

EL2111 Historical Variation in English

Tutorial No. 5

Examine the same sentence in various (mainly European) languages below. All of the languages are fairly contemporary ones, with the exception of the Greek, Latin and Old English versions. With the exception of Greek, I have confined the examples to languages that use the Latin script.

Afrikaans: In die begin was die Woord, en die Woord was by God, en die Woord was God.

Catalan: En lo principi era lo Verb, y lo Verb era ab Deu, y lo Verb era Deu.

Danish: I Begyndelsen var Ordet, og Ordet var hos Gud, og Ordet var Gud.

Dutch: In den beginne was het Woord en het Woord was by God en het Woord was God.

English: In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
(*Authorised Version, 1611*)

Old English: On frymðe wæs Word, and þæt Word wæs mid Gode, and God wæs þæt Word.

Estonian: Alguses oli Sõna, ja Sõna oli Jumala juures, ja Sõna oli Jumal.

Finnish: Alussa oli Sana, ja Sana oli Jumalan luona. Sana oli Jumala.

French: Au commencement était le Verbe et le Verbe était avec Dieu et le Verbe était Dieu.

German: Im Anfang war das Wort, und das Wort war bei Gott, und Gott war das Wort.

Greek (New Testament):

εν αρχη ην ο λογος, και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον, και θεος ην ο λογος. (Transliteration: en archē ēn o logos, kai o logos ēnpros ton theon, kai theos ēn o logos.)

Icelandic: Í upphafi var Orðið og Orðið var hjá Guði, og Orðið var Guð.

Indonesian (Malay): Pada mulanya, sebelum dunia dijadikan, Sabda sudah ada. Sabda ada bersama Allah dan Sabda sama dengan Allah.

Italian: In principio era il Verbo, il Verbo era presso Dio e il Verbo era Dio.

Latin: In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum (*Vulgate – ie Jerome's Latin translation completed in AD 405*)

Latvian: Iesākumā bija Vārds, un Vārds bija pie Dieva, un Vārds bija Dievs.

Melanesian Pidgin: Bipo bipo tru, taim olgeta samting i no kamap yet, Tok i stap. Tok i stap wantaim God na Tok em yet i God.

Norwegian: I opphavet var Ordet, og Ordet var hjå Gud, og Ordet var Gud.

Portuguese: No Principio era a Palavra, e a Palavra estava junto de Deos, e a Palavra era Deos.

Romanian: In inceput erà Cuvântul, și Cuvântul erà la Dumnezeu, și Dumjnezeu erà Cuvântul.

Singlish: Start hor got the Word there oredy, the Word was together with God, not only that, the Word was God ah! (http://singlishbible.wikia.com/wiki/John_1)

Spanish: En el principio era la Palabra; y la Palabra estaba con Dios: y la Palabra era Dios.

Swedish: I begynnelsen var Ordet, och Ordet var hos Gud, och Ordet var Gud.

Welsh: Yn y dechreuad yr oedd y Gair, a'r Gair oedd gyd â Duw, a Duw oedd y Gair.

- Locate roughly where these languages are spoken in the world map on the last page.
- Try to group the languages into various groups (and if necessary, sub-groups) based on their similarities and differences. Which languages are very close?
- Was there consensus in the classification? What is contentious? What additional information would have been helpful to help you in the classification?
- Were there any problems in interpreting the Latin script? What do we need to be careful about?
- Can you see a correlation between the groups that you mentioned and the geographical locations of the languages? How can you account for this?

- (f) Look up a book on the Indo-European languages and the various branches of that family of languages (eg Barber Ch. 3, or go to http://www.krysstal.com/langfams_indoeuro.html) and draw this as a diagram.

