Past and irrealis functions of the Meskwaki enclitc *=iyôwe*
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Dahlstrom (2021) presents an overview of Meskwaki verbal modes and constructions involving the inflectional suffix *-ehe*; these modes and constructions exhibit a range of past tense (i.e. marked functions such as remote past or relative past) and irrealis functions. That paper argues that the past tense meaning is the historical source for all the functions of *-ehe*, with the irrealis constructions being semantic extensions.

In the current paper I examine uses in narrative texts of the Meskwaki enclitic *=iyo·we* PAST; 'former' (cf. Goddard 2015:82). Although most tokens of *=iyo·we* indicate past tense, other instances of *=iyo·we* function to mark a clause as irrealis. In other words, the same link between past tense and irrealis conjectured to hold diachronically in the development of the inflectional modes containing the suffix *-ehe* appears to be mirrored in the synchronic use of the enclitic *=iyo·we.*

A link between past tense and irrealis has been described for other Algonquian languages as well (e.g. James, Clarke, and MacKenzie 2001 on Cree/Innu/Naskapi), as well as for unrelated languages in the typological literature (e.g. Fleischman 1989). The use of *=iyo·we* in Meskwaki narrative texts further strengthens the semantic link between past and irrealis, especially for Algonquian languages.

Moreover, the similarity between the distribution of an enclitic particle and certain verbal inflectional modes in Meskwaki calls to mind the observations of Blain and Déchaine (2007), who find that evidential functions expressed by inflectional means in Innu, Naskapi, and East Cree are expressed by enclitic particles in the westernmost dialect of Plains Cree. This raises the possibility that the enclitic *=iyo·we* may be gaining ground in Meskwaki at the expense of older inflectional strategies of expressing past tense/irrealis functions.

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