

Re: Armenian, Sumerian, Burushaski, and Turkic languages

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2007-05/msg00668.html>

- *From:* Nathan Sanders <nsanders@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 24 May 2007 20:46:36 -0400
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In article <1180045303.063108.281650@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Darkstar <darkstar100@xxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On May 24, 10:40 pm, Nathan Sanders <nsand...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

In article <1180027614.823798.178...@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>,

Darkstar <darkstar...@xxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On May 22, 6:37 am, Darkstar <darkstar...@xxxxxxxxx> wrote:

This short, preliminary web article consists of two main parts: (1) a table of cognates apparently found within certain languages of Central Asia and the Middle East, and (2) the discussion of the mechanism which could explain why languages located so far apart could possibly have anything in common with each other. Since the matter is highly controversial, there are no conclusions.

http://www.geocities.com/indo_european_geography/Central_Asian_cognat...

Has anyone found any mistakes or inconsistencies in this work, and

Lack of systematic correspondence.

Re: Armenian, Sumerian, Burushaski, and Turkic languages

You mean "colors" don't look convincing? One would need something like
*A = *B = *C?

I mean "Where language 1 has phone X in environments E and F, language 2 systematically has phones Y and Z respectively".

What you have is, roughly, "Where language 1 has phone X, language 2 randomly has V, W, Y, or Z".

Just because [b] and [m] are both voiced bilabial stops doesn't mean that they are randomly interchangeable between languages. Allowing that level of arbitrary, unpatterned correspondence results in an essential guarantee that you can find a good 20–40% of the vocabulary of two unrelated languages to appear to be cognates (this is homework problem I give my historical linguistics students, and they are consistently able to come up with dozens of apparent cognates between language like Spanish and Chinese).

The kind of mass comparison you're doing (scouring word lists looking for whatever superficial similarities pop out at you) is well-known to be pointless, because it doesn't distinguish between true cognates (which have rule-governed sound changes that derive them from a single proto-sound) and chance resemblance.

Nathan

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