

Language

CHAPTER

5

How many languages do you speak? If you are Dutch, you are likely to be able to speak at least four languages. All schoolchildren in the Netherlands are required to learn at least Dutch, English, German, and one other language, usually French or Russian.

For those of you who do not happen to be Dutch, the number is probably a bit lower. In fact, most people in the United States know only English. Only one-sixth of U.S. high school students are currently studying a foreign language. In contrast, five-sixths of European high school students learn a second language, and one-fourth learn at least two foreign languages.

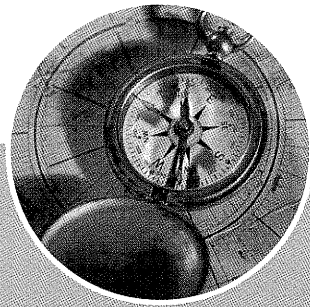
Even in other English-speaking countries, foreign languages are studied more frequently than in the United States. For example, 60 percent of British and 70 percent of Irish high school students learn French.

Earth's heterogeneous collection of languages is one of its most obvious examples of cultural diversity. Estimates of distinct languages in the world range from 2,000 to 4,000. Only ten languages, including English, are spoken by at least 100 million people. Several of these are relatively familiar to North Americans (Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and German), and several less familiar (Mandarin, Hindi, Bengali, Arabic, and Japanese).

In addition to the 10 largest ones, all together only about 100 other languages are spoken by at least 5 million people, another 70 by between 2 million and 5 million people. The remaining several thousand languages are spoken by fewer than 2 million people. The distribution of some of these languages is easy for geographers to document, whereas others—especially in Africa and Asia—are difficult, if not impossible.

KEY ISSUES

- 1 **Where are English-language speakers distributed?**
- 2 **Why is English related to other languages?**
- 3 **Where are other language families distributed?**
- 4 **Why do people preserve local languages?**



CASE STUDY

French and Spanish in the United States and Canada

The Tremblay family lives in a suburb of Montréal, Québec. The parents and two young children speak French at home, work, school, and shops. The Lopez family—also two parents and two children—live in San Antonio, Texas, and speak Spanish in their household.

The Tremblay and Lopez families share a common condition: they live in countries with an English-speaking majority, but English is not their native language. The French-speaking inhabitants of Canada and the Spanish-speaking residents of the United States continue to speak their languages, although English dominates the political, economic, and cultural life of their countries. The two families use languages other than English because they believe that language is important in retaining and enhancing their cultural heritage. At the same time, both families recognize that knowledge of English is essential for career advancement and economic success.

French is one of Canada's two official languages, along with English. French speakers comprise one-fourth of the country's population, most of whom are clustered in Québec, where they comprise more than three-fourths of the province's speakers. Colonized by the French in the seventeenth century, Québec was captured by the British in 1763 and in 1867 became one of the provinces in the Confederation of Canada.

In the United States, Spanish has become an increasingly important language in recent years because of large-scale immigration from Latin America. In some communities, public notices, government documents, and advertisements are printed in Spanish. Several hundred Spanish-language newspapers and radio and television stations operate in the United States, especially in southern Florida, the Southwest, and large northern cities, where most of the 28 million Spanish-speaking people live.

These examples—French-speaking residents of Canada and Spanish-speaking residents of the United States—illustrate the “*where*” and “*why*” questions that concern geographers who study languages. Where are different languages spoken? English, French, Spanish, and other languages are spoken in distinct locations around the world, and geographers can document the distribution of this important element of cultural identity. Why in some cases are two different languages spoken in two locations, whereas in other cases the same language is spoken in two locations? The geography of language displays especially clearly this book's overall theme of interplay between forces of globalization and local diversity.

Language is a system of communication through speech, a collection of sounds that a group of people understands to have the same meaning. Many languages also have a **literary tradition**, or a system of written communication. However, hundreds of spoken languages lack a literary tradition. The lack of written record makes it difficult to document the distribution of many languages.

Countries designate at least one language as their **official language**, which is the one used by the government for laws, reports, and public objects, such as road signs, money, and stamps. A country with more than one official language may require all public documents to be in all languages. Logically, an official language would be understood by most if not all of the country's citizens, but some countries that were once British colonies designate English as an official language, even though few of their citizens can speak it.

Language is part of culture, which, as shown in Chapter 1, has two main meanings—people's values and their tangible artifacts. This chapter and the next two discuss the three traits that best distinguish cultural values: language, religion, and ethnicity. Chapter 4 looked at the material objects of culture. We start our study of the geographic elements of cultural values with language in part because it is the means through which other cultural values, such as religion and ethnicity, are communicated.

Consistent with this book's where and why approach, this chapter first looks at *where* different languages are used, and how these languages can be logically grouped in *space*. The second and third key issues examine *why* languages have distinctive distributions. The study of language follows logically from migration, because the contemporary distribution of languages around the world results largely from past migrations of peoples.

Language is like luggage: people carry it with them when they move from place to place. They incorporate new words into their own language when they reach new *places*, and they contribute words brought with them to the existing language at the new location. Geographers look at the similarities among languages to understand the diffusion and interaction of people around the world.

The final section of the chapter discusses contradictory trends of *scale* in language. On the one hand, English has achieved an unprecedented **globalization**, because people around the world are learning it to participate in a global economy and culture. On the other hand, people are trying to preserve **local diversity** in language, because language is one of the basic elements of cultural identity and a major feature of a region's uniqueness. Language is a source of pride to a people, a symbol of cultural unity. As a culture develops, language is both a cause of that development and a consequence.

The global distribution of languages results from a combination of two geographic processes—interaction and isolation. People in two locations speak the same language because of migration from one of the locations to

another. If the two groups have few **connections** with each other after the migration, the language spoken by each will begin to differ. After a long period without contact, the two groups will speak languages that are so different they are classified as separate languages.

The interplay between interaction and isolation helps to explain **regions** of individual languages and entire language families. The difference is that individual languages emerged in the recent past as a result of historically documented events, whereas language families emerged several thousand years before recorded history.

For example, English developed as a distinct language in England as a result of migration and subsequent isolation of Germans 1,500 years ago and Normans 1,000 years ago. Similarly, individual Romance languages developed 2,000 years ago as a result of migration and isolation of Romans to other parts of Europe. On the other hand, the Indo-European language family developed as a result of migration and subsequent isolation of people that can only be reconstructed through linguistic and archaeological theories.

KEY ISSUE I

Where Are English-Language Speakers Distributed?

- Origin and diffusion of English
- Dialects of English

The location of English-language speakers serves as a case study for understanding the process by which any language is distributed around the world. A language originates at a particular place and diffuses to other locations through the migration of its speakers.

Origin and Diffusion of English

English is spoken fluently by one-half billion people, more than any language except for Mandarin. Whereas nearly all Mandarin speakers are clustered in one country—China—English speakers are distributed around the world. English is an official language in 42 countries, more than any other language, and is spoken by a significant percentage of people in a number of other countries (Figure 5-1). Two billion people—one-third of the world—live in a country where English is an official language, even if they cannot speak it.

English Colonies

The contemporary distribution of English speakers around the world exists because the people of England migrated with their language when they established colonies during the past four centuries. Compare

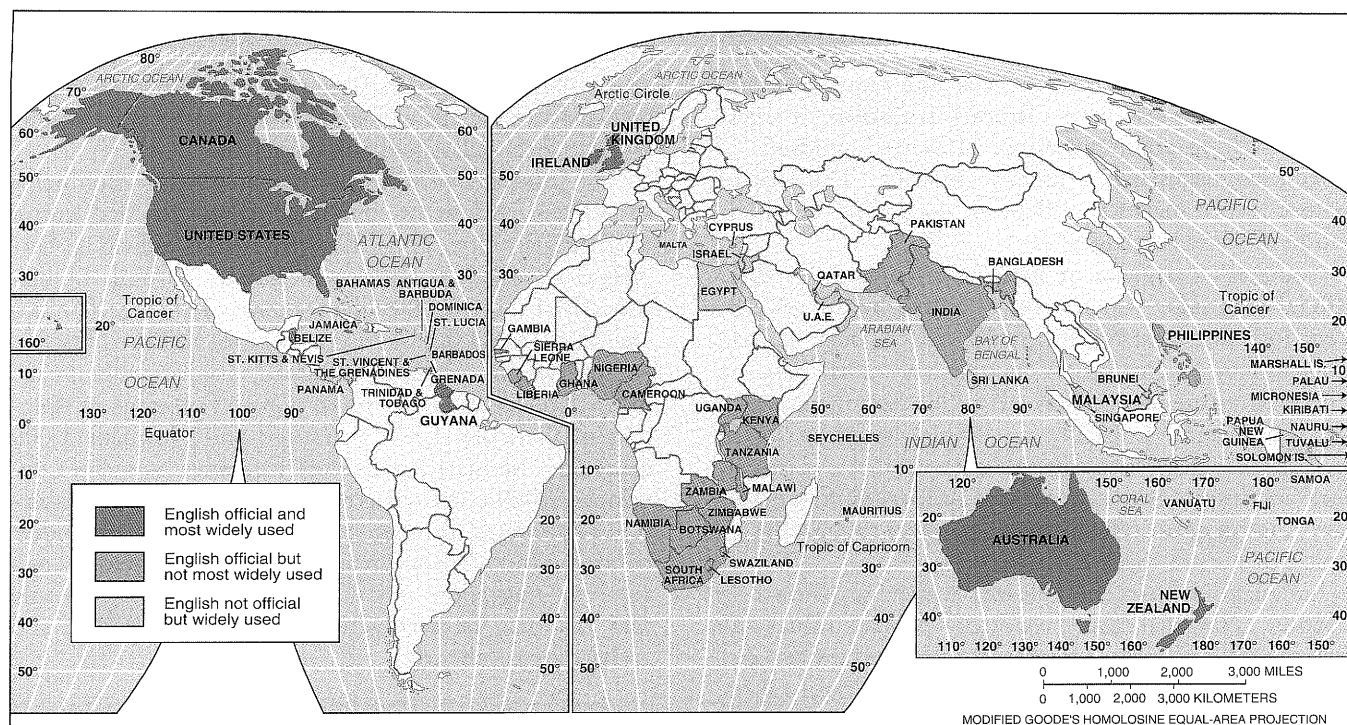


FIGURE 5-1 English-speaking countries. English is the official language in 42 countries, although in 26 of these it is not the most widely used language. English is also understood by a significant number of people in several other countries that were once British colonies.

Figure 5-1 to Figure 8-4, which shows the location of former British colonies. English is an official language in most of the former British colonies.

English first diffused west from England to North America in the seventeenth century. The first English colonies were built in North America, beginning with Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, and Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. After England defeated France in a battle to dominate the North American colonies during the eighteenth century, the position of English as the principal language of North America was assured, even after the United States and Canada became independent countries.

Similarly, the British took control of Ireland in the seventeenth century, South Asia in the mid-eighteenth century, the South Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and southern Africa in the late nineteenth century. In each case, English became an official language, even if only the colonial rulers and a handful of elite local residents could speak it.

More recently, the United States has been responsible for diffusing English to several places, most notably the Philippines, which Spain ceded to the United States in 1899, a year after losing the Spanish-American War. After gaining full independence in 1946, the Philippines retained English as one of its official languages, along with Filipino (Tagalog).

Origin of English in England

The global distribution of English may be a function primarily of migration from England since the seventeenth century, but that does not explain how English came to be

the principal language of the British Isles in the first place, nor why English is classified as a Germanic language.

The British Isles had been inhabited for thousands of years, but we know nothing of their early languages, until tribes called the Celts arrived around 2000 B.C., speaking languages we call Celtic. Then, around A.D. 450, tribes from mainland Europe invaded, pushing the Celts into the remote northern and western parts of Britain, including Cornwall and the highlands of Scotland and Wales.

German Invasion. The invading tribes were the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons. All three were Germanic tribes, the Jutes from northern Denmark, the Angles from southern Denmark, and the Saxons from northwestern Germany (Figure 5-2). Today, English people and others who trace their cultural heritage back to England are often called Anglo-Saxons, after the two larger tribes.

The name *England* comes from *Angles' land*. In Old English, *Angles* was spelled *Engles*, and the Angles' language was known as *englisc*. They came from a corner, or *angle*, of Germany known as Schleswig-Holstein. Modern English has evolved primarily from the language spoken by the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons when they migrated to England 1,500 years ago. The three tribes who brought the beginnings of English to the British Isles came from present-day Denmark and Germany, where they shared a language similar to that of other peoples in the region.

At some time in history, all Germanic people spoke a common language, but that time predates written records. The common origin of English with other Germanic languages can be reconstructed by analyzing

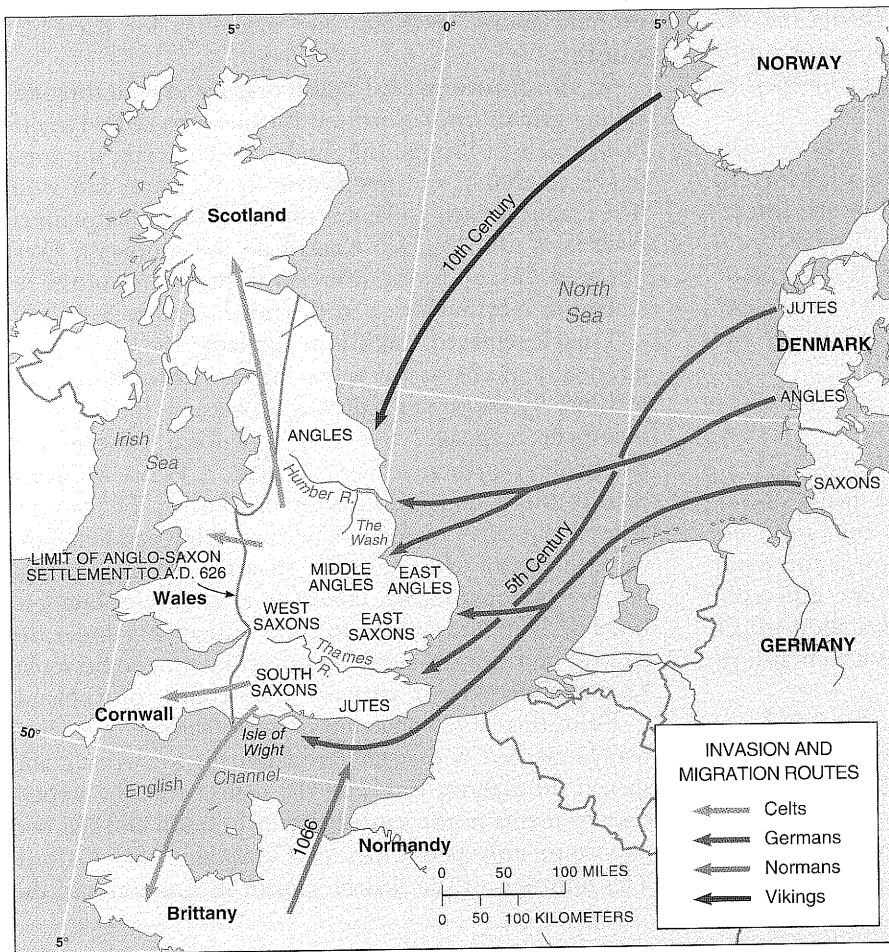


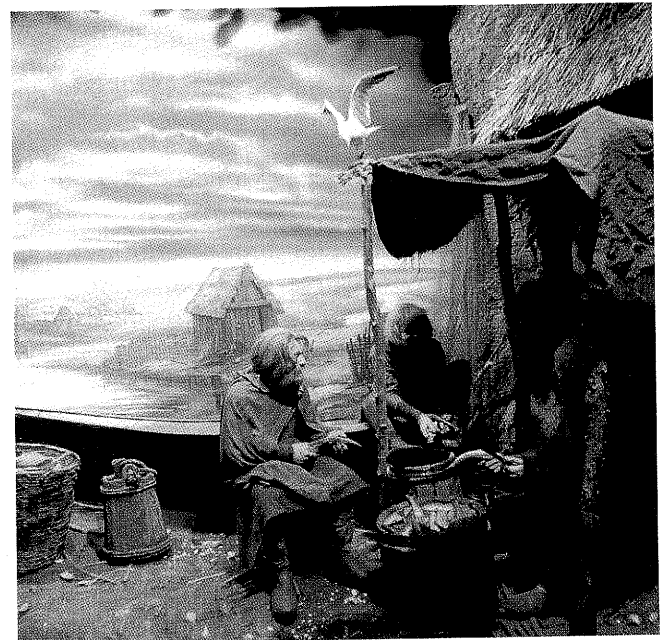
FIGURE 5-2 *Invasions of England.* The first speakers of the language that became known as English were tribes that lived in present-day Germany and Denmark. They invaded England in the fifth century A.D. The Jutes settled primarily in southeastern England, the Saxons in the south and west, and the Angles in the north, eventually giving the country its name: Angles' Land, or England. From this original spatial separation, the first major regional differences in English dialect developed, as Figure 5-3 shows. Invasions by Vikings in the ninth century and Normans in the eleventh century brought new words to the language spoken in the British Isles. The Normans were the last successful invaders of England. (Source: From Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 3d ed., © 1978, p. 47. Reprinted by permission of Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.)

language differences that emerged after Germanic groups migrated to separate territories and lived in isolation from each other, allowing their languages to continue evolving independently.

Other peoples subsequently invaded England and added their languages to the basic English. Vikings from present-day Norway landed on the northeast coast of England in the ninth century. Although defeated in their effort to conquer the islands, many Vikings remained in the country to enrich the language with new words.

Norman Invasion. English is a good bit different from German today primarily because England was conquered by the Normans in 1066. The Normans, who came from present-day Normandy in France, spoke French, which they established as England's official language for the next 300 years. The leaders of England, including the royal family, nobles, judges, and clergy, therefore spoke French. However, the majority of the people, who had little education, did not know French, so they continued to speak English to each other.

England lost control of Normandy in 1204, during the reign of King John, and entered a long period of conflict with France. As a result, fewer people in England wished to speak French, and English again became the country's unchallenged dominant language. Recognizing that nearly everyone in England was speaking English, Parliament



Vikings in England. Vikings invaded and occupied portions of England between the ninth and eleventh centuries. Well-preserved remains of the Viking City of Jorvik were found a few years ago beneath the city of York in northeastern England. An underground museum has been constructed in York that faithfully reproduces the appearance, sounds, and smells of the thousand-year-old city.

enacted the Statute of Pleading in 1362 to change the official language of court business from French to English. However, Parliament continued to conduct business in French until 1489.

During the 300-year period that French was the official language of England, the Germanic language used by the common people and the French used by the leaders mingled to form a new language. Modern English owes its simpler, straightforward words, such as *sky*, *horse*, *man*, and *woman*, to its Germanic roots, and fancy, more elegant words, such as *celestial*, *equestrian*, *masculine*, and *feminine* to its French invaders.

Dialects of English

A **dialect** is a regional variation of a language distinguished by distinctive vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Generally, speakers of one dialect can understand speakers of another dialect. Geographers are especially interested in differences in dialects, because they reflect distinctive features of the environments in which groups live.

When speakers of a language migrate to other locations, various dialects of that language may develop. This was the case with the migration of English speakers to North America several hundred years ago. Because of its large number of speakers and widespread distribution, English has an especially large number of dialects.

North Americans are well aware that they speak English differently from the British, not to mention people living in India, Pakistan, Australia, and other English-speaking countries. Further, English varies by regions within individual countries. In both the United States and England, northerners sound different from southerners.

In a language with multiple dialects, one dialect may be recognized as the **standard language**, which is a dialect that is well established and widely recognized as the most acceptable for government, business, education, and mass communication. One particular dialect of English, the one associated with upper-class Britons living in the London area, is recognized in much of the English-speaking world as the standard form of British speech. This speech, known as **British Received Pronunciation (BRP)**, is well-known, because it is commonly used by politicians, broadcasters, and actors. Why don't Americans or, for that matter, other British people speak that way?

Dialects in England

"If you use proper English, you're regarded as a freak; why can't the English learn to speak?" asked Professor Henry Higgins in the Broadway musical *My Fair Lady*. He was referring to the Cockney-speaking Eliza Doolittle, who pronounced "rain" like "rine" and dropped the /h/ sound from the beginning of words like "happy." Eliza Doolittle's speech illustrates that English, like other languages, has a wide variety of dialects that use different

pronunciations, spellings, and meanings for particular words.

As already discussed, English originated with three invading groups from Northern Europe who settled in different parts of Britain: the Angles in the north, the Jutes in the southeast, and the Saxons in the south and west. The language each spoke was the basis of distinct regional dialects of Old English: Kentish in the southeast, West Saxon in the southwest, Mercian in the center of the island, and Northumbrian in the north (Figure 5-3, left).

French replaced English as the language of the government and aristocracy following the Norman invasion of 1066. By the time English again became the country's dominant language, five major regional dialects had emerged: Northern, East Midland, West Midland, Southwestern, and Southeastern or Kentish. The boundaries of these five regional dialects roughly paralleled the pattern before the Norman invasion (compare Figure 5-3, left and right). However, after several hundred years of living in isolation in rural settlements under the control of a French-speaking government, people spoke English differently in virtually every county of England.

From this large collection of local dialects, one eventually emerged as the standard language for writing and speech throughout England: the dialect used by upper-class residents in the capital city of London and the two important university cities of Cambridge and Oxford. The diffusion of the dialect spoken in London and the



My Fair Lady. In the 1950s Broadway and Hollywood musical *My Fair Lady* by Alan J. Lerner and Frederick Loewe, based on George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, language expert Professor Henry Higgins (played by Rex Harrison) encounters Eliza Doolittle, a Cockney from the poor East End of London (played in the movie by Audrey Hepburn), selling flowers in front of London's Covent Garden Opera House. Higgins accepts a wager from a friend that he can transform Doolittle into an upper-class woman primarily by teaching her to speak with the accent used by upper-class Britons

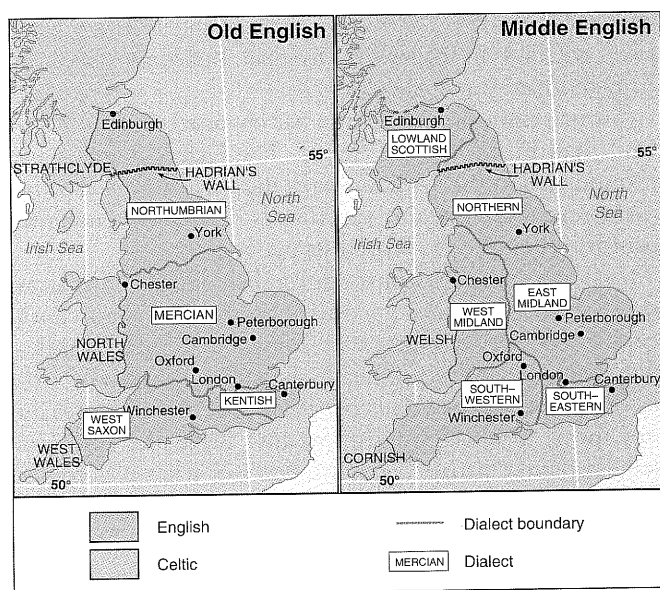


FIGURE 5-3 (Left) Old English dialects, before the Norman invasion of A.D. 1066. (Right) Middle English dialects (1150–1500). The two maps show that important dialects of Middle English corresponded closely to those of Old English. The Old English Northumbrian dialect, spoken by the Angles, split into Scottish and Northern dialects. The Old English Mercian dialect, spoken by the Saxons, divided into East Midland and West Midland, and the West Saxon dialect became known as the Southwestern dialect. The Old English Kentish dialect, spoken by the Jutes, extended considerably in area and became known as the Southeastern dialect. (Source: From Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 3d ed., © 1978, p. 53. Reprinted by permission of Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.)

university cities was first encouraged by the introduction of the printing press to England in 1476. Grammar books and dictionaries printed in the eighteenth century established rules for spelling and grammar that were based on the London dialect. These frequently arbitrary rules were then taught in schools throughout the country.

Despite the current dominance of British Received Pronunciation, strong regional differences persist in English dialects spoken in the United Kingdom, especially in rural areas. Although several dozen dialects are identifiable, they can be grouped into three main ones: Northern, Midland, and Southern. People in the south of England pronounce words like *grass* and *path* with an /ab/ sound, whereas people in the Midlands and North use a short /a/ as do most people in the United States. People in the Midlands and North pronounce *butter* and *Sunday* with the /oo/ sound of words like *boot*. Northerners pronounce *ground* and *pound* like *grund* and *pund*, with the /uh/ sound similar to the word *punt* in U.S. football.

Further, distinctive southwestern and southeastern accents occur within the Southern dialect. People in the southwest, for example, pronounce *thatch* and *thing* with the /th/ sound of *then*, rather than *thin*. *Fresh* and *eggs* have an /ai/ sound. Southeasterners pronounce the /a/ in *apple* and *cat* like the short /e/ in *bet*. Local dialects can be further distinguished, and some words have distinctive

pronunciations and meanings in each county of the United Kingdom.

Differences Between British and American English

The English language was brought to the North American continent by colonists from England who settled along the Atlantic Coast beginning in the seventeenth century. The early colonists naturally spoke the language used in England at the time and established seventeenth-century English as the dominant form of European speech in colonial America. Later immigrants from other countries found English already implanted here. Although they made significant contributions to American English, they became acculturated into a society that already spoke English. Therefore, the earliest colonists were most responsible for the dominant language patterns that exist today in the English-speaking part of the Western Hemisphere.

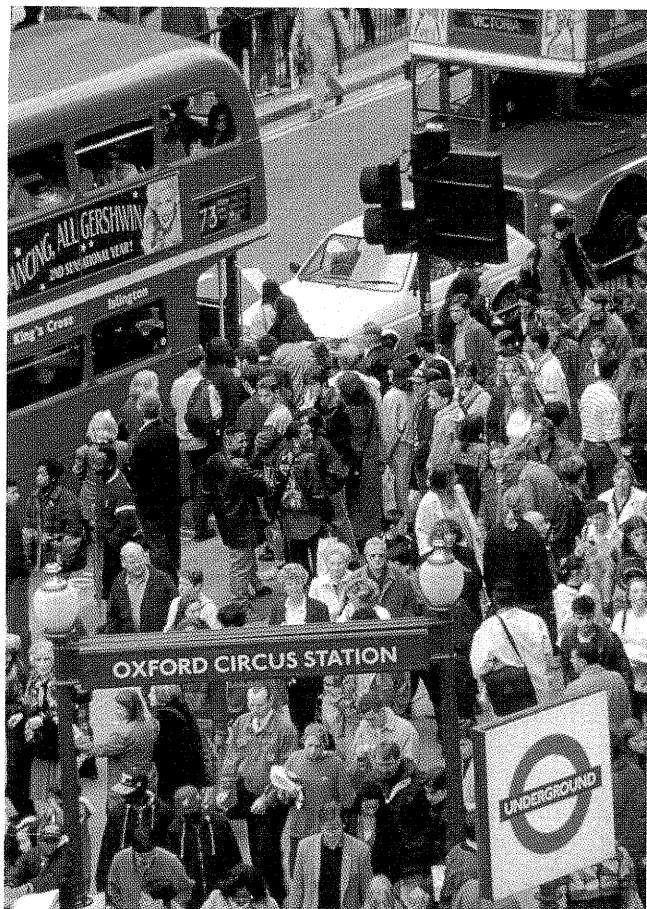
Differences in Vocabulary and Spelling. Why is the English language in the United States so different from that in England? As is so often the case with languages, the answer is isolation. Separated by the Atlantic Ocean, English in the United States and England evolved independently during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with little influence on one another. Few residents of one country could visit the other, and the means to transmit the human voice over long distances would not become available until the twentieth century.

U.S. English differs from that of England in three significant ways: vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. The vocabulary is different largely because settlers in America encountered many new objects and experiences. The new continent contained physical features, such as large forests and mountains, that had to be given new names. New animals were encountered, including the *moose*, *raccoon*, and *chipmunk*, all of which were given names borrowed from Native Americans. Indigenous American “Indians” also enriched American English with names for objects such as *canoe*, *moccasin*, and *squash*.

As new inventions appeared, they acquired different names on either side of the Atlantic. For example, the elevator is called a *lift* in England, and the flashlight is known as a *torch*. The British call the hood of a car the *bonnet* and the trunk the *boot*.

Spelling diverged from the British standard because of a strong national feeling in the United States for an independent identity. Noah Webster, the creator of the first comprehensive American dictionary and grammar books, was not just a documenter of usage, he had an agenda. Webster was determined to develop a uniquely American dialect of English. He either ignored or was unaware of recently created rules of grammar and spelling developed in England.

Webster argued that spelling and grammar reforms would help establish a national language, reduce cultural



English “circus.” In England, a circus is not a place where clowns perform but a place where several major streets come together. In Central London, Oxford Circus is the junction of Oxford and Regent streets, in a busy shopping area. Some of the crowd are entering the Oxford Circus Station to board the subway, known in England as the “underground”; a “subway” in London is a pedestrian underpass beneath a busy street.

dependence on England, and inspire national pride. The spelling differences between British and American English, such as the elimination of the “u” from the British spelling of words like “honour” and “colour” and the substitution of “s” for “c” in “defence” are due primarily to the diffusion of Webster’s ideas inside the United States.

Differences in Pronunciation. Differences in pronunciation between British and U.S. speakers are immediately recognizable. Again, geographic concepts help explain the reason for the differences. From the time of their arrival in North America, colonists began to pronounce words differently from the British. Such divergence is normal, for interaction between the two groups was largely confined to exchange of letters and other printed matter rather than direct speech.

One prominent difference between British and U.S. English is the pronunciation of the letters *a* and *r*. Such words as *fast*, *path*, and *half* are pronounced in England like the /ab/ in *father* rather than the /a/ in *man*. The British also eliminate the letter *r* from pronunciation except before vowels. Thus *lord* in British pronunciation sounds like *laud*. Further, Americans pronounce unaccented syllables

with more clarity. The words *secretary* and *necessary* have four syllables in American English but only three in British (*secret’ry* and *necess’ry*).

Surprisingly, pronunciation has changed more in England than in the United States. The letters *a* and *r* are pronounced in the United States the way they used to be pronounced in Britain, specifically in the seventeenth century when the first colonists arrived.

A single dialect of Southern English did not emerge as the British national standard until the late eighteenth century, after the American colonies had declared independence and were politically as well as physically isolated from England. Thus people in the United States do not speak “proper” English because when the colonists left England, “proper” English was not what it is today. Furthermore, few colonists were drawn from the English upper classes.

Dialects in the United States

Major differences in U.S. dialects originated because of differences in dialects among the original settlers. The English dialect spoken by the first colonists, who arrived in the seventeenth century, determined the future speech patterns for their communities because later immigrants adopted the language used in their new homes when they arrived. The language may have been modified somewhat by the new arrivals, but the distinctive elements brought over by the original settlers continued to dominate.

Settlement in the East. The original American settlements stretched along the Atlantic Coast in 13 separate colonies. The settlements can be grouped into three areas: New England, Middle Atlantic, and Southeastern. Massachusetts and the other New England colonies were established and inhabited almost entirely by settlers from England. Two-thirds of the New England colonists were Puritans from East Anglia in southeastern England, and only a few came from the north of England.

The nucleus of the southeastern colonies was Virginia, where the first permanent settlement by the English in North America was established at Jamestown in 1607. About half of the southeastern settlers came from southeast England, although they represented a diversity of social-class backgrounds, including deported prisoners, indentured servants, and political and religious refugees. The English dialects now spoken in the U.S. Southeast and New England are easily recognizable. Current distinctions result from the establishment of independent and isolated colonies in the seventeenth century.

The immigrants to the Middle Atlantic colonies were more diverse. The early settlers of Pennsylvania were predominantly Quakers from the north of England. Scots and Irish also went to Pennsylvania, as well as to New Jersey and Delaware. In addition, the Middle Atlantic colonies attracted many German, Dutch, and Swedish immigrants who learned their English from the English-speaking settlers in the area. The dialect spoken in the Middle Atlantic colonies thus differed significantly

from those spoken farther north and south, because most of the settlers came from the north rather than the south of England or from other countries.

Current Dialect Differences in the East. Today, major dialect differences within the United States continue to exist, primarily on the East Coast, although some distinctions can be found elsewhere in the country. The different dialects have been documented through the study of particular words. Every word that is not used nationally has some geographic extent within the country and therefore has boundaries. Such a word-usage boundary, known as an **isogloss**, can be constructed for each word. These isoglosses are determined by collecting data directly from people, particularly natives of rural areas. They are shown pictures to identify or are given sentences to complete with a particular word. Although every word has a unique isogloss, boundary lines of different words coalesce in some locations to form regions.

Two important isoglosses separate the eastern United States into three major dialect regions, known as Northern, Midland, and Southern. The northern boundary runs across Pennsylvania, whereas the southern one runs along the Appalachian Mountains (Figure 5-4).

Some words are commonly used within one of the three major dialect areas but rarely in the other two. In most instances, these words relate to rural life, food, and objects from daily activities. Language differences tend to be greater in rural areas than in cities, because farmers are relatively isolated from interaction with people from other dialect regions.

For example, a container commonly used on farms is known as a “pail” in the north and a “bucket” in the Midlands and South. A small stream is known as a “brook” in the North, a “run” in the Midlands, and a “branch” in the South. The term “run” was apparently used in the north of England and Scotland, which was the area of origin for many Middle Atlantic settlers but for few New England or Southern settlers.

Phrases for some farm activities, such as calling cows from pasture, show particularly sharp differences among the three regional dialects. New England farmers call cows with “Boss!” or “Bossie!” sometimes preceded by “Co” or “Come.” In the Midlands the preferred call is “Sook!” or sometimes “Sookie!” or “Sook cow!” The choice in the South is “Co-wench!” or its alternative forms, “Co-inch!” and “Co-ee!”

Many words that were once regionally distinctive are now national in distribution. Mass media, especially television and radio, influence the adoption of the same words throughout the country. For example, a “frying pan” was once commonly called a “spider” in New England and a “skillet” in the Middle Atlantic area.

Pronunciation Differences. Regional pronunciation differences are more familiar to us than word differences, although it is harder to draw precise isoglosses for them. Pronunciations that distinguish the Southern dialect include making such words as *half* and *mine* into two

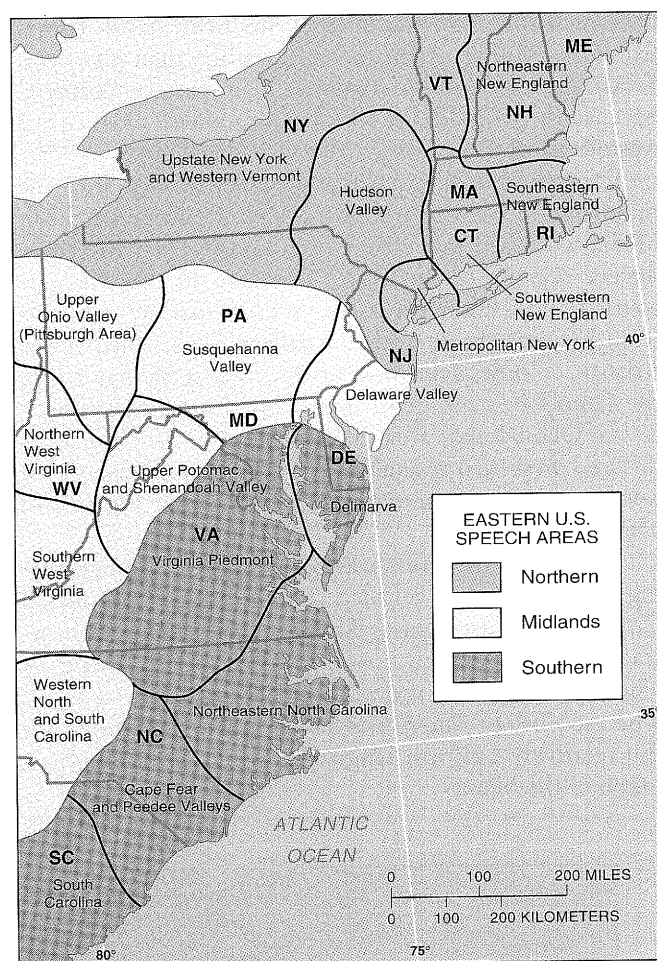


FIGURE 5-4 Dialects in eastern United States. The most comprehensive classification of dialects in the United States was made by Hans Kurath in 1949. He found the greatest diversity of dialects in the eastern part of the country, especially in vocabulary used on farms. Kurath divided the eastern United States into three major dialect regions—Northern, Midlands, and Southern—each of which contained a number of important subareas. Compare to the map of source areas of U.S. house types (Figure 4-9). As Americans migrated west they took with them distinctive house types as well as distinctive dialects.

syllables (“ha-af” and “mi-yen”), pronouncing *poor* as “po-ur,” and pronouncing *Tuesday* and *due* with a /y/ sound (“Tyuesday” and “dyue”).

The New England accent is well-known for dropping the /r/ sound, so that *heart* and *lark* are pronounced “hot” and “lock.” Also, *ear* and *care* are pronounced with /ah/ substituted for the /r/ endings. This characteristic dropping of the /r/ sound is shared with speakers from the south of England and reflects the place of origin of most New England colonists. It also reflects the relatively high degree of contact between the two groups. Residents of Boston, New England’s main port city, maintained especially close ties to the important ports of southern England, such as London, Plymouth, and Bristol. Compared to other colonists, New Englanders received more exposure to changes in pronunciation that occurred in Britain during the eighteenth century.

The New England and southern accents sound odd to the majority of Americans because the standard

pronunciation throughout the American West comes from the Middle Atlantic states rather than the New England and Southern regions. This pattern occurred because the Middle Atlantic states provided most of the western settlers.

The diffusion of particular English dialects into the middle and western parts of the United States is a result of the westward movement of colonists from the three dialect regions of the East. The area of the Midwest south of the Ohio River was settled first by colonists from Virginia and the other southern areas. The Middle Atlantic colonies sent most of the early settlers north of the Ohio River, although some New Englanders moved to the Great Lakes area. The pattern by which dialects diffused westward resembles the diffusion of East Coast house types discussed in Chapter 4 (compare Figure 5-4 with Figure 4-9).

As more of the West was opened to settlement during the nineteenth century, people migrated from all parts of the East Coast. The California gold rush attracted people from throughout the East, many of whom subsequently moved to other parts of the West. The mobility of Americans has been a major reason for the relatively uniform language that exists throughout much of the West.

KEY ISSUE 2

Why Is English Related to Other Languages?

- Indo-European branches
- Origin and diffusion of Indo-European

English is part of the Indo-European language family. A **language family** is a collection of languages related through a common ancestor that existed long before recorded history. Indo-European is the world's most extensively spoken language family by a wide margin. Nearly 3 billion people speak an Indo-European language as their first language.

Indo-European Branches

Within a language family, a **language branch** is a collection of languages related through a common ancestor that existed several thousand years ago. Differences are not as extensive or as old as with language families, and archaeological evidence can confirm that the branches derived from the same family.

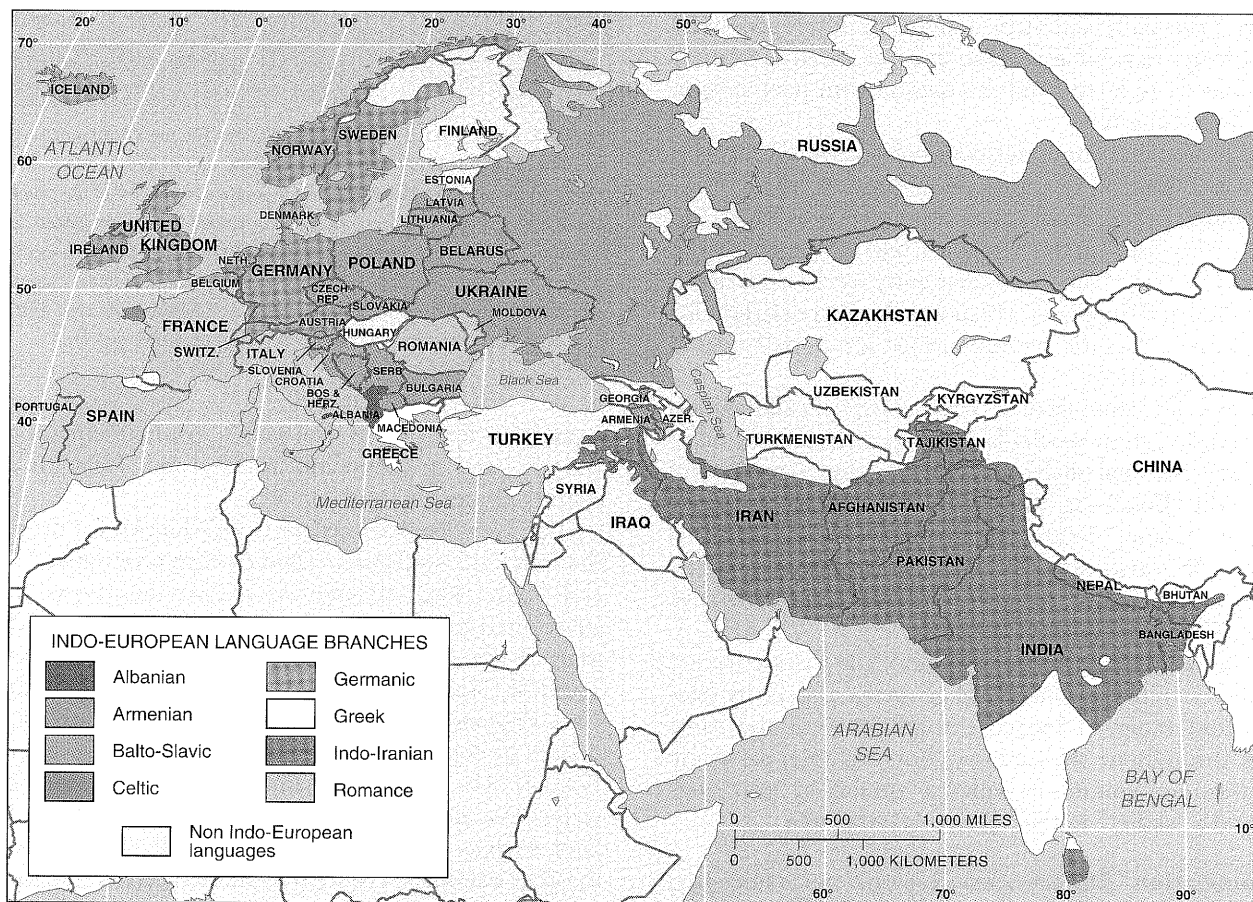


FIGURE 5-5 Branches of Indo-European language family. Most Europeans speak languages from the Indo-European language family. In Europe the three most important branches are Germanic (north and west), Romance (south and west), and Slavic (east). The fourth major branch, Indo-Iranian, clustered in southern and western Asia, has more than 1 billion speakers, the greatest number of any Indo-European branch.

Indo-European is divided into eight branches. Four of the branches—Indo-Iranian, Romance, Germanic, and Balto-Slavic—are spoken by large numbers of people. Indo-Iranian languages are clustered in South Asia, Romance languages in southwestern Europe and Latin America, Germanic languages in northwestern Europe and North America, and Balto-Slavic languages in Eastern Europe. The four less extensively used Indo-European language branches are Albanian, Armenian, Greek, and Celtic (Figure 5-5).

Germanic Branch of Indo-European

German may seem a difficult language for many English speakers to learn, but the two languages are actually closely related. Both belong to the Germanic language branch of Indo-European. English is part of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family because of the language spoken by the Germanic tribes that invaded England 1500 years ago.

A **language group** is a collection of languages within a branch that share a common origin in the relatively recent past and display relatively few differences in grammar and vocabulary. West Germanic is the group within the Germanic branch of Indo-European to which English belongs. Although they sound very different, English and German are both languages in the West Germanic group within the Germanic branch because they are structurally similar and have many words in common (Figure 5-6).

West Germanic is further divided into High Germanic and Low Germanic subgroups, so named because they are found in high and low elevations within present-day Germany. High German, spoken in the southern mountains of Germany, is the basis for the modern standard German language. English is classified in the Low Germanic subgroup of the West Germanic group. Other Low Germanic languages include Dutch, which is spoken in the Netherlands, as well as Flemish, which is generally considered a dialect of Dutch spoken in northern Belgium. Afrikaans, a language of South Africa, is similar to Dutch, because Dutch settlers migrated to South Africa 300 years ago. Frisian is spoken by a few residents in northeastern Netherlands. A dialect of German spoken in the northern lowlands of Germany is also classified as Low Germanic.

The Germanic language branch also includes North Germanic languages, spoken in Scandinavia. The four Scandinavian languages—Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic—all derive from Old Norse, which was the principal language spoken throughout Scandinavia before A.D. 1000. Four distinct languages emerged after that time because of migration and the political organization of the region into four independent and isolated countries.

Indo-Iranian Branch of Indo-European

The branch of the Indo-European language family with the most speakers is Indo-Iranian. This branch includes more than 100 individual languages, spoken by more

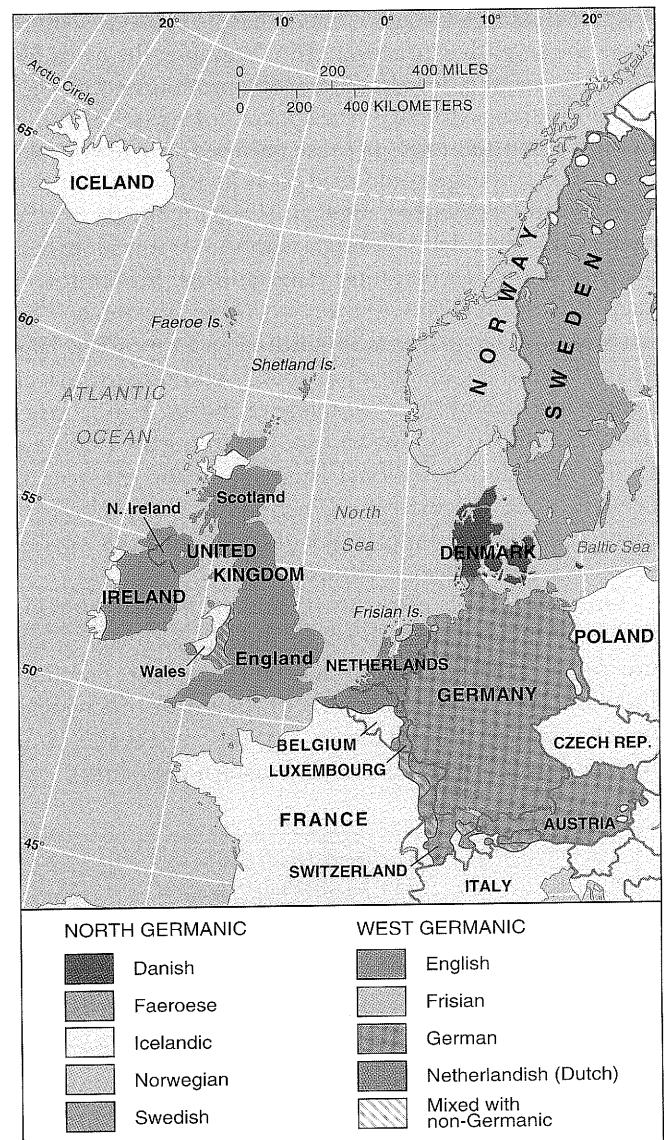


FIGURE 5-6 Germanic branch of Indo-European language family. Germanic languages predominate in Northern and Western Europe. The main North Germanic languages include Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic. The main West Germanic languages are English and German, with Dutch spoken in the Netherlands and northern Belgium. Two less widely used Germanic languages are Faeroese, spoken by inhabitants of the Faeroe Islands (part of Denmark), and Frisian, used in the northeastern Netherlands.

than 1 billion people. The branch can be divided into an eastern group (Indic) and a western group (Iranian).

Indic (Eastern) Group of Indo-Iranian Language Branch. The most widely used languages in India, as well as in the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh, belong to the Indo-European language family and, more specifically, to the Indic group of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European.

Approximately one-third of Indians, mostly in the north, use an Indic language called Hindi. Hindi is spoken many different ways—and therefore could be regarded as a collection of many individual languages—but there is only one official way to write the language, using

a script called Devanagari, which has been used in India since the seventh century A.D. (For example, the word for “sun” is written in Hindi as *सूर्य* pronounced *surag*.) Local differences arose in the spoken forms of Hindi but not in the written form, because until recently few speakers of that language could read or write it.

Pakistan’s principal language, Urdu, is spoken very much like Hindi but is written with the Arabic alphabet, a legacy of the fact that most Pakistanis are Muslims, and their holiest book (the Quran) is written in Arabic. The basis of both languages is Hindustani, a form of the language used in communication among different groups of people in much of India for many centuries. Hindi, originally a variety of Hindustani spoken in the area of New Delhi, grew into a national language in the nineteenth century when the British encouraged its use in government. Collectively, Indic languages constitute the world’s second-largest language group.

One of the main elements of cultural diversity among the nearly 1 billion residents of India is language (Figure 5-7). India has four important language families: Indo-European (predominantly in the north), Dravidian (in the south), Sino-Tibetan (in the northeast), and Austro-Asiatic (in the central and eastern highlands).

After India became an independent state in 1947, Hindi was proposed as the official language, but Dravidian speakers from southern India strongly objected. Therefore, India’s constitution as amended recognizes 18 official languages, including 13 Indo-European (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Konkani, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Urdu), four Dravidian languages (Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu), and one Sino-Tibetan language (Manipuri). More than 90 percent of the population speak at least one of these languages, but as many as 10 million Indians use other languages. Bengali is the most important language in Bangladesh.

As the language of India’s former colonial ruler, English has an “associate” status, even though only 1 percent of the Indian population can speak it. However, speakers of two different Indian languages who wish to communicate with each other sometimes are forced to turn to English as a common language.

Iranian (Western) Group of Indo-Iranian Language Branch. Indo-Iranian languages are also spoken in Iran and neighboring countries in southwestern Asia. These form a separate group from Indic within the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family.

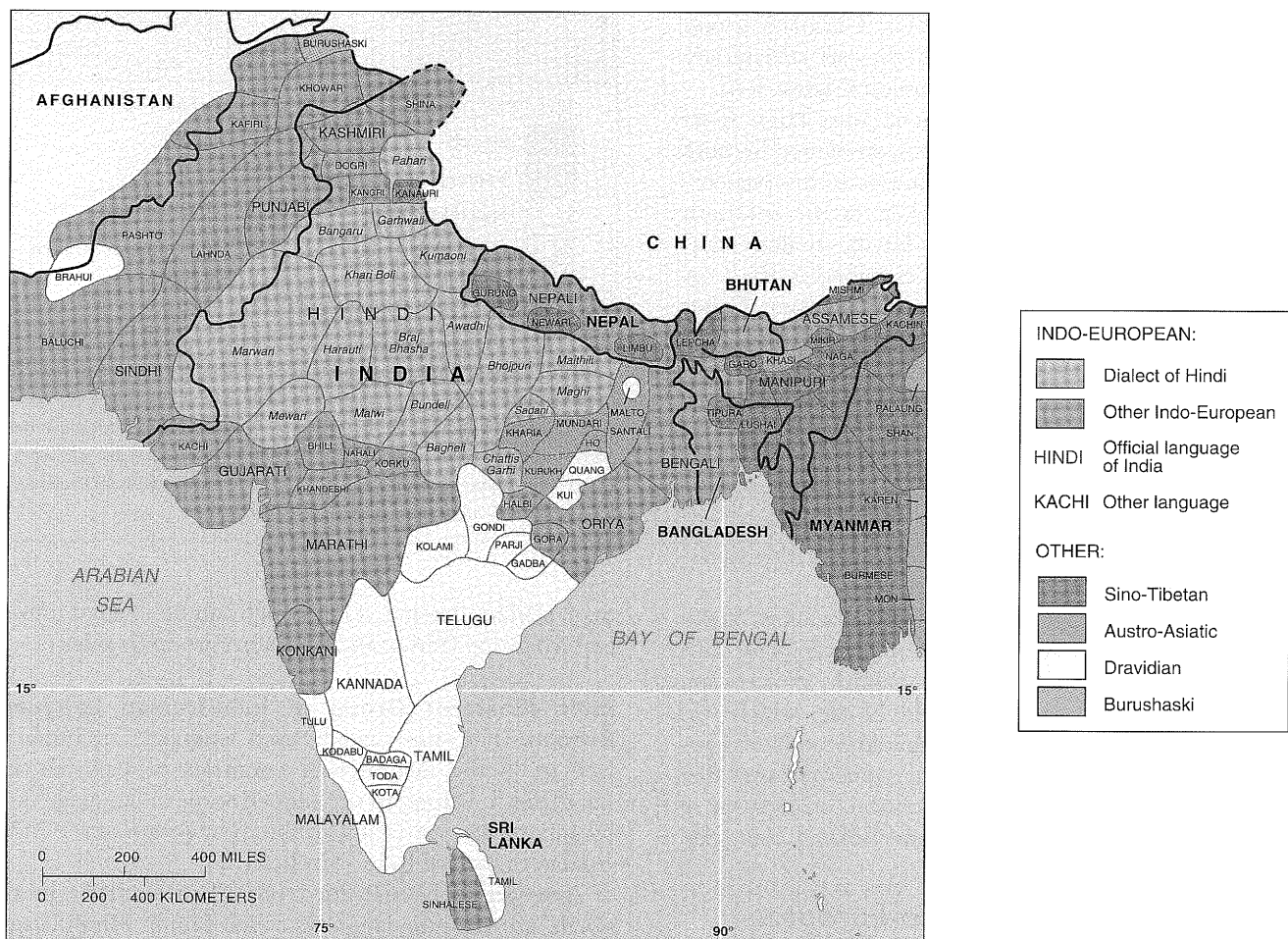


FIGURE 5-7 Languages and language families in South Asia. The region has four main language families: Indo-European, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, and Austro-Asiatic. More than 90 percent of the people of India speak at least one of the country’s 18 official languages, 16 of which are written in red on the map.

The major Iranian group languages include Persian (sometimes called Farsi) in Iran, Pathan in eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, and Kurdish, used by the Kurds of western Iran, northern Iraq, and eastern Turkey. These languages are written in the Arabic alphabet.

Balto-Slavic Branch of Indo-European

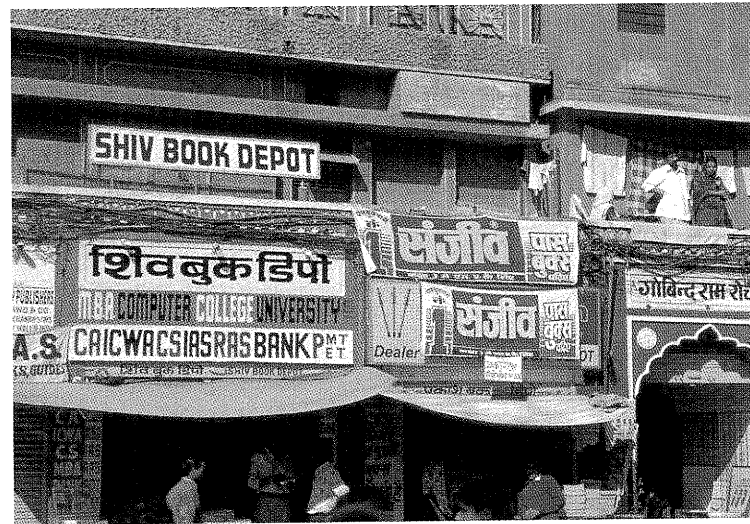
The other Indo-European language branch with large numbers of speakers is Balto-Slavic. Slavic was once a single language, but differences developed in the seventh century A.D. when several groups of Slavs migrated from Asia to different areas of Eastern Europe and thereafter lived in isolation from one other. As a result, this branch can be divided into East, West, and South Slavic groups as well as a Baltic group. Figure 7-21 shows the widespread area populated with Balto-Slavic speakers.

East Slavic and Baltic Groups of the Balto-Slavic Language Branch. The most widely used Slavic languages are the eastern ones, primarily Russian, which is spoken by more than 80 percent of Russian people. Russian is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

The importance of Russian increased with the Soviet Union's rise to power after the end of World War II in 1945. Soviet officials forced native speakers of other languages to learn Russian as a way of fostering cultural unity among the country's diverse peoples. In Eastern European countries that were dominated politically and economically by the Soviet Union, Russian was taught as the second language. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the newly independent republics adopted official languages other than Russian, although Russian remains the language for communications among officials in the countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

After Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian (sometimes written Byelorussian) are the two most important East Slavic languages, official languages in Ukraine and Belarus. Ukraine is a Slavic word meaning "border," and Belo- is translated as "white." The presence of so many non-Russian speakers was a measure of cultural diversity in the Soviet Union, and the desire to use languages other than Russian was a major drive in its breakup a decade ago.

West and South Slavic Groups of the Balto-Slavic Language Branch. The most spoken West Slavic language is Polish, followed by Czech and Slovak. The latter two are quite similar, and speakers of one can understand the other. The government of the former state of Czechoslovakia tried to balance the use of the two languages, even though the country contained twice as many Czechs as Slovaks. For example, the announcers on televised sports events used one of the languages during the first half and switched to the other for the second half. These balancing measures were effective in promoting



Hindi. The most widely used language in India, Hindi, is written in a script called Devanagari. English is widely used in India for written communication despite being spoken by only 1 percent of the population.

national unity during the Communist era, but in 1993, four years after the fall of communism, Slovakia split from the Czech Republic. Slovaks rekindled their long-suppressed resentment of perceived dominance of the national culture by the Czech ethnic group.

The two most important South Slavic languages are Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. Although Serbs and Croats speak the same language, they use different alphabets: Croatian is written in the Roman alphabet (what you are reading now), whereas Serbian is written in Cyrillic (for example, *Yugoslavia* written in Serbian is ЈУГОСЛАВИЈА). Slovene is the official language of Slovenia, whereas Macedonian is used in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia.

In general, differences among all Slavic languages are relatively small. A Czech, for example, can understand most of what is said or written in Slovak and could become fluent without much difficulty. However, because language is a major element in a people's cultural identity, relatively small differences among Slavic as well as other languages are being preserved and even accentuated in recent independence movements.

Since Bosnia and Croatia broke away from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, regional differences within Serbo-Croatian have increased. Bosnian Muslims have introduced Arabic words used in their religion, and Croats have replaced words regarded as having a Serbian origin with words considered to be purely Croatian. For example, the Serbo-Croatian word for martyr or hero—*junak*—has been changed to *heroj* by Croats and *shahid* by Bosnian Muslims. The term *Serbo-Croatian* now offends Bosnians and Croats, because it recalls when they were part of the same country as Serbs. In the future, after a generation of isolation and hostility among Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs, the languages spoken by the three groups may be sufficiently different to justify their classification as distinct languages.

Romance Branch of Indo-European

The Romance language branch evolved from the Latin language spoken by the Romans 2,000 years ago. The four most widely used contemporary Romance languages are Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian. Spanish and French are two of the six official languages of the United Nations.

The European regions in which these four languages are spoken correspond somewhat to the boundaries of the modern states of Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy. Rugged mountains serve as boundaries among these four countries. France is separated from Italy by the Alps and from Spain by the Pyrenees, and several mountain ranges mark the border between Spain and Portugal. Physical boundaries such as mountains are strong intervening obstacles, creating barriers to communication between people living on opposite sides.

The fifth most important Romance language, Romanian, is the principal language of Romania and Moldova. It is separated from the other Romance-speaking European countries by Slavic-speaking peoples.

The distribution of Romance languages shows the difficulty in trying to establish the number of distinct languages in the world. In addition to the five languages already mentioned, two other official Romance languages are Romansh and Catalán. Romansh is one of four official languages of Switzerland, although it is spoken by only 25,000 people. Catalán, a Spanish dialect, is the official language of Andorra, a tiny country of approximately 50,000 inhabitants situated in the Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France. Catalán is also

spoken by another 6 million people, mostly around the city of Barcelona. A third Romance language, Sardinian—a mixture of Italian, Spanish, and Arabic—once was the official language of the Mediterranean island of Sardinia (Figure 5–8).

In addition to these official languages, several other Romance languages have individual literary traditions. In Italy, Ladin (not Latin) is spoken by 20,000 people living in the South Tyrol, and Friulian is spoken by 500,000 in the northeast. Ladin and Friulian (along with the official Romansh) are dialects of Rhaeto-Romanic. A Romance tongue called Ladino—a mixture of Spanish, Greek, Turkish, and Hebrew—is spoken by 140,000 Sephardic Jews, most of whom now live in Israel. None of these languages have an official status in any country, although they are used in literature.

Origin and Diffusion of Romance Languages. The Romance languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and Romanian, are part of the same branch, because they all developed from Latin, the “Romans’ language.” The rise in importance of the city of Rome 2,000 years ago brought a diffusion of its Latin language.

At its height in the second century A.D., the Roman Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Black Sea on the east and encompassed all lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea (the empire’s boundary is shown in Figure 6–5). As the conquering Roman armies occupied the provinces of this vast empire, they brought the Latin language with them. In the process the

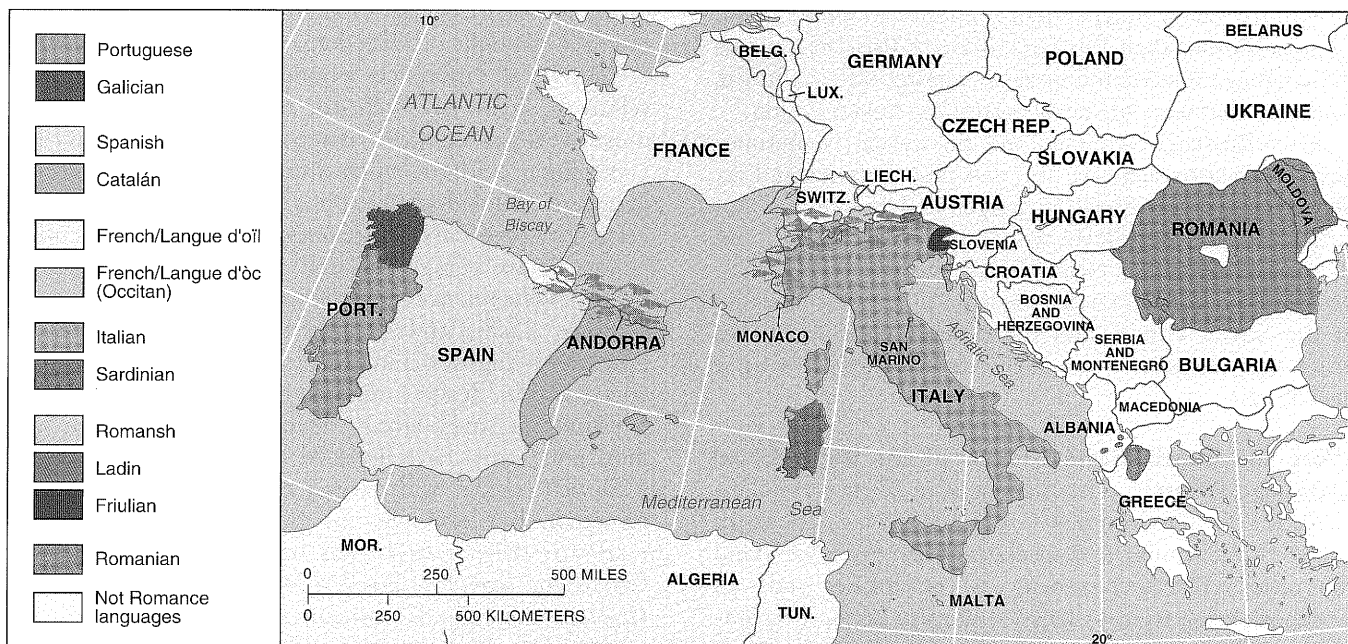


FIGURE 5–8 Romance branch of Indo-European language family. Romance includes three of the world's 12 most widely spoken languages (Spanish, Portuguese, and French) plus two other widely spoken tongues (Italian and Romanian). The map also shows boundaries among some dialects of Spanish and French. Catalán is a dialect of Spanish and the official language of Andorra. French dialects include Occitan (langue d'oïl) and langue d'òc. Rhaeto-Romanic languages include Romansh, Ladin, and Friulian.

languages spoken by the natives of the provinces were either extinguished or suppressed in favor of the language of the conquerors.

Even during the period of the Roman Empire, Latin varied to some extent from one province to another. The empire grew over a period of several hundred years, so the Latin used in each province was based on that spoken by the Roman army at the time of occupation. The Latin spoken in each province also integrated words from the language formerly spoken in the area.

The Latin that people in the provinces learned was not the standard literary form but a spoken form, known as **Vulgar Latin**, from the Latin word referring to “the masses” of the populace. Vulgar Latin was introduced to the provinces by the soldiers stationed throughout the empire. For example, the literary term for “horse” was *equus*, from which English has derived such words as *equine* and *equestrian*. However, the Vulgar term, used by the common people, was *caballus*, from which are derived the modern terms for “horse” in Italian (*cavallor*), Spanish (*caballo*), Portuguese (*cavalo*), French (*cheval*), and Romanian (*cal*).

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, communication among the former provinces declined, creating still greater regional variation in spoken Latin. By the eighth century, regions of the former empire had been isolated from each other long enough for distinct languages to evolve.

Latin persisted in parts of the former empire. People in some areas reverted to former languages, whereas others adopted the languages of conquering groups from the north and east, which spoke Germanic and Slavic.

In the past, when migrants were unable to communicate with speakers of the same language back home, major differences emerged between the languages spoken in the old and new locations, leading to the emergence of distinct, separate languages. This was the case with the migration of Latin speakers 2,000 years ago.

Romance Language Dialects. Distinct Romance languages did not suddenly appear in the former Roman Empire. As with other languages, they evolved over time. Numerous dialects existed within each province, many of which are still spoken today. The creation of standard national languages, such as French and Spanish, was relatively recent.

The dialect of the Île-de-France region, known as *Francien*, became the standard form of French because the region included Paris, which became the capital and largest city of the country. *Francien* French became the country’s official language in the sixteenth century, and local dialects tended to disappear as a result of the capital’s longtime dominance over French political, economic, and social life.

The most important surviving dialect difference within France is between the north and the south (refer to Figure 5–8). The northern dialect is known as *langue d’oïl* and the southern as *langue d’oc*. It is worth exploring these names, for they provide insight into how languages

evolve. These terms derive from different ways in which the word for “yes” was said.

One Roman term for “yes” was *hoc illud est*, meaning “that is so.” In the south, the phrase was shortened to *boc*, or *òc*, because the /h/ sound was generally dropped, just as we drop it on the word *honor* today. Northerners shortened the phrase to *o-il* after the first sound in the first two words of the phrase, again with the initial /h/ suppressed. If the two syllables of *o-il* are spoken very rapidly, they are combined into a sound like the English word “wheel.” Eventually the final consonant was eliminated, as in many French words, giving a sound for “yes” like the English *we*, spelled in French *oui*.

A province where the southern dialect is spoken in southwestern France is known as Languedoc. The southern French dialect itself is now sometimes called Occitan, derived from the French region of Aquitaine, which in French has a similar pronunciation to Occitan. About 2 million people in southern France speak an Occitan dialect, including a form known as Provençal.

Spain, like France, contained many dialects during the Middle Ages. One dialect, known as Castilian, arose during the ninth century in Old Castile, located in the north-central part of the country. The dialect spread southward over the next several hundred years as independent kingdoms were unified into one large country. Spain grew to its approximate present boundaries in the fifteenth century, when the Kingdom of Castile and León merged with the Kingdom of Aragón. At that time, Castilian became the official language for the entire country. Regional dialects, such as Aragón, Navarre, León, Asturias, and Santander, survived only in secluded rural areas. The official language of Spain is now called Spanish, although the term “Castilian” is still used in Latin America.

Spanish and Portuguese have achieved worldwide importance because of the colonial activities of their European speakers. Approximately 90 percent of the speakers of these two languages live outside Europe, mainly in Central and South America. Spanish is the official language of 18 Latin American states, whereas Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, which has as many people as all the other South American countries combined and 17 times more than Portugal itself.

These two Romance languages were diffused to the Americas by Spanish and Portuguese explorers. The division of Central and South America into Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking regions is the result of a 1493 decision by Pope Alexander VI to give the western portion of the New World to Spain and the eastern part to Portugal. The Treaty of Tordesillas, signed a year later, carried out the papal decision.

The Portuguese and Spanish languages spoken in the Western Hemisphere differ somewhat from their European versions, as is the case with English. The 46 members of the Spanish Royal Academy meet every week in a mansion in Madrid to clarify rules for the vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation of the Spanish language

around the world. The Academy's official dictionary, published in 1992, has added hundreds of "Spanish" words that originated either in the regional dialects of Spain or the Indian languages of Latin America.

Brazil, Portugal, and several Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa agreed in 1994 to standardize the way their common language is written. Many people in Portugal are upset that the new standard language more closely resembles the Brazilian version, which eliminates most of the accent marks—such as tildes (São Paulo), cedillas (Alcobça), circumflexes (Estância), and hyphens—and the agreement recognizes as standard thousands of words that Brazilians have added to the language.

The standardization of Portuguese is a reflection of the level of interaction that is possible in the modern world between groups of people who live tens of thousands of kilometers apart. Books and television programs produced in one country diffuse rapidly to other countries where the same language is used.

Difficulties arise in determining whether two languages are distinct or whether they are merely two dialects of the same language. Moldovan (or Moldavian) is the official language of Moldova but is generally classified as a dialect of Romanian, and Flemish, the official language of northern Belgium, is generally considered a dialect of Dutch. Galician, spoken in northwestern Spain, is generally classified as a dialect of Portuguese. Distinguishing individual languages from dialects is difficult, because many residents of these regions choose to regard their languages as distinct.

Romance languages spoken in some former colonies can also be classified as separate languages because they differ substantially from the original introduced by European colonizers. Examples include French Creole in Haiti, Papiamentu (Creolized Spanish) in Netherlands Antilles (West Indies), and Portuguese Creole in the Cape Verde Islands off the African coast. A **creole** or **creolized language** is defined as a language that results

from the mixing of the colonizer's language with the indigenous language of the people being dominated.

A creolized language forms when the colonized group adopts the language of the dominant group but makes some changes, such as simplifying the grammar and adding words from their former language. The word *creole* derives from a word in several Romance languages for a slave who is born in the master's house.

Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European

If Germanic, Romance, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian languages are all part of the same Indo-European language family, then they must be descended from a single common ancestral language. Unfortunately, the existence of a single ancestor—which can be called Proto-Indo-European—cannot be proved with certainty, because it would have existed thousands of years before the invention of writing or recorded history.

The evidence that Proto-Indo-European once existed is "internal," derived from the physical attributes of words themselves in various Indo-European languages. For example, the words for some animals and trees in modern Indo-European languages have common roots, including *beech*, *oak*, *bear*, *deer*, *pheasant*, and *bee*. Because all Indo-European languages share these similar words, linguists believe the words must represent things experienced in the daily lives of the original Proto-Indo-European speakers.

In contrast, words for other features, such as *elephant*, *camel*, *rice*, and *bamboo*, have different roots in the various Indo-European languages. Such words therefore cannot be traced back to a common Proto-Indo-European ancestor and must have been added later, after the root language split into many branches.

Interestingly, individual Indo-European languages share common root words for *winter* and *snow* but not for *ocean*. Therefore, linguists conclude that original Proto-Indo-European speakers probably lived in a cold climate,



Creole. A mix of French and English adorn this public bus in Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti. French and Haitian Creole, a dialect of French, are both official languages in Haiti, although English is the lingua franca in Haiti, as in much of the world.

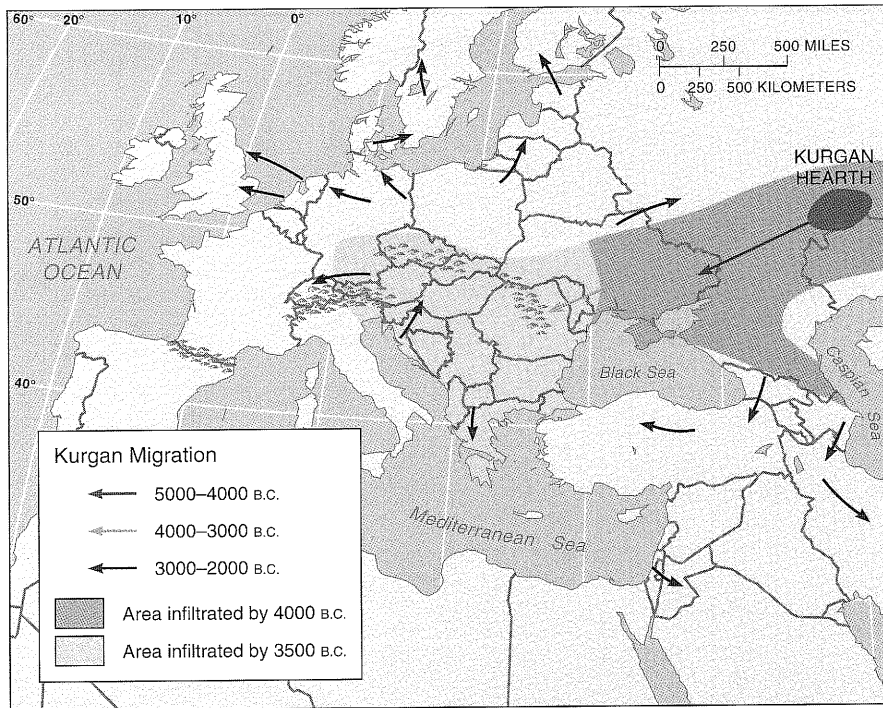


FIGURE 5-9 Origin and diffusion of Indo-European (Kurgan hearth theory). The Kurgan homeland was north of the Caspian Sea, near the present-day border between Russia and Kazakhstan. According to this theory, the Kurgans may have infiltrated into Eastern Europe beginning around 4000 B.C. and into central Europe and southwestern Asia beginning around 2500 B.C.

or one that had a winter season, but did not come in contact with oceans.

Linguists and anthropologists generally accept that Proto-Indo-European must have existed, but they disagree on when and where the language originated and the process and routes by which it diffused. The debate over place of origin and paths of diffusion is significant, because one theory argues that language diffused primarily through warfare and conquest, whereas the other theory argues that the diffusion resulted from peaceful sharing of food.

So where did Indo-European originate? One influential hypothesis, espoused by Marija Gimbutas, is that the first Proto-Indo-European speakers were the Kurgan people, whose homeland was in the steppes near the border between present-day Russia and Kazakhstan. The

earliest archaeological evidence of the Kurgans dates to around 4300 B.C.

The Kurgans were nomadic herders. Among the first to domesticate horses and cattle, they migrated in search of grasslands for their animals. This took them westward through Europe, eastward to Siberia, and southeastward to Iran and South Asia. Between 3500 and 2500 B.C., Kurgan warriors, using their domesticated horses as weapons, conquered much of Europe and South Asia (Figure 5-9).

Not surprisingly, scholars disagree on where and when the first speakers of Proto-Indo-European lived. Archaeologist Colin Renfrew argues that they lived 2,000 years before the Kurgans, in eastern Anatolia, part of present-day Turkey (Figure 5-10). Renfrew believes they diffused from Anatolia westward to Greece (the origin of the

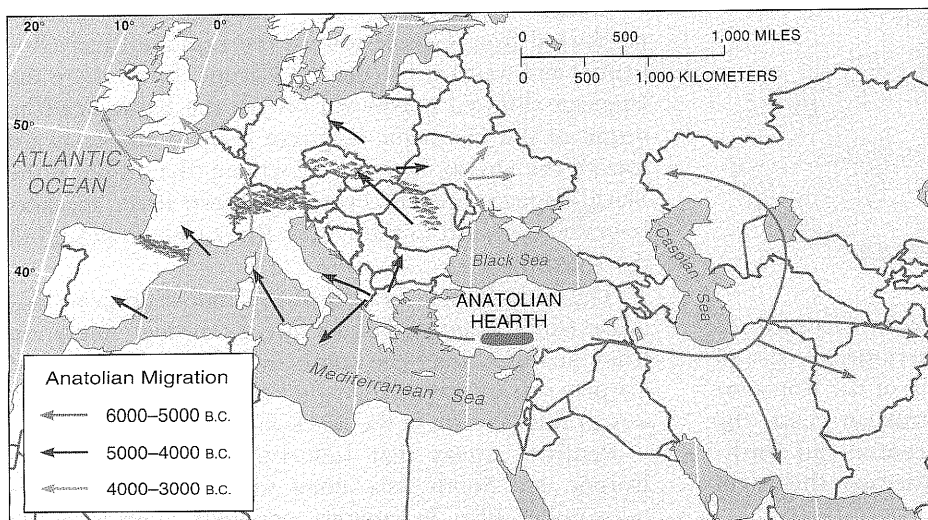
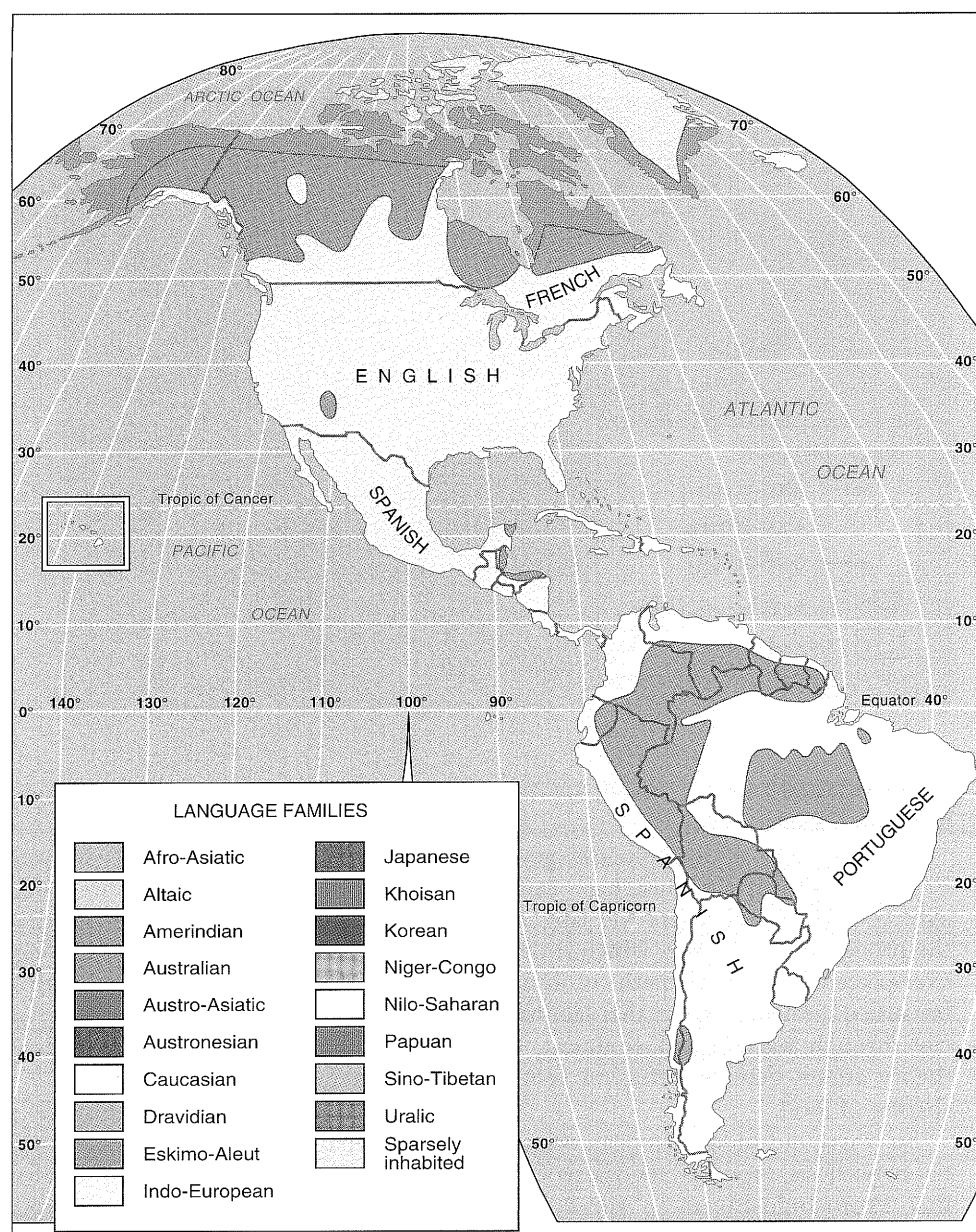
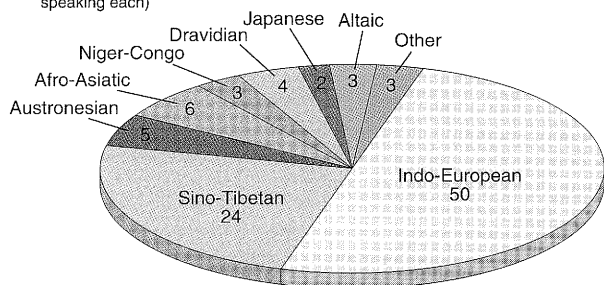


FIGURE 5-10 Origin and diffusion of Indo-European (Anatolian hearth theory). Indo-European may have originated in present-day Turkey 2,000 years before the Kurgans. According to this theory, the language diffused along with agricultural innovations west into Europe and east into Asia.

FIGURE 5-11 Language families. Most language can be classified into one of a handful of language families. The pie chart shows the percentage of people who speak a language from each major family. You can see that Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan languages dominate, with Indo-European spoken by about 50 percent of Earth's people, and Sino-Tibetan spoken by about 20 percent. The map colors show the distribution of each family. Note especially the worldwide span of Indo-European languages but the relatively narrow diffusion of Sino-Tibetan tongues. Languages that have more than 100 million speakers are identified on the map.



LANGUAGE FAMILIES
(Percentage of people speaking each)

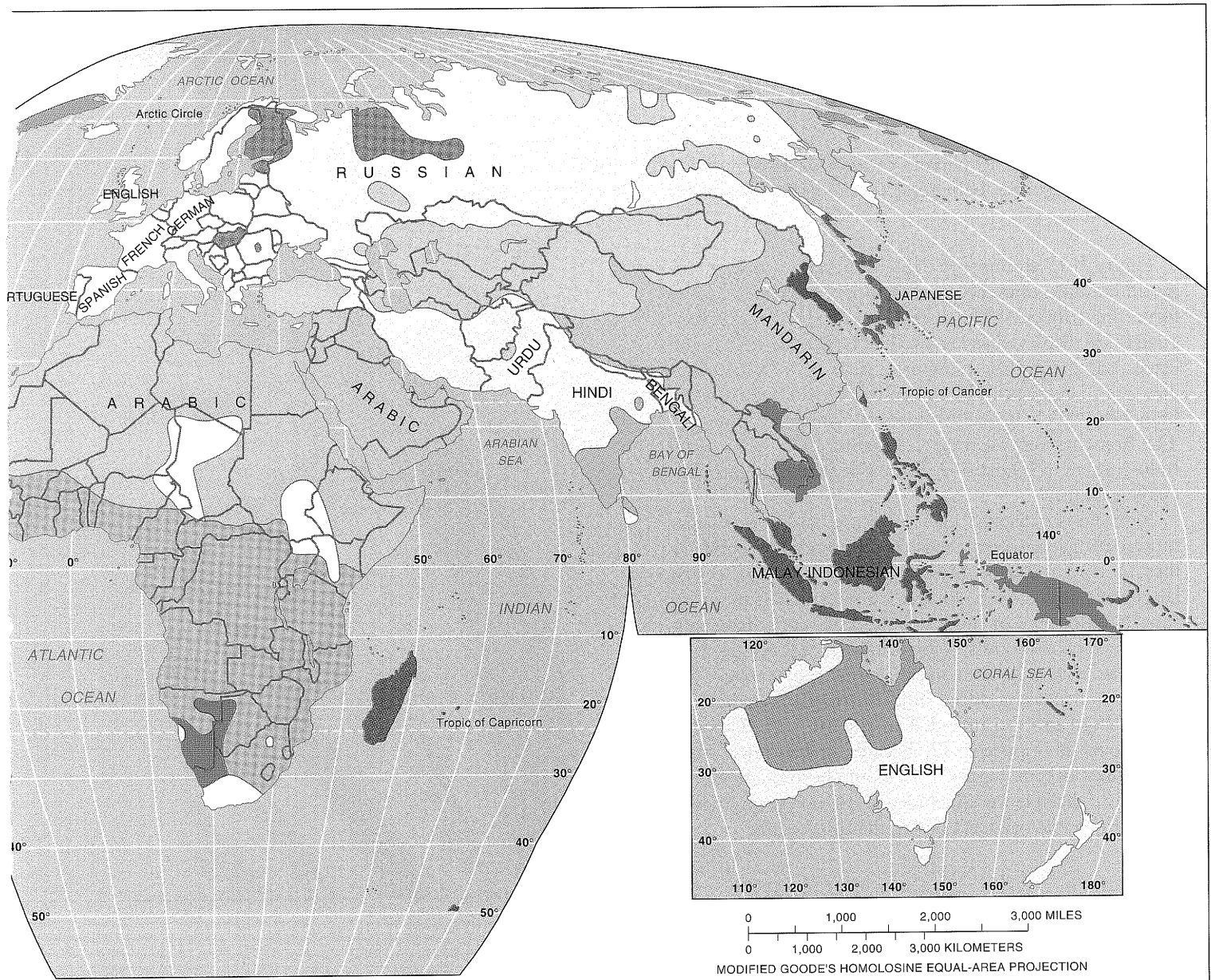


Greek language branch) and from Greece westward toward Italy, Sicily, Corsica, the Mediterranean coast of France, Spain, and Portugal (the origin of the Romance language branch). From the Mediterranean coast, the speakers migrated northward toward central and northern France and on to the British Isles (perhaps the origin of the Celtic language branch).

Renfrew believes that Indo-European also diffused northward from Greece toward the Danube River (Romania) and westward to central Europe. From there the language diffused northward toward the Baltic Sea (the origin of the Germanic language branch) and eastward toward the Dnepr River near Ukraine (the origin of the Slavic language branch). From the Dnepr River, speakers migrated eastward to the Dnepr River (the homeland of the Kurgans).

The Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family originated either directly through migration from Anatolia along the south shores of the Black and Caspian seas by way of Iran and Pakistan, or indirectly by way of Russia north of the Black and Caspian seas.

Renfrew argues that Indo-European diffused into Europe and South Asia along with agricultural practices rather than by military conquest. The language



triumphed because its speakers became more numerous and prosperous by growing their own food instead of relying on hunting. Regardless of how Indo-European diffused, communication was poor among different peoples, whether warriors or farmers. After many generations of complete isolation, individual groups evolved increasingly distinct languages.

This section describes where different languages are found around the world. Although several thousand languages are spoken, they can be organized logically into a small number of language families. The larger language families in turn can be further divided into language branches and language groups.

KEY ISSUE 3

Where Are Other Language Families Distributed?

- Classification of languages
- Distribution of language families

Classification of Languages

Figure 5-11 shows the world's language families:

- About 50 percent of all people speak a language in the *Indo-European family*. English is one example.
- About 20 percent speak a language in the *Sino-Tibetan family*. Examples include the languages spoken by most Chinese people.

- About 5 percent each speak a language in one of these four families:
 - *Afro-Asiatic* (in the Middle East)
 - *Austronesian* (in Southeast Asia)
 - *Niger-Congo* (in Africa)
 - *Dravidian* (in India)
- The remaining 10 percent of the world's population speak languages belonging to a number of smaller families.

Figure 5–12 attempts to depict differences among language families, branches, and groups. Language families form the trunks of the trees, whereas individual languages are displayed as leaves. The larger the trunks and leaves, the greater the number of speakers of those families and languages. Some trunks divide into several branches, which logically represent language branches. The branches representing Germanic, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian in Figure 5–2 divide a second time into language groups.

Figure 5–12 displays each language family as a separate tree at ground level, because differences among families predate recorded history. Linguists speculate that language families were joined together as a handful of superfamilies tens of thousands of years ago. Superfamilies are shown as roots below the surface, because their existence is highly controversial and speculative. The numbers of speakers of the Indo-European branches and major languages are included in Figure 5–12. Celtic is not shown in Figure 5–12, because it has fewer than 5 million speakers. Figure 5–12 would become much too complex if dialects were included. The leaves would need to be drawn like oak leaves, with marginal teeth.

Distribution of Language Families

Half the people in the world speak an Indo-European language. The second-largest family is Sino-Tibetan, spoken by nearly one fourth of the world. Other major language families include Afro-Asiatic, Altaic, Austronesian, Japanese, and Niger-Congo. Refer to Figure 5–11 to see the distribution of these language families and to Figure 5–12 to see the number of people who speak each of them.

Sino-Tibetan Family

The Sino-Tibetan family encompasses languages spoken in the People's Republic of China—the world's most populous state at more than 1 billion—as well as several smaller countries in Southeast Asia. The languages of China generally belong to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. Austro-Thai and Tibetan-Burman are two smaller branches of the family.

Sinitic Branch. There is no single Chinese language. Rather, the most important is Mandarin (or, as the Chinese call it, *pu tong hua*—common speech). Spoken by

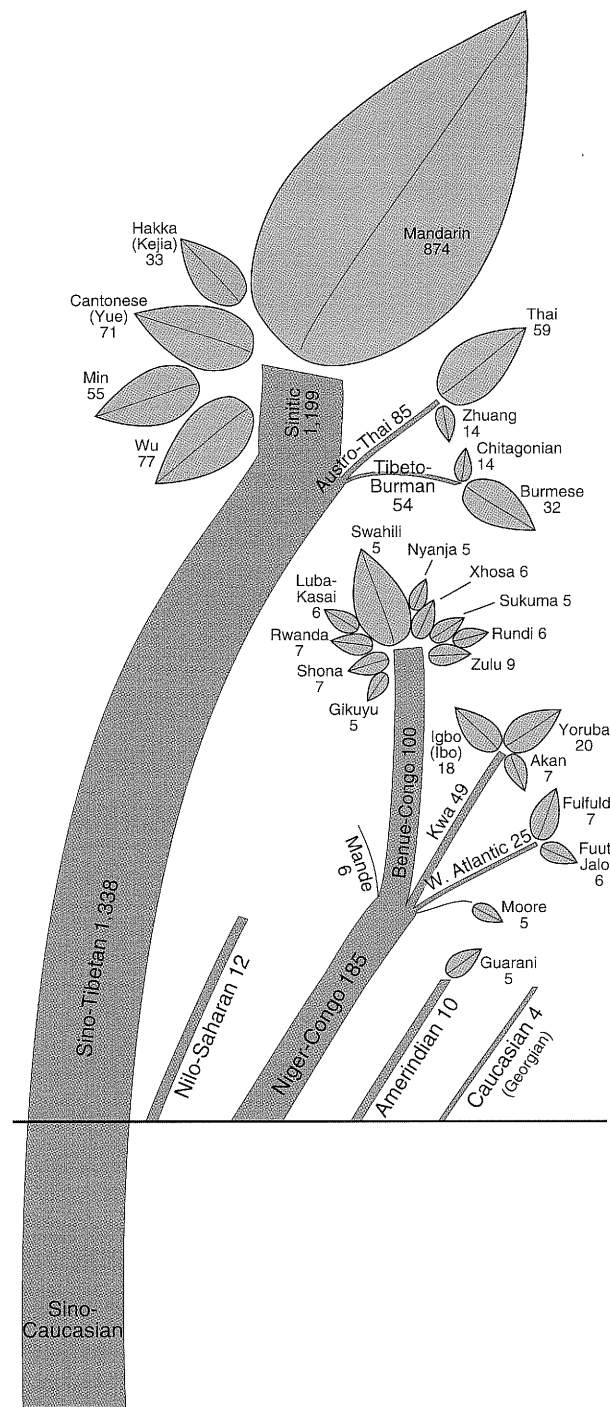
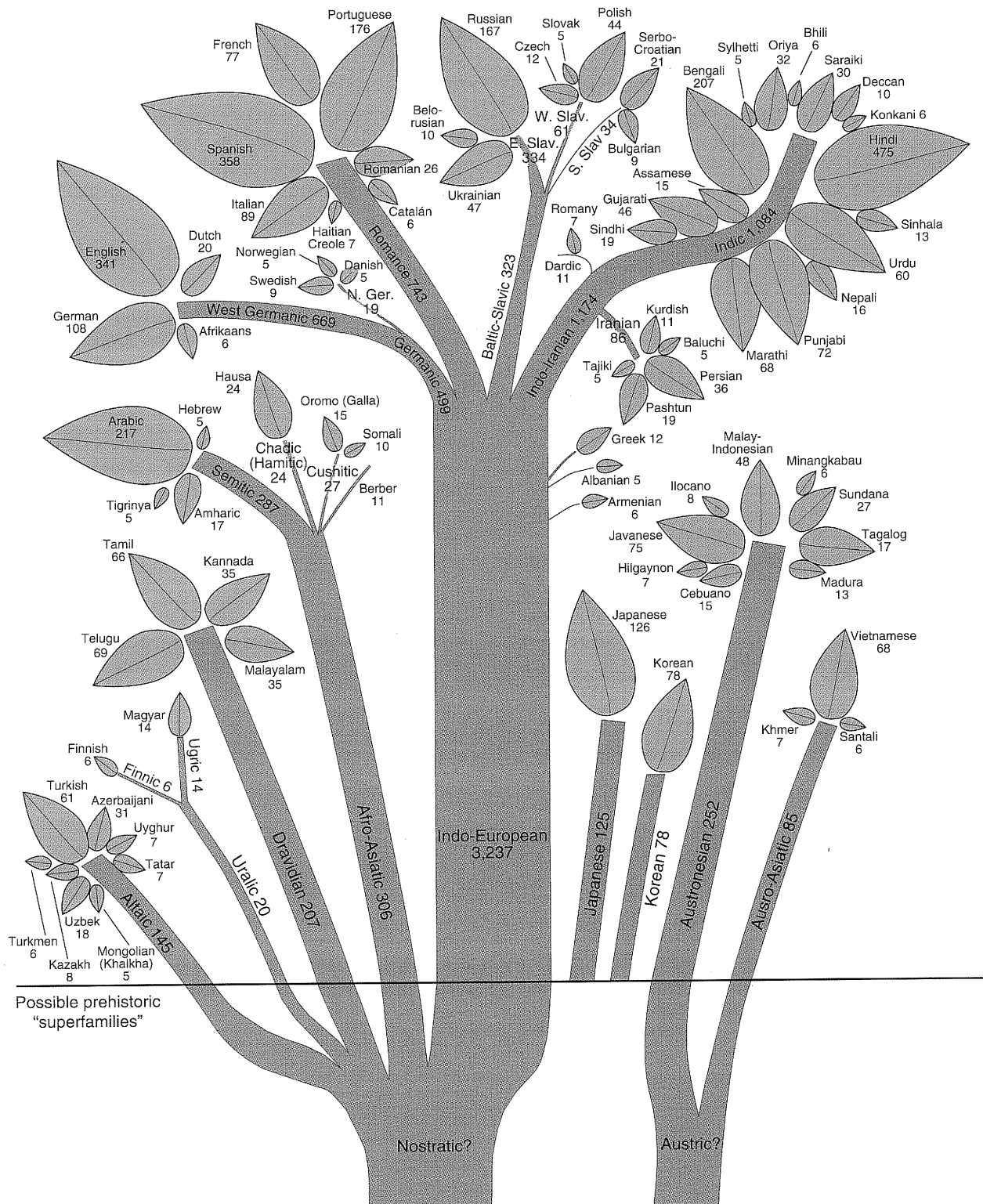


FIGURE 5–12 Language family tree. Language families are divided into branches and groups. Shown here are language families and individual languages that have more than 5 million speakers. Numbers on the tree are in millions of native speakers. Native speakers are people for whom the language is their first language. The totals exclude those who use the languages as second languages. Below ground level, the language tree's "roots" are shown. However, the theory that several language families had common origins tens of thousands of years ago is a highly controversial speculation advocated by some linguists and rejected by others.

approximately three-fourths of the Chinese people, Mandarin is by a wide margin the most used language in the world. Once the language of emperors in Beijing, Mandarin is now the official language of both the



People's Republic of China and Taiwan, as well as one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

Other Sinitic branch languages are spoken by tens of millions of people in China, mostly in the southern and eastern parts of the country—Wu, Cantonese (also known as Yue), Min, Xiang, Hakka (also known as Kejia), Jinyu, and Gan. However, the Chinese government is imposing Mandarin countrywide. The relatively small number of languages in China (compared to India, for

example) is a source of national strength and unity. Unity is also fostered by a consistent written form for all Chinese languages. Although the words are pronounced differently in each language, they are written the same way.

You already know the general structure of Indo-European quite well, because you are a fluent speaker of at least one Indo-European language. But the structure of Chinese languages is quite different. They are based on 420 one-syllable words. This number far exceeds the

possible one-syllable sounds that humans can make, so Chinese languages use each sound to denote more than one thing. The sound *shi*, for example, may mean “lion,” “corpse,” “house,” “poetry,” “ten,” “swear,” or “die.” The sound *jian* has more than 20 meanings, including “to see.” The listener must infer the meaning from the context in the sentence and the tone of voice the speaker uses.

In addition, two one-syllable words can be combined into two syllables, forming a new word. For example, the two-syllable word “Shanghai” is a combination of words that mean “above” and “sea.” *Kan jian*—a combination of the words for “look” and “see,” which would be redundant in English—clarifies that “to see” is the intended meaning for the multiple meanings of *jian*.

The other distinctive characteristic of the Chinese languages is the method of writing (Figure 5–13). The Chinese languages are written with a collection of thousands of characters. Some of the characters represent sounds pronounced in speaking, as in English. However, most are **ideograms**, which represent ideas or concepts, not specific pronunciations. The system is intricate and mature, having developed over 4,000 years.

The main language problem for the Chinese is the difficulty in learning to write, owing to the large number of characters. The Chinese government reports that 16 percent of the population over age 16 is unable to read or write more than a few characters.

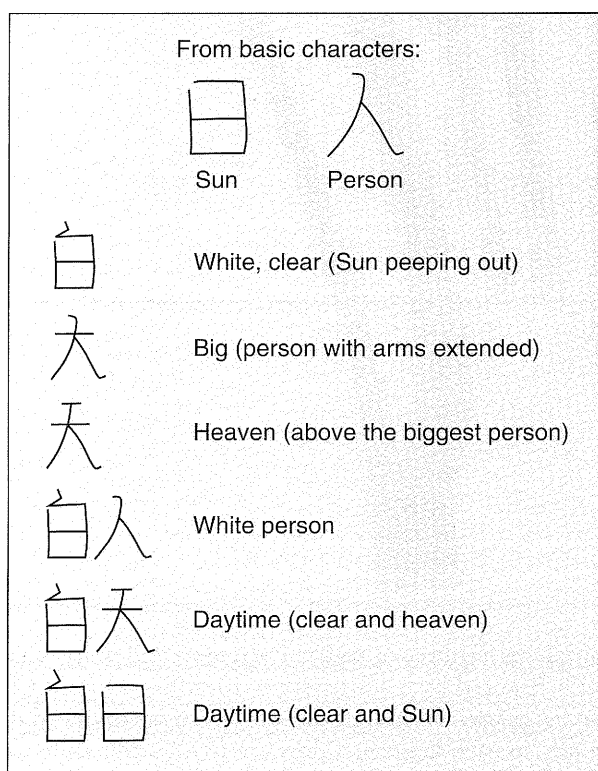


FIGURE 5-13 Chinese language ideograms. The Chinese languages are written with ideograms, most of which represent ideas or concepts rather than sounds. About 240 key characters may be built into more complex words. These are examples of words built from two basic characters—“sun” and “person.”

Austro-Thai and Tibeto-Burman branches of the Sino-Tibetan family. In addition to the Chinese languages included in the Sinitic branch, the Sino-Tibetan family includes two smaller branches, Austro-Thai and Tibeto-Burman. The major language of the Austro-Thai branch is Thai, used in Laos, Thailand, and parts of Vietnam. Burmese, the principal language of the Tibeto-Burman branch, is used in Myanmar (Burma).

Other East and Southeast Asian Language Families

To some Western observers, the written languages of the large East Asian population concentrations may be difficult to distinguish because they are written with such unfamiliar characters, and their sound has a general similarity. However, Japanese and Korean both form distinctive language families. If you look at their distribution in Figure 5–11, you can see a physical reason for their independent development: Japan is isolated because it is an island country, and Korea is isolated to some extent because it is a peninsular state.

Chinese cultural traits have diffused into Japanese society, including the original form of writing the Japanese language. But the structures of the two languages differ. Japanese is written in part with Chinese ideograms, but it also uses two systems of phonetic symbols, like Western languages, used either in place of the ideograms or alongside them. Foreign terms may be written with one of these sets of phonetic symbols.

Japanese Internet users have developed distinctive symbols that reflect cultural traditions. For example, ^.^ represents a girl smiling, because it is impolite for a girl to bare her teeth in a grin.

Korean is usually classified as a separate language family, although it may be related to the Altaic languages of Central Asia, or to Japanese. However, in contrast to Sino-Tibetan languages and Japanese, Korean is written not with ideograms but in a system known as *hankul* (also called *hangul* and *onmun*). In this system, each letter represents a sound, as in Western languages. More than half of the Korean vocabulary derives from Chinese words. In fact, Chinese and Japanese words are the principal sources for creating new words to describe new technology and concepts.

Austro-Asiatic, spoken by about 2 percent of the world's population, is based in Southeast Asia. Vietnamese, the most spoken tongue of the Austro-Asiatic language family, is written with our familiar Roman alphabet, with the addition of a large number of diacritical marks above the vowels. The Vietnamese alphabet was devised in the seventh century by Roman Catholic missionaries.

Afro-Asiatic Language Family

The Afro-Asiatic—once referred to as the Semito-Hamitic—language family includes Arabic and Hebrew, as well as a number of languages spoken primarily in northern Africa and southwestern Asia. The world's

fourth-largest language family, Afro-Asiatic's international significance transcends the number of speakers because its languages were used to write the holiest books of three major world religions, the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Islamic Quran.

Arabic is the major Afro-Asiatic language, an official language in two dozen countries of North Africa and southwestern Asia, from Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula. Besides the 200 million native speakers of Arabic, a large percentage of the world's Muslims have at least some knowledge of Arabic because the Quran (Koran) was written in that language in the seventh century A.D. Although a number of dialects exist in Arabic, a standard Arabic has developed because of the influence of the Quran, newspapers, and radio. The United Nations added Arabic as its sixth official language in the General Assembly in 1973 and in the Security Council in 1982.

Altaic and Uralic Language Families

The Altaic and Uralic language families were once thought to be linked as one family because the two display similar word formation, grammatical endings, and other structural elements. Recent studies, however, point to geographically distinct origins of the two families. The Altaic languages are thought to have originated in the steppes bordering the Qilian Shan and Altai mountains between Tibet and China. Linguists do not know whether one group originally spoke a single Altaic language or whether the language originated through a mixture of several others, which merged through interaction and acculturation of different peoples living in the steppes.

Altaic Languages. The Altaic languages are spoken across an 8,000-kilometer (5,000-mile) band of Asia between Turkey on the west and Mongolia and China on the east. Turkish, by far the most widely used Altaic language, was once written with Arabic letters. But in 1928 the Turkish government, led by Kemal Ataturk, ordered that the language be written with the Roman alphabet instead. Ataturk believed that switching to Roman letters would help modernize the economy and culture of Turkey through increased communications with European countries.

Other Altaic languages with at least 1 million speakers include Azerbaijani, Bashkir, Chuvash, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Tatar, Turkmen, Uighur, and Uzbek. When the Soviet Union governed most of the Altaic-speaking region, use of Altaic languages was suppressed to create a homogeneous national culture. One element of Soviet policy was to force everyone to write with the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, although some Altaic languages traditionally employed Arabic letters. Most speakers of Altaic languages are Muslims and are familiar with Arabic letters because Islamic holy books are written in Arabic.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Altaic languages became official in several newly independent countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. People in

these countries may no longer be forced to learn Russian and write with Cyrillic letters. But unrest continues among speakers of Altaic languages, because enthusiasm for restoring languages long discouraged by the Soviet Union threatens the rights of minorities in these countries to speak other languages that are not officially recognized.

Problems also persist because the boundaries of the countries do not coincide with the regions in which the speakers of the various languages are clustered. The speakers of one Altaic language may find themselves divided among several countries, whereas the speakers of other Altaic languages—such as Bashkir, Chuvash, Tatar, and Uighur—do not control the governments of independent states.

Uralic Languages. Every European country is dominated by Indo-European speakers, except for three: Estonia, Finland, and Hungary (refer to Figure 5–5). The Estonians, Finns, and Hungarians speak languages that belong to the Uralic family. Uralic languages are traceable back to a common language, Proto-Uralic, first used 7,000 years ago by people living in the Ural Mountains of present-day Russia, north of the Kurgan homeland.

Migrants carried the Uralic languages to Europe. One branch moved north along the Volga River and then either turned westward toward Estonia and Finland or eastward into Siberia. The second branch moved southward and then westward to present-day Hungary. These Uralic-speaking migrants carved out homelands for themselves in the midst of Germanic- and Slavic-speaking peoples and retained their language as a major element of cultural identity.

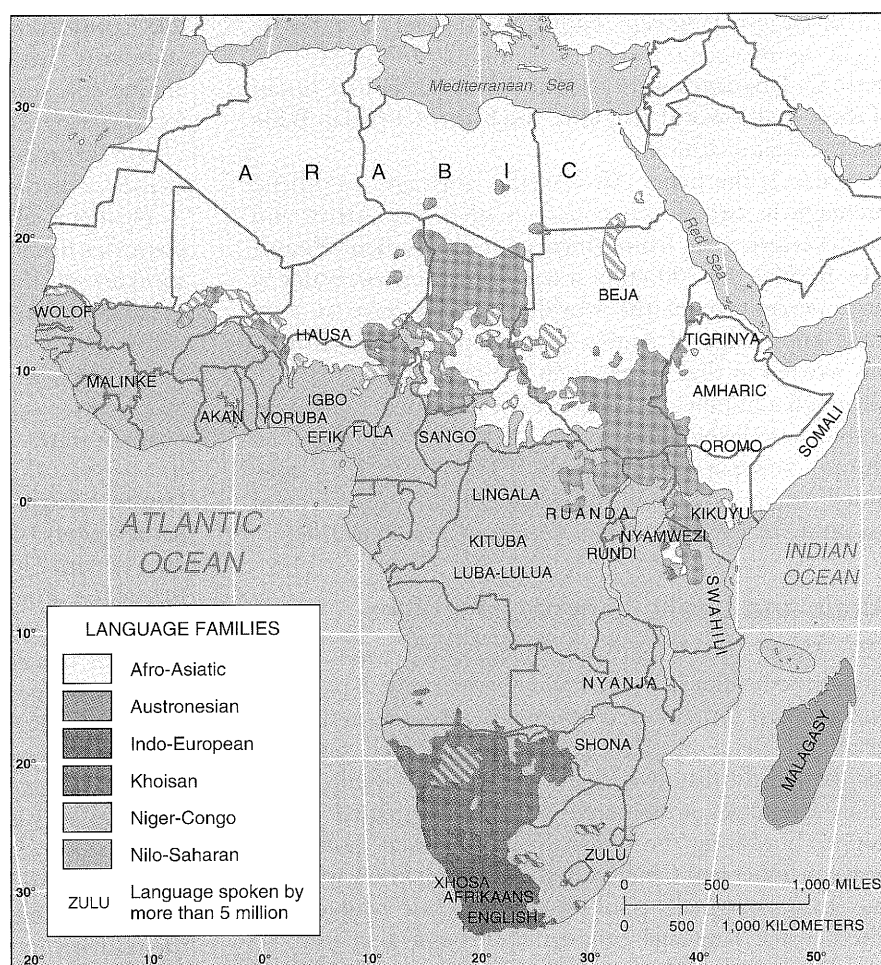
African Language Families

No one knows the precise number of languages spoken in Africa, and scholars disagree on classifying the known ones into families. Nearly 1,000 distinct languages and several thousand named dialects have been documented. Figure 5–14 shows the broad view of African language families, and Figure 5–15 of Nigeria hints at the complex pattern of multiple tongues. This great number of languages results from at least 5,000 years of minimal interaction among the thousands of cultural groups inhabiting the African continent. Each group developed its own language, religion, and other cultural traditions in isolation from other groups.

Documenting African languages is a formidable task, because most lack a written tradition and only ten are spoken by more than 10 million people. In the 1800s, European missionaries and colonial officers began to record African languages using the Roman or Arabic alphabet. Twentieth-century researchers continue to add newly discovered languages to the African list. They have found no evidence that any have become extinct.

In northern Africa the language pattern is relatively clear where an Arabic, an Afro-Asiatic language, dominates, although in a variety of dialects. Other Afro-Asiatic languages spoken by more than 5 million Africans

FIGURE 5-14 Africa's language families. Nearly 1,000 languages have been identified in Africa, and experts do not agree on how to classify them into families, especially languages in central Africa. On the large island of Madagascar, the language is unrelated to other African languages. Madagascar's Austronesian language is from a language family spoken across a wide area of the South Pacific (see Figure 5-11). This wide diffusion indicates that early speakers of Austronesian on the island of Madagascar must have migrated long distances. Languages with more than 5 million speakers are named on the map.



include Amharic, Oromo, and Somali in the Horn of Africa and Hausa in northern Nigeria. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, languages grow far more complex.

Niger-Congo Language Family. More than 95 percent of the people in sub-Saharan Africa speak languages of the Niger-Congo family, which includes six branches with many hard-to-classify languages. The remaining 5 percent speak languages of the Khoisan or Nilo-Saharan families. In addition, several million South Africans speak Indo-European languages, either English or Afrikaans, a Germanic Dutch-like language reflecting South Africa's Dutch colonial history.

The largest branch of the Niger-Congo family is the Benue-Congo branch, and its most important language is Swahili. Although it is the official language only of Tanzania, Swahili is spoken in much of eastern Africa. Swahili originally developed through interaction among African groups and Arab traders, so its vocabulary has strong Arabic influences. Also, Swahili is one of the few African languages with an extensive literature.

Nilo-Saharan Language Family. Nilo-Saharan languages are spoken by a few million people in north-central Africa, immediately north of the Niger-Congo language region. Divisions within the Nilo-Saharan family exemplify the problem of classifying African

languages. Despite fewer speakers, the Nilo-Saharan family is divided into six branches: Chari-Nile, Fur, Koma, Maba, Saharan, and Songhai. The Chari-Nile branch (East Africa from Egypt to Tanzania) can be subdivided into four groups: Berta, Central Sudanic, East Sudanic, and Kunama. The Central Sudanic group in turn comprises ten subgroups. Therefore, the total number of speakers of each individual Nilo-Saharan language is extremely small.

Khoisan Language Family. The third important language family of sub-Saharan Africa—Khoisan—is concentrated in the southwest. A distinctive characteristic of the Khoisan languages is the use of clicking sounds. Upon hearing this, whites in southern Africa derisively and onomatopoeically named the most important Khoisan language Hottentot.

Austronesian Language Family. About 6 percent of the world's people speak an Austronesian language, once known as the Malay-Polynesian family. The most frequently used Austronesian language is Malay-Indonesian, the most important language of Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country.

The maps of world and African languages (Figure 5-11 and Figure 5-14) show a striking oddity with Madagascar, the large island off the east coast of Africa. The people of Madagascar speak Malagasy, which belongs to

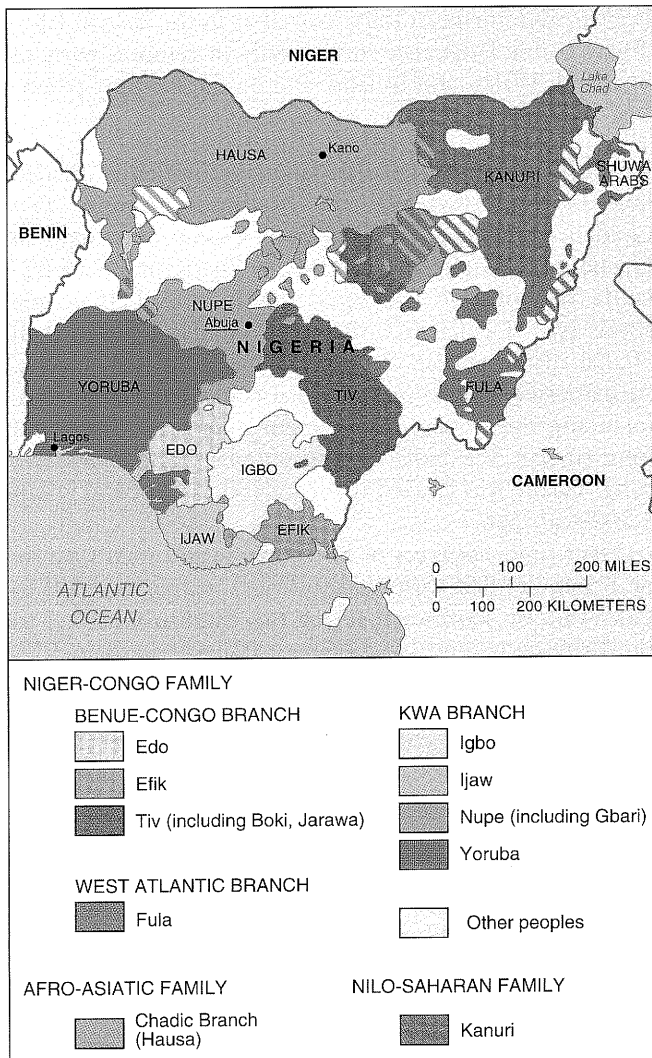


FIGURE 5-15 Nigeria's main languages. National unity is severely strained by the lack of a common language that a large percentage of the population can understand. To encourage unity among the disparate cultural groups, Nigeria has moved the national capital from Lagos, in the Yoruba-speaking southwest, to Abuja, in the country's center. This central and "neutral" location was selected to avoid existing concentrations of the major rival cultural groups.

the Austronesian family, even though the island is separated by 3,000 kilometers (1,900 miles) from any other Austronesian-speaking country, such as Indonesia. This is certainly strong evidence of migration to Madagascar from the South Pacific. Malayo-Polynesian people apparently sailed in small boats across the Indian Ocean to reach Madagascar approximately 2,000 years ago.

Nigeria: Conflict Among Speakers of Different Languages. Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, displays problems that can arise from the presence of many speakers of many languages. More than 200 distinct languages are spoken in Nigeria. In the north, Hausa, an Afro-Asiatic language, is spoken by approximately one-fourth of the population, mostly Hausa and Fulani peoples. In the southeast, Igbo is the most common language, followed by Efik and Ijaw. In the southwest, Yoruba is the most important language, followed by Edo (Figure 5-15).

Nigeria's principal problem as a country is that none of its 200-plus indigenous languages has widespread use. Reflecting its colonial history, English is spoken by 2 percent of Nigerians. In fact, English is the official language, which has the considerable advantage of being intelligible to governments of other countries.

Groups living in different regions of Nigeria have often battled. The southern Ibos attempted to secede from Nigeria during the 1960s, and northerners have repeatedly claimed that the Yorubas discriminate against them. To reduce these regional tensions, the government has moved the capital from Lagos in the Yoruba-dominated southwest to Abuja in the center of Nigeria.

Nigeria reflects the problems that can arise when great cultural diversity—and therefore language diversity—is packed into a relatively small region. Nigeria also illustrates the importance of language in identifying distinct cultural groups at a local scale. Speakers of one language are unlikely to understand any of the others in the same family, let alone languages from other families.

KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do People Preserve Local Languages?

- Preserving language diversity
- Global dominance of English

The distribution of a language is a measure of the fate of an ethnic group. English has been diffused around the world from a small island in northwestern Europe because of the cultural dominance of England and the United States over other territory on Earth's surface. On the other hand, Icelandic has remained a little-used language because of the isolation of the Icelandic people.

As in other cultural traits, language displays the two competing geographic trends of globalization and local diversity. On the one hand, English has become the principal language of communication and interaction for the entire world. At the same time, local languages endangered by the global dominance of English are being protected and preserved.

Preserving Language Diversity

Thousands of languages are **extinct languages**, once in use—even in the recent past—but no longer spoken or read in daily activities by anyone in the world. When Spanish missionaries reached the eastern Amazon region of Peru in the sixteenth century, they found more than 500 languages. Only 57 survive today, half of which face extinction in the next few years, with the impending deaths of the last elderly speakers of the languages.

Gothic was widely spoken by people in Eastern and Northern Europe in the third century A.D. Not only is Gothic extinct, but so is the entire language group to

which it belonged, the East Germanic group of the Germanic branch of Indo-European. The last speakers of Gothic lived in the Crimea in Russia in the sixteenth century.

The Gothic language died because the descendants of the Goths were converted to other languages through processes of integration, such as political dominance and cultural preference. For example, many Gothic people switched to speaking the Latin language after their conversion to Christianity.

Some endangered languages are being preserved. The European Union has established the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages, based in Dublin, Ireland, to provide financial support for the preservation of about two dozen languages, especially languages belonging to the Celtic branch of Indo-European. Nonetheless, linguists expect that hundreds of languages will become extinct during the twenty-first century and that only about 300 languages are clearly safe from extinction because they have sufficient speakers and official government support.

Hebrew: Reviving Extinct Languages

Hebrew is a rare case of an extinct language that has been revived. Most of the Bible's Old Testament was written in Hebrew (a small part of it was written in another Afro-Asiatic language, Aramaic). A language of daily activity in biblical times, Hebrew diminished in use in the fourth century B.C. and was thereafter retained only for Jewish religious services. At the time of Jesus, people in present-day Israel generally spoke Aramaic, which in turn was replaced by Arabic.

When Israel was established as an independent country in 1948, Hebrew became one of the new country's two official languages, along with Arabic. Hebrew was chosen because the Jewish population of Israel consisted of refugees and migrants from many countries who spoke many languages. Because Hebrew was still used in Jewish prayers, no other language could so symbolically unify the disparate cultural groups in the new country.

The task of reviving Hebrew as a living language was formidable. Words had to be created for thousands of objects and inventions unknown in biblical times, such as telephones, cars, and electricity. The effort was initiated by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who lived in Palestine before the creation of the state of Israel and who refused to speak any language other than Hebrew. Ben-Yehuda is credited with the invention of 4,000 new Hebrew words—related when possible to ancient ones—and the creation of the first modern Hebrew dictionary.

Celtic: Preserving Endangered Languages

The Celtic branch of Indo-European is of particular interest to English speakers because it was the major language in the British Isles before the Germanic Angles, Jutes, and Saxons invaded. Two thousand years ago Celtic languages were spoken in much of present-day Germany,

France, and northern Italy, as well as in the British Isles. Today Celtic languages survive only in remoter parts of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, and on the Brittany peninsula of France.

Celtic Groups. The Celtic language branch is divided into Goidelic (Gaelic) and Brythonic groups. Two Goidelic languages survive: Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic. Irish Gaelic and English are the Republic of Ireland's two official languages, but only 75,000 people speak Irish Gaelic exclusively. In Scotland fewer than 80,000 of the people (2 percent) speak Scottish Gaelic. An extensive body of literature exists in Gaelic languages, including the Robert Burns poem *Auld Lang Syne* ("old long since"), the basis for the popular New Year's Eve song. Gaelic was carried from Ireland to Scotland about 1,500 years ago.

Over time, speakers of Brythonic (also called Cymric or Britannic) fled westward to Wales, southwestward to Cornwall, or southward across the English Channel to the Brittany peninsula of France. Wales—the name derived from the Germanic invaders' word for *foreign*—was conquered by the English in 1283. However, Welsh remained dominant in Wales until the nineteenth century, when many English speakers migrated there to work in coal mines and factories. An estimated one-fourth of the people in Wales still use Welsh as their primary language, although all but a handful know English as well. In some isolated communities in the northwest, especially in the county of Gwynedd, as many as 80 percent of the people speak Welsh.

Cornish became extinct in 1777, with the death of the language's last known native speaker, Dolly Pentreath, who lived in Mousehole (pronounced "muzzle"). Before Pentreath died, an English historian recorded as much of her speech as possible so that future generations could study the Cornish language. One of her last utterances was later translated as "I will not speak English . . . you ugly, black toad!"

In Brittany—like Cornwall, an isolated peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean—300,000 people still speak Breton. Breton differs from the other Celtic languages in that it has more French words. Only about 10,000 actually use Breton more than French.

The survival of any language depends on the political and military strength of its speakers. The Celtic languages declined because the Celts lost most of the territory they once controlled to speakers of other languages. In the 1300s the Irish were forbidden to speak their own language in the presence of their English masters. By the nineteenth century, Irish children were required to wear "tally sticks" around their necks at school. The teacher carved a notch in the stick every day the child used an Irish word, and at the end of the day meted out punishment based on the number of tallies. Parents encouraged their children to learn English so that they could compete for jobs. Most remaining Celtic speakers also know the language of their English or French conquerors.



Celtic language branch. Road signs in Eire (Republic of Ireland) are written in both English and Goidelic (Gaelic). The English versions of the names are displayed underneath the Goidelic. This road sign, in Ballyvaughan, County Clare, shows the way to Galway, known in Goidelic as Gallimh.

Revival of Celtic Languages. Recent efforts have prevented the disappearance of Celtic languages. In Wales the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (Welsh Language Society) has been instrumental in preserving the language. Britain's 1988 Education Act made Welsh language training a compulsory subject in all schools in Wales, and Welsh history and music have been added to the curriculum. All local governments and utility companies are now obliged to provide services in Welsh. Welsh-language road signs have been posted throughout Wales, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) produces Welsh-language television and radio programs.

The number of people fluent in Irish Gaelic has grown in recent years as well, especially among younger people. Irish singers, including many rock groups (although not U2), have begun to record and perform in Gaelic. An Irish-language TV station began broadcasting in 1996. The revival is being led by young Irish living in other countries who wish to distinguish themselves from the English (in much the same way that Canadians traveling abroad often make efforts to distinguish themselves from U.S. citizens).

A couple of hundred people have now become fluent in the formerly extinct Cornish language, which was revived in the 1920s. Cornish is taught in grade schools and adult evening courses and is used in some church services; some banks accept checks written in Cornish. However, a dispute has erupted over the proper way to spell Cornish words. Some prefer to revive the confusing, illogical medieval spellings, whereas others, including the Cornish Language Board, advocate spelling words

phonetically. When officials in Camborne erected a welcome sign with the name of the town spelled "Kammbronn," traditionalists were outraged, because the medieval spelling was "Cambron." They argued that "Kammbronn" looked too "German," a harsh insult because it recalled both the successful invasion by Germanic people 1500 years ago and the failed attempt by the Nazis in 1940.

The long-term decline of languages such as Celtic provides an excellent example of the precarious struggle for survival that many languages experience. Faced with the diffusion of alternatives used by people with greater political and economic strength, speakers of Celtic and other languages must make sacrifices to preserve their cultural identity.

Multilingual States

Difficulties can arise at the boundary between two languages. Note on Figure 5-5, the map of Indo-European language branches, that the boundary between the Romance and Germanic branches runs through the middle of two small European countries, Belgium and Switzerland. Belgium has had more difficulty than Switzerland in reconciling the interests of the different language speakers.

Belgium. Southern Belgians (known as Walloons) speak French, whereas northern Belgians (known as Flemings) speak a dialect of the Germanic language of Dutch, called Flemish. The language boundary sharply divides the

country into two regions. Antagonism between the Flemings and Walloons is aggravated by economic and political differences. Historically, the Walloons dominated Belgium's economy and politics, and French was the official state language (Figure 5-16).

In response to pressure from Flemish speakers, Belgium was divided into two independent regions, Flanders and Wallonia. Each elects an assembly that controls cultural affairs, public health, road construction, and urban development in its region. The national government turns over approximately 15 percent of its tax revenues to pay for the regional governments.

Motorists in Belgium clearly see the language boundary on expressways. Heading north, the highway signs suddenly change from French to Flemish at the boundary between Wallonia and Flanders. Brussels, the capital city, is an exception. Although located in Flanders, Brussels is officially bilingual and signs are in both French and Flemish. As an example, some stations on the subway map of Brussels are identified by two names—one French and one Flemish (for instance, Porte de Hal and Halle Poort—see Figure 13-22).

Belgium had difficulty fixing a precise boundary between Flemish and French speakers, because people living near the boundary may actually use the language spoken on the other side. During the late 1980s, this

problem jailed one town's mayor and collapsed the national government. The town is named *Voeren* in Flemish and *Fourens* in French. Jose Happart, its mayor, refused to speak Flemish, which is required by national law because the town is in Flanders. Happart had been elected on a platform of returning the town to French Wallonia, from which it had been transferred in 1963, when the national government tried to clear up the language boundary. After refusing to be tested on his knowledge of Dutch, Happart (who in fact knew Dutch) was jailed and removed from office. In protest, French-speaking members quit the coalition governing the country, forcing the Belgian prime minister to resign.

Switzerland. In contrast, Switzerland peacefully exists with multiple languages. The key is a very decentralized government, in which local authorities hold most of the power, and decisions are frequently made by voter referenda. Switzerland has four official languages: German (used by 64 percent of the population), French (20 percent), Italian (7 percent), and Romansh (1 percent). Swiss voters made Romansh an official language in a 1938 referendum, despite the small percentage who use the language (Figure 5-17). Other languages are used by nearly 10 percent of the Swiss population, mostly guest-worker immigrants (see Chapter 3).

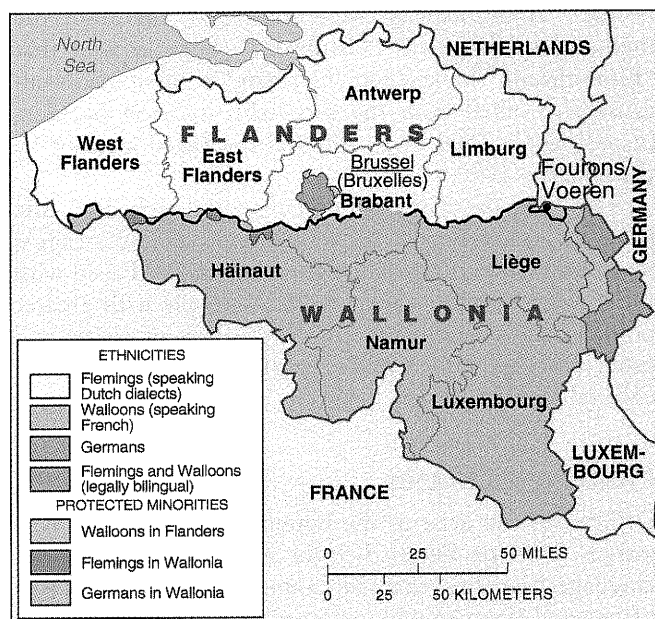


FIGURE 5-16 Languages in Belgium. Belgians are sharply divided by their language differences. Flemings in the north speak Flemish, a Dutch dialect. Walloons in the south speak French. The two groups have had difficulty sharing national power. As a result, considerable power has been transferred to two regional assemblies, one each for Flanders and Wallonia. This road sign in Flanders shows city names in Dutch. Had this been Wallonia, the sign would have shown the French equivalents Bruxelles, Anvers, and Courtrai, respectively. The photograph shows no motor vehicles because truck drivers had blocked the highway to protest high fuel costs.



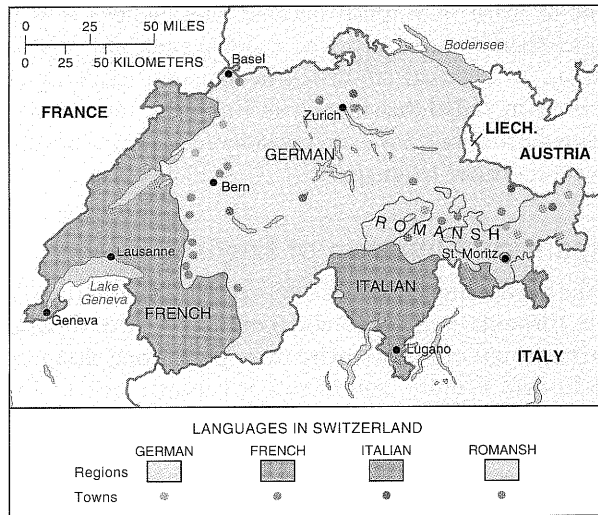


FIGURE 5-17 Languages in Switzerland. Switzerland lives peacefully with four official languages, including Romansh, which is used by only 1 percent of the population. Although the country can be divided into four main linguistic regions as shown, people living in individual communities, especially in the mountains, may use a language other than the prevailing local one. The Swiss, relatively tolerant of speakers of other languages, have institutionalized cultural diversity by creating a form of government that places considerable power in small communities.

Isolated Languages

An **isolated language** is a language unrelated to any other and therefore not attached to any language family. Similarities and differences between languages—our main form of communication—are a measure of the degree of interaction among groups of people. The diffusion of Indo-European languages demonstrates that a common ancestor dominated much of Europe before recorded history. Similarly, the diffusion of Indo-European languages to the Western Hemisphere is a result of conquests by Indo-European speakers in more recent times. On the other hand, isolated languages arise through lack of interaction with speakers of other languages.

A Pre-Indo-European Survivor: Basque. The best example of an isolated language in Europe is Basque, apparently the only language currently spoken in Europe that survives from the period before the arrival of Indo-European speakers. No attempt to link Basque to the common origin of the other European languages has been successful. Basque was probably once spoken over a wider area but was abandoned where its speakers came in contact with Indo-Europeans.

Basque is spoken by 1 million people in the Pyrenees Mountains of northern Spain and southwestern France (refer to Figure 5-8, the gray area in northern Spain). Basque's lack of connection to other languages reflects the isolation of the Basque people in their mountainous homeland. This isolation has helped the Basque people

preserve their language in the face of the wide diffusion of Indo-European languages.

An Unchanging Language: Icelandic. Unlike Basque, Icelandic is related to other languages, in the North Germanic group of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. Icelandic's significance is that over the past thousand years it has changed less than any other in the Germanic branch.

As was the case with England, people in Iceland speak a Germanic language because their ancestors migrated to the island from the east, in this case from Norway. Norwegian settlers colonized Iceland in A.D. 874.

When an ethnic group migrates to a new location, it takes along the language spoken in the former home. The language spoken by most migrants—such as the Germanic invaders of England—changes in part through interaction with speakers of other languages. But in the case of Iceland, the Norwegian immigrants had little contact with speakers of other languages when they arrived in Iceland, nor did they have contact with speakers of their language back in Norway. After centuries of interaction with other Scandinavians, Norwegian and other North Germanic languages had adopted new words and pronunciation, whereas the isolated people of Iceland had less opportunity to learn new words and no reason to change their language.



Competing Basque demonstrators in San Sebastian, Spain. Demonstrators in the foreground, who support the Basque separatist movement, have signs in Basque that read "Basque prisoners to the Basque country," referring to Basque prisoners held elsewhere in Spain. Demonstrators in the background, who oppose the Basque separatist group E.T.A., have signs that read "E.T.A., let us live in peace" in Spanish and "The word of the youth is Basque democracy" in Basque.

Global Dominance of English

One of the most fundamental needs in a global society is a common language for communication. Increasingly in the modern world, the language of international communication is English.

A Polish airline pilot who flies over France speaks to the traffic controller on the ground in English. English is the official language at the Airbus aircraft factory in Toulouse, France, and the Merloni appliance headquarters in Fabriano, Italy. When well-educated speakers of two different languages wish to communicate with each other in countries such as India or Nigeria, they frequently use English. Most information on the World Wide Web is in English.

English: An Example of a Lingua Franca

A language of international communication, such as English, is known as a **lingua franca**. To facilitate trade, speakers of two different languages would create a lingua franca by mixing elements of the two languages into a simple common language. The term, which means *language of the Franks*, was originally applied by Arab traders during the Middle Ages to describe the language they used to communicate with Europeans, whom they called *Franks*.

A group that learns English or another lingua franca may learn a simplified form, called a **pidgin language**. To communicate with speakers of another language, two groups construct a pidgin language by learning a few of the grammar rules and words of a lingua franca, while mixing in some elements of their own languages. A pidgin language has no native speakers—it is always spoken in addition to one's native language.

Other than English, modern lingua franca languages include Swahili in East Africa, Hindustani in South Asia, and Russian in the former Soviet Union. A number of African and Asian countries that became independent in the twentieth century adopted English or Swahili as an official language for government business, as well as for commerce, even if the majority of the people couldn't speak it.

The rapid growth in importance of English is reflected in the percentage of students learning English as a second language in school. Among European Union countries, 83 percent of high school students are learning English, including more than 90 percent of students in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. Seventy percent of Europeans between ages 18 and 24 speak English. Six years of English is typical in Japanese schools.

Around the world, some 200 million people speak English fluently as a second language, and an unknown number have some working knowledge of the language. Foreign students increasingly seek admission to universities in countries that teach in English rather than in German, French, or Russian. Students around the world

want to learn in English because they believe it is the most effective way to work in a global economy and participate in a global culture. The Japanese government, having concluded that fluency in English is mandatory in a global economy, has even considered adding English as a second official language.

Expansion Diffusion of English

In the past, a lingua franca achieved widespread distribution through migration and conquest. Two thousand years ago, use of Latin spread through Europe along with the Roman Empire, and in recent centuries use of English spread around the world primarily through the British Empire. In contrast, the current growth in use of English around the world is a result not of military conquest, nor of migration by English-speaking people.

Rather, the current growth in the use of English is an example of expansion diffusion, the spread of a trait through the snowballing effect of an idea rather than through the relocation of people. Expansion diffusion has occurred in two ways with English. First, English is changing through diffusion of new vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Second, English words are fusing with other languages.

For a language to remain vibrant, new words and usage must always be coined to deal with new situations. Unlike most examples of expansion diffusion, though, recent changes in English have percolated up from common usage and ethnic dialects rather than directed down to the masses by elite people. Examples include dialects spoken by African Americans and residents of Appalachia.

Some African Americans speak a dialect of English heavily influenced by the group's distinctive heritage of forced migration from Africa during the eighteenth century to be slaves in the southern colonies. African American slaves preserved a distinctive dialect in part to communicate in a code not understood by their white masters. Black dialect words such as “gumbo” and “jazz” have long since diffused into the standard English language.

In the twentieth century, many African Americans migrated from the South to the large cities in the Northeast and Midwest (see Chapter 7). Living in racially segregated neighborhoods within northern cities, and attending segregated schools, many blacks preserved their distinctive dialect. That dialect has been termed **Ebonics**, a combination of *ebony* and *phonics*.

The American Speech, Language and Hearing Association has classified Ebonics as a distinct dialect, with a recognized vocabulary, grammar, and word meaning. Among the distinctive elements of Ebonics are the use of double negatives, such as *I'm not going there no more*, and *be* instead of *is* in such sentences as *She be at home*.

Natives of Appalachian communities, such as in rural West Virginia, also have a distinctive dialect, pronouncing “hollow” as *holler*, “creek” as *crick*. Distinctive

Global Forces, Local Impacts

Language Policy in Australia and New Zealand

English is the official and most widely used language in Australia and New Zealand as a result of British colonization during the early nineteenth century. Settlers in Australia and New Zealand established and maintained outposts of British culture, including use of the English language.

An essential element in maintaining British culture was restriction of immigration from non-English-speaking places during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fear of immigration was especially strong in Australia, because of its proximity to other Asian countries.

Under a "White Australia" policy, every prospective immigrant was required to write 50 words of a European language dictated by an immigration officer. The dictation test was not eliminated until 1957. The Australian government now merely requires that immigrants learn English.

More remote from Asian landmasses, New Zealand has attracted fewer Asian immigrants. However, New Zealand's language requirement is more stringent: immigrants must already be fluent in English. Free English lessons are available to immigrants.

While English remains the dominant language of Australia and New Zealand, the languages that predate British settlement survive in both countries. However, the two countries

have adopted different policies with regard to indigenous languages. Australia regards English as a tool for promoting cultural diversity, whereas New Zealand regards linguistic diversity as an important element of cultural diversity.

In Australia, 1 percent of the population is Aboriginal. Many elements of Aboriginal culture are now being preserved, including dance, which was discussed in Chapter 4. But education is oriented toward teaching English rather than maintaining local languages. English is the language of instruction throughout Australia, and others are relegated to the status of second language.

In New Zealand, more than 10 percent of the population is Maori, descendants of Polynesian people who migrated there around 1,000 years ago. In contrast with Australia, New Zealand has adopted policies to preserve the Maori language, known as *te Reo Maori*. Most notably, *te Reo Maori* became one of New Zealand's two official languages, along with English, in 1987. A Maori Language Commission was established to preserve the language.

Despite official policies, only 3 percent of New Zealanders are fluent in *te Reo Maori*, 80 percent of whom are over age 50. Preserving the language requires skilled teachers and willingness to endure inconvenience compared to using the world's *lingua franca*, English.

grammatical practices include the use of the double negative as in Ebonics and adding "a" in front of verbs ending in "ing," such as *a-sitting*.

Use of Ebonics is controversial within the African American community. On the one hand, some regard it as substandard, a measure of poor education, and an obstacle to success in the United States. Others see Ebonics as a means for preserving a distinctive element of African American culture and an effective way to teach African Americans who otherwise perform poorly in school. The Oakland, California, school board voted to recognize Ebonics as a second language in 1996 but rescinded the vote after protests from many African Americans, as well as whites.

Similarly, speaking an Appalachian dialect produces both pride and problems. An Appalachian dialect is a source of regional identity but has long been regarded by other Americans as a sign of poor education and an obstacle to obtaining employment in other regions of the United States. Some Appalachian residents are "bidialectic"—they speak "standard" English outside Appalachia and slip back into their regional dialect at home.

Diffusion to Other Languages

English words have become increasingly integrated into other languages. The Japanese, for example, refer to *beisboru* (baseball), *naifu* (knife), and *sutoroberi keki*

(strawberry cake). French speakers regard the invasion of English words with alarm, but Spanish speakers find the mixing of the two languages stimulating.

Franglais. Traditionally, language has been an especially important source of national pride and identity in France. The French are particularly upset with the increasing worldwide domination of English, especially the invasion of their language by English words and the substitution of English for French as the most important language of international communications.

French is an official language in 26 countries and for hundreds of years served as the *lingua franca* for international diplomats. Many French are upset that English words such as *cowboy*, *hamburger*, *jeans*, and *T-shirt* were allowed to diffuse into the French language and destroy the language's purity. The widespread use of English in the French language is called **franglais**, a combination of *français* and *anglais*, the French words for *French* and *English*.

Since 1635, the French Academy has been the supreme arbiter of the French language. In modern times it has promoted the use of French terms in France, such as *stationnement* rather than *parking*, *fin du semaine* rather than *le weekend*, and *logiciel* instead of *software*. France's highest court, however, ruled in 1994 that most of the country's laws banning *franglais* were illegal.

Protection of the French language is even more extreme in Québec, which is completely surrounded by

CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

English on the Internet

English has become the principal language of the Internet. One-half of people online and three-fourths of Web sites use English. The dominance of English on the Internet is partly a reflection of the fact that usage is especially high in English-speaking countries, such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

English is even more dominant as the language of Internet commerce. The best way to measure the use of the Internet for business transactions is to monitor Web sites linked to secure servers that encrypt information such as credit card numbers. English is the language for 90 percent of all Web sites linked to secure sites, and 95 percent of Web sites in the ".com" domain linked to secure Web sites.

Geographers and other scientists have been "mapping" the Internet since the 1970s. Leading mapping sources include Matrix Internet and Directory Services (MIDS), based in Austin, Texas, *Mappa Mundi* magazine, and Cybergography.org. MIDS

produced a world map depicting the use of the Internet on a single day in 1999 (Figure 5-1.1). To create the map, MIDS geocoded the location of every Internet host for all 56.2 million computers connected to the Internet that day. The number of hosts was aggregated for major cities and countries and then represented on the map by the colored circles. Larger, brighter circles represented more hosts, consistent with the way conventional maps are designed.

Two principal conclusions can be drawn from the global distribution of Internet usage. First, the overwhelming majority of Internet users are located in North America and Europe, whereas few are in the less developed countries of the Southern Hemisphere. Second, Europe has a relatively large number of smaller circles, representing smaller volumes of hosts, because service providers did not cross national boundaries.

Maps of Internet usage produced by MIDS and other cyber geographers help Internet service providers identify bottlenecks and congestion in

Internet usage. Daily fluctuations in usage are depicted in animated maps resembling weather reports.

Other cyber geography maps are much more conceptual. They include maps of Internet service provider routes, maps that navigate complex Web sites, maps for surfing the Web, and maps of virtual cities. These are not "maps" of country boundaries and bodies of water, but use geographic metaphors to visualize the digital landscape.

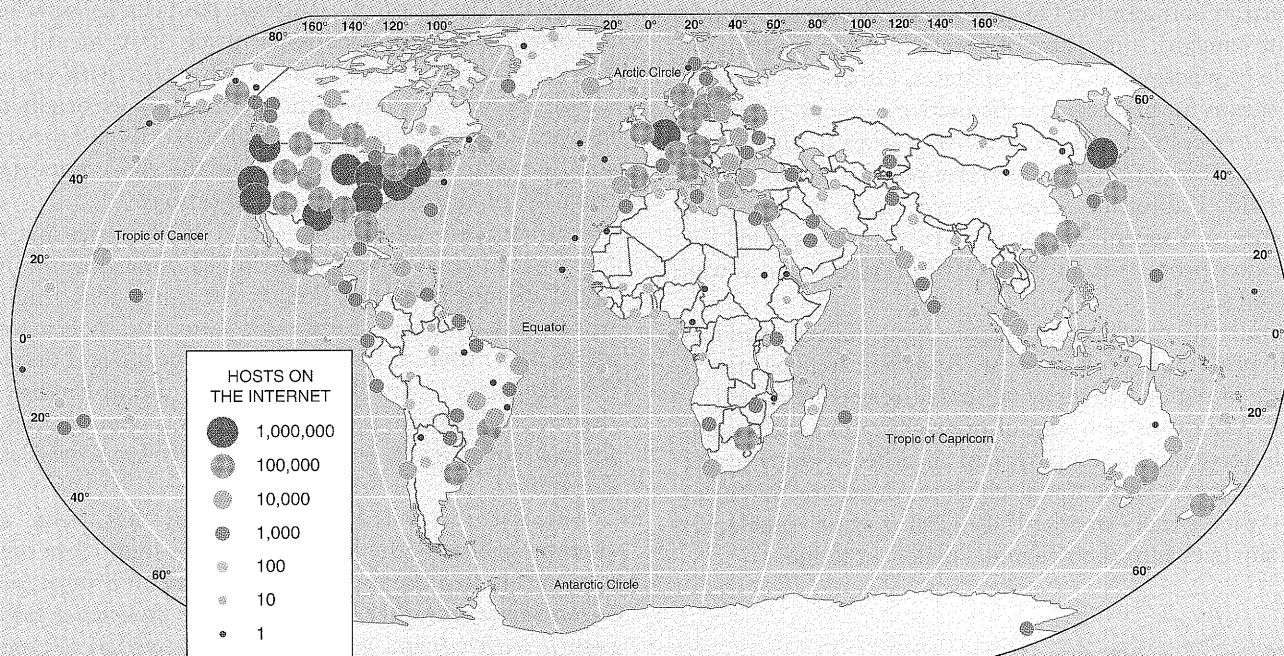
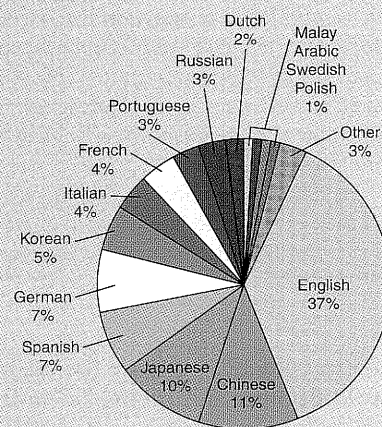


FIGURE 5-1.1 Internet hosts 1999. Matrix Internet and Directory Services prepared the map to show a clustering of a large percentage of the world's Internet users in the relatively developed countries of North America, Western Europe, and Japan.

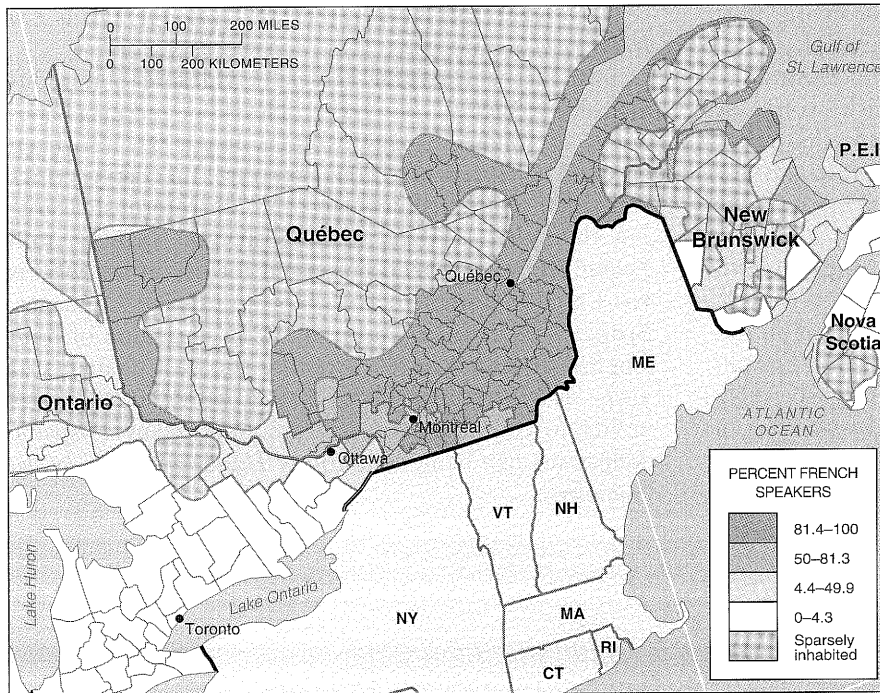


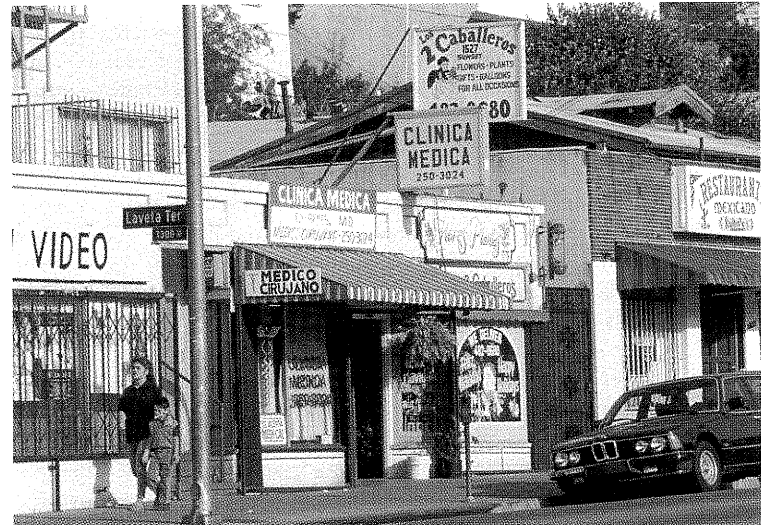
FIGURE 5-18 English/French language boundary in Canada. More than 80 percent of Québec's residents speak French, compared to approximately 6 percent for the rest of Canada. The boundary between Canada's French- and English-speaking regions is not precise; mixed areas exist along the borders with New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario, and the United States.

English-speaking provinces and U.S. states (Figure 5-18). Québécois are committed to preserving their distinctive French-language culture, and to do so, they may secede from Canada.

Spanglish. English is diffusing into the Spanish language spoken by 28 million Hispanics in the United

States, a process called **Spanglish**, a combination of Spanish and English. In Miami's large Cuban-American community, Spanglish is sometimes called Cubonics, a combination of Cuban and phonetics.

As with *franglais*, Spanglish involves converting English words to Spanish forms. Some of the changes modify the spelling of English words to conform to Spanish



Languages other than English in North America. (Left) French dominates in Québec City, including signs for hotels and shops. (Right) Spanish dominates in much of Los Angeles.

preferences and pronunciations, such as dropping final consonants and replacing *v* with *b*. For example, *shorts* (pants) becomes *chores*, and *vacuum cleaner* becomes *bac-uncliner*. In other cases, awkward Spanish words or phrases are dropped in favor of English words. For example, *parquin* is used rather than *estacionamiento* for *parking*, and *taipear* is used instead of *escribir a máquina* for *to type*.

Spanglish is a richer integration of English with Spanish than the mere borrowing of English words. New words have been invented in Spanglish that do not exist in English but would be useful if they did. For example, *bipiar* is a verb derived from the English *beeper* that means to *beep someone on a pager*, and *i-meiliar* is a verb that means to *e-mail someone*. Spanglish also mixes English and Spanish words in the same phrase. For example, a magazine article is titled “When he says me

voy . . . what does he really mean?” (*me voy* means *I’m leaving*).

Spanglish has become especially widespread in popular culture, such as song lyrics, television, and magazines aimed at young Hispanic women, but it has also been adopted by writers of serious literature. Inevitably, critics charge that Spanglish is a substitute for rigorously learning the rules of standard English and Spanish. And Spanglish has not been promoted for use in schools, as has Ebonics. Rather than a threat to existing languages, Spanglish is generally regarded as an enriching of both English and Spanish by adopting the best elements of each—English’s ability to invent new words and Spanish’s ability to convey nuances of emotion. Many Hispanic Americans like being able to say *Hablo un mix de los dos languages*.

SUMMARY

The emergence of the Internet as an important means of communication has further strengthened the dominance of English. Because a majority of the material on the Internet is in English, knowledge of English is essential for Internet users around the world. Most e-mail systems and interactive Internet programs do not accept accent marks used in other languages such as French. Languages that are not written in Arabic letters, such as Japanese and Russian, are extremely cumbersome if not impossible to write on the Web.

The dominance of English as an international language has facilitated the diffusion of popular culture and science and the growth of international trade. In Germany, for example, airlines, car dealers, and telephone companies use English slogans in advertising. However, people who forsake their native language must weigh the benefits of using English against the cost of losing a fundamental element of local cultural identity.

People in smaller countries need to learn English to participate more fully in a global economy and culture. All children learn English in the schools of countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden to facilitate international communication. This may seem culturally unfair, but obviously it is more likely that several million Dutch people will learn English, than that several hundred million English speakers around the world will learn Dutch.

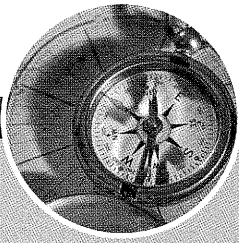
In view of the global dominance of English, many U.S. citizens do not recognize the importance of learning other languages. (Does your own college or university have a foreign-language requirement for graduation?) However, one of the best ways to learn about the beliefs, traits, and values of people living in other regions is to learn their language. The lack of effort by Americans to learn other languages is a source of resentment among people elsewhere in the world, especially when Americans visit or work in other countries.

The inability to speak other languages is also a handicap for Americans who try to conduct international business. Successful entry into new overseas markets requires knowledge of local culture, and officials who can speak the local language are better able to obtain important information. Japanese businesses that

wish to expand in the United States send English-speaking officials, but American businesses that wish to sell products to the Japanese are rarely able to send a Japanese-speaking employee.

Here again are the key issues raised by the geography of languages:

1. **Where are English-language speakers distributed?** The origin of the English language can be traced to invasions of England by Germanic tribes 1,500 years ago. From England, the language diffused around the world when English speakers established colonies. Americans and British speak different dialects of English because of relative isolation of the two groups.
2. **Why is English related to other languages?** English is part of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. Other major branches of Indo-European include Indo-Iranian, Balto-Slavic, and Romance. All Indo-European languages can be traced to a common ancestor, Proto-Indo-European. Individual languages developed from this single root through migration, followed by the isolation of one group from others who formerly spoke the same language.
3. **Where are other language families distributed?** Other language families with a large number of speakers include Sino-Tibetan, Austonesian, Afro-Asiatic, Niger-Congo, and Dravidian. Each has a distinctive distribution, as with Indo-European, which is a result of a combination of migration and isolation.
4. **Why do people preserve local languages?** English has become the most important language for international communication in popular arts, science, and business. In the face of the global dominance of a lingua franca such as English, less widely used languages can face extinction, but recent efforts have been made to preserve and revive local languages because of the importance of language as an element of cultural identity.



CASE STUDY REVISITED

The Future of French and Spanish in Anglo-America

The French-speaking people of Canada and the Spanish-speaking people of the United States both live on a continent dominated by English speakers. However, future prospects for these two languages in North America are different.

French Canada. Until recently, Québec was one of Canada's poorest and least developed provinces. Its economic and political activities were dominated by an English-speaking minority, and the province suffered from cultural isolation and lack of French-speaking leaders. In recent years Québec has strengthened its links to France. When French President Charles de Gaulle visited Québec in 1967, he encouraged the development of an independent Québec by shouting in his speech, "Vive le Québec libre!" ("Long live free Québec!")

The Québec government has made the use of French mandatory in many daily activities. Québec's Commission de Toponymie is renaming towns, rivers, and mountains that have names with English-language origins. The word *Stop* has been replaced by *Arrêt* on the red octagonal road signs, even though *Stop* is used throughout the world, even in France and other French-speaking countries. French must be the predominant language on all commercial signs, and the legislature passed a law banning non-French outdoor signs altogether (ruled unconstitutional by the Canadian Supreme Court).

Alarmed at these pro-French policies, many English speakers and major corporations moved from Montréal, Québec's largest city, to English-speaking Toronto, Ontario. Fewer than 1 million English speakers—one-eighth of Québec's population—remain in the province. Many Québécois favored total separation of the province from Canada as the only way to preserve their cultural heritage. Voters in Québec have thus far rejected separation from Canada, but by a slim majority.

Confrontation during the 1970s and 1980s has been replaced in Québec by increased cooperation between French and English speakers. Montréal's neighborhoods, once highly segregated between French-speaking on the east and English-speaking on the west, have become more linguistically mixed. One-third of Québec's native English speakers have married French speakers in recent years. Children of English speakers are increasingly likely to be bilingual.

Although French dominates over English, Québec faces a fresh challenge of integrating a large number of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America who don't speak French. Many immigrants would prefer to use English rather than French as

their lingua franca but are prohibited from doing so by the Québec government. Even immigrants who learn to speak French charge that they face discrimination because of their accents.

Hispanic America.

Linguistic unity is an apparent feature of the United States, a nation of immigrants who learn English to become Americans. However, the diversity of languages in the United States is greater than it first appears. A language other than English was spoken at home by 47 million Americans in 2000, 17 percent of the population over age 5. Spanish was spoken at home by 28 million people in the United States. More than 2 million spoke Chinese; at least 1 million each spoke French, German, Italian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, and at least one-half million each spoke Arabic, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian.

In reaction against the increasing use of Spanish in the United States, about 20 states and a number of localities have laws making English the official language. Some courts have judged these laws to be unconstitutional restrictions on free speech. The U.S. Congress has debated enacting similar legislation. For a state such as Montana, the law is symbolic, because it has few non-English speakers. But for states such as California, Texas, and Florida, with large Hispanic populations, the debate affects access to jobs, education, and social services.

Americans have also debated whether schools should offer bilingual education. Some people want Spanish-speaking children to be educated in Spanish, because they think that children will learn more effectively if taught in their native language and that this will also preserve their own cultural heritage. Others argue that learning in Spanish creates a handicap for people in the United States when they look for jobs, virtually all of which require knowledge of English. Bilingual education has also been hampered by the lack of teachers able to speak two languages and by the high cost of hiring added personnel and purchasing additional materials.

Promoting the use of English symbolizes that language is the chief cultural bond in the United States in an otherwise heterogeneous society. With the growing dominance of the English language in the global economy and culture, knowledge of English is important for people around the world, not just inside the United States. At the same time, the increasing use of other languages in the United States itself is a reminder of the importance that groups place on preserving cultural identity and the central role that language plays in maintaining that identity.

KEY TERMS

British Received Pronunciation (BRP) (p. 152)	Ideograms (p. 168)	Lingua franca (p. 176)
Creole or creolized language (p. 162)	Isogloss (p. 155)	Literary tradition (p. 149)
Dialect (p. 152)	Isolated language (p. 175)	Official language (p. 149)
Ebonics (p. 176)	Language (p. 149)	Pidgin language (p. 176)
Extinct language (p. 171)	Language branch (p. 156)	Spanglish (p. 179)
Franglais (p. 177)	Language family (p. 156)	Standard language (p. 152)
	Language group (p. 157)	Vulgar Latin (p. 161)

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY

1. Twenty-seven U.S. states have passed laws mandating English as the language of all government functions. In 1998, Arizona's law making English the official language was ruled an unconstitutional violation of free speech. Should the use of English be encouraged in the United States to foster cultural integration, or should bilingualism be encouraged to foster cultural diversity? Why?
2. Does the province of Québec possess the resources, economy, political institutions, and social structures to be a viable, healthy country? What would be the impact of Québec's independence on the remainder of Canada, on the United States, and on France?
3. How is American English different from British English as a result of contributions by African Americans and immigrants who speak languages other than English?
4. The southern portion of Belgium (Wallonia) suffers from higher rates of unemployment, industrial decline, and other economic problems compared to Flanders, in the north. How do differences in language exacerbate Belgium's regional economic differences?
5. Many countries now receive Cable News Network (CNN) broadcasts that originate in the United States, but even English-speaking viewers in other countries have difficulty understanding some American English. A recent business program on CNN created a stir outside the United States when it reported that McDonald's was a major IRA contributor. Viewers in the United Kingdom thought that the American hamburger chain was financing the purchase of weapons by the Irish Republican Army, which sometimes resorts to violence in its attempt to achieve the unification of Ireland. However, McDonald's, in fact, was contributing to Individual Retirement Accounts for its employees. Can you think of other examples where the use of a word could cause a British-American misunderstanding?

ON THE INTERNET

Our cyberspace exercises (www.prenhall.com/rubenstein) explore the geography of language: the where and why of distinctive distributions using the tools of geographers. Our Thinking Spatially map exercises, as well as exercises using interactive Internet maps and databases, helps you in this task. Our many review exercises, designed for immediate electronic grading, focus on such topics as the origin and diffusion of various language families, the dominance of English, preserving language

diversity, and more. You also have an opportunity to explore key terms in depth through Internet search engines that provide examples of how these terms are used.

The book *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, listed in the Further Readings, is available on-line at www.ethnologue.com. Detailed information and maps are provided for every language of the world.

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