Noun Composition in Mille Lacs Ojibwe

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This project investigated the *-igan*, *-n*, *-aagan*, and *-win* nominalizers in Ojibwe with dictionary data on 242 nouns and native speaker judgements. It uncovered three generalizations: VII stems cannot take a nominalizer, these nominalizers cannot form semantic Agents, and the animacy of the noun is not directly linked to the type of nominalizer is used.

VII stems cannot be nominalized by the nominalizers we investigated. In our survey of nouns, 77% were VAI and 23% were VTA. Only a single derived noun appeared to be a nominalized VII and none from a VTI. Our native speaker collaborator resisted attempts to nominalize VII stems like *ishpaa* 'it is high'. We expect *ishpaa-win* to mean 'height, tall' but our speaker could not generally recover a sensible meaning for these types of words, and never provided a translation consistent with nominalization.

In a survey of Plains Cree nouns, Giesbrecht and Lachler (2021) found that nouns formed with *-win* cannot be semantic Agents. Our project demonstrates that this is also true in Ojibwe and in fact none of the nominalizers that we analyzed can form semantic Agents. Nominalizing a verb like *odamino* 'to play' can result in the semantic Agent 'play-er' but in Ojibwe *odaminwaagan* means 'doll': the thing played with.

The dictionary data shows a lot of variation in the animacy of nouns nominalized by each nominalizer: suggesting that the relationship between the animacy of a noun and its nominalizer is not direct. However, there are general patterns in the animacy of nouns formed by each of the nominalizers. For example, of the 21 words surveyed that were formed with *-aagan* 66% were animate, 34% were inanimate. Meanwhile of the 81 nouns formed with *-n* 17% were animate and 83% were inanimate.

References:

Giesbrecht & Lachler (2021). Nominalization strategies in Plains Cree: An analysis of the *-win* suffix. In *Proceedings of the 51st Algonquian Conference.*