

LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION & DIFFUSION : SALIENT FACTS

1. According to ETHNOLOGUE 2019 there are 7097 languages in the 196 countries of the world. The common estimate is 5000- 6000

2. 90% of these languages are spoken by less than a population of 100,000 each and some 200 languages and some 200 languages have less than 1 million speakers each.

3. Spatial distribution of the languages is as follows:

ASIA	2300 languages
AFRICA	1060 languages
AMERICAS	2143 languages
PACIFIC	1306 languages
EUROPE	288 languages
TOTAL	7097 languages

4. Thus Asia accounts for about 33%, Africa 30%, and Europe 4% of world languages.

5. 500 languages are considered nearly extinct

6. The following are 10 languages with the largest number of speakers:

Chinese(Mandarin)	1.05 billion
English	510 million
Hindi	490 million
Spanish	420 million
Arabic	255 million
Russian	255 million
German	229 million
Bengali	215 million
Portuguese	213 million
Japanese	127 million

7. I-E Family has 8 branches:

4 branches– Romance, Germanic Balto-Slavic and Indo-Iranian– have large numbers of speakers

4 branches – Albanian, Armenian. Celtic and Greek are less widely spoken.

8. Language Divergence: Differentiation over time

9. Language Convergence : results from long isolated languages establish contact and some fusion occurs

10 Language Replacement : replacement or modification of language by stronger invaders/colonizers

11. HEARTHS & DIFFUSION PATHS OF I-E LANGUAGE FAMILY

As origin of language predates writing evidence for hearths of Proto-I-E comes from words in relation to the environment eg (a) each I-E language shares common words for winter and snow but not for ocean so it's hypothesized that the hearth of P-I-E must be land-based and experience snow and winter (b) individual I-E languages share common words for some plants (eg beech , oak bear, deer and bee) but other words are unshared (eg camel elephant rice and bamboo) Such environmental information establishes important characteristics of hearths of languages. So the hypothesis follows: P-I-E locates where the shared animals and plants are found with unshared words added after branching.

Two diffusion theories: Conquest Theory & Agriculture Theory

Conquest Theory: (a) puts hearth of Proto-I-E north of Black Sea
(b) language then spreads west judging by sound shifts
(c) critics hold that proto-I-E
 i has few words for plains
 ii has many different terms for high- relief land forms
 iii has words for animals that never lived on the plains north of the Black Sea

This theory is sometimes also referred to as Kurgan theory. According to Gimbutas the earliest archeological evidence of Kurgans dates to 4300BC. They were among the first to domesticate horses and cattle and were nomadic in search of grassland for their animals. Migration took them westwards thru' Europe east to Siberia and south-east to Iran and south Asia. The Kurgan warriors established military superiority thru' their horse and conquered much of Europe between 3,500 and 2500 BC

Agriculture Theory: (a) puts hearth of Proto-I-E in rugged Anatolia
(b) farmers of Anatolia moving westwards mixed with non-farmers
(c) farming in Anatolia led to population pressure and eventual out-migration