

An Introduction to Historical Linguistics

TY Linguistics Module



Overview of this Linguistics Module

- Topic 1 Introduction to areas of linguistics and problem-solving
- **Topic 2 Historical Linguistics**
- Topic 3 Phonetics
- Topic 4 Sociolinguistics
- Topic 5 Writing systems
- Topic 6 Language Acquisition
- Topic 7 Morphology
- Topic 8 Syntax
- Topic 9 Psycholinguistics / Neurolinguistics
- Topic 10 Machine Translation

Discussion Questions

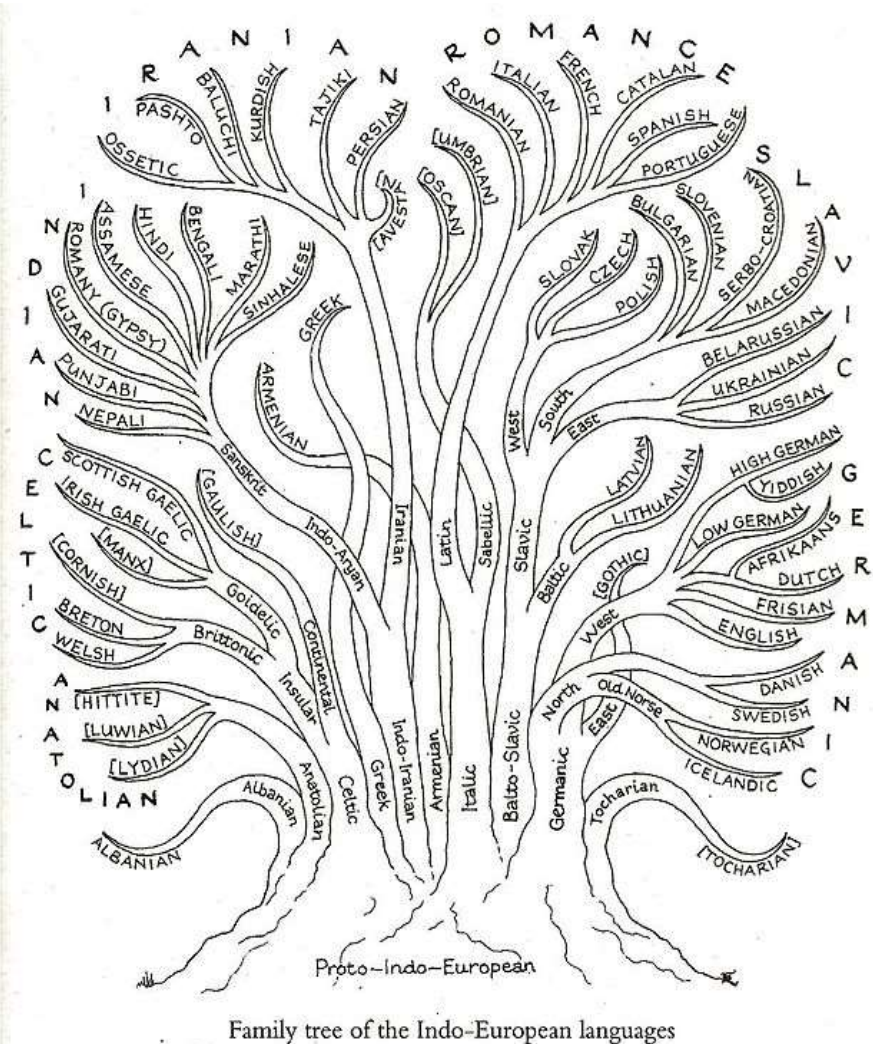
- How many languages are spoken in the world today?
- What was the first language?
- What do you call a group of languages that are linked together by a common ancestor?
- What language did Irish originate from?
- Where did the English language come from?
- Which language originated first - English or Irish?

2.1 Proto Indo-European Language Family



Language Family

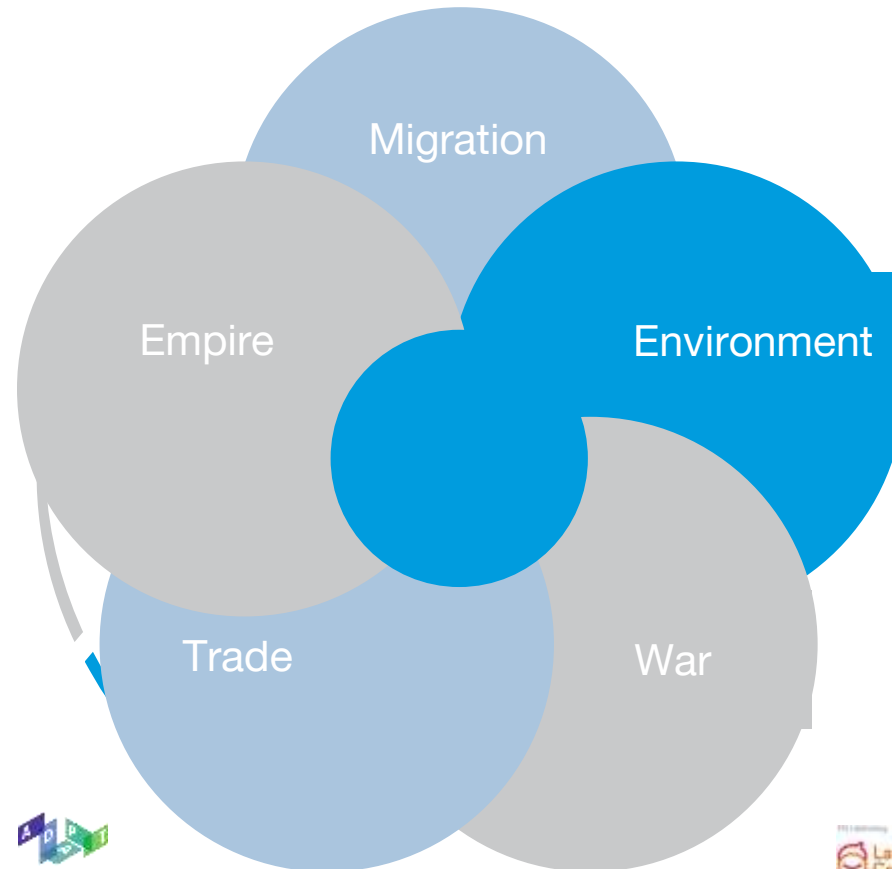
- This is a group of related languages that developed from a common historic ancestor, referred to as a **protolanguage** (**proto-**means early in Greek).
- The ancestral language is usually not known directly.
- It is possible to discover many of its features by applying the **comparative method**.
- Some languages such as Basque and Korean are a **Language isolate**, with no known language family.



Family tree of the Indo-European languages

Linguistic Change

Why do you think these languages changed so much from the original source language?



Proto Indo European Language Tree

The following 9 language groups all belong to this one language family:

- Albanian
- Armenian
- Baltic
- Celtic
- Germanic
- Hellenic
- Indo-Iranian
- Romance (Italic)
- Slavic

Activity 2.1 - Common words in PIE languages

By looking for similarities in just 4 common words, find which languages are related.

Note, 1 language is not related to any other language on the list.

	Gaelic	Manx
Mother	Máthair	Mayradh
Father	Áthair	Ayr
One	Aon	Nane
Two	Dó/Dhá	Daa

Answers - Romance and Germanic Branches

Romance/Italic Branch

Latin	Italian	French	Spanish	Catalan	Romanian	Portuguese
Mater	Madre	Mère	Madre	Mare	Mamă	Mãe
Pater	Padre	Père	Padre	Pare	Tată	Pai
Unum	Uno	Un	Uno	Un	Unu	Um
Duo	Due	Deux	Dos	Dos	Doi	Dois

Germanic Branch

German	Dutch	English	Danish	Swedish	Norwegian
Mutter	Moeder	Mother	Mor	Mor	Mor
Vater	Vader	Father	Far	Far	Far
Eins	Een	One	Én	En	Ett
Zwei	Twee	Two	to	Två	To

Answers - Slavic and Baltic Branches

Slavic Branch

Polish	Czech	Ukrainian	Russian
Matka	Mtka	Мати	Мать
Ojciec	Otec	батько	Отец
Jeden	Jeden	Ody'n	Odín
Dwa	Dva	Dva	Dva

Baltic Branch

Latvian	Lithuanian
Māte	Motina
Tēvs	Tēvas
Viêns	Vienas
divi	dù

Answers - Celtic Branch and Basque

Celtic Branch

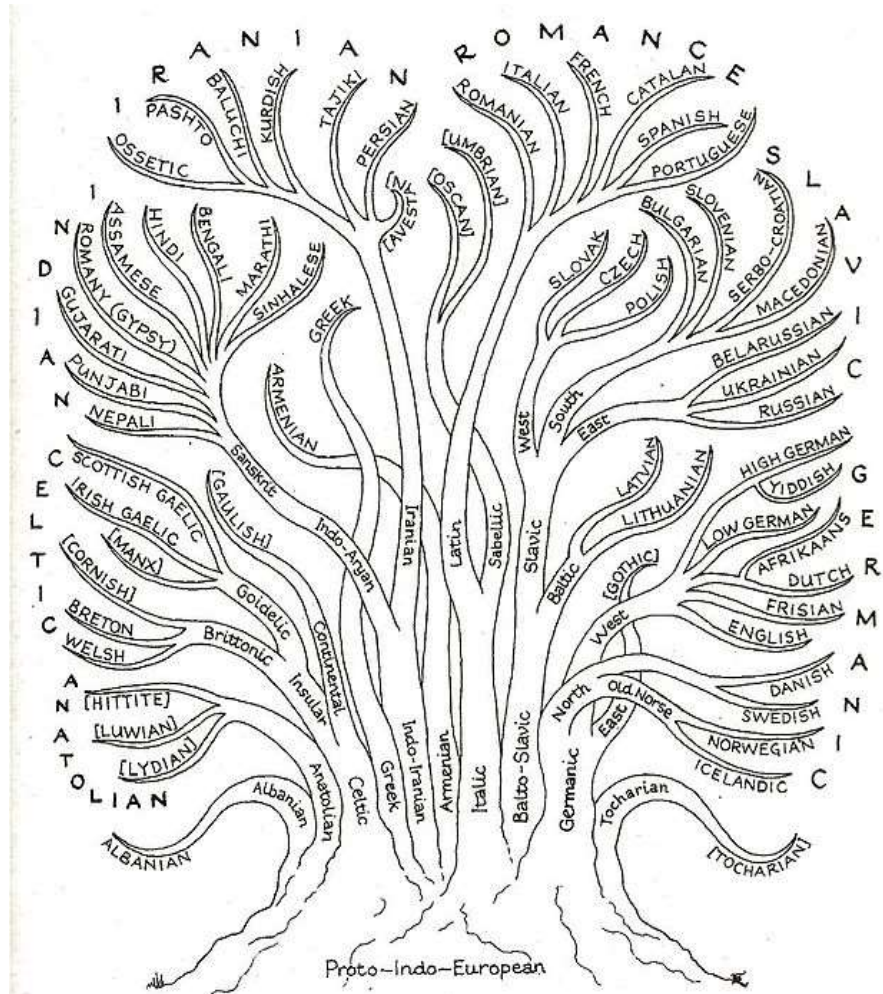
Scottish Gaelic	Irish	Welsh	Breton
Máthair	Máthair	Mam	Mamm
Athair	Athair	Tad	Tad
Aon	Aon	yek'	Unan
Dhá	Dó/Dhá	Du:i:	Daou

Language Isolate

Basque
Ama
Aite
Bat
Bi

Activity 2.1.1 - PIE Language Families

On your handout, work out the languages that are related to each other and complete the table provided.



Family tree of the Indo-European languages

Baltic (2)	Celtic (6)	Germanic (11)	Hellenic (2)	Italic/ Romance(8)	Indo-Iranian (6)	Slavic (10)
Latvian	Breton	Afrikaans	Ancient Greek	Catalan	Bengali	Bosnian
Lithuanian	Cornish	Danish	Modern Greek	French	Hindi	Bulgarian
	Irish Gaelic	Dutch		Galician	Iranian	Croatian
	Manx	English		Italian	Punjabi	Czech
	Scots Gaelic	Flemish		Latin	Sanskrit	Macedonian
	Welsh	Frisian		Portuguese	Urdu	Polish
		German		Romanian		Russian
		Icelandic		Spanish		Serbian
		Norwegian				Slovak
		Scots				Ukrainian
		Swedish				

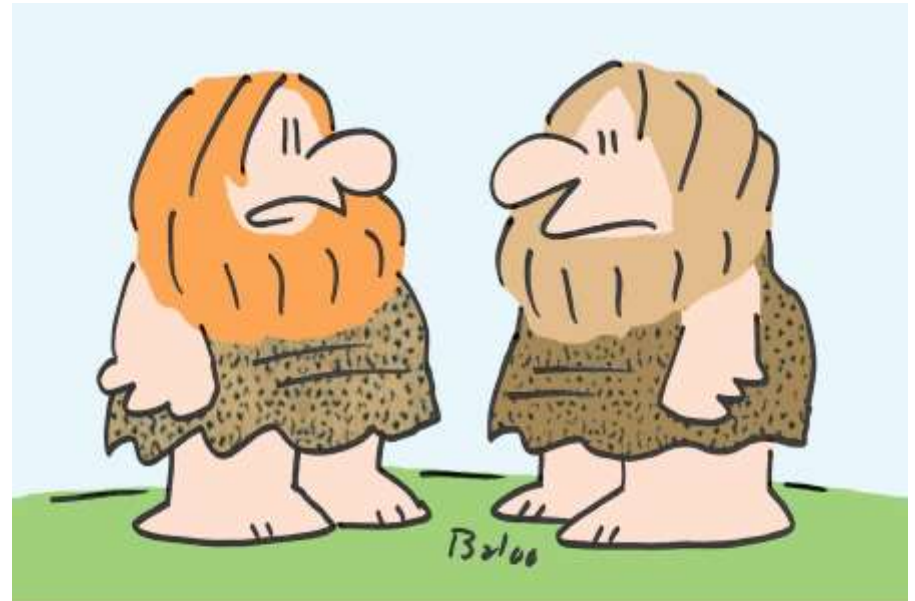
2.2 Language Change



Discussion Questions

We have already looked at why a language might move away and change completely from its original source language.

- Why might the language we speak today change and develop?
- What can influence it?
- How does a language change?
- Can you think of a word or phrase that your grandparents or someone from an older generation use that you no longer use?



"Now that we've invented language, we'll have to be careful about eavesdroppers."

CartoonStock.com

Language Change - Why?

Social and Political Pressure

E.g. War, Invasion, Colonisation, Migration

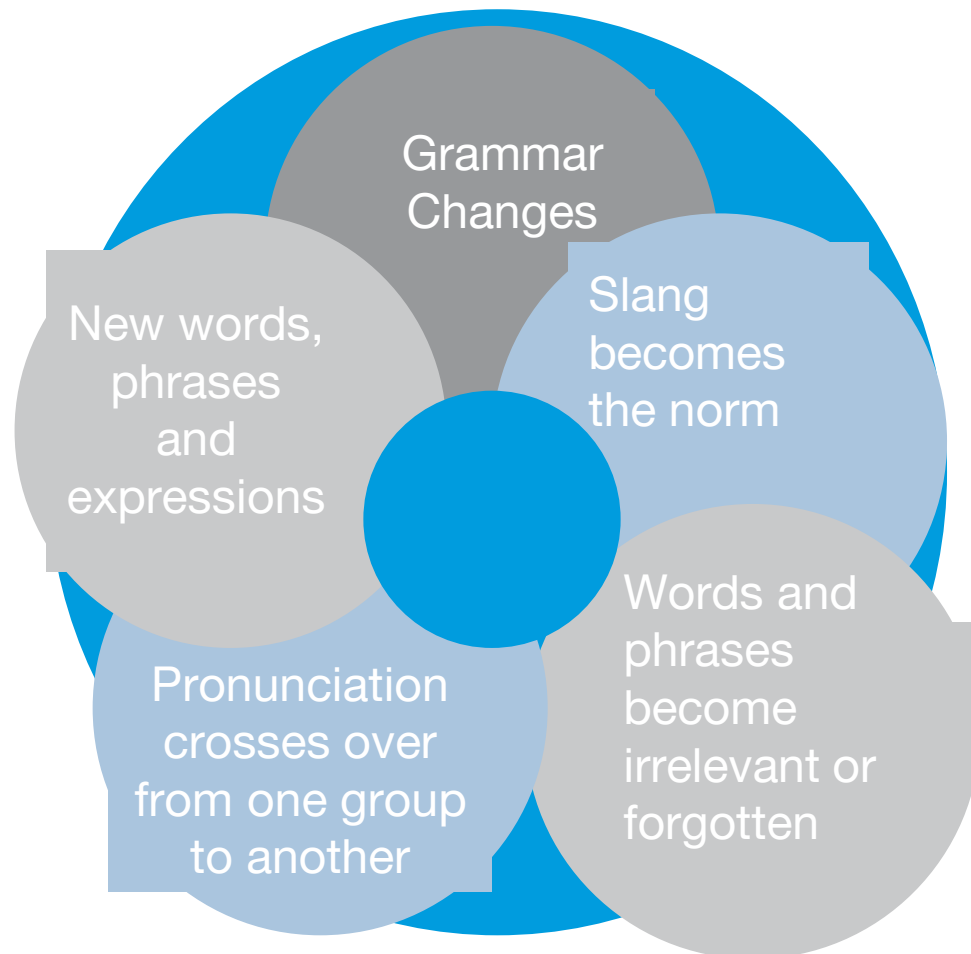
Influence by Others

E.g. Migration, Geography, Media, Celebrities

New Vocabulary Needed

E.g. Latest Inventions or Social Pursuits
Science, Technology, Sports, Media

Language Change - How?



Activity 2.2 - Old Languages

Listen to these 2 YouTube Video Clips

[OE YouTube Clip](#)

[ME YouTube Clip](#)

1. What language do you think it is?
2. What does it sound like?
3. Do you recognise any words?

Development of the English Language



Worksheet 2.2 - Lord's Prayer in Old, Middle and Modern English

Listen to the YouTube clip of [Old and Middle English](#)

Analyse the 3 versions of the Lord's Prayer in Old, Middle and Modern English.

Answer the 6 questions

Activity 2.2 Answers

1. What words are the same from Old English to Modern English?

[Redacted]

Us

1. What words are more or less the same from Old English to Modern English but might have a slight spelling change

[Redacted]

Nama/Name

1. [Redacted] 'p' sounds like?

Like the 'TH' in 'Think'

1. The letter or ligature 'æ' is no longer found in modern spelling, although it [Redacted] English words a lot easier. Which of [Redacted]

Activity 2.2 Answers

5. How has the word 'will' changed over time?



will

6. Write out the Lord's Prayer in your own English, reflecting the words and phrases that you use.



Facts about Old English c.450-1150AD

- Spoken in **Anglo-Saxon Britain**
- **Old Germanic** in character
- Some influence by Latin and Old Norse
- **Word order** and sentence structure were rather free
- **Variation** in word endings
- Approximately **50,000 words**

Facts about Middle English c1150-1450AD

- **Word order** fixed - Subject, Verb, Noun, as with Modern English
- Influenced by **French and Latin** but the fundamental Anglo-Saxon character of the language maintained with the use of words like 'he', 'of', 'and' 'have'.
- Significant **pronunciation change**, especially with vowels
- New contrastive sounds e.g. /f/ **and** /v/ consonants began to differentiate words e.g. **grief vs grieve** or /s/ and /z/ e.g. seal vs zeal
- Increase in the use of **prefixes and suffixes**
- Many words just look like an archaic version of modern English

2.3 AILO Ye Olde English Puzzle



Exercise 2.3 AILO Puzzle

- Student Puzzle: [Ye Olde English puzzle](#) (and solution)
- Give students this All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO) puzzle on Old English. They must work out how the sentence structure in Old English works, in particular with the use of pronouns.

Thank you



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