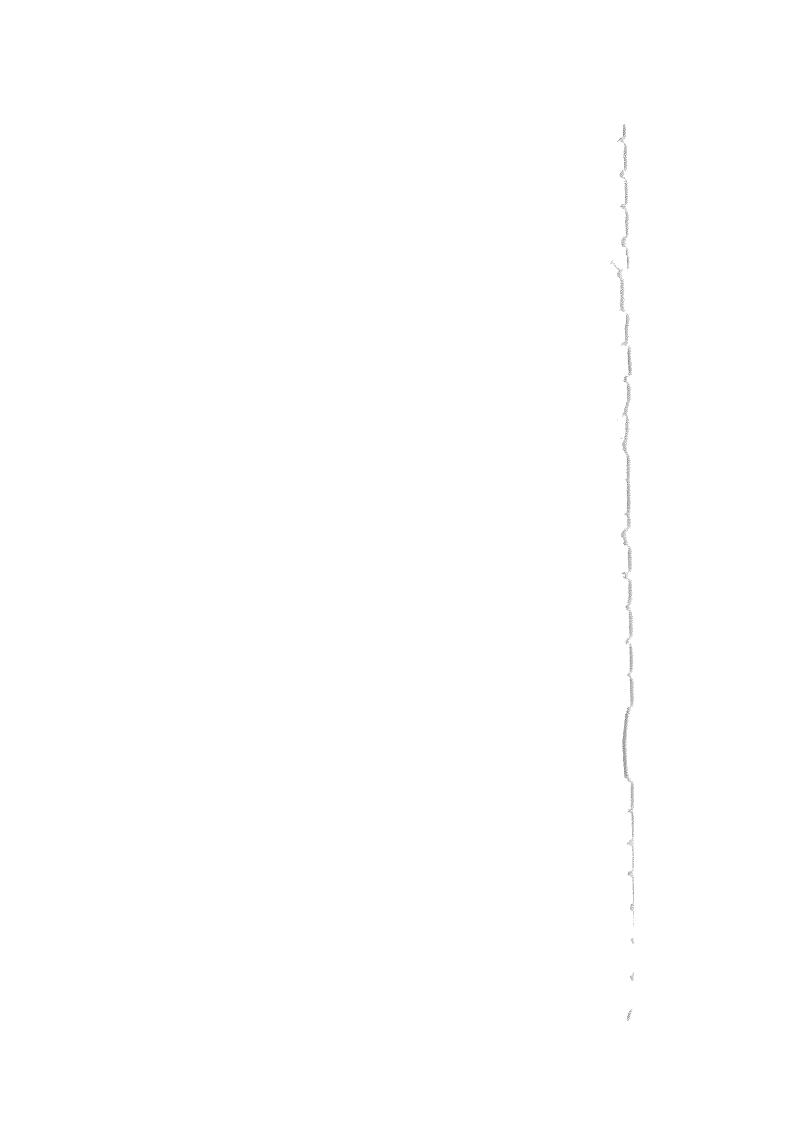# The Relationship between Marketization and Informalization in Modern English

A Research paper in Linguistics

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Abstract

The current paper examines new forms of English that have appeared in modern texts as a direct result of the technological revolution and change of social identity. These new forms of texts reflect these changing social relations and construct new identities. English as a world language plays a vital role to cope with the requirements of what is called postmodern conditions in such a rapidly changing world which has become a small global village. Actually, modern English has become rather informal to gratify the needs of people who live in the age of speed, in which the concept of 'time' is a crucial one. Now English seems likely to benefit from the creation of the new genres related to the new communication media and international marketization. It has become clear that technology blurred the boundaries among individuals and nations, not only geographical boundaries, but also political, economic and cultural. The major theme of the current thesis focuses on English as a world language. English as the language of globalization spreads widely and in its way to prevail and enter the world linguistic repertoire. The paper also highlights the hyperdization between 'informalization' and 'marketization' in modern English that has its impact on many genres of public language. The papers investigates and explains different examples of this process in various contexts

Introduction

English as an international language

The emergence of English as an international language had been predicted by many commentators in the 19th century, particularly in Europe and America. The speculation and expectation that English will prevail became an established fact when the speakers of English in the year 2000 exceeded a billion.

It has been estimated currently that about 1,500,000,000 people in the world speak English. Another 1,000,000,000 are learning it. English is spoken as a native language by around 375 million people . Around 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language. Baily asserts this fact in his comment:

> ...Now, judging by the increase that has taken place in the present century, we may estimate the probable growth of a population as follows: In England doubles in fifty years; therefore, in a century in (1970) it will be 124,000.000. In the United States, in Canada, in Australia, it doubled in twenty-five; therefore it

will b 736,000,000. Probable total of the English-speaking race in 1970,860,000,000.

(1992:111)

Actually, the British empire exists as a basic fact in the widespread of English worldwide. It was said that it covered one-fifth of the land surface, making English the lingua franca of more than one-third of the world population. After the world War 1st, English had become a world language. One impact of the growth of English is the reduction of native linguistic diversity in many parts of the world. Its influence continues to play an important role in language attrition.

English as a killer Language

The increasing use of the English language globally has had a large impact on many other languages, leading to language shift and even language death, and to claims of linguistic imperialism. English itself is now open to language shift as multiple regional varieties feed back into the language as a whole. It has been argued by many linguists that English is an endangered language, as it threatens the termination of other

mankind languages. This prediction has been asserted by Krauss in the following quote:

I consider it plausible calculation, wrote one linguist at the beginning of the 1990s, that – at the rate things are going- the coming will see either the death or the doom of 90 % of mankind's languages. What are we linguists doing to prepare for this or to prevent this catastrophic destruction of the linguistic world?   (1992:7)

It has been emphasized that there are around 6.000 languages still spoken in the world at the close of the 20th century. However, the majority of these languages are located in a few countries. These languages are spoken by people who have little political, economic or cultural impetus.

The speakers of English as a SL (L2) have outnumbered its native speakers. English as a global language, and because of its prestigious position worldwide, has become the primary medium of communication in most of the international contexts : social , political, commercial, educational, etc. It is also used in less

formal contexts to reflect a superior position of its speakers. (Benecke, 1991 and Crystal, 2003).

Because English is so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a "world language", the *lingua franca* of the modern era, and while it is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a foreign language. Some linguists believe that it is no longer the exclusive cultural property of "native English speakers", but it is rather a language that is absorbing aspects of cultures worldwide as it continues to grow. It is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications. English is an official language of the United Nations and many other international organizations, including the International Olympic Committee.

Actually, there are many opposing views and tendencies about the global spread of English. On the one hand, the expansion of the learning and use of English worldwide, compared to other lesser languages, may reflect a kind of homogeneous global culture that has emerged recently. This

concept is enhanced by media and modern technology which asserts the fact that English is dominating into different speech communities. Generally, and regardless of opposing or contradictory opinions, no one denies that we are living in an era of rapid economic, social and technological change in which new culture and identity are emerging. So, it is logical to assume that English will maintain its position at the top of the world linguistic hierarchy. Economic modernization, styles of living, education ,world politics will make it impossible for less and small isolated linguistic communities to exist in the face of overwhelming spread of English.

The concept of this research is based on the fact that new types of texts and forms of speech reflect and construct various identities and social relations. The English language as a world language plays a major part in the global formation of social and economic relations referred to as "the post – modern conditions." (Goodman and Graddol ,2003).

In the modern world, the interpretation of communication relies basically on understanding 'when, how, where 'a text was created'. Actually, the concept of time plays a crucial role in the

creation of new genres of language to satisfy the needs of modern readers and speakers who neither have time nor persistence to discover the outcome or reach the end of any process.

The current research examines the hybridization between informalization and marketization and its relationship to the spread of informal speech by market forces. Actually, this process has its impact on the emergence of new genres of public languages from highly formal context to the informal talks of salesmen.

Undoubtedly, English as a language of technology and capitalism, has become not only the 'linguistic repertoire' (Goodman and Graddol, 2003: 2)   of all parts of the globe, but also it will enter new relationships with local languages and cultures and meet new forms of local resistance, which in turn leads to a redefinition and shift in status of both English and local languages.

Border Crossing

Border crossing as a term first has been used by Fairclough (1996). According to sociologists and linguists, it is used to connect forms with uses of English. This term is used to illustrate and identify the phenomenon of postindustrilalized societies, and how an intricate range of new social relationships is developing, thus the linguistic behavior is changing accordingly.

Obviously, new forms of English related to situations are crossing the borders into new informal forms of English, on the level of professional relationships, media, and advertisements, as well as working practices worldwide. All these new forms appeared to gratify and fulfill the needs of global requirements, particularly economy. The decline of industry and manufacturing in some areas and their rise in some others led to the emergence of new forms of informal English, used at work. These new forms differ and vary according to the nature of work and the types of relationships among employees in the workplace. This concept is emphasized by Fairclough in the following quote:

Traditional, hierarchical social structure are becoming far more fluid and precarious than they once were. Relationships based automatically on authority, as well as personal relationships based on family duties and obligations are in decline, people's self identities , rather than being a feature of given positions and rules, is reflexively built up through a process of negation.

(1996:140)

In light of this claim, and according to analysts, English is located as border crossing language, particularly in wider social, political and economic contexts. The global changes in these contexts resulted in specific forms of English that the speakers use in these various and rapidly changing contexts. The most apparent forms are called visual English, related to what is called Informalization and Marketization.

Informalization

The above mentioned rapidly changing contexts have caused English to be increasingly informal . Boundaries among

languages and individuals vanish as an ordinary consequence of globalization. As the world has become a small village, the need for more new forms of language has become inevitable to satisfy the new types of relationships among individuals and nations. Only few reserved and traditional forms are kept for formal situations which are also becoming blurred.

Apparently, professional encounters are likely tending to be more informal or rather conversationalized. (Fairchlough, 1996). Recently, there is an apparent tendency in media, commerce and even diplomacy to become less formal and rather conversationalized. It is claimed that " In many contexts, then, the public and professional sphere is said to be becoming infused with private discourse" (Goodman ,2003,P. 141).

There are two views supporting the use of informal English: The first claims that using more conversational everyday forms in a wide range is positive, as it provides people with a better chance to participate, interact and exchange ideas easily. This view seems reasonable for two reasons: first, people are not at the same level of education and awareness. Second, in the domain of politics, using less formal forms allow people to

get better understanding from those who are in the authority. Besides, it helps those in position of authority to keep friendly relationships between them and the public. This style is used always by high officials and skilful politicians to create relationship which cannot be easily achieved in reality.

Markers of Informal English

In order to support the claim that English is becoming informal, it is important to consider some markers of informalized forms, which are likely to replace formal forms that have already existed as traditional fixed styles in different situations.

Informal English can be used in terms of address. Generally speaking, most of the English speaking nations worldwide have different conventions in addressing people in various situations .It was claimed earlier by Ervin-Trpp (1969) that speakers of any language share a set of rules of address, which may not be consciously known or adhered to.

The same view is asserted by Maybin and Mercer as what we understand from a certain talk draws meaning from a vast amount that is left unsaid, because language is always embedded in social relationships. This point is asserted in the following quote:

> Language alone does not make meaning, it is used
>
> to invoke a whole range of shared knowledge and
>
> experience between speakers, from aspects of a
>
> joint physical activity, to past conversations
>
> together, to shared cultural values.
>
> (2003:6)

Thus, the aspects of talk that might seem incoherent are actually important as the form used by speakers is employed to link people together and help them to share knowledge and understanding of the world. So in order to understand the meaning of the talk, we need to consider its function in each specific context and situation.

How does informal talk work?

In order to understand how informal talk works and what its function is , we need to give examples and discuss how it

works. Consider the following informal exchange between Julie and her tutor.

Tutor: come in   (¹)

Julie: hallo

Tutor: hallo (.) have a seat (.) Better this time

Julie: Yeh (.) tired (.) I'm (-) dead now (.) I can't wake up

I'm thinking of going back to bed (.) ohh God (.)

Tutor: first to ar first to arrive (.) that's a (.) I wonder if anybody else

a I always get a {bit worried Some body after me}

Tutor: Yes I know that there's somebody, there is somebody all day.

Adopted from (Cheepen and Monagham, 1990, p. 199)

As we notice from the previous extract, informal talk is unplanned but rather spontaneous and out of every day activities

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(1) Transcription conventions: (.) brief pause (-) inaudible speech. Deep brackets indicate {knock at the door} overlapping speech.

and encounters. From this example, we find inexplicit references, for example, (better this time) and (some body after me) Besides, there are some unplanned and overlapping utterances which do not look like grammatical sentences. These are considered errors in written English, but it is totally normal spoken English. The talk is rather dialogic. The tutor's (better this time) is clearly understood by Julie, who, in turn picks up the thread and lets her tutor know that she is still not feeling well. Also, Julie's (some body after me) is perfectly understood by the tutor to mean another student who has booked the next time.

From examining the previous extract, it is important to notice the context in order to use and interpret language properly and appropriately. In a broad sense, context can include the following elements which have its impact on the use and interpretation of particular words or phrases, as indicated by (Maybin and Mercer, 2003: 12):

- the physical surroundings;

- the relationship between speakers;

- their past shared experience and current conversational goals;

- the social events of which the conversation is a part;

- broader cultural values and expectations.

Generally, anthropologists state that in order to use and interpret language, we need to consider many cultural as well as linguistic knowledge. In addition, we also should take into account other factors or ways of speaking, as well as different legal, educational, and social relationships, in particular contexts in order to understand the meaning of any conversational exchange.

Consider another extract between two adolescent boys chatting informally:

R : Did you see the match last night?

T: Aye

R: It was great wasn't it?

T: It must have been one of the best matches I have seen.

R: Ya see the goal Hoddle scored (.) ... that was brilliant.

T: Aye he seemed to hang in the air as he hit it.

(Adopted from Wilson, 1989: 27)

The previous exchange is between two friends who are equal. It seems that they share the same interest and hobby. T immediately understands which match R is talking about, that is why he did not ask him (which match are you talking about?) The two boys seem to understand each other, as they recall the match and its high point, follow up and build on each other's talk. In this extract, it is not a matter of exchanging information about a match that both of them know, but rather their shared interest and experience, which reflected on their evaluation of the match through the use of similar words such as : great, brilliant, and one of the best matches I have seen.

Other aspects of informalization are seen in the use of someone's title or surname in an informal situation or context, instead of the first name, particularly in Britain. Informal style is also used among family members and friends to create a feeling of intimacy. This style is also used to enhance social relationships among individuals. However, in some formal context where an individual needs to make complaint or formal request he has to switch to formal style.

If we consider another aspect of informalization, we find it in the form of address, particularly in the use of pronouns. The use of pronouns has certain implications in social relationships. Pronouns can be manipulated in formal as well as in informal encounters. In French , for example, *tu* is used to address friends and relatives , *vous* to address superiors and elders . If we take an example from Arabic, /ʔnta / انت as a pronoun is used with friends and equals, whereas /ʔntum/ انتم is used with superiors and high ranking officials. Sometimes, /ʔntum/ is replaced by/hadritk/ حضرتك or /siydtk/ سيادتك and /maʕlik/ معاليك. Of course the participants in the encounter are always aware of the significance of these pronouns. Also, *thou* , still exists in some regional dialects to indicate a sense of respect or politeness.

Informalization can be seen also in the shortening of names .In informal encounters, the names are shortened to reflect a sense of intimacy and friendliness. For example, Stevenson is reduced to *Steve, and* Margrett is shortened to *Magy*. This aspect is common in Arabic too, as the shortened names are used to convey a sense of intimacy, particularly in early childhood , for

example, Mohammed is reduced to *Mido and susan* to *susy,*.

Informalization is also found in contractions of negatives such as: /shouldn't/ for should not, in /ya/ for yes, and in /gonna/ for going to, etc.

Colloquialism and slang are also other aspects of informalization in English which are almost used among friends, equals and in professional encounters, such as *guys.*

The use of active rather than passive is also associated with informal contexts, for example , 'carried out an experiment' is more informal than ' an experiment was carried out'.

In spoken English, speakers in a certain encounter change their intonation to convey a specific mood or feeling , depending on who they speak to, whether that person is a close friend, relative or superior.

Actually, there may be different reasons for using informal style of English. Between intimate friends, equals, relatives or colleagues, informal language serves to foster social relationships and convey a sense of familiarity and friendliness. In writing, informal language serves to make meaning clear and

understandable to all readers from different educational and cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, formalization whether in spoken or written English, is used to convey and maintain professionalism, and keep people at a distance. Official or institutional English is always associated with impersonal style. This style is in establishing a 'top-down' relationship, in which officials are looked upon as in control of the exchange. In recent years, there have been attempts to make institutional English more simple and clear to the public. The first attempt has been made in Gowers' book, Plain Words (1984). The book is still widely used, in which Gowers intended to erase what is called 'officialese' from government and official languages. The following quote is taken from The Complete Plain Words published in 1973 and refered to by(Goodman and Graddol ,2003:144).

"I regret however that the survey officer who is responsible for the preliminary investigation as to the technical possibility of installing a telephone at the address quoted by any applicant has reported that owing to a shortage of a spare pair

of wires to the underground cable, a pair of wires leading from the point near your house right back to the local exchange and thus a pair of wires essential for the provision of..."

On a comment on this quote, Gowers advises the writer saying : don't say more than necessary, and the explanation is ambiguous partly because the sentences are too long, partly because the long parenthesis has thrown the grammar out of gear, and partly because the writer says more than necessary even if he intends to be polite and convincing. The explanation can run better if said in this way:

> I am sorry to have to tell you that we have found
> that there is no spare pair of wires on the cables
> that would have to be used to connect your house
> with the exchange.   (1984: 32)

In this comment, Gowers asserted that importance of clarity as useful to the recipient of such letter is asserted. So plain language is better recommended in such contexts.

Deborah   Tannen,   (1992:32)   argues   that   "ordinary exchanges can create interpersonal involvement and meaning."

Actually, informal style is always associated with intimate relationships, which in turn foster social bonds. Moreover, as the public always distrust government officials, it is suggested that those in authority should use more informal language to gain the public's trust and enhance social solidarity.

It is obvious that informalization is increasingly used in media. For example, journalists in the BBC have a tendency to tell and write their stories in less formal English. This tendency is aimed to make English clear, simple, and informative. For example, they use *coz* instead of *because*. The interviewers and presenters in the BBC tend to create a sense of community, through conveying serious issues in a rather simple language. This can touch the mind and feeling of the listener faster than formal English, as part of the requirements of globalization in which nations and individuals are getting more close to each other. Besides, the people no longer have time or patience as thy live in an increasingly rapid and changing world.

Marketization

Obviously, marketization is an important issue nowadays. Advertising language seems to prevail the domain of information. Marketization as a science may use verbal as well as visual language, commonly in commercial advertising. Consequently, English texts tend to be marked-oriented or rather marketized. These new texts are always subject to political as well as commercial pressures. So, modern texts use English, whether verbal or non-verbal or both to sell certain ways and strategies to convince people and market products.

The hyperdization process between informalization and marketization has become widespread, not only to make people use new techniques, but also to become involved in the process. For example, people may use English in new forms to marketize themselves, in order to gain employment. Also, they may also manipulate new linguistic strategies to keep their jobs. Undoubtedly, this process affects people's sense of self, in an environment in which every value can be bought and sold.

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The marketization of English

In the previous section, many forms of informal English have been discussed. These forms are commonly used in the discourse of sales. Many other techniques are manipulated by the sellers to create friendly communication with customers. Also, some linguistic devices are designed to persuade customers to purchase certain product, such as the use of slang, alliteration, assonance and catchy phrases. Consider the following example:

Fig. 1. Assonance

Own it now on video

Fig. 2. Aquatic center

Fish Fins

In the two figures, we notice similarity in letters such as the letters o, n, w, and i in (fig. 1) and three similar letters in (fig.2) f, i, and s . We notice also that the letters n and h are also visually similar . Obviously, this form of language is aimed to produce the desired effect of convincing and attracting people's attention to the product. Puns are also used to reinforce a point

made verbally. Consider the following example:

Fig.3.   **Four x Four**

Market forces speak English

Sales exchange often occurs on the basis of scripts, which employees should use when they speak to customers. The example below is between financial service sales consultant and a prospective client:

Consultant: Mr. Brown ?

{prospect   yes?}

Consultant: Good morning, Sir.

{Prospect   Good morning.}

Consultant: my name (name)

            from company(company name).

            you may have heared of us?

{wait for reply}

{ Softly}   would you allow me to explain why

                I'm calling you this morning?

{Prospect   yes.}

Consultant   We are a company of

international insurance and pensions consultants.

I live and work here in {prospect's town or city}

{ Pause} Within {company's name} my job is to

advise people on investing for their future…

(Adapted from Goodman and Graddole , 2003:147-148)

This cold-call script occurs between a salesman and client without prior preparation and perhaps not in the proper time. In this script the salesperson is previously programmed to follow certain procedures:

1- **what to say;**

2- **how to say it   (softly);**

3- **when to say it;   (pause) and**

4- **how the prospective client is supposed to react.**

Moreover, some linguistic techniques are used to make the

encounter more personal, such as: *I live and work here in...* The place is almost the customer's place or town . Some deictic words are used to create proximity such as: *here.* Deictic words are always common in the salesmen talks to establish personal links between clients and themselves.

Another linguistic device manipulated by the salesmen is the use of the first name terms , and the pronouns which function to present the salesperson and the client as partners. Consider the following extract:

Consultant	may *I* just explain what *our* special
	care policy covers?
Prospect	{ yes}
Consultant	fine, *John,* well *we*'ve actually got
	an agenda for today's meeting. If *you*
	recall, *John*, when *we* finished last
	time *we, d* worked out that your
	most important concern was...
	(Goodman and Graddole,p.148)

Multimodals sales techniques

Apparently, it is common that most electronic texts are becoming widely multimodal, as we live the prime of technological revolution, through which the world has become a small global village. Multimodal texts are formed to cope with this rapidly changing world in which many forces and identities conflict. As a result, this vastly changing world requires new styles and forms. Accordingly, it is ordinary to find more than one semiotic mode in a single text (words and pictures, sounds and pictures, and sometimes all of them) work together as multi channels for communication and conviction.

According to Goodman and Graddole (2003:150), in multimodal texts, variety of visual elements are used to imply the desired effect such as:

- Typographical device, such as case, size and emphasis-all these elements are intended by writers of modern texts to convey a certain meaning or send a specific message to the readers or to the public.
- Speech bubbles are also used to suggest people, or characters who are always sharing in speech.

- Punctuation: parentheses are manipulated in a text to suggest that the speaker is thinking, whereas an exclamation mark implies interjecting or disagreeing .

- Triadic structures: presenting a proposition in three parts, as our lives are miserable, laborious and short.

- Semi-phonetic representations of nonstandard English, e.g. (wot,yer,etc) are common in the media language, particularly newspapers and comics, to convey a strong impression of speech styles, and social values.

- Intonation can be implied visually by, for example, repetition of letters (b-b-but).

In Modern English texts visual and verbal English are used, in addition to pictures, symbols, logos and different face types, as well as to personal handwriting and signatures – all manipulated to convey informality.

Conclusion

Thus, it is generally claimed that both informalization and marketization are hybridized together to be used in modern texts to achieve variety of purposes. That is why these texts are called multimodal texts in which various linguistic techniques and devices are manipulated. Modern texts are designed to fit and gratify the needs of people in the age of technology and to cover the needs of globalization.

As previously mentioned, the world is changing rapidly, accordingly the peoples' needs change as well. It has been pinpointed before that the salespersons try to convince the customers of a certain product through manipulating different strategies and steps which they are trained on. The salesmen have prior knowledge about what to say, how and when. As we explained before many devices and techniques are used such as : deictic markers, pronouns, the first name term, etc. Similarly, in multimodal texts, various devices and forms are used also such as: alliteration, assonance puns, logos, in addition to different symbols, pictures and face types for the purpose of conviction and marketization, as shown in a variety of modern texts.

In conclusion, the researcher throughout this paper has tried to examine the relationship between informalization and marketization in modern English texts, which is an ordinary phenomenon of the age of technology and globalization. The changes of English use have taken place as a result of post-industrialization. Informalization and marketization are the outcome of different and interrelated factors. Some of these factors are social, economic, and political that occur either at the local or international level. As mentioned before, the rapidly changing economic and political situations, such as the decline of some systems and the rise of others, are responsible for this

amalgam between informalization and marketization. All these factors, in addition to the technological revolution have led to English border crossing. The argument about this process is not clear-cut. The points of view differ regarding this process, as they are neither totally top –down nor bottom-up.

Finally, it is generally stated that the world is in constant change and this change necessitates the rise of new identities and the collapse of others. Linguistic change and the emergence of new forms and styles have become inevitable so as to cope with the needs of people and the nature of the age.

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