S/he called me.'
- (d) **ỳs t̀ dzàŋ ɣ̀ŋ<sup>4</sup>**  
1 + 3(+) P2 call 2 + 3(+)  
'We (excluding you) called you (PL).'
- (e) **v̀'ɣ̀ŋ t̀ dzàŋ èwén**  
1 + 2 + 3(+) P2 call 3  
'We called him/her.'

(3) Babanki independent pronouns as complements of prepositions

- (a) **yúwù t̀ k̀ à<sup>5</sup> v̀wé**  
1 + 2 P2 give to 3 +  
'We (you and I) gave them.'
- (b) **m̀ t̀ b̀m à ɣ̀ŋ**  
1 P2 ask to 2 + 3(+)  
'I asked you (PL).'
- (c) **ɣ̀ t̀ ʃ̀ f̀ m̀**  
3 P2 take from 1  
'S/he took from me.'

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<sup>4</sup> This construction also illustrates the semantic contrast between the non-singular 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns in that keeping the object pronoun ɣ̀ŋ (2 + 3(+)) constant and replacing ỳs (1 + 3(+)), with yúwù (1 + 2) or v̀'ɣ̀ŋ (1 + 2 + 3(+)), would produce semantically odd sentences because the listener would be included in both the subject and object pronouns, i.e., \*yúwù t̀ dzàŋ ɣ̀ŋ and \*v̀'ɣ̀ŋ t̀ dzàŋ ɣ̀ŋ.

<sup>5</sup> The underlying H tone of the Babanki prepositions á 'for, to' and fá 'from' changes to L when followed by a L tone object or complement. Compare, for example, k̀ á b̀ 'give to the dog' vs. k̀ à ẁyn 'give to the child', or wý á v̀'ɣ̀ŋ 'keep for us' vs. wý à m̀ 'keep for me' that illustrate á 'for, to'. Examples that illustrate the preposition fá 'from' include: ʃ̀ í fá b̀ 'take from the dog' vs. ʃ̀ í f̀ ẁyn 'take from the child', or z̀n fá v̀'ɣ̀ŋ 'buy from us' vs. z̀n f̀ m̀ 'buy from me'.



- (d) **vá'γáŋ t̀ wỳ á 'wén**<sup>6</sup>  
 1 + 2 + 3 + p2 keep for 3  
 'We kept for him/her.'

(4) Babanki independent pronouns as copula complements

- (a) **à t̀ b̀m m̀**  
 it p2 ask 1  
 'It is me who asked.'
- (b) **à t̀ b̀m əwén**  
 it p2 ask 3  
 'It is him who asked.'
- (c) **à t̀ b̀m ỳs**  
 it p2 ask 1 + 3(+)  
 'It is us (excluding you) who asked.'
- (d) **à t̀ b̀m v̀wé**  
 it p2 ask 3 +  
 'It is them who asked.'

### 3 Compound pronouns<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the basic pronouns presented in Section 2 above, compound pronouns combine two basic pronouns from the minimal or the augmented series to refer to groupings of participants conceptualized as subdivided in or composed of two distinct parties, as detailed in Table 5 where the compound margin is marked by the ampersand symbol & in contrast to the plus symbol + which denotes non-morphological conflation of semantic notions for person.

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<sup>6</sup> Downstep is caused by the L tone that remains afloat when the initial vowel of **əwén** is deleted because it is preceded by the vowel **á**.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'compound pronoun' is used here in a purely compositional sense, i.e., referring to a situation in which complex pronouns can be recognized as composed of simple pronouns that occur independently on a synchronic level. So, the usage of this term is not restricted to the special case of "compounds [...] with an incorporative reading of the first pronoun", as promoted by Cysouw (2009: 328).

Table 5: Babanki compound pronouns<sup>8</sup>

minimal compound (dual)	augmented compound (bipartite groups)			
minimal & minimal	minimal & augmented (individual plus group)		augmented & augmented (group plus group)	
1 & 2 -- <sup>9</sup>	1 & 2+ -- <sup>10</sup>	1 + 2 + 3(+) & 3+	<b>və'γəŋ &amp; vəwé</b>	
1 & 3 <b>yúwū &amp; wén</b>	1 & 3+ <b>yúwù &amp; vəwé</b>	1 + 3(+) & 3+	<b>yès &amp; vəwé</b>	
2 & 3 <b>wyē &amp; wén</b>	2 & 3+ <b>wyè &amp; vəwé</b>	2 + 3(+) & 3+	<b>γəŋ &amp; vəwé</b>	
3 & 3 <b>wé &amp; 'wén</b>	3 & 3+ <b>wé &amp; vəwé</b>	3+ & 3+	-- <sup>11</sup>	

As can be seen in Table 5, three types of compound pronouns can be formed: (a) minimal compounds which combine two minimal reference forms yielding a dual meaning, (b) augmented minimal compounds which combine a minimal and an augmented reference form and (c) doubly augmented compounds which combine two augmented reference forms. In all instances, the order of pronoun combination in compounding strictly follows the person hierarchy 1 > 2 > 3 (Siewierska 1993: 831). Cysouw (2009: 300) presents a very useful person hierarchy to which the Babanki evidence seems to conform: 1 + 2 > 1 > 2 > 3; the same hierarchy governs the “dualworthiness” (Plank & Schellinger 2000), as also supported by Babanki evidence, since the 1 + 2 dual is more deeply embedded in the Babanki pronoun system by virtue of its basic status than the rest of the dual forms which are all transparently compound. All of these compound pronouns are formed by the cumulative principle in that their individual meanings are simply added up, with the single exception of the dual pronoun **yúwū & wén** (1 & 3) which seems to represent a special case of incorporation as discussed in detail in Section 3.1 below.

<sup>8</sup> We are not aware of how the theoretically possible forms 1 + 2 & 3, 1 + 2 & 3(+), 1 + 2 + 3(+) & 2+ are realized. It is not clear whether it is possible to express these constellations in Babanki, or whether the meanings are somehow included in the referential scope of other compound pronouns.

<sup>9</sup> Semantically, this would be the cell occupied by the basic pronoun **yúwū** – which can also be used to refer to a situation in which first and second person are not conceptualized as a unitary group, but rather as two parties. It is excluded here because it is not a compound, at least not by synchronic criteria. There is, however, evidence for **yúwū** to be analyzed as a contraction of a prior compound historically (see discussion below in Section 3.5).

<sup>10</sup> The basic pronoun **və'γəŋ** 1 + 2 + 3(+) can be used to refer to the situation 1 & 2+ as well, i.e., there is no way to differentiate unitary group reference (1 + 2 + 3(+)) from reference to two distinct parties, i.e., the first person singular combined with more than one addressee. Or put otherwise, there is no way to co-opt another person to a conceptual group of addressees in bipartite forms and distinguish that co-opted second person from a co-opted third person.

<sup>11</sup> This cell is empty because the theoretically possible distinction of 3+ from 3+ & 3+ is neutralized in the form **vəwé**, i.e., there is no way to differentiate unitary vs. bipartite groups reference here.

### 3.1 Compound minimal pronouns (duals)

The compounding of two pronouns with minimal reference produces three compound dual pronouns which refer to precisely two persons as listed in the first column of Table 5. The compound dual pronouns are again listed in Table 6 along with their internally reconstructed composite source forms and a specification of their compositional semantics both of which will be discussed below.

#### (6) Babanki minimal compound pronouns (duals) and their origins

	reference	composite source form	composite source meaning
<b>yúwū &amp; wén</b>	1 & 3	*yúwù èwén	*[1 + 2] AND [3I]
<b>wyē &amp; wén</b>	2 & 3	*wù nè èwén	*[2] AND [3I]
<b>wé &amp; 'wén</b>	3 & 3	*èwén nè èwén	*[3I] AND [3I]

This set of compound duals stands out by the following characteristics: All of them include an eroded form ('wén of the independent third person singular pronoun èwén in second position. The first position is taken by the subject minimal pronouns for first cum second person, second person and third person, respectively. Thus, the only singular pronoun which is absent in compound duals is the first person singular pronoun m̀. Both restrictions, i.e., non-occurrence of the first person singular pronoun and the exclusive occurrence of the third person singular pronoun in second position, make perfect sense, since the only other possible combination which would suspend these restrictions and still conform with the person hierarchy, i.e., 1 + 2, already exists as the basic pronoun yúwù.

Under a morphophonological perspective, all initial components of the dual compound pronouns cannot stand alone in their current forms. However, these forms can easily be identified with some minimal pronoun which undergoes specific segmental and/or tonal changes. Thus, the first component in the second person minimal dual form wyē & wén (2 & 3) includes the second person singular pronoun wù while the second component can be identified with the third person non-subject pronoun èwén. All segmental and tonal changes can be explained by derivation from an underlying analytical phrase \*wù nè èwén 'you and her/him' involving the preposition nè 'with' in coordinative function, with individual steps involving the deletion of the nasal in the preposition (\*wù è èwén), creating a sequence of three vowels, i.e., a back vowel followed by schwa which, for unknown reasons, results to palatalization of the first vowel (\*wy ` è èwén), plus merging and fronting of the two schwas (\*wy è wén). The L tones are also merged and subsequently raised to mid

under the influence of the following high tone according to the general L-Raising rule (Akumbu 2019: 7), yielding the synchronic form **wyē** & **wén** (2 & 3).<sup>12</sup>

Regarding the third person minimal dual form **wé** & **‘wén** (3 & 3) derived from an underlying analytical phrase **\*əwén nə əwén** ‘her/him and her/him’, both components are identified with the third person independent pronoun **əwén**. The schwa of the first component is deleted, probably motivated by analogical levelling to allow all pronouns to begin with a consonant in initial position. The nasal in the preposition is also deleted (**\*wén ə əwén**), exposing the nasal of the first component to deletion as well (**\*wé ə əwén**), resulting in a sequence of three vowels, i.e., a front vowel followed by schwa. Instead of devocalizing and fronting as in the case of the second person pronoun above, the schwa is rather deleted (**\*wé ` wén**), presumably because the first vowel is front. The L tone of the deleted schwa causes downstep of the H of the second component, yielding **wé** & **‘wén** (3 & 3).

As for **yúwū** & **wén** (1 & 3), the first component can be identified with the basic minimal pronoun **yúwù** with dual reference 1 + 2. The initial schwa of the second component is deleted as with the third person pronoun (**\*yúwù wén**) and the L tone of **yúwù** has been raised to mid following the same L-Raising rule mentioned above for the second person pronoun.

As seen in Table 6, the preposition **nə** ‘with’ does not combine with **yúwù** (1 + 2) just as it does not combine with group centered compound augmented pronouns, presented below in Section 3.2. This incompatibility of **yúwù** (1 + 2) and **nə** ‘with’ presents a piece of evidence for 1 + 2 to go together with plural pronouns – not the singular ones, as argued above in Section 2. This actually shows that Babanki **yúwù** (1 + 2) rather has a hybrid nature, between singular and plural, although with more affinities to the singular pronouns.

Under a semantic perspective, the dual pronoun **yúwū** & **wén** (1 & 3) can be seen to present a special case of incorporation. Its initial component refers to first and second person together, contributing its non-singular first person notion to the overall compound. However, in deviation from the usual incorporative principle, the addition of the eroded third person minimal pronoun **əwén** seems to suppress or erase the second person reference originally included in the first component of the compound, i.e., **yúwù**. So, the incorporation of third person reference by addition of (**‘**)**wén** results in the subtraction of the second person notion originally included in **yúwù**.

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<sup>12</sup> Complex processes of this nature are also found in Babanki possessive constructions, e.g., **wyē yóm** ‘my child’ which derives from **wàn ə yóm** → **wà ə yóm** → **wy ` ə yóm** → **wy ` è yóm** → **wy è yóm** → **wyē yóm**. A general process of nasal deletion and vowel assimilation (Akumbu 2016) has been suggested to account for such data although the case of compound pronouns is not straightforward.

### 3.2 Compound augmented pronouns (bipartite groups)

The compound augmented pronouns subdivide into individual and group centered pronouns, depending on whether their initial component is from the minimal or the augmented set. They differ semantically from the basic augmented ones in that they refer to bipartite groups, i.e., groups which are composed of two distinct parties. The individual centered set combines an initial basic minimal pronoun with the third person augmented pronoun **v̀əwé** and refers to a bipartite group in which the first party consists of one person only, while the second party consists of two or more individuals, as seen in the second column of Table 5 above and repeated in Table 7 along with their internally reconstructed composite source forms and a specification of their compositional semantics which will be discussed below.

Table 7: Babanki individual centered augmented compound pronouns and their origins

	reference	composite source form	composite source meaning
<b>yúwù &amp; v̀əwé</b>	1 & 3+	* <b>yúwù v̀əwé</b>	*[1 + 2] & [3 +]
<b>wyè &amp; v̀əwé</b>	2 & 3+	* <b>wù ǹə v̀əwé</b>	*[2] & [3 +]
<b>wé &amp; v̀əwé</b>	3 & 3+	* <b>əwén ǹə v̀əwé</b>	*[3I] & [3 +]

By contrast, the group centered set combines two basic augmented pronouns referring to a bipartite group in which both parties consist of at least two (or more) persons, as seen the third column of Table 5 above and repeated in Table 8 along with their internally reconstructed composite source forms and a specification of their compositional semantics which will be discussed below.

Table 8: Babanki group centered augmented compound pronouns and their origins

	reference	composite source form	composite source meaning
<b>v́ə'yáŋ &amp; v̀əwé</b>	1 + 2 + 3 & 3+	* <b>v́ə'yáŋ v̀əwé</b>	*[1 + 2 + 3 +] & [3 +]
<b>yès &amp; v̀əwé</b>	1 + 3 & 3+	* <b>yès v̀əwé</b>	*[1 + 3 +] & [3 +]
<b>ỳəŋ &amp; v̀əwé</b>	2 + 3 & 3+	* <b>ỳəŋ v̀əwé</b>	*[2 + 3 +] & [3 +]

The individual centered compound augmented pronouns differ semantically from their basic augmented counterparts **yès** (1 + 3(+)), **ỳəŋ** (2 + 3(+)) and **v̀əwé** (3+), respectively, only in that they refer to groups composed of two distinct parties (examples 5a, 6a, 7a), while their basic counterparts refer to a single unified group, as illustrated in examples (5b, 6b, 7b), respectively.

(5) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central first person

- (a) **yúwù & v̀wé t̀ ʒí**  
1 + 2 & 3+ P2 eat  
'I and them ate / I ate with them.'
- (b) **yès t̀ ʒí**  
1 + 3(+) P2 eat  
'We (excluding you) ate.'

(6) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central second person

- (a) **wyè & v̀wé t̀ ʒí**  
2 & 3+ P2 eat  
'You and them ate.'
- (b) **ɣ̀əŋ t̀ ʒí**  
2 + 3(+) P2 eat  
'You (PL) ate.'

(7) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central third person

- (a) **wé & v̀wé t̀ ʒí**  
3 & 3+ P2 eat  
'S/he and them ate.'
- (b) **v̀wé t̀ ʒí**  
3+ P2 eat  
'They ate.'

As with the individual centered set, the group centered compound augmented pronouns differ semantically from their basic augmented counterparts **v̀á'ɣ̀əŋ** (1 + 2 + 3(+)), **yès** (1 + 3(+)), **ɣ̀əŋ** (2 + 3(+)), and **v̀wé** (3+), respectively, only in that they refer to groups composed of two distinct parties (examples 8a, 9a, 10a), while their basic counterparts refer to a single unified group, as illustrated in examples (8b, 9b, 10b), respectively.

(8) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central first person

- (a) **v̀á'ɣ̀əŋ & v̀wé t̀ ʒí**  
1 + 2 + 3(+) & 3+ P2 eat  
'We and them ate.'
- (b) **v̀á'ɣ̀əŋ t̀ ʒí**  
1 + 2 + 3(+) P2 eat  
'We ate.'

(9) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central first person under exclusion of second person

(a) **yès & v̀əwé**      **t̀ə**      **ʒí**  
 1 + 3(+) & 3+      P2      eat  
 ‘We (excluding you) and them ate.’

(b) **yès**      **t̀ə**      **ʒí**  
 1 + 3(+)      P2      eat  
 ‘We (excluding you) ate.’

(10) Bipartite group reference vs. unitary group reference with central second person

(a) **ɣ̀əŋ & v̀əwé**      **t̀ə**      **ʒí**  
 2 + 3(+) & 3+      P2      eat  
 ‘We and them ate.’

(b) **ɣ̀əŋ**      **t̀ə**      **ʒí**  
 2 + 3(+)      P2      eat  
 ‘You (PL) ate.’

Two peculiar asymmetries stand out in a comparison of the individual and group centered compound augmented pronouns in Table 5 above. First, the group centered set lacks a form based on the third person augmented pronoun **v̀əwé** as first component that would correspond to the individual centered third person based compound form **wé & v̀əwé**. This is due to the fact that the basic augmented form **v̀əwé** already refers to a potentially unlimited number of participants and there is no felt need for a grammaticalized differentiation between unitary group reference for third persons and a corresponding reference to bipartite groups in which both parties consist of two or more individuals. Second, there is a complementary distribution of the three basic first person forms **yúwù** (1+2), **yès** (1+3(+)) and **v̀ə'ɣ̀əŋ** (1+2+3(+)): **yúwù** (1+2) is only used in individual centered compounds, i.e., those which are centered on an individual supplemented by a group, while it does not occur in group centered compounds. This restriction supports the general alignment of **yúwù** (1+2) with the singular reference pronouns justifying their subsumption under the common label of ‘minimal basic pronouns’, as argued in section 2. Moreover, its behavior actually reflects the same semantic reduction to first person singular reference (and concurrent loss of second person singular inclusion) which has already been observed with the dual pronoun **yúwū-wén** in section 3.1.

Except for the two pronouns **yúwū & wén** (1 & 3) and **yúwù & v̀əwé** (1 & 3+), Babanki compound pronouns are cumulative in that individual meanings are simply added up without semantic mergers regarding person and number in bipartite groups. This is in contrast to the situation in Aghem (Hyman 1979) and Chufie’ (Hamm 2021),

where the incorporative principle is much more prominent, creating semantic ambiguities with respect to person and number constellations in bipartite groups, as demonstrated in (11) for Aghem and in (12) for Chufie’.

(11) Aghem compound pronouns

- (a) **yàà**        **yé**  
 2PL.LINK<sup>13</sup> 3PL  
 ‘you [SG] and them’, ‘you [PL] and him’, ‘you [PL] and them’, ‘you [SG] and him [LOG]’, ‘you [PL] and him [LOG]’
- (b) **yèè**        **yé**  
 3PL.LINK 3PL  
 ‘them and him’, ‘them and them’, ‘them and him [LOG]’

(12) Chufie’ compound pronouns

- (a) **pùgú-á**    **póú**  
 1 + 3-LINK 3 +  
 ‘I and they’, ‘we and s/he’, ‘we and they’
- (b) **póú-à**     **póú**  
 3 + 3-LINK 3 +  
 ‘they and s/he’, ‘they and they’

### 3.3 Inclusion of non-pronominal components in compound pronouns

As in other Grassfields Bantu languages, e.g., Chufie’ (Hamm 2021), and Aghem (Hyman 1979: 54–55), it is possible to replace the second part of a Babanki compound pronoun with personal names (13a), singular (13b), or plural (13c) common nouns.

(13) Incorporation of personal names and common nouns as second component in individual-centered augmented compound pronouns

- (a) **yúwū & Búŋ t̀**    **ʒì**    **kə́báyɲ**<sup>14</sup>  
 1 + 2 & Bung P2    eat    fufu  
 ‘I and Bung ate the fufu.’
- (b) **wyè & wàɲn t̀**    **ʒì**     **kə́báyɲ**  
 2 & child    P2    eat    fufu  
 ‘You (SG) and the child ate the fufu.’

<sup>13</sup> Both Aghem and Chufie’ have a linker, i.e., a linking morpheme between the first and second parts of the compound pronouns, akin to the Babanki linker **nə̀** assumed to account for the morphophonological effects discussed in Section 3.1 above. The Aghem linker assimilates to the vowel of the first element of the complex pronoun (Hyman 1979: 53).

<sup>14</sup> If the noun in the second component of the compound is L and not H (as in 13a), the last syllable of the first component will remain L, e.g., **yúwù & ʃə̀ɲn t̀ ʒì kə́báyɲ** ‘I and Shien ate the fufu’. This confirms that the M tone is derived by L-Raising, as discussed in Section 3.1 above.



- (c) **wé & kyí tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 3 & women P2 eat fufu  
 ‘Him/her and women ate the fufu.’

While the personal name or common noun can occur directly as the second part of a basic compound pronoun, the plural class 2 marker **və-** is required with augmented compound pronouns. This means that **və-** is obligatorily added to the second component as soon as the initial component of the compound is an augmented pronoun, i.e., in group-centered augmented compound pronouns, irrespective of whether the second component is a personal name (14a), a singular (14b), or plural (14c) common noun. Note that the class 2 prefix **və-** is also added to plural common nouns that come with another class marker, irrespective of whether this is a prefix (14d, e) or suffix (14f).

(14) Incorporation of personal names and common nouns as second component in group-centered augmented compound pronouns

- (a) **vǎʔyǎŋ & vǎ-Búŋ tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 1 + 2 + 3(+) & C2-Bung P2 eat fufu  
 ‘We and Bung ate the fufu.’
- (b) **yès & vǎ-wàyn tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 1 + 3(+) & C2-child P2 eat fufu  
 ‘We (excluding you) and the child ate the fufu.’
- (c) **yǎŋ & vǎ-kyí tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 2 + 3(+) & C2.woman P2 eat fufu  
 ‘You (PL) and the women ate the fufu.’
- (d) **yǎŋ & vǎ-vǎ-tsǎŋ tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 2 + 3(+) & C2-C2-thief P2 eat fufu  
 ‘You (PL) and the thieves ate the fufu.’
- (e) **yǎŋ & vǎ-mǎ-ŋín tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 2 + 3(+) & C2- C6a-bird P2 eat fufu  
 ‘You (PL) and the birds ate the fufu.’
- (f) **yǎŋ & vǎ-ŋám-ʔsǎ tè ʒì kǎbáyn**  
 2 + 3(+) & C2-cattle- C10 P2 eat fufu  
 ‘You (PL) and the cattle ate the fufu.’

In this function, the Babanki prefix **və-** resembles the – possibly cognate – preposed plural marker **bà** of Medumba (Keupdjio 2016) which serves to express associative plurals in the sense of ‘x and his/her friends/fellows/associates/lot’ (Corbett 2000, Moravcsik 2003), as in the following examples.

(15) Associative plurals

- (a) **Búŋ t̀è v̀ì wé v̀è-ndóŋ v́ó wén**  
 Bung P2 come 3 C2-friend C2.AM 3  
 ‘Bung came with his friends/lot.’
- (b) **Búŋ wé v̀è-ndóŋ v́ó wén t̀è t̀òŋt́é mò**  
 Bung 3 C2-friend C2.AM 3 P2 greet 1  
 ‘Bung and his friends/lot greeted me.’

### 3.4 Syntactic aspects of compound pronouns

Constructions in which actions are “performed jointly by either first or second person with a third person (or by first person with a second person)” (Bhat 2004: 103) are expressed in Babanki by compound pronouns using two distinct syntactic strategies. First, the compound pronoun can be used as the subject of a clause, as in (16).

(16) Compound pronouns in preverbal subject position

- (a) **yúwū & wén z̀ì k̀əbáyn**  
 1 + 2 & 3 eat fufu  
 ‘I and him/her ate the fufu.’
- (b) **wyē & wén z̀ì k̀əbáyn**  
 2 & 3 eat fufu  
 ‘You and him/her ate the fufu.’
- (c) **wé & wén z̀ì k̀əbáyn**  
 3 & 3 eat fufu  
 ‘S/he and him/her ate the fufu.’

Secondly, the compound pronoun can occur after the verb, as an afterthought in apposition to the subject, as in (17) where the postverbal compound pronoun obligatorily co-refers to the subject.

(17) Postverbal compound pronouns with co-reference to singular subject pronouns

- (a) **mà v̀ì yúwū & wén**  
 1SG come 1 + 2 & 3  
 ‘I have come with him/her.’
- (b) **ẁù z̀ì k̀əbáyn wyē & wén**  
 2SG eat fufu 2 & 3  
 ‘You (SG) eaten fufu with him/her.’
- (c) **ỳè t̀è v̀ì z̀òyn yúwū & wén**  
 3SG P2 come yesterday 1 + 2 & 3  
 ‘S/he came with me yesterday.’

- (d) **γə ʒì kəbáyɲ wyē & wén**  
 3SG eat fufu 2 & 3  
 ‘S/he has eaten fufu with you (SG).’
- (e) **γə v̄ì wé & ‘wén**  
 3SG come 3 & 3  
 ‘S/he has come with her/him.’

It should be noted that only compound pronouns and **yúwù** (1 + 2), not basic augmented pronouns such as **γəŋ** (18b) or **vəwé** (18c), can occur after the verb as afterthought in apposition to the subject. For this reason, the apposition in (17a) can be restricted to **yúwù**, only for the overall meaning ‘I have come with you’ in (18a).

(18) Restricted postverbal pronouns: compound pronouns and **yúwù** (1 + 2)

- (a) **mà v̄ì yúwù**  
 1SG come 1 + 2  
 ‘I have come with you.’
- (b) **\*wù v̄ì γəŋ**  
 \*‘You have come with you (PL).’
- (c) **\*γə v̄ì vəwé**  
 \*‘You have come with them.’

This again supports the general alignment of **yúwù** (1 + 2) with the singular reference pronouns, as argued in Section 2.

If the subject is non-singular or a compound augmented pronoun, it is repeated as an apposition to the subject and the third person plural **vəwé** added as its second component (19).

(19) Distributed compound pronouns in preverbal and postverbal position with non-singular subject

- (a) **yúwù v̄ì yúwū & vəwé**  
 1 + 2 come 1 + 2 & 3 +  
 ‘I and you have come with them.’
- (b) **vá‘γəŋ v̄ì vá‘γəŋ & vəwé**  
 1 + 2 + 3(+) come 1 + 2 + 3(+) & 3 +  
 ‘We have come with them.’
- (c) **yès v̄ì yès & vəwé**  
 1 + 3(+) come 1 + 3(+) & 3 +  
 ‘We (excluding you) have come with them.’
- (d) **γəŋ v̄ì γəŋ & vəwé**  
 2 + 3(+) come 2 + 3(+) & 3 +  
 ‘You (PL) have come with them.’

- (e) **vəwé vɪ**      **vəwé & vəwé**  
 3+    come    3+ & 3+  
 ‘They have come (by) themselves.’

It is also possible to replace the second part of the compound with a name (20a) or a common noun, be it singular (20b), plural (20c), or plural with the class 2 marker **və-** (20d).

(20) Incorporation of personal names and common nouns as second component in a postverbal compound pronoun

- (a) **mà vɪ**      **yúwū & Búŋ**  
 1SG   come    1 + 2 & Bung  
 ‘I have come with Bung.’
- (b) **wù vɪ**      **wyè & wàyn**  
 2SG   come    2 & child  
 ‘You (SG) have come with the child.’
- (c) **ɣə vɪ**      **wé & kyíí**  
 3SG   come    3 & women  
 ‘S/he has come with women.’
- (d) **mà vɪ**      **yúwū & və-Búŋ**  
 1SG   come    1 + 2 & C2-Bung  
 ‘I have come with Bung and others.’

When these personal names or common nouns occur as subjects, reference to them must be taken up by the 3SG or 3PL pronoun as second component in the appositional compound as in (21).

(21) Personal name or common noun as preverbal subject included in the reference of a postverbal compound pronoun

- (a) **Búŋ vɪ**      **yúwū & wén**  
 Bung   come    1 + 2 & 3  
 ‘Bung has come with me.’
- (b) **wàyn vɪ**      **wyē & wén**  
 child   come    2 & 3  
 ‘The child has come with you (sg).’
- (c) **wùwì vɪ**      **wé & wén**  
 woman   come    3 & 3  
 ‘The woman has come with him/her.’
- (d) **kyíí vɪ**      **wé & vəwé**  
 women   come    3 & 3+  
 ‘Women have come with them.’
- (e) **kyíí vɪ**      **yúwū & vəwé**  
 women   come    1 + 2 & 3+  
 ‘Women have come with me.’

The examples in (21a-b) seem to violate the person hierarchy 1 > 2 > 3, in that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is singled out from the compound pronoun as subject of the clause (instead of 1 or 2, respectively, which rank higher in the hierarchy).

In contrast to the distributive constructions involving compound pronominals in (21), an explicit hierarchy can be imposed on the semantic role constellation by construing individual participants as companions syntactically presented as complements to the preposition **nə** ‘with’ in prepositional phrases in (22). In these cases, control over the action is taken by the participants encoded in the subject only with the companion(s) relegated to a subordinate appendix lacking control. This is in contrast to the distributive constructions with compound pronominals in (21) where control is shared equally among the participants.

(22) Individual participants as companions introduced as complements to preposition **nə** ‘with’

- (a) **mà** **vì** **nə** **wén**  
1SG come with 3  
‘I have brought him/her.’
- (b) **wù** **vì** **nə** **Búnj**  
2SG come with Bung  
‘You have brought Bung.’
- (c) **γəŋ** **vì** **nə** **wàyn**  
2PL come with child  
‘You (PL) have brought the child.’
- (d) **Búnj** **vì** **nə** **mò**  
Bung come with 1  
‘Bung has brought me.’
- (e) **wàyn** **vì** **nə** **wù**  
child come with 2  
‘The child has brought you.’
- (f) **kyíí** **vì** **nə** **vəwé**  
women come with 3+  
‘Women have brought them.’

The function of compound pronouns as accompaniment cannot be obtained using the the conjunction **nə** ‘with’.

(23) Lack of function of compound pronouns as accompaniment using **nə** ‘with’

- (a) \***mà** **zì** **kəbáyn** **nə** **wén**  
1SG eat fufu with 3  
\*‘I have eaten the fufu with him/her.’

- (b) \***mà zì kǎbáyǎn nǎ Búŋ**  
 1SG eat fufu with Bung  
 \*‘I have eaten the fufu with Bung.’
- (c) \***ɣǎ zì kǎbáyǎn nǎ wáyǎ**  
 1SG eat fufu with child  
 \*‘S/he has eaten the fufu with child.’

It appears then that motion events create a situation of accompaniment encoded as simple pronoun in the complement of **nǎ** ‘with’ (22) while action events do not allow such a construction, but rather the accompaniment has to be expressed by a compound pronoun as complement of **nǎ** (23).

### 3.5 The logophoric pronoun

In Babanki, the anaphoric third person singular pronoun **ɣǎ** contrasts with a dedicated logophoric pronoun **yì** which marks a third person in reported speech as coreferential with the purported source of the quote, as elaborated in Akumbu & Kießling (2023). Thus, the Babanki logophoric pronoun **yì** in (24a) can only refer to the subject of the matrix clause, i.e., **wùwì** ‘woman’, the source of the reported speech, while the regular third person pronoun **ɣǎ** in (24b) refers to someone else, but not to the subject of the matrix clause.

(24) Babanki pronouns in reported speech

- (a) **wùwì gǎ? lá yì vǐ-ì**  
 1.woman say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG  
 ‘The woman<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming.’
- (b) **wùwì gǎ? lá ɣǎ vǐ-ì**  
 1.woman say QT 3SG come-PROG  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>j</sub> is coming.’

In contrast to other logophoric languages of the Grassfields area, e.g., Babungo (Schaub 1985: 198) and Noni (Hyman 1981: 15–18), the Babanki logophoric pronoun **yì** does not take part in pronoun compounding. Thus, **yì** cannot replace the second component (‘)wén in the compound pronouns in (25a-c), instead (‘)wén incurs ambiguity in that it may either be coreferential to the subject of the matrix clause or it may refer to someone else. The same holds for the initial component wé in the compound including the name in (25d).

(25) Babanki compound pronouns in reported speech

- (a) **ɣǎ gǎ? lá yúwū & wén é vǐ-ì**  
 3SG say QT 1 + 2 & 3 DJ come-PROG  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i/j</sub> and me are coming.’

- (b) **yə̀ gàʔ lá wyē & wén é vî-î**  
 3SG say QT 2 & 3 DJ come-PROG  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i/j</sub> and you (sg) are coming.’
- (c) **yə̀ gàʔ lá wé & ‘wén é vî-î**  
 3SG say QT 3 & 3 DJ come-PROG  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i/j</sub> and him<sub>k</sub>/her<sub>k</sub> are coming.’
- (d) **yə̀ gàʔ lá wé & Búnj é vî-î**  
 3SG say QT 3 & Bung DJ come-PROG  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i/j</sub> and Bung are coming.’

It is possible though to have a compound pronoun in a distributive construction as postverbal apposition to the logophoric subject pronoun *yî* in reported speech (26a-e). In those cases, however, the logophoric is simply linked by coreferentiality to the compounds’ components (‘)wén (26a-b) and wé (26c-e), respectively, without actually being incorporated in the compound itself morpho(phono)logically.

(26) Babanki compound pronouns as apposition to logophoric in reported speech

- (a) **yə̀ gàʔ lá yî vî-î yúwū & wén**  
 3SG say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG 1 + 2 & 3  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming with me.’
- (b) **yə̀ gàʔ lá yî vî-î wyē & wén**  
 3SG say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG 2 & 3  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming with you.’
- (c) **yə̀ gàʔ lá yî vî-î wé & ‘wén**  
 3SG say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG 3 & 3  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming with him/her.’
- (d) **yə̀ gàʔ lá yî vî-î wé & vó‘yáŋ**  
 3SG say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG 3 & 1 + 2 + 3(+)  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming with us.’
- (e) **yə̀ gàʔ lá yî vî-î wé & vèwé**  
 3SG say QT 3SG.LOG come-PROG 3 & 3+  
 ‘S/he<sub>i</sub> says that s/he<sub>i</sub> is coming with them.’

Individual (27) and group (28) centered compound augmented pronouns also occur as subject in reported speech but the logophoric pronoun cannot be integrated as part of the compound.

(27) Babanki individual centered compound augmented pronouns in reported speech

- (a) **yúwù & vèwé gàʔ lá yès é vî-î**  
 1 + 2 & 3+ say QT 1 + 3(+ ) DJ come-PROG  
 ‘I and them say that we<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’

- (b) **wyè & vèwé gâ? lá γèη é vi-ì**  
 2 & 3 & 3+ say QT 2+3(+) DJ come-PROG  
 ‘You and them say that you (PL)<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’
- (c) **wé & vèwé gâ? lá vèwé é vi-ì**  
 3 & 3+3 say QT 3+ DJ come-PROG  
 ‘S/he and them say that they<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’

(28) Babanki group centered compound augmented pronouns in reported speech

- (a) **vá'γáη & vèwé gâ? lá vá'γáη é vi-ì**  
 1+2+3(+) & 3+ say QT 1+2+3(+) DJ come-PROG  
 ‘We and them say that we<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’
- (b) **yès & vèwé gâ? lá yès é vi-ì**  
 1+3(+) & 3+ say QT 1+3(+) DJ come-PROG  
 ‘We (excluding you) and them say that we (excluding you)<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’
- (c) **γèη & vèwé gâ? lá γèη é vi-ì**  
 2+3(+) & 3+ say QT 2+3(+) DJ come-PROG  
 ‘You (PL) and them say that you (PL)<sub>i/j</sub> are coming.’

The fact that the logophoric pronoun *yì* cannot be integrated into compound pronouns may point to the incipient stage of pronoun compounding in Babanki.

### 3.6 Pronoun compounding in a historical perspective

Under a purely synchronic semantic perspective, the referential scope of all Babanki pronouns can be integrated into the overview in Table 9.

Table 9: Overview of Babanki pronouns under a semantic perspective

	0	+3(+)	& 3	& 3+	+3 & 3+
	minimal	augmented	minimal com- pound	augmented compound	
1+2	yúwù	vá'γáη	yúwū & wén	yúwù & vèwé	vá'γáη & vèwé
1	mà	yès			yès & vèwé
2	wù	γèη	wyē & wén	wyè & vèwé	γèη & vèwé
3	γè	vèwé	wé & 'wén	wé & vèwé	vèwé <sup>15</sup>

Under a compositional perspective, the two basic pronouns **yúwù** (1+2) and **vá'γáη** (1+2+3(+)) also seem to be retracable to contracted compounds due to phonological similarities with other existing basic pronouns, i.e., **yúwù** probably

<sup>15</sup> The morphological categories do not exactly match the semantic ones here, since there is no augmented compound pronominal for 3+3 &3+ reference, instead the plain augmented pronoun *vèwé* (3pl) takes over that function and thus comes to fill the gap in the system.



includes **wù** 2SG as second component, while the first component bears some resemblance to **yès** (1 + 3(+)). This in turn suggests that **yès** may also have been derived from a compound, e.g., \***yV-ès**, whose initial part appears to be related to that of the minimal 1 + 2 dual pronoun **yú-wù**. The form **vá'ǵǵǵ** seems to include **ǵǵǵ** 2PL as second component, while **vǎwé** seems to include **wén** 3SG as well. Both **vá'ǵǵǵ** and **vǎwé** share an initial component **vǎ** which is possibly a reflex of the Grassfields class 2 plural marker \***bV** (Hyman 1980: 182). This is most likely the same marker observed in an additional function as associate group indicator with compounds combining pronouns with ordinary nouns in Section 3.3 above. The tonal processes that derive **vá'ǵǵǵ** suggest that a preceding floating H tone of unknown origin docks to **vǎ** and dislodges its L tone which causes downstep of the following H tone of **ǵǵǵ** (i.e., \*H **vǎ** ǵǵǵ \*H → **vá** ` ǵǵǵ → **vá** 'ǵǵǵ).

From a historical perspective, four of the eight forms of the basic pronominal system actually seem to go back to a prior compound, as indicated in Table 10 (repeated from Table 3 above). This suggests that compounding is a key not only to the understanding of the structure of the modern Babanki pronoun systems and other Grassfields Bantu languages, but also to the reconstruction of pronominal forms in Grassfields Bantu and their diachronic development.

Table 10: Babanki basic pronouns under the perspective of historical compounding

	Minimal	augmented	reference
1 + 2	<b>yú-wù</b>	<b>vá-'ǵǵǵ</b>	1 + 2 + 3(+)
1	<b>mà</b>	<b>y-ès</b>	1 + 3(+)
2	<b>wù</b>	<b>ǵǵǵ</b>	2 + 3(+)
3	<b>ǵǵ</b>	<b>vǎ-wé</b>	3+

In a wider Grassfields perspective, it is especially the 1 + 2 dual pronoun which frequently betrays an origin in an erstwhile compound whose components have undergone coalescence and fusion to varying degrees, depending on the individual language. Table 11 presents the dedicated dual 1 + 2 pronoun forms for first and second person from a selection of Grassfields languages in contrast to relevant counterparts in the pronominal system, especially for the meanings 1 + 3(+) ('exclusive first plural'), 1 + 2 + ('inclusive first plural') and 2 ('second person singular').

Table 11: 1 + 2 minimal ('dual') pronouns in Wide Grassfields and beyond

		1 + 2	1 + 3(+)	1 + 2 +	2	etymology of 1 + 2	source
West Ring	Aghem	ɣàʔà wò	ɣàʔ´	˘sè´	wò	(1 + 3 +) & 2	Hyman 1979
Central Ring	Babanki	yúwù	yès	vó'ɣǎŋ	wù	*?? & 2	Akumbu & Chibaka 2012
	Kom	yes-i-và	yès	yes-i-nà	wà	(1 + 3 +) & 2	Shultz 1997
	Men	ɣásè-yò ~ yàsò	ɣàs	ɣásè-nì	ɣò	(1 + 3 +) & 2 (fusion)	Schröter 2016, Mua 2015
East Ring	Lamnso'	wòsò	vèr´	vèsən	à, wò	2 & *??	Grebe & Siiyatan 2015
South Ring	Babungo	sì, nsôo	yia	nsíŋ	à, ɣǒ	mono; (1 + 2 +) & 2 (fusion)	Schaub 1985
Menchum	Obang	súŋwè	sè	sánè, sámbìn	wè	(1 + 3 +) & 2 (fusion)	Asohsi 2015
North-EG	Limbum	sò, wiisòo	wìr (wèr)	sìi (sèe)	wè, wii	mono; (2 +) & 1 + 2	Fransen 1995
	Mfumte	é-wè'	bì	é-wyi'	wè	*?? & 2	McLean 2014
Ngemba	Bafut	sì, bì'ó	bì'ì	bì'ínè	ò	mono; (1 + 3 +) & 2	Tamanji 2009
	Mbili	bee-gu	bee	bee-ni	ù	(1 + 3 +) & 2	Ayuninjam 1998
Nun	Bali-Mungaka	bɯ'-ù	bù'	bà, bò	ù	(1 + 3 +) & 2	Stöckle & Tischhauser 1993
	Chufie'	pùʔ	pùgú	piêŋ'	ò	mono?	Hamm 2021
	Bamun	tà	pý	pwè	(w)ù	mono	Nchare 2010
	Bamenyam	wò pè	pú	pú	ó	*2 & ??	Ndedje 2003
	Bambalang	pǝgǝ	pìgǐ	piǎ	ò	(1 + 2/3 +) & 2 (fusion)	Wright 2009
	Bamukumbit	bó'(ò)	bì'	bí'nì	ò	(1 + 2/3 +) & 2 (fusion)	De Visser 2011
	Baba 1	tì	pòyò	pépè	wù	mono	Nashipu 2005



Beside synthetic 1 + 2 duals (Bamun, Baba 1), many other forms present different stages in the innovation and development of compounds, as summarized in Table 12. The cline ranges from straightforward analytic compounds combining the 1 + 3(+) pronoun with the second person singular pronoun (Aghem, Men, Kom; Mbili; Mungaka; Nchane, Mundabli), over compounds whose components have undergone various steps of assimilation and fusion (Bambalang, Bamukumbit, Ngamba, Ngiemboon, Yemba; Obang) up to the point of a historical fusion where one of the components remains opaque and cannot be retrieved synchronically any longer. This advanced stage seems to have been reached in Babanki for the initial component and in Mfumte and Mambila for the second component. Men actually testifies an ongoing process of fusion in the synchronic co-existence of the fully transparent analytic compound  $\gamma\acute{a}s\grave{e}-\gamma\grave{o}$  (1 + 3 +) & 2 and the contracted form  $\gamma\grave{a}s\grave{o}$ . Lamnso, Limbum and Bamenyam, after all, seem to present a different model based on the second person singular or plural pronoun in the first place.

Table 12: Form of 1 + 2 dual in Wide Grassfields and beyond

	attestation
synthetic	Bamun, Baba 1, Chufie’?; Babungo, Limbum, Bafut
* $(1 + 3 +)$ &2	Babanki, Lamnso’; Mambila
$(1 + 3 +)$ &2 + fusion	Bambalang, Bamukumbit, Ngamba, Ngiemboon, Yemba; Obang; (Men)
$(1 + 3 +)$ &2	Aghem, Men, Kom; Mbili, [Bafut]; Mungaka; Nchane, Mundabli

Interestingly, three languages, i.e., Babungo, Bafut and Limbum, display a situation of co-existence of a synthetic and an analytical form of 1 + 2 dual. This suggests an ongoing trend of cyclic innovation of 1 + 2 dual pronouns following the compounding model of incorporating the second person singular pronoun under the inclusory bond of an initial 1 + 3(+) pronoun.

In a broader comparative perspective, it would seem that the synthetic 1 + 2 dual pronouns of the form **tV** (Bamun, Baba 1) present genuine Bantoid reflexes of Proto-Benue Congo \***tV** 1PL (Babaev 2009: 43) which continues as subject marker 1PL \***tu-** in Proto-Bantu. These **tV** forms seem to be restricted to the Nun branch of Eastern Grassfields. By contrast, the synthetic 1 + 2 dual pronouns of the form **sV** (Babungo, Limbum, Bafut) seem to be restricted to the Northern and the Ngemba branches of Eastern Grassfields and to Ring (marginally), suggesting a complementary distribution of \***tV** vs. \***sV** on Proto-Bantoid level. For Proto-Grassfields, Babaev (2008: 159) reconstructs a two-way contrast of 1PL complex pronouns, i.e., \*(**be-**)**se** (inclusive) vs.

\*(**be-**)**r** (exclusive), with the ‘inclusive’ *se* component accounting for the synchronic **sV** forms and the ‘exclusive’ **r** component accounting for the synchronic **tV** forms, while the \***be-** prefix is identified with the class 2 marker \***ba-** (Babaev 2008: 158). While an augmentation of plural pronouns by an item which bears some etymological link to the marker \***ba-** of class 2 must definitely have occurred at some stage in Grassfields, an isomorphemic reconstruction of a two-way contrast based on the formula “class 2 prefix \***ba-** plus inclusive 1PL \***se** or exclusive 1PL **r**” seems too simplistic for two reasons. First, the wide synchronic dispersal of a tripartite contrast of 1PL forms in a minimal/augmented pronoun system across Grassfields (and beyond) suggests that such a system may also have to be reconstructed for Proto-Grassfields, i.e., 1 + 2 vs. 1 + 3(+) vs. 1 + 2 + 3(+). Second, all evidence assembled above shows that renewal of non-singular first person pronouns in Grassfields takes the form of compounding rather than derivation. Furthermore, one of the most widespread patterns of compounding involves the combination of an ‘exclusive’ first person plural pronoun 1 + 3+ with the second person singular pronoun to form a dedicated 1 + 2 dual first person pronoun. Thus, compounding in this case does not result in a straightforward isomorphemic addition of semantic notions. Rather, as demonstrated above, the common pattern of 1 + 2 dual formation involves the suppression of 3<sup>rd</sup> person reference originally included in the first component. Since historical reconstruction of any grammatical system must be informed by the patterns these systems take synchronically, semantic effects such as these have to be taken into account in the reconstruction of pronominal systems in the Grassfields.

#### 4 Conclusion

Babanki pronouns come in four sets: a basic set, supplemented by three types of compound pronouns. The basic pronouns operate a contrast of minimal vs. augmented or group reference, replacing the distinction of singular vs. plural, in order to capture the special status of the dual pronoun (1 + 2) in alignment with the ordinary singular pronouns, following the reasoning in Cysouw (2009).

The compound pronouns combine two basic pronouns from the minimal or the augmented series to refer to groupings of participants conceptualized as subdivided in or composed of two distinct parties. They come in three series: (a) minimal compounds which combine two minimal reference forms yielding a dual meaning, (b) augmented minimal compounds which combine a minimal and an augmented reference form denoting bipartite groups centered on an individual, and (c) doubly augmented compounds which combine two augmented reference forms, denoting bipartite groups centered on a party consisting of more than one person.

Compound pronouns in Babanki are mainly cumulative in that their meaning simply sums up the meanings of its individual components. The only exceptions to this are the two compounds based on the dual pronoun **yúwù** (1 + 2), i.e., the dual pronoun **yúwū** & **wén** (1 & 3) and the individual centered augmented pronoun **yúwù** & **vèwé** (1 & 3+). Both operate an incorporative reading in which the initial component, i.e., **yúwù**, sets an inclusory bond by specifying the entire compound as non-singular and the first participant of the group as 1<sup>st</sup> person. A second pronoun, i.e., **èwén** (3) or **vèwé** (3+), respectively, is attached to specify the second party of the group as either third person singular or third person plural. Remarkably, the notion of 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference, originally included in **yúwù** (1 + 2) and most readily recognizable as second part in the fossilised compound as **wù**, is suppressed. So, the incorporation of third person reference by additional components results in the subtraction of the second person notion originally included in **yúwù**.

Under a diachronic perspective, the minimal dual pronoun **yúwù** (1 + 2) can be traced back to a fossilised compound **\*yú-wù** which includes the second person singular pronoun **wù** as second component, while the first component **\*yú** is not attested synchronically. Internal reconstructions informed by pronoun compounding principles reveal that four of the eight basic pronouns of Babanki may actually have arisen from contractions of prior compounds. In general, a comparative perspective on the compound pronouns in the Grassfields region will help to disentangle the formal and functional development of pronominal systems in Grassfields Bantu. For instance, cross-Grassfields comparisons reveal a widespread pattern of analytical re-/innovation of dual 1 + 2 pronouns by way of compounding the exclusive first person plural pronoun 1 + 3(+) with the second person singular pronoun. It remains to be sorted out in a broader exploration to which extent synchronic systems of compound pronouns represent contact-induced innovations in the area or rather common heritage from a predecessor, either at the ultimate Proto-Grassfields Bantu level or some other intermediary level.

## Abbreviations

1(SG) first person singular, 2(SG) second person singular, 3(SG) third person singular, 1(PL) first person plural, 2(PL) second person plural, 3(PL) third person plural, C1, C2, C6a, C10 noun classes, DJ disjoint, EXCL exclusive, INCL inclusive, LINK linker, LOG logophoric, P2 hodiernal past tense, PL plural, PROG progressive, QT quotative, SG singular.

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