

CAMBRIDGE APPROACHES TO LINGUISTICS

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# LANGUAGE CHANGE

Progress or Decay?

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3RD EDITION

**JEAN AITCHISON**



This book gives a lucid and up-to-date overview of language change. It discusses where our evidence about language change comes from, how and why changes happen, and how languages begin and end. It considers both changes which occurred long ago, and those currently in progress. It does this within the framework of one central question - is language change a symptom of progress or decay? It concludes that language is neither progressing nor decaying, but that an understanding of the factors surrounding change is essential for anyone concerned about language alteration.

For this substantially revised third edition, Jean Aitchison has included two new chapters, one on change of meaning, the other on grammaticalization. Sections on new methods of reconstruction and ongoing chain shifts in Britain and America have also been added as well as over 150 new references. The work remains non-technical in style and accessible to readers with no previous knowledge of linguistics.