

## Language Notes

### Language

set of sounds and symbols that is used for communication  
reflects where a culture has been and what it values  
makes people in a culture visible to each other and to the world

#### Monolingual

Almost everyone speaks the same language

#### Multilingual

More than one language is used

Countries with linguistic fragmentation often adopt an official language

#### Mutual intelligibility

Two people can understand each other when speaking

Some languages are separate but are mutually intelligible

Almost impossible to measure

#### Lingua franca

language used among speakers of different languages for the purposes of trade and commerce

#### Pidgin language

two or more languages are in contact and they combine parts of their languages in a simplified structure and vocabulary

#### Creole language

a pidgin language with a more complex structure and vocabulary that has become the native language of a group of people

#### Dialects

Variants of a standard language along regional or ethnic lines

Including: differences in vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, cadence, and pace

Often difficult to categorize

#### Isogloss

geographic boundary within which a particular linguistic feature occurs

### Language families

Related through a common ancestor since prehistory

Niger-Congo language family dominates Sub-Saharan Africa

Oldest Sub-Saharan languages are the Khoisan languages, which include a "click" sound

#### Subfamilies

Romance, Germanic, Slavic

#### Language divergence

a lack of spatial interaction among speakers of a language breaks the language into dialects and then new languages.

#### Language convergence

different languages have consistent spatial interaction and their languages collapse into one

### Why are languages distributed the way they are?

Commonality among language diffusion theories is a focus on Europe

Proto-Indo-European language diffused into Europe over time

#### Conquest theory

Proto-Indo-European spread east to west on horseback, overpowering earlier inhabitants

beginning the diffusion/differentiation of Indo-European tongues

#### Alternative agricultural theory

Proto-Indo-European diffused westward through Europe with the diffusion of agriculture

Dispersal Hypothesis

Indo-European languages were first carried eastward into Southwest Asia, next around the Caspian Sea, and then across the Russian-Ukrainian plains and on into the Balkans

Printing press

Spread of literacy

Stabilized languages

Global language

Used around the world for conducting business

Language & Politics

High correlation between languages spoken and political organization of space

Major exception: Euskera-in no way related to other language families in Europe

Way of forcing assimilation

Through common language leading to a common culture

Toponyms

Post-colonial

Post-revolution

Memorial