

ESSENTIAL LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE ON FRENCH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This paper investigates and delivers essential linguistic knowledge on French and English languages to the entire readership in the field of general linguistics. Knowledge, according to the old maxim, is power. The essential linguistic knowledge on the languages under study, as supplied by the researchers here includes how their names came to be, their locations and ethnographies, their genetic and typological classifications as well as their sociolinguistic situations and dialectal issues. Doubtlessly, this kind of philological, genetic and typological linguistic knowledge is highly necessary for linguists, students and language admirers, as it empowers them to create a section on basic linguistic information about these languages when carrying out studies or researches involving any branch of linguistics (morphology, phonology, syntax, etc.) in any of the two languages, especially in their introductory portions.

Key word: French, English.

Introduction

Tracing, investigating or possessing the basic or essential linguistic knowledge of any language before its description at any level – phonologically, morphologically, syntactically, pragmatically or sociolinguistically, is an aspect of linguistics that is extremely paramount to linguists or language analysts. This is because languages did not just drop from the sky but they actually belong to a particular branch of the tree of family of languages genetically and typologically. And besides, such linguistic knowledge provides a window through which languages could be viewed by the linguist, the student of language, the layman and the language enthusiast. In other words, such investigation leading to this kind of information enables the linguist to get armed or endowed with essential, direct and original knowledge about any language of the world thus investigated. It is like digging into the origin of something with a view to unravelling or exposing to the outside world the knowledge of how that thing evolved, developed or came into existence.

FRENCH: Name, Location, Demography and Ethnography

The name 'French' (*le français* or *la langue française*) came into existence as a result of successive language change in the fifteenth century, and the name 'France' (French nation) was used originally to refer to several peoples in the lower Rhineland. It gradually was introduced as a more widespread term to denote that territory, formerly known as Gaul. The journey of the language known as French today started as far back as first century B.C. Scheel (1998:3) reports that about fourth or fifth century B.C., the major part of France, Gaul, was inhabited by the Franks or Celts (the original inhabitants), who spoke *Celtic languages*. As time went on, the Celts hounded the Iberians and the Ligurians who dwelt as far as the Alps in eastern France and Switzerland, and even threatened the Greek settlements on the Mediterranean coast. The Greeks who had control of the coastal areas of southern France eventually requested for assistance from the Romans to enable them to combat the Celts, somewhere around the second century B.C., and the first campaign against the Gauls (as the Celts were known at that time) occurred from 154 to 125 B.C. So, the south eastern portion of Gaul was conquered by the Roman army and renamed Provincia. To the east, the Germans contained the Celts as the Roman army advanced slowly but surely, and by 52 B.C., Julius Caesar had conquered most of the rest of Gaul. Furthermore, by the beginning of the first century, the Roman law ruled Gaul, and so *Latin* was the language of administration, justice and commerce, and as such, it became necessary to learn Latin, the language of the invaders (the Romans).

Be that as it may, Celtic languages did have some influence on Latin, as words for which the Romans did not have an equivalent term were adopted into Latin, or Latinised. Also, beyond vocabulary, the speech patterns or articulation of the Celtic inhabitants could not be proven to have been carried over into Latin, making it evident that interaction occurring between these two peoples (the Celts and the Romans) greatly influenced their languages thereby producing a new dialect of Latin. This, which made the local inhabitants speak one language and the people in power imposing another obviously set the stage for the emergence of a new language known as *Vulgar Latin* (a name used to refer to colloquial dialects of Latin until about 900 century), derived from *Vulgatus* or *Vulgaris*, a Latin adjective meaning 'common' or 'general' or populace.

In a similar submission, Rickard (1989:6) mentions that the introduction into the area formerly known as Brittany of a Celtic language related to Gaulish but by no means identical with it. From about A.D. 430 until the end of the sixth century, large numbers of refugees from Britain, displaced by the Anglo-Saxon invasions, settled in Brittany. So, at a time when Gaulish was rapidly being replaced or had already been replaced by Latin, a substantial Celtic-speaking area resisted Latin, and only very gradually, centuries later, came under its influence or the influence of the emergent vernacular. As for the later influence of Breton on French, it was insignificant, being confined to a small number of loanwords, a contribution greatly outweighed, from the Middle Ages onwards, by the number of French loan-words in Breton.

Notice that around 63 BC, Cicero derisively christened the budding *Romance language* "quotidianus sermo" [daily speech] or "rusticus sermo" [rural speech]. About the fifth century, another contributor to Romance (as popularly referred to within the stage between Latin and Old French) appeared on the scene, which is the *Germanic language*. Franks and Visigoths on the east of Gaul began invading in 406 A.D., and settling in France. However, unlike the Romans, they adopted the language of Gaul and even formed an alliance with them. According to Scheel (1998:5), the Germanic languages indirectly influenced the budding Romance language, as many military terms made their way into Latin from German, and thence into Romance. But before the Frank invasions, Germans had already entered the Roman army, beginning from the first century A.D., and, replaced the Romans in most positions of rank by the fourth century. In a related development, Rickard (1989:10) states that even though Gaul was the most thoroughly Romanised of all the provinces of the Western Empire, there occurred in that century the Germanic invasions which were to have a far-reaching effect on the Gallo-Roman population and on its language. The Roman army in Gaul had shrunk, by the end of the fourth century, to a dangerously inadequate size. On the other side of the Rhine, Germanic tribes, themselves beset by the Huns further east, were massing threateningly. In A.D. 406 they surged westwards across the Rhine and sacked Amiens, Th rouanne and Tournai. Owing to this, the already modified vocabulary of Latin understandably

underwent further modifications under Germanic influence during the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth centuries and later too.

Moreover, more foreign peoples arrived and settled in Gaul, and the Roman Empire had begun to deteriorate and only one province in southern Gaul remained under Roman control. Although the north of France was occupied by the Franks, and the south was under the weak domination of the Visigoths, Latin however still reigned as the language of communication, especially as neither the Franks nor the Visigoths imposed their language upon the local populations. Between the north, controlled by the Franks, and the south, controlled by the Visigoths, a linguistic division developed from the political and ethnic barrier between these two peoples which became increasingly striking over time. As a result, between the sixth and ninth centuries A.D., pronunciation affected by Germanic accentuation drastically altered the Latin of Rome into the beginnings of Old French, and by the end of the eighth century, Latin and Gallo-Romance had grown even farther apart than they were in the fifth century. As spoken Latin or Romance differed so greatly from written Latin, Charlemagne (742-814) attempted to reinstate classical Latin in the ninth century A.D., bringing in scholars from Ireland and England to restore and “purify” Latin as well as founding numerous schools where all teaching was done in Latin. While Charlemagne did spark a scholarly revival of classical Latin which resulted in new copies of old manuscripts, his attempt failed to impose the reformed language on the populace. However, the local vernacular of Gaul, *Old French*, was still only a spoken language.

It is important to note that although the dialect that would become Old French existed during the ninth century, a great number of local dialects and separate languages were spoken all over the area. These dialects had grown and developed after the Roman retreat – a period of about four hundred years, which reflected both the north-south division, and this led to the emergence of Old French in texts. The earliest of such texts in Old French appeared in the ninth century when Latin was dominant. One of them was the Strasbourg Oaths, translated or written in both the Romance and German vernacular, written in 842 A.D. Another was a 28-line poem describing the martyrdom of the virgin Saint Eulalie, appeared around 880 A.D. Furthermore, three religious documents written in Old French appeared in the tenth century: one, known as the “Jonah Fragment”, contains notes on a sermon; two are poems – the “Clermont Passion”, and the “Life of St. Leger”. These are the only texts preserved from the period following the Strasbourg Oaths through the eleventh century.

In 911 A.D., Charles the Simple ceded Normandy, also known as Neustria, to the occupying Vikings or Normanni (known as men of the north), who eventually settled down and within a few generations spoke Old French. Before the Normans dropped their language, many of their sea terms, combat vocabulary and place names passed into Old French, and by the end of the eleventh century, a capital had finally been established in Paris and the surrounding area developed into the political and linguistic centre for France. In the south, *Occitan* or the *Langue d’Oc* was commonly spoken, making it a possible rival to the northern language, the *Langue d’Oïl*. As pointed out by Rickard (1989:35&46), some texts were written in Occitan, such as the “Boecis” and the “Life of Saint Foi of Agen” in the eleventh century, but the language of the north eventually prevailed since the capital was in the north, and therefore it was the language spoken by the king. In southern France, the fall of the Toulousian dynasty, which was a consequence of Pope Innocent the Third’s Albigensian Crusade of 1209-1213 A.D., brought any linguistic influence upon the north to an end, and as such, the language of the south, Occitan, was rarely used after the end of the Toulousian dynasty for literary purposes, though the *Langue d’Oc* was still spoken in the south, the *Langue d’Oïl* eventually dominated written texts. As reported by Scheel (1998:9) epic poems later began to be written in *Old French* from the eleventh century, a period known as the classical epoch, and by the middle of the thirteenth century, *French* was used alongside Latin, even in royal documents and by foreign scholars. Soon, the language of Paris and the surrounding area, known as the *Ile de France* was accepted by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the desired form (Rickard, 1989:39). According to Osazuwa (2007:96), this became necessary as the ordinary man on the street found the classical Latin rather difficult, especially the grammar with all its inflections and the word order of the basic structure. *Ile de France* was used as the language of education at study centers, and the first “grands centres d’études” [great centers of study] to be founded the

in the thirteenth century were the University of Montpellier and the University of Paris, which reinforced the *lle de France* as a linguistic tool. By the end of the thirteenth century and up through the fifteenth century, a period of philosophical critique, French literature lost its prestige, as Latin also began to lose its role as the dominant language (Rickard, 1989:62). However, Latin was still used for scientific purposes, and some official purposes, especially after the advent of the printing press, but during the fifteenth century, the use of *French* steadily increased within official spheres of the royal government even as its influence in Italy and Sicily waned. During this period, Old French had developed beyond its initial structure, and by the fourteenth century, it was identified as the *Middle French*.

For the first time in 1539, *French* or *Middle French* was recognised as the official language of France, excluding Latin, provincial languages and local dialects. And in August of 1539, the *Ordonnances de Villers-Cotterets* were issued; Article Three of the *Ordonnances* states that “all court proceedings, deeds, judgements, etc. were to be set down *en langage maternel franyois et non aultrement* [in the French mother tongue and not otherwise]” (Rickard, 1989:83). Berg (1994) as cited in Rickard (1989:11&12) reveals that the most important advocate for the French language during the sixteenth century was the group of poets who called themselves the Pléiade. Founded by Pierre de Ronsard near the middle of the sixteenth century, the Pléiade set forth two goals for themselves: to defend the French language and its literary worth and to create a more illustrious, distinguished French – *Défense et Illustration de la langue frangaise* (Defense and Enrichment of the French Language). Henceforward, French was used in civil and ecclesiastical administration and archives, even in regions not under the direct control of the French king. After several centuries of linguistic struggle, French was finally “emancipated” from Latin in the sixteenth century. Despite some loss of land to Italy, political unification of France progressed greatly during the sixteenth century as other lands were regained from England, and some regions annexed, which allowed for the official version of French, that of the *lle de France*, to grow in strength and spread in use. Therefore, the number of French speakers was growing and so was the vocabulary. Consequently, standard French was soon heard almost everywhere, and local languages and dialects were slowly dying and disappearing from France. According to Lasserre (2009:2), it took centuries for French to emerge as the primary language among a plethora of dialects used in Middle Ages Gaul. Even at that, French was not yet the universal language of France until the twentieth century (Scheel, 1998:20).

Geographically, the French often refer to their nation as a hexagon to describe its six-sided shape, and this term is also a symbol for the country. Metropolitan France has an area of over 200,000 square miles (518,000 square kilometers), making it the largest Western European nation. It covers 5 percent of the European continent. By elevation, its Highest Point is 4,808m (Mont Blanc), and its Lowest Point is -2m (Rhône River Delta). Its land use consists the following: Arable Land: 33.40%, Permanent Crops: 1.83%, Other Crops: 64.77%, Irrigated Land: 26,420 km² and its Total Renewable Water Resources is 211 km³. Paris is the capital and cultural centre, long dominating the rest of the nation. The older provinces, now reconfigured in what are officially called regions, have played an important role in the nation’s history. There are currently twenty-two regions. The French Republic includes four overseas departments (*départements d’ outre-mer* DOMs) which include French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Réunion. These DOMs operate primarily as departments within the national system. There are two territorial collectives: Mayotte and Saint Pierre-et-Miquelon. Overseas territories (*territoires d’ outre-mer*) include French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis, and Futuna. France borders Andorra, Belgium (55 km), Germany (418 km), Italy (476 km), Luxembourg (69 km), Monaco (6 km), Spain (646 km), Brazil (649 km) and Switzerland (525 km). While tied to the mainland of Europe, the country is open to the Atlantic to the west. Its coastline is as follows: Metropolitan - 3,427 km, French Guiana - 378 km, Guadeloupe - 306 km, Martinique - 350 km and Réunion 207 km. It also has coasts on the Mediterranean Sea to the south and the English Channel to the north. France has a large range of terrain and a varied climate and geography. The major mountain ranges are the Alps in the east and the Pyrenees in the southwest. Each forms a natural boundary with other nations. The Massif Central is a large mountainous plateau in the central area, which includes the ancient volcanoes of the Auvergne region. While most of the country is in a temperate zone, the

Mediterranean area is considered to have a subtropical climate. The four main rivers are the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, and the Rhône. The winds that sweep across the territory have regional names and are connected to regional identity, the most famous being *le Mistral* in the Rhône valley (<https://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/France.html>). Climatically, Briney (2019:1) reports that the climate of Metropolitan France varies with one's location but most of the country has cool winters and mild summers, while the Mediterranean region has mild winters and hot summers. Paris, the capital and largest city of France, has an average January low temperature of 36°F (2.5°C) and an average July high of 77°F (25°C).

Demographically, Briney (2019:1) comments that French population, as estimated in July, 2011, stands at 65,312,249. France has a low population density compared to other countries in Western Europe. In an attempt to keep the population up, family allowances are given to each family per child, with no income restriction. There is much population mobility from urban to rural areas and from region to region. As clearly shown by the figures above, the French population has more than doubled since the mid-nineteenth century, when it was 28.3 million. The post World War II period saw fertility increases in the French version of the baby boom, but the birth rate began to drop in the early 1970s. Migration has added to the population. At the turn of the twentieth century and after World War I, migration accounted for half of the total population growth.

Politically, France operates under the constitution of the Fifth Republic, which was established in 1958. The government is highly centralised, although the 1982 act of decentralization transferred more power to the regions and communes. The executive branch includes the president and the prime minister. The president is elected for a seven-year term by popular vote. The prime minister is appointed by the president and serves as head of the government. The prime minister selects the ministers and secretaries of state, with approval by the president. Legislative power resides in a bicameral parliament composed of the *Assemblée Nationale* (National Assembly) and the *Senat* (Senate). The deputies of the *Assemblée Nationale* are elected by popular vote for five-year terms; senators are elected through an Electoral College system for nine-year terms. The twenty-two metropolitan regions, which recently received a formal role in government, are each composed of several departments. A region is headed by a regional prefect and served by elected regional council members who represent the departments. The regional council elects a president of the council. The department is headed by a prefect, and each canton elects a council member to serve at that level. Communes elect a mayor and a municipal council. Paris is the capital territory. The administration of the governmental system is organised through the levels of nation, region, department, arrondissement, canton, and commune. The commune is the smallest administrative level. This system of political administration dates back to the French Revolution. The state controls several state-owned companies in the areas of transportation, energy, and communications. Thirty percent of the workforce is employed by the state. The state bureaucracy is complex and is run by an administrative elite trained at the National School of Administration (ENA).

Culturally, Zimmermann (2017:1) states that most people associate French culture with Paris, which is a centre of fashion, cuisine, art and architecture; but life outside of the City of Lights (Paris) is very different and varies by region. As commented by Diggs (1979:1), French tradition and culture hold a special fascination for foreigners. Certain elements of the culture are world-famous, such as the deep regard the French have for excellent food and wine. The word “culture” actually comes from France, and it derives from the same French term, which in turn derives from the Latin *colere*, meaning to “tend to the earth and grow, cultivate and nurture”. Maritally, rates and age at marriage are related to socio-economic class and region. Overall, the marriage rate is declining and the age at marriage is rising. The average age of marriage for men is *twenty-nine*, and that for women is *twenty-seven*. Women tend to marry later when they seek higher education. Rural male celibacy has been associated with rural-urban migration since the 1960s. Geographic homogamy is a strong factor in marriage, that is, over half of all marriages involve partners from the same department. There is also a high level of religious homogamy. The divorce rate has increased in recent years, especially since a 1975 law that made the process easier and faster. One in three marriages ends in divorce. All marriages are sanctioned by a civil ceremony in the town hall. Religious ceremonies must follow the civil ceremony. Payment for the weddings of

young people is most often divided equally between the families of the bride and the groom. There has been a rise in cohabitation for unmarried couples. A recent law permitting legal unions that are not marriages for couples has given legal status to cohabitating couples, including homosexual couples. The PACS (*pacte d'association civile et solidaire*) law, passed in 1999, set up an intermediate union between marriage and cohabitation. A *pacte* is easier to dissolve than a marriage (<https://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/France.html>).

Genetic and Typological Classification

Greenberg (1957) as cited in Nwofie (2008:6) states that the French language belongs to the Romance group of the larger Indo-European family, whose immediate branch is Italic/Latin, and the next is Romance along with Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, Occitan (also known as Provençal), Rhaeto or Ibero-Romance, Rumanian and Sardinian. These languages are known to have originated from Vulgar Latin. We have observed that the list and names of these languages often differ with different writers. However, we provide the following list: after the Romance, we have the Germanic group, which comprises the following: North Germanic – Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish; East Germanic – Gothic; West Germanic – Africaans, Dutch, English, Flemish, Frisian, German and Yiddish. We also have the Hellenic/Greek group, which comprises Albanian, Armenian, Anatolian, Tocharian and Indo-Iranian. Below is a Latin family tree which belongs to the larger Indo-European family, showing clearly the evolution of the French language from there to where it is today:

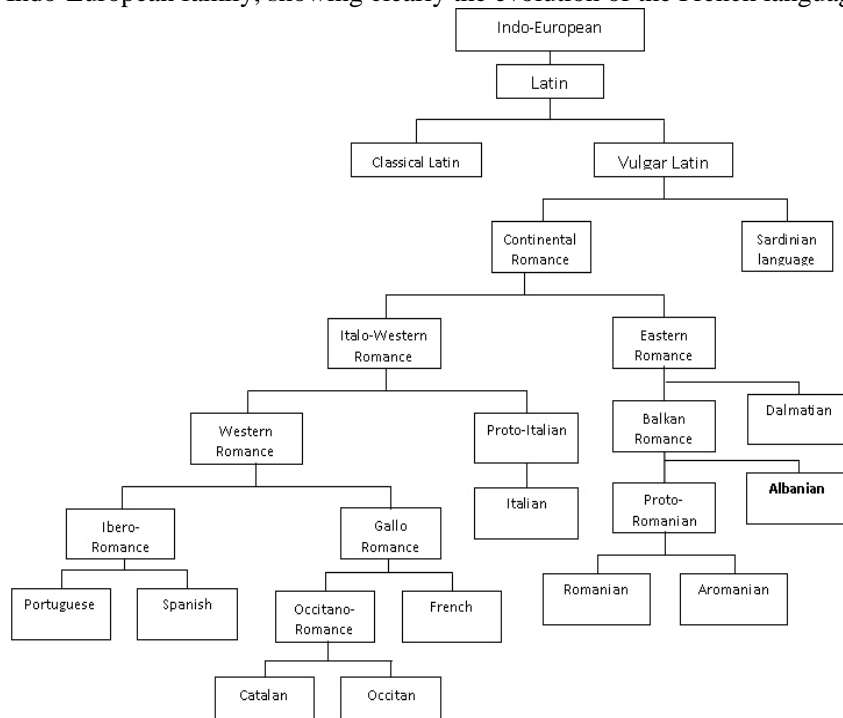


Figure1: The Genetic and Typological classification of French in the Latin family of the Broader Indo-European Language Family

(Source:<http://udel.edu/~dlarsen/ling203/Slides/History%20of%20Romance%20Languages>).

Sociolinguistic View and Dialectal Position

To be discussed under this section are dialectal issues as they concern the French language, that is, whether there are dialects in the language, and if there are, what are they? According to Malmkjær (2002:108) says that in

popular usage, the term dialect usually refers to a geographical variety of a language. She further states that generativist work on language variation used the term dialect to refer to any variety or variety feature not shared by all speakers of a language. In addition, forms of speech which are, or are believed to be unwritten, unstandardised, and/or associated with groups lacking in prestige, formal education, etc., or culturally subordinated to other groups, are often described as dialects. In a similar view, Crystal (2008:142) defines dialect as regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures. He further stresses that spoken dialects are usually also associated with a distinctive pronunciation, or accent, and that any language with a reasonably large number of speakers will develop dialects, especially if there are geographical barriers separating groups of people from each other, or if there are divisions of social class. In summary, a dialect is a variety of a language spoken by a group of people that is characterised by systematic features (e.g., phonological, lexical, grammatical) that distinguish it from other varieties of that same language.

Actually, the French language has dialects but as noted by Blanchet and Armstrong (2006:1), the concept of dialect expressed by English is not completely equivalent to the French notion of *dialecte*. In English, the word is generally used for a 'form of a language', whatever kind of form and language it may represent (regional, social, ethnic, etc.). In French, *dialecte* is rather used (even by some linguists) in an unreflecting hierarchical sense: a *dialecte* is a second-class language, not really a *langue*, but somehow 'better' than a *patois* (this latter negative French term refers to 'a highly localised vernacular that is unwritten'). In addition, most ordinary French people, as well as those in the media, also use *dialecte* to refer to languages spoken in the Third World and especially in Africa; these are not thought to be genuine *langues* because they 'lack' a spelling system, literature, official norms and codified grammar. As a matter of fact, one hardly finds the use of the term *dialecte* applied to the French itself, except occasionally among specialists; no one would speak in *French* of 'the Parisian dialect of French' or the 'dialectal pronunciation of French in Marseilles'. However, when the term *dialecte* is applied to the French language, it refers to forms of the so-called *langues d'Oïl*, such as Picard, Normand, Gallo or Poitevin, considered as *dialectes du français* on a purely 'linguistic' basis (although they would be better considered as 'northern Gallo-romance dialects', with French as one of them). But socially, these are often considered as *patois*.

The French language being a descendant of Latin, and an official language of France, contains many dialects used by many local inhabitants. According to Kennedy (2011:1), the dialects of French include the following: **Leoneg**, **Tregerieg**, **Kerneveg**, and **Gwenedeg** – these are spoken in North Western Peninsula of France. They originate from the **Breton**, a Brythonic language that was brought to France by the Britons in the middle ages, which was the language of the nobility in Brittany until around the 12th century but still spoken in France today. However, they are bishopric divisions rather than linguistic; **Alsatian** – spoken in French region of Alsace (north east), and it is the second most spoken regional dialect in France after Occitan. It originates from Germanic language that has a strong French influence and it is more closely related to Swiss German than standard German. This dialect is often confused with Lorraine Franconian; **French Flemish** – spoken in France near the border of Flanders, Belgium. The roots can be traced back to about 892 AD, when the region was ruled by the Counts of Flanders. The area became a part of France in the 17th century; **Lorraine Franconian** – often referred to as Moselle Franconian, is a member of a group of dialects of West Central German spoken in the Moselle département in north-eastern France; **Langues d'Oïl** – refers to a group of dialects spoken in Northern and Central France, which belongs to the Gallo-Romance group. Other members of the group include **Berrichon**, **Bourguignon-Morvandiau**, **Champenois or Campanois**, **Franc-Comtois**, **Gallo**, **Lorrain**, **Norman**, **Picard** which is also known as **Chtimi**, **Poitevin** and **Saintongeais**, **Wallon**, **Angevin**, **Manceau**, **Mayennais**, and **Romande**; **Occitan** – the Occitan dialects are a part of the Romance family of languages which are spoken in Southern France. Other dialects included in this group are: **Vivaroyalpenc**, **Auvergnat**, **Gascon** including **Béarnese (Béarnais)** and **Landese (Landais)**, **Languedocien**, **Limousin**, **Nissart (Niçois or Niçart)**, and **Provença**; **Catalan** – a dialect which originated from the Romance language, named after

Catalonia, the north-eastern region of Spain and the adjoining parts of France (which were ceded to France by Spain in 1659 with the Treaty of the Pyrenees); **Franco-Provençal** – a dialect that originated from Gallo-Romance language which is spoken in east-central France as well as parts of Switzerland and Italy. Many other dialects emanated from it, and it is one of the dialects most closely related to French aside from the langues d’Oïl. It is also referred to by its speakers as Arpitan, a term popularised in the 1980s, which means “alpine”; **Gallo-Italic** – spoken in Northern Italy, Monaco and parts of France, the Gallo Italic group of dialects are considered a part of the Gallo-Romance family (but are also argued as a part of the Italo-Dalmatian language family). The language is still spoken, but in most cases, has given way to Italian; **Corcican** – a dialect that is a part of the Romance language family, and it is closely related to the Italian language. It is spoken in both Corsica and parts of Sicily. It was the official language of the former until 1859 when it was replaced by French; and **Basque** – a dialect isolate spoken in South-Western France, and one of the few surviving pre-Indo-European languages in Europe. Other dialects in France include *Navarrese-Lapurdian* and *Zuberoan*. Apart from the aforementioned dialects, there are also several languages that are spoken in France by large immigrant communities which include: *Berber, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese, English, Polish, Turkish, Vietnamese, German*, among many others.

ENGLISH: Name, Location, Demography and Ethnography

The term ‘English’ derives from the Old English word for one of the three Germanic peoples that invaded the British Isles in the fifth century, the Angles, while ‘Britain’ and ‘British’ derive from a Roman term for the inhabitants’ language of the British Isles, called ‘Brythonic’ or p-Celtic. Also, according to Jowitt (2009) as cited in Unubi (2018:3), the name ‘English’ is related to ‘England’, and English was spoken first in England about 1,500 years ago. However, it was in existence before then. The English language was confined to ‘the British Isles’. There are two main islands, namely Britain, the larger of the two, and Ireland, the smaller. The British Isles today also comprises two main parts, namely the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, made up of England, Wales, Scotland (i.e. Britain), and Northern Ireland, with its capital at London; and the Republic of Ireland, with its capital at Dublin.

Associated with the British were the Celts, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes. The **Celts** were the first inhabitants of the British Isles about 500 and 100 BC. The age in which they existed is called ‘The Iron Age’. Having spread through central and western Europe, they arrived in south-eastern England. They did not speak English, but their languages belonged to the Indo-European family of languages, to which English also belongs. The **Romans** were a succession of peoples of the Ancient World who invaded Britain from the Middle East around the Mediterranean in the period of 3000 BC – 500 AD (3,500 years). They developed a literate civilisation based on agriculture and slave labour, and through military prowess brought other peoples under their control. The Roman Empire with Latin as its language and its capital at Rome in Italy, was the most extensive of all, and with the conquest of Britain, it reached almost its fullest extent. By the end of the fifth century AD, the Roman Empire in Western Europe had disappeared and had been replaced by ‘barbarian’ kingdoms. The **Anglo-Saxon** invaders arrived in Britain in large numbers with the intention of settling, when with the Roman withdrawal, the native British were left to fend for themselves. The Anglo-Saxons were chiefly interested in the fertile eastern and southern parts of Britain, which were also closest to their homeland in Germany. They set up a number of kingdoms which included: Kent, Sussex, Essex, Wessex, Northumbria, East Anglia, and Mercia. The whole area occupied by the Anglo-Saxons later came to be referred to as ‘Angla-land’ (‘the land of the Angles’, the Angles being more in number than the Saxons), and from this word, ‘England’ is clearly derived. Finally, the **Danes** were warlike, heathen and Norwegian beings from Scandinavia, popularly known as Vikings, who attacked the British Isles or England around 800. They descended on the English coast and penetrated far inland, plundering and burning. Later in the ninth century the Danes finally came to England to settle, especially in the eastern parts of the country after the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had virtually disappeared.

Geographically, England covers 50,357 square miles (130,423 square kilometers) of the main island of the British Isles and lies off the north-western coast of Europe, separated from the mainland by the English Channel. The Gulf Stream makes the climate mild and rainy. The country is also divided into a highland zone and a lowland zone along a line from the mouth of the River Exe in the southwest to the mouth of the River Tees in the northeast. The highland zone's soil is poor and rocky, mainly suitable for raising livestock, but in the lowlands the land is flatter, the soil is fertile, and there are many navigable rivers. As a result of its favourable topography, the lowland region has always had the majority of the population, supported most agriculture and trade, and had the largest cities including the capital, London. The highland zone did not develop rapidly until the nineteenth century, when its coal and iron deposits allowed it to surge to prominence in the industrial revolution.

Demographically, the latest estimative population of the English people (United Kingdom) as released by the Office for National Statistics as at 4th February, 2019, is **66 million (66,803,903)**. Based on this estimate, the United Kingdom population is equivalent to **0.87%** of the total population of the world, and its population density is **277 per Km² (717 people per mi²)**. In addition, **41%** of the population growth occurred from natural change (births minus deaths), **59%** through net international migration and an increase of 2,700 people in the armed forces population based in the UK. Also, **81.4 %** of the population is urban (**54,511,753**), while the median age in the United Kingdom is **40.3 years**. Nearly **12 million** UK residents were aged **65** years and over in mid-2017, or **18.2%** of the population, with the large 1947-born cohort now being aged **70** years. The second important shift in demography from an ethnic standpoint is related to the end of the British Empire. Beginning in the 1950s, peoples from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean began to immigrate to England, taking advantage of the 1948 British Nationality Act, which established that all Commonwealth citizens enjoyed British citizenship. Most of these immigrants have settled in London, the West Midlands, Yorkshire and Merseyside. Between 1984 and 1996, the number of nonwhites in England, Scotland, and Wales rose from 2.3 million to 3.39 million (the majority of whom lived in England) for a total increase of 47 percent. In that same period Great Britain grew by just 5.8 percent and England by even less. European, Mediterranean, and East Asian immigrants have been part of the cultural landscape since the Middle Ages, when the Jewish community came to prominence and Flemish textile workers began arriving. Immigrants to England in particular have been drawn there by the creation of a Common Market in Western Europe and the ending of restrictions on the movement of eastern Europeans. However, a decrease in net international migration in mid 2017 has affected the rate of population growth in some places more than others, with England's growth rate decreasing more than the other countries of the UK, which has **0.64%**, and London's rate nearly halving **0.63%** in addition to fewer births and more deaths than previously witnessed (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/population> and <https://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/England.html>).

Political parties and institutions favour those judged to be respectable and, in senior positions, those with political experience. Thus, in the Conservative Party, only members of Parliament (MPs) can elect party leaders. It is still common for politicians and judges to have an elite education and a privileged background. Local politics is a mixed bag, with some local authorities and town and village councils politically polarized and others less so, although the larger the community the more likely it is to be dominated by the Labour Party. In general, those who participate in local politics and local organizations such as arts councils knew someone in government before becoming involved. England has no national parties that affiliate specifically with the national culture. The main parties are the Labour Party (now often called New Labour), the Conservative Party (Tories), and the Liberal Democrats. Unlike Scotland and Wales, England does not have a separate parliament or departments to represent and manage it. Contact with the central government is increasingly achieved through nine Government Offices for the Regions. Day-to-day life in the community is governed by local authorities such as district and parish councils. Access to political leaders is achieved most effectively through voluntary sector interest groups. These organizations work with local government authorities, local agencies such as the

police, individual MPs, and central government ministries and may acquire an official role (<https://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/England.html>).

Culturally, English is known for folk tradition. Its folklore is the folk tradition that has evolved in England over the centuries which abounds in England in all forms, from the semi-historical to *Robin Hood* tales to contemporary *urban myths*, and aspects of cryptozoology such as the *Beast of Bodmin Moor*. Examples of surviving English folk traditions include the *Morris Dance* and related practices such as the *Abbots Bromley Horn Dance* and the *Mummers Play*. Religiously, Christianity became the most practised religion in Britain centuries ago. However, polytheistic religions or paganism were practised before Christianity took hold. These religions include *Celtic polytheism*, *Norse paganism*, *Roman polytheism*, and others. Some were introduced by the Anglo-Saxons, who had their origins in ancient Germanic tribes. Christianity was first introduced through the Romans. Legend links the introduction of Christianity to England to the Glastonbury legend of Joseph of Arimathea. Also, Matras, as cited by Edden and Hughes et al (2011:8) report that in British society, especially the Roman community of Gorton and Manchester, gender differences are highlighted through religious ceremonies such as birth, marriage and death. Maritally, arranged marriages as a means of cementing family alliances are the norm. Most inhabitants, however, decide independently whom to marry, often choosing to cohabit with the partner before marriage. Social position, social aspirations, and informal social control drive the choice of a marriage partner. Thus, marriages across class lines are not common, especially among unskilled workers and the professional and managerial classes. Marriages across ethnic lines also are not common. As a reason for marriage, economic security is prominent, but so is the desire for sexual and social companionship. In UK tradition, women are not likely to travel alone to represent their families at an event such as burial, and that if they wish to attend, they would accompany their husbands.

Genetic and Typological Classification

Wilton (2001) as cited in Unubi & Yusuf (2017:410) states that the English language belongs to the West Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages. This broad family includes most of the European languages spoken today. The Indo-European family includes several major branches, as follows:

- Latin and the modern Romance languages;
- The Germanic languages;
- The Indo-Iranian languages, including Hindi and Sanskrit;
- The Slavic languages;
- The Baltic languages of Latvian and Lithuanian;
- The Celtic languages; and
- Greek

The influence of the original Indo-European language, designated proto-Indo-European can be seen today, even though no written record of it exists. The word *father*, for example, is *vater* in German, *pater* in Latin, and *pitir* in Sanskrit. These words are all cognates, similar words in different languages that share the same root.

The English language has its origin in north-western Germany, from where it was brought to England by the Anglo-Saxons. At the time this happened, approximately 1,500 – 1,600 years ago, English was very different from what it is today, in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. This difference is indicated by the use of the expression ‘Old English’ (or, sometimes, ‘Anglo-Saxon’) to refer to the earlier form of the language. Since then, Old English has evolved into the language of today. This evolution is regarded generally as falling into three main stages or periods, as follows:

Old English: 500 to about 1100 AD

Middle English: about 1100 – 1500 AD

Modern English: 1500 – present day.

Below is a family tree of Indo-European languages clearly showing the position of English:

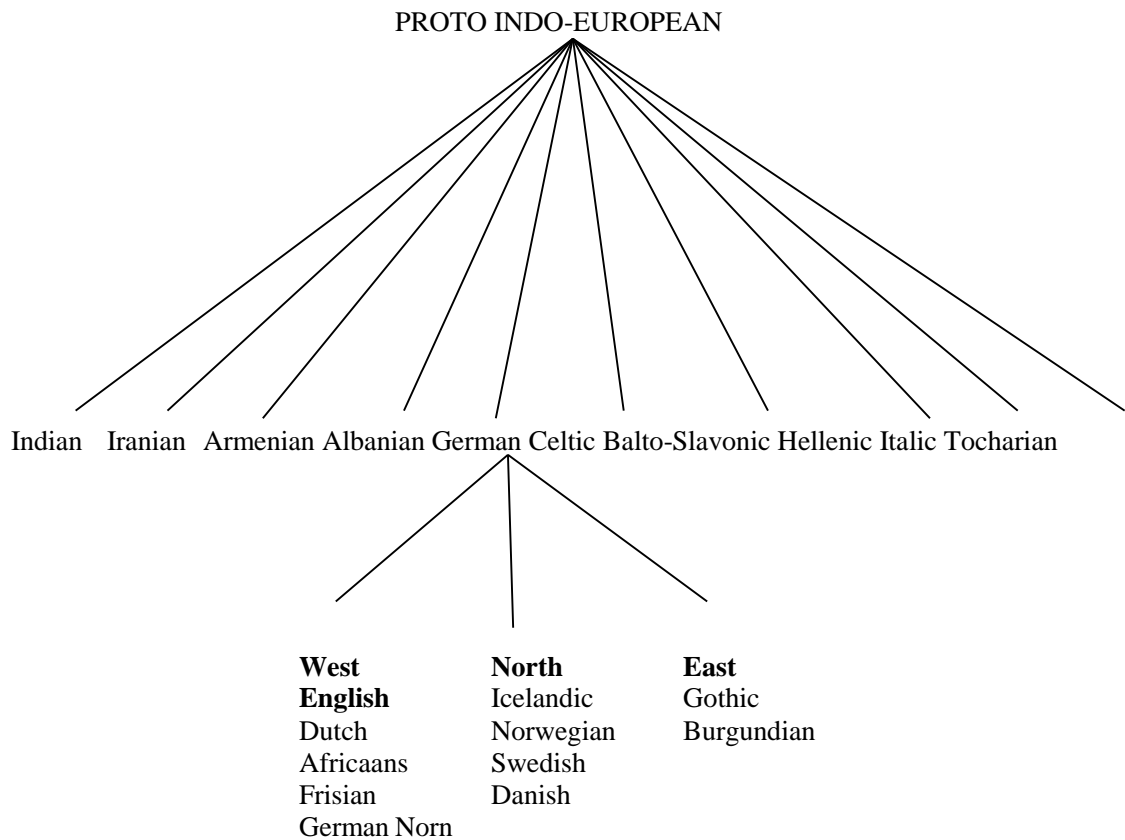


Figure 2: The Genetic and Typological classification of English in the Indo-European Language family (Culled from Finch (2000) in Unubi 2018:8))

Sociolinguistic View and Dialect Position

Unubi (2018:8) quotes Wardhaugh (2010) as commenting that sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication; the equivalent goal in the sociology of language is trying to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language, e.g., how certain linguistic features serve to characterise particular social arrangements. There is a great deal of relationship between the English language both in British society and other societies around the world. In other words, there are dialectically different varieties of English which vary from one society to another.

To this end, the dialects of English are as follows: the *Standard English* is the dialect of English that the grammar, syntax, morphology, slang and vocabulary are most widely accepted and understood. It is the English of well bred Londoners, especially graduates of the public schools, and overtly generally considered prestigious. With its *Received Pronunciation* (RP) accent, it is commonly or variously called Oxbridge English, BBC English, Queen’s English, and Upper Class English or ‘Posh’ English; the *Cockney English* is originally the dialect of the working class of East End London. One of the most renowned and undoubtedly striking peculiarities of Cockney has always been its Rhyming Slang. Rhyming Slang is a kind of slang in which a word is replaced by another word or phrase that rhymes with it (Santipolo, 2001 in Unubi 2018:9); *Estuary English* is the dialect used from London down the Thames into Essex, Sussex, and even Kent. However, a new working

and middle class dialect has evolved, and is rapidly become 'the southern' dialect. It combines some of the characteristics of Cockney with RP, but makes much less use of Cockney Slang. The *Yorkshire* dialect of English refers to the Northern English language variety spoken in England's historic county of Yorkshire. It is known for its sing-song quality, a little like Swedish; *Scottish English* is the dialect used in Scotland, and Scotland has more variations in dialect than England. However, the variations do have a few things in common. In rural areas, many older words and grammatical forms, as well as phonetic variations still survive, but are being rapidly replaced with more standard forms. There are also several urban dialects, particularly in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In Highlands, especially the Western Island, English is often people's second language, the first being Scottish Gaelic.

Boeree (2014) as reported in Unubi & Yusuf (2017:411) states that the *Irish English* is the dialect used in Ireland. English was imposed on Irish, but they have made it their own. Irish English is strongly influenced by Irish Gaelic; the *Australian English* is predominantly British English, and especially from the London area. Its vowels reflect a strong Cockney influence. Also, many common words refer to the traditions of the bushman or bushie – the early explorers and settlers of the outback (wilderness); the *American English* derives from seventeenth century British English. Virginia and Massachusetts, the 'original' colonies, were settled mostly by people from the south of England, especially London. The mid Atlantic area -- Pennsylvania in particular was settled by people from the north and west of England and by the Scots-Irish (descendants of Scottish people who settled in Northern Ireland). Others varieties are New Zealand English, Canadian English, South African English, Nigerian English, etc.

Conclusion

From our discussion so far, some issues stand out clearly from this article, which are the philological, genetic and typological relationships between the two languages. Philologically, the same *Celts* who settled in major part of France in 5th BC were also the first inhabitants of the British Isles about 500 and 100 BC.; the *Romans* and the *Germans* (Anglo-Saxons) who had their footing in France around 52 and 125 BC respectively till their displacement, were as well present in British Isles within the period of 3000 BC – 500 AD (notice that the Romance invaded both France and England with their language, Latin); the *Danes*, referred to as Vikings who occupied France in 911 A. D., also arrived, fought and settled in England; etc. Genetically and typologically too, both the French and the English languages stemmed or originated from the Romance group of the larger Indo-European family, which is clearly evident from the individual family trees of the two languages presented in this study.

This kind of linguistic knowledge is extremely essential to the linguist, language lover and student because if the philological, genetic and typological origins of a language is satisfactorily exposed, it can be a tool for providing an insightful guide into other aspects of that language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, etc. For this reason, the researchers were motivated to carry out this important study, which they believe will be of immense help to both scholars and students of French and English in particular, and the entire academic community in the field of language and linguistics in general.

Contribution to Knowledge

Based on our conclusion above, this paper has revealed that both the French and the English languages originated or stemmed from the Romance group of the larger Indo-European family philologically, genetically and typologically. And indubitably, this article is an addition to the existing knowledge in the field of linguistic typology and philology. Indeed, investigating or tracing the linguistic origins of the two languages to the root of their family tree and depositing the information from them on a single research paper, is something worthwhile, as far as language study is concerned. In addition, this article serves as a motivation and a template to scholars who are interested in tracing the philological, genetic and typological classification or origin of any of the languages of the world. Lastly, making this study available in the field of linguistics as a reference material

particularly for students of French and English, and generally for the entire academic community in language and linguistics, the language admirer and the layman, is a contribution to the knowledge of language study.

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