

Lexical diffusion

Principles of language change

Holger Diessel
University of Jena

holger.diessel@uni-jena.de
<http://www.holger-diessel.de/>

Neogrammarian hypothesis

Lexical diffusion challenges the Neogrammarian hypothesis.

All sound changes are mechanical processes, taking place according to laws with no exceptions. [Osthoff and Brugmann 1878]

The regularity in the transmission of sounds results from changes in the articulatory system and not the articulation of an isolated word. [Meillet]

Lexical diffusion

-ary -ery -ory -ury

every

summary

family

artillery

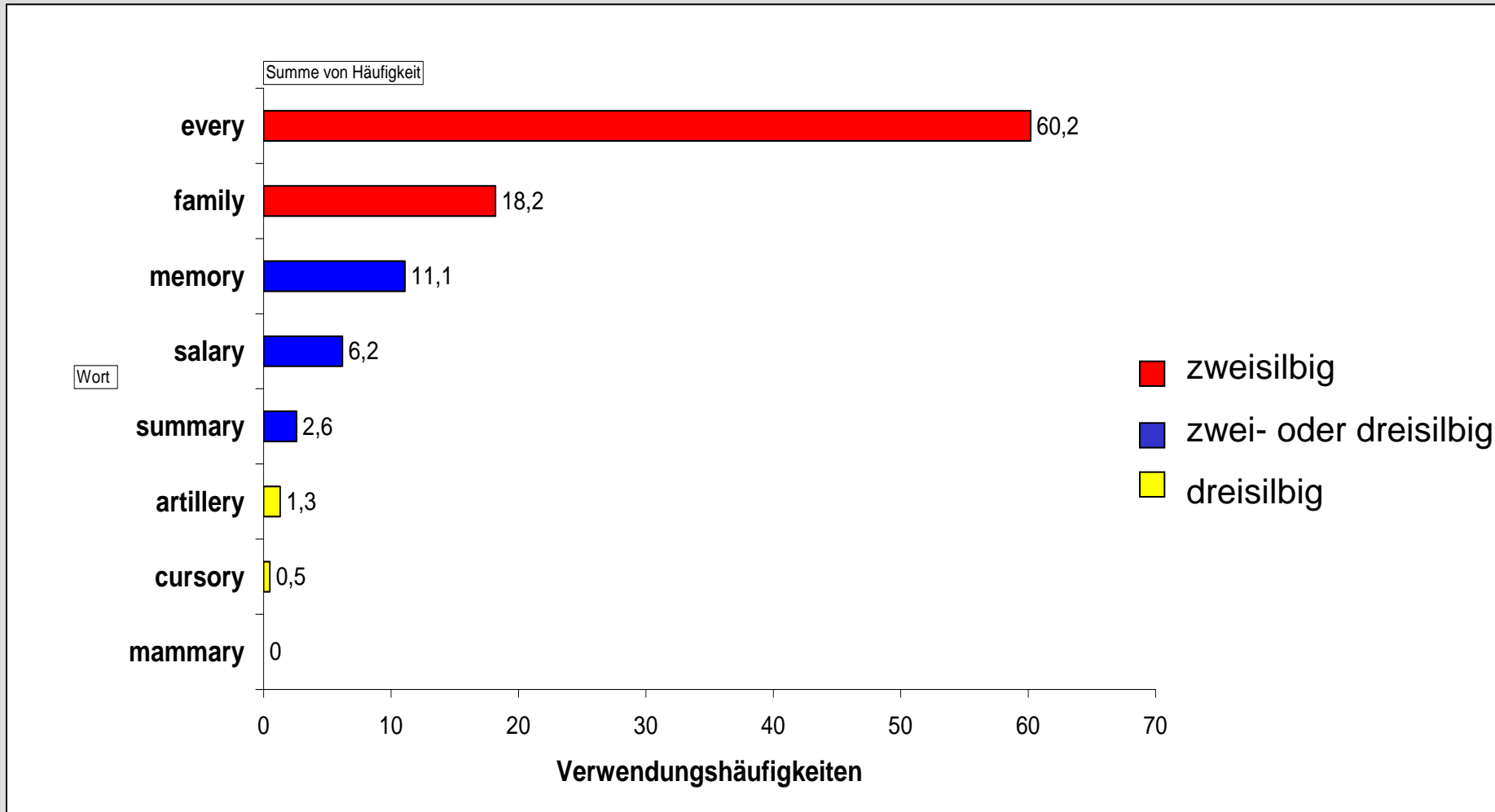
memory

cursorry

salary

mammary

Lexical diffusion



Lexical diffusion

burgl(a)ry

[glr]

forg(e)ry

[dʒr]

Lexical diffusion

- (1) The article **addresses** the following problem.
- (2) Send the letter to my **address**.

Lexical diffusion

to export
to record
to insult

the export
the record
the insult

to attack
to regret

the attack
the regret

Lexical diffusion

1570

outlaw

to out**law**

rebel

to re**bel**

record

to re**cord**

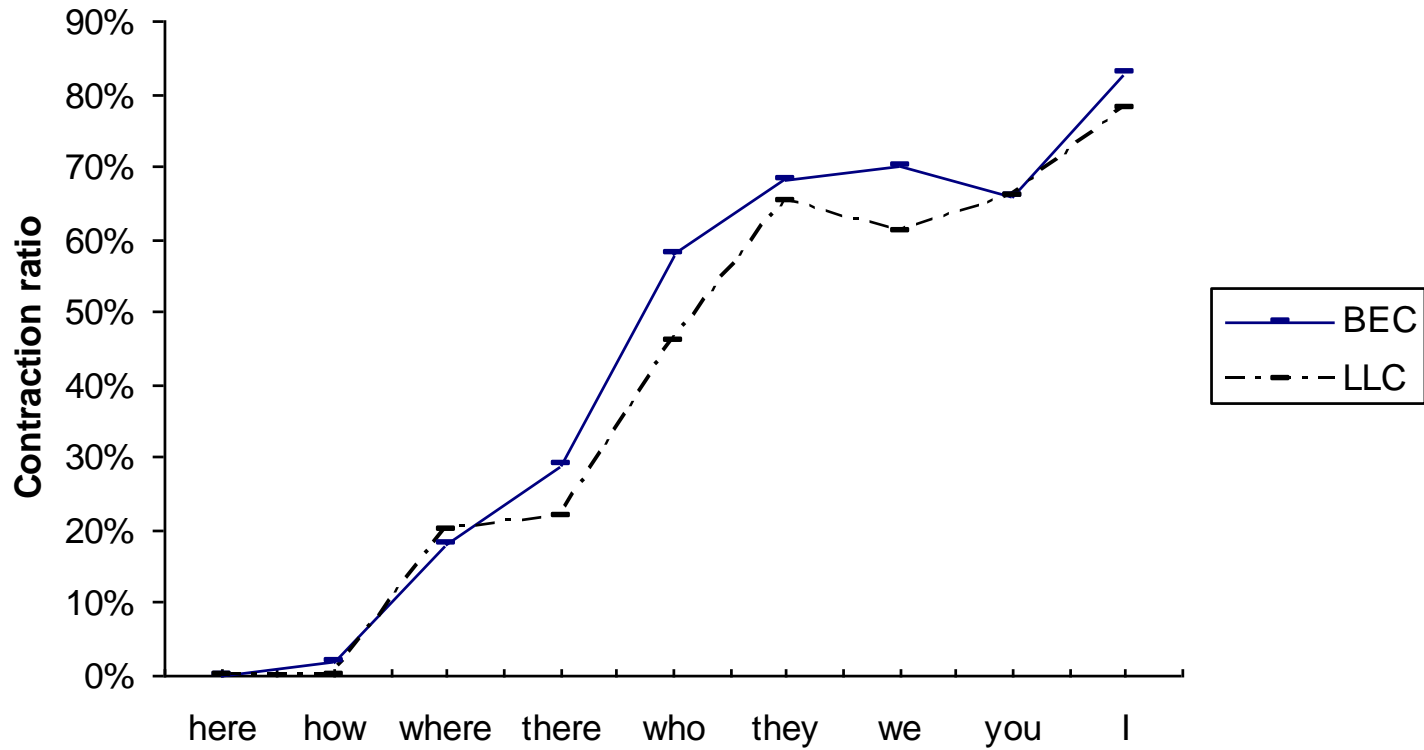
Lexical diffusion

I'll, you'll

he'll, she'll, we'll, they'll

*Peter'll, man'll

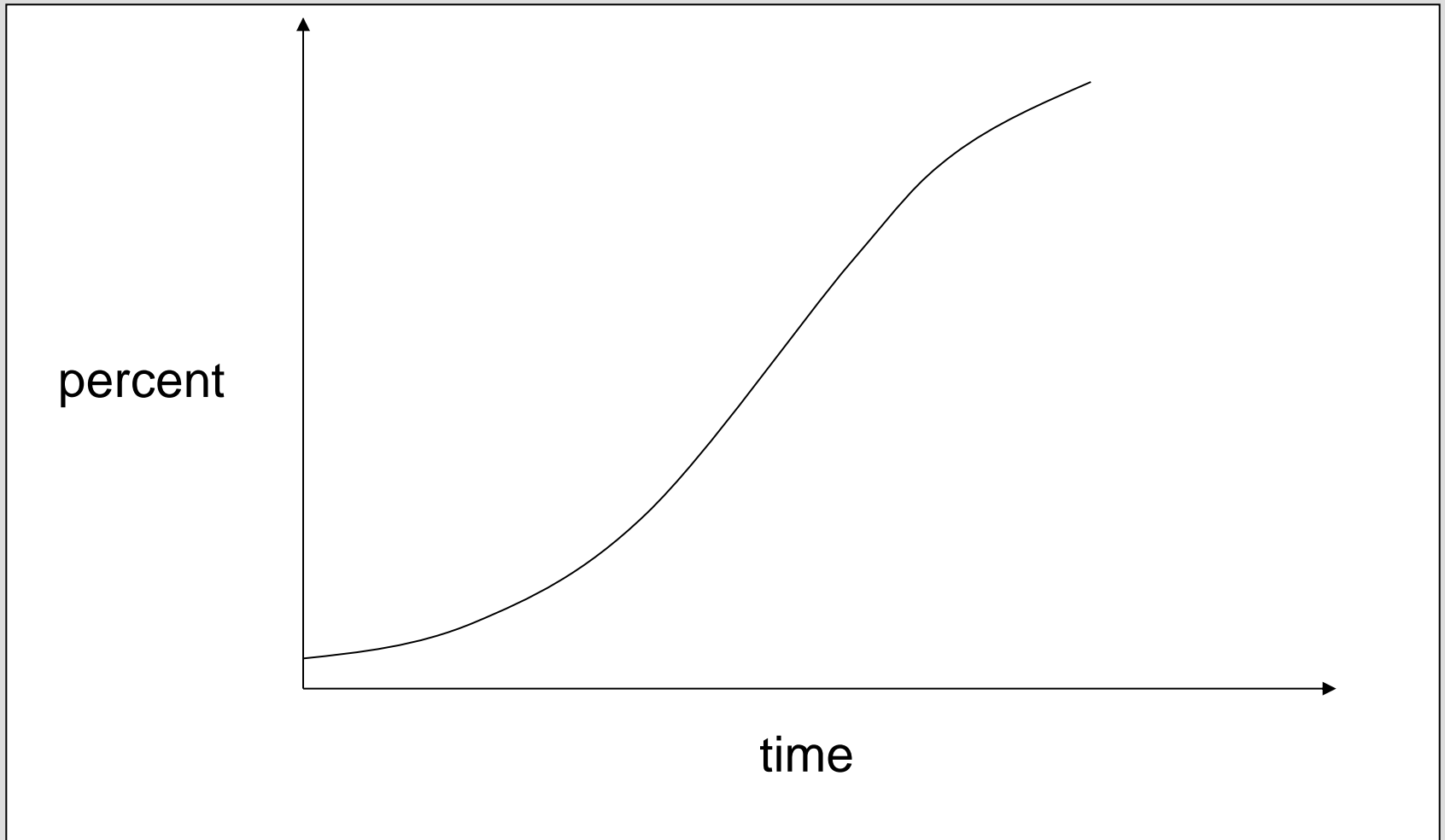
I've, you've



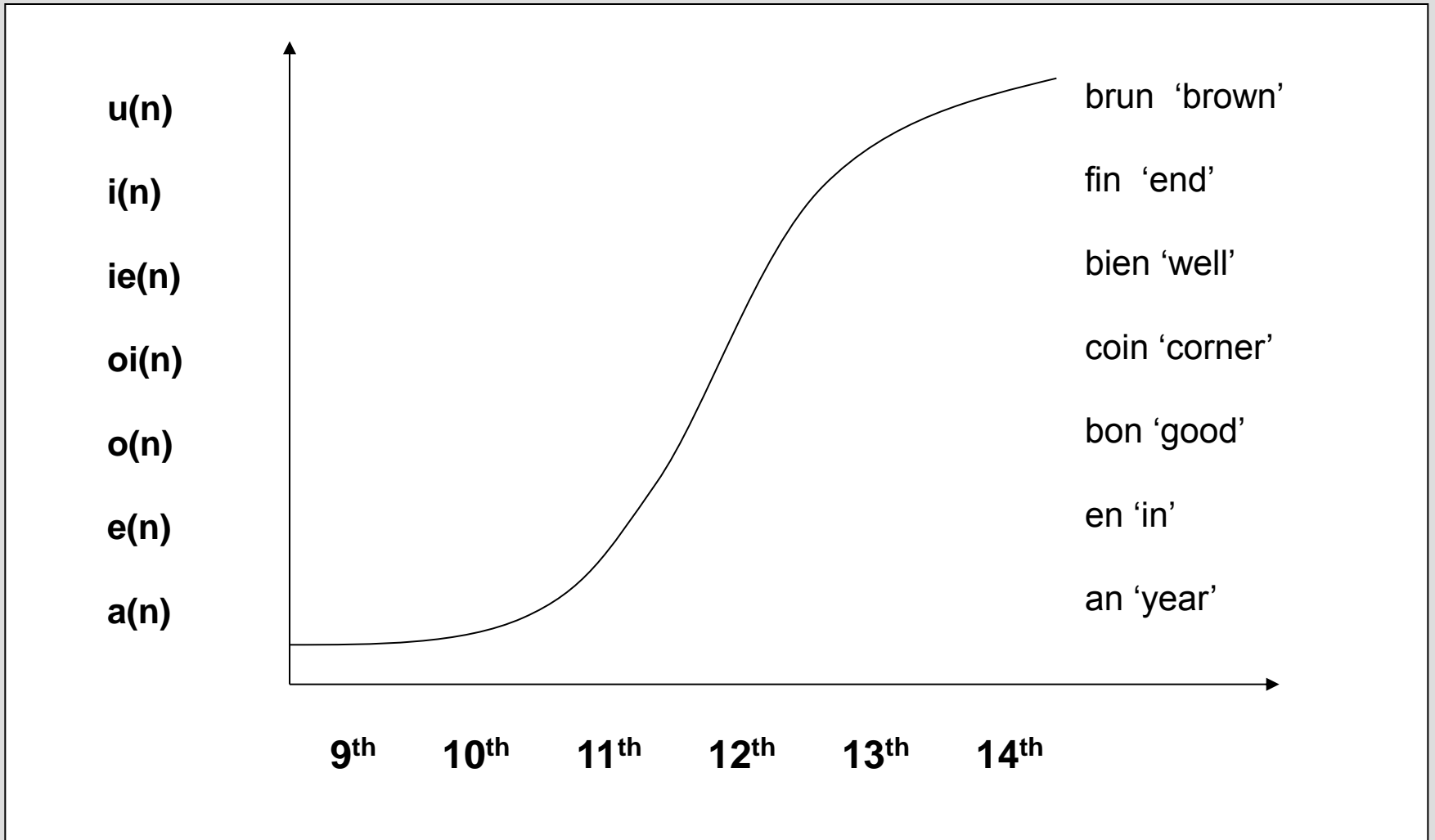
Lexical diffusion

- Item-specific historical change
- Driven by frequency
- Challenges the Neo-grammarians hypothesis

S-shaped development



S-shaped development



S-shaped development

Stage 1

Northern

Southern

does
says
has

doth
sayth
hath

Stage 2

Northern

Southern

V-s

V-s

Stage 3

Northern

Southern

does
says
has

doth
sayth
hath

S-shaped development

