The most repeated passage in linguistic history is Sir William Jones' (1746–1794) statement in 1786:

> The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and Celtic, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family, if this were the place for discussing any question concerning the antiquities of Persia.   (Jones, 1798, pp. 422–3)

Historical Linguistics (An Overview)

Introduction

Before dealing in details with the subject of historical linguistics, we first think somehow about what was before its emergence, how and why it comes into being as a discipline and other questions. Let's remember the ancient periods of the study of language such as the Greeks, the Romans, the Indians, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Where each period had its special features and objectives. Mainly all of them seek for answering some questions: Who is the first speaker on earth. What is the first language? The emergence of the Greek the Latin, and the Sanskrit languages helped in building a new vision towards language which is against the ideas of the philosophers in a long tradition that goes back to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, whose aim was to deduce the universal properties of human language. The importance of this period lies in the fact that it paved the way to the notion of Structuralism. Hence, some said that its emergence or the act birth of the discipline is the appearance of the Sanskrit language in the late 18th century, it was thought that Latin ,Greek, and Sanskrit languages hinted to be a common origin and believing, also, that they are related to Persian, Gothic, and Celtic languages. Hence, these new perspectives and dimensions gave birth to the field historical linguistics which is traditionally known as Philology. During this period, Historicism, the main focus is on items in isolation which is the weak point in this era that paved the way to the coming trends of language study such as Structuralism, Behaviorism, Generativism, etc.

Historical Linguistics

Historical linguistics involves the study of language through time, either from the perspective of the present looking back to earlier, unattested stages (the sub-discipline of reconstruction), or from some earlier stage towards the present (the domain of language change). This overview considers both sub disciplines, and does not focus exclusively on any particular area or level of the grammar, but concentrates on two general issues. First, in the heyday of traditional work in the nineteenth century, linguistic theory was historical-comparative only. The twentieth century has seen a radical shift in perspective, so that modern historical linguistics is often assessed according to the extent to which it incorporates insights from synchronically-based linguistic theories, and potentially provides a testing ground for them. Such theories may not, however, have a great deal to say about currently lively areas like the interaction of variation and change, or the related influence of language contact. Second, there is increasing interest in the data and analysis of historical linguistics from cognate disciplines, notably archaeology and genetics. Such cross-fertilization has led to the proposal of new models and methods, and has raised new methodological problems for historical linguistics, notable in the area of incorporation of computational techniques and quantitative approaches (McMahon, 2002).

Definition(s) of the Concept

What is historical linguistics? Historical linguists study language change, which occurs due to different reasons, it involves some of the hottest topics in linguistics, and it has important contributions to make to linguistic theory and to the understanding of human nature. There are many reasons why historical linguists feel this way about their field.

For one, a grasp of the ways in which languages can change provides the student with a much better understanding of language in general, of how languages work, how their pieces fit together, and in general what makes them tick.

For another, historical linguistic methods have been looked to for models of rigour and excellence in other fields. Historical linguistic findings have been utilized to solve historical problems of concern to society which extend far beyond linguistics

A very important reason why historical linguists study language change and are excited about their field is because historical linguistics contributes significantly to other sub-areas of linguistics and to linguistic theory. For example, human cognition and the human capacity for language learning are central research interests in linguistics, and historical linguistics contributes significantly to this goal.

Also to determine more accurately "what can change" and "what cannot change" in a language, and "what the permitted" versus "impossible" ways are in which languages can change, and to contribute significantly to the understanding of universal grammar, language typology and human cognition in general.

Furthermore, linguists list historical linguistics as one of their areas of specialization (not necessarily their first or primary area of expertise) than any other subfield of linguistics. (Campbell, 2013, pp.1-2)

Here are some definitions

1. **H**istorical linguistics is a subfield of linguistics in which an investigation of the history of languages is used to learn about how languages are related, how languages change, and what languages were like hundreds and even thousands of years ago — even before written records of a language.

2. **H**istorical linguistics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the development of a language or of languages over time, traditionally known as philology.

3. **T**he primary tool of historical linguistics is the comparative method, a way of identifying relations among languages in the absence of written records. For this reason, historical linguistics is sometimes called comparative-historical linguistics.

4. **L**inguists Silvia Luraghi and Vit Bubenik point out that the "official act of birth of comparative historical linguistics is conventionally indicated in Sir William Jones' The Sanscrit Language', delivered as a lecture at the Asiatic Society in 1786, in which the author remarked that the similarities between Greek, Latin and Sanskrit hinted to a common origin, adding that such languages might also be related to Persian, Gothic and the Celtic languages" (The Bloomsbury Companion to Historical Linguistics, 2010, as cited in Nordquist, 2019, para.1).

5. **H**istorical linguistics is concerned with both the description and explanation of language change (Aronoff & Janie, 2007).

Diachronic linguistics is the study of a language through different periods in history. It is one of the two main temporal dimensions of language study identified by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics (1916). The other is synchronic linguistics. The terms diachronic and synchronic refer, respectively, to an evolutionary phase of language and to a language state. Historical linguistics is the study of not only the history of languages and their development and change over time, as the name implies, but also the study of how languages change, and how languages are related to one another. Historical linguistics is full of lively debate and controversy. In this respect, Historical linguistics main concern is to learn about (What, How, why, How, and What.).

The Role of Historical Linguist(s)

The main job of historical linguists is to learn how languages are related. Generally, languages can be shown to be related by having a large number of words in common that were not borrowed (cognates). Languages often borrow words from each other, but these are usually not too difficult to tell apart from

other words. When a related group of languages has been studied in enough detail, it is possible to know almost exactly how most words, sounds, and grammar rules have changed in the languages.

History and Development of Historical Linguistics

People have thought about the origin of languages for a long time. Like other early looks into nature and the universe, the early ideas about language where at best obvious (realizing that two very similar languages were related) or lucky guesses, at worst dead wrong, and almost always ethno-centric (only paying attention to nearby languages. This, of course, was not always their fault, since communication was so slow. One of the earliest observations about language was by the Romans. They noticed that Latin and Greek were similar. However, they, incorrectly, assumed that Latin came from Greek. The reality is that both came from Indo-European. There were lots of people looking at languages in the Middle Ages. However, most of them were trying to show Hebrew, giving rise to all of the world's languages, specifically European languages. This never really worked, since Hebrew is not directly related to Indo-European languages.

When Europeans started travelling to India about 300 years ago, they noticed that Sanskrit, the ancient literary language of India, was similar to Greek, Latin, and other languages of Europe. In the late 18th century, it was first correctly theorized that Sanskrit and the languages of Europe had all come from the same language, but that language was no longer living. This was the beginning of Indo-European. Since then, many languages from all over the world have been studied, and started to get a good idea of how all the world's languages may be related. The study of linguistic change is called historical and comparative linguistics. Linguists identify regular sound correspondences using the comparative method among the cognates (words that developed from the same ancestral language) of related languages. They can restructure an earlier proto-language and this allows linguists to determine the history of a language family. Languages that evolve from a common source are genetically related. These languages were once dialects of the same language. Earlier forms of Germanic languages, such as German, English, and Swedish were dialects of Proto-Germanic, while earlier forms of Romance languages, such as Spanish, French, and Italian were dialects of Latin. Furthermore, earlier forms of Proto-Germanic and Latin were once dialects of Indo-European.

In short, modern historical linguistics dates from the late 18th century; it grew out of an earlier philosophy called "philology", and then a relative sub-branch derived from philology called comparative linguistics devoted to study language families, by comparing two or more attested languages that signal similarity in some aspects to establish their historical relatedness. At first, Greeks simply considered most languages in Europe to be "Barbarian", but later Romans also noticed that Latin and Greek languages were similar, and somehow incorrectly assumed that Latin came from Greek, until Europeans started traveling to India, where they have found out that Sanskrit (Indian language) was also similar to Greek,

Latin and other European languages, and then it was first correctly theorized that Sanskrit and the rest of European languages all came from the same language that is no more living, so it was put forward to call it "Proto-Indo-European language" that all languages have descended from by evolution or came by slow modification.

Comparative and Historical Linguistics

Comparative linguistics the subfield of linguistics that compares languages; usually understood as the application of the comparative method to the comparison of languages. Sometimes the term comparative linguistics is used as a synonym or near synonym of his historical linguistics. This latter is about how and why language changes over time. Comparative linguistics, in the relevant sense, is the study of linguistic relatedness, that is to say, of genetic or ancestral connections and related matters of sub grouping extending to the reconstruction of unattested ancestral languages or proto-languages. Historical linguistics is often regarded as the oldest branch of modern scientific linguistics. The powerful case put forward by the Neogrammarians for the regularity of sound change allowed comparison of linguistic phenomena to the laws of the natural science by providing a cornerstone to the scientific status of linguistics. Once focused on the comparison of distinct historical stages (like Latin versus French or Old English versus Modern English). The field now incorporates much research on language change process, including work on changes underway. Since all aspects of language change, save for our cognitive capacity for language, historical linguistics is directly connected to all subfields.

Conclusion

At the end, a remaining question will raise upon our minds; why studying historical linguistics at the first place? The aim of all human knowledge is not only to understand "how" and "what" but also "why" things go the way they do. Of course, we all know that from the past, we can understand more the present. This is generally true for linguistics too. Only by drawing on how a language has changed over time one can understand why this language has particular grammatical structures or phonological rules. This field allows one to compare different methodologies which have been used in the past and to evaluate which one provides us with more information and is the most efficient. It also allows us to explore languages which do not exist anymore, such as Gothic, Old English, Latin, Sanskrit and so on. With no doubt, it is very interesting to try to reconstruct how these languages might have sounded like, how they would have been written and used. Moreover, studying historical linguistics helps us to learn more about the culture, the customs, the religion, and literature of language. The existence of such branch is simply a sign that linguistics is gradually becoming a very important subject which worth attention, as Robins (1967) affirmed "the current interest shown by linguists in the past developments and the earlier history of their subject is in itself a sign of the maturity of linguistics as an academic discipline, quite apart from any practical application of linguistics science".

Language Classification

Everything it is possible for us to analyze depends on a clear method which distinguishes the similar from the not similar. Linneus, Genera Plantarum (1754)

Introduction

In the world today, there are thousands of different languages, each with its own sound patterns, grammar, and vocabulary. Regardless of how different these languages are, they have important similarities that allow linguists to group them into a fairly small number of families and types.

Although languages can be classified genetically, typologically, geographically and in other ways, normally the term 'classification of languages' (or 'language classification') is used to refer to classification of languages according to genetic relationships among related languages: however, this classification can be done according to the type of relationship between languages. Hence, a quick glance on any contemporary linguistics encyclopedia would demonstrate that there are 7.200 alive languages currently attested. All of them represent complex systems in their own right; all of them are gradually constituted and are codes enrooting underpinning infrastructures that determine not only their structural properties, but also their genetic/historical blueprint. Historical Linguistics records and archives. Campbell (1998) hold that there are 420 language families taking into account dead and isolate languages. These families are the explicit finding and the direct result of highly structured studies that fall under the heading of 'Classification of Languages.

Definition and Concept

According to Campbell and Mixico (2007, pp.38–39), " Classification of Languages or Language Classification -Although languages can be declassified typologically, geographically and in other ways, normally the term ' Classification of Languages' or ' Language Classification ' is used to refer to classification of languages according to the genetic relationships among related languages."

Prior to the 19th century, people, namely language scholars, had an atomistic and/or traditional approach to studying language. Atomism, otherwise deemed Traditional Grammar, viewed language as a set of unrelated elements and items studying each separately. The Atomistic view is regarded to refer to two eras in the history of studying language; the narrow sense (referring to grammar theories originated from ancient Greeks, Romans, and Indians), and the broad sense (referring to what is known as 'Comparative Philology'). Comparative Philologists studied languages analogously basing their assumptions on; 1. Geographical proximity, and 2. Borrowing. Latin was taken as a reference in such comparative studies on account of its being, tentatively, the purest of languages. It was the outstanding

discovery of Sir William Jones that led the Comparative Philology to deliver Language Classification, which is the process of grouping languages into types and families according to a vast array of criteria.

Aims of Language Classification

1. To prove the existence of properties that underlie different attested natural languages.
2. To group languages into families.
3. To establish universal properties from which to fathom the universality of human language and ultimately understand how we operate on language.
4. To clear misconceptions concerning convoluted relationships between unrelated languages such as false cognates and isolates.
5. To assist other fields in understanding matters in which language is central such as history, anthropology, and humanities.
6. To break down the intricate systematicness of language, and thus, help facilitate the tasks of theoretical and macro linguistics, especially the case of minority languages or languages of low proliferation.

Methods of Classification

As far as language classification is concerned, several methods and models are introduced so as to classify languages accurately and rigorously.

The Comparative Method

The comparative method is known as the central method in comparative linguistics for that it is the most predominantly proliferating method in the field of Historical Linguistics. As defined by **(Campbell, et al., 1988, p.41),** the Comparative Method is a set of procedures for comparing languages to determine whether they are related and, if related, how they have descended from a mutual ancestor. It functions via operating on different morphosyntactic items and phonosemantic elements of more than two languages, as such these items and elements are deemed **cognates.** The process by virtue of which the comparative method groups or classifies languages into families and sub-groups is called reconstruction. This latter is the simulation of what would the proto language be like and how language variation resulted in constituting the contemporary variants upon which the comparative method is applied. Reconstruction takes a variety of forms depending on the level of **stratum** concerned. The most important method of historical linguistics; a method (or set of procedures) for comparing languages to determine whether they are related and, if related, how they have developed from a common ancestor. The method compares forms from related languages, **cognates**, that have descended from a common ancestral language (the **proto-language**), in order to **reconstruct** the form in that ancestral language and to determine the changes related languages have undergone. It is also the basis for **sub-grouping** related

languages and establishing their **family tree**. This type of linguistics is concerned with making comparison between different states of language in different periods of that language history.

Steps and Assumptions of the Comparative Method

The comparative method is mainly and widely concerned with the sound reconstruction, however, other aspects of the language may be concerned. The process of reconstruction is the building block for this method. Therefore, the method undergoes a set of procedures, starting from gathering conjectured cognates before deciding about what level of representation is concerned. The following are the procedures for applying the comparative method:

1. Speculating that the currently studied language was a variant (dialect of a proto language).
2. Conjecturing about the language split.
3. Investigating the subsequent splits of the proto language.
4. Assuming about the sound change in a trial for recreating the sound system that would allow for variance akin to that of the currently attested languages.
5. Setting aside the contemporary features of the studied language in order not to delve into the history of elements having no history.

According to (Campbell, 1999, pp.108–123),the comparative method, however, applies a set of these major steps: (1) Assemble cognates, (2) Establish sound correspondences, (3) Reconstruct the proto-sound, (4) Determine the status of (partially overlapping) correspondence sets, (5) Check the plausibility of the reconstructed sound from the perspective of the overall phonological inventory of the proto language, (6) Check the plausibility of the reconstructed sound from the perspective of linguistic universals and typological expectations, and (7) Reconstruct individual morphemes. These major procedures underlie other sub-steps and tend to vary considerably in application and in adherence to the type of material studied. As to the procedures of the Comparative Method, they are seven, as follows (Campbell, 2013, pp. 111-28):

(i) assemble cognates,

(ii) establish sound correspondences,

 (iii) reconstruct the proto-sound which is admittedly uncertain but may be guided by (a) directionality, (b) majority wins, and (c) economy,

(iv) determine the status of similar (partially) overlapping correspondence sets,

(v) check the plausibility of the reconstructed sound from the perspective of the overall phonological inventory of the proto-language, and

(vi) check the plausibility of the reconstructed sound from the perspective of the linguistic universals and typological expectations, and

 (vii) reconstruct individual morphemes.

Criticism of the Comparative Method

In spite of the merits that characterize it, and despite its worldwide predominance, the comparative method received numerous criticisms from scholars and proponents claiming new methods and models The question the most salient and from which many limitations were attributed to the comparative method is that "to what extent the reconstructed languages are realistic?".The following is an enumeration of these criticisms from the point of view of (Harrison, 2003):

1. The Relative Temporal Limitations: In this regard, it is illustrated that the successive and frequent changes in allegedly related languages is a factor that minimizes the authenticity of the comparative method.

2. The Socio-Historical Limitations: The degree to which intra-lingual linguistic change occurs through history and the historical sociolinguistic variation that have not been documented are factors exalting the vagueness of the comparative method.

3. Purely Linguistic Limitations: As far as language per se is concerned, certain forms, elements, items, and structures cannot be approached implicating the comparative method).

4. Limitations of the Type of Classification: The comparative method does not concern itself with comparing all forms relating to typology or area; it is concerned with comparing changes stemming from genetic relationships only.

Models of Classification

The Family Tree Model

The shortcomings latent within the Comparative Method have led to the emergence of new methods and models to cater for the incomprehensiveness of the latter. August Schleicher (1856–7) has introduced the model of the family tree to provide a solid basis upon which reliable classification can be postulated. According to Mixico et al. (1988), " The Tree Model is the standard means for representing the genetic relationship among languages, shown in terms of a genealogical tree. In tree diagram or model, the branching – represented by the lines between individual languages and the nods or subgroups to which they belong –shows which languages that are more closely related to one another within each of the branches and what their intermediate parent language within the language family is. According to the same source, the cladistic model elucidates only relationships of descendants of a one particular proto language through genetic inheritance. Other types of relationships, however, are not demonstrated through this model. At the most basic level, Stammaun Theory attempts to diversify languages on the premise that they diverge from a one single proto-language, that is to say, language divergence is inevitable and that diverged languages do not converge once the split occurs.

The Wave Model

As criticisms from dialectologists were forwarded to the Neogrammarians, proponents of the Tree Model mainly Schmidt (1872), the basis for a new model which would cater for the inadequacy of the assumption underlying the criticized method was constituted. The Wave Theory/ Method, otherwise, known as Wellen theory, is defined by Mauricio et al. (2007) as " A model of linguistic change seen by some as an alternative to the Tree Model, but thought by others to complement the Family Tree; it is intended to deal with changes due to contact among languages and dialects. According to the Wave Theory, linguistic changes spread outward concentrically as waves on a pond do when a stone is thrown into it, becoming progressively weaker with the distance from their central point. Since later changes may not cover the same area there may be no sharp boundaries between neighboring dialects or languages; rather, the greater the distance between them, the fewer linguistic traits dialects or languages may share". As such the Wave Model is built on the principle of granting prominence to dialectology and the geographical proximity between linguistic communities. Through considering the effect of proximity and language contact, the Wave Model resulted in the generation of language classification types other than the genetic.

Types of Language Classification

The different methods and models of language classification have resulted in the erosion of multiple types of Language Classification.

Genetic Classification Categorizes languages according to their descent. Languages that developed historically from the same ancestor language are grouped together, and are said to be genetically related. This ancestor may be attested (that is, texts written in this language have been discovered or preserved, as in the case of Latin), or it may be a reconstructed proto-language for which no original texts exist (as is the case for lndo-European).

Although genetically related languages often share structural characteristics, they do not necessarily bear a close resemblance. For example, Latvian and English are genetically related (both are descended from Indo-European), but their morphological structure is quite different. An English sentence like It lras to be figured out can be expressed in Latvian by a single word .

1)

ja:izgudro

(one) must out figure (it)

'It has to be figured out.'

Of course, Latvian and English are very distantly related, ahd languages that are more closely related will typically share a larger number of similarities. On the other hand, it is also necessary to recognize that even languages that are totally unrelated may share some structural similarities. Thus, English and Swahili, which are unrelated, both employ Subject-Verb-Object word order in simple declarative sentences.

2)

Maria anapenda Anna

'Maria likes Anna.'

For this reason, another approach to language classification is useful. Known as linguistic typology, it classifies languages only according to their structural characteristics, without regard for genetic relationships. Thus typologists might group together languages with similar sound patterns or, alternatively, those with similar grammatical structures. Typological studies also endeavor to identify linguistic universals, that is, structural characteristics that occur in all or most languages.

Finally, areal classification identifies characteristics shared by languages that are in geographical contact. Languages in contact often borrow words, sounds, morphemes, and even syntactic patterns from one another. As a result, neighboring languages can come to resemble each other, even though they may not be genetically related (Aronoff, & Janie, 2007,pp. 348–9).

Genetic Classification

How are languages shown to be related to one another? How are language families established? Judging from media attention, it is one of the hottest questions in contemporary linguistics. The issue of language classification comes up when we are dealing with more than one language, as soon as we are faced with two languages or more the question is whether that they are similar, or dissimilar rises. The broader and more central aim here is to understand linguistic kinship. And furthermore to identify precisely what is genetic classification? What criteria can be used for identifying whether two or more languages could be grouped in one set, or one family concept. However, debate, and considerable confusion about the methods for demonstrating family relationships among languages as yet not known, also the ways those language families have come to be established. So to clarify the vision, we must take a look not only on the linguistic kinship, but also revealing which methods, techniques, strategies and rules were utilized and proved successful in genetic classification and sir William Jones contribution.

Grouping the world's languages into families is relatively possible through a variety of methods and in the form of a variety of types, nevertheless, some methods place a great deal of requirements on the part of scholars attempting to perform the act of classification. In agreement with O' Grady (1997)**,** genetic classification can be said to refer to the analysis of languages according to their form and meaning resemblances, that is, they should have developed from an ancestral language following a documented evidence. In regard to Genetic Classification, a set of intermingling terms appear; genetic linguistics, genetic model, and genetic relationship.

1. Genetic relationship/ Affiliation: is the kinship binding languages descending from a common ancestor.
2. Genetic linguistics: the study of genealogy.
3. Genetic model: refers to the sub-groupings of languages into families and/or establishing relationships between them.
4. Genetic Classification: is the process that historical linguists perform on languages speculated to come from a mutual proto language.

Genetic Classification deploys the Tree Model to group languages into families with regard to what they share as similarities such as cognates.

Definition(s) of the Concept

What do we mean by 'Genetic Classification', how can languages be shown to be related? The idea of relationships between languages is quite old and can be traced to Sir William Jones's proclamation, in the latter part of the 18th century, Ubiquitous mistaken belief is that genetic classification starts with Sir William Jones' famous declaration of 1786, but there are those who preceded him . Jones felt that the type of relationship he found between languages like Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, etc. was such that it could

not be accounted as due to chance, nor due to borrowing, rather should be explained as due only to genetic inheritance.

Genetic Classification of Languages

1. When languages are known to have developed out of a common ancestral language they are said to be genetically related.

2. Genetic relationships; therefore, have to do with the linguistic characteristics that are inherited by one generation of speakers from another (as opposed to those which are acquired from other sources).

3. That is, "all languages of the world are classified into families. All languages belonging to a particular family are believed to have the same origin, that is, they originated from the same ancestor language (Dakubu, 1988)

4. Languages are related if they are divergent continuations of a single language spoken at an earlier time; this implies that if we were to trace each language back in time, we would find increasing similarities until finally we would be dealing with a single language.

5. Languages which are genetically related have a common ancestor.

6. The ancestral language is usually referred to as the proto-language. The languages derived from this are said to be its daughter languages, and the degrees of interrelatedness are often described by using the metaphor of a family

7. Technically, a lower level grouping is usually called a language family. The highest level grouping is called a phylum, super stock, or even family.

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Sir William Jones's Contributions

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During the 19th Century linguistic scholarship had the outstanding achievement which was the comparative method. Sir William Jones (1746-1794) considered as the founder of the comparative method. He was an English oriental's, philosopher and student of ancient India   .Jones was a judge on supreme court in Bengal. Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic society in 1784 under the patronage of Warren Hastings. While Jones was studying the Sanskrit language, he observed that Sanskrit, Latin and Greek languages are similar , for example the word 'Pitar ' in Sanskrit it is similar to the word 'Patar' in Greek language , as well as to in Latin language 'petar' .sir William Jones in his third anniversary discourse to the Asiatic society in 1786 , he declared that " Sanskrit ,Latin and Greek languages are related to each other and had a common root « in his famous philologer passage ,these Indo-European languages are related to Gothic and Celtic languages , as well as to Persian language .this declaration made the beginning of the Indo-European languages and the comparative historical linguistics , according to Bengston and Rulen's (1997:3) that sir William Jones " discovered the method of comparative linguistics –and with it the Indo-European family ". Cannon (1990, p.246), declared that "Jones was the

first known printed statement of the fundamental postulate of Indo-European comparative Grammar ;more than that of comparative linguistics as whole " . Although Jones' name was associated with comparative method, he was not only the one who talked about this observation. In the 16th century there were many visitors to India observed the similarities between the Indian and European languages, among the observers was Van Boxhon in early 1653 he published a proposal for proto- language (Scythian). Sir William Jones his grand plan to write a history of human races in Asia rather than the historical linguistics matters; according to him study language was a help to him to study the origins of the human in Asia.

What is a Language Family?

A language family is a set of languages deriving from a common ancestor or "parent." Languages with a significant number of common features in phonology, morphology and syntax are said to belong to the same language family. Subdivisions of a language family are called "branches". English, along with most of the other major languages of Europe, belongs to the Indo-European language family. "It is estimated that there are more than 250 established language families in the world, and over 6,800 distinct languages, many of which are threatened or endangered."(Brown & Ogilvie, 2008 Concise Encyclopedia of Languages of the World. Elsevier Science). Here some of the main language families:

Major Language Families

Here some of the main language families :

1. **Niger–Congo** (1,542 languages) (21.7%): are the world's largest language family and Africa's largest in terms of geographical area, number of speakers and number of distinct languages.

2. **Austronesian** (1,257 languages) (17.7%): are a language family widely spoken throughout Maritime Southeast Asia, Madagascar and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. There are also a few speakers in continental Asia.

3. **Trans–New Guinea** (482 languages) (6.8%): is an extensive family of Papuan languages spoken in New Guinea and neighboring islands, perhaps the third-largest language family in the world by number of languages.

4. **Sino-Tibetan** (455 languages) (6.4%) : in a few sources also known as Trans-Himalayan, is a family of more than 400 languages, second only to Indo-European in number of native speakers.

5. **Indo-European** (448 languages) (6.3%) : are a language family of several hundred related languages and dialects.

6. **Australian** [dubious] (381 languages) (5.4%) : consist of around 290–363[1] languages belonging to an estimated 28 language families and isolates

7. **Afro-Asiatic** (377 languages) (5.3%) : is a large language family of about 300 languages that are spoken predominantly in West Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and parts of the Sahel

8. **Nilo-Saharan** [dubious] (206 languages) (2.9%) : The languages extend through 17 nations in the northern half of Africa: from Algeria to Benin in the west; from Libya to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the centre; and from Egypt to Tanzania in the east.

9. **Oto-Manguean** (178 languages) (2.5%) : are a large family comprising several subfamilies of indigenous languages of the Americas

10. **Austroasiatic** (167 languages) (2.3%) : are a large language family of Mainland Southeast Asia, also scattered throughout parts of India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and southern China.

11. **Tai**–Kadai (91 languages) (1.3%) : are a language family of tonal languages found in Mainland Southeast Asia, southern China, and Northeast India.

12. **Dravidian** (86 languages) (1.2%) : are a language family spoken by more than 215 million people, mainly in Southern India and northern Sri Lanka, with pockets elsewhere in South Asia

13. **Tupian** (76 languages) (1.1%): The Tupi or Tupian language family comprises some 70 languages spoken in South America, of which the best known are Tupi proper and Guarani.

Cognates

Identification of cognates is a component of two principle tasks of historical linguistics demonstrating the relatedness of languages and reconstructing the histories of families. Genetically related languages originate from a common proto-language. In the absence of historical records proto-languages have to be reconstructed from cognates; reflexes of proto-words that survive in some form in the daughter languages. A cognate of a word in one language (e.g. English) is a word in another language (e.g. German) that has a similar form and is or was used with a similar meaning in which they have gradually developed from the same ancestor word (inherited from a shared parent language). The English words mother, father and friend are cognates of the German words Mutter, Vater and Freund. On the basis of these cognates, we would imagine that modern English and modern German probably have a common ancestor in what has been labeled the Germanic branch of Indo-European. By the same process, we can look at similar sets in Spanish (madre, padre, amigo) and Italian (madre, padre, amico) and conclude that these cognates are good evidence of a common ancestor in the Italic branch of Indo-European. The word cognate derives from the Latin noun "cognatus" which means « blood relative.

Types of Cognates

False Cognates.

Cognates may have evolved similar, different or even opposite meanings, but in most cases there are some similar sounds or letters in the words, in some cases appearing to be dissimilar. Some words sound similar, but do not have the same meaning; these are called **False Cognates.** False cognates are two words in different languages that appear to be cognates, but actually are not (for example, the English advertisement and the French avertissement, which means "warning" or "caution". Also embarrassed in English and the Spanish embarasada, which means "pregnant", Sensible in English which means "reasonable" but "sensitive" in French and Spanish.

Perfect Cognates

For perfect cognates are words that are spelled exactly the same for example, in both English and Spanish, and they mean exactly the same thing, but their pronunciation is different. For example: English 'chocolate', Spanish 'chocolate', ' regular; regular' and 'animal; animal'.

Near Perfect Cognates

The next group of words are near perfect cognates. These are words that mean the same thing in both "English and Spanish" for example, but are not quite spelt the same but almost the same. You will be able to see that there are certain patterns that form with near perfect cognates that allow you to potentially predict when a near cognate is likely to exist. The main difference between two near perfect cognates is the pronunciation and this is where you have to be careful. Therefore, for example, you have the English word "basic", which in Spanish is "básico ". Also, you have the English word " information" which in Spanish is " información ", " anniversary" and anniversario", " arbitrary" and "arbitrario".

Definitions of Pidgins and Creole Languages

Pidgin. (Sometimes called **contact language**) A simplified form of **language**, typically with a reduced grammar and vocabulary, used for communication between groups speaking different languages who have no other language in common, usually in situations where there are strikingly different levels of power in a colonial setting. A pidgin is not spoken as a first or native language. The process by which pidgins arise is referred to as **pidginization**. As a pidgin becomes the first language of a generation of children, it acquires all the characteristics of a natural language, including a richer vocabulary and a functioning, relatively stable phonology and grammar, and in this way becomes a **creole**.

Creole. The traditional definition of a creole is a language descended from a **pidgin** that has become the native language of a group of people. The formation of a **creole** is referred to as **creolization**.

Special Cases

Language Isolates

Isolate (also called language isolate, sometimes isolated language) A language with no known relatives, that is, a family with but a single member. Some well-known isolates are: Ainu, Basque, Burushaski, Etruscan, Gilyak (Nivkh), Nahali, Sumerian, Tarascan and Zuni. In typology, the type of language in which each morpheme is a separate word, that is, where there is no bound morphology, and grammatical markers are independent words. Chinese is a much-cited example; many of the languages of southeast Asia are also isolating languages.

Language Phyla

Phylogenetic relationship is a term associated with biology, but sometimes applied in linguistics to refer to a genetic relationship or language-family relationship. Phylum is a proposed genetic relationship

that would group together language families (also isolates) in a larger-scale classification. Potentially, a phylum could refer to a more remote, larger-scale grouping of languages where the languages included are in fact confirmed to be related to one another; however, this is seldom the case. More typically, phylum refers to a grouping of languages thought by some to be distantly related to one another, though on the basis of inconclusive evidence, more or less equivalent to macro-family.

Typological Classification

As the name suggests, typological classification is the act of grouping languages on the basis of the type of their structural properties. Campbell et al (2007, p.218) claimed that topological classification operates on a number of tentatively related languages upon a number of interrelated factors (linguistic traits). As illustrated by the records of studies falling under this type, typological classification initiated its tradition with morphological analogies resulting in the emergence of notions like agglutination, inflection, and isolation. It has three main types: morphological typology (examines similarities between languages at the level of their morphemes. Morphology, the study of word formation, Typology (that views language through word order in the sentence, in that word order is the sole criterion with which to analyze and compare languages. Phonological Typology (Although granted little attention in the study of typology, phonological typology has indeed had a role in typological classification, in the sense that it distinguished between languages that are stress-timed and others which are syllable-timed.

Areal Classification

Out of the general dissatisfaction with the various types of language classification, and corresponding to the shortcomings of each, Areal Classification emerged in an attempt to give consideration to the social and geographical factors affecting language change after they have been neglected. It analogizes languages considering two major factors: (1) Language Contact; due to geographical proximity, languages intersect resulting in the creation of new linguistic system (pidgins and creoles and (2) Borrowing: following myriads of factors ranging from cultural, economic, to religious, languages can be set at a state where they come into contact.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The focus of this section is on the criteria that linguists use to classify languages, and on the enormous variety of languages found throughout the world. Linguists sometimes attempt to classify languages solely in terms of their structural similarities and differences (that is, in terms of their linguistic typology). Analysis of cross-linguistic data has identified a number of iinguistic universals, indicating the most/common characteristics of human language. The other major type of classificatory work in linguistics is concerned with genetic relationships-establishing language families whose members are descended from a common ancestor. While research in this area is hampered both by the large number of languages involved and the scarcity of the available data, a sizable portion of the world's several thousand

languages have been placed, in families. Finally, we present the controversial work recently done on linguistic phyla or macro-families. Research in these areas can shed light on the nature of language change, as well as the movement of peoples throughout the world.

Language Change

Introduction

It is both obvious and rather mysterious. The English of the late fourteenth century, for example, is so different from Modern English. The existence of such differences between early and later variants of the same language raises questions as to how and why languages change over time. Historical linguistics is concerned with both the description and explanation of language change. In this chapter, we examine the nature and causes of language change and survey phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and semantic change, etc.

The Nature of Language Change

Historical linguistics studies the nature and causes of language change. The causes of language change find their roots in the physiological and cognitive makeup of human beings. Sound changes usually involve articulatory simplification as in the most common type, assimilation. Analogy and reanalysis are particularly important factors in morphological change. Language contact resulting in borrowing is another important source of language change. All components of the grammar, from phonology to semantics, are subject to change over time. A change can simultaneously affect all instances of a particular sound or form, or it can spread through the language word by word by means of lexical diffusion. Sociological factors can play an important role in determining whether or not a linguistic innovation is ultimately adopted by the linguistic community at large. Since language change is systemic, it is possible, by identifying the changes that a particular language or dialect has undergone, to reconstruct linguistic history and thereby posit the earlier forms from which later forms have evolved" (O'Grady et al., 2001).

The Nature of Language Change

Raymond (2003,p.2) says that Any treatment of linguistics must address the question of language change. The way languages change offers insights into the nature of language itself. The possible answers to why languages change tell us about the way language is used in society, about how it is acquired by individuals and may reveal to us information about its internal organization. There is no simple explanation for why languages change. This is an area in which there is much speculation and little proof. The area is an interesting and fruitful one but there are few if any direct answers.

For this reason historical linguistics has traditionally been concerned with how languages evolve and not why they do so in one particular direction and not in another. To begin this section a number of statements about language change are made.

1. *All languages change*, there is no such thing as a language which is not changing. The rate of change may vary considerably due to both internal and external factors. English, for example, has changed greatly since Old English. Other languages, like Finnish and Icelandic, have changed little over the centuries.

2. *Language change is largely regular*, one can recognize regularities in the types of change which languages undergo, even if these cannot be predicted. (Raymond, 2003, p.2).

Causes of Language Change

The inevitability of language change is guaranteed by the way in which language is passed on from one generation to the next. Children do not begin with an intact grammar of the language being acquired, but rather must construct a grammar on the basis of the available data. In such a situation, it is hardly surprising that differences arise, even if only subtle ones, from one generation to the next. Moreover, since all children draw on the same physiological and cognitive endowment in learning language, it is to be expected that the same patterns of change will be consistently and repeatedly manifested in all languages.

Articulatory Simplification

As might be expected, most sound changes have a physiological basis. Since such sound changes typically result in articulatory simplification, they have traditionally been related to the idea of 'ease of articulation'. Although this notion is difficult to define precisely, we can readily identify cases of articulatory simplification in our everyday speech, such as the deletion of a consonant in a complex cluster or, in some dialects, the insertion of a vowel to break up a complex cluster.

Spelling Pronunciation

Not all changes in pronunciation have a physiological motivation. A minor, but nevertheless important, source of change in English and other languages is spelling pronunciation. Since the written form of a word can differ significantly from the way it is pronounced, a new pronunciation can arise that seems to reflect more closely the spelling of the word. A case in point is the word often. Although this word was pronounced with a [t] in earlier English, the voiceless stop was subsequently lost, resulting in the pronunciation [f n]. However, since the letter t was retained in the spelling, [t] has been reintroduced into many speakers' pronunciation of this word. Another case in point is the pronunciation of [s] in words such as assume and consume. Although in earlier English such words were pronounced with [s], the presence of the high vowel [u] resulted in a pronunciation with [ ] (still heard in assure). However, similar to the case of often above, the influence of the spelling (which remained unchanged) led to the reintroduction of the pronunciation with [s] in many dialects.

Analogy and Reanalysis

Cognitive factors also play a role in change in all components of the grammar. Two sources of change having a cognitive basis are analogy and reanalysis.

Analogy. It reflects the preference of speakers for regular patterns over irregular ones. It typically involves the extension or generalization of a regularity on the basis of the inference that if elements are alike in some respects, they should be alike in others as well. The effects of analogy can also be observed in the speech of children, who often generalize the regular -ed past tense form to produce forms such as goed and knowed**.** In short, analogy plays a very important role in morphological change.

Reanalysis. It is particularly common in morphological change. Morphological reanalysis typically involves an attempt to attribute a compound or root + affix structure to a word that formerly was not broken down into component morphemes. A classic example in English is the word hamburger, which originally referred to a type of meat patty deriving its name from the city of Hamburg in Germany. This word has been reanalyzed as consisting of two components, ham + burger. The latter morpheme has since appeared in many new forms, including: Fishburger, Chickenburger, and even as the free morpheme Burger**.**

Language Contact

Another cause of language change is language contact. Almost most of the languages in the world are subject of influence of language contact at one time or another. Languages have been in contact for thousands of years, at least when humankind started using more than a language; and this linguistic phenomenon is everywhere. It refers to the situation where speakers of a language frequently interact with the speakers of another language or dialect. As a consequence, extensive borrowing can occur, particularly where there are significant numbers of bilinguals or multilingualism.

Types of Influences

Language contact resulted in three main influences:

Superstratum Influence (also superstrate)

Superstratum Influence is the effect of a politically or culturally dominant language on another language or languages in the area. It is the language of invaders and conquered that is imposed on special group, leaving features. (Norman Frencd a superstratum influence that is why most of the English vocabulary is derived from French.

Substratum Influence (< Latin substratum 'underlayer') (also substrate)

When an earlier language influences a later language which moves into its territory (causing its extinction or becoming dominant), the earlier language is called a *substratum*. In language contact, a term applied to the effects on linguistic structures (phonological, morphological, semantic or syntactic) transferred from the earlier language to the one that arrived later in the same territory.

Adstratum Influence:

Here the languages enter into a similarly egalitarian relationship. It is the situation where two languages are in contact and neither one is clearly politically or culturally dominant. In a city such as Montreal, with its large number of bilingual speakers, English and French inevitably influence each other.

Borrowing

Languages borrow words freely from one another. Usually this happens when some new object or institution is developed for which the borrowing language has no word of its own. For example, the large number of words denoting financial institutions and operations borrowed from Italian by the other western European languages at the time of the Renaissance testifies to the importance of the Italian bankers in that period. (The word "bank" itself, in this sense, comes through French from the Italian banca). Words now pass from one language to another on a scale that is probably unprecedented, partly because of the enormous number of new inventions that have been made in the 20th and 21st centuries and partly because international communications are now so much more rapid and important. The vocabulary of modern science and technology is very largely international.

The process in which a language takes linguistic elements from another language and makes them part of its own. The borrowed elements are typically loanwords, but borrowing is not restricted just to lexical items taken from one language into another: any linguistic material – sounds, phonological rules, grammatical morphemes, syntactic patterns, semantic associations, discourse strategies – can be borrowed, that is, can be taken over so as to become part of the borrowing language.

The act of adopting some aspect of one language into another. It may be lexical (the most obvious and common type of borrowing), but also syntactic, morphological or phonological. The latter types of borrowing require that some section of the population be in direct contact with the second language. Lexical borrowing can be due to written influence as with the English loanwords in Modern German yielding so-called 'cultural borrowings'. Borrowing is one of the chief means of expanding the vocabulary of a language.

Other Causes of Language Change

1.The individual as well as society play a part in language change. The speech habits of one generation are based on those of the earlier one, and a change is likely to occur during the course of the acquisition of these habits by others.

2.The rise of new concepts and discovery of new objects cause changes in the vocabulary, structure and sounds of a language.

3.Geographical conditions also affect changes in the sound of a language.

4.Language changes because new concepts and discoveries are born, a huge migration takes place, a prestige is required so language is molded to suit new trends and also language changes because man is accustomed to least effort in speaking.

Types of Language Change

Introduction

All languages change in the course of time. Written records make it clear that 15th-century English is quite noticeably different from 21st-century English, as is 15th-century French or German from modern French or German. It was the principal achievement of the 19th-century linguists not only to realize more clearly than their predecessors the ubiquity of linguistic change, but also to put its scientific investigation on a sound footing by means of the comparative method This will be treated in greater detail in the following section. Here various kinds, or categories, of linguistic change will be listed and exemplified.

Linguistic Change

Like sound shift is found in the history of all languages, as evidenced by the regular sound correspondences that exist between different stages of the same language, different dialects, and different languages. Words, morphemes, and phonemes may be altered, added or lost. The meaning of words may broaden, narrow or shift. New words may be introduced into a language by borrowing, or by coinage, blends and acronyms. The lexicon may also shrink as older words become obsolete. Change comes about as a result of the restructuring of grammar by children learning the language. Grammars seem to become simple and regular, but these simplifications may be compensated for by more complexities. Sound changes can occur because of assimilation, a process of ease of articulation. Some grammatical changes are analogy changes, generalizations that lead to more regularity, such as sweeped instead of swept.

Sound Change (Phonetic and Phonology)

Since the beginning of the 19th century, when scholars observed that there were a number of systematic correspondences in related words between the sounds of the Germanic languages and the sounds of what were later recognized as other Indo-European languages, particular attention has been paid in diachronic linguistics to changes in the sound systems of languages. Sound change (also called phonological change) A change in pronunciation; the process by which sounds change their phonetic nature and phonological systems change.

Phonetic Change

a. **Assimilation:** It is the change of sound pronunciation because of the influence of another sound .

  It includes four types:

  1. Partial: involving place or manner of articulation
  2. Nasalization: a nasal consonant can have an effect on an adjacent vowel.
  3. Palatalization: front vowels and palatal [j] make the stops more palatal
  4. Affrication: palatalized stops become affricates.

    b. **Dissimilation**: i.e. two sounds become another sounds.

    c. **Epenthesis**: Adding sound into a particular environment.

    d. **Metathesis**: Two sounds change their places in one word.

    e. **Vowel Deletion**: Omitting a word final vowel (apocope) or a word internal vowel (syncope).

    f. **Consonant Deletion**: Omitting the consonant cluster at the beginning or al the end.

Phonological Change

Between 1400 and 1600 CE, the Great Vowel Shift took place. The seven long vowels of Middle English underwent changes. The high vowels [i] and [u] became the diphthongs [aj] and [aw]. The long vowels increased tongue height and shifted upward, and [a] was fronted. Many of the spelling inconsistencies of English are because of the Great Vowel Shift. Our spelling system still reflects the way words were pronounced before the shift took place. It has many types:

1. **Splits:** Where allophone of phoneme occurs in a word and the last consonant deleted.
2. **Mergers:** Two or more phonemes collapse into a single one.
3. **Shifts:** Change in series of phonemes (vowels).

Grammatical Change

A language can acquire a grammatical distinction that it did not have previously, as when English developed the progressive ("He is running") in contrast to the simple present ("He runs"). It can also lose a distinction; e.g., modern spoken French has lost the distinction between the simple past (Il marcha "he walked") and the perfect (Il a marché "he has walked"). What was expressed by means of one grammatical device may come to be expressed by means of another. For example, in the older Indo-European languages the syntactic function of the nouns and noun phrases in a sentence was expressed primarily by means of case endings (the subject of the sentence being in the nominative case, the object in the accusative case, and so on); in most of the modern Indo-European languages these functions are expressed by means of word order and the use of prepositions. It is arguable, although it can hardly be said to have been satisfactorily demonstrated yet, that the grammatical changes that take place in a language in the course of time generally leave its deep structure unaffected and tend to modify the ways in which the deeper syntactic functions and distinctions are expressed (whether morphologically, by wor order, by the use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs, or otherwise), without affecting the functions and distinctions themselves. Many grammatical changes are traditionally accounted for in terms of analogy.

Syntactic Change

Because of the lack of the case system, word order has become more rigid and strict in Modern English. Now it is strictly Subject – Verb – Object order.

Morphological Change

Many Indo-European languages had extensive case endings that governed word order, but these are no longer found in Romance languages or English. Although pronouns still show a trace of the case system (he vs. him), English uses prepositions to show the case. Instead of the dative case (indirect objects), English usually the words to or for. Instead of the genitive case, English uses the word of or 's after a noun to show possession. These are the main morphological changes: it is concerned with "how the structure or the word formation is changed by:

1. Addition of affixes through borrowing, grammaticalization, fusion, etc.
2. Loss of affixes.
3. Analogy
4. Reanalysis

Semantic Change

Near the end of the 19th century, a French scholar, Michel Bréal, set out to determine the laws that govern changes in the meaning of words. This was the task that dominated semantic research until the 1930s, when scholars began to turn their attention to the synchronic study of meaning. Many systems for the classification of changes of meaning have been proposed, and a variety of explanatory principles have been suggested. So far no "laws" of semantic change comparable to the phonologist's sound laws have been discovered. It seems that changes of meaning can be brought about by a variety of causes. Most important, perhaps, and the factor that has been emphasized particularly by the so-called words-and-things movement in historical semantics is the change undergone in the course of time by the objects or institutions that words denote. For example, the English word "car" goes back through Latin carrus to a Celtic word for a four-wheeled wagon. It now denotes a very different sort of vehicle; confronted with a model of a Celtic wagon in a museum, one would not describe it as a car.

Some changes in the meaning of words are caused by their habitual use in particular contexts. The word "starve" once meant "to die" (compare Old English steorfan, German sterben); in most dialects of English, it now has the more restricted meaning "to die of hunger," though in the north of England "He was starving" can also mean "He was very cold" (i.e., "dying" of cold, rather than hunger). Similarly, the word "deer" has acquired a more specialized meaning than the meaning "wild animal" that it once bore (compare German Tier); and "meat," which originally meant food in general (hence, "sweetmeats" and the archaic phrase "meat and drink") now denotes the flesh of an animal treated as food. In all such cases, the narrower meaning has developed from the constant use of the word in a more specialized context, and the contextual presuppositions of the word have, in time, become part of its meaning. In brief, semantic change refers to changes in word meaning. It involves:

1. **Broadening:** i.e. generalizing the meaning
2. **Narrowing:** i.e. reducing and limiting the meaning

3. **Semantic Shift:** i.e. words lose their original meanings and get new ones successfully and do so in many and different ways.

Lexical Change

Old English borrowed place names from Celtic, army, religious and educational words from Latin, and everyday words from Scandinavian. Angle and Saxon (German dialects) form the basis of Old English phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. Middle English borrowed many words from French in the areas of government, law, religion, literature and education because of the Norman Conquest in 1066 CE. Modern English borrowed words from Latin and Greek because of the influence of the classics, with much scientific terminology. Also, it is a modification in the lexicon through addition of (word formation processes, borrowing) and loss of items.

Orthographic Change

Consonant clusters have become simplified, such as hlaf becoming loaf and hnecca becoming neck. However, some of these clusters are still written, but are no longer pronounced, such as gnaw, write, and dumb.

Language Reconstruction

Introduction

One of the branches of linguistics is historical linguistics (diachronic linguistics) which studies the changes of languages and its development over time. In Historical Linguistics, reconstructing languages is one of the most principles concerning this branch. Language Reconstruction is meant to establish the features of one or more languages derived from a common language. There are Two predominant methods in reconstruction languages:

Language Reconstruction

When we compare the vocabulary items of various languages, we cannot help but notice the strong resemblance certain words bear to each other. By systematically comparing languages, we can establish whether two or more languages descended from a common parent and are; therefore, genetically related. The comparative method refers to the procedure of reconstructing earlier forms on the basis of a comparison of later forms. By means of such comparative reconstruction, we can reconstruct properties of the parent language with a great degree of certainty.

Reconstruction Techniques

Reconstruction can be undertaken with some confidence because the processes underlying language change are systematic. Once the processes are uncovered by linguists, they can be reversed, allowing us to infer earlier forms of the language. Although it is possible to reconstruct all components of a proto-language (its phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, and semantics), we will focus here on phonological reconstruction, the area in which linguists have made the most progress.

Reconstruction Strategies

Reconstruction of a proto-form makes use of two general strategies. The most important one is the phonetic plausibility strategy, which requires that any changes posited to account for differences between the proto-forms and the later forms must be phonetically plausible. And the majority rules strategy stipulates that if no phonetically plausible change can account for the observed differences, then the segment found in the majority of cognates should be assumed. It is important to note that the first strategy always takes precedence over the second; the second strategy is a last resort.

Reconstruction Types

Internal Reconstruction

It is a technique which relies on the analyses of the morphophonemic (the changes in pronunciation) variation within a single language.

Comparative Reconstruction

It is a technique which compares variations between two or more languages with common descent from shared ancestors. We can also speak about linguistic relationship in terms of kinship: language families, proto-language, parent language, daughter language, sister language and Romance language.

Phonological Reconstruction

The work of reconstruction is usually begins with phonology, which is to compare cognates that are genetically related and by using two principles "directionality and majority wins ".

Steps in the Application of the Comparative Method to Reconstruct Languages

1. **A**ssemble Cognates. Cognate: A word (morpheme) which is related to a word (morpheme) in sister languages. Cognate set: a set of words (morphemes) which are related to one another across the sister language.

2. **E**stablish Sound Correspondences. It is a set of cognate sounds, the sounds found in related words of cognate sets which correspond from one related language to another.

3. **R**econstruct the Proto-Sound. It is done by postulating what the original sound of proto language was basing on phonetic properties of the sounds from the descendant languages.

4. **D**etermine the status of similar (partially overlapping) correspondence sets. Some patterns in sound changes may concern more than one overlapping correspondence set.

5. **C**heck the plausibility of the reconstructed languages from the perspective of the overall phonological inventory of the proto-language: We are dealing with broader view of sound patterns, and we check whether our previous assumptions were correct or not.

6. **C**heck the plausibility of the reconstructed sound from the perspective of linguistic universals and typological expectations: After we finish applying step 5 we should check the probability of our findings on the grounds of presence of particular sets of sounds in other languages.

7. **R**econstruct individual morphemes: When we reconstruct the whole word sound by sound comparing the consecutive phonemes from all of the discussed daughter languages we can try to extend our research on entire lexis and grammar of proto-language also applying the comparative method.

Conclusion

Historical linguistics studies the history, the development, the nature and causes of language change over time. The causes of language change find their roots in the physiological and cognitive makeup of human beings. Sound changes usually involve articulatory simplification, as in the case of the most common type, assimilation. Analogy and reanalysis are particularly important factors in morphological change. Language contact resulting in borrowing is another important source of language change, in which borrowed words are said to be different from the words know as cognates only if these borrowed

words belong to the languages in the same family. Also, this contact among languages can result in three main types of influences, as it is explained previously.

All components of the language: grammar, phonology, phonetics (assimilation and metathesis), semantics (broadening and narrowing), are subject to change over time. A change can simultaneously affect all instances of a particular sound or form, or it can spread through the language word by word by means of lexical diffusion. Sociological factors can play an important role in determining whether or not a linguistic innovation is ultimately adopted by the linguistic community at large. Since language change is systematic, it is possible, by identifying the changes that a particular language or dialect has undergone, to reconstruct linguistic history and thereby posit the earlier forms from which later form shave evolved. Using sets of cognates, comparative reconstruction allows us to reconstruct the properties of the parent or proto-language on the basis of systematic phonetic correspondences.

Studies in historical linguistics can provide valuable insights into relationships among languages and shed light on prehistoric developments. Furthermore, historical studies of language are of great importance to our understanding of human linguistic competence.

In fact, it has often been stated that language change provides one of the most direct windows into the workings of the human mind. Furthermore, the study of language change contributes to our understanding of how social, cultural, and psychological factors interact to shape language. Finally, the integration of studies on language change, language acquisition, and language universals remains one of the most important challenges facing linguists today.

Good Luck!!!!