HOW LINGUISTIC CHANGES IN ENGLISH AFFECTED THE WAY PEOPLE COMMUNICATE DIGITALLY: MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

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Abstract
Language is able to change by itself gradually, and it may affect how people communicate, especially in digital communication. This study is conducted to see how English has changed over the years between the modernism era (1900-1940) and postmodernism era (1940-present), as well as how it has affected the way people communicate digitally. The researcher collected the data for this study with qualitative methods. The data is then analyzed to find more details focusing on three components of the same topic; factors of change, types of change, and how it affected the way people communicate digitally. This study ends with the findings which indicate that English has changed in so many aspects – lexical and semantic, syntax, and phonology – which were caused by a few factors including politics, technology, society, and foreign influence. Lastly, the linguistic changes in English have brought so many positive impacts; people on a global scale are now more interested in learning and using English as their second language because it is easier and simpler than how it used to be.

Keywords: English digital communication, effects of linguistic changes, linguistic changes in English, modernism and postmodernism

Introduction
Languages around the world are affected by inevitable changes, developments, and evolution. These changes may be obvious or subtle. Nonetheless, linguistic changes may bring positive impacts to the speakers of language and the language itself.

Language is like a mirror of the people who use it – it reflects their culture, technology, mentality, and further developments influencing their lives. In the current modern world, it is difficult for human to imagine how they would live without computers, smartphones, social media, or just the internet itself. Humans' lives are now attached to the internet no matter where they are, and it has revolutionized the way people think, act, and communicate to each other, especially in digital communication. The phrase "digital communication" has also changed throughout the year.

As advanced inventions are evolving and being introduced very rapidly, it is not hard for people to abandon the old devices which are not as efficient, and with the technology that keeps developing, language also follows to develop.

Method

The researcher used qualitative methods for this research study. Past studies and reliable websites are used as references for this study. The collected information was read thoroughly to find details focusing on the topic. After analyzing all the information needed, the researcher then compiled it up before putting it together as a whole.

Findings and Discussion

Factors of Change

When there are changes, there are factors which determine the changes. Language changes occur because of various factors; politics, technology, social, and foreign influence.

Political Factor

Most of the times, the changes of a language are rooted to politics such as human migration and colonization or invasion of an area, which is one of the main influences of language evolution, according to English Explorer. When people move out of their home country to another country, they slowly learn their adopted language imperfectly. They then pass on their own "version" of the adopted language with all of its imperfections to their children and the society. Eventually, this leads to alteration of the language. The same thing happens for invasion; the colonized people learn their adopted language imperfectly which also leads to alteration of the language (Aitchison, 1991, p.109).

Besides the migration and colonization factors, politics brings some direct changes through public debates and campaigns as well. Take for example, debates and campaigns about environmental awareness in the recent years have brought many new words and phrases such as "eco-friendly", "eco-terrorism", and "greenwashing." Those politics activities also popularized the use of a lot of words and phrases including "climate change", "recycle", and "greenhouse gas emissions".

Furthermore, the battle for women's rights, gender equality, and equality in general have carried some critical changes in the English language. To give an instance, more and more people nowadays are encouraged to use gender-neutral pronouns when referring to someone they do not know – a big portion of people prefer to use "they" to refer to someone, so they do not misgender the person. These changes also include gender-inclusive nouns such as "chairperson" instead of "chairman", "police officer" instead of "policeman", and "first-year student" instead of "freshman", taken from The Writing Center of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Technology Factor

Modernism and technology are making it more difficult for people to keep up with linguistic changes. Language is gradually changing and developing, but with the advanced technology, language may change faster, taken from HelenDoron English (2020). According to IDEAS.TED.COM, There are many new words

which have not been registered in dictionaries yet, by way of illustration, "supertasker", "typogram", and "dronie" (McKean, 2015).

People all around the world showed how intellectual they are by coming up with different slangs to use on the internet. Some examples of slang abbreviations are "OMG" (Oh my God), "LOL (Laughing Out Loud), "BRB" (Be right back), "BFF" (Best friends forever, and "TGIF" (Thank goodness it's Friday) (Morin, 2022) (Zazulak, 2016). Other than text abbreviations, there are also one-word slangs such as "dope" which means awesome, "cap" which means fake or a lie, "hangry" which means hungry and angry, "bae" which means "before anyone else" or basically means babe, and "Karen" which means a middle-aged woman who is rude (Kitlum, 2022).

Social Factor

Most of the times, Linguistic changes in politics and technology lead to social changes. Language can change because of the adaptation or development of the system of society life (Harya, 2016). When society changes, the language which is used in that society will change as well, and it will bring special effects to it. By "special effects", it includes linguistic changes based on social status, generation, age, ethnicity, and even gender.

Some people have social prestige, money, and power, while the others have little to no such commodities. People with different social status usually perceive things differently, and that leads to new vocabulary which is commonly used for specific communities. A few examples of words or phrases with different meanings depending on who uses them, taken from CNBC (2013):

- "Hammer price" means "the price of a hammer" for low to middle socioeconomic status people. However, for high socioeconomic status people, it means "the price of an item sold at auction when the auctioneer slams the greet and yells, 'Sold!'"
- "Complications" means "when things go wrong during a medical procedure" for low to middle socioeconomic status people. However, for high socioeconomic status people, it means "the extra mechanical parts on a watch that are not necessary (accessories)".
- "Graff" means graffiti (the slang term) for low to middle socioeconomic status people. However, for high socioeconomic status people, it is a luxury jewelry company that specializes in rare-colored gemstones and diamonds.
- "Stud fee" means "the amount of money that needs to be paid to watch a show" for low to middle socioeconomic status people. However, for high class socioeconomic status people, it means "the amount of money a breeder is willing to pay to buy an award-winning stallion".
- "Hip" means "new" or "cool" for low to middle socioeconomic status people. However, for high socioeconomic status people, it refers to a number placed on a horse's hip at auction.
- "Whisper" means "speaking quietly to someone" for most of people. However, for high socioeconomic status people, it also means "secret properties that are the most expensive ones on the market" (Joseph, 2013).

Foreign Influence Factor

One of the most common factors of linguistic change is foreign influence. This usually happens after new things or notions have been introduced to a community. For example, the Italian word "pizza" entered English because the food pizza was introduced to English-speaking communities. Similarly, the word "anonymous" is also a borrowed word. It comes from the Greek word "anōnumos" which describes someone or something without a name. It has a similar meaning with the English word, which is someone who does not reveal their identity. Examples of borrowed words in English, taken from McMahon's study (1994), cudoo (2016), Oxford Royale, and DICTIONARY.COM (2018):

- Loot, bungalow, pajamas, shampoo, jungle, thug (Hindi)
- Guru, avatar (Sanskrit)
- Paradise, bazaar, chess, shawl, lilac (Persian)
- Paprika (Hungarian)
- Robot, howitzer (Czech)
- Safari, lemon (Arabic)
- Karaoke, origami, bonsai, sumo, sushi (Japanese)
- Cigar, burrito, cruise, guitar, alligator (Spanish)
- Tattoo, taboo (Polynesian)
- Coffee, ottoman (Turkish)
- Flannel, penguin (Welsh)
- Cartoon, viola, tortilla, parmesan, spaghetti (Italian)
- Hammock, maize, tobacco, hurricane (Caribbean)
- Wanderlust, broccoli, opera, poodle, noodle, piano (German)
- Metropolis, democracy, biology, comedy (Greek)
- Cookie, coleslaw, sketch, landscape (Dutch)
- Ketchup, kung fu (Chinese)
- Utensil, catalogue, justice (French)
- Marmalade, veranda, massage, flamingo (Portuguese)
- Bamboo, orang-utan (Malay)

Types of Linguistic Change

English has changed in so many aspects; from the most obvious one — vocabulary — to the subtlest one — pronunciation. Language change is both obvious and rather mysterious (Magogo, 2012). However, there are much more changes than most people know, including lexical and semantic change, syntax (grammar) change, and phonological (sound or pronunciation) change.

Lexical and Semantic Change (Relation of words and meaning of words)

Lexical change refers to a change in the use of a word or the meaning. In other words, lexical change is a generational shift of preference. This type of change is the most common change and certainly the easiest to observe. A few examples of lexical change in the English Language:

- "Courting" now means "going out with" or date (first used in 1920).

- "Fit" used to mean "being physically healthy" (first used in the mid of 19ᵗʰ century). It is now used to describe someone who is seen as attractive (first used in 1884), taken from BBC (2014).
- "Wireless" used to mean "radio" (first used in 1913). It now means "a form of internet without cables" (first used in 1999).
- "Pictures" used to mean "the showing of a film in cinema" (first used in 1915). It now means "paintings", "photographs", or "drawings" (Robinson, 2007).

According to ruf.rice.edu, semantic change refers to the evolution of a word usage. Particularly, it is when the meaning of a word is different from what it used to mean. Several examples of semantic change:
- "Awful" initially meant "inspiring wonder or fear". This is a portmanteau of the words "awe" and "full"; a shortening for "full of awe". Nowadays, it usually has negative meaning.
- "Egregious" initially meant something that is remarkably good, but now it means something that is remarkably bad.
- "Guy" initially meant "person of grotesque appearance". It was then changed to refer to a male person. However, under the American popular culture in the 20ᵗʰ century, the word "guy" has slowly replaced the usage of "fellow", "folk", and "bloke". Usually, it is used in plural form to refer to a group of people regardless of their genders.
- "Gay" initially meant "bright, cheerful" before the 1960s, but now it means "homosexual" in general.
- "Demagogue" initially meant "a popular leader". However, it now refers to a politician who panders to emotions and prejudice. (McMahon, 1994)

Syntax Change (Grammar)
History records the evolution of English grammar (Mantiri, 2010). Syntax is the slowest linguistic change when it is compared to the other types of change. Modern English grammar or the one people use today is different from the one people used a few years ago. For example, the use of "shall" and "must". These words are being replaced with multi-word modul forms such as "wanna" (want to), "gonna" (going to), and "hafta" (have to). Some examples of grammatical changes:
- "We shall write a letter for her" becomes "We're gonna write a letter for her".
- "Shall we leave now?" becomes "Do you wanna leave now?"
- "I must go right now" becomes "I have to (hafta) go right now".

Moreover, there is an increase of progressive (continuous) voice forms usage in English language. The majority of English course books teach that stative verbs are never continuous. "Loving", "understanding", "liking", and "believing" would all be considered incorrect according to well-established English standards. Despite the fact that it is not grammatically correct, a lot of teenagers still use these continuous forms of stative verbs in everyday conversations. Several examples of progressive forms of stative verbs in conversations:
- "I'm not understanding what you just said."

- "OMG I am loving your shirt. Where did you get it?"
- "I'm not believing that the movie will be out tonight! Do you wanna go watch it?" (Krzyzewski, 2018)

In addition, the use of "get-passive" is increasing. The passive voice in English is usually formed with "to be" verb. For instance, "he was fired", "the woman was robbed", and "the plant was watered". However, nowadays, more and more people are using "get-passive" form than "to be-passive" form. Take for example, "he got fired", "the woman got robbed", and "the plant got watered". The rise of this "get-passive" form originally began at least 300 years ago, but it started to rapidly rise in the past 50 years (Okrent, 2013).

Phonology Change (Pronunciation)

English not only changed in word meanings and grammar, but the pronunciation of words has also changed throughout the years. Phonology has developed, creating the pronunciation which is commonly used today. Changes from the early twentieth century until late twentieth century:

In the early twentieth century,
- the vowel in words such as *cloth* and *cross* switched from being that of *thought* to that of *lot*;
- people stopped making a distinction in pairs such as *flaw* and *floor*;
- the quality of the "long O" vowel changed (*goat, home, know*);
- the quality of the "short A" vowel changed (*back, man*);
- people stopped using a "tapped" r-sound between vowels (*very sorry*).

In the mid twentieth century,
- words like *sure, poor, tour* started to sound identical to *shore, pour, tore*;
- the weak vowels in words such as *visibility, carelessness* drifted away from the sound of *kit*;
- people started to insert a t-sound in words such as *prince*, making it sound like *prints*;
- a ch-sound became respectable in words such as *perpetual*, and a j-sound in *graduate*;
- the glottal stop started to replace the traditional t-sound in phrases such as *quite nice, it seems*.

In the late twentieth century,
- the vowel sound at the end of words such as *happy, coffee, valley* is growing tenser;
- the OO-sounds of *goose* and *foot* are losing their lip-rounding and backness;
- the glottal stop extends into ever more phonetic environments (*not only, but also*);
- in certain positions, the l-sound is changing into a kind of w-sound (*milk, myself, middle*)
- ch- and j-sounds are spreading to words such as *Tuesday, reduce* (like *chooseday, rejuice*) (Wells, 1999).

How It Affected the Way People Communicate Digitally

History, politics, technology, and society have brought so many changes in the English language throughout the years. English has evolved and will keep developing in many aspects. Now, the question is, how did it affect the way people communicate digitally? The linguistic changes in English affected the way people communicate digitally in two aspects; effectiveness and range.

English is a very structured language. The structure of English can be studied in so many components – parts of speech (classes of words), semantics (meaning of words), syntax (how words are organized), morphology (how words are formed), orthography (how words are spelled), phonology (the sounds of words), lexicography (how written forms represent all of these), and so many more branches. As specified by The Language Doctors (2021), English is hard to learn because of the families of the language, rules and exceptions, words order, mixed vocabulary, and other elements. With that being said, not everyone around the world is able to learn and pick up English as their second language in spite of the fact that it is an international language. That is why the linguistic changes in English has brought many positive impacts, especially about effectiveness. In other words, the language English has been simplified.

People now can communicate with English more effectively as it is simpler than how it used to be. Syntax change made English easier to understand, especially in communications between native speakers and new learners. Semantic and lexical change made English vocabulary easier to be absorbed by new learners. Last but not least, phonology change made English words easier to be pronounced.

Supported by these changes, it is not very difficult for non-native speakers to learn English. The reason why is primarily because English learners do not have to stick with the structured rules to be understood by native speakers. To give an instance:
- "I'm not understand."
- "You is a good person."
- "Your welcome."

Those sentences are all grammatically incorrect, but they are understandable because larger number of native speakers do not always follow the grammar rules in everyday conversations. Taken from Awal English (2021), considering the fact that people from all across the world at present have access to a plethora of communication channels, such as internet, radio and television with the help of which they can sit, listen, and understand English speakers body language. They will get to learn common English idioms that are used and can get a much better understanding of new words as well as phrases and their context that is a feature usually lacking in Standard English learning textbooks.

In view of the fact that it is now more effective to digitally communicate with people, the range of people learning and using English is becoming wider and wider. People all around the globe are more interested in learning English, especially through the internet where it is possible for them to interact with native speakers. Cited from Tomedes, English is the fastest growing language over the past 90 years, rising from 405,741,495, in 1921 to 1,300,569,350 a century later (Tirosh, 2021). With that being said, it is no surprise that the linguistic changes has brought so many impacts for the English language.

Conclusion

Language change may be caused by a few factors, including political factor (campaign, human migration, and colonization or invasion of an area), technology factor (development of technology and devices), social factor (social status, generation, age, ethnicity, and gender), and foreign influence factor (introduction of new things and notions to a community). These factors brought many changes into the English language starting from the early 90s until now. The changes include lexical and semantic change, syntax change, and phonology change. The three linguistic changes in English may not be very noticeable, but they have brought positive impacts. People all around the world are now more interested in learning and using English language as it is simpler and easier than how it used to be; the reason is because these changes unintentionally simplified the English language. This structured language is easier to understand with the growth and development of the world.

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