

altaic family of languages

The Altaic Family of Languages: A Comprehensive Guide

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Summary: This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the Altaic family of languages, a controversial but fascinating group potentially connecting Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, and sometimes Japanese and Korean. It explores the arguments for and against the Altaic hypothesis, examines the linguistic features proposed as evidence, discusses methodological challenges, and highlights areas of ongoing research. The guide also addresses common misconceptions and pitfalls in studying the Altaic family of languages.

1. Introduction to the Altaic Family of Languages

The Altaic family of languages is a proposed grouping of several language families primarily spoken across a vast area of Eurasia, from Eastern Europe to Northeast Asia. The core members are usually considered to be Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic. However, the inclusion of Japanese and Korean remains highly debated, forming a crucial point of contention within the field. The very existence of the Altaic family as a unified genetic grouping is a subject of ongoing scientific debate. This guide aims to provide a balanced perspective on this complex and fascinating area of linguistic research.

2. The Languages of the Altaic Family

2.1 Turkic Languages: This branch encompasses a diverse range of languages spoken across a vast geographical area, from Turkey to Siberia. Examples include Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Uyghur. The Turkic languages are characterized by agglutination (adding suffixes to express grammatical relations) and vowel harmony.

2.2 Mongolic Languages: These languages are predominantly spoken in Mongolia, Inner Mongolia (China), and parts of Russia. Prominent examples include Mongolian, Buryat, and Kalmyk. Like Turkic languages, they display agglutination and possess specific phonological features.

2.3 Tungusic Languages: This branch is primarily found in Siberia and Manchuria. Notable Tungusic languages include Manchu, Evenki, and Nanai. They are characterized by complex vowel systems and a relatively high degree of consonant harmony.

2.4 The Question of Japanese and Korean: The inclusion of Japanese and Korean in the Altaic family is highly contentious. While some scholars point to shared typological features and potential lexical similarities, others argue that these similarities are due to areal contact or chance resemblance, not shared ancestry. The lack of conclusive etymological evidence continues to fuel this debate.

3. Evidence for the Altaic Hypothesis

Proponents of the Altaic hypothesis base their arguments on several lines of evidence:

Lexical similarities: A number of shared vocabulary items have been identified across the proposed Altaic branches. However, the interpretation of these similarities is often debated, with alternative explanations such as loanwords or chance resemblances frequently offered.

Grammatical similarities: Shared grammatical features, such as agglutination, vowel harmony, and similar patterns of case marking, have also been cited as evidence. However, critics argue that these features are common across various unrelated language families in the region and are therefore not sufficient proof of genetic relatedness.

Typological similarities: Similarities in the overall structure and organization of the languages have been observed. However, typological similarities alone cannot reliably establish genetic relatedness.

4. Challenges and Pitfalls in Altaic Studies

Researching the Altaic family of languages presents significant challenges:

Lack of reliable comparative data: The vast temporal and geographical distance between the languages makes it difficult to reconstruct a common ancestor with certainty.

Areal diffusion: The geographical proximity of the languages has resulted in extensive borrowing and linguistic influence, making it difficult to distinguish shared innovations from borrowed features.

Methodological limitations: Traditional comparative methods, which rely heavily on identifying cognates (words with a common ancestor), are hampered by the lack of sufficient reliable etymologies.

Bias and preconceptions: The historical and political context surrounding Altaic studies has

influenced research, with biases sometimes affecting interpretation of evidence.

5. Current Research and Future Directions

Despite the controversies, research on the Altaic family of languages continues. Modern approaches utilize computational methods, large-scale comparative databases, and advanced statistical techniques to analyze linguistic data. This allows researchers to investigate subtle relationships and test hypotheses with greater rigor. Focus is increasingly shifting towards detailed analysis of individual language families and the investigation of areal features.

6. Conclusion

The Altaic family of languages remains a fascinating but highly contested area of linguistic research. While the evidence for a unified genetic relationship is not conclusive, the shared typological and potential lexical similarities warrant continued investigation. Future research employing sophisticated methodologies and focusing on specific aspects of the languages holds the key to potentially resolving the long-standing debate surrounding this proposed language family. Further research needs to move beyond simple lexical comparisons and focus on deeper grammatical analysis and the use of sophisticated computational linguistics techniques.

FAQs

1. What is the main controversy surrounding the Altaic family of languages? The main controversy is whether the proposed family is actually a genetic grouping or whether the apparent similarities are due to areal contact and borrowing.
1. What are the core languages typically included in the Altaic family? Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages are generally considered the core members.
1. Why is the inclusion of Japanese and Korean controversial? The evidence for their inclusion is weaker than for the core members, with arguments based primarily on shared typological features rather than clear etymological connections.
1. What are the main types of evidence used to support the Altaic hypothesis? Lexical similarities, grammatical similarities, and typological similarities are all cited as evidence.

1. What are some of the challenges in studying the Altaic family? These include the lack of reliable comparative data, areal diffusion, methodological limitations, and potential biases in interpretation.
1. What are some alternative explanations for the similarities between Altaic languages? Borrowing, areal diffusion, and chance resemblance are often suggested as alternative explanations.
1. What modern methods are being used in Altaic research? Computational methods, large-scale databases, and advanced statistical techniques are now being used to analyze the data more effectively.
1. Is there a consensus among linguists on the Altaic hypothesis? No, there is no broad consensus. The hypothesis remains highly debated.
1. Where can I find more information on the Altaic family of languages? Academic journals, university libraries, and specialized websites focused on linguistics and historical linguistics offer valuable resources.

Related Articles

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(e.g. Sogdian elements in Turkic), and structural features common to all Altaic languages.

altaic family of languages: Is Japanese Related to Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic? Martine Irma Robbeets, 2005 Where does Japanese come from? The linguistic origin of the Japanese language is among the most disputed questions of language history. One current hypothesis is that Japanese is an Altaic language, sharing a common ancestor with Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic. But, the opinions are strongly polarized. Especially the inclusion of Japanese into this classification model is very much under debate. Given the lack of consensus in the field, this book presents a state of the art for the etymological evidence relating Japanese to Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic. The different Altaic etymologies proposed in the scholarly literature are gathered in an etymological index of Japanese appended to this book. An item-by-item sifting of the evidence helps to hold down borrowings, universal similarities and coincidental look-alikes to a small percentage. When the remaining core-evidence is screened in terms of phonological regularity, the answer to the intriguing question is beginning to take shape.

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Yugh and Ket), a rather heterogeneous language family traditionally classified as one of the 'Paleo-Siberian' language groups, that are not related to each other or to any other languages on the face of the planet. The present work is based on a database of approximately 230 Turkic and 70 Tungusic loanwords. A smaller number of loanwords are of Mongolic origin, which came through either the Siberian Turkic languages or the Tungusic Ewenki languages. There are clear linguistic criteria, which help to distinguish loanwords borrowed via Turkic or Tungusic and not directly from Mongolic languages. One of the main outcomes of this research is the establishment of the Yeniseian peculiar features in the Altaic loanwords. The phonetic criteria comprise the regular disappearance of vowel harmony, syncope, amalgamation, aphaeresis and metathesis. Besides, a separate group of lexemes represents hybrid words, i.e. the lexical elements where one element is Altaic and the other one is Yeniseian. This book presents a historical-etymological survey of a part of the Yeniseian lexicon, which provides an important part of the comparative database of Proto-Yeniseian reconstructions.

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Additional Resources

The Ugor Branch of the Ural-Altaic Family of Languages

Ural-Altaic family of languages; to point out the habitat and numbers belonging to the various tribes classified under that head, and to bring down, as far as possible to our own day, the ...

Where Are Other Language Families Distributed?

- A language in the Dravidian family is spoken by 4 percent, mostly in India.
- A language in the Altaic family is spoken by 2 percent, mostly in Asia.
- A language in the Austro-Asiatic family is ...

1. 0. Scope of the Indo-Pacific Languages - JSTOR

sought in Uralic and Altaic; affiliations of Indic and Iranian languages are known to be with the Indo-European family. On the other hand, affiliations of ... called Melanesia belong to the ...

UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Uralic/Finno-Ugric languages - and I hasten to add Indo-European languages - is controversial but the assumption of a common Altaic language family is controversial as well. Campbell ...

Survey of the world's languages - Bloomsbury

Altaic is an uncertain grouping of at least three relatively well established families, Turkic, and Mongolic. According to some, Korean and Tungusic ... Chukotko-Kamchatkan family. ...

Dated phylogeny suggests early Neolithic origin of ...

Sino-Tibetan languages make up the second-largest language family in the world 1 comprising around 500 languages that stretch from the western Pacific to the Himalayas, Nepal and India ...

Telling general linguists about Altaic - ResearchGate

The hypothesis of an Altaic language family, comprising the Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Korean and, in most recent versions, Japanese languages continues to be ... the relatedness of the ...

S. A. Starostin, A. V. Dybo, O. A. Mudrak

between the Altaic languages, laid the foundations of Altaic comparative grammar, and finalized the subclassification of the Altaic family by separating Uralic from Altaic and adding Korean ...

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Morphologic, Syntactic, and Phonologic Distance Between ...

languages, and Austronesian languages show similarities in the harmony of vowel backness. Japanese, the Altaic languages, and the Austronesian language Madurese display consonant ...

Václav Blažek, in collaboration with Michal Schwarz and ...

Without going into detail, suffice it to say that Altaic scholars have been unable to agree on whether there is a genealogical family of the Altaic languages, or if the similarities between ...

S. A. Starostin, A. V. Dybo, O. A. Mudrak - Turuz

The Altaic family as a genetic unity of Turkic, Mongolian and Tungus-Manchu languages had been proposed as early as 1730 by F. J. v. Strahlenberg. Until the early 20th ...

The Ugor Branch of the Ural-Altaic Family of Languages

Ural-Altaic family of languages; to point out the habitat and numbers belonging to the various tribes classified under that head, and to bring down, as far as possible to our own day, the ...

COMMON VOCABULARY IN URDU AND TURKISH ...

ALTAIC LANGUAGES- TURKISH2 ... Urdu is a South Asian language from the Indo-European family, and within the central zone's Indo-Iranian branch. Ethnologue classifies it as Indo ...

ON THE COMMON WORDS IN MONGOLIAN AND THE ...

the languages of Altaic language family group and especially on Turkish and Mongolian are necessary in order to prove the correctness or incorrectness of Altaic language hypothesis. ...

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The Representation of Korean and Other Altaic Languages in ...

126 The Representation of Korean and Other Altaic Languages in ~ proportion of the total vocabulary comes from Altaic languages. Further, some of the words said to have been taken ...

Analyzing genetic connections between languages by ...

patterns of similarity that we document for languages within the Altaic family are similar to those in the non-controversial Indo-European family. Thus, if the Indo-European family is accepted as ...

18 Evidentiality in Northern Asia - Alexandra Aikhenvald

18.2 Altaic languages The term “Altaic” (family or Sprachbund) encompasses Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages. In all three language families, evidentials form part of TAM systems. ...

Václav Blažek, in collaboration with Michal Schwarz and ...

The hypothesis of the so-called Altaic language family was first proposed by Gustaf J. Ramstedt and Nicholas N. Poppe in the early decades of the twentieth century. According to this ...

Common Vocabulary in Urdu and Turkish Language: A Case ...

Turkish is a member of the Altaic family of languages. According to Ethnologue its classification is Altaic, Turkic, Southern, Turkish and it is spoken by approximately 50 million people, not only ...

International Journal of Central Asian Studies - Altaica

with the Altaic languages. He presented about 50 common vocabularies of Korean and the Altaic languages in his articles “Korean and Altaic - A Preliminary sketch (1984)”. Among western ...

The Sámi languages - UiT

Eskaleut family Finno-Ugric branch Samoyedic branch Uralic family Not represented by Permanent Participants Critically endangered or recently extinct Dialects Turkic branch ...

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Characteristics of Altaic Languages Altaic languages have some common features which distinguish them from other language families. According to Poppe (1965), the characteristic ...

Introduction: “Altaic-type” Languages

Altaic languages, but also Ryukyuan, CuzcoQuechuan, Nivkh, Bur-ushaski, and so on. ... Sangyub Baek considers continuous aspect the inTungusic language family from the viewpoint ...

Kartvelian Lexical Correspondences with Uralic and Altaic ...

Altaic Languages Ben Hroskin To cite this version: ... Kartvelian family is often considered to be very isolated branch of common ‘Nostratic’ trunk. Estimates of separation date are sometimes ...

JAPANESE AS AN ALTAIC LANGUAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF ...

Characteristics of Altaic Languages Altaic languages have some common features which distinguish them from other language families. According to Poppe (1965), the characteristic ...

KEY ISSUE 3 Where Are Other Distribution of Language ...

• A language in the Dravidian family is spoken by 4 percent, mostly in India. • A language

in the Altaic family is spoken by 2 percent, mostly in Asia. • A language in the Austro-Asiatic family is ...

Even; Dagur (D) Mongolian, as well as Khalkha (the standard

the other languages spoken across the vast territory that stretches from the Bosphorus to Kamchatka.' The relationship of the Altaic group of languages-the three families called Turkic, ...

The Representation of Korean and Other Altaic Languages in ...

the extent to which members of one non-Indo-European family, the Altaic languages, are represented in AIALs. I will also compare the representation of Korean to that of other Altaic ...

Bomhard - A Brief History of the Reconstruction of the Proto ...

The study of the Altaic family has had a long and stormy history, and even today there is considerable disagreement among specialists over exactly which languages belong to the family.

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES - ed

Urdu language is a member of Indo-European family tree and within the zone of Indo-Iranian branch, whereas Turkish language is a member of Altaic family tree. Both of these languages ...

On the relation between the similarity of the acoustic ...

family, language, and dialect, consensus has not yet been achieved. According to the latest viewpoints of most scholars, there are about 50 Altaic languages. The Altaic language family ...

THE ANCESTRY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE BASED ON ...

Chinese belongs, is the second most populous family of languages in the world in terms of numbers of speakers. This language family was first identified by Julius von Klaproth in 1823, ...

The Austronesian Dispersal and the Origin of Languages

cerning the homeland of the family, the directions of its subsequent spread and the cultural world of its speakers. Commencing at the earliest time level, Paul K. Benedict, an unaffiliated U.S. ...

Similar Words between Turkish & Hindi (Urdu) Languages in ...

language belongs to the southern-western branch of Altaic family of languages and it has many dialects, Urdu took many words from Turkish. The aim of the study is to sum up the history of ...

Is Japanese Related to Austronesian? - JSTOR

Japanese are members of the Altaic language family. A simple glance at the list of major publications in that field reveals that more work has been done on the Japanese-Altaic ...

Oleg A. Mudrak (Moscow) - Altaic

and languages of Altaic family. Some roots are preserved in the other branches as Uralic or Indo-European, but there are lexical isoglosses typical only for PE and Altaic. The preliminary table ...

Languages And History Japanesekorean And Altaic (2024)

Languages And History Japanesekorean And Altaic: Languages and History Roy Andrew Miller, 1996* Concise Encyclopedia of Languages of the World , 2010-04-06 ... commonly used ...

Monumenta Altaica

Manchu-Tungus languages, and he excluded from that group all the other languages. Castrén demonstrated the identity of the personal suffixes in the languages mentioned but he ...

On the Origins of the Japanese Language - Sciendo

Japanese, Old Japanese, Altaic languages (Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic), and others. His seminal work advanced the comparison of Japanese with languages from the Korean Peninsula ...

ABSTRACT TONGUE ROOT IN KARAĀ - California State ...

languages, and are discussed in the following section, The Phonetics of the feature [ATR], below. While the ATR feature was once thought to be limited to the languages of West Africa (Stewart ...

Africa Isolate languages Altaic Family - aharon ...

Altaic Family Altaic general Japanese Korean Mongolic Buryat Daur Dialects of Inner Mongolia Kalmyk (Kalmyk Oirat) Khamnigan Mongol ... West Semitic languages Indo-European Family ...

Survey of the Series Folklore Monuments of the Peoples ...

extensive Altaic family, and the indigenous languages represent all three branches: Mongolian, Tungusic, and Turkic. Buriat, one of the major languages of Siberia, with 240,000 speakers, is ...

Dravidian and Uralian: The Lexical Evidence - JSTOR

family' consisting of Dravidian, Uralian, and Altaic. As an item of historical interest, Uralic and Altaic are precisely the language groups Caldwell called 'Scythian'. In view of the probable ...

Language Families of the World - cdn.bookekey.app

Altaic Family: Includes Turkish and stretches across Asia. - Austronesian Family: Encompasses languages in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. - Australian and New Guinean Languages: Two ...

Contrastive hierarchies in the Altaic vowel systems

Languages: non-Turkic Altaic Language family and location (Whitman, 2011, p. 150)
Language Region Ainuic Hokkaido, Sakhalin Amuric (Nivkh/Gilyak) Amur estuary, Sakhalin ... Tungusic ...

Historical Roots and Syntactic Nature of Languages

- The Ural-Altaic language family, - The Bantu language family, - The Caucasian language family, - The Finno-Ugric language family - The Austronesian language family, - Native American ...

Part of Speech Tagging for Mongolian Corpus - ACL Anthology

languages have been less studied and developed for such need. Mongolian is one of the Altaic family languages. It has a great, long history. Nonetheless, till now, there are no corpora for ...

Lea Gutierrez 2nd Period - mralarcon.weebly.com

This language family also includes Hebrew, the language of the Judeo-Christian Bible. Altaic and Uralic Languages ! These two families were once thought to be linked, but studies point to ...

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