

Types of Sound Change

Lenition

(1)	<i>Stronger</i>	<i>Weaker</i>
	voiced	voiceless (sometimes)
	voiceless	voiced (sometimes)
	stops	fricatives
	obstruents	sonorants
	consonants	semivowels
	oral	glottal
	front/back	central

(2) Lenition: Stronger > Weaker

			Kara (New Ireland)
*bulan	>	fulan	'moon'
*tapine	>	tefin	'woman'
*punti	>	fut	'banana'

(3) Rhotacism: C > r

			Latin
*ami:kosum	>	ami:korum	'of friends'
*genesis	>	generis	'of the type'

Sound Loss

(4) Aphaeresis: initial consonant deletion

			Angkamuthi (Cape York)
*maji	>	aji	'food'
*nani	>	ani	'ground'
*wapun	>	apun	'head'

(5) Apocope: final vowel loss

			S.E. Ambrym (Vanutu)
*utu	>	ut	'lice'
*aŋo	>	aŋ	'fly'
*asue	>	asu	'rat'
*tohu	>	toh	'sugarcane'

(6) Syncope: medial vowel loss

	Lenakel (Vanutu)			
*namatana	>	nimrin	'his/her eye'	(note other changes)
*nalimana	>	nelmin	'his/her hand'	
*masa	>	mha	'low tide'	

(7) Cluster reduction: CC >C

English		Melanesian Pidgin	
distrikt	>	distrik	'district'
poʊst	>	pos	'post'
peɪnt	>	pen	'paint'
tæŋk	>	taŋ	'tank'

(8) Haplology: syllable loss (conditioned by adjacent similar syllable)

laɪbrəri	>	laɪbri	'library'
Anglaland	>	England	

Sound Addition

(9) Excrescence: consonant addition

*æmtig	>	empti	'empty'
*θymle	>	θimbl	'thimble'

(10) Epenthesis: vowel addition

English		Tok Pisin	
blæk	>	bilak	'black'
blu:	>	bulu	'blue'
sɪks	>	sikis	'six'

(11) Prothesis: initial sound addition

		Moru (Papua New Guinea)	
*api	>	lahi	'fire'
*asan	>	lada	'gills'
*au	>	lau	'I, me'

Metathesis

Sounds switch places.

(12) *brid > *bird > bɔ̄d
æsk > æks

(13) *Tagalog* *Ilokano*
taŋjis : sa:ŋit ‘cry’
tubus : subut ‘redeem’
tigis : si:git ‘decant’
tamis : samqit ‘sweet’

Fusion

Two sounds become one, bearing features of both original sounds.

(14) vowel + nasal > nasalized vowel

French
*œn > ð̃ ‘one’
*bɔ̄n > bɔ̄̃ ‘good’
*vɛn > vɛ̃ ‘wine’
*blan > blã ‘white’

(15) velar stop + bilabial semivowel > bilabial stop

Attic Greek
*gwous > bous ‘cow’
*gwatis > basis ‘going’
*gwasileus > basileus ‘official’
*leikwɔ: > leipɔ: ‘I leave’
*yɛ:kwar > hɛ:par ‘liver’

(16) Compensatory lengthening - C deletion results in a lengthening of the preceding vowel:

Old Irish
*magl > ma:l ‘prince’
*kenetl > kene:l ‘gender’
*etn > e:n ‘bird’
*datl > da:l ‘assembly’

Unpacking

One sound becomes two, representing different features of the original.

(17) nasalized vowel > vowel + nasal

<i>French</i>		<i>Bislama</i> (Melanesian Pidgin spoken in Vanuatu)
kamiõ	>	kamioŋ 'truck'
aksidã	>	aksidoŋ 'accident'
kaɾtõ	>	kartoŋ 'cardboard box'
kalsõ	>	kalsoŋ 'underpants'

Vowel Breaking

vowel > diphthong ('diphthongization')

(18) *Standard English* *Southern American English*
 dɛd > dɛɪd 'dead'
 bæd > bæɪd 'bad'

(19) *Vulgar Latin* *Spanish*
 bõno > bueno 'good'
 dente > diente 'tooth'

(20) *Kairiru* (Wewak, Papua New Guinea)
 *pale > pial 'house' (what else is changing?)
 *manu > man 'bird'
 *ndanu > ran 'water'
 *lako > lak 'go'

Assimilation

Sounds becoming like adjacent sounds - two dimensions:

partial vs. total (note: partial assimilation is more common than total)
 progressive vs. regressive (regressive assimilation is more common than progressive)

(21) Total progressive assimilation:

		<i>Icelandic</i>
*findan	>	finna 'find'
*gulθ	>	gull 'gold'
*halθ	>	hall 'inclined'
*munθ	>	munn 'month'
*unθan	>	unna 'love'

- (22) Total regressive assimilation:

<i>Standard Spanish</i>		<i>Cuban Spanish</i>	
palmeto	>	pammeto	'type of bush'
karne	>	kane	'meat'

- (23) Partial regressive assimilation:

		<i>English</i>	
imbæləns	>	imbæləns	'imbalance'
ɪnkənsɪdət	>	ɪŋkənsɪdət	'inconsiderate'

- (24) Palatalization - assimilation with the front/high feature of a following vowel:

		<i>English</i>	
*kinn	>	tʃɪn	'chin'
*kɛ:si	>	tʃi:z	'cheese'
*geldan	>	ji:ld	'yield'
*gearn	>	ja:m	'yarn'

- (25)
- Latin*
- Vulgar Latin*
- Spanish*
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- kirka > tserka > serka or ɸerka 'close'

- (26) Regressive assimilation in manner and voice - intervocalic lenition:

		<i>Banoni</i> (N. Solomons)	
*wakar	>	bayara	'root'
*tipi	>	tsivi	'traditional dance'
*makas	>	mayasa	'dry coconut'

- (27) Final devoicing:

		<i>German</i>	
*ba:d	>	ba:t	'bath'
*ta:g	>	ta:k	'day'
*hund	>	hunt	'dog'
*ga:b	>	ga:p	'gave'

Harmony

Assimilation at a distance

(28) Consonant Harmony

<i>Tok Pisin</i>		<i>Huli</i> (New Guinea, S. Highlands)	
piksa	>	kikiḍa	‘picture’

(29) Vowel Harmony

		<i>Bislama</i>	
kukim	>	kukum	‘cook’ (-im ‘transitive suffix’)
*putim	>	putum	‘put’
*mitim	>	mitim	‘meet’
*kilim	>	kilim	‘hit’
*harim	>	harem	‘feel’
*mekim	>	mekem	‘make’
*soim	>	soem	‘show’

(30) Nasal Harmony

		<i>Enggano</i> (S. Sumatra)	
*ehɛkua	>	ehɛkũã	‘seat’
*eũʔadaʔa	>	eũʔãñãʔã	‘food’

Dissimilation

Similar sounds become less similar.

(31) Grassmann’s Law (Hermann Grassmann, 1862):

		<i>Sanskrit</i>	:	<i>Greek</i>	
*bho:dha	>	bo:dha	:	pewt ^h o	‘bid’

(32) *Dutch* *Afrikaans*

sxo:n	>	sko:n	‘clean’
sxoudər	>	skouər	‘shoulder’

‘Abnormal’ Sound Changes

(33) *PIE* *French*
*k_ṛmtom > sã ‘100’

(34) Chain of sound changes:

*k_ṛmtom
> *k_ṛemtom *unpacking*
> *kentom *assimilation*
> *kent *unstressed syllable loss*
> *tsent *palatalization*
> *sent *lenition*
> *sen *C deletion*
> *sẽ *fusion*
> sã *V lowering*