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8,000-year-old ancestor of English found – 31st July 2023

Level 4

Linguists have made a "significant breakthrough" regarding the origin of Indo-European languages. The linguists say the origins go back more than 8,100 years. Their study may settle a 200-year-old dispute over where English came from. One school of thought says it has its roots on the northern shore of the Black Sea. A competing theory is that English originated from Anatolia (present-day Turkey) 9,000 years ago.

Nearly half the world speaks Indo-European languages. The most commonly spoken are English, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish and Bengali. Each of these have over 100 million native speakers. Linguists created a databank of core vocabulary from 161 Indo-European languages. They concluded that their analysis suggested that the answer to the 200-year-old Indo-European enigma is a hybrid of the Steppe and Anatolia theories.

Level 5

Linguists say they have made a "significant breakthrough" regarding the origin of Indo-European languages. The linguists traced the origins back more than 8,100 years. The researchers are from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Their study may settle a 200-year-old dispute over where the ancestor of English came from. One school of thought says English has its roots on the northern shore of the Black Sea. A competing theory is that English originated from Anatolia (present-day Turkey) 9,000 years ago.

Nearly half of the world's population speak Indo-European languages. The most commonly-spoken members of this family are English, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish and Bengali. Each of these have over 100 million native speakers. More than 80 linguists created a databank of core vocabulary from 161 Indo-European languages. The study co-author said: "Ancient DNA and [evolutionary language analysis] combine to suggest that the resolution to the 200-year-old Indo-European enigma lies in a hybrid of the [Steppe and Anatolia] hypotheses."

Level 6

Evolutionary linguists believe they have made a "significant breakthrough" regarding the origin of Indo-European languages, including English and Sanskrit. The linguists say an ancient predecessor may have been spoken more than 8,100 years ago. The researchers are from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany. Their study may resolve a 200-year-old dispute over where the ancestor of English came from. One school of thought posits English has its roots in the Pontic-Caspian Steppe on the northern shore of the Black Sea 6,000 years ago. A competing theory is that English originated from Anatolia (much of present-day Turkey) 9,000 years ago.

Indo-European languages are spoken by nearly half of the world's population. The most commonly-spoken members of this family are English, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish, Bengali, French, Russian, Portuguese and Punjabi. Each of these have over 100 million native speakers. More than 80 language specialists created a huge databank of core vocabulary from 161 Indo-European languages. The study included 52 ancient and historical languages. Study co-author and Associate-Professor Russell Gray said: "Ancient DNA and [evolutionary language analysis] combine to suggest that the resolution to the 200-year-old Indo-European enigma lies in a hybrid of the [Pontic-Caspian Steppe] hypotheses."