

Activity 18.2 - Fox & Hookes - spelling & pronunciation

Pairs of words remaining homophones

I have identified the following words as homophones in present-day Received Pronunciation. For speakers of the many other accents of English, some of these pairs may not be homophonic, and other pairs not listed here would have been included - eg *ant* and *aunt* are homophones in some Northern and Midland dialects.

accidence / accidents	fare / fair	ours / hours	sheer (= <i>shear</i>) /
assistants / assistance	fur / fir	pains / panes	Hampshire
assent / ascent	form / fourm	principal / principle	cite / sight
a loan / alone	feign / fain	place / plaise	sole / soul
air / heir	feed / fee'd	pare / pear / pair	strait / straight
appear / a peer	find / fin'd	palait (= <i>palate</i>) / pallet	slight / sleight
a peece / a piece	fold / foal'd	praise / preys	succour / sucker
boul / bowl	forth / fourth	pillars / <i>cater</i> -pillers	sum / some
baron / barren	furz / furs	pride / pry'd	sun / son
bark / barque	foul / fowl	profit / prophet	sex / sects
bill'd / build	Francis / Frances	rain / reign / rein	Stanes (= <i>Staines</i>) /
bald / baul'd	frees / freese	raise / rayes	stains
bad / bade	flower / flowr	rancour / ranker	tax / tacks
by / buy	ghost / go'st	red / read	thyme / time
bolt / boult	galls / gauls	rear / rere	tide / ty'd
bow / bough	gilt / guilt	rite / right	toe / towe
bore / boar	hare / hair	write / wright	toad / toed / towed
brows / browz	holy / wholly	roe / row	too / two / to (<i>Cooper</i>
blew / blue	hole / whole	rose (<i>vb</i>) / rose (<i>n</i>)	<i>adds toe</i>)
brute / bruit	hoop / whoop	roes / rows	treatise / treaties
bred / bread	hire / higher / hy her	rapt (= <i>rapped</i>) / wrapt	thrown / throne
bare / bear	here / hear	roads / Rhodes	there / their
currents / corrants	lead / led	rack / wrack	tail / tale
call / caul	light (<i>vb</i>) / lite	reed / read	weigh / wey / way
cousin / cozen	lesson / lessen	raze / raise	wait / weight
council / counsel	lo / low	rasour / raiser	yew / you
cruel / crewel	meet / meat / mete	rest / wrest	ewer / ure (= <i>use</i>)
crue / crew	mantle / mantil	savers / savors	= 115 pairs
deer / dear	nay / neigh	seas / seize	
dun / done	naught / nought	seller / cellar	

Pairs of words no longer homophones in present-day English

Voiced/voiceless contrast of final <s>, <se>, <c>, <ce>, <ze>

It may be debatable whether Fox and Hookes' assertion that their listed pairs are "alike in Sound" means that an exact match is claimed for them. For example, the following pairs only differ in the voicing of the final sibilants in present-day pronunciation. Was this contrast not observable in the 17th century, and if so, was a voiced or unvoiced consonant pronounced?

advice / advise	decease / disease	price / prize	lyes / lice
copies / coppice	hens / hence	seas / cease	fens / fence
does (<i>n pl</i>) / dose	eyes / ice	princes / princess	
device / devise	lose / loose	necce / neese (= <i>sneeze</i>)	

<a> ~ <o>

barrow / borrow	chaps / chops	laught / loft	vacation / vocation
band / bond	knots / gnats	plot / plat	

<i-e> ~ <oi>

Homophones probably pronounced with a diphthong something like [əɪ].

bile / boil	lines / loins
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<ea> spellings

The pairing of <ea> spellings now pronounced [i:] with <e> is evidence that the upward shift of these and other <ea> words had not been completed. The pronunciation of the vowel was probably [ɛ:].

best / beast	reason / raisin	eat / ate
least / lest	ceasing / sessing	were / wear / ware
leapers / lepers	ye / yea	(<i>Cooper adds war</i>)

<o> ~ <oa>

The spelling <oa> was introduced for the half open back vowel [ɔ], though not consistently applied or retained.

boasted / bost (= <i>bossed</i>)	quoteth / coateth	rower / roar
cost / coast	ore / oar / ower	

[ŋg] ⇒ [n]

jerking / jerkin	coughing / coffin
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<gh> not pronounced

burrough / burrow	incite / in sight / insight	sithes (= <i>scythes</i>) / sighs	through / thorow
cough't / caught	wrought / wrote / rote	slow / slough	

<gh> pronounced [f]

ought / oft

Variable pronunciation of <ee> spellings

chare / chair / cheer flie / flee steed / stead sheep / ship

<o-e> <ou> and <oo> spellings

Homophones, probably with the high back vowel [u:] (?).

cool'd / could shoots / sutes / suits mouse / mows power / pour
 sound / swoon low'd / loud moles / moulds

These pairings suggest that not all words spelt with <oo> had finally shifted to the high back vowel [u:].

both / booth room / Rome tomb / tome

Miscellaneous

ask / ax	homely / homilie	parson / person
ant / aunt	holly / holy	rinde / Rhine
sure / suer	jointer / joynture	wrot / rot
barley / barely	kennel / channel	rung / wrung / rough (<i>sic</i>)
bath / bathe	leases / leasers	centurie / century (<i>centaury</i> , <i>a plant</i>)
begin / biggin (<i>a cap</i>)	lothe / loth	sivs (= <i>sieves</i>) / sives (= <i>chives</i>)
Barbarie / barbara	Latine / latten (= <i>a brass-like</i> <i>metal</i>)	sower / sowr
causes / causeys (= <i>causeways</i>)	message / messuage	shoes / shews
desert / desart (= <i>dessert</i>)	mower / more	then / than
east / yeast	millions / melons	tongs / tongues
earn / yarn / yern	Mary / marry	victuals / vital
eminent / imminent	needless / needles	wast / waste
froise (= <i>pancake</i>) / phrase	neither / nether	wrest / wrist
guardian / garden	of / off	wist / wisht
guess / guests	own / one	
glister / clyster	past / paste	
hast / haste		