

GEOG 220
Place, Space and Identity
Alan Nash

Language
21 February 2022

- Read “languages” in *The Encyclopedia of Human Geography* edited by Barney WARF (2006) – an ebook available via the Concordia Library.
- A copy of this article is on our moodle site

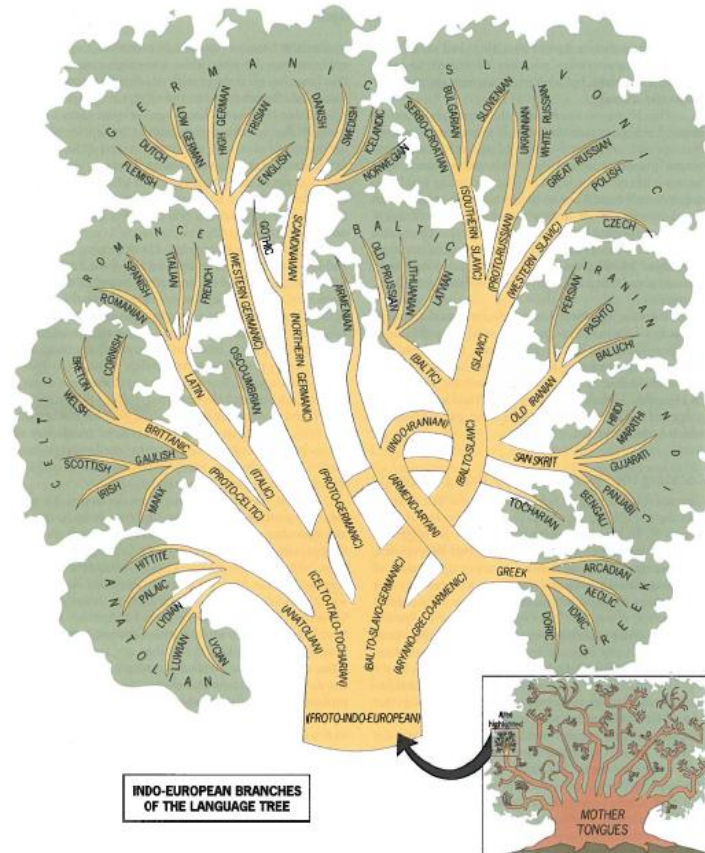
Language – a definition

- **language = a means of communicating ideas or feelings by means of a conventionalized system of signs, gestures, marks or articulate vocal sounds**

The Geography of language

- Here, we will discuss the topic of the geography of language in this order:
 - (A) The geography of world languages
 - (B) Dialects
 - (C) Language and Regional Identity

(A) The geography of world languages



The Indo-European languages

Figure 6.9
Indo-European Branches of the Language Tree. Adapted with permission from: T. V. Gamkrelidze and V. V. Ivanov. "The Early History of Indo-European Languages," *Scientific American*, March 1990, p. 111.

(A) The geography of languages

- this is an outcome of
- **(1) Innovation**
 - » Often involving lots of:
(a) Isolation, and **(b) time**
- **(2) Diffusion** – spread from one place to another

World Distribution of Major Languages and Major Language Families

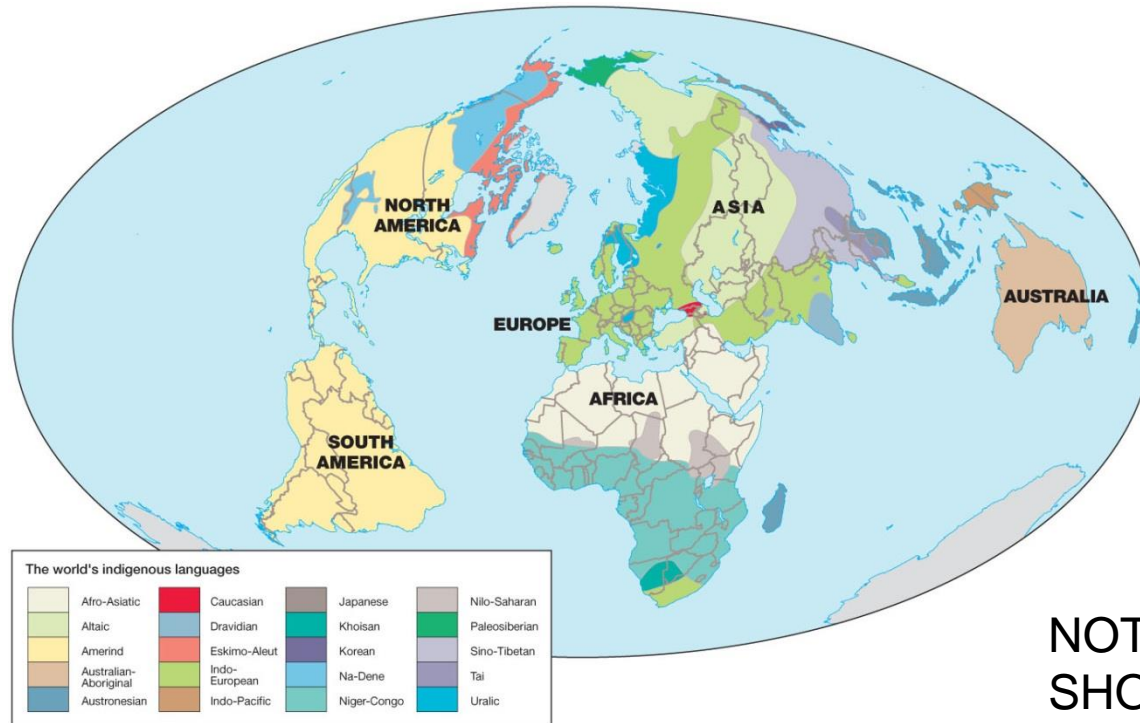


Figure 5.29 World distribution of major languages and major language families Classifying languages by family and mapping their occurrence across the globe provide insights about human geography. For example, we may discover interesting cultural linkages among seemingly disparate cultures widely separated in space and time. We may also begin to understand something about the nature of population movements across broad expanses of time and space. (Sources: Reprinted with permission from Prentice Hall, E.F. Bergman, *Human Geography: Cultures, Connections, and Landscapes*, © 1995, p. 240. Western Hemisphere adapted from *Language in the Americas* by Joseph H. Greenberg with the permission of the publishers, Stanford University Press, 1987 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. Eastern Hemisphere adapted with permission from David Crystal, *Encyclopedia of Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.)

Copyright © 2010 Pearson Education Canada

NOTE: THIS MAP SHOWS DISTRIBUTION BEFORE 1492 **COMPARE With MAP of INDO EUROPEAN** (see below) for after 1492

Indo-European (Warf 2006)

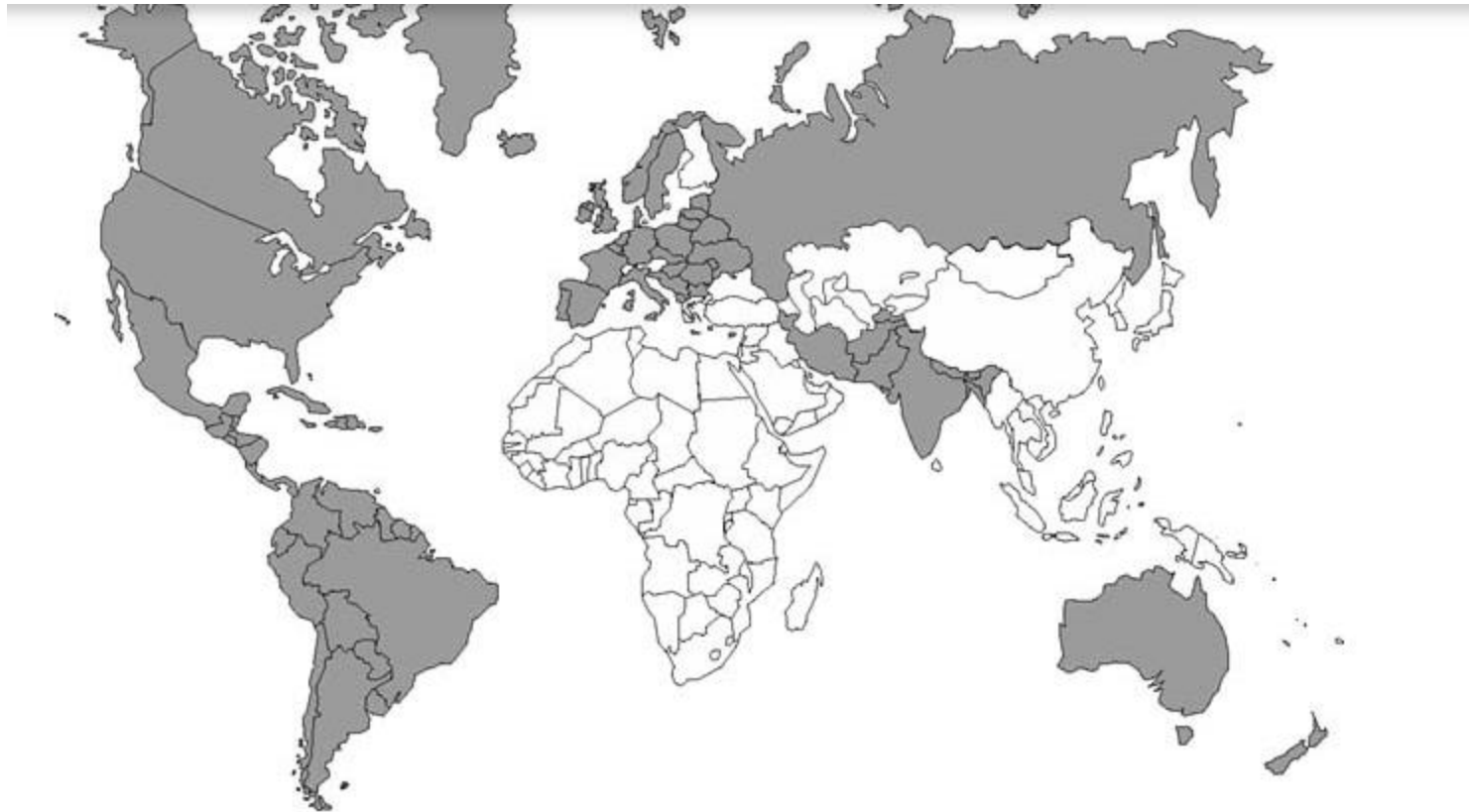


Figure 1 Countries in Which Indo-European Languages Are Dominant

Sino-Tibetan (Warf 2006)



Figure 5 Countries in Which Sino-Tibetan Languages Are Dominant

African languages (Warf 2006)

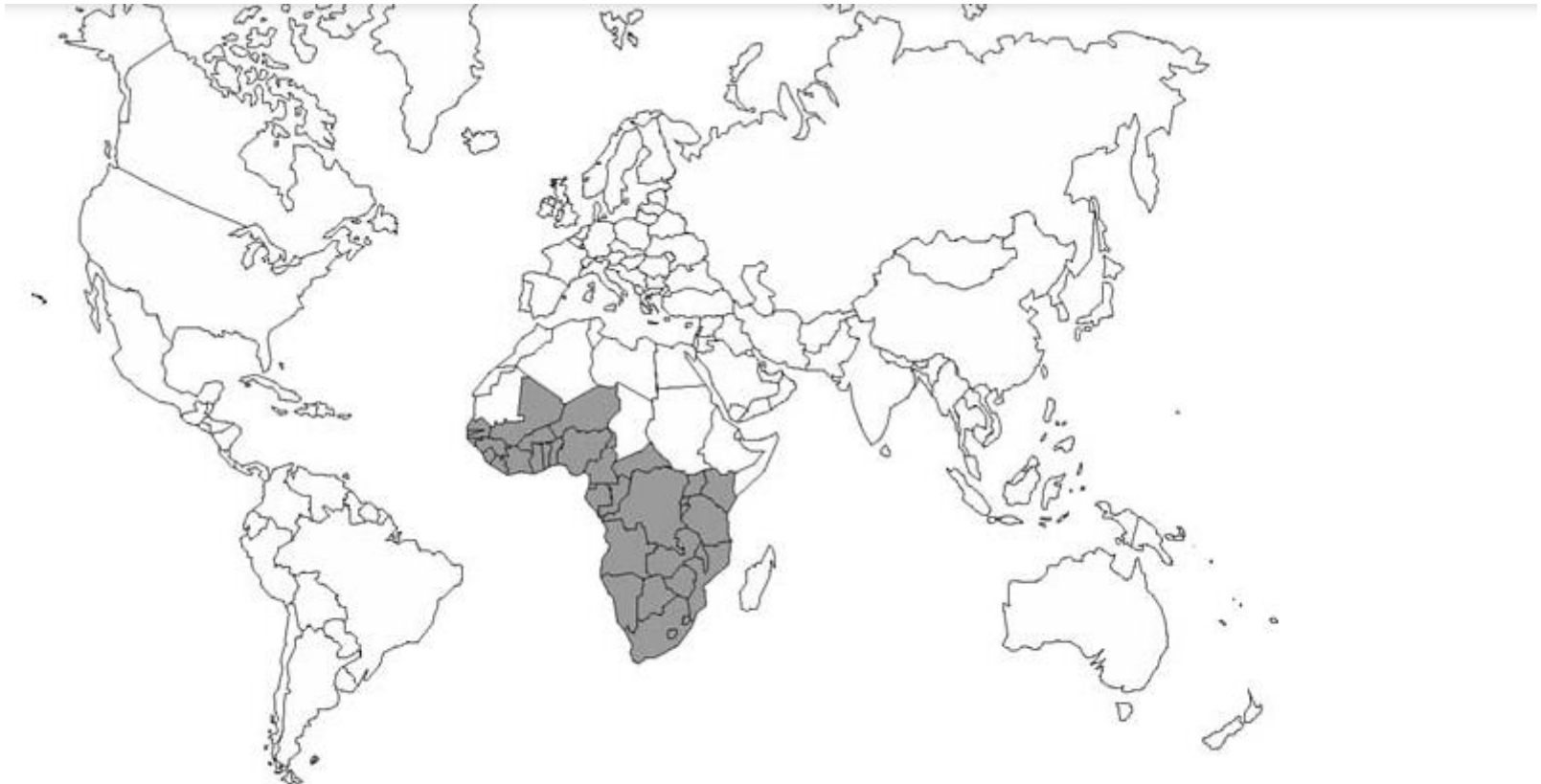


Figure 4 Countries in Which Bantu or Niger-Kordofanian Languages Are Dominant

Afro-Asiatic (Warf 2006)



Figure 2 Countries in Which Afro-Asiatic Languages Are Dominant

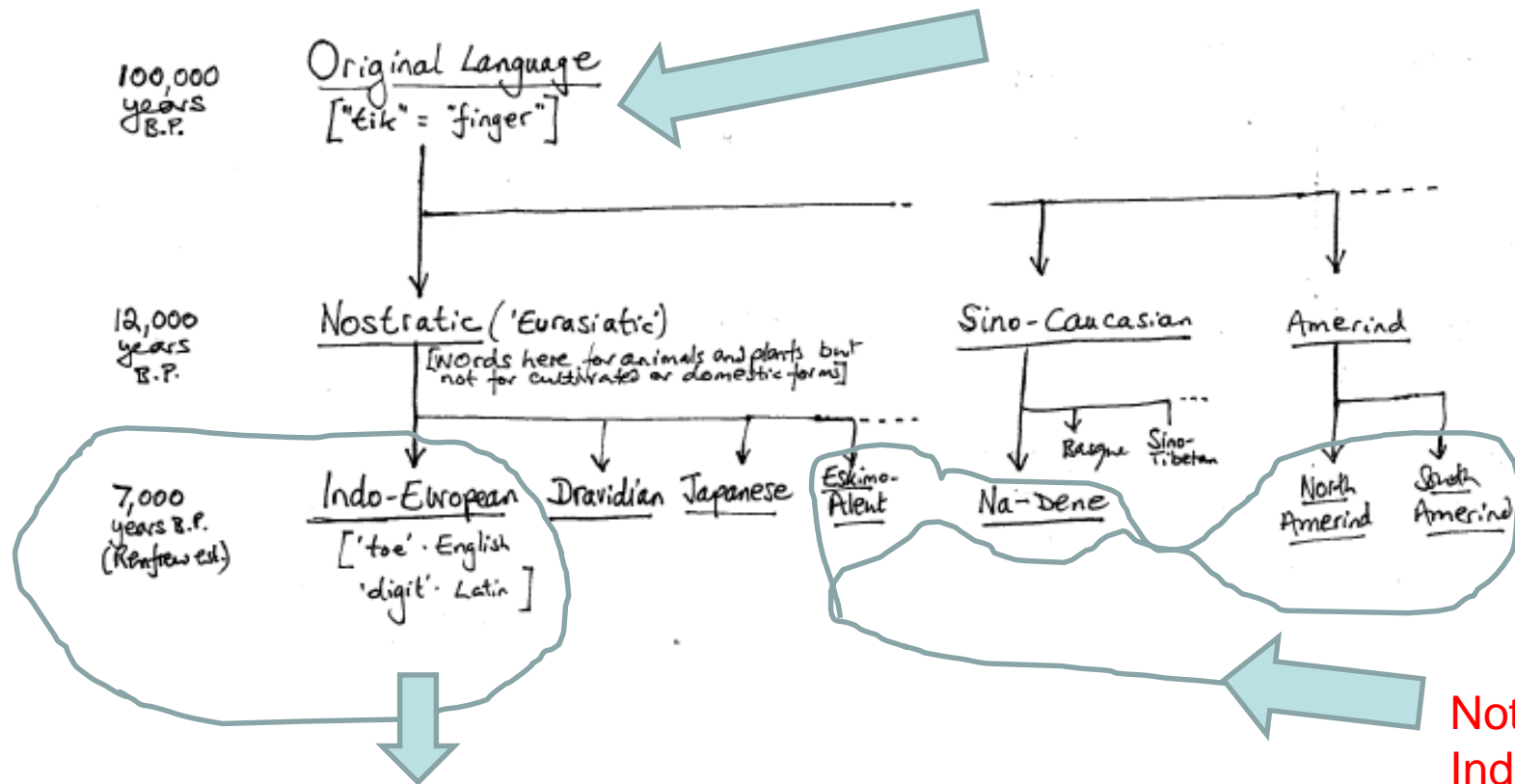
How many languages do we speak?

- Yes – how many languages do we know?
- And - If you would like to do this, why not take a minute and write down the words for:
 - *Mother*
 - *Wheel*
 - *Field*
 - *One*
 - *Ten*
- In any language known to you – and then call them out so we can hear some

The Family Tree of Language

Source: Ross, *Scientific American* 1991

Scholars are only able to make some reasonable guesses about what the first, or "original" language may have sounded like



We will talk about Indo-European first

Note: the
Indigenous
Languages
Of Americas

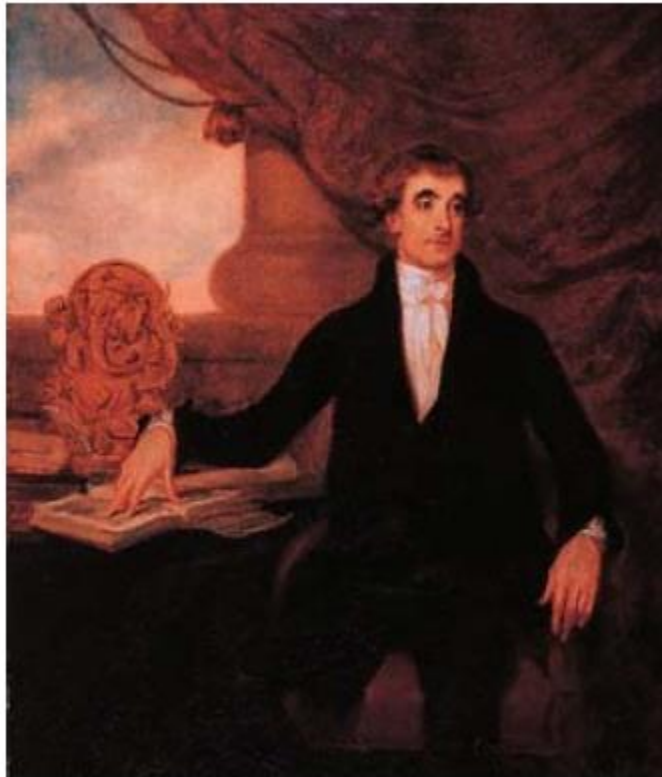
Indo-European

- One of the first real contributions to the geography of language was made by Sir William Jones, an employee of the British East India Company, who in 1786 observed the similarities between Sanskrit (an ancient East Indian language now only used for religious purposes) and a large number of European languages. He also noticed how dissimilar Indo-European languages were from those that were not Indo-European (i.e Japanese – see next slides)

- This finding surprised many scholars in Britain who could not believe that their language was derived from what they saw as a “primitive language”.

William Jones 1746-1794

Source: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography



Sir William Jones (1746-1794)

The *Sanscrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*; and the old *Persian* might be added to the same family.

Works, 3.34

The birth of Indo-European linguistics

On 2 February 1786, only about six months after he had begun to study Sanskrit, Jones's 'Third anniversary discourse' (1786) introduced startling ideas of linguistic and familial relationship between the rulers and their 'black' subjects, and the equally disconcerting conception of classical India as the *fons et origo* of world understanding. His emphasis upon roots and grammatical structure, rather than speculative etymology, rejected the

Vocabulary comparisons between some ~~Indo-European~~ and non Indo-European languages

<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Sanskrit</u>	<u>P-I-E</u>	<u>Japanese</u>	
Two	deux	duo	dva	*duwo	二	ni
three	trois	treis	tryas	*treyes	三	san
four	quatre	tettares	catvaras	*kwetwores	四	yon
ten	dix	deka	dasa	*dekmt	十	jyu
cow [ox]	bœuf	bous	gauh	*kwou	牛	usi
field	champ	agros	ajras	*agras	畑	hatake
water	eau	hudor	udan	*wedor	水	mizu
father	père	pater	pita	*pater	父	chichi
god	dieu	theos	devas	*dyeus	神	kami
wheel	roue	roda	ratha	*roto	車輪	sharin
			[chariot]	[wheel, chariot]		

Notes

P-I-E: Proto-Indo-European.

* denotes a reconstructed word in PIE.

Indo-European

- Includes almost all of the languages of Europe:
 - Except
 - **Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian** - which are members of the Uralic language family (believed to have originated in the Urals about 6000 years ago)
 - **Basque** (NE Spain, SW France) which = an isolate (a language with no known connection to any other) {note – Basque is not shown on the world map. It should be!)

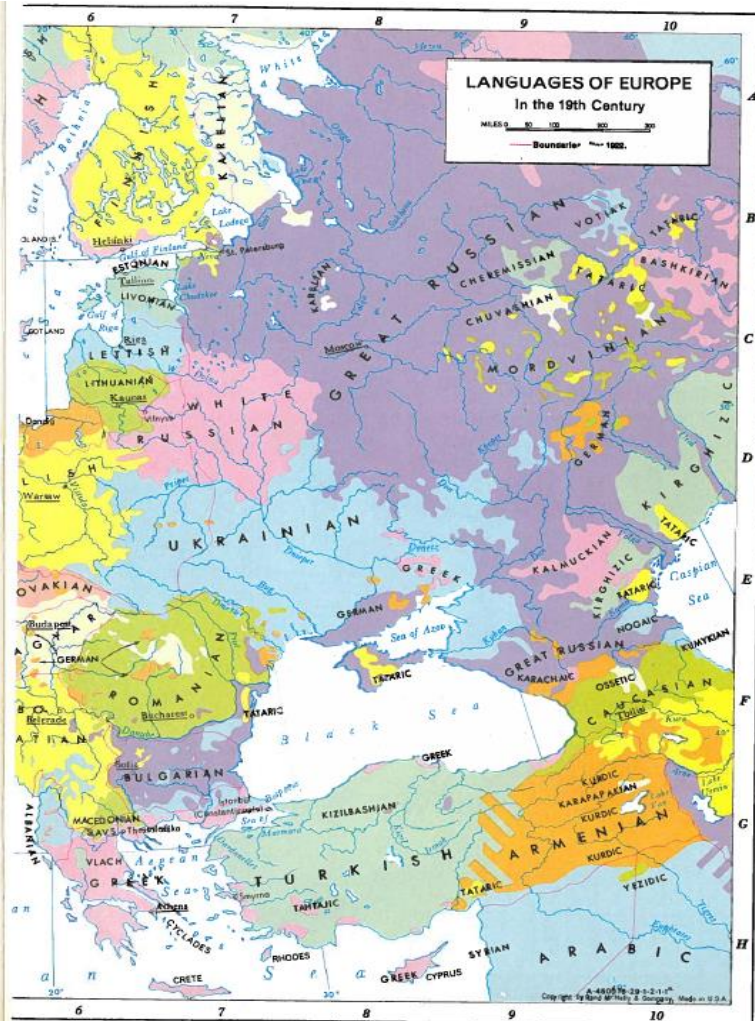
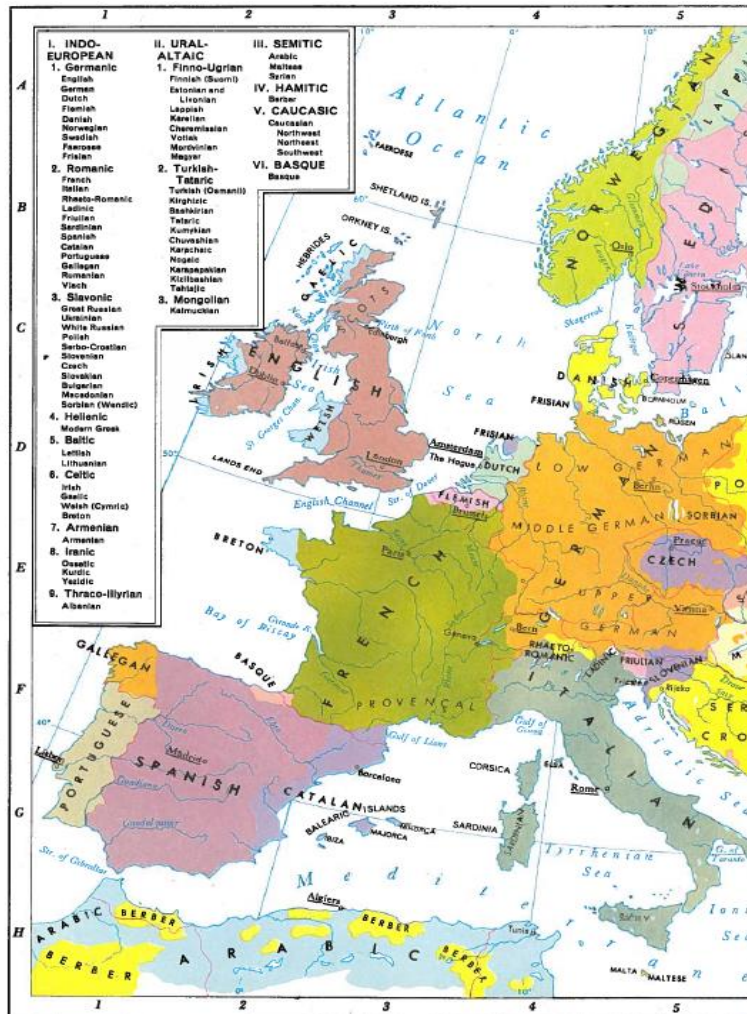
Basque – not Indo-European

- 1: bat
- 2: bi
- 3: hiru
- 4: lau
- 5: bost
- 6: sei
- 7: zazpi
- 8: zortzi
- 9: beheratzi
- 10: hamar

Hungarian – not Indo European [days of the week]



Not Indo-European: Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian (all Uralic); and Basque (an isolate). note: this RandMcNally map based on work of Bogdan Zaborski, an old Concordia geography professor)



Origins of Indo-European

- Where did Indo-European begin? How did it spread into Europe?
 - Older view was that invading nomadic hordes brought it from the Russian steppes
 - Newer views put it in the Turkey/Armenia area: i.e. Colin Renfrew, Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins (London 1987)
 - suggests one source of origins in Anatolia (Turkey) {see map on next slide}; and,
 - that Indo-European was spread from the Middle East across Europe from about 10,000 years ago by sedentary farmers
 - who were also responsible for the diffusion of agriculture across the continent. (These people, because they could feed more people through agriculture, eventually out-bred the non-Indo Europeans)

Where did Indo-European begin? Some newer ideas...

1990 view

Figure 6.12

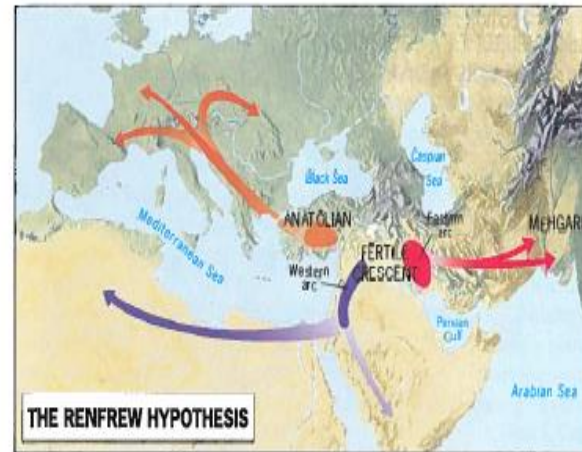
Indo-European Language Family: Proposed Hearth and Dispersal Hypothesis. This theory proposes that the Indo-European Language Family began in the Caucasus Mountain region and dispersed eastward before diffusing westward. Adapted with permission from: T. V. Gamkrelidze and V. V. Ivanov, *Scientific American*, March 1990, p. 112.



1989 Renfrew view

Figure 6.10

The Renfrew Hypothesis. The Renfrew Hypothesis proposes that three sources of agriculture each gave rise to a major language family. Adapted with permission from: "The Origins of Indo-European Languages," *Scientific American*, 1989, p. 114.



Another idea of the origins

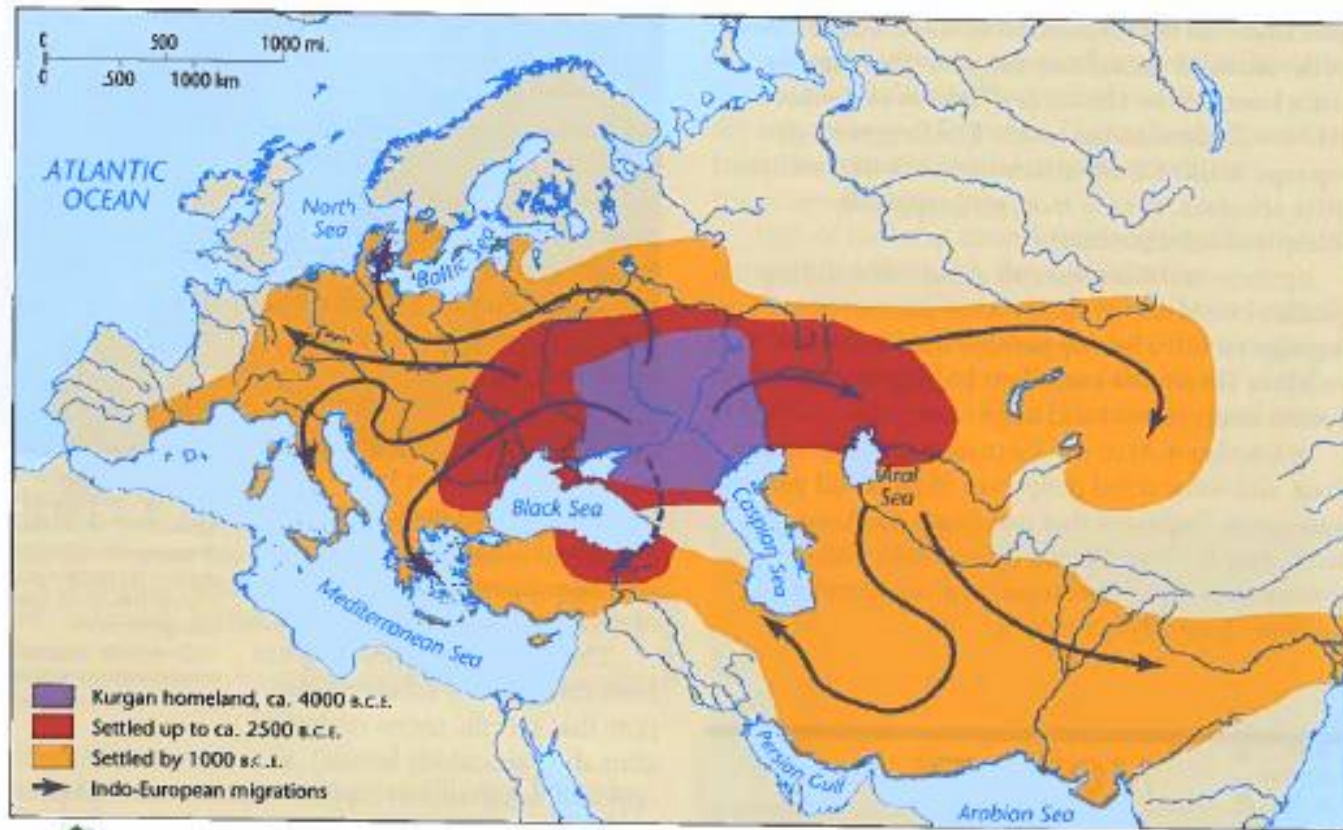


FIGURE 4.6 The spread of Indo-European language. This map depicts the so-called Kurgan hypothesis, named after the burial mounds (*kurgan*) characteristic of the warrior pastoralists who inhabited the area north of the Black and Caspian seas. Around 6000 B.C.E., they began to spread outward, conquering and imposing their language across Europe, Central Asia, India, the Balkans, and Anatolia (modern-day Turkey).

Source: Domosh et al 2015

Can we figure out where proto-Indo-European [PIE] began, using the environment?

- Many have tried.
- The approach is to figure out what the environment was like - some 10,000 years or so ago
- And then see if the words for some of the plants and animals that would be found in those conditions exist in PIE.
- One example follows:

University of Chicago Press 1970

Proto-Indo-European Trees

Paul Friedrich



The old words for birch tree

*The Birch: *bherH-ǵ-o-*

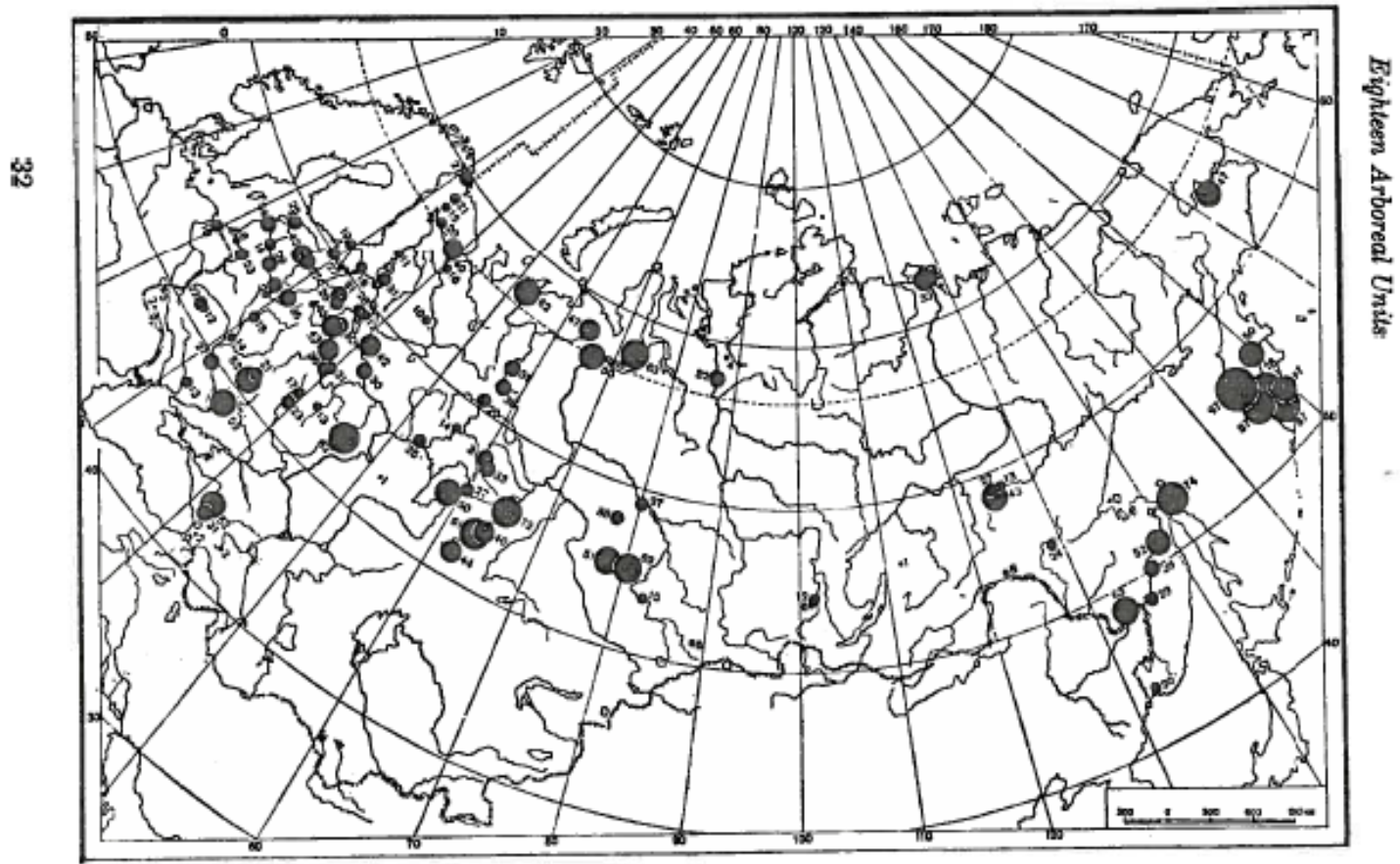
TABLE 3
THE BRIGHT BIRCH

	Birch	Bright
Latin	<i>farnus, fraxinus</i>	<i>fulgor, fla:gro, flamma</i>
Latvian	<i>beŕzs</i>	<i>birkstis</i>
Old Norse	<i>bjǫrk</i>	<i>bjartr</i>
Old High German	<i>birihha</i>	<i>beraht</i>
Iranian	<i>*barzā</i>	<i>brāz</i>
Indic	<i>bhūrjā-</i>	<i>bhrājate</i>

The evidence certainly suggests some folk etymological or connotational link between the birch names and the various roots for associated qualities; trees so often yield the names of colors and similar properties (ashen, piney, and so forth). Yet here one can determine neither the nature of the relation nor the direction of derivation, and all the arguments, both seem inconclusive.

A second semantic problem, as interesting as the connotation of "white, bright," is posed by the shift

But .. birch trees found all over Eurasia in Mid Holocene



MAP 1. Distribution of *Betula* in the middle Holocene (from Neishtadt)

According to Colin Renfrew, Indo-European diffuses with agriculture westwards

104

Chapter 6 Language

Figure 6.11

Indo-European Language Family: Proposed Westward Dispersal. Approximate timings and routes for the westward dispersal of the Indo-European languages.



The Austronesian family

- “Austronesian languages are spoken today as native languages over more than half of the globe’s span, from Madagascar to Easter Island”
- Source: Jared Diamond *Guns, Germs and Steel: A short history of everybody* (Random House London, 1997)

If we leave Indo-European, there are other language families that have spread far

The Austronesian family

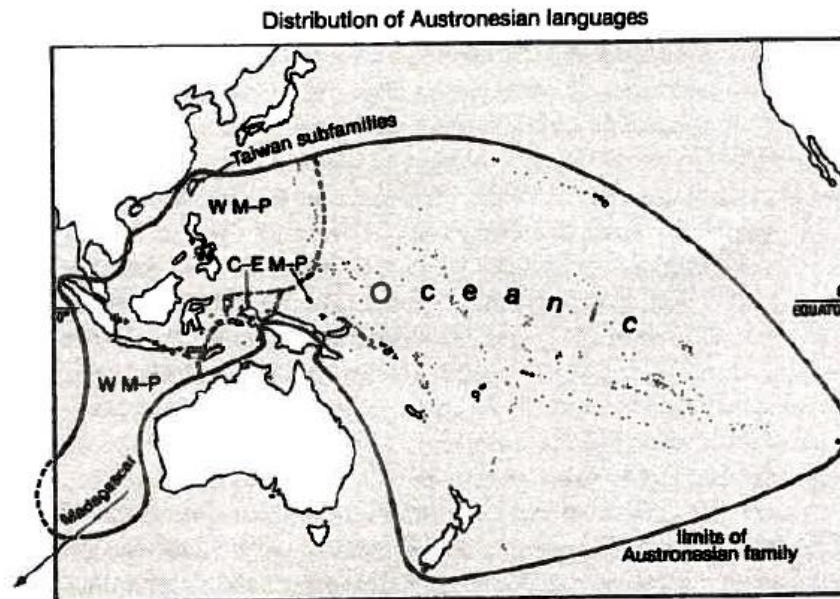
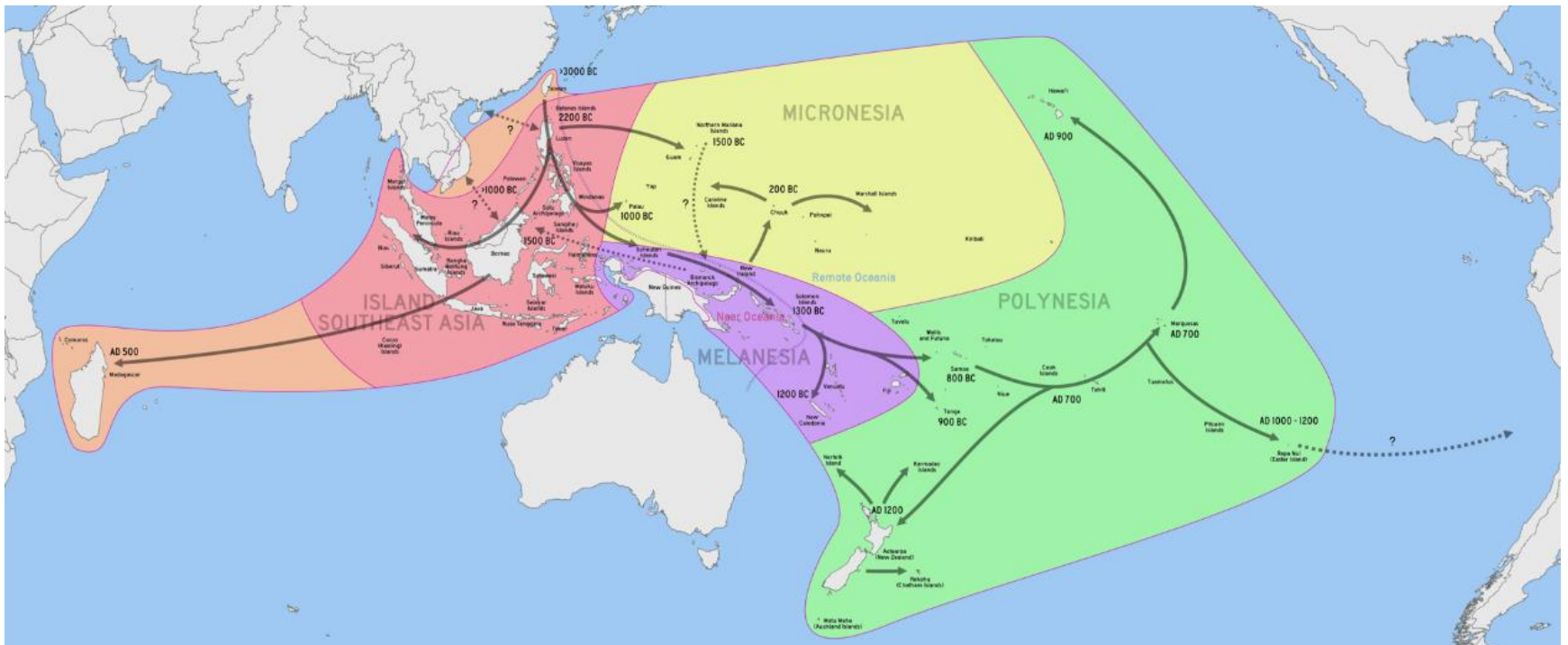


Figure 17.1. The Austronesian language family consists of four subfamilies, three of them confined to Taiwan and one (Malayo-Polynesian) widespread. The latter subfamily in turn consists of two sub-subfamilies, Western Malayo-Polynesian (= WM-P) and Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian (= C-E M-P). The latter sub-subfamily in turn consists of four sub-sub-subfamilies, the very widespread Oceanic one to the east and three others to the west in a much smaller area comprising Halmahera, nearby islands of eastern Indonesia, and the west end of New Guinea.

Note: most of
The area covered by
Austronesia are its
Malayo-Polynesian
Sub-family

Source: Jared
Diamond

Extent of Austronesian



Source: Wikipedia (their entry on Austronesian is well worth reading)

The Austronesian family

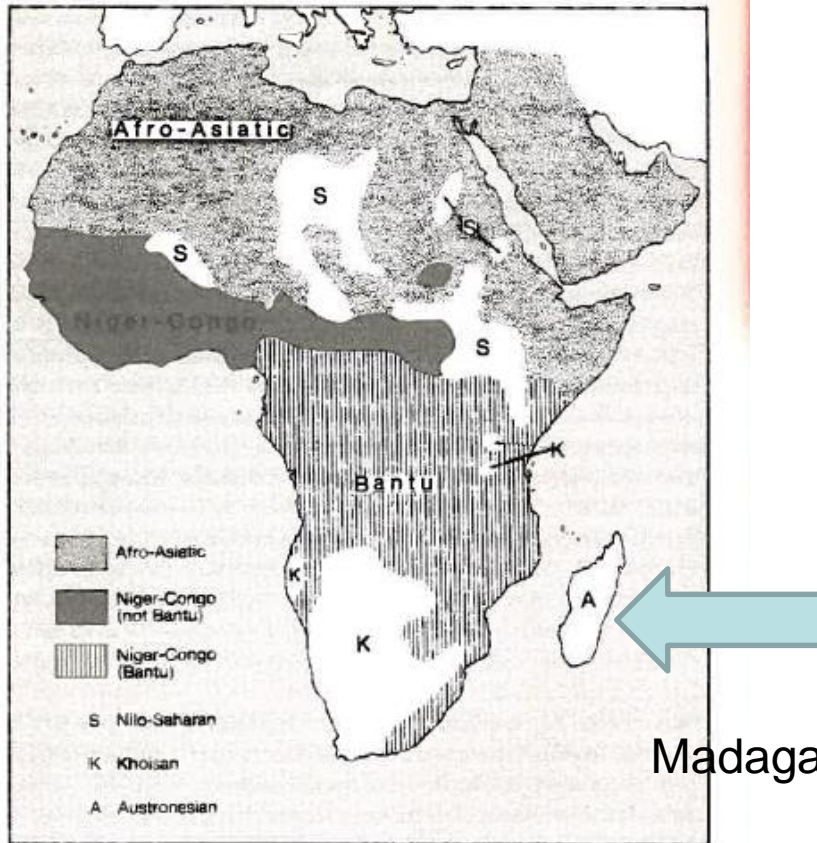


Figure 19.2. Language families of Africa.

Spread of Austronesian westwards
By about 500AD brought to Madagascar by Indian traders



Madagascar

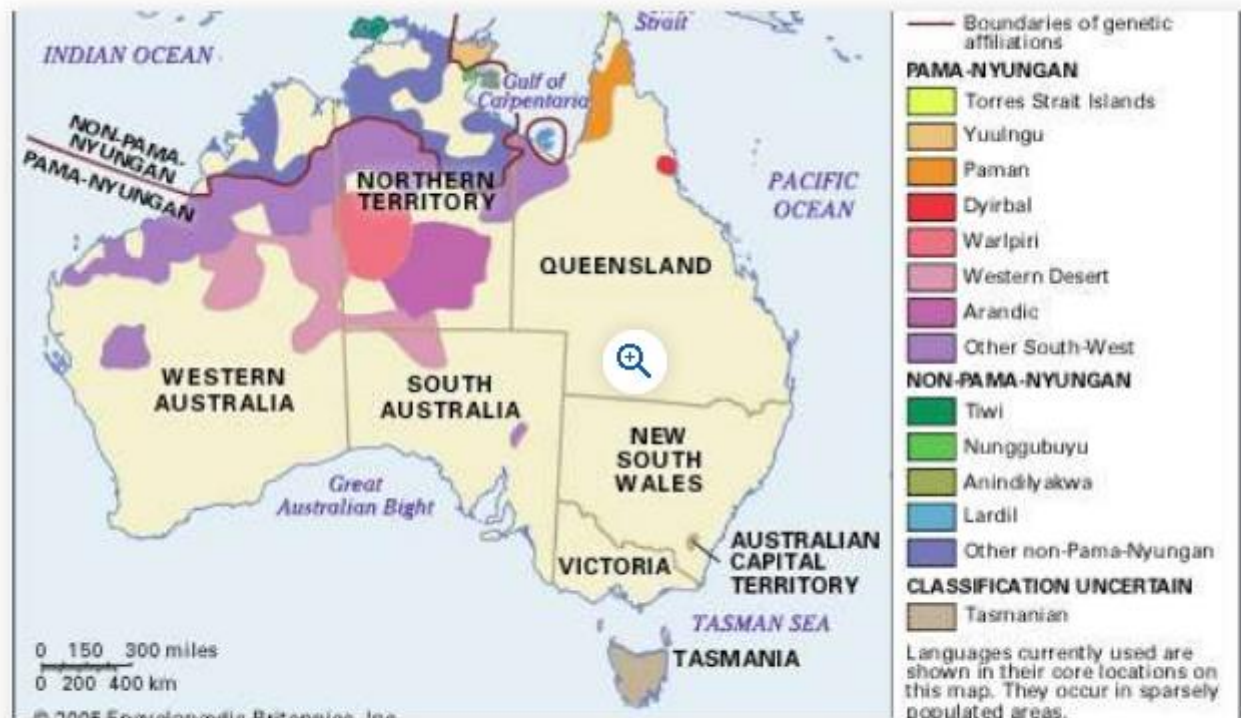
Austronesian languages of Madagascar
Not related at all to those of Africa

Note: Australian aboriginal languages NOT Austronesian

Australian Aboriginal languages are a unique [language](#) group, having no generally accepted genetic connections with non-Australian languages. (Despite its name, the [Austronesian](#) language family does not include Australian Aboriginal languages.) This uniqueness is probably the result of geographic isolation: archaeological evidence indicates that Australia has been inhabited for at least 40,000 years, and there is little sign of influxes of new inhabitants or even of extensive cultural contact with other Pacific peoples (except locally in

Encyclopedia Britannica

These languages are so old, we cannot easily see how they fit into our “family tree” of world languages (see slides at start)



Distribution of the Australian Aboriginal languages.

Image: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Encyclopedia Britannica

Warf (2006) concludes with this note on other languages

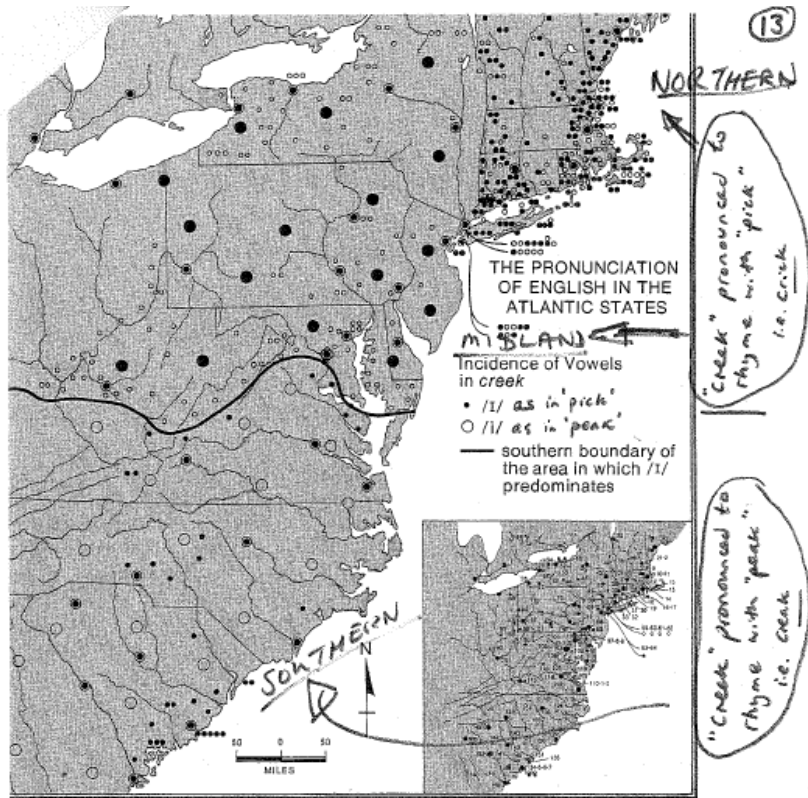
Several other families are worth noting. Southern India is home to a sizable population that does not speak Indo-European languages; instead, it speaks the Dravidian tongues such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The Indo-Chinese peninsula is home to two distinct language groups: Austro-Asiatic (Vietnamese and Cambodian) and Thai-Kadai (Thai and Lao). The aboriginal peoples of Australia and Papua New Guinea, who comprise 1% of the world's population, speak 20% of the world's languages in an enormously diverse group often called Indo-Pacific. The Americas were home to a huge range of indigenous languages prior to the mass extermination unleashed by the Europeans; more than a dozen families existed in North America (e.g., Iroquoian, Siouan, Salishan, Athabaskan, Mayan) and in South America (e.g., Andean, Chibchan, Macro-Carib). Finally, isolate languages such as Basque, with no surviving relatives, and Kartvelian tongues such as Georgian continue to survive.

(B) DIALECT

Dialect

- “Dialect” = regional variations from standard language in terms of
 - A. accent,
 - B. vocabulary and
 - C. grammar
- Dialects will develop because of either
 - Lengthy periods of isolation from other speakers of the same language
 - Or, through migrations

A. Accent [pronunciation]: “creek” said differently in 3 USA cultural hearths

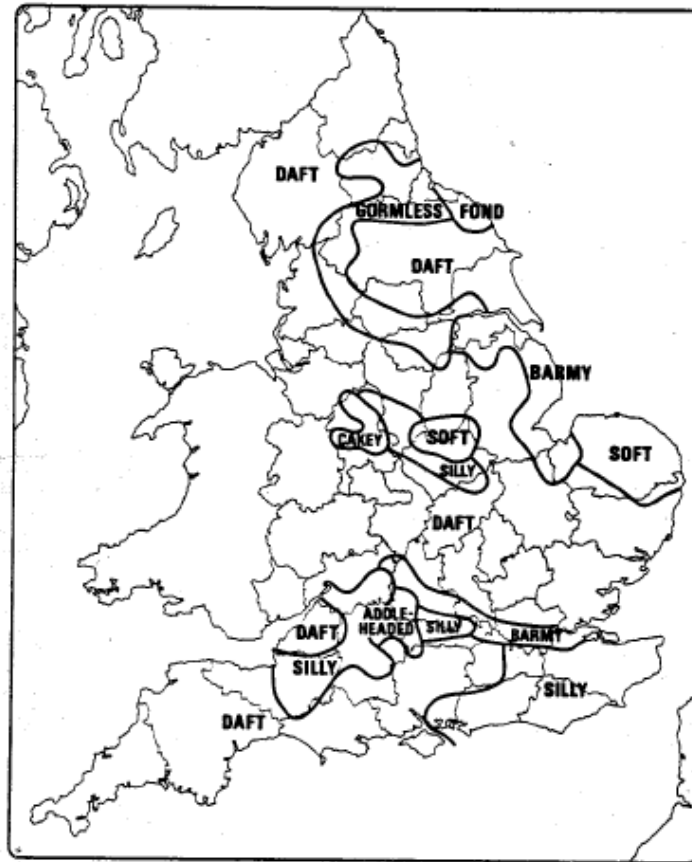


The map indicates that the pronunciation of *creek* with an /i/ as in *pick* predominates in the North except in southern New England and metropolitan New York. Pronunciation with an /ɪ/ as in *peak* predominates in the South except for the coast of South Carolina. Since /i/ is used as a prestige pronunciation among educated speakers, the insert shows how their usage differs from that of the general populace.

- Northern [New England] and Midland [Mid Atlantic] areas say ‘creek’ to rhyme with “crick”
- Southern [Chesapeake, or Tidewater] say “creek” to rhyme with “creek”

Recall from our look at vernacular houses in the E USA – it is the same pattern of three cultural hearths

B. Vocabulary: example of “silly”

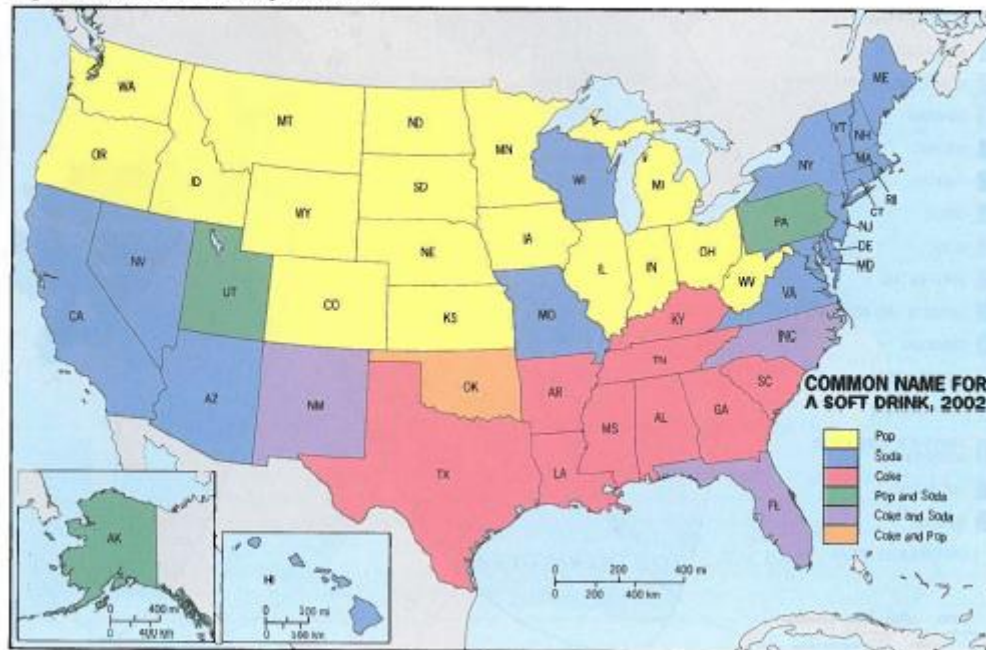


Map 145: SILLY (person)

Vocabulary: pop/soda etc

Figure 6.7

Common Name for a Soft Drink in the United States, by State, 2002. Data from: Bert Vaux, Harvard Survey of North American Dialects. <http://cfprod01.lint.uwm.edu/Dept/FLL/linguistics/dialect/last> accessed September 2005.



Vocabulary: South America example



FIGURE 4.7 Dialect boundaries in Latin America. Spanish speakers in the Americas use either *vos* or *tú* as the second-person singular verb form. They represent dialects of Spanish: both are correct, linguistically speaking, but the *vos* form is older. Some regions use *vos* and *tú* interchangeably. (Source: Adapted from Pountain, 2005.)

c. Grammar

- Here we are looking at the order of words, how sentences are constructed.
- One expression that often varies regionally is the way we tell the time
 - i.e. How would you tell someone the time when it is 11:35?

Grammar- example from SE England

- How would you tell someone the time when it is 11:35?
 - ANSWER “It is **five-and-twenty-to** twelve”
- The point here is that this is a local (regional) variation – not a national standard – and that is why it is a dialect expression.

Italian Nones dialect vs Standard Italian

with thanks to Sara for providing the
following powerpoints

The Nones dialect is spoken in the South Tyrol area of northern Italy

English	Standard Italian
Home	Casa
Room	Camera
Hospital	Ospedale
Inside	Di dentro
February	Febbraio
September	Settembre
October	Ottobre
December	Dicember

Nones dialect
Ciaza
Ciamara
Oshpedal
Denter
Ferrrar
September
Ottober
Disember

English	Standard Italian
One, two, three four	Uno, due, tre, quattro
Five, ten, twelve	Cinque, dieci, dodici
A bit	Un poco
Boy / Girl / Children	Bambino / Bambina / Bambini
“What did you think/ what do you expect”	Che credevi ?
Called me	Mi ha chiamata
Go and answer	Vai a rispondere
They came in my home for Christmas	Sono venuti a casa mia per Natale

Nones dialect
Uno, doi, tre, quatter
Sinch, diesh, dodesh
Un pueshte
Poppo / Poppa / Poppi
Che wes che sia, po ?
M’a clamava
Vai al shponder
Son nuti denter a ciaza mia per Nadal

A small text to show differences when speaking full sentences

English	Standard Italian	Nones dialect
My name is Giovanna Flaim. I come from the village of Revò, born in 1934. I came to the United States in 1935 and lived in New York.	Il mio nome è Giovanna Flaim. Vengo dal villaggio di Revò, nata nel mille nove <u>cento</u> trenta quattro . Sono arrivata negli Stati Uniti nel mille nove <u>cento</u> trenta cinque e ho vissuto a New York.	Le me nom e Giovanna Flaim. Scenda del paes de Revò, nata del mill nove <u>se</u> nto trenta quatter . Scen nudi ai Stati Uniti en mill nove <u>se</u> nto trenta sinch e hai a abita en New York

As you see, not so different – but still some subtle differences (mainly, number pronunciation)

Migration & Isolation

- When people move to a new land, there seems to be two possibilities regarding the changes that occur to their language.
 - 1. When people move, their language escapes the changes in vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation that occurs in the region of origin. [**New worlds, old words**] {A nice example I learned was that some regional Greek dialects are better preserved in Montreal than Greece.}
 - 2. When people move, their language undergoes considerable change [either through exposure to new environments or new technologies] **New worlds, new words**

New worlds – old words....

- Do you know of any examples??
- Here is one from my recent reading

Herman Melville Moby Dick 1851

- When a whale is perplexed by being hunted, it is described as “gallied”
- To “gally” is to frighten excessively – it is an old Saxon word. It occurs once [as “gallow” – to fear – in *King Lear* by Shakespeare.(ch 87: The Great Armada p406)]

Moby Dick (1851)

“To common land usages, the word [gally] is now completely obsolete ... much the same is it with many other sinewy Saxonisms of this sort which emigrated to the New England rocks with ... the Old English emigrants in the time of the Commonwealth.”

“Thus some of the best and furthest descended English words [?oldest]...are now democratized ... in the New World” (ch 87; p. 406)

As examples of the effects of migration and isolation --

- When people move, their language escapes changes that occur at home
 - We consider examples of French in Quebec
- When people move, their language undergoes considerable change
 - We consider example of English in Newfoundland

French in Quebec: background

- Example – the French in North America
 - 1789 French Revolution:
 - The Revolutionaries standardize language in France
 - Because it was felt that the many regional dialects across France made people from the regions somehow “unequal”; Parisian French becomes the standard.
- BUT for those who had left France before this date ... older forms of French were preserved.

Languages of France, 1789

Figure 5.35 The languages of France in 1789

On the eve of the French Revolution, language diversity in France was not so dissimilar from other European regions that were consolidating into states. Whereas a multiplicity of local languages and dialects prevailed before the emergence of a strong central state, many governments created policies to eliminate them. Local languages made it difficult for states to collect taxes, enforce laws, and teach new citizens. (Source: D. Bell, "Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei." *American Historical Review*, 1995, p. 1406.)



Copyright © 2010 Pearson Education Canada

“When people move, their language escapes changes that occurs at home”

Louisiana	Acadia	Quebec	France
		gager [to bet]	parrier
	éparer	étendre [to hang out fishing nets]	
ne lache pas la patate			n'abandonne pas [don't give up]

Can anyone help me and fill in some of the gaps in my table – or give me some other words...??

English in Newfoundland

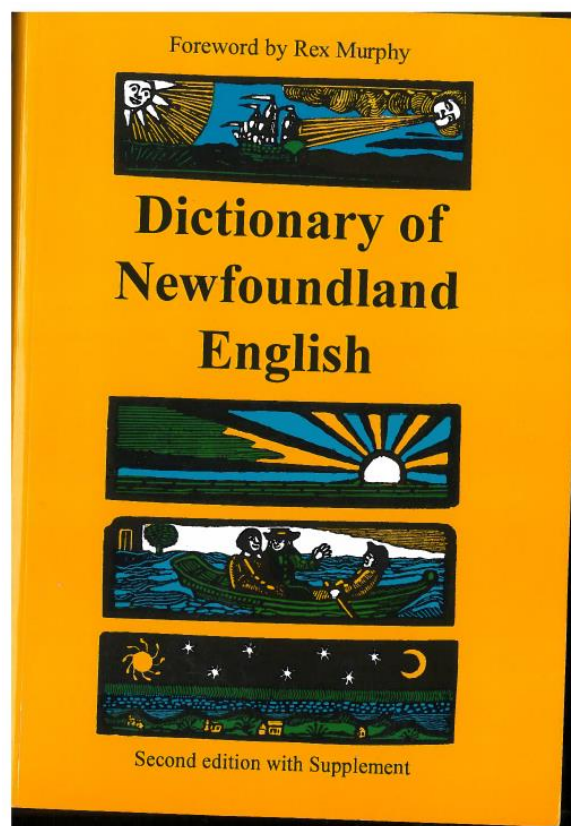
Newfoundland – settled from 17th C onwards by English speakers from western England and Ireland.

- (a) Vocabulary: new words for new environment:
 - “Ballicatter” = new words for “ice”;
 - “bedlammer” = immature seal;
 - “penguin” = originally for the Great Auk [from “pen gwn” = Welsh for “white head”]
- b) grammar – “... how many times am I after telling you ...”
- (c) pronunciation – a distinct Irish/west of England accent

The Dictionary of Newfoundland English, edited by G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin and J.D.A Widdowson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Second edition, 2000)

Down – “to go north”, as in “down to Labrador”

“penguin” = originally for the Great Auk [from “pen gwn” = Welsh for “white head”]



penguin n also piawing *OED* ~ 1 (Nfld: 1578-); *DAE* (1674-); *DC* (Nfld: 1578-). For a summary discussion of the obscure origin, see the *OED* note and W B LOCKWOOD *Zeits für Ang und Amer* xvii (1969), 262-4. A large, flightless bird once living in large numbers on Funk Island, extinct since the nineteenth century (*Pingulus impennis*); attrib in coastal names; GREAT AUK. [1536] 1600 HAKLUYT iii, 130 They came to part of the West Indies about Cape Briton, shaping their course thence Northeastwardes, vntill they came to the Island of Penguin, which is very full of rockes and stones, whereon they went and found it full of great foules white and gray, as big as geese, and they saw infinite numbers of their egges. They drave a great number of the foules into their boats vpon their sayles. [1578] 1935 *Richard Hakluyt* [Parkhurst's letter: 131-2 There are. . . many other kind of birdes store, too long

A Note: Pidgin and Creole

- As well as dividing – as dialect formation indicates – languages can, in certain circumstances, combine with other languages to produce hybrid forms – which themselves may eventually become new languages:
 - pidgin
 - creole

Pidgin

- **Pidgin** = “A pidgin is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other, for trading or other reasons” (David Crystal, The Cambridge Companion to Language, 1987)
 - A great example is the pidgin developed between the Basque whalers and the native peoples of the lower St Lawrence in the mid-sixteenth century (see next slide).

Pidgin (Basque-Micmac/Montagnais)

When the French Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard was in Port Royal, Nova Scotia in 1616, the natives greeted him with “*adesquidex, adesquidex*” [“good friends”]. The natives were Micmacs but these were not Micmac words. Perhaps they were derived from the Basque word *adiskide* (which we know was pronounced *adeskide* in 17thC Basque).

Another example is the missionary Paul Le Jeune at Tadoussac in the 1630s - where he noted the Montagnais called him “*ania*” (my brother). But “brother” in Montagnais is *nichtais*. In Basque it is *anaia*.

[Source: Peter Bakker, “The language of the Coast Tribes is Half Basque”: A Basque-American Indian Pidgin in Use Between Europeans and Native Americans in North America ca 1540-1640” *Anthropological Linguistics* 1989 vol 31 (3/4) 117-147.]

Creole

- **Creole** = “A creole is a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of a community – a definition which emphasizes that pidgins and creoles are two stages in a distinct process of linguistic development” (David Crystal, The Cambridge Companion to Language, 1987: 334-6)
 - i.e, the creole language of *papiamentu* (on Curaçao) made up of a number of African languages with Portuguese, Amerindian, English, Dutch and Spanish. Two dialects – one on Aruba, the other on Curaçao and Bonaire

c. Language and regional identity

(c) Language and Regional Identity

- Because language is spoken by people who occupy space and is an intrinsic part of culture, it is not surprising that language has always been an important characteristic of the cultural region.
- Many groups speak with pride about their language and will strongly identify with it, using language as part of the means to establish ethnic, regional, and national differences

Distribution of Language across Canada: Mother Tongue by Province and Territory

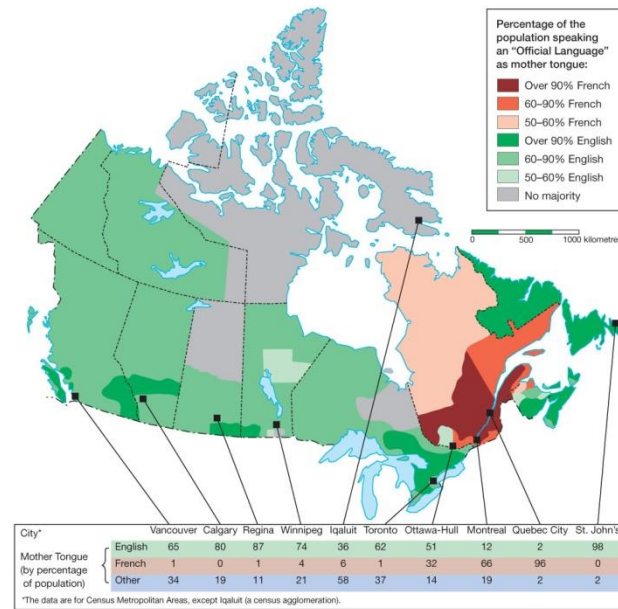


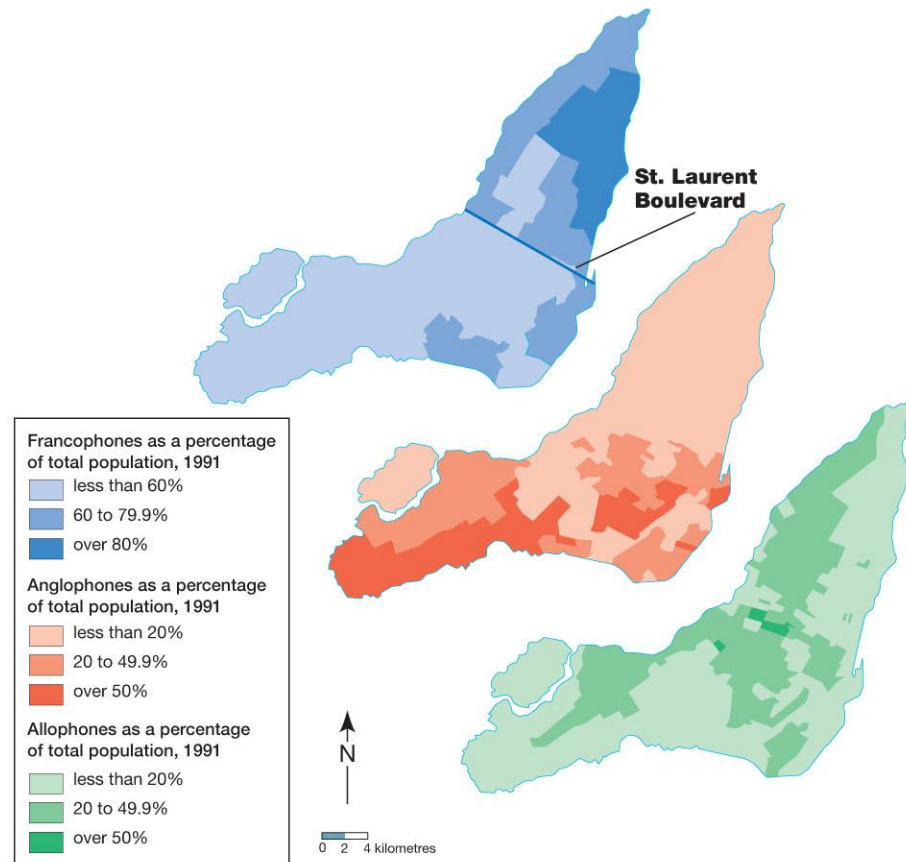
Figure 5.30 The distribution of language across Canada: mother tongue by province and territory This map shows one way of providing an overview of Canada's language geography. It does this by showing the percentage of people in an area who, in the 1986 census, reported that they used one of the official languages (French or English) as their mother tongue. Using data from small areal units (Statistics Canada's "census divisions"), the map gives a much more detailed picture than is possible from one based on provincial or territorial divisions. The map clearly shows the regions in Canada where these languages predominate (for example, French in southern parts of Quebec and English in Newfoundland). It also allows us to see those areas where neither official language is used as the predominant language by the majority (in Nunavut, northern Saskatchewan, and northeastern Ontario, because of the importance of Aboriginal languages in those regions). In addition, the map shows those regions where the official languages, while in a majority, are less dominant than in other parts of Canada (for example, in northern Alberta and northern Quebec). Such maps, however, cannot show the more detailed patterns that exist within urban communities, places where the many mother tongues of recent immigration make their greatest impact on the pattern of Canada's languages. To do that, data for a selection of cities has been added to show the variation that exists across this country. (Sources: David H. Kaplan, "Population and Politics in a Plural Society: The Changing Geography of Canada's Linguistic Groups," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84[1], 1994, pp. 52-53. The material is used permission of Blackwell Publishing Ltd. City data are from Statistics Canada's "1996 Census: Community Profiles," available at <http://ceps.statcan.ca>.)

Quebec: Some issues

- In Quebec:
concern about declining birth rate *and* **language shift*** of immigrants (into English, not French) has fuelled a “nationalist project” designed to support and increase the use of French.
- ***Language shift**=an indicator of the number of people who adopt a new language, usually measured by the difference between *mother tongue* and *home language* populations

The Language Divide in Montreal

Figure 5.32 The language divide in Montreal As these maps based on 1991 census data show clearly, the English- and French-speaking populations of Montreal (the anglophone and francophone communities) maintain separate existences. The traditional boundary of St. Laurent Boulevard can still be seen as demarcating these two groups. Bridging the “two solitudes,” the allophone communities (made up of people who speak neither English nor French as their mother tongue) have developed language geographies of their own. (Sources: L. Lo, and C. Teixeira, “If Quebec Goes . . . The ‘Exodus’ Impact.” *Professional Geographer* 50, 1998, pp. 481–498. The material is used by permission of Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Further information, including mother tongue maps for 1996, can be found in Julie Archambault, Damaris Rose, and Anne-Marie Séguin, *ATLAS: Immigration and Metropolis*, on the website of the Montréal Centre for Interuniversity Research on Immigration, Integration and Urban Dynamics at <http://im.metropolis.net>.



Canada's Indigenous peoples

- Decline of Aboriginal languages:
 - A worldwide phenomena, and one especially acute here:
 - As of the 1996 Census of Canada, only 3 of the 50 Aboriginal languages still spoken can be considered secure
 - Cree (76,475)
 - Ojibway (22,625)
 - Inuktitut (26,840)
 - Of the rest, at least 12 are in danger of extinction

From 2001 Canadian census

Despite the fact that the 2001 census also records an increase in the size of the three leading Aboriginal language groups, according to a recent UNESCO publication, Canada's Aboriginal languages are among the most endangered in the world.¹¹ As of 1996, only 3 of the 50 Aboriginal languages currently spoken in this country can be considered secure, and at least a dozen are on the brink of extinction. Over the years, the numbers of native language speakers has been reduced through slaughter and disease, forced assimilation in residential schools, and the economic and political necessity of learning English or French. The death in 1829 of the last known speaker of the Beothuk language of Newfoundland was but the first of a series of Aboriginal language extinctions that continues to this day. For example, the British Columbian languages of Haida (with only 240 speakers left in 1996), Tlingit (145), and Kutenai (120) are almost certain to join that list in the very near future.

1996 Census

The 1996 census records approximately 800 000 Aboriginal people in Canada (a figure which, as Chapter 3 noted, is somewhat incomplete). Of this total, 25 percent reported that they spoke an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. Of these, the majority spoke Cree (76 475), Ojibway (22 625), or the languages of the Inuktitut language family (26 840). (The 2001 census recorded the sizes of these three language groups as 80 000, 29 700, and 23 500, respectively.) However, when asked about the language most used at home, only 15 percent of the total in 1996 used an Aboriginal language. This statistic gives us an overall indication of the measure of *language shift* into English or French that is occurring.

— *Journal of American Indian Education*, 35 (1996), 1

OF THE MEASURE OF LANGUAGE SHIFT INTO ENGLISH OR FRENCH THAT IS OCCURRING.

For a more detailed picture of this shift, experts have derived an *index of continuity*. This index shows, for every 100 people with an Aboriginal mother tongue, the number who used an indigenous language most often at home. An index number below 30 is indicative of a language that is endangered, because at that point the language is not being passed on to enough children to enable it to survive. Overall, the index declined from 76 to 65 between 1981 and 1996. Over that period, the index varies from 12 for British Columbia's Salish languages to 65 for Cree and 84 for Inuktitut.

Statistics Canada

As Mary Jane Norris has recently remarked in a useful study of Canadian Aboriginal languages, the loss of language does not equate with the death of a culture, but it can severely handicap its future.¹² The vocabulary that each language develops is unique, and its loss therefore diminishes a people's ability to describe phenomena in terms most appropriate to it. Perhaps the most famous illustration of this point is the number of words that the Inuit have for snow (Table 5.3), a range of vocabulary brought about by the importance of snow in their way of life. Given how

¹¹S.A. Wurm (ed.), *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996, p. 23.

¹²The paragraphs on Aboriginal languages are based on M.J. Norris, "Canada's Aboriginal Languages," *Canadian Social Trends*, Statistics Canada, Catalogue 11-008, Winter 1998, pp. 8-16; and Statistics Canada, "1996 Census: Aboriginal data," *The Daily*, January 13, 1998 (www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm). The distinctions between Aboriginal languages and language families are from these sources, as are the English spellings used here.

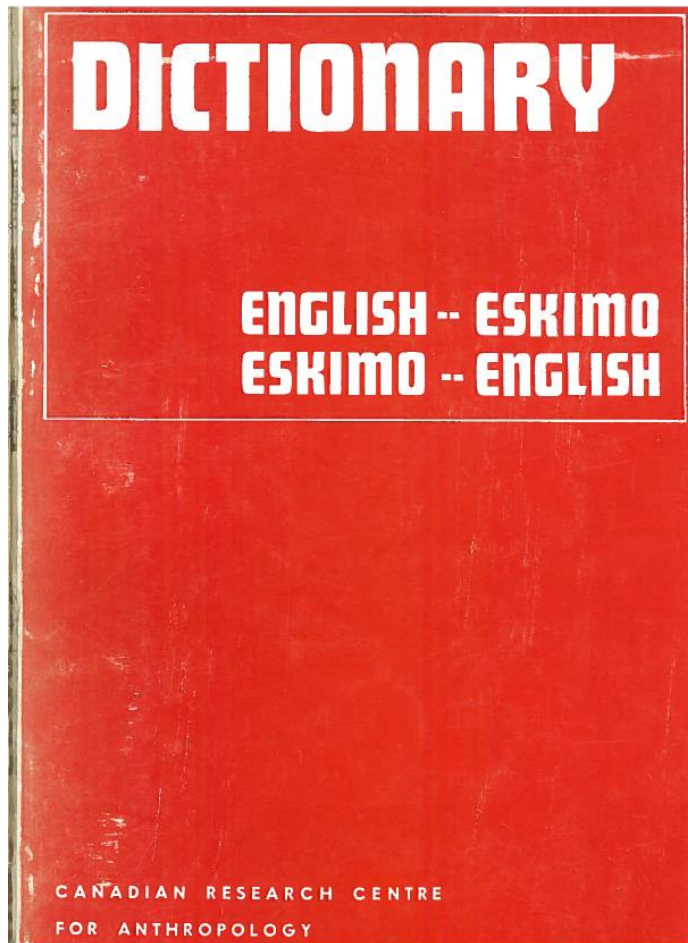
Inuktitut



Figure 5.34 Office sign in Iqaluit

The use of the Inuit language of Inuktitut, written here in syllabics, has received a great boost with the creation of the new Territory of Nunavut, administered from this city. (First developed in 1840 for the Cree language by the Reverend James Evans of Norway House in Manitoba, and based on Pitman's Shorthand, Syllabic orthography was later adapted for the Athapaskan and Inuktitut languages.)

Inuktitut



- Arthur Thibert, English-Eskimo, Eskimo-English Dictionary (Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, St Paul University, Ottawa: 1970)

Inuit words for snow

TABLE 5.4 Inuit Words for Snow

The language of the Inuit is called *Inuktitut*, and *Inuit* means “the people” in that language.

anuigaviniq:	very hard, compressed, or frozen snow
apijaq:	snow covered by bad weather
apigiannagaut:	the first snowfall of autumn
katakartanaq:	snow with a hard crust that gives way under footsteps
kavisilaq:	snow roughened by rain or frost
kinirtaq:	compact, damp snow
mannguq:	melting snow
masak:	wet, falling snow
matsaaq:	half-melted snow
natiruvaaq:	drifting snow
pukak:	crystalline snow that breaks down and separates like salt
qannialaaq:	light-falling snow
qiasuqaq:	snow that has thawed and refrozen with an ice surface
qiqumaaqaq:	snow whose surface has frozen after a light spring thaw

Source: *Aboriginal Times* 6(8), April 2002, p. 44.

Canada – some issues

- ROC (Rest of Canada): Predominantly anglophone, but note:
 - Changing pattern of immigration means that the leading allophone languages spoken at home have changed from Italian (in 1971) to Chinese (1996).
 - Because immigration is largely an urban phenomenon, the effects of recent flows have impacted Canada's cities:
 - With 44% of its population having a mother tongue other than English or French (according to 2006 Census), Toronto has the largest proportion of allophones in Canada. [At 41%, Vancouver is similar but Montreal only 22% allophone.]

Canada's Top 10 Home Languages, 1971 and 1996 (Excluding English and French)

**TABLE 5.3 Canada's Top 10 Home Languages, 1971 and 1996
(Excluding English and French)**

1971		1996	
Home Language	Number	Home Language	Number
1. Italian	425 230	1. Chinese	630 520
2. German	213 350	2. Italian	258 050
3. Ukrainian	144 755	3. Punjabi	182 895
4. Greek	86 825	4. Spanish	173 040
5. Chinese	77 890	5. Portuguese	142 975
6. Portuguese	74 760	6. Polish	137 330
7. Polish	70 960	7. German	134 615
8. Hungarian	50 670	8. Arabic	118 605
9. Dutch	36 170	9. Tagalog (Filipino)	111 865
10. Yiddish	26 330	10. Vietnamese	102 905
Aboriginal languages	122 205	Aboriginal languages	146 120

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 *Census Results Teacher's Kit* (www.statcan.ca/english/kits/kits.htm).
The 1996 results combine single and multiple responses to the question about which language (other than English or French) is spoken most often at home.

Copyright © 2010 Pearson Education Canada