AN ANALYSIS OF MALAYALAM LANGUAGE IN TERMS OF CODE SWITCHING AND CODE BORROWING

Dr. C. Chamundeshwari  
Associate Professor,  
School of Arts and Humanities,  
REVA University, Bangalore- 560064  
chamundeshwaripari@gmail.com

Ms. Athira Pushpamgathan  
M.A Student  
School of Arts and Humanities,  
REVA University, Bangalore- 560064

ABSTRACT
Malayalam, as a language has a history of many years. It is spoken by 38 million people across the world. The language was separated from Tamil and it is mostly spoken in Kerala, the coastal side of south India. After the British colonisation, the language underwent a lot of changes. This paper discusses the code-switching, code borrowing and the overall linguistic transformation that happened in the Malayalam language. Many words are borrowed and efficiently used by Malayalam speakers. There are many suffixes and affixes added to the Malayalam language. People use these words even without thinking about the actual word that should be used in their respective language. Therefore the paper focuses to know and understand the predominant changes and how the language underwent these changes?

Keywords: code-switching, code borrowing, language transformation.

1. Introduction
Malayalam is the official language used in Kerala which is also classified as one of the South Dravidian languages. The word Malayalam came with the combination of the words "mala" means mountains or hills and "Alam" means land. So basically it signifies the land itself, that is, a land of mountains. Malayalam is highly influenced by Sanskrit and Tamil. But after the British colonisation, English has become a very prominent part of Malayalam. Code-switching is when two languages are alternatively used by a user. In a way, we get to understand that the user is capable of using both languages. The user can think, speak and write both languages efficiently. This happens mainly because of bilingual speech communities that exist in one country. Code-switching can happen in many situations like in schools, among friends, when a new member joins a conversation etc.
Code-switching happens to an ideal bilingual when the speaker tends to switch from one language to another in different situations. The change might not be in the situation but certainly, it will not be in one sentence. Code-switching can be intentional and unintentional.

There can be several reasons for code-switching. It can be of a topic, that is, when people generally talk they tend to switch codes due to some specific topic only because, the topic can be explained in the specific language. Some jokes in one language may sound funny but in others, it doesn't even make sense. Code-switching can also take place when we try to quote someone. We also switch our language to show our gratitude and express our feelings. Some people might use alternative language to make others understand or clarify their points. We can easily identify a group of people by how they switch their languages. One person can belong to a particular group who talks only in English or vice versa. Code-switching is very much useful to command or to soften the language. If we communicate with some people and if we use a language which is easier for them to understand, it will help to improve our communication and even the needs can be fulfilled. Lexical or technical terms are mainly in English. Translating those words is quite difficult. So we tend to switch the code while using these terms.

2. Theories on Code Switching

2.1 Communication Accommodation Theory

It is developed by Howard Giles. He tries to explain the cognitive reasons behind code-switching and to understand how a person emphasises or minimises the social and cultural difference by using code-switching as a tool to improve their conversation (Howard Giles 1977). This theory shows the human tendency to adjust their behaviour while communicating. Humans try to accommodate the other language to get social approval. There are two types of accommodation. They are convergence and divergence. Convergence is when the user tends to adapt to the other person's language so that the social differences can be solved. In divergence, the user tends to focus more on social differences and the non-verbal differences among the users. These two processes are entirely dependent upon the individual.

2.2 Constraint Based Model

Shana Poplack’s model discusses the grammatical changes in code-switching. In general, there are two constraints in the theory. Free morpheme constraint and the equivalence constraints are the two constraints in the theory. In free morpheme constraint, the code-switching cannot happen in lexical term or bound morphemes. This helps to distinguish code-
switching and borrowing. In the equivalence constraints, the code-switching only happens when the surface structure of the language coincide.

3. A sample of Code Switching

The students or workers who go to another state tend to use English more because most of the people will understand English. But the same person when he or she meets a Malayalam speaker will automatically switch their language to Malayalam.

John: swathy told me that she will surely attend the lecture today
Max: oh is it! Let’s wait for her.
John: Hey swathy. Ni epolano varunne?
Swathy: aneekan neram vayiky poyi.

In this conversation when john was talking to max he used English because max might not know Malayalam. But when swathy entered john automatically switched to Malayalam because for them Malayalam is more comfortable to speak.

4. Code Borrowing

Code borrowing is a lexical process where one word will be borrowed from another language. While code borrowing occurs the language might seem to be a mixed one. Case studies done with reference of languages, such as that of Jespersen for English (1923), analysed the code borrowing and stated that "Careful research had shown how earlier borrowed words went through the various sound changes in the languages so that dating of language contacts as possible. The studies identified the types of elements which are borrowed. Vocabulary and phonology are borrowed more readily than morphology, syntax and stylistic features. Languages also have different levels of resistance to loans or susceptibility to loans".

5. Linguists Perspective on Code Borrowing

5.1 Ferdinand De Saussure’s

Many historical linguists related issues of borrowing from Ferdinand de Saussure's work (1915) in linguistics. The samples play a vital role in linguistic study. The other elements like external social use come only after the sample. Moreover, the study focuses on the changes happening to the sample when he/she speaks within a group of heterogeneous people. The sample tends to borrow different words from other languages. A loan word does not always study within a linguistic system. It gains attention whenever another word is associated with it.

5.2 Edward Sapir
Edward Sapir's Language (1921) he talks about the importance of language contact and influence of alternative languages in his chapter on "How Languages Influence One Another". Koreans and Japanese people have a lot of common borrowed words. Likewise, even the English borrowed a lot of words from the French. In both cases, reciprocation happened. Code-borrowing is interesting because it helps us to study many cultures across the world. In a brighter view, languages such as classical Chinese, Sanskrit, Arabic, Greek and Latin carried the cultures with overwhelming significance. A language takes in a word, accept it, translate or modify it and even reject it by the response of the users of the particular language.

5.3 Bloomfield

Bloomfield's language has three chapters about borrowing. In “cultural borrowing” he states about individuals learning in household and how that effect the language acquisition (Hoffer 2002). Children never learn a language, they basically acquire it. Even in adults, when they know more language they tend to borrow more words from other languages. Dialect borrowing starts from home, friends, school, occupation and external factors. Each learner learns from different circumstances. Standard forms, local, regional and national speech helps in language acquisition. Bloomfield is an important part of borrowing theory.

5.4 Einar Haugen

Einar Haugen's "the analysis of linguistic borrowing" is a major reference to borrowing. Haugen tried to define the terminology used in the linguistic analysis of code-borrowing and to identify the process of borrowing. He found out that the use of language forms from the two languages is not random mixing of words. The speaker either switches rapidly or switches a word, phrase or a sentence. Later the term code-switching became a term for this behaviour. The resulting language is not always about a hybrid versus a pure language. Most of all the languages borrow and it is not to purify the language from the help of the foreign language or vice versa. He also says about the misleading capability of the word borrowing. The word signifies that the content is taken without the permission of the holder or it is not to be repaid. However, the term is highly used as a technical form in linguistics. Borrowing is basically an attempt to reproduce a language pattern which is found in another language.

5.5 Uriel Weinreich

Uriel Weinreich's Languages in Contact is a study of the impact of one language over others (Einar Haugen 1954). He believed that borrowing is a part of bilingualism. The rearrangement of the linguistic systems of phonology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax are the interferences that happen to a language. He says that in the future studies it might be
difficult to determine the scale of borrowing even from the most structured and grammatically correct phrases, words, prepositions, articles, or auxiliary verbs, to full-fledged words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and on to independent adverbs and completely unintegrated interjections."

6. **Borrowing in Malayalam**

There are many words which are borrowed from English. We can divide them into several categories.

- In the administrative level, we can see words like parliament, assembly, cabinet secretary, chief secretary, collector, collectorate, village officer, revenue, block office, gazetted officer, clerk, peon, draft etc. Assembly is known as niyamasabha and village officer as Adhikari. But mostly these are not been used.

- In the economic level, the words like commission, discount, toll, shop, cheque, note, bank, share etc are used widely among people. The shop is also called as Kada and share as baagam.

- In a household level, we use a lot of words such as fan, light, switch, fridge, TV, ac, chimney, tap, bulb, current, hall, shed etc. Rarely people use Malayalam words for these borrowed words.

- In measurements also we say kilo, meter, gram, ounce etc. Nobody uses kaadham for measuring distance.

- In dress also we use English words. We use words like pants, jeans, coat, underwear, bra, tie, collar, sleeves etc.

- In educational level also we use school, college, university, class, books, etc. But there are words for all these words in Malayalam. School is vidhyalayam, the book is pusthakam.

We also use abbreviations in English. KSRTC is Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. KTC is Kerala Transport Corporation. KPCC IS Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. PU.KA.SA is purogamana Kalala saithyam. SPSS is sahythya pravrthaka sahakarana sankam. Even though these are Malayalam words the abbreviations are in English.

7. **Suffixation**

Suffixation is one of the main changes that happened in the Malayalam language. Even simple words are made into manglish which Malayalam + English.
People use classmuri for the classroom, englishkaaran for a person who speaks English, dancekaari for one who dances. In the following examples, the Malayalam suffix is added to an English word.

Nouns are added as suffixes. Gas adup means gas stove. Soap podi means detergent. Tiffin paatram means Tiffin box. Cinema paattu means cinema song. Hotel bhakshanam means hotel food. Cement thara means cement floor. In these, all the words are added after the English word.

Kuppi glass means glass made of glass. Irump bucket means an iron bucket. Nadu road means the middle of the road. Waste vandi means waste truck. Current kambi means the current line. In these examples, Malayalam comes first and English words are added as suffixes.

Even in Malayalam "s" is added to state one's possession or make it plural. Examples like chaathans, ammu’s, payyans, vava’s etc. Here ammus means ammu+s = ammu’s that is something belongs to ammu. Payyans is plural. Payyan+s = payyans which means boys.

Even places name are changed into English. Like Quilon (Kollam) Alleppey (Alappuzha) Trichur (Thrissur) Calicut (Kozhikode) Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram).

8. Influence of Social Media and Other Technologies

These days we are all aware of how social media and technologies affect our language and culture. Due to worldwide exposure, everyone mixes their culture and traditions. It is widely seen in marriages or any other festivals. Likewise in Kerala, the use of the English language has tremendously increased due to the popularity of social media. People use words like freaken which is a word borrowed from English plus a Malayalam suffix. The meaning is also different compared to the English meaning of the word freak. In English, freak means someone has a mental problem. But in Malayalam, it means the person looks very dashing or very modern dress. So borrowing has made the language a mixed one.

9. Conclusion

The hegemony of English over Malayalam has started very long back. The modern education system introduced by British made every Indian believe that English is the best language which had high standards. In Kerala, we can see Malayalam and English medium schools. And those who speak English are given more opportunities even when the Malayalam speaking candidate has more potential. The culture and the presence of the British are still there. Even though Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic influences are there in Malayalam, it is English which marks the prestige attitude of a Malayali. Many people attach prestige with English and widely promote it. Malayalis are often noticed for code-switching because
Malayalis tend to travel and settle in abroad, unlike others. It is said that where ever you go, you will surely meet a Malayali there. And that is because they usually adapt other languages easily and they also believe that speaking English will make them more exposed to a variety of knowledge. But many people only use Malayalam.

It is noticed that many words are borrowed from Malayalam to English. There are many countries and states which rejects the hegemony of English. But in Kerala, we see a mixed group of people who seamlessly use Malayalam and English with high fluency and grammatical structure.

References