

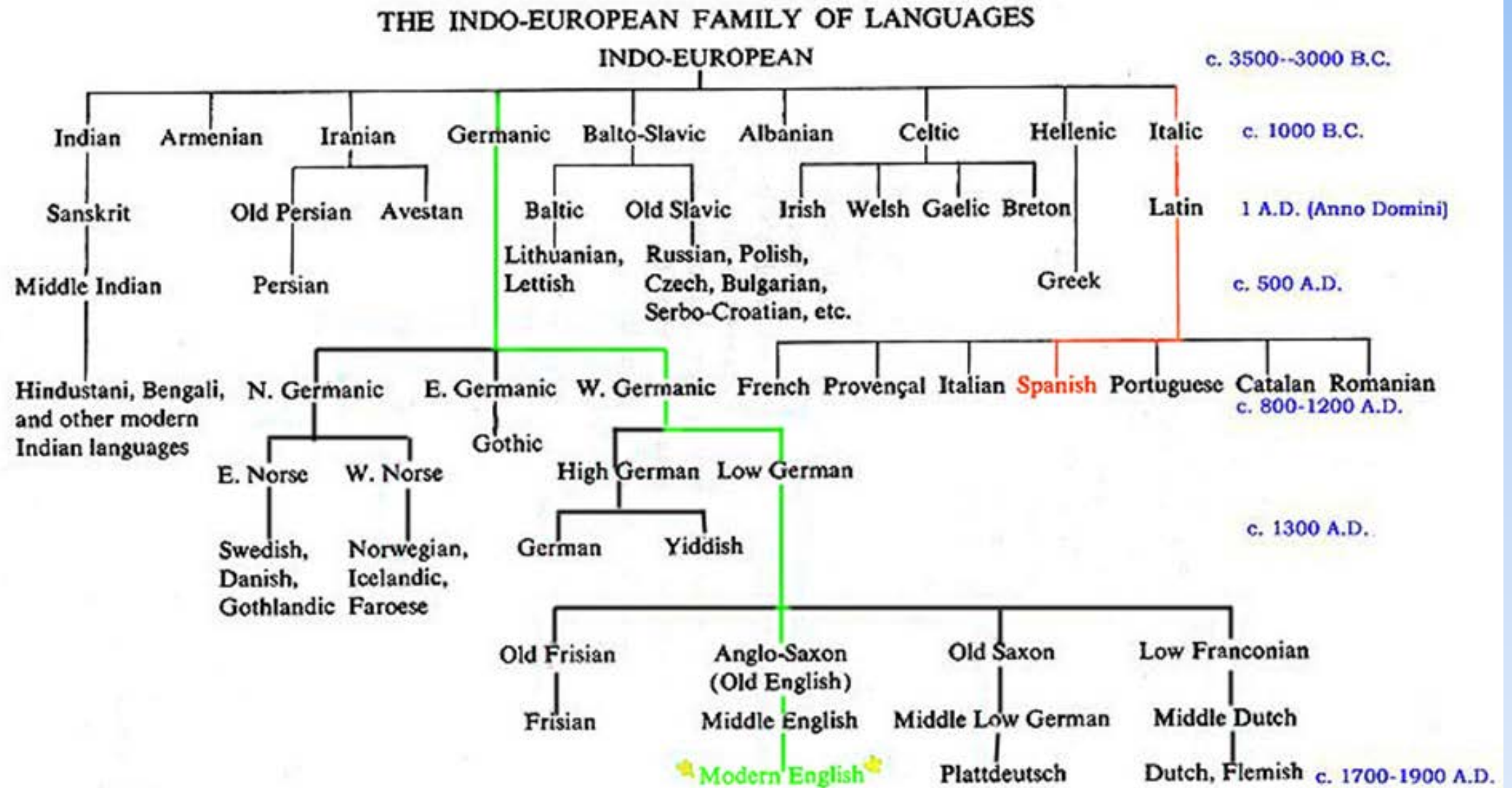
Language and the Speaker: What is language? - I

Language Conflict and Language Rights

Chapter 1

Spring 2018

Lippi-Green: All spoken languages change



Lippi-Green: All spoken languages change

Modern English:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.

Early Modern English (450 years ago – 16th century):

O oure father which arte in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Let thy kyngdom come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in erth, as it ys in heven.

Middle English (700 years ago – 14th century):

Oure fadir that art in heuenes, halewid be thi name. Thi kyngdoom come to, be thi wile don in erthe es in heuene.

Old English (1000 years ago – 11th century):

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum; Si þin nama gehalgod to becume þin rice gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.

Lippi-Green: All spoken languages change

Why do languages change?

- human migration and isolation—we tend to talk like those we associate with, ease of communication
- children—as they learn the language, they may learn it “imperfectly” and forge changes
- borrowing or infusion from another language
- need to adapt to a changing world

Lippi-Green: All spoken languages change

Can we stop language change? No.

Language standardization – an attempt to fossilize language and control variation.

Languages die:

- a result of natural catastrophes
- genocide
- the people who speak a language die

Lippi-Green: All spoken languages are linguistically equal

Every language is equally capable of expressing human thought.

Language is suited to its community, yet it is a responsive social tool

- makes or borrows words
- uses different strategies to express meanings (you vs. ya'll, you vs. you guys)
- intonation, body language strategies

Lippi-Green:

The functions of spoken language

Pragmatic: Doing things, or having things done. E.g. performatives.

Emotional: Expressing one's feelings (in real time).

Cognitive: Communicating thoughts (as they happen).

Social: Maintaining social order/protocol.

Lippi-Green:

Grammaticality and communicative effectiveness are not the same

Distinguish between what is “correct” (in a particular context) and what is “grammatical” (what people are able to produce).

He ain't here anymore.

vs.

Here not longer any he is.

Conversational principles:

Relevance, clarity, etc. (Lippi-Green p. 16)

Lippi-Green:

Written and spoken language are fundamentally different

Spoken:

- Innate
- Uses paralinguistic features
- Social activity
- Corrections are made in real time
- Relies on context
- Can be spontaneous
- Ephemeral/transitory (unless recorded)
- Variable

Written:

- Not innate, not universal
- Must use punctuation etc.
- Is a solitary activity
- Does not allow for online correction
- Cannot rely on context
- Is planned
- Permanent
- Eschews variation

Lippi-Green:

All spoken language is subject to variation at all levels

Accent: the way the speaker pronounces which is a distinctive phonological pattern different from some other

Southern Accent, Texas accent, Boston accent, New York accent

Dialect: grammatical, phonological, lexical differentiation

Phonological differences: *pin-pen, cot-caught*

Lexical differences: *soda vs. pop vs. coke*

Syntactic differences: *The house needs (to be) washed, The cat wants (to be) fed*

Davies & Dubinsky: The gap between letters and sounds

Rules for coherent phonetic representation:

1. A symbol always represents the same sound, and a sound is always represented by the same symbol.
2. Each symbol represents one sound, and each sound is represented by one symbol.

Consider the “a” in *bat*, *bay*, and *bawl*. (violates #1)

Consider the end of the words *tax* and *socks*. (violates #2)

Consider the vowel sound of the words *seem*, *steam*, and *priest*. (violates #1 and #2)

Davies & Dubinsky: The gap between letters and sounds

For example, in Year 1 that useless letter "c" would be dropped to be replaced either by "k" or "s", and likewise "x" would no longer be part of the alphabet.

The only case in which "c" would be retained would be the "ch" formation, which will be dealt with later.

Year 2 might reform "w" spelling, so that "which" and "one" would take the same konsonant, while Year 3 might well abolish "y" replacing it with "i" and Year 4 might fix the "g/j" anomaly once and for all.

Generally, then, the improvement would continue year by year with Year 5 doing away with useless double konsonants, and Years 6-12 or so modifying vowels and the remaining voiced and unvoiced konsonants.

By Year 15 or so, it would finally be possible to make use of the redundant letters "c", "y" and "x" -- by now just a memory in the minds of old dodgers -- to replace "ch", "sh", and "th" respectively.

Finally, then, after some 20 years of orthographic reform, we would have a logical, coherent spelling in use throughout the English-speaking world.

Davies & Dubinsky: Describing language sounds

Articulatory vs. acoustic description:

bilabial (e.g. ball, mat) vs. high and low pitch (e.g. eat, it)

Phonetics (objective sound description) vs. phonemics (how sounds are perceived):

light (e.g. leaf) and dark (e.g. pull) “l”

Natural sound processes:

assimilation - “n” to “m”

deletion – Barbara vs. Barbra

insertion – “t” and “p”

Davies & Dubinsky: The International Phonetic Alphabet

	IPA		IPA		IPA
meet	i:			boot	u:
mitt	ɪ	bird	ɜː	book	ʊ
mate	eɪ	mutt	ʌ	boat	oʊ
met	ɛ	<u>a</u> bout	ə	bought	ɔ:
mat	æ	might	aɪ	pot	ɑ:
		boy	ɔɪ		
		bout	aʊ		

IPA symbols for American English vowels

IPA		IPA	
p	pie	f	fie
t	tie	θ	thigh
k	kite	s	sigh
b	by	ʃ	shy
d	die	h	height
g	get	v	vie
m	my	ð	thy
n	night	z	zoo
ŋ	sang	ʒ	vi <u>s</u> ion
l	lie	tʃ	chin
r	rye	dʒ	just
w	why		
j	yes		

IPA symbols for American English consonants

Socio-economic dialects

Labov, William. 1972. The social stratification of (r) in New York City department stores. In *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

non-prevocalic r in New York City: (*non-prevocalic* ‘not right before a vowel’)

[k^hɑ] *car* and [k^hat] *cart*

[fɔ^ə] *four* and [fɔ^əθ] *fourth*

Through casual observation, Labov predicted use of non-prevocalic *r* is related to socioeconomic status. The higher the status, the more *r* shows up.

Labov 1972

3 department stores in NYC catering to different classes of clientele: Saks, Macy's, S Klein

He went and asked where to find some item that he had determined was on the 4th floor ('casual'). He then pretended not to hear the speaker so that he could get repetition ('emphatic').

	Percentage of [r]			
	casual 4th	floor	emphatic 4th	floor
Saks	30	63	40	64
Macy's	27	44	22	61
Klein	5	8	13	18

He also checked by job in the store and got another confirmation: floor walkers > sales clerks > stock boys