

Re: new book on the spread of IE

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Fri, 15 Feb 2008 10:31:27 -0800 (PST)
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On Feb 15, 10:34 am, ekk...@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

On Feb 12, 5:03 am, Harlan Messinger

<hmessinger.remove...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Franz Gnaedinger wrote:

On Feb 11, 10:08 pm, "Peter T. Daniels"
<gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

No, Franzl, show us where archeology has told us anything about the language spoken by the community uncovered. (Other, of course, than by finding inscriptions.)

Just like the inscription

Peter asked you to produce an example other than, of course, an inscription, and you respond with an inscription. Bravo.

Some interesting aspects of a language can be revealed/explained by archeology, though.

Case in example. The arrival of voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ to Chinese dialects is ubiquitous (this even happened in Vietnamese, which is not exactly a Chinese dialect.)

It isn't the least bit a Chinese dialect.

Out of the 7 or so major

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Chinese dialectal groups, only one group (Souther Min/Hoklo) did not develop a voiceless labio–dental fricative. Now, you may not find that very odd. The slightly odd thing is, the labiodental ones are re–imported and re–mapped to velar fricative /h/. (The bi–labial sometimes is preserved in colloquial terms: e.g: [pue1] = to fly, but [hui1 ki1] = flying machine = airplane.)

E.g.: Mandarin [fa3] = law, mapped to Southern Min [huat4] (Middle Chinese would have been something like [phat], like the Vietnamese writing.)

Also in Taiwan's Austronesian languages, there are in general no voiceless labio–dental fricatives. (Once I saw the language name Favorlang, I had some doubt, but then when I really looked at the language, e.g:<http://books.google.com/books?id=vPetKoll1y50C>, I was re–assured. I think the initial F in Favorlang was simply a Dutch invention.)

Now you may not find all that interesting. Until you take a look at ancient skull remains of the people across the Taiwan strait. Many skulls are missing the canines or lateral incisors: teeth removal (R, see e.g:<http://www.taiwan.org.cn/taiwan/yuanyuandetail.asp?ID=22>) is common ritual for a variety of reasons (adulthood or marriage, in particular.)

When you are missing some front upper teeth, you can't really make the /f/ sound.

What do "canines or lateral incisors" have to do with [f]?

How does tooth removal in some individuals affect an entire language family?

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