

# Noun Composition in Mille Lacs Ojibwe

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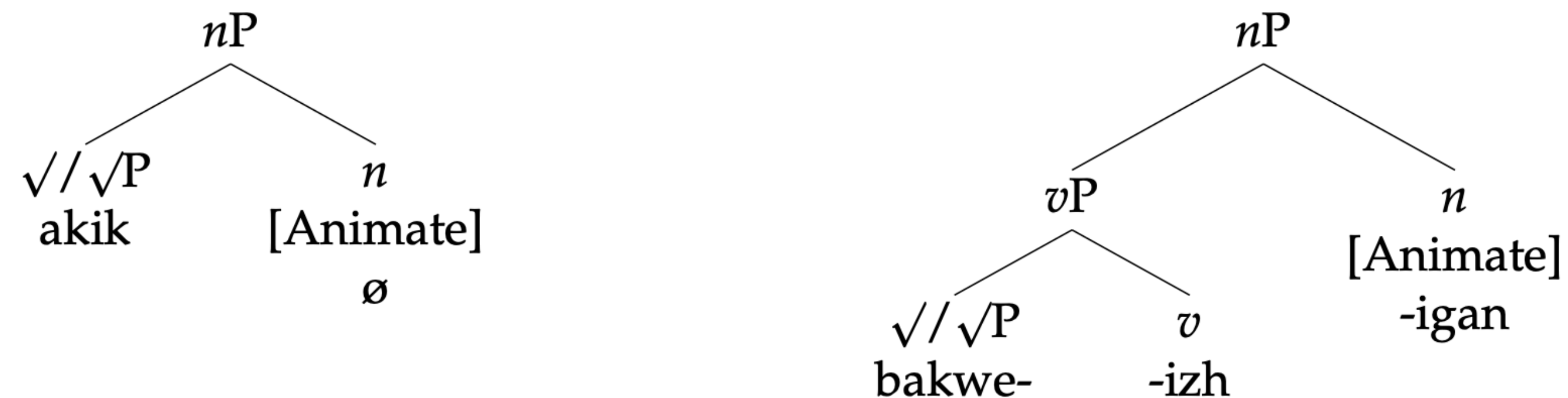
# Our question

- **Some nouns in Ojibwe are simply nouns:**
- akik (pail)
- anishinaabe (an Ojibwe)
- **While other nouns are derived from verb stems:**
- odaminw-aagan (doll)
- bakwezh-igan (bread)
- anishinaabemo-win (Ojibwe languages)
- ziinikiigomaa-n (snot)

**What restrictions, if any, exist in the noun making process of Ojibwe?**

# Recap of nominalization

- By nominalization here we mean the process by which you turn something of another category into a noun.
- This can be roots, verb stems, or something else and this idea is consistent with Distributed Morphology (DM). This project looks at how **verb stems** are nominalized in Ojibwe.
- *n* also introduces gender, which in Ojibwe is expressed as animacy (Kramer 2014, 2015).



Sample derivations of *akik* 'pail' and *bakwezhigan* 'bread'.

# Ojibwe nominalization

- There are also different types of nominalization. For example, you can nominalize things into Agents, Instruments, Results, etc.
- hunt-er = Agent of the verb 'hunt'
- giiyose-winini = hunt-man Agent of 'hunt'
- Giesbrecht and Lachler (2021) provide a detailed account of the semantics of -win nominalizations in **Plains Cree**.
- Their study showed that the **-win** nominalizer is able to form various semantic types of nouns from verb stems.
- We will see if their findings also hold for Ojibwe.

# Roadmap

- **Introduce nominalizers Ojibwe speakers use to nominalize verb stems**
- **Identify 3 restrictions discovered from data in the Ojibwe People's Dictionary**
- **Compare findings to fieldwork data and native speaker judgements**
- **Lingering questions and discussion**

# Breaking down the nominalizers in Ojibwe

- This study focused on the **-win**, **-n**, **-(i)gan**, and **-aagan** nominalizers which are all used to turn verb stems into nouns in Ojibwe.
- For the sake of this presentation, we're going to treat all of these as separate but in the discussion we will bring up the idea that they may be built up off of each other.

# -win

- Giesbrecht and Lachler (2021) looked at the **-win** nominalizer in **Plains Cree**.
  - They found that **-win** cannot be used to form a semantic Agent but it can form nouns pertaining to Manner, Time, Predicate, Result, Location, Patients etc. but not Agents.
- | • <b>Noun</b>                  | <b>Verb Stem</b>           |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • <b>abi-win = room</b>        | (s/he is at home)          |
| • <b>agaji-win = shame</b>     | (s/he is ashamed)          |
| • <b>baapi'idi-win = humor</b> | (they laugh at each other) |
| • <b>bimaadizi-win = life</b>  | (s/he is alive)            |
- **-win** nouns tend to mean the essence or -ness of the verb stem meaning, or: “the meaning of these [-win] nouns is often the same as the meaning of the verbs from which they were derived.” (Ahenakew 1987: 165) on Plains Cree -win nouns.

# -n

- **-n** nouns are often associated with Instruments or Results, but can also refer to some abstract things.
- **-n** generally combines with VAI stems.
- **Noun** **Verb Stem**
- **abwaa-n = roast** (s/he roasts)
- **apishimo-n = mattress** (s/he lies on something)
- **bimikawaa-n = a footprint, track** (s/he leaves a track)
- **waabikwaa-n = a grey hair** (s/he has grey hair)
- Notably different from **-win** nouns, these seem more concrete and less abstract.



# -(i)gan

- **-(i)gan** is commonly used to form nouns pertaining to some location where something is done or some process of doing something.
- **-(i)gan** generally combines with VTA stems.
- **Noun** **Verb Stem**
- **aabaabika'-igan = key** (s/he unlocks h/)
- **baasaabikiz-igan = dynamite, explosives** (blast h/)
- **dibaabiishkooj-igan = a scale** (s/he weighs h/ on a scale)
- **agwaakwa'-igan = poster** (nail h/ up against the wall)
- These semantic types don't hold perfectly, but generally **-igan** is associated with locations or processes of other more concrete types of nouns.

# -aagan

- Finally we have **-aagan** which forms similar types of nouns as **-(i)gan**.
- **-aagan** generally combines with VTA stems, like **-(i)gan**.

- **Noun**

- **dasoon-aagan = a trap**

- **gikinoo'amaw-aagan = student**

- **wiijiw-aagan = a partner, companion**

- **nagadenim-aagan = a friend**

- The meaning of **-aagan** nouns are also typically more concrete like the **-(i)gan** nouns.

## Verb Stem

(trap h/)

(teach it to h/)

(go with, accompany h/)

(be familiar with h/)

# Ojibwe People's Dictionary findings

Noun	Translation	Nominalizer	Animacy	Stem	Stem meaning	Stem verb type	Stem composition	Semantic type
<b>bakwezhigan</b>	bread	-igan	Animate	bakwezh	cut a piece of h/	VTA	bakwe-piece out of something, missing a piece; /-izhw/ act on h/ by blade	
<b>odaminwaagan</b>	doll	-aagan	Animate	odamino	s/he plays	VAI	N/A	Instrument
<b>ziinikiigomaan</b>	snot	-n	Animate	ziinikiigome	S/he blows h/ nose	VAI		Product
<b>gikaawin</b>	old age	-win	Inanimate	gikaa	s/he is old	VAI		

# Generalizations

Nominalizer	# of nouns	verb stems	% animate	% inanimate
-win	99	VAI	2%	98%
-n	88	VAI	17%	83%
-igan	25	VTA	15%	85%
-aagan	21	VTA	66%	34%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>242</b>		<b>14%</b>	<b>86%</b>

# Inanimate verb stems

- **You cannot nominalize an inanimate stem in Ojibwe**
- The single exception is *gizhaate-win* 'heat, hot weather': formed from the VII stem *gizhaate* 'it is hot'.
- In Plains Cree, however, Giesbrecht and Lachler's study showed that about 30% of data they gathered from a dictionary were VII or VTIs.
- However, after removing duplicates and sorting through the data, they found that only about 17% were formed from VTIs and VIIs. Only 1% were VII's.
- So it seems both **Plains Cree** and **Ojibwe** highly dislike nominalizing inanimate verb stems .
- In both languages, VII's seem extremely dispreferred in nominalizations.

# No semantic Agents

- **You cannot form semantic Agents in Ojibwe with -win, -n, -(i)gan, or -aagan.**
- This is not to say that there are no semantic Agent nouns in Ojibwe or that you cannot derive them from verb stems, but rather that these nominalizers are not able to form them.
- Along with Giesbrecht and Lachler (2021), the dictionary data on Ojibwe suggests that these nominalizers cannot be used to form **semantic Agents**.
- **hunt-er = Agent of the verb ‘hunt’**
- **giyose-winini = hunt-man Agent of ‘hunt’**
- But what about a verb like ‘play’?
- **play-er = Agent of the verb ‘play’**
- **odamino-aagan = ‘doll’ Instrument of verb play?**

# Animacy variation within nominalizers

- **The grammatical animacy of the result noun is not directly tied to the nominalizer used**

Noun	Meaning	Nominalizer	Animacy
ataadi-win	a playing card	-win	Animate
gagwaadagitoo-win	hard time, suffering	-win	Inanimate
mikwamiikaa-n	cut ice	-n	Animate
gijipizo-n	a belt	-n	Inanimate
bakwezh-igan	bread	-igan	Animate
gashkaabika'-igan	a lock	-igan	Inanimate
odaminw-aagan	doll	-aagan	Animate
zikw-aagan	Spittoon	-aagan	Inanimate

# Animacy variation within nominalizers

- Here's another table to demonstrate the variation of animacy within each type of nominalizer:

Nominalizer	%Animate	%Inanimate
-win	2	98
-n	17	83
-(i)gan	15	85
-aagan	66	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86</b>



# Fieldwork with Joe Nayquonabe

- Our native speaker collaborator is **Joe Nayquonabe** from the **Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**.
- Joe was an absolute joy to work with. I first had the chance to work with him in **Claire Halpert's** field methods course and I collaborated with him for another semester with this grant money.
- With each generalization we'll introduce how we tested it in the field and whether each generalization holds with native speaker judgements.

# VII stems with Joe

- **-win** nominals often take the meaning of the essence or *-ness* of some verb stem like **bimaadizi-win = life**.
- Drafted a list of VII stems to see if Joe had heard them, were acceptable, or any judgements we could get. Then, we tried the VIIs + **-win**.

VII stem	meaning	+win	intended meaning
<i>miskwaa</i>	'it is red'	<i>miskwaa-win</i>	redness
<i>dibikaa</i>	'it is dark'	<i>dibikaa-win</i>	darkness
<i>agaasaa</i>	'it is small'	<i>agaasaa-win</i>	smallness
<i>aabawaa</i>	'it is warm (weather)'	<i>aabawaa-win</i>	warmth

# VII stems with Joe

- For each example we tried to make for Joe, he said that either 1) he had not heard it, 2) you would need something in addition to it, or 3) a flat-out 'no' that's not acceptable.

VII stem	meaning	+win	intended meaning	Judgement
<i>miskwaa</i>	'it is red'	<i>miskwaa-win</i>	redness	*
<i>dibikaa</i>	'it is dark'	<i>dibikaa-win</i>	darkness	*
<i>agaasaa</i>	'it is small'	<i>agaasaa-win</i>	smallness	*
<i>aabawaa</i>	'it is warm (weather)'	<i>Aabawaa-win</i>	warmth	*

# VII stems with Joe

- We tested a few interesting examples towards the end of our sessions where we attempted to embed a noun in a clause like *I (don't) like X* where we really expect to find a noun.
- Joe said he would accept them *if you* added something.
- I provided Joe with:
- **??niminwendan ishpaawin** (intended: I like height, heights)
- **??gaawiin niminwendasin isphaawin** (intended: I don't like heights)
- Which he both said would make a lot more sense with something in addition and he gave us:
- **(gaawiin) niminwenda(sin) isphaawin wakaigan** (I (don't) like the tall/high house)
- **niminwendan giinaawin mookoman** (I like the sharp knife)

# VII stems with Joe

- These acceptability judgments were not the same for the VII+**-win** *gizhaate-win*.
- Joe had no problem with:
- **niminwendan gizhaate-win** (intended: I like hot weather/heat)
- **gaawiin niminwendasin gizhaate-win** (intended: I don't like hot weather)
- He had no problem with the -winless forms of the examples from the previous slide:
- **niminwendan ishpa** (I like (that) it is tall/high)
- **gaawiin niminwendasin ispha** (I don't like (that) it is tall/high)

# Semantic Agents with Joe

- The four nominalizers are unable to form semantic Agents.
- Out of all of our fieldwork data on nouns we found one potential exception `student`.
- Joe gave us:
- **Noun** **Verb Stem**
- **gikinoo'amaw-aagan = student** (gikinoo'amaw s/he is learning)
- This is the most Agent-y noun that we elicited from Joe.
- These findings align with those in Plains Cree from Giesbrecht and Lachler (2021) and is another similarity between the noun formation processes of Ojibwe and Plains Cree.

# Grammatical Animacy with Joe

- With each noun, we asked Joe what the plural and demonstrative forms were in order to determine the nouns animacy.
- Data elicited with Joe show that the dictionary pattern holds strong and there is a lot of variation in the gender of the result nouns all formed by the same nominalizer.
- Some **-n** nouns from Joe were animate, others inanimate. The same applies for **(i)gan** nouns although there were few **-aagan** or **-win**'s that we didn't make.

# The composition of nominalizers

- **-n**, **-(i)gan**, **-aagan**, and **-win** may all be the same underlying nominalizer **-n** but with extra parts.
- **-(i)gan** = **-ige** + **-n**
- **aagan** = **aa** (augment, Valentine 2001) + **-ige** + **-n**
- **-win** = **-iwi** + **n**
- For more on this, see Mathieu (2013, 2014).
- An interesting point is that the grammatical animacy of the nouns still varies quite a bit, so is *n* really introducing gender here?
- Another question: why is it that if **-(i)gan** and **-aagan** are essentially the same (one has an augment) then why do they not have the same animacy distributions?



# Questions

- **Why can't you nominalize inanimate stems?**
- Is it something special about animate stems or inanimate stems?
- **Why can't you form semantic Agents with these nominalizers?**
- One possible answer comes from the fact that Ojibwe uses other methods to form Agent nominals like relative clauses or things like the -inini marker in *giiyose-winini* 'hunter'.
- **What about animacy and nominalizers? If *n* introduces Animacy, then why is there so much variation within a single type of nominalizer?**
- Especially if, as the previous slide mentioned, we might treat these all as the same underlying nominalizer, then why is there so much variation in the animacy of the result nouns of each?

# Chi Miigwech! Questions?

- Chi-miigwech to Joe Nayquonabe for being an amazing collaborator to work with.
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