

Kashmiri-Urdu Code Switching and the Bilingual Language Behaviour : A Study

Aadil Amin Kak^{*}

Introduction

Language contact or language interaction which has recently been the subject of renewed interest is surrounded by a number of issues including the thorny issue of terminological confusion. There is very little consensus about the structural, semantic and social scope of the phenomena associated with language contact like code-mixing, borrowing, code switching, alternation, style shifting, etc. Furthermore, the domain of analysis also differs, some using the discourse context as the domain of analysis while others prefer the clause/sentence. One of the reasons for the ambiguity is the 'inherent variability' of different contact situations. Language contact situations are rarely stable as there is a change going on, overtly as well covertly, at different levels like the phonological, lexical, grammatical and pragmatic levels. These changes go unnoticed as they are integrated in the competence of bilingual speakers with the passage of time. What should also be understood is that changes in socio-political factors associated with the languages in contact can also change the nature of contact between the languages in question.

One of the most important and most frequent phenomenon associated with language contact situation and with bilingual behavior is the phenomenon of code switching. One important feature of code switching is the need of competence in the languages which are code switched. In this paper a code switch, as contrasted with code mix, from a syntactic point of view is ascribed to any situation which involves more than a word level mix, and usually involves clausal or sentential switches. From a sociolinguistic perspective, some definitions of code switching entail a functional

^{*} Department of Linguistics, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India.

necessity, and switches occur with the involvement of a new topic, situation, interlocutor as well as a change in other contextual factors. Weinreich (1953) holds the view that an *ideal bilingual* switches from one language to another in verbal communication, and switching depends on the type of discourse or interaction, nature of interlocutors or communication, and the situation. However, Hudson (1980) holds the view that code switching is a natural event in bilingual speech communities. These two views in early literature of code switching puts this phenomenon at two opposite poles, one considering it as a natural event and the other relating it to contextual factors or as a functional necessity. Thus, this phenomenon raises an important question, which is, whether every instance of code switching can be related to a function in a given society.

Verma (1998) holds the view that code switching is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that is determined by the verbal strategies of interaction, and sometimes in a situation code switching can be used and sometimes not. It is interesting to note here that on the one hand, according to Verma, it is the phenomenon which is determined by verbal strategies in a given interaction, and on the other hand Poplack (1979) writes of code switching as, '.... a verbal skill requiring a large degree of competence in more than one language, rather than a deficit arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other'. Thus, it entails that a bilingual who indulges in code switching has a large degree of competence in both languages. Verma's definition puts code switching as a verbal strategy of interaction. Here, it is essential to note that if a code switching bilingual is competent in both languages, then why does he resort to code switching? Why does interaction determine code switching as a verbal strategy? The definitions of code switching entail a large amount of information and portray code switching as a phenomenon which varies with interaction types, social types as well as with individual types. Thus, code switching definitions vary ranging from interactional, social and individual necessity to those which consider it a natural phenomenon. In this situation, we are faced with a number of questions regarding code switching as a phenomenon such as

1. How is code switching motivated by external factors?

2. Is every instance of code switching associated with a special function?
3. Does code switching reflect normal behavior?
4. Can code switching be considered as a single language code?

This paper attempts to look at Kashmiri-Urdu code switching among Kashmiri-Urdu bilinguals throughout Kashmir and tries to incorporate the afore-mentioned questions regarding the nature of code switching to it. An attempt will also be made to see how much of the literature regarding nature of code switching can be fitted in with Kashmiri-Urdu Code switching as a wide spread phenomenon. It must be made clear at the outset that this paper presents a theoretical discussion about the nature of code switching as a phenomenon with its emphasis on Kashmiri-Urdu code switching.

Kashmiri-Urdu Language Contact and its Impact

The contact between Kashmiri and Urdu is more than a century old, officially beginning in the early twentieth century when the Dogra king Pratap Singh made Urdu the official language of the country of Jammu and Kashmir. Urdu replaced Persian with ease in all the domains previously occupied by Persian. The influence does not seem to have lasted there, and Urdu seems to have come a long way and is observed to be influencing domains which were previously untouched by Persian, and for that matter by any other language which was previously holding sway, like Sanskrit, the most ancient recorded contact language of Kashmir. In the post 1947 scenario the state of Jammu and Kashmir became the only state where Urdu was given the status of official language of a state. The use of Urdu in the educational sector is observed in its use as a subject and more importantly as the medium of instruction in all government schools upto class 10th till 2003. Urdu is presently the most commonly used language after Kashmiri, in the verbal repertoire of an educated Kashmiri. Urdu has also emerged as the most important language in the mass media sector in Kashmir. Radio Kashmir is designated as an Urdu station and the largest number of newspapers are published in Urdu (Kak and Wani, 2005). Factors like these have contributed in enhancing the prestige of Urdu in Kashmir.

The passage of time and linguistically conducive factors paved the way necessary for the growth and 'intrusion' of Urdu in the linguistic scene of Kashmir. Presently, Urdu in Kashmir has a strong ethnolinguistic vitality and forms an integral part of an educated Kashmiri's linguistic competence. A plethora of factors have made a strong bias for regular and stable usage of Urdu in the day to day life of a Kashmiri. With the passage of time, knowledge as well as use of Urdu increased in the valley and code mixes started acquiring the position of borrowings in the valley. Urdu forms the primary choice of code switching among most educated Kashmiri speakers (Kak and Wani 2006), who incidentally are Urdu proficient. To clarify the above point it should be mentioned here that in the Kashmiri society, Kashmiri is followed by Urdu and then English in competence. Although there are signs of interference on Urdu spoken by Kashmiri-Urdu bilinguals in the monolingual mode, these interferences are not observed significantly in the Kashmiri in the monolingual mode of these bilinguals.

As discussed earlier, considering the increasing language proficiency as we move from Kashmiri to Urdu to English, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching is widespread throughout the valley but it must not be ignored that code switching itself is not a uniform phenomenon but is a variable in itself. Looking at the Kashmiri-Urdu bilingual from an individualistic perspective, it is observed that the indulgence in Kashmiri-Urdu code switching by a bilingual individual depends on the social settings and on personal choice. The leaning of code switching towards Urdu can increase or decrease considerably as per the interlocutor and tends to increase when the interlocutor prefers to speak Urdu. For the other speakers the pattern may be reversed and in this case the shift proceeds from Urdu to Kashmiri in a given network. Thus, code switching as a matter of personal choice is a bilingual strategy used by Kashmiri-Urdu bilingual speakers in tune with Giles's (1984) Speech Accommodation Theory.

Thus, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching in such cases where it is consciously used by the speakers as per the interlocutor can be regarded as a bilingual strategy. Looking at the question of social settings we can take an example

of a village in Kashmir where most of the adult speakers are uneducated and the younger generation are educated. The normal mode of verbal communication is Kashmiri. Although the younger members of the village have knowledge of Urdu (via education), they do not use Urdu as a switched variety in particular with, and in presence of, their elders. However, there might be some exceptions, but the situation mentioned above would be a general unmarked linguistic behaviour in most of the rural settings in Kashmir. In such a setting where Kashmiri is the unmarked form of speech, if someone switches to Urdu, he will do it consciously and his behaviour will definitely be marked in such a setting. Thus, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching used consciously in a marked way by a bilingual speaker can be regarded as a bilingual strategy. From this perspective when code switching is used consciously in a marked way it is always related to some function or has some motive. So, code switching as a bilingual strategy can always be related to a certain function or effect. E.g.

Person A :	<i>sahab kati?</i>	(Kashmiri)
	Where is the sahib (officer,etc)?	
Person B:	<i>patah nahi</i>	(Urdu)
	'(I) Don't know'	

The above instance can be regarded as a marked choice on the part of the person B who is showing a formality or formal relation by switching to Urdu, and this type of code switching can be assigned a regulatory function.

Proceeding from informal to formal domains at the societal level, and from uneducated interlocutors to educated interlocutors at the individual level in present day Kashmir, it is observed that the frequency of code switching increases correspondingly.

Although no sharp boundaries can be drawn between Rural vs. Urban, and Formal vs. Informal settings, the general tendency is that more code

switching between Kashmiri and Urdu occurs in urban and formal settings as compared to rural and informal settings. In the former case Kashmiri-Urdu code switching can even attain the level of unmarked mode of speech. This variation can be accounted for by the fact that Kashmiri and Urdu have intruded in each other's domains (generally, formal domains use Urdu and informal domains use Kashmiri). The regular Kashmiri-Urdu contact has led to a pervasive phenomenon of Kashmiri-Urdu code switching.

Regarding certain small social settings in Srinagar city, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching, particularly in public places like markets, libraries, educational institutions, has started becoming the normal mode of speech. This is observed more so among the youth where Kashmiri-Urdu code switching occurs unconsciously forming an unmarked mode of speech in such settings without seemingly associating an effect and function with it. Thus, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching when used unconsciously, as an unmarked code can not be associated with a specific function or motivation as this type of switching essentially forms their code. This unmarkedness of Kashmiri-Urdu code switching can well account for Congruent Lexicalisation of Kashmiri under the influence of Urdu. Thus, for such social settings, Kashmiri-Urdu code switching can simply be regarded as a linguistic code without essentially finding a motivation or function associated with it. E.g.

Person A:	<i>me gatshi yakhn¹! miye chi yi variya! pasand.</i>	(Kashmiri)
	'I want yakhni ¹ . I like it very much'.	
Person B:	<i>aap ke liye mangwatey hein jinab.</i>	(Urdu)
	'We will get it for you, sir'.	

¹ A dish of meat or vegetables in which milk/curds forms an essential ingredient.

The above sentences form an excerpt from a conversation which occurred in a restaurant between two friends. Here Kashmiri-Urdu Code switching is observed to be occurring normally in an unmarked way in an unconscious manner. No specific function can be ascribed to this type of code switching and there seems to be no particular motivation for such code switching.

Some other examples which have been taken from a recordings of informal conversation samples are given below

Speaker A	<i>me chu baasaan kal baraf hogi</i>	(Kashmiri-Urdu)
	'I think that it will snow tomorrow'	
Speaker B	<i>me ti chu tii baasaan</i>	(Kashmiri)
	'I also think so'	

Speaker A	<i>yiman koor'an chu aadaTei ki har wakht phone se munh lagave rehtii hain</i>	(Kashmiri-Urdu)
	'These girls have have the habit of always keeping the phones close to their mouth'	
Speaker B	<i>laDki ti ha chi phone variyah istimaal karaan</i>	(Kashmiri)
	'Boys also use phones a lot'	

Speaker A	<i>gaaDi manz che tiir kamai lagaan</i>	(Kashmiri)
	'It is less cold inside a vehicle'.	
Speaker B	<i>gaaDi ke andar va gaaDii ke bahar tiir che har jayi lagan</i>	(Urdu-Kashmiri)
	'Within the vehicle or outside a vehicle, it is cold everywhere'.	

Talking about motivations of code switching in bilingual communities, no concrete boundaries have been laid till the present time. In this context Gumperz and Hernandez-Chavez (1975) state that switches can not always be motivated through reference to external factors, rather there is much more indirect relation between switches and speaker's motivation. Code selection, in other words, is meaningful in much the same way that lexical choice is meaningful. From the work of Pfaff (1979), Poplack (1980) and Treffers-Daller (1991) among others, it becomes clear that such non-individually motivated switches constitute the rule rather than the exception and it is rather the frequency and positioning of the switches that carry social meaning and external motivation. The above facts can be related to Kashmiri-Urdu code switching only at one end of the continuum, where it was found to be an unmarked code without an identifiable function or motivation.

This facet of Kashmiri-Urdu code switching as an unmarked code conforms itself to what Poplack (1980) postulated, 'It is the overall patterns of switching that is significant in the communities observed, but it is not necessary to view each switch as fulfilling a specific function'. Trumper (1984) also remarks that his corpus does not support the idea that each switch is socially meaningful on its own. Code switching can be interpreted both as an individual ability to re-interpret conventional patterns of language use and as a social activity involving multiple intergroup relations. As a part of normal behaviour code switching is simply an unmarked code. The change in topic, beginning and exit from a topic, the introduction of side sequence etc all can be related to marked end of Kashmiri-Urdu code switching continuum.

Conclusion

Kashmiri-Urdu code switching as a phenomenon appears to conform with code switching literature discussed with reference to motivations for code switching ranging from conscious bilingual strategy to unmarked natural bilingual behaviour. In addition to this, the notion of preferred code partially overlaps with the marked/unmarked distinction which depends upon the community norms holding for any specific communicative situation, but is based on a different dimension of individual

characteristics. Here it must be remembered that Agnihotri (2006)'s statement, ' we must accept multi-linguality as a reality' applies to the unmarked end of Kashmiri-Urdu code switching where it is used simply like a language whereas functional model of Gumperz (1982) as put by Appel and Muysken (1989) applies to the marked end of Kashmiri-Urdu switching continuum.

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