

Creating new words for old languages

Dr Julie Reid, 23 November 2021

Introduction

- ▶ When reclaiming your language, don't be afraid of change, or of creating new words to help your language grow to meet the demands of the modern world. Traditional Owners have many decisions to make regarding their language if they want it to be suitable for everyday use in the 21st century.

Borrowing

Language	Standardised form
Madhi-Madhi	
Ladji-Ladji	Pupup
Wadi-Wadi (Swan Hill)	Pupu(p)
Wadi-Wadi (Piangil)	Pupupi
Wemba-Wemba	popeyn
Baraba-Baraba	popeyn
Wimmera (Wergaia)	Pupup
Djab Wurrung	Pupup
Dja Dja Wurrung	Ngilamun [newborn], pupup
Bunganditj	Kun-
Wannon	Pupup
Warrnambool	Pupup
Colac	purteRong
Wathawurrung	Pupup
Woiwurrung	Pupup
Thagungwurrung	Pupup
Yota-Yota	Kothupka
Dhudhuroa	Pantjina
Pallanganmiddang	Kapika
Gippsland	Lith

Borrowing

- ▶ Q: Are there other words that you need that might be available in another Kulin language? Make a list.

Compounding

Compounding

Compounding creates new words by putting two existing words together, for example, *baby-sit*.

Wemba Wemba

- ▶ tarmi-mureng 'hard headed or obstinate person' (hard, tough-head)

Taungurung

- ▶ babani-marnang 'thumb' (mother (of the) hand)
- ▶ bik-gurn 'mushroom' (earth neck)

Q. How would you create a word for stubborn using compounding?

Derivation - Having suffix

Derivation means adding a **suffix** (ending) to a word to create a new, related word.

Technically, it should change its function (eg noun to verb, verb to adjective) to be called derivational.

Of course, there may be more than we currently know about.

Derivation - Having suffix

Having Suffix

This suffix creates describing words by adding the ‘having’ suffix to a noun.

Wemba Wemba

In Wemba Wemba, the having suffix is **-wil**.

- ▶ liya-wil ‘sharp’ (teeth-having) (waddy, fighting club)
- ▶ kurraty-wil ‘fat’ (fat-having) (a fat person)

Derivation - Having suffix

Taungurung

In Taungurung the suffix is **-bil**.

- ▶ Guna-bil 'duck' (faeces-having)
- ▶ Parnmin-bil 'wet, rainy' (rain-having)

Q. How would you create a word for 'beautiful' using the **-bil** suffix?

Q. What other words could you use with the **-bil** suffix?

Derivation - Possession

Possession

A possessive (owner) suffix can create a new word.

Wemba Wemba

In Wemba Wemba this creates a descriptive word that implies a fairly permanent quality of the person or thing.

- ▶ Telk-uk ‘good, beautiful’ (good(ness)-her)
- ▶ Tirtenayuk ‘newness belongs to it’

Derivation - Possession

Taungurung

A similar formation is exemplified below.

- ▶ 1. barrng-i gurrk-ngat
track-link blood-?its
vein (blood's track)

Another example is:

- ▶ 2. ngilng-i wurrung-u
bone-link mouth-its
upper jaw (the mouth's bone)

Derivation - Possession

Q. Is this similar to the Wemba Wemba examples?

Perhaps you could create words in the same way, using the possessive suffixes found in Taungurung.

Q. Can you think of any words that could be utilised in this way?

Derivation - Stative verb suffix

Stative verb suffix

Add this suffix to a noun (the name of something) or descriptive word (adjective) to create a (intransitive (one person or thing)) verb that means being in that state or condition.

Wemba Wemba

In Wemba Wemba this suffix is -aya.

- ▶ Telk 'good' becomes Telk-aya 'to be in a good state, to be well'
- ▶ Tulu 'little' becomes tulaya 'to be little'

Derivation - Stative verb suffix

Taungurung

In Taungurung there are two possible stative verb suffixes. The first is -ara.

- ▶ burunh(dh) 'dark, night' becomes burundhara 'to get dark' (to be in a state of darkness)

The second possibility is -ba.

- ▶ birrm 'breast' becomes birrmba 'to suckle'
- ▶ ngaang 'breath' becomes ngaangaba 'to blow nose'

Derivation - Stative verb suffix

- ▶ Q. Can you think of something that would distinguish the meanings of -ara and -ba?
- ▶ Q. What other words could be suffixed with one of these suffixes?

Derivation - Causal suffix

Causal or 'to make something else change'

Causal suffixes are used to show that one person causes change to the state or condition of another person or thing.

Wemba-Wemba

In Wemba Wemba this suffix is -una.

- ▶ Telk 'good' becomes Telk-una 'to cure or to make well/good'

Derivation - Causal suffix

Taungurung

Taungurung appears to use the suffix -guna or -gunga 'to take hold of' for this purpose.

- ▶ wurrdha 'big' becomes wurrdha-gunga 'to increase' (to make something bigger)

Q. Can you think of any causative words that could be derived from nouns or adjectives using the causative suffix?

Derivation - Past participle suffix

Verb to Adjective by using the past participle suffix

As in English and many other languages, you can use a past participle form, which is used after the word is/was in English (The water is/was frozen.), as an adjective (the frozen lake).

Wemba Wemba

In Wemba Wemba the suffix is -en.

- ▶ Purkena 'to break' becomes purkenen 'broken' as in purkenen mirkuk 'a broken egg'

Derivation - Past participle suffix

Taungurung

The past participle suffix in Taungurung is -an.

- ▶ Borrongba 'break' becomes borrongban 'broken'

Q. Can you think of a word to use with this suffix in Taungurung?

Derivation - Reciprocal suffix

Reciprocal (each other)

You can change the meaning of an intransitive verb by turning it into an action that is carried out by more than one person on each other.

Wemba-Wemba

The Wemba Wemba suffix is -tyerra.

- ▶ Taka 'to hit' becomes tak-tyerra 'to fight, to hit each other'.

Derivation - Reciprocal suffix

Taungurung

The Taungurung suffix is -djirri/djerri.

- ▶ djilba ‘to hit’ becomes djilip-djerri ‘to fight’
- ▶ yuma ‘to give’ becomes yuma-djerri ‘to share’
- ▶ dhumba ‘to speak or tell’ becomes dhum-djerri ‘to argue, quarrel, meet, chat’

Q. What other actions require more than one person?

Derivation - Continuative suffix

Continuative suffixes

Continuative suffixes indicate that the action involved was repeated or done continually.

Wemba Wemba

The suffix **-ila** is a continuative suffix that can be added to a verb to create a new word that includes the action being carried out repeatedly or continually.

- ▶ tirnda 'to take away' becomes tirnd-ila 'to sew' (a possum skin rug)
- ▶ nyerna 'to hear' becomes nyern-ila 'to listen'

Derivation - Continuative suffix

Taungurung

The Taungurung suffix -arra might be used in the same way.

- ▶ bunda 'to bite' becomes bundarra 'to chew'

Q. What other words could you create with a continuative suffix?

Derivation - Intensive suffix

Intensive suffix

Wemba Wemba

In Wemba Wemba adding a strong intensive suffix, either **-uwa** or **-ungga**, to a verb can create a new verb with a closely related meaning.

- ▶ Tyaka 'to eat' becomes tyakuwa 'to feast, celebrate or gorge'
- ▶ Wereka 'to carry' becomes werekuwa 'to carry something heavy a long way'
- ▶ Tyira 'to tear' becomes tyirungga 'to tear to pieces'

Derivation - Intensive suffix

Taungurung

The ending -arraba occurs on many Taungurung words. Below is a very interesting set of words.

- ▶ dhanga 'to eat'
- ▶ dhangaba 'to eat, feed oneself, graze'
- ▶ dhangarraba 'to eat up, chew, gnaw'

Derivation - Intensive suffix

Let's examine these words.

- ▶ If-ba is an intensive suffix, then dhanga-ba 'to graze' makes sense, as grazing is certainly intensive eating.
- ▶ If-arra is the continuative suffix, then dhang-arra-ba 'to gnaw' also makes sense as gnawing requires both continuous (-arra) and intensive (-ba) action.

For me, gnawing is more intensive than just chewing.

Q. What about you?

Derivation - Intensive suffix

Another interesting pair are:

- ▶ guna 'to let, allow, permit, accept, take, make'
- ▶ gunarraba 'grab, grasp, catch hold of, have, hold'

Q. Does the sense of continuity and intensity hold true for this pair?

Derivation - Intensive suffix

Yet another interesting pair is:

- ▶ nguba 'to drink'
- ▶ ngubarraba 'drink up, drink a lot'

Q. Do you consider 'drink a lot, drink up' to be continuous and intensive drinking?

Derivation - Purposive suffix

Purposive suffix

The purposive suffix turns a verb into a reason for doing something.

Wemba Wemba

The purposive suffix is **-ap**.

- ▶ dyakila 'to eat up' becomes dyakilap (This is) 'for eating (up)'.

Taungurung

So far we haven't found a similar suffix. Perhaps you will.

Other derivational suffixes in Taungurung

Taungurung appears to have a suffix, **(ng)aluk**, that can be used on a noun to indicate another noun closely associated with the first noun.

- ▶ Dherrang ‘thigh’ becomes dherrangaluk ‘trousers’
- ▶ Djinang ‘foot’ becomes djinangaluk ‘shoes, boots’

Q. How would you label this suffix?

Other derivational suffixes in Taungurung

It seems that you could use a verb with the suffix **-(n)th** to create a related noun or adjective.

- ▶ bamba ‘to be afraid’ becomes bambunth ‘the fear’
- ▶ gaanbuyn ‘is happy’ becomes gaanbunith ‘amusement’.
- ▶ yuli, yutli ‘jump’ becomes yutlinth ‘quick, nimble’

Q. How would you label this suffix?

Other derivational suffixes in Taungurung

The suffix -ng appears to create a noun from a verb.

- ▶ djilp-djerr- ‘hit one another’ becomes djilp-djerri-ng ‘a fight or battle’
- ▶ dhumba ‘to talk’ becomes dhum-djerri-ng ‘a chat’
- ▶ muyup guna ‘to cheat’ becomes muyup guna-ng ‘cheating’.

Q. How would you label this suffix?

Meaning extension

Meaning extension

Meaning extension (or semantic extension) occurs when you extend the meaning of one word to mean something else that resembles it.

Wemba Wemba

- ▶ Thathakuk means both 'arm' and 'wing of a bird'
- ▶ Lar means 'camp, home, bark shelter'

Taungurung

- ▶ dharrak means 'arm' and 'wing', and dharrak-galk means 'branch'
- ▶ birrm-birrm means 'milk', 'butter' and 'breast'
- ▶ yilam means 'camp', 'house', 'hut', and 'home'

Reduplication

Reduplication

Reduplication is the repetition of a word.

Wemba Wemba

Reduplication can be used to show plurality (more than two or three).

- ▶ Marung ‘Murray pine’ becomes marung marung ‘a forest of Murray pines’
- ▶ Lip ‘a spike’ becomes lip-lip ‘lots of spikes’

Reduplication

Taungurung

Reduplication can indicate several things.

It can be used to show the material from which an article is made.

- ▶ galk ‘wood, stick’ becomes galk galk ‘club’
- ▶ walert ‘wallaby’ becomes walert walert ‘rug’

Many flying creatures names are reduplicated forms, eg, yin-yin ‘bell bird’, balam-balam ‘butterfly’.

Many adjectives are also reduplicated forms, eg, wulan-wulan ‘hot’, walan-walan ‘round’.

Reduplication

Q. Do you have any ideas about why these forms are reduplicated?

Could it be flying creatures because they always have two wings?

Perhaps some of the adjectives are reduplicated to show that they are strong?

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia

This is when the name of something mimics its sound. It is especially common with bird names.

Wemba Wemba

- ▶ Wa 'crow'
- ▶ Kurruluk 'magpie'

Onomatopoeia

Taungurung

- ▶ There is a creek between Kilmore and Pyalong called Kurkuruc. Do you think this could be a bird's name?
- ▶ The name for a cuckoo shrike is djilbi-djilbi. Is that the sound it makes?
- ▶ The name for a cuckoo is wuk-wuk. Is that what it sounds like?
- ▶ The name for a chook is djak-djak, which is just what they sound like!