EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

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Abstract

The way languages change offers an insight into the nature of language itself. Linguistic changes and/or developments might have undergone due to specific motives, although only some are reasonably understood. Actually, internal and external causes are the major classification of such motives. This paper investigates and analyses the external motives only which are triggered by the nature of society outside language system; outside the structure of language and the human organism. These motives stand behind the innovation or modification of lexical aspect in language in a hope to reveal an in-depth understanding of the role of lexemes in reflecting language change. New words, i.e. neologisms, will be utilised to implement the idea of language change. By handling this item, we find out that language's lexemes change due to specific factors that occur in society as a whole with the readiness of language users to that change.

KEYWORDS: LANGUAGE CHANGE (L-CHANGE), LANGUAGE USERS (L-USERS), NEOLOGISM, LEXICAKIZATION (L), RELEXICALIZATION (R)

1. Introduction

The way languages change offers an insight into the nature of language itself. Time changes all things. It is the law of nature to change. Constancy alone is strange, and language is not an exception. The vocabulary of a language is in constant flux; old items drop out, new terms come in, and as the new replace the old, so that language set is changed. The words of William Shakespeare (76th sonnet), in one way or another, describe this phenomenon:

So all my best is dressing old words new
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old
So is my love still telling what is told

Theorists of L-change, such as Labov, Milroys, Trudgill, Aitchison, Lyons and Deutscher agree that there is an amazing number of explanations and speculations that have been made to determine motives of L-change. Some of these motives are reasonably understood, others are not.

L-change is mainly affected by internal (linguistic) and external (extra-linguistic) motives (Meyer, 2009). Rey (1995) confirms that a need for neologisms is due to an external or internal pressure. These motives are generally regarded as *sources* of specific changes in language. They are inseparable depending upon the abstraction of language-system from the cultural and social matrix in which language operates (Lyons, 1990 & Aitchison, 2004). Internal factors of change can be dealt with *functionally* and *psychologically*, whereas extra-linguistic factors are studied *socio-linguistically*. Our study tackles extra factors only.

EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

Time and place have their influence on L-use. Language is closely intertwined with people themselves. Possible conscious role of L-users is especially clear in lexical innovation via specific changes that occur in technology, society, politics, religion and all spheres of human life (Campbell, 1999). Diana (1992) asserts that "when words are useful they remain in the language, and when they outlive their usefulness they disappear" (p.18). Innovating of new words does not change the system, but may change the norm. Coseriu (1975) speculates that language system (Saussure's *langue*) determines what is possible in any given language, whereas the speech (*parole*) of an individual can be seen as the realisation of the norm (Bauer 2003).

These motives cannot cause a change unless language is ready for that change (Aitchison 2004). Moreover, it is L-users "that change their language while using it in language perception and production" (Booij, 2005, p.256). Aitchison (2004) confirms that L-users get adjusted to a change when they hear it frequently

2. Motives of L-Change

This study does not deal with purely linguistic causes, but with extralinguistic ones that help to the innovation of new words or extension of new meaning(s) of an old word. Crystal (1992) supposes that "Some [words], such as computing and broadcasting, were completely novel; others, such as religious English and journalese, were affected by social change" (p.91).

Modern English has developed from its Indo-European roots. In fact, L-change does not "happen suddenly" (Fromkin et al., 2011, p.534), nor the factors "set off changes randomly" (Aitchison, 2004, p.152). Actually, "there are hidden linguistic factors which can either push forward or hold back a change" (Ibid p.106). Due to the ***wave theory*** suggested by Johannes Schmidt, innovations of all kinds might spread out from a centre of influence, like waves on lake, losing force as they reach points further and further from the centre. In essence, an innovation may become a change only after its ***diffusion***. As thus, sociolinguists find that diffusion has a vital role in L-change whether social or geographical, assuring that the social factors are most important.

2.1 External Contextual Motives

External causes are triggered by the nature of society ***outside*** language system; ***outside*** the structure of language and ***outside*** the human organism. They are known as socio- or extra-linguistic factors. Some motives are: economic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical that occur due to contact, need, desire, fashion, and the like. Neologisms are coined to cope with them. Virtually, what conditions a society, conditions its language (Cabré 1999, Fernandez 2009).

L-change, which is due to external causes, is effected by the nature of society. Hence, they are known as ***sociolinguistic*** factors. Aitchison (2004) finds that "The spread of language change... is essentially a social phenomenon, which reflects the changing social situation" (p.83).

2.1.1 Contact

The language of one group eventually has its effect on the other and vice versa (Aitchison 2004). Generally, changes move from one group to another via people contact. Aitchison opines that "the longer the contact, the deeper the influence" (Ibid p.137). Language contact can be the source of innovation, most obviously in the lexical matters. This contact may easily, and rather subconsciously, lead to L-change, "particularly with respect to lexical changes due to borrowing" (Fromkin et al., 2011,

p.530). The ceaseless contact between speakers of different languages has had considerable significance in the development of L-change (Al-Heety 2015).

Vocabulary echoes the L-users' political, economic, cultural, and social happenings. It is L-users who are in contact. Thus, their attitudes towards each other influence the way they speak, such as:
(1) Mitt Romney + head =   **Mitthead** (It refers to an individual who constantly changes his political positions to suit his audience and objectives).

Contact between people speaking different languages can have a wide variety of outcomes. This contact typically involves bilingual speakers due to tourism, migration, invasion, exploration, geographical distance, the increased mobility within and between countries, and the rise of mass media (Aitchison, 1987). Those factors help "the transmission of ideas and words" (Baugh & Cable, 1980, p.290). As such, L-users continue developing new manners and morals, as well as new words.

Languages tend to influence one another in various ways. The results of contact differ according to the length and intensity of contact between L-users, the types of social, economic and political relationship between them, the functions which communication between them must serve, and the degree of similarity between the languages they speak.

Sometimes few words are borrowed. Other times whole neologisms are formed. Aitchison prefers using "copying" rather than borrowing. The lexicon may expand by copying as "cultural contact … leads to an influx of new words in the linguistic repertoire" (Al-Heety, 2015, p.66). Copying "happens in situations of language contact, when speakers of different languages regularly interact with one another and especially where there are many bilingual or multilingual speakers" (Fromkin et al., 2011, p.505). Lexical copying can be of different ways. Hence, loan words (copied words) are both semantically and formally copied from the source language, as in:

(2) Gog and Magog =   **Gog and Magog** (copying that means a threat).

There are also different kinds of loan translations (caleques), i.e. more or less literal translations of complex foreign words into the target language to be named as loan translations, such as:

 (3) 'ne m'oubliez pas' =   **forget-me-not**

The language of such individuals may act upon and influence each other in a wide range of ways even in the adoption of features of pronunciation. Some contact varieties have influenced Standard English. Migration and contact with speakers of certain varieties has contributed to expanding use of these expressions. From a purely linguistic point of view, language contact phenomena are neither good nor bad, but the attitude of speakers to such phenomena is frequently not as neutral.

(4) back Adv. =   **back of** Prep.

This is an example of an invasion of Americanisms when a word in the English is frequently replaced by an American. Here the preposition ***behind*** is being replaced with ***back of*** which is an American term.

As languages and speakers in contact are rarely of equal political, economic or social status and power, the less powerful or prestigious group is frequently disadvantaged. In essence, Aarts and McMahon (2006) assert that "extensive contacts with other languages have contributed to the buildup of a very sizeable and etymologically diverse word-stock" (p.461).

EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

2.1.2 Need

Schendl (2009) agrees with Aitchison, Campbell, Rey, and most linguists in considering need as an important motive of L-change. Algeo (1993) thinks that "Changes in society, whether material or intellectual, call for new words; and the more intense the social change, the more need we have to name new things or rename old ones" (p.14).

(5) intifada = **intifada** N. (The term is copied from Arabic means 'an uprising', It is more specifically referring to the uprising and unrest led by Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied area of the West Bank. Hence it is referred to as Palestinians mass uprising).

Cultural development, invention, discovery, exploration, war, trade, and new concepts give a unique impetus to L-change. They help in developing language. Languages are accommodating and inventive in meeting these needs (Fromkin et al., 2011, Fernandez 2009). They either follow certain means of forming new words, expand the meaning of old words, or copy "heavily from other languages to meet the demands for words to describe new activities and new knowledge" (Diana, 1992, p.17). The introduction of **slang** terms can also be regarded as a response to a kind of need. When older words have become over-used and lose their impact, new vivid ones are introduced in their place.

(6) fashion N.+ -ista (Spanish suffix) = **Fashionista** N. (It refers to a person who is working in or involved with the high-fashion industry, such as a designer, model, photographer, writer, or a devotee to clothing fashion).

Cabré (1999) contends that new names are required because "terminology is... effected by social changes which have major effect on linguistic needs [such as] development of science and technology... transfer of knowledge and products…" (p.4). As mobile phones became part of everyday life and now almost everyone has one, words are coined as a way to fulfill the needs of this new technological society, such as:
(7) Subscriber **I**dentification **M**odule = **SIM** card N. (The **SIM** is an acronym that refers to a plastic card inside a mobile phone that stores personal information about the person using the phone. It is easy to say and sounds colloquial).

(8) application = **APP** (It is an abbreviation for an application which is a program designed for a particular purpose on a computer or cell phone operating system).

Rey (1995) confirms that "every change in the system of knowledge requires a parallel change in the system of designation" (p.56). Many new concepts, terms and phrases have appeared, since new things need new names.
(9) Electronic + democracy = **E-democracy** (It is blending that means a form of government in which all adult citizens are presumed to be eligible to take part equally in the proposal, development, and creation of laws).

New forms may be developed from the innovated one. One proposed form of e-democracy, for example, is **wikidemocracy**:
(10) wiki-system + democracy = **wikidemocracy** (It refers to a govern-ment with a legislature whose codex of laws was an editable wiki, like Wikipedia. This wiki-system has three wings of legislative, executive and judiciary roles for which every citizen could have a voice with free access to the wiki and an ID).

Vehemently, the focus of interest is vocabulary as there are no words in the language to talk accurately about the new inventions, concepts, and techniques. Aitchison (2004) asserts that "Need is certainly

relevant at the level of vocabulary" (p.146). Persuasively, new vocabulary items should be related to the repertoire of rhetorical needs in a given culture.

(11) frozen + **cappuccino** = **Frappuccino** (This blend is used widely in coffee shops all over the world. It is easier to say than frozen cappuccino/coffee, but now is used to describe a generally frozen drink from a coffee shop. It is mainly used by the younger generation of coffee drinkers, and the term spread fairly quickly. The word cappuccino was originally borrowed from the Italians, along with various other food or beverages words such as pizza or pasta).

When L-users acquire some new item or concept from abroad, they need a new term to go along with it; often a foreign name is copied along with the new concept. Material/intellectual changes need new words. Each social change requires a new name. Thus, semantic change is the fastest. As such **Google** is a zero neologised term that indicates a new search engine, representing an example of coinages:
(12) Google (It is a coinage for a new search engine. Google is a neologism used to name the new search engine in 1997. It didn't take long for the conversion of the proper noun 'Google' into the eponymous verb 'to google' or 'to Google', the first recorded use of which was in 1998 by its creator Larry Page).

Conversions and neologisms are common with technology because when something is invented we have to come up with words to describe it. It was added to the OED in 2006, to mean "to use the internet" or "to use a search engine." It is used as "to google", "googling." etc.

2.1.3 Prestige

L-change may be based on the prestige of another language or another variety of the same language which leads to certain fashionable words. The core of this force is mostly found outside language. It is often the prestige of a culture, the superiority of a group or politics which cause speakers to adopt linguistic elements (words, morphemes, morphs, sounds) from the prestigious group's speech. However, L-users may copy or innovate new words not because their own language does not have a word for a particular object or concept, but because they think that this word is more prestigious. Prestige is the positive social evaluations. The negative one is called stigma. Campbell (1999) asserts that "words are taken over from another language is for *prestige,* because the foreign term for some reason is highly esteemed" (p.59). He avows that desire is mere ***fashion*** to be distinct (Ibid).

Prestige occurs consciously or subconsciously to imitate features of speech. Many sociolinguists assure that most patterns of change occur due to social prestige. Trudgill (1974) supposes that the more typical pattern is for the middle classes to initiate linguistic change and for the highest and lowest classes of society to change only later; "all speakers from all classes moved towards the middle-class norm when they were reading, abandoning the other norms altogether" (Hudson, 1996, p.88).

Words could reflect different degrees of formality. People adapt their speech to suit the situation: they slow down for babies and strangers, and speed up for friends leading to ***phatic*** neologisms. As in euphemisticising expressions:
 (13) omni+ shambles = **omnishambles** (A compounding for a total disorder).

Schendl (2009) considers as a main reason of taking words from another language. He called copied words for prestige "as 'luxury' loans" (p.60).   Intrinsically, a radical shift might occur in using a word or its meaning(s) to facilitate interaction, or to fit new conditions as "some are newer or more 'posh' than others" (Finch, 2005, p.145). Metaphorical extension is one of these shifts; "some new idea is depicted in terms of something more familiar" (Saeed, 2009, p.15). Hudson (1996) opines that "different norms applied in different circumstances" (p.188). Some words obtain productivity as in the following example:

EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

 (14) selfie (The word is an abbreviation. Though it has no definite origin, it does not matter. It is an abbreviation of what? Self-taken photograph? Self-portrait photograph?)

In every corner of the globe, within a very short space of time, the selfie has taken over the world. Hence, this word is productive. There are:
(15) selfie stick (a stick-like device that allows you to hold the camera away from you when taking a selfie).

(16) self-medication (the practice of taking medicine or other drugs to treat an illness or condition without asking a doctor).

(17) self-harming (the act of deliberately hurting one's self, for example by cutting yourself, because of emotional problems).

3.1.4 Desire

Desire is one of the motives for change. It is mere **fashion**. People get fed up with the same old clothes, hairstyle, cars, furniture, accessories, or even words; therefore, they desire to be distinct and up to date especially among teenagers. L-users may acclimatise their language to be distinguished or to fit in with social groups by imitating "those they admire, or desire to be associated with" (Aitchison, 1987, p.130). They tend to invent new words all the time "to cope with new fashions and trends" (Jefferies, 2006, p.83).

The lower classes change their speech by imitating the elite of society to improve their own social standing, then, the upper class changes its language in order to maintain its distance from the masses. Sociolinguistic study of L-change reveals that the more typical pattern is for the middle classes to initiate linguistic change and for the highest and lowest classes of society to change only later (Schendl, 2009). Most linguists consider fashion as a "triggering factor, something which may set off a tendency whose deeper causes lie hidden beneath the surface... " (Aitchison, 2004, p.143).
(18) Jeans + le**ggings** = **Jeggings** (This is a blending of 'jeans' and 'leggings', which are close fitting, stretchy trousers that are designed to look like denim jeans).

As fashion is constantly changing, people have to come up new words to suit the new changes in fashion. These words are invented by fashionable retailers or designers, and then branded as the word, and so the words are more and more widely used by the public.

In fact, aspects of language go in and out of fashion. Words undergo semantic shift among younger people, such as 'sick' and 'safe'. These words replaced 'cool' as it went out of fashion, and now they in turn have gone out of fashion as new words replace them.
(19) trousers + l**eggings** = **Treggings** (Close fitting, stretchy trousers, usually worn by women and children).

(20) athlete + **wear** = **athwear** (clothing designed for sport and exercise).

Due to fashion that is changing all the time, new words are needed quickly to cope with fashion changes in society. However words for fashion are generally not long lasting due to the changing fashion tastes in society. L-users tend to be distinct to distinguish themselves from other groups. The majority of linguists "regard **fashion** changes simply as a triggering factor, something which may set off a tendency whose deeper causes lie hidden beneath the surface..." (Aitchison, 2004, p.143).

3.1.5 Plasticity

EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

Another motive of L-change is the wish for being clear; for plasticity. Intrinsically, informal speech is not worse than formal speech; it's just different. People adapt their speech to suit the situation: they slow down for babies and strangers, and they speed up for friends. They intend to achieve a certain goal, target, intention, and effect. They like to reach this effect with the best possible efficiency. Interestingly, there could be a radical shift in using a word or its meaning(s) to reduce misunderstanding, facilitate interaction, or to fit new conditions as "some are newer or more 'posh' than others" (Finch, 2005, p.145).

Interestingly, different norms applied in different circumstances. Humans adapt their speech to suit the situation: they slow down their language for babies and strangers, and they speed it up for friends. Speakers intend to achieve a certain goal, a certain target, a certain intention, and a certain effect. L-users like to reach this effect with the best possible efficiency.

Saeed (2009) contends that "speakers' shifting the meanings of words to fit new conditions" (p.15) is one of causes of L-change over time. He adds that metaphorical extension is one of these shifts as "some new idea is depicted in terms of something more familiar" (Ibid). Jean Aitchison (2004) supposes that fluent speakers in every known language simplify consonant sequences if they are able to make themselves understood without pronouncing each sound in detail as "life is too short to put a *d* on the end of each *and*" (p.159). Similarly, most nouns are converted into verbs. For example:
(21) Snapchat (n.) = **snapchat** (v.) (A verb means to send someone a message using the photomessaging application Snapchat).

Linguists also suppose anatomical, physiological and psychological make-up of human beings as a cause of change that occurs "due to the general and inevitable weakness of articulation of sounds at the end of words" (Ibid p.155).

3.1.6 Laziness

Being too lazy or too ignorant to search for the "proper" indigenous word of form is one of the causes that lead to language change. There are certain views of changes which are castigated as laziness. It was claimed by some linguists such as Max Müller that, "owing to a laziness inherent in civilization, sophisticated people do not use the forceful articulatory movements required for primitive tongues" (Aitchison, 2004. P.153).

It is believed that "people are too lazy to speak them 'properly'" (Schendl, 2009, p.67), as in:
(22) To **k**nock somebody **o**ut = **KO**

It is much shortened version and much quicker to say possibly showing that people are becoming lazier about their attitudes towards language, as in:
(23) **S**elf-**o**rganized **l**earning **e**nvironment = **SOLE** (It refers to an environment in which learners use technology to teach themselves collaboratively without a teacher).

However, some linguists proclaim that L-change could be the result of anatomical or physiological make-up of human beings "due to the general and inevitable weakness of articulation of sounds at the end of words" (Aitchison, 2004, p.155).

3.1.7 Frequency

Concerning the issue of frequency being a cause or an effect of change, some conclude that it is both. Frequency, as Bybee asserts, "in texts is of course an effect; but frequency or repetition of experiences has an impact on cognitive representations and in this way becomes a cause" (Leech et al., 2009, p.270). Aitchison (2004) believes that "people get acclimatized to a change by hearing it repeatedly attached

to a few prominent lexical items" (p.106). As in hearing the shortenings of words that L-users sometimes forget the origin of those words:

(24) Very **I**mportant **P**erson = **VIP** (Due to existence of more A-List celebrities and their prominence and regular mention in magazines and other forms of media, it is easy to say and the majority of people understand this initialism).

It is important as it shows how phrases can so easily be adopted into the English language from different parts of the world, meaning that the language is influenced by different countries not only Britain. Moreover, a new word may occur regularly serving a useful purpose, as in:

(26) Multi-media **M**essaging **S**ervice = **MMS** (With improvements in technology it is now common for all phones to have MMS. The name of the service was too long and MMS is used to shorten it. It is associated with picture messaging).

4. Conclusion

To sum up, external factors would absolutely result in a change in the word-stock of English language. This study highlights that we cannot control L-change because it is a result of society; we have no control over it. It changes by itself: we can never tell when it is going to change and how could we ever stop it. We cannot control how people speak therefore we cannot stop language from changing. When a word appears then continues to grow, and more and more people use and understand it, it will be part of the language.

These factors cause L-change. They output new words either by semantic innovation of entirely new words, or semantic extension of old words with totally new meanings. Constant linguistic change is not planned, but it occurs as a by-product. L-change is inevitable and cannot be stopped. Time and place in which people intermingle reflect their influence on L-use. However, these motives cannot take effect unless language is ready for that change. L-change mirrors sociolinguistic factors. Hence, the spread of this change is a social phenomenon that reflects L-users readiness for that change.

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EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

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EXTRA-LINGUISTIC MOTIVES INITIATING LANGUAGE CHANGE

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