

Name: _____
Section: _____

Linguistics 001
Spring 2009
Homework 7
Due: Wed., April 15th for 15 points

Dialect variation

The following chart shows the pronunciations of a few words in a standard dialect of American English and in a non-standard one (spoken in the inland South).

1. Fill in the chart with IPA transcriptions of each word as they would be produced in standard American English. **Half point each**

Standard	Standard IPA	Non-standard IPA
blind	blaɪnd	[bland]
now	naʊ	[na]
time	taɪm	[tam]
both	boʊθ	[boθ]

2. In your own words, explain the process that has affected the non-standard dialect. **1 pt**

Monothongization of vowels: diphthongs have become monothongs by losing their second half.

3. Will merger occur in the non-standard dialect if no other changes happen? Give an example. **1 pt**

If no other changes occur, <blonde> will rhyme with <bland>, an instance of merger.

Rule Ordering

In the change from Middle to Modern English, the following change occurred. This change is like phonological rules that we have seen before, except that prosody seems to play a role in determining what sounds undergo this change. Stressed vowels are marked with underline.

4. Use the Modern IPA transcriptions to determine the modern spelling and fill out the chart. **Half pt each**

Middle	Modern	Modern IPA
kr <u>a</u> bə	crab	kræb
w <u>i</u> f	wife	waɪf
s <u>u</u> nə	sun	sʌn
b <u>a</u> θ	bath	bæθ
n <u>a</u> kɪd	naked	nekɪd
kl <u>æ</u> nə	clean	kli:n

5. *What is the rule that describes this change? If you aren't sure how to write the formal rule, you can describe it in your own words. 1pt*

Informally: non-stressed final schwa has been deleted. Formally:

$\text{ə} \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{ ___[-stress] \#}$

In Middle English, voiced and voiceless fricatives were in complementary distribution, and thus allophones. The distribution is described by the following rule:

$[-\text{voice fricative}] \rightarrow [+ \text{voice}] / \text{ V ___ V}$

However, various processes, including borrowing from French, which had words starting with <v>, made this distribution no longer complementary. Therefore all voiced and voiceless fricatives became different phonemes. Now consider these data:

Middle		Modern
bæθ	>	bæθ 'bath (n.)'
bæðə	>	bəð 'bathe (v.)'
lif	>	laɪf 'life (n.)'
livə	>	lɪv 'live (v.)'

6. *Which happened first, the loss of the complementary distribution of the voiced and voiceless fricatives, or the loss of the final vowels? Why? 2pt*

It must have been the loss of complementary distribution first, then schwa-deletion: otherwise “life” and “live” would both have a final [f]. A demonstration:

/lifə/ → [livə]

/livə/ → [livə] (loss of complementary distribution)

/liv/ → [liv] (schwa loss)

(... then other vowel changes)

THIS IS THE CORRECT RESULT

/lifə/ → [livə]

/lif/ → [lif] (schwa loss, still complementary distribution)

/lif/ → [lif] (loss of complementary distribution, but doesn't apply here)

THIS IS THE INCORRECT RESULT

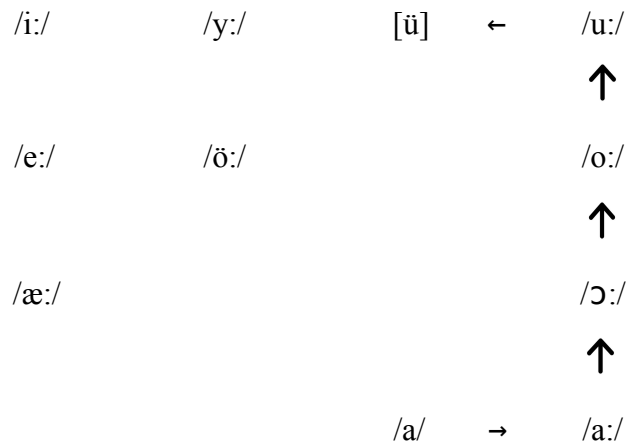
Chain shifting

A type of change that occurs in many vowel systems is the “chain shift”, in which vowels move in something like a circle instead of merging. Three chain shift behaviors are common.

- long vowels rise (become higher)
- short vowels fall (become lower)
- back vowels front (become fronter)

The following happened in the history of Swedish (the colon indicates long vowels, and the

arrow the change):



7. What principles are satisfied and what principles are violated? 2pt

A back vowel /u:/ fronted (1st principle), and the long back vowels all rise (2nd principle; except /u:/, which is already at the top, and fronted). The weird fact is that /a/ becomes more back rather than becoming front, in violation of the 3rd principle, probably arises from the fact that this is what is known as a “pull chain shift”, where /a/ backed to fill the space vacated by /ɑ:/’s rising.

Syntactic change

Compare this Old English sentence to Modern English.

þu	hauest	me	ouercumen.
you	have.2sg	me	overcome.

“You have overcome me.”

8. Explain how the syntax of Old English changed to become Modern English, expressing it as a change in the directions of phrase structures we used in the word typology section. Make sure to write out the old and new phrase structure rules; drawing a tree can't hurt either. **Don't use movement.**

Hint: “hauest” is a T/Aux. 3pts

Modern English has the following rules:

S → NP_{subj} TP
TP → T VP
VP → V NP_{obj}

This older form of English provides evidence that the VP rule was going in a different direction. To wit:

VP → NP_{ob} V