

GENEALOGICAL CLASSIFICATION (Part 2)

THE AFRO-ASIATIC LANGUAGE FAMILY, AND OTHER LANGUAGE FAMILIES OF AFRICA

(pp. 84-85)

SINO-TIBETAN AND OTHER LANGUAGES OF THE FAR EAST

(pp. 85-86)

FINNO-UGRIC LANGUAGE FAMILY

(see the Handout)

Uralic: Finno-Ugric + Samoyed

Early records:

Hungarian -- end of 12th century (a funeral sermon and prayer): the first text in a FU language (our book is wrong -- p. 87)

Zyrian -- 14th century (writing system and translations by a Russian missionary)

Estonian -- end of 15th century

Finnish -- 16th century

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FINNO-UGRIC AND OTHER LANGUAGE FAMILIES

a. FU and IE (see the example above!)

Hu	=	Fi	>	PFU	=	PIE	
<i>méz</i>		<i>mesi</i>		<i>*mete</i>		<i>*medhu</i>	honey
<i>név</i>		<i>nimi</i>		<i>*nime</i>		<i>*nomn-</i>	name
<i>ház</i>		<i>kota</i>		<i>*kota</i>		<i>*koto-</i>	house
-		<i>jyvä</i>		<i>*jeva</i>		<i>*jevo</i>	seed
<i>vezet</i>		<i>vetä-</i>		<i>*wetä-</i>		<i>*uedh-</i>	lead, pull
<i>visz</i>		<i>vie-</i>		<i>*wike-</i>		<i>*wegh-</i>	carry, take

- FU and Altaic
(Altaic: Turkic, Mongolian and Manchu-Tungus; the genetic relationship of these language groups is uncertain, “Altaic” is a label of convenience)

Hu	=	Fi	>	PFU	=	Turkic	
<i>al-</i>		<i>ala-</i>		<i>*ala</i>		<i>al</i>	bottom
<i>em-</i>		<i>ime-</i>		<i>*ime</i>		<i>äm</i>	suck
<i>nyal-</i>		<i>nuole-</i>		<i>*n'olo-</i>		<i>jala-</i>	lick
<i>tø</i>		<i>tyvi</i>		<i>*tü'e</i>		<i>tü' -</i>	base

- c. FU and Yukaghir (a Paleo-Siberian language, spoken by 300 people in North-East Siberia)

Hu	=	Fi	=	Yukaghir	
<i>eme</i>		<i>emä</i>		<i>emei</i>	mother
<i>kéreg</i>		<i>keri</i>		<i>χar</i> (skin)	bark of tree
<i>lélek</i> (soul)		<i>löyly</i> (steam)		<i>lul</i>	breath
<i>mond</i>		<i>manaa</i>		<i>mon-</i>	say
<i>név</i>		<i>nimi</i>		<i>neve, nim</i>	name

Similarities in grammatical elements:

FU = PIE: for example, the Accusative *-m* and the Ablative *-ta*

FU = Altaic: for example, the Genitive *-n* the Lative *-k*

FU and Yukaghir: several pronouns, suffixes

Problem: If it were only a question of vocabulary, we could regard certain words as loanwords (however, some basic vocabulary elements not likely to be borrowed!)

Grammatical elements are not easily taken over from one language to another -- it involves lengthy period of coexistence!

Can we consider these coincidences as evidence of early genealogical relationship between these language families?

Linguistic relationship can be proved only by comparing entire language systems and several hundred etymologies.

Such comparative material does not exist in FU-Altaic, FU-IE or FU-Yukaghir connections.

(The number of FU-IE etymologies does not extend 37, of which 12 are doubtful).

While we are still unable to prove the relationship between language families, one thing is certain: *these language families did not exist in isolation.*

MACRO FAMILIES; NOSTRATIC

H. Pedersen (19th century): the founder of the Nostratic theory (see pp. 89-90)

Pedersen proposed that Indo-European was related to several in a family he termed Nostratic; originally Nostratic included Indo-European, Semitic, Uralic, Yukaghir, Altaic and Eskimo-Aleut.

During the 1960's the theory further developed: Indo-European was related to Afro-Asiatic, Kartvelian, Uralic, Altaic and Dravidian -- over 700 etymologies, involving both grammar and lexicon exist now to support this hypothesis.

Two approaches by nostraticists:

- i. The proto-languages of the proposed families are compared and earlier proto-forms are hypothesized
- ii. elements with "stable meaning" are compared (see the list of 15 words on p. 90).

Nostraticists place great emphasis on only comparing families that have been reconstructed -- thus some families were not taken into account.

J. Greenberg, on the other hand, has approached the question of IE relatives from a totally different perspective: multilateral comparison!

□
compares morphemes with similar sounds and meanings, but makes no attempt to generate sound correspondences

Nostratic and multilateral approaches are very often confused with one another.

Nostratic: employs the comparative method;
importance of regular sound correspondences!

Multilateral comparison: does not try to prove that X is related to Y, but attempts to classify the languages of the world, without excluding those that do not have a reconstructed protolanguage yet.

Recently a family that is similar to Nostratic -- but with important differences -- has been proposed by Greenberg: Eurasiatic (see the Handout). Evidence for this family is provided by 64 grammatical and over 500 lexical etymologies.

Greenberg: proposed the classification of the indigenous languages of the Americas. He divides these languages into three families only (p.89):

Eskimo-Aleut
Na-Dene
Amerind -- this is a controversial concept; it is based on over 450 etymologies, and it includes most indigenous languages from North and South America. (See the Handout)

Sapir 1915: Soon after he proposed the Na-Dene family he became aware that this family shared many striking parallels with Sino-Tibetan languages. This idea has been further researched in the 1980s: Sapir's idea has been supported by additional evidence, but this question is not yet resolved.

Problems with long-range multilateral comparisons:

- unsystematic similarities between language families do not provide sufficient proof of genetic affinity, because unsystematic similarities can be found for any pair of languages.
- However, the comparative method does not allow us to research earlier periods (i.e. periods before PIE times); different methods are being employed.

Why the time-depths accessible to the comparative method are limited? Answer:

Beyond a certain time-depth lexical replacement erases cognate sets to such a degree that there is insufficient material to work out sound correspondences or morphological paradigms.

WAVE THEORY

Family trees represent languages as uniform entities, and show splits of languages as clear-cut and immediate.

Recognition that linguistic innovations take time to operate -- and may be diffused from one area, speaker or word to another -- resulted in an alternative theory □ the *wave theory*.

The wave theory was first suggested by Johannes Schmidt (1972).

Linguistic innovations spread from one language or dialect through contact on the part of speakers of neighbouring languages and dialects; languages often share innovations that cannot be attributed to a common ancestor.

Two languages *A* and *B* may show identical sound changes. *A*, however, may show another change that is specific to language *A* and that must have preceded the development that is identical to the one in *B*.

A change common to more than one language (whether they are related or not) that has not been inherited from a common language, is termed *parallel development*.

For example, umlaut in the Gmc languages is not a PGmc innovation, but seems to have spread through the Gmc dialects after the period of differentiation. How do we know this? □ Gothic, the earliest attested Gmc language does not exhibit umlaut.

The process of umlaut is found in both North Germanic and West Germanic languages; the wave-like spread of this innovation is suggested by the fact that dialects spoken in the south of Germany do not exhibit as many umlauted forms as dialects in the north of Germany.

The family tree theory and the wave theory are not mutually exclusive hypotheses. Many changes that can be reconstructed in PGmc are reflected in *all* Gmc languages (e.g., the merger of PIE *o* and PIE *a* as PGmc *a*). Others, such as umlaut, have spread throughout the family.

The two hypotheses are complementary. Care must be taken to differentiate between changes that reflect genetic relationship and those that reflect diffusion when languages are being compared for purposes of historical inference.

Study Figure 6.2. on p. 122!