ABSTRACT
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"A Sociolinguistic Investigation into Language Use, Language Preferences and Language Attitudes of the Kashmiri Speech Community."

An interesting situation of multilingualism is found in the state of Jammu and Kashmir where Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and English coexist as social and cultural phenomena. This thesis is an attempt to make a sociolinguistic investigation of the Kashmiri speech community in order to find out the actual position of Kashmiri, the mother tongue of this community; Urdu and English which play very significant roles in personal and interpersonal domains as well as in administration, education and mass media.

In this thesis we have made investigations into the language use, language preferences and language attitudes of the Kashmiri speech community from sociolinguistic point of view. It may be mentioned that sociolinguistics being a social science, its methods of research or investigation are similar to those of other social sciences. It approaches the problem from the angle of society. Unlike natural sciences, it observes and comprehends the issues from inside and not from the outside of society.
The entire study is based on the data collected through field survey from three hundred respondents belonging to three districts, viz., Baramullah, Pulwama and Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir state. A total of 243 respondents were selected as a sample for the final analysis. The data was collected with respect to four social variables, viz., Age, Education, Occupation and Sex. The main tool used for the collection of data has been the questionnaire. A very few respondents from each variable were also interviewed by the investigator. In order to see the actual position of three languages, participant observation method was also used. The data was processed and main findings were presented in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 whereas the Chapter 1 and 2 deal with introduction and methodology respectively. The summary and conclusions have been presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter - 1:

Introduction

It is purely an introductory chapter. It is about the sociolinguistic situation of the Jammu and Kashmir state. This chapter provides the details about the sociolinguistic functions of the Kashmiri speakers in India, states and union territories. It also provides information about the incidence of bilingualism among the Kashmiri speakers. The percentage of bilingualism
among Kashmiri speakers is 24.16% which exceeds the average national bilingualism of 13.34%.

Chapter - 2:

Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the methods used in the entire work. It explains the main objectives of the study, the hypothesis established before conducting the survey, tools used for data collection, sample selected for the final investigation, analysis of data and the presentation of findings.

Chapter - 3:

Language Use by the Kashmiri Speech Community

The findings of the data collected in respect of three languages, viz., Kashmiri, Urdu and English that are used in seventeen different domains in oral and written communications are presented in this chapter.

The percentage wise distribution of responses under various domains have been presented through frequency tables in respect of four different social variables. The frequency distribution has also been shown through frequency figure for males and females in general/totality.
The use of Kashmiri has been found very frequent in those situations and domains where oral communication takes place. Kashmiri find a little place in reading and writing situations. Daily newspaper is not published in Kashmiri, although a few weeklies and magazines are brought out by various non-governmental organizations. Urdu and English both plays a significant role in reading and writing situations, Urdu taking a leading role.

Chapter - 4:

Language Preferences by the Kashmiri Speech Community

It is a common phenomenon that when a person or persons know more than one language, they must prefer one language over the other for a specific purpose in a specific situation. Thus we have discussed in this chapter the preferences given to three languages (Kashmiri, Urdu and English) by Kashmiri speakers in twelve different situations.

It may be mentioned that English was found preferred most by a majority of respondents, from all variables, for media of instruction at all the levels of curriculum. Kashmiri was also found a preferred language by a good percent (33.3%, 37.4%) of male student and professional respondents for pursuing higher education. Kashmiri was mostly preferred as media of instruction upto middle school level only. For oral
communication, as expected, Kashmiri was preferred most by almost all respondents with a few exceptions like preferring language for religious performances, the illiterate females have responded to English. Similarly Kashmiri was found preferred very much for mass media. For writing and reading situations Urdu and English are taking lead. But Kashmiri is not lagging itself behind as a considerable percentage of respondents from all four variables use it for reading and writing purposes in one or the other way.

Chapter - 5:

**Attitudes of the Kashmiri Speech Community**

The evaluation of attitudes of the Kashmiri speakers towards Kashmiri, Urdu and English have been presented in chapter five. Generally it has been noticed that Kashmiri speakers have favourable attitudes towards all the three languages but the number increase or decrease with respect to a particular language. Kashmiri has strongly been favoured by most of the respondents with a few exceptions. In some cases Urdu runs parallel to Kashmiri but English does not stand anywhere as compared to Kashmiri and Urdu.
The figures show a clear picture of all aspects (language use, language preferences and language attitudes) which were taken under consideration with respect to four variables.

Chapter 6:

Summary and Conclusion

This is the final chapter of the thesis and presents, in brief, the summary and conclusions drawn from this investigation. The chapter wise summary has been given in this chapter. To conclude the findings we may assert that Kashmiri is primarily a language of oral communication, its use in reading and writing is very scanty and limited in its scope. Kashmiri is not formally use in administration and education. In these domains the languages like Urdu and English play vital roles. So far as mass media is concerned, Kashmiri is emerging as an important means of communication.