



PERIODIC CHANGES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Rustamov Ulug'bek Umarbek O'g'li

E-mail: ugorustamov@gmail.com

Annotation *This article discusses the study of main causes of change in modern English grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics are phonetic and structural reduction, dialectal or language variant influence on one another, innovative and fruitful word formation, and dialectal or language variant influence on one another. There are many examples of these shifts in popular artistic discourse. The English language generally does not change very quickly and will stay in its typical shape for a considerable amount of time, despite changes in specific regions. Nonetheless, in order to adjust established conventions in a timely manner, it is crucial to closely monitor linguistic developments.*

Key words: *lexical and grammatical changes, word formation, influence, phonetic reduction, language change.*

Language is a set of signals used to store, process, and communicate information between subjects. Language is both a singular whole and a system. It is arranged as an ordered collection of distinct and recognizable "signs" with the ability to split into lower-order units and combine into higher-order ones. The substance of mind is given form by this massive structure, which is composed of smaller structures with several levels." [1]. At the same time, "language is a set of various linguistic variations, the emergence of which is caused by the action of a wide variety of factors" [4]. The English language is one of the best examples of change and development. It is difficult for a modern reader to perceive what was written in English five hundred years ago, and he probably would not understand much if he had a chance to hear something in this language. Even over much shorter periods of time - ten or twenty years - enough change occurs to cause teachers and grammarians to begin amending textbooks and older generations to complain that the language is dying. Changes in language occur for a number of reasons. In this article we will look at the most common mechanisms of change occurring in modern English in grammar, vocabulary and phonetics.

Phonetic erosion is a potent tool for changing language. Given the complexity of the physical and mental processes involved in producing speech, people typically speak with less effort. As a result, less significant syllables experience less stress and reduction, sometimes even to the point of complete disappearance, as in February (Febry), probably (proibly), and secretary (secretry or secetry). Function words frequently find their way into speech: going to > 'gonna'; could have > 'coulda'; and sometimes they disappear completely: I've got > 'I got'; What do you want? > 'What do you want?' Changes like these, initially considered a sign of careless speech, can become so common that they eventually affect the entire grammatical structure of the language. This could help explain why Modern English and Old English are so different



from one another. Auxiliary verbs, function words, and a set word order have replaced the ends (inflections) of Old English verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

Reduction occurs not only at the phonetic level, but also at the structural level. Minor changes that have little effect on the communication process may not be recognized by native speakers and, as a result, become fixed in the language. Differences in the pronunciation of irregular verb forms, such as sank / sunk or sang / sung, are quite unstable. Nowadays, forms are often confused, so that in spoken language we encounter statements like the following: 'She sung very well in yesterday's concert,' or 'The ship sunk without trace' [7]. The rules determining what structures can follow English verbs and nouns are sometimes extremely confusing and contradictory. It is not surprising that one can encounter sentences like: 'I now have pleasure to enclose the correct enrolment form,' or 'They have a tendency of using plates as ashtrays.' Although these examples still remain outside the framework of traditional grammatical norms, some of them may well become regular features in the future. This is already happening with English modal verbs, which express numerous subtle shades of the speaker's attitude to the content of the utterance, as well as the relationship of the content of the utterance to reality. In modern English, modal verbs are gradually changing their original meanings. A striking example is the use of the modal verb may in combination with the perfect infinitive (have done). Traditionally, this construction was used to express a possible action in the past: (after an accident) 'They have taken her in for an X-ray – she may have broken her leg.' Today, however, many people are beginning to use this structure to describe an unrealized possibility: 'You were stupid to go skiing there – you may have broken your leg.' Previously, such a meaning was expressed only with the modal verbs might and could.

Modern grammatical changes include the gradual replacement of inflectional forms of degrees of comparison of adjectives with analytical ones: for example, instead of commoner, the form more common is used; as well as an increase in the number of uses of the plural form of nouns that perform the function of attributing in compound nouns: antiques shop, drugs problem, arrivals lounge, etc. [7].

The world moves on, old forms of expression become worn out, and speakers, especially the younger generation, strive to revitalize the language. Creative innovation is thus another powerful stimulus for language change. The use of 'I was like' to mean 'I said' (I was like 'You can't do that,' – She was like 'Well, I'm gonna.') was an innovation that spread very quickly. Similarly, modern English is likely to develop a new auxiliary verb to express the future. It is very common, especially in the media, to hear that 'something is set to happen: interest rates are set to rise; pub opening hours are set to change.' Not long ago, this construction was a metaphor – an allusion to a runner in a ready position before the start – and was used only for people who were ready to do something. Nowadays, the metaphorical meaning is fading into the



background, and 'to be set to do' is also used in relation to inanimate objects and processes.

Another example of innovations in grammar is the return of various forms of the singular and plural in the second person, which the English language got rid of about three hundred years ago. For example, in everyday speech, speakers use the form 'you guys', and to both sexes, instead of the traditional 'you' [7]. It is quite possible that this expression will turn into a new grammatical unit - a pronoun.

Of course, grammar is not the only area of language in which changes occur. The most noticeable changes occur in vocabulary and phonetics. Over the past fifty years, rapid and noticeable changes have occurred in standard British pronunciation. Received pronunciation (RP), which was considered the standard until the 1960s, has lost its former prestige. It is now spoken by no more than 3% of the population, and its position has been taken by 'Estuary English', the London dialect [7].

The analytical structure of the English language and the paucity of inflections make it morphologically hospitable, and English continues to actively borrow new words. During the 20th century, English was replenished with borrowings from 56 languages, with the largest number coming from French [5]. However, of the huge number of new words that have replenished the English lexicon over the past hundred years, most arose in the structure of the English language itself, mainly through affixation. Despite the small number of inflections,

English has a highly developed derivative morphology. More than a hundred affixes are in constant use, including a large number of elements originally borrowed from Greek and Latin. They are the most productive today: auto-; eco-; cyber-; mono-; macro-; inter-; -ology; -cratic; -phile; -phobe.

The mutual influence of one language variant or dialect on another is also an important mechanism that entails changes. Marginal dialects usually strive for the standard, which has a higher social and cultural status, and as a result, is considered more correct, elegant and prestigious. Of particular interest is how a language changes through the culture of another country and returns to its homeland already changed. This is evidenced by the lexical and grammatical changes caused by the interaction of the British version of English with American [2]. Since the 1950s, there has been an increased penetration of Americanisms into English speech. In this work, we conventionally call Americanisms lexical, phonetic and grammatical features of the English language in the United States, which represent relatively few deviations from the British literary norm. One of the reasons for the spread of Americanisms is the influence of the mass media, which makes the American English language popular and familiar both in Great Britain itself and in other countries, where it is becoming even more widespread than the British version [3]. Due to the popularization of American literature, cinema and pop music in Great Britain, Americanisms are gradually penetrating English publications and are being introduced into the English language. British English is subject to minor changes under the influence of the powerful



American version, so the small differences in grammar between the two versions disappear. Today, for example, the British often use the verb to do to form the interrogative negative form of the verb to have to express the meaning of temporary possession – ‘Do you have a match?’, whereas older people would say ‘Have you got a match?’ The use of like instead of as if (He looked like he’d seen a ghost), which has become widespread in colloquial American English, is becoming more common in Britain as well. The differences between British and American English in the use of must and have to are becoming increasingly blurred [6]. However, it is important to note that the influence of American and British English is mutual. British ‘high’ culture still has a significant influence in certain American circles, and this contributes to the tendency to imitate British English. In a Los Angeles Times article (published in the Guardian on April 8, 2005), the author laments the penetration of fashionable elements of British English (Britspeak) into America, for example: send up in the meaning of parody, spot on – dead on; sacked – fired; go missing – disappear; at the end of the day – in the end [7].

The next mechanism of changes in language can be called the mutual influence of different styles of language. In England and America in the 19th century, written English was the main instrument of lawmaking and culture and had great prestige. At the same time, the unofficial spoken language was considered a "poor relative". The development of oral media has significantly contributed to the fact that the differences between spoken and written language are gradually reduced, and many of the classical rules prescribed in the 18th - 19th centuries are losing their force. For example, the use of they / them / their in relation to an indefinite person (If anybody phones, tell them I'm out), previously acceptable only in colloquial speech, becomes acceptable in more formal styles. Similar changes can be noted in the following constructions:

- prepositions at the end of a subordinate clause (something that teachers often worry about); 47
- pronoun forms with a double subject or object (John and me went to the cinema or between you and I); Although these forms have existed in the language for centuries (examples can be found in the works of Shakespeare and Jane Austen), they have only recently been adopted by classical Englishists. Today, the use of informal grammar in e-mail correspondence further reduces the differences between written and spoken language. This in turn may affect traditional forms of writing. Language change, of course, does not happen overnight. Small-scale changes in some language forms spread quite quickly, especially in our age of electronic communication. The already mentioned example of the use of was like to mean said “moved” from the American variant to the speech of young Britons in about ten years [7]. However, larger-scale linguistic changes affecting the systemic level may take several centuries to form. For example, there are still verbs in English that are not used in the continuous tenses. Although this rule is sometimes broken: I’m understanding maths much better now; She’s really liking her new job; I’m loving it. Changes in the forms of the comparative



and superlative degrees of adjectives also have a long history. At first, more and most were used with three- and multi-syllable adjectives (the form *beautifullest* existed until the 18th century), but over time they began to be used in relation to two-syllable adjectives as well. Among other changes that are currently taking place, one can name the wider use of the form *going to*; the replacement of *shall* and *should* with *will* and *would*; the active use of *get* in the passive voice; the diminishing role of the subjunctive (especially in British English) and the disappearance of the form *whom*. It is not only the language that is changing. Our knowledge of language is constantly expanding and enriching itself in the light of ongoing linguistic research. Today, we know much more about language than we did before. And given the increasing availability of electronic corpora, containing hundreds of millions of words of authentic spoken and written English, it is becoming much easier to supplement and revise traditional norms, since corpus research reveals new facts about the functioning of language. For example, a study conducted by J. Leach in 2003 found that the modal verbs *must* and *may* are used less frequently than they were several decades ago [6]. This fact could not have been established, or even guessed at, without the use of corpus research tools. Such studies not only expand our knowledge of grammar, but also transform lexicography, since it becomes increasingly obvious that each word in the language is part of a complex and unique system of relationships. A natural question arises: how to treat all the changes occurring in the language? According to Michael Swan, English teachers should hardly worry. Despite changes in individual areas, in general, the English language does not change very quickly, and will remain in its usual form for quite a long time. However, it is important to carefully observe what is happening in the language, at least in order to be able to answer students' questions about innovations, as well as modify traditional rules in time. From this point of view, authors of textbooks and grammar collections are endowed with special responsibility. They need to be extremely attentive to all changes in order to avoid inaccuracies and errors.

REFERENCES

1. Klimenko A. V. *Remeslo perevoda. Prakticheskii kurs* [The trade of Translation. Practical Course] – M.: AST: Vostok - Zapad, 2007 – 636 p.
2. Wierzbicka A. *English: Meaning and Culture*. NY : Oxford University Press, 2006
3. Buren H. V. *American ways with names*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977. P. 111–130
4. Serebrennikov B. A. *Obshchie yazykoznanie* [General language studies]. – M., 1997 – 602 p.
5. Algeo, J. 'Vocabulary' in *The Comparative history of the English language*, volume IV, 1776-1997 (ed. S. Romaine). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.



6. . Zobotkina V. I. Cognitive-pragmatic approach to the study of English neology // Problems of the English Neology: Proceedings of a Scientific Conference - 2002
7. Swan, M. What is happening in English? // English Teaching Professional. - No 40 – 2005.
8. Cambridge Dictionary [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/> (date of access: 03/02/2018).