A Preliminary Survey of Animacy Categories in Penobscot

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INTRODUCTION

For as long as there has been study of Algonquian languages, researchers have sought a means to predict which nouns fall into the class we call "animate," and which fall into the class we call "inanimate." Early on it was noticed that nouns referring to "beings" (human, animal, or supernatural) or "items often personified" (e.g. dolls, heavenly bodies) were all "animate"---hence the term. Since these nouns fit easily into the English definition of "animate," this term has stuck, along with its antonym, "inanimate." However, there has always been a problem with items which do not fit the English definition of "animate," but which nonetheless are the referents of "animate" nouns. Some examples from Penobscot, an Eastern Algonquian language of Maine, include **èmkʷɑn** 'spoon', **kɑ̀wɪ** 'porcupine quill', and **wə̀laman** 'ochre, red clay, vermilion; blood poisoning'. Conversely, many items considered "animate" in English are treated as "inanimates." For example, the vast majority of terms for plants, bushes, and scrubby trees are inanimate in Penobscot, even as more substantial trees are uniformly animate. At first blush, then, membership in these two classes of nouns does not appear to be easily predictable.

Most investigations into the predictability of animacy assignment fall into two groups. The majority of researchers recognize that animacy can sometimes be predicted semantically---but they then conclude that it is ultimately lexically determined, since too many apparently unpredictable cases exist. The second (and smaller) group holds that animacy is determined dynamically by speakers' judgements about which items have a certain kind of "power," and which do not. One idea for which there does seem to be a fair consensus is that "animate" is the marked category, and "inanimate" is the default category. That is, we need only determine the criteria for "animate"-ness; any noun failing to satisfy those criteria will automatically fall into the "inanimate" category.

In this paper, I present the preliminary results of my survey of animacy as manifested in Penobscot. In Penobscot at least, it appears that animacy is determined largely by analogy between individual words, rather than by one elusive, overarching semantic feature that all members of the class "animate" share (cf. Dahlstrom (1995)). This one-word-to-one-word analogical model works as follows: if one knows that **ttawəssə́motɪ** 'cup, tumbler' is animate, then the functionally similar fluid container **pó**ttɑye 'bottle' is predictably animate as well. Animacy-assigning analogies are not random; they seem mainly (but not exclusively) to be made along the semantic lines of *intrinsic function* and *texture*. Although exceptions exist, this characterization accounts for the overwhelming majority of animate nouns attested in the language.

A note on terminology: in this paper, "animacy" refers to "the feature of whether a noun is animate or inanimate," and "animateness" means "the feature of whether or not a noun is animate." I also use the term "animate" mostly with the slightly restricted sense of the "not immediately obviously animate"---that is, my discussion will generally exclude the already very well-defined category of humans, animals, and personified and supernatural beings, along with large/substantial trees. I do so assuming that no matter what model one uses, these animate nouns are easily accounted for by simple descriptive rule. The "logically inanimate" animates are, as always, the main problem at hand. For the sake of completeness, however, here are some examples:

Beings, Personifications,[1] and Large/Substantial Trees

pəmɑwəsə́wɪno AN 'a living person'
pə̀so AN 'bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)'

kéhtɑǩəso AN ‘ghost, spirit, apparition’
ɑmsǩáčekkɑn AN ‘doll’
páwəhɪkan AN/INAN[2] ‘token, talisman, fetish object used for magic purposes by shamans’
ɑtlóhkɑkan DA ‘AN: protagonist of a sacred story; INAN: fable, traditional story, sacred story’[3]
ápasɪ DA ‘AN: tree; INAN: stick’
masǩémosɪ DA ‘AN: white or grey birch or canoe birch (*Betula papyrifera* and *B. populifolia*); INAN: birch log’

TERMINOLOGY, SOURCES, DEFINITIONS, AND ABBREVIATIONS

Two terms need special mention: dual animacy, and variable animacy. Dual animates (DA) are nouns that occur both as an animate and as an inanimate, with different meanings for each gender. Variable animates (VA) are nouns that occur both as an animate and as an inanimate, with no apparent difference in meaning for each gender. Variable animates probably stem either from interspeaker variation, or from cases of dual animacy for which the difference in meaning has been missed by the recorder.

Most of the material given here is drawn from Siebert’s *Penobscot Dictionary* manuscript. To avoid imposing a favorable interpretation on the meaning of any noun in question, all glosses are verbatim from the original manuscript. The only changes made are the reordering of dual animate definitions with AN first, then INAN (for clarity); the omission of taxonomist name from Latin species names (for space); and the correcting of spelling and other typographical errors. My bracketed comments are in italics, to distinguish them from Siebert’s own bracketed comments. Italics used to emphasize a portion of Siebert’s glosses are mine.

In this investigation, a noun is considered animate (or inanimate) if the dictionary manuscript indicates it as “AN” or “INAN,” and the distinctive plural form is given as well. Uncertain cases, i.e. where no verifying plural is given, or when the “AN/INAN” contradicts the classification implied by the plural form, are noted. The animacies of terms not given in the dictionary are determined by their agreement patterns (plural endings, demonstratives, or verbal agreement) within the text in which they appear.

Abbreviations used in this paper:

AN	*animate noun*
AI	*animate intransitive verb*
AN.cj	*AI conjunct functioning as an animate noun*
INAN	*inanimate noun*
II	*inanimate intransitive verb*
DA	*dual animate*
VA	*variable animate*

PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS

Most mentions of animacy assignment in Algoquianist literature are asides, limited to a paragraph or two in a description of some other phenomenon. Some, such as Wolfart (1973), argue that animacy is ultimately lexically determined: “only a list can account for the gender of Cree nouns.”[4] Yet nearly all authors provide lists that attempt to categorize and link animate nouns semantically.[5] The majority of researchers appear to hold views similar to that of LeSourd (1993:9), who states that “[it seems clear that] the animate/inanimate distinction is truly one of grammatical gender, despite the fact that gender has various semantic correlates.”

A few authors, however, favor a more fully semantic determination for animacy. Darnell and Vanek (1976) propose that a feature they call "power" determines which nouns are animate. This "power" is described as involving the "ability and freedom to act and interact;" and animates with this feature are said to have "some additional quality of either physical or spiritual reality which puts them in a special relationship to the power which drives the universe." (163, 177) Straus and Brightman (1982) argue for a similar model in which all animate nouns refer to "living$_1$" things, defined as those which "participate in the same life-system of creation, and [which] share in the power of that creation." (102) They too use a similar "power" terminology, concluding that "the fundamental semantic contrast which corresponds to gender in Northern Cheyenne and probably other Algonquian languages [is] that between *powerfulness* and *powerlessness* as attributes of referents." (133) Straus and Brightman do not, however, rule out the possibility that formal, that is, morpholexical, factors may affect animacy determination, and instead only state that semantics is the stronger factor. Barring this acceptance of a degree of lexicality, I see these two models as largely the same.

While Craik (1982) does not explicitly suggest a "power"-type model for animacy assignment, he does seem to consider animacy assignment semantically determined, since he describes animacy as dependent on the immediate attitude of a speaker towards the referent. His discussion is distinctive in that it offers several examples in which usually animate terms are treated as inanimates, a phenomenon I have seen in Penobscot only in one rather suspect case. Overall, however, Craik's model reads much like a "power" model expressed in slightly different terms, especially since he draws a direct link between Cree speakers' animacy-determining attitudes and their religion/cosmology.

Black-Rogers (1982) describes a similar "power" theory of animacy determination for Ojibwa. However, she concludes that because "the potential for power…resides in nearly anything one encounters," and because the Ojibwa "power belief system" has an inherently indeterminate aspect, this model is correct, but has come to an "impasse." (63, 65) According to her model, "power"-based assignment of animateness can be accounted for after the fact, but not independently predicted, since any noun can theoretically be treated as animate. The apparent implication is that Ojibwa gender is in constant flux, except where certain terms' animatenesses have undergone---in her terms---"crystallization." (68) This description seems suspiciously similar to "lexification." Despite this apparent return to the lexical model of animacy assignment, the overall model she argues for (albeit noting its main drawback) again basically seems to be the one shared by most authors who pursue the semantic line of analysis. Namely, that animacy is not static and lexical, it is dynamically and semantically determined, and varies according to on-the-spot judgements about the speaker's cosmological relationship to the referent.

I have no real bone to pick with the "power" model of animacy identification. Indeed, just because it is difficult to apply to Penobscot does not imply that it cannot be a very real part of Ojibwa, Northern Cheyenne, or Rupert House Cree. Certainly we should not assume that all Algonquian languages organize their animacy systems along exactly the same lines. But since Penobscot no longer has native speakers, it is not possible to ask them about their worldviews, and this has forced me develop a different model, one that most closely resembles the proposal of Dahlstrom (1995).

Dahlstrom (1995) approaches the question of membership in the class of animates by applying Lakoff (1987)'s notion of "radial categories." By this analysis, the category of animates is internally structured, "with central members picked out by a semantic feature, peripheral members connected to more central ones by semantic links, and [also with] some exceptional, unmotivated members." (125) Dahlstrom's work is the source of two of the main points I argue for here. First, that the animate class is the marked class, and inanimate the default; and second, that the overall class of animates need not have one single unifying feature. The key difference between Dahlstrom (1995)'s account and my own is that for any given group of animates, I posit no inherent center and no inherent margin. Instead, I analyze animateness groups as centerless

aggregations, clusters rather than core-periphery systems. For that reason, I also move away from the idea that animateness-assigning analogies synchronically still start primarily from familiar semantic notions of animacy. At the same time, the new analysis here contributes the original proposal that animateness-assigning analogy is constrained to just a few limited channels of analogical comparison.

ANALOGICAL ANIMACY ASSIGNMENT

The main problem I find in earlier models of animacy is that all except Dahlstrom (1995) seek one common deep thread, some single semantic feature that will link all animate nouns together. In line with Dahlstrom, I suggest that there is no one large common thread, but instead, lots of little ones. That is, animateness is assigned to Penobscot nouns from other animate nouns via analogy. So, as given before, if one knows that the term **ttawəssə́motɨ** AN 'cup, tumbler' is animate, then by analogy, the functionally similar fluid container **póttɑye** AN 'bottle' is predictably animate as well. Crucially, from there one can go down a list of fluid containers, analogizing the animateness of one off of the other:

Fluid Containers

ttawɑ́kǩɑkan AN 'kettle'
ttawɑkǩásotɨ AN 'cooking utensil; *kettle, pot (of any sort)*'
ttawəssə́motɨ AN 'cup, tumbler'
èmǩɑn AN 'spoon'
ppan AN 'lung'
sɑpolawésɪkan AN 'internal organ of the body, esp. animal; *lung*'
wətámɑkan AN '(tobacco) pipe'
pənáhpsǩahsən AN 'stone pipe [*for smoking tobacco*]; soapstone or slate from which pipes are made; stove pipe[6]'
ppahǩhólɑkan AN 'drum'
čɪǩhámɑkan DA 'AN: log drum; INAN: drumstick'

It is difficult to say where the foundation of this system is, and perhaps it is unnecessary. It may be that Penobscot children trying to make sense of their parents' language learn a few nouns' animatenesses lexically, but then extrapolate other terms' animatenesses off of them semantically. The lexically-acquired animacy assignments are thus a crutch---one depends on them as a catalyst to get the system moving, but thereafter, they are no longer needed. It would therefore also be impossible tell for certain which words in an adult speaker's lexicon might have formed that first core set of animates.

Any word can be related to any other word by some semantic thread, however, so this system must and indeed does have limits. For example, Penobscot nouns do not appear to analogize for animateness according to features like color: the animate **wə̀laman** AN 'ochre, red clay, vermilion; blood poisoning' is red, but equally red **pákahkan** INAN 'blood' is inanimate. Instead, animacy-assigning analogies seem to be made predominantly (but not exclusively) along the semantic lines of *texture* and *intrinsic function*.

Texture-based analogical animacy assignment

Texture is the easier of the two features to explain. For example, the assignment of animateness to some fruits and vegetables but not to others at first seems unpredictable. It appears, however, that a clear textural distinction divides animates from inanimates. Animate

fruits and vegetables are larger, juicier, fleshier, and softer than inanimate ones; they also do not have a thick or tough peel. Inanimates lack these features: they are the smaller, dryer, stonier ones, and may have a tough peel. Examine the contrasts below:

Biggish Juicy Fruits and Vegetables, Versus Those Which Are Not

INAN: small, dryish, and/or stony
wáhsawe INAN 'pumpkin' [*hard peel*]
álenčɪs INAN 'orange' [*tough peel*]
lèmənɪs INAN 'lemon' [*tough peel*]
sesαwanɪ-atówətəwan INAN 'banana' [*thick peel*]
sàhte INAN 'blueberry' [*small, often kept and consumed in dried form*]
asíhkɪmɪn INAN 'rock/N. mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium. vitis-idea* var. *minus*)' [*dryish*]

ípɪmɪn INAN 'highbush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)' [*dryish*]
sàwan INAN 'small cranberry [*nonspecific*]' [*dryish*]
póhpohke INAN 'cranberry (*Oxycoccus macrocarpus*)' [*dryish*]
séskɪpe INAN 'elderberry' [*dryish*]
kαkákəwɪmɪn INAN 'wintergreen berry (*Gaultheria procumbens*)' [*dryish*]
átəpɪmɪn INAN 'chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)' [*stony*]
αtawámkɪmɪn INAN 'sand cherry (*Prunus pumila*)' [*stony*]
nekawámkɪmɪn INAN 'sand plum, sand cherry (*Prunus depressa*)' [*stony*]
wékǩαmɪn INAN 'black cherry (*Prunus serotina*)'[7] [*stony*]
psólɪmɪn INAN 'chokeberry (*Pyrus melanocarpa*)' [*stony*]
αpətelәmáwɪmɪn INAN 'grain of rice (*Oryza sativa*)' [*not juicy*]

AN: biggish, fleshy, and juicy
ččìkəne AN 'apple'
káskɪmɪn AN 'Canada plum, red plum (*P. nigra*)'
kαwáhǩɪmɪn AN 'dogberry, prickly gooseberry'
síkosǩe AN 'widow; *pear*; cricket'[8]
psáhǩətemɪn AN 'blackberry'[9]
mìnsəss AN 'red rasberry; hemangioma, birthmark'[10]
pəməwáyɪmɪn AN 'serviceberry, sugarplum (*Amelanchier laevis*)'
nolkáyɪmɪn AN 'nannyberry, wild raisin (*Viburnum lentago*)'
káskɪmɪn AN 'Canada plum, red plum (*Prunus nigra*)'
ssòmɪn DA 'AN: fox grape; INAN: dried berry, raisin'

Note that the animate and inanimate readings of **ssòmɪn** DA 'AN: fox grape; INAN dried berry, raisin' favor animateness for the juicier referent. An even more telling contrast is the one between the following two terms:

atówətəwe AN 'cymbling, summer squash (*Cucurbita maxima*)'
atówətəwan INAN 'crookneck or winter squash (*Cucurbita moschata*)'

Summer squash have thin peels, ones not much more substantial than those of (animate) apples, with which they share a similar overall texture. Winter squash, on the other hand, have a tough peel, more like that of an (inanimate) pumpkin. Indeed, this hard peel also seems to be why **wòwan** INAN 'egg', arguably a fluid container, is not animate; and also **pàkαn** INAN? [11] 'large nut, butternut', for that matter.

Variable animates also point to a textural distinction. That is, we find animacy variation precisely in nouns referring to items that vary in the salience of these textural features. Exemplifying this is **mskíhkəwɪmɪn** 'strawberry', which is most often listed as an animate, but occasionally as an inanimate (e.g. Dana (date unknown): 998). If one considers that the term could apply both to the rather small and dryish [=INAN] wild strawberries and the big juicy [=AN] cultivated ones, one can see where the variation might result. In fact, in Siebert's dictionary manuscript, **mskíhkəwɪmɪn** takes an animate plural, but the same entry also lists an inanimate plural form that is marked with a diminutive: **mskɪhkəwímɪnsal**. If this story is true, then small wild strawberries are not big and juicy enough to be animate, while large cultivated ones are.[12]

Possibly linked to this group is another cluster of animates that relate to each other by textural analogy. This is the rather uniformly animate class of 'swellings on the body':

Swellings on the Body

mìsəwe AN 'ringworm, lesion of ringworm'[13]
mìnsəss AN 'red rasberry; *hemangioma, birthmark*'[14]
pə́sakəyan AN 'mole, nevus, a colored spot on the skin'[15]
pəməwe(hsɪs) AN 'boil, carbuncle'; also **kčí-pəməwe** AN 'ulcer, abscess'
makʷísotɪ AN 'tumor, cancer'
čəkʷal AN 'tumor, wen'
čakɪkʷ AN 'wart' diminutive **čákɪkʷɪs** AN 'little wart; decorative twists on a basket'
čáčɪkʷɪs AN ''little wart', protuberance, elevated ornament on basket'
wəčehte AN 'felon, whitlow'
čéhčalohks AN 'tonsil, gland'
čeht AN 'artery', diminutives **čehčɪs, wəčehčɪs** AN 'vein'
áwɪsənɑ AN 'beaver castor, beaver musk or gland oil'[16]
nósɑkan AN 'breast, teat (male or female)'
nonon AN 'nipple (male or female)'

These terms (and possibly also **wətolohs** AN 'kidney') are all animate, and all share the common feature of puffiness.[17] Again, the animacy-assigning analogy falls along textural lines. One might wonder, then, whether this group and the soft juicy fruits are just subsets of a larger 'soft juicy thing' class of animates. And indeed, one could extend two more groups off of these shared textural features. The first is the set of puffy baked goods, seen below:

Puffy Baked Goods

AN: grains, *baked to puffiness*
àpɑn AN 'bread'
pkʷésɪkan DA 'AN: loaf of bread;[18] INAN: *slice* of anything (bread, meat)'
pkénɪkan AN 'piece of bread broken off by hand (not cut)'
ápɑnɪs AN 'biscuit'
skamoní-apɑn AN 'corn bread' **sokálapɑn** AN 'sugarbread, cake'
pétəkʷɑkɪt **ččɪkənéweye** AN.cj 'apple *pie*'[19]
aləčákənɪkan AN 'kneaded bread, bannock'
pətəkʷánɪkan AN 'dumpling'

Contrast these with the inanimate grains and grain products, none of which are baked to puffiness:

INAN: grains, *not baked to puffiness*
αpətələmə́wɪmɪn INAN ‘grain of rice’
apάnkαkan INAN ‘materials for making bread, breadstuffs’
nóhkhamən INAN ‘flour’
nsὰpαn INAN ‘[*corn*] porridge’
skà·mon INAN ‘corn’
skamontá·hɪkan INAN ‘coarse cornmeal’

The second ‘puffy texture’ group is a bit more of a stretch: the animate “class” of root vegetables, tubers, and bulbs:

Root Vegetables, Tubers, and Bulbs

AN: big substantial food roots
ppən AN ‘groundnut; testicle’ [*and most derivations therefrom*][20]
mólehpən AN ‘yellow dog’s tooth violet, dogtooth violet root (*Erythronium americanum*)’
nólehpən AN ‘bugleweed (*Lycopus uniflorus*)’
ssìhpən AN ‘nodding or yellow wood lily (*Lilium canadense*)’
kkὰčo AN ‘swamp potato, duck potato, wapato, arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*)’
pskèhte AN ‘bullhead lily root (*Nuphar variegatum*)’[21]
psèhpən AN ‘wild leek, ramson; onion (*Allium tricoccum*)’
kčí-psehpən AN ‘bog onion (*Arisaemia stewardsoni*)’
awenóhčəwɪhpən AN ‘turnip’
wɪsá·wahkɁsɪt AN.cj ‘carrot’
méhkɁahkɁsɪt AN.cj ‘beet’

Contrast these with roots that are not starchy or juicy; these are inanimate:

wáčapahkɁ INAN ‘root, esp. tree root, trunk below the leaf/limb line, bole’
wɪsá·wkehsɪk INAN ‘goldthread (*Coptis trifolia*)’

An unusual exception here is **ápəčetes** INAN ‘potato’, which is predicted to be animate. Its cognate in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet, **pəčetes** (LeSourd 1984:71),[22] is also inanimate. However, the animate English loan padatesak given by Laurent (1884:30) for Western Abenaki (which generally has the same animacy patterns as Penobscot). This suggests that this term’s referent simply occupies a borderline area, one subject to variation.

Examining how one can and cannot stretch these analogical classes leads to an important point about the type of model proposed: namely, that analogical classes do not actually exist. Classes such as ‘juicy fruits’ and ‘swellings on the body’ are simply the outcome of a more individualized, one-word-to-one-word process. That is, a noun is assigned animateness not because it fits the criteria of a particular “class” such as ‘juicy fruits’ but because it resembles some other animate noun in texture and/or intrinsic function enough to be treated as animate as well. Class-like clusters of animate nouns naturally grow up as a result, and these may well develop a certain animateness-assigning momentum of their own---but they are fundamentally artifacts, not arbiters of the animateness-assigning process. Consequently, these clusters need not relate to one another, and may extend in rather heterogenous directions. This is because the assignment of animateness to a noun is constrained only by the limited types of analogy (texture-based and/or intrinsic function-based) that can be used in this process.

Intrinsic-function-based analogical animacy assignment

Having looked at several examples of animateness being assigned along textural lines, let us now examine a few cases where intrinsic function is the analogical criterion. "Intrinsic function" refers to the use or behavior of an item without which that item fails to be that item. For example, the feature 'fluid container' is an intrinsic functional feature of a bubble, since a bubble that never held and never will hold air simply cannot be a bubble. Even leaky fluid containers are still implicationally fluid containers, since to call them leaky is to note that they perform their intrinsic function badly. This is in contrast to a non-intrinsic-functional feature such as color or material: whether it is clear or purple, clay or glass, a bottle is still identifiable as a bottle, since being of any particular color or material is not a crucially distinctive function of being a bottle.

A prime example of a cluster of animates that have analogized along intrinsic functional lines is the already-mentioned set of 'fluid containers'. All of the items listed below intrinsically function to hold liquids, air, or smoke:

Fluid Containers

ttawɑ́kǩɑkan AN 'kettle'
ttawɑkǩásotɪ AN 'cooking utensil; *kettle, pot (of any sort)*'
ttawəssə́motɪ AN 'cup, tumbler'
èmǩɑn AN 'spoon'
séskɪčo AN 'birch bark container (used for collecting berries or boiling water)'
wɑ́lɪčo AN 'birch bark or wooden container, hollow dish'
wɑ̀ləsǩ AN 'naturally occurring hollow stone (natural stone receptacle or *pot*), eroded hollow rock'[23]
wskɪ̀čo AN 'small birch bark receptacle for temporary or emergency use; improvised birch bark dish'
pkə̀nɑčo AN 'birch bark receptacle (carried on the back, used to carry berries, etc.; has straps of cedar bark)'
asíhəpɑčo AN 'pail of birch bark, water container made of woven [*?*] birch bark'
pò̀hkəčɪn AN 'narrow vessel or jug for storing drinking water'
pó̀hkəčɪnsǩe AN 'jug'[24]
ɑmíkənɑǩe AN 'birch bark container, vessel'[25]
wɑ́late AN 'dish, plate'
wə̀lɑkan AN 'bowl; crop or craw of some bird species'[26]
apásɑlate AN 'wooden dish, bowl'
wɑ́pɑkkohs AN 'pail, tin bucket, hide container'
wɑpɑkkóhsɑlate AN 'metal dish'
kkohk AN 'pot, kettle; [vulgar] buttocks[27]'
kkɑ̀tkohk AN 'kettle, pot (with legs) [*dim. also animate*]'
mosalɑnsǩásotɪ AN 'clay pot'
pó̀ttɑye AN 'bottle'
mɑlíhkɪhle AN 'barrel, cask [possibly loanword from French *barrique*]'
pò̀hkətes AN 'bubble'
kehtɑǩəsəwɪ-píkətəwan AN 'puffball; spectral flatus'
píkətəwan AN 'flatus, stomach or intestinal gas'[28]
ppan AN 'lung'
sɑpolawésɪkan AN 'internal organ of the body, esp. animal; *lung*'
wətámɑkan AN '(tobacco) pipe'

pənáhpsǩahsən AN ‘stone pipe [*for smoking tobacco*]; soapstone or slate from which pipes are made; stove pipe[29]’
ppahǩhólɑkan AN ‘drum’
čɪkǩhámɑkan DA ‘AN: log drum; INAN: drumstick’

Note the contrast between the animate and inanimate readings of **čɪkǩhámɑkan** DA ‘AN: log drum; INAN: drumstick’. Only the animate reading, ‘log drum’, is functionally analogous to these other animate terms; the meaning ‘drumstick’ has no animate functional analogues, and so this reading is inanimate. Apparent exceptions to this “class” include:

míhkɑtɑǩe INAN ‘small narrow dish made of birch bark (used for sugar, cake, berries, and washing)[30]
pǩə̀nɑčo INAN ‘’birch bark bucket’
míkənɑǩe INAN ‘birch bark receptacle (with a large bottom and a small top)’
wə̀pəsǩe INAN ‘bladder’ **wə̀səkesǩ** INAN ‘air bladder, swim bladder (of fish)’

Given that birch bark containers have seen only limited use in recent times, particularly for the speakers Siebert recorded, it is no surprise that this is an area where uncertainty crops up. In particular, if the primary function of a **míhkɑtɑǩe** INAN ‘small narrow dish made of birch bark (used for sugar, cake, berries, and washing)’ is to hold berries or solid maple sugar, rather than fluids then its inanimateness is understandable. The same may be the case for the other birch bark container terms. Furthermore, inanimate **pǩə̀nɑčo** looks suspiciously like a variant of animate of **pkə̀nɑčo**, as does **míkənɑǩe** resemble the animate **ɑmíkənɑǩe**, so dialectal variation may also be involved.

The inanimateness of **wə̀pəsǩe** INAN ‘bladder’ and **wə̀səkesǩ** INAN ‘air bladder, swim bladder (of fish)’ is also surprising, and for this I have no explanation. Nonetheless, the “class” of fluid containers is otherwise a rather robust one,[31] and the word-to-word analogies that link each individual animate noun to another do seem to follow this functional criterion.

Another large “class” formed on functional analogy is the set of animates which all refer to items best described as “glyphic”---written symbols, gaming pieces, and wampum:

“Glyphic” Items: Written or Beaded Symbols

təpaskótɪkan DA ‘AN: glyph, sign-manual, mnemonic device, hieroglyphic, depiction, drawing, symbol, figure, numeral, signum; INAN: ruler, measuring stick, compass, clock’
awíhkhɪkan DA ‘AN: inscription of any sort; pictograph; glyph, hieroglyphic; INAN: book; letter; writing or printing of any sort’
kələ́səwɑkan DA ‘AN: speech wampum; large, long belt of wampum, as used for intertribal treaties; INAN: a word, the word; speech, talk’
wɑ́pɑpɪ AN ‘wampum string, belt’ [*alternatively animate as ‘cordage’?; see below*]
ɑ́səwɑpəss AN ‘a single string of long beads (used across each shoulder and diagonally across the body---worn on special occasions; also, two to three were used together to form a necklace)’
ayámɪhɑkan AN ‘rosary bead’ [*each bead is itself a record for a prayer*]
tə̀ǩəss AN ‘die, button used in a game (made of the knee-cap of deer or moose)’
taǩs AN ‘a die, (two large rounded discs, used in a different game)’
wɑlatehámɑkan DA ‘AN: a die [*i.e. pl. dice*]; INAN: dice game’[32]
tə̀lehp AN ‘playing card’ **lə̀hto** AN ‘trump card’ **pə̀kəss** AN ‘spade (in cards)’
čápohtehs AN ‘joker’ **kínčeməss** AN ‘king’
kɪnčemə́ssɪsǩe AN ‘queen’ **awenohčəwísǩehso** AN ‘queen’
neǩtawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘ace, one-spot [card]’ **nɪsawíhkhɑsɪt** AN.cj ‘two-spot [card]’

nehsawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘three-spot [card]’ **yewawíhkhɑsɪt** AN.cj ‘four-spot [card]’
nɑnawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘five-spot [card]’ **neǩətawíhkhɑsɪt** AN.cj ‘six-spot [card]’[33]
tɑpawɑsawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘seven-spot [card]’
nehsɑsəkawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘eight-spot [card]’
nolɪwawíhkhɑsɪt AN.cj ‘nine-spot [card]’ **nəǩətɪnske** AN.cj ‘ten-spot [card]’

The first three items in this list (**təpaskótɪkan**, **awíhkhɪkan**, **kəlósəwɑkan**) are all dual animates, and each animate reading refers to an actual glyphic object. This is in contrast to the respective inanimate readings: a measuring device, a book (an item which only *contains* glyphs), and a word (an abstract entity). Again, the inanimate readings are rather diverse, while the animate readings share a representational or recording function. One should also note that the human-named playing card terms (king, queen, joker, etc.) may be animate simply because they are representations of beings, and are personifications akin to that of **ɑmsǩáčekkɑn** AN ‘doll’. The other playing card terms may then have analogized their animateness off of this core. Either way, the general analogical process of animacy assignment is maintained.

Straddling the borderline between textural and functional is another cluster of animates. This is the “class” of ‘thorn-like items’:

Thornlike Items

kɑ̀wɪ AN ‘porcupine quill’[34]
kɑ́wɪsɪ DA ‘AN: thorn, spine; INAN briar, bramble, burr’
sɑ́kkɑtɪ AN ‘needle’
čámaǩɪs AN ‘snowshoe needle’
énɪkahǩ AN ‘fish-spear, leister, trident’
takátɪkan AN ‘harpoon, throwing spears [*sic*], javelin’
pàhǩe DA ‘arrow’[35]
wə̀səmo AN ‘horn, antler’
áhɑlɑn AN ‘powder horn; musical instrument horn’
ahɑlɑ́nəssɪs DA ‘AN: little powder horn; INAN: little rattle [*no verifying plurals*]’
wkə̀sɪ AN ‘claw, fingernail’
nə̀ssɑkan AN ‘punch’
sə̀tɪ AN ‘evergreen or conifer tree; evergreen bough; evergreen *needle*’[36]
kəwáyɪ-sətɪ AN ‘pine needle’
tò̀htəwes AN ‘pine needle cluster’[37]
wə̀sɪkəwɑn VA‘lance (single large pointed spear made out of shoulder blade of moose, not thrown, used for killing moose by hand)’[38]

Notice that the contrast in the dual animate term: **kɑ́wɪsɪ** favors animacy for the thorn itself, rather than the thorny bush as a whole. The feature by which all these terms analogize animacy is ‘functioning like a thorn or point’. Items whose primary feature is a blade, such as **nsèhǩaǩ** INAN ‘knife’, **ssə̀wɑn** INAN ‘arrowhead’, and **wəsəmɑkánahlaǩ** INAN ‘sword’, are inanimate, since the pointed end is less defining a functional characteristic than the blade. For this reason, **wə̀səmɑkan** INAN ‘bayonet’, which fundamentally is just a knife fixed to the end of pole, is inanimate. In clear contrast, **wəsəmɑkánaskɑn** AN ‘bayonet rush (*Juncus militaris*)’ is animate. This is because the term refers to a plant that has no blade, just a sharp pointed end, and therefore is animate---despite the inanimateness of the stem it derives from.

A more difficult exception to the animate “class” of ‘thorn-like items’ are two terms for ‘darts’:

pə́mhɪkan[39] INAN ‘dart’
mɑ́wahke INAN ‘dart (in throwing game, not for fish or animals)’

Here the only argument I might offer follows from the extra note on the gloss of **mɑ́wahke**. These terms may refer just to the blunt-headed darts one throws through hoops rather than the pointed (and therefore animate) ones thrown into a dartboard. Beyond these, two arguably thorn-like inanimates demand addressing:

mə̀kohs INAN ‘awl’ **sɑpahk̆táhɪkan** INAN ‘lance’

An awl is not quite like a thorn, because its function is to *perforate* thin objects and then be removed; and not simply to lodge into a thick item, as an animate thorn or pin does. Similarly, **sɑpahk̆táhɪkan** fails to be animate because the **|-ɑhkw-|** ‘wood; (hardwood) tree; linearly bulky object’ morpheme within it possibly implies an item that completely pierces, rather than simply sticks into something.[40] For this reason, a derivation that lacks this **|-ɑhkw-|** is animate: **sɑptáhɪkan** AN ‘spear, lance [not thrown, made of moose shoulder bone]’. The ‘thorn-like’ feature analogy holds true here, at least. However, the following terms suggest that the intrinsic function of a thorn rather than the thorn itself is the crucial feature:

sakahtépəwehso AN ‘sticktight; achene of bur-marigold (*Bidens cernua* & *frondosa*)’
pɑnawɑ́hpskewɪs AN ‘tick trefoil (*Desmodium canadense*) [*a kind of burr*]’[41]

That these two nouns are also animate indicates that the animacy-assigning analogy hinges on whether or not the referent sticks into or sticks tightly onto an object.[42] For this reason, two terms for poles that are stuck into the ground are also animate:

skáhɪkan AN ‘stake’
skɑ́hɑkan DA ‘AN: brace for wigwam [pole or stake to keep birch bark from blowing [away]]; INAN: forked pole, stake’

And by extension, the terms

tálɑkan AN ‘wedge’ [*basic function:* <u>stuck into</u> *something*]
náskʷahon, **nəskʷahon** AN ‘comb’ [*basic function:* <u>stuck into</u> *the mass of one’s hair*]

now make sense as animates. Although both are decidedly non-thorn-like, they do share with the thorn-like objects the intrinsic function of being wedged fast into something else. So despite the semantic distance between a pine needle and a wedge, these items all illustrate how the process of animacy assignment is limited to analogies along functional and textural lines.

Similar strings of analogies occur around certain items of clothing. Most clothing terms are inanimate, and animates

ɑttólhɑwe AN ‘sleeveless body garment or wrap (made of hide), stole; shirt’
wə̀leke AN ‘loincloth, breechcloth (of men)’, diminutive **wəlékehsɪs** AN ‘diaper’

simply have no other functionally close terms attested to clarify the source of their animacy. Nonetheless, three other clusters based on intrinsic function do present themselves. The first is that of hand coverings:

mə̀ləčess AN ‘mitten’ **nahsíləčɑkan** AN ‘glove’

Again, there are simply not enough terms attested to support or refute this analogy well. However, the second cluster, outer footwear:

màhksən AN 'shoe' **álənahksən** AN 'moccasin'
mósahksən AN 'moose shank (used for winter foot gear)'
ɑ̀kəm AN 'snowshoe'

is a bit more substantial. This is a particularly distinctive set, since cognates to **màhksən** AN 'shoe' are generally inanimate in other Algonquian languages, even in Western Abenaki (Laurent 1884:63). Penobscot shares this innovation to animateness with Passamaquoddy-Maliseet, cf. **pkəsən** AN 'shoe' (LeSourd 1984:71). I suspect that these languages developed this innovation in functional analogy to a noun whose cognates in most Algonquian languages are generally animate: **ɑ̀kəm** AN 'snowshoe'.[43]

Only one exception to this "class" is attested: dependent noun **nakˇánkəsən** INAN 'my buskin, moose shank, half-boot'. This gloss is nearly identical to that of the animate **mósahksən**, which again suggests a possible dialectal or recording variation.

The third string of clothing-related animates depends on the large class of nouns formed with the final |**-ewe**| 'animal fur with hair still on'. Generally speaking, the animacy of a word cannot be predicted from its morphemic derivation, but in this case, all nouns derived with this |**-ewe**| are sufficiently similar in texture and/or function to analogize animateness off each other:

awehsóhsəwewe AN 'bearskin (hair on)' **nólkewe** AN 'deerskin (with hair on)'
ayɑ́pewe AN 'buckskin (with hair on)' **mósewe** AN 'moose hide (fur on)'
pə̀səwewe AN 'bobcat skin or hide with hair on'
təmáhkˇewe AN 'beaver skin (with fur on)'
kɪwəníkewe AN 'otter skin (with hair on)'
esəpánewe, esəpanə́ssewe AN 'raccon skin'
ehpanahkə́ssəwewe AN 'marten skin, sable pelt'
ahkíkˇewe AN 'sealskin with fur retained'

Based on this core set of animates, it is no surprise then that **píləwɑltəkˇ** AN 'wig', which refers to a rather furlike item, is also animate. [44] More surprising is that

ánehkan AN 'rug (deerskin or bearskin); floor of canoe'
anéhkɑkan AN 'planking of canoe'

are *both* animate. Boards are not animate in Penobscot (cf. **psìksakˇ** INAN 'board, plank, paddle (in songs)'), so the change of meaning from 'fur rug' to 'floor/planking of canoe' should mean a change in animacy. But in this case, the extended meanings still refer to functionally similar items, so animateness extends to this last term as well.

SMALLER "CLASSES" OF ANIMATES

As earlier examples have shown, clusters of analogized animates often simply have too few forms attested to verify independently that analogy is indeed the process that determines animacy assignment. However, taken together, they corroborate an analysis already based on the more robust "classes" of animate nouns. A few small clusters of this sort are briefly summarized below:

Wings>Feathers>Fins (Functional)

wə̀təhɑ́kan DA ‘AN: fin; INAN: paddle, oar’
wə̀ləkʷ̓an AN ‘wing’
wələkʷ̓ánɪkʷ̓an AN ‘feather of a wing, wing feather, pinion feather, sarcel’
áwɪphon AN ‘feather’
alɑ́mɪpəwɑn AN ‘down, feather, plume’
alɑ́mɪphon AN ‘inner feather, quill’

Thickly Viscous and Tacky Items (Textural)

mə̀kɪkʷ̓ AN ‘nasal mucus, snot, catarrh’[45]
pə̀ko DA ‘AN: chewing gum; INAN: gum, pitch (in sap form, or when used to pitch a canoe)’
wə̀laman AN ‘ochre, red clay, vermilion; blood poisoning’
mosálɑnəskʷ̓ INAN? AN?[46] ‘deep or bottom clay; pot clay’
(But note that **kələmótɪkan** INAN ‘adhesive, glue, mucilage’ is INAN---perhaps ‘glue’ is still a bit too watery to analogize in texture with these terms)

Evergreen Boughs (Functional/Textural)

kəwéwɑtakʷ̓ AN ‘pine tree bough’
sətíwɑtakʷ̓ AN ‘evergreen bough’
stə̀hkʷ̓ənak AN ‘evergreen boughs’[47]
sə̀tɪ AN ‘evergreen or conifer tree; *evergreen bough*; evergreen needle’[48]

Balls (Functional[49])

apeskʷ̓ámhɑkan DA ‘AN: lacrosse [*or generic*] ball; INAN lacrosse game’[50]
ə̀təwɪs AN ‘pin and ball game; pin and loop game; the apparatus or instrument for playing either game’[51]
pətəkʷ̓ələnákənɪkan AN ‘snowball’
(But note the inexplicable exception **pkʷ̓anəyákhɪkan** INAN ‘snowball’)

Flakes (Textural)

wálahake AN ‘fish scale, snakeskin’[*also ‘bark’*][52]
mɪ̀səwes AN ‘flake of dandruff; eczema’[53]
pə̀hto AN ‘blood clot’[54]
wásɑlɪ DA ‘AN: [*pl.*] snowflakes; INAN: snow, patch of snow’[55]
apílatəwan DA ‘AN: shelf or bracket fungus; INAN: mushroom, toadstool’[56]
kkɑ́kehsan AN ‘rock tripe (*Gyrophora vellea*)’ [*forms a flake-like growth on rocks*]

These smaller groupings of animates are not sufficient evidence in and of themselves for the analogical animacy-assignment model. However, they certainly support this view, and their diversity particularly suggests that the analogical process likely proceeds from one word to another. The resulting small clusters of related animate nouns derive from this process, rather than from any pre-established abstract classes of nouns with shared semantics.

PROBLEMS

The clusters of animates described so far are fairly consistent ones, insofar as can be determined within the limited data available. Most exceptions occur in cases where the candidate for animateness is only uncertainly relatable to other animate nouns. At the present stage of research, quite a few far less consistent "classes" of animates remain. For example, the set of terms referring to 'cordage' at first seems to be another cluster of animates based on intrinsic function:

Cordage: Ropes, Threads, Cords, Snares

wɑ́pɑpɪ AN 'wampum string, belt' [*alternatively animate as 'glyphic item'*]
ttɑ̀pɪ AN 'bow'
nɑ̀ptɑn AN 'bowstring'
klápɑpɪ AN 'rope' diminutive **klapɑ́pəssɪs** AN 'string'
kʷanáskʷɑpɪ AN 'the end of the rope'
nakʷánɑpɪ AN 'my Achilles' tendon'
esɑ́mɑsɪt AN.cj 'string of the center or body of snowshoe cord'
pəsɪmɑn, pəsímɑkan VA 'snowshoe filling'[57]
wátapɪ AN 'fine spruce root (for sewing canoes, birch bark receptacles, etc.; small roots of the red spruce are preferred)'
nsèhtakʷ AN 'Indian hemp fiber (made by rolling together threads from stems of *Apocynum hypexcifolium*)'
skʷésontakʷ AN 'thread' **msàhtakʷ** AN 'large thread'
pɪmɪsíkənɪkan AN 'withe'[58]
wəlkʷehskʷɪs AN 'brown creeper (*Erthia familiaris americana*)' [*dict. mss. p. 472*]
ppɪhan AN 'snare' diminutive **ppíhanɪs** 'small, little snare'
ppɪhánaskɑn AN 'cordgrass, slough grass (*Spartina pectinata*)'
kəláhɪkan AN 'trap, deadfall (refers both to deadfalls or traps of wood, and modern steel traps)'[59]

In extension to this, all terms referring to and/or closely analogous to the ash splints used in basketry are animate, as fresh ash splints are as flexible and as tough as any cord:

nemátahkʷapɪt AN.cj 'upright standard (in basketry)'
wíwənahkʷapɪt AN.cj 'rim or runner of basket (at top)'
atəpɪkʷáhsotɪ AN 'binder (in making baskets)'
aləskanáwɑkan AN 'strip of black [=*brown*] ash for weaving baskets; strip of wooden weaving material or wicker; a weaver [*a type of strip*] in making baskets)'[60]
wɪ̀kəpɪ DA 'AN: grain of wood, layer of wood; 'brown ash' (*Fraxinus nigra*), young black ash used in basketry; INAN: bast, piece of inner fibrous bark (of linden or leatherwood), grain of wood, layer of wood, concentric layer of wood; a piece or strip of black ash (called brown ash in Maine) sapwood employed in making baskets'
wskítahkʷem AN 'outer wood of tree, sapwood'
nótekəpɪ AN 'cambium'

However, there are quite a few cordlike items that are not animate:

wə̀lokehs INAN 'thong, rawhide string, filling (of a snowshoe)'
kkíkʷɑtɪ INAN 'sinew'

ttə̀nawɑn INAN ‘thread made from sinew’
skʷè·son INAN ‘wampum string;[61] narrow belt’
mahksə́nɑpɪ INAN ‘shoestring’
wɪlə́·ssɑpɪ INAN ‘umbilical cord’
matékənɑpɪ INAN ‘rawhide string’
kkɪhkánɑpɪ INAN ‘garter’
wkɑ́·tɑpɪ INAN ‘end of [a] tumpline’
mɪkɪkánɑpɪ INAN ‘chest ornament, necklace (made of beads or small dew-claws)’
kspì·son INAN ‘waist broad belt, waist sash’

Why the first group of nouns is animate and the second group not remains unclear. Exactly what aspect of function or texture do these terms share with each other, which the otherwise similar inanimate terms lack? That no answer presents itself does not invalidate the overall model of analogical animacy assignment; it simply demands a better-refined analysis, one that I am still unable to offer. The animate terms clearly do have some semantic features in common; what remains to be determined is whether this “class” actually follows a more restricted functional or textural feature that excludes these apparent exceptions, or whether it breaks up into a few smaller and more semantically homogenous clusters.

A slightly better-defined cluster of animates also still exhibits problems; this is the “class” of terms for items which have an intrinsic function as crosspieces in a structure:

Crosspieces[62]

npì·ke AN ‘my rib [on body]’
ppì·ke DA ‘AN: rib (but INAN for ribs purchased at the market)’ [63]
wɑ̀·kɪn AN ‘rib of a canoe’
wɪpó·tɪkan, wɪpó·tɑkan AN ‘thwart’
mí·tsəmən, pəmí·tsəmən AN ‘thwart, crosspiece in a canoe’
kʷehsákahkʷapɪt AN.cj ‘crosspiece stick between two forked sticks to hang pots over a fire’
akʷɑkʷɑ́·təyahkʷem AN ‘pole to hang dirty clothes on’

The functions of human and canoe ribs are clearly analogous, hence their synonymy in English. Thwarts and crosspieces are a further legitimate extension along functional lines. The last two terms in this list are clearly functional analogs to each other: both are poles from which one hangs items; these too might be interpreted as a kind of crosspiece. But an apparent exception, **wí·wənahkʷtek** INAN.cj ‘crosspiece (connecting poles in wigwam)’ needs explanation. Does this term refer perhaps refer to something insufficiently rib-like? Compare for example the similar inanimate **ápasəyahkʷ** INAN ‘wigwam pole’. Lacking more specific information about this term’s referent, one can only speculate about what makes this item so different from the ones listed above that it fails to analogize animateness from them. Again, however, it remains clear that some functional similarity does exist between and likely interrelates the animate terms given above.

A still more difficult question is that of nouns that refer to mountains and hills. While the terms

wɑ̀čo AN ‘mountain, hill’
mə̀nahkʷ DA ‘AN: ridge, elongated strip of elevated land; INAN: grove, copse, clump of trees’
awahtáhstɪket AN.cj ‘one who casts a reflection; Wantastiquet Mountain (on Conn. River, N.H.)’
téhsatəne AN ‘hilltop’[64]

are all animate, and **ktàtən** VA ‘large mountain; Mt. Ktahdin, or Katahdin, Piscataquis Co., Me.’ is used as animate in at least one text without apparent personification, the dictionary twice attests inanimate terms for mountains or hills:

apématən INAN ‘conical, pyramidal, or sugarloaf mountain’
ktàtən INAN ‘large mountain; Mt. Ktahdin, or Katahdin, Piscataquis Co., Me.’

What blocks this apparent animacy-assigning analogy? Mountains are very frequently personified in Penobscot literature, and it may be that they wobble between animate and inanimate depending on whether or not the individual speakers or dialects generalize that personification-derived animateness to all mountain-related terms.

Even a reasonably defensible (if small) animate cluster such as ‘wheel-like items’ also demonstrates the pitfalls this system can present for the analyst, and possibly even the native speaker. This thinly attested “class” consists of only two terms:

Wheel-like Objects (Functional)

wahkálikʷəss AN ‘wheel, roller’
kíhtɑkan AN ‘grindstone, stone instrument for grinding’

A piece of anecdotal evidence offers further support, however. I was present once when Passamaquoddy speaker David Francis was talking about a meter-reader. Philip LeSourd pointed out to me that Francis used the English word “meter” with obviative plural and TA verb. The wheel-like electricity meter is animate, at least in Passamaquoddy, which suggests that this functional cluster is a valid one.

The real concern lies in that from this small core, there may possibly extend a group of animates whose referents are all disklike objects:

sòlsɪs AN ‘silver medal, medallion’[65]
nəkʷətákɪso AN ‘[*one*] silver dollar’
yewákɪsəwak AN ‘four silver dollars’
anáskamɑn AN ‘suspended breast ornament; gorget; brooch’[66]

In addition, the dice terms mentioned in the section on glyphic objects (**tàkʷəss**, **takʷs**, **wɑlatehámɑkan**) also refer to disklike items. The gloss of **takʷs** explicitly describes the term’s referents as “large rounded discs” and Siebert’s notes include drawings and descriptions of the dice used in the bowl-and-dice game, ones which indeed show a rather disklike object. However, these and the above terms are all also easily arguable as glyphic objects.[67] Even so, this potential grouping would also garner weight from the disklike **kìsohs** AN ‘sun, moon, month’, which, like other heavenly bodies, is often personified in Wabanaki literature, and is therefore animate.

Although this cluster of semantically-analogical animates is not a large one, it is rather consistent. It thus seems likely that any term referring to a disklike object will be analogized as animate.[68] If so, this would then one case where animateness assigns based strictly on shape, rather than texture or intrinsic function. The problems inherent in this “class” not only illustrate the danger of reading clusters as classes, but also demonstrate the maddeningly diverse potential interpretations and extensions of animacy-assigning criteria.

In addition to this matter of problematic categorizations, there also remain a few terms such as

wásɑǩe AN ‘streaking, marking, eye in birch bark’
síkosɑs AN ‘dried piece of fat or fatty meat’

that simply lack any clear analogous animate. Still more difficult to explain is why **áhlapɪ** AN ‘net, fish net, seine; spider web’ and **səyáhətɪkan** AN ‘sieve’ are attested as animates, but the functionally similar

səyahətɪmínɑkan INAN ‘berry sieve, sifter’
aǩɑ́pəlɪkan INAN ‘dip net’
kǩɑ́phɪkan INAN ‘scooping fishing net, hand net’
aməslapíhkɑpɪ INAN ‘spider web, cobweb’.

remain inanimate. These apparent exceptions to the general system demand explanations, ones which I still unable to provide in this preliminary survey.

CONCLUSION

Animacy assignment is not easily predictable, nor free from exception. However, this does not mean that animacy is lexically determined. By its very nature, the analogical process that assigns animateness is not a system of absolutes, as its somewhat flexible aspect allows for a certain small degree of speaker-to-speaker variation. Even as crucial semantic distinctions must be learned correctly---as in the case of dual animates---variation is likely to occur in the marginal areas of this system. Such marginal areas may include wherever a term simply means different things to different speakers, as in the proposed case of wild versus cultivated strawberries. Terms which refer to items no longer familiar to the speech community---such as moose-bone spears and birch bark containers---are also likely to exhibit variation. In fact, variation may be the very source of innovations such as the generalization of animateness from the term for ‘snowshoe’ onto other terms for external footwear.

While we have seen many robust clusterings of animates---the soft juicy fruits, the glyphic objects, the thorn-like items---it will never be possible to describe perfectly tidy semantic “classes” of animate nouns. But this is to be expected, since these “classes” result from the analogical process, and do not determine them. Animacy assignment has exceptions not because it is fundamentally lexical, but because it is a process that depends on the slippery beast we call “meaning,” and a few words are always likely to fall through the cracks.

Furthermore, many of the exceptions we have seen are attributable to limits on the available data. In many cases, an apparent violation to the general patterns observed is more likely just an artifact of our own imperfect knowledge about the exact identity of a particular term’s referent. For example, some birch bark container terms may refer to (animate) fluid containers, while others may not have intrinsic functions associated with other animate nouns. We often simply do not know enough about which terms refer to containers of which function, and so exactly how or if animateness is analogized between them becomes muddy.

However, the majority of animates *can* be accounted for via an analogical process that follows semantic lines. Because a biased analyst can always cobble together at least some semantic link between any two animates, for a non-trivial analysis, a limiting factor must be found to exist, and one does. The actual semantic criteria used by speakers to make these analogies are in fact constrained to only a certain few kinds of semantic features. So far, the two main feature types discovered are texture and intrinsic function. At this stage of research, further generalization would be premature, but I suspect that these two criteria are actually aspects of one basic principle. That is, both texture and intrinsic function represent essential kinesthetic or

interactive features of their referents. Further investigation into these semantic criteria hopefully will produce a better generalization than this temporary one.

Much remains to be examined in this area of study. In particular, although we must admit a small degree of exceptionality into this system, this does not excuse us from seeking better characterizations of semantic relations between animate nouns. Descriptive animacy "classes" demand further refining, not because they determine animateness, but because they may shed further light on exactly what the analogical criteria are. Future work should also be aimed at isolating which areas of meaning tend to exhibit the most variation, as these again will clarify the principles underlying the process.

Beyond this refining of the descriptive framework, this topic should be pursued because it raises interesting questions for the broader concerns of linguistics. Analogical animacy assignment occupies a middle ground between the lexical and the predictable, and so challenges the traditional dichotomy of rote memorization versus brute rule application. In addition, the one-word-to-one-word process of analogization that links each animate to another without requiring all to share a single common feature is interestingly similar to Wittgenstein's (1953) 'family resemblance' relation.[69] My independently developed (and still tentative) 'interactional feature' criterion also resembles Zubin and Köpke's (1986:151) argument (after Leeche (1964)) that each individual taxon in a folk biological taxonomy "may be defined by its specific cultural function or by the specific mode in which people interact with its members." These are just a few interesting issues that the animacy assignment issue speaks to. My overall hope is that more work on this phenomenon may help second-language learners of Penobscot and other Algonquian languages, even as it gives insight into the strategies human beings use to reduce lexical load in language acquisition.

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[1] One apparent consequence of this 'personification' criterion is that a few terms referring to natural phenomena that are individualized and apparently self-motivated are treated as animates:

tə̀ko AN 'wave' diminutive **tə̀kəwɪs** AN 'ripple, little wave'
apalahsə́məwehso AN 'whirlwind, tornado'[1]
čəkʼə̀lehs AN [or INAN] 'spark' [*contrast with* **skʼə̀te** *INAN 'fire'*]

This is not far-fetched, as there is at least one explicit attestation of this kind of personification: **akačəpɑ́lahso** AN 'marsh gas, methane [conceived by Abenakis to be a shy *creature* often heard but never seen]'. The note that this phenomenon is personified as some unseen creature is Siebert's; the italics are mine.

[2] The *Penobscot Dictionary* manuscript lists this as INAN, but it appears with an animate plural in Siebert notebook S:25 (Ida Gould). This term's animacy probably varies between speakers; the phenomenon of variable animacy will be discussed shortly.

[3] This is my gloss, as the dictionary entry gives "AN," but with an INAN plural, and is inconsistent with the frequently attested usage my gloss reflects.

[4] As quoted in Darnell and Vanek (1976:162).

[5] Cf. Bloomfield (1962:28-29), LeSourd (1993:9), Wolfart (1973:14).

[6] Tubes that only conduct fluids are usually not animate (e.g. **pɪpíkʼɑtɪ** INAN 'flute' and **nəkʼətɑkánɑpɪ** INAN 'my gullet'. The 'stove pipe' meaning of **pənáhpskʼahsən** is probably secondary, as the 'tobacco pipe' meaning is common in the Newell Lion stories recorded by Speck (1918). This word has no attestations that definitely indicate whether or not it remains AN when meaning 'stove pipe'.

[7] Possibly ?/**wéhkʼɑmɪn**/, as the term appears to mean 'constipation berry'. The sequences |**wɪhkw**, **wehkwɑ**, **wekkwɑ**| all have common semantics, all referring to narrowing or blockage.

[8] By derivation at least, the original meaning of this term is 'widow', from |-**skw** -| 'empty' and |-**əskwe**-| 'woman'. Originally animate terms tend to retain their animateness even when reapplied, so the animateness of the 'pear' reading may also just stem from this source.

[9] By the Aubery dictionary, this word may be ?/**msákʼətemɪn**/, with the initial |**m**-| devoiced and then rephonemicized to |**p**-|. A similar process clearly did take place with **pkʼə̀mɪ** AN 'ice', but /**psákʼətemɪn**/ could also just be recorder error.

[10] These latter extensions meaning also fall into two animate "classes" discussed later: bodily swellings and disklike items.

[11] This word appears mostly as an inanimate. But while the dictionary mss. lists it as INAN, the very same entry contradicts itself with an animate plural **pákɑnak**; as well as an inanimate diminutive **pákɑnsɪs**, with inanimateness verified with an inanimate plural form **pakɑ́nsɪsal**. I have not found a contrastive example in the texts to verify the animacy of the non-diminutive form.

[12] Interestingly, the same animacy alternation occurs for the term **kəpə́skɪmɪn** VA 'dewberry', which is very similar in appearance to the strawberry. The term **álənɪ-mɪn** DA 'common or native berry' is listed with both animate and inanimate forms for plural, with the note that "INAN [is the] usual form." The same is the case for **mɪn** DA 'berry, fruit', but not for the reduplicant, **mə̀mɪn** INAN, which is glossed only as 'berry'. Given that the majority of berry types found in Maine are smallish and low on juicy flesh, the usual reading as inanimate makes sense, and even more so if this reduplicated form has diminutive force.

[13] This term may also derive animacy from its referent's disklike shape, or its tendency to flake, both of which are characteristics shared by other animates, as we shall see.

[14] This seems to be an extension of from the original 'juicy berry' term, so there is no way to disprove that this word's animacy comes from there alone.

[15] Word-initial high stress on a schwa is unusual for Siebert-transcribed Penobscot, so this transcription should not be taken on faith.

[16] Terms for animal scent glands are rather heterogeneous in animacy: **áwɪsənɑ** AN 'beaver castor, beaver musk or gland oil', **təmahkʼáyɪlɪ** INAN 'beaver scent gland', **wə̀lɪ** INAN 'scent gland, musk gland [AN in some EA dialects]', **mosəpéhsəwɪlɪ** INAN 'mink scent gland'. The existence of interdialectal variation may account for the variation between the terms recorded as Penobscot;

and this dialectal variation may in turn come from the term alternately referring to the presumably animate fresh gland and to the presumably inanimate dried gland material.

[17] This idea of 'swelling on the body' is not limited to animal bodies. It seems likely that **mskʔàčɪs** AN 'burl, knurl, knob on a tree; club made of woody burl used for killing animals; war club' is animate in analogy with this cluster of terms. For this reason, it is also likely that the term **wəsəmalohs** AN or INAN? 'gnorl, excresence on a tree', which the dictionary lists with uncertain animacy, is animate. The texture is of course different, but their *function* on the body of a tree is analogous. For the same reason, body parts characterized by hard round swellings or protrusions are also animate:

nətápskohke AN 'my nape of neck'
nətápskohkan AN 'my cervical vertebra [when sg. esp. the seventh]'
ʔanáskʔɑtəp AN 'the top of the head'
nàtəlɪ AN 'my shoulder blade (on the living body)'
nəskʔan AN 'my elbow'
nəkàtəkʔ AN 'my knee', diminutive **nəkàtəkʔɪs** AN 'my kneecap, patella'
nəkʔàtɑkan AN 'my throat, front of neck'
nətàləmɑkan AN 'my shoulder'

kəláhkʔhɪkan AN 'ankle bone' requires comment here: note that **nàskan** INAN 'my *bone* of ankle, malleolus' is inanimate, as terms referring to bones (**sìkʔat** INAN 'bone') are not usually animate. So despite its gloss, **kəláhkʔhɪkan** may refer to the joint rather than the bone itself, such that it analogizes with **nəskʔan** AN 'my elbow' and **nəkàtəkʔ** AN 'my knee'. Note too that the low accent on **nəkàtəkʔ** is not the expected **nəkətəkʔ**. As well, **nàlɑn** AN 'my calf (of leg)' is a predicted animate because it refers to the usual soft swelling, as is **nàmɑmɑn** AN 'my eyebrow', if one considers it to refer first to the brow itself, rather than to the hair only. The only animate body part that is difficult to account for is **nənéhkehsəkʔ** AN 'my side of body, flank [between the ribs and the hip]'. This term may be animate because (despite the ideals of the modeling world) for many people, the flank area protrudes in a soft and round way: love handles are ideal candidates for animateness.

[18] This term is listed in the Siebert dictionary mss. only as INAN 'slice (of anything, bread, meat)'. My animate gloss comes from Seeber (1986), which is a Penobscot "rereading" of Rasles. Therein the term is used animately with the sense of 'a loaf of bread'. The derivation of this word indicates that its original meaning is indeed 'slice', but its presence as a cognate AN term glossed as 'bread' in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet (**pkʔesɪkən** AN 'loaf of unsliced bread' (LeSourd 1984:76)) suggests that the term was extended to refer to entire whole loaf. It then became analogous to the animates **àpɑn** AN 'bread' and **pkénɪkan** AN 'piece of bread broken off by hand (not cut)', while the meaning 'a slice of bread' presumably remained inanimate.

[19] This term exists twice in the dictionary mss.: once under the entry for **ččɪkənéweye**, and once again on p. 367 under **petəkʔákɪk** INAN.cj '(anything round)' which probably has the wrong accent, and which certainly is the wrong heading for this AI conjunct.

[20] The animate **sopékʔihpən** 'sea squirt' also derives from this final, but it refers to an (admittedly plantlike) animal, and so is predictably animate anyway. Note also **mósɪhpən** AN 'moose testicle', and **ppən** AN 'testicle', which refer to (animate) swellings on the body.

[21]Only one animate term referring to flowers is attested: **pskáhtawehso** AN 'water lily flower'. It may be animate either by extension from the animate lily terms listed above, or because the bullhead lily flower is a rounded ball, analogous to the "class" of animate terms for 'ball-like items'.

[22] Passamaquoddy-Maliseet terms given here are retranscribed in IPA from the original orthography; accents are omitted.

[23] Contrast inanimate **wɑ́lahpəskʔ** INAN 'concave, hollowed-out stone'---the referent is not functionally defined as a fluid container, and so does not analogize as animate.

[24] Note that this term's diminutive, **pohkəčínskʔehso** 'Jug-Woman', is personified, and therefore animate.

[25] The transcription given is the most likely one out of several attested forms. Note that the dictionary manuscript gives <**amíkənakʔe**> (with gloss given above) as animate, but <**míkənɑkʔe**> INAN 'birch bark receptacle, with a large bottom and a small top' as inanimate. If the difference is dialectal, the two obviously related terms may refer to different types of containers, wherein the inanimate one may not be a fluid-holder.

[26] This last and apparently extended meaning contrasts with two other inanimate terms also referring to the crop of a bird.

[27] This second and evidently more recent meaning is also animate in analogy to the 'swellings on the body' cluster of animates.

[28] This term is not immediately evident as a 'fluid container', but it reasonably interprets as referring to something bubble-like.

[29] Tubes that solely conduct rather than retain fluids are not usually animate, e.g. **pɪpíkʔɑtɪ** INAN 'flute' and **nəkʔətɑkánɑpɪ** INAN 'my gullet'. The 'stove pipe' meaning of **pənáhpskʔahsən** is probably secondary, as the 'tobacco pipe' meaning is repeatedly attested in the Newell Lion stories recorded by Speck. I have found no records of this word's use as 'stove pipe', so it is impossible to tell if it keeps its animateness with this new meaning.

[30] This entry is somewhat suspicious: no plural verifies the noun's animacy, and the accented syllable does not match the usual pattern of Penobscot words.

[31] Though the term refers to an item which only sometimes serves to hold fluids, it appears that **takʔáhɑkan** AN 'mortar' resembles other fluid containers enough to share animateness with them. And although no term for 'hammer' is attested for Penobscot, the Passamaquoddy-Maliseet loanblend **maltohsɪs** AN 'hammer' (LeSourd 1984:41) suggests a possible functional analogy supporting the animateness of Penobscot **pakámɑkan** AN 'pestle'.

[32] The dictionary mss. entry **wɑlatéhɑmakan** AN 'little stick used as counters in bowl and dice game' is problematic. It looks suspiciously like a typo or misrecording for **wɑlatehámɑkan**, and even more so when one reads the plural form, **wɑlatéhɑmakanək**. This too is either a typo, or the only word in the entire Penobscot lexicon to be stressed five full syllables from the end and use the locative suffix **|-ək|** to mark the animate plural. I suspect that this entry is in fact a garbled version of the AN **wɑlatéhamɑkan**, with a meaning slightly different but still easily related to the (animate) concept of 'dice'. The semantic variation is understandable, given that the bowl and dice game was nearly lost by the time of Siebert's field work.

[33] The expected form would be ***neʔətɑsawíhkhɑsɪt**, from **nàʔətɑs** 'six', but the recorded form is sufficient to distinguish it from **neʔtawíhkhɑsɪt** AN.cj 'one-spot'.

[34] Porcupine quills are hollow, and Siebert has notes from speakers stating that in earlier times they were used to apply water to hot stones to flake arrowheads. If such was indeed the case, there is at least a historical if not a synchronic justification for this term's animateness by the 'fluid container' criterion.
[35] The dictionary manuscript lists this term first as INAN, noting that "AN is used when increased focus or attention to the arrow is desired, chiefly in narrative." Siebert more specifically characterizes this distinction in a note to the Andrew Dana story ***wəsk'ekkehs*** (The Hairless Bear). He writes that "arrows in flight, discharged at a distance, unpossessed, or in penetration of a grammatically inanimate object, are inanimate in Penobscot, but when they are in [the] possession of their owner or in penetration of an animate object, they are animate." This also seems to hold at least for one case in Andrew Dana's ***kči-áwehsohs***: in the sentence **ìpɪ k'enínɑplɑt wə̀pahk'al** 'he only took the time to nock his arrow', obviative-marked **pə̀hk'e** is clearly animate, and its referent is still in the possession of its owner. Furthermore, all of the many occurrences of this term in Francis Stanislaus's **kələ́skɑpe nɑ̀kɑ mème** (Gluskabe and the Pileated Woodpecker; ed. by Andrew and Susie Dana) are possessed and animate as well.
[36] Simple extension from the animate 'tree' meaning is also a possibility.
[37] This item is also used as a doll-like to toy to represent dancers, so it could be considered personified, as in the term **ɑmsk'áčekkɑn** AN 'doll'. Note that the diminutive **tó'htəwesɪs** AN 'small cone of hemlock' has a completely different meaning, one I suspect is a mistranslation or a very different dialect usage. Barring further evidence, I can only take this second gloss on face value, in which case no valid analogical animate comes to mind.
[38] **wə̀sɪkəwɑn** 'lance (single large pointed spear made out of shoulder blade of moose, not thrown, used for killing moose by hand)' is listed as INAN in the dictionary manuscript, but in Andrew Dana's narrative ***wəsk'ekkehs*** (The Hairless Bear), it is treated as animate. Notably, this word occurs in that text coordinated with the functionally similar and unambiguously animate **takátɪkan** AN 'harpoon, throwing spears [*sic*], javelin'. The inanimate treatment presumably comes from speakers who use this term to refer to a weapon more characterized by a blade than a point.
[39] It is unusual to have high tone on initial schwa, so this recording is suspicious.
[40] These terms derive from AI verbs **sɑpahk'táhɪke** 'AN pierces with a spear' and **sɑptáhɪke** 'AN stabs through with a knife'. Their exact glosses may be unreliable; only examples of these verbs used in context can clarify exactly what idiomatic meaning these verbs have, and hopefully then explain the animacy contrast in their derivants. My impression from texts such as ***wəsk'ekkehs*** and ***kči-áwehsohs*** is that the l-**ɑhkw**-l morpheme emphasizes the complete transfixing of the body of a creature on the spear. Terms for items whose intrinsic function is to transfix rather than (animately) poke into objects do not qualify for this animateness analogy. Note for example **pəssɑk'hámɑkan, pəssɑk'hɑ́mɑkan** INAN 'spit [*for roasting*]'and **pəssɑk'hamamek'ɑkánahtək'** INAN 'spit or stick for rotating fish over a fire'.
[41] Granted, this term is also an unusual idiomatic use of the diminutive of **pɑnawɑ́hpskewɪ** AN 'Penobscot person', and so may derive its animateness from that personified referent. If so, then **sakahtépəwehso** might analogize as animate from there. Even without this route, however, these terms are close enough in function to the thorn-like items to analogize animateness from them.
[42] Barry Dana has also told me that Penobscot speaker Madeline Shay once called his young son by a diminutive form **kɑ̀wɪs**, where the term was understood to refer to some kind of burr, because he clung so tightly to people. So the potential exists for personification to be involved here.
[43] The term **wɪhpólahksən** AN 'pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*)' is animate either by its possible etymology as the metaphorical 'whippoorwill's shoe' or because this plant has pitcher-like leaves which collect water with which to trap insects: it is a natural fluid container.
[44] A potential exception, the inanimate **psɪ̀nsk'ɑn** INAN 'scalp, war trophy' is clearly functionally a very different item from a rug or warm fur, or even a wig, and so is not animate.
[45] In contrast, less substantially gummy bodily secretions such as **mə̀lɪ** INAN 'pus' and **pə̀se** INAN 'gunpowder; semen' remain inanimate.
[46] The dictionary mss. lists this term as "INAN (not used in plural)," but the example sentence **méhk'ɪkɪt mosáləɑnəsk' sɑkhəčákohse** 'the red clay comes oozing out' uses an AI conjunct form **méhk'ɪkɪt** AN 'that (AN) which is red' in reference to **mosáləɑnəsk'**. It is therefore likely that this term is or at least can be animate.
[47] Siebert's materials do not attest this word, and it appears to be a Passamaquoddy-Maliseet loan used by the trilingual Susie Dana (Dana (date unknown):1162). This is just one of many examples of loanwords following native terms in animacy.
[48] Extension from the animate 'tree' meaning is possible as well.
[49] This is as opposed to the simple physical feature of 'round object', which would include many inanimates.
[50] Assuming that this form derives directly from the corresponding AI verb, a more accurate transcription may be **apesk'hámɑkan**.
[51] This term is the diminutive of the reflex of Proto-Algonquian animate *ato:wa 'ball'; the unaffixed form is unattested in Penobscot.
[52] The animacy of bark-related terms in Penobscot is a complicated question. Birch bark terms such as **màsk'e** 'birchbark' and **ák'ɪtənask'** INAN 'bark for canoe making; material for canoe building' are inanimate, as is **kɑ́kskɪkəpɪ** INAN 'inner cedar bark, cedar bast'. But note the following:

pk'ɑ̀hɑ AN '[*balsam*] fir bark'
kɑkskosɪ-wálahake AN 'strip of cedar bark' **kɑkskosɪ-wálakesk'** INAN 'cedar bark'
wálakesk' DA 'AN: [*when*] used for heavy bark (such as hemlock); INAN: bark of tree, shell of lobster or turtle'

Strips of green cedar inner bark are traditionally used as cordage; they are similar in texture to new ash splints. So **kɑkskosɪ-wálahake**, which is already a likely candidate for being animate by virtue of deriving from the AN **wálahake**, is further likenable to this possible animate sense of **wɪ̀kəpɪ** DA 'strip of brown ash for basketry [*full gloss omitted*]'. The second term, **kɑkskosɪ-wálakesk'**, presumably refers to something other than the animate strip of tough sapwood: the outer bark, or the unseparated whole chunk of inner and outer bark. It is still unclear why **kɑ́kskɪkəpɪ** is inanimate, even most inner bark terms are animate. The answer probably lies in whatever will resolve the problematic "class" of 'cordage.' Whereas **pk'ɑ̀hɑ** AN '[*balsam*] fir bark' may analogize with the 'heavy bark' reading of **wálakesk'**; otherwise, like **kɑksk** AN 'piece of cedar wood' its animateness may be a holdover from related term for the tree itself.

[53] As a diminutive with a significantly different meaning from **mìsəwe** AN 'ringworm, lesion of ringworm'---which reads animate either as a swelling or as a disklike item---this term may be animate simply because, barring substantial differences in meaning, animacy does tend to be inherited in diminutives.
[54] Alternatively, when found inside an animal body, this term might analogize texturally with **wə̀səkɑn** AN 'fish roe'.
[55] From this perhaps also the animacy of **pkʼə̀mɪ** AN 'ice'? Alternatively, the old set phrase **nəkɪhčɪ-móhsomsəna kčɪ-pkʼə̀mɪ** 'Our grandfather the great ice' suggests an early personification.
[56]Terms referring to toadstool-like mushrooms are all inanimate, so this animate usage is distinctive.
[57] The dictionary entry lists this term as INAN, but Siebert's notes on snowshoes (S:42) attest it used with an animate plural. This variation may reflect dialectal or idiolectal variations in animacy assignment, ones possibly based on whatever feature (or actually, whatever lack thereof) excludes many cordage terms from animateness.
[58] I presume that this word refers to an item used as a cord for *binding*, based on its derivation from **pɪmɪsíkənɪke** AI 'AN makes withes (usually by yellow birch), bindings'.
[59] Note that the gloss does not seem to imply 'cordage'---instead, this a functional analogy to **ppìhan**, AN 'snare', one supported by Laurent's (1884:62) animate usage of the English loan telaps 'trap'.
[60] Given that this noun derives from AI verb **aləskánawe** AI 'AN weaves, fills (snowshoes); AN weaves ash wood strips. wicker, rushes, rattan; AN weaves mat', it is no surprise to see that the similar **ánɑsən** AN 'rush mat (of soft rush, (*Juncus effusus*))' is also animate. This 'woven' feature might explain why **ɑ̀kəm** AN 'snowshoe' is animate, too, but this is doubtful, since woven items are not necessarily animate, cf. **elhɑ́kəmɑsɪk** INAN.cj'open-work basket, basket with openings like a sieve'. On the other hand, note the later discussion regarding the still unclear animacy assignment of terms referring to nets. The animateness of **ánɑsən** may also just analogize from the other animate rug, floor, and planking terms.
[61] It is unclear if this refers to the string for beads, or the belt itself, which may be a crucial distinction for assigning animacy.
[62] The dual animate **nspɪkʼáhsotɪ** DA 'AN: 'cedar wood reinforcement' INAN: 'cedar wood reinforcement (used in making a wigwam)' is possibly part of this cluster. Siebert's notes indicate that this word refers to a birch bark-edge reinforcing wood strip; cf. the animate usage of **wìkəpɪ**, discussed above. Alternatively, this animate may extend from the animateness of **kɑksk** AN 'piece of cedar wood'.
[63] These two terms for 'human/animal rib' are analogous to animate **wɑ̀kɪn** AN 'rib [of a canoe]' in functioning as crosspieces in the body. Siebert's gloss of the distinction in meaning between animate and inanimate forms of this word is ambiguous on this point, however. Examples in the same dictionary entry, e.g.

ɪya nə̀mɑ nətáhpɪkem 'That is my (animal) rib over there.
kɪkíčɪsəwak nətahpíkemak 'My ribs are sore'
nísɑnkaw nətahpíkemak wečɑ́nokɪk 'I have twelve ribs (on my body)'

suggest that the term is animate both when in the human body and when referring to the food item. I suspect the animate reading stems from the idea of the rib functioning as a structural element in the body, whereas the inanimate reading only comes when the rib is considered explicitly in reference to its bone and flesh, that is, when it functions as food. This makes sense in light of the fact that otherwise similar referents **sìkʼat** INAN 'bone' and **wə̀yohs** INAN 'meat' are also inanimate, as are most food terms. Passamaquoddy-Maliseet also attests animate **pɪk** AN'rib' (Lesourd 1984:69).
[64] This term is suspect as a noun. The dictionary manuscript lists it as "AN," but no plural is given. By its morphology, it is more likely either an II verb or a locative particle.
[65] Unusually, this same word with modifier is listed as INAN: **pɑpahtamí-solsɪs** INAN 'prayer medal or medallion (Catholic)'. Either my description is incorrect, or something about Catholic medallions keeps them from being analogized with other animate medallion terms, or they are in fact animate: no animacy-verifying plural is attested to verify this "INAN."
[66] Exactly what type of jewelry **anə́skamɑn** refers to is still unclear. Siebert's main attestations are in Andrew Dana's texts **kkìno** 'Kino' and **nékʼtahtawet** 'Lone Light'. In both texts, the items are described as glittering adornments. Lacking further Siebert evidence, however, I have noticed that Fanny Hardy Eckstorm's work *Old John Neptune and Other Maine Indian Shamans* includes pictures of Mary Balasses Nicola (a.k.a. Molly Molasses) wearing two very large, disk-shaped ornaments on her chest. Three further plates show a two disklike ornaments worn by Sarah Polasses in an 1830 portrait, a "Penobscot Indian Silver Brooch," which is an ornamented metal disk given as 5.9in in diameter, and "Three Maine Indian Brooches," with the bottom two disks given as 7.5in in diameter. If these are in fact the referents of the term **anə́skamɑn**, then there is no question about classifying them semantically as disks. An intriguing if more far-fetched possibility for a glyphic or representational reading also presents itself. Siebert's notes quote one of his consultants as saying that before they converted to Catholicism, his people "used to worship the sun." These **anəskámɑnak** may be old sun symbols.
[67] Crucially, glyphic items are animate not for having glyphs impressed or written on them, but for actually being glyphs themselves: again, a case of *intrinsic* function. Hence **awíhkhɪkan** is animate when it means 'inscription of any sort; pictograph; glyph, hieroglyphic', but inanimate when it simply refers to an item with glyphs on it, such as a book. This explains why 'money' is not inherently animate; it is not a glyphic item itself. Contrast animate **nəkʼətɑ́kɪso** AN 'silver dollar' with inanimate **nəkʼətɑkísəwɪye** INAN 'dollar bill': a dollar bill is a banknote, more like a book or piece of writing than like the glyphs printed on it. But both coinage and banknotes have this feature; why are only coins animate? In Western Abenaki, Laurent (1884:41) also treats môni AN 'dollar' and sansak ANpl 'cents' as animate. Here the 'disklike' criterion may retain some use.
[68] The three terms for the unarguably disklike 'sundial'---**kɪsohsɪ-təpaskótɪkan**, **təpayɪ-kɪsóhsɑkan**, and **kɪsóhsɑkan**---are all inanimate. However, in the latter two dictionary entries, Siebert added a note that the terms literally mean "sunshine, where the sun's rays fall." This implies an emphasis not on the dial; and then the first term seems to read it as a measuring device alone, i.e. it follows the inanimate reading of **təpaskótɪkan**. Even so, this casts further doubt on the possibility of a 'disklike' feature being used in animacy-assigning analogy.
[69] I am indebted to my friend and colleague Xiufang Dong for pointing out this parallel.