

The article considers the ways of students' strategic competence forming taking into account the psychological peculiarities of learners' information perception and also taking into consideration the information given above by the teacher while foreign language teaching.

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Inherent causes of language change

The inevitable causes of language change are considered in this article. It gives an up-to-date view of the phonetic natural tendencies which are the predictable result of a human's anatomical, physiological and psychological make-up.

articulation, guttural sounds, nasalized vowel, nasal cavity, voiceless stop, glottal stop, consonants, obstruction, compressed air, explosion, assimilation, omission, alternating consonant, consonant sequences

The causes of language change are double-layered. On the top layer, there are social triggers. These set off or accelerate deeper causes, hidden tendencies which may be lying dormant within the language. The gun of change has been loaded and cocked at an earlier stage. Many of underlying tendencies appear disruptive.

Ease of effort, in the sense of ease of articulation, is the proposed cause of disruption which springs most easily to one's mind. There is a deep-rooted belief among quite a number of people that all human speech would be reduced to a prolonged *uh*. Ease-of-effort theories have been around for a long time. They were particularly prevalent in the nineteenth century, when educated men tended to idealize the 'noble savage', whose apparent virtues seemed to contrast strongly with the vices and decadence of civilization. At that time, we find the linguist Max Müller claiming that, owing to laziness inherent in civilization, sophisticated people do not use the forceful articulatory movements required for primitive tongues. In civilized languages, he maintained, speakers avoid difficult guttural sounds, and show a preference for relatively easy sounds produced fairly far forward in the mouth – a claim which turns out to be totally unsubstantiated, since there is no evidence that any language is 'more primitive', than any other or that primitive cultures use more 'throaty' sounds than advanced cultures.

A more sophisticated view of changes which are castigated as laziness, however, is that they are tendencies which are inevitably built into language because of the anatomical, physiological and psychological make-up of human beings. We may be dealing with predestination rather than sin. Let us go on to substantiate this viewpoint by outlining some developments which have happened repeatedly, and are happening currently in the language of the world.

Dropping off consonants

Let us begin with what seems to be a typical case of sloppiness, the loss of consonants at the end of words.

Consider French *n*. Between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, spoken French gradually lost *n* at the end of words such as *an* 'year', *en* 'in', *bon* 'good', *bien* 'well', *coin* 'corner', *fin* 'end', *brun* 'brown', and nasalized the preceding vowel. This change began with the words where the *n* was preceded by [a], a vowel in which the tongue is held low and the mouth kept relatively wide open. It then moved to mid-vowels such as [e] and [o], and finally to vowels such as [i] and [u], in

which the tongue is high and the mouth relatively closed. In other words, the lower the tongue and the more open the mouth, the earlier this change occurred.

The techniques have provided new insights, and also confirmed some things that phoneticians had long suspected: when the sequence [an] is pronounced, the nasal cavity – the space behind the nose – cannot be totally closed off during the vowel [a]. The result is that the sequence [an] is always [ãn], with a slightly nasalized vowel. This means that there is an imbalance between [ãn] and the other sounds [en], [in], [on], [un]. There will be a tendency to do two things: first, to omit an unnecessary [n] after [ã] – since the vowel is now nasalized, the final nasal is redundant; secondly, to allow the nasalization to spread to other vowels, in order to preserve the symmetry of the sound system. In other words, any language which possesses the sequence vowel + *n* has a potential weak spot in the language. Starting with *a* + *n* the vowels may become nasalized, and the final nasal is likely to be lost. This is a very common change, and has occurred in the last millennium in Chinese, as well as French.

So far we have seen that the human inability to close off the nasal cavity during the pronunciation of the sequence [an] causes a weak spot in language which could potentially be exploited. However, this is not the only reason why final nasals are weak. All consonants are weak at the end of a word if no vowel follows. They are weakly articulated, and difficult to perceive. Within the last millennium, the voiceless stops [p], [t], [k] have been lost at the end of words in French, Chinese and Maori, among other languages. In Chinese, they were at first replaced by a glottal stop – a stoppage of the airstream with no sound involved. Then this glottal stop was lost. Several dialects of British English, Cockney and Glaswegian, for example, now have glottal stops in place of final [t] and [k], and, less often, [p]. So English is possibly following the same track.

This development is not just ‘sloppiness’, but is due to the general and inevitable weakness of articulation of sounds at the end of words.

The consonants [p], [t], [k] are produced, like all stops, by totally obstructing the air flow at some point, in this case at the lips for [p], the teeth for [t], and the palate for [k]. The actual articulation of a stop consists of three successive stages: first, the placing of the obstruction; secondly, the building up of compressed air behind the obstruction; and thirdly, an explosion as the obstruction is removed. These three stages can be detected if you try saying slowly and with emphasis: ‘You *pig*! You *toad*! You *cuckoo*!’ Now try saying ‘Have a good sleep! Good night! Good luck!’ Even if you say these emphatically, you are likely to find that the explosion is considerably weaker when [p], [t], [k] occur at the end of a word. Anyone who habitually exploded stops occurring at the end of a word as strongly as those at the beginning would sound both pompous and theatrical. In fact, it is extremely difficult to explode them strongly without adding an extra vowel on the end: ‘Good sleep-a’, ‘Good night-a’, ‘Good luck-a’. The difficulty of exploding final stops means that it is not uncommon for stops at the end of a word to be ‘unreleased’, that is, unexploded. In the phrase ‘Good night!’, for example, normal breathing is often resumed after the closure and compression stages, without any explosion occurring.

The weakness and gradual loss of final consonants is not only due to feeble articulation. It is compounded and accelerated by the fact that such sounds are difficult to hear, particularly when unexploded. Speakers of Cantonese, a Chinese dialect which has unreleased final stops, were tested on their ability to distinguish between them. When words were read in list, out of context, hearers made wrong decisions about almost half of them.

When final stops have become virtually indistinguishable, the next stage is for them to become really indistinguishable. Most Chinese dialects simply replaced all three voiceless stops with a glottal stop. Eventually, the glottal stop itself tends to be omitted, resulting in the total loss of the original consonants.

Overall, then, it is normal for consonants to disappear at the ends of words over the ages. It has already happened in numerous languages over the centuries, and will undoubtedly happen in many more.

Linking sounds together

Anyone learning a new language speaks slowly, haltingly, one word at a time, with each section of word pronounced carefully and clearly. As the learner becomes more fluent, these separate words and sounds are linked together into a smoother style of speech.

The linking together of sounds and words is carried out primarily in two ways. First, by assimilation, 'becoming similar': when two sounds are adjacent, one often moves partially or wholly in the direction of the other. Secondly, by omission: in a group of sounds clustered together, one sometimes gets left out. As an example of the first process, try saying the sentences *I want you to warn Peter* and *I want you to warm Peter* fairly fast. At normal conversation speed, there is unlikely to be any difference between the two. *Warn* is likely to have been influenced by the following *p* and become *warm* also. As an example of the second process, say the sentence *George banged the drum hard as he marched through the town*. At normal conversation speed, you are likely to have omitted the final sounds in *banged*, *marched*, and said: *George bang(ed) the drum hard as he march(ed) through the town*. Even people who criticize others for 'swallowing their words' are likely to assimilate and omit sounds in the way described above, though they would probably deny it. Such phenomena tend to creep into the language unnoticed. Suddenly, there comes an arbitrary point at which people stop ignoring them, and start noticing and complaining.

When assimilations and omissions occur between words, they are usually only temporary: we normally pronounce *would you* as 'wood-joo', but the word *you* is in no danger of changing to *joo* in other context. However, when assimilation and omission occur within words instead of between them, the effect is likely to be longer-lasting – though the spelling can often prevent people from realizing that a change has occurred. Almost everyone, for example, pronounces the word *handbag* as *hambag*, with omission of the *d* in *hand*, and a change of the *n* to *m*, due to the influence of the following *b* (since *m* and *b* are both produced by closing the lips). However, few people will admit to this 'sloppy' pronunciation. Many, when challenged, are convinced that they say *handbag* – though the same people will usually admit to saying *hankerchief*, rather than *handkerchief*. If a change occurs in enough words, people grow to accept it, and eventually treat the spelling rather than the pronunciation as aberrant. For example, no one nowadays worries that we do not pronounce the *t* in words such as *whistle*, *thistle*, *castle*, *fasten*, *hasten*, even though one might expect people to want to keep *t* in *fasten* and *hasten* in order to retain their connection with *fast* and *haste*. But in this case, it is the spelling which people generally want to reform.

Assimilation and omission are found the world over, especially when two or more consonants meet. Furthermore, there is some evidence that an alternating consonant-vowel-consonant-vowel sequence is the most natural one for the human vocal organs, and a few linguists have tried to argue that all languages are subconsciously striving towards this natural state. It is certainly true that fluent speakers in every known language inevitably simplify consonant sequences, particularly if they are able to make themselves understood without pronouncing each sound in detail. As one phonetician expressed it, 'Language does what it has to do for efficiency and gets away with what it can.'

The list of literature

1. Aitchison J. Language origin and evolution. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
2. Aitchison J. Psycholinguistic perspectives on language change. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
3. Croft W. Explaining language change: An evolutionary approach. – London: Longman, 2000.

В статті розглядаються неминучі причини зміни мови. Вона пропонує сучасний погляд на природні тенденції у фонетиці, які є передбачуваним результатом анатомічної, фізіологічної та психологічної будови людини.

В статье рассматриваются неизбежные причины изменения языка. Она предлагает современный взгляд на естественные тенденции в фонетике, которые являются прогнозируемым результатом анатомического, физиологического и психологического строения человека.

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Рівень безробіття в Україні та пріоритетні напрямки його зниження

Структурні зрушення, що відбуваються на сучасному етапі розвитку національної економіки, призводять до суттєвих негативних змін на ринку праці, зокрема, до достатньо значних обсягів і рівня безробіття економічно активного населення і, як наслідок, до неефективного використання робочої сили. При цьому розвиток підприємництва, малого і середнього бізнесу та інші ринкові перетворення не в змозі на належному рівні вирішити проблеми забезпечення ефективної зайнятості населення, створення нових робочих місць, підвищення якості життя населення тощо. Одним із негативних наслідків цих процесів є формування значного рівня вимушеної неповної зайнятості ("прихованого безробіття"), що перетворилося на характерну тенденцію сучасного ринку праці.

Через це актуальним є розробка і вдосконалення механізмів державного регулювання обсягів незайнятого населення та підвищення рівня використання робочої сили з урахуванням особливостей її розподілу та сучасної кон'юнктури ринку праці. Вищезазначені обставини й зумовили вибір теми дослідження, її мету, структуру та основні задачі.

Метою даної роботи є дослідження рівня безробіття за останній рік та пропонування пріоритетних напрямків державної політики, для вирішення проблеми безробіття на ринку праці в Україні.

Згідно офіційних статистичних даних, у першому кварталі 2009 р. в Україні було зареєстровано 20,3 млн. осіб економічно активного населення працездатного віку, при цьому 2,1 млн. з них були безробітними, тобто рівень безробіття за методологією Міжнародної організації праці (МОП) склав 10,3% . Рівень зареєстрованого безробіття в Україні становив всього 4,4%. Для порівняння, у січні-вересні 2008 р. рівень безробіття серед населення працездатного віку складав 6,5% або майже 1,4 млн. осіб. Таким чином, за півроку з початку активної фази фінансово-економічної кризи понад 700 тис. українців втратили роботу.

У липні 2009 р. ситуація на ринку праці, - з точки зору офіційної статистики, - покращилася. Так, кількість зареєстрованих безробітних зменшилася з 900,6 тис. осіб. на 1 січня 2009 р. до 658,5 тис. осіб на 1 липня 2009 р., що дає можливість Міністерству праці і соціальної політики України рапортувати про зниження рівня безробіття на 26,9%.

Однак, реальна картина виглядає інакше: в Україні близько 3 млн. осіб. (близько 15% економічно активного населення працездатного віку) залишилися без роботи, - якщо рахувати за кількістю тих, хто сплачує внески до соціальних фондів.

Слід зазначити, що значна частина українців працює за межами України. За оцінками експертів, у 2008 р. за кордоном працювало понад 3,5 млн. українців. При цьому легально працевлаштовані були не більш 2%.