

of this, we have replaced ‘louse’ with ‘liver’, which actually possesses a very high rank of stability (25) and was expelled from the 50-item wordlist due to extra-linguistic reasons: words for ‘liver’ frequently remain non-documented in various glossaries and wordlists of the world’s languages.

Thus, the complete 50-item wordlist used in the present paper is as follows (word numbering is not continuous, since this is an excerpt from the full 100-itemlist; index figures designate the relative index of stability: ‘we₁’ is the most stable word, ‘night₅₀’ is the least stable one): Table 3.

Table 3. Semantic slots of the 50-item wordlist

2. ashes ₃₈	37. hand ₁₁	63. one ₂₁
6. bird ₃₃	38. head ₉	65. rain ₃₉
8. black ₄₈	39. hear ₄₅	78. smoke ₃₆
9. blood ₂₀	40. heart ₁₄	80. star ₄₀
10. bone ₃₄	41. horn ₄₄	81. stone ₉
13. fingernail ₁₉	42. I ₃	82. sun ₃₅
17. die ₁₃	43. kill ₄₂	84. tail ₂₆
18. dog ₁₆	46. leaf ₄₁	87. thou ₅
19. drink ₁₅	48. liver _{25a}	88. tongue ₈
20. dry ₂₄	53. meat ₄₆	89. tooth ₂₂
21. ear ₃₂	54. moon ₁₈	90. tree ₃₇
23. eat ₂₅	56. mouth ₃₁	91. two ₂
24. egg ₄₇	57. name ₁₀	94. water ₂₈
25. eye ₄	59. new ₂₃	95. we ₁
28. fire ₇	60. night ₅₀	96. what ₁₂
31. foot ₄₃	61. nose ₂₉	98. who ₆
36. hair ₂₇	62. not ₃₀	

For semantic specification of the Swadesh items and the general principles of the compilation process see Kassian et al. 2010.

In the above discussion on the principles of semantic reconstruction it has already been mentioned that the correct topology of the genealogical tree is a key condition for the reconstruction of ancestral states (this is a crucial difference between historical linguistics and modern molecular biology). Although some particular details of both the IE and the Uralic trees are still debatable, their main nodes are generally uncontroversial.

We proceed from the following IE tree: Fig. 2.