Study Of Linguistics Essay, Research Paper

Language changes with history and time. Our perception of words changes. Everything changes, from cooking with a fire to cooking with a microwave. Some examples of the ways language changes are through accents, books, slang, influential people, and historical events.

Accents show development of culture over time, maybe through a historical event, such as a new country being found. The people living there might adopt the culture of the founders. Language also changes, from using different sounds in words, which are called phonemes or “segments that differentiate words” (Fromkin and Brace 303). The English language has about 43 different phonemes, such as OH, EE, etc, which make up our language. Different cultures, such as some Indian Tribes, may have more or less phonemes in their language, showing either a lower form of language with less words and sounds, or a higher form with only the necessary sounds and words.

Accents also have different languages linked to them. Different letters phrases and even a whole new language may be created in the process of learning the language, over time. It’s like a metamorphosis to keep up with the changing world.

Letters are called graphemes (Lamb 59)(Friend 128) meaning the 26 letters of the alphabet. There may be more or less in different languages. Different symbols can also be associated with different cultures. The cross is associated with our religion, although it might not be in some other country for example.

Also the syntax or “the phase of grammar which deals with the relationship of words in sentences and the grammar and the manner in which words are put together” (Lamb 141) has an effect on the society. There is no “proper” way to write a book, for example, but just a standard way everyone uses. This may be thought of as the “proper” way but some rebels will use no periods and have one long paragraph in a 400-page book. Maybe their culture says it is mandatory to have everything in one long continuos sentence, while others more advanced may follow the rules to the very letter.

How can language have meaning? Through time it may lose and gain new meaning, for example through things such as historical occurrences. Imagine during the war, a whole new kind of lingo spreading like wild fire through fighting countries. “The study of how language contains meaning is called semantics” (Friend 145), and through this we can see what has occurred and what will occur, kind of like a time machine right before our eyes which we have to constantly study to use correctly.

There are many different influential people who have a major effect on our lives. Family, friends, and even those in our political system or government may affect our lives in both positive and negative ways. Influential people also play a part in our evolution of language. Influential people can coin words and do many other things that will affect our language. They may use one word that has become a habit to them, but do they know they might make it a habit for a million people? Ten million? The whole world? This example is shown in speeches of important people, books of all kinds, and especially through television and movies. In my life I know that my friends and I make up sayings all the time that are used by many people. It is our own dialect or slang

The change made by historical events might not be obvious but there is change whether we notice it or not. The change is usually obvious in historical events, which affect the entire world such as the “meeting” in the Gulf, which has stirred up an entire planet. This meeting may one day start a war that will devastate the earth. As gas prices rise, everything needing fuel does. Also the means of communication between two people change, from ignorance to shouting, to whispering, to nothing between the two our view of the concept must be clear before we can actually communicate efficiently. Language itself must be totally understood for it to be used fully. Changing with history and time means a whole new environment to live in where we must constantly adapt to our surroundings to survive. Car insurance, for example, was considered a luxury 70 years ago, now its life and death and is even against the law to drive without. The change can be so subtle over time that it hits us so hard we do not expect it, with horrendous results sometimes the outcome.

Different cultures have different perceptions of their language, the languages of others, their beliefs about God and their religion, etc. It is much easier to communicate if both parties understand where the other is coming from. Here is where I would like to talk about slang for a while. For hundreds of years, English has been continuously changing. Words that were unacceptable hundreds of years ago are now common. English has always been known as a comfortable language. Change in the grammar of a language is natural, and English is always confronted with changes. Among them are the use of slang, clipped word endings, and new dialects. Some conservative types do not like changes because they claim that Standard English is a perfect language and they do not want to corrupt it. Others simply do not like change. Slang worries conservatives the most because it affects the vocabulary of English. American English, especially, is always adding new words to its vocabulary for social, scientific, or artistic reasons. Most times the scientific and artistic words do not bother these people; only the social, or slang words do. Children or teens that seek social status usually create slang. Because kids are the source of new slang, some adults look down on it with the assumption that kids are unintelligent and are just rebelling against regular English grammar. Most times adults did the very same thing when they were kids though. Some conservatives also think slang is bad because it is not used by the upper class. If they hear someone speaking Ebonics they may be upset because Ebonics is not the way that high-class people talk. Those words used by that person might make them comfortable. If a language were not comfortable, why would you want to speak it?

Language will be thought of differently in the future because new ways of communicating will be used more often. The largest of these ways is the Internet. Nowadays lots of people are using the Internet to talk to people all over the world. The Internet has its own language which people call computer slang. No matter what your language or dialect is you will always have to type out an Internet message in a standard form. There are even different words used for the computer especially Acronyms which are “words composed of the initials of several other words” (Fromkin and Rodman 519) that are understood by everyone that will probably be in the dictionary soon.

Some people claim that the lack of Standard English is from insufficient education. They explain that the reason some slang is made up by kids who live in the ghetto is that the kids drop out of school because they are dumb kids and never learn the standard form of English. Many times the kids drop out of school because they are told that the way they talk is stupid.

Slang may also be considered a different belief, as different cultures have different languages, and slang may be the key that holds them together as their central language with which to communicate. This is not always bad, but sometimes another party has no idea of what they are saying, which causes problems. Slang is an example of how over time we can join together and create something new, according to our culture beliefs.

As mentioned earlier, there is no “proper” way to use language. There is a standard way. But slang is a change on the standard kind of like options on a new car. The standards have changed over time, and are also different from culture to culture. The proper ways have been stretched and strung out in many cases. Slang is first, while languages developed from other ones are also examples. Latin is the base of many languages and it is known if you study a language which is very similar to the one you know, you will learn it faster. The standard is always changing everyday, as we makeup and use new words.

Another important thing to think about which changes language is that we may lose effectiveness in our everyday use language. This upsets many people because one day their ideas, which they so carefully thought out, have gone out of style. The change over time has made many languages unknown. Like with Latin, there are many so called “universal” languages, which the creator had the intent for it to be learned worldwide (Fromkin and Rodman 19). Many of these have never caught on like Latin, which died before it had a chance to live very long.

As new concepts are developed, used and used again, a whole new language might be created from it. Thus names for the new concepts are also created, like with robots, airplanes, cars, and many other machines for example. Language has to grow to take on the new concepts we develop. Historical events, such as wars, have a part in joining two cultures or destroying two. They can destroy one, leaving them to pick up the pieces and to start over, or bring two together to make a whole new language. This is good in a way, but if a culture is completely destroyed, can it come back to its previous stature? Can it get better?

Our view of phrases can be changed also. As our sense of humor has grown we developed our phrases too. Here is my example. Sorry it is not quite as funny as yours handed out in class about the IRS or church newsletter. Fred lost a string in the house which was all tied up. What do you see? Fred Looking for a knotted string? Or Fred looking at a knotted house? At one time our view of this phrase might have been only one, the first one, while today there are millions of possibilities.

If we were frozen in time right now and woke up in the year 2099, we would be surprised and shocked to find ourselves there. If we had no way of going home, we would have to stay, and adapt to the new cultures. We wouldn’t have seen what had happened before that, so we wouldn’t know what to say or how to act. But, if we had stayed in 1999 and let our evolution take place, we could have seen everything. By being thrown into the future this is like learning a new culture all by itself.

So as I have discussed language changes with historical events and time. Time changes it, the influences of people change it, slang changes it, and history changes it. We all live it, and the everyday change is so subtle most of the time we don?t even notice it. But if we were zapped into the future, we would find it foreign to us because we do not know the language and cultures. Historical influences can bring together two cultures, destroy many, and make new ones. We all have different views of what language is and how it changes. Those stated are just my own and those of the authors in my bibliography, and they might change when we share information with others, getting their ideas and using ours as I have done in through my research and essay. Our standards and meanings of words change too, our sounds and syntax grows to accommodate for new concepts. New concepts help us to understand the world; new concepts are made with time and necessity. Language is a wonderful thing that we all use and change ourselves to suit our own needs.