

COMMUNICATIVE RELEVANCE OF LEXICAL DEVICES IN KASHMIRI NEWS MEDIA

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Communication is a fundamental aspect of human society and essentially a human affair. The basic act of communication begins when a person uses a given language symbol (a word or a higher construction) to arouse a specific set of meanings in another person. Communication takes place when there is a correspondence of meaning between the communicator and the receiver. The activity is strengthened by the extra linguistic devices like gestures, body movements, facial expressions etc.

Communication has been divided into different types like interpersonal communication, group communication, intercultural communication, professional communication and mass communication. Given the nature of the present paper, it will be pertinent to give a brief account of mass communication.

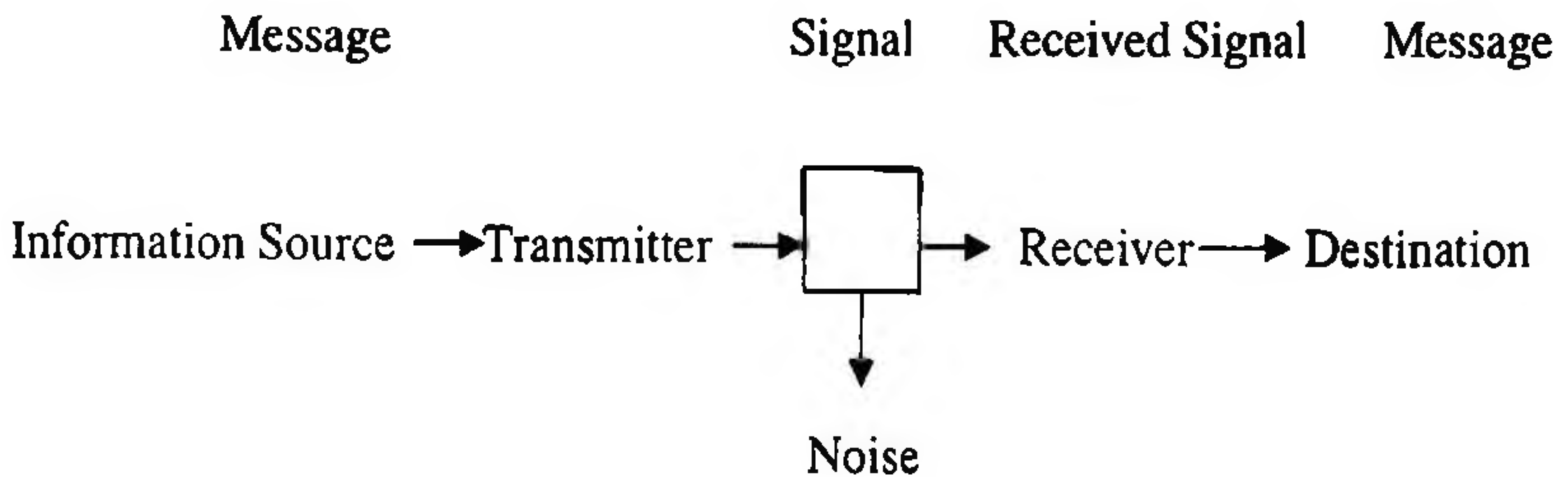
MASS COMMUNICATION

Mass communication is regarded as transmission of message to a large audience. It is not limited to the traditional public speech, a familiar example of this type of communication, but also includes the modes of communication that are products of modern technology which include books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, radio, television and the like. It is characterized by its wide circulation and the rapidity with which it can reach a large and heterogeneous audience. That is why it is generally regarded as the “communication of the few to the many”. (Marsen, 2006 : 8)

A major difference between face to face or interpersonal communication and mass media is the presence of immediate feedback in the former and its absence in the latter. Due to the absence or delay in feedback, the editor is unable to measure the effectiveness of his communication. It may result in loss or distortion of message. Besides, in interpersonal communication the participants have access to many

sources of information besides the content of the message. The contextual cues like stress, pitch, gestures and body language provide the participants with additional cues to the meaning or message.

Many models of communication have been put forth among which the model given by Shannon and Weaver (1949), holds a significant place. They developed a model to explain the communicative system generally involved in mass communication. The model can be shown diagrammatically as under:



(Shannon and Weaver, 1949 as quoted in Marsen, 2006, p.14)

According to this model a message originates from an information source which is encoded into verbal and nonverbal signals by a transmitter. The signals are then transmitted, via a channel, to a receiver who reconstructs or decodes it and provides it some meaning at the destination. The received message then reaches the destination. A noise source which is external to the message can interfere with this process and may result in the message reaching the recipient in a distorted form and may cause failure in communication. It follows that the message encoded by the source may not be equivalent to the message decoded by the receiver. Thus it can be said that the term 'noise' refers to any disturbance or interference in the process of communication which may be treated as an important cause of information loss.

Noise may be present in different forms. It may be atmospheric, physical, psychological or linguistic. Atmospheric noise may be due to different factors like disturbance in electricity or cross talk on phone. Physiological impairments of hearing, vision or speech may be the cause of Physical noise. Psychological noise is mainly attributed to the process of perception. Linguistic noise gets produced by random superposition of any one of the different linguistic causes which usually results in the production of ambiguous and vague expressions. This sort of noise

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source has received a great deal of attention by linguists. In this backdrop the present paper attempts to analyze the communicative relevance of some lexical devices used in Kashmiri news media.

STATUS OF KASHMIRI NEWS MEDIA

Although Kashmiri language serves as the mother tongue of majority of Kashmiri people, it has not received the official patronage it deserved and has been forced to play a second fiddle in different domains. The language has mostly remained confined to the spoken mode. As such, one is not surprised to note a dismal state of Kashmiri news media. It can be gauged from the fact that not a single daily newspaper is presently being published in Kashmiri. At present only two weeklies **SANGARMAL** and **SON MEERAS** are brought out in Kashmiri language. However, in case of electronic media, Radio Kashmir, Srinagar and Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar produces several news bulletins in this language throughout the day. Besides, All India Radio also broadcasts news in Kashmiri language twice a day. The data for the present paper has been accrued from the two weeklies and by recording news bulletins from Radio Kashmir, Srinagar and Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar.

LEXICAL DEVICES USED IN KASHMIRI NEWS MEDIA

The above deliberations suffice to prove that in presence of constraints like noise, absence of immediate feedback, etc, the news editors function in narrow and rigidly defined parameters. An efficient news editor is conscious of such constraints and limitations and, as such, is always on the hunt to look for effective linguistic strategies and devices to counter these constraints. Hence, there is always a conscious effort on part of the news editors to reduce the noise factor and message distortion and making the message ultra communicative by employing different linguistic techniques or strategies. Modernization forms one of the fundamental strategies in this regard.

Communication being the basic and fundamental function of language, a language is bound to adapt itself to the changing circumstances to successfully uphold this function. Consequently, language is always employing different processes and techniques to adapt to the new roles thus "providing an adequate means of fulfilling all communicative functions relevant in a given community" (Coulmas, 1989 p. 89). For this purpose, it remains "developing new vocabulary for new areas of knowledge and new styles, registers and forms of discourse for new situations of cognition and communication" (Annamalai, 1995 p. 65). In this backdrop, modernization of a language can be regarded as an attempt to enable the language to remain up-to-date to fulfill its communicative role effectively in the new circumstances and cater to its new functions and domains of use.

Since news media serves as a carrier or tool for dissemination of the multiplex changes, happenings and events taking place on the globe, it has to refurbish its lexical resources consistently and modernize itself to fulfill the new communicative needs. The trend is also witnessed in Kashmiri news media which, it can be said, is passing through the process of modernization. The data collected from the said media is a clear indicator in this regard. In this process of modernization, the lexical devices which are being widely used in Kashmiri news media include borrowing, hybridization, acronymy, clipping and nativization. The lexical devices along with their communicative relevance are discussed below.

BORROWING AND HYBRIDIZATION AS NOISE COMBATING STRATEGIES

Borrowing and hybridization are two fundamental lexical devices used in Kashmiri news media. Both the processes have been effectively used by news editors in Kashmiri news media.

1. Borrowing: Borrowing forms the primary source of lexical modernization for Kashmiri news media. Kashmiri language possesses a Dardic base and, throughout its history, has heavily borrowed and assimilated words from different languages. In consonance with the history of Kashmiri language, Kashmiri news media also followed this trend. For this purpose, it usually draws from two sources, namely, Urdu and English. The nature and intensity of borrowing from these sources is being discussed separately below.

(A). Urdu

Due to various socio-cultural and religio-political factors, Urdu serves as the primary source of borrowing for Kashmiri news media. A cursory glance at the recorded material suffices to show that the news items are flooded with Urdu words and expressions. The words like GIRIFTAR, NAZARBAND, ISTEQBAL, AZIM, HALAT, RAHNUMA, QABRISTAN, ISTEQBALIYA, MEHMAN, SHANDAAR, TAQRIB, ZIRA'T, NAZARBAND, T'AWUN, I'ANAT, etc., clearly portray the current trend of borrowing. In addition to the borrowing of individual lexical items, a significant number of Urdu constructions are also frequently used in news items. Consider the following examples:

SAKHT TASHWISH	'Strong Resentment'
SHANDAR ISTEQBALIYA	'Warm Welcome'
SAFARAT KAR	'Ambassador'

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KHAS MEHMAN

'Special Guest'

ISHTEYAL ANGEZI

'Provocation'

The borrowed expressions also include a good number of Urdu genitive expressions like:

BAYN-UL-AQWAMI

'International'

KHIRAJ-E-AQIDAT

'Tribute'

NAZR-E-SANI

'Re-examination'

QED-0-BAND

'Imprisonment'

HALQA-E-INTIKHAB

'Constituency'

(B). English:

English is other major source of borrowing for Kashmiri. Given the global position of English, it is bound to play an active role in the lexical development of Kashmiri news media. Kashmiri news media is replete with English words. Some of the words traced in Kashmiri news media are assembly, militant, security, constable, autonomy, programme, board, conference, budget, session, executive, magistrate, award, court, postpone, election, voter, boycott, supply, retirement, reservation, project, budget.

In addition to the above mentioned words, two to three word constructions can also be easily traced in the news items. Some of the examples are as under:

Private Member

Assembly Session

Division Bench

Short Circuit

Voter List

Pay commission

Water Supply

Reservation Bill

Power Project

Parliament Member

Moreover, the news editors invariably turn to English in the domains of science and technology. The adoption of words like computer, internet, cable television, email, laptop, cell phone, mobile, prepaid, postpaid, etc., substantiate this claim.

2. Hybridization: Hybridization can be regarded as the second main process involved in the modernization of Kashmiri news media. It can be defined as the process in which a compound word is formed by combining base forms which belong to different languages. Kashmiri news media is full of such hybrid expressions. Some of the hybrid expressions found in the data are provided as below.

DROJAR ALAWNAS	'Dearness Allowance'	Kashmiri + English
YADGaRI DOH	'Anniversary'	Urdu + Kashmir

However, most of the hybrid expressions have been formed by blending Urdu and English bases. It can be illustrated through the following examples

KASTAM AHALKAR	'Customs Official'	English + Urdu
MIGRANT TaLBI'ALIM	'Migrant Student'	English + Urdu
SEKURTY JAWAN	'Security Personnel'	English + Urdu
TARBIYATI KAMP	'Training Camp'	Urdu + English
TUWANaYI SEKTAR	'Energy Sector'	Urdu + English

As is evident, hybridized and borrowed expressions are very common in Kashmiri news media. These expressions are communicatively very effective and help in making the news captions very catchy and noise free. The Communicative affectivity of these expressions can be well understood in the backdrop of the notion of prior information which they are able to provide. Due to the prevalent dominant position and social acceptability of English and Urdu, most of the English words have gained a very high frequency as compared to their Kashmiri counterparts. As such the borrowed words and the hybridized expressions are easy to understand for the news consumers. In contrast, a receiver of the message may not know what messages are being communicated in case of newly coined expressions. Hence the new and alien signals (expressions) reaching the decoder

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will bear less information than the frequently used signals which are loaded with the prior information.

Another very important reason for the use of Urdu and English words and expressions can be the non-availability of their equivalents in Kashmiri. The non-availability hampers the task of Kashmiri news editors who, consequently, take refuge in the lexical devices of borrowing and hybridization.

LEXICAL DEVICES AND COMMUNICATIVE NECESSITY OF REDUNDANCY

Communicative redundancy can be defined as the process of adding something more than is strictly necessary to convey a message. It helps to widen the semantic domain and thus lowers the chances of information loss. If a signal has a zero redundancy, then it is susceptible to message distortion and information loss due to some disturbance or noise. In contrast the presence of redundancy makes the expressions ultra communicative.

Kashmiri news media is full of instances where two synonymous or semantically related words are conjoined together. These words may be joined by Kashmiri conjunction TA 'and' or Urdu conjunction known in Urdu as 'WAW-E-ATF'. Some examples are provided below.

ZA:LIM TA JA:BIR	'Oppressor'
ITTIHAD TA ITTIFAQ	'Unity'
TAHZIB-O-TAMADDUN	'Cultural Heritage'
IFHAM-O-TAFHIM	'Mutual Understanding'
NAZM-O-NASQ	'Law and Order'
QED-O-BAND	'Imprisonment'
HALQA-E-INTIKHAB	'Constituency'

As can be seen, the conjoining of the words leads to redundancy, thereby increasing the probability of the correct reception of the message.

Lexical Devices as Means of Simplification

Simplification is an important strategy whereby news editors try to make the words and expressions simple so as to make them easily fathomable and

comprehensible for the news readers. For this purpose, news editors resort to nativization, clipping and acronymy.

Nativization is the process in which a language modifies the borrowed words and expressions according to its own structure. In Kashmiri news media, the words and expressions borrowed from the above mentioned sources undergo the process of nativization to suit the linguistic framework of Kashmiri. The borrowed words and expressions usually get modified according to the phonological and morphological system of Kashmiri language which makes these easy to pronounce and use. Some of the examples of nativized words are as follows:

Original Word	Nativized
Operation	APRESHAN
Election	ALEKSHAN
Commission	KAM'SHAN

Clipping is another process used in making the words and expressions simple. This occurs when a word gets reduced to a shorter form. For example, fan and lab are the clipped forms of English words fanatic and laboratory. Kashmiri news media is replete with examples of clipping. Some of the clipped forms used in Kashmiri news media are provided below.

Clipped Form	Original Form
Hurriyat	Hurriyat Conference
Hizb	Hizbul Mujahidin
Forces	Security Forces
Bhajpa	Bhartiya Janata Party

In acronymy, the first letters are used in place of a set of letters. For example, NATO is an acronym for North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In Kashmiri news media acronyms are frequently used by the news editors. Some of the examples recorded in the data are as under.

Acronyms	Original Form
AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Power Act

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PIL	Public Interest Litigation
NASA	National Aeronautical Space Agency
EJAC	Employees Joint Action Committee

The factors like intelligibility, brevity and ease of expression are the driving force behind the frequent use of these devices in Kashmiri news media. Intelligibility is one of the basic prerequisites in effective communication and to make the communicative event successful, the words and expressions used in communicating the message should be intelligible to the receivers. It is here that the process of nativization becomes of paramount importance which helps in making the borrowed words and expressions easily perceptible for the common masses. Similarly the acronyms and clipped forms are simple and easy to handle than their full counterparts. It is a linguistic fact that language users (consequently news editors) have a natural tendency to shift to simple forms of language instead of complex and difficult ones. This brevity and ease of expression makes the acronyms and clipped forms communicatively useful and a natural choice for the news editors.

CONCLUSION

As is evident from the above deliberations, Kashmiri news media is adapting itself to the changing circumstances and, for this purpose it is frequently exploiting the linguistic devices of borrowing, hybridization, nativization, acronyms and clipping. The above deliberations suffice to portray the communicative relevance of these lexical devices in Kashmiri news media. As is clear they occupy an important place in reducing the noise factor and message distortion in transmission of the messages and making them communicatively more effective.

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