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Semantic Changes in Contemporary English
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Abstract

The term "semantic changes in present-day English" refers to the linguistic adjustment that occurs when the meanings of words change from their historical or original usage to their meanings in the present day. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the concepts and factors that lead to semantic shifts, as well as the effects of these changes on communication. In addition, the study offers a complete discussion of several forms of semantic change, including widening, specialization, and metaphorical extension. In the end, it looks at the ramifications of these changes on other elements of language, such as the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The abstract, on its whole, emphasizes the relevance of semantic change in the development of language and its function in the creation of language over time.

Keywords: Semantic, contemporary, Changes, language, alterations.

Introduction

There was no widely accepted Standard English before the printing press was invented. The majority of crucial public writing was either Latin or French; therefore, there was no need for an English standard. "English was predominantly utilized for spoken and casual purposes and exhibited significant regional variations" (Barry, 1999). Standardization was a must with the advent of

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mechanical printing in England in the late fifteenth century. Consequently, a small group of influential people in the seventeenth century decided that the English language should be standardized. The disarray in the English language disturbed the group, who thought language ought to be stable and everlasting. The gang, unfortunately, set out to do something that would never be possible. As the world around us changes dizzily, so does the English language. Grammarians in the eighteenth century used logic to settle disputes over linguistic usage. On the other hand, they looked to Classical Greek and Latin for examples of proper structure. The grammarians also considered the development of English when making their rulings.

"Due to their perception of language change as synonymous with language deterioration, they generally presumed that earlier forms and meanings were accurate, while the more recent ones were erroneous" (Barry, February 2002). Native English speakers have made many changes and adaptations to the English language over the years. For the most part, modern English speakers rely on something other than books written 200 years ago to determine what is considered proper usage. Contemporary linguists argue that change is inherent to every language, while eighteenth-century grammarians argued that English could achieve perfection and permanence if its speakers were more diligent (Barry, 2002). "Hard drive," "floppy disc," and other computer-related jargon would not exist if the English lexicon could not expand. Numerous changes have occurred since a tiny group of grammarians attempted to set a permanent standard for English in the seventeenth century. A word's modern meaning could contradict its semantic connotation from a hundred years ago. Alterations occur on multiple levels, including phonemic, morphological, semantic, syntactic, and lexical. The primary goal of this research is to look at how the English language has evolved in terms of its meaning. This study focuses on how the definition of modern English has changed. "Meanings undergo evolution over time, just like other language components" (Millward, that year).

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As their meanings have changed in modern English, I will examine how these words have developed semantically. The Germanic root of the English word "thing" historically meant a meeting or a legal process. However, the word's definition has evolved to cover anything (Millward, 1996).

Highlight how words' meanings can be influenced by outside causes, leading to long-lasting changes in their usage. My research aims to show how PDE has changed over the past few decades. I aim to explain the English language's ongoing progress thoroughly. In the seventeenth century, grammarians believed that English would remain unchanged. On the other hand, I will show that this is not the case and explain why a static language cannot exist. The English language is dynamic; keeping dictionaries up-to-date requires constant editing and rewriting.Another goal of this research is to clarify the steps required to apply a change to the English language. I will describe all the changes and transitions that take place. The ultimate goal of this research is to dispel the myth that change constantly means bad things are getting worse.

Historical Background

Several centuries have passed since the beginning of the field of semantics, which has a long history. Regarding its historical lineage, the English language has a strong and extensive connection. Middle English, also known as Old English (O.E.), was the language that was spoken between the years 450 and 1100 A.D. There was a period known as Middle English (M.E.) that lasted from 1100 to 1500 A.D. In the years that followed, the English language evolved into Early Modern English (EMnE), which remained in use until 1800 respectively. Since the 11th century, what is now known as Present-Day English (PDE) has been the name given to this language. The investigation of meaning and the changes in meaning can be traced back to the time of Old English. Words have been imbued with the speakers' interpretations and alterations since the beginning of language development.

Variations in the meanings of words have been occurring consistently. The word "lady," who was once considered a

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distinguished title in Old and Middle English, has taken on a little pejorative connotation in the English language of the present day. There are only a few words whose meanings have remained unchanged over time. There have been unique adjustments brought about by regional and dialectal variances, in addition to other alterations that have taken place. In certain instances, words have taken on literal definitions or alternative connotations due to the changing perspectives of the generation that comes after us. Changes materialize due to numerous variables; they have continually done so and are predicted to continue doing so in the future. Language is an essentially dynamic construct, and this fact has been proven since Old English.Millward's work from 1996

According to Sheard (1966: 12), the term "semantic change" describes the process by which the meanings of words shift over time. It involves the evolution and alteration of the semantic structure of a word, which helps the growth and enhancement of the vocabulary in terms of quality and quantity. Lyons (1981:179) points out that linguists agree that language evolves throughout history. In addition, they are aware that many of the languages spoken in Europe now are descended from ancient linguistic forebears. The Romance languages are a part of what is now referred to as the Romance Languages, whereas English is a descendant of the Anglo-Saxon language. Latin was the inspiration for the languages French, Spanish, and Italian.

Despite this, prior to developing the notions associated with historical linguistics, it was not acknowledged that language change is universal, ongoing, and consistent. Not only are phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes joint, but semantic change is also standard. Since the beginning of time, the meanings of English words have constantly evolved, and this process continues today.

Semantic Change and Processes of Word Formation

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The sources of semantic change

Furthermore, according to Traugott (1982:9), it is possible to divide it into two distinct groups: language factors and extra linguistic variables. Changes that occur as a result of the continual interdependence of vocabulary units in language and speech are the centre of attention for the first category. The differentiation between synonyms, modifications regarding ellipsis and fixed contexts, and changes resulting from ambiguity in particular circumstances are all included in this category. The progressive transformation that is known as semantic change is something that can be observed over the course of the evolution of language. This shift is the result of the differentiation of synonyms. During the time of Old English, for instance, the word "twist" was a noun that referred to a rope, and the verb "thrown" (which is now referred to as "throw") had the dual meaning of both hurling and twisting an object. Since it first appeared in Middle English, the word "twisten" has rendered the original verb meaningless throughout the centuries. An additional linguistic component that is taken into account throughout the process of semantic shift is the examination of fixed context. As an illustration, the term "token" was restricted in comparison to the loan word "sing." The term eventually came to be utilised solely in particular expressions, such as "love token" and "token of respect," and as a result, it acquired a more specific meaning.

In terms of ellipsis, it is conceivable to leave out the qualifying words of a sentence that is quite common. By way of illustration, the phrase "sale" is frequently utilised to refer to an event that is either discounted or offers lower prices. They are expressing interest in getting married and are looking forward to the arrival of a child. On the other hand, the fundamental term comprising the expression can appear to be unnecessary. The creation of mineral water, for instance, makes explicit use of minerals in its manufacturing process. The phrase "suffer from lack

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of food" or "die of hunger" was substituted by the ellipsis starve, which originally meant to starve oneself to death. As was the case with the earlier reference, the source that is being quoted is the same one, namely from the tenth page.

More generally, however, Trask (1996: 38) proposes three principles of semantic change. One of these principles is simply the occurrence of a change in the world. For example, the word tennis used to refer to a game that was played on an enclosed court using a racquet and a ball. An additional racquet-and-ball game was developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This game was played on an open grass court and was given the name lawn tennis. Within a short period of time, the new game saw a significant increase in popularity compared to the previous one, and it was swiftly shortened to tennis. When a person who speaks English hears the word tennis, they immediately think of the new game. As a result, they are required to use a new moniker, true tennis, to refer to the older game. The second principle describes a shift in the context of the language being used. One example of this is the subject of taboo. The use of plain language is prohibited by taboos, which means that topics such as sex, reproduction, excretion, death, and the human body are considered to be taboo in the English language. Euphemisms are a constant necessity for speakers, who are forced to being pushed into contexts where they did not previously occur. ibid., no. 39

The third premise has to do with the change that occurs as a result of borrowing (see 1.3). It is possible that the current work of Traugott (1982: 105), in which three trends in semantic development are indicated and partially rewarded here, is much more interesting. The first tendency is that the external depiction of reality is replaced by the interior description of interpretations and assessments. There are examples that exemplify this tendency, such as the semantic shift of the word "farmer" from "bor" to "oaf," as well as the observation that the word "feel" in English, which used to imply only "touch," now refers to the perceptions of the person who is doing the touching. (see also)In the second tendency, both the

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exterior and the internal descriptions are transformed into textual meanings; they acquire meanings that provide the discourse with an overt structure.

Once upon a time, the English language consisted solely of a period, as it continues to do in situations such as "wait for a while." On the other hand, it eventually came to be seen as the discourse function of the period (the time period in which something occurs), as in "While my wife was away, I used to live on pizza." Subsequently, it developed a discourse role that was more abstract; despite her skill, she is a little bit irresponsible. (see also ibid.).Tendency III: meanings expand in accordance with the subjective views and attitudes of the speaker; for example, the word's initial meaning was "openly in appearance." Afterwards, it developed a feeble awareness of the process of evolution: "to all appearances." It is in the nineteenth century that it developed the strong feeling of appraisal of evidence that it possesses now, as in the phrase "she is determined to pursue this." etc. (see also)In point of fact, the migration from the external and the objective to the discourse, which is internal and subjective, is something that all three orientations share in common. According to these observations, such movement appears to be a widespread factor in the process of semantic transformation (original source).

Semantic Change and User Communities

An extra worry about user communities and semantic change is that they may vary over time, leading to different user communities vying for the same resources. Words and concepts also undergo modifications in their meaning and comprehension. This might make resources more likely to become unaffordable because various communities have varied preferences. These groups may use certain keywords and have specific goals when looking for things online. Instead of merely seeking an object's origin, some people may seek its thoughts, motive, and enjoyment.

Using online social networks to objectively evaluate and comprehend the user communities associated with a cultural heritage institution, like the Tate galleries, is a fruitful way to investigate the effects of communities. Our unwavering commitment

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is to continuously expand our expertise to understand better and cater to our broad customer base, both today and in the years to come. As far as we are concerned, the "user community" is an elusive and dynamic concept. Thus, these methods are suitable for comprehending complicated events and offering a future-proof, practical monitoring method.

In order to protect and evaluate the cultural and social factors that add danger, it is critical to recognize changes in this group. Along with more extensive cultural and governmental institutions, the capacity to oversee and control audience access to the institution and its resources is essential (Schlieder, 2010). In order to lessen the impact of risks associated with changes in the social environment, we use social media to keep tabs on the social context. According to statistics gathered from social media, most of Tate's user base consists of people who have actively sought membership. It will likely constantly change and evolve, with changes coming slowly but surely over time.

The Tate community's Tumblr postings were subject to topic modeling (Blei, 2012) and social network analysis of the Tumblr network, which allowed us to pinpoint a particular shift within the community. This shift is in line with the surge in activity that occurred in 2012 and the years immediately after. Using five and 15-topic model solutions (Figures 2 and 3) to analyze the data at varying levels of detail, these two methods successfully detected shifts in the content produced by the Tate-centric Tumblr community. They explained how this social media platform and its content have evolved to suit users' demands. According to the five-theme model, there was a brief shift in attention from cataloging data to picture data, with the Tate Modern and exhibition content distribution receiving special attention. The initial shifts in focus suggest an investigation into new media. However, what shows a significant change in the Tumblr community's engagement is their fixation on Tate Modern and their efforts to promote and share exhibitions.

Semantic Web components such as RDF, vocabulary, and reasoning enhance web content structure, according to Berners-Lee et al., 2001. This substantially facilitates incorporating different data sources into collaborative online data warehouses. Schemas like

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ontologism and vocabularies enable users to provide meaningful descriptions and establish connections between their data, essential in this semantically-enhanced Linked Data on the Web implementation. Numerous publishers who regularly release revised editions of new vocabulary painstakingly curate the selection of these vocabularies. For instance, between 2012 and 2015, schema.org produced 23 distinct versions of its vocabulary. Generally, publishers revise their vocabularies to reflect changes in the actual world, user needs, and design constraints [Stojanovic et al., 2002]. Assessing the quality of the updates is an arduous process that can only be carried out by humans if that.

Online data is often unreliable. Hence, many methods have been developed to determine its authenticity. According to Wang (1996), data quality is characterized by how suitable the data is for user consumption. Several metrics are now being used to evaluate the multi-dimensional quality of Semantic Web data [Zaveri, 2016]. Nevertheless, these measures mainly address issues related to the entire dataset, ignoring the diachronic aspect of online vocabularies, which includes their evolution and development with time. Currently, there are no well-established standards for determining whether changes made to a Web vocabulary over time are suitable. Determining the quality of these vocabularies is made more challenging by the uncertainties surrounding their evolution.

Regarding Linked Data, how high-quality are the procedures of vocabulary evolution? Is there a sound explanation for the changes made in a revision? Does the present state of Linked Data vocabularies follow a predictable and consistent trajectory? In order to measure its development, what methods might be used?

In order to measure how well diachronic Linked Data vocabularies have evolved, this study presents a new metric. This metric is based on the premise that machine learning has matured to the point where it can produce high-quality prediction models for regular dataset sequences. As Pesquita (2012) demonstrated, the widely accepted predictors for ontology evolution, first proposed by Stojanovic (2004), have been instrumental in creating accurate models for predicting future ontology changes.

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So, we create a quantitative metric to measure the quality of a Linked Data vocabulary over time. In order to accomplish this, we undergo a series of iterations using a vocabulary continuum to identify the most efficient change models. The investigation is carried out using trustworthy predictions of ontology evolution [Stojanovic, 2004] and advanced machine learning algorithms [Pesquita, 2012]. Therefore, to measure vocabulary progress, we use the results of these change models. Remember that this metric systematically checks how well a diachronic Linked Data vocabulary holds up over time. Therefore, we have made numerous contributions to this research. Here, we introduce a measure determining how well the Linked Data vocabulary has evolved. The optimal inferred change models' performance is the basis for this metric. We provide a domain-agnostic method that works with any Linked Data vocabulary by improving an existing change learning method for biological ontologism. Afterward, we examine how diachronic Linked Data vocabularies measure evolution quality and what characteristics they possess. Lastly, we look at how well and consistently Linked Data vocabularies are being created.

All told, 669 different Linked Data vocabularies have been collected from different web sources and organized into 139 versions. Of all the version chains assessed, 39.80% achieved a score higher than 0.9, while 36.10 percent fell somewhere between 0.5 and 0.9. In addition, 25.10 percent show unpredictable patterns that are either random or highly unpredictable. These gifts are intended to accomplish three distinct goals: Our research reveals that many online vocabularies need to follow the predicted and consistent patterns of evolution. The data's accurate and intended meaning could diverge significantly if outdated vocabularies are used.

Furthermore, our quality indicators allow for the exact identification of the specific versions in the chains that have undergone significant alterations, revealing the prior problems encountered during the lexicon's development. Engineers can use this method to enhance the precision of both the terms used and the data annotated with them. Ultimately, the models can guide

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vocabulary engineers to make modeling decisions consistent with, or better than, the prior engineering process.

Changes in ontologism across versions and time can be identified and measured using semantic drift. The problem is that Semantic Web frameworks can only directly implement a small subset of the available, viable methods. On top of that, it is far more apparent that the necessary software and tools are lacking. The PERICLES partners have developed the SemaDrift software suite as a new set of tools. The purpose of these instruments is to track and evaluate changes in the weight of ontologies over time or between revisions. They offer significant insights by utilizing both text and structural similarity methods. According to Stavropoulos et al. (2016b), the methods can be quickly applied to ontologism derived from any application domain. The SemaDrift Library is an essential API that offers all the necessary techniques when developing open-source applications. The SemaDrift desktop application and the SemaDrift Protégé Plugin (Stavropoulos et al., 2016a) comprise the suite's two graphical user interfaces. Experts in a particular area and non-programmers can use these interfaces to evaluate the divergence in any topic. The Apache Licence covers all parts of the software. Analyzing and parsing ontology versions to extract metrics related to drift are done by the SemaDrift Library, a Java API that works as the main library. The system can handle several ontology versions and parses using the OWL-API library. In addition, it offers users several benefits, including avoiding re-processing models by obtaining ontology hierarchies in tree-like formats.

With the SemaDrift Protégé Plugin, interacting with the widely used ontology development tool, Protégé is a breeze. Including a GUI for measuring drift is a significant improvement to the product. Metrics for drift across ontology revisions can be calculated using the Java SemaDrift Library. As the user chooses the second ontology, Protégé opens the first version. A version that is at least as great as the one that is stated is necessary for the Protégé application. For desktop use, the SemaDrift is an independent software coder. Users can evaluate the degree to which an ontology changes between two successive versions they have chosen. The SemaDrift Library API is made easier to use with the help of the

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JavaFX framework's intuitive graphical user interface (GUI). This integration paves the way for future additions of additional visual functions, including visual morphing chains, diversified ontologism, and dynamic graphs.

Description of semantic and Approach

I used research methods that included a thorough dictionary and the Internet and referred to textbooks and publications. This was done because of the informative character. I noticed that the customary surveys or analyses needed to be updated despite being a standard study approach in instances where similar investigations are being conducted. My data collection method consisted primarily of reading thoroughly any information written in PDE that was available. Whenever I encountered a word that was being used uncommonly, I immediately added it to a list. In addition, I noted the precise words that folks used in their initial definitions and incorporated them into my compilation. I ended up putting out a list of sixteen different words.My examination revealed that semantic alterations continued to take place in EMnE; this was the case. The discipline of PDE has dealt with a significant number of words that have undergone at least one occurrence of semantic transformation. The semantic shifts did not occur in a single lexical category during the process. The dynamic nature of language has impacted adjectives in a manner comparable to the impact it has had on nouns and verbs.

The assembled inventory includes nine nouns, including lady, boy, girl, hound, meat, plant, box, condominium, and faggot; four verbs, including starve, go, ejaculate, and want; and three adjectives, including gay, friendly, and jealous. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the phrase expanded and became less intense, meaning that women should behave in a manner that is proper for them. As a result of the feminist movement, the term "lady" came to be associated with restrictions, bans, and limitations. Even though the connotative meaning has degenerated into a disparaging phrase, the denotative meaning has not altered. As a result of this turn of events, the lady's condition began to see some degree of improvement, and she began to reclaim some of the status she had previously held; however, she had not entirely regained it. The term "lady" is generally used as a counterpart to the term "gentleman" to

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emphasize the societal norms and courtesies expected in polite society or in situations that need correct etiquette. There is a common perception that using the word "lady" as an attribute, such as in the phrase "lady doctor," is condescending and inappropriate. In situations where it is necessary to determine the gender of a person, the term "woman" is the one that should be used (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000).

Conclusion

As time passes, the definition of a phrase could change, a phenomenon called semantic change or semantic shift. Examining the context of use across periods can provide evidence of lexical semantic alterations. Researchers studying the evolution of language have identified two types of semantic changes. One type is a generalization, in which a word's meaning and reference expand over time; for example, "pigeon" now refers to all members of the family Columbia, but it originally meant a young dove. The other type is specialization, in which a word's meaning becomes more specific over time; for example, "deer" used to mean any four-legged beast but now only refers to members of the cervical family.

We also acknowledge shift and semantic reversal as forms of semantic change. Both linguistic and non-linguistic factors contribute to this phenomenon. A change in context caused the term "pen" to lose its original lexical meaning. What we now call a pen comes from the Latin word "penna," meaning a bird's feather. The word "pen" came to mean both goose feathers and steel pens, which became the standard writing implement. On the other hand, language barriers could be to blame.

Examples include using ellipsis to change a word's meaning and introducing new words through borrowing, combining, cutting, and mixing. The process by which a term evolves is unpredictable and dynamic, as I discovered after finishing my thesis. The first grammarians of the eighteenth century who sought to "fix" the language shared many of the same beliefs as my hypothesis. The language transition was something I attempted to manage and foresee. There was a predetermined pattern for word substitution. As doomed and unrealistic as the first grammarians' ideas, so too was

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this one. My theory was overly specific and limited. My investigation led me to conclude that a manual detailing the evolution of noun meanings was necessary. Although my investigation did not reveal any of the ten potential semantic changes—abstraction, strengthening, or concretization—it does not imply that no noun has experienced these transformations in PDE. When I looked at adjectives and verbs, I got the same results. I have learned from this thesis that it is futile to attempt to regulate or foresee the evolution of any language, including English.

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