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Directional Preverbs in Ojibwe and the Registration of Path

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Ojibwe has a small number of preverbs of high text frequency that refer to paths: bi- ‘coming’, ani- ‘going’, bini- ‘going along’, and bibaa- ‘going around’.¹

(1) preverb example

(1a) bi- ... minwaa gii-bi-nisihkwaad. (BI T 35.36)
    ‘... and again he came climbing down.’

(1b) ani- Shiikeewaa giiw gii-ni-pizkwaag giw zhishiyahgiw (BL 38.11)
    ‘The ducks flew off up as high as the trees.’

(1c) bini- Aaztitkoon bini-ni-maan miikan. (W, p. 84, line 22)
    ‘The road runs along the cliffs.’

(1d) bibaa- Bhaa-giimin biihippoognihi.
    ‘The horse is running around loose.’

Calling these preverbs DIRECTIONALS, I will discuss two general sets of their properties: their morphosyntax and syntactic distribution, and their meaning and usage.

¹ For the purposes of this paper all examples will be taken from the Ottawa dialect, although what I will say here is not unique to Ottawa in any way. Examples are taken from Bloomfield’s Eastern Ojibwa 1958, the two Odawa Language Reports (Kaye, Piggott & Tokoeki 1971 and Piggott & Kaye 1973), Nichols’ edition of Angelina Williams’ texts (1991), originally collected by Bloomfield in the 1940s, and my own field notes from Walpole Island and Manitoulin Island speakers, collected between 1972 and 1986.

The form of citation for Bloomfield (1958) is (BI T) for texts, and (BI S) for example sentences. Thus (BI T 35.12) means Bloomfield (1958), text 35, sentence 12. (BI S 540) means Bloomfield (1958), example sentence 540. For Kaye et al. (1971) the citation is (OLP 1) and the citation for Piggott & Kaye (1973) is (OLP 2). Thus (OLP 1.1.23) means Odawa Language Project: First report, text 1, sentence 23. For Williams (1991), attributions take the form (W, p. 84, line 22). Any unattributed examples are from my field notes.

Almost all of the text examples are retranslated. The original translations almost always leave out the information expressed in the directional.

MORPHOSYNTAX AND SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

Each directional preverb has a corresponding initial form, biid-, anim-, bim-, bibaam-, respectively.

(2) preverb initial
(2a) bi-
     bi-zaad 'come'
     bi = in-ya
     coming = to-go
     biijbatood 'come running'
     biid-bibatoo-
     coming-run-
(2b) ani-
     ni-zhad 'go away'
     ni = in-ya-
     going = to-go
     anim-batood 'run away'
(2c) bim-
     bim-yaad 'go by'
     bimi = ayan- 
     along = be_at-
     bim-bibatoo-
     along-run-
(2d) biba-
     biba-adnizid
     bibaa = dan-izi-
     around = stay-
     bibaam-
     bbaamsed
     bibaam-oze-
     around-walk-

There are many morphemes in Ojibwe that have both initial and preverb forms. The choice between preverb form and initial is governed by principles that are not fully understood, and are probably largely lexical. Most motion finals take the initial form of directional, e.g.,

(3a) -ibatoo 'run'
     bimbatood 'run'
     bbaambatood 'run around'
     biijbatood 'come running'
     nimbatood 'run off'

(3b) -aadagaad 'wade'
     bmaadgaad 'wade'
     bbaamaadgaad 'wade around'
     biijdaadgaad 'come wading'
     nimaadgaad 'wade off'

There is one semantic quirk regarding bim- 'along'. As the initial in motion verbs it is bleached in meaning, such that the meaning of motion final plus bim- means has the meaning of the final alone, e.g.,

(4) bmaadgaad 'wade', bmaadhod 'skate', bmaakshiwaad 'paddle', bmaabood 'run', bmaabood 'fly', bmaabood 'leave tracks', bmaaood 'crawl', bmaaood 'walk', etc.

We will refer to bim- as the NEUTRAL INITIAL for motion verbs.

For the morphemes bi- and ani-, some motion finals allow, and in some cases even require, construction with preverb plus neutral initial or relative root, rather than using the initial form, e.g.,

(5a) biid-/bii-
     bibaadgaad 'come wading',
     bibaataad 'come running'
     biijbatood 'come running'
     but
     biijbatood / bi-baam - 'come flying'
     bi-zaad / *bii 'come'
     bi-baam - / *baaded 'come walking'
     bim-
     bim-yaad 'go by'
     bimi = ayan-
     along = be_at-
     bim-batoo-
     along-run-
     bim-
     bim-yaad 'go by'
     bimi = ayan-
     along = be_at-
     bim-batoo-
     along-run-
     bim-
     bim-yaad 'go by'
     bimi = ayan-
     along = be_at-
     bim-batoo-
     along-run-

The external syntactic properties of directionals are two - one dealing with the order of preverbs, the second dealing with relative root valences.

First, the directional preverbs appear in the second position in the preverb complex. They follow the tense/modal preverbs:

(6a) bii... miinwaa gii-bi-niisaaandwe. (BI T35.36) 
     '... and again he came climbing down.' (cf. gii- 'past')
(6b) bii... ji-bi-niisaaandwea ji-niisaaajidwea ... (BI T31.24)
     '... to come help me fight them ...' (cf. ji- 'conj. future')

But they precede adverbial preverbs:

(7a) Bi-indasoo-giwej wiitchiwohgoon. (BI S540)
     'Every time he comes home, she scolds him.' (cf. ojndaso- 'every time')
(7b) Jihwaa niiswii gow bi-ji-gichi-nimkii. (BI T10.16)
     'Before two days have passed there will be a big thunderstorm.' (cf. gichi- 'much, very')
(7c) *bebaa-nda-nshiwejig* (OLP 1.1.4)
'who were going around looking to kill people.' (cf. *nda-* 'seeking')

The second syntactic property of directional preverbs we will discuss here has to do with relative root valences. Relative roots always license an extra argument in the clause they appear in. When the initial or the verb root following the directional is a relative root, the preverb directional can function as the complement of the relative root:

(8a) *Mii dash giw nihiingaag gi-bi-yaawaaad.* (BI T35.43)
'And then the wolves came, ...' (cf. *yaab- 'be [there]'*)

(8b) *Diiheb dash ni-ni-patoon.* (BI T3.2)
'I run away along the shore, ...' (cf. *patoon- 'run to [there]'

(8c) *Eni-chitigweyaag ziihi.* (BI T36.15)
'Where the river heads away.' (cf. *chitigweyaag- 'the river runs to [there]')

MEANING AND USAGE

The directional verbs fall into two groups, a deictic group, comprising *bi-* 'coming' and *ani-* 'going, away, off', and a path group, comprising *bimi-* 'along [simple path]' and *bibbaa-* 'around [complex path]'.

The deictics are anchored to a point of reference from which the coming and going is calculated, as is suggested by their glosses. The neutral anchor position is the location of the participant in focus at the relevant point of the text. In example (9), the speaker, a partridge chick, tells his mother where Nenaboz has gone, referring to Nenaboz's path as *ani-* 'away' with respect to where he, the chick, was at the time:

(9) *Wgi-naan dash, 'Diiheb gi-ni-zhaa.*' (BI T35.17)
'So he said to [his mother], "[Nenaboz] headed off along the riverbank."'

The participant in focus can be the narrator, as in (10), where the work order comes (*bi-*) to the shop where the narrator is working at the time:

(10) *Ngoding dash ggizheb gi-bi-yaamgar iv order.* (BI T9.29)
'Then early one morning, a work order came.'

2. The sole exception is in idioms; see Rhodes (2005).

As is familiar to those who work with deixis, the deictic anchor can be transferred to be the homebase of the participant in focus, as in (11) where the narrator describes his arrival at the well (lit., the place where we draw water), as being *ani-* 'away', i.e. from the place where he was staying:

(11) *E-ni-dgoshnaan wiinaagmi in nihiish v-nihiinaaang.* (BI T10.7)
'When I got to the well, the water was dirty.'

In addition to deictic directionals, Ojibwe has an andative morpheme, *bi-*, historically related to the directional *bi-*. It can be distinguished from the directional *bi-*, not only in that it functions as an auxiliary preverb, but also because its deictic opposite is *awi-/awa- rather than *ani- and it has no initial form. For example:

(12a) *... myagi-nishnaaben wan-bi-nsiigwaadin.* (BI T31.19)
'... foreigners (obv.) who would come to kill them.'

(12b) *Wa-waaban daang daegwaagen nendwendaagaadogwen.* (BI T8.28)
'Go see what they want.'

The differences between the andative *bi-* and the directional *bi-* are as follows:

(13) *bi-*

directional

andative

initial

*biid-*

none

opposite

*ani-*

*awi-/awa-/oo-

Now let us turn our attention to matters of usage. There is a class of productive uses of the deictic directionals *bi- and ani-* which occur with a small class of motion verbs in what could reasonably be called clichés. The meanings are compositional, but the individual constructs are so frequent as to warrant being considered lexicalized, hence the term cliché. The verb stems involved are *ayaa- 'be [there], come to be [there]', *izhaa- 'go [there]', *maajaa- 'go', *giwe- 'go home', *dagoshin- 'arrive', and *onjibaad-'arise from [there]' :

(14a) *ayaa- 'be [there], come to be [there]' bi-yaad 'come'

ni-yaad 'go'

(14b) *izhaa- 'go [there]' bi-zaaad 'come'

ni-zaaad 'go'
(16b) Mit dash git-boozaan, gaa-shkwaq-gishgadood iw meihiyan go ni waa-ni-raqitaanoowu ji-biminaabann ‘goyaan sikhde-daabaaring.’ (BI T9.11)
   ‘Then I got on board, after he bought the ticket that I would use to ride the train.’

(16c) ... gye go giw sa kwewaq iw gegoq wii-gleniwoopa iw niiyaam waa-ni-haa-n-raqitaanoowu. (BI T23.2)
   ‘... and the women would learn things that they could make good use of in the future.’

A particularly clear instance is found in my field notes where, in a discussion about weather, the consultant volunteered several semantically parallel sentences, those in (17) are future in sense, in contrast to (18):

(17a) Mii go baamaa ji-jigyaam ni-dhikaa, ji-ni-dkeenamqu. (BI T9.11)
   ‘Then later, towards evening, it’ll get cold. ’ (lit. ‘as it becomes evening’)

(17b) Naangin go ni-dhikaa, da-gheeta. ‘Usually it’ll be hot until it gets to be evening.’

(18) Mii go baamaa e-giiwam, wi-dkeenamqu. (BI T9.11)
   ‘After it rained, it got cold.’

The difference between the sentences in (17) and that in (18) is that, in addition to futurity, those in (17) have a sense of change over time. From this one can surmise that pure future usages like those in (16) are generalized from ones like those in (17). These latter are metaphorical from the specialized usage of stepwise action exemplified in (15), based on a time-space metaphor.

In addition to the temporal usages of ani- in future-tensed clauses, there are temporal senses of ani- in past tense contexts, e.g.,

(19a) Eshkam dash ngii-ni-nstaan iw nokiwi. (BI T8.23)
   ‘Little by little I came to understand the work.’

(19b) Mit go zhaasti go eskam ni-magagmaag wi, ni-mehaa go naa wi nibish. (OLP 1.3.44)
   ‘Already, the lake was getting bigger and bigger, the water was expanding.’

(19c) Mit giit-ni-noojinam. (W, p. 22, line 9)
   ‘He had gotten progressively better.’

3. The combination bi-maajad also occurs, but it is not common.
The clearest cases of pleonastic directional are like those in (21) and (22), where the verb sporting the directional is not a verb of motion, nor one, like *aabaamad* 'look back' in (22b), that implies a directionality,

A particularly telling group of examples is found in a text about the Thunderers collected by the Odawa Language Project. In it a sickly man is chosen by the Thunderers to help them kill a monster. They take him up with them to the clouds. The excerpt in (23) tells how they got him there:

(23a) *Aanti-sh mii sa giį-zaagįitiwaat.
'So they took [the sickly man] outside.'
(23b) *Mii-sh giįwenh egod,...
'And [one of the Thunderers] told him,...'
(23c) "Naagdawaabmishtin...
"Follow me with your eyes,..."
(23d) "...ji-ni-dokkiyaa go, mii giį-ziwi ji-bi-dokkiyaa.
"...where I step (heading away), you step there (coming),""
(23e) *Aanti-sh mii sa giį-ni-dokkit idziw eni-zaamid go,...
'So [the sick man] stepped (heading away) where [the Thunderer] went (heading away),...'
(23f) *...mii go giį-ni-dokkwaabmad ni-dokkiyaa.
(OLP 1.4.22)
'...he followed him (heading away) with his eyes where he stepped (heading away).'
(23g) *Mii sa giį-ni-nbikwaabawaat idig aakokoo.
(OLP 1.4.23)
'So they walked away upwards into the clouds.'

Once the directionality becomes relevant in (23d), every clause in the passage is marked for directionality on every verb that is a motion verb for which direction might be relevant that takes place during motion, in spite of the fact that the four actual instances of *anti-* in (23e) and (f) are redundant.

This observation leads to the following analysis: at the point in the text that speaker deems directionality relevant to the frame, all the clauses connected with that frame and involving motion must be registered for directionality. Note that this principle clearly distinguishes pure directional uses of directional from other uses. The specialized uses do not trigger pleonastic copies. This is exemplified for cliché uses in (24a), for 'stepwise' *anti-* in (24b), and for the future sense in (24c), discussed above.
(24a) cliché

Mii dash gii-ni-maajaad ezhigweyanga ii ziibi. (B1 35.9)
‘Then he left heading along the river.’

(24b) ‘stepwise’ anti-

Wgii-ni-waa-amaan dash bnsaan niibdeyaa-kinin. (B1 35.2)
‘He looked down the line where the partridge chicks were sitting in a row.’

(24c) future anti-

Mii maanda niigana da-ni-gitchigak ge-mo-aabitooyan. (B1 31.13)
‘This is what you will make good use of in the days ahead.’

As one might expect, the clichéd usages can also optionally trigger pleonastic directionalities. This option is demonstrated by a telling pair of sentences found in two versions of Nenabozho and the partridges told by Andrew Medler to Bloomfield (1958). The sentence from the first telling is given in (25a) (= [24a]). The corresponding sentence from the second version is given in (25b). The first has no pleonastic directional, the second nearly identical sentence does:

(25a) Mii dash gii-ni-maajaad ezhigweyanga ii ziibi. (B1 35.9)
‘Then he left heading along the river.’

(25b) Mii dash miiwaan gii-ni-maajaad ziibi aanti-zhitgeyeyanin. (B1 36.8)
‘Then he left heading along the river.’

Pleonastic directionalities are also suppressed, as one might expect, in parentheticals. For example the full version of the excerpt cited in (22c) is given in (26). Notice that it contains a long parenthetical (26b-c) which has no directional, even though the burning through referred to in (26b) and (26c) happens as the man is trying to get away, and would normally be marked for directionality.

(26a) Maapii-sh giiwen miid gaa-ni-anwitoood wa.
‘After a while he could go no further.’

(26b) (Aanii-sh mi gii miid gii zhaabwaakood ziibi wiibaa-sonaag ...
‘He was burned through at the back.’

(26c) ... gii-biikgiwitind wi ziihaabakood.
‘He had been slapped [on the back] with the sugar.’

(26d) Gwitaawkanin miid na gii-pii-ki giihiig wi ziihaabakood, nendaajihang wa.
‘The sugar that she was stirring was terribly hot.’

(26e) Mii go iyid gii-zhaabwaakood.
‘He was burned through’

(26f) Mii ga iyid gii-ni-miib.
‘He died (heading away).’

Pleonastic preverb usage is not limited to directional preverbs. In (27) the preverb noonoo- ‘short of the goal’ is used pleonastically:

(27a) Gye go ngodeewaan miin mii-temsii miwaan gii-tamwaan go maan miibkaang ...’
‘And they put an extra pair of mocassins in the casket as well,...’

(27b) ... gisihpin ni-noonoo-bigisikood niin miiskeenun jiibwaan dgooshing wiid ezhiiid e-hiigishnog ...
‘... lest he wear out his mocassins before arriving in the west where he was going,...’

(27c) ... ji-wejibikood neyab miiwaan ji-biiwkaang miin miiskeenun. (B1 24.9)
‘... he might take those other mocassins from there and put them on.’

At the moment I have no analysis for sentences of this type. I suspect that this is a sentential level realization of a kind of repetition common in Ojibwe texts.5

CONCLUSION

A number of unexpected properties are found in a class of directional which register paths in Ojibwe. These uses include morphological quirks in word formation, clichéd usages with a limited class of motion verbs, a series of idiomatic uses of the directional anti- ‘away’, and a frame-based pleonastic use, commonly found in both narrative and conversation.

REFERENCES


5. An example is found in the parenthetical passage in (26). The first clause in (26b) has the same lexical content as the clause in (26e). This is a matter for future research.
Menominee Preverbs as Functional Categories

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This paper is one piece of a larger work exploring the proposal that Menominee preverbs occupy head positions in a functional hierarchy like that proposed in Cinque (1999). The behavior of several preverbs is considered in light of cross-linguistic properties of similar morphemes, in order to establish their categorial identity among the set of functional heads presumably supplied by Universal Grammar (UG).

PREVERBS AND ADVERBS

Menominee has a number of morphemes, called preverbs in Algonquianist literature, which encode various meanings including modal, temporal, spatial, and aspectual. A given clause can have several such morphemes, which are sometimes treated as part of the morphological verb because they occur between a preverbal agreement morpheme and the verb stem (e.g., Bloomfield 1962). The position of preverbs in the Menominee verbal complex is shown in (1) below (numerous details about agreement omitted). Arguments and other expressions appear both to the left and right of this complex. (2) provides an example of a preverb in what I will call the preverb space.

(1)  AGR-PREVERB₁-PREVERB₂-...-PREVERBₙ-V-AGR

preverb space

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2. However, there is evidence that preverbs do not form a phonological word with the verb stem in at least some Algonquian languages: see for example Bloomfield (1962) for Menominee, Leavitt (1985) for Passamaquoddy-Malecite, and Russell (1999) for Cree.