

**Title:** Loanword variation: Patterns, meanings, and apparent roots

**Author:** Zack Jagers

**Abstract:** Some loanwords and foreign placenames in American English have come to have multiple pronunciations: e.g., *Iraq* as /ear-rock/~eye-rack/, *Chile* as /chee-lay/~chill-ee/, *spiel* as /shpeel~/speel/. These variable pronunciations can be considered in triangulation with the source form of the word: e.g., the /ear-rock/ pronunciation of *Iraq* more closely resembles the Arabic [ʕiˈraq] sound form than the /eye-rack/ pronunciation does. This triangulated relationship between sound forms appears to reflect a parallel social triangulation.

Previous research has found that the variation of *Iraq*, in particular, patterns with political identity (Hall-Lew et al. 2010), where Democrats are more likely to use a more source-like pronunciation (/ear-rock/) while Republicans are more likely to use a less source-like pronunciation (/ear-rack/ or /eye-rack/). I present findings that both expand and deepen our understanding of this observation.

For one, this variation between more and less source-like pronunciations appears to be a broader pattern across foreign placenames and loanwords of diverse sources and sound variables. Furthermore, the best social predictor of this variation is a similarly broader ideological alignment of globalism–nationalism, suggesting that the variation observable with respect to political identity falls out from and reflects this particular aspect of US politics. An additional study suggests that loanword variation is rooted in social effects on the initial adaptation of incoming loanwords, where the same social factors predicting the pronunciation of established loanwords also predict speakers' imitation of nonce word sound forms. A final study of perceptual evaluation