



The Process of Changing Everyday Language: How Society Changes Words

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Abstract

The evolution of language, the emergence of new languages, loss, and decay of different words due to societal and linguistic diversity has been witnessed in the contemporary world. Multiple models, traditionist folktales, and myths have explored and explained the ever-changing everyday language. In the Book of Genesis Chapters 11:1-9, the Bible illustrates how people shared only one language to communicate and interact. However, later different tribes from the family tree of Adam and Eve differentiated into communities that speak and use different languages. In religion, linguistic, and socially, the aspect of changing language has been a topic of concern. As a result, the research paper embarked on an explorative study to research the process of changing everyday language and how society changes words. A systematic review of literature founded on a qualitative research methodology was used in secondary data collection and analysis. Study findings revealed that the process of everyday language could take morphological, semantic, syntactic, or lexical approaches to impact the language change. Following the results, the researcher concluded that language changes to adapt to the transforming needs of the user. Society offers the norms, values, and practices as elements that guide the regularities or irregularities of the words created. As a result, society provides the platform, the guidelines, and the expectations through which the language change process will be founded.

I. INTRODUCTION

Man is a social being. It implies that for humans to live to their fullest, they must live together and cooperate between themselves. The cooperation between human beings creates a community. However, the cooperation among community members can only run well if a means of communication referred to as language is utilized (Coulmas, 2018). Through language, man can express their wishes, ideas, and needs to other people. Equally, the close collaboration founded on language reflects the norms of the social group. However, given the dynamic nature of human life, language is constantly changing, adapting, and evolving to its users' unique needs and desires (PBS, 2017). For example, the English language has evolved from the age of Cable TV, fax machines, and messengers to accommodate the modern world terms such as Smart TV, printers, online streaming, file sharing, and emails. Such a transition and evolution of language terms reveal that as long as language users'

needs, way of life, and desires continue to transform, so will the language (Jucker and Joanna, 2013).

Generation by generation, new words, phrases, and pronunciations revolutionize. The new words can be invented or borrowed from other languages. Such structural evolution of language and its phrases means that old words drift and fade while their morphology decays or develops. However, the change process is so slow that it might be hard to notice. Irrespective of the changing pace, the new words build until the language user's mother tongue sounds different and distant (Schwenter & Waltereit, 2010). For instance, giving a modern-day child a piece of Shakespeare's work from the 16th century might sound challenging to read. It implies that although correct, language has evolved so much that the old phrasing sounds completely indifferent due to the social changes in the modern world.

Language change is often reflected as a social problem in the contemporary world. Older people in the community feel that their language is losing touch as new wording and pronunciations are creating inefficiencies in social communication. They feel as if their language is going down the drain. Nonetheless, the true state of events is that language is changing to accommodate the users' needs and transformation (Winter-Froemel, 2014). New experiences, new technologies, new services and products, and innovative approaches to work and life demand new words to describe the events clearly and efficiently. For instance, originally sending a message from one person to another was described as text messaging. However, in the age of mobile phones, emails, Zoom, and Chat applications, the language has evolved to ping. In a social context, 'ping me' implies that the receiver expects to receive a text, email, or other messages to their mobile phone.

Although language change has been identified and accepted in the community, it is unclear how everyday language changes. Equally, the process of how society changes words is imprecise. As a result, the sole focus of the research paper is to explore the process of changing everyday language while citing how society changes words. The thesis statement is that language as a social identifier changes through social differentiation. Social groups evolve and adopt distinctive practices, norms, and ways of life, in the process their syntactic constructions, morphological processes, word choice, vocabulary, and pronunciation change.

Purpose of the Study

Language change begins with the onset of a new generation. As the new generation interacts and finds their identity, their language grows to include constructions, phrases, and words different from the older generation. In Edward Sapir's work, "Language", published in 1921, Sapir noted the problems of language change and its impact on the cooperation between the older and the younger generation. The research highlighted the notion of drift where language and its content slowly move over centuries, changing its typology. The change creates the variants between the present-day language, and a decade ago. However, it is unclear how the drift occurs and how language users eventually observe it (Sapir, 1921). As such, the purpose of the study is to showcase the different processes of changing everyday language. Moreover, it will outline how society and its structures change words reflected in its daily interaction, communication, and participation. Additionally, it will outline different issues linked to language change and their influence on the adoption, use, and application of new words and phrases.

The Aim of the Study

Language elements, sounds, and voluntarily articulated symbols signify users' experience as socially linked to the whole group's norms, practices, and way of life in society. Like a path is developed by constant treading the ground, things and objects in society are called by their unique names through a constant application of names ascribed to them. It implies that the social dimension of language plays a critical role in the process of change. As such, the research aims to explore the complex nature of language, highlighting changing the everyday language and its structures. Additionally, it outlines the processes and procedures that society uses to change words.

Theoretical Framework: Random Fluctuation and Cultural Transmission Theory

According to the theoretical model of 'Random Fluctuation and Cultural Transmission', changing everyday language is owed to its instability. Charles Hockett coined the model in 1958. Instead of language decay or development, the model sees the change as a social response to the ever-changing context of life, language users, and its users (Hockett, 1958). The principal reason for choosing the theoretical model is that it includes the aspect of cultural transmission, which considers the process through which language is passed from one generation to another within the social context. As a result, the theoretical model provides a good opportunity to explore and understand how society changes words. It will also provide a platform to highlight how language is distinguished from one social group or generation to the other.

Research Approach

Human beings have developed unique ways of expressing their desires, needs, and thoughts. The evolution has triggered language change and linguistic expansion as people expand their abilities to communicate and connect with others in the community. Since the focus is on society and sentiments on how language changes, the research will adopt a qualitative research approach founded on a systemic literature review. The core reason for choosing the approach is that it provides an opportunity to outline diverse models used in language change and evolution. Additionally, it creates the avenue for understanding the role of society in changing the structure, words, and use of language in the community.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Founded on the modeled research framework, the section will showcase the genesis of language change and

the specific elements that create everyday language structure and process. The section will synthesize journals, publications, and research works that deal with the process of changing everyday language. It will also identify the role of society in the context of language change highlight how it changes words.

Factors in Language Change

The process of language change is triggered by factors that operate with the said language (internal factors) and those that operate outside the realms of the language (external factors). According to Verschuere & Blommaert (2002), internal factors are linked to the establishment and development of morphological regularity of language. For instance, the analogical extension of language and its analogical levelling. Also, it connects to the reshuffling of phrase elements in the word field. For example, a new word creates room within the lexicon for related word forms in lexical gaps—E.g. Brexit and brexiting.

On the other hand, external factors entail the symbolic role of language in a social context. For example, it checks the different levels of language embraced in a community and how social change influences the extension. It pays attention to occupation lexis, dialects, and sociolects and their influence on mainstream language usage ((Verschuere & Blommaert, 2002). For example, in early years of human development, a toddler is introduced phonetics and phonology, however, as they are oriented in the community, linguistic determinism kicks in to trigger and embrace language change as social norms, practices, and expectations evolve. Through the influence of external factors, omission, borrowing, and hyper-correction are included in the process of language change.

The Processes of Changing Language

In linguistics, historical linguistics pays attention to changes within language. Procedurally, language change represents the phenomenon of permanent evolution or alterations in the elements, features, structure, and use of a given language over time(Dawson & Joseph, 2014). Analytically, language change can adopt the process of social differentiation, language learning or language contact.

The Social Differentiation Process

According to Janda, Joseph, & Vance (2020), social groups invent and adapt to distinctive social norms, practices, communication, adornment, and language. The distinctiveness in the social group creates a linguistic variation between the group and the rest of the community members in terms of vocabulary used, pronunciation, syntactic construction, and morphological processes. The

differences create the foundation through which the process of everyday language change takes place.

The process begins with an internal change on the morphological level. The social group language change starts with the establishment of regularity within their language paradigms. The principal consideration is on the user's grasp of word classes, word phrases, and a set of forms within the language. In the communication process, the language users strive to remove the irregularities that they feel contradictive within their language paradigms. The removal works to differentiate the young generations language and the older one. It initiates the Great Vowel Shift, which differentiates the sounding of a given language.

Language Learning

Deo (2014) highlighted that in the process of learning, language can be transformed from one generation to another. Each learner tries to re-create a grammar and lexicon founded on the input received from caregivers, parents, siblings, or community members in a learning context. Similar to how learning is unique to each student, each individual's experience is different in language learning and use. In the process of replicating the language, new words, pronunciations, and phrases are created.

Nonetheless, it is important to consider the biases within the learning processes. For example, language regularization issues have a high probability of causing language drift from generation to generation. In other conditions, random differences in language uptake due to individual experiences may spread and eventually become fixed within a social group. Their everyday language is changed as they begin embracing a new form of language in the process. For example, in the modern world of mobile phone texting, predictive text errors exist. The errors demand an expansion of language to conform with different societal mistakes.

As highlighted by the Random Fluctuation theory, culture plays a critical role in the language learning and change process. First, it is crucial to recognize that culture is not biologically passed from the parent to the child. Instead, it is learned through orientation, participation, and experience. The process of enculturation creates the foundation through which the child begins to develop new words and language borrowed from the mother language. As such, through language learning, the change of everyday language begins when new words, terms, and concepts are included in the communication(Deo, 2014).

Language Contact

In the age of globalization, the internet of things, technology, trade, migration, and invasions bring speakers of one language into contact with users of a different language. The users of their unique language may decide to adopt the second language in the process. In the process of acquiring the second language, words, constructions, and sounds are borrowed. The borrowed words create a new language that changes the everyday way of communicating in a social context. For example, an English word such as breeze was borrowed from the Spanish phrase 'Brisa' in the 1560s. Although both words sustain their meaning, they are found differently. As such, Spanish-English speakers changed their everyday Spanish language speaking by embracing the English language. In the process, the created Spanish-English language features words borrowed from Spanish and pronounced in English.

As initially explored, language contact points to the process of semantic drifting process. The process involves a situation where the correspondence between a particular word and its real-world meaning and entity undergoes a shift. The shift takes a random direction as it strives to meet the specific needs and desires of the language user. For example, the word silly in the modern English language means foolish. However, in the Old English language, it meant blessed. The word silly originated from the German word 'selig', which also meant blessed. It implies that the words silly and Selig are cognates that mean blessed. However, as the English language came to being in the 1400s, the words began to drift in perspective and meaning. For example, a blessed individual was more likely to be innocent. As generation transitioned, the word silly was also used to mean innocent. Critically, the drift in the meaning of different words and establishment of their new representative in the new language is founded on the perspective and message that the social groups intend to use.

In the modern community, the process of changing everyday language can also be witnessed within the semantic narrowing phenomenon. It entails a situation where specific words will begin to adopt a particular meaning and usage than the one they were initially used. For example, the word meat was used to describe sweet foods in the old times. However, as communities evolve, meat is known to refer to animal flesh. Analytically, the process of semantic narrowing filters some words from the older language and provides a new phase where it joins to support the changed language. The change reflects the generation break as their communication and wording represent a completely different representation of facts,

descriptions and presentation of the environment around them.

Additionally, it is crucial to consider the aspect of semantic broadening within the process of language change. It means that the words in the everyday language are separated and used to represent a general overview. In the 1400s, the Old English term *brid* is contemporarily referred to as *bird*. In historical linguistics, the word *brid* was used to refer to young birds or small creatures with winged feathers. As generations revolutionized, the word *bird* moved from describing the small winged creatures to describing all birds. In their entirety, the semantic changes prove that unique user needs to trigger the process of changing everyday language as generations change from one to another (Deo, 2014).

How Society Changes Words

In a community setup, the society controls the language and the words used by its members. It describes what is considered acceptable within its social realms, norms, values, and practices. Additionally, it changes words to ensure that its communication and interaction does not have phrases and words that are systemically dysfunctional. The change ensures that no words will be used within the social context that will negatively affect their communication (McCormack & Wurm, 2011). One strategy that society utilizes in changing words is mergers and word distinctions. For example, the word 'Meat' and 'Mate' has the same number of letters, near-pronunciation and sounding, but different meaning and usage. The distinction in wording ensures that users of the language will not create confusion in their meaning.

Although it might appear as a typological realignment to lower confusion in word use, the approach by society is to ensure that systemically used word and meaning is balanced. Equally, the word *mate* could mean reproduction while at the same time mean friend. To lower the level of grammatical exponence, the speaker's word use context comes into play. The focus of society is to ensure that meaning is not lost while protecting the structure and usage of the specific words in different contexts.

III. METHODOLOGY

The section discusses the research method, the design, and data sources. As highlighted previously, the focus of the research is to explore the process of changing everyday language and how society changes words. The researcher chose a qualitative research methodology to address the 'why' and 'how' in the research paper. Adopting qualitative research made it possible for the researcher to

understand the transition's language change context, experiences, and societal phenomenon. Also, it provides the research with an opportunity to ask questions linked to human experience (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

Method of Data Collection and Data Sources

The study relied on secondary data. Data for the study was acquired from different journals, books, articles, and peer-reviewed publications that principally deal with the process of changing language and the procedures through which society changes words. Candidate resources used for references were randomly selected from different historical linguistic related publications.

The objective of the methodology was to employ the best historical linguistic data that informs the process of language change. Understanding, interpreting, and analyzing the acquired information demands a high-level comprehension of societal norms, values, and way of life. The core reason is that language is embedded within the community's culture, making it part and pursue their daily living. As a result, the systematic literature review was developed and planned to lower the biases in the study and eliminate all low-quality and irrelevant studies. Once the studies selection is complete, the researcher extracts the necessary information that helps achieve the aim of the study. Assess possible biases within the selected studies and identify the quality levels of the data presented by different studies.

The following process was utilized to achieve the systematic review of the literature to answer the research questions on the process of changing everyday language.

Step One: Framing the question for review

According to Costa, Reis, & Moreira (2020), the issues addressed in a systematic literature review should be clear, well-structured, and unambiguous. The preciseness of the research aim provides the ground for getting the correct materials to help answer the research queries. The research question that guided the researcher was, 'How is the process of changing everyday language undertake and how does the society change words?' Sub-question, "do a societal change of words impact the communication and interaction between generations within the community?"

Step Two: Identification of Relevant Literature Work

It involved a search for historical linguistic research, studies, journals, and books that have the keyword, 'changing everyday language', 'language change process', 'why language changes', 'the process of language change', 'society role in language change' and 'language change and society.' The potential study candidate selection followed a clear that checked on the relevance of the study, date of publication, and language used. The key

focus was to select literature materials that were updated, peer-reviewed, and relevant to the subject of study.

Step Three: Assessment of the Quality of Studies

Literature material quality assessment ensures that only high-quality studies are included in the review to help answer and achieve the research paper aim and purpose. The appraisal guidelines for selecting and assessing studies focused on the link between the published study and historical linguistics. It meant that the study had critical information linked to the process of language change, the involvement of society in language changes, and the different factors that play a role in the process of change.

Step Four: Summarizing the Acquired Evidence

After assessing the selected materials, the phase involved summarizing the acquired evidence while linking it to the study topic, aim, and question. The key emphasis was to ensure that the evidence provides a clear understanding of the process of changing the everyday language. More importantly, link in society in the change process citing how it changes words. The overall research strategy ensures that language change is not explored in a general approach, but conducted with a humanistic and societal perspective in place.

Step Five: Interpretation of the Study Findings

In order to realize the purpose of the research, all the issues highlighted in the above four steps had to be met. The research ensured that publication bias, quality of the publication, the language of publishing, and the focus of each study were considered before its data was interpreted to fit the research needs. By adopting stringent measures, the researcher strived to ensure that the literature and the findings offered in the study were valid and reliable (Costa, Reis, & Moreira, 2020). More importantly, the use of high-quality sources of literature in achieving the aim of the research guaranteed that the complete paper will be a viable candidate for future research inferences on the process of changing everyday language in a community setup.

Summary

The main goal of the methodology approach was to ensure that only high-quality resources, studies and inferences were included in the research paper. All selected study material worked around the idea that language changes in response to societal changes, generation to generation transition, change in norms and practices. In regard to society-changing words, language changes to reflect the needs, values, and norms of society. As societal changes occur, some words become obsolete while others emerge. In the process, a new language is

formed. New words slowly get accepted into the normal communication structure, creating the pathway for replacing the old words from the system. For example, the modern American community has transitioned their old language of using gendered nouns such as 'policeman' to embracing gendered-neutral nouns such as 'police officer'. The language change reflects the need for the community to promote gender equality by integrating gender-sensitive language into their daily communication. The community can showcase dignity, respect, value, and integrity in every social realm through the changed language. In its entirety, the methodology integrated the human experiences by adopting a qualitative research model to help understand the elements of language change from the societal structure and its ripple effect on every member of the community.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overview of the Process of Everyday Language Change

The process of everyday language change is a continuous process that occurs consciously or unconsciously. Although the change might go unnoticed, it is a continuous process that runs from generation to generation. From a social context, many motivations trigger language change within the community. As generations evolve, there is a need to pronounce and use certain words within their communication easily. The demand to reduce the effort to use the words causes society to trigger phonology changes. Equally, it triggers phonological change where a sound change is witnessed in the distribution and use of phonemes in a given language (Geert, 2012).

Additionally, as globalization impacts the world, different languages have come in contact resulting in semantic and lexical change. For example, the entry of Indians into the United States led to the development of language with new and opposing phonemes in communication. The situation resulted in a disappearance of the old contrasts while inviting a new language of the Indian-American language.

According to Raviv (2020), social pressures within the community interactions also play a role in triggering the process of change in everyday language. For example, the U.S has language policies founded on the notions of contemporary and historical linguistic landscape in America. For instance, a student coming for studies in the U.S is required to take up English language lessons to help them converge in English. The pressure placed on the student to converge in English forces them to re-evaluate their linguistic priorities, resulting in the emergence of new

words as they engage in their language learning process (Raviv, 2020).

In language learning, lexical items might take over grammatical functions resulting in a complete loss of their original meaning and usage in different societal contexts. For example, in one social context, the word 'desert' could mean to abandon a person, while it may describe a large area of dry land in other usages. The social environment does not present anything linked to the word. Therefore, if a language user gets into a community that usages the word to describe a different meaning, they will slowly adapt it and lose touch with the original meaning. The analysis proves that the process of everyday language is motivated by a change in needs of the language user, exposure, and interactions in their immediate environment. In the analysis, everyday language change takes different approaches, the approaches might be semantic, lexical, syntactic, or morphological.

Semantic and Lexical Everyday Language Change Process

Due to the diversity in human interaction, collaboration, and socialization. In the process of language change, lexical and semantic change are the most common. The words might be formed out of existing word phrases or developed to fit into new phenomena in the community (Henrich & Brian, 1996). For example, in the old English language, typewriting was used to describe the act of typing words on a typewriter. However, the age of computing the word has been shortened to 'typing' to represent the act. Other than reducing the effort to use the words, the everyday language change process strives to promote the conciseness of the language and enhance understanding of different actions.

The lexical change process involves the borrowing of words from different languages. The approach results in modifying and altering the lexicon of particular words in a given language. Once two different languages come into contact, lexemes commonly referred to as loanwords are adopted. In most cases, loaned words are integrated into the language in a situation where the new language does not have a phrase to describe a phenomenon (Crowley & Bower, 2010). For example, the word 'money' in English sounds more English. However, the word was borrowed from the French 'Monnaie' that describes loose change or cash.

Another word is the English word 'modern' lifted from the French word 'moderne.' English speakers adopt the loaned words and pronounce them in their respective terms to sound acceptable in their social setting. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the status and social classification of the community and the use of borrowed words. Historically, French words integrated into the

English language were seen to show a sign of elite. For example, the Old French term 'utensile' originated from the Latin word, 'utensilis' that means 'useful.' Then, English speakers borrowed the word and pronounced it in their language to 'utensil.' Though, the meaning of the word is similar across the languages. Additionally, the lexical word change process might take a strategy where the speakers use an existing word to build a new lexeme. In most cases, the language user compounds to words by adding affixes, blending, or clipping the words to get a meaning. For example, a word like human-centered. The core focus is to create meaning in the language used by different larger community members.

Equally, it has appeared that society changes words by evoking semantic alterations. The change might be triggered by a desire to avoid taboos or comply with the evolving word or linguistic needs. Society might narrow, broaden, or meliorate a word in the semantic everyday language change process. In other approaches, the community embraces metaphors and synecdoche to improve the semantic needs. As a result, the new meaning in a word replaces the old one while still improving the meaning. For example, the word chairman has been replaced with the chairperson to help reduce gender discrimination and inequality. Society embraces metaphors as figurative language purposed at conveying a different meaning than the denotative literal meaning of the phrase used. For example, instead of saying that a client is moody, metaphors are used to express the same feelings. For instance, the client is going through a rollercoaster of emotions. It helps reduce the weight of the condition while still maintaining the main message that the language use intended to pass. By changing words, society strives to reduce the potential of conflicts and disagreements between its members.

Syntactic and Morphological Change

In everyday language use, there is a situation where a user of a word might discover a completely new structure of the word. For example, the word 'place' has morphologically changed to 'replace' and eventually 'replace-ment'. The addition of prefix and suffixes in original words helps change the word structure and bring new words into the language that holds a completely different meaning. However, the new words are formed using a generalized approach, but following a particular pattern.

In changing words, society focuses on word formation and inflections. In the process, inflection is purely forced on the formal expression of the word's morphosyntactic properties, such as tense. On the other hand, word formation is concerned with how different

words are made. The core reason for society engaging in such word change processes is to enhance word acquisition, variation, processing, storage, and user lexicalization. Once the new words are formed, it is important to understand that the syntactic structures might develop into morphological structures. On the other hand, the compound constituents of the word might develop into affixes as the word is continuously used within social interactions.

Within the social realms, the society changes words, forms news ones while exposing others to decay. It gives the reason why Geert (2012) revealed that word change and formation in society might lead to loss of productivity of some works, which increases their risk of disappearance from the original language. For example, the word 'gorgonize' disappeared from the standard usage in the English language. Also, some words disappeared from the English language due to challenges in interaction. For instance, a word such as 'wyrð' was common in the Anglo-Saxon language, but became challenging to fit into modern English due to variance in spiritual concepts and belief approaches. If a social group has a challenge using a word along with their norms, values, and practices, they opt to lose touch with it, resulting in a complete decay of the specified word. Once the decay occurs, society imposes analogical changes that cement the regularities as new words evolve to fit the generational needs.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis has shown that as society evolves, so do their language. Humans as social beings have transformative needs and desires; as their user needs change, their language changes to meet the demands. The literature review approach has provided a wide array of historical linguistic materials that language as a social identifier changes through social differentiation. As society differentiates, variations are created between one generation and another. In order to sustain its demands, way of life, communication, and interaction, new words emerge to help describe the objects, actions, needs, and things in their immediate environment. In the process, a new language is formed. Social groups evolve and adopt distinctive practices, norms, and ways of life. Their syntactic constructions, morphological processes, word choice, vocabulary, and pronunciation change in the revolution process. As such, it is clear that the process of everyday language change might take the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical approaches to invoke the much-needed change in the language used. Society creates the foundation and the demand that inclines the need to

change, adapt or borrow words to create a particular meaning or expression in their language.

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