

Animacy as a semantic restriction

Algonquian languages classify nominals (nouns, demonstratives) and verbs in terms of whether a referent is **animate** or **inanimate** (Goddard 2002). (1) shows that, with nominals, a demonstrative and a noun agree in animacy value. (2) shows that intransitive verbs can come in VAI/VII pairs (Valentine 2001). However, some verbs have only one form: ‘be angry’ is only a VAI (3); ‘freeze over’ is only a VII (4)¹. This raises a problem: some verbs select for animacy; others do not.

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| <p>(1) a. <i>aw oshki-inini</i>
 D.AN young.man.AN
 ‘that young man’</p> | <p>b. <i>iw wiigwaam</i>
 D.IN lodge.IN
 ‘that lodge’</p> |
| <p>(2) a. <i>Ginoo-zi aw oshki-inini</i>
 tall-VAI D.AN young-man.AN
 ‘that young man is tall’</p> | <p>b. <i>Ginw-aa iw wiigwaam</i>
 tall-VII D.IN lodge.IN
 ‘that lodge is tall’</p> |
| <p>(3) a. <i>Nishkaad-izi aw oshki-inini</i>
 angry-VAI D.AN young.man.AN
 ‘that young man is angry’</p> | <p>b. *<i>Nishkaad-aa iw wiigwaam</i>
 angry-VII D.IN lodge.IN
 [‘that lodge is angry’]</p> |
| <p>(4) a. *<i>Gii-gashk-ad-izi aw oshki-inini</i>
 PST-freeze.over-VAI D.AN young.man.AN
 [‘that young man froze over’]</p> | <p>b. <i>Gii-gashk-ad-in i’iw zaaga’igan</i>
 PST-freeze.over.VII D..IN lake.IN
 ‘the lake froze over’</p> |

Assuming that animacy is perspective-dependent (Dahl & Fraurud 1996, Muehlbauer 2008), animacy is treated as a restrictor function (Heim & Kratzer 1998:64). The implications of two solutions are explored: with **Solution 1**, animacy restricts entity-denoting expressions; with **Solution 2**, animacy is a predicate that places restrictions on other predicates. Morpho-syntactic evidence is consistent with Solution 2.

- Solution 1** [tall-1] = $\lambda x \in D_{e,AN} . x$ is tall [young.man] = $\lambda x \in D_{e,AN} . x$ is young.man
[tall-2] = $\lambda x \in D_{e,AN} . x$ is tall
- Solution 2** [anim] = $\lambda x \in D_e . x$ is animate [young.man] = $\lambda x \in D . x$ is young.man
[tall] = $\lambda x \in D_e . x$ is tall

¹ All data from The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary

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