## In response to Christian Döhler’s query 20230112 on LingTyp :

### Joshua Birchall

Dear Christian,

First off, I would highly recommend checking out Kelsey Neely's 2018 PhD dissertation "The Linguistic Expression of Affective Stance in Yaminawa (Pano, Peru)". She gives a comprehensive description of the different linguistic resources that Yaminahua speakers use to express the subjective evaluation of their interlocutors and other referents in the discourse, including different bound morphemes.

In a different Amazonian language that I have been working with, the isolate Aikanã, there are two verbal suffixes that may be of interest to you, -ma 'honorific' and -are 'sympathetic'. The first expresses affection or respect, and is often used when addressing one's elders or one's children. The second expresses sympathy, pity or compassion.

1)

kau-ma-'e

eat-HON-IMP

'Please, eat!'

2)

Fabricia ware-’a-are-ya-e

Fabricia go-3SG.REFL-SYMP-DIR:hither-DECL

'Poor Fabrícia came all the way here walking.'

3)

hizaza uhu-h-are-za-e

2PL     cough-2.REFL-SYMP-PL-DECL   
‘You poor guys are coughing.’

The examples are from the Aikanã chapter of Amazonian Languages: An International Handbook (van der Voort and Birchall 2023: 43-44).

All the best,

Josh

### Peter Austin

As Jane says, many Pama-Nyungan languages have a nominal for sympathy, used as a head or in apposition to another nominal -- in Kanyara and Mantharta languages (Western Australia) this is gardulya.

Ngiyampaa, New South Wales, has a VERB suffix -guwa-y which encodes sympathy for an intransitive verb subject -- I don't have Donaldson's published grammar to hand but see  6.3.4.15 (page 234) in her PhD thesis.

Best

Peter

### Ilana Mushin

Following on from Jane’s email, such particles are widely found across Australian languages, including non-Pama-Nyungan languages. Eg Garrwa (and Yanyuwa) ‘kurda’ and Gija gaage- (the Gija forms inflect for gender). They can be used as compassionate responses as stand alone particles (response token), or they can be used turn initially or finally to express compassion over what has just been said, or is about to be said. They are usually used to express compassion over another’s misfortune, but can also be used affectionately. We have examples of them being used for people, animals and country.

Ilana Mushin

Professor of Linguistics

Deputy Head of School

President, Australian Linguistic Society

### Jane Simpson

Many Australian Pama-Nyungan languages have a nominal which semantically expresses both sympathy and affection, and syntactically is used as an expression of sympathy to an interlocutor (roughly equivalent to English 'Poor you!' or 'Poor thing'!), and to refer to third parties, whether as an argument or in apposition to an argument.  Here are some examples from  Warlpiri

wiyarrpa (N): (La,Ny,Y) dear (term of affection), unfortunate, poor thing. [expression of sympathy, concern, affection and closeness with some being].  
◆ **Wiyarrpa** nyurnu-jarrija kurdu. The poor baby got sick. ◆ **Wiyarrpa** nyinaka kulu-wangu. Don’t get into a fight, you poor thing! ◆ **Wiyarrparlu**npaju yungu. That was kind of you to give it to me. ◆ Ngajuku- purdangka **wiyarrpa,** milpa wijini. My poor brother, his eyes are sore. ◆ .. ◆ Kalalu-nyanu payurnu: “Yungkaju waja, wiyarrpaku.” “Nganja **wiyarrparlu**. Wiyarrparlu waja, nganja.” They would ask each other for things, “Give me (some) – to my poor self!” “Eat it you poor thing. You poor thing, I say, eat it.” Note: Also used to refer to deceased person in a way that expresses the speaker’s sympathy.◆ **Wiyarrpa**-ngurlu-nyanu muku pajurnu. He cut himself all over grieving over the poor (deceased) person.

and other examples  .. Kamparru- warnu-patulpalu nyinaja jalya-nyayirni – **wiyarrpa**.  The people from before were really naked, those dear people.

**Wiyarrpa** ngula nyangkalu jarntu larrpa-larrpa. Look at that poor skinny dog.

Laughren, Mary, Hale, Kenneth, Egan, Jeannie Nungarrayi, Patrick, Marlurrku Paddy Jangala, Hoogenraad, Robert, Nash, David, and Simpson, Jane. 2022. *Warlpiri Encyclopaedic Dictionary: Warlpiri yimi-kirli manu jaru-kurlu*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

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Jane Simpson  
Private e-mail

### Brigitte Pakendorf

Dear Christian,

in addition to having numerous diminutive and augmentative morphemes, the Lamunkhin dialect of Even has 2 verbal suffixes that express compassion and/or endearment.

See section 2.2.3 in Pakendorf (2017), Lamunkhin Even evaluative morphology in cross-linguistic comparison,*Morphology* 27:123–158 which you can find here: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01960459v1>. (If there’s a glitch with the link, let me know and I’ll send you the pdf-file.)

Best,

Brigitte

### David Gil

Indonesian has a high-frequency word *kasian* which expresses sympathy, empathy and affection.  However, unlike English *poor* and some of the diminutive forms mentioned earlier on this thread, Indonesian *kasian* cannot occur in clearly attributive constructions; instead, it may occur predicatively, or, perhaps most commonly, as a free-standing exclamation.

In this latter usage, it bears a resemblance to the South-African English *shame* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nElGCIMf2c>).

David

### Chao Li

Dear Christian,

Affectionate/emotive meanings can often be conveyed through adjectival reduplication in Mandarin Chinese. For example,

C:\Users\Maia PONSONNET\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\E4985A.tmp

As far as this example is concerned, the affectionate feel or the emotive connotation would be lost and it would read like an objective description if the adjectives (i.e. *qīng*and *lán*) were not reduplicated and the two modifying markers were dropped (for the sake of naturalness).

Best regards,

Chao

### Guillaume Jacques

Dear Christian,

Japhug has an exclamative word *dɯxpa* 'poor XXX', of nominal origin, but which, exceptionally, became able to index the number and person of the noun phrase it follows like a verb (however, only first and third person, not second person; besides, it cannot take any TAME marker). See [Jacques (2021:610-611)](https://langsci-press.org/catalog/book/295), as in (1).

(1) wo a-rɟit ra dɯxpa-nɯ ma nɯ ɯ-xtu ɯ-ŋgɯ nɯtɕu ɣɤʑu-nɯ rca

1sg.poss-child pl poor-pl lnk dem 3sg.poss-belly 3sg.poss-inside dem:loc exist:sens-pl sfp

My poor children, they are in his [the wolf's] belly

Guillaume

Sebastian Nordhoff added :

here is a more precise link pointing directly to the page in question to  
see in your browser:  
<https://paperhive.org/documents/items/Q7EaSdGqQ2jb?a=p:642>  
Best  
Sebastian

### Alex François

Dear Christian,  
  
Mwotlap, an Oceanic language of Vanuatu, has an adjective *[magaysēn](https://marama.huma-num.fr/Lex/Mwotlap/m.htm" \l "%E2%93%94m%5Ba%5Dgays%C4%93n" \t "_blank)*[maɣajsɪn] “sad, miserable”.

As a predicate head, it normally encodes the sadness of the subject:  
  
(1)  Ēntē-n  ne-**mgaysēn**.  
      son-3sg    Stative-sad  
     “Her son was miserable.”  
  
As a (subjectless) interjection, /ne-mgaysēn/ expresses the sadness of the speaker:  
  
(2)  Ne-**mgaysēn**!  
       Stative-sad  
     “So sad!” / “Sorry !”  (whether an expression of sympathy “sorry for you!” or an apology)  
  
Crucially, the same adjective has been conventionalized as a *postverb*, i.e. a verb modifier, to encode sympathy of the speaker towards one of the participants, or towards the whole situation.  
  
Sentence (3) could be interpreted literally as (3a) “he was crying sadly (because he was sad)”;  but it is also a bridging context where you could have a Sympathy reading (3b):  
  
(3) Kē   me-ten̄   **magaysēn**.  
     3sg    Pft-weep    sad/SYMP  
     a. “She was crying in sadness.”   [the subject is 'sad']  
     b. “She was crying, the poor thing.” [the speaker is 'sad' for the subject]  
  
In (4) the speaker expresses their sympathy for the main participant, which is not the grammatical subject, but the possessor:  
  
(4) Tateh   no-n haphap   **magaysēn**.  
     Neg:Exist  Poss-3sg things    SYMP  
     “He didn't have any possession, the poor thing.”    
  
(5) was uttered in a situation of farewell, where both the traveller and his friends were sad to part. Syntactically, the structure is ambiguous between a reading where the sad one is the subject or the object:

(5)   Yē   ti-tiok     **magaysēn** nēk?  
         who   FUT-see.off   sad              2SG  
  [Subject is sad]  ‘Who will have the sad role to see you off?’  
  [Object is sad] ‘Who will see you off, you poor fellow…’  
  
I briefly discussed the ambiguity of this example in my paper on Mwotlap complex predicates  ([see here p.123](http://alex.francois.online.fr/data/AlexFrancois_2004_Macroverbs-Mwotlap_preprint.pdf#page=15)).

Finally, a sentence like (6) has no identifiable participant that could be assigned the predicate {be.sad}:    
*magaysēn* here functions more like a Sympathy / Sadness modalizer over the whole situation:  
  
(6)  Na-lavēt  mal    bah   **magaysēn**.  
        Art-party     IAMIT   finish   SYMP  
      “The party is over, sadly!”  
   ~ “The party is over, poor us!”  
  
best  
Alex

### Jess Tauber

Yahgan (recently extinct genetic isolate from Tierra del Fuego) created diminutives by prefixing yeka 'little, small' to nominals- for ex. yek'oale:wa (from yeka wvle:wa) 'little boy' (v schwa, colon marks tenseness of the vowel preceding it). One could also postpose kuru: 'like, love' to create forms meaning 'beloved X' (as in some Biblical passages, etc.). That's about it, SFAIK, for this language.

Jess Tauber

Later addition :

I have to amend my previous statement about Yahgan. There IS a form kaiakaiiu:a (colon marks tenseness of the vowel preceding it) meaning 'alas, oh, dear me, what a pity'. But it is not appended to any nominal, and appears to be only found clause-initially (at least in the texts I've seen).

Jess Tauber

### Joanna Laakso

Dear Christian, dear all,

within Uralic, North Mansi (see e.g. Bakró-Nagy & al. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198767664.003.0029> ) can use the diminutive suffixes -kwe and -riś, the latter "with a shade of pity", not only in denominal diminutives but also in verbal conjugation:

ɑkweːkw, wɑːɣ-tɑːl pɑt-əm-ris'-ən

grandmother strength-CAR become-MIR.PST-DIM-2SG

‘Grandmother, poor you became tired!’

This is sometimes called the "precative conjugation".

As for Finnic, there seems to be (again) a nice areal/contact-related pattern. Finnish has "one-trick pony" nominals equivalent to Danish stakkels or Swedish stackars, usually postponed and forming a compound-like phrase: poikaparka ~ poika parka (/ rukka / ressu / raasu / riepu) ‘poor boy’ ["boy(-)poor.thing"]. Estonian, again, patterns with German and uses the general adjective vaene ‘poor (having little property)’ also in this attitudinal function of pitying.

(A similar pattern occurs with the use of diminutives in Estonian and Finnish: <https://www.academia.edu/94842951/Derivation_morphopragmatics_and_language_contact_On_the_role_of_German_influence_in_Estonian_word_formation> .)

Best

Johanna

PS. Etymological fun fact: Finnish parka ‘poor thing’ might be cognate with the Nenets word for overcoat or jacket which, in turn, has spread throughout Arctic Eurasia and (via Russian and Aleut?) to English and other Western languages.

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### Cat Butz

Hello Christian,  
  
Japanese uses one of its most internationally known words to express  
sympathy:  
  
kawaí-i inú=chan  
cute-NPST dog-TITLE  
"cute doggy"  
  
kawai-sóo=na inú-chan  
cute-EVID=N.LNK dog-TITLE  
"poor doggy" (lit. doggy that seems/looks cute)  
  
The suffix/clitic "-sóo" generally expresses evidentiality (e.g.  
Oishi-sóo! 'tasty-EVID' "That [food] looks good!"), but in the case of  
"kawai-sóo" has lexicalized into an expression of sympathy.  
  
Best  
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Cat Butz (she)  
HHU Düsseldorf, general linguistics

### Bruno Olson

Hi Christian,

See p. 412 in my Marind grammar for the "Affectionate" verb prefix *bat-*. I also cite Merlan's [description](https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/145172/1/PL-B89.pdf) of the Ngalakan Compassion prefix *wirli-*(1983: 66) with a similar meaning.

Cheers

### Laura Arnold

Hi Christian,

Ambel (Austronesian > South Halmahera-West New Guinea) has a clitic *ki=*which is typically used as a diminutive, but may also function as a marker of respect or affection. The latter uses are clearest when the context rules out a diminutive reading:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| e.g. | ái | lál | **ki**=pa | n-abí | n-anán |
|  | dog | big | **KI=**ART | 3SG.AN-want | 3SG.AN-eat |
|  | 'The big dog (whom I love) wants to eat.' | | | | |

There's more on the form and function of *ki=* in the Ambel grammar, sections 3.10 and 6.2.4: <https://laura-arnold.org/documents/Arnold_2018_AGrammarOfAmbel.pdf>

All the best,

Laura

### Prof. Dr. Paolo Ramat

talian (and Dutch) make use of suffixes to denote sympathy, empathy or affection:

il cagn*etto,*  il cagno*lino*"the little dog" (Dutch -*tje*, -*kje*etc.). Wolfgang Dressler and his team have many publications on this.

Best,

Paolo

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### Christian 20230112

Dear colleagues,  
  
I am looking for publications that address the difference between (1) and (2). In (2), the English adjective *poor* is used to signal the speaker's sympathy or affection towards the dog.

1. *The dog is waiting for its owner.*
2. *The poor dog is waiting for its owner.*

While English (and my native German) does this by extending the meaning of the adjective *poor*(and *arm* in German), other languages have special words with only that meaning. For example, Komnzo *bana*is a postposed adjective that only conveys sympathy.  
  
*ni bananzo namnzr karen.*  
ni           bana=nzo        na\m/nzr                       kar=en  
    1NSG    SYMP=only     1PL:NPST:IPFV/stay    village=LOC  
    'Only we poor guys stay behind in the village' (subtext: 'while the others are going to the celebration in the neighbouring village')  
    (NSG = non-singular, SYMP = sympathy marker, NPST = nonpast)  
  
Yet other languages seem to have special verb morphology for this. Van Tongeren describes this for Suki (her PhD grammar will probably be available later this year).  
  
Pointers to more examples and publications of this are most welcome. I was googling this with keywords like "sympathy", "empathy", "affection", but with not much luck. So there might be a whole literature on this phenomenon under different terminology. If that's the case, then please excuse my ignorance.  
Very Best,  
Christian