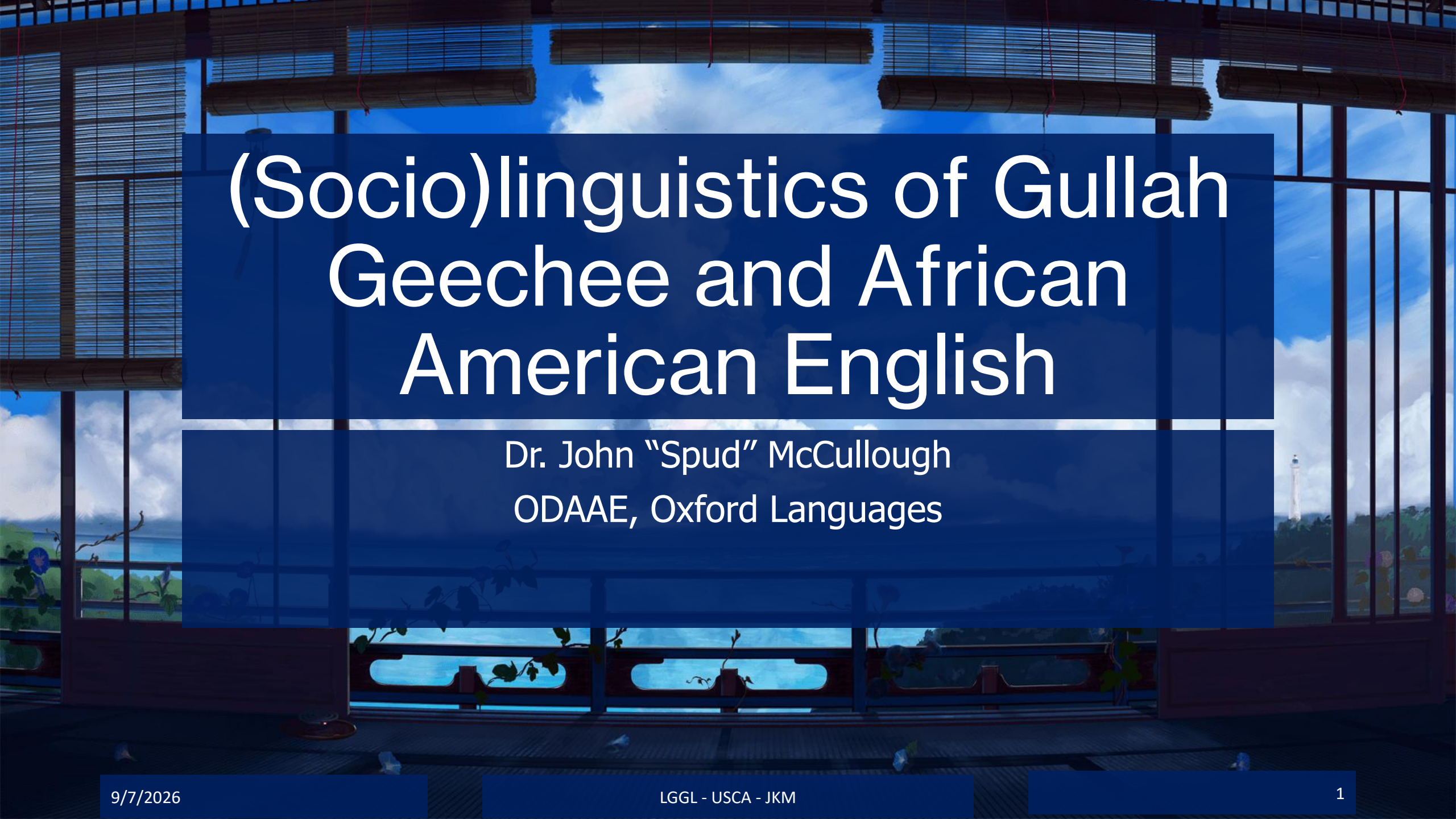




(Socio)linguistics of Gullah Geechee and African American English

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The next four sessions

- Today: Overview of (Socio)linguistics
What is linguistics, and why do we care?
- 9/10: Southern and African American English
What makes these varieties unique?
- 9/17: History and background of Gullah Geechee
Where does Gullah Geechee come from?
- 9/24: African American English today
Why do people feel strongly about language change?

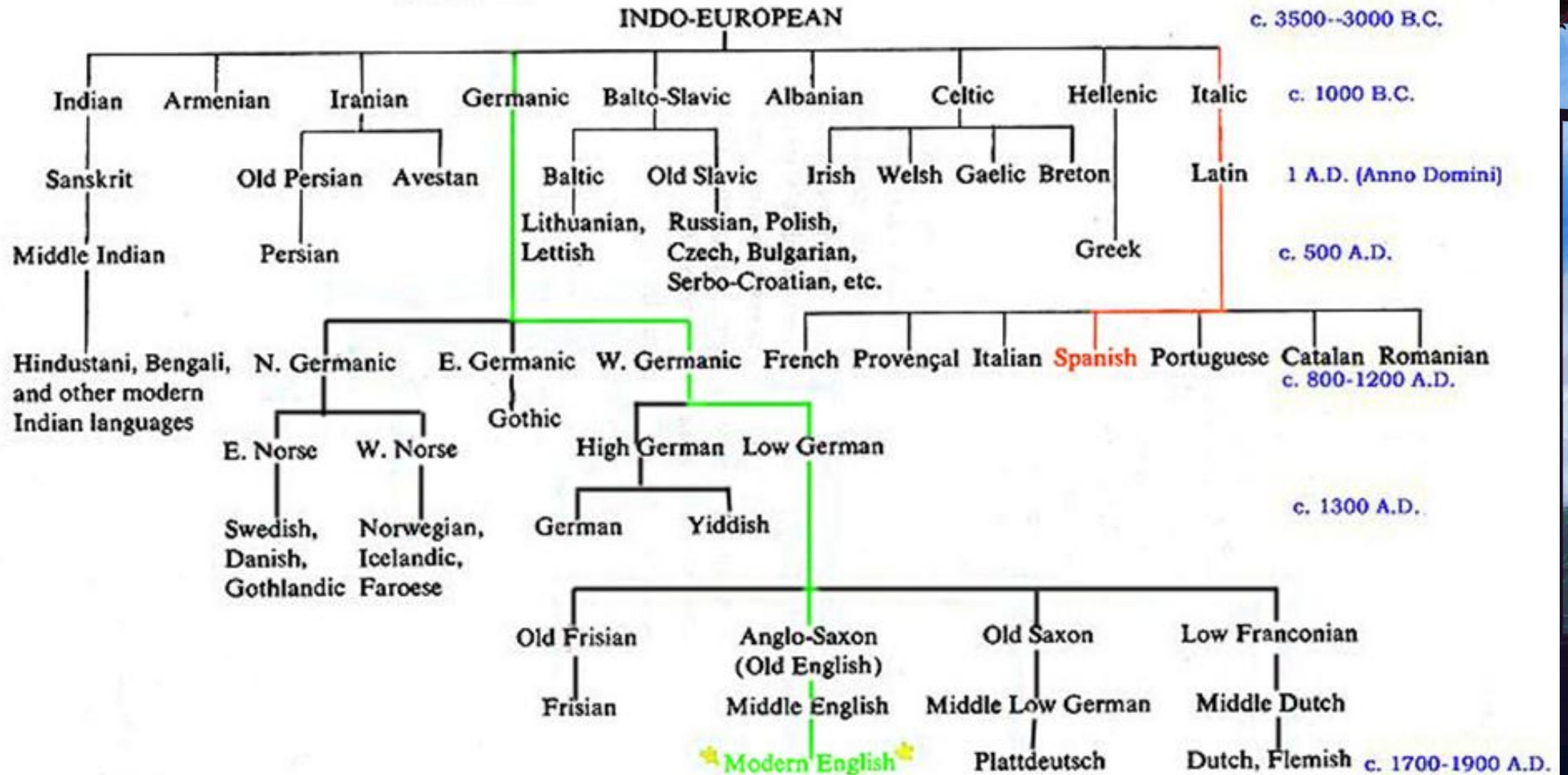
Outline for today

- Outcomes for the class
- Language, dialect, accent, variety
- Attitudes and ideologies
- Language change, contact, birth, death
- Appropriation, accommodation/adequation, distinction
- Conservation/preservation, revitalization
- Prescriptivism vs. descriptivism
- Internal reflections

Language, dialect, accent, variety

- What's the difference between a language, dialect, and accent?
אַ שפּראַך איז אַ דיאַלעקט מיט אַן אַרמיי און פֿלאָט
a shprakh iz a dyalekt mit an armey un flot
- A language is a dialect with an army and navy –Max Weinreich
- A dialect is a language that gets no respect –Rosina Lippi-Green
- How many languages are there in the world?
- ~7000; we lose 1 on average ~21 days
- 10% of the population speaks 90% of the world's languages
- Value-neutral term: **language variety**

THE INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES



Dialect variation

- What kind of value(s) do we assign to different types of language varieties?
- Covert vs. overt prestige: social elevation and mobility
- There is variation between all varieties
- Dialects have phonological, syntactic, and lexical production associations (e.g. Southern English):
 - **Phonological:** pin-pen merger
 - **Syntactic:** double modal, a-prefixation
 - **Lexical:** buggy, catawampus, pluff mud, chitlins

Linguistic axioms

- **Everyone speaks a dialect, everyone has an accent**
- **All language varieties are systematic and rule-governed**
- Every language is equally capable of expressing abstract thought (just not in the same ways)
- Each language is suited to its community of speakers
- All languages can adapt and borrow terms to suit their needs

Attitudes and ideologies

- How do we feel about dialects and accents?
- Where do these feelings come from?
- **Language ideology:** attitudes and beliefs towards a variety of language (*and its speakers*)
- What is a standard language?
- Who decides?
- Does a standard language change?
- **Linguistic dichotomy:** if there is a socially-constructed linguistic “standard,” that entails a disfavored “non-standard”

Attitudes and folk perceptions

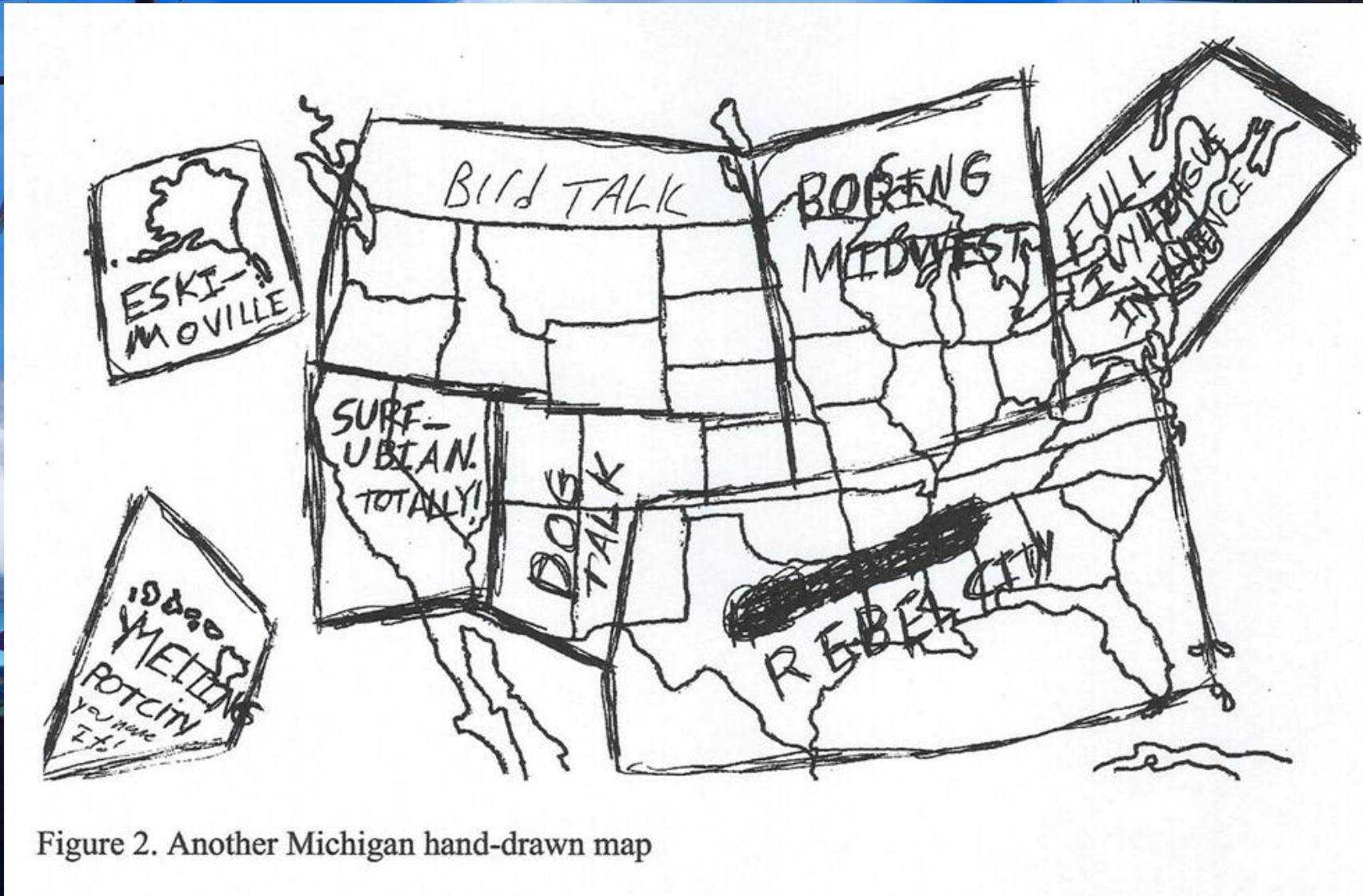


Figure 2. Another Michigan hand-drawn map

Language change, contact, birth, death

- Why does language change? Who changes it?
- Language change is often driven by children—as they learn the language, they may learn it “imperfectly” and forge changes
- Disparate languages arise through human migration and isolation—we tend to talk like those we associate with, ease of communication
- Borrowing or infusion from another language
- Need to adapt to a changing world
- Why and how does a language die?
- Language decline: dispersal, disuse, death, assimilation
- How is a language born?
- Language birth: jargon, slang, pidgin, creole, legitimation

Lippi-Green: All spoken languages change

Modern English:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.

Early Modern English (450 years ago – 16th century):

Oure father which arte in heven, hallowed be thy name. Let thy kyngdom come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in erth, as it ys in heven.

Middle English (700 years ago – 14th century):

Oure fadir that art in heuenes, halewid be thi name. Thi kyngdoom come to, be thi wile don in erthe es in heuene.

Old English (1000 years ago – 11th century):

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum; Si þin nama gehalgod to becume þin rice gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum.

Appropriation and accommodation

- What happens when varieties are in contact with one another?
- Bilingual, bidialectal, code-switching, assimilation, accommodation, suppression
- What does it mean to “appropriate” language from a variety?
- Popular use of the term vs. linguistic appropriation
- Does language “belong” to a particular culture or community?
- If it is part of an indigenous language; if a community “creates” a term; language as intellectual property
- Are there words you feel uncomfortable using? Why?
- Diffusion/mainstreaming: y’all, n-word, cool, woke



madison!!!

@madisonfrench_

priest: it be like that sometimes
congregation: and sometimes like that
it be

11/4/18, 11:43 PM from Baton Rouge, LA

35.9K Retweets **143K** Likes



Kaysen

@kaysenharlow · [Follow](#)



A whole social company whitewashing AAVE...hate to see it

Expressions That Gen Z Coined:

- Basic (regular, boring)
- Bop (a good song)
- Boujee (lavish)
- Catch them hands (get in a fight with somebody)
- Drip (outfit)
- Gucci (all good)
- No Cap (seriously)
- Swole (buff)
- Whip (car)



SocialBee

7:36 PM · Sep 13, 2022



33.3K



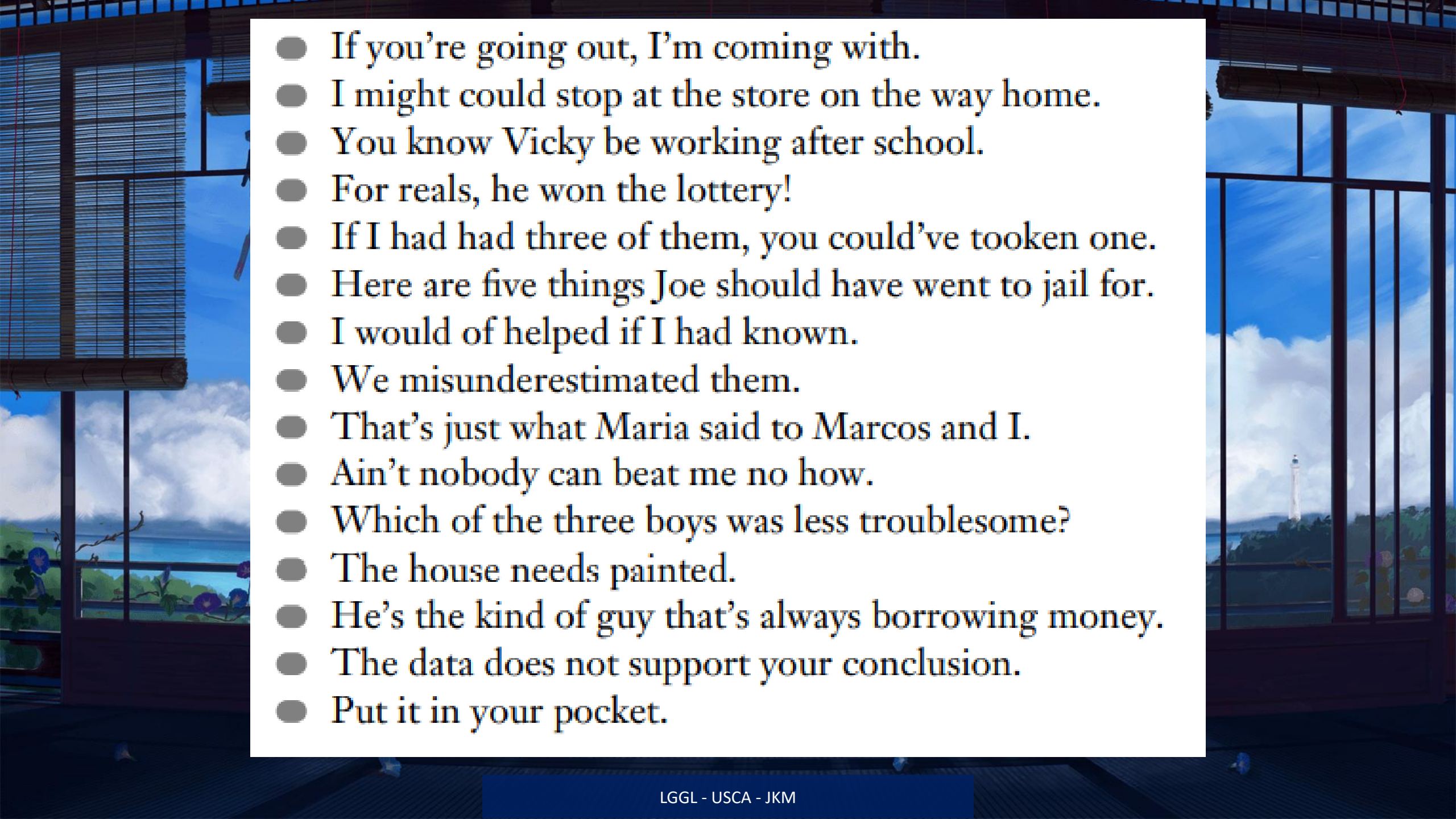
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Prescriptivism vs. descriptivism

- How do we decide what is correct grammar of a language?
- What are the social consequences of “bad grammar”?
- Socially constructed grammaticality vs. linguistic grammaticality
- For non-linguists, grammar rules are socially constructed
- For linguists, grammar is the internalized, rule-driven structure that facilitates generation of possible sentences and rules out others
- He ain't here anymore. vs. *Here any longer he is not.
- Prescriptivism vs. Descriptivism

- 
- The background of the slide is a photograph of a balcony. On the left, there is a balcony railing with a dark wooden frame and a light-colored, possibly bamboo or wicker, screen. A small potted plant with blue flowers sits on the balcony. In the background, the ocean is visible under a blue sky with white clouds. On the right side of the image, a tall, white lighthouse is visible on a small island or headland. The overall scene is bright and scenic.
- If you're going out, I'm coming with.
 - I might could stop at the store on the way home.
 - You know Vicky be working after school.
 - For reals, he won the lottery!
 - If I had had three of them, you could've tooken one.
 - Here are five things Joe should have went to jail for.
 - I would of helped if I had known.
 - We misunderestimated them.
 - That's just what Maria said to Marcos and I.
 - Ain't nobody can beat me no how.
 - Which of the three boys was less troublesome?
 - The house needs painted.
 - He's the kind of guy that's always borrowing money.
 - The data does not support your conclusion.
 - Put it in your pocket.

Documentation, conservation, revitalization

- Why do we try to save languages?
- Knowledge of ecosystems that contain unknown but potentially beneficial plants and animals
- Communal history and the transmission of unique methods of solving problems
- Richness and originality of language-embodied thought
- Whose language is being saved? What language is being saved?
- Contemporary or historical? Which dialect? Which community?
- Language nests, adult immersion
- Success* stories: Irish, Welsh, Hawaiian

Internal reflections

- What do you know about your own variety/dialect/accent?
 - What makes it unique?
 - What do you notice about it or have had other people notice?
 - When would you be most likely to use it? Are there times you wouldn't want to use it?
- What are some words you associate with other generations or communities? Would you use or not use them? Why?
- Do you speak any other language(s)? Why did you learn them?
 - What do you think speakers of those languages think about English? What kinds of ideologies do you think they have about the language and its speakers?