

## **LANGUAGE INTERACTION CONTINUUM: SYSTEMATICITY FROM CODE MIXING TO CONGRUENT LEXICALISATION**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The history of languages dates back to the history of humans and humans are mainly distinguished from other animals by the highly developed communication system which consists of verbal, non-verbal and tactic modes and more so of verbal mode of communication what in layman's terminology can be called as the language proper which we employ in our day to day lives. Languages come in contact due to various reasons and by different means and the nature and results of a given language contact are highly unpredictable. Speaking in broader terms language contact can be said to be of direct and indirect type. Two languages can be said to be in direct contact when the contact between two languages is accompanied by the contact between two populations having two different languages. Indirect contact between two languages does not include contact between two linguistic groups but one language is usually introduced through formal means like education, government agencies, religion and through other such means. Examples of direct contact involve different kinds of migrations, invasions etc. English as a world language has spread by both direct and indirect means. Language contact can be horizontal or diagonal depending on the nature of relation between the given languages. Languages are said to be in a horizontal contact situation when both languages are of same socio-political status and in diagonal contact situation when the languages in contact have an unequal sociopolitical status.

Language contact of different types result in the phenomena of multilingualism and multilingualism is now widely recognized as a natural phenomenon rather than an exception. India is characterized by grass-root multilingualism as compared to functional multilingualism prevalent in many European countries. Multilingualism here is taken as a process where more than one language is used in day to day lives of

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people whatever may be their proficiency in the given languages. The phenomenon of multilingualism is naturally accompanied by various language interaction phenomena such as code mixing, code switching, nonce borrowing and borrowing. According to many linguists when two languages come in contact; one language is relegated to background whereas other language foregrounds itself and is looked as a prestige language and gains social values and positive ethno-linguistic vitality at the cost of other, which correspondingly loses its ethno-linguistic vitality.

“Whenever languages are in contact, one is usually considered more prestigious than the other. The prestige language is often considered more beautiful, more expressive, more logical and better able to express thoughts and the other language is felt to be ungrammatical, concrete and coarse”(Grosjean,1982:120-121).

The earliest records pertaining to Kashmiri language dates back to thirteenth century and even a cursory look at the history of Kashmiri language will show that Kashmiri as a language has remained in contact with different world famous languages like Sanskrit, Persian in the `past and with Urdu and English at present. Whatever, may the factors and socio-political conditions accompanying the contact between these languages; one thing is evident that Kashmiri as such has remained as a subordinate contact language with respect to these languages and as proved from many linguistic research works; it is the subordinate language which faces the challenge of change.

#### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of this paper is to look at the various language interaction phenomena to see whether these occur randomly or these form a continuum where one-language interaction phenomena precedes the other and there is a logical relation between these phenomena. This is mainly done by looking at the Kashmiri language at present and the changes, which it has undergone as a result of these contact phenomena i.e.; through a synchronic and diachronic study of Kashmiri language. The twin aim of this paper is to look at this language interaction continuum and how it can be used to classify various language interaction phenomena which up to this point have been discussed and classified only within an arbitrary framework.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The data for this paper consists of sixteen hours of tape recordings from formal as well informal contexts. Besides data has also been used from other works on language interaction phenomena including Kak (1995), Wani (2004), Kak and Wani (2006). The paper also puts into use those examples which have been collected by the researcher through years of observation; the researcher being the member of the same speech community.

### **LANGUAGE INTERACTION PHENOMENA: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES**

Code mixing refers to the mixing of various linguistic units (morphemes, words, phrases, and clauses) primarily from two participating grammatical systems within a sentence. In other words code mixing is intra-sentential and is constrained by grammatical principles, which may be motivated by social and psychological factors. Code mixing is a direct result of bilingualism as when people have knowledge of more than one language; the people can switch and mix between these languages.

“Code mixing entails transferring linguistic units from one code to another ... one may consider code switching as a process which can result in code-mixed varieties. A multilingual or multidialectal person is generally able to associate a function and an effect with various types of language or dialect mixes” (Kachru, 1983:194).

A multilingual or multidialectal person is generally able to associate a function or an effect with various types of language or dialectal mixes. Language interaction phenomena are one of the most debated phenomena and countless definitions and many criteria have been proposed for the phenomena such as code mixing, code switching, nonce borrowing and borrowings but still scholars have not reached a consensus regarding the classification of these phenomena. Some scholars proposed the criterion of inter-sentential for code switching and extended it to discourse level. The main argument of scholars distinguishing code mixing from switching was that code mixing involves grammatical intrusion between two languages. The main criteria, which came to the fore-front in distinction of these phenomena include:

#### **TRANSITION PROBLEM**

Weinreich (1953), Labov (1971) and many other scholars raised the question of “Transition Problem”. Language change is a diachronic process and when a particular lexical item gained the status of a loanword in the recipient language is a difficult question. It is difficult to study variation synchronically particularly in urban areas.

#### **THE INTEGRATION ISSUE**

Pfaff(1979), Poplack(1980) and other scholars have argued that lone other language elements are fundamentally different from longer stretches of switches. Borrowing is fundamentally different from code switching. The following table 1.1 is an illustration of the criteria for distinguishing code switching from borrowing; although they regard code switching and code mixing essentially similar on the criteria of integration.

Type	Phonological	Morphological	Syntactic	Code-switching
1.	Yes	Yes	Yes	NO
2.	No	No	Yes	YES
3.	Yes	No	No	YES
4.	No	No	No	YES

**Table 1.1 Levels of Integration into Base Language (Poplack 1980)**

Thus according to this criterion a “borrowing “ must be integrated phonologically, morphologically and syntactically and code switching and mixing are similar as both these processes do not pass the filter of integration.

However, the notion of integration faced many problems and was challenged by many scholars. The notion of phonological integration was discarded due to it’s highly variable nature. Bourdieu (1991) explained that elite sections pronounce borrowings in donor language form due to it’s high prestige. Gysels (1992) argued that the discourse situation determines whether a lexical item is a code switch or a borrowed item. Backus (1996) argued that it is within the individual speaker’s motivation to ascribe status to a single word (foreign-item) in the recipient language. Myers-Scotton (1992, 1993) rejected morpho-syntactic integration as a basis for distinguishing code switching and borrowing. She proposed frequency as the single best criterion to link borrowed forms more closely with the recipient language mental lexicon.

#### **THE LEXICAL GAP CRITERION**

Bentahila and Davies (1983) also considered code switching and mixing essentially as the similar process. Bentahilla and Davies (1983) further argued along with Sridhar and Sridhar (1983) that one of the major characteristic of borrowed items is to fill the lexical gaps in the recipient language.

However, the lexical gap criterion was not without it’s problems and could not solve the question of classification of language interaction phenomena. Myer-Scotton (1993) argues re-echoing Haughen (1953)’s comment that borrowings always go beyond the actual needs of a language. Myers-Scotton further classified borrowings into two types i.e., cultural and core borrowings. Cultural borrowings are those borrowings which actually are new to the culture of recipient language. On the other hand core borrowings have native viable equivalents which are first substituted and

then replaced in due course of time. Thus from the above discussion of language interaction phenomena; it becomes clear that although a number of criteria have been proposed but a conclusive account of these interaction phenomena is still wanting.

Eastman (1992) concludes, "Efforts to distinguish code mixing, code switching, and borrowing are doomed" (p.1) and that it is crucial that we "...free ourselves of the need to categorize any instance of seemingly non-native material in languages as a borrowing or a switch; if we want to understand the social and cultural processes involved in the code-switching" (p.1).

### KASHMIRI AS A SUBORDINATE CONTACT LANGUAGE

As explained earlier Kashmiri has been subjected to diagonal bilingualism in its history of more than seven hundred years (earliest available records being those of thirteenth century) and has remained essentially a language of informal domains like home and other languages whether it is Sanskrit, Persian in past or Urdu and English at present which are enjoying the status of the prestigious and official languages. The data collected of language usage in present day Kashmir served as a motivation for looking at the systematic nature of language interaction phenomena. Consider the following examples:

1.	tAm-	Is	ChenI	ne:k	insa:n	sInz	pehCha:n	K
	he-	dat	hasn't	virtuous	person	of-gen	recognition	
He can not recognize a virtuous person.								

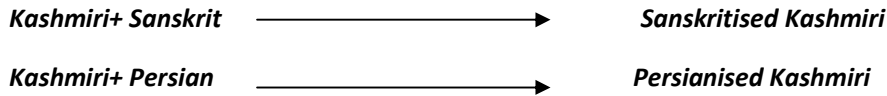
2.	potr-	I	dag	lalna:viny	Che-ne	sahal	K
	son-	dat	pain	bear	isn't	easy	
It is not easy to live with the grief of a demised son.							

3.	Tse	Khe	batl	.....	<i>nahin</i>	<i>aAbi</i>	<i>nahin</i>	<i>K-U CS</i>
	You	eat	rice	.....	no	now	no	
You eat rice! ..... No, not now.								

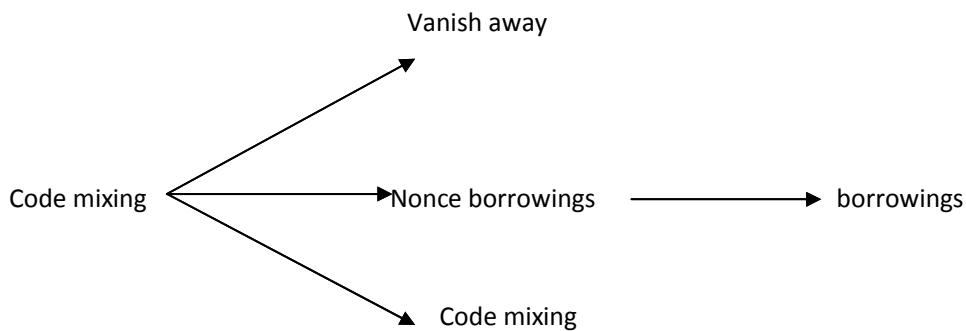
4.	Yi	kari	<i>absorb</i>	va:ryah	<i>moisture</i>	<i>K-E CM</i>
	This	do-fut	absorb	much	moisture	
It will absorb much moisture.						

The above examples are representative of main language interaction phenomena occurring in present day Kashmir valley with Kashmiri-Urdu code switching as unmarked behavior of speech on the one hand whereas Kashmiri-English code mixing as unmarked speech behavior on the other hand. (Wani, 2004). It, however, does not exclude Kashmiri-English code switching and Kashmiri-Urdu code mixing which are also observed but the most frequent and pervasive mode of speech is as specified in the above given examples which, however, is liable to change with the change of various factors in addition to passage of time.

The above examples can also be looked as the examples of, borrowings (example 1 and 2), code switching (example 3) and code mixing (example 4). The impact of Persian (example 1) and Sanskrit (example 2) can be felt in present day Kashmiri only at the lexical level i.e., Persian and Sanskrit lexicon is found in the present day Kashmiri mainly in the form of borrowings. Depending on the nature of lexicon, Kashmiri has been divided into two dialects, i.e.; Persianised Kashmiri and Sanskritised Kashmiri spoken by two major communities i.e. Muslims and Hindus. No solid records are present which can show that the impact of Sanskrit or Persian on Kashmiri was above lexical level. One of the reasons why Kashmiri survived was the illiteracy of Kashmiri native speakers. As records show less than 3 percent of population of Srinagar city was literate at the beginning of the twentieth century. Another reason which could be cited for the lesser effects of Sanskrit and Persian is the absence of mass media which has largely contributed in the spread of Urdu and English in Kashmir valley and the resulting socio-psycholinguistic impacts on Kashmiri language and Kashmiri speakers. Thus language interaction phenomena can stop at the level of lexicon determined by a given context i.e., what has happened as a result of contact of Kashmiri and Sanskrit or Kashmiri and Persian. In fact, it is the socio-political factors which have determined the result of the language interaction phenomena. This interaction can be represented as:



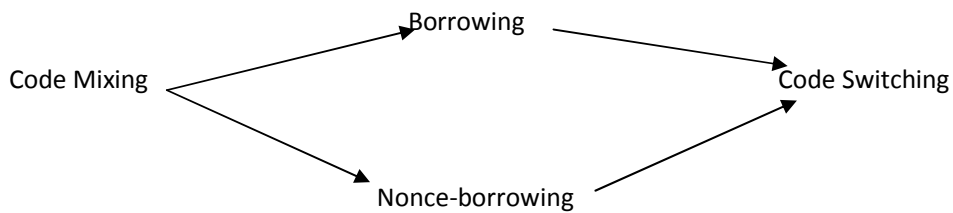
First Sanskrit and Persian entered in the form of code mixes and many of these code mixes vanished away, some were retained as nonce borrowings and some attained the status of borrowings depending on a number of linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors. Sanskrit and Persian have never attained the status of informal or home languages and even after many centuries of contact, Persian remained as the language of prestige, somehow separated from the day to day life of native Kashmiries. Thus the impact of Sanskrit and Persian stopped at the lexical level giving us the first three stages of language interaction continuum i.e., code mixing, nonce borrowing and borrowing. It must be mentioned here that there are many word which always remain as code mixes in a given language depending on it's usage in a given community. e.g; words belonging to particular registers which remain confined to a given section of the society and can never be put in a wide use in a given speech community.



**Fig1.1 Figure Representing the Language Interaction Continuum at Lexical Level**

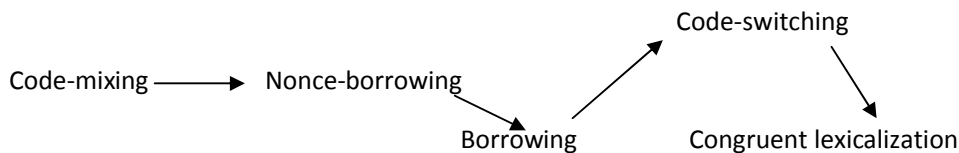
However, the language interaction phenomena are not restricted to the lexical level. The third language which was introduced in Kashmir as an official language in the beginning of the twentieth century i.e. Urdu share much of it's lexicon with Persian and Sanskrit languages and this paved the way for paralleling the structures of Kashmiri language towards Urdu language. The entry of Urdu in Kashmir was accompanied by the increase in literacy as well as the blooming of mass media in every corner of the valley. Urdu occupied the domains which hitherto were occupied by the Sanskrit and Persian languages. The impact of Urdu didn't restrict itself to the lexical level but extended above the lexical level on linguistic level, and at socio-psychological level its impact was much more than the preceding languages. In

normal language contact context, it is only open class items of lexicon which are mixed or borrowed but a recent study has shown that not only open class items but also some closed class items of lexicon of Urdu are now used in day to day speech of Kashmiries (Wani, 2006). At the socio-psychological level it can be said that Urdu has attained the status of an informal or home language in Kashmir or what has been called as “trickling of Urdu from school to home” (Kak, 1995 : 91). The impact of Urdu has extended above the lexical level and complete sentences of Urdu language can be observed in day to day speech of educated Kashmiries or what can be called as the process of code switching, where two base languages or two grammars can easily be identified (Kak and Wani, 2005). Thus an effective language contact can lead to the impact of a language above lexical and formal level and the next stage of language interaction can be identified as the process of code switching.



**Fig 1.2 Figure Showing the Language Interaction Continuum at Sentence Level**

Starting from Sanskrit and Persian, Kashmiri was sharing a major portion of its lexicon with Urdu language and due to a very strong ethno-linguistic vitality of Urdu language in Kashmir; Urdu attained the status of informal code switched language. Thus the similarity of Kashmiri with Urdu was on increase and Kashmiri grammar has started moving towards Urdu language due to heavy borrowing of both open and closed class items in addition to parallel usage or code switching of Urdu in most formal contexts or what can be called as the “Congruent lexicalization of Kashmiri with respect to Urdu language”. Congruent lexicalization is a term used by Muysken (2000) for intense language contact situations where two languages are increasingly moving towards a single grammar as a result of an effective language contact.



**Fig1.3 Figure Representing Language Interaction Continuum at Grammatical Level**

However, the congruent lexicalization of Kashmiri with respect to Urdu has stopped due to introduction of global English which is the most prestigious language in



present day Kashmir and in most of other parts of the world. English forms the primary choice for code mixing in the present day Kashmir due to number of factors. As a result of increasing impacts of global English, Kashmiri language is being de-lexified from Urdu lexicon and re-lexified with English lexicon (Shade Hypothesis, Wani: 2006). Thus English language at present in Kashmir can be said to be at the lexical stage of language interaction continuum or at the threshold of sentence level of language interaction continuum. In fact, it is a matter of time to determine the socio-linguistic impacts of global English on Kashmiri language.

#### **CONCLUSION: THERE LIES A LANGUAGE INTERACTION CONTINUUM**

From above discussion of Kashmiri as a subordinate contact language, it becomes clear that when languages interact with each other; their interaction is not random but the linguistic interaction between two languages is a function of accompanying socio-political, economic and psychological factors. From above diachronic and synchronic study of Kashmiri; it becomes clear that there lies a language interaction continuum which originates at the lexical level in the form of code mixes and progresses in the form of nonce-borrowings and borrowings as was case with the contact of Kashmiri with Sanskrit and Persian languages. However, when the contact between the two languages is more intense; the language interaction continuum supersedes the lexical level in the form of code switching as in case of Kashmiri –Urdu contact. Under conducive conditions language interaction continuum can move to the level of grammar or what has been referred to as the congruent lexicalization of two languages (Muysken, 2000). Thus language interaction phenomena occur in a systemic way and there is a clear possibility of distinguishing these processes from each other quite contrary to what Eastman (1992) concluded. From this study, it becomes clear that by incorporating socio-political and psychological factors, language interaction phenomena can be distinguished from each other as the systematicity of language interaction continuum is totally determined by the systematicity of the accompanying socio-political and psychological factors.

#### **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

1. gen = genitive case.
2. dat = dative case.
3. fut = future tense
4. K = Kashmiri
5. K-E CM= Kashmiri English code mixing
6. K-E CS = Kashmiri English code switching
7. K-U CS = Kashmiri Urdu code switching

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