



FIGURE 5-18 Chinese language ideograms. The Chinese languages are written with ideograms, most of which represent ideas or concepts rather than sounds.

of present-day Russia, north of the Kurgan homeland. Migrants carried the Uralic languages to Europe, carving out homelands for themselves in the midst of Germanic- and Slavic-speaking peoples and retaining their language as a major element of cultural identity.

African Language Families

No one knows the precise number of languages spoken in Africa, and scholars disagree on classifying those known into families. In the 1800s, European missionaries and colonial officers began to record African languages using the Roman or Arabic alphabet. More than 1,000 distinct languages and several thousand named dialects have been documented. Most lack a written tradition.

Figure 5-19 shows the broad view of African language families, and Figure 5-20 hints at the complex pattern of multiple tongues of Nigeria. This great number of languages results from at least 5,000 years of minimal interaction among the thousands of cultural groups inhabiting the African continent. Each group developed its own language, religion, and other cultural traditions in isolation from other groups.

In northern Africa the language pattern is relatively clear, because Arabic, an Afro-Asiatic language, dominates, although in a variety of dialects. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, languages grow far more complex.

- **Niger-Congo.** More than 95 percent of the people in sub-Saharan Africa speak languages of the Niger-Congo family. One of these languages—Swahili—is the first language of

only 800,000 people and an official language in only one country (Tanzania), but it is spoken as a second language by approximately 30 million Africans.

Especially in rural areas, the local language is used to communicate with others from the same village, and Swahili is used to communicate with outsiders. Swahili originally developed through interaction among African groups and Arab traders, so its vocabulary has strong Arabic influences. Also, Swahili is one of the few African languages with an extensive literature.

- **Nilo-Saharan.** Languages of this family are spoken by a few million people in north-central Africa, immediately north of the Niger-Congo language region. Divisions within the Nilo-Saharan family exemplify the problem of classifying African languages. Despite fewer speakers, the Nilo-Saharan family is divided into six branches, plus numerous groups and subgroups. The total number of speakers of each individual Nilo-Saharan language is extremely small.
- **Khoisan.** A distinctive characteristic of the Khoisan languages is the use of clicking sounds. Upon hearing this, whites in southern Africa derisively and onomatopoeically named the most important Khoisan language Hottentot.

KEY ISSUE 4

Why Do People Preserve Local Languages?

- Preserving Language Diversity
- Global Dominance of English

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

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

Preserving Language Diversity

Thousands of languages are **extinct languages** once in use—even in the recent past—but no longer spoken or read in daily activities by anyone in the world. *Ethnologue* considers 473 languages as nearly extinct because only a few older speakers are

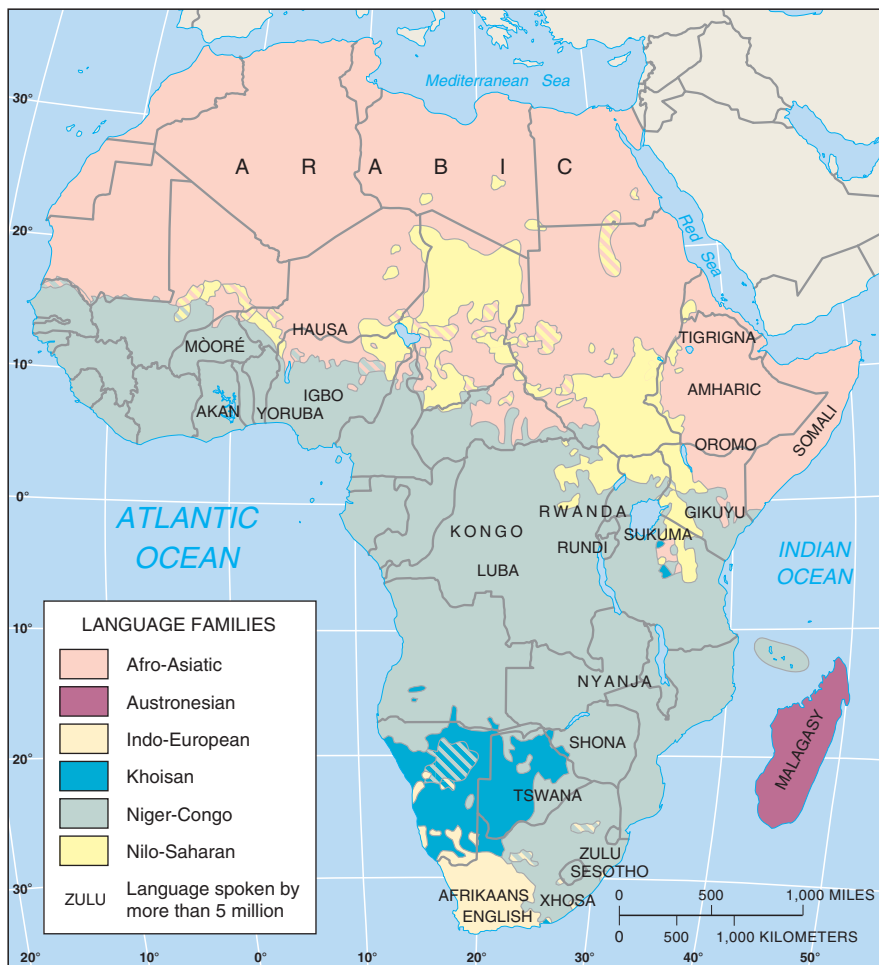


FIGURE 5-19 Africa's language families. More than 1,000 languages have been identified in Africa, and experts do not agree on how to classify them into families, especially languages in central Africa. Languages with more than 5 million speakers are named on the map.

still living, and they are not teaching the languages to their children. According to *Ethnologue*, 46 of these nearly extinct languages are in Africa, 182 in the Americas, 84 in Asia, 9 in Europe, and 152 in the Pacific.

When Spanish missionaries reached the eastern Amazon region of Peru in the sixteenth century, they found more than 500 languages. Only 92 survive today, according to *Ethnologue*, and 14 of these face immediate extinction because fewer than 100 speakers remain. Of Peru's 92 surviving indigenous languages, only Cusco, a Quechuan language, is currently used by more than 1 million people.

Gothic was widely spoken by people in Eastern and Northern Europe in the third century. Not only is Gothic extinct but so is the entire language group to which it belonged, the East Germanic group of the Germanic branch of Indo-European. The last speakers of Gothic lived in the Crimea in Russia in the sixteenth century. The Gothic language died because the descendants of the Goths were converted to other languages through processes of integration, such as political dominance and cultural preference. For example, many Gothic people switched to speaking the Latin language after their conversion to Christianity. Similarly,

indigenous languages are disappearing in Peru as speakers switch to Spanish.

Some endangered languages are being preserved. The European Union has established the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL), based in Dublin, Ireland, to provide financial support for the preservation of several dozen indigenous, regional, and minority languages spoken by 46 million Europeans. Nonetheless, linguists expect that hundreds of languages will become extinct during the twenty-first century and that only about 300 languages are clearly safe from extinction because they have sufficient speakers and official government support.

Hebrew: Reviving Extinct Languages

Hebrew is a rare case of an extinct language that has been revived (Figure 5-21). Most of the Jewish Bible (Christian Old Testament) was written in Hebrew (a small part of it was written in another Afro-Asiatic language, Aramaic). A language of daily activity in biblical times, Hebrew diminished in use in the fourth century B.C. and was thereafter retained only for Jewish religious services. At the time of Jesus, people in present-day Israel generally spoke Aramaic, which in turn was replaced by Arabic.

When Israel was established as an independent country in 1948, Hebrew became one of the new country's two official languages, along with Arabic. Hebrew was chosen because the Jewish population of Israel consisted of refugees and migrants from many countries who spoke many

languages. Because Hebrew was still used in Jewish prayers, no other language could so symbolically unify the disparate cultural groups in the new country.

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

Celtic: Preserving Endangered Languages

The Celtic branch of Indo-European is of particular interest to English speakers because it was the major language in the British Isles before the Germanic Angles, Jutes, and Saxons invaded. Two thousand years ago, Celtic languages were spoken in much of present-day Germany, France, and northern Italy, as well as in

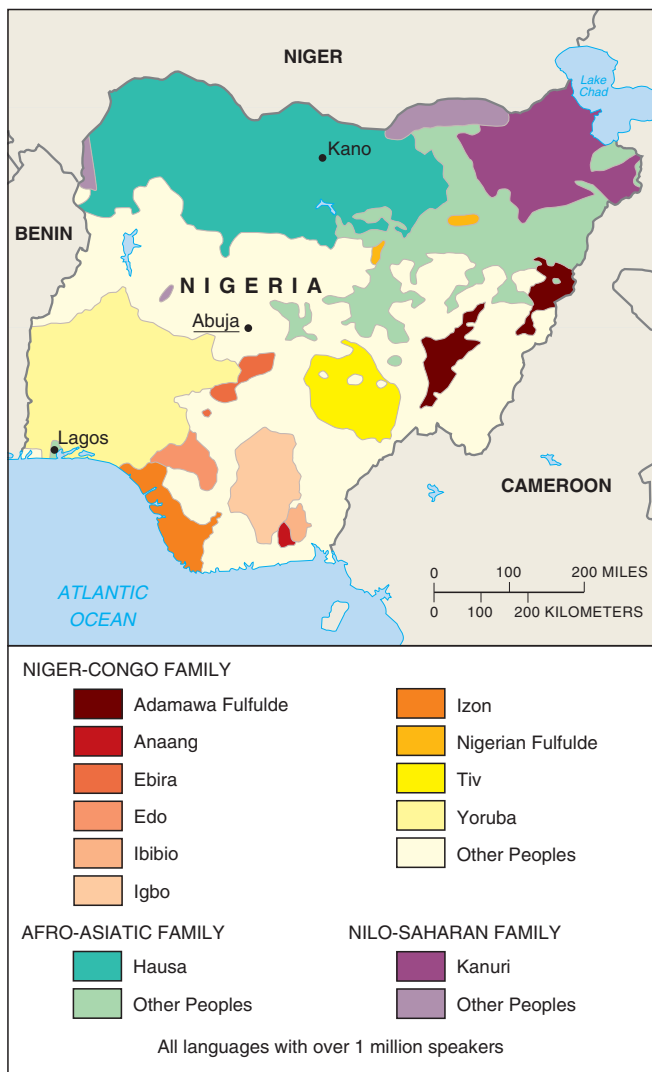


FIGURE 5-20 Nigeria's main languages. Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, displays problems that can arise from the presence of many speakers of many languages. Nigeria has 514 distinct languages, according to *Ethnologue*, only a few of which have widespread use. National unity is severely strained by the lack of a common language that a large percentage of the population can understand. Groups living in different regions of Nigeria have often battled. To reduce these regional tensions, the government moved the capital from Lagos in the Yoruba-dominated southwest to Abuja in the center of Nigeria. This central and "neutral" location was selected to avoid existing concentrations of the major rival cultural groups. Nigeria reflects the problems that can arise when great cultural diversity—and therefore language diversity—is packed into a relatively small region. Nigeria also illustrates the importance of language in identifying distinct cultural groups on a local scale. Speakers of one language are unlikely to understand any of the others in the same family, let alone languages from other families.

the British Isles. Today, Celtic languages survive only in remoter parts of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and on the Brittany peninsula of France (Figure 5-22).

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



FIGURE 5-21 Revival of Hebrew. Hebrew and Arabic are both official languages in Israel. A third-grade class in Jerusalem is taught simultaneously in Arabic (in blue) and Hebrew (in red) by Arab and Jewish teachers.

- **Irish Gaelic.** Irish Gaelic and English are the Republic of Ireland's two official languages. Irish is spoken by 350,000 people on a daily basis, and 1.5 million say that they can speak it.
- **Scottish Gaelic.** In Scotland 59,000, or 1 percent of the people, speak Scottish Gaelic. An extensive body of literature exists in Gaelic languages, including the Robert Burns poem *Auld Lang Syne* ("old long since"), the basis for the popular New Year's Eve song. Gaelic was carried from Ireland to Scotland about 1,500 years ago.
- **Brythonic (Welsh).** Wales—the name derived from the Germanic invaders' word for *foreign*—was conquered by the English in 1283. Welsh remained dominant in Wales until the nineteenth century, when many English speakers migrated there to work in coal mines and factories. A 2004 survey found 611,000 Welsh speakers in Wales, 22 percent of the population. In some isolated communities in the northwest, especially in the county of Gwynedd, two-thirds speak Welsh.



FIGURE 5-22 Celtic language branch. Direction sign on the Beara Peninsula in the southwest of County Cork, Ireland, indicates the distance to New York in Gaelic and English.

- **Cornish.** Cornish became extinct in 1777, with the death of the language's last known native speaker, Dolly Pentreath, who lived in Mousehole (pronounced "muzzle"). Before Pentreath died, an English historian recorded as much of her speech as possible so that future generations could study the Cornish language. One of her last utterances was later translated as "I will not speak English . . . you ugly, black toad!"
- **Breton.** In Brittany—like Cornwall, an isolated peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean—around 250,000 speak Breton regularly. Breton differs from the other Celtic languages in that it has more French words.

The survival of any language depends on the political and military strength of its speakers. The Celtic languages declined because the Celts lost most of the territory they once controlled to speakers of other languages. In the 1300s, the Irish were forbidden to speak their own language in the presence of their English masters. By the nineteenth century, Irish children were required to wear "tally sticks" around their necks at school. The teacher carved a notch in the stick every day the child used an Irish word, and at the end of the day meted out punishment based on the number of tallies. Parents encouraged their children to learn English so that they could compete for jobs. Most remaining Celtic speakers also know the language of their English or French conquerors.

Recent efforts have prevented the disappearance of Celtic languages. In Wales, the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (Welsh Language Society) has been instrumental in preserving the language. Britain's 1988 Education Act made Welsh language training a compulsory subject in all schools in Wales, and

Welsh history and music have been added to the curriculum. All local governments and utility companies are now obliged to provide services in Welsh. Welsh-language road signs have been posted throughout Wales, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) produces Welsh-language television and radio programs. Knowledge of Welsh is now required for many jobs, especially in public service, media, culture, and sports.

An Irish-language TV station began broadcasting in 1996. English road signs were banned from portions of western Ireland in 2005. The revival is being led by young Irish living in other countries who wish to distinguish themselves from the English (in much the same way that Canadians traveling abroad often make efforts to distinguish themselves from U.S. citizens). Irish singers, including many rock groups (although not U2), have begun to record and perform in Gaelic.

A few hundred people have become fluent in the formerly extinct Cornish

language, which was revived in the 1920s. Cornish is taught in grade schools and adult evening courses and is used in some church services. Some banks accept checks written in Cornish. EBLUL granted Cornish minority language status in 2002. After years of dispute over how to spell the revived language, various groups advocating for the revival of Cornish reached an agreement in 2008 on a standard written version of the language. Because the language became extinct, it is impossible to know precisely how to pronounce Cornish words.

The long-term decline of languages such as Celtic provides an excellent example of the precarious struggle for survival that many languages experience. Faced with the diffusion of alternatives used by people with greater political and economic strength, speakers of Celtic and other languages must work hard to preserve their linguistic cultural identity.

Multilingual States

Difficulties can arise at the boundary between two languages. Note in Figures 5-9 (Indo-European languages) and 5-10 (Germanic languages) that the boundary between the Romance and Germanic branches runs through the middle of two small European countries, Belgium and Switzerland. Belgium has had more difficulty than Switzerland in reconciling the interests of the different language speakers.

Southern Belgians (known as Walloons) speak French, whereas northern Belgians (known as Flemings) speak a dialect of the Germanic language, Dutch, called Flemish (Figure 5-23). The language boundary sharply divides the

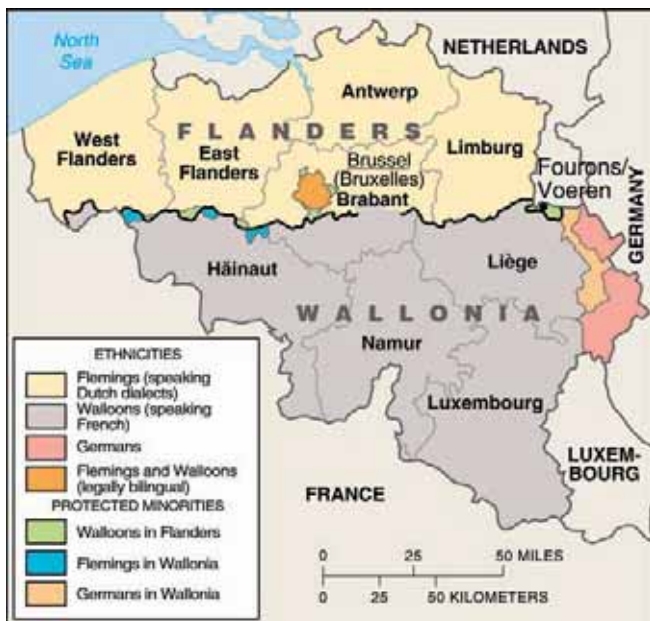


FIGURE 5-23 Languages in Belgium. Flemings in the north speak Flemish, a Dutch dialect. Walloons in the south speak French. The two groups have had difficulty sharing national power. Flemish activists seeking a division of Belgium into two countries spray-painted over the French names on this road sign, leaving the Flemish names intact.

country into two regions. Antagonism between the Flemings and Walloons is aggravated by economic and political differences. Historically, the Walloons dominated Belgium's economy and politics, and French was the official state language.

Motorists in Belgium clearly see the language boundary on expressways. Heading north, the highway signs suddenly change from French to Flemish at the boundary between Wallonia and Flanders. Brussels, the capital city, is an exception. Although located in Flanders, Brussels is officially bilingual and signs are in both French and Flemish. As an example, some stations on the subway map of Brussels are identified by two names—one French and one Flemish (for instance, Porte de Hal and Halle Poort—see Figure 13-28).

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

In contrast with Belgium, Switzerland peacefully exists with multiple languages. The key is a decentralized government, in which local authorities hold most of the power, and decisions are frequently made by voter referenda. Switzerland has four official languages—German (used by 65 percent of the population), French (18 percent), Italian (10 percent), and Romansh (1 percent). Swiss voters made Romansh an official language in a 1938 referendum, despite the small percentage of people who use the language.

Switzerland is divided into four main linguistic regions, as shown in Figure 5-24, but people living in individual communities, especially in the mountains, may use a language other

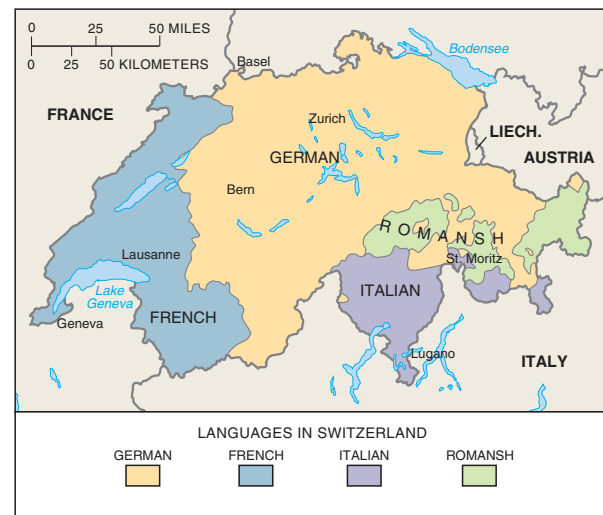


FIGURE 5-24 Languages in Switzerland. Switzerland lives peacefully with four official languages, including Romansh, which is used by only 1 percent of the population.

than the prevailing local one. The Swiss, relatively tolerant of speakers of other languages, have institutionalized cultural diversity by creating a form of government that places considerable power in small communities.

Isolated Languages

An **isolated language** is a language unrelated to any other and therefore not attached to any language family. Similarities and differences between languages—our main form of communication—are a measure of the degree of interaction among groups of people.



GLOBAL FORCES, LOCAL IMPACTS

Language Policy in Australia and New Zealand

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

An essential element in maintaining British culture was restriction of immigration from non-English-speaking places during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fear of immigration was especially strong in Australia because of its proximity to other Asian countries. Under a “White Australia” policy, every prospective immigrant was required to write 50 words of a European language dictated by an immigration officer. The dictation test was not eliminated until 1957. The Australian government now merely requires that immigrants learn English.

New Zealand’s language requirement is more stringent: Immigrants must already be fluent in English, although free English lessons are available to immigrants. More remote from Asian landmasses, New Zealand has attracted fewer Asian immigrants.

Though English remains the dominant language of Australia and New Zealand, the languages that predate British settlement survive in both countries. However, the two countries have adopted different policies with regard to indigenous languages. Australia regards English as a tool for promoting cultural diversity, whereas New Zealand regards linguistic diversity as an important element of cultural diversity (Figure 5-25).

In Australia, 1 percent of the population is Aboriginal. Many elements of Aboriginal culture are now being preserved. But education is oriented toward teaching English rather than maintaining local languages. English is the language of instruction throughout Australia, and others are relegated to the status of second language.

In New Zealand, more than 10 percent of the population is Maori, descendants of Polynesian people who migrated there around 1,000 years ago. In contrast with Australia, New Zealand has adopted

policies to preserve the Maori language. Most notably, Maori has become one of New Zealand’s three official languages, along with English and sign language. A Maori Language Commission was established to preserve the language. Despite official policies, only 1 percent of New Zealanders are fluent in Maori, most of whom are over age 50. Preserving the language requires skilled teachers and the willingness to endure inconvenience compared to using the world’s lingua franca, English. ■



FIGURE 5-25 Preserving language diversity in New Zealand. Maori language is being taught at an elementary school in a predominantly Maori village.

The diffusion of Indo-European languages demonstrates that a common ancestor dominated much of Europe before recorded history. Similarly, the diffusion of Indo-European languages to the Western Hemisphere is a result of conquests by Indo-European speakers in more recent times. In contrast, isolated languages arise through lack of interaction with speakers of other languages.

A PRE-INDO-EUROPEAN SURVIVOR: BASQUE. The best example of an isolated language in Europe is Basque, apparently the only language currently spoken in Europe that

survives from the period before the arrival of Indo-European speakers. No attempt to link Basque to the common origin of the other European languages has been successful.

Basque was probably once spoken over a wider area but was abandoned where its speakers came in contact with Indo-Europeans. It is now the first language of 666,000 people in the Pyrenees Mountains of northern Spain and southwestern France (refer to Figure 5-12, the gray area in northern Spain). Basque’s lack of connection to other languages reflects the isolation of the Basque people in their mountainous homeland.

This isolation has helped them preserve their language in the face of the wide diffusion of Indo-European languages.

AN UNCHANGING LANGUAGE: ICELANDIC. Icelandic is related to other languages in the North Germanic group of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. Icelandic's significance is that over the past thousand years it has changed less than any other in the Germanic branch. As was the case with England, people in Iceland speak a Germanic language because their ancestors migrated to the island from the east, in this case from Norway. Norwegian settlers colonized Iceland in A.D. 874.

When an ethnic group migrates to a new location, it takes along the language spoken in the former home. The language spoken by most migrants—such as the Germanic invaders of England—changes in part through interaction with speakers of other languages. But in the case of Iceland, the Norwegian immigrants had little contact with speakers of other languages when they arrived in Iceland, and they did not have contact with speakers of their language back in Norway. After centuries of interaction with other Scandinavians, Norwegian and other North Germanic languages had adopted new words and pronunciation, whereas the isolated people of Iceland had less opportunity to learn new words and no reason to change their language.

Global Dominance of English

One of the most fundamental needs in a global society is a common language for communication. Increasingly in the modern world, the language of international communication is English (see Global Forces, Local Impacts box). A Polish airline pilot who flies over Spain speaks to the traffic controller on the ground in English. Swiss bankers speak a dialect of German among themselves, but with German bankers they prefer to speak English rather than German. English is the official language at an aircraft factory in France and an appliance company in Italy.

English: An Example of a Lingua Franca

A language of international communication, such as English, is known as a **lingua franca**. To facilitate trade, speakers of two different languages would create a lingua franca by mixing elements of the two languages into a simple common language. The term, which means *language of the Franks*, was originally applied by Arab traders during the Middle Ages to describe the language they used to communicate with Europeans, whom they called *Franks*.

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

Other than English, modern lingua franca languages include Swahili in East Africa, Hindi in South Asia, Indonesian in

Southeast Asia, and Russian in the former Soviet Union. A number of African and Asian countries that became independent in the twentieth century adopted English or Swahili as an official language for government business, as well as for commerce, even if the majority of the people couldn't speak it.

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

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

Expansion Diffusion of English

In the past, a lingua franca achieved widespread distribution through migration and conquest. Two thousand years ago, use of Latin spread through Europe along with the Roman Empire, and in recent centuries use of English spread around the world primarily through the British Empire.

In contrast, the recent growth in the use of English is an example of expansion diffusion, the spread of a trait through the snowballing effect of an idea rather than through the relocation of people. Expansion diffusion has occurred in two ways with English. First, English is changing through diffusion of new vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Second, English words are fusing with other languages. For a language to remain vibrant, new words and usage must always be coined to deal with new situations. Unlike most examples of expansion diffusion, recent changes in English have percolated up from common usage and ethnic dialects rather than being directed down to the masses by elite people. Examples include dialects spoken by African Americans and residents of Appalachia.

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

In the twentieth century, many African Americans migrated from the South to the large cities in the Northeast and Midwest (see Chapter 7). Living in racially segregated neighborhoods within northern cities and attending segregated schools, many African Americans preserved their distinctive dialect. That dialect has been termed **Ebonics**, a combination of *ebony* and *phonics*. The American Speech, Language and Hearing Association classified Ebonics as a distinct dialect, with a recognized vocabulary, grammar, and word meaning. Among the distinctive elements of Ebonics are the use of double negatives, such



CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

English on the Internet

English was the dominant language of the Internet during the 1990s. In 1998, 71 percent of people online were using English (Figure 5-26). The early dominance of English on the Internet was partly a reflection of the fact that the most populous English-speaking country, the United States, had a head start on the rest of the world in making the Internet available to most of its citizens (refer to Figure 4-19).

English continued as the leading Internet language in the first years of the twenty-first century, but it was far less dominant. The percentage of English-language online users declined from 71 percent in 1998 to 29 percent in 2008. Chinese (Mandarin) language online users increased from 2 percent of the world total in 1998 to 20 percent in 2008. English may be less dominant as the language of the Internet in the twenty-first century. But the United States remains the Internet leader in key respects—and with it the English language.

The United States created the English-language nomenclature for the Internet that the rest of the world has followed. The designation “www,” which English speakers recognize as an abbreviation of “World Wide Web,” is awkward in other languages, most of which do not have an equivalent sound to the English “w.” In French, for example, “w” is pronounced “doo-blah-vay.”

The U.S.-based Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has been responsible for assigning domain names and for the suffixes following the dot, such as “com” and “edu.” Domain names in the rest of the world include a two-letter suffix for the country, such as “fr” for France and “jp” for Japan, whereas U.S.-based domain names don’t need the suffix.

U.S.-based companies provide the principal search engines for Internet users everywhere. In 2007, 67 percent of all

searches worldwide used Google. Second place was another U.S.-based company, Yahoo, with 15 percent. These companies offer search engines in languages other than English. Google was heavily criticized when its Mandarin-language Google.cn was designed to block web sites deemed unsuitable by China’s government.

Reflecting the globalization of the languages of the Internet, ICANN agreed in 2009 to permit domain names in characters other than Latin. Arabic, Chinese, and other characters may now be used. ■

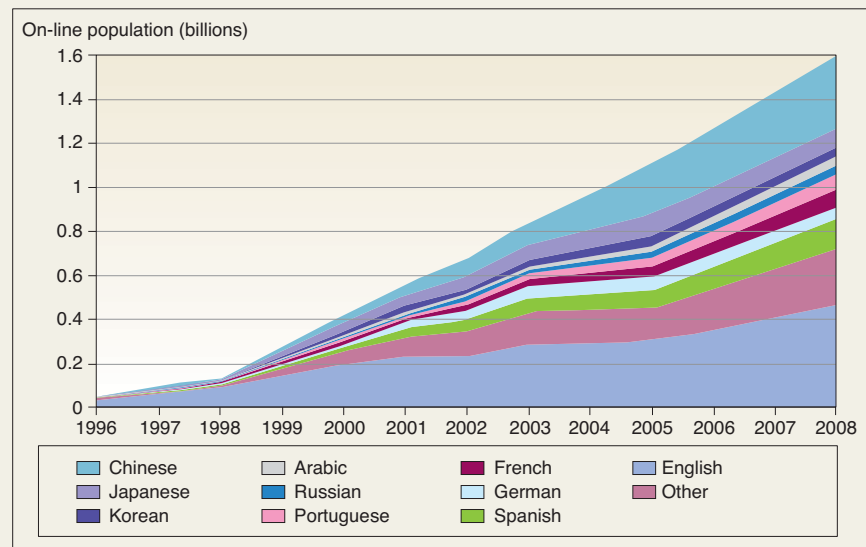


FIGURE 5-26 Languages of online speakers 1996–2008. English remains the most widely used language on the Internet, but Chinese is growing more rapidly.

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

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

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

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

Diffusion to Other Languages

English words have become increasingly integrated into other languages. Many French speakers regard the invasion of English words with alarm, but Spanish speakers may find the mixing of the two languages stimulating.

FRANGLAIS. Traditionally, language has been an especially important source of national pride and identity in France. The French are particularly upset with the increasing worldwide domination of English, especially the invasion of their language by English words and the substitution of English for French as the most important language of international communications.

French is an official language in 29 countries and for hundreds of years served as the lingua franca for international diplomats. Many French are upset that English words such as *cowboy*, *hamburger*, *jeans*, and *T-shirt* were allowed to diffuse into the French language and destroy the language's purity. The widespread use of English in the French language is called **Franglais**, a combination of *français* and *anglais*, the French words for *French* and *English*.

Since 1635, the French Academy has been the supreme arbiter of the French language. In modern times, it has promoted the use of French terms in France, such as *stationnement* rather than *parking*, *fin du semaine* rather than *le weekend*, *logiciel* rather than *software*, and *arrosage* rather than *spam*. France's highest court, however, ruled in 1994 that most of the country's laws banning *franglais* were illegal.

Protection of the French language is even more extreme in Québec, which is completely surrounded by English-speaking provinces and U.S. states (Figure 5-27). Québécois are committed to preserving their distinctive French-language culture and to do so, they may secede from Canada.

SPANGLISH. English is diffusing into the Spanish language spoken by 34 million Hispanics in the United States, to create **Spanglish**, a combination of Spanish and English. In Miami's large Cuban-American community, Spanglish is sometimes called Cubonics, a combination of Cuban and phonetics.

As with *franglais*, Spanglish involves converting English words to Spanish forms. Some of the changes modify the spelling of English words to conform to Spanish preferences and pronunciations, such as dropping final consonants and replacing *v* with *b*. For example, *shorts* (pants) becomes *chores*, and *vacuum cleaner* becomes *bacuncliner*. In other cases, awkward Spanish words or phrases are dropped in favor of English words. For example, *parquin* is used rather than *estacionamiento* for *parking*, and *taipear* is used instead of *escribir a máquina* for *to type*.

Spanglish is a richer integration of English with Spanish than the mere borrowing of English words. New words have been invented in Spanglish that do not exist in English but would be useful if they did. For example, *bipiar* is a verb derived from the English *beeper* that means to "beep someone on a pager," and *i-meiliar* is a verb that means to "e-mail someone." Spanglish also mixes English and Spanish words in the same phrase. For example, a magazine article is titled "When he says *me voy . . .* what does he really mean?" (*me voy* means "I'm leaving").

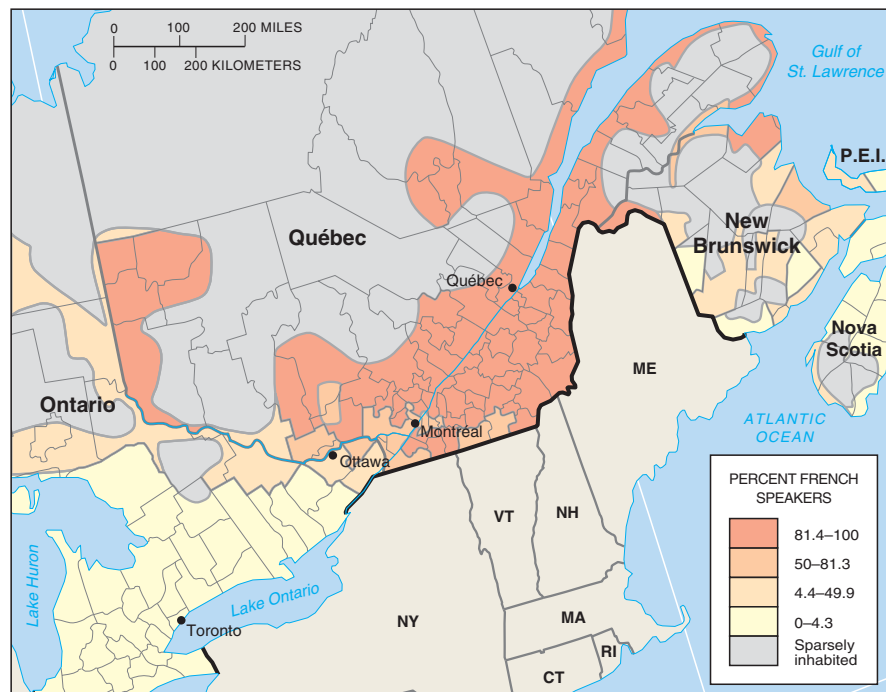


FIGURE 5-27 English/French language boundary in Canada. More than 80 percent of Québec's residents speak French, compared to approximately 6 percent for the rest of Canada.

Spanglish has become especially widespread in popular culture, such as song lyrics, television, and magazines aimed at young Hispanic women, but it has also been adopted by writers of serious literature. Inevitably, critics charge that Spanglish is a substitute for rigorously learning the rules of standard English and Spanish. And Spanglish has not been promoted for use in schools, as has Ebonics. Rather than a threat to existing languages, Spanglish is generally regarded as an enriching of both English and Spanish by adopting the best elements of each—English's ability to invent new words and Spanish's ability to convey nuances of emotion. Many Hispanic Americans like being able to say *Hablo un mix de los dos languages*.

DENGLISH. The diffusion of English words into German is called **Denglish**, with the "D" for *Deutsch*, the German word for *German*. For many Germans, wishing someone "happy birthday" sounds more melodic than the German *Herzlichen Gluuuckwunsch zum Geburtstag*.

The German telephone company Deutsche Telekom, uses the German word *Deutschlandverbindungen* for long distance and the Denglish word *Cityverbindungen* for local (rather than the German word *Ortsverbindungen*). The telephone company originally wanted to use the English "German calls" and "city calls" to describe its long-distance and local services, but the Institute for the German Language, which defines rules for the use of German, protested, so Deutsche Telekom compromised with one German word and one Denglish word.

English has diffused into other languages as well. The Japanese, for example, refer to *beisboru* ("baseball"), *naifu* ("knife"), and *sutoroberi keki* ("strawberry cake").