

Code Switching and Code Mixing among Adolescents in Kashmir

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Abstract : One of the remarkable gifts that a human being is blessed with is the ability to speak using a combination of sounds. Different combinations of sounds combine to form a word which in turn make a sentence and therefore give birth to a language. A person can either be a monolingual, i.e., can speak one language or bilingual, i.e., can speak more than one language. Whether a person speaks one language or multiple languages or in whatever language a person speaks, the main aim is to communicate, express ideas, feelings or thoughts. Sometimes the choice of a language is deliberate and sometimes it is a habitual act. The language which is used to put our ideas across speaks many things about our cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities. It can never be claimed that bilinguals are better than monolinguals in terms of linguistic skills, bilinguals or multilinguals have more than one language at their disposal. Therefore, how effectively two languages are used by the same person keeps linguists always intrigued. The most prominent and common features found in the speech of bilingual speakers are code switching and code mixing. The aim of the present paper is to explore these features among the adolescent speakers of Kashmir. The reason for studying the linguistics behavior of adolescents is the age when a person is neither an adult nor a child. They want to drift away from the norms and make a new norm for themselves. Therefore, how their linguistics skills are influenced by their age is of great interest because it can set the trend for the future generation. Kashmir is a multilingual society where three languages, i.e., Kashmiri, Urdu, and English are regularly used by the speakers, especially the educated ones. Kashmiri is widely used at home or mostly among adults. Urdu is the official language, and English is used in schools and for most of the written official correspondences. Thus, it is not uncommon to find these three languages coming in contact with each other quite frequently. The language contact results in the code switching and code mixing. In this paper different aspects of code switching and code mixing are discussed. Research Method: The data were collected from the different districts of Kashmir. The informants did not have prior knowledge of the survey. The situation was spontaneous and natural. The topics were introduced by the interviewer to the group of informants which comprised of three participants. They were asked to discuss the topic, most of the times without any intervention of the interviewer. Along with conversations, the informants also filled in written questionnaires comprising sociolinguistic questions. Questionnaires were analysed to get an idea about the sociolinguistic attitude of the informants. Percentage, frequency, and average were used as statistical tools to analyse the data. Conclusions were drawn taking into consideration of interpretations of both speech samples and questionnaires.

Keywords : code mixing, code switching, Kashmir, bilingualism

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