

**Early Civilisations and Modern World Languages  
The Effect of the First Writing Systems on the Development of Modern  
Languages**

الحضارات القديمة ولغات العالم الحديث  
أثر نظم الكتابة الأولى في تطور اللغات الحديثة

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**Abstract:**

Man is a social animal, but he is unique to thrive to evolve a language which is more than a set of signals. Our verbal utterance differs in a somatic way from the communication of animals. It comes from a cortical speech sphere which does not respond instinctively, but arranges sound and meaning on a rational structural basis. This part of the brain is peculiar and exclusive to man. When and how the distinct talent of language evolved is unattainable. But it is generally assumed that its evolution must have been a long process. Our ancestors were probably speaking a million years ago, but with a slower delivery, a meager vocabulary and above all a poorer grammar than the customary today. This paper investigates, via a descriptive historical timeline, how humans developed their means of communication along with their civilisational progress to reach systematic languages that enabled them to interact within their own communities and the world, and how did their lingua francas develop into our modern languages.

**Keywords:** Early Civilisations; Lingua Franca; History; Writing Systems; Modern Languages.

**ملخص:**

إنّ الإنسان كائن اجتماعي ويتواصل مثل جميع الحيوانات مع بعضها البعض، لكن البشّر امتازوا بقدرتهم على تطوير لغة تُعدُّ أكثر من مجموعة من الإشارات البسيطة، حيث يختلف كلامنا اللفظي بطريقة جسدية أو عضوية عن تواصل الحيوانات، إذ إنّه يأتي من مجال الكلام القشريّ في الدماغ الذي لا يستجيب غريزيًا، لكنّه يرتب الصّوت والمعنى على أساس بنيويّ عقلائيّ. هذا الجزء من الدماغ غريب وحصريّ للإنسان. هذا يجعلنا نتساءل متى وكيف تطوّرت موهبة اللّغة المتميّزة كونها أمرًا غير معروف، لكن يُفترض عمومًا أنّ تطوّرها بالتأكيد كان عمليةً طويلةً. ربّما كان أسلافنا يتحدثون منذ مليون سنة، ولكن مع إيصال أبطأ للمعنى، ومفردات هزيلة وقبل كلّ شيء قواعد نحوية أقل من المعتاد اليوم. يبحث هذا المقال، من خلال تحليل وصفي تاريخي، في كيفية تطوير البشّر لوسائل الاتّصال الخاصّة بهم جنبًا إلى جنب مع تقدّمهم الحضاريّ للوصول إلى لغات نظاميّة تمكّنهم من التفاعل داخل مجتمعاتهم المحليّة والعالم، وكيف تطوّرت لغاتهم المشتركة القديمة إلى لغاتنا الحديثة.

**الكلمات المفاتيح:** الحضارات القديمة؛ اللّغة المشتركة؛ التّاريخ؛ نظم الكتابة؛ اللّغات الحديثة.

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**1. Introduction:**

Language is always related with the way of communication that everybody uses to interact with his milieu. Language includes all the visual, auditory and tactile symbols (Santana, 2016, p.509). The human beings have developed means and ways to communicate with their mankind, especially if they are impaired. The signal language has been an alternative. The human social and cultural progress in any civilization really affects the language, because language without a tangible culture or a mental and moral progress cannot evolve.

When referring to culture, the concept is forthright tied up with civilisation and sometimes used as a synonym to it. Nevertheless, culture is closely bound to civilisation but both they do not hold the same significance, so they are not synonymous. Culture is regarded as the life style of a group of people and this includes all their vesture and mores, ethics, ingenuity, conduct, faith and language. It is then just part and parcel of a civilised human gathering. Whereas civilisation, which is considered as

an umbrella term, denotes the entire human moral, social, political, economic, artistic, technological, and communicative progress that cannot thrive and last without a language. Thus, language is the cornerstone of any civilisation and its backbone.

Language is an intricate and amazing human endowment. It is regarded as a device for humans' collective communication, and a cause of the emergence and evolution of their talents, bringing about inventiveness and ingenuity, to be spread and exchanged on a larger scale, to boost the creation of societies. Interest in language is not recent. From the earliest recorded history, people explored language, and the result was that many of the hypotheses, theories and notions of modern linguistics find their origin in past centuries.

The origins of human language will perhaps remain forever inscrutable and enigmatic. Contrariwise, the origin of individual languages has been the subject of a very precise study over the past two centuries. According to ethnologists, there are 6.909 languages spoken in the world today a third of them are in Africa, only 230 are spoken in Europe, and 2.197 in Asia, but scholars group them together into relatively few families—probably less than twenty (Vossen & Dimmendaal, 2020, p.398) Languages are related to each other by mutual and joint lexis or phonemes or syntax. The premise is that the members of each linguistic group have originated from one language, a common descent. Sometimes that original language is deemed by the scholars to have been employed in amazingly a little while back some thousand years ago. However, most of them today are subject to extinction.

Around a quarter of the languages of the world have less than a thousand speakers, and experts generally estimate that the demise of at least 3,000 of the 6,909 languages listed by ethnologists within the next century, or nearly half, is practically assured under current circumstances. As a result, the prospect of extinction concerns a much larger percentage of the world's languages than it does biological species (Anderson, 2010).

The development of modern languages used today can be traced back to thousands of years ago. In fact, one can wonder what can be the origin of spoken languages of today as Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Romanian languages...etc. What can be their historical trajectory to become fully-fledged languages that are widely used nowadays? What is the history of languages, and how ancient civilisations have contributed to the development of modern languages of today? How did the old world languages get mutually influenced to give rise to our modern languages? Indeed, the eternal rivalry between languages is an occurrence identical to evolution. A word is similar to a gene that will mutate and move and dominate according to its utility. A word's validity and genuineness is attained probably from being connected with a desirable new technology, or simply from being a witty or a functional and practical concept. This interaction between civilisations begat an intermingled linguistic experience that can be regarded as a splendid myriad of syntax, lexis, and signs that shaped our languages today.

Through a descriptive historical account of the development of languages in the world and their history, this paper will reveal the amazing itinerary of ancient world languages that flourished into our modern languages.

## **2. Modern Language Families**

Rising about 3000 years B.C era, the predominant group of languages nowadays is the Indo-European, spoken by half the global population. This whole group, stemming from Hindi (Vedic Indians) and Persian proceeding into Norwegian and English is supposed to be the offspring of the language of nomadic tribe wandering throughout the plains of Eastern Europe and western Asia (Werner, 1987, pp.491-492). Starting from about 2000 BC people using Indo-European languages as their major tongue began to expand throughout Europe, by and by attaining the Atlantic coast and the north of the Mediterranean coast, stretching afar into Asia - reaching the highlands of Iran and much regions of India (p.493).

Another lingual group, the Semitic family of languages is of weight and great value in the ancient history of west Asia and is up to this time of great worth. They are assented to hail from the language of a Bedouin group, supposedly nomads of southern Arabia. Around the year 3000 BC, Semitic languages were spoken over a vast expanse of desert territory from southern Arabia to northern Syria. Several Semitic peoples play an important role in the primitive civilisation of the region, from Babylonians and Assyrians to Hebrews and Phoenicians. And there is a particular Semitic language, Aramaic, that became a while back the Lingua Franca of the Middle East (Huehnergard & Na'ama, 2019).

Referring to a linguistic map of the world, one can notice that most of the great language families occupy one distinguished and autonomous territory. The two exceptions are the Indo-European and the Finno-Ugric groups (Uralic Languages) that constitute a portion of territory within or surrounded by a larger territory whose inhabitants are culturally or ethnically distinct. In modern era, Indo-European languages have spread throughout the world - in North and South America, Australia and New Zealand as a result of European colonial ambitions. But the admixture of Indo-European and Finno-Ugric, forming a mosaic pattern across Europe, existed for a distinct and prior reason. Finland, with Estonia on the opposite coast of the Baltic, constituted one of the secluded pockets of the Finno-Ugric group (the Finno part), and Hungary is a further group (the Ugric section). The reason behind this tremendous split is the great highlands of Europe which Finno-Ugric and Indo-European ethnic groups have taken as their habitat and wrestled over through the centuries. The lineal descent language of the Finns, Estonians and Hungarians was once spoken in an integrated area between the Baltic and the Ural mountains, until these people were dispersed and sparsed by Indo-European expulsion (Harms, 2016).

### **2.1 The Emergence of Latin and German during the 5th Century**

Over centuries, tongues continually permeated, and words propagating through conquest, empire, commerce, religion, technology or,

in present time, by global recreation. A good example of this process is the division line that separates Romance languages (those derived from a "Roman" model) from Germanic languages in Western Europe. The Roman family involves Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian (the upshot of a victorious Roman conquest in the second century AD). The Germanic group comprises English, German, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Flemish, Norwegian, and Icelandic.

This lingual split duly reflects the impact of the Roman Empire. France, Italy and Spain were outright embedded and rooted regions in the Roman Empire to safeguard the sovereignty of Latin after the decline of their civilisation. The Germanic territories east and north of the Rhine River were never compelled to be under Roman dominance (the precise linguistic dividing line is still sustained in modern Belgium, with part of its people speaking French in the south and Flemish in the north).

England was shielded within the empire and secured for three centuries. But the Romanised Celts were not indomitable to withstand the conquering German tribes, the Angles, the Jutes and the Saxons. Their languages reigned in the mold of Anglo-Saxon.

Modern English language holds a middle position within the western European family of languages, with its lexicon roughly half Germanic and half Romance in origin.

The reason behind that is not the relatively weak situation of Britain in the Roman Empire. The reason is more recent, it was in the Norman Conquest. After capturing north western France and adopting the local language, Norman arrived in England having French as an essential element of their cultural background. Several centuries of aristocratic rule and Norman bureaucrats date back to Latin in English through French in the Middle Ages.

With progress, language advancement became a tempting and enticing urge although conservative reactionaries always tried firmly to create hurdles to change. Overall, the French government occasionally ordained, decreed, and enacted laws against introducing English-speaking

words into French. As a result, these hybrids were depicted as Franglais (Hofstee, 2014, p.20).

## **2.2 The Rise of Strong Empires and Imperial Languages**

The obsession of the French associated with English language effect, although the linguistic obtrusion is futile compared with the sweeping impact of the French Norman on English in the past, was associated with a broader range of evolutionary conflict between languages (Ager, 1999). A great achievement for all languages at that time was to become a *Lingua Franca*, which was almost and always considered as a sign of power and prestige, and that position was obtained by the French who were at the peak of international influence under the rule of Louis XIV. More recently, English-firstly position throughout the British Empire, but especially through the dominance of the American civilisation in the 20th century world has replaced that French role.

In the late 20th century English was fortuitous and favored to become a *lingua franca*, a common language, at an extraordinary time. As a groundbreaking unprecedented in history, a universal language was requisite and claimed for heuristic and scientific ends. In the meantime, today's communication system emerged to help in the propagation of English to a global public through radio, television and the Internet. The imperial power that underlies American English as a *lingua franca* is for the first time economic and cultural rather than military (Acar, 2007, p.77-78).

The history model insists that English may not be the last global common language. Others might come and go. Actually, it is also reliable to argument that the prevalence of English depends on its diffusion rather than on the total number of population who speak it. A number of people speak the Chinese language more than English, but in only one region of the world. China's economic strength is promising for the future. But China's language complexity could make it a far-fetched adversary to English. One of the great assets and strong points of English is that it is simple, noncomplex and unsophisticated for common learners, although its idioms are very intricate at a higher level (yang et al., 2017).

In the meantime, linguistic evolutionary processes continued, and new languages emerged from old ones. There were already many varieties of English used in the world. For instance, the language of the thriving English hybrid in New Guinea called the Pidgin raised concerns abroad. Originally developed as a working language for professions and business, it was shortened to its simplest forms, and it developed its own affluent letter. Similarly, English-speaking communities in the world as in the West Indies or India, and also America have developed native words and vernaculars, phrases and local structures that added to their own version of language a distinct feature (Mufwene, 2001).

The amazing spread of Indo-European languages stemming from one language, just 5000 years ago, will never happen again in our more interweaved interdependent world. However, the propensity of language to develop nowadays is still not proven. However, shedding light on this prodigious and remarkable historical development seems to be possible in the light of precedent works and researches on language development throughout centuries.

### **3. The Very Beginning of the Historical Linguistic Journey**

As a telluric process of renewing world civilisations, glacial ages occur. Most countries and the world's hemispheres have been covered by billions of tons of ice for millions of years, engulfing and smashing all the civilisations of the regions. It extended to major areas of Europe, including England. The icy spine chills and cold waves across the continent, caused the breaking of the rest of civilisations, except for India which was not much affected by the ice ages because it lies in the tropics, protected by the Himalayan range of the cold winds in the deep North. Thus, India was saved from such climatic changes and its ancient civilisation persisted without coming to a halt. The last ice age declined about 10,000 years ago. It took a while to develop normal living conditions. The Ice Age survivors were small groups of nomadic people who moved and stretched through southern Europe and central Asia, the Gulf countries, parts of North America, South America and Africa.



### **3.1 The First Writing System in the World**

The oldest known documents showed the presence of villagers in northern Mesopotamia around 7000 BC. People also lived in the southern Sumer region of Mesopotamia for 5,000 years BC. Later, other people came to settle in Sumer. Sumerians developed a form of graphic writing that used images of words such as birds, fish, cows, houses grains, etc., called pictograph between 4000 and 3500 BC. In 3000 BC, it evolved into a transversal type of cuneiform writing, a type of wedge-shaped writing that was written in linear wedge form on clay tablets.

The cuneiform script was first in the pictographic graphic genre. After the third millennium BC it took a traditional form of linear cuneiform drawings and was written from left to right. Akkadian, Aramaic, Persian and other languages in the Middle East were written in cuneiform script. Since the time of Christ it has been completely forgotten and the knowledge of the Sumerians and their language and disappeared from history. It was only known after 1800 AD when the cuneiform code was decoded. The first was Akkadian-Babylonian and the other was Persian. Then, the correct name "Sumerian" was attributed to the Sumerian language. Cuneiform dates date back to the third millennium and the second century BC. They have been classified as follows: (1) Sumerian cuneiform, (2) Babylonian cuneiform and (3) Assyrian cuneiform (Wood et al., 2010), and was considered as the major human invention of the time:

The Invention of writing and of a convenient system of records on paper has had a greater influence in uplifting the human race than any other intellectual achievement in the career of man. It was more important than all the battles ever fought and all the constitutions ever devised. (Breasted, 1938, pp.53-54)

#### **3.1.1 Sumerians and Babylonians**

With the evolution of the Sumerian language and the introduction of more words, the depiction of words became more complex though it still had only 16 consonants and four vowels (a, e, i and u). In general, the Sumerian civilisation thrived between 3500 and 2200 BC. They built

palaces, temples and city-states (the main city was Ur). Around 2200 BC, the Semites invaded the Sumer Babylonians and ruled until 539 BC. After that, the Persians subjugated and seized the region and ruled until Alexander captured Babylon in 331 BC. Its kingdom was extended from Greece to the west of India. Alexander made Babylon the capital of his kingdom and he died there in 323 BC. After the death of Alexander, Babylon collapsed. Babylonia was one of the kingdoms of Mesopotamia to its south and its main city was Babylon (Kramer, 1963).

The Babylonian Kingdom was founded circa 2200 BC. J. - C. It ended in 323 BC. There were two major offensives. One of the Assyrians in 700 BC, when Babylonia saw its worst days and remained under their control until 612, and the other by the Persians in 539 BC, when they got hold of it and ruled until 331 BC. The Babylonian kingdom extended its empire mainly after 1750 BC. J.-C. They built huge citadels and strongholds, and set up commercial activities and trade. A major change occurred after 612 BC, when the new Babylonian Empire gradually took over most of the surrounding areas and achieved its greatest glory. There was a stone-like palace with eight bronze doors, and there were roads, buildings and paved roads and the temple of their main god, Marduk, who was the god of thunder and rain and Lord of heaven and earth. More than 250,000 people lived in Babylon and in nearby places. It was the richest and largest shopping mall in the Middle East at the time. At that time, they worshiped hundreds of community gods. Some were Semitic gods, some were Sumerian gods and some were Babylonian gods (Kramer, 1963).

The Sumerian periods are classified as: Archaic (up to 2500 BC), Old or Classical (up to 2300 BC), New (up to 2000 BC), and Post-Sumerian (after 2000 BC) which are the four Sumerian periods. Up to 2200 BC, the Sumerian language was thriving. When the Babylonian Semites rose to prominence, however, a Northeastern Semitic language known as Akkadian became the common tongue of Assyria and Babylonia. Assyro-Babylonian Akkadian was the name given to the language. Despite the fact that it was introduced as a spoken language, the cuneiform writing system was still in use. Many cuneiform clay tablets have been discovered in Semite and

Persian languages, demonstrating that it was the ancient Middle East civilisations' shared system of writing. However, when other languages emerged and Babylonia fell after 323 BC, the Sumerian language and the cuneiform script died out (George, 2007, 44-45).

Although there have been lingua francas on a minor scale throughout history, the language of the Semitic tribes that began infiltrating Mesopotamia in the early third millennium BC was the first known lingua franca across a large region. The Akkadian language, named after the capital city of Sargon the Great, Akkad, gradually superseded Sumerian as the predominant uttered language of northern and then southern Mesopotamia, finally becoming the state language of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires (p.48).

Speakers of Akkadian generated hundreds of thousands of preserved works in a variety of genres, including regal inscriptions, epic literature, religious hymns, mathematical and grammatical texts, and receipts for everyday economic transactions, even before the language became widely used. These texts would have provided us with incredible insight into Bronze Age Mesopotamian culture on their own, but because they were written using the same cuneiform writing system as the Sumerians, they also provided us with indirect access to the Sumerian language and literature, which would have been unfathomable to us otherwise (Garland, 2020).

This function as the key to Ancient Near Eastern civilisation did not just extend southward to Sumerian's older, more established culture; it also extended northward, westward, and eastward to Anatolia, Egypt, and Persia's cultures. Dating from the early second millennium BC, Akkadian-speaking traders established trading colonies all across the Near East called *kārū* (sg. *kārum*) (Alexander & Violet, 2018, p.6).

These commercial colonies served as emporia for long-distance trading networks, allowing Mesopotamian cities to get items not available in their native country. They had indirect consequences, however, because they served as outposts of Akkadian civilisation in areas where the language was not spoken natively. This was particularly true in Anatolia, where local

Hattic, Hittite, Luwian, Hurrian, and Urartian states began to employ Akkadian not merely to communicate with foreigners but also to establish their own ministries and administration. The Akkadian language and writing system became the model and standard by which they eventually built their own writing systems because they were not literate in their own languages at the time. To read Hittite or Hurrian language manuscripts, one needs know Akkadian in a literal sense (pp. 4-5).

However, Akkadian's importance as a contact language extended even to regions like Egypt, which had their own ancient writing tradition. Akkadian-speaking merchants, like those in Anatolia, dominated Egypt's foreign trade in gold, silver, iron, and ebony. Political and diplomatic communication was almost entirely conducted in Akkadian during the first age of globalisation, at the peak of the Bronze Age state system (consisting of the Great Powers of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Hatti, Mittani, and Elam) (Leemans, 1977), much like French was in the 18th and 19th centuries, and English is today.

The hoard of cuneiform tablets discovered in Amarna, Egypt, is the most well-known of them. The city of Amarna was envisioned as a new Egyptian capital by the radical monotheist Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (who named himself Akhenaten), who would rule as god-king over a land of sun-worshippers. When his religious ardour faded after his death, so did his capital. This fortunately resulted in his correspondence with Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hurrian kings being preserved nearly all in Akkadian, which was almost unprecedented for an Egyptian monarch (Mark, 2017).

The persistence of Akkadian as a Near Eastern lingua franca after the collapse of civilisation at the end of the Bronze Age, when cities like Troy and Hattusas were destroyed and passed into history, demonstrates its importance as a Near Eastern lingua franca (Vita, 2020). It remained a literary and spoken language until the New Assyrian Empire's peak, when King Tiglath-Pileser III's deportation campaign disseminated Aramaic over the Near East, and Akkadian began to fade. It appears to have died out as a

spoken language about the time of Cyrus the Great's conquest of Babylon in 539 BC, and as a written language around the first century AD (Mark, 2018). Though it was dead, it had a sort of afterlife: its impact on Aramaic was significant, and because Aramaic was the language of Jesus of Nazareth and the Jewish Talmud, individuals today occasionally unintentionally pronounce phrases drawn from or affected by old Akkad (Myers, 1987).

### **3.1.2 The Assyrians**

Assyria was the name given to northern Mesopotamia (Today North Iraq). Around 5000 to 4000 BC, the ancient Assyrians lived in small settlements and were of an unknown race. Its society was similar to that of ancient Babylonia, but it had a better agricultural environment. Before 3000 BC, a Semite tribe arrived and resided in the area. They were a mash-up of different races who spoke a Semitic language (that is related to Hebrew or Arabic of today). Up to the 2nd millennium BC, the Assyrian monarchy was essentially a dependence of Babylonia, although little is known about the early Assyrians. It founded an autonomous monarchy circa 1400 BC, expanded temporarily between 1200 and 1000 BC, then significantly after 800 BC, conquering all of the states from Babylonia to Egypt between 744 and 670 BC. After a civil war erupted in 635 BC, the Babylonians attacked in 614 BC, thus ending the Assyrian empire (Parpola, 2004, pp.13-14).

Beautifully carved stone slabs depicting religious events were used to construct palaces, cities, and temples by the Assyrians. The principal town, Assur, was called after their chief god Assur or Ashur. They also worshiped a variety of gods, including the god of learning, the god of war, and the goddess of love, among others, and their religion was similar to Babylonian religion. They also worshiped a large number of gods. Assyrians, Babylonians, and Sumerians all believed in a large number of gods, and as a result, the community worshipped hundreds of gods. They too believed that the monarch is God's representation on Earth, but the Assyrian king was renowned as the king of kings, with a kingdom that stretched from the upper sea to the lower sea (p.10).

Early Assyrians spoke Akkadian, a northern periphery or northeastern Semitic language spoken in Mesopotamia between the third and first millennia BC. Assyrian and Babylonian dialects existed. As a result, it was given the name "Assyro-Babylonian" language, which became the lingua franca of the world at that time. Cuneiform script was used to write it (p.9).

The Aramaic language, a Northern central Semitic language, began to supplant Akkadian from 700 BC, and by the 1st century AD, it had totally gone out. Only after 1799 AD was the cuneiform script deciphered. Late Assyrian Aramaic was written in both the Aramaic and the cuneiform scripts. As a result, both scripts were saved as being the most influential (Myers,1987).

### **3.1.3 The Hieroglyphics, and the Language and Religion of Ancient Egypt**

Egyptians extracted the idea of graphic writing from the Sumerians. Their writings, initiated in 3000 BC, were called hieroglyphics and were called illustrations or ideograms. There were about 700 marks and most were written from right to left but sometimes from left to right or from top to bottom. Original hieroglyphics have been developed into vocal hieroglyphics such as alphabets. But there were no moving letters, even after decoding the words; it was not possible to know its true pronunciation. About 1100 BC, it was replaced by a newly developed connected style called "hieratic", around 700 BC became "demotic". Demotic script was a betterment of the writing system of the Egyptian language. It became communal because it was easy to write and understand as compared to hieratic. The word hieratic takes its name from the Greek word hieratikos, which means "sacerdotal", because at some point the writing was used primarily for sacred texts, and the demotic word also came from the Greek word demotikos which means "for people or for daily use." Hieroglyphic texts were found mainly on the walls of temples and tombs (Gardiner, 1957 p.11-12).

Egyptian ‘demotic’ language was substituted by Coptic around 200 AD which was written in Greek alphabet with seven letters borrowed from ‘demotic.’ It had six dialects, four of the north and two of the south of Egypt. Finally, around 640 AD, after the Arab invasion, Arabic language and the Arabic script were introduced in Egypt, and the Coptic language was superseded by 1200 AD. The language of Egyptians belonged to the Hamito-Semitic language family and is now extinct. It can be divided into four categories based on the evolution of its writing system: Old Egyptian (3000 to 2200 BC), Middle Egyptian (2200 to 1600 BC), Late Egyptian (1600 to 700 BC), Demotic (700 BC to 400 AD), and Coptic (700 BC to 400 AD) (200 AD to about 1500 AD). The only stage of Egyptian language that contained appropriate vowels and gave a clear concept of how to pronounce them was Coptic (Britannica, 2014).

However, these writings remained unclear for a long time until a large stone slab with three detailed inscriptions in three scripts (hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek) was discovered near Rosetta town near the Nile's mouth in 1799 AD. After many years of intensive work, in 1882, they recognized the characters and finally deciphered the entire text by deciphering the texts of its Greek script and thus determining the position and repeated use of some of the proper royal names that appeared in the text of the other two scripts, as well as using what little knowledge of the Egyptian Coptic language they had, because the same event was described in the Egyptian language (Britannica, 2014). The grammar and dictionaries for the Egyptian languages were later developed after extensive investigation. Otherwise, the Egyptian culture and history would have been buried under a veil of linguistic ignorance if it had not been revealed by dint of the Rosetta Stone.

### **3.1.4 The Semites**

People who formerly lived on the eastern side of the Mediterranean spoke a language known as Semite, and those who spoke it were referred to as Semites. The Semitic languages Hebrew and Arabic are the most prominent descendants. Semites mostly inhabited in what is now Palestine,

Jordan, Syria, Lebanon (Phoenicia), and Iraq (Mesopotamia), before migrating to Arabia and North Africa. Semites included the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hebrews, and Canaanites of Canaan. Canaan was the biblical designation for the land around the Dead Sea and the Jordan River on the East Mediterranean coast. Palestine was another name for it. It was from there that Judaism and Christianity arose. Those people lived in the northern section of the country before moving to the south around 3000 BC. Northwestern Semites primarily spoke Hebrew and Aramaic. (The Hebrews were the ancient Israelites who resided in Palestine (Canaan) throughout Biblical times and spoke and wrote Hebrew). The Arabic language was spoken by the southern Semites. Many dialects and offshoots of the Aramaic and Arabic languages existed.

### **3.1.5 Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic and Persian Alphabets and Languages**

The Hebrew language is one of the world's oldest known languages. The Phoenician language, which had a 22-letter alphabet and no vowels, was closely connected to early Hebrew. Since the 13th century BC, the Hebrews of Palestine have spoken it. Between 600 and 300 BC, the Hebrew language was influenced by the Aramaic language, and the Hebrew writing system was altered to the Aramaic script. Although certain parts of the Old Testament were written in early Hebrew, the majority of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic script during that time period.

The Mishna is a compilation of descriptions of Jewish traditional norms governing religious prayers, marriage and family living, civil laws, temple sacrifices and tributes, and other issues. It is thought to have been released orally between 600 and 400 BC. Torah traditionally refers to the first five books of Moses, while Talmud (100-500 AD) is the explanation of religious teachings (Eisenberg, 2004, pp. 499–500).

Early Hebrew might date back to approximately 1000 BC, whereas Aramaic Hebrew could date back to around 300 BC. After 300 BC, the writing systems of the Hebrew language underwent a profound transformation, and a new sort of alphabet, like a cross between the alphabets of early Hebrew and Aramaic Hebrew, was formed, displacing the



Aramaic alphabet probably before 200 BC. Square Hebrew was the name of the language. The language was further refined and standardized throughout the Christian era, and appropriate vowels (such as dot and dash) were added about the 7th century AD. The Modern Hebrew alphabet, as well as the language, took almost 1,500 years to develop. Between 800 and 1400 AD, square Hebrew scripts were most common. Square Hebrew has been developed into Modern Hebrew. It features a 26-letter alphabet, with certain emphasized letters such as kaph, khaph, seen, and sheen (Benner, 2012).

Apart from the long vowels aleph, he, waw, and yod used in Square Hebrew, there are a number of vowel marks that are also used in Modern Hebrew writing. They are a dot and a dash placed beneath or on top of a letter. It is written in the left-to-right direction. From the 9th century through the 18th century, Hebrew as a spoken language collapsed. It was resurrected in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it is currently Israel's official language (Saénz, 1993, p. 16).

**Aramaic:** The earliest Aramaic inscriptions date from the 9th century BC. Since the 13th century BC, Aramaic has been the spoken language of the North Semitic peoples of northern Mesopotamia and Syria. The Aramaic alphabet was a system devised circa 1000 BC to transcribe the Aramaic language. It comprises 22 letters, all of which are consonants, and is written right to left. Aramaic was used to create the square Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian alphabets. Aramaic writing is used in several of the Dead Sea Scrolls (150BC). The Aramaic language was spoken by Jesus and his apostles (Eisenberg, 2004, p. 512).

**Arabic:** The Arabic script was created in the 4th century AD by the Aramaic-speaking inhabitants of northern Arabia. The Arabic language (which is related to the Southern Central Semitic group and is predominantly spoken in Arabia) existed before the 5th century BC. The Arabic abjad is the standardized Arabic script for writing Arabic. Abjad is a writing system in which only consonants are written, leaving the reader to infer vowel sounds. It has 28 letters and is written in a cursive form from right to left. Contextual letterforms may be seen in almost every letter. The

Arabic alphabet is an abjad, which means it solely contains consonants, although it is now referred to as an "impure abjad." Scribes eventually invented techniques of representing vowel sounds by distinct vowel diacritics, as they did with other impure abjads such as the Hebrew alphabet (Ghali, 2004, pp.1-2).

The Phoenician abjad was the first to achieve widespread use. The Phoenician alphabet included just a few dozen symbols, unlike other contemporary systems like cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs. This made the writing simple to learn, and merchants from Phoenicia spread it across the then known world. The Phoenician abjad was a radical simplification of phonetic writing, because hieroglyphics required the writer to choose a hieroglyph that began with the same sound as the sound he or she wanted to write in order to write phonetically, much like man'yūgana (kanji used solely for phonetic use) was used to represent Japanese phonetically before the invention of kana. Phoenician gave birth to a number of other writing systems, including the Aramaic abjad and the Greek alphabet, which are still extensively used today. The Greek alphabet became the progenitor of many current Asian abjads and abugidas, whereas Aramaic became the ancestor of many modern western alphabets, such as Latin and Cyrillic. Some vowels in impure abjads include letters, optional vowel diacritics, or both. The phrase "pure abjad" refers to scripts that have no vowel markers at all. Most current abjads, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Pahlavi, are "impure" abjads, which means they include symbols for certain vowel phonemes, albeit the non-diacritic vowel letters are also used to express some consonants, notably approximants that sound like long vowels (Daniels, 2013, p.415).

Probably, Early variants of ancient Phoenician are examples of a "pure" abjad, yet it and most of the contemporary Semitic abjads began to overload a few of the consonant symbols with a secondary function as vowel markers, known as *matres lectionis*, at some point (at least by the 9th century BC). This method was initially uncommon and limited in scope, but it became more popular and developed through time. The abjad writing system is well-suited to the morphological structure of the Semitic languages for which it was created. This is due to the fact that Semitic

languages have a root consisting of typically three consonants, with the vowels indicating inflectional or derived forms. When employed to write some Indo-European languages, such as Kurdish, Bosnian, and Yiddish, the Arabic and Hebrew scripts, on the other hand, may act as real alphabets rather than abjads (p.420).

The Arabic alphabet is made up of 28 letters. Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Central Kurdish, Urdu, Sindhi, Malay, Pashto, Arwi, and Arabi Malayalam all feature extra letters as indicated below, as a result of adaptations of the Arabic script for various languages. There is no distinction between upper and lower case letters. The Arabic alphabet is divided into two collating sequences which are: abjad and hija:

The original 'abjadīy order, which was employed for lettering, is derived from the Phoenician alphabet and hence related to the order of other Phoenician-derived alphabets, such as the Hebrew alphabet. Letters are also employed as numbers in this sequence, as Abjad numerals, and use the same alphanumeric code/cipher as Hebrew gematria and Greek isopsephy.

The hijā'ī or alifbā'ī order, which is used to sort lists of names and words, such as in phonebooks, classroom lists, and dictionaries, groups letters by shape similarity.

The spoken varieties of Arabic, some of which are mutually unintelligible, are found across the Middle East, Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and North Africa. The Arabic script was initially used to write Arabic manuscripts, including the Quran, Islam's sacred book. With the growth of the religion, it became the dominant script for many language families, resulting in the inclusion of additional letters and symbols, with certain forms, such as Kurdish, Uyghur, and ancient Bosnian, becoming abugidas (true alphabets). It also serves as the foundation for the Arabic calligraphy tradition (Gruendler, 1993, p.138).

Furthermore, the Arabic script is a writing system used to write Arabic as well as a number of other Asian and African languages, including Persian (Farsi/Dari), Malay (Jawi), Uyghur, Kurdish, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balti, Balochi, Pashto, Lurish, Urdu, Kashmiri, Rohingya, Somali, and Mandinka.

It was also employed to compose some Spanish writings until the 16th century. It was also the Turkish writing system previous to the language reform in 1928. After the Latin and Chinese characters, it is the world's second-largest writing system in terms of nations employing it and third-largest in terms of users (Alshahrani, 2008, pp.9-10). (The Chinese Language remained unknown to the world for centuries because of the isolationist policy of China in Ancient times, which was given up lately during the Roman Empire with the Silk Road. (Chinese characters, commonly known as Hanzi, are logograms designed to be used in Chinese calligraphy. They have been considered to write various East Asian languages, and are still a basis of the Japanese writing system, where they are called kanji. The oldest continually used writing system in the world is Chinese characters. Chinese characters are among the most extensively used writing systems in the world by number of users, including Koreans, Japanese, Vietnamese, and others, thanks to their broad contemporary use in East Asia and historic use across the Sinosphere.)

Persian: Persian is a language that belongs to the Iranian language family. Persia's first civilisation dates back to roughly 3000 BC. Later, approximately 1000 BC, several nomad tribes from the southern Soviet Union arrived in Persia (now Iran) and gradually built an empire that stretched from North Africa (Egypt) to the western regions of India. When Arabs seized it in 641 AD, however, it lost its splendour. Its linguistic evolution may be split into three periods: (1) Old Persian (up to 300 BC), which used cuneiform script; (2) Middle Persian, also known as Pahlavi (3rd century BC to 9th century AD), which used the Aramaic alphabet for writing; and (3) Modern Persian, which utilized the Arabic alphabet. The Persian language saw several modifications in its alphabet, writing style, lexicon, and grammar. Modern Persian grammar is significantly easier than Pahlavi or Old Persian, which has no relation to the current writing system (Olmstead, 1948, p.68).

Persians abide by Zoroastrianism, which was founded by Prophet Zoroaster and focuses on one god, Ahura Mazda, which means "wise spirit." His teachings, known as 'gatha,' are contained in the Avesta, which

details religious rites, prayers, sacrifices, ceremonial regulations, civic laws of good and evil, and fire ceremonies, among other things. In India, its adherents are known as 'Parsis.' They venerate fire as a symbol of Ahura Mazda (p.195).

**Avesta and Pahlavi:** The Prophet Zoroaster's chronological period is contested; however it is thought to be between 1400 and 600 BC. However, the majority of people believe he was born in the early 600s and was murdered at the age of 77, according to their religious beliefs. He is said to have authored his Avesta teachings, which must have been written in cuneiform script and hence in little fragments of text. Later on, the Zoroastrians kept adding to it their writings. After 300 BC, Zoroastrianism began to collapse, and by 600 AD, it had been completely eradicated due to Muslim conquest (pp.196-197).

The majority of the ancient Avesta was lost due to political upheavals. Between 531 and 578 AD, it was reassembled, extended, and redesigned in the shape of a genuine book in the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language in Aramaic script using the remaining fragments and royal favor. However, the Muslim conquest in 641 AD destroyed most of it again, when they replaced the state's whole culture, writing, religion, and everything else. Avesta is written in Pahlavi, which contains many Sanskrit terms and their apbhransh, and the descriptions of the deities and the manner of the rites in Avesta mirror Vedic rituals to some extent. The reason for this is that Iran's origin (known as Aryavart) is extremely near to India, where Sanskrit was the primary scholarly language. At one point in the distant past, the whole region stretching from Iran to Indonesia was known as Aryavart. As part of Indonesia's national historic culture, stage presentations of Bhagwan Ram's saga from the Ramayan are still performed every day in their unique way. The Avesta term 'gatha' is an 'apbhransh' of the Sanskrit word granth, which was popular among Buddhist writers (Maneckji, 1938, p.135-136).

All these glorious eastern civilisations blossomed altogether with their lingua francas, which grew and flourished during centuries and

contributed to the development of new languages through conquest, trade, and cultural exchange primarily with the rise of western civilisations.

#### **4. The Provenance of Alphabets**

Linguists have no clue how, when, or where the world's alphabets started, diverged, or mingled since they did not turn to the Sanskrit language (Ancient Indian Language), whose vowel system was partially adopted by the Greeks and whose 'apbhransh' terms are still present in the world's languages. This evidence, though confirmed today by many scholars, seems in need of more researches and investigations to be promulgated in the world. Linguists think that Semites and Greeks were the primary creators and developers of the alphabetic writing system that is utilized by the majority of the world's languages (Hooker et al., 1990, pp.211-213). Indeed, the Semitic system adopted by Egyptians first, simply had consonants; the Greeks added vowels. Around 1500 BC, the North Semitic Phoenicians created the earliest type of visual graphic signs, and around 800 BC, the Greeks created the vowel system of alphabetic writing. Despite the great influence of the Sanskrit and Indian-Aryan civilisations in the adoption of consonants and vowels, the research seems to be reluctant to the adoption of the idea that they were pioneers as to the creation of an alphabet.

##### **4.1 Phoenician and Greek Alphabets and Languages**

The oldest Phoenician inscription that has been deciphered dates from 1100 BC. The earliest and easiest-to-read inscription was found in Phoenicia, which is located on the coast of Canaan (now Lebanon). As a result, it is globally considered the progenitor of all western alphabets. From around 3000 BC, the Phoenicians and Hebrews were Canaanite tribes who lived there. As a result, the Canaanite alphabet style was also attributed to them.

The language of Phoenicia is a dead language today. From 2000 to 1000 BC, it was spoken on the continent. It lasted only until the early Christian years on a few Mediterranean islands before going extinct. They employed the cuneiform script for writing and spoke a dialect of Northern

Central Semite that was connected to Hebrew. Around 1600 BC, they created their own alphabet, which consisted of 22 consonants but no vowels.

They were seagoing traders, skilled shipbuilders and sailors who worshipped a variety of gods and performed sacrifices in the same way that other Semitic peoples did. From the Babylonians, they got many legendary myths about creation and floods, among other things. They specialized in ivory and wood carving, as well as metalwork, and their trading expeditions took them all the way up to Spain, where they established colonies along the country's southern coast. During the first century BC, the Phoenician language was replaced by the Aramaic (Hooker et al., p. 117).

Likewise, around the 14th century BC, the Greeks of Mycenae (a small town in southern Greece) devised Linear B, a solely syllabic writing system with 90 signs (graphic forms), one for each syllable. It had limits and was insufficient to generate a full spoken language, despite being methodical. The Greeks then adopted Semitic (Phoenician) graphic-signs, which were a sort of mixed consonant-vowel syllabic single-character graphic-signs, circa 900 BC. Their graphic-signs were created with the intention of portraying a single distinct sound that was used to denote generally recognized items and things, and they were retained in a set of 22 signs.

Instead of syllables, they were more like individual speech sounds. For example, their sound for ox was 'aleph,' which was a single sound that collectively contained the sound pictures of all the letters in the word. That may have sufficed for individuals who needed to talk or write in a very restricted capacity in those days. Despite the fact that it was an inefficient form of writing, the Phoenicians created a masterpiece that served as a model for the introduction of real alphabetic writing. The Greeks adapted the 22 names and their graphic symbols to their own needs. For instance, the Phoenician letter 'aleph (meaning ox) became Greek alpha, whereas beth (meaning home) became Greek beta (p.118).

They later improved and perfected their alphabetic system. Out of the twenty-two letters (signs), four were removed because they were

ambiguous. They added six additional letters to their alphabet and utilized six of their letters (signs) to symbolize the right sound of the vowels, making it a twenty-four letter alphabet. They created the real alphabetic principle of consonants and vowels in this way. Because the initial letter in Greek is termed 'alpha,' the term alphabet was coined to refer to all consonants and vowels.

The concept of distinct vowels and consonants had never been used before. The Greek alphabet was adopted by almost all European languages because it eliminated the ambiguity of all prior writing systems and established a technique to suit the current needs of progressive writing. As a result, their 24-letter vowel-consonant alphabet is still employed in Greek writing today. The earliest inscriptions were written right to left, as in other Semitic texts; subsequently, they were written alternately right to left and left to right in a ploughing manner; and eventually, approximately 500 BC, they were written from left to right.

Greece was the cradle of western civilisation, which began roughly 3,000 years ago. Around 500 BC, Athens reached its pinnacle of splendor, which was the city's golden period. Aristotle lived in the 4th century BC, whereas Democritus, Socrates, and his disciple Plato lived in the 5th century BC. Socrates spoke about basic universal principles and one Divinity, while Democritus proposed the theory of the universe's genesis using atoms (but he was sentenced to death by drinking poison for telling the truth which they called unorthodox); Plato believed in the soul's immortality and presented his argument based on his concept of the intellect and desire halves of the human being. In Athens, he founded the "Academy," a philosophical school. His disciple Aristotle demonstrated in his theory of physics how the intrinsic nature of this world causes perpetual change in every shape, phase, and feature of creation, but only God remains unchangeable and eternal. He used the term "theology" to describe God's philosophy (Boardman et al., 2001, p.115).

The Iliad and the Odyssey are two classic fiction stories written in a long poetry style that are traditionally thought to have been penned by a



blind but inventive bard, Homer (alone or with a traveling companion) circa 700 BC and recited in the community. Between 300 and 100 BC, the current books that are available today were assembled, revised, and rewritten from the known writing parts of the Iliad and Odyssey, as well as from the prevailing spoken versions. Such tales provide insight on the society and individuals of the time, as well as their beliefs. The ancient Greeks did, in fact, lay the foundations of western civilisation. They also made contributions to biology, geometry, history, philosophy, physics, Plato's logics, fine arts, architecture, and music. The architecture of Athena's temple (450 BC) is well-known.

When the Peloponnesian war broke out in 431 BC, and a plague pandemic killed one-third of the Athenians shortly after, the city's golden era came to an end, but it regained its wealth during Alexander's reign. However, in 148 BC, the Roman Empire's growing military conquests acquired control of Macedonia (Greece), causing many disruptions and destructions in Greece (p.145).

They used a vowel system and added six more letters to make it a 24 letter alphabet after adopting the Phoenician graphic alphabet in 900 BC. Previously, it was pronounced 'b'. It is now pronounced 'v' in Modern Greek. The letters took some time to develop. There were numerous Greek dialects, each with its own distinctive writing style. Finally, the Ionian alphabet style was accepted in general, and the letters became uniform after 400 BC. During the Classical Greek period, literature and art bloomed. Although the dialects of Greek were mutually comprehensible within a typical range of comprehension, word and accent pronunciations varied from era to period and dialect to dialect. The short and long vowel sounds differed amongst dialects, and the political environment in the country influenced the intermigration of dialects. However, after the creation of Alexander's empire in the 4th century BC and the dismantling of ancient political borders, homogeneity in spoken language developed. The Koine (common language) or Hellenistic Greek was the name given to this dialect (400 BC - 600 AD). It supplanted other dialects, and the speaking and writing systems were standardized to a large extent (p.178).

Grammar has evolved over time as well. In Plato's and Demosthenes' writings, there is a shift in language. Even under the Byzantine Empire (500-1500 AD), the spoken language continued to evolve, while the written language improved, resulting in a significant divide between the local vernacular and literary Greek. As a result of this predicament, a distinct type of 'Demotic' language has emerged for popular usage.

All of the key phonological and grammatical changes between Koine and Modern Greek occurred during this time period. Previously, pronouns and verbs had three numbers: singular, dual, and plural. The word 'dual' was thereafter eliminated, leaving simply singular and plural.

The formation of numerous words altered from Ancient Greek to Modern Greek. Local borrowings and collections make up the lexicon of the Greek language. In terms of the origins of Greek, numerous Mycenaean nouns in the 2nd millennium BC matched to Greek words like leon (lion), onos (ass), elephas (ivory), and so on. They expanded their vocabulary by utilizing proverbs, building compounds, and adding prefixes or suffixes to these primary words. They later borrowed a large number of words from other languages, including Italian, Turkish, French, and Latin (Palmer, 1980, pp.224-225).

## **4.2 Descendants of Greek Alphabet**

Etruscan, Latin (and Romance), and Cyrillic are direct descendants of the Greek alphabet. The Etruscan language was the language spoken by the Etruscans. Before 900 BC, they were the residents of western Italy (today Tuscany). Their language is now extinct and unintelligible. They started with a Greek (Phoenician) alphabet of 22 signs (with Greek phonetic meanings) and eventually added four additional letters, bringing the total to 26. Etruscan writing was usually done in a right-to-left direction. Their writing may be traced back to the 8th century BC. There were various variants of the Etruscan alphabet, and there was no single standard of writing. It went through a lot of transformations.

The classical Etruscan alphabet, however, attained its ultimate form after 400 BC, consisting of 20 letters, 16 consonants, and four vowels. The

language is still being figured out. Between 500 and 400 BC, they were prosperous, sold their handcrafted items around the Mediterranean, and believed in sacrifices. Around 700 BC, the towns of Latium (near Rome) came into touch. Early Rome was controlled by Etruscan kings, but the Roman invasion ended their reigns about 300 BC. Around 700-600 BC, the Latin alphabet was derived from Greek through Etruscan connection. They used 21 Etruscan (Greek) letters, including the letter k. When the Romans conquered Greece in the last century BC, y and z were added to it. As a result, the Classic Latin alphabet contained 23 letters. During the evolution of Old English in the Middle Ages, the letter I was exaggerated as I and j, while the letter v was exaggerated as u, v, and w, resulting in a 26-character alphabet. Latin scripts used to be written from right to left. They established their writing system afterwards and adopted a large number of Greek terms. The Romance languages are the languages that have evolved from Latin (Benelli, 2017).

The Cyrillic script, based on the Greek alphabet, was devised by two Greek brothers for Slavic-speaking people such as Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, and Serbs, among others. It was produced by Saints Cyril and Methodius, two brothers who evangelized the Slavs and were known as ‘the Apostles to the Slavs,’ and they were the same disciples that created the new Slavic script in Bulgaria. The usage of the Cyrillic script in Bulgaria was made official in 893. The new script became the basis of alphabets used in various languages in Orthodox Church dominated Eastern Europe, both Slavic and non-Slavic (such as Romanian). For centuries Cyrillic was also used by Catholic and Muslim (Bosnian) Slavs too. Cyrillic is derived from the Greek uncial script. Uncial is a majuscule script (written entirely in capital letters) commonly used from the 4th to 8th centuries AD by Latin and Greek scribes. Uncial letters were used to write Greek and Latin, as well as Gothic and Coptic. It used to have 42 letters, but that number was lowered to meet the demands of the country's language; for example, Russian has 32 letters and Bulgarian has just 30. Slavic languages (and dialects) number in the hundreds, each having its unique syntax and lexicon (Cubberley, 1996).

## 5. The Germanic Languages:

The common ancestor of all languages in this branch is Proto-Germanic, also known as Common Germanic, which was spoken in Iron Age Scandinavia about the middle of the first millennium BC. Proto-Germanic, like all of its offspring, possesses a number of distinctive linguistic characteristics, the most notable of which is the consonant change known as "Grimm's law." When Germanic tribes came south from Scandinavia in the 2nd century BC to settle in what is now northern Germany and southern Denmark, the first variations of Germanic entered history.

All Germanic languages are assumed to be descended from a hypothetical Proto-Germanic, connected through sound alterations governed by Grimm's and Verner's laws. These events took place in Northern Europe during the Pre-Roman Iron Age, around 500 BC. Although Proto-Germanic was most likely spoken after 500 BC, and Proto-Norse from the 2nd century AD and later is still quite close to reconstructed Proto-Germanic, other common developments that distinguish Germanic from Proto-Indo-European show that pre-Proto-Germanic speakers shared a common past during the Nordic Bronze Age.

Grimm's law was the first systematic sound change finding, and it led to the establishment of historical phonology as a separate field of historical linguistics. Friedrich von Schlegel was the first to notice the relationship between Latin *p* and Germanic *f* in 1806. Rasmus Rask expanded the correspondences to include other Indo-European languages like Sanskrit and Greek, as well as the entire system of consonants. In his book *Deutsche Grammatik*, published in 1822, Jacob Grimm proposed the rule and expanded it to encompass standard German. He discovered that many words had different consonants than predicted by his law, and these exceptions perplexed linguists for decades until they were finally explained by Danish linguist Karl Verner in the guise of Verner's law. After an unstressed syllable, consonants that would normally have been voiceless

fricatives turned voiced fricatives, according to Verner's law. Karl Verner devised the rule, which was originally published in 1877 (O'Donnell, 2012).

When compared to other Indo-European languages, Germanic languages have a number of distinguishing characteristics. The following are a some of the most well-known:

Grimm's Law and Verner's Law, which moved the values of all Indo-European stop consonants (for example, original \*/t d dh/ became Germanic \*/t d/ in most cases; compare three with Latin tres, two with Latin duo, and do with Sanskrit dha-). The discovery of these two sound laws was a watershed moment in our understanding of the regular character of language sound change, as well as the creation of the comparative method, which is the foundation of modern historical linguistics. Besides, the creation of a strong stress on the word's initial syllable, resulting in significant phonological reduction of all other syllables. This is the reason for the monosyllabic nature of most basic English, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish words, as well as the widespread perception of modern English and German as consonant-heavy languages (O'Donnell).

Also, when a high front vocalic segment (/i/, /i/, or /j/) followed in the next syllable, a shift known as Germanic umlaut ensued, which changed vowel quality. Back vowels were typically fronted, and front vowels were elevated. The changed vowels are denoted with a diaeresis in several languages (e.g. ä ö ü in German, pronounced / ε ø y/, respectively). This alteration resulted in widespread alternations in related words, which are still very common in current German but only exist in remnants in modern English. (e.g. mouse/mice, goose/geese, broad/breadth, tell/told, old/elder, foul/filth, gold/gild. There are a lot of vowel properties in Germanic languages. In most varieties of English (excluding diphthongs), there are 11–12 pure vowels (monophthongs), 17 pure vowels (monophthongs) in standard Swedish, 14 in standard German and Dutch, and at least 11 in Danish. The Amstetten dialect of Bavarian German includes 13 unique long vowel differences, making it one of the world's most extensive inventory (Cercignani, 1980, p.126).

Moreover, the word order of the verb second (V2) is unusual across languages. The verb must be preceded by exactly one noun phrase or adverbial element; in particular, if the verb is preceded by an adverb or prepositional phrase, the subject must follow immediately the finite verb. This only exists in a few relics in modern English, and is referred to as "inversion" in the EFL classroom. Some constructions with here or there (Here comes the teacher; there are five oceans), verbs of speech after a quote ("Yes," said Mary), utterances starting with certain conjunctions (Hardly had he said this when...; Only much later did he realise...), and sentences beginning with certain motion adverbs to create a sense of drama are examples (Over went the boat; out ran the lady; Down the feelings were). It is, nonetheless, found in all current Germanic languages (p.130). Another significant feature consists of discourse particles, a class of short, unstressed words used by speakers to communicate their attitude regarding the hearer's speech, outside of Germanic languages, this word category appears to be uncommon. The word 'just,' which the speaker can use to indicate astonishment, is an illustration of how little discourse particles are used in English (Harbert, 2007, p.32).

In general, Germanic languages differ in terms of how traditional or modern they are in addition to an overall trend toward analyticity. Some languages, such as Icelandic and, to a smaller degree, German, have retained much of the Proto-Germanic inflectional morphology (and in turn from Proto-Indo-European). Languages, like English, Swedish, and Afrikaans, have shifted to a more analytic approach.

Indeed, the Germanic variants have been split into three divisions since their first attestation: West, East, and North Germanic. The scant evidence of runic scripts makes it impossible to discern their exact relationship. The western group would have emerged during the late Jastorf civilisation, while the eastern group could be descended from a 1st-century Gotland variety, leaving the northern group's origins in southern Sweden. Elder Futhark's oldest period (2nd to 4th centuries) precedes the separation into regional script variants and linguistically represents the Common

Germanic stage. The Vimose inscriptions, which date from around 160 AD, are among the oldest datable Germanic inscriptions (Mees, 2015, p.129).

Ulfilas' 4th-century Gothic translation of the New Testament is the first cohesive Germanic work that has survived. Early West Germanic evidence can be found in Old Frankish/Old Dutch (the Bergakker inscription from the 5th century), Old High German (scattered words and sentences from the 6th century and cohesive texts from the 9th century), and Old English (oldest texts 650, coherent texts 10th century). North Germanic, as Proto-Norse, is only found in a few runic inscriptions until around 800, when it evolves into Old Norse. Longer runic inscriptions (Eggjum stone, Rök stone) originate from the 8th and 9th centuries, longer Latin alphabet texts (slendingabók) date from the 12th century, and some skaldic poetry dates from the 9th century.

By the 10th century, the variations had diverged to the point where mutual understanding was difficult. The Danelaw Vikings' linguistic contact with the Anglo-Saxons left traces in the English language and is thought to have aided the decline of Old English grammar, which, blended with the influx of Romance Old French lexicon after the Norman Conquest, ultimately resulted in Middle English from the 12th century. Since the end of the Migration Period, East Germanic languages have been sidelined. By the 7th century, the Burgundians, Goths, and Vandals had all been linguistically absorbed by their neighbours, with just Crimean Gothic surviving until the 18th century (p.135).

The insular development of Middle English on the one hand, and the continental High German consonant shift on the other, split the West Germanic languages in the early Middle Ages, resulting in Upper German and Low Saxon, with graded intermediate Central German forms. By the early modern period, the range had broadened to include significant distinctions, ranging from Highest Alemannic in the south to Northern Low Saxon in the north, and while both are termed German, they are barely mutually intelligible. The second sound shift had been accomplished in the southern variations, but the consonant shift had no effect on the northern

varieties. On the other hand, the North Germanic languages, remained undivided until well after 1000 AD, and mainland Scandinavian languages still have a high degree of mutual intelligibility today. The fundamental division in these languages is between mainland languages and island languages to the west, particularly Icelandic, which has maintained the Old Norse grammar nearly unaltered while mainland languages have diverged substantially (p.140).

## **6. Roman Civilisation: The Development of Latin Language and Romance languages**

The last of the ancient civilisations, the Roman civilisation, began around the Tiber River in western Italy. Before the 1st millennium BC, the first settlers arrived from somewhere and established. They were shepherds who began farming and purchased land. Their village life was aided by a better climate and fertile soil. They gradually expanded and built their colonies.

Around the first millennium BC, a new tribe arrived in Etruria (today Toscana or Tuscany), on the northwestern bank of the Tiber, most likely from the eastern Mediterranean. They were the type of folks that were both smart and aggressive. They made the earlier people of the area their subordinates once they had settled. The Etruscans were the name given to this people. They had their own language, but they wrote in Greek (Phoenician) alphabet and followed the Greek art style. Historians have discovered a handful of inscriptions in their language, all of which are incomprehensible. They enhanced their living conditions and expanded their territory to the north and south, eventually reaching Latium. Through the 7th century BC, they reached the pinnacle of their affluence and sovereign dignity. In 753 BC, Rome was founded. Around 600 BC, the Etruscans conquered Rome and the rest of Latium. They had a highly developed civilisation. They promoted trade and pioneered the citizen assembly concept. Rome became a thriving city under Roman leadership. However, as Latium became increasingly urbanized and wealthy farmers and



businesspeople became more prosperous, a new and more powerful social elite class emerged in Rome (Asimov, 199, p. 69).

Therefore, in 509 BC, the Romans seized control of Rome by deposing the last Etruscan monarch and establishing the Roman Republic. It was made up of two consuls who were elected for a one-year term and the senate, the Roman Republic's most powerful government entity. All of Rome's senators were patricians, members of the city's wealthiest families. They were so dominant that they had complete authority over the assembly that chose the consuls. The plebeians were the rest of the citizens. They had no influence over the government. (They only received government rights after 287 BC.) The patricians were the most powerful members of the aristocratic class, followed by common citizens and slaves. By 396 BC, Rome had surpassed Naples as Italy's largest metropolis. By 140 BC, the Romans had expanded their empire and had complete control of the Mediterranean coasts up to Spain, as well as conquering Greece and Macedonia. Wealthy Romans became increasingly wealthy as a result of business, tax income, and plundered property from defeated landlords, widening the gap and increasing the tension between the rich and the poor. The turmoil in society spread and those who attempted to defy the senate were discarded indefinitely (p.71).

Between 100 and 180 AD, the Roman Empire was at its peak in terms of strength and economy, and it ruled over all of the Mediterranean's adjacent countries, including Jerusalem. The emperor had the authority to reject or overturn any senate decision, and he was revered as a god of the earth. However, from 235 until 286 AD, the emperorship was in instability, with any prominent figure or warrior able to gain power by force and overthrow his competitor. As a result, more than 20 emperors were crowned in that brief time, including a record-breaking five emperors in an one year in 238 AD (p.85).

The Roman Empire was divided into two regions, Eastern and Western, with different emperorships for administrative purposes. 'East Roman Empire' and 'West Roman Empire' were the permanent divisions of

the Roman Empire. The Western Empire began to sag, and in 476 AD, the Germanic chieftain Odoacer deposed the empire's last monarch, Romulus Augustulus. The Eastern Empire, often known as the Byzantine Empire, lasted until 1453, when it was conquered by the Ottomans. Initially, as far as language is concerned, around the first millennium BC, a small group of people settled in Latium (west Italy) and began speaking Latin. Following then, it became the spoken language of ancient Romans. The popularity of Latin grew in tandem with the rise of Roman governmental power. The Romance languages emerged from Latin and were spoken in nations that were previously part of the Roman Empire. Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian are the major Romance languages. In Latin, *fabulare romanice* means "to speak in a Roman fashion or style." That's where the term "Romance" came from. Classical Latin and the locally spoken vernacular Latin existed. The first was prominent among educated people, whereas the second was the common people's spoken language.

Over several centuries, the Romance languages evolved from varieties of colloquial Latin (known as Vulgar Latin), and by 1200 AD, the majority of western Europeans spoke Latin or a Romance language (especially Italian, French and Spanish). All of the Romance languages had their own dialects spoken in various parts of the country, as well as their own history of growth in terms of how their writing style, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary evolved and expanded over 1,000 years, and how they came to be in its current form.

Latin was the Western world's most prestigious language. It lacked the uncertainty of meaning that other languages possessed. It was the most suited language for legal and other such particular reasons since it possessed exact expression, but it required a very long time to evolve from early spoken Latin to a fully formed form of Classical Latin. The earliest inscriptions are from the 6th century BC, when the city was still young. It went through a lot of transformations. Its early beginnings are little understood since it evolved so dramatically between 500 and 300 BC that older writings were barely comprehensible. From 100 BC to 14 AD, it reached its pinnacle of grandeur. Emperor Augustus (the Augustan Age,

which lasted from 27 BC to 14 AD) was particularly interested in the progress of Latin literature. Over time, the spoken Latin language evolved, deviating from Classical Latin's pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. After the 3rd century AD, it was labeled Vulgar Latin to distinguish it from Classical Latin. As a result, two types of Latin existed: Classical and Vulgar. St. Augustine's (354-430 AD) books are written in Vulgar Latin (Ramat A. & Ramat P., 1998, p.272).

Classical Latin underwent a number of alterations prior to the third century AD. Inflections were simplified, word order was regularized, the previous system of vowel length was changed, consonant sounds were changed, future and imperfect tenses were changed, and syntax was also revised. Classical Latin's grammar was improved and unified in this way, allowing it to use nominal inflections and a distinct usage of conjunctions. Vulgar Latin was also subjected to changes. During the Middle Ages, it was nearly uniform. For example, *viridem* (green) became *viridem*, and *vinea* (wine) became *vinia*; the distinction between short and long vowels was eliminated and altered through time, resulting in the confusion of *i* and *e*, and *u* and *o*, and so on; and *ae* became *e*, and *au* became *o*. As evidenced by accessible literature from various periods, the Latin language saw many shifts in grammar, spellings, vowel sounds, the overall structure of the language, and also the letter writing system. There were no punctuation marks in ancient manuscripts. They were later incorporated at various periods of the language's evolution (p.273).

Other Romance languages were in a similar situation. Northern France's language saw more rapid changes. There are numerous dialects in each of these languages. In France alone, there are approximately 15 dialects spoken in various sections of the country. Romance languages have a syntax that is more similar to Latin, and their common lexicon is likewise derived from Latin. Between the 13th and 14th centuries AD, the literary dialect of the standard Italian language evolved considerably. It has taken on a more Latinized structure. Latin was still employed for scholarly, religious, and scientific reasons in many Romance-speaking countries due to its linguistic consistency. After the medieval era, Latin was revived in original,

scholarly, and scientific works between c. 1375 and c. 1900. The result language is called New Latin. Latin was a fully formed language by 1500 AD. Later, when the English language evolved, it became extinct in England. Its popularity began to wane after the 16th century, and it was nearly extinct by the 19th century. The bulk of the terms in Latin's lexicon come from Greek, as well as those from its own dialects and Romance languages (p.275).

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the ancient civilisations epoch ended. A new era started with the rise of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic Civilisation, and at that period Arabic Language superseded Latin as the language of sciences and knowledge during the medieval ages. Although Latin and other languages were used as mother tongues, nevertheless they were almost declining after the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

In our modern times, and precisely during the Renaissance and the rise of colonialism and imperialism after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the discovery of the New World in 1492, the balance of power has shifted to new western civilisations and new powers, and with that rise, new languages resurrected from old civilisations and flourished in the world to become Imperial languages because their existence was firmly tied to colonial and economic power. These languages were English (both Germanic and Romance Language), French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, German, and Dutch.

The Renaissance was a fervent period of European cultural, artistic, political and economic “rebirth” following the Middle Ages. Generally described as taking place from the 14th century to the 17th century, the Renaissance promoted the rediscovery of classical philosophy, literature and art. Some of the greatest thinkers, authors, statesmen, scientists and artists in human history thrived during this era, while global exploration opened up new lands and cultures to European commerce. The Renaissance is credited with bridging the gap between the Middle Ages and modern-day civilisation. (History.com).

Europeans achieved limited progress in science and art during the Middle Ages, which lasted from the fall of ancient Rome in 476 A.D. to the beginning of the 14th century. The period is also known as the "Dark Ages," because it is associated with battle, ignorance, famine, and pandemics such as the Black Death. Some historians, on the other hand, argue that such bleak representations of the Middle Ages were greatly exaggerated, while many believe that old Greek and Roman philosophies and education were treated with low respect at the time. In Italy throughout the 14th century, a cultural movement known as humanism began to gain traction. Humanism supported the belief that man was the center of his own world and that people should value human achievements in education, classical arts, literature, and science, among other things.

In 1450, the invention of the Gutenberg printing press allowed for improved communication throughout Europe and for ideas to spread more quickly. As a result of this advance in communication, little-known texts from early humanist authors such as those by Francesco Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio, which promoted the renewal of traditional Greek and Roman culture and values, were printed and distributed to the masses. Additionally, many scholars believe advances in international finance and trade impacted culture in Europe and set the stage for the Renaissance. The Renaissance began in Florence, Italy, a city with a long cultural heritage and an affluent population that could afford to encourage aspiring artists. Famous supporters of the movement included members of the powerful Medici family, which governed Florence for more than 60 years. Great Italian poets, painters, statesmen, and others stated that they were part of an intellectual and aesthetic revolution unlike anything they had witnessed during the Dark Ages. Other Italian city-states, such as Venice, Milan, Bologna, Ferrara, and Rome, were the first to join the cause. The Renaissance ideals moved from Italy to France and then throughout western and northern Europe throughout the 15th century. Despite the fact that other European countries had Renaissances later than Italy, the effects were nevertheless revolutionary (Broton, 2002, p.21).

The Renaissance is often seen to as a period of immense blooming. The linguistic and philological innovations of this period are without a doubt fascinating and noteworthy. During this time, grammarians gained access to two new sources of data that modern linguists take for granted: (1) Europe's newly recognized vernacular languages, for the protection and nurture of which national academies and learned institutions developed and continue to exist today; and (2) the languages of Africa, East Asia, the New World, and, subsequently, Siberia, Central Asia, New Guinea, Oceania, the Arctic, and Australia, all of which were opened up by the voyages of discovery. Previously, the Hebrew and to some extent Arabic grammar was the only non-Indo-European grammar that was widely available; Semitic grammar overlaps many categories with Indo-European grammar. Latin was a widely spoken, read, and written language throughout the Renaissance, and it was widely spoken, read, and written throughout Europe and beyond. Other developments include societal changes such as the rise of humanism and humanist views, secularism, individualism, and significant changes in mathematics, sciences, and all sorts of learning in general, the advent of the printing press, religious changes, and the arts.

European industrializing nations engaged in the process of colonizing, influencing, and annexing other portions of the world during the Age of Imperialism, which began around 1760. Since the British began colonizing sections of Asia and Africa in the late 16th century, the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (ELF), or English used among speakers with different first language backgrounds, has persisted. However, it has only been in the last thirty years that ELF has expanded over the world, seen a tremendous increase in its user base, and achieved its current global status.

For centuries, English has evolved by absorbing the words of powerful nations and their languages: in addition to scientific, technical, and medical terms from Latin and Greek, it has absorbed a slew of words from French (following the Norman conquest of England in 1066) and other European Romance languages. The Indo-European language family includes the English language, which is strongly tied to the Frisian, German,

and Dutch languages (Dutch in Belgium is called Flemish). English is the prevalent language in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and a number of Caribbean and Pacific island nations. India, the Philippines, Singapore, and several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, notably South Africa, speak it as their official language. English is the most popular foreign language in most other nations, and it is because of this that it has earned the title of global lingua franca. English is presently spoken by around a third of the world's population, or two billion people.

The real impact of classical languages started with the Renaissance and has lasted ever since; Latin and Greek origins are still the most common source for English words in science, business, education, and technology today. The borrowing of words from foreign languages has proceeded unchecked over the last 300 years, to the point where most of the world's languages are now depicted to a certain degree in the lexicon of English by blending existing words and back formations, in which a part of an existing word is treated as an affix and dropped, resulting in a new word, usually with a related meaning.

However, due to the United States' increasing dominance on the world arena during the twentieth century, as well as more global travel, this importation of new terms has evolved over time. English became a net exporter of words in the twenty-first century as the English language flourished with rapid technological advancement in the Western world. Regardless of their country of origin, brand names frequently use English words. In other words, English has transitioned from a large-scale importer to a big word exporter. The Internet, a tremendous repository of information and arguably the best communication device ever devised, is 95% written in English (Crystal, 1997 p.113). There is no denying that English has already established itself as the worldwide lingua franca of today. Learning English will undoubtedly be a key to unlocking doors of potential opportunities for many years to come.

## 7- Conclusion:

Like the two sides of the same coin, language and culture are inextricably linked. For a variety of reasons, they inhale, bloom, wilt, and die. They are both delicate and adapt to their surroundings. Language expresses people's beliefs and norms fully, and because social norms are inherently dynamic, language must evolve in lockstep with cultural shifts. Language must expand its lexicon to capture new experiences as a result of technological, political, economic, and social advances. Indeed, language helps our minds form conceptions of values. The breakdown of a value system could spell the end of the language in issue. When a civilisation dies, it is almost guaranteed that the language connected with that culture will also die.

Through this historical linguistic journey, one finds out that any vernacular on the planet is in a state of evolution or devolution at any given time. Languages go through stages of differentiation or extinction depending on their function and prerequisites. History shows that a language that reigned supreme during one epoch has vanished during the next. There are numerous elements that influence a language's expansion and evolution. It has been observed that a language that has a large body of scholarly work to its credit increases importance and appeal. Languages like Arabic, Roman, French, and German have all had moments of dominance in the past.

The phenomena of languages continually changing has been observed throughout human history. History has also shown that the process of evolution is not only inexorable, but also unmanageable. This phenomenon has never occurred spontaneously; instead, it has occurred in tandem with relative external shifts and emerges as a natural process that occurs over time as languages and the people who speak them change.

Mesopotamia and Egypt were so powerful in the ancient world that they even had a hand in the creation of language through activities like trade, military, and culture. These societies influenced information exchange and the evolution of widely spoken languages at the time. When people



began to settle in Mesopotamia's villages and cities, their language changed as well. In fact, as those initial cities grew into dynasties, it altered even more, which historians believe reveals a lot about how the kings of those empires felt about the people they ruled.

We investigated the evolution of languages by examining three components of ancient life: trade, conflict, and culture. There are many factors that contribute to the evolution of languages, and this diversity of factors results in the wide range of speech sounds that we have even now.

Firstly, innovations and progress: For new inventions, new terms are always required. The wheel and the papyrus are two excellent examples of ancient times technologies.

Secondly, invasion and evolution: A society's language changes when it is invaded. Whether the invasion is forceful or the conquerors are welcomed, native speakers of a language will borrow terms from the intruders and adapt them into their own language. The invasions of Britain by the Romans and Normans are good instances of this in action. Both invasions came and went, but they left an indelible effect on British culture in a variety of ways. Language was one of these methods. Around 60% of English words are derived from Latin, and it is this invasion process that explains why and how.

Thirdly, new trends and evolvment: Young people invent new terms for each generation, or at the very least utilise words in new ways. Some of these become obsolete, while others do not.

Fourthly, simplicity: Another important factor in language evolution is simplicity. It's no surprise that the most widely used terms are the shortest and simplest. We aim to explain what we really need to say in the easiest way possible, saving lengthier words for more complicated thoughts. As a result, as a term gets more widely overused, it may be reduced or altered to make it simpler to pronounce. The less sophisticated a language grows, the more it evolves.

Finally, adaptability: Adaptability plays a significant role in the evolution of a language. The more docility a language has in absorbing and accepting foreign terms, and the more it exhibits grace in adopting new words, the faster it changes. Language evolution is a difficult and convoluted subject. Languages evolve over many eons, but one thing that cannot be denied is that they do alter.

Languages have a long and fascinating history because some of them originated from others many years ago, as evidenced by their structures and formations today. Still, it is difficult to identify who was the first to be influenced and how the impact was created. We can now see how languages evolved into one another over centuries, how they melted, fused, developed, and changed, and how old languages and lingua francas (Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Persian, Semitic, Aramaic, Phoenician, Koine, Germanic, and Latin) contributed to the rise of our Modern time languages. Writing in the West began with Mesopotamian Cuneiform and hieroglyphic pictographs better, ideograms from Egypt, the alphabet was passed to Phoenicia from the Phoenicians, the alphabet was also passed to the Greeks, and Etruscans were the first people in Italy to use the alphabet from the Greeks then, the Etruscans dominated the early Romans and gave them the alphabet, but the Romans adapted the alphabet to fit Latin as the data above show. Through their development, the interaction between people helped a great deal in enriching their cultures and languages. Indeed, language and intercultural communication in our globalisation era, with English as our global lingua franca, add to the world's cultural and linguistic variety. People from other cultures extend their perspectives by borrowing and exchanging culture when they meet and try to speak each other's languages. Intercultural connections are particularly powerful in the age of globalisation since they enrich each person and mutually transform their worldviews.

Culture and languages dictate how we connect with others, as well as the values and morals we espouse. This is not something that can be said with words, yet language can help us mold what we want to communicate. It is simple for us to transfer our innate ideals into cultural norms. How we

speak, think, and interact with others is influenced by a mix of culture and language. The more languages persons learn, the more "world citizens" they become, with knowledge of various places and people's thoughts, as popular cultures captivate people's minds.

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