



Banha University
Faculty of Arts- English Department
Open Education
Fourth Level/ Seventh Semester 2013/2014
Comparative Linguistics (413)

Write on the following topics:

1. Comparative Linguistics

Comparative linguistics (originally comparative philology) is a branch of historical linguistics that is concerned with comparing languages to establish their historical relatedness. Genetic relatedness implies a common origin or proto-language, and comparative linguistics aims to construct language families, to reconstruct proto-languages and specify the changes that have resulted in the documented languages. To maintain a clear distinction between attested and reconstructed forms, comparative linguists prefix an asterisk to any form that is not found in surviving texts. A number of methods for carrying out language classification have been developed, ranging from simple inspection to computerised hypothesis testing. Such methods have gone through a long process of development.



2. Morphology

3. morphology is the identification, analysis, and description of the structure of a given language's morphemes and other linguistic units, such as root words, affixes, parts of speech, intonations and stresses, or implied context.

4. Cognates

cognates are words that have a common etymological origin. This learned term derives from the Latin cognatus (blood relative).[1]

For example, the English words shirt and skirt are doublets; the former derives from the Old English *scýrte*, while the latter is borrowed from Old Norse *skyrta*, both of which derive from the Proto-Germanic **skurtijō*. Additional cognates of the same word in other Germanic languages include the German *Schürze* and Dutch *schort* (which both mean "apron").

5. Historical Linguistics

Historical linguistics (also called diachronic linguistics) has been defined by Nordquist as "one of the two main temporal dimensions of language study introduced by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916)".[1] The central focus of historical linguistics is the study of language at different periods in history and as it changes between different periods of history. Historical linguistics is directly compared and distinguished



from synchronic linguistics which studies language at a single historical period of time. Five of the principal concerns of historical linguistics are: (a) to describe and account for observed changes in particular languages, (b) to reconstruct the pre-history of languages and determine their relatedness, grouping them into language families (comparative linguistics), (c) to develop general theories about how and why language changes, (d) to describe the history of speech communities, and (e) to study the history of words, i.e. etymology.