

Day One

Language and Linguistics: Square One

Questions to talk about

- ❑ What is a language?
- ❑ Why are there so many languages?
- ❑ Where do languages come from?
- ❑ What's a linguist and what does a linguist do?

Language is.....?

Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

— www.britannica.com › topic › language

“Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know, a mountainous and anonymous work of unconscious generations.”

— Edward Sapir, *Language: Introduction to the Study of Speech*

“A language is not just words. It's a culture, a tradition, a unification of a community, a whole history that creates what a community is. It's all embodied in a language.”

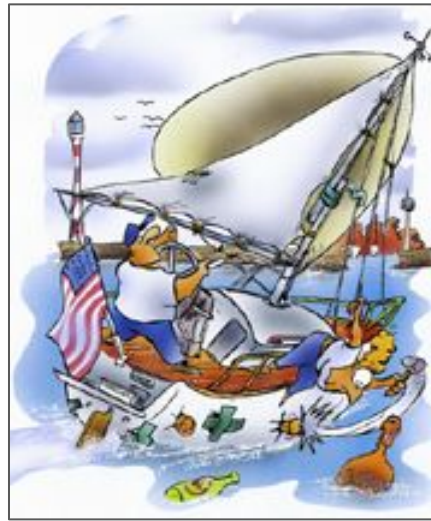
— Noam Chomsky



Language is...

“Language is a virus from outer space”

— William S. Burroughs



Like an ocean voyage
because...



Like a tattoo because...



Like a mountain
because...

Language by any other name is still language. Or is it?

What are other words for "language"?

Dialect, jargon, lingo, idiom, tongue, slang, creole, pidgin

What? You mean a pigeon is a kind of language? I thought we were birds!!

What do we mean by:

- The language of love?
- The language of art?
- The DNA language?
- Animal language?
- Computer language?
- Politically correct language?

Lots of languages

- Probably as many as 6000 languages still spoken today
- Probably twice that many or more are now extinct
- By the end of this century there will likely be half as many left
- A language is identified by the fact that some group of people speak or write it (or speak or wrote it)



Top 40 languages by number of native speakers

Languages by scope & impact

Type of Language	Number of Languages	Number of Speakers (1st & 2nd)	Percent of World Population
Peripheral languages	5880	616,000,000	0.08
Central languages	100	7,315,000,000	0.95
Supercentral languages	13	5,466,000,000	0.71
Hypercentral language	1	1,132,000,000	0.15
Speakers Across All Languages		13,397,000,000	World Pop ~7.7bn ~75% are bilingual
Total Bilingual Speakers		5,697,000,000	

Supercentral Languages

Mandarin
Spanish
English
Arabic
Portuguese
Hindi
French
German
Malay
Russian
Swahili
Turkish
Japanese

Hypercentral Language

English

The what, who, when, why, and where of languages

- ❑ **Why** are there languages?
- ❑ **Who** uses languages?
- ❑ **What** forms do languages take?
- ❑ **Where** are languages found?
- ❑ **Where** do languages come from?
- ❑ **When** does a language start?
- ❑ **When** does a language end?

**"HE GETS CREDIT FOR INVENTING
LANGUAGE, BUT HE WAS JUST BELCHING."**









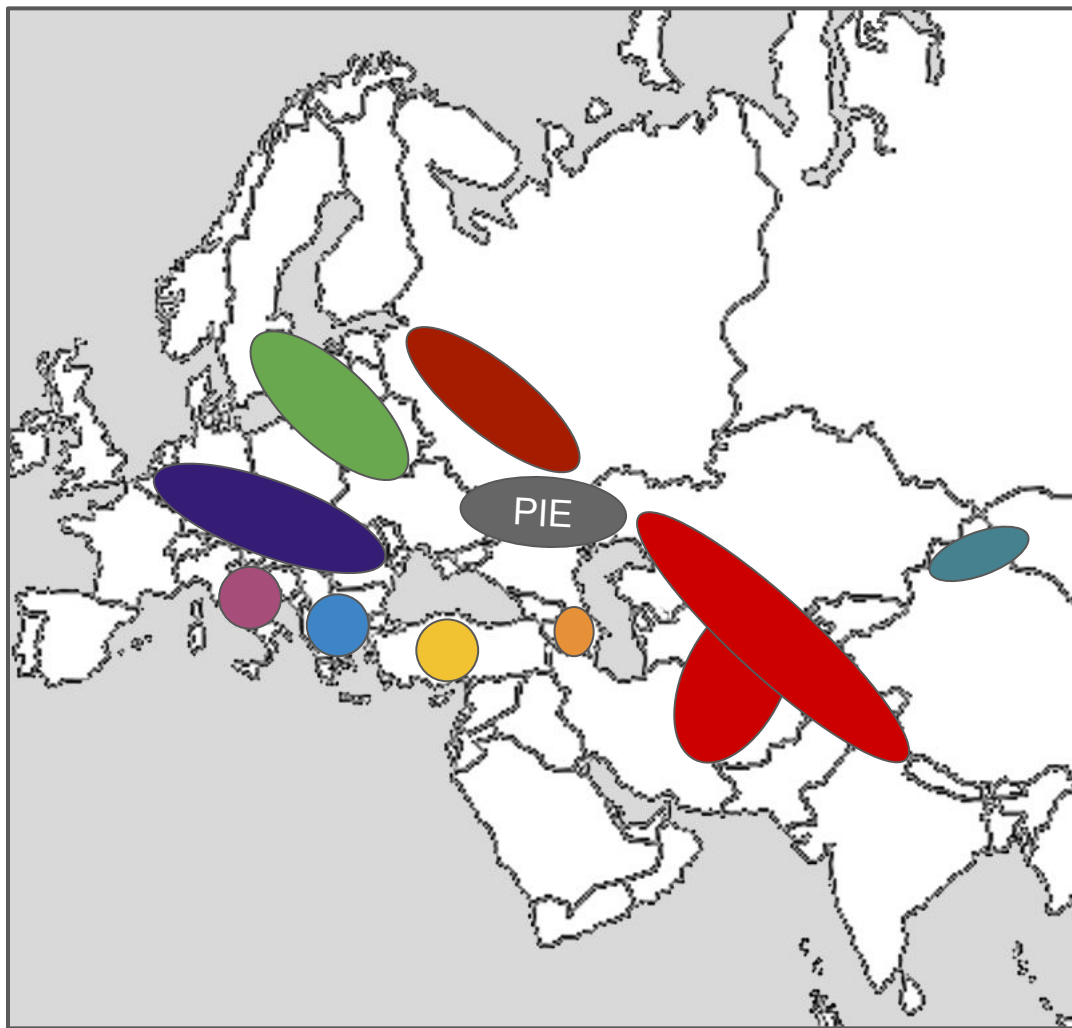
Home sweet home



6500 yrs ago	Proto Indo European (steppe north of Black Sea and Caspian Sea)
6000	Anatolian to SW Mideast (extinct)
5700	Tocharian to East Central Asia (extinct)
5300	Germanic to N Europe
5000	Celtic to W Europe & Italic to Italy
4800	Balto-Slavic to NE Europe
4500	Greek to Balkans
4200	Indo-Iranian to SE Persia and India

The family tree of PIE and the migrations

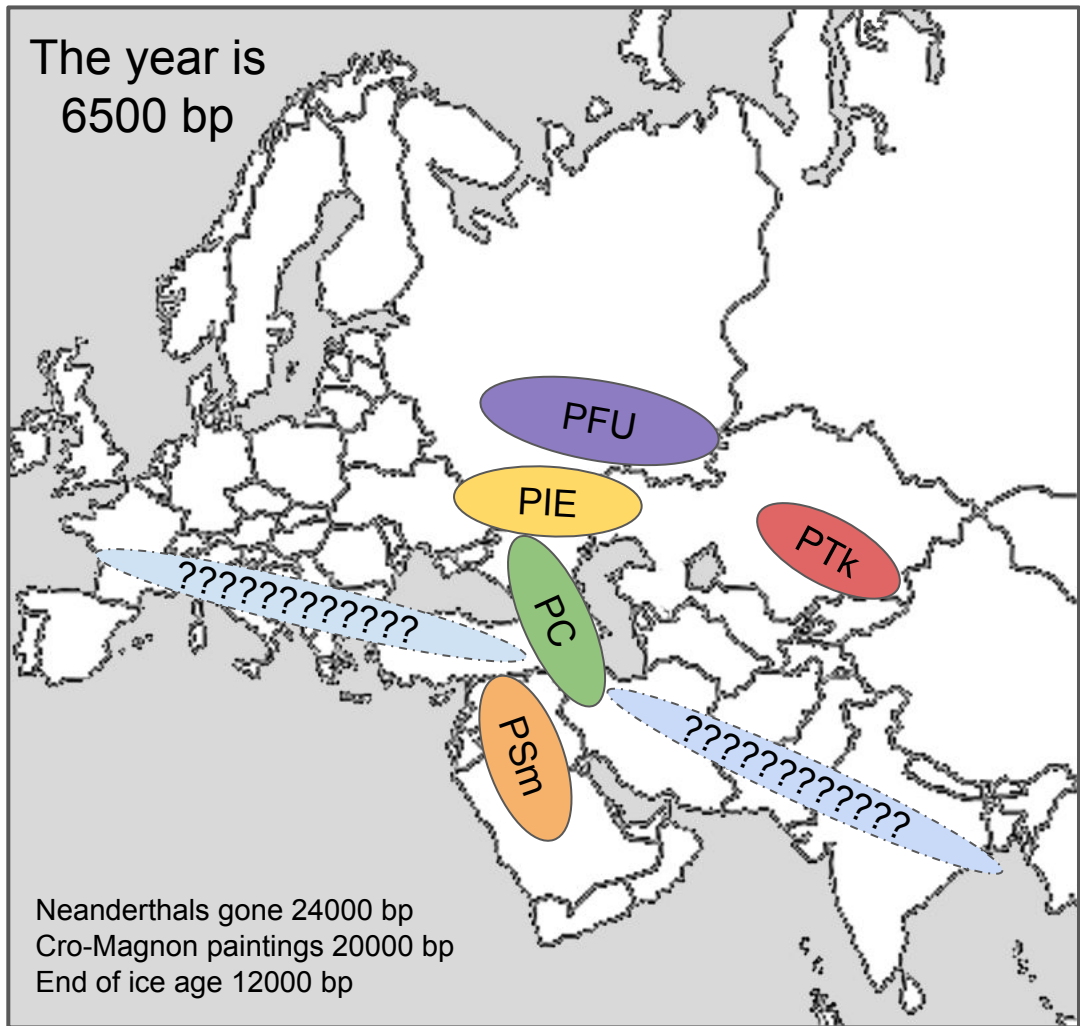
-  Balto-Slavic
-  Indo-Iranian
-  Armenian
-  Anatolian
-  Tocharian
-  Germanic
-  Greek
-  Celtic
-  Italic



Who were the people
in the path of the IE
migrants?

What happened to
them?

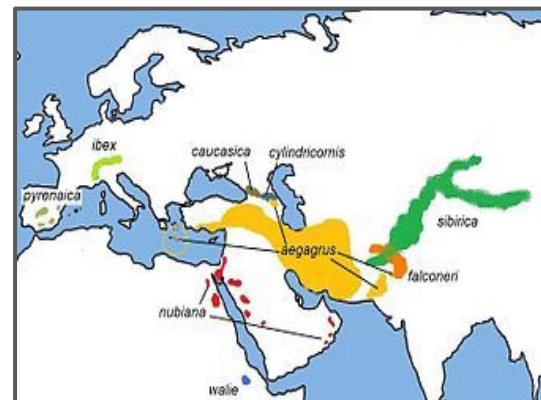
- Proto Finno-Ugric
- Proto Indo-European
- Proto Turkic
- Proto Caucasian
- Proto Semitic



“Goat” in Indo-European Languages

Olr: gabor	Lit: ožka	Grk: aidz	OE: tičen	ON: geit
Lat: caper	OPer: aza	Arm: ayts	Grk: ditsa	OHG: geits
OE: haefer	Toch: as	Alb: edh	OHG: tsiga	En: goat
Per: kahra	OCS: koza	Skt: ajaa		
Grk: kupros (boar)	How do we explain all of this linguistic “evidence” historically?			
Hin: bakara				

Turkic	Caucasian	Dravidian	Finno-Ugric
Chv: kaćaka	Ady: aća	Kan: ćigare	Hng: kećke
Trk: ketsi	Kab: aža		



Natural distribution of Eurasian goats

Goats were first domesticated in the area of present day western Iran about 10,500 years ago.

Who gets to call themselves a linguist?

“For the study of language to remain solely the business of a handful of specialists would be a quite unacceptable state of affairs. In practice, the study of language is in some degree or other the concern of everyone.

But a paradoxical consequence of this general interest is that no other subject has fostered more absurd notions, more prejudices, more illusions, or more fantasies.

From a psychological point of view, these errors are of interest in themselves. But it is the primary task of the linguist to denounce them, and to eradicate them as completely as possible.”

— Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*

So is a linguist a person who knows stuff about a lot of different languages?

Or is it a person who has strong opinions about language?

Or is it a person who collects and analyzes data on language and language use?

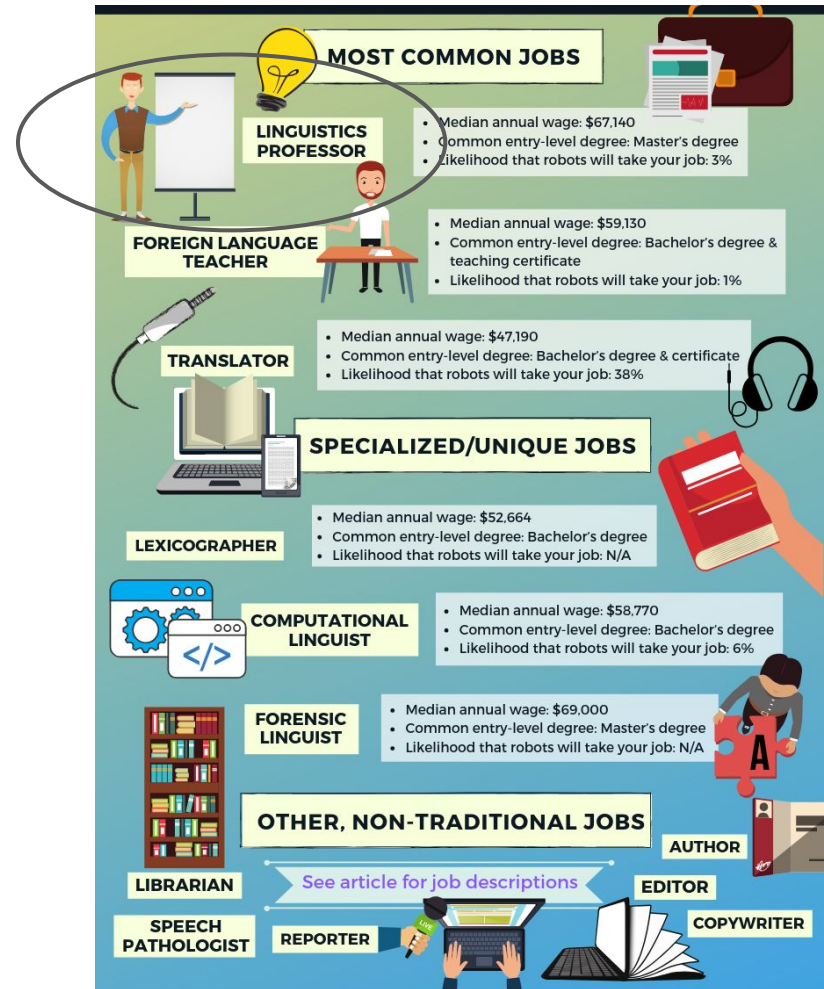
Linguistics is....

“Linguistics is that temple wherein earnest young people are taught not the language itself, but the method of teaching others to teach that [very same] method.”

— Vladimir Nabokov, Pnin

“... linguistics is a bitterly divided and unhappy discipline, and a large number of its practitioners spend too many nights drowning their problems in Ouisghian Zodahs.”

— Douglas Adams, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe

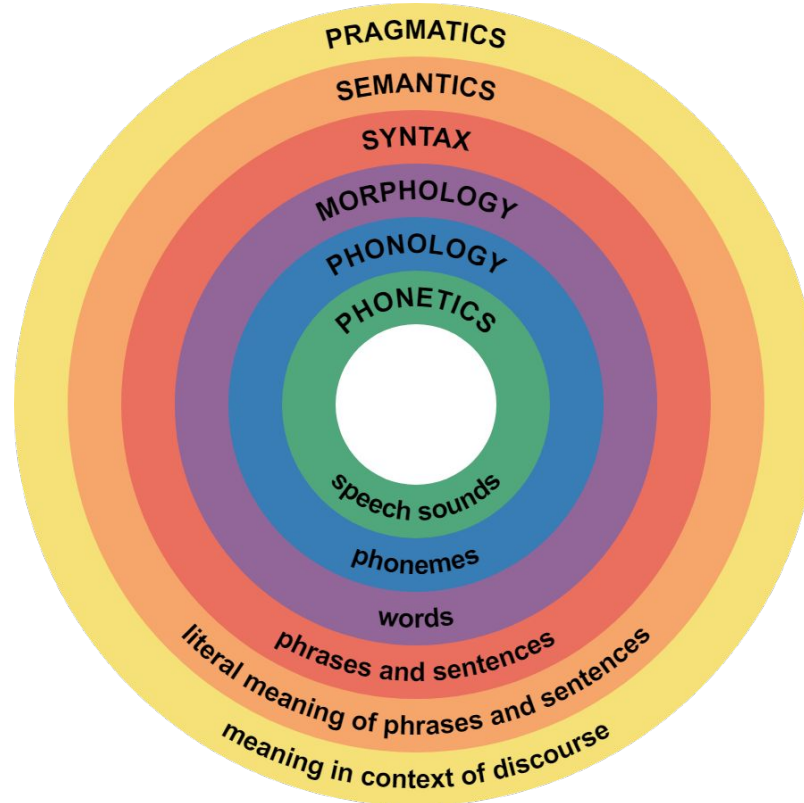


Subject matter of linguistics and linguistic specialties

How languages were once versus how they are now -- **historical linguistics**.

How languages work in the mind -- **cognitive** or **psycholinguistics** and how they work in the brain -- **neurolinguistics**.

How languages work in society or in a culture -- **sociolinguistics** and **anthropological linguistics**.



How languages are involved with computers and IT -- **computational linguistics** and **corpus linguistics**.

How languages are taught and learned and tested -- **applied linguistics**.

How languages are involved with the law -- **forensic linguistics**.

How linguists meddle with language

