

## 1st Person Patient Diminutive Verbs in Caniba and Western Abenaki

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A noteworthy feature reported for many Algonquian languages is the ability of verbal stems to take diminutive morphology. Of particular interest is their use---and the limitations thereon---with transitive-stem constructions. Wolfart 1963:71 reports diminutives with all four main transitive animate (TA) "theme signs" (= Patient markers, primarily of person) in Plains Cree: i.e. use with 1st, 2nd, and Direct (=3rd person) Patient markers, as well as the Inverse. In striking contrast, LeSourd 1995's extensive discussion of the diminutive element *-hs-* in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet verbs notes that while it is clearly productive for AIs, IIs, and the TA Direct, he was unable to locate or elicit any examples in TI (transitive inanimate) use, or with other TA theme signs.

So far, the extant corpora of Penobscot as documented by Siebert and Speck seem to attest the same apparent restriction: we find extensive examples of AI and II diminutives, as well as TA Direct diminutives, but none for other TI or for other TA theme signs.

But looking to the immediate west of Penobscot, i.e. to Caniba and Western Abenaki, we do find at least two clear examples of diminutive-marked 1st person Patient forms (1).

(1) Diminutive 1s person Patient in Caniba and Western Abenaki

a. Caniba (Pickering 1833:549)

*keketemañghéremissi Jes8s, añg8nikki kisi pitigan nhaghé*  
'tu auras pitié peut-être de moi, puis-~~q~~ tu es venu dans moi'

*kəkətəmąkerəmąssi [J]jesohs, ąk<sup>w</sup>ani=hki kisi-pitikan nhake*  
2-pitiful-feel.TA-1Pat.DIM-(P), Jesus since=PRT (IC)-PERF-enter.AI-2sCj 1-body  
'you have pity on (little/pitiful) me, Jesus, since you have entered my body'

b. Western Abenaki (Masta 1932:77)

*Ah! N'dadan machina O kia wijokamessina.*  
'Ah! my father is dead O you! Do help us.'

*ah nətatan mahčina o kia [wičohkam-ąssi-na]*  
oh my-father he-dies oh you [help.TA-1Pat.DIM-1p.Imper]

'ah, my father is dead---oh you, help (little/pitiful) us!'

In the Caniba example (1a), the TA form *ketemañghérem-* 'take pity on (AN)' is followed by <issi>, which likely represents /əssi/. This /əssi/ in turn is the regular realization of /ihsi/: Western Abenaki, Caniba, Penobscot, and Passamaquoddy-Maliseet all share a regular shift of string /ihsi/ to /əss/. This /ihsi/, occupying the TA theme sign (= Patient marker) position, is the collocation representing verbal diminutive element *-hs-* and 1st person Patient marker *-i-*.

As with other cases of diminutive 1st person Patient (see especially Oxford 2014:65's discussion re Plains Cree TA theme signs), it is difficult to determine whether or not the 1st person Patient element is reflected in just the first, just the second, or both /i/ elements on each side of /hs/. I.e. which of the following analyses is the correct one remains unclear:

(2) Diminutive 1s person Patient: alternative analyses

- a. ihsi = -i-hs-i = 1s.PAT-DIM-linker/AI
- b. ihsi = -i-hs-i = linker/AI -DIM-1s.PAT
- c. ihsi = -i-hs-i = 1s.PAT-DIM-1s.PAT

Given the pattern of the Direct element, where it is clearly repeated on both sides of the /hs/, e.g. in Penobscot as /-a-hs-α/ (and as cognate /-a-hs-a/ in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet),

(3) Penobscot TA Direct diminutive: *-a-hs-α* = DIR-DIM-DIR

- a. *nətáhsamα* 'I feed him, give him food'  
*nətahsámahsα* 'I give him a bite to eat, a small amount of food; I feed him (with sympathy, affection), I feed poor little him.'  
*nətahsámahsαk nətahsípsisəmak* 'I give my poor little birds a bite to eat, a little food.'
- b. *nəkəlapilα* 'I tie him, tie him up, tether him'  
*nəkəlapilαhsα* 'I tie him (a little AN object)'
- c. *nəpássikhα* 'I split him'  
*nəpássikhαhsα* 'I split him (a little animate object)'
- d. *nəséhspawəλα* 'I frighten him to tears'  
*nəsehspáwəlahsα* 'I frighten him to tears (a small child)'

we might tentatively assume the same analysis for /ihsi/ here. That said, it is difficult to conclusively exclude the possibility that one of these /i/ elements is either the morphological linker /i/ or the

common AI abstract Final /i/ seen, for example, in the reflexive Final *-əsi* and reciprocal Final *-əti*.

In the Western Abenaki example (1b), the TA form *wijokam-* 'help (AN)' is followed by <essi>, that is, again /əssi/ as the realization of /ihsi/, as above. The additional affix *-na* (cognate to Penobscot *-ne*, Passamaquoddy-Maliseet *-ne*) adds a 1st person plural into the imperative/hortative argument structure: taking it from 'take pity on (little/pitiful) me' to 'take pity on (little/pitiful) us'.

So while the exact parsing remains open, Caniba and Western Abenaki both show a clear use of a diminutive with the 1s Patient marker.

Even though it is a striking feature of these kinds of systems, and one that may have potential diagnostic relevance for particular models of TA morphosyntax (see again Oxford 2014:65 and Déchaine & Reinholtz 2008), documentation of TA theme sign diminutives remains relatively thin for Algonquian languages. In particular, while Plains Cree is reported to have diminutives for all four main TA theme signs, a specific search in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet (LeSourd 1995) was only able to uncover a use with the Direct, one paralleled exactly in the Penobscot data reported above. This is a striking and difficult-to-explain observation.

With this new report of diminutives usable with 1st person Patient markers (and in a form directly comparable to the Plains Cree ones) in systems quite closely related to Passamaquoddy-Maliseet---i.e. Caniba and W. Abenaki---we now have one further step towards a factorial typology of possible TA theme sign diminutives.

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