

Final examination preview

The final will be structured around the simple premise of this book, that knowing the history of the language actually helps you understand patterns we find in the contemporary language and explain them to others.

I. Clearly explain the history behind the following alternations/differences in a paragraph or so. **5 pts each. Probably 5 of 8.**

1. *brennen ~ brannte, kennen ~ kannte*
2. *melkte ~ molk; backte ~ buk; schien ~ scheinte; *kommte, *gehte*
3. **swarjan ~ schwören, *halja ~ Hölle*
4. *war_ vs. gewesen; schneiden ~ geschnitten; sach_ ~ gesaget* (historical forms of ‘to see’)
5. *ich muss_ but ich arbeite; sie muss_ but sie arbeitet*
6. *Wir brauchen das nicht __ machen. Dazu bräuchtest du mehr Zeit. Er brauch__ Hilfe.*
7. *Worte ~ Wörter, Lande ~ Länder*
8. *Köni[ç] ~ Köni[g]e ~ Köni[k]lich ~ Köni[ε]*
9. *Adresse ~ Anschrift, Augenblick ~ Moment, Verfasser ~ Autor*

II. Questions. Write about a half page on **five** of the following topics. Choose a key aspect of the problem to address, and be sure you give clear examples, and original ones to the extent possible (not from class or texts). As always, note outside sources you use. **25 pts each. Probably 5 of 8.**

1. Develop 2-3 examples of what the modern dialects can tell us about the broader history of German, how a dialect map can portray ‘history on a map’. Look at the atlases and other dialect sources given on the web page to find fresh examples.
2. How do current morphological changes in German continue trends present since Indo-European and early Germanic times? Develop 1-2 good examples with clear comparison between early and late forms.
3. Describe the evolution of Modern German *ge-* from Indo-European **kom*, phonologically, morphologically, and semantically. Where and to what extent can we still see traces of its earlier history in the modern language?

4. What non-linguistic motives drove/drive efforts to standardize German? Have those forces diminished or disappeared today?
5. How can we understand what gender a German noun has for native speakers? Sketch some of the key factors in how gender is assigned to German nouns, especially how these patterns have changed over time.
6. Given the amount of erosion of endings we see in German, are there cases where words or forms get 'built up' over history? Like where?
7. How has phonological 'weight' played a role in German diachronic phonology and morphology? Where are the traces (or clearer effects) of those patterns still visible today?
8. It is easy (all too easy, some would assert) to find German speakers who believe that standardization, the media and the schools have stopped change in their language, especially since many dialects appear to be receding. Provide evidence and arguments on these points.
9. Is German under threat from English today? How does this situation stack up against the broader history of German?
10. Germans sometimes use *weil* without putting the inflected verb at the end of the clause, despite what teachers have told them. Is this another case of the youth destroying the beautiful German language? What kind of patterns of this do you find with a Google search ... for instance, is this used just in the most informal styles?