Number Expressions in Ojibwe

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The following examples of number expressions in Ojibwe (Odawa/Chippewa dialect) are taken from Frederick Baraga's grammar, which was published in 1850. These forms are specific to this dialect, and they are quite old. Your dialect may well have different forms, due to dialect variation and due to changes in the language over the last 150 years.

I. Numbers

one	bezhig	ᐯᔑᑲ
two	niizh	ᓂᐢ
three	niswi	ᓂᐣ
four	niiwin	ᓂᐃᐎᐟ
five	naanan	ᐊᐊᓇᐟ
six	ningodwaaswi	ᓂᑯᐧᑕᐣ
seven	niizhwaaswi	ᓂᐧᔆᐣ
eight	nishwaaswi	ᓂᐧᔆᐣ
nine	zhaangaswi	ᔆᐟᒪᐧᐣ
ten	midaaswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ
eleven	midaaswi ashi bezhig	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᐯᔑᑲ
twelve	midaaswi ashi niizh	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐢ
thirteen	midaaswi ashi niswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐣ
fourteen	midaaswi ashi niiwin	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐃᐎᐟ
fifteen	midaaswi ashi naanan	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᐊᐊᓇᐟ
sixteen	midaaswi ashi ningotwaaswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᑯᐧᑕᐣ
seventeen	midaaswi ashi niizhwaaswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐧᔆᐣ
eighteen	midaaswi ashi nishwaaswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐧᔆᐣ
nineteen	midaaswi ashi zhaangaswi	ᒥᑕᐧᐣ ᐊᔑ ᔆᐟᒪᐧᐣ
twenty	niizhidana	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ
twenty one	niizhidana ashi bezhig	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᐊᔑ ᐯᔑᑲ
twenty two	niizhidana ashi niizh	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐢ
twenty three	niizhidana ashi niswi	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᐊᔑ ᓂᐣ
thirty	nisimidana	ᓂᓯᒥᑕᓇ
forty	niimidana	ᓂᒥᑕᓇ
fifty	naanimidana	ᐊᓂᒥᑕᓇ
sixty	ningodwaasimidana	ᓂᐟᑯᐧᑕᓯᒥᑕᓇ
seventy	niizhwaasimidana	ᓂᐧᔆᓯᒥᑕᓇ
eighty	nishwaasimidana	ᓂᐧᔆᓯᒥᑕᓇ
ninety	zhaangasimidana	ᔆᐟᒪᐧᓯᒥᑕᓇ
one hundred	ningodwaak	ᓂᑯᐧᑕᑲ
one hundred one	ningodwaak ashi bezhig	ᓂᑯᐧᑕᑲ ᐊᔑ ᐯᔑᑲ
two hundred	niizhwaak	ᓂᐧᔆᑲ

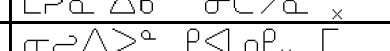
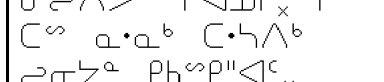
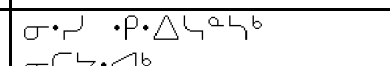
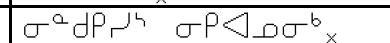
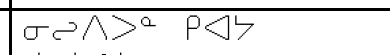
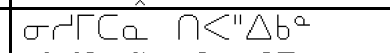
three hundred	niswaak	ᓂ·ᑳᐠ
four hundred	niiwaak	ᓂ·ᐁᐠ
five hundred	naanwaak	ᓇ·ᓇᐠ
six hundred	ningodwaasaak	ᓂᑯ·ᑕ·ᑳᐠ
seven hundred	niishwaaswaak	ᓂ·ᔅ·ᑳᐠ
eight hundred	nishwaaswaak	ᓂ·ᔅ·ᑳᐠ
nine hundred	zhaangaswaak	ᔆᓵᒪ·ᑳᐠ
one thousand	midaaswaak	ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
two thousand	niizhing midaaswaak *or* niizhidanaak	ᓂᔑᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ ᓂᔑᑕᓇᐠ
three thousand	nising midaaswaak *or* nisimidanaak	ᓂᓯᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ ᓂᓯᒥᑕᓇᐠ
four thousand	niiwing midaaswaak *or* niimidanaak	ᓂ·△ᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ ᓂᒥᑕᓇᐠ
five thousand	naaning midaaswaak	ᓇᓂᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
six thousand	ningodwaaching midaaswaak	ᓂᓵᑯ·ᑕᑭᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
seven thousand	niizhwaaching midaaswaak	ᓂ·ᔅᑭᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
eight thousand	nishwaaching midaaswaak	ᓂ·ᔅᑭᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
nine thousand	zhaangaching midaaswaak	ᔆᓵᒪᑭᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
ten thousand	midaaching	ᒥᑕᑭᓵᐠ
eleven thousand	midaaching ashi aabiding midaaswaak	ᒥᑕᑭᓵᐠ ᐊᔑ ᐊᐱᑎᓵᐠ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
twenty thousand	niizhidana daso midaaswaak	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᑕᓯ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
thirty thousand	nisimidana dash midaaswaak	ᓂᓯᒥᑕᓇ ᑕᓯ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
one hundred thousand	ningodwaak daso midaaswaak	ᓂᑯ·ᑕᐠ ᑕᓯ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ
one million	midaaswaak daso midaawaak	ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ ᑕᓯ ᒥᑕ·ᑳᐠ

— When counting from 11 to 19, it was common to omit the *midaaswi*, that is

11 ashi bezhig
12 ashi niizh
13 ashi niswi
etc.

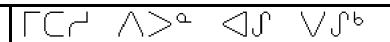
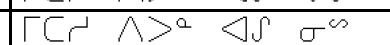
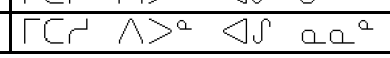
— There were shortened forms of some words that were used in faster speech. Baraga gives two examples: *zhaang* for *zhaangaswi* (nine) and *gwech* for *midaaswi* (ten).

Some examples of the use of numbers

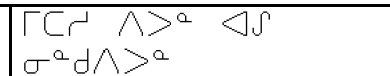
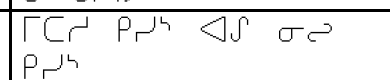
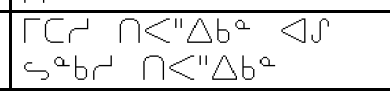
Awashime **naanwaak** mazinahiganan nindayaanan.		I have more than five hundred books.
Niizho-biboon gii-anokii; mii dash naanwaak daswaabik zhooniyaan gii-gashkihaad.		He worked for two years, and earned five hundred dollars.
Niswi gwiiwizensag nindayaawaag.		I have three boys.
Ningo-giizis ningii-anoonig.		He hired me for three months.
Niizho-biboon gii-ayaa Mooniyaang.		He was in Montreal two years.
Niso-dibahigan babagiwayaaniigin gimiinin.		I give you three yards of cotton.

Baraga says that there were three ways to express numbers from eleven to nineteen when used in expressions of measurement. These were

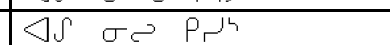
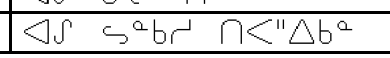
1.

midaaso-biboon ashi bezhig		eleven years
midaaso-biboon ashi niizh		twelve years
midaaso-biboon ashi naanan		fifteen years

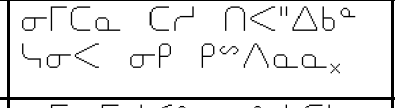
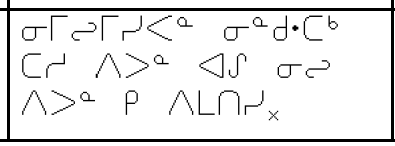
2.

midaaso-biboon ashi ningo-biboon		eleven years
midaaso-giizis ashi niizho-giizis		twelve months
midaaso-dibahigan ashi zhaangaso-dibahigan		nineteen bushels, yards, etc.

3.

ashi ningo-biboon		eleven years
ashi niizho-giizis		twelve months
ashi zhaangaso-dibahigan		nineteen bushels, yards, etc.

According to Baraga, when numbers are expressed in round numbers, twenty, thirty, forty, hundred, thousand, etc., the word daso is put between the number and the word it modifies. The modified word remains singular.

Gwaayak **niizhidana daso-biboon** gii-bimaadizi nindaanisiban.		My deceased daughter has lived just twenty years.
Niimidana daso-dibahigan zenibaanh ningii-giishpinanaa.		I bought forty yards of cloth.
Nimishoomisiban **ningodwaak daso-biboon ashi niizho-biboon** gii-bimaadizi.		My deceased grandfather lived 102 years.

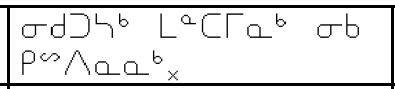
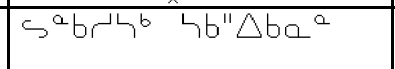
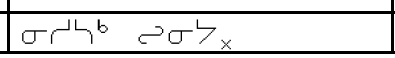
II. Classificatory Endings

Ojibwe has a rich system for expressing specific classifications of items when counting. The following examples are not complete.

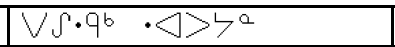
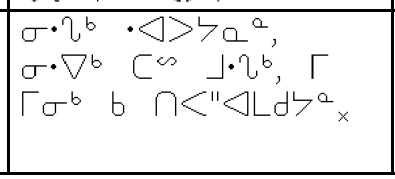
The ending **-gon** (or **-gwan**) is used when counting days:

Niizhogon ningii-bimose.		I walked for two nights.
Naanogon gii-ayaa omaa.		He was here five days.

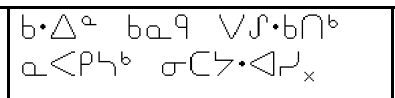
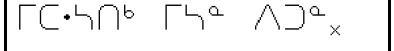
The ending **-sag** is used to denote "wooden containers," such as barrels, kegs, boxes, etc.

Ningodosag mandaaminag ninga-giishpinanaag.		I will buy a barrel of corn.
Zhaangasosag zagahiganan.		Nine kegs of nails.
Nisosag zhooniyaa		Three boxes of money.

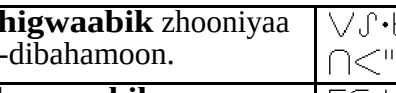
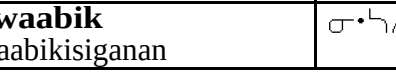
The ending **-weg** is used when counting clothing materials.

Bezhigweg waaboyaan.		One blanket.
Niizhweg waaboyaanan, **niiweg** dash babagiwayaanaan, **nisweg** dash mooshweg, mii minik gaa-dibahamaagooyaan.		My pay consisted of two blankets, four shirts, and three handkerchiefs.

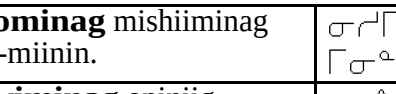
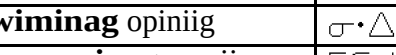
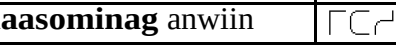
The ending **-waatig** is used when counting objects made or wood, or lumber.

Gaawiin ganage **bezhigwaatig** nabagisag nindayaawaasii.		I don't even have a single board.
Midaaswaatig misan biidoon.		Bring ten sticks of wood.
Niswaatig abwiin.		Three paddles.

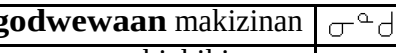
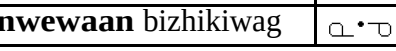
The ending **-waabik** is used when counting objects made of metal, stone or glass.

Bezhigwaabik zhooniyaa giga-dibahamoon.		I will pay you one dollar.
Midaaswaabik waasechiganaabikoon.		Ten window panes (panes of glass)
Niswaabik gizhaabikisiganan		Three stoves

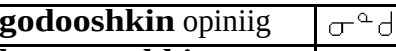
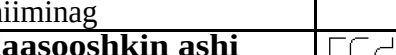
The ending **-minag** was used when counting globular (or berry-like, round) objects

Nisominag mishiiminag giga-miinin.		I will give you three apples.
Niiwiminag opiniig		Four potatoes
midaasominag anwiin		Ten musket balls

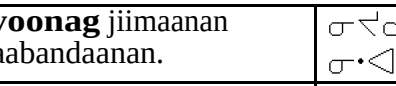
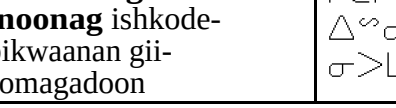
The ending **-wewaan** is used when counting pairs of things

ningodwewaan makizinan		one pair of shoes
naanwewaan bizhikiwag		five pair of oxen

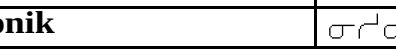
The ending **-ooshkin** is used when counting bags or sacks

Ningodooshkin opiniig		One bag of potatoes
niizhwaasooshkin mishiiminag		Seven bags of apples
midaasooshkin ashi naanan		Fifteen bags

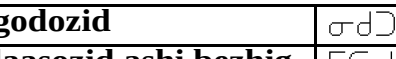
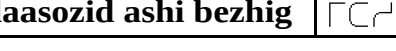
The ending **-oonag** is used when counting boats or boatloads

Niiyoonag jiimaanan niwaabandaanan.		I see four canoes.
Midaasoonag ashi naanoonag ishkode-naabikwaanan gii-niboomagadoon		Fifteen steamboats have sunk (perished).

The ending **-nik** is used to refer to the outstretched arms of a man measuring 6 feet

Midaasonik biiminakwaan.		Ten armlengths of cord (rope)
nisonik		Three armlengths

The ending **-zid** is used for measurements by the foot

ningodozid		one foot
midaasozid ashi bezhig		eleven feet

The ending **-ninj**, referring to the finger, is used to express measurement by the inch.

ningodoninj	ᓂᑯᑐᓂᐧᐃ	one inch
zhaangasoninj	ᓴᐸᓀᓂᐧᐃ	nine inches

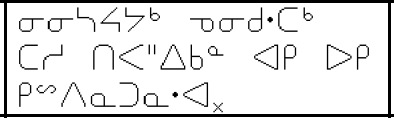
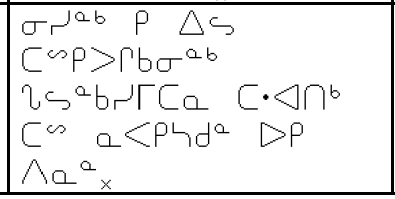
The element **daso** is used with many of these endings when referring to round numbers.

niizhidana dasogon	ᓂᔑᑌᓇ ᑕᓀᑯᐧ	about twenty days
ningodwaak dasosag bimide	ᓂᐧᑯ·ᑕᐢ ᑕᓀᓴᐢ ᐱᒥᑌ	about 100 barrels of oil
ningodwaasimidana dasweg waabooyaanan	ᓂᐧᑯ·ᑕᓀᒥᑌᓇ ᑕ·ᓴᐢ ·ᐊᐳᔨᓇᐧ	about 60 blankets
niizhwaasimidana daswaatig giizhikag	ᓂ·ᓵᒥᑌᓇ ᑕ·ᓴᑎᐢ ᑭᔑᑲᐢ	about 70 cedars
midaaswaak daswaabik zagahiganan	ᒥᑕ·ᓴᐢ ᑕ·ᓴᐱᐢ ᓴᑲ"ᐃᑲᓇᐧ	about 1000 nails.
nisimidana dasominag aninjiimin	ᓂᓀᒥᑌᓇ ᑕᓀᒥᓇᐢ ᐅᓂᑎᒥᐧ	about 30 peas

III. Distributive Numbers

bebezhig	ᐯᐯᔑᐢ	one by one, one each, one to each
neniizh	ᖶᑎᐣ	two by two, two each, two to each
neniswi	ᖶᑎ·ᓀ	three by three, three each, three to each
neniiwin	ᖶᑎ·ᐃᐧ	four by four, four each, four to each
nenaanan	ᖶᑲᓇᐧ	five by five, five each, five to each
neningodwaaswi	ᖶᑎᐧᑯ·ᑕ·ᓀ	six by six, six each, six to each
neniizhwaaswi	ᖶᑎ·ᓴ·ᓀ	seven by seven, seven each, seven to each
nenishwaaswi	ᖶᑎ·ᓴ·ᓀ	eight by eight, eight each, eight to each
zhezhaangaswi	ᐞᓴᐧᑲ·ᓀ	nine by nine, nine each, nine to each
memidaaswi	ᒣᒥᑕ·ᓀ	ten by ten, ten each, ten to each
memidaaswi ashi bezhig	ᒣᒥᑕ·ᓀ ᐊᔑ ᐯᔑᐢ	eleven by eleven, eleven each, eleven to each

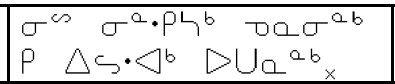
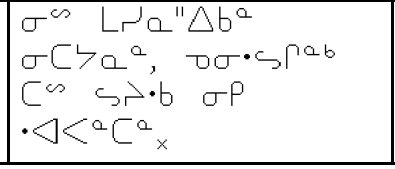
Examples

Gakina ogow ininiwag bebezhig mitigo-jiimaan gii-miinaawag.		A boat was given to each of these men.
Neniiwin mazinahiganan odayaanaawaan.		They have four books each.
Ninisayenyag nenigodwaak daso-dibahigan aki ogii-giishpinadoonaawaa.		My brothers bought a hundred acres of land each.
Nising gii-izhaa daashkiboojiganing, zhezhaangasi-midana daswaatig dash nabagisagoon ogii-biinaan.		He went three times to the sawmill, and brought ninety boards every time.

IV. Multiplicative Numerals

Aabiding	ᐊᐱᑎᐩ	once
Niizhing	ᓂᔑᐩ	twice
Nising	ᓂᓯᐩ	three times
Niiwing	ᓂᐧᐃᐩ	four times
Naaning	ᓇᓂᐩ	five times
Ningodwaaching	ᓂᑯᐧᑕᑎᐩ	six times
Niizhwaaching	ᓂᐧᔆᑎᐩ	seven times
Nishwaaching	ᓂᐧᔆᑎᐩ	eight times
zhaangaching	ᔆᐸᑎᐩ	nine times
midaaching	ᒥᑕᑎᐩ	ten times
midaaching ashi aabiding	ᒥᑕᑎᐩ ᐊᔑ ᐊᐱᑎᐩ	eleven times
midaaching ashi niizhing	ᒥᑕᑎᐩ ᐊᔑ ᓂᔑᐩ	twelve times
niizhidana dasing	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᑕᓯᐩ	twenty times
niizhidana dasing ashi aabiding	ᓂᔑᑕᓇ ᑕᓯᐩ ᐊᔑ ᐅᐱᑎᐩ	twenty-one times

Examples

Niizh ningwisag nenaanig gii-izhaawag oodenaang.		Two of my sons went to town five times.
Niizh mazinahiganan nindayaanan, neniizhwaaching dash zhayiigwa ningii-waabandaanan.		I have two books, and I've read each one seven times already.

V. Ordinal Numbers

Netamising or nitam	ᓂᐧᑕᒥᓯᐣᐦ or ᓂᑕᒪ	the first, or first
eko-niizhing	ᐁᑯᓂᔑᐣᐦ	the second, or secondly
eko-nising	ᐁᑯᓂᓯᐣᐦ	the third, or thirdly
eko-niiwing	ᐁᑯᓂ·△ᐣᐦ	the fourth, or fourthly
eko-naananing	ᐁᑯᐊᐊᓂᐣᐦ	the fifth, or fifthly
eko-ashi-niizhing	ᐁᑯ ᐊᔑ ᓂᔑᐣᐦ	the twelfth
eko-niizhidanewag	ᐁᑯ ᓂᔑᑕᓀ·ᐊᐦ	the twentieth
eko-niizhidana ashi niizhing	ᐁᑯ ᓂᔑᑕᐊ ᐊᔑ ᓂᔑᐣᐦ	the twenty-second
eko ningodwaak ashi niizhidanewag	ᐁᑯ ᓂᑯ·ᑕᐦ ᐊᔑ ᓂᔑᑕᓀ·ᐊᐦ	the hundred and twentieth

Examples

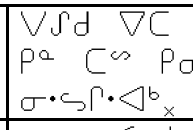
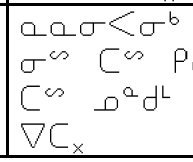
Eko-nising apabiwinan namadabi.	ᐁᑯ ᓂᓯᐣᐦ ᐊᐸᐱᐧ·△ᐊᓵ ᐊᒪᑕᐱₓ	He's sitting on the third bench.
Eko-niizhidana ashi nising waakaahiganan oodenaag, mii imaa endaayaan.	ᐁᑯ ᓂᔑᑕᐊ ᐊᔑ ᓂᓯᐣᐦ ·ᐊᑲ"△ᑲᓵ ᐅᑌᐊᑲ, ᒥ △ᒪ ᐁᓵᑕᐅᓵₓ	I live in the twety-third house in the village.
Eko-naaning omoodensan biidoon; wenizhishing mashkiki biindemagad.	ᐁᑯᐊᓂᐣᐦ ᐅᒧᑌᓵᓴᓵ ᐱᑐᓵ, ·ᐁᓂᔑᔑᐣᐦ ᒪᔕᑭᐢᑲᑎᑫᑲᐢ ᐱᓵᑌᒪᑲᑦₓ	Bring me the fifth bottle; there is good medicine in it.

VI. Verbs of Number

Animate Verbs of Number

nimbezhig, I am alone gibezhig, you are alone bezhigo, he is alone	ᓂᐯᔑᐦ ᑭᐯᔑᐦ ᐯᔑᑯ
niniizhimin, we are two giniizhim, you are two niizhiwag, they are two	ᓂᓂᔑᒥᓵ ᑭᓂᔑᒪ ᓂᔑ·ᐊᐦ
ninisimin, we are three ginisim, you are three nisiwag, they are three	ᓂᓂᓯᒥᓵ ᑭᓂᓯᒪ ᓂᓯᐧ·ᐊᐦ
niniiwimin, we are four	ᓂᓂ·△ᒥᓵ
ninaananimin, we are five	ᓂᓵᐊᓂᒥᓵ
ningodwaachimin, we are six	ᓂᓂᑯ·ᑕᑎᒥᓵ
nimidaachimin, we are ten	ᓂᒥᑕᑎᒥᓵ
nimidaachimin ashi bezhig, we are eleven	ᓂᒥᑕᑎᒥᓵ ᐊᔑ ᐯᔑᐦ

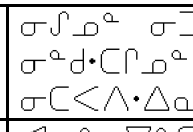
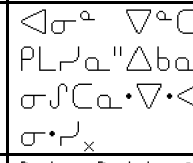
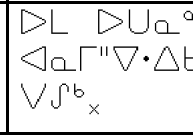
Examples

Bezhigo eta niniijaanis, giin dash giniijaanisag niizhwaachiwag.		I have only one child, but you have seven.
Naananiibaniig niniijaanisag, niizh dash gii-nibowag, mii dash noongom nisiwaad eta.		I had five children, but two died, and so there are only three now.

Inanimate Verbs of Number

bezhigwan, there is one thing	
niizhinoon, there are two things	
nisinoon, there are three things	
niiwinoon, there are four things	
naananoon, there are five things	
ningodwaachinoon, there are six things	
midaachinoon, there are ten things	
midaachinoon ashi bezhig, there are eleven things	
niizhidanawewan, there are twenty things	

Examples

Niizhinoon nindoopowinan, ningodwaachinoon dash nindapabiwinan.		I have two tables, and five chairs.
Aaniin endasing gimazinahiganan? Niizhidanawewan ashi niswi.		How books do you have? Twenty three.
Omaa oodenaang midaachinoon anamihewigamigoon ashi bezhig.		There are eleven churches in this city.