

A Study of the Origin of Modern English Language

Dhannya

Ph.D Scholar, Department of English Literature and Language,
St Thomas College, Palai, M.G University, Kottayam, Kerala, India

Email – dhannyapurushotham@gmail.com

Abstract: *English, West Germanic language of the Indo-European language family originated in England and is the dominant language for most people in Australia, Canada, the Commonwealth Caribbean, Ireland, New Zealand, the U.K and the USA. It is the first choice of foreign language in most other countries of the world, and this stature has aided it to embrace the position as a global lingua franca. It is estimated that about a third of the world's population: some two billion persons now use English. English is also extensively used as a second language and an official language throughout the world.*

Keywords: *English, Indo-European, Dominant language, Official, World.*

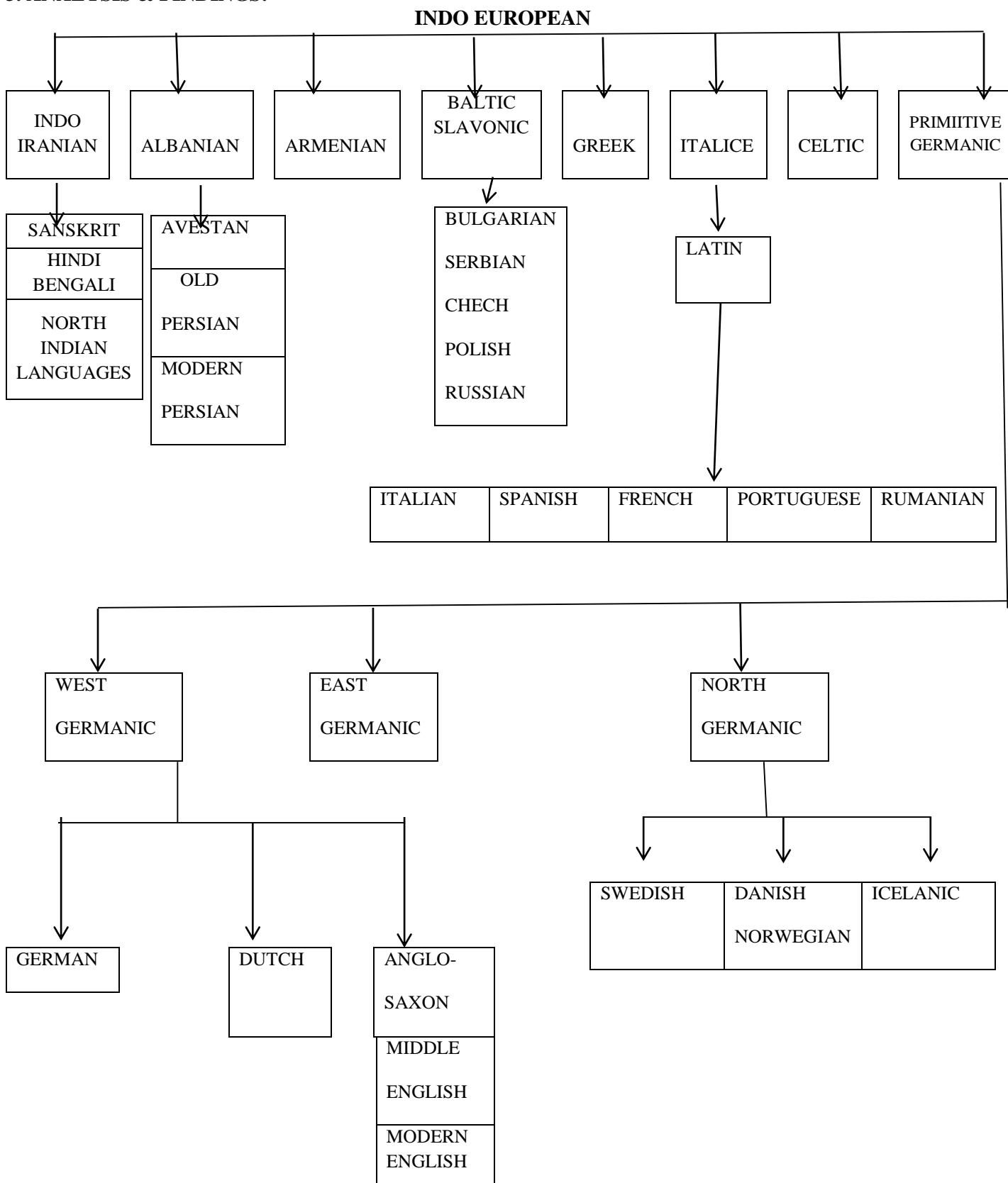
1. INTRODUCTION:

It is not accurately investigated whether the existing tongue have originated from a single common ancestor or many. Linguists have been scrutinising for the vestiges of a primordial universal tongue, scilicet, a common ancestor to all languages, living or dead. Unfortunately traces of such an ancestral vernacular have not been exhumed so far. However, philologists have proved beyond doubt that the innumerable languages spoken in the world may fall into historically related groups called families. Most of the tongues articulated now in Europe and in parts of the world colonised by Europeans are concurred by the linguists to be members of a single family and to have descended from one hypothetical speech ancestor namely Indo-European. Indo-European is the designation specified to an original homogenous language from which nearly all the speech of Europe, Persia and a large part of India are believed to have descended. This parent language has been variously named Aryan, Indo-Germanic and Indo-European. The first of these names has been abandoned as it endeavours to establish relation between race and language. Indo-Germanic was hitherto favoured, but later proceeded to be demurred, in that the second element accorded more stress on Germanic or linear connection with the Germanic languages such as English, Dutch German and declines to give prominence to its relationships with the Romance and Slavonic groups. So the best designation would be Indo-European, as it indicates the geographic location of the tongues without proffering disproportionate emphasis on any languages. This vernacular was vocalised in about 3000-3500 BC by the nomadic tribes of Central Asia, who wandered on the lands around the Black Sea. These tribes, in course of time split up and immigrated into separate directions across the Continents of Europe and Asia exploring unused pastures and arable terra firma. In the course of these meanderings, the parent tongue interweaved with numerous non Indo-European languages and adapted accordingly. Consequently, in due course, diverse dialects of the parent language emerged, gradually flourishing into independent languages. Individually, they dissected further and further in the process also being enriched by subsequent amalgamation with other tongues. This procedure persisted down the ages and has ensued the multiplicity of the languages in the contemporary era. No authentic records about the parent language have been found since it probably dissolved into distinct Indo-European speech prior to the invention of writing.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Neither has any additional authentic designs been established of the date of existence of these humans, nor are there any records of their mingling in a single, more or less coherent community. This phase of their habitual life must have broadened over a considerable stretch of time. It is customary to estimate the culmination of their common existence to somewhere between 2000-3000 BC. The presumed location of Indo-European community, however has been determined by ingenious linguistic deduction. This was assembled by assessing the original word-stock of these languages. If a single word occurs in all branches of the parent language, it originated from the primordial language. When this transpires repeatedly in words of certain type, we can assume that whatever generated those words was a component of the aboriginal Indo European existence. Since Indo-European tongues have corresponding words for winter, snow and cold, it is plausible to assume that the indigenous home of the family was located in a northern climate. It is at present universally considered that the Indo European cradle was in South-Eastern Europe.

3. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS:



The sketch above indicates the descent of Modern English and its affiliation to the other branches of Indo-European parent language. The eight components of the I E family have substantially been classified into two groups, Centum languages (Western group) and the Satem tongue (Eastern group). Under this principle, the Eastern group, scilicet, Indo- Iranian, Albanian, Armenian and Balto- Slavic are called Satem languages and the Western group

comprising Greek, Italic, Celtic and Germanic are called Centum vernacular. A brief description of each of the eight branches. Indo-Iranian:- This branch has two sub groups, Indian and Iranian to which belong Sanskrit, North Indian languages and Persian. This group constitute the largest and South Eastern most extant branch of the I E. They have more than 1.5 billion speakers, stretching from Europe, Turkey and the Caucasus. The common ancestor of all of the languages in the family is called Proto-Indo-Iranian also known as Common Aryan, which was articulated in approximately the late 3rd millennium BC. Albanian: - first attested in the 15th century, this is a language of ancient Illyria. It is also the last IE tongue to appear in written records. This is one of the reasons why its still unknown origin has long been a matter of dispute among linguists and historians. Armenian: - This is preserved as a literary language, dates back from the 5th century AD. Armenian is written in its own writing system, the Armenian alphabet that was introduced in 405 AD by Mesrop Mashtots. There are also modern Armenian dialects. Balto-Slavonic:- These consist of two groups: 1) the Baltic group comprising of old Prussia, Lithuanian and Lettic and 2) the Slavonic group comprising Russia, Bulgaria, Serbian, Czech and Polish.

Greek:- There were several Greek dialects, the most important being Attic, Ionic, Doric and Aeolic. The literary tongues according to the Greek sprang from the Attic-Ionic in the 5th century BC.

Italian:- One of the sub divisions of this branch is Latin, the literary language of Ancient Rome and is known from about 300 BC. This language developed into the modern Romance languages. The Romance languages are French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

Celtic: - This language was originally spoken in Portugal, Spain, France and England. But it was later displaced by the later romance vernacular and English.

Primitive Germanic:- This consists of three divisions, the East Germanic represented by Gothic, the North Germanic represented by the Scandinavian group and the West represented by the English, German and Dutch.

4. CONCLUSION:

The recurrent characteristics that have helped the linguists classify the Indo-European languages as a family are predominantly two. They are all inflexional in structure and they have a common word stock. The term inflexional indicates that such distinctions as gender, case, number, tense etc. are usually designated by altering the forms of the word. Thus, in English for instance we add 's' to a noun base to specify the plural form or 'ed' to a verb base to denote past tense. As to the second criterion of the Indo-European languages, the possession of frequent word stock will strike even the novice that Greek 'nuktos', Latin 'nokti', German 'nacht', French 'nuit', Italian 'notte' and English 'night' have an indistinguishable form and meaning that seems too unmistakable to be accidental unless some of these have been borrowed from one language to another. The Indo European languages have been in existence for thousands of years and each has refashioned inwardly along with acquiring considerably from the other vernaculars of the world. Consequently, the number of words which remain prevalent to the branches of the family is comparatively small. The study of these languages, have proved that English is not an isolated language but is related to other important languages of the world.

REFERENCES:

1. Anthony, David W. (2007). *The Horse, the Wheel, and the Language: How Bronze Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0-691-05887-0
2. Beekes, Robert S.P. *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics: An Introduction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995.
3. Clackson, James. *Indo-European Linguistics: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.
4. Mallory, J. P. (2006). *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.442. ISBN 9780199287918.
5. "Indo-European Documentation Center" Linguistics Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. Archived from the original on 3 September 2009, retrieved 14 December 2009.