THE YUMAN *n- PREFIX

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0. There appears to be good evidence for reconstructing for Proto-Yuman a diminutive verb prefix of the shape *n-. In this paper I will describe the use of this prefix in various synchronic Yuman languages and present the evidence that it must have existed in Proto-Yuman. I will then describe two other *n prefixes, one of which occurs on a group of kinship terms and one of which is used to indicate the plurality of a restricted group of verb stems. Finally, I will argue that these three *n prefixes are ultimately related, and that the diminutive function was the original one.

1. A productive diminutive prefix *n- is used in the synchronic Yuman languages Kiliwa, Cocopa, Mojave, and Yavapai (Tolkapaya dialect, hereafter referred to simply as Tolkapaya).

Mixco reports that the Kiliwa prefix *n- "ambiguously diminutivizes either the verb action or state or the size of the subject or object of the verb" (1971: 147), citing such examples as

1a) p*n+táw 'to spread slightly, small subject spreads, to spread small object'
1b) p*n+čín 'to laugh (Dim.)'
1c) p*i?+n+híd 'to fly (Dim.)'

Similarly, Crawford (1966: 114) describes a prefix *n- or, rarely, *n-/y-, used in Cocopa to indicate the diminutive or affection and tenderness, examples being

2a) nxcáq 'it's bad' [diminutive]
2b) nmutúrr 'it's spherical' [diminutive]
2c) l*nycáq 'it's small' [diminutive]

3) nxcáqxaníy ká:nyú lu:n?ánxan' (he-was-little-bad-very he-was-little-in-any-manner he-did-not-little-say-very) 'None whatsoever was as bad as he'

The Cocopa prefix is also used in baby talk, that is, the speech of adults to babies and young children (Crawford 1970).

In Mojave a similar n- prefix also appears in baby talk, as in

4) ká-m-ndu: (Q=-dim=be) 'How are you?' (addressed to baby)—cf. standard ká-m-ndu: or ká-m-ndu:-m (Q-2=be-aux=qu)

and in diminutive expressions like

5a) nmkahav 'little Mojave'—cf. standard mkahav
5b) nummar 'baby' [diminutive]—cf. standard nummar

6) n?c?aw-k (dim=little-tns) 'He's little' (about a baby)—cf. i?c?aw-k (little-tns) 'He's little' (about an old man)

My most extensive use of such a prefix comes from my recent work on Tolkapaya Yavapai. To my knowledge, no instance of an n- diminutive prefix has previously been reported for an Upland Yuman language. However, my Tolkapaya teacher, Molly Fasthorse, uses an n- diminutive prefix in a large variety of sentences, all of which she describes as "baby talk". These include commands, questions, and statements addressed to the baby, like

7) m-n-yuu-h m-i: (2-dim-come-irr 2-say=exhort) 'Come here!' (to baby)—cf. m-yuu-h m-i: (to adult)
8) kanyum m-n-vaa-wee (when 2-dim-arrive-Q) 'When were you
born?'; 'When did you come?'—cf. standard kanyum m-vaa-wee (9) m-n-tuvm ha-m-n-koy-k m-yu-m (2-dim-tuvm ha-2-dim-koy-same 2-be-inc; NB, ...tuvm ha...koy-, with ...'s indicating the position of person markers, is 'half-breed') 'You're a little half-breed'—cf. standard m-tuvm ha-m-koy-k m-yu-m 'You're a half-breed'

The n- may also appear in sentences about babies (or other small or dear creatures):

(10) hmaan'v-h-č kee n-yaam-k yuu (baby-dem-subj where dim-go-same be=Q) 'Where did the baby go?'—cf. standard hmaan'v-h-č kee yaam-k yuu

(11a) hmaan'v-č hwak-k n' CREATE n-yu-č-k yu-m (babies-subj dim=two-same there dim-be-pl-same be-inc) 'There are two babies there.'—cf. standard hmaan'v-č hwak-k n' CREATE n-yu-č-k yu-m

b) hmaan'v-č hwak-k n' CREATE n-yu-č-k n-yu-m (dim-be-inc)

Finally, this Tolkapaya n- may be used in an utterance like (12), in which an adult "answers" a question like (11) as though the baby addressed were speaking:

(12) ?n'a-h-m ?-n-vaa-k ?-n-yu-nv (day-dem-case 1-dim-come-same 1-dim-be-comp) 'I just came yesterday'—cf. standard

?n'a-h-m ?-vaa-k ?-yu-nv

These examples show that the n may occur (in Tolkapaya at least) in imperatives, questions, and declaratives, and in all three persons. Notice, in fact, that it may occur more than once in a sentence—on the two verbal parts of the complex predicate 'half-breed' in (9), for instance, or on the numeral verb 'two' as well as the main verb 'be' in (11a); even, in (11b) and (12), on the auxiliary verb 'be'. (Notice that the diminutive may occur more than once in Cocopa too, as shown in (3).) It could be argued, in fact, that ability to take the diminutive is a good test for verbal status, on some level, in Tolkapaya. This is significant at least in view of the occurrence of n with the auxiliary 'be' in (11b) and (12) or with auxiliary 'do' in (13):

(13) hmaan'v-č ?č-n-šaa-k n-wa-m (baby-dem-subj something-dim-eat-same dim-do-inc) 'The baby is eating'—cf. standard

hmaan'v-č ?č-šaa-k wu-m

Chung (1976) has argued quite persuasively that these 'be' and 'do' morphemes are synchronically virtually unanalyzable parts of "compound tense markers" -kυum and -kυum, but I feel that the fact that these sequences may be broken up by such morphemes as the diminutive n and the first-person prefix ?- (in (12)) shows that the yu and wu/vi must retain a good deal of verbal status. (The actual synchronic role of these tense markers within the speaker's system surely merits extensive further study.)

I suspect that the restriction of the use of the n prefix to verbs holds generally in other languages too. Its occurrence in Mojave expressions like (5) is not, I think, counter evidence to this claim; these words, like the Yavapai auxiliaries, can also be argued to be historically of verbal origin.

I originally proposed that the diminutive prefix could be reconstructed for Proto-Yuman on the basis of its occurrence only in Kiliwa, Cocopa, and Mojave; the discovery of this morpheme in Tolkapaya as well means that it is now attested in all recognized subgroups of Yuman (Kiliwa, Diegueño-Cocopa, River, Pai). I think it very likely that it
will be found in other languages as well. I have devoted a large amount of space to the description of the Tolkapaya n- prefix, then, not only because I believe that it is probably very similar to the diminutive prefix that must have been used in Proto-Yuman, on the basis of the data available, but also because I hope that a sufficient corpus of examples will stimulate other workers to look for traces of this prefix in the languages they work on. I studied Tolkapaya for months before ever hearing this morpheme, and I believe that a certain amount of contextual stimulation (preferably with a real baby!) is probably necessary to discover it.

There are a few lexical occurrences of the n prefix in words for 'little' in two other languages in which the prefix is not otherwise attested—k'intum in the Campo dialect of Diegueno and both cinko- and vindu in Paipai.3 Pre-root n's are so rare otherwise in Yuman that the occurrence of n's in these words with obvious diminutive meaning suggests that these languages might once have had more productive diminutive n's. Significantly, the first Paipai word has an alternate form ekos, without the n, suggesting an alternation exactly parallel to the Mojave one shown in (6).

Martha Kendall has remarked on occasion that the only nasal vowel in Verde Valley Yavapai occurs in a word for 'child' or 'offspring', sâwâ. Although phonetic nasalization of vowels is common in Tolkapaya, the only unpredictable nasalization I have observed in that dialect occurs in the same word. It is intriguing to speculate that this nasalization, too, might be a reflection of the diminutive n-

In all observed occurrences of the diminutive morpheme it appears as an "internal" prefix, immediately before the stressed CVC verb root, after any other prefixed material. This position can, therefore, be postulated for the Proto-Yuman *n-. I believe that the meaning of the prefix can be specified as more than just "diminutive". It may be argued that the n basically expresses the speaker's affection, tenderness, or amused toleration (what we might call generalized diminutive feeling) for the subject of the verb on which the n appears. In the most common use of the prefix, these verb subjects are babies, and therefore a natural extension of the meaning is to "diminutivize" the action of the verb, to make the verb mean '...the way a baby would', or something similar. An example of this from Tolkapaya is

(14) hman'--v-č inma-k n-yu-m (baby-dem-subj dim=dance-same dim-be-inc) literally 'The baby's dancing', but actually somewhat closer to 'The baby's trying to dance' (since obviously babies can't really dance)—cf. standard ...ima-k yu-m

In order to test whether a nonsubject could be the object of the speaker's diminutive feeling, I made up n-versions of the following sentences and presented them to my Tolkapaya teacher:

(15) kθar-če hman'--ve čnk'č-o-k yu-m (dog-subj baby-dem dim=bit-same be-inc) 'The dog bit the baby'—standard ...čk'č-o-k...

(16) vhle-če hman'--ve čŋqam-k wi-n (old=man-dem-subj baby-dem dim=hit-same do-comp) 'The old man hit the baby'—cf. standard ...čŋqam-k...

(17) vhle mëyq yat-č hman'--ve čŋqam-k wi-n (old=man mean very-subj baby-dem dim=hit-same do-comp) 'The very mean old man hit the baby'—cf. standard ...čŋqam-k...

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In each case, it seemed that the use of n in these sentences was interpreted to refer to the subject, not to the object, even though the object was in each case the canonical diminutivized person. For instance, Ms. Fasthorse's reaction to (15) was that it would only be acceptable if the dog in question was a small puppy. (16), in turn, implies that the old man referred to gave the baby a love pat—the action of the verb at least, and by implication the subject (or his motives) as well, are diminutivized, not the object. Similarly, (17) is also acceptable baby talk, but it means that "maybe the man wasn't as mean as we thought", since, as before, he just gave the baby a love pat. Again, the primary diminutive feeling is directed toward the action and its agent. In all other examples of the use of this prefix that I have seen other than the Kiliwa verb in (1a), the meaning is similarly restricted to the subject, and by extension, the action, of the modified verb; I assume that the possibility of reference to the object in some Kiliwa uses of the morpheme must also be an extension from the basic subject-reference.

2. The second n- prefix that I will discuss is one which occurs in a group of kinship terms. Langdon recognized this prefix as a separate element in her grammar of Diegueño (1970: 131), saying that it "denotes consanguineal relatives of older generations than ego, except for parents. Occasionally, the reciprocal term (used by the relative in question to refer to ego) is attested and has the same form without the prefix", examples being

(16) -naka:y 'father's sister' -ka:y 'brother's son' -nemuy: 'great grandparent' -muy: 'great grandchild'

As far as I can tell, the meaning of this prefix for Yuman generally is probably somewhat more general than that given by Langdon. Wares (1968) cites fifteen kinship term cognate sets containing n- prefixes, words for 'father' (150-152—Wares' numbering), 'father's older brother' (154), 'father's father' (155), 'father's mother' (156), 'father's sister' (157), 'mother' (284), 'mother's brother' (285), 'mother's father' (286), 'mother's mother' (287), 'mother's older sister' (288), 'mother's younger sister' (289), and 'older sibling' (376). On the basis of these, it seems that the n- may mean simply 'relative older than ego'. The same reciprocity noted by Langdon can also be reconstructed, at least for sets like *n-pi 'father's sister' vs. *pi 'brother's child' (59). 4

3. The third prefix I will consider here is a plural marker attested in all dialects of Diegueño, Cocopa, Yuma, Mojave, Yavapai, Wapalo, and Paiute. Its use seems to be restricted in all cases for which I have data to some subgroup of motion verbs. Langdon calls the group of verbs which take the n- plural prefix in Diegueño "verbs of directed motion"; they include 'go away', 'be there/be around', 'come', 'come toward', 'go down', 'be in the direction of', 'pass by/cross over', 'get to the top', 'climb', 'cross over', 'come out', 'go out', 'go in', and 'go around'. The plural prefix n- appears in absolute initial position in the verb stem which it modifies, before all the prefixes which occur in the nonplural form, as shown by these Diegueño examples:

(19) nonplural pekik 'pass by, cross over' nonplural xekay 'cross over' (Langdon, 114)

This position seems to be standard for this prefix in all languages for which it is attested.
4. It is understandable that one might want to try to relate the
three n- prefixes discussed in sections 1-3, just because n's are other-
wise so rare in non-root positions in Yuman. Other than these three
morphemes, there are no grammatical morphemes, prefixes or suffixes, of
the shape n in Yuman. I believe that such a relationship (admittedly
at a rather distant level) can be argued for, on both semantic and mor-
pho-syntactic grounds, and that the evidence indicates that the most
reasonable assumption is that the diminutive use is basic.

Two arguments may be based on morphology and the distribution of
the morphemes within the Yuman family. First of all, the diminutive,
while technically a prefix (as the term is used in Yuman), might be
better viewed as an infix, since it frequently appears within a lexical
verb (immediately before the stressed root syllable) which is not
otherwise analytic synchronically—it was for this reason that I
glossed some n-plus-verb combinations as complex diminutive stems. The
kinship term n also occurs prefixed to the CVC root, but since the
roots in question are all simply CVC in shape, with no other prefixes,
the kinship n is always the first prefix in the word. The position of
the plural n can be quite different, however, since it occurs at the
very beginning of the word, before the whole nonplural stem. The mor-
phological evidence, then, suggests that the diminutive prefix (and
possibly also the kinship term prefix) is more closely bound to the
stem, more deeply integrated into the prefix structure of the word in
which it occurs, than is the plural n; this, in turn, suggests that the
diminutive may be of greater antiquity than the plural.

Distributionally, the diminutive prefix is more widely attested
than either of the other two n's, if its occurrence in all major sub-
groups is accepted as evidence that it must have once been in pan-Yuman
use. The other two prefixes do not occur at all in Kiliwa, the most
divergent Yuman language, suggesting that their use may be reconstruc-
ted for non-Kiliwa Yuman only.

I think there is a natural semantic correlation between diminutive
and "honorific" (i.e., a term applied to someone older or respected) and
plural morphemes— for instance, there is at least one Uto-Aztecan mor-
pheme which can be argued to have all three uses, with again, the
diminutive meaning being the most basic of these (cf. Langacker n.d., p. 16) 6
But although such "universal" semantic correlations are suggestive, the
most powerful evidence for relating these three morphemes emerges from
a consideration of how the diminutive could have extended to the other
meanings within the context of Yuman structure.

The development of both the kinship term prefix and the plural
prefix from the diminutive hinges on the primary reference of the dimi-
nutive to the subject of the verb it marks argued for in section 1.

The use of the n in 'older than ego' kinship terms reflects the
fact that in Proto-Yuman kinship terms were undoubtedly primarily verbs,
only secondarily nouns. The verbal use of kinship terms is still demon-
strable for Yuma (Halpern 1942) and for Mojave, and various other facts
support this analysis for other Yuman languages. 7 The meaning of these
kinship verbs is 'have someone who is one's [kinship term]' or 'call
someone [kinship term]'— in other words, the subject of the kinship
verb corresponds to the possessor of the corresponding English Kinship
noun, and it is the object of the kinship verb to whom one might apply
the term that is the English gloss. The Mojave sentence ?-intay-pé (1-
mother-tns) has the sense of 'She is my mother', for instance, but must be more literally translated as 'I have her for a mother' or 'I call her mother', since its subject is the speaker.

Many California and neighboring languages have kinship systems in which there is a large degree of reciprocity, in Langdon's sense of the term: the same kin term may be used for both a younger and an older relative (Gifford 1922: esp. pp. 130-131) calls this "self-reciprocity"). I propose that at some stage of (pre-) Proto-Yuman a similar system was in use, with the CVC kinship roots having both "older" and "younger" reference. n-diminutive forms are used extensively in language addressed to or referring to babies in Cocopa, Mojave, and Tolkapa, and it seems reasonable to assume that this was probably also the case in Proto-Yuman. Since the use of the n-form is restricted (generally) to cases where the baby is the subject of the modified verb, n-forms of kinship terms would always be those of which the baby was the subject and his relative the object. Since babies (generally) have no relatives younger than themselves, n-forms would only be used with reference to relatives 'older than ego'. It seems reasonable that from such a situation the use of n-forms could have been generalized (perhaps for disambiguation) for use in all cases where a once-reciprocal kinship term was being used specifically for its "older" referent. Following this, the use of the n- on these forms became fully lexicalized, and it was no longer synchronically analyzeable in all cases.8 The appearance of an originally diminutive morpheme on the kin term for the older of a reciprocal pair seems aberrant, in that the usual system is for the younger to be so marked (cf. Gifford 1922: 130), but it is reasonable given the "reverse" semantics (to our way of thinking) of the Yuman kinship verbs.

I believe that the extension of the diminutive n to use as a marker of plurality on intransitive verbs can also be related to the restriction of the n to subject reference. The other plural morphemes which are used in Yuman have a strong correlation with "objects" either because their use implies the existence of an object (for instance, the C plural prefix, probably related to an instrumental prefix implying action on a "bunch" of objects (cf. Munro 1976: 225), is used in Yuma for a specific "conjunctive for distributive object" (Halpern 1947: 93ff.) or because they have a parallel syntactic use as markers of object nominalization (in Munro 1976 (ch. III) I argue that this is in fact the basic meaning of the plural morphemes). If the other plural markers are correlated with the existence of objects, their use must have at one point at least have been fairly well restricted to marking plurality of transitive verbs only. But there were not many other verb-modifying morphemes available for use as plural markers.

If diminutive vs. nondiminutive verb forms are compared, however, they are very suggestive of plural/nonplural forms. The nonplural/nondiminutive forms refer to generalized action, the standard notion implied by the lexical meaning of the verb. The use of these forms is never inappropriate, even in a diminutive/plural context. But the diminutive/plural forms, which give some added flavor to the utterance, are only appropriate in a subset of the occasions in which the unmodified verb might be used. Formally, there is a similarity between verb forms modified by the diminutive n and those modified by the various plural morphemes in that all the morphemes in question are incorporated into the structure
and are thus very difficult to segment synchronically (as for the purpose of glossing). At least one plural marker, the \( u \) prefix, in fact, occurs at just the same point in the prefix structure of the modified verb that the diminutive \( n \) does—immediately before the initial consonant of the stressed CVC verb root. The \( u \) seems to have some connection with objecthood, however, and its use is still fairly well restricted to transitive verbs. It is no wonder, then, that the \( n \) might have been perceived as a similar sort of marker which was largely restricted to subject reference, and, by implication, to intransitives. (In fact, most of the cited and freely produced uses of the \( n \) diminutive that I have seen have been with intransitives—sentences like (15)-(17) above, while fully grammatical, are uncommon.) I do not think that it is at all unreasonable to suppose that this perceived similarity between diminutive and plural forms, coupled with the subject-reference of the diminutives, could have led to the specialized use of the diminutive \( n \) as a marker of plurality on a subgroup of intransitive verbs. Two problems remain, however: the fact that the \( n \) plural marker is used only on certain motion and location verbs (not on other intransitives, such as, say, adjective verbs), and the fact that its position in the verb stem is different from that of the diminutive. I have already argued that the initial position of the \( n \) plural marker suggests that it reflects a later overlay than the \( n \) diminutive, which is so closely bound into the structure of the verb. One possibility is that the initial position of the plural marker was adopted deliberately in order to disambiguate it from the diminutive. This is not, however, the happiest explanation possible, and we must continue to look further for a more persuasive one.

In any event, I believe that I have shown that there is good evidence for considering the \( n \) diminutive prefix to have been the source for both the \( n \) 'older than ego' kinship prefix and the \( n \) plural prefix, though much more work remains to be done on this interesting comparative topic.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. My thanks go to all those who have discussed these ideas with me; to my fellow Tokapaya students and to Martha Kendall and Sandra Chung, for insights into Yavapai structure; and to my teachers Nellie Brown and Molly Fasthorse, who provided all the Mojave and Tokapaya data cited here. My work on these languages was supported by National Science Foundation grant S074-18043 and by the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, and I am most grateful to both of these bodies.

   The abbreviations used in the glosses for examples in this paper include aux=qv = question suffix on auxiliaries, comp = completed, dim = diminutive, exhort = exhortative, inc = incomplete, irr = irrealis, pl = plural, Q = question morpheme, same = same-subject, subj = subject, tns = tense, 1 = first-person, 2 = second-person. The symbol = separates parts of a complex gloss.

2. Other Tokapaya morphemes in which the diminutive \( n \) may appear which are not synchronically main verbs but which may be argued to be of verbal origin include the negative \( \text{?um} \), the modal \( \text{yite} \), predicative \( \text{pee} \) 'where', and the intensive suffix \(-\text{ra}(v)\). (I doubt that this list is exhaustive.)
3. These forms are from lexical files in the Yuman archives, University of California, San Diego, based primarily on fieldwork by Margaret Langdon and Judith Joël, respectively.

4. The n prefix never occurs in the Kiliwa cognates Wares cites (sometimes, however, an h prefix occurs); sometimes the n is omitted from the cited Walapai or Yavapai forms.

5. Some of my information about the distribution of this prefix comes from Hinton (1971), an unpublished preliminary survey of Yuman pluralization processes. I have continued this research myself to a small extent, but hope to complete a more general study of Yuman pluralization at some time in the future.

6. Some other "universal" semantic correlations include the use of plural forms as "formal" or "honorific" devices, and, conversely, the use of plural forms of various sorts in baby talk. One example of this is the hospital nurse's "How are we today?" to her patient; in my own experience (even before I started writing this paper) I have often observed myself and my husband addressing our small son with morphologically plural forms (cf. the familiar didums etc.).

7. Margaret Langdon discussed this point in her paper presented at this conference, which she is now preparing for publication at a later date. One piece of evidence on the subject which has not, I believe, been previously reported, is that the Tolkapaya Yavapai plural suffix -ä, which on verbs exclusively indicates plurality of subject, on kinship terms (synchronically nouns in Tolkapaya) indicates plurality of the possessor (i.e., the subject of the historical kinship verb). Consider, for instance, ?-tale (1-father) 'my father'/?-tala-ä (1-father-pl) 'our father [singular].

8. Another indication that this use of the n has been fully lexicalized and is no longer recognized as the same as the diminutive morpheme is that the kinship term *n is nY in Cocopa, while the diminutive *n is n (replaced by nY in two verb stems only). Grammatical morphemes differ in the degree to which otherwise regular Cocopa sound shifts have applied to them.
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In 1970 numerous linguists working on Hokan and Yuman languages were invited by Margaret Langdon to attend a conference at the University of California, San Diego. This made it possible for specialist to get to know each other and to learn in detail what each other was doing. The meeting was so successful that participants soon began asking when we would meet again. In 1975 Margaret Langdon invited the Yumanists to a workshop in conjunction with the research being done at the Yuman Languages Archives which she had established with the aid of a National Science Foundation grant. Again, the participants felt that the workshop was so successful that we ought to meet every year if possible. In 1976 another workshop was held at UCSD to which both Hokanists and Yumanists were invited. These proceedings are the result of that workshop. It is now expected that Hokanists and Yumanists will meet every year. The 1977 meeting will be at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

The participants of the 1976 Hokan-Yuman Languages Workshop gratefully acknowledge all the work that Sandra Chung and Pamela Munro did in organizing and running the workshop. Thanks are also due to Donald Crook and Susan Norwood for looking after the many details that helped make the workshop run smoothly.

Unfortunately, everyone who presented a paper at the 1976 Hokan-Yuman Languages Workshop was not able to prepare a final version for inclusion in this volume before it went to press. All the papers in this volume were presented in an earlier version at the 1976 workshop except the ones by Langdon and Webb, which were not ready in time for presentation for the workshop. However, since many of the points they contain were discussed at the workshop, they are included here.

The papers are presented according to the groups of languages presented at the workshop. Since there were some last minute changes in the program, I must plead faulty memory if I inadvertently placed some papers in an order different from that of the workshop presentation. The Langdon and Webb papers are included in the appropriate groups.

James E. Redden
Carbondale, May 1977
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