

Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak

Episode 8: February 17, 2022

Erik Redix (ER): Boozhoo Anishinaabedoog. Gibizindaan *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*. Miskwaa Anang indizhinikaaz. Migizi indoodem. Odaawaa zaaga'iganing indonjibaa. Gichi Onigamiing indaa. Ingikinoo'amaage Ojibwemowin Oshki Ogimaag Gikinoo'amaadiiwigamigong.

Welcome to *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*, a program featuring Ojibwe first speakers telling stories in English and Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe language. I'm your host, Erik Redix, and I am the Anishinaabe language Director at Oshki Ogimaag Community School on the Grand Portage Reservation. In episode eight, we are once again joined by Maajiigwaneyaash, Dr. Gordon Jourdain, Director of the Waadookaadaading Ojibwe Language Institute. Today, he talks with us about the different Ojibwe words for colors, remembers what winter was like at Lac La Croix, and talks about how he learned the art of carpentry and how to build houses in Ojibwemowin.

Well, the other thing I wanted to ask you about, which is something I think that a lot of our beginning Ojibwe speakers have questions about, it's something that you know, a different world view to wrap your mind around is colors. And you know, we have this term *ozhaawashkwaa*, which encompasses both blue and green or *ozaawaa*, encompasses a broader spectrum of color than we think about in English. And I just wondered if you had any insights on that.

Gordon Jourdain (GJ): I haven't actually really thought about that question before, until I came out of the environment or the particular community where I grew up at which was all Ojibwemowin understanding of things and I didn't really understand what the differentiation between those colors were until I entered the classroom, which is a totally different kind of space for language acquisition, where it was important to have different words for purple and blue and green, but the only words that I used to hear my grandmother talking about with reference to colors that are similar, *ozhaawashkwaa* is actually a spectrum of the color purple. My grandmother would say, *bagaki ozhaawashkwaa*, it's a lighter and brighter *ozhaawashkwaa*, and that would be green. *Makade-ozhaawashkwaa* would be like, more like purple. It's a darker spectrum, just a darker color of blue that's in the spectrum of, I think it's purple and blue would be like kind of in the middle. So it's either dark blue, blue or light blue, but they're purple, blue, and green in English, and that's similarly the same way with *ozaawaa*. *Bagaki-ozaawaa* would be more what is yellowish and brown is *ozaawaa*. They talk about spectrums in English, and I just started learning about those things later on in my life, when I started getting asked those questions, or beginning to think about, okay, what did my elders, what did I used to hear these very amazing speakers describing these things. So that's those are the some of the prefixes they would use for those color, different variations of color.

Another one that's quite in the same conundrum, if you want to say that, is the taste spectrum. For us, *zhiiwan* is sweet, but for down here, it's *waashkoban*. And I've never heard of *waashkoban*. I'm not saying that it doesn't exist, but because I don't have the understanding of the spectrum of taste, and I'm not really, really an expert in taste-ology (laughter). And then there's *zhiiwan*, *waashkoban* and *ziiwaskad* is sour, something that is sour is *ziiwaaskad*. *Zhiiwan*, is something for me that is sweet and *wiisagad* would be, what

is it, bitter. So that too, in a way, is because of the differences in dialects and understanding of Ojibwe words. There's not confusion, but there's not a word that is apparent all over Ojibwe country, It's related to the experience of the people that are describing these new things in life. So luckily, Ojibwemowin is adaptable and we can fully describe those kinds of things.

ER (6:02): I want to transition, well, not transition too much, but talk about winter time and the role that winter played in the community life when you were growing up. And now this winter, like we were talking about before we kind of went on the air here, was it's getting a little more winter like especially up here in Grand Portage, where we're having more regular snows. But last winter was not like that. And I wondered if you had any reflections on that, about the changes in how we as Anishinaabe people, are experiencing winter time.

GJ: I spent a lot of my younger life, from birth till probably I was about 17, 18, when I left the reservation in Lac La Croix. But my memories from the winters that we had there are of having a lot of snow. Real, real, massive quantities of snow just piled up all over the place. It could also be because I was shorter then, and it was cold all the time. I say it was cold all the time, because the way how that was measured back then was my mother would make moccasins, the kind that you wrap around here they go up your calves, and you just wrap that leather around them. But she would have us wear rabbit skin socks on those days, and the only time you can wear rabbit skin socks with your moccasins is when it's extremely cold, otherwise your feet get too hot. And sometimes you know when you're when your feet get hot, chances of you freezing your feet is more likely than if they were dry. Those are my measures of how much snow we had long time ago.

We used to make tunnels into those big hills of snow, the snow would accumulate on the lee side of the hills that were there because it just piles on the other side of a hill, because the wind blows right over and piles up on the other side. They were just, like, really deep. We would just tunnel and tunnel and tunnel and just play there all day long and oblivious to the cold, of course, because it was warmer, warmer on that side too. So I think we had more snow and the weather was colder compared to what it is now. I always tell people that I came down south to Minnesota and Wisconsin to warm up, because it feels like it's warmer here. Maybe it's just the global warming.

ER (9:07): You know, it's definitely a change we're going through, you know, in the last 10, 15 years. And you know, things are changing. And I don't know, I mean, in some ways, it's more comfortable, right?

GJ: I also want to add that, you know, although the temperatures were really cold up there, it was just part of what the normal conditions of living in, that in that area were then and still are to this day, that didn't stop us from doing all the things that were involved in maintaining a sustainable lifestyle. I remember when I was around 17, 18, years old, I would still go trapping with my brothers in the wintertime when it was extremely cold. Uh, we just wore better clothing, like mom's rabbit skin shoes. We bundled up and we just

prepared for that. We knew how to survive when the weather was that cold, to the point where we it didn't stop us from, you know, maintaining our lifestyle in fur harvesting or

even gathering wood for our stoves and stuff. And people were still building outside. So they just adapted to different ways of accommodating extreme temperatures.

ER (10:43): We haven't really talked a lot about this. You alluded to it earlier, but your days working in Canada, in carpentry and how that kind of influenced your teaching later on.

GJ: Well, I think, I know that my teaching began at home, learning how to how to build things. My brothers were builders, and my sisters were engaged in a lot of different things. Most of my family are musicians. They're politicians, they're educators, a lot of different positions that they've had over the years, and just listening to them and trying to emulate them. My parents and my brothers and sisters and my aunts and uncles and cousins, they were all my role models. Every single person at the community ... affected who I who I am today. It is true through their successes and failures, that I am the person I am today, and I attribute everything that I have that's good and bad to everybody that is still part of my life too. Didn't just happen there. All my learnings still happen outside, in different communities too, including LCO, where I currently work at. Everybody that I come across formulates who I am.

My father was a trades person. He was very good with working with his hands. He was also a good orator, an amazing speaker of Ojibwe language. And he was a great storyteller. He would make anybody laugh. So a lot of different qualified people with different sets of skills, you know, too and just not enough words to thank all those people that were in my life. But there's one particular person when I started in my carpentry career. I was 14 years old. I got hired for the summer, and it turned out to be what I did for a living for a long time. But this person, I never heard him speak English before ever in my life and he has passed on. The first thing we did was I went to work that day, and he says, "*Ginisidawinaan na dibaabiiginigan?*" He says, "Are you able to read or understand a measuring tape?" And I said, "Yeah, I can!" "*Ginitaa-aabajitoon na giishkiboojigan?*" Do you know how to use a saw?" "Oh, yeah, yeah, I can!" Because I used to do things with my dad. My dad would let me use that tape and kind of haul his tools around and stuff and clean up after him. So I learned I could watch and learn. You know, we as nishnaabe people, we learn different ways. So I just watch and learn him. And based on that experience, I thought I felt I was qualified to say, "Yes, I can operate a saw." (Laughter).

So all he was doing was measuring. We were putting wood across this floor and he would measure. Little did I know that he was going to be talking about fractions, and he started measuring things. So he took his tape, and measured across from one floor truss to the other. And he said "ashi-niizhoninj, ashi-naano/ashi-ingodawaaswi." It took me a little few seconds to figure out what he was saying. He was saying 12 and 15/16 of an inch. So, yeah, I understood it right away. It didn't take that long because of my understanding of Ojibwemowin. So, I have a masterful understanding of how to build a house in Ojibwe, because that's how I did it! The very first house that I made, I made it all in Ojibwe, right from the finish. So when I, when I went to other communities, you know, naturally, I

thought everybody spoke Ojibwe. I talked to them in Ojibwe when we were building houses and they were like, "What? What are you talking about?" (Laughter). But I would still use it, and then they would acquire some of the words, like "*Zaga'igan biidoon!*" "Bring that nail

over here!"

ER (15:36): So I don't know if you want to recap that story that you told in English in Ojibwe about your kind of mentor.

GJ: Bizaan igo. Mii sa idi gaa-tazhi-ni-, aa obigiyaan aa Kijiwanong izhinikaade ishkonigan. Mii iwidi nakake gaa-tazhi-ombigiyaan. Kijiwanong izhinikaade ishkoniganens. Biitawe'ii imaa he'ii Zhaaganaashiiwakiin miinawaa Kichi-mookomaanaki, mii imaa ayaag iwe he'ii zaag'igan. Namakekaaniwi-zaaga'igan beshiw imaa ayaamagad gaye, namekaaniwiziibii imaa biitawe'ii bimijiwan. Negawa-, Negaawaakwaan izhinikaade ishkonigan, zaaga'igan. Mii dash imaa gaa-tazhi-ombigi'igoowaan.

Mii eta go gii-anishinaabemowaad apane awiya, gaawiin awiya gii-shaaganaashiimosii ganage wiikaa. Mii dash imaa nakake ingoji go gii-shiniiyo-biboonagiziyaan mii apii maamawi-nitam gii-a-, gii-anokii'igooyaan geniin. Jibwaa ashi-, ashi-niiyobiboonagiziyaan dash ingii-waawiidookawaa indedenaaban, noosinaaban.

Giishpiin gegoo anokaadang niwiidookawaa gegoo: niminjiminamawaa, maagizhaa ge ninaadinaan gegoon, aawadamawag gegoo, maagizhaa ge biinichigeyaan gii-ishkwaa giizhiikang gegoo. Apane dash ingii-waabamaa aabajitood ini anokaajiganan: giishkizhigan, siboojigan, nigaabaajigan, nanaa'itood ge ini maajiishkaachiganan apane.

Aapiji gii-nitaawichige a akiwenziinyiban gegoo izhichiged, Wiin igo gegoo gii kashkitamaazo, gaawiin memoch awiya wiikaa ogii-anoonaasiin gegoo ji-naadamaagod. Wiin igo gegoo ogii-ozhitoon. Mii dash imaa geniin gaa-onji-kikendamaan, bangii go gegoo, ge-izhichigeyaan geniin. Gaawiin dash eta-, gaawiin dash wiin eta go gii-pezhigosii a indedeyiban gegoo gaganawaabamag ezhichigewaad awiya.

Mii go ge awe gaagii-ogiiyaang, mii ge awe aapiji gaa-kizhizhwizid aapiji mindimoowenh: gii-nitaa-wanii'ige, ogii-nitaa-gawa-, gawaakwesa'aag a, gawaakwesa'aa' mitigoo', gii-nitaa giishkiboojige - bizaan igo giishkiboojigaanzhish ogii-aabajitoon, gii-taashkiga'ise, ogii nitaa-aabajitoon baashkizigan - baashkizwaad inii amikon bimaadagenid, waawaashkeshiwa' gaye kakina gegoo go - baanizhaawed, wiiyaas dazhiikang - gikaanaapasang wiiyaas, waaboozoon agoodawaad, wenjidoo go kina gegoo gii nitaawichige.

Mii dash igo kina gaa-izhiwebiziwaad ingi anishinaabeg imaa Kijiwanong. Kakina go a-, apane ingii-kanawaabamaag gegoo ezhichigewaad: nimishoomenyag, noshenyag, niijiwaaganag a, aa ogitiziimiwaa'. Niibiwa go kina awiya gegoo gii-nitaawichige.

Mii dash imaa apii gii-ashiniiyo-biboonagiziyaan mii iw gii-anokii'igooyaan ji-, geniin, waakaa'igewag awiya. Wa! Daga geniin inga-gojitoon indenendam ingii-awi-gagwejimaa a niigaanizid iwidi ji-anokiiyaan, "Og geget!" ikido. "Gi-gabi-izhaa nitamanokii-giizhigak."

Mii dash apii gizhebaawagak, ani-izhaayaan iwidi, mii imaa naa-niibawid a'a inini bezhig. Ingii-waabamaa sa go gewiin apane ozhitood waakaa'iganan imaa Kijiwanong. Mii dash awe gaa aa gaa-izhinizha'ogooyaan ge awi wiidookawag. Mii dash awe anishinaabe gaawiin wikaa gii-ayaasii gii-shaaganashiimosii ganage. Mii eta go apane gii-yaad gii-ojibwemod.

Gaawiin wiikaa ingii-noondawaasii minik igo gaa-pimaadizid ji-zhaaganaashiimod. Gaawiin ganage wiikaa gii-shaaganaashiimosii.

Mii go ge gaganoonigod i'iwe wemitigoozhiwa' gaawiin ganage ogii-nakwetawaasii' i ji zhaaganaashiimod. Ingoding eta go wewepikweni maagizhaa ge owe doodam ha ha ha gaganoonind. Mii dash awe, niibawiyaan iwidi, he'ii ingii-ozhitaa sa go, he'ii ingii-ayaan geniin kichipizon mii imaa ezhi-agoodeg iwe pakite'igaans miinawaa dibaabiiginigan. Mii iw dash ekidod haa'aa, mii awe inini, "Gigikendaan na ezh-, esh-, ezhichigaadeg i'iw dibaabiiginigan?" ikido. "Ginitaa-, ginisidawinaan na ezh-, enaabadak?"

"Oo, geget!" indinaa. "Nis-, ingikendaan." Ingii-kikendaan dash eta go zhaaganaashiimong i, ingikendaan eta go. Gaawiin wiin anishinaabemong ingii-kikendanziin iniw he'iin a "fractions" ezhinikaadegin. Gaawiin ingii-kikendanziinan ganage. Mii eta go gii a-, he'ii. Mii dash imaa na-, mii eta go gii-kikendamaan Zhaagaanaashiimowaan agindamaan i'iw dibabiiginigan.

"Ginitaawitoon na? Ginisidawinaan na?"

"Henya!" indinaa. "Geget, nisidawinaan."

"Hoowa!" ikido. "Mii sa go ji-mino-aabadiziyin. He'ii dash giishkiboojigaans," ikido. Gaa madwebideg giishkiboojigaans, mii iwe "rrrrrr" gaa-inwewebideg giishkiboojigaans. "Gi nitaawitoon na i'i?"

"Oo yaa, nitwaawiton" indinaa. "Nitaawitoon gaye i'i." Gaan sanaa ingii-waawiidookawaa ayaa'aa indedeyinaaban aabajitood dinaw giishkiboojigaans.

"Hoowa, mii sa go ji-minwaabadiziyin," ikido. "Niin dash inga-babaa-dadibaabiiginige. Giin dash giga-ayaan goda, giga-diba'aan gegoo ge izhi-ozhibii'aman imaa nakake ge-izhi giishkiboodeg," ikido. Wa! Pane maajiiyaandawed. Maajii-adood imaa nakake.

Mii dash ingiwe gaa-aazhawaakoshinowaad ha'aa nabakisagoo' ashi-ningodwaaso-ninj abiwag ingi nabakisagoog, mii imaa biitawe'ii waa-izhi-, waa-izhi-a, waa-izhi-atood i he'ii waa-izhi-as-, waa-izhi-atood iwe goda, nabakisagoon waa-izhi-asaad. Akawe dash dibaabiiginige apane zhiibibidoon i'iw odibaabiiginigan oganawaabandaan, "Hoowa ikdo. Ashi-naano-ninj niswi-niizhooniyaans," indig.

"Henh!" indinendam. "Aaniin minik?" indinaa. Miinawaa ezhi-ganoozhid.

"Ashi-naano-ninj niswi-niizhooniyaans."

Naa-, naanaagadawendam niizhooniyaans. "Oonh, geget ingikendaan," mii dash ezhi dibaabiiginanaam i'iw mitig, ezhi-beshibii'amaan miinawaa ezhi-atoowaan imaa gaa kakaag biiwaabik, ezhi-beshibii'amaan mii dash ezhi-giishkiboodamawaan, giishkiboodamawag ini a mitigoon, nabakisagoon ezhi-izhiwidamowag.

Ezhi-asaad imaa, "Hoowa!" ikido. "Wiinge naa minwaakozi," miinawaa ezhi-zaga'waad ini.

Miinawaa dash bekaanizinid dibaabiiginige. “Oo, ashi-naano-ninj ashi-naano-ashi ingodwaaswi,” ikido.

Gabeyi’ii go ninaanaagadawendam, “Aaniin wenji-ikidod? Aaniin minik?”

“Ashi-naano-ninj ashi-naanan ashi-igodwaaswi,” ikido. Oo geget ezhi-nisidotamaan. Mii go naasaab endoodamaan: ezhi-dibabiiginamaan i’i mis-, mishi - nabakisag, ezhi-dibabiiginag a’a nabakisag, beshibii’amaan, miinawaa gaa-kakaag indaabajitoon ezhi-ozhibii’amaan. Mii dash iwe giishkizhamawag, giishkizhamaan ezhi-, ezhi-izhiwidamawag. Ezhi-agwako’ang miinawaa zaga-ang i’iw nabakisag.

Mii go iwe, biinash igo iwidi aazhaweyi’ii iwidi ayaag i’iw waakaa’igan. Mi iwe michisag ge izhi-ateg, ge-izhi-abid a’a nabakisag. Mii iwe gaa-izhichigeyaang. Mii dash igo kakina, kakina go iwe waakaa’igan gaagii-ozhitoowaang mii eta go gii-anishinaabemod a’a, gii-ojibwemod awe aa’aa inini. Mii dash iwe maamawi-nitam gaa-ozhitoowaan waakaa’igan.

Mii go apane gii-a-, gii-ojibwemowaang eta go gaawiin ganage ingii-shaaganaashiimosiimin anokiiyaang. Ganage go aa ganage niiyo, niiyo-a dibikigiizis ingii-tazhitaamin ji giizhiikamaang i waakaa’igan. Niizhimin dash eta go, niin miinawaa aw haa’aa inini.

Mii dash iwe geniin ani-kichi-ininiiwiyaan ingoji go gii-niizhtana ani-taso-biboonagiziyaan miziwe ingii-pabaa-izhaa iwidi Zhaaganaashiiwaking ayaagin iniw he’iin ishkoniganan ingii-pabaa-wiidookawaad ingiw weshki-bimaadiziwaad gewiinawaa ji-, ji-waakaa’ige ininiiwiwaad maagizhaa ge mitigonaabe-ininiiwiwaad.

Mii dash i’iw wiinawaa gaawiin wiinawaa nitaa-ojibwemosiiwag mii eta go zhaaganaashiiwowaad gegoo dazhindamowaad. Mii dash igo onjida ezhi anishinaabemowaan, “Daga biidoon iwedi pakite’igaans?”

Mii dash ekidowaad, “Henh?”

“Pakite’igaans biidoon.”

“What you talking about?” indigoog. Mii dash igo apane gaa-izhichigeyaan, apane babaa naadamawagwaa ingi anishinaabeg babaa-, memindage gagwe-niigaanisidoowaan i’iw ojibwemowin miziwe babaa-ayaayaan.

Mii sa go minik.

Mitigonaabe, that is the spirit of the trees. So when I used to tell him that I was a carpenter, that's what he used to call me, *mitigonaabe*, somebody that works with wood.

ER (25:46): You say it has that kind of second meaning that you'd say that about trees, kind of talking about their spirit?

GJ: The spirit of trees. There's *asinaabe* like when you're doing your tobacco, you would

acknowledge those different spirits. If you remember to do that, *mitigonaabe*, they would be one of them. He would be the one that's responsible for all of the trees. And I almost thought that there was also the one they called *Bagwajinini* down this way. But I'm thinking it's more specific to trees. When you say this word, right here *mitigon*, it is of wood quality. It has, the quality of wood. So *mitigon*, *mitigonaabe*, if you say something is *mitigon*, you'd say it's wood like, or it is wood. It is of wood.

ER (26:50): So *Bagwajinini*, that's not how you say that in Lac La Croix?

GJ: *Bagwaj* is anywhere off the beaten path, like where there's no evidence of any human things like forest, out in the field, out in the water, in a natural setting.

ER (27:17): Would you use that term to describe like wilderness? Like, we think of it today?

GJ: Yeah, yep. So you would tend to use this one, *aagwajayi'ii*. So I would ask my grandmother, where do you want me to put my tobacco? And she would say, "*Gidaa-asaa bagwajayi'ii*" or "*ezhi-biinaakamigaag*." There. *Ezhi-biinaakamigaag* would also have the same idea as a natural place where there was hardly any human evidence of any human activity there. That's where she would tell me to put my tobacco "*aandi ge-aasag asemaa*." She will always tell me, "*Gaa-biindaakoojigeyaan mii go apane gii-noondawad animikii biinoodaagozinid bidikwe-aanig daga awi-aashi asemaa bagwajayi'ii*," ikido. And then I'd say, "*Aandi Gram biinaakaamigong, biinaakaamigong*."

ER: Miigwech for tuning into Anishinaabe Bizindamoo-makak. Support for this program comes from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our producer is Staci Drouillard. The theme song is by the Stonebridge Singers. Until next time, this is Erik Redix. Giga-waabamin!

Ojibwe Transcription by Gordon Jourdain