

Seminar 8

Reading: Denison

§1 Denison writes: “There would be no change at all unless there were some small advantage in the new form” (p. 58). Why? What could the advantage be, and why is it needed?

§2 What different things can the y-axis in an S-curve plot mean?

§3 What is lexical diffusion? How is it related to S-curves?

§4 How could the S-curve pattern of change (“slow, slow, quick, quick, slow”) be explained? Why does it occur?

§5 What are some reasons of thinking that an S-curve does not, however, always occur?