CHAPTER – 2

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2.1 Introduction

Sociolinguistics is a problem oriented social science subject. Its methods of research or investigation are similar to those of other social sciences. It approaches the problem from the angle of society. It observes and comprehends the issues from inside and not from the outside of the society.

While the methods of all social sciences are alike, research techniques vary from one discipline to another. Sociolinguistics has developed its own research methodology. Under this methodology or technique, first of all a research design is prepared which consists of an objective and identification of the problem and a conceptual framework. Then the relevant data on the research object is collected through the field survey. After collecting the relevant data, they are analysed and processed and last of all a comprehensive report is prepared stating the findings of the research.

An Indian sociolinguistic investigator, Bayer (1986:33) admits that the investigator meets great challenges particularly if the investigator is a woman. I would like to point out that I, being a female investigator, found our respondents most cooperative. I did not face any problem during the entire period of my data collection.

The present work covers the sociolinguistic study of language use, language preferences and language attitudes of the Kashmiri speech community. These are the three specific aspects that have been investigated in this study.
For the purpose of our work on language use, language preferences and language attitudes, we have selected three districts, viz., Srinagar\(^1\), Baramulla\(^2\), and Pulwama\(^3\). These districts were frequently visited by the investigator during the summer vacations of 1997-98.

### 2.2. Goals and Objectives of the Study

The multilingual situation of Jammu and Kashmir and the unique status of Urdu in the state inspired me to take up this work. I conducted the field survey in the state in order to find out the actual position of the mother tongue i.e., Kashmiri and the most frequently used languages like Urdu and English. It was noticed that Kashmiri language has a restricted use. It is substantially used for oral communication in almost all domains, whereas Urdu and English are used in the fields of administration, education, literature, written communication and in formal settings such as writing, printing, etc. It was also found that the Kashmiri language speakers have strong feelings for the development of their language. It is their desire that this language should be used for various functions in the society. To focus on these issues the following objectives were formulated:

1. To find out the use and status of the Kashmiri language and to ascertain the functions of Urdu and English.
2. To investigate the preferences of languages at specific times in specific domains and situations.
3. To find out the attitudes of the Kashmiri people towards Kashmiri, Urdu and English.

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\(^1\) It is the summer capital of the state situated in southeast with a total population of 708,328 persons (1981 Census of India).

\(^2\) Situated in Southeast with a total population of 670,142 persons (1981 Census of India)
2.3. Hypotheses

The foremost important step in conducting a research work is to establish hypotheses that form the key points to be either proved or disproved. So the present study is based on a few propositions which are as follows:

1. It has been established that in a multilingual society like Kashmiri speech community; a number of languages come into use for different purposes. So all these languages must have their specific domains of use.
2. People having the advantage of more than one language at their disposal might prefer one language to other. Thus Urdu is supposed to be preferred to Kashmiri and English to Urdu.
3. English, the worldly prestigious language, is mostly preferred for higher education.
4. Kashmiri speakers favour the use of Kashmiri for all purposes including education, administration and mass media.

2.4. Tools of data collection

In order to test these hypotheses, we prepared a questionnaire for collection of data that consisted of four sections. Section 1 of the questionnaire is concerned with the background information of respondents. Section 2 contains seventeen questions inquiring about the use of language(s). Section 3 contains total of 14 questions eliciting preferences of languages. Of these 14 questions, 13 were provided with three language choices (Kashmiri, Urdu and English) whereas, the fourteenth question is related to mother tongue only that was further divided into seven responses provided with two choices (yes/no). Section 4 contains attributes as well as domains with three specific language choices (Kashmiri, Urdu and English). Section 4 deals with the attitudes of the Kashmiri people towards Kashmiri, Urdu and English.

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3 Situated in Southeast with a total population of 404, 078 persons (1981 census of India).
2.5. Sample Design

Because of the prevailing situation of the Jammu and Kashmir state, the authorities could not conduct survey for the Census 1991. Our information, therefore, is mainly based on the 1981 Census of India. According to the 1981 Census, 3,136,146 persons speak Kashmiri as their mother tongue that constitutes 52.73% to the total population of the state. We distributed questionnaire among 300 respondents, but later decided to consider only 243 samples which are presumed to be the representative data.

To study the amount of language use, language preferences and language attitudes of the Kashmiri speech community, we categorized the sample into age, education, sex and occupation. The age group was further sub-divided into three groups: 1, 2, 3. The respondents included in age group 1 were between 18-25 years. The respondents taken for age group 2 were between 26-50 years and age group 3 includes respondents of age 50 years onwards.

In the same way the social variable education was sub-divided into three sub-classes: illiterate, literate and professional. All those respondents who had not received formal education were kept in class illiterate. Respondents who had received formal education from middle school onwards were included in education class literate, and the respondents who had received any sort of professional education had been included in education class professional. In terms of occupation, the respondents were categorized as; businessmen (including industrialists), office-goers (including teachers of university, college and school); professionals; housewives and students (graduation and onwards).

2.6 Collection of Data

The data was collected by the investigator herself. Though the investigator was not known to the community, but being a native speaker and as a
member of the community, she was warmly received by the respondents and found no problems in obtaining the data from them.

All the four sections of the questionnaire were prepared in English. Respondents knowing English filled up questionnaire themselves in the presence of the investigator. During the process, a substantial number of respondents raised questions regarding some attributes in section 4 of the questionnaire. In turn, the attributes were explained by the investigator in order to get accurate and sufficient information. Care was taken during the explanation of questions by the investigator in order to avoid the influence of opinions of respondents.

The investigator filled up questionnaire of all those respondents who did not have full understanding of English. The questionnaire was simply translated into Kashmiri by the investigator, and no explanation was given until asked by the respondent(s).

The total of 300 questionnaires were distributed in three districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Pulwama, i.e., 100 questionnaires in each district. From each district a total of 81 questionnaires were selected for analysis constituting the total number of 243 samples. The distribution was made equal keeping in view the comparative analysis between different social variables from different regions. For present study we have not taken region as a separate variable.

The investigator tried her best to maintain the male/female ratio while collecting the data. But it was not possible for her to maintain the consistency of the ratio when two variables came together. Thus consistency was maintained only with single variables. Besides, the data was also collected by holding interviews with a few number of respondents from each variable.
2.7. **Analysis of data**

We have analysed data by obtaining simple frequency percentage for each language in each domain/situation. On the basis of the frequency percentage we have studied the following:

1. The use of Kashmiri, Urdu and English in all considered situations with respect to four social variables: age, sex, education and occupation
2. The preference of each language for different purposes with respect to four social variables
3. Comparison between four social variables with regard to situation/s and purpose/s
4. Attitudes towards each language according to four social variables.

The analysis of the data for attitudes was made by considering three-point scale into numerical values by assigning 1 to maximum point and 3 to minimum point.

2.8. **Presentation of findings**

The findings of the present sociolinguistic investigation have been presented in three chapters. In Chapter 3 we have discussed the use of Kashmiri, Urdu and English in seventeen different contexts. Chapter 4 discusses the preferences given by Kashmiri speakers of four social variables to a particular language in specific situation(s) for specific purpose(s). The Chapter 5 concerns the attitudes of Kashmiri language speakers toward Kashmiri, Urdu and English.