

### READING PASSAGE 3

*You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27-40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.*

## The Causes of Linguistic Change

All living languages undergo changes of various kinds, for which there are various reasons. The changes that have caused most dispute are those in pronunciation. We have various sources of evidence for the pronunciations of earlier times, like the evidence of spellings, the treatment of words borrowed from other languages or borrowed by them, the descriptions of contemporary grammarians, and the modern pronunciations in all the languages and dialects concerned. These, combined with a knowledge of the mechanism of speech production, can often give us a very good idea of the pronunciation of an earlier age, though absolute certainty is never possible. When we study the pronunciation of a language over any period of a few generations or more, we find that it is subject to change. Moreover, there are always large-scale regularities in the changes: for example, over a period of time, all the long a sounds in a language may change into long o sounds, or all the b sounds in a certain position (for example, at the end of a word) may change into p sounds. Such regular changes are often called sound laws. There are no universal sound laws, but simply particular sound laws for one given language at one given period.

One cause of change is the influence of one language on another. We learn our mother tongue very thoroughly, and acquire a whole set of speech habits which become second nature to us. When later we learn a foreign language, we inevitably carry over some of these speech habits into it, and so do not speak it exactly like a native. Consequently, in bilingual situations the second language tends to be modified. Such modifications may not persist, of course: an isolated Polish or German immigrant to Britain will usually have grandchildren who speak English like natives because the influence of the general speech environment (playmates, school, work) is stronger than that of the home. But if a large and closely knit group of people adopt a new language, then the modifications they make in it may persist among their descendants, even if the latter no longer speak the original language that caused the changes. This can be seen in Wales, where the influence of Welsh has affected the pronunciation of English, and the very characteristic melody of Welsh English has been carried over from Welsh.

It is also possible that fashion plays a part in the process of change. It certainly plays a part in the spread of change: one person imitates another, and people with the most prestige are most likely to be imitated, so that a change that takes place in one social group may be imitated (more or less accurately) by speakers in another group. When a social group goes up or down in the world, its pronunciation will gain or lose prestige. Some of the changes in accepted English pronunciation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been shown to consist of the replacement of one style of pronunciation by another style already

existing, and it is likely that such substitutions were a result of the great social changes of the period: the increased power and wealth of the middle classes, and their steady infiltration upwards into the ranks of the landed gentry probably carried elements of middle class dialect into upper class speech. However, besides spreading changes that have already taken place, fashion may actually cause changes in pronunciation. In a stratified society, the important thing about a fashion is that it is exclusive: as soon as the fashion has penetrated to a lower social group, it's time to move on.

This can be seen in clothes: fashionable people may find it flattering to be imitated, but as soon as the new fashion has really caught on they must change to something else, to mark themselves off as different. It may be the same with language, for social groups use characteristic styles of language to mark themselves off from other groups. A group that has high prestige may find that its style of speech is being imitated by other groups, and then its members may (perhaps subconsciously) begin to change it, perhaps by exaggerating its distinguishing characteristics.

However, while interaction between different languages, and between the dialects of a single language, can explain some changes in pronunciation, it cannot explain them all.

Another cause that has been suggested is the fact that the imitation of children is imperfect: they copy their parents' speech, but never reproduce it exactly. This seems to be true enough and it moreover seems to be true that even adults show a certain amount of random variation in their pronunciation. However, these facts cannot explain changes in pronunciation, unless it can be shown that there is some systematic trend in the failures in imitation. If they are merely random deviations they will cancel one another out and there will be no net change in the language. For some of these random variations to be selected at the expense of others, there must be further forces at work.

One such force, which is often suggested, is known as the principle of ease. We are all naturally lazy, it is argued, and so we tend to take short cuts in the movements of our speech organs, to replace movements calling for great accuracy or energy by less demanding ones, to omit sounds if they are not essential for understanding, and so on. For example, the word *scant* was once *skamt*, but the *m* has been changed to *n* under the influence of the following *t*. An economy of effort has thereby been achieved, because *n* and *t* are articulated in the same place (with the tip of the tongue against the teeth-ridge), whereas *m* is articulated elsewhere (with the two lips). The change from *skamt* to *scant* would be an example of assimilation, which is a very common kind of change. Assimilation is the changing of a sound under the influence of a neighbouring sound.

Assimilation is not the only way in which we change our pronunciation in order to reduce effort. A sound may come to be pronounced less energetically, wherever it occurs: the English *r* and *h* sounds are undoubtedly pronounced much less vigorously now than they were a thousand years ago. In some positions a sound may disappear altogether. At one

time the t was pronounced in words like castle and Christmas, and the g in words like gnat and gnaw. Sometimes a whole syllable is dropped out if it occurs twice running. A modern example is temporary, which in Britain is pronounced as if it were tempory.

Questions 27–30

Complete the summary below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 27–30 on your answer sheet.

It is known that the pronunciation of language changes over time. The changes include large-scale regularities known as **27** ..... . There are several possible causes for change. Firstly, there is the effect of one language on another. Secondly, there is the role of **28** ..... . The speech of certain groups has prestige, and is imitated by others. It has also been suggested that some changes are introduced by **29** ..... , who are unable to imitate speech in an exact way. Finally, there is a factor referred to as the **30** ..... , by which the effort necessary to produce words is reduced.

Questions 31–37

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 31–37 on your answer sheet, write:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>TRUE</b>      | <i>if the statement agrees with the information</i> |
| <b>FALSE</b>     | <i>if the statement contradicts the information</i> |
| <b>NOT GIVEN</b> | <i>if there is no information on this</i>           |

- 31** It is impossible to know how words used to be pronounced.
- 32** Some languages appear to have changed more than others.
- 33** Some changes in English were probably led by the middle classes.
- 34** Certain English sounds are difficult for all children to pronounce.
- 35** *Scant* is generally easier to pronounce than *skamt*.
- 36** The spelling of *gnat* is likely to change in the future.
- 37** The spelling of *temporary* no longer reflects its pronunciation.

Questions 38–40

Look at the following statements (questions 38–40) and the list of options below.

Match each statement with the option **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter **A**, **B**, **C** or **D** in boxes 38–40 on your answer sheet.

**38** the b sound changing to a p sound at the end of words

**39** the melodic pronunciation of Welsh English

**40** the disappearance of the t sound in *Christmas*

**List of Options**

- A** large-scale change
- B** influence of one language on another
- C** minimisation of effort
- D** imitation of prestigious group

**Disclaimer**

Compiled, formatted, and lightly proofread by ZYZ Reading Walks.

All copyright in the underlying works remains with the original authors and publishers.

No affiliation with or endorsement by any rights holder (including IELTS® owners).

For non-commercial educational use only. This notice must remain intact in all copies.

Available free of charge from ZYZ Reading Walks. Resale or any paid distribution is prohibited.

Questions 27–30 Summary 填空

| 题号 | Answer            | 题干翻译                                       | 原文定位句 (第 X 段)   | 定位翻译                                  | 详细解释  |
|----|-------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 27 | sound laws        | 众所周知, 语言的发音会随时间变化。这些变化包括被称为 27_____的大规模规律。 | Such regular changes are often called sound laws. (第 1 段)   | 这种规律性的变化常被称为“音变规律/语音规律 (sound laws)”。 | 题干说“large-scale regularities known as ...”, 原文直接给定义: 规律性的大范围变化叫 <b>sound laws</b> , 严格满足 ≤3 words, 且为原文原词。                            |
| 28 | fashion           | 其次, 还有 28_____的作用。某些群体的言语有声望, 会被他人模仿。      | It is also possible that fashion plays a part in the process of change. (第 3 段)                                     | 时尚/风尚也可能在变化过程中起作用。                    | 空格后题干解释“某些群体有 prestige, 会被模仿”, 这正是原文第 3 段在讲: <b>fashion 促进传播</b> (prestigious people are imitated), 因此填 <b>fashion</b> 。              |
| 29 | children          | 也有人认为, 一些变化是由 29_____引入的, 因为他们无法完全准确地模仿言语。 | ...the imitation of children is imperfect: they copy their parents' speech, but never reproduce it exactly. (第 6 段) | 儿童的模仿并不完美: 他们模仿父母说话, 但不可能完全一模一样地复现。   | 题干“unable to imitate speech in an exact way”= 原文“never reproduce it exactly”。主语就是 <b>children</b> , 一词满足字数限制。                         |
| 30 | principle of ease | 最后, 还有一个被称为 30_____的因素, 它能减少发音所需的努力。       | ...is known as the principle of ease. (第 7 段)   | .....被称为“省力原则 (principle of ease)”。   | 题干说“a factor referred to as the ... by which effort ... is reduced”, 原文第 7 段直接命名该因素: <b>principle of ease</b> , 并解释人会“走捷径/省力”。三词, 原词。 |

Questions 31–37 TRUE / FALSE / NOT GIVEN

| 题号 | Answer    | 题干翻译                    | 原文定位句 (第 X 段)   | 定位翻译   | 详细解释 (含同义改写/判断依据/错误点)  |
|----|-----------|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| 31 | FALSE     | 不可能知道过去的词是如何发音的。        | ...can often give us a very good idea of the pronunciation of an earlier age, though absolute certainty is never possible. (第 1 段)            | .....这些证据往往能让我们对早期的发音有很好的了解, 尽管绝对确定性永远不可能。                 | 题干是“impossible to know” (完全不可能知道)。原文相反: <b>often give us a very good idea</b> (经常能给出很好的推断/了解), 只是说不能“absolute certainty”。所以不是“完全不可能”, 而是“无法 100% 确定” → <b>FALSE</b> 。常见陷阱: 把“不能绝对确定”误读成“完全不知道”。              |
| 32 | NOT GIVEN | 有些语言似乎比其他语言变化更大。        | 全文相关处只说“所有语言会变”“会有规律”“可解释一些原因”, 没有比较不同语言谁变得更多。(通篇)  | ——   | 题干要求“比较程度 (more than others)”。文章没有做“某些语言更易变/变化更大”的跨语言对比, 也没有给任何语言变化幅度排行/趋势 → <b>NOT GIVEN</b> 。  |
| 33 | TRUE      | 英语中的一些变化很可能是由中产阶级带动的。   | ...the increased power and wealth of the middle classes... probably carried elements of middle class dialect into upper class speech. (第 3 段) | .....中产阶级权力与财富的增加.....很可能把中产阶级方言的某些成分带入了上层阶级的言语。           | 题干“probably led by the middle classes”≈ 原文“probably carried elements... into upper class speech”。这里明确把某些发音变化与中产阶级上升联系起来, 并用 <b>probably</b> 对应题干的“probably”语气 → <b>TRUE</b> 。                                |
| 34 | NOT GIVEN | 某些英语音对所有儿童来说都很难发音。      | 原文只说: children imitate imperfectly (孩子模仿不完美), 并未说“某些英语音很难”“all children”都难。(第 6 段)  | ——   | 题干焦点是“certain English sounds”“difficult to pronounce”“for all children”。原文没有“difficulty”概念, 也没有指向“英语特定音素”, 更没有“所有儿童”这一全称 → <b>NOT GIVEN</b> 。陷阱: 把“模仿不完美”偷换成“发音困难”。  |
| 35 | TRUE      | “scant”通常比“skamt”更容易发音。 | An economy of effort has thereby been achieved... The change from skamt to scant would be an example of assimilation... (第 7 段)               | 因此实现了省力.....从 skamt 变成 scant 是一种同化 (assimilation) 的例子..... | 原文解释 skamt→scant 是因为 <b>economy of effort / principle of ease</b> : n 与 t 发音部位相同, 比 m 更省力。题干“easier to pronounce”就是“需要更少努力”= <b>economy of effort</b> 。虽原文没直接写“easier”, 但给出明确因果: 变化带来省力 → 可判断为 <b>TRUE</b> 。 |
| 36 | NOT GIVEN | “gnat”的拼写未来很可能会改变。      | ...At one time... the g in words like gnat and gnaw. (第 8 段)  | 曾经在 gnat, gnaw 这样的词里, g 是要发音的。                             | 原文只讲过去发音变化 (g 变哑音/不再发), 没有任何关于“未来拼写会不会改/likely to change spelling”的预测或观点 → <b>NOT GIVEN</b> 。陷阱: 读者可能会想“既然不发音就该改拼写”, 但文章没说。  |
| 37 | TRUE      | “temporary”的拼写不再反映它的发音。 | A modern example is temporary, which in Britain is pronounced as if it were tempory. (第 8 段)  | 现代的例子是 temporary, 在英国它的发音就好像写成了 tempory。                   | 题干说“spelling no longer reflects pronunciation”。原文明确: 发音像 <b>tempory</b> (少了一个 syllable/音节被省略), 但拼写仍是 <b>temporary</b> → 拼写与实际发音不匹配 → <b>TRUE</b> 。   |

Questions 38–40 Matching (A–D)

| 题号 | Answer | 题干翻译                                 | 原文定位句 (第X段)   | 定位翻译  | 详细解释 (为什么选它/为什么不选别的)  |
|----|--------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 38 | A      | 词尾的 b 音变成 p 音。                       | ...all the b sounds in a certain position (for example, at the end of a word) may change into p sounds. (第1段)   | .....某个特定位置 (例如词尾) 的所有 b 音可能变成 p 音。                           | 这是第1段典型的“整体规律性音变”例子, 属于 sound laws / large-scale regularities, 对应选项 A large-scale change。不选 B/D/C: 这里不是语言接触、也不是模仿时尚群体、也不是省力机制的具体例子, 而是“普遍位置规律”式的音变。             |
| 39 | B      | 威尔士英语的旋律性发音 (melodic pronunciation)。 | ...the influence of Welsh has affected the pronunciation of English, and the very characteristic melody of Welsh English has been carried over from Welsh. (第2段)  | .....威尔士语影响了英语的发音; 威尔士英语那种非常有特征的“旋律感”是从威尔士语延续过来的。             | 这句话把 Welsh English 的 “melody” 明确归因于 Welsh→English 的影响, 因此匹配 B influence of one language on another。   |
| 40 | C      | Christmas 里 t 音的消失。                  | At one time the t was pronounced in words like castle and Christmas... (第8段) + (同段紧接) A sound may come to be pronounced less energetically... In some positions a sound may disappear altogether. (第8段) | 曾经 castle、Christmas 里的 t 是要发音的..... 某些音会变得不那么用力, 某些位置甚至会完全消失。 | 第8段属于“省力/减少努力”的延伸例子: 音变弱、音消失、音节省略, 都是 minimisation of effort / principle of ease 这一类机制的体现, 所以选 C。不选 A: A 是 “b→p 这种大范围规律” 那种 sound law 型例子; 这里是 “某些位置音消失” 的省力现象。 |