Code Switching and Code Mixing in Computer Mediated Communication among Kashmiri Multilinguals

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Abstract

In multilingual communities, people have a choice of code. They may decide to switch from one code to other or to mix codes even within very short utterances. Code switching and code mixing are the common phenomenon observed in the multilingual communities. The alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation is called code switching. In Kashmir more than one language is spoken. Kashmiri is the mother tongue, Urdu and English function as second language. Code switching and code mixing are the common phenomena observed. Bilinguals have been tested for the ability to understand and express themselves both verbally and in writing. (Grosjean; 1982). Code switching is not just limited to speaking but also has been seen in the text based communication. Text based communication comes under the realms of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Computer Mediated Communication is the communication that takes place between human beings through the instrumentality of computers. (Herrings, 1996).Text based communication has seen a very fast growth in last few years with social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram etc. playing the role of catalyst. The present paper aims to study code switching and code mixing in the computer mediated communication among Kashmiri multilinguals. The data is collected from natives of Kashmiri with urdu and English as second language from different social media platforms such as Facebook, instagram, twitter, WhatsApp. The data is analyzed taking into consideration Malik's (1994) reasons for code-switching in exploring the communicating patterns of Kashmiri multilinguals in CMC. The study revealed that the lack of facility is the main reason for code switching among Kashmiri multilinguals.

Key words: Code Switching, Code Mixing, Computer Mediated Communication, Multilingualism, Speech Communities

Introduction

When humans are communicating, they use certain linguistic tools which can broadly be called as codes. These codes help them to talk about different thing, issues, emotions and other things. But what are these codes? In general terms – it is a set of abstract signals which can be produced and interpreted by humans. These codes are encoded by the addressor and decoded by the addressee. The British sociologist Basil Bernstein has given a restricted meaning of code. His distinction between elaborated and restricted codes was part of a theory of the nature of social systems, concerned in particular with the kinds of meanings people communicate, and how explicitly they do this, using the range of resources provided by the language. It is interesting to know why people use certain code to convey one meaning and other code to convey other meaning. Why do they shift code or mix code? Such type of situations give rise to a linguistic phenomenon called "Code Switching and Code Mixing." In sociolinguistics, code is sometimes used as a cover term for dialect, language or variety. The phenomenon where the speakers change the code while speaking, for example, speaker of Kashmiri shift from Kashmiri to Urdu or English while speaking can be broadly called as code switching. Code switching is inter-sentential and code mixing is intra-sentential.

Code switching is a bilingual phenomenon, where the speakers know more than one language. Myers-Scotton and Ury (1977) explained code-switching as the "use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction." According to Nomura (2003), speakers may not be aware that code-switching has occurred in their communication or be able to report which language they have used during a particular topic after the conversation. Thus code switching can be regarded as natural and sub conscious phenomenon of bilinguals.

Code switching always has always a motive behind it. Whether it is conscious or sub conscious, a purpose is always behind the switching. A study by Ariffin and Rafik-Galea (2009) showed that code-switching is discourse strategies employed by speakers to effectively communicate their intents and express social and rhetorical meanings in their conversation.

Code switching has always fascinated sociolinguists and sociologists. It has been observed in all bilingual environments. With the fast growth of

internet and social networking sites come as new medium or as third medium (speaking and writing being the other two mediums) of communication. Internet has a number of such sites where people come and interact with each other at any time and in any part of the world instantly.

Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram are among the leading social networking sites. These sites have made verbal and non-verbal communication possible and made it instant and easy. People of different backgrounds, ethnic group, religious beliefs, education, etc. use such platforms and interact within their group and also outside their group. Such interactions give rise to the demand for certain codes in certain situations, which gives rise to the phenomenon like code switching and code mixing.

Kashmir being a multilingual region, the natives use at least two languages viz Kashmiri and Urdu. The new generation uses English along with the former two languages. When these bilinguals communicate on social networking sites, they switch codes due to various factors. The factors responsible for such code switching is the concern of this study.

Related Literature

Computer mediated communication is relatively recent field. In this regard, various studies have been conducted.

According to Warschauer et al (2007), who have studied the language choice and language use in online domains in Egypt. Majorly people of Egypt know two varieties of Arabic; Classical Arabic(used in formal domains) and Egyptian Arabic (used in informal domains), and English(language of education). The study revealed that Egyptians mostly prefer English in online communication but Arabic is also used in Romanized script in the informal domain.

According to Su (2009), in Taiwan, three main languages are spoken; Mandarin, Taiwanese and Taiwanese accented mandarin. Mandarin holds the highest prestige in formal contexts, while Taiwanese accented mandarin is generally the most stigmatized and Taiwanese seems to be located in between. It was found that Mandarin is used mostly online with the use of Chinese characters.

Code switching as a bilingual practice has always been a Centre of interest for many sociolinguists. CS in online communication was first studied by Paolillo in 1996. Since, then it has gained a lot of scholarly attention. Paolillo studied CS in use-net News group soc.culture Punjab. The studies revealed that English is predominantly used; Punjabi is restricted to the insertion of loan words and borrowing into English discourse. These loan words and borrowing are necessitated by talking about the Punjab region, Punjab and Punjab people (Paolillo, 1996:23)

Al Khatib & Sabbah (2008) studied language choice in mobile text messages among Jordanian University students. Their study indicated that the elements for the wide use of English or switching between Arabic and English is seen to serve the functions of greeting, quoting someone. Switching to English is seen as a mark of prestige, fill gaps in language or to serve the function of euphemism.

Parveen. S & Aslam .S (2013) studied reasons for CS in Facebook by Pakistani Urdu English bilinguals. The findings revealed that lack of facility, lack of registral competence, along with habitual expressions are main reasons for code switching. Mood of speaker is also another contributing factor for code switching.

Hadei. M. (2016) studied social factors for CS in Malaysian-English bilinguals. The findings revealed that show identity is the most frequent reason for motivating the speakers to switch languages.

The study of Rashid and Bhat (2018) have studied language choice and language use in online communication among Kashmiri multilinguals. The study revealed that the language choice and language use of Kashmiri speakers is English while communicating online. English is the preferred language in formal domain as English is used to discuss about studies and technology. Urdu and Kashmiri are predominantly used in informal contexts while communicating online. Urdu/Kashmiri in online communication is used only in Romanized script. Perso-Arabic script is rarely used while using Urdu/Kashmiri in online communication

Methodology

The research design chosen for the current study is a mixed-method one i.e., both qualitative and quantitative. The CS data for the purpose of this

study is collected from Kashmiri speakers with Urdu and English as second language. A total of 100 messages is/were collected from social networking platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram. The data was collected from the participants falling in the age group of 18-35 years. After identifying the code switched and code mixed sentences, the elements in each sentence were identified and categorized according to Malik's framework. The reasons for CS given by Malik are as follows : Lack of facility, Lack of registral competence, Semantic significance, addressing different audiences, showing identity with a group, amplifying and emphasizing a point, Mood of the speaker, Habitual expressions, Pragmatic reasons and attracting attention. As the mixed method is adopted for the current study, the data was analysed qualitatively by transcribing it. For quantitative analysis, the findings were counted manually and displayed in a table in the form of number and percent.

Findings and Discussion

Malik (1994) names ten reasons for CS. In this study, these functions serve as a framework reasons for CS in a Kashmiri speech community. The table below illustrates reasons for CS found in the data collected.

Table 1. Reasons for Code-Switching Among Kashmiri Multilinguals

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Lack of facility	28	28
Lack of registral competence	20	20
To show identity with a group	16	16
Habitual expressions	12	12
Semantic significance	4	4
Pragmatic Reasons	3	3
To address different audience	5	5
To attract attention	0	0
To amplify or emphasize a point	5	5
Mood of speaker	7	7
Total	100	100

The table shows different reasons which are used by Kashmiri speakers during conversations. From the table, we can see that lack of facility accounts for 28 of the total 100 motives in different conversations. The second most frequent reason in this study is lack of registral competence, forming (20%) of the code switched elements found in the data. As outlined in the table, the next most reason for CS in the present study are

show identity(16%), habitual expressions(10%), mood of the speaker (7%), address different audience (5%),emphasize a point (5%), semantic significance (4%), pragmatic reasons(3%), and attract attention (2%), respectively.

Lack of Facility

Bilinguals or multilinguals often explain that they code switch when they cannot find an appropriate expression or vocabulary item or when the language of conversation does not have the particular word needed to carry on the conversation smoothly.(Malik ;1994).

Example:

Transliteration*: /*bina yimai ni pagah tuıshan keh, I will go to Pehalgam festival'

Translation: *'I'll not turn up to tuitions tomorrow, I will go to Pehalgam festival'.*

In Examples the bilingual speaker preferred to use some words in English because she found them more suitable

Lack of Registral Competence

When certain vocabulary is not available to a speaker in the first language (L1), he or she switches to the second language (L2) during a dialogue. (Muthusamy 2009)

Example:

Transliteration*: /* yaar meri pen ɖraiv ko: virus huva hai….., I can't format it, ….. usmai bohat data hai */*

Translation: *My pen drive has got virus, I can't format it, it has lots of data.*

To Show Identity with a Group

Individuals switch particular type of codes to show belongingness or identity/ unity with a particular group. To show identity with a group, Di Pietro, reports that Italian immigrants would tell a joke in English and give the punchline in Italian, not only because it was better said in Italian but also it stressed the fact that they all belong to the same minority group, with shared values and experiences (cited in Malik, 1994).

Transliteration: / The current trends clearly indicate a PDP-CONG alliance but overall they are symbolic of the fact that in Kashmir its always "Kahan ravmich gaav /

Translation: *The current trends clearly indicate a PDP-CONG alliance but overall they are symbolic of the fact that in Kashmir its always "Kahan ravmucz gaav" (there is not unity among them).*

Habitual Expressions

CS often occurs in fixed phrases of greeting and parting, commands and requests, invitations, expressions of gratitude and discourse markers such as Oye (listen), you know or pero (but). (Malik; 1994)

Example:

Transliteration: /o reli! gari vanzi sarni mubarak. It iz relly a good news. Congrats brother/

Translation: *Oh really! Give my congratulations to family. It is really a good news. Congrats brother*!

Semantic Significance

Switching at a particular moment conveys semantically significant information. It is a communicative resource that builds on participant's perception of two languages. Lexical choice conveys meaning during code-switching. (Malik 1994, Gumperz 1970, 1976, 1982, and Gumperz and Hernandez 1972).Listeners interpret code switching as an indicator of the speaker's attitude, or communicative intents and emotions as code switching is a tool for conveying appropriate linguistic and social information. (Gal 1988).

Example:

Transliteration*: The mountains are calling* sheeni bala:j ti khandi zahar

Translation: *The mountains are calling there is a lot of snow and a lot of fun.*

Pragmatic Reasons

Speakers may code switch in order to call attention to the context of a conversation. He points out that sometimes the alternation between two languages is highly meaningful in terms of the conversational context. (Malik 1994) The sentence below is an example:

Transliteration: /they don't even leave you without attributing motives even in condoleces yes tengul pyov suyi zani dag. paiḍ moroonz/

Translation: *They don't even leave you without attributing motives even in condolences. The one who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. Paid morons*

To Address Different Audiences

CS is also used when the speaker intends to address and welcome people from various linguistic backgrounds. (Malik 1994)

Example:

Transliteration: / *Assalamu alikum and good morning to all of our esteemed customers. Today we will launch new lawn suits. Keeps supporting us and keep shopping from us/*

Translation: *Assalamu alikum and good morning to all of our esteemed customers. Today we will launch new lawn suits. Keeps supporting us and keep shopping from us.*

To Attract Attention

In an advertisement in India, both written and spoken form, CS is used to attract the attention of the readers or listeners. (Malik 1994).

Example:

In collected data of hundred messages, no example of code switching in order to attract attention was found as it is applicable to written and spoken advertisements.

To Amplify and Emphasize a Point

When a speaker needs to stress a particular statement CS may occur. (Anderson 2006)

Example:

Transliteration: Abhi tumhare exams aarahe hai. Plz plz study well.

Translation: *Your exams are about to start. so please study well.*

Mood of the Speaker

When bilinguals are tired or angry, code switching takes place with a new dimension (Malik 1994). CS is triggered when the speaker is emotionally affected such as feeling upset, excited, tired, happy, surprised, and scared

or distracted. As a result, when the speaker is in the right state of mind, he/she can find the suitable word or expression. (Crystal 1987)

Example:

Transliteration: /kya: karne jana hai wahan : baraf to hai nahi kahi . *Kashmir is burning/*

Translation: *Why do you have to go there, snow is nowhere. Kashmir is burning.*

Conclusion

The paper is set out to study the phenomenon of CS among Kashmiri multilinguals while communicating online. For the study data was analysed through data collected from various social networking sites like Facebook, twitter, instagram. The occurrence of CS was analysed by using Malik's ten reasons' approach to CS. It can be concluded that CS is quite apparent in the online communication of Kashmiri speakers. The findings showed that there are many reasons for this phenomenon. The ability of the speaker in speaking more than one language and the ability of the listeners in understanding the languages spoken play important roles when it comes to word choices and speech. The study has shown that 'lack of facility' is the most frequent reason for motivating the speakers to switch languages which is followed by ' lack of register', 'show identity', habitual expressions' 'moods of speaker', 'emphasising a point', addressing different audience', 'semantic significance', 'pragmatic reasons', and 'attracting attention' respectively.

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