



PLAINS CREE & METRICAL TYPOLOGY

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Plains Cree stress

Plains Cree (Algonquian) is Canada's most widely spoken, most dispersed geographically, best described and best understood Aboriginal language.

Its stress pattern is clear and known (e.g., Cook 1991, Wolfart 1996, Wolvengrey 2001) yet unique typologically (cf. Hayes 1995).

The foot: right-headed

The colon: left-headed

The word: right-headed

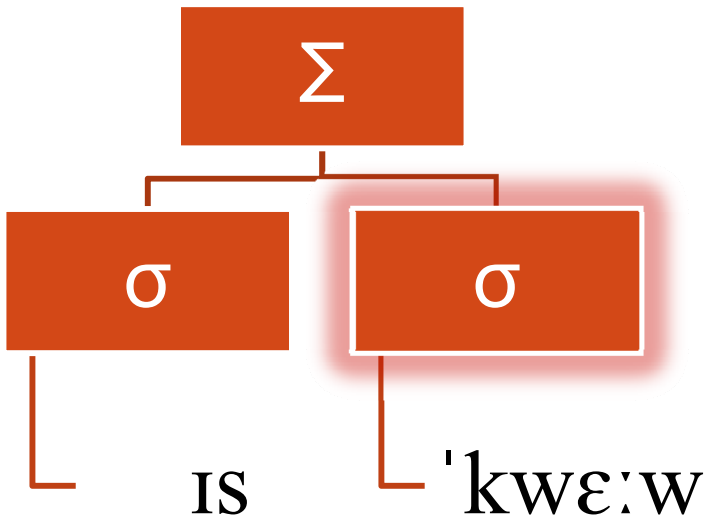
Quantity-insensitivity



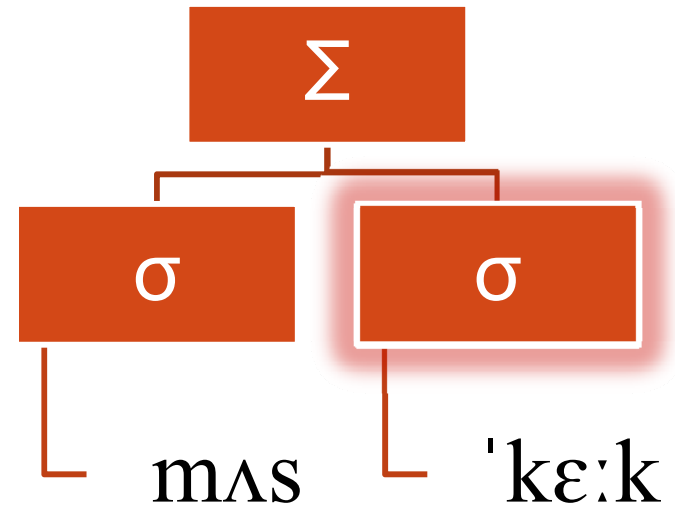
THE FOOT IN PLAINS CREE

Feet (Σ) are right-headed (iambic)

$\Delta^{\wedge}q^{\circ}$
iskwêw
'woman'

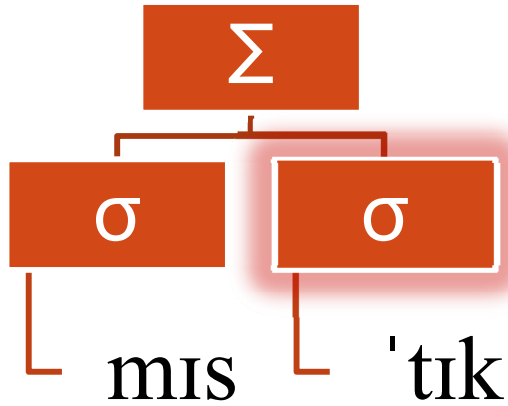


$L^{\wedge}q^{\backslash}$
maskêk
'muskeg'

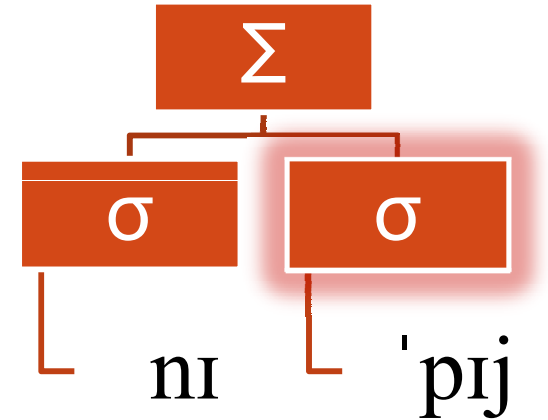


unlike in, say, English

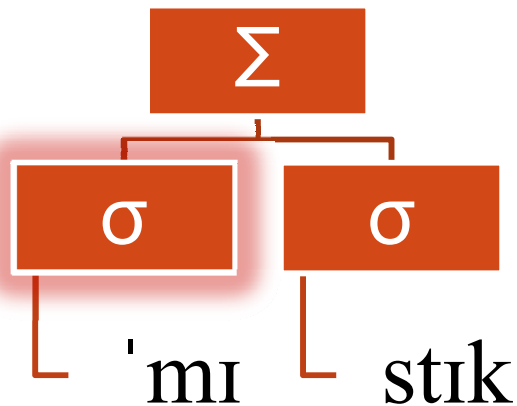
ᠮᠢᠰᠲᠢᠬ
mistik
'stick; tree'



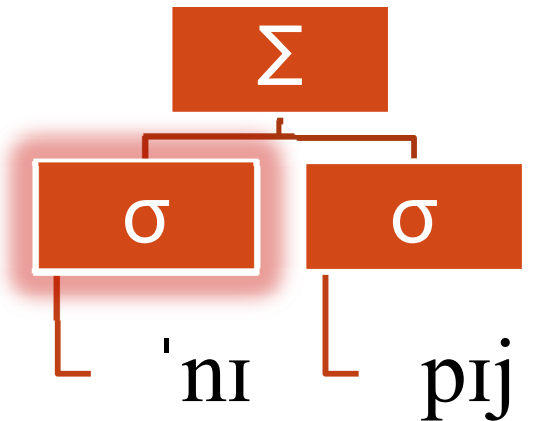
ᠨᠢᠫᠢᠶ
nipiy
'water'



cf. English
mystic

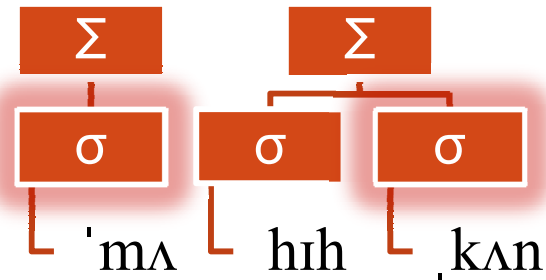


cf. English
nippy

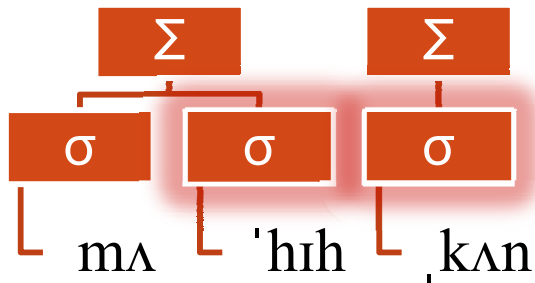


|| No clash: Σ assigned "right-to-left"

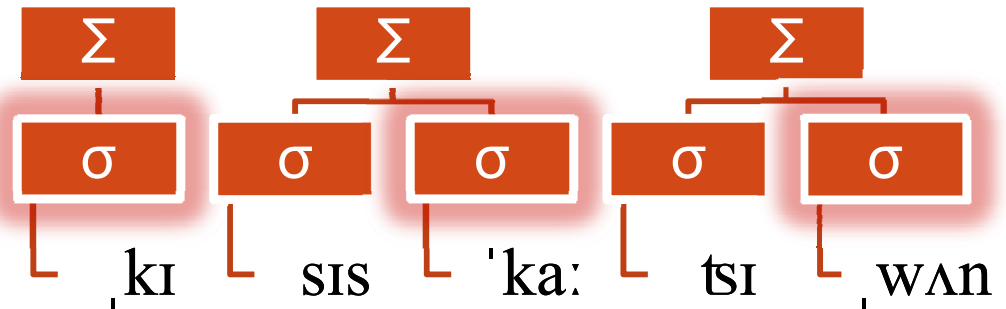
L^hΔ^hb³
mahihkan
 'wolf'



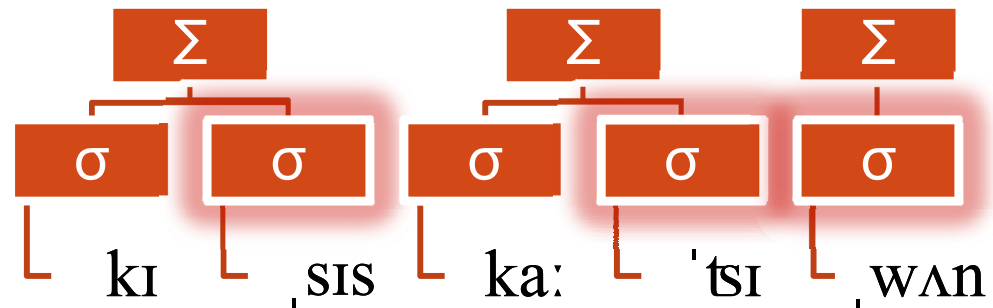
NOT:



ρr^hb³r^hΔ³
kisiskâciwan
 'it flows fast'



NOT:



Typological universal violated?

- “We do not find iambic systems where the counting of stress placement starts from the right.” (Alber 2005:487)
- “right-to-left iambic stress is probably universally impossible” (McCarthy 2005:190)
- “The few languages which have been claimed to make use of iambs which are assigned from right-to-left, can be reanalysed in terms of leftheaded feet assigned from right-to-left.” (van der Vijver 1998:1; also Kager 1989, 1995:398)

But:

Everett, Daniel. 2003. Iambic feet in Paumari and the theory of foot structure. *Linguistic Discovery* 2.22-44.

Plains Cree is strikingly similar to Paumari; and neither should exist!

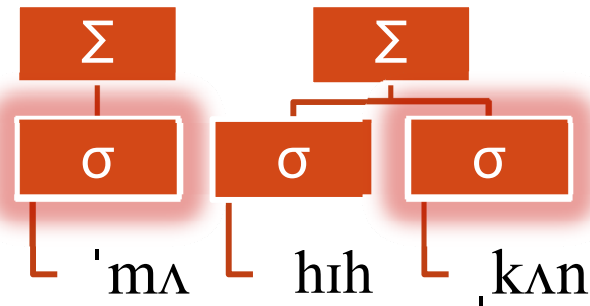
(Kager 1993, McCarthy and Prince 1993, Hayes 1995:262ff, Eisner 1997, van de Vijver 1998:1-54, van der Hulst 1999, etc.)

Other typological tendencies violated

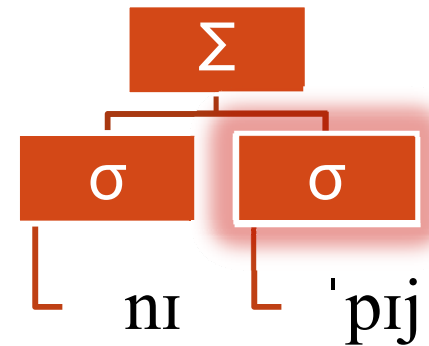
“in iambic languages stress on final and initial syllables is avoided... The evidence ... seems to be that iambic systems resist ALL edge-adjacent syllables, a fact which deserves a principled explanation.” (van der Vijver 1998:2,3)

“in iambic languages disyllabic words are usually stressed on the [penultimate] syllable, although in longer words the [ultimate] syllable is stressed.” (van der Vijver 1998:3)

L¹Δ¹b³
mahihkan
 'wolf'



σΛ⁺
nipiy
 'water'

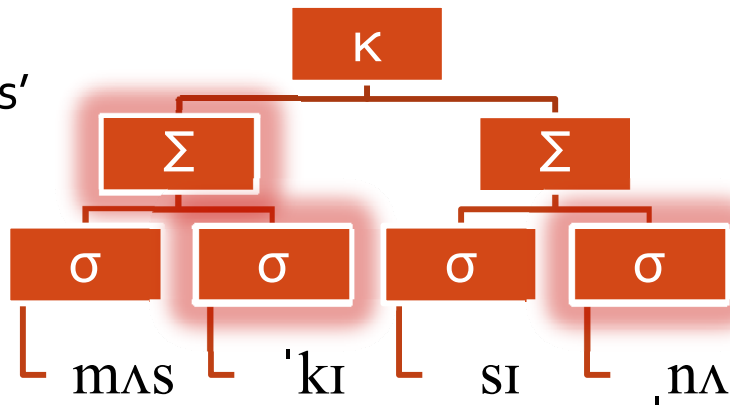




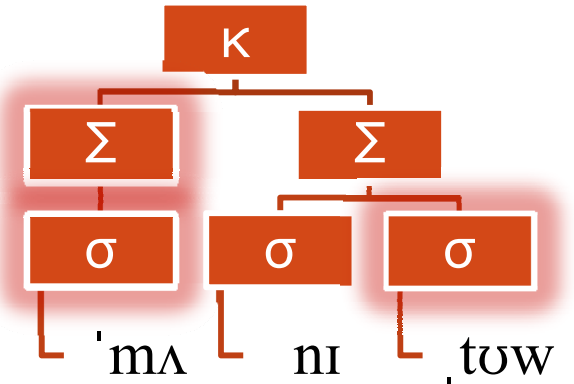
THE COLON IN PLAINS CREE

Cola (κ) are left-headed

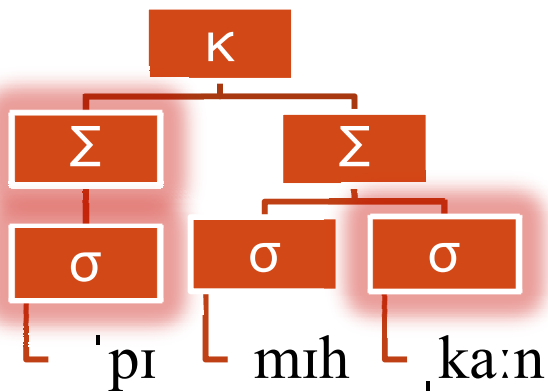
ᐃᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
maskisina
 'moccasins'



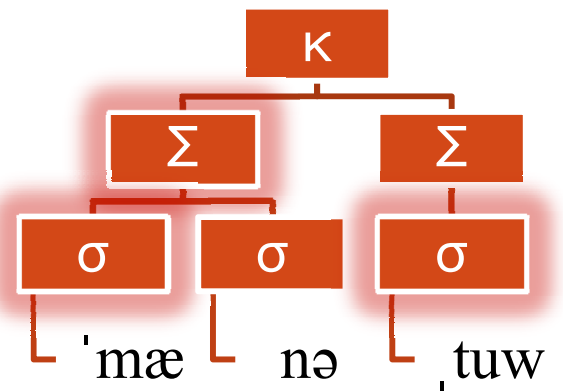
ᐃᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
manitow
 'spirit being'



ᐃᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
pimihkân
 'pemmican'



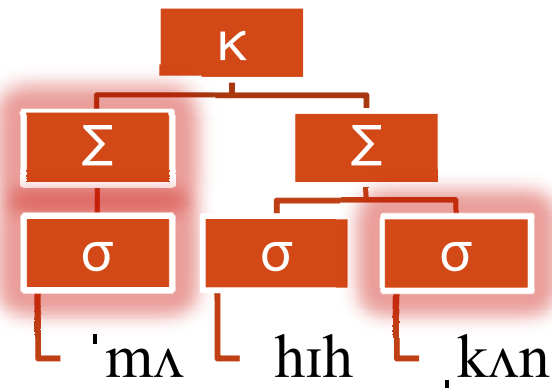
cf. English
Manitou



Cola?

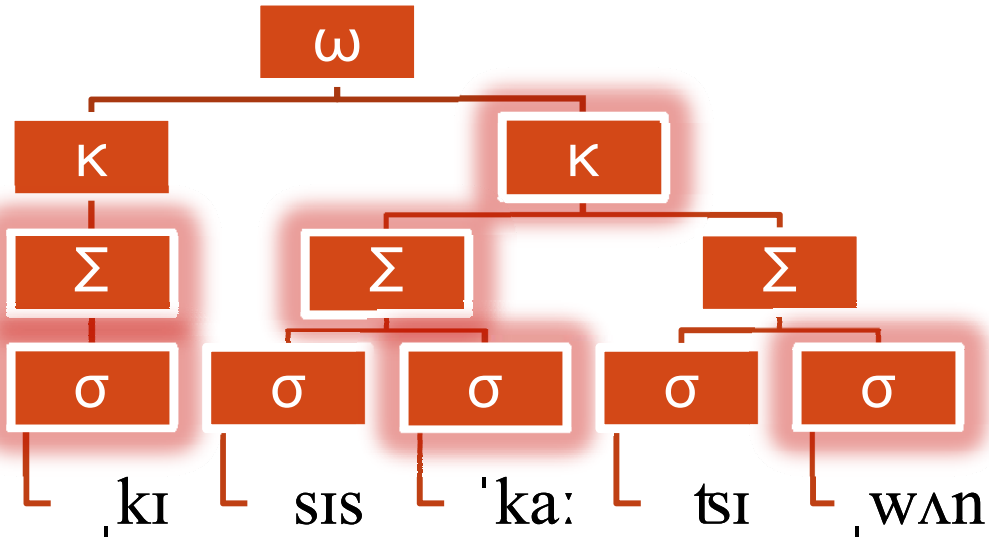
... were proposed by Halle and Clements (1983:18, 23-4), and defended by Hammond (1987) for Hungarian, Hayes (1995) for various languages including the Algonquian languages Malecite-Passamaquoddy and Ojibwa (see below), Green (1997) for Irish, Everett (2003) for Paumari, Bermudez-Otero (2006) for English, etc.

L^hΔ^hb^ʔ
mahihkan
'wolf'

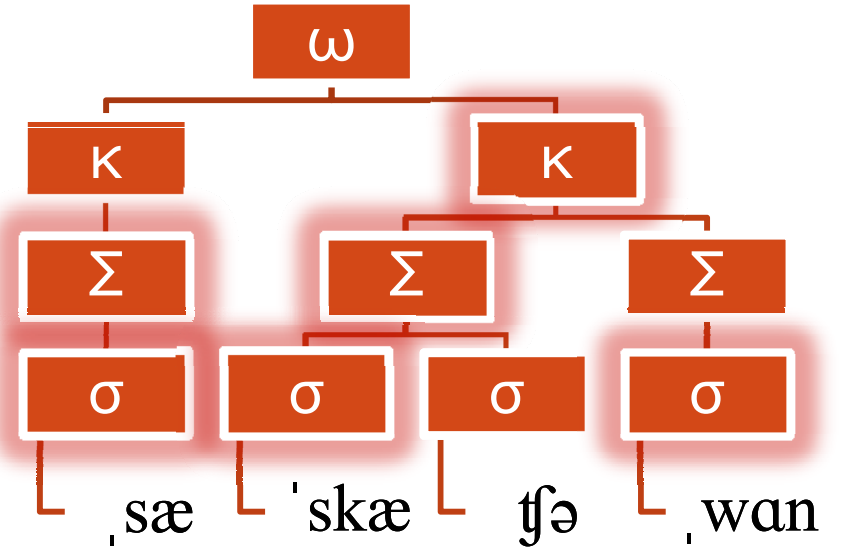




THE PROSODIC WORD

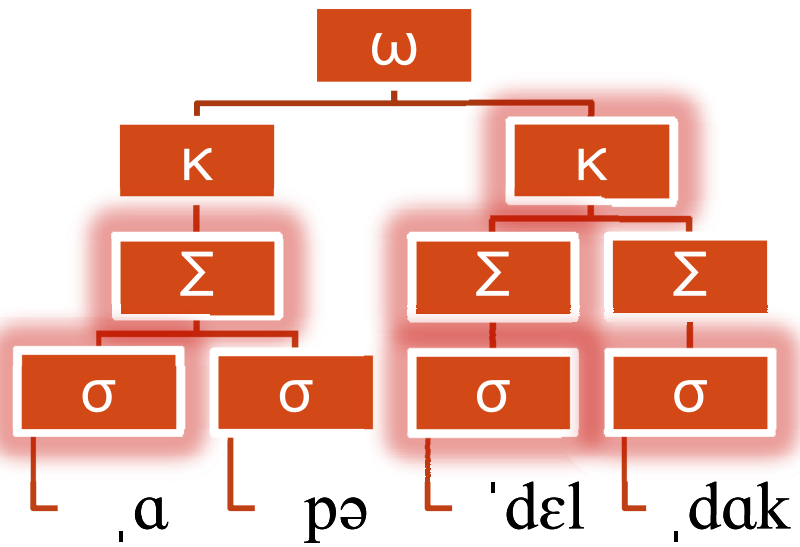


ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ
kisiskâciwan
'it flows fast'

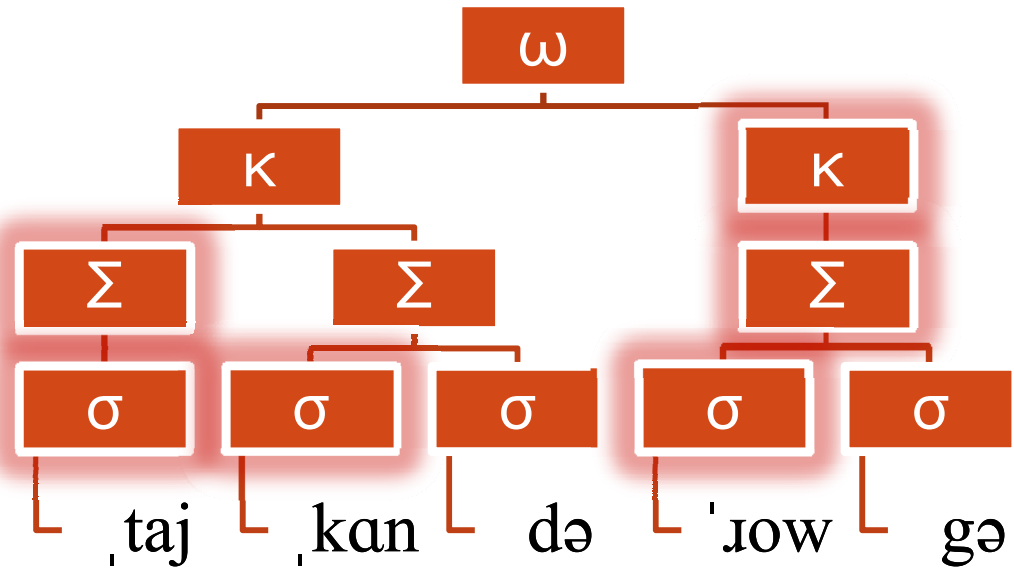


cf. English
Saskatchewan

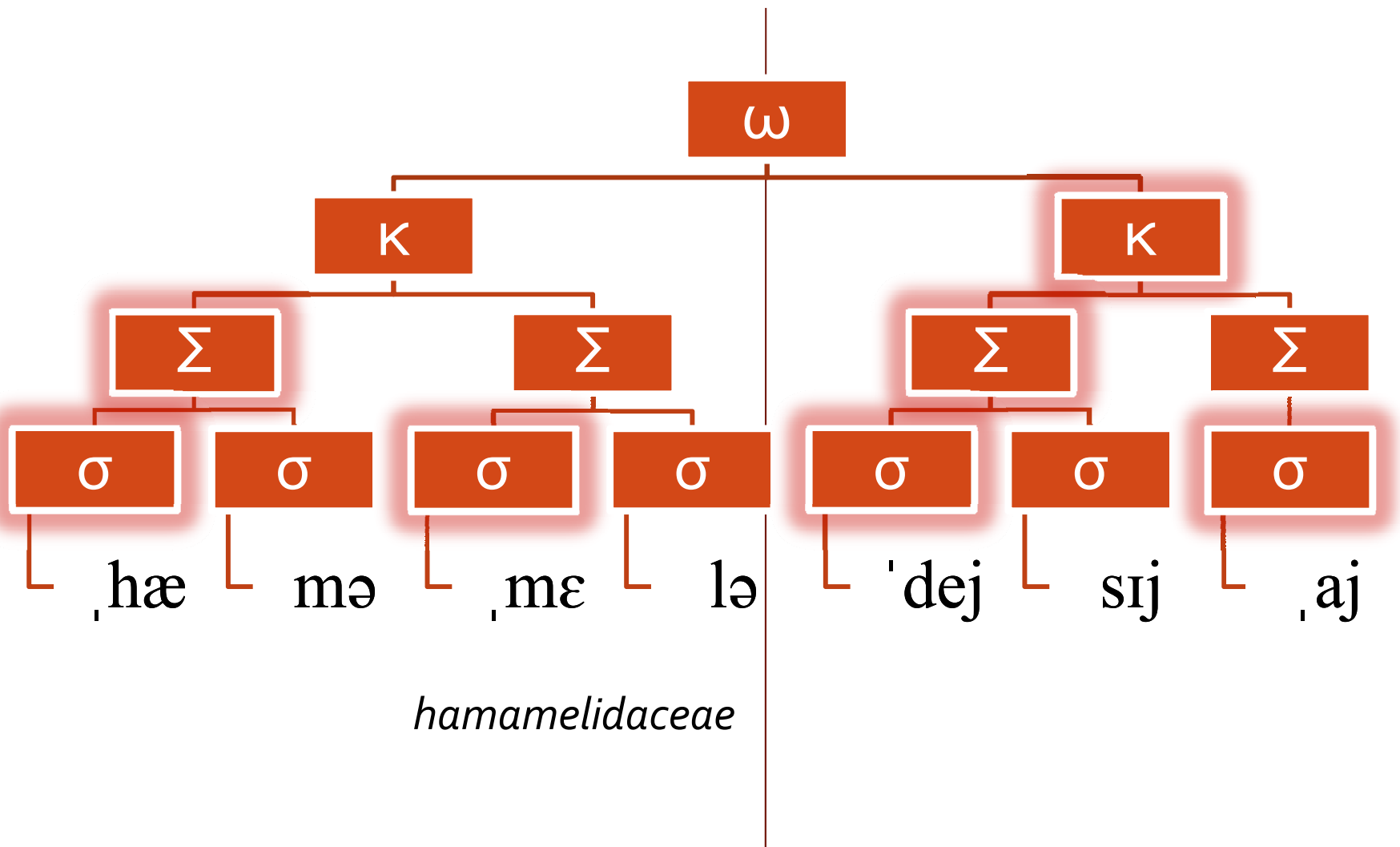
|| Cf. English



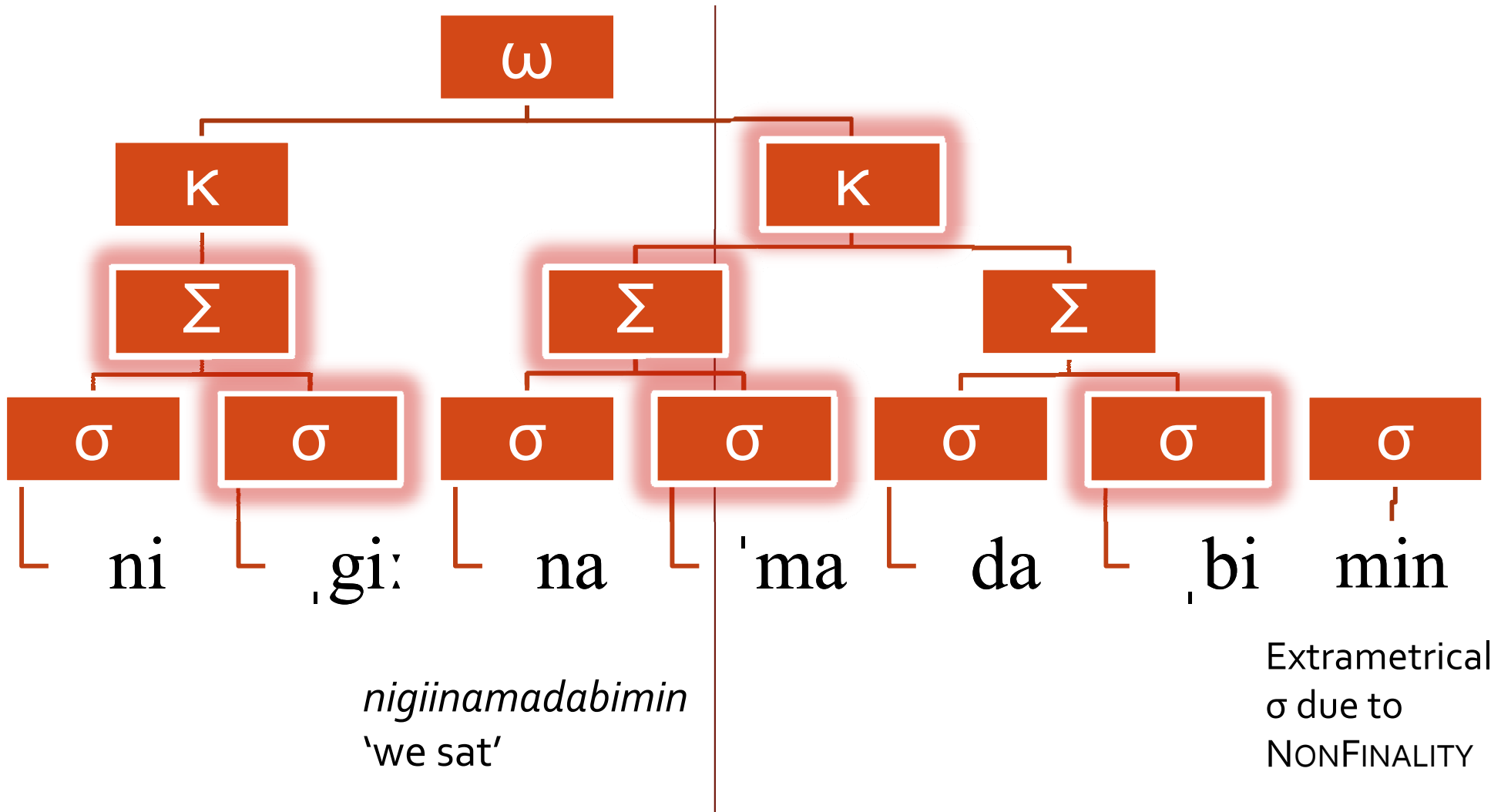
opodeldoc



Ticonderoga



|| Cf. Ojibwa





WEIGHT-TO-STRESS PRINCIPLE IN PLAINS CREE

Vowel length is distinctive

a. $\sigma\Lambda^+$ *nipiy* ‘water’

[ni'pi:]

b. $\triangleleft^{\wedge}\rho_x$ *askihk* ‘pail; kettle’

[ʌs'kihk]

c. $\rho\gamma\cup^{\circ}$ *kisitêw* ‘it is hot’

['kis(ɪ),tew]

d. $\zeta b''\Delta b^{\circ}$ *sakahikan* ‘nail’

[sʌ'kʌ(h)ɪ,kʌn]

e. $\sigma\zeta\acute{\circ}^{\circ}$ *niyanân* ‘us’

['nijʌ,na:n]

$\acute{\sigma}\Lambda^+$ *nîpiy* ‘leaf’

[ni:'pi:]

$\triangleleft^{\wedge}\acute{\rho}_x$ *askîhk* ‘on the reserve’

[ʌs'ki:hk]

$\acute{\rho}\gamma\cup^{\circ}$ *kîsitêw* ‘it is cooked’

['ki:s(ɪ),tew]

$\zeta b''\acute{\Delta} b^{\circ}$ *sâkahikan* ‘lake’

[sa:'kʌ(h)ɪ,kʌn]

$\sigma\zeta\acute{\circ}^{\circ}$ *niyânan* ‘five’

['nija:,nʌn]

Σ are quantity-insensitive in Plains Cree

<i>nîwa</i>	ᓄᐱ	'my wife'
<i>nîskwa</i>	ᓄᐱᓂ	'my husband's ex'
<i>cîsa</i>	ᓂᓴ	'Cisa' (name of trickster)
<i>êsa</i>	ᓄᓴ	'clam-shell'
<i>ihkwa</i>	ᐃᓂᓂ	'louse'
<i>kâkwa</i>	ᓂᓂᓂ	'porcupine'
<i>kôna</i>	ᓄᓄ	'snow'
<i>maskwa</i>	ᓂᐱᓂ	'bear'
<i>mwâkwa</i>	ᓂᓂᓂ	'loon'
<i>môswa</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'moose'
<i>niska</i>	ᓄᐱᓂ	'goose'
<i>pîskwa</i>	ᐱᓂᓂᓂ	'mosquito-hawk'
<i>sihta</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'spruce, evergreen'
<i>nîki</i>	ᓄᓂᓂ	'my home, dwelling'
<i>mêyi</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'stool, dung'
<i>mihko</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'blood'
<i>mihti</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'firewood'
<i>ôsi</i>	ᓂᓴᓂ	'canoe'
<i>pihko</i>	ᐱᓂᓂᓂ	'ashes'
<i>wâti</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂ	'hole, den, cave; ditch'
<i>wâwi</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂᓂ	'egg'
<i>wîko</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂ	'kidney-fat'
<i>wîni</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂᓂ	'bone-marrow'
<i>wîsi</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂᓂ	'belly-fat'
<i>wîsti</i>	ᓂᓴᓂᓂᓂᓂ	'beaver or muskrat house'

- “anti-penultimate stress does hold in Cree regardless of the length of the vowel of the penultimate... This pattern can be particularly difficult for English speakers to adjust to since the long (or tense) vowel in English speech tends to attract stress. However, it is very important when speaking Cree to keep vowel length and stress separate. Pronouncing *piyēsīs* as {pee YAY cease} is just as incorrect in Cree as pronouncing “syllable” as {sil LAB bull} in English.” (Wolwengrey 2001:xxiv)”
- “Note that the above [stress] rule holds for Plains Cree even where the penultima is long: [míta:tàht] *mita:taht* ‘10’, [úspwa:gàn] *ospwa:kan* ‘pipe’.” (Wolfart 2006:431)

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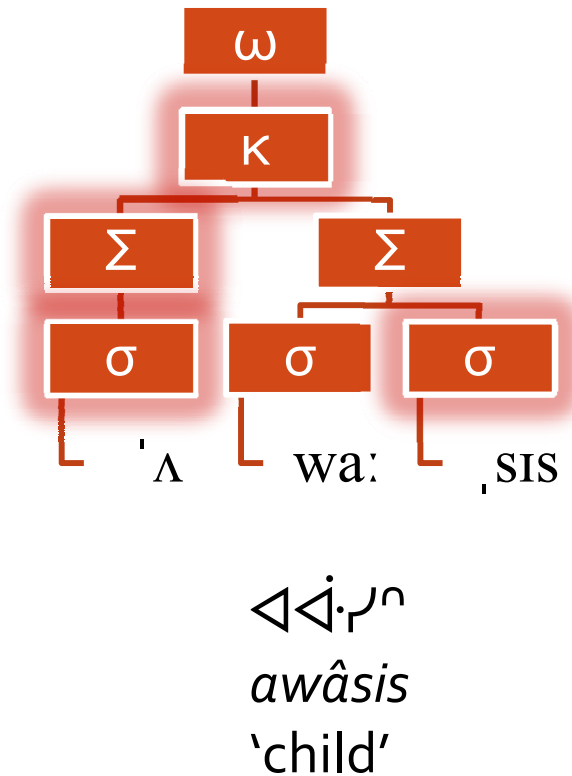
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Another typological universal violated?

Quantity-insensitive iambs do not exist!

“the syllabic trochee ... where a quantity distinction exists, but stress is nevertheless assigned to every other syllable, irrespective of quantity. In contrast, there appear to be no cases of this sort among iambic systems.” (Hayes 1995:268)



Osage?

Altshuler, Daniel. to appear.
Quantity insensitive iambs in Osage.
International Journal of American Linguistics 75.

Presents the Dhegiha-Siouan language Osage as “the first clear case with QI iambic feet” (p. 5).

But his case is hardly clear.

In particular, he cannot rule out the possibility that even-numbered words with initial stress are parsed with trochees, e.g., ('nõ^hpe) ‘to be afraid’, ('wakõ)(, ðapi) ‘he wants us’.

Strangely, he also fails to mention that “there are more initial-stressed words in the Osage lexicon than ones with peninitial stress” (de Lacy to appear:21)

or that “Osage has a pitch accent system, rather than a stress system.” (Quintero 1997:90ff.)!

['o:lã]	‘to be angry’
[o:'lã]	‘to put on, as a hat’

['opxa]	‘elk’
[o'pxa]	‘down the middle’

Conclusion

Plains Cree appears to be the only language that violates all proposed universals of iambic systems:

- Its feet are arranged “right-to-left”.
- The ultima is stressed in disyllabic words.
- The first & last syllables are stressed in odd-numbered syllable words.
- Its feet are quantity-insensitive.

I also suggest that Plains Cree provides evidence for the colon.

More research is needed on this prosodic element...