

# EL2111 Historical Variation in English

## (Sem 2, 2017/18)

### Tutorial No. 3

1. How do you understand the term **lexicon**? How is this different from the words in a dictionary? Examine the following entry from the OED, and answer the questions that follow.

## junta, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /ˈdʒʌntə/, /ˈhʌntə/, U.S. /ˈhʌntə/, /ˈhʌntə/, /ˈdʒəntə/

**Forms:** Also 17 **juncta**.

**Frequency (in current use):** ●●●●●●●●●●

**Etymology:** < Spanish *junta* (and Portuguese *junta*) = Italian *giunta* < Latin *juncta*, feminine passive participle of *jungĕre* to **JOIN** *v.*, in Romanic used as a noun. The equivalent French form is *jointe* **JOINT** *n.*; modern French *junte* *junta*, is from Spanish.

**1. With reference to Spain or Italy:** A deliberative or administrative council or committee. In mod. hist. the term is best known as the name of the local councils established in different districts of Spain to conduct the war against Napoleon in the summer of 1808; the Central Junta was formed in Sept. of the same year.

1623 J. MEDE *Let.* 8 Nov. in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eng. Hist.* (1824) 1st Ser. III. 162 At length the Junta of Divines [at Madrid] coming to agreement, the marriage was declared.

1645 J. HOWELL *Epistolæ Ho-elianæ* III. x. 62 A particular *Junta* of some of the Counsell of State and War, might be appointed to determine the businesse.

1754 A. DRUMMOND *Travels* II. 61 The senate [at Venice] consists of a hundred and twenty nobles, one half of whom are ordinary, and the other distinguished by the appellation of the junta.

1809 *Hist. Eur.* in *Ann. Reg.* 6/1 Details of the weakness and tardiness of the Spanish Junta.

1887 E. DOWDEN *Life Shelley* II. viii. 342 Here the troops were on the side of the viceroy and his junta.

**2. In general sense:** = **junto** *n.* 1.

1714 Swift *Some Free Thoughts upon Present State Affairs* (1741) 20 Ready for any Acts of Violence, that a Junto composed of the greatest Enemies to the Constitution shall think fit to enjoin them.

1867 G. Smith *Three Eng. Statesmen* (1882) 77 A junta of fanatics, who wanted to sweep away law, learning, and civil society.

Abbreviated entry for *junto*

## junto, *n.*

**Pronunciation:** /ˈdʒʌntəʊ/

**Forms:** Also 16–17 **juncto**.

**Frequency (in current use):** ●●●●●●●●●●

**Etymology:** Erroneous form of **JUNTA** *n.*, by assimilation to Spanish nouns in *o* (compare *-ADO* *suffix*). The form *juncto* (after Latin *junctum*) was very common down to 1700. ([Show Less](#))

**1. A body of men who have joined or combined for a common purpose, especially of a political character; a self-elected committee or council; a clique, faction, or cabal; a club or coterie.**

...

### In Spanish

**junta** /ˈhunta/

*noun*

1. Junta or junto, a congress, an assembly, a council (*consejo*), a convention, tribunal. (f)

2. Any meeting of persons to speak about business (*asamblea*). (f)

3. Conjunction, union, junction (*punto de unión*), concession, fraternity. (f)

4. Each lateral surface of a square hewed stone. (f)

5. Joint; coupling (*acoplamiento*). (f)

(a) Is the word a native English word or is it a loan-word? How do you know?

(b) Has the word undergone any kind of nativisation or assimilation?

(c) Do you think it is a common word? In what kind of contexts would you find this word?

(d) Is this a core lexical item?

2. Here are abbreviated entries for *luscious* and *summit* from the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. (Bear in mind that E = early; M = mid; L = late; ME = Middle English; 16, 17, etc. = 16th, 17th, etc. centuries; *alt.* = alteration; *colloq.* = colloquial; *ellipt.* = elliptical; *esp.* = especially; *f.* = from; *fig.* = figurative; *perh.* = perhaps; *spec.* = specifically.)

**luscious** /'lʌʃəs/ *a. & n.* LME. [Perh. alt. of shortened form of DELICIOUS. Cf. also LUSH *a.*] **1** Richly sweet in taste or smell; *colloq.* delicious. LME. **2** Excessively sweet, cloying, sickly; (esp. of language or literary style) overrich in sound, imagery, or voluptuous suggestion. M16. **3** Orig., appealing to a lascivious taste, salacious, voluptuous. Later, voluptuously attractive, sexually desirable. E17.

**summit** /'sʌmɪt/ *n. & v.* LME. [OFr. *som(m)ete*, also *somet*, *sumet* (mod. *sommet*), *f. som*, *sum* *f. L summum* neut. sing. of *summus*] **A n.** **1** The top or head of something; the vertex, the apex. Now *esp.* the highest point or ridge of a mountain; a peak. LME. **2** *fig. a* The highest point of power, success, etc.; the acme, the peak. E18. **b** The highest level, *spec.* with ref. to politics and international relations; *ellipt.* a summit conference, meeting, etc. M20.

(a) Discuss the range of senses for each word. Which are the original senses? Which are still available today?

(b) How has meaning changed for these two words?

(c) Are these core lexical items?

3. Examine the lexis in the opening of T S Eliot's poem 'The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock'. (This poem is often seen to be the one to launch Eliot into the poetry world.) This is an interior monologue of an urban man who feels isolated, indecisive and frustrated.

1 Let us go then, you and I,  
2 When the evening is spread out against the sky  
3 Like a patient etherised upon a table;  
4 Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
5 The muttering retreats  
6 Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
7 And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
8 Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
9 Of insidious intent  
10 To lead you to an overwhelming question ...  
11 Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'  
12 Let us go and make our visit.

(a) Go through the lexis in the poem, and with the help of a dictionary that contains etymological information (such as the *OED online*), categorise the lexis according to the *immediate* (not *ultimate*) source of the words – OE (Anglo-Saxon), Norse (Scandinavian), French, Latin, Greek, etc. (Bear in mind that the sources of some words might be disputed, so that the answer that you get might depend on the dictionary that you consult. Make sure also that you know how to read etymological entries and check up on the abbreviations used.)

(b) Discuss the 'feel' or 'texture' of the words in each category. Try to account for this by referring to the history of loan-words in English.

(c) Try to relate the categories to the notion of core vocabulary.

(d) Can you account for Eliot's use of core or non-core vocabulary and native lexical items and non-native lexical items in the poem?