Contents

Preface vii
Acknowledgements xiii

1 Introduction 1

The general objectives of historical linguistics 1
The role of explanation in language change 3
Synchronic and diachronic considerations 6
Data for historical linguistics 11
Regularity of sound change 17

2 Indo-European languages 23

Origins and distribution 23
Linguistic palaeontology 26
Archaeological considerations for Proto-Indo-European 27
Conclusion 42

3 The comparative method 46

Proto-Indo-European consonants 48
Phonetic basis of palatalization 51
First palatalization 52
Second palatalization 53
First Germanic sound shift 54
Grassmann's Law 56
Verner's Law 56
Second Germanic sound shift 57

Vowels, diphthongs and semi-vowels 58
Ablaut 59
Laryngeal Theory 61
Conclusion 62

4 Language reconstruction 65

The internal method of reconstruction 71
Loss in vocabulary 78
Assumptions in glottochronology 79
The Model 79
Dialect geography 81

5 Language divergence 86

External theories of language change 86
Chronological Theory 87
Class Theory 87
Centrifugal Theory 88
Substratum Theory 89
Superstratum and adstratum 93
Lexical borrowing 95
Pidgin and Creole languages 97
Morphology and syntax 97
Phonology 98
Lingua franca 99

6 Structural change (syntagmatic) 101

Sporadic change 103
Phonological processes 104
Assimilation 105
Dissimilation 106
Palatalization 106
Nasalization 109
Mutation (umlaut) 109
Influence of yod 110
Metathesis 110
Prothesis 111
Syncope 112
Phonetic patterning 114
Apocope 116

Epenthesis 117
Sonorization 118
Vocalization 118
Rhotacization 119
Haplology 119
Consonant cluster reduction in English 120

7 Structural change (paradigmatic) 127

Latin vowels 131
Margin of tolerance 133
Gallo-Roman vowels 135
Modern French vowels 137
English vowel shift 138
Latin consonants 141
French consonants 147
Italian consonants 147
English consonants 148
Phonological arrangements 149
Economy and redundancy 151

8 Morphological and syntactic change 155

Direction of change 157
Analysis 157
Synthesis 162
Drift 163
Morphological differentiation 164
Analogy 165
Analogical versus phonological pull 166

9 Social and cultural influence on language change 172

Interaction of linguistic and social patterns 173
Dissemination of variations 174
Changes in meaning 178
Polysemy 180
Synonyms 182
Structural considerations 183
Dissemination 184
Further mechanism of semantic change 184
Borrowings 185

10 Linguistic models 191

The genetic or kinship model 191
The family tree design 192
The Wave Theory 193
The biological model 194
The dynamic model 201

11 Generative-transformational model 204

SECTION I Diachronic phonology 204
Naturalness and language change 212
SECTION II Diachronic syntax 215
Diachrony and the base 218
Diachrony and transformations 221
Summary 228

Conclusion 230
Bibliography 233
Index 245

Figures

1 Romance languages 25
2 Languages and dialects of Italy, *c* fifth century BC 30
3 Greek languages 32
4 Early Greek migrations 34
5 Germanic languages 35
6 Celtic languages 36
7 Balto-Slavic languages 37
8 Indo-Iranian languages 39
9 The Ancient Eastern Mediterranean 41
10 Early dialectal variations in Proto-Indo-European 52
11 The distribution of Western Berber languages 68
12 The Alcoy lead tablet transliteration 76
13 Earlier version of the Indo-European family tree 192