

5

Languages

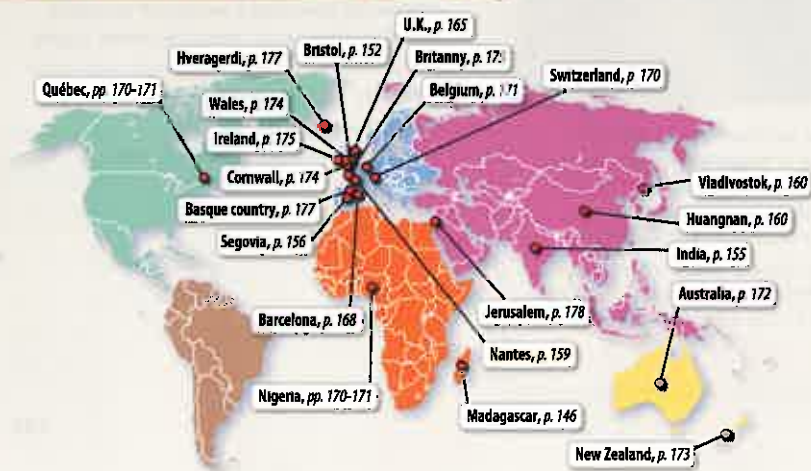
Language is an important part of culture. It is the means through which other cultural values, such as religion and ethnicity, are communicated. Language is a source of pride to a people, a symbol of cultural unity. As a culture develops, language is both a cause of that development and a consequence.

English has achieved an unprecedented globalization because people around the world are learning it to participate in a global economy and culture. At the same time, people are trying to preserve local diversity in language because language is one of the basic elements of cultural identity.

Learning English in Malaysia.



LOCATIONS IN THIS CHAPTER



KEY ISSUES

1



Where Are the World's Languages Distributed?

Most languages can be classified as belonging to a family. Individual languages and language families cluster in distinctive *regions*.

2

Where Did English and Related Languages Originate and Diffuse?

People in two locations speak the same language because of migration from one of the locations to another. If the two groups have few **connections** with each other after the migration, the languages spoken by the two groups will begin to differ.



3

Why Do Individual Languages Vary Among Places?

Distinctive languages form as people migrate to new **places** and incorporate new words into their language while holding on to some words brought from their previous place of **residence**.



4

Why Do Local Languages Survive?

Languages display contradictory trends of **scale**. On the one hand, individual languages remain clustered in **space** as an **expression** of cultural identity. On the other hand, languages such as English have achieved unprecedented globalization because people around the world are learning them to participate in a global economy and culture.



Where Are the World's Languages Distributed?

- **Introducing Languages**
- **Language Families**
- **Two Largest Language Families**
- **Other Large Language Families**

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.1

Understand how languages are classified.

Language is a system of communication through speech, a collection of sounds that a group of people understands to have the same meaning. Language is an important part of culture, which, as shown in Chapter 1, has two main meanings—people's values and their tangible artifacts. Chapter 4 looked at the material objects of culture. This chapter and the next two discuss three traits that distinguish cultural values: language, religion, and ethnicity.

We start our study of the geographic elements of cultural values with language in part because it is the means through which other cultural values, such as religion and ethnicity, are communicated.

Introducing Languages

How many languages do you speak? If you are Dutch, you were required to learn at least two foreign languages in high school. For those of you who do not happen to be Dutch, the number is probably a bit lower.

Most people in the United States know only English. In the United States, only 8 percent of college students and

18 percent of high school students take a foreign language. In contrast, 69 percent of graduates from Dutch high schools have learned at least two foreign languages. Across Europe as a whole, 75 percent of elementary school students and 94 percent of high school students learn English.

LANGUAGE AND MIGRATION

The study of language follows logically from migration because the contemporary distribution of languages around the world is largely a result of past migrations of peoples. People in two locations speak the same language because of migration from one of the locations to another.

For example, the people of Madagascar (the large island off the east coast of Africa) speak a language belonging to the same family as the languages of most of Indonesia and the Philippines (Figure 5-1). The shared language family between Indonesia and Madagascar is strong evidence of migration a long time ago between these two places. Researchers have concluded that migrants sailed the 3,000 kilometers across the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to Madagascar approximately 2,000 years ago. Imagine sailing across 3,000 kilometers of ocean in tiny boats 1,500 years before Columbus sailed 6,000 kilometers across the Atlantic Ocean.

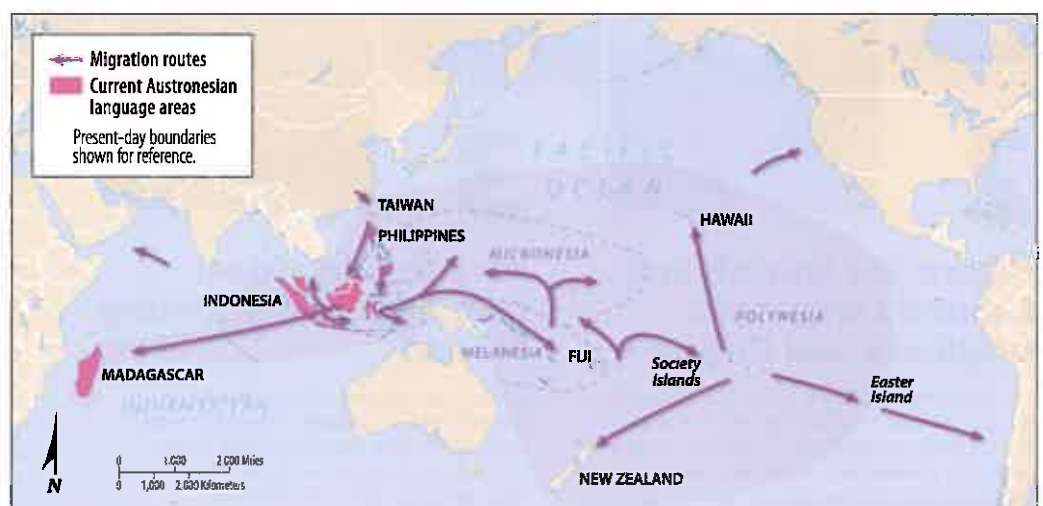
If the two groups have few connections with each other after the migration, the languages spoken by the two groups will begin to differ. After a long period without contact, the two groups will speak languages that are so different that they are classified as separate languages. The interplay between interaction and isolation helps explain the distribution of individual languages and entire language families.

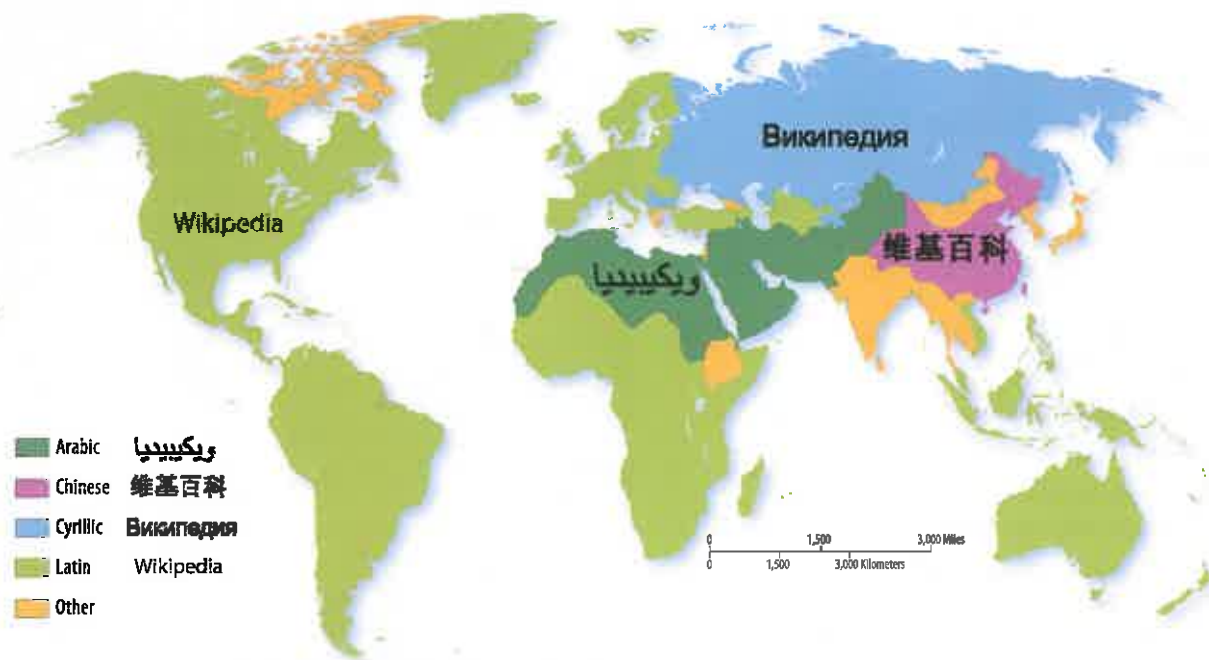
PAUSE & REFLECT 5.1.1

What forms of power would have moved boats 2,000 years ago?

Language is like luggage: People carry it with them when they move from place to place. They incorporate new words into their own language when they reach new places, and they contribute words brought with them to the existing

► **FIGURE 5-1 AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES** The current distribution of Austronesian languages is a function of migration of Austronesian people in the past.





▲ FIGURE 5-2 WRITING SYSTEMS The map shows the word “Wikipedia” in several writing systems.

language at the new location. Geographers look at the similarities among languages to understand the diffusion and interaction of people around the world.

CLASSIFYING LANGUAGES

Earth’s heterogeneous collection of languages is one of its most obvious examples of cultural diversity. *Ethnologue*, one of the most authoritative sources of languages (online at ethnologue.com), estimates that the world has 7,102 languages, including 90 spoken by at least 10 million people, 304 spoken by between 1 and 10 million people, and 6,708 spoken by fewer than 1 million people. The distribution of some of these languages is easy for geographers to document, whereas with others—especially in Africa and Asia—it is difficult, if not impossible.

Ethnologue classifies languages as institutional, developing, vigorous, in trouble, and dying. Of the world’s 7,102 languages, 578 are institutional, 1,598 developing, 2,479 vigorous, 1,531 in trouble, and 916 dying.

An **institutional language** is used in education, work, mass media, and government. Many countries designate at least one institutional language as an **official language**, which is used by the government for laws, reports, and public objects, such as road signs, money, and stamps. Logically, an official language would be understood by most if not all of the country’s citizens, but some countries that were once British colonies designate English as an official language, even though few of their citizens can speak it. Some countries have more than one official language and require all public documents to be in all of the official languages.

An institutional language also has a **literary tradition**, which means it is written as well as spoken. The system of written communication includes a method of writing

and rules of grammar. The world’s languages with literary traditions make use of more than one alphabet (Figure 5-2). Thousands of spoken languages lack a literary tradition. The lack of written records is one reason it is difficult to document the total number of languages or their distribution.

A **developing language** is spoken in daily use by people of all ages, from children to elderly individuals. A developing language also has a literary tradition, though literature in the language may not be widely distributed. A **vigorous language** is spoken in daily use by people of all ages, but it lacks a literary tradition. Languages in trouble and dying, as the names imply, are considered by *Ethnologue* to be in various stages of disappearing from use. Some of these endangered languages are being saved, as discussed later in this chapter.

ORGANIZING LANGUAGE FAMILIES

The world’s languages can be organized into families, branches, and groups:

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

Language Families

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.2

Identify the world's largest language families.

The several thousand spoken languages can be organized logically into a small number of language families. Larger language families can be further divided into language branches and language groups.

Figure 5-3 depicts differences among language families, branches, groups, and individual languages:

- Language families form the trunks of the trees.
- Individual languages are displayed as leaves.
- Some trunks divide into several branches, which logically represent language branches.
- The branches representing Germanic, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian in Figure 5-3 divide a second time into language groups.

The larger the trunks and leaves are, the greater the number of speakers of those families and languages.

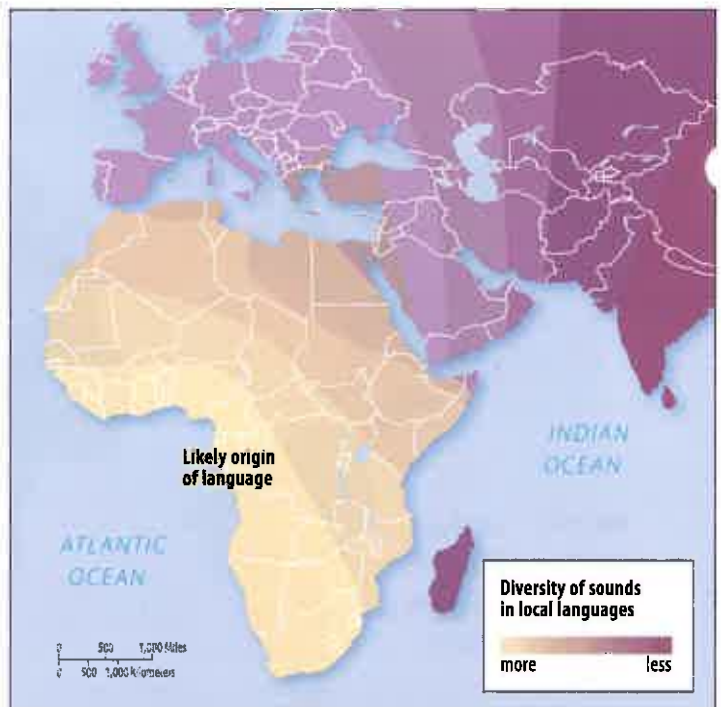
PAUSE & REFLECT 5.1.2

Based on Figure 5-3, which four other languages with at least 5 million speakers belong to the same language family, branch, and group as English?

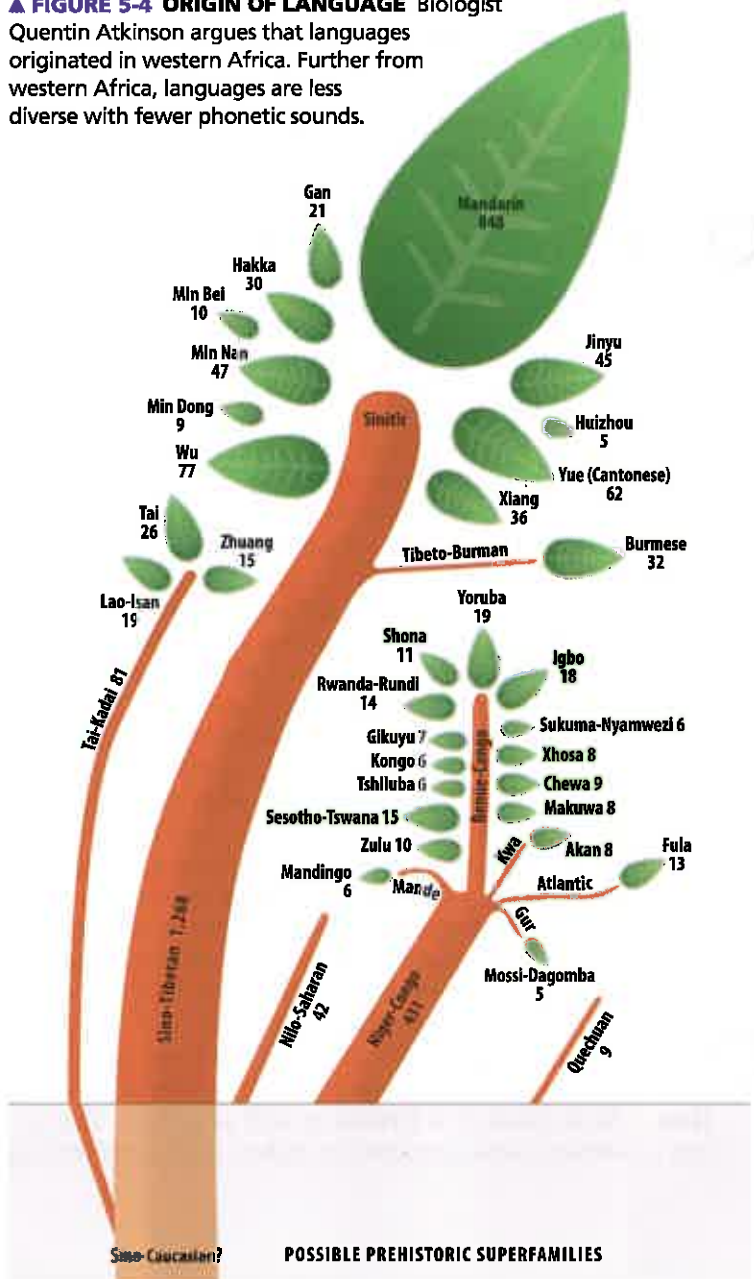
Figure 5-3 displays each language family as a separate tree at ground level because differences among families predate recorded history. Some linguists speculate that language families were joined together as a handful of superfamilies tens of thousands of years ago. Superfamilies are shown as roots below the surface because their existence is highly controversial and speculative.

A biologist in New Zealand, Quentin Atkinson, carries the speculation further, arguing that all languages can be ultimately traced to Africa (Figure 5-4). According to Atkinson, languages are most complex and diverse in Africa.

► **FIGURE 5-3 LANGUAGE FAMILY TREES** Language families with at least 9 million speakers, according to *Ethnologue*, are shown as trunks of trees. Individual languages that have more than 5 million speakers are shown as leaves. Some trunks divide into several branches, which logically represent language branches. The branches representing Germanic, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian divide a second time into language groups. Some linguists speculate that language families were joined together as a handful of superfamilies tens of thousands of years ago. Superfamilies are shown as roots below the surface because their existence is highly controversial and speculative.



▲ **FIGURE 5-4 ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE** Biologist Quentin Atkinson argues that languages originated in western Africa. Further from western Africa, languages are less diverse with fewer phonetic sounds.



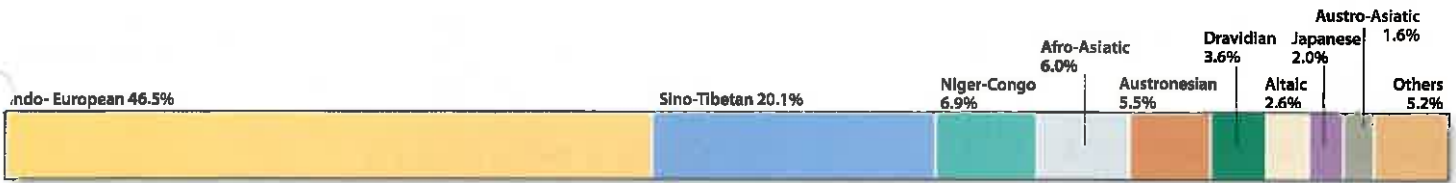
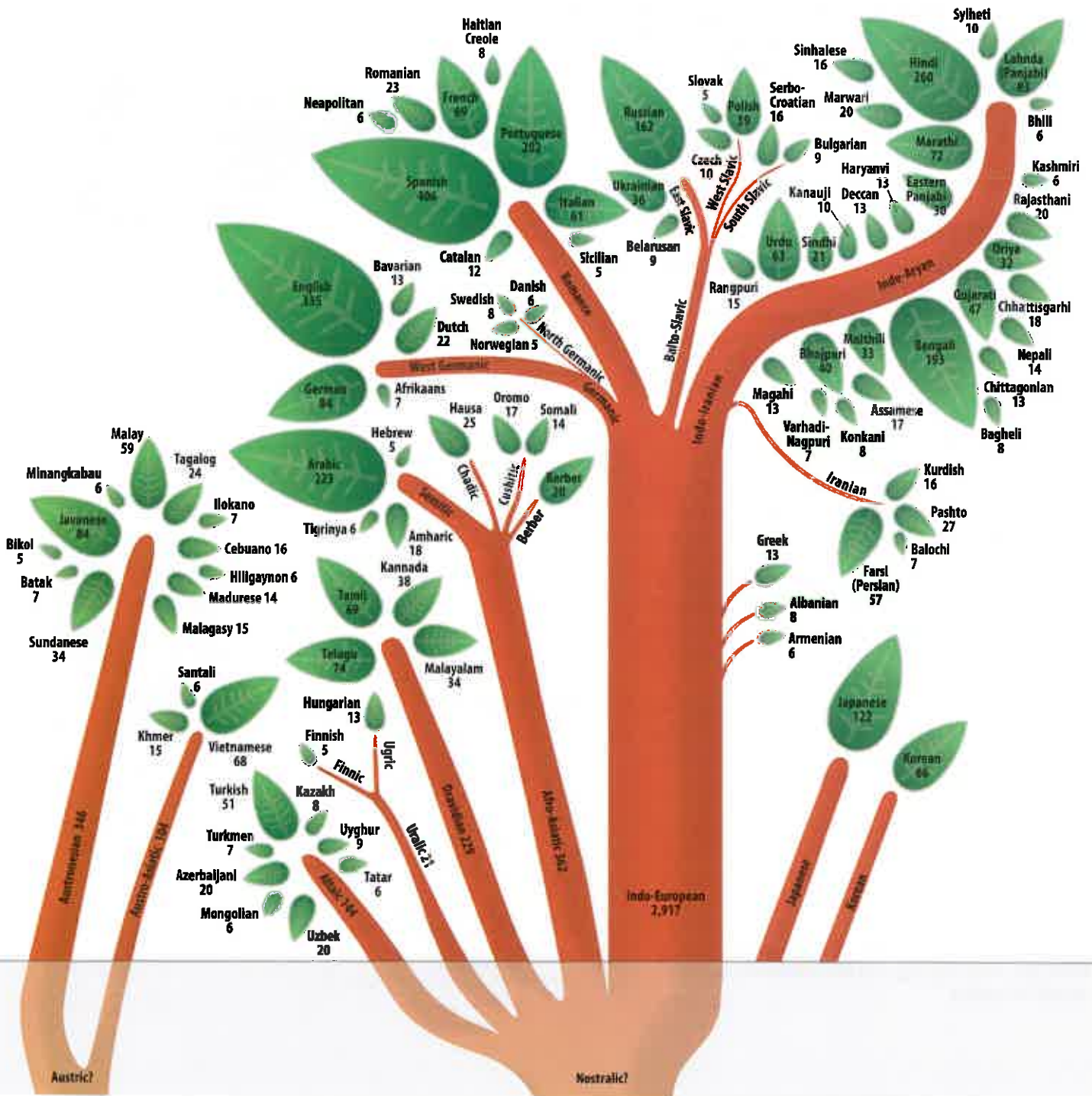


FIGURE 5-5 WORLD'S MAJOR LANGUAGE FAMILIES The graph shows the percentage of people who speak a language from each major family.

Atkinson thinks humans outside Africa display less linguistic diversity because their languages have had a shorter time in which to evolve into new languages than have African languages.

Ethnologue identifies 142 language families. The 14 families depicted in Figure 5-3 are used by 99 percent of the world's

population. Two language families—Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan—are used by more than 1 billion people, seven language families by between 100 million and 500 million people, and 5 by between 9 million and 100 million (Figure 5-5).



Two Largest Language Families

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.3

Identify the distribution of Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan, the two largest families.

Language families with at least 9 million native speakers are shown in Figure 5-6. Individual languages with at least 50 million speakers are named on the map. The two language families with the most speakers are Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

INDO-EUROPEAN

Indo-European, the most widely used language family, is the predominant one in Europe, South Asia, and North and Latin America (Figure 5-7). It has eight branches, including four that are widely used (Indo-Iranian, Germanic, Romance, and Balto-Slavic) and four that are spoken by relatively few people (Albanian, Armenian, Celtic, and Greek). Its origin and distribution are discussed in more detail in the next key issue.

SINO-TIBETAN

The Sino-Tibetan family encompasses languages spoken in the People's Republic of China—the world's most populous state, at 1.3 billion—and in several smaller countries in Southeast Asia. The languages of China generally belong to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family.

There is no single Chinese language. Rather, the most commonly used is Mandarin, which the Chinese call *Putonghua* ("common speech"). Spoken by approximately three-fourths of the Chinese people, Mandarin is by a wide margin the most-used language in the world. Once the language of emperors in Beijing, Mandarin is now the official language of both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, and it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

Seven other Sinitic branch languages are spoken by at least 20 million each in China, mostly in the southern and eastern parts of the

country—Wu, Yue (also known as Cantonese), Min, Jinyu, Xiang, Hakka, and Gan. However, the Chinese government is imposing Mandarin countrywide.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.1.3

Sino-Tibetan is the second-most widely used language family, but it appears on Figure 5-6 to encompass a smaller land area than several other language families. Why is this the case?



► **FIGURE 5-6 DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGE FAMILIES** Most languages can be classified into one of a handful of families.



The map illustrates the global distribution of major languages. The languages shown include English, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Malay, and others. The map is color-coded by language family: English (green), Russian (orange), Arabic (yellow), Hindi (red), Bengali (blue), Mandarin (pink), Japanese (purple), Korean (brown), Vietnamese (dark blue), Malay (light blue), and others. The map includes latitude and longitude lines, a scale bar in miles and kilometers, and labels for major oceans and continents.

Other Large Language Families

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.1.4

Identify the distribution of the largest language families other than Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan.

Figures 5-3 and 5-6 show 14 language families. The 2 largest—Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan—were introduced on the previous page. This page summarizes the distribution of the other 12 (Figure 5-8).

SOUTHEAST ASIA LANGUAGE FAMILIES

The three largest language families of Southeast Asia are Austronesian, Austro-Asiatic, and Tai-Kadai.

AUSTRONESIAN. These languages are spoken by about 6 percent of the world's people, who are mostly in Indonesia, the world's fourth-most-populous country. With its inhabitants dispersed among thousands of islands, Indonesia has many distinct languages and dialects; *Ethnologue* identifies 706 living languages in Indonesia. Indonesia's most widely used first language is Javanese, spoken by 84 million people, mostly on the island of Java, where two-thirds of the country's population is clustered.

AUSTRO-ASIATIC. This family is spoken by about 2 percent of the world's population, Vietnamese, the most-spoken tongue of the family, is written with our familiar Roman alphabet, with the addition of a large number of diacritical marks above the vowels. The Vietnamese alphabet was devised in the seventeenth century by Roman Catholic missionaries.

TAI-KADAI. The Tai-Kadai family was once classified as a branch of Sino-Tibetan. The principal languages of this family are spoken in Thailand and neighboring portions of China. Similarities with the Austronesian family have led some linguistic scholars to speculate that people speaking these languages may have migrated from the Philippines.

EAST ASIA LANGUAGE FAMILIES

The two most widely used language families outside of China are Japanese and Korean.

JAPANESE. Written in part with Chinese characters, Japanese also uses two systems of phonetic symbols, used either in place of Chinese characters or alongside them. Chinese cultural traits have diffused into Japanese society, including the original form of writing Japanese. But the structures of the two languages differ. Foreign terms may be written with one of these sets of phonetic symbols.

KOREAN. Unlike Sino-Tibetan languages and Japanese, Korean is written in a system known as *hankul* (also called *hangul* or *onmun*). In this system, each letter represents a sound, as in Western languages. More than half of the Korean vocabulary derives from Chinese words. In fact, Chinese and Japanese words are the principal sources for creating new words to describe new technology and concepts.

OTHER ASIAN LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Dravidian is the principal language family of South Asia, in addition to Indo-European. The Altaic and Uralic language families were once thought to be linked as one family, but recent studies point to geographically distinct origins.

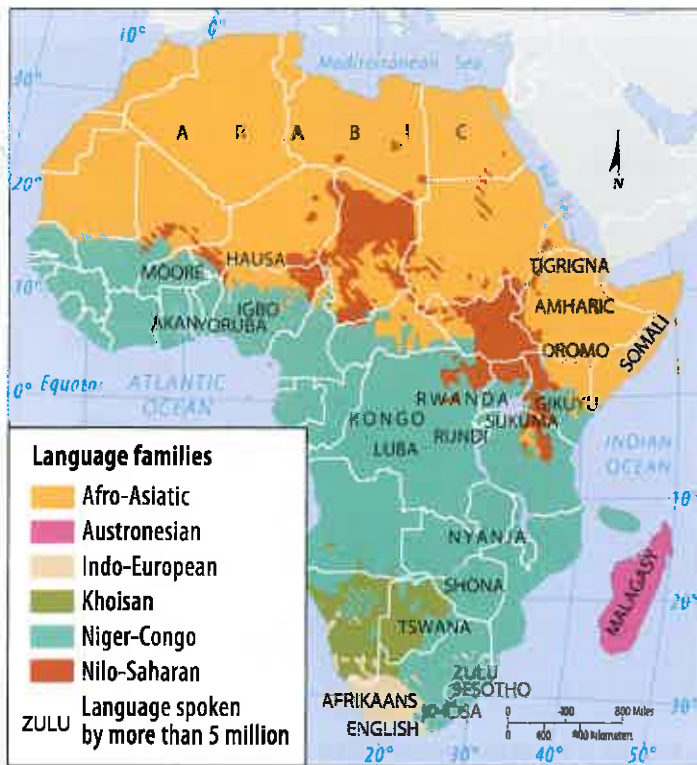
DRAVIDIAN. Dravidian languages are the principal ones in southern India. The two most widely used are Telugu and Tamil. The origin of Dravidian is unknown, and it has been studied less than other widely used language families. When speakers of Indo-European reached India, speakers of Dravidian languages were already present.

ALTAIC. Altaic languages are thought to have originated in the steppes bordering the Qilian Shan and Altai mountains between Tibet and China. Present distribution covers an 8,000-kilometer band of Asia. The Altaic language that has by far the most speakers is Turkish. When the Soviet Union governed most of the Altaic-speaking region of Central Asia, use of Altaic languages was suppressed. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Altaic languages became official in several new countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

URALIC. Uralic languages are traceable back to a common language, first used 7,000 years ago by people living in the Ural Mountains of present-day Russia. Migrants carried the Uralic languages to Europe, carving out homelands in the midst of Germanic and Slavic-speaking peoples and retaining their language as a major element of cultural identity.



◀ **FIGURE 5-8**
WELCOME IN 33
LANGUAGES The sign
is attached to a school in
Bristol, United Kingdom.



▲ FIGURE 5-9 AFRICA'S LANGUAGE FAMILIES The great number of languages results from at least 5,000 years of minimal interaction among the thousands of cultural groups inhabiting the African continent.

Estonians, Finns, and Hungarians speak languages that belong to the Uralic family.

AFRICAN LANGUAGE FAMILIES

No one knows the precise number of languages in Africa, and scholars disagree on classifying them into families. In the 1800s, European missionaries and colonial officers recorded African languages using the Roman or Arabic alphabet. *Ethnologue* lists 2,146 languages in Africa; only 699 have a literary tradition. The world's third- and fourth-largest language families are based in Africa: Afro-Asiatic in North Africa and Niger-Congo in sub-Saharan Africa.

AFRO-ASIATIC. Arabic is the major language of the Afro-Asiatic family, an official language in two dozen countries of Southwest Asia & North Africa, and one of six official languages of the United Nations. According to *Ethnologue*, 206 million people speak and write the official language Arabic. Most also speak a second language that is distinct from official Arabic. For example, 54 million people use Egyptian Spoken Arabic. *Ethnologue* identifies 34 distinct Arabic languages in addition to the official one. A large percentage of the world's 1 billion Muslims have at least some knowledge of Arabic because Islam's holiest book, the Quran (Koran), was written in that language in the seventh century. The Afro-Asiatic family also includes Hebrew, the original language of Judaism's Bible and Christianity's Old Testament.

NIGER-CONGO. More than 95 percent of the people in sub-Saharan Africa speak languages of the Niger-Congo family (Figure 5-9). The three most widely spoken Niger-Congo

languages are Yoruba, Igbo, and Swahili. Yoruba and Igbo are among the many languages of Nigeria (look ahead to Figure 5-35). Swahili is an official language only in Tanzania, but it is the first language of 15 million people and is spoken as a second language by another 25 million Africans. Especially in rural areas, the local language is used to communicate with others from the same village, and Swahili is used to communicate with outsiders. Swahili originally developed through interaction among African groups and Arab traders, so its vocabulary has strong Arabic influences. It is one of the few African languages with an extensive literature.

NILO-SAHARAN. Languages of the Nilo-Saharan family are spoken by 43 million people in north-central Africa, immediately north of the Niger-Congo language region. Divisions within the Nilo-Saharan family exemplify the problem of classifying African languages. Despite having relatively few speakers, the Nilo-Saharan family is divided into six branches, plus numerous groups and subgroups. The total number of speakers of each individual Nilo-Saharan language is extremely small.

AMERICA'S OTHER LANGUAGE FAMILY: QUECHUAN

Quechuan is the most widely used language family in the Western Hemisphere other than Indo-European. Its speakers live primarily in the Andes Mountains of western South America. *Ethnologue* estimates that around 9 million people use a Quechuan language. *Ethnologue* identifies 44 distinct Quechuan languages. Quechua Cusco is the only one with more than 1 million speakers. According to *Ethnologue*, most speakers of a Quechuan language use Spanish first. Aymara, another indigenous language family in the Andes, has 3 million speakers, mostly in Bolivia.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.1.4

Most languages are named for regions or countries. For example, based on their names, how would you expect the distributions of Austronesian and Afro-Asiatic to differ?

CHECK-IN KEY ISSUE 1

Where Are the World's Languages Distributed?

- ✓ Languages are classified as institutional, developing, vigorous, in trouble, and dying.
- ✓ Languages are organized into families and branches.
- ✓ Eighteen language families are used by at least 9 million people.

KEY ISSUE 2

Where Did English and Related Languages Originate and Diffuse?

- ▶ **Distribution of Indo-European Branches**
- ▶ **Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European**
- ▶ **Origin and Diffusion of English**
- ▶ **Global Importance of English**
- ▶ **Official Languages**

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.1

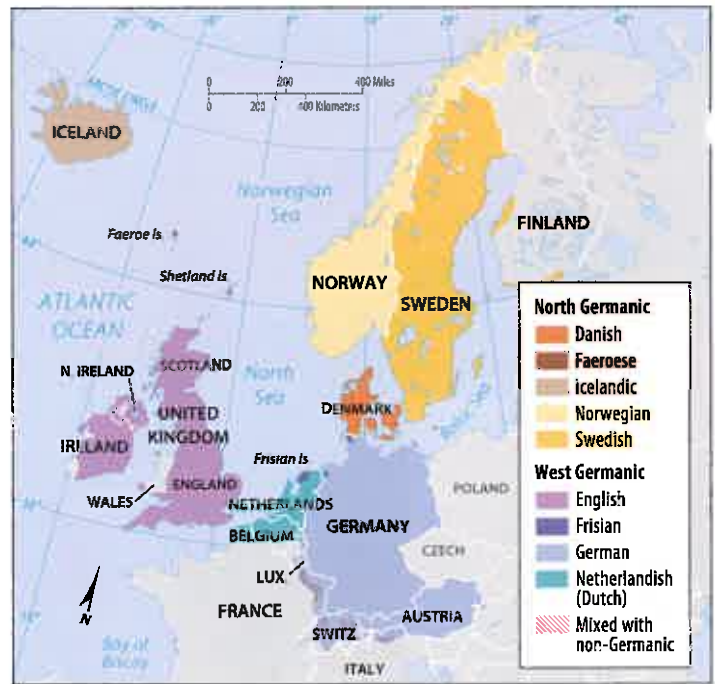
Identify the origin, diffusion, and current distribution of Indo-European branches.

Nearly one-half of the world's people speak a language belonging to the Indo-European language family. Indo-European languages have a common ancestor that predates recorded history.

Distribution of Indo-European Branches

Indo-European is divided into eight branches. Four are widely spoken, and four much less so.

▼ **FIGURE 5-11 ROMANCE BRANCH OF INDO-EUROPEAN** Romance branch languages predominate in southwestern Europe.



▲ **FIGURE 5-10 GERMANIC BRANCH OF INDO-EUROPEAN**

GERMANIC BRANCH

English belongs to the West Germanic group of the Germanic language branch of the Indo-European family (Figure 5-10). German and Dutch are also West Germanic group languages.

The Germanic language branch also includes languages in the North Germanic group, spoken in Scandinavia. The four Scandinavian languages—Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic—all derive from Old Norse, which was the principal language spoken throughout Scandinavia before A.D. 1000. Four distinct languages emerged after that time because of migration and the political organization of the region into four independent and isolated countries.

ROMANCE BRANCH

The four most widely used contemporary Romance languages are Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian (Figure 5-11). The

European regions in which these four languages are spoken correspond somewhat to the boundaries of the modern states of Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy. Rugged mountains serve as boundaries among these four countries. The fifth most widely used Romance language, Romanian, is the principal language of Romania and Moldova. It is separated from the other Romance-speaking European countries by Slavic-speaking peoples.

INDO-IRANIAN BRANCH

The branch of the Indo-European language family with the most speakers is Indo-Iranian. The branch is divided into the Iranian, or Western, group and the Indic, or Eastern, group. The major Iranian group languages include Persian (sometimes called Farsi) in Iran, Pashto in eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, and Kurdish, used by the Kurds of western Iran, northern Iraq, and eastern Turkey. These languages are written in the Arabic alphabet.

The most widely used languages in South Asia belong to the Indo-European language family and, more specifically, to the Indic group of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European. One of the main elements of cultural diversity among the 1.2 billion residents of India is language (Figure 5-12). *Ethnologue* identifies 461 languages currently spoken in India, including 29 languages spoken by at least 1 million people.

The official language of India is Hindi, which is an Indo-European language. Originally a variety of Hindustani spoken in the area of New Delhi, Hindi grew into a national language in the nineteenth century, when the British encouraged its use in government.

After India became an independent state in 1947, Hindi was proposed as the official language, but speakers of other languages strongly objected. Consequently, English—the language of the British colonial rulers—has been retained as a secondary official language. Speakers of different Indian languages who wish to communicate with each other sometimes use English as a common language.

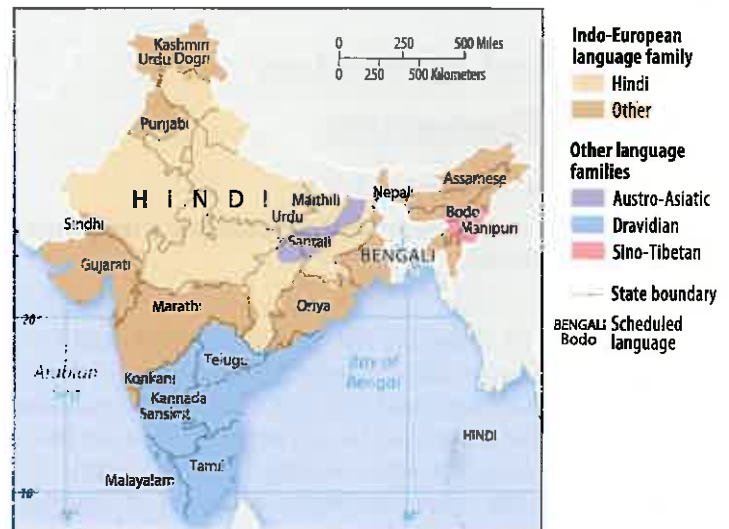
India also recognizes 22 so-called scheduled languages, including 15 Indo-European 4 Dravidian, 2 Sino-Tibetan, and 1 Austro-Asiatic. The government of India is obligated to encourage the use of these languages.

Hindi is spoken in many different ways, but there is only one official way to write Hindi, using a script called Devanagari. For example, the word for sun is written in Hindi as सूर्य (pronounced “surya”).

Adding to the complexity, Urdu is spoken very much like Hindi, but it is recognized as a distinct language. Urdu is written with the Arabic alphabet, a legacy of the fact that most of its speakers are Muslims, and their holiest book (the Quran) is written in Arabic.

BALTO-SLAVIC BRANCH

Balto-Slavic languages predominate in Eastern Europe. Slavic was once a single language, but differences developed in the seventh century A.D., when several groups of Slavs migrated from Asia to different areas of Eastern Europe



▲ FIGURE 5-12 LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN INDIA India's principal official language is Hindi, which has many dialects. The country has 22 scheduled languages that the government is required to protect.

and thereafter lived in isolation from one other. As a result, this branch can be divided into East, West, and South Slavic groups, as well as a Baltic group. Figure 5-7 shows the widespread area populated with Balto-Slavic speakers.

The most widely used Slavic languages are the eastern ones, primarily Russian, which is spoken by more than 80 percent of Russian people. The importance of Russian increased with the Soviet Union's rise to power. Soviet officials forced native speakers of other languages to learn Russian as a way of fostering cultural unity among the country's diverse peoples. In Eastern European countries that were dominated by the Soviet Union, Russian was taught as the second language.

The most spoken West Slavic language is Polish, followed by Czech and Slovak. The latter two are quite similar, and speakers of one can understand the other. The most widely used South Slavic language is the one spoken in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia. When they were all part of Yugoslavia, the language was called Serbo-Croatian. This name now offends Bosnians and Croats because it recalls when they were once in a country that was dominated by Serbs. Instead, the names Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are preferred by people in these countries, to demonstrate that each language is unique, even though linguists consider them one. Bosnians and Croats write the language in the Roman alphabet (what you are reading now), whereas Montenegrins and Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet (for example, Serbia is written Србија).

Differences among all of the Slavic languages are relatively small. However, because language is a major element in a people's cultural identity, relatively small differences among Slavic as well as other languages are being preserved and even accentuated in recent movements.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.2.1

Which branch predominates to the north in Europe, which to the south, and which to the east?

Origin and Diffusion of Indo-European

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.2

Identify processes of origin and diffusion of a language branch and a family.

Like other cultural elements, the contemporary distribution of languages exists because of geographic processes of origin and diffusion. The origin and diffusion of language branches and individual languages can be documented because these processes have occurred since recorded history began. On the other hand, the origin and initial diffusion of language families predate recorded history, so we can only speculate about them. The origin and diffusion of the Romance language branch and Indo-European family are examples.

ORIGIN AND DIFFUSION OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES

The Romance languages belong to a single branch because they originated from Latin, the “Romans’ language.” The rise in the importance of the city of Rome 2,000 years ago brought a diffusion of its Latin language. At its height in the second century A.D., the Roman Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Black Sea on the east and encompassed all lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 5-13). The empire’s boundary is shown in Figure 8-8. As the conquering Roman armies occupied the provinces of this vast empire, they brought the Latin language with them. In the process, the languages spoken by the natives of the provinces were either extinguished or suppressed in favor of the language of the conquerors.

Even during the period of the Roman Empire, Latin varied to some extent from one province to another. The empire grew over a period of several hundred years, and the Latin used in each province was based on that spoken by

▼ **FIGURE 5-13 ROMAN AQUEDUCT, SEGOVIA SPAIN** The Romans built this 17-kilometer (11-mile) aqueduct to bring water to one of their westernmost outposts.



the Roman army at the time of occupation. The Latin spoken in each province also integrated words from the language formerly spoken in the area. The Latin that people in the provinces learned was not the standard literary form but a spoken form, known as **Vulgar Latin**, from the Latin word referring to “the masses” of the populace.

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D., communication among the former provinces declined, creating still greater regional variation in spoken Latin. By the eighth century, regions of the former empire had been isolated from each other long enough for distinct languages to evolve.

In the past, when migrants were unable to communicate with speakers of the same language back home, major differences emerged between the languages spoken in the old and new locations, leading to the emergence of distinct, separate languages. This was the case with the migration of Latin speakers 2,000 years ago.

Romance branch languages have achieved worldwide importance because of the colonial activities of their European speakers. Spanish is the official language of 18 Latin American states, and fewer than 10 percent of the speakers of Spanish live in Spain. Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, which has a population of 200 million, compared to only 10 million in Portugal. The division of Central and South America into Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking regions resulted from a 1493 decision by Pope Alexander VI to give the western portion of the New World to Spain and the eastern part to Portugal. The Treaty of Tordesillas, signed a year later, carried out the papal decision.

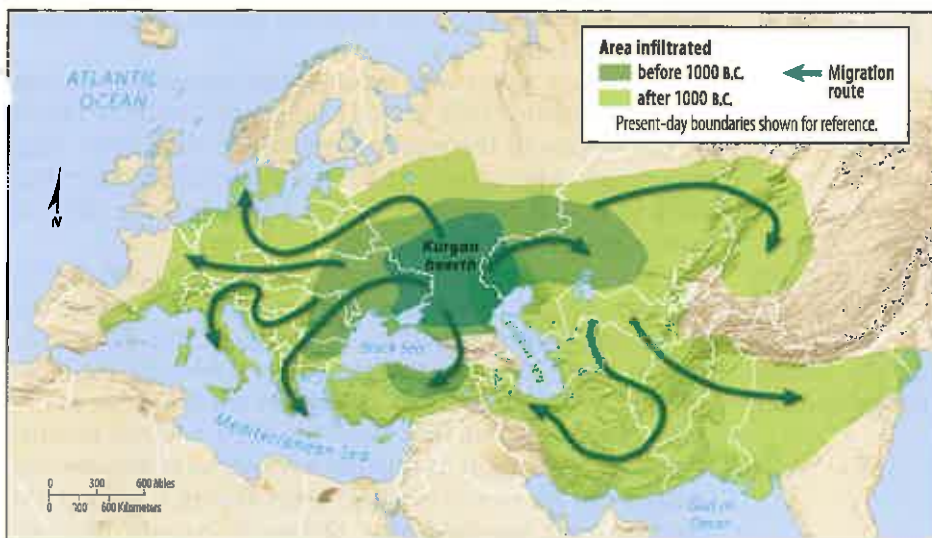
COMMON ANCESTRY OF INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

If Germanic, Romance, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian languages are all part of the same Indo-European language family, then they must be descended from a single common ancestral language. Unfortunately, the existence of a single ancestor—which can be called Proto-Indo-European—cannot be proved with certainty.

Because the origin of language families predates recorded history, the evidence that Indo-European originated with a single language comes primarily from words related to the physical environment. For example:

- Individual Indo-European languages share common words for winter and snow but not for ocean. Therefore, linguists conclude that original Proto-Indo-European speakers probably lived in a cold climate or one that had a winter season but did not come in contact with oceans.
- Individual Indo-European languages share words for some animals and trees (such as beech, oak, bear, deer, pheasant, and bee), but other words are unshared (such as elephant, camel, rice, and bamboo).

Therefore, linguists conclude that original Proto-Indo-European speakers lived in a place where the shared animals



◀ **FIGURE 5-14 ORIGIN AND DIFFUSION OF INDO-EUROPEAN: NOMADIC WARRIOR THEORY** The Kurgan homeland was north of the Caspian Sea, near the present-day border between Russia and Kazakhstan. According to this theory, the Kurgans may have infiltrated into Eastern Europe beginning around 4000 B.C. and into central Europe and Southwest Asia beginning around 2500 B.C.



◀ **FIGURE 5-15 ORIGIN AND DIFFUSION OF INDO-EUROPEAN: SEDENTARY FARMER THEORY** Indo-European may have originated in present-day Turkey 2,000 years before the Kurgans. According to this theory, the language diffused along with agricultural innovations west into Europe and east into Asia.

and trees are found, whereas the unshared words were added later, after the original language split into branches.

NOMADIC WARRIOR THEORY. Linguists and anthropologists disagree on when and where Proto-Indo-European originated and the process and routes by which it diffused. The first Proto-Indo-European speakers were the Kurgan people, according to archaeologist Marija Gimbutas. The earliest archaeological evidence of the Kurgans dates to around 4300 B.C., near the border between present-day Russia and Kazakhstan.

Among the first people to domesticate horses and chariots, the Kurgans migrated in search of grasslands for their animals. This took them westward through Europe, eastward to Siberia, and southeastward to Iran and South Asia. Between 3500 and 2500 B.C., Kurgan warriors, using their domesticated horses and chariots to establish military superiority, conquered much of Europe and South Asia (Figure 5-14).

SEDENTARY FARMER THEORY. Archaeologist Colin Renfrew argues that the first speakers of Proto-Indo-European lived 2,000 years before the Kurgans, in the east-

ern part of present-day Turkey (Figure 5-15). Supporting Renfrew, biologist Russell D. Gray dates the first speakers even earlier, at around 6700 B.C. This hypothesis argues that Indo-European diffused into Europe and South Asia along with agricultural practices rather than by military conquest. The language triumphed because its speakers became more numerous and prosperous by growing their own food instead of relying on hunting.

Thus, the diffusion of Indo-European speaks to a fundamental question for humanity: Do cultural elements such as language diffuse primarily through warfare and conquest or primarily through peaceful sharing of food? Regardless of how Indo-European diffused, communication was poor among different peoples, whether warriors or farmers. After many generations of complete isolation, individual groups evolved increasingly distinct languages.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.2.2

Which hypothesis appeals more to you: the “war” hypothesis or the “peace” hypothesis? Why?

Origin and Diffusion of English

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.3

Understand processes underlying current distribution of English.

The British Isles have been inhabited for thousands of years, but we know nothing of their early languages until tribes called the Celts arrived around 2000 B.C., speaking languages we call Celtic. Around A.D. 450, tribes from mainland Europe invaded, pushing the Celts into the remote northern and western parts of Britain, including Cornwall and the highlands of Scotland and Wales.

GERMAN INVASION

The tribes invading the British Isles were known as the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons. The Jutes came from northern Denmark, the Angles from southern Denmark, and the Saxons from northwestern Germany (Figure 5-16). Modern English has

▼ FIGURE 5-16 INVASIONS OF ENGLAND The first speakers of the language that became known as English were invaders from present-day Germany and Denmark. Later invasions by Vikings and Normans brought new words to the language spoken in the British Isles. The Normans were the last successful invaders of England.

evolved primarily from the language spoken by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.

The three tribes who brought the beginnings of English to the British Isles shared a language similar to that of other peoples in the region from which they came. English people and others who trace their cultural heritage back to England are often called Anglo-Saxons, after the two larger tribes.

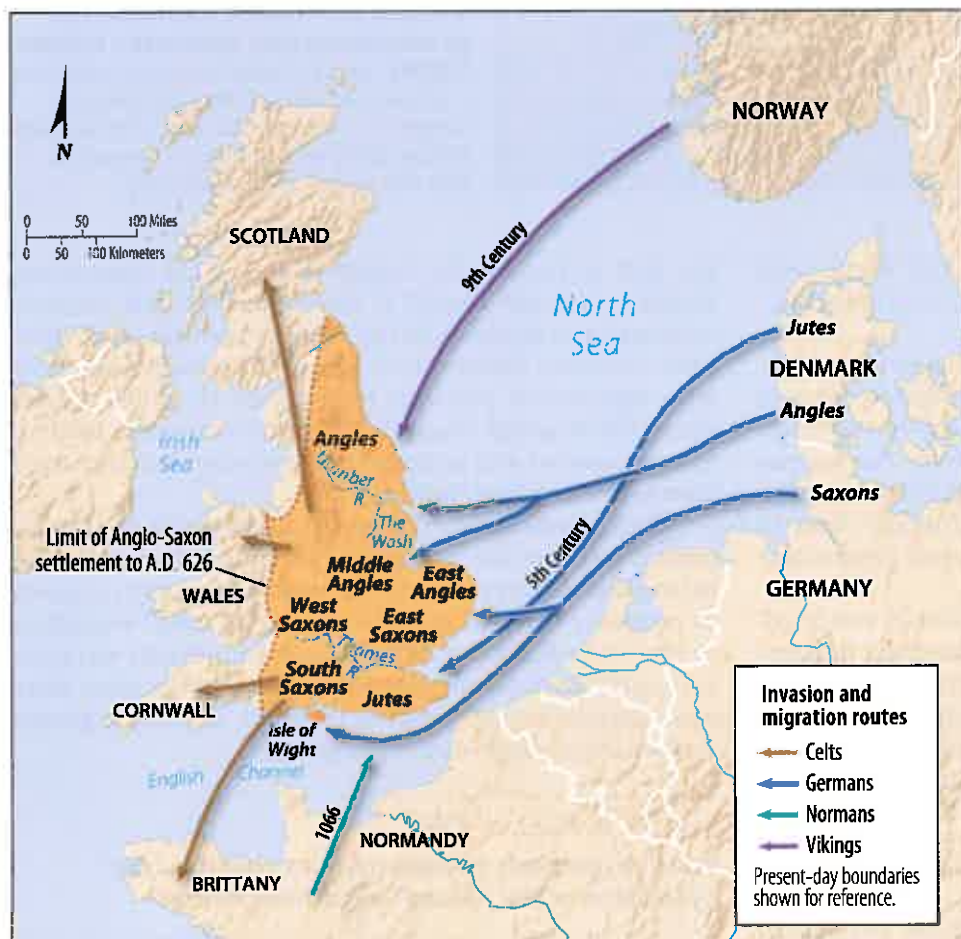
The name England comes from Angles' Land. In Old English, Angles was spelled *Engles*, and the Angles' language was known as *englisc*. The Angles came from a corner, or angle, of Germany known as Schleswig-Holstein. At some time in history, all Germanic people spoke a common language, but that time predates written records. The common origin of English with other Germanic languages can be reconstructed by analyzing language differences that emerged after Germanic groups migrated to separate territories and lived in isolation from each other, allowing their languages to continue evolving independently.

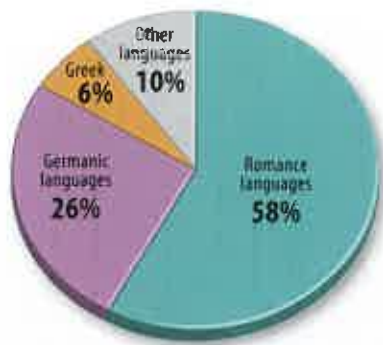
Other peoples subsequently invaded England and added their languages to the basic English. Vikings from present-day Norway landed on the northeastern coast of England in the ninth century. Although defeated in their effort to conquer the islands, many Vikings remained in the country, and enriched the language with new words.

NORMAN INVASION

English is quite different from German today primarily because England was conquered by the Normans in 1066. The Normans, who came from present-day Normandy in France, spoke French, which they established as England's official language for the next 300 years. The leaders of England, including the royal family, nobles, judges, and clergy, spoke French. However, the majority of the people, who had little education, did not know French, so they continued to speak English to each other.

England lost control of Normandy in 1204, and entered a long period of conflict with France. As a result, fewer people in England wished to speak French, and English again became the country's unchallenged dominant language. Recognizing that nearly everyone in England was speaking English, Parliament enacted the Statute of Pleading in 1362 to change the official language of court business from French to English. Parliament continued to conduct business in French until 1489.





▲ FIGURE 5-17 ORIGIN OF ENGLISH WORDS Although classified in the Germanic branch, English actually has a higher percentage of Romance branch words.

During the 300-year period that French was the official language of England, the Germanic language used by the common people and the French used by the leaders mingled to form a new language. Modern English owes its simpler, straightforward words, such as *sky*, *horse*, *man*, and *woman*, to its Germanic roots, and more elegant words, such as *celestial*, *equestrian*, *masculine*, and *feminine*, to its French invaders (Figure 5-17).

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.2.3

School and university: Which word entered the English language through the German invasions and which through the Norman invasion?

DIFFUSION OF ENGLISH

The contemporary distribution of English speakers around the world exists because the people of England migrated with their language when they established colonies over the course of four centuries.

English first diffused west from England to North America in the seventeenth century. The first successful English colonies were built in North America, beginning with Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, and Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. After England defeated France in a battle to dominate the North American colonies during the eighteenth century, the position of English as the principal language of North America was assured.

Similarly, the British took control of Ireland in the seventeenth century, South Asia in the mid-eighteenth century, the South Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and southern Africa in the late nineteenth century. In each case, English became an official language, even if only the colonial rulers and a handful of elite local residents could speak it.

Into the twentieth century, the United States was responsible for diffusing English to several places, most notably the Philippines, which Spain ceded to the United States in 1899, a year after losing the Spanish-American War. After gaining full independence in 1946, the Philippines retained English as one of its official languages, along with Filipino.

COMBINING ENGLISH WITH OTHER LANGUAGES

New languages are being created through mixing English with other languages. Here are several examples:

- **Franglais** is the mix of French and English. French is an official language in 29 countries and for hundreds of years served as the *lingua franca* for international diplomats. Traditionally, language has been an especially important source of national pride and identity in France (Figure 5-18).
- **Spanglish** is the mix of Spanish and English. English is diffusing into the Spanish language spoken by 34 million Hispanics in the United States. New words have been invented in Spanglish that do not exist in English but would be useful if they did. For example, *textear* is a verb derived from the English and is less awkward than the Spanish *mandar un mensajito*.
- **Denglish** is the mix of German and English. The D stands for Deutsch, the German word for German. For example, the German telephone company Deutsche Telekom uses the German word *Deutschlandverbindungen* for “long distance” and the Denglish word *Cityverbindungen* for “local” (rather than the German word *Ortsverbindungen*).

▼ FIGURE 5-18 FRANGLAIS The name of the cafe in Nantes, France, is a mix of English (“death”) and French (“porc”).



Global Importance of English

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.4

Understand the concept of lingua franca.

One of the most fundamental needs in a global society is a common language for communication. In the modern world, the most important language of international communication is English. A Polish airline pilot who flies over Spain speaks to the traffic controller on the ground in English. Swiss bankers speak German among themselves, but with German bankers they prefer to speak English. English is the official language at an aircraft factory in France and an appliance company in Italy.

The dominance of English as an international language has facilitated the diffusion of popular culture and science and the growth of international trade. However, people who forsake their native language must weigh the benefits of using English against the cost of losing a fundamental element of local cultural identity.

LINGUA FRANCA

A language of international communication, such as English, is known as a **lingua franca**. To facilitate trade, speakers of two different languages create a lingua franca by mixing elements of the two languages into a simple common one. The term, which means “language



▲ FIGURE 5-20 LEARNING RUSSIAN School in Vladivostok, Russia.

of the Franks,” was originally applied by Arab traders during the Middle Ages to the language they used to communicate with Europeans, whom they called Franks.

People in smaller countries need to learn English to participate more fully in the global economy and culture. All children learn English in the schools of countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden to facilitate international communication. This may seem culturally unfair, but obviously it is more likely that several million Dutch people will learn English than that a half-billion English speakers around the world will learn Dutch.

The rapid growth in importance of English is reflected in the percentage of students learning English as a second language in school (Figure 5-19). More than 90 percent of students in the European Union learn English in middle or high school, not just in smaller countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands but also in populous countries such as France, Germany, and Spain. The Japanese government, having determined that fluency in English is mandatory in a global economy, has even considered adding English as a second official language.

Foreign students increasingly seek admission to universities in countries that teach in English rather than in German, French, or Russian. Students around the world want to learn in English because they believe it is the most effective way to work in the global economy and participate in the global culture.

A group that learns English or another lingua franca may learn a simplified form, called a **pidgin language**. To communicate with speakers of another language, two groups construct a pidgin language by learning a few of the grammar rules and words of a lingua franca and mixing in some elements of their own languages. A pidgin language has no native speakers; it is always spoken in addition to one's native language.

Other than English, modern lingua franca languages include Swahili in East Africa, Hindi in South Asia, Indonesian in Southeast Asia, and Russian in the former Soviet Union (Figure 5-20). A number of African and Asian



▲ FIGURE 5-19 TEACHING ENGLISH Huangnan, China.

countries that became independent in the twentieth century adopted English or Swahili as an official language for government business, as well as for commerce, even if the majority of the people couldn't speak it.

In view of the global dominance of English, many U.S. citizens do not recognize the importance of learning other languages. One of the best ways to learn about the beliefs, traits, and values of people living in other regions is to learn their language. The lack of effort by Americans to learn other languages is a source of resentment among people elsewhere in the world, especially when Americans visit or work in other countries.

The inability to speak other languages is also a handicap for Americans who try to conduct international business. Successful entry into new overseas markets requires knowledge of local culture, and officials who can speak the local language are better able to obtain important information. Japanese businesses that wish to expand in the United States send English-speaking officials, but American businesses that wish to sell products to the Japanese are rarely able to send a Japanese-speaking employee.

ENGLISH ON THE INTERNET

The emergence of the Internet as an important means of communication has further strengthened the dominance of English. More than one-half of all Internet content is in English (Figure 5-21). Because a majority of the material on the Internet is in English, knowledge of English is essential for Internet users around the world.

The dominance of English-language websites persists despite the fact that a decreasing percentage of Internet users are English speakers. English was the language for only 27 percent of Internet users in 2015, a substantial decline from 71 percent in 1998 (Figure 5-22). The early dominance of English on the Internet was partly a reflection of the fact that the most populous English-speaking country, the United States, had a head start on the rest of the world in making the Internet available to most of its citizens (refer to Figure 4-33). Meanwhile, Chinese (Mandarin) language online users increased from 2 percent of the world total in 1998 to 25 percent in 2015.

English may be less dominant as the language of the Internet later in the twenty-first century. But the United

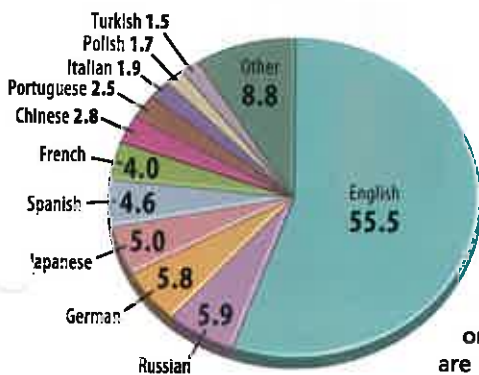


FIGURE 5-21
LANGUAGES OF WEBSITES More than one-half of all websites are in English.

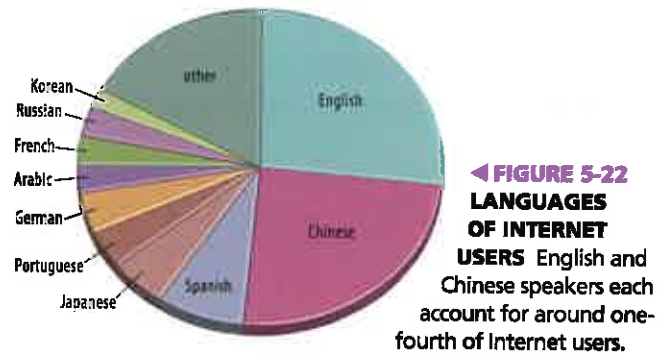


FIGURE 5-22
LANGUAGES OF INTERNET USERS English and Chinese speakers each account for around one-fourth of Internet users.

States—and with it the English language—remains the Internet leader in key respects. The United States created the English-language nomenclature for the Internet that the rest of the world has followed. The designation “www,” which English speakers recognize as an abbreviation of “World Wide Web,” is awkward in other languages, some of which do not have an equivalent sound to the English w.

The U.S.-based Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has been responsible for assigning domain names and for the suffixes following the dot, such as “com” and “edu.” Domain names in the rest of the world include a two-letter suffix for the country, such as “fr” for France and “jp” for Japan, whereas U.S.-based domain names don’t need the suffix. Reflecting the globalization of the languages of the Internet, ICANN agreed in 2009 to permit domain names in characters other than Latin. Arabic, Chinese, and other characters may now be used.

CHINESE: THE NEXT LINGUA FRANCA?

The future leadership of Chinese in social media comes in part from the large number of people worldwide who speak Chinese languages. The attraction of Chinese languages also comes from the way they are written. Rather than sounds (as in English), Chinese languages are written primarily with **logograms**, which are symbols that represent words or meaningful parts of words. Ability to read a book requires understanding several thousand logograms. Most logograms are compounds; words related to bodies of water, for example, include a symbol that represents a river, plus additional strokes that alter the river in some way.

Chinese is thus an attractive language to use in Twitter and other social media that restrict the number of characters. An English message that uses the maximum 140 symbols permitted by Twitter could be written in Chinese in only around 70 characters.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.2.4

What is the title of the book in Figure 5-20? Type the letters into Google Translate.

Official Languages

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.2.5

Understand the official status of English and other languages.

Some countries designate one or more languages as official. The official language is used by the government to enact legislation and other conduct other public business. In some cases, the official language is the only one that is used in public schools.

Europe has a large number of official languages (Figure 5-23). The European Union recognizes 24 official and working languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian,

Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish.

English is an official language in 58 countries, more than any other language (Figure 5-24). Two billion people live in a country where English is an official language, even if they cannot speak it. In addition, English is the predominant but not official language in several of the most prominent English-speaking countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (see Debate It feature).

As the primary language of the United States, English is used for all official documents, but it does not have an official status. On the other hand, 28 states have English-only laws (Figure 5-25).

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.2.5

Is English an official language in your state?



▲ FIGURE 5-23 EUROPE'S OFFICIAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES The official languages of the European Union are written in black. Languages that the European Union wishes to see preserved and protected are in purple.

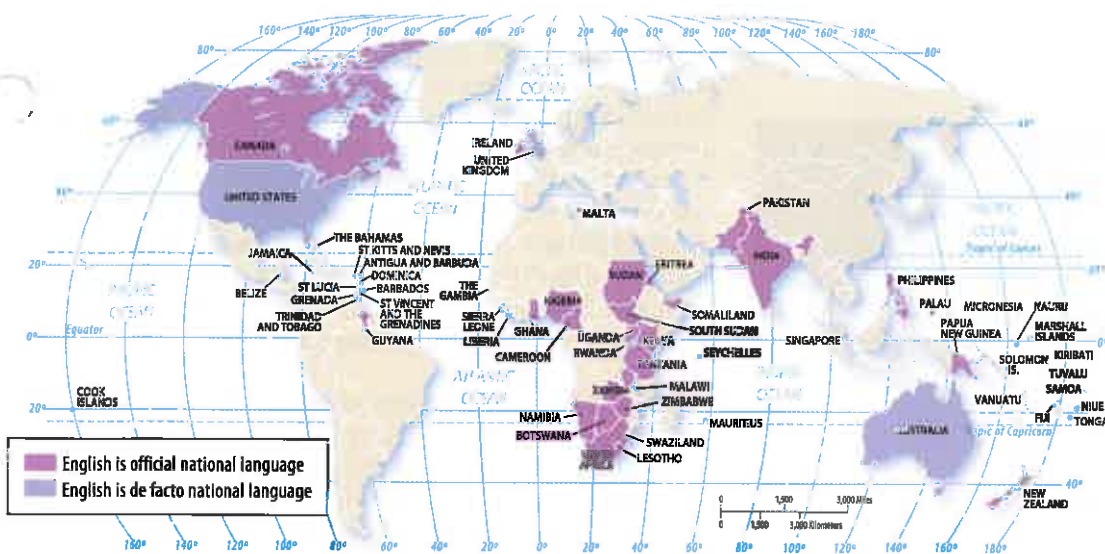


FIGURE 5-24 ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES
English is an official language in 58 countries and the predominant language in several other countries.

DEBATE IT! Should English be the official language of the United States?

The English-only movement advocates federal legislation that would require use of only English in U.S. documents.

MAKE ENGLISH THE OFFICIAL U.S. LANGUAGE

- 58 countries and 28 U.S. states already make English official.
- Requiring use of English is a symbol of national unity.
- Knowledge of English is essential for survival in the United States.
- Providing services to non-English speakers is expensive.

DO NOT MAKE ENGLISH THE OFFICIAL U.S. LANGUAGE

- A law is unnecessary because English is already the primary language of the United States.
- The government should not interfere with people's language rights.
- Advocating English-only attacks immigrants from non-English-speaking countries.

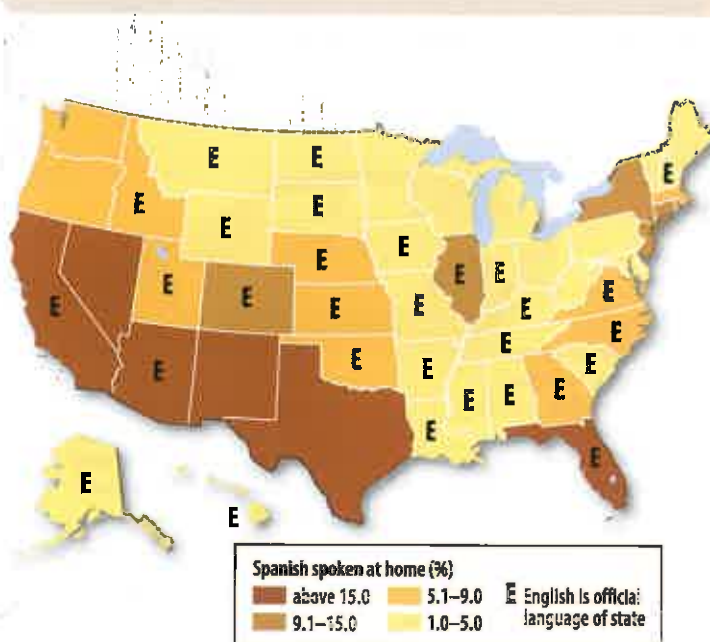


FIGURE 5-25 STATUS OF ENGLISH IN U.S. STATES

CHECK-IN KEY ISSUE 2

Where Did English and Related Languages Originate and Diffuse?

- The Indo-European family has four widely spoken branches.
- The origin and early diffusion of language families such as Indo-European is speculative because these language families existed before recorded history.
- Individual languages, such as English and languages of the Romance branch, have documented places of origin and patterns of diffusion.
- English has become the world's most important lingua franca, especially in the Internet era.

Why Do Individual Languages Vary Among Places?

- **English Dialects**
- **U.S. Dialects**
- **Dialect or Language?**
- **Multilingual Places**

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.1

Understand the ways that dialects vary.

A **dialect** is a regional variation of a language distinguished by distinctive vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Generally, speakers of one dialect can understand speakers of another dialect. A **subdialect** is a subdivision of a dialect. Two subdialects of the same dialect share relatively few differences, primarily in pronunciation and a small amount of vocabulary. Geographers are especially interested in differences in dialects and subdialects because they reflect distinctive features of the environments in which groups live.

English Dialects

When speakers of a language migrate to other locations, various dialects of that language may develop. This was the case with the migration of English speakers to North America several hundred years ago. Because of its large number of speakers and widespread distribution, English has an especially large number of dialects and subdialects. North Americans are well aware that they speak English differently from the British, not to mention people living in India, Pakistan, Australia, and other English-speaking countries.

AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH

The English language was brought to the North American continent by colonists from England who settled along the Atlantic Coast beginning in the seventeenth century. The early colonists naturally spoke the language they had been using in England at the time. Later immigrants from other countries found English already implanted here. Although they made significant contributions to American English, they became acculturated into a society that already spoke English. Therefore, the earliest colonists were most responsible for the dominant language patterns that exist today in the English-speaking part of the Western Hemisphere.

Why is the English language in the United States so different from that in England? As is so often the case with languages, the answer is isolation. Separated by the Atlantic Ocean, English in the United States and in England evolved independently during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with little influence on one another. Few residents of one country could visit the other, and the means to transmit the human voice over long distances would not become available until the twentieth century. U.S. English differs from the English of England in three significant ways—vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

VOCABULARY. The vocabulary of U.S. English differs from the English of England largely because settlers in America encountered many new objects and experiences. The new continent contained physical features, such as large forests and mountains, that had to be given new names. New animals were encountered, including the moose, raccoon, and chipmunk, all of which were given names borrowed from Native Americans. Indigenous American “Indians” also enriched American English with names for objects such as canoe, moccasin, and squash. As new inventions appeared, they acquired different names on either side of the Atlantic. For example, the elevator is called a lift in England, and the flashlight is known as a torch. The British call the hood of a car the bonnet and the trunk the boot (Figure 5-26).

SPELLING. American spelling diverged from the British standard because of a strong national feeling in the United States for an independent identity. Noah Webster, the creator of the first comprehensive American dictionary and grammar books, was not just a documenter of usage; he had an agenda. Webster was determined to develop a uniquely American dialect of English. He either ignored or was unaware of recently created rules of grammar and spelling developed in England. Webster argued that spelling and grammar reforms would help establish a national language, reduce cultural dependence on England, and inspire national pride. The spelling differences between British and American English, such as the



Lorry	Truck	Petrol	Gas
Sleeping policeman	Speed bump	Number plate	License plate
Car park	Parking lot	Multi-purpose vehicle	Minivan
Zebra crossing	Crosswalk	Flyover	Overpass
Motorway	Freeway	Multi-storey car park	Parking garage
Saloon	Sedan	Cat's eye	Raised pavement marker
Petrol station	Gas station	Caravan/campervan	RV
Bonnet	Hood	Estate car	Station wagon
Windscreen	Windshield	Indicators	Turn signal
Boot	Trunk	Amber traffic light	Yellow light
Reversing lights	Back-up lights	Gear Box	Transmission
Dual carriageway	Divided highway		

▲ **FIGURE 5-26 U.S. AND U.K. DIALECTS** Many words related to cars and motoring differ. (British words are in bold.)



▲ FIGURE 5-27 LONDON BUS A vintage AEC K-type bus takes part in a parade in London. 1. In approximately what year was the bus manufactured? Hint: Use your Internet search engine to learn about the AEC K-type bus. 2. What type of product does Schweppes produce? 3. What is a lemon squash?

elimination of the u from the British spelling of words such as *honour* and *colour* and the substitution of s for c in *defence*, are due primarily to the diffusion of Webster's ideas inside the United States (Figure 5-27).

PRONUNCIATION. From the time of their arrival in North America, colonists began to pronounce words differently from the British. Such divergence is normal, for interaction between the two groups was largely confined to exchange of letters and other printed matter rather than direct speech. Americans pronounce unaccented syllables with more clarity than do British English speakers. The words *secretary* and *necessary* have four syllables in American English but only three in British (*secret'ry* and *necess'ry*). Surprisingly, pronunciation has changed more in England than in the United States. A single dialect of southern English did not emerge as the British national standard until the late eighteenth century, after the American colonies had declared independence and were politically as well as physically isolated from England. Thus people in the United States do not speak "proper" English because when the colonists left England, "proper" English was not what it is today. Furthermore, few colonists were drawn from the English upper classes.

DIALECTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

English varies by regions within individual countries. In both the United States and England, northerners sound different from southerners.

As already discussed, English originated with three invading groups from Northern Europe who settled in different parts of Britain—the Angles in the north, the Jutes in the southeast, and the Saxons in the southwest. The language each spoke was the basis of distinct regional dialects of Old English (Figure 5-28a).

In a language with multiple dialects, one dialect may be recognized as the **standard language**, which is a dialect that is well established and widely recognized as the most acceptable for government, business, education, and mass communication. In the case of England, the standard language is known as **Received Pronunciation (RP)**. It is well known around the world as the dialect commonly used by politicians, broadcasters, and actors.

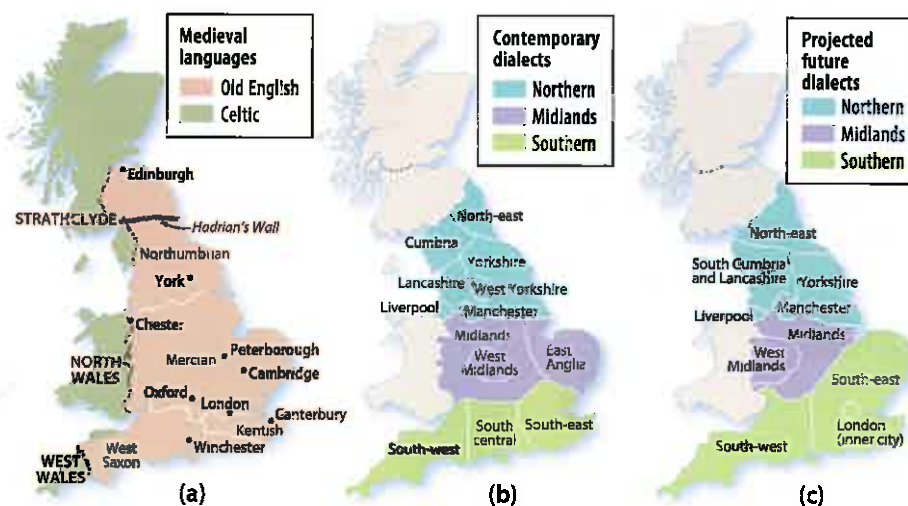
RP was the dialect used by upper-class residents in the capital city of London and the two important university cities of Cambridge and Oxford. The diffusion of the upper-class London and university dialects was encouraged by the introduction of the printing press to England in 1476. Grammar books and dictionaries printed in the eighteenth century established rules for spelling and grammar that were based on the London dialect. These frequently arbitrary rules were then taught in schools throughout the country.

Despite the current dominance of RP, strong regional differences persist in English dialects spoken in the United Kingdom, especially in rural areas. They can be grouped into three main ones—Northern, Midland, and Southern (Figure 5-28b).

The boundaries between English dialects have been moving (Figure 5-28c). The changes reflect patterns of migration. The emergence of a subdialect in London reflects migration of people from other countries into the capital city, and the northern expansion of the southeastern subdialect reflects the outmigration of Londoners.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.3.1

In what ways do you learn about differences between American and British English?



◀ FIGURE 5-28 DIALECTS AND SUBDIALECTS IN ENGLAND The Southeast dialect based in London is forecast to expand because of migration of Londoners.

U.S. Dialects

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.2

Understand the distribution of principal U.S. dialects.

The distribution of dialects is documented through the study of particular words. Every word that is not used nationally has some geographic extent within the country and therefore has boundaries. Such a word-usage boundary, known as an **isogloss**, can be constructed for each word. Isoglosses are determined by collecting data directly from people, particularly natives of rural areas. People are shown pictures to identify or are given sentences to complete with a particular word. Although every word has a unique isogloss, boundary lines of different words coalesce in some locations to form regions.

DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. DIALECTS

The United States has four major dialect regions: North, Midland, South, and West (Figure 5-29). The three eastern dialect regions can also be divided into several subdialects. The regional dialects display some familiar differences in pronunciation. For example:

- The South dialect includes making such words as *half* and *mine* into two syllables (“ha-af” and “mi-yen”).
- The North dialect is well known for dropping the /r/ sound, so that *heart* and *lark* are pronounced “hot” and “lock.”

The current distribution of U.S. dialects can be traced to differences in the origin of the English colonists along the East Coast. Three distinct dialect regions developed in the early colonies:

- **North.** Two-thirds of the New England colonists were Puritans from East Anglia in southeastern England, and only a few came from the north of England. The characteristic dropping of the /r/ sound is shared with speakers from the south of England.
- **South.** About half came from southeastern England, although they represented a diversity of social-class backgrounds, including deported prisoners, indentured servants, and political and religious refugees.
- **Midland.** These immigrants were more diverse. The early settlers of Pennsylvania were predominantly Quakers from the north of England. Scots and Irish also went to Pennsylvania, as well as to New Jersey and Delaware. The Middle Atlantic colonies also attracted many German, Dutch, and Swedish immigrants who learned their English from the English-speaking settlers in the area.

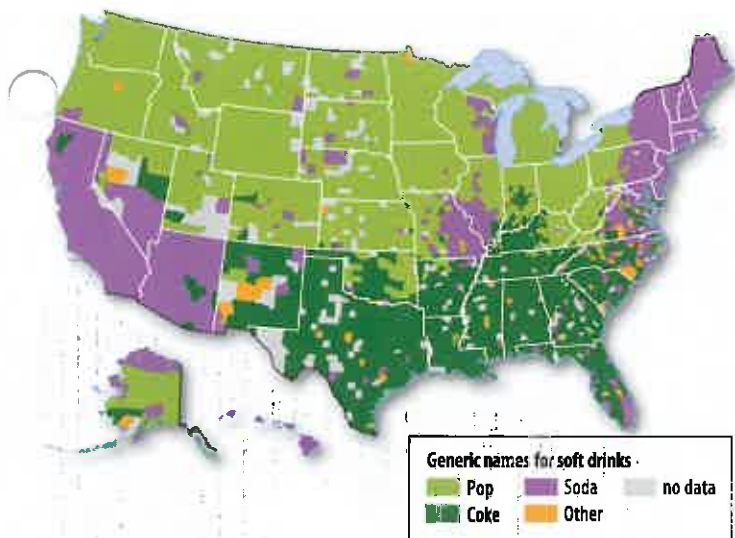
The English dialect spoken by the first colonists, who arrived in the seventeenth century, determined the future speech patterns for their communities because later immigrants adopted the language used in their new homes when they arrived. The language may have been modified somewhat by the new arrivals, but the distinctive elements brought over by the original settlers continued to dominate.

The diffusion of particular English dialects across the United States is a result of the westward movement of colonists from the three East Coast dialect regions. The North and South accents sound unusual to the majority of Americans because the standard pronunciation throughout the American West comes from the Midland rather than the North and South regions. This pattern occurred because most western settlers came from the Midland.

Many words that were once regionally distinctive are now national in distribution. Mass media, especially TV,



◀ **FIGURE 5-29 U.S. DIALECTS AND SUBDIALECTS** The United States has four major U.S. dialect regions. The most comprehensive classification of dialects in the United States was made by Hans Kurath in 1949. He found the greatest diversity of dialects in the eastern part of the country, especially in vocabulary used on farms. Kurath divided the three eastern U.S. dialect regions into several subdialects.



▲ **FIGURE 5-30 SOFT-DRINK DIALECTS** Soft drinks are called *soda* in the Northeast and Southwest, *pop* in the Midwest and Northwest, and *Coke* in the South. The map reflects voting at popvssoda.com.

influence the adoption of the same words throughout the country. Nonetheless, regional dialect differences persist in the United States. For example, the word for soft drink varies. Most people in the Northeast and Southwest, as well as the St. Louis area, use *soda* to describe a soft drink. Most people in the Midwest, Great Plains, and Northwest prefer *pop*. Southerners refer to all soft drinks as *Coke* (Figure 5-30).

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.3.2

Does your English fall into one of these dialects? Why or why not?

AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Some African Americans speak a dialect of English heavily influenced by the group's distinctive heritage of forced migration from Africa during the eighteenth century to be slaves in the southern colonies. African American slaves preserved a distinctive dialect in part to communicate in a code not understood by their white masters. Black dialect words such as *gumbo* and *jazz* have long since diffused into the standard English language.

In the twentieth century, many African Americans migrated from the South to the large cities in the Northeast and Midwest (see Chapter 7). Living in racially segregated neighborhoods within northern cities and attending segregated schools, many African Americans preserved their distinctive dialect. That dialect has been termed African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Since 1996, the term *Ebonics*, a combination of *ebony* and *phonics*, has sometimes been used as a synonym for AAVE.

The American Speech, Language and Hearing Association classifies AAVE as a distinct dialect, with recognized vocabulary, grammar, and word meaning. Among the distinctive elements of Ebonics are the use of double negatives,

such as “I ain’t going there no more,” and such sentences as “She be at home” instead of “She is usually at home.”

Use of AAVE is controversial within the African American community. On one hand, some regard it as substandard, a measure of poor education, and an obstacle to success in the United States. Others see AAVE as a means for preserving a distinctive element of African American culture and an effective way to teach African Americans who otherwise perform poorly in school.

APPALACHIAN ENGLISH

Natives of Appalachian communities, such as in rural West Virginia, also have a distinctive dialect, pronouncing *hollow* as “holler” and *creek* as “crick,” for example. Distinctive grammatical practices include the use of the double negative as in Ebonics and adding “a” in front of verbs ending in “ing,” such as *a-sitting*.

As with Ebonics, speaking an Appalachian dialect produces both pride and challenges. An Appalachian dialect is a source of regional identity but has long been regarded by other Americans as a sign of poor education and an obstacle to obtaining employment in other regions of the United States. Some Appalachian residents are “bidialectic”: They speak “standard” English outside Appalachia and slip back into their regional dialect at home.

CREOLE LANGUAGES

A **creole**, or creolized language, is a language that results from the mixing of a colonizer’s language with the indigenous language of the people being dominated. A creolized language forms when the colonized group adopts the language of the dominant group but makes some changes, such as simplifying the grammar and adding words from the former language (Figure 5-31). Examples include French Creole in Haiti, Papiamentu (creolized Spanish) in Netherlands Antilles (West Indies), and Portuguese Creole in the Cape Verde Islands off the African coast. These creole languages spoken in former colonies are classified as separate languages because they differ substantially from the original introduced by European colonizers.

▼ **FIGURE 5-31 CREOLE** Local election ballot in Miami is written in English, Spanish, and Spanish Creole.



Dialect or Language?

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.3

Understand challenges in distinguishing between some languages and dialects.

Distinguishing between dialects and distinct languages is a good example of global-local tensions. Migration, increased interaction, and other globalization processes have resulted in strengthening of standard languages and suppression of dialects. On the other hand, desire for more local cultural identity has resulted in the emergence of distinct languages that were once considered dialects.

DIALECTS BECOME LANGUAGES

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a language and a dialect. The Romance branch offers several examples.

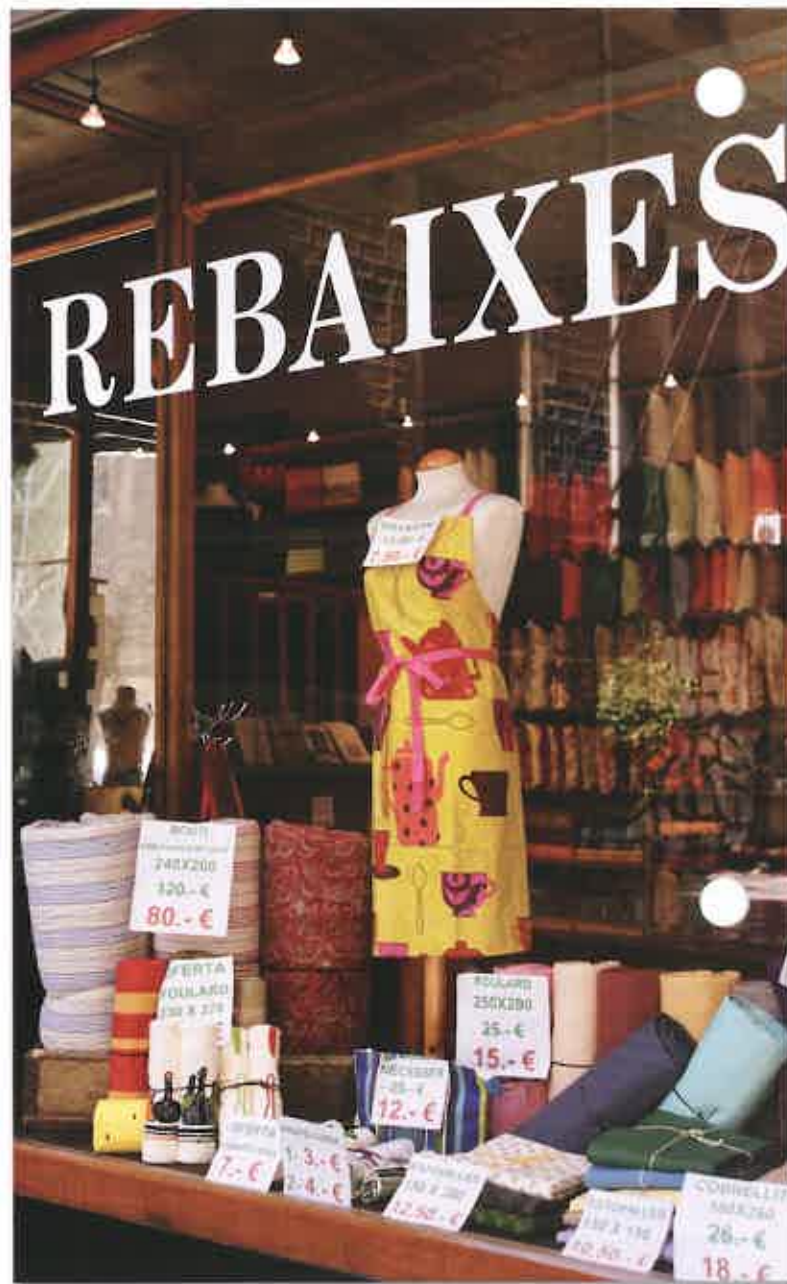
CATALÁN-VALENCIAN-BALEAR. Catalán was once regarded as a dialect of Spanish, but linguists now agree that it is a separate Romance language (Figure 5-32). Like other Romance languages, Catalán can be traced to Vulgar Latin, and it developed as a separate language after the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Catalán is the official language of Andorra, a tiny country of 79,000 inhabitants situated in the Pyrenees Mountains between Spain and France. Catalán is also spoken by 5 million people in eastern Spain and is the official language of Spain's highly autonomous Catalonia province, centered on the city of Barcelona.

With the status of Catalán settled as a separate language, linguists are identifying its principal dialects. Linguists agree that Balear is a dialect of Catalán that is spoken in the Balearic Islands, which include Ibiza and Majorca. More controversial is the status of Valencian, which is spoken mostly in and around the city of Valencia. Most linguists consider Valencian a dialect of Catalán. However, many in Valencia, including the Valencian Language Institute, consider Valencian a separate language, because it contains words derived from people who lived in the region before the Roman conquest. *Ethnologue* now calls the language Catalán-Valencian-Balear.

GALICIAN. Whether Galician, which is spoken in northwestern Spain and northeastern Portugal, is a dialect of Portuguese or a distinct language is debated among speakers of Galician. The Academy of Galician Language considers it a separate language and a symbol of cultural independence. The Galician Association of the Language prefers to consider it a dialect because as a separate language, it would be relegated to a minor and obscure status, whereas as a dialect of Portuguese, it can help influence one of the world's most widely used languages.

MOLDOVAN. Generally classified as a dialect of Romanian, Moldovan is the official language of Moldova. Moldovan is



▲ FIGURE 5-32 CATALÁN Store in Barcelona advertises “sale” written in Catalán. In Spanish, it would be written “rebajas.”

written, like Russian, in Cyrillic letters, a legacy of Moldova being a part of the Soviet Union, whereas Romanian is written in Roman letters.

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. These include (with the number of speakers in parentheses) Lombard (3.9 million), Neapolitano-Calabrese (5.7 million), Piemontese (1.6 million), Sicilian (4.7 million), and Venetian (3.9 million). These languages do not have official national status but are recognized by regional governments within Italy. See Figure 5-11 for the distribution of these languages within Italy.

OCCITAN. Occitan is spoken by about 2 million people in southern France and adjacent countries. The name derives from the French region of Aquitaine, which in French has a similar pronunciation to Occitan. The French government has established bilingual elementary and high schools called *calandretas* in the Occitan region. These schools teach both French and Occitan, according to a curriculum established by the national ministry of education. Still, many people living in southern France want to see more efforts by the government of France to encourage the use of Occitan.

STANDARDIZING LANGUAGES

Governments have long promoted the designation of a single dialect as the official or standard language in order to promote cultural unity. For example, the standard form of French derives from Francien, which was once a dialect of the Île-de-France region of the country. Francien became the standard form of French because the region included Paris, which became the capital and largest city of France. Francien French became the country's official language in the sixteenth century, and local dialects tended to disappear as a result of the capital's longtime dominance over French political, economic, and social life.

The Portuguese and Spanish languages spoken in the Western Hemisphere differ from their European versions, as is the case with U.S. and British English. To unify Spanish, the members of the Spanish Royal Academy meet every week in a mansion in Madrid to clarify rules for the vocabulary,

spelling, and pronunciation of the Spanish language around the world. The academy's official dictionary, published in 1992, has added hundreds of "Spanish" words that originated either in the regional dialects of Spain or the Indian languages of Latin America.

To unify Portuguese, Brazil, Portugal, and several Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa agreed in 1994 to standardize the way their common language is written. Many people in Portugal are upset that the new standard language more closely resembles the Brazilian version, which eliminates some of the accent marks—such as tildes (as in São Paulo), cedillas (as in Alcobça), circumflexes (as in Estância), and hyphens—and the agreement recognizes as standard thousands of words that Brazilians have added to the language, such as words for flowers, animals, and other features of the natural environment found in Brazil but not in Portugal.

The standardization of Spanish and Portuguese is a reflection of the level of interaction that is possible in the modern world between groups of people who live tens of thousands of kilometers apart. Books and television programs produced in one country diffuse rapidly to other countries where the same language is used.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.3.3

Does your Internet search engine show tildes, cedillas, and circumflexes?

SUSTAINABILITY & OUR ENVIRONMENT

Gender Differences in Language

The principle of gender equality is a foundation of the cultural and economic pillars of sustainability. Languages vary in their ability to absorb and to reflect a cultural change, such as gender equality.

Languages vary by gender in two principal ways:

- The grammar of the language may distinguish between masculine and feminine.
- Men and women use different words and converse differently.

Languages are divided about evenly between those that distinguish between masculine and feminine and those that do not. Of the 20 most widely used languages, 12 make gender distinctions, and 8 do not. Nouns and verbs may carry distinctive forms

or endings depending on gender, such as adding "ova" to designate feminine names in Russian. Others use distinctive articles, such as the French "la" in front of a feminine noun and "le" in front of a masculine one.

Austronesian, Altaic, and Uralic are considered genderless language families. All of the widely spoken languages in the Indo-European family other than English distinguish between masculine and feminine nouns and verbs. The gender-specific exception in English is singular pronouns (he/she and his/hers). Careful construction of sentences can avoid the handful of gender-specific pronouns in English, but gender neutrality is not possible in many other languages.

Though the English language is largely gender neutral, men and women have been found to speak

the language differently. Women are more likely to use hedge words like "probably" or "kind of," intensive adverbs like "very" and "extremely," fillers like "uh" and "I mean," and tag endings like "isn't it." Older women are less likely than men to use strong expletives, though younger people do not show differences.

Underlying these formal differences in language may be differences in respect and status for men and women. A recent study of conversations between one man and one woman found that the man interrupted the woman far more often than the woman interrupted the man. Furthermore, a woman was less likely to interrupt a man than to interrupt another woman, and a man was more likely to interrupt a woman than to interrupt another man.

Multilingual Places

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.3.4

Understand how some countries embrace more than one language.

Multiple languages coexist in some countries, with varying degrees of success. One cultural group living in a region of the country may speak one language, while a group elsewhere in the country uses another language. In other countries, speakers of various languages intermingle. Some countries have devised strategies to promote peaceful coexistence among speakers of different languages, whereas others face challenges among the cultural groups.

SWITZERLAND: INSTITUTIONALIZED DIVERSITY

Figure 5-7 shows that the boundary between the Romance and Germanic branches runs through the middle of two small European countries, Belgium and Switzerland. Belgium has had more difficulty than Switzerland in reconciling the interests of the different language speakers.

Switzerland has four official languages: German (used by 65 percent of the population), French (18 percent), Italian (10 percent), and Romansh (1 percent). These four languages predominate in different parts of the country (Figure 5-33). Swiss voters made Romansh an official language in a 1938 referendum, despite the small percentage of people who use the language.

Switzerland peacefully exists with multiple languages. The Swiss, relatively tolerant of citizens who speak other languages, have institutionalized cultural diversity by creating a form of government that places considerable power in small communities. The key is a long tradition of decentralized



▲ FIGURE 5-33 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN SWITZERLAND Switzerland has four official languages that predominate in different regions of the country.

government, in which local authorities hold most of the power, and decisions are frequently made by voter referenda.

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, where they account for more than three-fourths of the province's speakers (Figure 5-34). Colonized by the French in the seventeenth century, Québec was captured by the British in 1763, and in 1867 it became one of the provinces in the Confederation of Canada.

The Québec government has made the use of French mandatory in many daily activities. Québec's Commission de Toponymie renamed in French towns, rivers, and mountains that had been given English-language names. French must be the predominant language on all commercial signs.

Until the late twentieth century, Québec was one of Canada's poorest and least-developed provinces. Its economic and political activities were dominated by an English-speaking minority, and the province suffered from cultural isolation and lack of French-speaking leaders. To promote French-language cultural values, the Parti Québécois—one of the province's leading political parties—advocates sovereignty (effectively independence from Canada), but voters have thus far not supported it.

Confrontation has been replaced in Québec by increased cooperation between French and English speakers. The neighborhoods of Montréal, Québec's largest city, have become more linguistically mixed, and one-third of Québec's native English speakers have married French speakers in recent years.

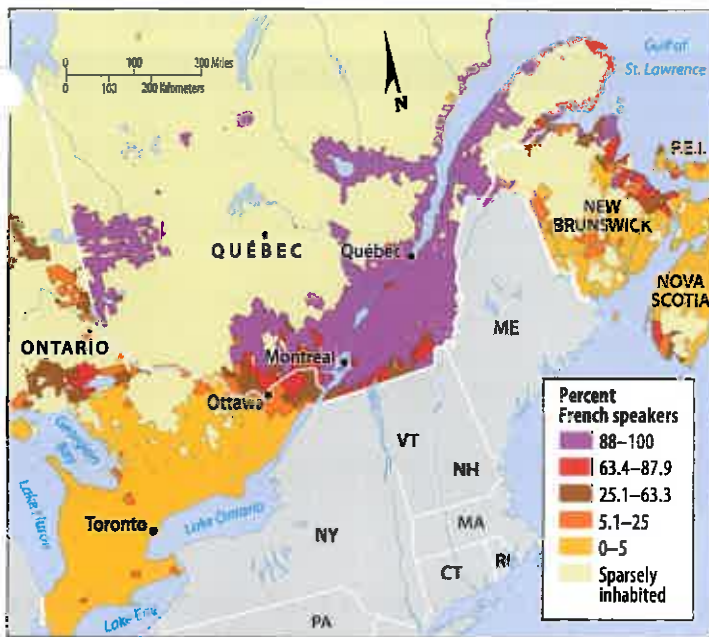
NIGERIA: SPATIAL COMPROMISE

Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, provides an example of the tensions that can arise from the presence of many speakers of many languages. Nigeria has 529 distinct languages, according to *Ethnologue*, but only 3 (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) are used by more than 10 percent of the country's population and only 4 others (Adamawa Fulfulde, Kanura, Nigerian Fulfulde, and Tiv) by between 1 and 10 percent of the population (Figure 5-35). Further splitting the country, the north is predominantly Muslim, and the south is predominantly Christian.

Groups living in different regions of Nigeria have often battled. The southern Igbo attempted to secede from Nigeria during the 1960s, and northerners have repeatedly claimed that the Yoruba discriminate against them. To reduce these regional tensions, the government has moved the capital from Lagos in the Yoruba-dominated southwest to Abuja in the center of the country, where none of the three major languages or two major religions predominates.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.3.4

What is the most widely used language in the same family as Hausa? What religion's holiest book is written in that language?



▲ FIGURE 5-34 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN CANADA Canada has two official languages. French predominates in Québec and English elsewhere.



▲ FIGURE 5-36 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN BELGIUM Flemings in the north speak Flemish, a Dutch dialect. Walloons in the south speak French.



▲ FIGURE 5-35 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are the most widely used languages.

BELGIUM: BARELY SPEAKING

A language boundary sharply divides the small country of Belgium into two regions. Southern Belgians (known as Walloons) speak French, whereas northern Belgians (known as

Flemings) speak Flemish, a dialect of the Germanic language Dutch (Figure 5-36). Brussels, the capital city, is officially bilingual, and signs there are in both French and Flemish.

Antagonism between the Flemings and Walloons is aggravated by economic and political differences. Historically, the Walloons dominated Belgium's economy and politics, and French was the official state language. But in recent years Flanders has been much more prosperous than Wallonia, and the Flemish-speaking northerners do not wish to see their taxes spent in the poorer south.

In response to pressure from Flemish speakers, Belgium has been divided into two autonomous regions, Flanders and Wallonia. Each elects an assembly that controls cultural affairs, public health, road construction, and urban development in its region. But for many in Flanders, regional autonomy is not enough. They want to see Belgium divided into two independent countries. Were that to occur, Flanders would be one of Europe's richest countries and Wallonia one of the poorest.

CHECK-IN KEY ISSUE 3

Why Do Individual Languages Vary Among Places?

- ✓ A dialect is a regional variation of a language.
- ✓ The United States has several major dialects.
- ✓ The distinction between a dialect and an entirely different language is not always clear-cut.
- ✓ Some countries more peacefully embrace multiple languages than do others.

Why Do Local Languages Survive?

- **Endangered Languages**
- **Preserving Languages**
- **Isolated and Extinct Languages**
- **New and Growing Languages**

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.1

Understand the classification of languages by severity of threat to their survival.

The distribution of a language is a measure of the fate of a cultural group. English has diffused around the world from a small island in northwestern Europe because of the dominance of England and the United States over other territory on Earth's surface. Icelandic remains a little-used language because of the isolation of the Icelandic people.

As in other cultural traits, language displays the two competing geographic trends of globalization and local diversity. English has become the principal language of communication and interaction for the entire world. At the same time, local languages endangered by the global dominance of English are being protected and preserved.

Endangered Languages

Many languages are threatened with extinction. *Ethnologue* considers 2,447 of the world's 7,102 living languages to be endangered. The United Nations *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* has a slightly different total of 2,348 endangered languages.

Ethnologue classifies 916 of the 2,447 endangered languages as dying because the childbearing generation is not capable of teaching the language to their children, and the only remaining fluent speakers are older people. Another 1,531 of the endangered languages are considered to be in trouble because parents who are fluent in the language are no longer teaching it to their children. Using slightly different definitions, UNESCO considers 598 languages to be vulnerable, 646 definitely endangered, 528 severely endangered, and 576 critically endangered.

Regardless of the precise count and method of definition, by any measure, a large percentage of the world's languages are endangered. Because parents are no longer able to teach them to children, these languages will survive only through concerted community efforts.

The world regions with the largest numbers of dying languages are the South Pacific, Latin America, and North

TABLE 5-1 LANGUAGES IN TROUBLE AND DYING

	In Trouble	Dying
North America	84	154
Europe	50	51
Latin America	225	185
Sub-Saharan Africa	209	117
Southwest Asia & North Africa	67	27
South Asia	129	29
Central Asia	4	1
East Asia	112	33
Southeast Asia	417	111
South Pacific	234	208
Total	1,531	916

America (Table 5-1). The South Pacific and North America are regions dominated by only one widely used institutional language (English), and Latin America has only two widely used institutional languages (Spanish and Portuguese).

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.4.1

Asia has 60 percent of the world's population but only 20 percent of the world's dying languages. Why might Asia's large population centers have relatively few dying languages?

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

English is the most widely used language in Australia and New Zealand as a result of British colonization during the early nineteenth century. Settlers in Australia and New Zealand established and maintained outposts of British culture, including use of the English language.

Though English remains the dominant language of Australia and New Zealand, the languages that predate British settlement survive in both countries. The two countries have adopted different policies with regard to preserving indigenous languages. Australia regards English as a tool for promoting cultural diversity, whereas New Zealand regards linguistic diversity as an important element of cultural diversity.

AUSTRALIA. In Australia, 1 percent of the population is Aboriginal. Many elements of Aboriginal culture are now being preserved. But education is oriented toward teaching English rather than maintaining local languages. English is the language of instruction throughout Australia, and others are relegated to the status of second language. As a result, Australia has 211 living indigenous languages in addition to English, but each of them has fewer than 10,000 speakers.

An essential element in maintaining British culture was restriction of immigration from non-English-speaking places during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fear of



▲ FIGURE 5-37 GOOGLE HOME PAGE IN MAORI

immigration was especially strong in Australia because of its proximity to Asian countries. Under a “White Australia” policy, every prospective immigrant was required to write 50 words of a European language dictated by an immigration officer. The dictation test was not eliminated until 1957. The Australian government now merely requires that immigrants learn English.

NEW ZEALAND. In New Zealand, 14 percent of the population is Maori, descendants of Polynesian people who migrated there around 1,000 years ago. In contrast with Australia, New Zealand has adopted policies to preserve the Maori language. Most notably, Maori is one of New Zealand’s three official languages, along with English and sign language (Figure 5-37). A Maori Language Commission was established to preserve the language. Despite official policies, only 4 percent of New Zealanders are fluent in Maori, and most of them are over age 50. Preserving the language requires skilled teachers and the willingness to endure inconvenience compared to using the world’s lingua franca, English. Consequently, despite its official status, Maori is classified by *Ethnologue* as a threatened language.

Although promoting language diversity through protecting Maori, New Zealand has imposed a language requirement for immigrants that is more stringent than the one in Australia. In most circumstances, immigrants must already be fluent in English, although free English lessons are available to immigrants for the exceptions. More remote from Asian landmasses, New Zealand has attracted fewer Asian immigrants.

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN NORTH AMERICA

The United States has 61 languages in trouble and 142 languages dying, according to *Ethnologue*. The United Nations has a somewhat different count of 25 definitely endangered, 35 severely endangered, and 74 critically endangered languages in the United States (Figure 5-38). The endangered languages of the United States were once used by large numbers of Native Americans, but as older speakers pass away, younger speakers are not taught the languages.

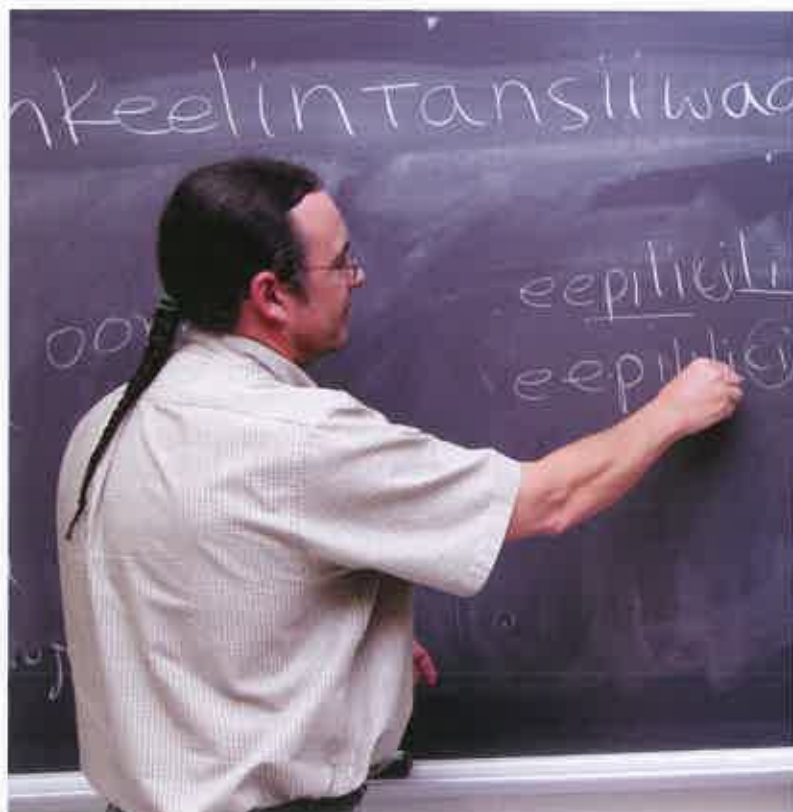
Five endangered Native American languages are reawakening, according to *Ethnologue*. One of the reawakening



▲ FIGURE 5-38 CRITICALLY ENDANGERED U.S. LANGUAGES The dots point to the approximate locations where the recently-extinct languages were last spoken.

languages is Myaamia (listed in *Ethnologue* as Miami). The Miami Native American Tribe, which is located in northeastern Oklahoma, traditionally spoke the Myaamia language, but no one has spoken it as their first language since the 1960s—until recently. Daryl Baldwin, a Miami Tribe member and director of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in Ohio, has acquired fluency in the Myaamia language as his second language, and his two children are learning it as their first language—its only two first language speakers in the world, according to *Ethnologue* (Figure 5-39). As part of the revival of the Myaamia language, an online dictionary has been created, accessible at myaamiadictionary.org.

▼ FIGURE 5-39 REVIVING THE MYAAMIA LANGUAGE



Preserving Languages

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.2

Understand how some lesser-used languages are being protected.

Some languages are being preserved and protected. The United Nations has had a program since 2003 to preserve endangered languages. The European Union has identified 60 local languages that people are trying to preserve (refer to Figure 5-23).

Recent efforts have bolstered languages belonging to the Celtic branch of Indo-European. Preserving Celtic languages is of particular interest to English speakers because these languages offer insights into the cultural heritage of places that now speak English. Celtic languages were spoken in much of present-day Germany, France, northern Italy, and the British Isles 2,000 years ago. Today, Celtic languages survive only in remote parts of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and on the Brittany peninsula of France.

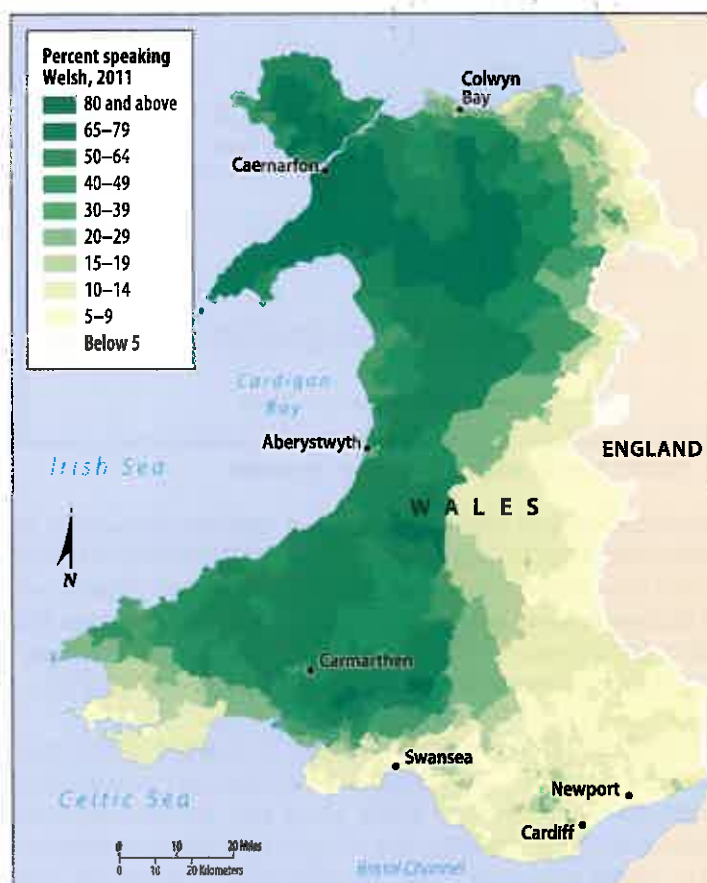
BRYTHONIC CELTIC

The Celtic language branch is divided into Goidelic (Gaelic) and Brythonic groups. Speakers of Brythonic (also called Cymric or Britannic) fled westward during the Germanic invasions to Wales, southwestward to Cornwall, or southward across the English Channel to the Brittany peninsula of France.

WELSH. Wales—the name derived from the Germanic invaders' word for foreign—was conquered by the English in 1283. Welsh remained dominant in Wales until the nineteenth century, when many English speakers migrated there to work in coal mines and factories. A 2014 census found 580,000 Welsh speakers in Wales, 23 percent of the population. Another 150,000 Welsh speakers live across the border in England. In some isolated communities in the northwest, especially in the county of Gwynedd, two-thirds speak Welsh (Figure 5-40).

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (Welsh Language Society) has been instrumental in preserving the language. Britain's 1988 Education Act made Welsh language training a compulsory subject in all schools in Wales, and Welsh history and music have been added to the curriculum. In 2011, the government of the United Kingdom made Welsh the official language in Wales. All local governments and utility companies are obliged to provide services in Welsh. Welsh-language road signs have been posted throughout Wales, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) produces Welsh-language television and radio programs. Knowledge of Welsh is now required for many jobs, especially in public service, media, culture, and sports. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, 73 percent of people living in Wales reported on the 2011 census that they had no Welsh language skills.

CORNISH. Cornish was the Celtic language spoken in Cornwall, the southwesternmost county of the United Kingdom. Its last-known native speaker of Cornish, died in 1777.



▲ **FIGURE 5-40 WELSH** The percentage speaking Welsh increases with distance from the border with England.

Cornish was revived in the twentieth century. A major step forward was an agreement in 2008 among several Cornish language advocacy groups on a standard system of writing (Figure 5-41). A 2011 census found 557 people in the United Kingdom who claimed fluency in the language. It is taught in grade schools and adult evening courses and is used

▼ **FIGURE 5-41 CORNISH** Kernow means "Cornwall," a'gas means "you," and dynergh means "welcomes."





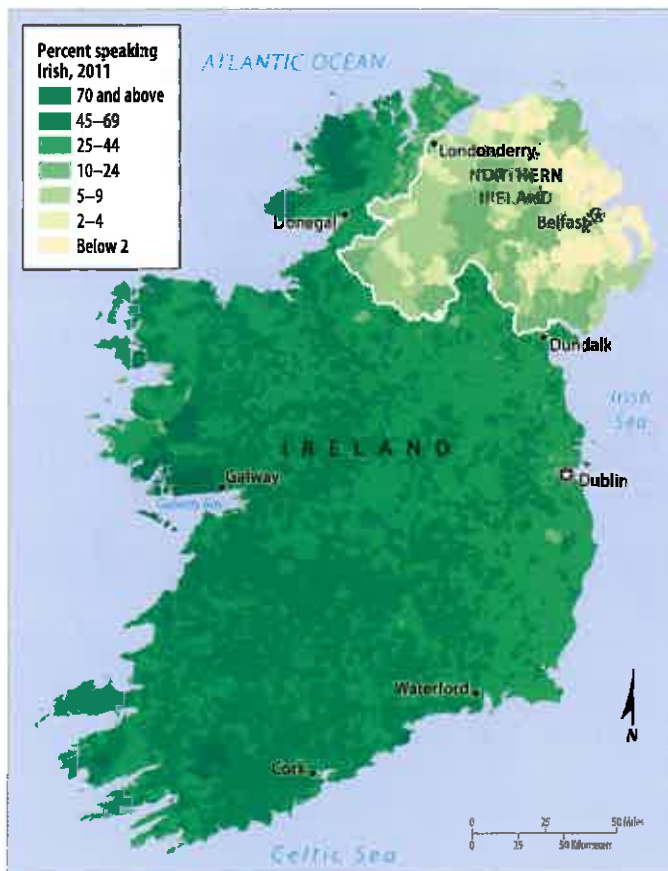
▲ **FIGURE 5-42 BRETON** The stones at Karnag (Breton) or Carnac (French) are the largest collection in the world (more than 3,000). They were probably erected around 3300 B.C.

in some church services. Some banks accept checks written in Cornish.

BRETON. Brittany, like Cornwall, is an isolated peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean. As part of France, Brittany has a language containing more words borrowed from French than do the other Celtic languages (Figure 5-42).

The number of Breton speakers has declined from around 1 million in 1950 to around 200,000 today, and three-fourths of the remaining speakers are over age 65. The decline in speakers has placed Breton on the lists of endangered languages maintained by *Ethnologue* and the learn United Nations. Around 15,000 students Breton in schools,

▼ **FIGURE 5-43 IRISH** The percentage of Irish speakers is highest in the most remote portions of the country.



▲ **FIGURE 5-44 SCOTTISH GAELIC** An anti-littering sign says "STOP!" at top; (left) "Don't do this" at left, "Do this" at right.

but the government of France requires French to be the principal language of instruction in public schools.

GOIDELIC CELTIC

Two Goidelic languages survive: Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic.

IRISH. Irish is one of two official languages in the Republic of Ireland, along with English. According to a 2011 census, Irish is spoken by 94,000 people on a daily basis, and 1.3 million say that they can speak it and use it at least occasionally. As with Welsh, the percentage of people speaking Irish is higher in the more remote areas of the country (Figure 5-43).

An Irish-language TV station began broadcasting in 1996. English road signs were banned from portions of western Ireland in 2005. The revival is being led by young Irish living in other countries who wish to distinguish themselves from the English (in much the same way that Canadians traveling abroad often make efforts to distinguish themselves from U.S. citizens). Irish singers, including many rock groups, have begun to record and perform in Gaelic. In the 1300s, the Irish were forbidden to speak their own language in the presence of their English masters.

SCOTTISH GAELIC. In Scotland 59,000, or 1 percent of the people, speak Scottish Gaelic (Figure 5-44). An extensive body of literature exists in Gaelic languages, including the Robert Burns poem *Auld Lang Syne* ("old long since"), the basis for the popular New Year's Eve song. Gaelic was carried from Ireland to Scotland about 1,500 years ago.

Meanwhile, *Ethnologue* considers Scots to be an Indo-European Germanic branch language separate from English, not merely a dialect of English. Scots is said to be the first language for 90,000 people in Scotland and the second language for 1.5 million.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.4.2

Google Translate includes Irish and Welsh. Type something in English and see whether similar words are used in Irish and in Welsh and whether the words are similar to English.

Isolated and Extinct Languages

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.3

Understand geographic factors resulting in isolated and extinct languages.

Similarities and differences between languages—our main form of communication—are a measure of the degree of interaction among groups of people. Some languages bear no similarity to other languages. Isolation from others has helped to preserve some of these languages, but in other cases it may hasten their demise.

ISOLATED LANGUAGES

An **isolated language** is a language that is unrelated to any other and therefore not attached to any language family. An isolated language arises because the speakers of that language have limited interaction with speakers of other languages.

An isolated language is considered vigorous if it is in full use in the community and is being learned by children as their first language. *Ethnologue* to be in vigorous use considers only 6 of 82 isolated languages (Figure 5-45). A vigorous language is used for face-to-face communication by both young and elderly people. As a result of its usage in daily life, the language is judged by *Ethnologue* to be sustainable—that is, likely to survive at least in the near future. The other isolated languages are considered to be endangered.

Basque is the only example of a vigorous isolated language in Europe. It is the first language of 600,000 people in the Pyrenees Mountains of northern Spain and southwestern France (refer to Figure 5-11, the gray area in northern Spain). No attempt to link Basque to the common origin of the other European languages has been successful.

Basque was probably once spoken over a wider area but was abandoned where its speakers came in contact with Indo-Europeans. It is considered the only language currently spoken in Europe that survives from the period before the arrival of Indo-European speakers. Basque's lack of connection to other languages reflects the isolation of the Basque people in their mountainous homeland. This isolation has helped them preserve their language in the face of the wide diffusion of Indo-European languages (Figure 5-46).

The diffusion of Indo-European languages demonstrates that a common ancestor dominated much of Europe before recorded history. No attempt to link Basque to the common origin of Indo-European languages has been successful. Basque's lack of connection to other languages reflects the isolation of the Basque people in their mountainous homeland. This isolation has helped them preserve their language in the face of the wide diffusion of Indo-European languages.

AN UNCHANGING LANGUAGE. Icelandic is not an isolated language because it is in the North Germanic group of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. Icelandic's significance is that over the past 1,000 years, it has changed less than any other language in

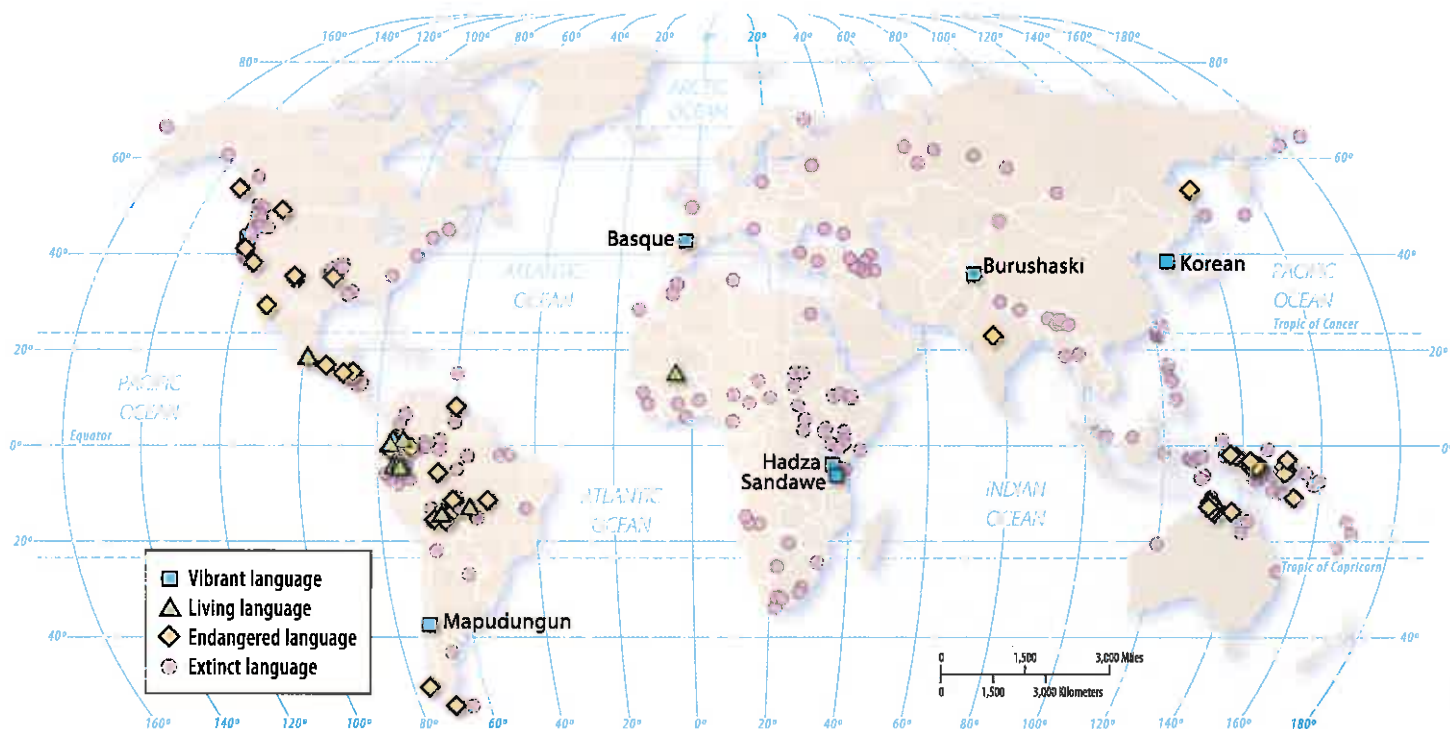


FIGURE 5-45 ISOLATED LANGUAGES



◀ **FIGURE 5-46 BASQUE** Marchers in the Basque region capital Bilbao protest budget cuts. The banner says in Spanish at left “for a social Europe” and in Basque at right “no restrictions.”

the Germanic branch (Figure 5-48). As was the case with England, people in Iceland speak a Germanic language because their ancestors migrated to the island from the east, in this case from Norway. Norwegian settlers colonized Iceland in A.D. 874.

When an ethnic group migrates to a new location, it takes along the language spoken in the former home. The language spoken by most migrants—such as the Germanic invaders of England—changes in part through interaction with speakers of other languages. But in the case of Iceland, the Norwegian immigrants had little contact with speakers of other languages when they arrived in Iceland, and they did not have contact with speakers of their language back in Norway. After centuries of interaction with other Scandinavians, Norwegian and other North Germanic languages had adopted new words and pronunciation, whereas the isolated people of Iceland had less opportunity to learn new words.

PAUSE & REFLECT 5.4.3

Why do you think the sign in Figure 5-47 is written in both Icelandic and English?

EXTINCT LANGUAGES

An **extinct language** is a language that was once used by people in daily activities but is no longer in use. *Ethnologue* estimates that 367 languages have become extinct since 1950, a rate of 6 per year. The United Nations identifies 231 recently extinct languages (refer to Figure 5-45).

Two examples of recently extinct languages are Liv and Clallam. Liv, a language belonging to the Uralic family, became extinct on June 5, 2013, when its last speaker, Grizelda Kristina, died in Latvia. Around 200 ethnic Livonians live along the northwestern coast of Latvia, but none of them speak Liv.

Clallam, a language once spoken in Washington’s Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island, Canada, became extinct

on February 4, 2014, when its last-known speaker, Hazel Sampson, died at age 103. The language is taught at Port Angeles High School in Washington, and six youths are reported to be able to speak some words of Clallam as their second language. A dictionary of Clallam was published in 2012. If someday a child is taught Clallam as his or her first language, perhaps by one of the six who know some words, then—like Myaamia—the language might be reclassified as reawakening.

When Spanish missionaries reached the eastern Amazon region of Peru in the sixteenth century, they found more than 500 languages. Only 92 survive today, according to *Ethnologue*, and 14 of them face immediate extinction because fewer than 100 speakers remain. Of Peru’s 92 surviving indigenous languages, only Cusco, a Quechuan language, is currently used by more than 1 million people. *Ethnologue* lists 74 languages based in the United States that are now extinct, and UNESCO lists 54. These are languages once spoken by groups of Native Americans, especially in the West.

The loss of many languages is a reflection of globalization. To be part of a global economy and culture, people choose to use a widely used language, leaving their traditional or indigenous language to disappear.

▼ **FIGURE 5-47 ICELANDIC** The warning sign in Icelandic and English is located in Hveragerdi, Iceland.



New and Growing Languages

LEARNING OUTCOME 5.4.4

Understand processes of creation of new languages.

While the number of languages in the world is declining, a handful of languages are being invented or revived. In other cases, endangered languages are being preserved before they become extinct. These efforts reflect the importance that groups place on language as an element of local culture.

NEW LANGUAGES

Isolated languages continue to be identified and documented, and entirely new languages are invented (see Doing Geography feature). For example, a research team from Oregon's Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages was in India to study rarely spoken languages. They heard people in the area speaking a language that was not listed in *Ethnologue*. The researchers concluded that what they were hearing was a distinct language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. The language, now known as Koro Aka, is now listed in *Ethnologue* as a language of northeastern India with 1,500 speakers.

GROWING LANGUAGES

Hebrew is an example of a language that was once rarely used but is more commonly used now. Most of the Jewish Bible and Christian Old Testament were written in Hebrew. A 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. At the time

of Jesus, most people in present-day Israel spoke Aramaic, which in turn was replaced by Arabic.

When Israel was established as an independent country in 1948, Hebrew became one of the new country's two official languages, along with Arabic (Figure 5-48). Hebrew was chosen because the Jewish population of the State of Israel consisted of refugees and migrants from many countries who spoke many languages. Because Hebrew was still used in Jewish prayers, no other language could so symbolically unify the disparate cultural groups in the new country.

The task of making Hebrew a modern language was formidable. Words had to be created for thousands of objects and inventions unknown in biblical times, such as telephones, cars, and electricity. The revival effort was initiated by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who lived in Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel and refused to speak any language other than Hebrew. Ben-Yehuda is credited with the invention of 4,000 new Hebrew words—related when possible to ancient ones—and the creation of the first modern Hebrew dictionary.

CHECK-IN KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do Local Languages Survive?

- ✓ Many languages have become extinct and others are threatened with extinction.
- ✓ Some endangered languages are being preserved and protected.
- ✓ Some lesser-used languages are growing in number of speakers. Other languages are being invented, in some cases through combination with English.



◀ **FIGURE 5-48 HEBREW**
The street sign in Jerusalem is in (top) Hebrew, (middle) Arabic, and English.

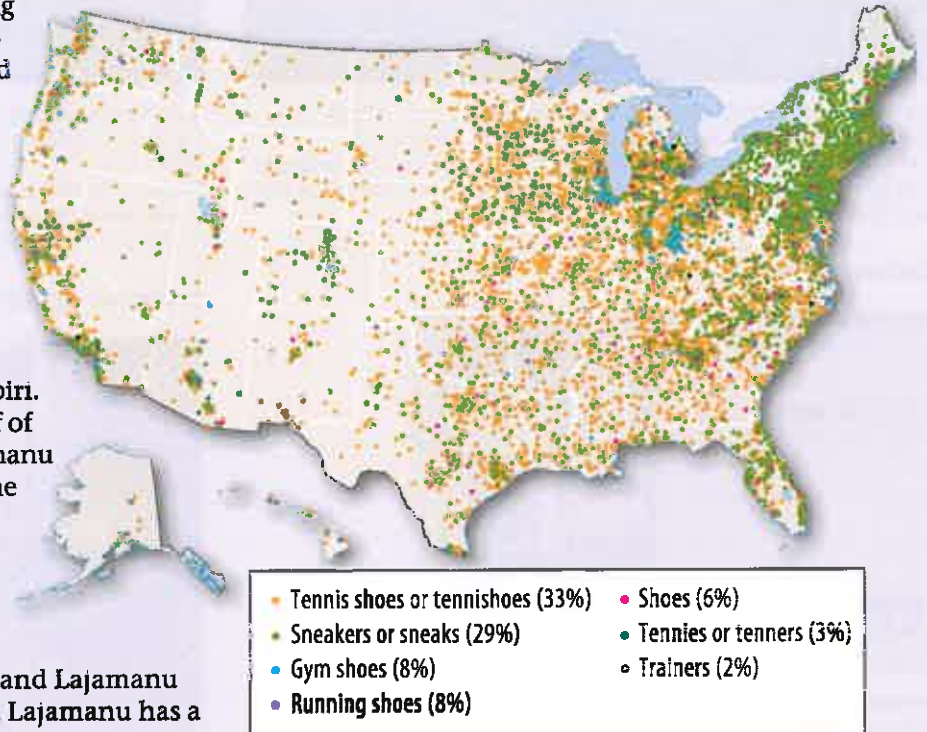
DOING GEOGRAPHY Finding a New Language

Some linguists spend time behaving like geographers: They head off to remote places to study endangered languages and unusual dialects. Every so often, linguists acting like geographers uncover something more very special: a language previously unknown to the rest of the world.

Even rarer is the discovery of a new language that was recently invented. This happened with a language now called Warlpiri rampaku, or Light Warlpiri. It is the first language of about one-half of the 700 residents of the village of Lajamanu in Australia's Northern Territory. No one outside the village knew about the language until a University of Michigan researcher, Carmel O'Shannessy, heard it in 2013.

Isolation is the perfect breeding ground for an entirely new language, and Lajamanu is about as isolated as a village can be. Lajamanu has a single shop that is restocked once a week by a truck. It is 557 kilometers from the nearest town offering other services. A community-owned airplane gets other items and people into and out of the village.

Young people invented the new language. It started with parents speaking to their babies in a combination of three languages: Strong Warlpiri, English, and a Creole language that combines English and Strong Warlpiri. As they got older, the children combined the



▲ FIGURE 5-49 TERMS FOR RUBBER-SOLED SHOES WORN FOR ATHLETICS The two most common terms are tennis shoes (especially in the Midwest) and sneakers (especially in the northeast).

three languages into an entirely new one through actions such as inventing new verb endings and tenses. For example, Light Warlpiri has a verb tense that means present or past but not future.

What's Your Language Geography?

Inventing New Words Young people rarely invent entirely new languages, as they have done in Lajamanu. But they constantly invent new words and even distinct dialects.

1. Search YouTube.com for "Monster Story in Light Warlpiri" videos.
What Light Warlpiri words do you see in the videos that are clearly borrowed from English?
2. What examples of new words can you find from music or from the use of electronic devices?
3. Take a quiz to determine whether you have a strong regional dialect. At nytimes.com, search for either

"Harvard Dialect Survey Quiz" or "How Y'all, Youse and You Guys" (Figure 5-49). Does the quiz accurately identify where you are from?

4. Are any indicators of dialect especially important in identifying your distinctive use of language? Why or why not?
5. Does this map from the dialect quiz accurately reflect what you call your shoes?

Summary & Review

KEY ISSUE 1

Where are the world's languages distributed?

Languages are organized into families, branches, and groups. All but 1 percent of the world's people speak a language belonging to 1 of 14 language families. Nearly one-half of the world's people speak a language in the Indo-European family, and another one-fifth speak a language in the Sino-Tibetan family.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY



▲ **FIGURE 5-50 CHINESE ELECTRONICS** This is the registration page for Twitter in Chinese.

1. As Chinese languages become increasingly important as lingua franca, what distinctive elements make it especially attractive to use, and which make it especially difficult to use?

KEY ISSUE 2

Where did English and related languages originate and diffuse?

English is an Indo-European language. Indo-European includes four branches with widely used languages and four other branches. English originated following the invasion of England by Germanic tribes. More recent patterns of migration have diffused English to other places. All Indo-European languages have a common prehistoric ancestor, although its place of origin and process of diffusion are disputed.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY



▲ **FIGURE 5-51 ORIGIN OF INDO-EUROPEAN?** Karain Cave in Turkey was first occupied 200,000 years ago. The first speakers of Indo-European may have lived near here.

2. The two theories of the origin of Indo-European depend on different views underlying the reasons that people migrate. Do you think the "war" theory or the "peace" theory better explains the migration of early humans? Why?

KEY ISSUE 3

Why do individual languages vary among places?

A dialect is a regional variation of a language. Dialects can vary in terms of vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Some dialects become sufficiently different to justify classifying them as separate languages. This is important for some cultural groups as a symbol of cultural identity. Some countries peacefully embrace multiple languages, whereas in other places the multiplicity of languages is a source of tension.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY



▲ **FIGURE 5-52 ENGLISH IN LONDON**

3. According to Figure 5-28c, which dialects of British English are forecast to expand, and which are expected to contract by 2030?

4. What geographic factors might account for this changing distribution?

KEY ISSUE 4

Why do local languages survive?

Many languages are endangered because not enough people continue to use them or teach them to children. Lack of interaction has helped a few isolated languages to survive, while interaction with other languages has caused the extinction of others. Some threatened languages, such as the Celtic branch of Indo-European, are being preserved with the help of governments.

THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY



▲ **FIGURE 5-53 REAWAKENING LANGUAGE** Ethnologue classifies Ohlone as one of five reawakening languages in the United States. A reconstructed Ohlone village house sites in Coyote Hills Regional Park, California.

5. Myaamia is an example of a reawakening language. What would have to happen for the language to become even more vigorous in the future?

KEY TERMS

- Creole (or creolized) language** (p. 167) A language that results from the mixing of a colonizer's language with the indigenous language of the people being dominated.
- Denglish** (p. 159) A combination of *Deutsch* (the German word for German) and *English*.
- Developing language** (p. 147) A language spoken in daily use with a literary tradition that is not widely distributed.
- Dialect** (p. 164) A regional variety of a language distinguished by vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.
- Ebonics** (p. 167) A dialect spoken by some African Americans.
- Extinct language** (p. 177) A language that was once used by people in daily activities but is no longer used.
- Franglais** (p. 159) A combination of *français* and *anglais* (the French words for French and English, respectively).
- Institutional language** (p. 147) A language used in education, work, mass media, and government.
- Isogloss** (p. 166) A boundary that separates regions in which different language usages predominate.
- Isolated language** (p. 176) A language that is unrelated to any other languages and therefore not attached to any language family.
- Language** (p. 146) A system of communication through the use of speech, a collection of sounds understood by a group of people to have the same meaning.
- Language branch** (p. 147) A collection of languages related through a common ancestor that can be confirmed through archaeological evidence.
- Language family** (p. 147) A collection of languages related to each other through a common ancestor long before recorded history.

- Language group** (p. 147) A collection of languages within a branch that share a common origin in the relatively recent past and display relatively few differences in grammar and vocabulary.
- Lingua franca** (p. 160) A language mutually understood and commonly used in trade by people who have different native languages.
- Literary tradition** (p. 147) A language that is written as well as spoken.
- Logogram** (p. 161) A symbol that represents a word rather than a sound.
- Official language** (p. 147) The language adopted for use by a government for the conduct of business and publication of documents.
- Pidgin language** (p. 160) A form of speech that adopts a simplified grammar and limited vocabulary of a lingua franca; used for communications among speakers of two different languages.
- Received Pronunciation (RP)** (p. 165) The dialect of English associated with upper-class Britons living in London and now considered standard in the United Kingdom.
- Spanglish** (p. 159) A combination of *Spanish* and *English* spoken by Hispanic Americans.
- Standard language** (p. 165) The form of a language used for official government business, education, and mass communications.
- Subdialect** (p. 164) A subdivision of a dialect.
- Vigorous language** (p. 147) A language that is spoken in daily use but that lacks a literary tradition.
- Vulgar Latin** (p. 156) A form of Latin used in daily conversation by ancient Romans, as opposed to the standard dialect, which was used for official documents.

EXPLORE



Wentworth Avenue, Chicago

Use Google Earth to explore *Wentworth Avenue in Chicago*.

Fly to 2230 S *Wentworth, Chicago, IL*.

Use Street View to click on *Wentworth Avenue*.

1. What language other than English do you see?
2. What factors probably determine the amount of English used on signs along *Wentworth Avenue*?



GeoVideo

Log in to the MasteringGeography Study Area to view this video

Israel: Reinventing Hebrew

The ancient language of Hebrew has been reinvented as a modern, living language.

1. What were the advantages to using Hebrew as the national language of Israel?
2. What are the disadvantages to using an ancient language in the modern world?
3. How does the video explain using a modernization of an ancient term (such as for "battery") and for using an English term (such as for "puncture")?



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