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ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE

Theories on the Origin of Language

Otto Jespersen's View on the Origin of Language

❖ Language originated in **joyful and playful** human interactions rather than serious situations.

❖ It emerged during the **courting days of mankind** when humans were enjoying themselves.

❖ Language is primarily **oral**, with writing as a substitute.

❖ Language **evolves constantly**, as seen from Chaucer's time to the present.

❖ **Professor Lloyd James:** Many animals have speech organs, but only humans developed speech due to **intellectual and personality growth**.

❖ **Sir G. Eliot Smith:** The discovery of speech **marked the beginning of mankind.**

Major Theories on the Origin of Language

The Bow-Wow Theory (Onomatopoeic Theory / Natural Sound Source Theory)

❖ Language developed from **imitating natural sounds** of objects or animals.

❖ Examples:
  o *Meow* (cat), *hiss* (snake), *cuckoo* (bird), *bang* (explosion), *beep* (machine), *splash* (water).

❖ Humans associated **sounds with objects**, leading to speech.

❖ **Onomatopoeic words** played a major role in language formation.

The Ding-Dong Theory (Rhythm-Based Theory / Yo-Heave-Ho Theory)

❖ Associated with **Max Müller (German philologist).**

❖ Language **originated from rhythmic sounds** linked to physical movement.

❖ **Imitation was based on movement, not just sound.**

❖ Examples:
  o Primitive humans **hummed or chanted** while walking or working.
  o Similar to **war dances, medieval ballads, sea chants, and work songs.**

❖ **Connected to the "Yo-Heave-Ho" theory**:
  o Language **emerged from collective labor sounds** (e.g., lifting heavy objects).
 o Workers made sounds (*yo-he-ho*) to synchronize efforts and reduce muscle strain.

The Pooh-Pooh Theory (Instinctive Sound Source Theory)

❖ Language began as **instinctive emotional cries** (expressions of pain, surprise, pleasure, wonder).

❖ Examples: *Ah!* (surprise), *Oh!* (shock), *Ouch!* (pain), *Hmm!* (thinking).

❖ Early human speech was a collection of such **instinctive noises**.

The Gesture Theory

❖ **Wilhelm Wundt** proposed it, later developed by **Sir Richard Piaget**.

❖ Early communication was **nonverbal**—humans used **signs and gestures**.

❖ Over time, gestures evolved into **spoken words**.

❖ **Sir Percy Nunn's View:**

 o Hand movements were accompanied by **tongue movements**, leading to speech.

❖ **Supported by "Glossogenetics"**—the biological study of language development.

INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY AND THE PLACE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES
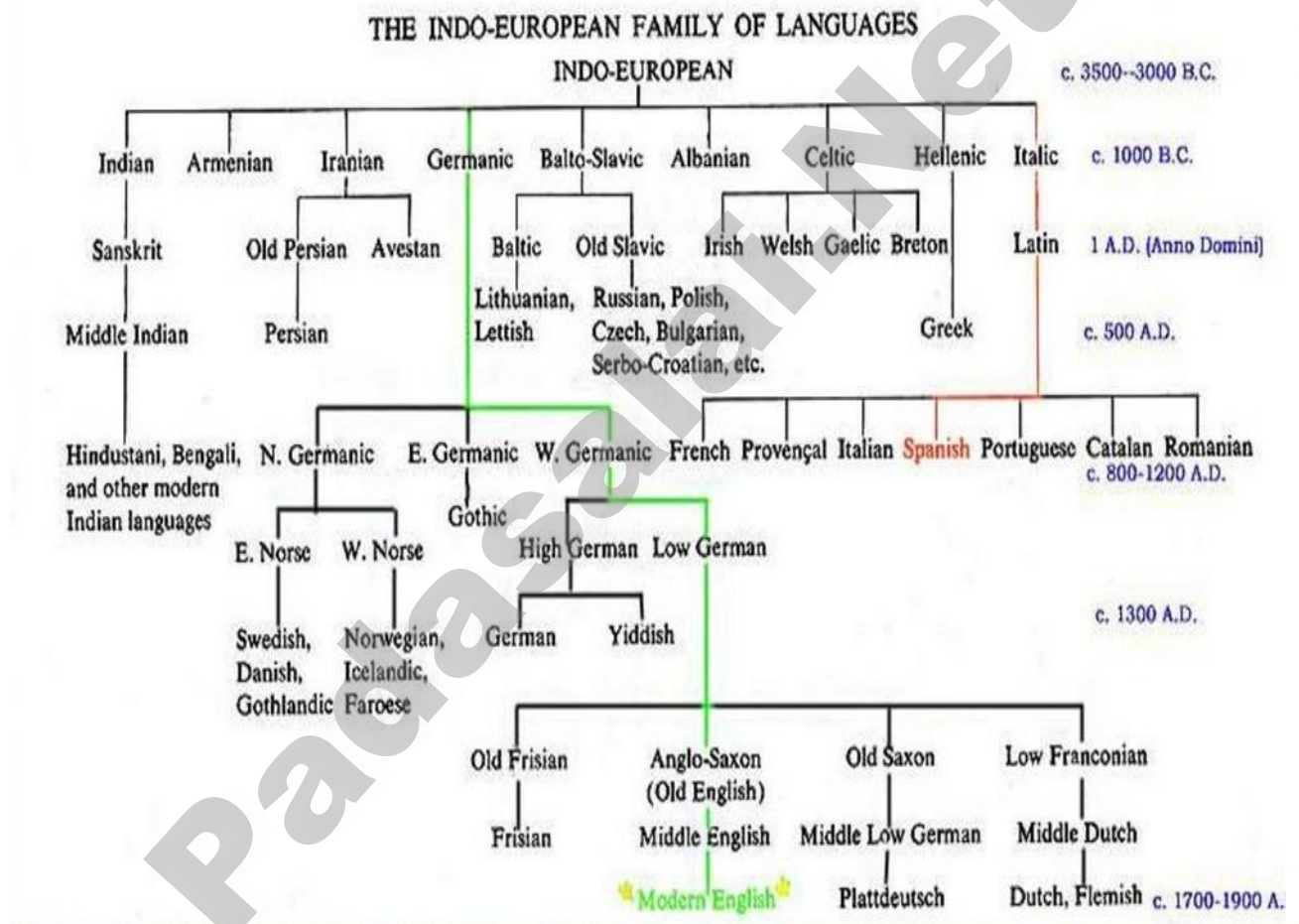
Classification of World Languages

Languages that share **common characteristics** and originate from a **common ancestor** are grouped into **language families**. Linguists classify the world's languages into **eight major families**:

1. **Sino-Tibetan**
2. **Indo-European**
3. **Dravidian**
4. **Afro-Asiatic**

Key Sound Changes in Grimm's Law:

1. **PIE Voiceless Stops → PG Voiceless Fricatives**
   - $p \to f$ (e.g., Latin **pater** → English **father**)
   - $t \to \theta$ (e.g., Latin **tres** → English **three**)
   - $k \to h$ (e.g., Latin **cordis** → English **heart**)

2. **PIE Voiced Stops → PG Voiceless Stops**
   - $b \to p$ (e.g., Latin **labium** → English **lip**)
   - $d \to t$ (e.g., Latin **duo** → English **two**)
   - $g \to k$ (e.g., Latin **genus** → English **kin**)

3. **PIE Voiced Aspirated Stops → PG Voiced Stops (or Fricatives in Some Cases)**
   - $bh \to b$ (e.g., Sanskrit **bhárami** → English **bear**)
   - $dh \to d$ (e.g., Sanskrit **dhuhiṭ** → English **daughter**)
   - $gh \to g$ (e.g., Sanskrit **gharma** → English **warm**)

Significance of Grimm's Law:

❖ First major sound shift that set Germanic languages apart from other Indo-European languages.

❖ Applied systematically but had some exceptions, later explained by Verner's Law.

Verner's Law (Explaining Exceptions to Grimm's Law)

Discovered by Karl Verner (1875), this law explains why some Grimm's Law changes were inconsistent, depending on word stress in Proto-Indo-European.

Key Concept:

❖ When **PIE voiceless stops (p, t, k, s)** changed into **voiceless fricatives (f, θ, x, s)** via Grimm's Law, they became **voiced** (*b, d, g, z*) **if the original PIE stress was NOT on the preceding syllable.**

Examples of Verner's Law:

1. **Latin → English**
   - Latin **pater** → English **father** (Grimm's Law: $p \to f$)
   - But Latin **frater** → English **brother** ($t \to d$ because of stress shift)

2. **PIE → Proto-Germanic**
   - PIE *téras* → PG *þeraz* → English **thorn** (Grimm's Law)
   - PIE *mater* → PG *móðer* → English **mother** ($t \to d$ due to Verner's Law)

Significance of Verner's Law:

❖ Explained why Grimm's Law wasn't perfectly consistent.

❖ Helped linguists understand how **stress in PIE affected sound changes in Germanic languages.**

GROWTH OF VOCABULARY FROM VARIOUS FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English as a Borrowed Language

- ❖ English has adopted many words from various foreign languages, enriching its vocabulary.
- ❖ Words borrowed from other languages are called *Loan Words*.

Three Main Sources of Loan Words (According to F.T. Wood)

- ❖ **Foreign Invasions:** Scandinavian words came with Scandinavian invasions; French words arrived after the Norman Conquest.
- ❖ **Trade & Exploration:** Words from Italian and Spanish entered through trade and voyages.
- ❖ **Scholarship & Culture:** The Renaissance introduced many Latin and Greek words into English.

Other Contributing Factors to Borrowings

- ❖ Migration, British colonial expansion, religious and political movements.
- ❖ Development of trade, scientific discoveries, and international communication.

Latin Influence on English

- ❖ **Continuous and significant impact** on English vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar.
- ❖ **Earliest Latin Borrowings** (Roman occupation of Britain, 55 BC – 410 AD)
    - o Military & administration: *camp* (bottle), *segn* (banner), *mil* (mile).
    - o Food items: *win* (wine), *weall* (wall).
- ❖ **Anglo-Saxon Period Borrowings**
    - o Religious terms: *devil, angel, night*.

Categories of Latin Loan Words

- ❖ **Religious Terms:** *Church, bishop, candle, hymn, mass, priest, psalm, shrine*.
- ❖ **Household & Domestic Words:** *Cap, chest, dish, linen, silk, tunic, oyster*.
- ❖ **Names of Trees, Plants & Herbs:** *Lily, pea, plum, pepper, poppy, palm*.
- ❖ **Education & Learning:** *School, master, verse, talent, grammatical*.
- ❖ **Animals & Birds:** *Phoenix, trout, turtle, elephant*.
- ❖ **Law Terms (Middle English & Renaissance Influence):** *Custody, homicide, notary, testify, prosecution*.
- ❖ **Literary Terms:** *Allegory, intellect, ornate, summary, prosody*.
- ❖ **Scientific & Medical Terms:** *Gesture, immune, lunatic, solar, rational, ulcer*.
- ❖ **Theological Words:** *Incarnate, pulpit, scripture, rosary, supplicate*.

- *Money lender* → Called a *financier.*
- *Bookmaker* → Called a *turf accountant.*
- *Barber* → Rebranded as a *hair stylist.*
- *Dung* → Softened to *manure.*

Polarization or Colouring (Emotional Shift in Meaning)

- **Definition:** Over time, a word gains a positive or negative emotional connotation.

Examples:

- *Gothic* → Once meant *uncouth, barbarous*; later became neutral.
- *Enthusiasm* → Initially meant *fanaticism* but now means *eagerness.*
- *Amateur* → Originally meant *someone who does something for love* but now implies *unskilled or non-professional.*

Loss of Instinctive Colouring (Depolarization of Words)

- **Definition:** Words that once had strong emotional meanings lose their **original bias** over time.

Examples:

- *Christian* → Once used **as an insult**; now a neutral term.
- *Methodist, Methodism* → Originally derogatory; now respectable.
- *Politics, politician, policy* → Once implied **dishonesty** (Shakespeare's time); now widely accepted.
- *Brave* → Used to mean *boastful* in the 17th century; now means *courageous.*

Metaphorical Application (Figurative Language Use)

- **Definition:** Words are often used in a **figurative or metaphorical** sense, extending their meaning.

Examples:

- *Chicken* → Used in *chicken-hearted* (cowardly).
- *Lion* → Used in *lion-hearted* (brave).
- *Bright* → Used in *bright future* (successful).
- *Mouse* → Used in *timid as a mouse* (shy).
- *Crank* → Originally meant a *bent object*; now used for someone with *odd ideas.*
- *Chest* → Originally meant *human torso*; now also means *a box.*
- *Broadcast* → Originally meant *spreading seeds*; now used for *news, music, and media transmission.*

Reversal of Meaning

- Some words **change to mean the opposite of their original meaning.**
- **Examples:**

- o *autonomos → autonomous*
- o *diaphanës → diaphanous*
- ❖ **Scientific and technological terms from Greek:**
  - o *photography, lithography, ophthalmoscope, stereotype, telephone, cinematograph.*

Borrowings from Other Languages

- ❖ **Portuguese:** *auto-da-fé, albatross, cocoa, dodo, verandah.*
- ❖ **Russian:** *drosky, knout, verst, steppe.*
- ❖ **Turkish:** *caftan, coffee, effendi, horde.*
- ❖ **Chinese:** *tea and names of various types of tea.*

Lexicography: The Making of English Dictionaries
Early Dictionaries

- ❖ **Robert Cawdrey's** *A Table Alphabeticall* **(1604)**
  - o **First monolingual English dictionary.**
  - o Targeted at **"Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons."**
- ❖ **Edward Phillips'** *New World of English Words* **(1658)**
  - o Expanded upon previous dictionaries with more words and definitions.

Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755)

- ❖ Considered the **most influential dictionary of the 18th century.**
- ❖ Included **personal, witty, and sarcastic definitions:**
  - ❖ **Essay:** "*A loose sally of the mind; an irregular undigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition.*"
  - ❖ **Lexicographer:** "*A harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the signification of words.*"
  - ❖ **Oats:** "*A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.*"
  - ❖ **Patron:** "*One who countenances, supports or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.*"
  - ❖ **Pension:** "*An allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England, it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.*"
- ❖ **Famous Mistake:**
  - ❖ Defined *pastern* as "*the knee of a horse,*" though it actually refers to the area between the fetlock and hoof.
  - ❖ When asked why he made this mistake, Johnson reportedly replied: "*Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance.*"

Allophones: Variations of a Phoneme

❖ **Allophones** are **positional variants** of **the same phoneme**.

❖ They occur in **different phonetic environments** but **do not change the meaning** of a word.

Examples of Allophones of /k/:

Word	Pronunciation	Explanation
key	/k/ (pronounced near the hard palate)	Front articulation
car	/k/ (pronounced at the back of the tongue)	Back articulation
kill	[kʰɪl] (with aspiration)	Strong puff of air
skill	[kɪl] (without aspiration)	No strong air release

Key Difference:

- **Phonemes** are written in **/slashes/** → **/k/**
- **Allophones** are written in **[square brackets]** → **[kʰ]**

Syllable Structure

A **syllable** is a basic unit of sound in a language and typically serves as the building block of words. It's a combination of one or more sounds that are pronounced together as a single, rhythmic beat. In English and most languages, syllables are made up of specific components arranged in a particular order.

Parts of a Syllable

A syllable can generally be broken down into **three parts**, though not all syllables have every part:

1. **Onset** (optional)

❖ This is the initial **consonant sound or group of consonants** that come before the vowel.

❖ It is not essential for a syllable to have an onset.

❖ **Examples**:
   - In "*cat*", the onset is **/k/**.
   - In "*at*", there is **no onset**.

2. **Nucleus** (required)

❖ This is the **core of the syllable**, usually a **vowel sound**.

❖ Every syllable must have a nucleus because it is the **sound that gives the syllable its vocal energy** or prominence.

❖ **Examples**:
   - In "*sun*", the nucleus is **/ʌ/**.
   - In "*go*", the nucleus is **/oʊ/**.

❖ **Voiceless Consonants** – Vocal cords **do not** vibrate.
  ○ Examples: **/p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, /θ/, /h/, /tʃ/**

Vowels and Their Classification

Vowel sounds are produced when the **air passes freely** through the mouth without friction, and the tongue plays a crucial role in shaping these sounds. They can be classified based on different features of articulation, which include the **part of the tongue raised**, the **height of the tongue**, and the **lip position**.

Types of Vowels in English
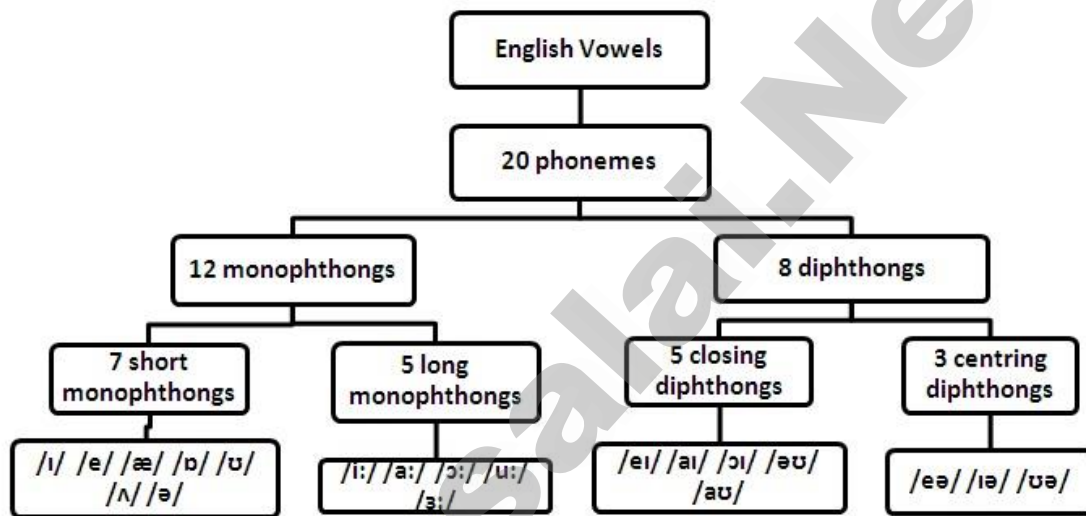
In English, there are two main types of vowels:
  1. **Pure Vowels (Monophthongs)**: These are single, stable vowel sounds.
  2. **Mixed Vowels (Diphthongs)**: These are vowel sounds that involve a glide from one vowel sound to another within the same syllable.

Pure Vowel Sounds in English

❖ **Long vowels**: /iː/, /ɑː/, /uː/, /ɔː/, /eɪ/
❖ **Short vowels**: /ɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɒ/, /ʊ/

The 12 pure vowel sounds in English are:
  1. **/iː/** as in "see"
  2. **/ɪ/** as in "sit"
  3. **/e/** as in "bed"
  4. **/æ/** as in "cat"

Diphthong	Example	Tongue Position (Start → End)	Centering or Closing	Rounded or Unrounded
/eɪ/	*face, day, rain*	Front-mid → Front-high	Closing	Unrounded
/aɪ/	*time, high, pie*	Front-low → Front-high	Closing	Unrounded
/ɔɪ/	*boy, coin, toy*	Back-mid → Front-high	Closing	Rounded → Unrounded
/aʊ/	*house, now, loud*	Front-low → Back-high	Closing	Unrounded → Rounded
/əʊ/ (RP) / /oʊ/ (GA)	*go, home, boat*	Central-mid → Back-high	Closing	Unrounded → Rounded
/ɪə/	*here, near, clear*	Front-high → Central-mid	Centering	Unrounded
/eə/	*there, care, fair*	Front-mid → Central-mid	Centering	Unrounded
/ʊə/	*pure, cure, tour*	Back-high → Central-mid	Centering	Rounded → Unrounded

Key Notes:

❖ **Closing Diphthongs**: The tongue moves **toward a higher position** (e.g., /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/).

❖ **Centering Diphthongs**: The tongue moves **toward the central vowel /ə/** (e.g., /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/).

❖ **Rounded → Unrounded Shift**: Seen in **/ɔɪ/** and **/ʊə/**, where the lips start rounded but become unrounded.

❖ **Unrounded → Rounded Shift**: Seen in **/aʊ/** and **/əʊ/**, where the lips start unrounded but become rounded.

Sense Relation	Definition	Example
Hyponymy	A specific word within a broader category	*Rose (hyponym) of Flower (superordinate)*
Meronymy	Part-whole relationship	*Wheel (meronym) of Car (holonym)*
Homonymy	Same form, different meanings	*Bank (money) vs. Bank (river)*
Polysemy	One word, multiple related meanings	*Head (body part) vs. Head (leader)*
Holonymy	A whole that consists of parts	*Car (holonym) of Wheel, Engine, Door*

SYNTAX

Syntax is the branch of linguistics that deals with the structure of sentences and how words are arranged to convey meaning. It studies the rules and principles that govern sentence formation and the relationships between different elements in a sentence.

Key Definitions and Concepts of Syntax:
- ❖ **Syntax**: The study of sentence structure and the rules governing the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses within a sentence.
- ❖ **Sentence Structure**: Refers to the way in which different parts of a sentence are organized, including subject, predicate, object, etc.
- ❖ **Grammaticality**: Refers to whether a sentence follows the syntactic rules of a language (whether it is acceptable in that language).

Key Components of Syntax:
1. **Word Order**:
   - ❖ Refers to the arrangement of words in a sentence. Different languages have different rules for word order.
   - ❖ **Example (English)**:
     - ▪ **Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)**: "She (S) eats (V) an apple (O)."
   - ❖ **Example (Japanese)**:
     - ▪ **Subject-Object-Verb (SOV)**: "She (S) an apple (O) eats (V)."
2. **Phrase Structure**:
   - ❖ Phrases are groups of words that function together as a unit within a sentence. Each phrase has a head (the central word) and optional modifiers.
   - ❖ **Noun Phrase (NP)**: A phrase with a noun as the head.
     - ▪ **Example**: "The big dog" (Head: "dog", Modifier: "big")
   - ❖ **Verb Phrase (VP)**: A phrase with a verb as the head.
     - ▪ **Example**: "is running" (Head: "running")

LANGUAGE TESTING AND EVALUATION

Language testing and evaluation are essential components of language teaching and learning. They help measure learners' proficiency, progress, and language skills while ensuring that instructional methods are effective.

A. Definition and Purpose of Language Testing & Evaluation

1. Language Testing

Language testing refers to the **systematic assessment of a learner's language abilities** through structured tasks. Tests evaluate **proficiency, achievement, diagnostic needs, and aptitude** in language learning.

Purposes of Language Testing:
- ❖ Measure learners' language proficiency
- ❖ Identify strengths and weaknesses
- ❖ Assess progress over time
- ❖ Determine language placement levels
- ❖ Guide curriculum and instructional improvements

2. Language Evaluation

Language evaluation refers to the **process of assessing the effectiveness** of language instruction, materials, and tests. It helps ensure that teaching strategies and assessments meet the needs of learners.

Purposes of Language Evaluation:
- ❖ Assess the validity and reliability of tests
- ❖ Evaluate learning materials and methods
- ❖ Improve language curriculum and policies

B. Types of Language Tests

1. Proficiency Tests

- ❖ Measure a learner's overall language ability independent of a specific course or curriculum.
- ❖ Used for academic admissions, job requirements, immigration, and certification.
- ❖ Focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).
- ❖ Typically standardized and norm-referenced.

Examples:
- ❖ TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – Common for university admissions.
- ❖ IELTS (International English Language Testing System) – Used for study, work, and migration.

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