

**Assignment 3: Due Friday, March 8 @ 5pm
(by email or delivered to my office)**

I. A 'n B, A or B

Constructions of the form [A 'n B], [A or B] provide one of the rare cases in English where speakers may alter word order without affecting meaning: [B 'n/ or A] is usually synonymous with [A 'n/ or B]. Yet despite this flexibility, English speakers consistently choose certain word orders over others:

strongly preferred

hot 'n bothered

sweet 'n sour

salt 'n pepper

short 'n sassy

Peter, Paul, 'n Mary¹

cream or sugar

soup or salad

now or later

strongly dispreferred

bothered 'n hot

sour 'n sweet

pepper 'n salt

sassy 'n short

Paul, Peter, 'n Mary

sugar or cream

salad or soup

later or now

Give a precise description of the rhythmic structures associated with each member of the pair *Peter, Paul, 'n Mary* vs. *Paul, Peter, 'n Mary*, as well as **one other pair** from the above list. How might the differences between these rhythmic structures account for the preferences seen above?

¹ 60's folk trio of "Puff the Magic Dragon" fame...

II. Stress Placement in English Verbs

In class (and in the Carr reading), we saw that the default patterns governing stress placement in English nouns differ from those for English verbs. In particular, we noted that while nouns with stress on their final syllable are exceptional in English, final-syllable stress is part of the default pattern for English verbs. In this problem, you will examine this latter pattern.

- A. For each of the following verbs, determine which syllable bears primary stress. (You need not determine whether/where any secondary stresses occur.) If you cannot decide where the primary stress falls in a particular verb, remember that you can use the "vocative chant" to investigate this question.

<i>a sto nish</i>	<i>main tain</i>	<i>co llapse</i>
<i>e dit</i>	<i>e rode</i>	<i>tor ment</i>
<i>de ve lop</i>	<i>a pply</i>	<i>a dapt</i>
<i>i ma gine</i>	<i>a ppear</i>	<i>u surp</i>
<i>pro mise</i>	<i>a llow</i>	<i>con vince</i>

- B. Now, for each verb, carefully consider the structure of its final syllable's rhyme constituent. What type of vowel does it contain? How many coda consonants does it contain? Do any generalizations emerge concerning the final syllables that appear in each column? If so, then state these generalizations. (E.g., "In all of the verbs in the left column, the final syllable's rhyme consists of. . .")
- C. Give a precise description of the circumstances under which an English verb will or will not receive primary stress on its final syllable.

III. [ə]-Deletion in American English

In class, we observed that [ə] may delete in unstressed syllables:

choc{o}late ~ choc'late
cam{e}ra ~ cam'ra

(Throughout this problem, the deleted vowel appears in curly brackets.)
It turns out that the possibility of [ə]-deletion is restricted by the surrounding consonantal context. In this problem, you will examine these restrictions.

A. One restriction governing [ə]-deletion concerns the nature of the following consonant. On the basis of the following words, identify this restriction.

[ə]-deletion possible

sep{a}rate
ped{a}ling
def{i}nite
cel{e}ry
pris{o}ner
jaw{e}lin
mack{e}rel

[ə]-deletion impossible

rock{e}ting
ball{o}ting
goss{i}ping
opac{i}ty
ven{i}son
harmon{i}ca
Luc{i}fer

B. Another restriction governing [ə]-deletion concerns the relationship between the preceding and the following consonant. On the basis of the following words, identify this restriction. (The restriction that you identify should also account for the differences illustrated in Part A.)

[ə]-deletion possible

fin{a}lly
gen{e}ral
fam{i}ly
Val{e}rie
cel{e}ry

[ə]-deletion impossible

fel{o}ny
ir{o}ny
col{o}ny
car{o}ling
scar{i}ly

Note: When answering this problem, you might again find that our sonority scale is relevant.

Table 6.1 *Sonority scale*

Oral stops		Fricatives		Nasals	Liquids	Semivowels	Vowels	
Voiceless	Voiced	Voiceless	Voiced				High	Low
p	b	f	v	m				
t	d	θ	ð	n		j	i	a
k	g	s	z	ŋ	l r	w	u	ɑ
s o n o r i t y →								