

What Influences Language Change?

- in Australian Words and Usages -

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Abstract

This paper reports recent results from a research study in Australian and New Zealand English. After investigating a few examples of other language first, I show the chart of other languages like (1). And next, (1) Linguistics as a cause for semantic change.

Also I divide the types of semantic change into three meanings: (1) Extension of meaning, (2) Narrowing of meaning, (3) Transfer of meaning. Next, as (1) metaphorical idioms are literal English; this is evident when phrases are connected with specific activities which are often part of the the cultural or historical background of the country come to be used in everyday speech.

Next, (2) Compoundings are different in N.Z. in metaphor as a source of semantic change. And there are three points concerning identifiable words and phrases: A. borrowing from the Maori language B. coinage C. semantic change.

I think that semantic change is probably the most common source of words of local origin.

1. Introduction

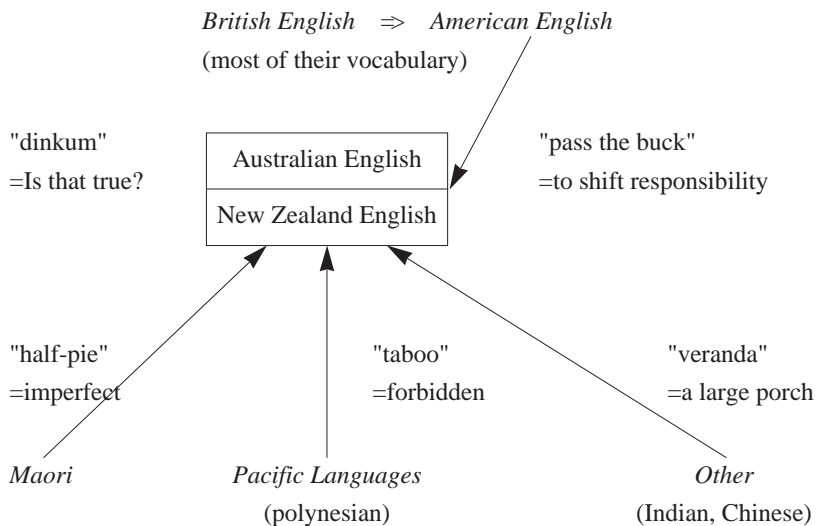
The main purpose of this paper is to report recent results from a research study in the Australian English. The results indicate language change with references to Australian words and usages. After investigating some examples of other language, I find that native speakers of Australians tend to take short cuts in their use of language. "Vocabulary is the least closely structured part of the language and so most subject to change" (The English language in Australia and New Zealand G.W.Turner) There are several different types of questions and responses in Australian language. In the types of semantic change, this is obviously when a words increases its range and association: This is evident when phrases connected with specific activities which are often part of the cultural or historical background of the country come to be used in everyday speech. Sometimes the original meaning will be lost or lost sight of and the metaphor will be quite unconsciously accepted as literal English.

Examples are: The first is the characteristic Australian greetings. G'daymate. (Hello, mate.) Owyagowin? (How are you going?) The standard response to this; NO bad. (Not so bad.) Wanna dog's eye? (Do you want a meat pie?) Jeez, it's brass monkey. (It's very cold.) She is top sort. (She is a good looking girl.) It's feeding time at the zoo. (It's time to have a meal in a hurry.) If something is okay, She is sweet. or, She is apples. (It'll be all right.)

It is difficult at times to decide what is true coinage and what is merely some form of semantic change. When it comes to compounding, when the concept is a new one rather than just the intensification of an old meaning, it will be deemed a coinage. Semantic change is probably the common source of words with their flavour.

What influences language change?

1. Other languages



Causes For Semantic Change

1. Linguistic

Native speakers of Australian and NZ English tend to take short cuts, especially in spoken language. This shortening of words or set phrases is in common practice in many languages.

Examples are:

comfy - comfortable

compo - worker's compensation

footy - Australian Rules football

garbo - garbage collector

kindy - kindergarten

nasho - national service

smoko - break for a smoke etc, rest from work

Yammy - Yamaha motorcycle

Australians are fond of putting "ie" on the ends of the words and converting their language into baby talk, but the fact remains that Australian language has been abbreviated to form shortened words that are now structures in their own right.

They go to the greengrocers for *vegies*, You take the kids to *kindies*, If you a tart you wear *lippies*, You get bitten by *mozzies*, Come to our *barbie* party. Did you bring your *sammie* and *bikkies*? etc. Examples are:

vegies - vegetable	Aussie - Australian
kindies - kindergarten	chappies - chap, fellow
lippies - lipstick	cossie - swimming costume
mozzies - mosquito	goodie - ethical, good person
barbie - barbecue	hollies - holidays
sammie - sandwich	hotties - hot-water bottle
bikkies - biscuits	sickie - a day absent from work
Brissie - Brisbane	sunnies - sunglasses

If an "ie" ending doesn't seem appropriate for the shortened form of a word, then an "o" is added instead.

If we have an oil fire we buy *kero* for it, when you're off working you might be doing a bit of *bizzo*, unless you're in the army when you are doing *nashos*. Other common shortened forms are, a kangaroo is a *roo*, Australia itself is *OZ*. Let me give you a *demo* you want some *info* on the *lingo*.

kero - kerosine	dero - derelict
bizzo - business	garbo - garbage collector
nashos - national service	hippo - hippopotamus
demo - demonstration	intro - introduction
info - information	lesso - lesbian
lingo - language	limmo - limousine
Abo - Aborigine	milko - milk vendor
aggro - aggressive	mo - moment
arvo - afternoon	muso - musician
condo - conominium	rego - vehicle registration

Types of Semantic Change

1. Extension of meaning
2. Narrowing of meaning
3. Transfer of meaning

1. *Extension of Meaning*

This is obviously when a word increases its range and association.

Examples are:

- Bush - It means native forest with dense undergrowth-in fact all "wild" areas of vegetation. "Forest" which normally implies exotic plantings, usually pine; sometimes the collocation "native forest" appears, usually in formal language only.
A "bush" has quite different and more traditional meaning.
- Mob - Originally applied to people, especially in urban areas; now in Australia and NZ applied to "unruly" groups of sheep.
- Paddock - Originally a small field near the house for keeping horses in. In New Zealand English it has come to mean all "field" no matter their size or function.
- Pine - This has been applied to describe many native trees which are neither related to pine trees nor to each other, red pine, black pine, white pine. Because of this liberality the true pine trees are often called by their Latin name "pinus".
- Plains - Used to refer to grasslands not necessarily flat, Eg. Awwarua Plains in NZ.
- Station - From Australian English-a convict settlement term. Used in relation to large farms, particularly in the country.

2. *Narrowing of Meaning*

This is when a word loses something from its range of associations; it could be that it loses one specific meaning or a whole range of meanings. Some words become so narrowed in connotation that they ultimately disappear from the language.

Examples are:

- Field - In English this means any enclosed agricultural area. It implies a whole range of purposes: wheat field, hay field, corn field, field for sheep etc.
It has been supplanted by "paddock" and its usage narrowed to the register of sports: rugby field, hockey field, baseball field, sports field etc.
- Flock - In English this refers to a group of sheep, stationary or moving but in NZ it only refers to the sheep owned by the farmer.
- Bushranger - Although an Australian word this is an interesting example of language change through the narrow of meaning. Originally it meant anyone who lived in the bush but over a period of time it became the word to describe the Australian equivalent of the British "highwayman".

3. *Transfer of Meaning*

- Bail up - Which means to hold up (bail up a coach, bail up a person) is derived from "bailing up a cow in a cow bail".

Metaphor as a Source of Semantic Change

1. Metaphorical Idiom

This is evident when phrases connected with specific activities often part of the cultural or historical background of the country come to be used in everyday speech.

Sometimes the original meaning will be lost or lost sight of and the metaphor will be quite unconsciously accepted as "literal" English.

Examples are:

Yea, we're gettin creamed.

-We're getting annihilated.

That bastard not worth feedin.

-He is not good enough for the team.

Avago ya mug!

-Don't just stand there you fool!

Givim a go.

-Give that person a fair chance.

There's a big blue started on the hill.

-There's a big fight started on the hill.

Wanna shoot through?

-Do you want to leave now?

No way.

-I don't want to go (leave).

I'm staying to the death.

-I'm staying till the end of the game

He'll start it in a mo, no worries.

-He'll start it in a moment, it's O.K.

It's freezing, so they get rugged up and hit the road.

-It's freezing, so they dressed up in warm clothes and left the road.

As soon as they get there, he cracks the tinnies while they sit down and start flapping their gums.

-As soon as they get there, he opens cans of beer while they sit down and start talking.

Wanna dog's eye?

-Do you want a meat pie?

Yeah, orright. Remember the tom sauce this time.

-Yes, all right. I need a tomato ketchup this time.

Orright, save me pozzie.

-Will you save my seat?

Doan go crook at me!

-Don't ge upset with me.!

Ben decides to nick off.

-Ben decides to go away.

He gets in the Kingswodd, chucks a u-ey and heads back towards the main drag.

-He makes a u-turn and heads back towards the main road.

I want to buy my pre-loved car.

-I want to buy my second hand car.

These things suck up the juice, mate.

-These things consume large quantities of petrol.

Sounds a bit shonky ter me.

-Sounds a bit of dubious quality.

It's in good nick.

-It's in good condition.

Check the duco.

-Check the paintwork.

It's vactus.

-It's of no further value.

Yer got rocks in yer ed!

-You got to be unwise.

In Australian, the days of the week are Mundy, Chewsdy, Wensdy, Thersdy, Fridy, Saddy, In Australian, the days of the week are Mundy, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

and Sundy.

At Chrissie you get pressies and get pissed to the eyeballs.

In Australia the weather varies little.

Emphasis is added with the the prefix "Jeez":

Jeez, it's friggint today.

Jeez, it's brass monkey.

Jeez, it's pissin down.

She has decided to visit his oldies.

He gets on the blower and tells them he's coming over Sundy.

I din't know ewas lobbin sarvo.

I told ya yesterdie.

Musta knocked it off from somewhere.

Woddid that set ya back?

We're not all on the bones of our arse.

If that's paid for, I'll stand the season.

Sticks out like dog's ball. Jeez, somethin's on the nose. I'm jacka this.

Bastard never comes to see us, anwenny does e only stays five minutes.

Some kids will ask for googie boiled, fried scrambled for breakfast.

He's been busier than a brickies in Beirut.

What appened to the dead cert?

He gets snakey with me. Thought I was doin the right thing.

I'm right in the noo-er when the missus fines out.

Ain't got a cracker for the resta the week.

Doan perform. I'll shout yer a beer.

Ya know what they say: Life wasn't menda be easy.

He is beside himself.

You arsey bastard. Yer gunna be quids in.

He decides it's time to choof off.

A friend of Ben's having a show.

He is really bunging on an act and sucking up to all the trendies.

-At Christmas you get presents and get drunk.

-It's very hot.

-It's very cold.

-It's raining.

-She has decided to visit his parents.

-He gets on the telephone and tells them he's coming over Sunday.

-I didn't know he was to arrive unexpectedly this afternoon.

-I told you yesterday.

-You must steal it from somewhere.

-How much did that cost you?

-We are not all destitute.

-I'll pay for the sum of hundred dollars.

-It is quite obvious. Jeez, something is smelly. I'm tired of this.

-This man never comes to see us, and then where he does he only stays five minutes.

-Some kids will ask for eggs-boiled, fried, scrambled for breakfast.

-He is very busy.

-What happened to a sure thing?

-He gets irritable with me. Thought I was acting in the correct manner.

-I'm right in trouble when my wife finds out.

-I haven't got a money for the rest of the week.

-Don't make a fuss. I'll buy a beer.

-You know what they say: Life is a challenge.

-He is extremely agitated.

-You are a very fortunate person. You are going to be prosperous.

-He decides it's time to depart.

-A friend of Ben's having a party.

-He is really feigning a personality superior to his own.

Top show. Real range.
It's orright. Wodyer thinka the decor. Really kitsch, eh?
Cop the tart over there with the red air.
Wait'll she opens er mouth. Rough as guts.
Anyway, the moll's on with some bloke oo runs a porno shop.
Woss the mail on the joker with the leather pants? Looks like a bit of a bit of a bumjumper ter me.
Jeez, you're really passe sometimes Shane.
Ben gay's all the go these days.
Suit yourself. I'm gunna go over an ava mag with im.
Shane goes over to him and starts pissing in his pocket. Shane ges absolutely full, tries to con up his boss's wife, and shits in his own nest.

Shane and Aaron have crashed at Aaron's mate's pad. Shane is not feeling too clever when he wakes up.
He has a mouth like an abo's armpit. Aaron is having brekkie.
Cop the eyes on it. They're like pissholes in the snow.
I must knocked back a few.
Ya were paraletic.
Well ya better go an ava tub. We're meeting this joker at 10.
That's a bit of a worry. We don't know the bloke from a bara soap.
We're both shorta the readies.
Arduunno. Think I'll take a rain check.
That's the shot.
She is pretty toey about the whole bizzo. He is wearing his shades so no one will recognise him.
Doan stan there like a stunned mullet.

She is off like a bride's nighttie.

-Top party. Real a good time.
-It's all right. What do you think of the internal decorations. Really in poor taste?
Watch the woman over there with the red hair.
-Wait until she opens her mouth. She is a vulgar. Anyway, she with her boyfriend runs a porno shop.
-What's the information about the fellow with the leather pants. Looks like a bit of a homosexual to me.
-You are really behind the time Shane. Ben is a fashionable these days.
-Do as you please. I'm going to go over and talk to him.
-Shane goes over to him and start ingratiating himself. Shane is extremely drunk, tries to get on to his boss's wife, and to earn a bad reputation for himself.
-They have bed down at Aaron's mate's pad. Shane feels terrible when he wakes up.
-He has bad breath. Aaron is eating breakfast.
-Have a look at. They look like to have a hangover.
-I must have imbibed large quantities of alcohol.
-You were drunk.
-You had better go and have a shower. We'll meet a person at 10.
-That is something perturbing. We don't know that fellow is a complete strange to us.
-We are both short of money.
-I don't know. I'll postpone it indefinitely.
-That's the spirit.
-She is very nervous about business. He is wearing sunglasses so ne one will recognise him.
-Don't stand there with an unintelligent expression on the face.
-She is off with all possible speed.

She is as happy as a pig in shit.	-She is extremely happy.
He's down the pub chewing the fat with her.	-He is down the pub having a long leisurely chat.
Bloody oath. It's beaut.	-That is absolutely correct. It is very good.
They are not rapt.	-They aren't excited.
He is top of the wozzer at some oil company.	-He is number one man at some oil company.
He has his buck's night the night before the wedding.	-He has a stag party the night before the wedding.
He can't even crack it for a smile.	-He is unable to see the humor in a situation.
He is sweating on her old man behaving himself.	-He is anxious about her old man.
He is already half-cut.	-He is already drunk.

2. *Compounding*

Possibly the most common form of word formation and therefore it straddles the areas of semantic change and coinage. It derives from Germanic or more relevantly, Anglo-Saxon "habits of language" where two concepts are linked together. Frequently these concepts are both nouns (Australian "woolshed" and the process of compounding often has a metaphorical element.)

Examples:

"ratbag" meaning "an eccentric" "half-pie" meaning "mediocre" "pie" meaning "good" "no-hoper" meaning "a fool" "off-sider" meaning "friend or partner"

According to G.W.Turner "when a word or expression can be fairly fully documented, we often find that there is no precise moment at which the word or expression is born. There is often competition between alternative forms for a time, or a word may compete with a longer, less set description." Let us take the case of the compound "herd-testing", a concept that originated in New Zealand. In 1910 both the terms herd-testing and cow-testing could be found in use (in the relevant literature). By 1950 "cow-testing" had disappeared and "herdtesting" had lost its hyphen.

Finally, "herd testing" (without hyphen) seemed to be quite established. "New Zealand English differs from British English not only in its New Zealandisms, since settlers from Australia brought with them all that had been achieved linguistically there and passed on much of it, so that it is Australian element in New Zealand English." (G.W.Turner: *The English Language in Australia and New Zealand*)

It is interesting how we have not coined a suitable adjective to describe things with a New Zealand flavour. The identifiable words and phrases come from the following sources:

- A. Borrowing from Maori
- B. Coinage
- C. Semantic Change

A. *Borrowing from Maori* (N.Z.)

Actual loan words are more often found in placenames and in words for the natural environment. Examples of words borrowed to describe the natural environment are:

Animals (in the widest sense): kea, kiwi, mana, pa, pakeha, puku, tiki, etc.

Plantlife: kauri, kumara, manuka, raupo. toi-toi. (This list is by no means exhaustive.)

Interesting too are words that have become manlgicised:

kokupu—————cockabully
tumatakuru————matagowrie

B. Coinage

It is difficult at times decide what is a true coinage and what is merely some form of semantic change. When it comes to compounding, when the concept is a new one rather than just the intensification of an old meaning, it will be deemed a coinage.

Examples:

bell-bird mutton-bird fantail
greenstone layby treefern
gumboot tarsealed waxeye

Though not coinage, some specifically Australians collocations could be added here.

Examples:

aerial top dressing cutty grass feeding out
lamb's fry supple jack jet boat
milk tokens home dew the Old country
storm water channels freezingworks

C. Semantic Change

This is probably the most common source of words with their flavour. Some examples have already been given in the section dealing with semantic change but three examples of transfer of meaning which have not been convered are worthy of interest:

- "bach" Originally from bachelor as in bachelor establishment has come to mean a holiday home (rather than just a hut out in the middle of the bush for the male of the species.)
- "domes" Though still found on people's clothes (the British English "press-studs" with its built in reference to earlier fashions has been lost NZE.)
- "pavlova" Has dropped the capital "p" and refers not to a great ballet dancer but to a favourite Australians dish made with the beaten whites of eggs.

Words discared from British English:

brook copse delled dingle downs
glen (sometimes used in place names) marsh (replaced by swam)
spinney thicket woods

Slang terms with an Australian Floavour:

- bash (as to go out on the bush)
- chutty (for chewing gum)
- comp (compensation payment for injury received at work)
- crook (unwell)
- (go) crook (to hgo mad at someone)
- gutzer (to come a gutzer)

sheila (for girl)
 shikker (to get drunk)
 spell (a breather)
 togs (sports gear or swimming costumes)

Established words that have gathered new and different associations:

creek (replaces stream in most instances)
 field (largely replaces "pitch")
 forest (refers to introduced trees usually pines)
 paddock (largely replaces "field")
 shout (to buy a drink for someone else)
 bush lawyer (bramble)
 bush carpenter (rough-and-ready tradesman)
 bush machanic (more often encountered far from the cities)
 bush whacker (a person living in the bush)
 bush Baptist (a person of no organised religion)
 bush telegraph (grapevine)

3. Australian Pronunciation

After World War II increasing numbers came from other parts of Europe and, to some extent, from Asia. The population has always contained a large number of people, at present numbering several million, who are not born in Australia but who came to it speaking one of the many variants of British English or one of the many variants of foreign-accented English.

J.R.L. Bernard says that Broad Australian is marked by the most extreme expression of the local speech habits. With the possible exception of the vowel /I/, as in hill, all the vowels and, all the diphthongs are given characteristic pronunciations which cause them to stand apart from their counterparts in other forms of English. The consonants are not remarkable, being much the same as the great majority of English consonants elsewhere, at least when fully articulated.

Cultivated Australian is a minority form spoken by perhaps a tenth of the population, and it is general Australian, which lies in all things between broad and cultivated, which the greatest number of speakers adopt. It seems very likely that a distinctive Australian pronunciation arose very early in the country's history during the decades which followed the settlement of 1788.

The 'mixing-bowl' theory is widely accepted and has been used to explain the emergence of one dialect from a mixture of dialects in other countries, for example, that of Stage German in Germany, and indeed that of the precursors of Received Pronunciation in Britain. Within their countries neither of these is anymore a regional dialect than is Australian English within Australia.

4. Australian English

It began as the English of the first settlers. These were of British origin, their speech that of the region or social class from which they came, their attitudes to language those peculiar to eighteenth-century England.

Since World WarII, Australia has received a substantial number of immigrants from Italy, Greece and central Europe. But the Australian policy has always been one of assimilation, and though in the cities, notably Sydney and Melbourne, Greek and Italian groups particularly maintain the familial and communal ties of their past and retain a degree of bilingualism and something of the character of their former life, they are unlikely to have a significant impact on it.

The languages of the Aborigines have provided Australian English with a good number of words, in particular with words which, because they are peculiarly Australian in their reference, help to establish its separate identity; but they are words which are very restricted in character, reflecting the course of relations between the two people.

Australians speak their own brand of the language, developed during their years of isolation from other English-speaking peoples. There are three kinds of Australians to be considered:

1. Original Australians. Known as Aborigines.
2. Old Australians. The native-born, locally educated majority of the country's citizens.
3. New Australians. Born in other countries, and speaking their own brand of English or other language, to the annoyance and embarrassment of their Australian-born children.

There are other types of substitution equally available. One of the most productive is metaphor, when one refers to something by the name of something else. Thus an old motor car is called a bomb, a kookaburra is the bushman's clock.

Sometimes the substitution is by translation: thus for go away! or buzz off! Yum-yum is an expression of delight at the thought of eating Yummy foods.

Australians whose mother-tongue is Australian English may otherwise be left in the dark by the talk of another generation or another locality of just of another individual.

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