

Linguistics 5
Historical Linguistics
Lecture II

Roslyn C. Burns

University of California Berkeley

November 14, 2012

Outline

Historical Linguistics

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Goals

Recap

Sound Change

Morphology

Semantics

Road Map

- 1 Goals
- 2 Recap
- 3 Sound Change
- 4 Morphology
- 5 Semantics

Goals

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Abstract

The goal of this lecture is to exemplify a few basic principles of historical linguistics by looking at West Germanic languages, in particular, the history of the English language.

Recap of Friday's Lecture

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Last Time We talked About:

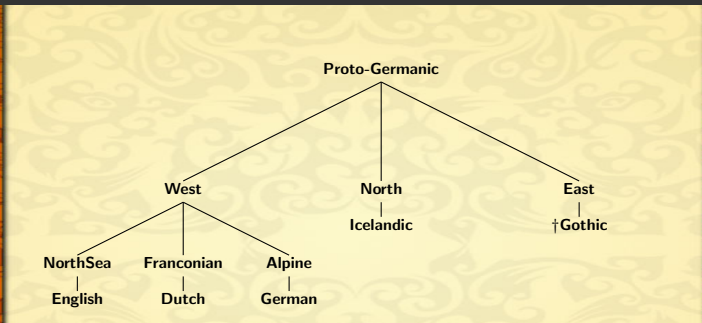
Language Families

- Proto-Language
- Daughter Language
- Subgrouping

The Comparative Method

- Cognates
- Reflexes
- Correspondence Sets

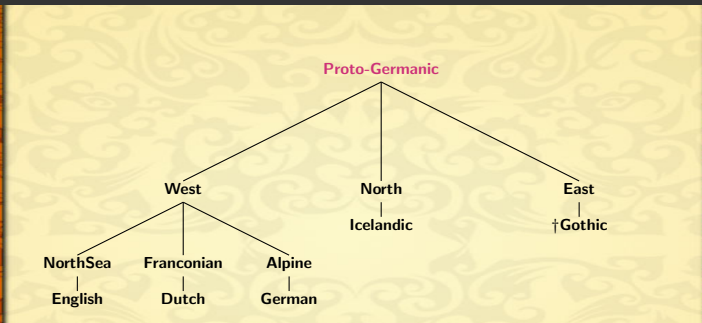
Germanic Family Tree



Language Families

- Proto-Language: A hypothesised predecessor of another language. Unwritten and derived through reconstruction (*).
- Daughter Language: A successor of another language.
- Subgroup: A cluster of daughter languages which share features. Shared features are usually due to shared development path from the proto-language.

Germanic Family Tree



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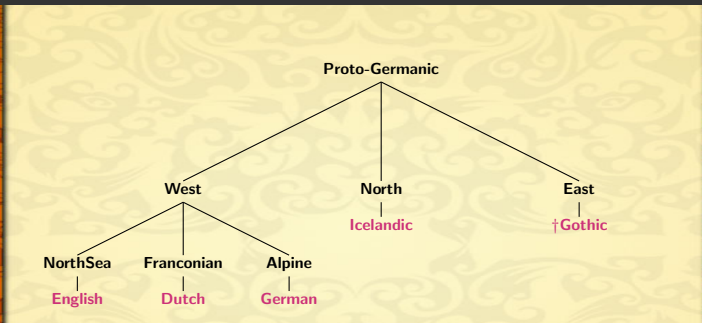
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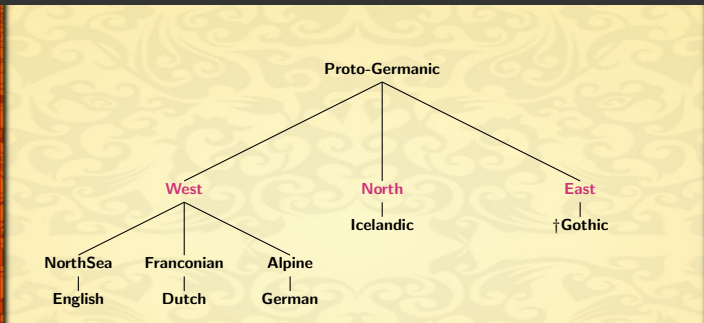
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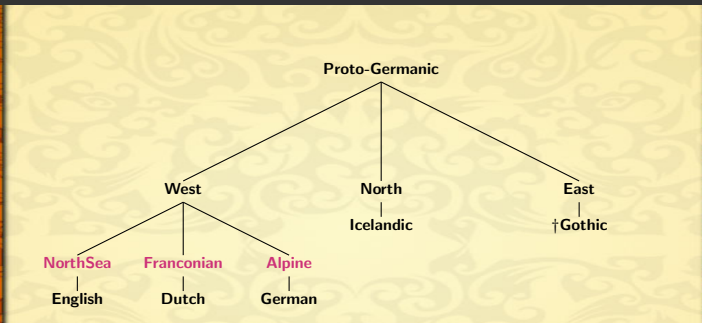
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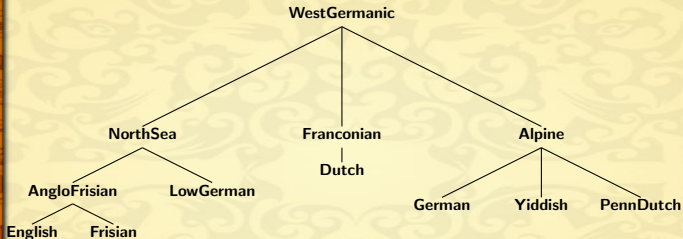
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Germanic Family Tree



- Cognates: Words in related languages that that descend from the same source. They must have similarity in form and sense.
- Reflex: The modern instantiation of an older form.
- Correspondence Set: A list of cognates whose reflexes are used to derive an older form.

How do we do the Comparative Method?

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Goal of the Comparative Method

The goal of the comparative method is reconstruction of older forms (proto-forms). The results of the comparative method help us in part to establish subgroupings.

- 1 Find cognates in a language.
- 2 Compile a list of them.
- 3 Look for regularities in the differences/similarities of reflexes.
- 4 Write a rule for how you get from the more general reflex to the more specific reflex.
- 5 Congratulate yourself for doing reconstruction.

Let's Reconstruct!

Look at the alveolar consonants (except sonorants)

English	Frisian	L.German	Dutch	German	Yiddish
ten	tiin	tian	tien	zehn	tsen
two	tou	twee	twee	zwei	tsvey
tile	tichel	Täjel	tegel	Ziegel	tsigl
eat	ite	äte(n)	eten	essen	esn
foot	foet	Foot	voet	Fuss	fus
	jitte	jeete(n)	gieten	giessen	gism

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Conclusion

- There is regularity in the appearance t, s; t, ts.
- 'ts' and 's' are restricted to Alpine German (High German).
- In Alpine German $*t \rightarrow \{s, ts\}$

Let's Reconstruct!

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The Golden Horn of Gallehus

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Figure : `ekhlewagastiz.holtijaz.horna.tawido.`

History of English Sounds: Old English

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Semantics

- Loss of Nasal before Fricative ($*N \rightarrow 0 / -C_{[+fricative]}$)
- Palatalization ($*C_{[+velar]} \rightarrow C_{[+palatal]} / -V_{[+front]}$)
- Allophonic Status of voiced and voiceless fricatives

History of English Sounds: Old English

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Semantics

- Loss of Nasal before Fricative ($*N \rightarrow 0 / -C_{[+fricative]}$)
 - O.Eng *gōs* 'goose'; O.HighGerman *gans*
 - O.Eng *fīf* 'five'; O.HighGerman *fimf*
- Palatalization ($*C_{[+velar]} \rightarrow C_{[+palatal]} / -V_{[+front]}$)
- Allophonic Status of voiced and voiceless fricatives

History of English Sounds: Old English

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Semantics

- Loss of Nasal before Fricative ($*N \rightarrow 0 / -C_{[+fricative]}$)
- Palatalization ($*C_{[+velar]} \rightarrow C_{[+palatal]} / -V_{[+front]}$)
 - O.Eng *cin* 'chin'; O.HighGerman *kinni*
 - O.Eng *gielð* 'yield'; O.HighGerman *gelt* 'pay'
- Allophonic Status of voiced and voiceless fricatives

History of English Sounds: Old English

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- Loss of Nasal before Fricative ($*N \rightarrow \emptyset / -C_{[+fricative]}$)
- Palatalization ($*C_{[+velar]} \rightarrow C_{[+palatal]} / -V_{[+front]}$)
- Allophonic Status of voiced and voiceless fricatives
 - wīf 'woman', wive 'women'
 - O.Eng *fox* 'fox'; *fyxe* 'female fox, vixen'; *fyxen* 'of a fox'

History of English Sounds: Middle English

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Semantics

- Phonemicization of voiced and voiceless fricatives
- Reduction of unstressed vowels to [ə]

History of English Sounds: Middle English

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- Phonemicization of voiced and voiceless fricatives
 - faith (< O.Fr *feid*), veil (< O.Fr *veile*)
 - push (< O.Fr *pousser*), rouge (< M.Fr *rouge*)
 - peach (< M.Fr *pesche*), ridge
- Reduction of unstressed vowels to [ə]

History of English Sounds: Middle English

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Semantics

- Phonemicization of voiced and voiceless fricatives
- Reduction of unstressed vowels to [ə]
 - name
 - mysi

History of English Sounds: Modern English

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- Loss of front round vowels
 - mus; mis (< mysi)
 - gos; ges (< gosi)
- “Great Vowel Shift”

History of English Sounds: Modern English

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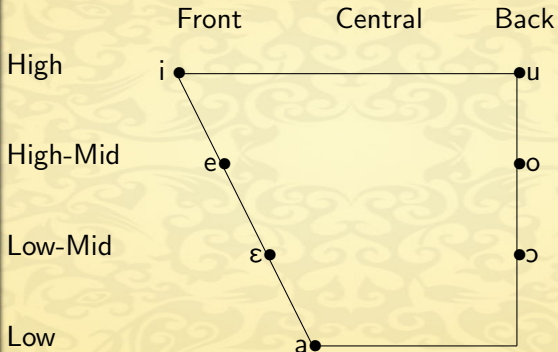
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History of English Sounds: Modern English

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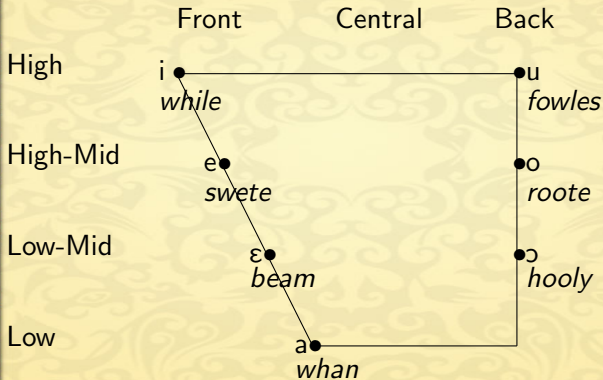
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Chaucer's Middle English Pronunciation



History of English Sounds: Modern English

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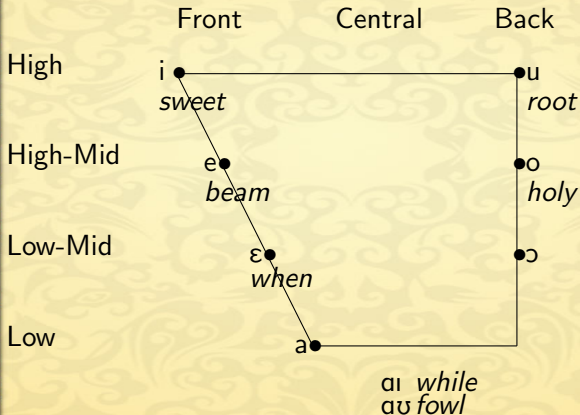
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Shakespeare's Modern English Pronunciation



What Happened to all that Morphology?

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Old English: skadu 'shadow'

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skādu	skadwa
Accusative	skadwe	skadwa
Dative	skadwe	skadwum
Genitive	skadwe	skadwa

What Happened to all that Morphology?

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Old English: skadu 'shadow'

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skādə	skadwə
Accusative	skadwə	skadwə
Dative	skadwə	skadwəm
Genitive	skadwə	skadwə

- Reduce unstressed vowels

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Old English: skadu 'shadow'

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skād	skadw
Accusative	skadw	skadw
Dative	skadw	skadwm
Genitive	skadw	skadw

- Reduce unstressed vowels
- Reason to yourself that you really need **all these forms**

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Old English: skadu 'shadow'

	Singular	Plural
Nominative	skād	skadw
Accusative	skadw	skadw
Dative	skadw	skadwm
Genitive	skadw	skadw

- Reduce unstressed vowels
- Reason to yourself that you really need all these forms
- Apply the great vowel shift where you can. You're left with Mod.Eng 'shade' and 'shadow'

Paradigmatic Leveling

The use of one generalizable form from within a paradigm to represent the entire lexeme is called **leveling**.

Generalization of -s Plural

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Semantics

The suffix *-s* was not the primary plural marker in older forms of English. Vowel alternations and the suffix *-r* and *-n* also marked plural.

- ox
- child
- cow
- brother

Generalization of -s Plural

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- ox; oxen
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- ox; oxen
- child; children
- cow; kine
- brother

Generalization of -s Plural

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- ox; oxen
- child; children
- cow; kine
- brother; brethren

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- ox; oxen
- child; children
- cow; kine
- brother; brethren

Analogical Extension

The use of one generalizable form across many lexemes is called **extension**.

Morphology Practice

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Extension or Leveling?

English verb roots have 3 basic inflections: infinitive (e.g., *see*), simple past (e.g., *saw*), and past participle (e.g., *seen*). Some speakers of American English have the following paradigm: *bring*, *brang*, *brung*. Is this an instance of leveling (generalization from within a lexeme) or extension (generalizing across different lexemes)?

Name Game

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Semantics

Which meaning do you think is older? Make a plausible story and give a semantic process.

fee

- A fine
- Cattle

Name Game

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Semantics

Which meaning do you think is older? Make a plausible story and give a semantic process.

silly

- Pious
- Pitiful

Name Game

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Semantics

Which meaning do you think is older? Make a plausible story and give a semantic process.

ridge

- Mountain tops
- Back

Open University's Lexical History of English

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Works Cited

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