

Chapter 4. Recognizing nouns and pronouns

In this chapter we'll focus on the nouns in Kawaiisu. First we'll look at different kinds of *pronouns*, words that stand in place of a full noun, then move on to different ways of talking about noun possession – having or owning something as in “my mother, her shoes, our house.”

Recognizing Kawaiisu pronouns

Pronouns are words that stand in place of a full noun, one that has already been mentioned or that is understood from the conversation. Here are the main pronouns of Kawaiisu followed by examples of each in full sentences.

	subject pronoun	object pronoun	
nü'ü	I	me	1st person singular
im(i)	you (one person)	you (one person)	2nd person singular
shi'in(a)	this one he/she, (close by)	this one him/her (close by)	3rd person singular animate, close by
su'un(a)	that one he/she (over there)	that one him/her (over there)	3rd person singular animate, far off
tam(i)	we (two)	us (two)	1st person dual
tawa	we (including everyone who is being addressed, many)	us (including everyone who is being addressed, many)	1st person plural, inclusive
nümü	we (everyone except whom the speaker is addressing)	us (everyone except whom the speaker is addressing)	1st person plural, exclusive
mum(i)	you all (many)	you all (many)	2nd person plural
shi'im(ü)	they (close by)	them (close by)	3rd person plural animate, close by
su'um(ü)	they (over there)	them (over there)	3rd person plural animate, far off
shi'id(ü)	this, they (close – things)	them (close – things)	3rd person inanimate close by
su'ur(ü)	that, them (over there – things)	them (over there – things)	3rd person inanimate far off

Kawaiisu pronouns are different from English pronouns in the following ways.

- Kawaiisu makes a distinction between *singular* (one person), and *plural* (more than one person) like English but it also has a special way of showing the *dual*. This is used when talking about two people, rather than one person or many people.
- Kawaiisu doesn't specify whether a *third person* is male or female. There are no direct translations for “he,” “she,” “him,” and “her.”

- Kawaiisu specifies whether a *third person*, the one being spoken about, is close by or far away.
- Kawaiisu specifies whether a *third person*, the one being spoken about, is animate (living) or inanimate (non-living).

nü'ü I, me (first person singular)

Nü'ü tsakinün iva'an!

'I'm stuck/having trouble here!'

Pükee nü'ü!

'Look at me!'

Nü'ü putsugudiik.

'I understand (it).'

imi you (talking to one person; second person singular)

Im tütüvitiivaadün.

'You teach me.'

Wagüt, hagaan imi?

'Frog, where are you?'

Piyeen meeneen, "Imi apiikweevaad!"

'His mother said, "[You] Go to sleep!"' (In English, we might not say "you" in a command.)

tami we two, the two of us (first person dual)

Tami iyavagad narawaa'idü.

'We (two) are scared of the dark.'

Tami abiginüm iva'ana ta'nipüz momo'o.

'We (two) are talking about the man and the woman.'

Some speakers will use this instead of *tawa* to talk about groups with more than two people.

Tami karünümi kapaan evipiich kahne.

'We all lived in a small house.' [Lucille Hicks]

Tami yühüv uween kwidanümi.

'We all pooped outside over there.' [Lucille Hicks, talking about an outhouse]

tawa we, all of us (more than two) (first person plural)

Historically, this pronoun was used to mean 'we' or 'us' when talking about a group doing something that included both the person talking and the person being talked to, as in "We (You and I and everyone else here) are going to the store."

Tawa pünikarüdiin Betty.

‘All of us were watching Betty.’

Lida meeneen, “Tawa müzikweevaadüm.”

‘Lida said, “We’re all going to roll” (down the mountain).’

Uus tawa havikweevaadüm.

‘We’re all going to bed now.’

nümü we, us

One speaker uses this instead of tawa. Historically, it was used when talking about a group doing something that included the speaker but excluded the person being talked to, as in “We (I and others, but not you) are going to the store,” and speakers today still seem to remember it being used this way.

owat nümü ükügüd

‘our hats / we have hats’ [Betty Hernandez]

nümü paviim

‘our older brother / we have an older brother’ [Betty Hernandez]

mumi you all (second person plural)

Mumi pagidüm.

‘Y’all are walking.’

Mumi pezenaam.

‘Y’all are hollering.’

shi’ina he/she, him/her (third person singular: one living thing, here close by)

Shi’ina pagikweeneen.

‘She was walking.’

Shi’ina odokidü.

‘He’s brown.’

Iva’an karüneen shi’ina.

‘He was sitting here.’

Münügi hinigüd shi’ina.

‘She was five years old.’ (lit., ‘five had she’)

shi'imü they, them (third person plural: a group of living things, here close by)

Abigikarüdüm shi'imü.

'They are sitting there talking.'

Hü'ü' kiyadüm shi'imü.

'They are playing good.'

Su'uvois shi'imü pükeed kapaan.

'They looked inside.'

shi'idü it (third person: one or a group of non-living thing(s), here close by)

"Pishaa'aguup shi'idü iva'an," meenen.

'"It would look pretty here," he said.'

Ataab shi'idü!

'It is bad!'

"Hin shi'idü kapaan?" meenen puguziich.

'"What's in here?" said the little doggy.'

Muts owat shi'idü!

'This is a lot!'

su'una he/she, him/her (third person singular: one living thing, over there)

Mansana su'una tseheneen.

'He (over there) is gathering apples.'

Su'una müzikweeneen keevi-va'an.

'She (over there) rolled down the mountain.'

Yuwaat, su'una odokidü.

'No, he (over there) is brown.'

Su'una seegid ükügüd.

'He (over there) has a white hat.'

Weesaxkweeneen su'una.

'It (that horse over there) was trotting.'

su'umü they, them (third person plural: a group of living things, over there)

Hin inidüm su'um – pagidüm?

'What are they (over there) doing – walking?'

Su'um seegid asi'eena.

'They (over there) have white skin.'

Hü'ü, nü'ü pükeedüm su'umü
 'Yes, I see them (over there).'

Su'umü pükeediina evipiich wagut.
 'They (over there) saw the little frog.'

su'urü it (third person: one or a group of non-living thing(s), over there)

Su'urü uween.
 'It (that thing) was way over there.'

Hagaan su'urü?
 'Where is it (that thing)?'

Su'urü muts uusüs wü'ipün.
 'It was a long time ago I was born.'

Narowa'id su'urü.
 'It was dark.'

Wüzünvaanaakün iva'an su'urü.
 'I'm going to put it (that thing) right here.'

The difference between *shi'ina/shi'imü/shi'idü* and *su'una/su'umü/su'urü* is similar to the difference between *this* and *these* versus *that* and *those* in English:

One set, *shi'ina/shi'imü/shi'idü* (*this/these*) is generally used for things that are relatively close by, while *su'una/su'umü/su'urü* (*that/those*) is used for things that are farther away.

The third person pronouns are sometimes are used together with a full noun, usually translated into English as "the."

Shi'ina togowa iva'an.
 'The snake is here!'

Su'una odokid mo'oriiz wününeen po'o-va'ana.
 'The brown bear stood by the water.'

"Hagaan su'una togowa?" meenün, "Hagaan su'una?"
 "'Where's the snake at," I said, "Where's he at?"

Pidügweenaam iva'ana su'urü kahne.
 'They arrived at the house.'

But unlike in English, Kawaiisu words don't have to stay close to the noun, as in this example:

Su'urü niyaageeneek papel *Sears Roebuck*.
 'The name of that book was *Sears Roebuck*.'

Recognizing indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are used when you want to talk about an individual or group but their identities aren't known or aren't important. Here is a table of Kawaiisu indefinite pronouns followed by examples of each in sentences.

hana'evi	someone, somebody
hin'ivi	something
sübihan	everyone
sübihin	everything
yuwaahan (yuwaat han)	nobody, anybody
yuwaahin (yuwaat hin)	nothing, anything

hana'evi 'someone, somebody'

Iva'an tüniyavaanaam hana'evi putsugunaam.

'You talk about somebody here that you know.'

Su'uvois hana'ev meeneen, "Süna'av, Süna'av!"

'Then someone said, "Coyote, Coyote!"'

hin'ivi 'something'

Hin'ivi haganikweeneek yu'uviin.

'Something happened to his leg.'

Hin'ivi naakeenaam.

'They hear something.'

Momo'o unuwe'e hivinaam hin'ivi.

'The woman with him is drinking something.'

sübihan 'everyone'

Sübihan ka'avaad.

'Everyone is going to eat.'

sübihin 'everything'

Sübihin pütsakikweeneek.

'Everything broke.'

Sübihin ka'akweeneen.

‘He ate everything.’

yuwaahan (yuwaat han) ‘nobody, anybody’

Iva’an yuwaahan pūkeediin.

‘Nobody saw him here.’

Yuwaahan putsugunaam?

‘You didn’t know anybody?’

Yuwaahan pidūnaam.

‘Nobody came.’

yuwaahin (yuwaat hin) ‘nothing, anything’

Yuwaahin ka’anün.

‘I ate nothing.’

Yuwaat hin wüzününi

‘I haven’t put anything.’

Talking about nouns that you have or own - possession

You might want to talk about having a relationship to someone as in “my father” or possessing something as in “your cup” and “their house.” These tables show some examples of *possessive nouns*. Three fluent speakers, Lucille Hicks, Luther Girado and Betty Hernandez, each gave us examples for the “Kawaiisu Practical Grammar” project. After looking at these tables, you will learn that there are three basic ways to say that you have or own something.

	pavi 'older brother'		
	Lucille	Luther	Betty
my older brother	pavün	pavün	
your older brother	paviyaam	pavuum	
his/her older brother	paviin	paviin	
our older brother (just us two but nobody else's)	tama pavigüdü	tami pavi	nümü paviim
all of ours older brother	tawa pavigüdümü	tawa pavi	paviim shi'im
y'all's older brother	mumi pavigüdü	mumi pavi	manoish paviim shi'im
their older brother (referring to people close by)	shi'im pavigüdümü	shi'im pavi	
their older brother (referring to people farther away)	su'um pavigüdüm	su'um pavi	

You will see that the examples can be different from speaker to speaker. All are correct. (Among our group of language learners, we decided to use the language of the person who was teaching us most regularly.)

	mo'o 'hand'		
	Lucille	Luther	Betty
my hand	mo'ün	mo'(o)ün	
your hand	mo'aam	mo'oom	
his/her hand	mo'iin	mo'een	
our hands (just us two but nobody else's)	tam mo'ogüdü	tami owat mo'ogüd	mo'ogüdüm
all of ours hands	tawa mo'ogüdü	tawa owat mo'ogüd	nümü owat mo'ogüdüm
y'all's hands	mumi mo'ogüdü	mumi mo'o	owat mo'o
their hands (referring to people close by)	shi'im mo'ogüdüm	shi'im owat mo'ogüdü	su'um owat mo'ogüdüm
their hands (referring to people farther away)	su'um mo'ogüdüm	su'um owat mo'ogüdü	su'um owat mo'ogüdüm

	hiib 'money'		
	Lucille	Luther	Betty
my money	hiibün	hiibün	
your money	hiibaam	hiibuum	
his/her money	hiibiin	hiibiin	
our money (just us two but nobody else's)	mumi hiibügüdüm	mumi hiib	tama owat hiib
all of ours money	tama hiibügüdüm	tami hiib	owatügüd hiib owat hiibügüd
y'all's money	tawa hiibügüdüm	tawa hiib	owat hiib
their money (referring to people close by)	shi'im hiibügüdüm	shi'im hiib	shi'im owat hiibügüd
their money (referring to people farther away)	su'um hiibügüdüm	su'um hiib	shi'im mava'an owat hiibügüdüm

	puguz 'dog'		
	Lucille	Luther	Betty
my dog	puguzün	puguzün	
your dog	puguzaam	puguzuum	
his/her dog	puguziin	puguziin	
our dog (just us two but nobody else's)	tama puguzigüdüm	tami owat puguzigüdü	
all of ours dog	tawa puguzigüdüm	tawa owat puguzigüdüm	
y'all's dog	mumi puguzigüdü	mumi owat puguzigüdü	owat puguzi owatüm puguzigüdüm owatüm puguzidüm
their dog (referring to people close by)	shi'im puguzigüdüm	shi'im owat puguzigüdümi	
their money (referring to people farther away)	su'um puguzigüdüm	su'um owat puguzigüdümi	

Learning how to express possession

As the tables showed, different speakers vary a lot in terms of how they indicate possession or ownership of things, so you can expect to hear a lot of ways to say the same thing. There are

three main possessive constructions in Kawaiisu. We will talk about each of them in this section, starting with the simplest and building up to the most complex.

First way - Expressing possession by combining pronoun + possessed noun

The simplest way to indicate possession is to just use a pronoun as the possessor, without making any changes to the possessed noun. This strategy is used mainly when the possessor is plural (more than one in number). For example, one speaker offered the following when asked to translate from English into Kawaiisu:

mumi muwa
'y'all's father'

tami muwa
'our (dual) father'

tawa muwa
'our (plural) father'

shi'im muwa
'their (close by) father'

Here is an example from a story one of the elders told:

Tawa kwidataaz uween inineeka.
'Our bathroom was way over there.'

Second way - Expressing possession by using the possessive suffix -gee/-gü

Another way to talk about possession in Kawaiisu is to use a verb *hinigü-* (or *hinigee-*) meaning 'to have.' You will frequently hear *hinigeeneen* ('he/she has...') in descriptions of how people look, so this is probably a good one to become familiar with soon.

Pahei nü'ü hinigüdü.
'I had three of them.'

Tuhukid patsa hinigeeneen.
'She has black shoes.'

Iveet kunavüz hinigeenüm wahaya iva'an wo'orineek.
'We had two big bags hanging here.'

You can add the suffix *-gee* (*-gü*) directly to a possessed noun:

Tawa pishaab piyagüdü.
'We have a pretty mother.' (piya 'mother')

Su'um puguzigüd.

'They have a dog.' (puguz 'dog')

Kagigeeneen su'una neezhi.

'The girl had a necklace on.' (kagi 'necklace')

Su'un seegid ükügüd.

'He has a white hat.' (ükü 'hat')

Speakers sometimes use a construction with the -gee/-gü suffix when translating English phrases like 'our ...', 'y'all's ...', and 'their ...' into Kawaiisu – that is, where the possessor is plural, as in the following examples:

Tami pavigüdü.

'We two have an older brother.' (perhaps also 'our older brother')

Tawa kahnegüdü.

'We have a house' (perhaps also 'our house')

Su'um ka'anüb hinigüdüm.

'They have a spoon.' (perhaps also 'their spoon')

Tawa hiibügüdüm.

'We have money.' (perhaps also 'our money')

Su'um mo'ogüdüm.

'They have hands.' (perhaps also 'their hands')

However, there are also examples in stories where this construction is used with a singular possessor:

Shi'ina niyaagüd Stanley John.

'His name is Stanley John.' (niyaa- 'name')

Third way - Expressing possession by adding possessive agreement suffixes

To make a possessive construction in Kawaiisu you can also add an agreement suffix directly to a possessed noun. In stories, this strategy seems to be used most commonly when two conditions are met:

1. The possessor is usually one person (animate and singular).
2. The possessed noun is considered to be an inseparable part of him or her – typically things like body parts and family members.

When asked to translate from English to Kawaiisu, speakers do sometimes produce and accept this possessive construction where (1) and (2) are not true, but usually a different strategy will be preferred, especially where the possessor is plural.

Singular possessor suffixes

Here are the the suffixes you put on the end of a noun so that it shows it belongs to someone with examples for each suffix. Notice their similarity to singular verb agreement suffixes.

-ün(i) ‘my’ (first person singular)

Muwüni chipikweeneen wo’orav.

‘My father climbed on a horse.’ (muwa ‘father’)

Shi’in piyün, Gladys.

‘This is my mother, Gladys.’ (piya ‘mother’)

Inineekeen wahai edün.

‘She went for both my guns.’ (edü ‘gun’)

-(uum, -(aa)m ‘your (one person)’ (second person singular)

po’onaakaam mo’om hagaan

‘the hand you write with’ (mo’o ‘hand’, literally, “your hand where you write”)

Hagaan eduum?

‘Where are your guns?’

This suffix always ends with -m, but speakers use different vowels after the root, even for the same noun. Luther Girado (LG) usually uses -uum or -üüm, whereas Lucille Hicks (LH) almost always uses -aam:

yu’uvuum (LG)

hiibuum (LG)

püüpuum (LG)

yu’uvaam (LH)

hiibaam (LH)

püüpaam (LH)

‘your legs’

‘your money’

‘your blood’

But these are just tendencies, and sometimes the speakers agree on the same form:

muwaam (LH and LG)

tawaam (LH and LG)

keevuum (LH and LG)

‘your father’

‘your tooth’

‘your mountain’

Speakers also differ from each other in terms of how they handle the vowel at the end of a root when this suffix is added. So we find differences like these, where Lucille Hicks (LH) inserts a [y] before the suffix:

paviyaam (LH)

pavuum (LG)
 ‘your older brother’ (pav(i), ‘older brother’)

totsiyaam (LH)
 totsuum (LG)
 ‘your head’ (tots(i), ‘head’)

kovayaam (LH)
 kovuum (LG)
 ‘your face’ (kovi, ‘face’)

-iin, -een, -aan ‘his/her’ (third person singular, animate)

Sh’ina Lida pediin.
 ‘This is Lida’s daughter.’ (pedü ‘daughter’)

Inarookweeneekēen ükiin eepizh.
 ‘He gave the little boy his hat.’ (ükü ‘hat’)

Hin’iv haganikweeneek yu’uviin.
 ‘Something happened to his leg.’ (yu’uv ‘leg’)

Kuhmaan shi’ina.
 ‘This is her husband.’ (kuhma ‘husband’)

Taween muts nabizhineeka.
 ‘His teeth were really showing.’ (tawa ‘tooth’)

Momo’o suui hinigeeneen iva’an kakawut mo’een.
 ‘The woman has one chicken by its claw.’ (mo’o ‘hand’)

Su’uvois piyeen meeneen...
 ‘Then his mother said ...’ (piya ‘mother’)

Piyaan shi’ina.
 ‘This is her mother.’ (piya ‘mother’)

Today’s speakers seem to use *-iin*, *-een*, and *-aan* interchangeably. For example, they accept all three of the following, and say they mean pretty much the same thing:

patsiin
 patseen
 patsaan
 ‘his/her shoes’

Here again, we find different tendencies in different speakers. Luther Girado will often use *-een* where Lucille Hicks uses *-iin*:

po'een (LG)
 po'iin (LH)
 'his water' (po'o 'water')

mo'een (LG)
 mo'iin (LH)
 'his hand' (mo'o 'hand')

muween (LG)
 muwiin (LH)
 'his father' (muwa 'father')

-iik 'its' (3rd person singular, inanimate)

There are not many examples of this as a possessive suffix because you don't usually talk about non-living things owning things, but we find examples like these:

yu'uviik 'its (car's) tire' (yu'uv 'leg')
 patsiik 'its shoe' (patsa 'shoe' - this could be used for cover on the leg of a walker)

Because we also find *-aan* and *-een* for animate possessors, we might also expect *-aak* and *-eek* to be possible too.

Plural possessor suffixes

The elders today don't seem to use this strategy when the possessor is plural, and usually they will use one of the other possessive constructions instead. But they will occasionally produce a plural suffixed noun when asked:

nümü paviim 'our older brother' (pavi 'older brother')
 paviim sh'im 'their older brother'
 kahniim 'their house' (kahne 'house')
 yu'uvaam 'their legs' (yu'uv 'leg')
 kunaam 'their fire' (kuna 'fire')
 puguzum 'their dog' (puguz 'dog')
 naroum 'their/your(pl.) shirt' (naro'o 'shirt')

There are even a couple of examples where the possessor is first person or second person plural:

kwichizüm 'our (dual) plate'
 wichichuum 'y'all's knife'

Again, however, this strategy seems to be avoided when the possessor is plural, so new learners are probably better off focusing on one of the other strategies described above.

Creating plural nouns

You can emphasize that there is more than one of something by adding the plural suffix -m(ü). This is usually used only with people and animals (animate beings).

Iva'an paginaam pahei eepizhim.

'Three boys are walking here.' (eepizh 'boy')

Wahai puguzim ha'adümü.

'Two dogs barked.' (puguz 'dog')

Su'um wo'oravüm nukidümü.

'Those horses are running.' (wo'orav 'horse')

Sometimes the plural suffix will also occur on words modifying a noun, like numbers or adjectives:

wahayim seegidüm nüwümü

'two white people'

Creating nouns from verbs

Some suffixes in Kawaiisu change a verb into a noun. Here are some of the most common ones:

-bisht/-visht 'something/someone who habitually is/does X'

"Im muts nahabisht," meeneena.

"'You're just mean,'" he said.' (naha'i- 'be angry')

paginivisht 'traveler, someone who walks around a lot' (paginii-, walk around)

abigivisht 'a big talker' (abigi- 'talk')

ka'avisht 'person who eats a lot'

-naat(ü) 'one who doesn't X' (added to verbs)

-aat(ü) 'one who doesn't have X' (added to nouns)

ka'anaat 'someone who doesn't eat'

hivinaat 'someone who doesn't drink'

This suffix can also be added to a noun to make a noun meaning 'one who doesn't have...':

puguziyaat (or puguwaat) 'someone who doesn't have a dog'

hiibiyaat 'someone who doesn't have any money'

pihwaat 'bachelor, someone without a wife'

muwaat 'someone with no mother'

ka'apüyaat 'somebody who doesn't have any food'

-nübü 'instrument for doing X'

ka'anübü 'fork' (literally, 'eating instrument')

hivinübü 'cup' (literally, 'drinking instrument')

nüwüpükeenübü 'mirror' (literally, 'instrument for seeing oneself')

The same suffix can also be added to another noun:

pu'inübü 'eyeglasses' (literally, 'instrument for your eyes')

-p(ü) 'something that has X done to it'

ka'ap 'food' *ka'a-* 'eat' + *p*

hivip 'a drink' *hivi-* 'drink' + *p*

kaap *kaa-* 'sing' + *p* 'a song'

-taa 'place for doing X'

ka'ataa 'restaurant' (lit., 'place for eating')

hivitaa 'bar' (lit., 'place for drinking')

havitaa 'hotel' (lit., 'place for lying down')

kwidataaz 'bathroom' (lit., 'place for pooping')

navakataaz 'bath/shower' (lit., 'place for washing')

Creating slightly different meaning by adding other suffixes for nouns

-tsi, -ich 'diminutive'

Betty-ich 'little Betty'

wagutiich 'the little frog'

puguziich 'little dog'

-gai 'when, while'

This suffix can be added to a noun to mean something like 'when someone was an X'.

Nü'ü neezhigai...

'When I was a little girl ...'

-geep 'former, deceased, past'

Lida-geep 'Lida, who is now deceased'

muwageepüni 'my deceased father'

Han su'una Harry-geep?

'Who is Harry, who is now deceased?'

Su'un yu'ugweepügüdü wahai müüzi-geep.

'She died two months ago.'

-re'e 'do thus, like this'

Ikare'enaamü, pükee nü'ü.

'Like this, look at me.'

Muts kaaneen imire'eneena?

'Did he sing loud like you?'