

Practice Unit 12

1. Consult a corpus of present-day English of your choice and list the senses of *swine* which figure prominently in your data. How does what you find in **your** corpus compare to a typical entry for the word in a major dictionary?
2. The Wycliffe translation of the parable of the prodigal son contains the following sentence, which is puzzling at first sight:

Fadir, gyue to me the porcioun of substaunce, ethir catel, that byfallith to me.
("Father, give me the portion of substance, or cattle, that belongs to me.")

Consult the OED entry for *cattle* to make sense of this passage.

3. Consider the passage from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

Touchstone: He sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon - which is in the vulgar leave - the society - which in the boorish is company - of this female - which in the common is woman. Which together is, abandon the society of this female, or clown thou perishest; or to thy better understanding, diest; or to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage. [...] (*As You Like It*, V. 1, 47ff.)

Shakespeare has Touchstone use synonyms in a way that is clearly intended to produce a humorous effect. Explain the joke.

Consult an etymological dictionary to find out which of the synonyms used are of Germanic/ Old English, French or Latin origin. How does origin relate to stylistic level?

4. The following quotations are from classic works of English literature:

(1a) Shakespeare, *Richard III*, I, ii
Anne [to Gloucester]: *Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead Or earth, gape open wide, and eat him **quick**.*

(1b) Shakespeare, *Othello* I, i
Roderigo [to Brabantio]:
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave;

*I say again, hath made a gross revolt;
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes,
In an **extravagant** and wheeling stranger
Of here and everywhere. [...]*

2. Defoe, *Moll Flanders*

I was really with child.

*This was a perplexing thing because of the Difficulty which was before me, where I should get leave to Lye Inn; it being one of the **nicest** things in the World at that time of Day, for a Woman that was a Stranger, and had no Friends, to be entertain'd in that Circumstance without Security, which by the way I had not, neither could I procure any.*

3. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, I, 625ff.

*The good **want** power, but to weep barren tears.*

*The powerful goodness **want**: worse need for them.*

*The wise **want** love; and those who love **want** wisdom;*

And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Look up the words printed in **bold** in the Oxford English Dictionary to determine the meanings presumably intended by the authors. Which semantic changes do you notice, and how would you explain them?

5. Use corpora and digital text data-bases documenting various stages in the history of English to study preferred choices between the following variable forms:

dream - dreamed - dreamed vs. dream - dreamt - dreamt

kneel - kneeled - kneeled vs. kneel - knelt - knelt

Have you (any money left)?

Do you have (any money left)?

Have you got (any money left)?

Which trends do you notice?

6. The recently coined word *co-opetition* (or *coopetition*) is a blend between *cooperation* (or *cooperative*) and *competition*. Check dictionaries, corpora and the World-Wide Web to find out as much as possible about the precise date and place of its origin. How solid is the evidence that you have been able to identify?
7. On page 205 in the book you find an early 20th-century advertisement for a much used washing soap. Look for a present-day advertisement for a detergent and comment on the changes in language structure and textual conventions that you notice.

8. As was pointed out in the Introduction to Unit 12, historical and generic relationships between languages are proved by systematic phonetic correspondences. State the regularity apparent in the following pairs of words:

ten - zehn

token - Zeichen

town - Zaun

water - Wasser

bite - beißen

write - reißen

Can you account for the following apparent exceptions to this rule?

stone - Stein

strike - Streich

Finally, do you note any parallels between these and the following, which seem to be relevant to a discussion of the /p – pf, f/ correspondence discussed in the text of the book?

spin - spinnen

spring - springen