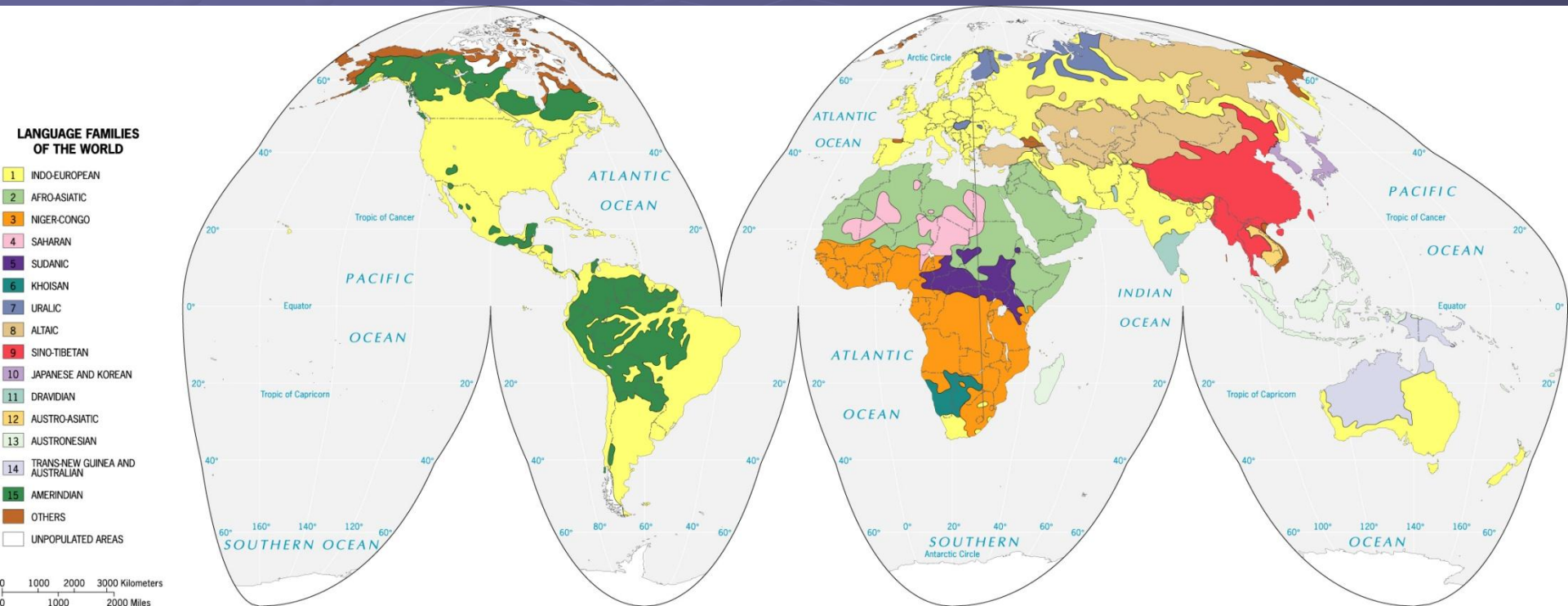


**KEY QUESTION #2:
WHY ARE
LANGUAGES
DISTRIBUTED THE
WAY THEY ARE?
(11 slides)**

KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- Linguists classify languages
 - At the global scale, we break them into language families
 - Within language families, there are subfamilies
- There are 20 major language families
 - Indo-European is the biggest in terms of scale & number of speakers
- Look at the map on pages 174-175

World Language Families



Major Language Families

Percentage of World Population

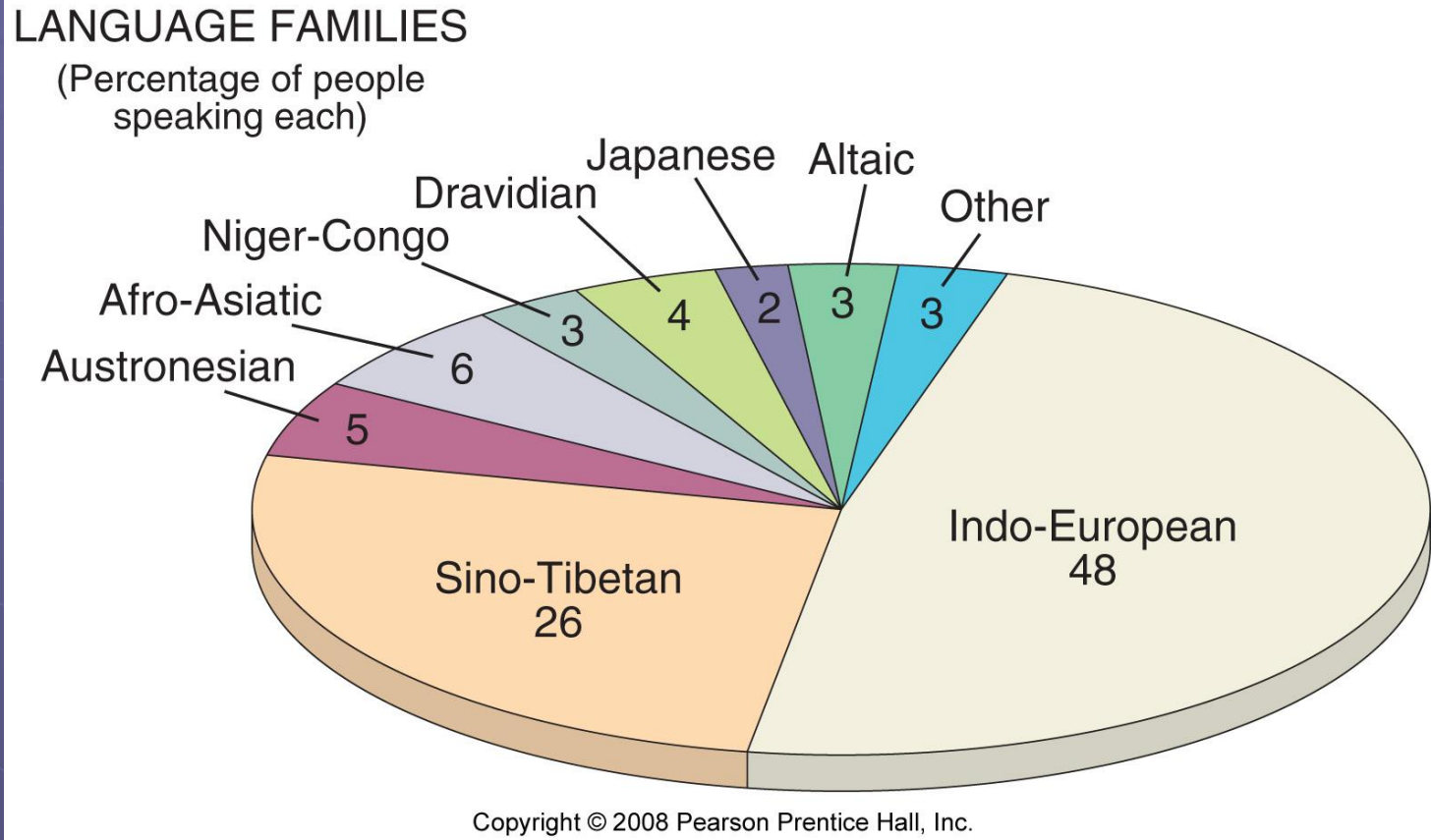
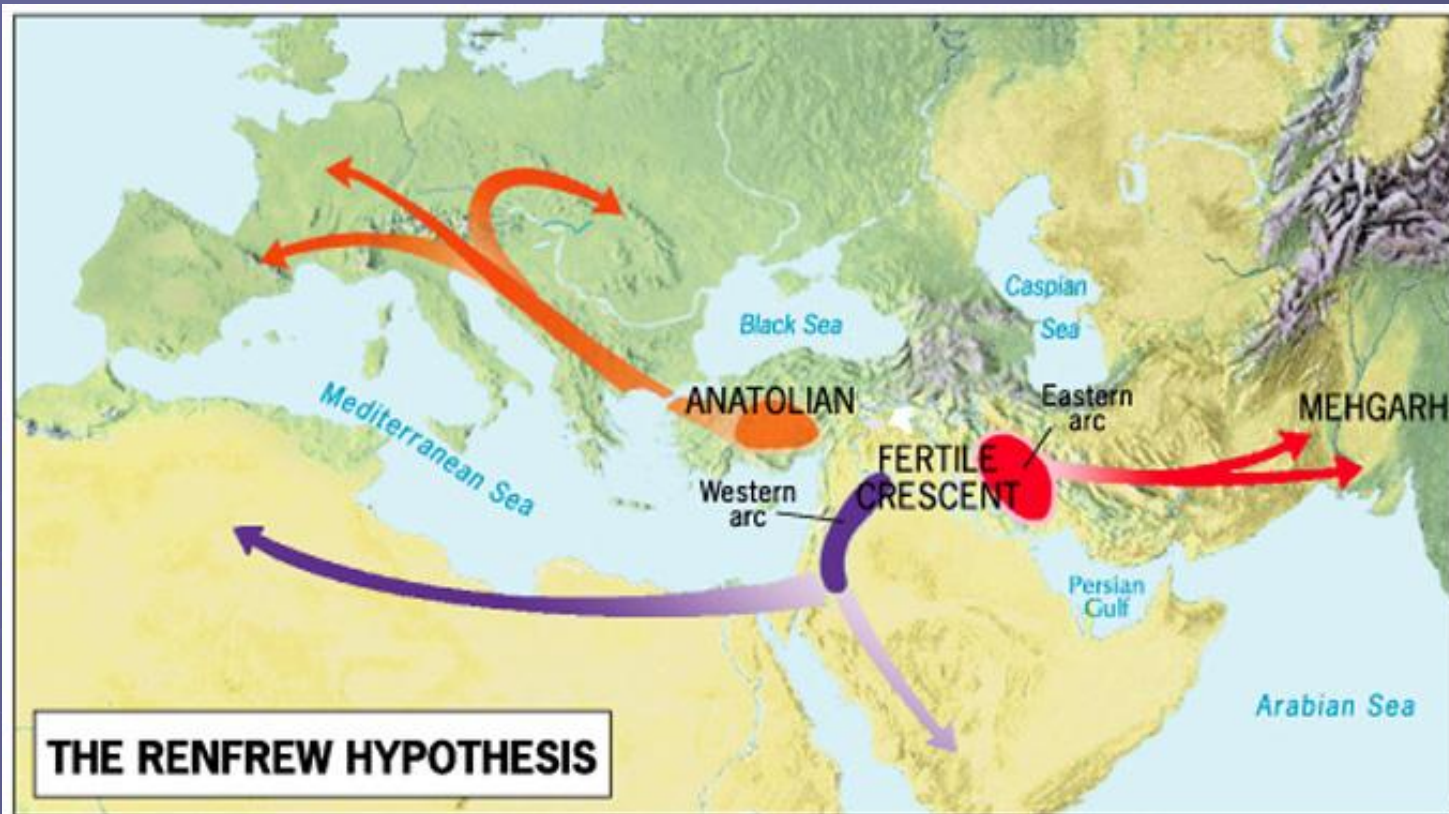


Fig. 5-11a: The percentage of world population speaking each of the main language families. Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan together represent almost 75% of the world's people.

KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- Most scholars think that Latin & Greek languages have resemblances to ancient Sanskrit (many languages today are rooted in Latin or Greek)
- To classify languages, we have to study the relationships languages have with each other
- One way is to study particular words as well as sound shifts (slight change in a word across languages within a subfamily)
 - Example: the word milk---*lacte* in Latin, *latta* in Italian, *leche* in Spanish and *lait* in French
- Most think that consonants become softer as time passes and as sounds shift (example is the English word “father”---pronounced “vater” in German)



THE RENFREW HYPOTHESIS

Renfrew Hypothesis:

Proto-Indo-European began in the Fertile Crescent, and then:

From Anatolia diffused Europe's languages

From the Western Arc of Fertile Crescent diffused North Africa and Arabia's languages

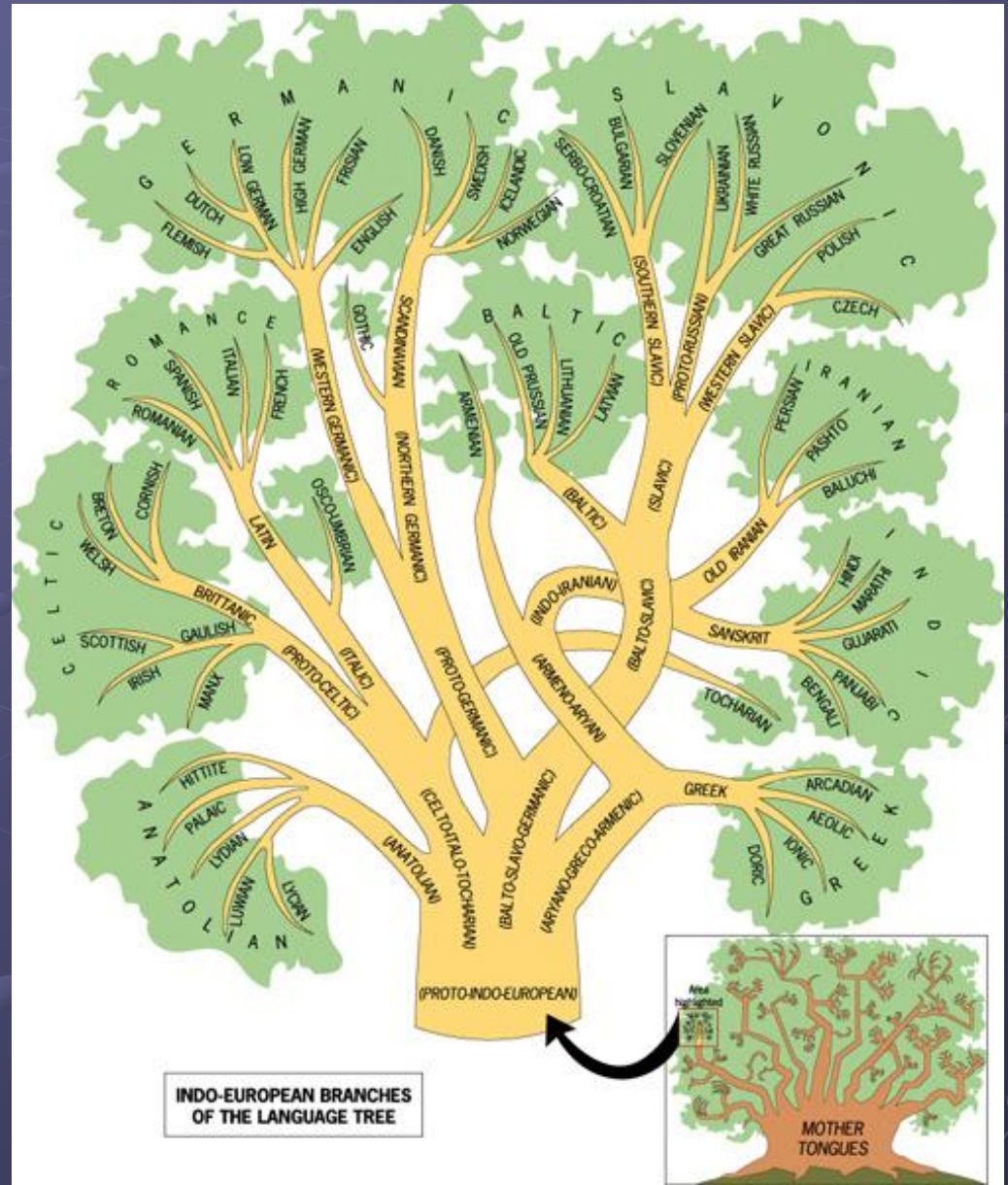
From the Eastern Arc of Fertile Crescent diffused Southwest Asia and South Asia's languages.

KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- The Sanskrit relationship, as well as sound shift & consonant theory, led scholars to create the term “Proto-Indo-European”
 - The hearth of ancient Latin, Greek & Sanskrit
- German linguist August Schleicher was the first to compare the world’s language families to the branches of a tree(see page 178)
- He suggested new languages develop through “language divergence”
 - Lack of interaction amongst speakers breaks the language into dialects and then continued isolation divides the languages into different languages

Historical Linkages among Languages

- Indo-European language family
- Proto-Indo-European language
- Nostratic Language



KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- On the flip side is “language convergence”
 - Collapsing of two languages into one
- Language extinction is what it sounds like---the death of a language(happens sometimes when language convergence takes place)

KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- In studying ancient language diffusion, scholars have determined a link between agricultural diffusion & language diffusion
 - They all believe Indo-European languages, North African/Arabian languages and South Asian languages all came about at the time that the first agricultural hearth near the Middle East came about

Agriculture Theory

With increased food supply and increased population, speakers from the hearth of Indo-European languages migrated into Europe.



KQ #2: WHY ARE LANGUAGES DISTRIBUTED THE WAY THEY ARE?

- One major theory about language diffusion is the term “conquest theory”
 - As a region became conquered, the language of the conquerors tend to become more prevalent
- Major languages and families found in each region of the world are as follows:

Dispersal Hypothesis

Indo-European languages first moved from the hearth eastward into present-day Iran and then around the Caspian and into Europe.



The Languages of Europe

Romance languages

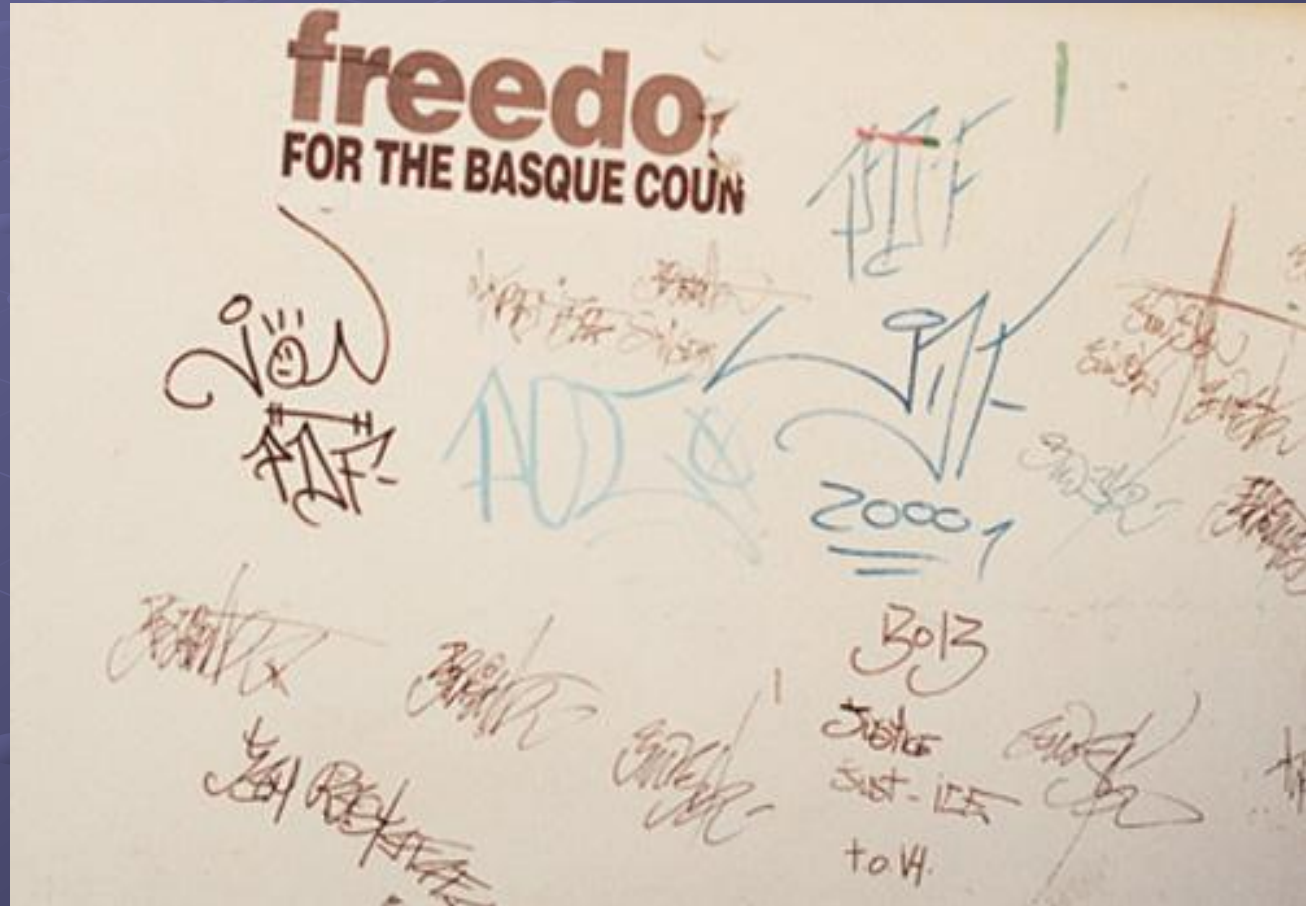
Germanic languages

Slavic languages

Euskera

The Basque speak the Euskera language, which is in no way related to any other language family in Europe.

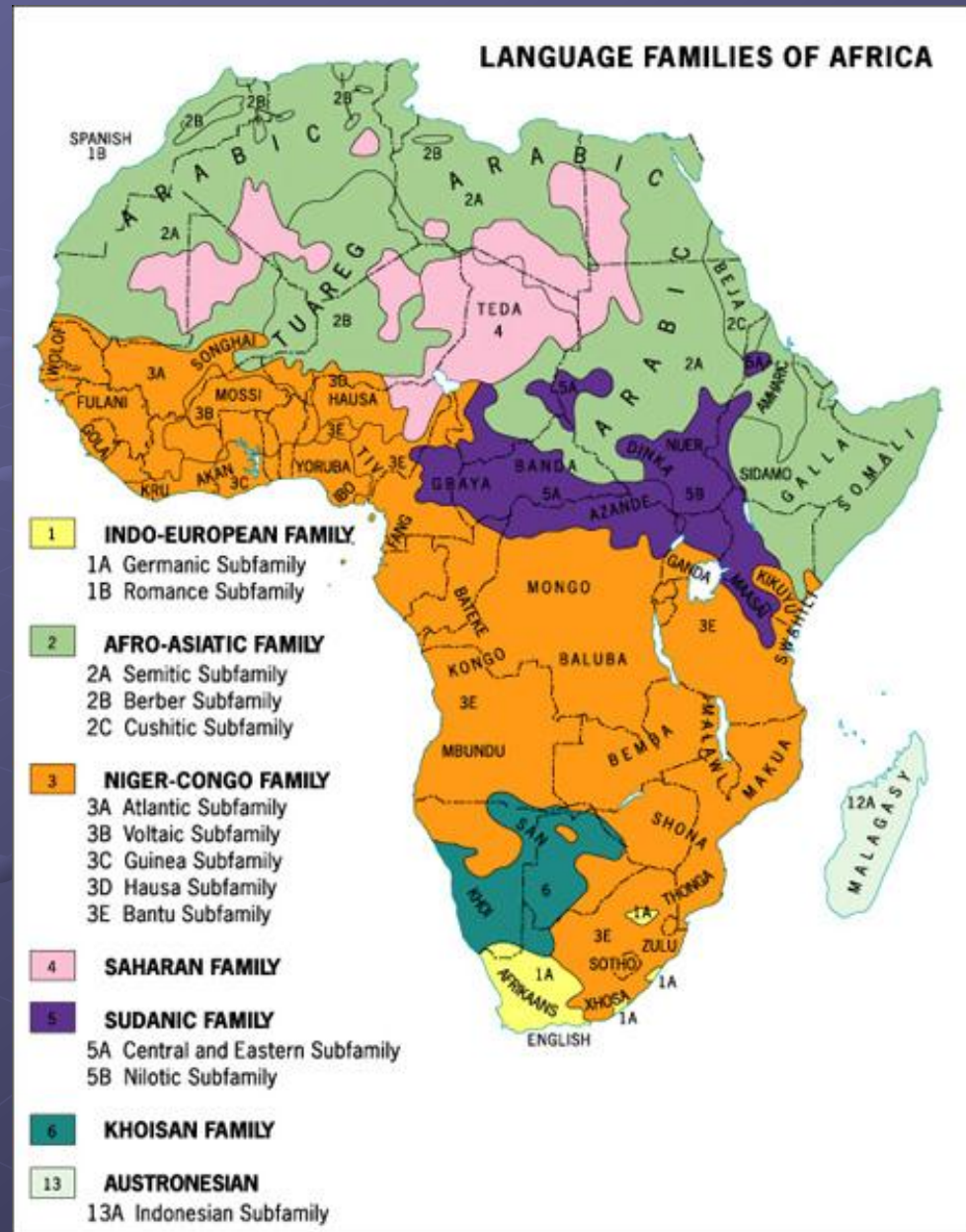
How did Euskera survive?



Languages of Subsaharan Africa

- extreme language diversity

- effects of colonialism



Nigeria

more than
400 different
languages.

