

Lexical change

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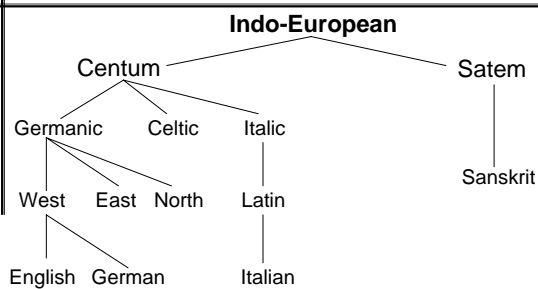
Lexicon and language change

- Diachronic vs. Synchronic linguistics
- Comparative method
- Languages and change are restricted by universal principles
- Language change can originate from within and from outside the language
- Focus on the lexicon/ lexical items
→ lexical resemblance

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Trees and language families



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Reasons for change

- Language is 'handed down' from one generation to the next
- All children use the same physiological and cognitive endowment in learning language
- Therefore the same pattern of change are repeatedly manifested in all languages
- Creativity, imitation

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Reasons for change

- Language contact
→ student's presentation

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Lexical change

- Addition or loss of words
- Often caused by cultural and technological changes
- Filling of 'lexical gaps'
- New words are added through word formation or borrowing

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Semantic change

- Word meanings rarely change suddenly
- Usually words develop new meanings which are related to previous ones
- These changes take place continually
- Sometimes total shift of meaning
- Usually: a word loses some aspect of its former meaning, taking on a partially new but related meaning

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Types of semantic change

- Change in denotation:
 - + generalisation
 - specialisation
- Change in connotation:
 - + amelioration
 - pejoration
- Metonymy
- Metaphor
- grammaticalisation

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Metaphor

- Figure of speech based on perceived similarity between distinct objects/ actions
- One of the most striking and most important mechanisms of semantic change
- Student's presentation

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