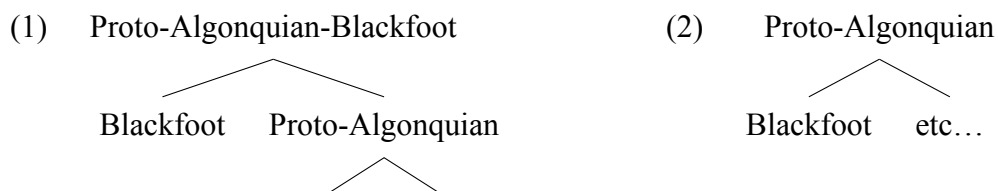


How synchronic analysis informs subgrouping: Against Proto-Algonquian-Blackfoot

Overview This paper argues against a recent claim in Goddard (2018) that Blackfoot is a sister to the other Algonquian languages, (1). The traditional classification, (2), leaves Blackfoot as a sister to the other Algonquian languages in a flat structure (Goddard 1994; Michelson 1935). Tree (1) predicts innovations within Proto-Algonquian (excluding Blackfoot). Goddard (2018) presents analyses of two such innovations in favor of the Proto-Algonquian-Blackfoot analysis.



Thesis I argue that a synchronic phonological analysis of Blackfoot leads to simpler analyses in both cases which do not involve innovations in Proto-Algonquian. The remaining shared retentions point only to a shared ancestor, in favor of (2) (Atkinson & Gray 2005; Koch & Bownern 2004). A broader implication is that synchronic analyses can inform language classification.

Argument Goddard argues that Blackfoot preserves Proto-Algonquian-Blackfoot roots beginning with *iC while CA neutralized these to *C < *iC except for a handful of cases. I argue that the data is better accounted for by an analysis where Blackfoot has C-initial roots, rather than iC-initial roots, with prothetic [i] in some positions (Weber 2021, 2022b). This analysis simplifies the derivation from the proto-language, and is further supported by evidence from initial change (Taylor 1967) and the historical record (Weber 2022a).

In the full paper I also present arguments against Goddard's second innovation in Proto-Algonquian; namely, that Proto-Algonquian innovated a remnant of a "post-inflectional" paradigm (preserved in Blackfoot) into the so-called "absentative" suffixes.

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