

Code Switching in Indian Culture

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Due to modernization, liberalization, and globalization and with the advent of TV channels a new kind of language is emerging which is neither Hindi nor English but it can be called Hinglish. In other words TV is serving us a cocktail of Hindi-English. TV has not only affected our eyesight but it has affected our language as well. Grammar which was considered as the back bone of a language is being neglected. A new culture is emerging which in their skintight or stone wash or monkey wash or shot gun clothes speaks Hinglish with great pride. For e.g. The loss of fourth wicket is a *Jabardast Jhatka* (great shock) for the Pakistani team, *Ham kisi bhi secular government ka samarthan karenge*. (We will support any secular govt.)

Besides Hinglish they are doing code-switching and reduplication which is totally ungrammatical. For example:

Maine abhi just *khana khaya hai*. (*I have just taken my meal*)

Suppose *karo* Barak Obama India *aaven*. (*Suppose Obama Comes to India*)

These **reduplications**—*suppose karo* and *abhi just* are grammatically incorrect and it appears that someone has put on sari and skirt together. Language has left the Grammar in the same way as the fashion has left the gracefulness. As in the age of new fashion the size of clothes is reducing similarly the size of words is also decreasing for the sake of economy of articulation.

Several English words are so frequent in Hindi that they have become a part of Hindi language. For example school, tuition, platform, station, train, rickshaw, signal, class, coffee, glass, table-tennis. If these words are translated in Hindi it will be against the rule of economy of articulation. For e.g. Hindi translation of train is “Louhpathgamini, Signal- “awat jawat suchak chinha”.

Certain English words are there whose Hindi equivalent are not there, for e.g. Bus, truck, tempo, cycle, scooter etc. Certain technical words are easy to articulate in English, for e.g. social survey, field work, mass media, office staff, traffic rules.

Certain constructions undergo **morphological changes**. We find Hindi plural markers to English nouns. For example- *Samosas, Gundas, girlso:, boyso:, collego:, ladiso:* etc.

Similarly **Hindi suffixes are applied in English words**. For e.g. *confusiajana* (to get confused), *sirji, computerji*, etc.

English prefixes also appear in Hindi words. For e.g. ex-mantri, non Hindi, non filmi. etc. These mixed words make their eloquence poor and language unintelligible.

The college students of Hindi origin pronounce English words in their **dialectal tone**. Instead of ‘period’ they pronounce /pred/, similarly Sociology >/ sosla:gi/, Economics> /aka:na:miks/, Biology> /bologi/. For Librarian they call Library sir, Identity card has become admit card, magazine has become book and journal has become magazine. Similarly attestation is ‘attachtation’ for them. In reduplication the speaker provide an echo word to the preceding English item. For example- cha:i-va:i,(sha:i), dance-vance etc. Sometimes an item from one

language gets attached to its equivalent in the other language. For example: *bi:ch center me rakho, gol round me ghumao, thanda cold drink*, G.D.C. College, etc. This type of language will not grant them success.

A large proportion of the world's population is bilingual. Bilingualism is present practically in every country of the world, in all classes of the society. A bilingual speaking to the other bilingual chooses the language unconsciously semi-consciously with no extra time or effort. Language alternation has become significant in the Indian context in view of the variety of language distribution throughout the country. Bilingual processes such as diglossia, code-mixing and code-switching are the most commonly noticed instances of code alternation. This process is called code-switching, in the general context of bilingualism.

Code-switching is a device used in the functional context in which a multilingual person makes alternate use of two or more languages as the situation demands. This phenomenon has been referred to variously as 'conversational code-switching' (Gumperz 1982), 'code-mixing' (Kachru 1979), with language –specific tables such as 'Hinglish' (Verma 1976), in recent sociolinguistic literature.

2. Data Collection

For the purpose of survey the native speakers of Hindi were chosen. There were two main steps in the investigation. First with the help of questionnaire the interviews with 100 members belonging to different states of society were conducted. Secondly the speeches of 20 subjects with the help of tape-recorder were recorded to ensure that the data obtained in the speech of the Hindi-English bilinguals was natural and spontaneous.

The five principal domains used in our investigation are: family, friendship, neighbourhood, transactions and employment. The questionnaire also sought information regarding the speakers' sociocultural profile, such as their linguistic background, status, age, sex, medium of instruction and attitude to English, with a view to finding out correlation between these and the subjects' language use.

Our data shows that English domain for the informant is employment domain while the most Hindi domain is family. In the family domain the mother tongue is the most dominant code in its most intimate variety, which is a symbol of group identity and solidarity. In the transaction domain some transaction, e.g. banking, elicits more English. In the domain of religion-rituals, recitations and ceremonies are carried out in the classical language (Sanskrit, Arabic, Pali, etc.) though devotional hymns and prayers are often in the regional dialects. In the entertainment domain Hindi is more popular than the regional languages or English. Hindi movies and film songs find wide patronage all over India and are probably the most effective instruments for the popularization of the language. English is associated with upward socioeconomic mobility, national mobility, authority, modernization and westernization.

In the domains of friendship, neighbourhood and employment the Hindi-English mixed code emerges as dominant. In the domain of transaction, however, no language has been found to be dominant.

There are certain socio-cultural variables, which affects language choice. In our investigation we concentrated on certain well-known variables, such as the speakers' educational level, sex and age. An attempt was also made to find out whether there is any correlation between the subjects' attitude to a language and linguistic variation. Similarly the social situation, topics, role-relationships are the other factors which cause language variation.

3. Code-switching:

The data of code-switching was obtained from the sources mentioned above. See the advertisement of BPL:

Ab BPL ke ma;lik jitenge bumper prizes, Country wide finance ki suvidha.
(Now BPL owner will win bumper prizes, facility of country wide finance).

In the above advertisement code-switching occurs at the end of each clause to catch the reader's attention. Thus it is their shop keeping mentality which provoke them to use simple and new type of language, whether it is Hinglish or ungrammatical or full of spelling mistake.

4. An attempt has been made to explain why the English words have been used rather than their Hindi equivalents.

- i) **Sandwich Words:** e.g. library ki book, seminar ka paper. (The informants are not switching, but are using words, which belong to the overlapping area and between which Hindi words tend to be sandwiched.
- ii) **Choice of Lexical Items:** There are many English words, which have become a part of language because they have no Hindi equivalents. For example, T.V., radio, video, cigarette, diploma, flashback, furniture etc.
- iii) **Common English words:** Hindi equivalents of English words are uncommon, so the English words are used. For Example, class, college, Vice-chancellor etc.
- iv) **Economy of articulation:** e.g. sorry (two syllables)—ma:f karna: (three syllable), best (one syllable)—sabse accha: (4 syllable), etc.
- v) **Polite Connotations:** e.g. ladies (orte), Husband (pati),
- vi) **Western Concept:** e.g. sweet dish (mitha:), fork (ka:nta:) etc.

5. **Inflection and Reduplication:** Certain constructions undergo morphological changes. We find Hindi plural markers to English nouns. For example- Samosas, Gundas, girlso:, boyso:, collego:, ladiso: etc.

In reduplication the speaker provide an echo word to the preceding English item. For example- cha:i-va:i,(sha:i), dance-vance etc. Sometimes an item from one language gets attached to itsequivalent in the other language. For example: bi:ch center me rakho, gol round me ghumao, thanda cold drink, G.D.C. College, etc.

The substantial data collected for the study shows that code switching has a major contribution in the formation of Indian English.

Globalization is a threat to national language. We live in the country (India) where the survival of our own language is threatened by success of English. The college students of Hindi origin pronounce English words in their dialectal tone. The Indians accepted the language of British in their typical way, they “accultured” it i.e. they used the language in a native culture. Consequently cultural features were reflected in it. This phenomenon is unique not to one colony alone but typical of all situations of language contact. The language gradually came into contact with various culture and with the result a mixed variety of language is produced which is used as popular language of day to day life.

Thus, switching of codes is essentially an intragroup phenomenon. Sociological and other background factors affect it only within a group and often individual characteristics influence the speaker’s choice of language. It is clearly conditioned by topic, situation, role relationship and style of speech; it is above all verbal strategy, the choice of a speaker from his verbal repertoire, according to the principle of ‘speech economy’, language distance is not an absolute, it is a function of intensity of contact and social context.

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