

# Evoking Emotions and Eliciting Heart-Felt Responses through Exclamatives: Unravelling the Potential of 'aiyyoo' in the English Language

Ruby George<sup>1</sup>, Anindita Sahoo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Independent Researcher

<sup>2</sup>Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India

Correspondence: Anindita Sahoo, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India.

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## Abstract

The English language is replete with exclamative utterances which convey an array of emotions and evoke strong sentiments that create a lasting impact in the hearts and minds of the users and listeners alike. However, they are not considered as conforming to the regular speech acts of the English language. The entry of *aiyyoo*, an expression of South Indian origin into the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), propels us to re-visit the Standard and Modified theories of speech acts and to look with fresh eyes at the striking features and contrasting perspectives on exclamatives. This paper dwells on the versatile dimensions of *aiyyoo* and gathers insights about its unique illocutionary force through the analysis of (a) religious texts, (b) a passage of Indian Writing in English (IWE), (c) some columns in leading English dailies and (d) typical oral Tamil discourses. The various modes of analysis serve to affirm the immense semantic potential of the exclamative. Pragmatically and stylistically, it plays a vital role in our speech acts as it helps to articulate our deepest thoughts and heartfelt emotions. Given the persuasive quality of the exclamative in speech and writing, the usage of *aiyyoo* should be encouraged to enhance interpersonal communication in the global community.

**Keywords:** exclamatives, *aiyyoo*, emotion, discourse, communication strategy

## 1. Introduction

Exclamatives are one of the most commonly used interpretive devices that express an array of emotions and meanings. The exclamatives such as Wow!, Alas!, Oops!, convey the richness, depth and intensity of speakers' attitude. Drawing on evidence from religious texts, Indian Writing in English (IWE) fiction, stores from print media and typical everyday utterances in Tamil, we discuss the semantic and pragmatic aspects of *aiyyoo*, a familiar expression which is spontaneously, rather involuntarily used by the native speakers of Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada languages. It is a powerful cry from the heart when the circumstances become tragic, uncanny or even ecstatic. In fact, every milestone of one's journey is fraught with these *aiyyoo* moments. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has acknowledged the value and significance of this word by taking it into its fold and treating it as its very own lexicon. The OED defines *aiyyoo* as follows:

“In South India and Sri Lanka expressing distress, regret or grief; oh no, oh dear”

This paper provides a theoretical and functional perspective of exclamatives. It further dwells on the usage of *aiyyoo* in written and spoken discourses. After highlighting various instances of the usage of *aiyyoo*, it makes a plea for popularizing the usage of this expression by the English-speaking community. It is evident from the fact that over 900 words from various Indian languages have entered the OED. Many of them describe food and relationships such as *mirch masala* 'spices', *anna* 'big brother', *palanquin* (derived from Sanskrit *palayanka* and Odia *palinki*). Suchismita Ukil's article "English words of Indian origin" published in the Reader's Digest India in the year 2018 has referred to words such as 'mango' and 'mongoose' which are born in India and now a part of English language.

The primary objective of the paper is to argue for the inclusion of *aiyyoo* in contemporary English, both in formal and informal discourse. Further, we propose to highlight the inherent value of the exclamative expressions both in the interpersonal communication and in written texts. We hypothesize that *aiyyoo* is a versatile exclamative utterance and has loaded connotations both in semantics and pragmatics. Furthermore, we contend that though it is a word of

South Asian origin, it has a potential to be treated as an alternative expression to conventional English exclamative phrases such as ‘Oops’, ‘Gosh’ and so forth which have a colloquial character.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 includes some previous studies that shed light on exclamatives. Section 3 provides a brief background on the emergence of *aiyyoo*. Section 4 discusses the datasets that have been collected from media discourse, religious texts and some day-to-day conversations. This section also analyses the data. Section 5 concludes.

## 2. Defining Exclamatives

There is no consensus regarding which terminology to use when discussing speech acts such as exclamative and expressive speech acts. Quirk et al (1985) mentions exclamations as a logical or semantic status of an utterance. Radford (1997:506) defines an exclamative as a type of structure used to exclaim surprise, delight, annoyance, etc., and considers it a syntactic phenomenon. Rosengren (1997) and others treat exclamative speech as a pragmatic phenomenon. According to Reiss (1999), there are only three syntactic sentence types: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. All their functional meanings and illocutionary use potentials can be put into these sentence types plus the additional structural or lexical elements that comprise the speech acts. The prevailing theories pertaining to speech acts are considered herewith:

### 2.1 Standard Theory of Speech Acts

A Speech Act is created when speakers/writers make an utterance to hearers/readers in Contexts. The various speech acts are distinguished by a number of dimensions such as Illocutionary Point, Expressed psychological states, and direction of fit between words and the world (Searle, 1975). There has to be a match between the speaker’s psychological state and the content of what he expresses if the speech act is to be successful.

Searle (1969) distinguishes between 5 speech acts:

- i. A representative is essentially an assertion or a conclusion.
- ii. A Directive is an attempt to get the hearers/readers to do something.
- iii. A Commissive indicates that the speaker makes a promise to do something.
- iv. A Declaration is an archetypal speech act.
- v. An expressive expresses a psychological state. It includes paradigm cases such as ‘thanking’, ‘apologising’ and ‘welcoming’. They principally express social interaction.

The Theory of Speech Acts required modification as exclamatives did not explicitly fall within the ambit of the five speech acts as distinguished by Searle. However, since exclamatives were extensively used by the speakers, their unique features had to be considered vis-à-vis other speech acts.

### 2.2 A Modification of Searle’s Theory of Speech Acts

Brandt and Brandt (2005) distinguish 4 kinds of speech acts, such as representations, regulations, expressions, and declarations. Expressive/emotional utterances, i.e., exclamatives do not belong to any of these speech acts. Rosengren (1997) argues that exclamatives are direct expressive/emotional responses that are likely to constitute an illocutionary act of their own.

Exclamatives are distinguishable from emotional utterances in general. Rosengren (1992,1997) shows that the exclamatory/emotive function of exclamatives is triggered by the sentence mood, the propositional properties, and the stress patterns. The term expressive/emotional utterances cover exclamatives, expressives, and interjections. The utterances as such are all scalar; they all refer to the phenomena on high positions on various scales. They also express deviations from norms, not explicitly, but through a generalized implicature triggered by emphatic stress. There is no intonation in exclamations, but the intonational contours exhibit a high degree of variation.

Exclamations not only express deviations from certain norms but also various feelings, such as astonishment, joy, surprise, and disappointment in relation to this deviation. Bolinger (1989) holds that exclamations are primarily used to express the speaker’s own feelings. He states that the connection between intonation and exclamation is ‘both broad and deep.’ He noted that there was a great deal of variation concerning the intonations that can be used in exclamations. This intonation, according to Bolinger (1989) ‘reaches for the extreme’. This ‘out of control’ feature is naturally related to the fact that the exclamations are emotionally triggered.

In sum, the exclamative constitutes an illocution of its own. It is a direct emotive expression concerning a state of affairs and expressing a deviation from a norm without explicitly stating it.

### 2.3 Further Perspectives on Exclamatives

Rett (2012) posits that exclamatives express that a particular proposition has violated the speaker's expectations. Furthermore, they are semantically restricted. They can be deployed only to the extent to which the speaker's expectations have been violated. The exclamatives, however, are stated to be characterized by an illocutionary force which makes a unique contribution to discourse. They are found to express a "scalar expectation": the actual value exceeded the expectation of the speaker with regard to a certain gradable property.

Potts and Schwartz (2008) opine that exclamatives provide vital information about the speaker's attitudes. They use the term "exclamativity" to refer to the extra meanings and exalted emotions such as excitement, surprise or enthusiasm. There is no single meaning associated with exclamatives. They have a 'polarity' of emotion dimension, which can be either positive or negative. They are good indicators that the speaker is in a heightened emotional state. They have been empirically found to be "reliable" windows into certain aspects of the speaker's mental state." This expressive language is considered vital to communication. Here are some instances of sentences which embody exclamatives.

- (1) Can anything good happen in our lives! (Bitterness/Scepticisms; Negative emotion)
- (2) What a tragic loss! (Extreme sadness- Negative emotion)
- (3) How expressive the dancer's eyes are! (High degree of appreciation, positive emotion)

In each case, we discern a regular propositional component of the overall message. Example (1) conveys the speaker's sense of bitterness about life in general which may be caused by various unpleasant incidents. (2) indicates a heightened emotion that people use to express condolences. Finally, in (3) we notice that speaker expresses his immense fascination for the addressee's eyes. These examples embody bitterness, anguish and admiration respectively. Potts and Schwarz (2008) call such expressions as extra meaning exclamativity.

### 3. The Emergence of *aiyyoo*

Mukherjee and Mohanty (2020), while analyzing the role of communicative strategies such as code switching in Arundhati Roy's novel "God of Small Things" discuss the role and significance of *aiyyoo*. This indigenous expression is a pragmatic marker which services as a discourse initiator and can convey myriads of emotions such as astonishment, compassion and sorrow. It is used in informal contexts to highlight suddenness or unexpectedness or the immediate feelings of the speaker. It is stated to bring out the meaning in the context, the relationship between the interlocutors and their socio-cultural background.

However, with its entry in the OED, this indigenous expression gets a universal dimension. All users of English can readily employ this expression to convey emotive thoughts, indicate their apparent and real intentions, reveal social and cultural identities in interpersonal communication. Crystal (1997) holds that any loan word can be considered "a minimalist example of code switching". It is noteworthy that *aiyyoo* which was once a loan word in English texts can now be treated as an asset that belongs to all users of this language. This paper attempts to highlight its vital role in both oral and written communication systems in English.

David Crystal deals with the terrible loss that arises when a language dies. In this context, he points out that the oral testimony of a language offers us "a unique view and a unique canon of literature". Thus, neglect of usage could lead to extinction of languages and idioms. This makes us ponder whether expressions such as *aiyyoo* derived from other native languages and which have entered the OED would also suffer such a fate due to inadequate usage by the community.

Sashi Kumar (2020), in his video narration, gives us a comprehensive account of the attributes of the South Indian expression *aiyyoo*. He draws attention to its unique features such as ubiquity, flexibility, versatility and its ability to convey myriads of meanings. Different renditions of *aiyyoo* can highlight different types of surprises. In a dramatic vein, he demonstrates with varying intonations that the word *aiyyoo* can indicate personal tragedy, forgetfulness, physical hurt, torture in police custody and so forth. The English language, with its host of words such as, "Oops" seems way behind *aiyyoo* in depicting the nuances of the highs and lows of life.

### 4. Evolving of *aiyyoo*: Data Sets and Their Analysis

For carrying out the current study data have been collected from religious texts, literary texts from Indian English, print media articles and day-to-day pieces of natural conversation in Tamil, a Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The first author of the paper is a near native speaker of Tamil and both the authors have near native fluency in Indian English. The data that have been collected are analysed on the basis of its usage identified in the everyday conversational discourse. Study of literary classics and other secondary reading references have helped analyse the data qualitatively.

#### 4.1 Usage of 'aiyyoo' in Religious Texts

Although the expression is a familiar word as well as a slang among the South-Indian speakers, it also finds a prominent place in several regional written texts. The Tamil version of the holy Bible, both the Old as well as the New Testament, is replete with numerous instances of the expression *aiyyoo*.

Here are 5 Tamil verses that illustrate the use of the expression *aiyyoo* which are as follows:

(4) Habakkuk 2:15.

*than thozharukku kudikoduthu than thuruthiyai avargalandaiyiley vathu avargaludaya nirvaanangalai paarkumpadikku avargalai verikapannugiravarukku aiyyoo!*

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies.” (God’s anger towards people)

(5) Hosea 7:13.

*avargal ennaivittu alaindhuthirigirapadiyinaal, avargalukku aiyyoo! avargalukku kaydu varum. Enakku virothamaga erandakampanninaargal. Naan avargalai meetirundhum, avargal enakku virodhamai pesugirargal.*

“Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak lies against me.” Heightened emotion of ‘curse’. (God’s wrath at people’s rebellion)

(6) Mathew 23:25

*maayakaaragu vedhabaragarey! Parasiyaray! Ungalukku aiyyoo! bjojanapathirangalai velipurathi suthamaakkugireergal; utpurathilo avaigal kolaiyinaalum, aneethinaalum nirainthirukkiradhu*

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” (Heightened emotion of Anger)

(7) Luke 6:24

*aishwaryavaankalaagiya Ungalukku aiyyoo! ungal aaruthalai neengal adaindhu theerindhadhu*

“But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.” (Intense criticism or judgement)

(8) Revelation 8:13.

*pinbu oru thoodhan vaanathin mathiyilay parandhavarkandeynn. aavan maha sathamittu eni ekkalam oothapokira matra moonru thoodharudaya ekkala sathangrlnaal bhoomiyil kudiyrurukiravargalukku aiyyoo, aiyyoo, aiyyoo(aabathu varum) enru sollakeyteyn.*

“As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: “Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels.” (Finality of God’s judgement)

In fact, the connotations associated with this lexicon are so stark and striking that it imparts a sense of reverence and awe amongst the readers. The English word woe in the King James Version of the Bible was translated as *aiyyoo* in the Tamil version of this biblical text. It is essentially a word of judgement. The word, woe in Greek is *ouai* and it conveys meanings such as ‘alas’ or points to reactions of shock and disbelief such as ‘Oh No!’ The Hebrew word for woe is *howy* and it also captures the feelings of doom and destruction that challenge mankind. Our online search revealed that there were 133 occurrences of the word *aiyyoo* in the Tamil Bible. In the Old Testament, the Tamil word, *aiyyoo* is mainly used to express God’s wrath, His judgement and the punishment that awaits the people who forsake Him. God’s anger burns with colossal fury and He foretells the disasters that will consume His rebellious house, even the womenfolk who willingly cause others to stumble. The word *woe* and its Tamil version *aiyyoo* are thus associated with the most severe forms of condemnation and vengeance by the Creator God against His people. In Hosea 7:13, the word *aiyyoo* is a word of wrath against the land of Israel for their willful refusal to return to the Lord. The Creator cries, “*aiyyoo*” (Zephaniah 2:5) to the nation of Cherethites and warns them that the word of the Lord is against them. He pronounces judgement against Philistia and resolves to destroy them absolutely and warns that there would be no inhabitant left on that land. Furthermore, the Lord cries “*aiyyoo*” (Habakkuk 2:15) against those people who cause drunkenness to come upon their neighbours. A God who is kind and compassionate can indeed be provoked to intense fury when His people become disobedient and stiff-necked.

This word, *aiyyoo* succinctly conveys the consequences of transgressing God’s commands and occurs with amazing

frequency in the Tamil-translated version of the New Testament. It is noteworthy that Jesus himself, makes use of this word more than anyone else in the Tamil Bible. In Chapter 23 of the Gospel according to Saint Mathew, we find an amazing list of *aiyyoos* that were deployed by Jesus while lashing out at the words and works of the Pharisees. He vents out His intense indignation against them through the usage of a litany of *aiyyoos*. These passages are rhetorically remarkable as they are accompanied by strong similes and metaphors that point to the hypocrisy and unrighteousness of the Pharisees. In a prophetic vein, Jesus declares that they shall receive greater damnation for shutting up the kingdom of heaven, for turning people into ‘children of hell’ for vaunting themselves in petty matters and for not observing the weightier matters of law, judgement, mercy, and faith. He unequivocally reprimands them for becoming “whited sepulchers full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” (Mathew 23:27). Jesus, in Chapter 11 of Saint Mathew’s Gospel also directed His wrath in a similar fashion against the people of cities such as Chorazin where Jesus performed mighty deeds but they chose not to repent. He uses the term *aiyyoo* and warns them of judgement, of being brought down to hell and of intolerable punishment. In the Gospel according to Saint Luke (6:20-26), Jesus directly addresses His disciples and draws their attention to the blessings and rewards that are reserved for the poor, the lowly, the hungry and the despised people. But, then, there is a dramatic change in the tenor of the discourse. The Tamil word *aiyyoo*, in this context, refers to the torments that would pursue those who are rich, contented, and well-spoken in this world. Jesus proceeds to dwell on the key teachings of forgiveness and other Christian virtues that godly people should follow.

In Revelation, the final Book of the Bible, the Apostle John records the voices of the angels who spell woe to the inhabitants of the earth. The word *aiyyoo* is repeated thrice in Chapter 8:13 of the Tamil Bible to indicate the finality of God’s judgement and ultimate decree on mankind. The word *aiyyoo*, in the Bible, is intimately related to the human predicament and is closely associated with grief, grievous distress and a deep sense of misfortune. It is like a groan of a prisoner for whom there is no redemption.

In Milton’s **Paradise Lost**, (1998 edition) the word woe has identical connotations with *aiyyoo* which is used in the Tamil Bible. In the Invocation. Milton uses the word ‘Woe’ to depict the suffering of mankind which was caused by disobedience of God:

“Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit Of that  
forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe, With loss of  
Eden, till one greater man.”

In Book 2 of **Paradise Lost**, (1998 edition) the fallen angel Belial laments that they are ‘decreed, reserved and destined to eternal woe’. He persuades the listeners to believe that they are fated to suffer the horrors of hell. The word ‘woe’ rhymes perfectly with ‘foe’, the creator God and it encompasses the endless torments as well as the intense restlessness that characterizes hell.

#### 4.2 Usage of ‘aiyyoo’ in Indian Writing in English

There are several instances of the usage of *aiyyoo* in the written discourse of Indian English literature. One such instance is Raja Rao’s (2014) *Kanthapura* a novel which is set in a village in Southern India in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A certain man called Ramayya was asked by the *maistri* ‘craftsman’ to fetch his cycle which was left behind at Sukkur police station. Instead of taking the main road, Ramayya decided to go by the Kalhapur tank-weir path. He had to traverse the Siddapur jungles on the way. He saw the footmarks of a tiger which would have feasted on a deer and he began to ring the cycle bell. It was then that a large cobra rattled up. Ramayya cried out, “*Ayyo...aiyyoo...aiyyoo...*” and ran away. This word came out instinctively from the lips of Ramayya who was shocked and stricken with fear. Raja Rao uses such exclamatives and idioms to create a unique English dialect which has a universal appeal.

Exclamative constructions are indeed structures that do not conform to regular syntactic sentence types or direct speech acts. They have an illocutionary dimension which makes the utterance dramatic and memorable. Their main function is to express social interaction and highlight the speaker’s own feelings. They are emotionally triggered and are used to express surprise, astonishment, annoyance, and so forth. Leveraged by intonational variations, they can serve to give vent to our deepest thoughts and heartfelt emotions in our daily speech acts. Furthermore, they can also feature in written discourses. The lexeme *aiyyoo* which has gained entry in the OED is quintessentially exclamative and is used to convey a range of emotions, in speech as well as in written texts. It is also noteworthy that usage of *aiyyoo* in English texts cannot be considered as an instance of code mixing anymore as it is deemed a regular English word.

#### 4.3 Usage of ‘aiyyoo’ in Print Media

The moot question concerns the match between the psychological state of the speaker/writer and the exclamative

*aiyyoo*. It becomes critical to determine the fit between this exclamative and the world in which we live. Our daily newspapers are replete with reports on various aspects of human existence. It would be worthwhile to consider some of the significant stories that catch our attention and trigger our emotions in these dailies. For instance, on 26/8/22, we came across these news items:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| (9) <i>A million Covid deaths in 2020, says the United Nations.</i>                             | (The Hindu)              |
| (10) <i>Europe is experiencing one of its hottest summers on record.</i>                        | (The Times of India)     |
| (11) <i>Toll in Ukraine train station strike rises to 25.</i>                                   | (The Hindu)              |
| (12) <i>15-year-old girl from Mumbai gang-raped by cousins at Jabalpur.</i>                     | (The Times of India)     |
| (13) <i>Woman mixes rat poison in tea to kill her parents, mother dies in Thrissur.</i>         | (The Hindu)              |
| (14) <i>7 districts flooded as rain batters Rajasthan.</i>                                      | (The New Indian Express) |
| (15) <i>11th-century hero stones were discovered in a village near Dharmapuram, Coimbatore.</i> | (The New Indian Express) |
| (16) <i>150 maggots removed from the nose of a Mucormycosis survivor in Hyderabad.</i>          | (The New Indian Express) |
| (17) <i>Bus shelters for commuters in Madras began only in the 1950s.</i>                       | (The Hindu)              |
| (18) <i>A housing ad promises that everything is possible in their independent villa.</i>       | (The Hindu)              |

These stories create *aiyyoo* moments as they provoke emotions such as shock, surprise, anguish, sadness, amazement, and wonder. This exclamative would certainly help to articulate our sentiments and fortify our responses. Semantically, as well as stylistically, exclamatives such as *aiyyoo* are as persuasive as regular sentence types and established speech acts. In fact, a sprinkling of this exclamative would add vibrancy and would animate our narratives.

#### 4.4 Usage of 'aiyyoo' in Oral Tamil Discourses

South Indians spontaneously resort to *aiyyoo* to express heartfelt emotions and sentiments like shock, sadness and regret. They use *aiyyoo* to warn people, to unlock their hearts to listeners and to thereby strengthen their relationships. Here are some instances of utterances in Tamil which commence with *aiyyoo* and which convey a spectrum of emotions.

- (19) *aiyyoo! cālaiyil periya-paḷḷam uḷḷatu pārunkal*  
 “*aiyyoo!* Look out, there is a big pothole on the road.”
- (20) *aiyyoo viruntinarkal aṭutta vāram vīṭṭirku varukirārkal*  
 “*aiyyoo!* Guests are coming home next week.”
- (21) *aiyoo! vaṇṇattuppūcci pūṇaikkū arukil paṛakkiratu*  
 “*aiyyoo!* The butterfly is flying close to the cat.”
- (22) *aiyyoo! paati keezhey vizhundhu kannukkalil elumbu murivu erpattadhu*  
 “*aiyyoo!* Grandma fell down and fractured her ankle.”
- (23) *aiyyoo! kadantha maadham sothu vari katta marundhuvitteyn*  
 “*aiyyoo!* I forgot to pay the Property Tax last month.”

These utterances appear trite and meaningful when they are studied along with their non-linguistic counterparts. For instance, in the first example, the rounded vowels in ‘look’ and ‘pothole’ can be backed up with wide open eyes when uttered in English. In example (2) The speaker, by drumming his forehead with his fingers can express annoyance at the thought of the arrival of guests and deem it a nuisance. The speaker in example (3) who senses that the butterfly is in peril might place his palm on his mouth to indicate his apprehension that it would be gobbled by the cat. In example (4), the speaker would perhaps might wipe his tear-stained cheek when he refers to the terrible plight of his grandmother who fractured her ankle when she fell down. In the example (5), the speaker is irritated by his own negligence and has a sense of regret because he forgot to pay the property tax on time. This is conveyed by vehemently nodding his head and by nudging himself.

These utterances when coupled with their non-linguistic counterpart provides insights about the usage of *aiyyoo* in the spoken discourse.

## 5. Conclusion

*aiyyoo*, a familiar South Indian utterance, has entered the OED and now stands at the disposal of all users of the English language. It does not just set decorative or embellishment purposes but it can break the ice, build bridges and capture the joy, the excitement and the plethora of profound emotions that characterize our lives. This expression may still retain its peripheral linguistic position in English utterances and sentences but its versatility and significance in highlighting the crests and troughs of our earthly sojourn is paramount. Its semantic potential is immense and it should be harnessed to the fullest. It would indeed be a source of tragedy if the expression *aiyyoo* which has been accommodated in the OED would suffer from disuse and even death due to neglect by the users of the language.

Although the word *aiyyoo* was added to the OED in 2016, it still does not feature in the English dailies and in formal English discourses such as the BBC news bulletins. It is the responsibility of native users of *aiyyoo* to popularize it through their regular writing and conversations in English so that it will find various avenues to be used as a versatile exclamative marker. In any case *aiyyoo* should not be left behind as a mere dictionary entry. The native users must ensure its frequent usage in various domains of the English language. We suggest that the readers in their 'Letter to the Editor' of newspapers could set the trend by using *aiyyoo* while calling attention to vital matters, thereby expressing their appreciation of noble deeds and even conveying the disapproval of undesirable actions by groups or individuals. In fact, poets, authors, sociologists, academicians, film makers, and singers-song writers can use *aiyyoo* in their oral and written texts, thereby, popularizing it in regular interpersonal communication, both in speech and writing.

The story of the emergence and evolving of *aiyyoo* is an absorbing one although the present study is exclusively centered on the role of *aiyyoo* in written texts and spoken utterances, we are able to perceive their magical feature, their capacity to foster and forge interpersonal relationships. Meaningful and relevant, the study of exclamatives can point out the link between heightened emotions on one hand and inclusivity, persuasiveness and spiritedness on the other. However, the immense potential of *aiyyoo* can be comprehensively appreciated only when its usage is increased. We can then make generalizations about its defining features. If it is fully adopted and assimilated into the English language, we can draw explicit conclusions about the precise category of speech acts or sentence types to which they should belong.

In the final analysis, we note that exclamatives such as *aiyyoo* are repositories of heartfelt emotions which help us to weave narratives about our shared experiences. Individually and collectively, they impart dynamism and vibrancy to the English language.

The study revealed that exclamatives provides a substantial contribution to the body of theory of speech acts although it has certain limitations. It focuses on the usage of *aiyyoo* by the Tamil community. The translated biblical texts and the everyday discourses are essentially Tamil in content and spirit. It would be indeed fruitful edifying to analyse the usage of *aiyyoo* in other South Asian languages such as Malayalam, Sinhalese and all other languages which own this expression. It would enable us to appreciate the subtle variations in the usage of this expression by the language communities, expand its contours and provide richer dimensions to our discourses. Furthermore, the study of the usage of *aiyyoo* in various other genre such as drama, films and folklore would also add to our understanding of this exclamative, its historical and sociocultural significance.

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Ruby George was responsible for the initial idea of the paper and prepared the preliminary draft. Anindita Sahoo designed the study, developed the methodology and critically revised the manuscript. Both the authors contributed equally throughout the research process.

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