

LANGUAGE CHANGE DUE TO NEW PRODUCTS REPLACING OLD THINGS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to explore the change in language due to incorporation of new products and commodities in our day to day life. It has been observed that with advancement of science and technology, life has been made easy with modern, comfortable and luxurious things. These products made our life smooth but also defunct the use of previous vernacular model of that product. People adapt new commodities and stop using the previous ones. This settles in one generations mind and the vernacular thing which progeny has not seen does not add up into their vocabulary. In a way words pertaining to vernacular styles die. This article will explore some of the words of Punjabi language which have become defunct due to their modern substitutes.

Introduction

Linguists all over the world have explored the different reasons of language change. These changes can be attributed to different factors. Language is not static phenomenon, it is dynamic and gradually keeps on changing. Very few languages like Japanese with extra ordinary discipline of speakers remain least affected but most of the languages succumb to the pressures of language change. The latest development in the language change is SMSian language. The young ones have become so habitual in the use of shorten forms of words using digits in text messages or writing on social networking sites that they are inclined to use the very words while writing their assignments and exams. According to Jean Aitchison, “It's hard to see what the problem is. Language speakers and writers have always been inventive, and texting is just one further example of human creativity. As David Crystal has expressed it: 'it is the latest manifestation of the human ability to be linguistically creative... In texting, we are seeing, in a small way, language in evolution...”

Another writer, *John McWhorter*, argues that “[Texting] is a whole new way of writing that young people are developing, which they're using alongside their ordinary writing skills. ... It's an expansion of their linguistic repertoire.”

In English language, there has been drastic change since the times of Father of English language, Geoffrey Chaucer. He took the vernacular dialect, Middle English, to new heights in the era when other languages like French and Latin were also dominant. His English is very

difficult to understand even by an average literature student of our times. Even some of the words and phrases that Shakespeare used in his writings have become obsolete. For eg. Thy, thou, hitherto. George Steiner asserted that when a language dies, a way of understanding the world dies with it, a way of looking at the world.

If we reverse the situation and go back to the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the words that new technology brought in later centuries would be new words for people who lived in earlier centuries but not for us. Let us first discuss various changes in language. The primary logic given for language change especially in pronunciation, sentence structure, vocabulary, spellings, semantics etc is mixing of various languages due to invasion, migration, trade and business. These changes did not happened in quick time. These were gradual changes brought upon a language with vast social, economic, psychological and political pressures. Ferdinand de Saussure said, “Time changes all things; there is no reason why language should escape this universal law”.

The change of inclusion of words has been researched by many scholars but unfortunately very few efforts have been made in native languages to enlist the excluded words. Internet, mobile phones, tablets, space programs have rapidly added new words to the existing dictionaries. But with the advent of these modern products the vernacular items which were used proudly in native cultures have vanished. Everyone wants new and latest models available in the market. This has led to change in the language which was not explored hitherto.

In my native language Panjabi, there have been changes. Punjabis have gone all over the world to earn livelihood and to make their name and fame. This process of migration started before independence but paced up in eighties and nineties and is going on. This has not only brought prosperity to the families living behind but it also changed the life style of them. The things used traditionally have lost their lack lustre. These vernacular items have been discarded and replaced by new commodities. This has led to the omission of many words from the memories of new generation. Gradually, these words will disappear as there won't be any physical form available for these signs.

Moorha is a bamboo made chair and it was used to sit in leisure time. Now sofa sets, cosy chairs and cushioned furniture is widely used and preferred. This has made moorha disappear from society. When there is no physical entity, there is no need to speak about that. Modern generation does not know about the existence of this word. Another example is *Fatti*, it is flat thin board on which pupils learnt the art of writing in government schools a decade ago. But the arrival of slates, availability of note books, and then advent of laptops and tablets have made *fatti* an antique piece. It is not used these days. Consequently, its substitutes have become so dominant and prevalent that the word *fatti* is rarely spoken in the sense it was used to.

Mashak is a water carrying bag made of goat skin. It was used to quench the thirst of soldiers in battles, for household works and travelling. Water coolers, filters, refrigerators and cold drinks have replaced it. I conducted a survey and collected following words rarely spoken these days and reason is same. The modern replacements have become permanent decentering the old ones from their centre to the verge of extinction. The participants also felt the need to collect the list of words from other regions. Following is the list of some words.

Earlier word	Meaning	Replaced by
<i>Ghotna</i>	Circular wooden log used to grind spices	Grinder/mixer
<i>Khussa</i>	Traditional footwear	Shoe/loafer
<i>Joag</i>	Pair of oxen used to plough fields	Tractor

<i>Panjali</i>	Yoke	Tractor/triller
<i>Munna</i>	Vernacular triller	triller
<i>Sharara/garara</i>	Traditional out fit	Lehenga
<i>Guthali</i>	A cloth made pouch to keep things like money	Wallet/purse
<i>Bharoli</i>	Earthen pot to boil milk gradually	Steel utensils
<i>Shanna</i>	A bronze bowl used to drink butter milk/milk	Steel glass
<i>Talli</i>	Vernacular way to name a ringing bell	Bell
<i>Kanali</i>	A utensil used to knead flour	Kneading machine
<i>Nakka Poor</i>	A game played with glass balls	Video games
<i>Surahi</i>	A long earthen pot to keep water cool	Water cooler

Conclusion

The list can be long. Many words have already become obsolete. These words are there in old texts but who reads them. The point is people do not see these things and these things do not enter their dictionaries. More research and efforts are needed to publish the list of words with their meanings to preserve the rapid loss of words. Otherwise, Steven Pinker says that “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to compute it.”

WorkCited

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Web resources

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