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河北大学 2007 年博士研究生入学考试试题

(套别: A)

学科、专业	研究方向	考试科目	备注
汉语言文字学	共通	专业英语	

请将下面英文译成中文。(30 分)

Why do languages change?

No one knows exactly how or why languages change. Certainly linguistic changes do not happen suddenly. It is not the case that all speakers of English awoke one morning and decided to use the word *beef* for "ox meat." Nor is it true that all the children of one particular generation grew up to adopt this new word usage. Changes are more gradual, particularly changes in the phonological and syntactic system.

Of course, certain changes may occur instantaneously for any one speaker. For example, when a speaker acquires a new word, he doesn't "gradually" acquire it. Even when a new rule is incorporated into his grammar, the rule is either in or not in his grammar, it may at first be an optional rule; he may use it only some of the time, its use perhaps being determined by social context. What is gradual is the spread of certain changes over the entire speech community.

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