

A Preliminary Survey of the Evidential and Information-Structural Properties of Some Algonquian Discourse Particles

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1. Introduction

As in many languages of the world, Algonquian "particles" receive a woeful degree of analytical inattention¹ considering their frequency and pervasiveness. Examining Penobscot, Passamaquoddy-Maliseet, and Unami texts, along with more limited forays into Nishnaabemwin/Ojibwe, Cree, Meskwaki and Sauk, we offer preliminary characterizations of some of the thus far least explicitly described clitic particles, focusing on their evidential and information-structural usages. We adopt a hypothesis-building approach of tentatively equating particles across languages, observing that discourse particle systems appear to be more similar than not across the Algonquian languages examined, even when the particles themselves have relexified new fillers for their functional slots. While remaining vigilant against the inherent Procrustean potential of that approach (i.e. that it could obscure real differences in use across languages and lects), we find this allows us a helpfully richer sample across which to test generalizational claims for particular particles. Hence, for example, we propose the following functional correspondences across multiple Algonquian languages:

(1) Algonquian discourse particles: evidentials and discourse-structural

| | | abbreviation |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| <i>secondhand/hearsay:</i> | Pb =ak ^w a, PsmMl =yàk ^w , Oj =giiwenh, Mskw/Sk =pi | (SHD) |
| <i>inferential/uncertative:</i> | Pb =eht, PsmMl =àl, Oj =iidog, Mskw/Sk =yêtoke | (INF) |
| <i>back-referencing:</i> | Pb =ka, PsmMl =ehta, Oj =sa | (BR) |
| <i>topic-shifting:</i> | Pb =ask ^w e, PsmMl =lò, Oj =dash | (TS) |
| <i>restrictively intensifying:</i> | Pb =tte, PsmMl =te, Oj =go, Mskw/Sk =meko | (INT) |

Unless otherwise specified, data is from Pb; primary demonstration will be from Pb and PsmMl, as limits of time and space disallow laying out complete and detailed defenses of each comparative claim on top of each functional description. The work has been done, however, and we offer these proposals today in large part to elicit critical responses from specialists for each of the cited languages.

A key part of this methodology is finding equivalents (or relevant near-equivalents) across languages by collocational matching, i.e. looking not just at the constructions characterized by single particles, but also to their recurrent collocations: in short, knowing each by the company they keep. Similarly, etymologization of synchronically frozen but diachronically analyzable particles and particle-clusters (particularly in identifying parts shared among more than one) also provides first-run insight into what to claim for their synchronic usage. By showcasing both these methodologies and their current outcomes, we hope to draw wider interest and attention to this greatly deserving yet still underserved area of Algonquian grammars.

This paper focuses on the meaning, use, and (where possible) the etymologies of evidential and information-structural particles. We start, however, with a brief account of two types of elements that extremely frequently collocate with them: the deictic linker and the modal clitics.

2. Preliminaries: some clitics that aren't discourse particles

2.1 Deictic linker *ni*

Originating from the inanimate distal demonstrative *ni* 'that^{NI}, at that point in time/space', the Pb deictic linker *ni* can be distinguished from its etymological source in that it most often reduces to *nə=*, something the demonstrative appears not to do. It is functionally identical to Oj *mii*, Cr *ěkw*, Un *ná*, and PsmMl *ən*,² and like them, it is one of the most high-frequency forms in texts, evidently functioning as a general deictic/discourse-anaphoric marker for any established referent of time, space, or entity.

(2) Deictic linker *ni*

ni wətalətónkə̀nə̀.
'Then they talked.'

LNK 3-_{place}-mouth-do.⊙^{NA}-N-≠1p
(k&tòləpe#2:13)

As we will see, *ni* forms extensive and frequent collocations with most of the discourse particles discussed here.

2.2 Conditional =*pa*

Also commonly collocating with the particles in question are the modal clitics =*pa* and =č (PsmMl =əp/=hp and =əč/=hč). Of these, =*pa* is a simple conditional marker:

(3) Conditional =*pa*

a. "...*nə=pa* mihkawitə̀hə̀mə̀yasáne iye wečkawíhlan, *nə=pa*=tte ni etali-námihə̀yan."

LNK=CND recall-feel.⊙¹-2sCj-SAN-ABS^{NI} yonder C-hither-move.⊙^{NA}-2sCj LNK=CND=INT that^{NI}
C-_{place}-see.⊙¹-2sCj

'If you had remembered me when you were approaching yonder, then you would have seen me at that place.' (čəwə̀mis:74)

b. owa səkə̀mə̀ wətihlan, "*nə=pa* kiselə̀tamólə̀ne kə̀máčekhlə̀n, kətaskami-máčekhlə̀n."

this^{NA} chief 3-tell.DIR-N LNK=CND PERF-feel.T.⊙^{NA}-for.⊙²-1sCj-ABS^{NI}
2-away-move.⊙^{NA}-N 2-forever-away-move.⊙^{NA}-N

'The chief told him, "If I should decide to permit you to leave, you are to depart permanently."' (mek^wayi-səkə̀mə̀:21)

Lacking another host, =*pa* tends to appear appended to linker *ni*, using it as a peg. This is consistent with the semantics of *ni* as 'at that point', i.e. the point at which the condition is reached or holds. The *ni=pa* collocation itself often collocates with inferential particle =*eht* as *ni=p=eht* (phonetically: *nəpeht*) in counterfactuals, particularly those of forlorn hope, i.e. 'if only...had/could', as in (4).

(4) Collocation *ni=p[a]=eht*

"...*nə=p[a]=eht* kisi-máčekpholə̀sáne iyè=tte nənikíhə̀kokke...."

LNK=CND=INF PERF-away-carry.⊙²-1sCj-ABS^{NI} yonder=INT 1-parent-?Napl-LOC-ABS^{NI}

'...if I could have taken you away to my parents' place....' (čəwə̀mis:77)

The clitic *=pa* looks etymologically to be related by reduction to the plain preterite/anterior affix *-əpan-*, following the cross-linguistically common use of past/preterite elements in constructing conditionals (cf. Iatridou 2000). See *=eht* later for a similar instance of a particle related to an affix or affix plus reduced/dummy root.

2.3 Realis potential/relative future =č

The clitic *=č*, archaically and etymologically *=či*, indicates future/potential relative to a present (5a) or past (5b) point of reference. Usage suggests that this future is one of relatively unquestioned certainty.

(5) Realis potential/relative future =č

a. $\dot{\alpha}$ ta=č mĩna kətahčəwi-k^wteləmáwiwα owa áwəhənəto.

not=FUT again 2-must-fear-feel.DIR-NEG-W-≠1pl this^{NA} who-supernat'l_being

'You will never again have to fear this demon.' (msahtawe:35)

b ...tāmα=č=àk^wa áwen, etali-αmiktak^wəsówamat, ...

where=FUT=SHD who C-_place-abuse-hear.INV.rflx^{NA}-W-to.DIR-NAcj

'...someone would be casting verbal abuse at her,' (k&pohkəčĩnsk^wehso:15)

In etymology, we speculate a possible origin in the 3rd person imperative or jussive *-č* (6), insofar as 'let X happen...' is a future-oriented type of semantics.

(6) 3rd person imperative/jussive -č

...alĩ-ksosič

'...let her fib this way.'

_way-fib.rflx^{NA}-NAimper

(k&pohkəčĩnsk^wehso:26)

This is a slightly different category of morpheme for a clitic to derive from, in comparison to the origin of *=pa* from preterite/anterior *-pan-* and, as we will see, *=eht* from a related dubitative affix, but it stands as a plausible candidate.

2.4 Other aspectual/modal particles

Unami (like many of its neighbors) boasts a richer set of such elements than Pb and PsmMl; rather than examine them all, we will simply note that equivalents for the above forms exist (conditional/potential in *=á*, cognate future *=č*, additional future in (=)xú (difference?), among others), and that further extensions such as habitual *=hánkw* 'usually' adhere to and logically fill out the basic modal-aspectual paradigm they establish.

3. Discourse Particles

3.1 Overview

We will begin with the two evidential particles: secondhand/hearsay =*ak^wa* and inferential/uncertative =*eht*. From there, we proceed through the information-structural particles: back-referencing =*ka* and topic-shifting =*ask^we*, with passing reference to the highly frequent intensifier particle =*tte*.

3.2 Secondhand/hearsay evidential =*ak^wa*

The Pb clitic =*ak^wa* is perhaps the most familiar type of evidential: a marker of secondhand or hearsay information, as is common across the Americas and Algonquian languages in particular.

(7) Secondhand/hearsay evidential =*ak^wa*

ni=*ak^wa*, iyo nàwat ítasik, kči-ótene atóthote, etali-sákàtehtək^wek sìpo.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| LNK= <u><i>SHD</i></u> | this ^{NI} | long_time.Ⓟ ^{NI} | C-say.T.??rflx.Ⓟ ^{NI} -NICj | great-village |
| _point-located.Ⓟ ^{NI} -W | | C-_place-rivermouth-river.Ⓟ ^{NI} -NICj | | river |

'It was long ago, it is said, that a large village was situated at the mouth of a river.' (k&t#2:1)

It corresponds directly in use to PsmMl =*yàk^w*, Oj =*giwenh*, and Mskw/Sauk =*pi*, among others. For Pb we can specifically report not only the standard permeating of clauses in narrative texts (where the exact distribution needs investigation; see Mithun 1998 for relevant discussion regarding the Mohawk equivalent), but also an anecdotal report of Siebert's: that once he was eliciting from two brothers, one of which was somewhat hard of hearing. Siebert recalled that the other brother translated his questions to the first, ending all the relayed, secondhand speech with =*ak^wa*. This is the only record we have of this type of conversational usage, hence my mentioning it.

As relatively familiar territory, we leave the coverage of =*ak^wa* this brief, noting only two points of etymology. Siebert proposed PA **ek^wa* 'OBV says to PROX' (with /a/ as the regular Pb word-initial reflex of PA **e* > PEA **a*) as the source of Pb =*ak^wa*; PsmMl =*yàk^w* is obviously surface-similar (it likely reflects a pre-form **yak^wa*), but the phonological trajectory is obscure. If Siebert's etymology is on track, then the Inverse component of =*ak^wa* makes it comparable to Meskwaki =*pi*: in Algonquian morphosemantics, the Inverse brushes close up against passives and impersonals, and this Meskwaki =*pi* looks like it could be a recutting of the homophonous morphology marking an impersonal argument. At this point nothing is conclusive, but these speculations warrant consideration.

3.3 Inferential/uncertative =*eht*

As an evidential, =*eht* seems to indicate inferentiality, and, by apparent implication, often just simple uncertainty. The inferential sense overlaps to a degree with the contrast between inferential (standardly: dubitative) preterite/anterior element -*san*- and the plain preterite/anterior -*pan*- (Quinn 2002), and indeed, =*eht* frequently collocates with -*san*-marked predicates (8).

(8) Collocation of inferential/uncertative =*eht* with inferential (dubitative) preterite/anterior

"...ow[a]=*eht* na kči-skòk nepəwàklásánəhi, iyòhi kətákəhi wənisəwihətíçəhi."

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| this ^{NA} = <u><i>INF</i></u> | that ^{NA} | great-snake | C-die-??DIR-NACj-SAN-OBVpl | this ^{NA} -OBVpl | other-OBVpl |
| 3-two-be.Ⓟ ^{NA} -NAPl-NACj-OBVpl | | | | | |

... "This serpent is evidently the one who had caused the death of her other husbands." (wələske:21)

Alone, =eht is enough to mark a clause with a clear inferential sense. In the example in (9), the 'must have...' glosses attempt to render the sense that the hero is working out a set of conclusions from present evidence: a canonical inferential. Specifically, viewing a giant water snake that he has just killed, our hero infers that it must have bewitched his wife, such that she then must have viewed it as a man; and it can now be inferred to be the reason why his wife's preceding husbands all mysteriously disappeared:

(9) Inferentiality with =eht

... "owa kčì-skok wəkisi=eht-mətewələnəwihpənaləl wələskal, n=eht wələske weči-álinawət iyòlil kčí-skokal, tãhəlaw=əpa awení-wskinohs. ow[a]=eht na kčí-skok nepəwəklasánəhi, iyòhi kətákəhi wənisəwihətíčəhi."

this^{NA} great-snake 3-PERF=INF-shamanic-injure.DIR-W-OBV good-leg.Ⓟ^{NA}-W-OBV
 LNK=INF good-leg.Ⓟ^{NA}-W C- from- way-view.DIR-NAcj this^{NA}-OBV great-snake-OBV
 like=CND who-young_man this^{NA}=INF that^{NA} great-snake C-die-??.DIR-NAcj-SAN-OBVpl
 this^{NA}-OBVpl other-OBVpl 3-two-be.Ⓟ^{NA}-NApl-NAcj-OBVpl

... "This serpent had evidently cast a magic spell on Pretty Legs, so that is presumably the reason Pretty Legs looked upon the serpent as she would some youth. This serpent is evidently the one who had caused the death of her other husbands." (wələske:21)

In example (10), the protagonist is specifically inferring an identification. When the referent whose identity is being inferred is one substantially established in the discourse, =eht collocates with back-referencing =ka (see 3.4). Here a woman is left at home and told to expect the arrival of an individual named January. When a person does indeed arrive, the narrator indicates that the woman's identification of this person at the door is by inference only, again through the use of =eht:

(10) Inferentiality with =eht

wa=k[a]=eht na čenəweri. this^{NA}=BR=INF that^{NA} January
 'This must be January.' (SDasα)

Similarly, in (11), a poor woman discovers that the only food in her house has been eaten, and infers that the perpetrator, not directly known (but established in discourse, hence back-referencing =ka again) is the likely one: the mischievous Jug-Woman.

(11) Inferentiality with =eht

ksìpa, "nə=k[a]=eht na mìnə, kčí-máčəhanətəwi-pohkəčínsk^wehso, mìnə yo otalík^wehsən."³
 you_see LNK=BR=INF that^{NA} again great-bad-supernat'l-jug-woman-AUG-Ⓟ^{NA}-W again
 this^{NI} 3- from-OBJRG-walk.Ⓟ^{NA}-N

'So you see, 'It must be that great devilish Jug Woman again, she walked the hell here again!'
 (k&pohkəčínsk^wehso:20)

In (12), at issue is what a woman was actually called as an insult: with the collocation ččo=k=eht 'it must have been', speakers can indicate both a degree of certainty (ččo 'certainly, for sure') and inferentiality (=eht) at the

same time, about the established issue in question (=ka).

(12) Inferentiality and certainty with =eht

tèpat ni àhtamā wewsətásiwi, kek^w=eht keti-itásikasa; ččò=k=eht kek^w, kèk^wæss eli-kətəməkímahsot pahk^wayihkásəyahsit.

enough.⊙^{NI} LNK not known-hear.??rflx.⊙^{NI}-NEG-W what=INF C-want-say.T.??rflx.⊙^{NI}-NICj-SAN certainly=BR=INF what what-AUG C- way-poor-say.DIR-DIM-DIR_Impers

'Therefore it was never understood what evidently was intended to have been said—something which certainly would have been a thing by which poor little Arrowhead Fingernails was verbally abused.'
(pahk^wayihkásəyahsit:24)

In the next section, we will see examples of established-referent identifications made without inferential hedges, and therefore systematically lacking =eht. We should note here that =eht has a peculiar interaction with the intensifier =tte: the collocation realizes not as =eht=tte or =tte=eht, but as a doubling of =eht (13).

(13) =eht + =tte > =eht=eht

- a. "ččò=kahk=əč=eht=eht kəwitəpéttipəna,..." certainly=FO=FUT=INF=INT 2-with-man-rcp.⊙^{NA}-P-1pl
"Certainly we should be friends," (čəwəmis:29)
- b. "iyò=k[a]=eht=eht tekakíhlak^w." this^{NI}=BR=INF=INT C-_as_far-move.⊙^{NA}-12plCj
"This should be as far as we ought to go." (čəwəmis:59)
- c. "ččò=kahk=eht=eht." certainly=FO=INF=INT
"Most assuredly." (čəwəmis:64)

Combining this fact with attention to comparative collocation reveals a parallel that might otherwise be missed: PsmMl čək^wahk=al=te^t, a common expression of similar usage, is in fact the same construction as Pb ččò=kahk=eht=eht. The only differences are the lenitional fusion of the reflexes of ččò=kahk as /čə=k^wahk/ (such reshapings are common in particles), and the fact that PsmMl particle =əl, lexically unrelated but functionally identical to Pb =eht---and exemplified in (14):

(14) PsmMl inferential/uncertative =əl

Tama-al-lu 'tapeksu, ma-te nkociciyaw.

where=INF=TS _from-cord-rflx.⊙^{NA}-W not=INT 1-know.DIR-NEG-W

'I don't know where he comes from, I don't know that about him.' (Francis and Leavitt 2010)

---does not show a doubling effect with the intensifier =te. Presumably this indicates that the Pb pattern is due to the phonological similarity of =eht and =tte.

As an inferential, =eht can of course co-occur with particles indicating certainty. However, perhaps due to the fact that inference inherently implies a greater chance for error than direct witnessing, =eht also can act as a simple hedge, indicating general uncertainty, lack of knowledge, or vagueness with regard to precision (15).

(15) Uncertainty, vagueness, imprecision: =eht

a. $\tau\alpha n=eh\tau$ kehsi-katənəwáyi, ni mečími èlek.

how=INF _many-year-??-IWI LNK always-IWI C-_way.⊙^{NI}-NICj

'For an undetermined number of years that was what invariably happened.' (mətəl:13)

b. ...nìl=ətahk=àk^wa pemi-sàkkáhəsikil, $\tau\alpha n=eh\tau$ kehsi-mílikkil nəpísonal.

this^{NI}-NIpl=FN=SHD C-along-emerge-ground-sudden.rflx.⊙^{NI}-NICj-NIpl how=INF
_many-various-form.⊙^{NI}-NICj-NIpl medicine-NIpl

'...there were all kinds of medicines sprouting up all around.' (k^weləphot:24)

The boundary between inferentiality and derivative uncertainty is, as we might expect, none too clear, since we could still claim the latter uses as rhetorical inferentials.

As a hedge of uncertainty, =*eh*τ occurs idiomatically in the collocation *mehč=eh*τ 'still=INF' as a formal hedge in reports of quantity/degree (16a,b).

(16) Quantity/degree hedge *mehč=eh*τ

a. *mehč=eh* yéwahtək^we alí-tkik^wəl. *still=INF* four-hundred _way-heavy.⊙^{NA}-W
'[the bear] weighed [about] 400 [pounds].' (A.N. Texts:1)

b. n=àk^wa yo eli-wəlí-təpinak, kámač=àk^wa, wa áwen, kínaπto, *mehč=àk^w[a]=eh* ákəməke, atótαpto.

LNK=SHD this^{NI} C-_way-good-assay-view.⊙^{NA}-NACj very=SHD this^{NA} who big-track.T.⊙^{NA}-W
still=SHD=INF snowshoe-LOC-ABS^{NI} _point-track.T.⊙^{NA}-W

'Thereupon as he scrutinized it, this person made a big track, comparable to the size of a snowshoe, so great was the footprint made.' (k^wsih^wαpe:2)

This collocation appears to be either a customary or normative hedge, insofar as it is regularly applied to reports that speakers likely do have a fair degree of certainty about: e.g. in this text the narrator has personally shot the bear. Here PsmMl's identically used collocation *mèč=al* offers additional support for the PsmMl =*al* to Pb =*eh*τ correspondence. Furthermore, when the collocation is interrupted with the conditional element (Pb =*pa*, PsmMl =*əp*), giving Pb *mehč=əp=eh*τ and PsmMl *mèč=əp=al* respectively, we find a second correspondence: both forms function roughly like English 'please...' to soften the tone of a request:

(17) Pb *mèhč=əp[a]=eh*τ, PsmMl *mèč=əp=al* 'please...'

mèhč=əp[a]=eh ni kkisi-manohəmáwewin? *still=CND=INF* that^{NI} 2-PERF-buy.⊙^{NA}-for.⊙¹-N
'Could you buy me that?' (SDMC; possibly w/ zero -P and not -N)

Mèc-op-al kéqsèy kisi-mílin, weci-sunpekǒnósín?

still=CND=INF thing-AUG-material (2)-PERF-give.⊙¹-N C-_from-smooth-liquid-hand.rflx.⊙^{NA}-?N

'Could you possibly give me something to rub myself with?' (LeSourd 2007:42:23, Psm orthography)

A third matchup between Pb =eht and PsmMl =əl is in (18): the shared idiomatic collocation of the 'which/how' element (Pb *tan*, PsmMl *tàn*) with back-referencing =k[a] followed by the inferential/uncertative to express rank lack of knowledge, typically in response to a question.

(18) Pb *tàn=ək[a]=eht* 'I don't know; how should I know'

a. "...*tàn=eht* àkima wətəlí-təpíhlán'." how=INF as_much_as 3-way-assay-move.⊙^{NA}-N
 "*tàn=ək=eht*" how=BR=INF

"What ever is wrong with him?"

"How should I know?"

(čəwamis:3-4)

b. wətíhlán, "*tàn kátəkʷəná*."
 ni pèsəko itak, "*tàn=ək[a]=eht*, məsi=tte kənəkíhkα-nəkáləkona."

3-say.DIR-N how 2-brother_in_law-1pl

LNK one^{NA}

C-say.T.⊙^{NA}-NACj

how=BR=INF

all=INT

2-completely-leave.INV-W-1pl

'So he said: "where is our brother-in-law?"'

'Then one said, "I don't know; he has completely left all of us [behind]."'

(kesihlatGD:12)

Notice that in (18a), the original establishing question has =eht, showcasing the asker's own lack of certainty. From that, the 'dunno' idiom constructs quite logically: even as it repeats back the same expression of uncertainty (*tan=eht*), it necessarily back-references the original question, and so adds =ka. The equivalent PsmMl response phrase is as expected: *tanəkəl* 'I don't know', often reduced to *ənəkəl*, differs only in the lexical replacement of =eht with =əl.⁵

A specialized 'dunno' lexically unrelated to the verb 'know' is common: see Indonesian *entah*, Sundanese *teuing/duka*, and closer to home, Oj *namanj*, which not surprisingly often collocates with its own inferential/uncertative particle =iidog (Treuer 2001:160), which, along with Mskw/Sauk =yêtoke (Whittaker et al. 1996:2),⁶ is cognate to =eht. Pb =eht comes from a preform broadly attested in EAb missionary materials as <ét8> /ehto/, and reflected directly as <ato> /atto/ in WAb (Laurent 1884, Masta 1932). Like =pa above, this may either be the old Algonquian dubitative affix (a paradigm absent in these languages) directly recut, or perhaps a reduction of an old bleached dummy-verb thus inflected. While reduction of the *-ok to -o has parallels in other particles, the preaspiration giving /ht/ and not expected /t/ (compare Unami èt) is of obscure origin, but seems to be an intrusive feature of several Pb particles, perhaps related to the laryngeal tension of the high pitch associated with immediately pre-pausal prosody (Siebert 1988). A phonologically plausible candidate for the etymology of PsmMl =əl is PEA *ālaw- 'failing to; although', but relating failure/concession to uncertainty, while not unreasonable, is a less sure semantic trajectory to claim.

3.4 Back-referencing =ka

The primary role of the clitic =ka is to back-reference an established point of discourse, be it an entity referent or a more abstract topic. As such, it is not itself a topic marker (it readily misanalyses as a focus marker, in fact), but in back-referencing, it does help explicitly mark topic continuity. Hence for example we see =ka frequently when an individual appears on the scene---establishing a referent---whose identity is unknown: =ka occurs in the answer to the question of who this is. Thus the two examples in (19) follow the same pattern: one speaker asks another to identify an unknown but present referent, and the other answers with a =ka-marked clause reporting that identity:

(19) Identifying established referents: back-referencing =ka

a. "awen na ketawintak^w?" who that^{NA} C-audibly-sing.T.⊙^{NA}-NACj
 "ehk^wi-čiksətawe, ess=aka na.⁷ stop-silent-hear.DIR clam=BR that^{NA}

'Don't listen, it is clams.' (Speck 1918:233, phonemicized)

b. "àwen na péčohset'." who that^{NA} C-arrive-walk.⊙^{NA}-NACj
 "k^wàk^wsəss=aka na péčohset." fox=BR that^{NA} C-arrive-walk.⊙^{NA}-NACj

'Who is that who came?'

'A fox is the one that has come.' (weči-pečihlak sk^wəte:15-16)

Contrast this with a referent established for the first time and simultaneously identified: in (20), there is no preceding question 'what is that?', only an identification of the creature and simultaneous warning of its presence.

(20) Identifying new referents: no =ka

esahsit na! C-through-shine.⊙^{NA}cj that^{NA}
 'That's an *esahsit*!' (ANesahsit)

Recalling also the further examples cited in 3.3, we can conclude that =ka does in fact indicate a back-referencing link to a discourse-established referent.

The use of =ka in imperatives continues this back-referencing characterization: here it appears in contexts where the imperative is already established or even "expected" from the previous discourse. Hence the case of literal insistence seen in (21), where =ka is added to the imperative (*Hurry up!*) only after the first imperative is used, signaling that this is a repeated request, and refers back to the earlier one established in the discourse.⁸

(21) Back-referencing imperative

"kèkα owa mkasewi-áləmosš nəməšənək^w. wih^wisəpk^wətéhəmwī, nəmóhsomi."
 "èhe ↑ , nk^wənəssis, kis péšək^wəta, nəkisi-pənámelki."
 "wisánək^wəsi=ka, nəmóhsomi. kis=te owa kèkα nənímiphək^w owa àwen."
 "èhe ↑ , nk^wənəssis, pəla iyo məčəssala, nəpənámelkin. nə=tte=č kətəpk^wətéhəmolən."
 "wisáyī, wisáyī, nəmóhsomi, wisáyī."
 "èhe ↑ , nə=ka=tte níhk^wəp, kətəpk^wətéhəmolən."

almost this^{NA} black-dog 1-catch-hand.INV-W RDP-hurried-open-by_tool.⊙^{NA}-for.⊙¹ 1-g'father
 yes 1-g'child-AUG-DIM already one-time 1-PERF-down-step.⊙^{NA}-P
 hurried-appear.⊙^{NA}=BR 1-g'father already=INT this^{NA} almost 1-take-grab.INV-W this^{NA} who
 yes 1-g'child-AUG-DIM wait this^{NI} last_time 1-down-step.⊙^{NA}-N LNK=INT=FUT
 2-open-by_tool.⊙^{NA}-for.⊙²-N
 hurried-IWI hurried-IWI 1-g'father hurried-IWI
 yes LNK=BR=INT now 2-open-by_tool.⊙^{NA}-for.⊙²-N

'A black dog has almost caught me. In all haste open the door for me, O my grandfather.

'Surely, my little grandchild, I have already completed one step downward.'

'Do hurry up [=KA], O my grandfather. Already this creature has almost seized me.'

'Surely, my little grandchild, but first I shall step down for the last time; then I will at once open the door for you.'

'Quickly! Quickly! O my grandfather, quickly!'

'Very well then, so now I will [=KA]open the door for you.' (msahtawe:28-33)

In the second use of =ka here, again it occurs only after the relevant point has been established. The unhurried old man says that he'll do it right then ($n\lambda=tte=\check{c}$ LNK=INT=FUT), and then adds in =ka when he reiterates the same promise (i.e. as $n\lambda=ka=tte$ LINK=BR=INT), back-referencing that he has said it before.

This collocation $ni=ka=tte$ is exceedingly common in Pb narrative texts; so are subcollocations $ni=tte$ and $ni=ka$. Here again =ka highlights that that deictic back-reference is not just true, but discursively relevant/salient. The clitic =tte serves, as it generally does, to intensify/narrow the scope of of its host, here the point in time deicticized by linker ni . Thus it corresponds to PsmMl =te, Oj =go, and Mskw/Sauk =meko.⁹ The equally common Oj collocation $mii=sa=go$ is therefore a direct equivalent to Pb $ni=ka=tte$, once more highlighting the utility of collocational comparison.¹⁰

We can see the workings of =ka clearly in the fragment of discourse given in (22). In the lines preceding it, the issue has been established that it is late, and both Muskrat and Beaver have not eaten. Given this, the enjoinder to eat together right away is a continuity worth highlighting; hence the =ka collocated within $m\acute{a}n\acute{n}i=tte$ 'directly, right away'.¹¹ We see =ka again on the concessive element $\acute{a}law$ 'although', here marking the concession that Muskrat is not far from home (and so need not trouble Beaver for dinner), with =ka serving to explicitly acknowledge Beaver's earlier invitation to dine together.

(22) Back-referencing imperative/hortative, back-referencing concessive

"n\`ehe," m\`ina k\`elosit t\`amahk\`we, "m\`an\`ani=ka=tte nisi-at\`al\`ak\`w\`ihpine."

n=\`ak\`wa wa m\`ohssk\`ehso \`itak, "\`alaw=aka iyo \`ipi pehso\`c\`iw\`ass wik\`aya, k\`enok \`ata kek\`w \`alewi. \`elawe=\`c k\`anis\`ohpip\`ana."

come_on again C-speak.reflx.⊙^{NA}-NACj beaver right_away=BR=INT two-evening-eat.⊙^{NA}-12imper
LNK=SHD this^{NA} muskrat C-say.T.⊙^{NA}-NACj although=BR this^{NI} only-IWI near-IWI-AUG
C-reside⊙^{NI}-1sCj but not what _way.⊙^{NI}-NEG-W I_guess=FUT 2-two-evening-eat.⊙^{NA}-12pl

"Come on," Beaver spoke again, "let us immediately eat supper together."

'So then the Muskrat said, "Although I live at only a short distance, nevertheless it doesn't make any difference. Suppose we eat together.'" (k., t, & m:7-8)

Collocations of concessive and =ka appear to be restricted precisely as we would predict: to concessions of propositions established in the discourse (often explicitly by the other interlocutor), rather than ones simply introduced for the first time by the speaker. In (23) we can see this back-referencing concessive response.

(23) Back-referencing concessive

..."ahkk\`w\`at\`ale, kkiw\`a\`c\`in\`ak\`w\`asi, n\`an\`aksk\`w\`ehsis\`am." (...)

"\`alaw=aka \`ata n\`akiw\`a\`c\`ihlaw, n\`i=hki, n\`i=ka el\`it\`ahas\`aya; tan=eht=\`ask\`we \`c\`c\`ipatok=te ni eli-t\`ap\`ihla."

alas 2-lonely-appear.⊙^{NA}-P 1-young_woman-AUG-DIM-POSS
although=BR not 1-lonely-move.⊙^{NA}-NEG-P LNK=HKI LNK=BR
C-_way-feel.reflx.⊙^{NA}-1sCj how=INF=TS maybe=INT LNK C-_way-assay-move.⊙^{NA}-1sCj

..."Alas! You appear to be lonely, my little girl." (...)

"Although I am not exactly lonely, conceivably that is what I think; however that may probably be my plight." (kkino:6-8)

Finally, the use of =ka for the 'dunno' collocation discussed in 3.3 also fits this characterization: as a response to a discourse-established question, it is inherently back-referencing.

3.5 Topic-shifting =ask^we

As much as =ka indicates topic continuity through back-referencing, =ask^we (PsmMl =lò) does the opposite: it highlights discontinuity, shift/change, or newness of topic. For this reason, =ka and =ask^we never co-occur. These features together suggest that the two may be in systematic opposition. Both always appeal to shared information: =ka referring back to it, and =ask^we offering a warning flag to an upcoming disruption to it.

For this reason, =ask^we associates with introducing or shifting to a new topical referent, as in the Pb narrative example in (24a), and the PsmMl conversational example in (24b).

(24) Introducing new/shifted topical referent: Pb =ask^we, PsmMl =lò

a. owa wskinohs mànəni=tte nəpəwi-təpəlomə. owa=ask^we mətəhsən itam, "àhtamə kənihlāwiwə."

this^{NA} young_man right_away=INT die-assay-discuss.DIR-W this^{NA}=TS youngest_child
say.T.⊙^{NA}-W not 2-kill.DIR-NEG-W-≠1pl

'The youth was immediately sentenced to death. However the youngest child said, "You are not to kill him.'" (wskinohs nəkə mətəhsən:24)

b. kíl=lò tən? you=TS how
'How about you?' (common followup after answering 'How are you?')

For the same reason, =ask^we often collocates 'some', when specifically read as 'some, in contrast to others', i.e. an explicit shift away from an established referent to a different one:

(25) Contrastively defined referents and =ask^we

a. ànək^wəč=ək^wa msélolak iyok tak^wəksəwínəwak; ànək^wəč=ask^we wahkéhsolak---tən=te eli-péçihlak.

some=SHD many-canoe.⊙^{NA}-W-NApl this^{NA}-NApl autumn-?rflx.⊙^{NA}-person-NApl
some=TS few-canoe.⊙^{NA}-W-NApl how=INT C-_way-arrive-move.⊙^{NI}-NIcj

'Sometimes there were many canoes of these autumn gatherers; on the other hand sometimes there were a few canoes of people—whichever way that it happened.' (wəsk^wekkehs:2)

b. tən=ək^wa=p[a]=eht, nì=ka=tte ànək^wəč àwen ólikkan, ask^we iyok ànək^wəč kətakik wətətələk^wəkk^wáhətina.

how=??=CND=INF LNK=BR=INT some who 3-good-house-make.⊙^{NA}-N
TS this^{NA}-NApl some other-NApl 3-evening-cook-make.⊙^{NA}-ExtPl.⊙^{NA}-N-≠1pl

'Accordingly someone promptly prepared camp while on the other hand some of the others cooked the evening meal.' (wəsk^wekkehs:16)

The particle =ask^we has a rich set of collocational friends. As kènok 'but' is a natural axis of topic-shifting new information, as is wàsam 'because' (explanations often construing as new to the listener), these too both frequently host =ask^we. Similarly, =ask^we commonly collocates with such systematically opposed temporal shift markers as ni 'then' (cf.), kis 'already', màlam 'eventually', mánani 'without delay, saliently quickly' (cf. PsmMl equivalent woliw=te): for all of these, =ask^we highlights these temporal turning points as involving substantial shift in events, rather than just ordinarily-expected consequent events.

Direct content questions also seem to attract the use of =ask^we, as in (25), which is a series of content questions posed back to the interlocutor's statements in proposing a fishing trip.¹²

(26) Direct content questions and =ask^we

| | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------------|--|
| tamα=p[a]=ask ^w e? | (...) | where=CND= <u>TS</u> | |
| kek ^w =ask ^w e=č ααα wíhk ^w ənəmak ^w ? | (...) | what= <u>TS</u> =FUT | (fs) C-take-hand.Ⓟ ^{NA} -12plCj |
| tan=əp[a]=eht=ask ^w e a, awahsí-sepa? | | how=CND=INF= <u>TS</u> | (fs) beyond-tomorrow |
| Where would [we go]? | (...) | | |
| What then...uhh...will we take? | (...) | | |
| How about the day after tomorrow? | (ANTexts) | | |

We suspect that in explicitly signaling a shift in information flow, =ask^we softens the yanking of topicality that an out-of-the-blue or rhetorical question might otherwise cause.¹³

In this regard =ask^we is close but also in opposition to =ahč 'too, also' (PsmMl =na): both are explicitly additive, but =ask^we adds novel/topically discontinuous information, while =ahč is smoothly continuous and cumulative in its informational contribution. We see this in (27), where the sentence is one of a series of statements describing the protagonist in the introduction to the story.

(27) Additive continuity =ahč

| | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ni=àk ^w [a]=ahč ólikin. | LNK=SHD= <u>ALSO</u> | 3-good-form.Ⓟ ^{NA} -N |
| 'It is said also that she was pretty.' | (kkino:1) | |

If this characterization of the =ask^we vs. =ka contrast is correct, then it makes a prediction about the Oj functional equivalents, namely =dash for =ask^we, and =sa for =ka. We predict first that =sa and =dash can never co-occur, a point I leave to Ojibwe specialists to test; so far, my perusal of the literature seems to bear this out. The only caveat needed is that =dash clearly collapses the contrast holding between =ask^we and =ahč, and so covers both. Second, following the extreme frequency of Pb collocations ni=ka and ni=ask^we in narrative texts, we predict that =sa and =dash will do the same with linker mii, and indeed, mii=sa and mii=dash are clearly common discourse collocations in Ojibwe narratives.

4. Conclusion

The discourse particles described here represent just the tip of the iceberg. Time does not nearly permit a full discussion of even the preliminary results from examining other particles, for example, the contrast of two foregrounding particles: =kahk for an established piece of information (often contrastively to others), and =tahk for a new piece of information (particularly for presentative, corrective, or replacive functions). This opposition, taken together with the =ka vs. =ask^we opposition examined earlier, suggests a sharp and systematic character to these elements, rather than the fuzziness usually attributed to set of "emphatic"

particles. While discourse markers do tend to be fuzzy (Rich Rhode's term) in their triggering, speakers still have a clear sense of what does and does not sound right, which implies a precision at some level of representation. The greater fuzziness, it seems, is in our means to approach these problems, rather than the nature of the phenomena themselves.

What I hope to have illustrated with just these few categories is to demonstrate that discourse particles are not vague fuzzy creatures that we can never understand, nor ones that we can rationalize our way into ignoring despite their radical frequency of use. Instead, they are evidently systematic, often clearly mutually contrastive creatures, whose systematicities we just need to work out. While eliciting glosses or usage generalizations from an average speaker is often fruitless (ask an English speaker to explain the meaning and usage of "the"), we are not without several clear means to find their functions. Recurrent textual usage parallels can give us a baseline confidence in construction-specific usage, to put towards more analytic generalizations. Matching collocations across languages can give us a further empirical foot in the door, as we have seen with the Pb and PsmMl functional equivalencies with and without lexical cognacy. And as always, just recognizing that these are creatures of discourse, i.e. operators at the multisentential level, immediately tells us to look before and after in context (co-text), and (failing anything else) also to what universal aspects of pragmatics we can to find their usage, their function. In short, Algonquian discourse particles are eminently researchable in a solid, systematic way. Which is lucky, particularly for pedagogical/revitalization purposes, since natural-sounding speech in these languages cannot be achieved without solid competence in this system.

The road is open.

5. Notes

¹Reinholtz and Wolfart 2001, Reinholtz 2002, and Oxford 2008 notwithstanding.

²Note that PsmMl *ən* is likely also a phonological reduction from an early free **ni* or synchronic affixed *nit*: the textual usage of *ən* and *nit* for the linker function somewhat overlap, which would be expected if they are etymologically related. Compare a semantically quite similar discourse linker, *maləm* (see 3.5), which shares the feature of moving the narrative forward, and also has a tendency to rank reduction, to *mam-te* and *am-te* (LeSourd 2007:18, 48, 78), albeit only when prosodically buttressed by *-te*.

³MS <*otalik^wessən*> is likely properly <*otalik^wessən*>.

⁴Phonemic accentuation of this form is uncertain.

⁵Interestingly, PsmMl does not use a direct lexical cognate for *=ka* in its independent function (replacing it instead with *=ehta*; see 3.4), and so this *-k-* element either represents a fossilized retention or a constructionally fixed borrowing.

⁶It is not clear to me if the Oj and Mskw/Sauk particles can be freestanding as well; I would suspect that as non-monosyllables, they may well be not be clitics at all. Compare for example (24b).

⁷Given the plural gloss and the occasional inexactness of transcription in this source, it is possible that the collocation is plural *ess-ak=ka* 'clam-NAP=BR', rather than simple singular *ess=əka* 'clam=BR'.

⁸Preliminary anecdotal evidence from interviews with PsmMl speakers suggests a similar imperative use for PsmMl equivalent *=ehta*.

⁹The etymology of *=tte* (PsmMl *=te*) is uncertain. Pb *əhte* 'NI is, is located' is possible as a bleached, "indeed it is so"-type predicate. Mskw/Sk *=meko* (Whittaker et al. 1996:7) is relatable to the lexical root preserved in Penobscot particle (*m*)*emək^w* 'scarcely, barely'---itself tending more often than not to collocate with *=tte*---with the initial consonantal variation suggestive of reduplication from a pre-form **-mək^w*. The restrictive semantics of the putative root to such a particle could readily have developed to form a restrictive intensifier.

¹⁰A second point of comparison is the tendency for certain lexically and phonologically more substantial particles to preferentially occur with the intensifier particle more often than without across various languages, contributing towards confirmation of matchings of each.

¹¹As noted, the particle *mánani=tte* is the functional equivalent of PsmMl *woliw=te*; each language's base form is of the type cited previously, i.e. that which preferentially co-occurs with the intensifier.

¹²In marking topic shifts and collocating with content questions, *=ask^we* tracks the Mandarin discourse particle 呢 *ne* quite closely, but 呢 *ne* to my first-blush impression seems to have a much stronger association with topic continuity.

¹³Notice how little would be left to this speaker's conversational contribution were the modal, evidential, and discourse-structural particles all absent. This showcases just how essential all three types of particle are to effective and normative speech.

6. Abbreviations

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---|
| ⊙ | light verb | OBJRG | objurgative |
| DIR | direct light verb | RDP | reduplication |
| INV | inverse light verb | PERF | perfective/abilitative |
| NA, NI | animate, inanimate | LNK | deictic linker |
| rcp | reciprocal | CND | conditional |
| rflx | reflexive | FUT | future/potential |
| C | initial change | SHD | secondhand/hearsay |
| Cj, cj | conjunct | INF | inferential/uncertative |
| Imper | imperative | BR | back-referencing |
| Impers | impersonal | TS | topic-shifting |
| 1,2,3 | grammatical Person | INT | intensifying/narrowing |
| ... ¹ , ... ² | 1, 2 as internal argument | FO | foregrounding old information |
| P, W, N | clause-type/arg structure marker | FN | foregrounding new information |
| T | T-element (see Quinn 2006, ch.2) | HKI | (particle of uncertain use, related to FO, FN) |
| OBV | obviative | IWI | adverbializer |
| ABS | absentative | – | preceding, = Relative Root; or = links multi-word gloss |
| LOC | locative | (fs) | false start or hesitation |
| AUG | augmentative | ?? | uncertain gloss or parsing |
| DIM | diminutive | | |

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