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## English Borrowings in the Kashmiri Language: Its Implications

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In any language contact phenomenon, the most common way that languages affect each other is word borrowing which refers to the exchange of words, phrases, expressions, etc. between languages. Winford (2003:12) following Thomason and Kaufman defines borrowing as, “the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language.” Usually the transportation of words from one language into another is determined by the status of the languages concerned, that is, the language with a lower status (socially, politically, economically, etc.) is always at the receiving end than that of the higher status one and not the vice-versa. In this connection, Winford (2003:39) quotes Bloomfield as “borrowing is usually from a more prestigious into a socially subordinate language. Speakers may find it more sophisticated to borrow from the higher languages.” Depending upon the contact situation in which languages interact with each other, there could be both casual as well as heavy lexical borrowing which is a universal linguistic fact as it occurs in almost all the languages of the world.

Following Myers Scotton (2002), word borrowing can be classified into two types: “core borrowings” and “cultural borrowings”. Core borrowings are words that substitute and replace the already existing words in the recipient language. Cultural borrowings are the lexical items for new objects/customs/practices which come along with the things they refer to and generally fill the lexical gap in the recipient languages.

The present paper aims at conducting a sociolinguistic study of the word borrowing between English and Kashmiri and attempts to explore the various issues involved in it. The paper tries to present the positive as well as the negative sides of this lexical transfer between the two languages in question, that is, how has the word transfer benefitted the native Kashmiri language and how, on the other hand has English emerged as a kind of threat to it. How, due to this word transportation, the latter has been pushed to the background losing all its socio-economic significance.

English language has entered into the valley of Kashmir in the second half of the nineteenth century with the Christian missionaries. Though, initially English language met a stiff resistance from the natives due to its association with Christianity; an unwelcome religion in the province. But, now the linguistic scenario has undergone a sea change as a huge number of English vocabulary have made their way into the native Kashmiri language and people belonging to almost all the social sections and age-groups are seen preferring their use over their Kashmiri counterparts. The close analysis reveals that the borrowed words from English belong to different grammatical categories; nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. In this paper, these

borrowed lexical items from English along with their Kashmiri equivalents have been arranged as per their grammatical categories to explain their use and implications in the Kashmiri linguistic community. Following are the English nouns and their Kashmiri equivalents.

**Table A**

**English nouns used by the Kashmiri people**

Cup	Pyala	Color	Rang
Pain	Dag	Dress	Poshaak/palaw
Chair	Kursi	Kitchen	Daankuth
Pen	Kalam	Cash	Rakam
Building	Emarat	Exam	Imtihaan
Election	Intikhab	Job	Naukri/mulazmat
Teacher	Wustaad	Student	Talib-ilm
Uniform	Wardi		

The use of these English nouns is extensive as people belonging to almost all the social sections and age-groups are seen using them in their day-to-day life.

English-Kashmiri word borrowing has resulted in the change in terminology vis-à-vis social/personal relationships and different professionals. Table B given below is the sample:

**Table B**

**English terms for social/personal relationships and different professionals**

English terms	Kashmiri equivalents	English terms	Kashmiri equivalents
Brother	Boi	<b>Cousin</b>	See below
Sister	Beni	<b>Uncle</b>	See below
Husband	Khandaar	Mother	Mouj
Nephew	Baabthir/benthir	Father	Moul
Niece	Benzi/bowzi	Shopkeeper	Dukaandaar
Advocate	Wakeel	Peon	Chapraes
Business-man	Kaarbaer	Employee	Mulaezim

The borrowing of English terms in case of social/personal relationships is at times problematic linguistically. For example, the term '**cousin**' in English refers to male as well as female relations and is a neutral term (gender wise). At the same time, it is used for both paternal as well

as maternal relationships. But in the Kashmiri language, there are different terms to refer to them. The same is true in case of the term ‘uncle’ as well.

Like nouns, the native Kashmiri language has received a good number of adjectives from the English language and the natives use them quite freely in both formal as well as informal settings. Following are some of the English adjectives along with their native Kashmiri equivalents:

**Table C**  
**English adjectives used by the native Kashmiri people**

English adjectives	Kashmiri equivalents	English adjectives	Kashmiri equivalents
Quick	Taez	Busy	Aawur
Fake	Nakli	Loose	Deaul
Free	Yaeli	Branded	Khasit
Lucky	Khushqismat	Young	Jawaan
Lazy	Natisout	Temporary	Aarzi
Engaged	Gandith	Dangerous	Khatarnak

Kashmiri language has borrowed a number of English adverbs but their use is mostly restricted to the educated people (Kashmiris) and youth. **Table D** presents the sample of words:

**Table D**  
**English adverbs and their Kashmiri equivalents**

English adverbs	Kashmiri equivalents	English adverbs	Kashmiri equivalents
Fast	Tez-tez	Purely	Khaspaeth
Carefully	Sambhaelith	Naturally	Qoudrati
Practically	Amlitoer	Willingly	Marzisaan
Surely	Bilzorur	Shortly	Wali-wal/jaldi

In addition, many English verbs are being used by the Kashmiri speakers in their day-to-day conversations. However, the linguistic transfer in case of verbs involves a syntactic adjustment, that is, they (English verbs) take auxiliaries from Kashmiri language like “kar” (do), “gov” (happen), etc. or their other grammatical forms. Given below is the list:

**Table E**

**English verbs used by the natives**

English verbs	Kashmiri equivalents	English verbs	Kashmiri equivalents
Jog	Dor-dor Karen	Press	Dabawun
Function	Kaem-karen	Attack	Hamlikarun
Walk	Pakun	Cheat	Dounkhi dun
Cancel	Raddkarun/gachun	Call	Aaloukarun/naad dun

All these English vocabulary items (nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs) belong to the group of core borrowings and as such have native Kashmiri equivalents available. Yet, people preferably use these English words and not the available Kashmiri equivalents.

In the last twenty to thirty years, the valley of Kashmir has received many new things and accepted many new practices which have by implication brought a good number of words (English) along with them. These new things and practices have benefitted the natives in many ways and at the same time, the words which have come along with them have added a lot to the lexical inventory of the indigenous language. It is worth mentioning that there are no native Kashmiri equivalents for these cultural borrowings available in the Kashmiri language. Following is the list:

**Mobile phone, Call center, Sunday market, Beauty parlour, Traffic jam,**

The sample of English lexical items presented in the **tables A, B, C, D and E** reveals that Kashmiri people irrespective of the social section and age-group use English vocabulary items consciously or unconsciously in order to make their utterances sound more attractive, cultivated and modern. The extensive use of these English vocabulary items is seen in both formal as well as informal day-to-day contexts. Yet, their presence is more decipherable in the speech of educated people and youth of the province than the uneducated ones. Besides, these English words are now accepted by a major portion of the population of the Kashmir valley.

**Implication**

The word borrowing between English and Kashmir is the recent development in the Kashmiri linguistic scenario; yet the pace with which it is going on is somewhat extraordinary. This lexical transfer between the two languages under study has both positive as well as negative aspects. The positive side of this borrowing is that it has enriched the lexical inventory of the native language and thereby made it competent enough to be at par with the globally changing linguistic scene. It has helped the Kashmiri language and its speakers to go ahead with the rest of the world in linguistic terms. Besides, it reflects the vibrant, active and lively nature of the

Kashmiri language which has received the lexical items of a foreign language like English in a rather natural way. In this connection, Winford (2003:59) comments:

Lexical borrowing must therefore be seen as just one aspect of a creative process of lexical change under contact which builds on *both native as well as foreign* sources. This process not only adds to the lexicon, but also enriches its potential for further expansion.

Nonetheless, this lexical borrowing has a serious/negative side associated with it. The fast growing presence of the English words in the day-to-day communication of the native Kashmiri speakers is impacting the recipient language due to which many native Kashmiri words have become obsolete and have gone out of use. The intensity of the English words is such that many native Kashmiri words are not now even known to people especially the younger generation with whom speaking and listening to Kashmiri language is not an easy job. The other two skills, that is, reading and writing are out of question. This overwhelming presence of borrowed words has changed the attitude of the people towards their own native language and they prefer English words rather than the Kashmiri ones wherever they can and in whatever situation they are in which ultimately may result in the slow extinction and thereby death of the native Kashmiri language. As Appel and Myusken (1987:174) rightly observe, “heavy lexical borrowing often goes together with low esteem for the receptive language involved, and low esteem . . . is often related to the process of language loss and death.” If this importation of words from English into Kashmiri flows with the same pace, there are possibilities that the latter may vanish from the linguistic map of the world because in the words of Appel and Myusken (1987:173), “language death involves heavy lexical borrowing.”

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