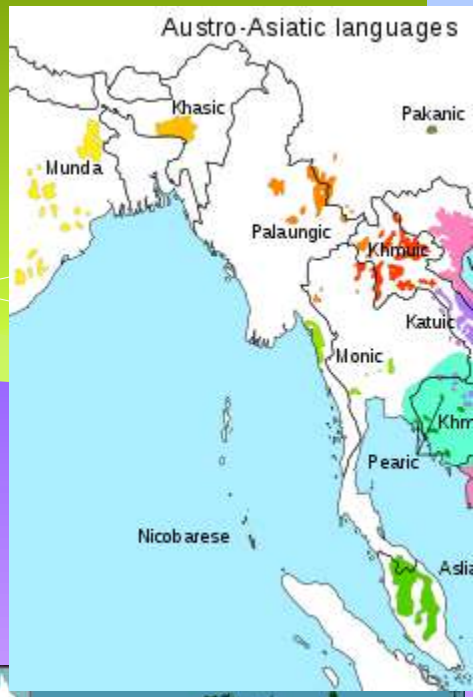
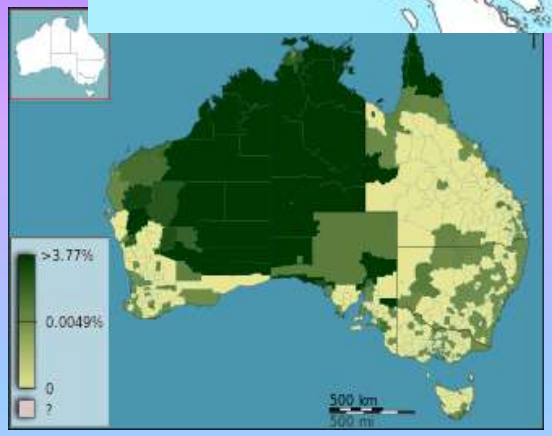
# 3. Austro - Asiatic Family

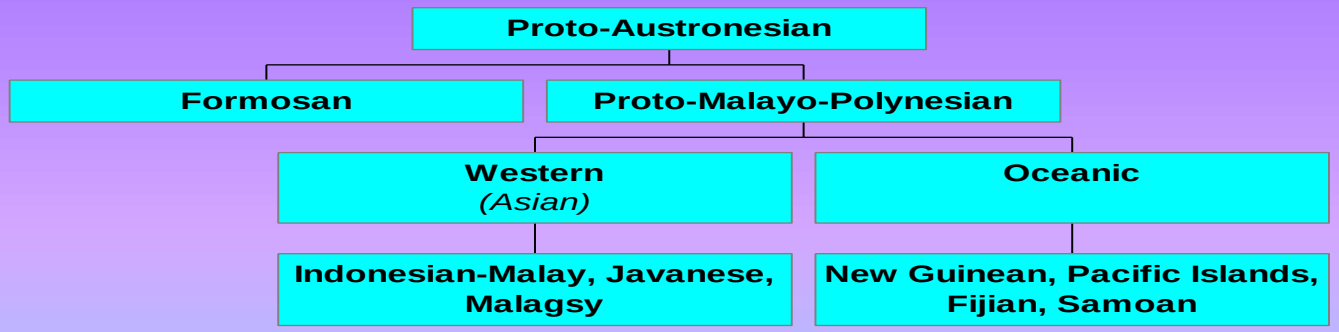
- The **Austronesian languages** are a language family widely spoken throughout Taiwan, the Malay Peninsula, Maritime Southeast Asia, Madagascar and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. There are also a few speakers in continental Asia. They are spoken by about 386 million people (4.9% of the world population).
- This makes it the fifth-largest language family by number of speakers. Major Austronesian languages include Malay (Indonesian and Malaysian), Javanese, and Tagalog (Filipino). According to some estimates, the family contains 1,257 languages, which is the second most of any language family.
- In 1706, the Dutch scholar Adriaan Reland first observed similarities between the languages spoken in the Malay Archipelago and by peoples on islands in the Pacific Ocean. In the 19th century, researchers (e.g. Wilhelm von Humboldt, Herman van der Tuuk) started to apply the comparative method to the Austronesian languages.
- The first extensive study on the history of the sound system was made by the German linguist Otto Dempwolff. It included a reconstruction of the Proto-Austronesian lexicon. The term Austronesian was coined by Wilhelm Schmidt. The word is derived from the German *austronesisch*, which is based on Latin *auster* "south wind" and Greek *νῆσος* "island").
- The family is aptly named, because most Austronesian languages are spoken by island dwellers. Only a few languages, such as Malay and the Chamic languages, are indigenous to mainland Asia.
- Many Austronesian languages have very few speakers, but the major Austronesian languages are spoken by tens of millions of people. For example, Malay is spoken by 250 million people. This makes it the eighth most-spoken language in the world. Approximately twenty Austronesian languages are official in their respective countries (see the list of major and official Austronesian languages).



# Austronesian Family

- By the number of languages they include, Austronesian and Niger–Congo are the two largest language families in the world. They each contain roughly one-fifth of the world's languages. The geographical span of Austronesian was the largest of any language family before the spread of Indo-European in the colonial period. It ranged from Madagascar off the southeastern coast of Africa to Easter Island in the eastern Pacific. Hawaiian, Rapa Nui, Maori, and Malagasy (spoken on Madagascar) are the geographic outliers.
- According to Robert Blust (1999), Austronesian is divided into several primary branches, all but one of which are found exclusively in Taiwan. The Formosan languages of Taiwan are grouped into as many as nine first-order subgroups of Austronesian. All Austronesian languages spoken outside Taiwan (including its offshore Yami language) belong to the Malayo-Polynesian branch. These are sometimes called *Extra-Formosan*.
- Most Austronesian languages lack a long history of written attestation. This makes reconstructing earlier stages—up to distant Proto-Austronesian—all the more remarkable. The oldest inscription in the Cham language, the Đông Yên Châu inscription dated to the mid-6th century AD at the latest, is the first attestation of any Austronesian language.

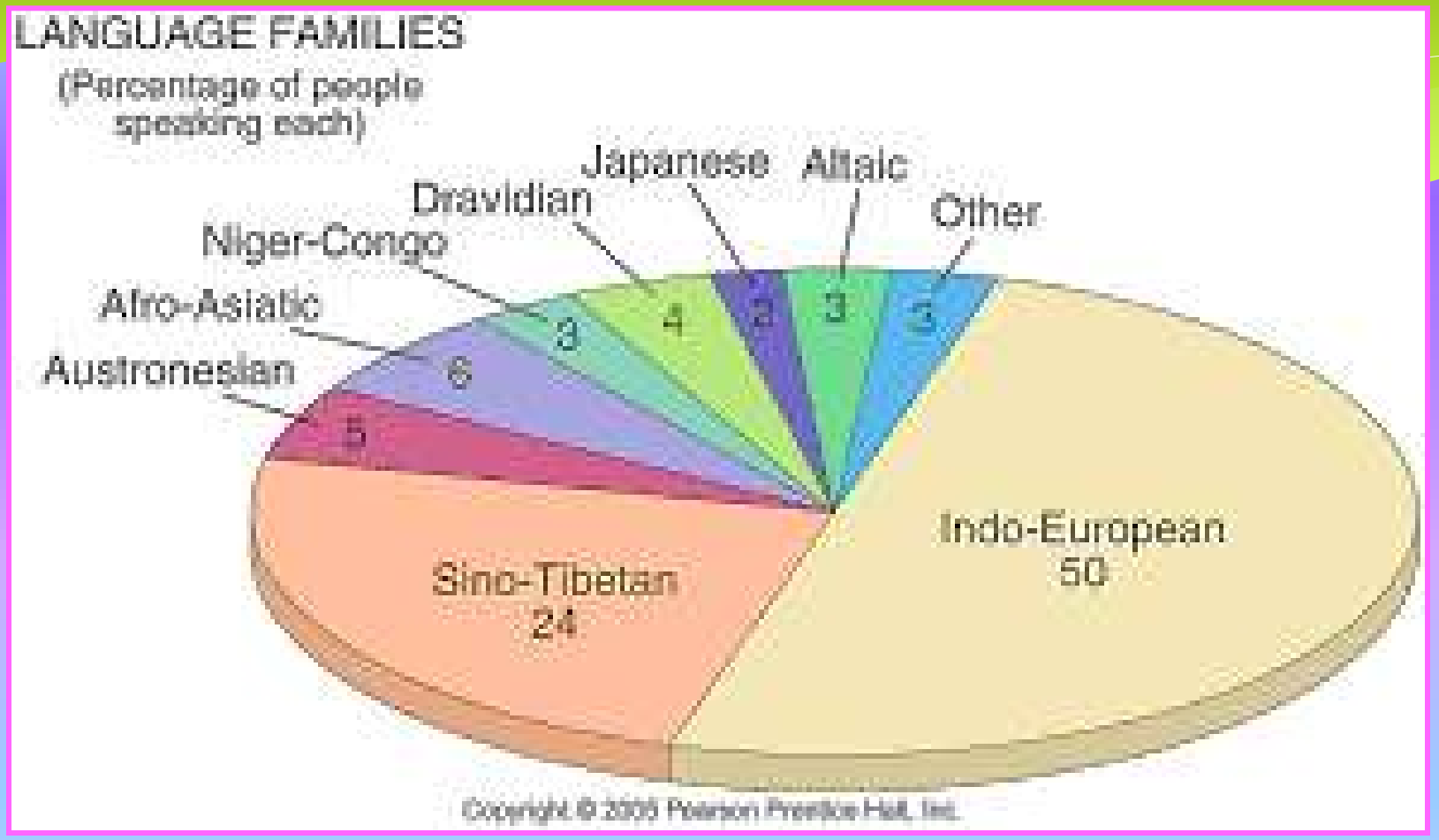


–Indonesian-Malay (150 mill) in Indonesian and Malaysia
–Javanese (60 mill) in Java and Indonesia
–Pilipino is the official language of Philippines
–Malagasy (9 mill) of Madagascar
–Most others have under 1 mill

# 13. Austronesian Family

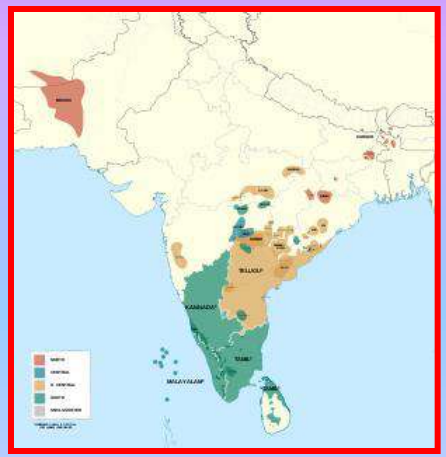
* 1,000 Different Languages
* Two Major Sub-Divisions
* 1) Formosan
  * 3 Ancient Languages
    * Spoken only in the hills of Taiwan
* 2) Malayo-Polynesian
  * West: Malayo Polynesian
    * Indonesia, Malaysia, Madagascar, Philippines
    * Recently Thai (40 mil) and Lao (10 mil) have been added
  * East: Oceanic
    * Papua New Guinea, Fijian, Islands of Pacific

# LANGUAGE FAMILIES

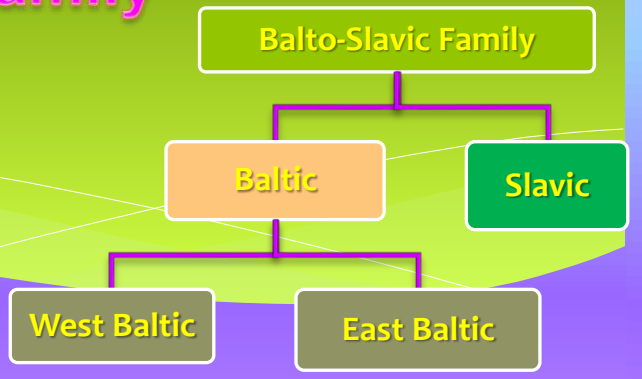


# 5. Dravidian Family

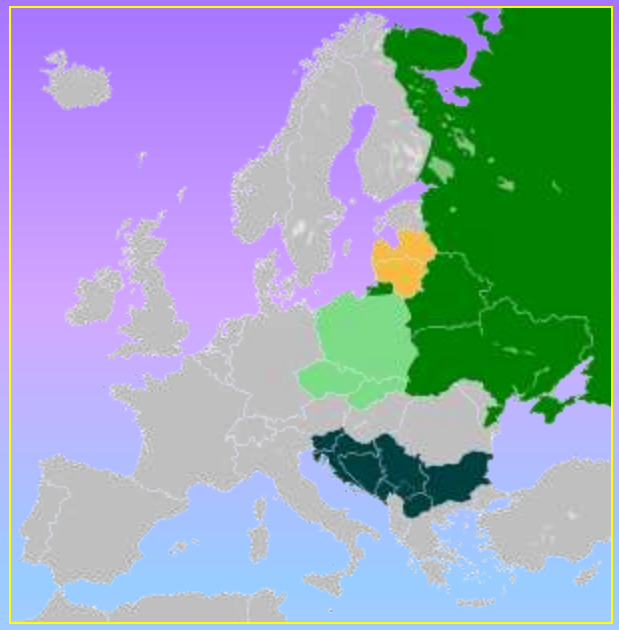
- The **Dravidian languages** are a language family spoken by more than 215 million people, mainly in southern India and northern Sri Lanka, with pockets elsewhere in South Asia. Since the colonial era, there have been small but significant immigrant communities outside South Asia in Mauritius, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Britain, Australia, and the United States.
- The Dravidian languages are first attested in the 2nd century BCE as Tamil-Brahmi script inscribed on the cave walls in the Madurai and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu. The Dravidian languages with the most speakers are (in descending order of number of speakers) Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam, all of which have long literary traditions. Smaller literary languages are Tulu and Kodava. There are also small groups of Dravidian-speaking scheduled tribes, who live outside Dravidian-speaking areas, such as the Kurukh in Eastern India and Gondi in Central India.
- Only two Dravidian languages are spoken exclusively outside the post-1947 state of India: Brahui in the Balochistan region of Pakistan and Afghanistan; and Dhangar, a dialect of Kurukh, in parts of Nepal and Bhutan.
- Dravidian place names along the Arabian Sea coasts and Dravidian grammatical influence such as clusivity in the Indo-Aryan languages, namely Marathi, Konkani, Gujarati, Marwari, and Sindhi, suggest that Dravidian languages were once spoken more widely across the Indian subcontinent.
- Though some scholars have argued that the Dravidian languages may have been brought to India by migrations from the Iranian plateau in the fourth or third millennium BCE or even earlier, the Dravidian languages cannot easily be connected to any other language family and they could well be indigenous to India.



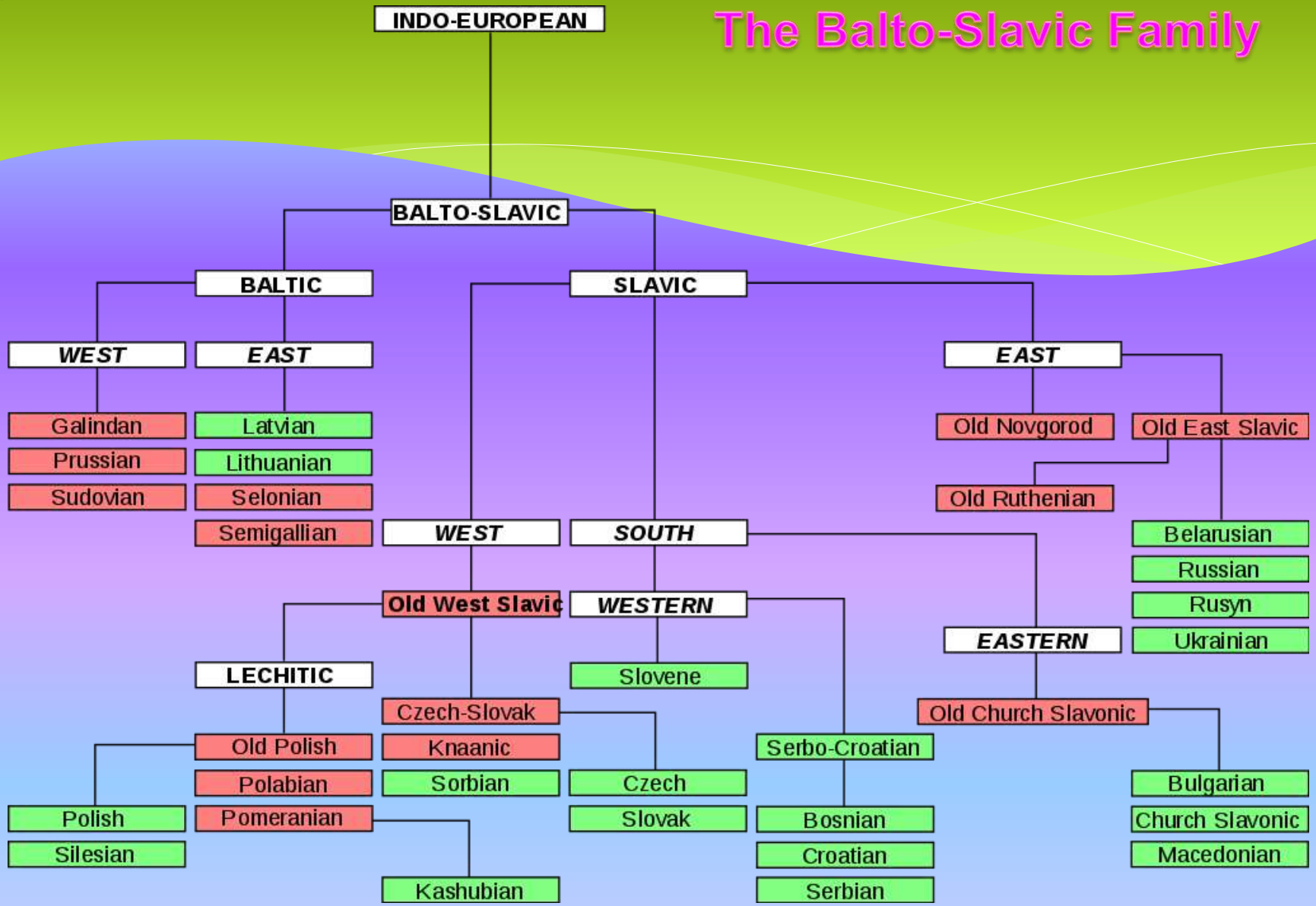
# 6. The Balto-Slavic Family




- The **Balto-Slavic languages** are a branch of the Indo-European family of languages.
- It traditionally comprises the Baltic and Slavic languages. Baltic and Slavic languages share several linguistic traits not found in any other Indo-European branch, which points to a period of common development.
- Although the notion of a Balto-Slavic unity has been contested (partly due to political controversies), there is now a general consensus among specialists in Indo-European linguistics to classify Baltic and Slavic languages into a single branch, with only some details of the nature of their relationship remaining in dispute.
- A Proto-Balto-Slavic language is reconstructable by the comparative method, descending from Proto-Indo-European by means of well-defined sound laws, and out of which modern Slavic and Baltic languages descended.
- One particularly innovative dialect separated from the Balto-Slavic dialect continuum and became ancestral to the Proto-Slavic language, from which all Slavic languages descended



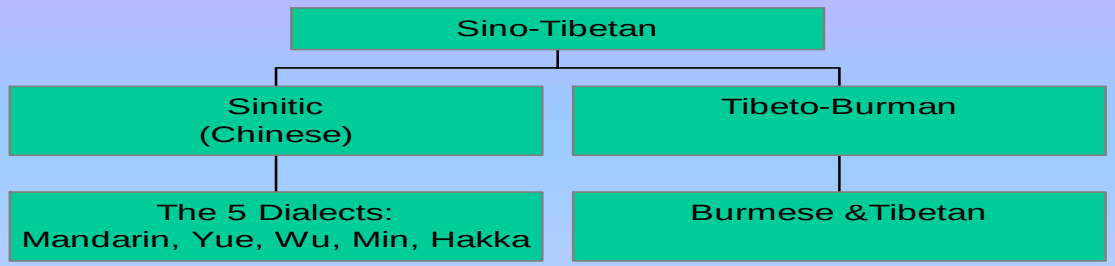
# The Balto-Slavic Family



# 7. Sino-Tibetan Family

- **Sino-Tibetan languages**, group of languages that includes both the Chinese and the Tibeto-Burman languages. In terms of numbers of speakers, they constitute the world's second largest language family (after Indo-European), including more than 300 languages and major dialects.
- In a wider sense, Sino-Tibetan has been defined as also including the Tai (Daic) and Karen language families.
- Some scholars also include the Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao) languages and even the Ket language of central Siberia, but the affiliation of these languages to the Sino-Tibetan group has not been conclusively demonstrated.
- Other linguists connect the Mon-Khmer family of the Austroasiatic stock or the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) family, or both, with Sino-Tibetan; a suggested term for this most inclusive group, which seems to be based on premature speculations, is Sino-Austric. Yet other scholars see a relationship of Sino-Tibetan with the Athabaskan and other languages of North America, but proof of this is beyond reach at the present state of knowledge.

- **300 East Asian Languages**
  - **Many of which remain unexplored**
- ***There are Two Major Divisions:***
  - **1) Sinitic/Chinese (1 Billion Speakers)**
    - **5 Major Dialects**
  - **2) Tibeto-Burman**
    - **Many different languages, very few speakers**
    - **Burmese (20 mill) and Tibetan (3 mill) are the only members with more than million speakers**



# 8. The Semito - Hamitic Family / Afro-asiatic (Afro-Asiatic),

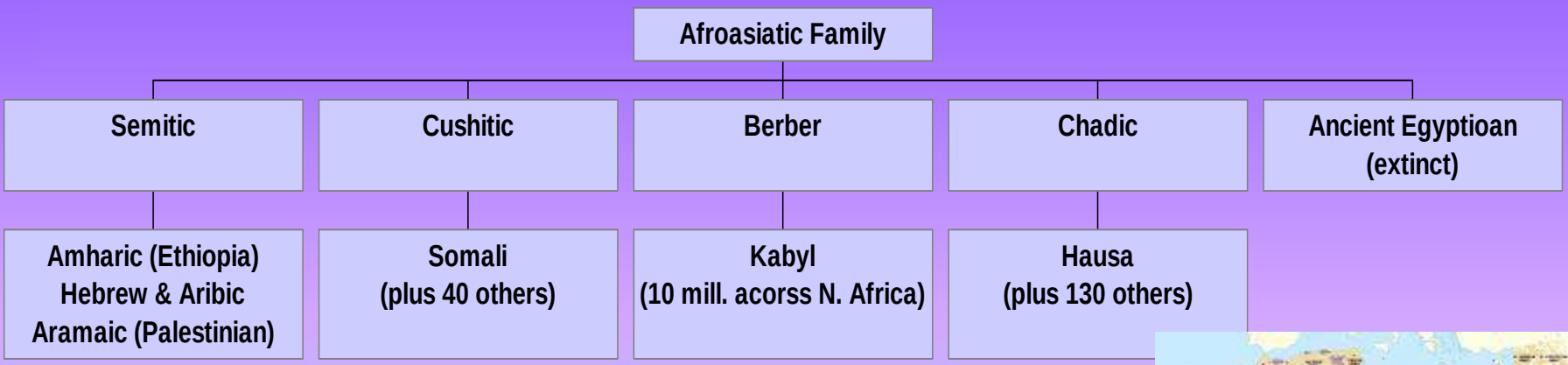
- **Afroasiatic** (**Afro-Asiatic**), also known as **Afrasian** and in older sources as **Hamito-Semitic** or **Semito-Hamitic**, is a large language family of about 300 languages that are spoken predominantly in West Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and parts of the Sahel.
- Afroasiatic languages have over 495 million native speakers, the fourth largest number of any language family (after Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan and Niger–Congo). The phylum has six branches: Berber, Chadic, Cushitic, Egyptian, Omotic and Semitic. By far the most widely spoken Afroasiatic language or dialect continuum is Arabic.
- A de facto group of distinct language varieties within the Semitic branch, the languages that evolved from Proto-Arabic have around 313 million native speakers, concentrated primarily in West Asia and North Africa.
- In addition to languages spoken today, Afroasiatic includes several important ancient languages, such as Ancient Egyptian, which forms a distinct branch of the family, and Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and Old Aramaic, all of which are from the Semitic branch.
- The original homeland of the Afroasiatic family, and when the parent language (i.e. Proto-Afroasiatic) was spoken, are yet to be agreed upon by historical linguists. Proposed locations include the Horn of Africa, North Africa, the Eastern Sahara and the Levant.

# The African Family

- The **languages of Africa** are divided into five major language families:
- Afroasiatic languages are spread throughout Western Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and parts of the Sahel.
- Austronesian languages are spoken in Madagascar.
- Indo-European languages are spoken in Sout Africa and Namibia (Afrikaans, English, German) and are used as lingua francas in the former colonies of Britain and Liberia that was part of American Colonization Society (English), former colonies of France and of Belgium (French), former colonies of Portugal (Portuguese), former colonies of Italy (Italian), former colonies of Spain (Spanish) and the current Spanish territories of Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands (Spanish).
- Niger–Congo languages (Bantu and non-Bantu) are spoken in West, Central, Southeast and Southern Africa.
- Nilo-Saharan languages (unity debated) are spoken from Tanzania to Eritrea and Sudan and from Chad to Mali.
- There are several other small families and language isolates, as well as languages that have yet to be classified. In addition, Africa has a wide variety of sign languages, many of which are language isolates (see below).
- The total number of languages natively spoken in Africa is variously estimated (depending on the delineation of language vs. dialect) at between 1,250 and 2,100, and by some counts at "over 3,000". Nigeria alone has over 500 languages (according to SIL Ethnologue), one of the greatest concentrations of linguistic diversity in the world. However, "One of the notable differences between Africa and most other linguistic areas is its relative uniformity. With few exceptions, all of Africa's languages have been gathered into four major phyla."Around a hundred languages are widely used for inter-ethnic communication. Arabic, Somali, Berber, Amharic, Oromo, Igbo, Swahili, Hausa, Man ding, Fulani and Yoruba are spoken by tens of millions of people. Twelve dialect clusters (which may group up to a hundred linguistic varieties) are spoken by 75 percent, and fifteen by 85 percent, of Africans as a first or additional language. Although many mid-sized languages are used on the radio, in newspapers and in primary-school education, and some of the larger ones are considered national languages, only a few are official at the national level. The African Union declared 2006 the "Year of African Languages".

# Afro-asiatic Family

- Comprises about 250 Languages
  - Arabic being the morethan--150 Mill
- From northern Africa and the Middle East:
  - Iran, Iraq, Chad, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan,
- It is the language of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
  - Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed




-Hausa is one of Africa's major languages spoken in Chad & Nigeria (20 mill)
-Akkadian was the first written language (Semitic)
-Jesus spoke Palestinian Aramaic

# 09. Malayo-Polynesian Family

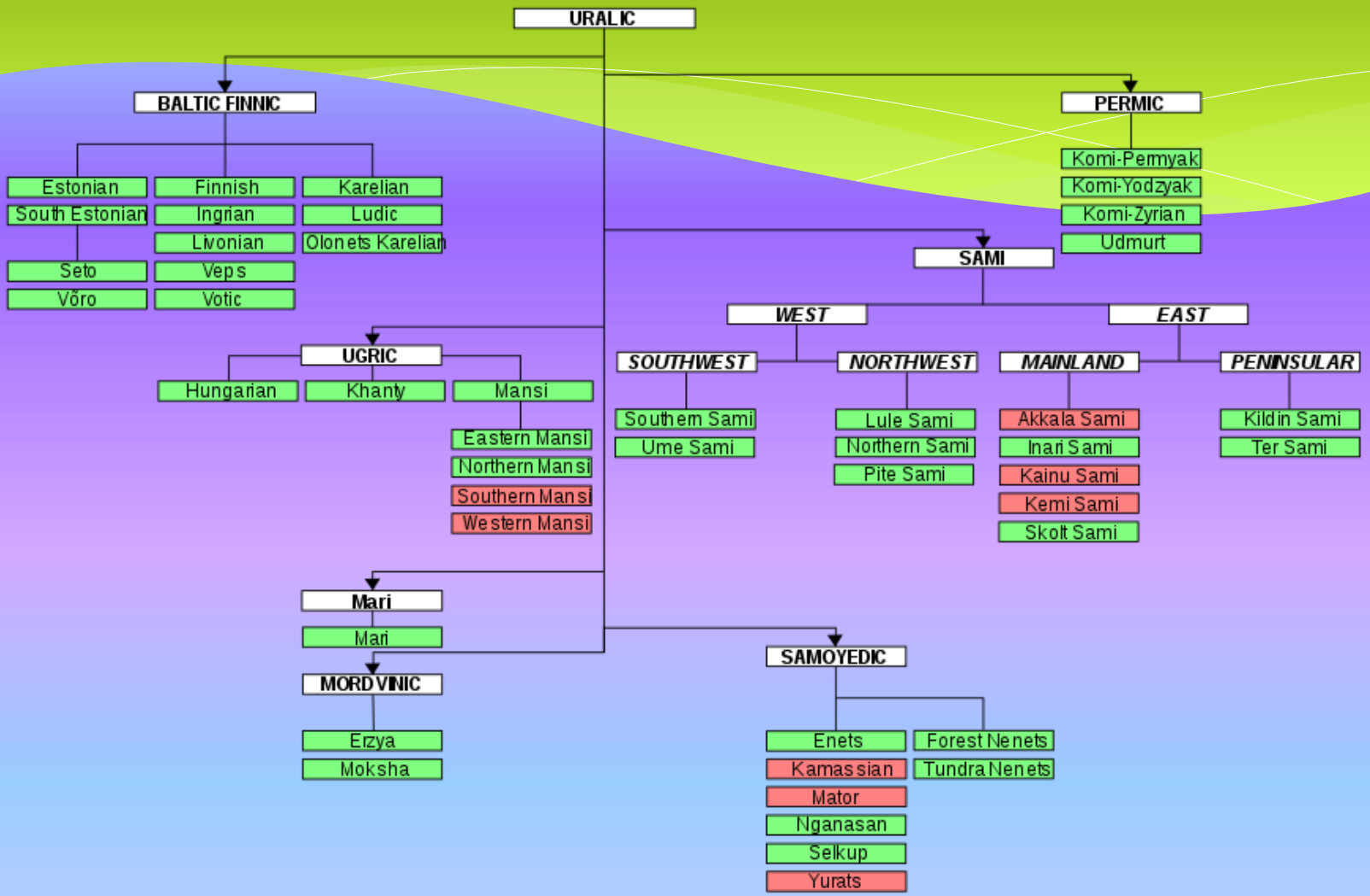
- The **Malayo-Polynesian languages** are a subgroup of the Austronesian languages, with approximately 385.5 million speakers.
- The Malayo-Polynesian languages are spoken by the Austronesian peoples of the island nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean, with a smaller number in continental Asia, going well into the Malay peninsula. Cambodia, Vietnam and the Chinese island Hainan serve as the northwest geographic outlier.
- The northernmost geographical outlier does not pass beyond the north of Pattani, which is located in southern Thailand. Malagasy is spoken in the island of Madagascar located off the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. Part of the language family shows a strong influence of Sanskrit and Arabic as the western part of the region has been a stronghold of Hinduism, Buddhism and, later, Islam.
- Two morphological characteristics of the Malayo-Polynesian languages are a system of affixation and the reduplication (repetition of all or part of a word, such as *wiki-wiki*) to form new words. Like other Austronesian languages they have small phonemic inventories; thus a text has few but frequent sounds.
- The majority also lack consonant clusters (e.g., [str] in English). Most also have only a small set of vowels, five being a common number.

- The most influential proposal for the internal subgrouping of the Malayo-Polynesian languages was made by ***Robert Blust*** who presented several papers advocating a division into two major branches, viz. **Western Malayo-Polynesian** and **Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian**.
- ***Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian*** is widely accepted as a subgroup, although some objections have been raised against its validity as a genetic subgroup.
- ***Western Malayo-Polynesian*** is now generally held (including by Blust himself) to be an umbrella term without genetic relevance. Taking into account the Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian hypothesis, the Malayo-Polynesian languages can be divided into the following subgroups (proposals for larger subgroups are given below).

# 10. Uralic Family

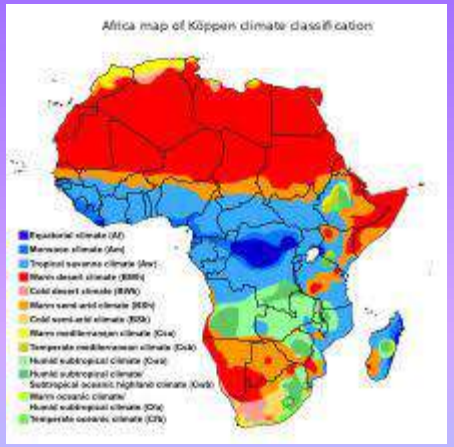
- The **Uralic** or **Uralian** language family consists of 38 languages spoken by approximately 25 million people, predominantly in Northern Eurasia. The Uralic languages with the most native speakers are Hungarian, Finnish, and Estonian, while other significant languages are Erzya, Moksha, Mari, Udmurt, Sami and Komi, spoken in northern regions of the Russian Federation.
- The name "Uralic" derives from the family's original homeland (*urheimat*) commonly hypothesized to be in the area of the Ural Mountains.
- Finno-Ugric is sometimes used as a synonym for Uralic, though Finno-Ugric is widely understood to exclude the Samoyedic languages. Scholars who do not accept the traditional notion that Samoyedic split first from the rest of the Uralic family may treat the terms as synonymous.

# Uralic Family



# 11. Sub-Saharan Africa

- South of the Sahara Desert, there are *three* other language families:
  - 1) Niger-Congo Family
    - Several hundred languages
    - From Senegal to Kenya to South Africa
  - 2) Nilo-Saharan Family
    - 100 languages by 10 million people
  - 3) Khoisan (*Coisan*) Family
    - Southern Africa (uses click sounds)
    - 50 languages spoken by fewer than 75,000
  - **Remember, North Africa is Afroasiatic*



# 12. Other Families of Asia and Europe

- 1) **Altaic Family** *(many speakers)*
  - **250 Mil Speakers Total**
  - **Vast area from USSR to China**
  - **Turkic, Mongolian, Manchu**
  - **Recently, Japanese (150 mil) and Korean (50 mil) have been added**
- 2) **Dravidian Family** *(many speakers)*
  - **Southern India**
- 3) **Austro-Asiatic** *(many speakers)*
  - 100 Languages in Southeast Asia
  - Found in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand
- 4) **Caucasian Family**
  - Georgian is best known
  - 30 Languages of Soviet Union, Turkey, and Iran
- 5) **Uralic Family**
  - Finland, Hungary, Estonia

# 13. The Americas

- It was assumed that there were 300 Languages belonging to 50 families
- Greenburg has found that there are only 3
  - Eskimo Aleut
    - Upper and most of the Eastern regions of Canada
  - Na-Dene
    - Western and Central Canada (not touched by E A)
    - Also, Navaho and Apache (Texas, OK)
  - Amerind
    - Everything Else from California to New York to Mexico to Brazil to Argentina
- Each year more and more ***Native American*** Languages are dying out with no speakers left: Since 1965 . . .
  - Tillamook, Wiyot, Algonquian, Huron, Chumash, Salinan, Chinook, Natchez, Tonkawa have died.
- Languages with fewer than 50 speakers:
  - Abnaki-Penobscot, varieties of Apache, Coeur d'Alene, Squamish, Cupeno, Miwok, Yokuts, Pmo, Shasta, Tuscarora

# 14. Pidgin and Creole

- **Pidgin**
  - Members of the subordinate (colonized) area create a simplified variety of the dominant language
  - Used in very limited situations (work, business)
    - Bamboo, China Coast, Cameroon
  - Many based on English and French
- **Creole**
  - Today, most pidgins give way to Creole
  - Used in many contexts
  - More complex and developed over generations
    - Louisiana, Jamaican, Caribbean

# And the totals are . . .

- 1. Indo-European--2 Bill (Europe)
- 2. Sino Tibetan--1,040 Bill (Asia)
- 3. Niger-Congo--260 Mill (Africa)
- 4. Altaic--250 Mill (Asia)
- 5. Austronesian--250 Mill (Asian Pacific)
- 6. Afro-asiatic--230 Mill (N. Af & M. East)
- 7. Dravidian--140 Mill (Asia)
- 8. Austro-Asiatic--60 Mill (Asia)

# Nostratoc Super Family

* Researchers from Russia and US have found a Super Family of 10,000 BC
* It gave birth to the Indo-European, Afro-asiatic, Uralic, Altaic, Dravidian, and Eskimos Aleut families
* This being the case, English, Hebrew, Arabic, Finnish, Korean, Turkish, and Eskimo would all be cousins
* But this is still highly contested