

Week 13: Variation and Change

Practice Problems

- (1) **Variation in slang.** Below is a collection of terms for getting inebriated. As you look through the list, compare your own current slang usage with that reported here. Which terms are new to you? Can you see how they may have originated? Are there terms here that you know as meaning something else? Why do you suppose there are so many different terms for this activity?

get wasted	loose	hazed	aced
get stiff	fried	z'd	pound a few
snockered	zoned	blasted	catch a cold
crooked	ripped	plastered	pissed
slushed	buzzed	loaded	toasted
stoned	tanked	hammered	tie one on
shit-faced	lubered	blotto	

- (2) **Variation in our class.** Fill out the online form for the class on variation in vocabulary ([link here](#)). In recitation, look at the data from the class (available [here](#), once classmates have completed the form). Do you notice any patterns in what forms are used by Age, Gender, or Region? If your family members or friends are willing, you can invite them to fill out the form as well.

- (3) **Factors influencing variation.** Consider the following data illustrating the *pin/pen* merger, common in Southern speech patterns.

Word	Southern English	Standard English
pin	[pɪn]	[pɪn]
Pen	[pɪn]	[pɛn]
Lit	[lɪt]	[lɪt]
Let	[lɛt]	[lɛt]
Nick	[nɪk]	[nɪk]
Neck	[nɛk]	[nɛk]
Tin	[tɪn]	[tɪn]
Ten	[tɪn]	[tɛn]

- (a) Notice that [ɪ] and [ɛ] are not merged to [ɪ] in all contexts. Identify the phonetic environment that conditions the merger.
- (b) Based on your analysis in (a), indicate whether each of the following words would be pronounced with [ɪ] or with [ɛ] in these dialects: *lid, led, kin, Ken, pick, peck, bin, Ben*

- (4) Look at the following versions of the Lord's Prayer and Identify at least one type of change in the transformation between Old English and Modern English: sound change, morphological change, syntactic change, and semantic change.

Old English (text ca. 1100)

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum, si þin nama gehalgod. Tobecume þin rice. Gewurpe þin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum. Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg. And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltedum. And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge ac alys us of yfele. Sōþlice.

Middle English (text ca. 1400)

Oure fadir that art in heuenes halowid be thi name, thi kyngdom come to, be thi wille don in erthe es in heuene, yeue to us this day oure bread ouir other substance, & foryeue to us oure dettis, as we forgeuen to oure dettouris, & lede us not in to temptation: but delyuer us from yuel, amen.

Early Modern English (text 1611)

Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdome come. Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven. Giue vs this day our dayly bread. And forgiue vs our debts, as we forgiue our debtors. And leade vs not into temptation, but deliuer vs from euill. Amen.

Contemporary English (text 1994)

Our Father, who is in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come into being. May your will be followed on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give us this day our food for the day. And forgive us our offenses, just as we forgive those who have offended us. And do not bring us to the test, but free us from evil. Amen.

- (5) Based on what you know about the outcome of sound change, do you think it is possible for two homonyms (like pair and pear) to be pronounced differently in the future just because of a sound change? Why or why not?

- (6) For each of the following sets of data below — **Proto-Peninsular Spanish** and **Proto-Uto-Aztecan** — use the comparative method to:

- (a) Set up the sound correspondences for each cognate set, and reconstruct the earlier form for the word from which the cognates have descended.
- (b) Establish the sound changes that have affected each language. Note that in some cases, the ordering of the changes is important.

Proto-Peninsular Spanish

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<i>Castilian</i>	<i>Andalusian</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a. [majo]	[majo]	'May'
b. [kaʎe]	[kaje]	'street'
c. [poʎo]	[pojo]	'chicken'
d. [pojo]	[pojo]	'stone bench'
e. [dos]	[dos]	'two'
f. [dieθ]	[dies]	'ten'
g. [θiŋko]	[siŋko]	'five'
h. [si]	[si]	'yes'
i. [kasa]	[kasa]	'house'
j. [kaθa]	[kasa]	'a hunt'
k. [θiβiliθaθion]	[siβilisation]	'civilization'

[ʎ] represents a palatal lateral.

[β] represents a voiced bilabial fricative.

Proto-Uto-Aztecan

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<i>Shoshone</i>	<i>Ute</i>	<i>Northern Paiute</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
a. [tuhu]	[tuu]	[tuhu]	'black'
b. [nika]	[ni̯ka]	[nika]	'dance'
c. [kasa]	[ka̯si]	[kasa]	'feather'
d. [tuku]	[tu̯ku]	[tuku]	'flesh'
e. [juhu]	[juu]	[juhu]	'grease'
f. [pida]	[pida]	[pita]	'arm'
g. [kadi]	[kadi]	[kati]	'sit'
h. [kwasi]	[kwa̯si]	[kwasi]	'tail'
i. [kwida]	—	[kwita]	'excrement'