Answers to Pause and Reflect Boxes for Chapter 7 The Classification of Languages
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Pause and Reflect 7.1

Examples of languages that are distinctive yet do not have their own country include: Swiss German, Flemish, Scots, Basque, Udmurt, Sakha (Yakut), and many others. Scottish Gaelic and Tatar both used to have their own countries but do not anymore. Modern Hebrew is an example of a language that acquired its own country (in 1948).

Pause and Reflect 7.2

The systematic similarities between Spanish, Italian, and French derive from the fact that the words and grammatical patterns in question are inherited from a common ancestral language, Latin.

Pause and Reflect 7.3

Linguists have done a great deal of comparative reconstructions for Latin in order to fill in the gaps in written records, as well as to verify that the comparative reconstruction method they were developing actually works for cases like Latin, where the answers can be checked against actual facts. This is called *validation and verification*, which is an important step in any scientific procedure.

Pause and Reflect 7.4

Since most languages in the sample have a /k/ in the first position, it is logical to assume that the ancestral language also had a /k/ there. Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese have inherited this sound and did not change it. French also inherited a /k/, but has subsequently changed it into /ʃ/. As you will see from the discussion below, a change from a velar such as /k/ into a palato-alveolar sound like /ʃ/ or an alveolar sound (/s/ or /tʃ/) is quite common in certain phonological environments, whereas the reverse is virtually unheard of.

Similarly, we can hypothesize that the vowel in the ancestral language was /a/, left unchanged in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and changed into /ɛ/ in French.

Using "majority" as a guide, one can hypothesize that the third sound was /b/ in Latin, but as we shall discuss in the text below, that turns out to be an incorrect assumption.

Pause and Reflect 7.5

To give just a couple of examples, Russian is a member of East Slavic family, which is a branch of Slavic family, which is a branch of Indo-European family. (Some scholars include a few more *matryoshka*-doll levels of classification, but the above is what most scholars agree on).

Similarly, Hebrew is a member of the Northwest Semitic family, which is a branch of Central Semitic family, which is a branch of Semitic family, which is a branch of Afro-Asiatic family.

Another example is Hawaiian, which is a member of Marquesic family, which is a branch of Eastern Polynesian family, which is a branch of Polynesian family, which is a branch Oceanic family, which is a branch of Malayo-Polynesian family, which is a branch of Austronesian family. You can look up such multilevel genetic classification for any language at the Ethnologue website (Ethnologue.com) or in a Wikipedia article for a given language.

Pause and Reflect 7.6

The genitive plural of "apple" is *alma-lar-nıŋ*, the dative singular of "car" is *mašina-ga*, and the dative plural "to our cars" is *mašina-lar-ıbız-ga*.

Pause and Reflect 7.7

This change from [k] to [tʃ] is an example of palatalization. As we have seen earlier, palatalization is typically triggered by front vowels (e.g., /i/ and /e/) rather than by a consonant such as /n/, as in this example.

Pause and Reflect 7.8

In French, evaluative adjectives typically precede the noun and the adjectives of origin or nationality follow the noun, as in *une belle dame française* literally "a beautiful lady French."

Pause and Reflect 7.9

There are different approaches to languages like Russian. One could say that it is not subject to the word order typology at all. Another possibility is to add a seventh type to the classification, *no one particular word order*. But as we shall see from the text below, there are good reasons to believe that Russian has one dominant or default word order, with some variations allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Pause and Reflect 7.10

In transition from Biblical to Modern Hebrew, the word order type has also been changed from VS (actually, VSO, but you cannot see it from these examples) to SV (actually, SVO).

Pause and Reflect 7.11

In Modern English, past tense is expressed through a suffix on the verb, *-ed* (some irregular verbs mark past tense in a different way, but we shall leave that aside for now). In contrast, the future tense is marked by a free-standing modal, *will*. In Romance languages, both past and future tenses are expressed through suffixes on the verb. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesize that the common ancestor of English and Romance languages marked tense through affixes, making the future tense auxiliary an innovation.