

In view of the fact that there are so many languages, often utterly diverse from each other with no evidence of any actual relationship, if language were to be called man's greatest achievement it would be an achievement which has been performed by many different men in many different places in very different ways.

The greater portion of our western world is occupied by people who speak languages that are related one to the other. It is quite evident that French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, and certain other languages have all developed from the ancient Latin in a process of change and adaptation extending over many centuries. Similarly we can show that English, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and various other languages must go back to a common Germanic source, even though we have no actual evidence from the time when this source existed. The same is true of the various Slavic languages. The Latin language, the ancient Greek language, what we can infer to have been the proto-Slavic language, what we can infer to be the proto-Germanic language, and certain other early languages, can be shown to have a definite relationship, leading scholars to assume that they go back to one original form source. Therefore we call all of these languages Indo-Germanic languages - using the term simply to show the wide stretch of land that is covered by people speaking them, extending from India to the various areas where people live that speak a language of Germanic type.

Thus it is held by linguistic scholars that at one time there was a single language which we call original Indo-European, that this language in time divided up into a group of languages which are the precursors of the Slavic group of languages, of the Germanic group of languages, of Latin, of Greek, etc. Then each of these developed into a number of languages as we have them today. It is also thought that at one time there was an original Semitic language, which developed into the various Semitic languages as we know them, and at one time an original Hamitic language that developed into the various Hamitic languages of North Africa, as they exist today. Some scholars believe that at one time there was a single Hamitic-Semitic language, which broke into the precursors of the Hamitic and of the Semitic languages respectively, but the evidence for this is much less certain than that for a unity of the various Indo-European languages. There are a few scholars who hold that there was one original language from which the Hamitic-Semitic and the Indo-European languages divided, but this is highly questionable. However, I know of no scholar today who holds that the Hungarian language was originally related to any of these languages in any way whatever. There is no evidence at all to connect up Chinese or Japanese with any of the languages mentioned. There are many languages spoken in different parts of India, and of southern Africa, and also languages spoken by various groups of North American and South American Indians, which have no relationship with the Indo-European languages at all. As far as present evidence goes it is quite clear that a great number of entirely different languages have developed independently on this earth.