World Conference on Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

ICTs Use on Linguistic Change and Identity

Hanane Sarnou[a]*

[a]*Abdelhamid Ibnbadis University, Faculty of Languages, English Department, Algeria*

Abstract

Language dynamics are related to an important set of factors – age, gender, history, geography – and as well to new means of communication used in daily life. With the extensive use of new technologies, and the implementation of the latest approaches dealing with learning and understanding, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), have become one of the necessities of modern learning and communication. Even in developing countries like Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt, these technologies have overwhelmed schools, colleges and universities. The issues addressed in this paper concern primarily understanding lexical innovation in the speech of Algerian Oran teenagers spoken variety, and how the use of ICTs influence their understanding and learning. This will contribute to language innovation and change, semantically and pragmatically in use throughout society, more specifically at the impact of ICTs usage and integrationist approaches to language in the current linguistic market.

Keywords: Lexis, innovation, agelect, ICTs, society

---

* Corresponding author.
 E-mail address: bh_sarnou@yahoo.fr

1. Introduction

Because language changes with every alteration witnessed by humankind, linguists are compelled to understand how and why language evolves alongside the changes that occur in life. As a result, the field of linguistic development has given rise to a great number of sub-branches, and each of these branches investigates issues relating to language varieties, aspects, functions, etc. In terms of language varieties, several linguistic disciplines look into why languages have different variations (dialects, spoken varieties, lects, vernaculars…). The concept of ''lect'' is considered one of the most complex linguistics units and it refers to any variety of language related to a given feature: gender (sexlect), age (agelect), social class (sociolect), individuality (idiolect).

Agelect marks the distinction between different generations in terms of age. It is widely-accepted that age differences result in differences at the level of behaviour, of mentality, and of ways of speaking. In a given speech community, one may find clearly distinct agelect due to a set of salient factors that people of the same age share as part of their culture. The question is whether this distinction will give rise to a gap between generations or to an interesting medley of spoken varieties**.**

In this paper, we look at the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by Algerian and particularly Oran teenagers from an integrationist perspective in order to uncover the extent of its influence on their ways of behaving and speaking. Mobile phones, computers and Internet have had an interesting impact on their lifestyle and culture. ICTs have become so useful that many people, mainly teenagers, cannot live without them.

To know more about the ICTs and their use, this paper investigates developments in the usage of ICTs by teenagers in Algeria. We will explore whether ICTs are effective instruments for changing the linguistic behaviors of young people in their social living situations, and/or if they are a representation of their lifestyle.

2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

The creation of new words, i.e. neologisms constitutes a first step in language change and language evolution; this is also referred to as language dynamicity.

Language changes for several reasons. First, it changes because the needs of its speakers change. New technologies, new products, and new experiences require new words to refer to them clearly and efficiently. "Consider the fax machine: originally it was called a facsimile machine, because it allowed one person to send another a copy, or facsimile, of a document. As the machines became more common, people began using the shorter form *fax* to refer to both the machine and the document; from there, it was just a short step to using the word *fax* as a verb" Birner, Betty, Ed. (1999)

Language is a changing social phenomenon. It changes through time, space and even situations; this is why there exist a great number of languages, dialects, and spoken varieties. Globally speaking, thousands of languages exist, though many of them belong to one language family: the Indo-European family. For example: French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese are four different languages, but they all belong to the Latin (Romance) sub-family of the Indo-European family.

In each speech community, different groups of people of different ages, sexes, regions or setting and social categories co-exist. This co-existence fosters communication, which calls for a mutual intelligibility from those engaged in it. The notion of intelligibility informs the theoretical framework of the present research. To observe, examine, and analyse language dynamicity, we chose to analyse the speech variety of young people. The objective of this paper is to present how young people ''speak'', what are the new words they have ''innovated'' and how they ''create'' their own repertoire. To do so, we will characterize the informants, and describe their speech. Then, we will offer an interpretation of what the youngsters say, by classifying their speech in a table.