



Historical Linguistics

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LING 101 SSII

Overview

- Review
- Homeworks
- Language Families
- Historical Reconstruction
 - The Comparative Method
 - Approaching Historical Problems
- History of English

Review

- Historical Linguistics and Mental Grammar
- Aspects of Historical Linguistics
 - Phonology
 - Morphology
 - Syntax
 - Semantics

Language Families

- We have been talking about how languages can develop into different dialects over time. If language communities remain distinct and uninfluenced by each other for long enough, **two different language varieties can develop into completely different languages.**
 - This occurs when the two language varieties cease to be mutually intelligible
- These separate languages come about through **various systematic sound change rules** that **have applied separately to each dialect** that has caused them to deviate over time from the original language variety that was shared.

Language Families

- This means that even though they have developed into separate languages, **we expect to find systematic correspondences and systematic differences** between the phonemes of some words from those languages that will can be used to **reconstruct the earlier word-form that was shared by the two languages.**
- When two languages can be shown to belong to a shared ancestor, we talk about the ancestor as the **mother** language and the later languages as **daughter languages**
 - Here we go using trees to show various hierarchies again!

Language Families

- If multiple languages can be shown to belong to a shared ancestor, we talk about them as **language families**. This means that we can classify groups of languages based on what family they belong to.
 - These language family names are **based on where the original people group would have been located, not based on what modern language form is closest to the original.**
 - If there is a language that does not seem to be related to any other languages, we call this an **isolate**. (e.g. Basque)

Language Families

- The Indo-European Family
 - Germanic
 - *Gothic* (East; *extinct*)
 - Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish (North)
 - English, German, Dutch, Frisian, Afrikaans, Yiddish (West)
 - Celtic
 - Welsh, Breton, *Cornish*, Irish, Scots Gaelic, *Manx* (Insular)
 - *Gaulish*
 - Italic (Romance)

Historical Reconstruction

- We mentioned earlier that if two or more languages are related, then we should be able to see **systematic sound correspondences** across their words that will allow us to reconstruct earlier language forms.
- Whenever we are talking about historical forms, we indicate this by placing an asterisk (*) next to the historical form of the word

Historical Reconstruction

- Just because you find “similar” words does not mean that a genetic relationship exists between the two languages.
 - Borrowing (from each other, or even from a third language)
 - Chance resemblance
- Which English word is genetically related to the Greek word?

Greek δεκα [ðeka]

English *decade/ten*

Historical Reconstruction

- **decade** < French *decade* ..., < Latin *decas*, *decadem*, < Greek *δεκάς*, *δεκάδα*, a group of ten, < *δέκα* ten (Oxford English Dictionary)
 - Greek >(borrowing) Latin >(historical change) French >(borrowing) English
- **ten** < Old English *tíen*, *-e*, Anglian *tén*, *-e*, Common Germanic, = Old Low German **tehan*, ... < Old Saxon *tehan* (*tîan*, *tein*), ... < Old Germanic **teχan*, beside **teχun* [<] pre-Germanic **'dekm*
 - Pre-Germanic >(historical change) Old Germanic >(historical change) > various descendants

Historical Reconstruction

- So if borrowings can look more alike than genetically related words/morphemes, how do we identify genetic relationships?
- The key is in **systematic correspondences**

Systematic Correspondences

- Consider the following forms (given in orthography)

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
pad-	pod-	ped-	fōtus	foot
pra-	pro-	pro-	fra-	fro
nápāt- 'descendant'		nepōs 'nephew, grandson'	(OHG nefo)	ne[f]ew (OE nefa)
trī-/tráyas	treĩs/tría	trēs	þrija	[θ]ree
tv-am	tū (Doric)	tv-am	þu	thou (was [θ])
śatám	(he-)katón	[k]entum	hunda (pl.)	hundred
dáśa	déka	de[k]em	taíhun [tɛxun]	ten

- What is the systematic pattern?

Systematic correspondences

- Sound Correspondences (Grimm's Law)

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
p	p	p	f	f
t	t	t	θ	θ
ʃ	k	k	h	h

- Each **row** is called a **correspondence set**. It shows what segment in certain languages correspond to other sounds in other languages.
- Can we state any generalizations here?
 - Skt/Gk/Lat __: Germanic __
 - Separate sound change for Sanskrit ʃ also.

Systematic Correspondences

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
		lūb <u>r</u> icus	sliu <u>p</u> an	sl <u>i</u> p
		(Lithu.) du <u>b</u> ùs	diu <u>p</u> s	de <u>e</u> p
	<u>k</u> ánnabis			<u>h</u> emp
d(u)vā́	dúo/dúō	duo	twái [twɛ:]	two
dánt-	odónt-	dent-	tun <u>þ</u> us	tooth
véda 'I know'	woīda 'I know'	videō 'I know'	wáit [wɛ:t] 'I know'	wit 'to know'
ǰánás	génos	genus	kun-i 'race, tribe'	kin
ǰánu-	gónu	genū	kniu	(k)nee
mṛǰ-	(a-)mélgō	mulgeō	miluk-s	milk
'to milk'	'squeeze out'	'I milk'	'milk'	

Systematic Correspondences

- Sound Correspondences (Grimm's Law)

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
b	b	b	p	p
d	d	d	t	t
dʒ	g	g	k	k

- Can we state any generalizations here?
 - Skt/Gk/Lat ___: Germanic ___
 - Do we see anything likewise consistent in the separate sound change for Sanskrit?

Systematic Correspondences

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
bhar-	phér-	fer-	baír-an [b _ɛ ran]	bear (v.)
bhrá̄tar	phrátēr	frá̄ter	brōþar	brother
a-bhū-t 'he was'	é-phu 'I brought forth'	fu-it 'he was'	bau-an [bōan] 'to dwell'	be
dhā- 'put'	ti-thē-mi 'I put'	fē-cī 'I made'		do OE dō-n
dvār-	thūr-a	for-ēs	daúr- [dor]	door
vidhāvā	ē-wíthewos 'unmarried youth'	vidua	widuwo	widow
hams-á- 'swan, goose'	khēn	Øāns-er	(German) Gans	goose
stigh- 'stride'	steíkhō 'I pace'		steigan [stīgan] 'to climb'	

Systematic Correspondences

- Sound correspondences (Grimm's Law)

<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Gothic</i>	<i>English</i>
b ^h	p ^h	f	b	b
d ^h	t ^h	f (#_)	d	d
d ^h	t ^h	d (V_)	d	d
h (#_)	k ^h	Ø	g	g
g ^h (V_)	k ^h	?	g	g

- This set is more complex, more different sound change rules have applied in the different languages.
 - However, still quite systematic.

Homeworks

- Due Tuesday the 24th:
 - Writing Assignment 9
 - Homework Assignment:
 - p. 291, Exercise 1, (a) – (g)
 - p. 294, Exercise 10
 - p. 294, Exercise 11
 - p. 291-92, Exercise 2
 - p. 292, Exercise 3
 - The tilde above certain vowels indicates that it is nasal.

Have a good day!

