5.1 Classifying Language

- Language
  - A language family is a collection of languages related through a common ancestral language that existed long before recorded history.

![language family diagram]

5.1 Classifying Language

- Language
5.1 Classifying Language

• Language
  – A language branch is a collection of languages within a family related through a common ancestral language that existed several thousand years ago.
  – Differences are not as extensive or as old as between language families, and archaeological evidence can confirm that the branches derived from the same family.

5.1 Classifying Language

• Language
  – A language group is a collection of languages within a branch that share a common origin in the relatively recent past and display many similarities in grammar and vocabulary.

5.2 Distribution of Language Families

– Thirteen language families have at least 9 million native speakers.
5.2 Distribution of Language Families

- Many languages have a literary tradition, or a system of written communication.
- Most written languages use one of four principal writing systems.

5.3 Distribution of Indo-European Languages

- Indo-European is divided into eight branches. Four branches are spoken by large numbers, while the other four are used less extensively.
5.4 Origin & Diffusion of Languages

• Origin and Diffusion of English
  – Celtic tribes around 2000 B.C.
    • Only a few words in modern English can be traced to the Celts, such as basket and flannel.
  – Angles, Saxons, and Jutes around A.D. 450
    • Germanic tribes from Denmark and Northern Germany pushed the Celts to remote areas and contributed around one-fourth of the words in modern English.

– Vikings between 787 and 1171
  • Although unable to conquer Britain, Vikings remaining in the country contributed many words from their language, such as call, die, and leg.

– Normans in 1066
  • Normans established French as the official language for the 300 years after the Norman invasion.
  • Romance languages contribute more than one-half of the words in English, either directly through French or through Latin.
5.4 Origin & Diffusion of Languages

• Origin and Diffusion of English

5.4 Origin & Diffusion of Languages

• Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European
  – Linguists and anthropologists disagree on when and where Proto-Indo-European originated and the process and routes by which it diffused.

5.4 Origin & Diffusion of Languages

• Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European
  – Nomadic Warrior Theory
5.4 Origin & Diffusion of Languages
• Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European
  – Sedentary Farmer Theory

5.5 Distribution of Dialects
• Dialects in the United States
  – The national diffusion of distinctive dialects is a result of the westward movement of colonists from the three East Coast dialect regions.
  – These have been joined by a fourth that developed in the West.
5.5 Distribution of Dialects

- Dialects in the United Kingdom
  - Regional dialects in the United Kingdom are a legacy of the invasion of groups from Northern Europe that settled in different parts of Britain.

5.5 Distribution of Dialects

- U.S. English differs from U.K. English in three significant ways:
  - Vocabulary
  - Spelling
  - Pronunciation

5.6 Dialect or Language

- Dialects Become Languages
  - The Romance languages we know today as French, Spanish, and Portuguese began as dialects of Latin (“Roman’s Language”).
5.6 Dialect or Language

• Standardizing Dialects of a Language
  – Spanish
    • The Spanish Royal Academy, housed in a mansion in Spain’s capital, Madrid, tries to promote a single standard language.
  – Portuguese
    • A 1994 agreement standardized the way that Portuguese is written. Many people in Portugal were upset that the new standard language more closely resembled the Brazilian version.

5.6 Dialect or Language

• Romance Language Examples
  – Creole languages
    • A creole is a language that results from the mixing of a colonizer’s language with an indigenous language. French Creole in Haiti is an example.
  – Italy’s languages
    • Several languages in Italy that have been traditionally considered dialects of Italian are now viewed by Ethnologue as sufficiently different to merit classification as languages distinct from Italian.

5.6 Dialect or Language

• Romance Language Examples
  – Catalán
    • Once regarded as a dialect of Spanish, Catalán is now classified as a distinct language.
  – Valencian
    • Currently classified as a dialect, but its speakers clamor to have it recognized as a distinct language.
  – Galician
    • Many of its speakers would prefer to consider it a dialect of Portuguese, one of the world’s most widely used languages.
5.7 Multilingual Places

- Switzerland: Institutionalized Diversity
  - The Swiss have institutionalized cultural diversity by giving considerable power to small communities.

5.7 Multilingual Places

- Canada: Bilingual Autonomy
  - French is one of Canada’s two official languages, along with English.
  - French speakers comprise one-fourth of the country's population and are clustered in Québec.
  - Confrontation has been replaced in Québec by increased cooperation between French and English speakers.

5.7 Multilingual Places

- Canada: Bilingual Autonomy
5.7 Multilingual Places

• Nigeria: Spatial Compromise
  – To reduce regional tensions, Nigeria moved the capital from Lagos Abuja in the center of the country, where no language predominates.

5.7 Multilingual Places

• Belgium: Barely Speaking
  – Southern Belgians (Walloons) speak French, whereas northern Belgians (Flemings) speak Flemish, a dialect of Dutch.
  – Each group controls an autonomous region.
  – The Flemish want independence, which would make Flanders one of Europe’s richest countries and Wallonia one of the poorest.
5.8 Isolated & Extinct Languages

• Endangered and Extinct Languages
  – Of the 7,105 living languages it identifies, *Ethnologue* classifies 906 of them as dying and 1,481 as in trouble.
  – An **extinct language** was once used by people in daily activities but is no longer in use.
  – The loss of many languages is a reflection of globalization.

5.8 Isolated & Extinct Languages

• Isolated Languages
  – An **isolated language** is a language unrelated to any other and therefore not attached to any language family.
5.9 Preserving Lesser-Used Languages

• Preserving Languages
  – Welsh
    • Welsh was the dominant language of Wales until the nineteenth century, when many English speakers migrated there.
    • To help preserve the language, Welsh is a required school subject, road signs are in Welsh, and Welsh-language TV and radio programs are broadcast.

• Preserving Languages
  – Irish
    • Irish Gaelic is an official language of the Republic of Ireland, along with English.
    • English was imposed when the country was a colony of the United Kingdom.
    • Irish is now preserved in schools, signs, and broadcast media, like Welsh.

• Preserving Languages
  – Breton
    • In Brittany around 225,000 people speak Breton regularly.
    • Breton is not recognized as an official language in France, however.
5.9 Preserving Lesser-Used Languages

- Preserving Languages
  - Scottish
    - Around 100,000 people speak Scottish Gaelic.
  - Cornish
    - Cornish became extinct in 1777, and the language was revived in the 1920s, but only a few hundred people are fluent.

- Reviving Languages
  - Hebrew
    - The language of daily activity in biblical times, Hebrew diminished in use in the fourth century B.C. and was thereafter retained primarily for Jewish religious services.
    - When Israel was established as an independent country in 1948, Hebrew became one of the new country's two official languages, along with Arabic.

- Reviving Languages
  - Myaamia
    - No one has spoken this as a first language, the language of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, since the 1960s.
    - Daryl Baldwin, a Tribe member, became fluent in the language and is teaching it to his children as their first language.
    - An online dictionary has been created to aid in the language’s revival.
5.9 Preserving Lesser-Used Languages

• Reviving Languages
  – Myaamia

• New Languages
  – Isolated languages continue to be identified and documented, and entirely new ones are invented.
  – For example, Koro Aka, a Sino-Tibetan language of Northeastern India, was discovered in 2008.

5.10 Diffusion of English

• Lingua Franca
  – A lingua franca is a language mutually understood and commonly used to communicate by people who have different native languages.
  – The leading lingua franca in the contemporary world is English, and others include Swahili, Hindi, Indonesian, and Chinese.
  – A pidgin language adopts a simplified grammar and limited vocabulary of a lingua franca.
5.10 Diffusion of English

• Diffusion of English into Other Languages
  – Franglais—a mix of French and English
  – Spanglish—a mix of Spanish and English
  – Denglish—a mix of German (Deutsch) and English

• Chinese: The Next Lingua Franca?
  – By 2020, Chinese is expected to replace English as the most common online language and to become the most important language of social media.
  – Rather than sounds (as in English), Chinese languages are written primarily with logograms, which are symbols that represent words or meaningful parts of words.

• Global Distribution of English
  – The current distribution of English exists because of the history of British and contemporary American influence.