

A Native American view of the “mind” as seen in the lexicon of cognition in East Cree

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Abstract

East Cree, an Algonquian language spoken in Northern Quebec, Canada, has a classifier, -eyi-, that indicates mental activity. This morpheme is found in a very large number of cognition words including all verbs for thinking, most for knowing, all for wanting, and several for feeling. A morphosyntactic analysis of over 500 words shows that many common metaphors for thinking are found in the etymology of Cree thinking words as well as culture-specific ones. There are interesting correlations between thinking and feeling and between rational and supernatural processes. The data support the existence of semantic universals for mental predicates, as defined by Goddard and Wierzbicka (1994, 2002), by providing evidence that East Cree has exponents for the semantic primes THINK, WANT, and KNOW. Interviews with elders confirm that the Cree “theory of mind” has both universal and culture-specific aspects, like the ideas of wholeness, a connection with the greater “mind” of creation (the Great Spirit), and respect for others, which is a central value of Cree culture.

Keywords: East Cree; Algonquian; semantics; morphosyntax; cognition; thinking.

1. Introduction

East Cree, an Algonquian language spoken in Northern Quebec, Canada, has a classifier, -eyi-, that indicates mental activity. This classifier is found in a very large number of cognition words including all verbs for thinking, most for knowing, all for wanting, and several for feeling. An example of each is presented in (1).

- (1) a. THINKING
Chihkaateyimeu. ‘She/he thinks positively about her/him.’

Naapeucheyihtaakusuu. ‘She/he thinks she/he is like a male (but really is not).’

Iyaaiweyimeu. ‘She/he kills her/him by thinking.’

b. KNOWING

Chischeyimeu. ‘She/he knows her/him.’

c. WANTING

Nituweyihitam. ‘She/he wants it.’

Mushtehneyihitam. ‘She/he desires it, longs for it.’

d. FEELING

Pikweyimeu. ‘She/he is anxious about her/him (absentee).’

Macheyihitam. ‘She/he is sad (about it).’

Paasikweyihitam. ‘She/he is excited (about it).’

Kaweyimuu. ‘She/he dies from grief.’

This article begins by presenting aspects of the Cree language required to understand the grammar and semantics of *-eyi-* constructions. A morphosyntactic analysis of the verbs containing *-eyi-* reveals three patterns of semantic composition. Many common metaphors for thinking are found in Cree, but some of these are quite culture-specific. The data support the existence of semantic universals for mental predicates, as defined by Goddard and Wierzbicka (1994, 2002), by providing evidence that East Cree has exponents for the semantic primes THINK, WANT, and KNOW. More culturally specific aspects of thinking in Cree are revealed in the organization of the lexicon. There are interesting correlations between thinking and feeling and between rational and supernatural processes. Interviews with elders confirm that the Cree theory of mind has both universal and culture-specific aspects.

2. East Cree

East Cree is an Algonquian language spoken on the eastern coast of James Bay, in Northern Quebec, Canada. There are approximately 13,000 speakers and two major dialects, the Northern and the Southern. Data discussed in this paper are from the Southern dialect, but no major difference is expected between the two, nor between it and neighboring Western varieties of Cree, like Moose Cree and, in the East, Naskapi or Montagnais. Existing resources on the East Cree language are few: MacKenzie (1972) and MacKenzie et al. (1987), but more documentation is currently under way (Junker et al. 2000–2003).¹ Descriptions of Western varieties (Wolfart 1973; Dahlstrom 1991; and Stark 1992) are available.

East Cree is a nonconfigurational (Hale 1983), polysynthetic (Sapir 1921), head-marking (Nichols 1986) language. Every verb constitutes

a grammatical sentence in itself. It contains pronominal affixes which cross-reference optional full nominals adjoined in a relatively free word order (Junker in press). Parts of speech consist of nouns, pronouns, verbs, and particles. There are no adjectives. Eighty-one percent of words in the *Cree Lexicon* (McKenzie et al. 1987) are verbs. This reflects a linguistic reality where most things are characterized as processes rather than objects. Cree nouns fall into two classes: animate and inanimate. This gender distinction is a principal term of classification for verbs.

Following Bloomfield (1946), Cree verbs can be divided by their morphology into four classes, according to the gender of the subject for intransitive verbs, and of the object for transitive verbs.² So we have intransitive verbs that take an inanimate subject (VII),³ intransitive verbs that take an animate subject (VAI), transitive verbs that take an inanimate object (VTI), and transitive verbs that take an animate object (VTA) (see also Wolfart 1973; 1996). Examples of each based on the root *mach-* ‘bad’ appear in (2a) to (2d).

- (2) a. *Macheyih̄taakun.* ‘It is unpleasant.’ (VII; inanimate)
- b. *Macheyih̄taakusuu.* ‘She/he is unpleasant.’ (VAI; animate)
- c. *Macheyih̄tam.* ‘She/he dislikes it, she is sad about it.’ (VTI; inanimate)
- d. *Macheyimeu.* ‘She/he dislikes her/him, she/he is sad about her/him.’ (VTA; animate)

The structure of Cree words is illustrated in Figures 1 to 3. Nouns consist of a stem that can take a personal prefix to indicate possession and inflectional suffixes. Verb stems take personal prefixes, preverbs indicating tense, aspect, or modality, and various derivational and inflectional

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------|
| person prefix | stem | suffixes |
|---------------|-------------|----------|

Figure 1. Structure of a Cree noun

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|--|----------|
| person prefix | preverbs | stem initial–medial–final | suffixes |
|---------------|----------|--|----------|

Figure 2. Structure of the Cree verbal complex

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| initial | medial | final |
| | | [- <i>eyi</i> -ht/m-] |
| initial–medial–final | initial–medial–final | initial–medial–final |

Figure 3. *Internal structure of the stem*

suffixes. The verb stem has an internal structure with three components: *initials* (including the category “root” established by Bloomfield 1946), *medials*, and *finals*. All three components may consist of more than one morpheme; that is, they may be composed of combinations of initials, medials, and finals. (Wolfart 1973; Clarke and MacKenzie, in press).

The *-eyi-* morpheme that indicates mental activity is always found preceding the final *-m-* meaning “involvement of the face, or the mouth”. The *-m-* element also appears in telling words like *tipachimu* and talking words like *ayimu*. It seems to reinforce and focus the *-eyi-* morpheme. For transitive inanimate verbs, the nasal *m* becomes *h* by phonological rule, before the transitive inanimate final *-t-*. Thus, the components *-eyi-* and *-m-* form a complex final, as illustrated in (3).⁴

- (3) a. *Macheyimeu*.
 Mach-eyi-m-e-u
 bad-by mind-by face(TA final)-TA direct theme sign-3
 ‘She/he dislikes her/him, she/he is sad about her/him.’
- b. *Macheyihtam*.
 Mach-eyi-h-t-am-(u)
 bad-by mind-by face-TI final-TI theme sign-(3)
 ‘She/he dislikes it, she/he is sad about it.’

This complex final is found in its minimal form in the verb “to think”. There is one basic verb stem that means “to think”, made up of a relative root *it-* ‘thus’, ‘so’, *-eyi-*, and the final *-m-* (or *-h-*) as in (4).

- (4) a. *Iteyimeu*.
 It-eyi-m-e-u
 so-by mind-by face(TA final)-TA.direct 3>3'-3
 ‘She/he thinks so of her/him.’
- b. *Iteyihtam*.
 It-eyi-h-t-am-(u)
 so-by mind-by face-TI final-TI theme sign-(3)
 ‘She/he thinks so of her/him.’

- c. *Iteyimuu*.
 It-eyi-m-u-u
 so-by mind-by face-AI final-3
 ‘She/he thinks so.’

The initial components of the stem are usually found occurring in words that lack the *-eyi-* component. This allows us to infer a gloss for them. When the initial is identical to a particle, we use the particle’s meaning as a gloss. For many verbs, however, the initial component requires *-eyi-*. An example is the word *uweshipeyihitam* in (5). For such verbs, a gloss of the initial component would be highly speculative, thus it will not be attempted here.

- (5) a. *Uweshipeyihitam*. (VTI) ‘She/he has it in her/his thoughts, she/he has reason, she/he is sensible.’
 b. *Uweshipeyimeu*. (VTA) ‘She/he has her/him in her/his thoughts.’

Nouns containing *-eyi-* are usually derived from verbs by the addition of a noun final, and are more complex morphologically, as shown in (6) and (7).

- (6) a. *Nituweyihitam*.
 nituw.eyi-ht-am-(u) (VTI)
 want-TI final-TI theme sign-(3)
 ‘She/he wants it.’
 → b. *Nituweyihitamuun*
 [Nituw-eyi-h-t-am-u]-un (NI)
 [want-TI final-TI theme sign-3]-noun final
 ‘a will’, ‘a wish’
- (7) a. *Chistimaacheihchicheu*.
 Chistimaach-eyi-hchi-che-u (VAI)
 pity-think-AI final-AI final-3
 ‘She/he is compassionate, merciful.’
 → b. *Chistimaacheyihchicheun*
 [Chistimaach-eyi-hchi-che-u]-n (NI)
 [pity-think-AI final-AI final-3]-noun final
 ‘Compassion, kindness, pity’

A corpus of 513 words containing *-eyi-* were collected from the Cree lexicon of MacKenzie and coauthors (1987), from prior to the translation of the Bible into East Cree. This lexicon reflects the East Cree language as it was used in the 1970s and 1980s by speakers born prior to 1960. The data were then rechecked in 2001 by interviews with five bilingual and four monolingual speakers. The ages of the speakers were 37, 47, 55 (2), 60 (2),

74, 76, and 80 years. There was a difference between elders and younger speakers in knowledge of some words. Bilingualism with English did not seem to make a difference, since all speakers were totally fluent in East Cree, which was their first and best language.

Table 1 shows the repartition of the data according to parts of speech. The words containing *-eyi-* make up 3.3 percent of the total number of words in the corpus. There is a higher percentage of transitive verbs with *-eyi-*: five percent of VTA and 6.65 percent of VTI verbs, for only two percent of VII and two and a half percent of VAI. The morpheme *-eyi-* is found only in nouns and verbs, never in particles and pronouns.

Because the Cree verb is highly derivational (verb classes, applicatives, causatives), these 513 words with *-eyi-* can be reduced to about 70 different stems in combination with *-eyi-*. The examples in (8) show six different forms the basic verb “to think” can take, depending on its syntax and derivations.

- (8) a. *Iteyimeu.*
It-eyi-m-e-u (VTA)
so-think-TA final-TA direct theme sign.3>3'-3
'She/he thinks so of herself/himself.'
- b. *Iteyihitam.*
It-eyi-ht-am-(u) (VTI)
so-think-TI final-TI theme sign-(3)
'She/he thinks so of it.'
- c. *Iteyimuu.*
It-eyi-mu-u (VAI)
so-think-AI final-3
'She thinks so.'
- d. *Iteyimisuu.*
It-eyi-m-isu-u (VAI-REFLEXIVE)
so-think.AI final-Reflexive-3
'She/he thinks so of herself/himself.'

Table 1. *Total words by part of speech and inclusion of -eyi-*

| Part of speech | Total in dictionary | Total with <i>-eyi-</i> | Percentage with <i>-eyi-</i> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| words | 15,362 | 513 | 3.3 |
| verbs | 12,400 | 465 | 3.75 |
| a. VII | 2,183 | 45 | 2 |
| b. VAI | 5,045 | 126 | 2.5 |
| c. VTA | 3,142 | 159 | 5 |
| d. VTI | 2,030 | 135 | 6.65 |
| nouns | 2,260 | 48 | 2.1 |
| other (particles, pronouns) | 702 | 0 | 0 |

- e. *Iteyimituuch.*
It-eyi-m-itu-u-ch (VAI-RECIPROCAL)
so-think-AI final- RECIP-3-PL
‘They think so of each other.’
- f. *Iteyihcheu.*
It-eyi-hche-u (VAI)
so-think-AI final-3
‘She/he assumes so.’

In the next section, we examine the semantics of the compounds with *-eyi-*. We discover their metaphors, and some evidence for the existence of universal semantic primes.

3. The semantics of compounds

The semantics of the compounds was investigated in two ways. First, I looked for the existence of the elements preceding *-eyi-* in verbs without *-eyi-*. Second, I asked speakers if they could tease apart the components and attribute a separate meaning to each. Then I asked whether they saw a connection or difference in meaning between the verbs that contained *-eyi-* and the corresponding ones that did not. Most *-eyi-* words that have corresponding non-*-eyi-* counter parts can be classified into three semantic compositional patterns:

- i. Think that . . . + (incorporated complement clause)
- ii. Think like + [NP]
- iii. Think like (this)

It is in the third pattern that metaphors are found. Some of these seem universal, while others seem more culture-specific. Finally, there are two words whose initial components are clearly attested in other words, but whose meaning speakers absolutely refused to paraphrase.

3.1. *To think that . . . + intransitive verb*

An example of this type of compound meaning is given in (9). The initial element of the stem corresponds to a verb of the VAI class, which is interpreted as an incorporated complement clause.

- (9) *Nichihitimuweyimaau.*
Ni-[chihitimuw]-eyi-m-aa
1-[s/he.is.lazy]-think-TA final- TA direct. 1>3
‘I think that she/he is lazy.’

The meaning of such verbs can be explained with a very simple gloss, using the Cree verb *iteyimeu* ‘someone thinks so about someone else’ or *iteyihitam* ‘someone thinks this about something’, preceded by a verb or an

expression based on the initial component. For example, (10) is considered synonymous to (9). Additional examples are provided in (11) to (15).

- (10) *Chihtimuu, nititeyimaau.*
 Chihti-mu-u, ni-t-iteyi-m-aaau
 be.lazy-AI final-3, 1-think.TA final-TA direct.1>3
 she is lazy, I think this of her
 ‘I think that she/he is lazy.’
- (11) a. *Meyaaucheyimeu.* (VTA).
 [meyaaau naashch ‘you deserved it!’ ; -eyim- ‘think about someone’]
 ‘She/he thinks it serves her/him (other) right.’
 → b. *Meyaaau naashch, iteyimeu.*
 (you) deserved that, so she/he thinks of her/him.
 ‘She/he thinks that it serves her/him (other) right.’
- (12) a. *Maamaskaateyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he thinks it is strange, surprising.’
 b. *Maamaskaateyimeu.* (VTA) ‘She/he thinks she/he (someone else) is strange, surprising.’
 c. *Maskaa.* (P) ‘It is strange, it is bizarre.’
- (13) a. *Chishuweyimeu.* (VTA) ‘She thinks she/he (someone else) is capable (physically).’
 b. *Chisuusiyuu.* (VAI) ‘She/he is capable of doing anything because of her/his physical abilities.’
- (14) a. *Iyaauteyimeu.* (VTA) ‘She/he thinks she/he (someone else) is not worth it (is a nuisance).’
 b. *Iyaauteyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he thinks it is not worth it (a nuisance).’
 c. *Iyaauch.* (P) ‘not worth the trouble!’
 d. *Iyaauchihuu.* (VAI) ‘She/he is a nuisance.’
- (15) a. *Wiineyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he thinks it is dirty.’
 b. *Wiiniheu.* (VTI) ‘She/he dirties it.’

The VTA counterpart of (15a), given in (16), also has a second meaning, showing that more than one type of compound meaning can exist in one verb.

- (16) *Wiineyimeu* (VTA)
 1. ‘She/he thinks she/he (someone else) is dirty.’
 2. ‘She/he thinks dirty (sexual sense) of her/him.’

3.2. *To think like this + noun*

This pattern is not very frequent, and may be due to the fact that the Cree language has few noun stems to start with. Most nouns are derived from

verbs, and the language consists mainly of verbs. In the data examined here, only one example, (17), has a nominal root :

- (17) a. *Chisheinuweyihitam.*
 Chisheinuw-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 elder-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he thinks (about it) like an elder.'
 b. *Chisheinu* 'an elder'

Example (17) can be glossed using the Cree words *itheyihitam* 'she/he thinks about it' and *mwech* 'like', as shown also by (18). These words are the Cree exponents of the universal semantic primes THINK and LIKE, proposed by Wierzbicka (1996).

- (18) *Mwech chisheinu itheyihitam.*
 like elder think.TI.3
 Like an elder, she/he thinks so of it.
 'She/he thinks (of it) like an elder.'

3.3. *To think like this . . .*

The compounds with the semantic compositional pattern "to think like this . . ." are not reliably transparent or predictable. However speakers do recognize the compositional meaning of them. The initial verbal element can be found in at least one and often many other verbs without *-eyi-*, which allows us to look at the etymology of these words. Each word has a story that is still recognized by speakers today (cf. Denny 1989). In order to explain their meaning to me, speakers actually like to translate them into English compounds. An explanation of these compounds would have in common the following elements: "She/he thinks like this". Many common metaphors for thinking are found here.

Examples (19) and (20) exhibit the metaphor THINKING IS OBJECT MANIPULATION. Jäkel (1995) claims that this metaphor is the most important one for the conceptualization of thinking. It is attested in East Cree with etymologies like "sweep-think" and "test-think", for which we find corresponding words without *-eyi-* in (19c), (19d), and (20b) with an instrumental affix.

- (19) to sweep-think
 a. *Wepeyihitam.*
 Wep-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 sweep/away-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he forgives it.'

- b. *Wepeyih^uamuweu* .
 Wep-eyi-ht-am-uw-e-u (VTA- applicative)
 sweep/away-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3-APPL-TA direct.
 3>3'-3
 'She/he forgives her/him.'
- c. *Wepahiikan*
 Wep-ahii-kan (NI)
 sweep/away-tool/instrument-action.noun final
 'broom'
- d. *Wepahiicheu*.
 Wep-ahii-che-u (VAI)
 away/sweep-by tool/instrument-regular activity.AI final-3
 'She/he sweeps (the floor).'
- (20) to test-think
- a. *Kakweteyihtam*.
 Kakwet-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 test-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he is making up her/his mind about it.'
- b. *Kakwetaham*.
 Kakwet-ah-am (VTI)
 test-by.tool/instrument-TI final- TI theme sign.3
 'She/he tests it (using a tool).'

Another common metaphor for thinking is THINKING IS MOVING (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). Many Cree thinking verbs have an initial component that expresses movement like "turn-think" as in (21), "stop-think", compare (22), or "down-think", see (23).

- (21) to turn-think
- a. *Kwescheyihta*.
 Kwesch-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 turn-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he changes her/his mind about it.'
- b. *Kwesch* (P) 'in turn.'
- c. *Kweschiiu*. (VAI) 'She/he turns.'
- (22) to stop-think
- a. *Puuneyihtam*.
 Puun-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 stop-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he stops thinking about it.'
- b. *Puuniiu*. (VAI) 'She/he stops/quits.'
- (23) to down-think
- a. *Kaweyimuu*.
 Kaw-eyi-mu-u (VAI)

[kaw- (or kau-): idea of downward movement]-think-AI final-3
 ‘She/he dies because of grief.’

- b. *Kaupayuu.* (VAI) ‘She/he falls down.’

The third metaphor that is found in East Cree thinking verbs is THINK-ING IS PERCEIVING (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). The words in (24) are composed with the initial component *waaskam-*, used for physical perception, as on a clear day in (24c). *Waskam-* is also found in words where it denotes positive qualities of the mind (24a), the voice (24e), or the heart (24f). The question in (24b) shows that clarity of thinking is associated with sanity.

(24) to clear-think

- a. *Waaskameyihitam.*
 Waaskam-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 clear-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he thinks straight/clearly.’
- b. *Chiwaaskameyihiten aa?* ‘Are you in your right mind?’
- d. *Waaskamaau.* (VII) ‘It is a clear day.’
- e. *Waaskamiweu.* (VAI) ‘She has a clear voice.’
- f. *Waaskamiteheu.* (VAI) ‘She/he has a pure heart.’

Many other verbs express ways of thinking that incorporate qualities. These qualities can be physical, as in (25), or moral, as in (26). They have to do with skills, as in (27) and (28), or the ability to perform skills, as in (29). Notice in (27b) how, via its etymology, *kachehtaaweyihitaamuun* ‘wisdom’ is considered a skill.

(25) to firm-think

- a. *Yaaiteyihitam.*
 Yaait-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 firm-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She is firm-minded/sure about it.’
- b. *Yaaitin.* (VII) ‘It is firm.’

(26) to wrong-think

- a. *Waneyihitam.*
 Wan-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 wrong-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he can’t think properly (about it).’
- b. *Wanituutam.* (VTI) ‘She/he does it wrong.’

(27) to skillfully-think

- a. *Kachetaaweyihitam.*
 Kachetaaw-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 skillful-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he thinks skillfully; she/he knows how; she/he is wise and alert.’

- b. *Kachehtaaweyihtaamuun* (NI) ‘Wisdom.’
 c. *Kachehtaunam*. (VTI) ‘She/he holds it skillfully.’
- (28) to uncertain-think
 a. *Kuituteyihtam*.
 Kuitu-t-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 uncertain-think-TI final- TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he does not know what to think of it.’
 b. *Kuituteyimeu*.
 Kuitu-t-eyi-m-e-u (VTA)
 uncertain-think-TA final-TA direct theme sign.3>3¹-3
 ‘She/he does not know what to think of her/him.’
 c. *Kuituumichisuu*. (VAI) ‘She/he does not know what to eat.’
- (29) to confuse-think
 a. *Chiishkweyeyihtam*.
 Chiishkwey-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 confuse-think-TI final- TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he has a lot on her/his mind, a confused mind (lots of yelling and screaming going on, driving you mad, out of your mind).’
 b. *Chiishkweu* (VAI) ‘She/he is crazy.’
 c. *Chiishkwemeu* (VTA) ‘She/he confuses her/him with noise or talking.’

While Lakoff and Johnson suggested that a submetaphor of THINKING IS PERCEIVING IS THINKING IS FEELING, a number of Cree verbs instead illustrate the inverse metaphor, FEELING IS THINKING. If we look again at the verb in (23), partially repeated below, we see that a certain way of thinking describes a very strong emotional state (grief) and that there is a belief, implicit in the etymology of this verb, that too much grief makes you die (i.e., “to die of sorrow”). Why does such a verb, describing death and its emotional cause, contain *-eyi-*?

- (30) *Kaweyimuu*.
 Kaw-eyi-mu-u (VAI)
 down-think-AI final-3
 ‘She/he dies because of grief.’ ‘She/he dies of sorrow.’
 [This verb would be used in a situation involving an orphan, for example, suffering over a long period of time, when rejection feelings built up, and when there is a lot of abuse. It means both thinking and feeling.]

Speakers explained this to me by saying that most feelings are caused by certain ways of thinking and that they ultimately originate in the mind. The polysemy of an example like (31) shows a thread that links the mental

attitude of disliking to an emotional state, being sad. Etymologically, the verb is made up of a preverb meaning 'bad' and the components of the verb 'think about something'. When this preverb is reduplicated, indicating intensity or repetitive action, we get the meaning of 'being jealous', also a consequence of "bad thinking".

- (31) to think badly (so as to affect oneself)
- a. *Mache^yihtam*.
Mach-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
bad-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
'She/he dislikes it, she/he is sad.'
 - b. *Mamache^yihtam*.
Ma-mach-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
REDUP- bad-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
'She/he is jealous.'

But bad thinking does not only affect oneself, it also affect others, as shown in (32a) to (32d). The verbs in (32) are made up of an initial component *maay-*, found in words for evil things (32e), beings (32f), concepts (32g), or actions (32h), or for bad omens (32i). Combined with *-eyi-*, it means thinking in a way that goes against one of the most important values of Cree culture, respect for others.

- (32) to think badly, in an evil way (so as to affect others)
- a. *Maaye^yihtam*. (VTI) 'She/he is disrespectful towards it, makes fun of it.'
 - b. *Maaye^yimeu*. (VTA) 'She/he is disrespectful towards her/him, she/he insults her/him.'
 - c. *Maaye^yicheu*. (VAI) 'She/he is disrespectful.'
 - d. *Maaye^yihtaakun*. (VII) 'It is mocked, ridiculed.'
 - e. *Maayaatin*. (VII) 'It is bad, evil.' (said of a premonition or omen)
 - f. *Maayaatisiiu*. (VAI) 'She/he is bad, evil.'
 - h. *Maayaatisiiun* (NI) 'Evil, badness'
 - g. *Maayaachimeu*. (VTA) 'She/he tattles on her/him.'
 - i. *Maayaasinam*. (VTI) 'She/he sees a vision, apparition of someone which foretells a death.'

Another couple of examples that show the chain of causation between feeling and thinking are given in (33) and (34).

- (33) to startle/shock-think
- a. *Kushkwe^yihtam*.
Kushkw-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
startle-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3

‘She/he feels startled about it and as a consequence, she/he is deep in thought about it.’

b. *Kushkweyimeu.*

Kushkw-eyi-m-e-u (VTA)

startle-think-TA final-TA direct.3>3'-3

‘She/he is deep in thought about her/him, because she/he was shocked.’

c. *Kushkwepayuu* (VAI) ‘She/he is startled, caught by surprise.’

(34) to be.attracted-think

a. *Mushtenyihtam.*

Mushten-eyi-ht-am (VTI)

attract-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3

‘She/he desires it, longs for it.’

b. *Mushtenam* (VTI) ‘She/he is attracted to it.’

Surprisingly, the common metaphor ACQUIRING IDEAS IS THINKING (Lakoff and Johnson 1999) is not attested in the data obtained from documents, nor could it be elicited.⁵ This section on etymology would not be complete without a look at the words that cannot be decomposed semantically, which is what we turn to next.

3.4. *The undecomposable ones: Evidence for universal mental predicates*

Not all *-eyi-* verbs in Cree can be fully decomposed into semantically transparent elements. Some are archaic forms, whose other components cannot be recognized independently by speakers. However, there are verbs for which speakers do recognize the initial component, but which they refuse to decompose. They also refuse to provide paraphrased English compounds for these verbs. The first one is the equivalent of English *want*, given in (35a) and (35b). The *Nituw-* initial component is found in hunting verbs like (35c) and (35d), and in other verbs of exploration like (35e) and (35f).

(35) a. *Nituweyihitam.*

Nituw.eyi-ht-am (VTI)

want-TI final-TI theme sign.3

‘She/he wants it.’

b. *Nituweyimeu.*

Nituw.eyi-m-e-u (VTA)

want-TA final-TA direct.3>3'-3

‘She/he wants her/him.’

c. *Nituwaascheu* (VAI) ‘She/he is goose hunting.’

d. *Nituwaaweueu* (VAI) ‘She/he goes egg-hunting.’

- e. *Nituwaapameu* (VTA) ‘She/he goes to see her/him.’
- f. *Nituwahtaau* (VAI) ‘She/he checks it.’

The second compound that speakers refuse to decompose is the equivalent of English *know*, given in (36a) and (36b). The *Chisch-* initial component is found in various non-*eyi-* words like those in (36c) to (36g).

- (36) a. *Chischeyihitam*.
Chisch.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
know-TI final-TI theme sign.3
‘She/he knows it.’
- b. *Chischeyimeu*.
Chisch.eyi-m-eu (VTA)
know- TA final-TA direct.3>3'-3
‘She/he knows her/him.’
- c. *Chischiwaahiicheu* (VAI) ‘She/he prophesies.’
- d. *Chischisuumeu* (VTA) ‘She/he reminds him.’
- e. *Chischinuwaapuu* (VAI) ‘She/he learns how to do it from watching.’
- f. *Chischinuwaachisham* (VTI) ‘She/he cuts a mark on it.’
- g. *Chischinuhtiheu* (VTA) ‘She/he leads, directs, guides her/him.’

The verbs in (36a), (36b) and (37a), (37b), semantically undecomposable and equivalent to English *want* and *know*, turn out to be universal semantic primitives. Semantic primitives, as defined by Wierzbicka (1996) cannot themselves be decomposed. The concepts they embody are indefinable without circularity.

Another term that cannot be decomposed is the verb *Iteyihitam/Iteyimeu* ‘think’. The Cree data thus support Wierzbicka’s hypothesis that mental predicates like THINK, WANT, and KNOW are semantic primes. Their exponents in Cree are all marked by this *-eyi-* morpheme, thus confirming their status as mental predicates.

- (37) *Iteyihitam/Iteyimeu* THINK
- (38) *Nituweyihitam/Nituweyimeu* WANT
- (39) *Chischeyi-htam/Chischeyimeu* KNOW

Because Cree is a polysynthetic language, and each verb is a sentence in itself, the Cree exponents of the semantic primes will always appear in their syntactic frames. In fact, there is a neat fit between Cree verbs and the syntactic frames recently proposed by Goddard and Wierzbicka (2002) for the primes (see Junker 2001). Notice, however, that although a number of feeling verbs in Cree bear the *-eyi-* morpheme, the exponent of the prime FEEL in Cree does not: *itamahchihuu* (VAI) ‘She/he feels a certain way’. We now turn to what the Cree *-eyi-* verbs tell us about thinking.

4. A view on the “mind”

4.1. *Thinking and feeling*

A first observation is that not all verbs containing *-eyi-* can be an answer to the question in (40), where the verb *iteyihitam* ‘to think’ is used. Instead, many *-eyi-* verbs are answers to the question in (41), containing the verb *itamahchihuu* ‘to feel’.

- (40) *Taan e iteyihtaman ?*
 Taan e iteyihtam-an ?
 How preverb(conjunct) think.TI-2
 ‘What are you thinking?’ (Lit.: ‘How are you thinking of it?’)
- (41) *Taan e itamahchihuyin?*
 Taan e itamahchihu-yin?
 How preverb(conjunct) feel.AI-2
 ‘How are you feeling?’

All speakers interviewed agreed that some element of *iteyimuu* ‘she/he is thinking (mental process)’ is involved in all the *-eyi-* verbs, including wanting, knowing, feeling. So the presence of the morpheme is an indicator of how speakers conceptualize and understand the word meaning. In this respect, *-eyi-* acts like a classifier of mental activities.

Many Cree words corresponding to English emotions contain *-eyi-*, including words meaning jealous, envious, happy, content, angry, lonely, and sad, as in examples (42a) to (42h). Notice the association of the feeling of jealousy with the porcupine in (42a).

- (42) a. *Kaahkweyimeu.*
 Kaahkw-eyi-m-e-u (VTA)
 porcupine-think-TA final-TA direct.3>3'-3
 ‘She/he is jealous of her/him.’
- b. *Uhteyimeu.*
 Uht.eyi-m-e-u (VTA)
 be.envious-TA final-TA direct.3>3'-3
 ‘She/he is jealous/envious of her/him.’
- c. *Miyeyihtamiheu.*
 Miy-eyi-ht-am-ih-e-u (VTA)
 good-think-TI final-TI theme sign-Causative-TA direct.3>3'-3
 ‘She/he makes her/him happy, content.’
- d. *Muuchicheyihitam.*
 Muuchich-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 joy-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he is elated, rejoicing.’

- e. *Niishtaameyihitam.*
Niishtaam.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
be.angry-TI final-TI theme sign.3
‘She/he is angry.’
- f. *Piichiskaateyihitam.*
Piichiskaat.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
be.lonely- TI final-TI theme sign.3
‘She/he is lonely.’
- g. *Paasikweyihitam.*
Paasikw.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
going.over.board-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
‘She/he is excited.’
- h. *Macheyihitam.*
Mach.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
Bad-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
‘She/he is sad.’

Cree words corresponding to English emotional activities also bear *-eyi-*, as in (43a) to (43e):

- (43) a. *Nanehkaateyimeu.* (VTA) ‘She/he suffers in empathy with another.’
 b. *Nanehkaateyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he suffers from it.’
 c. *Waawiisacheyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he is suffering from it.’
 d. *Mihchiiweyihitam.* (VTI) ‘She/he is sorry about it.’
 e. *Mihchiiyehitamuwewu.* (VTA applicative) ‘She/he is sorry for her/him.’

This is consistent with Wierzbicka’s claim that

all languages have words for describing feelings based on certain thoughts. Such words all combine the following components:

“someone feels something”

“because this person thinks something” (Wierzbicka 1999: 284)

Indeed, when asked why those words had the *-eyi-* component in them, speakers explained to me that it was because such feelings originate in the mind, by way of thought. Not all words for feelings in Cree contain *-eyi-*, but the ones which do indicate a causal relationship between thinking and feeling. This is consistent with D’Andrade (1987) proposed chain of causation from thinking to feeling.

Many mental attitude verbs also typically include *-eyi-*. The glosses and explanations offered by my consultants suggest a view of thinking as

a continuous, on-going process that can be either clear and calm or disturbed and difficult, thus affecting one's general emotional state.

- (44) a. *Piutameyih̄tam.*
 Piutam-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 clear-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he is peaceful in her/his mind, i.e., her/his thinking is clear and calm.'
- b. *Chiyaameyih̄tam.*
 Chiyaam-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 calm-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he is at peace.'
- c. *Mikuskaateyih̄tam.*
 Mikuskaat.eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 worry- TI final-TI theme sign.3
 'She/he worries, i.e., her/his thinking is disturbed; she/he has a hard time.'

Equivalents of *consider*, *reason*, *plan*, and *believe* all contain *-eyi-* but interestingly the verb *to judge* does not.⁶ *To judge* is polysemous with *to measure*:

- (45) a. *Tipaaskunam.* (VTI) 'She/he measures it with a tape or a ruler, she/he judges it.'
- b. *Tipaaskuneu.* (VTA) 'She/he measures her/him with a tape or a ruler, she/he judges her/him.'

There are no words for *stupid*, *idiot*, or *lack of intelligence*. In general, there are no insult words in East Cree. The notion of respect for others, so central to Cree culture, seems to bar labels that would convey lack of respect. There are many words for not thinking properly, as we saw in section (3), and for misusing the power of thought. Thinking is not viewed as a state ("I think therefore I am"), but rather as a skill. It is worse to misuse thinking skills than to lack them. The words for *mind* and *intelligence* are interesting in this respect. Example (47) is a reduplicated version of (46); the two words are judged by speakers to be synonyms.⁷ Both contain *mitun* meaning 'completely', as shown in (48).

- (46) *Mituneyih̄chikan.*
 Mitun-eyi-hchikan (NI)
 whole-think-noun final
 'intelligence; memory; thoughts; mind'
- (47) *Maamituneyih̄chikan.*
 Maa-mitun-eyi-hchikan (NI)
 REDUP-whole-think-noun final
 'mind; thinking faculty; thinking; thoughts'

- (48) a. *Mitun* (P) ‘completely’
 b. *Mitunisiiu*. (VAI) ‘She/he is complete, perfect, accurate.’

So, the etymology of mind and intelligence in Cree indicates an idea of wholeness. It is worth mentioning here the word for *meditation*, because it is built on the same root, *mitun* ‘complete’, once again with reduplication, via the verb *maamituneyihtam* ‘to ponder’. It also means *thought*, indicating again the importance of wholeness for thinking properly.⁸

- (49) *Maamituneyihtamuun*
 Maa-mitun-eyi-ht-am-u-un (NI)
 REDUP-whole-think-TI final- TI theme sign-3-noun final
 ‘meditation, thought’

The words for mind can be preceded by a prefix indicating goodness, as in (50a) and (50b) or badness, as in (51a) and (51b).

- (50) a. *Miyumituneyihchikan*
 Miyu-mitun-eyi-hchikan
 good-whole-think-noun final
 ‘good mind (thinking good thoughts)’
 b. *Miyumaamituneyihchikan*
 miyu-maa-mitun-eyi-hchikan
 good-REDUP-whole-think-noun final
 ‘good mind (thinking good thoughts)’
 (51) a. *Machimituneyihchikan*
 machi-mitun-eyi-hchikan
 bad-whole-think-noun final
 ‘bad mind (thinking bad thoughts)’
 b. *Machimaamituneyihchikan*
 machi-maa-mitun-eyi-hchikan
 bad-REDUP-whole-think-noun final
 ‘bad mind (thinking bad thoughts)’

Speakers described a person having a “good mind”, as in (50), as somebody with compassion, who is helpful to others in need, who looks after others. They described a person with a “bad mind”, as in (51), as a person who has evil thoughts, wishes ill on others, and is destructive. Again, note that (51) does not and cannot mean *being stupid*. People can be viewed as being more or less skilled, but it is how they use their skills that matters most. In Cree, misusing the thinking faculty is considered evil.

4.2. *The Cree ethnotheory of the person and the “mind”*

Goddard (this issue) discusses the “ethnotheory of the person”, the fact that languages and cultures universally have a word for BODY, which in

turn invites them to theorize or speculate about what the other parts might be. Conceptualizations of these other parts vary from culture to culture. In modern East Cree, there are three parts of a person that are distinct from the body. These are listed in (52b) to (52d). In traditional culture and religion, there is also a fourth part, shown in (52e).

- (52) a. *Miyuu* (NID) ‘body’
 b. *Ahchaahkw* (NA) ‘soul, spirit; pompom; toque [Canadian winter hat]’
 c. *Mituneyihchikan* (NI) ‘mind, memory, intelligence’
 d. *Mitehii* (NID) ‘heart’
 e. *Mistaapeu* (NA) ‘own personal power spirit (good or bad)’

Younger speakers do not always understand the polysemy of the word *ahchaahkw*, item (52b). One speaker in her forties ignored the *toque* meaning of it in reporting to me and was shocked the first time it was used like that by her mother, all she knew was the nonliteral meaning of *soul*. However, the polysemy seems to be motivated by the fact that the *ahchaahkw* is perceived as residing somewhere above or around the head. Item (52e), *mistaapeu*, comes from traditional religion and designates a person’s personal spirit or helper, who can be good or bad, depending on the person, and who represents a person’s supernatural essence and spiritual force. Modern speakers interviewed do not consider the *mistaapeu* a part of the person, and say only shamans in the old (pre-Christian) religion had them. In general, talking about the *mistaapeu* elicited uncomfortable feelings, reminding people of curses and black magic (see the following section). Item (52d), *mitehii*, indicates both the physical organ of the heart and the qualities associated with it, such as courage and compassion. It is linked with the good use of the *mituneyihchikan* ‘intelligence’, ‘mind’, which encompasses both the head and heart, and is located, according to the older speakers, from the waist up and around the body.

Wierzbicka (1992) demonstrated that the concept of “mind” is an English folk construct. She also studied how the concept of mind has changed over time in English. She noticed that it has shed its spiritual connotations, lost its links with values and emotions, and become a concept focused on the intellect. She thus proposed the following definition (in Natural Semantic Metalanguage) for the modern concept of “mind” in English:

- (53) ENGLISH:
Mind
one of two parts of a person
one cannot see it

because of this part, a person can think and know
(Wierzbicka 1992: 45)

I do not feel I have done enough consulting with Cree elders to propose a full explanation of the Cree concept of *mituneyihchikan/maamituneyihchikan*. Based on the data available to me at this point, I suggest that an explanation of the Cree concept would include the two components in (54):

- (54) CREE:
Mituneyihchikan / Maamituneyihchikan
(One of the parts of a person
one cannot see it)
Because of this part , a person can think, want, know, and feel.
You can do (good and bad) things with it.

The component *because of this part, a person can think, want, know, and feel* is there to account for the fact that all thinking, wanting, knowing, and many feeling words include *-eyi-* and are considered by speakers to involve some kind of thinking. The component *You can do things with it* accounts for the view of the thinking faculty as a skill that can be both used and misused. It is also there to account for the view of thinking as affecting the supernatural realm.

4.3. *Thinking in the supernatural realm or shamanistic thought*

A number of weather verbs feature *-eyi-*. This might seem curious to an outsider, but it is very logical to a traditional Cree person. In traditional Cree culture, the weather is governed by certain spirits, and those spirits have a mind of their own. The example in (55) “has to do with the weather, when there is a lot of falling snow, or a wind that is blowing so hard” (Mali Iserhoff, personal communication). There are four winds in traditional religion. Each is associated with particular spirits who bring certain types of weather. In traditional settings, it used to be common to use magical techniques to try to control the weather (Tanner 1979).⁹ It may be that a reference to the action of wind spirits explains the use of a thinking verb form for the weather, personifying it as a thinking entity.

- (55) *Naapeucheiyhtaakun*.
Naapeu-ch-eyi-ht-aakun (VII)
man(male)-PL-think-TI final- be.like(II final)
'It (weather) seems masculine, male.'

There are a series of old words, given in (56), that are used to designate both a trap with which to catch an animal and the catch you are hoping for. These belong to a family of verbs meaning “to wish”. In them, *-eyi-*

seems to convey the planning and ingenuity required to catch an animal, as well as the hope/wish that an animal will stumble into the trap left for it.

- (56) a. *Pikuseyihchikan* (NI)
 1. ‘trap or any traplike device left to catch an animal’
 2. ‘the catch (you are wishing for)’
 b. *Pikuseyihitam* (VTI) ‘She/he wishes for something from it.’
 c. *Pikuseyimeu* (VTA) ‘She/he wishes for something from her/him.’
 d. *Pikuseyihchicheun* (NI) ‘a wish’¹⁰

The use of songs can greatly increase your success at trapping. Personal songs allow the skilled trapper to call the animals into her trap (Florrie Mark-Stewart, p.c.). Many songs are still remembered for ice-fishing, for example, as a Cree school-teacher explained to me, and have the effect of not only attracting fish into your net but also calming your mind, helping you to focus and succeed in your task.¹¹ So at least for hunting and fishing, there is more to wishing than there is in English. It means using your *mituneyihchikan* (your whole mind) in order to connect with the animals and the greater harmonious mind of the entire creation. Respect for the animals is of utmost importance in all hunting and fishing practices, thus manifesting the wholeness of the *mituneyihchikan*.¹² Two other traditional practices, telepathy and prophecy, also seem to be part of the use of the *mituneyihchikan*. Instances of telepathy as a traditional means of communication are commonly reported. An example is found in the story told by Evadney and Jossy Gunner, and written in English by Ella Saganash (2000). Stories of the fulfillment of prophecies made by elders still abound in the communities.¹³

Divination is another traditional practice often spoken about with *-eyi-* words. According to Tanner (1979: 111), it is “part of a general intellectual approach to hunting, and includes a variety of techniques”. It can be done with scapulimancy (*mitunsaawaakan*), dream interpretation, or divinatory signs (*wechiyaawham* ‘something will come’). It is, he added, “conducted as an intellectual exercise which accompanies the collection of hunting data It fills the gaps in knowledge, which cannot be learned from the environment” (1979: 133–134).

Item (57) gives examples of the mental activities of divination and telepathy attested in *-eyi-* words.

- (57) a. *Niikaanichisheyihtam*. (VTI) ‘She/he foreknows it.’
 b. *Niikaanichisheymeueu*. (VTA) ‘She/he foreknows her/him.’
 c. *Puyeyihtam*. (VTI) ‘She/he has a vision, clue, insight about it. When conjuring, she/he predicts by signs, portents.’

- d. *Puyeyimeu*. (VTA) ‘She/he has a vision, clue, insight about her/him (conjuring), she/he reads about her/him in signs, portents.’
- e. *Pipeweyihtam*. (VTI) ‘She/he interprets the good omen, what it portents.’

Last, but not least, I found two curse words featuring the *-eyi-* component. The verb in (58) has two meanings. One is the more modern meaning based on an incorporated complement clause interpretation: *she thinks the other person is dead*. The other one is based on the compound interpretation: *she kills her/him by thinking*. Item (59) also has the same literal meaning of *to kill by thinking* in addition to the more benign one based on the incorporated clause interpretation *she thinks of it as useless*. The more literal meanings of these two verbs aroused fear in my older consultants when I questioned them about the topic. When I asked them what they meant by the gloss “to kill by thinking”, they told me, “Oh no, this is really bad. You are not supposed to do something like that. This is evil”. It is noteworthy that they used the verb *do* rather than *think!* “Can you really kill someone by thinking?”, I asked. — “Of course you can, but you should never even try!”, was the answer. An instance of such an event is reported in one of the Plains Cree stories recently edited by Wolfart and Ahenakew (2000).

- (58) a. *Iyaa*weyimeu** (VTA) ‘She/he thinks the other person is dead.’; ‘She/he kills her/him by thinking.’
- b. *Iyaa*uhuu**. (VAI) ‘She/he got herself/himself killed.’
- c. *Iyaa*wiyuu**. (VAI) ‘She/he is dead tired.’
- (59) a. *Nanaa*weyimeu**. (VTA)
 - 1. ‘She/he thinks of it (animate) as useless.’
 - 2. ‘She/he kills her/him by thinking.’
- b. *Nanaa*yuum**. (VII) ‘It is wasted.’
- c. *Nanaa*yuuhtaau**. (VTI) ‘She/he wastes it.’
- d. *Nanaa*yuuusham**. (VTI) ‘She/he wastes it by cutting it.’

From wishing to cursing, mental powers can heal or destroy. The use of mental powers in traditional Cree medicine is reported in Marshall (in press). The Cree *-eyi-* verbs indicate a wide range of uses for mental powers. The idea that one’s thoughts can have far-reaching effects, — be it to affect the weather, to communicate with a remote parent, to predict the future, to attract animals, or to kill a person at a distance — is consistent with a supernatural view of thinking. In traditional Cree culture and contemporary Cree usage, thinking includes shamanistic thought. A common admonishment given by elders is “Watch your thoughts!” — intentionally or not, thoughts can affect oneself, others, and the world.¹⁴

5. Conclusions

East Cree is a unique language which “talks about thinking” in its morphology. A morpheme, *-eyi-*, classifies a large number of words as mental processes. The examination of a corpus of over 500 words has shown that many common metaphors for thinking, proposed by Jäkel (1995) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) for English, like THINKING IS OBJECT MANIPULATION, THINKING IS MOVING, and THINKING IS PERCEIVING, are also found in the etymology of Cree thinking words. However, metaphors like ACQUIRING IDEAS IS EATING were not found. This analysis has also shown that Cree has exponents for the semantic primes THINK, KNOW, and WANT, all featuring the *-eyi-* morpheme and thus classified as mental processes. This adds further support to the findings of Goddard and Wierzbicka (1994, 2002) on the universality of these mental predicates. The fact that Cree verbs are also sentences, and appear in specific syntactic frames, fits neatly with Wierzbicka and Goddard’s further hypothesis about the existence of a universal syntax for semantic primes. The existence of many feeling words containing *-eyi-* shows that many feelings are conceived to result from thinking, and this conclusion is corroborated by elders. This also supports another hypothesis of Wierzbicka’s that all languages have words for describing feelings based on certain thoughts (Wierzbicka 1999).

Another interesting correlation was found between rational and supernatural processes. Many *-eyi-* words describe acts that could be called “shamanistic thought processes”: divination, telepathy, and cursing. It is not surprising then, that the Cree word for “mind” turned out to be quite different in its meaning from that of the typical modern English usage. Ideas of wholeness and connection with the greater “mind” of creation (the Great Spirit) were predominant. The words for the bad and the good mind, as well as the absence of potentially insulting words for a lack of intelligence, and the fact that other rational concepts, such as judging, did not involve thinking, all echo a central value of Cree culture, namely respect for others. A look at the Cree ethnotheory of the person thus confirms that the Cree folk theory of mind has both universal and culture-specific aspects. While it is true that all languages talk about thinking, the way they do so reveals their culture and their values.

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1. See the resource section of the East Cree language website at <<http://www.eastcree.org>> for a complete list of references. See also the reference grammar section for a description of the language and the upcoming on-line dictionary.
2. There is no case marking of nominal participants in Cree, except for locative.
3. The following abbreviations are used in the interlinear glosses:

APPL: applicative; REDUP: reduplication; VTA: verb transitive animate class (transitive verbs with an animate object); VTI: verb transitive inanimate class (transitive verbs with an inanimate object); VAI: verb animate intransitive class (intransitive verbs with an animate subject); VII: verb inanimate intransitive class (intransitive verbs with an inanimate subject); TA: transitive animate; TI: transitive inanimate; AI: animate intransitive; II: inanimate intransitive; NI: noun inanimate; NA: noun animate; NID: noun inanimate dependent (a noun that always takes a personal prefix); NAD: noun animate dependent; P: particle; 1: first person; 2: second person; 3: third person animate proximate; 3': third person animate obviative; 0: third person inanimate proximate; 0': third person inanimate obviative.

Obviation is the marking of all third persons but one as nontopic in a given discourse span. It is an obligatory morphosyntactic feature in Algonquian languages. For information see Wolfart (1973), and for East Cree, Junker (in press).

When morphemes are not interpretable separately, a dot is used to separate them instead of a hyphen.

4. The glosses “by mind” and “by face” are used here to roughly indicate the morphological structure of the Cree verbs. Actually the morphemes *-eyi-* and *-m-* do not have one-to-one English equivalents; it is only their combination into a word or a phrase that allows us to translate them with an English word or sentence. See Marantz (1997) for a possible explanation.
5. The only verb that I could elicit was (i.a), linked to (i.b). The former can be used for anything, including knowledge, according to a younger speaker.
 - (i) a. *Siiweyitutam.* (VTI) ‘She/he is hungry for it.’
 - b. *Siiweyuu.* (VAI) ‘She/he is hungry.’
6. For example, here are the equivalents of “to plan”:

- (i) a. *Iyeskuuweyihitam.*
 Iyeskuuw-eyi-ht-am (VTI)
 ready-think-TI final-TI theme sign.3
 ‘She/he thinks about her/ his decision ahead of time’/‘She/he is planning.’
- b. *Iyeskuuw* (P) ‘The action is about to happen.’
- c. *Iyeskuuwiiu.* (VAI) ‘She/he is getting ready.’

There are no exact equivalents of the English words *to believe*, *to reason*, or *to consider*, but they can be found in the glosses of a number of Cree words with *-eyi-*, such as

- (ii) *taapweucheiyhtaakun.* (VII) ‘It is credible, believable, it seems true.’

7. Only the reduplicated word for intelligence has a corresponding verb:
 - (i) a. **Mituneyihtam*
 - b. **Mituneyimeu*
 - c. *Maamituneyihtam* . (VTI) ‘She/he is pondering, thinking about it.’
 - d. *Maamituneyimeu* . (VTA) ‘She/he is pondering, thinking about her/him.’
8. The spiritual dimension of thinking also appears in the fact that the word *chistimaacheiyhchicheum* ‘compassion, kindness, pity’ contains *-eyi-*.
9. Tanner (1979) explains that magical practices are directed at entities associated with certain elements. The practices include offerings to placate *underground entities* or actions designed to drive *above-ground entities* away.
10. Note that today *wanahiikan* (NI) ‘trap (steel)’ is used in Mistissini rather than *pikuseyihchikan*.
11. Note the same initial *pipew-* in:
 - (i) *Pipeweyihtam*. (VTI) ‘She/he interprets the good omen, portent it gives.’
 - (ii) *Pipeweumekweu*. (VAI) ‘She/he sings his fish song.’
12. Tanner (1979: 107) reported that “[i]n ideological statements about spirit powers, the Mistassini prefer to speak of a generalized respect which is due to all spirits and all animals”.
13. Luci Salt (p.c.) told me of how her grandmother remembers her own grandmother telling her that she would one day see a flying ship in the sky, long before the first plane made it to her community of Chisasibi. “The elders they knew a lot, always before it happened”, she concluded.
14. The same philosophy is reported in Witherspoon (1977) for Navajo.

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