

Numeral Classifiers in Menominee

This paper provides an analysis of numeral classifiers and their usage in Menominee, using data from Gachet (1954 [1862]) and Bloomfield (1928, 1962). I highlight new data found in Gachet and discuss two newly attested classifiers, *-yīkw* ‘sheetlike’ and *-aemenak* ‘round’.

Menominee has both mensural and sortal classifiers, distinguishing measurement and inherent characteristics of objects.

1. Mensural Classifier: Naeqn**īhnak** sūniyan ‘three boxes of money’
2. Sortal Classifier: Naeq**uahtek** pīyan ‘three oars’

In (1), the mensural classifier final *-āēhNakw* ‘barrel, wooden container’ is attached to the numeral *naeqnw-* ‘three’ to describe the containers of money. In (2), the sortal classifier *-āhtaek* is attached to further classify ‘oars’ as having the inherent qualities of being wooden and long.

I discuss seven mensural and five sortal classifiers.

Seven, eight, nine are numerals in Menominee that behave differently throughout the whole of the number system. These numerals, when used with a classifier, must utilize the initial *tahN-*.

3. Sākāew **tahnīhnak** sakāhekanan ‘nine barrels of nails’

In (3), the mensural classifier final is attached to *tahN-* rather than the numeral itself. This phenomenon, however, is not exclusive to seven, eight, and nine. *TahN-* plus a classifier is used for certain higher numerals as well.

Measurements of time may “behave like mensural classifiers in some ways, but crucially, they cannot co-occur with nouns” (Meyer 2020:123).

4. Nīsinoh metātahn**okon** - 20 days

In (4), the final *-aekon* ‘days’ attaches to the numeral; however it is just a measurement. There is no noun co-occurring.

Many sortal classifiers have related counterparts in Ojibwe. To explore this relationship, I turn to Meyer 2019 and 2020 to compare and contrast Ojibwe and Menominee classifiers. The fact that Ojibwe has such a wide variety of classifiers indicates that Menominee may have once had more that were lost in time and lack of use.

References

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